Taisiya Sikorskaya

PhD Candidate in Finance

London Business School ⋄ Regent's Park, London, NW1 4SA United Kingdom
tsikorskaya@london.edu

Research Interests Asset Pricing, Financial Intermediaries, Asset Management

Education

London Business School (LBS), United Kingdom
PhD in Finance, 2017 - present

London Business School (LBS), United Kingdom
MRes in Finance, 2017 - 2019

University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
MA in Quantitative Economics and Finance, 2017

Chelyabinsk State University, Russia
Diplom (MSc equivalent) in Mathematical Methods in Economics and Operations Research, 2013

Published Papers

Retail Trading in Options and the Rise of the Big Three Wholesalers
(with S. Bryzgalova and A. Pavlova). Forthcoming in *The Journal of Finance*, solicited.
We document a rapid increase in retail trading in options in the U.S. Facilitated by payment for order flow (PFOF) from wholesalers executing retail orders, retail trading recently reached over 48% of the total market volume. Nearly 90% of PFOF comes from three wholesalers. Exploiting new flags in transaction-level data, we isolate wholesaler trades and build a novel measure of retail options trading. Our measure comoves with equity-based retail activity proxies and drops significantly during U.S. brokerage platform outages and trading restrictions. Retail investors prefer cheaper, weekly options, with the average bid-ask spread of a whopping 12.6%, and lose money on average.

Benchmarking Intensity (with A. Pavlova).
The Review of Financial Studies, 36(3), 2023, pp. 859–903. Editor's Choice.
Benchmarking incentivizes fund managers to invest a fraction of their funds' assets in their benchmark indices, and such demand is inelastic. We construct a measure of inelastic demand a stock attracts, benchmarking intensity (BMI), computed as its cumulative weight in all benchmarks, weighted by assets following each benchmark. Exploiting the Russell 1000/2000 cutoff, we show that changes in stocks' BMIs instrument for changes in ownership of benchmarked investors. The resulting demand elasticities are low. We document that both active and passive fund managers buy additions to their benchmarks and sell deletions. Finally, an increase in BMI lowers future stock returns.

Working Papers

Institutional Investors, Securities Lending and Short-Selling Constraints (job market paper)
Institutional ownership is thought to facilitate short-selling. Indeed, short sellers typically borrow from the holdings of institutions. Yet, institutional demand, and hence lending supply, is endogenous. This paper isolates changes in this demand due to investment mandates (benchmark indexes) to shed new light on the role of institutions in lending markets. In a model with benchmarked fund managers who supply their risky holdings for lending, the equilibrium price and lending supply are both higher for the benchmark asset. Larger supply alleviates short-selling constraints while higher shorting demand (due to inflated price) exacerbates them. Two quasi-natural experiments, the Russell index reconstitution and the Bank of Japan purchases, confirm that stocks with more institutional capital benchmarked against them have larger lending supply and demand. Ultimately, they are *costlier* to short. In both theory and data, results are driven by incomplete pass-through from institutional holdings to lending supply.

Profiting from Investor Mistakes: Evidence from Suboptimal Option Exercise
(with S. Bryzgalova and A. Pavlova). Revise & Resubmit at *The Journal of Financial Economics*
The recent retail trading boom in the U.S. options market, driven by an inflow of inexperienced investors, coincides with an increase in call option contracts left suboptimally unexercised. Arbitrageurs exploit these investor mistakes via so-called dividend play trades, which produce (virtually) riskless profits. Using transaction-level data and a new reporting requirement, we identify dividend play trades and document rising profits from this strategy. Puzzlingly, however, arbitrageurs leave 50% of potential profits on the table. Few arbitrageurs exploit each contract, with a median of only one. Finally, our paper details how market participants circumvent a regulation devised to curtail dividend play.

Two APs Are Better Than One: ETF Mispricing and Primary Market Participation
(with E. Gorbatikov)
Exchange-traded funds (ETFs) depend on arbitrageurs to correct deviations between a fund's price and its fair value. ETFs have designated brokers, or authorized participants (APs), who have a unique right to create and redeem ETF shares, and who can thus trade on ETF mispricing without risk. Using novel regulatory filings, we provide the first description of the US ETF-AP network. It has a dense core and a sparse periphery, and the observed creation/redemption volumes are highly concentrated. The level of mispricing in a US equity ETF is negatively related to the fund's primary market diversity, especially during times of high market volatility. Funds that share more APs exhibit stronger mispricing comovement. We theoretically show that diverse primary markets help mitigate the effect of shocks to AP-specific arbitrage costs. We highlight the importance of AP balance sheet usage costs in ETF markets by exploiting the Federal Reserve's purchases of bond ETFs in 2020.

Academic Presentations

2024: AFA, ASSA Meetings
2023: AFA*, Dauphine Finance PhD Workshop, Q Group Spring Seminar*, Junior Academic Research Seminar in Finance, London Business School, NFA, SAFE Market Microstructure Conference, TADC, Women in Microstructure Meeting, SEC*, USC Marshall PhD Conference in Finance, Vanguard seminar*
2022: AFA (2x), Bank of America*, Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance, CDI Annual Conference on Derivatives*, Chicago Fed, Florida International University*, Indiana University*, London Business School, Miami Behavioral Finance Conference*, Microstructure Exchange, NBER Asset Pricing Spring Meeting*, NBER Behavioral Finance*, NFA*, Queen Mary University of London*, Stockholm Business School*, Tel Aviv Finance Conference*, TMX Group, University of Indiana*, University of Central Florida*, University of Hong Kong*, Virtual Derivatives Workshop, YSFC*
2021: Adam Smith Workshop*, ASSA Meetings, EFA, European Winter Finance Conference, FMA*, INSEAD Finance Symposium*, London Business School, MFA, NBER Behavioral Finance*, NFA, SFS Cavalcade North America, University of Bath, Vienna Graduate School of Finance*, WSIR
2020: London Business School
* *Presentations by co-authors.*

Awards and Honours

AQR Asset Management Institute Fellowship Award, 2022
Professor Sir James Ball PhD Award, London Business School, 2021
Fellowship for Doctoral Students, London Business School, 2017-2023
The STARR International Foundation Grant, Switzerland, 2013-2014
The President of Russia Award for Outstanding Students (awarded twice), 2012
The City Administration Award (Chelyabinsk, Russia), 2010

Professional Service

Referee, Review of Financial Studies
Organization of Finance PhD seminars and reading groups at LBS, 2019-2021
Organization of Finance Junior Faculty and PhD Students reading group at LBS, 2019-2021
Organization of the Trans-Atlantic Doctoral Conference 2019, London

Additional Research Experience

London School of Economics
Research Assistant to Prof. Dimitri Vayanos, 2020-2021
London Business School
Research Assistant to Prof. Svetlana Bryzgalova, 2020

Work Experience

Bank of England, London, UK
PhD Intern, 2021-2022
ThirdYear Capital GmbH, Munich, Germany
Global Macro Analysis Intern, 2017
Deutsche Asset Management, Deutsche Bank Switzerland and UK
Assistant Portfolio Manager, Credit and ETF Portfolio Management, 2014-2016

Teaching Experience

LBS - INEOS Executive Education Program
Finance, Assistant to Prof. Anna Pavlova, 2022
Mean evaluation 4.6/5.0

LBS Empirical Asset Pricing, PhD
Assistant to Prof. Svetlana Bryzgalova, 2019-2021

LBS - MBA
Finance II, Assistant to Prof. Howard Kung, 2020-2021
Finance I, Assistant to Prof. Anna Pavlova, 2018-2020

LBS - Masters
Personal Finance, Assistant to Prof. Francisco Gomes, 2019-2021
FinTech and the Financial Services Industry Transformation, Assistant to Prof. Narayan Naik, 2018

LBS - Sberbank Executive Education Program
Project Appraisal and Corporate Valuation, Assistant to Prof. Anna Pavlova, 2018-2020
Financial Statements Analysis, Assistant to Prof. Alastair Lawrence, 2018-2020
Macroeconomics, Assistant to Prof. Andrew Scott and Prof. Elias Papaioannou, 2018-2020

Other

Languages: Russian (native), English (proficient), German (intermediate)
Programming: R, SAS, Python, Stata, MATLAB, Julia, VBA, SQL
Certifications: Completed Level III of CFA examination in 2016

References

Anna Pavlova (advisor)
Professor of Finance
London Business School
+44 (0)20 7000 8218
apavlova@london.edu

Svetlana Bryzgalova
Assistant Professor of Finance
London Business School
+44 (0)20 7000 8292
sbryzgalova@london.edu