

Environmental impact investing

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Chaire FDIR

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Impact Investing

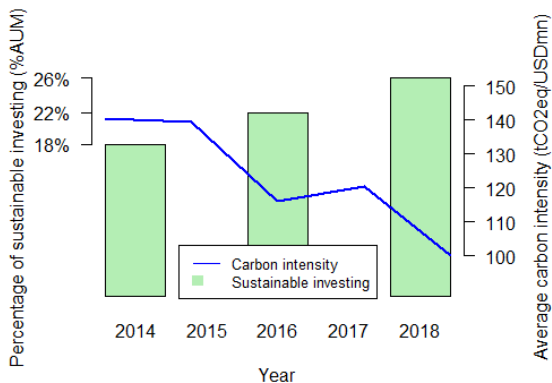
"Generate *positive, measurable* social and environmental impact alongside a financial return"
(Global Impact Investing Network).

2 major channels: Shareholder engagement and ESG integration

⇒ We focus on **ESG integration**, applied to green investing

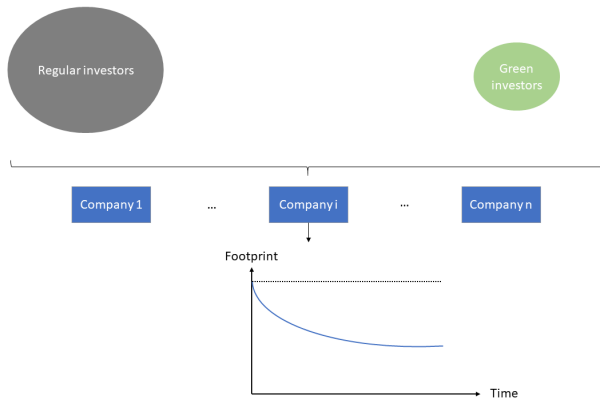
Motivation

Does green investing spur companies to reduce their GHG emissions?



Contributions

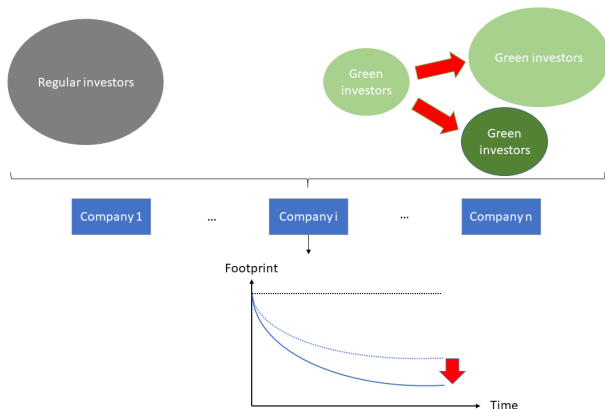
- 1 **Dynamic** setup + investors have **heterogeneous beliefs** about future environmental *deterministic* externalities
⇒ Impact (convex over time)



Contributions

- ② Higher wealth share of green investors or more stringent green investors

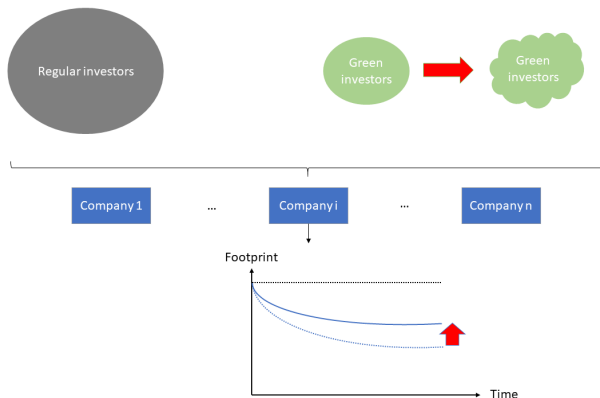
⇒ ↗ impact



Contributions

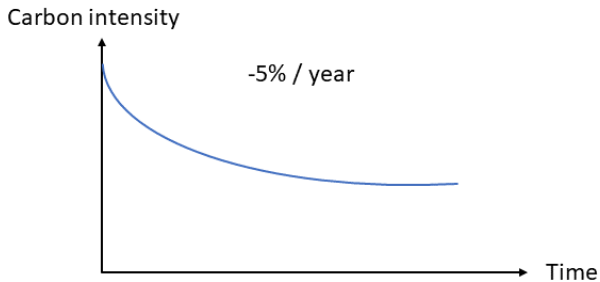
③ Uncertainty about future environmental externalities

⇒ ↘ impact



Contributions

- ④ **Empirical evidence:** Using green fund holdings ; when the fraction of assets managed by green investors **doubles**, companies' carbon intensity drops by 5% over one year



Related literature

- Impact investing:
 - Heinkel, Kraus, and Zechner (2001): When green investors exclude the most polluting companies, they decrease their market value and push them to reform.
 - Chowdhry, Davies, and Waters (2018): optimal contracting perspective: impact investors must hold a large enough financial claim to incentivize the company to internalize social externalities.
 - Oehmke and Opp (2020): ESG investors relax financial constraint for clean production \Rightarrow trigger the scaling of clean projects; sustainable and regular investors are complementary: together they achieve higher welfare.
 - Landier and Lovo (2020): Search frictions in financial markets allow an ESG fund to improve social welfare; the ESG fund forces companies to internalize externalities.
 - Pastor et al. (2020): Investors with preferences for ESG issues push (i) all companies (maximizing their market value) to become greener and (ii) green companies to invest more than brown companies.

Related literature

- Asset pricing (theory): Pastor et al. (2020); Pedersen et al. (2020); Zerbib (2020).
- Asset pricing (empirics): Hong and Kacperczyk (2009); Chava (2014); Barber, et al. (2018), Baker et al. (2018), Zerbib (2018).

The market

Arbitrage-free complete market with n risky stocks and a risk-free asset ($r = 0$).

Each stock i is a claim on a **single liquidating dividend** D_T^i at horizon T :

$$D_T = D_0 + \int_0^T \sigma_t dB_t,$$

where:

- $(B_t)_{t \in [0, T]}$ is a n -dimensional BM on filtered probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$
- σ_t is a deterministic, $n \times n$ invertible matrix

$\Rightarrow (\sigma_t dB_t)_{t \in [0, T]}$ is the sequence of **cash flow news** (see Barberis et al., 2015, 2018)

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We denote the dividend forecast in $t \in [0, T]$ by

$$D_t = \mathbb{E}[D_T | \mathcal{F}_t] = D_0 + \int_0^t \sigma_s dB_s.$$

Heterogeneous beliefs

The market is populated by two types of investors, **regular** and **green** investors. Investors and companies have **different expectations** regarding **future cash flows**:

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- Under regular investors' probability \mathbb{P}^r ,

$$\mathbb{E}_t^r(D_T) = D_t.$$

- Under green investors' probability measure \mathbb{P}^g ,

$$\mathbb{E}_t^g(D_T) = D_t + \int_t^T \theta(\psi_s) ds,$$

where:

- ψ_s : GHG emissions at date s (deterministic)
- $\theta(\psi_s) \in \mathbb{R}^n$: **financial impacts of environmental externalities**, $\psi_s \nearrow \Rightarrow \theta(\psi_s) \searrow$

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- $\theta(\psi_s) \in \mathbb{R}^n$: **financial impacts of environmental externalities**, $\psi_s \nearrow \Rightarrow \theta(\psi_s) \searrow$
- Under companies's probability measure \mathbb{P}^c , similarly,

$$\mathbb{E}_t^c(D_T) = D_t + \int_t^T \theta^c(\psi_s) ds.$$

Investors' preferences and optimization

Investors maximize expected exponential utility of terminal wealth W_T :

$$\mathbb{E}^j(1 - e^{-\gamma^j W_T^j}), \quad \gamma^j > 0, \quad j \in \{r, g\},$$

Wealth processes follow the dynamics

$$W_t^j = w^j + \int_0^t (N_s^j)^\top dp_s,$$

where N_t^r and N_t^g are quantities of assets held by investors, and prices $(p_t)_{t \in [0, T]}$ are determined by the market clearing.

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We denote by γ^* the global risk aversion, $\frac{1}{\gamma^*} = \frac{1}{\gamma^r} + \frac{1}{\gamma^g}$, and set $\alpha = \frac{\gamma^r}{\gamma^r + \gamma^g}$.

If two investors have the same **relative** risk aversion at time $t = 0$, $\alpha = \frac{w^g}{w^g + w^r}$ is the **proportion** of wealth held by green investors at $t = 0$.

Companies' utility and optimization

Companies choose their emissions schedules $(\psi_t^i)_{t \in [0, T]}$ at time $t = 0$ aiming to maximize their expected market value:

$$\mathcal{J}^i(\psi^i, \psi^{-i}) = \mathbb{E}^c \left[\int_0^T e^{-\rho t} p_t^i(\psi_t^i, \psi_t^{-i}) dt \right],$$

where ρ is the rate of time pref., ψ^{-i} is the emissions schedule of the other companies.

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They choose $(\psi_t^i)_{t \in [0, T]}$ as a tradeoff between:

- maximizing their future valuation at $(\psi_t^i)_{t \in [0, T]}$ irresp. of the cost of reform (the market price increases in ψ because of green investors' beliefs)
- minimizing the cost of reform to achieve the targeted $(\psi_t^i)_{t \in [0, T]}$ (the market value decreases in ψ because the company pays a cost of reform of $c_i(\psi_t^i - \psi_0^i)$)

⇒ Optimal schedule ψ^* : Nash equilibrium, each company determines $\psi^{i,*}$:

$$\mathcal{J}^i(\psi^{*,i}, \psi^{*, -i}) \geq \mathcal{J}^i(\psi^i, \psi^{*, -i}).$$

Summary of the game

Date	Agent	Choose	Given
At $t = 0$	Companies	Their deterministic emissions schedule from 0 to T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their expected market capitalization between 0 and T - The cost of reducing their emissions
$\forall t \in [0, T]$	Regular investors	Their asset allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The observed cash flow news between 0 and t, and the expected cash flow news between t and T
$\forall t \in [0, T]$	Green investors	Their asset allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The observed cash flow news between 0 and t, and the expected cash flow news between t and T - Companies' emissions schedule between t and T

Equilibrium price and allocation

Proposition

Given an emissions schedule $(\psi_t)_{t \in [0, T]}$, *equilibrium asset price* is

$$p_t = D_t - \int_t^T \mu_s ds \quad \text{with} \quad \mu_t = \gamma^* \Sigma_t \mathbf{1} - \alpha \theta(\psi_t), \quad \Sigma_t = \sigma_t^\top \sigma_t,$$

and *optimal numbers of shares* held by investors in equilibrium are

$$N_t^r = (1 - \alpha) \left(\mathbf{1} - \frac{1}{\gamma^g} \Sigma_t^{-1} \theta(\psi_t) \right) \quad \text{and} \quad N_t^g = \alpha \left(\mathbf{1} + \frac{1}{\gamma^r} \Sigma_t^{-1} \theta(\psi_t) \right),$$

Equilibrium return

In terms of dollar returns:

$$dp_t = dD_t + \left[\gamma^* \Sigma_t \mathbf{1} - \alpha \theta(\psi_t) \right] dt$$

$$\mathbb{E}^r[dp_t] = \mu_t dt = \left[\gamma^* \Sigma_t \mathbf{1} - \alpha \theta(\psi_t) \right] dt$$

→ Externality premium, $-\alpha \theta(\psi_t)$: Green investors accept (require) a lower (higher) expected return to hold green (brown) assets

This result in a dynamic setting is consistent with:

- Theoretical works (one-period models): Pastor et al. (2020), Pedersen et al. (2020), Zerbib (2020)
- Empirical evidence on realized returns (Brammer et al., 2006; Renneboog et al., 2008; Barber et al., 2019; Hsu et al., 2019; Bolton and Kacperczyk, 2020) and expected returns (Sharfman and Fernando, 2008; ElGhoul et al., 2011; Chava, 2014)

Equilibrium emissions schedule

Proposition

The optimal emissions schedule maximizes for all $t \in [0, T]$ the quantity

$$c_i \psi_t^i + \beta_t^c \theta_i^c(\psi_t^i) + \alpha \beta_t \theta_i(\psi_t^i),$$

where

$$\beta_t^c = \frac{1 - e^{-\rho(T-t)}}{\rho} \quad \text{and} \quad \beta_t = \frac{e^{\rho t} - 1}{\rho}.$$

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$$\beta_t^c = \frac{1 - e^{-\rho(T-t)}}{\rho} \quad \text{and} \quad \beta_t = \frac{e^{\rho t} - 1}{\rho}.$$

⇒ Trade-off between the **cost of reducing the emissions** and the **positive effect of mitigating the climate-related financial risk** perceived by the agents.

Equilibrium emissions schedule

- Special case with quadratic externalities (e.g., quadratic damage function by Barnett, Brock and Hansen, 2019):

Proposition

Assuming $\theta_i(x) = \kappa_0 - \frac{\kappa}{2}x^2$ and $\theta_i^c(x) = \kappa_0^c - \frac{\kappa^c}{2}x^2$, for $x \geq 0$, where κ , κ^c , κ_0 and κ_0^c are positive constants representing the *stringency* with which agents internalize externalities, the optimal emissions schedules are

$$\psi_t^{*,i} = \frac{c_i}{\beta_t^c \kappa^c + \alpha \beta_t \kappa}$$

Equilibrium emissions schedule

Recall:

$$\psi_t^{*,i} = \frac{c_i}{\beta_t^c \kappa^c + \alpha \beta_t \kappa}$$

Limiting cases:

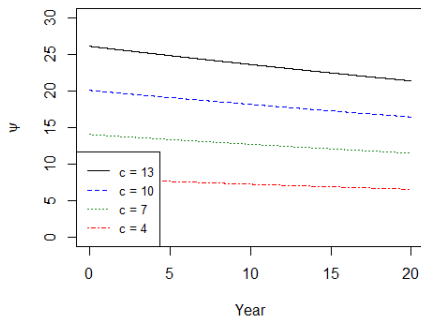
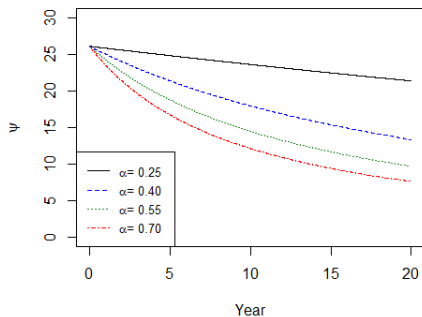
- Limiting case #1: when $\rho \simeq 0$, $\beta_t \simeq t$ and $\beta_t^c \simeq T - t$
 \Rightarrow The effect of green investors increases over time
- Limiting case #2: when $\kappa^c = 0$, green investors still have impact since

$$\psi_t^{*,i} = \frac{c_i}{\alpha \beta_t \kappa}$$

- Limiting case #3: when $c_i = 0$, companies no longer emit GHG.

Equilibrium emissions schedule: simulations

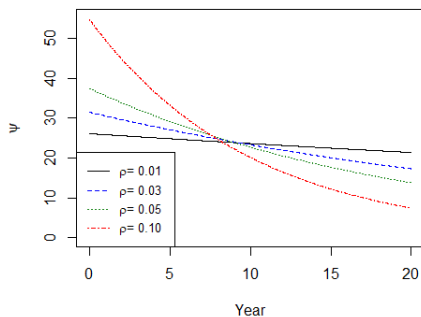
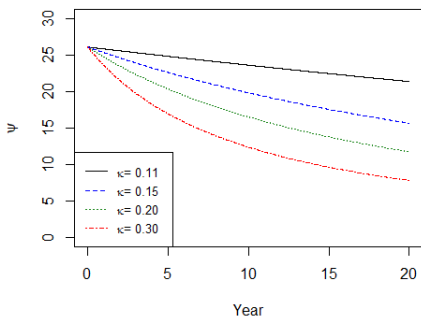
Emissions schedules, according to several values of the proportion of green investors (α , left), and the marginal abatement cost (c , right).



Example: When 25% (50%) of the AUM are managed by green investors, the company reduces its emissions by 1% (4.4%) per year on average.

Equilibrium emissions schedule: simulations

Emissions schedules, according to several values of the green investors stringency (κ , left), and the rate of time preference (ρ , right).



Uncertainty

Fundamental features of climate risks: **uncertainty** and **nonlinearities**.

“[...] given historical evidence alone it is likely to be challenging to extrapolate climate impacts on a world scale to **ranges in which many economies have yet to experience**. Both **richer dynamics and alternative nonlinearities** may well be essential features of the damages that we experience in the future due to global warming. (Barnett, Brock, Hansen, 2019)”

Model with environmental risk: Market and beliefs

Now, green investors internalize *uncertain* future environmental externalities (climate risks) as future random shocks on expected asset pay-offs.

Model with environmental risk: Market and beliefs

Now, green investors internalize *uncertain future environmental externalities* (climate risks) as *future random shocks* on expected asset pay-offs.

The market is no longer complete, and the liquidating dividend defined as

$$D_T = D_0 + \int_0^T \sigma_t dB_t + \sum_{k=1}^{\mathcal{N}_T} Y_k,$$

where:

- Y_k are independent random variables (environmental shocks) with distribution ν_t^ψ (consistent with transition risks).
- \mathcal{N} is a Poisson process with time-dependent intensity ($t \geq 0$):
 - Under regular investors' beliefs ($\mathbb{P}^r = \mathbb{P}$): Λ_t
 - Under green investors' beliefs (\mathbb{P}^g): Λ_t^g

NB: For the moment, regular investors internalize climate-related financial risks.

Model with environmental risk: Market and beliefs

Similarly, we denote the dividend forecast in $t \in [0, T]$ by

$$D_t = \mathbb{E}[D_T | \mathcal{F}_t] = D_0 + \int_0^t \sigma_s dB_s + \sum_{k=1}^{\mathcal{N}_t} Y_k.$$

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Assumption 1: Let

$$L_t(u) := \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} e^{u^\top z} \nu_t^\psi(dz),$$

for $t \in [0, T]$ and $u \in \mathbb{R}^n$.

We assume that $L_t(u) < \infty$ for all $t \in [0, T]$ and $u \in \mathbb{R}^n$ (env. impact $< \infty$).

Model with environmental risk: Equilibrium price

Proposition

The *optimal numbers of shares* for regular investors in equilibrium is the unique solution of

$$\Lambda_t^g \nabla L_t(-\gamma^g(\mathbf{1} - N_t^r)) - \gamma^g \Sigma_t(\mathbf{1} - N_t^r) - \Lambda_t \nabla L_t(-\gamma^r N_t^r) + \gamma^r \Sigma_t N_t^r = 0.$$

The *equilibrium price process* is unique and given by

$$p_t = D_t - \int_t^T \mu_s ds$$

with drift

$$\mu_t = \gamma^r \Sigma_t N_t^r - \Lambda_t \nabla L_t(-\gamma^r N_t^r).$$

Model with environmental risk: Additional assumptions

Assumption 2: For simplicity, and consistent with the first model, we now assume that regular investors do not internalize risk: $\Lambda = 0$.

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Since we cannot have a closed form formula of μ_t , N_t^r , and N_t^g , we analyze the limiting case with small but frequent shocks:

- The intensity of shocks as seen by the green investors is $\Lambda_t^{g,h} = h^{-1}\Lambda_t^g$
- The shock sizes are multiplied by h : $\nu^{h,\psi}(A) = \nu^\psi(\{x \in \mathbb{R}^n : hx \in A\})$

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Introduce the first and second moments of environmental risk:

$$\theta(\psi_t) = \Lambda_t^g \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} z \nu_t^\psi(dz), \quad \pi(\psi_t) := \Lambda_t^g \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} z z^\top \nu_t^\psi(dz), \quad \text{for } t \in [0, T].$$

Model with environmental risk: Equilibrium allocation

Proposition

In the paper, we give a first order approximation of $N^{r,h}$, $N^{g,h}$ and μ_t^h . In particular, as $h \rightarrow 0$, the quantity of assets held by green investors in equilibrium satisfies

$$N^{g,h} = \left(\mathbf{I} - h(1 - \alpha)\Sigma_t^{-1}\pi(\psi_t) \right) N^{g,0} + O(h^2),$$

where $N^{g,0}$ is the quantity held in the case of deterministic externalities.

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where $N^{g,0}$ is the quantity held in the case of deterministic externalities.

By comparison with the deterministic case, **green investors decrease their overall absolute allocation to risky assets** by a certain factor, since $\|N^{g,h}\| < \|N^{g,0}\|$.

Green investors **alleviate the relative pressure** they exert on the **costs of capital of the brown companies** compared to those of the green companies

⇒ **Weakens incentives for brown companies to mitigate emissions**

Model with environmental risk: Emissions schedule

Assumption 3: The size of the shocks $(Y_t)_{t \in [0, T]}$ is deterministic.

Proposition

When $\theta(\psi)$ and $\theta^c(\psi)$ are defined as in the deterministic case, the optimal emissions schedule of the i -th company reads

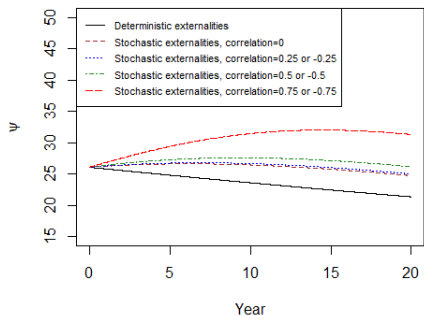
$$\psi_t^{*,i} = \frac{\psi_t^{*,0,i}}{1 - h \Gamma_t^i \psi_t^{*,0,i}} + O(h^2), \quad \text{for } i=1, \dots, n, \quad (1)$$

with $\psi_t^{*,0,i} = \frac{c_i}{\beta_t^c \kappa^c + \alpha \beta_t \kappa}$ being the emissions schedule in the deterministic case and

$$\Gamma_t^i := \kappa \beta_t \frac{\alpha(1-\alpha)}{c_i \Lambda_t^g} \left[\underbrace{(\gamma^r \mathbf{1}^\top \theta(\psi_t^{*,0}) + \theta^\top(\psi_t^{*,0}) \Sigma_t^{-1} \theta(\psi_t^{*,0}))}_{\text{Market adjustment}} + \underbrace{(\gamma^r \theta_i(\psi_t^{*,0}) + 2\theta^\top(\psi_t^{*,0}) \Sigma_t^{-1} \delta_i \theta_i(\psi_t^{*,0}))}_{\text{Stock adjustment}} \right],$$

where δ_i is a vector whose i -th coordinate is equal to one and all other coordinates are zero.

Model with environmental risk: simulations



Market with 2 companies:

- One brown company ($c_2 = 13$)
- One green company ($c_1 = 0.5$)

⇒ For all correlation values, the brown company increases its emissions compared to the deterministic case.

Empirical evidence: Specifications

We estimate our two main results in the deterministic case:

1) the **equilibrium return**

$$\mathbb{E}[dp_t^i] = [\gamma^* \Sigma_t^i - \alpha \theta_i(\psi_t^i)] dt,$$

Estimated using gaussian returns:

$$r_t^i = c + \gamma \text{Cov}(r_t^i, r_t^m) - \alpha \theta_i(\psi_t^i) + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

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2) The **emission schedule**

$$\psi_t^i = \frac{c_i}{\alpha \beta_t \kappa}$$

Estimated over 1 year ($\rho \simeq 0 \Rightarrow \beta_1 \simeq 1$):

$$\log(\psi_{i,t+1}) = \iota + f_i + \beta_\alpha \log(\alpha_t) + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (2)$$

Empirical Evidence: Proxies

We use the carbon intensity to represent $\psi_{i,t}$.

We use green fund holdings to proxy for $\theta(\psi)$ and α :

- Proxy for $\theta(\psi)$:

$$\tilde{\theta}_i(\psi_t^i) = \frac{w_{i,t} - w_{i,t}^b}{w_{i,t}^b},$$

where w is the weight of i -th industry in the holdings of a sample of green funds and w_i^b is the market weight;

- Proxy for α :

$$\tilde{\alpha}_t = \frac{\text{Market value of U.S. stocks in green funds holdings at } t}{\text{Total market value of U.S. stocks in } t}$$

Empirical illustration: Asset returns

	ι	γ	$\alpha\delta$	β_{SMB}	u_{HML}	u_{MOM}	$u_{\Delta\theta}$	Adj OLS/GLS R^2
Estimation of the market and externality premia separately								
Estimate	0.0141	-0.6871						0.05 [0.03,0.07]
t-value	(11.54)	(-0.94)						0.07 [0.05,0.09]
Estimate	0.0142		-0.0002					-0.01 [-0.02,-0.01]
t-value	(18.16)		(-3.41)					0.01 [0.01,0.01]
Main estimation								
Estimate	0.0142	-0.6855	-0.0002					0.04 [0.02,0.05]
t-value	(11.73)	(-0.92)	(-3.6)					0.08 [0.06,0.09]
Main estimation with SMB, HML and MOM betas								
Estimate	0.0138	0.4387	-0.0003	-0.00004	0.0002	-0.0001		0.22 [0.18,0.26]
t-value	(12.38)	(0.59)	(-5.6)	(-0.33)	(1.27)	(-1.36)		0.31 [0.27,0.34]
Main estimation with SMB, HML and MOM betas, and control for unexpected shifts in beliefs								
Estimate	0.014	0.2866	-0.0002	-0.00005	0.0002	-0.0001	0.0138	0.22 [0.18,0.26]
t-value	(12.43)	(0.38)	(-1.95)	(-0.38)	(1.09)	(-1.41)	(3.89)	0.32 [0.28,0.35]

Empirical illustration: Asset returns

Industry	Externality premium (% annual return)
Precious metals	0.18
Coal	0.15
Mining	0.13
Consumer goods	-0.01
Health care	-0.06
Food	-0.07
Electrical equipment	-0.69

Empirical illustration: Emissions

<i>Dependent variable: $\log(\psi_{i,t+1})$</i>	
$\log(\tilde{\alpha}_t)$	-0.079*** (0.014)
Industry FE	Yes
Observations	564
R ²	0.964
Adjusted R ²	0.961
F Statistic	297.502*** (df = 47; 516)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

When the percentage of green assets $\tilde{\alpha}$ doubles, the carbon intensity ψ drops by 5.3% the following year ($\frac{\psi_2 - \psi_1}{\psi_1} = e^{-0.079 \log(2)} - 1 = -0.053$).

⇒ Limited impact

Main take-aways: Impact

- ↗ with the **wealth share** of green investors
⇒ Emphasizes the need to **support the development of green finance** (raising awareness, offering green securities, etc.)
- ↗ with green investors environmental **stringency**
⇒ Advocates the **development of frameworks, taxonomies and labels to allow green investors to discriminate** more clearly between green and brown companies and be more selective in the asset allocation
- ↘ with **uncertainty** about future environmental risks
⇒ Highlights the need for **more transparency** from companies about their future environmental risks

Future research: More efficient approaches for green investing? Combining green investing with shareholder engagement (Broccardo, Hart and Zingales, 2020)?

Thank you for your attention!

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