

Inflation and Individual Investors' Behavior: Evidence from the German Hyperinflation

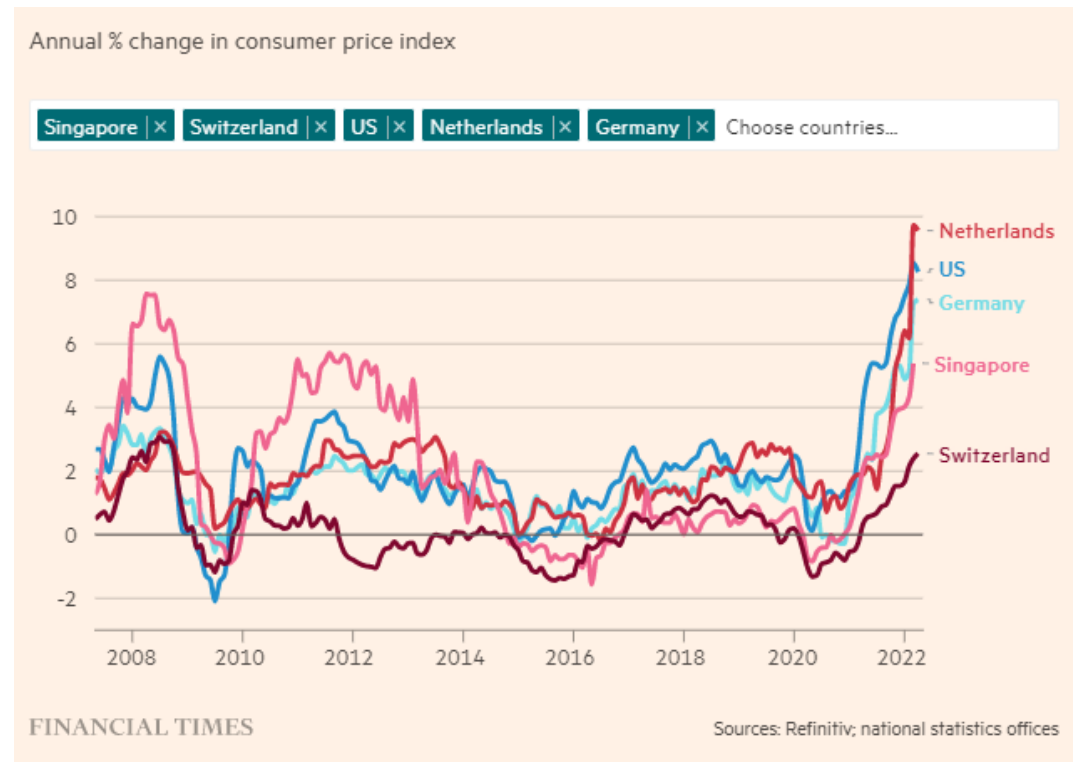
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Motivation

- Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, inflation resurfaced in many countries:



→ Inflation is among the most important economic risks faced by individual investors.

Motivation (II)

- Little is known about how individual investors respond to the prospect of higher inflation, and theory provides conflicting hypotheses on this question:
 - **Hedging hypothesis:** Investors buy more (sell less) stocks in inflationary periods (e.g., Fama and Schwert, 1977; Fama, 1981; Boudoukh and Richardson, 1993; Bekaert and Wang, 2010).
 - **Money illusion hypothesis:** Investors buy less (sell more) stocks in inflationary periods (e.g., Modigliani and Cohn, 1979; Ritter and Warr, 2002; Cohen et al., 2005).
- Understanding how investors react to expected inflation is an empirical question.

This study

- How do investors respond to expected inflation?
 - Do investors buy stocks?
 - Do investors sell stocks?
 - Do different types of investors respond differently?
 - Is investors' behavior consistent with the hedging hypothesis or with the money illusion hypothesis?

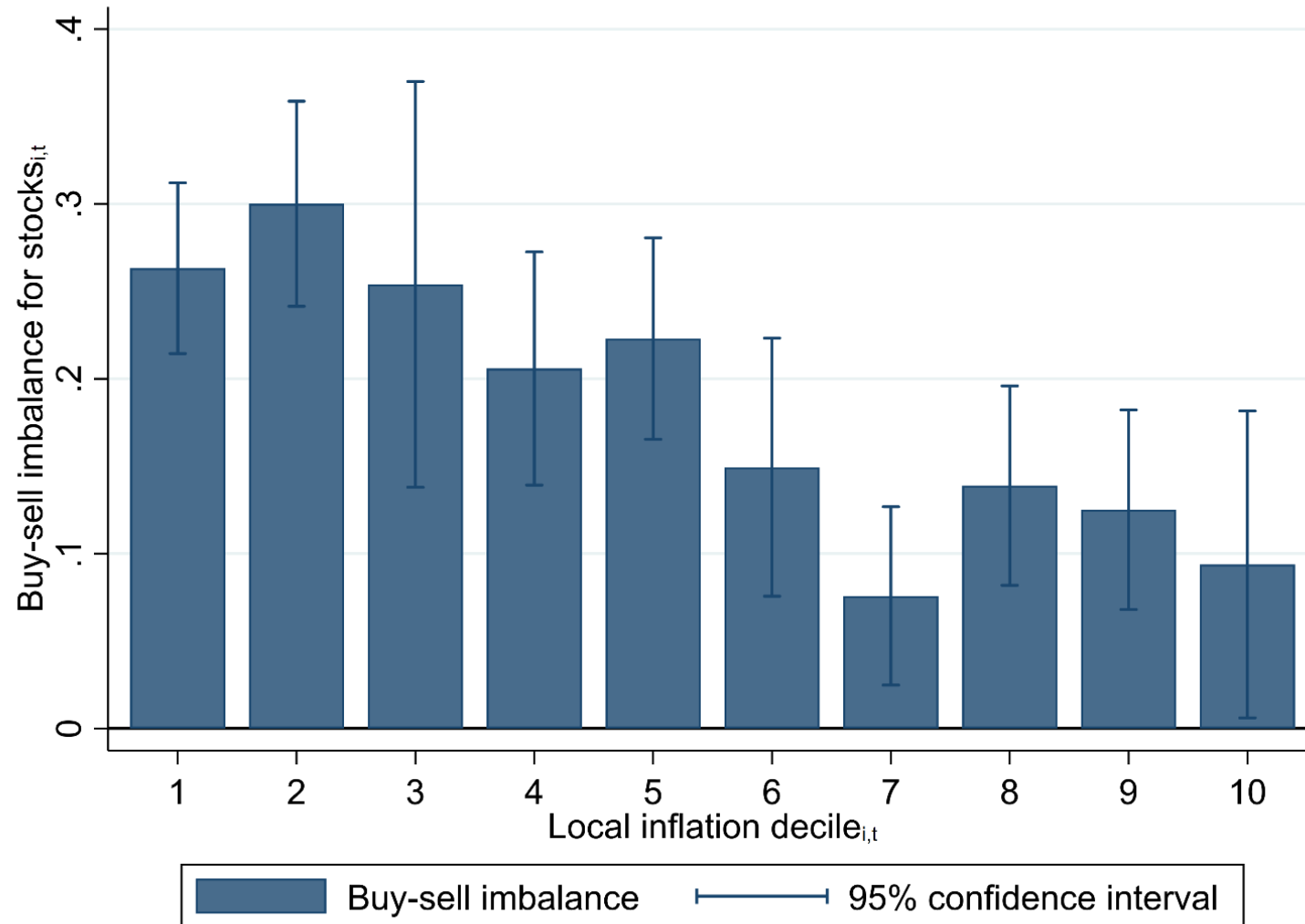
Empirical challenges

- A test of investors' response to inflation is subject to several empirical challenges:
 - 1) **Data on security transactions of investors:** One needs granular data on investors' security transactions. This allows for a direct analysis of investment decision-making in inflationary periods.
 - 2) **Sizable inflation:** One needs a time period in which inflation produces sizable financial losses if overlooked and thus attracts the attention of investors.
 - 3) **Data on inflation expectations of investors:** One needs a reliable measure of expected inflation that varies both over time and across investors. This is a necessary condition for a within-person analysis and enables one to control for the overall time trend.

How do we address the empirical challenges?

- We introduce a unique dataset containing local inflation and security portfolios of over 2,000 clients of a German bank between 1920 and 1924, covering the famous German hyperinflation.
- The data and the time period are ideally suited to address each of the empirical challenges:
 - 1) **Data on security transactions of investors** ✓
 - 2) **Sizable inflation** ✓
 - 3) **Data on inflation expectations of investors** ✓

Preview of the main result



Contribution

- **Inflation and investors' behavior:**

- Inflation and stock returns:

- Positive relation: e.g., Branch (1974), Firth (1979), Boudoukh and Richardson (1993)
 - Negative relation: e.g., Fama and Schwert (1977), Fama (1981), Ritter and Warr (2002), Cohen et al. (2005), Bekaert and Wang (2010)

- Stock returns only provide indirect evidence of investors' behavior. We provide direct evidence of investors' response to inflation.

- **Individual investor behavior:**

- Individual investors are subject to a host of behavioral biases (Shefrin and Statman (1985), Odean (1998), Barber and Odean (2000), Barber and Odean (2001), Grinblatt and Keloharju (2001), Barber and Odean (2008), Goetzmann and Kumar (2008), Grinblatt and Keloharju (2009))

- Ours is the first paper that investigates individual investors' response to inflation.

Data

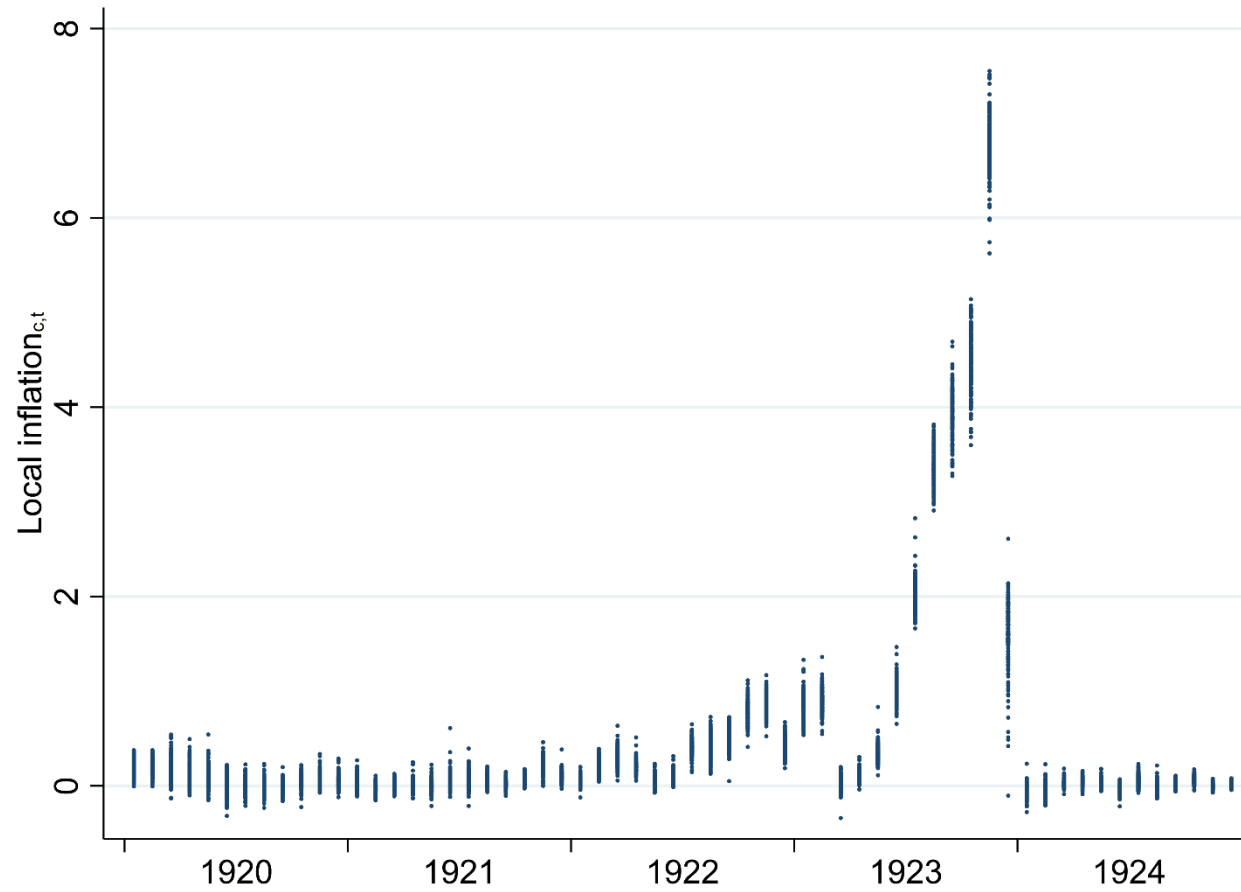
- **Investor data:**

- Deposit books (*Depotbücher*) of a German bank
- 49,415 trades in stocks, bonds, and foreign exchange of 2,262 clients between 1920 and 1924

- **Local inflation data:**

- Quarterly Issue of the German Statistical Office (*Vierteljahresheft des Statistischen Reichsamts*)
- Monthly CPIs of 633 towns in Germany with more than 10,000 inhabitants between 1920 and 1924
- The CPI is based on a basket of goods considered representative for a family of five members.
 - Groceries make up approximately 80% of the basket.
 - D'Acunto, Malmendier, Ospina, and Weber (2021) show that when individuals form inflation expectations, they strongly rely on experienced grocery price changes.

Distribution of local inflation



Determinants of local inflation

| | Local inflation _{c,t} | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Log(local population) _{c,1919} | 0.021* (1.69) | | | | | 0.016 (1.67) | |
| Occupied (d) _{c,t} | | 0.081** (2.20) | | | | 0.073* (1.86) | 0.029* (1.89) |
| Local unemployment rate _{c,t} | | | -6.387*** (-3.28) | | | -6.471*** (-3.17) | -0.084 (-0.56) |
| German Central Bank (d) _{c,1920} | | | | 0.065* (1.73) | | 0.013 (0.48) | |
| % local employees in paper _{c,1921} | | | | | 0.116*** (3.28) | 0.162* (1.81) | |
| Year-month fixed effects | No | No | No | No | No | No | Yes |
| Town fixed effects | No | No | No | No | No | No | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.008 | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.010 | 0.986 |
| N | 10,634 | 10,634 | 9,629 | 10,634 | 10,634 | 9,629 | 9,629 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Empirical approach

- $Buy - sell\ imbalance_{i,t} = \alpha_t + \alpha_i + \beta Local\ inflation_{i,t} + Controls_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t}$
 - $Buy - sell\ imbalance_{i,t} = \frac{\# buys_{i,t} - \# sells_{i,t}}{\# buys_{i,t} + \# sells_{i,t}}$; net demand of the investor for stocks
 - $Local\ inflation_{i,t}$: local monthly inflation in the town where the investor lives
 - α_t : year-month fixed effects
 - α_i : client fixed effects
 - $Controls_{i,t}$: town-level control variables (Occupied (d), Local unemployment rate)
- Rationality predicts $\beta \geq 0$.
- Irrationality (money illusion) predicts $\beta \leq 0$.

Local inflation and stock trades

| | Buy-sell imbalance for stocks _{i,t} | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | | | Jan. 1920- Jun. 1922 | Jul. 1922- Sep. 1923 |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} | -0.536** (-2.48) | -0.650** (-2.63) | | -0.548** (-2.07) | -0.990* (-1.83) | -0.584** (-2.42) |
| Local inflation _{i,t-1,t} | | | -0.353*** (-2.57) | | | |
| Occupied (d) _{i,t} | | | | -0.484* (-1.93) | | |
| Local unemployment rate _{i,t} | | | | -2.188 (-0.74) | | |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Client fixed effects | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.036 | 0.036 | 0.035 | 0.037 | 0.021 | 0.055 |
| N | 8,057 | 8,057 | 7,961 | 7,962 | 3,394 | 4,663 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Cross-sectional analysis

| | Buy-sell imbalance for stocks _{i,t} | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} | -0.748*** (-2.82) | -0.784*** (-3.04) | -0.674*** (-2.72) | -0.683*** (-2.80) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} x Wealthy (d) _{i,Jan. 1920} | 0.035*** (4.29) | | | |
| Local inflation _{i,t} x Diversified (d) _{i,Jan. 1920} | | 0.095*** (5.83) | | |
| Local inflation _{i,t} x Bank employee (d) _i | | | 0.085*** (6.61) | |
| Local inflation _{i,t} x Levered (d) _i | | | | 0.053*** (3.86) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Client fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.078 | 0.080 | 0.038 | 0.036 |
| N | 3,561 | 3,561 | 8,057 | 8,057 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Alternative explanations

- We also test for several alternative explanations:
 - **Consumption:** Do investors shy away from stocks to finance consumption? [Go to test](#)
 - **Economic prospects:** Do investors shy away from stocks because local inflation reveals information about gloomy economic prospects of firms? [Go to test](#)
 - **Risk aversion:** Do investors shy away from stocks because local inflation increases their risk aversion? [Go to test](#)
 - **Other asset classes:** Do investors shy away from stocks because they invest in other asset classes that offer a hedge against inflation? [Go to test](#)
- Results suggest that our findings are not driven by these alternative explanations.

Instrumental variables (IV) regressions

- Concern: Local inflation may be correlated with shocks to other determinants of stockholdings
- Distinctive feature of our investigation period: Money took the form of banknotes, which had to be printed and brought into circulation. This took place locally.
- Instrument: Share of local employees working in paper production
 - Relevance criterion:
 - Instrument needs to be correlated with local inflation
 - F-stat > 10, significant first-stage coefficient
 - Exclusion restriction:
 - Instrument needs to influence local stockholdings only through its impact on local inflation
 - Local capacity to produce paper was determined by environmental factors: Access to spruce trees and clean river water

Instrumental variables (IV) regressions (II)

| | Buy-sell imbalance for stocks _{i,t} | | | |
|---|--|----------|----------|----------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} | -4.918* | -4.686* | -4.479** | -4.273** |
| | (-1.86) | (-1.78) | (-2.62) | (-2.61) |
| <i>First-stage instrument</i> | | | | |
| % local employees in paper _{i,1921} | 1.312*** | 1.307*** | | |
| | (3.46) | (3.46) | | |
| High % local employees in paper (d) _{i,1921} | | | 0.054*** | 0.054*** |
| | | | (3.40) | (3.39) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Region fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Town characteristics | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Client characteristics | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| N | 7,956 | 7,956 | 7,956 | 7,956 |
| F-statistic of first-stage regression | 12.199 | 12.198 | 12.668 | 12.565 |

Town characteristics: Log(local population)_{i,1919}, Log(distance to state capital)_i, Log(distance to Berlin)_i, Log(distance to border)_{i,1920}, Occupied (d)_{i,t}, Local unemployment rate_{i,t}, and German Central Bank (d)_{i,1920}; Client characteristics: Male (d)_i, Other bank account (d)_i, Bank employee (d)_i, and Levered (d)_i. t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Conclusion

- Inflation is among the most important economic risks faced by investors.
- In this study, we analyze how investors respond to inflation, using a unique dataset containing local inflation and security portfolios of more than 2,000 clients of a German bank between 1920 and 1924, covering the famous German hyperinflation.
- We find that investors buy less (sell more) stocks when facing higher local inflation.
- This effect is more pronounced for less sophisticated investors.
- Our findings are consistent with investors suffering from money illusion.
- Our results underscore concerns that the financial literacy of individuals may not be sufficient to respond appropriately to the currently resurfacing inflation.

Appendix

Preview of the results

- We find that investors buy less (sell more) stocks when facing higher local inflation.
- This effect is more pronounced for less sophisticated investors.
- We also document a positive relation between local inflation and forgone returns following stock sales.
- Our findings are consistent with investors suffering from money illusion.
- Alternative explanations are unlikely to drive our results. Do investors shy away from stocks...
 - ... because local inflation reveals information about gloomy economic prospects of firms? ✖
 - ... because local inflation increases their risk aversion? ✖
 - ... to finance consumption? ✖
 - ... because they invest in other asset classes that offer a hedge against inflation? ✖

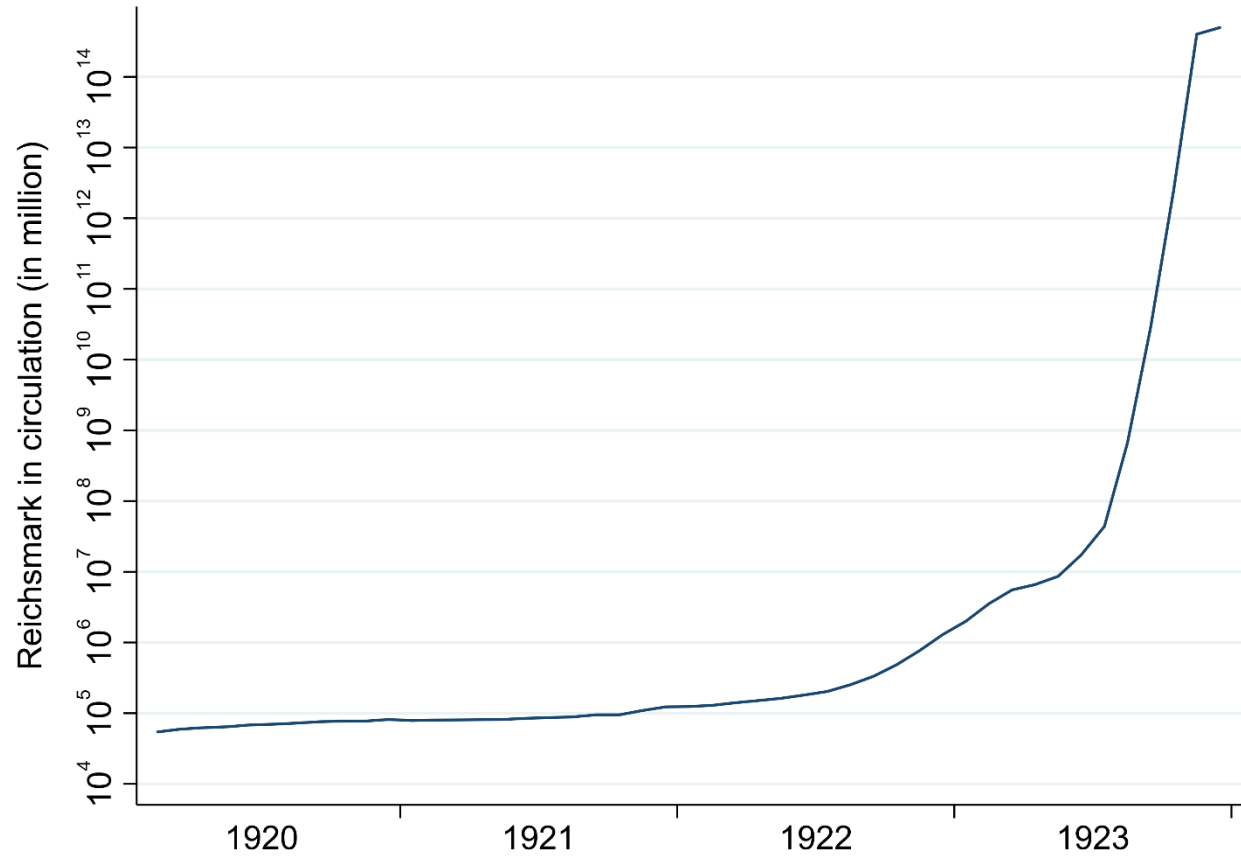
The money illusion hypothesis of Modigliani and Cohn (1979)

| | Response of <u>rational</u> <u>investors</u> to higher expected inflation | Response of <u>irrational</u> <u>investors</u> (<u>money</u> <u>illusion</u>) to higher expected inflation |
|--|---|---|
| <p>– Gordon Growth Model:</p> $\frac{D_{t+1}}{P_t} = R - G$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – D_{t+1}: dividend per share – P_t: share price – R: nominal discount rate – G: nominal growth rate of cash flow | $\leftrightarrow \frac{D_{t+1}}{P_t} = R \uparrow - G \uparrow$ | $\uparrow \frac{D_{t+1} \leftrightarrow}{P_t \downarrow} = R \uparrow - G \leftrightarrow$ <p>The perceived price is lower than the actual market price. Thus, investors <u>buy less</u> (<u>sell more</u>) stocks in inflationary periods.</p> |

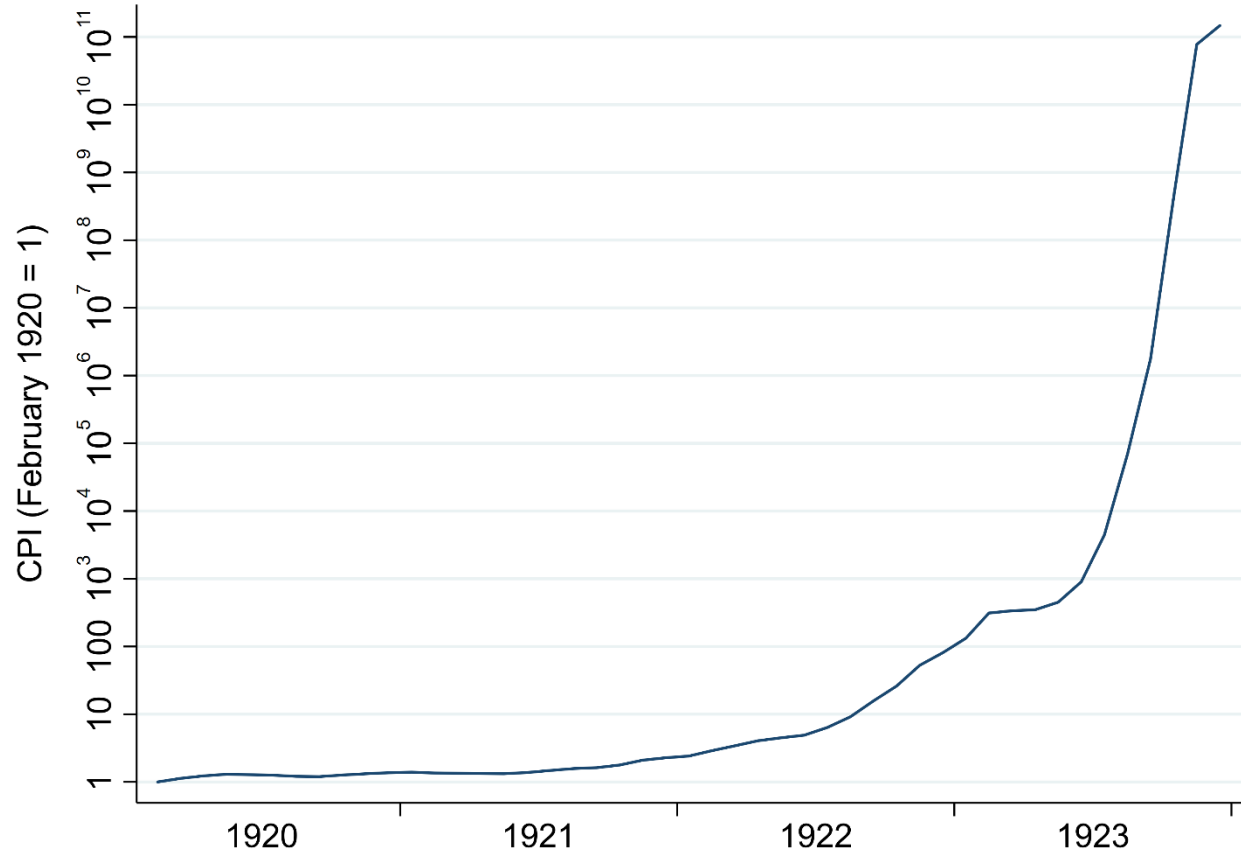
The origins of inflation

- Germany lost the First World War in 1918.
 - Thereafter, it had plenty of financial obligations:
 - “Normal” public expenditures
 - War debt
 - Pensions to war veterans, widows, etc.
 - Reparations to the Allies of the First World War
 - ...
 - Where to find the money?
 - Tax revenues were low
 - Imposing new taxes was difficult
 - Issuing new debt in Germany was difficult
 - Issuing new debt internationally was not possible
- Printing money...

Money supply in Germany in the 1920s



Inflation in Germany in the 1920s



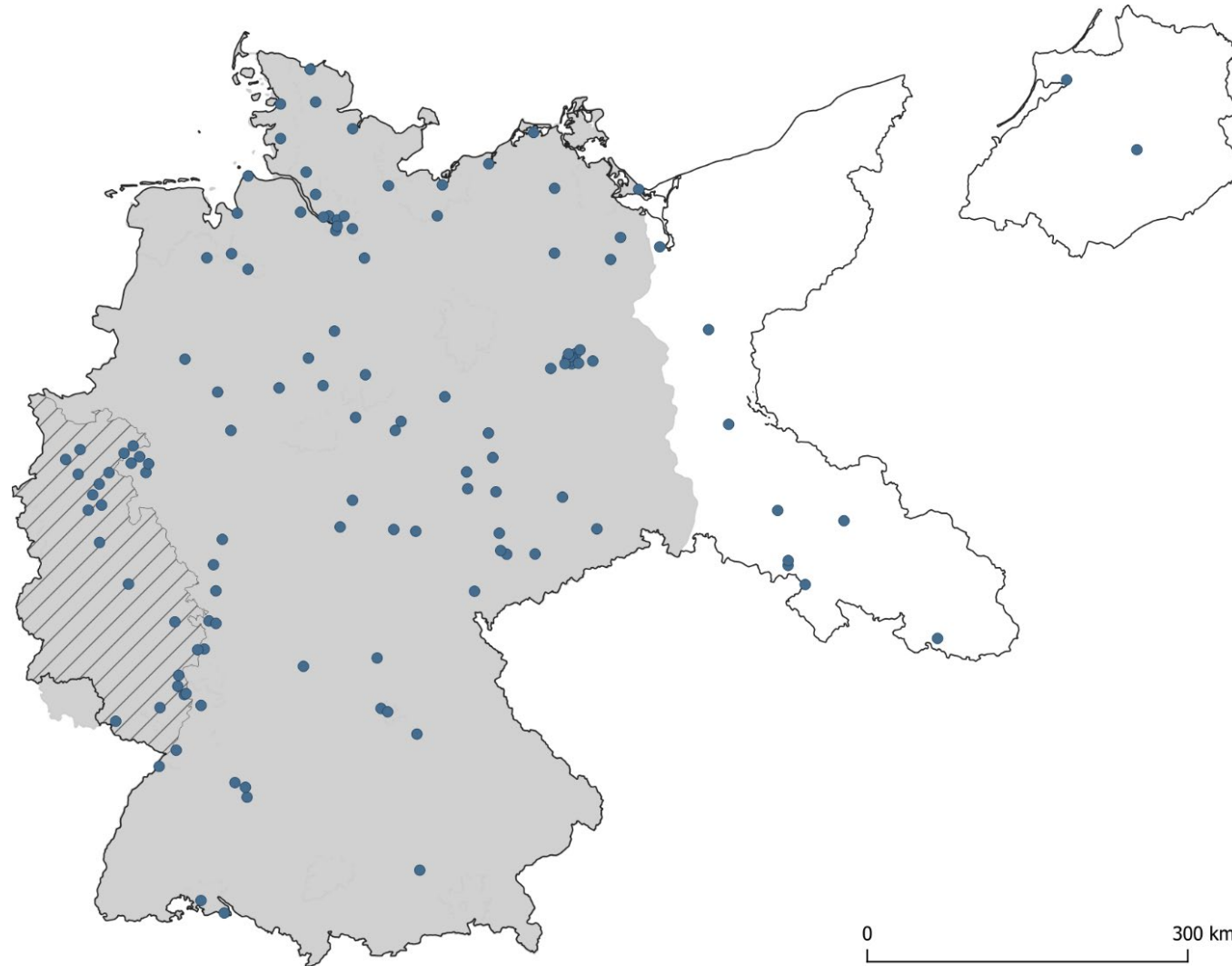
Investor data

[illegible]

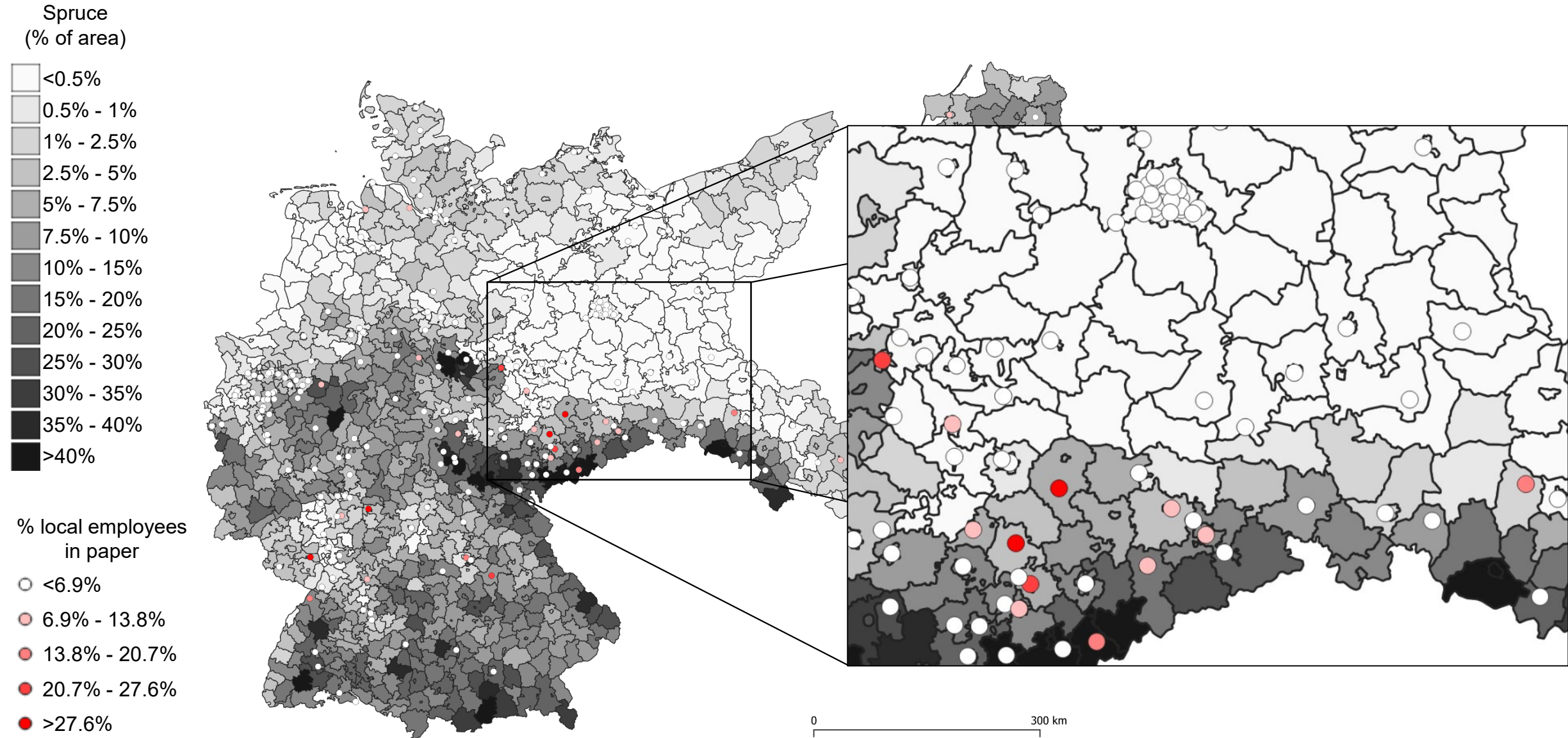
Local inflation data

| Die Steuerungsstatistik im 3. Vierteljahr 1921 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | IV. 93 | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------------|---|--------------|------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------------|---|--|--|
| Steuerungs- und Verhältniszahlen für die Gemeinden mit 10 000 und mehr Einwohnern nach den Erhebungen vom Januar und vom Juli bis September 1921 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (Die Landgemeinden, Markflecken usw. sind mit * bezeichnet.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gemeinden und Verwaltungsbezirke | Orts- anwesende Be- völkerung am 8. 10. 1919 | Steuerungszahlen für | | | | Verhältniszahlen mit Bezug auf Januar 1921 (= 100) | | | Gemeinden und Verwaltungsbezirke | Orts- anwesende Be- völkerung am 8. 10. 1919 | Steuerungszahlen für | | | | Verhältniszahlen mit Bezug auf Januar 1921 (= 100) | | |
| | | Janu- ar 1921 | Juli 1921 | August 1921 | Septem- ber 1921 | Janu- ar 1921 | Juli 1921 | Septem- ber 1921 | | | Janu- ar 1921 | Juli 1921 | August 1921 | Septem- ber 1921 | | | |
| | | 1921 | 1921 | 1921 | 1921 | 1921 | 1921 | 1921 | | | 1921 | 1921 | 1921 | 1921 | 1921 | | |
| Preußen | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reg.-Bez. Königsberg | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Braunsberg i. Ostpr. | 13 076 | 810 | 913 | 957 | 990 | 113 | 118 | 122 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Elbing | 67 127 | 813 | 999 | 975 | 969 | 123 | 120 | 119 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Königsberg i. Pr. | 260 895 | 876 | 886 | 980 | 1 031 | 101 | 112 | 118 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Rastenburg | 13 275 | 875 | 866 | 925 | 960 | 99 | 106 | 110 | | | | | | | | | |
| Reg.-Bez. Gumbinnen | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Gumbinnen | 17 374 | 875 | 863 | 937 | 989 | 99 | 107 | 113 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Insterburg | 38 340 | 912 | 955 | 1 000 | 959 | 105 | 110 | 105 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Tilsit | 44 424 | 898 | 987 | 988 | 1 044 | 110 | 110 | 116 | | | | | | | | | |
| Reg.-Bez. Allenstein | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Allenstein | 34 731 | 889 | 926 | 1 012 | 1 005 | 104 | 114 | 113 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Ohren | 9 178 | 818 | 986 | 980 | 989 | 121 | 120 | 121 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Eylau | 13 602 | 956 | 863 | 1 038 | 1 078 | 90 | 109 | 113 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Cherode i. Ostpr. | 14 826 | 825 | 909 | 958 | 987 | 110 | 116 | 120 | | | | | | | | | |
| Reg.-Bez. Marienwerder | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Deutsch-Eylau | 9 266 | 963 | 940 | 978 | 1 016 | 98 | 102 | 106 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Marienburg i. Westpr. | 15 774 | 797 | 874 | 924 | 943 | 110 | 116 | 118 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Marienwerder | 11 817 | 881 | 922 | 990 | 1 002 | 105 | 112 | 114 | | | | | | | | | |
| Berlin | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Berlin (früh. Stadtfreis) | 1 902 509 | 960 | 999 | 1 045 | 1 056 | 104 | 109 | 110 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Adlershof | 12 655 | 881 | 955 | 957 | 1 089 | 108 | 109 | 124 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Berlin-Hohenschönhausen | 6 732 | 929 | 940 | 1 035 | 1 059 | 101 | 111 | 114 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Berlin-Johannisthal | 5 474 | 904 | 947 | 958 | 1 090 | 105 | 106 | 121 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Berlin-Lichtenberg | (1 169 042) | 896 | 948 | 976 | 1 015 | 106 | 109 | 113 | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Berlin-Mariendorf | 20 699 | 937 | 954 | 988 | 1 070 | 102 | 105 | 114 | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 Berlin-Mariensfelde | 3 843 | 890 | 1 013 | 989 | 1 030 | 114 | 111 | 116 | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 Berlin-Niederschönhausen | 9 611 | 854 | 943 | 959 | 1 091 | 110 | 112 | 128 | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 Berlin-Niederschönhausen | 18 906 | 884 | 1 052 | 1 171 | 1 051 | 119 | 121 | 130 | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 Berlin-Oberischönhausen | 25 612 | 919 | 937 | 958 | 1 090 | 102 | 104 | 119 | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 Berlin-Pankow | 57 923 | 988 | 969 | 994 | 1 011 | 98 | 101 | 102 | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 Berlin-Reinickendorf | 41 263 | 894 | 1 074 | 1 127 | 1 104 | 120 | 126 | 123 | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 Berlin-Schöneberg | (2 218 925) | 942 | 955 | 1 023 | 1 074 | 101 | 109 | 114 | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 Berlin-Steglitz | (1 142 976) | 908 | 1 035 | 1 001 | 1 047 | 114 | 110 | 115 | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 Berlin-Stralau | 4 960 | 969 | 992 | 982 | 1 088 | 102 | 101 | 112 | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 Berlin-Tegel | 20 590 | 922 | 954 | 1 007 | 1 063 | 103 | 109 | 115 | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 Berlin-Tempelhof | 34 363 | 895 | 1 038 | 1 027 | 1 108 | 116 | 115 | 124 | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 Berlin-Treptow | 30 701 | 898 | 949 | 961 | 1 093 | 106 | 107 | 122 | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 Berlin-Weißensee | 45 880 | 910 | 990 | 1 063 | 1 091 | 109 | 117 | 120 | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 Berlin-Wilmersdorf | 139 406 | 950 | 979 | 1 055 | 1 073 | 103 | 111 | 113 | | | | | | | | | |
| Reg.-Bez. Frankfurt | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 * Lehnin | 2 396 | 922 | 996 | 985 | 1 095 | 108 | 107 | 119 | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 Ludenwalde | 22 742 | 844 | 987 | 977 | 989 | 117 | 116 | 117 | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 Nauen | 8 734 | 981 | 1 019 | 1 029 | 1 073 | 104 | 105 | 109 | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 Neuruppin | 17 215 | 860 | 855 | 907 | 964 | 99 | 105 | 112 | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 * Nauen | 25 582 | 801 | 946 | 1 009 | 1 010 | 118 | 126 | 126 | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 Trantenburg | 12 777 | 941 | 989 | 976 | 1 002 | 105 | 104 | 106 | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 Verleberg | 9 551 | 839 | 889 | 915 | 970 | 106 | 109 | 116 | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 Potsdam | 58 397 | 979 | 1 048 | 1 026 | 1 081 | 107 | 105 | 110 | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 Prenzlau | 19 650 | 787 | 854 | 923 | 921 | 109 | 117 | 117 | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 Rathenow | 24 885 | 896 | 928 | 959 | 1 004 | 104 | 107 | 112 | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 Wittenberge | 24 257 | 875 | 928 | 978 | 968 | 106 | 112 | 111 | | | | | | | | | |
| Reg.-Bez. Frankfurt | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Arnswalde | 9 799 | 806 | 919 | 946 | 970 | 114 | 117 | 120 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Cottbus | 48 046 | 839 | 881 | 957 | 1 026 | 105 | 114 | 122 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Güttrich | 18 522 | 984 | 1 008 | 1 019 | 1 065 | 102 | 104 | 108 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Hünnerwalde | 12 754 | 1 008 | 1 037 | 1 106 | 1 160 | 103 | 110 | 115 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Forst (Lausitz) | 32 216 | 908 | 910 | 993 | 1 129 | 100 | 109 | 124 | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Frankfurt a. O. | 65 055 | 874 | 898 | 997 | 991 | 103 | 114 | 113 | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 Fürstentum a. O. | 6 319 | 856 | 928 | 896 | 976 | 108 | 105 | 114 | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 Fürstentum a. O. | 21 522 | 843 | 888 | 928 | 992 | 105 | 110 | 118 | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 Guben | 37 987 | 934 | 842 | 997 | 1 003 | 90 | 107 | 107 | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 Landsberg a. W. | 39 752 | 842 | 914 | 957 | 962 | 109 | 114 | 114 | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 Senftenberg | (13 346) | 1 011 | 1 031 | 1 093 | 1 067 | 102 | 108 | 106 | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 Sommerfeld | 10 700 | 886 | 995 | 991 | 1 008 | 112 | 112 | 114 | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 Cottbus (Nied.-Laus.) | 15 651 | 798 | 965 | 1 015 | 1 051 | 121 | 127 | 132 | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 Spremberg | 10 563 | 968 | 949 | 1 030 | 1 028 | 98 | 106 | 106 | | | | | | | | | |
| Reg.-Bez. Stettin | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Altdamm | 8 390 | 898 | 886 | 936 | 962 | 99 | 104 | 107 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Anklam | 14 355 | 829 | 859 | 974 | 958 | 104 | 117 | 116 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Demmin | 12 001 | 969 | 917 | 947 | 979 | 95 | 98 | 101 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Gollnow | 10 155 | 971 | 813 | 870 | 896 | 103 | 110 | 113 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Bairendorf | 11 041 | 960 | 906 | 964 | 977 | 94 | 100 | 102 | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Stargard i. Pom. | 28 629 | 903 | 955 | 1 002 | 1 007 | 106 | 111 | 112 | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 Stettin | 232 726 | 986 | 947 | 1 044 | 1 040 | 96 | 106 | 105 | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 Swinemünde | 15 587 | 834 | 959 | 1 010 | 1 015 | 115 | 121 | 122 | | | | | | | | | |
| Reg.-Bez. Köslin | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Belgard | 10 406 | 832 | 978 | 1 045 | 1 061 | 118 | 126 | 128 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Bublitz | 5 112 | 874 | 983 | 969 | 981 | 112 | 111 | 112 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Kolberg | 29 021 | 1 046 | 1 013 | 1 085 | 1 100 | 97 | 104 | 105 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Kolberg | 27 005 | 916 | 1 036 | 958 | 986 | 113 | 105 | 108 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Rauenburg i. Pom. | 14 777 | 840 | 897 | 964 | 1 051 | 107 | 115 | 125 | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Neustettin | 13 264 | 877 | 958 | 984 | 1 024 | 109 | 112 | 117 | | | | | | | | | |

Geographical distribution of investors



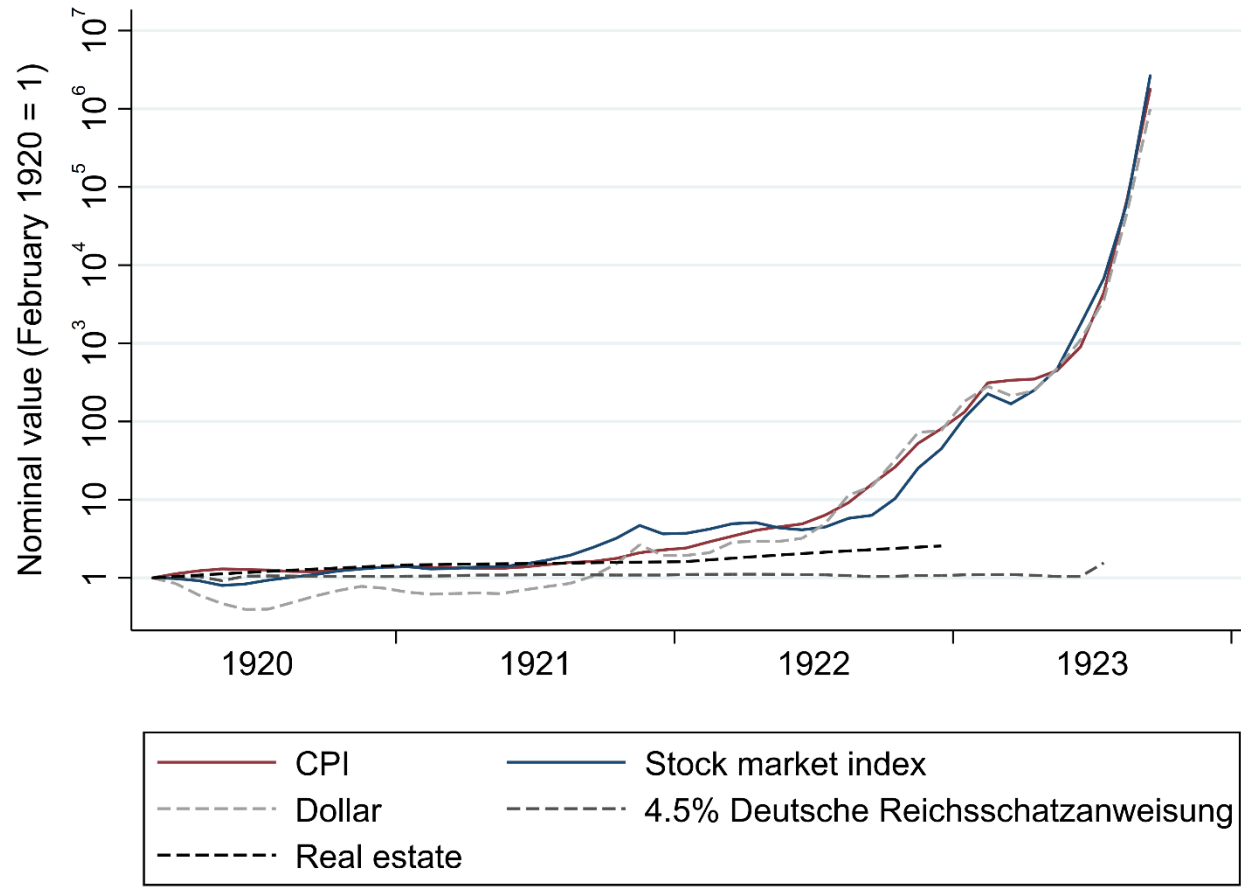
Instrumental variables (IV) regressions (II)



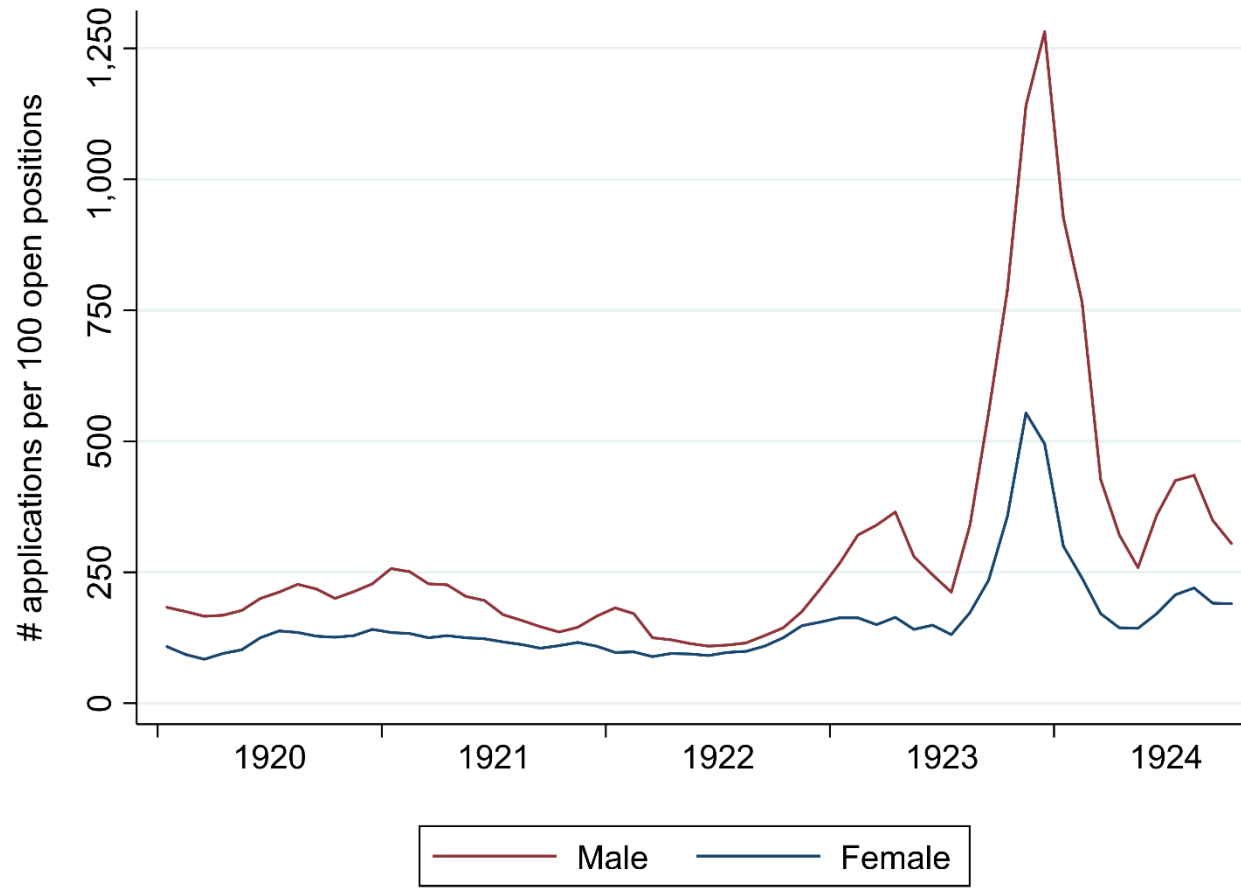
What financial instruments were available to investors in Germany in the 1920s?

- **Stocks and bonds:**
 - >20 stock exchanges in Germany
 - The Berlin Stock Exchange was the largest exchange in Germany and the second largest exchange in the world (after London).
 - >1,400 stocks and >2,400 bonds traded on the Berlin stock exchange
- **Derivatives:**
 - The derivatives market was shut down prior to the First World War.
- **Foreign exchange:**
 - Foreign exchange was subject to strict regulations.
- **Real estate:**
 - Real estate was subject to strict regulations.
- **Commodities:**
 - Gold was scarce.

How did different financial instruments perform in the 1920s?



Unemployment



Descriptive statistics

| | Mean | Minimum | Median | Maximum | Std. dev. | N |
|---|-------|---------|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Panel A: Client characteristics | | | | | | |
| Male (d) | 0.72 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.45 | 2,262 |
| Germany (d) | 0.89 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.31 | 2,260 |
| Panel B: Portfolio characteristics | | | | | | |
| Avg. # securities | 3.12 | 1.00 | 1.53 | 60.88 | 4.44 | 2,262 |
| Avg. % stocks | 48.70 | 0.00 | 50.00 | 100.00 | 42.56 | 2,262 |
| Avg. % bonds | 31.91 | 0.00 | 4.44 | 100.00 | 40.54 | 2,262 |
| Avg. % foreign exchange | 13.44 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 | 28.21 | 2,262 |
| Panel C: Trading characteristics | | | | | | |
| Avg. # trades per month | 0.78 | 0.00 | 0.50 | 16.22 | 1.03 | 2,262 |
| Avg. % buys | 54.21 | 0.00 | 50.00 | 100.00 | 22.55 | 2,225 |
| Avg. % stock trades | 51.21 | 0.00 | 58.82 | 100.00 | 41.84 | 2,225 |
| Avg. % bond trades | 30.33 | 0.00 | 4.44 | 100.00 | 39.65 | 2,225 |
| Avg. % foreign exchange trades | 13.36 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 | 27.42 | 2,225 |

The performance of stock sales

- Investors subject to money illusion buy less (sell more) stocks because they consider stocks to be overvalued.
- If investors do not suffer from money illusion and stocks are truly overvalued, real stock returns following stock sales should be negative, as stock prices return to their fundamental values.
- If investors suffer from money illusion and stocks are not overvalued, real stock returns following stock sales should not be negative.

Stock price data

- Berlin Stock Exchange Newspaper (*Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*)
- Monthly stock prices of 1,440 stocks between 1920 and 1924

Kurszettel der „Berliner Börsen-Zeitung“ vom 30. Juni 1920.

3

(Die Dividenden lauten für 1919 resp. 1917/18 resp. 1918/19.) — bedeutet, dass die Dividende auf den angegebenen Betrag festgesetzt, Termin der Auszahlung aber noch nicht bestimmt ist.

Aktien von Industriellen und Bergwerks-Ges.

| | Div. 17 | Div. 18 | Div. 19 | Gesetzl. | Stücke zu | heute | gestern | Stücke zu | heute | gestern |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Berl. Kindl-Br. | 16 | 20 | 12 | 1/10 | 300 .K | 261 G | 259 G | 1000 .K | 221 G | 220,25 G |
| da. St.-Pr. | 18 | 22 | 14 | da. | 1000 .K | 200 G | 227 G | 1000 .K | 248,75 G | 247 G |
| Böhm. Brauhaus | 10 | 10 | 9 | da. | 200 .K | 133 G | 131 G | 1000 .K | 276 G | 276 G |
| Boll. Weinbau | 5 | 5 | 5 | da. | 1000 .K | 238,50 G | 238 G | 1000 .K | 340,50 G | 328 G |
| Deutsche Bierbr. | 8 | 8 | 7 | da. | 1000 .K | 181 G | 181 G | 1000 .K | 330 G | 328 G |
| Engelhardt | 15 | 15 | 15 | da. | 1000 .K | 138 G | 138 G | 1000 .K | 213 G | 213 G |
| Friedrichshain | 6 | 6 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 75,40 G | 75,40 G | 1000 .K | 162 G | 162 G |
| Germania | 0 | 0 | 0 | da. | 1000 .K | 192 G | 192 G | 1000 .K | 261 G | 261 G |
| Königsstadt | 4 | 4 | 4 | da. | 1000 .K | 181 G | 181 G | 1000 .K | 110,50 G | 110,50 G |
| Landr. Weinb. | 5 | 5 | 5 | da. | 1000 .K | 215 G | 217 G | 1000 .K | 226 G | 226 G |
| Lebenbräuerei | 14 | 14 | 12 | da. | 1000 .K | 242 G | 242 G | 1000 .K | 363 G | 363 G |
| Schönbach Schl. | 6 | 6 | 4 | da. | 1000 .K | 220 G | 217 G | 1000 .K | 160 G | 160 G |
| Schultheiss | 16 | 16 | 14 | 1/10 | 1210.300.000 | 220 G | 217 G | 1000 .K | 160 G | 160 G |
| Böckum Victoria | 9 | 9 | 12 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 220 G | 217 G | 1000 .K | 373,25 G | 373,25 G |
| Bräuer Nürnberg | 9 | 9 | 9 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 1150 G | 1150 G |
| Bräuer Stadth. | 10 | 6 | 6 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 165 G | 165 G |
| Bucher, Hbf. | 7 | 8 | 8 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 358 G | 358 G |
| Danziger Act.-Br. | 8 | 8 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 306,25 G | 306,25 G |
| Dortm. Act.-Br. | 20 | 20 | 20 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. Union | 20 | 20 | 20 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. Victoria | 10 | 17 | 10 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Düsseld. Diesterich | 16 | 10 | 12 | 1/11 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. (Hofel) | 5 | 8 | 11 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Frankf. Henning | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Germania Dortmund | 6 | 6 | 8 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Glückauf Gelsenk. | 7 | 6 | 9 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Hannh. Hbf. Brau. | 3 | 3 1/2 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Hennigshof Bräu. | 5 | 5 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Hess. u. Hercules | 8 | 8 | 8 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Hocherbräu | 8 | 8 | 17 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Hofstein | 10 | 8 | 8 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Hugger, Posen | 8 1/2 | 8 1/2 | 8 1/2 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Isenbeck & Co. | 5 | 5 | 0 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Kieler Schlossbr. | 6 | 6 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| König Br. Beck | 7 | 7 | 7 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Kunsterstein | 8 | 8 | 8 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Lpz. Br. Riebeck | 10 | 10 | 10 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. Verz.-Akt. | 6 | 6 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Landr. Brauer | 13 | 13 | 11 | da. | 1500 .K | 371 G | 376 G | 1000 .K | 220,25 G | 220,25 G |
| Lebenbr. Dortm. | 10 | 10 | 10 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Merg. Brauerei | 5 | 7 | 10 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Möser Langendr. | 8 | 8 | 12 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Oberschlesische | 7 | 9 | — | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Oppelner abg. | 8 | 8 | 13 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Paulshöhe Spitta | 4 | 4 | 5 | da. | 1000 .K | 221 G | 215 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| Chem. Fabr. Buckau | 10 | 5 | 10 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 371 G | 372 G | 1000 .K | 376 G | 376 G |
| da. St.-Pr. | 10 | 5 | 10 | da. | 1500 .K | 372 G | 376 G | 1000 .K | 248,75 G | 247 G |
| da. Griesheim | 16 | 7 | 12 | da. | 1000 .K | 284 G | 284 G | 1000 .K | 276 G | 276 G |
| da. Grünau | 12 | 10 | 12 | da. | 1000 .K | 245 G | 251 G | 1000 .K | 340,50 G | 340,50 G |
| da. v. Heyden | 23 | 16 | 16 | da. | 1000 .K | 302 G | 302 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. Misch & Co. | 12 | 22 | 0 | 1/11 | 1000 .K | 307 G | 314 G | 1000 .K | 213 G | 213 G |
| da. Weller | 12 | 10 | 12 | 1/2 | 1000 .K | 244 G | 245 G | 1000 .K | 162 G | 162 G |
| da. Ind. Gelsenk. | 16 | 16 | 25 | da. | 1000 .K | 298 G | 302 G | 1000 .K | 261 G | 261 G |
| da. Werke Albert | 30 | 20 | 30 | da. | 1000 .K | 561,50 G | 562 G | 1000 .K | 110,50 G | 110,50 G |
| Chem. W. Zimmerm. | 20 | 20 | 0 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 407,75 G | 406 G | 1000 .K | 226 G | 226 G |
| Concordia, Bergbau | 21 | 21 | 22 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 557,50 G | 555,50 G | 1000 .K | 363 G | 363 G |
| da. chem. Fabr. | 6 | 10 | 8 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 200,50 G | 204,50 G | 1000 .K | 159,75 G | 159,75 G |
| da. Spinnerei | 12 | 12 | 16 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 420 G | 425 G | 1000 .K | 296 G | 296 G |
| Consolidation Schalk | 22 | 22 | 12 | da. | 1000 .K | 148 G | 148 G | 1000 .K | 236 G | 236 G |
| Continental Maschinen | 8 | 10 | 0 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 300 G | 300 G | 1000 .K | 375,50 G | 375,50 G |
| Cottb. Papierfab. | 16 | 25 | 10 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 208,50 G | 201 G | 1000 .K | 180 G | 180 G |
| Daimler-Motoren | 30 | 6 | 5 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 254,75 G | 256 G | 1000 .K | 315 G | 315 G |
| Delmenh. Lda. (Anker) | 14 | 10 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 150 G | 150 G | 1000 .K | 199 G | 199 G |
| Dessauer Gas-G. | 11 | 10 | — | 1/11.D.1919 | 1000 .K | 183,50 G | 183,50 G | 1000 .K | 248 G | 248 G |
| Dtsch.-Allgem. Elektr. | 10 | 10 | — | 1/11.D.1919 | 1000 .K | 190 G | 190 G | 1000 .K | 108 G | 108 G |
| Dr. Lössberg, Bergw. | 6 | — | — | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 195 G | 195 G | 1000 .K | 163 G | 163 G |
| Dr. Niderl. Elektr. | 6 | — | — | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 778 G | 778 G | 1000 .K | 211 G | 211 G |
| Dr. Schmid, Tel. Ser. A. | 5 | — | — | da. | 1000 .K | 773 G | 773 G | 1000 .K | 160 G | 160 G |
| Deutsch-Übersee. El. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 150 G | 150 G | 1000 .K | 373,25 G | 373,25 G |
| da. Zert. & D. Tr.-G. | 6 | 6 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 150 G | 150 G | 1000 .K | 1140 G | 1140 G |
| da. Verz.-Akt. | 6 | 6 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 150 G | 150 G | 1000 .K | 165 G | 165 G |
| da. Zert. & D. Tr.-G. | 0 | 0 | 4 | da. | 1000 .K | 150 G | 150 G | 1000 .K | 353 G | 353 G |
| Deutsche Anhalt-G. | 0 | 0 | 4 | da. | 1000 .K | 150 G | 150 G | 1000 .K | 306,25 G | 306,25 G |
| da. Babcock & Wilcox | 12 1/2 | 17 1/2 | 12 1/2 | 1/10 | 1000 .K | 1050 G | 1050 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. Elsbach - Signal | 16 | 10 | 0 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 1050 G | 1050 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. Erdöl-Akt. Gen. | 25 | 20 | 45 | da. | 1000 .K | 1050 G | 1050 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. Gas- & Lique. | 25 | 25 | 0 | 1/11.D.1919 | 1000 .K | 1050 G | 1050 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. Guano-Kongl. | 5 | 5 | 0 | da.11.D.1919 | 1000 .K | 1050 G | 1050 G | 1000 .K | 328 G | 328 G |
| da. Jute-Spinnerei | 36 1/2 | 36 1/2 | 25 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 159 G | 157,75 G | 1000 .K | 255,25 G | 255,25 G |
| da. Kalkwerke | 10 | 10 | 15 | da. | 1000 .K | 173,75 G | 173 G | 1000 .K | 140,50 G | 140,50 G |
| da. Kalkwerke | 8 | 7 | 28 | da. | 1000 .K | 392,50 G | 407 G | 1000 .K | 260 G | 260 G |
| da. Kunstleder | 10 | 10 | 14 | da. | 1000 .K | 320 G | 320 G | 1000 .K | 312 B | 312 B |
| da. Schachtbau | 25 | 20 | 20 | da. | 1000 .K | 291 G | 291 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| da. Spiegelglas | 12 | 20 | 25 | da. | 1000 .K | 191 G | 191 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| da. Steinzeug | 20 | 12 | 0 | da. | 1000 .K | 205 G | 205 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| da. Ton- & Stein-W. | 14 | 11 | 14 | da. | 1000 .K | 330 G | 331 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| da. Waffen- u. Mun. | 30 | 30 | 30 | da. | 1000 .K | 306 G | 306 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| da. Wasserwerke | 3 | 3 | 5 | da. | 1000 .K | 190 G | 191 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| da. Wellw.-Masch. | 20 | 15 | 30 | da. | 1000 .K | 164 G | 163 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Deutsch-Kiesh. A.-G. | 10 | 20 1/2 | 15 | da. | 1000 .K | 220 G | 220 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Deutsche Lda. | 15 | 10 | 10 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Dittmann-Nachbau | 40 | 22 | 32 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Dommitzsch Thon | 4 | 5 | 29 | 1/4 | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Dönnersmarch. kv. | 22 | 12 | 15 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Döring & Lehmann | 0 | 5 | 6 | da. | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Hirsch, Kupfer-W. | 20 | 10 | 12 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Hirschberg, Lederf. | 15 | 15 | 10 | da. | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Hocher Farbwerke | 18 | 12 | 14 | da. | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Hocher, Huen u. Stahl | 24 | 39 | 0 | 1/1 | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Hoffmann, Strohfab. | 12 | 8 | 20 | 1/4 | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Hohenselwerke | 8 | 0 | — | 1/4 | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | 328 B |
| Horchwerke | 15 | 15 | 6 | 1/11 | 1000 .K | 327 G | 327 G | 1000 .K | 328 B | |

Local inflation and the performance of stock sales

| | Real return of stock sale _{i,j,t+1,t+3} | | | Real return of stock sale _{i,j,t+1,t+6} |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------|--|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} | 1.459* (1.83) | 1.656* (1.94) | 1.159 (1.26) | 0.261 (0.17) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Firm fixed effects | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Client fixed effects | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.307 | 0.455 | 0.478 | 0.372 |
| N | 4,585 | 4,585 | 4,585 | 4,569 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Local inflation, firm leverage, and stock trades

| | Buy-sell imbalance for individual stocks _{i,j,t} | | | |
|--|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Local inflation _{j,t} | -0.199 (-0.97) | -0.189 (-0.91) | -0.289 (-1.32) | -0.239 (-1.35) |
| Δ Net leverage _{j,t} | 0.162*** (3.07) | 0.165*** (2.78) | 0.155* (1.89) | 0.157** (2.34) |
| Local inflation _{j,t} x Δ Net leverage _{j,t} | -0.122** (-2.29) | -0.135*** (-2.27) | -0.129* (-1.98) | -0.112** (-2.13) |
| Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Client fixed effects | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Firm fixed effects | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Client-year-month fixed effects | No | No | No | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.035 | 0.039 | 0.038 | 0.243 |
| N | 11,597 | 11,597 | 11,597 | 11,597 |

Controls: Log(assets), Profitability
t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Additional robustness tests

- **Alternative measures for investor behavior:**
 - Buy-sell imbalance computed based on the value of stock trades
 - Log(portfolio value of stocks)
- **Alternative measures for local inflation:**
 - Raw local inflation
 - Log(local inflation)
 - Local inflation decile

[Go to test](#)

Do investors shy away from stocks because local inflation reveals information about gloomy economic prospects of firms?

- 1) **1920/1921:** Our results are similar when focusing on the time period from January 1920 to August 1922, when inflation was comparably low and the prospects of the German economy were good. [Go to results](#)
- 2) **Security level:** Our results are similar when we rerun our analysis on the client-security-month level (rather than at the client-level) and include security-year-month fixed effects that control for time-varying security characteristics, such as changes in cash flows and changes in the cost of capital. [Go to results](#)
- 3) **Major events:** Investors in low-inflation areas do not behave differently from investors in high-inflation areas around events that likely impacted economic prospects (e.g., invasion of the Ruhr by French and Belgian troops), suggesting that local inflation does not proxy for economic prospects. [Go to results](#)

Do investors shy away from stocks because local inflation increases their risk aversion?

- 1) **Low-volatility stocks vs. high-volatility stocks:** Our results are similar when we rerun our analysis separately for low-volatility stocks and high-volatility stocks. [Go to results](#)
- 2) **Major events:** Investors in low-inflation areas do not behave differently from investors in high-inflation areas around events that likely impacted investors' risk aversion (e.g., invasion of the Ruhr by French and Belgian troops), suggesting that local inflation does not proxy for risk aversion. [Go to results](#)

Do investors shy away from stocks to finance consumption?

- 1) **Bonds:** We find the relation between local inflation and buy-sell imbalances for bonds to be positive, suggesting that investors shift funds from stocks to bonds if inflation rises. [Go to results](#)
- 2) **Dividend income:** We find that clients are more likely to sell stocks if they receive dividends and experience high inflation, suggesting that clients do not sell because of consumption needs. [Go to results](#)

Do investors shy away from stocks because they invest in other asset classes that offer a hedge against inflation?

– Foreign exchange:

- 1) **Strict regulations:** Foreign exchange was subject to strict regulations.
- 2) **Foreign exchange:** We do not find a significant relation between local inflation and buy-sell imbalances for foreign exchange, suggesting that investors do not shift funds from stocks to foreign exchange. [Go to results](#)
- 3) **Regulatory change:** Investors in low-inflation areas do not behave differently from investors in high-inflation areas around a regulatory change that affected the availability of foreign exchange, suggesting that investors do not reallocate funds from stocks to foreign exchange. [Go to results](#)

– Real estate:

- 1) **Strict regulations:** Real estate was subject to strict regulations.
- 2) **Regulatory change:** Investors in low-inflation areas do not behave differently from investors in high-inflation areas around a regulatory change that increased the attractiveness of real estate, suggesting that investors do not reallocate funds from stocks to real estate.

Local inflation and individual stock trades

| | Buy-sell imbalance for individual stocks _{i,j,t} | | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} | -0.364** (-2.10) | -0.570*** (-3.48) | -0.614*** (-3.90) | -0.514*** (-3.08) | | -0.492** (-2.44) |
| Local inflation _{i,t-1,t} | | | | | -0.296** (-2.30) | |
| Occupied (d) _{i,t} | | | | | | -0.312 (-1.10) |
| Local unemployment rate _{i,t} | | | | | | -7.510** (-2.30) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Client fixed effects | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Security fixed effects | No | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Security-year-month fixed effects | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.026 | 0.032 | 0.038 | 0.330 | 0.331 | 0.328 |
| N | 15,189 | 15,189 | 15,189 | 15,189 | 14,986 | 15,051 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Local inflation and stock trades around major events

| | Buy-sell imbalance for stocks _{i,t} | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Local inflation _{i,Nov.-Apr. 1921} x Post reparations (d) _t | 0.758 (0.72) | | | |
| Local inflation _{i,Feb.-Jul. 1921} x Post Erzberger (d) _t | | 0.063 (0.07) | | |
| Local inflation _{i,Dec. 1921-May 1922} x Post Rathenau (d) _t | | | 1.016 (0.95) | |
| Local inflation _{i,Jul.-Dec. 1922} x Post Ruhr (d) _t | | | | 0.368 (0.27) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Client fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.032 | 0.062 | 0.068 | 0.068 |
| N | 1,337 | 1,367 | 1,629 | 3,204 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Local inflation and trades in low-volatility and high-volatility stocks

| | Buy-sell imbalance for low-volatility stocks _{i,t} | | | | Buy-sell imbalance for high-volatility stocks _{i,t} | | | |
|--|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} | -0.509 (-1.21) | -0.912** (-2.03) | | -0.992** (-2.09) | -0.811** (-2.51) | -0.792** (-2.14) | | -0.733** (-2.02) |
| Local inflation _{i,t-1,t} | | | -0.406 (-0.96) | | | | -0.383 (-1.01) | |
| Occupied (d) _{i,t} | | | | -0.887*** (-7.14) | | | | 0.098 (1.43) |
| Local unemployment rate _{i,t} | | | | 1.616 (0.25) | | | | -4.588 (-0.56) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Client fixed effects | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.047 | 0.046 | 0.045 | 0.046 | 0.062 | 0.022 | 0.023 | 0.021 |
| N | 2,269 | 2,269 | 2,233 | 2,249 | 2,602 | 2,602 | 2,558 | 2,567 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Local inflation and bond trades

| | Buy-sell imbalance for bonds _{i,t} | | | | Buy-sell imbalance for individual bonds _{i,j,t} | | |
|--|---|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} | 0.085 (0.21) | 0.413 (1.11) | | 0.391 (1.01) | 0.836* (1.98) | | 1.134** (2.22) |
| Local inflation _{i,t-1,t} | | | 0.473 (1.66) | | | 0.759** (2.56) | |
| Occupied (d) _{i,t} | | | | 0.579*** (7.84) | | | -0.147 (-0.83) |
| Local unemployment rate _{i,t} | | | | 1.023 (0.23) | | | -0.176 (-0.03) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Client fixed effects | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Security-year-month fixed effects | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.026 | 0.065 | 0.075 | 0.068 | 0.424 | 0.433 | 0.424 |
| N | 4,406 | 4,406 | 4,321 | 4,296 | 5,191 | 5,056 | 5,056 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Local inflation, dividend payments, and stock trades

| | Buy-sell imbalance for stocks _t | | | | Buy-sell imbalance for individual stocks _{i,j,t} | | |
|--|--|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} | -0.533** (-2.49) | -0.637** (-2.58) | | -0.533* (-2.02) | -0.507*** (3.01) | | -0.488** (-2.40) |
| Local inflation _{i,t-1,t} | | | -0.344** (-2.50) | | | -0.287** (-2.20) | |
| Dividend (d) _{i,t} | 0.105*** (4.01) | 0.121*** (7.02) | 0.120*** (6.69) | 0.126*** (5.52) | 0.075*** (4.07) | 0.080*** (0.417) | 0.076*** (4.11) |
| Local inflation _{i,t} × Dividend (d) _{i,t} | -0.060*** (-2.88) | -0.061*** (-2.53) | | -0.065** (0.23) | -0.043 (-1.26) | | -0.043 (-1.26) |
| Local inflation _{i,t-1} × Dividend (d) _{i,t} | | | -0.35** (-2.09) | | | -0.027 (-1.30) | |
| Controls | No | No | No | Yes | No | No | Yes |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Client fixed effects | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Security-year-month fixed effects | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.037 | 0.037 | 0.036 | 0.039 | 0.331 | 0.331 | 0.330 |
| N | 8,057 | 8,057 | 7,961 | 7,962 | 15,189 | 14,986 | 15,051 |

Controls: Occupied (d)_{i,t}, Local unemployment rate_{i,t}. t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Local inflation and trades in securities denominated in foreign exchange

| | Buy-sell imbalance for foreign exchange $_{i,t}$ | | | | Buy-sell imbalance for individual foreign exchange $_{i,j,t}$ | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Local inflation $_{i,t}$ | -0.301 (-0.50) | -0.486 (-0.50) | | -0.501 (-0.52) | -0.937 (-1.12) | | -0.966 (-1.15) |
| Local inflation $_{i,t-1,t}$ | | | 0.214 (0.30) | | | -0.461 (-0.56) | |
| Occupied (d) $_{i,t}$ | | | | -0.645* (-1.97) | | | 0.000 (0.00) |
| Local unemployment rate $_{i,t}$ | | | | 2.334 (0.23) | | | 6.313 (0.52) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Client fixed effects | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Security-year-month fixed effects | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.060 | -0.058 | -0.062 | -0.061 | 0.194 | 0.197 | 0.196 |
| N | 1,868 | 1,868 | 1,837 | 1,855 | 1,550 | 1,527 | 1,542 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Local inflation and stock trades around regulatory changes

| | Buy-sell imbalance for stocks _{i,t} | |
|---|--|-------------------|
| | (1) | (2) |
| Local inflation _{i, Apr.-Sep. 1921} x Post Forex (d) _t | 1.032 (0.96) | |
| Local inflation _{i, Sep. 1921-Feb. 1922} x Post housing (d) _t | | -0.348 (-0.55) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Client fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.083 | 0.029 |
| N | 2,212 | 1,630 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.

Local inflation and stock trades – additional robustness tests

| | Buy-sell imbalance for stocks _{i,t} | | | Buy-sell imbalance for stocks _{i,t} (set to zero in months with no trades) | Buy-sell imbalance for stocks _{i,t} (based on value of trades) | Log(portfolio face value of stocks) _{i,t} |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|---|---|--|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Raw local inflation _{i,t} | -0.024*** (-3.07) | | | | | |
| Log(local inflation) _{i,t} | | -0.770** (-2.64) | | | | |
| Local inflation decile _{i,t} | | | -0.017** (-2.39) | | | |
| Local inflation _{i,t} | | | | -0.137** (-2.49) | -0.591** (-2.60) | -0.731*** (-3.05) |
| Year-month fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Client fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Adj. R ² | 0.035 | 0.036 | 0.035 | 0.019 | 0.025 | 0.666 |
| N | 8,057 | 8,057 | 8,057 | 36,175 | 8,057 | 36,175 |

t-statistics are provided in parentheses.