# Transparency: What Has Changed in Derivatives Markets Since 2008?

## David Frenk October 11<sup>th</sup> 2013



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### What is Better Markets?

Nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes the public interest in the domestic and international financial markets

- **o** Three pillars: transparency, accountability and oversight
- Been referred to as a "Wall Street Watchdog"

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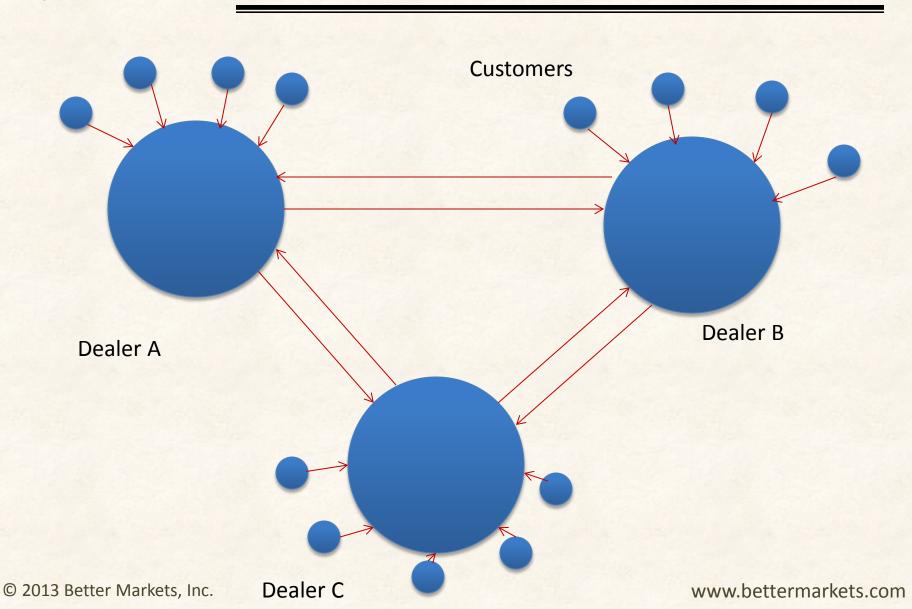


Why Transparency in Derivatives Markets Matters

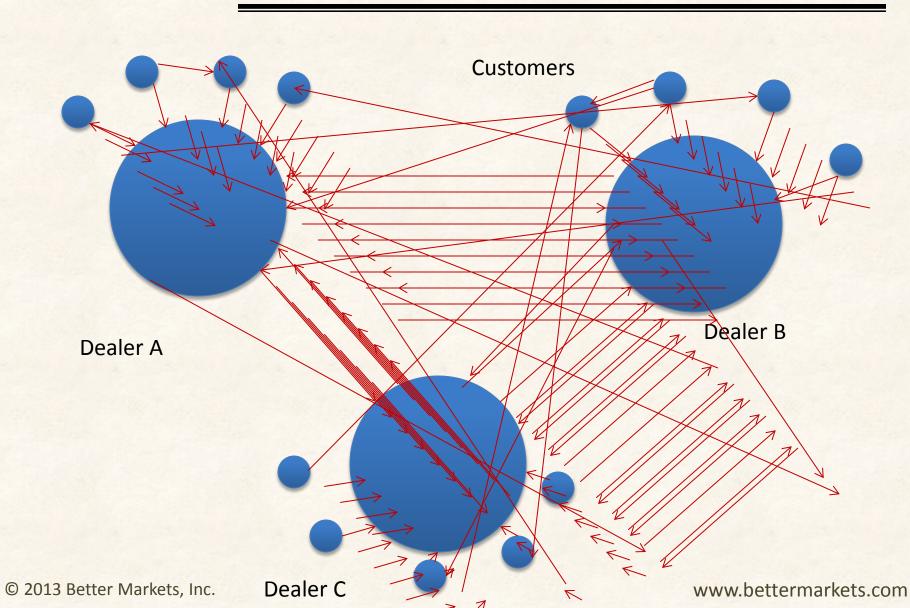
- Reduces Hedging Costs for Businesses
- Enables Regulators to Spot Risks Early
- Lack of Transparency Led to 2008 Panic
- Prevents Dealers from Overcharging/Misleading Customers, Municipalities, Pension Funds, etc.



The Derivatives Markets in 2008: Structure: A Few Large Dealers With Customers; Dark Bilateral Deals



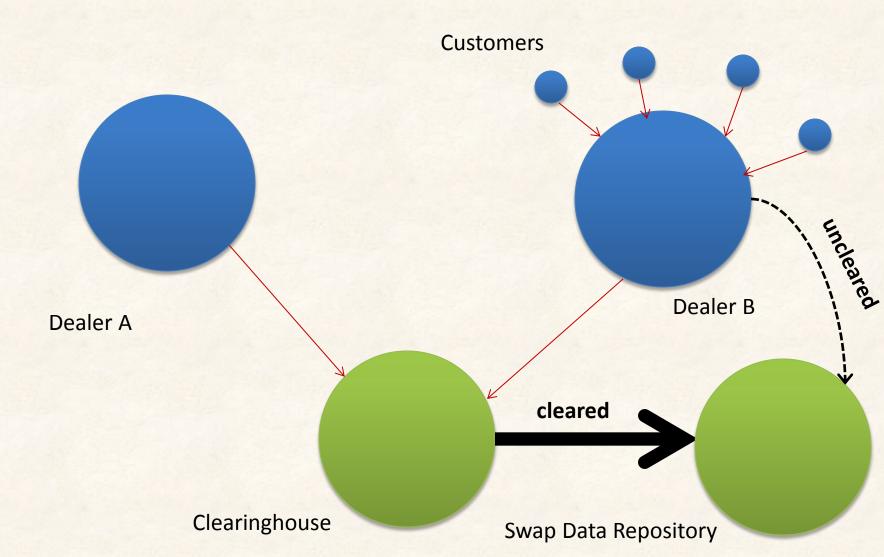
The Derivatives Markets in 2008: Reality: Vast Numbers of Opaque Deals With No Netting And No Transparency



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#### The Derivatives Markets in 2013: Central Clearing and SDR Reporting;



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The OTC Derivatives Market Increasingly Resembles the Futures Market

- Clearing
- Central Limit Order Books
- Netting
- Pre-Trade Transparency
- Post-Trade Transparency



## **But Some Obstacles Remain**

- Block Trades & RFQ
- Clearing Exemptions
- Limited Swap Dealer and Major Swap Participant Registration
- Pressure from Industry and Overseas Regulators
- No Aggregated Reports
- CME Blocking CFTC Economists' Research Efforts

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#### **Current SDR Data is Incomplete and Rudimentary**

Although the SDRs are disseminating public data in real time, it is hard to get an overview of the entire market.

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Source: https://rtdata.dtcc.com/gtr/tracker.do

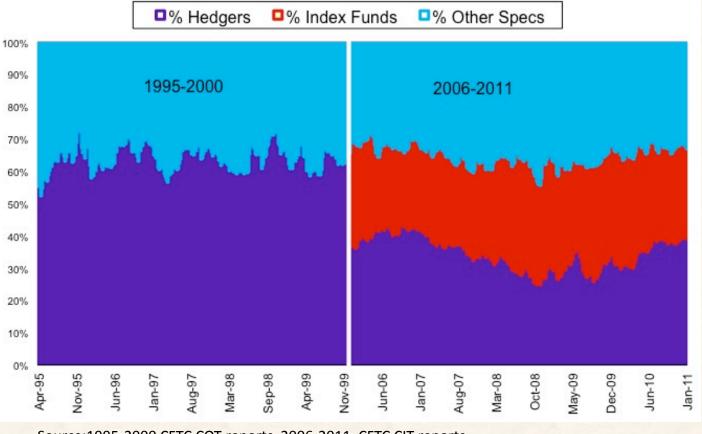


Swaps Data Will Gradually Improve Just Like Futures Data Did

Prior to 2009, the CFTC's reports on the futures market were simply divided into "commercial" and "noncommercial"

Many bank activities, including index funds, were classed as "commercial"





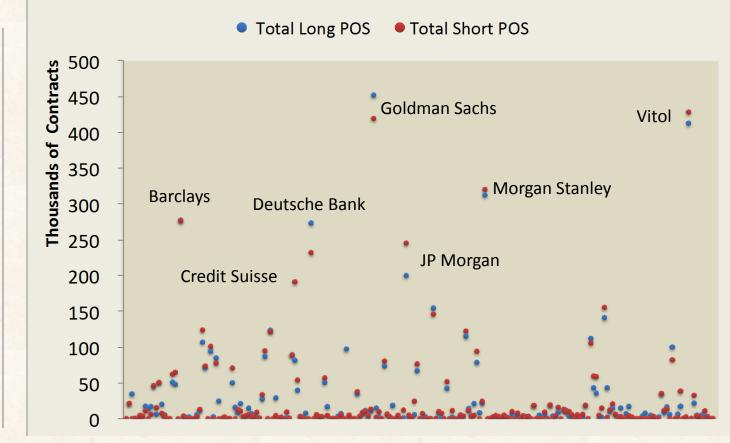
Source:1995-2000 CFTC COT reports, 2006-2011, CFTC CIT reports.



#### Although, Much Depends On The Regulators Actually Using the Data

CFTC View of Crude Oil Market in June 2008

In 2008, the CFTC knew about the huge bets banks were making on commodities, but did not act despite the huge price distortions



Source: Confidential CFTC Data Publicly Leaked in 2010



#### And Without Adequate Funding, The Regulators Simply Cannot Do Their Job

CFTC View of Swaps Market in October 2013

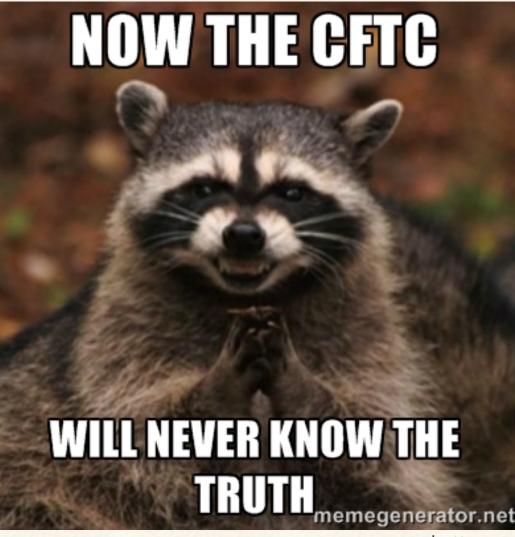
CFTC Commissioner Scott O'Malia has claimed that the CFTC computers cannot load the SDR data without crashing





Not All Industry Stakeholders Are Keen On Transparency

Under intense pressure from the CME, the CFTC shut down its research program into excessive speculation and its impact on prices



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- CFTC (and SEC, Fed, etc.) must use the data at their disposal.
- Congress must fund the CFTC at a level sufficient for adequate staff & technology.
  - Better Markets has advanced a user-fee funding model similar to that used for <u>all</u> other financial regulators in the US.
- Data must be published and disseminated in usable format.
- Transparent trading must not be undermined by actions of exchanges, dealers and others.



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