Mercurio, Danilo; Spokoiny, Vladimir G.

Working Paper

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SFB 373 Discussion Paper, No. 2002,61

Provided in Cooperation with:
Collaborative Research Center 373: Quantification and Simulation of Economic Processes, Humboldt University Berlin

Suggested Citation: Mercurio, Danilo; Spokoiny, Vladimir G. (2002) : Statistical inference for time-inhomogeneous volatility models, SFB 373 Discussion Paper, No. 2002,61, Humboldt University of Berlin, Interdisciplinary Research Project 373: Quantification and Simulation of Economic Processes, Berlin,
https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:kobv:11-10049197

This Version is available at:
https://hdl.handle.net/10419/65319

Statistical inference for time-inhomogeneous volatility models

Mercurio, Danilo *
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin,
Spandauer Straße 1,
10178 Berlin, Germany
isedoc02@wiwi.hu-berlin.de

Spokoiny, Vladimir
Weierstrass-Institute,
Mohrenstr. 39,
10117 Berlin, Germany
spokoiny@wias-berlin.de

July 4, 2002

Keywords: stochastic volatility model, adaptive estimation, local homogeneity.

AMS 1995 Subject Classification. Primary 62M10; Secondary 62P20.

Abstract

This paper offers a new approach for estimation and forecasting of the volatility of financial time series. No assumption is made about the parametric form of the processes, on the contrary we only suppose that the volatility can be approximated by a constant over some interval. In such a framework the main problem consists in filtering this *interval of time homogeneity*, then the estimate of the volatility can be simply obtained by local averaging. We construct a *locally adaptive volatility estimate (LAVE)* which can perform this task and investigate it both from the theoretical point of view and through Monte Carlo simulations. Finally the LAVE procedure is applied to a data set of nine exchange rates and a comparison with a standard GARCH model is also provided. Both models appear to be able of explaining many of the features of the data, nevertheless the new approach seems to be superior GARCH method as far as the out of sample results are taken into consideration.

*Financial support by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Graduiertenkolleg für Angewandte Mikroökonomik at Humboldt University, is gratefully acknowledged.

1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to offer a new perspective for the estimation and forecasting of the volatility of financial asset returns such as stocks and exchange rate returns.

A remarkable amount of statistical research is devoted to financial time series, and in particular to the volatility of asset returns, where the term volatility indicates a measure of dispersion, usually the variance or the standard deviation. The interest in this topic is motivated by the needs of the financial industry, which regards the volatility as one of the main reference numbers for risk management and derivative pricing.

Actually, asset returns time series display very peculiar stylized facts, which are connected with their second moments. Graphically, they look like white noise, where periods of high and low volatility seems to alternate. Their density has fat tails if compared to the one of a normal random variable and they show significantly positive and highly persistent autocorrelation of the absolute returns, meaning that large (resp. small) absolute returns are likely to be followed by large (resp. small) absolute returns. Typical examples can be seen in Section 6 and further details on this topic can be found in Taylor (1986). Therefore, a white noise process with time varying variance is usually taken to model such features. Let S_t denote the observed asset process, then the corresponding (log) returns $R_t = \log(S_t/S_{t-1})$ follow the heteroscedastic model

$$R_t = \sigma_t \xi_t$$

where ξ_t are standard Gaussian independent innovations and σ_t is a time-varying *volatility* coefficient. It is often assumed that σ_t is measurable w.r.t. the σ-field generated by the preceding returns $R_1, \ldots, R_{t-1}$. For modeling this volatility process parametric assumptions is usually used. The main model classes are the ARCH and GARCH family (Engle 1995), and the stochastic volatility (Harvey, Ruiz & Shephard 1995). A great amount of papers has followed the first publications on this topic, and the original models have been extended in order to provide better explanations. For example models which take into account asymmetries in volatility have been proposed, such as EGARCH (Nelson 1995), QGARCH (Sentana 1995) and GJR (Glosten, Jagannathan & Runkle 1992); furthermore the research on integrated processes has produced integrated (Engle & Bollerslev 1986) and fractal integrated versions of the GARCH model.

The availability of very large samples of financial data has given the possibility of constructing models which display quite complicated parameterizations in order to explain all the observed stylized facts. Obviously those models rely on the assumption that the parametric structure of the process remains constant through the whole sample. This is a nontrivial and possibly dangerous assumption in particular as far as forecasting is concerned (Clements & Hendry 1998). Furthermore checking for parameter instability becomes quite difficult if the model is nonlinear, and/or the number of parameters is large. Whereby, those characteristics of the returns which are often explained by the long memory and (fractal) integrated nature of the volatility process, could also depend on the parameters being time varying.

In this paper, we propose another approach focusing on a very simple model but with a possibility for model parameters to depend on time. This means that the model is

regularly checked and adapted to the data. No assumption is made about the parametric structure of the volatility process, we only suppose that it can be locally approximated by a constant, that is, for every time point τ there exists a past interval $[\tau - m, \tau]$ where the volatility σ_t did not vary much. This interval is referred to as *interval of time homogeneity*. An algorithm is proposed for data-driven estimation of the interval of time homogeneity, after which the estimate of the volatility can be simply obtained by averaging.

Our approach is similar to varying coefficient modeling from Fan & Zhang (1999), see also Cai, Fan & Li (2000) and Cai, Fan & Yao (2000). Fan, Jiang, Zhang & Zhou (2001) discussed applications of this method to stock price volatility modeling. The proposed procedure is based on the assumption that the model parameters smoothly vary with time and can be locally approximated by a linear function of time. This approach has drawback of not allowing to incorporate structural breaks in the model.

Change-point modeling with applications to financial time series was considered in Mikosch & Starica (2000). Kitagawa (1987) applied non-Gaussian random walk modeling with heavy tails as the prior for the piecewise constant mean for one-step-ahead prediction of nonstationary time series. However, the mentioned approaches require some essential amount of prior information about the frequency of change-points and their size.

The LAVE approach proposed in this article does not assume smooth or piecewise constant structure of the underlying process and does not require any prior information. The procedure proposed below in Section 3 focuses on adaptive choice of the interval of homogeneity that allows to proceed in a unified way with smoothly varying coefficient models and change-point models.

The proposed approach attempts to describe the *local* dynamic of the volatility process and it is particularly appealing for short term forecasting purposes which is an important building block e.g. in Value-at-Risk and portfolio hedging problems or backtesting (Härdle & Stahl 1999).

The reminder paper is organized as follows. The next section introduces the adaptive modeling procedure, then some theoretical properties are discussed in the general situation and for a change-point model. A simulation study illustrates the performances of the new methodology with respect to the change-point model. The question of selecting the smoothing parameters is also addressed and some solutions are proposed. Finally the procedure is applied to a set of nine exchange rates and it appears to be highly competitive with standard GARCH(1,1), which is used as a benchmark model. Mathematical proofs are given in the appendix.

2 Modeling volatility via power transformation

Let S_t be an observed asset process in discrete time, $t = 1, 2, \ldots, \tau$ and R_t are the corresponding returns: $R_t = \log(S_t / S_{t-1})$. We model this process via the *conditional heteroscedasticity* assumption

$$R_t = \sigma_t \xi_t \,, \tag{1}$$

where ξ_t, $t \geq 1$, is a sequence of independent standard Gaussian random variables and σ_t is the *volatility* process which is in general a predictable random process, that is, $\sigma_t \sim \mathcal{F}_{t-1}$ with $\mathcal{F}_{t-1} = \sigma(R_1, \ldots, R_{t-1})$ (σ-field generated by the first $t-1$ observations).

A *time-homogeneous* (*time-homoscedastic*) model means that σ_t is a constant. The process S_t is then a Geometric Brownian motion observed at discrete time moments. The assumption of time homogeneity is too restrictive in practical applications and it does not allow to fit well real data. In this paper we consider an approach based on the *local time-homogeneity* which means that for every time moment τ there exists a time interval $[\tau - m, \tau]$ where the volatility process σ_t is nearly constant. Under such a modeling, the main intention is both to describe the interval of homogeneity and to estimate the corresponding value σ_τ which can then be used for one-step forecasting etc.

2.1 Data transformation

The model equation (1) links the target volatility process σ_t with the observations R_t via the multiplicative errors ξ_t. The classical well developed regression approach relies on the assumption of additive errors which can be then smoothed out by some kind of averaging. A natural and widespread method of transforming the equation (1) into a regression like equation is to apply the log-function to both its sides squared:

$$\log R_t^2 = \log \sigma_t^2 + \log \xi_t^2 \tag{2}$$

which can be rewritten in the form

$$\log R_t^2 = \log \sigma_t^2 + C + v\zeta_t$$

with $C = \boldsymbol{E} \log \xi_t^2$, $v^2 = \operatorname{Var} \log \xi_t^2$ and $\zeta_t = v^{-1} \left(\log \xi_t^2 - C \right)$, see e.g. Gouriéroux (1997). This is a usual regression equation with the "response" $Y_t = \log R_t^2$, target regression function $f(t) = \log \sigma_t^2 + C$ and homogeneous "noise" $v\zeta_t$.

The main problem with this approach is due to the distribution of the errors ζ_t, which is highly skewed and it gives very high weights to the small values of the errors ξ_t. In particular, this leads to a serious problem with missing data which are typically modeled equal to previous values providing $R_t = 0$.

Another possibility is based on power transformation, see Carroll & Ruppert (1988) which also leads to a regression with additive noise and this noise is much closer to a Gaussian one. Due to (1) the random variable R_t is conditionally on $\mathcal{F}_{t-1}$ Gaussian and it holds

$$\boldsymbol{E} \left(R_t^2 \,\middle|\, \mathcal{F}_{t-1} \right) = \sigma_t^2.$$

Similarly, for every $\gamma > 0$,

$$\begin{aligned} \boldsymbol{E} \left(|R_t|^\gamma \,\middle|\, \mathcal{F}_{t-1} \right) &= \sigma_t^\gamma \boldsymbol{E} \left(|\xi|^\gamma \,\middle|\, \mathcal{F}_{t-1} \right) = C_\gamma \sigma_t^\gamma, \\ \boldsymbol{E} \left(|R_t|^\gamma - C_\gamma \sigma_t^\gamma \,\middle|\, \mathcal{F}_{t-1} \right)^2 &= \sigma_t^{2\gamma} \boldsymbol{E} \left(|\xi|^\gamma - C_\gamma \right)^2 = \sigma_t^{2\gamma} D_\gamma^2 \end{aligned}$$

where ξ denotes a standard Gaussian r.v., $C_\gamma = \boldsymbol{E}|\xi|^\gamma$ and $D_\gamma^2 = \operatorname{Var} |\xi|^\gamma$. Therefore, the process $|R_t|^\gamma$ allows for the representation

$$|R_t|^\gamma = C_\gamma \sigma_t^\gamma + D_\gamma \sigma_t^\gamma \zeta_t, \tag{3}$$

where ζ_t is equal to $(|\xi|^\gamma - C_\gamma)/D_\gamma$. Note that the problem of estimating σ_t is in some sense equivalent to the problem of estimating $\theta_t = C_\gamma \sigma_t^\gamma$ which is the conditional mean of the transformed process $|R_t|^\gamma$. This is already a kind of a heteroscedastic regression problem with additive errors $D_\gamma \sigma_t^\gamma \zeta_t$ satisfying

$$\begin{aligned} \boldsymbol{E}\left(D_\gamma \sigma_t^\gamma \zeta_t \mid \mathcal{F}_{t-1}\right) &= 0, \\ \boldsymbol{E}\left(D_\gamma^2 \sigma_t^{2\gamma} \zeta_t^2 \mid \mathcal{F}_{t-1}\right) &= D_\gamma^2 \sigma_t^{2\gamma}. \end{aligned}$$

A natural choice of the parameter γ is $\gamma = 2$ providing the nearly efficient variance estimation under homogeneity. For $\gamma = 2$ one has $C_\gamma = 1$ and $D_\gamma^2 = 2$. Note however that the distribution of the 'errors' $\zeta_t = (|\xi_t|^\gamma - C_\gamma)/D_\gamma$ is still heavy tailed and highly skewed which results in a low sensitivity of the method in a inhomogeneous situation. The other important cases are $\gamma = 1$ and $\gamma = 1/2$. A minimization of the skewness $\boldsymbol{E}\zeta_\gamma^3$ and the fat $\boldsymbol{E}\zeta_\gamma^4 - 3$ with respect to γ leads to the choice $\gamma \approx 1/2$. The corresponding density $p_{1/2}(x)$ of $\zeta_{1/2}$ together with the standard normal density $\phi(x)$ is plotted in Figure 1. Our numerical results are also in favor of the choice $\gamma = 1/2$, see Section 5 .

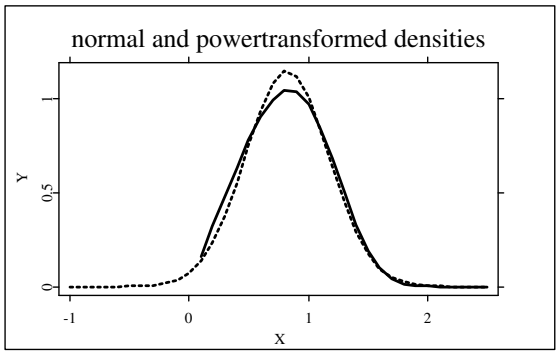

Figure 1: Density of $p_{1/2}(x)$ (straight line) and the standard normal density (dotted line).

3 Adaptive estimation under local time-homogeneity

Here, we describe one approach to volatility modeling based on the assumption of local time homogeneity starting from the preliminary heuristic discussion. The assumption of local time homogeneity means that the function σ_t is nearly constant within an interval $I = [\tau - m, \tau]$, and the process R_t follows the regression-like equation (3) with the constant trend $\theta_I = C_\gamma \sigma_I^\gamma$ which can be estimated by averaging over this interval I:

$$\widetilde{\theta}_I = \frac{1}{|I|} \sum_{t \in I} |R_t|^\gamma. \tag{4}$$

By (3)

$$\widetilde{\theta}_I = \frac{C_\gamma}{|I|} \sum_{t \in I} \sigma_t^\gamma + \frac{D_\gamma}{|I|} \sum_{t \in I} \sigma_t^\gamma \zeta_t = \frac{1}{|I|} \sum_{t \in I} \theta_t + \frac{s_\gamma}{|I|} \sum_{t \in I} \theta_t \zeta_t \tag{5}$$

with $s_\gamma = D_\gamma / C_\gamma$ so that

$$\boldsymbol{E}\widetilde{\theta}_I = \boldsymbol{E}\frac{1}{|I|}\sum_{t\in I}\theta_t\,, \tag{6}$$

$$\frac{s_\gamma^2}{|I|^2}\boldsymbol{E}\left(\sum_{t\in I}\theta_t\zeta_t\right)^2 = \frac{s_\gamma^2}{|I|^2}\boldsymbol{E}\sum_{t\in I}\theta_t^2. \tag{7}$$

3.1 Some properties of the estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_I$

Due to our assumption of local homogeneity, the process θ_t is close to θ_τ for all $t \in I$. Define also:

$$\Delta_I = \sup_{t\in I}|\theta_t - \theta_\tau| \qquad \text{and} \qquad v_I^2 = \frac{s_\gamma^2}{|I|^2}\sum_{t\in I}\theta_t^2.$$

The value of Δ_I measures the departure from homogeneity within the interval I and it can be regarded as a upper bound of the "bias" of the estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_I$. The value of v_I^2, because of equation (7), will be referred as the "conditional variance" of the estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_I$. The next theorem provides a probability bound for the estimation error, i.e. the deviation of $\widetilde{\theta}_I$ from the present value of the volatility θ_τ in terms of Δ_I and v_I.

Theorem 3.1 *Let the volatility coefficient σ_t satisfy the condition*

$$b \le \sigma_t^\gamma \le bB \tag{8}$$

with some positive constant b, B. Then there exists $a_\gamma > 0$ such that it holds for every $\lambda \ge 1$

$$\boldsymbol{P}\left(|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| > \Delta_I + \lambda v_I\right) \le 4\sqrt{e}a_\gamma^{-1}\lambda(1+\log B)e^{-\lambda^2/(2a_\gamma)}.$$

Remark 3.1 This result can be slightly refined for the special case when the volatility process σ_t for for $t \in I$ is deterministic or (conditionally) independent of the observations R_t preceding I. Namely, in such a situation, the factor $4\sqrt{e}a_\gamma^{-1}\lambda(1+\log B)$ in the bound can be replaced by 2:

$$\boldsymbol{P}\left(|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| > \Delta_I + \lambda v_I\right) \le 2e^{-\lambda^2/(2a_\gamma)}.$$

Similar remark applies to all the results what follow.

The result of this theorem bounds the loss of the estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_I$ via value Δ_I and the conditional standard deviation v_I. Under homogeneity $\Delta_I \equiv 0$ and the error of estimation is of order v_I. Unfortunately, v_I depends in its turn on the target process θ_t. One would be interested in another bound which does not involve the unknown function θ_t. Namely, basing on (7) and assuming Δ_I small, one may replace the conditional standard deviation v_I by its estimate

$$\widetilde{v}_I = s_\gamma\widetilde{\theta}_I|I|^{-1/2}.$$

Theorem 3.2 *Let $R_1, \ldots, R_\tau$ obey (1) and let (8) hold true. Then it holds for the estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_I$ of θ_τ for every $D \geq 0$ and $\lambda \geq 1$:*

$$\boldsymbol{P}\left(|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| > \lambda' \widetilde{v}_I,\, \Delta_I / v_I \leq D\right) \leq 4\sqrt{e}\lambda(1 + \log B) e^{-\lambda^2/(2a_\gamma)}$$

where λ' solves

$$\lambda + D = \lambda'/(1 + \lambda' s_\gamma |I|^{-1/2}).$$

3.2 Adaptive choice of the interval of homogeneity

Given observations $R_1, \ldots, R_\tau$ following the time-inhomogeneous model (1), we aim to estimate the current value of the parameter θ_τ using the estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_I$ with a properly selected time interval I of the form $[\tau - m, \tau]$ to minimize the corresponding estimation error. Below we discuss one approach which goes back to the idea of pointwise adaptive estimation, see Lepski (1990), Lepski & Spokoiny (1997) and Spokoiny (1998). The idea of the method can be explained as follows. Suppose I is an interval-candidate, that is, we expect time-homogeneity in I and hence, in every sub-interval of I. This particularly implies that the value Δ_I is small and similarly for all Δ_J, $J \subset I$, and that the mean values of the θ_t over I and over J nearly coincide. Our adaptive procedure roughly means the choice of the largest possible interval I such that the hypothesis that the value θ_t is a constant within I is not rejected. For testing this hypothesis, we consider the family of sub-intervals of I of the form $J = [\tau - m', \tau]$ with $m' < m$ and for every such sub-interval J compare two different estimates: one is based on the observations from J, and the other one is calculated from the complement $I \setminus J = [\tau - m, \tau - m'[$. Theorems 3.1 and 3.2 can be used to bound the difference $\widetilde{\theta}_J - \widetilde{\theta}_{I \setminus J}$ under homogeneity within I. Indeed, the conditional variance of $\widetilde{\theta}_{I \setminus J} - \widetilde{\theta}_J$ is $v^2_{I \setminus J} + v^2_J$ and can be estimated by $\widetilde{v}^2_{I \setminus J} + \widetilde{v}^2_J$. Thus, with a high probability, it holds that

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_{I \setminus J} - \widetilde{\theta}_J| \leq \lambda \sqrt{\widetilde{v}^2_{I \setminus J} + \widetilde{v}^2_J}$$

provided that λ is sufficiently large. Therefore, if there exists a testing interval $J \subset I$ such that the quantity $|\widetilde{\theta}_{I \setminus J} - \widetilde{\theta}_J|$ is significantly positive then we reject the hypothesis of homogeneity for the interval I. Finally, our adaptive estimate corresponds to the largest interval I such that the hypothesis of homogeneity is not rejected for I itself and all smaller considered intervals.

Now we present a formal description. Suppose a family $\mathcal{I}$ of interval-candidates I is fixed. Each of them is of the form $I = [\tau - m, \tau]$, $m \in \mathbb{N}$, so that the set $\mathcal{I}$ is ordered due to m. With every such interval we associate the estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_I$ of θ_τ and the corresponding estimate $\widetilde{v}_I$ of the conditional standard deviations v_I.

Next, for every interval I from $\mathcal{I}$, we suppose to be given a set $\mathcal{J}(I)$ of testing sub-intervals J (one example of these sets $\mathcal{I}$ and $\mathcal{J}(I)$ is given in Section 6). For every $J \in \mathcal{J}(I)$, we construct the corresponding estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_J$ (resp. $\widetilde{\theta}_{I \setminus J}$) from the observations $Y_t = |R_t|^\gamma$ for $t \in J$ (resp. for $t \in I \setminus J$) according to (4) and compute $\widetilde{v}_J$ (resp. $\widetilde{v}_{I \setminus J}$).

Now, with a constant λ, define the adaptive choice of the interval of homogeneity by the following iterative procedure:

Initialization Select the smallest interval in $\mathcal{I}$.

Iteration Select the next interval I in $\mathcal{I}$ and calculate the corresponding estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_I$ and the estimated conditional standard deviation $\widetilde{v}_I$.

Testing homogeneity Reject I, if there exists one $J \in \mathcal{J}(I)$ such that

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_{I\setminus J} - \widetilde{\theta}_J| > \lambda\sqrt{\widetilde{v}^2_{I\setminus J} + \widetilde{v}^2_J}. \tag{9}$$

Loop If I is not rejected, then continue with the iteration step by choosing a larger interval. Otherwise, set $\widehat{I} =$ "the latest non rejected I".

The *locally adaptive volatility estimate (LAVE)* $\widehat{\theta}_\tau$ of θ_τ is defined by applying this selected interval $\widehat{I}$:

$$\widehat{\theta}_\tau = \widetilde{\theta}_{\widehat{I}}\,.$$

The next Section discusses the theoretical properties of the LAVE algorithm in a general framework, while Section 6 gives a concrete example for the choice of the sets $\mathcal{I}$, $\mathcal{J}(I)$ and the parameter λ. This choice is then applied on simulated and real data.

4 Theoretic properties

In this section we collect some results describing the quality of the proposed adaptive procedure.

4.1 Accuracy of the adaptive estimate

Let $\widehat{I}$ be the interval selected by our adaptive procedure. We aim to show that our adaptive choice is up to some constant factor in the losses as good as the "ideal" choice $I\!I$ that may utilize the knowledge of the volatility process σ_t. This "ideal" choice can be defined by balancing the accuracy of approximating the underlying process θ_t (which is controlled by Δ_I) and the stochastic error controlled by the stochastic standard deviation v_I. By definition $v_I = s_\gamma |I|^{-1} \left(\sum_{t\in I} \theta_t^2\right)^{1/2}$ so that v_I typically decreases when $|I|$ increases. For simplicity of notation, we shall suppose further that $v_I \le v_J$ for $J \subset I$.

We do not give a formal definition of an "ideal" choice of the interval I since the there is no one universally optimal choice even if the process θ_t is known. Instead we consider a family of all "good" intervals $I\!I$ such that the variability of the process θ_t inside $I\!I$ is not too large compared to the conditional stochastic deviation $v_{I\!I}$. This, due to Theorem 3.1, allows us to bound with a high probability the losses of the "ideal" estimate $\widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}$ by $(D+\lambda)v_{I\!I}$ provided that $\Delta_{I\!I}/v_{I\!I} \le D$ and λ is sufficiently large. Similar property should be fulfilled for all smaller intervals $I \subset I\!I$. Hence, it is natural to quantify the quality of the interval $I\!I$ by

$$\delta_{I\!I} = \sup_{I\in\mathcal{I}:\, I\subseteq I\!I} \Delta_I / v_I.$$

The next assertion claims that the risk of the adaptive estimate is not larger in order than $v_{I\!I}$ for all $I\!I$ such that $\delta_{I\!I}$ is sufficiently small.

Theorem 4.1 *Let (8) hold true. Let an interval $I\!I$ be such that for some $D \geq 0$, it holds with a positive probability $\delta_{I\!I} \leq D$. Then*

$$\boldsymbol{P}\left(I\!I \text{ is rejected}, \delta_{I\!I} \leq D\right) \leq \sum_{I \in \mathcal{I}(I\!I)} \sum_{J \in \mathcal{J}(I)} 12\sqrt{e}\lambda_J(1+\log B)e^{-(\lambda_J - D)^2/(2a_\gamma)} \tag{10}$$

where $\lambda_J = \lambda(1 - s_\gamma \lambda N_J^{-1/2})$ with $N_J = \min\{|J|, |I \setminus J|\}$.

Moreover, if $N_J \geq 2s_\gamma\lambda$ for all $J \in \mathcal{J}(I)$ and all $I \in \mathcal{I}$, then it holds for the adaptive estimate $\widehat{\theta} = \widetilde{\theta}_{\widehat{I}}$ on the random set $A = \{I\!I \text{ is not rejected}, \delta_{I\!I} \leq D\}$:

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| \leq 2\lambda\widetilde{v}_{I\!I}$$

and

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| \leq \left(D + 3\lambda + 2\lambda s_\gamma(D+\lambda)|I\!I|^{-1/2}\right) v_{I\!I}$$

Remark 4.1 It is easy to see that the sum in the right hand-side of the bound (10) can be made arbitrary small by a proper choice of the constant λ and the sets $\mathcal{J}(I)$. Hence, the result of the theorem claims that with a dominating probability a "good" interval $I\!I$ will not be rejected and the adaptive estimate $\widehat{\theta}$ is up to a constant factor as good as any of "good" estimates $\widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}$.

Remark 4.2 As mentioned in Remark 3.1 the probability bound in the right hand-side of (10) can refined for the special case when the process θ_t is constant within $I\!I$ by replacing the factor $12\sqrt{e}\lambda_J(1+\log B)e^{-(\lambda_J - D)^2/(2a_\gamma)}$ with $6e^{-\lambda_J^2/(2a_\gamma)}$.

5 Change-point model

A *change-point* model is described by a sequence $T_1 < T_2 < \ldots$ of stopping times with respect to the filtration $\mathcal{F}_t$ and by values $\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \ldots$ where each σ_k is $\mathcal{F}_{T_k}$-measurable. By definition $\sigma_t = \sigma_k$ for $T_k < t \leq T_{k+1}$ and σ_t is constant for $t < T_1$. This is an important special case of the model (1). For this special case, the above procedure has a very natural interpretation: when estimating at the point τ we search for a largest interval of the form $[\tau - m, \tau]$ does not containing a change-point. This is doing via testing for a change-point within the interval-candidate $I = [\tau - m, \tau]$. Note that the classical maximum-likelihood test for no change-point in the regression case with Gaussian $\mathcal{N}(0, \sigma^2)$-errors is also based on comparison of the mean values of observations Y_t over the sub-intervals $I = [\tau - m, \tau - m']$ and every sub-interval $J = [\tau - m', \tau]$ for different m', so that the proposed procedure has strong appeal in this situation. However, there is an essential difference between testing of a change-point and a testing homogeneity appearing as a building block of our adaptive procedure. Usually a test for a change-point is constructed in a way to provide the prescribed probability of a "false

alarm", that is, rejecting the "no change-point" hypothesis under homogeneity. Our adaptive procedure involves a lot of such tests for every candidate I, which leads to a multiple testing problem. As a consequence, each particular test should be performed at a very high level, i.e., it should be rather conservative providing a joint error probability at a reasonable level.

5.1 Probability of a "false alarm"

For the change-point model, a "false alarm" would mean that the interval-candidate I is rejected although the hypothesis of homogeneity is still fulfilled. The arguments used in the proof of Theorem 4.1 lead to the following upper bound for the probability of a "false alarm":

Theorem 5.1 *If $I = [\tau - m, \tau]$ is an interval of homogeneity, that is $\theta_t = \theta_\tau$ for all $t \in I$, then*

$$\boldsymbol{P}\,(I \text{ is rejected}) \le \sum_{I \in \mathcal{I}(I\!I)} \sum_{J \in \mathcal{J}(I)} 6 \exp\left(-\frac{\lambda^2}{2a_\gamma(1+\lambda s_\gamma |J|^{-1/2})^2}\right).$$

This result is a special case of Theorem 4.1 with $\Delta_J \equiv 0$ when taking into account Remark 4.2.

Theorem 4.1 implies that for every fixed value M there exists a fixed λ providing a prescribed upper bound α for the probability of a "false alarm" for a homogeneous interval I of length M. Namely, the choice

$$\lambda \ge (1+\epsilon)\sqrt{2a_\gamma \log \frac{M}{m_0 \alpha}}$$

leads for a proper small positive constant $\epsilon > 0$ to the inequality

$$\sum_{I \in \mathcal{I}(I\!I)} \sum_{J \in \mathcal{J}(I)} 6 \exp\left(-\frac{\lambda^2}{2a_\gamma(1+\lambda s_\gamma |J|^{-1/2})^2}\right) \le \alpha.$$

Here M/m_0 is approximately the number of intervals in $\mathcal{J}(I)$ (see Section 6.1). This bound is however, very rough and it is only of theoretical importance since we estimate the probability of the sum of dependent events by the sum of single probabilities. The value of λ providing a prescribed probability of a "false alarm" can be found by Monte-Carlo simulation for the homogeneous model with the constant volatility as described in Section 6.

5.2 Sensitivity to change-points and the mean delay

The quality (sensitivity) of a change-point procedure is usually measured by the mean delay between the occurrence of the change-points and its detection.

To study this property of the proposed method, we consider the case of estimation at a point τ immediately after a change-point T_{cp}. It is convenient to suppose that T_{cp} belongs to the end points of an interval which is tested for homogeneity. In this case the

'ideal' choice $I\!I$ is clearly $[T_{\rm cp}, \tau]$. Theorem 4.1 claims that the quality of estimation at τ is essentially the same as if we knew the latest change-point $T_{\rm cp}$ a priori. In fact, one can state a slightly stronger assertion: every interval I which is essentially larger than $I\!I$ will be rejected with a high probability provided that the magnitude of the change is large enough.

Denote $m' = |I\!I|$, that is, $m' = \tau - T_{\rm cp}$. Let also $I = [T_{\rm cp} - m, \tau] = [\tau - m' - m, \tau]$ for some m, so that $|I| = m + m'$, and let θ (resp. θ') denote the value of parameter θ_t before (resp. after) change-point $T_{\rm cp}$. The magnitude of the change-point is measured by the relative change $b = 2|\theta' - \theta|/\theta$.

It is worth mentioning that the values θ_t and especially θ'_t can be random and depending on the past observations. For instance, θ'_t may depend on Y_t for all $t < T_{\rm cp}$.

The interval I will be certainly rejected if $|\widetilde{\theta}_{I \setminus I\!I} - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}|$ is sufficiently large compared to the corresponding critical value.

Theorem 5.2 *Let* $\boldsymbol{E}(Y_t \mid \mathcal{F}_{t-1}) = \theta$ *before the change-point at* $T_{\rm cp}$ *and* $\boldsymbol{E}(Y_t \mid \mathcal{F}_{t-1}) = \theta'$ *after it, and let* $b = |\theta' - \theta|/\theta$. *Let* $I = [\tau - m' - m, \tau]$ *with* $m' = \tau - T_{cp}$. *If* $\varrho := \lambda s_\gamma / \sqrt{\min\{m, m'\}} < 1$ *and*

$$b \geq \frac{2\varrho + \sqrt{2}\varrho(1+\varrho)}{1-\varrho}, \tag{11}$$

then $\boldsymbol{P}(I \text{ is not rejected}) \leq 4e^{-\lambda^2/(2a_\gamma)}$.

The result of Theorem 5.2 delivers some additional information about the sensitivity of the proposed procedure to change-points. One possible question is about the minimal delay m' between the change-point $T_{\rm cp}$ and the first moment τ when the procedure starts to indicate this change-point by selecting an interval of type $I\!I = [T_{\rm cp}, \tau]$. Due to Theorem 5.2, the change will be 'detected' with a high probability if the value $\varrho = \lambda s_\gamma / \sqrt{m'}$ fulfills (11). With fixed $b > 0$, condition (11) leads to $\varrho \leq bC_0$ for some fixed constant C_0. The latter condition can be rewritten in the form $m' \geq b^{-2}\lambda^2 s_\gamma^2 / C_0^2$. We see that this lower bound for the required delay m' is proportional to b^{-2} where b is the change-point magnitude. It is also proportional to the threshold λ squared. In its turn, for the prescribed probability α of rejecting a homogeneous interval of length M, the threshold λ can be bounded by $C\sqrt{\log \frac{M}{m_0 \alpha}}$. In particular, if we fix the length M and α, then $m' = O(b^{-2})$. If we keep fixed the values b and M but aim to provide a very small probability of a "false alarm" by letting α go to zero, then $m' = O(\log \alpha^{-1})$. All these issues are in agreement with the theory of change-point detection, see, e.g. Pollak (1985) and Brodskij & Darkhovskij (1993).

6 LAVE in practice

The aim of this Section is to give some hints concerning the choice of the testing intervals and the smoothing parameter λ, and to illustrate the performance of the LAVE procedure on simulated and real data. We consider the simplest homogeneous model and we study

the stability of the procedure in such a situation. Then, a change-point model is analyzed and the sensitivity with respect to the jump magnitude is measured. Finally, LAVE is applied to a set of exchange rate data.

6.1 Choice of the sets $\mathcal{I}$ and $\mathcal{J}(I)$

The presented algorithm involves the sets of interval candidates $\mathcal{I}$ and of testing intervals $\mathcal{J}(I)$. The simplest proposal is based on the use of regular time grid $t_1, t_2, \ldots,$ with grid step $m_0 \in \mathbb{N}$, that is, $t_k = m_0 k$, $k = 1, 2, \ldots$. For a given time point τ, the set $\mathcal{I}$ of interval candidates is defined in the following way:

$$\mathcal{I} = \{I_k = [t_k, \tau] : t_k \leq \tau - m_0,\ k = 1, 2 \ldots\}$$

Next, for every interval I_k, we define the set $\mathcal{J}(I_k)$ of testing subintervals $J_{k'} \subset I_k$ such that $J_{k'} = [t_{k'}, \tau]$ for all $t_{k'} > t_k$ belonging to the grid. The homogeneity within I_k is then tested by comparing the pairs of estimates $\widetilde{\theta}_J$ and $\widetilde{\theta}_{I_k \setminus J}$ for all $J \in \mathcal{J}(I_k)$.

In this construction, the sets $\mathcal{I}$, $\mathcal{J}(I)$ are completely determined by the grid step m_0. The value of m_0 should be selected possibly small, because it represents the minimal delay before the LAVE algorithm can detect a change point. Nevertheless, m_0 should be sufficiently large to provide stability of the estimates $\widetilde{v}_J$ and $\widetilde{v}_{I \setminus J}$. For the simulation and the analysis of real data we use $m_0 = 10$, which represents a good compromise. However, small changes in this value, i.e. $5 \leq m_0 \leq 20$ do not appear to have great influence on the estimation results.

6.2 Choice of λ and γ

The selection of γ and in particularly of λ is more critical. Theorem 5.1 suggests that, in the context of a change-point model, a reasonable approach for selecting λ is by providing a prescribed level α for rejecting a homogeneous interval I of a given length M. This would clearly imply at most the same level α for rejecting a homogeneous interval of a smaller length. However, the value of λ which can be derived with the help of Theorem 5.1 is rather conservative. A more accurate choice can be made by Monte Carlo simulation. We examine the procedure described in Section 3.2 with the sets of intervals $\mathcal{I}$ and $\mathcal{J}(I)$ on the regular grid with the fixed step $m_0 = 10$. A constant (and therefore also time homogeneous) model assumes that the parameter θ_t does not vary in time, i.e. $\theta_t \equiv \theta$. It can easily be seen that the value θ has no influence on the procedure under time homogeneity. One can therefore suppose that $\theta = 1$ and the original model (1) is transformed into the regression model $Y_t = 1 + s_\gamma \zeta_t$ with the constant trend and homogeneous variance s_γ. This model is completely described and therefore, one can determine by simulation the value of λ for which an interval of time homogeneity of length M is not rejected with a frequency of 95%.

The values of λ are computed for $M = 40$ and 80 and for the power transformations $\gamma = 0.5$, 1.0 and 2.0. The results are shown in Table 1. Note that, the values of λ calibrated for $M = 80$ are necessarily larger and therefore more conservative, than the values of λ calibrated for $M = 40$.

Table 1: The value of λ, which for a given power transformation γ provide the rejection of an interval of time homogeneity of length M with a frequency of 5%.

SMOOTHING PARAMETERS					
$\gamma = 0.5$		$\gamma = 1.0$		$\gamma = 2.0$	
$M = 80$	$M = 40$	$M = 80$	$M = 40$	$M = 80$	$M = 40$
$\lambda = 2.74$	$\lambda = 2.40$	$\lambda = 2.58$	$\lambda = 2.24$	$\lambda = 2.18$	$\lambda = 1.86$

6.3 Simulation results for the change-point model

We now evaluate the performance of the LAVE algorithm on simulated data. Two change-point time series of length $T = 240$ are considered. The simulated data display two jumps of the same magnitude in opposite directions, i.e.: $\sigma_t = \sigma$ for $t \in [1, 80]$ and $t \in [161, 240]$ and $\sigma_t = \sigma'$ for $t \in [81, 160]$. Where $\sigma = 1$ and $\sigma' = 3$ and 5 respectively. For each model 500 realizations are generated, the estimation is performed at each time point $t \in [t_0, 240]$, where t_0 is set equal to 20.

We compute the estimation error for each combination of γ and λ with the following criterion:

$$\sum_{t=20}^{240} \sum_{\omega=1}^{500} \left(\frac{\widehat{\sigma}_t - \sigma_t}{\sigma_t} \right)^2 (\omega), \tag{12}$$

where the index ω indicates the realizations of the change-point model. We remark that, in equation (12) the quadratic error is divided by the true volatility so that the criterion does not depend on the scale of σ_t. The results shown in Table 2 are favorable to the choice of the smaller value of γ, confirming that the loss of efficiency caused by $\gamma < 2$ is offset by the greater normality of the errors. Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the results

Table 2: Estimation errors for all the combinations of parameters γ and λ.

ESTIMATION ERROR						
PARAMETERS	$\gamma = 0.5$		$\gamma = 1.0$		$\gamma = 2.0$	
	$\lambda = 2.74$	$\lambda = 2.40$	$\lambda = 2.58$	$\lambda = 2.24$	$\lambda = 2.18$	$\lambda = 1.86$
SMALL JUMP	19241.9	17175.3	19121.2	16522.5	24887.2	17490.9
LARGE JUMP	46616.2	43282.5	51363.9	46706.4	68730.7	55706.3

of the estimation for the power transformation $\gamma = 0.5$ and the value of λ calibrated for an interval of time homogeneity of length $M = 40$ and $M = 80$ respectively. The plots of the top line display the true process (straight line), the empirical median among all estimates (thick dotted line) and the empirical quartile among all estimates (thin dotted line). The plots of the bottom line similarly display the length of the interval of time

homogeneity, which is minimal (resp. maximal) just after (resp. just before) a change point and the median and the quartiles among all estimates.

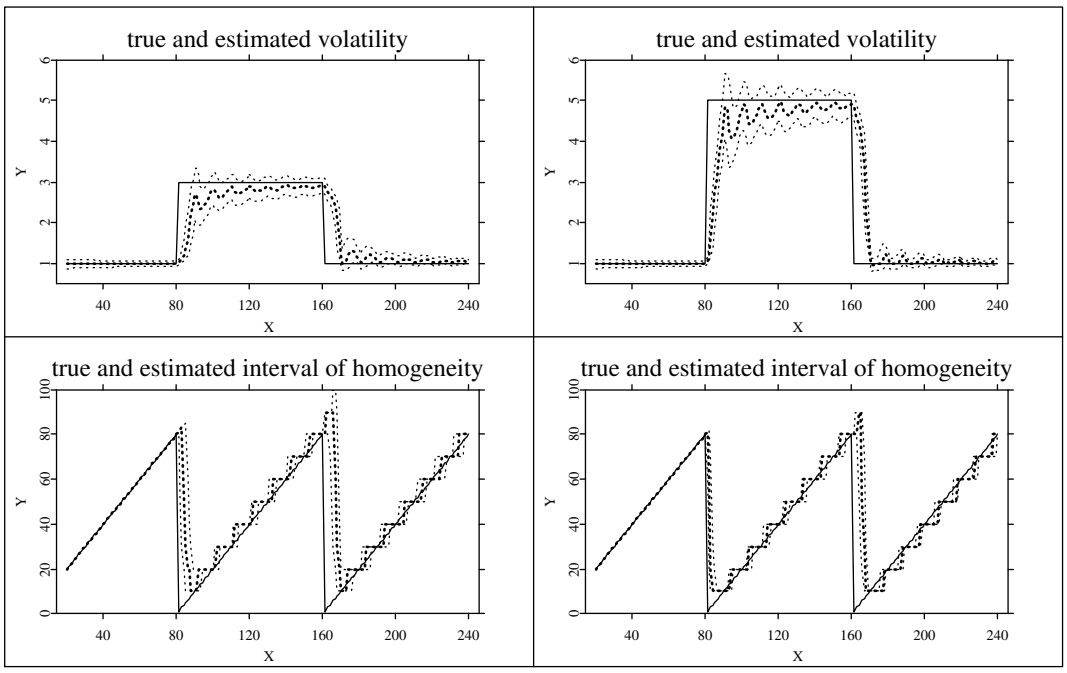

Figure 2: Estimation results for the change-point model. The upper plots shows the values of the standard deviation, while the lower plots shows the values of the interval of homogeneity at each time point. True values (solid line), median of all estimates (thick dotted line), upper and lower quartile (thin dotted line). The value of λ for $\gamma = 0.5$ and $M = 40$ has been used.

The results are satisfactory. The volatility is estimated precisely and the change points are quickly detected. As expected, the behavior of the method within homogeneous regions is very stable. The delay in detecting a change point becomes smaller as the jump size grows. Taking a smaller λ also results in a smaller delay and improves on the quality of estimation after the change points. The results for other power transformations look very similar and therefore are not displayed.

6.4 Estimation of exchange rate volatility

We apply the LAVE procedure to a set of nine exchange rates, which are available from the web page of the US Federal Reserve. The data sets represents daily exchange rates of the US Dollar (USD) against the following currencies: Australian Dollar (AUD), British Pound (BPD) Canadian Dollar (CAD), Danish Krone (DKR), Japanese Yen (JPY), Norwegian Krone (NKR), New Zeeland Dollar (NZD), Swiss Franc (SFR) and Swedish Krone (SKR). The period under consideration goes from January the 1st 1990 to April the 7th 2000.

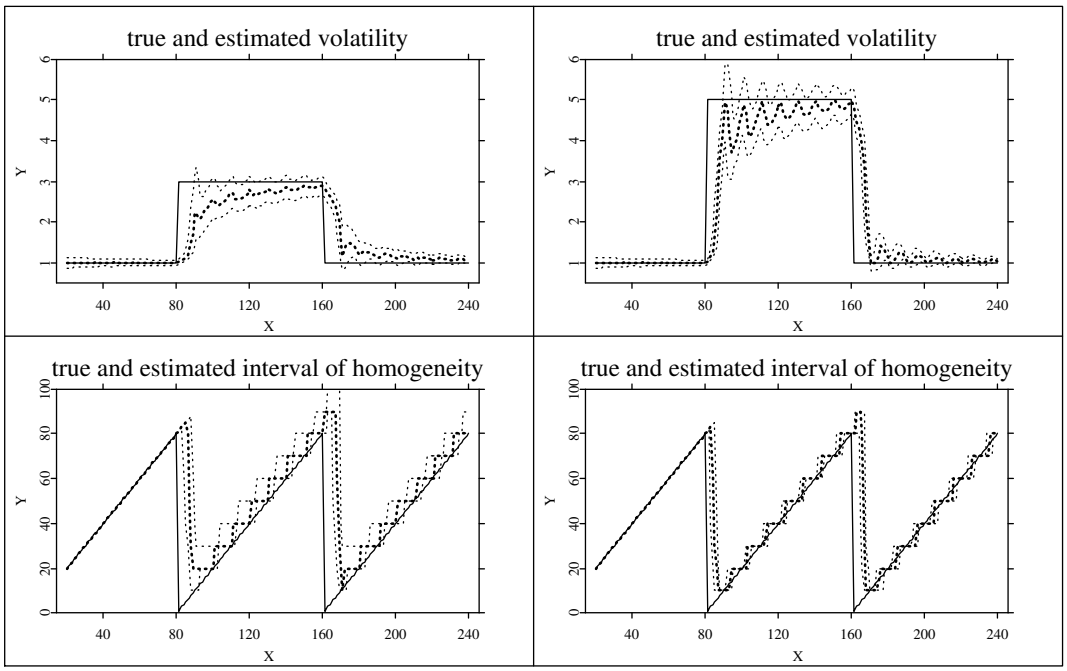

Figure 3: Estimation results for the jump model. The value of λ for $\gamma = 0.5$ and $M = 80$ has been used.

All the time series show qualitatively almost the same pattern, therefore we provide the graphical example only for the two representative exchange rates JPY/USD and BPD/USD (Figure 4). The empirical mean of the returns is close to zero, while the empirical kurtosis is larger than 3. Furthermore, variance clustering and persistence of the autocorrelation of the square returns is also visible. The estimated standard deviation is nicely in accordance with the development of the volatility and in particular sharp changes in the volatility tend to be quickly recognized. Note also that the variability of the estimated interval of time homogeneity appears to grow as the estimated interval becomes larger. This is a feature of the algorithm because the number of tests grows with the accepted interval, so that a rejection becomes more probable. Nevertheless, this variability does not affect strongly the estimated volatility coefficient. Figure 5 shows the significantly persistent autocorrelation of the absolute returns, together with the autocorrelation of the absolute returns divided by the estimated standard deviation. The autocorrelation of the standardized absolute returns is not significant any more and this fact support the choice of a locally homogeneous model in order to explain the data.

Table 3: Summary statistics.

currency	n	mean·10^5	variance·10^5	skewness	kurtosis
AUD	2583	-10.41	3.191	-0.187	8.854
BPD	2583	-0.679	3.530	-0.279	5.792
CAD	2583	8.819	0.895	0.042	5.499
DKR	2583	6.097	4.201	-0.037	4.967
JPY	2583	-12.70	5.486	-0.585	7.366
NKR	2583	9.493	4.251	0.313	8.630
NZD	2583	-6.581	3.604	-0.356	49.17
SFR	2583	1.480	5.402	-0.186	4.526
SKR	2583	12.66	4.615	0.372	9.660

A benchmark model

As a matter of comparison we also consider a model which is commonly used to estimate and forecast volatility processes: the GARCH(1,1) model proposed by Bollerslev (1995):

$$\sigma_t^2 \quad = \quad \omega + \alpha R_{t-1}^2 + \beta \sigma_{t-1}^2 .$$

Among all parametric volatility models it represents the most common specification: *"The GARCH(1,1) is the leading generic model for almost all asset classes of returns. ... it is quite robust and does most of the work in almost all cases."* (Engle 1995).

We do not require the parameters to be constant through the whole sample, but similarly to Franses & Dijk (1996) we consider a rolling estimate. We thus fit the model to a sample of 350 observations, generate the forecast, delete the first observation from the sample and add the next one. Such a procedure reduce the harmful effect of possible parameter shifts on the forecasting performances of the model, even if at the same time it may increase the estimation variability.

The volatility is a hidden process which can be observed only together with a multiplicative error, therefore the evaluation of the forecasting performance of an algorithm is not straightforward. Due to the model (1), it holds $\boldsymbol{E}\left(R_{t+1}^2 \mid \mathcal{F}_t\right) = \sigma_{t+1}^2$. Therefore, given a forecast $\widehat{\sigma}_{t+1|t}$, the empirical mean value of $|R_{t+1}^2 - \widehat{\sigma}_{t+1|t}^2|^p$ can be used to measure the quality of this forecast. The forecast ability of the LAVE and the GARCH estimates are therefore evaluated with the following criterion:

$$\frac{1}{T - t_0 - 1} \sum_{t=t_0}^{T} \left| R_{t+1}^2 - \widehat{\sigma}_{t+1|t}^2 \right|^p \qquad \text{with} \qquad p = 0.5 \; .$$

The value of $p = 0.5$ is chosen instead of the more common $p = 2$ because we are interested in a robust criterion, which is not too sensitive to the presence of outliers. The relative performance of the LAVE and of the GARCH estimate is displayed in Table 4. The performance of the LAVE approach is clearly better, furthermore, the table gives a clear hint for the choice of the power transformation. Indeed $\gamma = 0.5$ provides the smallest forecasting errors, while $\gamma = 2.0$ leads to the largest forecasting errors, which are sometimes larger than the one of the GARCH model.

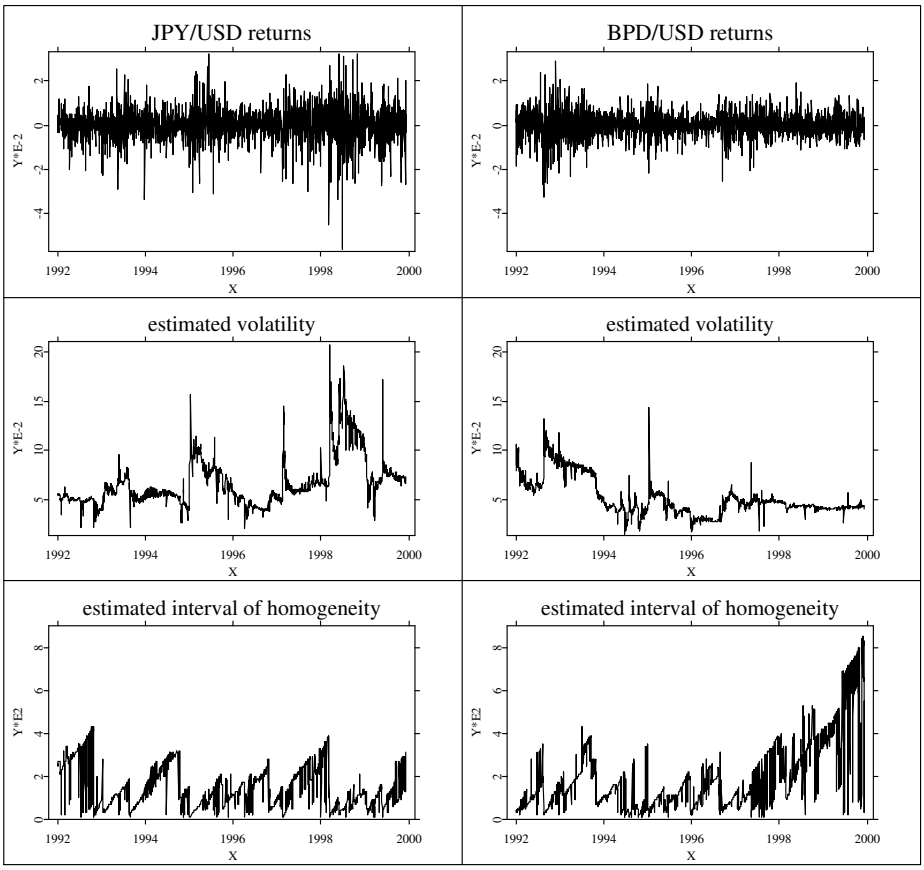

Figure 4: Exchange rate returns, estimated standard deviation and estimated interval of time homogeneity. The value of λ for $\gamma = 0.5$ and $M = 80$ has been used.

7 Conclusions and outlook

The local adaptive volatility estimate (LAVE) is described and analyzed in this paper. It provides a nonparametric way for estimating and short term forecasting the volatility of financial returns.

It is assumed that a local constant approximation of the volatility process holds over some unknown interval. The issue of filtering this interval of time homogeneity out of the return time series is considered, and a nonparametric approach is presented. The estimate of the volatility process is then found by averaging over the interval of time homogeneity.

A theoretical analysis of the properties of the LAVE algorithm is provided and the problem of selecting the smoothing parameters is analyzed through Monte Carlo simulation. The estimation results on change-point models show that the method has a reasonable performance in practice. An empirical application to exchange rate returns and a comparison with a GARCH(1,1) also provides a good evidence that the new method is competitive and can even outperform the standard parametric models especially for

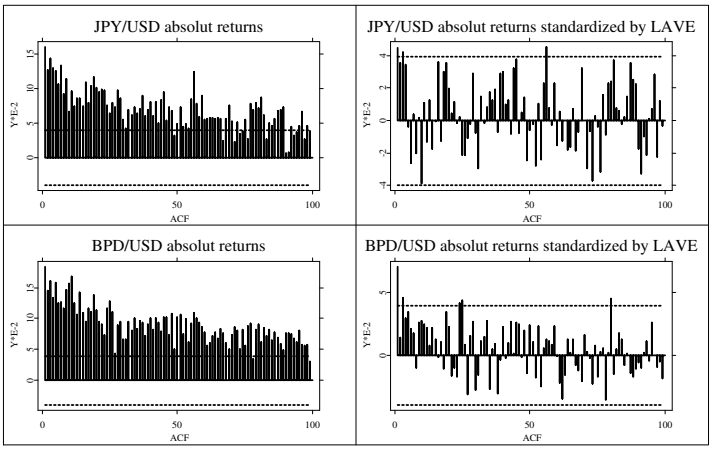

Figure 5: ACF of the absolute values of the exchange rate returns and ACF of the absolute values of the exchange rate returns standardized by LAVE

Table 4: Forecast performance of LAVE relative to GARCH.

CURRENCY	$\gamma = 0.5$		$\gamma = 1.0$		$\gamma = 2.0$	
	$M = 80$	$M = 40$	$M = 80$	$M = 40$	$M = 80$	$M = 40$
AUD	0.942	0.945	0.963	0.962	0.991	0.982
BPD	0.961	0.960	0.979	0.970	1.006	1.000
CAD	0.974	0.979	0.989	0.992	1.010	0.997
DKR	0.978	0.980	0.985	0.987	1.010	1.004
JPY	0.951	0.949	0.971	0.966	1.006	0.997
NKR	0.961	0.957	0.972	0.965	0.998	0.984
NZD	0.878	0.879	0.904	0.902	0.952	0.947
SFR	0.985	0.984	0.992	0.990	1.004	1.000
SKR	0.965	0.961	0.973	0.968	0.982	0.977

forecasting with a short horizon.

An important feature of the proposed method is that it allows for a straightforward extension on the multivariate volatility estimation, see Härdle, Herwartz & Spokoiny (2001) for a detailed discussion.

Obviously, if the underlying conditional distribution is not normal, the estimated volatility can give only a partial information about the riskiness of the asset. Recent developments in the risk analysis tends to focus on the estimation of the quantiles of the distribution. In this direction the LAVE procedure can be used as a convenient tool for pre-whitening the returns and obtain a sample of "almost" identical and independently distributed returns, which do not display any more variance clustering. So that the usual techniques of quantile estimation could be applied in a static framework. We regard such a development as a topic for future research.

8 Proofs

In this section we collect the proofs of the results stated above. We begin by considering some useful properties of the power transformation introduced in Section 2.1.

Some properties of the power transformation

Let $g_\gamma(u)$ be the moment generating function of $\zeta_\gamma = D_\gamma^{-1}\,(|\xi|^\gamma - C_\gamma)$:

$$g_\gamma(u) = \boldsymbol{E} e^{u\zeta_\gamma}\,.$$

It is easy to see that this function is finite for $\gamma < 2$ and all u and for $\gamma = 2$ and $u < 1$. For $\gamma = 1/2$ the function $2u^{-2}\log g_\gamma(u)$ is plotted in Figure 6.

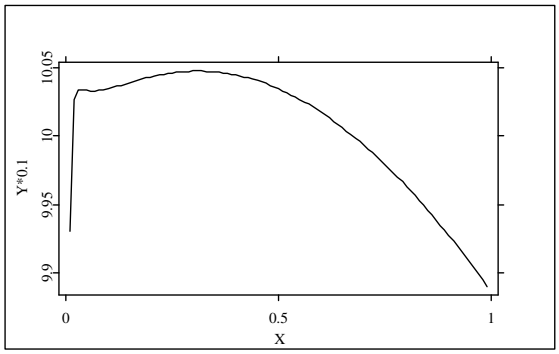

Figure 6: The log-Laplace transform of $\zeta_{1/2}$ divided by the log-Laplace transform of a standard normal r.v.

Lemma 8.1 *For every $\gamma \le 1$ there exists a constant $a_\gamma > 0$ such that*

$$\log \boldsymbol{E} e^{u\zeta_\gamma} \le \frac{a_\gamma u^2}{2}. \tag{13}$$

Proof. It is easy to check that the function $g_\gamma(u)$ with $\gamma \le 1$ is positive and smooth (infinitely many times differentiable). Moreover, the function $h_\gamma(u) = \log g_\gamma(u)$ is also smooth and satisfies $h_\gamma(0) = h'_\gamma(0) = 0$, $h''_\gamma(0) = \boldsymbol{E}\zeta_\gamma^2 = 1$. This yields that $u^{-2}h_\gamma(u) = u^{-2}\log g_\gamma(u)$ is bounded on every finite interval of the positive semi-axis $[0,\infty)$. It therefore remains to show that

$$\lim_{u\to\infty} u^{-2}\log \boldsymbol{E} e^{u\zeta_\gamma} < \infty.$$

Since $\zeta_\gamma(u) = D_\gamma^{-1}(|\xi|^\gamma - C_\gamma)$, it suffices to bound $u^{-2}\boldsymbol{E}e^{u|\xi|^\gamma/D_\gamma}$. It holds for every $t > 0$

$$\begin{aligned}
\boldsymbol{E} e^{u|\xi|^\gamma D_\gamma^{-1}} &= \boldsymbol{E} e^{u|\xi|^\gamma D_\gamma^{-1}}\mathbf{1}(|\xi| \le t) + \boldsymbol{E} e^{u|\xi|^\gamma D_\gamma^{-1}}\mathbf{1}(|\xi| > t) \\
&\le e^{ut^\gamma D_\gamma^{-1}} + \boldsymbol{E} e^{u|\xi|t^{\gamma-1}D_\gamma^{-1}} \\
&\le e^{ut^\gamma D_\gamma^{-1}} + 2\boldsymbol{E} e^{u\xi t^{\gamma-1}D_\gamma^{-1}} \\
&= e^{ut^\gamma D_\gamma^{-1}} + 2e^{u^2 t^{2\gamma-2}D_\gamma^{-2}}.
\end{aligned}$$

Next, with $t = u^{1/(2\gamma)}$ and $\gamma < 1$, it holds for $u \to \infty$:

$$\begin{aligned} u^{-2} \log e^{ut^\gamma D_\gamma^{-1}} &= u^{-1/2} D_\gamma^{-1} \to 0, \\ u^{-2} \log e^{u^2 t^{2\gamma-2} D_\gamma^{-2}} &= u^{-(1-\gamma)/\gamma} D_\gamma^{-2} \to 0. \end{aligned}$$

For $\gamma = 1$, the last expression remains bounded and the assertion follows. ∎

For $\gamma = 1/2$, condition (13) meets with $a_\gamma = 1.005$.

The next technical statement is a direct consequence of Lemma 8.1.

Lemma 8.2 *Let c_t be a predictable process w.r.t. the filtration $\mathcal{F} = (\mathcal{F}_t)$, i.e. every c_t is a function of previous observations $R_1, \dots, R_{t-1}$: $c_t = c_t(R_1, \dots, R_{t-1})$. Then the process*

$$\mathcal{E}_t = \exp\left(\sum_{s=1}^{t} c_s \zeta_s - \frac{a_\gamma}{2} \sum_{s=1}^{t} c_s^2 \right)$$

is a supermartingale, that is,

$$\boldsymbol{E}\left(\mathcal{E}_t \mid \mathcal{F}_{t-1}\right) \le \mathcal{E}_{t-1}. \tag{14}$$

The next result has been stated in Lipster & Spokoiny (1999) for Gaussian martingales, however, the proof is based only on the property (14) and allows for a straightforward extension to the sums of the form $M_t = \sum_{s=1}^{t} c_s \zeta_s$.

Theorem 8.1 *Let $M_t = \sum_{s=1}^{t} c_s \zeta_s$ with predictable coefficients c_s. Let then T be fixed or a stopping time. For every $b > 0$, $B \ge 1$ and $\lambda \ge 1$*

$$\boldsymbol{P}\left(|M_T| > \lambda \sqrt{\langle M \rangle_T},\ b \le \sqrt{\langle M \rangle_T} \le bB \right) \le 4\sqrt{e}\lambda \left(1 + \log B\right) e^{-\lambda^2/(2a_\gamma)}$$

where

$$\langle M \rangle_T = \sum_{t=1}^{T} c_t^2.$$

Remark 8.1 If the coefficients c_t are deterministic or independent of M then Lemma 8.1 and the Tschebysheff inequality yield

$$\boldsymbol{P}\left(|M_T| > \lambda \sqrt{\langle M \rangle_T} \right) \le 2e^{-\lambda^2/(2a_\gamma)}.$$

Proof of Theorem 3.1

Define

$$\bar{\theta}_I = \frac{1}{|I|} \sum_{t \in I} \theta_t \qquad \xi_I = s_\gamma |I|^{-1} \sum_{t \in I} \theta_t \zeta_t .$$

Then $\widetilde{\theta}_I = \bar{\theta}_I + \xi_I$. By the definition of Δ_I

$$|\bar{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| = |I|^{-1} \left| \sum_{t \in I} (\theta_t - \theta_\tau) \right| \le \Delta_I \tag{15}$$

Next, by (5)

$$\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau = \bar{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau + \xi_I$$

and the use of (15) yields

$$\boldsymbol{P}\left(|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| > \Delta_I + \lambda v_I\right) \le \boldsymbol{P}\left(\left|\sum_{t\in I}\theta_t\zeta_t\right| > \lambda\left(\sum_{t\in I}\theta_t^2\right)^{1/2}\right).$$

In addition, if the volatility coefficient σ_t satisfies $b \le \sigma_t^2 \le bB$ with some positive constant b, B, then the conditional variance $v_I^2 = s_\gamma^2|I|^{-2}\sum_{t\in I}\theta_t^2$ fulfills

$$b'|I|^{-1} \le v_I^2 \le b'|I|^{-1}B$$

with $b' = bs_\gamma^2$. Now the assertion follows from (8) and Theorem 8.1.

Proof of Theorem 3.2

It suffices to show that the inequalities $\Delta_I/v_I \le D$ and

$$|\widetilde{\xi}_I| = |\widetilde{\theta}_I - \bar{\theta}_I| \le \lambda v_I \tag{16}$$

imply $|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| \le \lambda'\widetilde{v}_I$ where λ' solves the equation $D + \lambda = \lambda'/(1 + \lambda' s_\gamma|I|^{-1/2})$. This would yield the desirable result by Theorem 8.1, cf. the proof of Theorem 3.1.

Lemma 8.3 *Let* $(\Delta_I/v_I)s_\gamma|I|^{-1/2} < 1$. *Under (16)*

$$\widetilde{v}_I \ge v_I\left(\sqrt{1-(\Delta_I/v_I)^2 s_\gamma^2|I|^{-1}} - s_\gamma\lambda|I|^{-1/2}\right) \ge v_I\left(1 - s_\gamma|I|^{-1/2}(\Delta_I/v_I + \lambda)\right).$$

Proof. By definition of $\widetilde{v}_I$ in view of (16)

$$\widetilde{v}_I = s_\gamma\widetilde{\theta}_I|I|^{-1/2} \ge s_\gamma\left(\bar{\theta}_I - \lambda v_I\right)|I|^{-1/2}.$$

Since $\bar{\theta}_I$ is the arithmetic mean of θ_t over I,

$$\sum_{t\in I}(\theta_t - \bar{\theta}_I)^2 \le \sum_{t\in I}(\theta_t - \theta_\tau)^2 \le \Delta_I^2|I|.$$

Next

$$s_\gamma^{-2}|I|v_I^2 = |I|^{-1}\sum_{t\in I}\theta_t^2 = \bar{\theta}_I^2 + |I|^{-1}\sum_{t\in I}(\theta_t - \bar{\theta}_I)^2 \le \bar{\theta}_I^2 + \Delta_I^2,$$

so that

$$\bar{\theta}_I \ge s_\gamma^{-1}|I|^{1/2}v_I\sqrt{1-(\Delta_I s_\gamma v_I^{-1}|I|^{-1/2})^2}.$$

Hence, it holds under (16)

$$\widetilde{v}_I \ge v_I\left(\sqrt{1-(\Delta_I s_\gamma v_I^{-1}|I|^{-1/2})^2} - s_\gamma\lambda|I|^{-1/2}\right)$$

and the assertion follows. ∎

The bound (16) and the definition of Δ_I imply

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| \le |\bar{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| + |\widetilde{\theta}_I - \bar{\theta}_I| \le \Delta_I + \lambda v_I \le (D+\lambda) v_I \,.$$

By Lemma 8.3 $\widetilde{v}_I \ge v_I \left(1 - s_\gamma D |I|^{-1/2} - s_\gamma \lambda |I|^{-1/2}\right)$. Thus,

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| \le \frac{D+\lambda}{1 - s_\gamma (D+\lambda)|I|^{-1/2}} \widetilde{v}_I = \lambda' \widetilde{v}_I$$

as required.

Proof of Theorem 4.1

Let $I\!I$ be a "good" interval in the sense that with a high probability, $\Delta_J / v_J \le D$ for some nonnegative constant D and every $J \in \mathcal{J}(I\!I)$. First we show that $I\!I$ will not be rejected with a high probability provided that λ is sufficiently large.

We proceed similarly to the proof of Theorems 3.1 and 3.2. The procedure involves the estimates $\widetilde{\theta}_J$, $\widetilde{\theta}_{I\setminus J}$ and the differences $\widetilde{\theta}_J - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\setminus J}$ for all $I \in \mathcal{I}(I\!I)$ and all $J \in \mathcal{J}(I)$. The expansion $\widetilde{\theta}_J = \bar{\theta}_J + \xi_J$ implies

$$\widetilde{\theta}_J - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\setminus J} = \left(\bar{\theta}_J - \bar{\theta}_{I\setminus J}\right) + \left(\xi_J - \xi_{I\setminus J}\right).$$

It holds under the condition $\delta_I \le D$

$$|\bar{\theta}_J - \bar{\theta}_{I\setminus J}| \le \Delta_I \le D v_I \le D\sqrt{v_J^2 + v_{I\setminus J}^2}.$$

Define the events

$$A_I = \bigcup_{J \in \mathcal{J}(I)} \left\{ |\xi_J - \xi_{I\setminus J}| \le (\lambda_J - D)\sqrt{v_J^2 + v_{I\setminus J}^2} \text{ and } \sqrt{\frac{\widetilde{v}_J^2 + \widetilde{v}_{I\setminus J}^2}{v_J^2 + v_{I\setminus J}^2}} \ge 1 - s_\gamma \lambda N_J^{-1/2} \right\}$$

$$A_{I\!I} = \bigcup_{I \in \mathcal{I}: I \subseteq I\!I} A_I$$

where $N_J = \min\{|J|, |I \setminus J|\}$ and $\lambda_J = \lambda(1 - s_\gamma \lambda N_J^{-1/2})$.

Define $A_{I\!I}^* = A_{I\!I} \cap \{\delta_{I\!I} \le D\}$. On this set

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{|\widetilde{\theta}_J - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\setminus J}|}{\sqrt{\widetilde{v}_J^2 + \widetilde{v}_{I\setminus J}^2}} &\le \frac{|\bar{\theta}_J - \bar{\theta}_{I\setminus J}| + |\xi_J - \xi_{I\setminus J}|}{\sqrt{\widetilde{v}_J^2 + \widetilde{v}_{I\setminus J}^2}} \\ &\le (D + \lambda_J - D)\sqrt{\frac{v_J^2 + v_{I\setminus J}^2}{\widetilde{v}_J^2 + \widetilde{v}_{I\setminus J}^2}} \le \frac{D + \lambda_J - D}{1 - s_\gamma \lambda N_J^{-1/2}} = \lambda. \end{aligned}$$

It is easy to see that the conditional variance of $\xi_J - \xi_{I\setminus J}$ is equal to $v_J^2 + v_{I\setminus J}^2$. Arguing similarly to Lemma 8.3 and Theorem 3.1 we bound with $\lambda_{J,D} = \lambda_J - D$

$$\begin{aligned} \boldsymbol{P}(A_I) &\le \sum_{J \in \mathcal{J}(I)} \boldsymbol{P}\left(\frac{|\xi_J|}{v_J} > \lambda_{J,D}\right) + \boldsymbol{P}\left(\frac{|\xi_{I\setminus J}|}{v_{I\setminus J}} > \lambda_{J,D}\right) + \boldsymbol{P}\left(\frac{|\xi_J - \xi_{I\setminus J}|}{\sqrt{v_J^2 + v_{I\setminus J}^2}} > \lambda_{J,D}\right) \\ &\le \sum_{J \in \mathcal{J}(I)} 12\sqrt{e}\lambda_J (1 + \log B) e^{-\lambda_{J,D}^2/(2a_\gamma)} \end{aligned}$$

and the first assertion of the theorem follows.

Now we show that on the set $A^*_{I\!I}$ the estimate $\widehat{\theta} = \widetilde{\theta}_{\widehat{I}}$ fulfills $|\widehat{\theta} - \widehat{\theta}_{I\!I}| \le 2\lambda\widetilde{v}_{I\!I}$.

Due to the above, on $A^*_{I\!I}$ the interval $I\!I$ will not be rejected and hence, $|\widehat{I}| \ge |I\!I|$. Let I be an arbitrary interval from $\mathcal{I}$ which is not rejected by the procedure. By construction, the $I\!I$ is one of the testing intervals for I. Denote $J = I \setminus I\!I$. Note that $|I|(\widetilde{\theta}_I - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}) = |J|(\widetilde{\theta}_J - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I})$, so that the event '$I$ is not rejected' implies $|\widetilde{\theta}_J - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| \le \lambda\sqrt{\widetilde{v}_J^2 + \widetilde{v}_{I\!I}^2}$ and

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| \le \frac{\lambda|J|}{|I|}\sqrt{\widetilde{v}_J^2 + \widetilde{v}_{I\!I}^2} \le \frac{\lambda|J|}{|I|}\,(\widetilde{v}_J + \widetilde{v}_{I\!I})\,.$$

The use of $\widetilde{v}_J = s_\gamma\widetilde{\theta}_J|J|^{-1/2}$ and $|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| \le \lambda\,(\widetilde{v}_J + \widetilde{v}_{I\!I})$ yields

$$\left|\widetilde{v}_J|J|^{1/2} - \widetilde{v}_{I\!I}|I\!I|^{1/2}\right| \le \lambda s_\gamma\,(\widetilde{v}_J + \widetilde{v}_{I\!I})$$

implying

$$\widetilde{v}_J \le \frac{|I\!I|^{1/2} + \lambda s_\gamma}{|J|^{1/2} - \lambda s_\gamma}\,\widetilde{v}_{I\!I}\,, \qquad \widetilde{v}_J + \widetilde{v}_{I\!I} \le \frac{|J|^{1/2} + |I\!I|^{1/2}}{|J|^{1/2} - \lambda s_\gamma}\,\widetilde{v}_{I\!I}\,.$$

Therefore,

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| \le \frac{\lambda|J|\left(|J|^{1/2} + |I\!I|^{1/2}\right)}{(|J| + |I\!I|)\left(|J|^{1/2} - \lambda s_\gamma\right)}\,\widetilde{v}_{I\!I}$$

It is straightforward to check that the function $f(x) = x^2(x+1)/[(x^2+1)(x-c)]$ with any $c \ge 0$ satisfies $f(x) \le 2$ for all $x \ge 2c$. This implies with $x = |J|^{1/2}/|I\!I|^{1/2}$ and $c = \lambda s_\gamma/|I\!I|^{1/2}$ that

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| \le 2\lambda\widetilde{v}_{I\!I}$$

under the condition that $|J|^{1/2} \ge 2\lambda s_\gamma$.

Let $\Delta_{I\!I} \le Dv_{I\!I}$. Similarly to Lemma 8.3 $\widetilde{v}_{I\!I} \le v_{I\!I}\left(1 + s_\gamma(D+\lambda)|I\!I|^{-1/2}\right)$ and by Theorem 3.1 $|\widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I} - \theta_\tau| \le (D+\lambda)v_{I\!I}$. This yields

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| \le 2\lambda v_{I\!I}\left(1 + s_\gamma(D+\lambda)|I\!I|^{-1/2}\right)$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}|\widetilde{\theta}_I - \theta_\tau| &\le 2\lambda v_{I\!I}\left(1 + s_\gamma(D+\lambda)|I\!I|^{-1/2}\right) + (D+\lambda)v_{I\!I} \\ &= \left(D + 3\lambda + 2\lambda s_\gamma(D+\lambda)|I\!I|^{-1/2}\right)v_{I\!I}\end{aligned}$$

as required.

Proof of Theorem 5.2

To simplify the exposition, we suppose that $\theta = 1$. (This does not restrict generality since one can always normalize each 'observation' Y_t by θ.) We also suppose that $\theta' > 1$ and $b = \theta' - 1$. (The case when $\theta' < \theta$ can be considered similarly.) Finally we assume that $m' = m$ (One can easily see that this case is the most difficult one.) We again apply the decomposition

$$\widetilde{\theta}_J = 1 + \xi_J\,, \qquad \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I} = \theta' + \xi_{I\!I}$$

see the proof of Theorem 3.1. Hence,

$$\widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I} - \widetilde{\theta}_J = b + \xi_{I\!I} - \xi_J\,.$$

It is straightforward to see that $v_J^2 = s_\gamma^2/m$ and $v_{I\!I}^2 = s_\gamma^2\theta'/m$. By Lemma 8.1 (see also Remark 8.1)

$$\boldsymbol{P}\left(|\xi_J| > \lambda v_J\right) + \boldsymbol{P}\left(|\xi'| > \lambda v_{I\!I}\right) \le 4e^{-\frac{\lambda^2}{2a_\gamma}}$$

and it suffices to check that the inequalities $|\xi_J| \le \lambda v_J$, $|\xi_{I\!I}| \le \lambda v_{I\!I}$ and (11) imply

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_J - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| \ge \lambda\sqrt{\widetilde{v}_J^2 + \widetilde{v}_{I\!I}^2}\,.$$

Since $\theta' - 1 = b$ and since $\widetilde{v}_J = s_\gamma |J|^{-1/2}\widetilde{\theta}_J$ and similarly for $\widetilde{v}_I$, it holds under the conditions $|\xi_J| \le \lambda v_J$, $|\xi_{I\!I}| \le \lambda v_{I\!I}$:

$$\begin{aligned} |\widetilde{\theta}_J - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| &\ge b - \frac{\lambda s_\gamma(\theta'+1)}{\sqrt{m}} = b(1-\varrho) - 2\varrho, \\ \widetilde{v}_J &= \frac{s_\gamma}{\sqrt{m}}\,(1+\xi_J) \le \lambda^{-1}\varrho\,(1+\varrho)\,, \\ \widetilde{v}_{I\!I} &= \frac{s_\gamma}{\sqrt{m}}\,(1+\xi_{I\!I}) \le \lambda^{-1}\varrho\,(1+\varrho) \end{aligned}$$

with $\varrho = m^{-1/2}\lambda s_\gamma$. Therefore

$$|\widetilde{\theta}_J - \widetilde{\theta}_{I\!I}| - \lambda\sqrt{\widetilde{v}_J^2 + \widetilde{v}_{I\!I}^2} \ge b(1-\delta) - 2\varrho - \sqrt{2}\varrho(1+\varrho) > 0$$

in view of (11) and the assertion follows.

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