

Liquidity and Its Pricing in the US Corporate Bond Market

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Motivations and Contributions

- How to measure illiquidity and what are its properties?
 - We propose illiquidity measures that are more robust than existing ones.
- What are the pricing implications of illiquidity? Can the credit spread puzzle be explained by illiquidity?
 - Credit spread puzzle, e.g., Huang and Huang (2003), and Elton, Gruber, Agrawal, and Mann (2001).
 - We identify that illiquidity level is priced in the corporate bond market.
 - Illiquidity risk effect is weaker and is driven by the crisis.

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Main Results

- Three illiquidity measures robust to various specifications
 - Residual volatility σ_u , variance ratio VR , and signed price impact $\lambda^{VW, signed}$
- Bond yield spreads explained by illiquidity measures with 5% improvement in R^2 for 2002-2010 (8% improvement in R^2 for 2008-2010). On average,
 - 1 cross-sectional SD change in σ_u associated with 16 bps in yield spreads.
 - 1 cross-sectional SD change in VR associated with 6 bps in yield spreads.
 - 1 cross-sectional SD change in $\lambda^{VW, signed}$ associated with 6 bps in yield spreads (2008-2010).
 - Together, 1-SD changes of σ_u and VR explain 23bps in yield spreads (2002-2010).
 - Together, 1-SD changes of σ_u , VR , and $\lambda^{VW, signed}$ explain 44bps in yield spreads (2008-2010).

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What is liquidity? What determines liquidity?

- Liquidity is how easy to trade without causing price movement.
- Illiquidity is caused by the following market imperfections, Vayanos and Wang (2012):
 - Asymmetric information
 - Imperfect competition
 - Transaction costs
 - Participation costs
- Two components of illiquidity:
 - Permanent component
 - Transitory component

Outline

- 1 Measuring Illiquidity
 - Overview of Measures
 - Measures Construction - Part I (Measures assuming price model)
 - Measures Construction - Part II (Measures not assuming price model)
 - Data
 - Properties of Measures

- 2 Bond Yields and Illiquidity
 - Bond Yields and Illiquidity Level
 - Bond Yields and Illiquidity Risk
 - Horse Race of Illiquidity Level and Risk
 - Aggregate Yield Spreads and Aggregate Illiquidity

Measures in Literature/ Proposed Measures (1/2)

There 4 broad classes of illiquidity measures:

1 **Heuristic measures**, e.g., age, maturity, issuance, turnover, trade size, number of trades, etc.

- Longstaff, Mithal, and Neis (2005)
- Chen, Lesmond, and Wei (2007)
- Mahanti, Nashikkar, Subrahmanyam, Chacko, and Mallik (2008)

2 **Price reversal γ and variants**

- Bid-ask spread in Roll (1984), estimated transaction cost in Hasbrouck (2009)
- Minus covariance $\gamma \equiv -Cov(r_t, r_{t-1})$ in Bao, Pan, and Wang (2011)
- Price reversal conditional on volume γ^{CGW} in Campbell, Grossman, and Wang (1993)

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Measures in Literature/ Proposed Measures (2/2)

3 Price impact λ and variants

- Amihud price impact $\lambda^A \equiv \frac{|p_t - p_{t-1}|}{Q_t}$, Q_t is trade size, in Amihud (2002)
- Price impact normalized by issuance λ^I
- Coefficient of return regressed on signed volume $\lambda^{VW, signed}$ in Vayanos and Wang (2012) - theory, and this work - empirical

4 Other measures

- Residual volatility σ_μ from AR(p) fit of return
- Minus sum of mean reversion coefficients Φ
- Variance ratio VR in Lo and MacKinlay (1988)

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Price Model

- Bond log price, $p_t \equiv \ln(\text{price})$
- p_t has two components: f_t is fundamental component (a random walk with shock e_t), and x_t is transitory component.

$$\begin{aligned} p_t &= f_t + x_t, \text{ where} \\ f_t &= f_{t-1} + e_t \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

- Bond log return

$$\begin{aligned} r_t &\equiv \Delta p_t = p_t - p_{t-1} \\ q_t &\equiv \Delta x_t \end{aligned}$$

$$\boxed{r_t = q_t + e_t} \tag{2}$$

- q_t is the transitory component of return.

Price Reversal γ

- Bao, Pan, and Wang (2011) defines price reversal γ

$$\gamma \equiv -Cov(r_t, r_{t-1}) \quad (3)$$

- From Price Model,

- Return

$$r_t = q_t + e_t \quad (4)$$

- Transitory component q_t , consider q_t modelled by AR(1) process.

$$q_t = \rho_1 q_{t-1} + \epsilon_t, \quad (5)$$

with AR(1) coefficient ρ_1 , and uncorrelated homoskedastic noise ϵ_t .

- γ combines effects of persistence and noise variance of the transitory component.

$$\begin{aligned} \gamma &\equiv -Cov(r_t, r_{t-1}) \\ \gamma &= -\rho_1 \frac{\sigma_\epsilon^2}{1 - \rho_1^2}, \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

where σ_ϵ^2 is the variance of q_t shock.

Variance Ratio VR

- Lo and MacKinlay (1988) proposes VR to test random walk hypothesis of stock prices.

$$VR(\tau) \equiv \frac{Var[r_t(\tau)]}{\tau Var[r_t(1)]}, \quad (7)$$

where τ is the number of trading days, and $r_t(\tau)$ is the τ -day return. $Var[r_t(\tau)]$ denotes the variance of the τ -day return.

- As $\tau \rightarrow \infty$, $Cov(r_t, r_{t+\tau}) \approx 0$

$$VR(\tau) \rightarrow 1 - \frac{Var[q_t]}{Var[r_t]}, \quad (8)$$

Steady-state VR implies the relative size of the transitory component and fundamental component of returns.

Mean-Reversion Coefficient ϕ and Residual Volatility σ_u (1/2)

- Ideally, the transitory component can be decomposed from the return using Kalman Filter.

$$r_t = q_t + e_t, \text{ observation equation} \quad (9)$$

$$q_t = \rho_1 q_{t-1} + \epsilon_t, \text{ state equation} \quad (10)$$

- Monte Carlo simulations show that 5,000 or more observations (#transactions in a month for a bond) is needed to get accurate estimates.
- In practice, there are considerably fewer observations in a month for a bond.
- The size of the transitory component is about 3 times larger than that of the fundamental component for corporate bonds, according to *VR*.
- r_t can be approximately used to estimate volatility and mean-reversion coefficient of the transitory component.

Mean-Reversion Coefficient ϕ and Residual Volatility σ_u (2/2)

- AR(p) model of return

$$r_t^d = \phi_1 r_{t-1}^d + \phi_2 r_{t-2}^d + \dots + \phi_p r_{t-p}^d + v_t, \quad (11)$$

where r_t^d is the demeaned return of transaction t , ϕ_s is the correlation coefficient of lag s , and v_t is the model error.

$$r_t^d = \hat{\phi}_1 r_{t-1}^d + \hat{\phi}_2 r_{t-2}^d + \hat{\phi}_3 r_{t-3}^d + \hat{\phi}_4 r_{t-4}^d + \eta_t, \quad (12)$$

where $\hat{\phi}_s$ is the estimated coefficient of lag s , and η_t is the error from estimation.

- Minus sum of mean reversion coefficients Φ

$$\Phi \equiv -(\hat{\phi}_1 + \hat{\phi}_2 + \dots + \hat{\phi}_p) \quad (13)$$

- Residual volatility σ_u

Price Impacts: λ^I and $\lambda^{VW,signed}$

- Price impact normalized by issuance λ^I

$$\lambda_t^I \equiv \frac{|p_t - p_{t-1}|}{Q_t / I} \quad (14)$$

Q_t is the trade size, and I is the issuance size

- Coefficient of return regressed on signed volume $\lambda^{VW,signed}$

$$r_t = \alpha + \lambda^{VW,signed} \frac{V_t}{\bar{V}} \quad (15)$$

V_t is negative if the dealer sells bonds to the customer and V_t is positive if the dealer buys bonds from the customer. Inter-dealer trades are excluded.

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Data and Filters

- Corporate bond data (July 2002 to December 2010) from TRACE and Mergent FISD
- Apply filters to data to ensure enough observations for estimation. For example,
 - Investment-grade bonds
 - Traded at least 75% of trading days
- Sample: 907 bonds (about 10 million transaction-level observations)
- Use transaction-level observations to estimate monthly illiquidity measures.

Data Summary Statistics

Table 2.1: Summary Statistics of Bond Sample

This table reports summary statistics of the sample of 907 bonds by period. Rating is a numerical translation with AAA=1 and D=22. Turnover is the percentage of issuance traded per month.

	Pre-Crisis Jul 2002 - Nov 2007			Crisis Dec 2007 - Jun 2009			Post-Crisis Jul 2009 - Dec 2010		
	Median	Mean	Std.	Median	Mean	Std.	Median	Mean	Std.
#Bonds		442			461			504	
Issuance (10^6 \$)	1,000	1,170	1,043	1,000	1,259	1,278	1,000	1,199	1,216
Rating (AAA=1, D=22)	5.15	5.30	1.94	6.00	6.19	1.93	6.17	6.93	1.93
Age (yr)	2.19	2.54	2.06	2.35	3.20	2.71	1.94	2.64	2.41
Maturity (yr)	5.13	7.33	6.84	6.17	8.62	8.13	5.93	8.44	7.93
Coupon (%)	5.50	5.49	1.28	5.55	5.63	0.99	5.65	5.70	1.45
Years traded (yr)	5.19	5.79	1.91	4.64	5.22	1.97	3.05	3.61	2.20
Turnover (% of iss./month)	8.22	10.43	7.16	6.07	7.38	4.80	6.87	9.15	7.57
Trd Size (10^3 \$, monthly)	442	587	486	214	318	343	285	420	414
#Trades (per month)	159	198	108	274	371	304	199	281	233
Price	100.74	102.31	5.67	99.18	98.52	5.29	105.78	106.87	5.92

Table 2.4: Cross-sectional Variation in Measures and Bond Characteristics

This table reports pooled regressions of measures on bond characteristics. T-statistics in brackets account for cross-sectional and serial correlations. The data are from July 2002 to December 2010 except the signed measures whose period is from November 2008 to December 2010.

Panel A: Full Sample (July 2002 - December 2010)						
	γ			γ^{CGW}		
Intercept	0.52 [2.45]	0.61 [2.92]	0.19 [0.95]	-0.97 [-5.71]	-1.01 [-5.92]	-0.83 [-4.46]
Age	0.01 [2.62]	0.01 [1.08]	0.01 [2.16]	-0.01 [-2.69]	-0.01 [-1.96]	-0.01 [-2.47]
Maturity	0.05 [13.45]	0.05 [13.46]	0.05 [14.00]	-0.01 [-3.83]	-0.01 [-4.04]	-0.01 [-3.97]
In(Issuance)	-0.06 [-2.10]	-0.06 [-2.36]	-0.11 [-3.88]	0.22 [9.06]	0.23 [9.26]	0.25 [9.01]
Rating	0.01 [1.42]	0.01 [1.86]	0.01 [0.81]	-0.02 [-3.34]	-0.02 [-3.70]	-0.02 [-2.99]
Turnover		-0.01 [-3.41]			0.00 [1.85]	
In(Num Trds)			0.14 [8.33]			-0.06 [-2.60]
Obs	22,046	22,046	22,046	21,885	21,885	21,885
R^2 (%)	22.82	23.35	24.35	4.28	4.33	4.50

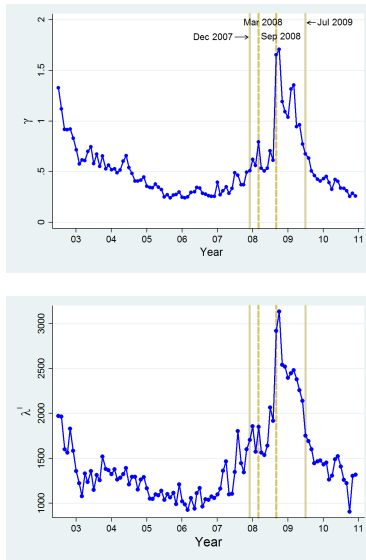
	λ^I ($\times 10^3$)			Φ ($\times 10^{-2}$)		
Intercept	-6.06 [-13.47]	-5.80 [-13.54]	-6.61 [-14.68]	168.70 [26.79]	166.50 [25.32]	158.27 [24.66]
Age	0.06 [5.74]	0.04 [3.95]	0.05 [5.42]	-1.22 [-6.81]	-1.05 [-5.49]	-1.29 [-7.20]
Maturity	0.04 [7.31]	0.04 [7.67]	0.04 [7.63]	-0.57 [-6.58]	-0.58 [-6.64]	-0.55 [-6.73]
In(Issuance)	0.93 [14.73]	0.91 [14.92]	0.83 [12.66]	1.43 [1.80]	1.57 [1.94]	-0.36 [-0.42]
Rating	0.03 [1.95]	0.04 [2.65]	0.02 [1.39]	-2.48 [-9.99]	-2.56 [-10.35]	-2.62 [-10.76]
Turnover		-0.02 [-7.25]			0.15 [2.94]	
In(Num Trds)			0.23 [5.71]			4.34 [4.53]
Obs	22,046	22,046	22,046	22,046	22,046	22,046
R^2 (%)	32.58	33.92	34.14	5.29	5.43	6.04

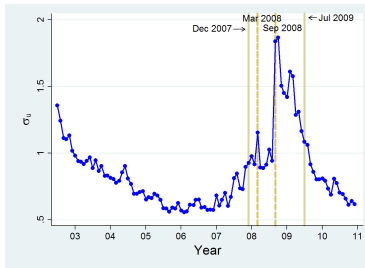
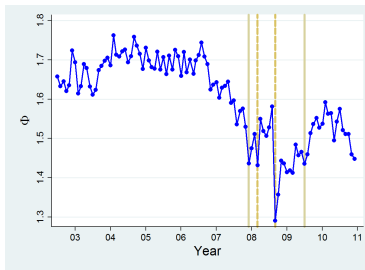
Table 2.4: Cross-sectional Variation in Measures and Bond Characteristics (Continued)

Panel A: Full Sample (July 2002 - December 2010) (Continued)						
	σ_u			VR ($\times 10^{-2}$)		
Intercept	0.69 [5.19]	0.78 [6.09]	0.41 [3.13]	-14.89 [-5.88]	-16.19 [-6.30]	-17.51 [-6.99]
Age	0.02 [3.96]	0.01 [2.46]	0.01 [3.55]	-0.39 [-4.30]	-0.30 [-3.28]	-0.41 [-4.60]
Maturity	0.04 [17.51]	0.04 [17.67]	0.04 [18.29]	0.27 [6.70]	0.26 [6.72]	0.27 [6.65]
ln(Issuance)	-0.04 [-2.34]	-0.05 [-2.80]	-0.09 [4.64]	2.44 [7.38]	2.51 [7.64]	1.97 [5.27]
Rating	0.03 [4.30]	0.03 [4.64]	0.02 [3.77]	1.05 [8.70]	0.98 [8.45]	1.02 [8.56]
Turnover		-0.01 [-4.17]			0.14 [4.46]	
ln(Num Trds)			0.12 [8.05]			1.13 [3.88]
Obs	22,046	22,046	22,046	18,412	18,412	18,412
R^2 (%)	26.47	27.29	41.78	24.79	26.29	25.81

Panel B: Signed Volume Data Available (November 2008 - December 2010)						
	$\gamma_{CGW, signed}$			$\lambda_{VW, signed}$ ($\times 10^{-3}$)		
Intercept	-0.38 [-1.83]	-0.36 [-1.87]	-0.54 [-2.49]	8.94 [1.96]	12.49 [2.70]	-0.89 [-0.20]
Age	-0.00 [-0.66]	-0.01 [-0.86]	-0.01 [-0.89]	0.76 [6.29]	0.56 [4.77]	0.65 [5.52]
Maturity	0.00 [1.26]	0.00 [1.29]	0.00 [1.67]	0.21 [4.77]	0.23 [5.37]	0.27 [6.23]
ln(Issuance)	0.04 [2.21]	0.04 [2.26]	0.01 [0.51]	-0.63 [-1.00]	-0.92 [-1.47]	-2.32 [-3.51]
Rating	0.01 [1.02]	0.01 [1.03]	0.01 [0.88]	-0.19 [-1.15]	-0.02 [-0.13]	-0.30 [-2.01]
Turnover		0.00 [-0.51]			-0.28 [-6.22]	
ln(Num Trds)			0.06 [2.61]			3.93 [8.44]
Obs	8,609	8,609	8,609	8,317	8,317	8,317
R^2 (%)	0.07	0.07	0.14	1.91	3.44	4.59

Figure 2.1: Monthly Time-Series of Aggregate Illiquidity Level Measures (issuance-weighted average)





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2 Bond Yields and Illiquidity

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Table 3.1: Bond Yield Spread and Illiquidity Level Measures

Monthly Fama-MacBeth cross-sectional regression of bond yield spreads on illiquidity measures and control variables. The t-statistics in brackets account for serial correlation with Newey-West correction. Top and bottom 0.5% of illiquidity level estimates are winsorized. Top and bottom 1% of yield spreads are trimmed.

Panel A: Full Sample (July 2002 - December 2010)

Intercept	0.93 [8.50]	-0.91 [-4.54]	-0.85 [-4.73] 0.19 [5.19]	-0.90 [-4.50]	-0.83 [-4.25]	-0.87 [-4.33]	-1.05 [-5.25]	-0.96 [-4.93]	-0.78 [-4.07]	-1.09 [-4.95] -0.13 [-5.69]	-0.96 [-4.84]	-0.87 [-4.53]
γ												
γ^{CGW}				-0.01 [-1.22]								
λ^I ($\times 10^3$)					0.03 [4.47]					-0.03 [-3.17]		
Φ						-0.04 [-2.21]						
σ_u							0.40 [6.30]			0.60 [8.34]	0.42 [7.28]	
$\sigma_u - E[\sigma_u Eq. Volatility]$								0.33 [6.00]				0.33 [5.73]
VR									0.76 [5.01]	0.92 [6.22]	0.93 [6.32]	0.73 [5.00]
$\gamma - E[\gamma \sigma_u, VR]$											-0.01 [-0.77]	-0.01 [-0.57]
$\lambda^I - E[\lambda^I \sigma_u, VR]$ ($\times 10^3$)											-0.02 [-1.92]	-0.01 [-1.13]
Age		0.02 [3.55]	0.02 [3.44]	0.02 [3.35]	0.02 [3.47]	0.02 [3.42]	0.01 [2.73]	0.03 [4.49]	0.02 [3.50]	0.01 [2.71]	0.01 [2.71]	0.02 [5.12]
Maturity		0.03 [14.94]	0.02 [5.13]	0.03 [14.54]	0.03 [12.45]	0.03 [14.74]	0.01 [2.97]	0.03 [13.80]	0.03 [12.94]	0.01 [2.23]	0.01 [2.00]	0.03 [11.87]
$\ln(\text{Num Trds})$		0.20 [7.01]	0.20 [7.29]	0.20 [6.93]	0.19 [6.55]	0.21 [7.03]	0.21 [7.20]	0.21 [7.29]	0.18 [6.08]	0.20 [5.83]	0.19 [6.22]	0.19 [6.43]
Eq. Volatility		0.02 [5.79]	0.01 [5.73]	0.02 [5.91]	0.01 [5.77]	0.02 [5.82]	0.01 [5.78]	0.02 [5.89]	0.01 [5.28]	0.01 [5.26]	0.01 [5.28]	0.02 [5.40]
A Dummy	0.36 [4.60]	0.31 [5.68]	0.29 [5.98]	0.31 [5.66]	0.31 [5.73]	0.31 [5.63]	0.27 [6.05]	0.30 [5.71]	0.28 [5.14]	0.23 [5.46]	0.24 [5.38]	0.28 [5.15]
BAA dummy	1.07 [10.61]	0.95 [9.16]	0.91 [9.97]	0.95 [9.12]	0.95 [9.10]	0.95 [9.20]	0.86 [10.28]	0.94 [9.24]	0.83 [8.00]	0.71 [8.88]	0.73 [8.63]	0.81 [7.91]
Avg. # bonds/month	216	216	216	215	216	216	216	214	192	192	192	190
R^2 (%)	26.90	58.32	60.17	58.23	58.65	58.49	61.40	59.93	59.19	63.59	63.38	61.66

Table 3.8: Bond Yield Spread and Illiquidity Level and Risk
(Subperiod when signed volume data is available)

Monthly Fama-MacBeth cross-sectional regression of bond yield spreads on illiquidity measures and control variables. The t-statistics in brackets account for serial correlation with Newey-West correction. Top and bottom 0.5% of illiquidity level estimates are winsorized. Top and bottom 1% of illiquidity risk estimates are winsorized. Top and bottom 1% of yield spreads are trimmed.

Panel A: Signed Volume Data Available (November 2008 - December 2010)			
Intercept	1.27 [4.82]	-2.02 [-7.34]	-2.18 [-11.08]
σ_u			0.86 [12.80]
VR			1.17 [4.20]
$\lambda^{VW, signed}$			2.03 [2.47]
$\beta \sigma_u$			0.00 [1.55]
Age		0.00 [-0.88]	-0.01 [-1.29]
Maturity		0.03 [15.36]	-0.01 [-2.57]
$\ln(\text{Num Trds})$		0.36 [9.54]	0.35 [8.97]
Eq. Volatility		0.03 [10.74]	0.03 [9.42]
A Dummy	0.90 [6.55]	0.67 [6.63]	0.48 [5.02]
BAA dummy	1.69 [9.71]	1.53 [6.57]	1.11 [5.16]
Avg. # bonds/month	323	323	279
R^2 (%)	20.60	58.89	66.98

Table 3.5: Aggregate Yield Spreads and Aggregate Illiquidity

This table reports regressions of the monthly changes in the aggregate yield spread on changes in aggregate illiquidity measures and market variables. Newey and West (1987) t-statistics are reported in brackets. The sample period is specified in each panel.

Panel A: Full Sample (July 2002 - December 2010)								
			γ		γ^{CGW}		VR	
Intercept	0.009	0.007	0.010	0.010	0.000	0.007	0.004	0.008
	[0.66]	[0.47]	[0.46]	[0.73]	[-0.00]	[0.44]	[0.13]	[0.48]
Δ Measure			1.272	0.565	-1.005	-0.423	2.934	2.734
			[5.31]	[2.93]	[-1.93]	[-2.16]	[0.49]	[1.26]
Δ VIX	0.028	0.037		0.031		0.036		0.038
	[5.93]	[8.49]		[7.45]		[8.64]		[9.04]
Δ Bond Index	0.177							
Return Volatility	[0.93]							
Δ CDS Index	0.062							
	[1.36]							
Δ Term Spread	-0.033							
	[-0.32]							
Lagged Stock	-0.006							
Mkt Return	[-1.20]							
Lagged Bond	-0.013							
Mkt Return	[-0.86]							
$AdjR^2$ (%)	69.25	59.49	32.54	64.12	6.72	60.39	-0.62	60.06

Table 3.5: Aggregate Yield Spreads and Aggregate Illiquidity (Cont.)

Panel A: Full Sample (July 2002 - December 2010)							
		$\lambda^l (\times 10^3)$		Φ		σ_u	
Intercept	0.007 [0.47]	0.007 [0.32]	0.010 [0.70]	-0.001 [-0.02]	0.007 [0.47]	0.008 [0.40]	0.009 [0.67]
Δ Measure		1.102 [4.72]	0.574 [5.01]	-0.770 [-2.29]	-0.062 [-0.22]	1.219 [7.17]	0.500 [3.67]
Δ VIX	0.037 [8.49]		0.032 [8.00]		0.037 [8.65]		0.032 [6.59]
$AdjR^2$ (%)	59.49	26.47	65.57	2.03	59.10	30.08	63.07

Conclusions

- Proposed measures σ_u , VR , and $\lambda^{VW, signed}$ are more robust and more economically significant than those in literature.
- Using various illiquidity measures, we test pricing implications of illiquidity level and illiquidity risk.
 - Illiquidity level carries risk premium.
 - Illiquidity risk is priced only during crisis, not normal time.

Conclusions

- Proposed measures σ_u , VR , and $\lambda^{VW, signed}$ are more robust and more economically significant than those in literature.
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