

Trust Region Policy Optimization & NPG

Recap on NPG:

At iteration t:

$$\max_{\pi_{\theta}} \mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta_t}}} \left[\mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}(s)} A^{\pi_{\theta_t}}(s, a) \right] \cdot$$

$\text{s.t., } KL(\rho_{\pi_{\theta_t}} | \rho_{\pi_{\theta}}) \leq \delta$

Intuition: maximize local adv subject
to being incremental (in KL);

Recap on NPG:

At iteration t:

$$\begin{aligned} \max_{\pi_{\theta}} \mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta_t}}} \left[\mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}(s)} A^{\pi_{\theta_t}}(s, a) \right] &\longrightarrow \text{First-order Taylor expansion at } \theta_t \\ \text{s.t., } KL \left(\rho_{\pi_{\theta_t}} \mid \rho_{\pi_{\theta}} \right) \leq \delta &\longrightarrow \text{second-order Taylor expansion at } \theta_t \end{aligned}$$

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Recap on NPG:

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Intuition: maximize local adv subject to being incremental (in KL);

PG
↓

$$\max_{\theta} \nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta_t})^{\top} (\theta - \theta_t)$$
$$\text{s.t. } (\theta - \theta_t)^{\top} F_{\theta_t} (\theta - \theta_t) \leq \delta$$

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Intuition: maximize local adv subject
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$$\theta_{t+1} = \theta_t + \eta F_{\theta_t}^{-1} \nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta_t})$$

NPG

$$\begin{aligned} & \max_{\theta} \nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta_t})^{\top} (\theta - \theta_t) \\ & \text{s.t. } (\theta - \theta_t)^{\top} F_{\theta_t} (\theta - \theta_t) \leq \delta \end{aligned}$$

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Intuition: maximize local adv subject to being incremental (in KL);

$$\theta_{t+1} = \theta_t + \underbrace{\eta F_{\theta_t}^{-1} \nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta_t})}_{\text{NPG}} \longleftarrow \begin{array}{l} \max_{\theta} \nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta_t})^{\top} (\theta - \theta_t) \\ \text{s.t. } (\theta - \theta_t)^{\top} F_{\theta_t} (\theta - \theta_t) \leq \delta \end{array}$$

$$F_{\theta_t} := \mathbb{E}_{s, a \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta_t}}} \left[\underbrace{\nabla_{\theta} \ln \pi_{\theta_t}(a | s) \left(\nabla_{\theta} \ln \pi_{\theta_t}(a | s) \right)^{\top}}_{P \succeq \mathcal{D}} \right] \in \mathbb{R}^{dim_{\theta} \times dim_{\theta}}$$

Outline for Today:

1. Derivation of the closed-form NPG update
2. Intuitive Explanation of Natural (Policy) Gradient
3. Review of Policy Optimization (API, CPI, PG, and NPG) & a new algorithm

At iteration t , NPG solves a convex constrained optimization problem:

$$\begin{aligned} & \max_{\theta} \nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta_t})^{\top} (\theta - \theta_t) \\ \text{s.t. } & (\theta - \theta_t)^{\top} F_{\theta_t} (\theta - \theta_t) \leq \delta \end{aligned}$$

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Notation
simplification
→

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Notation simplification \longrightarrow

$$\begin{aligned} \max_{\Delta} & \nabla^{\top} \Delta, \\ \text{s.t.} & \Delta^{\top} F \Delta \leq \delta \end{aligned}$$

At iteration t , NPG solves a convex constrained optimization problem:

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Notation
simplification



$$\begin{aligned} \max \quad & \nabla^{\top} \Delta, \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & \Delta^{\top} F \Delta \leq \delta \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \downarrow \\ \tilde{\Delta} & := F^{1/2} \Delta \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} F^{\frac{1}{2}} &= \sqrt{F} \\ F &= U \Sigma U^{\top} \\ F^{\frac{1}{2}} &= U \sqrt{\Sigma} U^{\top} \\ (F^{\frac{1}{2}})^2 &= F \end{aligned}$$

At iteration t , NPG solves a convex constrained optimization problem:

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$$\begin{aligned} & \Delta^{\top} F^{\frac{1}{2}} F^{\frac{1}{2}} \Delta \\ & = (F^{\frac{1}{2}} \Delta)^{\top} (F^{\frac{1}{2}} \Delta) \\ & = \tilde{A}^{\top} \tilde{\Delta} \end{aligned} \quad \begin{aligned} & \tilde{\Delta} := F^{1/2} \Delta \\ & \max_{\tilde{\Delta}} (F^{-1/2} \nabla)^{\top} \tilde{\Delta}, \\ & \text{s.t. } \tilde{\Delta}^{\top} \tilde{\Delta} \leq \delta \end{aligned} \quad \|\tilde{\Delta}\|_2 = \delta$$

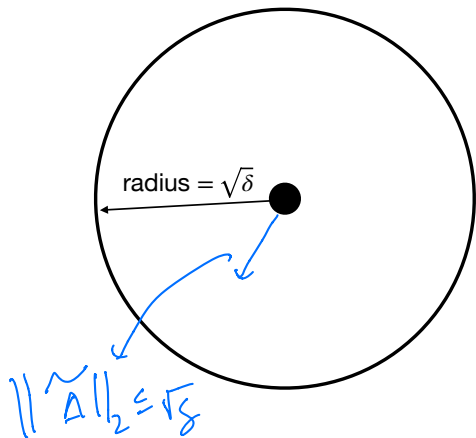
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$$\begin{aligned} & \downarrow \widetilde{\Delta} := F^{1/2} \Delta \\ \max_{\widetilde{\Delta}} \quad & (F^{-1/2} \nabla)^{\top} \widetilde{\Delta}, \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & \widetilde{\Delta}^{\top} \widetilde{\Delta} \leq \delta \end{aligned}$$

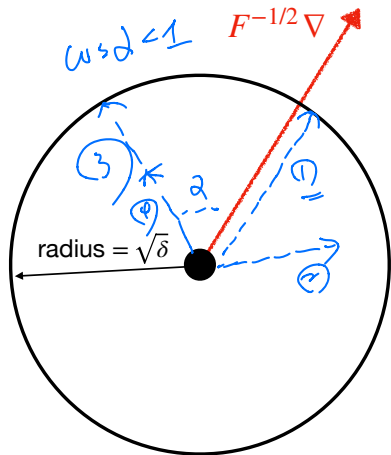


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$$\begin{aligned} & \textcircled{1} \left(F^{-\frac{1}{2}} \nabla \right) \\ & > \textcircled{2} \left(F^{-\frac{1}{2}} \nabla \right) \end{aligned}$$

$$\textcircled{1} = \eta \cdot F^{-\frac{1}{2}} \nabla$$

$$\|\textcircled{1}\|_2 = \sqrt{\delta}$$

$$\Rightarrow \|\eta F^{-\frac{1}{2}} \nabla\|_2 = \sqrt{\delta} \Rightarrow \eta^2 \nabla^{\top} F^{-\frac{1}{2}} F^{-\frac{1}{2}} \nabla = \delta$$

solve for η :

$$\Rightarrow \eta = \sqrt{\frac{\delta}{\nabla^{\top} F^{-1} \nabla}}$$

$$\textcircled{1} = \eta \cdot F^{-\frac{1}{2}} \nabla$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \downarrow \tilde{\Delta} := F^{1/2} \Delta \\ & \max_{\tilde{\Delta}} \left(F^{-1/2} \nabla \right)^{\top} \tilde{\Delta}, \\ & \text{s.t. } \tilde{\Delta}^{\top} \tilde{\Delta} \leq \delta \end{aligned}$$

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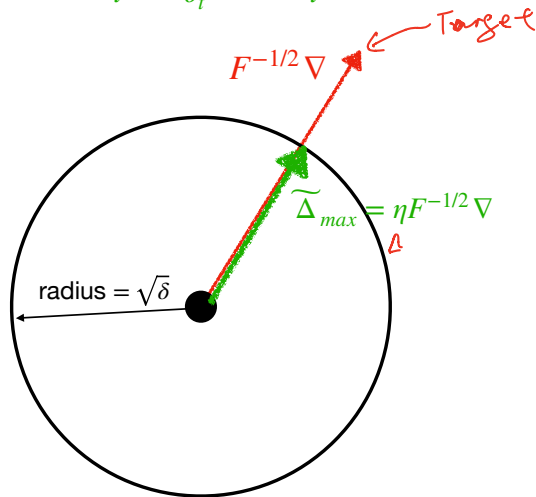
$$\begin{aligned} \max_{\Delta} & \nabla^{\top} \Delta, \\ \text{s.t.} & \Delta^{\top} F \Delta \leq \delta \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & F^{-\frac{1}{2}} \nabla \\ & = F^{-\frac{1}{2}} \nabla_{\theta} J(\theta_t) \\ & \underbrace{\quad}_{\text{vector defined by } \theta_t} \end{aligned}$$

$$\widetilde{\Delta} := F^{1/2} \Delta$$

$$\max_{\widetilde{\Delta}} \left(\underline{F^{-1/2}} \nabla \right)^{\top} \widetilde{\Delta},$$

$$\text{s.t. } \widetilde{\Delta}^{\top} \widetilde{\Delta} \leq \delta$$

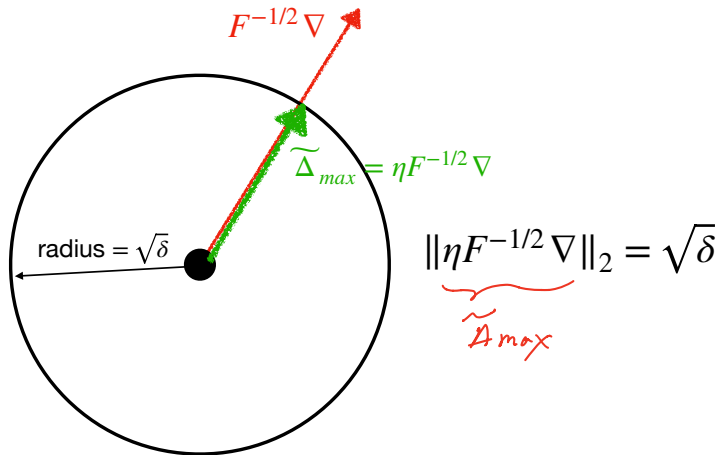


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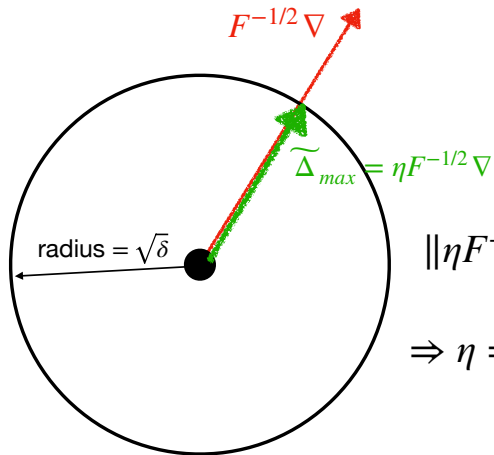
$$\begin{aligned} & \downarrow \tilde{\Delta} := F^{1/2} \Delta \\ & \max_{\tilde{\Delta}} (F^{-1/2} \nabla)^{\top} \tilde{\Delta}, \\ & \text{s.t. } \tilde{\Delta}^{\top} \tilde{\Delta} \leq \delta \end{aligned}$$

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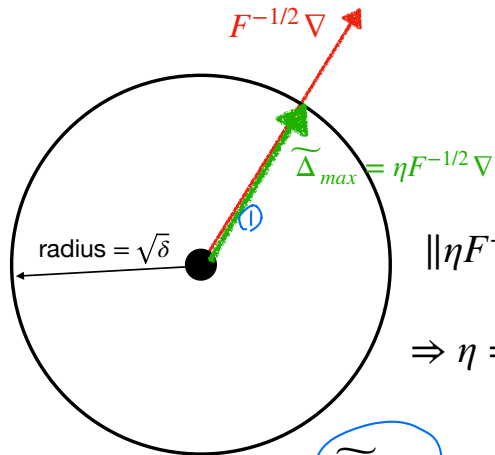
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$$\textcircled{1} \quad \tilde{\Delta}_{max} := \sqrt{\frac{\delta}{\nabla^{\top} F^{-1} \nabla}} F^{-1/2} \nabla$$

$\tilde{\Delta} := F^{\frac{1}{2}} \Delta \Rightarrow A = F^{-\frac{1}{2}} \tilde{\Delta}$

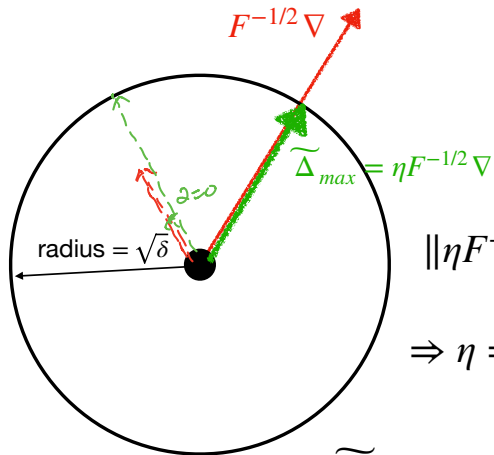
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$$\tilde{\Delta} := F^{1/2} \Delta$$

$$\max_{\tilde{\Delta}} (F^{-1/2} \nabla)^{\top} \tilde{\Delta},$$

$$\text{s.t. } \tilde{\Delta}^{\top} \tilde{\Delta} \leq \delta$$

$$\Delta_{max} := \sqrt{\frac{\delta}{\nabla^{\top} F^{-1} \nabla}} F^{-1} \nabla$$

$$\begin{aligned} x^{\top} y \\ = \|x\|_2 \|y\|_2 \cos \langle x, y \rangle \end{aligned}$$

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A more standard and straightway is to use Lagrange multiplier $\lambda \leq 0$:

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A more standard and straightway is to use Lagrange multiplier $\lambda \leq 0$:

$$\min_{\lambda \leq 0} \max_{\theta} \nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta_t})^{\top} (\theta - \theta_t) + \lambda \left((\theta - \theta_t)^{\top} F_{\theta_t} (\theta - \theta_t) - \delta \right)$$

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(This is optional: Lagrange formulation is out of scope)

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Summary: at this stage, we complete the NPG algorithm derivation

Outline for Today:



1. Derivation of the closed-form NPG update

2. Intuitive Explanation of Natural (Policy) Gradient

3. Review of Policy Optimization (API, CPI, PG, and NPG) & a new algorithm

NPG update: $\theta_1 = \theta_0 + \eta F_{\theta_0}^{-1} \nabla_{\theta_0}$

Natural Gradient

NPG update: $\theta_1 = \theta_0 + \eta F_{\theta_0}^{-1} \nabla_{\theta_0}$

$$KL(\rho_{\pi_{\theta_0}} | \rho_{\pi_{\theta}}) \leq \delta \Rightarrow \underbrace{(\theta - \theta_0)^T F_{\theta_0} (\theta - \theta_0)}_{\text{metric, } F_{\theta_0} \text{ is PD}} \leq \delta$$

NPG update: $\theta_1 = \theta_0 + \eta F_{\theta_0}^{-1} \nabla_{\theta_0}$

$$KL\left(\rho_{\pi_{\theta_0}} \mid \rho_{\pi_{\theta}}\right) \leq \delta \Rightarrow (\theta - \theta_0)^\top F_{\theta_0} (\theta - \theta_0) \leq \delta$$

Our goal is to make sure two distributions do not change too much,
but parameters θ could potentially change a lot!

$$\text{NPG update: } \theta_1 = \theta_0 + \eta F_{\theta_0}^{-1} \nabla_{\theta_0}$$

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Our goal is to make sure two distributions do not change to much,
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Consider special case where F_{θ_0} is a diagonal matrix: $F_{\theta_0} = \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \sigma_2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \sigma_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{\sigma_1} \cdot \nabla_{\theta_0} [1] \\ \frac{1}{\sigma_2} \cdot \nabla_{\theta_0} [2] \\ \frac{1}{\sigma_3} \cdot \nabla_{\theta_0} [3] \end{bmatrix}$

$$\text{NPG update: } \theta_1 = \theta_0 + \eta F_{\theta_0}^{-1} \nabla_{\theta_0}$$

$$KL(\rho_{\pi_{\theta_0}} | \rho_{\pi_{\theta}}) \leq \delta \Rightarrow (\theta - \theta_0)^\top F_{\theta_0} (\theta - \theta_0) \leq \delta$$

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$$\forall i: \theta_1[i] = \theta_0[i] + \underbrace{(\eta \sigma_i^{-1})}_{\text{step size}} \nabla_{\theta_0}[i]$$

$$\text{NPG update: } \theta_1 = \theta_0 + \eta F_{\theta_0}^{-1} \nabla_{\theta_0}$$

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$$\forall i : \theta_1[i] = \theta_0[i] + (\eta \sigma_i^{-1}) \nabla_{\theta_0}[i]$$

For tiny σ_i , we indeed have a **huge** learning rate, i.e., $\eta \sigma_i^{-1}$, at coordinate i !

$$\text{NPG update: } \theta_1 = \theta_0 + \eta F_{\theta_0}^{-1} \nabla_{\theta_0}$$

$$(\theta - \theta_0)^T \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 \\ \sigma_2 \\ \sigma_3 \end{bmatrix} (\theta - \theta_0)$$

$$KL(\rho_{\pi_{\theta_0}} | \rho_{\pi_{\theta}}) \leq \delta \Rightarrow (\theta - \theta_0)^T F_{\theta_0} (\theta - \theta_0) \leq \delta$$

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For tiny σ_i , we indeed have a **huge** learning rate, i.e., $\eta \sigma_i^{-1}$, at coordinate i !

In other words, NPG **allows a big jump** on some coordinates which do not affect KL-div too much

Example of Natural Gradient on 1-d problem:

$\theta \in \mathbb{R}$

$$p_\theta = \left(\frac{p[1]}{p[1] + p[2]}, \frac{p[2]}{p[1] + p[2]} \right)$$

$p[1] + p[2] = 1$

$$p_\theta = \left(\frac{\exp(\theta)}{1 + \exp(\theta)}, \frac{1}{1 + \exp(\theta)} \right)$$

$$g(\theta) = 100 \cdot p_\theta[1] + 1 \cdot p_\theta[2]$$

$$\lim_{\theta \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\exp(\theta)}{1 + \exp(\theta)} = \frac{\exp(\theta)}{\exp(\theta)} = 1$$

Δ

$$\theta^* = \underset{\theta}{\operatorname{argmax}} g(\theta) \quad ??$$

$$p_{\theta^*}[1] = 1$$

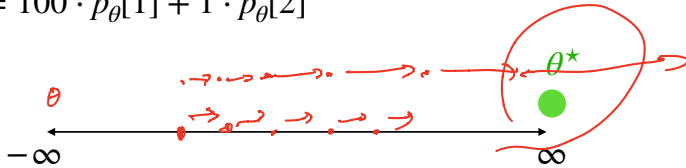
$$p_{\theta^*}[2] = 0$$

Example of Natural Gradient on 1-d problem:

$$p_{\theta} = \left(\frac{\exp(\theta)}{1 + \exp(\theta)}, \frac{1}{1 + \exp(\theta)} \right)$$

$$g(\theta) = 100 \cdot p_{\theta}[1] + 1 \cdot p_{\theta}[2]$$

$$\theta^* = \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta} g(\theta)$$

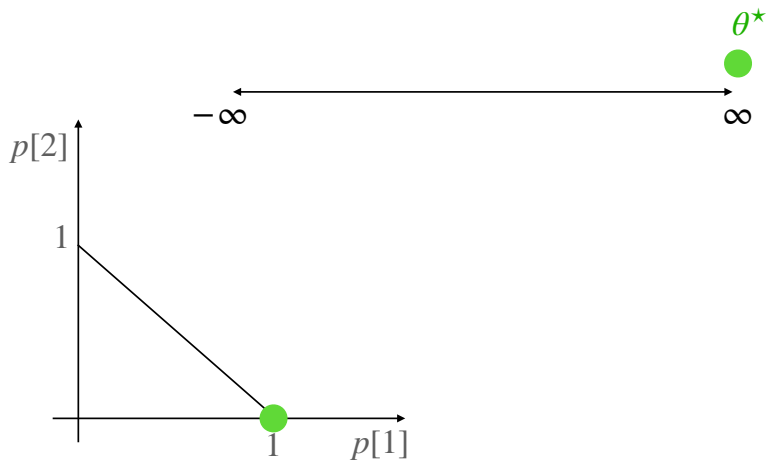


$$\theta' = \theta + g'(\theta)$$

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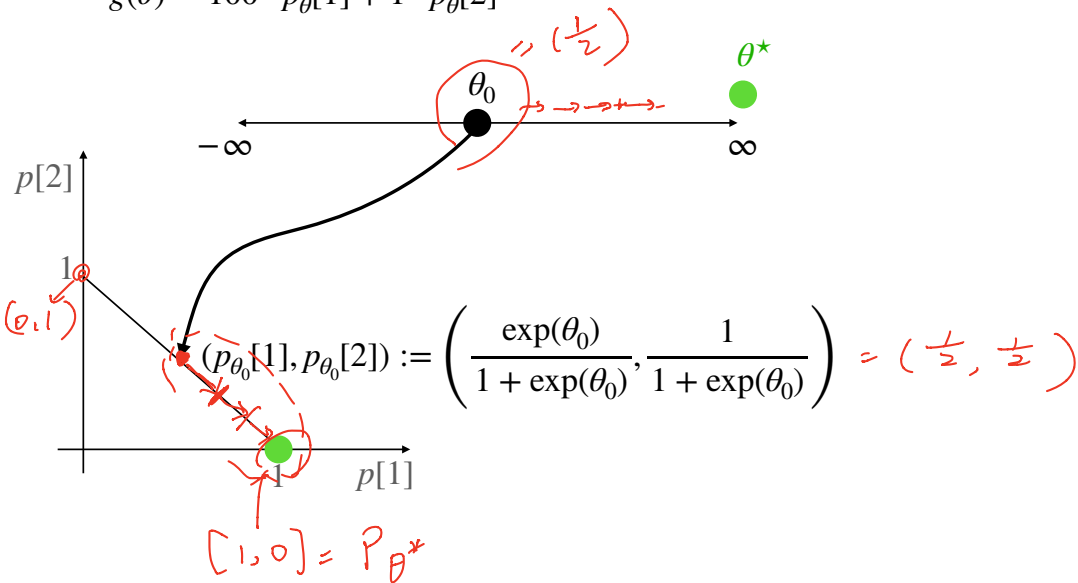
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$F_\theta \in \mathbb{R}^{d_\theta \times d_\theta}$

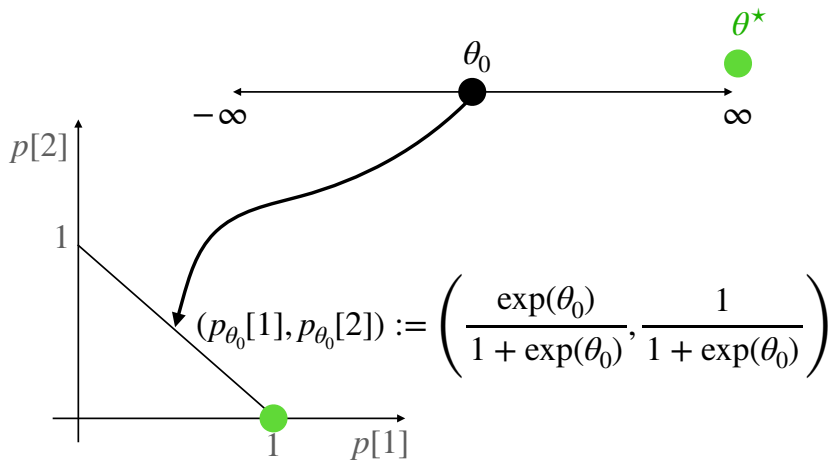
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Fisher information scalar: $f_{\theta_0} = \frac{\exp(\theta_0)}{(1 + \exp(\theta_0))^2}$

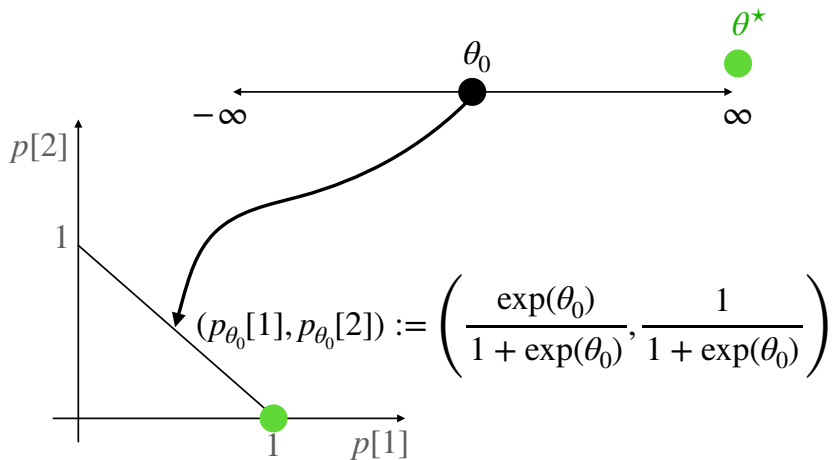
$\text{KL}(P_{\theta_0} \parallel P_\theta) \Big|_{\theta=\theta_0}$



Example of Natural Gradient on 1-d problem:

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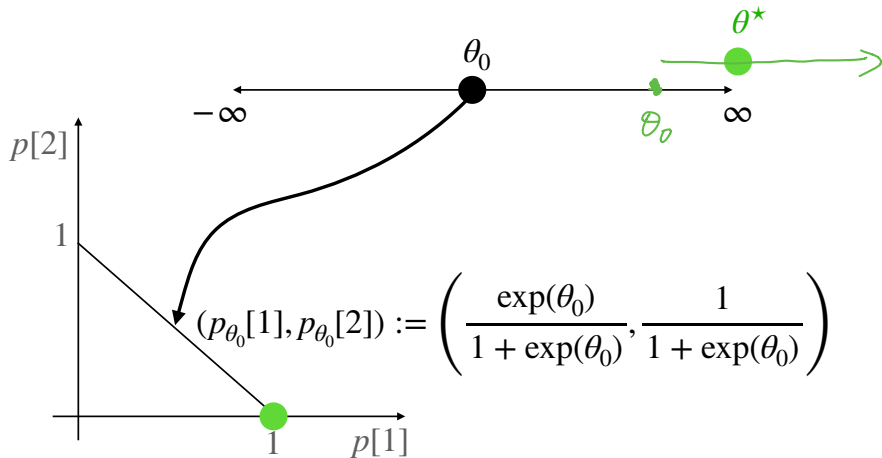
Hence: $f_{\theta_0} \rightarrow 0^+$, as $\theta_0 \rightarrow \infty$

$$\lim_{\theta_0 \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\exp(\theta_0)}{(1 + \exp(\theta_0))^2} = 0^+$$

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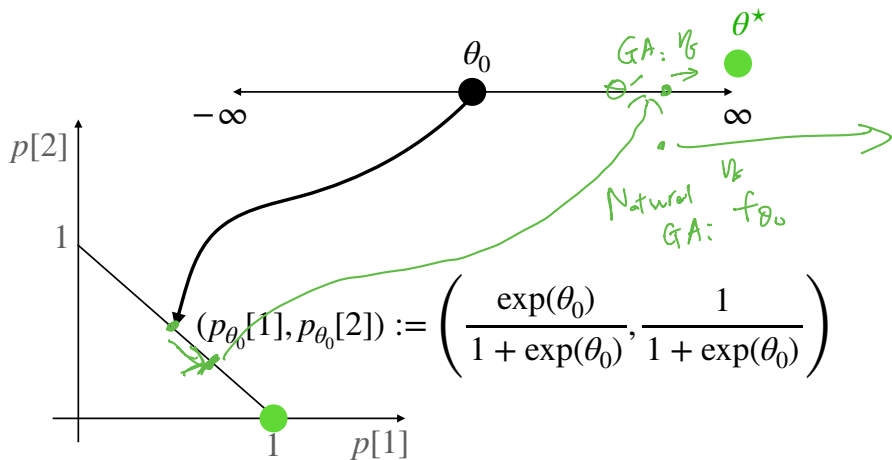
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$$\begin{aligned} \text{NPG: } \theta_1 &= \theta_0 + \eta \frac{g'(\theta_0)}{f_{\theta_0}} \\ &= \theta_0 + \frac{\eta}{f_{\theta_0}} g'(\theta_0) \\ &\rightarrow \omega^+, \theta_0 \rightarrow \omega^+ \end{aligned}$$

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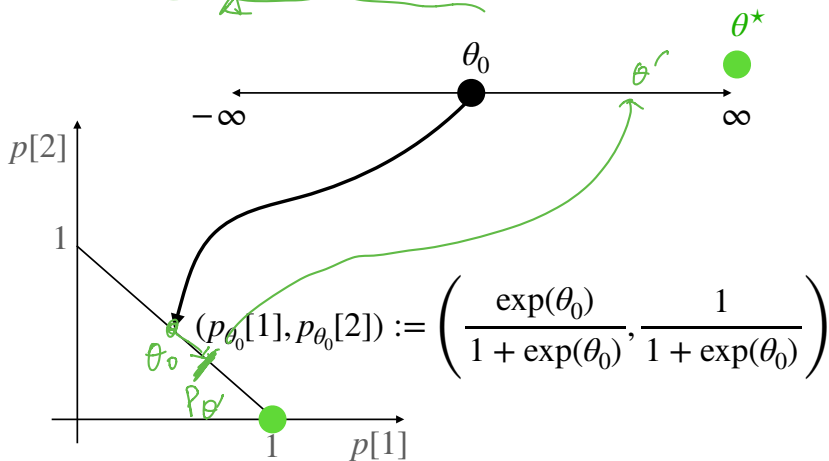
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$$\text{GA: } \theta_1 = \theta_0 + \eta g'(\theta_0)$$

i.e., Plain GA in θ will move to $\theta = \infty$ at a constant speed,
 while Natural GA can **traverse faster and faster when θ gets bigger**
 (subject to the same learning rate)

$$g(\theta) = 100 \cdot p_\theta[1] + 1 \cdot p_\theta[2]$$



Outline for Today:



1. Derivation of the closed-form NPG update



2. Intuitive Explanation of Natural (Policy) Gradient

(In HW2, try to compare PG and NPG, see how they perform differently in practice!)

3. Review of Policy Optimization (API, CPI, PG, and NPG) & a new algorithm

Review on Policy Optimization:

We have huge ~~space~~ *state* space, i.e., $|S|$ might be $255^{3 \times 512 \times 512}$

We can only reset from initial state distribution $s_0 \sim \mu$

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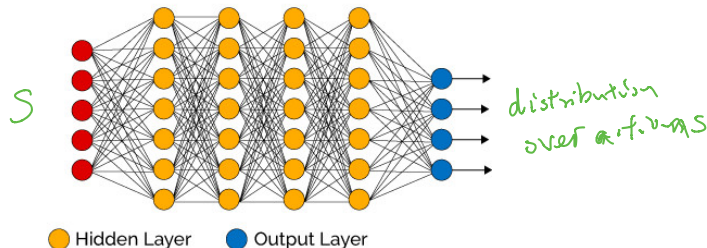
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Deep Learning Neural Network



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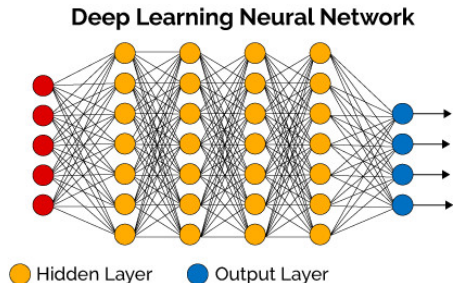
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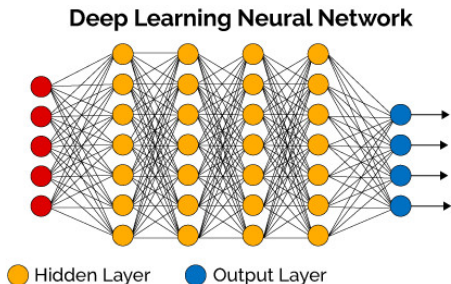
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What about continuous actions $a \in \mathbb{R}^d$?

$$\pi_{\beta, \alpha}(\cdot | s) = \mathcal{N} \left(\mu_{\beta}(s), \exp(\alpha) I_{d \times d} \right)$$

$$\theta := [\beta, \alpha]$$

$s \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} | \\ | \\ | \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \mu_{\beta}(s) \in \mathbb{R}^d$

$\nabla_{\theta} \ln \pi_{\theta}(a|s) \checkmark$

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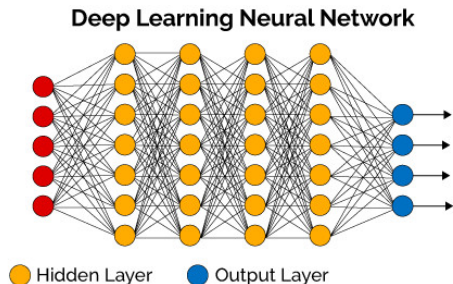
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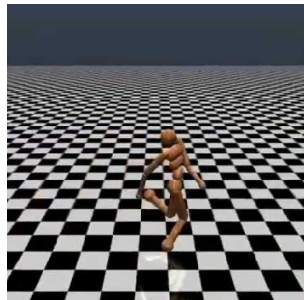


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a $\sim \pi_{\beta, \alpha}(\cdot | s)$

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Review on Policy Optimization: API

Given an current policy π^t , we perform policy update to π^{t+1}

First attempt: **Approximate Policy Iteration**

$$\pi^{t+1} = \arg \max_{\pi \in \Pi} \mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi^t}} [A^{\pi^t}(s, \pi(s))]$$

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Unfortunately, π^{t+1} might be very different from π^t ,
and API could fail to make any progress

Review on Policy Optimization: CPI

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second attempt: **Conservative Policy Iteration**

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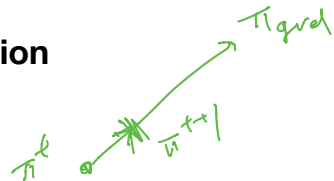
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$$\sum_s \left| d^{\pi^t}(s) - d^{\pi^{t+1}}(s) \right|$$

Two nice properties:

$$\left\| d^{\pi^t}(\cdot) - d^{\pi^{t+1}}(\cdot) \right\|_1 \leq O\left(\frac{\alpha}{1-\gamma}\right), \quad V^{\pi^{t+1}} > V^{\pi^t} \text{ (if not terminate yet)}$$

Review on Policy Optimization: PG

Given an current policy π^t , we perform policy update to π^{t+1}

Third attempt: **PG on parameterized policy**

$$\max_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta_t}}} \left[\mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}(\cdot|s)} A^{\pi_{\theta_t}}(s, a) \right]$$

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Locally Improve the local-adv a little bit via one-step gradient ascent:

$$\begin{aligned} & \nabla_{\theta} \left[\mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta}}} \left[\mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}(\cdot|s)} A^{\pi_{\theta}}(s, a) \right] \right] = \nabla_{\theta} J(\theta) \\ & = \nabla_{\theta} \left[\mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta}}} \left[\mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}(\cdot|s)} \frac{\pi_{\theta}(a|s)}{\pi_{\theta_e}(a|s)} A^{\pi_{\theta_e}}(s, a) \right] \right] \\ & = \mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta}}} \mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta_e}(\cdot|s)} \nabla_{\theta} \ln \pi_{\theta_e}(a|s) A^{\pi_{\theta_e}}(s, a) \end{aligned}$$

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When $\eta \rightarrow 0^+$, gradient ascent ensures
we improve the objective function

Review on Policy Optimization: NPG

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Fourth attempt: **Natural Policy Gradient**

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$$s.t., \text{KL}(\rho_{\theta_t} | \rho_{\theta}) \leq \delta$$

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↪ Hessian

Define fisher info-matrix $F_{\theta_t} = \nabla_{\theta}^2 \text{KL}(\rho_{\theta_t} | \rho_{\theta}) |_{\theta=\theta_t}$,

a convex approximation, e.g., linearize obj and quadratize constraint,
gives us the following NPG update:

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a convex approximation, e.g., linearize obj and quadratize constraint,
gives us the following NPG update:

$$\max_{\theta} \nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta_t})^{\top} (\theta - \theta_t), \text{ s.t.}, (\theta - \theta_t)^{\top} F_{\theta_t} (\theta - \theta_t) \leq \delta$$

An extension of NPG (even faster in practice):

Given an current policy π^t , we perform policy update to π^{t+1}

fifth attempt (new): **Proximal Policy Optimization (PPO)**

$$\max_{\theta} \mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta_t}}} \left[\mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}(\cdot|s)} A^{\pi_{\theta_t}}(s, a) \right]$$

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Use importance weighting & expand KL divergence:

$$\underset{\Delta}{\mathcal{L}(\theta)} := \mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta_t}}} \left[\underbrace{\mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta_t}(\cdot|s)} \frac{\pi_{\theta}(a|s)}{\pi_{\theta_t}(a|s)} A^{\pi_{\theta_t}}(s, a)}_{\substack{\uparrow \\ \text{IW}}} \right] - \lambda \underbrace{\mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta_t}}} \mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta_t}(\cdot|s)} [-\ln \pi_{\theta}(a|s)]}_{\text{expand KL}}$$

An extension of NPG (even faster in practice):

$F_{\theta} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{\theta} \times d_{\theta}}$
 $F_{\theta}^{-1} : d_{\theta}^3$

Given an current policy π^t , we perform policy update to π^{t+1}

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SGA
to approximately optimize $\ell(\theta)$

Use importance weighting & expand KL divergence:

$$\ell(\theta) = \mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta_t}}} \left[\mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta_t}(\cdot|s)} \frac{\pi_{\theta}(a|s)}{\pi_{\theta_t}(a|s)} A^{\pi_{\theta_t}}(s, a) \right] - \lambda \mathbb{E}_{s \sim d_{\mu}^{\pi_{\theta_t}}} \mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta_t}(\cdot|s)} \left[-\ln \pi_{\theta}(a|s) \right]$$

PPO: Perform a few steps of mini-batch SGA on $\ell(\theta)$ to approximate $\arg \max_{\theta} \ell(\theta)$

$$\pi_{\theta}(a|s) = \frac{\exp(f_{\theta}(s,a))}{\sum_a \exp(f_{\theta}(s,a))}$$

Next a few lectures:

**Imitation Learning
(Learning from Demonstrations)**

Can we learn a good policy purely from expert demonstrations?

$$F_{\theta_0} = \mathbb{E}_{s \sim p} \left[\nabla_{\theta} \ln \pi(a|s) \nabla_{\theta} \ln \pi_{\theta}(a|s)^T \right] \in \mathbb{R}^{d \times d} \quad d: \theta$$

Hessian
KL | $\theta = \theta_0$

$$F_{\theta_0} = U \Sigma U^T$$

$$F_{\theta_0}^{-1} = U \Sigma^{-1} U^T \quad U^{\oplus} = I$$

$$F_{\theta_0}^{-1} \cdot \nabla_{\theta} = U \Sigma^{-1} (U^T \nabla_{\theta_0})$$

Rotate Scale Rotate

$$= \sum_{i=1}^d u_i \frac{1}{\sigma_i} (u_i^T \nabla_{\theta_0})$$

$$KL(P_{\theta_0} || P_{\theta}) \approx (\theta - \theta_0)^T \nabla_{KL} |_{\theta = \theta_0} (\theta - \theta_0) + \text{higher-order terms} = 0$$

