

# PCA in Finance

Long before Machine Learning became popular, PCA was used to "explain" the yield curve.

A Yield Curve is a vector of features

- Whose length  $n$  corresponds to the number of bond maturities
- $\mathbf{x}_j^{(i)}$  is the yield, on day  $i$  of the  $j^{th}$  bond
  - $j$  increases with maturity

Does the yield of each maturity change (from day to day)

- Independently of other maturities ?
- Or are there a small number of "common factors"/"concepts" that drive daily yield changes ?

PCA can help us answer the question.

In the process, we are also able to *interpret* the common factors

- Which helps our intuition

Let's visit the [notebook section on PCA of the Yield Curve \(Unsupervised.ipynb#PCA-in-Finance\)](#).

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