

STK2130 – Lecture 4

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Chapter 4 – Markov Chains

Section 4.4 – Long-Run Proportions and Limiting Probabilities

Recurrent and transient states

Let $\{X_n\}$ be a Markov chain with state space \mathcal{S} and transition probability matrix \mathbf{P} .

In the last lecture we considered the probabilities:

$$f_i = P\left(\bigcup_{r=1}^{\infty} \{X_r = i\} \mid X_0 = i\right), \quad i \in \mathcal{S}.$$

We then introduced the following concepts:

- State i is **recurrent** if $f_i = 1$.
- State i is **transient** if $f_i < 1$.

Section 4.4 Long-Run Proportions and Limiting Probabilities

For pairs of states $i \neq j$ we let f_{ij} denote the probability that the Markov chain, starting in state i , will ever make a transition into state j :

$$\begin{aligned} f_{ij} &= P(X_n = j \text{ for some } n > 0 | X_0 = i) \\ &= P\left(\bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \{X_n = j\} | X_0 = i\right) \end{aligned}$$

We recall that if $i \rightarrow j$ if and only if $f_{ij} > 0$. We now show that:

Proposition (4.3)

If i is recurrent and $i \leftrightarrow j$, then $f_{ij} = 1$.

Proof of Proposition 4.3

Proof: Since $i \leftrightarrow j$ there exists an $n > 0$ such that $P_{ij}^n > 0$. We assume that n is the minimal integer with this property.

Moreover, since state i is recurrent, with probability one there exists an infinite sequence $0 = k_0 < k_1 < k_2 < \dots$, such that $X_{k_r} = i$, $r = 0, 1, 2, \dots$

We then introduce:

$$Z = \min\{r \geq 0 : X_{k_r+n} = j\}$$

Then it is easy to verify that:

$$P(Z = z) = P_{ij}^n \cdot (1 - P_{ij}^n)^z, \quad z = 0, 1, 2, \dots$$

And from this it follows that:

$$1 \geq f_{ij} = P\left(\bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \{X_n = j\} \mid X_0 = i\right) \geq \sum_{z=0}^{\infty} P(Z = z) = 1.$$

Hence, we conclude $f_{ij} = 1$ ■

Positive and null recurrency

Assume that j is a recurrent state and introduce:

$$N_j = \min\{n > 0 : X_n = j\}$$

Thus, N_j is the number of steps until the Markov chain makes a transition into state j . We then let:

$$m_j = E[N_j | X_0 = j]$$

That is, m_j is the expected number of steps until the Markov chain returns to state j given that it starts out in state j .

NOTE: Since j is recurrent, we know that $P(N_j < \infty | X_0 = j) = 1$.

Still, depending on the distribution of N_j , it may happen that $E[N_j | X_0 = j] = \infty$.

Definition

If $m_j < \infty$, we say that j is positive recurrent.

If $m_j = \infty$, we say that j is null recurrent.

Positive and null recurrency (cont.)

Let π_j be the long-run proportion of time the Markov chain is in state j :

$$\pi_j = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{r=1}^n I(X_r = j)$$

Proposition (4.4)

If the Markov chain is irreducible and recurrent, then for any initial state X_0 , we have:

$$\pi_j = 1/m_j$$

NOTE: If $m_j = \infty$, then $\pi_j = 0$.

Proof of Proposition 4.4

Proof: Assume that $X_0 = i$, and introduce:

$$T_0 = \min\{r > 0 : X_r = j\}$$

$$T_1 = \min\{r > 0 : X_{T_0+r} = j\}$$

$$T_k = \min\{r > 0 : X_{T_0+\dots+T_{k-1}+r} = j\}, \quad k = 2, 3, \dots$$

We then note:

- $P(T_0 < \infty) = f_{ij} = 1$ by Proposition 4.3.
- T_1, T_2, \dots are independent and identically distributed.
- $E[T_k] = m_j, \quad k = 1, 2, \dots$

Hence, by the strong law of large numbers:

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^n T_k = m_j \quad \text{with probability 1.}$$

Proof of Proposition 4.4 (cont.)

$T_0 + \sum_{k=1}^n T_k$ is the time the chain enters state j for the $(n + 1)$ st time.

The proportion of time the chain has been in state j at this point of time is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of times in } j}{\text{Total time}} = \frac{n + 1}{T_0 + \sum_{k=1}^n T_k}$$

Hence, the long-run proportion is given by:

$$\pi_j = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{n + 1}{T_0 + \sum_{k=1}^n T_k} = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{\frac{T_0}{n+1} + \frac{n}{n+1} \cdot \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^n T_k} = \frac{1}{m_j}$$

NOTE: We have that $m_j < \infty$ if and only if $1/m_j > 0$.

Thus, state j is positive recurrent if and only if $\pi_j = 1/m_j > 0$.

Positive recurrence is a class property

Proposition (4.5)

If state i is positive recurrent and $i \leftrightarrow j$, then state j is positive recurrent as well.

Proof: Since i is positive recurrent, we know that $\pi_i > 0$. Moreover, since $i \leftrightarrow j$, there exists an $n > 0$ such that $P_{ij}^n > 0$.

From this it follows that:

$$\pi_j \geq \pi_i P_{ij}^n > 0.$$

Hence, state j is positive recurrent as well ■

Positive recurrence is a class property (cont.)

Corollary (4.5.1)

If state i is null recurrent and $i \leftrightarrow j$, then state j is null recurrent as well.

Proof: Assume that i is null recurrent and $i \leftrightarrow j$. If j is positive recurrent, Proposition 4.5 implies that i is positive recurrent as well. However, this contradicts the assumption ■

Corollary (4.5.2)

An irreducible finite state Markov chain must be positive recurrent.

Proof: By Proposition 4.5 all states in an irreducible are either positive recurrent or null recurrent. If all states are null recurrent, then $\pi_i = 0$ for all $i \in \mathcal{S}$. However, this is impossible if $|\mathcal{S}|$ is finite ■

Long-run proportion of states

We have that:

$\pi_i P_{ij}$ = Long-run proportion of transitions that go from i to j

Hence, by summing over all possible preceding states of j , we get:

$$\pi_j = \sum_{i \in \mathcal{S}} \pi_i P_{ij}$$

Long-run proportion of states (cont.)

Theorem (4.1)

Consider an irreducible Markov chain. If the chain is positive recurrent, then the long-run proportions are the unique solution of the equations:

$$\pi_j = \sum_{i \in \mathcal{S}} \pi_i P_{ij}, \quad \text{for all } j \in \mathcal{S}$$

$$\sum_{j \in \mathcal{S}} \pi_j = 1$$

Moreover, if there is no solution of these linear equations, then the Markov chain is either transient or null recurrent, and $\pi_j = 0$ for all $j \in \mathcal{S}$.

Symmetric random walk

Consider a Markov chain with state space $\mathcal{S} = \{\dots, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, \dots\}$ and where:

$$P_{i,i+1} = P_{i,i-1} = 1/2, \quad i \in \mathcal{S}.$$

By Example 4.19 we know that this chain is recurrent.

Moreover, by Theorem 4.1 we have that:

$$\pi_j = \pi_{j-1} \cdot \frac{1}{2} + \pi_{j+1} \cdot \frac{1}{2}$$

We now assume that $X_0 = i$, where $i \in \mathcal{S}$ is arbitrarily chosen. Then it follows by symmetry that $\pi_{i-1} = \pi_{i+1}$, and hence:

$$\pi_{i-1} = \pi_i = \pi_{i+1}.$$

Symmetric random walk (cont.)

Similarly it follows by Theorem 4.1 that:

$$\begin{aligned}\pi_{i+1} &= \pi_i \cdot \frac{1}{2} + \pi_{i+2} \cdot \frac{1}{2} \\ \pi_{i-1} &= \pi_i \cdot \frac{1}{2} + \pi_{i-2} \cdot \frac{1}{2}\end{aligned}$$

Since $\pi_{i-1} = \pi_i = \pi_{i+1}$, this implies that:

$$\pi_{i-2} = \pi_i = \pi_{i+2}.$$

Continuing in the same way, we get that:

$$\pi_{i-k} = \pi_i = \pi_{i+k}, \quad k = 1, 2, \dots$$

Since the initial state i was arbitrarily chosen, we conclude that the long-run proportions are the same for all states regardless of the initial state, and denote this common proportion by π .

Symmetric random walk (cont.)

If the chain is positive recurrent, it follows by Theorem 4.1 that:

$$\sum_{j \in \mathcal{S}} \pi_j = \pi \cdot \sum_{j \in \mathcal{S}} 1 = 1$$

However, $\sum_{j \in \mathcal{S}} 1 = \infty$, so this implies that $\pi = 0$.

Thus, we conclude that the chain is null recurrent.

Long-Run Proportions and Limiting Probabilities

Previously we introduced the probabilities:

$$\pi_i^{(n)} = P\{X_n = i\}, \quad i \in \mathcal{S}, \quad n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$$

Moreover, we defined:

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \pi_i^{(n)} = \pi_i, \quad i \in \mathcal{S}.$$

and showed that:

$$\pi_j = \sum_{i \in \mathcal{S}} \pi_i P_{ij}, \quad \text{for all } j \in \mathcal{S}, \quad \sum_{j \in \mathcal{S}} \pi_j = 1$$

Assuming that there exists a unique solution to these equations, it follows by Theorem 4.1 that these limiting probabilities are the same as the long-run proportions.

Long-Run Proportions and Limiting Probabilities

NOTE: The set of equations

$$\pi_j = \sum_{i \in \mathcal{S}} \pi_i P_{ij}, \quad \text{for all } j \in \mathcal{S}$$

may be written in matrix form as:

$$\boldsymbol{\pi} = \boldsymbol{\pi} \cdot \mathbf{P},$$

where:

$\boldsymbol{\pi}$ = The row vector of long-run proportions

= The row vector of limiting probabilities

Example 4.22

$$P\{\text{Rain tomorrow}|\text{Rain today}\} = \alpha = 0.7$$

$$P\{\text{Rain tomorrow}|\text{No rain today}\} = \beta = 0.4$$

$$\mathbf{P} = \begin{bmatrix} \alpha & (1 - \alpha) \\ \beta & (1 - \beta) \end{bmatrix}$$

In order to find the long-run proportion of rain (π_0) and not-rain (π_1), we solve the equations:

$$\pi_0 = \alpha\pi_0 + \beta\pi_1$$

$$\pi_1 = (1 - \alpha)\pi_0 + (1 - \beta)\pi_1$$

$$\pi_0 + \pi_1 = 1.$$

The last equation implies that $\pi_1 = 1 - \pi_0$. By inserting this into the first equation we get:

$$\pi_0 = \alpha\pi_0 + \beta(1 - \pi_0) = (\alpha - \beta)\pi_0 + \beta$$

Example 4.22 (cont.)

We solve the equation:

$$\pi_0 = (\alpha - \beta)\pi_0 + \beta$$

with respect to π_0 , and get that:

$$\pi_0 = \frac{\beta}{1 - \alpha + \beta} = \frac{0.4}{1 - 0.7 + 0.4} = \frac{4}{7}$$

By using the last equation again we find that:

$$\pi_1 = 1 - \pi_0 = \frac{1 - \alpha}{1 - \alpha + \beta} = \frac{1 - 0.7}{1 - 0.7 + 0.4} = \frac{3}{7}$$

Example 4.23 - Mood of an individual

0 = cheerful, 1 = so-so, 2 = glum.

$$P = \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 & 0.4 & 0.1 \\ 0.3 & 0.4 & 0.3 \\ 0.2 & 0.3 & 0.5 \end{bmatrix}$$

In order to find the long-run proportions π_0 , π_1 and π_2 , we solve the equations:

$$\pi_0 = 0.5\pi_0 + 0.3\pi_1 + 0.2\pi_2$$

$$\pi_1 = 0.4\pi_0 + 0.4\pi_1 + 0.3\pi_2$$

$$\pi_2 = 0.1\pi_0 + 0.3\pi_1 + 0.5\pi_2$$

$$\pi_0 + \pi_1 + \pi_2 = 1.$$

SOLUTION:

$$\pi_0 = \frac{21}{62} = 0.3387, \quad \pi_1 = \frac{23}{62} = 0.3710, \quad \pi_2 = \frac{18}{62} = 0.2903$$

Example 4.23 (cont.)

The solution $\pi_0 = 0.3387$, $\pi_1 = 0.3710$, $\pi_2 = 0.2903$ also corresponds to taking the limit of the n -step transition probability matrix:

$$\mathbf{P}^{(4)} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.3446 & 0.3734 & 0.2820 \\ 0.3378 & 0.3706 & 0.2916 \\ 0.3330 & 0.3686 & 0.2984 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\mathbf{P}^{(8)} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.3388 & 0.3710 & 0.2902 \\ 0.3387 & 0.3710 & 0.2903 \\ 0.3386 & 0.3709 & 0.2904 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\mathbf{P}^{(16)} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.3387 & 0.3710 & 0.2903 \\ 0.3387 & 0.3710 & 0.2903 \\ 0.3387 & 0.3710 & 0.2903 \end{bmatrix}$$

Example 4.24 - Class mobility

0 = Upper class, 1 = Middle class, 2 = Lower class.

$$P = \begin{bmatrix} 0.45 & 0.48 & 0.07 \\ 0.05 & 0.70 & 0.25 \\ 0.01 & 0.50 & 0.49 \end{bmatrix}$$

In order to find the long-run proportions π_0 , π_1 and π_2 , we solve the equations:

$$\pi_0 = 0.45\pi_0 + 0.05\pi_1 + 0.01\pi_2$$

$$\pi_1 = 0.48\pi_0 + 0.70\pi_1 + 0.50\pi_2$$

$$\pi_2 = 0.07\pi_0 + 0.25\pi_1 + 0.49\pi_2$$

$$\pi_0 + \pi_1 + \pi_2 = 1.$$

SOLUTION:

$$\pi_0 = 0.0624, \quad \pi_1 = 0.6234, \quad \pi_2 = 0.3142$$

Example 4.24 (cont.)

The solution $\pi_0 = 0.0624$, $\pi_1 = 0.6234$, $\pi_2 = 0.3142$ also corresponds to taking the limit of the n -step transition probability matrix:

$$\mathbf{P}^{(4)} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.0932 & 0.6199 & 0.2869 \\ 0.0623 & 0.6241 & 0.3136 \\ 0.0564 & 0.6229 & 0.3207 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\mathbf{P}^{(8)} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.0635 & 0.6233 & 0.3132 \\ 0.0624 & 0.6234 & 0.3142 \\ 0.0622 & 0.6235 & 0.3144 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\mathbf{P}^{(16)} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.0624 & 0.6234 & 0.3142 \\ 0.0624 & 0.6234 & 0.3142 \\ 0.0624 & 0.6234 & 0.3142 \end{bmatrix}$$

Example 4.25 - The Hardy-Weinberg Law

Two gene types: A and a

Three possible gene pairs: AA , aa , Aa .

In generation 0 we assume that the proportions of these gene pairs are respectively:

$$p = \text{Proportion of } AA, \quad q = \text{Proportion of } aa, \quad r = \text{Proportion of } Aa$$

By conditioning on the gene pairs of a parent we get the following probabilities for one of the genes for a given child:

$$\begin{aligned} P(A) &= P(A|AA)p + P(A|aa)q + P(A|Aa)r \\ &= 1 \cdot p + 0 \cdot q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r = p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} P(a) &= P(a|AA)p + P(a|aa)q + P(a|Aa)r \\ &= 0 \cdot p + 1 \cdot q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r = q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r \end{aligned}$$

Example 4.25 - The Hardy-Weinberg Law (cont.)

Hence, the proportions of the gene pairs in generation 1 is:

$$p_1 = P(AA) = P(A) \cdot P(A) = (p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)^2$$

$$q_1 = P(aa) = P(a) \cdot P(a) = (q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)^2$$

$$r_1 = P(Aa) = 2P(A)P(a) = 2 \cdot (p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)(q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)$$

Hence, in generation 1 the probabilities for the two gene types are:

$$\begin{aligned} P(A) &= p_1 + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r_1 \\ &= (p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)^2 + (p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)(q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r) \\ &= (p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)[p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r + q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r] \\ &= p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} P(a) &= q_1 + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r_1 \\ &= (q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)^2 + (p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)(q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r) \\ &= (q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)[q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r + p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r] \\ &= q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r \end{aligned}$$

Example 4.25 - The Hardy-Weinberg Law (cont.)

By repeating the same argument we get that the proportions of the gene pairs in generation n is:

$$p_n = P(AA) = P(A) \cdot P(A) = (p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)^2$$

$$q_n = P(aa) = P(a) \cdot P(a) = (q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)^2$$

$$r_n = P(Aa) = 2P(A)P(a) = 2 \cdot (p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)(q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r)$$

Hence, in generation n the probabilities for the two gene types are:

$$P(A) = p + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r$$

$$P(a) = q + \frac{1}{2} \cdot r$$

NOTE: This holds for $n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$

Example 4.25 - The Hardy-Weinberg Law (cont.)

We now define:

X_n = The gene pair of an n th generation child, $n = 1, 2, \dots$

where the state space is $\mathcal{S} = \{AA, aa, Aa\}$.

Since we have shown that in every generation we have $P(A) = p + r/2$ and $P(a) = q + r/2$, the transition matrix for this chain is:

$$\mathbf{P} = \begin{bmatrix} p + r/2 & 0 & q + r/2 \\ 0 & q + r/2 & p + r/2 \\ p/2 + r/4 & q/2 + r/4 & p/2 + q/2 + r/2 \end{bmatrix}$$

Example 4.25 - The Hardy-Weinberg Law (cont.)

NOTE: We have shown that the distribution p, q, r is stable from generation to generation. This means that:

$$p = P(A) \cdot P(A) = \left(p + \frac{r}{2}\right)^2$$

$$q = P(a) \cdot P(a) = \left(q + \frac{r}{2}\right)^2$$

$$r = 2P(A)P(a) = 2 \cdot \left(p + \frac{r}{2}\right)\left(q + \frac{r}{2}\right)$$

We now claim that p, q, r also is the long-time distribution of the Markov chain with transition matrix \mathbf{P} .

Since obviously $p + q + r = 1$, it is sufficient to verify that:

$$(p, q, r) = (p, q, r)\mathbf{P}$$

Example 4.25 - The Hardy-Weinberg Law (cont.)

This follows since we have:

$$p(p + \frac{r}{2}) + r(\frac{p}{2} + \frac{r}{4}) = (p + \frac{r}{2})^2 = p$$

$$q(q + \frac{r}{2}) + r(\frac{q}{2} + \frac{r}{4}) = (q + \frac{r}{2})^2 = q$$

$$\begin{aligned} p(q + \frac{r}{2}) + q(p + \frac{r}{2}) + r(\frac{p}{2} + \frac{q}{2} + \frac{r}{2}) \\ &= p(q + \frac{r}{2}) + q(p + \frac{r}{2}) + \frac{r}{2}(p + \frac{r}{2} + q + \frac{r}{2}) \\ &= (p + \frac{r}{2})(q + \frac{r}{2}) + (q + \frac{r}{2})(p + \frac{r}{2}) \\ &= 2(p + \frac{r}{2})(q + \frac{r}{2}) = r \end{aligned}$$

Stationary probabilities

The long-run proportions $\pi_j, j \in \mathcal{S}$ are called the **stationary probabilities** of the Markov chain.

In fact if $P(X_0 = j) = \pi_j, j \in \mathcal{S}$, then $P(X_n = j) = \pi_j, j \in \mathcal{S}, n = 1, 2, \dots$ as well.

To see this, we let $\pi_j^{(n)} = P(X_n = j), j \in \mathcal{S}, n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$. Moreover, let $\pi^{(n)}$ denote the vector of $\pi_j^{(n)}, j \in \mathcal{S}$, and let π denote the vector of $\pi_j, j \in \mathcal{S}$.

Thus, $\pi = \pi^{(0)}$, and $\pi = \pi \mathbf{P}$

By conditioning on X_{n-1} it follows that $\pi^{(n)} = \pi^{(n-1)} \mathbf{P}, n = 1, 2, \dots$

Hence, $\pi^{(1)} = \pi^{(0)} \mathbf{P} = \pi \mathbf{P} = \pi$.

By induction this implies that $\pi^{(n)} = \pi \mathbf{P} = \pi$.

Bounded functions on the state space

Proposition (4.6)

Let $\{X_n\}$ be an irreducible Markov chain with stationary probabilities π_j , $j \in \mathcal{S}$, and let f be a bounded function on the state space. Then with probability 1:

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=1}^N f(X_n) = \sum_{j \in \mathcal{S}} \pi_j f(j)$$

Proof: Let $a_j(N)$ be the amount of time the Markov chain spends in state j during the periods $1, \dots, N$. Then we have:

$$\sum_{n=1}^N f(X_n) = \sum_{j \in \mathcal{S}} a_j(N) f(j)$$

Hence,

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=1}^N f(X_n) = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{j \in \mathcal{S}} \frac{a_j(N)}{N} f(j) = \sum_{j \in \mathcal{S}} \pi_j f(j)$$

Example 4.29 - Car insurance

State space $\mathcal{S} = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ bonus classes. We let $f(j)$ denote the premium as a function of state, and assume that:

$$f(1) = 200, \quad f(2) = 250, \quad f(3) = 400, \quad f(4) = 600.$$

Transition matrix:

$$P = \begin{bmatrix} 0.6065 & 0.3033 & 0.0758 & 0.0144 \\ 0.6065 & 0.0000 & 0.3033 & 0.0902 \\ 0.0000 & 0.6065 & 0.0000 & 0.3935 \\ 0.0000 & 0.0000 & 0.6065 & 0.3935 \end{bmatrix}$$

The stationary distribution is found by solving $\pi = \pi P$ combined with the restriction that $\pi_1 + \dots + \pi_4 = 1$, and we get:

$$\pi_1 = 0.3692, \quad \pi_2 = 0.2395, \quad \pi_3 = 0.2103, \quad \pi_4 = 0.1809$$

Average annual premium is then:

$$f(1) \cdot \pi_1 + f(2) \cdot \pi_2 + f(3) \cdot \pi_3 + f(4) \cdot \pi_4 = 326.375$$