

Deposit Funding Shocks and Credit Supply: Bank-Level IV Estimates and Heterogeneous Responses

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1 Introduction

Rapid tightening since March 2022 has renewed interest in how monetary policy transmits through banks to the real economy. A rising strand emphasizes the deposit channel: when policy rates increase, deposit spreads widen, deposit growth slows, and banks partly replace core deposits with more expensive wholesale liabilities, which still leaves assets and loan supply lower (Drechsler et al. 2016). This perspective fits within the broader credit-channel research program that tighter policy raises banks’ funding costs and tightens loan supply (Bernanke and Gertler 1995). Following Drechsler et al. (2016), a large body of recent work documents substantial cross-sectional variation in deposit rate pass-through and deposit outflows, shaped by factors such as bank size and depositor sophistication. The foundational branch-level evidence on the “deposit channel” showed that when policy rates rise, banks in less competitive deposit markets raise rates more slowly and lose fewer deposits, while others face larger outflows and higher funding costs. Later studies questioned how well such local designs capture bank-level behavior. Evidence that large institutions price deposits uniformly across geographies raises concerns about county-level identification and suggests strong liability substitution at the largest banks (Begenau and Stafford 2023; Begenau and Stafford 2024). Related work shows depositor composition matters for pass-through and outflows and concentration indexes largely proxy deposit composition rather than market power, shifting attention from local market structure to who the depositors are. Against this backdrop, much less is known about the subsequent impact of higher funding costs on how much credit banks supply (Narayanan and Ratnadiwakara 2024).

The deposit channel rests on three testable premises. First, deposits are imperfect substitutes for other liabilities at the margin, so policy rate hikes raise both marginal and average funding costs for a meaningful subset of banks (Bernanke and Gertler 1995; Drechsler et al. 2016). Second, higher marginal funding costs shift banks’ loan-supply schedules inward rather than being fully offset by repricing, fees, or operating adjustments (Bernanke and Gertler 1995). Third, borrowers face frictions in replacing relationship lenders, so bank-level supply contractions translate into lower aggregate credit availability (Erel et al. 2023). Each premise is contestable. Large banks can reoptimize liability structures at relatively low cost, dampening the effective increase in funding costs (Begenau and Stafford 2023). On the second premise in particular, the mapping from funding-cost shocks to bank credit supply remains

underdeveloped in both theory and evidence; two canonical frameworks motivate quantity (and terms) tightening without one-for-one price pass-through: credit-rationing logic, where higher loan rates worsen selection and incentives, making nonprice and quantity restrictions optimal (Stiglitz and Weiss 1981), and bank-capital models, where lower net interest margins slow retained-earnings accumulation and raise the likelihood of binding capital constraints (Van den Heuvel 2002). This paper does not attempt to identify these microfoundations; it estimates the reduced-form, bank-level local average treatment effect of policy-induced increases in effective funding costs on credit supply.

The paper’s objective is to estimate the bank-level local average treatment effect (LATE) of policy-driven increases in effective deposit funding costs on bank credit supply, for the set of banks whose costs are shifted by the instrument. Identification comes from a bank-level instrument that interacts predetermined, pre-2021 exposures to deposit-rate sensitivity with quarterly Fed Funds rate changes. Working at the bank rather than branch level and focusing on effective funding costs addresses uniform-pricing and aggregability critiques. A secondary analysis examines size heterogeneity to assess whether small and community banks contract credit more for the same policy-driven cost increase. The contribution is direct, reduced-form evidence on the causal link from deposit funding costs to bank credit supply without committing to a specific micro-mechanism.

2 Literature Review

The “standard interest-rate channel” is the textbook mechanism in which a policy-induced increase in the federal funds rate passes through to borrowing rates, raising the user cost of credit and reducing interest-sensitive spending (Bernanke and Gertler 1995). An earlier alternative emphasized a “reserve channel,” under which the central bank’s control of bank reserves and a stable reserve multiplier constrained loan supply (Bernanke and Blinder 1988; Balbach 1981). In practice, that mechanism weakened or had never been effective as financial innovation, regulatory change, and modern operating procedures decoupled lending from contemporaneous reserve quantities: banks reconfigured liability mixes and reserve requirements became less binding, while central banks accommodated aggregate reserve demand in order to target the overnight policy rate (Minsky 1957; Moore 1991). In the early 1990s, the discussion was recast as a “credit channel” comprising a balance-sheet channel—tightening weakens borrower cash flow and collateral, raising external-finance premia—and a bank-lending channel—reserve drains or funding-cost increases reduce core deposits and, when nondeposit liabilities are imperfect or costly substitutes, shift banks’ loan-supply schedules inward, tightening bank credit supply (Bernanke and Gertler 1995).

A complementary bank-capital channel traces how capital requirements and payout rules shape lending. Since Basel I (1988), risk-weighted capital standards have tied balance-sheet growth to capital; Basel II increased risk sensitivity, and Basel III added conservation and countercyclical buffers (Basel Committee on Banking Supervision 1988, 2011). Early credit-crunch evidence showed that thinly capitalized banks slowed loan growth as they adjusted to standards (Bernanke and Lown 1991; Hancock and Wilcox 1994). Quasi-experimental work finds that tighter, bank-specific capital requirements contract lending at affected banks,

with some migration to less-regulated lenders (Aiyar et al. 2014). Risk-sensitive rules can be procyclical: in downturns, higher measured default probabilities and losses given default raise required capital just as earnings weaken, amplifying credit retrenchment (Kashyap and Stein 2004; Gordy and Howells 2006; Heid 2007; Repullo and Suárez 2013). Importantly, banks need not be at regulatory minima to pull back: when margins compress, value-maximizing banks may conserve capital and smooth dividends, raising the shadow cost of capital and shifting loan supply inward even without a binding constraint (Van den Heuvel 2002).

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