The CRISIS of CROWDING

> Quant Copycats, Ugly Models, and the New Crash Normal LUDWIG B.

CHINCARINI

Crowded Spaces and Copycat Risk Management July 1, 2015 The CRISIS of CROWDING

> Quant Copycats, Ugly Models, and the New Crash Normal

LUDWIG B. Chincarini

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WESTERN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL, 90TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE JULY 1, 2015 Thank you for coming. Thanks Sohn Wook for Chairing session and Alvaro Morales for discussing the paper.

Outline

- 1. The Crisis of Crowding (2012)
- 2. Intro to Crowding
- 3. Crowded Spaces and Copycat Risk Management
 - a. Risk Management might create crowding
 - b. A Simple Demonstration
 - c. A Reasonable Solution
 - d. Empirical Investigation of the Problem
- 4. Conclusions/Discussion

New Idea of Crowding

- The Crisis of Crowding by Ludwig Chincarini.
- The book tells the real stories of the financial crisis of 2008 and beyond how they are all connected by elements of crowding.
- The book is easy to read and informative with lots of interviews with insiders, including Goldman Sachs executives, Jimmy Cayne, Myron Scholes, John Meriwether, Vice Chairman of Citibank, government regulators, and others.

The CRISIS

CROWDING

Quant Copycats, Ugly Models, and the New Crash Normal

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Crowding takes place when multiple market participants begin to follow the same trade altering the risk and return dynamics of the trade.

- Not always east to detect holders matter
- Risk will be incorrectly measured if not accounted for, both market and liquidity risk.
- Can lead to levered firms failing rapidly.

How does crowding differ from herding?

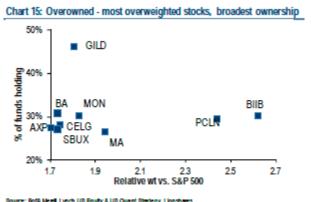
They are similar. However, herding represents many similar investors following the same strategy.

Crowding represents similar and/or different investors following the same or different, but correlated strategies to an extent that the opportunity or trading space is crowded/saturated. When the saturation is severe, the return and risk of the space is no longer determined by fundamentals, but determined by the behavior of the participants in the space. This makes all historical return and risk calculations useless.

How Crowding Typically Happens

- 1. Attractive Trading Opportunity Develops
- 2. Copycats rush to follow the leader (even if it's not their core business)
- 3. Herding occurs, but sometimes very hidden (not obvious)
- 4. The trading space becomes crowded
- 5. Not all crowded spaces are similar.
 - a. 1 type of holder (all traders similar)
 - b. N types of holders (different motivations and behaviors to risk)
 - c. Holders can have exactly same position or slightly different positions, still leading to crowded behavior.
 - d. Inadvertent Crowding (see Bruno, Chincarini & Davis (2015)).

Examples bank reports from Goldman Sachs, Bank of Α. America, Bernstein, JP Morgan Chase, and many others.



Source: Both Memil Lynch US Equity & US Quant Strategy, Lionshares

Exhibit 9: The 20 most concentrated stocks in the S&P 500 <Bloomberg: GSTHHFHI> Holdings as of September 30, 2012; Pricing as of November 15, 2012

S&P 500: Twenty MOST CONCENTRATED Hedge Fund Holdings (Bloomberg Ticker: GSTHHFHI) % of equity cap Total Return Equity owned by During 2012 Hedge Funds Cap Ticker Sector YTD Company Sub-sector (\$ bil) 3Q 30-Sep-12 **Trin**Advisor TRIP Consumer Discretionary Internet Retail 5 (26)45 50% Consumer Discretionary AutoNation Automotive Retail 24 9 45 AN I vondellBasell Industries N V I YB Materials Specialty Chemicals 26 29 53 34 E*TRADE Financial ETFC Financials Investment Banking & Brokerage 9 (1) 32 29 J.C. Pennev JCP Consumer Discretionary Department Stores 4 (53) 23 Tenet Healthcare THC Health Care Health Care Facilities 20 23 Yahoo! Inc. YHOO Information Technology Internet Software & Services 21 11 23 VeriSign Inc. VRSN Information Technology Internet Software & Services 12 16 23 6 21 BEAM Consumer Staples Distillers & Vintners (8) Beam Inc. MetroPCS Communications PCS Telecommunication Servic Wireless Telecommunication Services 20 20 Ralph Lauren Corp q 20 RI Consumer Discretionary Apparel Accessories & Luxury Goods 14 Life Technologies LIFE Health Care Life Sciences Tools & Services 8 20 19 American Intl Group Financials Multi-line Insurance 46 35 19 AIG CBRE Group Inc CBG Financials Real Estate Services 13 14 19 6 WPX Energy Oil & Gas Exploration & Production (17) 19 WPX Energy 3 Family Dollar Stores FDO Consumer Discretionary General Merchandise Stores Ο 15 18 priceline.com PCLN Consumer Discretionary Internet Retail 31 (7)32 18 Coca-Cola Enterprises CCE Consumer Staples Soft Drinks 12 17 18 Systems Software BMC Software BMC Information Technology (3) 19 18 Motorola Solutions MSL Information Technology Communications Equipment 17

Top 50 Holdings: Top 50 Hedge Funds

Market value is in millions of dollars and represents the market value held by the top 50 hedge funds at the end of the quarter. The market value change measures the total position change of each security multiplied by its quarter-end price. "% Port" indicates the weight of the stock in an aggregated equity portfolio of the top 50 hedge funds. "% Shares Out" indicates the proportion of the shares outstanding of the stock owned by the aggregated portfolio of the top 50 hedge funds and the "Total" and "50 Highest" lines show the average for this item*. "# of companies" indicates the number of funds (out of the top 50) holding the stock.

		Qtr End	Mkt Val	Mkt Val			
		Market	Chg - 3 mo	Chg		%Shrs	# Of
High/Low - %Portfolio	GICS Sector	Value	(\$millions)	3mnth	% Port	Out*	Co's

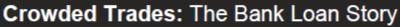
Total

55 Highest LyondellBasell Industries N.V. CI A Google Inc. CI A Realogy Holdings Corp.

Highlights

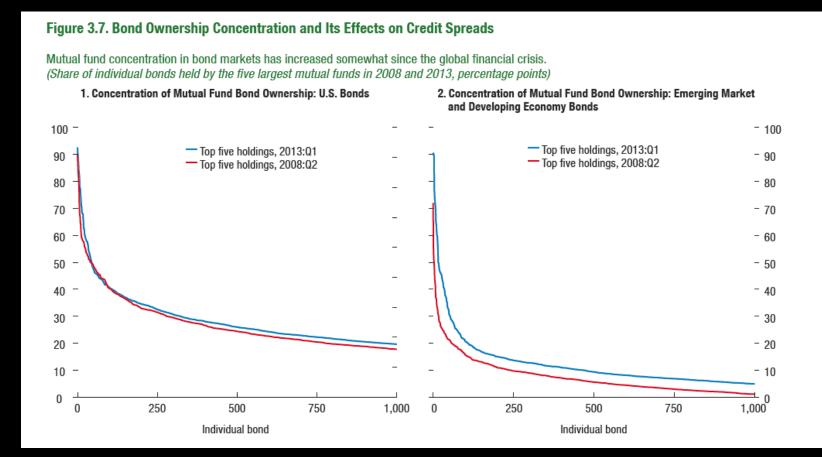
In this report we extend the definition of crowding to include breadth of high conviction overweights by active managers, as well as persistence of accumulation by active managers. We also demonstrate that crowding is an important risk factor at the stock level (with neutral performance profile), but tends to be a useful contrarian performance indicator at the aggregate sector, region level.

A. Examples bank reports from Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Bernstein, Credit Suisse, JP Morgan Chase, and many others.





A. Examples IMF Report "The Asset Management Industry and Financial Stability" April 2015.



A. Risk Management and Crowding

- If portfolio managers use similar risk models, these risk models might cause positions to become crowded.
- Could occur if models are similar or even slightly different.

- B. A Simple Demonstration
- Mean-variance optimization with no constraints
- Expected returns are random
- What happens when we compare the pairwise correlations of the random expected returns with the actual portfolio weightings?
- We get higher correlations.

B. A Simple Demonstration (Pairwise Correlations)

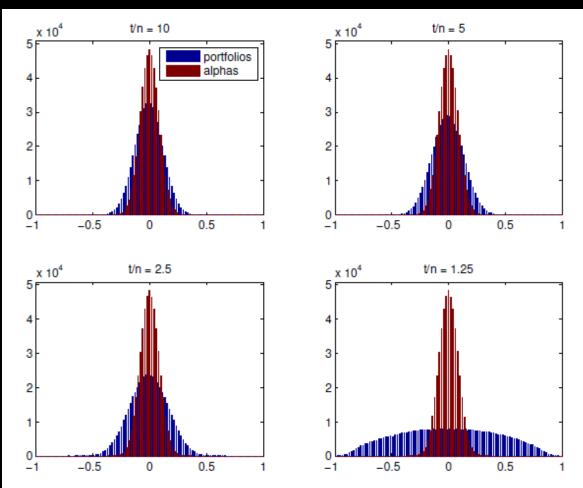


Figure F1: Distribution of Alpha Correlations and Portfolio Correlations for Various Look-back Values ($\delta = 1$). $\Omega = 1.4564$, 1.6342, 2.0144, and 5.4597 for upper left, upper right, lower left, and lower right respectively.

B. A Simple Demonstration (Pairwise Correlations)

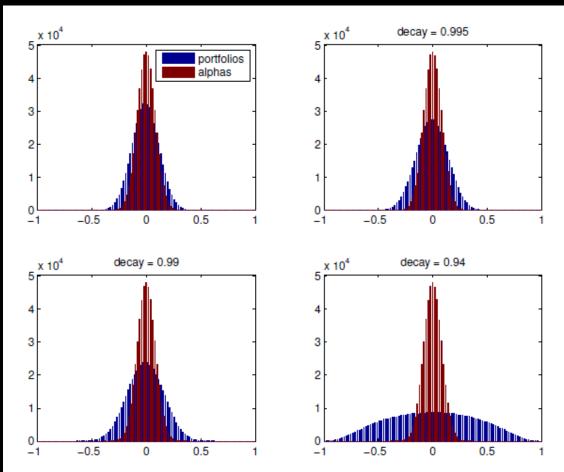
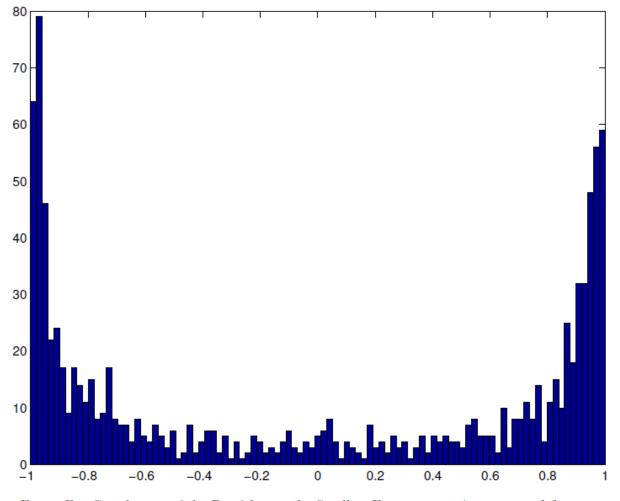


Figure F2: Distribution of Alpha Correlations and Portfolio Correlations for Various Decay Values (t/n = 5). $\Omega = 1.6273$, 1.7184, 1.9701, and 4.9166 for upper left, upper right, lower left, and lower right respectively.

- B. A Simple Demonstration
- Thus, crowding could occur from the risk management process.
- Why is crowding occurring?

- Using Principal Component Decomposition, we find that optimal portfolios are projected along the eigenvector with the smallest eigenvalue.

- In fact, we can look at the correlation between all of the portfolios with this eigenvector.





B. A Simple Demonstration

- In the limit, optimal portfolios converge to eigenvector of smallest eigenvalue.

- How does this particular portfolio behave?

B. A Simple Demonstration – Most eigenvalues are random noise...

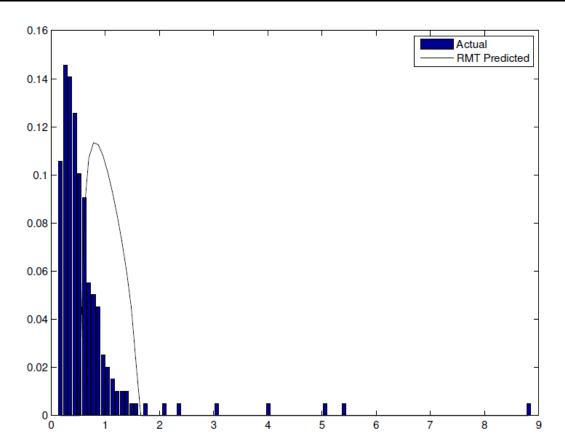
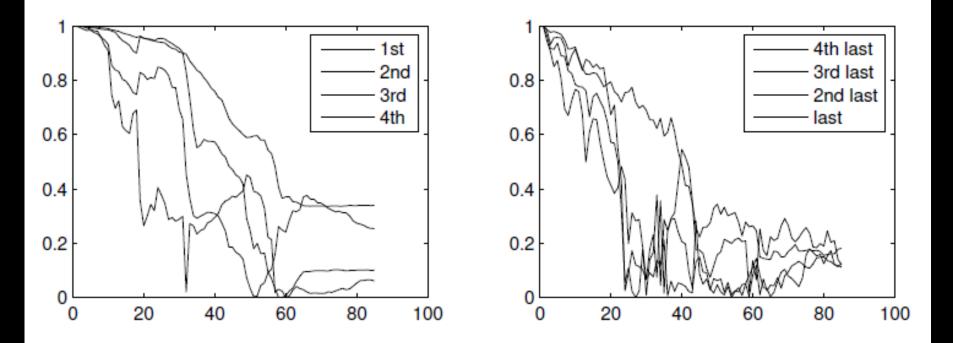


Figure F6: Close-Up of Eigenvalues from Simple Optimization Example and Marchenko-Pastur Distribution

- This portfolio is indistinguishable from random noise.
- Conjecture 1 (Convergence to Noise): In the limit, not only do expected returns of managers not matter for portfolio formation, and not only does just a small slice of the covariance matrix govern the portfolio that all managers will converge to, but that small slice of the covariance matrix is governed by something that is indistinguishable from random.

B. A Simple Demonstration – How are eigenvectors correlated over time?



- As eigenvector indices increase, the correlation between present and past becomes weaker at a faster pace.
- Thus, higher index eigenvectors (small eigenvalues) have less significance in describing future returns as compared to those with lower index.

- If we use different lookback periods and different decay factors (slightly different risk measurement methods), what happens to the eigenvectors of those different measurement techniques?
- The first eigenvectors and the last ones are highly correlated across different risk models.

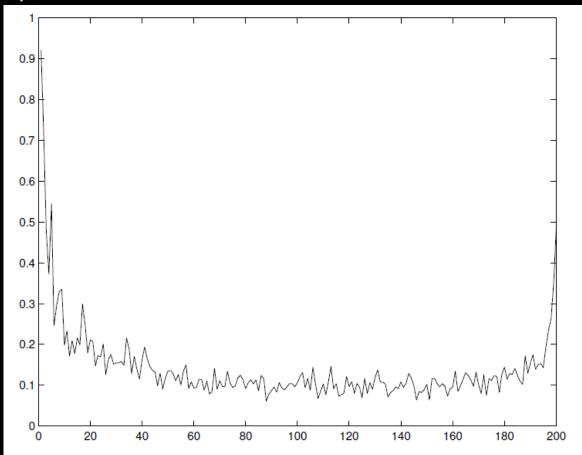


Figure F9: Average Absolute Correlation Evolution. The figure represents the average correlation across eigenvectors computed from difference variance-covariance matrices of returns based upon different decay values and different look-back periods. These were given by $T/N = [1.05\ 1.5\ 2\ 3\ 4\ 5\ 7.5\ 10]$ and $\delta = [1\ 0.995\ 0.99\ 0.94]$. For each of the 200 eigenvectors, the absolute value of the correlation of the eigenvector is computed and plotted.

- **B. A Simple Demonstration**
- Conjecture 2 (Simple Risk Variation and Crowding): Even if managers use different simple empirical covariance matrices, the risk model induced crowding problem seems unavoidable.

C. A Reasonable Solution to the Basic Problem

- Many methods to filter covariance matrices.
- We suggest using the Marchenko-Pastur distribution to eliminate random eigenvectors (eigenvalues).

D. Empirical Investigation of Problem: Data

- In order to examine whether risk-model induced crowding is an issue in the financial industry, we focus on the equity portfolio management world.
- We obtain risk model data from leading risk model providers – BARRA, Northfield, and Axioma.
- We also obtain fundamental and stock return data from Factset.
- Data from 1992 to 2013, but we present results only for 2006-2013.

D. Empirical Investigation of Problem: Alphas

Random: We generate 100 random alphas for each stock in 3000 stock universe every month. For each stock:

 $\alpha \sim N(0, \Sigma_{\alpha})$

- Non-Random: We use three realistic models of portfolio alpha based on stock fundamentals
 - Value and Momentum
 - PEG
 - Aggregate Z-Score with many factors

D. Empirical Investigation of Problem: Methodology

- Step 1: Match stocks from all 3 professional risk models.
- Step 2: Every month, create 100 random alphas or 3 non-random.
- Step 3: Construct portfolio optimization (a) Long Only; (b) Market Neutral w/o Liquidity; (c) Market Neutral w/ Liquidity. Constraints: Sectors, Beta, Max/Min weights, Dollar Neutral, Leverage=2.
- Step 4: Do this for all risk models and all portfolio construction techniques. Includes OGARCH risk models
- Step 5: Compare the resulting portfolios for crowding.

D. Empirical Investigation of Problem: Measures of Crowding

1. Cosine Similarity amongst portfolios.

$$s_{ij} = rac{\mathbf{w}_i'\mathbf{w}_j}{|\mathbf{w}_i||\mathbf{w}_j|}$$
 $S = (H'H) \circ I$

2. Crowding

$$C = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{m} \sum_{j=1}^{m} S_{p:i,j} - m}{m^2 - m}$$

3. Imposed Correlation Bias

$$\Omega = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{m} \sum_{j=1}^{m} S_{p:i,j} - m}{\sum_{i=1}^{m} \sum_{j=1}^{m} S_{\alpha:i,j} - m}$$

D. Empirical Investigation of Problem: Measures of Crowding

4. Correlation Adjusted Crowding

$$C^* = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{m} \sum_{j=1}^{m} S^*_{p:i,j} - m}{m^2 - m}$$

5. Concentration Index

$$CI \,=\, \frac{H-1/N}{1-1/N},$$
 where $H\,=\,\sum_{i=1}^N w_i^2,$

E. Empirical Results

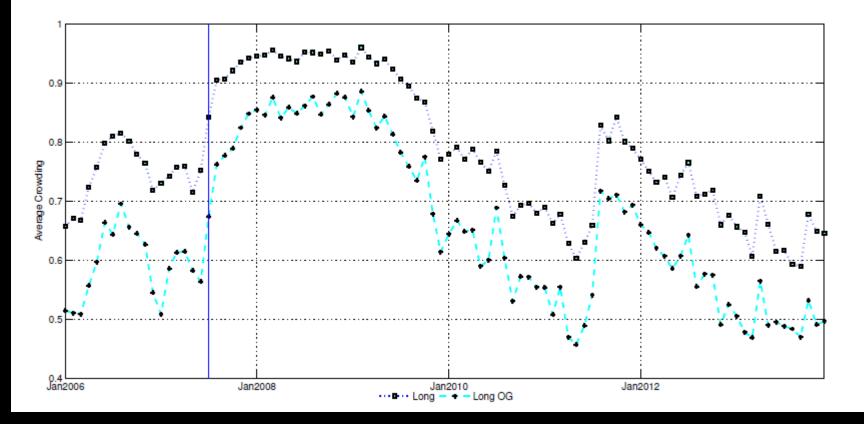
Summary:

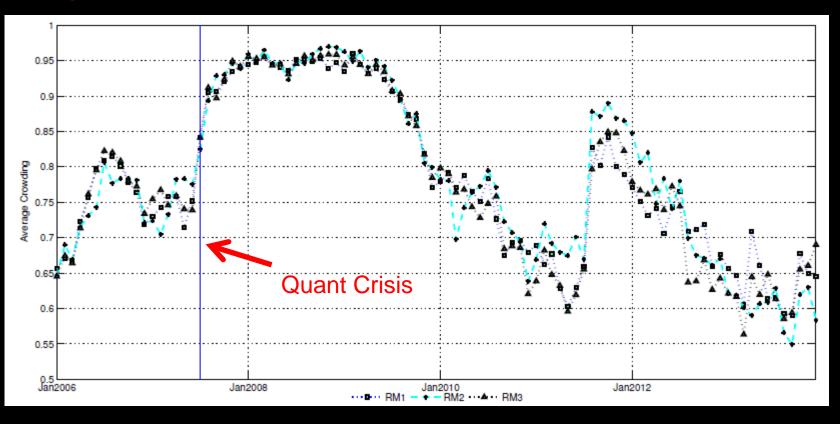
- Crowding occurs from the use of standard risk models in the industry – even when crowding is absent in alpha models.
- 2. Crowding seems to be more severe for long-only equity managers.
- 3. The OGARCH procedure we suggest reduces crowding amonst portfolio managers.
- 4. Crowding would be less in a financial system where there is a diversification of risk model usage.

															E			
'1	Table E1: Summary of Crowding of Random Alpha Models: Minimize Volatility from 2006 to 2009 The second															TAE		
			Risk Model 1					Risk Model 2							Risk N	odel 3		
	С	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	S.R.	C.I.	С	C^*	Ω	Ω*	S.R.	C.I.	С	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	SR.	C.I.
Alpha	0.00	-0.0003				0.00												
Long Only																		
Regular	0.85	0.9999	1251.17	-2.84	0.01	0.01	0.86	0.9999	1140.19	-176.13	-0.00	0.01	0.86	0.9999	1250.08	-329.81	0.00	0.01
OGARCH	0.73	0.9996	1123.99	-2.81	0.01	0.03	0.73	0.9994	872.10	-175.72	-0.00	0.03	0.72	0.9992	976.13	-329.53	0.00	0.03
Market Neutral																		
Regular	0.00	-0.0011	1.65	0.03	-0.02	0.00	0.00	0.0016	1.76	0.36	-0.01	0.00	0.00	0.0005	1.10	-1.31	-0.00	0.00
OGARCH	0.00	-0.0013	1.24	0.45	-0.02	0.00	0.00	0.0007	1.23	-0.14	0.03	0.00	0.00	-0.0004	1.05	-2.07	0.01	0.00
Market Neutral Liq																		
Regular	0.00	-0.0006	2.02	-0.35	-0.02	0.00	0.00	0.0030	4.23	-0.61	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.0015	1.20	-0.73	-0.00	0.00
OGARCH	0.00	-0.0003	0.78	0.16	-0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.0001	0.73	0.33	0.03	0.00	0.00	-0.0002	0.84	1.84	0.01	0.00

m	Table E2: Summary of Crowding of Random Alpha Models: Minimize Volatility from 2010 to 2013															E			
	able E2	: Summ	ary of Ci	rowding	of Rar	idom .	Alpha	Models:	Minimi	ze Volat	fility fr	om 20	10 to :	2013			TAE		
			Risk Mo	del 1				Risk Model 2							Risk Model 3				
	С	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	S.R.	C.I.	С	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	S.R.	C.I.	С	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	SR.	C.I.	
Alpha	-0.00	0.0002				0.00													
Long Only																			
Regular	0.71	0.9999	1101.07	-49.26	0.01	0.02	0.71	0.9999	617.27	-63.07	0.01	0.02	0.70	0.9999	689.01	-154.31	0.01	0.02	
OGARCH	0.57	0.9997	822.54	-49.26	0.01	0.03	0.57	0.9996	711.50	-63.08	0.01	0.03	0.56	0.9996	607.04	-153.62	0.01	0.03	
Market Neutral																			
Regular	-0.00	0.0004	-0.80	0.18	-0.01	0.00	-0.00	-0.0011	3.80	0.19	-0.01	0.00	-0.00	0.0016	5.50	0.71	-0.01	0.00	
OGARCH	0.00	-0.0005	1.82	-0.42	-0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.0007	-1.18	0.06	-0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0001	0.34	0.03	-0.00	0.00	
Market Neutral Liq.																			
Regular	-0.00	0.0007	1.61	-0.12	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	-0.0008	5.04	0.59	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.0018	1.50	-4.32	-0.00	0.00	
OGARCH	-0.00	0.0005	1.49	0.21	-0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.0004	-0.51	1.14	-0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0015	-0.30	-3.67	-0.01	0.00	

				Risk M	odel 1				Risk Model 2						Risk Model 3				
	С	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	S.R.	C.I.	С	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	S.R.	C.I.	С	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	S.R.	EC.I	
Alpha	0.21	0.5373				0.00													
Long Only																			
Regular	0.15	0.9949	0.73	0.28	0.00	0.02	0.15	0.9954	0.68	-0.05	0.00	0.02	0.18	0.9958	0.84	-0.26	0.00	0.02	
OGARCH	0.12	0.9941	0.58	0.28	0.00	0.03	0.12	0.9942	0.56	-0.05	-0.00	0.03	0.14	0.9932	0.68	-0.26	0.00	0.03	
Market Neutral																			
Regular	0.18	0.2845	0.84	-0.20	-0.02	0.00	0.17	0.2686	0.79	-0.60	0.03	0.00	0.12	0.0780	0.57	-0.17	-0.01	0.0	
OGARCH	0.07	0.0679	0.34	0.20	-0.09	0.03	0.06	0.0869	0.30	-0.02	0.10	0.04	0.06	-0.0055	0.27	0.31	0.11	0.04	
Market Neutral Liq.																			
Regular	0.16	0.3355	0.79	-0.20	-0.01	0.00	0.15	0.1254	0.70	-0.73	-0.01	0.00	0.11	0.0738	0.55	-0.05	-0.01	0.0	
OGARCH	0.11	0.1588	0.50	-0.12	0.00	0.02	0.09	0.3265	0.45	-0.02	0.03	0.02	0.07	-0.0447	0.32	0.02	0.02	0.0	





- Risk models all seem to have similar amounts of crowding.
- Does it make any difference whether the universe uses one risk model versus another?

E. Empirical Results

Table E5: Systemic Crowding Risk from Distribution of Risk Model Usage													
			Long (Ν	larket l	Neutral					
Percentage of													
Models Used	\mathbf{C}	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	S.R.	C.I.	C	C^*	Ω	Ω^*	S.R.	C.I.	
100 - 0 - 0	0.85	0.9999	1251.17	-2.84	0.01	0.01	0.00	-0.0011	1.65	0.03	-0.02	0.00	
0 - 100 - 0	0.86	0.9999	1140.19	-176.13	-0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0016	1.76	0.36	-0.01	0.00	
0 - 0 - 100	0.86	0.9999	1250.08	-329.81	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0005	1.10	-1.31	-0.00	0.00	
80 - 20 - 0	0.65	0.9977	869.71	-2.55	0.01	0.01	0.00	-0.0008	2.96	0.29	-0.02	0.00	
80 - 0 - 20	0.76	0.9983	1176.42	-2.64	0.01	0.01	0.00	-0.0012	1.38	0.05	-0.02	0.00	
20 - 80 - 0	0.65	0.9977	799.36	-2.55	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.0001	2.37	0.09	-0.02	0.00	
0 - 80 - 20	0.66	0.9980	788.17	-2.56	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.0016	2.33	-0.72	-0.02	0.00	
20 - 0 - 80	0.76	0.9983	1181.01	-2.64	0.01	0.01	0.00	-0.0006	1.29	-0.42	-0.02	0.00	
0 - 20 - 80	0.66	0.9980	859.13	-2.56	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.0006	2.29	-0.44	-0.02	0.00	
45 - 45 - 10	0.52	0.9961	623.48	-2.41	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0001	3.02	-0.53	-0.02	0.00	
10 - 45 - 45	0.52	0.9964	620.27	-2.41	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.0006	3.03	-0.47	-0.02	0.00	
45 - 10 - 45	0.63	0.9992	939.13	-176.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0006	2.28	0.43	-0.01	0.00	
60 - 40 - 0	0.55	0.9983	672.34	-175.83	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0012	3.54	0.40	-0.01	0.00	
60 - 20 - 20	0.58	0.9988	802.99	-175.93	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0026	3.05	0.52	-0.00	0.00	
40 - 60 - 0	0.55	0.9983	644.00	-175.83	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0017	2.74	-0.05	-0.00	0.00	
0 - 60 - 40	0.56	0.9988	633.06	-175.88	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0015	3.00	0.85	0.01	0.00	
40 - 0 - 60	0.72	0.9997	1152.52	-176.11	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0010	1.79	0.60	-0.00	0.00	
0 - 40 - 60	0.56	0.9988	660.20	-175.88	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0011	2.73	0.44	-0.01	0.00	
33 - 67 - 0	0.58	0.9984	673.88	-175.85	-0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0010	2.31	-0.08	-0.00	0.00	
67 - 0 - 33	0.58	0.9981	710.80	-328.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.0005	3.12	0.77	-0.01	0.00	
0 - 67 - 33	0.58	0.9977	661.92	-327.87	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.0017	3.02	-1.30	-0.00	0.00	
33 - 33 - 34	0.51	0.9974	681.27	-327.58	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.0009	1.92	0.10	-0.01	0.00	
10 - 90 - 0	0.74	0.9992	961.72	-329.03	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.0018	1.77	-0.14	-0.01	0.00	
10 - 0 - 90	0.80	0.9996	1200.84	-329.39	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.0005	0.78	-0.91	0.00	0.00	
90 - 10 - 0	0.74	0.9992	1028.33	-328.99	0.01	0.01	0.00	-0.0005	2.35	1.37	-0.01	0.00	
0 - 10 - 90	0.75	0.9990	1029.26	-328.93	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.0001	1.67	-0.99	-0.00	0.00	
90 - 0 - 10	0.74	0.9992	1032.74	-328.99	0.01	0.01	0.00	-0.0005	2.37	1.40	-0.01	0.00	

E. Empirical Results

 Conjecture 3 (Distribution of Risk Models and Systemic Risk): Crowding in the financial system will be less when there is a diversification of risk models used in the system.

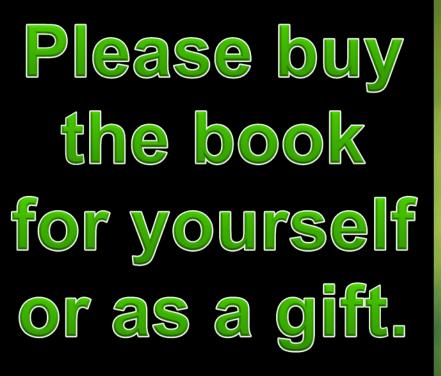
4. Conclusion/Discussion

- A. Crowding is a real and important phenomena that needs to be studied more.
- B. Crowding is typically thought of to be generated from similar alpha models (Chincarini (2012)).
- C. Crowding can also occur due to the risk model process itself.
- D. Our research shows that crowding does occur from risk models.
- E. Some suggestions from our research: (a) Use an OGARCH implementation to reduce crowding; (b) The financial system might have less crowding when there is a diversification of risk models.

Thank you

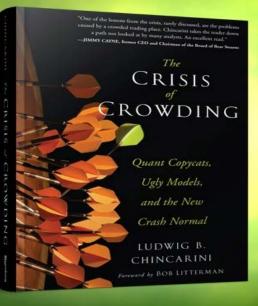
- Dr. Ludwig Chincarini
- University of San Francisco

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A RARE, IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF The 2008 Financial Crisis

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A unique blend of storytelling and sound quantitative analysis, *The Crisis of Crowding* explores the circle of greed from homeowners to real estate agents to politicians to Wall Street.

Linking the 2008 financial crisis back to the 1998 crisis of LTCM, *The Crisis of Crowding* shows how banks, hedge funds, and other market participants repeated the sins of the past and how the collapse of Lehman Brothers led to market insanity thanks to the irrational behaviors of buyers and sellers in the crowded space.

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