

A propos de la présentation *Crowding and Tail Risk in Momentum Returns* par Paul Karehnke

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- Stein 2009 : L'essor des “investisseurs sophistiqués” (hedge funds) augmente-t-il nécessairement l'efficacité du marché ?
- Mise en cause de la thèse célèbre de Friedman (1953) selon laquelle l'arbitrage rationnel contribue à l'efficience des marchés (rapproche les prix des fondamentaux)
- Selon Stein, en raison d'externalités de type *crowding* et *leverage*, il n'en irait pas nécessairement ainsi.

- <https://www.man.com/maninstitute/crowding> (surpeuplement ?) :
 - tendance des investisseurs à agir de la même manière manières en réponse aux mêmes stimuli, conduisant à des positions analogues

Crowding uncertainty, ignorance des acteurs quant au crowding du marché (quant à la propension au crowding des pairs)

- Daniel, Kent, and Tobias J. Moskowitz. **Momentum** crashes.
Journal of Financial economics 2016 :
" buying past winners and selling past losers [...] the **strong positive average returns** and Sharpe ratios of momentum strategies are punctuated with occasional crashes"

Executive Summary

- Paul et al. démontrent tout d'abord suivant la logique de Stein (2009) comment l'incertitude de crowding pourrait expliquer le risque de queue des stratégies de momentum (*the crowding hypothesis for momentum crashes*).
- Cependant la preuve suppose des momentum **investisseurs myopes**.
- Dans la solution (de type point-fixe) **investisseurs rationnels** à l'équation d'équilibre du marché, l'ajustement des demandes des investisseurs à l'incertitude de crowding élimine le risque de queue des stratégies de momentum

- Strong empirical evidence of crowding-induced negative mean momentum returns, consistent with theoretical prediction under all belief specifications considered.
- Little empirical evidence that (unanticipated) crowding predicts momentum tail risk.

- Les momentum investors infèrent leurs anticipations de rendements de la condition d'équilibre du marché (*market clearing price*).
- Cette inférence est imparfaite et potentiellement complexe dans la mesure où l'équilibre du marché dépend d'allocations de capital non observables et de la demande des momentum investors eux-mêmes
- Paul et al. se démarquent Stein (2009) par l'introduction de **degrés divers de rationalité des momentum investors**, incluant un équilibre rationnel de type point-fixe

Hypothèses techniques a priori non limitatives quant à la méthologie de type point-fixe utilisée :

- cash flows log-normaux
- utilités CRRA (constant relative risk aversion)
- structure d'information similaire à Stein (2009)

Le calcul numérique des solutions correspondant à un grand nombre de paramètres des modèles tirés aléatoirement indique que :

- **Result 1. When momentum investors rationally condition on the momentum portfolio price to infer crowd size, unanticipated crowding does not generate momentum tail risks.**
- **Result 2. In the case of myopic momentum investors, making no effort to infer crowd size from the momentum portfolio's price, unanticipated crowding can lead to extreme tail risk in momentum returns.**

Empirical analysis

- Sur la base de données trimestrielles Thomson Reuters 13f des avoirs des investisseurs institutionnels (“réputés” momentum traders) 1980–2015
- For addressing the crowding hypothesis for momentum crashes empirically, it is necessary to be able to identify in practice momentum investors, myopic versus rational, and to quantify the crowd size.

- Paul et al. come up with **innovative crowding proxies**, obtained by first applying an algorithm to designate institution i a momentum investor in quarter q, then aggregating this designation using various weighting schemes, and with (six) measures for crowd size.
- Main empirical (regression) results :
 - ① crowding proxies indeed strongly negatively relate to momentum returns.
 - ② momentum's crash risk cannot be attributed to crowding by institutional investors
 - like with rational momentum investors in the model

Questions and Comments

A beautifully told and documented story, which seems to correct a widely held false idea concerning the cause of momentum crashes, introducing relevant crowding proxies for this purpose.

About the maths :

- Detail of "utility maximization problem (2) solved as individual demands (3), summing to zero-supply yielding the market clearing condition (4)" not immediately clear to me only in view of the elements provided by the online appendix.
 - all standard or what's new/notable?
- four "solutions" to (4) : solutions in which sense, especially in the last case of rational beliefs ?

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Could "Results 1 and 2" be formally **proved**, rather than observed numerically simply in the paper ?

About the empirical analysis :

- all regressions based
- any other way to "let the data speak" (use of more general machine learning algorithms) ?

About the financial implications :

- Any **regulatory or other actionable implications** (or negative implications) of the analysis ?
- Any alternative explanations for momentum crashes ?

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Merci pour votre attention