

Galstyan, Vahagn

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How Persistent are International Capital Flows?

Vahagn Galstyan

Trinity College Dublin

Abstract

This paper documents the dynamic properties of the current account, trade balance and international capital flows. For this purpose, two approaches are taken: probit and a nonparametric estimation. The probabilistic approach shows that, in general, deficits and net inflows tend to be more persistent than surpluses and net outflows. This result is robust to either specification of pooled and country-specific probits. The results of non-parametric estimation are in line with the results obtained from the probit.

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Keywords: Capital flows; persistence

Correspondence:

*Vahagn Galstyan, Department of Economics, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin2, Ireland,
E-mail: galstyav@tcd.ie*

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1. Introduction

The sustainability and adjustment of current account imbalances have been major issues in recent research. The greatest attention has concerned the trajectory of possible adjustments of the US current account deficit, which, growing steadily since 1991, has reached a remarkable 6.5 percent of GDP in 2006. A situation such that a variable (the current account in this case) is steadily in a deficit or in a surplus may be labeled a persistent deficit or surplus.

How does the history of a variable matter for its current state? This question, relevant in policy circles for the analysis of the trajectory and the timing of adjustment of external imbalances, is the motivator of the current study.

The persistence of capital flows has already received academic attention. Sarno and Taylor (1999), using maximum likelihood and Kalman Filtering techniques, study the persistence properties of international capital flows to Latin American and Asian developing countries. Clarida et al. (2007) use threshold autoregression model to estimate the asymmetric adjustment between different states of the current account. Chortareas et al. (2004) test for current account solvency in Latin America using STAR-modified unit root tests. Edwards (2004) studies persistence of large current accounts, where persistence is measured with the marginal probability. Reinhart and Rogoff (2003), analyzing panel data on external debt, show that the probability of transition from a bad state into a good state is higher than the transition in the other direction.

To contribute to this literature, we study the persistence of wider range of international capital flow categories using two different methods: probit and a non-parametric estimator. We find that deficits and net inflows tend to be more persistent than surpluses and net outflows. For instance, the probability of transition from a current account deficit into a deficit next period is 0.88, while the probability of transition from a current surplus into a surplus in the next period is 0.77. We find that FDI are more persistent than portfolio investments and the other investments category in either state. The probability of remaining in a deficit state is 0.88 for FDI, 0.74 for portfolio investments and 0.73 for the other investments category, while the probability of remaining in a surplus state is 0.75 for FDI, 0.72 for portfolio investments and 0.68 for the other investments category. Non-parametric approach yields results qualitatively consistent with probit.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses econometric specifications, describes the data and modifies the non-parametric measure of persistence developed by Dias and Marques (2005). Section 3 presents the main empirical findings. The last section concludes.

2. Data and Econometric Specifications

Different measures of persistence have been considered in the literature. Among widely used ones are “sum of autoregressive coefficients”, “spectrum of zero frequency”, “largest autoregressive root” and “half life”.¹ The most prominent of these is the ‘half life’ which, having such an attractive feature as a measure of persistence in units of time, has been used extensively.² Dias and Marques (2005), studying the persistence of inflation, suggest a non-parametric measure, based on mean reversion. Another measure of persistence, widely spread in labor economics, is the probability of state dependence. State dependence arises when the probability of experiencing an event is a function of experiencing an event in the past. As a consequence of an event (e.g. positive FDI flows) the preferences, prices or possibly constraints are affected, which in turn affects the future probability of experiencing the same event.

2.1. Probit

The first approach we choose is a probabilistic one, specified by the following binary probit model:

$$p(x_{i,t} = 1|\cdot) = \Phi(\alpha + \beta x_{i,t-1}) \quad (1)$$

where x_t is the variable of interest and Φ stands for the normal cumulative distribution. We measure the persistence by the conditional probability $p(x_{i,t} = j|x_{i,t-1} = j)$ for $j = 0, 1$.

Regarding equation (1), we use a pooled estimator since the fixed effects estimator is biased. For comparison, individual country-by-country estimation of parameters is also done.

2.2. Non-parametric approach

Dias and Marques (2005) have suggested a non-parametric estimator, which is robust to the model specification (number of lags). Their approach is based on mean reversion and does not allow the positive and negative state distinction. In this section, we modify their approach to incorporate the latter as well.

Assume variable x_t crosses its mean n times out of total number of available T observations. So, $T - n$ times the series has not been crossing the mean. For the purpose of this paper we will assume the steady state mean value of the variable to be equal to zero. Define by T_p the time spent in the positive, and by T_n the time spent in the negative states. Then we can decompose the number of times not crossing the mean into the positive and negative state

¹See Dias and Marques (2005) for discussions and relevant references on relative behavior of different measures of persistence.

²For examples see Imbs et al. (2005) and Clarida et al. (2007).

counterparts by writing it as a weighted average of relative time in either states of the series:

$$T - n = \frac{T_p}{T}(T - n) + \frac{T_n}{T}(T - n) = \frac{T_p}{T}(T - n) + (1 - \frac{T_p}{T})(T - n) \quad (2)$$

Because absolute $T - n$ has little interpretation, the relative to total T is a better measure of persistence.³ Thus we have:

$$1 - \frac{n}{T} = \frac{T_p}{T}(1 - \frac{n}{T}) + (1 - \frac{T_p}{T})(1 - \frac{n}{T}) = \gamma_{positive} + \gamma_{negative} \quad (3)$$

Note that the left hand side is the measure of persistence suggested by Dias and Marques (2005). The right hand side is just the weighted average of this measure, where the weights are relative time in the positive and negative states of the series. In our paper, this allows the analysis of persistence of net inflows and outflows.

To study the properties of the estimator, assume the variable z takes value 1 if the series is in a positive state and 0 otherwise, while variable y is defined the other way around. Then the weights are averages of series z and y . In a similar manner we can generate a variable m which takes value 1 if the mean is crossed and 0 otherwise. Thus n/T also represents the average of the variable m . Since the sample mean converges in probability to the expectation of the variable, the consistency of the estimator follows directly. The restrictive side of this estimator is its applicability to time series, and our ignorance of its asymptotic distribution.

2.3. Data

The data used in this paper are annual and cover the period 1970-2005. Data on capital flows, current account and trade balance are obtained from International Financial Statistics database by the IMF. GDP in current US dollars is taken from the World Development Indicators database by the World Bank. The sample of countries includes 19 industrial and 33 developing countries, which are listed in in Appendix A.

3. Results

3.1. Probit

3.1.1. Main specification

The first econometric specification considered is the pooled probit. Table 1 shows the combined estimates for positive and negative flows. Almost all coefficients are statistically significant. The column “Lag” has only positive coefficients in the total sample as well as subsamples of industrial and developing countries. All of the lagged variables are statistically

³If $n_1 = n_2 = 5$ for two different series, while $T_1 > T_2$, then it would be reasonable to claim higher persistence of the first series.

significant at the conventional levels of significance. Since the coefficients in probit specifications are hard to interpret, it is common to construct marginal probabilities. Instead we will construct the levels of probabilities since we think that the levels of transition probabilities are a better measure of persistence than the marginal probabilities. But first we check whether the transition probabilities from deficit to deficit and surplus to surplus states are significantly different from each other. This would signal existence of asymmetric adjustment. A formal way to do that would be deriving asymptotic distribution of conditional probabilities, and then testing the hypothesis of equality. We choose an approach that is relatively simpler to implement.

Since both slopes and the corresponding standard errors are equal by construction between the two probits (positive and negative flows) in Table 1, the source of asymmetry can be found in the intercept.⁴ All intercepts are statistically significant at 10 percent. So, by constructing 90 percent confidence intervals and looking for the intersection regions, we can judge whether the coefficients and thus the transitional probabilities are equal.⁵

From Table 2 we can see the presence of asymmetry in the process of adjustment. In the total sample, only the trade balance has a relatively large overlap of confidence intervals of negative and positive intercepts. Portfolio investments and debt securities also have an overlap, but it is relatively smaller. The confidence intervals of negative and positive intercepts do not overlap in all other categories. Thus the probabilities of transition for the latter group can be asymmetric. In the sample of industrial countries, all of the categories, except other investments and reserve assets, have overlapping confidence intervals. The overlap is minor for the current account balance, trade balance, FDI and debt securities. In the sample of developing countries only portfolio investments and other investments have a major overlap of confidence intervals. There is a minor overlap in the case of the trade balance. All other categories seem to have asymmetric transition probabilities.

So far the confidence intervals indicated asymmetry in the transition probabilities. To judge the size of this asymmetry we must construct the transition probability matrix. These are presented in Figure 1. In the total sample, the current account balance, the trade balance, FDI, portfolio investments and other investments have a larger persistence of deficits than surpluses. The probability of remaining in a deficit state is 0.88 for the current account, compared to the 0.77 probability of remaining in the surplus state. The probability of remaining in a deficit state is 0.84 for the trade balance, compared to the 0.84 probability of remaining in the surplus state. This was expected as there was a major overlap of the confidence

⁴The same data with different definitions has been used: in one case surpluses and net outflows take value one and deficits and net inflows - zero, in the other case - the other way around. These two problems are mathematically equivalent.

⁵A formal way for testing for intercept equality from two different estimation would be deriving the asymptotic distribution of the difference between coefficients, and then using some test, say Wald. The computation of the asymptotic variance is quite complicated. For this reason we approach the problem using confidence intervals.

intervals. The probability of remaining in a deficit state for FDI is 0.88, compared to the 0.75 probability of remaining in the surplus state. For portfolio investments the probability of remaining in a deficit state is 0.74, compared to the 0.72 probability of remaining in the surplus state. Though there is a slight difference in persistence, the overlap of confidence intervals of negative and positive intercepts for this category suggests possible symmetry in the persistence of flows. This is true for the category of the debt securities as well, though the persistence of outflows is greater than the persistence of inflows. For other investments the probability of remaining in a deficit state is 0.73, compared to the 0.68 probability of remaining in the surplus state.

In the sample of industrial countries the current account deficit has a persistence of 0.87, while the surplus has a persistence of 0.81. The inflow of portfolio investments has a persistence of 0.76, compared to the 0.70 persistence of outflows. The inflow of debt securities has a persistence of 0.77, as opposed to the 0.69 persistence of outflows. The inflow of other investments has a persistence of 0.69, as opposed to the 0.57 persistence of outflows. All other categories have a greater persistence of outflows, although the confidence interval test suggest possible symmetry in all of the cases.

In the sample of developing countries the current account deficit has a persistence of 0.88, while the surplus has a persistence of 0.72. The trade deficit is more persistent than the trade surplus, with persistence probabilities of 0.86 and 0.82. Note that the trade balance has marginally overlapping confidence intervals. The inflow of other investments has a persistence of 0.76, as opposed to the 0.74 persistence of outflows. In this case there is a major overlap of confidence intervals, signalling symmetry in persistence. All other categories have a greater persistence of outflows, though the confidence interval test suggests possible symmetry in all of the cases.

In general, the evidence is for higher persistence of deficits and net inflows than surpluses and net outflows, meaning that countries in the negative state are more likely to stay in that state than countries in the positive state. This can be seen more easily by looking at the probabilities of transition from one state into the opposite one: $p(x_t > 0 | x_{t-1} < 0) < p(x_t < 0 | x_{t-1} > 0)$. Once a country is in the negative state, it is harder to move to the positive state, than would be otherwise. This conclusion was also achieved by the analysis of Reinhart and Rogoff (2003) for external debt.

Although pooled probit estimation provides a good description of asymmetric adjustment of international balance sheet components, the results can be biased due to false state dependence. In the case of pooled probit, the estimator, *ceteris paribus*, is consistent, as opposed to the properties of fixed-effects probit.⁶ Yet, possible individual heterogeneity can bias the results significantly, particularly if the unobserved heterogeneity is correlated with the disturbance term. In this case ignoring the former will result in false state dependence (Heckman,

⁶Bias can be reduced by using, for example, a modified maximum likelihood estimator (Carro, 2006).

1981).

To overcome this problems, country-specific probits are used. But this approach in turn has problems. For some countries, data length is too short and for that particular period the variable of interest may carry the same sign. In this case, probit estimation is impossible. For this reason some countries are dropped out of the estimation.⁷ Averaged transition probabilities are computed and the transition probability matrix based on these results is presented in Table 3.

As can be seen from this table, the average of transition probabilities supports the results of pooled estimation for both full sample, and breakdown into industrial and developing countries subsamples. In the samples of all countries, the current account, FDI, portfolio investments and other investments have a higher persistence of deficits and net inflows than surpluses and net outflows. In the case of industrial countries, the current account, portfolio investments, debt securities and other investments categories have a higher persistence of surpluses and net outflows. In the sample of developing countries, the current account balance, FDI and other investments categories have a higher persistence of surpluses and net outflows. For the rest of the categories the situation is reversed. It is worth noting, that the magnitude of standard deviations suggest a failure to reject the null hypothesis of symmetry in all of the cases.

Comparing the results of current account persistence to Edwards (2004), we can see some differences. His direct interests are episodes of large surpluses and deficits. Running fixed-effects probits, Edwards (2004) finds that the point estimates of marginal probabilities are larger for large surpluses than for large deficits. Based on this finding, the conclusion is that countries running large surpluses tend to stay in the surplus state longer than countries running large deficits. A possible explanation could be current account reversals. While the results are interesting, they are sensitive to the definition of persistence. A plausible definition of persistence given in the introduction states that it is the probability of experiencing an event conditional on the fact that the same event happened in the past. Using this definition of persistence, our estimations so far suggest that deficits are more persistent than surpluses.

Summarizing this section, in general, deficits and net inflows seem to be more persistent than surpluses and net outflows. The result is robust to either specification of pooled and individual probits. FDI is more persistent than portfolio investments in either state. In turn, the latter is more persistent than other investments category in either state. The persistence of the current account is larger than the persistence of the trade balance, although the probabilities are quite close. This result can be linked to the high persistence of investment income.

⁷The list of dropped countries is available on request from the author.

3.2. Non-parametric approach

This subsection presents results from the non-parametric estimation, which, being a more intuitive measure of persistence, is robust to the model specification as well.

Equation (3) has been estimated for our subsamples and the results are summarized in Table 4. In the sample of all countries, the current account, trade balance, FDI, portfolio investments and other investments have a higher probability of remaining in the deficit state, than remaining in the surplus state. In the sample of industrial countries, the current account, portfolio investments debt securities and other investments have a higher probability of remaining in the deficit state, than remaining in the surplus state. In the sample of developing countries the current account, trade balance, FDI and other investments have a higher probability of remaining in the deficit state, than remaining in the surplus state.

Looking at the composite measure of persistence $\gamma = \gamma_{positive} + \gamma_{negative}$, we see that FDI is more persistent than portfolio investments. The latter is more persistent than the other investments category. So, the adjustment is not only asymmetric between deficits and surpluses, but also different components of balance sheet adjust differently. These results are consistent with the probit specification, supporting the idea that deficits and net inflows are more persistent than surpluses and net outflows. Note that persistence coefficients, that are very close to each other, have also been very close in the probit case. This symmetry between the two approaches signals a consistency of the probit estimates.

The current account is more persistent than the trade balance in either state both in the total sample as well as in sub-samples. This result is also consistent with the results from the probit specification. The current account, trade balance deficits and net FDI inflows are more persistent in the developing than industrial countries.

In summary, the results of this subsection are qualitatively the same as the results from probit estimations: deficits and net inflows seem to be more persistent than surpluses and net outflows.

3.3. Discussion

In the case of probit, deficits and net inflows are more persistent than surpluses and net outflows. The result is robust to either specification of pooled and individual probits. FDI is more persistent than portfolio investments in either state. In turn, the latter is more persistent than other investments category in either state. The persistence of the current account is larger than the persistence of the trade balance, though the probabilities are quite close.

In the case of the non-parametric estimator, the results strongly support the results from probit estimations: deficits and net inflows are more persistent than surpluses and net outflows. FDI is more persistent than portfolio investments. The latter is more persistent than

the other investments category. The current account is more persistent than the trade balance in either state. The current account, trade balance deficits and net FDI inflows are more persistent in the developing than industrial countries.

The definition of persistence as probability of transition from one state into the other is very close in logic to the definition of persistence based on a mean reversion. For this reason the results from these two approaches are in line with each other.

4. Conclusions

The existing literature on the persistence of capital flows has concentrated on either the estimates of half life, or constructions of marginal probabilities. To contribute to this literature, we study a wider range of capital flows using two possible approaches to understanding the persistence and the dynamics of the current account and main components of international capital flows.

The probabilistic approach shows, that, in general, deficits and net inflows are more persistent than surpluses and net outflows. This result is robust to either specification of pooled and individual probits. FDI are more persistent than portfolio investments in either state. The latter is more persistent than other investments category in either state. The persistence of the current account is larger than the persistence of the trade balance. Developing countries tend to have a higher persistence of deficits and net inflows than industrial countries.

We developed further the non-parametric estimator, proposed by Dias and Marques (2005). The estimation results strongly support the results from probit estimations. The current account, trade balance, FDI, portfolio investments and other investments have a higher probability of remaining in the deficit state, than remaining in the surplus state. FDI is more persistent than the portfolio investments category, while the current account is more persistent than the trade balance in either the deficit or surplus state.

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Table 1: Pooled probit of a dummy variable on its lag

A: All countries	$C_{positive}$	$C_{negative}$	Lag	R^2	Obs.
Current account balance	-1.15 (0.05)***	-0.72 (0.06)***	1.88 (0.08)***	0.32	1587
Trade balance	-0.99 (0.05)***	-0.98 (0.05)***	1.96 (0.08)***	0.36	1587
FDI	-1.20 (0.05)***	-0.68 (0.06)***	1.87 (0.08)***	0.32	1528
Portfolio investments	-0.64 (0.05)***	-0.58 (0.05)***	1.22 (0.07)***	0.16	1553
Equity securities	-0.56 (0.06)***	-0.88 (0.05)***	1.44 (0.07)***	0.21	1477
Debt securities	-0.57 (0.05)***	-0.65 (0.05)***	1.22 (0.07)***	0.16	1514
Other investments	-0.62 (0.05)***	-0.46 (0.05)***	1.08 (0.07)***	0.13	1587
Reserve assets	0.18 (0.05)***	-0.51 (0.04)***	0.33 (0.07)***	0.01	1587
B: Industrial countries					
Current account balance	-1.14 (0.08)***	-0.89 (0.09)***	2.03 (0.12)***	0.38	613
Trade balance	-0.79 (0.09)***	-1.05 (0.08)***	1.84 (0.12)***	0.32	613
FDI	-0.73 (0.08)***	-0.96 (0.08)***	1.68 (0.12)***	0.28	605
Portfolio investments	-0.70 (0.07)***	-0.53 (0.08)***	1.23 (0.11)***	0.16	613
Equity securities	-0.53 (0.08)***	-0.71 (0.07)***	1.24 (0.11)***	0.16	603
Debt securities	-0.73 (0.07)***	-0.49 (0.08)***	1.23 (0.11)***	0.16	611
Other investments	-0.51 (0.07)***	-0.19 (0.08)**	0.69 (0.11)***	0.05	613
Reserve assets	0.05 (0.08)	-0.33 (0.07)***	0.28 (0.10)***	0.01	613
C: Developing countries					
Current account balance	-1.16 (0.06)***	-0.58 (0.08)***	1.75 (0.10)***	0.28	974
Trade balance	-1.08 (0.07)***	-0.91 (0.07)***	2.00 (0.10)***	0.37	974
FDI	-1.44 (0.07)***	-0.16 (0.11)	1.60 (0.12)***	0.22	923
Portfolio investments	-0.59 (0.06)***	-0.61 (0.06)***	1.20 (0.09)***	0.15	940
Equity securities	-0.59 (0.08)***	-1.00 (0.06)***	1.59 (0.10)***	0.25	874
Debt securities	-0.43 (0.07)***	-0.73 (0.06)***	1.16 (0.09)***	0.14	903
Other investments	-0.71 (0.06)***	-0.63 (0.06)***	1.34 (0.09)***	0.19	974
Reserve assets	0.29 (0.07)***	-0.61 (0.05)***	0.33 (0.09)***	0.01	974

Note: Results from pooled probit estimation. Column $C_{positive}$ indicates value of intercept of probit estimation with assigned value of one to positive flows and zero to negative flows. Column $C_{negative}$ indicates value of intercept of probit estimation with assigned value of one to negative flows and zero to positive flows.

***, **, * significant at 1, 5 and 10 percent respectively.

Table 2: Testing asymmetry: confidence intervals

A: All countries	$\theta_{positive}^{lower}$	$\theta_{positive}^{upper}$	$\theta_{negative}^{lower}$	$\theta_{negative}^{upper}$
Current account balance	-1.24	-1.07	-0.82	-0.62
Trade balance	-1.07	-0.90	-1.06	-0.90
FDI	-1.28	-1.12	-0.77	-0.58
Portfolio investments	-0.72	-0.56	-0.67	-0.50
Equity securities	-0.66	-0.46	-0.97	-0.80
Debt securities	-0.65	-0.49	-0.73	-0.57
Other investments	-0.71	-0.54	-0.54	-0.38
Reserve assets	0.10	0.26	-0.58	-0.44
B: Industrial countries				
Current account balance	-1.27	-1.01	-1.04	-0.74
Trade balance	-0.94	-0.64	-1.18	-0.92
FDI	-0.86	-0.60	-1.09	-0.83
Portfolio investments	-0.82	-0.59	-0.66	-0.40
Equity securities	-0.66	-0.40	-0.82	-0.59
Debt securities	-0.85	-0.62	-0.63	-0.36
Other investments	-0.62	-0.39	-0.32	-0.06
Reserve assets	-0.08	0.18	-0.45	-0.22
C: Developing countries				
Current account balance	-1.26	-1.06	-0.72	-0.45
Trade balance	-1.20	-0.97	-1.03	-0.80
FDI	-1.56	-1.33	-0.34	0.02
Portfolio investments	-0.69	-0.49	-0.71	-0.52
Equity securities	-0.72	-0.46	-1.10	-0.90
Debt securities	-0.55	-0.32	-0.83	-0.63
Other investments	-0.81	-0.61	-0.73	-0.53
Reserve assets	0.17	0.40	-0.70	-0.53

Note: $\theta_{positive}^{lower}$ and $\theta_{positive}^{upper}$ indicate lower and upper bounds of 90 percent confidence interval of intercept for positive flows, while $\theta_{negative}^{lower}$ and $\theta_{negative}^{upper}$ indicate lower and upper bounds of 90 percent confidence interval of intercept for negative flows. The interval was computed by $w \pm z_{\frac{\alpha}{2}} s.e.$, where w is the intercept and $s.e.$ is the standard error of the intercept.

Table 3: Country estimates

A: All countries	$P(X_t > 0 X_{t-1} > 0)$	$P(X_t < 0 X_{t-1} > 0)$	$P(X_t < 0 X_{t-1} < 0)$	$P(X_t > 0 X_{t-1} < 0)$	Obs.
Current account balance	0.67 (0.20)	0.33 (0.20)	0.81 (0.14)	0.19 (0.14)	43
Trade balance	0.77 (0.19)	0.23 (0.19)	0.68 (0.20)	0.32 (0.20)	41
FDI	0.64 (0.19)	0.36 (0.19)	0.70 (0.20)	0.30 (0.20)	27
Portfolio investments	0.67 (0.18)	0.33 (0.18)	0.68 (0.19)	0.32 (0.19)	46
Equity securities	0.75 (0.17)	0.25 (0.17)	0.67 (0.17)	0.33 (0.17)	45
Debt securities	0.68 (0.19)	0.32 (0.19)	0.66 (0.19)	0.34 (0.19)	47
Other investments	0.64 (0.19)	0.36 (0.19)	0.70 (0.14)	0.30 (0.14)	50
Reserve assets	0.67 (0.11)	0.33 (0.11)	0.41 (0.14)	0.59 (0.14)	49
B: Industrial countries					
Current account balance	0.70 (0.21)	0.30 (0.21)	0.82 (0.13)	0.18 (0.13)	17
Trade balance	0.79 (0.20)	0.21 (0.20)	0.62 (0.17)	0.38 (0.17)	16
FDI	0.76 (0.13)	0.24 (0.13)	0.65 (0.23)	0.35 (0.23)	14
Portfolio investments	0.61 (0.20)	0.39 (0.20)	0.69 (0.16)	0.31 (0.16)	16
Equity securities	0.68 (0.18)	0.32 (0.18)	0.68 (0.17)	0.32 (0.17)	17
Debt securities	0.62 (0.18)	0.38 (0.18)	0.71 (0.17)	0.29 (0.17)	17
Other investments	0.55 (0.16)	0.45 (0.16)	0.68 (0.12)	0.32 (0.12)	19
Reserve assets	0.62 (0.10)	0.38 (0.10)	0.45 (0.17)	0.55 (0.17)	19
C: Developing countries					
Current account balance	0.64 (0.20)	0.36 (0.20)	0.80 (0.15)	0.20 (0.15)	26
Trade balance	0.76 (0.19)	0.24 (0.19)	0.72 (0.21)	0.28 (0.21)	25
FDI	0.51 (0.16)	0.49 (0.16)	0.76 (0.15)	0.24 (0.15)	13
Portfolio investments	0.70 (0.16)	0.30 (0.16)	0.67 (0.20)	0.33 (0.20)	30
Equity securities	0.80 (0.15)	0.20 (0.15)	0.66 (0.17)	0.34 (0.17)	28
Debt securities	0.71 (0.18)	0.29 (0.18)	0.64 (0.20)	0.36 (0.20)	30
Other investments	0.69 (0.18)	0.31 (0.18)	0.71 (0.15)	0.29 (0.15)	31
Reserve assets	0.69 (0.12)	0.31 (0.12)	0.39 (0.12)	0.61 (0.12)	30

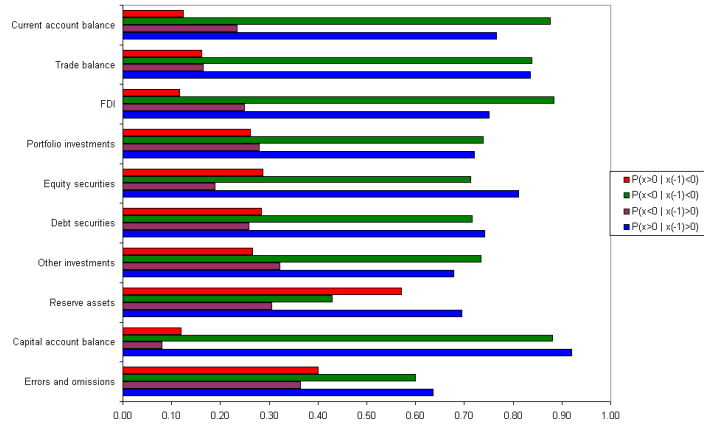
Note: Probit specification (dummy variable on its lag) is estimated for each country separately. Then the probabilities are computed using $\Phi(\alpha + \beta X_{t-1})$ normal distribution. Columns 2 to 5 indicate arithmetic averages of the group with standard deviation in parenthesis. The last column indicates the number of countries in each group.

Table 4: Non-parametric estimate of persistence

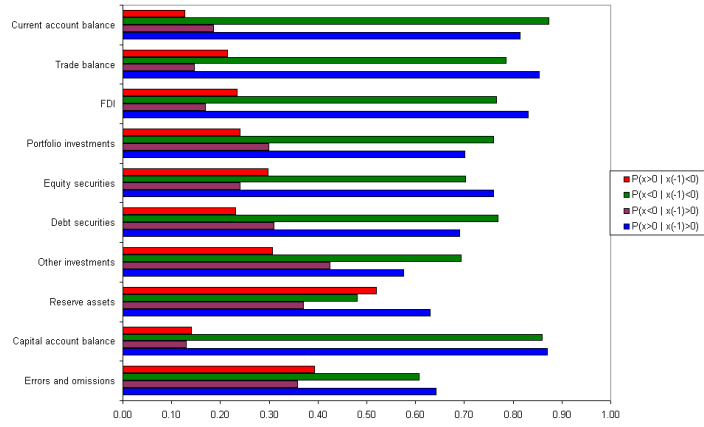
A: All countries	$\gamma_{positive}$	$\gamma_{negative}$	γ
Current account balance	0.27 (0.23)	0.55 (0.24)	0.82 (0.08)
Trade balance	0.39 (0.26)	0.43 (0.28)	0.82 (0.09)
FDI	0.23 (0.25)	0.58 (0.31)	0.81 (0.12)
Portfolio investments	0.35 (0.17)	0.37 (0.17)	0.72 (0.12)
Equity securities	0.49 (0.22)	0.28 (0.16)	0.77 (0.13)
Debt securities	0.38 (0.19)	0.33 (0.17)	0.72 (0.11)
Other investments	0.31 (0.15)	0.39 (0.15)	0.70 (0.12)
Reserve assets	0.40 (0.14)	0.20 (0.06)	0.60 (0.11)
B: Industrial countries			
Current account balance	0.36 (0.27)	0.48 (0.25)	0.84 (0.08)
Trade balance	0.49 (0.26)	0.33 (0.26)	0.82 (0.10)
FDI	0.44 (0.27)	0.35 (0.25)	0.78 (0.10)
Portfolio investments	0.32 (0.20)	0.40 (0.20)	0.72 (0.13)
Equity securities	0.43 (0.22)	0.32 (0.15)	0.74 (0.15)
Debt securities	0.32 (0.21)	0.41 (0.20)	0.72 (0.12)
Other investments	0.26 (0.08)	0.37 (0.12)	0.64 (0.10)
Reserve assets	0.34 (0.08)	0.23 (0.06)	0.58 (0.09)
C: Developing countries			
Current account balance	0.22 (0.20)	0.59 (0.23)	0.81 (0.09)
Trade balance	0.33 (0.23)	0.49 (0.28)	0.82 (0.09)
FDI	0.11 (0.14)	0.72 (0.24)	0.83 (0.14)
Portfolio investments	0.36 (0.15)	0.35 (0.16)	0.72 (0.11)
Equity securities	0.53 (0.22)	0.26 (0.16)	0.79 (0.12)
Debt securities	0.42 (0.18)	0.29 (0.15)	0.71 (0.11)
Other investments	0.34 (0.17)	0.39 (0.17)	0.73 (0.12)
Reserve assets	0.44 (0.15)	0.18 (0.05)	0.62 (0.12)

Note: Standard deviation in parenthesis. $\gamma = \gamma_{positive} + \gamma_{negative}$.

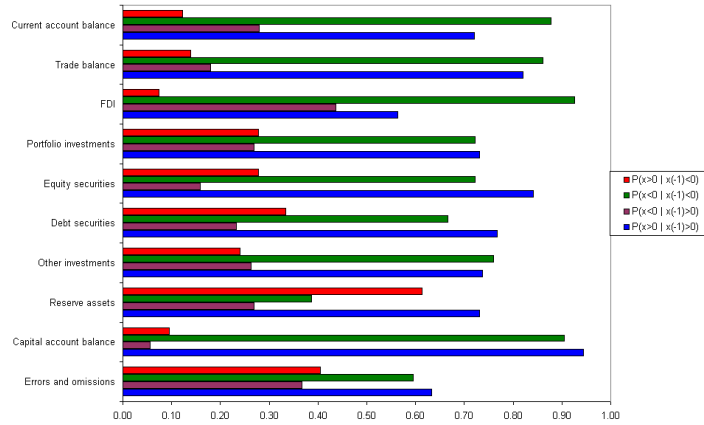
Figure 1: Transition probabilities



(a) All countries



(b) Industrial countries



(c) Developing countries

Appendix A: Country list

Sample of industrial countries: Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States.

Sample of developing countries: Argentina, Bahrain, Barbados, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cte d'Ivoire, Egypt, El Salvador, Gabon, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela.

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