A multivariate model of strategic asset allocation[☆]

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Abstract

We develop an approximate solution method for the optimal consumption and portfolio choice problem of an infinitely long-lived investor with Epstein–Zin utility who faces a set of asset returns described by a vector autoregression in returns and state variables. Empirical estimates in long-run annual and post-war quarterly U.S. data suggest that the predictability of stock returns greatly increases the optimal demand for stocks. The role of nominal bonds in long-term portfolios depends on the importance of real interest rate risk relative to other sources of risk. Long-term inflation-indexed bonds greatly increase the utility of conservative investors.
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1. Introduction

Academic research in finance has had a remarkable impact on many aspects of the financial services industry, from mutual fund management to securities pricing and issuance to corporate risk management. But academic financial economists have thus far provided surprisingly little guidance to financial planners who offer portfolio advice to long-term investors. The mean–variance analysis of Markowitz (1952) provides a basic paradigm and usefully emphasizes the effect of diversification on risk, but this model ignores several critically important factors. Most important, the analysis is static; it assumes that investors care only about risks to wealth one period ahead. In reality, however, many investors—individuals as well as institutions such as charitable foundations or universities—seek to finance a stream of consumption over a long lifetime.

Financial economists have understood at least since the work of Samuelson (1969) and Merton (1969, 1971, 1973) that the solution to a multiperiod portfolio choice problem can be very different from the solution to a static portfolio choice problem. In particular, if investment opportunities vary over time, then long-term investors care about shocks to investment opportunities—the productivity of wealth—as well as shocks to wealth itself. They may wish to hedge their exposures to wealth productivity shocks, giving rise to intertemporal hedging demands for financial assets. Brennan et al. (1997) have coined the phrase "strategic asset allocation" to describe this farsighted response to time-varying investment opportunities.

Unfortunately, Merton's intertemporal model is hard to solve in closed form. For many years solutions to the model were generally unavailable unless the investor had log utility of consumption with constant relative risk aversion equal to one, but this case is relatively uninteresting because it implies that Merton's model reduces to the static model. Rubinstein (1976a,b) obtains some important insights by adding a subsistence level to the log utility model, converting it into a model of declining relative risk aversion; in particular, he makes the point that long-term inflation-indexed bonds, and not short-term bonds, are the riskless asset for long-term investors.[1] But these preferences are not standard and most economists have continued to assume constant relative risk aversion. The lack of closed-form solutions for optimal portfolios with constant relative risk aversion has limited the applicability of the Merton model; it has not become a usable empirical paradigm, has not displaced the Markowitz model, and has had little influence on financial planners and their clients.

Recently, this situation has begun to change as a result of several related developments. First, computing power and numerical methods have advanced to the point at which realistic multiperiod portfolio choice problems can be solved

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[1] Modigliani and Sutch (1966) argue that bonds are safe assets for long-term investors, and Stiglitz (1970) builds a rigorous model to illustrate their point. Rubinstein (1981) also explores the intertemporal demand for long-term bonds in a three-period version of the Merton model under the assumption of exponential (constant absolute risk aversion) utility. Rubinstein (1976b), Lucas (1978), Breeden (1979), and Grossman and Shiller (1981) show how Merton's results could be interpreted in terms of consumption risk, an idea that has had major influence in macroeconomics.

numerically using discrete-state approximations. Balduzzi and Lynch (1999), Barberis (2000), Brennan et al. (1997, 1999), Cocco et al. (1998), and Lynch (2001) are important examples of this style of work. Second, financial theorists have discovered some new closed-form solutions to the Merton model. In a continuous-time model with a constant riskless interest rate and a single risky asset whose expected return follows a mean-reverting (Ornstein-Uhlenbeck) process, for example, the model can be solved if long-lived investors have power utility defined over terminal wealth (Kim and Omberg, 1996), or if investors have power utility defined over consumption and the innovation to the expected asset return is perfectly correlated with the innovation to the unexpected return, making the asset market effectively complete (Wachter, 2002), or if the investor has Epstein and Zin (1989, 1991) utility with intertemporal elasticity of substitution equal to one (Campbell and Viceira, 1999; Schroder and Skiadas, 1999). Similar results are available in affine models of the term structure (Brennan and Xia, 2002; Campbell and Viceira, 2001; Liu, 1998; Wachter, 2000). Finally, approximate analytical solutions to the Merton model have been developed (Campbell and Viceira, 1999, 2001, 2002). These solutions are based on perturbations of the known exact solutions for intertemporal elasticity of substitution equal to one, so they are accurate provided that the intertemporal elasticity is not too far from one. They offer analytical insights into investor behavior in models that fall outside the still limited class that can be solved exactly.

Despite this encouraging progress, it remains extremely hard to solve realistically complex cases of the Merton model. Discrete-state numerical algorithms become slow and unreliable in the presence of many assets and state variables, and approximate analytical methods seem to require a daunting quantity of algebra. Neither approach has been developed to the point at which one can specify a general vector autoregression (VAR) for asset returns and hope to solve the associated portfolio choice problem.

The purpose of this paper is to remedy this situation by extending the approximate analytical approach of Campbell and Viceira (1999, 2001, 2002). Specifically, we show that if asset returns are described by a VAR, if the investor is infinitely long-lived with Epstein–Zin utility, and if there are no borrowing or short-sales constraints on asset allocations, then the Campbell-Viceira approach implies a system of linear–quadratic equations for portfolio weights and consumption as functions of state variables. These equations are generally too cumbersome to solve analytically, but can be solved very rapidly by simple numerical methods. As the time interval of the model shrinks, the solutions become exact if the elasticity of intertemporal substitution equals one. They are accurate approximations for short time intervals and elasticities close to one.

We apply our method to a VAR for short-term real interest rates, excess stock returns, and excess bond returns. We also include variables that have been identified as return predictors by past empirical research: the short-term interest rate (Fama and Schwert, 1977; Campbell, 1987; Glosten et al., 1993); the dividend–price ratio (Campbell and Shiller, 1988; Fama and French, 1988); and the yield spread between long-term and short-term bonds (Shiller et al., 1983; Fama, 1984; Fama and French,

1989; Campbell and Shiller, 1991). In a variant of the basic approach we construct data on hypothetical inflation-indexed bond returns, following the approach of Campbell and Shiller (1996), and study the allocation to stocks, inflation-indexed bonds, nominal bonds, and bills.

Two closely related papers are by Brennan et al. (1999) and Lynch (2001). Brennan et al. consider asset allocation among stocks, nominal bonds, bills, and interest-rate futures, using short- and long-term nominal interest rates and the dividend–price ratio as state variables. The investor is assumed to have power utility defined over wealth at a given horizon, and the stochastic optimization problem is solved using numerical dynamic programming imposing borrowing and short-sales constraints. Lynch considers asset allocation among portfolios of stocks sorted by size and book-to-market ratios, using the long-short yield spread and the dividend–price ratio as state variables, and assuming power utility defined over consumption. He solves the optimization problem with and without short-sales constraints, again using numerical dynamic programming. Our paper, by contrast, assumes recursive Epstein–Zin utility defined over an infinite stream of consumption and does not impose any portfolio constraints. The simplicity of our solution method allows us to consider an unrestricted VAR in which lagged returns are state variables along with the short-term nominal interest rate, dividend–price ratio, and yield spread. Our method also allows us to break intertemporal hedging demands into components associated with individual state variables.

The organization of the paper is as follows. Section 2 explains our basic setup, and Section 3 describes our approximate solution method. Section 4 presents empirical results when stocks, nominal bonds, and bills are available. Section 5 considers portfolio allocation in the presence of inflation-indexed bonds. Section 6 concludes.

2. The model

Our model is set in discrete time. We assume an infinitely long-lived investor with Epstein–Zin recursive preferences defined over a stream of consumption. This contrasts with papers such as Brennan et al. (1997, 1999), Kim and Omberg (1996), and Barberis (2000) that consider finite-horizon models with power utility defined over terminal wealth. We allow an arbitrary set of traded assets and state variables. Thus we do not make the assumption of Wachter (2000, 2002) that markets are complete, and we substantially extend the work of Campbell and Viceira (1999) in which there is a single risky asset with a single state variable.

2.1. Securities

There are n assets available for investment. The investor allocates after-consumption wealth among these assets. The real portfolio return $R_{p,t+1}$ is given by

$$R_{p,t+1} = \sum_{i=2}^{n} \alpha_{i,t}(R_{i,t+1} - R_{1,t+1}) + R_{1,t+1}, \tag{1}$$

where $\alpha_{i,t}$ is the portfolio weight on asset i. The first asset is a short-term instrument whose real return is $R_{1,t+1}$. Although we use the short-term return as a benchmark and measure other returns relative to it, we do not assume that this return is riskless. In practice, we use a nominal bill as the short-term asset; the nominal return on a nominal bill is riskless, but the real return is not because it is subject to short-term inflation risk. In most of our empirical analysis we consider two other assets: stocks and long-term nominal bonds. In Section 5, we also consider long-term inflation-indexed bonds.

2.2. Dynamics of state variables

We postulate that the dynamics of the relevant state variables are well captured by a first-order vector autoregressive process or VAR(1). This type of dynamic specification has been used by Kandel and Stambaugh (1987), Campbell (1991, 1996), Hodrick (1992), and Barberis (2000), among others. In principle, the use of a VAR(1) is not restrictive since any vector autoregression can be rewritten as a VAR(1) through an expansion of the vector of state variables. For parsimony, however, in our empirical work we avoid additional lags that would require an expanded state vector with additional parameters to estimate. Specifically, we define

$$\mathbf{x}_{t+1} \equiv \begin{bmatrix} r_{2,t+1} - r_{1,t+1} \\ r_{3,t+1} - r_{1,t+1} \\ \vdots \\ r_{n,t+1} - r_{1,t+1} \end{bmatrix}, \tag{2}$$

where $r_{i,t+1} \equiv \log(R_{i,t+1})$ for all i, and $\mathbf{x}_{t+1}$ is the vector of log excess returns. In our empirical application, $r_{1,t+1}$ is the ex post real short rate, $r_{2,t+1}$ refers to the real stock return, and $r_{3,t+1}$ is the export real return on nominal bonds.

We allow the system to include other state variables $\mathbf{s}_{t+1}$, such as the dividend–price ratio. Stacking $r_{1,t+1}$, $\mathbf{x}_{t+1}$, and $\mathbf{s}_{t+1}$ into an $m \times 1$ vector $\mathbf{z}_{t+1}$, we have

$$\mathbf{z}_{t+1} \equiv \begin{bmatrix} r_{1,t+1} \\ \mathbf{x}_{t+1} \\ \mathbf{s}_{t+1} \end{bmatrix}. \tag{3}$$

We will call $\mathbf{z}_{t+1}$ the state vector and we assume a first-order vector autoregression for $\mathbf{z}_{t+1}$:

$$\mathbf{z}_{t+1} = \mathbf{\Phi}_0 + \mathbf{\Phi}_1 \mathbf{z}_t + \mathbf{v}_{t+1}, \tag{4}$$

where $\mathbf{\Phi}_0$ is the $m \times 1$ vector of intercepts, $\mathbf{\Phi}_1$ is the $m \times m$ matrix of slope coefficients, and $\mathbf{v}_{t+1}$ are the shocks to the state variables satisfying the following

distributional assumptions:

$$\mathbf{v}_{t+1} \overset{\text{i.i.d.}}{\sim} \mathcal{N}(0, \mathbf{\Sigma}_v),$$

$$\mathbf{\Sigma}_v \equiv \text{Var}_t(\mathbf{v}_{t+1}) = \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1^2 & \boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1x}' & \boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1s}' \\ \boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1x} & \mathbf{\Sigma}_{xx} & \mathbf{\Sigma}_{xs}' \\ \boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1s} & \mathbf{\Sigma}_{xs} & \mathbf{\Sigma}_{ss} \end{bmatrix}. \tag{5}$$

Thus, we allow the shocks to be cross-sectionally correlated, but assume that they are homoskedastic and independently distributed over time. The VAR framework conveniently captures the dependence of expected returns of various assets on their past histories as well as on other predictive variables. The stochastic evolution of these other state variables $\mathbf{s}_{t+1}$ is also determined by the system.

The assumption of homoskedasticity is of course restrictive. It rules out the possibility that the state variables predict changes in risk; they can affect portfolio choice only by predicting changes in expected returns. Authors such as Campbell (1987), Harvey (1989, 1991), and Glosten et al. (1993) have explored the ability of the state variables used here to predict risk and have found only modest effects that seem to be dominated by the effects of the state variables on expected returns. Chacko and Viceira (1999) show how to include changing risk in a long-term portfolio choice problem, using a continuous-time extension of the methodology of Campbell and Viceira (1999); they find that changes in equity risk are not persistent enough to have large effects on the intertemporal hedging demand for equities. Aït-Sahalia and Brandt (2001) adopt a semiparametric methodology that accommodates both changing expected returns and changing risk.

Given our homoskedastic VAR formulation, the unconditional distribution of $\mathbf{z}_t$ is easily derived. The state vector $\mathbf{z}_t$ inherits the normality of the shocks $\mathbf{v}_{t+1}$. The appendix, available on the website of this journal, gives expressions for the unconditional mean and variance–covariance matrix of $\mathbf{z}_t$.

2.3. Preferences and optimality conditions

The assumption of Epstein–Zin recursive preferences has the desirable property that the notion of risk aversion is separated from that of the elasticity of intertemporal substitution. Following Epstein and Zin, we let

$$U(C_t, \text{E}_t(U_{t+1})) = [(1-\delta)C_t^{(1-\gamma)/\theta} + \delta(\text{E}_t(U_{t+1}^{1-\gamma}))^{1/\theta}]^{\theta/(1-\gamma)}, \tag{6}$$

where C_t is consumption at time t, $\gamma > 0$ is the relative risk aversion coefficient, $\psi > 0$ is the elasticity of intertemporal substitution, $0 < \delta < 1$ is the time discount factor, $\theta \equiv (1-\gamma)/(1-\psi^{-1})$, and $\text{E}_t(\cdot)$ is the conditional expectation operator. Epstein–Zin recursive utility nests as a special case the standard, time-separable power utility specification, in which $\gamma = \psi^{-1}$. Log utility obtains when we impose the additional restriction $\gamma = \psi^{-1} = 1$.

At time t, the investor uses all relevant information to make optimal consumption and portfolio decisions. The intertemporal budget constraint is

$$W_{t+1} = (W_t - C_t)R_{p,t+1}, \tag{7}$$

where C_t is consumption and W_t is wealth at time t.

Epstein and Zin (1989, 1991) have shown that with this budget constraint, the Euler equation for consumption is

$$\mathrm{E}_t\left[\left\{\delta\left(\frac{C_{t+1}}{C_t}\right)^{-1/\psi}\right\}^{\theta} R_{p,t+1}^{-(1-\theta)} R_{i,t+1}\right] = 1 \tag{8}$$

for any asset i, including the portfolio p itself. This first-order condition reduces to the standard one in the power utility case where $\gamma = \psi^{-1}$ and $\theta = 1$.

The investor's optimal consumption and portfolio policies must satisfy Eq. (8). When investment opportunities are constant, the optimal policies imply a constant consumption–wealth ratio and a myopic portfolio rule—that is, the investor chooses a portfolio as if the investment horizon were only one period. However, when investment opportunities are time varying, there are no known exact analytical solutions to this equation except for some specific values of γ and ψ. Giovannini and Weil (1989) show that with $\gamma = 1$, it is optimal for the investor to follow a myopic portfolio rule. They also show that with $\psi = 1$, the investor optimally chooses a constant consumption–wealth ratio equal to $(1 - \delta)$. However, with $\gamma = 1$, the optimal consumption–wealth ratio is not constant unless $\psi = 1$ and, conversely, with $\psi = 1$ the optimal portfolio rule is not myopic unless $\gamma = 1$. Thus, the solution is fully myopic only when $\gamma = \psi = 1$, that is, with log utility. To solve for the optimal rules in all other cases, we extend the approximate analytical solution method in Campbell and Viceira (1999, 2001) to a multivariate framework.

Epstein and Zin (1989, 1991) derive another useful result. They show that the value function—the maximized utility function in Eq. (6)—per unit of wealth can be written as a power function of the optimal consumption–wealth ratio:

$$V_t \equiv \frac{U_t}{W_t} = (1 - \delta)^{-\psi/(1-\psi)}\left(\frac{C_t}{W_t}\right)^{1/(1-\psi)}. \tag{9}$$

We have already noted that the ratio C_t/W_t approaches $(1 - \delta)$ as ψ approaches one. This allows Eq. (9) to have a finite limit as ψ approaches one.

3. Solution methodology

3.1. An approximate framework

The return on the portfolio in Eq. (1) is expressed in terms of the simple returns on the assets. Since it is more convenient to work with log returns in our framework, we

first derive an expression for the log return on the portfolio. Following Campbell and Viceira (1999, 2001), we approximate the log return on the portfolio as

$$r_{p,t+1} = r_{1,t+1} + \boldsymbol{\alpha}'_t \mathbf{x}_{t+1} + \tfrac{1}{2}\boldsymbol{\alpha}'_t(\boldsymbol{\sigma}^2_x - \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx}\boldsymbol{\alpha}_t), \tag{10}$$

where $\boldsymbol{\sigma}^2_x \equiv \mathrm{diag}(\boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx})$ is the vector consisting of the diagonal elements of $\boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx}$, the variances of excess returns. This approximation holds exactly in continuous time and is highly accurate for short time intervals. Just as in a continuous-time model, Eq. (10) prevents bankruptcy even when asset positions are leveraged; Campbell and Viceira (2002) discuss the relation of this approach with continuous-time modeling. When there is only one risky asset, Eq. (10) collapses to the approximation derived in Campbell and Viceira (1999). Detailed derivations for this and other results in this section are provided in the appendix.

The budget constraint in Eq. (7) is nonlinear. Following Campbell (1993, 1996), we log-linearize around the unconditional mean of the log consumption–wealth ratio to obtain

$$\Delta w_{t+1} \approx r_{p,t+1} + \left(1 - \frac{1}{\rho}\right)(c_t - w_t) + k, \tag{11}$$

where Δ is the difference operator, $\rho \equiv 1 - \exp(\mathrm{E}[c_t - w_t])$, and $k \equiv \log(\rho) + (1 - \rho)\log(1 - \rho)/\rho$. When consumption is chosen optimally by the investor, ρ depends on the optimal level of c_t relative to w_t and in this sense is endogenous. This form of the budget constraint is exact if the elasticity of intertemporal substitution $\psi = 1$, in which case $c_t - w_t$ is constant and $\rho = \delta$.

Next, we apply a second-order Taylor expansion to the Euler equation in (8) around the conditional means of $\Delta c_{t+1}, r_{p,t+1}$, and $r_{i,t+1}$ to obtain

$$0 = \theta \log \delta - \frac{\theta}{\psi}\mathrm{E}_t\Delta c_{t+1} - (1 - \theta)\mathrm{E}_t r_{p,t+1} + \mathrm{E}_t r_{i,t+1}$$

$$+ \frac{1}{2}\mathrm{Var}_t\left[-\frac{\theta}{\psi}\Delta c_{t+1} - (1 - \theta)r_{p,t+1} + r_{i,t+1}\right]. \tag{12}$$

This loglinearized Euler equation is exact if consumption and asset returns are jointly lognormally distributed, which is the case when the elasticity of intertemporal substitution $\psi = 1$. It can be usefully transformed as follows. Setting $i = 1$ in Eq. (12), subtracting from the general form of Eq. (12), and noting that $\Delta c_{t+1} = \Delta(c_{t+1} - w_{t+1}) + \Delta w_{t+1}$, we obtain, for asset $i = 2, \ldots, n$,

$$\mathrm{E}_t(r_{i,t+1} - r_{1,t+1}) + \frac{1}{2}\mathrm{Var}_t(r_{i,t+1} - r_{1,t+1})$$

$$= \frac{\theta}{\psi}(\sigma_{i,c-w,t} - \sigma_{1,c-w,t}) + \gamma(\sigma_{i,p,t} - \sigma_{1,p,t}) - (\sigma_{i,1,t} - \sigma_{1,1,t}), \tag{13}$$

where $\sigma_{i,c-w,t} = \mathrm{Cov}_t(r_{i,t+1}, c_{t+1} - w_{t+1})$, $\sigma_{1,c-w,t} = \mathrm{Cov}_t(r_{1,t+1}, c_{t+1} - w_{t+1})$, $\sigma_{i,p,t} = \mathrm{Cov}_t(r_{i,t+1}, r_{p,t+1})$, $\sigma_{1,p,t} = \mathrm{Cov}_t(r_{1,t+1}, r_{p,t+1})$, $\sigma_{i,1,t} = \mathrm{Cov}_t(r_{i,t+1}, r_{1,t+1})$, and $\sigma_{1,1,t} = \mathrm{Var}_t(r_{1,t+1})$. The left-hand side of this equation is the risk premium on asset i over the benchmark asset 1, adjusted for Jensen's Inequality by adding one-half the

variance of the excess return. The equation relates asset i's risk premium to its excess covariance with consumption growth, its excess covariance with the portfolio return, and the covariance of its excess return with the benchmark return. (The last term drops out when the benchmark asset is riskless.) Of course, consumption growth and the portfolio return are endogenous, so this is a first-order condition describing the optimal solution rather than a statement of the solution itself.

3.2. Solving the approximate model

To solve the model, we now guess that the optimal portfolio and consumption rules take the form

$$\boldsymbol{\alpha}_t = \mathbf{A}_0 + \mathbf{A}_1 \mathbf{z}_t, \tag{14}$$

$$c_t - w_t = b_0 + \mathbf{B}_1' \mathbf{z}_t + \mathbf{z}_t' \mathbf{B}_2 \mathbf{z}_t. \tag{15}$$

That is, the optimal portfolio rule is linear in the VAR state vector but the optimal consumption rule is quadratic. $\mathbf{A}_0, \mathbf{A}_1, b_0, \mathbf{B}_1$, and $\mathbf{B}_2$ are constant coefficient matrices to be determined, with dimensions $(n-1) \times 1, (n-1) \times m, 1 \times 1, m \times 1$, and $m \times m$, respectively. This is a multivariate generalization of the solution obtained by Campbell and Viceira (1999). It is important to note that only $m + (m^2 - m)/2$ elements of $\mathbf{B}_2$ are determined. The diagonal elements of $\mathbf{B}_2$ are unique, but the consumption–wealth ratio is determined by the sums of off-diagonal elements $b_{2,ij} + b_{2,ji}$ because $z_{i,t} z_{j,t} = z_{j,t} z_{i,t}$. Thus we can impose arbitrary normalizations on $\mathbf{B}_2$ provided that we leave each sum $b_{2,ij} + b_{2,ji}$ unrestricted. For example, we could restrict $\mathbf{B}_2$ to be symmetric, upper triangular, or lower triangular.

To verify this guess and solve for the parameters of the solution, we write the conditional moments that appear in Eq. (13) as functions of the VAR parameters and the unknown parameters of Eqs. (14) and (15). We then solve for the parameters that satisfy Eq. (13). Recalling that the vector of excess returns is written as $\mathbf{x}_t$, the conditional expectation on the left-hand side of Eq. (13) is

$$\mathrm{E}_t(\mathbf{x}_{t+1}) + \tfrac{1}{2} \mathrm{Var}_t(\mathbf{x}_{t+1}) = \mathbf{H}_x \boldsymbol{\Phi}_0 + \mathbf{H}_x \boldsymbol{\Phi}_1 \mathbf{z}_t + \tfrac{1}{2} \boldsymbol{\sigma}_x^2, \tag{16}$$

where $\mathbf{H}_x$ is a selection matrix that selects the vector of excess returns from the full state vector.

The appendix shows that the three conditional covariances on the right-hand side of Eq. (13) can all be written as linear functions of the state variables. In matrix notation,

$$\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{c-w,t} - \sigma_{1,c-w,t}\boldsymbol{\iota} \equiv [\sigma_{i,c-w,t} - \sigma_{1,c-w,t}]_{i=2,\ldots,n} = \boldsymbol{\Lambda}_0 + \boldsymbol{\Lambda}_1 \mathbf{z}_t, \tag{17}$$

$$\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{p,t} - \sigma_{1,p,t}\boldsymbol{\iota} \equiv [\sigma_{i,p,t} - \sigma_{1,p,t}]_{i=2,\ldots,n} = \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx}\boldsymbol{\alpha}_t + \boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1x}, \tag{18}$$

$$\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1,t} - \sigma_{1,1,t}\boldsymbol{\iota} \equiv [\sigma_{i,1,t} - \sigma_{1,1,t}]_{i=2,\ldots,n} = \boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1x}, \tag{19}$$

where $\boldsymbol{\iota}$ is a vector of ones.

3.3. Optimal portfolio choice

Solving the loglinearized Euler equation in (13) for the portfolio rule we have

$$\boldsymbol{\alpha}_t = \frac{1}{\gamma} \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx}^{-1} \left[\mathrm{E}_t(\mathbf{x}_{t+1}) + \frac{1}{2} \mathrm{Var}_t(\mathbf{x}_{t+1}) + (1-\gamma)\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1x} \right]$$

$$+ \frac{1}{\gamma} \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx}^{-1} \left[-\frac{\theta}{\psi} (\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{c-w,t} - \sigma_{1,c-w,t}\boldsymbol{\iota}) \right], \tag{20}$$

where $\mathrm{E}_t(\mathbf{x}_{t+1}) + \mathrm{Var}_t(\mathbf{x}_{t+1})/2$ and $\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{c-w,t} - \sigma_{1,c-w,t}\boldsymbol{\iota}$ are the linear functions of $\mathbf{z}_t$ given in Eqs. (16) and (17), respectively. This equation is a multiple-asset generalization of Restoy (1992) and Campbell and Viceira (1999). It expresses the optimal portfolio choice as the sum of two components.

The first term on the right-hand side of Eq. (20) is the myopic component of asset demand. When the benchmark asset 1 is riskless ($\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1x} = 0$), then the myopic allocation is the vector of expected excess returns on risky assets, scaled by the inverse of the variance–covariance matrix of risky asset returns and the reciprocal of the coefficient of relative risk aversion. Investors with $\gamma \neq 1$ adjust this allocation by a term $(1-\gamma)\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1x}$ when asset 1 is risky. Because of its myopic nature, this component does not depend on ψ, the elasticity of intertemporal substitution.

The second term on the right-hand side of Eq. (20) is the intertemporal hedging demand. In our model, the investment opportunity set is time varying since expected returns on various assets are state-dependent. Merton (1969, 1971) shows that a rational investor who is more risk averse than a logarithmic investor will hedge against adverse changes in investment opportunities. For a logarithmic investor, the optimal portfolio rule is purely myopic and hence the hedging demand is identically equal to zero. This can be easily seen from Eq. (20) since when $\gamma = 1$, $\theta = 0$ and the hedging component vanishes. Also, when investment opportunities are constant over time, hedging demand is zero for any level of risk aversion. This case corresponds to having only the intercept term in our VAR specification. It is straightforward to verify that the coefficient matrices $\boldsymbol{\Lambda}_0$ and $\boldsymbol{\Lambda}_1$ in the hedging component are zero matrices in this case and thus there is no hedging component of asset demand.

Substituting Eqs. (16) and (17) in Eq. (20) and rearranging the terms yields

$$\boldsymbol{\alpha}_t \equiv \mathbf{A}_0 + \mathbf{A}_1 \mathbf{z}_t, \tag{21}$$

where

$$\mathbf{A}_0 = \left(\frac{1}{\gamma}\right) \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx}^{-1} \left(\mathbf{H}_x \boldsymbol{\Phi}_0 + \frac{1}{2} \boldsymbol{\sigma}_x^2 + (1-\gamma)\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{1x} \right) + \left(1 - \frac{1}{\gamma} \right) \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx}^{-1} \left(\frac{-\boldsymbol{\Lambda}_0}{1-\psi} \right), \tag{22}$$

$$\mathbf{A}_1 = \left(\frac{1}{\gamma}\right) \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx}^{-1} \mathbf{H}_x \boldsymbol{\Phi}_1 + \left(1 - \frac{1}{\gamma} \right) \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{xx}^{-1} \left(\frac{-\boldsymbol{\Lambda}_1}{1-\psi} \right). \tag{23}$$

Eq. (21) verifies our initial guess for the form of the optimal portfolio rule and expresses the coefficient matrices $\mathbf{A}_0$ and $\mathbf{A}_1$ as functions of the underlying parameters describing preferences and the dynamics of the state variables. $\mathbf{A}_0$ and $\mathbf{A}_1$ also depend on the parameters in the consumption–wealth ratio equation, $\mathbf{B}_1$ and $\mathbf{B}_2$,

through the coefficient matrices $\mathbf{\Lambda}_0$ and $\mathbf{\Lambda}_1$. The terms in $(1 - 1/\gamma)$ in Eqs. (22) and (23) reflect the effect of intertemporal hedging on optimal portfolio choice. Thus intertemporal hedging considerations affect both the mean optimal portfolio allocation to risky assets—through $\mathbf{A}_0$ and $\mathbf{A}_1$—and the sensitivity of the optimal portfolio allocation to changes in the state variables—through $\mathbf{A}_1$.

The appendix shows that, given the loglinearization parameter ρ, the coefficient matrices $-\mathbf{\Lambda}_0/(1 - \psi)$ and $-\mathbf{\Lambda}_1/(1 - \psi)$ are independent of the intertemporal elasticity of substitution ψ. This implies that the optimal portfolio rule is independent of ψ given ρ; ψ only affects portfolio choice to the extent that it enters into the determination of ρ. This property generalizes to a model with multiple assets and state variables a similar result shown by Campbell and Viceira (1999) in the context of a univariate model.

3.4. Optimal consumption

Next, we solve for the optimal consumption–wealth ratio. Setting $i = p$ in Eq. (12) and rearranging,

$$E_t(\Delta c_{t+1}) = \psi \log \delta + \chi_{p,t} + \psi E_t(r_{p,t+1}), \tag{24}$$

where

$$\chi_{p,t} = \frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{\theta}{\psi}\right)\mathrm{Var}_t(\Delta c_{t+1} - \psi r_{p,t+1}). \tag{25}$$

This equation relates expected consumption growth to preferences and investment opportunities. A patient investor with high δ plans more rapid consumption growth. Similarly, when the return on the portfolio is expected to be higher, the investor increases planned consumption growth to take advantage of good investment opportunities. The sensitivity of planned consumption growth to both patience and returns is measured by the elasticity of intertemporal substitution ψ.

The term $\chi_{p,t}$ arises from the precautionary savings motive. Randomness in future consumption growth, relative to portfolio returns, increases precautionary savings and lowers current consumption if $\theta > 0$ (a condition satisfied by power utility for which $\theta = 1$), but reduces precautionary savings and increases current consumption if $\theta < 0$.

We show in the appendix that combining Eq. (24) and the loglinearized budget constraint in Eq. (11), we obtain a difference equation in $c_t - w_t$:

$$c_t - w_t = -\rho\psi \log \delta - \rho\chi_{p,t} + \rho(1 - \psi)E_t(r_{p,t+1}) + \rho k + \rho E_t(c_{t+1} - w_{t+1}), \quad (26)$$

where both $E_t(r_{p,t+1})$ and $\chi_{p,t}$ are quadratic functions of the VAR state variables. Given our conjectured quadratic form for the optimal consumption–wealth ratio, both sides of this equation are quadratic in the VAR state variables. This confirms our initial conjecture on the form of the consumption–wealth ratio and gives us a set of equations that solve for the coefficients of the optimal consumption policy, b_0, $\mathbf{B}_1$, and $\mathbf{B}_2$.

In a model with a single state variable, as in Campbell and Viceira (1999, 2001), it is feasible to solve these equations to obtain approximate closed-form solutions for consumption and portfolio choice given the parameter of loglinearization ρ. A simple numerical recursion then obtains the value of ρ that is consistent with the derived consumption rule. In the current model, with multiple state variables, we use a numerical procedure to solve for consumption and portfolio choice given ρ. This procedure, which is described in detail in the appendix, converges much more rapidly than the usual numerical procedures which approximate the model on a discrete grid. In our empirical results, we emphasize the case $\psi = 1$, for which the value of ρ is known to equal the time discount factor δ; however, it is straightforward to add a numerical recursion for ρ when this is needed.

3.5. Value function

Substitution of the optimal log consumption–wealth ratio into the expression for the value function in Eq. (9) gives

$$
\begin{aligned}
V_t &= (1 - \delta)^{-\psi/(1-\psi)} \left(\frac{C_t}{W_t} \right)^{1/(1-\psi)} \\
&= \exp\left\{ -\frac{\psi}{1-\psi} \log(1-\delta) + \frac{b_0}{1-\psi} + \frac{\mathbf{B}_1'}{1-\psi}\mathbf{z}_t + \mathbf{z}_t'\frac{\mathbf{B}_2}{1-\psi}\mathbf{z}_t \right\} \\
&= \exp\{ \mathcal{B}_0 + \mathcal{B}_1'\mathbf{z}_t + \mathbf{z}_t'\mathcal{B}_2\mathbf{z}_t \},
\end{aligned}
\tag{27}
$$

where the definitions of $\mathcal{B}_0$, $\mathcal{B}_1$, and $\mathcal{B}_2$ are obvious from the second equality.

The appendix shows that $\mathcal{B}_1$ and $\mathcal{B}_2$ are independent of ψ given ρ. However, $\mathcal{B}_0$ does depend on ψ. The appendix also derives an expression for $\mathcal{B}_0$ when $\psi = 1$. This derivation uses the fact that $C_t/W_t = 1 - \delta$ when $\psi = 1$, which implies that $\rho = \delta$. Therefore, the value function in Eq. (27) has a well-defined finite limit in the case $\psi = 1$, which obtains by setting $\rho = \delta$ in the expressions for $\mathcal{B}_0$, $\mathcal{B}_1$, and $\mathcal{B}_2$. Finally, the appendix derives an expression for the unconditional mean of the value function, $\mathrm{E}[V_t]$. We can use these results to calculate the utility of long-term investors who are offered alternative menus of assets.

4. An empirical application: stocks, bonds and bills

Section 3 provides a general theoretical framework for strategic asset allocation. In this section, we use the framework to investigate how investors who differ in their consumption preferences and risk aversion allocate their portfolios among three assets: stocks, nominal bonds, and nominal Treasury bills. Investment opportunities are described by a VAR system that includes short-term ex post real interest rates, excess stock returns, excess bond returns, and variables that have been identified as return predictors by empirical research: the short-term nominal interest rate, the

dividend–price ratio, and the yield spread between long-term bonds and Treasury bills.

The short-term nominal interest rate has been used to predict stock and bond returns by authors such as Fama and Schwert (1977), Campbell (1987), and Glosten et al. (1993). An alternative approach, suggested by Campbell (1991) and Hodrick (1992), is to stochastically detrend the short-term rate by subtracting a backwards moving average (usually measured over one year). For two reasons we do not adopt this alternative here. First, one of our data sets is annual and does not allow us to measure a one-year moving average of short rates. Second, we want our model to capture inflation dynamics. If we include both the ex post real interest rate and the nominal interest rate in the VAR system, we can easily calculate inflation by subtracting one from the other. This allows us to separate nominal from real variables, so that we can extend our model to include a hypothetical inflation-indexed bond in the menu of assets. We consider this extension in Section 5.

We compute optimal portfolio rules for different values of γ, assuming $\psi = 1$ and $\delta = 0.92$ in annual terms. This case gives the exact solution of Giovannini and Weil (1989), where the consumption–wealth ratio is constant and equal to $1 - \delta$. This implies that the loglinearization parameter $\rho \equiv 1 - \exp(E[c_t - w_t])$ is equal to δ. The choice of $\psi = 1$ is convenient but not necessary for our results. We have also calculated optimal portfolios for the case $\psi = 0.5$ and $\delta = 0.92$, and find very similar results to those reported here.

Section 4.1 describes the quarterly and annual data used in this exercise, and Section 4.2 reports the estimates of the VAR system. The numerical procedure used to calculate optimal asset allocations is described in detail in the appendix. Section 4.3 discusses our findings on asset allocation.

4.1. Data description

Our calibration exercise is based on post-war quarterly and long-term annual data for the U.S. stock market. The quarterly data begin in the second quarter of 1952, shortly after the Fed-Treasury Accord that fundamentally changed the stochastic process for nominal interest rates, and end in the fourth quarter of 1999. We obtain our quarterly data from the Center for Research in Security Prices (CRSP). We construct the ex post real Treasury bill rate as the difference of the log return (or yield) on a 90-day bill and log inflation, and the excess log stock return as the difference between the log return on a stock index and the log return on the 90-day bill. We use the value-weighted return, including dividends, on the NYSE, NASDAQ, and AMEX markets. We construct the excess log bond return in a similar way, using the five-year bond return from the U.S. Treasury and Inflation Series (CTI) file in CRSP. The source of the 90-day bill rate is the CRSP Fama Risk-Free Rate file.

The nominal yield on Treasury bills is the log yield on a 90-day bill. To calculate the dividend–price ratio, we first construct the dividend payout series using the value-weighted return including dividends, and the price index series associated with the value-weighted return excluding dividends. Following the standard convention in

the literature, we take the dividend series to be the sum of dividend payments over the past year. The dividend–price ratio is then the log dividend less the log price index. The yield spread is the difference between the five-year zero-coupon bond yield from the CRSP Fama-Bliss data file (the longest yield available in the file) and the bill rate.

The annual dataset covers over a century from 1890 to 1998. Its source is the data used in Grossman and Shiller (1981), updated for the recent period by Campbell (1999). This dataset contains data on prices and dividends on S&P 500 stocks as well as data on inflation and short-term interest rates. The equity price index is the end-of-December S&P 500 Index, and the price index is the Producer Price Index. The short rate is the return on six-month commercial paper bought in January and rolled over in July. We use this dataset to construct time series of short-term nominal interest rates, ex post real interest rates, excess returns on equities, and dividend yields. Finally, we obtain data on long-term nominal bonds from the long yield series in Shiller (1989), which we have updated using the Moody's AAA corporate bond yield average. We construct the long bond return from this series using the loglinear approximation technique described in Campbell et al. (1997, Chapter 10):

$$r_{n,t+1} \approx D_{n,t} y_{n,t} - (D_{n,t} - 1) y_{n-1,t+1},$$

where n is bond maturity, the bond yield is written Y_{nt}, the log bond yield $y_{n,t} = \log(1 + Y_{n,t})$, and $D_{n,t}$ is bond duration. We calculate duration at time t as

$$D_{n,t} \approx \frac{1 - (1 + Y_{n,t})^{-n}}{1 - (1 + Y_{n,t})^{-1}},$$

and we set n to 20 years. We also approximate $y_{n-1,t+1}$ by $y_{n,t+1}$.

4.2. VAR estimation

Table 1 gives the first and second sample moments of the data. Except for the dividend–price ratio, the sample statistics are in annualized, percentage units. Mean excess log returns are adjusted by one-half their variance to account for Jensen's Inequality. For the post-war quarterly dataset, Treasury bills offer a low average real return (a mere 1.53% per year) along with low variability. Stocks have an excess return of 7.72% per year compared to 1.08% for the five-year bond. Although volatility is much higher for stocks than for bonds (16.23% vs. 5.63%), the Sharpe ratio is almost three and a half times as high for stocks as for bonds. The average Treasury bill rate and yield spread are 5.50% and 0.95%, respectively. Fig. 1 plots the history of the variables included in the quarterly VAR.

Table 1 and all subsequent tables and figures in this section report results based on quarterly and annual sample periods that exclude the first observation. This ensures that the results shown in Section 4 are based on the same sample period as the results shown in Section 5, where we consider the inclusion of a hypothetical real consol bond in the menu of assets. We compute the returns on this bond using a measure of the ex ante short-term real interest rate, and in order to compute this expected real return on a short-term bond we lose one observation for the estimation of the VAR

Table 1
Sample statistics

	Sample moment	1952.Q2–1999.Q4	1890–1998
(1)	$E[r_{1,t}^{\$} - \pi_t] + \sigma^2(r_{1,t}^{\$} - \pi_t)/2$	1.528	2.101
(2)	$\sigma(r_{1,t}^{\$} - \pi_t)$	1.354	8.806
(3)	$E[r_{e,t}^{\$} - r_{1,t}^{\$}] + \sigma^2(r_{e,t}^{\$} - r_{1,t}^{\$})/2$	7.719	6.797
(4)	$\sigma(r_{e,t}^{\$} - r_{1,t}^{\$})$	16.231	18.192
(5)	$SR = (3)/(4)$	0.476	0.374
(6)	$E[r_{n,t}^{\$} - r_{1,t}^{\$}] + \sigma^2(r_{n,t}^{\$} - r_{1,t}^{\$})/2$	1.079	0.674
(7)	$\sigma(r_{n,t}^{\$} - r_{1,t}^{\$})$	5.631	6.543
(8)	$SR = (6)/(7)$	0.192	0.103
(9)	$E[y_{1,t}^{\$}]$	5.501	4.361
(10)	$\sigma(y_{1,t}^{\$})$	1.413	2.597
(11)	$E[d_t - p_t]$	−3.420	−3.101
(12)	$\sigma(d_t - p_t)$	0.305	0.304
(13)	$E[y_{n,t}^{\$} - y_{1,t}^{\$}]$	0.951	0.902
(14)	$\sigma(y_{n,t}^{\$} - y_{1,t}^{\$})$	0.507	1.450

Note: $r_{1,t}^{\$}$ = log nominal return on Treasury bills, π_t = log inflation rate, $r_{e,t}^{\$}$ = log nominal return on equities, $r_{n,t}^{\$}$ = log nominal return on nominal bond, $d_t - p_t$ = log dividend–price ratio, $y_{n,t}^{\$}$ = log nominal bond yield, and $y_{1,t}^{\$}$ = short-term nominal interest rate. The nominal bond maturity is five years in the quarterly dataset and twenty years in the annual dataset.

describing the dynamics of the investment opportunity set. Campbell and Viceira (2002) show that omitting one observation has a minimum impact on the results of Section 4. They report results based on the full sample period which are almost identical to those shown here.

Covering a century of data, the annual dataset gives a different description of the relative performance of each asset. The real return on short-term nominal debt is quite volatile, due to greater volatility in both real interest rates and inflation before World War II. Stocks offer a slightly lower excess return, and yet a higher standard deviation, than in the post-war quarterly data. The Depression period is largely responsible for this result. The long-term bond also performs rather poorly, giving a Sharpe ratio of only 0.10 versus a Sharpe ratio of 0.37 for stocks. The bill rate has a lower mean in the annual dataset, but the yield spread has a higher mean. Both bill rates and yield spreads have higher standard deviations in the annual dataset.

Table 2 reports the estimation results for the VAR system in the quarterly dataset (Panel A) and the annual dataset (Panel B). We estimate the VAR imposing the restriction that the unconditional means of the variables implied by the VAR coefficient estimates equal their full-sample arithmetic counterparts. Standard, unconstrained least-squares fits exactly the mean of the variables in the VAR excluding the first observation. We use constrained least-squares to ensure that we fit the full-sample means.

The top section of each panel reports coefficient estimates (with *t*-statistics in parentheses) and the R^2 statistic (with the *p*-value of the F test of joint significance in
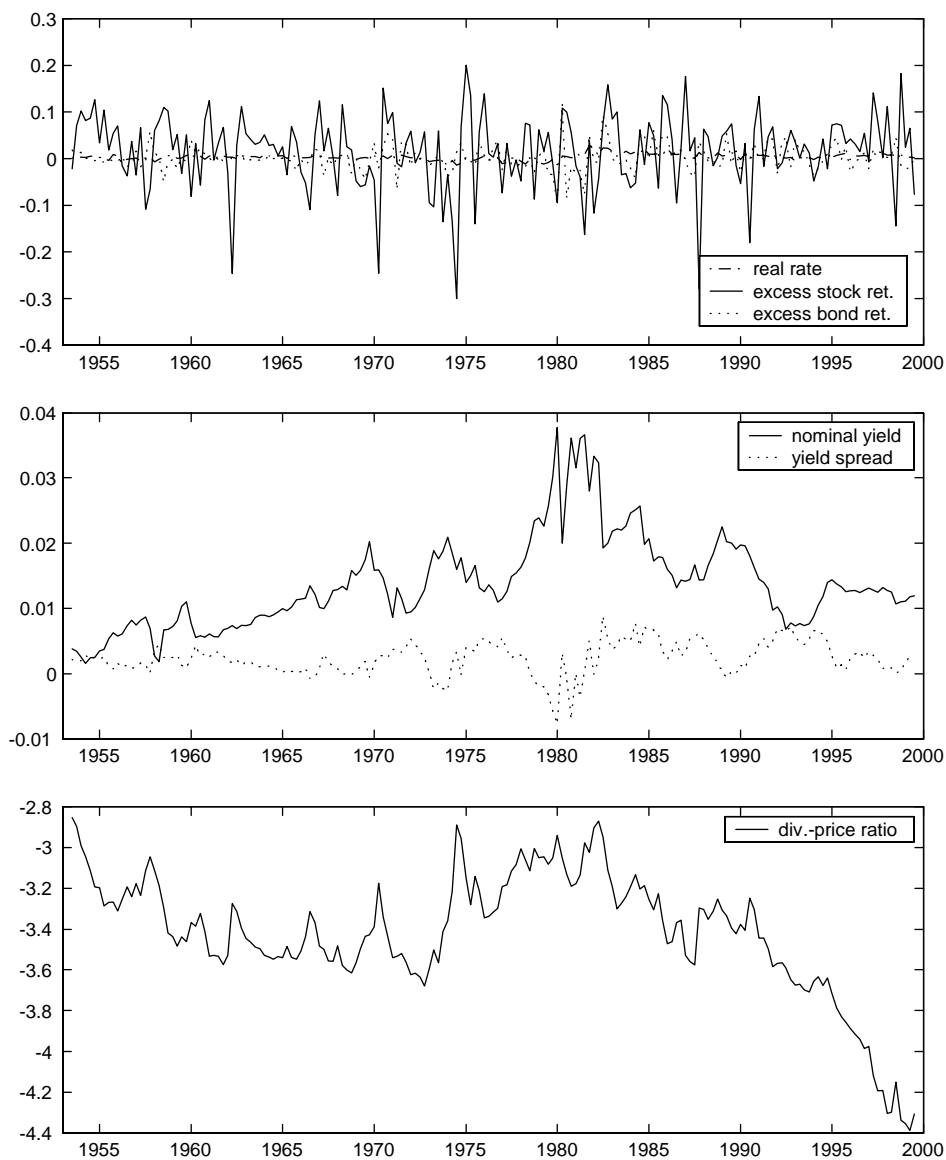
Fig. 1. History of state variables (1952.Q2–1999.Q4). This figure plots the history of the state variables included in the quarterly VAR shown in Table 2. The upper panel plots the ex-post log real return on T-bills, the excess log return on equities over T-bills, and the excess log return on a five-year nominal bond over T-bills. The middle panel plots the log yield on the five-year nominal bond, and the spread of this yield over the yield on T-bills. The lower panel plots the log dividend–price ratio.

parentheses) for each equation in the system. The bottom section of each panel shows the covariance structure of the innovations in the VAR system. The entries above the main diagonal are correlation statistics, and the entries on the main diagonal are standard deviations multiplied by 100. All variables in the VAR are measured in natural units, so standard deviations are per quarter in Panel A and per year in Panel B.

The first row of each panel corresponds to the real bill rate equation. The lagged real bill rate and the lagged nominal bill rate have positive coefficients and *t*-statistics above 2.0 in both sample periods. The yield spread also has a positive coefficient and a *t*-statistic above 2.0 in the quarterly data. The rest of the variables are not significant in predicting real bill rates one period ahead.

The second row corresponds to the equation for the excess stock return. Predicting excess stock returns is difficult: this equation has the lowest R^2 in both the quarterly

Table 2
VAR estimation results

Dependent variable	rtb_t (t)	xr_t (t)	xb_t (t)	y_t (t)	$d_t - p_t$ (t)	spr_t (t)	R^2 (p)
A: Quarterly sample (1952.Q2–1999.Q4)							
VAR estimation results							
rtb_{t+1}	0.444	0.005	−0.012	0.255	−0.001	0.455	0.340
	(6.557)	(0.837)	(−0.630)	(3.374)	(−0.975)	(2.414)	(0.000)
xr_{t+1}	0.639	0.021	0.428	−2.108	0.047	0.408	0.086
	(0.644)	(0.257)	(1.729)	(−2.357)	(2.213)	(0.160)	(0.006)
xb_{t+1}	0.047	−0.055	−0.088	0.355	0.002	3.068	0.096
	(0.143)	(−2.728)	(−0.779)	(0.816)	(0.320)	(2.768)	(0.003)
y_{t+1}	−0.008	0.004	0.004	0.952	−0.000	0.115	0.868
	(−0.200)	(1.808)	(0.341)	(19.467)	(−0.116)	(1.075)	(0.000)
$d_{t+1} - p_{t+1}$	−0.848	−0.020	−0.402	1.412	0.963	−1.114	0.932
	(−0.820)	(−0.222)	(−1.513)	(1.508)	(44.001)	(−0.425)	(0.000)
spr_{t+1}	−0.000	−0.001	0.002	0.026	−0.000	0.747	0.539
	(−0.004)	(−0.329)	(0.270)	(0.857)	(−0.254)	(10.897)	(0.000)

Cross-correlation of residuals

	rtb	xr	xb	y	d − p	spr
rtb	0.550	0.239	0.393	−0.389	−0.238	0.186
xr	—	7.752	0.229	−0.171	−0.981	0.026
xb	—	—	2.674	−0.765	−0.246	0.198
y	—	—	—	0.255	0.202	−0.777
d − p	—	—	—	—	7.932	−0.058
spr	—	—	—	—	—	0.172

Table 2 (*continued*)

Dependent variable	rtb_t (t)	xr_t (t)	xb_t (t)	y_t (t)	$d_t - p_t$ (t)	spr_t (t)	R^2 (p)
B: Annual sample (1890–1998)							
VAR estimation results							
rtb_{t+1}	0.303 (2.434)	−0.052 (−1.314)	0.122 (0.902)	0.701 (2.365)	−0.004 (−0.146)	−0.776 (−1.242)	0.240 (0.000)
xr_{t+1}	0.116 (0.438)	0.075 (0.607)	−0.091 (−0.305)	−0.074 (−0.105)	0.131 (2.320)	1.291 (0.957)	0.050 (0.399)
xb_{t+1}	0.200 (3.072)	0.106 (2.990)	−0.197 (−1.502)	−0.112 (−0.319)	0.012 (0.614)	2.628 (5.289)	0.392 (0.000)
y_{t+1}	−0.042 (−1.922)	−0.012 (−1.784)	0.037 (1.318)	0.921 (12.307)	−0.005 (−1.119)	−0.017 (−0.136)	0.776 (0.000)
$d_{t+1} - p_{t+1}$	−0.567 (−2.272)	−0.124 (−1.146)	0.357 (1.115)	−0.597 (−0.941)	0.842 (13.362)	−1.662 (−1.194)	0.721 (0.000)
spr_{t+1}	0.020 (1.118)	0.002 (0.409)	−0.013 (−0.667)	0.085 (1.625)	0.004 (1.153)	0.820 (8.900)	0.540 (0.000)

Cross-correlation of residuals

	rtb	xr	xb	y	d − p	spr
rtb	7.592	−0.167	−0.020	0.114	0.100	−0.155
xr	—	17.498	−0.020	−0.135	−0.725	0.186
xb	—	—	5.102	−0.650	−0.055	0.264
y	—	—	—	1.228	0.179	−0.894
d − p	—	—	—	—	16.067	−0.170
spr	—	—	—	—	—	0.978

Note: rtb_t = ex post real Treasury bill rate, xr_t = excess stock return, xb_t = excess bond return, $d_t - p_t$ = log dividend–price ratio, y_t = nominal Treasury bill yield, and spr_t = yield spread. The bond maturity is five years in the quarterly dataset and twenty years in the annual dataset.

and the annual sample (8.6% and 5.0%, respectively). The dividend–price ratio, with a positive coefficient, is the only variable with a *t*-statistic above 2.0 in both samples. The coefficient on the lagged nominal short-term interest rate is also significant in the quarterly sample, and it has a negative sign in both samples. The yield spread has positive coefficients in both samples, but they are not statistically significant.

The third row is the equation for the excess bond return. In the quarterly post-war data, excess stock returns and yield spreads help predict future excess bond returns. In the long annual dataset, real Treasury bill rates also help predict future excess bond returns. The fit of the equation in the annual sample, with an R^2 of 39%, is four times as large as the fit in the quarterly sample,

where the R^2 is only 9.6%. In part, this difference in results may reflect approximation error in our procedure for constructing annual bond returns; the possibility of such error should be kept in mind when interpreting our annual results.

The last three rows report the estimation results for the remaining state variables, each of which is fairly well described by a univariate AR(1) process. The nominal bill rate in the fourth row is predicted by the lagged nominal yield, whose coefficient is above 0.9 in both samples, implying extremely persistent dynamics. The log dividend–price ratio in the fifth row also has persistent dynamics; the lagged dividend–price ratio has a coefficient of 0.96 in the quarterly data and 0.84 in the annual data. The yield spread in the sixth row also seems to follow an AR(1) process, but is considerably less persistent than the other variables, especially in the quarterly sample.

The bottom section of each panel describes the covariance structure of the innovations in the VAR system. Unexpected log excess stock returns are highly negatively correlated with shocks to the log dividend–price ratio in both samples. This result is consistent with previous empirical results in Campbell (1991), Campbell and Viceira (1999), Stambaugh (1999), and others. Unexpected log excess bond returns are negatively correlated with shocks to the nominal bill rate, but positively correlated with the yield spread. This positive correlation is about 20% in the quarterly sample and 26% in the annual sample.

The signs of these correlations help to explain the contrasting results of recent studies that apply Monte Carlo analysis to judge the statistical evidence on predictability in excess stock and bond returns. Stock market studies typically find that asymptotic tests overstate the predictability of excess stock returns (Hodrick, 1992; Goetzmann and Jorion, 1993; Nelson and Kim, 1993). Bond market studies, on the other hand, find that asymptotic procedures are actually conservative and understate the predictability of excess bond returns (Bekaert et al., 1997). The reason for the discrepancy is that the evidence on stock market predictability comes from positive regression coefficients of stock returns on the dividend–price ratio, while the evidence on bond market predictability comes from positive regression coefficients of bond returns on the yield spread. Stambaugh (1999) shows that the small-sample bias in such regressions has the opposite sign to the sign of the correlation between innovations in returns and innovations in the predictive variable. In the stock market the log dividend–price ratio is negatively correlated with returns, leading to a positive small-sample bias which helps to explain some apparent predictability; in the bond market, on the other hand, the yield spread is positively correlated with returns, leading to a negative small-sample bias which cannot explain the positive regression coefficient found in the data.

Although finite-sample bias may well have some effect on the coefficients reported in Table 2, bias corrections are complex in multivariate systems and we do not attempt any corrections here. Instead, we take the estimated VAR coefficients as given and known by investors, and explore their implications for optimal long-term portfolios.

4.3. Strategic asset allocations to stocks, bonds, and bills

We have shown in Section 3.3 that the optimal portfolio rule is linear in the vector of state variables. Thus, the optimal portfolio allocation to stocks, bonds, and bills changes over time. One way to characterize this rule is to examine its mean and volatility. To analyze level effects, we compute the mean allocation to each asset as well as the mean hedging portfolio demand for different specifications of the vector of state variables. Specifically, we estimate a series of restricted VAR systems, in which the number of explanatory variables increases sequentially, and use them to calculate mean optimal portfolios for $\psi = 1$, $\delta = 0.92$ at an annual frequency, and $\gamma = 1$, 2, 5, or 20.

The first VAR system only has a constant term in each regression, corresponding to the case in which risk premia are constant and realized returns on all assets, including the short-term real interest rate, are i.i.d. The second system includes an intercept term, the ex post real bill rate, and log excess returns on stocks and bonds. We then add sequentially the nominal bill rate, the dividend yield, and the yield spread. Thus, we estimate five VAR systems in total.

Table 3 reports the results of this experiment for values of the coefficient of relative risk aversion γ equal to 1, 2, 5, and 20, with the intertemporal elasticity of substitution $\psi = 1$. Panel A considers the quarterly dataset, while Panel B considers the annual dataset. The entries in each column are mean portfolio demands in percentage points when the explanatory variables in the VAR system include the state variable in the column heading and those to the left of it. For instance, the "constant" column reports mean portfolio allocations when the explanatory variables include only a constant term, that is, when investment opportunities are constant. The right-hand "spread" column applies when all state variables are included in the VAR.

Table 3 reports results only for selected values of risk aversion, but we have also computed portfolio allocations for a continuum of values of risk aversion; Fig. 2 plots these allocations and their myopic component using the quarterly VAR with all state variables included. In this figure, the horizontal axis shows risk tolerance $1/\gamma$ rather than risk aversion γ, both in order to display the behavior of highly conservative investors more compactly, and because myopic portfolio demands are linear in risk tolerance. Infinitely conservative investors with $1/\gamma = 0$ are plotted at the right edge of the figure, so that as the eye moves from left to right we see the effects of increasing risk aversion on asset allocation.

Table 3 enables us to analyze two effects on the level of portfolio demands. By comparing numbers within any column, we can study how total asset allocation and intertemporal hedging demand vary with risk aversion. By comparing numbers within any row, we can examine the incremental effects of the state variables on asset allocation. Here we explore the first topic (we leave the second for the next section). To simplify the discussion we focus only on the allocations implied by the full VAR, shown in the right-hand column of the table.

The first set of numbers in Table 3 reports the mean portfolio allocation to stocks, bonds, and bills of a logarithmic investor. For this investor, the optimal portfolio

Table 3
Mean asset demands

State variables:	Constant	AR_t	y_t	$d_t - p_t$	spr_t
A: Quarterly sample (1952.Q2–1999.Q4) $\gamma = 1, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$					
Stock: Total demand	272.77	292.42	296.33	303.41	302.79
Hedging demand	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bond: Total demand	172.93	162.73	160.07	160.67	171.01
Hedging demand	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash: Total demand	−345.70	−355.15	−356.40	−364.08	−373.80
Hedging demand	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
$\gamma = 2, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$					
Stock: Total demand	135.52	146.02	149.62	246.07	246.61
Hedging demand	0.00	0.20	1.95	94.91	95.77
Bond: Total demand	82.13	33.53	−7.22	6.25	−8.17
Hedging demand	0.00	−43.86	−83.35	−70.18	−90.00
Cash: Total demand	−117.65	−79.55	−42.39	−152.32	−138.44
Hedging demand	0.00	43.66	81.41	−24.73	−5.77
$\gamma = 5, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$					
Stock: Total demand	53.17	56.52	57.40	157.64	160.51
Hedging demand	0.00	−1.34	−1.08	97.83	100.84
Bond: Total demand	27.65	−3.94	−15.70	−43.70	−94.24
Hedging demand	0.00	−30.13	−41.47	−69.59	−122.57
Cash: Total demand	19.18	47.42	58.30	−13.94	33.73
Hedging demand	0.00	31.47	42.55	−28.24	21.72
$\gamma = 20, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$					
Stock: Total demand	12.00	12.01	11.47	59.37	59.54
Hedging demand	0.00	−1.88	−2.41	45.23	45.46
Bond: Total demand	0.41	−11.28	3.61	−19.55	−39.95
Hedging demand	0.00	−11.86	3.03	−20.17	−41.53
Cash: Total demand	87.59	99.27	84.92	60.18	80.41
Hedging demand	0.00	13.74	−0.62	−25.06	−3.94

Table 3 (*continued*)

State variables:	Constant	AR_t	y_t	$d_t - p_t$	spr_t
B: Annual sample (1890–1998)					
$\gamma = 1, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92$					
Stock: Total demand	192.33	207.77	209.27	215.20	219.34
Hedging demand	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bond: Total demand	120.29	152.23	161.31	162.08	241.55
Hedging demand	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash: Total demand	−212.62	−260.00	−270.57	−277.28	−360.89
Hedging demand	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
$\gamma = 2, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92$					
Stock: Total demand	98.94	108.84	108.84	132.21	133.41
Hedging demand	0.00	0.96	0.55	20.83	20.10
Bond: Total demand	65.44	89.60	96.87	83.16	142.25
Hedging demand	0.00	6.99	11.53	−2.58	19.78
Cash: Total demand	−64.38	−98.43	−105.71	−115.36	−175.67
Hedging demand	0.00	−7.96	−12.08	−18.25	−39.88
$\gamma = 5, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92$					
Stock: Total demand	42.91	53.87	52.77	67.38	66.70
Hedging demand	0.00	5.94	5.06	18.29	17.01
Bond: Total demand	32.53	52.31	63.87	53.76	90.99
Hedging demand	0.00	11.48	24.12	13.84	39.95
Cash: Total demand	24.56	−6.19	−16.64	−21.14	−57.69
Hedging demand	0.00	−17.42	−29.17	−32.13	−56.96
$\gamma = 20, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92$					
Stock: Total demand	14.89	27.61	25.82	29.25	29.32
Hedging demand	0.00	9.64	8.40	11.31	11.44
Bond: Total demand	16.07	34.03	48.01	44.10	76.42
Hedging demand	0.00	14.08	31.05	27.08	61.10
Cash: Total demand	69.03	38.36	26.17	26.65	−5.73
Hedging demand	0.00	−23.73	−39.45	−38.39	−72.54

Note: This table reports mean asset demands for stocks, nominal long-term bonds, and nominal T-bills ("cash") of investors with unit elasticity of intertemporal substitution (ψ), time discount factor (δ) equal to 0.92 at an annual frequency, and coefficients of relative risk aversion (γ) equal to 1, 2, 5, and 20. The bond is a five-year nominal bond in the quarterly dataset and a 20-year in the annual dataset. The entries in each column are mean portfolio demands in percentage points when the explanatory variables in the VAR system describing investment opportunities include the state variable in the column heading and those to the left of it: *Constant* = VAR system only has a constant term in each regression, implying that risk premia are constant and realized returns on all assets, including the short-term real interest rate, are i.i.d.; AR_t = real returns on T-bills, excess return on stocks, and excess return on bonds; y_t = nominal yield on T-bills; $d_t - p_t$ = log dividend–price ratio; and spr_t = yield spread. This last column corresponds to the VAR system shown in Table 2.
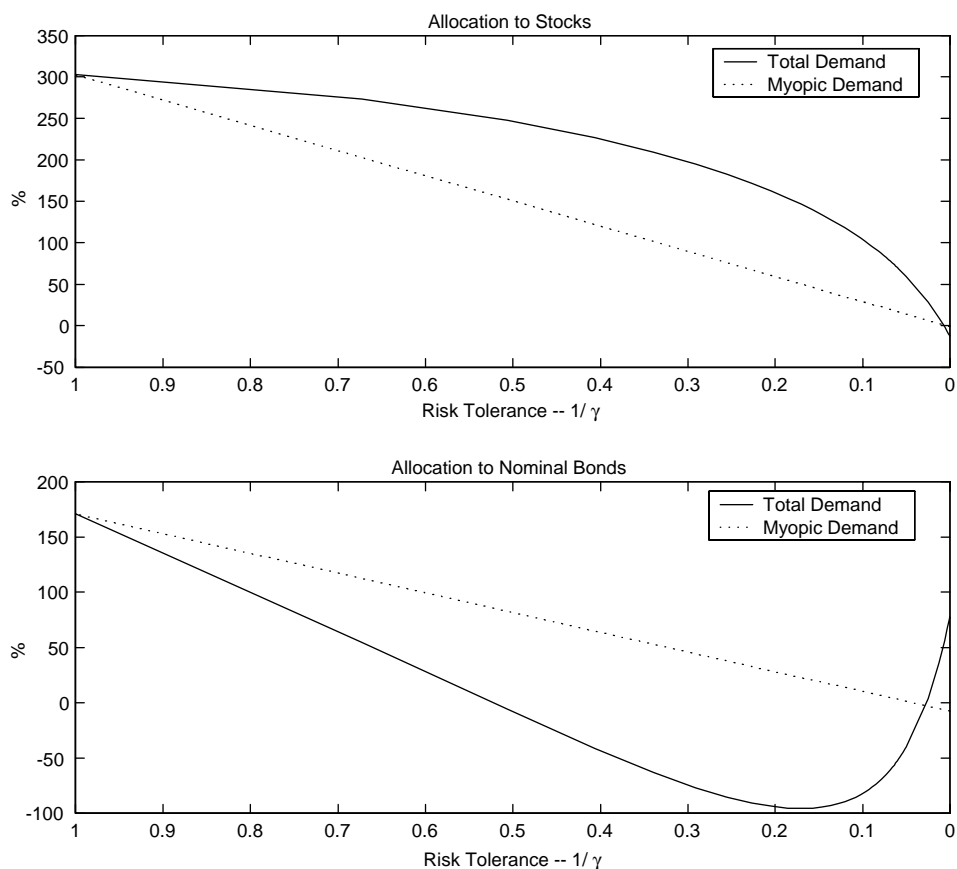
Fig. 2. Optimal asset allocations to stocks and nominal bonds (quarterly sample). This figure plots mean optimal portfolio allocations in percentage points of investors with unit elasticity of intertemporal substitution, time discount factor equal to 0.92 at an annual frequency, and relative risk tolerance coefficients $(1/\gamma)$ between one and zero. $1/\gamma = 1$ corresponds to the case of a log utility investor, while $1/\gamma = 0$ corresponds to the case of an infinitely conservative investor. The solid lines plot total mean portfolio demands, and the dotted lines plot the myopic component of total mean portfolio demands.

rule is purely myopic. Eq. (20) evaluated at $\gamma = 1$ shows that asset allocation depends only on the inverse of the variance–covariance matrix of unexpected excess returns and the mean excess return on stocks and bonds. This myopic allocation is long in stocks and bonds in both the quarterly dataset and the annual dataset. However, the ratio of stocks to bonds is about 1.8 in the quarterly dataset, and close to one in the annual dataset. The preference for stocks in the quarterly dataset is primarily due to the estimated large positive correlation between unexpected excess quarterly returns on stocks and bonds. This shifts the optimal myopic allocation towards stocks—the asset with the largest Sharpe ratio. In the annual dataset the correlation between excess bond and stock returns is very low, implying that the optimal portfolio

allocation to one asset is essentially independent of the optimal allocation to the other.

Conservative investors, with risk aversion $\gamma > 1$, have an intertemporal hedging demand for stocks. This demand is most easily understood by looking at Fig. 2, which is based on the quarterly dataset. In Fig. 2, the total demand for stocks is a concave function of risk tolerance $1/\gamma$, while the myopic portfolio demand is a linear function of $1/\gamma$. The linearity of myopic portfolio demand follows from Eq. (20), which shows that myopic demand is a linear function of $1/\gamma$ with intercept given by $-\Sigma_{xx}^{-1}\sigma_{1x}$. The intercept is zero only when shocks to the real interest rate on nominal Treasury bills are uncorrelated with excess returns on all other assets, that is, when σ_{1x} is zero. Fig. 2 shows that total stock demand is always larger than myopic portfolio demand for all $1/\gamma < 1$, implying that intertemporal hedging demand is a positive, hump-shaped function of $1/\gamma$. We can verify this by looking at the hedging demands reported in Table 3. In both datasets, the hedging demand for stocks is always positive and exhibits a hump-shaped pattern as a function of $1/\gamma$.

These patterns reflect the time variation in expected stock returns, which is captured in our VAR model by the predictability of stock returns from the dividend–price ratio. Because stocks have a large positive Sharpe ratio, investors are normally long in the stock market. Hence an increase in expected stock returns represents an improvement in the investment opportunity set. Our VAR model implies that expected stock returns increase when the dividend–price ratio increases; since stocks are strongly negatively correlated with the dividend–price ratio, this means that poor stock returns are correlated with an improvement in future investment opportunities. Thus stocks can be used to hedge the variation in their own future returns, and this increases the demand for stocks by conservative investors. The effect is strongest at intermediate levels of risk aversion, because investors with $\gamma = 1$ do not wish to hedge intertemporally, and extremely conservative investors have little interest in the risky investment opportunities available in the stock market.

These results are comparable to those reported by Campbell and Viceira (2000) for a model with a single risky asset (stocks) and a single state variable (the dividend–price ratio) over a slightly shorter post-war sample period.[2] Although there is slightly weaker predictability of stock returns in our longer post-war sample, which tends to reduce intertemporal hedging demand, there is also more persistence in the dividend–price ratio, which tends to increase intertemporal hedging demand. These two effects roughly cancel.

Intertemporal hedging demands are just as striking for nominal bonds. Fig. 2 and Table 3 show that the intertemporal hedging demand for nominal bonds is U-shaped in risk aversion in the quarterly dataset. It is strongly negative at intermediate coefficients of risk aversion, but turns positive for extremely conservative investors. This effect is large enough to make the total demand for nominal bonds negative for investors with intermediate risk aversion.

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[2] Campbell and Viceira (2000) correct an estimation error in Campbell and Viceira (1999) that understated the predictability of post-war quarterly stock returns and the absolute value of the correlation between innovations to stock returns and dividend yields.

This pattern results from several features of bond returns in our quarterly VAR model. First, there is a positive correlation between unexpected excess stock returns and nominal bond returns in the quarterly dataset. Thus, investors can offset the short-term risk implied by their large positive intertemporal hedging demand for stocks by taking short positions in long-term nominal bonds. This negative effect on bond demand is largest at intermediate levels of risk aversion because the positive intertemporal hedging demand for stocks is largest at these levels of risk aversion.

Second, the short-term nominal interest rate forecasts real interest rates positively, but excess stock returns negatively, in the quarterly dataset. A high real interest rate is a good investment opportunity, but a low excess stock return is a poor investment opportunity. Thus, short-term interest rates have opposing effects on the investment opportunity set. An investor with intermediate risk aversion is most interested in the opportunities available in the stock market, and will consider an increase in the short rate to be a deterioration in investment opportunities, but an extremely conservative investor is most interested in real interest rates and will consider an increase in the short nominal rate to be an improvement in investment opportunities. Since nominal bond returns are highly negatively correlated with movements in the short nominal interest rate, this generates negative intertemporal hedging demand by investors with intermediate risk aversion but positive intertemporal hedging demand by extremely conservative investors.

Finally, the yield spread forecasts real interest rates and excess bond returns positively in the quarterly dataset; thus, an increase in the yield spread represents an improvement in investment opportunities. Since innovations in the yield spread are positively correlated with unexpected bond returns, this reduces the intertemporal hedging demand for long-term bonds. We can see the importance of this effect in Table 3 by noting the negative shift in average bond demand that occurs when the yield spread is included in the VAR system.

Panel B of Table 3 shows that the intertemporal hedging demand for long-term nominal bonds is always positive in the annual dataset. There are several reasons for this difference in results. First, bond and stock returns are uncorrelated rather than positively correlated in the annual data, so the positive intertemporal hedging demand for stocks does not reduce the demand for bonds. Second, the nominal interest rate still predicts the real interest rate positively but does not predict excess stock returns negatively in the annual data, so an increase in the interest rate unambiguously represents an improvement in investment opportunities that can be hedged by holding bonds. Finally, the yield spread forecasts low rather than high real interest rates in the annual data. It is true that the yield spread still predicts positive excess bond returns in the annual data, which itself would generate negative intertemporal hedging demand for bonds. A univariate model (not shown here to save space), in which short-term real interest rates are constant and yield spreads forecast only excess bond returns, shows a negative intertemporal hedging demand for bonds. This negative demand is a direct result of the positive regression coefficient of future bond excess returns on yield spreads, and the positive correlation between shocks to yield spreads and unexpected bond excess returns.

But in the full VAR system this negative effect is outweighed by the other positive effects on intertemporal hedging demand for bonds.

The contrast in results between the post-war quarterly and long-term annual data can also be understood by noting that real interest rate variation is more important in the annual dataset. Row 2 of Table 1 shows that the standard deviation of ex post real interest rates is almost six times higher in the annual dataset, while Table 2 shows that the predictability of real interest rates is only modestly lower, implying that ex ante real interest rates are much more variable in the long-term annual data. This implies that a strategy of rolling over Treasury bills is highly risky at long horizons because bills must be reinvested at unknown future real interest rates. This risk can be hedged using long-term bonds, as emphasized by Campbell and Viceira (2001). In the post-war data, real interest rate variation is less important relative to other sources of risk.

We turn now to the analysis of the variability of asset demands. From Eq. (20), we can express the optimal portfolio rule as

$$\alpha_{i,t} = \alpha_{i,t}^{\mathrm{m}} + \alpha_{i,t}^{\mathrm{h}}, \tag{28}$$

where i denotes stocks or bonds, m denotes myopic, and h denotes hedging. Thus,

$$\mathrm{Var}(\alpha_{i,t}) = \mathrm{Var}(\alpha_{i,t}^{\mathrm{m}}) + \mathrm{Var}(\alpha_{i,t}^{\mathrm{h}}) + 2\,\mathrm{Cov}(\alpha_{i,t}^{\mathrm{m}}, \alpha_{i,t}^{\mathrm{h}}). \tag{29}$$

We have calculated this variance decomposition for the illustrative case $\gamma = 5$ and $\psi = 1$. The variance of the hedging component explains at most 22% of the total variation in stock and bond demand in the quarterly dataset, and 14% in the annual dataset. Thus, hedging portfolio demand is much more stable than total portfolio demand. Kim and Omberg (1996) and Campbell and Viceira (1999) give an intuitive explanation for this result, showing that hedging demand can change sign only in extreme circumstances when investors have replaced their normal long positions with short positions in risky assets. To a first approximation, intertemporal hedging shifts the intercept of risky asset demand rather than the slope with respect to state variables; put another way, long-term investors should "time the market" just as aggressively as short-term investors.

Fig. 3 illustrates the result graphically. The figure plots time series of total portfolio allocations based on the quarterly dataset for $\gamma = 5$, along with the myopic and hedging components of total portfolio demand. For all three assets, hedging demands are considerably less volatile than myopic demands. The allocation to long-term nominal bonds has the greatest short-term volatility, despite the low predictability in bond excess returns. This can be understood by noting that the variability of myopic allocations depends positively on the predictability of returns, but negatively on their unpredictable volatility, which is relatively low for bonds. In the case with only a single risky asset, the variability of the optimal myopic allocation is proportional to $R^2/(\sigma^2(1 - R^2))$, where R^2 is the R-squared of the predictive regression for the excess return on the asset and σ^2 is the variance of the unexpected excess return. Thus we should expect variable asset demand when this variance is low, even if there is only a modest degree of predictability.
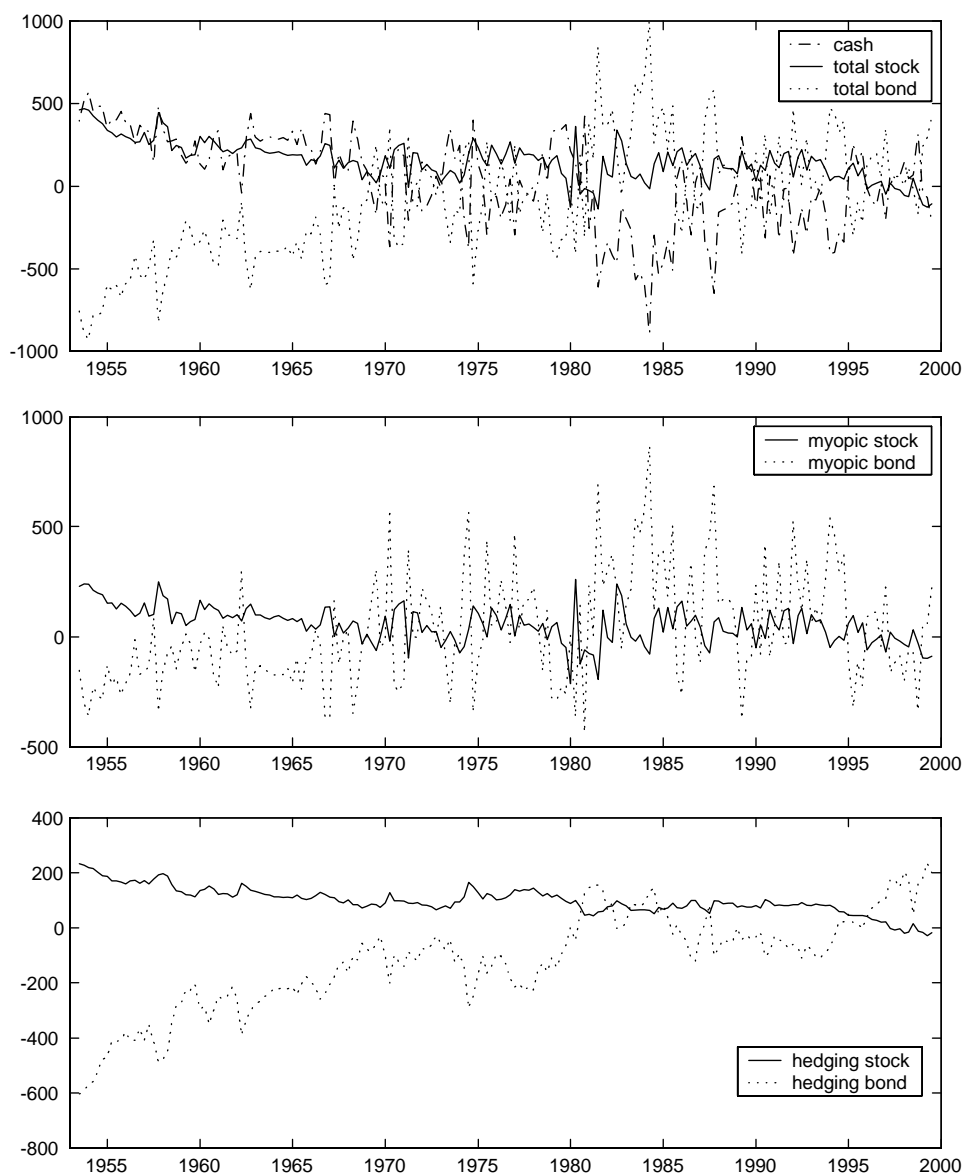
Fig. 3. History of asset allocations (1952.Q2–1999.Q4). This figure plots time series of total optimal portfolio allocations in percentage points of investors with unit elasticity of intertemporal substitution, time discount factor equal to 0.92 at an annual frequency, and relative risk aversion coefficient equal to 5. These allocations are based on the quarterly dataset. The upper panel plots time series of total portfolio demands for T-bills ("cash"), stocks, and a five-year nominal bond. The middle panel plots time series of myopic portfolio demands for stocks and the five-year nominal bond. The lower panel plots time series of intertemporal hedging demands for stocks and the five-year nominal bond.

4.4. Which state variables matter?

The analysis so far has focused on the shape of asset demands and their hedging components. It is equally important to understand the effects of various state variables on the level and variability of asset demands. To analyze the level effects of state variables, we can compare average portfolio demands across rows in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that there are important changes in the magnitude of hedging demands as we consider new state variables in the investor information set. In the case of stocks, hedging demand is very small when only lagged Treasury bill rates (either real or nominal) and excess returns on bonds and stocks are included in the VAR. It increases dramatically when the dividend–price ratio is introduced into the VAR as a regressor. The inclusion of the yield spread has a negligible effect on the hedging demand for stocks.

The correlation structure shown in Table 2 helps explain these results. In the full annual VAR system, there is a strong negative correlation between unexpected excess returns on stocks and shocks to the dividend–price ratio, while the magnitude of all other correlations in the table is much smaller. These correlations are not sensitive to the inclusion or exclusion of state variables in the VAR. The presence of the dividend–price ratio in the investor information set increases the hedging demand for stocks because negative shocks to the dividend–price ratio, which drive down expected returns on stocks, tend to coincide with positive realized excess returns on stocks. This negative correlation is even stronger in the quarterly dataset, which makes the pattern for hedging demand more pronounced in this dataset.

The case of bonds is more complex, particularly in the quarterly dataset. As we have noted in Section 4.3, several different factors influence the demand for nominal bonds. The positive correlation of bond and stock returns in the quarterly dataset means that positive hedging demand for stocks tends to produce negative hedging demand for bonds in that dataset. In the annual dataset, by contrast, the correlation of bond and stock returns is very small, so that positive hedging demand for stocks has little effect on the hedging demand for bonds. The VAR system also includes the ex post real bill rate, the nominal bill rate, and the yield spread; these variables capture the complex dynamics of real interest rates, inflation, and excess bond returns. In the quarterly dataset, these variables tend to create a negative intertemporal hedging demand for bonds, while in the annual dataset they create a positive hedging demand for bonds.

We can also evaluate the importance of each state variable to the variability of asset demands. In the illustrative case $\gamma = 5$ and $\psi = 1$ considered earlier, the variance of the dividend–price ratio is the dominant source of movements in stock demand in both samples, explaining about 84% of the variance of stock demand. The dividend–price ratio explains almost 28% of the variability of bond demand in the annual dataset, but less than 2% in the annual dataset. The nominal bill rate and the yield spread are the most important variables driving the variability of bond demand in the quarterly dataset, while the yield spread alone is of dominant importance for bond demand in the annual dataset. There are also some covariance

effects in the quarterly dataset, but these are much less important in the annual dataset. A table with a complete set of results is included in the appendix.

In summary, our results indicate that the most important state variable determining the mean and volatility of stock demand is the dividend yield, while variables that forecast real interest rates, inflation, and excess bond returns determine the mean and volatility of bond demand. Aït-Sahalia and Brandt (2001) also find that these variables are important determinants of optimal portfolio choice.

5. Strategic asset allocation with inflation-indexed bonds

We have found that the intertemporal hedging demand for long-term bonds is negative for investors with intermediate levels of risk aversion in the quarterly post-war sample. This finding contrasts with conventional investment advice that conservative long-term investors should hold bonds to obtain a stable stream of income, disregarding short-run fluctuations in capital value. There are two possible reasons for the discrepancy between our results and conventional wisdom. First, conventional wisdom disregards the distinction between nominal and inflation-indexed bonds. In the presence of significant inflation risk, long-term nominal bonds are not suitable assets for conservative long-term investors. Campbell and Viceira (2001) use a term structure model with time-varying real interest rates and inflation rates but constant risk premia, and find that inflation uncertainty drastically reduces the intertemporal hedging demand for long-term nominal bonds in the post-war period. (They also look at data since 1983, and find much smaller inflation uncertainty. We do not examine this period here as our VAR system is not sufficiently parsimonious for such a short sample period.) Second, our model has a general dynamic structure in which either stocks or bonds might be good hedges for predictable variation in stock and bond returns. Conventional investment advice might be based on the presumption that bonds are the best hedges for predictable variation in returns on all risky assets; the model of Campbell and Viceira (2001) explicitly assumes this.

To determine which of these explanations is correct, we now extend our model to include an inflation-indexed perpetuity in the menu of available assets. This requires us to construct hypothetical real bond returns, because inflation-indexed bonds were first issued by the U.S. Treasury in 1997 and thus very little direct evidence is available about their returns. The VAR framework is well suited for this purpose, provided that we make the assumption that expected real returns on real bonds of all maturities and the expected real return on short-term nominal bills differ only by a constant. This amounts to assuming that the inflation risk premium on nominal bills is constant. We now briefly describe the construction procedure, which is adapted from the work of Campbell and Shiller (1996). The appendix provides full details.

We first use the estimates of the coefficient matrices in the VAR to construct returns on hypothetical real perpetuities, or consols, according to the procedure outlined in the appendix. The procedure assumes a zero inflation risk premium. As noted in Campbell and Shiller (1996), if the inflation risk premium is not zero but

constant, the procedure will miss the average level of the yield curve, but will still capture the dynamics of the curve. This is important, because intertemporal hedging demand depends sensitively on the dynamics of asset returns. With the correct dynamics in hand, we set the mean excess return of the real perpetuity to zero. We deliberately choose this value to be conservative about the appeal of this bond to a myopic investor.[3] Finally, we include the imputed excess return on real perpetuities in two new VAR systems. In the first VAR we replace the excess return on nominal bonds with the excess return on real perpetuities, while in the second system we include both variables. The appendix shows the estimation results.

Table 4 reports the resulting mean asset demands for values of γ equal to 1, 2, 5, 20, and 2,000 and $\psi = 1$ in the quarterly dataset. We include the case $\gamma = 2000$ because we want to study asset demand for infinitely risk-averse investors, which we proxy using this large value of γ. We also report mean asset allocations under constant investment opportunities. The appendix shows results for the annual dataset. Figs. 4 and 5 plot the allocations implied by the full quarterly VAR for a continuum of values of γ.

We start by looking at the optimal portfolio of a myopic logarithmic investor in Table 4. This investor should hold long positions in both stocks and the inflation-indexed perpetuity, and a short position in long-term nominal bonds when these assets are available. The positive holdings of stocks result from the positive expected excess return on stocks. The positive holdings of the real perpetuity result from a large negative correlation (shown in the appendix) between excess returns on stocks and on the real perpetuity, which makes this a good asset to hedge long positions in stocks. The myopic demand for long-term nominal bonds is negative because there is a large positive correlation between nominal bond returns and stock returns, and between nominal bond returns and real consol returns. The first correlation makes it optimal to use a short position in nominal bonds to offset a long position in stocks. The second correlation has the effect of strengthening the long and short positions on the real perpetuity and nominal bonds determined by the correlations of these assets with stock returns. By contrast, the correlation structure of excess returns in the annual sample (shown in the appendix) is markedly different: the excess return on stocks is negatively correlated with the excess return on the real perpetuity, and almost uncorrelated with the excess return on nominal bonds, while the excess returns on the real perpetuity and nominal bonds are still positively correlated. This correlation structure results in long positions in stocks and the nominal bond, and a short position in the real perpetuity.

We can learn about the myopic allocations of nonlogarithmic investors by looking at the allocations under constant investment opportunities shown in the "constant"

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[3] In our model with multiple risky assets, the assumption of a zero risk premium on the real perpetuity does not necessarily imply a zero mean myopic allocation to this bond. The myopic mean allocation can differ from zero if unexpected excess returns on the real perpetuity are correlated with unexpected excess returns on other assets. We have also considered a positive mean excess return on the perpetuity. In particular, we have considered a mean excess return such that the Sharpe ratio of the real perpetuity is equal to the Sharpe ratio of nominal bonds. This choice increases the myopic demand for the perpetuity but has only modest effects on intertemporal hedging demands.

Table 4
Mean asset demands with hypothetical real bonds (Quarterly sample: 1952.Q2–1999.Q4)

State variables:	*Constant*	*Full VAR*
A: Nominal bills, stocks, and real consol bond		
$\gamma = 1, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	322.40	361.03
Real consol cond	741.86	813.66
Cash	−964.26	−1,074.70
$\gamma = 2, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	160.46	265.55
Real consol bond	379.69	262.14
Cash	−440.16	−427.69
$\gamma = 5, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	63.31	155.59
Real consol bond	162.39	61.03
Cash	−125.70	−116.66
$\gamma = 20, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	14.73	55.97
Real consol bond	53.74	58.12
Cash	31.53	−14.09
$\gamma = 2,000, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	−1.30	2.53
Real consol bond	17.88	97.10
Cash	83.42	0.37
B: Nominal bills, stocks, real consol bond and nominal bond		
$\gamma = 1, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	328.29	387.82
Real consol bond	802.07	1,055.20
Nominal bond	−40.24	−149.07
Cash	−990.13	−1,193.96
$\gamma = 2, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	165.04	307.05
Real consol bond	426.36	599.77
Nominal bond	−31.18	−255.51
Cash	−460.21	−551.31
$\gamma = 5, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	67.08	192.14
Real consol bond	200.93	310.10
Nominal bond	−25.75	−233.06
Cash	−142.26	−169.18
$\gamma = 20, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	18.10	76.46
Real consol bond	88.21	156.03
Nominal bond	−23.04	−123.31
Cash	16.72	−9.18

Table 4 (*continued*)

State variables:	*Constant*	*Full VAR*
$\gamma = 2,000, \psi = 1, \delta = 0.92^{1/4}$		
Stocks	1.94	2.68
Real consol bond	51.01	102.23
Nominal bond	−22.13	−2.76
Cash	69.18	−2.16

Note: This table reports mean asset demands in percentage points for stocks, a hypothetical real consol bond, nominal long-term bonds, and nominal T-bills ("cash") of investors with unit elasticity of intertemporal substitution (ψ), time discount factor (δ) equal to 0.92 at an annual frequency, and coefficients of relative risk aversion (γ) equal to 1, 2, 20, and 2,000. The maturity of the nominal bond is five years. The entries in the "*Constant*" column report mean asset demands when the VAR system only has a constant in each regression, corresponding to the case in which risk premia are constant and realized returns on all assets, including the short-term real interest rate, are i.i.d. The entries in the "*Full VAR*" column report mean asset demands when the VAR system includes all state variables.

column in Table 4. Investors with $\gamma > 1$ have a myopic demand for real perpetuities that is larger than $1/\gamma$ times the optimal allocation of the logarithmic investor. This is driven by the fact that the short-term bill is risky in real terms, so the portfolio with the smallest short-term risk is a combination of the short-term bill and the real perpetuity, with a short position in nominal bonds when they are available. The myopic portfolio approaches this "minimum short-term variance" portfolio as risk aversion γ increases.[4]

The "full VAR" column in Table 4 shows total portfolio demands with time-varying investment opportunities. The total portfolio demand for the real perpetuity is increasing in risk aversion, approaching 100% of the portfolio as the investor becomes infinitely conservative. By contrast, the total portfolio demand for stocks, the nominal bill, and the nominal bond are decreasing in γ, approaching 0% as the investor becomes infinitely conservative. Thus, inflation-indexed bonds drive out cash from the portfolios of conservative investors. In their model with time-varying interest rates but constant risk premia, Campbell and Viceira (2001) show that an infinitely risk-averse long-horizon investor with zero elasticity of intertemporal substitution would choose to be fully invested in a real perpetuity. Wachter (2000) and Brennan and Xia (2002) have extended this result to more general models with complete markets. Table 4 shows that the result extends to a world in which both interest rates and expected excess returns are time varying. Note that the allocation to the real consol bond for an investor with an extremely large coefficient of relative risk aversion does not equal 100% exactly. This is due primarily to the fact that the investor we consider in Table 4 has unit, not zero, elasticity of intertemporal

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[4] Eq. (20) shows that the myopic demand of non-logarithmic investors is not proportional to $1/\gamma$; instead it is a linear function of $1/\gamma$ whose intercept depends on the covariance between shocks to the real interest rate on nominal bills and unexpected excess returns on all other assets (σ_{1x}). The appendix shows that the correlation between shocks to the real interest rate on nominal bills and unexpected excess returns on the real consol bond is negative and large (about −46% in the quarterly dataset, and −85% in the annual dataset), which in turn translates into a substantial, positive intercept for the real perpetuity.
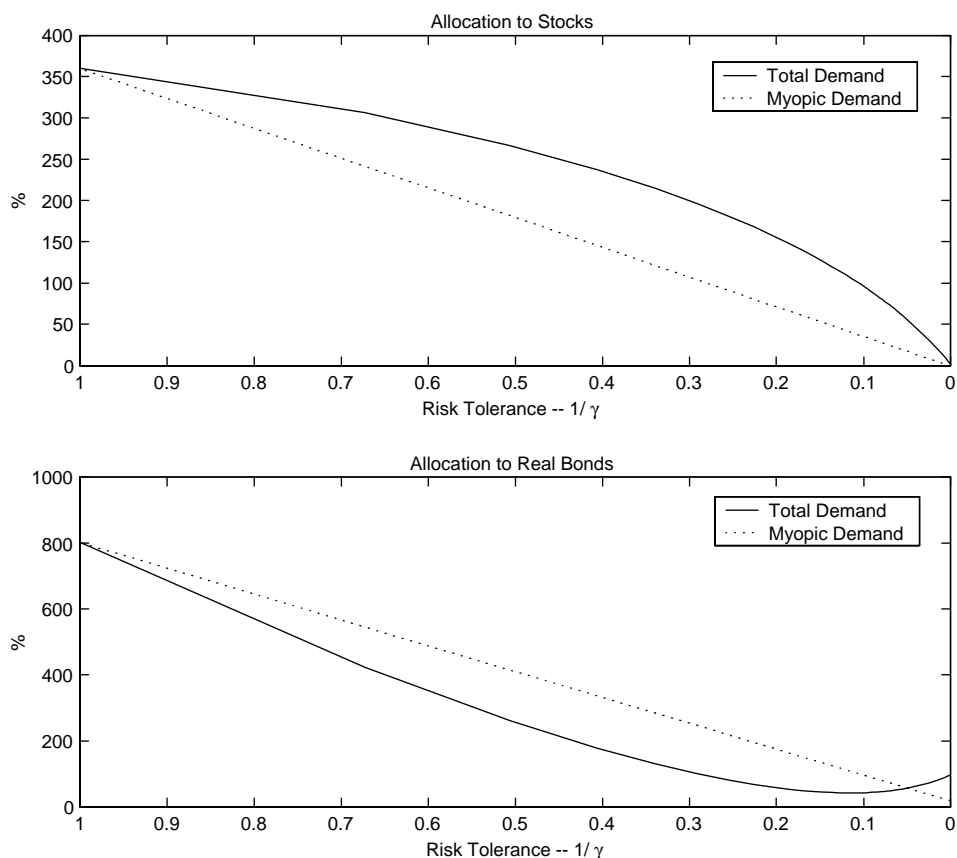
Fig. 4. Optimal allocations to stocks and real consol bond (quarterly sample). This figure plots mean optimal portfolio allocations in percentage points of investors with unit elasticity of intertemporal substitution, time discount factor equal to 0.92 at an annual frequency, and relative risk tolerance coefficients $(1/\gamma)$ between one and zero. $1/\gamma = 1$ corresponds to the case of a log utility investor, while $1/\gamma = 0$ corresponds to the case of an infinitely conservative investor. The solid lines plot total mean portfolio demands, and the dotted lines plot the myopic component of total mean portfolio demands.

substitution. There is also a small effect caused by the fact that the VAR system in Table 4 does not exactly capture the information set we used to construct the long-term real bond yield.

In this model, the intertemporal hedging demand for long-term nominal bonds is negative for all levels of risk aversion; it does not turn positive for extremely conservative investors as when only nominal bonds are available. We have noted that the dynamic properties of bond returns imply a multiplicity of hedging roles for these assets. The presence of inflation-indexed bonds in the menu of assets allows investors to use long positions in inflation-indexed bonds to hedge real interest rate risk, and short positions in nominal bonds to hedge their long positions in stocks and the risk of time variation in expected excess bond returns.
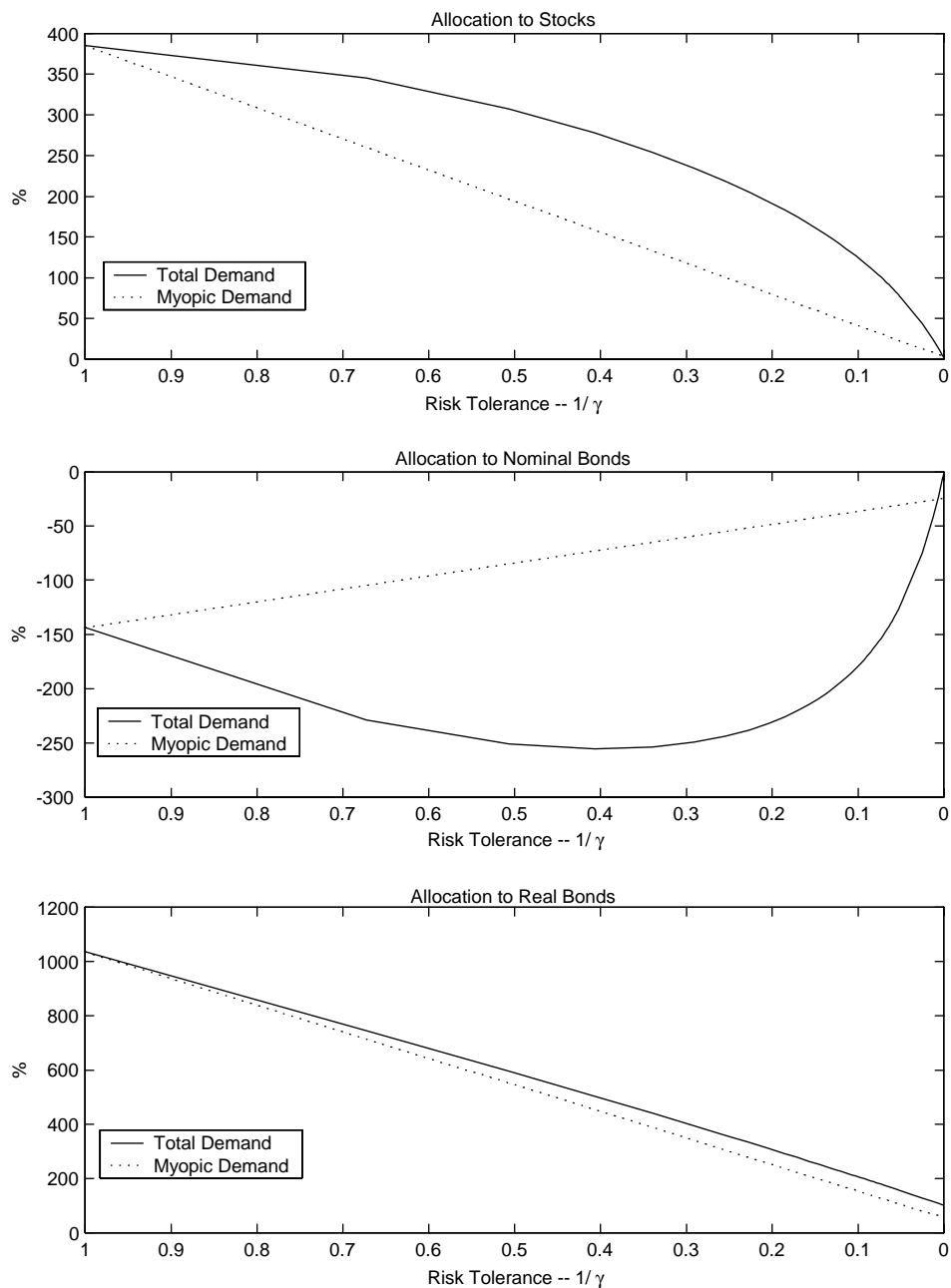
Fig. 5. Optimal allocations to stocks, nominal bond, and real consol bond (quarterly sample). This figure plots mean optimal portfolio allocations in percentage points of investors with unit elasticity of intertemporal substitution, time discount factor equal to 0.92 at an annual frequency, and relative risk tolerance coefficients ($1/\gamma$) between one and zero. $1/\gamma = 1$ corresponds to the case of a log utility investor, while $1/\gamma = 0$ corresponds to the case of an infinitely conservative investor. The solid lines plot total mean portfolio demands, and the dotted lines plot the myopic component of total mean portfolio demands.

5.1. The utility benefits of inflation indexation

Another way to judge the importance of an asset class is to compare the utility of an investor who has access to that asset class with the utility of an investor who does not. In Table 5 we carry out this comparison. The table shows the mean value function for values of γ equal to 1, 2, 5, 20, and 2,000 and $\psi = 1$ in the quarterly dataset. The value function is normalized so that a doubling from one asset menu to another implies that an investor would require twice as much wealth to obtain the same utility with the worse asset menu than with the better one. We report results for a base case in which only nominal bills and stocks are available, and for the three

Table 5
Mean value function (Quarterly sample: 1952.Q2–1999.Q4)

γ	$E[V_t]$
Nominal bills and stocks	
1	0.803
2	0.158
5	0.043
20	0.015
2,000	0.000
Nominal bills, stocks, and nominal bond	
1	13.392
2	0.692
5	0.087
20	0.020
2,000	0.001
Nominal bills, stocks, and real consol bond	
1	1.920
2	0.192
5	0.044
20	0.016
2,000	0.009
Nominal bills, stocks, nominal bond, and real consol bond	
1	3,456.715
2	4.762
5	0.174
20	0.023
2,000	0.009

Note: This table shows the mean value function implied by the quarterly dataset for investors with unit elasticity of intertemporal substitution (ψ), time discount factor (δ) equal to 0.92 at an annual frequency, and coefficients of relative risk aversion (γ) equal to 1, 2, 5, 20, and 2,000. Each panel considers a different asset menu available to the investor. To make all asset menus fully comparable, all mean value functions are based on the same VAR. The value function is normalized so that a doubling from one asset menu to another implies that the investor would require twice as much wealth to obtain the same utility with the worse asset menu than with the better one.

asset menus we have discussed earlier in the paper: nominal bills, long-term nominal bonds, and stocks; nominal bills, real perpetuities, and stocks; and nominal bills, long-term nominal bonds, real perpetuities, and stocks. To make these asset menus fully comparable, we compute value functions for all of them based on the same VAR, which includes the real perpetuity as an additional state variable. Thus, the value function numbers for bills, nominal bonds, and stocks do not correspond exactly to the mean asset allocations reported in Table 3—although the numbers are extremely close. The appendix shows results for the annual dataset.

A comparison of the top panel of Table 5, in which no long-term bonds are available, with the lower panels shows that long-term bonds generate large welfare gains for all investors. Aggressive investors gain by having access to risky nominal bonds with positive expected excess returns, and by the ability to use bonds to hedge long positions in stocks. Conservative investors gain by having access to long-term instruments that hedge the risk of variation in real interest rates. A comparison of the second panel of Table 5 with the bottom panel shows that the addition of real perpetuities to an asset menu that already includes nominal bonds also creates large gains for all investors by improving static and intertemporal hedging opportunities. A comparison of the second panel of Table 5 with the third panel shows that extremely conservative investors would prefer to have real perpetuities available instead of nominal bonds; however, aggressive and moderately conservative investors prefer to be able to invest in nominal bonds because of the risk premium they offer and their ability to hedge stock positions. In interpreting this result, it is important to recall our assumption that real perpetuities offer no risk premium. Also, results are somewhat more favorable for real perpetuities in the annual dataset, where real interest rate risk is more important. In that dataset even moderately conservative investors prefer to have real perpetuities instead of nominal bonds in the asset menu.

6. Conclusion

This paper explores the implications for long-term investors of the empirical evidence on the predictability of asset returns. Dividend yields, interest rates, yield spreads, inflation, and other variables that predict asset returns in previous empirical research have substantial effects on optimal portfolio allocations among bills, stocks, and nominal and inflation-indexed bonds. These effects are strategic, working through intertemporal hedging demands, rather than merely tactical effects on myopic optimal portfolios.

Strategic effects on asset demands arise because shocks to the forecasting variables are correlated with the unexpected returns on stocks and bonds. The correlation is strongest for the dividend–price ratio, and thus we find that this variable is the most important determinant of both the level and the variability of optimal portfolio demands. Predictability of stock returns from the dividend–price ratio tilts the optimal portfolio holdings of moderately conservative investors towards stocks and away from bonds and cash.

We find that the intertemporal hedging demand for long-term nominal bonds is negative for intermediate levels of risk aversion in post-war quarterly data, and positive in long-term annual data covering the whole twentieth century. These contrasting results reflect the importance of real interest rate risk in each period. In the annual dataset, real interest rates are much more variable than in the quarterly postwar dataset, thus increasing the desire of conservative investors to use bonds to hedge real interest rate risk. Also, nominal bonds have been positively correlated with stocks in the post-war period, encouraging investors to use short bond positions to hedge long stock positions; this correlation is much weaker in the long-term annual dataset. When we add inflation-indexed bonds to the asset menu, we find that conservative investors use these assets to hedge real interest rate risk; extremely conservative investors should hold most of their wealth in inflation-indexed bonds when these assets are available.

Our research has several limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting the results. First, we consider a long-term investor who has financial wealth but no labor income. We hope to remedy this serious omission in future work by extending the approach of Viceira (2001). Second, we do not impose borrowing or short-sales constraints; to do so would take us outside the tractable linear–quadratic approximate framework and would require a fully numerical solution method of the sort used by Brennan et al. (1997, 1999) and Lynch (2001). Third, our solutions are approximate for investors with elasticity of intertemporal substitution not equal to one. Campbell et al. (2001) have checked the accuracy of the approximation in the simpler model of Campbell and Viceira (1999) with only one risky asset and one state variable, and have explored the effects of portfolio constraints in that context, but further work is needed within the richer dynamic framework used here. Fourth, we ignore the differential tax treatment of interest or dividend income and capital gains. Dammon et al. (2001) have recently argued that tax effects can be particularly important for long-term investors. Fifth, we assume that a VAR system, estimated without corrections for small-sample biases and without the use of Bayesian priors, is a reasonable description of the dynamic behavior of stock and bond returns. Finally, we assume that investors know all the parameters of the model. We have found that these parameters, including not only the means and covariances of asset returns but also the parameters governing the dynamics of asset returns and state variables, can have enormous effects on optimal portfolio demands. Given this, it is not surprising that parameter uncertainty and learning can have a large effect on optimal long-term investment strategies as shown by Barberis (2000), Brennan (1998), Xia (2001), and others. A challenging task for future research will be to integrate all these effects into a single empirically implementable framework.

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