Generated Sigma Algebra

1 Why

A simple way to obtain a sigma algebra, is to ask it to obtain some sets, and then to ask it to contain all the sets it needs to fulfill the properties.

2 Definition

The *generated sigma algebra* for a set of subsets is the smallest sigma algbera containing the set of subsets. We must prove the existence and uniqueness of this sigma algebra.

Proposition 1. *The intersection of a non-empty set of sigma algebras on the same base set is a sigma algebra.*

Proof. Let $\{(A, \mathcal{A}_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$ a familiy of sigma algebras on the same base set. Define $\mathcal{A}$ as $\cap_{\alpha \in I} \mathcal{A}_\alpha$.

1. For all $\alpha \in I$, $A \in \mathcal{A}_\alpha$, thus $A \in \mathcal{A}$; condition (a).

2. For all $B \in \mathcal{A}$, for all $\alpha \in I$, $B \in \mathcal{A}_\alpha$. Thus, for all $\alpha \in I$, $C_A(B) \in \mathcal{A}_\alpha$. And so $C_A(B) \in \mathcal{A}$; condition (b).

3. For all sequences $\{B_n\} \subset \mathcal{A}$, $\{B_n\} \subset \mathcal{A}_\alpha$ for all α. Thus $\cup_n B_n \in \mathcal{A}_\alpha$ for all α and so $\cup_n B_n \in \mathcal{A}$; condition (c).

$\square$

On the other hand, the union of a set of sigma algebras can fail to be a sigma algebra.

Proposition 2. *If A is a set and $\mathcal{A} \subset 2^A$, then there is a unique a smallest sigma algebra containing $\mathcal{A}$.*

Proof. We know of one sigma algebra containing $\mathcal{A}$: the power set of A. Thus, the set of sigma algebras containing $\mathcal{A}$ is not empty. Proposition 1 implies the intersection of all such sigma algebras (containing $\mathcal{A}$) is a sigma algebra. The intersection contains $\mathcal{A}$, and is contained in all other sigma algebras with this property, so is a smallest sigma algebra containing $\mathcal{A}$. If $\mathcal{B}, \mathcal{C}$ were two smallest sigma algebras, then $\mathcal{B} \subset \mathcal{C}$ and $\mathcal{C} \subset \mathcal{B}$, but then $\mathcal{B} = \mathcal{C}$; thus the smallest sigma algebra is unique. $\qquad\qquad\square$

3   Notation

Let A be a set and $\mathcal{A} \subset 2^A$. We denote the sigma algebra generated by $\mathcal{A}$ by $\sigma(\mathcal{A})$.