

556: MATHEMATICAL STATISTICS I

STOCHASTIC CONVERGENCE

The following definitions relate to random variables defined on the same probability space (Ω, \mathcal{F}, P) . The statements are given in terms of P (rather than P_X etc) for simplicity.

- **Convergence in Probability:** The sequence of random variables X_1, \dots, X_n **converges in probability** to constant c , denoted

$$X_n \xrightarrow{P} c$$

if

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|X_n - c| < \epsilon] = 1 \quad \text{or} \quad \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|X_n - c| \geq \epsilon] = 0$$

that is, if the limiting distribution of X_1, \dots, X_n is **degenerate at c** .

Weak Law Of Large Numbers: Suppose that X_1, \dots, X_n is a sequence of i.i.d. random variables with expectation μ and finite variance σ^2 . Let \bar{X}_n be the sample mean. Then, for all $\epsilon > 0$,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|\bar{X}_n - \mu| < \epsilon] = 1,$$

that is, $\bar{X}_n \xrightarrow{P} \mu$, and thus the mean of X_1, \dots, X_n converges in probability to μ . We have seen that \bar{X}_n has expectation μ and variance σ^2/n , and hence by the Chebychev Inequality,

$$P[|\bar{X}_n - \mu| \geq \epsilon] \leq \frac{\sigma^2}{n\epsilon^2} \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{as } n \rightarrow \infty$$

for all $\epsilon > 0$. Hence $\bar{X}_n \xrightarrow{P} \mu$ as

$$P[|\bar{X}_n - \mu| < \epsilon] \rightarrow 1 \quad \text{as } n \rightarrow \infty.$$

The sequence of random variables X_1, \dots, X_n **converges in probability** to random variable X

$$X_n \xrightarrow{P} X$$

if, for all $\epsilon > 0$,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|X_n - X| < \epsilon] = 1 \quad \text{or equivalently} \quad \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|X_n - X| \geq \epsilon] = 0$$

To understand this definition, let $\epsilon > 0$, and consider

$$A_n(\epsilon) \equiv \{\omega : |X_n(\omega) - X(\omega)| \geq \epsilon\}$$

Then we have $X_n \xrightarrow{P} X$ if

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P(A_n(\epsilon)) = 0$$

that is, if there exists an n such that for all $m \geq n$, $P(A_m(\epsilon)) < \epsilon$.

- **Convergence Almost Surely:** The sequence of random variables X_1, \dots, X_n **converges almost surely** to random variable X , denoted $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$ if for every $\epsilon > 0$

$$P\left[\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} |X_n - X| < \epsilon\right] = 1,$$

that is, if $A \equiv \{\omega : X_n(\omega) \rightarrow X(\omega)\}$, then $P(A) = 1$. Equivalently, $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$ if for every $\epsilon > 0$

$$P \left[\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} |X_n - X| \geq \epsilon \right] = 0.$$

This can also be written

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} X_n(\omega) = X(\omega)$$

for every $\omega \in \Omega$, except possibly those lying in a set of probability zero under P .

Alternative characterizations:

(I) Let $\epsilon > 0$, and the sets $A_m(\epsilon)$ and $B_n(\epsilon)$ be defined for $n, m \geq 1$ by

$$A_m(\epsilon) \equiv \{\omega : |X_m(\omega) - X(\omega)| \geq \epsilon\} \quad B_n(\epsilon) \equiv \bigcup_{m=n}^{\infty} A_m(\epsilon).$$

Then $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$ if and only if $P(B_n(\epsilon)) \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$.

- $A_m(\epsilon)$ is the set of ω for which $X_m(\omega)$ is at least ϵ away from X .
- $B_n(\epsilon)$ is the set of ω for which $X_m(\omega)$ at least ϵ away from X , for **at least one** $m \geq n$.
- The event $B_n(\epsilon)$ occurs **if there exists** an $m \geq n$ such that $|X_m - X| \geq \epsilon$.
- $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$ if and only if and only if $P(B_m(\epsilon)) \rightarrow 0$.

(II) $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$ if and only if

$$P[|X_n - X| \geq \epsilon \text{ infinitely often}] = 0$$

that is, $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$ if and only if there are **only finitely many** X_n for which $|X_n(\omega) - X(\omega)| \geq \epsilon$ if ω lies in a set of probability greater than zero.

Note that $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$ if and only if

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P(B_n(\epsilon)) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P \left(\bigcup_{m=n}^{\infty} A_m(\epsilon) \right) = 0$$

in contrast with the definition of convergence in probability, where $X_n \xrightarrow{p} X$ if

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P(A_n(\epsilon)) = 0.$$

Clearly

$$A_n(\epsilon) \subseteq \bigcup_{m=n}^{\infty} A_m(\epsilon)$$

so therefore

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P \left(\bigcup_{m=n}^{\infty} A_m(\epsilon) \right) = 0 \quad \implies \quad \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P(A_n(\epsilon)) = 0$$

and hence almost sure convergence implies convergence in probability.

Alternative terminology:

- $X_n \rightarrow X$ almost everywhere, $X_n \xrightarrow{a.e.} X$
- $X_n \rightarrow X$ with probability 1, $X_n \xrightarrow{w.p.1} X$

Interpretation: A random variable is a real-valued function from (a sigma-algebra defined on) sample space Ω to \mathbb{R} . The sequence of random variables X_1, \dots, X_n corresponds to a sequence of functions defined on elements of Ω . Almost sure convergence requires that the sequence of real numbers $X_n(\omega)$ converges to $X(\omega)$ (as a real sequence) for all $\omega \in \Omega$, as $n \rightarrow \infty$, except perhaps when ω is in a set having probability zero under the probability distribution of X .

Strong Law Of Large Numbers: Suppose that X_1, \dots, X_n is a sequence of i.i.d. random variables with expectation μ and (finite) variance σ^2 . Let \bar{X}_n be the sample mean. Then for all $\epsilon > 0$,

$$P \left[\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} |\bar{X}_n - \mu| < \epsilon \right] = 1,$$

that is, $\bar{X}_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} \mu$, and thus the mean of X_1, \dots, X_n converges almost surely to μ .

- **Convergence in Distribution:** Consider a sequence of random variables X_1, X_2, \dots and a corresponding sequence of cdfs, F_{X_1}, F_{X_2}, \dots so that for $n = 1, 2, \dots$ $F_{X_n}(x) = P[X_n \leq x]$. Suppose that there exists a cdf, F_X , such that **for all x at which F_X is continuous**,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} F_{X_n}(x) = F_X(x).$$

Then X_1, \dots, X_n **converges in distribution** to random variable X with cdf F_X , denoted

$$X_n \xrightarrow{d} X$$

and F_X is the **limiting distribution**. Convergence of a sequence of mgfs or cfs also indicates convergence in distribution, that is, if for all t at which $M_X(t)$ is defined, if as $n \rightarrow \infty$, we have

$$M_{X_i}(t) \rightarrow M_X(t) \iff X_n \xrightarrow{d} X.$$

The sequence of random variables X_1, \dots, X_n converges in distribution to constant c if the limiting distribution of X_1, \dots, X_n is **degenerate at c** , that is,

$$X_n \xrightarrow{d} X$$

and $P[X = c] = 1$, so that

$$F_X(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & x < c \\ 1 & x \geq c \end{cases}$$

Interpretation: This special case of convergence in distribution occurs when the limiting distribution is discrete, with the probability mass function only being non-zero at a single value, that is, if the limiting random variable is X , then $P[X = c] = 1$ and zero otherwise. We say that the sequence of random variables X_1, \dots, X_n **converges in distribution** to c if and only if, for all $\epsilon > 0$,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|X_n - c| < \epsilon] = 1$$

This definition indicates that convergence in distribution to a constant c occurs if and only if the probability becomes increasingly concentrated around c as $n \rightarrow \infty$.

To show that we should ignore points of discontinuity of F_X in the definition of convergence in distribution, consider the following example: let

$$F_\epsilon(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & x < \epsilon \\ 1 & x \geq \epsilon \end{cases}$$

be the cdf of a degenerate distribution with probability mass 1 at $x = \epsilon$. Now consider a sequence $\{\epsilon_n\}$ of real values converging to ϵ from **below**. Then, as $\epsilon_n < \epsilon$, we have

$$F_{\epsilon_n}(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & x < \epsilon_n \\ 1 & x \geq \epsilon_n \end{cases}$$

which converges to $F_\epsilon(x)$ at all real values of x . However, if instead $\{\epsilon_n\}$ converges to ϵ from **above**, then $F_{\epsilon_n}(\epsilon) = 0$ for each finite n , as $\epsilon_n > \epsilon$, so $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} F_{\epsilon_n}(\epsilon) = 0$. Hence, as $n \rightarrow \infty$,

$$F_{\epsilon_n}(\epsilon) \rightarrow 0 \neq 1 = F_\epsilon(\epsilon).$$

Thus the limiting function in this case is

$$F_\epsilon(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & x \leq \epsilon \\ 1 & x > \epsilon \end{cases}$$

which is not a cdf as it is not right-continuous. However, if $\{X_n\}$ and X are random variables with distributions $\{F_{\epsilon_n}\}$ and F_ϵ , then $P[X_n = \epsilon_n] = 1$ converges to $P[X = \epsilon] = 1$, however we take the limit, so F_ϵ does describe the limiting distribution of the sequence $\{F_{\epsilon_n}\}$. Thus, because of right-continuity, we ignore points of discontinuity in the limiting function.

- **Convergence In r th Mean**

The sequence of random variables X_1, \dots, X_n **converges in r th mean** to random variable X , denoted $X_n \xrightarrow{r} X$ if

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^r] = 0.$$

For example, if

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{E}[(X_n - X)^2] = 0$$

then we write $X_n \xrightarrow{r=2} X$. In this case, we say that $\{X_n\}$ converges to X in *mean-square* or in *quadratic mean*. For $r_1 > r_2 \geq 1$,

$$X_n \xrightarrow{r=r_1} X \implies X_n \xrightarrow{r=r_2} X$$

as, by Lyapunov's inequality

$$\mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^{r_2}]^{1/r_2} \leq \mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^{r_1}]^{1/r_1} \quad \therefore \quad \mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^{r_2}] \leq \mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^{r_1}]^{r_2/r_1} \rightarrow 0$$

as $n \rightarrow \infty$, as $r_2 < r_1$. Thus

$$\mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^{r_2}] \rightarrow 0$$

and $X_n \xrightarrow{r=r_2} X$. The converse does not hold in general.

- **Relating The Modes Of Convergence** For sequence of random variables X_1, \dots, X_n ,

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X \\ \text{or} \\ X_n \xrightarrow{r} X \end{array} \right\} \implies X_n \xrightarrow{p} X \implies X_n \xrightarrow{d} X$$

so almost sure convergence and convergence in r th mean for some r both imply convergence in probability, which in turn implies convergence in distribution to random variable X .

No other relationships hold in general

- **Slutsky's Theorem:** Suppose that

$$X_n \xrightarrow{d} X \quad \text{and} \quad Y_n \xrightarrow{p} c$$

Then

- (i) $X_n + Y_n \xrightarrow{d} X + c$
 - (ii) $X_n Y_n \xrightarrow{d} cX$
 - (iii) $X_n/Y_n \xrightarrow{d} X/c$ provided $c \neq 0$.
- **The Central Limit Theorem:** Suppose X_1, \dots, X_n are i.i.d. random variables with mgf M_X , with expectation μ and variance σ^2 , both finite. Let the random variable Z_n be defined by

$$Z_n = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i - n\mu}{\sqrt{n\sigma^2}} = \frac{\sqrt{n}(\bar{X}_n - \mu)}{\sigma}$$

and denote by M_{Z_n} the mgf of Z_n . Then, as $n \rightarrow \infty$,

$$M_{Z_n}(t) \rightarrow \exp\{t^2/2\}$$

irrespective of the form of M_X . Thus, as $n \rightarrow \infty$, $Z_n \xrightarrow{d} Z \sim \text{Normal}(0, 1)$.

Proof. First, let $Y_i = (X_i - \mu)/\sigma$ for $i = 1, \dots, n$. Then Y_1, \dots, Y_n are i.i.d. with mgf M_Y say, and $\mathbb{E}_{f_Y}[Y_i] = 0$, $\text{Var}_Y[Y_i] = 1$ for each i . Using a Taylor series expansion, we have that for t in a neighbourhood of zero,

$$M_Y(t) = 1 + t\mathbb{E}_Y[Y] + \frac{t^2}{2!}\mathbb{E}_Y[Y^2] + \frac{t^3}{3!}\mathbb{E}_Y[Y^3] + \dots = 1 + \frac{t^2}{2} + \mathcal{O}(t^3)$$

using the $\mathcal{O}(t^3)$ notation to capture all terms involving t^3 and higher powers. Re-writing Z_n as

$$Z_n = \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \sum_{i=1}^n Y_i$$

as Y_1, \dots, Y_n are independent, we have by a standard mgf result that

$$M_{Z_n}(t) = \prod_{i=1}^n \left\{ M_Y \left(\frac{t}{\sqrt{n}} \right) \right\} = \left\{ 1 + \frac{t^2}{2n} + \mathcal{O}(n^{-3/2}) \right\}^n = \left\{ 1 + \frac{t^2}{2n} + \mathcal{o}(n^{-1}) \right\}^n.$$

so that, by the definition of the exponential function, as $n \rightarrow \infty$

$$M_{Z_n}(t) \rightarrow \exp\{t^2/2\} \quad \therefore \quad Z_n \xrightarrow{d} Z \sim \text{Normal}(0, 1)$$

where no further assumptions on M_X are required. ■

Alternative statement: The theorem can also be stated in terms of

$$Z_n = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i - n\mu}{\sqrt{n}} = \sqrt{n}(\bar{X}_n - \mu)$$

so that

$$Z_n \xrightarrow{d} Z \sim \text{Normal}(0, \sigma^2).$$

and σ^2 is termed the **asymptotic variance** of Z_n .

Notes :

- (i) The theorem requires the **existence of the mgf** M_X .
- (ii) The theorem holds for the i.i.d. case, but there are similar theorems for **non identically distributed**, and **dependent** random variables.
- (iii) The theorem allows the construction of **asymptotic normal approximations**. For example, for **large but finite** n , by using the properties of the Normal distribution,

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_n &\sim \mathcal{AN}(\mu, \sigma^2/n) \\ S_n = \sum_{i=1}^n X_i &\sim \mathcal{AN}(n\mu, n\sigma^2).\end{aligned}$$

where $\mathcal{AN}(\mu, \sigma^2)$ denotes an asymptotic normal distribution. The notation

$$\bar{X}_n \dot{\sim} \text{Normal}(\mu, \sigma^2/n)$$

is sometimes used.

- (iv) The **multivariate version** of this theorem can be stated as follows: Suppose $\mathbf{X}_1, \dots, \mathbf{X}_n$ are i.i.d. d -dimensional random variables with mgf $M_{\mathbf{X}}$, with

$$\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{X}}[\mathbf{X}_i] = \boldsymbol{\mu} \quad \text{Var}_{\mathbf{X}}[\mathbf{X}_i] = \Sigma$$

where Σ is a positive definite, symmetric $k \times k$ matrix defining the variance-covariance matrix of the $\bar{\mathbf{X}}_i$. Let the random variable \mathbf{Z}_n be defined by

$$\mathbf{Z}_n = \sqrt{n}(\bar{\mathbf{X}}_n - \boldsymbol{\mu})$$

where

$$\bar{\mathbf{X}}_n = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbf{X}_i.$$

Then

$$\mathbf{Z}_n \xrightarrow{d} \mathbf{Z} \sim \text{Normal}_d(\mathbf{0}, \Sigma)$$

as $n \rightarrow \infty$.

Appendix: Technical Details

Proof. Relating the modes of convergence.

(a) $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X \implies X_n \xrightarrow{p} X$. Suppose $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$, and let $\epsilon > 0$. Then

$$P[|X_n - X| < \epsilon] \geq P[|X_m - X| < \epsilon, \forall m \geq n] \quad (1)$$

as, considering the original sample space,

$$\{\omega : |X_m(\omega) - X(\omega)| < \epsilon, \forall m \geq n\} \subseteq \{\omega : |X_n(\omega) - X(\omega)| < \epsilon\}$$

But, as $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$, $P[|X_m - X| < \epsilon, \forall m \geq n] \rightarrow 1$, as $n \rightarrow \infty$. So, after taking limits in equation (1), we have

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|X_n - X| < \epsilon] \geq \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|X_m - X| < \epsilon, \forall m \geq n] = 1$$

and so

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|X_n - X| < \epsilon] = 1 \quad \therefore \quad X_n \xrightarrow{p} X.$$

(b) $X_n \xrightarrow{r} X \implies X_n \xrightarrow{p} X$. Suppose $X_n \xrightarrow{r} X$, and let $\epsilon > 0$. Then, using an argument similar to Chebychev's Lemma,

$$\mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^r] \geq \mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^r I_{\{|X_n - X| > \epsilon\}}] \geq \epsilon^r P[|X_n - X| > \epsilon].$$

Taking limits as $n \rightarrow \infty$, as $X_n \xrightarrow{r} X$, $\mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^r] \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$, so therefore

$$P[|X_n - X| > \epsilon] \rightarrow 0 \quad \therefore \quad X_n \xrightarrow{p} X.$$

(c) $X_n \xrightarrow{p} X \implies X_n \xrightarrow{d} X$. Suppose $X_n \xrightarrow{p} X$, and let $\epsilon > 0$. Denote, in the usual way,

$$F_{X_n}(x) = P[X_n \leq x] \quad \text{and} \quad F_X(x) = P[X \leq x].$$

Then, by the theorem of total probability, we have two inequalities

$$F_{X_n}(x) = P[X_n \leq x] = P[X_n \leq x, X \leq x + \epsilon] + P[X_n \leq x, X > x + \epsilon] \leq F_X(x + \epsilon) + P[|X_n - X| > \epsilon]$$

$$F_X(x - \epsilon) = P[X \leq x - \epsilon] = P[X \leq x - \epsilon, X_n \leq x] + P[X \leq x - \epsilon, X_n > x] \leq F_{X_n}(x) + P[|X_n - X| > \epsilon].$$

as $A \subseteq B \implies P(A) \leq P(B)$ yields

$$P[X_n \leq x, X \leq x + \epsilon] \leq F_X(x + \epsilon) \quad \text{and} \quad P[X \leq x - \epsilon, X_n \leq x] \leq F_{X_n}(x).$$

Thus

$$F_X(x - \epsilon) - P[|X_n - X| > \epsilon] \leq F_{X_n}(x) \leq F_X(x + \epsilon) + P[|X_n - X| > \epsilon]$$

and taking limits as $n \rightarrow \infty$ (with care; we cannot yet write $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} F_{X_n}(x)$ as we do not know that this limit exists) recalling that $X_n \xrightarrow{p} X$,

$$F_X(x - \epsilon) \leq \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} F_{X_n}(x) \leq \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} F_{X_n}(x) \leq F_X(x + \epsilon)$$

Then if F_X is continuous at x , $F_X(x - \epsilon) \rightarrow F_X(x)$ and $F_X(x + \epsilon) \rightarrow F_X(x)$ as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$, so

$$F_X(x) \leq \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} F_{X_n}(x) \leq \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} F_{X_n}(x) \leq F_X(x)$$

and thus $F_{X_n}(x) \rightarrow F_X(x)$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$.

Thus all results follow. ■

THEOREM (Partial Converses)

(i) If

$$\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} P[|X_n - X| > \epsilon] < \infty$$

for every $\epsilon > 0$, then $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$.

(ii) If, for some positive integer r ,

$$\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \mathbb{E}[|X_n - X|^r] < \infty$$

then $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$.

Proof. (i) Let $\epsilon > 0$. Then for $n \geq 1$,

$$P[|X_n - X| > \epsilon, \text{ for some } m \geq n] \equiv P\left[\bigcup_{m=n}^{\infty} \{|X_m - X| > \epsilon\}\right] \leq \sum_{m=n}^{\infty} P[|X_m - X| > \epsilon]$$

as, by elementary probability theory, $P(A \cup B) \leq P(A) + P(B)$. But, as it is the tail sum of a convergent series (by assumption), it follows that

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{m=n}^{\infty} P[|X_m - X| > \epsilon] = 0.$$

Hence

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P[|X_n - X| > \epsilon, \text{ for some } m \geq n] = 0$$

and $X_n \xrightarrow{a.s.} X$.

(ii) Identical to part (i), and using part (b) of the previous theorem that $X_n \xrightarrow{r} X \implies X_n \xrightarrow{p} X$.

Thus the partial converse results hold. ■