Option prices and risk-neutral densities for currency cross-rates

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Abstract

The theoretical relationship between the risk-neutral density (RND) of the euro/pound cross-rate and the bivariate RND of the dollar/euro and the dollar/pound rates is derived; the required bivariate RND is defined by the dollar-rate marginal RNDs and a copula function. The cross-rate RND can be used by banks, international businesses and central bankers to assess market expectations, to measure risks and to value options, without relying on over-the-counter markets which may be either non-existent or illiquid.

Empirical comparisons are made between cross-rate RNDs estimated from several datasets. Five one-parameter copula functions are evaluated and it is found that the Gaussian copula is the only one-parameter copula function which is ranked highly in all of the comparisons we have made.
Introduction

Option markets provide important information about market expectations for foreign exchange rates. The future volatility of rates can be predicted by inverting a pricing formula and these predictions are known to be generally superior to forecasts obtained by estimating time series models from historical rates (Jorion (1995), Pong et al (2004)). Risk managers and policymakers use implied volatilities but they are also interested in the additional information provided by probability densities for future rates. In particular, the most prominent users of option-based density expectations are central banks (Söderlind and Svensson (1997), Bliss and Panigirtzoglou (2002)).

Many numerical methods can be used to convert a set of option prices into a univariate risk-neutral density (RND) and these are routinely applied to dollar exchange rates (Malz (1996, 1997), Campa et al (1998) and Jondeau and Rockinger (2000)). A manager, trader or central banker concerned about the euro/pound cross-rate may find, however, that these univariate methods are infeasible. The estimation and analysis of risk-neutral densities for exchange cross-rates is a difficult problem because cross-rate options have low liquidity and are traded over-the-counter, at prices that are not usually available to researchers. The contrast between the abundance of dollar option prices and the paucity of non-dollar option prices suggests that the most constructive way to learn about market expectations for cross-rates may involve exploiting the triangular relationship between cross-rates and a pair of dollar rates (Bennett and Kennedy (2004)).

The primary contribution of this paper is a complete methodology for estimating cross-rate risk-neutral densities, from which cross-rate options can be priced. Our methods are illustrated for options on the euro/pound rate and they rely on prices from the highly liquid option markets for the dollar/pound and the dollar/euro rates. We are the first to use the triangular relationship between three currencies to infer the correct cross-rate RND from the
bivariate density of the two dollar exchange rates. This bivariate density is given by the product of three terms: the two marginal densities for the dollar rates and a copula function that quantifies their dependence.

The second contribution of this paper is advice about selecting the copula function, that is based upon comparing our derived cross-rate RNDs with those implied by over-the-counter RNDs. The cross-rate RNDs that we derive can be used by banks, international businesses and central bankers to assess market expectations, to measure risks and to value options, without relying on over-the-counter markets which may be either non-existent or illiquid.

Bikos (2000), Rosenberg (2003) and Bennett and Kennedy (2004) also investigate cross-rate densities, their option prices and the implied dependence between dollar exchange rates. Bikos (2000) uses option prices for all three exchange rates to estimate the dependence between dollar rates. Rosenberg (2003) shows how the bivariate density can be estimated non-parametrically, using a copula function that is estimated from historical exchange rates. As we explain in the next section, his cross-rate density is not risk-neutral because a required change of numeraire from dollars (for the bivariate density) to a foreign currency (for the cross-rate density) is overlooked. Bennett and Kennedy (2004) provide some related theoretical results for quanto options, that have dollar payoffs that are contingent upon cross-rates.

Our empirical results are all for the dollar, pound and euro currencies. We compare the option prices for cross-rates quoted by a bank with those that we derive from dollar option prices. Our derived prices depend on a source, a copula function and its dependence parameter. We compare the results for dollar option prices obtained from two sources: the OTC market and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME). We compare results for five widely used copula functions, namely the Clayton, Frank, Gaussian, Gumbel and Plackett copulas. For each copula function, we fix the dependence parameter by using either the at-the-
money, OTC cross-rate price or the recent historical record of exchange rates. We find first
that the publicly available CME source gives essentially the same results as the OTC source,
second that the Frank, Gaussian and Gumbel copulas provide the most satisfactory option
prices and third that historical correlations are on average lower than those implied by cross-
rate, OTC option prices.

This paper continues with three theoretical sections, followed by three empirical
sections. The next section derives the relationship between the RND for the cross-rate and the
bivariate RND for two dollar exchange rates, using risk-neutral measures determined by the
numeraires of payoffs. An introduction to copula functions is then provided; these are used to
c caracterize the relationship between the bivariate RND and the marginal RNDs for the dollar
rates. The third theoretical section summarizes three standard methods for estimating marginal
RNDs. The empirical framework, the data and the empirical results are then presented. Finally,
conclusions are stated.

The risk-neutral density formula for cross-rates

Our first objective is to produce formulae for the cross-rate risk-neutral density and the prices
of cross-rate options by using the prices of dollar-denominated assets. Option payoffs depend
on the rates of exchange between dollars (\$, USD), pounds (£, GBP) and euros (€, EUR) in
our three-currency framework. We denote the dollar price of one pound at time \( t \) by \( S_t^{\$ / \£} \) and
likewise the dollar price of one euro at the same time is denoted by \( S_t^{\$ / \€} \). The cross-rate
price of one pound in euros is then given by \( S_t^{\£ / \€} = S_t^{\$ / \£} / S_t^{\$ / \€} \).

At time zero we assume there is a complete market for \$/€ European call options, priced
in dollars, that expire at time \( T \). This implies the existence of a unique risk-neutral density
(RND) for \( S_t^{\$ / \£} \) that we denote by \( f_\$ (y) \); the dollar subscript emphasizes that the numeraire
of asset payoffs is dollars. Likewise, there is a RND for $S_T^{S/€}$ that we denote by $f_S(z)$. We also assume that it is possible to define a bivariate risk-neutral density for $(S_T^{S/€}, S_T^{S/€})$, denoted by $f_S(y, z)$, that can be used to price dollar payoffs that are contingent on these two exchange rates; we defer discussion of the construction of $f_S(y, z)$ until the next section.

Now consider an European option to buy £1 for €$X$ at time $T$. This is identical to an option to exchange $XS_T^{S/€}$ dollars for $S_T^{S/€}$ dollars at time $T$. Hence its dollar payoff equals $\max(S_T^{S/€} - XS_T^{S/€}, 0)$ and its fair price in dollars at time zero is:

$$C_S(X) = e^{-r_S T} E^{Q_S} [\max(S_T^{S/€} - XS_T^{S/€}, 0)]$$

$$= e^{-r_S T} \int_0^\infty \int_0^\infty \max(y - Xz, 0) f_S(y, z) dydz. \quad (1)$$

Here $Q_S$ is the risk-neutral measure for the $S$ numeraire and $r_S$ is the dollar risk-free rate. The fair price of the same option in euros is therefore:

$$C_€(X) = C_S(X)/S_0^{S/€}$$

$$= (e^{-r_S T}/S_0^{S/€}) \int_0^\infty \int_0^\infty \max(y - Xz, 0) f_S(y, z) dydz. \quad (2)$$

This must equal the following discounted expected payoff, that employs the risk-neutral measure $Q_€$ for the euro numeraire:

$$C_€(X) = e^{-r_€ T} E^{Q_€} [\max(S_T^{€/€} - X, 0)]$$

$$= e^{-r_€ T} \int_X^\infty (x - X) f_€(x) dx. \quad (3)$$

Here $r_€$ is the euro risk-free rate and $f_€(x)$ is the RND for one pound priced in euros.

A specific formula for the cross-rate RND defined by equation (3) is given by using the well-known result of Breeden and Litzenberger (1978),
\[ f_{e}(x) = e^{r_{e}T} \frac{\partial^{2}C_{e}(x)}{\partial x^{2}} , \]

in conjunction with equation (2), to obtain:

\[ f_{e}(x) = \frac{1}{F_{0}^{S/E}} \frac{\partial^{2}}{\partial x^{2}} \left[ \int_{0}^{\infty} \int_{0}^{\infty} \max(y - xz, 0) f_{S}(y, z) dy dz \right] \]  

(4)

where \( F_{0}^{S/E} = S_{0}^{S/E} e^{(r_{e} - r_{s})T} \) is the forward price, at time zero, to exchange one euro for dollars at time \( T \). Equation (4) simplifies, as shown in Appendix A, to give the RND of the cross-rate as the following single integral:

\[ f_{e}(x) = \frac{1}{F_{0}^{S/E}} \int_{0}^{\infty} z^{2} f_{S}(xz, z) dz . \]  

(5)

Cross-rate option prices can be calculated either from the two single integrals defined by equations (3) and (5), or from the double integral in equation (2) which is the same as

\[ \int_{0}^{\infty} \int_{0}^{\infty} Q \left( \frac{S_{0}^{S/E}}{F_{0}^{S/E}} \right) \frac{1}{F_{0}^{S/E}} \left[ \int_{0}^{\infty} \int_{0}^{\infty} \max(y - xz, 0) f_{S}(y, z) dy dz \right] dx . \]  

(6)

It is easy to check the three necessary conditions for the function in (5) to be a risk-neutral density. First, the function is obviously non-negative. Second, the substitution \( y = xz \) (with \( dy = zdx \)) can be used to show the function integrates to one and is therefore a density:

\[ \int_{0}^{\infty} f_{e}(x) dx = \frac{1}{F_{0}^{S/E}} \int_{0}^{\infty} z^{2} \left[ \int_{0}^{\infty} f_{S}(xz, z) dx \right] dz = \frac{1}{F_{0}^{S/E}} \int_{0}^{\infty} z f_{S}(y, z) dy dz = E^{Q_{s}} \left[ \frac{S_{T}^{S/E}}{F_{0}^{S/E}} \right] / F_{0}^{S/E} = 1 . \]

(7)

Third, the same substitution establishes that the expectation of the spot cross-rate at time \( T \) is the forward cross-rate, and hence the density is risk-neutral:
\[ \int_0^\infty x f_S(x) dx = \frac{1}{F_0^{S/\ell}} \int_0^\infty \int_0^\infty x^2 f_S(x,z) dx dz \]
\[ = \frac{1}{F_0^{S/\ell}} \int_0^\infty \int_0^\infty y f_S(y,z) dy dz \]
\[ = E^{Q_S} [S_T^{S/\ell} / F_0^{S/\ell}] = F_0^{S/\ell} / F_0^{S/\ell} = F_0^{\ell / \ell}. \]

We provide the above checks because our RND for the cross-rate is not the same as the density derived in Rosenberg (2003). His density, in our notation, is

\[ f(x) = \int_0^\infty y f_S(x,z) dz. \]

This is the density of the cross-rate with respect to the risk-neutral measure for the dollar numeraire, i.e. \( Q_S \). Thus (9) is only appropriate for the valuation of claims that have dollar payoffs (e.g. the quanto options valued by Bennett and Kennedy (2004)). Consequently, the Rosenberg density is not in general a cross-rate risk-neutral density and hence it should not be used to price cross-rate options. Indeed, a random variable whose density is given by (9) has expectation

\[ \int x f_S(x,z) dz dx = \int y f_S(y,z) dy dz \]
\[ = E^{Q_S} [S_T^{S/\ell} / S_T^{S/\ell}] = E^{Q_S} [S_T^{S/\ell}] = F_0^{S/\ell} / F_0^{S/\ell} = F_0^{\ell / \ell}. \]

whenever \( \text{cov}^{Q_S} (S_T^{S/\ell}, S_T^{S/\ell} / S_T^{S/\ell}) \neq 0 \).

The construction of bivariate RNDs

To price cross-rate options, using the cross-rate RND given by (5), we first need to obtain the bivariate RND of the two dollar-denominated exchange rates, denoted \( f_S(y,z) \). We use copula functions in this paper to convert the two marginal densities, \( f_S(y) \) and \( f_S(z) \), into the bivariate density \( f_S(y,z) \).
Copula methods are covered in the textbooks by Joe (1997), Nelsen (1999) and Cherubini et al (2004). There are many recent applications in finance research, to subjects such as credit risk (Li, 2000), portfolio allocations (Hennessy and Lapan, 2002), the pricing of multivariate contingent claims (Rosenberg, 2003) and the dependence between European markets (Bartram et al, 2007).

**Definitions**

Copula functions, denoted \( C(u,v) \), are the bivariate cumulative distribution functions of random variables \( U \) and \( V \) whose marginal distributions are uniform from zero to one. Employing a copula function permits modeling of dependence by using marginal densities to construct bivariate densities that are consistent with the univariate marginals.

Let \( H \) be the bivariate cumulative distribution function for random variables \( Y \) and \( Z \), with respective marginal cumulative functions \( F \) and \( G \) that are both continuous. By Sklar’s Theorem, there exists a unique copula function \( C \) such that

\[
H(y,z) = C(F(y), G(z)) \text{ for all } y \text{ and } z.
\]

The bivariate density for \((Y,Z)\) is given by

\[
h(y,z) = c(F(y), G(z)) \times f(y) \times g(z)
\]

(11)

where \( c(u,v) = \frac{\partial^2 C(u,v)}{\partial u \partial v} \) is the density corresponding to the c.d.f. \( C(u,v) \) and \( f \) and \( g \) are the marginal densities of \( Y \) and \( Z \).

The correlation between the uniform random variables \( U = F(Y) \) and \( V = G(Z) \) is a useful parameter for measuring the dependence between \( Y \) and \( Z \). This correlation defines Spearman’s “rho” for the variables \( Y \) and \( Z \), denoted by \( \rho_S \):

\[
\rho_S(Y,Z) = \text{cor}(U,V) = \frac{E[UV] - \frac{1}{4}}{\frac{1}{12}}.
\]

Spearman’s rho is obviously invariant to increasing transformations of \( Y \) and \( Z \). In particular,
\[ \rho_S(Y, Z) = \rho_S(U, V). \]

**Specific copula functions**

Although several parametric copula functions have been applied in statistical literature, only a few of them have flexible dependence properties and are hence appropriate for financial applications (Joe, 1997). We focus on five copula functions, that include all of the parametric copulas suggested by Cherubini et al. (2004) and which permit a wide range of possible dependence structures between two prices of financial assets. To the best of our knowledge, firstly we consider almost all the single-parameter copulas investigated in prior financial applications and secondly each prior application considers at most three of our five functions.

Each of the copula functions has a single parameter, which determines the magnitude of the dependence. We make empirical comparisons between the Clayton, Frank, Gaussian, Gumbel and Plackett copulas. All of these copulas can display either positive or negative dependence. The contours of the bivariate densities for \( Y \) and \( Z \) are shown on the left of Figure 1, when Spearman’s rho equals 0.5 and the marginal distributions are standard normal; then \( h(y, z) = c(\Phi(y), \Phi(z))\phi(y)\phi(z) \) with \( \phi(.) \) and \( \Phi(.) \) representing the density and the c.d.f. of the standard normal distribution. The corresponding copula densities are shown on the right of Figure 1; the plotted variable is \( c(\Phi(y), \Phi(z)) \) which characterizes the dependence between \( Y \) and \( Z \).

The dependence structure is symmetric and tail-independent for the Frank, Gaussian and Plackett copulas. While the Gumbel copula has asymmetry and upper-tail dependence, the Clayton copula has asymmetry and lower-tail dependence that has been used to model the

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1 One parameter is sufficient to model dependence. Multi-parameter copulas, such as the Student copula, are not investigated in this paper because we rely on a single cross-rate option price when option information is used to infer the magnitude of the dependence between two exchange rates.

2 A copula \( C \) is symmetric if \( (U, V) \) and \( (1-U, 1-V) \) have the same c.d.f.

3 A copula is tail-independent if \( P(U > a \mid V > a) \) and \( P(U < b \mid V < b) \) both converge to zero as \( a \to 1 \) and \( b \to 0 \).
dependence of equity prices (e.g. Cherubini and Luciano, 2002). Equations for all the copula functions are given in Appendix B.

Estimation of the dependence parameter

If the market price of one cross-rate option is available, typically the at-the-money option, then we can use numerical methods to obtain the implied estimate of the dependence parameter by equating the market price with the theoretical price given by (6). Otherwise, we can use a historical record of intraday dollar-denominated currency returns for two exchange rates to calculate their realized correlation, using the method of Andersen et al (2001). By assuming the historical correlation equals the risk-neutral correlation in the future, we can estimate Spearman’s rho for the risk-neutral Gaussian copula (see Appendix B). The dependence parameters for the other four copulas can then be obtained by constraining these copulas to have the same value for Spearman’s rho. We discuss the empirical relationship between the historical and risk-neutral correlations in the penultimate section.

When using intraday returns to estimate realized volatility or correlations, the choice of frequency is a tradeoff between selecting a high frequency and avoiding market microstructure effects. For our data, we find that the first-lag autocorrelations of the five-minute returns are significantly negative, which probably reflects microstructure effects. Consequently, we use thirty-minute returns instead to calculate realized correlations since their first-lag autocorrelations are much lower. Following Andersen et al, the realized correlation coefficient between two sets of thirty-minute returns, \( \{ \eta_{t,j} \} \) and \( \{ \eta_{2,j} \}, \) whose latest return is at the end of day \( t, \) is given by the following formulae:

\[
\rho_t = \frac{\text{Cov}_t}{\sigma_{1,t} \sigma_{2,t}}, \quad \text{Cov}_t = \sum_{j=1}^{nm} \eta_{1,j} \eta_{2,j} \quad \text{and} \quad \sigma_{i,t}^2 = \sum_{j=1}^{nm} r_{i,j}^2, \quad (12)
\]
where \( n \) is the number of thirty-minute intervals in one day and \( m \) is the number of days used for estimation.

**Methodology for the marginal RNDs**

Marginal risk-neutral densities for the dollar prices of one pound and one euro are required when we construct their bivariate density using (11) and an appropriate copula density. Many specifications of univariate RNDs have been proposed, including lognormal mixtures (Ritchey, 1990, Melick and Thomas, 1997, Liu et al, 2007), generalized beta densities (Anagnostou-Basioudis et al, 2005, Liu et al, 2007), lognormal-polynomial densities (Madan and Milne, 1994), multi-parameter discrete distributions (Jackwerth and Rubinstein, 1996) and densities derived from fitting spline functions to implied volatilities (Bliss and Panigirtzoglou, 2002). Providing options are traded for a range of exercise prices that encompass almost all of the risk-neutral distribution, several flexible density families will provide similar empirical estimates.

In our empirical discussion we focus on the results when each RND is a generalized beta density of the second kind (GB2). The GB2 density has only four parameters and many desirable properties: general levels of skewness and kurtosis are allowed, the shapes of the tails are fat relative to the lognormal density, and there are analytic formulae for the density, its moments and the prices of options. Furthermore, parameter estimation is easy and does not involve any subjective choices, the estimated densities are never negative and risk-neutral densities can be transformed analytically into real-word densities. Equations for risk-neutral and real-world densities, moments and call prices are provided by Liu et al (2007). The results for two other widely used risk-neutral densities, namely lognormal mixtures and lognormal-polynomial products are also discussed later. Definitions, pricing formulae and estimation methods for these three densities are given in Taylor (2005) and in Appendix C.
Empirical framework

Three steps are followed to obtain empirical estimates of the cross-rate risk-neutral density and then the prices of cross-rate options. In the first step, we use market option prices for two dollar-denominated exchange rates, namely the dollar prices of one pound and one euro, to estimate their univariate RNDs with respect to the risk-neutral measure for the dollar numeraire. The two univariate RNDs and a one-parameter copula function are employed in the second step to obtain their bivariate RND, again for the dollar numeraire. The third step produces the cross-rate RND for the euro price of one pound, with respect to the risk-neutral measure for the euro numeraire. It also provides the prices of cross-rate options.

The cross-rate RND depends both on the choice of the copula function and the value of its dependence parameter. The parameter is estimated either from historical data or by matching the theoretical price of the at-the-money cross-rate option with its market price. The latter approach requires a numerical method that repeats the second and third steps until the parameter value is estimated accurately.

To assess our cross-rate RND and option pricing methodology, we consider one-month and three-month maturities. In addition, we also investigate the following two questions:

1. Which copula function(s) can model the dependence structure of exchange rates most satisfactorily?
2. Is the information used to price cross-rate options efficiently shared across different markets for options on dollar exchange rates?

The cross-rate option prices generated by our copula formulae are compared with those for OTC cross-rate option prices. The differences between two sets of prices for the same options are summarized by three statistics: the Kolmogrov-Smirnov statistic, that equals the maximum difference between two cumulative risk-neutral distribution functions (K-S), the...
average of the absolute differences between call prices as a ratio of the OTC prices (G-call),
and the average magnitude of the difference between implied volatilities (G-implied).

**Data**

The primary data are options prices for the $/£, $/€ and €/£ exchange rates. It is not possible
to obtain useful exchange-traded option prices for the €/£ cross-rate. Some cross-rate
settlement prices are available for the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), but they
 correspond to almost no trading volume. Consequently, we have to rely on over-the-counter
 option prices for the cross-rate. Such prices are not in the public domain to the best of our
 knowledge. We make use of a confidential file of OTC option price midquotes, supplied by
 the trading desk of an investment bank, that covers the period from May to December 2000.
The OTC quotes are for all three exchange rates, recorded at the end of the day in London.
There are typically prices for seven exercise prices, based upon “deltas” equal to 0.1, 0.25,
0.37, 0.5, 0.63, 0.75 and 0.9.

A second source of $/£ and $/€ option prices is provided by CME settlement prices for
options on currency futures contracts. These options are American. Their early exercise
 premia are estimated from the pricing approximation of Barone-Adesi and Whaley (1987)
 which allows us to deduce appropriate prices for European options. The average number of
 exercise prices for which there are option prices is 21 for the $/£ rate and 24 for the $/€ rate.

Our primary and secondary sources provide option prices for several exercise prices. We
also study at-the-money (ATM) prices from a third source for a longer period, until December
2007, but our supplier (namely Olsen and Associates) does not provide a useful number of
out-of-the-money prices.

Figure 2 shows $/€ and €/£ exchange rates from May to December 2000. It also displays
the three-month, ATM implieds for these rates during this period. The averages of the ATM
implieds are 9.8%, 13.4% and 11.0% respectively for the $/£, $/€ and €/£ rates during the eight-month period. Implied volatility was lower, on average, during the subsequent seven-year period from 2001 to 2007; the corresponding averages for the longer period are 8.1%, 9.4% and 6.4%.

We generate both one-month and three-month RNDs. We obtain densities from the one-month OTC option prices for the first and third Tuesday of every month from May to October 2000. Thus our one-month results are based upon twelve cases. Because options traded at the CME have fixed expiry dates, on the Fridays preceding the third Wednesdays of the contract months, it is impossible to match them with OTC options whose expiry dates are two business days before the forward dates. Therefore, we define matching CME option prices from the prices of the two nearest-to-expiry contracts that are more than one week from expiry. These matching prices are obtained by assuming implied volatilities have a linear term structure4. There is less usable OTC data for the generation of three-month densities. We use the three-month options prices on 12 June, 12 September, and 13 December 2000, from both the OTC source and the CME.

The OTC data and our processing of the CME data provide us with implied volatilities. The required one and three-month forward rates, when the CME closes a few hours after the OTC quotes are recorded, are provided by the standard no-arbitrage equation that relates forward rates to spot prices and domestic and foreign interest rates. These forward rates are the expectations of the risk-neutral densities.

We also use the prices of $/£ and $/€ recorded every thirty minutes in the OTC markets, to calculate one-month and three-month realized correlation coefficients for their returns from (12). Daily spot exchanges rates and risk-free Eurocurrency interest rates are obtained from

4 The term structure of the implied volatility of FX options is not flat and its slope changes frequently (Xu and Taylor, 1994). For a selected exercise price, we approximate the CME implied volatility for an option that expires at time $T$ by $\nu = \nu_1 + (\nu_2 - \nu_1)(T - T_1) / (T_2 - T_1)$ where $\nu_1$ and $\nu_2$ are the implied volatilities of the two near-to-expiry contracts, that have times $T_1$ and $T_2$ until expiry.
Empirical results

Our empirical implementation uses two types of information to estimate the dependence parameter of the copula function. First we use the prices of at-the-money cross-rate options, then we assess the alternative strategy of relying on historical data to provide correlation estimates. Initially we assume all the marginal RNDs have GB2 distributions and subsequently we compare the GB2 results with those for other marginal RNDs. We also discuss a practical method for selecting the copula function. Finally we consider possible explanations for a correlation risk premium revealed by our calculations.

When the prices of ATM cross-rate options are used

The properties of €/£ cross-rate risk-neutral densities derived from OTC cross-rate option prices are shown in the first column of Table 1, and also in the first column of Table 2. We refer to these as “vanilla” densities as they merely depend upon cross-rate market prices. Each vanilla density is derived from seven option prices. The remaining columns of Table 1 provide summary statistics for further cross-rate RNDs, each of which is obtained from seven OTC option prices for both the $/£ and the $/€ rates, a copula function and the OTC price of the at-the-money €/£ option. Likewise, the remaining columns of Table 2 summarize cross-rate RNDs obtained from CME option prices for the $/£ and the $/€ rates, a copula function and the OTC price of the at-the-money €/£ option.

The summary statistics are averages across densities. For example, each “Variance” statistic for a set of one-month densities is the average value of twelve variances, one for each risk-neutral density. The statistics in Table 1 are generally similar to those in Table 2.

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5 At-the-money refers to options whose deltas equal 0.5.
The means of all sets of twelve one-month densities are identical, because all the densities are risk-neutral, and likewise for all sets of three three-month densities. The average variances of the RNDs created from the various copula functions are very similar to those of the vanilla densities. There is more positive skewness in the vanilla densities than in all the sets of copula densities except the Gumbel density. The average skewness of the RNDs is positive and relatively high for the Gumbel copula, but low for the Frank, Gaussian and Plackett copulas while the averages are negative for the Clayton copula. The kurtosis averages for all sets of densities exceed three and the averages are fairly similar for the vanilla densities and those derived using copula functions. Generally, the cross-rate densities on a particular date are similar. This can be seen on Figure 3, which shows all the one-month densities formed on 5th September 2000; the cross-rate RNDs generated by the Frank, Gaussian and Gumbel copulas are slightly nearer to the vanilla density than the densities obtained from the Clayton and Plackett copulas.

Next consider how near the densities derived from copulas are to the vanilla densities. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) statistic is an overall measure of the similarity of two densities. The averages of the K-S statistics are always least for the Frank, Gaussian and Gumbel copulas and are then always less than 0.02. Similarity can also be assessed by comparing the option prices generated by different risk-neutral densities, for the options that are not at-the-money. For both the one-month and the three-month option contracts, the average absolute difference between a vanilla option price and a Frank option price is about 3% of the vanilla option price, with slightly higher average differences for the Gaussian and Plackett option prices. The average differences for the Gumbel option prices are also about 3% for the one-month contracts, but are higher for the three-month options. When implied volatilities are compared, the average absolute difference is less than the bid-ask spread (typically 0.5%) for all but the Clayton copula. Our comparisons show that the Frank,
Gaussian and Gumbel copulas are satisfactory, with average absolute differences as low as 0.2%, the Plackett copula is fairly satisfactory but the Clayton copula systematically performs less well.

Figure 4 shows averages of the implied volatility functions for the €/£ cross-rate, across density formation dates, for both OTC and CME dollar-rate data. These functions are plotted against the OTC option delta. All the copula functions generate volatility smiles. The vanilla densities and the Frank, Gaussian and Plackett copulas all produce symmetric smiles. The Gumbel smiles are slightly asymmetric, but still close to the vanilla smiles, especially for the one-month contracts. However, the Clayton smiles are highly asymmetric and hence are unsatisfactory. The curvature (or depth) of the smiles is highest for the Plackett smiles, and the Frank smiles are deeper than the Gaussian smiles. Generally the market volatility smile, defined by the vanilla densities, lies above the Gaussian smile and below the Frank smile.

Figure 5 compares the average OTC and CME volatility smiles generated by the Frank and Gaussian copulas. The differences between the OTC and the CME average smiles are seen to be small, particularly when delta is between 25% and 75%. The differences are all less than the bid-ask spread, even for the extreme values of delta. We conclude that the cross-rate densities obtained from the OTC and the CME option prices of dollar exchange rates are similar, so that price information is efficiently shared by these two markets. Figure 5 also emphasizes that the Frank smiles are approximately twice as deep as the Gaussian smiles.

Our results show that the Frank and Gaussian copula functions are the most satisfactory when modeling the dependence between the risk-neutral distributions of the $/£ and the $/€ exchange rates, for both the one-month and the three-month densities. The Gumbel copula function also performs well for the one-month densities. The deeper smiles produced by the Plackett copula show that it is less satisfactory. Because the implied volatility pattern of foreign exchange rates is a smile, rather than a smirk, the highly asymmetric Clayton copula
appears to be unsatisfactory, although it is often used to model the dependence structure of equity prices satisfactorily (e.g. Cherubini and Luciano, 2002).

When the prices of ATM cross-rate options are not used

The previous strategy of estimating the dependence parameter by matching the theoretical ATM call price with the market price is like using an implied risk-neutral correlation to estimate the dependence parameter. When the ATM cross-rate market price is either unavailable or considered to be an unfair price, we can instead use the realized historical correlation to estimate the dependence parameter.

Time series of implied and realized correlation coefficients through our eight-month sample period in 2000 are shown on Figure 6. These are correlations between changes in the logarithms of the $/£ and the $/€ rates. The implied correlations are derived directly from the ATM implied volatilities of $/£, $/€ and €/£ OTC options one month from expiry, while the realized correlations are calculated from the previous month of thirty-minute\(^6\) returns for the $/£ and the $/€ rates.

It is seen very clearly that the realized correlations are lower than the implied correlations; we defer discussion of why this occurs until the end of this empirical section. The immediate consequence of the differences between the implied and realized correlations is that the differences between the vanilla and the copula results will increase, for densities, option prices and implied volatilities.

The properties of €/£ cross-rate risk-neutral densities derived from option prices for the $/£ and the $/€ rates, a copula function and the historical correlation are summarized in Tables 3 and 4, respectively for densities derived from OTC and CME prices. These summary statistics can be compared with those presented in Tables 1 and 2. The densities are

\(\text{\textsuperscript{6}}\) The realized correlations are almost unchanged if the frequency of returns is switched from thirty to sixty minutes. The average realized correlations are 0.45 and 0.49 for these two frequencies and the period covered by Figure 6.
guaranteed to remain risk-neutral. The most obvious difference, that occurs when historical correlations are used, is that the variances of the cross-rate RNDs increase significantly due to the lower dependence between the marginal dollar-rate densities. It is now hard to tell which copula is the most satisfactory, regardless of the criterion, because all the copula functions produce option prices that are evidently different from the vanilla option prices. For example, the average absolute difference between the copula and vanilla implied volatilities is about 1% for the one-month maturities and 2% for the three-month maturities when historical correlations are employed.

One-month cross-rate RNDs formed on a typical date, 18th July 2000, are shown on Figure 7. The peaks of the copula densities are lower than the vanilla densities because the copula variances exceed the vanilla variances. Figure 8 shows the averages of the one-month implied volatility functions. All the copula functions again produce volatility smiles, although the general levels of these smiles are visibly higher than the vanilla smiles. The previous remarks about the relative depth and the symmetry of the copula smiles remain valid when the implied correlation is replaced by the historical correlation.

It is difficult to decide which copula function performs best when historical data are used to estimate correlations. We do see that the average absolute differences between copula and vanilla implied volatilities are lowest for the Gaussian and Gumbel copulas with the latter fitting slightly better. The average absolute differences of call prices are also comparatively low for these two copulas, while the K-S statistics favor the Gumbel copula. We also see that the shapes of the vanilla volatility smiles are most similar to those of Frank, Gaussian, and Gumbel volatility smiles. Therefore the Gaussian and Gumbel copulas should perform satisfactorily if the precision of historical correlation estimates can be improved.

Robustness analysis
Comparisons of different methods for estimating univariate RNDs (e.g. Campa et al, 1998) have shown that most methods produce similar estimates, providing options are traded for a range of strike prices that encompass almost all of the RND. To check if our cross-rate density and option results derived from a bivariate distribution depend on the GB2 assumption for the marginal RNDs, we compare our previous results for one-month OTC options when one cross-rate option price is available with those obtained by assuming either lognormal-mixture or lognormal-polynomial RNDs for the dollar rates.

The summary statistics for the cross-rate RNDs derived from the three distributional assumptions and the five copula functions are shown in Table 5. There are no important differences between the cross-rate RNDs densities derived from the three families of marginal densities. Also, the averages of the K-S statistics, the absolute differences between call prices and the magnitudes of the differences between implied volatilities are very similar across distributional assumptions. Furthermore, these numerical measures of agreement between densities are very small and negligible when we compare two sets of cross-rate densities obtained from the same copula but different marginal RNDs. For example, the largest K-S statistic is only 0.0025 and the largest difference of average implied volatilities is only 0.02%, while Figure 9 illustrates the similarities of the cross-rate RNDs and the implied volatilities. Therefore, our results are not sensitive to the distributional assumption applied to the dollar-rate RNDs.

As it is difficult to obtain the prices of OTC cross-rate options, our empirical study only covers the €/£ cross-rate. Although our results imply that the Frank, Gaussian and Gumbel copulas can model the dependence structure of the $/£ and the $/€ rates satisfactorily, it is possible that different pairs of exchange rates are associated with different dependence structures. Therefore identifying a way to select a suitable copula function for other pairs of exchange rates when option prices for their cross-rates are not available is an important issue.
It may be reasonable to assume that the dependence structures of both the risk-neutral and real-world densities come from the same copula families, and thus it is plausible to infer the appropriate copula function from the historical prices of the two exchange rates. We have explored this strategy by estimating the GARCH-copula dependence model of Bartram et al (2007). In our implementation, the returns from each exchange rate are modeled by supposing they follow an MA(1) process, with the conditional variance specified as GARCH(1,1) and the conditional density as Student-t. This model specifies univariate, conditional, cumulative distribution functions for each exchange rate from which time series of observed cumulative probabilities can be calculated, say \( \{u_t\} \) for the S/£ rate and \( \{v_t\} \) for the S/€ rate. A time-varying copula parameter, such as \( \rho_t \) for the Gaussian copula, can then be estimated by an equation resembling an autoregressive process. Like Bartram et al (2007), we suppose

\[
\rho_t = \omega + \phi_1 \rho_{t-1} + \phi_2 \rho_{t-2} + \gamma |u_{t-1} - v_{t-1}|. \tag{13}
\]

The parameters in this equation are estimated by maximizing the log-likelihood of the bivariate time series \( \{u_t, v_t\} \).

We find that the highest log-likelihood for the bivariate dataset of S/£ and S/€ daily returns from 2000 to 2007 is provided by the Gaussian copula. The differences between the log-likelihood for the Gaussian copula and the log-likelihoods for the other copulas are 21 for the Gumbel copula, 32 for the Plackett copula, 97 for the Frank copula and 217 for the Clayton copula; a similar ranking of the copulas was reported in a previous version of this paper for the earlier period from 1994 to 2000. The likelihood results are consistent with the results obtained from the cross-rate vanilla option prices.

Figure 10 shows the time series of \( \rho_t \) for the Gaussian copula, calculated using (13) and the maximum-likelihood parameter values, which are \( \omega = 0.0215 \), \( \phi_1 = 0.9806 \), \( \phi_2 = 0 \) and \( \gamma = -0.0428 \).
Determinants of the correlation risk premium

Figure 6 shows that the implied correlation between returns for the $/£ and the $/€ rates generally exceeded the realized correlation during 2000. Figure 11 shows that this is also true for the longer and more recent period from 2001 to 2007.\footnote{We thank the referee for advising us to consider the longer period and how to evaluate empirical explanations for the differences between implied and realized correlations.} The differences between the implied and realized correlations can be interpreted as estimates of the correlation risk premium and this premium can be important.\footnote{For example, suppose the volatility of all dollar rates is 10% and these rates do not have a volatility risk premium. Then implied and realized correlations equal to 0.6 and 0.5 respectively provide respective cross-rate volatilities equal to 8.9% and 10.0%, i.e. they imply an economically significant and negative cross-rate volatility risk premium.}

Some possible explanations for these differences are biased historical estimates, mispriced ATM cross-rate options and premia for risks that can not be hedged. Firstly, historical estimates may contain bias that can arise from bid-ask effects and non-synchronous returns. Secondly, the quotes of cross-rate options may differ from their fundamental prices because of market liquidity and clientele effects. Thirdly, when asset prices follow simple diffusion processes, the second-moment measures of returns, such as variances and correlations, do not depend on risk assumptions. Thus, variances and correlations are then the same under the real-world measure $P$ and the risk-neutral measure $Q$. However, as suggested by the theoretical work of Branger and Schlag (2004), when price processes include jump components, the change of measure will affect variances and correlations and the size of this impact varies across maturities. Furthermore, if correlations follow a diffusion process then correlation risk can explain why expected correlations are different under measures $P$ and $Q$; see the equity market analysis of Driessen et al (2009).

Let $d_t$ denote the correlation difference on day $t$, defined as the three-month ATM implied correlation minus the realized correlation calculated from 30-minute returns. We
attempt to explain the variation in $d_t$ by a regression model which includes three-month interest rates (denoted $i_{s,t}, i_{i,t}, i_{e,t}$), the cross-rate implied volatility (denoted $I_t$), the historical volatility proxied by the cross-rate absolute return (denoted $|r_t|$) and a proxy for cross-rate price jumps; the jump proxy is $J_t = \max(RV_t - BP_t, 0)$ with $RV_t$ and $BP_t$ the realized variance and bipower variation of 30-minute cross-rate returns (Barndorff-Nielsen and Shephard, 2006, Andersen et al 2007). The euro and pound interest rates have approximately opposite coefficients in our best model, so we specify the model as depending on the interest rate differential, namely $i_{e,t} - i_{i,t}$. We estimate the following regression model:

$$d_t = \alpha + \beta_1 d_{t-1} + \beta_2 d_{t-2} + \beta_3 (i_{e,t} - i_{i,t}) + \beta_4 i_{s,t} + \beta_5 I_t + \beta_6 J_t + \beta_7 |r_t| + \epsilon_t$$

(14)

with a GARCH(1,1) specification for the residuals $\epsilon_t$. As shown in Table 6, the most significant explanatory variable for the eight-year period from 2000 to 2007 is the interest rate differential, followed by the jump proxy variable. We conclude that the correlation differences have been higher when euro interest rates have been high relative to pound interest rates and/or there have been relatively extreme intraday returns which are evidence of price jumps. We also find that the explanatory power of the models we have investigated is weak because $R^2$ is always less than 8%.

**Concluding remarks**

This paper illustrates practical methods for estimating cross-rate risk-neutral densities. We suppose there is limited information available about the prices of cross-rate options, which contrasts with an abundance of information about the prices of dollar-rate options. The theoretical cross-rate RND is derived from the bivariate RND for two dollar exchange rates. Cross-rate RNDs can be used to price any European contingent claim on cross-rates and they also provide insight into market expectations.
Our methods make an assumption about the number of available implied volatilities for cross-rate options. We find that cross-rate option prices are sensitive to this number, which is assumed to be either one or zero. When there are no cross-rate option prices we have to rely on historical dollar exchange rates to quantify the dependence between the two dollar rates. The historical correlation estimates are positive and on average less than those implied by option prices.

Our methods use a copula function to provide an empirical approximation to the function defined by the bivariate RND of the dollar-rates divided by the product of the marginal RNDs. The Frank, Gaussian and Gumbel copulas provide satisfactory results, when we compare the cross-rate RNDs obtained from one cross-rate option price and many dollar-rate option prices with the densities that can be estimated from seven cross-rate option prices quoted by a particular bank. These comparisons show that the cross-rate RND can be estimated equally well from exchange-traded and over-the-counter dollar-rate option prices.

Finally, we offer some advice to practitioners wishing to price cross-rate currency options. Dollar-rate marginal RNDs can be obtained by several methods and the selection of the method is probably not particularly important. Calculation of the bivariate RND of the dollar rates requires a specific copula function and this choice is important. The Gaussian copula is the only one-parameter copula function which is ranked highly in all of the comparisons we have made. The dependence parameter of the Gaussian copula is a critical number. The empirical analysis suggests it is best to select this parameter within a risk-neutral framework, so ideally practitioners should make use of the at-the-money cross-rate option price when they calculate the prices of other cross-rate options.
Appendix A

To simplify (4) into (5) it is necessary to simplify the function

\[ h(x) = \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} \left[ \int_0^\infty \max(y-xz,0)f_S(y,z)dydz \right]. \]

First, let

\[ g(x) = \int_0^\infty \max(y-xz,0)f_S(y,z)dydz = \int_0^\infty \left[ \int_0^{\infty} (y-xz)f_S(y,z)dy \right] dz \]

and replace \( y \) by \( tz \). Then \( dy = zdt \) and \( g(x) \) becomes

\[ g(x) = \int_0^\infty z^2 \left[ \int_x^\infty (t-x)f_S(tz,z)dt \right] dz. \]

Second, differentiate the inner integral twice, obtaining

\[ \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \int_x^\infty (t-x)f_S(tz,z)dt = -\int_x^\infty f_S(tz,z)dt \] and

\[ \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} \int_x^\infty (t-x)f_S(tz,z)dt = f_S(xz,z). \]

Consequently, \( h(x) \) simplifies to

\[ h(x) = \int_0^\infty z^2 f_S(xz,z)dz. \]

Appendix B

The Gaussian copula is defined by:

\[ C(u,v|\rho) = \int_{-\infty}^{s} \int_{-\infty}^{t} f(y,z|\rho)dydz \]

with \( s = \Phi^{-1}(u) \) and \( t = \Phi^{-1}(v) \); \( \Phi \) is the standard normal c.d.f., and \( f(\cdot|\rho) \) denotes the standard bivariate normal density with correlation \( \rho \). The copula density is:
\[ c(u, v|\rho) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1-\rho^2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{1}{2(1-\rho^2)} [s^2 + t^2 - 2\rho st] + \frac{1}{2}[s^2 + t^2]\right\}. \]

From Kepner et al (1989), Spearman’s rho for this density equals:

\[ \rho_S = (6/\pi) \arcsin(\rho/2). \]

The Gaussian copula generates a bivariate normal density if and only if the marginal densities are normal.

The Plackett copula is defined by a constant cross-product ratio:

\[
P(U \leq u, V \leq v)P(U > u, V > v)\]
\[
P(U \leq u, V > v)P(U > u, V \leq v) = \theta
\]

with \( \theta \) a positive parameter. Consequently, with \( \eta = \theta - 1 \),

\[ C(u, v|\theta) = \frac{1}{2} \eta^{-1} \{1 + \eta(u + v) - [(1 + \eta(u + v))^2 - 4\theta\eta u v]^{1/2}\} \]

and

\[ c(u, v|\theta) = [(1 + \eta(u + v))^2 - 4\theta\eta u v]^{-3/2} \theta [1 + \eta(u + v - 2uv)]. \]

The Frank, Clayton, and Gumbel copulas are all Archimedean copulas. They are defined by \( C(u, v) = \phi^{-1}(\phi(u) + \phi(v)) \) for some continuous, strictly decreasing function \( \phi \) from \((0, 1)\) to \([0, \infty)\) that has \( \phi(1) = 0. \)

For the Frank copula,

\[
\phi(t) = -\ln[(\exp(-\theta t) - 1)/(\exp(-\theta) - 1)], \quad \theta \neq 0,
\]

\[ C(u, v|\theta) = -\frac{1}{\theta} \ln[1 + \frac{(\exp(-\theta u) - 1)(\exp(-\theta v) - 1)}{\exp(-\theta) - 1}] \quad \text{and} \quad c(u, v|\theta) = -\theta(\exp(-\theta) - 1)e^{-\theta(u+v)} \]
\[ \quad \left[\exp(-\theta) - 1 + (\exp(-\theta u) - 1)(\exp(-\theta v) - 1)\right]^2. \]

For the Clayton copula, with \( \theta \) positive,

\[
\phi(t) = (t^{-\theta} - 1)/\theta, \quad C(u, v|\theta) = (u^{-\theta} + v^{-\theta} - 1)^{-1/\theta}
\]

and
\begin{equation*}
c(u, v | \theta) = (1 + \theta)(uv)^{-\theta - 1}(u^{-\theta} + v^{-\theta} - 1)^{-2(1/\theta)}.
\end{equation*}

The Clayton copula can also be defined, by different equations, when \(-1 < \theta < 0\), but none of our estimates are within this range.

For the Gumbel copula,
\begin{equation*}
\phi(t) = (-\ln t)^\theta, \theta \geq 1, \quad C(u, v | \theta) = e^{-[(-\ln u)^{\theta} + (-\ln v)^{\theta}]^{1/\theta}}
\end{equation*}

and
\begin{equation*}
c(u, v | \theta) = C(u, v | \theta)(uv)^{-1} \frac{[(-\ln u)(-\ln v)]^{\theta - 1}}{[(-\ln u)^{\theta} + (-\ln v)^{\theta}]^{2-1/\theta}} \{[(-\ln u)^{\theta} + (-\ln v)^{\theta}]^{1/\theta} + \theta - 1\}.
\end{equation*}

Appendix C

Risk-neutral densities are defined for an exchange rate \(T\) years into the future when the spot rate for one unit of foreign currency is \(S_T\) dollars. The dollar risk-free interest rate is \(r\) and the forward rate at time zero for exchange at time \(T\) is denoted by \(F\); it equals the risk-neutral expectation of \(S_T\). Interest rates are assumed to be non-stochastic, so that \(F\) is also a futures price. A general exercise price is represented by \(X\), for a European call option that is written either on spot currency or on a futures contract that delivers at time \(T\).

The generalized beta density

Bookstaber and McDonald (1987) proposed the GB2 density for asset prices, with four positive parameters that define a parameter vector \(\theta = (a, b, p, q)\). The RND for \(S_T\) is
\begin{equation*}
f_{\text{GB2}}(x | a, b, p, q) = \frac{a}{b^a p B(p, q)} \times \frac{x^{ap-1}}{[1 + (x/b)^a]^{p+q}}, \quad x > 0,
\end{equation*}

where the function \(B\) is defined in terms of the Gamma function by \(B(p, q) = \Gamma(p)\Gamma(q)/\Gamma(p + q)\). Call prices can be derived if \(aq > 1\), with the following result:
\[ C(X) = Fe^{-rT} [1 - F_\beta(u(X, a, b) | p + a^{-1}, q - a^{-1})] - Xe^{-rT} [1 - F_\beta(u(X, a, b) | p, q)] \]

where \( F_\beta \) is the incomplete beta function given by

\[ F_\beta(u | p, q) = \frac{1}{B(p, q)} \int_0^u t^{p-1}(1-t)^{q-1} \, dt \quad \text{and} \quad u(X, a, b) = \frac{(X/b)^a}{1+(X/b)^a}. \]

Risk-neutrality constrains the mean of the density to be

\[ F = bB(p + a^{-1}, q - a^{-1})/B(p, q). \]

### The lognormal mixture density

The lognormal RND for \( S_T \), with volatility \( \sigma \), is the following density:

\[ \psi(x | F, \sigma, T) = \frac{1}{x\sigma\sqrt{2\pi T}} \exp\left[ -\frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\ln(x/F) + \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 T}{\sigma\sqrt{T}} \right)^2 \right]. \]

The price of a call option is then given by Black’s formula,

\[ C_B(F, T, X, r, \sigma) = Fe^{-rT} \Phi(d_1) - Xe^{-rT} \Phi(d_2) \]

with \( d_1 = (\ln(F/X) + \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 T)/(\sigma\sqrt{T}) \) and \( d_2 = d_1 - \sigma\sqrt{T} \). A mixture of two lognormal densities for \( S_T \) is defined by:

\[ f_{\text{mix}}(x) = p\psi(x | F_1, \sigma_1, T) + (1-p)\psi(F_2, \sigma_2, T). \]

There are five non-negative parameters, \( \theta = (F_1, F_2, \sigma_1, \sigma_2, p) \), with \( 0 \leq p \leq 1 \). The mixture is risk-neutral when \( F = pF_1 + (1-p)F_2 \). Call prices are simply a mixture of Black prices:

\[ C(X) = pC_B(F_1, T, X, r, \sigma_1) + (1-p)C_B(F_2, T, X, r, \sigma_2). \]

### The lognormal-polynomial density

Madan and Milne (1994) assume the density of standardized returns \( Z \) is the standard normal
density \( \phi(z) \) multiplied by a general function approximated by a polynomial. For a quartic approximation, the parameters are denoted \( \theta = (\mu, \sigma, b_3, b_4) \), such that \( \log(F_T) - \log(F) \) has mean and variance respectively equal to \( \mu T - \sigma^2 T \) and \( \sigma^2 T \). The RND for \( Z \) is

\[
f_Z(z \mid \mu, \sigma, b_3, b_4) = \phi(z)[1 + \frac{b_3}{\sqrt{6}} (z^3 - 3z) + \frac{b_4}{\sqrt{24}} (z^4 - 6z^2 + 3)],
\]

and the RND for \( S_T \) is

\[
f_{LP}(x \mid \mu, \sigma, b_3, b_4) = \frac{1}{x \sigma \sqrt{T}} f_Z\left(\frac{\ln(x) - \ln(F) - \mu T + 0.5 \sigma^2 T}{\sigma \sqrt{T}}\right).
\]

Risk-neutrality constrains the parameters to satisfy

\[
1 + \frac{\beta^3 b_3}{\sqrt{6}} + \frac{\beta^4 b_4}{\sqrt{24}} = e^{-\mu T}
\]

with \( \beta = \sigma \sqrt{T} \). The price of a call option is given by

\[
C(X) = e^{-rT} [a_0(X) + a_3(X)b_3 + a_4(X)b_4],
\]

with \( a_0(X) = F e^{\mu T} \Phi(D_1) - X \Phi(D_1 - \sigma \sqrt{T}) \),

\[
a_3(X) = F \beta e^{\mu T} [\beta^2 \Phi(D_1) + (2\beta - D_1)\phi(D_1)]/\sqrt{6},
\]

\[
a_4(X) = F \beta e^{\mu T} [\beta^3 \Phi(D_1) + (3\beta^2 - 3\beta D_1 + D_1^2 - 1)\phi(D_1)]/\sqrt{24}
\]

and \( D_1 = (\ln(F/X) + \mu T + \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 T)/(\sigma \sqrt{T}) \).

Parameter estimation

As is common in the RND literature, we estimate the parameters by minimizing the sum of squared pricing errors for a set of market call prices denoted by \( c_m(X_i) \). When there are market prices available for \( N \) distinct exercise prices, having a common expiry time \( T \), we estimate \( \theta \) by minimizing
\[ G(\theta) = \sum_{i=1}^{N} (c_m(X_i) - C(X_i|\theta))^2. \]

**References**


Table 1: Summary statistics for euro/pound RNDs obtained from over-the-counter option prices, including one cross-rate option price

Average values of summary statistics for euro/pound risk-neutral densities, for various dependence functions. GB2 densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities and the vanilla cross-rate densities, all obtained from OTC option prices. The Gaussian, Frank, Plackett, Clayton, and Gumbel copula functions are used when defining the bivariate dollar-rate densities. The dependence parameters of the copulas are estimated by equating the theoretical at-the-money cross-rate option price with the market price.

Panel A: Averages for 1-month RNDs

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<th>Gaussian</th>
<th>Frank</th>
<th>Plackett</th>
<th>Clayton</th>
<th>Gumbel</th>
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Panel B: Averages for 3-month RNDs

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*K-S: Kolmogrov-Smirnov statistic.
*G-call: Average absolute error of call price as a ratio of the vanilla price.
*G-implied: Average absolute error of implied volatility.
Table 2: Summary statistics for euro/pound RNDs obtained from CME option prices and one cross-rate OTC option price

Average values of summary statistics for euro/pound risk-neutral densities, for various dependence functions. GB2 densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities obtained from CME option prices. The vanilla cross-rate densities are obtained from OTC option prices. The Gaussian, Frank, Plackett, Clayton, and Gumbel copula functions are used when defining the bivariate dollar-rate densities. The dependence parameters of the copulas are estimated by equating the theoretical at-the-money cross-rate option price with the market price.

Panel A: Averages for 1-month RNDs

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Panel B: Averages for 3-month RNDs

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*K-S: Kolmogrov-Smirnov statistic.

*G-call: Average absolute error of call price as a ratio of the vanilla price.

*G-implied: Average absolute error of implied volatility.
Table 3: Summary statistics for euro/pound RNDs obtained from over-the-counter option prices and the historical realized correlation coefficient

Average values of summary statistics for euro/pound risk-neutral densities, for various dependence functions. GB2 densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities and the vanilla cross-rate densities, all obtained from OTC option prices. The Gaussian, Frank, Plackett, Clayton, and Gumbel copula functions are used when defining the bivariate dollar-rate densities. The dependence parameters of the copulas for one-month (three-month) maturities are estimated from the historical correlation for one month (three months) of thirty-minute dollar-rate returns.

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Panel B: Averages for 3-month RNDs

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*K-S: Kolmogrov-Smirnov statistics.
*G-call: Average absolute error of call price as a ratio of the vanilla price.
*G-implied: Average absolute error of implied volatility.
Table 4: Summary statistics for euro/pound RNDs obtained from CME option prices and the historical realized correlation coefficient

Average values of summary statistics for euro/pound risk-neutral densities, for various dependence functions. GB2 densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities obtained from CME option prices. The vanilla cross-rate densities are obtained from OTC option prices. The Gaussian, Frank, Plackett, Clayton, and Gumbel copula functions are used when defining the bivariate dollar-rate densities. The dependence parameters of the copulas for one-month (three-month) maturities are estimated from the historical correlation for one month (three months) of thirty-minute dollar-rate returns.

Panel A: Averages for 1-month RNDs

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Panel B: Averages for 3-month RNDs

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*K-S: Kolmogrov-Smirnov statistics.
*G-call: Average absolute error of call price as a ratio of the vanilla price.
*G-implied: Average absolute error of implied volatility.
Table 5: Summary statistics for euro/pound RNDs with various distributional assumptions

Average values of summary statistics for euro/pound risk-neutral densities, for various distributional assumptions and dependence functions. Either GB2, lognormal mixtures, or lognormal-polynomial densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities and the vanilla cross-rate densities, all obtained from 1-month OTC option prices. The Gaussian, Frank, Plackett, Clayton, and Gumbel copula functions are used when defining the bivariate dollar-rate densities. The dependence parameters of the copulas are estimated by equating the theoretical at-the-money cross-rate option price with the market price.

Panel A: GB2 densities

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Panel B: Lognormal mixtures densities

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>3.1101</td>
<td>3.9153</td>
<td>4.2272</td>
<td>3.2493</td>
<td>4.1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-S</td>
<td>0.0155</td>
<td>0.0149</td>
<td>0.0200</td>
<td>0.0304</td>
<td>0.0123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-call</td>
<td>0.0474</td>
<td>0.0331</td>
<td>0.0398</td>
<td>0.0712</td>
<td>0.0335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-implied</td>
<td>0.0030</td>
<td>0.0025</td>
<td>0.0031</td>
<td>0.0055</td>
<td>0.0024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Panel C: Lognormal-polynomial densities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copula</th>
<th>Gaussian</th>
<th>Frank</th>
<th>Plackett</th>
<th>Clayton</th>
<th>Gumbel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rho/Theta</td>
<td>0.5604</td>
<td>4.2781</td>
<td>6.5766</td>
<td>1.2744</td>
<td>1.5735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.6399</td>
<td>1.6399</td>
<td>1.6399</td>
<td>1.6399</td>
<td>1.6399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.0028</td>
<td>0.0031</td>
<td>0.0032</td>
<td>0.0030</td>
<td>0.0029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>0.1023</td>
<td>0.1375</td>
<td>0.1613</td>
<td>-0.2088</td>
<td>0.3331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>3.5256</td>
<td>4.5273</td>
<td>4.8863</td>
<td>4.1847</td>
<td>4.1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-S</td>
<td>0.0130</td>
<td>0.0161</td>
<td>0.0218</td>
<td>0.0292</td>
<td>0.0118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-call</td>
<td>0.0445</td>
<td>0.0324</td>
<td>0.0398</td>
<td>0.0671</td>
<td>0.0336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-implied</td>
<td>0.0028</td>
<td>0.0026</td>
<td>0.0032</td>
<td>0.0054</td>
<td>0.0024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*K-S: Kolmogrov-Smirnov statistic.
*G-call: Average absolute error of call price as a ratio of the vanilla price.
*G-implied: Average absolute error of implied volatility.
Table 6: Determinants of the correlation risk premium

The regression model estimated is
\[ d_t = \alpha + \beta_1 d_{t-1} + \beta_2 d_{t-2} + \beta_3 (i_{t,2} - i_{t,1}) + \beta_4 i_{t,1} + \beta_5 I_t + \beta_6 |r_t| + \epsilon_t \]

with a GARCH(1,1) specification for the residuals \( \epsilon_t \). Here \( d_t \) denotes the correlation difference on day \( t \), defined as the three-month ATM implied correlation minus the realized correlation calculated from 30-minute returns. Three-month interest rates for the dollar, pound and euro are denoted \( i_{t,1}, i_{t,2}, i_{t,3} \), respectively. \( I_t \) and \( |r_t| \) are respectively the cross-rate implied volatility and the historical volatility proxied by the cross-rate absolute return. \( J_t = \max(RV_t - BP_t, 0) \) is a proxy for cross-rate price jumps with \( RV_t \) and \( BP_t \) being the realized variance and bipower variation of 30-minute cross-rate returns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>t-ratio</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \alpha )</td>
<td>0.1514</td>
<td>0.0183</td>
<td>8.2938</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \beta_1 )</td>
<td>0.1256</td>
<td>0.0205</td>
<td>6.1255</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \beta_2 )</td>
<td>0.0659</td>
<td>0.0210</td>
<td>3.1320</td>
<td>0.0017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \beta_3 )</td>
<td>0.0409</td>
<td>0.0004</td>
<td>107.3063</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \beta_4 )</td>
<td>-0.0052</td>
<td>0.0023</td>
<td>-2.2202</td>
<td>0.0264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \beta_5 )</td>
<td>794.9835</td>
<td>70.3352</td>
<td>11.3028</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \beta_6 )</td>
<td>0.0932</td>
<td>0.2484</td>
<td>0.3750</td>
<td>0.7077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \beta_7 )</td>
<td>3.6760</td>
<td>1.1458</td>
<td>3.2082</td>
<td>0.0013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted \( R^2 \) \hspace{1cm} 0.0769
Figure 1: Bivariate copula densities

The contours are for the bivariate densities of two random variables whose marginal densities are the standard normal density. Each bivariate density is the product of the two marginal densities and a copula density function. Each copula density function is shown to the right of the corresponding contour plot for the bivariate density. Densities are shown for the Gaussian, Frank, Plackett, Clayton, and Gumbel copulas when Spearman’s rho equals 0.5.
Figure 2: Time series of exchange rates and ATM implied volatilities for dollar/euro and euro/pound rates

Dollar/euro and euro/pound exchange rates and the three-month, ATM implied volatilities for these rates are shown from May to December 2000.
Figure 3: Euro/pound RNDs when one cross-rate option price is known

Typical RNDs for the euro/pound rate, respectively derived from CME and OTC dollar-rate option prices. GB2 densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities and the vanilla cross-rate densities. The dependence parameters of the copulas are estimated by equating the theoretical at-the-money cross-rate option price with the market price.
Figure 4: Implied volatilities for the euro/pound rate when one cross-rate option price is known

Average implied volatilities, derived from OTC and CME option prices and various copula functions. GB2 densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities and the vanilla cross-rate densities. The parameters of the copulas are estimated by equating the theoretical at-the-money cross-rate option price with the market price.
Figure 5: Implied volatilities for the euro/pound rate from OTC and CME option prices, when one cross-rate option price is known

Average implied volatilities, derived from OTC and CME option prices and various copula functions. GB2 densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities and the vanilla cross-rate densities. The parameters of the copulas are estimated by equating the theoretical at-the-money cross-rate option price with the market price.
Figure 6: Time series of implied and realized correlation coefficients for the dollar/pound and dollar/euro rates

Each implied correlation is calculated from the one-month at-the-money implied volatilities of OTC options on the dollar/pound, dollar/euro and euro/pound rates. Each realized correlation is calculated from the previous month of thirty-minute returns, obtained from CME dollar/pound and dollar/euro futures prices.
Figure 7: Euro/pound RNDs when dependence is estimated from historical prices

Typical RNDs for the euro/pound rate, respectively derived from CME and OTC dollar-rate option prices. GB2 densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities and the vanilla cross-rate densities. The dependence parameters of the copulas are estimated from the historical correlation for one month of thirty-minute dollar-rate returns.
Figure 8: Implied volatilities for the euro/pound rate, when dependence is estimated from historical prices

Average one-month implied volatilities, derived from OTC and CME option prices and various copula functions. GB2 densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities and the vanilla cross-rate densities. The dependence parameters of the copulas are estimated from the historical correlation for one month of thirty-minute dollar-rate returns.
Figure 9: Euro/pound RNDs and implied volatilities from OTC option prices with various distributional assumptions, when one cross-rate option price is known.

Typical one-month RNDs and average implied volatilities for the euro/pound rate derived from OTC dollar-rate option prices with various distributional assumptions and the Gumbel copula function. Either GB2, lognormal mixtures, or lognormal-polynomial densities define the marginal dollar-rate densities and the vanilla cross-rate densities. The parameters of the copulas are estimated by equating the theoretical at-the-money cross-rate option price with the market price.
Figure 10: Time series of the dependence parameter for the Gaussian copula

The time series of the dependence parameter, $\rho_t$, for the Gaussian copula is produced for the dollar/pound and dollar/euro rates from 2000 to 2007.
Figure 11: Time series of implied and realized correlation coefficients for the dollar/pound and dollar/euro rates from 2000 to 2007

Each implied correlation is calculated from the three-month at-the-money implied volatilities of OTC options on the dollar/pound, dollar/euro and euro/pound rates from May 2000 to December 2007. Each realized correlation is calculated from the thirty-minute returns of OTC dollar/pound and dollar/euro rates during this period. All data are collected from Olsen and Associates.