

Quantile and Expectile Regressions

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<http://freakonometrics.hypotheses.org>

Econometrics vs Machine Learning

As claimed in Freedman (2005), **Statistical Models**, in **econometrics**, given some probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{A}, \mathbb{P})$, assume that y_i are realization of i.i.d. variables Y_i (given $\mathbf{X}_i = \mathbf{x}_i$) with distribution F_{m_i} (“*conditional distribution story*” or “*causal story*”). E.g.

$$Y|\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{N}(\underbrace{\mathbf{x}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta}}_{m(\mathbf{x})}, \sigma^2) \text{ or } Y|\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{B}(m(\mathbf{x})) \text{ where } m(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{e^{\mathbf{x}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta}}}{1 + e^{\mathbf{x}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta}}}$$

Then solve (“*maximum likelihood*” framework)

$$\hat{m}(\cdot) = \operatorname{argmax}_{m(\cdot) \in \mathcal{F}} \left\{ \log \mathcal{L}(m(\mathbf{x}); \mathbf{y}) \right\} = \operatorname{argmax}_{m(\cdot) \in \mathcal{F}} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \log f_{m(\mathbf{x}_i)}(y_i) \right\}$$

where $\log \mathcal{L}$ denotes the **log-likelihood**, see Haavelmo (1944) **The Probability Approach in Econometrics**.

Econometrics vs Machine Learning

In **machine learning** (“*explanatory data story*” in Freedman (2005), **Statistical Models**), given some dataset (\mathbf{x}_i, y_i) , solve

$$m^*(\cdot) = \operatorname{argmin}_{m(\cdot) \in \mathcal{F}} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \ell(m(\mathbf{x}_i), y_i) \right\}$$

for some **loss functions** $\ell(\cdot, \cdot)$. There is no probabilistic model *per se*.

But some loss functions have simple and interesting properties, e.g.

$\ell_s(x, y) = \mathbf{1}_{x > s} \neq y$ for classification, associated with missclassification dummy (with cutoff threshold s),

		$y_i = 0$	$y_i = 1$	
$m(\mathbf{x}_i) \leq s$	n_{00}		n_{01}	$\widehat{m}_s(\cdot) = \operatorname{argmin}_{m(\cdot) \in \mathcal{F}} \{n_{01} + n_{10}\}$
$m(\mathbf{x}_i) > s$	n_{10}		n_{11}	

OLS Regression, ℓ_2 norm and Expected Value: $\ell_2(x, y) = [x - y]^2$

Let $\mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, $\bar{y} = \operatorname{argmin}_{m \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{n} [\underbrace{y_i - m}_{\varepsilon_i}]^2 \right\}$. It is the empirical version of

$$\mathbb{E}[Y] = \operatorname{argmin}_{m \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \int [\underbrace{y - m}_{\varepsilon}]^2 dF(y) \right\} = \operatorname{argmin}_{m \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \mathbb{E}\left[\|\underbrace{Y - m}_{\varepsilon}\|_{\ell_2}\right]\right\}$$

where Y is a random variable.

Thus, $\operatorname{argmin}_{m(\cdot): \mathbb{R}^k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{n} [\underbrace{y_i - m(\mathbf{x}_i)}_{\varepsilon_i}]^2 \right\}$ is the empirical version of $\mathbb{E}[Y | \mathbf{X} = \mathbf{x}]$.

See Legendre (1805) *Nouvelles méthodes pour la détermination des orbites des comètes* and Gauß (1809) *Theoria motus corporum coelestium in sectionibus conicis solem ambientium*.

Median Regression, ℓ_1 norm and Median: $\ell_1(x, y) = |x - y|$

Let $\mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, $\text{median}[\mathbf{y}] \in \operatorname{argmin}_{m \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{n} \left| \underbrace{y_i - m}_{\varepsilon_i} \right| \right\}$. It is the empirical version of

$$\text{median}[Y] \in \operatorname{argmin}_{m \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \int \left| \underbrace{y - m}_{\varepsilon} \right| dF(y) \right\} = \operatorname{argmin}_{m \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \mathbb{E} \left[\left\| \underbrace{Y - m}_{\varepsilon} \right\|_{\ell_1} \right] \right\}$$

where Y is a random variable, $\mathbb{P}[Y \leq \text{median}[Y]] \geq \frac{1}{2}$ and $\mathbb{P}[Y \geq \text{median}[Y]] \geq \frac{1}{2}$.

$\operatorname{argmin}_{m(\cdot): \mathbb{R}^k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{n} \left| \underbrace{y_i - m(\mathbf{x}_i)}_{\varepsilon_i} \right| \right\}$ is the empirical version of $\text{median}[Y | \mathbf{X} = \mathbf{x}]$.

See Boscovich (1757) *De Litteraria expeditione per pontificiam ditionem ad dimetiendos duos meridiani* and Laplace (1793) *Sur quelques points du système du monde*.

Quantiles and Expectiles, $\ell(x, y) = \mathcal{R}(x - y)$

Consider the following risk functions

$$\mathcal{R}_\tau^q(u) = u \cdot (\tau - \mathbf{1}(u < 0)), \quad \tau \in [0, 1]$$

with $\mathcal{R}_{1/2}^q(u) \propto |u| = \|u\|_{\ell_1}$, and

$$\mathcal{R}_\tau^e(u) = u^2 \cdot (\tau - \mathbf{1}(u < 0)), \quad \tau \in [0, 1]$$

with $\mathcal{R}_{1/2}^e(u) \propto u^2 = \|u\|_{\ell_2}^2$.

$$Q_Y(\tau) = \operatorname{argmin}_m \left\{ \mathbb{E}(\mathcal{R}_\tau^q(Y - m)) \right\}$$

which is the median when $\tau = 1/2$,

$$E_Y(\tau) = \operatorname{argmin}_m \left\{ \mathbb{E}(\mathcal{R}_\tau^e(Y - m)) \right\}$$

which is the expected value when $\tau = 1/2$.

Elicitable Measures

“elicitable” means “being a minimizer of a suitable expected score”

T is an elicitable function if there exists a scoring function $S : \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow [0, \infty)$ (see functions $\ell(\cdot, \cdot)$ introduced above) such that

$$T(Y) = \operatorname{argmin}_{x \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \int_{\mathbb{R}} S(x, y) dF(y) \right\} = \operatorname{argmin}_{x \in \mathbb{R}} \left\{ \mathbb{E}[S(x, Y)] \text{ where } Y \sim F. \right\}$$

see Gneiting (2011) [Making and evaluating point forecasts](#).

The **mean**, $T(Y) = \mathbb{E}[Y]$ is elicited by $S(x, y) = \|x - y\|_{\ell_2}^2$

The **median**, $T(Y) = \operatorname{median}[Y]$ is elicited by $S(x, y) = \|x - y\|_{\ell_1}$

The **quantile**, $T(Y) = Q_Y(\tau)$ is elicited by $S(x, y) = \tau(y - x)_+ + (1 - \tau)(y - x)_-$

The **expectile**, $T(Y) = E_Y(\tau)$ is elicited by $S(x, y) = \tau(y - x)_+^2 + (1 - \tau)(y - x)_-^2$

Quantiles and Expectiles (Technical Issues)

One can also write empirical quantiles and expectiles as

$$\text{quantile: } \operatorname{argmin} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \omega_{\tau}^q(\varepsilon_i) \left| \underbrace{y_i - q_i}_{\varepsilon_i} \right| \right\} \text{ where } \omega_{\tau}^q(\epsilon) = \begin{cases} 1 - \tau & \text{if } \epsilon \leq 0 \\ \tau & \text{if } \epsilon > 0 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{expectile: } \operatorname{argmin} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \omega_{\tau}^e(\varepsilon_i) \left(\underbrace{y_i - q_i}_{\varepsilon_i} \right)^2 \right\} \text{ where } \omega_{\tau}^e(\epsilon) = \begin{cases} 1 - \tau & \text{if } \epsilon \leq 0 \\ \tau & \text{if } \epsilon > 0 \end{cases}$$

Expectiles are unique, not quantiles...

Quantiles satisfy $\mathbb{E}[\operatorname{sign}(Y - Q_Y(\tau))] = 0$

Expectiles satisfy $\tau \mathbb{E}[(Y - E_Y(\tau))_+] = (1 - \tau) \mathbb{E}[(Y - E_Y(\tau))_-]$

(those are actually the first order conditions of the optimization problem).

Expectiles as Quantiles (Interpretation)

For every $Y \in L^1$, $\tau \mapsto E_Y(\tau)$ is continuous, and strictly increasing

if Y is absolutely continuous, $\frac{\partial E_Y(\tau)}{\partial \tau} = \frac{\mathbb{E}[|X - E_Y(\tau)|]}{(1 - \tau)F_Y(E_Y(\tau)) + \tau(1 - F_Y(E_Y(\tau)))}$

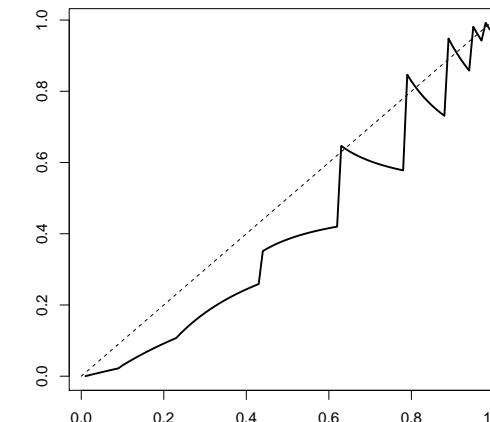
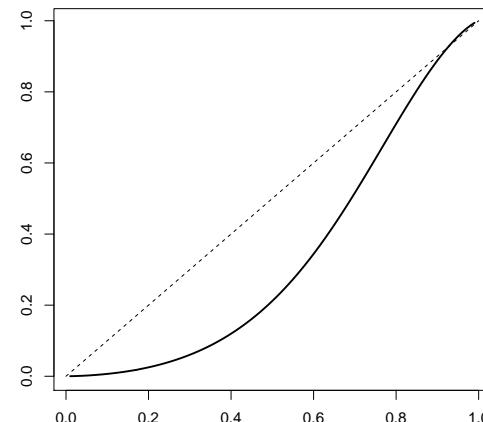
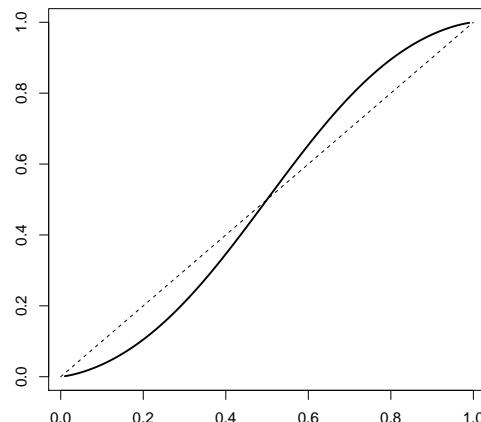
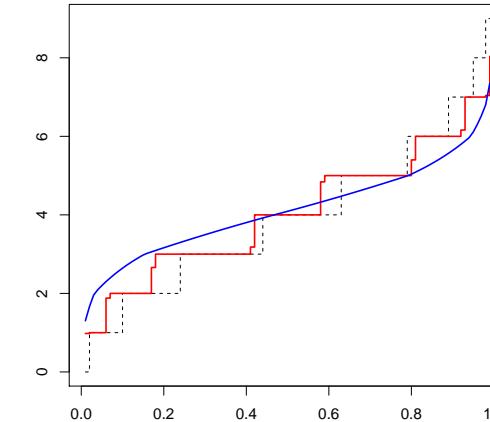
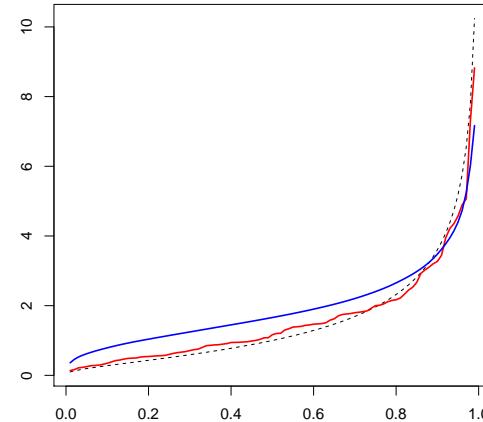
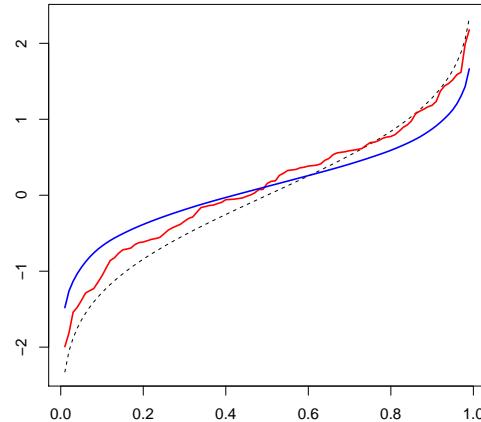
“Expectiles have properties that are similar to quantiles” Newey & Powell (1987)

Asymmetric Least Squares Estimation and Testing. The reason is that expectiles of a distribution F are quantiles of a distribution G which is related to F , see Jones (1994) **Expectiles and M-quantiles are quantiles:** let

$$G(t) = \frac{P(t) - tF(t)}{2[P(t) - tF(t)] + t - \mu} \text{ where } P(s) = \int_{-\infty}^s ydF(y).$$

The expectiles of F are the quantiles of G .

Distortion: Expectiles as Quantiles (Gaussian, Lognormal & Poisson)



Empirical Quantiles & Empirical Expectiles

Consider some i.id. sample $\{y_1, \dots, y_n\}$ with distribution F (abs. continuous).

$$Q_\tau = \operatorname{argmin} \left\{ \mathbb{E}[\mathcal{R}_\tau^q(Y - q)] \right\} \text{ where } Y \sim F \text{ and } \hat{Q}_\tau \in \operatorname{argmin} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \mathcal{R}_\tau^q(y_i - q) \right\}$$

$$\text{Then as } n \rightarrow \infty, \sqrt{n}(\hat{Q}_\tau - Q_\tau) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} \mathcal{N}\left(0, \frac{\tau(1-\tau)}{f^2(Q_\tau)}\right)$$

$$E_\tau = \operatorname{argmin} \left\{ \mathbb{E}[\mathcal{R}_\tau^e(Y - m)] \right\} \text{ where } Y \sim F \text{ and } \hat{E}_\tau = \operatorname{argmin} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \mathcal{R}_\tau^e(y_i - m) \right\}$$

$$\text{Then as } n \rightarrow \infty, \sqrt{n}(\hat{E}_\tau - E_\tau) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} \mathcal{N}(0, s_\tau^2) \text{ where, if}$$

$\mathcal{I}_\tau(x, y) = \tau(y - x)_+ + (1 - \tau)(y - x)_-$ (elicitable score for quantiles),

$$s_\tau^2 = \frac{\mathbb{E}[\mathcal{I}_\tau(E_\tau, Y)^2]}{(\tau[1 - F(E_\tau)] + [1 - \tau]F(Eu_\tau))^2}.$$

Quantile Regression (and Heteroskedasticity)

We want to solve, here, $\min \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \mathcal{R}_\tau^q(y_i - \mathbf{x}_i^\top \boldsymbol{\beta}) \right\}$

$$y_i = \mathbf{x}_i^\top \boldsymbol{\beta} + \varepsilon_i \text{ so that } \hat{Q}_{y|\mathbf{x}}(\tau) = \mathbf{x}^\top \hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}} + F_\varepsilon^{-1}(\tau)$$

Optimization Algorithm : Quantile Regression

Simplex algorithm to solve this program. Primal problem is

$$\min_{\beta, \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}} \{ \tau \mathbf{1}^T \mathbf{u} + (1 - \tau) \mathbf{1}^T \mathbf{v} \} \text{ s.t. } \mathbf{y} = \mathbf{X}\beta + \mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}, \text{ with } \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{R}_+^n$$

and the dual version is

$$\max_{\mathbf{d}} \{ \mathbf{y}^T \mathbf{d} \} \text{ s.t. } \mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{d} = (1 - \tau) \mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{1} \text{ with } \mathbf{d} \in [0, 1]^n$$

Koenker & D'Orey (1994) [A Remark on Algorithm AS 229: Computing Dual Regression Quantiles and Regression Rank Scores](#) suggest to use the **simplex method** (default method in R). Portnoy & Koenker (1997) [The Gaussian hare and the Laplacian tortoise](#) suggest to use the **interior point method**.

Running time is of order $n^{1+\delta} k^3$ for some $\delta > 0$ and $k = \dim(\beta)$
(it is $(n + k)k^2$ for OLS, see [wikipedia](#)).

Quantile Regression Estimators

OLS estimator $\hat{\beta}^{\text{ols}}$ is solution of

$$\hat{\beta}^{\text{ols}} = \operatorname{argmin} \left\{ \mathbb{E} [(\mathbb{E}[Y|\mathbf{X}=\mathbf{x}] - \mathbf{x}^\top \beta)^2] \right\}$$

and Angrist, Chernozhukov & Fernandez-Val (2006) [Quantile Regression under Misspecification](#) proved that

$$\hat{\beta}_\tau^q = \operatorname{argmin} \left\{ \mathbb{E} [\omega_\tau(\beta) (Q_\tau[Y|\mathbf{X}=\mathbf{x}] - \mathbf{x}^\top \beta)^2] \right\}$$

(under weak conditions) where

$$\omega_\tau(\beta) = \int_0^1 (1-u) f_{y|\mathbf{x}}(u \mathbf{x}^\top \beta + (1-u) Q_\tau[Y|\mathbf{X}=\mathbf{x}]) du$$

$\hat{\beta}_\tau^q$ is the best **weighted mean square** approximation of the true quantile function, where the weights depend on an average of the conditional density of Y over $\mathbf{x}^\top \beta$ and the true quantile regression function.

Quantile Regression Estimators

Under weak conditions, $\widehat{\beta}_\tau^q$ is asymptotically normal:

$$\sqrt{n}(\widehat{\beta}_\tau^q - \beta_\tau^q) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} \mathcal{N}(0, \tau(1-\tau)D_\tau^{-1}\Omega_x D_\tau^{-1}),$$

where

$$D_\tau = \mathbb{E}[f_\varepsilon(0)\mathbf{X}\mathbf{X}^\top] \text{ and } \Omega_x = \mathbb{E}[\mathbf{X}^\top\mathbf{X}].$$

hence, the asymptotic variance of $\widehat{\beta}$ is

$$\widehat{\text{Var}}[\widehat{\beta}_\tau^q] = \frac{\tau(1-\tau)}{[\widehat{f}_\varepsilon(0)]^2} \left(\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbf{x}_i^\top \mathbf{x}_i \right)^{-1}$$

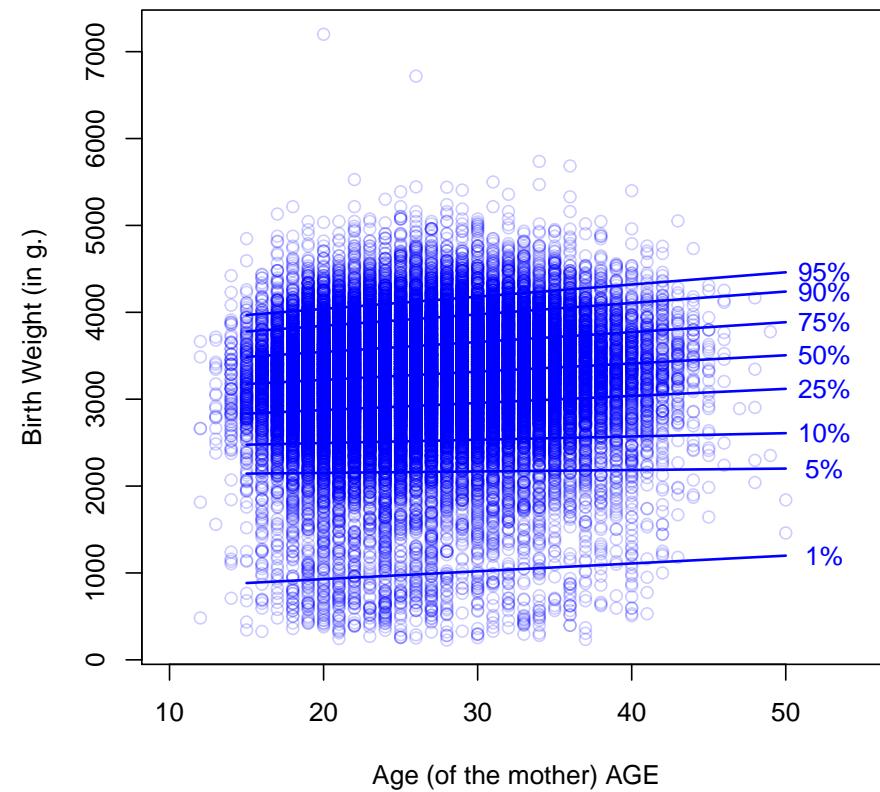
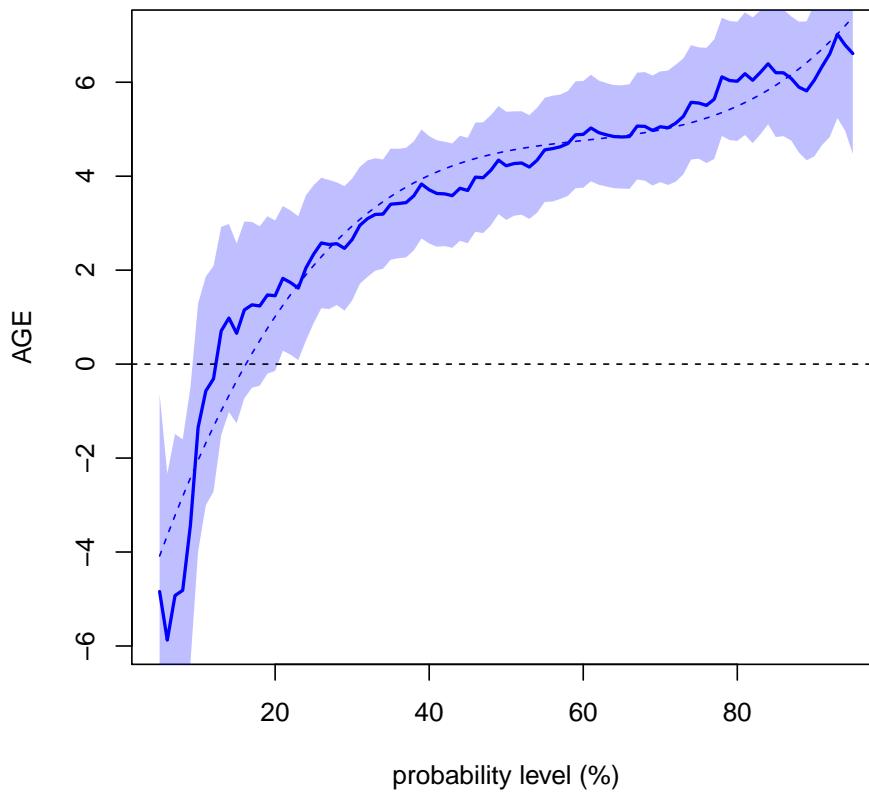
where $\widehat{f}_\varepsilon(0)$ is estimated using (e.g.) an histogram, as suggested in Powell (1991)

Estimation of monotonic regression models under quantile restrictions, since

$$D_\tau = \lim_{h \downarrow 0} \mathbb{E} \left(\frac{\mathbf{1}(|\varepsilon| \leq h)}{2h} \mathbf{X}\mathbf{X}^\top \right) \sim \frac{1}{2nh} \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbf{1}(|\varepsilon_i| \leq h) \mathbf{x}_i \mathbf{x}_i^\top = \widehat{D}_\tau.$$

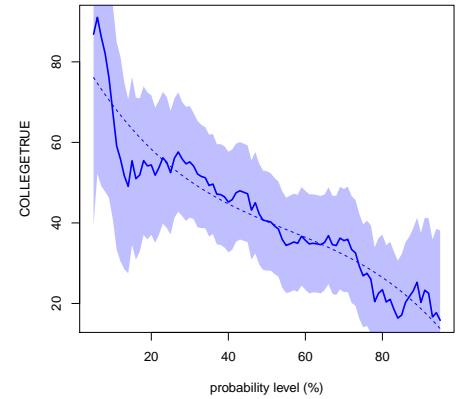
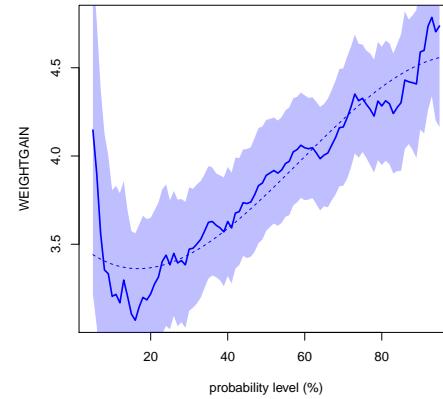
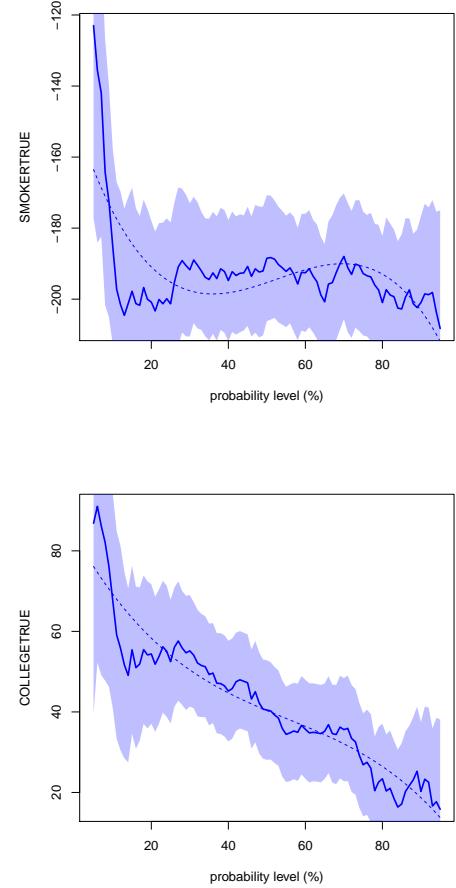
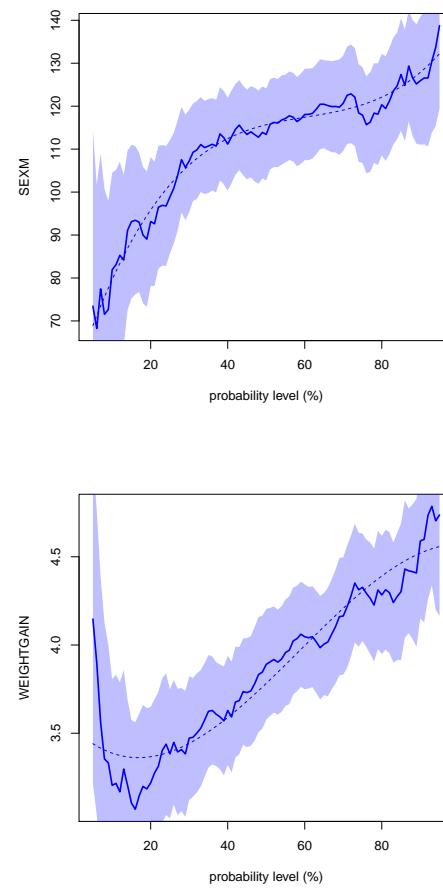
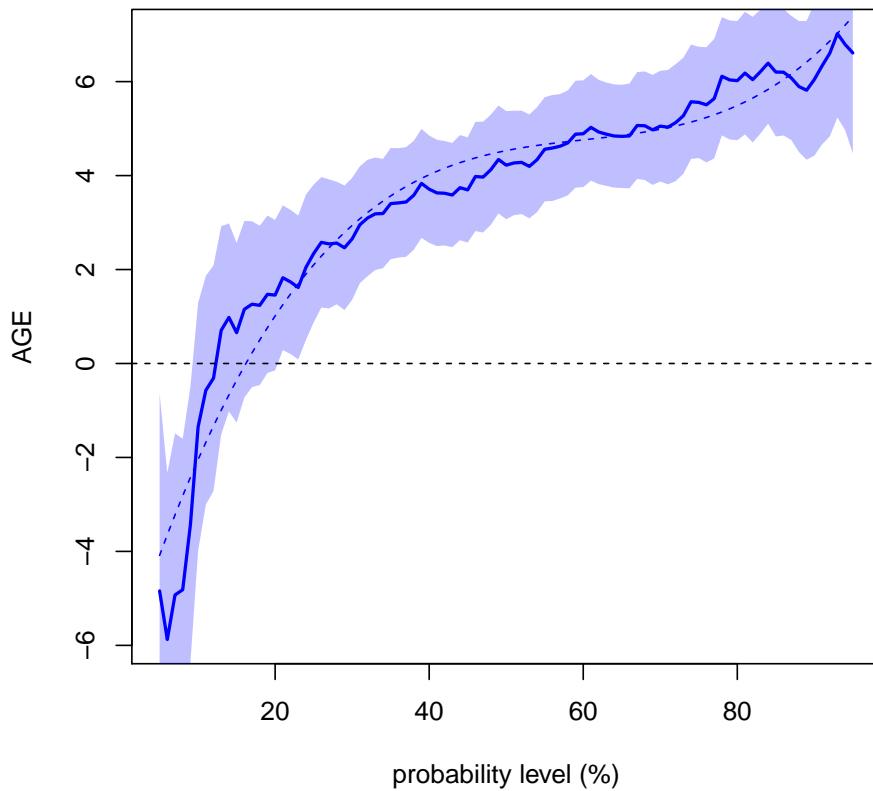
Visualization, $\tau \mapsto \hat{\beta}_\tau^q$

See Abreveya (2001) **The effects of demographics and maternal behavior on the distribution of birth outcomes**



Visualization, $\tau \mapsto \hat{\beta}_\tau^q$

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Quantile Regression on Panel Data

In the context of panel data, consider some fixed effect, α_i so that

$$y_{i,t} = \mathbf{x}_{i,t}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta}_\tau + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{i,t} \text{ where } Q_\tau(\varepsilon_{i,t} | \mathbf{X}_i) = 0$$

Canay (2011) [A simple approach to quantile regression for panel data](#) suggests an estimator in two steps,

- use a standard OLS fixed-effect model $y_{i,t} = \mathbf{x}_{i,t}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta} + \alpha_i + u_{i,t}$, i.e. consider a within transformation, and derive the fixed effect estimate $\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}}$

$$(y_{i,t} - \bar{y}_i) = (\mathbf{x}_{i,t} - \bar{\mathbf{x}}_{i,t})^\top \boldsymbol{\beta} + (u_{i,t} - \bar{u}_i)$$

- estimate fixed effects as $\hat{\alpha}_i = \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T (y_{i,t} - \mathbf{x}_{i,t}^\top \hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}})$
- finally, run a standard quantile regression of $y_{i,t} - \hat{\alpha}_i$ on $\mathbf{x}_{i,t}$'s.

See `rqpd` package.

Quantile Regression with Fixed Effects (QRFE)

In a panel linear regression model, $y_{i,t} = \mathbf{x}_{i,t}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta} + u_i + \varepsilon_{i,t}$,

where u is an unobserved individual specific effect.

In a fixed effects models, u is treated as a parameter. Quantile Regression is

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{\beta}, \mathbf{u}} \left\{ \sum_{i,t} \mathcal{R}_\tau^q(y_{i,t} - [\mathbf{x}_{i,t}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta} + u_i]) \right\}$$

Consider **Penalized QRFE**, as in Koenker & Bilias (2001) **Quantile regression for duration data**,

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{\beta}_1, \dots, \boldsymbol{\beta}_k, \mathbf{u}} \left\{ \sum_{k,i,t} \omega_k \mathcal{R}_{\tau_k}^q(y_{i,t} - [\mathbf{x}_{i,t}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta}_k + u_i]) + \lambda \sum_i |u_i| \right\}$$

where ω_k is a relative weight associated with quantile of level τ_k .

Quantile Regression with Random Effects (QRRE)

Assume here that $y_{i,t} = \mathbf{x}_{i,t}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta} + \underbrace{u_i + \varepsilon_{i,t}}_{=\eta_{i,t}}$.

Quantile Regression Random Effect (QRRE) yields solving

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{\beta}} \left\{ \sum_{i,t} \mathcal{R}_\tau^q(y_{i,t} - \mathbf{x}_{i,t}^\top \boldsymbol{\beta}) \right\}$$

which is a weighted asymmetric least square deviation estimator.

Let $\Sigma = [\sigma_{s,t}(\tau)]$ denote the matrix

$$\sigma_{ts}(\tau) = \begin{cases} \tau(1-\tau) & \text{if } t = s \\ \mathbb{E}[\mathbf{1}\{\varepsilon_{it}(\tau) < 0, \varepsilon_{is}(\tau) < 0\}] - \alpha^2 & \text{if } t \neq s \end{cases}$$

If $(nT)^{-1} \mathbf{X}^\top \{\mathbb{I}_n \otimes \Sigma_{T \times T}(\tau)\} \mathbf{X} \rightarrow \mathbf{D}_0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$ and $(nT)^{-1} \mathbf{X}^\top \Omega_f \mathbf{X} = \mathbf{D}_1$, then

$$\sqrt{nT} \left(\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}}_\tau^q - \boldsymbol{\beta}_\tau^q \right) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} \mathcal{N} \left(0, \mathbf{D}_1^{-1} \mathbf{D}_0 \mathbf{D}_0^\top \mathbf{D}_1^{-1} \right).$$

Expectile Regression

We want to solve, here, $\min_{\beta} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \mathcal{R}_\tau^e(y_i - x_i^\top \beta) \right\}$

see Koenker (2014) [Living Beyond our Means](#) for a comparison quantiles-expectiles

Expectile Regression

Solve here $\min_{\beta} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n \mathcal{R}_\tau^e(y_i - x_i^\top \beta) \right\}$ where $\mathcal{R}_\tau^e(u) = u^2 \cdot (\tau - \mathbf{1}(u < 0))$

“this estimator can be interpreted as a maximum likelihood estimator when the disturbances arise from a normal distribution with unequal weight placed on positive and negative disturbances” Aigner, Amemiya & Poirier (1976)

Formulation and Estimation of Stochastic Frontier Production Function Models.

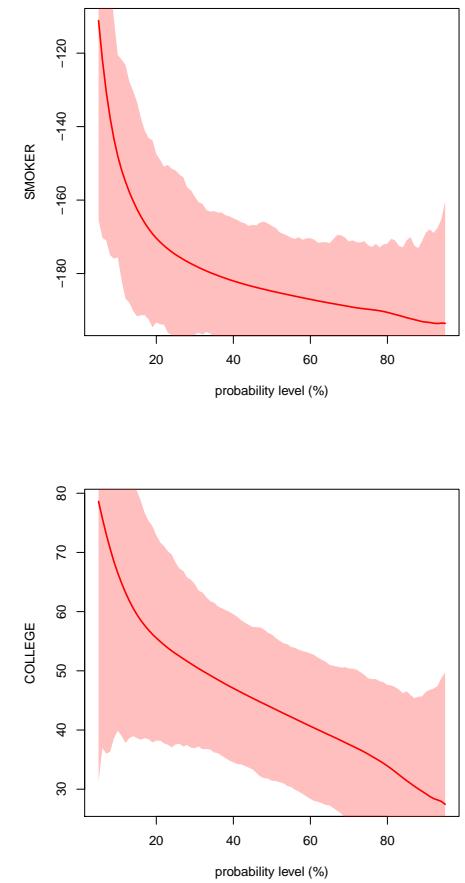
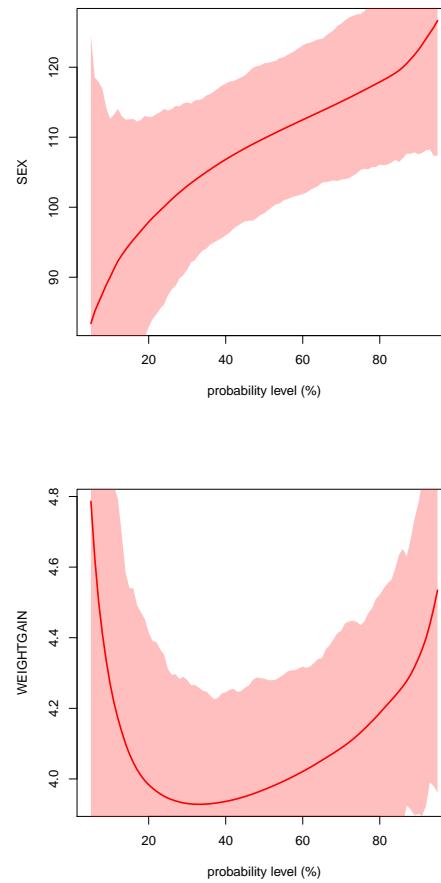
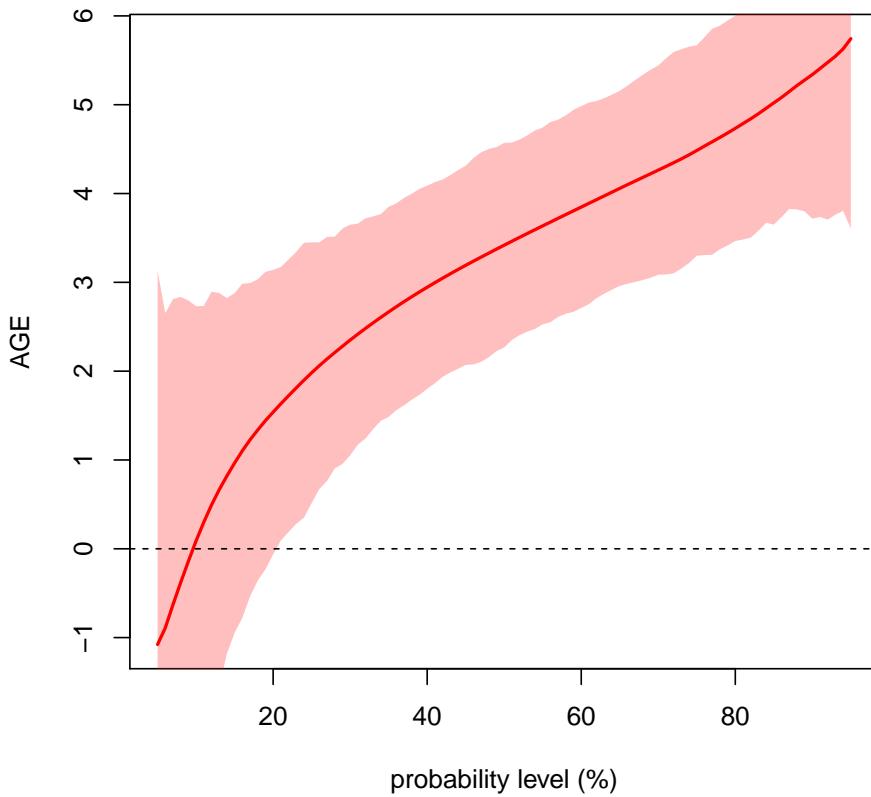
See Holzmann & Klar (2016) Expectile Asymptotics for statistical properties.

Expectiles can (also) be related to Breckling & Chambers (1988) *M*-Quantiles.

Comparison quantile regression and expectile regression, see Schulze-Waltrup *et al.* (2014) Expectile and quantile regression - David and Goliath?

Visualization, $\tau \mapsto \hat{\beta}_\tau^e$

See Abrevaya (2001) **The effects of demographics and maternal behavior on the distribution of birth outcomes**



Expectile Regression, with Random Effects (ERRE)

Quantile Regression Random Effect (QRRE) yields solving

$$\min_{\beta} \left\{ \sum_{i,t} \mathcal{R}_\alpha^e(y_{i,t} - \mathbf{x}_{i,t}^\top \beta) \right\}$$

One can prove that

$$\hat{\beta}_\tau^e = \left(\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{t=1}^T \hat{\omega}_{i,t}(\tau) \mathbf{x}_{it} \mathbf{x}_{it}^\top \right)^{-1} \left(\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{t=1}^T \hat{\omega}_{i,t}(\tau) \mathbf{x}_{it} y_{it} \right),$$

where $\hat{\omega}_{it}(\tau) = |\tau - \mathbf{1}(y_{it} < \mathbf{x}_{it}^\top \hat{\beta}_\tau^e)|$.

Expectile Regression with Random Effects (ERRE)

If $W = \text{diag}(\omega_{11}(\tau), \dots, \omega_{nT}(\tau))$, set

$$\bar{W} = \mathbb{E}(W), H = \mathbf{X}^\top \bar{W} \mathbf{X} \text{ and } \Sigma = \mathbf{X}^\top \mathbb{E}(W \boldsymbol{\varepsilon} \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}^\top W) \mathbf{X}.$$

and then

$$\sqrt{nT} \{ \hat{\beta}_\tau^e - \beta_\tau^e \} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} \mathcal{N}(0, H^{-1} \Sigma H^{-1}),$$

see Barry *et al.* (2016) Quantile and Expectile Regression for random effects model.

Application to Real Data

