



# Time Series Analysis and Forecasting

Seminar 7: Cointegration and VECM



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## Seminar Outline

- Review Quiz** – Knowledge check
- True/False Questions** – Conceptual checks
- Practice Problems** – Applied practice
- Worked Examples** – Detailed solutions
- Discussion Topics** – Critical thinking
- AI-Assisted Exercises** – Applied artificial intelligence



## Quiz 1: Cointegration Definition

### Question

Two  $I(1)$  variables  $X_t$  and  $Y_t$  are cointegrated if:

### Answer choices

- (A) They are both stationary
- (B) Their sum is  $I(2)$
- (C) A linear combination of them is  $I(0)$
- (D) They have the same mean

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 1: Answer

Answer: C – A linear combination is I(0)

Question: Two I(1) variables  $X_t$  and  $Y_t$  are cointegrated if:

### Answer choices

- (A) They are both stationary ✗
- (B) Their sum is I(2) ✗
- (C) A linear combination of them is I(0) ✓
- (D) They have the same mean ✗

- $Y_t - \beta X_t \sim I(0)$  means they share a common stochastic trend
- The linear combination (spread) is stationary even though both series are non-stationary



## Quiz 2: Spurious Regression

### Question

When regressing one independent random walk on another, you typically get:

### Answer choices

- (A) Low  $R^2$  and insignificant coefficients
- (B) High  $R^2$  and significant coefficients (spurious!)
- (C) Zero coefficients
- (D) Undefined results

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 2: Answer

Answer: B – High  $R^2$  and significant coefficients (spurious!)

### Answer choices

- (A) Low  $R^2$  and insignificant coefficients ✗
- (B) **High  $R^2$  and significant coefficients (spurious!) ✓**
- (C) Zero coefficients ✗
- (D) Undefined results ✗

- ☐ Granger-Newbold (1974): Regressing unrelated I(1) series gives misleading results
- ☐ Rule of thumb: If  $R^2 > DW$ , suspect spurious regression!
- ☐ 🌎 Real-world examples: [tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations](http://tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations)

Q TSA\_ch7\_spurious\_regression



## Quiz 3: Engle-Granger Test

### Question

In the Engle-Granger two-step method, what do you test in step 2?

### Answer choices

- (A) Whether the original variables are stationary
- (B) Whether the regression residuals have a unit root
- (C) Whether the coefficients are significant
- (D) Whether the  $R^2$  is high enough

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 3: Answer

Answer: B – Whether residuals have unit root

Answer choices

- (A) Whether the original variables are stationary ✗
- (B) Whether the regression residuals have a unit root ✓
- (C) Whether the coefficients are significant ✗
- (D) Whether the  $R^2$  is high enough ✗

- Step 1: Run OLS:  $Y_t = \alpha + \beta X_t + e_t$ , save residuals  $\hat{e}_t$
- Step 2: ADF test on residuals:  $\Delta \hat{e}_t = \rho \hat{e}_{t-1} + \dots$
- $H_0: \rho = 0$  (unit root  $\Rightarrow$  no cointegration)
- $H_1: \rho < 0$  (stationary  $\Rightarrow$  cointegration!)
- Important: Use Engle-Granger critical values, not standard ADF!



## Quiz 4: Johansen Test Advantage

### Question

The main advantage of Johansen over Engle-Granger is:

### Answer choices

- (A) It's simpler to compute
- (B) It can detect multiple cointegrating relationships
- (C) It doesn't require data
- (D) It always finds cointegration

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 4: Answer

Answer: B – Can detect multiple cointegrating relationships

Question: The main advantage of Johansen over Engle-Granger is:

Answer choices

- (A) It's simpler to compute ✗
- (B) It can detect multiple cointegrating relationships ✓
- (C) It doesn't require data ✗
- (D) It always finds cointegration ✗

- Johansen advantages:** Tests for  $r = 0, 1, \dots, k - 1$  cointegrating vectors
- MLE (more efficient); no need to choose dependent variable

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## Quiz 5: Rank of $\Pi$

### Question

In a VECM with  $k = 3$  variables, if  $\text{rank}(\Pi) = 2$ , this means:

### Answer choices

- (A) No cointegration
- (B) One cointegrating relationship
- (C) Two cointegrating relationships
- (D) All variables are stationary

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 5: Answer

Answer: C – Two cointegrating relationships

### Answer choices

- (A) No cointegration ✗
- (B) One cointegrating relationship ✗
- (C) Two cointegrating relationships ✓
- (D) All variables are stationary ✗

- $\text{rank}(\boldsymbol{\Pi}) = 0$ : No cointegration (use VAR in differences)
- $0 < \text{rank}(\boldsymbol{\Pi}) = r < k$ :  $r$  cointegrating vectors (use VECM)
- $\text{rank}(\boldsymbol{\Pi}) = k$ : All variables are  $I(0)$  (use VAR in levels)
- With  $k = 3$  and  $r = 2$ :** Two equilibrium relationships, only  $k - r = 1$  common stochastic trend



## Quiz 6: VECM Structure

### Question

In the VECM equation  $\Delta Y_t = c + \alpha\beta'Y_{t-1} + \dots$ , what does  $\alpha$  represent?

### Answer choices

- (A) The cointegrating vectors
- (B) The adjustment (loading) coefficients
- (C) The short-run dynamics
- (D) The error variance

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 6: Answer

Answer: B – The adjustment (loading) coefficients

### Answer choices

- (A) The cointegrating vectors ✗
- (B) The adjustment (loading) coefficients ✓
- (C) The short-run dynamics ✗
- (D) The error variance ✗

- $\Pi = \alpha\beta'$ :
- $\beta$  = cointegrating vectors (define equilibrium)
- $\alpha$  = adjustment speeds (how fast each variable corrects)



## Quiz 7: Error Correction Term

### Question

If  $Y_t - \beta X_t$  is the cointegrating relation and this term is positive, what happens?

### Answer choices

- (A)  $Y$  is above equilibrium;  $Y$  should decrease (if  $\alpha < 0$ )
- (B)  $Y$  is below equilibrium;  $Y$  should increase
- (C) Nothing, error correction doesn't affect levels
- (D) Both variables increase

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 7: Answer

Answer: A – Y above equilibrium; decreases if  $\alpha < 0$

### Answer choices

- (A) Y is above equilibrium; Y should decrease (if  $\alpha < 0$ ) ✓
- (B) Y is below equilibrium; Y should increase ✗
- (C) Nothing, error correction doesn't affect levels ✗
- (D) Both variables increase ✗

- **Error correction mechanism:**  $\Delta Y_t = \alpha(Y_{t-1} - \beta X_{t-1}) + \dots$
- If  $Y_{t-1} - \beta X_{t-1} > 0$ : Y is “too high”
- With  $\alpha < 0$ :  $\Delta Y_t < 0$  (Y decreases toward equilibrium)
- **Sign convention:**  $\alpha$  should be negative for the dependent variable to move back toward equilibrium

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## Quiz 8: Weak Exogeneity

### Question

If  $\alpha_2 = 0$  in a bivariate VECM, this means:

### Answer choices

- (A) There is no cointegration
- (B) Variable 2 does not adjust to disequilibrium (weakly exogenous)
- (C) Variable 1 does not adjust
- (D) Both variables are stationary

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 8: Answer

Answer: B – Variable 2 is weakly exogenous

### Answer choices

- (A) There is no cointegration ✗
- (B) Variable 2 does not adjust to disequilibrium (weakly exogenous) ✓
- (C) Variable 1 does not adjust ✗
- (D) Both variables are stationary ✗

- **Weak exogeneity:** Variable doesn't respond to disequilibrium
- **Example:** Long rate ( $R_t$ ) often weakly exogenous ( $\alpha_R \approx 0$ )
- Short rate ( $r_t$ ) adjusts to spread ( $\alpha_r < 0$ )
- **Implication:** Can estimate single equation for the adjusting variable



## Quiz 9: Trace Test

### Question

The Johansen trace test with  $H_0 : r \leq 1$  vs  $H_1 : r > 1$  tests whether:

### Answer choices

- (A) There is exactly one cointegrating vector
- (B) There are at most one cointegrating vectors
- (C) There are more than one cointegrating vectors
- (D) All eigenvalues are zero

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 9: Answer

Answer: B – There are at most one cointegrating vectors

Question: The Johansen trace test with  $H_0 : r \leq 1$  vs  $H_1 : r > 1$  tests whether:

### Answer choices

- (A) There is exactly one cointegrating vector ✗
- (B) There are at most one cointegrating vectors ✓
- (C) There are more than one cointegrating vectors ✗
- (D) All eigenvalues are zero ✗

Note: (B) describes the null hypothesis  $H_0 : r \leq 1$ , which is what the test “tests whether”. (C) describes the alternative  $H_1 : r > 1$ , not what the test tests.

- Sequential testing:** Test  $H_0 : r = 0$ , then  $H_0 : r \leq 1$ , continue until fail to reject
- Trace statistic:**  $\lambda_{\text{trace}}(r) = -T \sum_{i=r+1}^k \ln(1 - \hat{\lambda}_i)$
- Reject  $H_0$  if trace statistic > critical value**

## Quiz 10: VECM vs VAR in Differences

### Question

If variables are cointegrated, using VAR in first differences instead of VECM:

### Answer choices

- (A) Gives identical results
- (B) Is more efficient
- (C) Loses long-run information (misspecified)
- (D) Is the preferred approach

*Answer on next slide...*



## Quiz 10: Answer

Answer: C – Loses long-run information

### Answer choices

- (A) Gives identical results ✗
- (B) Is more efficient ✗
- (C) Loses long-run information (misspecified) ✓
- (D) Is the preferred approach ✗

- Granger Representation Theorem:** If cointegrated, VECM representation exists and should be used

	VAR( $\Delta$ )	VECM
Long-run equilibrium	Lost	Preserved
Error correction	No	Yes
Forecasts (long-run)	Poor	Better

**Bottom line:** Differencing removes the long-run relationship that cointegration represents!



## True or False? — Questions

Statement	T/F?
1. Cointegration requires all variables to be I(1).	?
2. The cointegrating vector is unique.	?
3. Spurious regression has low Durbin-Watson statistic.	?
4. In VECM, both $\alpha$ coefficients must be non-zero.	?
5. Johansen test requires choosing a dependent variable.	?
6. The number of common trends = $k - r$ .	?



## True or False? — Answers

Statement	T/F	
1. Cointegration requires all variables to be $I(1)$ .	T	Standard $CI(1,1)$ case. More generally, cointegration can exist.
2. The cointegrating vector is unique.	F	
3. Spurious regression has low Durbin-Watson statistic.	T	
4. In VECM, both $\alpha$ coefficients must be non-zero.	F	
5. Johansen test requires choosing a dependent variable.	F	
6. The number of common trends = $k - r$ .	T	



## Exercise 1: Cointegration Identification

### Problem

- Data:** Quarterly data on consumption ( $C_t$ ) and income ( $Y_t$ ). ADF tests show both are I(1). The regression  $C_t = 0.85 Y_t + e_t$  gives residuals with ADF statistic =  $-3.92$ . The 5% Engle-Granger critical value for 2 variables is  $-3.34$ .
- Question:** Are  $C_t$  and  $Y_t$  cointegrated?

### Solution: Yes, they are cointegrated

- Test:**  $H_0$ : No cointegration (residuals have unit root)
- ADF statistic:**  $-3.92$ , **Critical value (5%)**:  $-3.34$
- Since  $-3.92 < -3.34$ , we **reject  $H_0$**  at 5% level
- Conclusion:** Residuals are stationary  $\Rightarrow$  Cointegration exists!
- Interpretation:** Consumption and income share a common trend. The cointegrating vector is approximately  $(1, -0.85)$ , consistent with permanent income hypothesis



## Exercise 2: VECM Interpretation

### Problem

- A VECM for short rate ( $r_t$ ) and long rate ( $R_t$ ) gives:

$$\Delta r_t = 0.01 - 0.25(r_{t-1} - R_{t-1}) + \dots$$

$$\Delta R_t = 0.005 - 0.02(r_{t-1} - R_{t-1}) + \dots$$

Interpret the adjustment coefficients.

### Solution

- **Error correction term:**  $(r_{t-1} - R_{t-1})$  = spread
- **Short rate** ( $\alpha_r = -0.25$ ): When spread is positive, short rate decreases. 25% of disequilibrium corrected per period
- **Long rate** ( $\alpha_R = -0.02$ ): Very small adjustment coefficient. Long rate is nearly weakly exogenous
- **Economic interpretation:** Central bank (short rate) adjusts to maintain yield curve



## Exercise 3: Johansen Test Results

### Problem

- Johansen trace test for 3 variables gives:

$H_0$	Trace Stat	5% CV
$r = 0$	45.2	29.8
$r \leq 1$	18.1	15.5
$r \leq 2$	3.2	3.8

What is the cointegrating rank?

### Solution: Rank = 2

- $H_0 : r = 0: 45.2 > 29.8 \Rightarrow \text{Reject (at least 1)}$
- $H_0 : r \leq 1: 18.1 > 15.5 \Rightarrow \text{Reject (at least 2)}$
- $H_0 : r \leq 2: 3.2 < 3.8 \Rightarrow \text{Fail to reject}$
- Conclusion:**  $r = 2$ , two equilibrium relationships, only  $3 - 2 = 1$  common stochastic trend



## Example: Term Structure of Interest Rates

### Economic Theory

Expectations hypothesis:  $R_t^{(n)} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} E_t[r_{t+i}] + \text{premium}$

If premium is constant  $\Rightarrow$  spread  $(R_t - r_t)$  should be stationary.

### Typical Findings

- Both rates are  $I(1)$  (confirmed by ADF)
- Johansen test:  $r = 1$  cointegrating vector
- Cointegrating vector  $\approx (1, -1)$ : spread is stationary
- Short rate adjusts ( $\alpha_r < 0$ ), long rate weakly exogenous

### Policy Implication

Central bank controls short rate; long rate driven by expectations.



## Example: Purchasing Power Parity

### PPP Theory

$e_t = p_t - p_t^*$  (log exchange rate = price differential)

Real exchange rate:  $q_t = e_t - p_t + p_t^*$  should be stationary (long-run PPP)

### Empirical Challenges

- Unit root tests:  $e_t, p_t, p_t^*$  all I(1)
- Cointegration tests: Mixed results depending on sample
- Half-life of PPP deviations: 3-5 years (slow adjustment)
- Weak exogeneity: Exchange rate often doesn't adjust

### PPP Puzzle

Real exchange rate is highly persistent—slow mean reversion is hard to explain with standard models.



## Example: Pairs Trading Strategy

### Idea

Find cointegrated stocks  $\Rightarrow$  trade the stationary spread

### Implementation Steps

1. **Identify pairs:** Test cointegration (e.g., Coca-Cola & Pepsi)
2. **Estimate spread:**  $z_t = P_A - \beta P_B$
3. **Trading rules:**
  - ▶  $z_t > \mu + 2\sigma$ : Sell A, Buy B (spread too wide)
  - ▶  $z_t < \mu - 2\sigma$ : Buy A, Sell B (spread too narrow)
  - ▶ Exit when  $z_t \approx \mu$

### Risks

Cointegration can break down; spread may not revert; transaction costs.

Q [TSA\\_ch7\\_pairs\\_trading](#)



## Python Cointegration Analysis: Key Functions

### Essential Libraries

```
from statsmodels.tsa.stattools import coint, adfuller  
from statsmodels.tsa.vector_ar.vecm import coint_johansen, VECM
```

### Workflow

1. Unit root tests: `adfuller(series)`
2. Engle-Granger: `coint(y, x)` returns test stat & p-value
3. Johansen: `coint_johansen(data, det_order, k_ar_diff)`
4. Fit VECM: `model = VECM(data, k_ar_diff=2, coint_rank=1)`
5. Results: `results = model.fit()`

### Note

Complete working examples are provided in the Jupyter notebooks.



## Discussion: Cointegration vs Correlation

### Key Question

Two series are highly correlated. Are they cointegrated?

### Answer: Not necessarily!

- Correlation:** Measures co-movement (can be spurious for  $I(1)$ )
- Cointegration:** Requires stationary linear combination

### Example

Two independent random walks can have correlation  $> 0.9$  purely by chance (spurious correlation). But they're NOT cointegrated—their spread is also  $I(1)$ .

**Cointegration** implies a meaningful long-run equilibrium relationship.



## Discussion: Choosing Deterministic Components

### Key Question

Johansen test has 5 cases for deterministics. Which to choose?

### Guidelines

1. **No constant, no trend:** Rarely used (requires mean-zero data)
2. **Constant in CE only:** Level series, no drift
3. **Constant unrestricted:** Most common for economic data
4. **Trend in CE:** Series have deterministic trends
5. **Trend unrestricted:** Trending differences (uncommon)

### Practical Advice

Start with Case 3 (constant unrestricted). Check sensitivity to specification. Use economic reasoning: do levels have trends?



## Take-Home Exercises

1. **Theoretical:** Show that if  $Y_t$  and  $X_t$  are both random walks with the same innovation, they are cointegrated.
2. **Computation:** Given VECM estimates:

$$\Delta Y_t = 0.5 - 0.3(Y_{t-1} - 2X_{t-1}) + 0.2\Delta Y_{t-1}$$

$$\Delta X_t = 0.1 + 0.1(Y_{t-1} - 2X_{t-1}) + 0.4\Delta X_{t-1}$$

- ▶ What is the cointegrating vector?
  - ▶ Which variable adjusts more quickly?
  - ▶ What is the long-run equilibrium relationship?
3. **Applied:** Download 10-year and 3-month Treasury rates:
    - ▶ Test for unit roots; Test for cointegration (Engle-Granger and Johansen)
    - ▶ Estimate VECM; Interpret adjustment coefficients
  4. **Critical Thinking:** Why might PPP hold in the long run but not short run?

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## Exercise Solutions Hints

### Hints

1. If  $Y_t = Y_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$  and  $X_t = X_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$  (same shock), then  $Y_t - X_t = Y_0 - X_0$  is constant (stationary).
2. From the VECM:
  - ▶ Cointegrating vector:  $(1, -2)$  (normalized on  $Y$ )
  - ▶  $Y$  adjusts faster:  $|\alpha_Y| = 0.3 > |\alpha_X| = 0.1$
  - ▶ Long-run:  $Y = 2X$  (when EC term = 0)
3. For interest rates:
  - ▶ Both typically  $I(1)$ ; spread usually stationary
  - ▶ Expect one cointegrating vector with  $(1, -1)$
  - ▶ Short rate typically adjusts; long rate often weakly exogenous
4. PPP deviations: Transportation costs, non-traded goods, sticky prices, tariffs, market segmentation all slow adjustment but don't prevent long-run convergence.



## Summary: Chapter 7

### Key Concepts

1. **Cointegration:**  $I(1)$  variables with stationary linear combination
2. **Spurious regression:** High  $R^2$  without cointegration is meaningless
3. **Engle-Granger:** Simple, but only one cointegrating vector
4. **Johansen:** Multiple vectors, MLE, more powerful

### VECM Insights

- $\beta$  defines equilibrium;  $\alpha$  determines adjustment speed
- Weak exogeneity ( $\alpha = 0$ ): Variable doesn't respond to disequilibrium
- Always use VECM (not VAR in differences) when cointegrated

### Remember

Cointegration is about **long-run equilibrium**, not just correlation!

### Questions?



## AI Exercise: Critical Thinking

Prompt to test in ChatGPT / Claude / Copilot

"Download oil spot and futures prices (CL=F, BZ=F). Test for cointegration and estimate a VECM model. Can I use the spread for a pairs trading strategy?"

**Exercise:**

1. Run the prompt in an LLM of your choice and critically analyze the response.
2. Does the AI test the order of integration of each series before testing for cointegration?
3. Johansen or Engle-Granger test? Does the AI justify the choice?
4. Is the cointegrating rank ( $r$ ) correctly interpreted?
5. Does the pairs trading strategy account for transaction costs and model risk?

**Warning:** AI-generated code may run without errors and look professional. *That does not mean it is correct.*



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### Online Resources and Code

- **Quantlet:** <https://quantlet.com> — Code repository for statistics
- **Quantinar:** <https://quantinar.com> — Platform for learning quantitative methods
- **GitHub TSA:** [https://github.com/QuantLet/TSA/tree/main/TSA\\_ch7](https://github.com/QuantLet/TSA/tree/main/TSA_ch7) — Python code for this seminar



# Thank You!

Questions?

Seminar materials are available at: <https://danpele.github.io/Time-Series-Analysis/>



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