

# Can an event space be a countably infinite set?

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**Exercise 2.** Can an event space be a countably infinite set?

**Solution** First of all, event space in measure theory based probability, it is required to be a sigma-algebra. Then we need to prove a sigma-algebra that contains infinitely many sets must be uncountable.

Assume we have a set  $\mathbb{X}$ , and an infinite sigma-algebra  $\mathbb{S}$  on it. I want to prove that  $\mathbb{S}$  is uncountable by contradiction.

**Assumption**  $\mathbb{S} = \{A_i\}_{i=1}^{\infty}, B_x = \cap_{x \in A_i} A_i$ . Due to  $\mathbb{S}$  is countable,  $B_x$  is made of countable intersection, which means it belongs to  $\mathbb{S}$ .

**Lemma**  $c \in B_x \cap B_y \rightarrow B_x = B_y$

**Proof** If  $x \notin B_c, B_x \setminus B_c \subset S$  with  $x \in B_x \setminus B_c$ . But  $B_x$  is the intersection of all the intervals containing  $x$ . Therefore  $B_x \setminus B_c = B_x$ , which means,  $B_x = B_c$ .

Analogously, we have  $B_y = B_c$ . So we've got  $B_x = B_y$  when  $c \in B_x \cap B_y$ .

If there are finite sets of the form  $B_x$ , then:  $\mathbb{S}$  is a union of a finite number of disjoint sets, which leads to  $\mathbb{S}$  is finite.

If there are countable-infinite sets of the form  $B_x$ , then suppose  $G = \{B_x\}_{x \in X}$ . By taking all the possible disjoint unions from  $G$  you can form  $\|P(G)\|$  new different sets (P means power set), hence an uncountable number of different sets. (G is countably infinite, then  $P(G)$  is uncountable)

Notice that every possible union of sets in  $G$  is a set that belongs to  $S$ , since  $B_x \in S$  and  $S$  is a sigma-algebra. This means that  $S$  should be uncountable in order to contain this uncountable number of all possible different unions of the sets in the family  $G$ .

In conclusion, an event space can't be a countably infinite set.