

# Property Elicitation on Imprecise Probabilities

Rabanus Derr

University of Tübingen & Tübingen AI Center

Joint w/ James Bailie

Work completed at Harvard University, now at Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (IAB)

15 July 2025

(ISIPTA 2025)

# Expected Loss Minimization

$$\arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

→ (Lecture 10) Empirical Risk Minimization / Machine Learning

→ Asymptotic Estimation

→ Property Estimation

# Expected Loss Minimization

$$\arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

- ▶ (Asymptotic) Empirical Risk Minimization (Machine Learning)
- ▶ Asymptotic  $M$ -Estimation
- ▶ Property Elicitation

# Expected Loss Minimization

$$\arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

- ▶ (Asymptotic) Empirical Risk Minimization (Machine Learning)
- ▶ Asymptotic  $M$ -Estimation
- ▶ Property Elicitation

# Expected Loss Minimization

$$\arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

- ▶ (Asymptotic) Empirical Risk Minimization (Machine Learning)
- ▶ Asymptotic  $M$ -Estimation
- ▶ **Property Elicitation**

# Property Elicitation

A property  $f: \Delta(\mathcal{Z}) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^p$  is *elicitable* if there exists a loss  $\ell$  such that

$$f(P) = \arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

E.g.,

$$\text{mean} = \arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[(\theta - Z)^2].$$

# Property Elicitation

A property  $f: \Delta(\mathcal{Z}) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^p$  is *elicitable* if there exists a loss  $\ell$  such that

$$f(P) = \arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

E.g.,

$$\text{mean} = \arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[(\theta - Z)^2].$$

# Property Elicitation

A property  $f: \Delta(\mathcal{Z}) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^p$  is *elicitable* if there exists a loss  $\ell$  such that

$$f(P) = \arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

E.g.,

$$\text{mean} = \arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[(\theta - Z)^2].$$



# Property Elicitation on Imprecise Probabilities (IPs)

An *IP-property*  $f: 2^{\Delta(\mathcal{Z})} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^p$  is *elicitable* if there exists a loss  $\ell$  such that

$$f(\mathcal{P}) = \arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \sup_{P \in \mathcal{P}} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

Why? – e.g, Multi-Distribution Learning.

# Property Elicitation on Imprecise Probabilities (IPs)

An *IP-property*  $f: 2^{\Delta(\mathcal{Z})} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^p$  is *elicitable* if there exists a loss  $\ell$  such that

$$f(\mathcal{P}) = \arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \sup_{P \in \mathcal{P}} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

Why? – e.g, Multi-Distribution Learning.

# Property Elicitation on Imprecise Probabilities (IPs)

An *IP-property*  $f: 2^{\Delta(\mathcal{Z})} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^p$  is *elicitable* if there exists a loss  $\ell$  such that

$$f(\mathcal{P}) = \arg \min_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^p} \sup_{P \in \mathcal{P}} \mathbb{E}_{Z \sim P}[\ell(\theta, Z)].$$

Why? – e.g, Multi-Distribution Learning.

# At Our Poster

- ▶ Necessary conditions for IP-elicitability,
- ▶ Characterization of elicitable IP-properties by Bayes pairs,
- ▶ Illustrative examples, connections to  $\Gamma$ -maximin and many exciting open problems;
- ▶ A penguin.

# At Our Poster

- ▶ Necessary conditions for IP-elicitability,
- ▶ Characterization of elicitable IP-properties by Bayes pairs,
- ▶ Illustrative examples, connections to  $\Gamma$ -maximin and many exciting open problems;
- ▶ A penguin.

# At Our Poster

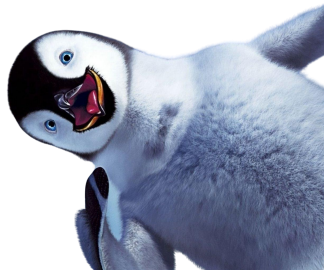
- ▶ Necessary conditions for IP-elicitability,
- ▶ Characterization of elicitable IP-properties by Bayes pairs,
- ▶ Illustrative examples, connections to  $\Gamma$ -maximin and many exciting open problems;
- ▶ A penguin.

# At Our Poster





- ▶ Necessary conditions for IP-elicitability,
- ▶ Characterization of elicitable IP-properties by Bayes pairs,
- ▶ Illustrative examples, connections to  $\Gamma$ -maximin and many exciting open problems; and
- ▶ A penguin.



**[ARXIV.ORG/ABS/2507.05857](https://arxiv.org/abs/2507.05857)**



# Select References

-  Grünwald and Dawid (2004). “Game theory, maximum entropy, minimum discrepancy and robust Bayesian decision theory”. In: *The Annals of Statistics* 32.4, pp. 1367–1433.
-  Embrechts et al. (2021). “Bayes risk, elicibility, and the expected shortfall”. In: *Mathematical Finance* 31.4, pp. 1190–1217.
-  Fröhlich and Williamson (2024). *Scoring rules and calibration for imprecise probabilities*. arXiv:2410.23001.
-  Schervish et al. (2025). “Elicitation for sets of probabilities and distributions”. In: *The 14th Intl. Symposium on Imprecise Probability: Theories and Applications*. Vol. 290. PMLR, pp. 242–251.