

Introduction to Lower Previsions I

Gregory Wheeler

Munich Center for Mathematical Philosophy

Prolog Spring School

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A (mathematically) simple way to a lower prevision

$$(\Omega, \mathcal{A}, p)$$

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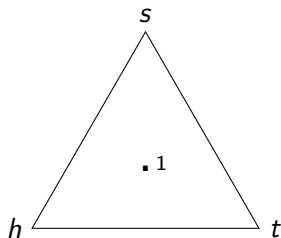
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Williams (1975), Levi (1980), Walley (1991), Joyce (2008),
Haenni, Romeijn, Wheeler, Williamson (2011).



Tin Can Toss

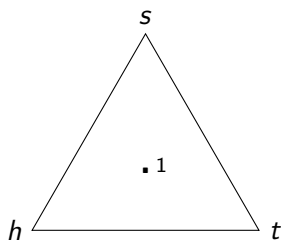
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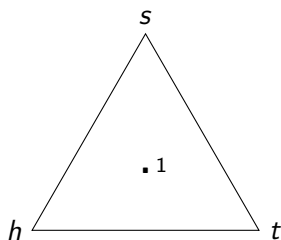
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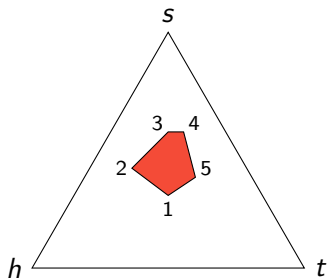
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- ▶ The probability simplex includes all the probability mass functions.
- ▶ Example: the center point is the uniform distribution, $p_1 = (\frac{1}{3}, \frac{1}{3}, \frac{1}{3})$.
- ▶ An easy way to think about an imprecise probability model is as a **closed convex set** \mathbb{P} of probability mass functions. . .

Tin Can Toss

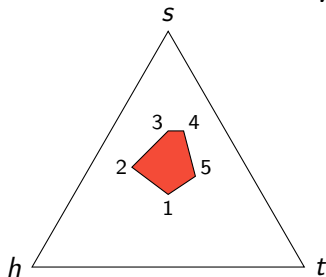
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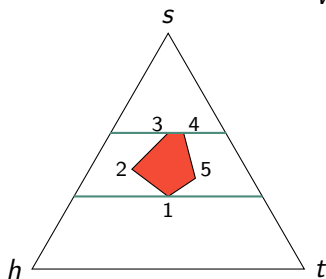
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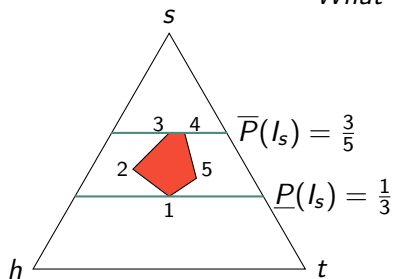
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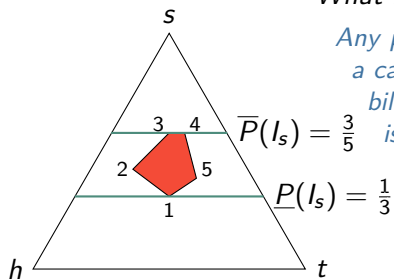
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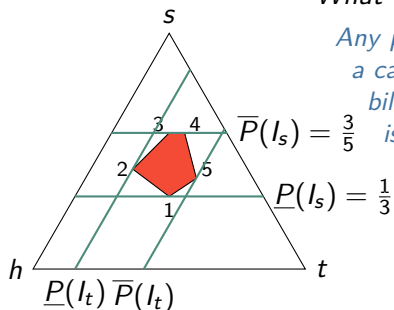


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Any point in the red **credal set** is a candidate model for the probability of s . But, in this set there is a **lower** possible value and an **upper** possible value. The same holds for the probabilities of h and t .

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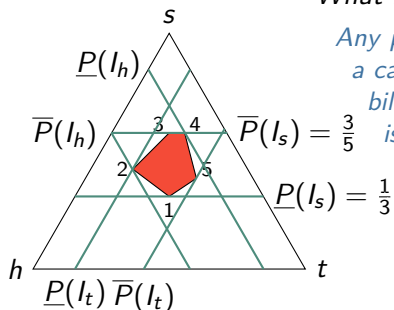


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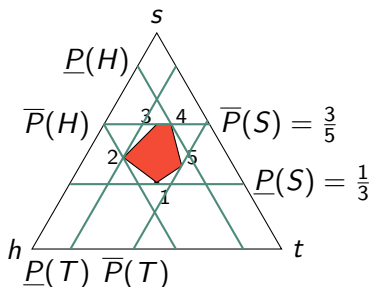


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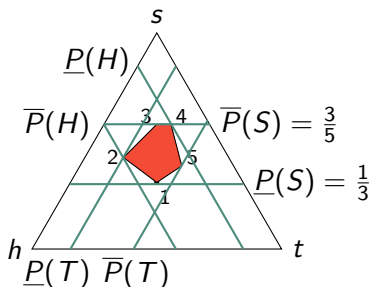
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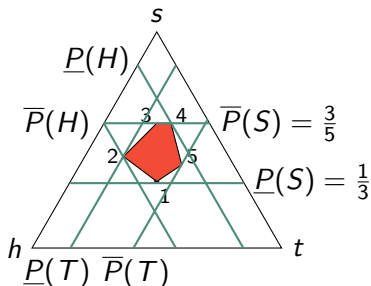
$\underline{P}_{\mathbb{P}}(f) := \min\{P_p(f) : p \in \mathbb{P}\}$
Lower prevision (expectation)

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Upper prevision (expectation)

$\overline{P}(-f) = -\underline{P}(f)$
Conjugacy

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Set of probabilities: \mathbb{P}

Convex closure of \mathbb{P} : $\text{co}(\mathbb{P})$

Lower envelope of the convex hull of $\text{co}(\mathbb{P})$: $\underline{P}(\cdot)$

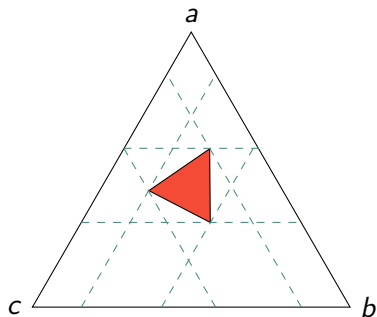
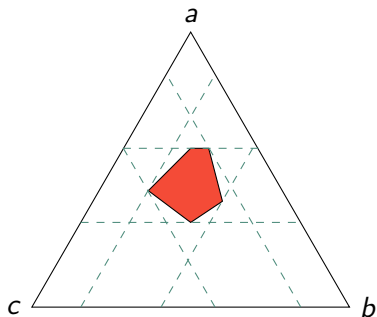
Lower Envelope and Lower Previsions

Theorem (Walley 1991)

A real functional \underline{P} is a lower prevision if and only if it is the lower envelope of **some** credal set \mathbb{P} .

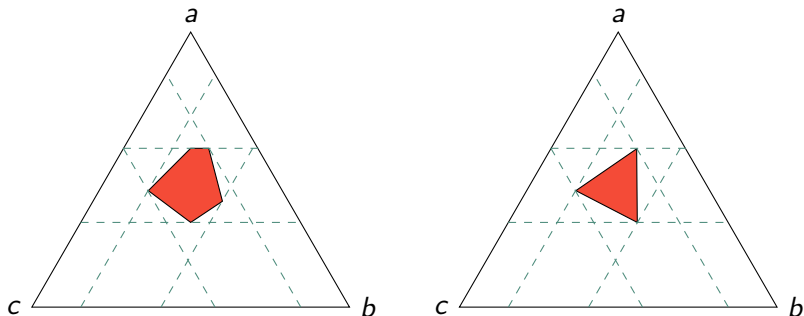
Many credal sets to one lower envelope

Two **different credal sets**, in red, that have the **same lower and upper probabilities** to all events.



Many credal sets to one lower envelope

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Moral: The language of events (propositions) is not expressive enough for the theory of lower previsions.

Issues with “imprecise” probabilities

- ▶ *What do these probabilities represent?*
 - Incomplete evidence?
 - Knightian uncertainty (vs risk)?
 - A person's “credal committee”?
 - A group of Bayes agents?
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- ▶ *Is IP too problematic?*
 - Dilation & discounting cost-free information
 - No IP strictly proper scoring rules
 - Conditioning on sets of zero probabilities?
 - ...

Outline for this tutorial

Three goals

1. *Get rid of probabilities, credal sets, and lower previsions*
 - Sets of **Acceptable/Desirable Gambles**
Williams 1977; Walley 1991, 2000; De Cooman and Troffaes 2014

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 - **Dilation**
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What is basic?

A set of outcomes \mathcal{X} .

A set of (bounded) gambles.

Bounded Gambles

A **bounded gamble** on the set \mathcal{X} is a bounded real-valued map $f : \mathcal{X} \mapsto \mathbb{R}$.

- ▶ Interpreted as a **gain** (+/−) that is a function of $x \in \mathcal{X}$
- ▶ The gain is expressed in units of a **linear utility** scale.
- ▶ A bounded gamble is a real-valued **random variable**.

Example: Acceptable Bounded Gamble

You **accept** f when You agree to the following transaction:

- ▶ The value x of X is determined, and
- ▶ You receive the amount $f(x)$.

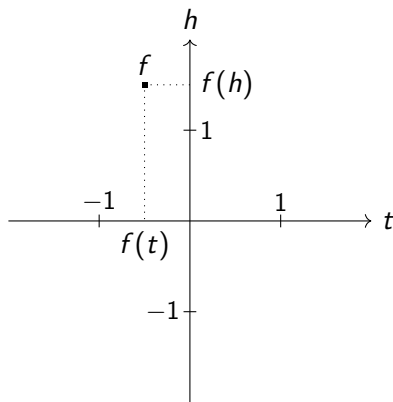
Note:

- ▶ When $f(x) \geq 0$, Your total utility will **increase** by $|f(x)|$;
- ▶ When $f(x) < 0$, Your total utility will **decrease** by $|f(x)|$.

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A **gamble** $f : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is an uncertain reward whose value is $f(X)$.

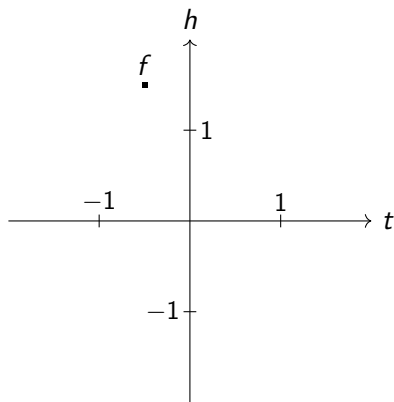
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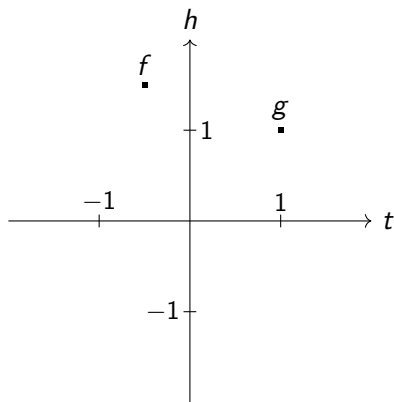
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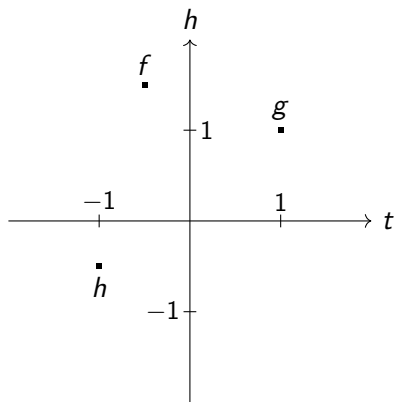
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Elicitation: So, tell me some number of gambles that You accept.

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Set of Acceptable Gambles:

$\mathcal{D} \subseteq \mathbb{B}$ is a set of gambles whose reward is no worse than zero.

Sets of Coherent Acceptable Bounded Gambles

A set of acceptable gambles \mathcal{D} is **coherent** if

A1. Avoid Partial Loss - If $f < 0$, then $f \notin \mathcal{D}$.

Never accept when you cannot win

A2. Accept Partial Gain - If $f \geq 0$, then $f \in \mathcal{D}$.

Always accept when you cannot lose

A3. Scale Invariance - If $f \in \mathcal{D}$, then $\lambda f \in \mathcal{D}$ ($\forall \lambda \in \mathbb{R}. \lambda > 0$)

If a gamble is acceptable, a fraction of it is acceptable too

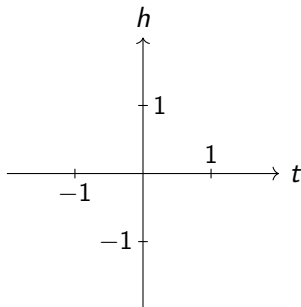
A4. Combination - If $f \in \mathcal{D}$ and $g \in \mathcal{D}$, then $f + g \in \mathcal{D}$.

If each is acceptable alone, they are acceptable together

Coherence for Sets of Acceptable Gambles

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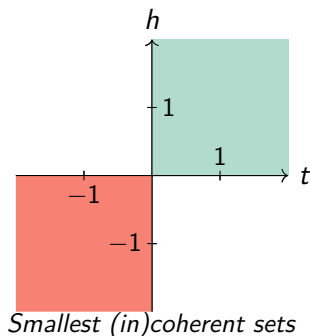
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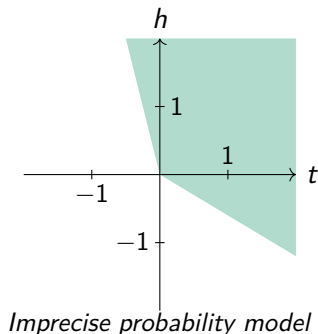
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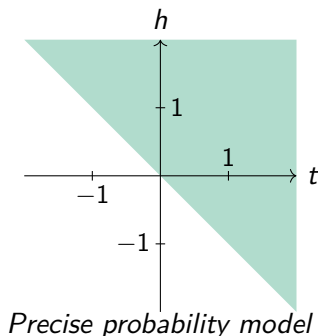
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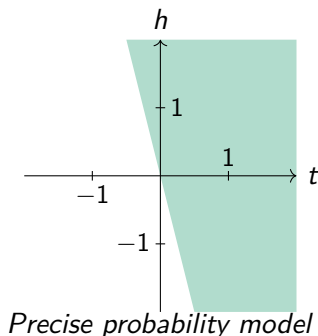
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Example: Tin Can Toss

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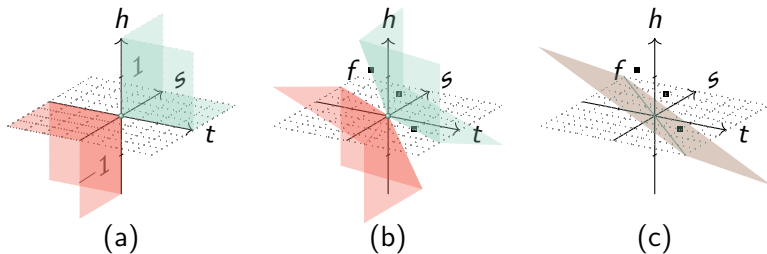


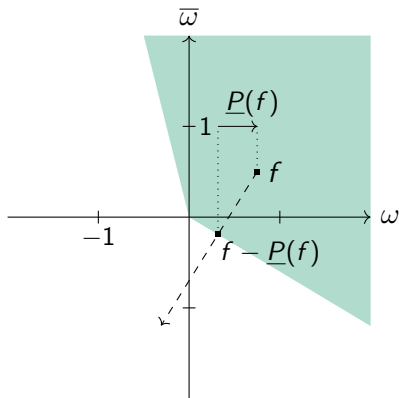
Figure: Sets of Acceptable Gambles for outcomes *heads*, *side*, and *tails*

Connecting Acceptable Gambles to Lower Previsions

$$\underline{P}(f) = \sup\{\alpha \in \mathbb{R} : f - \alpha \in \mathcal{D}\}$$

supremum buying price for f .

- ▶ You get uncertain f
- ▶ You give a constant α
- ▶ The result of the transaction $f - \alpha$ is acceptable to You
- ▶ The *highest price* α whereby $f - \alpha$ remains acceptable to You is Your *supremum buying price* for f .
- ▶ This is your **lower prevision** for f .

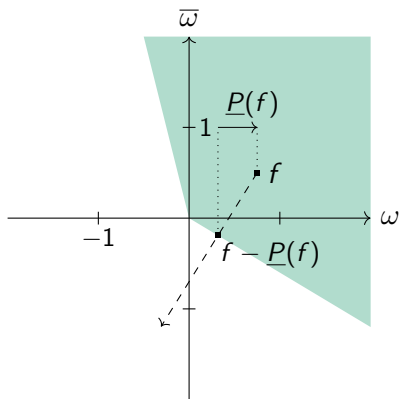


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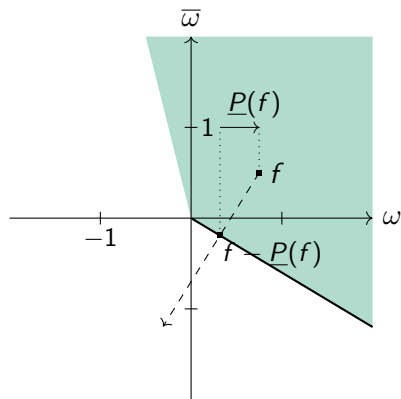
- ▶ Sets of desirable gambles are more informative than lower previsions



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$\underline{P}(f) = \sup\{\mu \in \mathbb{R} : f - \mu \in \mathcal{D}\}$
supremum buying price for f .

- ▶ Sets of desirable gambles are more informative than lower previsions
- ▶ The border could be **included** or

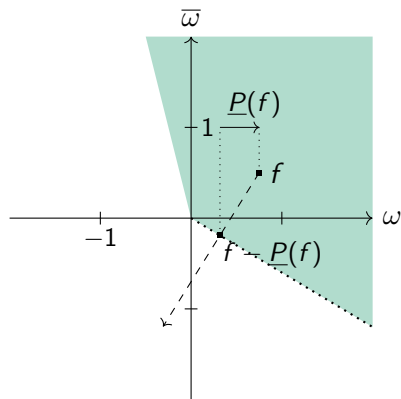


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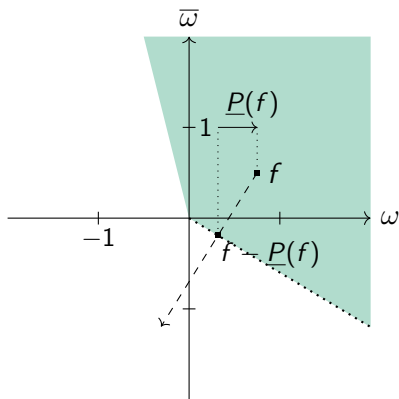
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- ▶ Sets of desirable gambles are more informative than lower previsions
- ▶ This border behavior does not affect the supremum
- ▶ So, there are **no problems** with conditioning on sets of **probability zero**, as this occurs precisely on the border condition.



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 - ✓ Sets of **Acceptable Gambles**
Williams 1977; Walley 1991, 2000; De Cooman and Troffaes 2014
2. *Propose a benchmark for evaluating a model of belief*
 - ✓ **Operationalizable**
 - **Inference**: closure, marginalization, and conditionalization
 - ✓ **Unification**: unify different uncertainty models
3. *Address with some alleged problems*
 - **Dilation**
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 - **No Strictly Proper IP Scoring Rules**

Inference

Probabilistic inference involves three basic components:

- ▶ Closure or “natural extension” (Walley)
- ▶ Marginalization
- ▶ Conditioning

Closure: The Natural Extension

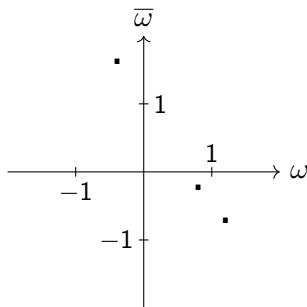
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These axioms are viewed as production rules.

Inference through natural extension

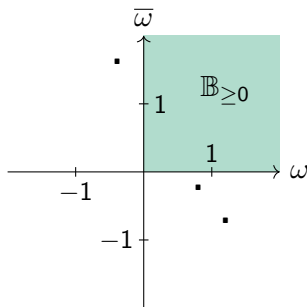
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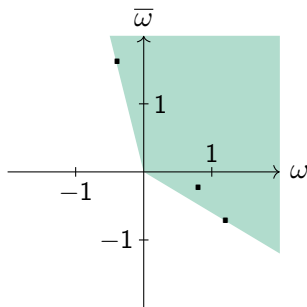
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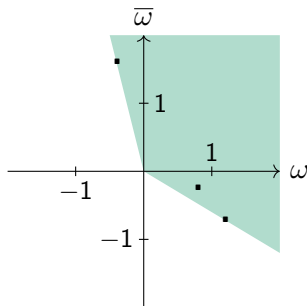


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Inference through natural extension

The natural extension \mathcal{E}_A of Your elicited set of accepted gambles A wrt \mathcal{X} is

$$\mathcal{E}_A := \left\{ \sum_{k=1}^n \lambda_k f_k : f_k \in A \cup \mathbb{B}_{\geq 0}, \lambda_k \geq 0, n > 0 \right\}$$



Conditional Lower Previsions

Let's introduce **conditional lower previsions** for **unbounded** random variables defined over

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Let $\wp^+(\mathcal{X})$ be the **powerset** of \mathcal{X} excluding the empty set.

Now consider a set of **acceptable unbounded gambles** $D \subseteq \mathbb{G}$.

Conditional Lower Previsions

Define for $\mathcal{D} \subseteq \mathbb{G}$ two functionals on $\mathbb{G} \times \wp^+$:

The **conditional lower prevision** $\text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(|\cdot) : \mathbb{G} \times \wp^+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^*$:

$$\text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(f | E) := \{\alpha \in \mathbb{R}^* : (f - \alpha)I_E \in \mathcal{D}\}$$

The **conditional upper prevision** $\text{upr}(\mathcal{D})(\cdot | \cdot) : \mathbb{G} \times \wp^+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^*$:

$$\text{upr}(\mathcal{D})(f | E) := \{\alpha \in \mathbb{R}^* : (\alpha - f)I_E \in \mathcal{D}\}$$

for any gamble f on \mathcal{X} and any event $E \in \wp^+$.

Properties of conditional lower previsions on gambles

Theorem (Williams 1975, Troffaes and De Cooman 2014)

Let $\text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(\cdot | \cdot)$ be the conditional lower prevision on \mathcal{D} . Then, for all gambles f, g , all non-negative real numbers λ , all real numbers α , and all non-empty events A and B such that $A \subseteq B$, we have

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$$\text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(f + g | A) \geq \text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(f | A) + \text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(g | A)$$

whenever the right-hand side is well defined

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clp4 **Bayes' rule:**

$$\text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(f - \alpha)I_A | B) \begin{cases} \geq 0 & \text{if } \alpha < \text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(f | A) \\ \leq 0 & \text{if } \alpha > \text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(f | A). \end{cases}$$

Representing conditional lower previsions

Theorem (Walley 1991, Troffaes and De Cooman 2014)

A \mathbb{R}^* -valued functional $\underline{P}(\cdot | \cdot)$ on $\mathbb{G} \times \wp^+$ is a conditional lower prevision iff there is **some** set of acceptable gambles \mathcal{D} such that

- ▶ $\underline{P}(\cdot | \cdot) = \text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(\cdot | \cdot)$, and
- ▶ $\underline{P}(\cdot | \cdot)$ satisfies clp1 – clp4.

Example

$\underline{P}(f | A) = -\infty$ says that, given A , You are not willing to buy f at any price.

Coherence

Coherence for conditional lower previsions can be purchased in each of the following (equivalent) ways:

1. There is some coherent set of acceptable gambles \mathcal{D} such that $\text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(\cdot | \cdot)$ is an extension of $\underline{P}(\cdot | \cdot)$

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1. There is some coherent set of acceptable gambles \mathcal{D} such that $\text{lpr}(\mathcal{D})(\cdot | \cdot)$ is an extension of $\underline{P}(\cdot | \cdot)$
2. $\underline{P}(\cdot | \cdot)$ avoids sure loss and is a restriction of the **natural extension** of $\underline{P}(\cdot | \cdot)$.

Two ways of defining lower previsions w/out credal sets

Directly

- ▶ Define $\underline{P}(f)$ directly as Your supremum acceptable buying price for f
- ▶ $\underline{P}(f)$ is the highest price s s.t. for any $t < s$, You accept to pay t before observing X on the promise that You will receive $f(x)$ upon observing the event $X = x$.
- ▶ *Thus*, You are only required to consider whether you accept bounded gambles of type $f - \alpha$.
- ▶ *Conditioning is complicated*

Via Gambles

- ▶ Announce Your acceptable bounded gambles
- ▶ Enforce coherence conditions
- ▶ *Then* infer Your lower $\underline{P}(f)$ and upper $\overline{P}(f)$ previsions for any bounded gamble f .
- ▶ *Conditioning is clean*

Three goals

1. *Get rid of probabilities, credal sets, and lower previsions*

- ✓ Sets of **Acceptable Gambles**

Williams 1977; Walley 1991, 2000; De Cooman and Troffaes 2014

2. *Propose a benchmark for evaluating a model of belief*

- ✓ **Operationalizable**: one-sided betting
- ✓ **Inference**: closure, marginalization, and conditionalization
- ✓ **Unification**: unify different uncertainty models

3. *Address with some alleged problems*

- **Dilation**
- **Violations of Good's Principle**
- **No Strictly Proper IP Scoring Rules**

Summary

- ▶ IP via sets of acceptable gambles is ready for general use
- ▶ It meets the minimal acceptable benchmarks
 - ▶ Operationalizable
 - ▶ Inference: closure, conditionalization, marginalization
 - ▶ Unifies different accounts: propositional logic, Bayesian probabilities, linear previsions, and lower previsions are all special cases.
- ▶ Next: Objections to IP.



Rationality Criteria for Sets of Acceptable Gambles

For all bounded-gambles f and g on \mathcal{X} , and all non-negative real numbers λ ,

A1. Avoid Partial Loss - If $f < 0$, then $f \notin \mathcal{D}$.

You should not accept any gamble you cannot win.

A2. Accept Partial Gain - If $f \geq 0$, then $f \in \mathcal{D}$.

You should accept any gamble you cannot lose.

A3. Scale Invariance - If $f \in \mathcal{D}$, then $\lambda f \in \mathcal{D}$.

If you accept gamble f , you should accept λf .

A4. Combination - If $f \in \mathcal{D}$ and $g \in \mathcal{D}$, then $f + g \in \mathcal{D}$.

If you accept f and accept g , you should accept $f + g$.

A5. Monotonicity - If $f \in \mathcal{D}$ and $g \geq f$, then $g \in \mathcal{D}$.

Any gamble dominating an acceptable gamble is acceptable.

NB: A5 is a theorem. It follows from A2 and A4.

Information ordering

Suppose \mathcal{D}_1 and \mathcal{D}_2 are the sets of acceptable gambles for subject₁ and subject₂, respectively.

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Suppose \mathcal{D}_1 and \mathcal{D}_2 are the sets of acceptable gambles for subject₁ and subject₂, respectively.

If $\mathcal{D}_1 \subseteq \mathcal{D}_2$, then subject₂ will accept (at least) all the bounded gambles that subject₁ does.

We may interpret ' \subseteq ' between sets of acceptable bounded gambles as:

- ▶ *'is at most as informative as'*
- ▶ *'is at most as committal as'*
- ▶ *'is at least as conservative as'*

Extensions

Suppose \mathcal{A} is Your set of acceptable bounded gambles. Your **assessment** \mathcal{A} is (likely) to be finite. Suppose we **extend** \mathcal{A} by the following set of bounded gambles:

$$\mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{A}} := \left\{ g + \sum_{k=1}^n \lambda_k f_k \mid g \geq 0, n \in \mathbb{N}, f_k \in \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}, k = 1, \dots, n \right\}$$

where $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$ is the set of non-negative real numbers.

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where $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$ is the set of non-negative real numbers.

$\mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{A}}$ is the smallest set of bounded gambles that includes \mathcal{A} and satisfies A2 - A4.

Consistency

A set \mathcal{A} of acceptable bounded gambles is **consistent** or **avoids partial loss** if one (or both) of the equivalent conditions is satisfied:

- A. \mathcal{A} is included in some coherent set of acceptable bounded gambles:

$$\mathcal{D} \in \mathbb{D}_b \mid \mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{D} \} \neq \emptyset.$$

- B. For all $n \in \mathbb{N}$, non-negative $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n \in \mathbb{R}$, and bounded gambles $f_1, \dots, f_n \in \mathcal{A}$:

$$\sum_{k=1}^n \lambda_k f_k \not\leq 0.$$

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NB: Condition B explain why consistency is also called **avoiding partial loss**: no non-negative linear combination of bounded gambles in \mathcal{A} should produce a partial loss.

Closure

Proposition: Given a non-empty class $\mathcal{D}_i, i \in I$ of sets of acceptable bounded gambles, if all \mathcal{D}_i are coherent, then so is their intersection $\bigcap_{i \in I} \mathcal{D}_i$.

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For any assessment \mathcal{A} , consider the set $\{\mathcal{D} \in \mathbb{D}_b \mid \mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{D}\}$ of all coherent sets of acceptable bounded gambles including \mathcal{A} . Define the intersection of this set to be the **closure** $\text{Cl}_{\mathbb{D}_b}(\mathcal{A})$ of \mathcal{A} :

$$\text{Cl}_{\mathbb{D}_b}(\mathcal{A}) := \bigcap \{\mathcal{D} \in \mathbb{D}_b : \mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{D}\}$$

NB: the intersection of the empty set is the set of all bounded gambles: $\bigcap \emptyset := \mathbb{B}$.

Properties of Closure

Let $\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2,$ and \mathcal{A}_3 be sets of acceptable bounded gambles. Then the following hold:

1. $\mathcal{A} \subseteq \text{Cl}_{\mathbb{D}_b}(\mathcal{A})$

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4. If $\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathbb{B}_{\geq 0}$ then $\text{Cl}_{\mathbb{D}_b}(\mathcal{A}) = \mathbb{B}_{\geq 0}$.
5. \mathcal{A} is consistent iff $\text{Cl}_{\mathbb{D}_b}(\mathcal{A}) \neq \mathbb{B}$.

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5. \mathcal{A} is consistent iff $\text{Cl}_{\mathbb{D}_b}(\mathcal{A}) \neq \mathbb{B}$.
6. \mathcal{A} is a coherent set of acceptable bounded gambles iff it is consistent and $\mathcal{A} = \text{Cl}_{\mathbb{D}_b}(\mathcal{A})$.

NB: Any $\mathcal{P}(\mathbb{B}) - \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{B})$ -map that satisfies (1) - (3) is a **closure operator**; (4) says that the corresponding **closed subsets** of $\mathcal{P}(\mathbb{B})$ different from \mathbb{B} are exactly the coherent sets of acceptable bounded gambles.

Natural Extension

Theorem (Natural Extension) If the set \mathcal{A} of acceptable bounded gambles is consistent, then there is a smallest coherent set of acceptable bounded gambles that includes \mathcal{A} . It is given by

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cl}_{\mathbb{D}_b}(\mathcal{A}) = \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{A}} &= \left\{ g + \sum_{k=1}^n \lambda_k f_k \mid g \geq 0, n \in \mathbb{N}, f_k \in \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}, k = 1, \dots, n \right\} \\ &= \left\{ h \in \mathbb{B} \mid h \geq \sum_{k=1}^n \lambda_k f_k \text{ for some } n \in \mathbb{N}, f_k \in \mathcal{A}, \lambda_k \in \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0} \right\} \end{aligned}$$

and it is called the **natural extension** of \mathcal{A} .

Inference

Applying the **closure operator**, $\text{Cl}_{\mathbb{D}_b}$, or (equivalently) **natural extension**, to a consistent assessment \mathcal{A} adds those bounded gambles to \mathcal{A} that can be obtained from bounded gambles in \mathcal{A} using the **production rules** A2 - A4 and no other gambles.

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Thus, **natural extension** is a conservative inference mechanism: it picks the **smallest** coherent set of bounded gambles (with respect to some \mathcal{A} that satisfy A2 - A4).

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Thus, **natural extension** is a conservative inference mechanism: it picks the **smallest** coherent set of bounded gambles (with respect to some \mathcal{A} that satisfy A2 - A4).

Consistency then ensures A1, namely that the production rules will not lead to negative bounded gambles and therefore will not lead to partial loss.

Propositional Logic as a Special Case of Natural Extensions

The inference mechanism of natural extension subsumes that of classical propositional logic.

Propositional Logic as a Special Case of Natural Extensions

Setup:

- ▶ An **event** is a subset of the possible values \mathcal{X} of X .
- ▶ The **indicator** I_E of an event E is the bounded gamble that gives one if the actual value x of X belongs to E and zero otherwise.

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- ▶ Now consider propositions p about X , which are in one-to-one correspondence with subsets E_p of \mathcal{X} .

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- ▶ Now consider propositions p about X , which are in one-to-one correspondence with subsets E_p of \mathcal{X} .
- ▶ If You **accept a proposition** p , then You accept the bounded gambles $I_{E_p} - 1 + \epsilon$ for all $\epsilon > 0$.

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- ▶ Now consider propositions p about X , which are in one-to-one correspondence with subsets E_p of \mathcal{X} .
- ▶ If You **accept a proposition** p , then You accept the bounded gambles $I_{E_p} - 1 + \epsilon$ for all $\epsilon > 0$.
- ▶ Since,

$$I_{E_p}(x) - 1 + \epsilon = \begin{cases} \epsilon & \text{if } x \in E_p \\ \epsilon - 1 & \text{if } x \notin E_p, \end{cases}$$

You are willing to bet on the occurrence of E_p at **any** odds $\frac{1-\epsilon}{\epsilon}$, i.e., at any rate strictly less than 1.

- ▶ For any rate $(1 - \epsilon)/\epsilon < 1$, You are **practically certain** that E_p occurs.

Propositional Logic as a Special Case of Natural Extensions

Logical Production Rules

- ▶ **Modus Ponens:** Suppose You accept both p and $p \Rightarrow q$.
Then, $E_p \subseteq E_q$, so,

$$I_{E_p}(x) - 1 + \epsilon \leq I_{E_q}(x) - 1 + \epsilon.$$

From Monotonicity (A5), it follows that You should accept E_q .

- ▶ Therefore, the **logical inference rule modus ponens** is included in the inference mechanism for coherent sets of acceptable gambles.

Propositional Logic as a Special Case of Natural Extensions

Logical Production Rules

- ▶ **Conjunction:** Suppose You accept both p and q .

Propositional Logic as a Special Case of Natural Extensions

Logical Production Rules

- ▶ **Conjunction:** Suppose You accept both p and q .

Then, You accept the bounded gambles $I_{E_p}(x) - 1 + \epsilon$ and $I_{E_q}(x) - 1 + \epsilon$, and by A4 You also accept the bounded gambles $I_{E_p}(x) + I_{E_q}(x) - 2 + 2\epsilon$, for all $\epsilon > 0$.

Propositional Logic as a Special Case of Natural Extensions

Logical Production Rules

- ▶ **Conjunction:** Suppose You accept both p and q .

Then, You accept the bounded gambles $I_{E_p}(x) - 1 + \epsilon$ and $I_{E_q}(x) - 1 + \epsilon$, and by A4 You also accept the bounded gambles $I_{E_p}(x) + I_{E_q}(x) - 2 + 2\epsilon$, for all $\epsilon > 0$.

Then, You also accept the conjunction $p \wedge q$ by A5, since $E_{p \wedge q} = E_p \cap E_q$ and

$$I_{E_p}(x) + I_{E_q}(x) - 1 \leq I_{E_p \cap E_q}(x) = \min\{I_{E_p}, I_{E_q}\}.$$

- ▶ Therefore, the **logical rule of conjunction** is included in the inference mechanism for coherent sets of acceptable bounded gambles.

Propositional Logic as a Special Case of Natural Extensions

Logical Production Rules

- ▶ **Logical Non-Contradiction:** Suppose You accept both p and $\neg p$.

Propositional Logic as a Special Case of Natural Extensions

Logical Production Rules

- ▶ **Logical Non-Contradiction:** Suppose You accept both p and $\neg p$.

The, You would accept both $I_{E_p}(x) - 1 + \epsilon$ and $I_{E_{\neg p}}(x) - 1 + \epsilon$, and by A4, You would also accept the bounded gambles

$$I_{E_p}(x) - 1 + \epsilon + I_{E_{\neg p}}(x) - 1 + \epsilon = -1 + 2\epsilon$$

for all $\epsilon > 0$, since $I_{E_p}(x) + I_{E_{\neg p}}(x) = 1$. But this contradicts A1, avoiding partial loss.

- ▶ Therefore, **logical contradiction is prohibited** by the inference mechanism for coherent sets of acceptable bounded gambles.

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