

# Markov Processes and Martingales

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## Martingales, the definition

### Definition 1.1 (Filtered space)

Here we follow the Williams' book. [21] A filtered space is  $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \{\mathcal{F}_n\}, \mathbb{P})$ , where  $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$  is a probability space and  $\{\mathcal{F}_n\}_{n=0}^\infty$  is a filtration. This means:

$$\mathcal{F}_0 \subset \mathcal{F}_1 \subset \mathcal{F}_2 \cdots \subset \mathcal{F}$$

is an increasing sequence of sub  $\sigma$ -algebras of  $\mathcal{F}$ . Put

(1)  $\mathcal{F}_\infty := \sigma\left(\bigcup_n \mathcal{F}_n\right) \subset \mathcal{F}$ .

The reason that we use filtration so often is

## Martingales, the definition (cont.)

### Theorem 1.2

(a2)? Given the r.v.  $X_1, \dots, X_n$  and  $Y$  on the probability space  $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ . We define  $\mathcal{F} := \sigma(X_1, \dots, X_n)$ . Then

(2)  $Y \in \mathcal{F} \iff \exists g : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ , Borel s.t.

$$Y(\omega) = g(X_1(\omega), \dots, X_n(\omega)).$$

This means that if  $X_1, \dots, X_n$  are outcomes of an experiment then the value of  $Y$  is predictable based on we know the values of  $X_1, \dots, X_n$  iff  $Y \in \mathcal{F}$ , where  $Y \in \mathcal{F}$  means that  $Y$  is  $\mathcal{F}$ -measurable.

## Martingales, the definition (cont.)

When we say simply "process" in this talk, we mean "Discrete time stochastic process".

### Definition 1.3 (Adapted process)

We say that the process  $M = \{M_n\}_{n=0}^\infty$  is adapted to the filtration  $\{\mathcal{F}_n\}$  if  $M_n \in \mathcal{F}_n$ .

## Martingales, the definition (cont.)

### Definition 1.4

(a61)? Let  $M = \{M_n\}_{n=0}^\infty$  be an adaptive process to the filtration  $\{\mathcal{F}_n\}$ . We say that  $X$  is a **martingale** if

(i)  $\mathbb{E}[|M_n|] < \infty, \forall n$

(ii)  $\mathbb{E}[M_n | \mathcal{F}_n] = M_{n-1}$  a.s. for  $n \geq 1$

$X$  is **supermartingale** if we substitute (ii) with

$$\mathbb{E}[M_n | \mathcal{F}_{n-1}] \leq M_{n-1} \text{ a.s. } n \geq 1.$$

Finally,  $M$  is a **submartingale** if we substitute (ii) with

$$\mathbb{E}[M_n | \mathcal{F}_{n-1}] \geq M_{n-1} \text{ a.s. } n \geq 1.$$

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## Functions of MC

### Remark 2.1

(a10) Given a **Markov chain**  $X = (X_n)$  with transition probability matrix  $\mathbf{P} = (p(x, y))_{x, y}$ . We are also give a function  $f : S \times \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  satisfying

(5)  $\square_{a8} \quad f(x, n) = \sum_{y \in S} p(x, y) f(y, n+1)$ .

Then  $M_n = f(X_n)$  is a **martingale** w.r.t.  $X$ . (We verified this in the Stochastic Processes course. See [4, Theorem 5.5].)

## Functions of MC (cont.)

Given a Markov chain  $X = (X_n)$  with transition probability matrix  $\mathbf{P} = (p(x, y))_{x, y}$ .

## Functions of MC (cont.)

$f$  is called **superharmonic** if  $-f$  is subharmonic. It follows from Remark 2.1 that

### Theorem 2.3

Let  $X = (X_n)$  be a Markov chain with transition probability matrix  $\mathbf{P} = (p(x, y))_{x, y}$  and let  $h$  be a  $\mathbf{P}$ -harmonic function. Then  $h(X_n)$  is a Martingale w.r.t.  $X$ .

## Functions of MC (cont.)

### Example 2.5 (Simple Symmetric Random Walk)

Let  $Y_1, Y_2, \dots$  be iid with

$$\mathbb{P}(X_i = 1) = \mathbb{P}(X_i = -1) = 1/2,$$

We write  $S_n := S_0 + Y_1 + \dots + Y_n$ . Then  $M_n := S_n^2 - n$  is a martingale. Namely,  $f(x, n) = x^2 - n$  satisfies (5).

### Theorem 2.6

<sup>a14)?</sup> Let  $h$  be a subharmonic function for the Markov chain  $X = (X_n)$ . Then  $M_k := h(X_k)$  is a submartingale.

## Polya's Urn,

One can find a nice account with more details at <http://www.math.uah.edu/stat/urn/Polya.html> or click [here](#)

Given an urn with initially contains:  $r > 0$  red and  $g > 0$  green balls.

- draw a ball from the urn randomly,
- observe its color,
- return the ball to the urn along with  $c$  new balls of the same color.

- If  $c = 0$  this is sampling with replacement.
- If  $c = -1$  sampling without replacement.

## Functions of MC (cont.)

### Definition 2.2 ( $\mathbf{P}$ -harmonic functions)

<sup>a12)?</sup> For an  $f : S \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ :

$$(6) \text{ ?a6)? } Pf(x) := \sum_{y \in S} p(x, y) f(y).$$

We say that such an  $f$  is **harmonic** if

$$(i) \sum_{y \in S} p(x, y) |f(y)| < \infty, \forall x \in S \text{ and}$$

$$(ii) \forall x \in S, h(x) = Ph(x)$$

if we replace (ii) with  $\forall x, f(x) \leq Pf(x)$  then  $f$  is **subharmonic**.

## Functions of MC (cont.)

### Example 2.4

<sup>?(a9)?</sup> Let  $X_1, X_2, \dots$  be iid with

$$\mathbb{P}(X_i = 1) = p \text{ and } \mathbb{P}(X_i = -1) = 1 - p,$$

$p \in (0, 1), p \neq 0.5$ . Let  $S_n := X_1 + \dots + X_n$ . Then

$$(7) \text{ ?a11)? } M_n := \left(\frac{1-p}{p}\right)^{S_n}$$

is a martingale. Namely,  $h(x) = ((1-p)/p)^x$  is harmonic.

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## Polya's Urn, (cont.)

From now we assume that  $c \geq 1$ . After the  $n$ -th draw and replacement step is completed:

- the number of green balls in the urn is:  $G_n$ .
- the number of red balls in the urn is:  $R_n$ .
- the fraction of green balls in the urn is  $X_n$ .
- Let  $Y_n = 1$  if the  $n$ -th ball drawn is green. Otherwise  $Y_n := 0$ .
- Let  $\mathcal{F}_n$  be the filtration generated by  $Y = (Y_n)$ .

## Polya's Urn, (cont.)

### Claim 1

$X_n$  is a martingale w.r.t.  $\mathcal{F}_n$ .

**Proof** Assume that

$$R_n = i \text{ and } G_n = j$$

Then

$$\mathbb{P}\left(X_{n+1} = \frac{j+c}{i+j+c}\right) = \frac{j}{i+j},$$

and

$$\mathbb{P}\left(X_{n+1} = \frac{j}{i+j+c}\right) = \frac{i}{i+j}.$$

## Polya's Urn, (cont.)

- The probability  $p_{n,m}$  of getting green on the first  $m$  steps and getting red in the next  $n-m$  steps is the same as the probability of drawing altogether  $m$  green and  $n-m$  red balls in any particular redescribed order.

$$p_{n,m} = \prod_{k=0}^{m-1} \frac{g+kc}{g+r+kc} \cdot \prod_{\ell=0}^{n-m-1} \frac{r+\ell c}{g+r+(m+\ell)c}$$

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## Games (cont.)

### Definition 4.1

(a19) Given a process  $C = (C_n)$ . We say that:

- (i)  $C$  is **previsible** or **predictable** if

$$\forall n \geq 1, C_n \in \mathcal{F}_{n-1}.$$

- (ii)  $C$  is **bounded** if  $\exists K$  such that  $\forall n, \forall \omega, |C_n(\omega)| < K$ .

- (iii)  $C$  has **bounded increments** if  $\exists K$  s.t.  $\forall n \geq 1, \forall \omega \in \Omega, |C_{n+1}(\omega) - C_n(\omega)| < K$

## Polya's Urn, (cont.)

Hence

$$(8) \mathbb{E}[X_{n+1} | \mathcal{F}_n] = \frac{j+c}{i+j+c} \cdot \frac{j}{i+j} + \frac{j}{i+j+c} \cdot \frac{i}{i+j} = \frac{j}{i+j} = X_n.$$

□

### Corollary 3.1

There exists an  $X_\infty$  s.t.  $X_n \rightarrow X_\infty$  a.s.

This is immediate from Theorem 1.10.

In order to find the distribution of  $X_\infty$  observe that:

## Polya's Urn, (cont.)

If  $c = g = r = 1$  then

$$\mathbb{P}(G_n = 2m+1) = \binom{n}{m} \frac{m!(n-m)!}{(n+1)!} = \frac{1}{n+1}.$$

That is  $X_\infty$  is uniform on  $(0, 1)$ : In the general case  $X_\infty$  has density

$$\frac{\Gamma((g+r)/c)}{\Gamma(g/c)\Gamma(r/c)} x^{(g/c)-1} (1-x)^{(r/c)-1}.$$

That is the distribution of  $X_\infty$  is Beta  $\left(\frac{g}{c}, \frac{r}{c}\right)$

## Games

Imagine that somebody plays games at times  $k = 1, 2, \dots$ . Let  $X_k - X_{k-1}$  be the **net winnings per unit stake in game  $n$** .

In the martingale case

$$\mathbb{E}[X_n - X_{n-1} | \mathcal{F}_{n-1}] = 0, \text{ the game is fair.}$$

In the supermartingale case

$$\mathbb{E}[X_n - X_{n-1} | \mathcal{F}_{n-1}] \leq 0, \text{ the game is unfavorable.}$$

## Games (cont.)

$C_n$  is the **player's stake at time  $n$**  which is decided based upon the history of the game up to time  $n-1$ . The winning on game  $n$  is  $C_n(X_n - X_{n-1})$ . The **total winning after  $n$  game** is

$$(9) \text{ [a18]} Y_n := \sum_{1 \leq k \leq n} C_k (X_k - X_{k-1}) =: (C \bullet X)_n.$$

By definition:

$$(C \bullet X)_0 = 0.$$

Clearly,

$$Y_n - Y_{n-1} = C_n (X_n - X_{n-1}).$$

## Games (cont.)

We say that

$C \bullet X$  is the martingale transform of  $X$  by  $C$ .

## Games (cont.)

Proof.

$$(10) \quad \mathbb{E}[Y_n - Y_{n-1} | \mathcal{F}_{n-1}] = C_n \mathbb{E}[X_n - X_{n-1} | \mathcal{F}_{n-1}] < 0.$$

Theorem 4.3

(a21) Assume that  $C$  is a **bounded** and **previsible** process and  $X$  is a **martingale** then  $C \bullet X$  is a **martingale** which is null at 0.

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## Stopping Times, definitions (cont.)

E.g.  $T$  is the time when we stop plying the game. We can decide at time  $n$  if we stop at that moment based on the history up to time  $n$ .

## Games (cont.)

Theorem 4.2 (You cannot beat the system)

(a20) Given  $C = (C_n)_{n=1}^\infty$  satisfying:

- (a)  $C_n \geq 0$  for all  $n$  (otherwise the player would be the Casino),
- (b)  $C$  is previsible (that is  $C_n \in \mathcal{F}_{n-1}$ ),
- (c)  $C$  is bounded.

Then  $C \bullet X$  is a **supermartingale** (**martingale**) if  $X$  is a **supermartingale** (**martingale**) respectively.

## Games (cont.)

Theorem 4.4

In the previous two theorems the boundedness can be replaced by  $C_n \in L^2, \forall n$  if  $X_n \in L^2, \forall n$ .

The proofs of the one but last theorem is obvious. The proof of the last theorem immediately follows from (f) on slide 133 of file "Some basic facts from probability theory".

## Stopping Times, definitions

Definition 5.1

A map  $T : \Omega \rightarrow \{0, 1, \dots, \infty\}$  is called **stopping time** if

$$(11) \quad \mathbb{P}\{T \leq n\} = \{\omega : T(\omega) \leq n\} \in \mathcal{F}_n, \quad n \leq \infty.$$

equivalent definition:

$$(12) \quad \mathbb{P}\{T = n\} = \{\omega : T(\omega) = n\} \in \mathcal{F}_n, \quad n \leq \infty.$$

We say that the **stopping time  $T$  is bounded** if  $\exists K$  s.t.  $T(\omega) < K$  holds for all  $\omega \in \Omega$ .

## Stopping Times, definitions (cont.)

Example 5.2

Given a process  $(X_n)$  which is adapted to the filtration  $\{\mathcal{F}_n\}$ , further given a Borel set  $B$ . Let

$$T := \inf \{n \geq 0 : X_n \in B\}.$$

By convention:  $\inf \emptyset := \infty$ . Then

$$\{T \leq n\} = \bigcup_{k \leq n} \{T = k\} \in \mathcal{F}_n.$$

## Stopping Times, definitions (cont.)

### Lemma 5.3

(a37) Assume that  $T$  is a stopping time w.r.t. the filtration  $\{\mathcal{F}_n\}$ . Let

$$C_n^T := \mathbb{1}_{n \leq T}.$$

Then  $C_n^T$  is previsible. That is

$$(13) \text{ ?a40? } C_n^T \in \mathcal{F}_{n-1}.$$

### Proof.

$$\{C_n^T = 0\} = \{T \leq n-1\} \in \mathcal{F}_{n-1}. \quad \square$$

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## Stopped martingales (cont.)

(a60)? Let  $T$  be a stopping time for an  $\{\mathcal{F}_n\}$  filtration. For a process  $X = (X_n)$  we write  $X^T$  for the process stopped at  $T$ :

$$X_n^T(\omega) := X_{T(\omega) \wedge n}(\omega),$$

where  $a \wedge b := \min\{a, b\}$ .

Assume that Kázmér always bets 1\$ and stops playing at time  $T$ . Then Kázmér's stake process is:

$$(14) \text{ a23 } C_n^{(T)} = \mathbb{1}_{n \leq T}$$

In Lemma 5.3 we proved that  $C^{(T)}$  is previsible (the notion "previsible" was defined on slide # 23).

By (9), Kázmér's winning's process:

$$(C^{(T)} \bullet X)_n = X_{T \wedge n} - X_0.$$

That is

$$C^{(T)} \bullet X = X^T - X_0.$$

So, by Theorems 4.2 and 4.3 we obtain

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Theorem 6.1

(a22) Let  $T$  be a stopping time

(i)

$X$  supermartingale  $\implies X^T$  supermartingale.

So, in this case  $\forall n, \mathbb{E}[X_{T \wedge n}] \leq \mathbb{E}[X_0]$

(ii)

$X$  martingale  $\implies X^T$  martingale.

So, in this case  $\forall n, \mathbb{E}[X_{T \wedge n}] = \mathbb{E}[X_0]$

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Proof

We define  $C_n^{(T)}$  as in (14). Clearly,  $C^{(T)} \geq 0$  and bounded. As we saw in Lemma 5.3,  $C^{(T)}$  is previsible. So, we can apply Theorem 4.2 for

$$(15) \quad (C \bullet X)_n = \sum_{k=1}^n C_k \cdot (X_k - X_{k-1}) = \begin{cases} X_n - X_0, & \text{on } \{T \geq n\}; \\ \sum_{k=1}^T (X_k - X_{k-1}) = X_T - X_0, & \text{on } \{T < n\}. \end{cases} = X_{T \wedge n} - X_0.$$

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

That is by Theorem 4.2 we get that  $X_{T \wedge n} - X_0$  is a supermartingale (martingale) if  $(X_n)$  is a supermartingale (martingale) respectively. Which yields the assertion of the theorem. ■

### Remark 6.2

(a26)? It can happen for a martingale  $X$  that

$$(16) \text{ a32 } \mathbb{E}[X_n] \neq \mathbb{E}[X_0].$$

The most popular counter example uses the Simple Symmetric Random Walk (SSRW). First we recall its definition and a few of its most important properties.

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Example 6.3 (Simple Symmetric Random Walk (SSRW))

(a27)? The Simple Symmetric Random Walk (SSRW) on  $\mathbb{Z}$  is  $S = (S_n)_{n=0}^\infty$ , where

$$(17) \text{ ?a33? } S_n = X_0 + X_1 + \dots + X_n,$$

where  $X_0 = 0$  and  $X_1, X_2, \dots$  are iid with  $\mathbb{P}(X_1 = 1) = \mathbb{P}(X_1 = -1) = \frac{1}{2}$ .

We have seen that

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Lemma 6.4 (SSRW)

(a34)? The Simple Symmetric Random Walk on  $\mathbb{Z}$  is

- (i) Null recurrent,
- (ii) martingale.

The second part follows from Example 1.7. We proved that SSRW is null recurrent in the course Stochastic processes. To give an example where (16) happens:

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Example 6.5

(a35)?  $S = (S_n)$  be the SSRW and let  $T := \inf \{n : S_n = 1\}$ . Then by Theorem 6.1,  $\mathbb{E}[X_{T \wedge n}] = \mathbb{E}[X_0]$ . However,

$$\mathbb{E}[X_T] = 1 \neq 0 = X_0 = \mathbb{E}[X_0].$$

### Question 1

Let  $X$  be a martingale and let  $T$  be a stopping time. Under which conditions can we say that

$$(18) \text{ ?a25? } \mathbb{E}[X_T] = \mathbb{E}[X_0]?$$

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Theorem 6.6 (Doob's Optional Stopping Theorem)

(a28) Let  $X$  be a supermartingale and  $T$  be a stopping time. If any of the following conditions holds

- (i)  $T$  is bounded.
- (ii)  $X$  is bounded and  $T < \infty$  a.s.
- (iii)  $\mathbb{E}[T] < \infty$  and  $X$  has bounded increments.

then

- (a)  $X_T \in L^1$  and  $\mathbb{E}(X_T) \leq \mathbb{E}[X_0]$ .
- (b) If  $X$  is a martingale then  $\mathbb{E}(X_T) = \mathbb{E}[X_0]$ .

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Proof.

By Thm: 6.1  $\forall n, X_{T \wedge n} \in L^1$  and  $\mathbb{E}[X_{T \wedge n} - X_0] \leq 0$ . If (i) holds then  $\exists N$  s.t.  $T \leq N$ . Then for  $n = N$ , we have  $X_{T \wedge n} = X_T$ . Hence (a) follows.

If (ii) holds then  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} X_{T \wedge n} = X_T$ . So, by Dominated Convergence Theorem:  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{E}[X_{T \wedge n}] = \mathbb{E}[X_T]$ . On the other hand, by Theorem 6.1,  $\mathbb{E}[X_{T \wedge n}] \leq \mathbb{E}[X_0]$ .

If (iii) holds The answer comes from Dom. Conv.

Thm.  $|X_{T \wedge n} - X_0| = \left| \sum_{k=1}^{T \wedge n} (X_k - X_{k-1}) \right| \leq KT < \infty$ . If  $X$  is a martingale, apply everything above also for  $-X$ .  $\square$

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Corollary 6.7

(a41)? Assume that

- (a)  $M = (M_n)$  is a martingale.
- (b)  $\exists K_1$  s.t.  $\forall n, |M_n - M_{n-1}| < K_1$ ,
- (c)  $C = \{C_n\}$  is a previsible process with  $|C_n(\omega)| < K_2, \forall \omega, \forall n$ .
- (d)  $T$  is a stopping time with  $\mathbb{E}[T] < \infty$ .

Then

$$(19) \text{ ?a42? } \mathbb{E}[(C \bullet M)_T] = 0.$$

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Proof.

Put together Theorem 4.3 and Theorem 6.6.  $\square$

A corollary of the Optional Stopping Theorem is:

### Theorem 6.8

(a43)? Assume that

- (i)  $M = (M_n)$  is a non-negative supermartingale,
- (ii)  $T$  is a stopping time s.t.  $T < \infty$  a.s.

Then  $\mathbb{E}[X_T] \leq \mathbb{E}[X_0]$ .

## Stopped martingales (cont.)

### Proof.

We know that  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} X_{T \wedge n} = X_T$  a.s. and  $X_{T \wedge n} \geq 0$ . So we can apply Fatou Lemma :

$$\liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{E}[X_{T \wedge n}] \geq \mathbb{E}[X_T].$$

On the other hand, by Theorem 6.1 the left hand side is smaller than or equal to  $\mathbb{E}[X_0]$ .  $\square$

## Awaiting for the (almost) inevitable

In order to apply the previous theorems we need a machinery to check if  $\mathbb{E}[T < \infty]$  a.s. holds.

### Theorem 6.9

(a44) Assume that  $\exists N \in \mathbb{N}, \varepsilon > 0$  s.t.  $\forall n \in \mathbb{N}$ ,

$$(20) \text{ a45 } \mathbb{P}(T \leq n + N | \mathcal{F}_n) > \varepsilon, \text{ a.s.}$$

then

$$\mathbb{E}[T] < \infty.$$

**Proof.**

We apply (20) for  $n = (k - 1)N$ . Then the assertion follows by mathematical induction from Homework 11. □

**ABRACADABRA (cont.)**

**Problem 6.11 (Monkey at the typewriter)**

a48)? Let  $X_1, X_2, \dots$  be iid r.v. taking values from the set **Alphabet**  $:= \{A, B, \dots, Z\}$  of cardinality 26. We assume that the distribution of  $X_k$  is uniform. Let  $T$  be

$$(21) \quad T := \min \{n + 10 : (X_n, X_{n+1}, \dots, X_{n+10}) = (A, B, R, A, C, A, D, A, B, R, A)\}$$

Find  $\mathbb{E}[T] = ?$

We associate a players in a Casino to the monkey:

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**ABRACADABRA**

The following exercise is named as "Tricky exercise" in Williams' book [21, p.45].

**Problem 6.10 (Monkey at the typewriter)**

a46)? Assume that a monkey types on a typewriter. He types only capital letters and he chooses equally likely any of the 26 letters of the English alphabet independently of everything. What is the expected number of letters he needs to type until the word "ABRACADABRA" appears in his typing for the first time?

The same problem formulated in a more formal way:

**ABRACADABRA (cont.)**

**Example 6.12 (Players associated to the monkey)**

a47)? Imagine that for every  $\ell = 1, 2, \dots$ , on the  $\ell$ -th day a new gambler arrives in a Casino. He bets: **1\$ on the event: " $X_\ell = A$ "**. If he loses he leaves. If he wins he receives 26\$. Then he bets his **26\$ on the event: " $X_{\ell+1} = B$ "**. If he loses he leaves. If he wins then he receives 26<sup>2</sup>\$ and then he bets all of his **26<sup>2</sup>\$ on the event: " $\ell + 2$ -th letter will be R"** and so on until he loses or gets ABRACADABRA.

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