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Baumol's diseases: a subsystem perspective

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Abstract

In his paper "Baumol's diseases: a macroeconomic perspective", Nordhaus (2008) applies a new testing framework in order to estimate the six hypotheses that lie at the core of Baumol's (1967) model, following an industry perspective. In this work, I extend Nordhaus' testing framework to estimate Baumol's diseases in the US economy over the period 1999-2018 according to a subsystem perspective, by making use of the US Bureau of Economic Analysis input-output tables. In order to check whether Baumol's diseases depend on the perspective that is followed, I apply both the usual industry perspective and the novel subsystem framework and compare the results. For both subsystems and industries, I do not find robust evidence in favour of the persistent demand hypothesis and the hypothesis of declining nominal value added shares in the progressive sector, while my results do support the cost and price disease hypothesis, the hypothesis of declining employment shares in the progressive sector and the hypothesis of uniform wage growth. As a result, Baumol's growth disease does not substantially lower aggregate labour productivity growth over the period across both subsystems and industries. This happens mainly because progressive services increase their real output at a faster rate than the economy's average, restraining the reallocation of nominal value added towards stagnant subsystems or industries and thereby providing a strong palliative against Baumol's growth disease.

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Keywords: Baumol's diseases; subsystems; input-output analysis; labour productivity growth; US economy

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1. Introduction

The relative expansion of the service sector in employment and nominal value added (tertiarisation) with income per capita is one of the most salient aspects of structural change and economic development (Fisher, 1939; Jorgenson and Timmer, 2011; Kuznets, 1957, 1966).

Given the significance of this process, a growing number of literature has tried to understand the factors that drive this reallocation of employment and nominal value added. Within this literature, it is possible to distinguish between two strands, depending on whether they underscore demand or supply mechanisms. On the one hand, some authors claim that tertiarisation arises due to the existence of non-homothetic preferences, that is, heterogeneous income elasticities of demand across sectors (Clark, 1957; Comin et al., 2015; Foellmi and Zweimller, 2008; Kongsamut et al., 2001; Pasinetti, 1981). Since it is argued that services exhibit higher income elasticities of demand, the growth of real income shifts final consumption towards services and fosters structural change. On the other hand, some scholars link structural transformation to cross-sector differences in technological conditions, such as productivity growth (Baumol, 1967; Ngai and Pissarides, 2007), factor intensity (Acemoglu and Guerrieri, 2006) or the elasticity of substitution between factors (Alvarez-Cuadrado et al., 2017, 2018). According to this view, tertiarisation takes place due to the fact that services present slower productivity growth, lower capital intensity or higher substitutability. Within this second strand of literature, Baumol's (1967) model is highly regarded as one of the most relevant contributions to the understanding of the drivers of the service sector expansion.

Baumol's model considers one factor of production, labour, and divides the economy into two sectors that produce for final consumption. It is assumed that the first sector has stagnant productivity and resembles the service sector, while the second sector presents increasing productivity and is more akin to manufacturing. If wages rise at a similar pace in both sectors, the productivity gains of manufacturing are passed on to consumers, leading to above-average increases in unit costs and prices in the service sector in a phenomenon known as Baumol's cost and price disease. As a result, "[t]he growth of [...] productivity in manufacturing becomes a sort of fund in which [...] both manufacturing and the services share equally" (Baumol and Wolff, 1984). The macroeconomic relevance of Baumol's model arises from the fact that, despite their "exploding costs", it is assumed that services have "persistent demand" (ten Raa and Schettkat, 2001), which means that real output grows at about the same pace in both sectors. Consequently. if the service sector exhibits below-average productivity growth, above-average increases in its unit costs and prices and persistent demand, this sector will take ever-increasing shares in employment and nominal output. Then, according to Baumol's model, the expansion of the service sector arises when there is unbalanced productivity growth between sectors and wages and demand in services grow at about the same pace as in manufacturing. Nevertheless, Baumol's model is not limited to acknowledge the factors that drive the expansion of the service sector, as it also points out the negative impact that this process brings to economic growth. Since aggregate labour productivity growth is just a weighted average of the sectoral productivity growth rates (where the weights are the nominal value added shares), the gradual reallocation of nominal value added towards the service sector that comes with tertiarisation increasingly undermines aggregate productivity growth, which asymptotically tends to mirror productivity growth in the service sector. This negative impact of the service sector expansion on productivity growth has been known in the literature as Baumol's growth disease (BGD) (Nordhaus, 2008).

In an attempt to test the model empirically, Nordhaus (2008) proposes the application of a panel data analysis to the hypotheses that lie at the core of Baumol's model. According to Nordhaus (see also Hartwig, 2011), it is possible to distinguish the following six hypotheses, which he also labels as syndromes or variants of Baumol's diseases:

1) The cost and price disease hypothesis. Costs and prices in stagnant industries rise relative to the average.

2) The persistent demand hypothesis. Real output grows at about the same rate in both sectors.

3) The hypothesis of declining employment shares in the progressive sector. If there is unbalanced productivity growth and persistent demand across sectors, then labour reallocates towards the stagnant sector.

4) The hypothesis of declining nominal value added shares in the progressive sector. If real output grows at about the same rate

in both sectors and the relative productivity gains of the progressive sector dissipate into the consumers' rent [by means of declining relative prices] instead of raising the nominal value added earned by the [sector]" (Peneder and Streicher, 2018), then the stagnant sector gains weight in terms of nominal value added.

5) The hypothesis of uniform wage growth. Wages grow at about the same pace in both sectors.

6) The growth disease hypothesis. If hypothesis (4) is fulfilled, then the reallocation of nominal value added towards the stagnant sector will undermine aggregate productivity growth.

Nordhaus tests the six hypotheses for the US economy using industry data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and finds supporting evidence for all of them except for the persistent demand hypothesis. More recently, Hartwig has applied Nordhaus' testing framework to other economies such as Switzerland (Hartwig, 2010), the EU economies (Hartwig, 2011) and Japan (Hartwig, 2019). While he finds that the EU economies and the US are similarly affected by Baumol's diseases, Japan and Switzerland exhibit a weaker price disease. As a result, evidence in favour of declining nominal value added shares in the progressive sector seems to be stronger for the US and the UE economies than for Japan and Switzerland. Still, in all these economies real output seems to grow faster in progressive industries than in stagnant ones, providing robust evidence against hypothesis (2).

Since both Nordhaus and Hartwig take the industry as the unit of analysis, in this paper I aim to extend Nordhaus' testing framework to estimate Baumol's diseases in the US economy over the period 1999-2018, following a subsystem perspective. In order to check whether Baumol's diseases depend on the perspective that is followed, I apply both the usual industry perspective and the novel subsystem framework and compare the results.

Adopting a subsystem perspective allows us to transform the circular nature of the production process, as represented in the input-output tables, to an ideal classification made by autonomous units (subsystems) that include all the inputs needed to directly or indirectly satisfy its final demand (Antonioli et al., 2020; Ciriaci and Palma, 2016; Montresor and Vittucci Marzetti, 2011; Pasinetti, 1981; Sarra et al., 2019). As compared to an industry framework, adopting the subsystem as the unit of analysis has several advantages to test Baumol's diseases: 1) Given that Baumol assumes that each sector produces only for final consumption, the model is implicitly taking the subsystem as the unit of analysis. Consequently, it seems more appropriate to follow a subsystem perspective if one wants to test Baumol's diseases.

2) The literature on the drivers of structural change has pointed out to the role of the changing input-output structure as a determinant of the tertiarisation process (Berlingieri, 2014; Pasinetti, 1981; Sposi, 2016). Within this framework, some studies stress the increasing reliance of the manufacturing sector on intermediate services (Lind, 2014) and claim that tertiarisation is linked to some extent to the outsourcing of services that were previously performed in-house in manufacturing firms to specialised suppliers (Berlingieri, 2014; Ciriaci and Palma, 2016; Greenhalgh and Gregory, 2001; Montresor and Vittucci Marzetti, 2011; Russo and Schettkat, 2001; Petit, 1986). As such, the relative expansion of services would be partly a "statistical illusion" or "statistical artefact" (Palma, 2005; Rowthorn and Coutts, 2004; Tregenna, 2015), caused by this re-classification of activities spurred by outsourcing. As a result, adopting an industry perspective can be misleading and might actually overestimate the extent of the tertiarisation process. In order to overcome this bias, a subsystem framework should be used.

3) One of the most prominent critiques to Baumol's model was formulated by Oulton (2001). According to Oulton, Baumol's growth disease only holds when services produce final products. If these service industries supply intermediate inputs to the manufacturing sector and present below-average but positive productivity growth, manufacturing benefits from these productivity gains and tertiarisation boosts aggregate productivity growth¹. While an industry perspective faces severe problems to address the role of these spillovers, a subsystem framework takes into account how the productivity gains originated in one industry are not limited to that industry, but rather induce further productivity gains in the rest of the subsystem (De Juan and Febrero, 2000). As such, adopting a subsystem perspective makes Baumol's growth disease inmune to Oulton's critique.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 addresses the methodo-

¹ In the same vein, there has been a growing number of empirical studies that stress the role of knowledge intensive business services to generate positive spillovers, even for the manufacturing sector (Ciarli et al., 2012; Ciriaci et al., 2015; Guerrieri and Meliciani, 2005; Kox and Rubalcaba, 2007).

logical considerations regarding the Nordhaus testing strategy used to test Baumol's diseases and the procedure to classify the production process according to subsystems. Section 3 discusses the results regarding each of the six hypotheses. Given that testing hypothesis (6) requires a different method, this section first discusses results on hypotheses (1) to (5) and subsequently deals with Baumol's growth disease. Lastly, section 4 summarises the main conclusions drawn from this study.

2. Method

Assuming a Cobb-Douglas economy and an almost ideal demand system, Nordhaus shows that hypotheses (1) to (5) can be econometrically tested as reduced-form equations with the following specification:

$$x_{it} = \beta_{0i} + \beta_1 q_{it} + z_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$
(1)

Where q is labour productivity growth, x is the growth of the variable that defines the hypothesis that is being tested, z denotes time dummies, ε is the error term, subscript i refers to industry or subsystem i and subscript t denotes the time period.

Since hypotheses (1) to (5) established a predicted correlation between productivity growth and the growth of another variable, the coefficient of interest to test each of the six hypotheses is β_1 . Accordingly, these are the coefficients signs that must be found in order to get evidence in favour of each hypothesis:

1) The cost and price disease hypothesis: β_1 must be significantly lower than zero. This implies that there is a negative correlation between productivity growth and price growth (*p*) across industries or subsystems.

2) The persistent demand hypothesis: β_1 cannot be significantly different from zero. This means that productivity growth is not correlated with real output growth (*rva*) across industries subsystems.

3) The hypothesis of declining employment shares in the progressive sector: β_1 must be significantly lower than zero, which implies that there is a negative correlation between productivity growth and employment growth (*l*) across industries or subsystems.

4) The hypothesis of declining nominal value added shares in the progressive sector: β_1 must be significantly lower than zero, so that there is a negative correlation between productivity growth and nominal value added growth (*nva*) across industries or subsystems.

5) The hypothesis of uniform wage growth: β_1 cannot be significantly different from zero. This implies that productivity growth is not correlated with wage growth (*w*) across industries or subsystems.

Equation (1) is estimated controlling both fixed and time effects for the period 1999-2018. Following Nordhaus and Hartwig, in order to check for the robustness of the results, I also estimate this equation cross-sectionally for the period average 1999-2018.

Regarding hypothesis (6), Nordhaus proposes a different methodology to test Baumol's growth disease. As he shows, aggregate labour productivity growth can be approximated as a weighted average of the industry or subsystem productivity growth rates, where the weights are the nominal value added shares²:

$$q_{t} = \Sigma w_{it-1} q_{it} (2)$$

Where *w* denotes nominal value added share.

According to equation (2), if progressive industries or subsystems gradually lose weight in terms of nominal value added, as Baumol's model predicts, aggregate productivity growth will follow a declining trend. In order to capture this, we need to keep the weights in equation (2) fixed with respect to the base period:

$$q_{t} = \Sigma w_{it-1} q_{it} = \Sigma w_{i0} q_{it} + \Sigma (w_{it-1} - w_{i0}) q_{it}$$
 (3)

As a result, aggregate labour productivity growth is broken down into two terms or effects. The first term on the right-hand side captures the so-called within effect and measures how much productivity would grow if there was not any structural change in terms of nominal value added. The second term estimates the impact that the cumulative reallocation of nominal value added (that has taken place since the base period) exerts on aggregate productivity growth when there is unbalanced productivity growth across industries or subsystems. Consequently, this second term corresponds to BGD.

However, Nordhaus proposes an additional refinement on the estimation of BGD. Given that BGD in equation (3) is affected by the instability of the cross-industries or subsystem

² Nordhaus abstracts from the contribution to aggregate labour productivity growth stemming from the reallocation of labour across subsystems with heterogeneous nominal productivity levels. In a previous paper (Nordhaus, 2001), he argues that a welfare measure of aggregate productivity growth should not consider this effect.

differences in productivity growth, he recommends to use the average productivity growth rates for each industry or subsystem during the period under study and update their respective nominal value added shares:

$$\sum c_{it}^{BGD} = \sum (w_{it-1} - w_{i0}) \overline{q_{it}} \quad (4)$$

Where Σc_{it}^{BGD} corresponds to the aggregate BGD effect and the symbol ⁻ stands for the average value of the variable over the whole period. If, consistently with Baumol's prediction nominal value added gradually reallocates towards stagnant industries or subsystems, then we will expect to see how this effect exhibits a negative magnitude and follows a declining trend.

When applying this formula to the US economy, Nordhaus finds that BGD lowered aggregate productivity growth by about 0.5 percentages points over the second half of the twentieth century. Besides Nordhaus, equation (4) has also been applied by other authors to test for BGD in different economies. Hartwig (2011) finds that annual aggregate productivity growth slowed down in 0.5 percentages points in the UE economies due to BGD over the period 1970-2005. Contrary to the previous studies, Hartwig (2010), Nishi (2019) and Oh and Kim (2015) do not find evidence in favour of BGD in Switzerland, Japan and Korea, respectively. Lastly, similarly to Nordhaus, Duernecker et al. (2017) finds that BGD lowered aggregate productivity growth by 0.6 percentage points in the US economy over the period 1948-2010.

As equation (4) shows, the aggregate BGD effect can be broken down into industry or subsystem contributions. This will allow us to assess which industries or subsystems behave consistently with Baumol's prediction by exerting a negative and declining contribution. However, given that equation (4) does not normalise industry or subsystem productivity growth with respect to aggregate productivity growth (\overline{q}_t) , industry or subsystem contributions to BGD do not yield plausible economic results. In order to correct this flaw, deviations from means are taken:

$$\sum c_{it}^{BGD} = \sum (w_{it-1} - w_{i0})(\overline{q_{it}} - \overline{q_t})$$
(5)

According to equation (5), a progressive (stagnant) industry or subsystem will only exert a negative contribution to BGD if it loses (gains) weight in terms of nominal value added.

In order to analyse these industry or

subsystem contributions, industries or subsystems are classified in different groups according to the nature of the final product and their progressive/stagnant status³. Consequently, I distinguish the following industries or subsystem groups: manufacturing, progressive manufacturing, stagnant manufacturing, services, progressive services, stagnant services and other industries or subsystems. By disaggregating both services and manufacturing, I take into account that the dichotomy between services and manufacturing on which both Baumol's model is based has been questioned in the empirical literature. After Baumol et al. (1985) corrected his previous position to admit the existence of progressive services, several authors have emphasized the need to distinguish between different types of services in the analysis (Duarte and Restuccia, 2017; Duernecker et al., 2017; IMF, 2018; Inklaar and Timmer, 2014; Jorgenson and Timmer, 2011; Maroto-Sánchez and Cuadrado-Roura, 2009). Although the literature on BGD do not stress the existent heterogeneity within manufacturing, arguably due to the small and declining share of the manufacturing sector in employment and nominal value added, this internal diversity is not neglected a priori in this study. In light of this heterogeneity within both sectors, whether BGD evolves consistently with Baumol's prediction depends on which industries or subsystems are the ones that gain weight in terms of nominal value added.

In order to test Baumol's diseases across subsystems, we need to reclassify the production process according to this unit of analysis. Given that national statistics services do not directly report data on subsystems, we need to apply the following lineal operator *O* to remap data from industries to subsystems by making use of the national input-output tables:

$$O = (\hat{x})^{-1} (I - DB)^{-1} (\widehat{De}) \quad (6)$$

Where \hat{x} is the diagonalised vector of industry gross output, D is the industry-by-commodity market share matrix, B is the commodity-by-industry domestic direct requirements matrix and e is the vector of commodity final demand. Since in this paper I use input-output tables in a commodity-industry format, the market share matrix D is applied in order to obtain the industry-by-industry total domestic requirements matrix $(I-DB)^{-1}$ and the diagonalised vector of industry final demand De

³ An industry or subsystem is classified as progressive (stagnant) if it exhibits a productivity growth rate higher (lower) than that of the economy.

(Miller and Blair, 2009), so that equation (6) is equivalent to the one used in the subsystems literature (Antonioli et al., 2020; Ciriaci and Palma, 2016; Montresor and Vittucci Marzetti, 2011; Pasinetti, 1981; Sarra et al., 2019).

After calculating *O*, this operator is used to derive matrix *N*:

N=v0(7)

Where \hat{v} is the diagonalised vector of the variable that needs to be remapped from industries to subsystems.

On the one hand, each column j in matrix N shows the amount of the variable v referred to each industry i that is directly or indirectly used by subsystem j in order to produce its final output. Consequently, the sum across all the elements of column j yields the value of the variable for subsystem j. On the other hand, each row i shows the amount of the variable v referred to industry i that is directly or indirectly used by each subsystem j. As a result, the sum across all the value of the variable for subsystem j. As a result, the sum across all the elements of row i yields the value of the variable for industry i.

The data used in this paper is from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The BEA provides consistent time series input-output tables for the period 1997-2018. Data on nominal output (nominal value added) and wages (compensation of employees) is taken from the input-output tables, while data on real output (real value added) and employment (persons engaged in production) is taken from the Industry Economic Accounts Data. Rather than considering employment in hours worked. I use the number of persons engaged in production because there are more available years for the latter variable. However, given that the number of persons engaged by industry is only available since 1998 according to the 2012 NAICS, this variable determines the period studied in this paper.

In order to check for the robustness of the results on hypotheses (1) to (5), I use the two levels of aggregation which are provided by the BEA input-output tables in consistent time series⁴. While the summary level of aggregation consists of 71 industries (subsystems), the sector level reports data on 15 industries (subsystems)⁵. The summary level is used to

test Baumol's growth disease so as to capture at a finer level of aggregation the impact of the reallocation of nominal value added on productivity growth. Table A1 and Table A2 in the Appendix provide a detailed classification of industries (subsystems) at the two aggregation levels and defines the progressive/stagnant status of every industry/subsystem.

3. Results

3.1 Testing hypotheses (1) to (5)

Table 1 shows the results on the estimation of hypotheses (1) to (5). For each disease and framework (either an industry one or a subsystem one), four coefficients are reported according to the level of aggregation (summary or sector) and the type of data (panel, cross section or 5-year non-overlapping moving averages) that are used. Following Nordhaus (2008) and Hartwig (2011), I also report the weighted (where the weights are provided by the number of observations) and unweighted coefficients across all the specifications for each framework. The last rows of Table 1 show Nordhaus and Hartwig's coefficients, so that my results can be easily compared to theirs. While Nordhaus estimates Baumol's diseases in the US economy over the period 1948-2001 using BEA data (1987 SIC), Hartwig analyses the diseases in the EU economies over the period 1970-2005 using EU KLEMS data.

Regarding the cost and price disease hypothesis, I find robust evidence that both stagnant subsystems and stagnant industries exhibit above-average price increases. However, my weighted and unweighted coefficients are significantly lower than those found in Nordhaus. While Nordhaus finds that consumers mostly capture all productivity gains due to a coefficient that is about -1, my results show that both progressive subsystems and progressive industries use to some extent their relative productivity gains to increase their nominal value added. With respect to Hartwig's coefficients, even though they are similar to mine, he downplays the difference with respect to Nordhaus by attributing it to the different dataset used in both studies (the BEA in Nordhaus and EU KLEMS in Hartwig). He argues that when this disease is estimated for the US economy using EU KLEMS data the coefficients are similar to the ones found here and in Hartwig.

Consistently with the previous literature (Hartwig, 2010, 2011, 2019; Nordhaus, 2008;

⁴ The most detailed published level (405 industries or subsystems) is not used in this paper because the BEA only provides data for two benchmark years (2007 and 2012).

⁵ Given that the sector level of aggregation would only provide 15 observations if a cross-section analysis were to be used, I apply 5-year non-overlapping moving averages instead of performing a cross-section regression when checking the ro-

bustness of the results for this aggregation level.

Oh and Kim. 2015), my results on the persistent demand hypothesis provide robust evidence against it. Most of the coefficients are positive and significant at the 1% level. Consequently, the faster real output growth in both progressive subsystems and progressive industries works as a palliative against Baumol's diseases, restraining the reallocation of employment and nominal value added towards stagnant subsystems or industries. However, since I find that coefficients are higher for industries than for subsystems, this unbalanced real output growth alleviates Baumol's diseases more for the former than for the latter. Compared to my estimates, Nordhaus and Hartwig's findings seem to lie within the interval defined by my subsystem and industry coefficients.

Regarding the hypothesis of declining employment shares in the progressive sector, a significantly negative coefficient is found in every estimation. Given that unbalanced real output growth worked more as a palliative against Baumol's diseases for industries than for subsystems, the latter also experiences a more negative reallocation of labour towards stagnant subsystems. As a result, subsystems exhibit more negative coefficients on hypothesis (3). Likewise, Nordhaus and Hartwig's coefficients mostly lie again within the interval defined by my subsystem and industry estimates.

With respect to hypothesis (4), I do not obtain robust evidence in favour of a reallocation of nominal value added towards stagnant subsystems or stagnant industries. While subsystems and industries do exhibit a significantly negative coefficient when using the sector level of aggregation, estimates at the summary level are insignificant in most of the specifications. In order to understand this finding, it is important to note that the coefficient on hypothesis (4) theoretically equals the sum of the coefficient on hypothesis (1) and the coefficient on hypothesis (2). In other words, the coefficient on hypothesis (4) depends on both the extent to which the relative productivity gains of progressive subsystems (industries) are passed on to consumers (coefficient on hypothesis (1)) and the extent to which real production growth in progressive subsystems (industries) exceeds real production growth in stagnant subsystems (industries) (coefficient on hypothesis (2))⁶. Since the relative productive gains of the progressive subsystems (industries) are not completely passed on to consumers and real output grows at a slower

rate in stagnant subsystems (industries), nominal output does not significantly reallocate towards stagnant subsystems (industries). My results on hypothesis (4) are similar to those in Nordhaus or Hartwig. However, they downplay this finding by claiming that their test of Baumol's growth disease provides indirect evidence in favour of a reallocation of nominal value added towards stagnant industries.

The estimation of hypothesis (5) seems to confirm that higher productivity growth does not lead to higher wages. Even though I find a significantly positive (but small) coefficient for subsystems at the summary level of aggregation, this result is not robust to the estimation of the hypothesis using 5-year non-overlapping moving averages at the sector level. In conjunction with evidence on hypothesis (1), it seems that relative productivity gains dissipate into the consumer's rent rather than raising wages in progressive subsystems (industries). These results are consistent with Nordhaus and Hartwig findings, who also acknowledge that productivity growth does not seem to lead to higher wage growth in progressive industries.

All in all, the evidence reported on hypotheses (1) to (5) stresses that results do not differ much between a subsystem perspective and an industry one. For both subsystems and industries, my findings reject the persistent demand hypothesis and the hypothesis of declining nominal value added shares in the progressive sector, while they confirm the cost and price disease hypothesis, the hypothesis of declining employment shares in the progressive sector and the hypothesis of uniform wage growth. However, given that the coefficients on hypothesis (2) are significantly higher for industries than for subsystems, I find that real output grows faster in progressive industries than in progressive subsystems, acting as a stronger palliative against Baumol's diseases. As a result, stagnant subsystems gain more weight in terms of employment than stagnant industries.

[Insert Table 1 here]

3.2 Testing Baumol's growth disease

Figure 1 shows the results on the actual subsystem contributions to Baumol's growth disease at the summary level. I find that the aggregate contribution to BGD across subsystems does follow a significant declining trend, suggesting that there is a reallocation of nominal value added towards stagnant subsystems. However, despite this negative trend, BGD has only lowered aggregate labour productivity

⁶ Alternatively, the coefficient on hypothesis (4) also equals the coefficient on hypothesis (3) plus the sum of one and the coefficient on hypothesis (1).

growth by about 0.11 points over 1999-2018. According to this result, it would take 100 years for BGD to slow down productivity growth in 0.5 points with this structural change. This small magnitude of the BGD effect seems to explain why we did not find robust evidence in favour of a significant reallocation of nominal value added towards stagnant subsystems in Table 1.

Looking at the contributions of the different subsystem groups in Figure 1, it seems that the only subsystem group that behaves consistently with Baumol's model, exerting a substantial and declining contribution, is (progressive) manufacturing. If the remaining subsystem groups do not satisfy Baumol's prediction, this must be mostly explained by the fact that progressive (stagnant) subsystem groups do not gradually and considerably lose (gain) weight in terms of nominal value added. In line with the econometric results reported in Table 1, this fact must be linked to the evidence found on hypothesis (1) and (2), which ultimately explains why hypothesis (4) was rejected and why BGD exhibits a small magnitude.

Two simple counterfactual exercises allows us to assess what is the link between each subsystem group and the results found for hypothesis (1) and (2), that is, the factors that explain why nominal value added does not reallocate towards stagnant subsystems and why aggregate labour productivity growth is not increasingly undermined by BGD. The results on these two counterfactual exercises are depicted in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Figure 2 shows the counterfactual subsystem contributions to Baumol's growth disease if relative productivity gains were fully passed on to consumers. To calculate these counterfactual contributions, instead of using the actual nominal value added shares in equation (5), I use the actual employment shares as counterfactual nominal value added shares. Therefore, I assume in this scenario that the counterfactual cumulative reallocation of nominal value added mirrors the actual cumulative reallocation of employment, which would only happen if relative productivity gains were fully passed on to consumers. By comparing the results shown in Figure 2 with the ones depicted in Figure 1, it is possible to obtain indirect evidence about the subsystem groups that mostly explain the fact that the relative productivity gains did not fully dissipate into the consumer's rent and its impact on BGD. According to the evidence reported in Figure 2, if relative productivity gains were fully passed on to consumers, BGD would lower aggregate labour productivity growth in 0.16 points over the period, that is. 0.05 additional points compared to the actual BGD. Looking at the subsystem contributions, both progressive services and stagnant services seem to explain the more negative impact of BGD on this counterfactual scenario, contributing in -0.02 percentage points and -0.03 points with respect to the actual BGD, respectively. This suggests that progressive services are not sharing to some extent their productivity gains with stagnant services. However, given the small magnitude of this additional negative impact, the incomplete pass on to consumers of the relative productivity gains does not seem to explain why BGD has not substantially undermined aggregate labour productivity growth over 1999-2018.

Figure 3 shows the counterfactual subsystem contributions to Baumol's growth disease if hypothesis (2) was fulfilled, that is, if real output grew at about the same pace in progressive subsystems and stagnant subsystems. To estimate these counterfactual contributions, instead of using the actual nominal value added shares in equation (5), I use counterfactual nominal value added shares that are calculated from the assumption that real output grow at the same rate in every subsystem. By subtracting for each subsystem its real output growth differential (that is, with respect to the economy's average) from its actual nominal value added growth, I calculate counterfactual nominal growth rates for every subsystem. These counterfactual rates allows me to estimate counterfactual nominal value added shares that fulfill hypothesis (2). By comparing the results shown in Figure 3 with the ones depicted in Figure 1, it is possible to obtain indirect evidence about the subsystem groups that mostly explain the rejection of hypothesis (2) and its impact on BGD. According to Figure 3, if real output grew at the same rate in every subsystem, BGD would lower aggregate labour productivity growth in 0.24 percentage points over the period, that is, 0.13 additional points compared to the actual BGD. Consequently, contrary to the incomplete pass on to consumers of the relative productivity gains, unbalanced real output growth seems to significantly restrain the actual BGD. Looking at the subsystem contributions, since progressive services account for most of the additional negative impact on this counterfactual scenario (contributing in -0.07 points with respect to the actual BGD), the above-average real output growth of these services provides the strongest palliative for the actual BGD.

After having estimated BGD across subsystems, in Figure 4 to 6 I repeat this

analysis following an industry perspective.

As Figure 4 shows, I do not find evidence of a substantial negative impact of BGD across industries and, contrary to when analysed at a subsystem perspective, BGD does not even follow a significant declining trend. Again, the only group that behaves consistently with Baumol's prediction is (progressive) manufacturing.

Figure 5 sheds light on the role of the incomplete pass on to consumers of the relative productivity gains in explaining BGD's impact across industries. According to my results, if relative productivity gains fully dissipated into the consumer's rent, then BGD would lower aggregate labour productivity growth in 0.19 percentage points over the period, that is, 0.21 additional points with respect to the actual BGD. As a result, this mechanisms seems more relevant to restrain BGD for industries than for subsystems and is even able to explain why BGD does not follow a declining trend when the industry is taken as the unit of analysis. Looking at the industry contributions, both progressive services and stagnant services mostly explain the more negative impact of BGD on this counterfactual scenario, contributing in -0.09 points and -0.08 points with respect to the actual BGD, respectively. As for subsystems, progressive services do not seem to be fully sharing their productivity gains with stagnant services, although this happens to a larger extent than for subsystems.

Figure 6 depicts the results on the counterfactual industry contributions to BGD if hypothesis (2) was fulfilled. On this counterfactual scenario, the cumulative reallocation of nominal value added would lower aggregate labour productivity growth in 0.54 percentage points over the period, that is, 0.56 additional points with respect to the actual BGD. As for subsystems, unbalanced real output growth seems more relevant to restrain BGD than the incomplete pass on to consumers of the relative productivity gains, although unbalanced real output growth does provide a stronger palliative for industries than for subsystems. This evidence is consistent with the results reported in Table 1 on hypothesis (2). Looking at the industry contributions, the more negative impact of BGD on the counterfactual scenario is linked to a large extent to progressive services, which contribute in -0.24 points with respect to the actual BGD.

All in all, my results on hypothesis (6) stress that BGD does not substantially lower aggregate labour productivity growth mainly because unbalanced real output growth provides a strong palliative for this disease across both subsystems or industries⁷. To a large extent, this is explained by the above-average real output growth of progressive subsystems (industries), which restrains the reallocation of nominal value added towards stagnant subsystems (industries).

[Insert Figure 1 here] [Insert Figure 2 here] [Insert Figure 3 here] [Insert Figure 4 here] [Insert Figure 5 here] [Insert Figure 6 here]

4. Concluding remarks

This paper has extended Nordhaus' testing framework to estimate Baumol's diseases in the US economy over the period 1999-2018 according to a subsystem perspective, by making use of the US BEA input-output tables. In order to check whether Baumol's diseases depend on the perspective that is followed, I apply both the usual industry perspective and the novel subsystem framework and compare the results.

As compared to an industry framework, adopting the subsystem as the unit of analysis has several advantages to test Baumol's diseases: 1) it better corresponds to the unit of analysis implicitly taken in Baumol's model, 2) it avoids the bias that might arise in studies on tertiarisation due to the outsourcing process when an industry perspective is followed and 3) it makes Baumol's growth disease immune to Oulton's critique.

My results show that Baumol's diseses do not differ much between a subsystem perspective and an industry one. Regarding hypothesis (1) to (5), for both subsystems and industries, my findings reject the persistent demand hypothesis and the hypothesis of declining nominal value added shares in the progressive sector, while they confirm the cost and price disease hypothesis, the hypothesis of declining employment shares in the progressive sector and the hypothesis of uniform wage growth. However, given that the coefficients on hypothesis (2) are significantly higher for industries than for subsystems, I find that real output grows faster in progressive industries than in progressive subsystems, acting as a stronger palliative against Baumol's diseases. As a result, stagnant subsystems seem to gain more weight in terms

⁷ Unlike Nordhaus (2008) and Hartwig (2011) (who find a substantial negative impact stemming from BGD, but do not find robust evidence in favour of hypothesis (4)), my results are consistent with the evidence reported on hypothesis (4).

of employment than stagnant industries.

With respect to Baumol's growth disease, my results stress that BGD does not substantially lower aggregate labour productivity growth across both subsystems and industries, even though I do find that BGD follows a significant declining trend when following a subsystem perspective. All in all, the small magnitude of BGD is linked to the rejection of hypothesis (2). Unbalanced real output growth restrains the reallocation of nominal value added towards stagnant subsystems or industries, thereby providing a strong palliative against Baumol's growth disease. To a large extent, this is explained by the fact that progressive services increase their real output at a faster rate than the economy's average.

In a future investigation, it would be interesting to extend this analysis to a wider sample of developed economies by making use of the WIOD input-ouput tables in order to check whether "countries are similarly affected by Baumol's diseases" (Hartwig, 2011) when adopting a subsystem perspective. Likewise, since Baumol's growth disease arises as a long-term process, I hope that in the near future time series of input-output tables become available for a longer time-span.

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Tables and Figures

	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)	
	p Coefficient	No. of	rva Coefficient	No. of	Coefficient	No. of	nva Coefficient	No. of	W	No. of
	Coefficient	obs	Coefficient	obs	Coefficient	obs	Coefficient	obs	Coefficient	obs
71 Subsystems Panel Cross section	-0.387*** (0.0177) -0.586*** (0.0635)	1420 71	0.358*** (0.0364) 0.484** (0.208)	1420 71	-0.642*** (0.0364) -0.516** (0.208)	1420 71	-0.0292 (0.0412) -0.102 (0.235)	1420 71	0.185*** (0.0145) 0.138*** (0.0465)	1420 71
15 Subsystems Panel 5-year MA	-0.874*** (0.0519) -1.088*** (0.197)	300 60	0.153** (0.0770) 0.418* (0.209)	300 60	-0.847*** (0.0770) -0.582*** (0.209)	300 60	-0.722*** (0.0957) -0.670** (0.285)	300 60	0.0894*** (0.0292) -0.0704 (0.0597)	300 60
Summary statistics (subsystems) Weighted Unweighted	-0.64 -0.73		0.33 0.35		-0.67 -0.65		-0.17 -0.38		0.16 0.09	
71 Industries Panel Cross section	-0.336*** (0.0203) -0.700*** (0.0607)	1420 71	0.868*** (0.0138) 0.757*** (0.0930)	1420 71	-0.132*** (0.0138) -0.243** (0.0930)	1420 71	0.531*** (0.0242) 0.0572 (0.113)	1420 71	0.0163 (0.0296) -0.0139 (0.0814)	1420 71
15 Industries Panel 5-year MA	-1.191*** (0.0794) -1.229*** (0.212)	300 60	0.758*** (0.0375) 0.454*** (0.119)	300 60	-0.242*** (0.0375) -0.546*** (0.119)	300 60	-0.433*** (0.0901) -0.775*** (0.245)	300 60	-0.0376 (0.0430) -0.160*** (0.0578)	300 60
Summary statistics (industries) Weighted Unweighted Nordhaus (2008) Weighted Unweighted Hartwig (2011) Weighted Unweighted	-0.52 -0.87 -0.96 -0.94 -0.47 -0.59		0.83 0.71 0.67 0.67 0.57 0.49		-0.17 -0.29 -0.28 -0.26 -0.38 -0.48		0.31 -0.15 -0.28 -0.28 0.12 -0.11		0.00 -0.05 -0.001 0.017 0.197 0.122	

Table 1. Estimation of hypotheses (1) to (5) across subsystems or industries (continues on the next page).

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 Fixed and time effects are used in all panel estimations



Figure 1. Subsystem contributions to BGD (summary level).

Figure 2. Counterfactual subsystem contributions to BGD if relative productivity gains were fully passed on to consumers (summary level).







Figure 4. Industry contributions to BGD (summary level).



Figure 5. Counterfactual industry contributions to BGD if relative productivity gains were fully passed on to consumers (summary level).



Figure 6. Counterfactual industry contributions to BGD if hypothesis (2) was fulfilled (summary level).



Appendix.

Table A1. Classification of subsystems and industries at the summary level (continues on the next page).

	As a subsystem	As an industry		
Farms	Progressive	Stagnant		
Forestry, fishing, and related activities	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Oil and gas extraction	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Mining, except oil and gas	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Support activities for mining	Progressive	Stagnant		
Utilities	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Construction	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Wood products	Progressive	Progressive		
Nonmetallic mineral products	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Primary metals	Progressive	Progressive		
Fabricated metal products	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Machinery	Progressive	Progressive		
Computer and electronic products	Progressive	Progressive		
Electrical equipment, appliances, and components	Progressive	Progressive		
Motor vehicles, bodies and trailers, and parts	Progressive	Progressive		
Other transportation equipment	Progressive	Progressive		
Furniture and related products	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Miscellaneous manufacturing	Progressive	Progressive		
Food and beverage and tobacco products	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Textile mills and textile product mills	Progressive	Progressive		
Apparel and leather and allied products	Progressive	Progressive		
Paper products	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Printing and related support activities	Progressive	Progressive		
Petroleum and coal products	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Chemical products	Progressive	Progressive		
Plastics and rubber products	Progressive	Progressive		
Wholesale trade	Progressive	Progressive		
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Food and beverage stores	Stagnant	Stagnant		
General merchandise stores	Progressive	Progressive		
Other retail	Progressive	Progressive		
Air transportation	Progressive	Progressive		
Rail transportation	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Water transportation	Stagnant	Progressive		
Truck transportation	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Transit and ground passenger transportation	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Pipeline transportation	Progressive	Progressive		
Other transportation and support activities	Stagnant	Stagnant		
Warehousing and storage	Progressive	Stagnant		
Publishing industries, except internet (includes software)	Progressive	Progressive		

	-	
Motion picture and sound recording	Progressive	Progressive
Broadcasting and telecommunications	Progressive	Progressive
Data processing, internet publishing, and other information services	Progressive	Progressive
Federal Reserve banks, credit	Stagnant	Stagnant
Securities, commodity contracts, and investments	Progressive	Progressive
Insurance carriers and related activities	Progressive	Progressive
Funds, trusts, and other financial vehicles	Stagnant	Stagnant
Housing	Stagnant	Stagnant
Other real estate	Progressive	Progressive
Rental and leasing services and lessors of intangible assets	Progressive	Progressive
Legal services	Stagnant	Stagnant
Computer systems design and related services	Progressive	Progressive
Miscellaneous professional, scientific, and technical services	Stagnant	Stagnant
Management of companies and enterprises	Stagnant	Stagnant
Administrative and support services	Progressive	Progressive
Waste management and remediation services	Stagnant	Stagnant
Educational services	Stagnant	Stagnant
Ambulatory health care services	Stagnant	Stagnant
Hospitals	Stagnant	Stagnant
Nursing and residential care facilities	Stagnant	Stagnant
Social assistance	Stagnant	Stagnant
Performing arts, spectator sports, museums, and related activities	Stagnant	Stagnant
Amusements, gambling, and recreation industries	Stagnant	Stagnant
Accommodation	Stagnant	Stagnant
Food services and drinking places	Stagnant	Stagnant
Other services, except government	Stagnant	Stagnant
Federal general government (defense)	Stagnant	Stagnant
Federal general government (nondefense)	Progressive	Progressive
Federal government enterprises	Stagnant	Stagnant
State and local general government	Stagnant	Stagnant
State and local government enterprises	Stagnant	Stagnant

	As a subsystem	As an industry
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	Progressive	Progressive
Mining	Stagnant	Progressive
Utilities	Stagnant	Progressive
Construction	Stagnant	Stagnant
Manufacturing	Progressive	Progressive
Wholesale trade	Progressive	Progressive
Retail trade	Progressive	Stagnant
Transportation and warehousing	Stagnant	Stagnant
Information	Progressive	Progressive
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing	Stagnant	Progressive
Professional and business services	Progressive	Progressive
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	Stagnant	Stagnant
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	Stagnant	Stagnant
Other services, except government	Stagnant	Stagnant
Government	Stagnant	Stagnant

Table A2. Classification of subsystems and industries at the sector level.

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