

Cramer's Rule and Volume

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Cramer's Rule

For an $n \times n$ matrix A and any vector $b \in \mathbb{R}^n$, we define $\det(A)_i(b)$ as the determinant of the matrix A with the i th column replaced by b . If A is invertible, then the solution of $Ax = b$ is given by the following formula

$$x_i = \frac{\det(A)_i(b)}{\det(A)}$$

We can use Cramer's rule to get an explicit formula for the inverse

$$\begin{aligned}\text{adj}(A) &= (C_{ij})^T \\ A^{-1} &= \frac{\text{adj}(A)}{\det(A)}\end{aligned}$$

Example 1

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \qquad b = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\det(A) &= 2 \\ \det \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 2 & 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} &= 1 \\ \det \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 2 & 1 \end{bmatrix} &= 2 \\ \det \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 2 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \\ -1 & 1 & 2 \end{bmatrix} &= 3\end{aligned}$$

$$x_1 = 1/2$$

$$x_2 = 1$$

$$x_3 = 3/2$$

Example 2

Compute A^{-1} using Cramer's rule

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$C_{11} = 1$$

$$C_{12} = 0$$

$$C_{13} = 1$$

$$C_{21} = 1$$

$$C_{22} = 2$$

$$C_{23} = -1$$

$$C_{31} = -1$$

$$C_{32} = 2$$

$$C_{33} = 1$$

$$\text{adj}(A) = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 2 & -1 \\ -1 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^T$$

$$= \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & -1 \\ 0 & 2 & 0 \\ 1 & -1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$A^{-1} = \frac{\text{adj} A}{\det A}$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & -1 \\ 0 & 2 & 0 \\ 1 & -1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Relation with area

Suppose that S is a region in \mathbb{R}^2 with finite area and $T : \mathbb{R}^2 \mapsto \mathbb{R}^2$ is a linear transformation with a standard matrix A . The area of $T(S)$ is equal to $|\det A|$ times the area of S . The same is true for volumes in \mathbb{R}^3 and general n -volumes in \mathbb{R}^n .