

Consider the marginal prior density function

$$\begin{aligned}\pi(\theta_1, \theta_2) &= \pi(\theta_1) \cdot \pi(\theta_2) \\ &= \text{normal}(\theta_1 \mid 0, \tau_1) \cdot \text{normal}(\theta_2 \mid 0, \tau_2) \\ &\propto \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \left[ \frac{\theta_1^2}{\tau_1^2} + \frac{\theta_2^2}{\tau_2^2} \right]\right),\end{aligned}$$

and a probability density function that encodes a desired pushforward behavior on  $\phi = \theta_1 + \theta_2$ ,

$$\pi(\phi) = \text{normal}(\phi \mid \mu, \tau_+) \propto \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{\phi - \mu}{\tau_+}\right)^2\right).$$

Naively we might assume that multiplying these two probability density function together,

$$\begin{aligned}\rho(\theta_1, \theta_2) &= \pi(\theta_1, \theta_2) \cdot \pi(\theta_1 + \theta_2) \\ &\propto \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \left[ \frac{\theta_1^2}{\tau_1^2} + \frac{\theta_2^2}{\tau_2^2} + \left(\frac{\theta_1 + \theta_2 - \mu}{\tau_+}\right)^2 \right]\right),\end{aligned}$$

yields a prior density function consistent with the both the marginal and pushforward behavior. Unfortunately this is not the case.

To see why let's reparameterize to

$$\begin{aligned}\eta_1 &= \theta_1 \\ \eta_2 &= \theta_1 + \theta_2.\end{aligned}$$

The Jacobian determinant of this transformation is just

$$|J|(\eta_1, \eta_2) = \begin{vmatrix} \frac{\partial \eta_1}{\partial \theta_1} & \frac{\partial \eta_1}{\partial \theta_2} \\ \frac{\partial \eta_2}{\partial \theta_1} & \frac{\partial \eta_2}{\partial \theta_2} \end{vmatrix} = \begin{vmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \end{vmatrix} = 1$$

so that

$$\begin{aligned}\rho(\eta_1, \eta_2) &= \rho(\theta_1(\eta_1, \eta_2), \theta_2(\eta_1, \eta_2)) \frac{1}{|J|(\eta_1, \eta_2)} \\ &= \rho(\eta_1, \eta_2 - \eta_1) \\ &\propto \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \left[ \frac{\eta_1^2}{\tau_1^2} + \left(\frac{\eta_2 - \eta_1}{\tau_2}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{\eta_2 - \mu}{\tau_+}\right)^2 \right]\right) \\ &\propto \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} f(\eta_1, \eta_2)\right).\end{aligned}$$

Expanding each term in square brackets and gathering like terms gives

$$\begin{aligned}
f(\eta_1, \eta_2) &= \frac{\eta_1^2}{\tau_1^2} + \frac{\eta_2^2}{\tau_2^2} - 2 \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \eta_2}{\tau_2^2} + \frac{\eta_1^2}{\tau_2^2} + \frac{\eta_2^2}{\tau_+^2} - 2 \frac{\mu \cdot \eta_2}{\tau_+^2} + \text{const} \\
&= \left( \frac{1}{\tau_1^2} + \frac{1}{\tau_2^2} \right) \eta_1^2 + \left( \frac{1}{\tau_2^2} + \frac{1}{\tau_+^2} \right) \eta_2^2 - 2 \left( \frac{\eta_1}{\tau_2^2} + \frac{\mu}{\tau_+^2} \right) \eta_2 + \text{const} \\
&= \left( \frac{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot \tau_2^2} \right) \eta_1^2 + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \eta_2^2 - 2 \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \eta_2 + \text{const}.
\end{aligned}$$

Completing the square for  $\eta_2$  gives

$$\begin{aligned}
f(\eta_1, \eta_2) &= \left( \frac{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot \tau_2^2} \right) \eta_1^2 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \right]^2 \\
&\quad - \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right)^2 \\
&\quad + \text{const} \\
&= \left( \frac{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot \tau_2^2} \right) \eta_1^2 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \right]^2 \\
&\quad - \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right)^2 \\
&\quad + \text{const} \\
&= \left( \frac{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot \tau_2^2} \right) \eta_1^2 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \right]^2 \\
&\quad - \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \frac{\eta_1^2 \cdot \tau_+^4 + 2 \eta_1 \cdot \mu \cdot \tau_+^2 \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^4 \cdot \tau_+^4} \\
&\quad + \text{const} \\
&= \left( \frac{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot \tau_2^2} \right) \eta_1^2 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \right]^2 \\
&\quad - \left( \frac{1}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \frac{\eta_1^2 \cdot \tau_+^4 + 2 \eta_1 \cdot \mu \cdot \tau_+^2 \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \\
&\quad + \text{const}
\end{aligned}$$

Gathering terms,

$$\begin{aligned}
f(\eta_1, \eta_2) &= \left[ \left( \frac{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot \tau_2^2} \right) - \left( \frac{1}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \frac{\tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2} \right] \eta_1^2 \\
&\quad - 2 \left( \frac{1}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \mu \cdot \eta_1 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \right]^2 \\
&\quad + \text{const} \\
&= \left[ \frac{(\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2) \cdot (\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2) - \tau_1^2 \cdot \tau_+^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot \tau_2^2 \cdot (\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2)} \right] \eta_1^2 \\
&\quad - 2 \left( \frac{1}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \mu \cdot \eta_1 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \right]^2 \\
&\quad + \text{const} \\
&= \left[ \frac{\tau_2^2 \cdot (\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2)}{\tau_1^2 \cdot \tau_2^2 \cdot (\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2)} \right] \eta_1^2 \\
&\quad - 2 \left( \frac{1}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \mu \cdot \eta_1 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \right]^2 \\
&\quad + \text{const} \\
&= \left[ \frac{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot (\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2)} \right] \eta_1^2 \\
&\quad - 2 \left( \frac{1}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \mu \cdot \eta_1 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \right]^2 \\
&\quad + \text{const.}
\end{aligned}$$

Now we can complete the square for  $\eta_1$  to give

$$\begin{aligned}
f(\eta_1, \eta_2) &= \left[ \frac{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot (\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2)} \right] \cdot \left[ \eta_1 - \frac{\tau_1^2 \cdot (\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2)}{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \left( \frac{1}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \cdot \mu \right]^2 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \left( \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right) \right]^2 \\
&\quad + \text{const} \\
&= \left[ \frac{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_1^2 \cdot (\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2)} \right] \cdot \left[ \eta_1 - \frac{\tau_1^2 \cdot \mu}{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right]^2 \\
&\quad + \left( \frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_2^2 \cdot \tau_+^2} \right) \left[ \eta_2 - \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2} \right]^2 \\
&\quad + \text{const} \\
&= g(\eta_1) + h(\eta_1, \eta_2) + \text{const}.
\end{aligned}$$

Exponentiating these quadratics will yield normal density functions.

We can now substitute this back into the probability density function to give

$$\begin{aligned}
\rho(\eta_1, \eta_2) &\propto \exp \left( -\frac{1}{2} f(\eta_1, \eta_2) \right) \\
&\propto \exp \left( -\frac{1}{2} h(\eta_1, \eta_2) \right) \cdot \exp \left( -\frac{1}{2} g(\eta_1) \right) \\
&= \rho(\eta_2 \mid \eta_1) \cdot \rho(\eta_1) \\
&= \text{normal} \left( \eta_2 \mid \frac{\eta_1 \cdot \tau_+^2 + \mu \cdot \tau_2^2}{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}, \frac{\tau_2 \cdot \tau_+}{\sqrt{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}} \right) \\
&\quad \cdot \text{normal} \left( \eta_1 \mid \frac{\tau_1^2 \cdot \mu}{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}, \tau_1 \cdot \sqrt{\frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}} \right)
\end{aligned}$$

Because of this conditional decomposition we can immediately integrate out  $\eta_2$  which

gives the marginal density function for  $\eta_1 = \theta_1$ ,

$$\begin{aligned}
\rho(\eta_1) &= \int d\eta_2 \rho(\eta_1, \eta_2) \\
&= \int d\eta_2 \rho(\eta_2 \mid \eta_1) \cdot \rho(\eta_1) \\
&= \left[ \int d\eta_2 \rho(\eta_2 \mid \eta_1) \right] \cdot \rho(\eta_1) \\
&= \rho(\eta_1) \\
&= \text{normal} \left( \eta_1 \mid \frac{\tau_1^2 \cdot \mu}{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}, \tau_1 \cdot \sqrt{\frac{\tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}{\tau_1^2 + \tau_2^2 + \tau_+^2}} \right),
\end{aligned}$$

which is quite different from the original marginal of  $\text{normal}(\eta_1 \mid 0, \tau_1)$ ! The naive multiplication has both translated and scaled the original prior model.