



Distinguishing constraints on financial inclusion and their impact on GDP, TFP, and the distribution of income[☆]



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ABSTRACT

A general equilibrium model featuring multiple realistic sources of financial frictions is developed to study how different constraints interact in equilibrium. We highlight, distinguish, and evaluate their differential impacts and rich interactions. The economic impact of financial inclusion policies in an economy depends not only on which constraint is alleviated, but also on the tightness of other constraints. Policy instruments should target the most binding constraint, which likely varies across countries. Moreover, there are important tradeoffs between financial inclusion, GDP, and the distribution of income. The transitional dynamics also differ from those in steady states. Policy makers should consider both.

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1. Introduction

The development of a financial system is multi-faceted in nature. In general, the stage of financial development and the extent of financial inclusion in a country are mainly reflected in the breadth (ability of firms to access credit), depth (the amount of collateral required for borrowing), and efficiency (ability of financial intermediaries to provide services at

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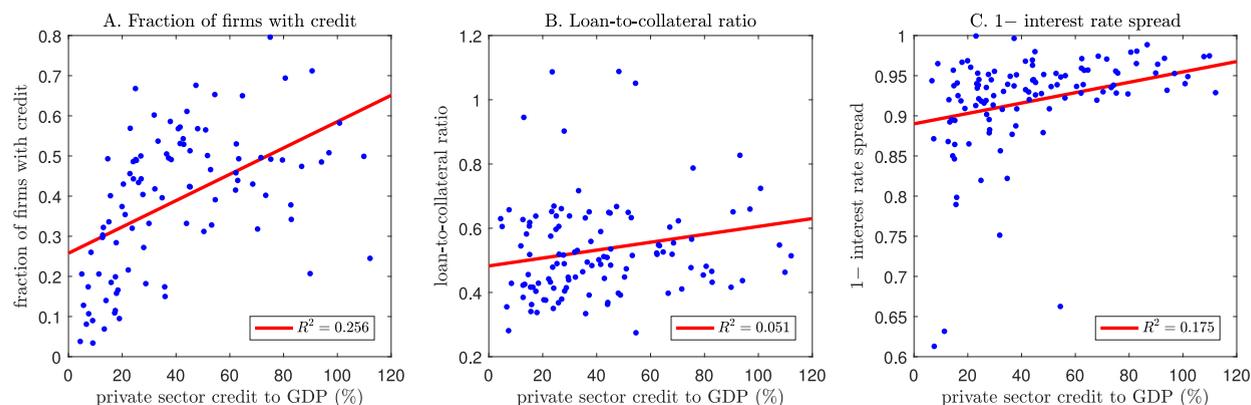


Fig. 1. Ratio of private credit to GDP versus various financial system indicators.

Note: Data is from the World Bank's Enterprise Surveys and World Development Indicators. The breadth, depth, and efficiency of a country's financial system can be measured by the fraction of firms with credit, the loan-to-collateral ratio, and one minus the interest rate spread, respectively. Among the 139 countries in our sample, the correlation is 0.11 between the measures of breadth and depth, 0.09 between the measures of depth and efficiency, and 0.37 between the measures of efficiency and breadth.

low cost) of its financial system. These three characteristics can be proxied by the fraction of firms with credit, the loan-to-collateral ratio, and one minus the interest rate spread. More developed financial systems are usually associated with greater breadth, depth, and efficiency. However, there are significant cross-country difference, and the correlations among the three measures are not high (see Fig. 1).

For this reason, policy instruments to foster financial inclusion will necessarily vary across countries. Instead of deriving optimal policies based on specific objectives and cost functions, the goal of this paper is to highlight, distinguish, and systematically examine the tradeoffs between various policy instruments as an essential first step in policy design. Reduced-form empirical techniques, however, are less likely to offer revealing answers, because different constraints have nonlinear interactions with each other and economy-wide policies inevitably have general-equilibrium effects. These challenges lend themselves to a structural approach followed in this paper.

We develop a general equilibrium model of heterogeneous agents with multiple sources of financial frictions to study the equilibrium interactions among different financial constraints and their implications on GDP, TFP, and the distribution of income. Our model has two key implications. First, policy instruments should target the most binding constraint, which likely varies across countries. Likewise, assuming there is only one generic type of constraint across all countries can give inaccurate predictions of an economy's response to lowering that constraint. For example, relaxing the collateral constraint may significantly boost GDP in one country, but may not be as effective in other countries, where financial inclusion is constrained by a high borrowing cost. Second, there are important tradeoffs between financial inclusion, GDP, and the distribution of income. Further, short-run transitional effects may differ from outcomes in long-run steady states, which may be years away.¹ For example, policies that increase GDP may lead to high income inequality and the extent of these tradeoffs can vary over time after implementation. We provide a roadmap for policy makers so that they know what they are likely to face in the future, thereby allowing them to build in some commitment if possible or to choose another path if not.

Our model is built on the workhorse model of occupational choice in the macro-development literature (see, e.g., Banerjee and Newman, 1993; Buera and Shin, 2011; 2013; Gine and Townsend, 2004). In the model, agents are heterogeneous in wealth and entrepreneurial productivity, and can choose to be workers or entrepreneurs. Workers supply labor for wages in return. Entrepreneurs use capital and labor for production.

Our major deviation from standard models is that we make the more realistic assumption that agents face multiple sources of financial constraints rather than a single one. First, agents who borrow from financial intermediaries incur a credit entry cost. This cost captures the fixed transaction costs, documentation requirements, and other access barriers. Second, the amount of loans obtained is constrained by a collateral constraint as in Jermann and Quadrini (2009, 2012). Finally, the interest rate charged by loans is higher than the deposit rate, reflecting an informational or intermediation cost. Existing studies have emphasized the quantitative importance of each type of financial friction. For example, Greenwood and Jovanovic (1990) and Townsend and Ueda (2006) study the credit entry cost. Buera et al. (2011) and Buera and Shin (2013) focus on the collateral constraint. Greenwood et al. (2013, 2010) quantify the importance of the intermediation cost. These three types of financial constraints distort the allocation of capital and entrepreneurial productivity. They naturally give rise conceptually to three policy instruments, each alleviating a specific type of constraint.

¹ In Internet Appendix 3.5, we study the transitional dynamics after implementing financial inclusion policies.

Real-world counterparts of these constraints are easy to find. For example, the existing literature has documented that the distance to a bank branch matters for credit access, suggesting that policies to promote branch opening in rural locations with unbanked populations could help reduce the credit entry cost in our model.² During the global financial crisis of 2007 – 2008, many countries relaxed the collateral constraint by widening the range of securities that could be accepted as collateral with the aim of boosting lending to firms and households. Finally, financial inclusion can lead to increased competition among financial institutions, accelerating investment in financial technology, thereby improving intermediation efficiency and lowering the intermediation cost.³

In order to assess and quantify the interactions and tradeoffs of policy instruments, we calibrate the model using data from the World Bank's Enterprise Surveys and World Development Indicators for a number of countries. We choose the model's key parameters to match the data moments reflecting the key characteristics of a financial system, in particular the percentage of firms with credit, the collateral-to-loan ratio, and the interest rate spread, as well as other moments such as the real interest rate, the gross savings as a percentage of GDP, and the firm employment distribution.

Our lead illustrative example is taken from the Philippines, although we also consider other countries. We first examine the steady-state implications of alleviating different financial constraints on GDP and TFP by conducting counterfactual experiments. Policies that relax the collateral constraint away from its calibrated value have a larger impact on increasing GDP and TFP than policies that reduce the credit entry cost or the intermediation cost. Moreover, the model implies that the increase in GDP and TFP is attributed to different margins depending on which policy instrument is used. Specifically, when the credit entry cost is reduced, GDP and TFP will initially increase mostly through the intensive margin; that is, the few entrepreneurs who already have access to finance will expand their scale of production. This is because most entrepreneurs do not have sufficient wealth to pay the upfront cost and are excluded from the credit market. When the credit entry cost is further lowered, however, GDP and TFP will increase through the extensive margin; that is, productive but wealth-constrained entrepreneurs who were previously excluded from the credit market will start to gain access to finance. By contrast, when the collateral constraint is relaxed, both intensive and extensive margins will contribute significantly to the increase in GDP and TFP. When the intermediation cost is lowered, the increase in GDP and TFP is attributed only to the extensive margin. More generally, the model structure provides these decompositions in theory with formulas, which are also quantified in the data, as are the general equilibrium effects on wages and interest rates.

We further study the equilibrium interactions of these financial constraints. In partial equilibrium, our analytical results reveal that when multiple constraints are relaxed simultaneously, the effect is amplified through the intensive margin but dampened through the extensive margin. This implies that policies that alleviate multiple constraints could, in principle, yield a larger or a smaller effect than policies targeting individual constraints, depending on whether the overall interaction effect between different constraints is positive or negative. For example, if the interaction effect through the intensive margin dominates, policy makers should develop a more balanced financial system, as different financial constraints are complements in constraining GDP. In this case, policies that alleviate the most binding financial constraint would be most effective. On the other hand, if the interaction effect through the extensive margin dominates, policy makers should focus on alleviating a single constraint while ignoring all other constraints.

Using the calibrated model, we conduct a sequence of counterfactual experiments to study the equilibrium interactions between financial constraints. We find that the interaction effect between different constraints is positive, suggesting that effective financial inclusion policies should be designed to develop a well-rounded financial system by alleviating the currently most binding constraint. As noted earlier, policies that are effective in increasing GDP in one country may not be equally effective in others. Therefore, identifying the most binding constraint is important for designing financial policies.

In terms of the distributional implications, we find that policies that relax different constraints tend to bring differential benefits to agents, depending on their wealth and productivity. Although reducing the credit entry cost benefits every agent in the economy, the welfare of some agents will fall when the collateral constraint is relaxed or when the intermediation cost is reduced due to general equilibrium effects.

To demonstrate how our model can be harnessed to help identify the bottleneck constraint in a financial system, we separately calibrate the model to six representative countries. Three of them, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Brazil, have relatively extreme financial constraints. For example, only 6.7% of firms in Pakistan have access to credit; the average collateral requirement in Bangladesh is 271.4% of the loan size; and in Brazil, the interest spread between lending rates and deposit rates is as high as 35.4%. The model implies that policies that relax the collateral constraint in Bangladesh and reduce the intermediation cost in Brazil would be more effective in increasing GDP and TFP, which is consistent with the inference directly drawn from the tight collateral constraint in Bangladesh and the high interest rate spread in Brazil. However, choosing the policy instrument entirely based on descriptive statistics could be misleading because these statistics are endogenously

² Many developing countries have implemented such policies to increase credit access. For example, after nationalizing a bank in 1969, the Indian government launched an ambitious social banking program that sought to improve the access of the rural poor to formal credit and savings opportunities (see Burgess and Pande, 2005). Also see Assuncao et al. (2012), Alem and Townsend (2013), Gilje et al. (2016), Aguirregabiria et al. (2017), Celerier and Matray (2017), and Nguyen (2017).

³ For example, from 1985 to 1994, the Thai banking sector became more capital-intensive, substituting physical capital for labor. The average cost of raising funds decreased from 14.40% in 1985 to 5.61% in 1994 for large banks (see Okuda and Mieno, 1999).

determined in equilibrium. For instance, the model implies that relaxing the collateral constraint rather than reducing the credit entry cost would increase the GDP of Pakistan more, even though the country's credit access ratio is low.

The other three countries analyzed are the Philippines, Kenya, and Zambia, which have relatively balanced financial constraints. It is difficult to tell which financial constraint is most binding simply by looking at the descriptive statistics for the credit access ratio, the collateral-to-loan ratio, and the interest rate spread. By calibrating the model to these countries, we are able to systematically evaluate the potential impacts of different policy instruments, and hence shed light on the real underlying bottleneck. Our model provides a structural framework to systematically study the potential implications of different financial inclusion policies, providing complementary and arguably more accurate evaluations than simple summary statistics.

Finally, to evaluate our model's ability to explain real-world policy intervention, we apply it to the analysis of a large-scale financial liberalization policy implemented in Thailand during the period from 1986 to 1995. The model is able to explain a large fraction of the cumulative growth in GDP and TFP, and can also generate a hump-shaped income Gini coefficient that resembles the data. Importantly, the model allows us to separately quantify the extent to which relaxing different constraints can drive economic growth and the dynamics of income inequality.

Related literature

Our paper is related to the literature that uses models of occupational choice and financial frictions to study the aggregate and distributional impacts of financial intermediation (see, e.g., [Amaral and Quintin, 2010](#); [Banerjee and Newman, 1993](#); [Buera et al., 2011](#); [2012](#); [Cagetti and De Nardi, 2006](#); [Gine and Townsend, 2004](#); [Greenwood et al., 2013](#); [Jeong and Townsend, 2007](#); [2008](#); [Lloyd-Ellis and Bernhardt, 2000](#); [Moll, 2014](#)). In contrast to these studies, our model introduces multiple financial frictions to the occupational choice framework to highlight multiple dimensions of financial inclusion within an economy. The model also uncovers how different frictions interact with each other.

Our paper is particularly related to studies in which multiple financial frictions co-exist and are compared. For example, [Albuquerque and Hopenhayn \(2004\)](#) and [Clementi and Hopenhayn \(2006\)](#) find that moral hazard and limited commitment have different implications for firm dynamics. [Abraham and Pavoni \(2005\)](#) and [Doepke and Townsend \(2006\)](#) illustrate how consumption allocations differ under moral hazard with and without hidden savings versus full information. [Ahlin and Townsend \(2007\)](#) emphasize regional variations in obstacles to trade and financial constraints. [Martin and Taddei \(2013\)](#) study the implications of adverse selection on macroeconomic aggregates and contrast them with those under limited commitment. [Karaivanov and Townsend \(2014\)](#) estimate the financial/information regime in place for households (including those running businesses) in Thailand and find that a financial regime constrained by moral hazard fits the data best in urban areas, while a regime that is more limited by savings is more applicable for rural areas. Relatedly, [Paulson et al. \(2006\)](#) argue that moral hazard best fits the data in the more urban central region of Thailand but not in the more rural northeast. [Kinnan \(2014\)](#) uses a different metric based on the first-order conditions characterizing optimal insurance under moral hazard, limited commitment, and hidden income to distinguish between these regimes in Thai data. [Moll et al. \(2014\)](#) develop a general equilibrium framework that encompasses different types of frictions, and examine their interactions. More recently, [Nikolov et al. \(2018\)](#) develop a rich structural corporate model incorporating multiple financial frictions, with the goal of identifying sources of financial constraints using firm-level data. Our paper is different from these studies in that we emphasize the rich interactions among financial constraints and the tradeoffs between different policy instruments.

Our paper is also related to the literature on misallocation (see, e.g., [Banerjee and Moll, 2010](#); [Bassetto et al., 2015](#); [Caselli and Gennaioli, 2013](#); [Hsieh and Klenow, 2009](#); [Midrigan and Xu, 2014](#); [Moll, 2014](#)) and inequality (see, e.g., [Aghion and Bolton, 1997](#); [Benhabib et al., 2011](#); [2015](#); [Cagetti and De Nardi, 2006](#); [2009](#); [Castaneda et al., 2003](#); [Davies, 1982](#); [De Nardi et al., 2016](#); [De Nardi and Yang, 2016](#); [Huggett, 1996](#); [Nardi, 2004](#); [Quadrini, 2000](#)). Our contribution is to show that policy instruments that target different financial sector frictions have differential impacts on resource allocation and inequality.

2. Model

We develop a general equilibrium model of heterogeneous agents with multiple sources of financial frictions to study the equilibrium interactions among different financial constraints.

2.1. Agents

Heterogeneity and demographics

Time is indexed by t . The economy is populated by a continuum of agents of measure one and there is no population growth. Agents live indefinitely and are heterogeneous in terms of wealth b_t and entrepreneurial productivity z_t . Wealth b_t evolves endogenously, determined by forward-looking savings decisions. Productivity z_t follows an exogenous stochastic process. In particular, with probability γ , agents retain their productivity in the previous period; with probability $1 - \gamma$, agents draw a new productivity from a time-invariant Pareto distribution $\mu(z)$ governed by the tail parameter θ . The shocks to productivity can be interpreted as changes in market conditions that affect the profitability of individual skills (see [Buera et al., 2011](#)).

Preferences

Agents derive utility from consumption c_t and have preferences

$$\mathbb{E}_t \left[\sum_{s=t}^{\infty} \beta^{s-t} \frac{c_s^{1-\sigma}}{1-\sigma} \right], \quad (2.1)$$

where β is the discount factor and σ is the risk-aversion parameter.

Technology. In any period t , agents can choose to be workers or entrepreneurs. Each worker supplies one unit of labor inelastically and earns the equilibrium wage w_t . Each entrepreneur operates a technology that uses capital k_t and labor l_t as inputs to produce output. The profitability of an entrepreneurial business depends on the agent's productivity; specifically, the output $f(k_t, l_t, z_t)$ is given by

$$f(k_t, l_t, z_t) = z_t (k_t^\alpha l_t^{1-\alpha})^{1-\nu}, \quad (2.2)$$

where $1 - \nu$ is the span-of-control parameter, representing the share of output accruing to variable factors. Out of this, a fraction α goes to capital and $1 - \alpha$ goes to labor. Production exhibits diminishing returns to scale, with $\nu > 0$. Capital depreciates at rate δ . Our specification of technology follows [Buera and Shin \(2011\)](#), and is also close to [Quadrini \(2000\)](#) and [Cagetti and De Nardi \(2006\)](#) among many others.⁴

2.2. Financial markets

The only asset in the economy is capital. This is equivalent to assuming the existence of a perfect technology that can freely transform capital into consumption goods. Perfectly competitive financial intermediaries receive deposits from all agents and lend to entrepreneurs. The deposit interest rate r_t is determined endogenously by the capital market clearing condition at time t . Following [Buera and Shin \(2011\)](#), we focus on within-period credit for production purposes. We do not allow borrowing for consumption smoothing across periods by imposing $b_t \geq 0$. Therefore, only entrepreneurs borrow from intermediaries.

The key distinction of our model is that we introduce and examine three sources of financial frictions in a unified framework. Each source of friction reflects one particular aspect of financial market imperfection. These three types of financial constraints naturally give rise conceptually to three policy instruments, each targeting a specific constraint. The three frictions are described below.

Limited credit access. Entrepreneurs incur a fixed credit entry cost ψ to borrow from intermediaries. The modeling of fixed entry costs for obtaining credit follows [Greenwood and Jovanovic \(1990\)](#) and [Townsend and Ueda \(2006\)](#) among others. It captures, for example, various fees associated with financial accounts, the cost of bookkeeping and exchange (transportation), and others (see, e.g., [Townsend, 1983](#)).

We assume that an agent lives in a “credit regime” if the agent pays the cost ψ and can borrow, and in a “savings regime” if the agent does not pay ψ and can therefore only save. In equilibrium, the fixed entry cost ψ is more likely to exclude poor entrepreneurs from financial markets, as it amounts to a larger fraction of their wealth.

Collateral constraint. The credit contract that entrepreneurs receive is subject to a collateral requirement due to limited enforceability of debt contracts. In particular, consider an entrepreneur with wealth b_t who approaches financial intermediaries for a loan x_t at the competitive equilibrium lending interest rate r_t^l . After obtaining the loan x_t , the entrepreneur transforms her wealth-on-hand $b_t - \psi + x_t$ costlessly into capital $k_t = b_t - \psi + x_t$, which is then used as collateral to secure the loan x_t . The entrepreneur is free to default and walk away with her income and wealth at any time, but if she does, the financial intermediaries will seize the collateral. Following [Jermann and Quadrini \(2009, 2012\)](#), we assume that the liquidation value of capital is uncertain at the time of contracting. With probability $1 - \xi$ intermediaries recover the full value k_t , but with probability ξ they recovery nothing. Thus to avoid default, the amount of loan x_t that intermediaries are willing to lend is restricted to $x_t \leq (1 - \xi)k_t$. Substituting x_t , we can derive the entrepreneur's capital constraint in terms of her wealth b_t :

$$\xi k_t \leq b_t - \psi. \quad (2.3)$$

The single parameter $\xi \in [0, 1]$ parsimoniously captures the tightness of the borrowing constraint, with $\xi = 1$ corresponding to financial autarky, where all capital must be self-financed by entrepreneurs with their wealth $b_t - \psi$.

Intermediation inefficiency. We assume that the lending interest rate r_t^l is higher than the deposit interest rate r_t by a margin χ , i.e., $r_t^l = r_t + \chi$. Thus for the loan x_t , entrepreneurs pay intermediation fees equal to χx_t . The interest rate spread χ reflects the efficiency of financial intermediation. For example, as noted by [Townsend \(1983\)](#), costly intermediation could arise from the cost of enforcement and monitoring when information is imperfect.

⁴ Unlike [Quadrini \(2000\)](#) and [Cagetti and De Nardi \(2006\)](#), we do not model heterogeneous working ability or the corporate sector. We focus on the entrepreneurial sector to demonstrate the interactions among different financial constraints and what important role they might play in policy evaluation. As discussed in Internet Appendix 3.2, introducing the corporate sector would affect the response of interest rates and wages to financial inclusion policies, which may consequently have different implications for wealth inequality.

2.3. Agents' problem

We formulate the agent's problem recursively. Denote by $V_t(b_t, z_t)$ the value function of the agent of type (b_t, z_t) . Denote by $W_t(b_t, z_t)$ or $E_t(b_t, z_t)$ the agent's value if she chooses to be a worker or an entrepreneur at time t . The occupation choice is made to maximize utility,

$$V_t(b_t, z_t) = \max \{W_t(b_t, z_t), E_t(b_t, z_t)\}. \quad (2.4)$$

The value function also generally depends on time t because we consider transitional dynamics. For ease of exposition, we denote variables and distributions in steady states by omitting the subscript t . The worker's value is given by

$$W_t(b_t, z_t) = \max_{c_t} \frac{c_t^{1-\sigma}}{1-\sigma} + \beta \mathbb{E}_t[V_{t+1}(b_{t+1}, z_{t+1})] \quad (2.5)$$

$$\text{s.t. } c_t + b_{t+1} = (1 + r_t)b_t + w_t, \quad \text{with } c_t, b_{t+1} \geq 0.$$

The entrepreneur's value is determined by comparing the cases with and without borrowing from financial intermediaries. Denote by $E_t^s(b_t, z_t)$ or $E_t^c(b_t, z_t)$ the entrepreneur's value when capital is financed with savings only or with credit as well. The borrowing decision is made to maximize utility,

$$E_t(b_t, z_t) = \max \{E_t^s(b_t, z_t), E_t^c(b_t, z_t)\}. \quad (2.6)$$

In the savings regime, the agent finances production herself and the remaining wealth is deposited in financial intermediaries for interest earnings. The value function in the savings regime is

$$E_t^s(b_t, z_t) = \max_{c_t, k_t, l_t} \frac{c_t^{1-\sigma}}{1-\sigma} + \beta \mathbb{E}_t[V_{t+1}(b_{t+1}, z_{t+1})]$$

$$\text{s.t. } c_t + b_{t+1} = z_t(k_t^\alpha l_t^{1-\alpha})^{1-\nu} + (1 - \delta)k_t - w_t l_t + (1 + r_t)(b_t - k_t),$$

$$k_t \leq b_t \quad \text{and} \quad c_t, k_t, l_t, b_{t+1} \geq 0. \quad (2.7)$$

In the credit regime, the agent takes out loans to finance production. Without loss of generality, we only consider the case in which the agent invests $k_t > b_t$ in the credit regime, because investing $k_t \leq b_t$ but paying the credit entry cost is obviously not optimal. Thus, we can write the value function in the credit regime as

$$E_t^c(b_t, z_t) = \max_{c_t, k_t, l_t} \frac{c_t^{1-\sigma}}{1-\sigma} + \beta \mathbb{E}_t[V_{t+1}(b_{t+1}, z_{t+1})]$$

$$\text{s.t. } c_t + b_{t+1} = z_t(k_t^\alpha l_t^{1-\alpha})^{1-\nu} + (1 - \delta)k_t - w_t l_t - (1 + r_t + \chi)(k_t - b_t + \psi),$$

$$\xi k_t \leq b_t - \psi \quad \text{and} \quad c_t, l_t, b_{t+1} \geq 0 \quad \text{and} \quad k_t > b_t. \quad (2.8)$$

Panel A of Fig. 2 illustrates the choice of occupation for agents with different levels of wealth and productivity. Depending on whether the occupation choice is constrained by wealth, we identify four categories of agents: unconstrained workers, constrained workers, constrained entrepreneurs, and unconstrained entrepreneurs. As shown in the figure, there is a certain level of productivity below which agents will always find working for a wage better than operating a business. These agents

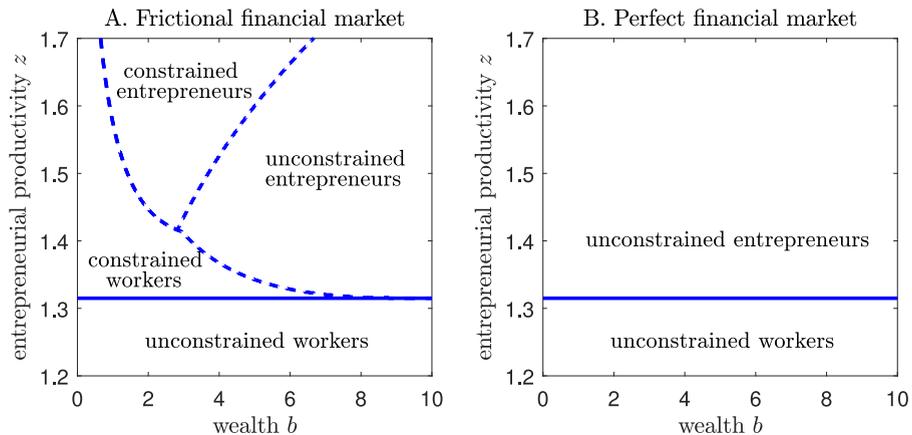


Fig. 2. Occupation choice with/without financial frictions.

Note: Panel A illustrates the occupation choice in the presence of financial frictions (i.e., $\psi = 0.05$, $\chi = 0.05$, $\xi = 0.5$). Panel B illustrates the occupation choice in a perfect financial market (i.e., $\psi = \chi = \xi = 0$) in partial equilibrium with the same interest rate and wage as panel A. In general equilibrium, when we move from an economy with financial frictions to an economy without financial frictions, the interest rate and wage will also change, which is analyzed in Section 4. The other parameters for plotting the figure are $r = 0.05$, $w = 0.8$, $\delta = 0.06$, $\nu = 0.19$, $\alpha = 0.33$.

are identified as unconstrained workers, because their productivity is so low that they will never find it optimal to become entrepreneurs. Above this level of productivity, there are three regions. The left region refers to constrained workers. These agents are productive but do not have sufficient wealth to operate businesses at a profitable scale. The middle region represents constrained entrepreneurs who have sufficient wealth to operate profitable businesses, but their scale of business is constrained. Agents in the right region choose to be entrepreneurs, operating businesses at the unconstrained scale, with the marginal return on capital equal to the marginal cost. Thus, they are classified as unconstrained entrepreneurs.

In the presence of financial market frictions, the decision to become an entrepreneur and the scale of business not only depends on productivity z_t but also on wealth b_t . By contrast, when the financial market is perfect (i.e., $\psi = \chi = \xi = 0$), panel B of Fig. 2 indicates that productive agents always choose to be entrepreneurs and operate their businesses at the unconstrained scale. We formally state this result in Proposition 1.

Proposition 1. *In the absence of financial frictions, there exists a threshold of entrepreneurial productivity z_t , and the agent will choose to be an entrepreneur if and only if $z \geq z_t$.*

2.4. Competitive equilibrium

Denote by $h_t(b, z)$ the probability density function (PDF) for the joint distribution of wealth and productivity at the beginning of period t . Given an initial distribution $h_0(b, z)$, a competitive equilibrium consists of allocations $\{c_t(b, z), k_t(b, z), l_t(b, z)\}_{t=0}^\infty$, sequences of joint distributions of wealth and productivity $\{h_t(b, z)\}_{t=0}^\infty$ and prices $\{r_t, w_t\}_{t=0}^\infty$ such that:

- (1) Agents optimally choose the underlying regime, occupation, consumption $c_t(b, z)$, capital $k_t(b, z)$, and labor $l_t(b, z)$ by solving problems (2.4)–(2.8) at all $t \geq 0$.
- (2) The capital market clears at all $t \geq 0$,

$$\iint_{(b,z) \in \Phi_t^C} [k_t(b, z) - b + \psi] h_t(b, z) db dz = \iint_{(b,z) \notin \Phi_t^E} b h_t(b, z) db dz + \iint_{(b,z) \in \Phi_t^S} [b - k_t(b, z)] h_t(b, z) db dz, \quad (2.9)$$

where Φ_t^E is the set of entrepreneurs at time t ; Φ_t^S and Φ_t^C are the sets of entrepreneurs in the savings and credit regimes, respectively. We have $\Phi_t^E = \Phi_t^S \cup \Phi_t^C$.

- (3) The labor market clears at all $t \geq 0$,

$$\iint_{(b,z) \in \Phi_t^E} l_t(b, z) h_t(b, z) db dz = \iint_{(b,z) \notin \Phi_t^E} h_t(b, z) db dz. \quad (2.10)$$

- (4) $\{h_t(b, z)\}_{t=0}^\infty$ evolves according to the equilibrium mapping

$$h_{t+1}(b', z') db dz = \gamma dz \int \mathbb{1}_{\{b^*=b'\}} h_t(b, z') db + (1 - \gamma) \mu(z') dz \iint \mathbb{1}_{\{b^*=b'\}} h_t(b, z) db dz, \quad (2.11)$$

where $b^* \equiv b_{t+1}(b, z)$ is the wealth at $t + 1$ implied by the optimal savings decision of agents of type (b, z) . $\mathbb{1}_{\{b^*=b'\}}$ is an indicator function which equals one if $b^* = b'$ and zero otherwise. The left-hand side of Eq. (2.11) is the probability mass of agents with (b', z') at $t + 1$. The right-hand side sums the probabilities of transition to (b', z') from any arbitrary (b, z) at t . With probability γ , the agent keeps the current productivity z' and transits to b' from (b, z') if $b^* = b'$. With probability $1 - \gamma$, the agent draws a new productivity, which equals z' with probability $\mu(z') dz$.

3. Data and calibration

We use data from the World Bank's Enterprise Surveys and World Development Indicators to discipline the model. We calibrate the model by first matching the moments for the Philippines, which serves as our benchmark calibration. The sample contains 1,335 firms interviewed from November 2014 through May 2016. In Section 5.1, we calibrate the model to target moments of other countries and show that it could be used to conduct cross-country analyses.

We set the risk-aversion parameter $\sigma = 1.5$ and the span-of-control parameter $\nu = 0.19$ following standard practice. The one-year depreciation rate δ is set to 0.06. The aggregate income share of capital α is set to 0.33. The remaining six parameters are calibrated by matching relevant moments in the data as shown in Table 1.

The three key parameters, ψ , ξ , and χ , capturing the financial frictions, are calibrated to match the three moments that reflect the country's financial development. These moments are the percentage of firms with access to credit, the collateral-to-loan ratio, and the interest rate spread.⁵ The 4% interest rate spread directly identifies the parameter χ . For firms with access to credit, the average collateral as a percentage of loans is 156.7%, indicating that for each unit of credit, the firm has to post 1.57 units of collateral on average. This moment provides information about the tightness of the collateral constraint,

⁵ Internet Appendix Fig. 1 presents the sensitivity of these moments to each key parameter.

Table 1
Calibration and moments in data and model.

	Data	Model	Parameter
Firms with credit (%)	29.9	29.5	$\psi = 0.95$
Collateral (% of loans)	156.7	156.4	$\xi = 0.335$
Interest rate spread (%)	4.0	4.0	$\chi = 0.04$
Real interest rate (%)	6.2	6.3	$\beta = 0.88$
Employment share of top 5% (%)	43.7	43.7	$\theta = 3.4$
Employment share of top 10% (%)	57.6	58.6	$\gamma = 0.89$
Employment share of top 20% (%)	73.2	71.5	
Employment share of top 40% (%)	88.8	85.3	
Gross savings (% of GDP)	44.2	41.2	

governed by the parameter ξ . In the Philippines, the fraction of firms with credit access is 29.9%, which identifies the credit entry cost ψ .⁶

Buera and Shin (2011) and Moll (2014) show that with persistent productivity, entrepreneurs can accumulate wealth on their own and overcome financial constraints. We thus identify the parameter γ by matching the gross savings as a percentage of GDP.⁷ We set the discount factor β to match the real interest rate of 6.2%. The parameter θ governs the distribution of agents' entrepreneurial productivity. A lower θ implies that the distribution is more right-skewed, and hence top entrepreneurs will employ a larger fraction of labor in the economy. We thus calibrate θ to match the employment share distribution. Specifically, we use four brackets of employment shares, corresponding to the fraction of labor employed by the top 5%, 10%, 20%, and 40% of entrepreneurs ranked in terms of their business income.

4. Distinguishing the impact of policy instruments

In this section, we systematically examine the aggregate implications of different financial inclusion policies on GDP and TFP in steady states. We first present formulas to decompose changes in GDP and TFP. Next, we evaluate the aggregate implications of policy instruments and how they interact with each other in equilibrium. Finally, we shed light on the distributional implications of these policies on welfare.

4.1. Formulas for GDP and TFP decomposition

In our model, financial inclusion is reflected in lower values of the parameters, $\Omega \equiv (\psi, \xi, \chi)$. We decompose the effect of financial inclusion through the extensive and intensive margins. On the one hand, relaxing financial constraints can increase GDP and TFP through the extensive margin by increasing the credit access ratio (i.e., entrepreneurs move from the savings regime to the credit regime). On the other hand, relaxing financial constraints enables entrepreneurs who already have access to credit to scale up their production, boosting GDP and TFP through the intensive margin. In particular, the effect of financial inclusion on GDP and TFP can be decomposed as follows.

Proposition 2. Consider a financial inclusion policy that relaxes the constraints from Ω to Ω' , with $\Omega' \leq \Omega$. The increase in steady-state GDP is given by

$$\begin{aligned} \text{GDP}_{\Omega'} - \text{GDP}_{\Omega} &= \int_z \int_{\underline{b}(z; \Omega')}^{\underline{b}(z; \Omega)} [y^c(b, z; \Omega')h(b, z; \Omega') - y^s(b, z; \Omega)h(b, z; \Omega)] db dz \\ &+ \int_z \int_{\underline{b}(z; \Omega)}^{\infty} [y^c(b, z; \Omega')h(b, z; \Omega') - y^c(b, z; \Omega)h(b, z; \Omega)] db dz \\ &+ \int_z \int_0^{\underline{b}(z; \Omega')} [y^s(b, z; \Omega')h(b, z; \Omega') - y^s(b, z; \Omega)h(b, z; \Omega)] db dz, \end{aligned} \quad (4.1)$$

where $\underline{b}(z; \Omega)$ denotes the threshold of wealth above which entrepreneurs of productivity z will choose to access credit in the steady state of the economy with Ω . The variables $y^s(b, z; \Omega)$ and $y^c(b, z; \Omega)$ are entrepreneurs' output net of the deadweight loss arising from financial frictions in the savings and credit regimes, respectively (see Internet Appendix 1).

The first term on the right-hand side of Eq. (4.1) captures the increase in GDP through the extensive margin, because when $\underline{b}(z; \Omega') < \underline{b}(z; \Omega)$, more entrepreneurs will move from the savings regime to the credit regime and they will produce more. The second term captures the increase through the intensive margin, because when $y^c(b, z; \Omega') > y^c(b, z; \Omega)$,

⁶ The calibrated value of ψ amounts to about 10.4% of the average wealth of entrepreneurs in the credit regime. Our model requires a high value of ψ in order to rationalize the low credit access ratio in the data. In the literature, Townsend and Ueda (2006) calibrate a fixed entry cost that amounts to one-third of wealth to match the low credit access ratio in Thailand in 1976.

⁷ A more direct way to estimate γ is to use the information on entry and exit rates of entrepreneurship. However, it is difficult to find uniform and high-quality data on business entries and exits for different countries studied in this paper. When applying our model to Thailand in Section 5.2, we use the information on households' business turnovers to calibrate γ in a more direct manner.

entrepreneurs who are already in the credit regime will expand their scale of production. The third term reflects the general equilibrium effect on entrepreneurs who remain in the savings regime after the financial inclusion policy is implemented.

We define the model-implied steady-state TFP as $TFP_{\Omega} = Y_{\Omega} / (K_{\Omega}^{\alpha} L_{\Omega}^{1-\alpha})$, where Y_{Ω} , K_{Ω} , and L_{Ω} are steady-state aggregate output, capital, and labor in the economy with Ω .⁸ By exploring the equivalence between growth accounting by factor and growth accounting by regime, we can decompose the economy's change in steady-state TFP along similar dimensions.⁹

Proposition 3. Consider a financial inclusion policy that relaxes the constraints from Ω to Ω' , with $\Omega' \leq \Omega$. The increase in steady-state TFP is given by

$$\begin{aligned} TFP_{\Omega'} - TFP_{\Omega} = & g_{p'} [s_y^p - \alpha s_k^p - (1 - \alpha) s_l^p] TFP_{\Omega} + [s_y^c g_{y^c} - \alpha s_k^c g_{k^c} - (1 - \alpha) s_l^c g_{l^c}] TFP_{\Omega} \\ & + [s_y^s g_{y^s} - \alpha s_k^s g_{k^s} - (1 - \alpha) s_l^s g_{l^s}] TFP_{\Omega}, \end{aligned} \quad (4.2)$$

where s_y^p , s_y^s , s_y^c , s_k^p , s_k^s , s_k^c , s_l^p , s_l^s , s_l^c are defined in Internet Appendix 2.3. $g_{p'}$ is the percentage change in the fraction of entrepreneurs with credit access after the financial inclusion policy is implemented. g_{y^s} , g_{y^c} , g_{k^s} , g_{k^c} , g_{l^s} , and g_{l^c} are the percentage change in the average output, capital, and labor in the savings regime and the credit regime after the financial inclusion policy is implemented.

In Eq. (4.2), the first term on the right-hand side captures the increase in TFP through the extensive margin, attributed to entrepreneurs who move from the savings regime to the credit regime. The second term captures the increase in TFP through the intensive margin, attributed to entrepreneurs who are already in the credit regime before the financial inclusion policy is implemented. The third term captures the general equilibrium effect from entrepreneurs who remain in the savings regime after the financial inclusion policy is implemented.

Because the extensive and intensive margins benefit different agents, by analyzing by how much different financial inclusion policies increase GDP and TFP through the two margins, we can better understand the implication of these policies on inequality and the distribution of income. In the rest of this section, we use these formulas to quantitatively assess the contribution of the two margins to increases in GDP and TFP, and discuss their link to inequality.

4.2. Aggregate implications of financial inclusion

In this section, we analyze the steady-state implications of the three policy instruments in the Philippines. In particular, we vary the value of ψ , ξ , or χ , holding the other two parameters at their calibrated values. These counterfactual experiments capture what would happen in the steady state if the government uses a single policy instrument to increase financial inclusion.

In Fig. 3, we plot the increase in steady-state GDP (the blue solid lines in panels A, B, C) and TFP (the blue solid lines in panels D, E, F) when ψ , ξ , or χ is reduced while the other two parameters are held at their calibrated values. For example, panels A and D imply that when the credit entry cost ψ is reduced from 2 to 0, steady-state GDP and TFP increase by about 12.5% and 8.2% respectively; panels B and E show that steady-state GDP and TFP increase by about 71.8% and 53.3% respectively when the collateral constraint ξ is lowered from 0.7 to 0; and panels C and F show that steady-state GDP and TFP increase by about 1.4% and 0.8% respectively, when the intermediation cost χ is lowered from 0.08 to 0. These counterfactual experiments clearly illustrate that steady-state GDP and TFP respond differently to various financial constraints. In Section 5.1 below, we apply our model to different countries and demonstrate that it can be used to identify the most binding financial constraint in a country.

We use formulas (4.1) and (4.2) to understand the margins through which steady-state GDP and TFP increase after financial constraints are relaxed. The red dashed line shows that owing to a general equilibrium effect, the savings regime negatively contributes to the overall increase in steady-state GDP and TFP. Intuitively, as financial constraints are relaxed, resources are more efficiently allocated toward more productive entrepreneurs, increasing the demand for capital and labor, which drives up the equilibrium interest rate and wage. Entrepreneurs who remain in the savings regime do not benefit from the relaxed financial constraints. Instead, a higher cost of production leads to their optimally choosing to produce less output. In addition, there is a composition effect. As relatively productive entrepreneurs obtain credit, the average productivity of entrepreneurs in the savings regime will fall, negatively contributing to the overall increase in steady-state TFP. Quantitatively, when ψ , ξ , and χ are reduced from their leftmost values on the x-axis to zero, the savings regime contributes to about -4.9%, -55.4%, and -1.2% of the increase in steady-state GDP, and -2.3%, -18.0%, and -0.2% of the increase in steady-state TFP, respectively.

The heights of the light and dark grey areas in Fig. 3 represent the contributions of the intensive and extensive margins, respectively. Although both margins contribute positively to the increase in steady-state GDP and TFP when financial constraints are relaxed, our simulation suggests that the magnitude of their effects largely depends on the values of ψ , ξ , and χ . Specifically, panels A and D of Fig. 3 show that the intensive margin contributes to a significant portion of the increase in

⁸ Moll (2014) shows that when entrepreneurs have constant-return-to-scale production technology, TFP is equal to the average individual productivity weighted by wealth.

⁹ Our decomposition is in a similar spirit to the approach of Jeong and Townsend (2007), who decompose the increase in TFP into the occupational shift effect, the financial deepening effect, the capital heterogeneity effect, and sectoral Solow residuals.

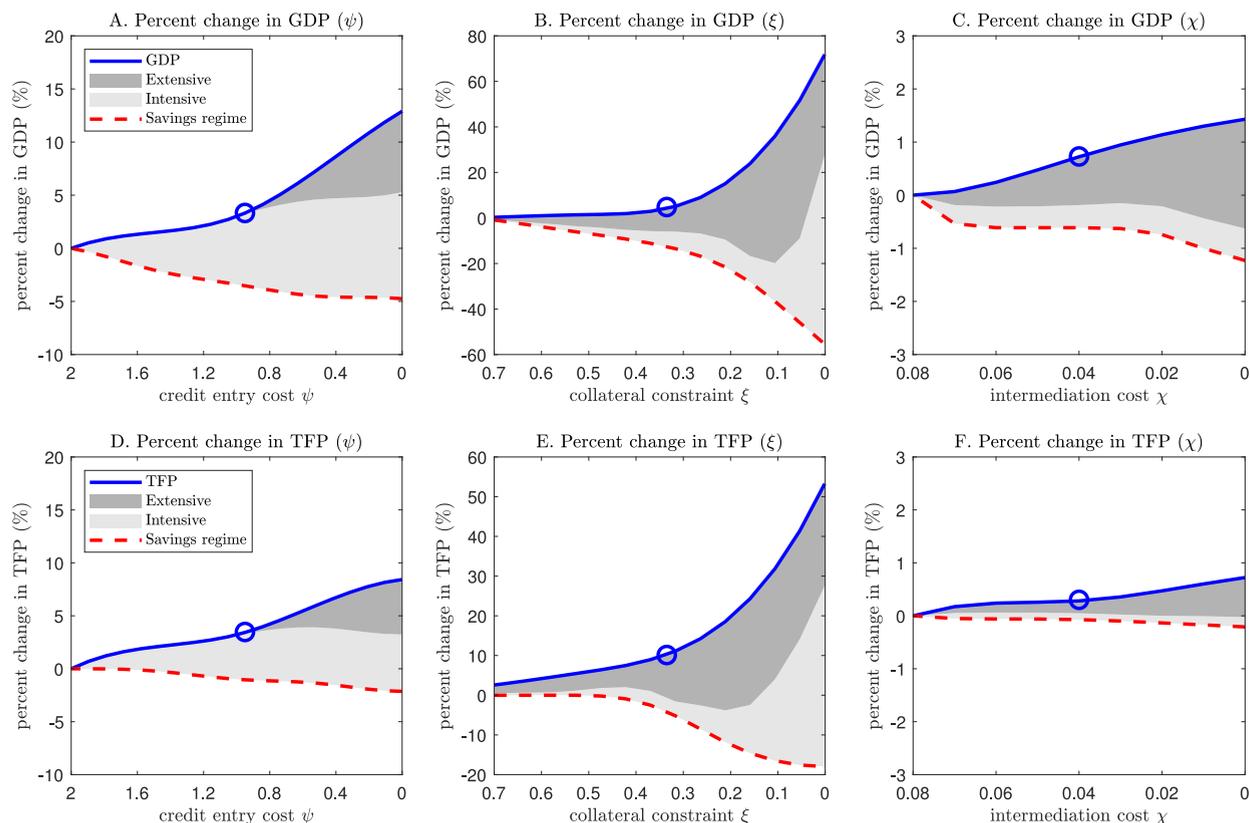


Fig. 3. Impact of financial inclusion on GDP and TFP in steady states.

Note: In panels A – C, the blue solid line plots the percentage increase in GDP relative to the benchmark economy associated with the leftmost parameter value on the x-axis (i.e., $\psi = 2$ in panel A, $\xi = 0.7$ in panel B, and $\chi = 0.08$ in panel C). For each parameter value on the x-axis, we use formula (4.1) to decompose the corresponding increase in GDP relative to the benchmark. The red dashed line plots the contribution of the savings regime (the third term in formula 4.1). The height of the light grey area represents the contribution of the intensive margin (the second term in formula 4.1). The height of the dark grey area represents the contribution of the extensive margin (the first term in formula 4.1). In panels D – F, we perform the same exercise for TFP using formula (4.2). The blue circle in each panel represents the corresponding value under our calibration in Table 1. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article).

steady-state GDP and TFP. This is because a lower credit entry cost ψ increases pledgeable collateral, allowing entrepreneurs in the credit regime to expand their production. By contrast, our simulation suggests that when ψ is reduced from 2 to 0.9, the extensive margin has a negligible contribution to the increase in steady-state GDP and TFP. Only when ψ is further reduced to values below 0.9 does the extensive margin start to play a role. Intuitively, this is because high values of ψ lead to financial exclusion. Unless ψ is sufficiently reduced, most entrepreneurs cannot afford the high credit entry cost.¹⁰

By contrast, panels B and E show that when the collateral constraint ξ is reduced, both intensive and extensive margins contribute significantly to the increase in steady-state GDP and TFP. Relaxing the collateral constraint allows entrepreneurs with access to credit to borrow more to expand their production, increasing steady-state GDP and TFP through the intensive margin. Moreover, the lower collateral constraint also encourages more entrepreneurs to pay the credit entry cost and enter the credit regime, thereby increasing steady-state GDP and TFP through the extensive margin.

Panels C and F show that when the intermediation cost χ is reduced, most of the increase in steady-state GDP and TFP is attributed to the extensive margin instead of the intensive margin. Intuitively, a lower intermediation cost effectively reduces the user cost of capital, which motivates entrepreneurs to invest more and expand their businesses. However, because the parameter ξ remains unchanged, the scale of business is restricted by the tight collateral constraint, limiting the effect of reducing χ . On the other hand, a lower intermediation cost encourages more productive, but wealth-constrained entrepreneurs to enter the credit regime, contributing to the increase in steady-state GDP and TFP through the extensive margin.

¹⁰ As shown in panel A1 of Internet Appendix Fig. 1, the credit access ratio remains low when ψ is greater than 0.9, and this ratio starts to increase significantly only when ψ is further reduced.

4.3. Equilibrium interactions of policy instruments

Our previous analysis indicates that policy instruments targeting different financial constraints may have differential effects on GDP and TFP. In principle, countries may also adopt more comprehensive policies that alleviate multiple financial frictions at the same time. What would their potential effects on GDP be and through which margin? To what extent does the effect of targeting one financial constraint depend on the tightness of other financial constraints?

In this section, we explore these questions to understand how different constraints interact in equilibrium. We first examine individuals' output and credit access in partial equilibrium to analytically characterize the interaction effect. Next, we use the calibrated model to quantitatively evaluate the interaction effect in general equilibrium. Our findings suggest that it is important for policy makers to identify and alleviate the most binding financial constraint.

Interactions in partial equilibrium

As discussed in Section 4.1, financial inclusion policies increase GDP through both the extensive margin (by increasing the credit access ratio) and the intensive margin (by allowing entrepreneurs with credit access to scale up their production). Below, we relax multiple constraints simultaneously and study the interaction effect through each margin. For analytical tractability, we focus on a stylized partial-equilibrium example with fixed interest rate r , wage w , and constant-returns-to-scale production function (i.e., $\nu = 0$).

Proposition 4 (Extensive Margin). *Let $\underline{b}(\Omega) \equiv \underline{b}(z; \Omega)$ be the threshold of wealth above which entrepreneurs of productivity z choose to access credit in the economy with Ω . Consider fixed interest rate r , wage w , and $\nu = 0$. We have*

- i. Tightening (relaxing) each financial constraint reduces (improves) credit access:

$$\frac{\partial \underline{b}(\Omega)}{\partial \psi}, \quad \frac{\partial \underline{b}(\Omega)}{\partial \xi}, \quad \frac{\partial \underline{b}(\Omega)}{\partial \chi} \geq 0. \quad (4.3)$$

- ii. $\underline{b}(\Omega)$ has submodularity in Ω , suggesting that the effect through the extensive margin of relaxing one constraint is smaller when the other constraints are more relaxed:

$$\frac{\partial^2 \underline{b}(\Omega)}{\partial \psi \partial \xi} = \frac{\partial^2 \underline{b}(\Omega)}{\partial \xi \partial \psi}, \quad \frac{\partial^2 \underline{b}(\Omega)}{\partial \xi \partial \chi} = \frac{\partial^2 \underline{b}(\Omega)}{\partial \chi \partial \xi}, \quad \frac{\partial^2 \underline{b}(\Omega)}{\partial \chi \partial \psi} = \frac{\partial^2 \underline{b}(\Omega)}{\partial \psi \partial \chi} \geq 0. \quad (4.4)$$

The first-order partial derivatives are positive, indicating that relaxing any constraint (i.e., reducing ψ , ξ , or χ) unambiguously reduces the threshold of wealth $\underline{b}(\Omega)$. Since a lower $\underline{b}(\Omega)$ means more entrepreneurs will gain access to credit, Proposition 4.i indicates that relaxing these constraints will increase the credit access ratio. The second-order cross partial derivatives are positive, indicating that the impact of relaxing any constraint on $\underline{b}(\Omega)$ would be smaller when the other two constraints are more relaxed (i.e., lower ψ , ξ , or χ). Therefore, Proposition 4 indicates that the three policy instruments dampen each other's effect through the extensive margin. For example, when the credit entry cost ψ is lower, relaxing the borrowing constraint ξ or reducing the intermediation cost χ would have a smaller effect on reducing the wealth threshold $\underline{b}(\Omega)$. Intuitively, when the credit entry cost ψ is low, most firms already have access to finance. As such, there is little room for increasing credit access further by relaxing the other two constraints.

Proposition 5 (Intensive Margin). *Let $y^c(\Omega) \equiv y^c(b, z; \Omega)$ be the net output of entrepreneurs of productivity z and wealth b in the credit regime (see its formula in Internet Appendix 1). Consider fixed interest rate r , wage w , and $\nu = 0$. We have*

- i. Tightening (relaxing) each financial constraint reduces (raises) output:

$$\frac{\partial y^c(\Omega)}{\partial \psi}, \quad \frac{\partial y^c(\Omega)}{\partial \xi}, \quad \frac{\partial y^c(\Omega)}{\partial \chi} \leq 0. \quad (4.5)$$

- ii. $y^c(\Omega)$ has supermodularity, suggesting that the effect through the intensive margin of relaxing one constraint is larger when the other constraints are more relaxed:

$$\frac{\partial^2 y^c(\Omega)}{\partial \psi \partial \xi} = \frac{\partial^2 y^c(\Omega)}{\partial \xi \partial \psi}, \quad \frac{\partial^2 y^c(\Omega)}{\partial \xi \partial \chi} = \frac{\partial^2 y^c(\Omega)}{\partial \chi \partial \xi}, \quad \frac{\partial^2 y^c(\Omega)}{\partial \chi \partial \psi} = \frac{\partial^2 y^c(\Omega)}{\partial \psi \partial \chi} \geq 0. \quad (4.6)$$

The first-order partial derivatives are negative, indicating that relaxing any constraint (i.e., reducing ψ , ξ , or χ) unambiguously increases the output $y^c(\Omega)$ of entrepreneurs with credit access, increasing GDP through the intensive margin. The second-order cross partial derivatives are positive, indicating that the impact of relaxing any constraint on $y^c(\Omega)$ would be larger when the other two constraints are more relaxed (i.e., lower ψ , ξ , or χ). Therefore, Proposition 5 implies that relaxing any two constraints has complementary effects on output. For example, when the credit entry cost ψ is lower, relaxing the borrowing constraint ξ or reducing the intermediation cost χ would have a larger effect on increasing $y^c(\Omega)$. Intuitively, when the credit entry cost ψ is lower, entrepreneurs are left with more wealth after entering the credit regime, which increases pledgeable capital for borrowing. As a result, relaxing the collateral constraint ξ or reducing the intermediation cost χ would have a larger effect on output.

Our analytical results reveal that different constraints are complements through the intensive margin and substitutes through the extensive margin. This implies that relaxing multiple constraints simultaneously could, in principle, bring larger or smaller GDP gains than relaxing each constraint separately, depending on whether the overall interaction effect is positive

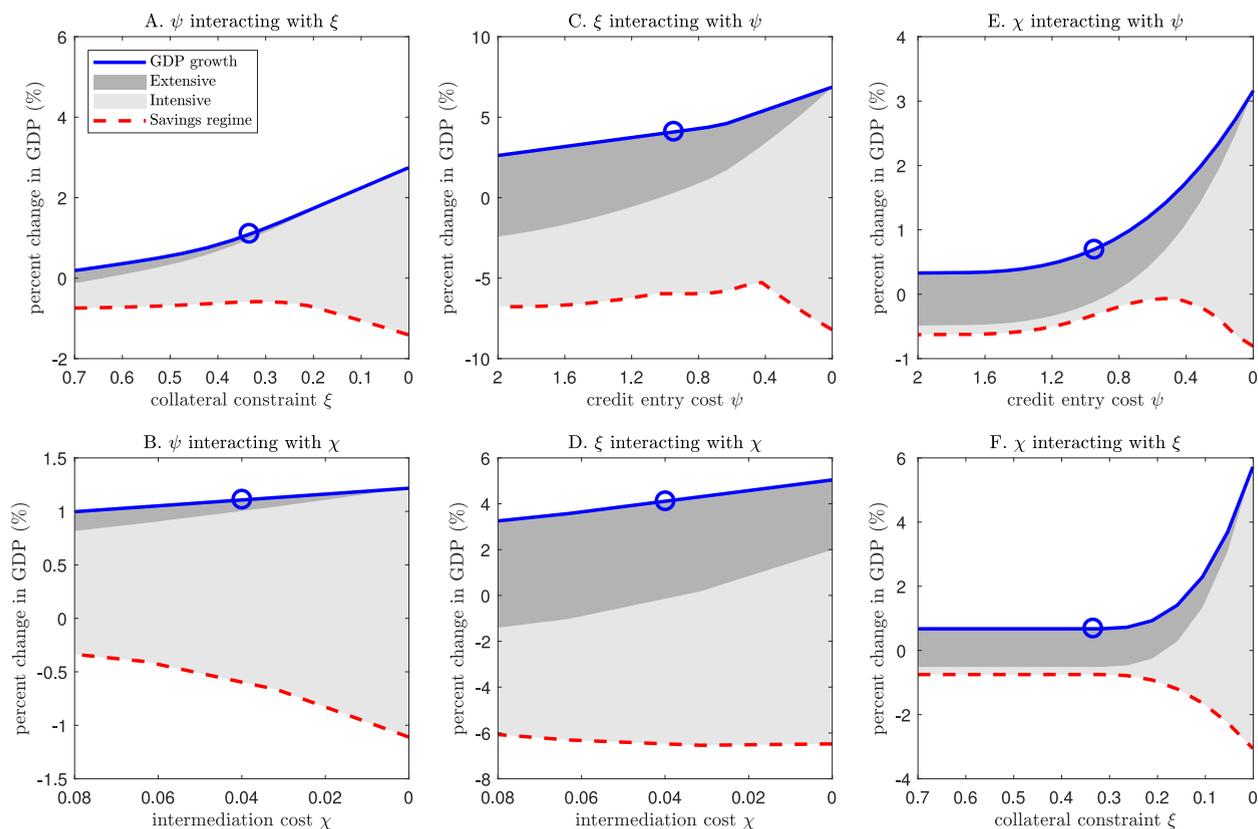


Fig. 4. Interaction effects among financial constraints in general equilibrium.

Note: This figure visualizes the interaction effects among financial constraints in general equilibrium with fixed interest rate, wage, and distribution of agents. Panels A and B present the percentage increase in steady-state GDP when ψ is reduced from its calibrated value of 0.95 to 0.8. Panel A visualizes the interaction effect between ψ and ξ when ξ is varied from 0.7 to 0 while χ is kept at its calibrated value. For each value of ξ , we decompose the increase in GDP (owing to reducing ψ from 0.95 to 0.8) into three components according to formula (4.1). The red dashed line plots the contribution of the savings regime (the third term in formula 4.1). The height of the light grey area represents the contribution of the intensive margin (the second term in formula 4.1). The height of the dark grey area represents the contribution of the extensive margin (the first term in formula 4.1). Panel B studies the interaction effect between ψ and χ when χ is varied from 0.08 to 0 while ξ is kept at its calibrated value. Panels C and D present the percentage increase in steady-state GDP when ξ is reduced from its calibrated value of 0.335 to 0.29, interacting with different values of ψ and χ . Panels E and F present the percentage increase in steady-state GDP when χ is reduced from its calibrated value of 0.04 to 0, interacting with different values of ψ and ξ . (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article).

or negative. For example, if the interaction effect through the intensive margin dominates, policy makers should develop a more balanced financial system, because different financial constraints are complements in constraining GDP. In this case, policies that alleviate the most binding financial constraint would be most effective. On the other hand, if the interaction effect through the extensive margin dominates, policy makers should alleviate a single constraint while ignoring all other constraints.

Quantitative evaluation.

We now use our calibrated model to quantitatively study the interaction effect through the extensive and intensive margins. We present a sequence of counterfactual experiments in general equilibrium where the interest rate, wage, and the distribution of wealth and productivity are endogenously determined in the steady state of each counterfactual experiment. In each experiment, we measure the percentage increase in steady-state GDP after relaxing one financial constraint (i.e., the target constraint) conditional on different values of the second constraint (i.e., the moving constraint), while at the same time keeping the third constraint unchanged. Thus, our experiments essentially measure the interaction effect between the target and the moving constraint. For our three financial constraints (ψ , ξ , χ), six combinations are possible as presented in Fig. 4.

Panel A considers ψ as the target constraint and ξ as the moving constraint. On the y-axis, we plot the percentage increase in steady-state GDP (the blue solid line) resulting from reducing the target constraint ψ from its calibrated value of 0.95 to 0.8 for different values of the moving constraint ξ (from 0.7 to 0 as shown on the x-axis). The dark grey and light grey areas, and the red-dashed line represent the increase in steady-state GDP attributed to the extensive margin, the intensive margin, and the savings regime respectively.

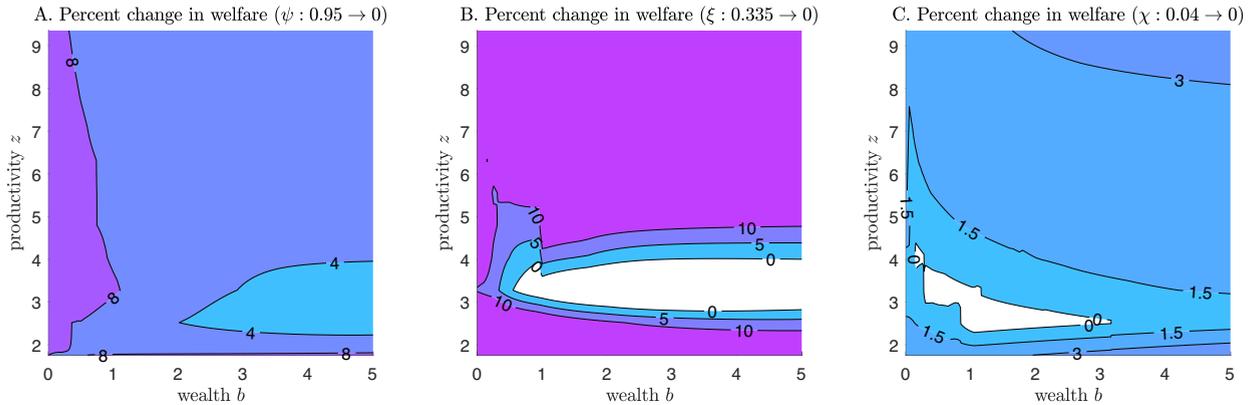


Fig. 5. Impact of financial inclusion on welfare in steady states.

Note: The numbers in panels A – C represent the percentage change in consumption-equivalent welfare in the steady state after financial inclusion policies are implemented relative to that before these policies are implemented. The white area represents the region in which agents experience welfare losses after financial inclusion.

Moving from the left to the right along the x-axis, as the collateral constraint is relaxed (i.e., lowering ξ), we observe that the intensive-margin effect increases while the extensive-margin effect diminishes, consistent with the implications of Propositions 4 and 5. Moreover, the interaction effect through the intensive margin dominates that through the extensive margin. That is, when we relax the collateral constraint, the (increasing) intensive-margin effect is larger than the (decreasing) extensive-margin effect. As a result, reducing ψ increases steady-state GDP more when the collateral constraint is relaxed (see the upward-sloping blue solid line). Similarly, in panel B, we hold ψ as the target constraint and consider χ as the moving constraint. Again, moving from the left to the right along the x-axis (i.e., lowering χ), the intensive-margin effect increases whereas the extensive-margin effect diminishes. The former dominates the latter, resulting in a larger increase in steady-state GDP from reducing ψ . These patterns are also observed in panels C and D, where we reduce the target constraint ξ from 0.335 to 0.29, as well as in panels E and F, where we reduce the target constraint χ from 0.04 to 0.

Our results imply that the net effect on GDP is larger when policy makers alleviate multiple financial constraints together than when they relax the financial constraints individually. In other words, effective financial inclusion policies should be designed to develop a well-rounded financial system, as reflected in a high breadth (i.e., high credit access), depth (i.e., relaxed collateral constraints), and efficiency (i.e., low intermediation costs).

4.4. Distributional implications of financial inclusion

We now move to the distributional implications of financial inclusion policies in steady states. We conduct three counterfactual experiments for the Philippines. In the first experiment, we reduce the credit entry cost ψ from the calibrated value of 0.95 to 0. In the second experiment, we assume that borrowing is frictionless by reducing the collateral constraint ξ from the calibrated value of 0.335 to 0. In the third experiment, we assume perfect financial intermediation by reducing the intermediation cost χ from the calibrated value of 0.04 to 0. Fig. 5 presents the change in steady-state welfare (consumption-equivalent measure) for agents of different wealth and productivity.¹¹

Panel A shows that reducing the credit entry cost ψ increases the steady-state welfare for all agents, but by different magnitudes. Agents in the region enclosed by “4” obtain relatively small welfare gains (less than 4%). These agents are mostly unconstrained entrepreneurs (see Fig. 2) who are wealthy but not productive, operating businesses at small scales and do not demand much external credit. Thus reducing the credit entry cost does not benefit these entrepreneurs much as most of them are currently unconstrained. Agents in the region enclosed by “8” obtain the largest welfare gains (more than 8%). These agents are currently constrained workers, who are productive but poor. A lower credit entry cost allows them to access credit and start businesses, significantly increasing their life-time utility. The agents in the middle region obtain modest welfare gains, between 4% and 8%. These agents are currently either unconstrained workers who obtain welfare gains due to higher wages, or constrained entrepreneurs who expand their businesses due to a lower credit entry cost.

In contrast to panel A, we find that not everyone gains when the collateral constraint ξ is relaxed or the intermediation cost χ is reduced. Panel B shows that when the collateral constraint ξ is relaxed, agents in the (white) region enclosed by “0” incur welfare losses in the new steady state. These are the entrepreneurs who are moderately productive and wealthy. Their businesses are operated at the unconstrained scale, and thus further relaxing the collateral constraint does not benefit

¹¹ Note that due to the existence of idiosyncratic productivity shocks, agents who are productive now can be unproductive in the future, and vice versa. Our value functions derived from forward-looking agents already capture the effect from such dynamic changes in individual characteristics. In Internet Appendix 3.2, we discuss the implications of financial inclusion on the distribution of income and wealth.

them much. However, relaxing the collateral constraint results in a general equilibrium effect that increases the cost of production (i.e., the equilibrium interest rate and wage), reducing their profits. Our simulation implies that the biggest winners are the most productive but constrained entrepreneurs and the unconstrained workers, whose welfare increases by more than 10%. The former group benefits from increased scale of production and the latter from the significant increase in the equilibrium wage.

Panel C shows that when the intermediation cost χ decreases, agents who are currently moderately productive but poor (in the region enclosed by “0”) incur welfare losses in the new steady state. These agents are entrepreneurs who operate their businesses at small scales due to low productivity. They do not demand much credit and receive little benefit from a lower intermediation cost. However, they suffer from a higher production cost due to the rise in the equilibrium interest rate and wage. The agents who obtain the largest welfare gains (more than 3%) are those in the upper-right region and in the bottom-right region, enclosed by “3”. The former group consists of constrained entrepreneurs who borrow the largest amount of credit. Thus, a lower intermediation cost significantly reduces their cost of production. The latter group consists of wealthy workers, who receive significantly more interest earnings from their large amounts of savings when the equilibrium interest rate goes up.

5. Model applications

The interaction effects among the three financial constraints suggest that effective financial inclusion policies should be designed to target the most binding constraint. Moreover, policies that are effective in increasing GDP in one country may not be equally effective in other countries. As one application of the model, we show that it can be used to evaluate and compare the effectiveness of implementing different financial inclusion policies across countries. As another application, we apply our model to the analysis of a large-scale financial liberalization policy in Thailand and evaluate its ability to explain real-world policy intervention.

5.1. Identifying the most binding constraint

We consider two groups of countries (see panel A of Table 2). In the first group, we intentionally choose three countries with extreme financial constraints. These countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Brazil. Their financial systems exhibit sharply different characteristics. For example, fewer than 6.7% of firms in Pakistan have access to credit whereas the figures are 34.1% and 59.2% in Bangladesh and Brazil respectively. Among the 139 countries in our sample, only four have a lower percentage of firms with credit than Pakistan (thus, the percentile rank of Pakistan is $5/139 \approx 3.6\%$). However, among those firms that have credit access, those in Bangladesh must post collateral that amounts to as much as 271.4% of the face value of their loans, whereas the figures are 153.4% and 95.1% in Pakistan and Brazil respectively. Surprisingly, although firms in

Table 2
Identifying the most binding constraint.

Panel A: Moments in data and model in various countries												
	Pakistan		Bangladesh		Brazil		The Philippines		Kenya		Zambia	
	Data	Model	Data	Model	Data	Model	Data	Model	Data	Model	Data	Model
Firms with credit (%)	6.7	6.7	34.1	34.7	59.2	59.8	29.9	29.5	25.4	25.9	8.8	8.6
Percentile rank (high to low %)	3.6		43.2		85.6		33.8		28.8		5.0	
Collateral (% of loans)	153.4	154.0	271.4	271.7	95.1	100.4	156.7	156.4	120.8	120.8	236.6	236.4
Percentile rank (high to low %)	54.0		3.6		89.9		52.5		80.6		14.4	
Interest rate spread (%)	4.8	4.7	1.9	1.9	35.4	35.4	4.0	4.0	8.5	8.5	11.8	11.8
Percentile rank (high to low %)	51.8		72.7		0.7		56.1		20.9		9.4	
Real interest rate (%)	0.2	0.5	4.5	4.6	2.9	2.8	6.2	6.3	7.6	7.7	4.8	4.5
Employment share of Top 5 (%)	65.7	52.1	55.4	50.3	63.1	66.4	43.7	43.7	54.1	53.9	41.8	35.9
Employment share of Top 10 (%)	77.6	60.9	71.2	61.5	74.6	80.6	57.6	58.6	66.9	69.1	56.1	49.9
Employment share of Top 20 (%)	87.6	70.2	86.2	85.8	84.7	87.1	73.2	71.5	81	73.4	70.7	63.3
Employment share of Top 40 (%)	94.7	91.4	95.2	96.6	93.1	95.9	88.8	85.3	93.2	84.9	84.7	89.0
Gross savings (% of GDP)	21.4	20.5	21.2	20.6	23.9	28.5	44.2	41.2	15.4	14.9	35.4	29.6

Panel B: Impact of financial inclusion on GDP, TFP and income Gini									
	$\psi \rightarrow 0$			$\xi \rightarrow 0$			$\chi \rightarrow 0$		
	GDP(%)	TFP(%)	Gini	GDP(%)	TFP(%)	Gini	GDP(%)	TFP(%)	Gini
Pakistan	24.96	9.71	-0.021	89.71	55.59	-0.082	0.11	0.01	0.001
Bangladesh	8.94	2.33	0.008	111.92	77.48	-0.124	0.50	0.41	0.002
Brazil	0.02	0.01	-0.000	0.00	0.00	0.000	42.44	38.31	0.056
The Philippines	9.25	4.78	-0.046	59.73	37.42	-0.083	0.70	0.50	0.002
Kenya	21.01	11.70	-0.060	13.77	7.83	-0.020	2.41	0.91	0.012
Zambia	10.22	5.34	-0.003	81.85	47.76	-0.059	1.50	1.13	0.002

Brazil tend to have access to credit and face a more relaxed collateral constraint, the loan interest rate is 35.4 percentage points higher than the deposit rate. By calibrating our model to these countries (see Internet Appendix Table 1 for parameter values), we can test the model's ability to identify the most binding constraint and quantitatively evaluate the potential gains from relaxing different constraints. In the second group, we choose three countries with relatively balanced financial constraints: the Philippines, Kenya, and Zambia. Kenya's financial system is relatively developed for a country with its level of income and also compared with many other Sub-Saharan African countries. Zambia is a low-income country with an underdeveloped financial system reflected in all three dimensions: a low credit access ratio, a high collateral requirement, and a high interest rate spread. Unlike countries in the first group, it is difficult to see which financial constraint is most binding from a simple eyeball test. Our calibrated model, however, allows us to identify the bottleneck in their financial systems.

Panel B presents the changes in steady-state GDP, TFP and income Gini when the six countries adopt the best-possible financial intermediation technology along a single dimension (i.e., $\psi = 0$, $\xi = 0$, or $\chi = 0$). Regarding the first group of countries, the model implies that the high intermediation cost is the key friction that hinders aggregate production in Brazil. Reducing χ to zero increases Brazil's steady-state GDP and TFP by 42.44% and 38.31%, while reducing ψ to zero almost has no effect on steady-state GDP and TFP due to the high intermediation cost. The model implies that Bangladesh's most binding financial friction is the tight collateral constraint. If we relax ξ to zero in Bangladesh, steady-state GDP and TFP would increase by 111.92% and 77.48% respectively, while reducing either ψ or χ to zero only increases steady-state GDP by 8.94% or 0.50%. Regarding Pakistan, steady-state GDP and TFP would increase by 24.96% and 9.71% respectively when the credit entry cost ψ goes to zero, while keeping ξ and χ unchanged. Relaxing the collateral constraint ξ to zero boosts steady-state GDP and TFP by 89.71% and 55.59% respectively, while reducing the intermediation cost χ to zero increases steady-state GDP and TFP by only 0.11% and 0.01%. Therefore, our model suggests that the most binding financial constraint for Pakistan is the collateral constraint. This differs from our direct inference from the descriptive statistics in Table 2. Although only 6.7% of firms in Pakistan have access to credit, the credit entry cost is not necessarily the most binding constraint on GDP.¹²

We conduct similar counterfactual experiments for the second group of countries. The last three rows of panel B indicate that the collateral requirement is the most binding constraint in the Philippines and Zambia whereas the credit entry cost is the most binding constraint in Kenya. In terms of the income inequality, our simulation suggests that reducing the intermediation cost always increases the income Gini and relaxing the collateral constraint always reduces the income Gini. Reducing the credit entry cost lowers the income Gini in all six countries except for Bangladesh.¹³ In Internet Appendix 3.5, we study the transitional dynamics after implementing financial inclusion policies. We show that short-run transitional effects may differ from outcomes in long-run steady states, which may be years away. For example, the short-run interest rate could rise and overshoot the target, resulting in high borrowing costs. Similarly, reducing the cost of intermediation increases GDP and widens income inequality, but the short-run effect on GDP could be smaller whereas that on income inequality is larger. Such intertemporal tradeoffs may raise concerns for policy makers or lead to time-inconsistent behavior.

5.2. Application: policy evaluation in Thailand

Between 1986–1996, Thailand's economy underwent deep structural changes, including the liberalization of its financial sector and the economic integration with global financial and product markets. A series of financial liberalization policies were rapidly adopted with the intention to develop a highly functional financial system with efficient financial institutions through the market mechanism.

Before these financial policies were adopted, the prime lending rate to small- and medium-sized companies differed substantially from the commercial bank's deposit rate. The interest rate spread, measured as the difference between the prime lending rate and the deposit rate, decreased from about 8% in 1986 to about 2% by the end of 1995 (see panel A of Internet Appendix Fig. 6).

Moreover, the competitive market environment created after the implementation of these policies gave the financial institutions strong incentives to expand their bank branch networks (see panels B and C of Internet Appendix Fig. 6), which improves the access to credit for Thai households.

Third, the Thai government also enacted policies to further open up the capital account in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As reviewed in Alba et al. (1999), during 1986 the tax impediments to portfolio inflows were reduced, in particular for purchasing Thai mutual funds, with the aim of fostering the development of Bangkok as a regional financial center. This capital account liberalization resulted in a surge in private capital inflows and rapid credit growth (see panel D of Internet Appendix Fig. 6).

Model-based evaluation

¹² In fact, as we show in Internet Appendix Fig. 1, the credit access ratio is an endogenous variable determined by all three constraints, not simply the credit entry cost. Thus, the low credit access ratio could be largely attributed to the tight collateral constraint in Pakistan rather than the high credit entry cost. On the other hand, our model suggests that reducing the credit entry cost is more effective at boosting GDP in Pakistan than in Bangladesh. This suggests that the credit entry cost is indeed a more binding constraint in Pakistan than in Bangladesh.

¹³ In Internet Appendix 3.4, we shed light on the margins through which steady-state GDP and TFP increase in these countries.

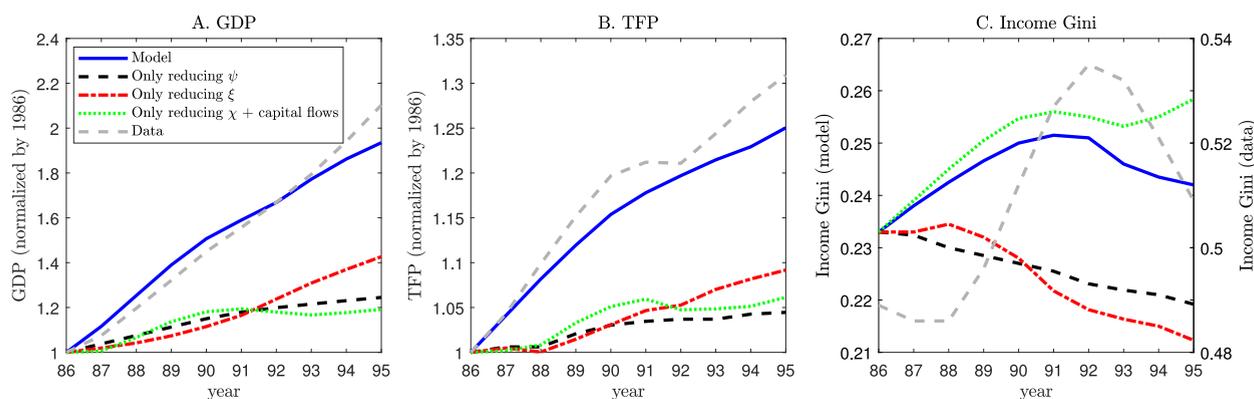


Fig. 6. Model-based evaluation of GDP, TFP, and income Gini in Thailand 1986–1996.

As a quantitative exercise, we take these policy shifts as given and evaluate the distinct roles played by these policies on GDP, TFP, and income inequality using our model. We solve the model's transitional dynamics using the algorithm in Internet Appendix 4. The three parameters, ψ_t , ξ_t , and χ_t , governing the degree of financial frictions are allowed to vary from 1986 to 1995, to capture the financial inclusion policies implemented during this period.¹⁴ In particular, we calibrate the path of intermediation costs χ_t by directly fitting the average annualized quarterly interest rate spread in each year. We calibrate the initial credit entry cost ψ_t in 1986 so that 10% of households have access to credit at the beginning of the simulation, as in the data. We assume that the value of ψ_t decreases by the same amount in each year until it vanishes in 1996. We do not have reliable data to calibrate the tightness of the collateral constraint in 1986. Because the public development bank in Thailand had much fewer branches than commercial banks, loans were mostly made by commercial banks which were quite stringent in lending (see Assuncao et al., 2012). We thus set a high initial value of ξ_t in 1986 and allow it to decrease by the same amount in each year until 1996. The value of ξ_t in 1996 is calibrated to match the median loan-to-collateral ratio in the 1997 Townsend Thai annual survey.

In addition, we introduce net international capital flows to the model, which increases the aggregate supply of capital (i.e., the right-hand side of Eq. (2.9)) by an amount equal to $\varsigma_t \text{GDP}_t$, where ς_t is chosen to match the yearly ratio of net capital inflows to GDP. The capital inflows during this period effectively lower the borrowing cost, thus playing a role similar to lowering intermediation cost, for entrepreneurs by increasing the supply of credit. All other parameters are calibrated according to Internet Appendix 3.7 and their values are fixed in our analysis.

Over 1986–1995, GDP more than doubled in Thailand whereas the model can generate about 93.5% cumulative growth (see the blue solid line in panel A of Fig. 6), suggesting that other forces like technology adoption and human capital accumulation were also at work. The model also generates a smaller increase in TFP than the data (see the blue solid line in panel B). The income Gini is much lower in the model due to the lack of worker heterogeneity, however, the model is able to capture the hump-shaped dynamics of income inequality (see the blue solid line in panel C).¹⁵ Using the model, we run three counterfactual experiments to evaluate the relative contribution of reducing the credit entry cost, relaxing the collateral constraint and cutting the cost of credit (i.e., the downward trend in χ_t and the surge in capital inflows). In each counterfactual experiment, we allow ψ_t , ξ_t , or χ_t (plus ς_t) to vary over time while keeping the other two parameters fixed at their values in 1986. Our simulations imply that if only the collateral constraint is relaxed, GDP increases by about 42.7% and TFP by 9.2% (the red dash-dotted lines in panels A and B). Reducing the credit entry cost alone increases GDP by about 24.5% and TFP by about 4.5% (the black dashed lines in panels A and B), whereas cutting the cost of credit increases GDP by about 19.1% and TFP by 6.1% (the green dotted lines in panels A and B). Moreover, the lower cost of credit results in a higher Gini coefficient of earnings whereas the lower credit entry cost and relaxed collateral constraint reduce income inequality. It is the joint effect of the three policies that generates the hump-shaped income Gini dynamics (see panel C).

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we develop a tractable general equilibrium model with heterogeneous agents to study how different financial constraints interact in equilibrium. Our model highlights three different dimensions of a financial system: breadth, depth, and efficiency. These dimensions reflect different sources of financial frictions whose tightness can be captured by three indicators, the credit access ratio, the loan-to-collateral ratio, and the interest rate spread.

¹⁴ But their values are fixed after 1996 so that we can attain a steady state at which backward induction is applied to solve the transitional dynamics.

¹⁵ Jeong and Townsend (2008) show that the standard occupation choice model does not generate a high income Gini due to the lack of worker heterogeneity. Cagetti and De Nardi (2006) introduce heterogeneity in both working ability and entrepreneurial ability, and they calibrate the variance of the former to match the Gini coefficient of earnings. Cagetti and De Nardi (2008) provide a comprehensive review on the issue of wealth inequality. They emphasize that it is even more difficult for models to generate the observed degree of wealth concentration from observed income inequality.

Our analytical and quantitative analyses indicate that the three financial constraints should be jointly analyzed due to their rich interactions in equilibrium. The quantitative as well as qualitative implications of financial inclusion on GDP, TFP, and the distribution of income not only depend on which constraint is alleviated, but also on the extent to which other constraints are binding. Analytically, we show that relaxing these constraints increases GDP through both the extensive margin and the intensive margin. However, the interaction between different constraints tends to dampen the effect through the extensive margin and amplify the effect through the intensive margin. Quantitatively, we find that the interaction effect through the intensive margin dominates, indicating that more effective financial inclusion policies should be designed in a balanced manner.

Our model provides insights into financial inclusion policies. The main value of our model lies in clarifying the tradeoff among different policy instruments and in distinguishing their impacts on various macro and micro variables in both steady states and transitions. The financial frictions incorporated in our model are not meant to be exhaustive, but our intention is to suggest an approach that might be applied to more complete and realistic models.

Supplementary material

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:[10.1016/j.jmoneco.2020.101003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmoneco.2020.101003).

CRediT authorship contribution statement

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