

INTEGRAL PROBABILITY METRICS AND THEIR GENERATING CLASSES OF FUNCTIONS.

ALFRED MÜLLER,* *Universität Karlsruhe*

Abstract

We consider probability metrics of the following type: Let \mathfrak{F} be a class of functions and let P and Q be probability measures. Then define $d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q) := \sup_{f \in \mathfrak{F}} |\int f dP - \int f dQ|$. A unified study of such *integral probability metrics* is given. We characterize the maximal class of functions, which generates such a metric. Further we show how some interesting properties of these probability metrics arise directly from conditions on the generating class of functions. The results are illustrated by several examples, including the Kolmogorov metric, the Dudley metric and the stop-loss metric.

INTEGRAL PROBABILITY METRICS; MAXIMAL GENERATOR;
UNIFORMITY IN WEAK CONVERGENCE; STOP-LOSS METRIC.

AMS 1991 SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION: PRIMARY 60E05, SECONDARY 60B10

1 Introduction.

Most of the models in applied probability are so complex, that an explicit calculation of their characteristics is nearly impossible. Therefore approximations are of practical importance. But these approximations require some sort of stability of the model. Very often it is convenient to express such stability in terms of probability metrics. Since most of the characteristics are defined as an integral of some function f with respect to a probability measure P , probability metrics based on the comparison of integrals are of special interest.

In recent years there appeared a vast literature on the theory of probability metrics. A lot of results have been summarized in the monography of Rachev (1991). Many of the numerous metrics, that have been proved to be valuable, are based on the comparison of integrals as follows: There is a class \mathfrak{F} of functions, such that

$$d(P, Q) := \sup_{f \in \mathfrak{F}} \left| \int f dP - \int f dQ \right|. \quad (1.1)$$

*Postal address: Institut für Wirtschaftstheorie und Operations Research, Universität Karlsruhe, Kaiserstr. 12, D-76128 Karlsruhe, Germany

In Zolotarev (1983) metrics defined as in (1.1) are called *probability metrics with a ζ -structure*. We will use the more intuitive notion *integral probability metric*.

The purpose of this paper is to give a unified study of these integral probability metrics. After providing some preliminary results from functional analysis in section 2, we compare in section 3 classes of functions generating the same metric. Especially we characterize the maximal generator of an integral probability metric. In section 4 we give conditions on the generator, that induce interesting properties of the probability metric. Special emphasis is given to the relationship between convergence in the metric and weak convergence. In section 5 we apply these results to several examples like the Kolmogorov metric, the total variation metric and the stop-loss metric.

2 Preliminaries.

First we make some remarks about our notation. Sets of functions are mostly denoted by capital *fraktur* letters as $\mathfrak{F}, \mathfrak{Y}, \mathfrak{R}, \mathfrak{B}, \dots$, whereas we use *calligraphic* letters as $\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{B}, \mathcal{S} \dots$ for σ -algebras. Sets of (signed) measures are denoted by letters in *blackboard* like $\mathbb{M}, \mathbb{P}, \dots$.

Let (S, \mathcal{S}) be a measure space and $b : S \rightarrow [1, \infty)$ a measurable function, called *weight function*. We consider the set \mathfrak{B}_b of measurable functions $f : S \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, for which

$$\|f\|_b := \sup_{s \in S} \frac{|f(s)|}{b(s)} < \infty.$$

For a signed measure μ on \mathcal{S} we denote the positive and negative variation by μ^+ resp. μ^- . As usual $|\mu| := \mu^+ + \mu^-$ is the total variation. Integrals are sometimes written in the functional form $\mu(f) := \int f d\mu := \int f d\mu^+ \Leftrightarrow \int f d\mu^-$. Notice that $\mu(f)$ exists and is finite if and only if $\mu^+(|f|) + \mu^-(|f|) < \infty$.

The set of all signed measures μ on \mathcal{S} with $|\mu|(b) = \mu^+(b) + \mu^-(b) < \infty$ is denoted by \mathbb{M}_b . We write \mathbb{P} for the set of all probability measures (p.m.) on \mathcal{S} , and $\mathbb{P}_b := \mathbb{P} \cap \mathbb{M}_b$ is the restriction of \mathbb{M}_b to \mathbb{P} . \mathbb{P}_b is nonvoid as it contains all p.m.'s with finite support. \mathbb{M}_b^N is the set of all signed measures with $\mu(S) = 0$. Notice that the difference of two p.m.'s lies in \mathbb{M}_b^N and that every measure in \mathbb{M}_b^N is a multiple of such a difference, i.e. \mathbb{M}_b^N is the linear span of $\mathbb{P}_b \Leftrightarrow \mathbb{P}_b$.

For the formulation of our first lemmas we need some notions of functional analysis, which can be found e.g. in Choquet (1969), §22 or Robertson and Robertson (1966).

A pair (E, F) of vector spaces is said to be in *duality*, if there is a bilinear mapping $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle : E \times F \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$. The duality is said to be *strict*, if for each

$0 \neq x \in E$ there is a $y \in F$ with $\langle x, y \rangle \neq 0$ and for each $0 \neq y \in F$ there is an $x \in E$ with $\langle x, y \rangle \neq 0$.

Lemma 2.1 \mathbb{M}_b and \mathfrak{B}_b are in strict duality under the bilinear mapping

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle &: \mathbb{M}_b \times \mathfrak{B}_b \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \\ \langle \mu, f \rangle &:= \mu(f) \end{aligned} \quad (2.1)$$

Proof. Evidently \mathfrak{B}_b and \mathbb{M}_b are vector spaces. For $f \in \mathfrak{B}_b$ we have $|f| \leq \|f\|_b \cdot b$, and hence

$$|\mu(f)| \leq \mu^+(|f|) + \mu^- (|f|) \leq \|f\|_b \cdot (\mu^+(b) + \mu^-(b)) < \infty$$

for $\mu \in \mathbb{M}_b$. Thus the mapping $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$ is well defined. It remains to show the strictness of the duality.

(i) \mathfrak{B}_b contains the indicator functions of all sets $A \in \mathcal{S}$, as $b \geq 1$. Therefore $\mu(f) = 0$ for all $f \in \mathfrak{B}_b$ implies $\mu(A) = 0$ for all $A \in \mathcal{S}$, and thus $\mu \equiv 0$.

(ii) \mathbb{M}_b contains all one point measures δ_s , $s \in S$. Hence $\mu(f) = 0$ for all $\mu \in \mathbb{M}_b$ implies $\delta_s(f) = f(s) = 0$ for all $s \in S$ and consequently $f \equiv 0$. \square

Remark. In part (i) of the proof we needed the requirement $b \geq 1$ for the weight function. Sometimes there is a naturally given weight function b' , which only fulfils $b' \geq 0$. Then we can use $b := b' + 1$, leading to $\mathbb{M}_b = \mathbb{M}_{b'}$ and $\mathfrak{B}_{b'} \subset \mathfrak{B}_b$, i.e. the measure space remains the same and even more functions can be handled.

Unfortunately the duality $(\mathbb{M}_b^N, \mathfrak{B}_b)$ is not strict, as $\mu(f) = 0$ for all $\mu \in \mathbb{M}_b^N$ only implies f constant. But strict duality can be obtained by identifying functions which differ only by a constant. Formally, we define an equivalence relation $f \sim g$ if and only if $f \Leftrightarrow g$ is constant. Denoting the corresponding quotient space by $\mathfrak{B}_{b/\sim}$ we get the following lemma.

Lemma 2.2 \mathbb{M}_b^N and $\mathfrak{B}_{b/\sim}$ are vector spaces in strict duality under the bilinear mapping (2.1).

A crucial role in our further investigations plays the bipolar theorem.

The *polar* M° of a set $M \subset E$ (in the duality (E, F)) is defined by

$$M^\circ := \{y \in F : |\langle x, y \rangle| \leq 1 \text{ for all } x \in M\}.$$

The polar of a set $N \subset F$ is defined analogously.

The following theorem is known as *bipolar theorem* (see e.g. Robertson and Robertson (1966), p. 35),

Theorem 2.3 (Bipolar Theorem).

Suppose E and F are in strict duality and $X \subset E$. Then $X^{\circ\circ}$ is the $\sigma(E, F)$ -closure of the absolutely convex hull of X .

3 Maximal Generators.

Let (S, \mathcal{S}) be an arbitrary measure space and let $b : S \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a weight function. A mapping $d : \mathbb{P}_b \times \mathbb{P}_b \rightarrow [0, \infty]$ is called a *probability metric*, if it possesses the following properties:

- (i) $d(P_1, P_2) = 0$ if and only if $P_1 = P_2$.
- (ii) $d(P_1, P_2) = d(P_2, P_1)$.
- (iii) $d(P_1, P_3) \leq d(P_1, P_2) + d(P_2, P_3)$.

If (i) is replaced by the weaker requirement $d(P, P) = 0$ for all $P \in \mathbb{P}_b$, then we speak of a *probability semimetric*.

In this paper we only consider probability (semi)metrics, which are generated by integrals. For $\mathfrak{F} \subset \mathfrak{B}_b$ we define an *integral probability (semi)metric* $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ on \mathbb{P}_b by

$$d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q) := \sup_{f \in \mathfrak{F}} \left| \int f dP \Leftrightarrow \int f dQ \right|. \quad (3.1)$$

Remarks: 1. As is common use in the theory of probability metrics, the distance between to p.m.'s is allowed to be infinite, compare e.g. Rachev (1991), p. 10ff.

2. In Zolotarev (1983) and Rachev (1991) probability metrics defined as in (3.1) are called *metric with ζ -structure*. We think that the notion *integral probability (semi)metric* is much more intuitive.

3. The metric $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ is induced by a seminorm $\|\cdot\|_{\mathfrak{F}}$ on \mathbb{M}_b^N : If we define

$$\|\mu\|_{\mathfrak{F}} := \sup_{f \in \mathfrak{F}} |\mu(f)|, \quad (3.2)$$

then $d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q) = \|P \Leftrightarrow Q\|_{\mathfrak{F}}$.

4. The function $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ obviously is a probability semimetric. It is a metric, if and only if \mathfrak{F} separates points in \mathbb{M}_b^N .

Next we compare different classes of functions, which generate the same probability metric.

One of the main purposes of this paper is to determine the maximal generator of an integral probability metric.

Definition 3.1 Let $\mathfrak{F} \subset \mathfrak{B}_b$. The set $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ of all functions $f \in \mathfrak{B}_b$ with the property

$$|P(f) \Leftrightarrow Q(f)| \leq d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q) \quad \text{for all } P, Q \in \mathbb{P}_b \quad (3.3)$$

is called **maximal generator**.

Remark: Since \mathbb{M}_b^N is the linear span of $\mathbb{P}_b \Leftrightarrow \mathbb{P}_b$, $f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ holds if and only if $|\mu(f)| \leq \|\mu\|_{\mathfrak{F}}$ for all $\mu \in \mathbb{M}_b^N$.

A direct consequence of the definition is the following result.

Lemma 3.2 *Let $\mathfrak{F} \subset \mathfrak{Y} \subset \mathfrak{B}_b$ and $P, Q \in \mathbb{P}_b$.*

- a) $d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q) \leq d_{\mathfrak{Y}}(P, Q)$.
- b) $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}} \subset \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{Y}}$.
- c) *If $\mathfrak{Y} \subset \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$, then $d_{\mathfrak{Y}}$ and $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ are identical.*

The next two results show that $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ is absolutely convex, contains the constant functions and is closed under linear mixtures.

Theorem 3.3 *Let \mathfrak{F} be an arbitrary generator of $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$. Then:*

- a) $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ contains the convex hull of \mathfrak{F} ;
- b) $f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ implies $\alpha f + \beta \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ for all $\alpha \in [\ominus 1, 1]$ and $\beta \in \mathbb{R}$;
- c) *If the sequence $(f_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \subset \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ converges uniformly to f , then $f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$.*

We omit the easy proof.

Theorem 3.4 *Let $(\Omega, \mathcal{A}, \rho)$ be a probability space and let $f : \Omega \times S \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a $\mathcal{A} \otimes \mathcal{S}$ -measurable function, which fulfils the following assumptions:*

- (i) $f(\omega, \cdot) \in \mathfrak{F}$ for all $\omega \in \Omega$;
- (ii) *There exists a ρ -integrable function $c : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$ with $|f(\omega, s)| \leq c(\omega) \cdot b(s)$ for all $\omega \in \Omega$, $s \in S$.*

Then $g(\cdot) := \int f(\omega, \cdot) \rho(d\omega)$ exists and belongs zu $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$.

Proof. Since $|f(\omega, x)| \leq c(\omega) \cdot b(x)$ we have for all $\mu \in \mathbb{M}_b$:

$$\iint |f(\omega, x)| \rho(d\omega) |\mu|(dx) \leq \int c(\omega) \rho(d\omega) \cdot \int b(x) |\mu|(dx) < \infty. \quad (3.4)$$

Specializing $\mu = \delta_s$, $s \in S$, we can infer the existence of

$$g(s) = \int f(\omega, s) \rho(d\omega).$$

Now (3.4) and (ii) imply $\|g\|_b \leq \int c \, d\rho < \infty$. Hence $g \in \mathfrak{B}_b$ and we can apply Fubini's theorem. Thus we have for $P, Q \in \mathbb{P}_b$

$$\begin{aligned} |P(g) \ominus Q(g)| &= |\int P(ds) \int \rho(d\omega) f(\omega, s) \ominus \int Q(ds) \int \rho(d\omega) f(\omega, s)| \\ &\leq \int \rho(d\omega) |\int P(ds) f(\omega, s) \ominus \int Q(ds) f(\omega, s)| \\ &\leq \int \rho(d\omega) d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q) = d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q) \end{aligned}$$

This yields $g \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$. □

Now we are ready for the main result of this section.

Theorem 3.5 $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ is the $\sigma(\mathfrak{B}_b, \mathbb{M}_b)$ -closure of the absolutely convex hull of \mathfrak{F} and the constant functions.

Proof. The assertion follows from the bipolar theorem for the duality $(\mathbb{M}_b^N, \mathfrak{B}_{b/\sim})$, if we can show $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}/\sim} = (\mathfrak{F}/\sim)^{\circ\circ}$. But by definition of $\|\cdot\|_{\mathfrak{F}}$ we have

$$\begin{aligned} f \in (\mathfrak{F}/\sim)^{\circ\circ} &\Leftrightarrow |\mu(f)| \leq 1 && \forall \mu \in (\mathfrak{F}/\sim)^{\circ} \\ &\Leftrightarrow |\mu(f)| \leq 1 && \forall \mu \in \mathbb{M}_b^N \text{ with } \|\mu\|_{\mathfrak{F}} \leq 1 \\ &\Leftrightarrow |\mu(f)| \leq \|\mu\|_{\mathfrak{F}} && \forall \mu \in \mathbb{M}_b^N \\ &\Leftrightarrow f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}/\sim}. && \square \end{aligned}$$

Theorem 3.5 is rather of theoretical nature. As the $\sigma(\mathfrak{B}_b, \mathbb{M}_b)$ -topology is hard to handle, it is not very useful for applications. In our next result, however, we give a sufficient condition for $\mathfrak{F} = \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ that is very easy to check.

Corollary 3.6 If $\mathfrak{F} \subset \mathfrak{V} \subset \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$, and \mathfrak{V} is absolutely convex, contains the constant functions and is closed with respect to pointwise convergence, then $\mathfrak{V} = \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$.

Proof. It is sufficient to show that \mathfrak{V} is closed with respect to the topology $\sigma(\mathfrak{B}_b, \mathbb{M}_b)$. Since \mathbb{M}_b includes all one point measures, the $\sigma(\mathfrak{B}_b, \mathbb{M}_b)$ -topology is finer than the topology of pointwise convergence. Hence each set, which is closed under pointwise convergence, is also closed with respect to $\sigma(\mathfrak{B}_b, \mathbb{M}_b)$. \square

4 Convergence and Uniformity.

There is a special interest in probability metrics, which metrize weak convergence. Therefore, we now investigate the relationship between structural properties of \mathfrak{F} and weak convergence. From now on we assume, that S is a Polish (i.e. complete separable metric) space with metric d .

Definition 4.1 Let S be some Polish space and let $b : S \rightarrow [1, \infty)$ be some weight function. Let $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ be some probability metric on \mathbb{P}_b . Then $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ has

- a) property (W_1) , if $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ metrizes weak convergence;
- b) property (W_2) , if

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_n, Q_n) = d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q).$$

for all weak convergent sequences $(P_n), (Q_n) \subset \mathbb{P}_b$ with limits $P, Q \in \mathbb{P}_b$.

- c) property (W_3) , if

$$\liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_n, Q_n) \geq d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q).$$

for all weak convergent sequences $(P_n), (Q_n) \subset \mathbb{P}_b$ with limits $P, Q \in \mathbb{P}_b$.

Remarks: 1. The implications $(W_1) \Rightarrow (W_2) \Rightarrow (W_3)$ are obvious, but in the sequel we will see that none of these implications can be reversed.

2. Property (W_2) is equivalent to the following condition:

$$(W_2^*) \text{ If } (P_n) \text{ converges weakly to } P, \text{ then } d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_n, P) \rightarrow 0.$$

If $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ has this property, then \mathfrak{F} is sometimes called a *uniform class with respect to weak convergence*, see Rachev (1991), p. 75.

In the following theorem we denote by \mathfrak{C}_b the set of all bounded continuous functions.

Theorem 4.2 *If $\mathfrak{F} \subset \mathfrak{C}_b$, then (W_3) holds.*

Proof. Let $a := \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_n, Q_n)$ and $\varepsilon > 0$. Then there is a subsequence $(k_n) \subset \mathbb{N}$ and a $n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$ such that for all $n \geq n_0$ and all $f \in \mathfrak{F}$ we have:

$$|P_{k_n}(f) \Leftrightarrow Q_{k_n}(f)| \leq a + \varepsilon.$$

Hence, if (P_n) and (Q_n) are weak convergent sequences with limits P, Q and $\mathfrak{F} \subset \mathfrak{C}_b$ then

$$|P(f) \Leftrightarrow Q(f)| \leq a + \varepsilon \quad \text{for all } f \in \mathfrak{F}.$$

But this implies

$$d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P, Q) = \sup_{f \in \mathfrak{F}} |P(f) \Leftrightarrow Q(f)| \leq a + \varepsilon.$$

As $\varepsilon > 0$ was arbitrary, the assertion follows. □

For an arbitrary function f we define the *span* of f by $sp(f) := \sup f \Leftrightarrow \inf f$. A set \mathfrak{F} of functions is said to have *uniformly bounded span*, if

$$\sup_{f \in \mathfrak{F}} sp(f) < \infty.$$

The following Theorem can be found in Bhattacharya and Ranga Rao (1976), p. 16.

Theorem 4.3 *An integral probability metric $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ has property (W_2) , if and only if \mathfrak{F} is equicontinuous and has uniformly bounded span.*

Corollary 4.4 *Property (W_2) holds, if and only if the function $d^*(x, y) := d_{\mathfrak{F}}(\delta_x, \delta_y)$ is continuous and bounded.*

A necessary and sufficient condition on \mathfrak{F} for (W_1) to hold seems to be unknown. From the preceding theorem it is evident that it is necessary for \mathfrak{F} to have uniformly bounded span and to be equicontinuous. Another necessary condition is the following:

The semimetric d^* defined in Corollary 4.4 is topologically equivalent to d .

EXAMPLE: Let $S = \mathbb{R}$ and let

$$\mathfrak{F} := \{f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R} : \|f\|_L \leq 1, \|f\|_\infty \leq 1, |f(x) \Leftrightarrow f(0)| \leq |1/x|, x \neq 0\},$$

where $\|\cdot\|_L$ is the so called *Lipschitz-norm* defined on an arbitrary metric space (S, d) as

$$\|f\|_L := \sup_{x \neq y \in S} \frac{|f(x) \Leftrightarrow f(y)|}{d(x, y)}.$$

Then $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ has property (W_2) , as \mathfrak{F} is uniformly bounded and equicontinuous. But (W_1) does not hold, since $d_{\mathfrak{F}}(\delta_n, \delta_0) = 1/n \rightarrow 0$ for $n \rightarrow \infty$.

The following sufficient condition for (W_1) can easily be deduced from Theorem 4.3.2 in Rachev (1991).

Theorem 4.5 *If \mathfrak{F} has uniformly bounded span, is equicontinuous and contains for every closed set $A \subset S$ and all $n \in \mathbb{N}$ the function*

$$s \rightarrow f_{n,A}(s) := \max\{0, 1/n \Leftrightarrow d(s, A)\},$$

then $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ has the property (W_1) .

A well known example for an integral probability metric that metrizes weak convergence is the *Dudley-metric* β . It is generated by the set

$$\mathfrak{F} := \{f : \|f\|_\infty \leq 1, \|f\|_L \leq 1\}.$$

This metric obviously fulfils the conditions of Theorem 4.5.

There are some more interesting properties of probability metrics. Some of them are most easily defined in terms of random variables. Therefore we sometimes use the notation $d_{\mathfrak{F}}(X, Y) := d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_X, P_Y)$.

Definition 4.6 *Let (S, d) be some metric vector space and let $b : S \rightarrow [1, \infty)$ be some weight function. Let $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ be some (semi)metric on \mathbb{P}_b . Then $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ has*

- a) *Property (R), if $d_{\mathfrak{F}}(\delta_a, \delta_b) = d(a, b)$;*
- b) *Property (M), if $d_{\mathfrak{F}}(aX, aY) = a \cdot d_{\mathfrak{F}}(X, Y)$.*
- c) *Property (C), if $d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_1 * Q, P_2 * Q) \leq d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_1, P_2)$ for all p.m.'s Q .*

Theorem 4.7 Let $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ be the maximal generator of the integral probability metric $d_{\mathfrak{F}}$ on \mathbb{P}_b .

a) Property (R) holds if and only if

$$\sup_{f \in \mathfrak{F}} \frac{|f(x) \Leftrightarrow f(y)|}{d(x, y)} = 1 \quad \text{for all } x, y \in S, x \neq y.$$

b) Property (C) holds if and only if $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ is invariant under translations.

Proof. a) is trivial.

b) (i) If $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ is invariant under translations, then $f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ implies $f(\cdot + y) \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ for all $y \in S$. Hence

$$\begin{aligned} d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_1 * Q, P_2 * Q) &= \sup_{f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}} |P_1 * Q(f) \Leftrightarrow P_2 * Q(f)| \\ &= \sup_{f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}} \left| \int Q(dy) P_1(f(\cdot + y)) \Leftrightarrow \int Q(dy) P_2(f(\cdot + y)) \right| \\ &\leq \sup_{f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}} \int Q(dy) d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_1, P_2) \\ &= d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_1, P_2). \end{aligned}$$

Hence (C) holds.

(ii) Now assume that (C) holds. Let $f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ and $P_1, P_2 \in \mathbb{P}_b$. Define $Q := \delta_y$, $y \in S$. Then we can infer

$$\begin{aligned} |P_1(f(\cdot + y)) \Leftrightarrow P_2(f(\cdot + y))| &= |P_1 * Q(f) \Leftrightarrow P_2 * Q(f)| \\ &\leq d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_1 * Q, P_2 * Q) \stackrel{(C)}{\leq} d_{\mathfrak{F}}(P_1, P_2). \end{aligned}$$

Hence $f(\cdot + y) \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$. □

5 Examples.

A. The Kolmogorov metric.

A well known probability metric on $S = \mathbb{R}$ is the *Kolmogorov metric* ρ defined by

$$\rho(X, Y) := \sup_{t \in \mathbb{R}} |F_X(t) \Leftrightarrow F_Y(t)|.$$

Since $F_X(t) = \int 1_{[t, \infty)} dP_X$, the Kolmogorov metric is an integral probability metric generated by the set \mathfrak{F}_{ρ} of all functions $1_{[t, \infty)}$, $t \in \mathbb{R}$. One can use $b(s) \equiv 1$ as weight function, so that \mathbb{P}_b consists of all probability measures on \mathbb{R} .

The maximal generator of ρ can be characterized in terms of total variation. We denote the set of all functions of bounded variation by $BV(\mathbb{R})$. For a partition $Z = [x_0, x_1, \dots, x_n]$ of \mathbb{R} with $x_0 < x_1 < \dots < x_n$ we define

$$V(f, Z) := \sum_{k=1}^n |f(x_k) \ominus f(x_{k-1})|.$$

Then the total variation of a function $f \in BV(\mathbb{R})$ is defined by

$$V(f) := \sup_Z V(f, Z).$$

Lemma 5.1 *The set $\mathfrak{F}_1 := \{f \in BV(\mathbb{R}) : V(f) \leq 1\}$ is closed with respect to pointwise convergence.*

Proof. Endow $BV(\mathbb{R})$ with the topology of pointwise convergence. Then for a fixed partition Z the functional $f \rightarrow V(f, Z)$ is continuous. Hence the functional $f \rightarrow V(f) = \sup_Z V(f, Z)$ is lower semicontinuous, as it is a supremum of continuous functionals. Thus the level set $\{V(f) \leq 1\}$ is closed. \square

Theorem 5.2 *The maximal generator $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ of the Kolmogorov metric ρ is the set of all functions $f \in BV(\mathbb{R})$ with total variation $V(f) \leq 1$.*

Proof. Let \mathfrak{F}_1 be the set of all functions $f \in BV(\mathbb{R})$ with $V(f) \leq 1$. Then obviously $\mathfrak{F}_\rho \subset \mathfrak{F}_1$. The convex hull of \mathfrak{F}_ρ is the set of all increasing step functions, which assume only values in $[0, 1]$. But every increasing function with range in $[0, 1]$ can be approximated uniformly by such step functions. Thus Theorem 3.3 implies that $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ contains all monotone functions f with $V(f) \leq 1$. Now the decomposition theorem of Jordan tells us that every function f with $V(f) \leq 1$ can be written as a convex combination of two monotone functions with this property. Hence applying Theorem 3.3 once more yields $\mathfrak{F}_1 \subset \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$. Now the assertion follows from Lemma 5.1 and Corollary 3.6. \square

Theorem 5.3 *The Kolmogorov metric ρ has the properties (C) and (W_3) .*

Proof. a) The maximal generator of ρ obviously is invariant under translations. Hence Theorem 4.7 implies (C).

b) By Theorem 4.2 the existence of a generator $\mathfrak{V} \subset \mathfrak{C}_b$ is sufficient for (W_3) . Such a generator is given by the set of all functions

$$f_{a,b}(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{for } x < a \\ (x \ominus a)/(b \ominus a) & \text{for } a \leq x \leq b, \\ 1 & \text{for } x > b \end{cases}$$

$a, b \in \mathbb{R}$, $a < b$. □

B. The total variation metric.

The set of all signed measures on an arbitrary measure space (S, \mathcal{S}) can be endowed with the so called *total variation norm* $\|\mu\| := |\mu|(S)$. The corresponding *total variation metric* σ on the set of all probability measures is then defined by $\sigma(P, Q) := |P \Leftrightarrow Q|(S)$, see Zolotarev (1983).

This is an integral probability metric. Choose $b(s) \equiv 1$ and define $\mathfrak{V}_\sigma := \{2 \cdot 1_B : B \in \mathcal{S}\}$. Then \mathfrak{V}_σ is a generator of σ , as

$$\|\mu\| = 2 \cdot \sup_{A \in \mathcal{S}} |\mu(A)|$$

for all $\mu \in \mathbb{M}_b^N$.

The proof of the following theorem is similar to that of Theorem 5.3.

Theorem 5.4 *The maximal generator \mathfrak{R}_σ of the total variation metric σ is the set of all measurable functions $f : S \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ with $sp(f) \leq 2$.*

Theorem 5.5 *The total variation metric σ has the properties (C) and (W_3) .*

Proof. a) Property (C) follows immediately from Theorem 4.7.

b) We claim that $\mathfrak{V} := \mathfrak{R}_\sigma \cap \mathfrak{C}_b$ is a generator of σ . Property (W_3) then follows from Theorem 4.2.

Let $f \in \mathfrak{R}_\sigma$ and $P, Q \in \mathbb{P}_b$. Define $\mu := P + Q$. It is well known that the continuous functions are dense in $\mathcal{L}_1(\mu)$, see e.g. Hewitt and Stromberg (1965), Theorem 13.21. Thus there is a sequence $(\phi_n) \subset \mathfrak{V}$ with $\int |f \Leftrightarrow \phi_n| d\mu \rightarrow 0$. This yields

$$\begin{aligned} |P(f) \Leftrightarrow Q(f)| &\leq |P(f \Leftrightarrow \phi_n) \Leftrightarrow Q(f \Leftrightarrow \phi_n)| + |P(\phi_n) \Leftrightarrow Q(\phi_n)| \\ &\leq \mu(|f \Leftrightarrow \phi_n|) + d_{\mathfrak{V}}(P, Q) \\ &\rightarrow d_{\mathfrak{V}}(P, Q). \end{aligned}$$

Hence $f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{V}}$. Thus we have $\mathfrak{V} \subset \mathfrak{R}_\sigma \subset \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{V}}$ and therefore $d_{\mathfrak{V}} = \sigma$. □

C. The stop-loss metric.

Motivated by risk-theoretical considerations, Rachev and Rüschendorf (1990) defined and investigated several so called *stop-loss metrics*. The most important one is

$$d_{sl}(X, Y) := \sup_{t \in \mathbb{R}} |E(X \Leftrightarrow t)^+ \Leftrightarrow E(Y \Leftrightarrow t)^+|,$$

defined for random variables with finite expectation. This metric can already be found in Gerber (1981).

If we define on $S = \mathbb{R}$ the weight function $b(s) := 1 + |s|$, then d_{sl} is an integral probability metric on \mathbb{P}_b that is generated by the set \mathfrak{F}_{sl} of functions $s \rightarrow \phi_t(s) = (s \Leftrightarrow t)^+$, $t \in \mathbb{R}$.

Before we can characterize the corresponding maximal generator, we need some facts about differences of convex functions. We follow the notation of Roberts and Varberg (1973). Let I be a closed interval with endpoints a, b . For a partition $Z = \{x_0, x_1, \dots, x_n\} \subset I$ with $x_0 < x_1 < \dots < x_n$ and a function $f : I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ we define

$$\square_i f := \frac{f(x_i) \Leftrightarrow f(x_{i-1})}{x_i \Leftrightarrow x_{i-1}} \quad \text{and} \quad K(f, Z) := \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} |\square_{i+1} f \Leftrightarrow \square_i f|.$$

Further, $K_a^b(f) := \sup K(f, Z)$, where the supremum is taken over all partitions Z . In case $I = \mathbb{R}$ we write $K(f)$ for short. Obviously it holds

$$K(f) := \lim_{\substack{a \rightarrow -\infty \\ b \rightarrow \infty}} K_a^b(f). \quad (5.1)$$

In case $[a, b]$ is a compact interval, a thorough treatment of the functional K_a^b can be found in section 14 of Roberts and Varberg (1973). Using (5.1), these results can easily be carried over to the case $I = \mathbb{R}$.

Lemma 5.6 *a) It holds $K(f) < \infty$, if and only if f is the difference of two Lipschitz-continuous convex functions.*

b) If $K(f) < \infty$, then the left and right derivatives $D^-f(x)$ und $D^+f(x)$ exist for all $x \in \mathbb{R}$ and it holds

$$K(f) = V(D^-f) = V(D^+f).$$

By Lemma 5.6 b) D^+f is of bounded variation, if $K(f) < \infty$. Hence $\lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} D^+f(t)$ exists. Thus we can define a functional K^* by

$$K^*(f) := K(f) + \left| \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} D^+f(t) \right|.$$

This functional can alternatively be defined as follows. For a partition Z define

$$K^*(f, Z) := |\square_1 f| + \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} |\square_{i+1} f \Leftrightarrow \square_i f|.$$

Then $K^*(f) = \sup_Z K^*(f, Z)$.

Using this characterization, the following Lemma can be proved similarly to Lemma 5.1.

Lemma 5.7 *The set $\mathfrak{K}_1 := \{f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R} : K^*(f) \leq 1\}$ is closed with respect to pointwise convergence.*

Theorem 5.8 *The maximal generator $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ of the stop-loss metric d_{sl} is the set of all functions $f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ with $K^*(f) \leq 1$.*

Proof. a) Let $\mathfrak{K}_1 := \{f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R} : K^*(f) \leq 1\}$. For $\phi_t(s) := (s \Leftrightarrow t)^+$, $t \in \mathbb{R}$, we have $D^+ \phi_t = 1_{[t, \infty)}$, and therefore Lemma 5.6 implies

$$K^*(\phi_t) = K(\phi_t) = V(D^+ \phi_t) = 1.$$

Hence $\mathfrak{F}_{sl} = \{\phi_t : t \in \mathbb{R}\} \subset \mathfrak{K}_1$.

b) Next we show $\mathfrak{K}_1 \subset \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$.

From

$$|EX \Leftrightarrow EY| = \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} |E(X \Leftrightarrow t)^+ \Leftrightarrow E(Y \Leftrightarrow t)^+| \leq d_{sl}(X, Y),$$

we infer $id \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$. Now fix $f \in \mathfrak{K}_1$ and define

$$\alpha := \lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} D^+ f(x) \quad \text{and} \quad \beta := K(f).$$

Then $f(x) =: \alpha x + \beta f_1(x)$, where f_1 has the following properties:

$$(I) \quad K(f_1) \leq 1.$$

$$(II) \quad |\lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} D^+ f_1(x)| = 0.$$

Hence, if we can show that every function, which fulfils (I) and (II) is contained in $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$, then $id \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ implies $\mathfrak{K}_1 \subset \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$.

Therefore suppose that f fulfils (I) and (II), and let $g := D^+ f$. Since $V(g) = K(f) \leq 1$, the function g has the properties:

$$(I') \quad V(g) \leq 1.$$

$$(II') \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} g(x) = 0.$$

From the decomposition theorem of Jordan we can deduce, that there is a $\gamma \in [0, 1]$, such that g can be written as $g = \gamma g_1 \Leftrightarrow (1 \Leftrightarrow \gamma) g_2$, where g_1, g_2 are increasing functions, which also fulfil (I') and (II'). Thus we can assume without loss of generality g to be increasing. But then g can be approximated monotonely by increasing step functions

$$h_n(x) := \sum_{i=1}^n \alpha_{in} \cdot 1_{[\beta_{in}, \infty)} \quad \text{with} \quad \alpha_{in} \geq 0, \quad \sum_{i=1}^n \alpha_{in} \leq 1, \quad \beta_{in} \in \mathbb{R}.$$

Hence, by Theorem 3.3

$$f_n(x) := f(0) + \int_0^x h_n(t) dt = \sum_{i=1}^n \alpha_{in} \cdot \phi_{\beta_{in}}(x) + const \quad (5.2)$$

is contained in $\mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$, and the monotone convergence theorem implies that (f_n) converges to f , from above on $(-\infty, 0)$ and from below on $[0, \infty)$. Applying the monotone convergence theorem once more we get

$$\begin{aligned}\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P(f_n) &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} (P(f_n \cdot 1_{(-\infty, 0)}) + P(f_n \cdot 1_{[0, \infty)})) \\ &= P(f \cdot 1_{(-\infty, 0)}) + P(f \cdot 1_{[0, \infty)}) = P(f)\end{aligned}$$

for every $P \in \mathbb{P}_b$. Since $f_n \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$, this implies for arbitrary $P, Q \in \mathbb{P}_b$

$$|P(f) \Leftrightarrow Q(f)| = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} |P(f_n) \Leftrightarrow Q(f_n)| \leq d_{sl}(P, Q).$$

Hence $f \in \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$ and thus we have shown $\mathfrak{R}_1 \subset \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$.

c) By Lemma 5.7, \mathfrak{R}_1 is closed with respect to pointwise convergence. It is easy to see that \mathfrak{R}_1 is absolutely convex and contains the constant functions. Thus Theorem 3.6 implies $\mathfrak{R}_1 = \mathfrak{R}_{\mathfrak{F}}$. \square

Remark: Rachev and Rüschendorf (1990) define a probability metric θ_1 generated by

$$\mathfrak{F}_1 := \{f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R} : f'' \text{ exists and } \int |f''(x)| dx \leq 1\}.$$

They show that $\theta_1(X, Y) = d_{sl}(X, Y)$ if $EX = EY$. But for $EX \neq EY$, $\theta_1(X, Y)$ is not finite, as \mathfrak{F}_1 contains all functions $s \rightarrow \alpha s$, $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}$. Thus \mathfrak{F}_1 is not a generator of d_{sl} . But if we modify \mathfrak{F}_1 to

$$\mathfrak{F}_1^* := \{f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R} : f'' \text{ exists and } |\lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} f'(x)| + \int |f''(x)| dx \leq 1\},$$

then we get a generator of d_{sl} . To see this you only have to observe that for a twice differentiable function f it holds $K(f) = \int |f''(x)| dx$, cf. Roberts and Varberg (1973), p. 28, problem D (3).

Theorem 5.9 *The probability metric d_{sl} has the properties (R) and (C), but none of the properties $(W_1) \Leftrightarrow (W_3)$.*

Proof. a) The properties (R) and (C) follow immediately from Theorem 4.7. For (C) notice that the functional K^* is invariant under translations.

b) We give the following counterexample for (W_3) . Let

$$P_n := \frac{n \Leftrightarrow 1}{n} \delta_0 + \frac{1}{n} \delta_n \xrightarrow{w} \delta_0 =: P,$$

and

$$Q_n := \frac{n \Leftrightarrow 1}{n} \delta_1 + \frac{1}{n} \delta_{n/2} \xrightarrow{w} \delta_1 =: Q.$$

Then $d_{sl}(P_n, Q_n) = 1/2$, $n \in \mathbb{N}$, but $d_{sl}(P, Q) = 1$. Hence $(W_1) \Leftrightarrow (W_3)$ can not hold. \square

If G is a non-negative unbounded continuous function, then the joint convergence

$$P_n \xrightarrow{w} P \quad \text{and} \quad \int G dP_n \rightarrow \int G dP$$

is called *G-weak convergence*, see Rachev (1991), Def. 4.2.2. Using this notion, the following weakening of (W_3) can be proved for d_{sl} .

Theorem 5.10 *Define $G(s) = s^+$ and let $(P_n), (Q_n)$ be G-weak convergent sequences with limits P and Q . Then it holds*

$$\liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} d_{sl}(P_n, Q_n) \geq d_{sl}(P, Q). \quad (5.3)$$

Proof. The functions $f_t(x) := \phi_t(x) \Leftrightarrow G(x) = (x \Leftrightarrow t)^+ \Leftrightarrow x^+$, $t \in \mathbb{R}$ are bounded and continuous. Therefore G-weak convergence of (P_n) to P implies $\int \phi_t dP_n \rightarrow \int \phi_t dP$. Hence (5.3) can be proved similarly to Theorem 4.2. \square

The following example shows, that \mathfrak{F}_{sl} is not a uniform class with respect to G-weak convergence. Let

$$P_n := \frac{n \Leftrightarrow 1}{n} \delta_0 + \frac{1}{n} \delta_{-n}.$$

Then the sequence (P_n) is G-weak convergent to $P := \delta_0$, but $d_{sl}(P_n, P) = n$. Hence d_{sl} does not metrize G-weak convergence.

D. Further Examples.

Another well known integral probability metric is the *Kantorovich metric* ζ_1 , which is generated by the set \mathfrak{L}_1 of Lipschitz functions f with $\|f\|_L \leq 1$, see Zolotarev (1983), p. 284 or Dudley (1989), p. 330. It is well known that for $S = \mathbb{R}$

$$\zeta_1(X, Y) = \ell_1(X, Y) := \int |F_X(t) \Leftrightarrow F_Y(t)| dt,$$

see e.g. Rachev (1991), p.6. It is easy to see that \mathfrak{L}_1 is the maximal generator of ζ_1 and that ζ_1 has the properties (R), (M), (C) and (W_3) .

We have yet mentioned the Dudley metric as an integral probability metric that metrizes weak convergence. The most familiar probability metrics with this property are the *Levy metric* L and the *Prohorov metric* π , see Rachev (1991). These two metrics are **not** generated by integrals. This follows from the fact that they both fulfil

$$d(\delta_0, (1 \Leftrightarrow \alpha)\delta_0 + \alpha\delta_{1/2}) = \min \{\alpha, 1/2\} \quad (5.4)$$

for all $\alpha \in (0, 1)$. But this is not possible for an integral probability metric, since for an arbitrary generator \mathfrak{F}

$$d_{\mathfrak{F}}(\delta_0, (1 \Leftrightarrow \alpha)\delta_0 + \alpha\delta_{1/2}) = \|\alpha \cdot (\delta_0 \Leftrightarrow \delta_{1/2})\|_{\mathfrak{F}} = \alpha \cdot \|\delta_0 \Leftrightarrow \delta_{1/2}\|_{\mathfrak{F}},$$

in contradiction to (5.4).

Acknowledgements

The content of this paper appears in part in my doctoral thesis, which I have written under the supervision of K. Hinderer. I owe him a debt of gratitude for his expert guidance and encouragement.

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