# Statistical Properties of Robust MDPs

Wenhao Yang





- 1 Introduction
- 2 Robust MDPs
- 3 Statistical Results
- 4 Further Discussion
- **6** Reference



- 1 Introduction
- Statistical Results
- 4 Further Discussion

Models may be sensitive to estimation errors.



- Models may be sensitive to estimation errors.
- Example: suppose  $X \sim P$  and  $\theta$  is the parameter of interest.



000

- Models may be sensitive to estimation errors.
- Example: suppose  $X \sim P$  and  $\theta$  is the parameter of interest. The population risk minimization is:

$$\min_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_P f(X; \theta); \ \theta^* \in \arg \max_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_P f(X; \theta).$$

- Models may be sensitive to estimation errors.
- Example: suppose  $X \sim P$  and  $\theta$  is the parameter of interest. The population risk minimization is:

$$\min_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_P f(X; \theta); \ \ \theta^* \in \arg\max_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_P f(X; \theta).$$

The empirical risk minimization is:

$$\min_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_{\widehat{P}_n} f(X; \theta) := \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i} f(X_i; \theta); \ \widehat{\theta}_n^* \in \arg \max_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_{\widehat{P}_n} f(X; \theta)$$



- Models may be sensitive to estimation errors.
- Example: suppose  $X \sim P$  and  $\theta$  is the parameter of interest. The population risk minimization is:

$$\min_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_P f(X; \theta); \ \theta^* \in \arg \max_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_P f(X; \theta).$$

The empirical risk minimization is:

$$\min_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_{\widehat{P}_n} f(X; \theta) := \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i} f(X_i; \theta); \ \widehat{\theta}_n^* \in \arg \max_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_{\widehat{P}_n} f(X; \theta)$$

•  $\widehat{\theta}_n^*$  may vary a lot with estimation errors of  $\widehat{P}_n$ .



• One solution: introduce (distributional) robustness.



Introduction

- One solution: introduce (distributional) robustness.
- The population robust risk minimization:

$$\min_{\theta} \sup_{D(Q||P) \le \rho} \mathbb{E}_{Q} f(X; \theta); \text{ minimizer: } \theta_{r}^{*}.$$

- One solution: introduce (distributional) robustness.
- The population robust risk minimization:

$$\min_{\theta} \sup_{D(Q||P) \le \rho} \mathbb{E}_Q f(X; \theta); \text{ minimizer: } \theta_r^*.$$

The empirical robust risk minimization:

$$\min_{\theta} \sup_{D(Q||\widehat{P}_n) \leq \rho} \mathbb{E}_Q f(X; \theta); \text{ minimizer: } \widehat{\theta}_r^*.$$

Introduction

- One solution: introduce (distributional) robustness.
- The population robust risk minimization:

$$\min_{\theta} \sup_{D(Q||P) \le \rho} \mathbb{E}_Q f(X; \theta); \text{ minimizer: } \theta_r^*.$$

The empirical robust risk minimization:

$$\min_{\theta} \sup_{D(Q \| \widehat{P}_n) \leq \rho} \mathbb{E}_Q f(X; \theta); \text{ minimizer: } \widehat{\theta}_r^*.$$

• Why  $\widehat{\theta}_r^*$  is less sensitive to randomness of  $\widehat{P}_n$ ?



Introduction

- One solution: introduce (distributional) robustness.
- The population robust risk minimization:

$$\min_{\theta} \sup_{D(Q||P) \le \rho} \mathbb{E}_{Q} f(X; \theta); \text{ minimizer: } \theta_{r}^{*}.$$

The empirical robust risk minimization:

$$\min_{\theta} \sup_{D(Q \| \widehat{P}_n) \leq \rho} \mathbb{E}_Q f(X; \theta); \text{ minimizer: } \widehat{\theta}_r^*.$$

- Why  $\widehat{\theta}_r^*$  is less sensitive to randomness of  $\widehat{P}_n$ ?
- Image  $\rho$  is super large, like infinity.



- 1 Introduction
- 2 Robust MDPs
- Statistical Results
- 4 Further Discussion



• Same parameters with MDPs:  $\langle S, A, P, R, \gamma \rangle$ .

- Same parameters with MDPs:  $\langle \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{A}, P, R, \gamma \rangle$ .
- Additional parameters: uncertainty set  $\mathcal{P}$ .



## Robust Markov Decision Processes

- Same parameters with MDPs:  $\langle \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{A}, P, R, \gamma \rangle$ .
- ullet Additional parameters: uncertainty set  ${\cal P}.$
- Robust value function:

$$V_r^{\pi}(s) := \inf_{P \in \mathcal{P}} V_P^{\pi}(s).$$

- Same parameters with MDPs:  $\langle \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{A}, P, R, \gamma \rangle$ .
- Additional parameters: uncertainty set  $\mathcal{P}$ .
- Robust value function:

$$V_r^{\pi}(s) := \inf_{P \in \mathcal{P}} V_P^{\pi}(s).$$

• Robust Bellman operator  $\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}$ :

$$\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V = R^{\pi} + \gamma \inf_{P \in \mathcal{P}} P^{\pi}V.$$

Introduction

### Robust Markov Decision Processes

- Same parameters with MDPs:  $\langle \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{A}, P, R, \gamma \rangle$ .
- ullet Additional parameters: uncertainty set  ${\cal P}.$
- Robust value function:

$$V_r^{\pi}(s) := \inf_{P \in \mathcal{P}} V_P^{\pi}(s).$$

• Robust Bellman operator  $\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}$ :

$$\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V = R^{\pi} + \gamma \inf_{P \in \mathcal{P}} P^{\pi}V.$$

• Optimal robust Bellman operator  $\mathcal{T}_r$ :

$$\mathcal{T}_r V = \max_{\pi} R^{\pi} + \gamma \inf_{P \in \mathcal{P}} P^{\pi} V.$$



- Same parameters with MDPs:  $\langle \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{A}, P, R, \gamma \rangle$ .
- Additional parameters: uncertainty set  $\mathcal{P}$ .
- Robust value function:

$$V_r^{\pi}(s) := \inf_{P \in \mathcal{P}} V_P^{\pi}(s).$$

• Robust Bellman operator  $\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}$ :

$$\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V = R^{\pi} + \gamma \inf_{P \in \mathcal{P}} P^{\pi}V.$$

• Optimal robust Bellman operator  $\mathcal{T}_r$ :

$$\mathcal{T}_r V = \max_{\pi} R^{\pi} + \gamma \inf_{P \in \mathcal{P}} P^{\pi} V.$$

• Both are  $\gamma$ -contraction. Fixed points are  $V_r^{\pi}$  and  $V_r^* = \max_{\pi} V_r^{\pi}$ .

Introduction

• Can we choose an arbitrary  $\mathcal{P}$ ?



- - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]

• Can we choose an arbitrary  $\mathcal{P}$ ?



- Can we choose an arbitrary  $\mathcal{P}$ ?
  - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]
- [WKR13] Most common assumption on  $\mathcal{P}$ :

- Can we choose an arbitrary  $\mathcal{P}$ ?
  - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]
- [WKR13] Most common assumption on  $\mathcal{P}$ :
  - (s, a)-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s, a} \mathcal{P}_{s, a}$ .

- Can we choose an arbitrary  $\mathcal{P}$ ?
  - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]
- [WKR13] Most common assumption on  $\mathcal{P}$ :
  - (s, a)-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s, a} \mathcal{P}_{s, a}$ .
  - s-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s} \mathcal{P}_{s}$ .

- Can we choose an arbitrary  $\mathcal{P}$ ?
  - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]
- [WKR13] Most common assumption on  $\mathcal{P}$ :
  - (s, a)-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s, a} \mathcal{P}_{s, a}$ .
  - s-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_s \mathcal{P}_s$ .
- Example: *f*-divergence set:

- Can we choose an arbitrary  $\mathcal{P}$ ?
  - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]
- [WKR13] Most common assumption on  $\mathcal{P}$ :
  - (s, a)-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s, a} \mathcal{P}_{s, a}$ .
  - s-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_s \mathcal{P}_s$ .
- Example: f-divergence set:
  - $\mathcal{P}_{s,a} = \{Q_{s,a} \in \Delta(\mathcal{S}) | \sum_{s' \in \mathcal{S}} f(\frac{Q_{s,a}(s')}{P_{s,s}(s')}) P_{s,a}(s') \leq \rho\}.$

- Can we choose an arbitrary P?
  - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]
- [WKR13] Most common assumption on P:
  - (s, a)-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s, a} \mathcal{P}_{s, a}$ .
  - s-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_s \mathcal{P}_s$ .
- Example: f-divergence set:
  - $\mathcal{P}_{s,a} = \{Q_{s,a} \in \Delta(\mathcal{S}) | \sum_{s' \in \mathcal{S}} f(\frac{Q_{s,a}(s')}{P_{s,a}(s')}) P_{s,a}(s') \leq \rho\}.$
  - $\mathcal{P}_s = \{Q_{s,a} \in \Delta(\mathcal{S}) | \sum_{a \in A} \int_{s' \in \mathcal{S}} f(\frac{Q_{s,a}(s')}{P_{s,a}(s')}) P_{s,a}(s') \leq |\mathcal{A}| \rho \}.$

- Can we choose an arbitrary P?
  - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]
- [WKR13] Most common assumption on P:
  - (s, a)-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s,a} \mathcal{P}_{s,a}$ .
  - s-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s} \mathcal{P}_{s}$ .
- Example: f-divergence set:
  - $\mathcal{P}_{s,a} = \{Q_{s,a} \in \Delta(\mathcal{S}) | \sum_{s' \in \mathcal{S}} f(\frac{Q_{s,a}(s')}{P_{s,a}(s')}) P_{s,a}(s') \leq \rho\}.$
  - $\mathcal{P}_s = \{Q_{s,a} \in \Delta(\mathcal{S}) | \sum_{a \in \mathcal{A}, s' \in \mathcal{S}} f(\frac{Q_{s,a}(s')}{P_{s,a}(s')}) P_{s,a}(s') \le |\mathcal{A}| \rho\}.$
- [WKR13] Optimal polices  $\pi_r^* \in \arg\max_{\pi} V_r^{\pi}$ :



- Can we choose an arbitrary  $\mathcal{P}$ ?
  - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]
- [WKR13] Most common assumption on  $\mathcal{P}$ :
  - (s, a)-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s, a} \mathcal{P}_{s, a}$ .
  - s-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_s \mathcal{P}_s$ .
- Example: *f*-divergence set:
  - $\mathcal{P}_{s,a} = \{Q_{s,a} \in \Delta(\mathcal{S}) | \sum_{s' \in \mathcal{S}} f(\frac{Q_{s,a}(s')}{P_{s,a}(s')}) P_{s,a}(s') \leq \rho\}.$
  - $\mathcal{P}_{s} = \{Q_{s,a} \in \Delta(\mathcal{S}) | \sum_{a \in \mathcal{A}, s' \in \mathcal{S}} f(\frac{Q_{s,a}(s')}{P_{s,a}(s')}) P_{s,a}(s') \leq |\mathcal{A}| \rho \}.$
- [WKR13] Optimal polices  $\pi_r^* \in \arg \max_{\pi} V_r^{\pi}$ :
  - Stationary, deterministic under (s, a)-rectangular assumption.



- Can we choose an arbitrary P?
  - No! It may be NP hard.[WKR13]
- [WKR13] Most common assumption on  $\mathcal{P}$ :
  - (s, a)-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s,a} \mathcal{P}_{s,a}$ .
  - s-rectangular:  $\mathcal{P} = \bigotimes_{s} \mathcal{P}_{s}$ .
- Example: f-divergence set:
  - $\mathcal{P}_{s,a} = \{Q_{s,a} \in \Delta(\mathcal{S}) | \sum_{s' \in \mathcal{S}} f(\frac{Q_{s,a}(s')}{P_{s,a}(s')}) P_{s,a}(s') \le \rho\}.$
  - $\mathcal{P}_s = \{Q_{s,a} \in \Delta(\mathcal{S}) | \sum_{a \in \mathcal{A}, s' \in \mathcal{S}} f(\frac{Q_{s,a}(s')}{P_{s,a}(s')}) P_{s,a}(s') \le |\mathcal{A}| \rho\}.$
- [WKR13] Optimal polices  $\pi_r^* \in \arg \max_{\pi} V_r^{\pi}$ :
  - Stationary, deterministic under (s, a)-rectangular assumption.
  - Stationary, stochastic under s-rectangular assumption.



- 2 Robust MDPs
- 3 Statistical Results
  Non-asymptotic Results
  Asymptotic Results
- 4 Further Discussion
- 5 Reference



# Data Generation Mechanism

## Data Generation Mechanism

• P is always unknown!



### Data Generation Mechanism

- P is always unknown!
- Generative model: for each (s, a), we obtain n samples  $\{X_i^{(s,a)}\}_{i=1}^n \sim P_{s,a}(\cdot)$ .



Introduction

#### Data Generation Mechanism

- P is always unknown!
- Generative model: for each (s, a), we obtain n samples  $\{X_i^{(s,a)}\}_{i=1}^n \sim P_{s,a}(\cdot).$
- Estimation of  $P: \widehat{P}_{s,a}(s') = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathbb{1}(X_i^{(s,a)} = s').$



Introduction

#### Data Generation Mechanism

- P is always unknown!
- Generative model: for each (s, a), we obtain n samples  $\{X_i^{(s,a)}\}_{i=1}^n \sim P_{s,a}(\cdot).$
- Estimation of  $P: \widehat{P}_{s,a}(s') = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathbb{1}(X_i^{(s,a)} = s').$
- $\widehat{\mathcal{P}} \to \mathcal{P}$ ,  $\widehat{V}_r^{\pi} \to V_r^{\pi}$ ,  $\widehat{V}_r^* \to V_r^*$ .



Introduction

- 1 Introduction
- 3 Statistical Results Non-asymptotic Results
- 4 Further Discussion



# Prior Results

#### Prior Results

 $\bullet$  How many samples are sufficient to guarantee

$$\|V_r^* - \widehat{V}_r^*\|_{\infty} \le \varepsilon$$
?

Introduction

#### Prior Results

How many samples are sufficient to guarantee

$$\|V_r^* - \widehat{V}_r^*\|_{\infty} \le \varepsilon$$
?

• [ZBZ<sup>+</sup>21]: (s, a)-rectangular,  $f(t) = t \log t$  (KL set), number of samples  $\widetilde{\mathcal{O}}\left(\frac{|\mathcal{S}|^3|\mathcal{A}|\exp(\frac{1}{\beta(1-\gamma)})}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma)^2\rho^2}\right)$ .

#### Prior Results

How many samples are sufficient to guarantee

$$\|V_r^* - \widehat{V}_r^*\|_{\infty} \le \varepsilon$$
?

- [ZBZ<sup>+</sup>21]: (s, a)-rectangular,  $f(t) = t \log t$  (KL set), number of samples  $\widetilde{\mathcal{O}}\left(\frac{|\mathcal{S}|^3|\mathcal{A}|\exp(\frac{1}{\beta(1-\gamma)})}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma)^2\rho^2}\right)$ .
- It is counter-intuitive...



### Lower Bound

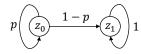
#### Lower Bound

• A classic example with 2 states, 1 action:



#### Lower Bound

• A classic example with 2 states, 1 action:



#### Lower Bound

• A classic example with 2 states, 1 action:

$$p$$
  $z_0$   $z_1$ 

• Robust value function:  $V_r^*(z_0) = \frac{1}{1 - \gamma g(p)}$ ,

#### Lower Bound

• A classic example with 2 states, 1 action:

$$p$$
  $z_0$   $1-p$   $z_1$   $z_1$ 

• Robust value function:  $V_r^*(z_0) = \frac{1}{1-\gamma g(p)}$ , where  $g(p) = \inf_{D_f(q\parallel p) \leq \rho} q$  and  $D_f(q\parallel p) = pf(p/q) + (1-p)f(1-p/1-q)$ .



# Lower bound

#### Lower bound

• Consider a perturbation from p to  $p + \delta$ :



#### Lower bound

• Consider a perturbation from p to  $p + \delta$ :

$$\frac{1}{1-\gamma g(p+\delta)}-\frac{1}{1-\gamma g(p)}\geq \frac{\gamma \delta g'(p)}{(1-\gamma g(p))^2}=2\varepsilon.$$

Introduction

#### Lower bound

Consider a perturbation from p to  $p + \delta$ :

$$\frac{1}{1 - \gamma g(p + \delta)} - \frac{1}{1 - \gamma g(p)} \ge \frac{\gamma \delta g'(p)}{(1 - \gamma g(p))^2} = 2\varepsilon.$$

• [AMK13] told us  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{p(1-p)g'(p)^2}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma g(p))^4}\right)$ .



Introduction

#### Lower bound

Consider a perturbation from p to  $p + \delta$ :

$$\frac{1}{1-\gamma g(p+\delta)}-\frac{1}{1-\gamma g(p)}\geq \frac{\gamma \delta g'(p)}{(1-\gamma g(p))^2}=2\varepsilon.$$

- [AMK13] told us  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{p(1-p)g'(p)^2}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma g(p))^4}\right)$ .
- f(t) = |t-1|,



Introduction

#### Lower bound

Consider a perturbation from p to  $p + \delta$ :

$$\frac{1}{1 - \gamma g(p + \delta)} - \frac{1}{1 - \gamma g(p)} \ge \frac{\gamma \delta g'(p)}{(1 - \gamma g(p))^2} = 2\varepsilon.$$

- [AMK13] told us  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{p(1-p)g'(p)^2}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma g(p))^4}\right)$ .
- $f(t) = |t-1|, g(p) = p \rho/2,$



#### Lower bound

Consider a perturbation from p to  $p + \delta$ :

$$\frac{1}{1-\gamma g(p+\delta)}-\frac{1}{1-\gamma g(p)}\geq \frac{\gamma \delta g'(p)}{(1-\gamma g(p))^2}=2\varepsilon.$$

- [AMK13] told us  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{p(1-p)g'(p)^2}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma g(p))^4}\right)$ .
- f(t) = |t-1|,  $g(p) = p \rho/2$ ,  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{1-\gamma}{\varepsilon^2}\min\{\frac{1}{(1-\gamma)^4},\frac{1}{\rho^4}\}\right)$ .

#### Lower bound

• Consider a perturbation from p to  $p + \delta$ :

$$\frac{1}{1 - \gamma g(p + \delta)} - \frac{1}{1 - \gamma g(p)} \ge \frac{\gamma \delta g'(p)}{(1 - \gamma g(p))^2} = 2\varepsilon.$$

- [AMK13] told us  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{p(1-p)g'(p)^2}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma g(p))^4}\right)$ .
- f(t) = |t-1|,  $g(p) = p \rho/2$ ,  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{1-\gamma}{\varepsilon^2}\min\{\frac{1}{(1-\gamma)^4},\frac{1}{\rho^4}\}\right)$ .
- $f(t) = (t-1)^2$ ,



#### Lower bound

• Consider a perturbation from p to  $p + \delta$ :

$$\frac{1}{1 - \gamma g(p + \delta)} - \frac{1}{1 - \gamma g(p)} \ge \frac{\gamma \delta g'(p)}{(1 - \gamma g(p))^2} = 2\varepsilon.$$

- [AMK13] told us  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{p(1-p)g'(p)^2}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma g(p))^4}\right)$ .
- f(t) = |t-1|,  $g(p) = p \rho/2$ ,  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{1-\gamma}{\varepsilon^2}\min\{\frac{1}{(1-\gamma)^4}, \frac{1}{\rho^4}\}\right)$ .
- $f(t) = (t-1)^2$ ,  $g(p) = p - \sqrt{\rho p(1-p)}$ ,



#### Lower bound

Consider a perturbation from p to  $p + \delta$ :

$$\frac{1}{1-\gamma g(p+\delta)}-\frac{1}{1-\gamma g(p)}\geq \frac{\gamma \delta g'(p)}{(1-\gamma g(p))^2}=2\varepsilon.$$

- [AMK13] told us  $n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{p(1-p)g'(p)^2}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma g(p))^4}\right)$ .
- $f(t) = |t 1|, \ g(p) = p \rho/2, n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{1 \gamma}{\varepsilon^2} \min\{\frac{1}{(1 \gamma)^4}, \frac{1}{\rho^4}\}\right).$
- $f(t) = (t-1)^2$ .  $g(p) = p - \sqrt{\rho p(1-p)}, n = \widetilde{\Omega}\left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon^2(1-\gamma)^2}\min\{\frac{1}{1-\gamma},\frac{1}{\rho}\}\right).$



# Upper bound

# Upper bound

• Okay...How about upper bound?



Introduction

# Upper bound

- Okay...How about upper bound?
- No explicit expression of  $V_r^*$ ...



### Upper bound

- Okay...How about upper bound?
- No explicit expression of  $V_r^*$ ...
- Let's take advantage of robust Bellman operator:



Introduction

## Upper bound

- Okay...How about upper bound?
- No explicit expression of V<sub>r</sub><sup>\*</sup>...
- Let's take advantage of robust Bellman operator:

$$\|V_r^* - \widehat{V}_r^*\|_{\infty} \leq \frac{1}{1-\gamma} \sup_{\pi \in \Pi, V \in [0,1/1-\gamma]^{|\mathcal{S}|}} \|\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V - \widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V\|_{\infty}.$$



# Upper bound

- Okay...How about upper bound?
- No explicit expression of V<sub>r</sub><sup>\*</sup>...
- Let's take advantage of robust Bellman operator:

$$\|V_r^* - \widehat{V}_r^*\|_{\infty} \leq \frac{1}{1-\gamma} \sup_{\pi \in \Pi, V \in [0,1/1-\gamma]^{|\mathcal{S}|}} \|\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V - \widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V\|_{\infty}.$$

Uniform analysis on V can be unnecessary. But no harm!



## Upper bound

- Okay...How about upper bound?
- No explicit expression of V<sub>r</sub><sup>\*</sup>...
- Let's take advantage of robust Bellman operator:

$$\|V_r^* - \widehat{V}_r^*\|_{\infty} \leq \frac{1}{1-\gamma} \sup_{\pi \in \Pi, V \in [0,1/1-\gamma]^{|\mathcal{S}|}} \|\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V - \widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V\|_{\infty}.$$

 Uniform analysis on V can be unnecessary. But no harm!  $\log \mathcal{N}(\Pi, \|\cdot\|_1) \approx \log \mathcal{N}([0, 1/1 - \gamma]^{|\mathcal{S}|}, \|\cdot\|_{\infty}) \approx \Theta(|\mathcal{S}|).$ 



Further Discussion

Introduction

# Upper bound

• For any fixed  $\pi$ , V, we need concentration inequality to bound  $\|\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V - \widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V\|_{\infty}$ .



## Upper bound

- For any fixed  $\pi$ , V, we need concentration inequality to bound  $\|\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V - \widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V\|_{\infty}$ .
- How...? Randomness is hidden in the constraints.



# Upper bound

- For any fixed  $\pi$ , V, we need concentration inequality to bound  $\|\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V - \widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V\|_{\infty}$ .
- How...? Randomness is hidden in the constraints. Try dual.



## Upper bound

- For any fixed  $\pi$ , V, we need concentration inequality to bound  $\|\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V \widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V\|_{\infty}$ .
- How...? Randomness is hidden in the constraints. Try dual. By [Sha17]:

## Upper bound

- For any fixed  $\pi$ , V, we need concentration inequality to bound  $\|\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V \widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V\|_{\infty}$ .
- How...? Randomness is hidden in the constraints. Try dual. By [Sha17]:

$$(P)\inf_{D_f(Q||P)\leq\rho}\sum_sQ(s)V(s).$$

$$(D) \sup_{\lambda \geq 0, \eta \in \mathbb{R}} -\lambda \sum_{s} { extstyle P(s)} f^*(rac{\eta - V(s)}{\lambda}) - \lambda 
ho + \eta.$$

# Upper bound

- For any fixed  $\pi$ , V, we need concentration inequality to bound  $\|\mathcal{T}_{r}^{\pi}V-\widehat{\mathcal{T}}_{r}^{\pi}V\|_{\infty}$
- How...? Randomness is hidden in the constraints. Try dual. By [Sha17]:

$$(P) \inf_{D_f(Q\|P) \le \rho} \sum_s Q(s) V(s).$$
 $(D) \sup_{\lambda > 0, \eta \in \mathbb{R}} -\lambda \sum_s P(s) f^*(\frac{\eta - V(s)}{\lambda}) - \lambda \rho + \eta.$ 

Next: calculations...



Non-asymptotic Results

# Upper bound

• Consider three f: |t-1|,  $(t-1)^2$ ,  $t \log t$ , in (s, a)-rectangular assumption.

Non-asymptotic Results

Introduction

- Consider three  $f: |t-1|, (t-1)^2, t \log t$ , in (s, a)-rectangular assumption.
- Upper bound  $\widetilde{\mathcal{O}}\left(\frac{|\mathcal{S}|^2|\mathcal{A}|}{\varepsilon^2\rho^2(1-\gamma)^4}\right)$ .



Non-asymptotic Results

Introduction

- Consider three  $f: |t-1|, (t-1)^2, t \log t$ , in (s, a)-rectangular assumption.
- Upper bound  $\widetilde{\mathcal{O}}\left(\frac{|\mathcal{S}|^2|\mathcal{A}|}{\varepsilon^2\rho^2(1-\gamma)^4}\right)$ .
- For  $f(t) = t \log t$ , an additional parameter  $(\min_{P^*(s'|s,a)>0} P^*(s'|s,a))^{-1}.$



- Consider three f: |t-1|,  $(t-1)^2$ ,  $t \log t$ , in (s, a)-rectangular assumption.
- Upper bound  $\widetilde{\mathcal{O}}\left(\frac{|\mathcal{S}|^2|\mathcal{A}|}{\varepsilon^2\rho^2(1-\gamma)^4}\right)$ .
- For  $f(t) = t \log t$ , an additional parameter  $(\min_{P^*(s'|s,a)>0} P^*(s'|s,a))^{-1}$ .
- Wait... Why infinity when  $\rho \rightarrow 0$ ?



- Consider three  $f: |t-1|, (t-1)^2, t \log t$ , in (s, a)-rectangular assumption.
- Upper bound  $\widetilde{\mathcal{O}}\left(\frac{|\mathcal{S}|^2|\mathcal{A}|}{\varepsilon^2\rho^2(1-\gamma)^4}\right)$ .
- For  $f(t) = t \log t$ , an additional parameter  $(\min_{P^*(s'|s,a)>0} P^*(s'|s,a))^{-1}$ .
- Wait... Why infinity when  $\rho \to 0$ ?
- By fact  $V_r^* o V^*$  when ho o 0, alternative bound:

$$\|V_r^* - \widehat{V}_r^*\|_{\infty} \leq \mathcal{O}\left(\frac{h(
ho)}{(1-\gamma)^2}\right) + \widetilde{\mathcal{O}}\left(\sqrt{\frac{|\mathcal{S}|}{(1-\gamma)^4 n}}\right).$$



- 1 Introduction
- 3 Statistical Results Asymptotic Results
- 4 Further Discussion



### Asymptotic Normality

• Confidence length of non-asymptotic results is  $O_P(\sqrt{\log n/n})$ .



- Confidence length of non-asymptotic results is  $O_P(\sqrt{\log n/n})$ .
- The non-asymptotic upper bound is not tight.



- Confidence length of non-asymptotic results is  $O_P(\sqrt{\log n/n})$ .
- The non-asymptotic upper bound is not tight.
- In large sample regime, rate of  $||V_r^* \widehat{V}_r^*||_{\infty}$  is  $O_P(1/\sqrt{n})$ .



#### Asymptotic Normality

- Confidence length of non-asymptotic results is  $O_P(\sqrt{\log n/n})$ .
- The non-asymptotic upper bound is not tight.
- In large sample regime, rate of  $||V_r^* \widehat{V}_r^*||_{\infty}$  is  $O_P(1/\sqrt{n})$ .
- Fix a  $\pi$ , by CLT and delta method:

$$\sqrt{n}(\widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V_r^{\pi}-\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V_r^{\pi})\stackrel{d}{\to} \mathcal{N}(0,\Lambda^{\pi}).$$

#### Asymptotic Normality

- Confidence length of non-asymptotic results is  $O_P(\sqrt{\log n/n})$ .
- The non-asymptotic upper bound is not tight.
- In large sample regime, rate of  $||V_r^* \widehat{V}_r^*||_{\infty}$  is  $O_P(1/\sqrt{n})$ .
- Fix a  $\pi$ , by CLT and delta method:

$$\sqrt{n}(\widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V_r^{\pi}-\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V_r^{\pi})\stackrel{d}{\to}\mathcal{N}(0,\Lambda^{\pi}).$$

• LHS =  $-\widehat{M}^{\pi} \cdot \sqrt{n}(V_r^{\pi} - \widehat{V}_r^{\pi}) + o_P(\sqrt{n} \|\widehat{V}_r^{\pi} - V_r^{\pi}\|_{\infty})$ , where  $\widehat{M}^{\pi}$  is the derivative of functional  $I - \widehat{T}_r^{\pi}$  at  $V_r^{\pi}$ .

- Confidence length of non-asymptotic results is  $O_P(\sqrt{\log n/n})$ .
- The non-asymptotic upper bound is not tight.
- In large sample regime, rate of  $\|V_r^* \widehat{V}_r^*\|_{\infty}$  is  $O_P(1/\sqrt{n})$ .
- Fix a  $\pi$ , by CLT and delta method:

$$\sqrt{n}(\widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V_r^{\pi}-\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V_r^{\pi})\stackrel{d}{\to}\mathcal{N}(0,\Lambda^{\pi}).$$

- LHS =  $-\widehat{M}^{\pi} \cdot \sqrt{n}(V_r^{\pi} \widehat{V}_r^{\pi}) + o_P(\sqrt{n} \|\widehat{V}_r^{\pi} V_r^{\pi}\|_{\infty})$ , where  $\widehat{M}^{\pi}$  is the derivative of functional  $I \widehat{T}_r^{\pi}$  at  $V_r^{\pi}$ .
- Notice  $\sqrt{n}(V_r^{\pi}-\widehat{V}_r^{\pi})=O_P(1)$  and prove  $\widehat{M}^{\pi}$  is consistent to  $M^{\pi}$ :



- Confidence length of non-asymptotic results is  $O_P(\sqrt{\log n/n})$ .
- The non-asymptotic upper bound is not tight.
- In large sample regime, rate of  $\|V_r^* \widehat{V}_r^*\|_{\infty}$  is  $O_P(1/\sqrt{n})$ .
- Fix a  $\pi$ , by CLT and delta method:

$$\sqrt{n}(\widehat{\mathcal{T}}_r^{\pi}V_r^{\pi}-\mathcal{T}_r^{\pi}V_r^{\pi})\stackrel{d}{\to}\mathcal{N}(0,\Lambda^{\pi}).$$

- LHS =  $-\widehat{M}^{\pi} \cdot \sqrt{n}(V_r^{\pi} \widehat{V}_r^{\pi}) + o_P(\sqrt{n} \|\widehat{V}_r^{\pi} V_r^{\pi}\|_{\infty})$ , where  $\widehat{M}^{\pi}$  is the derivative of functional  $I \widehat{T}_r^{\pi}$  at  $V_r^{\pi}$ .
- Notice  $\sqrt{n}(V_r^{\pi} \widehat{V}_r^{\pi}) = O_P(1)$  and prove  $\widehat{M}^{\pi}$  is consistent to  $M^{\pi}$ :

$$\sqrt{n}(\widehat{V}_r^{\pi} - V_r^{\pi}) \stackrel{d}{\to} \mathcal{N}(0, (M^{\pi})^{-1} \Lambda^{\pi} (M^{\pi})^{-\top}).$$



Asymptotic Results



Further Discussion

Asymptotic Results

# Asymptotic Normality

• What about  $\sqrt{n}(\widehat{V}_r^* - V_r^*)$ ?



# Asymptotic Normality

- What about  $\sqrt{n}(\widehat{V}_r^* V_r^*)$ ?
- Need uniqueness assumption of  $\pi^* \in \arg\max V_r^{\pi}$ .

- What about  $\sqrt{n}(\widehat{V}_r^* V_r^*)$ ?
- Need uniqueness assumption of  $\pi^* \in \arg\max V_r^{\pi}$ . And replace  $\pi$  with  $\pi^*$ .

- What about  $\sqrt{n}(\widehat{V}_r^* V_r^*)$ ?
- Need uniqueness assumption of  $\pi^* \in \arg\max V_r^\pi$ . And replace  $\pi$  with  $\pi^*$ .
- If not. Still  $\sqrt{n}$  rate, but not asymptotic normal.



Asymptotic Results

Introduction

#### Asymptotic Normality

- What about  $\sqrt{n}(\hat{V}_r^* V_r^*)$ ?
- Need uniqueness assumption of  $\pi^* \in \arg\max V_r^{\pi}$ . And replace  $\pi$  with  $\pi^*$ .
- If not. Still  $\sqrt{n}$  rate, but not asymptotic normal. The asymptotic distribution be like:

$$\bigvee_{\pi\in\Pi^*}\mathcal{N}(0,(M^\pi)^{-1}\Lambda^\pi(M^\pi)^{-\top}),$$

where  $x \lor y = \max\{x, y\}$ .



### Asymptotic Normality

- What about  $\sqrt{n}(\widehat{V}_r^* V_r^*)$ ?
- Need uniqueness assumption of  $\pi^* \in \arg\max V_r^{\pi}$ . And replace  $\pi$  with  $\pi^*$ .
- If not. Still  $\sqrt{n}$  rate, but not asymptotic normal. The asymptotic distribution be like:

$$\bigvee_{\pi \in \Pi^*} \mathcal{N}(0, (M^{\pi})^{-1} \Lambda^{\pi} (M^{\pi})^{-\top}),$$

where  $x \vee y = \max\{x, y\}$ .

How to do inference?



Further Discussion

- Statistical Results
- 4 Further Discussion



0

#### Discussion

#### Discussion

 How to construct an efficient robust estimator in linear MDPs?



- How to construct an efficient robust estimator in linear MDPs?
- E.g.  $P = \Phi \theta$ ,  $\Phi \in \mathbb{R}_+^{|\mathcal{S}||\mathcal{A}| \times r}$  is known and  $\theta \in \mathbb{R}_+^{r \times |\mathcal{S}|}$  is unknown. Offline dataset with coverage rate  $\sigma$ .



#### Discussion

- How to construct an efficient robust estimator in linear MDPs?
- E.g.  $P = \Phi \theta$ ,  $\Phi \in \mathbb{R}_+^{|\mathcal{S}||\mathcal{A}| \times r}$  is known and  $\theta \in \mathbb{R}_+^{r \times |\mathcal{S}|}$  is unknown. Offline dataset with coverage rate  $\sigma$ .
  - Estimation of  $\theta$  may be dependent on |S|.



#### Discussion

- How to construct an efficient robust estimator in linear MDPs?
- E.g.  $P = \Phi \theta$ ,  $\Phi \in \mathbb{R}_{+}^{|S||A| \times r}$  is known and  $\theta \in \mathbb{R}_{+}^{r \times |S|}$  is unknown. Offline dataset with coverage rate  $\sigma$ .
  - Estimation of  $\theta$  may be dependent on |S|.
  - Least squares:  $\mathbb{E}\|\widehat{\theta} \theta\|_2^2 \leq \mathcal{O}(\sqrt{\frac{|\mathcal{S}|r^{5/2}}{n\sigma^2}})$ . (Can we reduce it?)
- Currently the methods are model-based.  $(\mathcal{O}(|\mathcal{S}|^2|\mathcal{A}|))$  memory space).

- How to construct an efficient robust estimator in linear MDPs?
- E.g.  $P = \Phi \theta$ ,  $\Phi \in \mathbb{R}_{+}^{|S||A| \times r}$  is known and  $\theta \in \mathbb{R}_{+}^{r \times |S|}$  is unknown. Offline dataset with coverage rate  $\sigma$ .
  - Estimation of  $\theta$  may be dependent on |S|.
  - Least squares:  $\mathbb{E}\|\widehat{\theta} \theta\|_2^2 \leq \mathcal{O}(\sqrt{\frac{|\mathcal{S}|r^{5/2}}{n\sigma^2}})$ . (Can we reduce it?)
- Currently the methods are model-based. ( $\mathcal{O}(|\mathcal{S}|^2|\mathcal{A}|)$ ) memory space). Can we derive a model-free algorithm? (Tadashi and I are working on it.)



- 1 Introduction
- 2 Robust MDPs
- 3 Statistical Results
- 4 Further Discussion
- **5** Reference



- [AMK13] Mohammad Gheshlaghi Azar, Rémi Munos, and Hilbert J Kappen.
   Minimax pac bounds on the sample complexity of reinforcement learning with a generative model.
   Machine learning, 91(3):325–349, 2013.
- [Sha17] Alexander Shapiro.
  Distributionally robust stochastic programming.

  SIAM Journal on Optimization, 27(4):2258–2275, 2017.
- [WKR13] Wolfram Wiesemann, Daniel Kuhn, and Berç Rustem. Robust markov decision processes.

  Mathematics of Operations Research, 38(1):153–183, 2013.



[ZBZ+21] Zhengqing Zhou, Qinxun Bai, Zhengyuan Zhou, Linhai Qiu, Jose Blanchet, and Peter Glynn.
Finite-sample regret bound for distributionally robust offline tabular reinforcement learning.
In Proceedings of The 24th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics, pages 3331–3339, 2021.

Thanks!