

Expected Shortfall

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8. September 2025



Structure

- ① Basic definitions and intuition
- ② Translation invariance and positive homogeneity
- ③ Prerequisites for the proofs
- ④ Important proofs for subadditivity

Assumptions throughout the presentation

- An **atomless** probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$, i.e. a $U[0, 1]$ random variable exists on it.
- All random variables are defined on $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$.
- X is a *real-valued* r.v. representing **loss**: $X > 0$ loss, $X < 0$ profit.
- Spaces: L^0 (all r.v.'s), L^1 (integrable), L^∞ (bounded).
- Notation: F_X is the distribution of X (under \mathbb{P}).

Definitions: Value at Risk (VaR) and Expected Shortfall (ES)

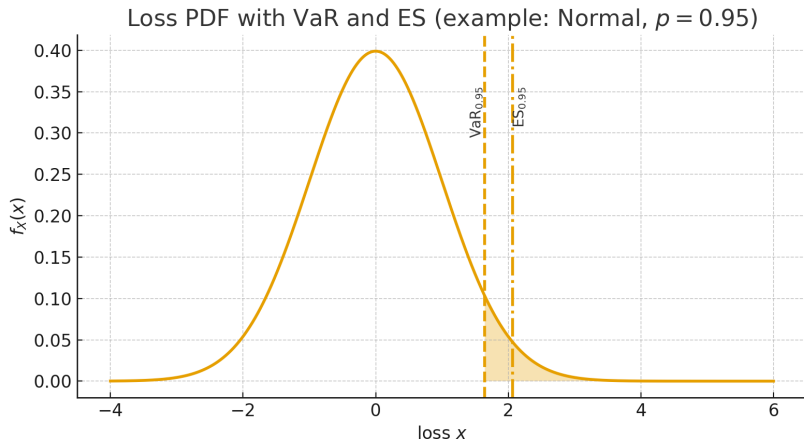
For $p \in (0, 1)$, the risk measures $\text{VaR}_p : L^0 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ and $\text{ES}_p : L^0 \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \cup \{+\infty\}$ are defined as

$$\text{VaR}_p(X) = \inf\{x \in \mathbb{R} : \mathbb{P}(X \leq x) \geq p\}, \quad X \in L^0,$$

$$\text{ES}_p(X) = \frac{1}{1-p} \int_p^1 \text{VaR}_q(X) dq, \quad X \in L^0.$$

ES is also known as Conditional Value at Risk (CVaR) and Average Value at Risk (AVaR).

Illustration: VaR and ES on a loss PDF



Example with $X \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$ and $p = 0.95$. The shaded region is $\{x \geq \text{VaR}_p\}$. Dashed line: VaR_p . Dash-dot line: $\text{ES}_p = \mathbb{E}[X \mid X \geq \text{VaR}_p]$.

Coherent risk measure axioms

Let $\rho : \mathcal{X} \subseteq L^0 \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \cup \{+\infty\}$ be a risk measure that assigns capital to a loss r.v. X . For any $X, Y \in \mathcal{X}$, $c \in \mathbb{R}$, $\lambda \geq 0$, and $\theta \in [0, 1]$:

- **Monotonicity:** $X \leq Y$ a.s. $\Rightarrow \rho(X) \leq \rho(Y)$.
- **Translation invariance (cash-invariance):**
 $\rho(X + c) = \rho(X) + c$.
- **Positive homogeneity:** $\rho(\lambda X) = \lambda \rho(X)$.
- **Subadditivity:** $\rho(X + Y) \leq \rho(X) + \rho(Y)$.
- **Convexity:** $\rho(\theta X + (1 - \theta)Y) \leq \theta \rho(X) + (1 - \theta)\rho(Y)$.

Monetary risk measure with positive homogeneity:

convexity \Longleftrightarrow subadditivity

Assume ρ is positively homogeneous.

(Subadditivity \Rightarrow Convexity) For $\theta \in [0, 1]$,

$$\rho(\theta X + (1 - \theta)Y) \leq \rho(\theta X) + \rho((1 - \theta)Y) = \theta\rho(X) + (1 - \theta)\rho(Y).$$

(Convexity \Rightarrow Subadditivity) Using $\theta = \frac{1}{2}$,

$$\rho(X + Y) = 2\rho\left(\frac{X+Y}{2}\right) \leq 2\left(\frac{1}{2}\rho(X) + \frac{1}{2}\rho(Y)\right) = \rho(X) + \rho(Y).$$

Thus, it is sufficient for our purposes to prove that ES satisfies subadditivity.

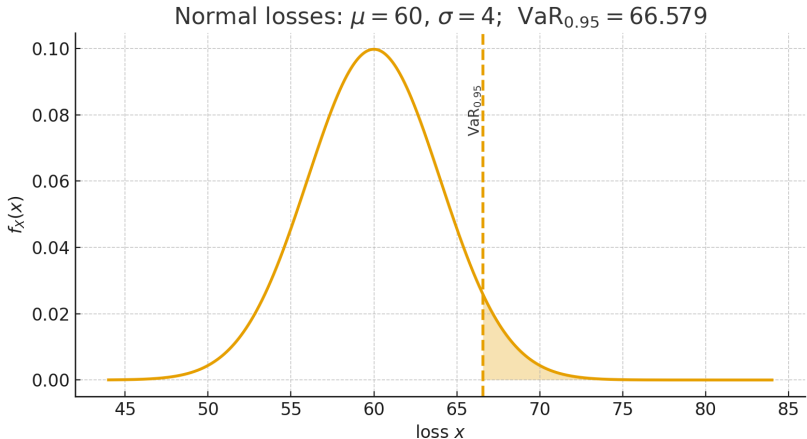
Example: normal distributed losses — VaR

Assume $X \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$ is a loss r.v. Then

$$F_X(x) = P(X \leq x) = \Phi\left(\frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}\right).$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{VaR}_p(X) &= \inf\{x : P(X \leq x) \geq p\} \\ &= \inf\left\{x : \Phi\left(\frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}\right) \geq p\right\} \\ &= \mu + \sigma \Phi^{-1}(p).\end{aligned}$$

Example: continued



Parameters: $\mu = 60$, $\sigma = 4$. Here $\text{VaR}_{0.95} = \mu + \sigma \Phi^{-1}(0.95) \approx 66.58$.
So there is a 5% chance that the loss exceeds $\text{VaR}_{0.95}(X)$, i.e.

$$P(X > \text{VaR}_{0.95}(X)) = 0.05.$$

Example: normal distributed losses — ES

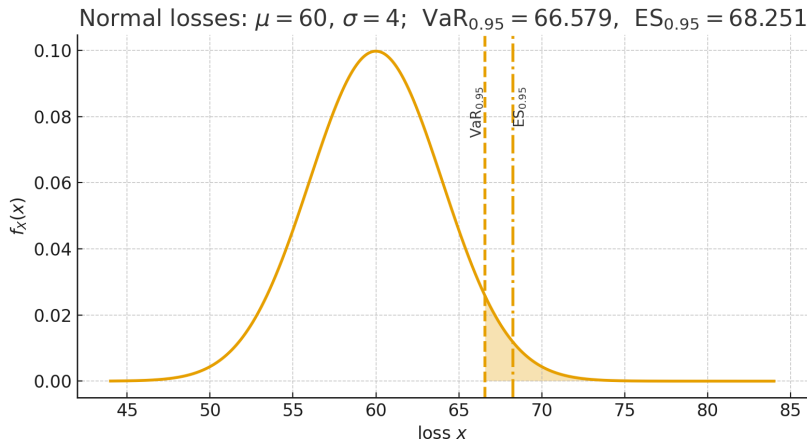
Assume $X \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$ and $p \in (0, 1)$. Using

$$\text{ES}_p(X) = \frac{1}{1-p} \int_p^1 \text{VaR}_q(X) dq \quad \text{and} \quad \text{VaR}_q(X) = \mu + \sigma \Phi^{-1}(q),$$

set $q = \Phi(t)$ so $dq = \varphi(t) dt$ and t runs from $z_p = \Phi^{-1}(p)$ to ∞ :

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ES}_p(X) &= \frac{1}{1-p} \int_p^1 (\mu + \sigma \Phi^{-1}(q)) dq \\ &= \mu + \frac{\sigma}{1-p} \int_{z_p}^{\infty} t \varphi(t) dt = \mu + \sigma \frac{\varphi(z_p)}{1-p}, \quad z_p = \Phi^{-1}(p). \end{aligned}$$

Example: continued



Parameters: $\mu = 60, \sigma = 4$. Here $\text{VaR}_{0.95} \approx 66.58$ and $\text{ES}_{0.95} \approx 68.25$.

Interpretation: $\text{ES}_{0.95}(X) = E[X \mid X \geq \text{VaR}_{0.95}(X)]$ is the *average loss* in the worst 5% of cases.

VaR: translation invariance & positive homogeneity

For $p \in (0, 1)$ and any loss r.v. X , $c \in \mathbb{R}$, $\lambda \geq 0$:

$$\text{VaR}_p(X + c) = \text{VaR}_p(X) + c, \quad \text{VaR}_p(\lambda X) = \lambda \text{VaR}_p(X).$$

Definition used: $\text{VaR}_p(X) = \inf\{x : P(X \leq x) \geq p\}$.

Proof: translation invariance of VaR

Claim. $\text{VaR}_p(X + c) = \text{VaR}_p(X) + c$ for any $c \in \mathbb{R}$.

Proof. Let $F_X(x) = P(X \leq x)$.

$$F_{X+c}(x) = P(X + c \leq x) = P(X \leq x - c) = F_X(x - c).$$

Hence

$$\begin{aligned}\text{VaR}_p(X + c) &= \inf\{x : F_{X+c}(x) \geq p\} \\ &= \inf\{x : F_X(x - c) \geq p\} \\ &= c + \inf\{y : F_X(y) \geq p\} \\ &= c + \text{VaR}_p(X).\end{aligned}$$

□

Proof: positive homogeneity of VaR

Claim. $\text{VaR}_p(\lambda X) = \lambda \text{VaR}_p(X)$ for $\lambda \geq 0$.

Proof. If $\lambda = 0$, then $\lambda X = 0$ a.s., so $\text{VaR}_p(0) = 0 = \lambda \text{VaR}_p(X)$.
For $\lambda > 0$, using $F_X(x) = P(X \leq x)$,

$$F_{\lambda X}(x) = P(\lambda X \leq x) = P(X \leq \frac{x}{\lambda}) = F_X(\frac{x}{\lambda}).$$

Therefore

$$\begin{aligned}\text{VaR}_p(\lambda X) &= \inf\{x : F_{\lambda X}(x) \geq p\} \\ &= \inf\{x : F_X(x/\lambda) \geq p\} \\ &= \lambda \inf\{y : F_X(y) \geq p\} \\ &= \lambda \text{VaR}_p(X).\end{aligned}$$

□

ES inherits translation invariance & positive homogeneity

Recall $\text{ES}_p(X) = \frac{1}{1-p} \int_p^1 \text{VaR}_q(X) dq$. Using the identities for VaR:

$$\text{ES}_p(X + c) = \frac{1}{1-p} \int_p^1 (\text{VaR}_q(X) + c) dq = \text{ES}_p(X) + c,$$

$$\text{ES}_p(\lambda X) = \frac{1}{1-p} \int_p^1 \lambda \text{VaR}_q(X) dq = \lambda \text{ES}_p(X) \quad (\lambda \geq 0).$$

These equalities hold in the extended real sense (if $\text{ES}_p(X) = +\infty$, both sides are $+\infty$).

Why VaR can fail subadditivity (counterexample)

Let X, Y be independent losses with

$$P(X = 0) = 0.96, \quad P(X = 10) = 0.04, \quad Y \text{ i.i.d. to } X.$$

At level $p = 0.95$:

$$\text{VaR}_{0.95}(X) = 0, \quad \text{VaR}_{0.95}(Y) = 0.$$

But for $Z = X + Y$,

$$P(Z = 0) = 0.9216, \quad P(Z = 10) = 0.0768, \quad P(Z = 20) = 0.0016,$$

hence

$$\text{VaR}_{0.95}(Z) = 10.$$

Therefore

$$\text{VaR}_{0.95}(X + Y) = 10 > 0 + 0 = \text{VaR}_{0.95}(X) + \text{VaR}_{0.95}(Y),$$

so VaR is *not* subadditive.



Prerequisites for the proofs

Generalized inverse (quantile)

Let $F_X(x) = P(X \leq x)$ be a cdf (nondecreasing, right-continuous).
For $p \in (0, 1)$ the *generalized inverse / left-continuous quantile* is

$$F_X^{-1}(p) = \inf\{x : F_X(x) \geq p\}.$$

This quantity is the basis of $\text{VaR}_p(X)$: $\text{VaR}_p(X) = F_X^{-1}(p)$.

Generalized inverse: key properties

For $p \in (0, 1)$ and any cdf F_X :

- **Monotone in p :** if $p_1 \leq p_2$, then $F_X^{-1}(p_1) \leq F_X^{-1}(p_2)$.
- **Left-continuous in p .**
- **Inequalities:**

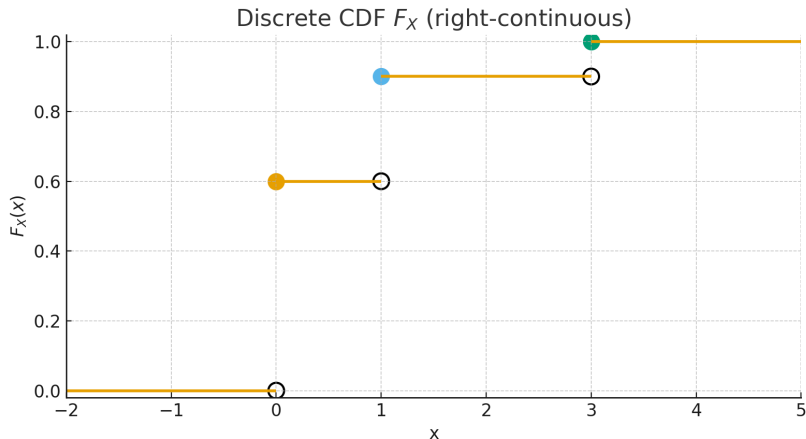
$$F_X(F_X^{-1}(p)) \geq p, \quad F_X^{-1}(F_X(x)) \leq x.$$

- If F_X is *continuous and strictly increasing*, then it is a true inverse:

$$F_X(F_X^{-1}(p)) = p, \quad F_X^{-1}(F_X(x)) = x.$$

Generalized inverse example: CDF view

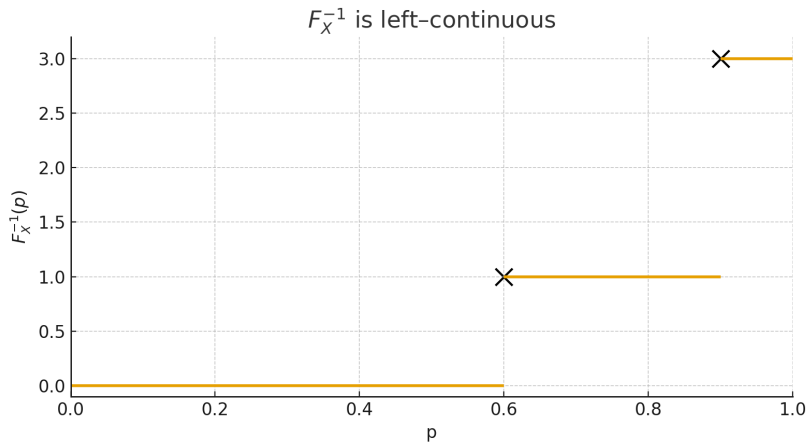
Consider a discrete loss X with $P(X = 0) = 0.6$, $P(X = 1) = 0.3$, $P(X = 3) = 0.1$. Then F_X jumps to 0.6 at $x = 0$, to 0.9 at $x = 1$, and to 1 at $x = 3$.



Reading off at $p = 0.75$ gives $F_X^{-1}(0.75) = 1$ as the first x with $F_X(x) \geq 0.75$.



Generalized inverse example: quantile view



If the cdf is flat, then the generalized inverse has a jump — and *vice versa*.

Lemma 1 (Quantile transform)

For any random variable X with cdf $F_X(x) = P(X \leq x)$, there exists $U_X \sim U[0, 1]$ such that

$$X = F_X^{-1}(U_X) \quad \text{almost surely.}$$

Remark:

$F_X(X) \sim U[0, 1] \iff F_X$ is continuous.

In particular, if F_X is continuous, one may take $U_X = F_X(X)$.

Distributional equality $F_X^{-1}(U) \stackrel{d}{=} X$

We are proving a slightly weaker statement.

Let $F_X(x) = P(X \leq x)$ be a cdf and define the generalized inverse $F_X^{-1}(p) = \inf\{x : F_X(x) \geq p\}$ for $p \in (0, 1)$. Let $U \sim U[0, 1]$. For any real t ,

$$\{F_X^{-1}(U) \leq t\} \iff \{U \leq F_X(t)\} \quad (\text{since } F_X^{-1}(p) \leq t \iff p \leq F_X(t))$$

Hence

$$P(F_X^{-1}(U) \leq t) = P(U \leq F_X(t)) = F_X(t),$$

because U is uniform on $[0, 1]$ and $F_X(t) \in [0, 1]$. Thus the cdf of $F_X^{-1}(U)$ equals F_X , so

$$F_X^{-1}(U) \stackrel{d}{=} X.$$

Lemma 2 (representation of ES)

For $p \in (0, 1)$ and an integrable loss r.v. $X \in L^1$,

$$\text{ES}_p(X) = \text{VaR}_p(X) + \frac{1}{1-p} \mathbb{E}[(X - \text{VaR}_p(X))_+].$$

Here $(x)_+ := \max\{x, 0\}$.

Interpretation.

- $\text{VaR}_p(X)$ is the loss threshold leaving tail probability $1 - p$.
- $(X - \text{VaR}_p(X))_+$ is the *exceedance* above that threshold.
- $\frac{1}{1-p} \mathbb{E}[(X - \text{VaR}_p(X))_+] = \mathbb{E}[X - \text{VaR}_p(X) \mid X > \text{VaR}_p(X)]$ for continuous F_X (in general: the average tail exceedance).

Thus, $\text{ES}_p = \text{“threshold”} + \text{“average exceedance”} = \text{the mean loss in the worst } 1 - p \text{ fraction of cases.}$



Lemma 2 — Proof

$$\begin{aligned}\text{ES}_p(X) &= \frac{1}{1-p} \int_p^1 \text{VaR}_q(X) dq \\ &= \text{VaR}_p(X) + \frac{1}{1-p} \int_p^1 (\text{VaR}_q(X) - \text{VaR}_p(X)) dq.\end{aligned}$$

Write $\text{VaR}_q(X) = F_X^{-1}(q)$ and let $U \sim U[0, 1]$. Since F_X^{-1} is nondecreasing,

$$\begin{aligned}\int_p^1 (F_X^{-1}(q) - F_X^{-1}(p)) dq &= \int_0^1 (F_X^{-1}(q) - F_X^{-1}(p))_+ dq \\ &= \mathbb{E}[(F_X^{-1}(U) - F_X^{-1}(p))_+].\end{aligned}$$

By Lemma 1, $F_X^{-1}(U) \stackrel{d}{=} X$, hence

$$\text{ES}_p(X) = \text{VaR}_p(X) + \frac{1}{1-p} \mathbb{E}[(X - \text{VaR}_p(X))_+].$$

Lemma 3 (tail-split identity for ES)

For $p \in (0, 1)$ and any integrable loss r.v. $X \in L^1$,

$$(1-p) \text{ES}_p(X) = E\left[X \mathbf{1}_{\{X > \text{VaR}_p(X)\}}\right] + \text{VaR}_p(X) (P(X \leq \text{VaR}_p(X)) - p).$$

- $E\left[X \mathbf{1}_{\{X > \text{VaR}_p(X)\}}\right]$ is the contribution of all exceedances above the VaR threshold (the strict tail).
- $\text{VaR}_p(X)(P(X \leq \text{VaR}_p(X)) - p)$ accounts for an atom at the VaR level and vanishes when F_X is continuous.
- Hence, if F_X is continuous,

$$\begin{aligned}(1-p) \text{ES}_p(X) &= E\left[X \mathbf{1}_{\{X > \text{VaR}_p(X)\}}\right] \\ \Rightarrow \text{ES}_p(X) &= E[X \mid X > \text{VaR}_p(X)].\end{aligned}$$

i.e., ES is the average loss in the worst $1-p$ fraction of outcomes.



Lemma 3 — Proof

Let $v := \text{VaR}_p(X)$. From Lemma 2,

$$\text{ES}_p(X) = v + \frac{1}{1-p} \mathbb{E}[(X - v)_+].$$

Multiplying by $(1 - p)$ and expanding $(X - v)_+ = (X - v)\mathbf{1}_{\{X > v\}}$ gives

$$\begin{aligned}(1 - p)\text{ES}_p(X) &= (1 - p)v + \mathbb{E}[(X - v)\mathbf{1}_{\{X > v\}}] \\ &= \mathbb{E}[X\mathbf{1}_{\{X > v\}}] - v\mathbb{P}(X > v) + (1 - p)v \\ &= \mathbb{E}[X\mathbf{1}_{\{X > v\}}] + v(\mathbb{P}(X \leq v) - p),\end{aligned}$$

which is the desired identity.



Important proofs for subadditivity

Theorem: ES is subadditive

For $p \in (0, 1)$, ES_p is subadditive on L^0 :

$$\text{ES}_p(X + Y) \leq \text{ES}_p(X) + \text{ES}_p(Y) \quad \text{for all } X, Y \in L^0.$$

Remark. In practice ES_p is used on L^1 .

Our plan. We prove subadditivity of ES_p for *bounded* losses $X, Y \in L^\infty$ as this implies the theorem for $X, Y \in L^0$.

Lemma 4 (Law of Large Numbers for order statistics)

Let $(X_i)_{i \geq 1}$ be i.i.d. losses with $X_1 \in L^\infty$. For $n \in \mathbb{N}$, let $X_{[i,n]}$ denote the i -th *largest* value among X_1, \dots, X_n . Then for any $p \in (0, 1)$,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{n(1-p)} \sum_{i=1}^{\lfloor n(1-p) \rfloor} X_{[i,n]} = \text{ES}_p(X_1) \quad \text{almost surely.}$$

Intuition: the average of the worst $\lfloor n(1-p) \rfloor$ sample losses converges to the population tail mean at level p .

Proof based on LLN for order statistics — setup

Fix integers $m \leq n$ and write

$$A_m^n := \{(i_1, \dots, i_m) : 1 \leq i_1 < \dots < i_m \leq n\}.$$

For a sequence X_1, \dots, X_n and the descending order statistics $X_{[1,n]} \geq \dots \geq X_{[n,n]}$,

$$\sum_{i=1}^m X_{[i,n]} = \max \left\{ X_{i_1} + \dots + X_{i_m} : (i_1, \dots, i_m) \in A_m^n \right\}.$$

Proof based on LLN for order statistics — key inequality

Let $X, Y \in L^\infty$. Take i.i.d. copies $(X_1, Y_1), (X_2, Y_2), \dots$ distributed as (X, Y) , and set $Z_i := X_i + Y_i$. Then, for any $m \leq n$,

$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{i=1}^m Z_{[i,n]} &= \max \left\{ Z_{i_1} + \dots + Z_{i_m} : (i_1, \dots, i_m) \in A_m^n \right\} \\ &= \max \left\{ (X_{i_1} + \dots + X_{i_m}) + (Y_{i_1} + \dots + Y_{i_m}) \right\} \\ &\leq \max \left\{ X_{i_1} + \dots + X_{i_m} \right\} + \max \left\{ Y_{i_1} + \dots + Y_{i_m} \right\} \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^m X_{[i,n]} + \sum_{i=1}^m Y_{[i,n]}.\end{aligned}$$

Proof based on LLN for order statistics — conclusion

Choose $m = \lfloor n(1-p) \rfloor$ and divide the inequality by $n(1-p)$:

$$\frac{1}{n(1-p)} \sum_{i=1}^{\lfloor n(1-p) \rfloor} Z_{[i,n]} \leq \frac{1}{n(1-p)} \sum_{i=1}^{\lfloor n(1-p) \rfloor} X_{[i,n]} + \frac{1}{n(1-p)} \sum_{i=1}^{\lfloor n(1-p) \rfloor} Y_{[i,n]}$$

By Lemma 4 (LLN for order statistics), as $n \rightarrow \infty$,

$$\frac{1}{n(1-p)} \sum_{i=1}^{\lfloor n(1-p) \rfloor} X_{[i,n]} \rightarrow \text{ES}_p(X), \quad \frac{1}{n(1-p)} \sum_{i=1}^{\lfloor n(1-p) \rfloor} Y_{[i,n]} \rightarrow \text{ES}_p(Y),$$

$$\frac{1}{n(1-p)} \sum_{i=1}^{\lfloor n(1-p) \rfloor} Z_{[i,n]} \rightarrow \text{ES}_p(X + Y) \quad \text{a.s.}$$

Hence $\text{ES}_p(X + Y) \leq \text{ES}_p(X) + \text{ES}_p(Y)$ for $X, Y \in L^\infty$.



Optimization view: define the objective

Fix $p \in (0, 1)$ and $X \in L^\infty$. For $t \in \mathbb{R}$ set

$$f_X(t) := t + \frac{1}{1-p} \mathbb{E}[(X - t)_+].$$

We will use that **VaR** is a minimizer of f_X and **ES** is the minimum value of f_X .

Lemma 5 (VaR is an optimizer)

For $p \in (0, 1)$ and $X \in L^\infty$,

$$\text{VaR}_p(X) \in \arg \min_{t \in \mathbb{R}} f_X(t).$$

Proof (sketch). Write $t_0 = \text{VaR}_p(X)$ and note

$$f_X(t) = t + \frac{1}{1-p} \int_t^\infty (1 - F_X(x)) dx$$

(by integration by parts). For $t_1 > t_0$, $F_X(x) \geq p$ on (t_0, t_1) , so

$$f_X(t_1) - f_X(t_0) = (t_1 - t_0) - \frac{1}{1-p} \int_{t_0}^{t_1} (1 - F_X(x)) dx \geq 0.$$

For $t_2 < t_0$, $F_X(x) \leq p$ on (t_2, t_0) , giving $f_X(t_2) - f_X(t_0) \geq 0$. Hence t_0 minimizes f_X . □

Lemma 6 (ES is the minimum value)

For $p \in (0, 1)$ and $X \in L^\infty$,

$$\text{ES}_p(X) = \min_{t \in \mathbb{R}} f_X(t).$$

Proof. Lemma 2 gives

$$\text{ES}_p(X) = \text{VaR}_p(X) + \frac{1}{1-p} \mathbb{E}[(X - \text{VaR}_p(X))_+] = f_X(\text{VaR}_p(X)).$$

By Lemma 5, $\text{VaR}_p(X)$ is a minimizer of f_X , so
 $f_X(\text{VaR}_p(X)) = \min_t f_X(t).$

□

Proof based on the optimization property (subadditivity)

Let $f_Z(t) := t + \frac{1}{1-p} \mathbb{E}[(Z - t)_+]$. For $X, Y \in L^\infty$, choose $t_1 = \text{VaR}_p(X)$, $t_2 = \text{VaR}_p(Y)$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ES}_p(X) + \text{ES}_p(Y) &= f_X(t_1) + f_Y(t_2) \\ &\geq t_1 + t_2 + \frac{1}{1-p} \mathbb{E}[(X - t_1)_+ + (Y - t_2)_+] \\ &\geq t_1 + t_2 + \frac{1}{1-p} \mathbb{E}[(X + Y - (t_1 + t_2))_+]. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore

$$\text{ES}_p(X) + \text{ES}_p(Y) \geq \min_{t \in \mathbb{R}} f_{X+Y}(t) = \text{ES}_p(X + Y) \quad (\text{by Lemma 6}).$$

□



Estimator of ES_p from order statistics

Given losses X_1, \dots, X_n and level $p \in (0, 1)$, let $X_{[1:n]} \geq \dots \geq X_{[n:n]}$ be the descending order statistics. Set

$$m = \lfloor n(1 - p) \rfloor, \quad \alpha = n(1 - p) - m \in [0, 1).$$

Define the empirical Expected Shortfall by

$$\widehat{\text{ES}}_p^{(n)} = \frac{1}{n(1 - p)} \left(\sum_{i=1}^m X_{[i:n]} + \alpha X_{[m+1:n]} \right).$$

If $n(1 - p) \in \mathbb{N}$ (i.e., $\alpha = 0$), this reduces to the average of the largest m observations: $\widehat{\text{ES}}_p^{(n)} = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m X_{[i:n]}$.

By the LLN for order statistics (Lemma 4), $\widehat{\text{ES}}_p^{(n)} \rightarrow \text{ES}_p(X_1)$ a.s. under mild conditions (e.g., $X_1 \in L^1$ and continuity at VaR_p).