

Mortgage valuation and the term structure of interest rates

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Chapter 8

Summary and Concluding Remarks

This dissertation contributes to two main research fields, mortgage valuation and term structure calibration. Concerning mortgage valuation, computational methods are introduced and analyzed to value restricted prepayment options, present in all Dutch mortgage contracts. For both financial institutions and clients, the importance of mortgage valuation has increased due to the large growth of the Dutch mortgage market in the last decade. For mortgage issuers, one of the largest uncertainties in mortgage contracts concerns prepayment risk. American mortgage loans allow for unrestricted and penalty-free prepayment at any time. Dutch mortgage loans bear less prepayment risk, since only a limited prepayment is allowed penalty-free per calendar year. This so-called partial prepayment option complicates mortgage valuation significantly. Part II of this thesis deals with the valuation of Dutch mortgages.

The second main theme concerns the contribution to the literature on term structure calibration. For pricing interest rate derivatives, including mortgage contracts with embedded options, a term structure of interest rates and a volatility structure are essential. Calibrating a term structure model to a recombining scenario tree (a lattice), in order to match market prices of interest rate derivatives, is discussed in the first part of this thesis.

Performance of term structure models is measured by the ability to price interest rate derivatives accurately. Derivatives we consider include swaps and swaptions. Swap data are available as annual swap rates, which are used to derive a yield curve. Implied swaption volatilities are observed and transformed into prices by Black's formula. Both cash flow patterns and quoting conventions of swaps and swaptions are examined in chapter 2 to obtain a term structure of interest rates and swaption prices.

Chapter 2 also provides an overview of commonly used term structure models, as well as a comparison with respect to swap and swaption pricing based on both model properties and empirical performance. Model prices are compared to prices obtained from observed swap rates and implied swaption volatilities. For our purpose of pricing mortgage contracts and embedded options, a term structure model is selected that is easily calibrated to an interest rate lattice. Empirically desirable properties of term structure models include lognormality and mean reversion of one-period interest rates. Since we consider monthly periods, a model with a limited number of factors is preferred for efficiency reasons.

Calibration of interest rate lattices is based on the Black, Derman and Toy [9, BDT] model. The BDT model, originally defined in discrete time, is easily calibrated to a lattice and captures mean reversion and lognormally distributed interest rates. The original BDT model is a one-factor model. To increase flexibility we also consider a two-factor version.

Besides a detailed analysis of BDT model properties, chapter 3 also provides extensive calibration results. Zero-coupon bond prices are exactly matched by specifying all drift parameters. Swaption pricing errors show a particular pattern. Long term options on short term swaps are underpriced by the model, short term options on long term swaps are overpriced. Average pricing errors are typically smaller than the bid-ask spread for swaptions. Volatilities are hump-shaped. Mean reversion usually starts during the second year, while interest rates are diffusing in the first year. Results are robust, since one- and two-factor models with varying specifications are used for four different dates. Empirically, including multiple factors does not improve calibration results significantly.

Mortgage valuation is the topic of part II of this thesis. The mortgage value equals the present value of all cash flows (redemption, interest payments and additional prepayments). We particularly focus on the valuation of the partial prepayment option. Clients are assumed to exercise prepayment options optimally, based on the development of interest rates. Interest rate scenarios derived in part I serve as input for mortgage valuation.

American mortgage types, allowing full prepayment, can be priced using lattices. Valuation of these mortgage contracts is described in chapter 4. The straightforward pricing method for partially callable mortgages is based on a non-recombining tree approach. Due to the inefficiency of non-recombining trees, we solve mortgage valuation problems including partial prepayment options by applying extended lattice methods.

Some partially callable mortgages can be priced efficiently to optimality. Interest-only mortgages, having no regular periodical amortization, can be viewed as a portfolio of callable bonds. Valuation is based on successively exercising callable bonds, where only

one bond can be exercised each calendar year. The portfolio of callable bonds can be valued optimally by an efficient lattice approach, according to chapter 5.

A bond portfolio cannot be used to price partially callable mortgages including a regular amortization schedule (for instance annuities). For this reason, optimal valuation of partially callable annuity mortgages is not possible using a lattice approach. If a non-recombining tree method is applied, optimal prepayment strategies can be derived, but such method is only possible for very small instances. In chapter 6 we formulate a linear programming formulation based on a non-recombining tree. Duality theory and complementary slackness conditions can be applied to derive the optimal prepayment strategy.

A 'no prepayment' strategy is a feasible solution of the primal LP, formulating the valuation of a partially callable mortgage. A 'full prepayment' strategy is a feasible solution of the dual LP. Every feasible solution of the primal LP provides an upper bound on the price of a partially callable mortgage. Similarly, every dual feasible solution provides a lower bound on the price. To obtain a close approximation of the optimal mortgage price (that is, the mortgage price corresponding to an optimal and allowed prepayment strategy), both feasible solutions must be improved in order to narrow the range for the optimal price.

To find a close upper bound on the mortgage price (or equivalently, a lower bound on the fair rate), we propose a heuristic for a prepayment strategy that is close to optimal. An upper bound on the fair rate is obtained by the fair rate of an interest-only mortgage, in case term structures are upward sloping. Combining all results, close to optimal fair rates can be computed efficiently. Directions for further research include the derivation of a theoretical upper bound on the fair rate and the approximation of fair rates by considering a subset of scenario paths.

Chapter 7 concludes the mortgage valuation part. Fair rate results are compared, indicating the values of prepayment options. As an example, for a ten year fixed rate period, a 20% prepayment option is worth more than half the value of a full prepayment option. Additionally, the effect of the yield curve and the fixed rate period on fair rates is discussed, as well as values of contract rate adjustment options and the duration effect of cash flows on the contract rate. Fair rates are robust with respect to the underlying term structure model and the step size of the underlying grid.

An important direction for future research is the effect of the Dutch tax regime on mortgage valuation. Both interest payments and prepayment penalty are tax deductible. Although including tax effects requires a client specific approach, optimal prepayment will not change if a tax-adjusted fair rate is considered.

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Samenvatting / Summary in Dutch

Hypotheekwaardering en rentemodellen vormen de twee hoofdthema's in deze dissertatie. De belangrijkste bijdrage aan de bestaande literatuur over het prijzen van hypotheekleningen is de waardebeoordeling van een optie tot gedeeltelijk aflossen, die in alle Nederlandse hypotheekleningen aanwezig is. We veronderstellen dat (een gedeelte van) een hypotheeklening wordt afgelost op het moment dat rentes laag zijn. Om die reden worden rentemodellen geanalyseerd in het eerste deel van dit proefschrift, voorafgaand aan hypotheekwaardering.

Een hypotheek is een lening, verstrekt door een bank of andere financiële instelling, met onroerend goed als onderpand. De bank vervult de rol van hypotheeknemer, de klant stelt het onderpand beschikbaar en is daarmee hypotheekgever. Het onderpand dient als garantie voor de bank als de klant de overeengekomen periodieke betalingen niet nakomt.

Het belang van het waarderen van hypotheekleningen voor alle financiële instellingen neemt de laatste jaren sterk toe. Zowel banken als institutionele beleggers geven nieuwe hypotheekleningen uit of beleggen in bestaande leningen. Het totale bedrag aan uitstaande hypotheekleningen in Nederland is verdrievoudigd in de afgelopen tien jaar. In Europa bezet de Nederlandse hypotheekmarkt de tweede plaats op basis van het bedrag aan uitstaande leningen, ondanks een relatief klein aantal inwoners. De belangrijkste oorzaak hiervoor is het gunstige Nederlandse belastingklimaat, dat hypotheekgevers netto een goedkope mogelijkheid biedt om hoge hypotheeklasten aan te houden.

Vervroegd aflossen van hypotheekleningen vormt een groot risico voor financiële instellingen. Amerikaanse hypotheekleningen laten ongelimiteerde en boetevrije aflossingen toe op elk moment. Nederlandse hypotheekleningen zijn aan minder aflossingsrisico onderhevig, omdat slechts een beperkt gedeelte van de lening boetevrij mag worden afgelost per kalenderjaar. Deze gedeeltelijke aflossingsoptie bemoeilijkt hypotheekwaardering in grote mate.

Voor het waarderen van hypotheekcontracten en bijbehorende (aflossings)opties zijn een rentetermijnstructuur en de volatiliteiten van de rentes essentieel. Beide worden

gemodelleerd met behulp van scenario's, die gecombineerd worden tot een renteboom. Een renteboom is een discrete weergave van de continue verdeling van mogelijke rentes in de toekomst. Voor het calibreren van een renteboom maken we gebruik van geobserveerde swaprentes en swaptionprijzen. Een renteboom is gecalibreerd als swaps en swaptions correct geprijsd worden, dat wil zeggen als de modelprijzen overeenkomen met de geobserveerde data.

Hoofdstuk 2 geeft een overzicht van populaire rentemodellen en hun kenmerken. Ook wordt de waardering van swaps en swaptions uitgebreid beschreven, gebaseerd op de kasstromen van deze rentederivaten. Ten slotte geeft dit hoofdstuk een literatuuroverzicht waarin de prestaties van verschillende modellen met betrekking tot het prijzen van swaps en swaptions worden uiteengezet.

Calibratie geschiedt op basis van verschillende variaties op het Black, Derman en Toy [9] rentemodel. Hoofdstuk 3 analyseert de kenmerken van dit model, waaronder 'mean reversion' en lognormaal verdeelde rentes. De gemodelleerde rentetermijnstructuur komt exact overeen met de geobserveerde termijnstructuur gebaseerd op swaprentes. De gemiddelde afwijking tussen geobserveerde prijzen en modelprijzen van swaptions is kleiner dan de bid-ask spread. Swaptions met een lange optielooptijd en een korte swaplooptijd worden door het model ondergeprijsd, swaptions met een korte optielooptijd en een lange swaplooptijd worden overgeprijsd. De volatiliteit van de korte rente heeft een karakteristieke 'hump'. Rentes zijn beperkt 'mean reverting', in het eerste jaar is er zelfs sprake van divergentie.

De gecalibreerde rentebomen worden gebruikt voor het waarderen van hypotheekleningen en voor het bepalen van de optimale aflossingsstrategie. We vergelijken hypotheekleningen op basis van 'eerlijke' contractrentes (fair rates). De hypotheekrente is fair als de som van alle verdisconteerde rentebetalingen en aflossingen exact gelijk is aan de nominale waarde van de lening. Bij deze rente maken zowel klant als bank geen winst, gegeven de verwachte ontwikkeling van rente en volatiliteit. Fair rates worden vooral gebruikt om aflossingsopties te waarderen. Zo geeft het verschil tussen de fair rate van een ongerestricteerd aflosbare hypotheek en die van een niet aflosbare de waarde van een ongerestricteerde aflossingsoptie.

In hoofdstuk 4 onderscheiden we hypotheekcontracten op basis van aflossingsschema, opties tot vervroegd aflossen en opties tot het aanpassen van de contractrente. Hier worden de meest gangbare hypotheekvormen beschreven die (met behulp van een recombinerende scenarioboom) efficiënt gewaardeerd kunnen worden. De optimale aflossingsstrategie van een onbeperkt aflosbare hypotheeklening komt aan de orde.

Hypotheekleningen met gedeeltelijke aflossingen vereisen complexere waarderingstechnieken.

In hoofdstuk 5 ontwikkelen we een efficiënt algoritme voor het prijzen van beperkt aflosbare 'interest-only' hypotheek. Deze methode is gebaseerd op het opsplitsen van een hypotheek in een aantal volledig aflosbare obligaties. De in Nederland populaire 'interest-only' hypotheek kunnen met dit algoritme gewaardeerd worden omdat deze contracten geen reguliere maandelijkse aflossing kennen.

Hypotheek met reguliere aflossingen kunnen niet zonder meer opgesplitst worden in obligaties. Waardering is ingewikkelder omdat vervroegde aflossingen ook het reguliere aflossingspatroon beïnvloeden. In hoofdstuk 6 formuleren we een lineair programmeringsmodel (LP), waarin de som van alle verdisconteerde betalingen wordt geminimaliseerd. Op basis van LP dualiteit kan een optimale aflossingsstrategie voor onbeperkt aflosbare hypotheek worden afgeleid. Prijzen van niet en onbeperkt aflosbare hypotheek begrenzen de waarde van een beperkt aflosbare hypotheek. 'Niet aflossen' vormt een toegelaten oplossing van het primale LP en geeft een bovengrens voor de prijs van een beperkt aflosbare hypotheek. 'Onbeperkt aflossen' is een toegelaten oplossing van het duale LP en geeft een ondergrens voor de prijs.

Door het interval tussen bovengrens en ondergrens te verkleinen, wordt een nauwkeurige schatting van de prijs (of van de fair rate) verkregen. Omdat aan het LP een niet-recombinerende boom ten grondslag ligt, met een exponentiële toename van het aantal scenario's, kunnen grote instanties niet tegelijk efficiënt en optimaal worden opgelost. Om die reden leiden we een suboptimale aflossingsstrategie af, die een goede bovengrens op de prijs oplevert.

Hoofdstuk 7 sluit het tweede deel af met een uitgebreid overzicht van fair rates van de meest voorkomende hypotheek, gecategoriseerd naar aflossingspatroon, renteaanpassingen en toegestane aflossingsmogelijkheden. Hieruit volgen onder andere de waardes van aflossingsopties. Empirisch blijkt dat, voor een aantal typische hypotheek, een optie om 20% van de oorspronkelijke lening per kalenderjaar af te lossen ten minste de helft waard is van een onbeperkt toegestane aflossing.

Ook komen het effect van de rentevastperiode en de termijnstructuur op de fair rate en de invloed van de duratie van kasstromen op de contractrente aan de orde. Waargenomen contractrentes worden vergeleken met fair rates om een indicatie te krijgen van de premie voor banken. Deze ligt voor basishypotheek rond 1 procentpunt, hypotheek met gecompliceerde opties kennen een hogere premie.