

Asset Pricing when 'This Time is Different'

Pierre Collin-Dufresne, Michael Johannes and Lars A. Lochstoer*

University of Lausanne and Columbia Business School

May 2014

Abstract

Recent empirical evidence suggest that the young update beliefs about macro outcomes more in response to aggregate shocks than the old. We embed this form of experiential learning bias in an overlapping generations general equilibrium macro-finance model where agents have recursive preferences and are unsure about the specification of the exogenous aggregate stochastic process. The departure from Rational Expectations is small in a statistical sense, but the asset pricing implications of the bias can be large. Differences in beliefs and learning about the model specification induces additional, quantitatively significant priced risks in the economy, as well as significant time-variation in these risks, depending both on agents' relative wealth and beliefs. The small time-varying bias in agents' beliefs leads to substantial and persistent over- and under-valuation, accompanied by over- and under-investment, that tends to be exacerbated in equilibrium as outcomes of the optimal risk-sharing in the economy.

*Pierre Collin-Dufresne is at the University of Lausanne. Michael Johannes and Lars Lochstoer are at Columbia Business School. This is work in progress – comments are welcome! We thank seminar participants at Columbia for helpful comments. Contact info: Lars A. Lochstoer, 405B Uris Hall, Columbia Business School, Columbia University, 3022 Broadway, New York, NY 10027. E-mail: LL2609@columbia.edu. First draft: November 2013.

1 Introduction

Investors' beliefs regarding future macro economic outcomes are important determinants of aggregate asset prices. Recent empirical evidence suggest that agents update their beliefs about macro economic outcomes differently based on their own personal experience. For instance, Malmendier and Nagel (2011) argue that investors who lived through the Great Depression display more pessimistic beliefs due to their direct, personal exposure to this event than younger agents, who were born later and therefore did not personally experience such a severe downturn. Similarly, Nagel and Malmendier (2013) present evidence from survey data that agents' sensitivity of beliefs about inflation dynamics to a shock to inflation is decreasing with the age of the agent. Thus, when learning about the economic environment, the young update more in response to shocks than the old. Taken together, these findings imply that agents place more importance on personal experience relative to what a fully Bayesian agent would do when forming beliefs.

While it is clear that this departure from Rational Expectations implies that any one agent's beliefs about aggregate dynamics at times will be too optimistic or too pessimistic relative to the beliefs of a fully rational Bayesian agent, the general equilibrium asset pricing implications of such a bias are not clear. For instance, since aggregate asset prices are a function of the (weighted) average belief, differences in beliefs between young and old may approximately 'wash out' and therefore have only minor effects on prices, especially over the long run. In fact, Ang, Bekaert, and Wei (2007) show, using the same survey data on inflation expectations, that the median (or mean) inflation forecast outperforms pretty much any other forecast they construct from available macro and asset price data. Thus, the median (or mean) belief appears to be quite 'rational,' which restricts the amount of bias in beliefs agents can exhibit.¹

Further, if agents disagree about states that are particularly important for asset prices and marginal utilities, such as a Depression state, there are large gains to trade and an optimistic agent may be willing to provide ample insurance to a 'rational' agent. In particular, Chen, Joslin, and Tran (2012) show in a disaster risk model that only a small fraction of optimistic agents are needed in order to eliminate most of the risk premium due to disaster risk. Thus, allowing for belief heterogeneity can strongly affect

¹Given the nature of the survey data, the forecasting horizon is up to 12 months. Note that the evidence in Ang, Bekaert, and Wei (2007) also holds for the Michigan survey, where respondents are consumers, not professionals.

the asset pricing performance of standard models, but often in a way that reduces risk and thus makes it harder to fit the stylized facts.

This paper proposes a general equilibrium, macro-finance asset pricing model that incorporates this behavioral bias in way consistent with the above mentioned evidence on macro expectations. In this model, mean beliefs about aggregate macro outcomes such as consumption growth over the next year are very close to being unbiased in a 'Rational Expectations' sense, but at the same time a 'this time is different'-bias leads to substantial extra risks in the economy, helping the model account for high Sharpe ratios and risk premiums as observed in the data along with low investor risk aversion. The model also features extended periods of over- and under-valuation, accompanied by over- and under-investment, leading to return predictability patterns as those found in the data.

In the model, agents are uncertain about the specification of the exogenous aggregate stochastic process and update beliefs as new data arrives in a Bayesian manner. In particular, there are two generations alive at each point in time, young and old. Each generation lives for 40 years, so there is a 20 year overlap between generations. When born, agents inherit the mean beliefs about the model specification from their parent generation (who die and are the previously Old), but with a prior variance of beliefs that is higher than the posterior variance of their parent generation's beliefs. The latter is the source of the 'this time is different'-bias. We consider the particular cases where agents are unsure about the mean growth rate of the economy or the probability of a disaster state. A fully rational, Bayesian agent would eventually learn the true model, but due to the 'this time is different' OLG feature of the model parameter learning persists indefinitely in this economy.

We assume agents have Epstein-Zin preferences with a preference for early resolution of uncertainty, following Bansal and Yaron (2004). With such preferences, updates in beliefs about the model specification are priced and can substantially amplify the effect of macro shocks on marginal utility. In particular, when a Bayesian agent updates her beliefs about a fixed quantity (the mean growth rate), this update is permanent and therefore affects the subjective consumption distribution for all future dates. Thus, even a small update in beliefs can have a large impact on the continuation utility. Effectively, parameter/model learning generates subjective long-run consumption risks (see Collin-Dufresne, Johannes, and Lochstoer (2013a)).

The fact that the young and old 'agree to disagree' means the more optimistic agent

will hold a relatively high portfolio weight in assets that decrease in value in bad times, thus making it harder to match the standard asset pricing moments. On the other hand, the 'this time is different'-bias leads to perpetual model uncertainty, which itself is a significant source of risk given the chosen investor preferences (see Bloom (2009) for macroeconomic implications of time-varying uncertainty). In fact, in a benchmark model with i.i.d. consumption growth and learning about the mean growth rate in the economy, the 'this time is different' Epstein-Zin model can account for the standard asset pricing moments, as well as time-varying Sharpe ratios and risk premiums due to periods of optimistic and pessimistic beliefs. In contrast, power utility preferences with the same level of risk aversion leads to an equity Sharpe ratio that is on average close to zero and otherwise overall worse asset pricing performance when 'this time is different'-learning is introduced.

Further, we show, in the case of learning about the probability of a Depression, that belief uncertainty combined with recursive preferences decreases the impact of optimists on asset prices. In particular, we find that while the risk premium is decreasing in the fraction of optimists, the effect is much smaller than in the case where agents are certain about their beliefs, as is the case in Chen, Joslin, and Tran (2012). In particular, optimists are less willing to provide disaster state hedges as with Epstein-Zin preferences the belief uncertainty strongly adversely affects marginal utility. In other words, while they think the disaster event is more unlikely than others in the economy, they still know that they will substantially increase their mean beliefs if a disaster state is realized and therefore scale back on their speculative activity.

When considering a standard representative firm production economy, consumption and capital accumulation are endogenous and the agents learn about the mean growth rate of technology growth. Again Sharpe ratios are high and strongly time-varying as in the exchange economy case. Further, we show that the 'this time is different'-bias in this economy increases the volatility of equity returns by an order of magnitude due to the fluctuations in aggregate beliefs. Similar to the analysis in Hirshleifer and Yu (2013), who consider a single agent production economy with extrapolative beliefs about technology growth, agents have a strong desire to increase (decrease) investment when beliefs are optimistic (pessimistic). Therefore, the model allows for higher capital adjustment costs while still matching aggregate investment dynamics, which helps with the otherwise much too low volatility of the equity claim in these models (see Jermann (1998), and Kaltenbrunner and Lochstoer (2010)). In the model,

as in the data, aggregate investment negatively forecasts future excess equity returns.

In the production economy output is endogenous and a function of capital accumulation as well as the technology level. If investors currently are, say, optimistic, meaning that their mean belief about the mean technology growth rate is higher than truth, they will tend to invest more aggressively, leading to high future output growth. Thus, since agents make investment decisions based on their beliefs, high (low) expected output growth under the agents' beliefs is over the relatively near future associated with on average high (low) output growth also under the true probability measure. Of this reason, the mean beliefs of agents in this economy is a good forecaster of future output growth over the horizons considered in Ang, Bekaert, and Wei (2007). We show that, in fact, this forecast is as good as or better than the forecasts one would obtain from running, say, an AR(4) on output growth. We document that this is also true in the data using actual survey forecasts for real output growth (combining forecasts of inflation and nominal output).²

The time-varying conditional Sharpe ratio of the equity claim the model generates is due to time-varying volatility of the stochastic discount factor under the true probability measure. Thus, the 'this time is different'-bias leads to what an econometrician would identify as high and time-varying prices of macro risks, even though agents have low levels of risk aversion, utility is isoelastic and shocks are homoskedastic. This is due to investors' perceived model uncertainty. The quantitatively large effects are notable as the model is also consistent with the average belief about output growth over the next year being quite accurate, as in the data.

In terms of the dynamics that arise from having heterogeneous agents, the optimal risk-sharing in the Epstein-Zin model tends to exacerbate the impact of biased beliefs on asset prices and investment as the more optimistic (pessimistic) agent holds more (less) stock. A positive (negative) shock is therefore amplified in terms of the wealth-weighted average belief in this model. This endogenous amplification of shocks is much stronger when agents have Epstein-Zin preferences as there is a larger difference in the impact of model risk on utility across the generations when agents are very averse to model uncertainty (when they have a preference for early resolution of uncertainty). This means the average difference in portfolio holdings across generations is also large.

²The studies mentioned initially analyze inflation dynamics, but the standard production economy model we analyze is concerned with real quantities, which is why we consider real output growth, for which there are also survey forecasts available.

This is opposed to the case of power utility where model uncertainty in general has much less impact on utility.

There are four state-variables in the exchange economy model and five state variables in the production economy model, which also has capital as a state variable. Solving the endogenous risk sharing problem is non-trivial when agents have Epstein-Zin preferences. We solve the model using a new robust numerical solution methodology developed by Collin-Dufresne, Johannes, and Lochstoer (2013b) for solving risk-sharing problems in complete markets when agents have recursive preferences. This numerical method does not rely on approximations to the actual economic problem (e.g., it does not rely on an expansion around a non-stochastic steady-state) and therefore provides an arbitrarily accurate solution (depending of course on the chosen coarseness of grids, quadratures, etc.).³

Related literature. There is a large literature on the effects of differences in beliefs on asset prices. Harrison and Kreps (1978) and Scheinkman and Xiong (2003) show how over-valuation can arise when agents have differences in beliefs and there are short sale constraints. Dumas, Kurshev, and Uppal (2009) consider a general equilibrium, complete markets model where two agents with identical power utility preferences disagree about the dynamics of the aggregate endowment. Baker, Hollifield, and Osambela (2014) consider a general equilibrium production economy where two agents have heterogeneous beliefs about the mean productivity growth rate, where the agents agree-to-disagree and do not update their beliefs. Agents have power utility preferences, and the authors show that speculation leads to a counter-cyclical risk premium and that the investment and stock return volatility dynamics are counter-cyclical when agents have high elasticity of intertemporal substitution. These papers are close to ours along many dimensions, with the most important exceptions being that our agents have Epstein-Zin preferences and the overlapping generations feature of our model, which determines the learning dynamics. A number of the properties of equilibrium are qualitatively similar. We therefore focus our analysis on the particular implications of agents with recursive preferences, as compared to the standard time separable CRRA preferences.

A new feature of our model is that agents are not only heterogeneous with respect

³Accurate solutions do require efficient coding in a fast programming language, such as C++ or Fortran, and extensive use of the multiprocessing capability of high-performance desktops. Such technology is, however, easily available.

to their mean beliefs, but also with respect to the confidence they exhibit in their beliefs. This is an important feature when agents have recursive preferences as the level of confidence (the precision of posteriors) determines the magnitude of updates in beliefs, which are priced with these preferences. Bansal and Shaliastovich (2010) present an asset pricing model with confidence risk in a representative agent setting. In our model, the different levels of confidence are strong determinants of the optimal risk sharing arrangement.

In contemporaneous work, Ehling, Graniero, and Heyerdahl-Larsen (2013) consider a similar learning bias in an OLG endowment economy framework, but with log utility preferences. These authors present empirical evidence that the expectations of future stock returns are more highly correlated with recent past returns for the young than the old, consistent with the overall evidence given by Malmendier and Nagel (2011, 2013). In other recent work, Choi and Mertens (2013) solve a model with two sets of infinitely-lived agents with Epstein-Zin preferences, portfolio constraints, where one set of agents has extrapolative beliefs, in an incomplete markets setting. These authors estimate the size of the belief bias by backing it out from standard asset price moments, whereas we calibrate the bias to available micro estimates as given by Malmendier and Nagel (2011, 2013), as well as solve an OLG model. Further, our numerical model solution method is exact, whereas they rely on higher-order expansions around a steady-state solution. Both these authors and Dumas, Kurshev, and Uppal (2009) have only one set of agents with biased beliefs, while the generational 'this time is different'-bias leads to multiple agents with biased beliefs. Thus, the nature of the OLG problem we solve has more state variables as we need to keep track of the individual beliefs of multiple generations (the young and the old in our case). In terms of heterogeneous agent models with Epstein-Zin preferences, Garleanu and Panageas (2012) solve an OLG model with Epstein-Zin agents with different preference parameters, while Borovicka (2012) shows long-run wealth dynamics in a two-agent general equilibrium setting where agents have Epstein-Zin preferences and differences in beliefs. Finally, Marcet and Sargent (1989), Sargent (1999), Orphanides and Williams (2005a), and Milani (2007) are prominent examples of the effects of perpetual, non-Bayesian learning in macro economics.

2 The Model

General equilibrium models with parameter learning and heterogenous beliefs are difficult to solve as the state space quickly becomes prohibitively large. For that reason, we focus on settings that are not only simple and tractable, but also quantitatively interesting and which can be easily calibrated to the microeconomic evidence presented in Malmendier and Nagel (2011, 2013). This section describes an exchange economy, and the next section describes a production economy.

We assume there are two sets of agents alive at any point in time, young and old. A generation last for T periods, and each agent lives for $2T$ periods. Thus, there is no uncertainty about life expectancy. All young and old agents currently alive were born at the same time, and agents born at the same time have the same beliefs. These assumptions imply that (a) there are no hedging demands related to uncertain life span, and (b) there is a two-agent representation of the economy. The latter is important in order to minimize the number of state variables. The former is a necessary assumption for the latter to be true given our learning problem, as shown below.

When an old generation dies, the previously young generation becomes the new old generation and a new young generation is born. The old leave their wealth for their offspring. In terms of beliefs, the new young inherit their parent's mean beliefs in a manner that will be made precise below.⁴ The bequest motive is similar to those in a Dynasty model, that is, the parents care as much about their offspring as themselves (with the usual caveat that there is time-discounting in the utility function). Thus, there are two representative agents from each Dynasty, A and B. Figure 1 provides a timeline of events related to the cohorts of each dynasty in the model.

2.1 Aggregate dynamics and cohort belief formation

The agents in the economy are not able to learn the true model specification for aggregate consumption dynamics due to an experiential learning bias. In particular, we

⁴The labels 'old' and 'young' in this model refer to the two generations currently alive. A new generation could be born, say, every 20 years, which implies the investors in this economy live for 40 years. When the old 'die' they give life to new 'young,' and so 'death' may be thought of as around age 70 and the new 'young' as around 30 years of age. In other words, the model is stylized in order to in a transparent manner capture a 'this time is different'-bias related to personal experience in a quantitatively interesting setting. It is not designed to explain all aspects of observed life-cycle patterns in endowments or consumption-saving decisions.

Figure 1 - Model timeline

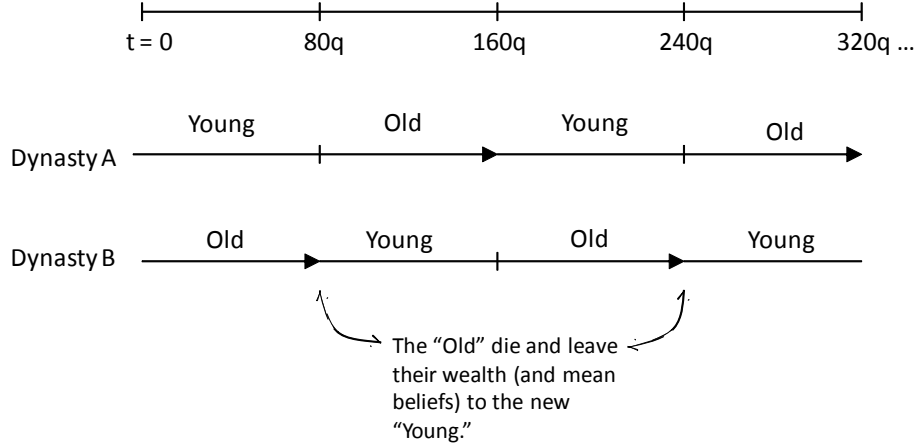


Figure 1: The plot shows the timeline of the model over an 80 year period (the model is an infinite horizon model, so the pattern continues ad infinitum). Model time is in quarters, and a generation lasts for 20 years (80 quarters), while agent's "investing lives" are 40 years. Upon death, represented as an arrowhead in the figure, the Old leave their wealth to their offspring—the new Young. The Young also inherits their parent generations mean beliefs about model parameters, but start their lives with a prior variance of beliefs that is higher than their parents posterior dispersion of beliefs. It is the latter "This Time is Different" bias that makes experiential learning important for belief formation.

assume agents are Bayesian learners with respect to data they personally observe, e.g., aggregate consumption growth realized during their lifetime, but that they downweight data prior to their lifetime in the following way: the young inherit the mean beliefs about the model of consumption growth from their parents (the dying old), but they are endowed with more dispersed initial beliefs or uncertainty than their parents had at the end of their life. This is the source of the 'This Time is Different'-bias.

We assume aggregate consumption growth is i.i.d., with both standard normal shocks and 'disasters,' a small probability of a large negative consumption drop:

$$\Delta c_{t+1} = \mu + \sigma \varepsilon_{t+1} + d_{t+1}, \quad (1)$$

where $\varepsilon_{t+1} \stackrel{i.i.d.}{\sim} N(0, 1)$, and $d_{t+1} = \underline{d} \ll 0$ with probability p and zero otherwise, similar to the specification in Barro (2006). We calibrate the size of the consumption drop to the U.S. Great Depression experience. We assume σ and \underline{d} are known and that

both Δc_{t+1} and d_{t+1} are observed, but that μ and p are unknown.⁵

The time t posterior beliefs of agent i about μ are $N(m_{i,t}, A_{i,t}\sigma^2)$, where beliefs are updated according to Bayes rule:

$$m_{i,t+1} = m_{i,t} + \frac{A_{i,t}}{1 + A_{i,t}} (\Delta c_{t+1} - d_{t+1} - m_{i,t}) \quad (2)$$

and

$$A_{i,t+1} = \frac{A_{i,t}}{1 + A_{i,t}}. \quad (3)$$

Agent i 's time t posterior beliefs about p are Beta distributed, with $p \sim \beta(a_{i,t}, A_{i,t}^{-1} - a_{i,t})$. The properties of the Beta distribution and Bayes rule then imply that:

$$E_t^i [p] = a_{i,t} A_{i,t} \quad \text{and} \quad Var_t^i [p] = \frac{A_{i,t}}{1 + A_{i,t}} E_t^i [p] (1 - E_t^i [p]) \quad (4)$$

and

$$a_{i,t+1} = \begin{cases} a_{i,t} + 1 & \text{if } d_{t+1} = \underline{d} \\ a_{i,t} & \text{if } d_{t+1} = 0 \end{cases}, \quad (5)$$

where the updating equation for $A_{i,t}$ is as in Equation (3). First, note that if agent i were to live forever, $A_{i,\infty} = 0$ and the variance of her subjective beliefs about both μ and p would go to zero. Further, mean beliefs would converge to the true parameter values, $m_{i,\infty} = \mu$, and $E_\infty^i [p] = p$. However, the generational ‘This Time is Different’-bias implies that learning persists indefinitely. In particular, for a time t that corresponds to the death of the current old generation, let the posterior beliefs of the old be the sufficient statistics $m_{old,t}$, $a_{old,t}$ and $A_{old,t}$. The new young are then assumed to be born and consume at time $t + 1$ with prior beliefs $m_{young,t} = m_{old,t}$, $A_{young,t} = k A_{old,t}$, where $k > 1$, and $a_{young,t} = k a_{old,t}$ (i.e., $E_t^{old} [p] = E_t^{young} [p]$). Thus, the mean parameter beliefs are inherited by the young, but the prior dispersion of the beliefs of the young is higher than the posterior dispersion of the old. The constant k determines the amount of the experiential learning bias, and we set $k = A_0 / (A_0^{-1} + 2T)^{-1}$ such that the prior belief dispersion parameter of the young is always $0 < A_0 < 1$, which ensures that the beliefs process is stationary. Finally, we assume that the young and old generations

⁵In continuous-time, σ would be learned immediately. The constant \underline{d} would be known with certainty after its first realization. Since we consider large jumps, it would be easy for the agent to assess whether $d_{t+1} = 0$ or not. Thus, we lose little by assuming d_{t+1} is directly observed, but gain tractability. It is, however, hard to learn μ and p , which is why we focus on these parameters.

living concurrently do not mutually update, that is, they ‘agree to disagree.’

As should be clear from the preceding discussion, the updating scheme with the ‘This Time is Different’-bias implies that the Young place too much weight on personal experience relative to a full-information, known parameters benchmark case, consistent with the micro evidence presented by Malmendier and Nagel (2011, 2013).

2.2 Utility and the bequest motive

We assume agents have Epstein and Zin (1989) recursive preferences. In particular, the value function $V_{i,t}$ of agent i alive at time t who will ‘die’ at time $\tau > t + 1$ is:

$$V_{i,t}^\rho = (1 - \beta) C_{i,t}^\rho + \beta E_t^i [V_{i,t+1}^\alpha]^\rho. \quad (6)$$

Here, $\rho = 1 - 1/\psi$ where ψ is the elasticity of intertemporal substitution (EIS) and $\alpha = 1 - \gamma$, where γ is the risk aversion parameter. As shown in Collin-Dufresne, Johannes, and Lochstoer (2013a), a preference for early resolution of uncertainty, which the Epstein-Zin preference allow for, greatly magnifies the impact of model learning on equilibrium asset prices. Thus, to fully evaluate the impact of experiential learning, it is important to consider preferences more general than the standard CRRA specifications.

In terms of birth and death, an agent’s last consumption date is τ , and at $\tau + 1$ the agent’s offspring, i' , comes to life and starts consuming immediately. The offspring have different beliefs about the aggregate endowment, as described earlier. We consider a bequest function of the form:

$$B_i(W_{i',\tau+1}) = \phi_{i'}(X_{\tau+1}) W_{i',\tau+1}, \quad (7)$$

where X_t is a vector of state variables and $W_{i,t}$ is the agent i ’s wealth at time t . State variables include all agents’ beliefs as well as a measure of the time each class of agent has been alive (or equivalently, how long until end of life).

With this bequest function, we have that:

$$V_{i,\tau}^\rho = (1 - \beta) C_{i,\tau}^\rho + \beta E_\tau^i [\phi_{i'}(X_{\tau+1})^\alpha W_{i',\tau+1}^\alpha]^\rho. \quad (8)$$

Substituting in the usual budget constraint, we have:

$$V_{i,\tau}^\rho = (1 - \beta) C_{i,\tau}^\rho + \beta (W_{i,\tau} - C_{i,\tau})^\rho E_\tau^i [\phi_{i'} (X_{\tau+1})^\alpha R_{w_{i,\tau+1}}^\alpha]^\rho. \quad (9)$$

The first order condition over consumption implies that

$$\rho (1 - \beta) C_{i,\tau}^{\rho-1} = \rho \beta (W_{i,\tau} - C_{i,\tau})^{\rho-1} \mu_{i,\tau}^\rho, \quad (10)$$

equivalently,

$$\mu_{i,\tau} = \left(\frac{1 - \beta}{\beta} \right)^{1/\rho} \left(\frac{W_{i,\tau}}{C_{i,\tau}} - 1 \right)^{(1-\rho)/\rho}, \quad (11)$$

where the certainty equivalent is $\mu_{i,\tau} = E_\tau^i [\phi_{i'} (X_{\tau+1})^\alpha R_{w_{i,\tau+1}}^\alpha]^{1/\alpha}$. Inserting this back into the value function,

$$\frac{V_{i,\tau}}{W_{i,\tau}} = (1 - \beta)^{1/\rho} \left(\frac{W_{i,\tau}}{C_{i,\tau}} \right)^{1/\rho-1}. \quad (12)$$

The W/C ratio is a function of the state variables X_t . Let:

$$\phi_i (X_t) = (1 - \beta)^{1/\rho} \left(\frac{W_{i,\tau}}{C_{i,\tau}} \right)^{1/\rho-1}. \quad (13)$$

Then, $V_{i,t} = \phi_i (X_t) W_{i,t}$ for each t during the life of agent i . Since i was a general agent, it follows that $B_i (W_{i',\tau+1}) = V_{i',\tau+1}$. In this sense, the bequest function is dynastic, where the agent cares ‘as much’ about their offspring as themselves. Note that the expectation of the offspring’s indirect utility is taken using the parent generation’s beliefs. Thus, each dynasty can be represented as an agent that has the dispersion of beliefs reset every $2T$ periods as in the generational belief transmission explained in Section 2.1.

When there is no model/parameter uncertainty (that is, a full-information or the rational expectations case corresponding to $k = 1$ and $t = \infty$), the model reduces to an infinitely-lived Epstein-Zin representative agent with the same preference parameters as those assumed above (β, γ, ψ) . This agent, together with the maintained assumption of i.i.d. consumption growth, implies that the risk premium, the risk-free rate, the price-dividend ratio, and the price of risk are all constant in this benchmark economy.

2.3 The consumption sharing rule and model solution

We assume markets are complete, so each agent's intertemporal marginal rates of substitution are equal for each state $(\Delta c_t, d_t)$. We index the two agents in the economy as belonging to Dynasty A or Dynasty B, where as explained above a Dynasty consists of a lineage of parent-child relations. Given Equations (6), (7), and (13), and the assumption of complete markets, we have that the two representative agents' ratios of marginal utilities are equalized in each state (i.e., the stochastic discount factor is unique and both agents' IMRS price assets given the respective agent's subjective beliefs):

$$\begin{aligned} \pi^A(\Delta c_{t+1}, d_{t+1}|X_t) \left(\frac{c_{A,t+1}}{c_{A,t}}\right)^{\rho-1} \left(\frac{v_{A,t+1}}{\mu_{A,t}(v_{A,t+1}C_{t+1}/C_t)}\right)^{\alpha-\rho} &= \dots \\ \pi^B(\Delta c_{t+1}, d_{t+1}|X_t) \left(\frac{1-c_{A,t+1}}{1-c_{A,t}}\right)^{\rho-1} \left(\frac{v_{B,t+1}}{\mu_{B,t}(v_{B,t+1}C_{t+1}/C_t)}\right)^{\alpha-\rho} &. \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

Here, X_t , which will be defined below, holds the total set of state variables in the economy, including the sufficient statistics for each agent's beliefs. The conditional beliefs about the joint state $(\Delta c_{t+1}, d_{t+1})$ can be further decomposed as $\pi^i(\Delta c_{t+1}, d_{t+1}|X_t) = \pi^i(\Delta c_{t+1} - d_{t+1}|m_{i,t}, A_{i,t}) \pi^i(d_{t+1}|a_{i,t}, A_{i,t})$ given the independence between ε_{t+1} and d_{t+1} and the assumption that agents agree-to-disagree. Further, we in Equation (14) set $c_{i,t} \equiv C_{i,t}/C_t$, $v_{i,t} \equiv V_{i,t}/C_t$ and impose the goods market clearing condition $c_{A,t} + c_{B,t} = 1 \iff C_{A,t} + C_{B,t} = C_t$ for all t .

With recursive preferences the value functions appear in the intertemporal marginal rates of substitution. Thus, unlike in the special case of power utility, Equation (14) does not provide us with an analytical solution for the evolution of the endogenous state variable—the relative consumption (or equivalently, wealth) of agent A. This complicates significantly the model solution. We solve the model using the numerical solution technique given in Collin-Dufresne, Johannes, and Lochstoer (2013b) using a backwards recursion algorithm that solves numerically for the consumption sharing rule starting at a distant terminal date for the economy, \tilde{T} . The solution corresponds to the infinite horizon economy when the transversality condition is satisfied and \tilde{T} is chosen sufficiently far into the future (e.g., 500+ years). The solution technique does not approximate the objective function and thus, with the caveat that it is numerical, provides an exact solution to the model. See the Appendix for further details.

The state variables in this model are $m_{A,t}$, $m_{B,t}$, $a_{A,t}$, $a_{B,t}$, $c_{A,t}$, and t . Time t is a sufficient statistic for $A_{(i=A,B),t}$ as $A_{i,t}$ is deterministic. We note that for general ρ and α , the prior distributions for the mean growth rate μ and the jump probability p must be truncated in order to have existence of equilibrium. The truncation bounds do not affect the updating equations, but $m_{i,t}$ and $a_{i,t}A_{i,t}$ no longer in general exactly correspond to the conditional mean beliefs about μ and p .

2.4 Model Discussion

With Epstein-Zin preferences and a preference for early resolution of uncertainty ($\gamma > 1/\psi$) the agents are averse to long-run risks (see Bansal and Yaron (2004)). Parameter learning induces subjective long-run consumption risks as the conditional distribution of future consumption growth varies in a very persistent manner as agents' update their beliefs (see Equations (2), (3), and (5)). Collin-Dufresne, Johannes, and Lochstoer (2013a) show in the case of a representative agent that parameter and model learning can be a tremendous amplifier of macro shocks in terms of their impact on marginal utility with such preferences.

The same amplification mechanism is at work in the model at hand, but, importantly, there is (a) speculation and risk-sharing across generations related to the model uncertainty and (b) learning persists indefinitely. The former arises as agents that differ in their assessment of probabilities of future states will trade with each other to take advantage of what they perceive to be the erroneous beliefs of other agents. That is, bad states that are perceived as less likely from the perspective of agent A relative to that of agent B will be states for which agent B will buy insurance from agent A and vice versa, thus making each agent better off given their beliefs. These effects will serve to decrease the risk premium and undo some of the asset pricing effects of the long-run risks that arise endogenously from parameter learning. However, the latter element of the 'this time is different'-bias works in the opposite direction in that the magnitude of belief updates from parameter learning remains high indefinitely and so agents are permanently faced with a substantial degree of long-run risk induced by model uncertainty.

2.5 Model Calibration

2.5.1 The belief process

The belief process of the stationary equilibrium in the model is governed by A_0 —the parameter that controls the severity of the 'This Time is Different'-bias. We calibrate this parameter to be consistent with the micro-evidence documented by Malmendier and Nagel (2013). In particular, Malmendier and Nagel (2013) estimate the sensitivity of the young (at age 30) to updates in beliefs from model learning to be about 2.5% of the size of the macro shock (in their case, quarterly inflation). Towards the end of their life (at age 70), the old have a sensitivity of about 1%. The estimates provided are based on inflation data and survey forecasts using available data in the post-WW2 period, and so these do not correspond to more extreme periods like the Great Depression. We therefore calibrate the value of A_0 to be 0.025, such that the updates in beliefs of the young from a 'regular' quarterly macro shock (ε in our model) is about 2.5% of the size of the macro shock, consistent with the estimate of Malmendier and Nagel (2013).⁶ This implies that $k = 0.025/(1/0.025 + 160)^{-1} = 5$, when $T = 80$. We leave the effect of this value of A_0 on updates of the probability of a disaster as an 'out-of-sample'-test of the model to be evaluated by comparing the expected return differences found in Malmendier and Nagel (2011) for investors who lived through the Great Depression and investors who did not, with the corresponding expected return differences between the agents in our model after such an event.

⁶This calculation is based on the following. With a prior $\mu \sim N(m_0, A_0\sigma^2)$, the subjective consumption dynamics for the next period are:

$$\Delta c_1 = m_0 + \sqrt{A_0 + 1}\sigma\tilde{\varepsilon}_{t+1},$$

and the update in belief can be written:

$$m_1 = m_0 + \frac{A_0}{\sqrt{A_0 + 1}}\sigma\tilde{\varepsilon}_{t+1}.$$

Thus, the sensitivity of the update in mean beliefs to the macro shock when $A_0 = 0.025$ is $\frac{0.025}{\sqrt{0.025+1}} \approx 0.025$. The old then have a posterior sensitivity to shocks of 0.5% of the size of the shock, somewhat lower than that estimated by Malmendier and Nagel. Note that a different learning problem, for instance learning about a persistence parameter, would lead to slower learning relative to the simple learning about the mean case that we consider here. The micro estimates from Malmendier and Nagel do not correspond directly to the learning problem we consider, both since they allow for a non-Bayesian learning scheme and because they consider a different model (not just learning about a mean parameter). A more general learning model leads to many more state variables and is left for future research.

So, how irrational are our representative agents? Consider the following experiment. Record the beliefs about consumption dynamics from a particular Dynasty over time and then ask how long it on average takes to at the 5% level to reject the subjective model, as given by Equations (2)–(5)), relative to the true model, as given in Equation (1). We answer this by comparing the sequential model probabilities over time, averaged across 100,000 simulations, given an initial model probability of 50/50 where the initial mean beliefs of the agent is centered around truth.⁷ In the full learning model, where agents are learning both about μ and p , it takes on average 175 years before the 'This Time is Different'-bias is detected at the 5% level. Thus, it is very hard to learn, using only time series data, that the belief formation process of a representative agent is not correct. On the other hand, it is immediate to find this in the cross-section of agents as the Young update beliefs differently from the Old, even though they observe the same shock.

2.5.2 Preference and consumption parameters

We assume a generations lasts for 20 years, and so $T = 80$. We separately consider models with learning about the mean parameter μ or the jump probability p . First, this makes it easier to understand what is driving what in terms of asset pricing and risk-sharing implications. Second, considering the two cases separately reduces the state space by two variables, which means the model can be solved very accurately overnight, whereas the full model takes a full month to solve with reasonable accuracy given our current computing capabilities.

In the 'Uncertain mean'-calibration, we let the preference parameters be $\gamma = 10$, $\psi = 1.5$ and $\beta = 0.994$, the true mean $\mu = 0.45\%$ and $\sigma = 1.35\%$, while $\underline{d} = 0$. I.e., there are no Depressions in this calibration. In the 'Uncertain probability'-calibration, we let $\gamma = 5$, $\psi = 1.5$ and $\beta = 0.994$. Thus, the risk-aversion is half of that in the former case, but otherwise the preference parameters are the same. We set the risk aversion parameter in both models so that the Sharpe ratio on the equity claim is similar to that in the data. The true quarterly probability of a Depression, $p = 1.7\%/4$, is set

⁷The sequential updating of the probability of the 'This Time is Different' learning model versus the true iid model, $p_{M,t+1}$, is:

$$p_{M,t+1} = \frac{L(\Delta c_{t+1}, d_{t+1} | M_{TTiD}, a_t, m_t, A_t) p_{M,t}}{L(\Delta c_{t+1}, d_{t+1} | M_{TTiD}, a_t, m_t, A_t) p_{M,t} + L(\Delta c_{t+1}, d_{t+1} | M_{iid}) (1 - p_{M,t})}$$

consistent with the estimate used in Barro (2006), while the consumption drop in a Depression, \underline{d} , is -18%. Finally, we let $\mu = 0.53\%$ and $\sigma = 0.8\%$ in this calibration so as to match the mean and volatility of time-averaged consumption growth also in this case.

In the Great Depression, per capita real log consumption dropped by 18% from 1929 through 1933 (using data from the National Income and Product Accounts data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis). Of course, this four-year decline is quite different from a quarterly drop of 18%. However, since agents have Epstein-Zin preferences with $\gamma > 1/\psi$, the risk-pricing is related to the overall drop in consumption, so unlike for the power utility case, this distinction is not as important. Modeling true consumption as i.i.d. significantly simplifies the learning problem (in particular, the number of state variables as opposed to a more realistic, persistent Depression state), and has the nice property that the benchmark model without the 'This Time is Different'-bias has no interesting dynamics and so it will be easy to see what additional asset pricing implications this particular bias buys us. We also consider power utility versions of the economies to assess the role of the EIS, ψ . Table 1 shows all relevant model parameters.

In order to ensure existence of equilibrium, we truncate the priors for the mean growth rate and the Depression probability for the respective models. In particular, the upper (lower) bound for the prior over μ are 1.35% (-0.45%), while the upper (lower) bound for the prior over p are 0.04 (0.00001). Given that the prior standard deviations of beliefs when born are 0.21% for the mean and 0.01 for the probability, the truncation bounds are quite wide and therefore typically will not strongly affect the update in mean beliefs relative to the untruncated prior cases.

The equity claim is a claim to an exogenous dividend stream specified as in Campbell and Cochrane (1999):

$$\Delta d_{t+1} = \lambda \Delta c_{t+1} + \sigma_d \eta_{t+1}, \tag{15}$$

where $\lambda = 3$ is a leverage parameter and $\sigma_d = 5\%$ is the volatility of idiosyncratic dividend growth.

Table 1 - Parameter values for Exchange Economy

Table 1: The top half of this table gives the preference parameters used in the two calibrations of the model. 'Uncertain Mean' refers to the calibration where log consumption growth is Normally distributed and agents are uncertain about the mean growth rate, while 'Uncertain Probability' refers to the case where log consumption growth also has a 'Depression' shock and where agents are uncertain about the probability of such a shock. The bottom half of the table gives the value for the parameters govern the consumption dynamics and agents beliefs. The numbers correspond to the quarterly frequency of the model calibration.

Preference parameters:		Uncertain Mean	Uncertain Probability
γ	(risk aversion parameter)	10	5
ψ	(elasticity of intertemporal substitution)	1.5	1.5
β	(quarterly time discounting)	0.994	0.994
Priors and consumption parameters:		Uncertain Mean	Uncertain Probability
A_0	('This Time is Different'-parameter)	0.025	0.025
T	(length of a generation in quarters)	80	80
σ	(volatility of Normal shocks)	1.35%	0.80%
μ	(true mean in 'normal times')	0.45%	0.53%
\bar{m}	(upper truncation point of μ prior)	1.35%	<i>n/a</i>
\underline{m}	(lower truncation point of μ prior)	-0.45%	<i>n/a</i>
\bar{p}	(upper truncation point of p prior)	<i>n/a</i>	0.04000
\underline{p}	(lower truncation point of p prior)	<i>n/a</i>	0.00001
p	(true probability of Depression)	<i>n/a</i>	0.00425
d	(consumption shock in Depression)	<i>n/a</i>	-18%

3 Results from the Exchange Economy Model

We first describe the dynamic portfolio allocations and implied risk-sharing of the two agents and thereafter focus on the asset pricing implications of the model.

3.1 Portfolio allocation and risk-sharing

An unsurprising outcome of having two agents with differences in beliefs is that the more optimistic (pessimistic) agent will tend to hold a larger (smaller) portfolio share in assets that pay off in good states. While this is true in the model at hand as well, we focus on the novel implications of our model, which also features (*a*) agents

with differences in the *confidence* of, or uncertainty over, their mean beliefs ($A_{A,t}$ vs $A_{B,t}$) and (b) recursive utility and therefore high perceived risk (and benefits from risk-sharing) arising from model uncertainty and learning.

Before we describe the portfolio allocations a couple of definitions are in order. First, total wealth in the economy is the value of the claim to aggregate consumption. Second, since we solve a discrete-time, complete markets problem where one of the shocks has a continuous support (ε), the complete portfolio choice decisions of agents involve positions in principle in an infinite set of Arrow-Debreu securities. To convey the portfolio decisions of the agents in a simple (first-order) manner, we define the weight implicit in the total wealth portfolio of agent i as the local sensitivity of the return to agent i 's wealth to a small shock to total wealth (as arising from an aggregate ε shock close to zero). In the continuous-time limit for the 'Uncertain Mean'-calibration, this local sensitivity is exactly the current portfolio allocation of agent i in the total wealth portfolio (because in this case, markets would be dynamically complete with two assets). When evaluating the 'Uncertain Probability'-calibration, we evaluate changes in relative wealth resulting from whether a Depression shock occurred or not.

3.1.1 'Uncertain Mean'-case

Figure 2 shows how risk-sharing operates in the 'Uncertain Mean'-economy. In particular, the change in the relative wealth share of the Young is plotted against realizations of the aggregate shock (log aggregate consumption growth).⁸ The current wealth of the two agents is assumed equal and both agents are in the middle age of their respective generations (age 10yr and 30yr). In addition, the current mean beliefs of the Old are assumed to be unbiased, $m_{Old,t} = \mu$.

Two features of the model stand out. First, in the upper left plot, the case where the beliefs of the Young also are unbiased (the solid line) shows that the Old are in fact insuring the Young against bad states even when the mean beliefs coincide. This happens also when agents have Power utility preferences ($\psi = 0.1$; see the lower left plot) and is because the Young perceive the world to be more risky than the Old as they are more uncertain about their mean beliefs about μ than the Old are. Second, it is clear in the unbiased case that when $\gamma > 1/\psi$ the Old are insuring the Young to a larger extent than in the power utility case. This is because a preference for early

⁸To be precise, the plot shows the log return on the wealth of the Young minus the log return to total wealth.

resolution of uncertainty leads to model uncertainty being perceived as much more risky than in when agents are indifferent to the timing of resolution of uncertainty as in the power utility case (see Collin-Dufresne, Johannes, and Lochstoer (2013a)). Therefore, the difference in confidence leads to the Young perceiving the world as a more risky place, unconditionally. If the Young are sufficiently optimistic (here, about 2 standard deviations above the mean over a life time), the Young are in fact insuring the Old who are more pessimistic, and vice versa for the case where the Young are pessimistic (about 2-standard deviations below the mean over a life time).

The right-hand plots of Figure 2 show the portfolio weight of the Old versus the Young over the span of a generation (80 quarters). The wealth is held equal across the two agents and the beliefs of both agents are assumed to be unbiased over time. With recursive utility, the Old start with a portfolio allocation of 1.45 (145%) to the total wealth portfolio, while the Young starts with 0.55. Subsequently both are pulled towards 1 as the difference in the dispersion of beliefs decreases over time. This is an artifact of Bayesian learning in this case, as can be seen from Equation (3), where the variance of beliefs decreases more rapidly when prior uncertainty is high than low. Right before the generational shift, there is still a substantial difference, about 1.15 versus 0.85.

With power utility preferences, however, the portfolio choice is markedly different. First, portfolio weights barely budge over time and they are quite close, about 1.05 versus 0.95. Second, it is the *Young* who are more exposed to the total wealth fluctuations and thus has a higher portfolio weight. This somewhat counter-intuitive result is due to the fact that total wealth covaries *positively* with marginal utility in this case due to the low level of the elasticity of substitution. For instance, an upward update in the mean belief of the growth rate, due to a positive consumption shock, *lowers* the price/consumption ratio as the wealth effect dominates (as now $\psi = 1/\gamma < 1$). This effect is strong enough to make the return to total wealth positively related to marginal utility. The Young still perceive model risk as higher than the Old (remember, the subjective consumption dynamics in the 'Uncertain Mean'-case are $\Delta c_{t+1} = m_{i,t} + \sqrt{1 + A_{i,t}\sigma\varepsilon_{t+1}}$, so this follows since $A_{Young,t} > A_{Old,t}$), but given the negative correlation between total wealth returns and aggregate consumption growth and the resulting negative risk premium on the total wealth portfolio, the Old hedges the Young by holding *less* of the total wealth claim.

Figure 2 - "Uncertain Mean"-case: Risk-sharing and portfolio allocations

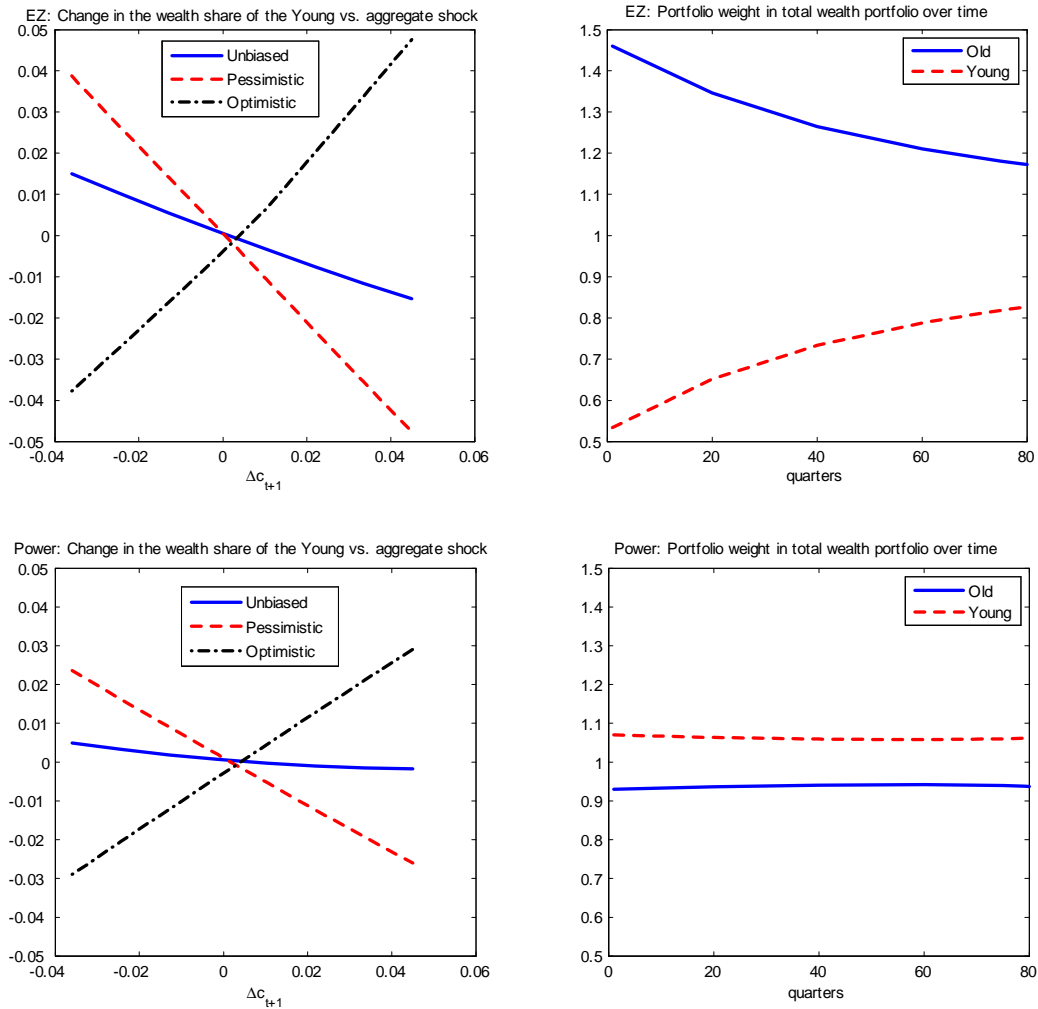


Figure 2: The left plots show the change in the wealth share of the Young for different realizations of the aggregate shock (consumption growth). The current wealth of the agents is set equal, the current age of the Young and the Old are in the middle of their generations (at 10 and 30 years, respectively), and the current beliefs of the Old are unbiased. The solid line shows the change in the relative wealth share when the current beliefs of the Young are also unbiased, whereas the red dashed line shows the case where the Young are pessimistic (the belief of the mean growth rate 2 standard deviations below the true mean), and the dash-dotted line shows the case where the Young are optimistic (2 standard deviations above the true mean)). The right plots show the portfolio allocation of the Young and the Old agent over time (from 1 to 80 quarters), where beliefs are held unbiased and the wealth-share is held equal across agents. The top plots show the result from the 'EZ' case whereas the bottom plots show the result from the 'Power' case.

The reason the portfolio share does not move much over time (holding beliefs and wealth constant) in the power utility case is again because with power utility, and the indifference to the timing of resolution of uncertainty, model uncertainty is simply not very important for total welfare. Thus, while the Young experience more model uncertainty relative to the Old, neither agent care very much about it. In the recursive utility case, however, the agents experience large utility losses from being faced with model uncertainty. In particular, the amount of long-run risk is proportional to the size of the update in mean beliefs, which from Equation (2) is $A_t\sigma$. In the middle of their respective generations, the relative difference in perception of short run risk ($\sqrt{1 + A_t\sigma}$) between the Young and the Old is 0.3%, while the relative difference in long-run risk ($A_t\sigma$) is 67%. Thus, with recursive utility there is a much bigger difference in perceived risk between the two agents, which is also why both the dynamics of portfolio allocation and asset prices (as we show in the next Section) are much more pronounced in this case.

3.1.2 'Uncertain Probability'-case

In the case where the probability of a Depression is not known to agents, the differences portfolio allocation are manifest in terms of differential wealth exposure to the Depression event. Therefore, we plot the log change in the relative wealth of the Young (starting from a 50% wealth share) in the relevant cases $d_{t+1} = 0$ and $d_{t+1} = -18\%$. The left plots in Figure 3 show the case where the agents have the same level of wealth before the shock for the EZ calibration (top plot) and the power utility calibration (lower plot), where the Old have unbiased beliefs ($E_t^{Old} [p] = p$). When the Young also are unbiased, the Old still provide insurance against the Depression event and, as in the previous case, more so with Epstein-Zin utility than with power utility preferences. Also as in the previous case, when the Young are optimistic ($E_t^{Young} [p] = 0.0001 < p = 0.00425$) they provide insurance to the unbiased Old, while the reverse is true when the Young are pessimistic ($E_t^{Young} [p] = 0.02 > p = 0.00425$).

The right-hand plots show the same for the case when the wealth share of the Young is 90%. The Old clearly provide less insurance to the Young in this case when the Young are pessimistic. Thus, relative to the case in Chen, Joslin, and Tran (2012), where agents agree to disagree and are certain about their beliefs about the probability of a disaster, the case of uncertain beliefs feature less aggressive risk-sharing/speculation.

Figure 3 - "Uncertain Probability"-case: Risk-sharing

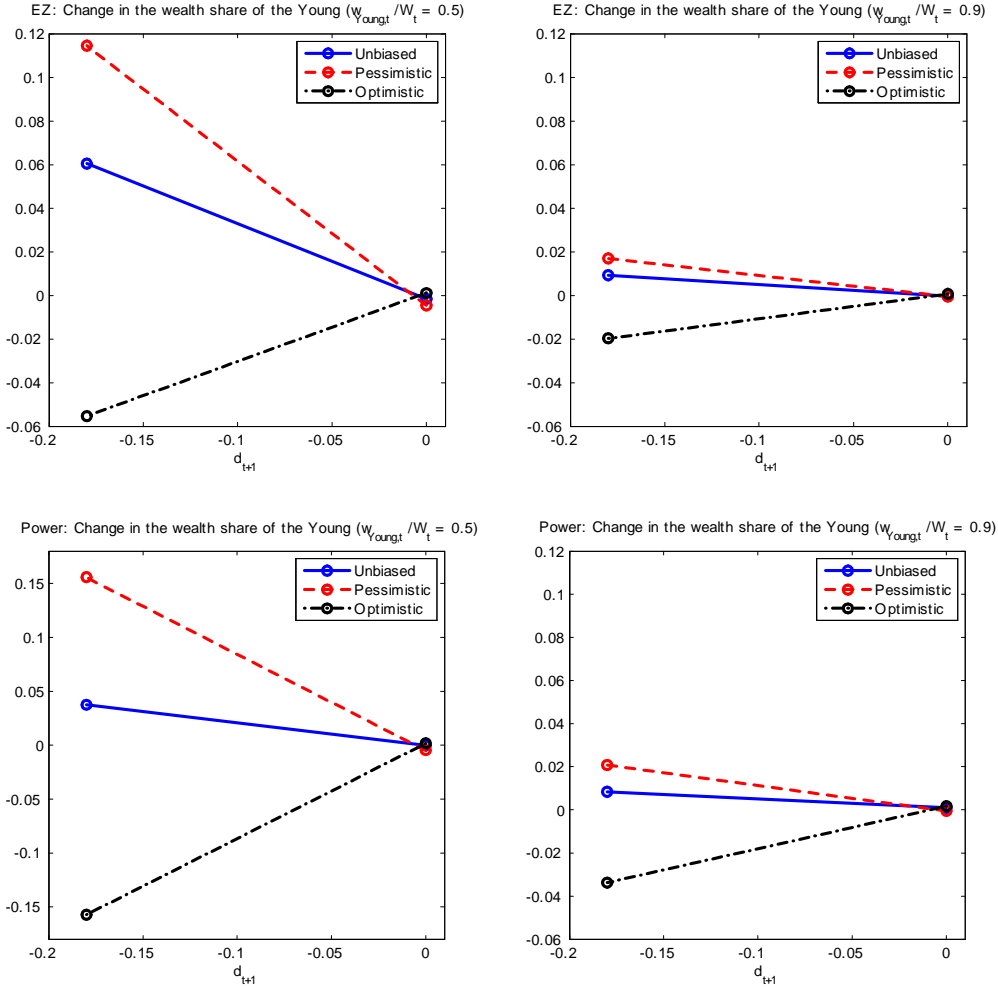


Figure 3: The left plots show the change in the wealth share of the Young for different realizations of the Depression shock (0% or -18%). The current wealth of the agents is set equal, the current age of the Young and the Old are in the middle of their generations (at 10 and 30 years, respectively), and the current beliefs of the Old are unbiased. The solid line shows the change in the relative wealth share when the current beliefs of the Young are also unbiased, whereas the red dashed line shows the case where the Young are pessimistic (the belief of the mean growth rate 2 standard deviations below the true mean), and the dash-dotted line shows the case where the Young are optimistic (2 standard deviations above the true mean)). The right plots show the same but when Young holds 90% of the wealth in the economy. The top plots show the result from the 'EZ' case whereas the bottom plots show the result from the 'Power' case.

We will make this point precise when discussing the conditional risk premium below.

3.2 Asset pricing implications

3.2.1 Unconditional Moments

Table 2 shows the unconditional moments from 10,000 simulations of length 247 quarters, as in the data sample. The simulations have a 2000 period burn-in period to avoid the effects of initial conditions. Panel A shows standard moments from three versions of the "Uncertain Mean"-case—two cases where agents suffer from the 'This Time is Different'-bias, with Epstein-Zin and power utility preferences, respectively, and the benchmark case where agents know the mean parameter.⁹ Since consumption growth is i.i.d., Sharpe ratios and risk premiums are the same in the power utility and Epstein-Zin economies in this case and we therefore only show this for the EZ case. Panel B shows the corresponding for the "Uncertain probability"-case.

Introducing the 'This Time is Different'-bias has strong implications for asset pricing, whether agents have Epstein-Zin or power utility. In the former case, the equity risk premium increases by a factor more than 3, while the Sharpe ratio and price of risk increases by a factor more than 2, relative to the known parameters cases, matching the data well. In the latter case, however, the risk premium and Sharpe ratio on equity *decreases*, as a 'positive' update in beliefs decreases the price-dividend ratio and therefore the absolute value of the covariance between the pricing kernel and the equity return.

These effects are similar to the parameter learning effects already documented in Collin-Dufresne, Johannes, and Lochstoer (2013a). What is different is that (a) the moments in Table 2 reflect a stationary, long-run equilibrium and not a transient phenomenon, and (b) that there are two agents that agree to disagree. The latter effect typically leads to a reduction in unconditional Sharpe ratios and risk premiums as the optimists tend to hold more of the risky asset. This also happens here, as can be seen by the price of risk for the power utility case, which is lower than the price of risk for the known parameters benchmark case. If there was only one agent with learning, these would be very close with the learning case having a slightly higher price of risk. However, with the 'This Time is Different'-bias and two agents, the price of risk drops from 0.27 in the benchmark i.i.d. case to 0.20 in the power utility case as

⁹For the power utility specifications, it was necessary to tighten the truncation bounds somewhat to ensure finite utility. In particular, XXX

Table 2 - Unconditional Moments

Table 2: This table gives average sample moments from 10,000 simulations of 247 quarters. The 'data' column sample average moments for the U.S. from 1929 to 2011. Panel A gives results from the "Uncertain mean"-calibration, whereas Panel B gives results from the "Uncertain probability"-calibration. The columns labelled "EZ" correspond to the calibrations given in Table 1. The "Power" columns have the EIS parameter, ψ , set such that agents have power utility. the Columns labelled "Known mean" and "Known probability" correspond to moments from the benchmark case where agents know the true parameters and therefore are not subject to the 'This Time is Different'-bias.

Panel A: "Uncertain mean"-case				
		'This Time is Different'		Known mean
	<i>Data</i>	<i>EZ</i> : $\gamma = 10$	<i>Power</i> : $\gamma = 10$	<i>EZ</i> : $\gamma = 10$
	1929 – 2011	$\psi = 1.5, \beta = 0.994$	$\psi = 1/10, \beta = 0.994$	$\psi = 1.5, \beta = 0.994$
$E_T [r_m - r_f]$	5.1	5.2	0.1	1.5
$\sigma_T [r_m - r_f]$	20.2	16.6	10.5	12.9
$SR_T [r_m - r_f]$	0.25	0.31	0.01	0.12
$E_T [r_f]$	0.86	2.4	18.7	3.4
$\sigma_T [r_f]$	0.97	0.3	2.6	0.0
$\sigma_T [M_{t+1}] / E_T [M_{t+1}]$	-	0.51	0.20	0.27
$\gamma \times \sigma_T [\Delta c_{t+1}]$	-	0.27	0.27	0.27
$E_T [\Delta c_{t+1}]$	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%
$\sigma_T [\Delta c_{t+1}^{TA}]$	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%
Panel B: "Uncertain probability"-case				
		'This Time is Different'		Known probability
	<i>Data</i>	<i>EZ</i> : $\gamma = 5$	<i>Power</i> : $\gamma = 5$	<i>EZ</i> : $\gamma = 5$
	1929 – 2011	$\psi = 1.5, \beta = 0.994$	$\psi = 1/5, \beta = 0.994$	$\psi = 1.5, \beta = 0.994$
$E_T [r_m - r_f]$	5.1	4.9	0.2	1.7
$\sigma_T [r_m - r_f]$	20.2	16.7	12.1	13.2
$SR_T [r_m - r_f]$	0.25	0.30	0.01	0.13
$E_T [r_f]$	0.86	1.8	10.7	3.2
$\sigma_T [r_f]$	0.97	0.9	1.4	0.1
$\sigma_T [M_{t+1}] / E_T [M_{t+1}]$	-	0.69	0.17	0.20
$\gamma \times \sigma_T [\Delta c_{t+1}]$	-	0.135	0.135	0.135
$E_T [\Delta c_{t+1}]$	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%
$\sigma_T [\Delta c_{t+1}^{TA}]$	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%

speculation and the presence of optimists in the market decreases the required average risk compensation. In the Epstein-Zin case with learning, however, the price of risk increases to 0.51. Thus, the model uncertainty risk channel dominates with these preferences.

3.2.2 Wealth dynamics and risk pricing

Figure 4 - Wealth dynamics and the risk premium

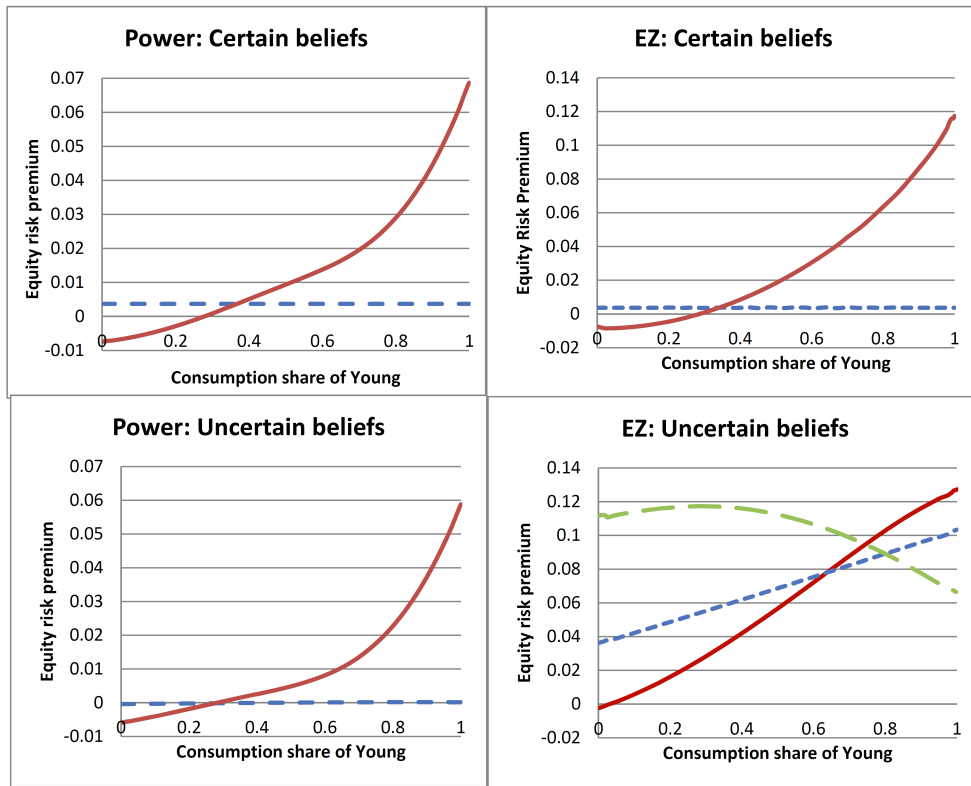


Figure 4: The figure shows the conditional annualized equity risk premium versus the current relative consumption of the Young, for the case with an uncertain Depression probability. Both the Old and the Young are assumed to be in the middle of their respective generations. "Power" refers to models where the agents have power utility, whereas "EZ" refers to models where agents have Epstein-Zin utility with $\gamma > 1/\psi$. The dashed lines correspond to the case where the mean beliefs of the agents coincide. The solid line corresponds to the case where the Young have pessimistic mean beliefs, while the Old have optimistic mean beliefs. The green line with the long dashes in the bottom right graph corresponds to the case where instead the Young are optimists and the Old are pessimists.

With heterogenous beliefs the relative wealth of agents in the economy arise as

an additional state variable. In our setting, this endogenous state variable affects asset prices in two distinct ways. First, consistent with previous literature, if there are optimist (pessimists) in the market, risk premiums and Sharpe ratios are lower (higher) under the objective measure. Second, and particular to the belief heterogeneity in the generational 'This Time is Different' model, the heterogeneity in agents' confidence in their beliefs matters. As discussed earlier, this uncertainty has particularly strong effects on asset prices when agents have Epstein-Zin utility. Thus, even if agents' mean beliefs coincide, an increase in, say, the wealth of the Young affects asset prices as the wealth-weighted beliefs are now more uncertain.

Figure 4 shows the annualized equity risk premium (under the objective measure) for the 'Unknown probability'-case plotted against the consumption share of the Young—i.e., the agent that perceives more model uncertainty. As before, the agents are in the middle of their respective generations in terms of their age. The dashed blue lines correspond to the case where the agents' mean beliefs about the Depression probability coincide (and are set approximately equal to the true value). The bottom right plot shows the main case where beliefs are uncertain (due to the 'This Time is Different'-bias) and agents have Epstein-Zin preferences. Here the equity risk premium increases from 4% when all the wealth are in the hands of the Old to over 10% when the Young hold all the wealth. The consumption share varies between 0.3 and 0.7 in simulations, so in practice the range of variation in the risk premium resulting from variation in the relative wealth of agents is from 5% to 8%. The bottom left plot shows the same economy but where agents have power utility preferences. Note that the blue line here barely budes, as in this case the model uncertainty has a very low risk price. That is, the aforementioned source of wealth-dynamics-induced variation in the price of risk is absent when agents have power utility.

Another source of variation in the risk premium that is due to the wealth dynamics is, as mentioned, the difference in mean beliefs. The solid red lines show the case where the Young agent is pessimistic ($E_t^{Young}[p] = 0.02$) and the Old agent is optimistic ($E_t^{Old}[p] = 0.001$). For the both the power utility and the EZ cases, the risk premium is increasing the more wealth are given to the pessimistic agent (in this example, the Young). However, note that the sensitivity of the risk premium to the amount of consumption of the optimistic agent is much higher for the power utility case when the wealth of the optimistic agent is low. In particular, the risk premium decreases from 6% to 0.5% when the relative consumption share of optimists goes from 0 to

0.5. This echoes the finding of Chen, Joslin, and Tran (2012), who document that in terms of the pricing of disaster risk, the risk premium decreases precipitously when only a small mass (e.g., 10-20% of total wealth) of optimists are introduced in the model. Thus, the disaster model does not seem robust to a reasonable amount of belief heterogeneity. In the EZ case, however, the same change in the consumption share of the optimists (the Old in this example), decreases the risk premium from about 12% to about 6%. In other words, the strong nonlinearity found in the power utility case is no present when agents have EZ preferences and face model uncertainty. Note that in both cases agents are learning, subject to the 'This Time is Different'-bias. In fact, the two top plots shows the same graphs for the case where agents do not learn and are perfectly certain about their (different) beliefs, as in the model of Chen, Joslin, and Tran (2012). Here, each agent remains an optimist or pessimist forever, with no updating of beliefs. Since there are no model-uncertainty-induced long-run risks in this case, both the EZ and the power utility cases exhibit the strong nonlinearity and fragility of the disaster model with respect to belief heterogeneity. In sum, allowing for uncertain beliefs, learning, and Epstein-Zin preferences renders the disaster model more robust along this dimension.

These two sources of excess return predictability, as well as the common movements in beliefs, makes standard excess return forecasting regressions using the lagged dividend yield as the predictive variable find a significant and positive relation (for the EZ model) between the dividend yield and future excess returns, as in the data. We do not report such regressions for brevity.

3.2.3 Over- and undervaluation vs beliefs

The model features periods of over- and undervaluation, as agents at times become either too optimistic (after a sequence of positive Normal shocks or a lack of Depression shocks) or too pessimistic (after a sequence of negative Normal shocks or a recent Depression shock) relative to the true model. Given that agents beliefs are close to rational—agents update as Bayesian during their lifetime and therefore have mean beliefs close to the truth—one may think the asset misvaluation must be quite small. This is not the case. The reason is that while the belief updates are quite 'small,' they are very persistent. Thus, they affect valuations strongly. In this section, we show, through simulated paths from the model, how big these misvaluations can be.

Figure 5 - "Uncertain Mean": Simulated Paths

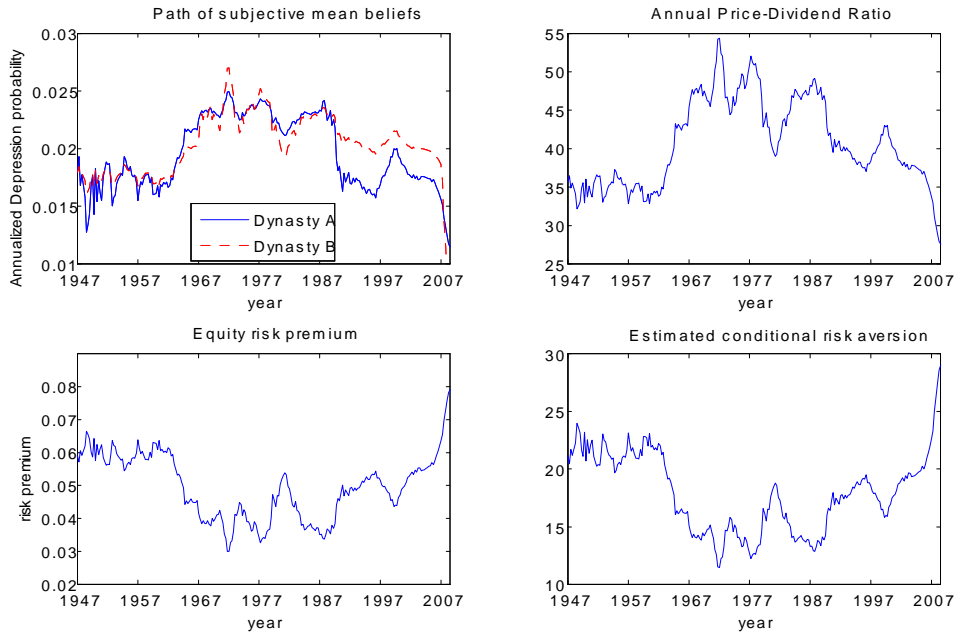


Figure 5: The figure shows time series statistics from the 'Uncertain mean' model. The consumption shocks are taken from U.S. post-WW2 data, from 1947Q2 to 2009Q4.

'Uncertain mean'-case The top left plot of Figure 5 shows the mean beliefs about the mean parameter, μ , of the two agents using actual consumption shocks (real per capita quarterly U.S. consumption growth from 1947 to 2009). We set the prior mean beliefs equal to truth for both agents in 1947Q1 and let the agent from Dynasty A start out as a new Young, while the agent from Dynasty B starts out as just having become Old. The mean beliefs are annualized. The blue solid (red dashed) line shows the mean beliefs of the agent from Dynasty A (B). Since the two agents have differing variances of beliefs, they do not update the same, even though they observe the same shocks. Mean beliefs decrease in bad times, given the bad consumption outcomes, and the period around the Great Recession shows the biggest decline in belief about the long-run mean growth rate.

The range of the mean beliefs is from about 1.2% to 2.7% p.a. and the beliefs are clearly quite persistent, as one would expect given the updating rule. The top right plot in Figure 5 shows the model-implied Price-Dividend ratio.¹⁰ Its range is from about

¹⁰Simulated paths of model quantities like the risk premium and the price-dividend ratio will have

27 to 54. In the benchmark economy where agents know that consumption growth is i.i.d., the price-dividend ratio is constant, so the effect of introducing a relatively mild departure from Rational Expectations is large. The price-dividend ratio is highly persistent, echoing the belief dynamics. The plot shows that there are long (>10 yr) periods where the market price level is too high or too low relative to the level when mean beliefs are at the true value, in which case the P/D-ratio is about 38. Thus, the range of the price-dividend ratio over the sample indicates the market was at times almost 30% underpriced and at times more than 40% overpriced.

Generally, the price-dividend ratio increases in good times and decreases in bad times, most notably over the Great Recession. These dynamics are mirrored in the equity risk premium as shown in the lower left plot of Figure 5. Generally, when agents are optimistic, the risk premium is low. There is additional variation in the risk premium related to the wealth-dynamics of the two agents, as discussed earlier. The range of the risk premium is from about 3% to 8%, with the peak reached during the Great Recession.

One implication of the model presented here with an experiential learning bias, is that an econometrician who uses a long sample to estimate (the dynamics of) risk aversion jointly with consumption dynamics and assumes Rational Expectations will conclude that investors exhibit high and time-varying risk aversion. In particular, with a long sample the econometrician will conclude that consumption growth is i.i.d. and estimate the mean and volatility parameters to be equal to their true values. The (conditional) price of risk in the i.i.d. economy, when agents are assumed to know the true model, is approximately $\gamma \times \sigma$ —risk aversion times the quantity of risk and in the 'Uncertain Mean'-model $\gamma = 10$. Define estimated conditional risk aversion as:

$$\gamma_t \equiv \frac{\sigma_t(M_{t+1})}{E_t(M_{t+1})}/\sigma. \quad (16)$$

Here $\frac{\sigma_t(M_{t+1})}{E_t(M_{t+1})}$ is the maximum conditional Sharpe ratio in the 'This Time is Different'-

jumps at times of generational shifts. This is because we only have two long-lived cohorts and not a continuum as in, e.g., Garleanu and Panageas (2012). This is, of course, an unrealistic feature of the model and one borne out of necessity in order to keep the state space small. To focus on the time series of beliefs, and the discrete generational changes, we plot paths of model quantities averaging over all possible prior variances for both agent. In other words, we solve for the path of, say, the price-dividend ratio, given that the two agents are of ages 1 and 21 at the beginning of the sample, then for the case when agents are 2 and 22, and so on. The consumption shock series is the same in all cases. Finally, we take the average at each time t of the price-dividend ratios to arrive a time-series.

economy under the objective measure and σ is the volatility of consumption growth. The bottom right plot of Figure 5 shows the path of this 'estimated conditional risk aversion' over the same sample. It is always above 10 and ranges from about 12 to about 28, with a pronounced persistent and counter-cyclical pattern. Thus, the dynamics of this 'estimated risk aversion' is more reminiscent of an external habit formation model, such as Campbell and Cochrane (1999), and due to the small but persistent mistakes agents make in their belief formation as well as the fact that the model uncertainty is priced when agents have Epstein-Zin preferences.

Figure 6 - "Uncertain Probability": Simulated paths

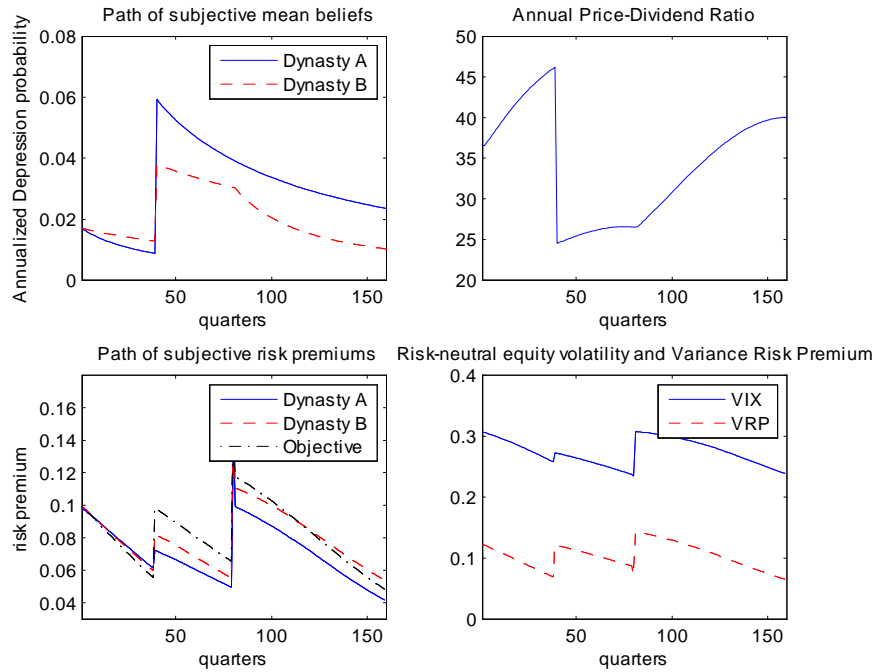


Figure 6: The figure shows selected time series statistics from the 'Uncertain probability'-model. The relevant shocks are the Depression realizations. We simulate a path for one full life-time (160 quarters) and let the Depression occur at the 41st quarter. The Young generation is assumed to come alive in the first quarter (Dynasty A), while the initial Old generation (Dynasty B) gives rise to new Young at the 81st quarter.

'Uncertain probability'-case For the "Uncertainty probability"-model, where agents learn about the probability of a Depression shock, the implications for over- and undervaluation are in many ways similar to the "Uncertain mean"-case. The top left plot

of Figure 6 shows the mean beliefs about the (annualized) probability of a Depression for the two Dynasties, where both agents start at $t = 1$ with unbiased beliefs. In this simulation, the Depression shock occurs at time $t = 41$, and there are no Depressions thereafter until $t = 160$ (i.e., the time period considered covers the full life of an agent). The agent from Dynasty A was again a new Young at $t = 1$, while the agent from Dynasty B was a new Old. Thus, at the time of the shock, they are both in the middle of their respective generations. The Young updates more quickly in the direction of a low Depression probability as long as no Depression shock occurs. Once the shock hits, it is again the Young that update more and their mean beliefs flip from being the optimists in the market to being the pessimists. At $t = 80$, the Old die (from Dynasty B) and the previous Young become the new Old (from Dynasty A), which is why the mean belief of Dynasty B has a kink at this point in time (the new Young starts updating more quickly).

At $t > 80$, there is only one of the two generations in the market that has experienced the Depression personally (Dynasty A). This agent assigns a higher probability to the Depression state than the Young who have not experienced the Depression, as documented empirically in Malmendier and Nagel (2011). The upper right plot of Figure 6 shows the model-implied price-dividend ratio. First, the fluctuations are large, from about 25 to about 45. Further, it takes about 120 quarters (30 years) after the Depression shock for the price-dividend ratio to reach its level when beliefs are unbiased, so the effects of the shock are long-lasting. Again, the benchmark known parameters i.i.d. consumption growth model has a constant price-dividend ratio, so these fluctuations reflect misvaluation, as well as the priced model uncertainty.

The bottom left plot of Figure 6 shows three versions of the conditional risk premium—the objective risk premium, the risk premium using agent A’s beliefs, and the risk premium using agent B’s beliefs. First, note that the risk premium falls in all three cases as long as a Depression does not occur. Once a Depression occurs, the risk premium goes up in all three cases as agents update the likelihood of a severe consumption drop. However, the conditional risk premium goes up the least for the Young, who become the pessimists in the market upon experiencing the shock as they update their beliefs the most. Consider the time $t = 100$ in the plot. This is after the Depression shock and after a new generation was born (at $t = 81$). Thus, here we can consider the ‘Depression babies’ effect on expected market returns. The agent (Dynasty A) who experienced the Depression event and is still alive expects a risk premium that is about

1.5% points below that of the current Young (Dynasty B) who did not experience the Depression. Thus, consistent with Malmendier and Nagel's findings, the generation that experienced the Depression have a relatively lower allocation to stocks given their relatively low expectation of future excess stock market returns.

The bottom right plot in Figure 6 shows the path of the VIX (here, risk-neutral annualized quarterly conditional equity return volatility) and the variance risk premium (VRP: the 'VIX' minus the actual (objective measure) conditional annualized quarterly equity return volatility). The Depression event at $t = 41$ is associated with an increase in the VIX as the subjective beliefs about the likelihood of a disaster increases. Interestingly, the variance risk premium increases more. This is due to the fact that the Depression shock causes a wealth-transfer from the more Old to the Young. Thus, the wealth-weighted perceived model uncertainty increases and claims that pay off in the Depression state (such as a variance swap) become more valuable hedges, leading to a higher variance risk premium.

4 Asset Pricing in a 'This Time is Different' Production Economy

In the introduction, we noted that while there is micro evidence of an age dependent 'this time is different'-bias with respect to beliefs about macro dynamics, the average (or median) belief is an excellent predictor of future actual outcomes, indicating that the bias cannot be too severe. Survey data is not available for aggregate consumption dynamics, however, but it is available for both expected inflation and nominal GDP, which means we can construct the implied survey forecasts of *real* GDP. The latter can be related to output in a standard general equilibrium production economy.

In this Section, we show that agents' median GDP growth forecast is as good a predictor of future GDP as standard time-series GDP growth forecasting models, both in the data and in the model. Further, the production economy allows us to relate aggregate investment behavior to asset price over- and under-valuation. Before we turn to the production economy model, we first consider the accuracy of quarterly median real GDP growth forecasts from the Survey of Professional Forecasters versus a standard time-series forecasting model using GDP data.

Figure 7 - Forecasts of quarterly real GDP growth

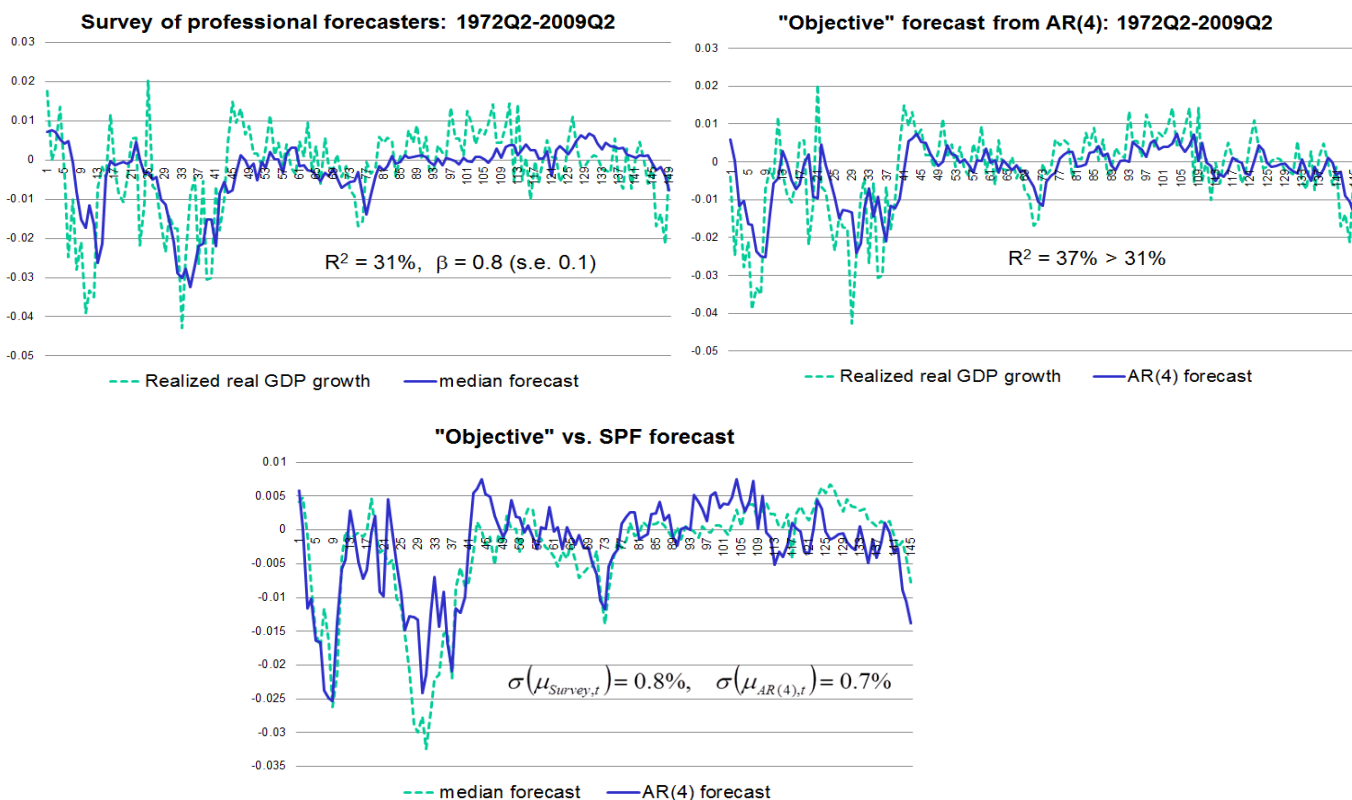


Figure 7: The top left plot shows realized quarterly real U.S. GDP growth from 1972Q2 to 2009Q2 (dashed line) versus the median quarterly forecast of real GDP growth (calculated using forecasts of inflation and nominal GDP) from the Survey of Professional Forecasters. The R^2 refers to a regression of realized on predicted growth, β is the regression coefficient, and s.e. refers to its standard error. The top right plot shows the same realized GDP growth plotted versus expected GDP growth obtained from running an AR(4) in sample on the realized GDP data. This is the 'objective', data-based forecast. The bottom plot shows the predicted growth obtained from the Survey and the AR(4) in-sample forecast. Here $\sigma(\mu_{Survey,t})$ and $\sigma(\mu_{AR(4),t})$ refer to the time-series standard deviation of the two forecasts.

The top left plot in Figure 7 shows realized, quarterly real U.S. GDP growth from 1972Q2 to 2009Q2 plotted versus the median forecast from the Survey of Professional Forecasters. The R^2 of a regression of the median forecast on next quarter's GDP growth is 31%, with a regression coefficient of 0.8 with 0.1 standard error. The top right plot shows the expected GDP growth obtained from an in-sample estimation of an AR(4) model on the GDP growth data plotted against the realized GDP growth data.

In this case, the R^2 of the AR(4) is 37%. We can think of the AR(4) estimated expected GDP growth as the 'objective' time-variation in the expected growth rate versus the subjective growth rate given by the survey data. The R^2 's being quite similar indicates that the survey data in fact is a pretty good forecasting variable, especially considering that the AR(4) expected growth rate is determined in-sample. The bottom plot shows the two expected growth rates plotted together. They clearly co-move and the time-series standard deviation of the 'objective' measure from the AR(4) is only slightly lower than the standard deviation of the survey-based expectation (0.7% versus 0.8%).

These results indicate that also for GDP data, as for the inflation data as discussed in Ang, Bekaert, and Wei (2007), there is not strong evidence of extrapolative beliefs. Extrapolation implies that beliefs are substantially more volatile than what a Rational Expectations case would imply, but this is clearly not the case in this sample with respect to the GDP data. Next, we show that the production economy model with the 'this time is different'-bias as modeled in this paper can replicate this fact. Further, the analysis of the 'This Time is Different'-bias is the first paper, as far as we know, that analyzes differences in beliefs in a production economy where agents have recursive preferences.

4.1 Production Function and Technology

For the production economy, we only consider the 'Uncertain mean'-case, with the Depression case as work in progress. Preferences, the overlapping generations setup, and belief formation are as before, with the difference being that agents now instead learn about the mean growth rate of labor-enhancing technology, Z_t , which is assumed to be i.i.d.:

$$\Delta z_t = \mu + \sigma_z \varepsilon_{t+1}, \quad (17)$$

where $z_t \equiv \ln Z_t$. The production function of the representative firm is Cobb-Douglas:

$$Y_t = (Z_t N_t)^{1-\alpha} K_t^\alpha, \quad (18)$$

where labor supply N_t is assumed fixed at 1 and K_t is capital, and the capital accumulation equation is:

$$K_{t+1} = (1 - \delta) K_t + \phi (I_t/K_t) K_t, \quad (19)$$

where δ is the depreciation rate, $\phi(\cdot)$ is a concave function that governs capital adjustment costs, and I_t is gross investment. Thus, $Y_t = C_t + I_t$. If agents know μ , the economy reduces to the that in Kaltenbrunner and Lochstoer (2010). We let adjustment costs be quadratic with higher costs for downward adjustment:

$$\begin{aligned} \phi(x_t) &= x_t - \frac{a_t}{2} (x_t - \delta)^2, \\ a_t &= \begin{cases} a_- & \text{if } x_t < \delta \\ a_+ & \text{if } x_t \geq \delta \end{cases}, \end{aligned} \quad (20)$$

as in Zhang (2005).

The return to investment in this model is the same as the unlevered equity return (e.g., Cochrane (1991), Restoy and Rockinger (1994)):

$$R_{I,t+1} = \phi'(I_t/K_t) \left(\alpha (K_t/Z_t)^{\alpha-1} + \frac{1 - \delta + \phi(I_{t+1}/K_{t+1})}{\phi'(I_{t+1}/K_{t+1})} - \frac{I_{t+1}}{K_{t+1}} \right), \quad (21)$$

where the firm's first order condition over investment yields:

$$E_t^A [M_{t+1}^A R_{I,t+1}] = E_t^B [M_{t+1}^B R_{I,t+1}] = 1. \quad (22)$$

We report levered equity returns, following Hirshleifer and Yu (2013) as

$$R_{E,t+1} = (1 + B/E) R_{I,t+1}, \quad (23)$$

where B/E is the average debt to equity ratio in the data, set to $2/3$.

4.2 Calibration and Moments

Table 3 shows the parameters chosen for the production economy. The preference parameter and learning parameters are the same as for the exchange economy considered in the previous section, with the caveat of risk aversion which set to half, at 5, as the production economy generates some long-run risks through the endogenous capital accumulation and therefore requires less risk aversion to match the equity Sharpe ratio (see Kaltenbrunner and Lochstoer (2010)).

The parameters governing the production technology are standard and the volatility

Table 3 - Parameter values for Production Economy

Table 3: The table gives the parameters used in the calibrations of the production economy model. The numbers correspond to the quarterly frequency of the model calibration.

Preference parameters:	EZ – Production
γ (risk aversion parameter)	5
ψ (elasticity of intertemporal substitution)	2
β (quarterly time discounting)	0.994
Priors:	
A_0 (dispersion parameter for prior at birth)	0.025
\bar{m} (upper truncation point of prior)	1.5%
\underline{m} (lower truncation point of prior)	-0.5%
Technology and Production Parameters:	
α (the capital share)	0.36
μ (true mean growth rate)	0.5%
σ_z (volatility of technology shocks)	3.8%
δ (capital depreciation rate)	2.5%
a_- (downside adjustment costs parameter)	20
a_+ (upside adjustment costs parameter)	6

of technology shocks is set such as to match U.S. real per capita GDP growth volatility over the available 1929-2013 sample. The adjustment cost parameters are set such as to both be in line with empirical estimates (which are provide a quite wide range) and such that consumption growth volatility is the same as in the data over the same sample period.

Table 4 shows the unconditional moments from the production economy model with the 'this time is different'-bias. The model matches the volatilities of output, consumption and investment very well. The model also matches the equity Sharpe ratio and the real risk-free rate mean and volatility well. The equity return volatility is, however, only 6%, which leads to a somewhat low equity premium of 3.1%. While this is short of the equity volatility in the data, it is an order of magnitude higher than

Table 4 - Unconditional Moments: Production Economy

Table 4: This table gives average sample moments from 247 quarters. The shocks to consumption are constructed from the real, per capita post WW2 nondurable and services data series from 1947Q2 to 2009Q4 and fed through each model. The 'data' column sample average moments for the U.S. from 1929 to 2011.

	Data 1929 – 2011	Model
$\sigma_T [\Delta y]$ (%)	4.9	4.9
$\sigma_T [\Delta c] / \sigma_T [\Delta y]$	0.52	0.47
$\sigma_T [\Delta i] / \sigma_T [\Delta y]$	2.3	2.2
$E_T [r_m - r_f]$ (%)	5.1	3.1
$\sigma_T [r_m - r_f]$ (%)	20.2	6.0
$SR_T [R_M - R_f]$	0.36	0.51
$E_T [r_f]$ (%)	0.86	1.3
$\sigma_T [r_f]$ (%)	0.97	0.6

the equity volatility in the model without the 'this time is different'-bias when agents known μ . The low volatility of the endogenous dividend claim is due to dividends in this model being counter-cyclical as investment is strongly pro-cyclical, as explained in Kaltenbrunner and Lochstoer (2010). This is counter-factual. Danthine and Donaldson (2002) show that sticky wages is a feature of the data that if incorporated in the model creates operating leverage that helps match the dividend dynamics better to the data (see also Favilukis and Lin (2013)), which in turn generates higher return volatility. To keep the model simple, we do not add these features, but note that the 'this time is different'-bias helps tremendously in matching the 'difficult' return volatility moment in the production economy model.

This relative success is due to increase incentive to invest and disinvest in response to shocks as both agents update beliefs about the mean growth rate in the direction of the shock. This leads to higher investment volatility, which allows us to increase capital adjustment costs to make investment smoother to again match the data (see also Jerman (1998)).

Figure 8 shows that the time-variation in agent beliefs again lead to counter-cyclical risk premium and price of risk. Further, a low (high) risk premium under the true

Figure 8 - Conditional dynamics in production economy

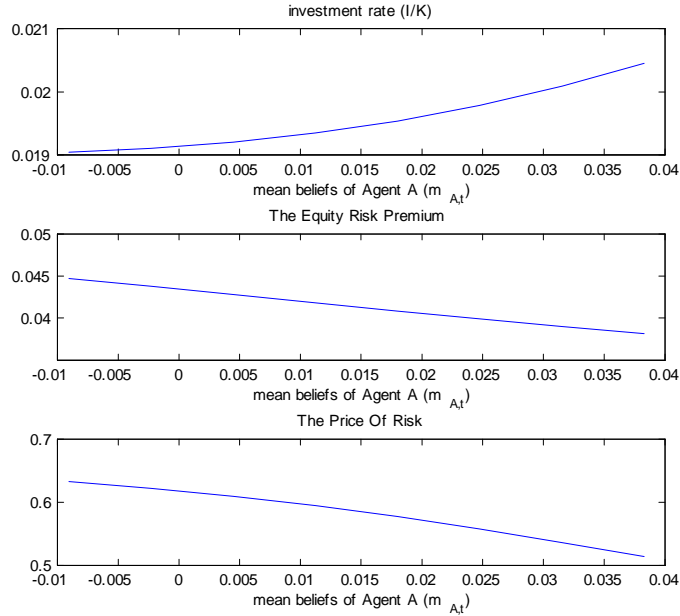


Figure 8: The top plot shows annualized conditional expected excess return on the dividend claim in the production economy versus the beliefs of agent A. All other state variables are at their average value. The middle plot shows the annualized conditional price of risk – the maximum Sharpe ratio in the economy. The price of risk and risk premium are calculated using the true probability measure. The bottom plot shows the quarterly investment rate, again as a function of the mean beliefs of agent A.

probability measure, due to optimistic beliefs, is associated with high (low) investment rates, which implies that investment forecasts future excess returns with a negative sign as in the data.

4.3 Output Predictability

In this final section, we turn to the predictability of output growth within the model, using both average agent beliefs and standard time-series models estimated on a sample of the same length as in the data. Figure 9 shows the true conditional mean of output growth for a simulated sample based on the same shocks as those used in the exchange economy of the previous section, as well as agents' mean belief about the conditional mean of output growth, average across agents.

As the graph shows, there is considerable comovement between these series, indi-

cating the agents beliefs about output growth is quite accurate. This is due to the endogenous capital accumulation, which creates high output if agents believe technology growth is high, as they in these cases invest more aggressively.

In a more formal evaluation, using annual output growth from the simulated sample, we verify that the agents' average subjective expectation is a good predictor of future annual output growth relative to estimates of true output growth from an AR(4) model. In particular, the R^2 's and volatility of beliefs are very similar.

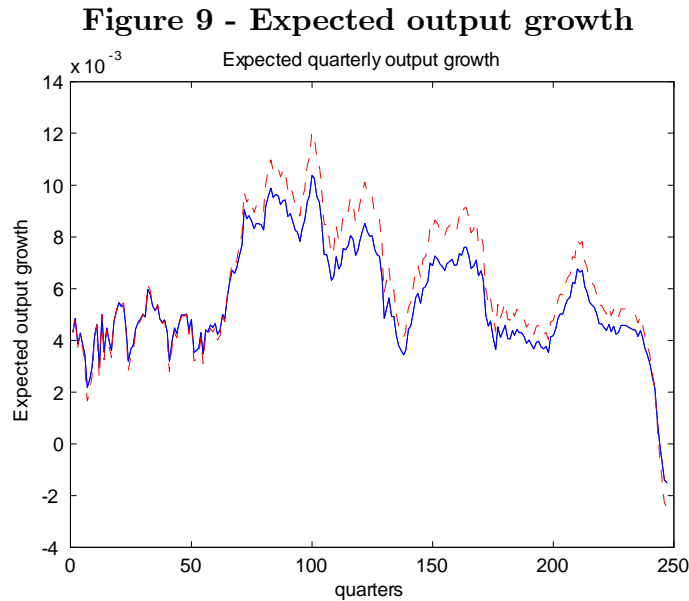


Figure 9: The figure shows a sample of expected quarterly output growth from the production economy. The solid line is the true (P-measure) expected growth rate, while the dashed line is the average agents' subjective expected growth rate.

In sum, the 'this time is different'-bias is not excessive in this model along the following dimensions: (a) it corresponds to micro estimates, (b) average beliefs are not excessively volatile and as good a predictor of output growth as standard in-sample time-series estimates (from an AR(4)), and (c) it helps account jointly for quantities and asset prices in a production-based general equilibrium economy.

5 Conclusion

We have proposed a relatively simple, but quantitatively realistic model that incorporates the 'this time is different'-bias across generations documented by Malmendier and Nagel (2011, 2013). In this model, model uncertainty persists indefinitely, and model uncertainty is an added risk factor due to the assumed preference for early resolution of uncertainty (Epstein-Zin preferences as in Bansal and Yaron (2004)). Importantly, consistent with Ang, Bekaert, and Wei (2007), as well as original empirical evidence presented in this paper, agents' beliefs are very good predictive variables for real output growth. Thus, the calibration of the bias is not excessive.

The pricing implications of the endogenous long-run risk introduced by such learning, as shown in Collin-Dufresne, Johannes, and Lochstoer (2013a), remain with the added feature of more time-variation in Sharpe ratios and expected excess returns. In particular, optimal risk-sharing between the agents induce fat tails in returns as over- and underpricing is exacerbated more as a consequence of optimal risk sharing. Despite the, in a statistical sense, small departure from the rational expectations assumption, the asset pricing implications that arise from the experiential learning bias are large. Over- and underpricing is persistent and large and the norm rather than the exception. Further, we show that when agents have recursive preferences and are uncertain about their beliefs, the amount of speculative activity stemming from disagreement in mean beliefs is tempered. In particular, agents that are optimistic about the Depression probability are still hesitant to hedge the other agents against this state as they know they will adversely update their beliefs if the state occurs and since such updates have a large impact on marginal utility with recursive preferences.

Finally, when adding the calibrated 'this time is different'-bias in a production economy, the endogenous subjective long-run risk helps increase equity return volatility by an order of magnitude relative to the case where the mean growth rate is known. Further, the persistent over (under) valuation is associated with over (under) investment, as in the data, with subsequent low (high) excess stock market returns.

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6 Appendix – Model Solution

We here briefly describe how we solve the model. Denote aggregate consumption C_t . There are two agents with Epstein-Zin preferences and different beliefs about the exogenous aggregate consumption dynamics. The resource constraint is:

$$C_t = C_{A,t} + C_{B,t}.$$

The preferences of agents A and B are given by:

$$\begin{aligned} V_{A,t} &= V_A(C_{A,t}, V_{A,t+1}) = \left[(1 - \beta) C_{A,t}^\rho + \beta E_t^A (V_{A,t+1}^\alpha)^{\rho/\alpha} \right]^{1/\rho}, \\ V_{B,t} &= V_B(C_{B,t}, V_{B,t+1}) = \left[(1 - \beta) C_{B,t}^\rho + \beta E_t^B (V_{B,t+1}^\alpha)^{\rho/\alpha} \right]^{1/\rho}. \end{aligned}$$

Let X_t denote a vector of exogenous state variables governing beliefs and aggregate consumption dynamics. There will be an endogenous state variable related to the relative wealth of the two agents.

The recursive optimization problem can then be written (see Kan (1995), Baker and Routledge (2012)):

$$\begin{aligned} V_{A,t} &= \max_{C_{A,t}, V_{B,t+1}} \left[(1 - \beta) C_{A,t}^\rho + \beta E_t^A (V_{A,t+1}^\alpha)^{\rho/\alpha} \right]^{1/\rho} \\ s.t. \quad V_{B,t} &= V_B(C_t - C_{A,t}, V_{B,t+1}). \end{aligned}$$

Given the homogeneity of the problem, it is useful to create normalized utility indexes by dividing utility by the exogenous aggregate consumption. Let lower case letters imply normalization by aggregate consumption ($x_t = X_t/C_t$):

$$\begin{aligned} v_{A,t} &= \max_{c_{A,t}, v_{B,t+1}} \left[(1 - \beta) c_{A,t}^\rho + \beta E_t^A [(C_{t+1}/C_t)^\alpha v_{A,t+1}^\alpha]^{\rho/\alpha} \right]^{1/\rho} \\ s.t. \quad v_{B,t} &= V_B(1 - c_{A,t}, (C_{t+1}/C_t) v_{B,t+1}), \end{aligned}$$

where $v_{B,t}$ is a current state variable, along with the state variables governing beliefs, X_t . We solve this recursion using the methodology in Collin-Dufresne, Johannes and Lochstoer (2013b). In principle, the problem is a standard value function iteration type problem, but the presence of an endogenous state variable (relative consumption or relative wealth of the agents) and its endogenous evolution equation complicates the

implementation of the numerical routine. The approach in Collin-Dufresne, Johannes and Lochstoer (2013b) provides a robust way to solve for this endogenous evolution equation.

For the production economy case, we also add the first order condition of the firm as a moment when finding the optimal investment.