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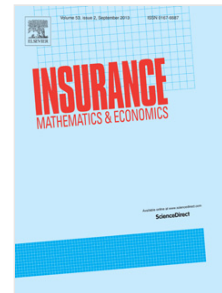
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OPTIMAL RISK AND LIQUIDITY MANAGEMENT WITH COSTLY REFINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

ANDREA BARTH AND SANTIAGO MORENO-BROMBERG

ABSTRACT. In this paper we study risk and liquidity management decisions within an insurance firm. Risk management corresponds to decisions regarding proportional reinsurance, whereas liquidity management has two components: Distribution of dividends and costly equity issuance. Contingent on whether proportional or fixed costs of reinvestment are considered, singular stochastic control or stochastic impulse control techniques are used to seek strategies that maximize firm value. We find that, in a proportional-costs setting, the optimal strategies are always mixed in terms of risk management and refinancing. In contrast, when fixed issuance costs are too high relative to the firm's profitability, optimal management does not involve refinancing. We provide analytical specifications of the optimal strategies, as well as a qualitative analysis of the interaction between refinancing and risk management.

1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to study the optimal decisions of an insurance firm's manager in terms of liquidity management and risk exposure. With respect to the latter, the manager continuously chooses the proportion of claims that are to be reinsured. This determines how risky/profitable the firm is at each date. Liquidity management entails dividend distribution in bonanza times and injections of fresh cash when required.

Risk management plays an essential role in the daily operations of an insurance firm and has a stark influence on firm value. It is therefore not surprising that this aspect of the firm's management has been extensively studied. Liquidity management, and more importantly, how it feeds back to optimal risk management is also crucial. In good times, it provides shareholders with returns on their investment, whereas in bad times it may lend a necessary lifeline to the firm. Indeed, distressed equity issuances are not rare. Jostarndt reports in [11] that in Germany, between 1996 and 2004, 123 out of 267 financially-troubled corporations issued new equity. Franks & Sanzhar document in [5] that distressed equity issuances were a significant proportion of total seasoned issuances in the United Kingdom from 1989 to 1998. In our model, the firm requires a positive level of cash reserves to fund its day-to-day operations. Should said level become non-positive, the firm must be either liquidated or recapitalized, which is interpreted

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