

## Lecture 7: Law of Large Numbers and Central Limit Theorem

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EE210: Probability and Introductory Random Processes  
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### Roadmap

- Most remarkable two results in probability theory history
- Weak Law of Large Numbers: Result and Meaning
- Central Limit Theorem: Result and Meaning
- Weak Law of Large Numbers: Proof
  - Inequalities: Markov and Chebyshev
- Central Limit Theorem: Proof
  - Moment Generating Function (MGF)
- Strong Law of Large Numbers

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- Most remarkable two results in probability theory history
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- Example 1.  $n$  students who decide their presence, depending on their feeling. Each student is happy or sad at random. How many students will show their presence?
- Example 2. I am hearing some sound. There are  $n$  noisy sources from outside.
- $X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n$ : i.i.d (independent and identically distributed) random variables
- $\mathbb{E}[X_i] = \mu, \text{var}[X_i] = \sigma^2$
- Our interest is to understand how the following sum behaves:

$$S_n = X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n$$

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$$S_n = X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n$$

- Challenging if we intend to approach directly. Even just for  $Z = X + Y$ , finding the distribution, for example, requires the complex **convolution**.

$$p_Z(z) = \mathbb{P}(X + Y = z) = \sum_x p_X(x)p_Y(z - x)$$

- Take a certain **scaling** with respect to  $n$  that corresponds to a **new glass**, and investigate the system for large  $n$
- First, consider the sample mean, and try to understand how it behaves:

$$M_n = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n}{n}$$

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$$M_n = \frac{S_n}{n} = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n}{n}$$

- **Example.**  $n$  coin tossing.  $X_i = 1$  if head, and 0 otherwise.  $S_n$ : total number of heads.
- $\mathbb{E}(M_n) = \mu$ ,  $\text{var}(M_n) = \sigma^2/n$
- For large  $n$ , the variance decays. We expect that, for large  $n$ ,  $M_n$  loses its randomness and concentrates around  $\mu$ .
- Why important? If we take the scaling of  $S_n$  by  $1/n$ , it behaves like a deterministic number. This significantly simplifies how we understand the world.
- We call this **law of large numbers**.

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$$M_n = \frac{S_n}{n} = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n}{n}$$

- What about this? What's wrong?

$$M_n \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} \mu$$

- Ordinary convergence for the sequence of real numbers:  $a_n \rightarrow a$ 
  - For every  $\epsilon > 0$ , there exists  $n_0$ , such that for every  $n \geq n_0$ ,  $|a_n - a| \leq \epsilon$ .
- $M_n$  is a random variable, which is a function from  $\Omega$  to  $\mathbb{R}$ .
- Need to mathematically build up the concept of convergence for the sequence of random variables.

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- Consider the sequence of rvs  $(Y_n)_{n=1,2,\dots}$ , and I want to say they “converge” to a number  $a$ .
- Play the game with my friend Lin.
  - Lin, give me any  $\epsilon > 0$ .
  - OK. Then, let me consider the event  $\{|Y_n - a| \geq \epsilon\}$ , and compute its probability  $a_n = \mathbb{P}(|Y_n - a| \geq \epsilon)$ .
  - Now,  $a_n$  is just the real number, and I will show that  $a_n \rightarrow 0$  as  $n \rightarrow \infty$ .

### Convergence in probability

For any  $\epsilon > 0$ ,  $\mathbb{P}(|Y_n - a| \geq \epsilon) \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} 0$ .

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$$M_n = \frac{S_n}{n} = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n}{n}$$

### Weak law of large numbers

$M_n$  converges to  $\mu$  in probability.

- Why "Weak"? There exists a stronger version, which we call "strong" law of large numbers.
- Proof requires some knowledge about useful inequalities, which we cover later.

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- Loosely speaking, WLLG says:

$$(M_n - \mu) \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} 0$$

- However, we don't know **how**  $M_n - \mu$  converges to 0. For example, what's the speed of convergence?
- Question.** What should be "something"? Something should what blows up.

$$\boxed{\text{(something)}} \times (M_n - \mu) \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} \text{meaningful thing}$$

$$\boxed{n^\alpha} \times (M_n - \mu) \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} \text{meaningful thing}$$

- What's  $\alpha$  for our magic?
- The answer is  $\frac{1}{2}$

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- Reshaping the equation:

$$\sqrt{n} \times (M_n - \mu) = \sqrt{n} \left( \frac{S_n - n\mu}{n} \right) = \frac{S_n - n\mu}{\sqrt{n}}. \quad \text{Let } Z_n = \frac{S_n - n\mu}{\sigma\sqrt{n}}.$$

- $\mathbb{E}[Z_n] = 0$  and  $\text{var}(Z_n) = 1$ .
  - $Z_n$  is well-centered with a constant variance irrespective of  $n$ .
- We expect that  $Z_n$  converges to something meaningful, but what?
- Some deterministic number just like WLLG?
- Interestingly, it converges to some **random variable**  $Z$  that we know very well.

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- $Z_n \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} Z$ , where  $Z \sim N(0, 1)$ .
- Wait! What kind of convergence? Convergence in probability as in WLLN? No.
- Convergence **in distribution** (another type of convergence of rvs)

### Central Limit Theorem

For every  $z$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(Z_n \leq z) \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}(Z \leq z),$$

where  $Z \sim N(0, 1)$ .

- **Meaning from scaling perspective.**
  - LLN: Scaling  $S_n$  by  $1/n$ , you go to a deterministic world.
  - CLT: Scaling  $S_n$  by  $1/\sqrt{n}$ , you still stay at the random world, but not an arbitrary random world. That's the normal random world, not depending on the distribution of each  $X_i$ . Very interesting!

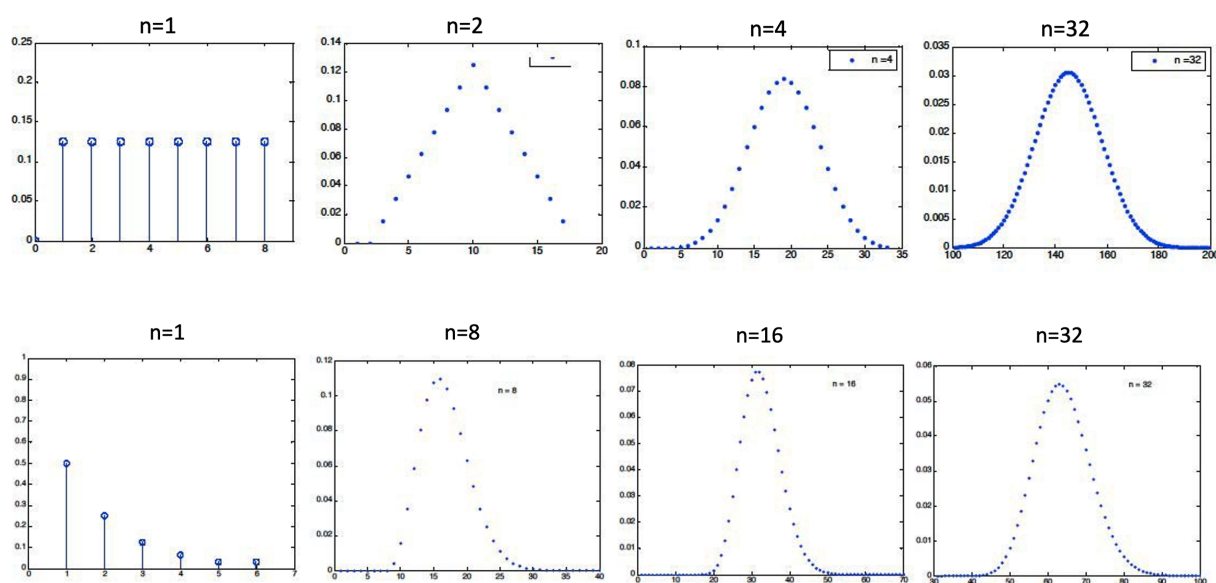
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$$Z_n = \frac{S_n - n\mu}{\sigma\sqrt{n}}$$

$$\mathbb{P}(Z_n \leq z) \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}(Z \leq z), \quad Z \sim N(0, 1)$$

- Can approximate  $Z_n$  with a standard normal rv
- Can approximate  $S_n$  with a normal rv  $\sim (n\mu, n\sigma^2)$ 
  - $S_n = n\mu + Z_n\sigma\sqrt{n}$
- How large should  $n$  be?
  - A moderate  $n$  (20 or 30) usually works, which the power of CLT.
  - If  $X_i$  resembles a normal rv more, smaller  $n$  works: symmetry and unimodality<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Only unique mode. A single maximum or minimum.



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- (Q) Knowing  $\mathbb{E}(X)$ , can we say something about the distribution of  $X$ ?
- Intuition: small  $\mathbb{E}(X) \implies$  small  $\mathbb{P}(X \geq a)$

## Markov Inequality

If  $X \geq 0$  and  $a > 0$ , then  $\mathbb{P}(X \geq a) \leq \frac{\mathbb{E}(X)}{a}$ .

**Proof.** For any  $a > 0$ , define  $Y_a$  as:

$$Y_a \triangleq \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } X < a, \\ a, & \text{if } X \geq a \end{cases}$$

Then, using non-negativity of  $X$ ,  $Y_a \leq X$ , which leads to  $\mathbb{E}[Y_a] \leq \mathbb{E}[X]$ .

Note that we have:

$$\mathbb{E}[Y_a] = a\mathbb{P}(Y_a = a) = a\mathbb{P}(X \geq a).$$

$$\text{Thus, } a \cdot \mathbb{P}(X \geq a) \leq \mathbb{E}[X]. \quad \square$$

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# Chebyshev Inequality

- (Q) Knowing both  $\mathbb{E}(X)$  and  $\text{var}(X)$ , can we say something about the distribution of  $X$ ?
- Intuition: small  $\text{var}(X) \implies X$  is unlikely to be too far away from its mean.
- $\mathbb{E}(X) = \mu$ ,  $\text{var}(X) = \sigma^2$ .

## Chebyshev Inequality

$$\mathbb{P}(|X - \mu| \geq c) \leq \frac{\sigma^2}{c^2}$$

- **Proof.**

$$\mathbb{P}(|X - \mu| \geq c) = \mathbb{P}((X - \mu)^2 \geq c^2) \leq \frac{\mathbb{E}[(X - \mu)^2]}{c^2} = \frac{\text{var}(X)}{c^2}$$

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-  $X \sim \exp(1)$ . Then,  $\mathbb{E}[X] = 1$  and  $\text{var}[X] = 1$ .

-  $\mathbb{E}(X \geq a) = e^{-a}$

• Markov inequality

$$\mathbb{P}(X \geq a) \leq \frac{\mathbb{E}[X]}{a} = \frac{1}{a}$$

• Chebyshev inequality

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(X \geq a) &= \mathbb{P}(X - 1 \geq a - 1) \\ &\leq \mathbb{P}(|X - 1| \geq a - 1) \leq \frac{1}{(a - 1)^2} \end{aligned}$$

- For reasonably large  $a$ , CI provides much better bound.

- knowing the variance helps

- Both bounds are the ones that bound the [probability of rare events](#).

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$$M_n = \frac{S_n}{n} = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n}{n}$$

Weak law of large numbers

$M_n$  converges to  $\mu$  in probability.

Proof.

$$\mathbb{P}(|M_n - \mu| \geq \epsilon) \leq \frac{\text{var}(M_n)}{\epsilon^2} = \frac{\sigma^2}{n\epsilon^2} \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} 0$$

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## Moment Generating Function

- For a rv  $X$ , we introduce a kind of transform, called **moment generating function (MGF)**.
- A function of a scalar parameter  $s$ , defined by

$$M_X(s) = \mathbb{E}[e^{sX}]$$

- If clear, we omit  $X$  and use  $M(s)$ .

$$M(s) = \sum_x e^{sx} p_X(x) \quad (\text{discrete})$$

$$M(s) = \int e^{sx} f_X(x) dx \quad (\text{continuous})$$

Ex1)  $X \sim \exp(\lambda)$ ,  $f_X(x) = \lambda e^{-\lambda x}$ ,  $x \geq 0$

$$\begin{aligned} M(s) &= \lambda \int_0^{\infty} e^{sx} e^{-\lambda x} dx \\ &= \lambda \left. \frac{e^{(s-\lambda)x}}{s-\lambda} \right|_0^{\infty} \quad (\text{if } s < \lambda) \\ &= \frac{\lambda}{\lambda - s} \end{aligned}$$

Ex2)  $X \sim N(0, 1)$  (homework problem)

$$M(s) = e^{s^2/2}$$

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$$1. M'(0) = \mathbb{E}[X]$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{ds} M(s) &= \frac{d}{ds} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{sx} f_X(x) dx = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{d}{ds} e^{sx} f_X(x) dx = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x e^{sx} f_X(x) dx \\ &= \left. \frac{d}{ds} M(s) \right|_{s=0} = \mathbb{E}[X] \end{aligned}$$

$$2. \text{ Similarly, } M''(0) = \mathbb{E}[X^2]$$

$$3. \left. \frac{d^n}{ds^n} M(s) \right|_{s=0} = \mathbb{E}[X^n]$$

4. MGF provides a convenient way of generating moments. That's why it is called moment generating function.

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### Inversion Property

The transform  $M_X(s)$  associated with a random variable  $X$  uniquely determines the CDF of  $X$ , assuming that  $M_X(s)$  is finite for all  $s$  in some interval  $[-a, a]$ , where  $a$  is a positive number.

- In easy words, we can recover the distribution if we know the MGF.
- Thus, each rv has its own MGF.

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- Without loss of generality, assume  $\mathbb{E}(X_i) = 0$  and  $\text{var}(X_i) = 1$
- $Z_n = \frac{S_n}{\sqrt{n}} = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n}{\sqrt{n}}$
- Show: MGF of  $Z_n$  converges to MFG of  $N(0, 1)$  (using inversion property)

**Proof.**

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{E}\left[e^{sS_n/\sqrt{n}}\right] &= \mathbb{E}\left[e^{sX_1/\sqrt{n}}\right] \times \dots \times \mathbb{E}\left[e^{sX_n/\sqrt{n}}\right] \\ &= \left(\mathbb{E}\left[e^{sX_1/\sqrt{n}}\right]\right)^n = \left(M_{X_1}\left(\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}\right)\right)^n\end{aligned}$$

- For simplicity, let  $M(\cdot) = M_{X_1}(\cdot)$
- **Facts:**  $M(0) = 1$ ,  $M'(0) = 0$ ,  $M''(0) = 1$
- $\left(M\left(\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}\right)\right)^n \rightarrow \text{what???$
- Taking log,  $n \log M\left(\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}\right) \rightarrow \text{what???$

For convenience, do the change of variable  $y = \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$ . Then, we have

$$\lim_{y \rightarrow 0} \frac{\log M(y s)}{y^2}$$

- If we apply l'hospital's rule twice (please check), we get

$$\lim_{y \rightarrow 0} \frac{\log M(y s)}{y^2} = \frac{s^2}{2}$$



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## Questions?

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## Review Questions

- 1) What's the practical value of LLN and CLT?
- 2) Explain LLN and CLT from the scaling perspective.
- 3) Why are LLN and CLT great?
- 4) Why do we need different concepts of convergence for random variables?
- 5) Explain what is convergence in probability.
- 6) Explain what is convergence in distribution.
- 7) Why is MGF useful?

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