Modern Discrete Probability

VI - Spectral Techniques

Background

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1. Review
2. Bounding the mixing time via the spectral gap
3. Applications: random walk on cycle and hypercube
4. Infinite networks

Mixing time I

Theorem (Convergence to stationarity)

Consider a finite state space V. Suppose the transition matrix P is irreducible, aperiodic and has stationary distribution π. Then, for all x, y, $P^t(x, y) \to \pi(y)$ as $t \to +\infty$.

For probability measures μ, ν on V, let their *total variation distance* be $\|\mu - \nu\|_{\mathrm{TV}} := \sup_{A \subseteq V} |\mu(A) - \nu(A)|$.

Definition (Mixing time)

The *mixing time* is

$$\mathrm{t}_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon) := \min\{t \geq 0 \,:\, d(t) \leq \varepsilon\},$$

where $d(t) := \max_{x \in V} \|P^t(x, \cdot) - \pi(\cdot)\|_{\mathrm{TV}}$.

Mixing time II

Definition (Separation distance)

The *separation distance* is defined as

$$s_x(t) := \max_{y \in V} \left[1 - \frac{P^t(x,y)}{\pi(y)} \right],$$

and we let $s(t) := \max_{x \in V} s_x(t)$.

Because both $\{\pi(y)\}$ and $\{P^t(x,y)\}$ are non-negative and sum to 1, we have that $s_x(t) \geq 0$.

Lemma (Separation distance v. total variation distance)

$$d(t) \leq s(t).$$

Mixing time III

Proof: Because $1 = \sum_y \pi(y) = \sum_y P^t(x,y)$,

$$\sum_{y:P^t(x,y)<\pi(y)} \left[\pi(y) - P^t(x,y)\right] = \sum_{y:P^t(x,y)\geq\pi(y)} \left[P^t(x,y) - \pi(y)\right].$$

So

$$\begin{aligned}
\|P^t(x,\cdot) - \pi(\cdot)\|_{\mathrm{TV}} &= \frac{1}{2}\sum_y \left|\pi(y) - P^t(x,y)\right| \\
&= \sum_{y:P^t(x,y)<\pi(y)} \left[\pi(y) - P^t(x,y)\right] \\
&= \sum_{y:P^t(x,y)<\pi(y)} \pi(y)\left[1 - \frac{P^t(x,y)}{\pi(y)}\right] \\
&\leq s_x(t).
\end{aligned}$$

Reversible chains

Definition (Reversible chain)

A transition matrix P is *reversible* w.r.t. a measure η if $\eta(x)P(x,y) = \eta(y)P(y,x)$ for all $x, y \in V$. By summing over y, such a measure is necessarily stationary.

Example I

Recall:

Definition (Random walk on a graph)

Let $G = (V, E)$ be a finite or countable, locally finite graph. *Simple random walk* on G is the Markov chain on V, started at an arbitrary vertex, which at each time picks a uniformly chosen neighbor of the current state.

Let (X_t) be simple random walk on a connected graph G. Then (X_t) is reversible w.r.t. $\eta(v) := \delta(v)$, where $\delta(v)$ is the degree of vertex v.

Example II

Definition (Random walk on a network)

Let $G = (V, E)$ be a finite or countable, locally finite graph. Let $c : E \to \mathbb{R}_+$ be a positive edge weight function on G. We call $\mathcal{N} = (G, c)$ a *network*. Random walk on $\mathcal{N}$ is the Markov chain on V, started at an arbitrary vertex, which at each time picks a neighbor of the current state proportionally to the weight of the corresponding edge.

Any countable, reversible Markov chain can be seen as a random walk on a network (not necessarily locally finite) by setting $c(e) := \pi(x)P(x,y) = \pi(y)P(y,x)$ for all $e = \{x, y\} \in E$. Let (X_t) be random walk on a network $\mathcal{N} = (G, c)$. Then (X_t) is reversible w.r.t. $\eta(v) := c(v)$, where $c(v) := \sum_{x \sim v} c(v, x)$.

Eigenbasis I

We let $n := |V| < +\infty$. Assume that P is irreducible and reversible w.r.t. its stationary distribution $\pi > 0$. Define

$$\langle f, g\rangle_\pi := \sum_{x\in V} \pi(x) f(x) g(x), \quad \|f\|_\pi^2 := \langle f, f\rangle_\pi,$$

$$(Pf)(x) := \sum_y P(x,y) f(y).$$

We let $\ell^2(V,\pi)$ be the Hilbert space of real-valued functions on V equipped with the inner product $\langle\cdot,\cdot\rangle_\pi$ (equivalent to the vector space $(\mathbb{R}^n, \langle\cdot,\cdot\rangle_\pi)$).

Theorem

There is an orthonormal basis of $\ell^2(V,\pi)$ formed of eigenfunctions $\{f_j\}_{j=1}^n$ of P with real eigenvalues $\{\lambda_j\}_{j=1}^n$. We can take $f_1 \equiv 1$ and $\lambda_1 = 1$.

Eigenbasis II

Proof: We work over $(\mathbb{R}^n, \langle\cdot,\cdot\rangle_\pi)$. Let D_π be the diagonal matrix with π on the diagonal. By reversibility,

$$M(x,y) := \sqrt{\frac{\pi(x)}{\pi(y)}} P(x,y) = \sqrt{\frac{\pi(y)}{\pi(x)}} P(y,x) =: M(y,x).$$

So $M = (M(x,y))_{x,y} = D_\pi^{1/2} P D_\pi^{-1/2}$, as a symmetric matrix, has real eigenvectors $\{\phi_j\}_{j=1}^n$ forming an orthonormal basis of $\mathbb{R}^n$ with corresponding real eigenvalues $\{\lambda_j\}_{j=1}^n$. Define $f_j := D_\pi^{-1/2}\phi_j$. Then

$$Pf_j = PD_\pi^{-1/2}\phi_j = D_\pi^{-1/2} D_\pi^{1/2} P D_\pi^{-1/2}\phi_j = D_\pi^{-1/2} M\phi_j = \lambda_j D_\pi^{-1/2}\phi_j = \lambda_j f_j,$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}\langle f_i, f_j\rangle_\pi &= \langle D_\pi^{-1/2}\phi_i, D_\pi^{-1/2}\phi_j\rangle_\pi \\ &= \sum_x \pi(x)[\pi(x)^{-1/2}\phi_i(x)][\pi(x)^{-1/2}\phi_j(x)] = \langle \phi_i, \phi_j\rangle.\end{aligned}$$

Because P is stochastic, the all-one vector is a right eigenvector of P with eigenvalue 1. ■

Eigenbasis III

Lemma

For all $j \neq 1$, $\sum_x \pi(x) f_j(x) = 0$.

Proof: By orthonormality, $\langle f_1, f_j \rangle_\pi = 0$. Now use the fact that $f_1 \equiv 1$. ■

Let $\delta_x(y) := \mathbb{1}_{\{x=y\}}$.

Lemma

For all x, y, $\sum_{j=1}^n f_j(x) f_j(y) = \pi(x)^{-1} \delta_x(y)$.

Proof: Using the notation of the theorem, the matrix Φ whose columns are the ϕ_js is unitary so $\Phi\Phi' = I$. That is, $\sum_{j=1}^n \phi_j(x)\phi_j(y) = \delta_x(y)$, or $\sum_{j=1}^n \sqrt{\pi(x)\pi(y)} f_j(x) f_j(y) = \delta_x(y)$. Rearranging gives the result. ■

Eigenbasis IV

Lemma

Let $g \in \ell^2(V, \pi)$. Then $g = \sum_{j=1}^n \langle g, f_j \rangle_\pi f_j$.

Proof: By the previous lemma, for all x

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \langle g, f_j \rangle_\pi f_j(x) = \sum_{j=1}^n \sum_y \pi(y) g(y) f_j(y) f_j(x) = \sum_y \pi(y) g(y) [\pi(x)^{-1} \delta_x(y)] = g(x).$$

■

Lemma

Let $g \in \ell^2(V, \pi)$. Then $\|g\|_\pi^2 = \sum_{j=1}^n \langle g, f_j \rangle_\pi^2$.

Proof: By the previous lemma,

$$\|g\|_\pi^2 = \left\| \sum_{j=1}^n \langle g, f_j \rangle_\pi f_j \right\|_\pi^2 = \left\langle \sum_{i=1}^n \langle g, f_i \rangle_\pi f_i, \sum_{j=1}^n \langle g, f_j \rangle_\pi f_j \right\rangle_\pi = \sum_{i,j=1}^n \langle g, f_i \rangle_\pi \langle g, f_j \rangle_\pi \langle f_i, f_j \rangle_\pi,$$

Eigenvalues I

Let P be finite, irreducible and reversible.

Lemma

Any eigenvalue λ of P satisfies $|\lambda| \leq 1$.

Proof: $Pf = \lambda f \implies |\lambda| \|f\|_\infty = \|Pf\|_\infty = \max_x |\sum_y P(x,y) f(y)| \leq \|f\|_\infty$ ■

We order the eigenvalues $1 \geq \lambda_1 \geq \cdots \geq \lambda_n \geq -1$. In fact:

Lemma

We have $\lambda_2 < 1$.

Proof: Any eigenfunction with eigenvalue 1 is P-harmonic. By Corollary 3.22 for a finite, irreducible chain the only harmonic functions are the constant functions. So the eigenspace corresponding to 1 is one-dimensional. Since all eigenvalues are real, we must have $\lambda_2 < 1$. ■

Eigenvalues II

Theorem (Rayleigh's quotient)

Let P be finite, irreducible and reversible with respect to π. The second largest eigenvalue is characterized by

$$\lambda_2 = \sup\left\{ \frac{\langle f, Pf\rangle_\pi}{\langle f, f\rangle_\pi} \;:\; f \in \ell^2(V,\pi),\ \sum_x \pi(x) f(x) = 0 \right\}.$$

(Similarly, $\lambda_1 = \sup_{f\in\ell^2(V,\pi)} \frac{\langle f,Pf\rangle_\pi}{\langle f,f\rangle_\pi}$.)

Proof: Recalling that $f_1 \equiv 1$, the condition $\sum_x \pi(x) f(x) = 0$ is equivalent to $\langle f_1, f\rangle_\pi = 0$. For such an f, the eigendecomposition is

$$f = \sum_{j=1}^n \langle f, f_j\rangle_\pi f_j = \sum_{j=2}^n \langle f, f_j\rangle_\pi f_j,$$

Eigenvalues III

and

$$Pf = \sum_{j=2}^{n} \langle f, f_j \rangle_\pi \lambda_j f_j,$$

so that

$$\frac{\langle f, Pf \rangle_\pi}{\langle f, f \rangle_\pi} = \frac{\sum_{i=2}^n \sum_{j=2}^n \langle f, f_i \rangle_\pi \langle f, f_j \rangle_\pi \lambda_j \langle f_i, f_j \rangle_\pi}{\sum_{j=2}^n \langle f, f_j \rangle_\pi^2} = \frac{\sum_{j=2}^n \langle f, f_j \rangle_\pi^2 \lambda_j}{\sum_{j=2}^n \langle f, f_j \rangle_\pi^2} \leq \lambda_2.$$

Taking $f = f_2$ achieves the supremum. ■

Dirichlet form I

The *Dirichlet form* is defined as $\mathcal{E}(f,g) := \langle f, (I-P)g\rangle_\pi$. Note that

$$
\begin{aligned}
&2\langle f, (I-P)f\rangle_\pi \\
&= 2\langle f, f\rangle_\pi - 2\langle f, Pf\rangle_\pi \\
&= \sum_x \pi(x)f(x)^2 + \sum_y \pi(y)f(y)^2 - 2\sum_x \pi(x)f(x)f(y)P(x,y) \\
&= \sum_{x,y} f(x)^2\pi(x)P(x,y) + \sum_{x,y} f(y)^2\pi(y)P(y,x) - 2\sum_x \pi(x)f(x)f(y)P(x,y) \\
&= \sum_{x,y} f(x)^2\pi(x)P(x,y) + \sum_{x,y} f(y)^2\pi(x)P(x,y) - 2\sum_x \pi(x)f(x)f(y)P(x,y) \\
&= \sum_{x,y} \pi(x)P(x,y)[f(x)-f(y)]^2 = 2\mathcal{E}(f)
\end{aligned}
$$

where

$$\mathcal{E}(f) := \frac{1}{2}\sum_{x,y} c(x,y)[f(x)-f(y)]^2,$$

is the Dirichlet energy encountered previously.

Dirichlet form II

We note further that if $\sum_x \pi(x) f(x) = 0$ then

$$\langle f, f\rangle_\pi = \langle f - \langle \mathbf{1}, f\rangle_\pi, f - \langle \mathbf{1}, f\rangle_\pi\rangle_\pi = \mathrm{Var}_\pi[f],$$

where the last expression denotes the variance under π. So the variational characterization of λ_2 translates into

$$\mathrm{Var}_\pi[f] \leq \gamma^{-1}\mathcal{E}(f),$$

for all f such that $\sum_x \pi(x) f(x) = 0$ (in fact for any f by considering $f - \langle \mathbf{1}, f\rangle_\pi$ and noticing that both sides are unaffected by adding a constant), which is known as a *Poincaré inequality*.

Spectral decomposition I

Theorem

Let $\{f_j\}_{j=1}^n$ be the eigenfunctions of a reversible and irreducible transition matrix P with corresponding eigenvalues $\{\lambda_j\}_{j=1}^n$, as defined previously. Assume $\lambda_1 \geq \cdots \geq \lambda_n$. We have the decomposition

$$\frac{P^t(x,y)}{\pi(y)} = 1 + \sum_{j=2}^{n} f_j(x) f_j(y) \lambda_j^t.$$

Spectral decomposition II

Proof: Let F be the matrix whose columns are the eigenvectors $\{f_j\}_{j=1}^n$ and let D_λ be the diagonal matrix with $\{\lambda_j\}_{j=1}^n$ on the diagonal. Using the notation of the eigenbasis theorem,

$$D_\pi^{1/2} P^t D_\pi^{-1/2} = M^t = (D_\pi^{1/2} F) D_\lambda^t (D_\pi^{1/2} F)',$$

which after rearranging becomes

$$P^t D_\pi^{-1} = F D_\lambda^t F'.$$

■

Example: two-state chain I

Let $V := \{0, 1\}$ and, for $\alpha, \beta \in (0, 1)$,

$$P := \begin{pmatrix} 1-\alpha & \alpha \\ \beta & 1-\beta \end{pmatrix}.$$

Observe that P is reversible w.r.t. to the stationary distribution

$$\pi := \left(\frac{\beta}{\alpha+\beta}, \frac{\alpha}{\alpha+\beta}\right).$$

We know that $f_1 \equiv 1$ is an eigenfunction with eigenvalue 1. As can be checked by direct computation, the other eigenfunction (in vector form) is

$$f_2 := \left(\sqrt{\frac{\alpha}{\beta}}, -\sqrt{\frac{\beta}{\alpha}}\right)',$$

with eigenvalue $\lambda_2 := 1 - \alpha - \beta$. We normalized f_2 so $\|f_2\|_\pi^2 = 1$.

Example: two-state chain II

The spectral decomposition is therefore

$$P^t D_\pi^{-1} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + (1-\alpha-\beta)^t \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\alpha}{\beta} & -1 \\ -1 & \frac{\beta}{\alpha} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Put differently,

$$P^t = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\beta}{\alpha+\beta} & \frac{\alpha}{\alpha+\beta} \\ \frac{\beta}{\alpha+\beta} & \frac{\alpha}{\alpha+\beta} \end{pmatrix} + (1-\alpha-\beta)^t \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\alpha}{\alpha+\beta} & -\frac{\alpha}{\alpha+\beta} \\ -\frac{\beta}{\alpha+\beta} & \frac{\beta}{\alpha+\beta} \end{pmatrix}.$$

(Note for instance that the case $\alpha + \beta = 1$ corresponds to a rank-one P, which immediately converges.)

Example: two-state chain III

Assume $\beta \geq \alpha$. Then

$$d(t) = \max_x \frac{1}{2} \sum_y |P^t(x, y) - \pi(y)| = \frac{\beta}{\alpha + \beta} |1 - \alpha - \beta|^t.$$

As a result,

$$t_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon) = \left\lceil \frac{\log\left(\varepsilon \frac{\alpha+\beta}{\beta}\right)}{\log|1 - \alpha - \beta|} \right\rceil = \left\lceil \frac{\log \varepsilon^{-1} - \log\left(\frac{\alpha+\beta}{\beta}\right)}{\log|1 - \alpha - \beta|^{-1}} \right\rceil.$$

Spectral decomposition: again

Recall:

Theorem

Let $\{f_j\}_{j=1}^n$ be the eigenfunctions of a reversible and irreducible transition matrix P with corresponding eigenvalues $\{\lambda_j\}_{j=1}^n$, as defined previously. Assume $\lambda_1 \geq \cdots \geq \lambda_n$. We have the decomposition

$$\frac{P^t(x,y)}{\pi(y)} = 1 + \sum_{j=2}^{n} f_j(x) f_j(y) \lambda_j^t.$$

Spectral gap

From the spectral decomposition, the speed of convergence of $P^t(x, y)$ to $\pi(y)$ is governed by the largest eigenvalue of P not equal to 1.

Definition (Spectral gap)

The *absolute spectral gap* is $\gamma_* := 1 - \lambda_*$ where $\lambda_* := |\lambda_2| \vee |\lambda_n|$. The *spectral gap* is $\gamma := 1 - \lambda_2$.

Note that the eigenvalues of the lazy version $\frac{1}{2}P + \frac{1}{2}I$ of P are $\{\frac{1}{2}(\lambda_j + 1)\}_{j=1}^n$ which are all nonnegative. So, there, $\gamma_* = \gamma$.

Definition (Relaxation time)

The *relaxation time* is defined as

$$\mathrm{t_{rel}} := \gamma_*^{-1}.$$

Example continued: two-state chain

There two cases:

- $\alpha + \beta \leq 1$: In that case the spectral gap is $\gamma = \gamma_* = \alpha + \beta$ and the relaxation time is $t_{rel} = 1/(\alpha + \beta)$.
- $\alpha + \beta > 1$: In that case the spectral gap is $\gamma = \gamma_* = 2 - \alpha - \beta$ and the relaxation time is $t_{rel} = 1/(2 - \alpha - \beta)$.

Mixing time v. relaxation time I

Theorem

Let P be reversible, irreducible, and aperiodic with stationary distribution π. Let $\pi_{\min} = \min_x \pi(x)$. For all $\varepsilon > 0$,

$$(\mathrm{t_{rel}} - 1) \log\left(\frac{1}{2\varepsilon}\right) \leq \mathrm{t_{mix}}(\varepsilon) \leq \log\left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon \pi_{\min}}\right) \mathrm{t_{rel}}.$$

Proof: We start with the upper bound. By the lemma, it suffices to find t such that $s(t) \leq \varepsilon$. By the spectral decomposition and Cauchy-Schwarz,

$$\left|\frac{P^t(x,y)}{\pi(y)} - 1\right| \leq \lambda_*^t \sum_{j=2}^n |f_j(x) f_j(y)| \leq \lambda_*^t \sqrt{\sum_{j=2}^n f_j(x)^2 \sum_{j=2}^n f_j(y)^2}.$$

By our previous lemma, $\sum_{j=2}^n f_j(x)^2 \leq \pi(x)^{-1}$. Plugging this back above,

$$\left|\frac{P^t(x,y)}{\pi(y)} - 1\right| \leq \lambda_*^t \sqrt{\pi(x)^{-1}\pi(y)^{-1}} \leq \frac{\lambda_*^t}{\pi_{\min}} = \frac{(1-\gamma_*)^t}{\pi_{\min}} \leq \frac{e^{-\gamma_* t}}{\pi_{\min}}.$$

Mixing time v. relaxation time II

The r.h.s. is less than ε when $t \geq \log\left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon \pi_{\min}}\right) \mathrm{t}_{\mathrm{rel}}$.

For the lower bound, let f_* be an eigenfunction associated with an eigenvalue achieving $\lambda_* := |\lambda_2| \vee |\lambda_n|$. Let z be such that $|f_*(z)| = \|f_*\|_\infty$. By our previous lemma, $\sum_y \pi(y) f_*(y) = 0$. Hence

$$\lambda_*^t |f_*(z)| = |P^t f_*(z)| = \left|\sum_y [P^t(z,y) f_*(y) - \pi(y) f_*(y)]\right|$$
$$\leq \|f_*\|_\infty \sum_y |P^t(z,y) - \pi(y)| \leq \|f_*\|_\infty 2d(t),$$

so $d(t) \geq \frac{1}{2}\lambda_*^t$. When $t = \mathrm{t}_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon)$, $\varepsilon \geq \frac{1}{2}\lambda_*^{\mathrm{t}_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon)}$. Therefore

$$\mathrm{t}_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon)\left(\frac{1}{\lambda_*} - 1\right) \geq \mathrm{t}_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon) \log\left(\frac{1}{\lambda_*}\right) \geq \log\left(\frac{1}{2\varepsilon}\right).$$

The result follows from $\left(\frac{1}{\lambda_*} - 1\right)^{-1} = \left(\frac{1-\lambda_*}{\lambda_*}\right)^{-1} = \left(\frac{\gamma_*}{1-\gamma_*}\right)^{-1} = \mathrm{t}_{\mathrm{rel}} - 1$. ■

Random walk on the cycle I

Consider simple random walk on an n-cycle. That is, $V := \{0, 1, \ldots, n-1\}$ and $P(x, y) = 1/2$ if and only if $|x - y| = 1 \mod n$.

Lemma (Eigenbasis on the cycle)

For $j = 0, \ldots, n-1$, the function

$$f_j(x) := \cos\left(\frac{2\pi j x}{n}\right), \qquad x = 0, 1, \ldots, n-1,$$

is an eigenfunction of P with eigenvalue

$$\lambda_j := \cos\left(\frac{2\pi j}{n}\right).$$

Random walk on the cycle II

Proof: Note that, for all i, x,

$$\sum_y P(x,y) f_j(y) = \frac{1}{2}\left[\cos\left(\frac{2\pi j(y-1)}{n}\right) + \cos\left(\frac{2\pi j(y+1)}{n}\right)\right]$$

$$= \frac{1}{2}\left[\frac{e^{i\frac{2\pi j(y-1)}{n}} + e^{-i\frac{2\pi j(y-1)}{n}}}{2} + \frac{e^{i\frac{2\pi j(y+1)}{n}} + e^{-i\frac{2\pi j(y+1)}{n}}}{2}\right]$$

$$= \left[\frac{e^{i\frac{2\pi jy}{n}} + e^{-i\frac{2\pi jy}{n}}}{2}\right]\left[\frac{e^{i\frac{2\pi j}{n}} + e^{-i\frac{2\pi j}{n}}}{2}\right]$$

$$= \left[\cos\left(\frac{2\pi jy}{n}\right)\right]\left[\cos\left(\frac{2\pi j}{n}\right)\right]$$

$$= \cos\left(\frac{2\pi j}{n}\right) f_j(y).$$

■

Random walk on the cycle III

Theorem (Relaxation time on the cycle)

The relaxation time for lazy simple random walk on the cycle is

$$t_{\mathrm{rel}} = \frac{2}{1 - \cos\left(\frac{2\pi}{n}\right)} = \Theta(n^2).$$

Proof: The eigenvalues are

$$\frac{1}{2}\left[\cos\left(\frac{2\pi j}{n}\right) + 1\right].$$

The spectral gap is therefore $\frac{1}{2}(1 - \cos\left(\frac{2\pi}{n}\right))$. By a Taylor expansion,

$$1 - \cos\left(\frac{2\pi}{n}\right) = \frac{4\pi^2}{n^2} + O(n^{-4}).$$

■

Since $\pi_{\min} = 1/n$, we get $t_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon) = O(n^2 \log n)$ and $t_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon) = \Omega(n^2)$. We showed before that in fact $t_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon) = \Theta(n^2)$.

Random walk on the cycle IV

In this case, a sharper bound can be obtained by working directly with the spectral decomposition. By Jensen's inequality,

$$4\|P^t(x,\cdot)-\pi(\cdot)\|_{\mathrm{TV}}^2 = \left\{\sum_y \pi(y)\left|\frac{P^t(x,y)}{\pi(y)}-1\right|\right\}^2 \leq \sum_y \pi(y)\left(\frac{P^t(x,y)}{\pi(y)}-1\right)^2$$

$$= \left\|\sum_{j=2}^n \lambda_j^t f_j(x) f_j\right\|_\pi^2 = \sum_{j=2}^n \lambda_j^{2t} f_j(x)^2.$$

The last sum does not depend on x by symmetry. Summing over x and dividing by n, which is the same as multiplying by $\pi(x)$, gives

$$4\|P^t(x,\cdot)-\pi(\cdot)\|_{\mathrm{TV}}^2 \leq \sum_x \pi(x)\sum_{j=2}^n \lambda_j^{2t} f_j(x)^2 = \sum_{j=2}^n \lambda_j^{2t}\sum_x \pi(x) f_j(x)^2 = \sum_{j=2}^n \lambda_j^{2t},$$

where we used that $\|f_j\|_\pi^2 = 1$.

Random walk on the cycle V

Consider the non-lazy chain with n odd. We get

$$4d(t)^2 \leq \sum_{j=2}^{n} \cos\left(\frac{2\pi j}{n}\right)^{2t} = 2\sum_{j=1}^{(n-1)/2} \cos\left(\frac{\pi j}{n}\right)^{2t}.$$

For $x \in [0, \pi/2)$, $\cos x \leq e^{-x^2/2}$. (Indeed, let $h(x) = \log(e^{x^2/2}\cos x)$. Then $h'(x) = x - \tan x \leq 0$ since $(\tan x)' = 1 + \tan^2 x \geq 1$ for all x and $\tan 0 = 0$. So $h(x) \leq h(0) = 0$.) Then

$$4d(t)^2 \leq 2\sum_{j=1}^{(n-1)/2} \exp\left(-\frac{\pi^2 j^2}{n^2}t\right) \leq 2\exp\left(-\frac{\pi^2}{n^2}t\right)\sum_{j=1}^{\infty} \exp\left(-\frac{\pi^2(j^2-1)}{n^2}t\right)$$

$$\leq 2\exp\left(-\frac{\pi^2}{n^2}t\right)\sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty} \exp\left(-\frac{3\pi^2 t}{n^2}\ell\right) = \frac{2\exp\left(-\frac{\pi^2}{n^2}t\right)}{1-\exp\left(-\frac{3\pi^2 t}{n^2}\right)},$$

where we used that $j^2 - 1 \geq 3(j-1)$ for all $j = 1, 2, 3, \ldots$. So $t_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon) = O(n^2)$.

Random walk on the hypercube I

Consider simple random walk on the hypercube $V := \{-1,+1\}^n$ where $x \sim y$ if $\|x-y\|_1 = 1$. For $J \subseteq [n]$, we let

$$\chi_J(x) = \prod_{j \in J} x_j, \qquad x \in V.$$

These are called *parity functions*.

Lemma (Eigenbasis on the hypercube)

For all $J \subseteq [n]$, the function χ_J is an eigenfunction of P with eigenvalue

$$\lambda_J := \frac{n - 2|J|}{n}.$$

Random walk on the hypercube II

Proof: For $x \in V$ and $i \in [n]$, let $x^{[i]}$ be x where coordinate i is flipped. Note that, for all J, x,

$$\sum_y P(x,y)\chi_J(y) = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{n}\chi_J(x^{[i]}) = \frac{n-|J|}{n}\chi_J(x) - \frac{|J|}{n}\chi_J(x) = \frac{n-2|J|}{n}\chi_J(x).$$

■

Random walk on the hypercube III

Theorem (Relaxation time on the hypercube)

The relaxation time for lazy simple random walk on the hypercube is

$$\mathrm{t_{rel}} = n.$$

Proof: The eigenvalues are $\frac{n-|J|}{n}$ for $J \subseteq [n]$. The spectral gap is $\gamma_* = \gamma = 1 - \frac{n-1}{n} = \frac{1}{n}$. ∎

Because $|V| = 2^n$, $\pi_{\min} = 1/2^n$. Hence we have $\mathrm{t_{mix}}(\varepsilon) = O(n^2)$ and $\mathrm{t_{mix}}(\varepsilon) = \Omega(n)$. We have shown before that in fact $\mathrm{t_{mix}}(\varepsilon) = \Theta(n \log n)$.

Random walk on the hypercube IV

As we did for the cycle, we obtain a sharper bound by working directly with the spectral decomposition. By the same argument,

$$4d(t)^2 \leq \sum_{J \neq \emptyset} \lambda_J^{2t}.$$

Consider the lazy chain again. Then

$$\begin{aligned} 4d(t)^2 &\leq \sum_{J \neq \emptyset} \left(\frac{n - |J|}{n}\right)^{2t} = \sum_{\ell=1}^{n} \binom{n}{\ell} \left(1 - \frac{\ell}{n}\right)^{2t} \leq \sum_{\ell=1}^{n} \binom{n}{\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{2t\ell}{n}\right) \\ &= \left(1 + \exp\left(-\frac{2t}{n}\right)\right)^{n} - 1. \end{aligned}$$

So $t_{\mathrm{mix}}(\varepsilon) \leq \frac{1}{2} n \log n + O(n)$.

Some remarks about infinite networks I

Remark (Positive recurrent case)

The previous results cannot in general be extended to infinite networks. Suppose P is irreducible, aperiodic and positive recurrent. Then it can be shown that, if π is the stationary distribution, then for all x

$$\|P^t(x,\cdot) - \pi(\cdot)\|_{\mathrm{TV}} \to 0,$$

as $t \to +\infty$. However, one needs stronger conditions on P than reversibility for the spectral theorem to apply (in a form similar to what we used above), e.g., compactness (that is, P maps bounded sets to relatively compact sets, i.e. sets whose closure is compact).

Some remarks about infinite networks II

Example (A positive recurrent chain whose P is not compact)

For $p < 1/2$, let (X_t) be the birth-death chain with $V := \{0, 1, 2, \ldots\}$, $P(0,0) := 1 - p$, $P(0,1) = p$, $P(x, x+1) := p$ and $P(x, x-1) := 1 - p$ for all $x \geq 1$, and $P(x, y) := 0$ if $|x - y| > 1$. As can be checked by direct computation, P is reversible with respect to the stationary distribution $\pi(x) = (1-\gamma)\gamma^x$ for $x \geq 0$ where $\gamma := \frac{p}{1-p}$. For $j \geq 1$, define $g_j(x) := \pi(j)^{-1/2}\mathbb{1}_{\{x=j\}}$. Then $\|g_j\|_\pi^2 = 1$ for all j so $\{g_j\}_j$ is bounded in $\ell^2(V, \pi)$. On the other hand,

$$Pg_j(x) = p\pi(j)^{-1/2}\mathbb{1}_{\{x=j-1\}} + (1-p)\pi(j)^{-1/2}\mathbb{1}_{\{x=j+1\}}.$$

Some remarks about infinite networks III

Example (Continued)

So

$$\|Pg_j\|_\pi^2 = p^2\pi(j)^{-1}\pi(j-1) + (1-p)^2\pi(j)^{-1}\pi(j+1) = 2p(1-p).$$

Hence $\{Pg_j\}_j$ is also bounded. However, for $j > \ell$

$$\begin{aligned}\|Pg_j - Pg_\ell\|_\pi^2 &\geq (1-p)^2\pi(j)^{-1}\pi(j+1) + p^2\pi(\ell)^{-1}\pi(\ell-1)\\ &= 2p(1-p).\end{aligned}$$

So $\{Pg_j\}_j$ does not have a converging subsequence and therefore is not relatively compact.

Infinite networks: transient and null recurrent cases I

Most random walks on infinite networks we have encountered so far were transient or null recurrent. In such cases, there is no stationary distribution to converge to. In fact:

Theorem

If P is an irreducible chain which is either transient or null recurrent, we have for all x, y

$$\lim_t P^t(x, y) = 0.$$

Proof:

Infinite networks: transient and null recurrent cases II

Consider the null recurrent case. Fix $x \in V$. We observe first that:

- It suffices to show that $P^t(x,x) \to 0$. Indeed, by irreducibility, for any y there is $s > 0$ such that $P^s(x,y) > 0$. So $P^{t+s}(x,x) \geq P^t(x,y)P^s(y,x)$ so $P^t(x,x) \to 0$ implies $P^t(x,y) \to 0$.
- Let $\ell = \gcd\{t \,:\, P^t(x,x) > 0\}$. As $P^t(x,x) = 0$ for any t that is not a multiple of ℓ, it suffices to consider the transition matrix $\widetilde{P} := P^\ell$. That corresponds to "looking at the chain" at times $k\ell$, $k \geq 0$. We restrict the state space to $\widetilde{V} := \{y \in V \,:\, \exists s \geq 0,\ \widetilde{P}^s(x,y) > 0\}$. Let $(\widetilde{X}_t)$ be the corresponding chain, and let $\widetilde{\mathbb{P}}_x$ and $\widetilde{\mathbb{E}}_x$ be the corresponding measure and expectation. Clearly we still have $\widetilde{\mathbb{P}}_x[\tau_x^+ < +\infty] = 1$ and $\widetilde{\mathbb{E}}_x[\tau_x^+] = +\infty$ because returns to x under P can only happen at times that are multiples of ℓ. The reason to consider $\widetilde{P}$ is that it is irreducible and aperiodic, as we show next. Note that the irreducibility of $\widetilde{P}$ also implies that $\widetilde{P}$ is null recurrent.

Infinite networks: transient and null recurrent cases III

- We first show that $\widetilde{P}$ is irreducible. By definition of $\widetilde{V}$, it suffices to prove that, for any $w \in \widetilde{V}$, there exists $s \geq 0$ such that $\widetilde{P}^s(w, x) > 0$. Indeed that then implies that all states in $\widetilde{V}$ communicate through x. Let $r \geq 0$ be such that $\widetilde{P}^r(x, w) > 0$. If it were the case that $\widetilde{P}^s(w, x) = 0$ for all $s \geq 0$, that would imply that $\widetilde{\mathbb{P}}_x[\tau_x^+ = +\infty] > \widetilde{P}^r(x, w) > 0$—a contradiction.
- We claim further that $\widetilde{P}$ is aperiodic. Indeed, if $\widetilde{P}$ had period $k > 1$, then the greatest common divisor of $\{t \,:\, P^t(x, x) > 0\}$ would be $\geq k\ell$—a contradiction.
- The chain $(\widetilde{X}_t)$ has stationary measure

$$\mu_x(w) = \widetilde{\mathbb{E}}_x\left[\sum_{s=0}^{\tau_x^+ - 1} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widetilde{X}_s = w\}}\right] < +\infty,$$

which satisfies $\mu_x(x) = 1$ by definition and $\sum_w \mu_x(w) = +\infty$ by null recurrence.

Infinite networks: transient and null recurrent cases IV

Lemma

For any probability distribution ν on $\widetilde{V}$,

$$\limsup_t \nu \widetilde{P}^t(x) \leq \limsup_t \widetilde{P}^t(x,x).$$

Proof: Since $\widetilde{\mathbb{P}}_\nu[\tau_x^+ = +\infty] = 0$, for any $\varepsilon > 0$ there is N such that $\widetilde{\mathbb{P}}_\nu[\tau_x^+ > N] \leq \varepsilon$. So,

$$\limsup_t \nu \widetilde{P}^t(x) \leq \varepsilon + \limsup_t \sum_{s=1}^{N} \widetilde{\mathbb{P}}_\nu[\tau_x^+ = s]\, \widetilde{P}^{t-s}(x,x) \leq \varepsilon + \limsup_t \widetilde{P}^t(x,x).$$

Since ε is arbitrary, the result follows. ∎

Infinite networks: transient and null recurrent cases V

For $M \geq 0$, let $F \subseteq \widetilde{V}$ be a finite set such that $\mu_x(F) \geq M$. Consider the conditional distribution

$$\nu_F(W) := \frac{\mu_x(W \cap F)}{\mu_x(F)}.$$

Lemma

$$(\nu_F \widetilde{P}^t)(x) \leq \frac{1}{M}, \qquad \forall t$$

Proof: Indeed

$$(\nu_F \widetilde{P}^t)(x) \leq \frac{(\mu_x \widetilde{P}^t)(x)}{\mu_x(F)} = \frac{\mu_x(x)}{\mu_x(F)} \leq \frac{1}{M},$$

by stationarity. ∎

Infinite networks: transient and null recurrent cases VI

Because F is finite and Q is aperiodic, there is m such that $\widetilde{P}^m(x, z) > 0$ for all $z \in F$. Then we can choose $\delta > 0$ such that

$$\widetilde{P}^m(x, \cdot) = \delta \nu_F(\cdot) + (1 - \delta)\nu_0(\cdot),$$

for some probability measure ν_0. Then

$$\begin{aligned}\limsup_t \widetilde{P}^t(x, x) &= \delta \limsup_t (\nu_F \widetilde{P}^{t-m})(x) + (1 - \delta) \limsup_t (\nu_0 \widetilde{P}^{t-m})(x) \\ &\leq \frac{\delta}{M} + (1 - \delta) \limsup_t \widetilde{P}^t(x, x).\end{aligned}$$

Rearranging gives $\limsup_t \widetilde{P}^t(x, x) \leq 1/M$. Since M is arbitrary, this concludes the proof. ■

Basic definitions I

Let (X_t) be an irreducible Markov chain on a countable state space V with transition matrix P and stationary measure $\pi > 0$. As we did in the finite case, we let $(Pf)(x) := \sum_y P(x,y)f(y)$. Let $\ell_0(V)$ be the set of real-valued functions on V with finite support and let $\ell^2(V,\pi)$ be the Hilbert space of real-valued functions f with $\|f\|_\pi^2 := \sum_x \pi(x)f(x)^2 < +\infty$ equipped with the inner product

$$\langle f, g\rangle_\pi := \sum_{x \in V} \pi(x) f(x) g(x).$$

Then P maps $\ell^2(V,\pi)$ to itself. In fact, we have the stronger statement:

Basic definitions II

Lemma

For any $f \in \ell^2(V, \pi)$, Pf is well-defined and further we have $\|Pf\|_\pi \leq \|f\|_\pi$.

Proof: Note that by Cauchy-Schwarz, Fubini and stationarity

$$\begin{aligned}
\sum_x \pi(x) \left[\sum_y P(x,y)|f(y)|\right]^2 &\leq \sum_x \pi(x) \sum_y P(x,y) f(y)^2 \\
&= \sum_y \sum_x \pi(x) P(x,y) f(y)^2 \\
&= \sum_y \pi(y) f(y)^2 = \|f\|_\pi^2 < +\infty.
\end{aligned}$$

This shows that Pf is well-defined since $\pi > 0$. Applying the same argument to $\|Pf\|_\pi^2$ gives the inequality. ∎

Basic definitions III

We consider the operator norm

$$\|P\|_\pi = \sup\left\{\frac{\|Pf\|_\pi}{\|f\|_\pi}\ :\ f \in \ell^2(V,\pi),\ f \neq \mathbf{0}\right\},$$

and note that by the lemma $\|P\|_\pi \leq 1$. Note that, if V is finite or more generally if π is summable, then we have $\|P\|_\pi = 1$ since we can take $f \equiv 1$ above in that case.

Basic definitions IV

Lemma

If in addition P is reversible with respect to π, then P is self-adjoint on $\ell^2(V,\pi)$, that is,

$$\langle f, Pg\rangle_\pi = \langle Pf, g\rangle_\pi \qquad \forall f, g \in \ell^2(V,\pi).$$

Proof: First consider $f, g \in \ell_0(V)$. Then by reversibility

$$\langle f, Pg\rangle_\pi = \sum_{x,y} \pi(x)P(x,y)f(x)g(y) = \sum_{x,y} \pi(y)P(y,x)f(x)g(y) = \langle Pf, g\rangle_\pi.$$

Because $\ell^0(V)$ is dense in $\ell^2(V,\pi)$ (just truncate) and the bilinear form above is continuous in f and g (because $|\langle f, Pg\rangle_\pi| \leq \|P\|_\pi \|f\|_\pi \|g\|_\pi$ by Cauchy-Schwarz and the definition of the operator norm) the result follows for $f, g \in \ell^2(V,\pi)$. ■

Rayleigh quotient I

For a reversible P, we have the following characterization of the operator norm in terms of the so-called *Rayleigh quotient*.

Theorem

Let P be irreducible and reversible with respect to $\pi > 0$. Then

$$\|P\|_\pi = \sup\left\{\frac{\langle f, Pf\rangle_\pi}{\langle f, f\rangle_\pi} \,:\, f \in \ell_0(V),\ f \neq \mathbf{0}\right\}.$$

Proof: Let λ_1 be the r.h.s. above. By Cauchy-Schwarz $|\langle f, Pf\rangle_\pi| \leq \|f\|_\pi \|Pf\|_\pi$. That gives $\lambda_1 \leq \|P\|_\pi$ by dividing both sides by $\|f\|_\pi^2$.

Rayleigh quotient II

In the other direction, note that for a self-adjoint operator P we have the following "polarization identity"

$$\langle Pf, g\rangle_\pi = \frac{1}{4}\left[\langle P(f+g), f+g\rangle_\pi - \langle P(f-g), f-g\rangle_\pi\right],$$

which can be checked by expanding the r.h.s. Note that if $\langle f, Pf\rangle_\pi \leq \lambda_1 \langle f, f\rangle_\pi$ for all $f \in \ell_0(V)$ then the same holds for all $f \in \ell^2(V,\pi)$ because $\ell_0(V)$ is dense in $\ell^2(V,\pi)$. So for any $f, g \in \ell^2(V,\pi)$

$$|\langle Pf, g\rangle_\pi| \leq \frac{\lambda_1}{4}\left[\langle f+g, f+g\rangle_\pi + \langle f-g, f-g\rangle_\pi\right] = \lambda_1 \frac{\langle f, f\rangle_\pi + \langle g, g\rangle_\pi}{2}.$$

Taking $g := Pf\|f\|_\pi / \|Pf\|_\pi$ gives

$$\|Pf\|_\pi \|f\|_\pi \leq \lambda_1 \|f\|_\pi^2,$$

or $\|P\|_\pi \leq \lambda_1$. ■

Spectral radius I

Definition

Let P be irreducible. The *spectral radius* of P is defined as

$$\rho(P) := \limsup_t P^t(x,y)^{1/t},$$

which does not depend on x, y.

To see that the lim sup does not depend on x, y, let $u, v, x, y \in V$ and $k, m \geq 0$ such that $P^m(u,x) > 0$ and $P^k(y,v)$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} &P^{t+m+k}(u,v)^{1/(t+m+k)} \\ &\quad \geq (P^m(u,x)P^t(x,y)P^k(y,v))^{1/(t+m+k)} \\ &\quad \geq P^m(u,x)^{1/(t+m+k)}P^t(x,y)^{1/t}P^k(y,v)^{1/(t+m+k)}, \end{aligned}$$

which shows that $\limsup_t P^t(u,v)^{1/t} \geq \limsup_t P^t(x,y)^{1/t}$ for all u, v, x, y.

Spectral radius II

In the positive recurrent case (for instance if the chain is finite), we have $P^t(x,y) \to \pi(y) > 0$ and so $\rho(P) = 1 = \|P\|_\pi$. The equality between $\rho(P)$ and $\|P\|_\pi$ holds in general for reversible chains.

Theorem

Let P be irreducible and reversible with respect to $\pi > 0$. Then

$$\rho(P) = \|P\|_\pi.$$

Moreover for all t

$$P^t(x,y) \leq \sqrt{\frac{\pi(y)}{\pi(x)}} \|P\|_\pi^t.$$

Spectral radius III

Proof: Because P is self-adjoint and $\|\delta_z\|_\pi^2 = \pi(z) \leq 1$, by Cauchy-Schwarz

$$\pi(x)P^t(x,y) = \langle \delta_x, P^t\delta_y\rangle_\pi \leq \|P\|_\pi^t \|\delta_x\|_\pi \|\delta_y\|_\pi = \|P\|_\pi^t \sqrt{\pi(x)\pi(y)}.$$

Hence $P^t(x,y) \leq \sqrt{\frac{\pi(y)}{\pi(x)}}\|P\|_\pi^t$ and further $\rho(P) \leq \|P\|_\pi$.

For the other direction, by self-adjointness and Cauchy-Schwarz, for any $f \in \ell^2(V,\pi)$

$$\|P^{t+1}f\|_\pi^2 = \langle P^{t+1}f, P^{t+1}f\rangle_\pi = \langle P^{t+2}f, P^t f\rangle_\pi \leq \|P^{t+2}f\|_\pi \|P^t f\|_\pi,$$

or

$$\frac{\|P^{t+1}f\|_\pi}{\|P^t f\|_\pi} \leq \frac{\|P^{t+2}f\|_\pi}{\|P^{t+1}f\|_\pi}.$$

So $\frac{\|P^{t+1}f\|_\pi}{\|P^t f\|_\pi}$ is non-decreasing and therefore has a limit $L \leq +\infty$. Moreover $\frac{\|Pf\|_\pi}{\|f\|_\pi} \leq L$ so it suffices to prove $L \leq \rho(P)$. As before it suffices to prove this for $f \in \ell_0(V)$, $f \neq \mathbf{0}$ by a density argument.

Spectral radius IV

Observe that

$$\left(\frac{\|P^t f\|_\pi}{\|f\|_\pi}\right)^{1/t} = \left(\frac{\|Pf\|_\pi}{\|f\|_\pi} \times \cdots \times \frac{\|P^t f\|_\pi}{\|P^{t-1} f\|_\pi}\right)^{1/t} \to L,$$

so $L = \lim_t \|P^t f\|_\pi^{1/t}$. By self-adjointness again

$$\|P^t f\|_\pi^2 = \langle f, P^{2t} f\rangle_\pi = \sum_{x,y} \pi(x) f(x) f(y) P^{2t}(x,y).$$

By definition of $\rho := \rho(P)$, for any $\varepsilon > 0$, there is t large enough so that $P^{2t}(x,y) \leq (\rho+\varepsilon)^{2t}$ for all x, y in the support of f. In that case,

$$\|P^t f\|_\pi^{1/t} \leq (\rho+\varepsilon)\left(\sum_{x,y} \pi(x)|f(x)f(y)|\right)^{1/2t}.$$

The sum on the l.h.s. is finite because f has finite support. Since ε is arbitrary, we get $\limsup_t \|P^t f\|_\pi^{1/t} \leq \rho$.

A counter-example

In the non-reversible case, the result generally does not hold. Consider asymmetric random walk on $\mathbb{Z}$ with probability $p \in (1/2, 1)$ of going to the right. Then both $\pi_0(x) := \left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right)^x$ and $\pi_1(x) := 1$ define stationary measures, but only π_0 is reversible. Under π_1, we have $\|P\|_{\pi_1} = 1$. Indeed, let $f_n(x) := \mathbb{1}_{\{|x| \leq n\}}$ and note that

$$(Pf_n)(x) = \mathbb{1}_{\{|x| \leq n-1\}} + p\mathbb{1}_{\{x = -n-1 \text{ or } -n\}} + (1-p)\mathbb{1}_{\{x = n \text{ or } n+1\}},$$

so $\|f_n\|_{\pi_1}^2 = 2n+1$ and $\|Pf_n\|_{\pi_1}^2 \geq 2(n-1)+1$. Hence $\limsup_n \frac{\|Pf_n\|_{\pi_1}}{\|f_n\|_{\pi_1}} \geq 1$. On the other hand, $\mathbb{E}_0[X_t] = (2p-1)t$ and X_t, as a sum of t independent increments in $\{-1, +1\}$, is a 2-Lipschitz function. So by the Azuma-Hoeffding inequality

$$P^t(0,0)^{1/t} \leq \mathbb{P}_0[X_t \leq 0]^{1/t} = \mathbb{P}_0[X_t - (2p-1)t \leq -(2p-1)t]^{1/t} \leq e^{-\frac{2(2p-1)^2 t^2}{2^2 t}\frac{1}{t}}.$$

Therefore $\rho(P) \leq e^{-(2p-1)^2/2} < 1$.

A corollary

Corollary

Let P be irreducible and reversible with respect to π. If $\|P\|_\pi < 1$, then P is transient.

Proof: By the theorem, $P^t(x,x) \leq \|P\|_\pi^t$ so $\sum_t P^t(x,x) < +\infty$. Because $\sum_t P^t(x,x) = \mathbb{E}_x[\sum_t \mathbb{1}_{\{X_t = x\}}]$, we have that $\sum_t \mathbb{1}_{\{X_t = x\}} < +\infty$, $\mathbb{P}_x$-a.s., and (X_t) is transient. ∎

This is not an if and only if. Random walk on $\mathbb{Z}^3$ is transient, yet $P^{2t}(0,0) = \Theta(t^{-3/2})$ so $\|P\|_\pi = \rho(P) = 1$.