

Reference Dependent Preferences and the EPK Puzzle

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Risk neutral valuation

- Arbitrage free market: there exists at least one state price density (SPD) i.e. a positive random variable π s.t.

$$E[\pi] = 1.$$

- **Risk neutral valuation** at time 0 of random payoffs $\psi(S_T)$

$$E \left[e^{-Tr} \pi \psi(S_T) \right] = E \left[e^{-Tr} E[\pi | S_T] \psi(S_T) \right],$$

$Tr = \int_0^T r_t dt$, $\{r_t\}_{t \in [0, T]}$ risk free rate, $\{S_t\}_{t \in [0, T]}$ risky asset.



Pricing Kernel

- Pricing kernel (PK) w.r.t. π , positive random variable

$$\mathcal{K}_\pi(S_T) = E[\pi|S_T]$$

- Radon-Nikodym derivative of the risk neutral distribution Q w.r.t. physical measure P of S_T

$$Q(S_T \leq x) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \int_0^x \mathcal{K}_\pi(s_T) dp(s_T) ds_T.$$



Intertemporal Pricing Kernel

- Conditional risk neutral measure $Q_t(S_T) = Q(S_T|\mathcal{F}_t)$

$$Q_t(S_T \leq x) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \int_0^x \mathcal{K}_\pi^t(ds_T) dp(s_T) ds_T.$$

for $P_t = Q(S_T|\mathcal{F}_t)$ and $\mathcal{F}_t = \{S_1, \dots, S_t\}$

- Intertemporal pricing kernel at time t (w.r.t. π)

$$\mathcal{K}_\pi^t(S_T) = \frac{q_t(S_T)}{p_t(S_T)}$$

q_t and p_t are cdtl pdf of Q_t and P_t respectively



Pricing Equation

Price at time t of a random payoff $\psi(S_T)$, $\tau = T - t$

- ▣ Arbitrage free asset pricing models

$$P_t = E_t^P \left[e^{-\tau r} \psi(S_T) \frac{q_t(S_T)}{p_t(S_T)} \right]$$

- ▣ Consumption based asset pricing models

$$P_t = E_t^P \left[\beta \frac{u'(S_T)}{u'(S_t)} \psi(S_T) \right]$$

β subjective discount factor, S_t value at time t of consumption, $u'(x)$ marginal utility index of the RA



Dual Nature of the PK

If (2) and (5) hold for any function ψ , the pricing kernel is

$$\mathcal{K}_{\pi}^t(S_T) = \frac{q_t(S_T)}{p_t(S_T)} = \frac{u'(S_T)}{u'(S_t)}$$

if $e^{-\tau r} = \beta$.

□ Standard microeconomic theory

- ▶ $u : \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$
- ▶ increasing, concave, twice cts. differentiable

→ decreasing pricing kernel ▶ PK - Black-Scholes



Empirical Pricing Kernel (EPK)

- PK estimated from index options and prices: Ait-Sahalia & Lo (2000), Engle & Rosenberg (2002), Chernov (2003), Brown & Jackwerth (2004), Barone-Adesi, Engle & Mancini (2008), Giacomini & Härdle (2008), Bakshi, Madan & Panayotov (2010), Detlefsen, Härdle & Moro (2010), Chabi-Yo (2011), Christoffersen, Heston & Jacobs (2011), Audrino & Meier (2012), Grith, Härdle & Park (2013)



the puzzle



EPK puzzle

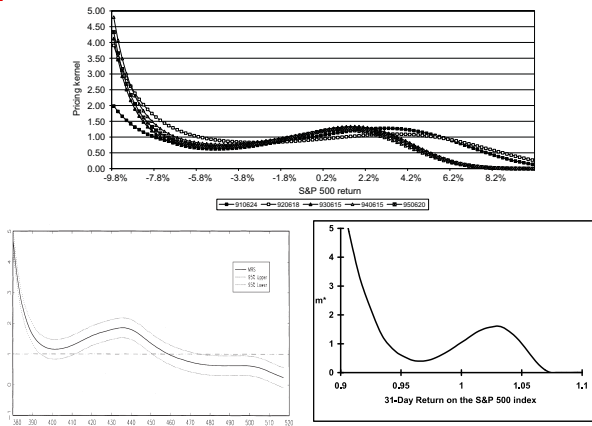


Figure 1: S&P 500 EPK's: Engle and Rosenberg (2002), Ait-Sahalia and Lo (2000), Brown and Jackwerth (2004)



EPK puzzle

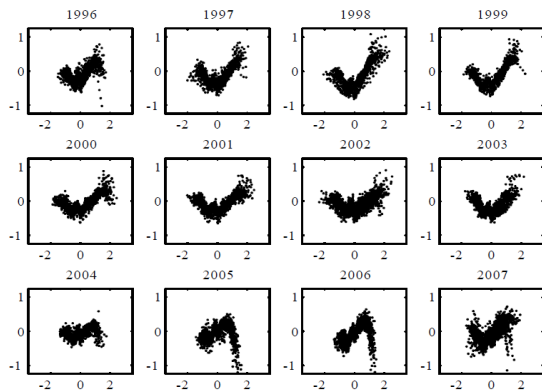


Figure 2: *S&P* 500 EPK's: Christoffersen, Heston and Jacobs (2012)



EPK puzzle

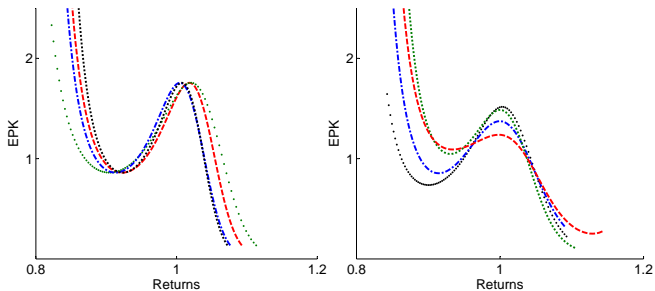


Figure 3: DAX EPK's for various maturities (left) and different estimation dates for fixed maturity 1M (right), Grith et al. (2013)



EPK puzzle

Figure 4: DAX 30 EPK's, Giacomini and Härdle (2008)



Empirical Tests for PK Monotonicity

Indirect estimation of the PK

$$\hat{\mathcal{K}}_{\pi}^t(S_T) = \frac{\hat{q}_t(S_T)}{\hat{p}_t(S_T)}$$

- Golubev, Härdle and Timofeev (2008): LR test
- Härdle, Okhrin and Wang (2012): confidence bands for $\hat{\mathcal{K}}_{\pi}^t$
- Beare and Schmidt (2012): concavity of the ordinal dominance curve associated with Q_t and P_t



Research Questions

- Consumption based asset pricing models

$$\mathcal{K}_\pi^t(\cdot) \propto u'(\cdot | \mathcal{F}_t)$$

representative agent with utility index u

- Can increasing regions in the PK be the outcome of investors' optimal behavior?
- How to modify standard preferences to rationalize the puzzle?
- What is the intuition behind the time variation of the PK w.r.t the new model?



Outline

1. Motivation ✓
2. Microeconomic Framework
3. Pricing Kernel
4. Comparative Statics
5. Fitting EPK's
6. Conclusions



Theoretical Explanation for the EPK puzzle

- **state dependence:** Benzoni, Collin-Dufresne & Goldstein (2005), Chabi-Yo, Garcia & Renault (2008), Christoffersen, Heston & Jacobs (2011)
- **heterogeneity in beliefs:** Ziegler (2007), Bakshi & Madan (2008), Bakshi, Madan & Panayotov (2010), Hens & Reichlin (2012)
- **misestimations/distortions:** Polkovnichenko & Zhao (2012), Hens & Reichlin (2012)
- **investors' sentiment:** Barone-Adesi, Mancini & Shefrin (2012)
- **ambiguity aversion:** Gollier (2011)
- **incomplete markets:** Hens & Reichlin (2012)
- ...



Assumptions

□ Financial markets

- ▶ Finite investment time horizon $[0, T]$
- ▶ Risk free bond $\{B_t\}_{0 \leq t \leq T}$ with annual interest rate r
- ▶ Risky asset with prices $\{S_t\}_{0 \leq t \leq T}$ and return $R_T = S_T/S_0$
- ▶ Arbitrage free market
- ▶ No transaction costs; no restrictions on short sales

□ m Consumers

- ▶ Exogenous endowments w_0^i , $i = 1, \dots, m$
- ▶ Decisions on portfolio holdings at $t = 0$
- ▶ Financial wealth $e_i(R_T)$ and consumption $c_i(R_T)$



Individual Preferences

- Consumer i 's **extended expected utility**, Mas-Colell et al. (1995)

$$E [u^i \{R_T, c_i (R_T)\}],$$

with $u^i : \mathbb{R}_+^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ - state dependent utility index

$$u^i \{R_T, c_i (R_T)\} = u_i^0 \{c_i (R_T)\} \mathbf{1} \{R_T \in [0, x_i]\} + u_i^1 \{c_i (R_T)\} \mathbf{1} \{R_T \in (x_i, \infty)\}$$

$x_i \in [0, \infty)$ - **reference point** of consumer i ; $x_1 \leq \dots \leq x_m$

$u_i^0, u_i^1 : \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ - utility indices

- strictly increasing, concave and twice cts differentiable



Equilibrium

- Individual optimization

$$\bar{c}_i(R_T) = \arg \max_{c_i(R_T)} E [u^i \{R_T, c_i(R_T)\}]$$

$$\text{s.t. } E [\{c_i(R_T) - e_i(R_T)\} \mathcal{K}(R_T)] \leq w_0^i$$

- Market clearing

$$\sum_{i=1}^m \bar{c}_i(R_T) = \sum_{i=1}^m \{w_0^i + e_i(R_T)\} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \bar{e}(R_T)$$

- ▶ Pareto optimal $\bar{c}_1(R_T), \dots, \bar{c}_m(R_T)$



Aggregated Preferences

- Aggregated extended expected preferences

$$E[u_\alpha \{R_T, \bar{e}(R_T)\}],$$

with $u_\alpha : \mathbb{R}_+^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ - aggregated indirect utility

$$\begin{aligned} u_\alpha \{r_T, \bar{e}(r_T)\} = & u_{\alpha,1} \{\bar{e}(r_T)\} \mathbb{I} \{r_T \in [0, x_1]\} + \\ & + \sum_{i=1}^{m-1} u_{\alpha,i+1} \{\bar{e}(r_T)\} \mathbb{I} \{r_T \in (x_i, x_{i+1}]\} + \\ & + u_{\alpha,m+1} \{\bar{e}(r_T)\} \mathbb{I} \{r_T \in (x_m, \infty)\} \end{aligned}$$

for every realization r_T of R_T .



□ Aggregated utility indices $u_{\alpha,j} : \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

$$\begin{aligned}
 u_{\alpha,j} \{ \bar{e}(r_T) \} &= \sum_{k=1}^m \alpha_k u_k^0 \{ \bar{c}_k(r_T) \} I \{ k \geq j \} \\
 &+ \sum_{k=1}^m \alpha_k u_k^1 \{ \bar{c}_k(r_T) \} I \{ k < j \}
 \end{aligned}$$

for for $j = 1, \dots, m + 1$, importance weights
 $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_m)^\top$ and

$$\frac{du_{\alpha}(r_T, \cdot)}{dy} \Big|_{y=\bar{e}(r_T)} = \alpha_i \frac{du^i(r_T, \cdot)}{dy} \Big|_{y=\bar{c}_i(r_T)}$$



Pricing Kernel

Theorem

For every $\alpha_i > 0$ there exists β_i s.t.

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{\mathcal{K}}_\pi(r_T) = \alpha_i \beta_i \mathcal{K}(r_T) &= \left. \frac{\partial u_{\alpha,1}\{y\}}{\partial y} \right|_{y=r_T} \mathbb{I}\{r_T \in [0, x_1]\} + \\ &+ \sum_{i=1}^{m-1} \left. \frac{\partial u_{\alpha,i+1}\{y\}}{\partial y} \right|_{y=r_T} \mathbb{I}\{r_T \in (x_i, x_{i+1}]\} + \\ &+ \left. \frac{\partial u_{\alpha,m+1}\{y\}}{\partial y} \right|_{y=r_T} \mathbb{I}\{r_T \in (x_m, \infty)\}. \end{aligned}$$

for $\bar{e}(r_T) = r_T$.

Note: $\tilde{\mathcal{K}}_\pi(r_T)$ is nonincreasing separately on the intervals

$[0, x_1], (x_1, x_2], \dots, (x_m, \infty)$ but may be nonmonotone at x_i 's

EPK puzzle



Example 1

Consider m investors with identical reference point x_1 that switch between the v. Neumann-Morgenstern utility indices $u^0(y)$ and $u^1(y)$ s.t.

$$\text{a. } \tilde{\mathcal{K}}_{\pi}(r_T) = r_T^{-\gamma_{\alpha}^0} \mathbb{I}\{r_T \in [0, x_1]\} + r_T^{-\gamma_{\alpha}^1} \mathbb{I}\{r_T \in (x_1, \infty)\}$$

$$\text{b. } \tilde{\mathcal{K}}_{\pi}(r_T) = r_T^{-\gamma_{\alpha}} \mathbb{I}\{r_T \in [0, x_1]\} + br_T^{-\gamma_{\alpha}} \mathbb{I}\{r_T \in (x_1, \infty)\}$$

γ_{α}^0 , γ_{α}^1 and γ_{α} - aggr. CRRA coeff's, $b > 0$



Example 1

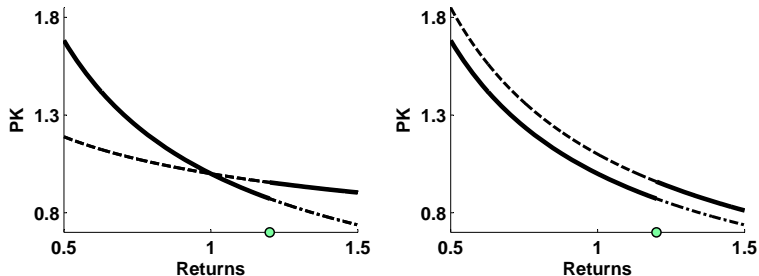


Figure 5: $\frac{du_{\alpha}^1(r_T)}{dr_T}$ (dashed-dotted) and $\frac{du_{\alpha}^{m+1}(r_T)}{dr_T}$ (dashed) for $x_1 = 1.2$;
 a. (left) $\gamma_{\alpha}^0 = 0.75 > \gamma_{\alpha}^1 = 0.25$; b. (right) $\gamma_{\alpha} = 0.50$ and $b = 1.2$



Example 2

Consider m investors with ref. points x_i 's that switch between utility indices $u^0(y)$ and $u^1(y)$ with $u^1(y) = bu^0(y)$

$$u^0(y) = \begin{cases} \frac{y^{1-\gamma}}{1-\gamma} & \text{if } \gamma > 0 \text{ and } \gamma \neq 1 \\ \log(y) & \text{if } \gamma = 1 \end{cases}$$

Let $F(r_T)$ be the cdf of the reference points

$$F(r_T) = m^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbb{I}\{x_i \leq r_T\}$$
$$\tilde{\mathcal{K}}_\pi(r_T) = \left[\frac{r_T}{1 + F(r_{T,t}) \left(b^{\frac{1}{\gamma}} - 1 \right)} \right]^{-\gamma} \quad (1)$$



Example 2

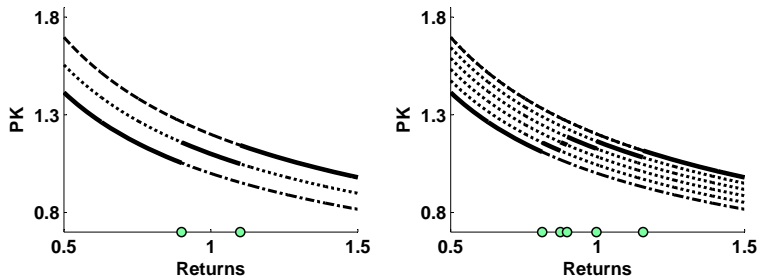


Figure 6: $\frac{du_\alpha(r_T)}{dr_T}$ (solid), $\frac{du_\alpha^j(r_T)}{dr_T}$ (dotted), $\frac{du_\alpha^1(r_T)}{dr_T}$ (dashed dotted) and $\frac{du_\alpha^{m+1}(r_T)}{dr_T}$ (dashed) for $\gamma_\alpha = 0.75$ and $b = 1.2$; $m = 3$ and $m = 5$



Example 2

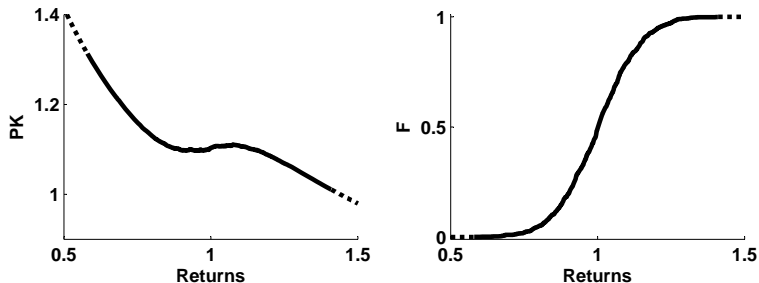


Figure 7: PK (left) for $\gamma = 0.5$, $b = 1.2$ and F (right) a *edf* of 400 random reference points from $N(1, 1.2)$; compact support for pdf of F (solid)



Welfare Effects

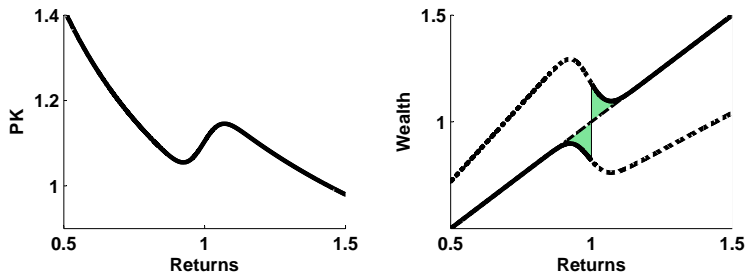


Figure 8: Market pricing kernel and (scaled) final wealth of a mixed agent; $m\bar{c}_i(r_T)$ (solid), $m\bar{c}_i^0(r_T)$ (dotted) and $m\bar{c}_i^1(r_T)$ (dotted)



Welfare Effects

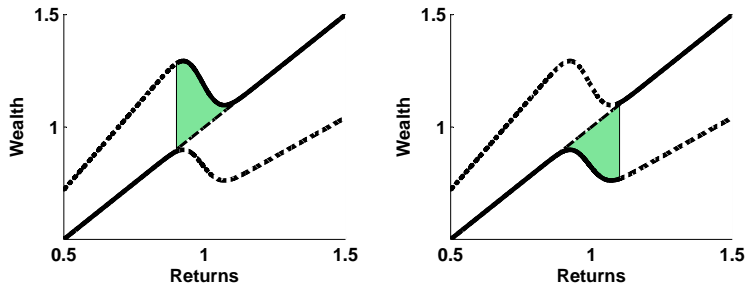


Figure 9: Final wealth of an optimistic agent (left) and pessimistic agent (right); $m\bar{c}_i(r_T)$ (solid), $m\bar{c}_i^0(r_T)$ (dotted) and $m\bar{c}_i^1(r_T)$ (dotted)



Effects of F

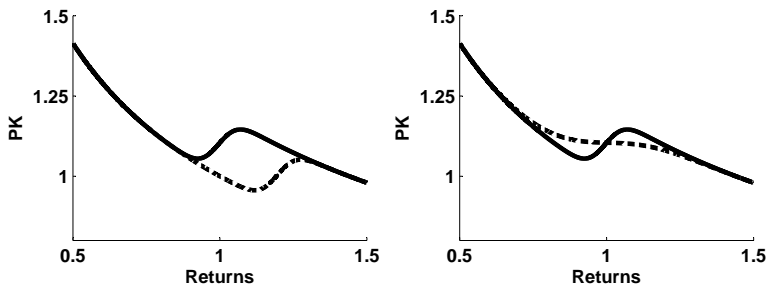


Figure 10: Baseline model (solid): $\gamma = 0.5$, $b = 1.2$, $F = N(1, 0.05)$; alternative specifications (dashed): left $F = N(1.2, 0.05)$; right $F = N(1, 0.15)$



Effects of θ

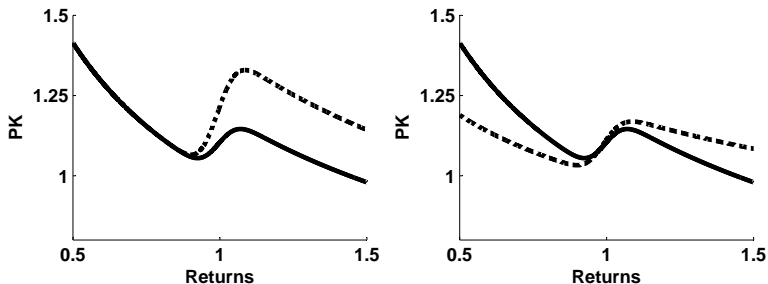


Figure 11: Baseline model (solid): $\gamma = 0.5$, $b = 1.2$, $F = N(1, 0.05)$; alternative specifications (dashed): left $b = 1.4$; right $\gamma = 0.25$;



Fitting EPK's

- Assume that for the estimate $\widehat{\mathcal{K}}(s_j) = y_j$ with $j = 0, \dots, n$
 $y_j = \mathcal{K}_{\theta, F}(s_j) + \varepsilon_j$, with $\varepsilon_j \sim (0, \sigma^2)$

$$\mathcal{K}_{\theta, F}(x) = \left[\frac{x}{\{1 - F(x)\} b_0^{\frac{1}{\gamma}} + F(x) b_1^{\frac{1}{\gamma}}} \right]^{-\gamma}$$

with $b_1 = b_0 b > 0$, $\theta = (\gamma, b_0, b_1)^\top$ and F cdf.

- Find $\widehat{\theta}$ and \widehat{F} that minimize

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \{y_j - \mathcal{K}_{\theta, F}(s_j)\}^2$$



Identifiability

For $\gamma, b_0, b_1 > 0$ and $b_0 \leq b_1$

$$x\mathcal{K}_{\theta, F}^{\frac{1}{\gamma}}(x) = \{1 - F(x)\} b_0^{\frac{1}{\gamma}} + F(x) b_1^{\frac{1}{\gamma}} \quad (2)$$

is a monotonically increasing function bounded between $b_0^{\frac{1}{\gamma}}$ and $b_1^{\frac{1}{\gamma}}$.

- For discrete reference points θ is identifiable
- For F continuous θ is not identifiable



Partial Identifiability

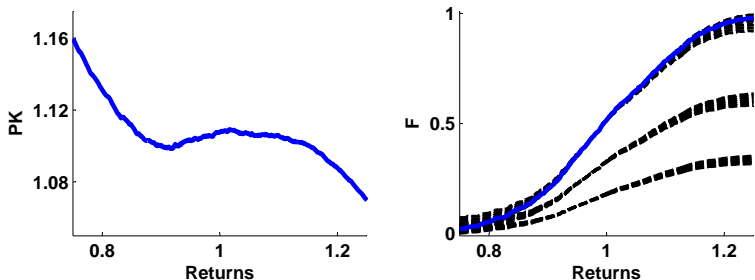


Figure 12: PK (left) and F (right) for $b = (1.2, 1.3, 1.5)$ and $\gamma = (0.46, 0.47, 0.48, 0.49, 0.50, 0.52)$



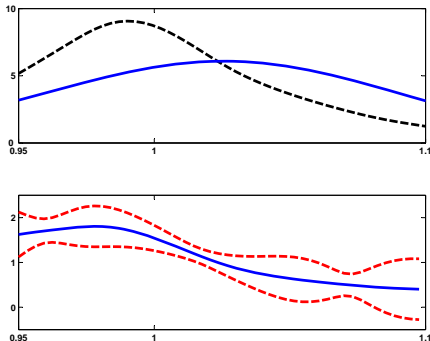


Figure 13: Upper panel: estimated risk neutral density \hat{q} and historical density \hat{p} . Lower panel: EPK and 95% uniform confidence bands on 20080228, Härdle, Okhrin and Wang (2012)



EPK Dynamics

- Assume that $y_{tj} = \widehat{\mathcal{K}}^t(s_j)$ is a sample of T noisy curves

$$y_{tj} = \mathcal{K}_{\theta_t, F_t}(s_j) + \varepsilon_{tj} \quad \text{with } \varepsilon_{tj} \sim (0, \sigma_t^2)$$

$$\mathcal{K}_{\theta_t, F_t}(x) = \left[\frac{x}{\{1 - F_t(x)\} b_{0t}^{\frac{1}{\gamma_t}} + F_t(x) b_{1t}^{\frac{1}{\gamma_t}}} \right]^{-\gamma_t}$$

with $\theta_t = (\gamma_t, b_{0t}, b_{1t})^\top$ and F_t cdf.

- Scale/shift model for F ▶ SIM EPK

$$F_t(x) = F\left(\frac{x - a_t}{d_t}\right) \quad \text{for } a_t \in \mathbb{R} \quad \text{and } d_t \in \mathbb{R}_+$$

- use state variables to pin down $(\gamma_t, b_{0t}, b_{1t}, a_t, d_t)$ for parametric F



Other Setups I

- Option implied stock return distributions

$$p_t(S_{t+1}|\theta, F) = \frac{\frac{q_t(S_{t+1})}{\mathcal{K}_{\theta_t, F_t}(S_{t+1})}}{\int \frac{q(x)}{\mathcal{K}_{\theta_t, F_t}(x)}}$$

- Maximum likelihood estimation

$$(\hat{\theta}, \hat{F}) = \arg \min_{\theta, F} \sum_{t=0}^{T-1} \log p_t(S_{t+1}|\theta, F)$$



Other Setups II

- Euler equation

$$A_t = E_t \left[e^{-r_{t,t+1}} \mathcal{K}_{\theta_t, F_t} (S_{t+1}) A_{t+1} \right], \quad t=1, \dots, T$$

$A_t = (A_{1t}, \dots, A_{kt})^\top$ price vector of k assets at t

- Generalized method of moments

$$g_T(\theta, F) = \sum_{t=0}^{T-1} \left\{ e^{-r_{t,t+1}} \mathcal{K}_{\theta_t, F_t} (S_{t+1}) A_{t+1}/A_t - 1_k \right\}$$

$$(\hat{\theta}, \hat{F}) = \arg \min_{\theta, F} \left\{ g_T^\top(\theta, F) W^{-1} g_T(\theta, F) \right\}.$$

for some weighting matrix W .



Conclusions

- Individual state-dependent preferences with reference point may explain nonmonotonicity in the PK
- The model suggests a sensible mechanisms for PKs dynamics

Further Research

- Statistical estimation and inference on $\hat{\theta}$ and \hat{F}
- Joint fitting of curves using state variables
- Alternative model specifications for the EPK puzzle



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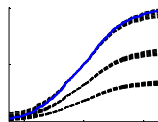
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PK under the Black-Scholes Model ► Motivation

- Geometric Brownian motion for S_t

$$\frac{dS_t}{S_t} = \mu dt + \sigma dW_t$$

μ drift, σ volatility, W_t Wiener process

- Physical density p is log-normal, $\tau = T - t$

$$p_t(S_T) = \frac{1}{S_T \sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2\tau}} \exp \left[-\frac{1}{2} \left\{ \frac{\log(S_T/S_t) - \left(\mu - \frac{\sigma^2}{2}\right)\tau}{\sigma\sqrt{\tau}} \right\}^2 \right]$$

- Risk neutral density q is log-normal with drift μ



PK under the Black-Scholes Model ▶ Motivation

- PK is a decreasing function in S_T for fixed S_t

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{K}_t(S_T) &= \left(\frac{S_T}{S_t}\right)^{-\frac{\mu-r}{\sigma^2}} \exp\left\{\frac{(\mu-r)(\mu+r-\sigma^2)\tau}{2\sigma^2}\right\} \\ &= c \left(\frac{S_T}{S_t}\right)^{-\gamma} = b \frac{u'(S_T)}{u'(S_t)} \end{aligned}$$

- and consistent with a power utility function $u(x) = \frac{x^{1-\gamma}}{1-\gamma}$ for $c = \exp\left\{\frac{(\mu-r)(\mu+r-\sigma^2)\tau}{2\sigma^2}\right\}$ and $\gamma = \frac{\mu-r}{\sigma^2} \geq 0$ constant relative risk aversion (CRRA) coefficient.



EPK Dynamics - Empirical Study

- Grith, Härdle and Park (2013)
- **Data:** Research Data Center (RDC)
<http://sfb649.wiwi.hu-berlin.de>
- Datastream DAX 30 Price Index;
2 years worth of monthly returns in a sliding window
- EUREX European Option Data; tick observations;
intraday cross-sectional data



Estimation of PK

- EPK: ratio of 2 estimated densities

$$\hat{\kappa}_t(S_T) = \frac{\hat{q}_t(S_T)}{\hat{p}_t(S_T)}$$

- $\hat{q}_t(S_T)$ by Rookley (1997) method based on the results of Breeden and Litzenberger (1978)

$$q_t(S_T) = e^{r\tau} \frac{\partial^2 C_t(\cdot)}{\partial K^2} \Big|_{K=S_T}$$

C European call price with strike price K

- $\hat{p}_t(S_T)$ by kernel density method



Estimation of RND

Rookley method: for fixed one month maturity estimate a smooth call price function with respect to the moneyness K/S_t

- implied volatility σ_{IV} substitute the call price
- $\hat{\sigma}_{IV}$, $\hat{\sigma}'_{IV}$, $\hat{\sigma}''_{IV}$ improve efficiency
- local polynomial smoothing of degree 3
- quartic kernel
- little sensitivity to the bandwidth choice



Estimation of PDF

- nonparametric kernel density based on overlapping monthly historical returns (2 years)
- quartic kernel
- bandwidth choice: unimodal densities for all periods
- peak varies with the bandwidth and window length
- robustness checks with risk-free mean adjusted historical densities and GARCH models with empirical innovations



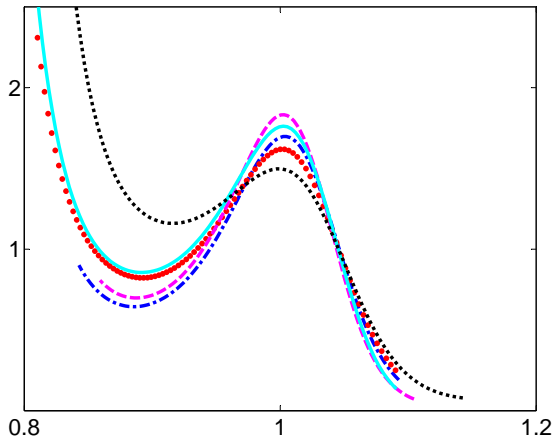


Figure 14: EPK vs moneyness for maturity $\tau = 0.083$ (4w), observed on 20060118 (blue), 20060215 (red), 20060322 (magenta), 20060419 (cyan), 20060417(black)

EPK puzzle



Shape Invariant Model (SIM)

- Y_{tj} is a noisy sample of T curves at design points u_j , with $j \in \{1, \dots, n\}$, $n = 101$

$$Y_{tj} = \mathcal{K}_t(u_j) + \varepsilon_{tj}, \quad \text{with} \quad \varepsilon_{tj} \sim (0, \sigma_t^2) \quad (3)$$

- The smooth curves are of the form

$$\mathcal{K}_t(u) = \theta_{t1} \mathcal{K}_0\left(\frac{u - \theta_{t3}}{\theta_{t2}}\right) + \theta_{t4} \quad (4)$$

- \mathcal{K}_0 is a reference curve and $\theta = (\theta_{t1}, \theta_{t2}, \theta_{t3}, \theta_{t4})^\top$ are horizontal and vertical deviation parameters



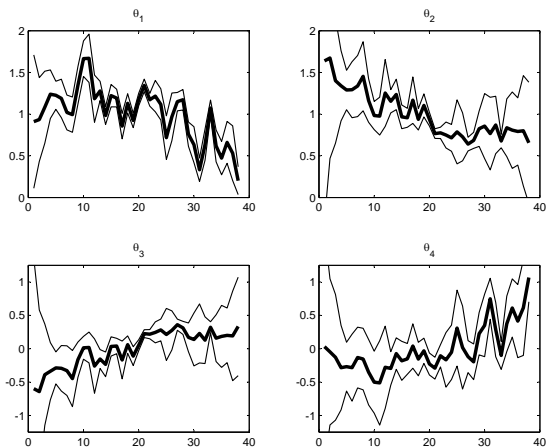


Figure 15: Parameter estimates of the SIM and their confidence intervals at 95% confidence level for the EPK 200304:200605



Business Cycle Indicators

- **Data:** Daily observations. German market
- Credit spread (CD): 5Y Corporate - Gov. bond yield
- Yield term slope (IR): 30Y-3M Gov. bond yield
- DAX 30 stock index (I_{DAX})



	θ_1	θ_2	θ_3	θ_4	CS	DAX	YT
θ_1	1.00	0.55*	0.02	0.78*	-0.25	0.38**	-0.26
θ_2		1.00	0.38*	-0.04	0.06	-0.12	-0.39**
θ_3			1.00	-0.18	0.07	-0.21	-0.28***
θ_4				1.00	-0.37**	0.62*	-0.04

Table 1: Correlation table for the first difference of SIM parameters and the selected macro economic variables. (sig. at 1% = *, sig. at 5% = **, sig. at 10% = ***)



Interpretation ▶ EPK Dynamics

When economic conditions deteriorate ...

SIM Model

... the hump moves to the right, its spread increases, its height decreases

Our Model

... the investors become more pessimistic: mean of F increases
... their heterogeneity increases: variance of F increases

