

THE INTERTEMPORAL APPROACH TO THE CURRENT ACCOUNT FOR SOUTH AFRICA

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Overview

- Introduction
 - Aim of study
 - Literature overview
- Current account balance of South Africa
- Theoretical background
- Data and empirical results
- Concluding remarks

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Introduction

- Current Account (CA) based on 2 perspectives derived from accounting identities
 - Patterns of international trade and payments
 - National savings and investments
 - Open economies: capital mobility CA imbalances
 - Small economy is expected to smooth consumption due to output shocks by borrowing/lending & thereby running a CA deficit/surplus
 - Intertemporal approach based on latter and is defined as: the outcome of forward-looking rational consumption-saving and investment decisions of economic households

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Aim of study

- Construct a benchmark (optimal) CA series
 - Compare with actual CA given expectations of output shocks
 - Important to include households' knowledge about developments that might affect optimal choices
 - Campbell and Shiller (1987) argue that the CA captures information
- Thus; benchmark and actual CA series are identical, output shocks affect both
- Intertemporal model predict: CA operates as a buffer to smooth consumption when faced with economic shocks to national cash flow
- Standard models to test the consumption-smoothing theory derived from present-value models (Campbell, 1987 and Campbell & Shiller, 1987)

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Literature overview

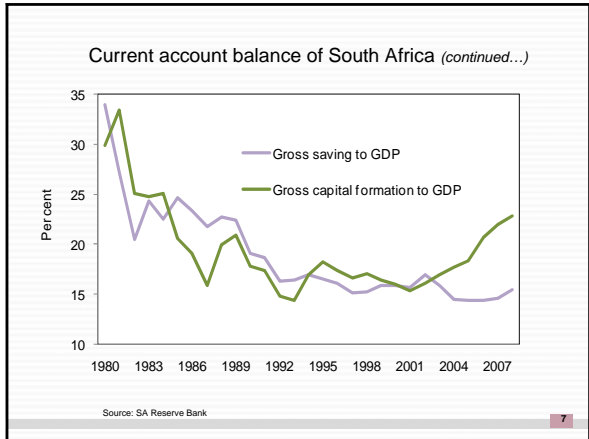
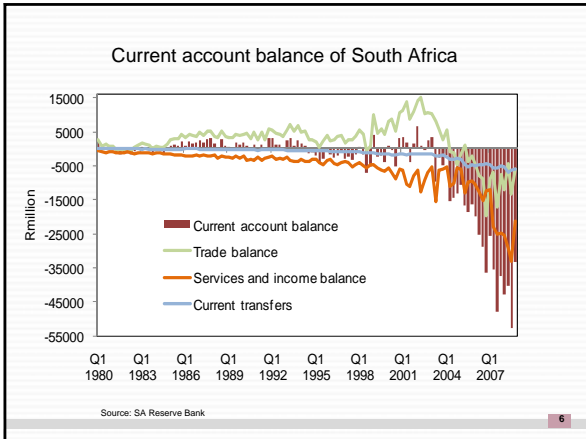
Author(s)	Country	Validity of intertemporal model
Khundrakpam & Ranjan (2008)	India	Not rejected
Ghosh & Ostry (1995)	India	Not rejected
Sheffrin & Woo (1990)	Belgium	Not rejected
Campa & Gavilán (2006)	Belgium	Not rejected
Obstfeld & Rogoff (1994)	Sweden	Not rejected
Otto (2003)	Australia	Not rejected
Cashin & McDermott (2002)	Australia	Not rejected
Ghosh (1995)	Canada	Not rejected
	Germany	Not rejected
	Japan	Not rejected
	UK	Not rejected
	US	Not rejected

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Literature overview (continued...)

Author(s)	Country	Validity of intertemporal model
Milbourne & Otto (1992)	Australia	Not rejected
Guest & McDonald (1998)	Australia	Reject
Sheffrin & Woo (1990)	Canada	Reject
	Denmark	Reject
	UK	Reject
Saksonovs (2006)	Germany	Not rejected
	South Africa	Not rejected
	UK	Not rejected

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Theoretical background

- The present-value model is derived from the permanent-income theory of consumption to:
 - a small open economy;
 - an infinite time horizon;
 - single homogenous good;
 - free capital mobility
- Permanent-income hypothesis (Friedman, 1957): consumption depends on what households expect to earn over a period of time
- Households smooth out fluctuations in income to save during periods of high income and dis-save during periods of low income

Theoretical background (continued...)

- Following Ghosh (1995), the economy is represented by a household who maximises lifetime utility from consumption:

$$u_t = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \beta^j E[u(c_{t+j})] \quad (1)$$

where β is the subjective discount rate ($0 < \beta < 1$) that reflects preference for current consumption over future consumption;
 u is the utility function such that $u' > 0$, $u'' < 0$
 c_t is the consumption of a single good; and
 E is the expectations operator

Theoretical background (continued...)

- Intertemporal budget constraint:

$$b_{t+1} = (1+r)b_t + q_t - c_t - i_t - g_t \quad (2)$$

where b denotes the level of foreign assets/bonds;
 q is the level of output or GDP;
 i is investment;
 g is government spending;
 r is the fixed world interest rate

Theoretical background (continued...)

- Household maximises (1) subject to (2):

$$c_t = \frac{1}{\theta} \left[\frac{1}{1+r} + \frac{1}{1+r} \sum_{j=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(1+r)^j} \frac{1}{\theta} \right] \quad (3)$$

where c_t^* denotes the optimal level of consumption

- Equation (3) decomposed into:
 - consumption-smoothing component and;
 - consumption-tilting component
- The consumption-tilting parameter; θ is estimated as the coefficient of in the regression of national cash flow including interest payments, on

Theoretical background *(continued...)*

- If $\theta < 1 \Rightarrow$ consumption exceeds current permanent cash flow (tilt consumption towards present)
- If $\theta > 1 \Rightarrow$ tilt consumption towards future
- If $\theta = 1 \Rightarrow$ consumption = permanent cash flow
- The current account is defined as;

$$ca_t^* = y_t - i_t - g_t - \theta pc_t^* \quad (4)$$

where $y_t = q_t + rb_t$

- Consumption-smoothing behaviour:
 - current account surplus \Rightarrow country is lending when output increases relative to its permanent level
 - current account deficit \Rightarrow country is borrowing when output falls below its permanent level

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Theoretical background *(continued...)*

- By substituting equations (3) and (4):
Optimal current account is obtained as follows;

$$ca_t^* = \frac{1}{\theta} \left[\frac{1}{1+r} \left(\frac{1}{\theta} + \theta + r \right) - \frac{1}{\theta} \sum_{j=1}^{\infty} \left(\frac{1}{1+r} \right)^j \left(\frac{1}{\theta} + \theta + r \right) \right] \quad (5)$$

by assuming $\theta=1$, and simplifying, the following is obtained;

$$ca_t^* = -E_t \sum_{j=1}^{\infty} (1+r)^{-j} \Delta(zb_{t+j}) \quad (6)$$

- (6) represents the optimal current account as the expected present discounted value of changes in national cash flow
- Expected transitory shocks affect current account balance
- Optimal level of cash flow \Rightarrow smooth consumption in presence of shocks to components of zb_t

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Data and empirical results

- The current account is defined as; $ca_t^* = y_t - i_t - g_t - \theta pc_t^*$
where y is gross national product (GNP);
 pc is private consumption spending;
 i is total investment;
 g is government consumption at time t
 θ is the estimated consumption-tilting parameter
- National cash flow inclusive of interest payments is represented by;
 $zb_t = q_t + rb_t - i_t - g_t$
where q is real gross domestic production (GDP) and
 b is net foreign assets

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Data and empirical results *(continued...)*

- Quarterly SA data from SARB and IMF (IFS)
- Full sample period: 1980Q1-2008Q4
- Sub-samples: 1980Q1-1994Q4 and 1995Q1-2008Q4 and 2001Q1-2008Q4
- Nominal values deflated by using CPI
- Per capita terms: divide data by level of total population
- World interest rate: 4%
(Sheffrin & Woo, 1990; Ghosh, 1995; Ghosh & Ostry, 1995, Cashin & McDermott, 1998 & 2002)
- Constant interest rate: small open economy not affect world interest rate

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Testable implications

Present-value model hypothesis

- Stationary optimal ca series
- Long-run relationship between zb and pc as $ca_t = zb_t - \theta c_t$
- CA Granger-cause Δzb
- Coefficient on $\Delta zb=0$ and coefficient on $ca=1$

Other implications (optimal vs actual ca)

- Correlation coefficient
- Equality of variances (receive sufficient capital flows to ensure consumption-smoothing)

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Data and empirical results *(continued...)*

a) Unit root tests

		Stationary	Non-stationary*
ADF-test	1980-2008	Δzb	ca pc zb
	1980-1994	ca zb Δzb	pc
	1995-2008	zb Δzb	ca pc
	2001-2008	ca pc zb Δzb	-
PP-test	1980-2008	ca zb Δzb	pc
	1980-1994	ca pc zb Δzb	-
	1995-2008	ca pc zb Δzb	-
	2001-2008	ca pc zb Δzb	-

* Stationary after taking first differences

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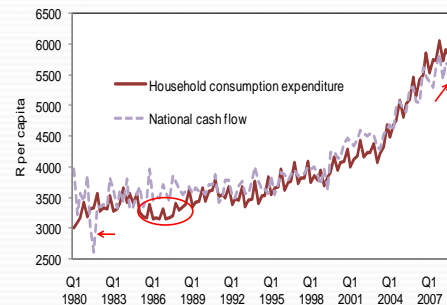
Data and empirical results *(continued...)*

b) Consumption tilting component (θ)

- Determine θ to estimate optimal CA
- θ is cointegrating vector between zb and pc
- Cointegration is necessary as $ca_t = zb_t - \theta pc_t$
- ADF-test: zb and pc is non-stationary for 1980Q1-2008Q4
- Johansen cointegration test
- One cointegrating vector for full period and sub-periods

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Plot of national cash flow and household consumption (1980Q1-2008Q4)



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Data and empirical results *(continued...)*

b) Consumption tilting component

- Long-run coefficient (θ) between zb_t and pc_t is
- 0.827 \Rightarrow 1980Q1-2008Q4
- Consumption tilted towards current period
- 1.048 \Rightarrow 1980Q1-1994Q4
- Consumption tilted towards future
- 0.450 \Rightarrow 1995Q1-2008Q4
- 0.689 \Rightarrow 2002Q4-2008Q4

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Data and empirical results *(continued...)*

b) Consumption tilting component

- Nigeria: 0.85 (Adedeji, 2001)
- Ghana: 1.92 (Opoku-Afari, 2007)
- Turkey: 0.93 (Ogus & Sohrabji, 2006)
- India: 0.93 (Khundrakpam & Ranjan, 2008)
- Ghosh & Ostry (1995) between 0.90 and 0.98 for: Ghana, Tunisia, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru & Uruguay
- Ghosh & Ostry: most developing countries tilt consumption to present

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Actual and optimal current account

- Unrestricted VAR (Campbell & Shiller, 1987)
- ca and Δzb is stationary during all periods
- Lag length of 5 periods (SC)
- Quarterly centered seasonal dummy variables

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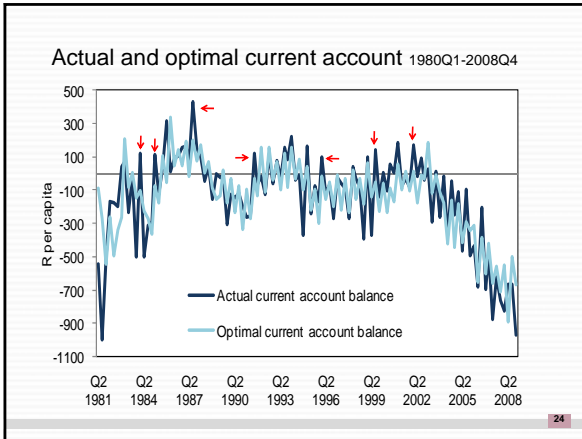
Actual and optimal current account *(continued...)*

1980Q1-2008Q4

- 1) -0.236 [F-stat: 2.825 (p-value: 0.028)]
- 2) Reject hypothesis that ca does not GC Δzb [F-stat: 2.252 (p-value: 0.054)]
- 3) Optimal CA is stationary [PP-test]
- 4) Coefficient on
 - a) $\Delta zb=0$ [F-stat: 1.887 (p-value: 0.103)]
 - b) $ca=1$ [F-stat: 686.751 (p-value: 0.000)]

- CA helps predict future changes in zb
- Capital flows reflect consumption-smoothing behaviour
- Private consumption in SA was optimal
- Results (except 4b) in favour of present-value model

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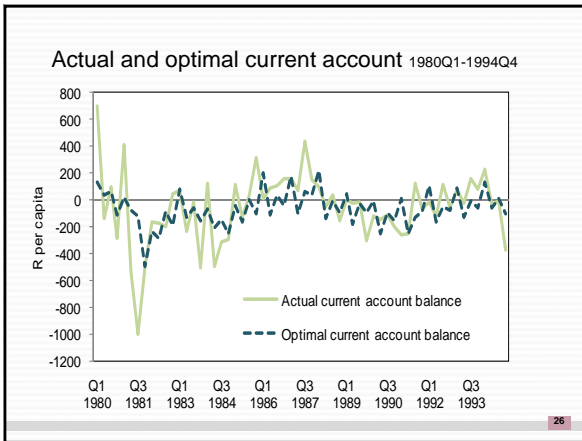
Actual and optimal current account (continued...)

1980Q1-1994Q4

- 0.435 [F-stat: 9.880 (p-value: 0.002)]
- Reject hypothesis that ca does not GC Δz_b [F-stat: 14.116 (p-value 0.000)]
- Optimal CA is stationary [PP-test]
- Coefficient on
 - $\Delta z_b=0$ [F-stat: 3.093 (p-value: 0.084)]
 - $ca=1$ [F-stat: 107.383 (p-value: 0.000)]

- CA helps predict future changes in z_b
- Capital flows reflect consumption-smoothing behaviour
- Private consumption in SA was optimal before 1994
- Results (except 4) in favour of present-value model

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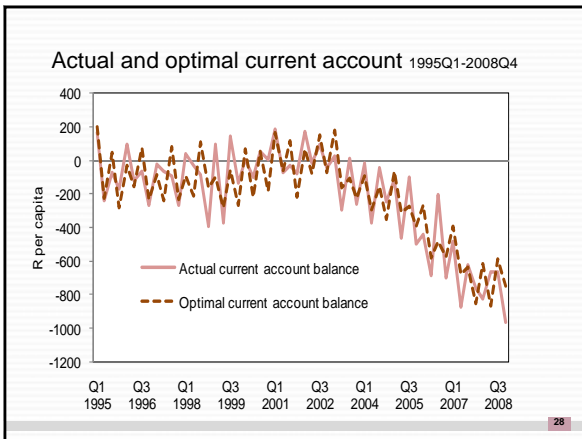
Actual and optimal current account (continued...)

1995Q1-2008Q4

- 0.093 [F-stat: 1.201 (p-value: 0.278)]
- Fail to reject hypothesis that ca does not GC Δz_b [F-stat: 2.429 (p-value 0.125)]
- Optimal CA is stationary [PP-test]
- Coefficient on
 - $\Delta z_b=0$ [F-stat: 7.201 (p-value: 0.009)]
 - $ca=1$ [F-stat: 165.852 (p-value: 0.000)]

- CA fail to predict future changes in z_b
- Capital flows do not reflect consumption-smoothing behaviour
- Private consumption in SA was not optimal after 1995
- Results (except 3) not consistent with present-value model

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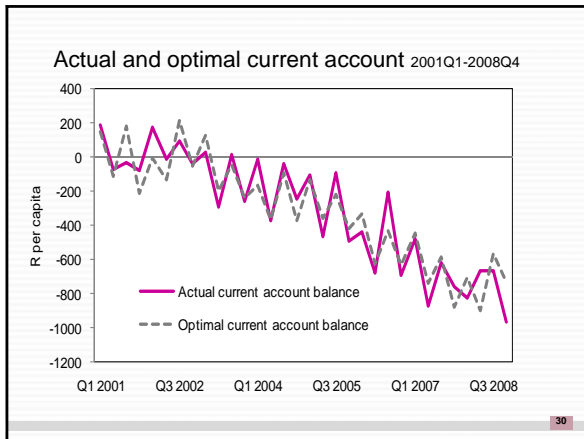
Actual and optimal current account (continued...)

2001Q1-2008Q4

- 0.046 [F-stat: 0.227 (p-value: 0.637)]
- Fail to reject hypothesis that ca does not GC Δz_b [F-stat: 0.824 (p-value 0.371)]
- Optimal CA is stationary [PP-test]
- Coefficient on
 - $\Delta z_b=0$ [F-stat: 2.297 (p-value: 0.142)]
 - $ca=1$ [F-stat: 113.674 (p-value: 0.000)]

- CA fail to predict future changes in z_b
- Capital flows do not reflect consumption-smoothing behaviour
- Private consumption in SA was not optimal after 1995
- Results (except 3 & 4a) not consistent with present-value model

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Actual and optimal current account (continued...)

- Other testable implications
- Ability of consumption-smoothing model to track actual CA

Sample period	Variance (σ) ca	Variance (σ) ca*	σ -ratio	Tests for equality of σ		Correlation coefficient (p-value)
				F-test (p-value)	Siegel-Tukey (p-value)	
1980-2008	76072	49326	1.542	1.542 (0.024)	1.726 (0.084)	0.805 (0.000)
1980-1994	683115	16339	4.180	4.180 (0.000)	3.508 (0.000)	0.546 (0.000)
1995-2008	85477	68446	1.248	1.248 (0.412)	1.032 (0.301)	0.890 (0.000)
2001-2008	110384	94512	1.167	1.167 (0.668)	1.148 (0.251)	0.930 (0.000)

Note: ca* denotes optimal current account. Variance ratio= $\sigma(\text{ca})/\sigma(\text{ca}^*)$

Comparison of work on SA

	Saksonovs (2006)	Blignaut (2009)
Time period	1975Q1-2003Q4	1980Q1-2008Q4
Data frequency	Quarterly	Quarterly
Model	Standard model extended	Standard model not extended
Variables	Tradable & Non-tradable prices (REER)	-
Current account	=Net output-c (in logs)	=GNP-c+i-g
National cash flow	=GDP+i-g (in logs)	=GDP+(rb)+i-g
Interest rate	G7 T-bill rate/money market rate	Fixed rate of 4% p.q.
Consumption tilting parameter	$1/(1-r^*)$ 0.98 (fixed across all countries)	Cointegrating vector between zb and pc 0.827 (1980Q1-2008Q4)
Variance	Optimal > actual	Actual > optimal

- ### Concluding remarks
- Forward-looking intertemporal saving and investment decisions
 - Consumption tilted towards present in SA
 - Ability to track behaviour of SA current account
 - Current account help predict national cash flow (consumption-smoothing)
 - Strong correlation (unconstrained CA)
 - Actual CA more volatile than predicted optimal CA
 - Liberated capital inflows
 - "Over-borrowing" to finance consumption
 - Ostry (1997) & Goh (2007): problematic/unsustainable CA

- ### Concluding remarks (continued...)
- Some restrictions rejected
 - Only partial support for intertemporal model
 - Otto (1992) & Ostry (1997): although restrictions not met: model explains current account as long as predicted CA series tracks actual series well
 - Standard model is stylized
 - Extensions to relax assumptions to improve descriptive power
 - Small open economies affected by external shocks
 - Further empirical work to include time-varying interest rates, distinguish between tradable and non-tradable goods and global oil prices

Thank you

Unit root tests

Series	Level Form		First Difference	
	ADF test	PP-test	ADF test	PP-test
	Lag length		Lag length	
1980Q1-2008Q4				
c_{it} (T)	-1.187	3	-8.554***	-11.508***
p_{it} (T)	-2.070	8	-1.928	-1.764*
Δz_{it} (T)	-12.607***	2	-23.794***	
1980Q1-1994Q4				
c_{it} (T)	-3.707**	1	-6.608***	
p_{it} (T)	-3.106	9	-5.447***	-2.272**
Δz_{it} (T)	-6.289***	1	-8.233***	
1995Q1-2008Q4				
c_{it} (T)	-0.358	3	-5.674***	-9.133***
p_{it} (T)	-2.683	7	-3.431*	-2.759* (I)
Δz_{it} (T)	-4.537***	0	-4.527***	
2001Q1-2008Q4				
c_{it} (T)	-8.414***	0	-7.498***	
p_{it} (T)	-3.141**	7	-4.255**	
Δz_{it} (T)	-3.451*	1	-3.794**	

Note: T (Linear trend and intercept), I (Intercept) included in test equation in parentheses (), (*), (**), (***) Statistically significant at a 10(5)(1) % level. Lag length of ADF test was selected based on SIC criterion and PP-test is based on Newey-West using Bartlett Kernel method.

Johansen cointegration test

Null Hypothesis	λ trace	5% critical value
1980Q3-2008Q4 No deterministic trend (restricted constant) - 1 lag		
$r=0$	31.588	20.261 (0.000)
$r \leq 1$	7.570	9.164 (0.099)
$r=0$	24.017	15.802 (0.002)
$r=1$	7.570	9.164 (0.099)
1981Q3-1994Q4 No deterministic trend (restricted) - 5 lags		
$r=0$	13.071	12.320 (0.037)
$r \leq 1$	0.451	4.129 (0.565)
$r=0$	12.620	11.224 (0.028)
$r=1$		
1995Q3-2008Q4 Linear deterministic trend (restricted) - 1 lag		
$r=0$	25.601	25.872 (0.054)
$r \leq 1$	3.689	12.517 (0.786)
$r=0$	21.911	19.387 (0.021)
$r=1$	3.689	12.517 (0.786)
2002Q4-2008Q3 No deterministic trend (restricted constant) - 6 lags		
$r=0$	26.942	20.261 (0.005)
$r \leq 1$	4.368	9.164 (0.360)
$r=0$	22.574	15.802 (0.003)
$r=1$	4.368	9.164 (0.360)

p-value in parentheses ()

VAR test (1980Q1-2008Q4)

	c_{it}	Δz_{it}	X_t
c_{it-1} (t-statistic)	0.036 (2.946)	-0.323 (-3.188)	
c_{it-2} (t-statistic)	0.016 (0.953)	-0.196 (-0.952)	
c_{it-3} (t-statistic)	0.216 (0.648)	0.497 (1.456)	
c_{it-4} (t-statistic)	0.551 (1.846)	0.320 (0.929)	
c_{it-5} (t-statistic)	-0.865 (-3.331)	-0.534 (-2.006)	
Δz_{it-1} (t-statistic)	-0.389 (-1.596)	-0.322 (-1.298)	
Δz_{it-2} (t-statistic)	-0.243 (-0.988)	-0.004 (-0.019)	
Δz_{it-3} (t-statistic)	-0.327 (-1.327)	-0.279 (-1.104)	
Δz_{it-4} (t-statistic)	-0.748 (-2.894)	-0.417 (-1.624)	
Δz_{it-5} (t-statistic)	0.145 (1.577)	0.154 (1.636)	
R^2	0.601	0.428	
Joint significance of lags of c_{it} F-statistic (p-value)			80.431 (0.000)
Joint significance of lags of Δz_{it} F-statistic (p-value)			12.412 (0.000)
Joint significance of lags of ca $H_0: c_{it-1} = 0$ F-statistic (p-value)	2.825 (0.028)		
Sum of coefficients on lags of ca	-0.236		
$H_0: \Delta z_{it-1} = 0$ F-statistic (p-value)	1.887 (0.103)		
$H_0: c_{it-1} = 1$ F-statistic (p-value)	686.751 (0.000)		
$H_0: \Delta z_{it}$ does not GC ca F-statistic (p-value)	6.294 (0.000)		
$H_0: \Delta ca$ does not GC Δz_{it} F-statistic (p-value)	2.252 (0.054)		

VAR test (1980Q1-1994Q4)

	c_{it}	Δz_{it}	X_t
c_{it-1} (t-statistic)	0.475 (3.332)	-0.435 (-3.143)	
Δz_{it-1} (t-statistic)	-0.170 (-1.293)	-0.225 (-1.758)	
R^2	0.198	0.443	
Joint significance of lags of c_{it} F-statistic (p-value)			4.519 (0.037)
Joint significance of lags of Δz_{it} F-statistic (p-value)			0.236 (0.628)
Joint significance of lags of ca $H_0: c_{it-1} = 0$ F-statistic (p-value)	9.880 (0.002)		
Sum of coefficients on lags of ca	-0.435		
$H_0: \Delta z_{it-1} = 0$ F-statistic (p-value)	3.093 (0.084)		
$H_0: c_{it-1} = 1$ F-statistic (p-value)	107.383 (0.000)		
$H_0: \Delta z_{it}$ does not GC ca F-statistic (p-value)	0.007 (0.932)		
$H_0: \Delta ca$ does not GC Δz_{it} F-statistic (p-value)	14.116 (0.000)		

VAR test (1995Q1-2008Q4)

	c_{it}	Δz_{it}	X_t
c_{it-1} (t-statistic)	0.940 (12.157)	-0.093 (-1.096)	
Δz_{it-1} (t-statistic)	-0.415 (-3.486)	-0.350 (-2.683)	
R^2	0.765	0.403	
Significance of lag of c_{it} F-statistic (p-value)			9.988 (0.051)
Significance of lag of Δz_{it} F-statistic (p-value)			0.582 (0.448)
Significance of lag of ca $H_0: c_{it-1} = 0$ F-statistic (p-value)	1.201 (0.278)		
Sum of coefficient on lag of ca	-0.093		
$H_0: \Delta z_{it-1} = 0$ F-statistic (p-value)	7.201 (0.009)		
$H_0: c_{it-1} = 1$ F-statistic (p-value)	165.652 (0.000)		
$H_0: \Delta z_{it}$ does not GC ca F-statistic (p-value)	5.816 (0.019)		
$H_0: \Delta ca$ does not GC Δz_{it} F-statistic (p-value)	2.429 (0.125)		

VAR test (2001Q1-2008Q4)

	c_{it}	Δz_{it}	X_t
c_{it-1} (t-statistic)	0.859 (11.236)	-0.046 (-0.477)	
Δz_{it-1} (t-statistic)	-0.531 (-3.052)	-0.303 (-1.515)	
R^2	0.826	0.437	
Joint significance of lags of c_{it} F-statistic (p-value)			2.702 (0.111)
Joint significance of lags of Δz_{it} F-statistic (p-value)			0.485 (0.491)
Joint significance of lags of ca $H_0: c_{it-1} = 0$ F-statistic (p-value)	0.227 (0.637)		
Sum of coefficients on lags of ca	-0.046		
$H_0: \Delta z_{it-1} = 0$ F-statistic (p-value)	2.297 (0.142)		
$H_0: c_{it-1} = 1$ F-statistic (p-value)	113.674 (0.000)		
$H_0: \Delta z_{it}$ does not GC ca F-statistic (p-value)	2.121 (0.156)		
$H_0: \Delta ca$ does not GC Δz_{it} F-statistic (p-value)	0.824 (0.371)		