

INTRODUCTION TO STATISTICS
THEORY, METHODS, AND APPLICATIONS

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Statistics is a mathematical discipline that uses probability theory (which, in turn, relies on set theory) to extract insights from information (data). Probability theory is a branch of pure mathematics—probabilistic questions can be posed and solved using axiomatic reasoning, and therefore there is one correct answer to any probability question. Statistical questions can be converted into probability questions through the use of probability models. Given assumptions about the mechanism generating the data, statistical questions can be answered using probability theory. This highlights the dual nature of statistics, which consists of two integral parts.

1. The first part involves the formulation and evaluation of probabilistic models, a process situated within the philosophy of science. This phase grapples with the foundational aspects of constructing models that accurately represent the problem at hand.
2. The second part concerns itself with extracting answers after assuming a specific model. Here, statistics becomes a practical application of probability theory, involving both theoretical considerations and numerical analysis in real-world scenarios.

This duality underscores the interdisciplinary nature of statistics, bridging the gap between the conceptual and the applied aspects of probability theory. Although probabilities are well defined, their interpretation is not specified beyond their mathematical definition. This ambiguity has given rise to two competing statistical paradigms, corresponding to two interpretations of probability: the Frequentist paradigm and the Bayesian paradigm. This book aims to explain how these paradigms fit together, as well as to provide a non-exhaustive overview of methods within each.

1.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has been shaped by many sources of inspiration. A few exercises are adapted from [1], the idea of presenting decision theory as a contest between “Robot vs. Nature” is inspired by [2], and the overall style has been influenced by works such as [1, 3, 4].

CHAPTER 2

Introduction to Set Theory

Set theory is a foundational branch of mathematics that provides the language and structure underlying much of modern mathematics, including probability theory. At its core, it studies sets – collections of distinct objects or elements – and the relationships between them. This chapter reviews the essential properties and operations of sets, laying the groundwork for the axiomatic development of probability theory and, ultimately, statistics.

Definition 2.1 (Set). *A set is a collection of distinct objects, called elements, considered as a single entity. Sets are typically denoted using curly braces {} and can be described in two primary ways:*

1. *By listing their elements separated by commas, e.g.*

$$A = \{a_1, a_2, a_3\}. \tag{2.1}$$

2. *By specifying a defining property of their elements, e.g.*

$$A = \{x : x \text{ is a natural number}\}. \tag{2.2}$$

Sets can also be illustrated graphically, as in Figure 1.

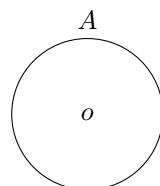


Figure 1: The graphical representation of a generic set A with generic element o .

Definition 2.2 (Membership). *Given an object o and a set A , the notation $o \in A$ denotes that o is an element (or member) of A . If $o \notin A$, then o is not an element of A .*

Definition 2.3 (Cartesian product). *The Cartesian product of sets A and B , denoted by $A \times B$, is defined as the set containing all ordered pairs (a, b) , where a is in A and b is in B .*

Example 2.1. —

Let $A = \{a_1, a_2\}$ and $B = \{b_1, b_2, b_3\}$ then

$$A \times B = \{(a_1, b_1), (a_1, b_2), (a_1, b_3), (a_2, b_1), (a_2, b_2), (a_2, b_3)\}. \quad (2.3)$$

Definition 2.4 (Subset). *The set A is called a subset of the set B , denoted $A \subseteq B$, if every element of A is also an element of B . Formally,*

$$A \subseteq B \iff \forall x \in A: x \in B. \quad (2.4)$$

By this definition, a set is always a subset of itself.

Definition 2.5 (Proper subset). *The set A is called a proper subset of the set B , denoted $A \subset B$, if $A \subseteq B$ and $A \neq B$. This means that A is a subset of B but A is not equal to B ; there is at least one element in B that is not in A .*

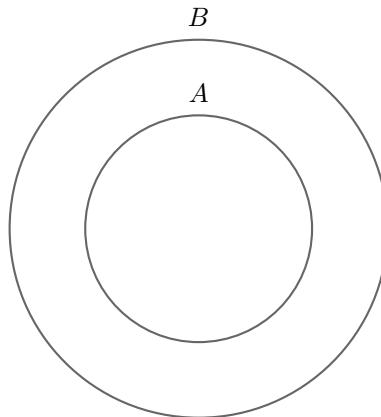


Figure 2: The graphical representation of $A \subset B$.

Example 2.2.

apple , apple , and apple are members (elements) of the set $\{\text{apple}, \text{apple}, \text{apple}\}$, but are not subsets of it; in turn, the subsets, such as $\{\text{apple}, \text{apple}\}$, are not members of the set $\{\text{apple}, \text{apple}, \text{apple}\}$.

Example 2.3.

Suppose $A = \{\text{apple}, \text{apple}, \text{apple}\}$, then $\{\text{apple}, \text{apple}\}$ and $\{\text{apple}\}$ are proper subsets of A , meaning $\{\text{apple}, \text{apple}\}, \{\text{apple}\} \subset A$. $\{\text{apple}, \text{apple}\}$, on the other hand, is not a subset of A , meaning $\{\text{apple}, \text{apple}\} \not\subset A$.

Definition 2.6 (Empty set). *The empty set, denoted by \emptyset or $\{\}$, is the set that contains no elements.*

Definition 2.7 (Power set). *The power set of a set A , denoted by 2^A , is defined as the set containing all possible subsets of A , including A itself and the empty set.*

Example 2.4.

The power set of the set $A = \{a_1, a_2, a_3\}$ can be written

$$2^A = \{\emptyset, \{a_1\}, \{a_2\}, \{a_3\}, \{a_1, a_2\}, \\ \{a_1, a_3\}, \{a_2, a_3\}, A\}. \quad (2.5)$$

Definition 2.8 (Universal set). *The universal set, denoted by Ω , is the set that contains all the objects or elements under consideration in a particular discussion or problem. It is the largest set in the context of a given study.*

Definition 2.9 (Closure). *A set A is said to be closed under an operation $*$ if, for all $x, y \in A$, the result of applying $*$ to x and y is also an element of A ; that is,*

$$x, y \in A \Rightarrow x * y \in A. \quad (2.6)$$

Example 2.5.

Let $\mathcal{E} = \{2k: k \in \mathbb{Z}\}$ denote the set of even integers. Then \mathcal{E} is closed under addition, since for any $x, y \in \mathcal{E}$,

$$x + y \in \mathcal{E}. \quad (2.7)$$

In contrast, the set of odd integers $\mathbb{O} = \{2k + 1: k \in \mathbb{Z}\}$ is not closed under addition, because $x + y$ is even when $x, y \in \mathbb{O}$.

Definition 2.10 (Union). *The union of sets A and B , denoted by $A \cup B$, is defined as the set containing all elements that are in A or B (or both). Figure 3 provides a graphical representation of $A \cup B$.*

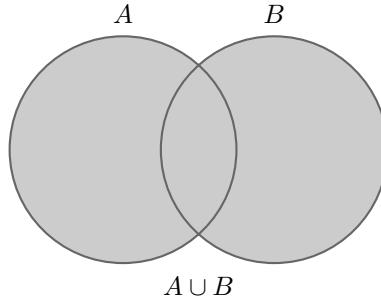


Figure 3: The graphical representation of $A \cup B$. Each circle represents the sets and the colored region represents the result of the binary operation.

Definition 2.11 (Finite and infinite unions). *For a collection of sets $\{A_i\}$, the union is denoted by $\bigcup_i A_i$ and is defined as the set containing all elements that are in at least one of the sets A_i .*

Definition 2.12 (Intersection). *The intersection of sets A and B , denoted by $A \cap B$, is defined as the set containing all elements that are common to both A and B . Figure 4 provides a graphical representation of $A \cap B$.*

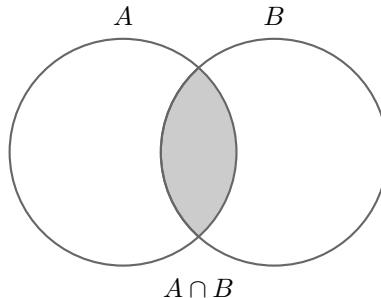


Figure 4: The graphical representation of $A \cap B$. Each circle represents the sets and the colored region represents the result of the binary operation.

Definition 2.13 (Finite and infinite intersections). *For a collection of sets $\{A_i\}$, the intersection is denoted by $\bigcap_i A_i$ and is defined as the set containing all elements that are common to all sets A_i .*

Definition 2.14 (Disjoint). *Two sets A and B are said to be disjoint if their intersection is the empty set, i.e., $A \cap B = \emptyset$. Figure 5 provides a graphical representation of $A \cap B = \emptyset$.*

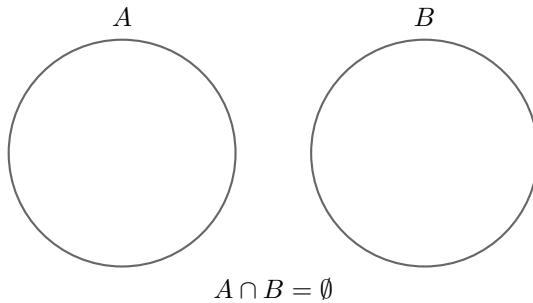


Figure 5: The graphical representation of $A \cap B = \emptyset$. Each circle represents the sets and the colored region represents the result of the binary operation.

Definition 2.15 (Complementation). *The complement of set A , denoted by A^c , is defined as the set containing all elements in the universal set Ω that are not in A . Figure 6 provides a graphical representation of $(A \cap B)^c$.*

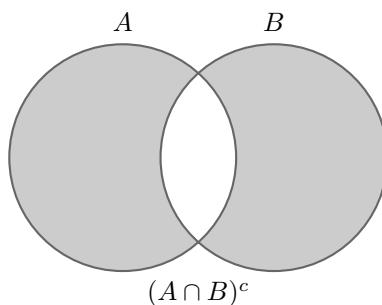


Figure 6: The graphical representation of $(A \cap B)^c$. Each circle represents the sets and the colored region represents the result of the binary operation.

Definition 2.16 (Difference). *The difference between sets A and B , denoted by $A \setminus B = A \cap B^c$, is defined as the set containing all elements in A that are not in B . Figure 7 provides a graphical representation of $A \setminus B$ and $B \setminus A$.*

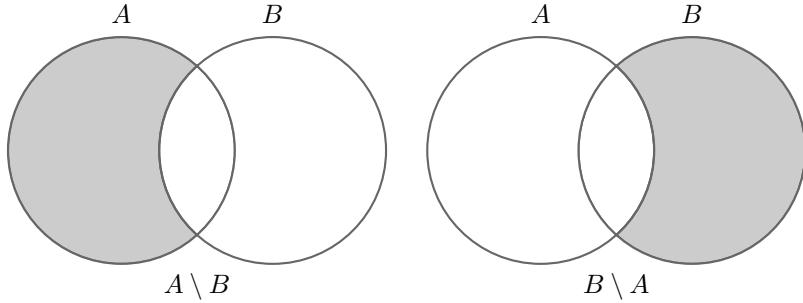


Figure 7: The graphical representation of $A \setminus B$ (left) and $B \setminus A$ (right). Each circle represents the sets and the colored region represents the result of the binary operation.

Definition 2.17 (Symmetric difference). *The symmetric difference of sets A and B , denoted by $A \Delta B$, is defined as the set containing all elements that are in either A or B but not in both, meaning $A \Delta B = (A \cap B^c) \cup (B \cap A^c)$. Figure 6 shows the symmetric difference between sets A and B .*

Definition 2.18 (Partition). *A collection of non-empty subsets $\{A_i\}$ of a set A is called a partition of A if the following conditions are satisfied:*

1. *The subsets A_i are pairwise disjoint, i.e., $A_i \cap A_j = \emptyset$ for all $i \neq j$.*
2. *The union of all subsets A_i is equal to the set A , i.e., $\bigcup_{i \in I} A_i = A$.*

A graphical representation of the set $A = \{A_1, A_2, A_3\}$, where A_j are partitions, is shown in Figure 8.

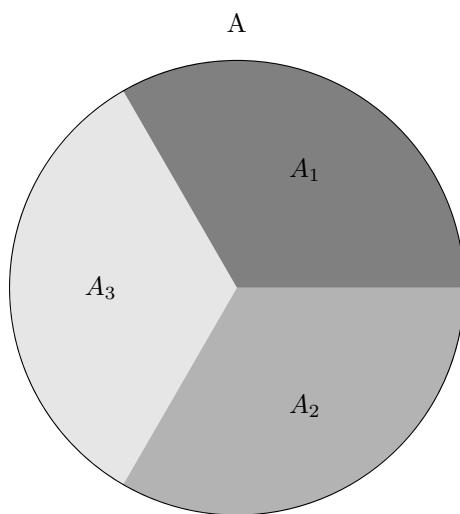


Figure 8: A graphical representation of $A = \{A_1, A_2, A_3\}$, where the A_j are the disjoint subsets forming a partition of A .

CHAPTER 3

Introduction to Probability Theory

Probability theory is a foundational branch of mathematics that provides the formal framework for reasoning about uncertainty. At its core, it studies random experiments and the likelihood of their outcomes. This chapter reviews the essential principles and axioms of probability, laying the groundwork for statistical inference and decision-making under uncertainty.

Definition 3.1 (Sample space). *The sample space, denoted by Ω , is the set of all possible outcomes (i.e. the universal set, see Definition 2.8) of a random experiment.*

Definition 3.2 (Event). *An event, E , is a subset of the sample space, denoted by $E \subseteq \Omega$, that corresponds to a specific collection of possible outcomes in a random experiment. Events may consist of single or multiple outcomes and are defined by the occurrence or non-occurrence of particular conditions.*

Definition 3.3 (σ -algebra). *A σ -algebra over a sample space Ω is a collection of subsets \mathcal{G} of Ω that contains both \emptyset and Ω , is closed under complementation (that is, if $E \in \mathcal{G}$ then $E^c \in \mathcal{G}$), and is closed under countable unions (and therefore also under countable intersections).*

Example 3.1.

Consider the roll of a fair six-sided die. The sample space for this experiment is given by $\Omega = \{\square, \blacksquare, \blacksquare, \blacksquare, \blacksquare, \blacksquare\}$. $E = \{\square, \blacksquare, \blacksquare\}$, is the event of rolling an even number.

Example 3.2.

For the roll with the fair die considered in Example 3.1, the trivial σ -algebra on Ω is given by

$$\mathcal{G}_{\text{trivial}} = \{\emptyset, \Omega\}. \tag{3.1}$$

In this case, the only events that can be described are the impossible event \emptyset and the certain event Ω . For instance, the event of rolling an even number $E = \{\square, \blacksquare, \blacksquare\}$ is not in $\mathcal{G}_{\text{trivial}}$.

Definition 3.4 (Borel σ -algebra). *The Borel σ -algebra, denoted $\mathcal{B}(\mathbb{R})$, is the smallest σ -algebra on \mathbb{R} that contains all open subsets of \mathbb{R} . Equivalently, $\mathcal{B}(\mathbb{R})$ is generated by the collection of open intervals $(a, b) \subset \mathbb{R}$. Thus, $\mathcal{B}(\mathbb{R})$ contains all sets that can be formed from open intervals through countable unions, intersections, and complements.*

Definition 3.5 (Event space). *The event space, denoted by \mathcal{F} , is the collection of all subsets of the sample space Ω that are considered valid events for a random experiment. Formally, \mathcal{F} is required to be a σ -algebra, ensuring it is closed under complementation, countable unions, and countable intersections.*

Remark 3.1 (Typical event spaces). *For a discrete sample space Ω , \mathcal{F} is typically the power set of Ω (Definition 2.7). For a continuous sample space, \mathcal{F} is typically the Borel σ -algebra (Definition 3.4), generated by open sets in \mathbb{R} (i.e. $\mathcal{B}(\mathbb{R})$).*

Definition 3.6 (Measurable space). *A measurable space is a pair (Ω, \mathcal{F}) , where Ω is the sample space of a random experiment and \mathcal{F} is the corresponding event space.*

Example 3.3.

For the roll with the fair die considered in Example 3.1, the event space is given by

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{F} &= \{\emptyset, \{\square\}, \{\square, \blacksquare\}, \{\blacksquare\}, \{\square, \blacksquare, \blacksquare, \blacksquare\}, \{\blacksquare\}, \dots, \Omega\} \\ &= 2^\Omega.\end{aligned}\tag{3.2}$$

Definition 3.7 (Measure). *Let (Ω, \mathcal{F}) be a measurable space, where Ω is the sample space and \mathcal{F} is the event space. A measure μ is a set function*

$$\mu: \mathcal{F} \rightarrow [0, \infty]\tag{3.3}$$

that satisfies Axiom 3.1 (non-negativity) and Axiom 3.2 (additivity).

Axiom 3.1 (Non-negativity). *For any event $E \in \mathcal{F}$, the measure $\mu(E)$ is non-negative, satisfying*

$$\mu(E) \geq 0 \quad \forall E \in \mathcal{F}.\tag{3.4}$$

Axiom 3.2 (Additivity). *For any countable sequence of mutually exclusive events $E_1, E_2, \dots \in \mathcal{F}$, the measure of their union is the sum of their individual measures, such that*

$$\mu\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} E_i\right) = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \mu(E_i) \quad \forall E_i \in \mathcal{F} \text{ where } \bigcap_{i=1}^{\infty} E_i = \emptyset. \quad (3.5)$$

Definition 3.8 (σ -finite measure). *Let (Ω, \mathcal{F}) be a measurable space, where Ω is the sample space and \mathcal{F} is the event space. A measure μ on (Ω, \mathcal{F}) is called σ -finite if there exists a countable collection of sets $A_i \in \mathcal{F} \forall i \in \mathbb{N}$ such that*

$$\Omega = \bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} A_i \quad \text{and} \quad \mu(A_i) < \infty \quad \forall i \in \mathbb{N}. \quad (3.6)$$

Definition 3.9 (Measurable function). *Let (Ω, \mathcal{F}) and $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$ be measurable spaces. A function*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \quad (3.7)$$

is said to be measurable if

$$X^{-1}(B) \in \mathcal{F} \quad \forall B \in \mathcal{F}_X, \quad (3.8)$$

where

$$X^{-1}(B) = \{\omega \in \Omega: X(\omega) \in B\}. \quad (3.9)$$

In words, the preimage of every measurable set in \mathcal{F}_X is a measurable set in \mathcal{F} .

Definition 3.10 (Lebesgue measure). *Let (Ω, \mathcal{F}) be a continuous measurable space, where Ω is the sample space and $\mathcal{F} = \mathcal{B}(\mathbb{R})$ is the event space. The Lebesgue measure λ is a measure, in the sense of Definition 3.7, defined on \mathcal{F} such that, for every interval $(a, b] \subseteq \mathbb{R}$,*

$$\lambda((a, b]) = b - a. \quad (3.10)$$

In higher dimensions, the Lebesgue measure λ extends naturally to the n -dimensional Euclidean space \mathbb{R}^n , coinciding with the usual notions of length ($n = 1$), area ($n = 2$), and volume ($n = 3$).

Definition 3.11 (Counting measure). *Let (Ω, \mathcal{F}) be a discrete measurable space, where Ω is the sample space and \mathcal{F} is the event space. The counting measure ν is a measure, in the sense of Definition 3.7, defined on \mathcal{F} such that for every event $E \in \mathcal{F}$,*

$$\nu(E) = |E|, \tag{3.11}$$

where $|E|$ denotes the cardinality of E (finite or countably infinite). In particular, for finite sets E , $\nu(E)$ equals the number of elements in E , and for countably infinite sets, $\nu(E) = \infty$.

Definition 3.12 (Probability measure). *Let (Ω, \mathcal{F}) be a measurable space, where Ω is the sample space and \mathcal{F} is the event space. A probability measure \mathbb{P} is a measure, in the sense of Definition 3.7, defined on (Ω, \mathcal{F}) that, in addition to satisfying Axiom 3.1 (non-negativity) and Axiom 3.2 (additivity), satisfies the normalization property*

$$\mathbb{P}(\Omega) = 1. \tag{3.12}$$

Definition 3.13 (Objective probability measure). *Let \mathbb{P} denote a probability measure defined on the measurable space (Ω, \mathcal{F}) . Interpreting the probability measure as an objective probability measure [5, 6] consists in viewing $\mathbb{P}(E)$ as the long-run relative frequency of the event $E \in \mathcal{F}$ over repeated independent trials, provided that the limit exists.*

Definition 3.14 (Subjective probability measure). *Let \mathbb{P} denote a probability measure defined on the measurable space (Ω, \mathcal{F}) . Interpreting the probability measure as a subjective probability measure [7, 8] consists in assigning values to events based on rational degrees of belief derived from prior knowledge, constraints, or partial information, in a way that avoids internal inconsistencies (i.e., satisfies Dutch-book coherence [9]).*

Definition 3.15 (Probability space). *A probability space is a triple $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$, where Ω is the sample space, \mathcal{F} is the event space and \mathbb{P} is a probability measure on the measurable space (Ω, \mathcal{F}) .*

Remark 3.2 (Reason for Borel σ -algebra). *The restriction to Borel sets in continuous sample spaces avoids paradoxical constructions such as non-measurable sets (e.g., the Vitali set [10]), which cannot be consistently assigned a probability [11], ensuring that the probability measure is well defined on all events in \mathcal{F} [12].*

Example 3.4.

Consider a random experiment where a real number is chosen uniformly from the interval $[0, 1]$. The sample space is therefore $\Omega = [0, 1]$. The event space \mathcal{F} cannot be the power set of $[0, 1]$, since not all subsets admit a well-defined probability measure. Instead, \mathcal{F} is chosen as the Borel σ -algebra $\mathcal{B}([0, 1])$, which includes sets such as open intervals, closed intervals, and countable unions or intersections thereof. For example, the event

$$E = (0.2, 0.5) \quad (3.13)$$

represents the outcome that the selected real number lies between 0.2 and 0.5.

Definition 3.16 (Independence). Two events $E_1, E_2 \in \mathcal{F}$ in a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ are said to be independent if and only if

$$\mathbb{P}(E_1 \cap E_2) = \mathbb{P}(E_1)\mathbb{P}(E_2). \quad (3.14)$$

Definition 3.17 (Conditional probability). Let $E_1, E_2 \in \mathcal{F}$ be events in a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ with $\mathbb{P}(E_2) > 0$. The conditional probability of E_1 given E_2 is defined by

$$\mathbb{P}(E_1 | E_2) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(E_1 \cap E_2)}{\mathbb{P}(E_2)}. \quad (3.15)$$

Definition 3.18 (Conditional independence). Events E_1 and E_2 are conditionally independent given $E_3 \in \mathcal{F}$ if

$$\mathbb{P}(E_1 \cap E_2 | E_3) = \mathbb{P}(E_1 | E_3)\mathbb{P}(E_2 | E_3), \quad (3.16)$$

provided $\mathbb{P}(E_3) > 0$.

Theorem 3.1 (Chain rule). Let $E_1, E_2, E_3 \in \mathcal{F}$ be events in a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ with $\mathbb{P}(E_3) > 0$. Then the chain rule states that

$$\mathbb{P}(E_1 \cap E_2 \cap E_3) = \mathbb{P}(E_1 | E_2 \cap E_3)\mathbb{P}(E_2 | E_3)\mathbb{P}(E_3). \quad (3.17)$$

Proof. From the definition of conditional probability in Definition 3.17

$$\mathbb{P}(E_1 \cap E_2 \cap E_3) = \mathbb{P}(E_1 | E_2 \cap E_3)\mathbb{P}(E_2 \cap E_3). \quad (3.18)$$

Using the definition of conditional probability again

$$\mathbb{P}(E_2 \cap E_3) = \mathbb{P}(E_2 | E_3)\mathbb{P}(E_3). \quad (3.19)$$

which leads to Theorem 3.1. \square

Theorem 3.2 (Bayes theorem). *For events $E_1, E_2 \in \mathcal{F}$ in a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ with $\mathbb{P}(E_2) > 0$, Bayes theorem states that*

$$\mathbb{P}(E_1 | E_2) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(E_2 | E_1) \mathbb{P}(E_1)}{\mathbb{P}(E_2)}. \quad (3.20)$$

Proof. Bayes theorem follows directly from applying Theorem 3.1 and applying the concept of symmetry as follows

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(E_1 \cap E_2) &= \mathbb{P}(E_1 | E_2) \mathbb{P}(E_2) \\ &= \mathbb{P}(E_2 | E_1) \mathbb{P}(E_1) \end{aligned} \quad (3.21)$$

from which

$$\mathbb{P}(E_1 | E_2) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(E_2 | E_1) \mathbb{P}(E_1)}{\mathbb{P}(E_2)} \quad (3.22)$$

which is Theorem 3.2. \square

Theorem 3.3 (Law of total probability / Marginalization). *Let $\{E_1, \dots, E_n\}$ be a finite partition, in the sense of Definition 2.18, of the sample space Ω in a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$. Then, for any event $A \in \mathcal{F}$,*

$$\mathbb{P}(A) = \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbb{P}(A \cap E_i). \quad (3.23)$$

Proof. Consider an event $A \in \mathcal{F}$ and a partition $\{E_1, \dots, E_n\}$ of Ω such that $\cup_i E_i = \Omega$. For mutually exclusive events (which a partition by definition is), Axiom 3.2 can be used such that

$$\sum_i \mathbb{P}(A \cap E_i) = \mathbb{P}\left(\bigcup_i (A \cap E_i)\right). \quad (3.24)$$

$\bigcup_i (A \cap E_i)$ is the union of all intersections between A and the E 's. However, since the E 's form a partition of Ω , they together form Ω and the intersection between Ω and A is A , meaning

$$\begin{aligned} \bigcup_i (A \cap E_i) &= (A, \bigcup_i E_i) \\ &= (A \cap \Omega) \\ &= A. \end{aligned} \quad (3.25)$$

Combining Equation 3.24 and Equation 3.25 yields

$$\mathbb{P}(A) = \sum_i \mathbb{P}(A \cap E_i) \quad (3.26)$$

which is Theorem 3.3. \square

Example 3.5.

For the roll with the fair die considered in Example 3.1, the sample space is $\Omega = \{\square, \blacksquare, \boxdot, \blacksquare\boxdot, \boxtimes, \blacksquare\boxtimes\}$. Let $E_1 = \{\square, \blacksquare, \boxdot\}$ and $E_2 = \{\boxtimes\}$ be two events, then from Definition 3.17

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(E_1 | E_2) &= \frac{\mathbb{P}(E_1 \cap E_2)}{\mathbb{P}(E_2)} \\ &= 1 \end{aligned} \quad (3.27)$$

where $\mathbb{P}(E_1 \cap E_2) = \frac{1}{6}$ since $E_1 \cap E_2 = E_2 = \{\boxtimes\}$ is one of 6 possible values and $\mathbb{P}(E_2) = \frac{1}{6}$. Intuitively this makes sense because E_2 is a set with one member and since E_2 is known, the outcome of the experiment is known with certainty in this case.

Definition 3.19 (Random Variable). A random variable X is a measurable function in the sense of Definition 3.9,

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \quad (3.28)$$

from a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to a measurable space $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$, where Ω_X is the codomain of X and \mathcal{F}_X is a σ -algebra on Ω_X .

Remark 3.3 (Types of random variables). Random variables provide a numerical representation of the outcomes of a random experiment. They are classified as either discrete, when Ω_X is countable, or continuous, when Ω_X is uncountable, often modeled as an interval of \mathbb{R} .

Definition 3.20 (Image measure). Let

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \quad (3.29)$$

be a random variable from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to a measurable space $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$. Then [13]

$$\mathbb{P} \circ X^{-1}: \mathcal{F}_X \rightarrow [0, 1] \quad (3.30)$$

defines a probability measure on $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$. $\mathbb{P} \circ X^{-1} \equiv \mathbb{P}_X$ is called the image measure or the pushforward measure of \mathbb{P} .

Definition 3.21 (Expected value). *Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \quad (3.31)$$

be a random variable from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to a measurable space $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$, and let

$$\mathbb{P}_X = \mathbb{P} \circ X^{-1} \quad (3.32)$$

be the image measure of X on $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$. The expected value of X , denoted by $\mathbb{E}_X[X]$, is defined as follows

$$\mathbb{E}_X[X] \equiv \int_{\Omega_X} x d\mathbb{P}_X(x). \quad (3.33)$$

Theorem 3.4 (Non-negativity of expected value). *Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \quad (3.34)$$

be a random variable from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to a measurable space $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$. $X \geq 0 \Rightarrow \mathbb{E}_X[X] \geq 0$.

Proof. From Definition 3.21

$$\mathbb{E}_X[X] = \int_{\Omega_X} x d\mathbb{P}_X(x), \quad (3.35)$$

and if $x \geq 0$ for all $x \in \Omega_X$, the integral of a non-negative function with respect to a measure is non-negative. Hence, $\mathbb{E}_X[X] \geq 0$. \square

Theorem 3.5 (Linearity of expected value). *Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \quad (3.36)$$

be a random variable from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to a measurable space $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$. The expected value is a linear operator meaning $\mathbb{E}_X[a + X] = a + \mathbb{E}_X[X]$ and $\mathbb{E}_X[aX] = a\mathbb{E}_X[X]$ for any constant a .

Proof. From Definition 3.21

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}_X[a + X] &= \int_{\Omega_X} (a + x) d\mathbb{P}_X(x) \\ &= a \int_{\Omega_X} d\mathbb{P}_X(x) + \int_{\Omega_X} x d\mathbb{P}_X(x) \\ &= a + \mathbb{E}_X[X], \end{aligned} \quad (3.37)$$

since

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{P}_X(\Omega_X) &= \int_{\Omega_X} d\mathbb{P}_X(x) \\ &= 1.\end{aligned}\tag{3.38}$$

Similarly,

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{E}_X[aX] &= \int_{\Omega_X} axd\mathbb{P}_X(x) \\ &= a \int_{\Omega_X} xd\mathbb{P}_X(x) \\ &= a\mathbb{E}_X[X].\end{aligned}\tag{3.39}$$

□

Remark 3.4 (Law of the unconscious statistician). *Definition 3.21 naturally extends to measurable functions via the law of the unconscious statistician. Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \tag{3.40}$$

be a random variable from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to a measurable space $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$, and let

$$g: \Omega_X \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \tag{3.41}$$

be a generic measurable function. Denote the image measure of X by \mathbb{P}_X . Then

$$\mathbb{E}_X[g(X)] \equiv \int_{\Omega_X} g(x)d\mathbb{P}_X(x).\tag{3.42}$$

Definition 3.22 (Variance). *Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \tag{3.43}$$

be a real-valued random variable from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to a measurable space $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$. The variance of X , denoted by $\text{Var}_X[X]$, is defined as follows

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Var}_X[X] &\equiv \mathbb{E}_X[(X - \mathbb{E}_X[X])^2] \\ &= \mathbb{E}_X[X^2] - \mathbb{E}_X[X]^2.\end{aligned}\tag{3.44}$$

Definition 3.23 (Probability density with respect to a measure). *Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \quad (3.45)$$

be a random variable from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to the measurable space $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$. Let μ_X be a σ -finite measure on $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$, in the sense of Definition 3.8. If the image measure $\mathbb{P}_X = \mathbb{P} \circ X^{-1}$ is absolutely continuous with respect to μ_X , then by the Radon-Nikodym theorem [14] there exists a measurable function

$$p_X = \frac{d\mathbb{P}_X}{d\mu_X}, \quad (3.46)$$

called the probability density of X with respect to μ_X , such that

$$\mathbb{P}_X(B) = \int_B p_X(x) d\mu_X(x), \quad \forall B \in \mathcal{F}_X. \quad (3.47)$$

Moreover, since \mathbb{P}_X is a probability measure, the density satisfies

$$p_X(x) \geq 0, \quad \text{and} \quad \int_{\Omega_X} p_X(x) d\mu_X(x) = 1. \quad (3.48)$$

Remark 3.5 (Probability density function). *In the case of a continuous sample space, the measure $\mu_X = \lambda_X$ is the Lebesgue measure (Definition 3.10) on Ω_X . The probability density p_X is then called the probability density function (PDF) of X .*

Remark 3.6 (Probability mass function). *In the case of a discrete sample space, the measure $\mu_X = \nu_X$ is the counting measure (Definition 3.11) on Ω_X . The probability density p_X is then called the probability mass function (PMF) of X , and*

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}_X(B) &= \int_B p_X(x) d\nu_X(x) \\ &= \sum_{x \in B} p_X(x) \quad \forall B \in \mathcal{F}_X. \end{aligned} \quad (3.49)$$

Remark 3.7 (Expected value of a discrete random variable). *Let X be a discrete random variable with PMF p_X . From Definition 3.21 and Remark 3.6 the expected value of X can be written*

$$\mathbb{E}_X[X] = \sum_{x \in \Omega_X} x p_X(x). \quad (3.50)$$

Remark 3.8 (Expected value of a continuous random variable). *Let X be a continuous random variable with PDF p_X then from Definition 3.21 and Remark 3.5 the expected value of X can be written*

$$\mathbb{E}_X[X] = \int_{\Omega_X} x p_X(x) d\lambda_X(x), \quad (3.51)$$

where λ_X denotes the Lebesgue measure on \mathbb{R} . In practice, it is customary to write $d\lambda_X(x)$ simply as dx .

Example 3.6. ——————

Let X be a continuous random variable with PDF p_X on $\Omega_X \subseteq \mathbb{R}$. For the interval (event) $[a, b] \subseteq \Omega_X$,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(X^{-1}([a, b])) &= \mathbb{P}_X([a, b]) \\ &= \int_{[a, b]} p_X(x) d\lambda_X(x) \\ &= \int_a^b p_X(x) dx. \end{aligned} \quad (3.52)$$

Definition 3.24 (Joint probability measure). *Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X, \quad Y: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Y \quad (3.53)$$

be random variables from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to the measurable spaces $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$ and $(\Omega_Y, \mathcal{F}_Y)$, respectively. The joint probability measure of X and Y is the image measure

$$\mathbb{P}_{X,Y} = \mathbb{P} \circ (X, Y)^{-1} \quad (3.54)$$

defined on the measurable space

$$(\Omega_{X_1} \times \Omega_Y, \mathcal{F}_X \otimes \mathcal{F}_Y). \quad (3.55)$$

All probability measures related to the random variables can be derived from the joint probability measure via Theorem 3.3.

Remark 3.9 (Marginalization over a joint measure). *Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X, \quad Y: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Y \quad (3.56)$$

be random variables from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to measurable spaces $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$ and $(\Omega_Y, \mathcal{F}_Y)$, respectively. Suppose $A \in \mathcal{F}_X$ and let $\mathbb{P}_{X,Y}$ denote the joint probability measure on the measurable space $(\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y, \mathcal{F}_X \otimes \mathcal{F}_Y)$, then from Theorem 3.3

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}_X(A) &= \mathbb{P}_{X,Y}(A \times \Omega_Y) \\ &= \int_A \int_{\Omega_Y} p_{X,Y}(x, y) d\mu_Y(y) d\mu_X(x), \quad \forall A \in \mathcal{F}_X, \end{aligned} \quad (3.57)$$

where $p_{X,Y}$ is the probability density with respect to $\mu_{X,Y} = \mu_X \otimes \mu_Y$.

Theorem 3.6 (Law of total expectation). *Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X, \quad Y: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Y \quad (3.58)$$

be random variables from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to measurable spaces $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$ and $(\Omega_Y, \mathcal{F}_Y)$, respectively. Let $\mathbb{P}_{X,Y}$ denote the joint probability measure on the measurable space $(\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y, \mathcal{F}_X \otimes \mathcal{F}_Y)$. Then

$$\mathbb{E}_X[X] = \mathbb{E}_Y[\mathbb{E}_{X|Y}[X | Y]]. \quad (3.59)$$

Proof. By Fubini's theorem and Definition 3.17,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}_X[X] &= \int_{\Omega_X} x d\mathbb{P}_X(x) \\ &= \int_{\Omega_X} \int_{\Omega_Y} x d\mathbb{P}_{X,Y}(x, y) \\ &= \int_{\Omega_Y} \int_{\Omega_X} x d\mathbb{P}_{X|Y=y}(x) d\mathbb{P}_Y(y) \\ &= \mathbb{E}_Y[\mathbb{E}_{X|Y}[X | Y]]. \end{aligned} \quad (3.60)$$

or equivalently in terms of the probability densities

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}_X[X] &= \int_{\Omega_X} x p_X(x) d\mu_X(x) \\ &= \int_{\Omega_Y} \int_{\Omega_X} x p_{X,Y}(x, y) d\mu_X(x) d\mu_Y(y) \\ &= \int_{\Omega_Y} p_Y(y) \left(\int_{\Omega_X} x p_{X|Y}(x | y) d\mu_X(x) \right) d\mu_Y(y) \\ &= \mathbb{E}_Y[\mathbb{E}_{X|Y}[X | Y]] \end{aligned} \quad (3.61)$$

where $p_{X,Y}$ is the probability density with respect to $\mu_{X,Y} = \mu_X \otimes \mu_Y$. \square

Theorem 3.7 (Expectation of product of independent random variables). *Let $X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X$ and $Y: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Y$ be continuous random variables defined on the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$. If the random variables are independent the expectation can be written*

$$\mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[XY] = \mathbb{E}_X[X]\mathbb{E}_Y[Y]. \quad (3.62)$$

Proof. If the random variables are independent, then according to Definition 3.16

$$\mathbb{P}_{X,Y}(\{x, y\}) = \mathbb{P}_X(\{x\})\mathbb{P}_Y(\{y\}) \quad (3.63)$$

meaning

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[XY] &= \int_{\Omega_X} \int_{\Omega_Y} xy d\mathbb{P}_{X,Y}(x, y) \\ &= \int_{\Omega_X} x d\mathbb{P}_X(x) \int_{\Omega_Y} y d\mathbb{P}_Y(y) \\ &= \mathbb{E}_X[X]\mathbb{E}_Y[Y]. \end{aligned} \quad (3.64)$$

\square

Definition 3.25 (Covariance). *Let $X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X$ and $Y: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Y$ be continuous random variables defined on the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$, then the covariance of X and Y , denoted by $\text{Cov}_{X,Y}[X, Y]$, is defined as follows*

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cov}_{X,Y}[X, Y] &= \mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[(X - \mathbb{E}_X[X])(Y - \mathbb{E}_Y[Y])] \\ &= \mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[XY] - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\mathbb{E}_Y[Y], \end{aligned} \quad (3.65)$$

Theorem 3.8 (Covariance of independent random variables). *Let*

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \quad \text{and} \quad Y: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Y \quad (3.66)$$

be continuous random variables defined on the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$. If X and Y are independent, then their covariance is

$$\text{Cov}_{X,Y}[X, Y] = 0. \quad (3.67)$$

Proof. Using Theorem 3.7 in Definition 3.25 yields $\text{Cov}_{X,Y}[X, Y] = 0$. \square

Definition 3.26 (Correlation). Let $X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X$ and $Y: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Y$ be continuous random variables defined on the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$. The correlation between X and Y , denoted by $\text{Corr}_{X,Y}[X, Y]$, is defined as

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Corr}_{X,Y}[X, Y] &= \frac{\text{Cov}_{X,Y}[X, Y]}{\sqrt{\text{Var}_X[X] \text{Var}_Y[Y]}} \\ &= \frac{\mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[XY] - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\mathbb{E}_Y[Y]}{\sqrt{(\mathbb{E}_X[X^2] - \mathbb{E}_X[X]^2)(\mathbb{E}_Y[Y^2] - \mathbb{E}_Y[Y]^2)}}.\end{aligned}\quad (3.68)$$

Remark 3.10 (Correlation versus covariance). Correlation and covariance are both measures of the relationship between two random variables. While covariance indicates the extent to which two variables change together, correlation provides a standardized measure of this relationship, taking into account the scales of the variables.

Definition 3.27 (Change of variables). Let

$$X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \quad (3.69)$$

be a random variables from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to the measurable space $(\Omega_X, \mathcal{F}_X)$, and let

$$\mathbb{P}_X(B) = \int_B p_X(x) d\lambda_X(x), \quad \forall B \in \mathcal{F}_X. \quad (3.70)$$

Let

$$g: \Omega_X \rightarrow \Omega_Y \quad (3.71)$$

be a continuous differentiable bijection with continuous differentiable inverse g^{-1} , and define

$$Y = g(X). \quad (3.72)$$

Then Y admits a probability density function p_Y with respect to the Lebesgue measure on $\Omega_Y = g(\Omega_X)$, given by [3]

$$p_Y(y) = p_X(g^{-1}(y)), \left| \frac{d}{dy} g^{-1}(y) \right|, \quad y \in \Omega_Y. \quad (3.73)$$

Example 3.7.

Let $X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X$ and $Y: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Y$ be continuous random variables defined on the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$. Using Definition 3.22 and Definition 3.25, the variance of a sum can be written

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Var}_{X,Y}[X + Y] &= \mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[(X + Y - \mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[X + Y])^2] \\ &= \mathbb{E}_X[(X - \mathbb{E}_X[X])^2] + \mathbb{E}_Y[(Y - \mathbb{E}_Y[Y])^2] \\ &\quad + 2\mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[(X - \mathbb{E}_X[X])(Y - \mathbb{E}_Y[Y])] \\ &= \text{Var}_X[X] + \text{Var}_Y[Y] + 2\text{Cov}_{X,Y}[X, Y].\end{aligned}\tag{3.74}$$

Example 3.8.

Let $X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X$ be a continuous random variable with probability density function (PDF) p_X , defined on a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$. Suppose

$$\begin{aligned}Y &= g(X) \\ &= aX + b,\end{aligned}\tag{3.75}$$

where $a \neq 0$ and b are constants. The inverse function is

$$g^{-1}(y) = \frac{y - b}{a}.\tag{3.76}$$

Using Definition 3.27, the PDF of Y is

$$\begin{aligned}p_Y(y) &= p_X(g^{-1}(y)) \left| \frac{d}{dy}g^{-1}(y) \right| \\ &= p_X\left(\frac{y - b}{a}\right) \left| \frac{1}{a} \right|.\end{aligned}\tag{3.77}$$

Hence,

$$p_Y(y) = \frac{1}{|a|} p_X\left(\frac{y - b}{a}\right).\tag{3.78}$$

Example 3.9.

Let $X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X$ be a continuous random variable with probability density function (PDF) p_X , defined on a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$. Suppose $p_X(x) \propto \text{const}$, and let

$$\begin{aligned}Y &= g(X) \\ &= \frac{e^X}{1 + e^X}.\end{aligned}\tag{3.79}$$

The inverse function is

$$g^{-1}(y) = \ln\left(\frac{y}{1-y}\right). \quad (3.80)$$

Using Definition 3.27, the PDF of Y is

$$\begin{aligned} p_Y(y) &= p_X(g^{-1}(y)) \left| \frac{d}{dy} g^{-1}(y) \right| \\ &= \text{const} \cdot \left| \frac{d}{dy} \ln\left(\frac{y}{1-y}\right) \right| \\ &= \text{const} \cdot \frac{1}{y(1-y)}, \quad y \in (0, 1). \end{aligned} \quad (3.81)$$

Theorem 3.9 (Error propagation). Let

$$X_1: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_{X_1}, \dots, X_n: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_{X_n} \quad (3.82)$$

be continuous random variables defined on a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$, and let

$$g: \Omega_{X_1} \times \dots \times \Omega_{X_n} \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \quad (3.83)$$

be a differentiable function of these variables. Denote for shorthand

$$X = (X_1, \dots, X_n) \quad (3.84)$$

and

$$\mathbb{E}_X[X] = (\mathbb{E}_{X_1}[X_1], \dots, \mathbb{E}_{X_n}[X_n]). \quad (3.85)$$

Then the variance of $g(X)$, which quantifies the uncertainty in g due to the uncertainties in X_1, \dots, X_n , satisfies the first-order approximation

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Var}_X[g(X)] &= \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{\partial g(X)}{\partial X_i} \Big|_{X=\mathbb{E}_X[X]} \right)^2 \text{Var}_{X_i}[X_i] \\ &\quad + \sum_{i \neq j} \frac{\partial g(X)}{\partial X_i} \frac{\partial g(X)}{\partial X_j} \Big|_{X=\mathbb{E}_X[X]} \text{Cov}_{X_i, X_j}[X_i, X_j] \\ &\quad + \mathcal{O}(\|X - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\|^3). \end{aligned} \quad (3.86)$$

Proof. $g(X)$ can be written as a Taylor expansion around $\mathbb{E}_X[X]$ as follows

$$\begin{aligned} g(X) &= g(\mathbb{E}_X[X]) + \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\partial g(X)}{\partial X_i} \Big|_{X=\mathbb{E}_X[X]} (X_i - \mathbb{E}_{X_i}[X_i]) \\ &\quad + \mathcal{O}(\|X - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\|^2). \end{aligned} \quad (3.87)$$

Consequently

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}_X[g(X)] &= g(\mathbb{E}_X[X]) + \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\partial g(X)}{\partial X_i} \Big|_{X=\mathbb{E}_X[X]} \mathbb{E}_{X_i}[X_i - \mathbb{E}_{X_i}[X_i]]^0 \\ &\quad + \mathcal{O}(\|X - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\|^2) \\ &= g(\mathbb{E}_X[X]) + \mathcal{O}(\|X - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\|^2) \end{aligned} \quad (3.88)$$

meaning the variance of g can be approximated as follows

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Var}_X[g(X)] &= \mathbb{E}_X[(g(X) - \mathbb{E}_X[g(X)])^2] \\ &= \mathbb{E}_X \left[\left(\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mathbb{E}_{X_i}[X_i]) \frac{\partial g}{\partial X_i} \Big|_{X=\mathbb{E}_X[X]} \right. \right. \\ &\quad \left. \left. + \mathcal{O}(\|X - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\|^2) \right)^2 \right] \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{\partial g(X)}{\partial X_i} \Big|_{X=\mathbb{E}_X[X]} \right)^2 \text{Var}_{X_i}[X_i] \\ &\quad + \sum_{i \neq j} \frac{\partial g(X)}{\partial X_i} \frac{\partial g(X)}{\partial X_j} \Big|_{X=\mathbb{E}_X[X]} \text{Cov}_{X_i, X_j}[X_i, X_j] \\ &\quad + \mathcal{O}(\|X - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\|^3). \end{aligned} \quad (3.89)$$

□

Remark 3.11 (Error propagation for independent random variables). *Let*

$$X_1: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_{X_1}, \dots, X_n: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_{X_n} \quad (3.90)$$

be continuous random variables defined on a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$. If the random variables X_1, \dots, X_n are independent, then according to Theorem 3.8 $\text{Cov}_{X_i, X_j}[X_i, X_j] = 0 \forall i \neq j$. In this case, Theorem 3.9 simplifies to

$$\text{Var}_X[g(X)] \approx \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{\partial g(X)}{\partial X_i} \Big|_{X=\mathbb{E}_X[X]} \right)^2 \text{Var}_{X_i}[X_i] \quad (3.91)$$

where

$$X = (X_1, \dots, X_n) \quad (3.92)$$

and

$$\mathbb{E}_X[X] = (\mathbb{E}_{X_1}[X_1], \dots, \mathbb{E}_{X_n}[X_n]). \quad (3.93)$$

Example 3.10.

A company produces square plates with dimensions characterized by two independent random variables

$$X \sim \text{Norm}(2m, (0.01m)^2), \quad Y \sim \text{Norm}(3m, (0.02m)^2). \quad (3.94)$$

The variance of the area XY can be determined exactly as follows

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Var}_{X,Y}[XY] &= \mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[(XY)^2] - \mathbb{E}_{X,Y}[XY]^2 \\ &= (\text{Var}_X[X] + \mathbb{E}_X[X])(\text{Var}_Y[Y] + \mathbb{E}_Y[Y]) - \mathbb{E}_X[X]^2 \mathbb{E}_Y[Y]^2 \\ &= \mathbb{E}_Y[Y]^2 \text{Var}_X[X] + \mathbb{E}_X[X]^2 \text{Var}_Y[Y] + \text{Var}_X[X] \text{Var}_Y[Y] \end{aligned} \quad (3.95)$$

where Theorem 3.7 has been applied. Via the linear approximation from Remark 3.11 the variance of the area can be approximated as follows

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Var}_{X,Y}[XY]|_{\text{linear approx.}} &\approx \sum_{i=X,Y} \left(\frac{\partial(XY)}{\partial i} \Big|_{X=\mathbb{E}_X[X], Y=\mathbb{E}_Y[Y]} \right)^2 \text{Var}_i[i] \\ &= \mathbb{E}_Y[Y]^2 \text{Var}_X[X] + \mathbb{E}_X[X]^2 \text{Var}_Y[Y] \end{aligned} \quad (3.96)$$

Comparing Equation 3.95 and Equation 3.96 the relative difference can be written

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\text{Var}_{X,Y}[XY]|_{\text{linear approx.}} - \text{Var}_{X,Y}[XY]}{\text{Var}_{X,Y}[XY]} &= -\frac{\text{Var}_X[X] \text{Var}_Y[Y]}{\text{Var}_{X,Y}[XY]} \\ &\simeq -1.6 \cdot 10^{-5}. \end{aligned} \quad (3.97)$$

Example 3.11. —

Consider a probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ describing two children with unknown sexes. Let

$$\Omega_{\text{child 1}} = \{\text{B}, \text{G}\}, \quad \Omega_{\text{child 2}} = \{\text{B}, \text{G}\}, \quad (3.98)$$

and define the sample space as the Cartesian product

$$\Omega = \Omega_{\text{child 1}} \times \Omega_{\text{child 2}} = \{(\text{B}, \text{B}), (\text{B}, \text{G}), (\text{G}, \text{B}), (\text{G}, \text{G})\}. \quad (3.99)$$

The associated algebra of subsets is denoted $\mathcal{F} = 2^\Omega$, and the probability measure \mathbb{P} assigns equal mass to each outcome, that is,

$$\mathbb{P}(\{\omega\}) = \frac{1}{4}, \quad \omega \in \Omega. \quad (3.100)$$

Define the random variables

$$B: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_B, \quad G: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_G, \quad (3.101)$$

where $B(\omega)$ and $G(\omega)$ denote the number of boys and girls, respectively, in outcome $\omega \in \Omega$, and where

$$\Omega_B = \Omega_G = \{0, 1, 2\}. \quad (3.102)$$

Let $\mathcal{F}_B = 2^{\Omega_B}$ and $\mathcal{F}_G = 2^{\Omega_G}$ denote the corresponding algebras. The pair (B, G) defines a measurable mapping

$$(B, G): (\Omega, \mathcal{F}) \rightarrow (\Omega_B \times \Omega_G, \mathcal{F}_B \otimes \mathcal{F}_G), \quad (3.103)$$

where $(\Omega_B \times \Omega_G, \mathcal{F}_B \otimes \mathcal{F}_G)$ is the product measurable space. The joint probability measure of (B, G) is the image measure

$$\mathbb{P}_{B,G} = \mathbb{P} \circ (B, G)^{-1}, \quad (3.104)$$

defined on $(\Omega_B \times \Omega_G, \mathcal{F}_B \otimes \mathcal{F}_G)$. Its corresponding probability mass function (PMF) $p_{B,G}$ is the Radon–Nikodym derivative of $\mathbb{P}_{B,G}$ with respect to the counting measure $\nu_{B,G} = \nu_B \otimes \nu_G$, i.e.,

$$\begin{aligned} p_{B,G}(b, g) &= \frac{d\mathbb{P}_{B,G}}{d\nu_{B,G}}(b, g) \\ &= \mathbb{P}_{B,G}(\{(b, g)\}) \\ &= \mathbb{P}(\{\omega \in \Omega : B(\omega) = b, G(\omega) = g\}). \end{aligned} \quad (3.105)$$

For instance,

$$p_{B,G}(1,1) = \mathbb{P}(\{(1,1), (0,0)\}) = \frac{1}{2}. \quad (3.106)$$

Let $A \subseteq \Omega_B \times \Omega_G$ denote the event “at least one boy”:

$$A = \{(b,g) \in \Omega_B \times \Omega_G : b \geq 1\}. \quad (3.107)$$

Using Definition 3.17, the conditional probability of exactly one girl given at least one boy is (see Remark 3.12)

$$\mathbb{P}_{B,G}(\{(1,1)\} | A) = \frac{\mathbb{P}_{B,G}(\{(1,1)\} \cap A)}{\mathbb{P}_{B,G}(A)}. \quad (3.108)$$

From the PMF,

$$\mathbb{P}_{B,G}(\{(1,1)\} \cap A) = p_{B,G}(1,1) = \frac{1}{2}, \quad (3.109)$$

and by the law of total probability (Theorem 3.3),

$$\mathbb{P}_{B,G}(A) = \sum_g \sum_{b \geq 1} p_{B,G}(b,g) = p_{B,G}(1,1) + p_{B,G}(2,0) = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4}. \quad (3.110)$$

Hence,

$$\mathbb{P}_{B,G}(\{(1,1)\} | A) = \frac{2}{3}. \quad (3.111)$$

Remark 3.12 (PMF versus image measure on events). Let B and G be discrete random variables with joint PMF $p_{B,G}$ and image measure $\mathbb{P}_{B,G}$. From Definition 3.23, the PMF is defined only for single points $(b,g) \in \Omega_B \times \Omega_G$:

$$p_{B,G}(b,g) = \mathbb{P}_{B,G}(\{(b,g)\}). \quad (3.112)$$

The image measure $\mathbb{P}_{B,G}$, however, is defined on all measurable subsets in the event space $A \in \mathcal{F}_B \otimes \mathcal{F}_G$. Hence, expressions of the form

$$\mathbb{P}_{B,G}(\{(b,g)\} \cap A) \quad (3.113)$$

are valid, since $\{(b, g)\} \cap A$ is an element of $\mathcal{F}_B \otimes \mathcal{F}_G$. In contrast, writing

$$p_{B,G}(b, g \cap A) \quad (3.114)$$

(or similarly) is not valid, because $p_{B,G}$ is defined only on individual points (b, g) , not on sets or intersections. The PMF cannot take an event as its argument; only the image measure $\mathbb{P}_{B,G}$ can.

Example 3.12.

Suppose a crime has been committed. Blood is found at the crime scene for which there is no innocent explanation. It is of the type that is present in 1% of the population. Let E denote the event that a person has the blood type found at the crime scene. Then

$$\mathbb{P}(E) = 0.01. \quad (3.115)$$

The prosecutor claims: “There is a 1% chance that the defendant would have the blood type found at the crime scene if he were innocent. Thus, there is a 99% chance that he is guilty.” This is known as the prosecutor’s fallacy. What is wrong with this argument?

The prosecutor’s claim can be written as

$$\mathbb{P}(E \mid \text{innocent}) = 0.01 \Rightarrow \mathbb{P}(\text{guilty} \mid E) = 0.99. \quad (3.116)$$

To investigate this claim, use Theorem 3.2 to write

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(E \mid \text{innocent}) &= \frac{\mathbb{P}(E \cap \text{innocent})}{\mathbb{P}(\text{innocent})} \\ &= \frac{\mathbb{P}(\text{innocent} \mid E)}{\mathbb{P}(\text{innocent})} \mathbb{P}(E). \end{aligned} \quad (3.117)$$

Hence, in general, $\mathbb{P}(E \mid \text{innocent}) \neq \mathbb{P}(E)$. Suppose there are N people in the world, and $M \leq N$ of these have the blood type found at the crime scene. In that case,

$$\frac{\mathbb{P}(\text{innocent} \mid E)}{\mathbb{P}(\text{innocent})} = \frac{\frac{M-1}{M}}{\frac{N-1}{N}}, \quad (3.118)$$

which approaches 1 in the limit $N, M \rightarrow \infty$. Hence, $\mathbb{P}(E \mid \text{innocent}) \simeq \mathbb{P}(E)$ can be a good approximation, but it is not an exact relation.

Assuming $\mathbb{P}(E \mid \text{innocent}) = 0.01$, the prosecutor's claim can be further analyzed using Definition 3.17, as follows

$$\mathbb{P}(\text{guilty} \mid E) + \mathbb{P}(\text{innocent} \mid E) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(\text{guilty} \cap E) + \mathbb{P}(\text{innocent} \cap E)}{\mathbb{P}(E)}. \quad (3.119)$$

Innocent and guilty are complementary events that form a partition of the sample space, meaning (Theorem 3.3)

$$\mathbb{P}(\text{guilty} \cap E) + \mathbb{P}(\text{innocent} \cap E) = \mathbb{P}(E), \quad (3.120)$$

and thereby

$$\mathbb{P}(\text{guilty} \mid E) + \mathbb{P}(\text{innocent} \mid E) = 1. \quad (3.121)$$

This means that if $\mathbb{P}(\text{guilty} \mid E) = 0.99$, then $\mathbb{P}(\text{innocent} \mid E) = 0.01$, and from Theorem 3.2,

$$\mathbb{P}(\text{innocent} \mid E) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(E \mid \text{innocent}) \mathbb{P}(\text{innocent})}{\mathbb{P}(E)} \quad (3.122)$$

From Equation 3.122, it is clear that in general

$$\mathbb{P}(E \mid \text{innocent}) \neq \mathbb{P}(\text{innocent} \mid E), \quad (3.123)$$

and so even if $\mathbb{P}(E \mid \text{innocent}) = 0.01$, the prosecutor's claim (Equation 3.116) is not true.

Example 3.13.

After your yearly checkup, the doctor has bad news and good news. The bad news is that you tested positive for a serious disease, and that the test is 99% accurate (i.e. the probability of testing positive given that you have the disease is 99%, as is the probability of testing negative given that you don't have the disease). The good news is that this is a rare disease, striking only one in 10 000 people. What are the chances that you actually have the disease?

Let "s" denote the event of being sick, "h" the event of being healthy, "p" the event of a positive test and "n" the event of a negative test. Using Theorem 3.2 and Theorem 3.3

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(s \mid p) &= \frac{\mathbb{P}(p \mid s)\mathbb{P}(s)}{\mathbb{P}(p)} \\ &= \frac{\mathbb{P}(p \mid s)\mathbb{P}(s)}{\mathbb{P}(p \mid s)\mathbb{P}(s) + \mathbb{P}(p \mid h)\mathbb{P}(h)} \end{aligned} \quad (3.124)$$

where $\mathbb{P}(p | s) = 0.99$, $\mathbb{P}(s) = \frac{1}{10\,000}$, $\mathbb{P}(p | h) = 1 - \mathbb{P}(n | h)$, $\mathbb{P}(n | h) = 0.99$ and $\mathbb{P}(h) = 1 - \mathbb{P}(s)$. This means

$$\mathbb{P}(s | p) \simeq 0.0098. \quad (3.125)$$

Example 3.14.

On a game show, a contestant is told the rules as follows: There are 3 doors labeled 1, 2, 3. A single prize has been hidden behind one of them. You get to select one door. Initially your chosen door will not be opened, instead, the gameshow host will open one of the other two doors in such a way as not to reveal the prize. For example, if you first choose door 1, the gameshow host will open one of doors 2 and 3, and it is guaranteed that he will choose which one to open so that the prize will not be revealed. At this point you will be given a fresh choice of door: You can either stick with your first choice, or you can switch to the other closed door. All the doors will then be opened and you will receive whatever is behind your final choice of door.

Imagine that the contestant chooses first door 1; then the gameshow host opens door 3, revealing nothing. Should the contestant a) stick with door 1, b) switch to door 2 or c) it does not matter? Assume that initially, the prize is equally likely to be behind any of the 3 doors.

Let z_i denote the prize being behind the i 'th door, o_i the action of opening the i 'th door and c_i the action of choosing the i 'th door. The door with the largest probability of containing the prize should be picked, meaning

$$z^* = \underset{z}{\operatorname{argmax}}(\mathbb{P}(z | o_3 \cap c_1)). \quad (3.126)$$

Since the host cannot open the door containing the prize,

$$\mathbb{P}(z_3 | o_3 \cap c_1) = 0 \quad (3.127)$$

and only $\mathbb{P}(z_1 | o_3 \cap c_1)$ and $\mathbb{P}(z_2 | o_3 \cap c_1)$ will have to be considered. Using Theorem 3.2

$$\mathbb{P}(z_1 | o_3 \cap c_1) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_1)\mathbb{P}(c_1 \cap z_1)}{\mathbb{P}(o_3 \cap c_1)} \quad (3.128)$$

where from Theorem 3.3

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbb{P}(o_3 \cap c_1) &= \sum_i \mathbb{P}(o_3 \cap c_1 \cap z_i) \\
 &= \mathbb{P}(o_3 \cap c_1 \cap z_1) + \mathbb{P}(o_3 \cap c_1 \cap z_2) + \mathbb{P}(o_3 \cap c_1 \cap z_3) \quad (3.129) \\
 &= \mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_1) \mathbb{P}(c_1 \cap z_1) + \mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_2) \mathbb{P}(c_1 \cap z_2) \\
 &\quad + \mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_3) \mathbb{P}(c_1 \cap z_3).
 \end{aligned}$$

$\mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_3) = 0$ since the host will not open the door with the prize. $\mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_2) = 1$ since the host has no other option in this case. $\mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_1) = \frac{1}{2}$ since the host has two options in this case. There is no connection between the choice of door and position of the prize, so $\mathbb{P}(c_1 \cap z_j) = \mathbb{P}(c_1) \mathbb{P}(z_j)$ and initially $\mathbb{P}(z_j) = \mathbb{P}(z_k) \forall j, k \in \{1, 2, 3\}$. Hence

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbb{P}(z_1 | o_3 \cap c_1) &= \frac{\mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_1)}{\sum_i \mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_i)} \\
 &= \frac{1}{3}.
 \end{aligned} \quad (3.130)$$

Similarly

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbb{P}(z_2 | o_3 \cap c_1) &= \frac{\mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_2)}{\sum_i \mathbb{P}(o_3 | c_1 \cap z_i)} \\
 &= \frac{2}{3}.
 \end{aligned} \quad (3.131)$$

Since $\mathbb{P}(z_2 | o_3 \cap c_1) > \mathbb{P}(z_1 | o_3 \cap c_1) > \mathbb{P}(z_3 | o_3 \cap c_1)$, door number 2 is the optimal choice. Hence, answer "b)" is correct. The intuition behind the answer is the information the contestant has at the time of making the decision; initially, there is no a priori information and so $\mathbb{P}(z_1 | o_3 \cap c_1) = \frac{1}{3}$. At this time, there is $\frac{2}{3}$ probability that the prize is behind doors 2, 3. When the gameshow host open door 3, this probability converge on door 2.

Example 3.15.

Let $X: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X$ and $Y: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Y$ be continuous random variables defined on the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ and suppose $X \sim \text{Unif}(a = -1, b = 1)$ and $Y = X^2$. In this case

$$\text{Corr}_{X,Y}[X, Y] = \text{Corr}_X[X, X^2]. \quad (3.132)$$

Using Definition 3.26 and Definition 3.25

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Corr}_X[X, X^2] &= \frac{\text{Cov}_X[X, X^2]}{\sqrt{\text{Var}_X[X] \text{Var}_X[X^2]}} \\ &= \frac{\mathbb{E}_X[X^3] - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\mathbb{E}_X[X^2]}{\sqrt{\text{Var}_X[X] \text{Var}_X[X^2]}}\end{aligned}\tag{3.133}$$

In this case for the nominator

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Cov}_X[X, X^2] &= \int_{\Omega_X} x^3 p_X(x) dx - \int_{\Omega_X} x p_X(x) dx \int_{\Omega_X} x^2 p_X(x) dx \\ &= \frac{1}{b-a} \int_a^b x^3 dx - \frac{1}{(b-a)^2} \int_a^b x dx \int_a^b x^2 dx \\ &= \frac{1}{12} (a-b)^2 (a+b) \\ &= 0\end{aligned}\tag{3.134}$$

where the last equality comes from the fact that $a+b = 0$ in this case. However, we need to make sure the denominator does not diverge

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Var}_X[X] \text{Var}_X[X^2] &= (\mathbb{E}_X[X^2] - \mathbb{E}_X[X]^2)(\mathbb{E}_X[X^4] - \mathbb{E}_X[X^2]^2) \\ &= \frac{1}{540} (b-a)^4 (4a^2 + 7ab + 4b^2) \\ &\neq 0.\end{aligned}\tag{3.135}$$

Its denominator does not diverge, so the factorized $a+b$ from the nominator makes $\text{Corr}_X[X, X^2] = 0$.

Example 3.16.

According to Definition 3.22 the variance is defined as positive definite. This means

$$\begin{aligned}0 &\leq \text{Var}_{X,Y} \left[\frac{X}{\sqrt{\text{Var}_X[X]}} \pm \frac{Y}{\sqrt{\text{Var}_Y[Y]}} \right] \\ &= \frac{\text{Var}_X[X]}{\text{Var}_X[X]} + \frac{\text{Var}_Y[Y]}{\text{Var}_Y[Y]} \pm \frac{2}{\sqrt{\text{Var}_X[X] \text{Var}_Y[Y]}} \text{Cov}_{X,Y}[X, Y] \\ &= 2 \pm 2 \text{Corr}_{X,Y}[X, Y].\end{aligned}\tag{3.136}$$

From Equation 3.136 the result follows

$$-1 \leq \text{Corr}_{X,Y}[X, Y] \leq 1.\tag{3.137}$$

Example 3.17. —

Let $X : \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X$ be a continuous random variable defined on the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ and suppose $Y = aX + b$ given parameters $a > 0$ and b . Since Y is uniquely determined by X ,

$$\text{Corr}_{X,Y}[X, Y] = \text{Corr}_X[X, aX + b]. \quad (3.138)$$

Using Definition 3.26 and Definition 3.25

$$\text{Corr}_X[X, aX + b] = \frac{\text{Cov}_X[X, aX + b]}{\sqrt{\text{Var}_X[X] \text{Var}_X[aX + b]}} \quad (3.139)$$

with

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cov}_X[X, aX + b] &= \mathbb{E}_X[X(aX + b)] - \mathbb{E}_X[X]\mathbb{E}_X[aX + b] \\ &= a\mathbb{E}_X[X^2] + b\mathbb{E}_X[X] - a\mathbb{E}_X[X]^2 - b\mathbb{E}_X[X] \\ &= a\text{Var}_X[X] \end{aligned} \quad (3.140)$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Var}_X[aX + b] &= a^2 \text{Var}_X[X] + \cancel{a^2 \text{Var}_X[b]} + \cancel{2a \text{Cov}_X[X, b]}^0 \\ &= a^2 \text{Var}_X[X]. \end{aligned} \quad (3.141)$$

Combining Equation 3.139, Equation 3.140 and Equation 3.141 yields

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Corr}_X[X, aX + b] &= \frac{a \text{Var}_X[X]}{\sqrt{a^2 \text{Var}_X[X] \text{Var}_X[X]}} \\ &= \frac{a}{|a|}. \end{aligned} \quad (3.142)$$

CHAPTER 4

Framing of Statistics

In this book, statistics is framed as a game against Nature, following conventions from decision theory [2]. In this game, two players interact under uncertainty: the Robot, who seeks to make optimal decisions, and Nature, who determines the state of the world.

Definition 4.1 (Robot). *The Robot is the decision maker in the statistical game. It selects actions or decisions based on available information with the aim of achieving an optimal outcome under uncertainty.*

Definition 4.2 (Nature). *Nature represents the inherent uncertainty in the environment and the data-generating process. It determines the true state of the world, which influences the outcomes of the statistical experiment, but it does not act strategically or make decisions in the usual sense.*

Definition 4.3 (Statistical prediction game). *The interaction between the Robot and Nature is formalized as a statistical game under uncertainty. Let*

$$(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P}) \tag{4.1}$$

be a probability space. Consider $n + 1$ pairs of random variables

$$(X_1, Y_1), \dots, (X_n, Y_n), (X_{n+1}, Y_{n+1}): \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_X \times \Omega_Y, \tag{4.2}$$

where (X_i, Y_i) for $i = 1, \dots, n$ correspond to past observations collected as data, and (X_{n+1}, Y_{n+1}) corresponds to a new observation X_{n+1} with unknown outcome Y_{n+1} to be predicted. Define the dataset as the collection of past realizations

$$D = \{(x_i, y_i)\}_{i=1}^n \in (\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y)^n, \tag{4.3}$$

where $x_i \in \Omega_X$ and $y_i \in \Omega_Y$ are realizations of X_i and Y_i , respectively. Each pair $(x_i, y_i) \in D$ corresponds to one past round of the game. The image measures of the random variables

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{P}_{X_{1:n+1}} &= \mathbb{P} \circ (X_1, \dots, X_{n+1})^{-1}, \\ \mathbb{P}_{Y_{1:n+1}} &= \mathbb{P} \circ (Y_1, \dots, Y_{n+1})^{-1}, \\ \mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}} &= \mathbb{P} \circ ((X_1, Y_1), \dots, (X_{n+1}, Y_{n+1}))^{-1},\end{aligned}\tag{4.4}$$

are defined on the measurable spaces

$$(\Omega_X^{n+1}, \mathcal{F}_X^{n+1}), \quad (\Omega_Y^{n+1}, \mathcal{F}_Y^{n+1}), \quad ((\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y)^{n+1}, (\mathcal{F}_X \otimes \mathcal{F}_Y)^{n+1}).\tag{4.5}$$

Suppose that the image measure $\mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}$ depends on the unknown parameter $w \in \Omega_W$, where Ω_W is the parameter space. Let

$$\mathcal{P}' = \{\mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}^w : w \in \Omega_W\},\tag{4.6}$$

denote a parametric family of joint image measures on $(\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y)^{n+1}$. The statistical model of the game is then defined as the triple

$$((\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y)^{n+1}, (\mathcal{F}_X \otimes \mathcal{F}_Y)^{n+1}, \mathcal{P}').\tag{4.7}$$

In the game, the Robot selects an action $u_{n+1} \in \Omega_U$ according to a decision rule

$$U: \Omega_X \times (\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y)^n \rightarrow \Omega_U,\tag{4.8}$$

mapping the new observation x_{n+1} and past dataset D to an action. The Robot incurs a penalty determined by a cost function

$$C: \Omega_U \times \Omega_Y \rightarrow \mathbb{R},\tag{4.9}$$

which assigns a numerical cost to each pair $(u, n) \in \Omega_U \times \Omega_Y$. The Robot's goal is to minimize the expected cost [1], which for prediction is given by

$$\mathbb{E}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}^{\mathcal{P}'} [C(U(x_{n+1}, D), Y_{n+1})].\tag{4.10}$$

Remark 4.1 (Superscript notation). The superscript w in \mathbb{P}_Z^w serves as an index identifying a particular member of a family of probability measures or densities. It reflects dependence on an underlying parameter $w \in \Omega_W$ without specifying whether w is fixed, unknown, or random.

The superscript \mathcal{P}' indicates that the object is taken with respect to a member or mixture of the parametric family. The superscript notation provides a unified notation across different statistical paradigms (see Remark 4.2 and Remark 7.2).

Remark 4.2 (Notation of statistics). *The expected cost of Definition 4.3 (Equation 4.10) can be written as follows*

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbb{E}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}^{\mathcal{P}'} [C(U(x_{n+1}, D), Y_{n+1})] \\ &= \int_{(\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y)^{n+1}} C(U(x_{n+1}, D), y_{n+1}) d\mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}^{\mathcal{P}'}(D, x_{n+1}, y_{n+1}). \end{aligned} \quad (4.11)$$

Equation 4.11 can be further decomposed by specifying the cost function or by factorizing the joint image measure using Theorem 3.1, Theorem 3.2, or Theorem 3.3. In such cases, the notation of probability theory can become cumbersome. Therefore, when the context is sufficiently clear, statistical notation is often relaxed by omitting distributional subscripts, superscripts, and explicit integral domains. In this notation, Equation 4.11 becomes

$$\mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1})] = \int C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) d\mathbb{P}(\tilde{D}, y_{n+1}), \quad (4.12)$$

where $\tilde{D} = \{x_{n+1}, D\}$ is used to further compress the notation.

Theorem 4.1 (Optimal decision rule). *Following Definition 4.3, the optimal decision rule for the Robot is*

$$\begin{aligned} U^*(\tilde{D}) &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}] \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \int C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1}. \end{aligned} \quad (4.13)$$

Proof. From Definition 4.3

$$U^*(\tilde{D}) = \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1})], \quad (4.14)$$

where the expected cost (Equation 4.10) can be written

$$\mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1})] = \int C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) d\mathbb{P}(\tilde{D}, y_{n+1}). \quad (4.15)$$

From Theorem 3.6

$$\mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1})] = \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}]]. \quad (4.16)$$

Using Equation 4.16 in Equation 4.14

$$\begin{aligned} U^*(\tilde{D}) &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}]] \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \int p(\tilde{D}) \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}] d\tilde{D}. \end{aligned} \quad (4.17)$$

Since $p(\tilde{D})$ is a non-negative function, the minimizer of the integral is the same as the minimizer of the conditional expectation, meaning

$$\begin{aligned} U^*(\tilde{D}) &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}] \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \int C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1}. \end{aligned} \quad (4.18)$$

□

Example 4.1.

The random variables X_i represent the observations the Robot has available that are related to the decisions of Nature. However, this information may not be given, in which case $\{x_{n+1}, D_x\} = \emptyset$ and consequently

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{D} &= \{y_i\}_{i=1}^n \\ &\equiv D_y. \end{aligned} \quad (4.19)$$

In this case, the Robot is forced to model the decisions of Nature without observations. From Theorem 4.1 the optimal action for the Robot can be written

$$U^*(D_y) = \operatorname{argmin}_{U(D_y)} \mathbb{E}[C(U(D_y), Y_{n+1}) \mid D_y] \quad (4.20)$$

CHAPTER 5

Assigning a Cost Function

The cost function from Definition 4.3 associates a numerical penalty to the Robot's action and thus the details of it determine the decisions made by the Robot. Under certain conditions, a cost function can be shown to exist [2], however, there is no systematic way of producing or deriving the cost function beyond applied logic. In general, the topic can be split into considering a continuous and discrete action space, Ω_U .

5.1 CONTINUOUS ACTION SPACE

In case of a continuous action space, the cost function is typically picked from a set of standard choices.

Definition 5.1 (Linear cost function). *The linear cost function is defined as follows*

$$C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) \equiv |U(\tilde{D}) - y_{n+1}|. \quad (5.1)$$

Theorem 5.1 (Median decision rule). *The linear cost function (Definition 5.1) leads to the median decision rule*

$$\int_{-\infty}^{U^*(\tilde{D})} p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} = \frac{1}{2}. \quad (5.2)$$

Proof. From Theorem 4.1

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) | \tilde{D}] &= \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} |U(\tilde{D}) - y_{n+1}| p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \\ &= \int_{-\infty}^{U(\tilde{D})} (y_{n+1} - U(\tilde{D})) p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \\ &\quad + \int_{U(\tilde{D})}^{\infty} (U(\tilde{D}) - y_{n+1}) p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1}. \end{aligned} \quad (5.3)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
0 &= \frac{\partial \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}]}{\partial U(\tilde{D})} \Big|_{U(\tilde{D})=U^*(\tilde{D})} \\
&= (U^*(\tilde{D}) - U^*(\tilde{D}))p(U^*(\tilde{D}) \mid \tilde{D}) + \int_{-\infty}^{U^*(\tilde{D})} p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \quad (5.4) \\
&\quad + (U^*(\tilde{D}) - U^*(\tilde{D}))p(U^*(\tilde{D}) \mid \tilde{D}) - \int_{U^*(\tilde{D})}^{\infty} p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1}.
\end{aligned}$$

This leads to

$$\begin{aligned}
\int_{-\infty}^{U^*(\tilde{D})} p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} &= \int_{U^*(\tilde{D})}^{\infty} p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \\
&= 1 - \int_{-\infty}^{U^*(\tilde{D})} p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \quad (5.5) \\
&\Downarrow \\
\int_{-\infty}^{U^*(\tilde{D})} p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} &= \frac{1}{2}.
\end{aligned}$$

□

Definition 5.2 (Quadratic cost function). *The quadratic cost function is defined as follows*

$$C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) \equiv (U(\tilde{D}) - y_{n+1})^2. \quad (5.6)$$

Theorem 5.2 (Expected value decision rule). *The quadratic cost function (Definition 5.2) leads to the expected value decision rule*

$$U^*(\tilde{D}) = \mathbb{E}[Y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}]. \quad (5.7)$$

Proof. From Theorem 4.1

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}] &= \int (U(\tilde{D}) - y_{n+1})^2 p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \\
 &\Downarrow \\
 \frac{\partial \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}]}{\partial U(\tilde{D})} \Big|_{U(\tilde{D})=U^*(x)} &= 2U^*(\tilde{D}) - 2 \int y_{n+1} p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \\
 &= 0 \\
 &\Downarrow \\
 U^*(\tilde{D}) &= \int y_{n+1} p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \\
 &= \mathbb{E}[Y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}].
 \end{aligned} \tag{5.8}$$

□

Definition 5.3 (o-1 cost function). *The o-1 cost function is defined as follows*

$$C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) \equiv 1 - \delta(U(\tilde{D}) - y_{n+1}). \tag{5.9}$$

Theorem 5.3 (MAP decision rule). *The o-1 cost function (Definition 5.3) leads to the maximum a posteriori (MAP) decision rule*

$$\frac{\partial p_{Y_{n+1}|X_{n+1},(X,Y)_{1:n}}(U(\tilde{D}) \mid \tilde{D})}{\partial U(\tilde{D})} \Big|_{U(\tilde{D})=U^*(\tilde{D})} = 0, \tag{5.10}$$

where the distribution subscript has been included (see Remark 4.2).

Proof. From Theorem 4.1

$$\mathbb{E}[C((\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}] = 1 - \int \delta(U(\tilde{D}) - y_{n+1}) p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \tag{5.11}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{\partial \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}]}{\partial U(\tilde{D})} \Big|_{U(\tilde{D})=U^*(\tilde{D})} &= -\frac{\partial p(U(\tilde{D}) \mid \tilde{D})}{\partial U(\tilde{D})} \Big|_{U(\tilde{D})=U^*(\tilde{D})} \\
 &= 0.
 \end{aligned} \tag{5.12}$$

□

Example 5.1. —

The median decision rule is symmetric with respect to

$$z(\tilde{D}, y_{n+1}) \equiv U(\tilde{D}) - y_{n+1}, \quad (5.13)$$

meaning underestimation ($z < 0$) and overestimation ($z > 0$) is penalized equally. This decision rule can be generalized by adopting the cost function

$$C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) = \alpha \cdot \text{swish}(z(\tilde{D}, y_{n+1}), \beta) + (1 - \alpha) \cdot \text{swish}(-z(\tilde{D}, y_{n+1}), \beta), \quad (5.14)$$

where

$$\text{swish}(z, \beta) = \frac{z}{1 + e^{-\beta z}}. \quad (5.15)$$

Taking $\alpha \ll 1$ means $z < 0$ will be penalized relatively more than $z > 0$. The expected cost is

$$\mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) | \tilde{D}] = \int C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1}. \quad (5.16)$$

The derivative of the cost function with respect to the decision rule can be approximated as follows

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial C}{\partial U} &= \frac{\partial C}{\partial z} \frac{\partial z}{\partial U} \\ &= \left(\frac{\alpha}{1 + e^{-\beta z}} - \frac{1 - \alpha}{1 + e^{\beta z}} \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \frac{\alpha \beta e^{-\beta z} z}{(1 + e^{-\beta z})^2} + \frac{(1 - \alpha) \beta e^{\beta z} z}{(1 + e^{\beta z})^2} \right) \frac{\partial z}{\partial U} \\ &= \frac{\beta z e^{\beta z} - e^{\beta z} - 1}{(1 + e^{\beta z})^2} + \alpha + \mathcal{O}(\alpha^2) \\ &\approx \alpha - \frac{1}{(1 + e^{\beta z})^2} \end{aligned} \quad (5.17)$$

leading to the derivative of the expected cost

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) | \tilde{D}]}{\partial U(\tilde{D})} &\approx \int \left(\alpha - \frac{1}{(1 + e^{\beta z(\tilde{D}, y_{n+1})})^2} \right) p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \\ &= \alpha - \int \frac{1}{(1 + e^{\beta z(\tilde{D}, y_{n+1})})^2} p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1}. \end{aligned}$$

(5.18)

For large β , $\frac{1}{(1+e^{\beta z(\tilde{D}, y_{n+1})})^2}$ approaches the indicator $\mathbb{1}\{y_{n+1} > U(\tilde{D})\}$. Hence,

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) \frac{1}{(1 + e^{\beta z(\tilde{D}, y_{n+1})})^2} dy_{n+1} \approx \int_{U(\tilde{D})}^{\infty} p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1} \quad (5.19)$$

This means the optimal decision rule can be written as follows

$$\alpha \approx \int_{U^*(\tilde{D})}^{\infty} p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dy_{n+1}. \quad (5.20)$$

The optimal decision $U^*(\tilde{D})$ is the α -quantile of the conditional distribution $p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D})$. This rule is known as the quantile decision rule.

5.2 DISCRETE ACTION SPACE

In case of a continuous action space, the conditional expected loss from Theorem 4.1 can be written

$$\mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) | \tilde{D}] = \sum_{y_{n+1} \in \Omega_Y} C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}), \quad (5.21)$$

where the cost function can be represented in matrix form as follows

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} & & Y_{n+1} & & \\ & & y^{(1)} & \dots & y^{(\dim(\Omega_Y))} \\ U(\tilde{D}) & u^{(1)} & \boxed{C(u^{(1)}, y^{(1)}) & \dots & C(u^{(1)}, y^{(\dim(\Omega_Y))})} \\ & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ u^{(\dim(\Omega_U))} & & C(u^{(\dim(\Omega_U))}, y^{(1)}) & \dots & C(u^{(\dim(\Omega_U))}, y^{(\dim(\Omega_Y))}) \end{array}$$

Note that the upper index represent realized values of y_{n+1} whereas a lower index represent datapoints.

Example 5.2.

Consider a binary classification problem with action space $\Omega_U = \{u^{(1)}, u^{(2)}\}$ and Nature's state space $\Omega_Y = \{y^{(1)}, y^{(2)}\}$, where $u^{(1)}$ corresponds to predicting class $y^{(1)}$ and $u^{(2)}$ to predicting class $y^{(2)}$. Let

$$D = \{(x_i, y_i)\}_{i=1}^n \quad (5.22)$$

denote the data, where $y_i \in \Omega_Y$ are observed realizations of Nature's states. Let $U(x_{n+1}, D)$ be a classifier based on the probability

$$p_{Y_{n+1}|X_{n+1},(X,Y)_{1:n}}(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, D). \quad (5.23)$$

Define a threshold $k \in [0, 1]$ and the decision rule

$$U_m(x_{n+1}, D) = \begin{cases} u^{(1)}, & p_{Y_{n+1}|X_{n+1},(X,Y)_{1:n}}(y^{(2)} | x_{n+1}, D) < m, \\ u^{(2)}, & p_{Y_{n+1}|X_{n+1},(X,Y)_{1:n}}(y^{(2)} | x_{n+1}, D) \geq m. \end{cases} \quad (5.24)$$

For a fixed threshold m , classifier performance is summarized in the confusion matrix

		Y_{n+1}	
		$y^{(1)}$	$y^{(2)}$
$U_m(x_{n+1}, D)$	$u^{(1)}$	$TP(k)$	$FP(k)$
	$u^{(2)}$	$FN(k)$	$TN(k)$

Example 5.3.

Consider a binary classification problem with action space $\Omega_U = \{u^{(1)}, u^{(2)}\}$ and Nature's state space $\Omega_Y = \{y^{(1)}, y^{(2)}\}$, where $u^{(1)}$ corresponds to predicting class $y^{(1)}$ and $u^{(2)}$ to predicting class $y^{(2)}$. Let

$$D = \{(x_i, y_i)\}_{i=1}^n \quad (5.25)$$

denote the data, where $y_i \in \Omega_Y$ are observed realizations of Nature's states and let the cost function be defined by the matrix

		Y_{n+1}	
		$y^{(1)}$	$y^{(2)}$
$U(x_{n+1}, D)$	$u^{(1)}$	0	λ_{12}
	$u^{(2)}$	λ_{21}	0

where λ_{12} denotes the cost of predicting $y^{(1)}$ when the true state is $y^{(2)}$, and λ_{21} the cost of the reverse error. The decision $U(\tilde{D})$ is determined by minimizing the conditional expected cost (Equation 5.21)

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) | \tilde{D}] &= \sum_{y_{n+1} \in \Omega_Y} C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) \\ &= C(U(\tilde{D}), y^{(1)}) p(y^{(1)} | \tilde{D}) \\ &\quad + C(U(\tilde{D}), y^{(2)}) p(y^{(2)} | \tilde{D}). \end{aligned} \quad (5.26)$$

For the different possible actions

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{E}[C(u^{(1)}, Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}] &= \lambda_{12}p(y^{(2)} \mid \tilde{D}), \\ \mathbb{E}[C(u^{(2)}, Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}] &= \lambda_{21}p(y^{(1)} \mid \tilde{D}),\end{aligned}\tag{5.27}$$

$U(\tilde{D}) = u_1$ iff

$$\mathbb{E}[C(u^{(1)}, Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}] < \mathbb{E}[C(u^{(2)}, Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}]\tag{5.28}$$

meaning

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda_{12}p(y^{(2)} \mid \tilde{D}) &< \lambda_{21}p(y^{(1)} \mid \tilde{D}) \\ &= \lambda_{21}(1 - p(y^{(2)} \mid \tilde{D}))\end{aligned}\tag{5.29}$$

meaning $U(\tilde{D}) = u_1$ iff

$$p(y^{(2)} \mid \tilde{D}) < \frac{\lambda_{21}}{\lambda_{12} + \lambda_{21}} = m.\tag{5.30}$$

Equation 5.30 is equivalent to Equation 5.24 from Example 5.2. The difference between the two is that if λ_{12} and λ_{21} are specified, m is specified. In Example 5.2 m was left as a free parameter.

Example 5.4.

In many classification problems the Robot has the option of assigning x_{n+1} to class $k \in K$ or, if the Robot is too uncertain, choosing a reject option. If the cost for rejection is less than the cost of falsely classifying the object, it may be the optimal action. Define the cost function as follows

$$C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if correct classification } (U(\tilde{D}) = y_{n+1}) \\ \lambda_r & \text{if reject option } (U(\tilde{D}) = \text{reject}) \\ \lambda_s & \text{if wrong classification } (U(\tilde{D}) \neq y_{n+1}) \end{cases}.\tag{5.31}$$

The conditional expected cost if the Robot does not pick the reject option, meaning $U(\tilde{D}) \in \Omega_U \setminus \text{reject}$, is

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) \mid \tilde{D}] &= \sum_{y_{n+1} \in \Omega_Y} C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1})p(y_{n+1} \mid \tilde{D}) \\ &= \lambda_s(1 - p(U(\tilde{D}) \mid \tilde{D})),\end{aligned}\tag{5.32}$$

where for the second equality it has been used that the cost of a correct classification is 0. For the third equality it has been used that summing over all but $y_{n+1} = U(\tilde{D})$ is equal to $1 - p(U(\tilde{D}) | \tilde{D})$. The larger $p(U(\tilde{D}) | \tilde{D})$, the smaller the expected cost (for $\lambda_s > 0$), meaning the expected cost is minimized for the largest probability. The conditional expected cost if the Robot picks the reject option is

$$\mathbb{E}[C(\text{reject}, Y_{n+1}) | \tilde{D}] = \lambda_r, \quad (5.33)$$

and from Equation 5.32 and Equation 5.33 it follows that picking

$$\operatorname{argmax}_{U(\tilde{D}) \in \Omega_U \setminus \text{reject}} p(U(\tilde{D}) | \tilde{D}) \quad (5.34)$$

is the best option among classes $U(\tilde{D}) \neq \text{reject}$. To be the best option overall, it also needs to have lower cost than the reject option. Using Equation 5.32 and Equation 5.33 yields

$$(1 - p(U(\tilde{D}) | \tilde{D}))\lambda_s < \lambda_r, \quad (5.35)$$

meaning

$$p(U(\tilde{D}) | \tilde{D}) \geq 1 - \frac{\lambda_r}{\lambda_s}. \quad (5.36)$$

Qualitatively, as $\frac{\lambda_r}{\lambda_s}$ is increased from 0 to 1, the behavior of the Robot changes smoothly. When

$$\frac{\lambda_r}{\lambda_s} = 0, \quad (5.37)$$

rejection is rated as a successful classification – i.e., there is no cost associated with it – and thus becomes the best option unless

$$p(U(\tilde{D}) | \tilde{D}) = 1, \quad (5.38)$$

corresponding to knowing the correct class with absolute certainty. In other words, in this limit rejection is optimal unless the Robot is completely certain of the correct class. Conversely, when

$$\frac{\lambda_r}{\lambda_s} = 1, \quad (5.39)$$

rejection is rated as a misclassification – i.e., $\lambda_r = \lambda_s$ – and thus always incurs a cost. In this case, rejection is never chosen. For values of $\frac{\lambda_r}{\lambda_s}$ between these limits, an interpolation of interpretations applies, where rejection is preferred only when the Robot's uncertainty exceeds the corresponding threshold.

CHAPTER 6

Assigning Probability Functions

While Chapter 3 provides the formal definition of probability measures and their manipulation, it is not sufficient on its own to conduct inference. In practice, one must also specify the probability measure or, equivalently, the probability density or mass functions. Assigning these functions requires a principled method to convert available information into a probability distribution.

The central challenge is to incorporate only the information that is actually known, without introducing unwarranted assumptions about unknown quantities. Logical analysis provides the framework for this task: it ensures that probability assignments are internally consistent and make full use of the information at hand. Several approaches implement this principle. Logical analysis can be applied directly to the sum and product rules to construct probability functions [15]; it can exploit group invariances inherent in the problem [16]; and it can ensure consistent marginalization of nuisance parameters [17].

Among these methods, the principle of maximum entropy[18] stands out for its generality and power. By selecting the probability distribution that maximizes entropy subject to the known constraints, it provides a systematic, non-arbitrary means of assigning probabilities while remaining maximally noncommittal about unknown information [16, 19–22]. The remainder of this chapter develops the maximum entropy principle and illustrates how it can be applied to derive probability distributions from partial knowledge.

6.1 THE PRINCIPLE OF MAXIMUM ENTROPY

The principle of maximum entropy, first proposed by Jaynes [18], addresses the problem of assigning a probability distribution to a random variable in a way that is maximally noncommittal with respect to missing information. Let

$$Z: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_Z \tag{6.1}$$

be a generic random variable from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to the probability space $(\Omega_Z, \mathcal{F}_Z, \mathbb{P}_Z^w)$, where \mathbb{P}_Z^w is the image measure of \mathbb{P} , parameterized by w (see Definition 4.3 and Remark 4.1). \mathbb{P}_Z^w is a member or mixture of a parametric family of measures

$$\mathcal{P}' = \{\mathbb{P}_Z^w : w \in \Omega_W\}, \quad (6.2)$$

where Ω_W is the parameter space. The goal of the maximum entropy principle is to determine the probability measure \mathbb{P}_Z^w that best represents the current state of knowledge, given a set of moment constraints. From Definition 3.23, the image measure \mathbb{P}_Z^w admits a density p_Z^w with respect to the measure μ_Z , so that

$$\mathbb{P}_Z^w(B | w) = \int_B p_Z^w(z | w) d\mu_Z(z) \quad \forall B \in \mathcal{F}_Z. \quad (6.3)$$

The maximum entropy principle asserts that the density $p_Z^w(z | w)$ that best represents the current state of knowledge is the one that maximizes the constrained Shannon entropy [3]. The Shannon entropy of a probability density p_Z^w can be written

$$H[p_Z^w] = - \int_{\Omega_Z} p_Z^w(z | w) \ln \frac{p_Z^w(z | w)}{m_Z(z)} d\mu_Z(z), \quad (6.4)$$

where $m_Z(z)$ is a reference measure that ensures invariance of the entropy under reparameterizations of z . To incorporate known constraints, such as moment conditions or normalization, one introduces Lagrange multipliers w_0, w_1, \dots, w_n and defines the Lagrangian functional, which represents the constrained entropy:

$$\mathcal{L}[p_Z^w] = - \int_{\Omega_Z} p_Z^w(z | w) \left(\ln \frac{p_{Z|I}^w(z | w)}{m_Z(z)} + w_0 + \sum_{j=1}^n w_j C_j(z) \right) d\mu_Z(z), \quad (6.5)$$

where each $C_j(z)$ denotes a constraint function. Maximizing $\mathcal{L}[p_Z^w]$ with respect to p_Z^w yields the probability distribution of maximum entropy consistent with the given constraints. The maximum of \mathcal{L} with respect to p_Z^w is defined by the Euler-Lagrange condition

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial p_Z^w(z | w)} p_Z^w(z | w) \left(\ln \frac{p_Z^w(z | w)}{m_Z(z)} + w_0 + \sum_{j=1}^n w_j C_j(z) \right) = 0, \quad (6.6)$$

which simplifies to

$$\ln \frac{p_Z^w(z | w)}{m_Z(z)} + 1 + w_0 + \sum_{j=1}^n w_j C_j(z) = 0. \quad (6.7)$$

Hence the maximum-entropy distribution takes the exponential family form

$$\begin{aligned} p_Z^w(z | w) &= m_Z(z) e^{-1-w_0-\sum_{j=1}^n w_j C_j(z)} \\ &= \frac{m_Z(z) e^{-\sum_{j=1}^n w_j C_j(z)}}{\int_{\Omega_Z} m_Z(z') e^{-\sum_{j=1}^n w_j C_j(z')} d\mu_Z(z')}. \end{aligned} \quad (6.8)$$

The constants w_j are determined by the imposed constraints. The resulting probability measure (Equation 6.3) defines the unique maximum-entropy probability measure consistent with the given information.

Example 6.1.

Consider a continuous random variable, Z , with sample space $\Omega_Z = \mathbb{R}$, assumed to be symmetric around $\mathbb{E}[Z] = \eta$ and with $\text{Var}[Z] = \sigma^2$. In this case

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = m_Z(z) e^{-1-w_0-w_1 z - w_2 z^2}. \quad (6.9)$$

Taking a uniform measure ($m_Z = m = \text{const}$) and imposing the normalization constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Omega_Z} p_Z^w(z | w) dz &= m e^{-1-w_0} \int_{\Omega_Z} e^{-w_1 z - w_2 z^2} dz \\ &= m e^{-1-w_0} \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{w_2}} e^{\frac{w_1^2}{4w_2}} \\ &= 1. \end{aligned} \quad (6.10)$$

Defining $K^{-1} = m e^{-1-w_0}$ yields

$$\begin{aligned} p_Z^w(z | w) &= \frac{e^{-w_1 z - w_2 z^2}}{K} \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{w_2}{\pi}} e^{-\frac{w_1^2}{4w_2} - w_1 z - w_2 z^2}. \end{aligned} \quad (6.11)$$

Now, imposing the mean constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Omega_Z} p_Z^w(z | w) dz &= \frac{\int_{\Omega_Z} z e^{-w_1 z - w_2 z^2} dz}{K} \\ &= -\frac{w_1}{2w_2} \\ &\equiv \eta. \end{aligned} \tag{6.12}$$

Hereby

$$\begin{aligned} p_Z^w(z | w) &= \sqrt{\frac{w_2}{\pi}} e^{-\eta^2 w_2 + 2\eta w_2 z - w_2 z^2} \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{\eta-z}{\sigma}\right)^2}, \end{aligned} \tag{6.13}$$

where $\sigma \equiv \frac{1}{2w_2}$ has been defined. Equation 6.13 can be identified as the normal distribution.

Example 6.2.

Consider a continuous random variable, Z , with sample space $\Omega_Y = [0, 1]$. In order to impose the limited support, require that $\ln(z)$ and $\ln(1-z)$ be well defined. In this case

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = m_Z(z) e^{-1-w_0-w_1 \ln z - w_2 \ln(1-z)}. \tag{6.14}$$

Taking a uniform measure ($m_Z = m = \text{const}$) and imposing the normalization constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Omega_Z} p_Z^w(z | w) dz &= m e^{-1-w_0} \int_{\Omega_Z} z^{-w_1} (1-z)^{-w_2} dz \\ &= m e^{-1-w_0} \frac{w(1-w_1)w(1-w_2)}{w(2-w_1-w_2)} \\ &= 1. \end{aligned} \tag{6.15}$$

Now define $\alpha \equiv 1 - w_1 \wedge \beta \equiv 1 - w_2$. Hereby

$$p_Z^w(z | \alpha, \beta) = \frac{w(\alpha+\beta)}{w(\alpha)w(\beta)} x^{\alpha-1} (1-x)^{\beta-1}, \tag{6.16}$$

which is the beta distribution.

Example 6.3.

Consider a continuous random variable, Z , with sample space $\Omega_Z = [0, \infty)$, a known mean η and a known logarithmic mean ν . In this case

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = m_Z(z)e^{-1-w_0-w_1z-w_2\ln z}. \quad (6.17)$$

Taking a uniform measure ($m_Z(z) = m = \text{const}$) and defining $\tilde{m} = me^{-1-w_0}$

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = \tilde{m}z^{-w_2}e^{-w_1z}. \quad (6.18)$$

Imposing normalization

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Omega_Z} p_Z^w(z | w) dz &= \tilde{m} \int_{\Omega_Z} z^{-w_2} e^{-w_1z} dz \\ &= 1. \end{aligned} \quad (6.19)$$

The integral is recognized as the Gamma function

$$\int_{\Omega_Z} z^{\alpha-1} e^{-\beta z} dz = \frac{\Gamma(\alpha)}{\beta^\alpha} \quad (6.20)$$

with $\alpha = 1 - w_2$ and $\beta = w_1$. Substituting \tilde{m} , α , β back into Equation 6.17

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = \frac{\beta^\alpha}{\Gamma(\alpha)} z^{\alpha-1} e^{-\beta z}, \quad (6.21)$$

which is the Gamma distribution.

Example 6.4.

Consider a continuous random variable, Z , with sample space $\Omega_Z = [0, \infty)$ and known mean η . In this case

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = m_Z(z)e^{-1-w_0-w_1z}. \quad (6.22)$$

Taking $m_Z = m = \text{const}$ and imposing the normalization constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Omega_Z} p_Z^w(z | w) dz &= me^{-1-w_0} \int_{\Omega_Z} e^{-w_1z} dz \\ &= me^{-1-w_0} \frac{1}{w_1} \\ &= 1 \end{aligned} \quad (6.23)$$

and the mean constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Omega_Z} z p(z | w) dz &= \int_{\Omega_Z} z w_1 e^{-w_1 z} dz \\ &= \frac{1}{w_1} \\ &\equiv \eta. \end{aligned} \tag{6.24}$$

Combining Equation 6.23, Equation 6.24 and Equation 6.22 yields

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = \frac{e^{-\frac{z}{\eta}}}{\eta}. \tag{6.25}$$

which is the exponential distribution.

Example 6.5.

Consider a discrete random variable, Z , with sample space $\Omega_Z = \{0, 1\}$ and mean η . In this case

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = m_Z(z) e^{-1-w_0-w_1 z}. \tag{6.26}$$

Taking a uniform measure ($m_Z = m = \text{const}$) and imposing the normalization constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{z=0}^1 p_Z^w(z | w) &= m e^{-1-w_0} \left(1 + e^{-w_1} \right) \\ &= 1 \end{aligned} \tag{6.27}$$

and mean constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{z=0}^1 z p_Z^w(z | w) &= m e^{-1-w_0} e^{-w_1} \\ &= \frac{1}{1 + e^{w_1}} \\ &\equiv \eta \end{aligned} \tag{6.28}$$

This means

$$\begin{aligned} p_Z^w(0 | w) &= m e^{-1-w_0} \\ &= \frac{1}{1 + e^{-w_1}} \\ &= 1 - \eta \end{aligned} \tag{6.29}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} p_Z^w(1 \mid w) &= me^{-1-w_0-w_1} \\ &= \eta, \end{aligned} \tag{6.30}$$

or

$$p_Z^w(z \mid w) = \eta^z(1-\eta)^{1-z}. \tag{6.31}$$

which is the Bernoulli distribution.

Example 6.6.

Consider a discrete random variable, Z , with sample space $\Omega_Z = \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$ representing the total number of successes in n independent Bernoulli trials with mean η . In this case

$$p_Z^w(z \mid w) = m_Z(z)e^{-w_0-w_1z}. \tag{6.32}$$

Taking a uniform reference measure for the underlying sequences of Bernoulli trials, equivalent to the counting measure $m_Z(z) = \binom{n}{z}$, and imposing the normalization constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{z=0}^n p_Z^w(z \mid w) &= \sum_{z=0}^n \binom{n}{z} e^{-w_0-w_1z} \\ &= 1, \end{aligned} \tag{6.33}$$

yields

$$e^{-w_0} = (1 + e^{-w_1})^{-n}. \tag{6.34}$$

The mean constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{z=0}^n z p_Z^w(z \mid w) &= n \frac{e^{-w_1}}{1 + e^{-w_1}} \\ &= n\eta \end{aligned} \tag{6.35}$$

gives

$$e^{-w_1} = \frac{\eta}{1 - \eta}. \tag{6.36}$$

Finally, substituting e^{-w_0} and e^{-w_1} into $p_Z^w(z \mid w)$ gives the maximum entropy distribution

$$p_Z^w(z \mid w) = \binom{n}{z} \eta^z (1 - \eta)^{n-z}, \tag{6.37}$$

which is the Binomial distribution.

Example 6.7.

Consider a discrete random variable Z with sample space $\Omega_Z = \mathbb{N}_0$ with a known mean η . In this case

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = m_Z(z)e^{-1-w_0-w_1z}. \quad (6.38)$$

Take the counting measure $m_Z(z) = 1/z!$ and impose the normalization constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{z=0}^{\infty} p_Z^w(z | w) &= \sum_{z=0}^{\infty} \frac{e^{-1-w_0-w_1z}}{z!} \\ &= e^{-1-w_0} \sum_{z=0}^{\infty} \frac{e^{-w_1z}}{z!} \\ &= 1, \end{aligned} \quad (6.39)$$

Identifying the sum with the Taylor expansion

$$\sum_{z=0}^{\infty} \frac{e^{-w_1z}}{z!} = e^{e^{-w_1}} \quad (6.40)$$

yields

$$e^{-1-w_0} = e^{-e^{-w_1}} \Rightarrow 1 + w_0 = e^{-w_1}. \quad (6.41)$$

Imposing the mean constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{z=0}^{\infty} z p_Z^w(z | w) &= e^{-1-w_0} \sum_{z=1}^{\infty} \frac{ze^{-w_1z}}{z!} \\ &= e^{-1-w_0} \sum_{z=1}^{\infty} \frac{e^{-w_1z}}{(z-1)!} \\ &= e^{-w_1} e^{-1-w_0} \sum_{y=0}^{\infty} \frac{e^{-w_1y}}{y!} \\ &= e^{-w_1} \\ &\equiv \eta \end{aligned} \quad (6.42)$$

where Equation 6.39 and $y = z - 1$ has been used. Combining Equation 6.38, Equation 6.41 and Equation 6.42 yield

$$p_Z^w(z | w) = \frac{\eta^z e^{-\eta}}{z!}. \quad (6.43)$$

which is the Poisson distribution.

CHAPTER 7

Statistical Paradigms

Axiom 7.1 (Parameter fixedness). *In the statistical game of Definition 4.3, the parameter $w \in \Omega_W$ is treated as a fixed but unknown constant. In this setting, the image measure*

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}^{\mathcal{P}'} &= \mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}^w \\ &= \mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}|w} \end{aligned} \tag{7.1}$$

is assumed to equal $\mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}^{w^}$ for some (unknown) $w^* \in \Omega_W$.*

Axiom 7.2 (Parameter as a random variable). *In the statistical game of Definition 4.3, the parameter $w \in \Omega_W$ is treated as the realization of a random variable*

$$W: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_W \tag{7.2}$$

from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to the measurable space $(\Omega_W, \mathcal{F}_W)$, with the image (prior) measure

$$\mathbb{P}_W = \mathbb{P} \circ W^{-1}. \tag{7.3}$$

The image measure

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}^{\mathcal{P}'} &= \mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}, W} \\ &= \mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}|W} \mathbb{P}_W, \end{aligned} \tag{7.4}$$

where $\mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}|W} = \mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_{1:n+1}}^w$, is defined on

$$((\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y)^{n+1} \times \Omega_W, (\mathcal{F}_X \otimes \mathcal{F}_Y)^{n+1} \otimes \mathcal{F}_W). \tag{7.5}$$

Definition 7.1 (Frequentist statistics paradigm). *Frequentist statistics is a paradigm within the statistical game framework (Definition 4.3) that treats parameters as fixed (Axiom 7.1) and assumes an objective probability measure interpretation (Definition 3.13).*

Definition 7.2 (Bayesian statistics paradigm). *Bayesian statistics is a paradigm within the statistical game framework (Definition 4.3) that treats parameters as realizations of a random variable (Axiom 7.2) and assumes a subjective probability measure interpretation (Definition 3.14).*

Remark 7.1 (Paradigm distinction). *The distinction between Bayesian and Frequentist statistics lies not in the mathematics of probability, but in the interpretation of what probability and parameters represent.*

Remark 7.2 (Frequentist and Bayesian forms of the expected cost). *In the paradigm of Frequentist statistics, Equation 4.10 becomes*

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbb{E}_{(X,Y)_1: n+1|w} [C(U(x_{n+1}, D), Y_{n+1}) | w] \\ &= \int_{(\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y)^{n+1}} C(U(x_{n+1}, D), y_{n+1}) \\ & \quad d\mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_1: n+1|w}(D, x_{n+1}, y_{n+1} | w), \end{aligned} \tag{7.6}$$

whereas in the paradigm of Bayesian statistics, Equation 4.10 becomes

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbb{E}_{(X,Y)_1: n+1, W} [C(U(x_{n+1}, D), Y_{n+1})] \\ &= \int_{(\Omega_X \times \Omega_Y)^{n+1} \times \Omega_W} C(U(x_{n+1}, D), y_{n+1}) \\ & \quad d\mathbb{P}_{(X,Y)_1: n+1, W}(D, x_{n+1}, y_{n+1}, w). \end{aligned} \tag{7.7}$$

7.1 BAYESIAN STATISTICS

The Bayesian paradigm (Definition 7.2) originally come from the work of Bayes [23] and Laplace [24] with much of the modern discussions and formalism created later by Finetti [25], Jeffreys [26], and Savage [27].

In the Bayesian paradigm, it is assumed that Nature's decisions can be captured by a statistical model with parameters that are modeled as realizations of a random variable and a subjective probability measure. This means that the probability density for Nature's actions, used to determine the optimal decision rule in Theorem 4.1, can be written

$$\begin{aligned} p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) &= \int p(w, y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) dw \\ &= \int p(y_{n+1} | w, \tilde{D}) p(w | \tilde{D}) dw, \end{aligned} \tag{7.8}$$

where the relaxation of the notation described in Remark 4.2 has been used. Using Theorem 3.2 and Axiom 7.3

$$\begin{aligned} p(w | \tilde{D}) &= p(w | D) \\ &= \frac{p(D_y | w, D_x)p(w)}{p(D_y | D_x)}, \end{aligned} \tag{7.9}$$

where $D_y = \{y_i\}_{i=1}^n$, $D_x = \{x_i\}_{i=1}^n$ and $p(D_y | D_x)$ can be expanded via marginalization (Remark 3.9).

Axiom 7.3 (Relevance of Observations). *The Robot's observations are relevant for estimating Nature's model only when they map to known actions of Nature.*

$p(w)$ is the Robot's prior belief about w . $p(D_s | w, D_x)$ is the likelihood of the past actions of Nature, and $p(w | D)$, called the posterior, represents the Robot's belief after observing data. The prior depends on parameters that must be specified and cannot be learned from data, as it reflects the Robot's belief before any observations are made.

7.1.1 Bayesian Regression

Regression involves the Robot building a model,

$$f: \Omega_\Theta \times \Omega_X \rightarrow \Omega_Y, \tag{7.10}$$

with associated parameters $\theta \in \Omega_\Theta \subseteq \Omega_W$, that estimates Nature's action $y \in \Omega_Y = \mathbb{R}$ based on observed data $x \in \Omega_X$. The model f acts as a proxy for the Robot in that it on behalf of the Robot estimates the action of Nature given an input. Hence, in providing an estimate, the model must make a choice, similar to the Robot and thus the Robot must pick a cost function for the model. In this study, the quadratic cost function from Definition 5.2 will be considered to review the subject. According to Theorem 5.2 the best action for the Robot can be written

$$U^*(x_{n+1}, D) = \int y_{n+1} p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, D) dy_{n+1}. \tag{7.11}$$

Assuming the actions of Nature follow a normal distribution with the function f as mean and an unknown precision, $\xi \in \Omega_W$

$$p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, w) = \sqrt{\frac{\xi}{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{\xi}{2}(f(\theta, x_{n+1}) - y_{n+1})^2}, \tag{7.12}$$

where $w = (\theta, \xi, \dots)$. Using Equation 7.12 and marginalizing (Remark 3.9) over ξ, θ

$$\begin{aligned} p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, D) &= \int p(y_{n+1}, \theta, \xi | x_{n+1}, D) d\theta d\xi \\ &= \int p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, \theta, \xi, D) p(\theta, \xi | x_{n+1}, D) d\theta d\xi \quad (7.13) \\ &= \int p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, \theta, \xi) p(\theta, \xi | D) d\theta d\xi, \end{aligned}$$

where it has been used that

$$p(y_{n+1} | \theta, \xi, x_{n+1}, D) = p(y_{n+1} | \theta, \xi, x_{n+1}) \quad (7.14)$$

since, by definition, f deterministically maps each input x_{n+1} (given θ, ξ) to a conditional distribution over y_{n+1} (Equation 7.12), and

$$p(\theta, \xi | x_{n+1}, D) = p(\theta, \xi | D) \quad (7.15)$$

from Axiom 7.3. Using Equation 7.13 in¹ Equation 7.11

$$\begin{aligned} U^*(x_{n+1}, D) &= \int f(\theta, x_{n+1}) p(\theta, \xi | D) d\theta d\xi \\ &= \mathbb{E}[f | x_{n+1}, D], \end{aligned} \quad (7.16)$$

where it has been used that

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[Y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, \theta, \xi] &= \int y_{n+1} p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, \theta, \xi) dy_{n+1} \\ &= f(\theta, x_{n+1}) \end{aligned} \quad (7.17)$$

according to Equation 7.12. Using Bayes theorem (Theorem 3.2)

$$p(\theta, \xi | D) = \frac{p(D_y | D_x, \theta, \xi) p(\theta, \xi | D_x)}{p(D_y | D_x)} \quad (7.18)$$

where from marginalization (Remark 3.9)

$$p(D_y | D_x) = \int p(D_y | D_x, \theta, \xi) p(\theta, \xi | D_x) d\theta d\xi. \quad (7.19)$$

¹ Note that a function of a random variable is itself a random variable, so f is a random variable.

Assuming the past actions of Nature are independent and identically distributed (IID), the likelihood can be written (using equation Equation 7.12)

$$p(D_y | D_x, \theta, \xi) = \left(\frac{\xi}{2\pi} \right)^{\frac{n}{2}} \prod_{i=1}^n e^{-\frac{\xi}{2}(f(\theta, x_i) - y_i)^2}. \quad (7.20)$$

From the chain rule (Theorem 3.1) and Axiom 7.3

$$p(\theta, \xi | D_x) = p(\theta | \xi)p(\xi). \quad (7.21)$$

Assuming the distribution of θ is i) independent of ξ and ii) normally distributed with zero mean and a precision described by a hyperparameter, λ , then

$$\begin{aligned} p(\theta | \xi) &= p(\theta) \\ &= \int p(\theta | \lambda)p(\lambda)d\lambda. \end{aligned} \quad (7.22)$$

The precision is constructed as a wide gamma distribution so as to approximate an objective prior

$$p(\theta | \lambda)p(\lambda) = \prod_{q=1}^{\tilde{n}} \frac{\lambda_q^{\frac{n_q}{2}}}{(2\pi)^{\frac{n_q}{2}}} e^{-\frac{\lambda_q}{2} \sum_{l=1}^{n_q} \theta_l^2} \frac{\beta_q^{\alpha_q}}{\Gamma(\alpha_q)} \lambda_q^{\alpha_q-1} e^{-\beta_q \lambda_q} \quad (7.23)$$

where α_q, β_q are prior parameters and \tilde{n} is the number of hyper parameters. In the completely general case \tilde{n} would equal the dimension of θ , such that each parameter has an independent precision. In practice, the Robot may consider assigning some parameters the same precision, e.g. for parameters in the same layer in a neural network. Since $p(\xi)$ is analogous to $p(\lambda)$ – in that both are prior distributions for precision parameters – $p(\xi)$ is assumed to be a wide gamma distribution as well, meaning

$$\begin{aligned} p(\xi) &= \text{Ga}(\xi | \tilde{\alpha}, \tilde{\beta}) \\ &= \frac{\tilde{\beta}^{\tilde{\alpha}}}{\Gamma(\tilde{\alpha})} \xi^{\tilde{\alpha}-1} e^{-\tilde{\beta}\xi}. \end{aligned} \quad (7.24)$$

At this point the optimal decision rule (Equation 7.11) is fully specified and can be approximated by obtaining samples from $p(\theta, \xi, \lambda | D)$ via Hamiltonian

Monte Carlo (HMC) [28–31]. The centerpiece in the HMC algorithm is the Hamiltonian defined as follows [30, 31]

$$H \equiv \sum_{q=1}^{\tilde{n}} \sum_{l=1}^{n_q} \frac{p_l^2}{2m_l} - \ln p(\theta, \xi, \lambda | D) + \text{const}, \quad (7.25)$$

where

$$p(\theta, \xi | D) = \int p(\theta, \xi, \lambda | D) d\lambda. \quad (7.26)$$

Besides its function in the HMC algorithm, the Hamiltonian presents the details of the Bayesian model well. Using Equation 7.18–Equation 7.26 yields

$$\begin{aligned} H = & \sum_{q=1}^{\tilde{n}} \sum_{l=1}^{n_q} \frac{p_l^2}{2m_l} + \frac{n}{2} [\ln(2\pi) - \ln \xi] + \frac{\xi}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n (f(\theta, x_i) - y_i)^2 \\ & + \sum_{q=1}^{\tilde{n}} \left(\ln \Gamma(\alpha_q) - \alpha_q \ln \beta_q + (1 - \alpha_q) \ln \lambda_q + \beta_q \lambda_q \right. \\ & \quad \left. + \frac{n_q}{2} (\ln(2\pi) - \ln \lambda_q) + \frac{\lambda_q}{2} \sum_{l=1}^{n_q} \theta_l^2 \right) \\ & + \ln \Gamma(\tilde{\alpha}) - \tilde{\alpha} \ln \tilde{\beta} + (1 - \tilde{\alpha}) \ln \xi + \tilde{\beta} \xi + \text{const}. \end{aligned} \quad (7.27)$$

Example 7.1. —

Let $\xi \equiv e^\zeta$, such that $\zeta \in [-\infty, \infty]$ maps to $\xi \in [0, \infty]$ and ξ is ensured to be positive definite regardless of the value of ζ . Using the differential $d\xi = \xi d\zeta$ in Equation 7.16 means $p(\theta, \xi, \lambda | D)$ is multiplied with ξ . Hence, when taking $-\ln p(\theta, \xi, \lambda | D)$ according to Equation 7.25, a $-\ln \xi$ is added to the Hamiltonian. In practice this means

$$(1 - \tilde{\alpha}) \ln \xi \in H \Rightarrow -\tilde{\alpha} \ln \xi. \quad (7.28)$$

7.1.2 Bayesian Classification

Classification involves the Robot building a model,

$$f: \Omega_\Theta \times \Omega_X \rightarrow \Delta^K, \quad (7.29)$$

with associated parameters $\theta \in \Omega_\Theta \subseteq \Omega_W$, that estimates Nature's actions $y \in \Omega_Y = \{1, \dots, K\}$ based on observed data $x \in \Omega_X$. Here

$$\Delta^K = \{p \in \mathbb{R}^K : p_i \geq 0, \sum_i p_i = 1\} \quad (7.30)$$

denotes the K -dimensional probability simplex, so that for $x_i \in \Omega_X$ the model output $f(\theta, x_i)$ is a probability vector representing the conditional distribution of the class label $y_i \in \Omega_Y$. In particular, the probability of observing class y_{n+1} given x_{n+1} and parameters θ is

$$p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, \theta) = f_{y_{n+1}}(\theta, x_{n+1}), \quad (7.31)$$

where $f_{y_{n+1}}(\theta, x_{n+1})$ denotes the y_{n+1} 'th component of $f(\theta, x_{n+1})$. In this case, the Robot's action space is equal to Natures action space, with the possible addition of a reject option, $\Omega_U = \Omega_Y \cup \{\text{reject}\}$. To review this subject the Robot will be considered to be penalized equally in case of a classification error, which corresponds to the $0 - 1$ cost function (Definition 5.3), with the addition of a reject option at cost ψ . This means

$$C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) = 1 - \delta_{U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}} + (\psi - 1)\delta_{U(\tilde{D}), \text{reject}}. \quad (7.32)$$

Using Equation 5.21, the optimal decision rule for the robot can be written

$$\begin{aligned} U^*(\tilde{D}) &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) | \tilde{D}] \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \left(\sum_{y_{n+1} \in \Omega_Y} C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) p(y_{n+1} | \tilde{D}) + (\psi - 1)\delta_{U(\tilde{D}), \text{reject}} \right) \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \left(1 - p(U(\tilde{D}) | \tilde{D}) + (\psi - 1)\delta_{U(\tilde{D}), \text{reject}} \right). \end{aligned} \quad (7.33)$$

In absence of the reject option, the optimal decision rule is to pick the MAP, as shown in Theorem 5.3. Marginalizing over θ and using Equation 7.31

$$\begin{aligned}
 p(U(\tilde{D}) | \tilde{D}) &= \int p(U(\tilde{D}), \theta | \tilde{D}) d\theta \\
 &= \int p(U(\tilde{D}) | \theta, \tilde{D}) p(\theta | \tilde{D}) d\theta \\
 &= \int p(U(\tilde{D}) | x_{n+1}, \theta) p(\theta | D) d\theta \\
 &= \int f_{U(\tilde{D})}(\theta, x_{n+1}) p(\theta | D) d\theta \\
 &= \mathbb{E}[f_{U(\tilde{D})}(\theta, x_{n+1}) | D],
 \end{aligned} \tag{7.34}$$

where for the second to last equality it has been used that

$$p(U(\tilde{D}) | \theta, \tilde{D}) = p(U(\tilde{D}) | \theta, x_{n+1}) \tag{7.35}$$

which holds because f deterministically maps each input x_{n+1} to a probability vector (Equation 7.31). Consequently, conditional on θ and x_{n+1} , the distribution of $U(\tilde{D})$ is independent of the observed dataset D . Furthermore, by Axiom 7.3, the posterior of θ does not change with the addition of the new input, i.e. $p(\theta | \tilde{D}) = p(\theta | D)$. From Bayes theorem

$$p(\theta | D) = \frac{p(D_y | D_x, \theta) p(\theta | D_x)}{p(D_y | D_x)}, \tag{7.36}$$

where from Axiom 7.3 $p(\theta | D_x) = p(\theta)$. Assuming θ is normally distributed with zero mean and a precision described by a hyperparameter, λ ,

$$p(\theta) = \int p(\theta | \lambda) p(\lambda) d\lambda. \tag{7.37}$$

where $p(\theta | \lambda)p(\lambda)$ is given by Equation 7.23. Assuming the past actions of Nature are independent and identically distributed (IID), the likelihood can be written [32]

$$\begin{aligned}
 p(D_y | D_x, \theta) &= \prod_{i=1}^n p(y_i | x_i, \theta) \\
 &= \prod_{i=1}^n f_{y_i}(\theta, x_i).
 \end{aligned} \tag{7.38}$$

At this point the optimal decision rule (Equation 7.33) is fully specified and can be approximated by HMC similarly to the regression case. In this case, the model can be represented by the Hamiltonian

$$H \equiv \sum_q \sum_l \frac{p_l^2}{2m_l} - \ln p(\theta, \lambda | D) + \text{const} \quad (7.39)$$

where

$$p(\theta | D) = \int p(\theta, \lambda | D) d\lambda. \quad (7.40)$$

Using Equation 7.34–Equation 7.38 in Equation 7.39 yields the Hamiltonian

$$\begin{aligned} H = & \sum_{q=1}^{\tilde{n}} \sum_{l=1}^{n_q} \frac{p_l^2}{2m_l} - \sum_{i=1}^n \ln f_{y_i}(\theta, x_i) \\ & + \sum_{q=1}^{\tilde{n}} \left(\ln \Gamma(\alpha_q) - \alpha_q \ln \beta_q + (1 - \alpha_q) \ln \lambda_q + \beta_q \lambda_q \cdot \right. \\ & \left. + \frac{n_q}{2} (\ln(2\pi) - \ln \lambda_q) + \frac{\lambda_q}{2} \sum_{l=1}^{n_q} \theta_l^2 \right) + \text{const} \end{aligned} \quad (7.41)$$

Sampling Equation 7.41 yields a set of coefficients which can be used to compute $\mathbb{E}[f_{y_{n+1}}(\theta, x_{n+1}) | D]$ which in turn (see Equation 7.34 and Equation 7.33) can be used to compute $U^*(\tilde{D})$.

7.1.3 Bayesian Parameter Estimation

Aside from prediction-based decisions, which Definition 4.3 describes, the Robot may also make decisions concerning the Model of Nature, such as estimating unknown parameter values. In this case, for Bayesian statistics, the expected cost takes the general form

$$\mathbb{E}_{(X,Y)_{1:n}, N} [C(U(D), N)], \quad (7.42)$$

where N denotes Nature's action. For parameter estimation, $N = W$ corresponds to the parameter of interest. By convention, the decision rule used specifically for parameter estimation is denoted

$$\hat{w}(D) \in \Omega_U = \Omega_W \quad (7.43)$$

emphasizing its role as an estimator rather than a generic action $U(D)$. The optimal estimator follows from Theorem 4.1 as

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{w}^*(D) &= \operatorname{argmin}_{\hat{w}(D)} \mathbb{E}_{W|(X,Y)_{1:n}} [C(\hat{w}(D), W) | D] \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_{\hat{w}(D)} \int C(\hat{w}(D), w) p(w | D) dw.\end{aligned}\tag{7.44}$$

The Robot can select a cost function like in Chapter 5 and proceed by expanding $p(w | D)$ similarly to Equation 7.9.

Example 7.2.

Consider two sensors that produce noisy measurements

$$D_y = \{y_i^{(1)}\}_{i=1}^{N^{(1)}} \cup \{y_j^{(2)}\}_{j=1}^{N^{(2)}}.\tag{7.45}$$

of a common but unknown physical quantity. Let the parameter of interest be represented by the random variable

$$W: \Omega \rightarrow \Omega_W,\tag{7.46}$$

interpreted as Nature's true mean value, from the probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ to a measurable space $(\Omega_W, \mathcal{F}_W)$. The two sensors produce conditionally independent observations with known but distinct noise variances $\nu_1, \nu_2 > 0$, where $\nu_1 \neq \nu_2$. By Equation 7.44 and Theorem 5.2 a quadratic cost function yields the optimal decision rule

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{w}^*(D_y) &= \operatorname{argmin}_{\hat{w}(D_y)} \int (\hat{w}(D_y) - w)^2 p(w | D_y) dw \\ &= \int wp(w | D_y) dw\end{aligned}\tag{7.47}$$

where by Theorem 3.2

$$p(w | D_y) = \frac{p(D_y | w)p(w)}{p(D_y)}.\tag{7.48}$$

Assuming a non-informative (uniform) prior

$$p(w) = \text{Unif}(a, b),\tag{7.49}$$

the posterior is proportional to the likelihood

$$p(D_y | w) = \prod_{i=1}^{N^{(1)}} p(y_i^{(1)} | w) \prod_{j=1}^{N^{(2)}} p(y_j^{(2)} | w).\tag{7.50}$$

Taking

$$p(y_i^{(1)} | w) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\nu_1}} e^{-\frac{(y_i^{(1)} - w)^2}{2\nu_1}}, \quad p(y_j^{(2)} | w) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\nu_2}} e^{-\frac{(y_j^{(2)} - w)^2}{2\nu_2}}, \quad (7.51)$$

yields

$$p(w | D_y) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\tilde{\nu}}} e^{-\frac{1}{2\tilde{\nu}}(w - \tilde{w})^2} \quad (7.52)$$

where the posterior variance $\tilde{\nu}$ and mean \tilde{w} are given by

$$\tilde{\nu} = \left(\frac{N^{(1)}}{\nu_1} + \frac{N^{(2)}}{\nu_2} \right)^{-1}, \quad \tilde{w} = \tilde{\nu} \left(\frac{N^{(1)}\bar{y}^{(1)}}{\nu_1} + \frac{N^{(2)}\bar{y}^{(2)}}{\nu_2} \right), \quad (7.53)$$

with sample means

$$\bar{y}^{(1)} = \frac{1}{N^{(1)}} \sum_{i=1}^{N^{(1)}} y_i^{(1)}, \quad \bar{y}^{(2)} = \frac{1}{N^{(2)}} \sum_{j=1}^{N^{(2)}} y_j^{(2)}. \quad (7.54)$$

Using Equation 7.52 in Equation 7.47 means

$$\hat{w}^*(D_y) = \tilde{w}. \quad (7.55)$$

Hence, the Robot's optimal action is to report the weighted average of the two sample means, where each weight is inversely proportional to the corresponding sensor variance.

7.2 FREQUENTIST STATISTICS

The Frequentist paradigm (Definition 7.1) trace back to seminal works such as those of Neyman and Pearson [33] and Fisher [34], who laid the groundwork for much of its methodology. Subsequent developments by Wald [35], Neyman [36], and Lehmann [37] further refined its theories and techniques.

In the Frequentist paradigm, it is assumed that Nature's decisions can be captured by a statistical model with fixed, unknown parameters and an objective probability measure. In this setting, the optimal decision rule can be expressed as

$$U^*(x, w). \quad (7.56)$$

Since w is not known to the Robot, the central task becomes to estimate w from past data D . This gives rise to a nested decision problem with two levels:

- i) Parameter estimation: use past data D to construct an estimator $\hat{w}(D)$ of the fixed but unknown parameters w .
- ii) Prediction/decision: given a new observation x and the parameter estimate $\hat{w}(D)$, apply the decision rule U to determine an action.

The practical decision rule for a new observation $x_{n+1} \in \Omega_X$ therefore takes the form²

$$U^*(x_{n+1}, \hat{w}^*(D)), \quad (7.57)$$

where $\hat{w}^*(D)$ denotes the optimal parameter decision rule, obtained from past data D , and the action U^* is determined by minimizing the expected cost as specified in Definition 4.3 and Remark 7.2.

7.2.1 Frequentist Regression

Regression involves the Robot constructing a model,

$$f: \Omega_\Theta \times \Omega_X \rightarrow \Omega_Y, \quad (7.58)$$

with associated parameters $\theta \in \Omega_\Theta \subseteq \Omega_W$, that estimates Nature's actions $y_{n+1} \in \Omega_Y$ based on observed data $x_{n+1} \in \Omega_X = \mathbb{R}$. The model f acts as a proxy for the Robot in that it on behalf of the Robot estimates the action of Nature given an input. Hence, in providing an estimate, the model must make a choice, similar to the Robot and thus the Robot must pick a cost function for the model. In this study, the quadratic cost function from Definition 5.2 will be considered to review the subject.

Assuming the actions of Nature follow a normal distribution with the function f as mean and an unknown precision $\xi \in \Omega_W$

$$p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, w) = \sqrt{\frac{\xi}{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{\xi}{2}(f(\theta, x_{n+1}) - y_{n+1})^2}, \quad (7.59)$$

² Equation 7.57 justifies the unified notation $U(\tilde{D})$ for the decision rule in Definition 4.3 and Remark 7.2.

where $w = (\theta, \xi, \dots)$ denotes the collection of fixed, unknown parameters. Under the quadratic cost function from Definition 5.2, the optimal decision rule is the conditional expectation of Y_{n+1} given (x_{n+1}, w) (Theorem 5.2),

$$\begin{aligned} U^*(x_{n+1}, \hat{w}^*(D)) &= \mathbb{E}[Y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, \hat{w}^*(D)] \\ &= \int y_{n+1} p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, \hat{w}^*(D)) dy_{n+1} \\ &= f(\hat{\theta}^*(D), x_{n+1}). \end{aligned} \quad (7.60)$$

Equation 7.60 represents the Frequentist optimal decision rule, defined conditional on an estimate of the model parameters. This can be directly contrasted with Equation 7.16, which expresses the Bayesian optimal decision rule obtained by averaging over the posterior distribution of the model parameters (and latent variables) given the observed data. From Equation 7.60, it follows that within the Frequentist paradigm, regression becomes a problem of parameter estimation.

7.2.2 Frequentist Classification

The setup for Frequentist classification initially mirrors that of Bayesian classification (Section 7.1.2), but begins to diverge at the level of the cost function,

$$C(U(x_{n+1}, w), y_{n+1}) = 1 - \delta_{U(x_{n+1}, w), y_{n+1}} + (\psi - 1)\delta_{U(x_{n+1}, w), \text{reject}}. \quad (7.61)$$

Let $\hat{w}^*(D)$ denote the optimal Frequentist estimator of the model parameters obtained from past data D . The optimal decision rule for a new observation x_{n+1} is (Theorem 4.1 and Equation 5.21)

$$\begin{aligned} U^*(x_{n+1}, \hat{w}^*(D)) &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \mathbb{E}[C(U(\tilde{D}), Y_{n+1}) | x_{n+1}, \hat{w}(D)] \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \sum_{y_{n+1} \in \Omega_Y} C(U(\tilde{D}), y_{n+1}) p(y_{n+1} | x_{n+1}, \hat{w}(D)) \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_{U(\tilde{D})} \left(1 - f_{U(\tilde{D})}(\hat{\theta}^*(D), x_{n+1}) + (\psi - 1)\delta_{U(\tilde{D}), \text{reject}} \right). \end{aligned} \quad (7.62)$$

From Equation 7.62, it follows that within the Frequentist paradigm, classification reduces to a problem of parameter estimation.

Remark 7.3 (Bayesian versus Frequentist regression and classification). *Contrasting Equation 7.60 and Equation 7.16 for regression and Equation 7.62 and Equation 7.33 for classification, the mathematical difference in relation to prediction between the two paradigms can be written as shown in Table 1.*

Table 1: Comparison between Frequentist and Bayesian prediction

Paradigm	Predictive model
Frequentist	$f(\hat{\theta}^*(D), x_{n+1})$
Bayesian	$\mathbb{E}[f(\theta, x_{n+1}) D]$

7.2.3 Frequentist Parameter Estimation

As shown in Section 7.2.1 and Section 7.2.2, both regression and classification in the Frequentist paradigm can be reframed as problems of parameter estimation. This makes parameter estimation the central focus of Frequentist statistics. Unlike in Bayesian statistics, where parameters are intermediate quantities to be marginalized over, in the Frequentist framework the parameters are fixed but unknown, and their determination carries substantive interpretational and practical importance. Estimators of these parameters serve as decision rules that summarize past observations into actionable predictions.

Definition 7.3 (Sampling distribution). *Let D denote the observed dataset and let $\hat{w}(D)$ be a decision rule (estimator) for the fixed-but-unknown parameter $w \in \Omega_W$. The sampling distribution of \hat{w} is the probability distribution of the random variable $\hat{w}(D)$ induced by repeated sampling of D from the data-generating mechanism $p(D | w)$.*

Remark 7.4 (Bayesian versus Frequentist perspective). *The sampling distribution of an estimator $\hat{w}(D)$ is central to the Frequentist paradigm, since all uncertainty arises from the randomness of the data $D \sim p(D | w)$ while the parameter w is treated as a fixed but unknown constant. In Bayesian statistics, by contrast, uncertainty about w is represented by a posterior distribution $p(w | D)$ after observing data. Both approaches yield distributions over possible parameter values or estimates, but their conceptual origin differs: in the*

Frequentist case, the distribution is over repeated samples of data, whereas in the Bayesian case, the distribution is over the parameter itself given the observed data.

Example 7.3.

In practice, the true sampling distribution of an estimator $\hat{w}(D)$ is rarely available in closed form. The bootstrap provides an approximation technique based solely on the observed dataset. Let $D = \{(x_i, y_i)\}_{i=1}^n$ be the dataset. A bootstrap sample D^b is constructed by sampling n observations with replacement from D . Repeating this procedure B times yields bootstrap replicates $\hat{w}(D^1), \dots, \hat{w}(D^B)$, whose empirical distribution approximates the sampling distribution of $\hat{w}(D)$.

Common quantities derived from the bootstrap include:

- The bootstrap estimate of variance:

$$\widehat{\text{Var}}_{\text{boot}}[\hat{w}] = \frac{1}{B-1} \sum_{b=1}^B \left(\hat{w}(D^b) - \bar{\hat{w}} \right)^2, \quad (7.63)$$

where

$$\bar{\hat{w}} = \frac{1}{B} \sum_{b=1}^B \hat{w}(D^b). \quad (7.64)$$

- The bootstrap confidence interval, constructed from quantiles of the bootstrap distribution of \hat{w} .

Definition 7.4 (Fisher information). Let $D_y = \{y_i\}_{i=1}^n$ denote Nature's actions, $D_x = \{x_i\}_{i=1}^n$ the corresponding observations, and let $w \in \Omega_W$ be an unknown parameter of the model. Let $p(D_y | D_x, w)$ denote the likelihood of observing D_y given D_x and w . The Fisher information is defined as

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{I}(w) &\equiv \mathbb{E} \left[\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p(D_y | D_x, w) \right)^2 \middle| D_x, w \right] \\ &= \text{Var} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p(D_y | D_x, w) \middle| D_x, w \right]. \end{aligned} \quad (7.65)$$

Proof. In general

$$\mathbb{E} \left[\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p \right)^2 \right] = \text{Var} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p \right] + \left(\mathbb{E} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p \right] \right)^2. \quad (7.66)$$

Now

$$\mathbb{E} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p \right] = \int \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p \right) p dD_y \quad (7.67)$$

$$= \int \frac{\partial}{\partial w} p dD_y \quad (7.68)$$

$$= \frac{\partial}{\partial w} \int p dD_y \quad (7.69)$$

$$= 0, \quad (7.70)$$

since $\int p(D_y | D_x, w) dD_y = 1$. Therefore

$$\mathcal{I}(w) = \text{Var} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p(D_y | D_x, w) \middle| D_x, w \right]. \quad (7.71)$$

□

Theorem 7.1 (Fisher information for independent observations). *Let $D_y = \{y_i\}_{i=1}^n$ denote Nature's actions and $D_x = \{x_i\}_{i=1}^n$ the corresponding observations, and let $w \in \Omega_W$ be the parameters of Nature's model. If the data are independently and identically distributed (IID), the likelihood factorizes as*

$$p(D_y | D_x, w) = \prod_{i=1}^n p(y_i | x_i, w). \quad (7.72)$$

Then, the Fisher information of the full dataset is

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{I}(w) &= \mathbb{E} \left[\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p(D_y | D_x, w) \right)^2 \middle| D_x, w \right] \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n \mathcal{I}_i(w), \end{aligned} \quad (7.73)$$

where $\mathcal{I}_i(w)$ denotes the Fisher information contributed by the i th observation:

$$\mathcal{I}_i(w) = \mathbb{E} \left[\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ln p(y_i | x_i, w) \right)^2 \middle| x_i, w \right]. \quad (7.74)$$

Definition 7.5 (Maximum likelihood estimator (MLE) decision rule). Let $D_y = \{y_i\}_{i=1}^n$ denote Nature's actions, $D_x = \{x_i\}_{i=1}^n$ the corresponding observations, and let $w \in \Omega_W$ be the parameters of Nature's model. The Maximum Likelihood Estimator (MLE) decision rule \hat{w}_{MLE} is the value of w that maximizes the likelihood of observing D_y given D_x :

$$\hat{w}_{\text{MLE}}(D) \equiv \underset{w \in \Omega_W}{\operatorname{argmax}} p(D_y | D_x, w). \quad (7.75)$$

Theorem 7.2 (Asymptotic sampling distribution of the MLE). Let $\hat{w}_{\text{MLE}}(D)$ denote the Maximum Likelihood Estimator (MLE) of the fixed-but-unknown parameter w . Under standard regularity conditions, the sampling distribution of \hat{w}_{MLE} satisfies

$$\sqrt{n} (\hat{w}_{\text{MLE}} - w) \xrightarrow{d} \text{Norm}(0, \mathcal{I}(w)^{-1}), \quad (7.76)$$

where $\mathcal{I}(w)$ is the Fisher information matrix evaluated at w , and \xrightarrow{d} denotes convergence in distribution as $n \rightarrow \infty$. That is, the sampling distribution of the MLE becomes approximately normal, centered at the true parameter w with variance given by the inverse Fisher information.

Definition 7.6 (Minimax decision rule). A decision rule \hat{w}' is said to be minimax if it minimizes the maximum expected cost, that is,

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{w}' &\equiv \inf_{\hat{w}} \sup_{w \in \Omega_W} \mathbb{E}[C(\hat{w}, w) | w] \\ &= \inf_{\hat{w}} \sup_{w \in \Omega_W} \int C(\hat{w}(D), w) p(D | w) dD. \end{aligned} \quad (7.77)$$

Theorem 7.3 (Mean squared error (MSE)). The expectation of the quadratic cost function for a parameter estimate can be written as

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[C(\hat{w}, w) | w] &= \mathbb{E}[(\hat{w} - w)^2 | w] \\ &= \mathbb{E}[(\hat{w} - \mathbb{E}[\hat{w}])^2 | w] + (w - \mathbb{E}[\hat{w}])^2 \\ &= \text{Var}[\hat{w} | w] + \text{Bias}[\hat{w} | w]^2, \end{aligned} \quad (7.78)$$

where the bias of the estimator \hat{w} is defined as

$$\text{Bias}[\hat{w} | w] \equiv w - \mathbb{E}[\hat{w}]. \quad (7.79)$$

If $\mathbb{E}[C(\hat{w}, w) | w] \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$, then \hat{w} is a weakly consistent estimator of w , i.e., $\hat{w} \xrightarrow{P} w$. Different consistent estimators may converge to w

at different rates. It is desirable for an estimator to be consistent and have a small (quadratic) cost, meaning that both its bias and variance should be small. In practice, however, these two quantities often cannot be minimized simultaneously.

Corollary 7.1 (MLE is approximately minimax for quadratic loss). *Under standard regularity conditions, the Maximum Likelihood Estimator (MLE) \hat{w}_{MLE} is approximately minimax for the quadratic cost function, meaning it approximately minimizes the maximum expected cost.*

Proof. From Theorem 7.3,

$$\mathbb{E}[(\hat{w} - w)^2 | w] = \text{Var}[\hat{w} | w] + \text{Bias}[\hat{w} | w]^2. \quad (7.80)$$

Under the regularity conditions where the MLE is unbiased and asymptotically efficient, the bias term vanishes, meaning $\text{Bias}[\hat{w}_{\text{MLE}} | w] = 0$, and the variance term $\text{Var}[\hat{w}_{\text{MLE}} | w]$ is asymptotically minimal among a class of estimators. Thus, the expected quadratic cost for the MLE can be approximated by

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[(\hat{w}_{\text{MLE}} - w)^2 | w] &\approx \text{Var}[\hat{w}_{\text{MLE}} | w] \\ &\approx \frac{\text{tr}[\mathcal{I}(w)^{-1}]}{n}, \end{aligned} \quad (7.81)$$

where the second line follows from Theorem 7.2. The Cramér–Rao lower bound [38] states that

$$\text{Var}[\hat{w} | w] \geq \frac{\text{tr}[\mathcal{I}(w)^{-1}]}{n}, \quad (7.82)$$

implying that the MLE achieves the smallest possible variance asymptotically. Therefore,

$$\sup_{w \in \Omega_W} \mathbb{E}[(\hat{w}_{\text{MLE}} - w)^2 | w] \approx \inf_{\hat{w}} \sup_{w \in \Omega_W} \mathbb{E}[(\hat{w} - w)^2 | w], \quad (7.83)$$

meaning the MLE decision rule is approximately minimax under quadratic cost. \square

Remark 7.5 (Over/under-fitting). *The bias-variance decomposition (Theorem 7.3) is a concept relevant to Frequentist statistics, where a single point estimate of the parameters is used. This decomposition illustrates the trade-off between underfitting and overfitting: high bias corresponds to underfitting,*

while high variance corresponds to overfitting.

In Bayesian statistics, predictions are obtained by integrating over the posterior distribution of parameters, rather than relying on a single point estimate. This integration inherently regularizes the model, mitigating overfitting and underfitting.

Remark 7.6 (Frequentist regression). According to Equation 7.60, the optimal decision rule for the Robot in the Frequentist regression setting depends on the observed data x_{n+1} and on the optimal decision rule for parameter estimation, $\hat{w}^*(D)$. As defined in Definition 7.6, the optimal parameter decision rule under the quadratic cost of Equation 7.60 coincides, according to Corollary 7.1, approximately with the maximum likelihood estimate of Definition 7.5.

To illustrate this concretely, consider a dataset $D = \{(x_i, y_i)\}_{i=1}^n$ consisting of IID pairs, where each observation follows the probabilistic model in Equation 7.59. The parameters of interest are $\theta \in \Omega_\Theta \subset \Omega_W$, representing the regression coefficients. The precision parameter $\xi \in \Omega_W$, denoting the inverse variance of the noise, is treated as a nuisance parameter, as it does not directly affect the decision rule in Equation 7.60.

By equation Equation 7.59, the likelihood is given by

$$p(D_y | D_x, \theta, \xi) = \left(\frac{\xi}{2\pi} \right)^{\frac{n}{2}} \prod_{i=1}^n e^{-\frac{\xi}{2} (f(\theta, x_i) - y_i)^2}. \quad (7.84)$$

Since the natural logarithm is a monotonic transformation, the MLE can equivalently be obtained by minimizing the negative log-likelihood, also called the loss function,

$$\begin{aligned} \ell(\theta, \xi) &= -\ln p(D_y | D_x, \theta, \xi) \\ &= \frac{n}{2} [\ln(2\pi) - \ln \xi] + \frac{\xi}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n (f(\theta, x_i) - y_i)^2. \end{aligned} \quad (7.85)$$

The loss function ℓ plays a role analogous to the Hamiltonian in the Bayesian formulation of Equation 7.27. Indeed, one can view ℓ as a subset of H , in the sense that it captures the same data-fit term but omits the prior and momentum contributions. Despite this structural similarity, their purposes differ: ℓ is minimized to obtain a single optimal parameter estimate, whereas H is used to generate an ensemble of parameter values for computing the expected value of f .

Minimization with respect to θ , for fixed ξ , is equivalent to minimizing the sum of squared residuals,

$$\hat{\theta}_{MLE} = \operatorname{argmin}_{\theta} \sum_{i=1}^n (f(\theta, x_i) - y_i)^2. \quad (7.86)$$

Remark 7.7 (Philosophical tension within Frequentist statistics). *The structural similarity between the loss function and the Hamiltonian, described in Remark 7.6, extends naturally through the introduction of regularization and ensemble learning. Bayesian models inherently mitigate overfitting and promote model stability through prior distributions that constrain parameter uncertainty. In contrast, the Frequentist framework must introduce analogous mechanisms explicitly. For example, ridge regression[39] corresponds directly to imposing a Gaussian prior on the regression coefficients, making it equivalent to Bayesian linear regression with a conjugate prior. Likewise, ensemble methods such as bagging approximate Bayesian model averaging by combining predictions from multiple fitted models, thereby capturing parameter uncertainty through resampling rather than explicit probabilistic inference.*

In such cases, the Frequentist decision rule (Equation 7.60) increasingly resembles the Bayesian one (Equation 7.16), blurring the practical distinction between the two paradigms. This convergence exposes a philosophical tension within Frequentist statistics: in seeking to replicate the robustness of Bayesian methods, it implicitly incorporates subjective elements—through modeling choices, regularization assumptions, or ensemble constructions—thus challenging its foundational claim of objectivity (Definition 3.13).

To be clear, this incorporation of subjectivity does not undermine the mathematical validity of the Frequentist definition of probability as a long-run relative frequency (Definition 3.13). Rather, it challenges the philosophical claim of epistemic objectivity, since regularization and ensemble methods implicitly encode subjective choices that parallel the role of priors in Bayesian inference.

Example 7.4.

Consider a statistical experiment in which the actions of Nature are IID Bernoulli random variables with unknown parameter $w \in \Omega_W = [0, 1]$. Each observed outcome $y_i \in \{0, 1\}$ satisfies

$$p(1 | w) = w, \quad p(0 | w) = 1 - w, \quad (7.87)$$

and the Robot observes the dataset

$$D_y = \{y_i\}_{i=1}^n. \quad (7.88)$$

The goal of the Robot is to estimate the unknown parameter w based on D_y .

- **Arithmetic mean:** $\hat{w}(D_y) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n y_i$ with

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbb{E}[\hat{w}(D_y) | w] &= \int \hat{w}(D_y) p(D_y | w) dD_y \\
 &= \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbb{E}[Y_i | w] \\
 &= w, \\
 \text{Var}[\hat{w}(D_y) | w] &= \int (\hat{w}(D_y) - \mathbb{E}[\hat{w}(D_y) | w])^2 p(D_y | w) dD_y \\
 &= \frac{1}{n^2} \sum_{i=1}^n \text{Var}[Y_i | w] \\
 &= \frac{w(1-w)}{n}, \\
 \mathbb{E}[(\hat{w}(D_y) - w)^2 | w] &= \text{Var}[\hat{w}(D_y) | w] + (\mathbb{E}[\hat{w}(D_y) | w] - w)^2 \\
 &= \frac{w(1-w)}{n}.
 \end{aligned} \tag{7.89}$$

- **Constant estimator:** $\hat{w}(D_y) = 0.5$ with

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbb{E}[\hat{w} | w] &= 0.5, \\
 \text{Var}[\hat{w} | w] &= 0, \\
 \mathbb{E}[(\hat{w} - w)^2 | w] &= (0.5 - w)^2.
 \end{aligned} \tag{7.90}$$

- **First observation:** $\hat{w}(D_y) = y_1$ with

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbb{E}[\hat{w}(D_y) | w] &= \mathbb{E}[Y_1 | w] \\
 &= w, \\
 \text{Var}[\hat{w}(D_y) | w] &= \text{Var}[Y_1 | w] + (\mathbb{E}[\hat{w}(D_y) | w] - w)^2 \\
 &= w(1-w), \\
 \mathbb{E}[(\hat{w}(D_y) - w)^2 | w] &= w(1-w).
 \end{aligned} \tag{7.91}$$

The arithmetic mean minimizes the quadratic cost across all w , whereas the constant estimator may perform better only for particular values of w . The

variance of the first-observation estimator does not decrease with sample size n , making it sub-optimal as n increases.

Example 7.5.

The likelihood function for Example 7.4 is

$$\begin{aligned} p(D_y | D_x, w) &= p(D_y | w) \\ &= \prod_{i=1}^n w^{y_i} (1-w)^{1-y_i}. \end{aligned} \tag{7.92}$$

Let $\ell(w) \equiv -\ln p(D_y | D_x, w)$, then

$$\begin{aligned} \operatorname{argmin}_w \ell(w) &= \operatorname{argmax}_w p(D_y | w) \\ &= \operatorname{argmax}_w \ln \left(\prod_{i=1}^n w^{y_i} (1-w)^{1-y_i} \right) \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_w \left[\ln(1-w) \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - 1) - \ln w \sum_{i=1}^n y_i \right] \end{aligned} \tag{7.93}$$

Requiring

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial w} \ell(w) = \frac{n - \sum_{i=1}^n y_i}{1-w} - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n y_i}{w} \tag{7.94}$$

to vanish means the maximum likelihood estimate of w is given by

$$\hat{w}_{MLE}(D_y) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n y_i. \tag{7.95}$$

Example 7.6.

Consider a statistical experiment in which the actions of Nature are IID random variables with exponential distribution and unknown rate parameter $w > 0$. Each observed outcome $y_i \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$ satisfies

$$p(y_i | w) = \frac{e^{-\frac{y_i}{w}}}{w}, \quad i = 1, \dots, n, \tag{7.96}$$

and the Robot observes the dataset

$$D_y = \{y_i\}_{i=1}^n. \tag{7.97}$$

The goal of the Robot is to estimate the unknown parameter w based on D_y . The likelihood is

$$p(D_y | w) = \prod_{i=1}^n \frac{e^{-\frac{y_i}{w}}}{w}. \quad (7.98)$$

The loss function is

$$\ell(w) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n y_i}{w} - n \ln w. \quad (7.99)$$

Differentiating and setting to zero gives the maximum likelihood estimate:

$$\hat{w}_{\text{MLE}}(D_y) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n y_i}{n}. \quad (7.100)$$

Example 7.7.

The posterior mean derived in Example 7.2 coincides with the maximum likelihood estimate of the common mean. This equivalence arises because the prior on the parameter was assumed to be uniform, and therefore does not influence the posterior. In general, for a non-informative prior, the Bayes estimator under a quadratic loss reduces to the maximum likelihood estimator.

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