

6. Multivariate Distributions

Spring 2021

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Gov 2002 (Harvard)

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- Distributions of one variable: how to describe and summarize uncertainty about one variable.
- Today: **distributions of multiple variables** to describe relationships between variables.
- Later: use data to **learn** about probability distributions.

Why multiple random variables?

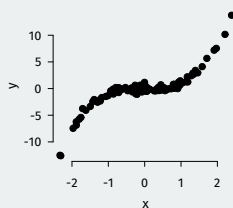
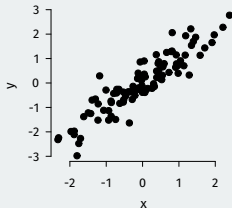
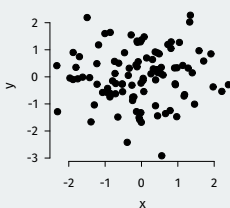
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Why multiple random variables?

1. How to measure the relationship between two variables X and Y ?
2. What if we have many observations of the same variable, X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n ?

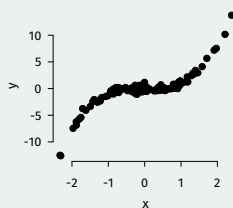
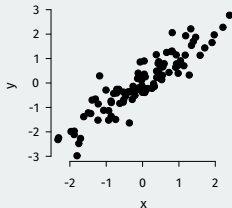
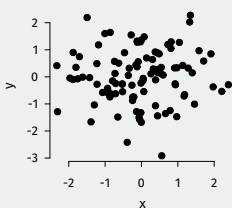
1/ Distributions of Multiple Random Variables

Joint distributions



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- Shape of the joint distribution \rightsquigarrow the relationship between X and Y

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$$f_{X,Y}(x, y) = \mathbb{P}(X = x, Y = y)$$

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 - \sum_x is shorthand for sum over all possible values of X

Example: Gay marriage and gender

	Support Gay Marriage $Y = 1$	Oppose Gay Marriage $Y = 0$
Female $X = 1$	0.30	0.21
Male $X = 0$	0.22	0.27

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$$p_{X,Y}(1,1) = \mathbb{P}(X=1, Y=1) = 0.3$$

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 - Works because values of X are disjoint.

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Marginal	0.30 + 0.22		

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Marginal	0.52	$0.21 + 0.27$	

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Conditional p.m.f.

Definition

The **conditional probability mass function** or conditional p.m.f. of Y conditional on X is

$$\mathbb{P}(Y = y \mid X = x) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(X = x, Y = y)}{\mathbb{P}(X = x)}$$

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- This is a valid univariate probability distribution!
 - $P(Y = y \mid X = x) \geq 0$ and $\sum_y \mathbb{P}(Y = y \mid X = x) = 1$
- Can define the **conditional expectation** of this p.m.f.:

$$E[Y \mid X = x] = \sum_y y \mathbb{P}(Y = y \mid X = x)$$

Example: conditionals for gay marriage

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$$\mathbb{P}(Y = 1 \mid X = 0)$$

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$$\mathbb{P}(Y = 1 \mid X = 0) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(X = 0, Y = 1)}{\mathbb{P}(X = 0)} = \frac{0.22}{0.22 + 0.27}$$

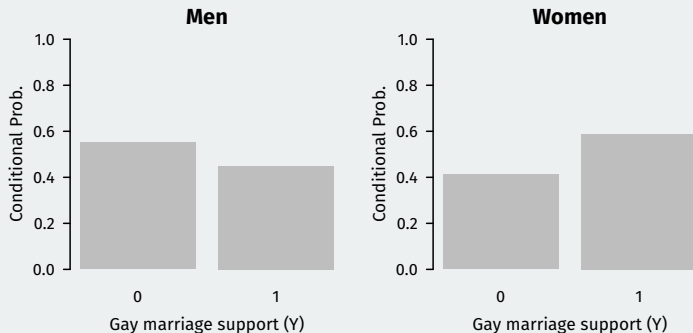
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$$\mathbb{P}(Y = 1 \mid X = 0) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(X = 0, Y = 1)}{\mathbb{P}(X = 0)} = \frac{0.22}{0.22 + 0.27} = 0.449$$

Example: conditionals for gay marriage



- Two values of $X \rightsquigarrow$ two **univariate** conditional distributions of Y

- Bayes' rule for r.v.s:

$$\mathbb{P}(Y = y \mid X = x) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(X = x \mid Y = y)\mathbb{P}(Y = y)}{\mathbb{P}(X = x)}$$

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- Law of total probability for r.v.s:

$$\mathbb{P}(X = x) = \sum_y \mathbb{P}(X = x \mid Y = y)\mathbb{P}(Y = y)$$

Definition

For two r.v.s X and Y , the **joint cumulative distribution function** or joint c.d.f. $F_{X,Y}(x, y)$ is a function such that for finite values x and y ,

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- Well-defined for discrete and continuous X and Y .
- For discrete we simply have:

$$F_{X,Y}(x, y) = \sum_{i \leq x} \sum_{j \leq y} \mathbb{P}(X = i, Y = j)$$

Continuous r.v.s

- One continuous r.v.: prob. of being in a subset of the real line.

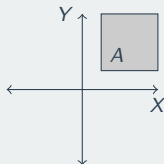


Continuous r.v.s

- One continuous r.v.: prob. of being in a subset of the real line.



- Two continuous r.v.s: probability of being in some subset of the 2-dimensional plane.



Continuous joint p.d.f.

Definition

If two continuous r.v.s X and Y with joint c.d.f. $F_{X,Y}$, their **joint p.d.f.** $f_{X,Y}(x, y)$ is the derivative of $F_{X,Y}$ with respect to x and y ,

$$f_{X,Y}(x, y) = \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x \partial y} F_{X,Y}(x, y)$$

- Integrate over both dimensions to get the probability of a region:

$$\mathbb{P}((X, Y) \in A) = \iint_{(x,y) \in A} f_{X,Y}(x, y) dx dy.$$

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- $\{(x, y) : f_{X,Y}(x, y) > 0\}$ is called the **support** of the distribution.

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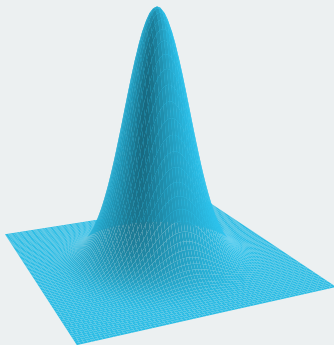
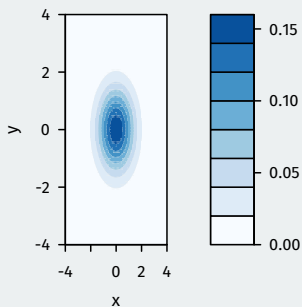
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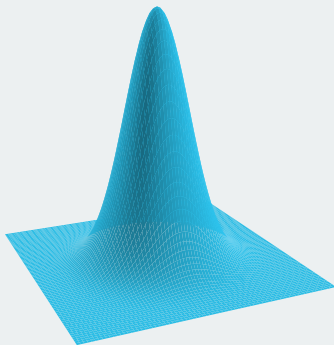
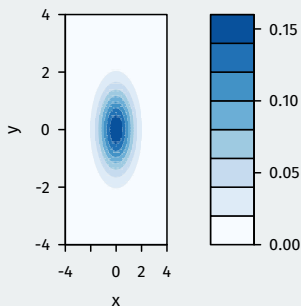
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- $\mathbb{P}(X = x, Y = y) = 0$ for similar reasons as with single r.v.s.

Joint densities are 3D



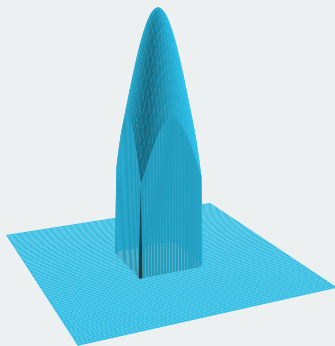
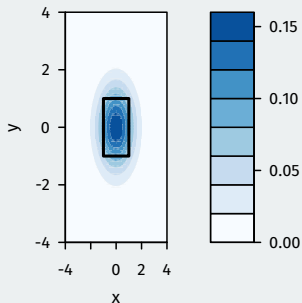
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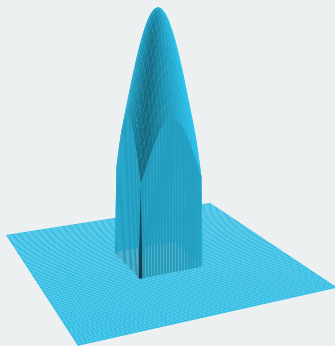
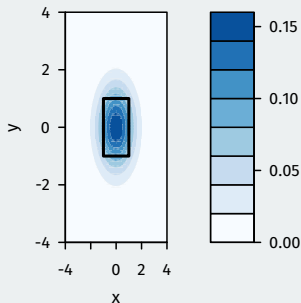
- X and Y axes are on the “floor,” height is the value of $f_{X,Y}(x,y)$.
- Remember $f_{X,Y}(x,y) \neq \mathbb{P}(X = x, Y = y)$.

Probability = volume



- $$\mathbb{P}((X, Y) \in A) = \iint_{(x,y) \in A} f_{X,Y}(x,y) dx dy$$

Probability = volume



- $\mathbb{P}((X, Y) \in A) = \iint_{(x,y) \in A} f_{X,Y}(x,y) dx dy$
- Probability = volume above a specific region.

Continuous marginal distributions

- We can recover the marginal PDF of one of the variables by integrating over the distribution of the other variable:

$$f_Y(y) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f_{X,Y}(x, y) dx$$

Continuous marginal distributions

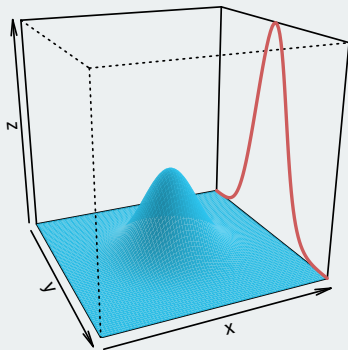
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- Works for either variable:

$$f_X(x) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f_{X,Y}(x, y) dy$$

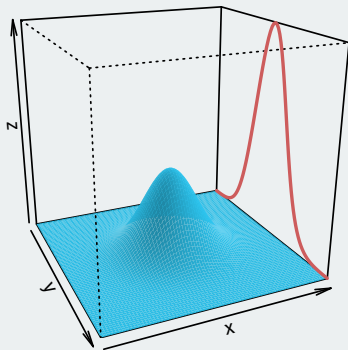
Visualizing continuous marginals



- Marginal integrates (sums, basically) over other r.v.:

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Visualizing continuous marginals



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- Pile up/flatten all of the joint density onto a single dimension.

Continuous conditional distributions

Definition

The **conditional p.d.f.** of a continuous random variable is

$$f_{Y|X}(y|x) = \frac{f_{X,Y}(x,y)}{f_X(x)}$$

for all values x s.t. $f_X(x) > 0$.

- Implies

$$\mathbb{P}(a < Y < b | X = x) = \int_a^b f_{Y|X}(y|x) dy$$

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for all values x s.t. $f_X(x) > 0$.

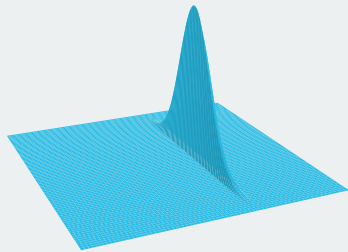
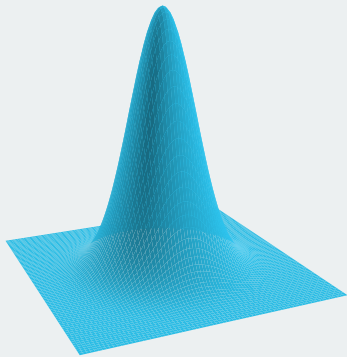
- Implies

$$\mathbb{P}(a < Y < b | X = x) = \int_a^b f_{Y|X}(y|x) dy$$

- Based on the definition of the conditional p.m.f./p.d.f., we have the following factorization:

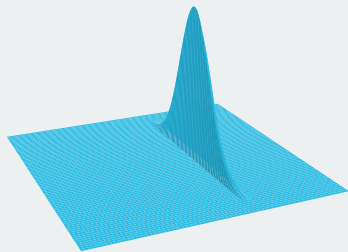
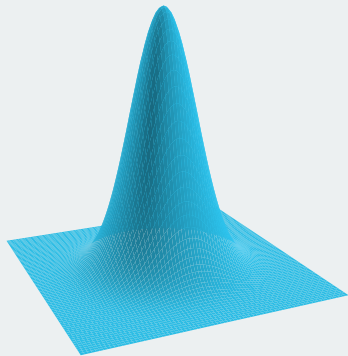
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Conditional distributions as slices



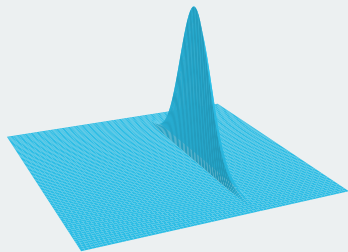
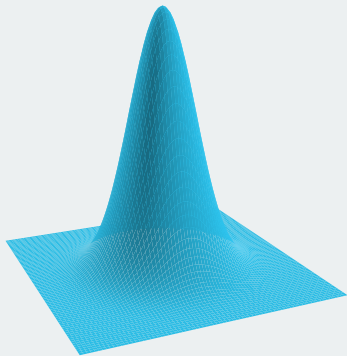
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- Normalize by dividing by $f_X(x_0)$ to ensure proper p.d.f.

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- **Conditional independence** implies similar to conditional distributions:

$$\mathbb{P}(X \in A, Y \in B \mid Z) = \mathbb{P}(X \in A \mid Z)\mathbb{P}(Y \in B \mid Z)$$

2/ Expectations of Joint Distributions

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3/ Covariance and Correlation

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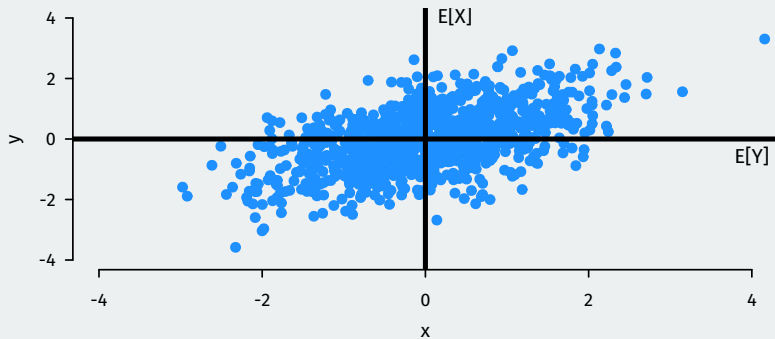
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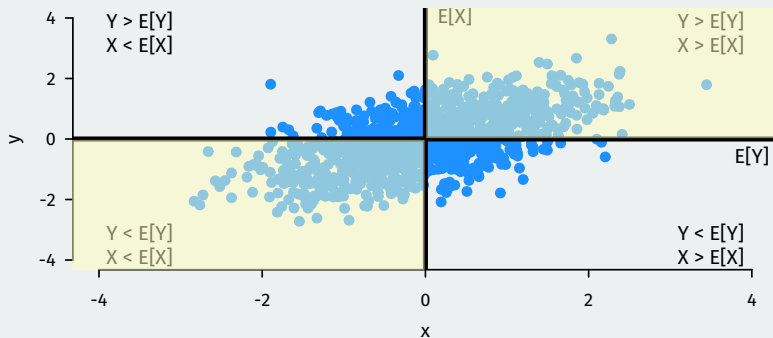
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Covariance intuition

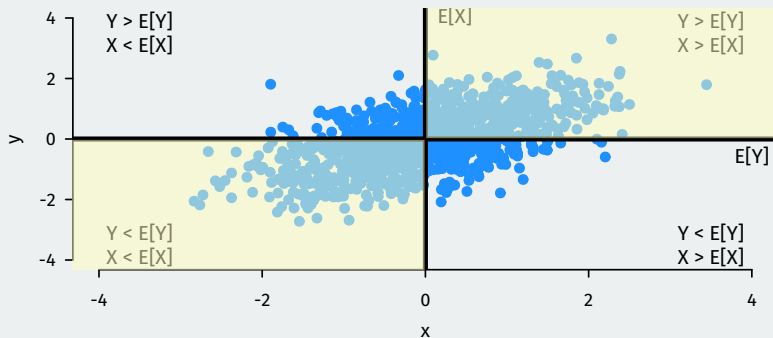


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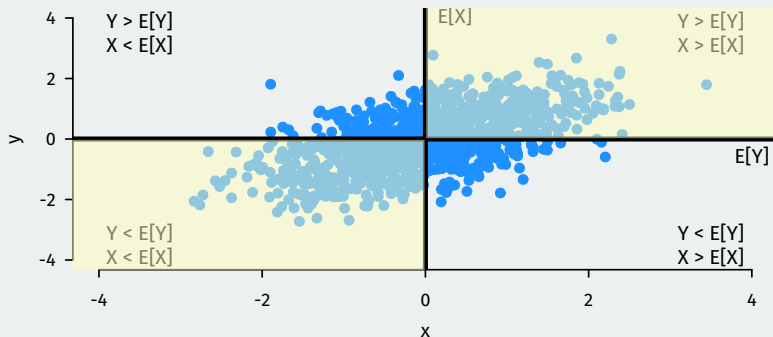
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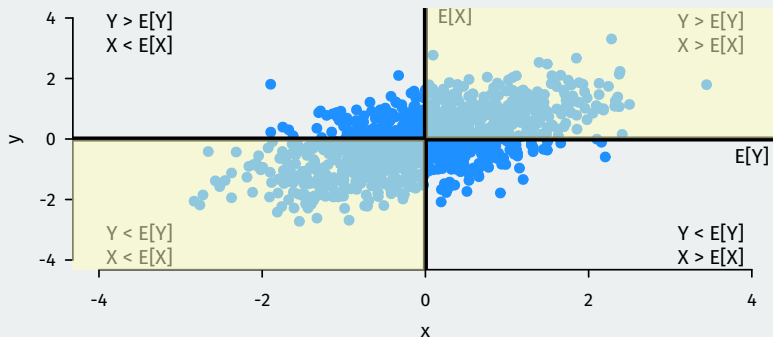
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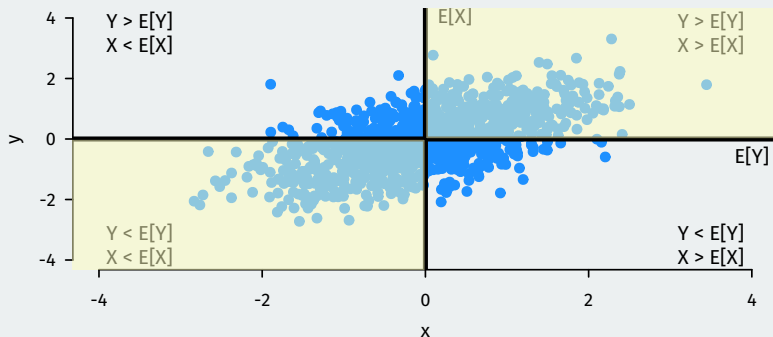
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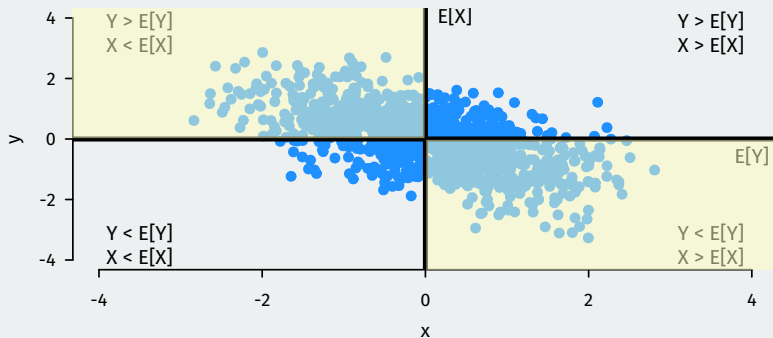
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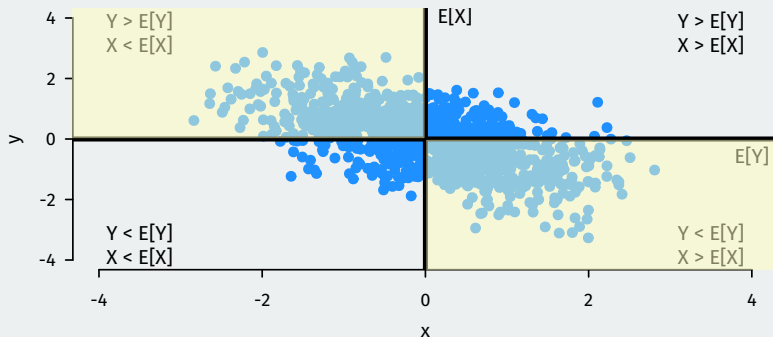
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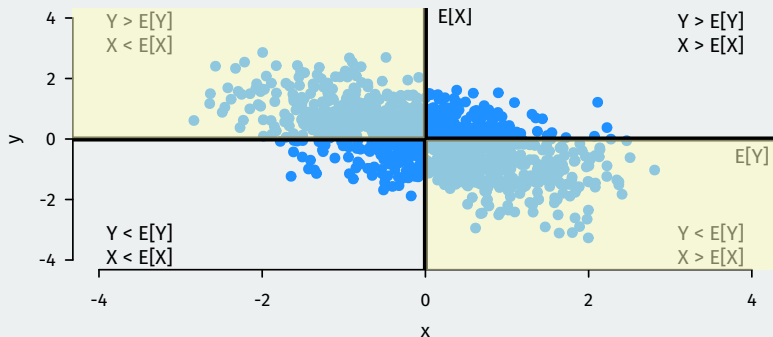
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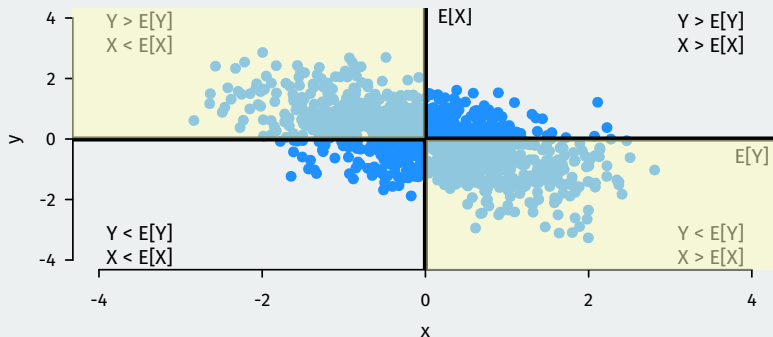
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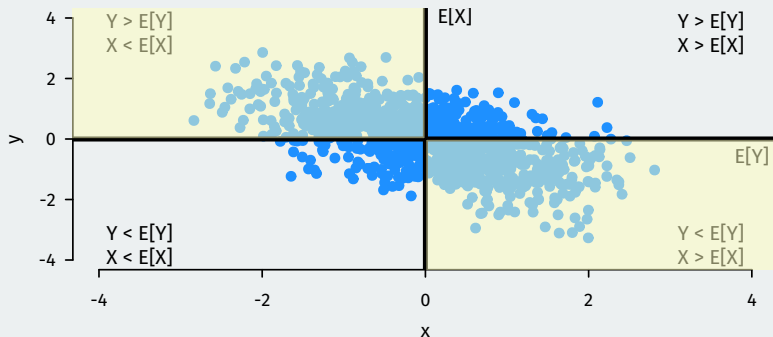
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 - Beware: $\mathbb{V}[X - Y] = \mathbb{V}[X] + \mathbb{V}[Y]$ as well.

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- Covariance is a measure of **linear dependence**, so it can miss non-linear dependence.

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 - $|\rho(X, Y)| = 1$ if and only if X and Y are perfectly correlated with a deterministic linear relationship: $Y = a + bX$.

4/ Random vectors

Multivariate random vectors

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- More generally, if $\mathbf{X} \sim \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$ then $\mathbf{Y} = \mathbf{a} + \mathbf{BX} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{B}\boldsymbol{\mu}, \mathbf{B}\boldsymbol{\Sigma}\mathbf{B}')$

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