From the Manhattan Project to Number Theory: How Nuclear Physics Helps Us Understand Primes

Steven J Miller
Williams College

Steven.J.Miller@williams.edu
http://www.williams.edu/go/math/sjmiller/

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Introduction

Fundamental Problem: Spacing Between Events

General Formulation: Studying system, observe values at $t_1, t_2, t_3, \dots$.

Question: What rules govern the spacings between the t_i?

Examples:

- Spacings b/w Energy Levels of Nuclei.
- Spacings b/w Eigenvalues of Matrices.
- Spacings b/w Primes.
- Spacings b/w $n^k\alpha$ mod 1.
- Spacings b/w Zeros of L-functions.

Sketch of proofs

In studying many statistics, often three key steps:

1. Determine correct scale for events.
2. Develop an explicit formula relating what we want to study to something we understand.
3. Use an averaging formula to analyze the quantities above.

It is not always trivial to figure out what is the correct statistic to study!

Background Material: Linear Algebra

Eigenvalue, Eigenvector

Say $\overrightarrow{v} \neq \overrightarrow{0}$ is an eigenvector of A with eigenvalue λ if $A\overrightarrow{v} = \lambda\overrightarrow{v}$.

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Example:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 2 & 1 \end{pmatrix}\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} = 3\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 2 & 1 \end{pmatrix}\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} = -1\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Background Material: Probability

Probability Density

A random variable X has a probability density $p(x)$ if

- $p(x) \geq 0$;
- $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} p(x)dx = 1$;
- $\text{Prob}(X \in [a, b]) = \int_a^b p(x)dx$.

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Examples:

1. Exponential: $p(x) = e^{-x/\lambda}/\lambda$ for $x \geq 0$;
2. Normal: $p(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}} e^{-(x-\mu)^2/2\sigma^2}$;
3. Uniform: $p(x) = \frac{1}{b-a}$ for $a \leq x \leq b$ and 0 otherwise.

Background Material: Probability (cont)

Key Concepts

- Mean (average value): $\mu = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} xp(x)dx$.

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- k^{th} moment: $\mu_k = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x^k p(x) dx$.

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Key observation

As a nice function is given by its Taylor series, a nice probability density is determined by its moments.

Classical
Random Matrix Theory

Origins of Random Matrix Theory

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Fundamental Equation:

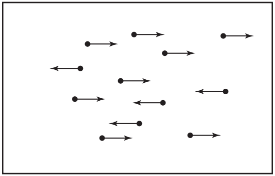
$$H\psi_n = E_n\psi_n$$

H : matrix, entries depend on system

E_n : energy levels

ψ_n : energy eigenfunctions

Origins (continued)



- Statistical Mechanics: for each configuration, calculate quantity (say pressure).
- Average over all configurations – most configurations close to system average.
- Nuclear physics: choose matrix at random, calculate eigenvalues, average over matrices (real Symmetric $A = A^T$, complex Hermitian $\overline{A}^T = A$).

Random Matrix Ensembles

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} & \cdots & a_{1N} \\ a_{12} & a_{22} & a_{23} & \cdots & a_{2N} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ a_{1N} & a_{2N} & a_{3N} & \cdots & a_{NN} \end{pmatrix} = A^T, \quad a_{ij} = a_{ji}$$

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$$\text{Prob}(A) = \prod_{1 \le i \le j \le N} p(a_{ij}).$$

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This means

$$\text{Prob}\left(A : a_{ij} \in [\alpha_{ij}, \beta_{ij}]\right) = \prod_{1 \le i \le j \le N} \int_{x_{ij}=\alpha_{ij}}^{\beta_{ij}} p(x_{ij}) dx_{ij}.$$

Eigenvalue Trace Lemma

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Eigenvalue Trace Lemma

Let A be an $N \times N$ matrix with eigenvalues $\lambda_i(A)$. Then

$$\mathrm{Trace}(A^k) = \sum_{n=1}^{N} \lambda_i(A)^k,$$

where

$$\mathrm{Trace}(A^k) = \sum_{i_1=1}^{N} \cdots \sum_{i_k=1}^{N} a_{i_1 i_2} a_{i_2 i_3} \cdots a_{i_N i_1}.$$

Eigenvalue Distribution

$\delta(x - x_0)$ is a unit point mass at x_0:
$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x)\delta(x - x_0)dx = f(x_0)$.

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To each A, attach a probability measure:

$$\mu_{A,N}(x) = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}\delta\left(x - \frac{\lambda_i(A)}{2\sqrt{N}}\right)$$

$$\int_a^b \mu_{A,N}(x)dx = \frac{\#\left\{\lambda_i : \frac{\lambda_i(A)}{2\sqrt{N}} \in [a,b]\right\}}{N}$$

$$\text{k}^{\text{th}}\text{ moment} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N}\lambda_i(A)^k}{2^k N^{\frac{k}{2}+1}} = \frac{\text{Trace}(A^k)}{2^k N^{\frac{k}{2}+1}}.$$

Density of States

Wigner's Semi-Circle Law

Wigner's Semi-Circle Law

$N \times N$ real symmetric matrices, entries i.i.d.r.v. from a fixed $p(x)$ with mean 0, variance 1, and other moments finite. Then for almost all A, as $N \to \infty$

$$\mu_{A,N}(x) \longrightarrow \begin{cases} \frac{2}{\pi}\sqrt{1-x^2} & \text{if } |x| \le 1 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

SKETCH OF PROOF: Correct Scale

$$\mathrm{Trace}(A^2) \;=\; \sum_{i=1}^{N} \lambda_i(A)^2.$$

By the Central Limit Theorem:

$$\mathrm{Trace}(A^2) \;=\; \sum_{i=1}^{N}\sum_{j=1}^{N} a_{ij}a_{ji} \;=\; \sum_{i=1}^{N}\sum_{j=1}^{N} a_{ij}^2 \;\sim\; N^2$$

$$\sum_{i=1}^{N} \lambda_i(A)^2 \;\sim\; N^2$$

Gives $N\,\mathrm{Ave}(\lambda_i(A)^2) \sim N^2$ or $\mathrm{Ave}(\lambda_i(A)) \sim \sqrt{N}$.

SKETCH OF PROOF: Averaging Formula

Recall k-th moment of $\mu_{A,N}(x)$ is $\mathrm{Trace}(A^k)/2^k N^{k/2+1}$.

Average k-th moment is

$$\int \cdots \int \frac{\mathrm{Trace}(A^k)}{2^k N^{k/2+1}} \prod_{i \leq j} p(a_{ij}) da_{ij}.$$

Proof by method of moments: Two steps

- Show average of k-th moments converge to moments of semi-circle as $N \to \infty$;
- Control variance (show it tends to zero as $N \to \infty$).

SKETCH OF PROOF: Averaging Formula for Second Moment

Substituting into expansion gives

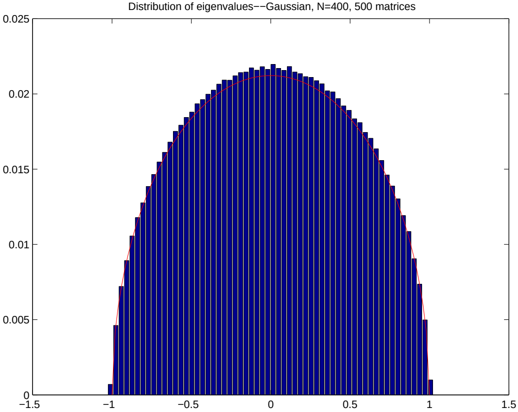
$$\frac{1}{2^2N^2}\int_{-\infty}^{\infty}\cdots\int_{-\infty}^{\infty}\sum_{i=1}^{N}\sum_{j=1}^{N}a_{ji}^2\cdot p(a_{11})da_{11}\cdots p(a_{NN})da_{NN}$$

Integration factors as

$$\int_{a_{ij}=-\infty}^{\infty}a_{ij}^2p(a_{ij})da_{ij}\quad\cdot\quad\prod_{\substack{(k,l)\neq(i,j)\\k<l}}\int_{a_{kl}=-\infty}^{\infty}p(a_{kl})da_{kl}\ =\ 1.$$

Higher moments involve more advanced combinatorics (Catalan numbers).

Numerical example: Gaussian density



500 Matrices: Gaussian 400×400

$$p(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-x^2/2}$$

Numerical example: Cauchy density $p(x) = 1/\pi(1 + x^2)$

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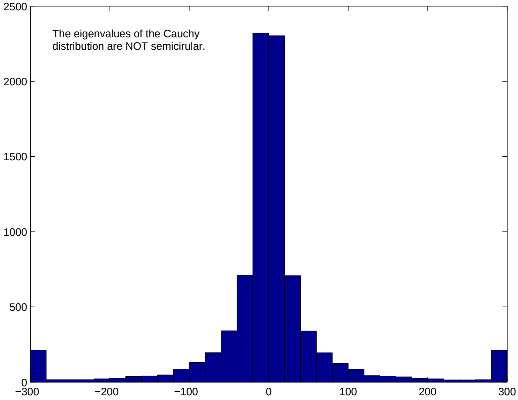

Cauchy Distribution: $p(x) = \frac{1}{\pi(1+x^2)}$

Spacings between events

GOE Conjecture

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As $N \to \infty$, the probability density of the spacing b/w consecutive normalized eigenvalues approaches a limit independent of p.

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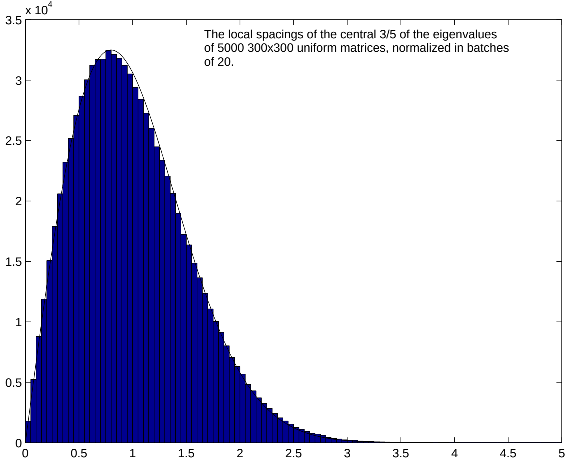
Only known if p is a Gaussian.

$$\mathrm{GOE}(x) \approx \frac{\pi}{2} x e^{-\pi x^2/4}.$$

Numerical Experiment: Uniform Distribution

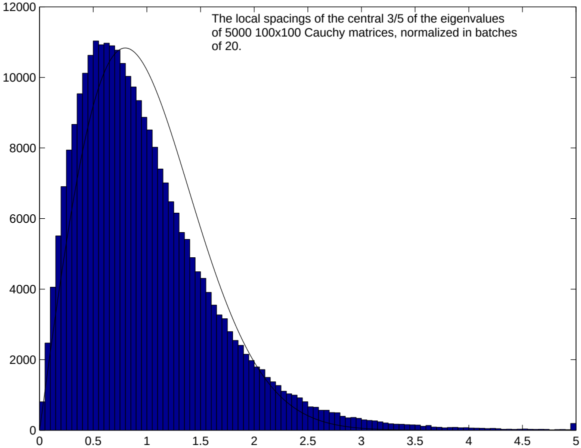
Let $p(x) = \frac{1}{2}$ for $|x| \leq 1$.



5000: 300×300 uniform on $[-1, 1]$

Cauchy Distribution

Let $p(x) = \frac{1}{\pi(1+x^2)}$.



5000: 100 $\times$ 100 Cauchy

Cauchy Distribution

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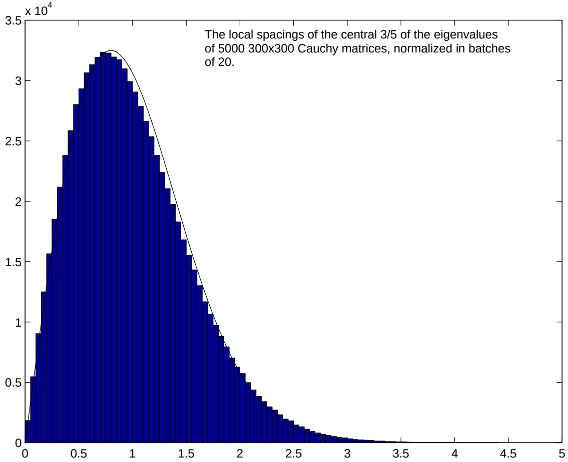
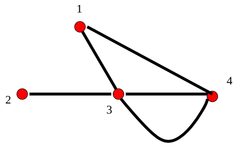


5000: 300×300 Cauchy

Random Graphs



Degree of a vertex $=$ number of edges leaving the vertex.
Adjacency matrix: a_{ij} $=$ number edges b/w Vertex i and Vertex j.

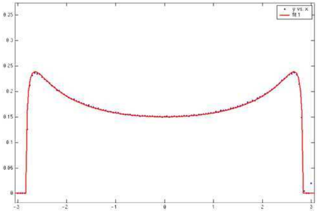
$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 2 \\ 1 & 0 & 2 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

These are Real Symmetric Matrices.

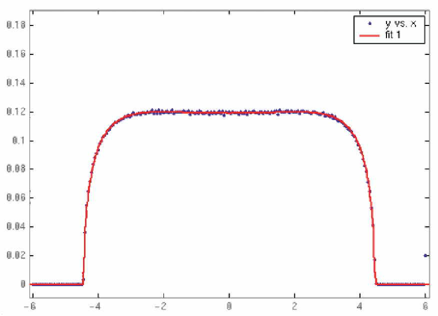
McKay's Law (Kesten Measure) with $d = 3$

Density of Eigenvalues for d-regular graphs

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{d}{2\pi(d^2 - x^2)}\sqrt{4(d-1) - x^2} & |x| \le 2\sqrt{d-1} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$



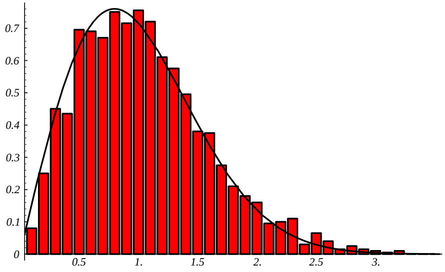
McKay's Law (Kesten Measure) with $d = 6$



Fat Thin: fat enough to average, thin enough to get something different than Semi-circle.

3-Regular, 2000 Vertices and GOE

Spacings between eigenvalues of 3-regular graphs and the GOE:



Introduction to L-Functions

Riemann Zeta Function

$$\zeta(s) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^s} = \prod_{p \text{ prime}} \left(1 - \frac{1}{p^s}\right)^{-1}, \quad \mathrm{Re}(s) > 1.$$

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Unique Factorization: $n = p_1^{r_1} \cdots p_m^{r_m}$.

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$$\prod_p \left(1 - \frac{1}{p^s}\right)^{-1} = \left[1 + \frac{1}{2^s} + \left(\frac{1}{2^s}\right)^2 + \cdots\right] \left[1 + \frac{1}{3^s} + \left(\frac{1}{3^s}\right)^2$$

$$= \sum_n \frac{1}{n^s}.$$

Riemann Zeta Function (cont)

$$\zeta(s) = \sum_n \frac{1}{n^s} = \prod_p \left(1 - \frac{1}{p^s}\right)^{-1}, \quad \text{Re}(s) > 1$$

$$\pi(x) = \#\{p : p \text{ is prime}, p \leq x\}$$

Properties of $\zeta(s)$ and Primes:

Riemann Zeta Function (cont)

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Properties of $\zeta(s)$ and Primes:

- $\lim_{s\to 1^+} \zeta(s) = \infty$, $\pi(x) \to \infty$.

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Properties of $\zeta(s)$ and Primes:

- $\lim_{s \to 1^+} \zeta(s) = \infty$, $\pi(x) \to \infty$.
- $\zeta(2) = \frac{\pi^2}{6}$, $\pi(x) \to \infty$.

Riemann Zeta Function

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Functional Equation:

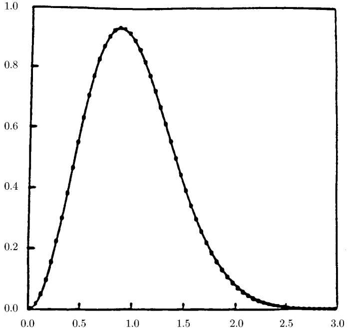
$$\xi(s) = \Gamma\left(\frac{s}{2}\right)\pi^{-\frac{s}{2}}\zeta(s) = \xi(1-s).$$

Riemann Hypothesis (RH):

All non-trivial zeros have $\text{Re}(s) = \frac{1}{2}$; can write zeros as $\frac{1}{2}+i\gamma$.

Observation: Spacings b/w zeros appear same as b/w eigenvalues of Complex Hermitian matrices $\overline{A}^T = A$.

Zeros of $\zeta(s)$ vs GUE



70 million spacings b/w adjacent zeros of $\zeta(s)$, starting at the $10^{20\text{th}}$ zero (from Odlyzko)

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