

The distribution of partial quotients with fixed denominator

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Introduction - Continued fractions

- Every $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}$ has a (unique) continued fraction expansion
$$\alpha = a_0 + \frac{1}{a_1 + \frac{1}{a_2 + \frac{1}{a_3 + \dots}}} = [a_0; a_1, a_2, \dots], a_i \in \mathbb{N}.$$

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- $\pi = [3; 7, 15, 1, 292, 1, 1, 1, 2, \dots]$, $e = [2; 1, 2, 1, 1, 4, 1, 1, \dots]$, $\Phi = \frac{1+\sqrt{5}}{2} = [1; 1, 1, 1, 1, \dots]$.

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- The convergents $\frac{p_i}{q_i} = [a_0; a_1, a_2, \dots, a_i]$ approximate α by

$$\frac{1}{(a_{i+1} + 2)q_i^2} \leq (-1)^i \left(\alpha - \frac{p_i}{q_i} \right) \leq \frac{1}{a_{i+1}q_i^2}.$$

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- Theorem of Legendre: if $|\alpha - \frac{p}{q}| \leq \frac{1}{2q^2}$, then $\frac{p}{q}$ is a convergent of α .

Distribution of a_k, q_k for random irrationals

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- $\mathbb{P}[q_k \geq f(k)], \mathbb{P}[a_{i+n} = j \mid a_i = k], \mathbb{P}[\exists \infty \text{ many } k : a_k > f(k)], \mathbb{P}[\sum_{i=1}^k a_k > f(k)], \dots$

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- $\mathbb{P} =$ Lebesgue measure on $[0, 1)$. The statements above (and many more) can be solved with measure-theoretic/probabilistic methods.

- Gauss-Kuzmin theorem:

$$\mathbb{P}[a_n = m] = \log_2 \left(1 + \frac{1}{m(m+2)} \right) + O(e^{-cn}).$$

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- The distribution of $(a_i)_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$ is very close to i.i.d. variables $(X_i)_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$ where $\mathbb{P}[X_i = m] = \log_2 \left(1 + \frac{1}{m(m+2)} \right) \Rightarrow$ many theorems from classical probability hold (laws of large numbers, central limit theorems, LDPs, ...).

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- The Farey fractions: For a fixed large integer N , we pick a fraction uniformly at random from
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(Dynamical methods can be applied)
- Reduced fractions with fixed denominator: For a fixed large integer N , we pick a fraction uniformly at random from
$$\left\{ \frac{a}{N} : 1 \leq a \leq N : (a, N) = 1 \right\}$$

(we worked with this one - equidistribution and sieve theory).

- Distribution of $\sum_i f(a_i(\alpha)), \sum_i (-1)^i f(a_i(\alpha))$ where f is a well-behaving function and $\alpha = [0; a_1, a_2, \dots]$.

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- Prominent entities within this framework:
 - Gauss-Kuzmin statistics ($f = \mathbb{1}_{[a_i=m]}$)
 - Sum of partial quotients ($f(x) = x$), related to the Discrepancy of $(n\alpha)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$.
 - Alternating sum $\sum_i (-1)^i a_i(\alpha)$, closely related to Dedekind sums.
 - Maximal partial quotient $f = \mathbb{1}_{[a_i \geq m]}$, related to Zaremba's conjecture.

Theorem (Gauss/Kuzmin, 1800/1929)

$$\text{Irrational case: } \lim_{i \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}[a_i = m] = \log_2 \left(1 + \frac{1}{m(m+2)} \right).$$

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$$\text{Farey: } \frac{\sum_{i=1}^r \mathbb{1}_{[a_i=m]} - \log_2 \left(1 + \frac{1}{m(m+2)} \right) \log N}{\sigma_m \sqrt{\log N}} \xrightarrow{d} \mathcal{N}(0, 1).$$

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Theorem (Aistleitner, Borda, H., 2023+)

Reduced fractions with fixed denominator:

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{\varphi(N)} \frac{\pi^2}{12 \log 2 \log N} \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} \sum_{i=1}^r \mathbb{1}_{[a_i=m]} = \log_2 \left(1 + \frac{1}{m(m+2)} \right).$$

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$$\mathbb{P} \left[\left| \sum_{i=1}^r (-1)^i a_i \right| \geq t \log N \right] \ll \frac{1}{t}.$$

- Same asymptotic tail estimate as in the Farey case.

Sum of partial quotients

Theorem (Bettin, Drappeau, 2022)

$$\text{Farey: } \frac{\sum_{i=1}^r a_i - \frac{12}{\pi^2} \log N \log \log N - \gamma \log N}{\log N} \xrightarrow{d} S_1 \left(\frac{\pi}{6}, 1, 0 \right).$$

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Corollary (Aistleitner, Borda, H., 2023+)

$$\forall N \in \mathbb{N} \exists a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^* : \sum_i^r a_i(a/N) \leq \frac{12}{\pi^2} \log N \log \log N + O(\log N).$$

- Improves upon the (implicit) constants found by Larcher (1986)/Rukavishnikova(2006).

Theorem (Hensley, 1991)

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- By $1 - e^{-x} = x + O(x^2)$, same tail behaviour.

Zaremba's conjecture

Conjecture (Zaremba, 1972 (still open))

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- Best bound known so far for general N .

The method - expected value

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$$\Rightarrow \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} S_f\left(\frac{a}{N}\right) = \sum_{k \leq N} \sum_{b \in \mathbb{Z}_k^*} \sum_{m=1}^{\infty} f(m) \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} \mathbb{1}_{I_m(b/k)}\left(\frac{a}{N}\right).$$

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$$\Rightarrow \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} S_f\left(\frac{a}{N}\right) = \sum_{k \leq N} \sum_{b \in \mathbb{Z}_k^*} \sum_{m=1}^{\infty} f(m) \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} \mathbb{1}_{I_m(b/k)}\left(\frac{a}{N}\right).$$

We have (on average) $\lambda(I_m(b/k)) \approx \frac{1}{k^2} \log_2\left(1 + \frac{1}{m(m+2)}\right)$ so if $\{a/N : (a, N) = 1\}$ is well uniformly distributed, everything is fine. Problem: For $k > \sqrt{N}$, interval length $\leq \frac{1}{k^2} < \frac{1}{N}$.

$k > \sqrt{N}$ - reflection by modular inverse

Define a^* by $aa^* = (-1)^r \pmod{N}$ ($a \mapsto a^*$ is a bijection), If $a/N = [0; a_1, \dots, a_r]$, then $a^*/N = [0; a_r, \dots, a_1]$.

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$$\Rightarrow \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} S_f \left(\frac{a}{N} \right) \approx 2 \sum_{k \leq \sqrt{N}} \sum_{b \in \mathbb{Z}_k^*} \sum_{m=1}^{\infty} f(m) \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} \mathbb{1}_{I_m(b/k)} \left(\frac{a}{N} \right)$$

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For $1 \leq k < \sqrt{N}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{\varphi(N)} \# \left\{ a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^* : \frac{a}{N} \in I_m(b/k) \right\} &\approx \lambda(I_m(b/k)) \\ &\approx \frac{1}{k^2} \log_2 \left(1 + \frac{1}{m(m+2)} \right) \end{aligned}$$

by sieve methods/discrepancy estimates.

Variance estimate

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{E} \left[S_f \left(\frac{a}{N} \right)^2 \right] &\approx \frac{1}{\varphi(N)} \frac{1}{8} \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} \sum_{i: q_{i-1} < \sqrt{N}} f(a_i(a/N)) \underbrace{\sum_{j \leq i} f(a_j(a/N))}_{= S_f \left(\frac{b}{k} \right), \frac{b}{k} = [0; a_1, \dots, a_i]} \\ &\approx \frac{1}{\varphi(N)} \frac{1}{8} \sum_{1 \leq k < \sqrt{N}} \sum_{b \in \mathbb{Z}_k^*} \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} w_f \left(\frac{b}{k} - \frac{a}{N} \right) S_f \left(\frac{b}{k} \right)\end{aligned}$$

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 &\approx \frac{1}{\varphi(N)} \frac{1}{8} \sum_{1 \leq k < \sqrt{N}} \sum_{b \in \mathbb{Z}_k^*} \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} w_f \left(\frac{b}{k} - \frac{a}{N} \right) S_f \left(\frac{b}{k} \right) \\
 \sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} w_f \left(\frac{b}{k} - \frac{a}{N} \right) &\approx \frac{\varphi(N)}{k^2} \int_0^\infty \frac{f(x)}{x^2} dx, \quad \text{almost independent of } b. \\
 \Rightarrow &\approx \frac{1}{8} \int_0^\infty \frac{f(x)}{x^2} dx \sum_{1 \leq k < \sqrt{N}} \frac{1}{k^2} \underbrace{\sum_{b \in \mathbb{Z}_k^*} S_f \left(\frac{b}{k} \right)}_{\text{Expected value w.r.t. } k}.
 \end{aligned}$$

Concentration inequalities

For any $0 < t \leq (\log N)^C$,

$$\mathbb{P} \left[\left| \sum_{i=1}^r a_i - \frac{12}{\pi^2} \log N \log \log N \right| \geq t \log N \right] \ll \frac{1}{t}.$$

- Heavy-tailed distribution: First, remove those a/N where $\max_i a_i(a/N) \geq (\log N)^C$ by Markov. Then apply mean/variance + Chebyshev on $f(x) = x \mathbb{1}_{[x \leq (\log N)^C]}$.

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- “Typical behaviour deviates from average behaviour”: $\mathbb{E}[\sum_{i=1}^r a_i] \sim \frac{6}{\pi^2} (\log N)^2$ (Panov/Liehl, 1982/1983), but concentration around $\frac{12}{\pi^2} \log N \log \log N$ (median is much smaller than the mean).

- Is it possible to obtain those estimates on (short) intervals or other measures than $Unif(\mathbb{Z}_N^*)$? Say, given $(X, Y) \subset [0, 1]$, what statistics hold for a/N such that $a/N \in (X, Y)$ or $\sum_{a \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*} S_f(a/N)g(a/N)$ where g is a smooth function?

Open questions

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- Do the same limit laws as in the Farey setting hold without the double-average? If so, do the center/scaling terms depend on the arithmetic structure of N ?

Thanks for your attention!