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SHOULD PUBLIC PLANS ENGAGE IN SOCIAL INVESTING?

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Introduction

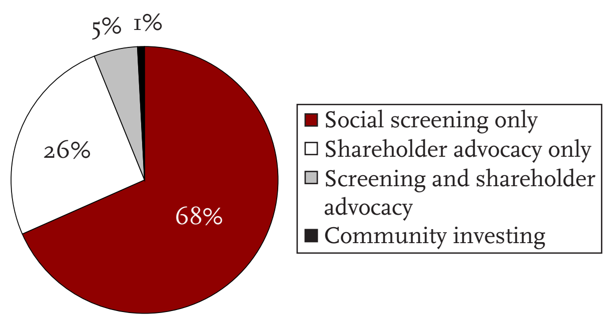
Social investing is a movement that advocates incorporating social and environmental considerations, as well as financial factors, when making investment decisions. The most recent incarnation of this movement is the initiative by state legislatures to force public pension funds to sell their holdings of companies doing business in Sudan. The effort to divest Sudan-linked stocks began in 2004 after the U.S. government characterized the killing and displacement in Darfur province as genocide.[1] Riding on the coattails of the success of the Sudan effort, state legislatures have now targeted Iran, with a goal of "terror-free" investing. The emotional appeal of such actions is powerful. Over 2 million civilians have been displaced and more than 200,000 slaughtered in Darfur since 2003.[2] And Iran refuses to back away from its pursuit of nuclear weapons.[3] But strong arguments also exist against using public pension plans to accomplish foreign policy goals.

This *brief* explores the current world of social investing, the recent efforts regarding the Sudan and Iran, the likely impact of social investing on the target firms, and the reasons why such activity may be inappropriate for public pension plans.

What Is Social Investing? How Much? Who's Doing It?

Social investing takes three primary forms: 1) screening (either excluding "bad" companies or including "good" companies); 2) shareholder advocacy; and 3) community investing. The Social Investment Forum (SIF), a trade group of social investors, reports that at the end of 2005, in terms of assets under management, screening is by far the most prevalent approach (see Figure 1). Significantly less is involved in shareholder advocacy, and community investing activity is tiny.

Figure 1. Social Investing in the United States by Type of Strategy, 2005



Source: Social Investment Forum (2006).

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Table 1. Assets in Socially Screened Portfolios, 1999-2005 (Billions)

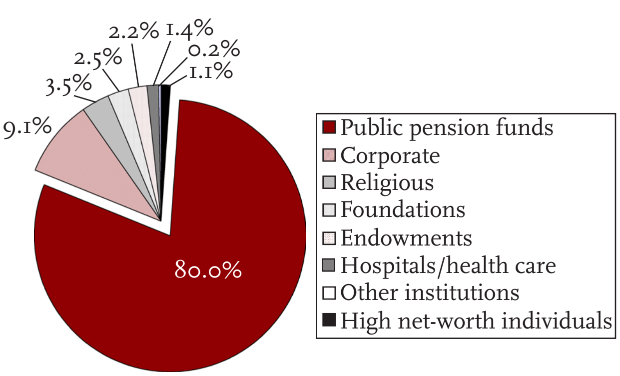
Year	Mutual funds	Separate accounts	Total
1995	$12	$150	$162
1997	96	433	529
1999	154	1,343	1,497
2001	140	1,870	2,010
2003	151	1,992	2,143
2005	179	1,506	1,685

Source: Center for Retirement Research at Boston College (2006).

The Social Investment Forum reports that as of the end of 2005, mutual funds with social screens held $179 billion and that socially screened "separate accounts," which are managed for individuals and institutional clients, held $1,506 billion (see Table 1). The SIF calculates that these totals amount to 9.4 percent of all public and private assets under management.

The bulk of the money in separate accounts (80 percent) is the assets of public pension funds (see Figure 2). And screening is pervasive among public funds. The SIF numbers suggest that, in 2005, $1.2 trillion of public pension fund assets were screened by some criteria. These screened assets accounted for 45 percent of total state and local pension holdings in that year.[4]

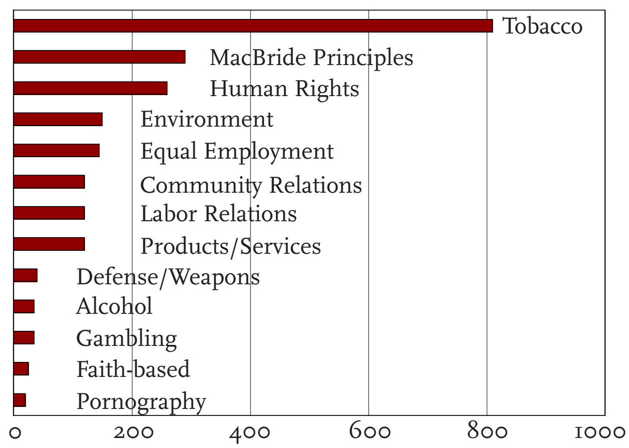
Figure 2. Socially Screened Investor Assets, 2005



Source: Social Investment Forum (2006).

The screens vary by the nature of the customer. As of 2005, by far the most popular approach for mutual funds was a negative screen for tobacco; alcohol came in second; gambling third.[5] But the pattern for institutional separate accounts, which is dominated by public plans, is quite different. For these accounts, the MacBride Principles (relating to fair hiring in Northern Ireland), Human Rights, the Environment, and Equal Employment Opportunity ranked among the top social concerns (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Social Screening by Institutional Investors, 2005 (Billions)



Source: Social Investment Forum (2006).

Note that almost none of the screened money is held in private sector defined benefit pension funds.[6] These private plans are covered by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), and right from the beginning the Department of Labor has stringently enforced ERISA's duties of loyalty and prudence.[7] In 1980, the chief administrator of the Department of Labor's pension section published an influential article that warned that the exclusion of investment options would be very hard to defend under ERISA's prudence and loyalty tests.[8] And a 1994 Interpretive Bulletin reminded fiduciaries that they are prohibited from subordinating the interests of participants and beneficiaries ... to unrelated objectives."[9] Thus, ERISA fiduciary law has effectively constrained social investing in private sector defined benefit plans.[10] Social investing is a public pension fund phenomenon.

Recent Developments – Sudan and Now Iran

During 2005, and therefore not reflected in Figure 3, state legislatures in Arizona, Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey, and Oregon passed legislation related to companies with operations in Sudan.[11] Since then some states have branched out to include Iran. And Missouri has taken the lead in initiating an entirely "terror-free" investment policy. American companies have been barred for some time from doing business in either Sudan or with states considered sponsors of terrorism according to the U.S. State Department (Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan and Syria).[12] But in a world of global investing, U.S. investors can have a link to Sudan or "terror states" through foreign stock holdings. Such foreign holdings would be most affected by the recent state legislation.

Sudan

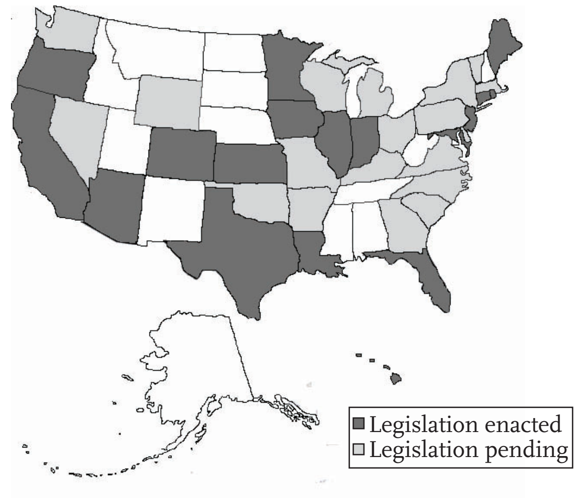
As of August 2007, eighteen states have passed laws regarding divestment of state pension and other funds from Sudan (see Figure 4).[13] Divesting is not easy, however. State and local pension funds tend to invest in global indices, so the exercise involves identifying the companies with links to Sudan and then constructing a Sudan-free index that mimics established benchmarks.

Generally, the states have asked their money managers to figure out which stocks have a Sudan link. Money managers, in turn, have left it to the social investing firms, such as KLD Research and Analytics, Institutional Shareholders Services, and the Conflict Securities Advisory Group to identify companies involved in Sudan.[14] The social investing firms refuse to make the names public, however, since that is how they earn their money.[15]

And the *New York Times* has reported that the lists are not always definitive. Some companies appear on them even though they claim that they were not actually doing business in Sudan. And for at least one company that was doing business in Sudan, 3M, its involvement was the result of a U.N. purchase of Scotchshield Ultra Safety and Security Film to protect embassy and mission windows from explosions, a transaction that was authorized by the federal government.[16]

The Sudan Divestment Task Force (2007) publishes a more tightly targeted list, recommending the divestment of only 28 companies. These are companies that 1) do business with the Sudanese government; 2) provide little benefit to the disadvantaged of Sudan; and 3) have not developed policies to prevent their business activities from inadvertently contributing to the government's genocide capability.

Figure 4. States that Have Enacted or Are Considering Sudan Divestment Legislation, 2007



Sources: National Conference of State Legislatures (2007); Office of Missouri State Treasurer (2005); Sudan Divestment Task Force (2007); State of Arizona (2005), State of Arkansas (2007); and State of Louisiana (2005 and 2007).

Fund managers take the Sudan-link list and attempt to construct "Sudan Free" funds that mimic popular benchmarks. This step is also a challenge. According to the chief investment strategist at Northern Trust, whose fund tracks the Morgan Stanley Capital International Europe Australasia Far East index (MSCI EAFE) index, constructing a "Sudan-free" index will require divesting 25 companies or 9 percent of assets.[17]

Despite the challenges involved, public funds have moved $2.2 billion away from Sudan-linked companies between 2005 and 2007.[18]

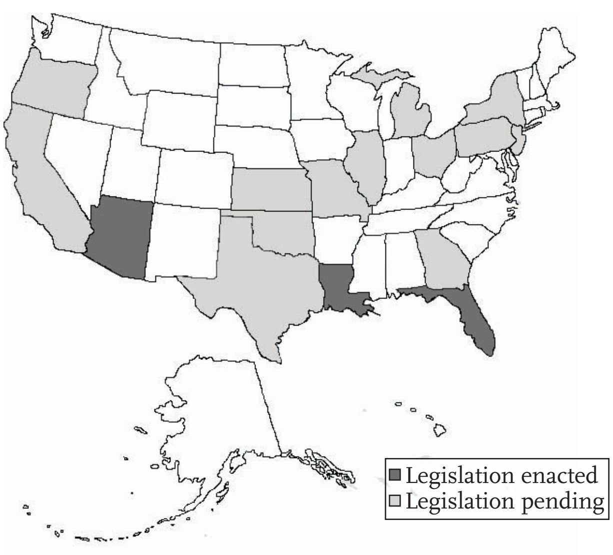
Iran

More recently, "terror-free" investment has been picking up steam. The primary targets are companies doing business in Iran.[19] As noted above, U.S. companies have long been barred from operating in Iran, but more than 200 multinationals have investments there, from Royal Dutch Shell and France's telecommunications-equipment company Alcatel to Sweden's electronics company Ericsson.[20]

On June 8, 2007, Florida's governor signed a Sudan and Iran Divestiture bill into law. Florida follows other states with regard to Sudan, but is the first to enact divestiture legislation for companies doing business with Iran.[21] Louisiana, which had passed "terror-free investing" legislation in 2005, permits — but does not require — divestment. Arizona, which also passed legislation in 2005, only requires the public retirement system to disclose investments in terror-linked companies. In Illinois, the state Senate passed an Iran divestment bill on June 14, 2007 which would compel the state's five retirement systems to divest Iran-connected companies in energy and other natural resources.[22] California, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas are also considering adopting Iran-free investing (see Figure 5).[23]

If some of the bills are passed in their broadest form, institutions may be forced to sell $18 billion in investments.[24] Selling all Iran-related securities would add substantial risk to an indexed international equity portfolio. State Street Global Advisors (SSgA), Boston, has had preliminary conversations with clients about Iran divestments. SSgA estimates that if all companies with ties to Iran were removed from Morgan Stanley's EAFE index and replaced with similar performing companies, it would introduce a tracking error of up to 200 basis points, compared to the tracking error on a typical index of between five and 10 basis points.[25]

Figure 5. States that Have Enacted or Are Considering Iran Divestment Legislation, 2007



Sources: National Conference of State Legislatures (2007); Office of Missouri State Treasurer (2005); State of Arizona (2005), and State of Louisiana (2005 and 2007).

Some state legislatures, however, are limiting the scope of divestiture to energy-related stocks, arguing that such action is likely to be most effective in curbing terrorist activities. Narrowing the scope greatly reduces the number of stocks and amount that would have to be sold.[26]

Iran is a more politically complicated issue than Sudan. Sometimes promoters of "divest Iran" suggest that the effort is aimed at Al Qaeda.[27] But Al Qaeda is an enemy without a state and therefore difficult to target. In addition, the U.S. government is not enthusiastic about the effort, because it is working on its own initiative with allies to curtail business transactions tied to nuclear activities and support for terrorism. Treasury and State Department officials have expressed concern that broad-based divestiture could cause a backlash if allies feel that a wide range of companies is under attack.[28]

Despite the complexities involved with Iran, some states have gone even further and are pursuing "terror-free" investing, which extends the scope of the boycott to all the countries on the U.S. State Department's State Sponsors of Terrorism list, which includes Cuba, Syria, and North Korea. Missouri has been at the forefront of this movement. The State Treasurer claims that at least 500 big foreign companies and multinationals do at least some business in countries identified as sponsoring terrorism.[29] The Treasurer's goal is to have all Missouri's investments "terror–free," although the state legislature has not yet passed divestiture legislation for the state pension funds.[30] Anti-terrorism bills have been enacted in Arizona, Florida, and Louisiana.

Given the substantial amount of social investing by public pension funds, it is useful to consider the likely impact of such activity on the targets of the social screen and the likely impact on the pension funds themselves.

The Economics of Social Investing

The academic literature suggests that social screens are likely to have very little impact on the target company and that the impact on the pension fund depends on the scale of the screen.

Impact on Targeted Company

The SIF Report suggests that social investing will have a financial impact — that investors are putting their money to work in ways that will build “a better, more just, and sustainable economy.” The academic literature on the stock market, however, suggests the opposite. And a comprehensive survey on the effect of the South African boycott — the largest and most visible social action — documents virtually no effect, suggesting the real world mirrors the textbook model.

Injecting politics into pension policy is problematic.

According to standard finance theory, the price of any stock equals the present discounted value of expected future cash flows. Thus, the stock of a particular firm has a lot of close substitutes, which makes the demand curve for a particular stock, in economists’ terms, almost perfectly elastic.[31] That is, even a big change in quantity demanded will lead to only a small change in price. And any significant deviation from the fundamental price would represent a profitable trading opportunity that market participants would quickly exploit and thus correct.[32] In other words, boycotting tobacco stocks or international companies doing business in Sudan or Iran may result in a temporary fall in the stock price, but as long as some buyers remain they can swoop in, purchase the stock, and make money. And the buyers are out there. The “Vice Fund,” which was established in September 2002, specializes in only four sectors — alcohol, tobacco, arms, and gambling, and thus stands ready to buy the stocks screened out of standard portfolios.[33] Thus, the textbooks suggest that boycotting tobacco companies or international companies doing business in Iran is unlikely to have any impact on the price of their stocks.

A 1999 study took a comprehensive look at how equity prices responded to sanctions and pressures for firms to divest their holdings in South Africa.[34] The conclusion that emerges from a series of event studies is that the anti-apartheid shareholder and legislative boycotts had no negative effect on the valuation of banks or corporations with South African operations or on the South African financial markets. This is not to say that the boycott was not important politically, but merely that it did not impact financial markets. The study looks at pressure put on firms from both congressional action and divestiture by pension funds and universities.

The bulk of the congressional action occurred in 1985 and 1986, when the U.S. government passed legislation imposing trade embargoes, currency sanctions, and lending restrictions. Most importantly, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 prohibited new private or public loans to South Africa other than for humanitarian purposes. To test the impact of this prohibition, the study identified ten important legislative events leading up to the 1986 Act and examined their impact on a portfolio of nine banks with South African loans. The results showed few significant effects on bank stock prices and where significant they were of the wrong sign.

Pension funds and universities also put pressure on corporations. Pension fund involvement in the South African issue began when a number of churches threatened to divest from banks doing business in South Africa. In 1977, the first iteration of the “Sullivan principles,” which called for non-segregation of races and equal pay for equal work, was adopted in the hope that by adhering to these principles, companies could continue doing business in South Africa and at the same time promote non-discrimination policies.[35] But many felt that the Sullivan principles did not go far enough, so Reverend Sullivan called in 1987 for companies to withdraw completely from South Africa. Many funds began to divest themselves even of companies that had followed these principles.[36] The study looked at the effect of 16 pension fund divestments on a portfolio of firms with the highest exposure in South Africa. The results showed no evidence that the pension fund divestment announcements hurt firms with major South African operations.

In short, financial textbooks characterize the demand curves for individual stock as infinitely elastic, so the price of the stock of a targeted company is unlikely to be affected by a boycott so long as additional buyers remain to scoop up the profit opportunity. The fact that an effort as large as the boycott of firms doing business in South Africa had virtually no effect on stock prices suggests that the financial effect of social investing on target firms is roughly zero.

Impact on the Pension Fund

But does social investing affect the pension fund adversely? Modern portfolio theory states that investors should diversify their asset holdings over a variety of securities, so that the returns on all financial assets do not move in lockstep.[37] The question is how many securities are needed for the portfolio to be efficient? The answer is that an investor needs only 20-30 stocks to construct a fully diversified portfolio.[38] The small number of required stocks suggests that eliminating, say, tobacco, which accounts for about 1 percent of the market capitalization of the S&P 500, should leave enough securities to construct something very, very close to the market index. As the number excluded increases, it would become increasingly difficult to duplicate the market.[39]

In terms of evidence, considerable research has compared the risk-adjusted return of screened portfolios to the return of unscreened portfolios. Most of the studies cover the period since the mid-1980s. Overall, the results show that the differences in risk-adjusted returns between the screened portfolios and unscreened portfolios are negligible and in most cases zero.[40] A few studies have focused on the effects of divestiture of tobacco stocks in the 1990s and show that the risk and returns for the S&P 500 with and without tobacco stocks were almost identical.[41]

In addition to comparing the performance of screened portfolios to the S&P 500, several studies have examined the performance of social investment funds relative to the S&P 500. The Domini Social Index includes 400 U.S. companies that pass multiple and broad-based social screens, and the Calvert Social Index is a broad-based index including 659 companies. The majority of these studies show that socially screened funds have no significant effect on risk-adjusted returns.[42]

In contrast, the evidence from the early days of the South Africa divestiture suggested that screening out stocks meant large losses. For example, in the 1970s, Princeton University reported that the stocks that had been excluded because of South Africa ties outperformed other holdings by 3 percent.[43] As time passed and researchers undertook more comprehensive studies, the conclusions shifted. For example, one study examined the performance of a South-Africa free portfolio compared to an unscreened NYSE portfolio for the period 1960-1983 and found that, after adjusting for risk, the portfolio excluding South Africa companies actually performed better than the unscreened portfolio.[44] The positive results occurred because companies with South Africa ties were large and excluding these companies increased reliance on small-cap stocks, which performed better on a risk-adjusted basis during this period. During the late 1980s, the results were also mixed. On the one hand, a 1998 study analyzed data from the Surveys of State and Local Employees (PENDAT) from the early 1990s and found no significant effect on returns from restrictions on South Africa investments.[45] On the other hand, the S&P 500 including South Africa stocks performed slightly better than the index without the stocks, and one study of public pension plans found that South Africa restrictions had a negative effect on returns.[46] Thus, a large divestiture movement could have some negative effect on returns earned by public plans.

State actions may conflict with federal foreign policy.

Another aspect that has received less attention is the administrative costs of social investing. It is possible that social investing is associated with higher fees and therefore has lower net returns because additional resources are required by fund managers to do the screening. The 2003 SIF Report concluded that socially responsible funds appear as competitive as other funds when it comes to administrative costs. However, others challenge this view by pointing out that some of the large-cap social index funds have above-average fees.[47] Moreover, in the case of Sudan and Iran, constructing new indices to match existing benchmarks involves substantial costs.

In short, theoretical models of portfolio choice imply that restricting the portfolio to socially responsible investments could have an effect on the rate of return by limiting the ability to diversify. Given the large number of stocks available, however, the cost — using traditional asset pricing models — is likely to be negligible. The bulk of the studies, which compare risk-adjusted returns for socially screened portfolios to those of unrestricted portfolios, supports this claim. Although a "terror-free" effort as large as the South African divestiture may have had some effect.[48] And administrative costs may be an important issue.

Public Plans Are Not Suited to Social Investing

In the late 1970s, some observers identified the large and rapidly growing funds in state and local pension plans as a mechanism for achieving socially and politically desirable objectives. The initial debate focused on attempts to exclude from pension portfolios companies with specific characteristics, such as those with almost totally nonunion workforces or investments in South Africa. The focus quickly shifted to undertaking pension investments that would foster social goals such as economic development and home ownership.[49] Advocates generally contended that the broader goals could be achieved without any loss of return.

Early reports, however, suggested that the targeting did involve sacrificing return. For example, a 1983 study of state-administered pension funds showed that many states had purchased publicly or privately insured mortgage-backed pass-through securities to increase homeownership in their state.[50] Analysis of the risk/return characteristics of these targeted mortgage investments revealed that 10 states either inadvertently or deliberately had sacrificed as much as 200 basis points to foster homeownership. Similarly, in 1992, Connecticut's state pension fund lost $25 million attempting to shore up Colt Industries. The firm went bankrupt two years after the fund bought a 47 percent interest in an attempt to protect Connecticut jobs.[51] In Kansas, the state pension fund lost between $100 and $200 million on defaulted loans from an in-state investment program that included a chain of video stores, a steel mill, and a failed savings and loan bank.[52] State and local pension funds were on a naïve and dangerous path.[53]

The losses in the 1980s and early 1990s were a sharp wake-up call to a number of public pension fund managers who appeared to believe that they could accomplish social goals without sacrificing returns. Over the last 20 years, the rhetoric associated with targeted investments has changed markedly. Public pension fund managers, sensitive to the potential for losses, go out of their way to make clear that they are no longer willing to sacrifice returns for social considerations; almost every definition of social investing includes a requirement that the investment produce a "market rate of return."

Divestment can be complicated, costly, and ineffective.

In the recent debate regarding Sudan and Iran, trustees of public plans have spoken out opposing such initiatives. Administrators at California's large public pension funds — CalPERS and CalSTERS — oppose the California bills requiring divestiture. A CalPERS spokesman said that determining which companies have dealings with Iran would be a struggle: "We don't necessarily have the resources or the expertise."[54] Similarly, the executive director of Massachusetts' Pension Reserves Investment Management Board, which invests public plan assets, said "You hire us to make you money, and when you restrict our ability to pick stocks, you likely restrict our ability to get returns."[55] Ohio's legislature initially considered following the Missouri model making investments "terror-free" by filtering out all stocks with links to North Korea, Syria, Sudan or Iran. The pension fund administrators argued that the measure would affect stocks of more than 170 companies and require the funds to sell more than $9 billion. Administrative costs would exceed $60 million.[56]

Moreover, legislative mandates for pension fund investing may have implications elsewhere in the state. For example, in the case of Ohio the "terror-free" investing bill would have roped in companies such as Honda, DaimlerChrsyler AG, Bridgestone Corporation, Siemens, and Thyssenkrupp AG, all of which had investments in Ohio.[57] The pension funds estimated these companies employed more than 45,000 workers. In response, the legislature narrowed the scope of the effort and decided to go after only those companies with more than $20 million in Iran's energy sector.[58]

Most importantly, three aspects of public pension funds make them particularly ill-suited vehicles for social investing.

First, the decision-makers and the stakeholders are not the same people. The decision-makers are either the fund board or the state legislature. The stakeholders are tomorrow's beneficiaries and/or taxpayers. If social investing produces losses either through higher administrative costs or lower returns, tomorrow's taxpayers will have to ante up or future retirees will receive lower benefits. The welfare of these future actors is not well represented in the decision-making process.

Second, whereas the investment practices of many large public funds are first rate, other boards are much less experienced. The boards of smaller funds often consist of between five and eleven people including mayors, treasurers, comptrollers, city councilors, union leaders, and citizens. The process is often conducted behind closed doors and subject to little public scrutiny. Moreover, many state and local plans are still run in-house and involve the selection of individual stocks rather than broad-based indices. A front page *New York Times* article reported that political money sometimes affects pension investment decisions. As a result, pension boards may overlook excessive fees or high rates of turnover, and they may approve inappropriate investments.[59] Introducing divestment requirements into such an environment is problematic.

The final issue is the slippery slope. This round of divestment began with Sudan and involved only a few stocks. It is quickly spreading to Iran, where the issues are even more complicated and the number of companies substantially greater. If "terror-free" investing gains momentum, what is going to stop the spread to, say, Saudi Arabia, original home of 15 of the 19 hijackers involved in the 9/11 terrorist attacks? At some point, the administrative costs of broad-based divestiture will balloon and excluding large numbers of companies will definitely hurt returns.

Conclusion

Everyone is horrified by genocide, and no one wants to support terror. Yet even those who sell socially responsible funds admit that the issue of divestiture is complex. "You have to ask yourself what your goal is with divestment. What's there if the government falls? Is there a government there that will take over and be better? If the companies that pull out provide money, goods, and services, is there an understanding that will make the people poorer in the short run?"[60] Yes, the regime changed in South Africa, but many South Africans say that it was the cultural boycott — particularly in sports — rather than the divestiture of companies with South-Africa-linked activities that resulted in the peaceful ascendance of Nelson Mandela as president.[61]

In addition to the issue of effectiveness, the fundamental question is where foreign policy should be made. Sudan does not raise as many issues in this regard as Iran. The State Department is working closely with foreign governments to get specific companies to stop selected activities, particularly in Iran's energy sector. Additionally, in more than one instance, federal courts have ruled that state legislation regarding social investment was unconstitutional on grounds that it overlapped with federal regulations.[62] Statements by officials at both Treasury and the State Department make clear their concern that a broad-based divestiture could disrupt the government's effort.

But even assuming that divestment is an effective mechanism to stop genocide and reduce terror risk and that state legislatures and pension fund boards are the right place to make foreign policy, the issue remains whether pension funds are an appropriate vehicle for implementing that policy. The answer seems unquestionably "no." The decision-makers are not the people who will bear the brunt of any losses; rather they will accrue to future beneficiaries and/or taxpayers. In many instances, the environment surrounding public pension fund investing is politically charged and encouraging public pension fund trustees to take "their eyes off the prize" of the maximum return for any given level of risk is asking for trouble. And finally, boycotting companies doing business with particular countries is a slippery slope — today Sudan and Iran, tomorrow Saudi Arabia.

Endnotes

1 Actually, as early as 2000, many college endowments and public pension funds, including CalPERS, did not participate in the initial public offering of PetroChina, because of its involvement in oil extraction in Sudan. See Fried (2006).

2 Amnesty International (2007) and Hagan and Pallioni (2006).

3 U.S. Department of Treasury (2007).

4 The Federal Reserve Flow of Funds reports total assets for state and local pension plans of $2,701.5 billion in 2005.

5 The majority of funds (64 percent) use 5 or more screens; the remainder are divided between those with a single screen (25 percent) and those with 2-4 screens (11 percent).

6 Multi-employer plans have made a few efforts to stimulate demand for union labor, especially in the construction trades. And some health care companies and hospitals screen for tobacco. But generally very little social investment has taken place. The Social Investment Forum (SIF), however, has reported that nearly 10 percent, or $137 billion, of screened assets are controlled by corporations (Social Investment Forum, 2006). It was impossible for the author to ferret out where this money was. The Federal Home Loan and Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) appeared to be the only corporation listed in Appendix 5 — "Institutions Involved in Social or Environmental Investing" — of the SIF report. Since Freddie Mac invests most of its money in home mortgages, it is not clear how it is involved in social screening. According to Joshua Humphreys, the SIF report's research director, there may be other corporations who participated in the survey but preferred that their names not be disclosed.

7 ERISA requires a fiduciary to act "solely in the interests of the [plan] participants and beneficiaries... for the exclusive purpose" of providing benefits to them. A fiduciary must also act "with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence" of the traditional "prudent man." See Langbein, Stabile, and Wolk (2006).

8 Lanoff (1980).

9 U.S Department of Labor (1994).

10 Some companies offer their employees one or more mutual fund options that pursue social investing criteria. Such an option does not raise any fiduciary concerns because the decision is left entirely to the participant.

11 The New Jersey legislation requires its pension funds to divest holdings in businesses that have equity stakes in the Sudan. A similar bill in Illinois, enacted in June 2005, provides that a fiduciary should not transact any business with a company doing business with Sudan, although in February 2007 the Federal District Court for the Northern District of Illinois ruled this act unconstitutional. Oregon also passed such a law for its public pension funds, while Louisiana legislation permits, but does not require, divestiture of investments linked to the Sudan.

12 U.S. Department of State (2007a). In 1997, President Clinton issued an executive order barring companies from conducting business in the Sudan; foreign businesses do not fall under that restriction.

13 For example, Texas legislation, signed into law on June 15, 2007, will require both the Teacher Retirement System and the Texas Employees Retirement System to ask affected companies to cease business in Sudan and to divest shares of unresponsive companies. The Hawaiian Employees' Retirement System was required to divest from Sudan-related investments when legislation went into effect July 1st. In Connecticut, legislation enables the Treasurer to divest state funds invested in companies doing business in Sudan or decide against further or future investments. Nineteen other states have pending divestment legislation or are taking other actions towards divestment. For example, the New York State Comptroller adopted a targeted Sudan divestment policy for the New York State Common Retirement Fund.

14 Fried (2006).

15 A KLD employee told us that KLD sells their compliance list to institutional money managers who are interested in social divestment and that it is not in the company's best interest to allow outside organizations to obtain their list in whole or in part. KLD also would not provide information about the American companies on the list. This information was obtained through a personal communication with KLD's Randy O'Neill.

16 Fried (2006). In a personal communication, 3M's Jacqueline Berry also confirmed the sale of the Security Film to the United Nations.

17 Fried (2006) and a personal communication with Northern Trust's Priya Khetarpal.

18 Pichardo (2007).

19 The U.S. House Financial Services Committee on May 23, 2007 passed legislation that would protect public pension funds and their money managers from litigation in response to Iranian divestiture.

20 King (2007).

21 The new law requires the State's Board of Administration to contact companies with business ties to Sudan and with energy ties in Iran, asking them to stop such activities; unresponsive companies would have to be divested 90 days after the communication. See Pensions and Investments (2007a).

22 *Pensions and Investments* (2007b).

23 The California legislation, which was proposed in January and as of July is still in committee in the state senate, would force two of the nation's largest pension funds — for the state's public employees and teachers, with combined holdings of $400 billion — to remove their money from any foreign company doing business with Iran. See Abdollah (2007).

24 Pichardo (2007).

25 See Pichardo (2007); and also confirmed by a personal communication with SSgA's Gary Conway. Also, according to Northern Trust Global Investments, companies doing business in Iran comprise about 25 percent of the MSCI EAFE index, compared to about 15 percent with ties to Sudan.

26 When narrowed, the number of companies involved declines from 100-125 to the 19-25 range. In California, for example, CalPERS would have to divest $8 billion if a bill introduced by Joel Anderson is passed. If narrowed to companies only with energy interests in Iran, the divestiture requirement drops to $2 billion. See Pichardo (2007).

27 LaFranchi (2007).

28 See U.S. Department of Treasury (2007); U.S. Department of State (2007b); and McKinley (2007).

29 Karmin (2007).

30 See Frick (2007).

31 For a summary of the literature on testing the extent to which the supply curve is elastic, see Munnell and Sundén (2005).

32 The caveat is, of course, that potential buyers must not think the sale (purchase) reflects a negative (positive) assessment of the firm's financial condition or business prospects that could affect future cash flows. If potential purchasers believe that the seller is disposing of the stock because he knows something adverse they do not, they will revise down their assessment of the stock's value, and the transaction will reduce the price of the stock.

33 Apparently the Vice Fund has grown at 20 percent annually since its inception, outpacing the S&P's growth of 16 percent. At first blush, these results appear to contradict the conclusion that screening has no impact, but the period under consideration is far too short for these numbers to have meaningful implications. See Authers (2007).

34 Teoh, Welch, and Wazzan (1999).

35 During the 1970s, as opposition against the apartheid government increased, social activists charged that companies investing in South Africa indirectly supported the government and its discrimination policies. In an initial effort to resolve the conflict, the Reverend Leon Sullivan in 1977 introduced a set of guidelines for companies doing business in South Africa, the so-called "Sullivan Principles." By 1987, 127 U.S. companies had signed on to the Sullivan principles (Auerbach, 1987).

36 For example, CalPERS divested itself of $9.5 billion worth of shares of companies holding a South African subsidiary. Pressure to divest and a worsening economic and political environment in South Africa led many companies (IBM, Exxon, Ford, GM and Chrysler) to sell their holdings. See Teoh, Welch, and Wazzan (1999).

37 An asset can be characterized by its expected return and the risk associated with that return, measured by the variance in returns. The risk of a specific asset can be broken down into two parts: risks that are unique to that stock (firm risk) and risks that stem from market-wide variations such as business cycle variation, inflation, and interest rate fluctuations

(market risk). When assets are combined in a portfolio, the return on the overall portfolio is given by the average return of the assets. And the risk associated with the portfolio is determined by the variance of the individual returns and the degree to which the individual returns vary together (covariance). Thus, by combining assets into a portfolio that have differing risk characteristics, an investor can create an efficient portfolio — a portfolio that is expected to achieve a given level of expected returns while minimizing risk.

38 Assume an investor plans to divide his money among *n* stocks selected from the entire market portfolio. The portfolio variance is given by:

$$\text{Portfolio variance} = 1/n * \text{average variance} + (1- 1/n) * \text{average covariance}$$

As the number of securities in the portfolio increases, the contribution to total risk from the individual firm-specific risk decreases and the contribution from how the risks vary in relation to each other (covariance) increases. Thus, as the number of securities increases, the overall portfolio variance approaches the economy-wide risk, represented by the second term in the equation. With 2 stocks in the portfolio, half of the overall variance is due to firm specific risk and half to market risk. By the time a portfolio contains 10 securities, 90 percent of the portfolio's variance should be determined by the market risk. With a 20 stock portfolio, 95 percent of the variance should be determined by the overall market risk. See Brearley and Myers (1988).

39 Rudd (1981) and Grossman and Sharpe (1986) argue that the investor will not be able to exactly duplicate the market portfolio, because the screened portfolio will have relatively greater covariation in returns. Rudd also argued that social investing will introduce size and other biases into the portfolio, which will lead to a deterioration in long-run performance.

40 Guerard (1997); Hamilton, Jo, and Statman (1993); Statman (2000); Bauer, Koedijk, and Otten (2002); Dhrymes (1998); and Bello (2005). A similar result has been found for bond portfolios (D'Antonio, Johnsen and Hutton, 1997).

41 DiBartolomeo (2000). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, tobacco stocks performed slightly better than the S&P 500 but during the second half of the 1990s the tobacco stocks underperformed the S&P 500 on a risk-adjusted basis (Social Investment Forum, 1999; and Ferrari, 2000). However, the overall effect of divesting tobacco stocks should be small because they only account for about 1 percent of the S&P 500.

42 Kurtz and DiBartolomeo (1996); DiBartolomeo and Kurtz (1999); DiBartolomeo (1996); and Bello (2005). Some critics of these results contend that the comparable returns reflect the fact that the screened funds invest a higher proportion of their assets in small cap stocks. Small caps have out-performed large caps over the period 1995 to 2007 by more than 3 percentage points (10.9 percent versus 7.8 percent). The discrepancy since the trough in the market in 2002 has been even greater (20.0 percent versus 11.0 percent). Bello (2005) contends, however, that the sizes of the companies in the screened and unscreened portfolios are very similar.

43 Malkiel (1991).

44 Grossman and Sharpe (1986).

45 Munnell and Sundén (2001).

46 Romano (1993).

47 Hickey (2000).

48 A recent study (Karolyi, 2007) of terror-free investing concluded that there were no significant differences in risk or return of stock portfolios screened on the basis of their operations in countries designated as state sponsors of terrorism and the S&P 500. This study, however, focused exclusively on U.S. markets, where very few firms do business in terror-linked countries. The author notes that "Broadening the analysis to incorporate a global investment strategy may render different results and conclusions."

49 Two books were instrumental to broadening the social investing debate — Rifkin and Barber (1978) and Litvak (1981).

50 Munnell (1983).

51 Schwimmer (1992); and Langbein, Stabile, and Wolk (2006).

52 White (1991).

53 In their initial forays into economically targeted investments, public pension fund managers generally

did not appear to recognize the "Catch-22" nature of the exercise. For the most part, the goals of increasing in-state housing investment and maximizing returns are inconsistent in the United States' highly developed capital markets. Any housing investment that offers a competitive return at an appropriate level of risk, such as a GNMA, does not need special consideration by public pension plans nor would such consideration increase the long-run supply of mortgage loans. Investments by pension funds that would increase the supply of housing funds must by definition either produce lower returns or involve greater risk. Sophisticated advocates of targeted investments recognized the efficiency of the market for housing finance and argued that pension funds could make a contribution through innovative forms of housing finance. But that was not what was going on in 1983; the in-state mortgages purchased by public pension funds tended to be conventional fixed-rate 30-year mortgages. See Munnell (1983).

54 McKinley (2007) and also confirmed by a personal communication with CalPERS' Brad Pacheco.

55 Mishra (2006).

56 King (2007).

57 Ohio Retirement Study Council (2007).

58 King (2007).

59 Walsh (2004).

60 The comment is from Julie Gorte, director of social research at Calvert Investments (Fried, 2006).

61 Authers (2007).

62 Stern (2007).

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