

Simulated Score Methods and Indirect Inference for Continuous-time Models

Initial Draft: August 2001

This Draft: March 2002

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Abstract

We describe a simulated method of moments estimator that is implemented by choosing the vector valued moment function to be the expectation under the structural model of the score function of an auxiliary model, where the parameters of the auxiliary model are eliminated by replacing them with their quasi-maximum likelihood estimates. This leaves a moment vector depending only the parameters of the structural model. Structural parameter estimates are those parameter values that put the moment vector as closely to zero as possible in a suitable GMM metric. This methodology can also be interpreted as a practical computational strategy for implementing indirect inference. We argue that considerations from statistical science dictate that the auxiliary model should approximate the true data generating process as closely as possible and show that using the SNP model is one means to this end. When the view of close approximation is accepted in implementation, the methodology described here is usually referred to as Efficient Method of Moments (EMM) in the literature because (i) the estimator is asymptotically as efficient as maximum likelihood under correct specification, and (ii) detection of model error is assured under incorrect specification. There are alternative views toward the desirability of close approximation to the data, which we discuss.

Key words: Efficient method of moments, Indirect inference, Simulated method of moments.

1 Introduction and Overview

In both empirical work (Bansal, Gallant, Hussey, and Tauchen, 1993, 1995) and in theoretical work (Gallant and Tauchen, 1996; Gallant and Long, 1997)

we have developed a systematic strategy for choosing the moments for Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) estimation of a structural model. The idea is relatively straightforward: Use the expectation with respect to the structural model of the score function of an auxiliary model as the vector of moment conditions for GMM estimation.

The score function is the derivative of the logarithm of the density of the auxiliary model with respect to the parameters of the auxiliary model. The moment conditions obtained by taking the expectation of the score depend directly upon the parameters of the auxiliary model and indirectly upon the parameters of the structural model through the dependence of expectation operator on the parameters of the structural model. The parameters of the auxiliary model are eliminated from the moment conditions by replacing them with their quasi-maximum likelihood estimates, which are obtained by maximizing the likelihood of the auxiliary model. This leaves a random vector of moment conditions that depends only on the parameters of the structural model; the randomness is due to the random fluctuations of the quasi-maximum likelihood estimates of the parameters of the auxiliary model. When this vector of moment conditions is evaluated at the true values of the structural parameters, it tends to zero as sample size increases, presuming that the structural model is correctly specified. The parameters of the structural model may therefore be estimated by minimizing the magnitude of the vector of moment conditions as measured by the appropriate GMM metric.

The estimation method, which we review here, is particularly useful in a simulation-based estimation context, where the structural model is readily simulated but the likelihood function of the structural model is intractable. This context applies to many continuous-time estimation problems. In implementation, the expectation of the score with respect to the structural model is computed by simulating the structural model and averaging the score function over the simulations. When the structural model is strictly stationary, one may average the scores over a single very long simulated realization (Case 2 of Gallant and Tauchen, 1996), while in the presence of exogenous covariates, one simulates and averages the scores at each data point conditional on the covariates and then sums across data points (Case 3 of Gallant and Tauchen, 1996).

The estimator is closely related to the indirect inference estimator, due to Smith (1990, 1993) and Gourieroux, Monfort, and Renault (1993). The indirect inference estimator is a minimum distance estimator that entails minimizing, in a suitable metric, the difference between the parameters of the auxiliary model obtained by quasi-maximum likelihood and those predicted by the structural model. The predicted parameter values are given by the binding function, which in practice is computed by re-estimating the auxiliary model on simulations from the structural model. The binding function com-

putation is trivial for linear auxiliary models, as initially suggested by Smith (1990, 1993), but is very demanding and possibly infeasible for more complicated nonlinear auxiliary models. The score-based approach discussed here circumvents the need to evaluate the binding function and is thus more computationally tractable. Nonetheless, for any given auxiliary model, the score-based estimator and indirect inference have the same asymptotic distribution. Thus, some interpret and view the score-based estimator as a practical way to implement indirect inference in a simulation-based context. Either way, there are strong parallels to the classical simultaneous equations literature, with the auxiliary model playing the role of the reduced form and we recognize that there may be different, but asymptotically equivalent ways to work back from the reduced form parameter estimates to obtain structural parameter estimates.

The practical implication of working from the score function is that the auxiliary model only needs to be estimated once, namely on the observed data. This added flexibility makes it possible to implement the score-based estimator using either very simple, or very complicated and sophisticated auxiliary models as discussed in (Hansen, 2001). Complicated auxiliary models would be appropriate if the observed data exhibit important nonlinearities, and the researcher wants the structural model to confront these nonlinearities. Regardless of the score generator actually used, the estimator is consistent and asymptotically normal, subject only to mild identification conditions. Thus, there is potentially great latitude for choosing the auxiliary model.

We have consistently argued for resolving this choice by making the auxiliary model be a good statistical description of the data. That is, it should be a bona fide reduced form model. As we shall see, by doing so the researcher can ensure that the estimator can achieve the full efficiency of maximum likelihood estimation if the structural model is correct. Furthermore, it assures the researcher of detecting misspecification if the structural model is wrong. In view of these capabilities, we ascribe the term Efficient Method of Moments (EMM) to the estimator.

There are three basic steps to EMM. The first, termed the Projection Step, entails summarizing the data by projecting it onto the reduced form auxiliary model, which we frequently term the score generator. If one knows of a good statistical model for the data, then it should be used in the projection step. That is rarely the case, however, and we have proposed the SNP models of Gallant and Tauchen (1989) as a general purpose score generator. The second step is the Estimation Step, where the parameters are obtained by GMM (minimum chi-squared) using an appropriate weighting matrix. If, in the projection step, care is taken to obtain a good auxiliary model, then the weighting matrix takes a particularly simple form. The estimation step produces an omnibus test of specification along with useful diagnostic t statistics. The third

step is termed the Reprojection Step, which entails post-estimation analysis of simulations for the purposes of prediction, filtering, and model assessment.

Section 2, immediately below, discusses and contrasts simulated score methods and indirect inference. Thereafter the discussion is combined with a focus on the EMM estimator. As will be seen, these estimators are so closely related that, after the preliminary discussion of the differences, a unified discussion under the projection, estimation, reprojection paradigm described above is warranted.

Section 3 gives general guidelines for selecting the auxiliary model for the projection step. Section 4 is formal analysis of the efficiency theory and develops the SNP model as a general purpose score generator. Section 5 gives an intuitive overview of reprojection followed by a more formal description of the theory underlying it. Section 6 reviews in detail two selected applications of EMM for estimation of continuous time models. Section 7 discusses software, practical issues, and some interesting capabilities using parallelization.

This chapter is focused on applications to continuous time processes. But one should be aware that indirect inference, efficient method of moments, and simulated method of moments methods have far greater applicability. They apply to cross sectional data, panel data, data with fixed covariates, and spatial data. For details see Gourieroux, Monfort and Renault (1993), Gallant and Tauchen (1996), Pagan (1999), and de Luna and Genton (2002).

2 Estimation and Model Evaluation

The simulated score estimation method was proposed and applied in Bansal, Gallant, Hussey, and Tauchen (1993) where it was used to estimate and evaluate a representative agent specification of a two-country general equilibrium model. The theory was developed in Gallant and Tauchen (1996) and extended to non-Markovian data with latent variables in Gallant and Long (1997).

Indirect inference was proposed and developed by Smith (1990, 1993) and Gourieroux, Monfort, and Renault (1993). These ideas overlap with the simulated method of moments estimators proposed by Ingram and Lee (1991), Duffie and Singleton (1993), McFadden (1989), and Pakes and Pollard (1989).

Here we shall sketch the main ideas of simulated score estimation and indirect inference in a few paragraphs at a modest technical level and then present a more detailed review of the efficient method of moments methodology.

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Simulated Score Estimation

Suppose that $f(y_t|x_{t-1}, \theta)$ is a reduced form model for the observed data, where x_{t-1} is the state vector of the observable process at time $t - 1$ and y_t is the observable process. An example of such a reduced form model is a GARCH(1,1). If this reduced form model, which we shall call a score generator, is fitted by maximum likelihood to get an estimate $\hat{\theta}_n$, then the average of the score over the data $\{\tilde{y}_t, \tilde{x}_{t-1}\}_{t=1}^n$ satisfies

$$\frac{1}{n} \sum_{t=1}^n \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(\tilde{y}_t | \tilde{x}_{t-1}, \tilde{\theta}_n) = 0 \quad (1)$$

because equations (1) are the first order conditions of the optimization problem. Throughout, as in (1), we shall use a tilde to denote observed values and statistics computed from observed values.

Now suppose we have a structural model that we wish to estimate. We express the structural model as the transition density $p(y_t|x_{t-1}, \rho)$ where ρ is the parameter vector. In relatively simple models, $p(y_t|x_{t-1}, \rho)$ is available in a convenient closed-form expression, and one can estimate ρ directly by classical maximum likelihood. However, for more complicated nonlinear models, $p(y_t|x_{t-1}, \rho)$ is often not available and direct maximum likelihood is infeasible.

But at the same time, it can be relatively easy to simulate the structural model. That is, for each candidate value ρ one can generate a simulated trajectory on $\{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=1}^N$ and the corresponding lagged state vector $\{\hat{x}_{t-1}\}_{t=1}^N$. This situation, of course, is the basic setup of simulated method of moments (Ingram and Lee, 1991; Duffie and Singleton, 1993). It arises naturally in continuous-time models, because the implied discrete time density is rarely available in closed form (Lo, 1988), but continuous time models are often quite easy to simulate. The situation also arise in other areas of economics and finance as well as discussed in Tauchen (1997).

If the structural model is correct and the parameters ρ are set to their true values ρ^o , then there should not be much difference between the data $\{\tilde{y}_t\}_{t=1}^n$ and a simulation $\{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=1}^N$. Therefore, if the first order conditions (1) of the reduced form were computed by averaging over a simulation instead of the sample, viz.,

$$m(\rho, \theta) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{t=1}^N \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(\hat{y}_t | \hat{x}_{t-1}, \theta),$$

one would expect that

$$m(\rho^o, \tilde{\theta}_n) = 0,$$

at least approximately. This condition will hold exactly in the limit as N and n tend to infinity under the standard regularity conditions of quasi maximum likelihood. One can try to solve $m(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n) = 0$ to get an estimate $\hat{\rho}_n$ of the parameter vector of the structural model. In most applications this cannot be done because the dimension of θ is larger than the dimension of ρ . To compensate for this, one estimates ρ by $\hat{\rho}_n$ that minimizes the GMM criterion

$$m'(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n) (\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1} m(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n)$$

with weighting matrix

$$\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{t=1}^n \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(\tilde{y}_t | \tilde{x}_{t-1}, \tilde{\theta}_n) \right] \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(\tilde{y}_t | \tilde{x}_{t-1}, \tilde{\theta}_n) \right]'$$

This choice of weighting matrix presupposes that the score generator fits the data well. If not, then a more complicated weighting matrix, described below, should be considered. The estimator $\hat{\rho}_n$ is asymptotically normal.

If the structural model is correctly specified, then the statistic

$$L_0 = n m'(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n) (\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1} m(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n)$$

has the chi-squared distribution on $\dim(\theta) - \dim(\rho)$ degrees freedom. This is the familiar test of overidentifying restrictions in GMM nomenclature and is used to test model adequacy. A chi-squared is asymptotically normally distributed as degrees freedom increase. Therefore, for ease of interpretation, the statistic L_0 is often redundantly reported as a z -statistic, as we do later in our tables.

The vector $m(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n)$ can be normalized by its standard error to get a vector of t -statistics. These t -statistics can be interpreted much as normalized regression residuals. They are often very informative but are subject to the same risk as the interpretation of regression residuals; namely, a failure to fit one characteristic of the data can show up not at the score of the parameters that describe that characteristic but elsewhere due to correlation (colinearity). Nonetheless, as with regression residuals, inspecting normalized $m(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n)$ is usually the most informative diagnostic available. To protect oneself from misinterpreting these t -statistics, one should confirm all conclusions by means of the test of model adequacy L_0 above.

If the score generator is a poor fit to the data or the chi-squared test of model adequacy L_0 is not passed, then the analysis must be viewed as a calibration exercise rather than classical statistical inference. One might, for instance, deliberately choose a score generator that represents only some characteristics of the data to study the ability of a structural model to represent only those characteristics. We do this below. One might also use a rejected model to price options, arguing that it is the best available even though it was rejected. The use of EMM for calibration is discussed in Gallant, Hsu, and Tauchen (1999). But see Gallant (2001) for alternative simulation estimators that are better suited to calibration than simulated score estimators or indirect inference estimators.

The score generator can be viewed as a summary of the data. It is accomplished by, in effect, projecting the data onto a reduced form model and is therefore called the projection step of an EMM investigation. Extraction of structural parameters from the summary by minimizing the chi squared criterion is called the estimation step. In a later section, we shall describe a third step, reprojection, that often accompanies an EMM investigation.

2.1.2 Indirect Inference Estimation

The indirect inference estimator is based on the binding function, which is defined as

$$b(\rho) = \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta \in \Theta} \iint \log f(y|x, \theta) p(y|x, \rho) dydx,$$

where $f(y|x, \theta)$ and $p(y|x, \rho)$ are the transition densities of the auxiliary model and structural model, respectively, as described above. The binding function can also be defined as the function that satisfies $m[\rho, b(\rho)] = 0$ (where, implicitly, $N = \infty$). According to the asymptotics of quasi maximum likelihood,

$$\sqrt{n}[\tilde{\theta}_n - b(\rho)] \xrightarrow{L} N(0, \mathcal{J}^{-1} \mathcal{I} \mathcal{J}^{-1}),$$

where $\tilde{\theta}_n$ is as above and

$$\mathcal{I} = \iint \left\{ \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \sum_{t=1}^n \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f[y|x, b(\rho)] \right\}^2 p(y|x, \rho) dydx,$$

$$\mathcal{J} = \iint \left\{ \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \theta \partial \theta'} \log f[y|x, b(\rho)] \right\} p(y|x, \rho) dydx.$$

The matrix \mathcal{I} will likely have to be estimated by a HAC variance estimator as described below because, for reasons mentioned below, the auxiliary model is not apt to be a good approximation to the structural model in most indirect inference applications. A plug-in estimator can be employed to estimate \mathcal{J} ; numerical differentiation may be required to get the second derivatives. With-

out being specific as to the method employed, let $\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n$ and $\tilde{\mathcal{J}}_n$ denote estimates of \mathcal{I} and \mathcal{J} .

The indirect inference estimator is

$$\hat{\rho}_n = \operatorname{argmin}_{\rho \in R} [\tilde{\theta}_n - b(\rho)]' (\tilde{\mathcal{J}}^{-1} \tilde{\mathcal{I}} \tilde{\mathcal{J}}^{-})^{-1} [\tilde{\theta}_n - b(\rho)]$$

where R is the parameter space of the structural model.

Herein lies the computational difficulty with the indirect inference estimator: One must have an expression for $b(\rho)$ in order to compute the estimator. The expression

$$b(\rho) = \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta \in \Theta} \iint \log f(y|x, \theta) p(y|x, \rho) dy dx,$$

can be computed numerically, with the integral computed by simulation as discussed above, and $b(\rho)$ computed by numerical optimization for given ρ . This embeds one numerical optimization, that for $b(\rho)$, inside another, that for $\hat{\rho}_n$, which poses two problems: The first is cost, the second is stability. That this computation will be costly is obvious. The stability issue is that a numerical optimizer can only compute the inner optimization, that for $b(\rho)$, to within a tolerance, at best. This will cause jitter which will cause the outer optimization problem to be non-smooth. Non-smooth optimization problems are very difficult and costly to solve because good curvature information is not available. If the inner problem has local minima, the situation becomes nearly hopeless. For this reason, most practitioners convert a problem formulated as an indirect inference problem to simulated score estimation problem prior to computation so as to eliminate $b(\rho)$ and \mathcal{J} from consideration; see, for instance, Pastorello, Renault, and Touzi (2000). A verification of the equivalence of the indirect inference and simulated score formulations is in Gourieroux, Monfort, and Renault (1993). Of course, if the auxiliary model is sufficiently simple, then analytic expressions for $b(\rho)$ and \mathcal{J} become available and the computation

$$\hat{\rho}_n = \operatorname{argmin}_{\rho \in R} [\tilde{\theta}_n - b(\rho)]' (\tilde{\mathcal{J}}^{-1} \tilde{\mathcal{I}} \tilde{\mathcal{J}}^{-})^{-1} [\tilde{\theta}_n - b(\rho)]$$

becomes feasible as posed.

The indirect inference formulation of the estimation problem can be useful device for modifying the estimator to achieve semiparametric or robustness properties. Space does not permit an exploration of those ideas here. For a discussion of seminonparametric properties achieved through indirect inference see Dridi and Renault (1998) and the references therein. For a discussion of robustness properties achieved through indirect inference, see Genton and de Luna (2002).

We now discuss the ideas above in more detail. We consider nonlinear systems that have the features of the models described in Section 1. Specifically, (i) for a parameter vector ρ in a parameter space R , the random variables determined by the system have a stationary density

$$p(y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1}, y_0 | \rho), \quad (2)$$

for every stretch (y_{t-L}, \dots, y_t) ; and (ii) for $\rho \in R$, the system is easily simulated so that expectations

$$\mathcal{E}_\rho(g) = \int \cdots \int g(y_{-L}, \dots, y_0) p(y_{-L}, \dots, y_0 | \rho) dy_{-L} \cdots dy_0 \quad (3)$$

can be approximated as accurately as desired by averaging over a long simulation

$$\mathcal{E}_\rho(g) \doteq \frac{1}{N} \sum_{t=1}^N g(\hat{y}_{t-L}, \dots, \hat{y}_{t-1}, \hat{y}_t). \quad (4)$$

As conventions, we use $\{y_t\}$ to denote the stochastic process determined by the system, $\{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=1}^N$ to denote a simulation from the system, $\{\tilde{y}_t\}_{t=1}^n$ to denote data presumed to have been generated by the system, and $(y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1}, y_0)$ to denote function arguments and dummy variables of integration. The true value of the parameter vector of the system (2) is denoted by ρ^o .

We presume that the data have been summarized in the projection step, as described in Section 3, and that a score generator of the form

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(y | x, \tilde{\theta}_n),$$

and a weighting matrix

$$\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{t=1}^n \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(\tilde{y}_t | \tilde{x}_{t-1}, \tilde{\theta}_n) \right] \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(\tilde{y}_t | \tilde{x}_{t-1}, \tilde{\theta}_n) \right]'$$

are available from the projection step. This formula assumes that $f(y | x, \tilde{\theta}_n)$ closely approximates $p(y | x, \rho^o)$. If the SNP density $f_K(y | x, \theta)$ is used as the auxiliary model with tuning parameters selected by BIC, $\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n$ as above will be adequate (Gallant and Long, 1997; Gallant and Tauchen, 1999; and Coppens and Gallant, 2000). If the approximation is not adequate, then a HAC

weighting matrix (Andrews, 1991) must be used. A common choice of HAC matrix is

$$\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n = \sum_{\tau=-\lceil n^{1/5} \rceil}^{\lceil n^{1/5} \rceil} w\left(\frac{\tau}{\lceil n^{1/5} \rceil}\right) \tilde{\mathcal{I}}_{n\tau} \quad (5)$$

where

$$w(u) = \begin{cases} 1 - 6|u|^2 + 6|u|^3 & \text{if } 0 < u < \frac{1}{2} \\ 2(1 - |u|)^3 & \text{if } \frac{1}{2} \leq u < 1, \end{cases}$$

and

$$\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_{n\tau} = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{t=1+\tau}^n \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(\tilde{y}_t | \tilde{x}_{t-1}, \tilde{\theta}_n) \right] \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(\tilde{y}_{t-\tau} | \tilde{x}_{t-1-\tau}, \tilde{\theta}_n) \right]' & \text{if } \tau \geq 0 \\ \tilde{\mathcal{I}}_{n,-\tau} & \text{if } \tau < 0 \end{cases}$$

(Gallant and White, 1987).

Recall that the moment equations are

$$m(\rho, \theta) = \mathcal{E}_\rho \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(y | x, \theta).$$

which can be computed by averaging over a long simulation

$$m(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n) \doteq \frac{1}{N} \sum_{t=1}^N \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(\hat{y}_t | \hat{x}_{t-1}, \tilde{\theta}_n).$$

The EMM estimator is

$$\hat{\rho}_n = \underset{\rho \in R}{\operatorname{argmin}} m'(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n) (\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1} m(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n)$$

The asymptotics of the estimator are as follows. If ρ^o denotes the true value of ρ and θ^o is an isolated solution of the moment equations $m(\rho^o, \theta) = 0$, then under regularity conditions (Gallant and Tauchen, 1996; Gallant and Long, 1997),

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \hat{\rho}_n &= \rho^o \quad \text{a.s.} \\ \sqrt{n}(\hat{\rho}_n - \rho^o) &\xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} N\left\{0, [(M^o)'(\mathcal{I}^o)^{-1}(M^o)]^{-1}\right\} \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \hat{M}_n = M^o \quad \text{a.s.}$$

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n = \mathcal{I}^o \quad \text{a.s.}$$

where $\hat{M}_n = M(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n)$, $M^o = M(\rho^o, \theta^o)$, $M(\rho, \theta) = (\partial/\partial\rho')m(\rho, \theta)$, and

$$\mathcal{I}^o = \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} \log f(y_0 | x_{-1}, \theta^o) \right] \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} \log f(y_0 | x_{-1}, \theta^o) \right]',$$

if $f(y|x, \theta)$ encompass the data generating process, or

$$\mathcal{I}^o = \sum_{\tau=-\infty}^{\infty} \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} \log f(y_0 | x_{-1}, \theta^o) \right] \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} \log f(y_{-\tau} | x_{-1-\tau}, \theta^o) \right]',$$

if not. Under the null hypothesis that $p(y_{-L}, \dots, y_0 | \rho)$ is the correct model,

$$L_0 = n m'(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n) (\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1} m(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n) \quad (7)$$

is asymptotically chi-squared on $p_\theta - p_\rho$ degrees of freedom. Under the null hypothesis that $h(\rho^o) = 0$, where h maps R into \Re^q ,

$$L_h = n \left[m'(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n) (\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1} m(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n) - m'(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n) (\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1} m(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n) \right] \quad (8)$$

is asymptotically chi-squared on q degrees of freedom where

$$\hat{\rho}_n = \underset{h(\rho)=0}{\operatorname{argmin}} m'(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n) (\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1} m(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n).$$

A Wald confidence interval on an element ρ_i of ρ can be constructed in the usual way from an asymptotic standard error $\sqrt{\hat{\sigma}_{ii}}$. A standard error may be obtained by computing the Jacobian $M_n(\rho, \theta)$ numerically and taking the estimated asymptotic variance $\hat{\sigma}_{ii}$ to be the i th diagonal element of $\hat{\Sigma} = (1/n)[(\hat{M}_n)'(\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1}(\hat{M}_n)]^{-1}$. These intervals, which are symmetric, are somewhat misleading because they do not reflect the rapid increase in the EMM objective function $s_n(\rho) = m'(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n) (\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1} m(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n)$ when ρ_i approaches a value for which the system under consideration is explosive. Confidence intervals obtained by inverting the criterion difference test L_h do reflect this phenomenon and are therefore more useful. To invert the test one puts in the interval those ρ_i^* for which L_h for the hypothesis $\rho_i^o = \rho_i^*$ is less than the critical point of a chi-squared on one degree of freedom. To avoid re-optimization one may use the approximation

$$\hat{\rho}_n = \hat{\rho}_n + \frac{\rho_i^* - \hat{\rho}_{in}}{\hat{\sigma}_{ii}} \hat{\Sigma}_{(i)}$$

in the formula for L_h where $\hat{\Sigma}_{(i)}$ is the i -th column of $\hat{\Sigma}$.

The above remarks should only be taken to imply that confidence intervals obtained by inverting the criterion difference test have more desirable structural characteristics than those obtained by inverting the Wald test and not that they have more accurate coverage probabilities.

When L_0 exceeds the chi-squared critical point, diagnostics that suggest improvements to the system are desirable. Because

$$\sqrt{n} m(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} N\left\{0, \mathcal{I} - (M^o)[(M^o)'(\mathcal{I}^o)^{-1}(M^o)]^{-1}(M^o)'\right\},$$

inspection of the t -ratios

$$T_n = S_n^{-1} \sqrt{n} m(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n), \tag{9}$$

where $S_n = \left(\text{diag}\{\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n - (\hat{M}_n)[(\hat{M}_n)'(\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1}(\hat{M}_n)]^{-1}(\hat{M}_n)'\right)^{1/2}$, can suggest reasons for failure. Different elements of the score correspond to different characteristics of the data and large t -ratios reveal those characteristics that are not well approximated.

In practice, one would usually prefer to inspect $\sqrt{n} m(\hat{\rho}_n, \tilde{\theta}_n)$, which are underestimates of the t -ratios, to avoid having to determine the matrix \hat{M}_n numerically and to avoid any potential inaccuracies that numerical differentiation can introduce. Because the statistic L_0 provides an overall test of significance, it is not necessary to have exactly correct values of the t -ratios. That is, one is only relying on the t -ratios for suggestions as to where a structural model fails to fit and one is not relying on them for statistical inference.

3 Projection: General Guidelines on the Score Generator

A sensible question is how to determine the reduced form density $f(y_t|x_{t-1}, \theta)$ that defines the score generator for EMM. Interestingly, there are two natural principles that lead to different strategies. The first principle is data-based: choose $f(y_t|x_{t-1}, \theta)$ to be good approximation to the dynamics of the data, i.e., to $\text{pdf}(y_t|x_{t-1})$, whatever that might be. In other words, $f(y_t|x_{t-1}, \theta)$ should emerge from a carefully-conducted effort to model the data $\{\tilde{y}_t\}_{t=1}^n$ without much regard to the structural model. A flexible parameterization should be used if the dynamics of the data are not well understood *a priori*. The second principle is model-based: choose $f(y_t|x_{t-1}, \theta)$ to be a close approximation to the $p(y_t|x_{t-1}, \rho)$ implied by the structural model, so that the moment function $(\partial/\partial\theta) \log[f(y_t|x_{t-1}, \theta)]$ for EMM should look very much like moment function

$(\partial/\partial\rho)\log[p(y_t|x_{t-1}, \rho)]$ of maximum likelihood estimation. Implementing this strategy entails using detailed knowledge of the characteristics of the structural model to build up the score generator.

We initially set forth the arguments for the data-based strategy in Bansal, Gallant, Hussey, and Tauchen (1993, 1995), and we have consistently argued for it over the model-based strategy ever since. The issue is controversial. Dridi and Renault (1998) argue for a more model-based strategy and Hansen (2001) outlines some of the issues. The gist of our argument is that the data-based strategy will be nearly fully efficient if the structural model is correctly specified, and it will reveal the inadequacy of the structural model if it is misspecified. On the other hand, the model-based strategy is fine if the structural model is correct, but it could be potentially very misleading if the structural model is wrong. Rarely do we know for sure that our models are indeed correct.

We now look at some of these considerations in more detail.

3.1 *An Initial Look at Efficiency*

Let \mathcal{V}_f denote the asymptotic covariance matrix of EMM if the score generator is $f(y_t|x_{t-1}, \theta)$. In Section 2 we saw that $\sqrt{n}(\hat{\rho} - \rho) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} N(0, \mathcal{V}_f)$, where from (6), \mathcal{V}_f is given by

$$\mathcal{V}_f = [(M^o)'(\mathcal{I}^o)^{-1}(M^o)]^{-1}$$

Let \mathcal{V}_{ML} denote the asymptotic distribution of the maximum likelihood estimator, which is given by

$$\mathcal{V}_{ML} = [\mathcal{E}(s_t s_t')]^{-1} = \mathcal{I}^{-1}$$

where

$$s_t = \frac{\partial}{\partial\rho} \log[p(y_t|x_{t-1}, \rho^o)]$$

is the score function of the underlying probability model, presumed correct here. From basic maximum likelihood theory we have that

$$\mathcal{V}_{ML} \leq \mathcal{V}_f$$

Tauchen (1997) considers the iid case, $p(y_t|\rho)$ and shows that \mathcal{V}_f and \mathcal{V}_{ML} are connected as follows. Let

$$\Omega = \text{Var}(s_t - Bs_{ft})$$

where $s_{ft} = (\partial/\partial\theta)\log[f(y_t|\theta^o)]$ is the score of the reduced form model reduced form, and B is the coefficient matrix from a linear projection of $s_t = (\partial/\partial\rho)\log[f(y_t|\rho^o)]$ onto s_{ft} . Then

$$\mathcal{V}_{ML} = (\mathcal{V}_f^{-1} + \Omega)^{-1} \leq \mathcal{V}_f \tag{10}$$

with equality if $\Omega = 0$. Hence, the better the score of f comes to spanning the score of p , then the smaller is Ω and the closer is EMM to full efficiency. Tauchen (1997) also provides some intuition as to how this result would carry over to the dynamic case. Gallant and Long (1997) handle the dynamic case and prove that

$$\lim_{K \rightarrow \infty} \mathcal{V}_{f_K} = \mathcal{V}_{ML}$$

where f_K represents the K^{th} term in the SNP series expansion as described in Section 4 below.

The upshot is that the better the score generator approximates structural model, then the closer is \mathcal{V}_f to \mathcal{V}_{ML} . But since the structural model is presumed to be correct, the data-based approach has to produce a score function that is a close approximation to the true score function. If one knows of a good model for the data, then that model should be used as the auxiliary model. If not, as is often the case, then Gallant and Long's (1997) results provide a systematic strategy based on SNP modeling for getting a close approximation.

3.2 Misspecification

Suppose the structural model is itself misspecified. Will this be detected by the EMM objective function? The issue was first formally considered in Tauchen (1997) and examined in much more detail by Aguire-Torres (2001). The answer is essentially yes if one employs the data-based strategy to determine the score generator but no if one follows the model-based strategy for determining the score generator for EMM.

Define the densities

	conditional	joint
true model:	$\xi(y x)$	$\xi(x, y)$
structural model:	$p(y x, \rho)$	$p(x, y, \rho)$
auxiliary model:	$f(y x, \theta)$	$f(x, y \theta)$

where for simplicity we drop the time subscripts. The pseudo-true values of θ and ρ are

$$\theta^o = \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta} \int \int \log[f(y|x, \theta)] \xi(x, y) dy dx$$

$$\rho^o = \operatorname{argmin}_{\rho} m'(\rho, \theta^o) (\mathcal{I}^o)^{-1} m(\rho, \theta^o)$$

where

$$m(\rho, \theta) = \int \int \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log[f(y|x, \theta)] p(x, y, \rho) dy dx$$

Note that \mathcal{I}^o is the limiting pseudo-information matrix computed under $\xi(x, y)$. Following Geweke (1983) define the approximate slope functional

$$S(f, p, \xi) = m'(\rho^o, \theta^o) (\mathcal{I}^o)^{-1} m(\rho^o, \theta^o)$$

The value of $S(f, p, \xi)$ is the limiting normalized value of the noncentrality parameter of the test of the overidentifying restrictions.

For fixed f and p , it is reasonably easy to come with plausible alternative models ξ such that

$$S(f, p, \xi) = 0$$

In other words, given f , there is no power to detect $p \neq \xi$. It is easy to construct such examples. The danger is fitting a misspecified p -model to the scores of a misspecified f -model, and thinking everything is fine, when in fact $p \neq \xi$.

The problem is with leaving f fixed. If one chooses f nonparametrically, say by SNP, then the preliminary analysis of Tauchen (1997) and detailed calculations of Aguire-Torres (2001) indicate that whenever $p \neq \xi$, then

$$\liminf_{K \rightarrow \infty} S(f_K, p, \xi) > 0$$

so the misspecification is detected with probability one asymptotically.

The message, again, is to think nonparametrically when choosing the auxiliary model.

3.3 *Non-nested Models*

Another argument in favor of the data-based strategy has emerged after some years of experience with EMM. Frequently, one considers families of non-nested structural models and one faces a model selection problem. EMM using a data-based score generator forces all structural models to confront the same set of moment conditions, and therefore meaningful comparisons of objective values across models are available. For example, Dai and Singleton (2000) use the EMM objective function to guide model selection within and across the non-nested branches of the affine family of term structure models, as do Bansal and Zhou (2001) for regime switching affine term structure models.

3.4 *Dynamic Stability*

The EMM objective function is

$$Q(\rho) = m'(\rho, \tilde{\theta}) \tilde{\mathcal{I}}^{-1} m(\rho, \tilde{\theta})$$

and

$$\hat{\rho} = \underset{\rho \in \mathcal{R}}{\operatorname{argmin}} Q(\rho)$$

Simulated trajectories $\{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=1}^N$ are used to compute the expectation that defines $m(\rho, \theta)$. Since the underlying structural model typically have a nonlinear dynamic autoregressive structure, it is natural to consider potential problems if ρ lies in the explosive region of the parameter space and $|\hat{y}_t| \rightarrow \infty$?

Tauchen (1998) examines the issue of dynamic stability of the structural model (p) and the score generator (f). The upshot is that one really need not worry about imposing dynamic stability on the structural model itself. Dynamic stability is self-enforcing. If the optimizer wanders into the region of the parameter space where the underlying structural model is unstable, then the data simulator generates a wildly explosive simulated realization that induces a large value of the objective function. The time series properties of this explosive realization are very much unlike the time series properties of the observed

data set to which the auxiliary model has been fitted, so the objective function attains an exceedingly high value. The situation is actually a bit more subtle, because automatic stability is ensured only if the auxiliary model itself is dynamically stable. The use of a dynamically unstable auxiliary model can be expected to define a GMM objective function with very poor numerical properties in both the stable and unstable regions of the parameter space.

Dynamic stability is of practical importance. Andersen and Lund (1997) carefully examine a class of generalized GARCH and E-GARCH auxiliary models for the short-term interest rate. They find the former typically unstable, and therefore unusable as auxiliary models, while the latter are stable. Gallant and Tauchen (1998) likewise use model stability as part of the selection criterion. We now incorporate into the SNP code (Gallant and Tauchen, 2001c) nonlinear transformations of the state vector x_{t-1} that attenuate large movements and help enforce stability, but we still recommend checking long simulations to ensure the score generator is a stable model.

4 A General Purpose Score Generator

4.1 Efficiency Comparisons

In Section 2 we defined the EMM estimator as

$$\hat{\rho}_n = \operatorname{argmin}_{\rho \in R} m'(\rho)(\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1}m(\rho)$$

It is essentially a simulated method of moments estimator based on the moment function

$$m(\rho) = \mathcal{E}_\rho \tilde{\psi}$$

where

$$\tilde{\psi} = \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(y | x, \theta)$$

and for now we shall suppress the second argument of $m(\rho, \theta)$.

In Subsection 3.1 we noted that the closer f comes to approximating the condition density implied by the structural model, then the closer will be the asymptotic variance of the EMM estimator to that of maximum likelihood. In

fact, a spanning argument can be used to show that the efficiency of EMM can be made asymptotically negligible.

But the same spanning argument applies to estimation using more traditional moments such as means, variances, etc., which we shall call below the Classical Method of Moments. Thus, an open question is whether the moment function of EMM, which entails the extra effort of estimating the score generator, defines a better set of moments, other things equal.

The question is considered and answered affirmatively by Gallant and Tauchen (1999), which we now summarize. They examine the simpler case where the random variables defined by the system (2) generate univariate independently and identically distributed random variables $\{y_t\}$ with density $p(y|\rho)$. The ideas for the general case of a multivariate, non-Markovian, stationary system are the same, but the algebra is far more complicated (Gallant and Long, 1997). Nothing essential is lost by considering the simplest case.

Consider three moment functions $\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}$, $\tilde{\psi}_{p,n}$, and $\tilde{\psi}_{f,n}$ that correspond to Classical Method of Moments, Maximum Likelihood, and Efficient Method of Moments, respectively, defined as follows:

$$\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}(y) = \begin{pmatrix} y - \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \tilde{y}_i \\ y^2 - \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (\tilde{y}_i)^2 \\ \vdots \\ y^K - \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (\tilde{y}_i)^K \end{pmatrix},$$

$$\tilde{\psi}_{p,n}(y) = \frac{\partial}{\partial \rho} \log p(y|\tilde{\rho}_n),$$

$$\tilde{\psi}_{f,n}(y) = \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(y|\tilde{\theta}_n),$$

where the exponent K that appears in $\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}(y)$ is the degree of the largest moment used in a method of moments application, the function $f(y|\theta)$ that appears in $\tilde{\psi}_{f,n}(y)$ is a density that closely approximates the true data generating process in a sense made precise later, and the statistics $\tilde{\rho}_n$ and $\tilde{\theta}_n$ that appear in $\tilde{\psi}_{p,n}(y)$ and $\tilde{\psi}_{f,n}(y)$ are

$$\tilde{\rho}_n = \operatorname{argmax}_{\rho} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \log p(\tilde{y}_i|\rho),$$

$$\tilde{\theta}_n = \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \log f(\tilde{y}_i|\theta);$$

ρ is of length p_ρ and θ of length $p_\theta \geq p_\rho$.

Note that each of the moment functions $\tilde{\psi}_{p,n}$, $\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}$, and $\tilde{\psi}_{f,n}$ is in the null space of the expectation operator corresponding to the empirical distribution of the data, denoted as $\mathcal{E}_{\tilde{F}_n}$. That is, $\mathcal{E}_{\tilde{F}_n} \tilde{\psi}_{p,n} = \mathcal{E}_{\tilde{F}_n} \tilde{\psi}_{c,n} = \mathcal{E}_{\tilde{F}_n} \tilde{\psi}_{f,n} = 0$. Method of moments is basically an attempt to do the same for the model $p(y|\rho)$. That is, method of moments attempts to find a ρ that puts one of these moment functions, denoted generically as $\tilde{\psi}_n$, in the null space of the expectation operator \mathcal{E}_ρ corresponding to $p(y|\rho)$.

In addition to computing $\tilde{\psi}_n$, one computes

$$\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n = \mathcal{E}_{\tilde{F}_n}(\tilde{\psi}_n)(\tilde{\psi}_n)'$$

Once $\tilde{\psi}_n$ and $\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n$ have been computed, the data have been summarized, and what we refer to as “the projection step” is finished.

For estimation, define

$$m_n(\rho) = \mathcal{E}_\rho \tilde{\psi}_n.$$

If the dimensions of ρ and $\tilde{\psi}_n(y)$ are the same, then usually the equations $m_n(\rho) = 0$ can be solved to obtain an estimator $\hat{\rho}_n$. For $\tilde{\psi}_{p,n}$, the solution is the maximum likelihood estimator (Gauss, 1816; Fisher, 1912). For $\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}$ with $K = p_\rho$, it is the classical method of moments estimator (Pearson, 1894). For $\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}$ with $K > p_\rho$, no solution exists and the moment functions $\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}$ are those of minimum chi-squared or generalized method of moments (Neyman and Pearson, 1928; Hansen, 1982) as customarily implemented.

As just noted, when $K > p_\rho$, then $\tilde{\psi}_n$ cannot be placed in the null space of the operator \mathcal{E}_ρ for any ρ , because the equations $m_n(\rho) = 0$ have no solution. In this case, the minimum chi-squared estimator relies on the fact that, under standard regularity conditions (Gallant and Tauchen, 1996) and choices of $\tilde{\psi}_n$ similar to the above, there is a function ψ^o such that

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \tilde{\psi}_n(y) &= \psi^o(y) \quad \text{a.s.} \\ \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n &= \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(\psi^o)(\psi^o)' \quad \text{a.s.} \\ \sqrt{n} m_n(\rho^o) &\xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} N\left[0, \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(\psi^o)(\psi^o)'\right] \end{aligned}$$

where \mathcal{E}_{ρ^o} denotes expectation taken with respect to $p(y|\rho^o)$. For the three choices $\tilde{\psi}_{p,n}$, $\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}$, and $\tilde{\psi}_{f,n}$ of $\tilde{\psi}_n(y)$ above, the functions ψ_p^o , ψ_c^o , and ψ_f^o given

by this result are

$$\psi_c^o(y) = \begin{pmatrix} y - \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(y) \\ y^2 - \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(y^2) \\ \vdots \\ y^K - \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(y^K) \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\psi_p^o(y) = \frac{\partial}{\partial \rho} \log p(y|\rho^o)$$

and

$$\psi_f^o(y) = \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f(y|\theta^o),$$

where

$$\theta^o = \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta} \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o} \log f(\cdot|\theta).$$

With these results in hand, ρ may be estimated by minimum chi-squared, viz.,

$$\hat{\rho}_n = \operatorname{argmin}_{\rho} m'_n(\rho) (\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1} m_n(\rho)$$

and

$$\sqrt{n}(\hat{\rho}_n - \rho^o) \xrightarrow{L} N[0, (C^o)^{-1}],$$

where

$$C^o = [\mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(\psi_p^o)(\psi_p^o)'] [\mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(\psi^o)(\psi^o)']^{-1} [\mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(\psi^o)(\psi_p^o)'].$$

Note that for any nonzero $a \in \mathcal{R}^{p_\rho}$,

$$\min_b \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o} [a' \psi_p^o - (\psi^o)' b]^2 = \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o} (a' \psi_p^o)^2 - a' C^o a \geq 0. \quad (11)$$

Expression (11) implies that $a' C^o a$ cannot exceed $\mathcal{E}_{\rho^o} (a' \psi_p^o)^2 = a' [\mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(\psi_p^o)(\psi_p^o)'] a$ and therefore the best achievable asymptotic variance of the estimator $\hat{\rho}_n$ is $(\mathcal{I}_\rho^o)^{-1} = [\mathcal{E}_{\rho^o}(\psi_p^o)(\psi_p^o)']^{-1}$, which is the variance of the maximum likelihood estimator of ρ . It is also apparent from (11) that if $\{\psi_i^o\}_{i=1}^\infty$ spans the $L_{2,p}$

probability space $L_{2,p} = \{g : \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o} g^2 < \infty\}$ and $\psi^o = (\psi_1^o, \dots, \psi_K^o)$, then $\hat{\rho}_n$ has good efficiency relative to the maximum likelihood estimator for large K . The polynomials span $L_{2,p}$ if $p(y|\rho)$ has a moment generating function (Gallant, 1980). Therefore, one might expect good asymptotic efficiency from $\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}$ for large K .

Rather than just spanning $L_{2,p}$, EMM requires, in addition, that the moment functions actually be the score vector $\psi_{f,n}(y)$ of some density $f(y|\tilde{\theta}_n)$ that closely approximates $p(y|\rho^o)$. Possible choices of $f(y|\tilde{\theta}_n)$ are discussed in Gallant and Tauchen (1996). Of them, one commonly used in applications is the SNP density, which was proposed by Gallant and Nychka (1987) in a form suited to cross-sectional applications and by Gallant and Tauchen (1989) in a form suited to time-series applications.

The SNP density is obtained by expanding the square root of an innovation density $h(z)$ in a Hermite expansion

$$\sqrt{h(z)} = \sum_{i=0}^{\infty} \theta_i z^i \sqrt{\phi(z)},$$

where $\phi(z)$ denotes the standard normal density function. Because the Hermite functions are dense in L_2 (Lebesgue) and $\sqrt{h(z)}$ is an L_2 function, this expansion must exist. The truncated density is

$$h_K(z) = \frac{\mathcal{P}_K^2(z)\phi(z)}{\int \mathcal{P}_K^2(u)\phi(u) du},$$

where

$$\mathcal{P}_K(z) = \sum_{i=0}^K \theta_i z^i$$

and the renormalization is necessary so that the density $h_K(z)$ integrates to one. The location-scale transformation $y = \sigma z + \mu$ completes the definition of the SNP density

$$f_K(y|\theta) = \frac{1}{\sigma} h_K\left(\frac{y - \mu}{\sigma}\right). \quad (12)$$

with $\theta = (\mu, \sigma, \theta_0, \dots, \theta_K)$. Gallant and Long (1997) have shown that

$$\psi_f^o(y) = \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \log f_K(y|\theta^o),$$

with

$$\theta^o = \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta} \mathcal{E}_{\rho^o} \log f_K(\cdot|\theta)$$

spans $L_{2,p}$.

While a spanning argument can be used to show that high efficiency obtains for large K , it gives no indication as to what might be the best choice of moment functions with which to span $L_{2,p}$. Moreover, if ψ_p is in the span of ψ^o for some finite K , then full efficiency obtains at once (Gallant and Tauchen, 1996). For instance, the score of the normal density is in the span of both $\tilde{\psi}_{c,n}$ and $\tilde{\psi}_{f,n}$ for $K \geq 2$. These considerations seem to rule out any hope of general results showing that one moment function should be better than another.

With general results unattainable, the best one can do is compare efficiencies over a class of densities designed to stress-test an estimator and over some densities thought to be representative of situations likely to be encountered in practice to see if any conclusions seem to be indicated. Comparisons using Monte Carlo methods are reported by Andersen, Chung, and Sorensen (1999), Chumacero (1997), Ng and Michaelides (2000), van der Sluis (1999), and, Zhou (2001). Overall, their work supports the conjecture that EMM is more efficient than CMM in representative applications at typical sample sizes.

Analytical comparisons are possible for the independently and identically distributed case and are reported in Gallant and Tauchen (1999). Their measure of efficiency is the volume of a confidence region on the parameters of the density $p(y|\rho)$ computed using the asymptotic distribution of $\hat{\rho}_n$. This region has the form $\{\rho : (\rho - \rho^o)'(C^o)^{-1}(\rho - \rho^o) \leq \mathcal{X}_d^2/n\}$ with volume

$$\frac{2\pi^{d/2}(\mathcal{X}_d^2/n)^d}{d\Gamma(d/2)\det(C^o)},$$

where \mathcal{X}_d^2 denotes a critical value of the chi-squared distribution on d degrees of freedom. As small volumes are to be preferred, and the region $\{\rho : (\rho - \rho^o)'\mathcal{I}_p^o(\rho - \rho^o) \leq \mathcal{X}_d^2/n\}$ has the smallest achievable volume,

$$\text{RE} = \frac{\det(C^o)}{\det(\mathcal{I}_p^o)}$$

is a measure of relative efficiency. Over a large collection of densities thought to represent typical applications, their computations support the conclusion that EMM dominates CMM. Moreover, their computations indicate that once $f_K(\cdot|\theta^o)$ begins to approximate $p(\cdot|\rho^o)$ accurately, the efficiency of the EMM

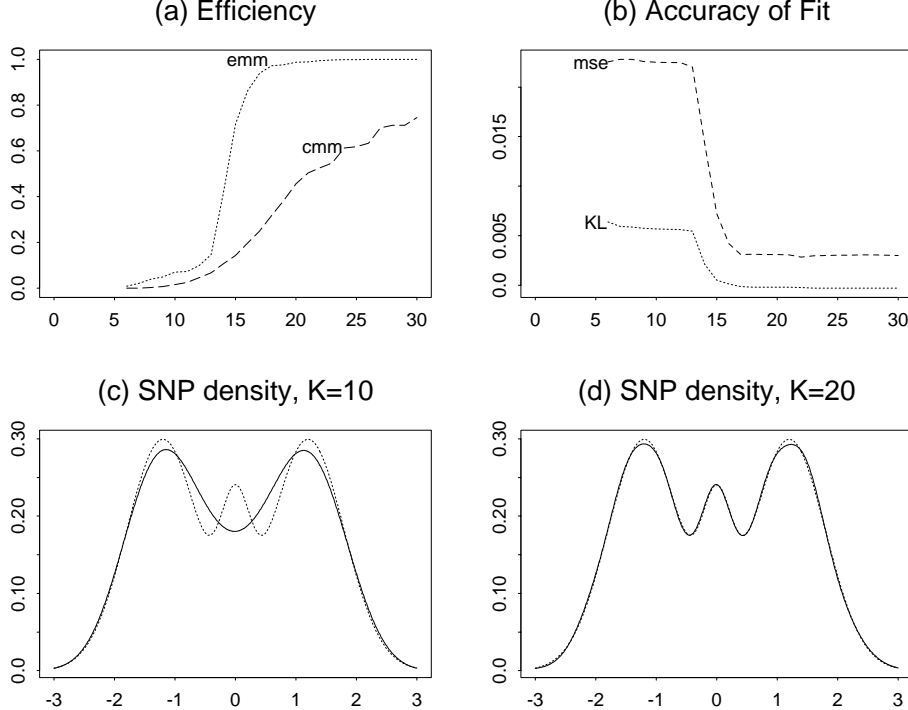


Figure 1. Relative Efficiency for the Trimodal Density. Panel (a) plots the relative efficiency of the EMM and CMM estimators against degree K , for the trimodal density of the Marron-Wand test suite. As seen, the efficiency of the EMM estimator increases rapidly when the degree K of the SNP auxiliary model is between 10 and 20. Panel (b) plots the root mean squared error and Kullback-Leibler divergence of the SNP approximation to the trimodal density against K , labeled mse and KL, respectively. As seen, the region $10 \leq K \leq 20$ is the region where the error in the SNP approximation to the trimodal density decreases rapidly. Panel (c) plots the SNP approximation at $K = 10$, shown as a solid line, to the trimodal density, shown as a dotted line. As seen, at $K = 10$ the SNP density approximates a trimodal density by a bimodal density. Panel (d) is the same at $K = 20$. As seen, at $K = 20$ the SNP density has correctly determined the number of modes.

estimator begins to increase rapidly. A representative illustration is provided by Figure 1, which shows the relative efficiency comparison for a trimodal density $p(y|\rho)$ taken from the Marron-Wand test suite (Marron and Wand, 1992). As seen in Figure 1, once $f_K(\cdot|\theta^o)$ has detected the third mode of the trimodal density, EMM efficiency increases rapidly.

The second question to address is how many moments to include in the moment function ψ_f . As the computations in Gallant and Tauchen (1999) and Figure 1 suggest, the answer is as many as is required for f to well approximate p . The natural conclusion is that one should use standard statistical model selection criteria to determine f as we discuss later. This approach has a distinct advantage over the use of ψ_c in that there seems to be no objective statistical criterion for determining the number of moments to include in ψ_c .

4.2 SNP: A General Purpose Score Generator

As indicated in Subsection 4.1, the best choice of a moment function ψ to implement simulated method of moments is the score of a auxiliary model that closely approximates the density of the data. We have also seen that the SNP density is a useful, general purpose auxiliary model. In this section, we shall extend the SNP density to a general purpose auxiliary model suited to dynamic models. Here, y_t is multivariate, specifically a column vector of length M , and we write x_{t-1} for the lagged state vector, which typically is comprised of lags y_{t-j} . For simplicity, we often suppress the time subscript and write y and x for the contemporaneous value and lagged state vector, respectively. With these conventions, the stationary density (2) of the dynamic system under consideration can be written $p(x, y|\rho)$ and its transition density as

$$p(y|x, \rho) = \frac{p(x, y|\rho)}{\int p(x, y|\rho) dx} \quad (13)$$

If one expands $\sqrt{p(x, y|\rho^o)}$ in a Hermite series and derives the transition density of the truncated expansion, then one obtains a transition density $f_K(y_t|x_{t-1})$ that has the form of a location-scale transform

$$y_t = Rz_t + \mu_{x_{t-1}},$$

of an innovation z_t (Gallant, Hsieh, and Tauchen, 1991). The density function of this innovation is

$$h_K(z|x) = \frac{[\mathcal{P}(z, x)]^2 \phi(z)}{\int [\mathcal{P}(u, x)]^2 \phi(u) du}, \quad (14)$$

where $\mathcal{P}(z, x)$ is a polynomial in (z, x) of degree K and $\phi(z)$ denotes the multivariate normal density function with dimension M , mean vector zero, and variance-covariance matrix the identity.

It proves convenient to express the polynomial $\mathcal{P}(z, x)$ in a rectangular expansion

$$\mathcal{P}(z, x) = \sum_{\alpha=0}^{K_z} \left(\sum_{\beta=0}^{K_x} a_{\beta\alpha} x^\beta \right) z^\alpha, \quad (15)$$

where α and β are multi-indexes of maximal degrees K_z and K_x , respectively, and $K = K_z + K_x$. Because $[\mathcal{P}(z, x)]^2 / \int [\mathcal{P}(u, x)]^2 \phi(u) du$ is a homogeneous function of the coefficients of the polynomial $\mathcal{P}(z, x)$, $\mathcal{P}(z, x)$ can only be determined to within a scalar multiple. To achieve a unique representation, the constant term a_{00} of the polynomial $\mathcal{P}(z, x)$ is put to one. With this normalization, $h_K(z|x)$ has the interpretation of a series expansion whose leading term is the normal density $\phi(z)$ and whose higher order terms induce departures from normality.

The location function is linear

$$\mu_x = b_0 + Bx_{t-1}, \quad (16)$$

where b_0 is a vector and B is a matrix.

It proves advantageous in applications to allow the scale R of the location-scale transformation $y = Rz + \mu_x$ to depend on x because it reduces the degree K_x required to achieve an adequate approximation to the transition density $p(y|x, \rho^\theta)$. With this, the location-scale transformation becomes

$$y = R_x z + \mu_x \quad (17)$$

where R_x is an upper triangular matrix that depends on x . The two choices of R_x that have given good results in applications are an ARCH-like moving average specification and a GARCH-like ARMA specification, which we describe next.

For an ARCH specification, let $R_{x_{t-1}}$ be a linear function of the absolute values of the elements of the vectors $y_{t-L_r} - \mu_{x_{t-1-L_r}}$ through $y_{t-1} - \mu_{x_{t-2}}$, viz.

$$\text{vech}(R_{x_{t-1}}) = \rho_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{L_r} P_{(i)} |y_{t-1-L_r+i} - \mu_{x_{t-2-L_r+i}}|$$

where $\text{vech}(R)$ denotes a vector of length $M(M+1)/2$ containing the elements of the upper triangle of R , ρ_0 is a vector of length $M(M+1)/2$, $P_{(1)}$ through $P_{(L_r)}$ are $M(M+1)/2$ by M matrices, and $|y - \mu|$ denotes a vector containing

the absolute values of $y - \mu$. The classical ARCH (Engle, 1982) has

$$\Sigma_{x_{t-1}} = R_{x_{t-1}} R'_{x_{t-1}}$$

depending on a linear function of squared lagged residuals. The SNP version of ARCH is more akin to the suggestions of Nelson (1991) and Davidian and Carroll (1987).

Since the absolute value function is not differentiable, $|u|$ is approximated in the formula for R_x above by the twice continuously differentiable function

$$a(u) = \begin{cases} (|100u| - \pi/2 + 1) / 100 & |100u| \geq \pi/2 \\ (1 - \cos(100u)) / 100 & |100u| < \pi/2 \end{cases}$$

The scale factor 100 above represents a compromise. Small values, such as 3, improve the stability of the computations but then $a(\cdot)$ does not approximate $|\cdot|$ well.

For a GARCH specification, let

$$\begin{aligned} \text{vech}(R_{x_{t-1}}) = & \rho_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{L_r} P(i) |y_{t-1-L_r+i} - \mu_{x_{t-2-L_r+i}}| \\ & + \sum_{i=1}^{L_g} \text{diag}(G(i)) R_{x_{t-2-L_g+i}} \end{aligned}$$

where $G_{(1)}$ through $G_{(L_g)}$ are vectors of length $M(M+1)/2$.

The classical GARCH (Bollerslev, 1986) has $\Sigma_{x_{t-1}}$ expressed in terms of squared lagged residuals and lagged values of $\Sigma_{x_{t-1}}$. As with the SNP variant of ARCH, the SNP version of GARCH is expressed in terms of the absolute value of lagged residuals and standard deviations.

Note that when $L_g > 0$, the SNP model is not Markovian and that one must know both x_{t-1} and $R_{x_{t-2-L_g}}$ through $R_{x_{t-2}}$ to move forward to the value for y_t . Thus, x_{t-1} and $R_{x_{t-2-L_g}}$ through $R_{x_{t-2}}$ represent the state of the system at time $t-1$ and must be retained in order to evaluate the SNP conditional density of y_t or to iterate the SNP model forward by simulation. If one wants to compute the derivatives of the SNP density with respect to model parameters, one must retain the derivatives of $R_{x_{t-2-L_g}}$ through $R_{x_{t-2}}$ with respect to model parameters as well.

The change of variable formula applied to the location-scale transform (17) and innovation density (14) yields the SNP density

$$f_K(y | x, \theta) = \frac{h_K[R_x^{-1}(y - \mu_x) | x]}{\det(R_x)}. \quad (18)$$

Hereafter, we shall distinguish among the lag lengths appearing in the various components of the expansion. The number of lags in μ_x is denoted L_u ; the number of lags in R_x is $L_u + L_r$, and the number of lags in the x part of the polynomial, $\mathcal{P}(z, x)$, is L_p . We set $L = \max(L_u, L_u + L_r, L_p)$.

Large values of M can generate a large number of interactions (cross product terms) for even modest settings of degree K_z ; similarly, for $M \cdot L_p$ and K_x . Accordingly, we introduce two additional tuning parameters, I_z and I_x , to represent filtering out of these high order interactions. $I_z = 0$ means no interactions are suppressed, $I_z = 1$ means the highest order interactions are suppressed, namely those of degree K_z . In general, a positive I_z means all interactions of order larger than $K_z - I_z$ are suppressed; similarly for $K_x - I_x$.

In summary, L_u , L_g , and L_r determine the location-scale transformation $y = R_x z_t + \mu_x$ and hence determine the nature of the leading term of the expansion. The number of lags in the location function μ_x is L_u and the number of lags in the scale function R_x is $L_u + L_r$. The number of lags that go into the x part of the polynomial $\mathcal{P}(z, x)$ is L_p . The parameters K_z , K_x , I_z and I_x determine the degree of $\mathcal{P}(z, x)$ and hence the nature of the innovation process $\{z_t\}$.

Putting certain of the tuning parameters to zero implies sharp restrictions on the process $\{y_t\}$, the more interesting of which are displayed in Table 1.

5 Reprojection: Analysis of Post-Estimation Simulations

5.1 Simple Illustration of Volatility Extraction

We start with an illustration that gives the main idea of reprojection. In Gallant and Tauchen (2001a) we estimated via EMM the vector SDE with two stochastic volatility factors:

$$\begin{aligned} dU_{1t} &= \alpha_{10}dt + \exp(\beta_{10} + \beta_{12}U_{2t} + \beta_{13}U_{3t})dW_{1t} \\ dU_{2t} &= \alpha_{22}U_{2t}dt + dW_{2t} \\ dU_{3t} &= \alpha_{33}U_{3t}dt + dW_{3t} \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

Table 1. Restrictions Implied by Settings of the Tuning Parameters.

Parameter setting	Characterization of $\{y_t\}$
$L_u = 0, L_g = 0, L_r = 0, L_p \geq 0, K_z = 0, K_x = 0$	iid Gaussian
$L_u > 0, L_g = 0, L_r = 0, L_p \geq 0, K_z = 0, K_x = 0$	Gaussian VAR
$L_u > 0, L_g = 0, L_r = 0, L_p \geq 0, K_z > 0, K_x = 0$	semiparametric VAR
$L_u \geq 0, L_g = 0, L_r > 0, L_p \geq 0, K_z = 0, K_x = 0$	Gaussian ARCH
$L_u \geq 0, L_g = 0, L_r > 0, L_p \geq 0, K_z > 0, K_x = 0$	semiparametric ARCH
$L_u \geq 0, L_g > 0, L_r > 0, L_p \geq 0, K_z = 0, K_x = 0$	Gaussian GARCH
$L_u \geq 0, L_g > 0, L_r > 0, L_p \geq 0, K_z > 0, K_x = 0$	semiparametric GARCH
$L_u \geq 0, L_g \geq 0, L_r \geq 0, L_p > 0, K_z > 0, K_x > 0$	nonlinear nonparametric

Notes: L_u is the lag length of the location function. L_g is the lag length of the GARCH (autoregressive) part of the scale function. L_r is the lag length of the ARCH (moving average) part of the scale function. L_p is the lag length of the polynomials in x that determine the coefficients of the Hermite expansion of the innovation density. K_z is the degree of the Hermite expansion of the innovation density. K_x is the degree of polynomials in x that determine the coefficients of the Hermite expansion of the innovation density.

using daily data on Microsoft (MSFT), 1986-2001. Here U_{1t} is the log price process and

$$y_t = 100 * (U_{1t} - U_{1,t-1})$$

at integer t is the observation equation for the geometric daily return expressed as a percent. U_{2t} and U_{3t} are stochastic volatility factors. We find that the stochastic volatility model cleanly separate into two distinct factors: a very persistent factor, U_{2t} , which displays very little mean reversion, and a very strongly mean-reverting factor, U_{3t} .

Thus, from the observed data set $\{\tilde{y}_t\}_1^n$ we generated via EMM the parameter estimate $\hat{\rho}$ for each model under consideration. We now summarize how to proceed backwards to infer the unobserved state vector from the observed process as implied by a particular model. The approach follows the reprojec-tion method proposed by Gallant and Tauchen (1998), which is a numerically intensive, simulation-based, nonlinear Kalman filtering technique.

The idea is relatively straightforward. As a by-product of the estimation, we have a long simulated realization of the state vector $\{\hat{U}_t\}_{t=1}^N$ and the corresponding $\{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=1}^N$ for $\rho = \hat{\rho}$. Working within the simulation, we can calibrate the functional form of the conditional distribution of functions of \hat{U}_t given $\{\hat{y}_\tau\}_{\tau=1}^t$. Given the calibrated functions determined within the simulation, we simply evaluate them on the observed data. More generally, we can determine

within the simulation the conditional distribution of functions of \hat{U}_t given $\{\hat{y}_\tau\}_{\tau=1}^t$ and then evaluate the result on observed data $\{\tilde{y}_t\}_{t=1}^n$.

In the application we work with the conditional mean functions of the volatility factors. Our targets are

$$\mathcal{E}(U_{it}|\{y_\tau\}_{\tau=1}^t), \quad i = 2, 3 \quad (20)$$

To begin, we generated simulations $\{\hat{U}_t\}_{t=1}^N$, $\{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=1}^N$, at the estimated $\tilde{\rho}$ and $N = 100,000$. Keep in mind that, in order to generate predictions of U_{2t} and U_{3t} via filtering y_t , we are allowed to use very general functions of $\{y_\tau\}_{\tau=1}^t$ and that we have a huge data set work with. After some experimentation, we found the following strategy, which seems to work quite well. We estimate an SNP-GARCH model on the \hat{y}_t because the SNP-GARCH model provides a convenient representation of the one-step ahead conditional variance $\hat{\sigma}_t^2$ of \hat{y}_{t+1} given $\{\hat{y}_\tau\}_{\tau=1}^t$. We then run regressions of \hat{U}_{it} on $\hat{\sigma}_t^2$, \hat{y}_t , and $|\hat{y}_\tau|$ and lags of these series, with lag lengths generously long. (Keep in mind the huge size of the simulated data set; these regressions are essentially analytic projections.) At this point we have calibrated, inside the simulations, functions that give predicted values of U_{2t} and U_{3t} given $\{y_\tau\}_{\tau=1}^t$. Lastly, we evaluate these functions on the observed data series $\{\tilde{y}_\tau\}_{\tau=1}^t$, which gives reprojected values \tilde{U}_{2t} and \tilde{U}_{3t} for the volatility factors at the data points.

The figures in Gallant and Tauchen (2001a) indicate that \tilde{U}_{2t} is slowly moving while \tilde{U}_{3t} is quite choppy. Interestingly, the crash of 1987 is attributed to a large realization of the strongly mean reverting factor, U_{3t} . This result suggest that the volatility increase surround the 87 crash was rather temporary, which appears consistent with raw data plots. Also, the reprojected volatility factor from a model with only one stochastic volatility factor misses much of the crash of 1987, which reflects further on the shortcomings of single-factor stochastic volatility models.

5.2 General Theory of Reprojection

Having the EMM estimate of system parameters $\hat{\rho}_n$ in hand, we should like to elicit the dynamics of the implied conditional density for observables

$$\hat{p}(y_0|x_{-1}) = p(y_0|x_{-1}, \hat{\rho}_n). \quad (21)$$

Recall that x_{-1} represents the lagged state vector, and so in the Markov case (21) is an abbreviated notation for

$$\hat{p}(y_0|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1}) = p(y_0|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1}, \hat{\rho}_n).$$

Although analytic expressions are not available, an unconditional expectation

$$\mathcal{E}_{\hat{\rho}_n}(g) = \int \cdots \int g(y_{-L}, \dots, y_0) p(y_{-L}, \dots, y_0 | \hat{\rho}_n) dy_{-L} \cdots dy_0$$

can be computed by generating a simulation $\{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=-L}^N$ from the system with parameters set to $\hat{\rho}_n$ and using

$$\mathcal{E}_{\hat{\rho}_n}(g) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{t=0}^N g(\hat{y}_{t-L}, \dots, \hat{y}_t).$$

With respect to unconditional expectation so computed, define

$$\hat{\theta}_K = \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta \in \mathfrak{R}^{p_K}} \mathcal{E}_{\hat{\rho}_n} \log f_K(y_0 | x_{-1}, \theta)$$

where $f_K(y_0 | x_{-1}, \theta)$ is the SNP density given by (18). Let

$$\hat{f}_K(y_0 | x_{-1}) = f_K(y_0 | x_{-1}, \hat{\theta}_K). \quad (22)$$

Theorem 1 of Gallant and Long (1997) states that

$$\lim_{K \rightarrow \infty} \hat{f}_K(y_0 | x_{-1}) = \hat{p}(y_0 | x_{-1}).$$

Convergence is with respect to a weighted Sobolev norm that they describe. Of relevance here is that convergence in their norm implies that \hat{f}_K as well as its partial derivatives in $(y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1}, y_0)$ converge uniformly over \mathfrak{R}^ℓ , $\ell = M(L+1)$, to those of \hat{p} . We propose to study the dynamics of \hat{p} by using \hat{f}_K as an approximation. This result provides the justification for our approach.

To approximate \hat{p} by \hat{f}_K values of $(L_u, L_r, L_p, K_z, I_z, K_x, I_x)$ must be chosen. It seems natural to reuse the values of the projection that determined $\hat{\rho}_n$ because, among other things, that choice facilitates a comparison of the constrained dynamics determined by the estimated system with the unconstrained dynamics determined by the data. However, if the estimated nonlinear system is to be sampled at a different frequency than was the data, then it will be necessary to redetermine $(L_u, L_r, L_p, K_z, I_z, K_x, I_x)$ by the methods described in Subsection 2.2. We anticipate that the dynamics at a different sampling frequency will not often be of interest and we shall presume in what follows that the sampling frequency is the same as the data. The modifications required when it differs are mentioned as they occur.

Of immediate interest in eliciting the dynamics of observables are the first two one-step-ahead conditional moments

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{E}(y_0|x_{-1}) &= \int y_0 f_K(y_0|x_{-1}, \hat{\theta}_K) dy_0 \\ \text{Var}(y_0|x_{-1}) &= \int [y_0 - \mathcal{E}(y_0|x_{-1})][y_0 - \mathcal{E}(y_0|x_{-1})]' f_K(y_0|x_{-1}, \hat{\theta}_K) dy_0\end{aligned}$$

where $x_{-1} = (y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1})$. Owing to the form of a Hermite expansion, expressions for these integrals as linear combinations of high order moments of the normal distribution are available (Gallant and Tauchen, 1992). The moments themselves may be obtained from standard recursions for the moments of the normal (Johnson and Kotz, 1970).

Filtered volatility is the one-step-ahead conditional standard deviation evaluated at data values; viz.

$$\sqrt{\text{Var}(y_{k0} | x_{-1})} \Big|_{x_{-1}=(\tilde{y}_{t-L}, \dots, \tilde{y}_{t-1})} \quad t = 0, \dots, n. \quad (23)$$

In (23), \tilde{y}_t denotes data and y_{k0} denotes the k th element of the vector y_0 , $k = 1, \dots, M$. Because filtered volatility is a data dependent concept, the dynamic system must be sampled at the same frequency as the data to determine \hat{f}_K . It has been claimed that filtered volatility could not be recovered from method of moments estimates of a nonlinear dynamic system with partially observed state and that this has been a criticism of such estimates. However, as just seen, filtered volatility is easily computed using the reprojection notion.

We are using the term “filtered volatility” with a purely ARCH-type meaning as in the nonlinear impulse-response literature. Another usage of filtering, perhaps the predominant one, involves estimating an unobserved state variable conditional upon all past and present observables. Filtering according to this notion (for L lags rather than back to the first observation) can be accomplished through reprojection. This may be seen by noting that one can repeat the derivation with y taken to be a contemporaneous unobserved variable and x taken to be contemporaneous and lagged observed variables. Denote y and x thus modified by y^* and x^* , respectively. The result is a density $f_K(y^*|x^*, \theta)$ of the same form as (18) but with altered dimensions. One can simulate $\{y_t^*, x_t^*\}$ from the structural model and perform the reprojection step to get $\hat{f}_K(y^*|x^*)$ as described above. The proof of Gallant and Long (1997) can be altered to justify these modifications. How one uses $\hat{f}_K(y^*|x^*)$ will be application specific. For instance, one might wish obtain an estimate of

$$y_t^* = \int_t^{t+T} \exp(\beta_{10} + \beta_{12}U_{2t} + \beta_{13}U_{3t}) dt$$

in a system such as (19) for the purpose of pricing an option. In this instance, $x_t^* = (U_{1,t-L}, \dots, U_{1t})$, and $\hat{y}_t^*(x^*) = \int y^* \hat{f}_K(y^*|x^*) dy^*$. To avoid any confusion, we shall refer to (23) as reprojected volatility hereafter. We now return to the

main discussion.

One-step-ahead dynamics may be studied by means of plots of (the elements of) $\mathcal{E}(y_0|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta)$, $\text{Var}(y_0|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta)$, or other conditional moments against δ where Δ is an M -vector with δ in the i th element and zeroes elsewhere. More general perturbation strategies may be considered such as $\Delta = \delta \tilde{y}_\tau$ where \tilde{y}_τ is a point chosen from the data such that perturbations in the direction $\delta \tilde{y}_\tau$ take contemporaneous correlations among the components of y_t into account. Perturbations to a single element of y_{-1} in a multivariate setting may represent a movement that is improbable according to the dynamics of the system. Some thought must be given to the perturbation scheme in multivariate applications if plots of conditional moments against δ are to be informative. This issue is discussed in Gallant, Rossi, and Tauchen (1993).

Two methods for choosing (y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1}) for these plots suggest themselves. The first is to put y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} to the sample mean, that is, put $(y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1}) = (\bar{y}, \dots, \bar{y})$ where $\bar{y} = (1/n) \sum_{t=0}^n \tilde{y}_t$, and plot, for instance,

$$\text{Var}(y_0|\bar{y}, \dots, \bar{y} + \Delta) \tag{24}$$

against δ . The second is to average over the data and plot, for instance,

$$(1/n) \sum_{t=0}^n \text{Var}(y_t|\tilde{y}_{t-L}, \dots, \tilde{y}_{t-1} + \Delta) \tag{25}$$

against δ . If the estimated system is sampled at a different frequency than the data, then one plots the average $(1/N) \sum_{t=0}^N \text{Var}(y_t|\hat{y}_{t-L}, \dots, \hat{y}_{t-1} + \Delta)$ over a simulation $\{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=-L}^N$ at the correct frequency instead.

In an economic system, the graphics just described are interpreted as representing the consequences of a shock to the system that comes as a surprise to the economic agents involved, and similar interpretations hold in other contexts. If one wants to consider the consequences of forcing the system to a different equilibrium, the graphic obtained by plotting $\text{Var}(y_0|y_{-L} + \Delta, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta)$ against δ is relevant. They can be quite different.

Multi-step-ahead dynamics may be studied by considering plots of the trajectories

$$\mathcal{E}[g(y_{j-L}, \dots, y_{j-1})|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta], \quad j = 0, 1, \dots, J, \tag{26}$$

where $g(y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1})$ is a time invariant function whose choice is discussed immediately below. As discussed in Gallant, Rossi, and Tauchen (1993), if one

sets the initial condition to $(y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta) = (\bar{y}, \dots, \bar{y} + \Delta)$ it is helpful to net out transients by plotting either

$$\mathcal{E}[g(y_{j-L}, \dots, y_{j-1})|\bar{y}, \dots, \bar{y} + \Delta] - \mathcal{E}[g(y_{j-L}, \dots, y_{j-1})|\bar{y}, \dots, \bar{y}] \quad (27)$$

or

$$\frac{1}{n} \sum_{t=0}^n \mathcal{E} [g(y_{t+j-L}, \dots, y_{t+j-1})|\tilde{y}_{t-L}, \dots, \tilde{y}_{t-1} + \Delta] \quad (28)$$

against $j = 0, 1, \dots, J$ instead of (26). Although (28) is conceptually superior, in the examples considered by Gallant, Rossi, and Tauchen (1993), plots of (27) had nearly the same appearance and are much cheaper to compute.

To compute (26), one exploits the fact that there are efficient algorithms for sampling the density $\hat{f}_K(y_0|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta)$ recursively to obtain R simulated futures

$$\{\hat{y}_{0,i}, \dots, \hat{y}_{J,i}\}, \quad i = 1, \dots, R,$$

each conditional upon $y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta$ (Gallant and Tauchen, 1992). Prepend $\{y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta\}$ to each future to obtain the sequences

$$\{\hat{y}_{-L,i}, \dots, \hat{y}_{-1,i}, \hat{y}_{0,i}, \dots, \hat{y}_{J,i}\}, \quad i = 1, \dots, R.$$

$\mathcal{E}[g(y_{j-L}, \dots, y_{j-1})|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta]$ can then be computed as

$$\mathcal{E}[g(y_{j-L}, \dots, y_{j-1})|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta] = \frac{1}{R} \sum_{i=1}^R g(\hat{y}_{j-L,i}, \dots, \hat{y}_{j-1,i}).$$

A general discussion of appropriate choice of $g(y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1})$ for nonlinear impulse-response analysis, the analysis of turning points, etc. is in Gallant, Rossi, and Tauchen (1993). Of these, the more routinely useful are the conditional mean profiles

$$\begin{aligned} & \mu_j(y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta) \\ &= \mathcal{E} [\mathcal{E}(y_{k,j}|y_{j-L}, \dots, y_{j-1})|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta], \quad j = -1, \dots, J \end{aligned}$$

for the components $k = 1, \dots, M$ of y , which extend the impulse-response profiles of Sims (1980) to nonlinear systems, and conditional volatility profiles

$$\begin{aligned} & \sigma_j^2(y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta) \\ & = \mathcal{E} [\text{Var}(y_{k,j}|y_{j-L}, \dots, y_{j-1})|y_{-L}, \dots, y_{-1} + \Delta], \quad j = 0, \dots, J \end{aligned}$$

which extend the volatility impulse-response profiles of Engle, Ito, and Lin (1990) and Bollerslev and Engle (1993) to nonlinear systems. Plots of the conditional mean profile reveal the future dynamic response of system forecasts to a contemporaneous shock to the system. These will, in general, be nonlinear and can differ markedly when the sign of δ changes. Similarly for volatility.

Persistence can be studied by inspection of profile bundles, which are overplots for $t = 0, \dots, n$ of the profiles

$$\{\mu_j(\tilde{y}_{t-L}, \dots, \tilde{y}_{t-1}), j = -1, \dots, J\} \quad (29)$$

That is, one overplots profiles conditional on each observed datum. If the thickness of the profile bundle tends to collapse to zero rapidly, then the process is mean reverting. If the thickness tends to retain its width, then the process is persistent. Similarly, the profile bundles

$$\{\{\sqrt{\sigma_j^2}(\tilde{y}_{t-L}, \dots, \tilde{y}_{t-1}), j = 0, \dots, J\}, t = 0, \dots, n\} \quad (30)$$

can be used to examine volatility for persistence. These are extensions to nonlinear systems of notions of persistence due to Bollerslev and Engle (1993). Rather than comparing plots, one can instead compare half-lives. A half-life \hat{j} can be obtained by computing the range R_j at each ordinate $j = 0, \dots, J$ of either (29) or (30), regressing $\log R_j$ on $j\beta$, and using $(-\log 2)/\hat{\beta}$ as an estimate of half-life.

Extensive examples of the use of the methods described here for elucidating the joint dynamics of stock prices and volume are in Gallant, Rossi, and Tauchen (1993).

6 Applications

There are now several applications of EMM to substantive problems in continuous time estimation and economics more broadly. For reasons of space, we can only review in detail a few applications. At the end of this section we give a short overview of the other applications of which we are currently aware.

6.1.1 Jump Diffusions

We start with the application of Andersen, Benzoni, and Lund (2001). They consider the familiar stochastic volatility diffusion for an observed stock price S_t given by

$$\frac{dS_t}{S_t} = (\mu + cV_t)dt + \sqrt{V_t}dW_{1t} \quad (31)$$

where the unobserved volatility process V_t is either log-linear

$$\text{Log linear: } d \log(V_t) = [\alpha - \beta \log(V_t)] + \eta dW_{2t} \quad (32)$$

or square-root (affine)

$$\text{Square root: } dV_t = (\alpha - \beta V_t) + \eta \sqrt{V_t} dW_{2t}. \quad (33)$$

Here, W_{1t} and W_{2t} are standard Brownian motions that are correlated with $\text{corr}(dW_{1t}, dW_{2t}) = \rho$. The notation is self-explanatory taking note that the term cV_t reflects possible GARCH in mean effects. The version with the log-linear volatility dynamics has attracted substantial attention in the econometrics literature, while the version with square-root volatility dynamics has attracted attention in the finance literature because of the availability of closed form solutions for options prices.

Andersen, Benzoni, and Lund use EMM to estimate both versions of the stochastic volatility model with daily S&P 500 Stock Index data, January 2, 1953 – December 31, 1996. Their auxiliary model is an E-GARCH model (Nelson, 1991) with an SNP-like Hermite series representation for the error density. They report that the EMM chi-square test statistic (7) sharply rejects both versions; likewise, the EMM t -ratio diagnostics (9) indicate that these models have difficulty accommodating the tail behavior of the data.

These authors also consider a more general jump diffusion stochastic volatility models

$$\frac{dS_t}{S_t} = (\mu + cV_t - \lambda_t \bar{\kappa})dt + \sqrt{V_t}dW_{1t} + \kappa_t dq_t \quad (34)$$

with jump intensity given by

$$\lambda_t = \lambda_0 + \lambda_1 V_t \quad (35)$$

and jump size κ_t given by

$$\log(1 + \kappa_t) \sim N[\log(1 + \bar{\kappa}) - 0.5\delta^2, \delta^2]$$

The jump diffusion models pass the EMM chi-squared test of fit and the EMM diagnostic t -ratio tests, which suggests an adequate fit. Once jumps are included in the model, the test statistics reveal no substantive difference between the log-linear and square-root specifications for volatility. Also, their estimates suggest little evidence for state-dependent jumps in (35). They go on to compute hypothetical options prices under various assumptions about the risk premiums on volatility and jump risks. They illustrate the role of stochastic volatility and jumps in generating anomalies such as volatility smiles and smirks.

6.1.2 *Alternative Models*

The fact that adding a jump component to a basic stochastic volatility model improves the fit so much reflects two familiar characteristics of financial price movements: thick non-Gaussian tails and persistent time-varying volatility. A model with a single stochastic volatility factor can accommodate either of these characteristics separately, but not both together. The addition of the jump factor accounts for the thick tails. Doing so complicates the estimation, however, because a direct simulation of a jump diffusion entails a discontinuous path and thereby a discontinuous objective function. Andersen, Benzoni, and Lund need to implement a simulation strategy that smoothes out the sample path across a jump boundary.

An alternative to adding the jump component is to add another stochastic volatility factor. This step is undertaken via EMM in Gallant, Hsu, and Tauchen (1999), with some encouraging initial results. A more extensive investigation is undertaken in the next paper we review.

6.1.3 *Volatility Index Models*

Chernov, Gallant, Ghysels, and Tauchen (2001) consider a four factor model of the form

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dP_t}{P_t} &= (\alpha_{10} + \alpha_{12}U_{2t})dt + \sigma(U_{3t}, U_{4t})(dW_{1t} + \psi_{13}dW_{3t} + \psi_{14}dW_{4t}) \\ dU_{2t} &= (\alpha_{20} + \alpha_{22})dt + \beta_{20}dW_{2t} \end{aligned} \quad (36)$$

In the above, P_t represents the financial price series evolving in continuous time; U_{2t} is a stochastic drift factor; U_{3t} and U_{4t} are stochastic volatility factors

that affect price evolution through the volatility index function $\sigma(U_{3t}, U_{4t})$.

These authors consider two broad classes of setups for the volatility index functions and factor dynamics: an affine setup, where the index function and volatility dynamics are

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma(U_{3t}, U_{4t}) &= \sqrt{\beta_{10} + \beta_{13}U_{3t} + \beta_{14}U_{4t}} \\ dU_{it} &= (\alpha_{i0} + \alpha_{ii}U_{it})dt + \sqrt{\beta_{i0} + \beta_{ii}U_{it}}dW_{it} \quad i = 3, 4\end{aligned}\tag{37}$$

and a logarithmic setup where

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma(U_{3t}, U_{4t}) &= \exp(\beta_{10} + \beta_{13}U_{3t} + \beta_{14}U_{4t}) \\ dU_{it} &= (\alpha_{i0} + \alpha_{ii}U_{it})dt + (\beta_{i0} + \beta_{ii}U_{it})dW_{it} \quad i = 3, 4\end{aligned}\tag{38}$$

The simpler stochastic volatility models with only one volatility factor, (31) above, are subsumed in this setup by taking $\beta_{14} = 0$.

Chernov, Gallant, Ghysels, and Tauchen (2001) apply EMM to estimate the above models along with affine jump diffusion models, using daily data on the DOW Index, January 2, 1953, to July 16, 1999. They find that models with two volatility factors, U_{3t} and U_{4t} , do much better on the EMM chi-squared specification test than do models with only a single volatility factor. They also find the logarithmic two-volatility factor models (38) outperform affine jump diffusions and basically provide an acceptable fit to the data. One of the volatility factors is extremely persistent and the other strongly mean reverting. Interestingly, the volatility feedback parameter, β_{ii} , is positive and very important for finding an acceptable fit. This parameter permits the local variability of the volatility factors to be high when the factors themselves are high, a characteristic of volatility that has been noted by others. The strongly mean reverting factor with the volatility feedback acts much like a jump factor in the return process itself.

At this point, it is not clear whether jump diffusions or multiple-factor models with appropriate factor dynamics are the right models for equity prices. The former, with jumps entered directly into the price process, are intuitively appealing models for financial prices. But the jumps generate complications for the simulations and estimation. On the other hand, the multifactor models are far easier to simulate and estimate and might prove more adaptable to derivatives computations, since all sample paths are continuous and standard hedging arguments and the Ito calculus apply.

6.2 Term Structure of Interest Rates

6.2.1 Affine Term Structure Models

Dai and Singleton (2000) apply EMM for estimation of an affine term structure model. In the affine setting, the vector of underlying state variables, Y_t , follows affine dynamics

$$dY_t = \bar{\mathcal{K}}[\bar{\theta} - Y_t]dt + \Sigma\sqrt{S_t}d\tilde{W}_t \quad (39)$$

where S_t is a diagonal matrix with entries $S_{ii,t} = \beta_{i0} + \beta'_i Y_t$. The short-rate of interest follows

$$r_t = \delta_0 + \delta'_y Y_t$$

On these assumptions for the risk neutral dynamics, the pure-discount bond prices are given by

$$P_t(\tau) = e^{A(\tau) - B(\tau)' Y_t}$$

where $A(\tau)$ and $B(\tau)$ are given by the solutions to ordinary differential equations.

Dai and Singleton use Euro-dollar swap rates, and the observation equation is a bit more complicated than in other applications due to the nature of swaps. The no-arbitrage swap rate, $r_{s\tau t}$, on a fixed for variable swap at times $t + k\tau_0$, $k = 1, 2, \dots, K$, $\tau = K\tau_0$, is

$$r_{s\tau t} = \frac{1 - P_t(K\tau_0)}{\sum_{k=1}^K P_t(k\tau_0)}$$

They estimate ATSMs using three observed variables $y_t = (y_{1t} \ y_{2t} \ y_{3t})'$:

y_{1t}	$-0.50 \log[P_t(0.50)]$	Six Month LIBOR
y_{2t}	r_{s2t}	Two-Year Swap Rate
y_{3t}	r_{s10t}	Ten-Year Swap Rate

This selection defines the observation function

$$y_t = \phi(Y_t, \rho)$$

where ρ contains all of the parameters of the Affine Term Structure Model (ATSM) to be estimated and tested.

Dai and Singleton focus on two stochastic volatility models for the term structure. One is due to Balduzzi, Das, Foresi, and Sundaram (1996), abbreviated (BDFS), (1996) and the other to Chen (1996). Each lies in a separate branch of the family of ATSMs. Dai and Singleton find that neither model fits the data, in sense that the overall goodness-of-fit chi-squared tests are very large relative to degrees of freedom and the diagnostic t -ratios are well above 2.0 in magnitude. However, if each model is expanded outwards to the maximal identified ATSM within its particular branch, then the chi-squared tests for both models become acceptable at conventional significance. To choose an overall preferred model, Dai and Singleton undertake additional analysis of post estimation simulations, much in the spirit of reprojection analysis described in Section 5 above, to select the extended version of the BDFS model as their preferred model.

6.2.2 Regime Switching Affine Term Structure Models

Bansal and Zhou (2001) examine a class affine models with stochastic regime switching. In their class of models, factor dynamics are constant-parameter affine within each regime, but the economy shifts stochastically between regimes. They deduce appropriate closed-form bond pricing functions that properly account for the regime switching. The use of regime switching models is intuitively appealing in view of potential effects on fixed income markets of various monetary regimes. Bansal and Zhou use monthly data, 1964–1995, on yields of six months and five year maturities for estimation. They use an ARCH-type model with an SNP error density as the auxiliary model. They find that a two-factor regime switching model passes the EMM test of specification while every model in broad class of two- and three-factor constant regime affine models is sharply rejected. They also find that the estimated regime switching model does pricing in pricing the cross section of bond prices beyond the two basis yields use in estimation.

6.2.3 Non-Affine Models

Ahn, Dittmar, and Gallant (2001) use EMM to examine the class of quadratic term structure models (QTSMs) for two monthly data sets, January 1952 – February 1991 and November 1971 – December 1999. They find that the QTSM models generally outperform affine models on the EMM diagnostic test, but no QTSM is capable of explaining the data. Ahn, Dittmar, Gallant, and Gao (2001) use EMM to estimate hybrid models where some underlying factors follow affine dynamics and the others quadratic. They find that hybrid

models do better than either class separately but are still rejected on the EMM chi-squared test of fit.

An interesting and promising line of research would be to combine the findings Bansal and Zhou (2001), who report favorable evidence for regime switching models, with those of Ahn, Dittmar, and Gallant (2001) who find encouraging evidence for quadratic term structure models.

6.3 Exchange Rates

Chung and Tauchen (2001) use EMM to test various target zone models of exchange rates. They consider the basic model where the fundamental k_t evolves as

$$dk_t = \mu dt + \sigma dw_t \quad (40)$$

and more general models with mean reversion

$$dk_t = -\gamma(k_t - k_0) + \sigma dw_t. \quad (41)$$

The central bank is assumed to follow policy actions to keep the fundamental within the band $[\underline{k}, \bar{k}]$. Letting s_t denote the exchange rate, then the target zone model generates the observation equation

$$s_t = G(k_t, \rho), \quad (42)$$

where the functional form of G is determined by the asset pricing equation that connects the dynamics of the exchange rate to the fundamental process k_t and by the boundary and smooth pasting conditions. Above, ρ represents the parameters. See Delgado and Dumas (1991) for details on specification and solution of target zone models. Evidently, it is relatively simple to simulate exchange rate data from a target zone model and thereby implement EMM.

Chung and Tauchen (2001) apply the procedure to weekly French franc/Deutsche mark exchange rates, 1987–1993. Their findings, in brief, are as follows. Consistent with previous empirical work, their specification tests reject all target zone models considered when bounds, \underline{k} and \bar{k} , are determined directly from officially announced bands. However, they find that a very acceptable fit is given by a target zone model with implicit bands, i.e., where \underline{k} and \bar{k} are free parameters, and the fundamental process is with mean reversion (41). Their results indicate that the central banks were operating within an implicit band inside the announced official bands. Interestingly, their results are consistent

with theoretical predictions for a bilateral analysis of exchange rates determined in a multilateral system (Pedroni, 2001). Finally, Chung and Tauchen present rather dramatic graphical evidence on the much better fit to the data provided by the preferred target zone model over a conventional stochastic volatility model for exchange rates.

6.4 General Equilibrium Models

Genotte and Marsh (1993) is an early effort to estimate a general equilibrium asset pricing model by simulated method of moments. In Bansal, Gallant, Hussey, and Tauchen (1993, 1995) we employ EMM to estimate small-scale general equilibrium model of international currency markets. More recently, Valderrama (2001) has implemented EMM for estimation of a small-scale real business cycle model.

Estimation of completely specified equilibrium models, i.e., starting from tastes and technology, faces a computational bottleneck. For candidate values of the parameter the users needs to solve for the equilibrium along the simulated trajectory. This computational requirement is generally more demanding than that required to estimate an SDE, as described in many of the preceding examples. However, recent sharp increases in computational power, in the form of faster processors linked by parallization software, indicate that it will soon be feasible to investigate more extensively via EMM such fully articulated models. In an initial effort, we are exploring the feasibility of confronting the models of and Bansal and Yaron (2000). These models entail complicated state and time nonseparable specifications for the stochastic discount factor and elaborate multi-factor models dynamics for cash flow dynamics, and thereby present serious challenges for estimation.

6.5 Additional Applications

Below we give a short summary of additional applications of which we are currently aware. Many of these applications preceded and motivated those described above. We apologize in advance for omissions and would be interested in knowing of applications we might have inadvertently left out; send an e-mail with the citation to either **george.tauchen@duke.edu** or **ron_gallant@unc.edu**.

Discrete time stochastic volatility models are well suited for EMM estimation. Van der Sluis (1997, 1999) implements the method and provides C/C+ code under Ox for discrete time univariate stochastic volatility models. Gallant,

Hsieh, and Tauchen (1997) use it to examine an extensive list of discrete time stochastic volatility models and document a set of empirical shortcomings.

Applications to estimation of continuous time stochastic volatility models include Engle and Lee (1996), Gallant and Tauchen (1997), and Gallant and Long (1997). Mixon (1998) generalizes the log-linear Gaussian continuous time model to include a feedback effect in volatility. Gallant, Hsu, and Tauchen (1999) also find this feedback effect to be important as well a second volatility factor in their investigation of daily returns and range data. Chernov, Gallant, Ghysels, and Tauchen (1999) use the technique to explore stochastic volatility and state dependent jump models.

A recent application to options pricing is Chernov and Ghysels (2000), who use the technique for joint estimation of the risk neutral and objective probability distributions using a panel of options data. Pastorello, Renault, and Touzi (2000) use it to deal with the estimation of continuous-time stochastic volatility models of option pricing.

Early applications to interest rate modeling include Pagan, Hall, and Martin (1996), who apply the technique for estimating a variety of factor models of the term structure, and Andersen and Lund (1997), who use the technique to estimate a stochastic volatility model of the short rate. Some evidence from EMM diagnostics on the shortcomings of a one factor model is set forth in Tauchen (1997) and in McManus and Watt (1999). An extensive analysis of multifactor models of short rate dynamics is in Gallant and Tauchen (1998). Other term structure applications include Martin and Pagan (2000) along with Dungey, Martin, and Pagan (2000), who undertake a factor analysis of bond yield spreads.

Some interesting recent applications to microeconomic problems include Nagypal (2001), who uses the method to estimate and compare various models of learning by doing. Austin and Katzman (2001) apply the method to estimate and test new models of multi-step auctions using tobacco auction data.

7 Software and Practical Issues

7.1 Code

We have written a Fortran software package that implements the EMM estimator for the case in which the structural model defines a strictly stationary process and there are no covariates. Everything is available by way of <http://www.econ.duke.edu/~get/emm.htm>. The structural model is that of

CASE 2 of Gallant and Tauchen (1996). The setup subsumes a wide variety of situations in macroeconomics and finance. The SNP model is the score generator. A reader should be able to modify the code to accommodate other score generators and to accommodate covariates, as in CASE 1 or CASE 3 of Gallant and Tauchen (1996). The most recent version of SNP is 8.8, which permits a GARCH specification for the conditional variance of the leading term of score generator. The first two worked examples in the EMM guide only use the ARCH feature, not the GARCH feature. The third uses the GARCH feature.

7.1.1 Availability-Unix

Fortran code and an EMM Guide as a PostScript file are available via anonymous ftp at `ftp.econ.duke.edu` in directory `~ftp/pub/get/emm`. (`~ftp` is the “home” directory for ftp; it is where one starts out when first coming in under anonymous ftp.) It is known to run on Sun, HP, and Linux workstations.

Since this implementation of EMM uses SNP model as the score generator, the code is tied to the SNP package, which is available in a similar manner: Fortran code, and a guide as a PostScript file, are available via anonymous ftp at `~ftp.econ.duke.edu` in subdirectory `~ftp/home/arg/snp`.

7.1.2 Availability-PC

PC versions of the EMM Fortran code are available via anonymous ftp at `ftp.econ.duke.edu` in directory `~ftp/pub/get/emm`. (`~ftp` is the “home” directory for ftp; it is where one starts out when first coming in under anonymous ftp.)

There is a PC version that runs under the free GNU g77 compiler, which is in the public domain. We distribute the compiler along with the EMM code. There is also a PC version for Microsoft’s PowerStation Fortran. The code and makefiles should be rather easily modifiable for other PC-based Fortran compilers. The user is alerted that not all Fortran compilers are IEEE compliant, and that can cause problems at run time if the job goes awry with divide by zero or some other problem. The GNU compiler is IEEE compliant whereas the Microsoft Power Station is not.

While we do our work in Unix, we have had good luck running EMM on a Pentium PC. We build and execute `emm.exe` within an MS-DOS window under Windows 95, 98, and 2000.

On the whole, the EMM package is useful and practical. An early version was used for estimating asset pricing models (Bansal *et al*, 1993, 1995). Recent versions of the package have been used in several applications including, among others, Chernov, Gallant, Ghysels, and Tauchen (2001) and Gallant and Tauchen (2001a) for stochastic volatility, Gallant and Long (1997), Chung and Tauchen (2001) for exchange rate modeling, and Dai and Singleton (2000), Ahn, Dittmar, Gallant, (2001), and Tauchen (1997) for interest rates.

Things can go awry, however. Sometimes, the program may stop prematurely, and there are some key issues of dynamic and numerical stability that the user must be attentive to. These issues affect the speed of the computations and relate to convergence problems in the nonlinear optimization. The following discussion pertains to these issues.

7.2.1 Start Value Problems and Scaling

Sometimes it is hard to get decent start values. We suggest intensive use of the recently-added randomly perturbed start value feature described in the EMM Manual. The user might need to experiment with a set of different input parameter files, a wide range of tweak factors, and many trial runs. This strategy will be numerically intensive, but so far it holds promise in our applications.

The nonlinear optimizer works best if it sees all parameters as roughly the same order of magnitude. We adopt a scaling so that all parameters as seen by the optimizer lie in the interval (-1,1). Since this scaling may not be the natural scaling for the data generator, one might want to adapt subroutine `gensim` so that the rescaling is done automatically, as in the logliner example distributed with the EMM code. We find the proper scaling mitigates many problems and accelerates convergence.

7.2.2 Enforcing Dynamic Stability

As noted in Section 3 above, the score generator should be dynamically stable. The SNP package incorporates a spline and/or logistic transformation feature that directly enforces dynamic stability on the score generator. This feature is discussed at length in the SNP User's Guide (Gallant and Tauchen, 2001c). The transformations only affect the conditioning variable x_{t-1} in the conditional density $f(y_t|x_{t-1}, \theta)$; it has no effect on y_t and it is not a prefiltering of the data. All it does is force a very gentle sort mean reversion so that $(\partial/\partial\theta) \log[f(\hat{y}_\tau|\hat{x}_{\tau-1}, \theta)]$ remains well defined should the optimizer happen to

pass back a parameter vector ρ such that the simulation $\{\hat{y}_\tau(\rho), \hat{x}_{\tau-1}(\rho)\}$ is explosive. For series that are very persistent, such as interest rates, we find the spline transformation the best while for series that are nearly *iid*, e.g., stock returns series, we recommend using the logistic transformation instead of the spline transformation. As explained in the SNP User’s Manual, the logistic really serves a different purpose than the spline. The logistic prevents large elements of x_{t-1} from unduly influencing the conditional variance computation.

7.2.3 *Bullet Proofing the DGP*

Recall the basic structure of EMM as outlined in Subsection 2.2 above. The core component of the distributed EMM package is the user-supplied simulator that takes as input a candidate vector ρ and generates a simulated realization. This component computes the mapping $\rho \rightarrow \{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=1}^N$. The EMM package evaluates the objective function

$$s_n(\rho) = m_n'(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n)(\tilde{\mathcal{I}}_n)^{-1}m_n(\rho, \tilde{\theta}_n)$$

and optimizes it with respect to ρ .

The optimizer should see $s_n(\rho)$ as a smooth surface and care should be taken in writing the DGP code to ensure small perturbations of ρ lead to small perturbations of $s_n(\rho)$. The most common source of a rough surfaces is the failure to control Monte Carlo jitter. One must ensure that when ρ changes the random numbers used to compute $\{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=1}^N$ do not change. Usually taking care that the seeds passed to random number generators do not change when ρ changes is an adequate precaution. However, as mentioned in connection with the discussion of Anderson, Benzoni and Lund (2001), additional precautions may be necessary when adding jumps or other discrete elements to simulated paths. Large values for N also contribute to smoothness.

Our experience is that the optimizer sometimes tries outlandishly extreme values of ρ , especially in the initial phase of the optimization when it’s acquiring information on functional form of the objective function. These outlandish values of ρ could entail taking the logs or square roots of negative numbers, dividing by zero, or undertaking other operations that generate numerical exceptions, either within the user’s simulator, within SNP (which evaluates to scores), or even within the optimizer itself. Our experience is that things proceed most smoothly when the user-supplied simulator can generate some kind of sensible simulated realization regardless of ρ and be able to compute something for $\rho \rightarrow \{\hat{y}_t\}_{t=1}^N$ given arbitrary ρ . We call this “bullet proofing” the code.

However, sometimes it extremely difficult to bullet proof completely the simulator (especially for diffusion models) and numerical exceptions occur that generate NaN's. On a Unix workstation, the Fortran compiler usually has produced an executable that can appropriately propagate the NaN's and the EMM objective function evaluates to either Inf or NaN. Typically, the optimizer distributed with the code can recover, as it realizes that the particular value of ρ that led to the disaster is very unpromising and it tries another. The cost of this is that the program slows down considerably while handling the numerical exceptions along a very long simulated realization.

On the other hand, on a PC running a Windows Fortran, the numerical exceptions can cause the job to halt immediately and control to be passed back to the operating system. The PC user should try more bullet proofing, better start values, and perhaps checking the Fortran documentation for compiler switches to set so that the executable can appropriately propagate the NaN's.

7.3 *New Developments and Parallelization*

The EMM code is trivially parallelizable and we have had excellent results using Linux clusters. These are several interconnected Intel or AMD machines which are typically rack mounted. A common configuration is eight or so nodes each with a 2 CPU motherboard, 1MB memory, and 80GB hard disk that are connected via a 100Mbps ethernet switch. An excellent reference is Specter (2000).

There are a variety of parallelization strategies that one might employ, as described by Foster (1995). Briefly, they are as follows: *Shell Scripts*. The interconnected nodes are secure so that rcp, rsh, etc. do not need to be disabled. Some programs, such as nonlinear optimizers that use multiple, random starts, are so embarrassingly parallelizable, that parallelization can be done with shell scripts alone. *Message Passing Interface (MPI)*. The industry-standard protocol for implementing parallel processing. Allows communication among processes running on different processors. Architecture independent: Code written for a Linux cluster will run on multiple-processor, shared-memory machines. The recommended strategy. *Parallel Virtual Machine (PVM)*. Syntax similar to MPI. Runs on heterogeneous architectures. Can be installed and run on a user's account without requiring the user to have administrative privileges. *Parallelized Libraries*. Allows sequential code to have some of the benefits of parallelism. Works best on shared-memory, multiple-processor machines. Can actually impede performance if coupled with MPI or PVM. *High Performance Fortran*. A sort of hybrid of the strategies above, allows both threads and message passing. Worked poorly for us because the compiler that we tried, from the leading vendor, turned out to be of such low quality that it could not

compile LAPACK properly and was not IEEE compliant.

The distributed EMM code can be parallelized using shell scripts. These scripts are available at the distribution site mentioned above. The strategy is simple: Each node contains an exact copy of the user's directory structure where EMM runs are executed. The file `emmntl.dat`, contains lines of text each describing a perturbation strategy, as discussed above, an input parameter file names, and an output parameter file name. The shell scripts fragment this file, which resides on the master node, parcel the fragments out to each slave node, and execute EMM on all nodes. When runs are completed the output parameter files are collected at the master node. The state of the directory on the master node at completion is the same as if all runs had occurred on a serial machine. The improvement in performance is linear in the number of CPU's on the cluster because there is not message passing overhead involved.

8 Conclusion

We described a simulated score method of moments estimator based on the following idea: Use the expectation with respect to the structural model of the score function of an auxiliary model as the vector of moment conditions for GMM estimation. Making the procedure operational requires an estimate of the parameters of the auxiliary model and computation of the expectation via simulation. Strategies for doing this were set forth, considerations regarding choice of the auxiliary model were discussed, and the SNP density, which is a sieve, was described as a general purpose auxiliary model. When the auxiliary model is chosen to closely approximate the characteristics of the observed data, the estimation method is termed efficient method of moments (EMM). The SNP density provides a systematic method to achieve a close approximation, though, depending on the nature of the data, other auxiliary models might provide a more convenient way to achieve adequate approximation for EMM.

These ideas were related to indirect inference, which is an asymptotically equivalent methodology, and mention made of the fact that the indirect inference view of the method can be used to facilitate the choice of an auxiliary model that confers seminonparametric or robustness properties on the estimator. Also mentioned was that, as a practical matter, indirect inference will often have to be reformulated as a simulated score method to make it computationally feasible.

There are three steps to EMM. The first, termed the Projection Step, entails summarizing the data by projecting it onto the auxiliary model. The second is the Estimation Step, where the parameters are obtained by GMM. The estimation step produces an omnibus test of specification along with useful

diagnostic t statistics. The third step is termed the Reprojection Step, which entails post-estimation analysis of simulations for the purposes of prediction, filtering, and model assessment. It was argued that the last two steps, assessment of model adequacy, and post estimation evaluation, are the real strengths of the methodology in building scientifically valid models.

There have been numerous applications of the EMM methodology in the literature and several of these were discussed in detail. Code is available, its use was broadly discussed with attention given to various pitfalls that need to be avoided. Use of the code on parallel architectures was discussed.

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