<u>Cost-sensitive Classification</u> <u>of German Credit Data</u>

1 Problem

The problem is a bank's uncertainty in deciding to approve loans. The bank can use applicants' demographics and socio-economic profile to assess their "Credit Risk".

An applicant with:

- 1. Good-risk, is likely to repay the loan, not approving the loan would cause loss of business
- 2. Bad-risk, is unlikely to repay, approving the loan would cause financial loss to the bank.

As such, our objective is to predict Credit Risk in order to minimise financial cost to the bank.

Data Source

This report uses the German Credit dataset sourced from the UC Irvine Machine Learning Repository. The data was originally collected from regional bank in Southern Germany from 1973-1975. Being from a reputable and heavily cited source, the data is likely to be reliable.

Target Attribute

The target attribute is the applicant's Credit *Risk*. Since it can be classified as Good or Bad, this is a classification analysis.

2 Understanding the Data

Nature & Size of Dataset

The dataset contains 20 attributes and 1000 instances with 17 categorical and 3 numerical attributes (AppendixC). Each instance contains information of one customer applying for one loan. 700 instances were of Good-Risk while 300 were Bad-Risk.

The attributes can be generally categorised into Demographics, Credit Information, Wealth and Stability.

Visualisation

Firstly, we look at demographics.

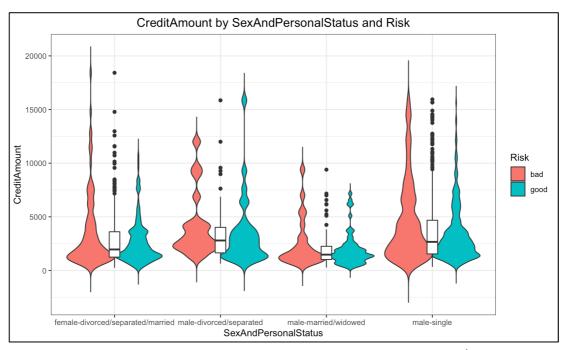


Figure 1: Violinplot of CreditAmount-SexAndPersonalStatus/Risk

Figure 1 shows varying distributions of *CreditAmount* per *SexAndPersonalStatus* and densities of Good-Risk/Bad-Risk. For "male-single", we observe a higher probability of Bad than Good-Risk at higher *CreditAmount*. We also note that there are no records of "female-single" due to regulations at the time of data collection requiring women to apply for loans in their husband's name.

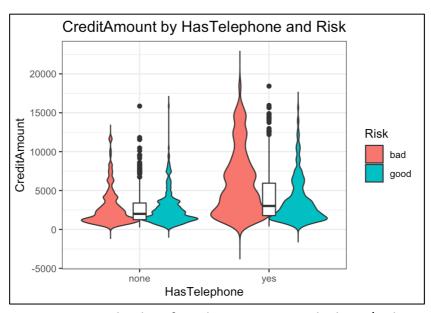


Figure 2: Violinplot of CreditAmount-HasTelephone/Risk

Figure 2 also shows a significantly higher probability of Bad-Risk at higher *CreditAmount* for customers with a telephone.

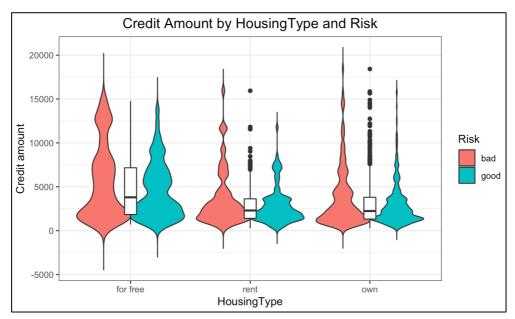


Figure 3: Violinplot of CreditAmount-HousingType

Figure 3 shows more customers who live in free housing applying for loans. We also observe higher probabilities of Bad-Risk at higher *CreditAmount* for customers in this group. Seeing varying effects of *CreditAmount* on Risk prompted us to further investigate attributes under Credit Information.

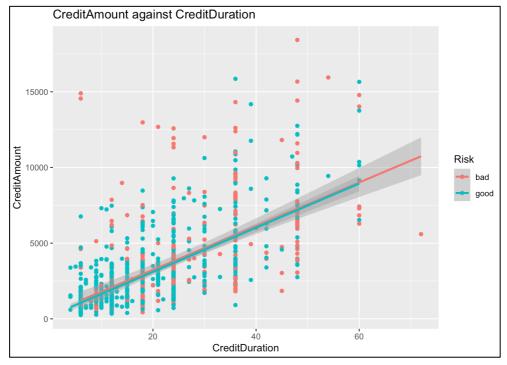


Figure 4: Scatterplot of CreditAmount-CreditDuration

Figure 4 shows similarly positive correlations between *CreditAmount* and *CreditDuration* for both customers with Good-Risk and Bad-Risk. This is as expected since larger *CreditAmounts* are paid off over a longer *CreditDuration*. There are also more scattered points of Bad-Risk at higher *CreditAmounts*. To further see the distributions of *CreditAmount* and *CreditDuration* individually, we create density plots.

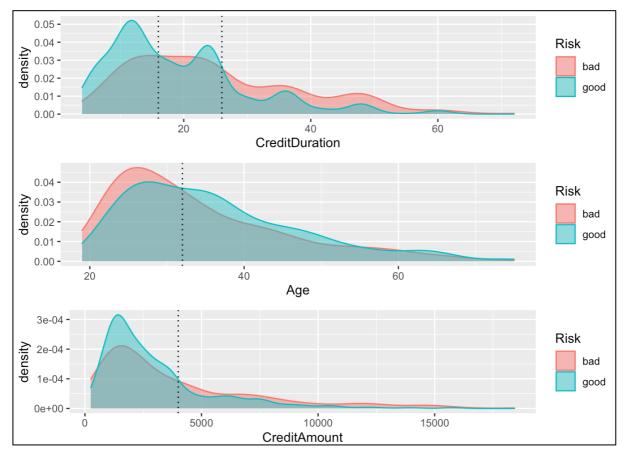
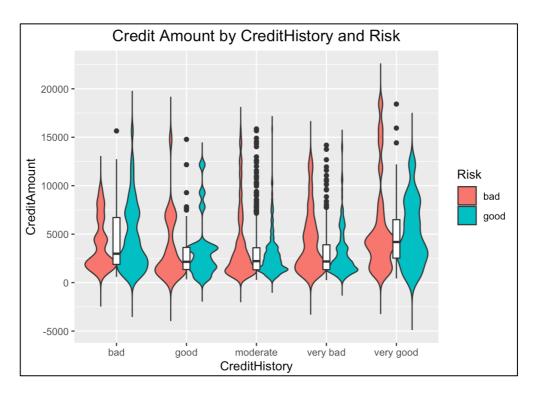


Figure 5: Density plots of CreditDuration/Age/CreditAmount

Figure 5 shows the densities of numerical attributes. There are significantly higher densities of Bad-Risk when *CreditDuration>*26 and *Age<*32 and significantly lower density of Bad-Risk when *CreditAmount<*4000 and *CreditDuration<*16. As such, these numerical attributes re likely important in predicting Risk.



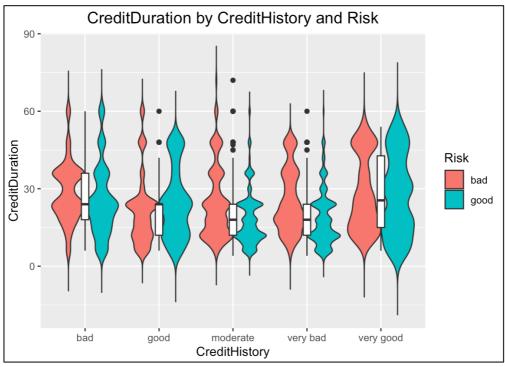


Figure 6: Violinplots of (a) CreditAmount-CreditHistory & (b) CreditDuration-CreditHistory

Figure 6 show customers with "very-good" *CreditHistory* obtaining loans of greater <u>CreditAmount</u> and longer <u>CreditDuration</u>. This group also higher probability of being Good-Risk. Contrastingly, customers with "very-bad" <u>CreditHistory</u> have significantly higher probability of being Bad-Risk regardless of <u>CreditAmount</u> or <u>CreditDuration</u>. Hence, we also expect <u>CreditHistory</u> to determine <u>Risk</u>.

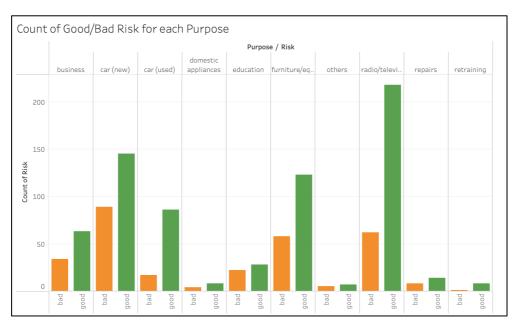


Figure 7: Barchart of Good-Risk/Bad-Risk by Purpose

Figure 7 shows significantly greater numbers of customers with Good-Risk who take loans for *Purpose* "car(used)" and "radio/television". Contrastingly, loans with *Purpose* "domestic-appliances", "repairs" and "education" are almost equally Good-Risk and Bad-Risk. However, these categories have very low frequencies and may not be representative for the larger true population.

We then investigated how Wealth and Stability relate to Risk.

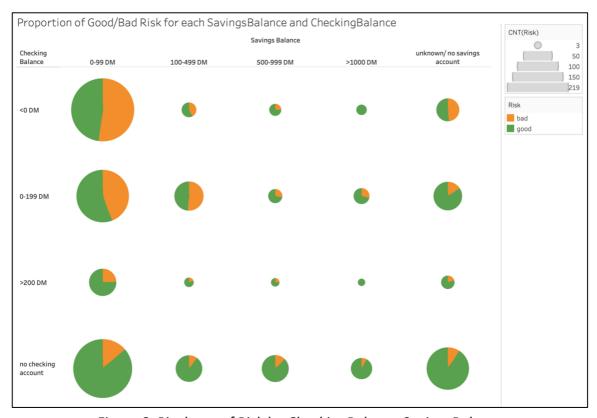


Figure 8: Piecharts of Risk by CheckingBalance-SavingsBalance

Figure 8 shows the low-SavingsBalance and low-CheckingBalance group containing the most instances with the highest proportion of Bad-Risk. Customers with "no checking account" have smaller proportions of Bad-Risk regardless of SavingsBalance. These significantly different proportions for each group illustrate the influence of both CheckingBalance and SavingsBalance in predicting Risk.

We observe a sizeable number of observations with "0-99DM" *SavingsBalance* and "no checking account". Thus, the Good-Risk/Bad-Risk proportions for other groups of *SavingsBalance* and *CheckingBalance* may be unrepresentative of true population

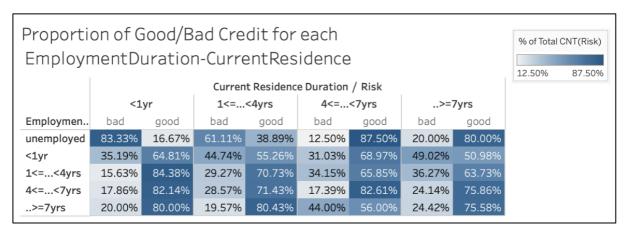


Figure 9: Aggregation table of Proportions *Risk* by *EmploymentDuration- CurrentResidenceDuration*

Figure 9 show "unemployed" customers with *CurrentResidenceDuration*<1yr and 1≤*CurrentResidenceDuration*<4yrs" were more likely Bad-Risk. In contrast, those with longer *EmploymentDuration* were generally more likely Good-Risk. This also shows that *EmployementDuration* may be more deterministic of *Risk* than *CurrentResidenceDuration* since it better indicates financial stability.

3 Preparing the Data

Merging Categories

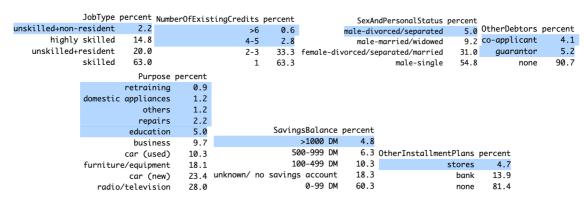


Figure 10: Categories with proportion<5%

Some categorical attributes have categories with very few observations (Figure 10) which may unrepresent the true population. Hence, we merged closely related groups to create new categories to represent at least 6% of total observations.

Removing Attributes

IsForeignWorker	percent	OtherDebtors	percent
no	3.7	yes	9.3
ves	96.3	none	90.7

Figure 11: Unbalanced attributes

Despite merging, two-category attributes *IsForeignWorker* and *OtherDebtors* still had unbalanced observations (Figure 11). This may not make them good predictors and were consequently removed.

Derived Attributes

We initially considered to derive separate attributes "Sex" and "PersonalStatus" from SexAndPersonalStatus. However, PersonalStatus only varied for males and the effects of each SexAndPersonalStatus with Risk were observable. Hence, we decided to keep the original attribute.

Imputing Missing Values

There were no missing values. Although, *SavingsBalance* contained the category "unknown/no-savings-account", we decided to note impute this as it contained a sizeable number of observations and visualisations showed it to be insightful to predicting *Risk* (Figure8).

Transforming Attributes

Numerical attributes were kept as is while categorical attributes were transformed to factors.

Training & Testing Split

The data was split 75/25 into training/testing datasets.

4 Generating & Testing Prediction Models

Cost-sensitive Problem

A false-positive (predicted Good when actually Bad) results in issuing a loan that would be defaulted while a false-negative (predicted Bad when actually Good) results the opportunity cost of not earning the interests on that loan. However, financial loss of a defaulted loan significantly outweighs opportunity cost of earning interest.

Вас	d	Good					
Bad	0	5	_				
Good	1	0					
the rows	-			classification	and	the	columns

Figure 12: Cost Matrix

The dataset is accompanied by a cost-matrix (Figure 12). Since it is worse to class a customer as good when they are bad (5), than it is to class a customer as bad when they are good (1), our problem is cost-sensitive.

Metrics Used

In evaluating our models, we used two metrics: Cost and Mean Misclassification Error (MMCE).

We created a new metric Cost using MLR's makeCostMeasure() which measures resulting cost, weighted according to the cost matrix. MMCE is defined as mean(response!=truth), measuring the proportion of misclassifications.

With these two measures, we consider both the correctness of classification and cost resulting from misclassifications. With the objective of minimising financial loss, Cost is prioritised. Both lower Cost and MMCE implies better predictions.

Models Selected

We selected 3 models – Logistic Regression, RandomForest, and XGBoost. The Logistic Regression is more interpretable to provide insights and acts as a good baseline model. However, it may not well capture complex, non-linear relationships between predictors and target attributes. To complement this, we selected two ensemble methods – RandomForest and XGBoost – which are more robust to noise and outliers, helping provide more generalise predictions.

Since our classification problem is cost-sensitive, we try two different methods for each model – thresholding and weighting.

Thresholding

The default thresholds of classification is 0.5, meaning the instance would be classified as Good if Prob(Good)>0.5. Since false-Goods are worse than false-Bads, we should be more confident that the customer is actually Good before concluding that they are Good. Thus, we adjust thresholds used in predictions.

Firstly, we trained our 3 models using the training-set and finetuned the RandomForest and XGBoost with these parameters (AppendixD):

RandomForest

- ntree
- mtry
- nodesize

XGBoost

- nrounds
- max_depth
- lambda
- eta
- subsample
- min child weight
- colsample_bytree

Given the large number and range of parameters, we performed a random search, limiting to 100 maximum iterations, giving us optimal parameters (AppendixE), helping us build default models.

From this we created theoretical and empirical thresholds.

```
> costs = matrix(c(0, 1, 5, 0), 2)
> colnames(costs) = rownames(costs) = getTaskClassLevels(trainTask)
> th = costs[2,1]/(costs[2,1] + costs[1,2])
> th
[1] 0.1666667
```

Figure 13: Theoretical Threshold

The theoretical threshold for the Bad class is calculated to be 0.167 (Figure 13). We then also created empirical thresholds which are cost-optimal thresholds for a given learning method based on training data (Sheng & Ling, 2007).

```
model cost mmce
rf-threshold-default 0.820 0.260
rf-threshold-theoratical 0.680 0.680
rf-threshold-empirical 0.560 0.528
xgb-threshold-default 1.032 0.264
xgb-threshold-theoratical 0.968 0.328
xgb-threshold-empirical 0.568 0.520
logreg-threshold-default 0.932 0.244
logreg-threshold-theoratical 0.552 0.344
logreg-threshold-empirical 0.544 0.384
```

Figure 14: Threshold Models

Using default, theoretical and empirical thresholds, we have three variation of predictions of each model (Figure 14).

We observe significant improvements in cost from default, theoretical to empirical thresholds while MMCE increases as adjusting thresholds reduce false-Goods but result in more misclassifications overall. With thresholding, we see that the logistic regression model generally performs best in both Cost and MMCE.

```
> # Investigating Coefficients of Logistic Regression model
> coefs = as.data.frame(stack(model_logreg$learner.model$coefficients))
> probs = data.frame(var=coefs$ind,
                     coef=coefs$values,
                     prob=exp(coefs$values) / (1 + exp(coefs$values)))
> probs %>% arrange(-prob) %>% top_n(10)
Selecting by prob
                                           coef
                                                     prob
1 CheckingBalanceno checking account 1.6945546 0.8448222
               InstallmentRate35-100% 1.3649512 0.7965632
3
                    Purposecar (used) 1.2392681 0.7754366
4
               CheckingBalance>200 DM 1.1441180 0.7584349
5
                CreditHistoryvery bad 0.8704641 0.7048423
6
                InstallmentRate25-34% 0.7683903 0.6831726
7
      SexAndPersonalStatusmale-single 0.7545103 0.6801607
8
             NumberOfExistingCredits1 0.5919621 0.6438152
                          (Intercept) 0.5684183 0.6383981
10
        EmploymentDuration4<=...<7yrs 0.4431675 0.6090135
```

Figure 15: Probabilities of BadRisk

Coefficients from the Logistic Regression shows customers with CheckingBalance "no-checking-account", InstallmentRate "35-100%" and Purpose "car-(used)" more likely to be Bad-Risk (Figure 15).

Weighting

Another cost-sensitive approach is weighting which factors the imbalanced-cost during the training of the models.

```
> w = (1 - th)/th
> w
[1] 5
```

Figure 16: Theoretical Weight

We can derive the theoretical weight from the theoretical threshold (Figure 16).

From this, we create three weighted versions of the above models using the same tuning parameters with an addition of weight. Even though the theoretical weight is 5, we may find other weights to provide better performance depending on each model. As such, in tuning we try weights from 4-8.

```
model cost mmce
rf-weighted 0.516 0.356
xgb-weighted 0.960 0.256
logreg-weighted 0.932 0.244
```

Figure 17: Weighted Models

The RandomForest gave the lowest cost out of the weighted models although it resulted in higher MMCE (Figure 17).

Further Model Improvements

RandomForest and XGBoost selects features automatically in creating trees during training. However, the Logistic Regression does not. Given that logistic regression already performed the best with Thresholding, feature selection may further improve its performance.

Using MLR's filterFeartures(), we selected 10 features with the highest chi-squared p-values. However, seeing that the weighted RandomForest had very low Cost, we suspect that feature selection by RandomForest Importance may also be helpful.

```
> getTaskFeatureNames(trainTask_selected_chisq)
 [1] "CheckingBalance"
                           "CreditDuration"
                                                  "CreditHistory"
                                                                         "Purpose"
                           "EmploymentDuration"
 [5] "SavingsBalance"
                                                  "InstallmentRate"
                                                                         "SexAndPersonalStatus"
                         "HousingType"
 [9] "PropertyOwned"
> getTaskFeatureNames(trainTask_selected_rf)
 [1] "CheckingBalance"
                            "CreditDuration"
                                                     "CreditHistory"
                                                                             "Purpose"
 [5] "CreditAmount"
                            "SavingsBalance"
                                                     "PropertyOwned"
                                                                             "Age"
 [9] "OtherInstallmentPlans" "NumberOfPersonsLiable"
```

Figure 18: Feature Selection

As such, we created two variations of feature selected data with different selected attributes (Figure 18).

We then retrain Logistic Regression models on these two feature-selected training-sets, using both thresholding and weighting with the same tuning parameters as above.

```
model cost mmce
logreg-selectchi2-threshold-default 0.988 0.236
logreg-selectchi2-threshold-theoratical 0.600 0.376
logreg-selectchi2-threshold-empirical 0.580 0.532
logreg-selectchi2-weighted 0.596 0.372
logreg-selectrf-threshold-default 0.908 0.236
logreg-selectrf-threshold-theoratical 0.596 0.388
logreg-selectrf-threshold-empirical 0.484 0.468
logreg-selectrf-weighted 0.568 0.376
```

Figure 19: Models with Feature Selection

Models with features selected with RandomForest Importance indeed resulted in lowest cost and MMCE (Figure 19). This model used weight = 4.5, ntree = 430, mtry = 6, nodesize = 20.

Best Models & Evaluation

```
> errors %>% arrange(cost)
                                     model cost mmce
       logreg-selectrf-threshold-empirical 0.484 0.468
                               rf-weighted 0.516 0.356
3
                logreg-threshold-empirical 0.544 0.384
4
              logreg-threshold-theoratical 0.552 0.344
5
                    rf-threshold-empirical 0.560 0.528
6
                   xgb-threshold-empirical 0.568 0.520
7
                  logreg-selectrf-weighted 0.568 0.376
     logreg-selectchi2-threshold-empirical 0.580 0.532
9
                logreg-selectchi2-weighted 0.596 0.372
10
    logreg-selectrf-threshold-theoratical 0.596 0.388
11 logreg-selectchi2-threshold-theoratical 0.600 0.376
12
                  rf-threshold-theoratical 0.680 0.680
13
                      rf-threshold-default 0.820 0.260
14
        logreg-selectrf-threshold-default 0.908 0.236
15
                  logreg-threshold-default 0.932 0.244
16
                           logreg-weighted 0.932 0.244
17
                              xgb-weighted 0.960 0.256
18
                 xgb-threshold-theoratical 0.968 0.328
19
       logreg-selectchi2-threshold-default 0.988 0.236
20
                     xgb-threshold-default 1.032 0.264
```

Figure 20: All Models

The models with the top 2 lowest Costs were the logistic regression with feature selection using RandomForest importance and empirical threshold (*logreg-selectrf-threshold-empirical*) and the weighted RandomForest (*rf-weighted*) (Figure 20). We also generally observe that models with low Cost tend to have high MMCE.

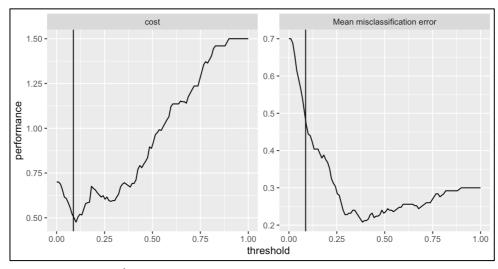


Figure 21: Cost/MMCE-threshold of logreg-selectrf-threshold-empirical

When using the Thresholding approach, there is a direct trade-off between Cost and MMCE as chosen threshold decreases (Figure 21). Hence for *logreg-selectrf-threshold-empirical*, even though Cost is minimised, MMCE was still high at 0.468, meaning that almost half of the classifications were incorrect.

```
> # 1st lowest Cost: logreg-selectrf-empirical
 get_confmatrix(logreg_pred_em_s2$data$response)
      bad good
pred
       74 116
  bad
        1 59
  good
  # 2nd lowest Cost: rf-weighted
  get_confmatrix(pred_rf$data$response)
       bad good
pred
  had
       65
             79
  good 10
             96
  errors %>% arrange(cost)
                                  model cost mmce
       logreg-selectrf-threshold-empirical 0.484 0.468
                            rf-weighted 0.516 0.356
```

Figure 22: Confusion Matrix

Comparing the confusion matrix (Figure 22), we see that *logreg-selectrf-threshold-empirical* is overly-biased towards predicting false-Bads. This resulted in slightly lower cost but significantly higher misclassifications for *logreg-selectrf-threshold-empirical*.

Although *rf-weighted* resulted in more false-Goods, this issue would be less significant in the real population as the dataset was described to have over-sampled instances with Bad-Risk (Groemping, 2019). Therefore, we conclude rf-weighted to be the best model given its low Cost and more reasonable MMCE.

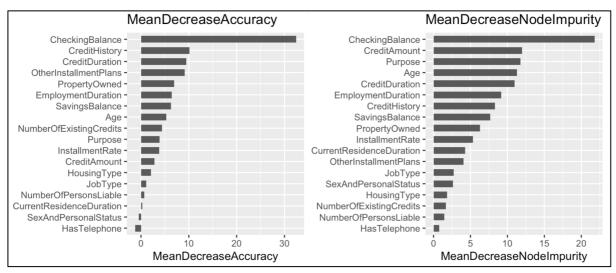


Figure 23: Variable Importance

Variable importance from *rf-weighted* (Figure 23) shows Checking Balance to be most important in predicting Risk. Removing it would cause a 33% mean decrease in accuracy.

5 Problem Conclusions & Recommendations

By implementing the *rf-weighted*, the bank can predict Credit Risk with 64.4% correct classifications. Even though there are models which are more accurate, those result in higher costs. For example, the model most accurate model with 76.4% correct classifications resulted in twice as much cost as our chosen model.

Important Features

Both Logistic Regression and RandomForest model showed *CheckingBalance* to be the most important in predicting Risk. Several other factors such as *CreditHistory, CreditDuration, OtherInstallmentPlans, CreditAmount, Purpose* and *Age* were also important. Consequently, the bank should consider to gather and vet this information more rigorously in order to most accurately predict Risk.

Considerations

The objective of minimising cost also results in more false-Bads since we only predict GoodRisk with higher confidence. In practicality, this results in more people being denied loans. This may affect the bank's reputation to be seen as a strict lender, potentially resulting in fewer applicants.

References

Groemping, U., 2019. South German credit data: Correcting a widely used data set. *Rep. Math., Phys. Chem., Berlin, Germany, Tech. Rep, 4*, p.2019.

Sheng, V.S. and Ling, C.X., 2007. Roulette sampling for cost-sensitive learning. In *Machine Learning: ECML 2007: 18th European Conference on Machine Learning, Warsaw, Poland, September 17-21, 2007. Proceedings 18* (pp. 724-731). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Appendices

Appendix A: Data Source

http://archive.ics.uci.edu/ml/datasets/Statlog+%28German+Credit+Data%29

Appendix B: Data Description & Further Info

http://www1.beuth-hochschule.de/FB_II/reports/Report-2019-004.pdf

Appendix C: Categorical Attributes

_		
P2	2 bad	good
1	1 45.00	19.80
2		23.43
3	4.67	7.00
4	4 15.33	49.7
0	0 8.33	2.14
1	9.33	3.00
2	2 56.33	51.5'
3		8.57
4		34.7
0	29.67	20.7
1	1 5.67	12.2
2		17.5'
3		31.1
4		1.14
5		2.00
6		4.00
7		0.00
8		1.14
9		9.00
10		1.00
10	1.07	1.00
1	1 - 72.33	55.1
2	2 11.33	9.86
3	3 - 3.67	7.43
4	4 2.00	6.00
5	5 10.67	21.5
1	1 7.67	5.57
2	3 3.67 4 2.00 5 10.67 1 7.67 2 23.33 3 34.67 4 13.00	14.5
3	34.67	33.5
4	4 13.00	19.2
5	5 21.33	27.0
1	1 11.33	14.5
2	2 20.67	24.1
3		16.0
4		45.2
1	1 6.67	4.29
2		28.7
3		57.4
4		9.57
1	1 90.67	90.7
2		3.29
3		6.00
1	1 12.00	13.4
		30.1
		15.1
		41.2
	:	3 3.33 1 12.00 2 32.33 3 14.33 4 41.33

Variable name	Level	P2	bad	good
property	unknown / no property	1	20.00	31.71
(A12, M12)	car or other	2	23.67	23.00
	building soc. savings agr./life insurance	3	34.00	32.86
	real estate	4	22.33	12.43
other_installment_plans	bank	1	19.00	11.71
(A14, M13)	stores	2	6.33	4.00
	none	3	74.67	84.29
housing	for free	1	23.33	15.57
(A15, M14)	rent	2	62.00	75.43
	own	3	14.67	9.00
number_credits	1	1	66.67	61.86
(A16, M4)	2-3	2	30.67	34.43
	4-5	3	2.00	3.14
	>= 6	4	0.67	0.57
job	unemployed/unskilled - non-resident	1	2.33	2.14
(A17, M11)	unskilled - resident	2	18.67	20.57
	skilled $employee/official$	3	62.00	63.43
	manager/self-empl./highly qualif. employee	4	2 23.67 3 34.00 4 22.33 1 19.00 2 6.33 3 74.67 1 23.33 2 62.00 3 14.67 1 66.67 2 30.67 3 2.00 4 0.67 1 2.33 2 18.67 3 62.00 4 17.00 1 15.33 2 84.67 1 62.33 2 37.67 1 1.33	13.86
people_liable	3 or more	1	15.33	15.57
(A18, M20)	0 to 2	2	84.67	84.43
telephone	no	1	62.33	58.43
(A19, M19)	yes (under customer name)	2	37.67	41.57
foreign_worker	yes	1	1.33	4.71
(A20, M18)	no	2	98.67	95.29

Appendix D: Tuning Parameters

```
rf_param = makeParamSet(
   makeIntegerParam("ntree",lower = 50, upper = 500),
   makeIntegerParam("mtry", lower = 3, upper = 15),
   makeIntegerParam("nodesize", lower = 10, upper = 50)
)

xg_ps = makeParamSet(
   makeIntegerParam("nrounds",lower=200,upper=600),
   makeIntegerParam("max_depth",lower=3,upper=20),
   makeNumericParam("lambda",lower=0.55,upper=0.60),
   makeNumericParam("eta", lower=0.001, upper=0.5),
   makeNumericParam("subsample", lower=0.10, upper=0.80),
   makeNumericParam("min_child_weight",lower=1,upper=5),
   makeNumericParam("colsample_bytree",lower=0.2,upper=0.8)
)
```

Appendix E: Optimal Tuning Parameters

```
> rf_tune$y
cost.test.mean mmce.test.mean
        0.576
                      0.400
> rf_tune$x
$wcw.weight
[1] 4.5
$ntree
[1] 430
$mtry
[1] 6
$nodesize
[1] 20
> xg_tune$y
cost.test.mean mmce.test.mean
        0.856
                      0.264
> xg_tune$x
$wcw.weight
[1] 5.5
$nrounds
[1] 275
$max_depth
[1] 5
$lambda
[1] 0.5686219
$eta
[1] 0.1608161
$subsample
[1] 0.770873
$min_child_weight
[1] 3.786923
$colsample_bytree
[1] 0.7768955
```