Thalassa de Waal

PhD Candidate · Finance

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Research Interests

Institutional Investors • Portfolio Choice • Water and Resource Scarcity • Geospatial Microdata

Education

University of Groningen — *The Netherlands*
PhD Finance — *2022 - present*
- Supervisors: Prof. Abe de Jong, Prof. Herman de Jong
- Expected completion: June 2027

Erasmus University Rotterdam — *The Netherlands*
MSc Finance & Investments — *2020 - 2021*
- Supervisors: Prof. Mathijs van Dijk, Prof. Dirk Schoenmaker

Erasmus University Rotterdam — *The Netherlands*
BSc International Business Administration — *2017 - 2020*

KU Leuven — *Belgium*
BA Philosophy — *2012 - 2016*

Grants

2025 Jo Kolk Studiefonds, Vereniging van Vrouwen met een Hogere Opleiding (VVAO), €2,000
2025 Research Visit Grant, Faculty of Economics and Business Research Institute, €5,000

Research

Job Market Paper

Not in My Backyard - Portfolio Allocation under Water Scarcity
Single-authored

Investors typically overweight domestic equities, reflecting a persistent home bias. This paper studies a setting in which domestic holdings carry more risk than foreign holdings do, giving rise to a not-in-my-backyard effect in portfolio choice that could attenuate or even reverse this home bias. I formalize a model in which investors tilt away from firms that contribute to resource constraints in the economies to which they are most exposed, and I examine this empirically in the context of water: a critical, geographically constrained input whose scarcity varies across firms and locations. Domestic ownership is lower for firms contributing to water scarcity at headquarters, a pattern that does not hold for foreign ownership and is therefore difficult to reconcile with uniform risk pricing. A one-standard-deviation increase in local water scarcity is associated with a 14.5 to 45.4 percent decline in portfolio share relative to the mean domestic position, and the asymmetry is stable over long horizons, inconsistent with a short-lived informational frictions explanation. The results are consistent with portfolio allocations shifting away from firms that contribute most to binding local constraints as resource scarcity intensifies.

Conferences: International Behavioural Finance Conference (Chicago, 2026, scheduled) • GRASFI (Liège, 2026) • International Symposium on Climate, Finance, and Sustainability (Paris, 2026) • FMA European Conference (Braga, 2026)
Seminars: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2026 (scheduled)

Working Papers

Thirsty for Returns - The Impact of Water Risk on the Global Stock Market
With Romulo Alves, Eline ten Bosch, Mathijs van Dijk, Marloes Hagens

As freshwater levels decline and economic expansion and population growth place increasing pressure on global freshwater resources, many regions face growing water stress, exposing firms to potential operational disruptions. However, do investors care? This study examines the relation between global stock returns and corporate water use and stress from 2013 to 2024. We construct a novel monthly firm-level water stress measure by combining corporate water use with granular water supply data from NASA satellites. We find a statistically significant positive relation between corporate water use and global stock returns, and show that investors perceive water use as a systematic risk, demanding an annual premium of 2.15% for investing in firms with high water use. Also, indirect and total water use have a higher water use premium than direct water use. These results seem to suggest that investors particularly value water use within supply chains. Furthermore, we provide initial evidence of a potential water stress risk premium for firms in high-water-use industries.

Conferences: French Inter-Business School Workshop in Finance (Nantes, 2026)* • Research Conference on Climate and Nature-Related Risks in the Economic and Financial System (Paris, 2026)* • Faculty of Economics and Business PhD Conference, University of Groningen (2025)
Seminars: SKEMA Business School, 2026* • Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2026*

Work in Progress

Firm Financing and Investment Efficiency on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, 1881-1940
With Abe de Jong, Pieter Drok, Josef Lilljegren

This paper studies the efficiency of capital allocation among exchange-listed firms in The Netherlands between 1881 and 1940. We investigate sources of investment funding by Dutch corporations, including internal cash flows, public funding via the stock exchange, and private funding by investors and intermediaries. We measure the efficiency of allocating capital and investments using investment-cash flow sensitivity models, where we control for firm growth opportunities. For identification purposes, we utilize shocks to external financing (temporary stock market closure in 1914 and banking crisis in 1923) to determine whether limited access to external funds affected investment behavior. We find that the Amsterdam Stock Exchange only played a minor role in total financing of Dutch firms between 1881 and 1940, but firm internal funding is the key source of financing.

Conferences: 19th World Economic History Congress (Paris, 2022)

Discussions

"Short Sellers and Social Responsibility Ratings" by Jie Cao et al., GRASFI (Liège, 2026)
"Does Conservation of Natural Capital Repel Foreign Investment?" by Shuang Wu et al., FMA European Conference (Braga, 2026)

*Presented by a coauthor.

Professional Experience

2019-2021 Research Assistant, Erasmus University Rotterdam
To Prof. Abe de Jong, Prof. Mathijs van Dijk

2018-2020 Teaching Assistant, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Research Visits

2025 Monash University, Department of Banking & Finance, Melbourne, Australia
Host: Prof. Chris Veld

Teaching Experience

University of Groningen

2024 - 2025 Intermediate Corporate Finance, BSc Economics & Business Economics (4.5/5.0)
2023 - 2024 Intermediate Corporate Finance, BSc Economics & Business Economics (4.8/5.0)

Erasmus University Rotterdam

2018 - 2019 Foundations of Finance and Accounting, BSc Business Administration (8.8/10.0)
2018 - 2019 Introduction to Business, BSc International Business Administration (8.4/10.0)

Professional Service

2024 - 2025 PhD Exchange Oxford-Groningen, Organizer
2024 FEB-HIS Summer School, Co-organizer
2023 - 2025 PhD Workshop Groningen Growth and Development Center, Co-organizer

Languages and Skills

Dutch (Native), English (Fluent), French (Intermediate)
Python, R, Stata, SQL, Cloud Computing (AWS EC2 and S3), LaTeX
Citizenship: Dutch

References

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