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U.S. and U.K. Quantitative Easing**

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# The Response of Interest Rates to U.S. and U.K. Quantitative Easing

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## Abstract

We analyze the declines in government bond yields that followed the announcements of plans by the Federal Reserve and the Bank of England to buy longer-term government debt. Using empirical dynamic term structure models, we decompose these declines into changes in expectations about future monetary policy and changes in term premiums. We find that declines in U.S. Treasury yields mainly reflected lower policy expectations, while declines in U.K. yields appeared to reflect reduced term premiums. Thus, the relative importance of the signaling and portfolio balance channels of quantitative easing may depend on market institutional structures and central bank communications policies.

*JEL Classification:* E43, E52, E58.

*Keywords:* monetary policy, quantitative easing, term structure models.

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# 1 Introduction

In late 2008, the Federal Reserve lowered its target policy rate—the overnight federal funds rate—effectively to its zero lower bound. Given a deteriorating outlook for economic growth and a perceived threat of price deflation, the Fed began to purchase longer-term securities in order to push down bond yields and provide additional monetary policy stimulus to the economy. Similarly, in the early spring of 2009, the Bank of England, which had lowered its policy interest rate—the Bank Rate—to its effective zero lower bound, projected weak U.K. economic growth and a medium-term inflation rate that was below its official 2 percent target. Therefore, the Bank of England announced plans to purchase government bonds in order to increase nominal economic activity.

Facing similar circumstances, the Federal Reserve and the Bank of England purchased roughly comparable amounts of bonds—both relative to the sizes of their economies and to the stocks of outstanding government debt. Recent research also suggests that the two central bank bond purchase programs induced a comparable reduction in government bond yields in each country. For the United States, Gagnon et al. (2011), henceforth GRRS, report a cumulative decline in the ten-year U.S. Treasury yield of 91 basis points following eight key announcements about the Fed’s first program of large-scale asset purchases (LSAPs).<sup>1</sup> For the United Kingdom, Joyce et al. (2011), henceforth JLST, report that long-term U.K. government bond (or gilt) yields fell a total of about 100 basis points after six key quantitative easing (QE) announcements.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, both GRRS and JLST provide evidence suggesting that the same mechanism—the portfolio balance channel—was primarily responsible for the bond yield responses in each country.<sup>3</sup> The portfolio balance channel operates when the central bank bond purchases, which change the relative supplies of assets held by the private sector, induce equilibrating changes in relative yields. In this channel, announcements of central bank bond purchases push up the prices of the bonds bought and the prices of close substitutes and push down the associated term premiums and yields. The crucial departure from the standard frictionless asset pricing model for a portfolio balance channel is that bonds of different maturities are imperfect substitutes. For example, there may be “preferred-habitat” investors who have maturity-specific demand for bonds and a less-than-perfect offset to this effect from other “arbitrageurs” in the market. In this setting of partially segmented markets, the maturity structure of outstanding debt may affect term premiums.

The key alternative mechanism that may account for declines in yields following an-

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<sup>1</sup>D’Amico and King (2011), Hamilton and Wu (2011), and Krishnamurthy and Vissing-Jorgensen (2011) provide further discussion.

<sup>2</sup>Note that JLST focus on a two-day event window, while GRRS use a one-day window.

<sup>3</sup>However, as described below, GRRS and JLST emphasize different versions of the portfolio balance channel. GRRS focus on a duration removal version, while JLST focus on a market segmentation version.

nouncements of future bond purchases is the signaling channel. In the signaling channel, announcements of central bank bond purchases provide information to market participants about current or future economic conditions or monetary policy. For example, the bond purchase announcements could signal a greater commitment to easier monetary policy, so market participants revise down their expectations for future short-term interest rates (assuming, say, a longer period of near-zero policy rates), and longer-term yields fall. Therefore, just as the portfolio balance channel is associated with changes in the term premium, the signaling channel is linked to changes in the other components of the standard decomposition of a long-term yield: the average expected level of short-term interest rates over the maturity of the bond.<sup>4</sup>

Still, despite all the similarities in motivation and design, it is not clear that the U.S. and U.K. bond purchase programs affected financial markets in the same manner or operated through the same mechanism. One notable puzzle is that the Fed's LSAP and Bank of England's QE announcements had very different effects on overnight index swap (OIS) rates.<sup>5</sup> In the United States, long-maturity OIS rates fell nearly in tandem with government yields of a similar maturity, while in the United Kingdom, long-maturity OIS rates fell by only a very small portion of the decline in similar maturity U.K. gilt yields.<sup>6</sup> The different responses of OIS rates in the two countries suggest that different channels for the effects on yields may have been at work. For example, one interpretation of these results is that a signaling channel predominated in the United States, so the lower expected short rates tended to lower all long yields equally (including OIS rates), while in the United Kingdom, gilts were very imperfect substitutes for swaps, so changes in gilt yields were only imperfectly mirrored in the swaps market.

To shed some light on the various channels through which the U.S. and U.K. bond purchases may have affected bond prices, we examine the responses of yields in each country using an event study methodology, as in GRRS and JLST. Our event study focuses on results using a dynamic term structure model (DTSM) that can decompose long-term yields into expected short rate and term premium components. With estimated changes in term premiums and monetary policy expectations in each country, we can evaluate and compare the responses of yields—and of the components of yields—to U.S. and U.K. bond purchase announcements.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>In fact, as discussed below, this usual association is an oversimplification. Shifts in the term premium may alter the expected path of short rates, and news about economic conditions and policy may affect term premia.

<sup>5</sup>In an OIS, one party pays a fixed interest rate on the notional amount and receives the overnight rate over the entire maturity period. Under absence of arbitrage, OIS rates reflect risk-adjusted expectations of the average policy rate over the horizon corresponding to the maturity of the swap.

<sup>6</sup>See GRRS and JLST and further discussion below.

<sup>7</sup>GRRS, though not JLST, provide a DTSM decomposition. But as we note below, our DTSM decomposition is arguably better suited for this exercise because it produces more accurate short-term interest rate forecasts during the recent sample.

Our results generally support the differential channels of operation suggested by the responses of OIS rates. That is, our analysis of the U.S. data indicates that more than half of the response of U.S. Treasury yields came from lower expectations for future monetary policy. These findings indicate that the magnitude of the portfolio balance effect may not be as large as previously reported. In contrast, our U.K. results indicate that all of the gilt yield declines on seven key U.K. QE announcement dates were driven by declines in term premiums. Overall, our contrasting U.S. and U.K. results suggest that the relative importance of the signaling and portfolio balance effects from central bank bond purchase programs may depend crucially on specific financial market institutional structures or central bank communications policies. This suggests that managing policy expectations is likely an important consideration in conducting unconventional monetary policy.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 details our theoretical framework and describes how we extract policy expectations and term premiums from bond yields. Section 3 contains our empirical event study analysis of the response of U.S. Treasury yields, while Section 4 contains the comparable analysis for the response of U.K. gilt yields. Section 5 analyzes cross-country yield responses. Finally, Section 6 concludes. An appendix describes the model estimation.

## 2 Decomposing Yields with Affine Models

Assessing whether central bank bond purchases affect yields through lower policy expectations or lower term premiums requires an accurate model of expectations for the instantaneous risk-free rate  $r_t$  and the term premium. For simplicity, we focus on decomposing  $P_t(\tau)$ , the price of a zero-coupon bond at time  $t$  that has a single payoff, namely \$1, at maturity  $t + \tau$ . Under standard assumptions (see Cochrane (2001) and the references therein), this price is given by

$$P_t(\tau) = E_t^P \left[ \frac{M_{t+\tau}}{M_t} \right],$$

where the stochastic discount factor,  $M_t$ , denotes the value at time  $t_0$  of a claim at a future date  $t$ , and the superscript  $P$  refers to the actual, or real-world, probability measure underlying the dynamics of  $M_t$ .

We follow the usual reduced-form empirical finance approach that models bond prices with unobservable (or latent) factors, here denoted as  $X_t$ , and the assumption of no residual arbitrage opportunities.<sup>8</sup> We assume that  $X_t$  follows an affine Gaussian process with constant volatility, with dynamics in continuous time given by the solution to the following stochastic

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<sup>8</sup>Ultimately, of course, the behavior of the stochastic discount factor is determined by the preferences of the agents in the economy, as in, for example, Rudebusch and Swanson (2011).

differential equation (SDE):

$$dX_t = K^P(\theta^P - X_t) + \Sigma dW_t^P,$$

where  $K^P$  is an  $n \times n$  mean-reversion matrix,  $\theta^P$  is a  $n \times 1$  vector of mean levels,  $\Sigma$  is an  $n \times n$  volatility matrix, and  $W_t^P$  is an  $n$ -dimensional Brownian motion. The dynamics of the stochastic discount function are given by

$$dM_t = r_t M_t dt + \Gamma_t' M_t dW_t^P,$$

and the instantaneous risk-free rate,  $r_t$ , is assumed affine in the state variables

$$r_t = \delta_0 + \delta_1 X_t,$$

where  $\delta_0 \in \mathbf{R}$  and  $\delta_1 \in \mathbf{R}^n$ . The risk premiums,  $\Gamma_t$ , are also affine

$$\Gamma_t = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 X_t,$$

where  $\gamma_0 \in \mathbf{R}^n$  and  $\gamma_1 \in \mathbf{R}^{n \times n}$ .

Duffie and Kan (1996) show that these assumptions imply that zero-coupon yields are also affine in  $X_t$ :

$$y_t(\tau) = -\frac{1}{\tau} A(\tau) - \frac{1}{\tau} B(\tau)' X_t,$$

where  $A(\tau)$  and  $B(\tau)$  are given as solutions to the following system of ordinary differential equations

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dB(\tau)}{d\tau} &= -\delta_1 - (K^P + \Sigma\gamma_1)' B(\tau), \quad B(0) = 0, \\ \frac{dA(\tau)}{d\tau} &= -\delta_0 + B(\tau)' (K^P \theta^P - \Sigma\gamma_0) + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=1}^n (\Sigma' B(\tau) B(\tau)' \Sigma)_{j,j}, \quad A(0) = 0. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, the  $A(\tau)$  and  $B(\tau)$  functions are calculated *as if* the dynamics of the state variables had a constant drift term equal to  $K^P \theta^P - \Sigma\gamma_0$  instead of the actual  $K^P \theta^P$  and a mean-reversion matrix equal to  $K^P + \Sigma\gamma_1$  as opposed to the actual  $K^P$ .<sup>9</sup> The difference is determined by the risk premium  $\Gamma_t$  and reflects investors' aversion to the risks embodied in  $X_t$ .

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<sup>9</sup>The probability measure with these alternative dynamics is frequently referred to as the risk-neutral, or  $Q$ , probability measure since the expected return on any asset under this measure is equal to the risk-free rate  $r_t$  that a risk-neutral investor would demand.

Finally, we define the term premium as

$$TP_t(\tau) = y_t(\tau) - \frac{1}{\tau} \int_t^{t+\tau} E_t^P[r_s] ds. \quad (1)$$

That is, the term premium is the difference in expected return between a buy and hold strategy for a  $\tau$ -year Treasury bond and an instantaneous rollover strategy at the risk-free rate  $r_t$ .

### 3 Analysis of the U.S. Experience

In this section, we estimate the effect of the Fed’s LSAP announcements on expected short-term interest rates and term premiums. We first describe our affine empirical models for U.S. Treasury yields and then provide quantitative results from an event study. However, in light of a potential regime switch in bond pricing following the introduction of a bond purchase program, the use of these models needs some discussion. Theoretically, we are treating the LSAP or QE announcements as just another series of shocks to the Treasury bond market. As such, there is no notion of a regime switch in terms of the way information is processed and priced into the Treasury yield curve following the purchases announcements. Under that assumption, the models can be used to extract key information about future monetary policy expectations from the variation in the Treasury yield curve.<sup>10</sup>

#### 3.1 U.S. Empirical Yield Curve Models

The first model we consider was introduced by Kim and Wright (KW) (2005). This model is estimated on an ongoing basis by the staff of the Federal Reserve Board (and made available at [www.federalreserve.gov](http://www.federalreserve.gov)) and was used by GRRS. It is a standard latent three-factor Gaussian term structure model of the kind described in Section 2. The model is estimated using one-, two-, four-, seven-, and ten-year off-the-run Treasury zero-coupon yields from the Gürkaynak, Sack, and Wright (GSW, 2007) database, as well as three- and six-month Treasury bill yields. To facilitate empirical implementation, monthly data on the six- and twelve-month-ahead forecasts of the three-month T-bill yield from Blue Chip Financial Forecasts and semiannual data on the average expected three-month T-bill yield six to eleven years hence from the same source are included in the model estimation.

The main drawback of this model is one that generally plagues the estimation of any

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<sup>10</sup>Support for this view is provided in Swanson and Williams (2012). They find that U.S. Treasury yields do not appear to have been constrained in their response to economic news surprises over the 2009-2010 period—the focus of our analysis—as compared to their response patterns during the “normal” period from 1990-2000.

DTSM. Because interest rates are highly persistent, empirical autoregressive models, including DTSMs, suffer from substantial small-sample estimation bias. Specifically, model estimates will generally be biased toward a dynamic system that displays much less persistence than the true process (so estimates of the real-world mean-reversion matrix,  $K^P$ , are upward biased). Furthermore, if the degree of interest rate persistence is underestimated, future short rates would be expected to revert to their mean too quickly, and estimated risk-neutral rates would be too stable. Therefore, the bias in the estimated dynamics distorts the decomposition of yields and contaminates estimates of long-maturity term premia. Bauer et al. (2011) provide a complete discussion of the small-sample bias in empirical affine Gaussian DTSMs and simulation-based methods to eliminate it. Here, we construct a DTSM with a number of restrictions imposed both prior to model estimation and based on estimation results that arguably reduce the small-sample estimation bias, partly by imposing a unit-root property on the most persistent factor and partly by using a long sample.<sup>11</sup>

The specific DTSMs we consider are arbitrage-free Nelson-Siegel (AFNS) representations that follow Christensen, Diebold, and Rudebusch (2011), henceforth CDR, with three state variables,  $X_t = (L_t, S_t, C_t)$ .<sup>12</sup> These are described by the following system of SDEs under the risk-neutral  $Q$ -measure:<sup>13</sup>

$$\begin{pmatrix} dL_t \\ dS_t \\ dC_t \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \lambda & -\lambda \\ 0 & 0 & \lambda \end{pmatrix} \left[ \begin{pmatrix} \theta_1^Q \\ \theta_2^Q \\ \theta_3^Q \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} L_t \\ S_t \\ C_t \end{pmatrix} \right] dt + \Sigma \begin{pmatrix} dW_t^{1,Q} \\ dW_t^{2,Q} \\ dW_t^{3,Q} \end{pmatrix}, \quad \lambda > 0.$$

In addition, the instantaneous risk-free rate is defined by

$$r_t = L_t + S_t.$$

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<sup>11</sup>As discussed in Kim and Orphanides (2005), the inclusion of short- and long-term survey forecasts of future three-month T-Bill rates in the estimation of the KW model serves two purposes. First, it makes the latent factors better econometrically identified, which facilitates model estimation. In our models, we achieve this by imposing the Nelson-Siegel structure described below (see Christensen et al. 2011 for a more detailed discussion). Second, they argue that it mitigates the upward bias in the estimation of the mean-reversion rates of the state variables described here. Thus, the bias problem is addressed in the KW model, but likely inadequately so based on our results.

<sup>12</sup>For related applications of the AFNS model, see Christensen et al. (2010), who examine yields for nominal and real Treasuries, Christensen et al. (2009), who examine short-term LIBOR and highly rated financial firms' corporate bond rates, and Christensen and Lopez (2008), who examine corporate bond rates more generally.

<sup>13</sup>As discussed in CDR, with a unit root in the level factor under the pricing measure, the model is not arbitrage-free with an unbounded horizon; therefore, as is often done in theoretical discussions, we impose an arbitrary maximum horizon. Also, following CDR, we identify this class of models by fixing the  $\theta^Q$  means under the  $Q$ -measure at zero without loss of generality.

Alternative Specifications	Goodness-of-fit statistics				
	$\log L$	$k$	$p$ -value	AIC	BIC
(1) Unrestricted $K^P$	280,690	24	n.a.	-561,332	-561,172
(2) $\kappa_{32}^P = 0$	280,690	23	0.6547	-561,334	-561,181
(3) $\kappa_{32}^P = \kappa_{31}^P = 0$	280,690	22	0.5271	-561,336	-561,189
(4) $\kappa_{32}^P = \kappa_{31}^P = \kappa_{12}^P = 0$	280,689	21	0.2367	-561,336	-561,196
(5) $\kappa_{32}^P = \dots = \kappa_{13}^P = 0$	280,689	20	0.5271	<b>-561,338</b>	<b>-561,205</b>
(6) $\kappa_{32}^P = \dots = \kappa_{21}^P = 0$	280,685	19	0.0034	-561,331	-561,205
(7) $\kappa_{32}^P = \dots = \kappa_{23}^P = 0$	280,665	18	0.0000	-561,293	-561,174

Table 1: **Evaluation of Alternative Specifications of the AFNS Model of U.S. Treasury Yields.**

There are seven alternative estimated specifications of the AFNS model of U.S. Treasury yields with the unrestricted 3-by-3  $K^P$  matrix being the most flexible. Each specification is listed with its maximum log likelihood value ( $\log L$ ), number of parameters ( $k$ ), the  $p$ -value from a likelihood ratio test of the hypothesis that it differs from the specification above with one more free parameter, and the information criteria (AIC and BIC). The sample is daily from December 1, 1987 to December 31, 2010, a total of 5,757 observations.

CDR show that this specification implies that zero-coupon bond yields are given by

$$y_t(\tau) = L_t + \left(\frac{1 - e^{-\lambda\tau}}{\lambda\tau}\right)S_t + \left(\frac{1 - e^{-\lambda\tau}}{\lambda\tau} - e^{-\lambda\tau}\right)C_t - \frac{A(\tau)}{\tau}, \quad (2)$$

where the factor loadings in the yield function match the level, slope, and curvature loadings introduced in Nelson and Siegel (1987). The final yield-adjustment term,  $A(\tau)/\tau$ , captures convexity effects due to Jensen's inequality.<sup>14</sup>

The maximally flexible specification of the AFNS model has  $P$ -dynamics given by<sup>15</sup>

$$\begin{pmatrix} dL_t \\ dS_t \\ dC_t \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \kappa_{11}^P & \kappa_{12}^P & \kappa_{13}^P \\ \kappa_{21}^P & \kappa_{22}^P & \kappa_{23}^P \\ \kappa_{31}^P & \kappa_{32}^P & \kappa_{33}^P \end{pmatrix} \left[ \begin{pmatrix} \theta_1^P \\ \theta_2^P \\ \theta_3^P \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} L_t \\ S_t \\ C_t \end{pmatrix} \right] dt + \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{11} & 0 & 0 \\ \sigma_{21} & \sigma_{22} & 0 \\ \sigma_{31} & \sigma_{32} & \sigma_{33} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} dW_t^{1,P} \\ dW_t^{2,P} \\ dW_t^{3,P} \end{pmatrix}. \quad (3)$$

We estimate our AFNS models using the same daily nominal U.S. Treasury zero-coupon yields used in the estimation of the KW model.<sup>16</sup> The data run from December 1, 1987, until December 31, 2010, for eight maturities: three months, six months, one year, two years, three years, five years, seven years, and ten years.

<sup>14</sup>The model is completed with a risk premium specification that connects the factor dynamics to the dynamics under the real-world  $P$ -measure. It is important to note that there are no restrictions on the dynamic drift components under the empirical  $P$ -measure beyond the requirement of constant volatility. To facilitate empirical implementation, we use the essentially affine risk premium introduced in Duffee (2002).

<sup>15</sup>As noted in CDR, the unconstrained AFNS model has a sign restriction and three parameters less than the standard canonical three-factor Gaussian DTSM.

<sup>16</sup>The Appendix provides details of our estimation methodology.

To select the best fitting specification of the AFNS model’s real-world dynamics, we first build on the findings in CDR and limit the  $\Sigma$  volatility matrix to be diagonal. Then, to determine the appropriate specification of the mean-reversion matrix  $K^P$ , we use a general-to-specific modeling strategy that restricts the least significant parameter in the estimation to zero and then re-estimates the model. This strategy of eliminating the least significant coefficients is carried out down to the most parsimonious specification, which has a diagonal  $K^P$  matrix. The final specification choice is based on the values of the Akaike and Bayes information criteria as per Christensen et al. (2010).<sup>17</sup> The summary statistics of the model selection process are reported in Table 1. Both information criteria are minimized by specification (5), which has a  $K^P$  matrix specified as

$$K_{US}^P = \begin{pmatrix} \kappa_{11}^P & 0 & 0 \\ \kappa_{21}^P & \kappa_{22}^P & \kappa_{23}^P \\ 0 & 0 & \kappa_{33}^P \end{pmatrix}.$$

Finally, to mitigate the small-sample bias problem in the estimation of the parameters in  $K^P$ , we impose a unit-root property on the Nelson-Siegel level factor. Thus, in the end, our preferred specification of the AFNS model for the United States has  $P$ -dynamics given by<sup>18</sup>

$$\begin{pmatrix} dL_t^{US} \\ dS_t^{US} \\ dC_t^{US} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 10^{-7} & 0 & 0 \\ \kappa_{21}^P & \kappa_{22}^P & \kappa_{23}^P \\ 0 & 0 & \kappa_{33}^P \end{pmatrix} \left[ \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \theta_2^P \\ \theta_3^P \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} L_t^{US} \\ S_t^{US} \\ C_t^{US} \end{pmatrix} \right] dt + \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{11} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \sigma_{22} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \sigma_{33} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} dW_t^{1,P} \\ dW_t^{2,P} \\ dW_t^{3,P} \end{pmatrix}.$$

There are two things to note regarding this specification. First, the Nelson-Siegel level factor is restricted to be an independent unit-root process under both probability measures.<sup>19</sup> As discussed below, this restriction helps improve forecast performance independent of the specification of the remaining parts of  $K^P$ .<sup>20</sup> Second, we test the significance of the four parameter restrictions imposed on  $K^P$  in the preferred AFNS model relative to the corresponding AFNS model with an unrestricted  $K^P$  matrix.<sup>21</sup> As shown in Figure 1, the four parameter restrictions are statistically insignificant throughout our sample period. Thus, our

<sup>17</sup>See Harvey (1989) for further details.

<sup>18</sup>The simple dynamic three-factor Gaussian model introduced in Duffee (2011) is qualitatively close to our preferred model (it has  $\kappa_{21}^P = 0$ , but  $\kappa_{32}^P \neq 0$ ). Duffee reports good forecast performance for this model, but uses a sample of U.S. Treasury yields that differs from ours. Furthermore, his state variables are identical to the three first principal components, whereas our state variables are the filtered AFNS factors, which are *not* identical to the three first principal components.

<sup>19</sup>Due to the unit-root property of the first factor, we can arbitrarily fix its mean at  $\theta_1^P = 0$ .

<sup>20</sup>As described in detail in Bauer, Rudebusch, and Wu (2011), bias-corrected  $K^P$  estimates are typically very close to a unit-root process, so we view the imposition of the unit-root restriction as a simple shortcut to reduce small-sample estimation bias.

<sup>21</sup>That, is, we test the hypotheses  $\kappa_{12}^P = \kappa_{13}^P = \kappa_{31}^P = \kappa_{32}^P = 0$  jointly using a standard likelihood ratio test.

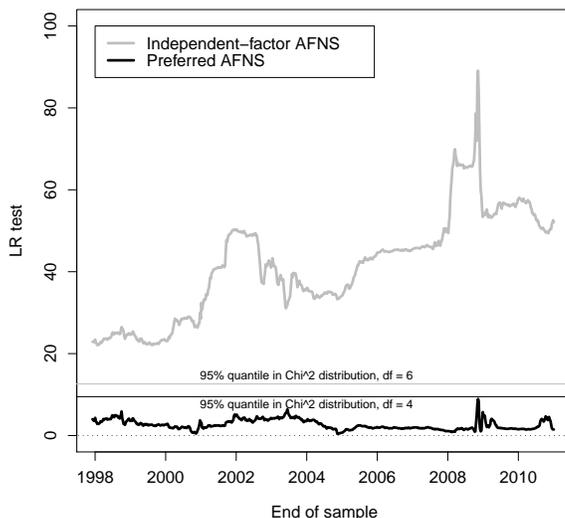


Figure 1: **LR Tests of Parameter Restrictions in U.S. AFNS Models.**

Illustration of the value of likelihood ratio tests of the restrictions imposed in the independent-factor and preferred AFNS models relative to the AFNS model with unrestricted  $K^P$  matrix and diagonal  $\Sigma$  matrix. The analysis covers weekly re-estimations of expanding samples from December 4, 1998 to December 31, 2010, a total of 683 observations, while the full data set is weekly covering the period from December 4, 1987 to December 31, 2010. The 95 percentiles in the relevant  $\chi^2$  distributions are shown with horizontal lines.

preferred AFNS model is flexible enough to capture the relevant information in the data. To assess the robustness of our results, we also consider both the unconstrained AFNS model described in Equation (3), which is the AFNS model closest to the canonical Gaussian  $A_0(3)$  model of Dai and Singleton (2000), and the independent-factor AFNS model favored by CDR, even though likelihood ratio tests of its parameter restrictions (also shown in Figure 1) indicate that it is too parsimonious.<sup>22</sup>

To study bond investors' expectations in real time, we perform a rolling re-estimation of the models on expanding samples—adding one day of observations each time, a total of 3,249 estimations. As a result, the end dates of the expanding samples run from January 2, 1998, to December 31, 2010. For each end date during that period, we calculate the average expected path for the overnight rate,  $\frac{1}{\tau} \int_t^{t+\tau} E_t^P[r_s^{US}] ds$ , as well as the associated term premium—assuming the two components sum to the bond yield,  $y_t^{US}(\tau)$ . Importantly, the estimates of these two components rely only on information that was available in real time.

<sup>22</sup>In unreported results, (i) we repeated the forecast exercise in Diebold and Li (2006), (ii) we estimated all eight admissible specifications of two-factor AFNS models (i.e., those with only a level and a slope factor) with and without unit-root properties imposed, (iii) we studied more flexible specifications of the volatility matrix within the AFNS model. None of these alternatives systematically outperformed our preferred AFNS model.

Forecasting method	One-year forecast		Two-year forecast	
	Mean	RMSE	Mean	RMSE
Random walk	40.03	170.18	84.12	282.21
Kim & Wright model	57.05	142.14	140.93	252.58
Unconstrained AFNS model	6.05	161.24	33.78	263.92
Indep.-factor AFNS model	32.20	158.28	70.22	263.80
Preferred AFNS model	9.61	136.68	70.85	250.32

Table 2: **Summary Statistics for Target Federal Funds Rate Forecast Errors.**

Summary statistics of the forecast errors of the target overnight federal funds rate one and two years ahead. The forecasts are monthly starting on January 31, 1998, and running until December 31, 2010, for the one-year forecasts (156 forecasts), and until December 31, 2009, for the two-year forecasts (144 forecasts). All measurements are expressed in basis points.

### 3.2 Comparison of U.S. DTSMs

For a start, we use our AFNS models and the KW model to forecast the target overnight federal funds rate one and two years ahead at the end of each month over the period from January 2, 1998, until December 31, 2010. The summary statistics for the forecast errors relative to the subsequent realizations of the target overnight federal funds rate set by the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) are reported in Table 2, which also contains the forecast errors obtained using a random walk assumption. We note the weaker forecast performance of the KW model relative to our preferred AFNS model. Figure 2 compares the forecasts at the two-year horizon from the KW model and the preferred AFNS model to the subsequent target rate realizations. The KW model systematically overestimates the subsequent target rate realizations since the fall of 2008, which is the period of interest for studying the effects of the LSAP program.

Figure 3 shows the time series of the ten-year term premium from our preferred AFNS model and the ten-year term premium from the KW model. Over the whole sample, the KW term premium averages about half the size of that produced by the AFNS model. The two measures of the term premium have a high degree of correlation (almost 60 percent), but also exhibit important differences at the low points of the monetary policy cycles—notably, during 2002 to 2004 and 2008 to the present. During these periods, the KW premium is very low and indeed appears to turn negative in the fall of 2010.

These low term premiums may be an artifact of the model estimation bias noted above. Any bias in the model-generated expectations for future short-term interest rates will translate one-for-one into a similar bias, but with opposite sign, in the estimated term premiums. Specifically, at the bottom of a monetary policy cycle, it appears that the KW model generates expectations for future short-term rates that are too high—that is, a quicker reversion to

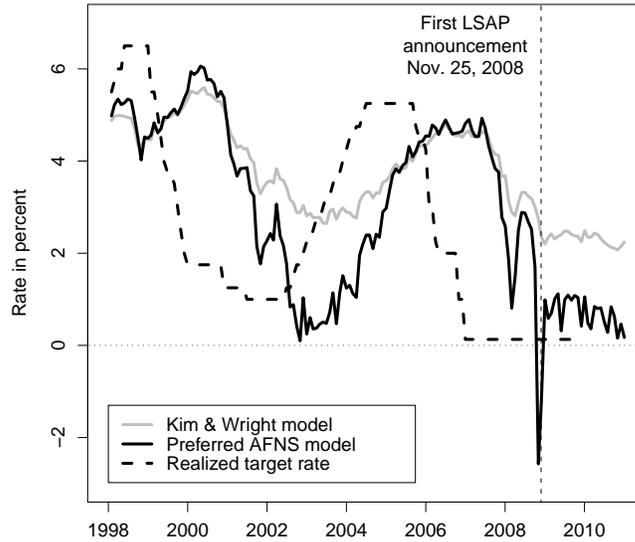


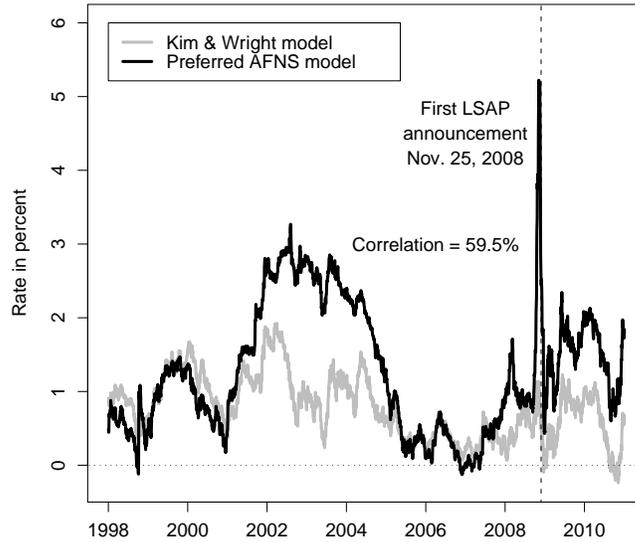
Figure 2: **Forecasts of the Target Overnight Federal Funds Rate.**

Forecasts of the target overnight federal funds rate two years ahead from the preferred AFNS model and the Kim and Wright model. Subsequent realizations of the target overnight federal funds rate are included, so at date  $t$ , the figure shows forecasts as of time  $t$  and the realization from  $t$  plus two years. The forecast data are end-of-month observations from January 31, 1998, to December 31, 2010.

mean—and, equivalently, estimates of term premiums that appear quite low. Therefore, especially at low points in the interest rate cycle, the KW estimated model appears to indicate that bond investors expect a more rapid reversal of monetary policy than is likely to be the case. This potential problem raises doubts about the accuracy of the KW term premium decomposition exactly during the key period since late November 2008 that we are interested in analyzing.

### 3.3 Response of U.S. Yields to Bond Purchase Announcements

We analyze the effects of the Federal Reserve’s bond purchases using an event study methodology that examines changes in U.S. interest rates over one-day intervals around announcements of future bond purchases. Of course, though widely used, this is an imperfect technique. We have no reliable measures of what was expected prior to each Fed announcement, so, following GRRS, we assume that the entire announcement was a complete surprise. This likely underestimates the interest rate response as, especially for the later announcements, market



**Figure 3: Two Estimates of Ten-Year U.S. Term Premiums.**

The figure illustrates the ten-year U.S. Treasury zero-coupon term premium estimates from the preferred AFNS model as well as the corresponding estimates from the KW model. Both series are daily, covering the period from January 2, 1998, to December 31, 2010.

participants may have anticipated some Fed action.<sup>23</sup> Also, a one-day event window may be too short to capture all of the announcements’ effects—again, perhaps biasing downward the estimated size of these effects.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, a one-day window may capture an exaggerated initial market response that is unwound over time as market makers and investors adjust. Finally, even during a one-day window, other news may have been released that significantly affected interest rates and obscured the effects we are trying to assess. Although we believe that a majority of the interest rate movements we examine reflected new information from the Fed’s announcements, at the very least our results provide a careful comparison to the well-known GRRS results using different empirical models to extract term premiums.

We start our analysis with a model-free inspection of the data. The eight key announcements regarding the Federal Reserve’s first LSAP program highlighted by GRRS are listed in Table 3. Table 4 shows the changes on these dates in five of the eight yield maturities we use in model estimation. Five- and ten-year U.S. Treasury yields declined almost 100 basis points

<sup>23</sup>We only examine the first round of Fed purchases because the information releases regarding the second round of purchases and the subsequent maturity extension program were more diffuse and less amenable to an event study analysis.

<sup>24</sup>JLST, for example, use a two-day window in their U.K. analysis.

No.	Date	Event	Description
I	Nov. 25, 2008	Initial LSAP announcement	Fed announces purchases of \$100 billion in GSE debt and up to \$500 billion in MBS.
II	Dec. 1, 2008	Bernanke speech	Chairman Bernanke indicates that the Fed could purchase long-term Treasury securities.
III	Dec. 16, 2008	FOMC statement	The first FOMC statement that mentions possible purchases of long-term Treasuries.
IV	Jan. 28, 2009	FOMC statement	FOMC states that it is ready to expand agency debt and MBS purchases and to purchase long-term Treasuries.
V	Mar. 18, 2009	FOMC statement	Fed will purchase an additional \$750 billion in agency MBS and \$100 billion in agency debt. Also, it will purchase \$300 billion in long-term Treasury securities.
VI	Aug. 12, 2009	FOMC statement	Fed is set to slow the pace of the LSAP. The final purchases of Treasury securities will be in the end of October instead of mid-September.
VII	Sep. 23, 2009	FOMC statement	Fed's purchases of agency debt and MBS will end in the first quarter of 2010, while its Treasury purchases will end as planned in October.
VIII	Nov. 4, 2009	FOMC statement	Amount of agency debt capped at \$175 billion instead of the \$200 billion previously announced.

Table 3: **Key Federal Reserve LSAP Announcements.**

over the eight announcement dates, while shorter maturities changed much less. However, without a dynamic modeling of the entire yield curve, it is not possible to conclude whether policy expectations or changes in term premiums are the driver of the observed yield changes.

To first get a sense of how widely these Treasury yield reactions were shared in other markets, we analyze the reaction of OIS rates.<sup>25</sup> These rates represent average expectations for the effective federal funds rate over the given maturity. Of course, as for any financial claim, OIS rates contain their own set of risk premiums and are not pure measures of future policy expectations. Still, the very small net changes in Treasury-OIS spreads implied by the responses reported in Tables 4 and 5 suggest that there was a common factor behind the observed declines in Treasury yields and OIS rates. This common factor may have been a shift in policy expectations and the expectations component in long-term interest rates. Alternatively, the rates may have shared a shift in risk premiums following the LSAP announcements. For example, GRRS argue that the announced changes in the supply of long-term bonds affect

<sup>25</sup>Krishnamurthy and Vissing-Jorgensen (2011) use federal funds futures with maturities up to 24 months and extrapolate beyond that to measure the response of long-term monetary policy expectations. Their method suggests an upper bound of 40 basis points for the decline in policy expectations.

Event	Maturity				
	6-month	1-year	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Nov. 25, 2008	<b>-5</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>-21</b>
II Dec. 1, 2008	<b>-3</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-12</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-22</b>
III Dec. 16, 2008	<b>-7</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>-17</b>
IV Jan. 28, 2009	<b>-5</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>
V Mar. 18, 2009	<b>-13</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>-47</b>	<b>-52</b>
VI Aug. 12, 2009	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
VII Sep. 23, 2009	<b>-1</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-2</b>
VIII Nov. 4, 2009	<b>-1</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>
Total net change	<b>-34</b>	<b>-45</b>	<b>-65</b>	<b>-97</b>	<b>-89</b>

Table 4: **Changes in U.S. Treasury Yields on LSAP Announcement Dates.**  
Changes are measured in basis points.

the aggregate amount of duration available in the market and the pricing of the associated interest rate risk term premium, which is shared by all similar-duration bonds. In their duration removal version of the portfolio balance channel, lowering aggregate duration risk can reduce term premiums in all fixed-income securities.

A second set of fixed-income securities that investors could view as relatively close substitutes to U.S. Treasuries are U.S. corporate bonds. Table 6 contains the yield changes for three rating categories (AA, BBB, B) across five maturities.<sup>26</sup> Corporate bond yields generally declined, but by less than Treasury yields. Again, a common factor seems to be present, although likely tempered by some negative news on announcement dates regarding the economic outlook so that lower credit quality bonds faced greater perceived risk of default, especially in the near term. Thus, credit spreads increased, on net, for all three rating categories, but increased more the lower the credit quality and the shorter the maturity of the bond.

A third important segment of the U.S. fixed-income markets that could serve as a close substitute for U.S. Treasury bond investors is the huge market for interest rate swaps tied to

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<sup>26</sup>See Christensen and Lopez (2008) for a description of the corporate bond data, which are obtained from Bloomberg.

Event	Maturity				
	6-month	1-year	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Nov. 25, 2008	<b>-5</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-25</b>	<b>-28</b>
II Dec. 1, 2008	<b>-5</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-19</b>
III Dec. 16, 2008	<b>-17</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>-29</b>	<b>-32</b>
IV Jan. 28, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>
V Mar. 18, 2009	<b>-3</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-12</b>	<b>-27</b>	<b>-38</b>
VI Aug. 12, 2009	<b>-2</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>1</b>
VII Sep. 23, 2009	<b>-2</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-5</b>
VIII Nov. 4, 2009	<b>-1</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
Total net change	<b>-35</b>	<b>-37</b>	<b>-58</b>	<b>-97</b>	<b>-102</b>

Table 5: **Changes in U.S. OIS Rates on LSAP Announcement Dates.**  
Changes are measured in basis points.

the U.S. dollar LIBOR. The reaction in this market to the LSAP announcements is reported in Table 7, where we note that both LIBOR and swap rates declined in tandem with Treasury yields and OIS rates.

The fairly similar reaction of U.S. Treasury yields, OIS rates, corporate bond yields, and swap interest rates to LSAP announcements provides little evidence of pronounced market segmentation in the U.S. fixed-income market during this period or a simple market segmentation version of the portfolio balance channel. The model-free evidence is consistent with a view that U.S. LSAP announcements mainly worked through the signaling channel, whereby Treasury yields were depressed as purchase announcements in essence indicated that interest rates would be low for longer than previously anticipated. Alternatively, the model-free evidence could also be seen as consistent with the GRRS duration removal version of the portfolio balance channel, in which the market price of duration risk increases with Fed purchase announcements, and the term premiums on all fixed-income securities of a long maturity fall. To distinguish between these last two channels, we use the empirical DTSMs described in the previous section. Using these models, we decompose the response of Treasury yields to the LSAP announcements into three components:

Event	AA-rated U.S. industrial corporate bonds				
	6-month	1-year	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Nov. 25, 2008	6	1	-6	-18	-24
II Dec. 1, 2008	-13	-13	-12	-24	-23
III Dec. 16, 2008	10	6	0	-16	-23
IV Jan. 28, 2009	-2	0	5	11	13
V Mar. 18, 2009	-5	-13	-22	-41	-49
VI Aug. 12, 2009	-2	-1	-2	2	7
VII Sep. 23, 2009	-1	-1	-3	-4	-2
VIII Nov. 4, 2009	1	-1	0	6	14
<b>Total net change</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-40</b>	<b>-85</b>	<b>-89</b>

Event	BBB-rated U.S. industrial corporate bonds				
	6-month	1-year	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Nov. 25, 2008	8	2	-4	-17	-23
II Dec. 1, 2008	-4	-5	-3	-16	-14
III Dec. 16, 2008	-3	-7	-13	-14	-22
IV Jan. 28, 2009	-4	-2	2	8	10
V Mar. 18, 2009	-2	-10	-19	-39	-45
VI Aug. 12, 2009	-2	-1	-2	1	5
VII Sep. 23, 2009	-1	-1	-3	-4	-2
VIII Nov. 4, 2009	-1	-4	-3	4	11
<b>Total net change</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-27</b>	<b>-45</b>	<b>-77</b>	<b>-80</b>

Event	B-rated U.S. industrial corporate bonds				
	6-month	1-year	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Nov. 25, 2008	41	34	27	14	9
II Dec. 1, 2008	0	-1	0	-13	-11
III Dec. 16, 2008	1	-3	-9	-21	-29
IV Jan. 28, 2009	2	4	9	15	17
V Mar. 18, 2009	4	-4	-20	-32	-40
VI Aug. 12, 2009	-8	-7	-7	-5	1
VII Sep. 23, 2009	-8	-8	-10	-11	-9
VIII Nov. 4, 2009	5	3	4	10	19
<b>Total net change</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-42</b>	<b>-43</b>

Table 6: **Changes in U.S. Corporate Bond Yields on LSAP Announcement Dates.** Changes in U.S. industrial corporate bond yields across three rating categories (AA, BBB, and B) measured in basis points. The data are from Bloomberg.

- (i). The response of the estimated average target federal funds rate until maturity;
- (ii). The response of the term premium defined as the difference between the model fitted Treasury yield and the average expected target rate; and

Event	Maturity			
	3-month	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Nov. 25, 2008	<b>1</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-29</b>	<b>-29</b>
II Dec. 1, 2008	<b>-1</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-17</b>
III Dec. 16, 2008	<b>-29</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>-34</b>	<b>-32</b>
IV Jan. 28, 2009	<b>-1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>
V Mar. 18, 2009	<b>-7</b>	<b>-25</b>	<b>-33</b>	<b>-39</b>
VI Aug. 12, 2009	<b>-1</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>1</b>
VII Sep. 23, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-5</b>
VIII Nov. 4, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
Total net change	<b>-39</b>	<b>-86</b>	<b>-109</b>	<b>-101</b>

Table 7: **Changes in U.S. LIBOR and Swap Rates on LSAP Announcement Dates.** Changes are measured in basis points. Note that the response of the three-month U.S. LIBOR uses a two-day window as it is determined daily around 11 a.m. GMT well before the release of any of the U.S. LSAP announcements.

(*iii*). A residual that reflects variation not accounted for by the model.

The results of the decomposition of the response of the ten-year U.S. Treasury yield on the eight LSAP announcement dates are reported in Table 8. First, we note the fairly large variation in the decompositions across the four models, which is a reflection of the inherent uncertainty in this type of analysis.<sup>27</sup> Second, it is worth highlighting the qualitative agreement of the models regarding the response on the five first LSAP announcements, for example, they all suggest that policy expectations declined on four of these five dates. However, the magnitudes vary, and as explained previously, a model with a big response in the policy expectations component relative to another model will show an equally smaller response in the term premium component as the observed yield change is the same for all models. Third, in terms of the KW model, we replicate the result of GRRS whose emphasis on the portfolio portfolio balance channel is based on the observation that about 80 percent of the decline in the ten-year U.S. Treasury yield to the LSAP announcements is explained by declines in the

<sup>27</sup>This uncertainty is also highlighted by the wide confidence intervals estimated in Bauer and Rudebusch (2011).

Event	Model	Decomposition from models			Ten-year Treasury yield
		Avg. target rate next ten years	Ten-year term premium	Residual	
I Nov. 25, 2008	Kim & Wright	-7	-17	3	<b>-21</b>
	Unconstrained AFNS	-17	-7	3	
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-2	-17	-2	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-2</b>	
II Dec. 1, 2008	Kim & Wright	-7	-17	2	<b>-22</b>
	Unconstrained AFNS	-23	-2	3	
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-1	-19	-2	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-10</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>-2</b>	
III Dec. 16, 2008	Kim & Wright	-7	-12	1	<b>-17</b>
	Unconstrained AFNS	-22	3	2	
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-1	-13	-3	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-7</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-3</b>	
IV Jan. 28, 2009	Kim & Wright	3	9	0	<b>12</b>
	Unconstrained AFNS	5	6	1	
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-7	14	5	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	
V Mar. 18, 2009	Kim & Wright	-16	-40	4	<b>-52</b>
	Unconstrained AFNS	-54	-5	7	
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-11	-27	-15	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-14</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-15</b>	
VI Aug. 12, 2009	Kim & Wright	1	3	2	<b>6</b>
	Unconstrained AFNS	7	-1	1	
	Indep.-factor AFNS	3	-3	6	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	
VII Sep. 23, 2009	Kim & Wright	-1	-1	0	<b>-2</b>
	Unconstrained AFNS	-3	2	0	
	Indep.-factor AFNS	2	-5	1	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
VIII Nov. 4, 2009	Kim & Wright	2	5	0	<b>7</b>
	Unconstrained AFNS	3	4	-1	
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-1	6	3	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	
Total net change	Kim & Wright	-31	-71	13	<b>-89</b>
	Unconstrained AFNS	-104	0	16	
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-18	-64	-7	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-53</b>	<b>-29</b>	<b>-7</b>	

Table 8: **Decomposition of Responses of Ten-Year U.S. Treasury Yield.**

The decomposition of responses of the ten-year U.S. Treasury yield on eight LSAP announcement dates into changes in (i) the average expected target rate over the next ten years, (ii) the ten-year term premium, and (iii) the unexplained residual based on empirical DTSMs of U.S. Treasury yields. All changes are measured in basis points.

term premium.<sup>28</sup> Importantly, though, the definition of the term premium in Equation (1) requires a conditional forecast of future short rates and since, based on Table 2, our preferred

<sup>28</sup>Note that this is an extreme interpretation of the decomposition from the KW model as the changes in policy expectations are minimized by the unexplained residual. At the other extreme, there would be a 35/65 split between the policy expectations and term premium components.

AFNS model has delivered the most accurate real-time forecasts of future short rates in the past, we choose to focus on that model in the remainder of this section. Thus, using the preferred AFNS model, one key result is that the cumulative net decline in the expectations component of the 10-year yield fell by 53 basis points. That is, almost 60 percent of the total change in the ten-year Treasury yield following the eight LSAP announcements is explained by declines in the expected future target rates. Declines in term premiums only account for about a third of the yield change (29 basis points). Similarly, Bauer and Rudebusch (2011), using a bias-corrected estimate of the term premium, report that about 50 percent of the ten-year yield change is accounted for by changes in the expectations component.

If we analyze the model-based decomposition from the preferred AFNS model in greater detail, we find that, for the initial four dates with LSAP related announcements (Nov. 25, 2008, Dec. 1, 2008, Dec. 16, 2008, and Jan. 28, 2009), a large part of the change in the observed yield curve is assigned by the model to shifts in expectations about future monetary policy rather than in the term premiums. Of the total decrease of 48 basis points in the ten-year yield on these four dates, 31 basis points are explained by declines in policy expectations, while declines in term premiums only account for 16 basis points. Thus, two-thirds of the decrease can be attributed to declines in expectations about future monetary policy on these dates. For the LSAP announcement on March 18, 2009, in which Treasury security purchases were actually introduced, the main part of the decline in bond yields was driven by declines in the term premiums rather than declines in policy expectations. As a consequence, we also see significant declines in the Treasury-OIS spread at all maturities on this day. Finally, for the remaining three LSAP announcement dates, the responses were more modest but characterized by clearly distinct reactions in the two components. Policy expectations were depressed, while term premiums increased as the Fed's Treasury bond purchases started to come to a completion. Consistent with these results, there is a uniform increase in the Treasury-OIS spread in the one- to ten-year maturity range on all three announcement dates.

Our preferred AFNS model also allows us to study the response of forward rates. The net response of the fitted forward rate curve as well as its decomposition into forecasted future instantaneous spot rates and instantaneous forward term premiums is shown in Figure 4. Not surprisingly, policy expectations in the medium-term two to three years ahead reacted the most to the LSAP announcements, while the ten-year-ahead spot rate expectations declined much less, even though they still declined by a total of 27 basis points. Term premiums declined at all horizons, but more so at the long end of the yield curve that benefits the most when short- and medium-term policy uncertainty is reduced.

To summarize our findings for the United States, the key conclusion is that changes in policy expectations appear to have played a very important role in the reaction of U.S.

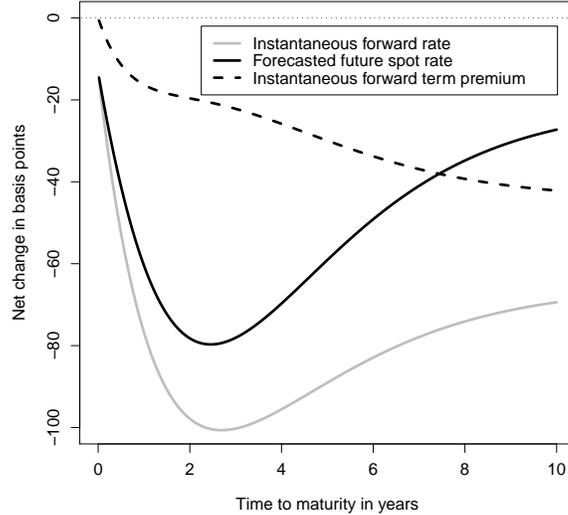


Figure 4: **Decomposition of Net Response of U.S. Treasury Forward Rates.**

Illustration of the decomposition of the net response of instantaneous U.S. Treasury forward rates to eight LSAP announcements into (i) forecasted future instantaneous spot rates and (ii) instantaneous forward term premiums based on the preferred AFNS model of U.S. Treasury yields.

Treasury yields on the key announcement dates in the Fed’s first LSAP program.

## 4 Analysis of the U.K. Experience

In this section, we estimate the effect of the Bank of England’s QE announcements on expected short-term interest rates and term premiums. We first describe our empirical affine models for U.K. gilt yields and then provide quantitative results from an event study.

### 4.1 U.K. Empirical Yield Curve Models

Again, we construct a preferred DTSM with restrictions that arguably reduce the small-sample estimation bias. Our specific AFNS models are estimated using daily data on U.K. zero-coupon gilt yields with the same eight maturities used in the U.S. analysis: three months, six months, one year, two years, three years, five years, seven years, and ten years.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup>While the U.S. LSAP program focused on purchases of debt with maturities of five to ten years, the U.K. QE program purchased a significant amount of debt with a maturity of more than ten years. However, as in much DTSM analysis, we focus on the yields with a maturity of at most ten years, in part because these appear to be economically the most relevant ones. The U.K. data are available at [www.bankofengland.co.uk/statistics/yieldcurve/index.htm](http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/statistics/yieldcurve/index.htm)

Alternative Specifications	Goodness-of-fit statistics				
	$\log L$	$k$	$p$ -value	AIC	BIC
(1) Unrestricted $K^P$	293,450	24	n.a.	-586,853	-586,690
(2) $\kappa_{13}^P = 0$	293,450	23	1.0000	-586,855	-586,699
(3) $\kappa_{13}^P = \kappa_{32}^P = 0$	293,450	22	0.6547	-586,857	-586,708
(4) $\kappa_{13}^P = \kappa_{32}^P = \kappa_{12}^P = 0$	293,450	21	0.5271	-586,858	-586,716
(5) $\kappa_{13}^P = \dots = \kappa_{31}^P = 0$	293,450	20	0.3711	-586,860	-586,724
(6) $\kappa_{13}^P = \dots = \kappa_{21}^P = 0$	293,449	19	0.2733	<b>-586,860</b>	-586,731
(7) $\kappa_{13}^P = \dots = \kappa_{23}^P = 0$	293,446	18	0.0201	-586,857	<b>-586,735</b>

Table 9: **Evaluation of Alternative Specifications of the AFNS Model of U.K. Gilt Yields.**

There are seven alternative estimated specifications of the AFNS model of U.K. gilt yields with the unrestricted 3-by-3  $K^P$  matrix being the most flexible. Each specification is listed with its maximum log likelihood value ( $\log L$ ), number of parameters ( $k$ ), the  $p$ -value from a likelihood ratio test of the hypothesis that it differs from the specification above with one more free parameter, and the information criteria (AIC and BIC). The sample is daily from January 2, 1985 to December 31, 2010, a total of 6,535 observations.

To select the best fitting specification of the AFNS model's real-world dynamics, we proceed as in the U.S. analysis, that is, we first limit the  $\Sigma$  volatility matrix to be diagonal. Second, we use a general-to-specific modeling strategy to determine the appropriate specification of the mean-reversion matrix  $K^P$  where the least significant parameter is eliminated in each step. As before, the final specification choice is based on the values of the Akaike and Bayes information criteria. The summary statistics of the model selection process are reported in Table 9. The Akaike information criterion is minimized by specification (6), which has a  $K^P$  matrix given by

$$K_{UK}^P = \begin{pmatrix} \kappa_{11}^P & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \kappa_{22}^P & \kappa_{23}^P \\ 0 & 0 & \kappa_{33}^P \end{pmatrix},$$

while the Bayes information criterion calls for an even more parsimonious, diagonal specification of  $K^P$ . In light of the individual significance of the marginal parameter,  $\kappa_{23}^P$ , we choose to rely on specification (6) as our preferred specification.

Finally, to mitigate the small-sample bias problem in the estimation of the parameters in  $K^P$ , we impose a unit-root property on the Nelson-Siegel level factor. Thus, in the end, our preferred specification of the AFNS model for the United Kingdom has  $P$ -dynamics given by

$$\begin{pmatrix} dL_t^{UK} \\ dS_t^{UK} \\ dC_t^{UK} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 10^{-7} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \kappa_{22}^P & \kappa_{23}^P \\ 0 & 0 & \kappa_{33}^P \end{pmatrix} \left[ \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \theta_2^P \\ \theta_3^P \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} L_t^{UK} \\ S_t^{UK} \\ C_t^{UK} \end{pmatrix} \right] dt + \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{11} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \sigma_{22} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \sigma_{33} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} dW_t^{1,P} \\ dW_t^{2,P} \\ dW_t^{3,P} \end{pmatrix}.$$

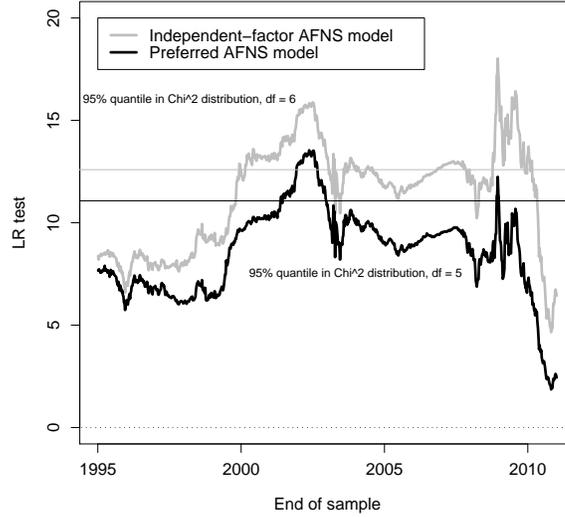


Figure 5: **LR Tests of Parameter Restrictions in U.K. AFNS Models.**

Illustration of the value of likelihood ratio tests of the restrictions imposed in the parsimonious AFNS models relative to the AFNS model with unrestricted  $K^P$  matrix and diagonal  $\Sigma$  matrix. The analysis covers weekly re-estimations of expanding samples from January 6, 1995 to December 31, 2010, a total of 835 observations, while the full data set used in the estimation covers the period from January 4, 1985 to December 31, 2010. The 95 percentiles in the relevant  $\chi^2$  distributions are shown with horizontal lines.

Likelihood ratio tests of the five parameter restrictions in the preferred  $K^P$  mean-reversion matrix relative to the AFNS model with unrestricted  $K^P$  matrix based on rolling weekly re-estimations since 1995 are shown in Figure 5.<sup>30</sup> The figure also shows the corresponding likelihood ratio tests for the more parsimonious model with diagonal  $K^P$  matrix favored by BIC. The LR tests indicate that the restrictions in our preferred AFNS model have been well supported by the data for most of the period, in particular during the 2009-2010 period of interest here, while the restrictions in the more parsimonious competitor are typically closer to the border of rejection. Still, for completeness, we consider both the unconstrained AFNS model and the parsimonious independent-factor AFNS model favored by the Bayes information criterion.<sup>31</sup>

To quantify the forecast performance of our various AFNS models, Table 10 reports the

<sup>30</sup>Here, we are testing the hypotheses  $\kappa_{12}^P = \kappa_{13}^P = \kappa_{21}^P = \kappa_{31}^P = \kappa_{32}^P = 0$  jointly.

<sup>31</sup>In unreported results, (i) we repeated the forecast exercise in Diebold and Li (2006), (ii) we estimated all eight admissible specifications of two-factor AFNS models (i.e., those with only a level and a slope factor) with and without unit-root properties imposed, (iii) we studied more flexible specifications of the volatility matrix within the AFNS model. None of these alternatives systematically outperformed our preferred AFNS model.

Model	One-year forecast		Two-year forecast	
	Mean	RMSE	Mean	RMSE
Random walk	38.59	137.86	77.36	196.84
Unconstrained AFNS model	-0.71	137.88	56.04	202.41
Indep.-factor AFNS model	52.58	136.05	113.41	202.80
Preferred AFNS model	33.22	131.99	81.41	201.31

Table 10: **Summary Statistics for Overnight Bank Rate Forecast Errors.**

Summary statistics of the forecast errors of the overnight target Bank Rate one and two years ahead. The forecasts are weekly starting on January 6, 1995, and running until December 31, 2010, for the one-year forecasts (835 forecasts), and until December 31, 2009, for the two-year forecasts (783 forecasts). All measurements are expressed in basis points.

summary statistics for weekly forecast errors of future Bank Rates one and two years ahead from our empirical AFNS models and from a random walk assumption. Our preferred U.K. AFNS model specification is comparable to the random walk for this sample.

As in our U.S. analysis, we provide a real-time analysis of bond investors' expectations via a sequence of estimations of the models with expanding samples. Our first estimation sample is from January 2, 1985, through January 2, 1995. Then we add one additional day of data and re-estimate the model and repeat. Using the estimated models at each date  $t$ , we calculate the average expected path for the overnight rate,  $\frac{1}{\tau} \int_t^{t+\tau} E_t^P[r_s^{UK}] ds$ , as well as the resulting term premium by subtracting that average from the bond yield  $y_t^{UK}(\tau)$ .

## 4.2 Response of U.K. Yields to Bond Purchase Announcements

Table 11 lists seven key announcements made by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) regarding its QE program.<sup>32</sup> The six first announcement dates are identical to those analyzed by JLST in their analysis of the response of U.K. gilt yields. The most recent date is the 2011 announcement of further purchases.

We start with a model-free inspection of the response of U.K. gilt yields on the key QE announcement dates. Cumulated over all events, Table 12 shows that long-term yields declined about 45 basis points on net, while short-term yields fell much less. As such, the one-day reaction in the U.K. data is smaller than, but qualitatively similar to, the reaction pattern observed in the U.S. data.<sup>33</sup>

To examine whether this response was mirrored in other interest rates, we also report

<sup>32</sup>As discussed in the MPC statement following its meeting on March 5, 2009, the MPC views 0.5 percent as the effective lower boundary for a Bank Rate that is consistent with a sustained smooth operation of related financial markets.

<sup>33</sup>Using a two-day window as in JLST, the reaction in gilt yields with two years or less to maturity remains about the same, while the response of the seven- and ten-year gilts goes above 80 basis points.

No.	Date	Event	Description
I	Feb. 11, 2009	February Inflation Report	Press conference and Inflation Report indicated that asset purchases were likely.
II	Mar. 5, 2009	MPC statement	The MPC announced that it would purchase £75 billion of assets over three months. Gilt purchases would be restricted to the 5-25 year maturity range.
III	May 7, 2009	MPC statement	The MPC announced that the amount of asset purchases would be extended by a further £50 billion to a total of £125 billion.
IV	Aug. 6, 2009	MPC statement	The MPC announced that the amount of asset purchases would be extended to £175 billion and that the buying range would be extended to include gilts with residual maturity greater than three years.
V	Nov. 5, 2009	MPC statement	The MPC announced that the asset purchases would be extended to £200 billion.
VI	Feb. 4, 2010	MPC statement	The MPC announced that the amount of asset purchases would be maintained at £200 billion.
VII	Oct 6, 2011	MPC statement	The MPC announced that the asset purchases would be extended to £275 billion.

Table 11: **Key Bank of England QE Announcements.**

the response of U.K. OIS rates in Table 13. On net, the long-maturity OIS rates exhibited only about a quarter of the decline registered in comparable gilt yields. This is the main piece of evidence that lead JLST to conclude that the U.K. QE program primarily worked through a market segmentation version of the portfolio balance channel. Here, we find further evidence of market segmentation in the response of U.K. LIBOR and swap interest rates to QE announcements. As shown in Table 14, the five- and ten-year swap interest rates experienced less than half of the declines registered in the comparable gilt yields.<sup>34</sup>

To go beyond this model-free analysis, we use our AFNS models of U.K. gilt yields to decompose the reaction in the ten-year U.K. gilt yield into changes in (i) a policy expectations component, (ii) a term premium component, and (iii) a residual component not accounted for by the models. The result of this decomposition on each of the seven QE announcement dates is reported in Table 15. According to the model decompositions, over all seven episodes, policy expectations *did* actually firm between 2 and 20 basis points depending on the model, but this firming was more than offset by declines in term premiums according to all three

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<sup>34</sup>We were unable to obtain U.K. corporate bond rate data comparable in quality to the U.S. data, in part because the U.K. corporate bond market is relatively less liquid.

Event	Maturity				
	6-month	1-year	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Feb. 11, 2009	<b>-16</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>-25</b>	<b>-20</b>
II Mar. 5, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-32</b>
III May 7, 2009	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
IV Aug. 6, 2009	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-7</b>
V Nov. 5, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>
VI Feb. 4, 2010	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-1</b>
VII Oct. 6, 2011	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Total net change	<b>-13</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>-44</b>	<b>-43</b>

Table 12: **Changes in U.K. Gilt Yields on QE Announcement Dates.**  
All changes are measured in basis points.

Event	Maturity				
	6-month	1-year	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Feb. 11, 2009	<b>-22</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-16</b>
II Mar. 5, 2009	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-17</b>
III May 7, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
IV Aug. 6, 2009	<b>-2</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>2</b>
V Nov. 5, 2009	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
VI Feb. 4, 2010	<b>-1</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-4</b>
VII Oct. 6, 2011	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Total net change	<b>-12</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-12</b>	<b>-8</b>

Table 13: **Changes in U.K. OIS Rates on QE Announcement Dates.**  
All changes are measured in basis points.

Event	Maturity			
	3-month	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Feb. 11, 2009	<b>-1</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-14</b>
II Mar. 5, 2009	<b>-3</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-21</b>
III May 7, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
IV Aug. 6, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>0</b>
V Nov. 5, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
VI Feb. 4, 2010	<b>0</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-4</b>
VII Oct. 6, 2011	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
Total net change	<b>-5</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>-16</b>

Table 14: **Changes in U.K. LIBOR and Swap Rates on QE Announcement Dates.** All changes are measured in basis points.

models.

Given the superior forecast performance of our preferred AFNS model, we focus on that model in the following more detailed analysis. On the first announcement date, the press conference following the release of the February 2009 Inflation Report during which it was first indicated that asset purchases by the Bank of England were likely, both policy expectations and term premiums declined by similar magnitudes. However, on the second announcement date when the first asset purchases were actually announced, there is a clear difference between the reaction of the two components, with policy expectations firming while term premiums declined. Similarly, on August 6, 2009, when the targeted maturity range was extended to encompass gilts with between three and five years remaining to maturity,<sup>35</sup> the difference in the reaction of the two components is equally stark, with policy expectations firming at all horizons offset by even bigger declines in term premiums, also of approximately the same magnitudes across all maturities. Finally, decomposing the response of the term structure of instantaneous forward rates into forecasted future spot rates and instantaneous forward term premiums, lead to similar conclusions. As shown in Figure 6, future forecasted spot rates increased, on net, by about 10-15 basis points at the two- to three-year forecast horizon, while

<sup>35</sup>Note that gilts with more than 25 years remaining to maturity also became eligible, but because we do not use those maturities in the model estimation, we do not analyze their reaction.

Event	Model	Decomposition from models			Ten-year gilt yield
		Avg. target rate next ten years	Ten-year term premium	Residual	
I Feb. 11, 2009	Unconstrained AFNS	-26	6	-1	<b>-20</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-10	-11	1	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-12</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>1</b>	
II Mar. 5, 2009	Unconstrained AFNS	-10	-24	2	<b>-32</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-9	-15	-7	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>17</b>	<b>-41</b>	<b>-7</b>	
III May 7, 2009	Unconstrained AFNS	12	-5	-1	<b>6</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	3	2	0	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	
IV Aug. 6, 2009	Unconstrained AFNS	-4	-4	1	<b>-7</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	10	-18	1	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>14</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>1</b>	
V Nov. 5, 2009	Unconstrained AFNS	5	3	-1	<b>7</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	1	6	0	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	
VI Feb. 4, 2010	Unconstrained AFNS	13	-14	0	<b>-1</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	4	-5	0	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>7</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>0</b>	
VI Oct. 6, 2011	Unconstrained AFNS	15	-12	1	<b>4</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	4	0	0	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	
Total net change	Unconstrained AFNS	6	-49	1	<b>-43</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	2	-40	-5	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>20</b>	<b>-58</b>	<b>-5</b>	

Table 15: **Decomposition of Responses of Ten-Year U.K. Gilt Yield.**

The table contains the decomposition of responses of the ten-year U.K. gilt yield on seven QE announcement dates into changes in (i) the average expected target rate the following ten years, (ii) the ten-year term premium, and (iii) the unexplained residual based on empirical DTSMs of U.K. gilt yields. All changes are measured in basis points.

the corresponding term premiums declined slightly more than 60 basis points to produce a net decline in the two- to three-year forward rates of 50 basis points.

## 5 Cross-Country Yield Responses

In this section, we examine the reactions of yields in one country to the policy announcements in another in order to further illuminate the LSAP/QE channels of operation. Announcements of bond purchases in one country could provide investors worldwide with information about the state of the global economy and thus have implications for the outlook for monetary policy in many countries. Alternatively, to the extent that policymakers generally face similar economic shocks, rely on similar economic models, and have similar policy objectives, such announcements could reveal something about the monetary policy reaction function in a

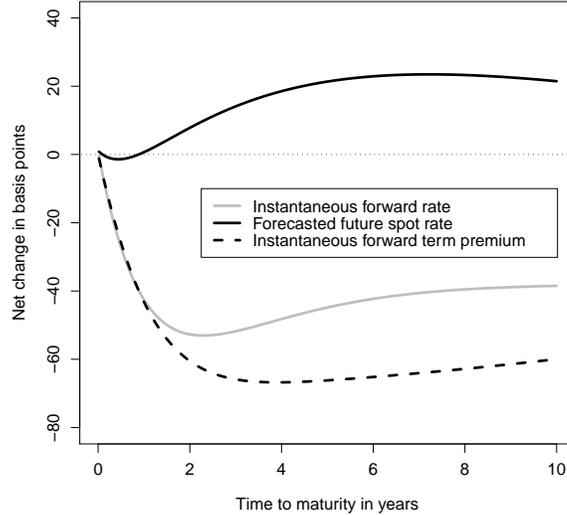


Figure 6: **Decomposition of Net Response of U.K. Gilt Forward Rates.**

Illustration of the decomposition of the net response of instantaneous U.K. gilt forward rates to seven QE announcements into (i) forecasted future instantaneous spot rates and (ii) instantaneous forward term premiums based on the preferred AFNS model of U.K. gilt yields.

variety of countries. For example, in a cross-country signaling channel, the announcement of a U.S. central bank bond purchase could be taken as news about a deepening global economic crisis and lead U.K. investors to revise down the path for expected future U.K. policy interest rates. That is, an expectation that the Fed will hold interest rates low for a longer duration could spill over and raise the probability of a similar action by the Bank of England. Of course, a portfolio balance channel could operate in the same fashion. Namely, the announcement of U.S. bond purchases could raise the probability of U.K. bond purchases, and the associated expected reduction in U.K. bond supply could lower U.K. term premiums.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the extension of our analysis to consider cross-country effects could potentially provide a useful expansion of our limited sample of LSAP and QE announcement events. In particular, we focus on the response of U.K. yields to the first four U.S. LSAP announcements that were made before the U.K.’s own QE program was introduced. These announcements could boost investors’ expectations of easier future U.K. monetary policy, either in the form of a lower expected path for the Bank Rate or of a more likely implementation of a similar U.K. bond purchase program. A strong signaling effect from the U.S. policy announcements should affect all U.K. yields in much the same way as they affected U.S. interest rates for the

<sup>36</sup>A direct portfolio balance effect of U.S. purchases on U.K. term premia—that is, holding fixed the expected Bank of England balance sheet—seems remote given the size of global fixed-income markets.

Event	Maturity				
	6-month	1-year	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Nov. 25, 2008	<b>-8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-16</b>
II Dec. 1, 2008	<b>-26</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-42</b>	<b>-33</b>	<b>-23</b>
III Dec. 16, 2008	<b>-15</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>-24</b>
IV Jan. 28, 2009	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>2</b>
Total net change	<b>-49</b>	<b>-51</b>	<b>-56</b>	<b>-62</b>	<b>-61</b>

Table 16: **Changes in U.K. Gilt Yields on U.S. LSAP Announcement Dates Prior to U.K. QE Program.**

All changes are measured in basis points.

reasons outlined above. Alternatively, the greater likelihood of a U.K. bond purchase program coupled with investors understanding the market segmentation and portfolio balance channel would imply a very modest U.K. yield response outside of gilts.

As in the previous sections, we start with a model-free inspection of the observed data. Table 16 reports the response of U.K. gilt yields to the four first U.S. LSAP announcements. We use a two-day response window because the U.S. announcements occurred after the market close in London. The long-term gilt yields declined slightly more than 60 basis points, while short-term gilt yields declined about 50 basis points. This response is consistent with a signalling spillover effect on U.K. markets from the U.S. policy actions. Further support for this interpretation is provided in Tables 17 and 18, which report the response of U.K. OIS, LIBOR, and swap rates to the four first U.S. LSAP announcements. These long-term U.K. rates declined even more than gilt yields, about 70 to 80 basis points. The peak responses are in the one- to five-year contracts, which would naturally decline the most if a prolonged period of low interest rates was expected to be about to start.

Again, to go beyond the observable yield responses, we rely on our empirical DTSMs to decompose the response of the ten-year U.K. gilt yield to these U.S. LSAP announcements into separate policy expectations and term premium components as well as unexplained residuals. The results of these decompositions are reported in Table 19. On net, all three models agree that declines in policy expectations represented two-thirds or more of the declines observed in the ten-year gilt yield in response to these announcements. This suggests the presence of a strong signaling effect that affected not just U.S. yields, but also overseas markets.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup>Neely (2012) also reports strong cross-country government bond yield responses in Australia, Canada,

Event	Maturity				
	6-month	1-year	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Nov. 25, 2008	<b>-6</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>-15</b>
II Dec. 1, 2008	<b>-32</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-30</b>
III Dec. 16, 2008	<b>-33</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>-27</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>-18</b>
IV Jan. 28, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-5</b>
Total net change	<b>-71</b>	<b>-80</b>	<b>-81</b>	<b>-72</b>	<b>-68</b>

Table 17: **Changes in U.K. OIS Rates on U.S. LSAP Announcement Dates Prior to U.K. QE Program.**

All changes are measured in basis points.

Event	Maturity			
	3-month	2-year	5-year	10-year
I Nov. 25, 2008	<b>-4</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>-16</b>
II Dec. 1, 2008	<b>-7</b>	<b>-38</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>-29</b>
III Dec. 12, 2008	<b>-8</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-17</b>
IV Jan. 28, 2009	<b>0</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-2</b>
Total net change	<b>-19</b>	<b>-74</b>	<b>-75</b>	<b>-64</b>

Table 18: **Changes in U.K. LIBOR and Swap Rates on U.S. LSAP Announcement Dates Prior to U.K. QE Program.**

All changes are measured in basis points.

To summarize, there is essentially no evidence of a portfolio balance or market segmentation channel in the U.K. response to these U.S. LSAP announcements (even though U.K. market stress was likely more intense than later on when the U.K. QE program was announced). That is, the news of Fed bond purchases seemed to signal a longer period of low U.K. short-term interest rates rather than a future program of U.K. QE and reduced U.K.

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Germany, Japan, and the U.K. to these U.S. announcements. Furthermore, he presents intraday data on government bond futures prices and foreign exchange rates that indicate that the market response was complete within a few hours for the five first U.S. LSAP announcements that he analyzes. In addition to supporting the usage of one-day response windows, it suggests that the overseas effects were not likely to reflect other news.

Event	Model	Decomposition from models			Ten-year gilt yield
		Avg. target rate next ten years	Ten-year term premium	Residual	
I Nov. 25, 2008	Unconstrained AFNS	3	-25	6	<b>-16</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-32	15	1	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>6</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>1</b>	
II Dec. 1, 2008	Unconstrained AFNS	-40	18	-2	<b>-23</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-8	-13	-3	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-3</b>	
III Dec. 16, 2008	Unconstrained AFNS	-25	1	0	<b>-24</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-15	-8	-1	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-19</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-1</b>	
IV Jan. 28, 2009	Unconstrained AFNS	3	0	0	<b>2</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	5	-5	3	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	
Total net change	Unconstrained AFNS	-59	-5	4	<b>-61</b>
	Indep.-factor AFNS	-50	-11	1	
	Preferred AFNS	<b>-44</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>1</b>	

Table 19: **Decomposition of Responses of Ten-Year U.K. Gilt Yield on U.S. LSAP Announcement Dates Prior to U.K. QE Program.**

The table contains the decomposition of two-day responses of the ten-year U.K. gilt yield on the four U.S. LSAP announcement dates that occurred prior to the introduction of the U.K. QE program. The gilt yield changes are decomposed into (i) the average expected target rate the following ten years, (ii) the ten-year term premium, and (iii) the unexplained residual based on empirical DTSMs of U.K. gilt yields. All changes are measured in basis points.

bond supply. (Alternatively, U.K. bond investors may have misjudged the future effects of a prospective U.K. QE program.) Hence, we see no reason why a market-wide signaling effect could not have occurred in response to the U.K. QE announcements, if investors had interpreted it that way.

For symmetry, we also examined the response of U.S. interest rates to the U.K. QE announcements. Perhaps not too surprisingly, Treasury and swap market yields and our model decompositions of the ten-year U.S. Treasury yield generally indicated little reaction to the U.K. QE announcements and only modest declines in U.S. term premiums.<sup>38</sup> This is consistent with our earlier results that the response to the U.K. QE announcements was concentrated in the gilt market.

## 6 Conclusion

The existing literature on the response of fixed-income markets to the Federal Reserve's first LSAP program and the Bank of England's QE program suggests a negative effect of between

<sup>38</sup>U.S. yields did experience sizable movements on three dates, but that variation appears driven by non-U.K. related news. Complete results are available from the authors.

50 and 100 basis points on 10-year yields. To elaborate on these results, we used empirical DTSMs for each country to decompose the yield responses to key announcements regarding the bond purchase programs. For the United States, our results suggest that a key effect of the Fed's LSAP program was to lower policy expectations. In contrast, for the United Kingdom, yield declines following QE announcements appear to have been entirely driven by reductions in term premiums. Of course, as noted above and stressed in Bauer and Rudebusch (2011), the uncertainty regarding these conclusions is sizable.

The differences between the U.S. and U.K. reactions of the expectations and term premium components of longer-term yields to central bank bond purchases are notable—especially given the similar bond purchase amounts and rationales in the two countries. The contrasting channels of influence of the U.S. and U.K. unconventional policy can perhaps be traced to differences in policy communication and financial market structure. Specifically, with regard to communication, the Federal Reserve was clearly more willing to provide monetary policy forward guidance near the zero bound. For example, the FOMC statement released following its December 16, 2008, meeting noted that “the Committee anticipates that weak economic conditions are likely to warrant exceptionally low levels of the federal funds rate for some time.”<sup>39</sup> The FOMC announcements of bond purchases could have been interpreted as reinforcing this guidance and essentially providing a signal that the period of low funds rate levels was even longer. In contrast, forward-looking policy guidance on interest rates was absent in the U.K. MPC statements, and the signaling value of the QE program may have been commensurately diminished.<sup>40</sup> A separate reason for the differing importance of term premium components in the U.K and U.S. reactions of longer-term yields to bond purchase programs could perhaps be traced to the difference in financial market structure across the two countries. For the operation of a portfolio balance channel, the exact nature of investors' preferred habitats and limits on arbitrage crucially determine the magnitude of shifts in term premiums. U.S. government bond markets are widely considered more liquid than U.K. markets, and U.S. Treasury securities are held by a broader class of international investors. Therefore, the institutional nature of financial market structures and transactions may also play a role in explaining the different reactions across countries.

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<sup>39</sup>At the March 18, 2009, meeting, this timing language was modified to “for an extended period,” and later, specific dates were provided.

<sup>40</sup>The operation of the U.K. QE program was also implemented with less forward guidance with each step of the program intended to be completed in three months or less. In contrast, the U.S. LSAP program involved longer periods of purchases, on the order of nine months.

## Appendix: AFNS Model Estimation Methodology

We estimate the AFNS models by maximizing the likelihood function in the standard Kalman filter algorithm, which is an efficient and consistent estimator in this affine Gaussian setting (see Harvey, 1989). In the continuous-time formulation of the AFNS model, the conditional mean vector and the conditional covariance matrix are given by

$$\begin{aligned} E^P[X_T|\mathcal{F}_t] &= (I - \exp(-K^P \Delta t))\theta^P + \exp(-K^P \Delta t)X_t, \\ V^P[X_T|\mathcal{F}_t] &= \int_0^{\Delta t} e^{-K^P s} \Sigma \Sigma' e^{-(K^P)' s} ds, \end{aligned}$$

where  $\Delta t = T - t$ .

The state equation, which represents the factor dynamics under the  $P$ -measure, is given by

$$X_t = (I - \exp(-K^P \Delta t))\theta^P + \exp(-K^P \Delta t)X_{t-1} + \eta_t,$$

where  $\Delta t$  is the time between observations. The conditional covariance matrix for the shock terms is given by<sup>41</sup>

$$Q = \int_0^{\Delta t} e^{-K^P s} \Sigma \Sigma' e^{-(K^P)' s} ds.$$

The AFNS measurement equation is given by

$$y_t(\tau) = \tilde{A}(\tau) + \tilde{B}(\tau)' X_t + \varepsilon_t(\tau),$$

where  $\tilde{A}(\tau) = -\frac{1}{\tau}A(\tau)$  and  $\tilde{B}(\tau) = -\frac{1}{\tau}B(\tau)$  are as described in equation (2).

The error structure is assumed to be

$$\begin{pmatrix} \eta_t \\ \varepsilon_t \end{pmatrix} \sim N \left[ \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} Q & 0 \\ 0 & H \end{pmatrix} \right],$$

where  $H$  is a diagonal matrix

$$H = \begin{pmatrix} \sigma^2(\tau_1) & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & \sigma^2(\tau_N) \end{pmatrix}.$$

The linear least-squares optimality of the Kalman filter requires that the transition and mea-

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<sup>41</sup>In the estimation, we calculate the conditional and unconditional covariance matrices using the analytical solutions provided in Fisher and Gilles (1996).

surement errors be orthogonal to the initial state, i.e.,

$$E[f_0\eta_t'] = 0, \quad E[f_0\varepsilon_t'] = 0.$$

Finally, parameter standard deviations are calculated as

$$\Sigma(\hat{\psi}) = \frac{1}{T} \left[ \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \frac{\partial \log l_t(\hat{\psi})}{\partial \psi} \frac{\partial \log l_t(\hat{\psi})'}{\partial \psi} \right]^{-1},$$

where  $\hat{\psi}$  denotes the estimated model parameter set.

Normally, we start the Kalman filter using the unconditional distribution of the state variables. However, when we impose a unit-root property on the Nelson-Siegel level factor, the joint dynamics of the state variables are no longer stationary. By implication, we cannot start the Kalman filter at the unconditional distribution. Instead, we follow Duffee (1999) and derive a distribution for the starting point of the Kalman filter based on the yields observed at the first data point in each sample. Specifically, the model states that zero-coupon yields are given by

$$y_t = \tilde{A} + \tilde{B}X_t + \varepsilon_t, \quad \varepsilon_t \sim N(0, H).$$

For the first set of observations, this equation reads

$$y_1 = \tilde{A} + \tilde{B}\tilde{X}_0 + \tilde{\varepsilon}_0 \iff \tilde{B}\tilde{X}_0 = y_1 - \tilde{A} - \tilde{\varepsilon}_0.$$

Now, multiply from the left on both sides by  $\tilde{B}'$  to obtain

$$\tilde{B}'\tilde{B}\tilde{X}_0 = \tilde{B}'(y_1 - \tilde{A}) - \tilde{B}'\tilde{\varepsilon}_0.$$

We can then isolate  $\tilde{X}_0$  by using the inverse of  $\tilde{B}'\tilde{B}$

$$\tilde{X}_0 = (\tilde{B}'\tilde{B})^{-1}\tilde{B}'(y_1 - \tilde{A}) - (\tilde{B}'\tilde{B})^{-1}\tilde{B}'\tilde{\varepsilon}_0.$$

Here,  $\tilde{\varepsilon}_0$  is normally distributed with a mean of zero and a variance matrix equal to  $H$ . By implication,  $\tilde{X}_0$  follows a normal distribution with the following properties

$$\tilde{X}_0 \sim N((\tilde{B}'\tilde{B})^{-1}\tilde{B}'(y_1 - \tilde{A}), (\tilde{B}'\tilde{B})^{-1}\tilde{B}'H\tilde{B}(\tilde{B}'\tilde{B})^{-1}).$$

Thus, this is the normal distribution used to start the Kalman filter when unit-root properties are imposed.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Note that this approach generalizes to estimation of non-Gaussian affine models where nonstationarity is

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required. See Duffee (1999) for an example.

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