

# Discussion of Blanchard, L'Hullier, and Lorenzoni (2009): “News, Noise, and Fluctuations: An Empirical Exploration”

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- This discussion:
  - Negative result not whole story; focus on what one *can* do with a structural VAR
  - Positive result not so positive, very fragile with respect to model structure

# A Simple Model with News and Noise

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- Natural rate assumption:  $\lim_{j \rightarrow \infty} E_t c_{t+j} = E_t a_{t+j}$
- Implies that consumption only depends on  $x$

# Signal Extraction Problem

- Agents observe level of productivity, but don't observe permanent component, only a noisy signal:  $s_t = x_t + v_t$

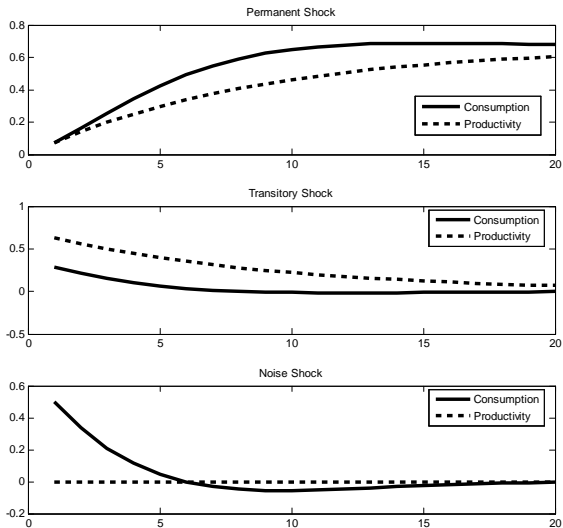
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- Primitive disturbances:  $\epsilon$  (“permanent shock”),  $\eta$  (“transitory shock”), and  $v$  (“noise shock”)

# Impulse Responses to Primitive Shocks





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  - Long run restriction cannot identify noise shock

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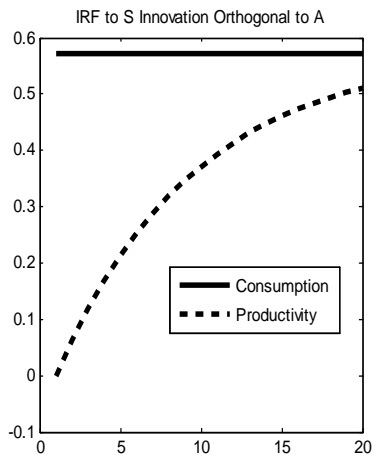
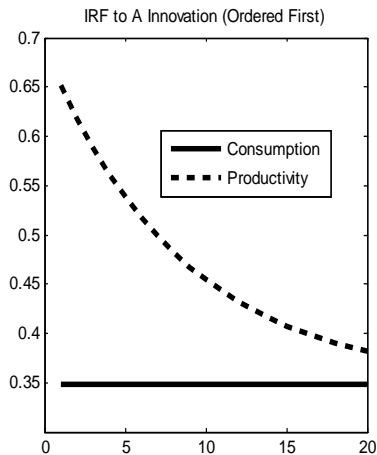
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  - Signal innovation orthogonal to productivity is “news shock”

# IRFs from Perspective of Agents



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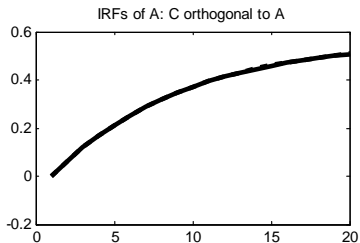
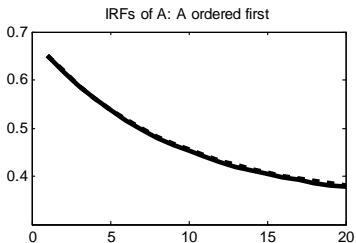
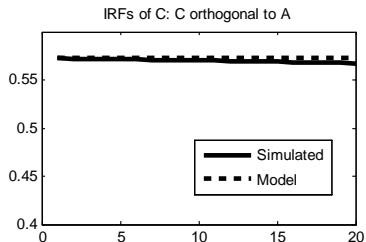
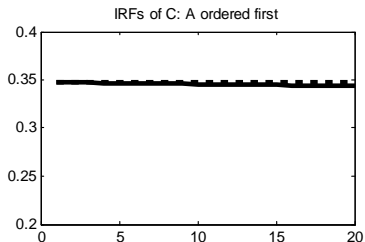
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- Estimate bivariate VAR with productivity and consumption
  - Order productivity first, consumption second in Choleski decomposition
  - This VAR recovers *exactly* (in large enough sample) shocks and IRFs from perspective of agents

# SVAR and Model Responses



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- To say more about the role of noise, need to impose more structure

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- Justification is that simple model is a special case of New Keynesian model

# New Keynesian Model

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- Equations of model:

$$\begin{aligned}E_t y_{t+1} &= y_t + i_t - E_t \pi_{t+1} \\ \pi_t &= \frac{(1-\theta)(1-\theta\beta)}{\theta} mc_t + \beta E_t \pi_{t+1} \\ mc_t &= (1+\zeta)(y_t - a_t) \\ i_t &= \phi \pi_t \quad \phi > 1\end{aligned}$$

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  - A constant real interest rate implies perfect consumption smoothing

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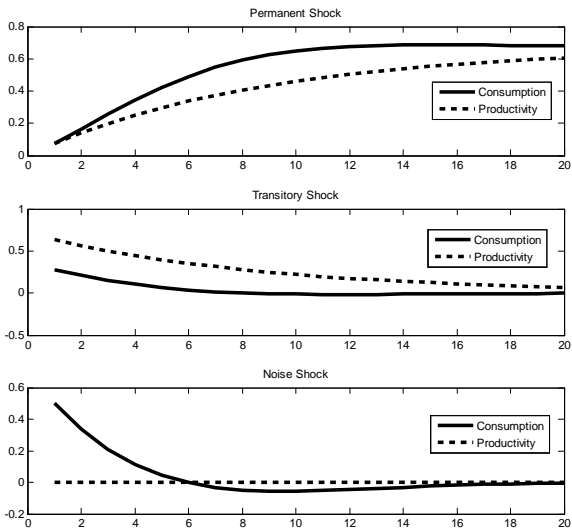
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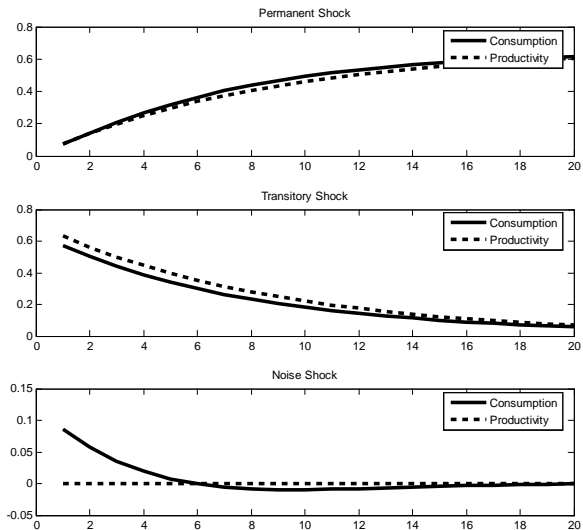
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- Allowing  $\theta < 1 \implies$  real interest rate will move around  $\implies$  news/noise will lead to smaller high frequency movements in consumption
- Most empirical evidence suggests  $\theta \leq 0.8$  ( $\theta \approx 0.8$  preferred estimate in Gali and Gertler (1999))

# Responses with Calvo Parameter = 1



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    - As  $\theta \rightarrow 0$ , this economy functions as an endowment economy with  $y_t = a_t$

# Variance Decomposition

- Fraction of forecast error variance of consumption due to noise shocks:

Horizon	$\theta = 1$	$\theta = 0.9$	$\theta = 0.8$	$\theta = 0.7$
$h = 1$	0.747	0.197	0.021	0.003
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  - True regardless of other parameters

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  - Gali and Gertler (1999): estimate slope of Phillips Curve in terms of marginal cost at 0.023.
  - Even if labor supply elasticity is  $\infty$  (so  $\zeta = 0$ ),  $\kappa = 0.0011$  is less than  $\frac{1}{20}$  the magnitude of GG's estimate!

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  - Cannot conclude that noise shocks are an important source of fluctuations on the basis of estimating this model

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- Suggestions:

# Discussion of Their Results

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- Maybe think about modeling noise explicitly on the firm side of the model