Mgmt 237E: Empirical Methods in Finance
Homework 7

Prof. Lars A. Lochstoer

TA: Yu Shi

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Please use Matlab/R to solve these problems. You can just hand in one set of solutions that has all the names of the contributing students on it in each group. The problem set is due on February 27 by 9:45 AM. Use the electronic drop box to submit your answers. Submit the Matlab or R file and the file with a short write-up of your answers separately.

[The quality of the write-up matters for your grade. Please imagine that you're writing a report for your boss at Goldman when drafting answers these questions. Try to be clear and precise.]

Problem 2: Applying the Box-Jenkins methodology[1]

In PPIFGS.xls you will find quarterly data for the Producer Price Index. Our goal is to develop a quarterly model for the PPI, so we can come up with forecasts. Our boss needs forecasts of inflation, because she wants to hedge inflation exposure. There is not a single 'correct' answer to this problem. Well-trained econometricians can end up choosing different specifications even though they are confronted with the same sample. However, there definitely are some wrong answers.

1. We look for a covariance-stationary version of this series. Using the entire sample, make a graph with four subplots:

[1] In Matlab, there is an **Econometrics Toolbox** and a series of functions : 'arima, estimate, forecast, infer, simulate, lbqtest' that can help you solve this problem. Alternatively, you can download Kevin Sheppard's **MFE toolbox**, which is freely available. You can just Google this and find it. In *R* there is a package called 'MTS' for *Multivariate Time Series*, by Ruey Tsay. This is a very useful package, that we will also use when estimating time-varying volatility models.

(a) Plot the PPI in levels.

(b) Plot ΔPPI

(c) Plot $\log PPI$

(d) Plot $\Delta \log PPI$.

2. Which version of the series looks covariance-stationary to you and why? Let's call the covariance stationary version $y_t = f(PPI_t)$.

3. Plot the ACF of y_t for 12 quarters. What do you conclude? If the ACF converges very slowly, re-think whether y_t really is covariance stationary.

4. Plot the PACF of y_t for 12 quarters. What do you conclude?

5. On the basis of the ACF and PACF, select four different ARMA model specifications.

   (a) Using the entire sample, estimate each one of these. Report the coefficient estimates and standard errors. Check for stationarity of the parameter estimates.

   (b) Plot the residuals. (Note: the residuals will have conditional heteroskedasticity or 'GARCH effects'. We will talk about this in Lecture 12. However, in well-specified models, the residuals should not be autocorrelated.)

   (c) Report the Q-statistic for the residuals for 8 and 12 quarters, as well as the AIC and BIC. Select a preferred model on the basis of these diagnostics. Explain your choice.

6. Re-estimate the 4 models using only data up to the end of 2005 and compute the MSPE (mean squared prediction error) on the remainder of the sample for one-quarter ahead forecasts:

$$\frac{1}{H}\sum_{t=1}^{H} v_t^2$$

   where H is the length of the hold-out sample, and v_i is the one-step ahead prediction error. Also report the MSPE assuming there is no predictability in y_t, i.e. assuming y_t follows a random walk. What do you conclude?