### Geometric Aggregation of the Social Welfare in Online Resource Allocation

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Joint work with many

**The Chicago Booth Operations Management Workshop** 

## There are many settings when we need to fairly allocate shared resources to users online





#### Public Good Allocation

Medical materials Allocation

# A key question is how to aggregate society's (linear) utilities to reflect a fair division of resources

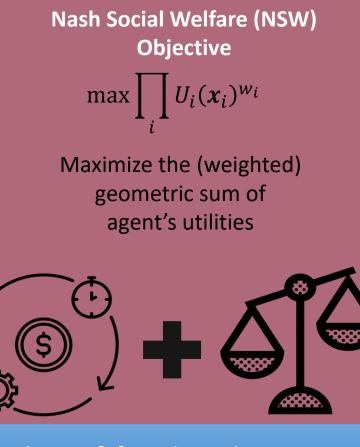
**Efficiency Objective** 

 $\max\sum_{i} w_i U_i(\boldsymbol{x}_i)$ 

Maximize the (weighted) arithmetic sum of agent's utilities, known as **Linear Programming** if u is linear



w<sub>i</sub>: population size or budget of type-i agent



[Nash, 1950], [Kaneko, Nakamura, 1979]

Egalitarian Objective max min  $w_i U_i(x_i)$ 

Maximize the minimum (weighted) utility of any agent



### The NSW objective provides a compromise between the efficiency and egalitarian ideals of society

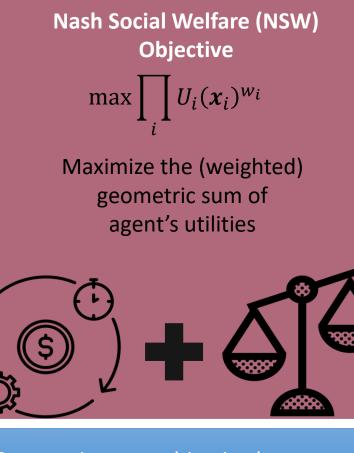
#### **Arithmetic Objective**

 $\max\sum_{i} w_i U_i(\boldsymbol{x}_i)$ 

Maximize the (weighted) arithmetic sum of agent's utilities, known as Linear Programming if u is linear



Robustness Property: Provides a lower bound for arithmetic mean objective



Geometric mean objective has several advantages

Egalitarian Objective  $\max \min_{i}(w_{i} U_{i}(x_{i}))$ 

Maximize the minimum (weighted) utility of any agent

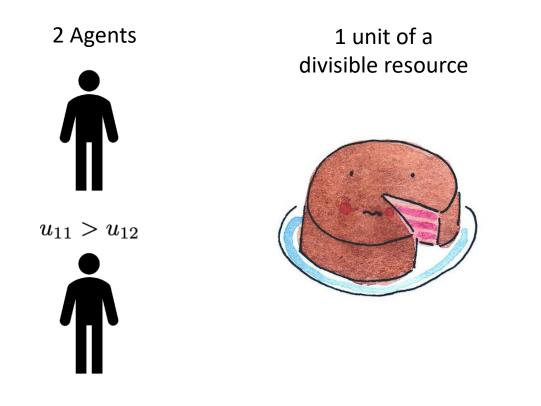


Larger weight (priority) implies higher utility unlike egalitarian objective

### Organization

- Advantages/Properties of (Weighted) Geometric Mean Objective
- Online Linear Programming
- Online Fisher Markets
- Summaries

## Fairness: with the geometric mean objective, all users are guaranteed to get at least some fraction of the resources



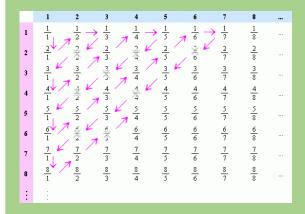
 $u_{ij}$ : Preference of Agent *i* for one unit of good *j* 

Arithmetic Allocation: Under the arithmetic mean objective, the entire resource is allocated to agent 1: "big" takes all

Nash welfare allocation: Under the geometric mean objective each agent receives some portion of the resource

# The geometric mean objective retains several computational advantages

#### Rationality of data implies rationality of solution



Exact computation of optimal solutions is possible

The objective can be formulated as a convex optimization problem  $U_i(\boldsymbol{x}_i)^{w_i}$ max  $w_i \log(U_i(\mathbf{x}_i))$ max 🔪

Computational Complexity is identical to that of a linear program via Interior-Point Method



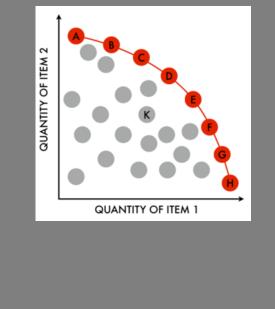
Optimal solution can be efficiently computed in polynomial time

#### [Jain 2007], [Y 2008], [Vazirazi 2012],...

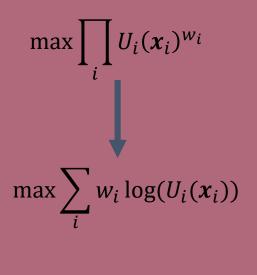
# The geometric mean objective has several additional advantages



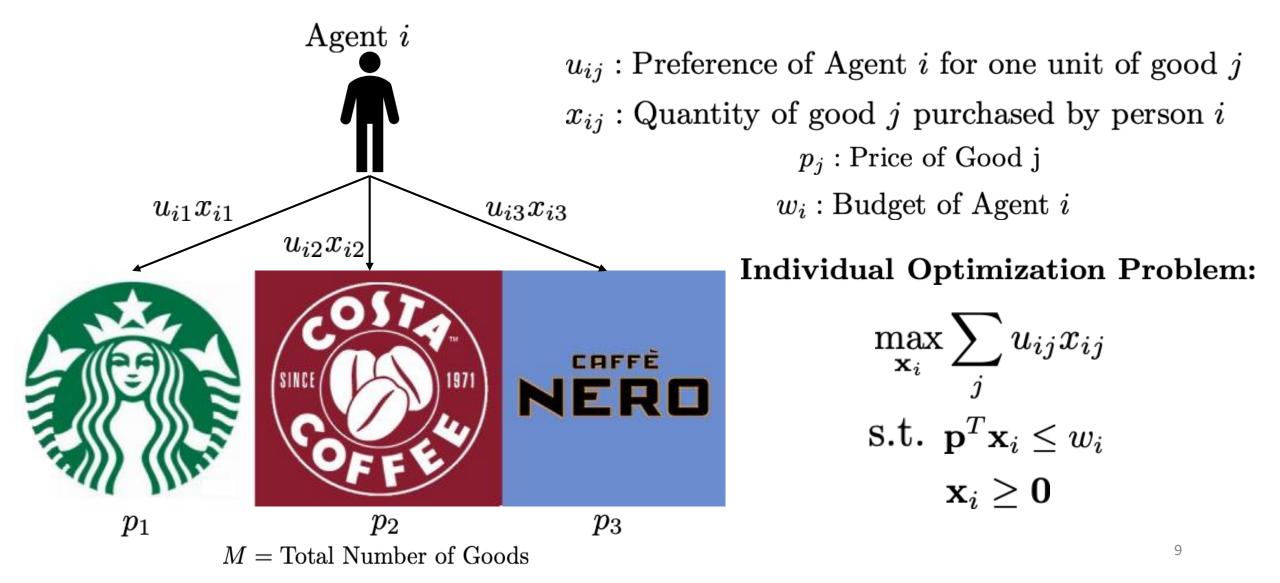
Each agent prefers their allocation to that of any other agent The resulting allocation is Pareto efficient



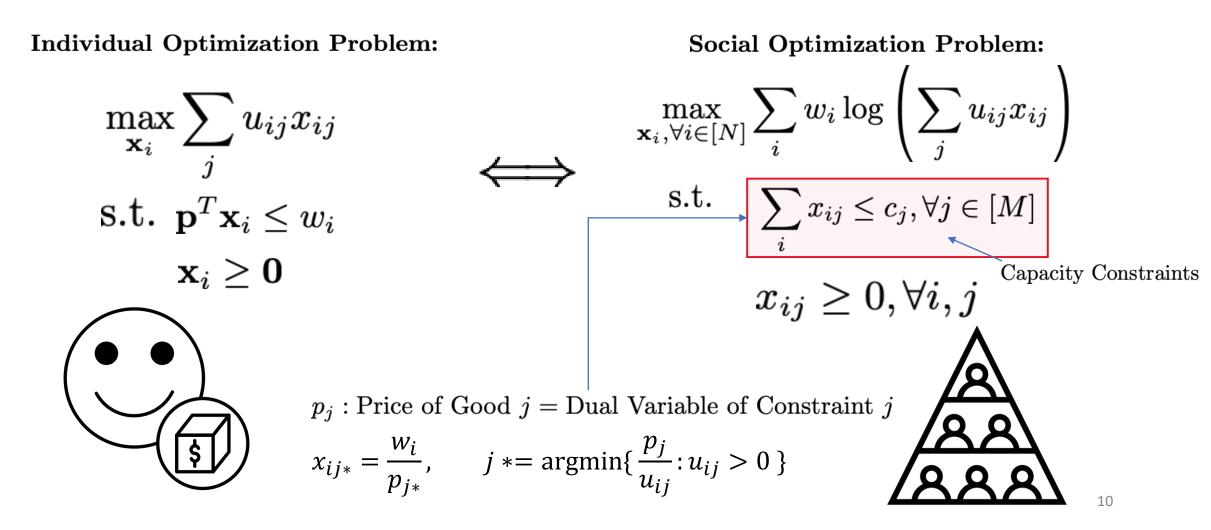
The objective can be formulated as a convex optimization problem



## The NSW objective has a decentralization property captured through the framework of Fisher Markets

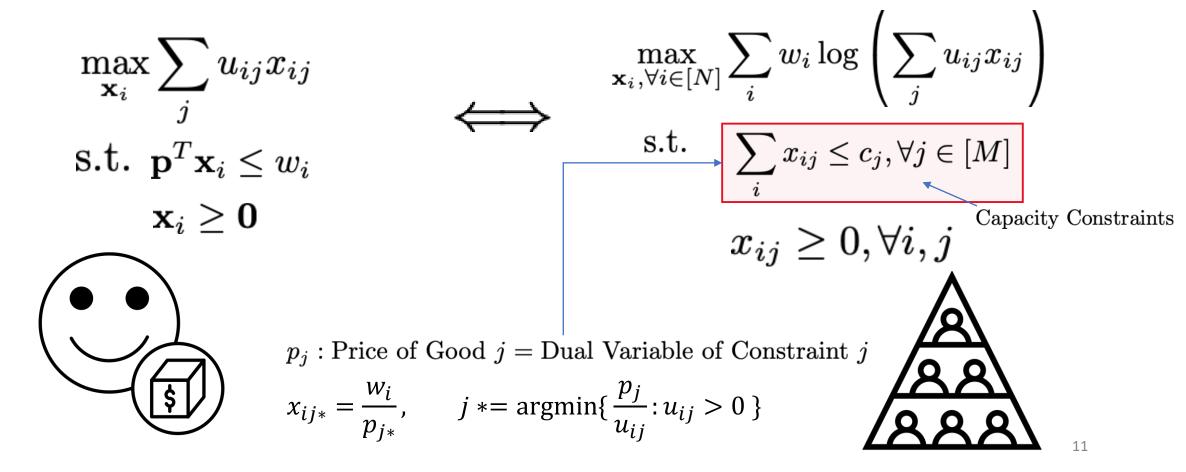


#### The prices can be derived from a centralized optimization problem with a budget weighted geometric mean objective: freedom-of-choice ⇔ fairness

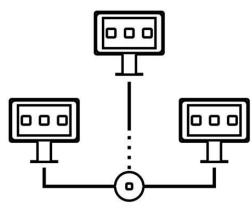


#### The applicability of Fisher markets is restricted to the "complete information setting"

Individual Optimization Problem: Social Optimization Problem:

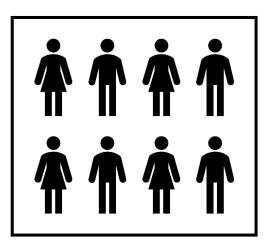


Can markets be implemented in an online setting but still achieve social fairness, efficiency and agent-privacy



Each agent distributedly optimizes their individual objectives in response to the set prices

Simulated Market: No trade takes place until equilibrium prices are reached [Cole, Fleischer, 2008] [Panageas, Tröbst, Vazirani, 2021], [Jelota et al. 2021]



Buyers arrive sequentially with utility and budget parameters in real time

**Real Market**: Market designer learns prices from past buying behavior of users and makes an online decision

#### Organization

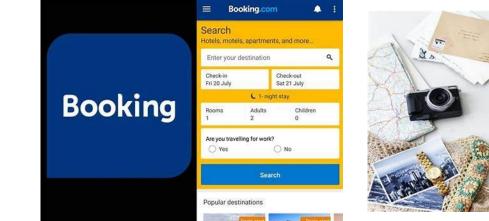
- Advantages of (Weighted) Geometric Mean Objective
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### Online Resource Allocation & Revenue Management

- m type of resources; T customers
- Decision maker needs to decide whether and how much resources are allocated to each customer
- Resources are limited!

• Online setting:

 Customers arrive sequentially and the decision needs to be made instantly upon the customer arrival: Sell or No-sell?





$$\begin{array}{l} \max \ \sum_{t=1}^{T} r_{t} x_{t} \\ \text{s.t.} \ \sum_{t=1}^{T} a_{it} x_{t} \leq b_{i}, \quad i=1,...,m \\ 0 \leq x_{t} \leq 1 \ \text{ or } x_{t} \in \{0,1\}, \quad t=1,...,T \end{array}$$

Performance of online algorithm measured with respect to regret from the offline linear objective [Agrawal et al. 2010, 2014], [Kesselheim et al 2014] [Li/Ye, 2019], [Li et al. 2020],

#### Online Seller's Market: An Illustration Example

Bid #	\$100	\$30	 		Inventory	
Decision	X1=?	X2=?				
Pants	1	0	 	•••	100	
Shoes	1	0			50	
T-Shirts	0	1			500	
Jackets	0	0			200	
Hats	1	1	 		1000	

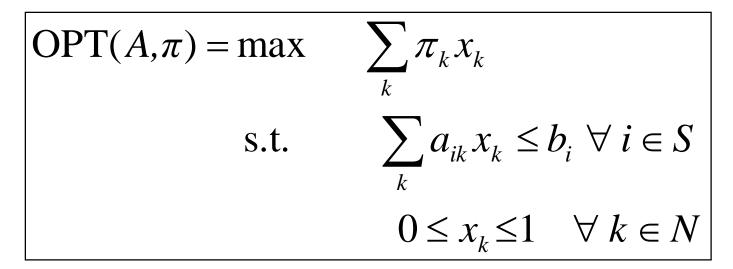
### **Online Linear Programming**

- Agents/Traders come one by one sequentially, buy or sell, or combination, with a combinatorial order/bid  $(a_t, \pi_t)$
- The seller/market-maker has to make an order-fill decision as soon as an order arrives
- The seller/market-maker faces:
  - Sell or No-sell this is an irrevocable decision
- Optimal Policy/Mechanism?
- The off-line problem can be an (0 1) linear program

$$\begin{array}{l} \max \ \sum_{t=1}^{T} r_{t} x_{t} \\ \text{s.t.} \ \sum_{t=1}^{T} a_{it} x_{t} \leq b_{i}, \ i=1,...,m \\ 0 \leq x_{t} \leq 1 \ \text{ or } x_{t} \in \{0,1\}, \ t=1,...,T \end{array}$$

**Off-Line LP** 

#### Regret-Ratio for Online Algorithm/Mechanism



- We know the total number of customers, say *n*;
- Assume customers arrive in a random order or with i.i.d distributions.
- For a given online algorithm/decision-policy/mechanism

$$Z(A,\pi) = E_{\sigma} \left[ \sum_{1}^{n} \pi_{k} x_{k} \right] R(A,\pi) = 1 - \frac{Z(A,\pi)}{OPT(A,\pi)}$$
$$R = \sup_{(A,\pi)} R(A,\pi)$$

#### Impossibility Result on Regret-Ratio

Theorem: There is no online algorithm/decisionpolicy/mechanism such that

$$R \leq O\left(\sqrt{\log(m)/B}\right), \quad B = \min_i b_i.$$

Corollary: If  $B \le \log(m)/\epsilon^2$ , then it is impossible to have a decision policy/mechanism such that  $R \le O(\epsilon)$ .

Agrawal, Wang and Y, "A Dynamic Near-Optimal Algorithm for Online Linear Programming," 2010.

#### Possibility Result on Regret-Ratio

Theorem: There is an online algorithm/decisionpolicy/mechanism such that

$$R \leq O\left(\sqrt{m\log(n)/B}\right), \quad B = \min_i b_i.$$

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Theorem: If  $B > \log(mn)/\epsilon^2$ , then there is an online algorithm/decision-policy/mechanism such that  $R \le O(\epsilon)$ .

Kesselheim et al. "Primal Beat the Dual...," 2014, ...

#### Online Algorithm and Price-Mechanism: Learning-while-Doing

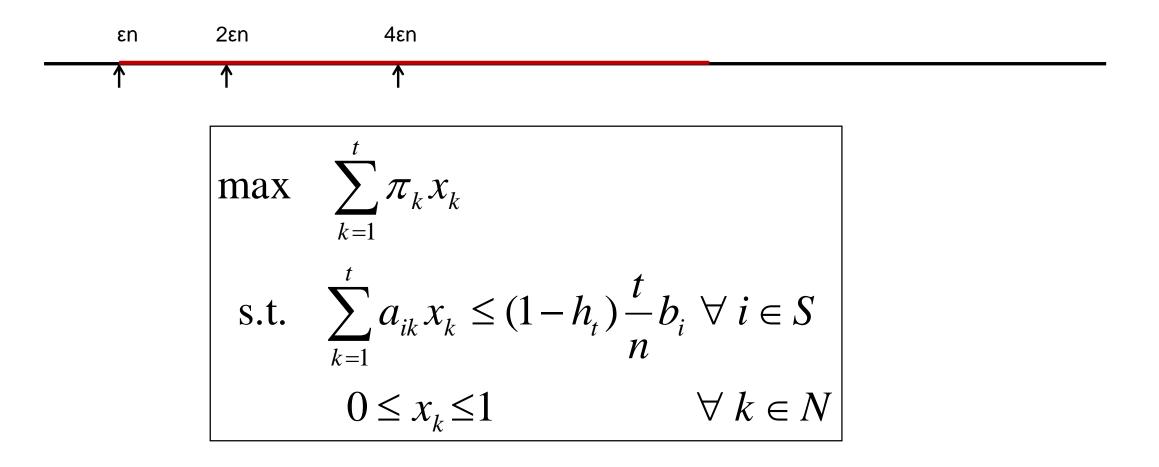
- Learn "ideal" itemized-prices
- Use the prices to price each bid
- Accept if it is an over bid, and reject otherwise

Bid #	\$100	\$30	 	 Inventory	Price?
Decision	x1	x2			
Pants	1	0	 	 100	45
Shoes	1	0		50	45
T-Shirts	0	1		500	10
Jackets	0	0		200	55
Hats	1	1	 •••	 1000	15

Such ideal prices exist and they are shadow/dual prices of the offline LP

#### How to Learn Shadow Prices Online

For a given  $\varepsilon$ , solve the sample LP at t= $\varepsilon$ n,  $2\varepsilon$ n,  $4\varepsilon$ n, ...; and use the new shadow prices for the decision in the coming period.



#### Finite-Customer-Type Based LP formulation

In the original offline LP formulation,  $x_t$  represents the decision for the t-th customer,  $a_t$  represents the request vector of the t-th customer, and  $r_t$  represents the reward of the t-th customer

$$\max \sum_{t=1}^{T} r_t x_t \quad \text{s.t.} \quad \sum_{t=1}^{T} a_t x_t \le b, \quad x_t \in [0,1]$$

In the finite-customer-type based formulation, there are in total J types of customers. The j-th type arrives with a probability  $p_j$  (proportion of type j but unknown); the request vector and reward of the j-th type customer is  $c_j$  and  $\mu_j$ 

$$\max \sum_{j=1}^J p_j \mu_j y_j \hspace{0.1in} \text{s.t.} \hspace{0.1in} \sum_{j=1}^J p_j c_j y_j \leq b/T, \hspace{0.1in} y_j \in [0,1]$$

The decision variable  $y_j$  represents the fraction/probability of j-th type customer being accepted. But, in real applications, most LPs have nonunique solutions...

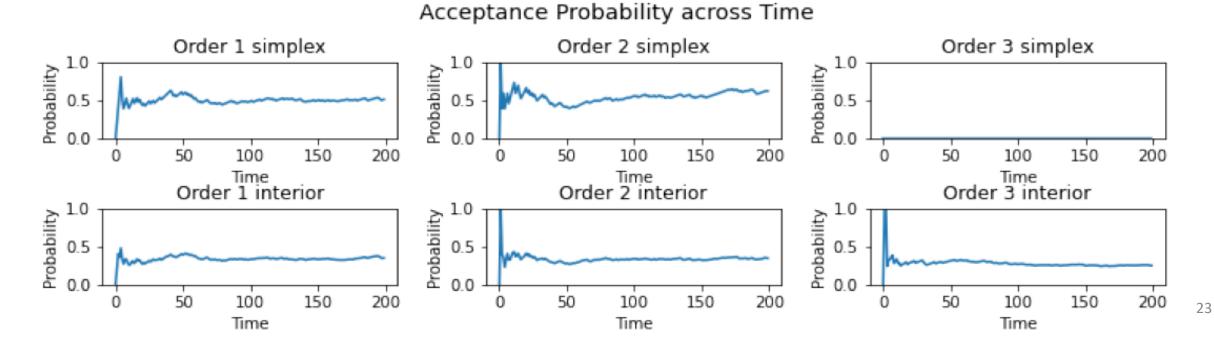
### A Motivation Example

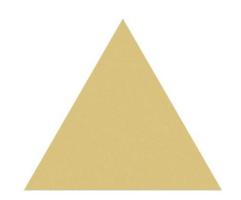
• Consider an allocation problem: there exists three types of

orders/customers, where the first two types have the reward/resource

characteristics that are considered equivalent from the system.

• The following plots show the acceptance fraction/probability of the three types across time by two different online algorithms: the simplex and interior-point methods (Jasin 2015, Chen et al 2021).





### Fairness Desiderata



- Technically, Non-Uniqueness/Degeneracy degrades the quality of online algorithm since the learning "targets" are ambiguous no ground-truth.
- More importantly, Individual Fairness needs to be achieved: similar customers should be treated similarly. Since the optimal object value depends on the total resources spent, not on the resources spent on which groups, some individual or group may be ignored by a particular online algorithm/allocation-rule.
- Also, Time Fairness: The algorithm may tend to accept mainly the first half (or the second half of the orders), which is unfair or unideal...

#### Fair Optimal Solution for Offline Problem

$$\max \sum_{j=1}^{J} p_j \mu_j y_j \text{ s.t. } \sum_{j=1}^{J} p_j c_j y_j \leq b/T, y_j \in [0,1]$$

- We define y<sup>\*</sup> the fair offline optimal solution of the LP problem as the analytical center of the optimal solution set, which represents an "average" of all the optimal corner solutions – their product is maximized.
- The fair solution  $y^*$  will treat individuals fairly, based on their similar reward and resource consumption.
- An online interior-point learning algorithm would use the data points up to time t and solve the sample-based linear program to decide fair y<sub>t</sub>.

#### Fairness-Performance Measure

• Let  $y_t$  be the allocation rule at time t which encodes the accepting probabilities under the online algorithm  $\pi$ . Then we define the cumulative unfairness of the online algorithm  $\pi$  as

$$UF_T(\pi) = E[\sum_{t=1}^T ||y_t - y^*||_2^2]$$

- Intuition: If  $UF_T(\pi)$  is sub-linear, we know Time Fairness is satisfied since the deviation of the online solution cannot be large. Moreover, Individual Fairness is satisfied because we know  $UF_T(\pi)$  being sub-linear implies  $y_t$  converging to  $y^*$ .
- Let j<sub>t</sub> denote the incoming customer type at time t, the Revenue Regret is defined as

• 
$$Reg_T(\pi) = E[\sum_{t=1}^T r_t(y_{j_t}^* - y_{t,j_t})]$$

Regret measures the performance loss compared to the optimal policy.

### Our Result

• We develop an algorithm [Chen, Li & Y (2021)] that achieve  $UF_T(\pi) = O(\log T)$ 

 $Reg_T(\pi)$  Bounded independent of T

- Key ideas in algorithm design:
  - At each time t, we use interior-point method to obtain the sample analyticcenter solution and randomly make decision based on sample solution **y**<sub>t</sub>.
  - We also adjust the right-hand-side resource of the LP to ensure the depletion of binding resources and non-binding resources does not affect the fairness.
  - This state of the art result removes typical non-degeneracy or non-uniqueness assumption in the OLP literature.

#### The Online Algorithm can be Extended to Bandits with Knapsack (BwK) Applications

- For the previous problem, the decision maker first wait and observe the customer order/arm and then decide whether to accept/play it or not.
- An alternative setting is that the decision maker first decides which order/arm (s)he may accept/play, and then receive a random resource consumption vector  $\mathbf{a}_j$  and yield a random reward  $\pi_j$  of the pulled arm.
- Known as the Bandits with Knapsacks, and it is a tradeoff exploration v.s.
  exploitation





max 
$$\sum_{j} \pi_j x_j$$
 s.t.  $\sum_{j} a_j x_j \le b$ ,  $x_j \ge 0$   $\forall j = 1, \dots, J$ 

- The decision variable  $x_i$  represents the total-times of pulling the j-th arm.
- We have developed a two-phase algorithm
  - Phase I: Distinguish the optimal super-basic variables/arms from the optimal non-basic variables/arms with as fewer number of plays as possible
  - Phase II: Use the arms in the optimal face to exhaust the resource through an adaptive procedure and achieve fairness
- The algorithm achieves a problem dependent regret that bears a logarithmic dependence on the horizon T. Also, it identifies a number of LP-related parameters as the bottleneck or condition-numbers for the problem Takeaway:
  - Minimum non-zero reduced cost
  - Minimum singular-values of the optimal basis matrix.

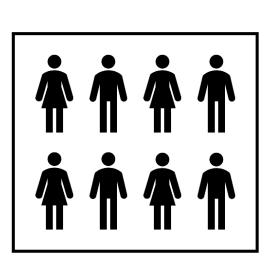
Stochastic data are learnable and partial social fairness is achievable

• First algorithm to achieve the O(log T) regret bound [Li, Sun & 92021].

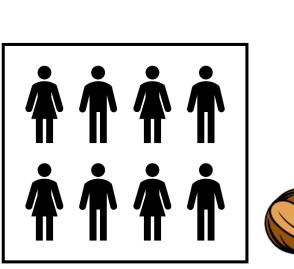
### Organization

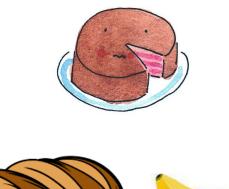
- Advantages of (Weighted) Geometric Mean Objective
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- Summaries

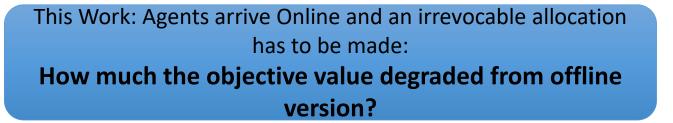
Prior work on online variants of Fisher markets have considered the setting of goods arriving sequentially



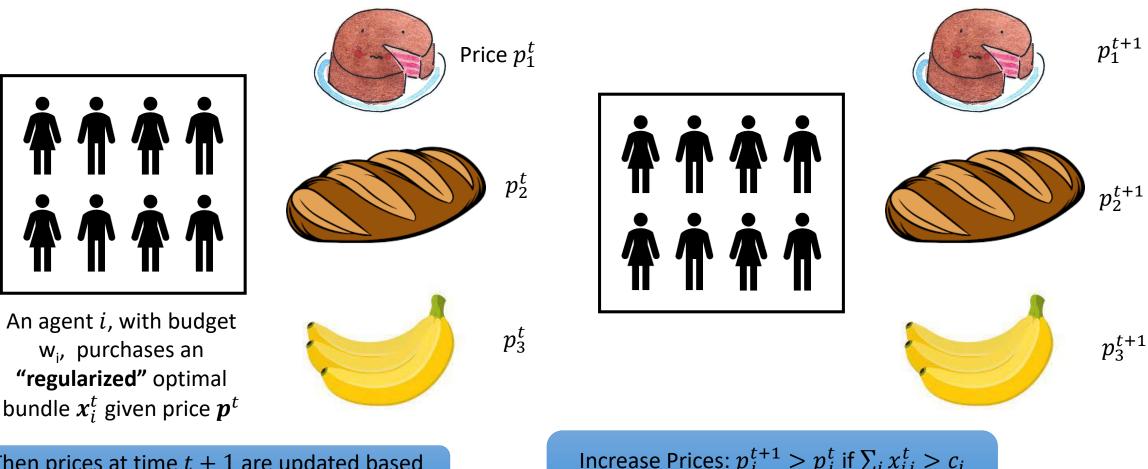








Prior Work: Goods Arrive Online [Gorokh, Banerjee, Iyer, 2021] Agents maximize individual utilities based on posted prices that are adjusted based on discrepancy between supply & demand – Buyers' market in real time

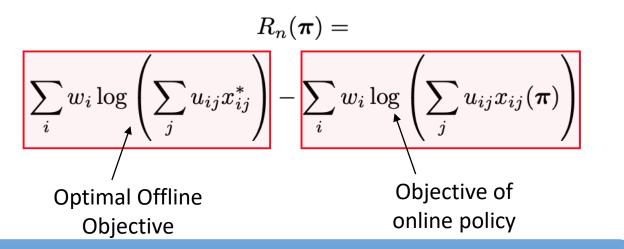


Then prices at time t + 1 are updated based on observed consumptions  $x_i^t$  at time t Increase Prices:  $p_j^{t+1} > p_j^t$  if  $\sum_i x_{ij}^t > c_j$ Decrease Prices:  $p_j^{t+1} < p_j^t$  if  $\sum_i x_{ij}^t > c_j$ 

#### Online for Geometric Objective: evaluate algorithms through the absolute regret of social welfare and capacity violation

#### **Regret (Optimality Gap)**

 $\frac{Difference \ in \ the \ Optimal \ Social}{Objective \ of \ the \ online \ policy \ \pi \ to \ that} \\ \frac{of \ the \ optimal \ offline \ social \ value}{Objective \ of \ the \ optimal \ offline \ social \ value}$ 



Prior Work on concave objectives [Agrawal/Devanur 2014; Lu, Balserio, Mirrkoni, 2020] assume non-negativity and boundedness of utilities, none of which are true for the NSW

#### **Constraint Violation**

Norm of the violation of capacity constraints of the online policy  $\pi$ 

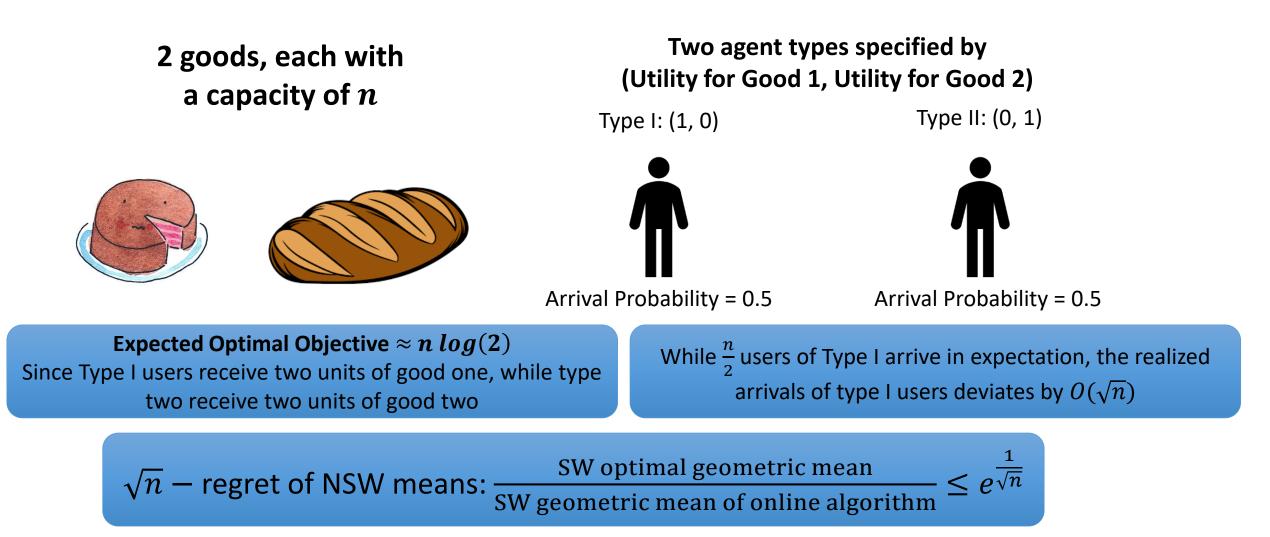
$$V_j({m \pi}) = \sum_j x_{ij}({m \pi}) - c_j$$

Violation of Capacity Constraint of good *j* 

 $V_n({m \pi}) = ||\mathbb{E}[V({m \pi})^+]||_2$ 

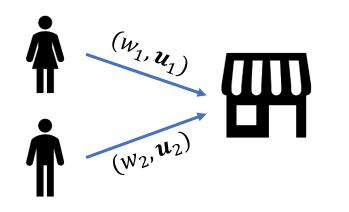
Norm of the expected constraint violation

Using the optimal expect prices, one of the two measures must be  $\Omega(\sqrt{n})$ , where n is the number of total agents



# Primal algorithms are often computationally expensive and do not preserve user-privacy

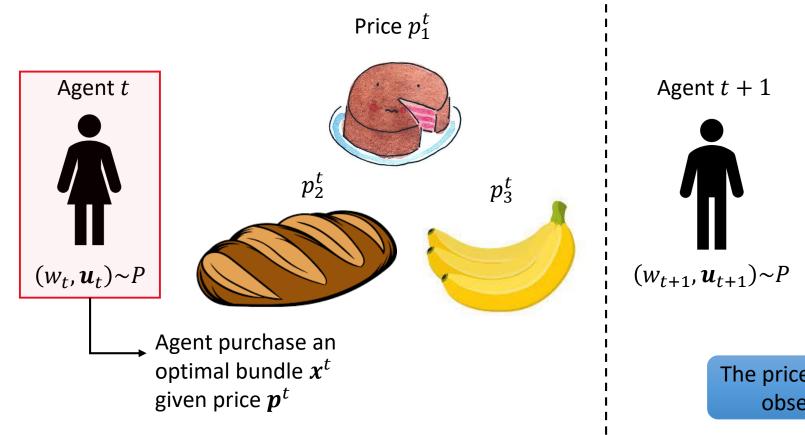
User parameters (*w*, *u*) are revealed

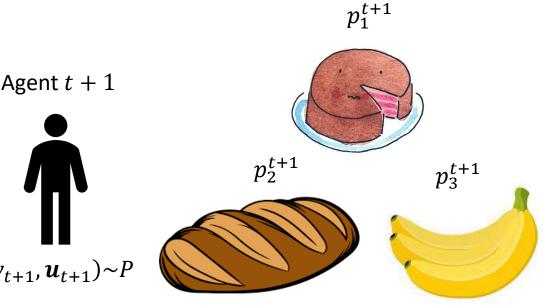


Such algorithms require information on user parameters, which may not be known in practice With parameters until user t arrives, we can solve the following primal problem

$$\mathbf{x}_{i} \in \mathbb{R}^{m}, \forall i \in [t] \quad \sum_{i=1}^{t} w_{i} \log \left( \sum_{j=1}^{m} u_{ij} x_{ij} \right)$$
  
s.t. 
$$\sum_{i=1}^{t} x_{ij} \leq \frac{t}{n} c_{j}, \quad \forall j \in [m]$$
  
$$x_{ij} \geq 0, \quad \forall i \in [t], j \in [m]$$
 Prices can be set  
based on dual of  
capacity constraints

At each time instance, we solve a larger convex program, which may become computationally expensive in real time We design a dual based algorithm, wherein users see posted prices at each time they arrive and make buy decisions (no need to worry truthfulness)





The price at time t + 1 is updated based on observed consumption  $x^t$  at time t

## Applying gradient descent to the dual of the social optimization problem motivates a natural algorithm

Dual of social optimization problem with Lagrange multiplier of the capacity constraints  $p_i$ 

Equivalent Sample Average Approximation (SAA) of Dual Problem

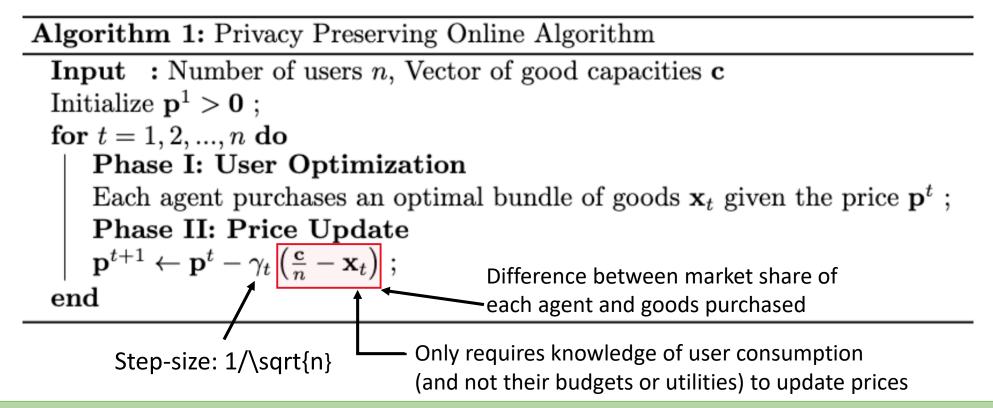
(Sub)-gradient descent of dual problem for each agent: O(m) complexity of price update

$$\begin{split} \min_{\mathbf{p}} \quad D_n(\mathbf{p}) &= \sum_{j=1}^m p_j \frac{c_j}{n} + \frac{1}{n} \sum_{t=1}^n \left( w_t \log(w_t) - w_t \log(\min_{j \in [m]} \frac{p_j}{u_{tj}}) - w_t \right) \\ \partial_{\mathbf{p}} \left( \sum_{j \in [m]} p_j \frac{c_j}{n} + w \log(w) - w \log\left(\min_{j \in [m]} \frac{p_j}{u_j}\right) - w \right) \bigg|_{\mathbf{p} = \mathbf{p}^t} = \frac{1}{n} \mathbf{c} - \mathbf{x}_t \end{split}$$

 $\min_{\mathbf{p}} \quad \sum_{t=1}^{n} w_t \log(w_t) - \sum_{t=1}^{n} w_t \log\left(\min_{j \in [m]} \frac{p_j}{u_{tj}}\right) + \sum_{j=1}^{n} p_j c_j - \sum_{t=1}^{n} w_t$ 

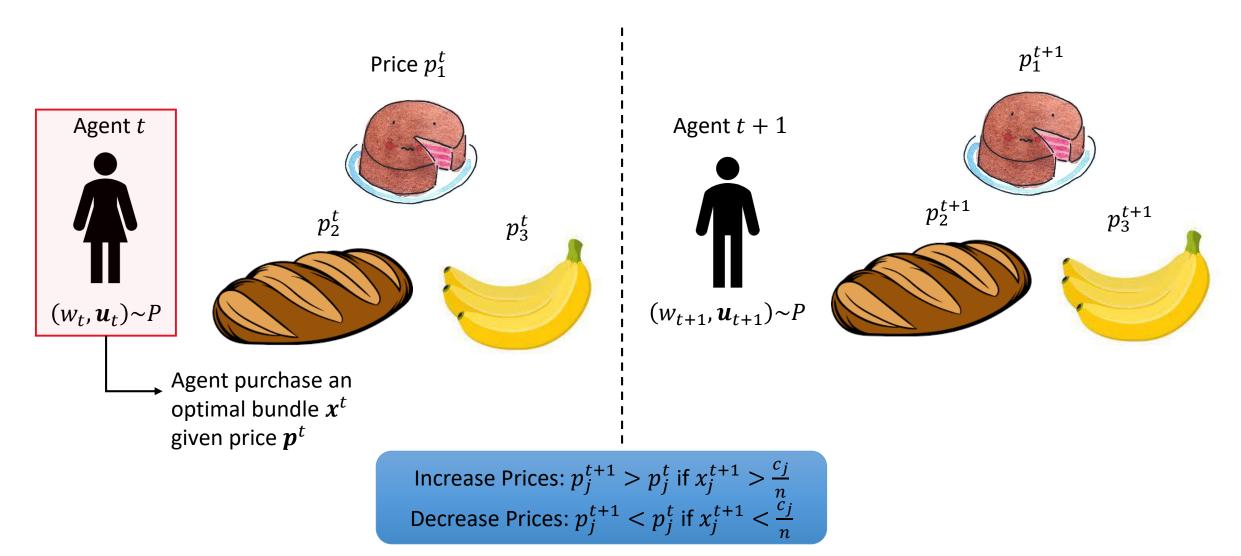
Difference between market share of each agent and goods purchased

# The privacy-preserving algorithm has sub-linear regret and constraint violation guarantees

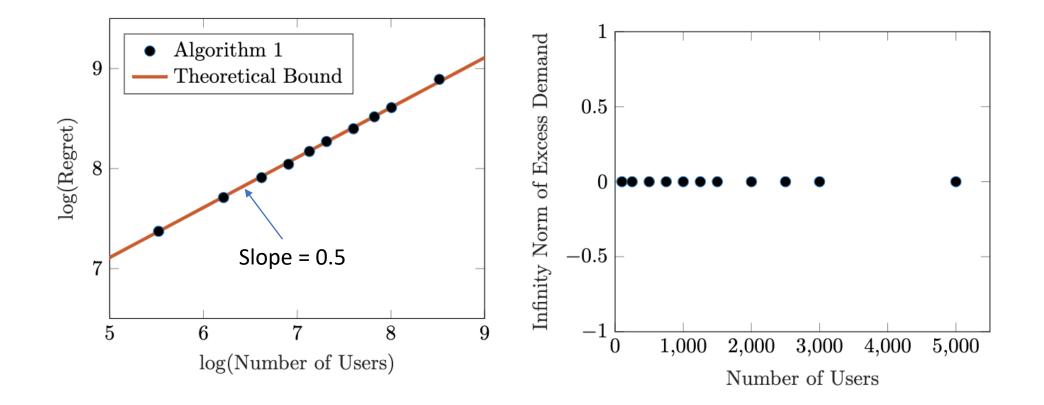


**Theorem** [Jelota & Y 2022]: Under i.i.d. budget and utility parameters and when good capacities are O(n), Algorithm 1 achieves an expected regret  $R_n(\pi) \le O(\sqrt{n})$  and the expected constraint violation  $V_n(\pi) \le O(\sqrt{n})$ , where n is the number of arriving users.

## Again, the price of a good is increased if the arriving user purchase more than its market share of the good

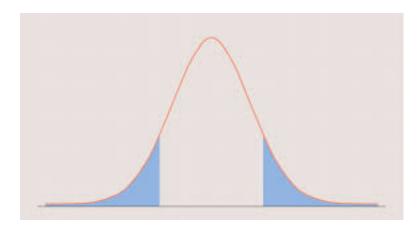


## Our numerical results verify the obtained theoretical guarantee



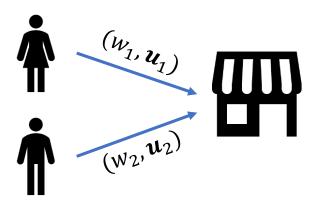
## We also develop benchmarks that have access to more information to compare our algorithm's performance

#### Known Probability Distribution



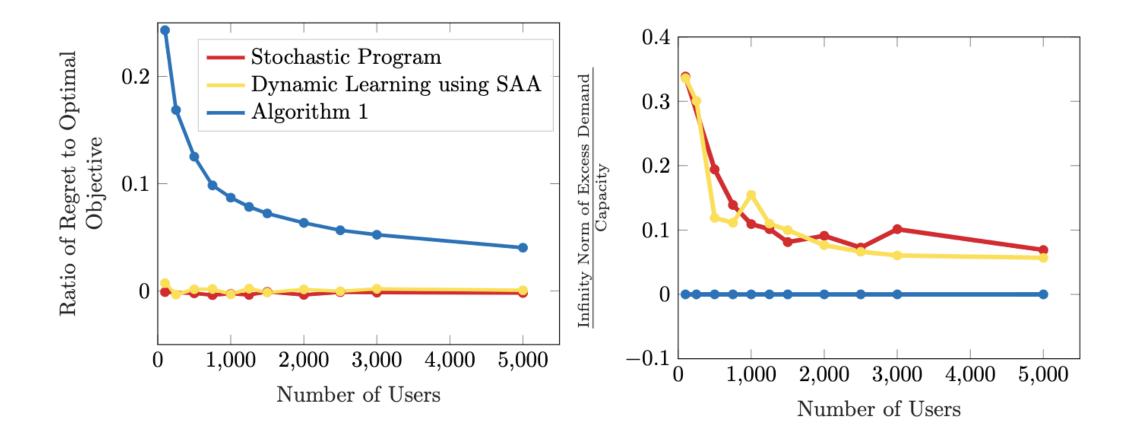
**Benchmark 1**: Set price based on solution of Stochastic Program

User parameters (*w*, *u*) are revealed

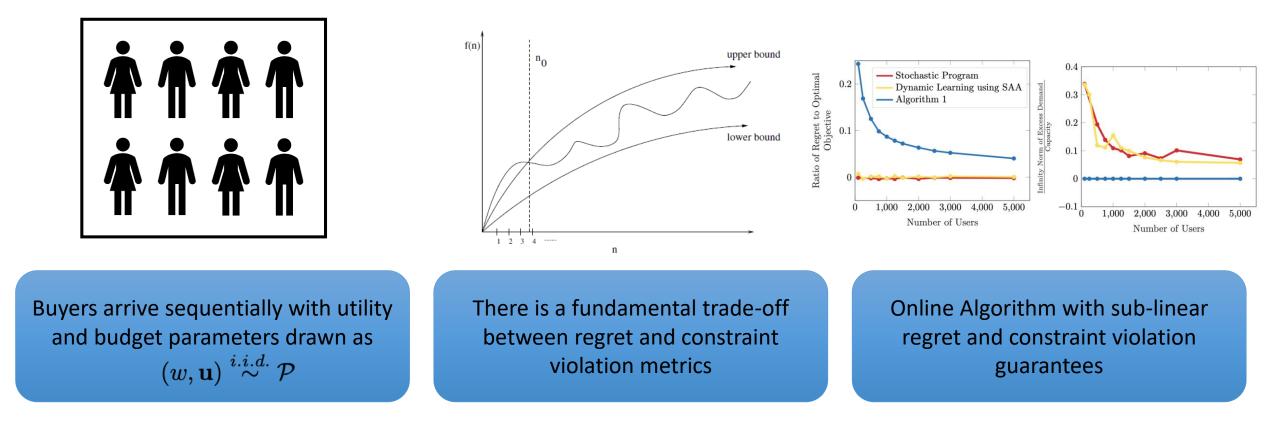


Benchmark 2: Set prices based on a sequence of dual problems using revealed parameters

# Our numerical results demonstrate a tradeoff between regret and constraint violation



Summary: online algorithms are applicable to Fisher markets with geometric aggregation of social welfare and sub-linear regret guarantees



### Organization

- Advantages of (Weighted) Geometric Mean Objective
- Distributed ADMM Algorithm for Fisher Markets (Simulated Market)
- Online Fisher Markets (Real Market)
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Geometrically aggregated welfare optimization: it is as easy as linear programming and more desirable in many social/economical settings

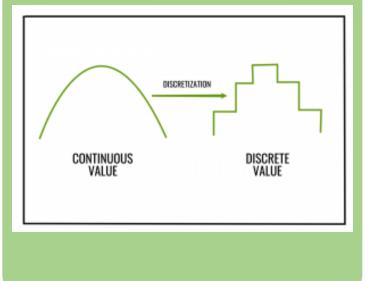
The weighted geometric average objective has several advantages including fairness, computational complexity, and the resulting allocation can be distributed using prices through Fisher markets

The Nash social welfare maximizing allocations can be computed in a distributed fashion by using the primal-dual and/or ADMM methods while preserving the privacy of individual utilities

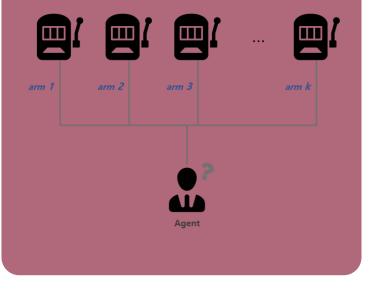
The corresponding allocations can be implemented in the online setting with a sublinear regret

### Future Work

#### Loss in social objective under integral allocations



Extensions of geometric social objective for online allocation in bandit and reinforcement learning problems



Extension of online Fisher markets under general concave utility functions and tight regret bounds