

Realized Volatility Forecasting with ML

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- ① Motivation
- ② Literature Review
- ③ Methodology
- ④ Empirical Findings
- ⑤ Conclusion
- ⑥ References

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RV: a volatility measure using high-frequency data

$$RV_t = \sum_{i=1}^M r_{t,i}^2$$

where $r_{t,i}$ is the log return over the i th intraday period on day t .

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- Machine learning: What potential? [KX⁺23]
 - Presence of large conditioning panel information sets
 - **Ambiguous functional forms**

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- **A:** Apply and compare the performance of each of its methods in familiar empirical problems. [GKX20]
- **Objective:** Compare the out-of-sample predictive performance of machine learning models against structural time-series econometric models

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"A good volatility model must be able to forecast volatility." [EP07]

- OLS-based models: HAR [Cor09], MIDAS [GSCV06], SHAR [PS15], HARQ [BPQ16], HEXP [BHHP18]
- Attempts using ML models: LASSO [AK16], random forest [LD18], feed-forward neural networks (FFNN) and recurrent neural networks (RNN) [Buc20], convolutional neural networks (CNN) [RBH22]
- Comparative analysis: [RP20], [LT22], [CSV23], [ZZCQ24]
- Robust realized measures: [BNS06, ZMAS05, Zha06, BNHLS08, PV09, ADS12, DX21],
- $ML \cap (Economics \cup Finance)$: [A⁺18, GKX20, GKX22, KMZ24, CPZ24]

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Model Overview

Econometrics	Machine Learning
HAR	LASSO
MIDAS	Principal Component Regression (PCR)
SHAR	Random Forest (RF)
HARQ	Gradient Boosting Regression Tree (GBRT)
HEXP	Feed-forward Neural Networks (FFNN)

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Quadratic Variation Theory

Assume the log price p_t within the active part of a trading day t follows a continuous semimartingale of the form:

$$p_t = \int_{t-1}^t \mu_s ds + \int_{t-1}^t \sigma_s dW_s$$

The quadratic variation (QV) of this log-price process, after some derivation, is:

$$QV_t = [p, p]_t = \int_{t-1}^t \sigma_s^2 ds$$

The true unobservable volatility construct that integrates the instantaneous volatility over time is called integrated volatility (IV):

$$IV_t = \int_{t-1}^t \sigma_s^2 ds$$

$QV_t = IV_t$ (without jumps)! Heads-up: Such nice coincidence doesn't happen in general e.g. jump-diffusion process.)

Consistency & Asymptotic Theory [BNS02]

Since we can only observe intraday price observations in discrete time...

$$RV_t = \sum_{i=1}^M r_{t,i}^2 \xrightarrow{P} IV_t$$

Moreover, the semimartingale theory provides CLT:

$$\sqrt{M} \left(\frac{RV_t - IV_t}{\sqrt{2IQ_t}} \right) \xrightarrow{d} N(0, 1)$$

where $IQ_t = \int_{t-1}^t \sigma_s^4 ds$ denotes *integrated quarticity*, which is independent of the limiting Gaussian distribution and can be consistently estimated by the *realized quarticity* (RQ) statistic:

$$RQ_t = \frac{M}{3} \sum_{i=1}^M r_{t,i}^4 \xrightarrow{P} IQ_t$$

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HAR [Cor09]

$$RV_t = \beta_0 + \beta_d RV_{t-1}^d + \beta_w RV_{t-1}^w + \beta_m RV_{t-1}^m + \beta_q RV_{t-1}^q + \epsilon_t$$

where $RV_{t-1}^l = \frac{1}{l} \sum_{i=1}^l RV_{t-i}$, $l = \{1, 5, 22, 63\}$ is the simple average of daily RVs over different lag horizons (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, respectively), and $\{\epsilon_t\}_t$ is a zero mean innovation process.

- Simple, parsimonious, easy to implement
- Serve as the benchmark model

MIDAS [GSCV06]

$$RV_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MIDAS_{t-1} + \epsilon_t,$$

$$MIDAS_t = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^L a_i} \sum_{i=0}^L a_{i+1} RV_{t-i}$$

$$a_i = \left(\frac{i}{L}\right)^{\theta_1-1} \left(1 - \frac{i}{L}\right)^{\theta_2-1} \frac{\Gamma(\theta_1 + \theta_2)}{\Gamma(\theta_1)\Gamma(\theta_2)}, i = 1, \dots, L$$

- Smoothly weighted moving average of lagged daily RVs
- Parametrize the coefficients/weights in a beta polynomial form

SHAR [PS15]

$$\begin{aligned}RV_t &= \beta_0 + \beta_d^+ RS_{t-1}^{d+} + \beta_d^- RS_{t-1}^{d-} \\&\quad + \beta_w RV_{t-1}^w + \beta_m RV_{t-1}^m + \beta_q RV_{t-1}^q + \epsilon_t, \\RS_t^+ &= \sum_{i=1}^M r_{t,i}^2 \mathbb{I}\{r_{t,i} > 0\}, RS_t^- = \sum_{i=1}^M r_{t,i}^2 \mathbb{I}\{r_{t,i} < 0\}.\end{aligned}$$

- Leverage realized semivariance (RS) estimator by [BNKS08]
- [PS15] found that the negative RS has more predictive power than its positive counterpart.

HARQ [BPQ16]

$$RV_t = IV_t + \eta_t, \eta_t \sim N(0, 2\Delta IQ_t)$$

$$RV_t = \beta_0 + (\beta_d + \phi_d \sqrt{RQ_{t-1}^d})RV_{t-1}^d + (\beta_w + \phi_w \sqrt{RQ_{t-1}^w})RV_{t-1}^w \\ + (\beta_m + \phi_m \sqrt{RQ_{t-1}^m})RV_{t-1}^m + (\beta_q + \phi_q \sqrt{RQ_{t-1}^q})RV_{t-1}^q + \epsilon_t$$

- Exploit the heteroskedasticity in the measurement error η_t
- Compensate for uncertainty in RV measurements: low variance in measurement errors offers a stronger predictive signal

HEXP [BHHP18]

$$RV_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Exp}RV_{t-1}^1 + \beta_5 \text{Exp}RV_{t-1}^5 + \beta_{25} \text{Exp}RV_{t-1}^{25} \\ + \beta_{125} \text{Exp}RV_{t-1}^{125} + \epsilon_t,$$

$$\text{Exp}RV_t^{\text{CoM}(\lambda)} = \sum_{i=1}^{500} \frac{e^{-i\lambda}}{e^{-\lambda} + e^{-2\lambda} + \dots + e^{-500\lambda}} RV_{t-i+1}$$

$$\text{CoM}(\lambda) = \frac{\sum_{t=0}^{\infty} e^{-\lambda t} t}{\sum_{t=0}^{\infty} e^{-\lambda t}} = \frac{e^{-\lambda}}{1 - e^{-\lambda}}$$

- CoM Center of Mass, defined as the weighted average period for the lags used; λ decay rate
- Use a mixture of exponentially weighted moving averages (EWMA) of lagged daily RVs as regressors

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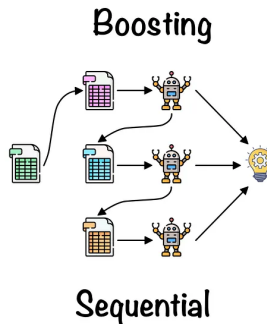
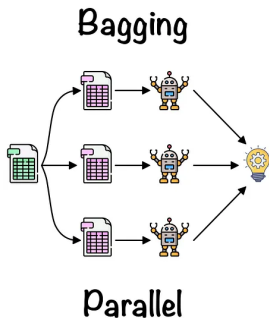
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Linear Models: LASSO & PCR

- LASSO: sparsity, variable selection
- PCR: dimension reduction, but forms PCs before the forecasting step

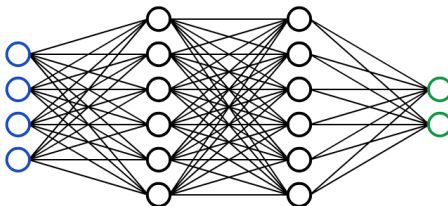
Tree-based Models: RF & GBRT

- RF (bagging): averaged over forecasts of separate trees trained on bootstrapped samples
- GBRT (boosting): each tree fitted on the residual errors of the preceding tree, correcting what earlier predictors don't capture



Feed-forward Neural Networks

- "Universal approximators" with layered structure
- Require large-scale training data and compute with engineering optimization and tuning tricks to success



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Data and Variables

Data:

- 2 universes: 1000 S&P 500 stocks and 10014 U.S. stocks
- Sample period: January 1996 - December 2022 (27 years)
- Data source:
 - 1-min price observations from TAQ
 - options implied volatility data from OptionMetrics
 - overnight return and trading volume data from CRSP
- Collect call and put options with maturities ranging from 1, 2, 3 months and absolute delta equal to 0.1, 0.15, ..., 0.9

Features & Response Variable:

- 5-minute sampling frequency for intraday returns
- 122 features in total (15 realized + 102 implied + 4 price volume + 1 intercept)
- Response Variable: next-day RV (in logs)

Response Variable - S&P 500

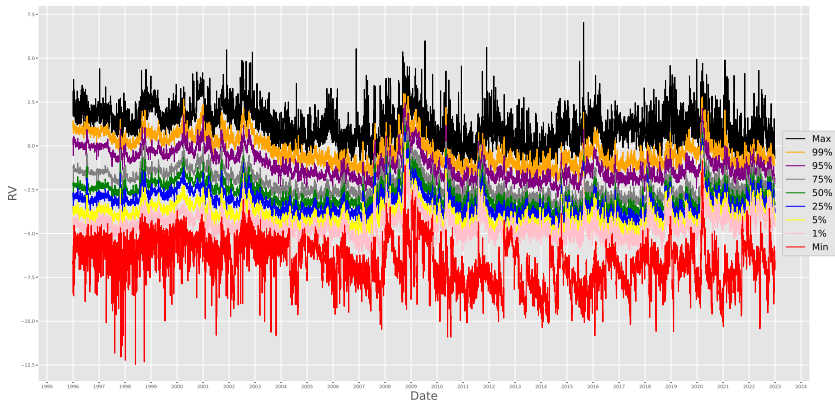


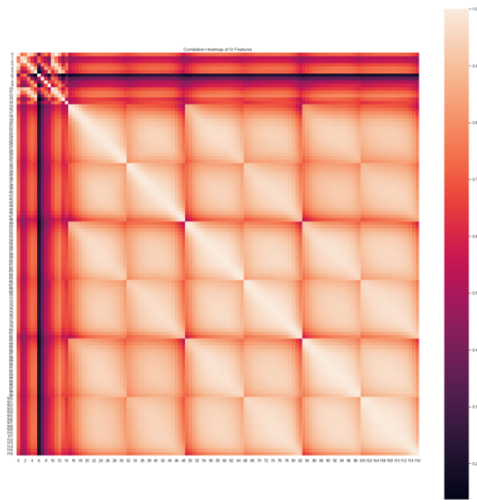
Figure 1: maximum, minimum, 99th, 95th, 75th, 50th, 25th, 5th, and 1st percentiles of daily RV in log-scale for stocks in the S&P 500 universe from 1996 to 2022.

Response Variable - U.S. Stocks



Figure 2: maximum, minimum, 99th, 95th, 75th, 50th, 25th, 5th, and 1st percentiles of daily RV in log-scale for stocks in the U.S. stock universe from 1996 to 2022.

Feature Correlation Heatmap



Training Scheme & Evaluation Metrics

Training scheme:

- Rolling window: 5 training years + 1 validation year + 1 test year
- Panel/pooled fitting

Evaluation metrics:

- R^2 : $1 - \frac{\sum_{i,t} (RV_{i,t} - \widehat{RV}_{i,t}^m)^2}{\sum_{i,t} (RV_{i,t} - \widehat{RV}_{i,t}^{\text{benchmark}})^2}$,

- Mean squared error (MSE):

$$\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{1}{\#\mathcal{T}_{\text{test}}} \sum_{t \in \mathcal{T}_{\text{test}}} (RV_{i,t} - \widehat{RV}_{i,t})^2$$

- Quasi-likelihood (QLIKE):

$$\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{1}{\#\mathcal{T}_{\text{test}}} \sum_{t \in \mathcal{T}_{\text{test}}} \left[\frac{\exp(RV_{i,t})}{\exp(\widehat{RV}_{i,t})} - (RV_{i,t} - \widehat{RV}_{i,t}) - 1 \right]$$

OOS Performance - S&P 500 (* = 99.99th percentile winsorized)

Model	R2	MSE	MSE*	QLike	QLike*
HAR	0.7052	0.3970	0.3962	0.4039	0.3737
MIDAS	0.6995	0.4047	0.4039	0.4018	0.3729
SHAR	0.7057	0.3963	0.3955	0.4029	0.3735
HARQ	0.7187	0.3787	0.3780	0.3912	0.3601
HEXP	0.7071	0.3944	0.3936	0.4015	0.3721
OLSRM	0.7201	0.3768	0.3761	0.3880	0.3583
OLSRM4	0.7202	0.3768	0.3761	0.3874	0.3578
OLSIV	0.6096	0.5257	0.5248	0.4471	0.4128
OLSALL	0.7276	0.3668	0.3660	0.3673	0.3366
LASSO	0.7276	0.3668	0.3661	0.3667	0.3368
PCR	0.7216	0.3748	0.3740	0.3734	0.3416
RF	0.7204	0.3765	0.3758	0.3681	0.3373
GBRT	0.7068	0.3948	0.3941	0.3854	0.3567
NN	0.7321	0.3607	0.3599	0.3576	0.3245

Table 1: OOS Forecasting Performance, S&P 500 Stocks

OOS Performance - U.S. stocks

Model	R2	MSE	MSE*	QLike	QLike*
HAR	0.7849	0.5708	0.5680	1.5628	0.4886
MIDAS	0.7815	0.5798	0.5771	1.4024	0.4914
SHAR	0.7850	0.5706	0.5678	1.6462	0.4883
HARQ	0.7884	0.5615	0.5587	1.6487	0.4864
HEXP	0.7863	0.5670	0.5643	1.4541	0.4827
OLSRM	0.7897	0.5580	0.5552	1.7167	0.4819
OLSRM4	0.7898	0.5578	0.5550	1.6645	0.4817
OLSIV	0.5109	1.2980	1.2951	1.4857	1.0282
OLSALL	0.7906	0.5557	0.5529	1.5204	0.4758
LASSO	0.7904	0.5563	0.5535	1.5025	0.4758
PCR	0.7861	0.5675	0.5647	1.3597	0.4781
RF	0.7905	0.5561	0.5533	1.2245	0.4594
GBRT	0.7756	0.5954	0.5926	1.1476	0.4855
NN	0.7954	0.5428	0.5400	1.4290	0.4509

Table 2: OOS Forecasting Performance, US Stocks

OLS Individual v.s. Pooled Fit - S&P 500

Model	R ²		MSE*		QLike*	
	Individual	Pooled	Individual	Pooled	Individual	Pooled
HAR	0.6833	0.7052	0.4253	0.3962	0.4305	0.3737
MIDAS	0.6907	0.6995	0.4158	0.4039	0.3798	0.3729
SHAR	0.6834	0.7057	0.4252	0.3955	0.4335	0.3735
HARQ	0.6775	0.7187	0.4332	0.3780	0.5024	0.3601
HEXP	0.6693	0.7071	0.4442	0.3936	0.4701	0.3721
OLSRM	0.6734	0.7201	0.4383	0.3761	0.4894	0.3583
OLSRM4	0.6654	0.7202	0.4492	0.3761	0.5145	0.3578
OLSIV	0.4551	0.6096	0.7317	0.5248	0.8039	0.4128
OLSALL	0.5514	0.7276	0.6019	0.3660	0.7744	0.3366

Table 3: Individual vs Pooled Fit, S&P 500 Stocks

OLS Individual v.s. Pooled Fit - U.S. stocks

Model	R2		MSE*		QLike*	
	Individual	Pooled	Individual	Pooled	Individual	Pooled
HAR	0.6991	0.7849	0.7953	0.5680	6.1815	0.4886
MIDAS	0.7434	0.7815	0.6777	0.5771	0.6883	0.4914
SHAR	0.6992	0.7850	0.7947	0.5678	5.8682	0.4883
HARQ	0.6379	0.7884	0.9581	0.5587	26.9071	0.4864
HEXP	0.6427	0.7863	0.9452	0.5643	22.3139	0.4827
OLSRM	0.6032	0.7897	1.0501	0.5552	32.1466	0.4819
OLSRM4	0.5933	0.7898	1.0762	0.5550	36.0054	0.4817
OLSIV	0.3112	0.5109	1.8256	1.2951	45.2375	1.0282
OLSALL	0.4051	0.7906	1.5765	0.5529	64.0068	0.4758

Table 4: Individual vs Pooled Fit, U.S. Stocks

Diebold-Mariano (DM) Test - S&P 500

Model	HAR	MIDAS	SHAR	HARQ	HEXP	OLSRM	OLSRM4	OLSIV	OLSALL	LA
MIDAS	-50.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SHAR	28.0	55.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
HARQ	135.5	153.6	131.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	
HEXP	43.5	72.5	28.5	-109.6	-	-	-	-	-	
OLSRM	141.6	169.0	142.6	34.5	126.7	-	-	-	-	
OLSRM4	139.9	167.4	140.9	33.2	125.1	1.3	-	-	-	
OLSIV	-27.4	-25.8	-27.6	-31.4	-28.0	-31.8	-31.8	-	-	
OLSALL	114.8	145.3	113.4	59.3	107.8	52.1	52.3	34.6	-	
LASSO	112.8	141.4	111.2	56.7	106.3	49.0	48.9	34.6	-1.0	
PCR	81.8	110.2	79.4	16.1	76.0	8.5	8.4	32.9	-82.8	-9
RF	83.0	112.1	80.0	10.2	72.4	1.4	1.2	32.0	-43.6	-4
GBRT	4.0	18.0	2.7	-30.5	-0.9	-34.3	-34.4	28.9	-60.3	-6
NN	131.2	159.7	129.2	84.1	120.7	74.7	73.7	35.4	28.6	2

Table 5: Diebold-Mariano Test, S&P 500 Stocks

Diebold-Mariano (DM) Test - U.S. Stocks

Model	HAR	MIDAS	SHAR	HARQ	HEXP	OLSRM	OLSRM4	OLSIV	OLSALL	LA
MIDAS	-96.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SHAR	19.2	99.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HARQ	138.8	197.1	137.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HEXP	109.5	145.9	96.4	-75.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
OLSRM	167.5	242.2	170.8	100.2	125.8	-	-	-	-	-
OLSRM4	143.9	218.4	145.1	61.7	106.8	4.4	-	-	-	-
OLSIV	-103.9	-102.7	-104.0	-105.4	-104.4	-105.9	-105.9	-	-	-
OLSALL	156.0	236.7	156.8	89.1	121.3	40.2	55.2	106.5	-	-
LASSO	177.5	248.7	178.6	101.6	139.3	38.5	24.2	106.5	-11.7	-
PCR	55.3	119.0	50.4	-66.3	-8.1	-105.6	-95.7	104.8	-124.9	-14
RF	80.6	135.8	79.2	30.0	61.4	10.9	9.5	106.6	-1.9	1
GBRT	-41.2	-25.9	-41.5	-56.7	-47.6	-62.6	-62.9	104.7	-67.5	-6
NN	197.4	278.7	194.9	134.4	176.5	110.1	108.7	108.1	101.5	10

Table 6: Diebold-Mariano Test, U.S. Stocks

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Conclusion & Discussion

Empirical Conclusion: Shallow neural networks deliver superior out-of-sample predictive performance compared to existing OLS-based regression models.

Discussion:

- Inclusion of jumps and microstructure noise consideration
- How to impose economic structure based on domain knowledge of economic and finance theory
- Economic gain and implications from machine learning volatility forecast & real-world execution
- Engineering optimization tricks v.s. interpretability for more complex network architecture

Possible Future Directions

- Try jump-robust and microstructure noise-robust estimators as features
- Tweak nonlinear models to focus on stocks with lower arbitrage and transaction costs
- Tailed machine learning model and network architecture design

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- 5 Conclusion
- 6 References**

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Thank You