Efficient Weighting Schemes for Auditing Instant-Runoff Voting Elections*

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Abstract. Various risk-limiting audit (RLA) methods have been developed for instant-runoff voting (IRV) elections. A recent method, AWAIRE, is the first efficient approach that does not require cast vote records (CVRs). AWAIRE involves adaptively weighted averages of test statistics, essentially "learning" an effective set of hypotheses to test. However, the initial paper on AWAIRE only examined a few weighting schemes and parameter settings.

We provide an extensive exploration of schemes and settings, to identify and recommend efficient choices for practical use. We focus only on the (hardest) case where CVRs are not available, using simulations based on real election data to assess performance.

Across our comparisons, the most effective schemes are often those that place most or all of the weight on the apparent "best" hypotheses based on already seen data. Conversely, the optimal tuning parameters tended to vary based on the election margin. Nonetheless, we quantify the performance trade-offs for different choices across varying election margins, aiding in selecting the most desirable trade-off if a default option is needed.

A limitation of the current AWAIRE implementation is its restriction to handling a small number of candidates (previously demonstrated up to six candidates). One path to a more computationally efficient implementation would be to use lazy evaluation and avoid considering all possible hypotheses. Our findings suggest that such an approach could be done without substantially comprising statistical performance.

1 Introduction

Elections are a critical part of modern democracy. Ensuring that elections truly reflect the preferences of the population should be a cornerstone of democratic governance. While there are many forms of elections, *ranked-choice* or *preferential* voting allows voters to express preferences among some or all candidates,

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rather than simply voting for a single candidate. Instant-runoff voting (IRV) is used in elections in many countries, including Australia, Ireland and the USA.

While ranked-choice voting captures more of the preferences of voters, assuring that their preferences are followed requires ensuring that the reported *outcome* of an election is correct, that is the reported winner of the election is the winner if we followed the election process correctly on the correct set of ballots. Risk-limiting audits (RLAs) are a way of checking that a reported election outcome is correct. As opposed to other auditing methods, RLAs guarantee with some minimum probability that they will correct an incorrect reported outcome of an election, and never alter a correct outcome. The *risk limit*, denoted by α, is the maximum chance that a wrong outcome will not be corrected.

The first RLA approach to auditing IRV elections, RAIRE [4], makes use of a digitised record of the votes in the election (the *cast vote records* (CVRs)) to generate a set of "assertions" that, if true, imply that the reported winner really won. These assertions are currently used in the SHANGRLA framework for RLAs [9], and have been used to audit actual elections [3]. More recently, an alternative approach to RLAs for IRV elections that does not require CVRs, AWAIRE [7], was published. AWAIRE has the advantage that many IRV elections are tabulated by hand,[4] and no digitised record of the ballots is actually made, so RAIRE is not applicable in these circumstances. While RAIRE commits to a set of assertions to check before the audit starts, AWAIRE adapts to the voter preferences observed in the audit sample as the audit progresses, identifying a sufficient set of assertions that are efficient to test statistically. AWAIRE is also more resilient than RAIRE when the reported outcome is correct but the digitised vote records lead to an erroneous elimination order.

AWAIRE uses a *weighting scheme* to adapt the assertions it will concentrate on as the audit progresses, and more and more observations of ballots are seen. In the original AWAIRE paper [7], the authors consider a few simple weighting schemes and a single default choice of parameters used for ALPHA [10], the statistical test used to test whether assertions are correct (within a statistical limit on the acceptable chance of error). In this paper we:

- Expand upon AWAIRE by investigating more weighting schemes and exploring how the margin of victory affects which weighting scheme is best.
- Investigate the effect of ALPHA tuning parameters on audit efficiency.

2 Auditing IRV Contests Using AWAIRE

2.1 Instant-runoff voting (IRV)

In an IRV contest, voters write on their ballot an ordering of (possibly a subset of) the candidates based on the voter's preference.

The votes are tabulated as follows: Initially, each ballot counts as a single vote for its first-choice candidate on that ballot. The candidate with the fewest

[4] Most, but not all, lower house elections in Australia are hand-counted IRV contests.

first-choice votes is eliminated, while the others remain in the race. Every ballot that ranked the eliminated candidate first is now instead counted as a vote for its second choice, i.e., it becomes a vote for the top-ranked candidate remaining in the race. This process continues until only one candidate remains, the winner. As a ballot need not list every candidate, if at any point there are only eliminated candidates listed on a ballot, then the ballot is *exhausted* and no longer contributes any votes. The above tabulating process leads to an *elimination order*: the order in which candidates are eliminated, with the last candidate in the order being the winner.

In order to audit an IRV election we need to show that it would be unlikely that any candidate other than the reported winner actually won.

2.2 The AWAIRE Framework

AWAIRE is a process for performing a risk-limiting audit on an IRV election that does not require an electronic record of the ballots (CVRs) to proceed. In brief:

- AWAIRE tracks every elimination order that yields a winner other than the reported winner; we refer to these orders as *alt-order(s)*. If there is sufficiently strong evidence (based on a pre-specified risk limit) that no alt-order is correct, then the audit stops without a full hand count and AWAIRE concludes that the reported winner really won.
- Each alt-order is characterised by a set of *requirements*: necessary conditions for that elimination order to be correct. If the data refutes at least one requirement for each alt-order, then the reported outcome is confirmed.
- A *test supermartingale* is constructed for each requirement. A test supermartingale is also constructed for each alt-order, by defining each new term as a (predictable) convex combination of the terms in the test supermartingales for each requirement in the alt-order.
- As the audit progresses, the convex combination for each alt-order is updated to give more weight to the test supermartingales that are giving the strongest evidence that their corresponding requirements are false.
- The audit stops when the test supermartingale for every alt-order exceeds $1/\alpha$, or when every ballot has been inspected and the correct outcome is known.
- The process described above has risk limit α.

2.3 Test Supermartingales

A supermartingale is a mathematical model of a gambler's fortune in a sequence of wagers that are fair or biased against the gambler. Specifically, a supermartingale is a stochastic process $(M_t)_{t\in\mathbb{N}}$ (e.g., fortune after t bets) with respect to another stochastic process $(X_t)_{t\in\mathbb{N}}$ (e.g., a series of t coin flips that we bet on), where the conditional expected value of the next observation, given all past observations, is not greater than the current observation; that is, $\mathbb{E}(M_t \mid X_1, \ldots, X_{t-1}) \leqslant M_{t-1}$.

A test statistic that is a nonnegative supermartingale starting at 1 when a hypothesis is true can be used to test that hypothesis. We call such a process a *test supermartingale* for the hypothesis. By Ville's inequality [11], which generalises Markov's inequality to nonnegative supermartingales, the chance that a test supermartingale ever exceeds $1/\alpha$ is at most α if the null hypothesis is true. Hence, rejecting the null hypothesis when $M_t \geqslant 1/\alpha$ for some time t is a level α test of the hypothesis.

In words, suppose that a gambler starts with a fortune of \$1 and is not allowed to go into debt. The gambler bets on a sequence of games. The chance that the gambler's fortune ever gets to \$$1/\alpha$ is at most α if the games are fair or biased against the gambler. If the gambler succeeds in amassing a fortune of, say, \$1,000, then that is quite strong evidence that some of the games had odds that were favorable to the gambler—that the games were not all fair or sub-fair. Had the games all been fair or sub-fair, the chance of reaching a fortune of \$1,000 would be at most $1/1000 = 0.001$.

2.4 Hypotheses and Requirements

The process of auditing an IRV contest can be expressed as a collection of hypothesis tests. In the AWAIRE framework, we try to reject each alt-order. For an election with k candidates, there are $m = k! - (k-1)!$ alt-orders. Let H_0^j denote the hypothesis that the jth alt-order is correct. Then, to conclude that the reported winner really won without the audit becoming a full hand count, we need to reject the composite null hypothesis

$$H_0 = H_0^1 \cup \cdots \cup H_0^m.$$

To reject an alt-order in the AWAIRE framework, we need to reject one or more of its *requirements*, relations that must hold for the alt-order to hold (i.e., they are necessary and sufficient for alt-order i to be correct). Hence, if we can reject one requirement with risk α, then we can reject the alt-order with risk α. We must reject

$$H_0^i = R_i^1 \cap R_i^2 \cap \cdots \cap R_i^{r_i},$$

where $R_i^1, R_i^2, \ldots, R_i^{r_i}$ are the requirements of alt-order i.

In IRV, each requirement is comprised of so-called *directly beats* assertions. The assertion $\mathbf{DB}(i, j, \mathcal{S})$, where $\mathcal{S} \supseteq \{i, j\}$, holds if candidate i has more votes than candidate j, given that only the candidates in $\mathcal{S} \supseteq \{i, j\}$ have not been eliminated. If the assertion is true, then it means that j cannot be the next eliminated candidate (as j would be eliminated before i) if only the candidates $\mathcal{S}$ remain standing. For more details about the assertions and how to build test supermartingales for individual assertions, we refer the reader to [7].[5]

[5] An understanding of these details is not necessary for the current paper.

At each time t, a ballot is drawn without replacement. Every ballot is encoded (via an *assorter*, see [9]) as either evidence against (value 1), for (value 0), or neutral to (value 1/2) a requirement being true. Each requirement can be expressed as the hypothesis that the mean of a list of encoded ballots is less than 1/2. We test the requirement using the ALPHA test supermartingale [10].

ALPHA involves specifying a function that can be thought of as a running estimate of the population of assorter. One such function, `shrinkTrunc()`, has two tuning parameters, η_0, which can be thought of as an initial estimate of the true assorter mean for the ballots, and d, which can be thought of as how much emphasis we put on η_0 (higher values) or how eagerly we learn from the sample (lower values). In this paper we explore the effect of those parameters on audit sample sizes. Other parameters of ALPHA were set to the same values used by [7].

3 Weighting Schemes

In the AWAIRE framework, the assorter associated with each requirement r from some alt-order[6] is applied to the sample (at time ℓ), forming the list of values $(X_t^r)_{t=1}^{\ell}$. Let $M_{r,\ell}$ be the test supermartingale for requirement r evaluated at time ℓ, which can be written as a product of increments:

$$M_{r,\ell} := \prod_{t=0}^{\ell} m_{r,t},$$

where $m_{r,0} = 1$ denotes the starting value and $m_{r,t}$ reflects how X_t^r impacts the cumulative evidence that requirement r is false. For example $m_{r,t} < 1$ means that X_t^r gives no evidence that r is false; $m_{r,t} > 1$ means that X_t^r gives evidence that r is false. Because $M_{r,\ell}$ is a test supermartingale,

$$\mathbb{E}(m_{r,t} \mid (X_\ell^r)_{\ell=0}^{t-1}) \leqslant 1, \tag{1}$$

if r is true. These supermartingales are referred to as *base* test supermartingales.

3.1 Intersection Test Martingales

Each alt-order has an *intersection* test supermartingale, which measures the cumulative evidence for that alt-order being the true elimination order. To correct for multiplicity, the intersection test supermartingale uses a weighted average of its base test supermartingales.

Specifically, let the weights at time t be $\{w_{r,t}\}_{r=1}^{r_i}$. These can depend on the data collected up to time $t-1$, but not on any later data. Using those weights, the intersection test supermartingale is a product of weighted combinations of the terms of the base test supermartingales:

$$M_\ell := \prod_{t=1}^{\ell} \frac{\sum_{r=1}^{r_i} w_{r,t} m_{r,t}}{\sum_{r=1}^{r_i} w_{r,t}}, \quad \ell = 0, 1, \ldots,$$

[6] The details in this section are analogous for every alt-order.

with $M_0 := 1$.

The base test supermartingales for requirements that are false tend to grow with t. We explore how to make M_ℓ grow quickly by choosing efficient weighting schemes.

3.2 Previous Schemes

The original AWAIRE paper [7] investigates a number of schemes for weight selection:

Linear. Proportional to previous value, $w_{r,t} := M_{r,t-1}$.
Quadratic. Proportional to the square of the previous value, $w_{r,t} := M_{r,t-1}^2$.
Largest. Take only the largest base supermartingale(s) and ignore the rest, $w_{r,t} := 1$ if $r \in \arg\max_{r'} M_{r',t-1}$; otherwise, $w_{r,t} := 0$.

Experiments in [7] found **Largest** to be the most robust choice. But there are many more weighting schemes possible, and indeed a single weighting scheme may not be the best for different IRV elections.

3.3 New Schemes: Variants of Previous Schemes

We introduce several new weighting schemes usable within AWAIRE to try to generate intersection test supermartingale that grow quickly. The schemes in the previous subsection are *myopic*: they only look at the previous value of the base supermartingales. This makes them inefficient when two or more base test supermartingales frequently swap leadership positions. Below we examine more complex weighting schemes, many of which look back at the test supermartingale values of the last i steps:

LargestCount(i) Put all weight on the base test supermartingale that was largest most often in the previous i draws. This is a less myopic version of **Largest**.
LargestMean(i) Put all weight on the base test supermartingale whose mean in the last i draws was largest. Again this is a less myopic version of **Largest** that also takes into account the magnitude of the difference between different requirements.
Linear+ Same as Linear, but if at least one base test supermartingale is greater than 1 at step $t-1$, put weight 0 on all base test supermartingales that are less than 1. This attempts to remove from consideration requirements that appear to be compatible with the data.
LinearCount(i) Put weight in linear proportion to how many times each requirement has been the largest looking back i steps. This is fairer version of **LargestCount** that spreads its bets on requirements that have been largest.
LinearMean(i) Taking the moving average value of each requirement looking back i steps, put weight in linear proportion to their means. This is a less myopic version of **Linear**.
Quadratic+ Same as Quadratic, adapted in an analogous way to Linear+.

3.4 New Schemes: Portfolio Algorithms

There is a large literature on *portfolio algorithms*, which aim to maximise the growth of wealth in a stock market by selecting a portfolio of stocks. This involves selecting how to split some starting capital into amounts to invest in each stock and how to re-invest the capital each period. Our weighting schemes fit this paradigm, with the base test supermartingales representing individual stocks and the weights corresponding to the fraction of the current fortune invested in each stock in each time period. Any portfolio algorithm that only uses information about previous stock prices yields a weighting scheme that could be used with AWAIRE.

We attempted to test a variety of portfolio algorithms, but the vast majority of papers describing such algorithms do not include software. The most comprehensive collection of software we found was at:

https://github.com/Marigold/universal-portfolios

We tried to use these, but the only scheme that ran successfully was:

ONS(δ) "Online Newton Step" with tuning parameter δ [1]. This is a family of weighting schemes coming from investment portfolio management.

The other algorithms either did not apply to our problem or crashed due to floating point overflow. Even ONS(δ) sometimes crashed for $\delta = 0.66, 1$, and sometimes 2. Thus, we analyse ONS with $\delta > 2$.

Previous work has shown that (under suitable conditions) the optimal portfolio is a *constant rebalanced portfolio* [2,5], where at each timestep the fraction of the current capital invested in a given stock is constant over time. The optimal allocation, however, can only be determined in hindsight.

A class of portfolio algorithms that are asymptotically optimal are *F-weighted portfolios*, also known as *universal portfolios* [6]. However, they often perform poorly for small sample sizes and do not necessarily have computationally efficient implementations [8]. Nevertheless, they might inspire better weighting schemes; we discuss some ideas in Section 5.

3.5 Software

Our software implementation of the new weighting schemes, along with the AWAIRE implementation, is available at: https://github.com/aekh/awaire

4 Analyses and Results

4.1 Data

We used the same NSW 2015 Legislative Assembly election data as in the AWAIRE paper [7], consisting of 71 contests with 6 or fewer candidates.[7] Experiments showed that the relative performance of the weighting schemes and

[7] https://github.com/michelleblom/margin-irv

various tuning parameters for ALPHA depend on the margin of victory. To understand these differences more clearly, we partitioned the dataset into four categories based on the margin of victory:

Huge. Margins of 10% and above. (41 contests)
Large. Margins in the range 4–10%. (19 contests)
Medium. Margins in the range 1.5–4%. (7 contests)
Small. Margins less than 1.5%. (4 contests)

4.2 Initial Comparison of Weighting Schemes

First, let's compare the weighting schemes we have listed above. We will use the $d = 50$ and $\eta_0 = 0.52$ as was used in previous AWAIRE paper. We will refer to this as *the previous default*. We used a risk limit of 5%. See Figure 1 for results. For each weighting scheme, we ran 500 simulated audits for each contest. First we calculated statistics across all simulated audits in each of the four margin categories.

Figure 1 indicates that Quadratic+, LargestCount(5), LinearCount(7), and the previously introduced Largest are consistently best while also performing somewhat differently across the four categories. The following sections concentrate on those weighting schemes.

4.3 Tuning Parameters for `shrinkTrunc()` in ALPHA

The purpose of these experiments is twofold: first, to understand what the best tuning parameters are for ALPHA when dealing with IRV contests; second, to ensure that the evaluation of the weighting schemes is somewhat decoupled from the choice of underlying test supermartingale.

We used $\eta_0 \in \{0.505, 0.51, 0.52, 0.54\}$ and $d \in \{10, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000\}$. For time reasons, for these experiments we used a subset of the contests consisting of 3 elections per margin category: (a) the contest with the smallest margin, (b) the contest with the largest margin, and (c) a contest in the middle (rounded to smaller margin if no true middle).

Figure 2 shows the results from these experiments. There was no single best choice of tuning parameters, but $\eta_0 = 0.51$ and $d = 100$ were reasonable defaults. Selecting η_0 and d involves trade-offs in performance across contests. For example, with $\eta_0 = 0.51$, increasing d improved efficiency for Small-margin elections but decreased efficiency for the Huge-margin category. The default choice balances efficiency across the categories by slightly prioritising good performance for Large and Medium at the expense of Small and Huge. Our reasoning is as follows:

- Audits for Huge-margin contests will generally only need small sample sizes, thus increasing the number of samples by a relatively large percentage has low absolute cost.
- Audits of contests with very small margins may require sampling fractions so large that a full hand count is more efficient.

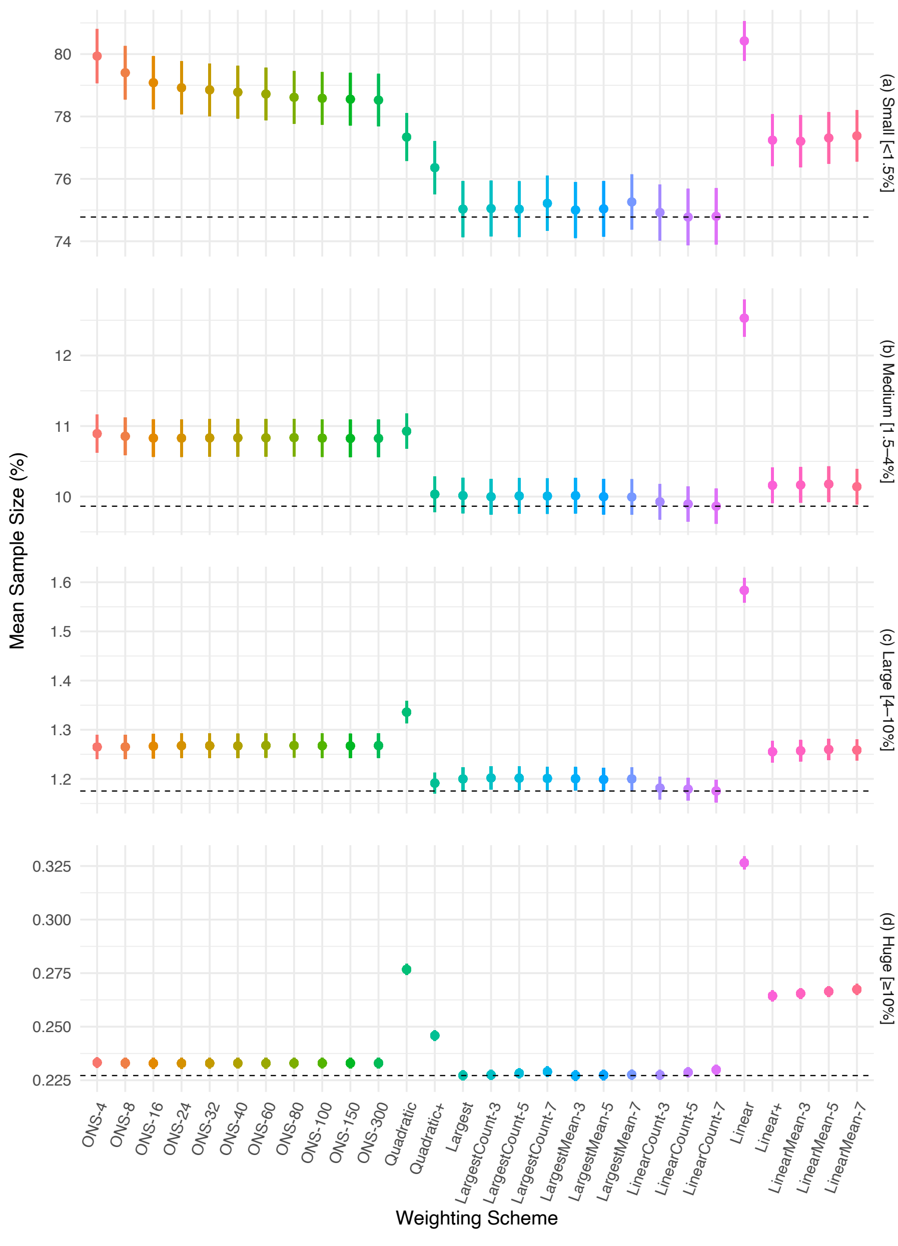

Fig. 1. Mean sample size (as a percentage of the total ballots in each contest; ±2 standard errors) across all simulated audits in each of the margin categories (rows). The vertical gridlines in panels (a)–(d) correspond respectively to approximately 500, 150, 25 and 10 ballots. The dashed lines show the best mean sample size achieved within each panel.

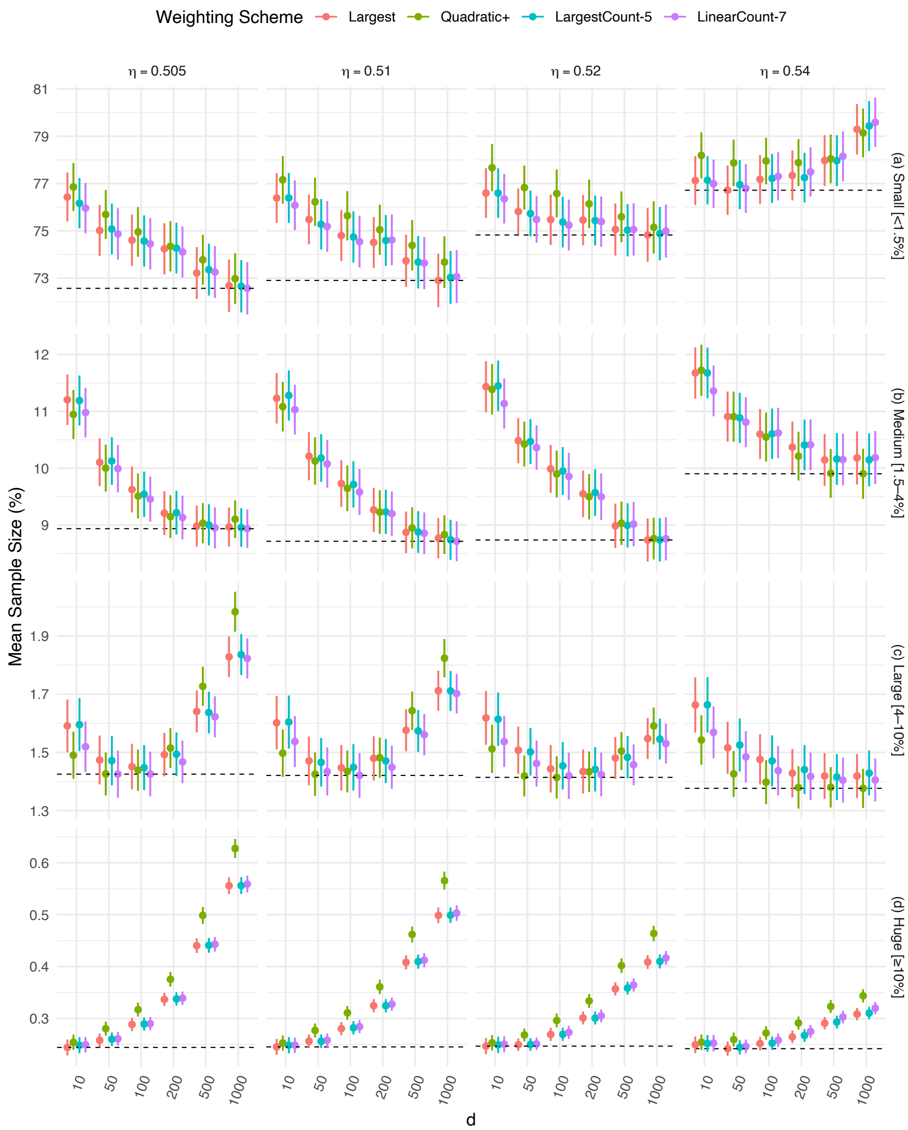

Fig. 2. Mean sample size (as a percentage of the total ballots in each contest; ±2 standard errors) across all simulated audits in each of the margin categories (rows) and settings for `shrinkTrunc()` (η_0 across columns and d on the x-axis). Three contests were selected to represent each category, see Section 4.3 for details. The dashed lines show the best mean sample size achieved within each panel.

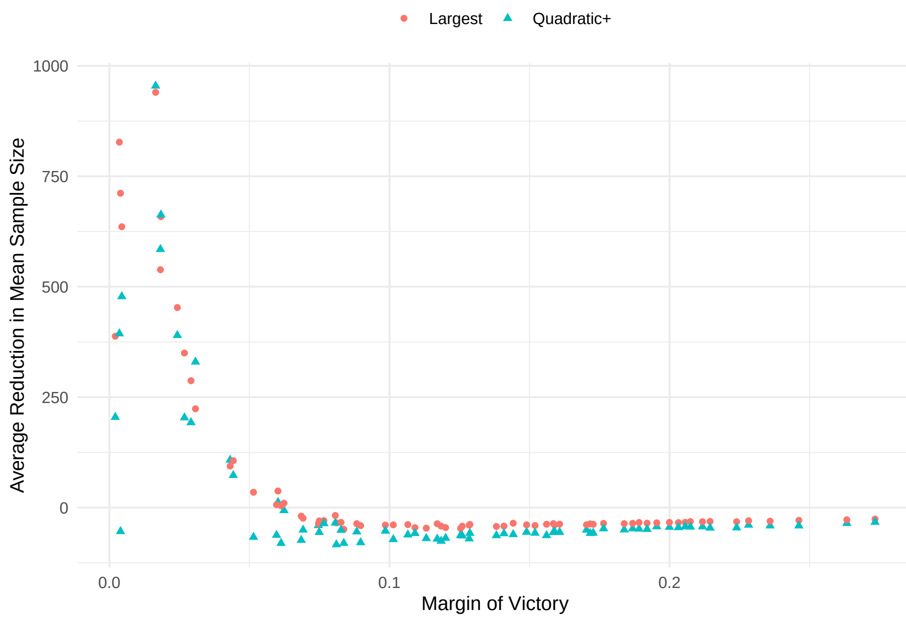

Fig. 3. Average reduction in mean sample size for two default choices compared to the previous default choice. Each point represents a single contest (averaged over 500 simulated audits). The margin (x-axis) is shown as a proportion out the total ballots in each contest.

4.4 Detailed Comparison of Selected Weighting Schemes

From the results in Figure 2, we see two types of patterns: either the difference between the weighting schemes is barely discernable, or Quadratic+ differs clearly from the others (performing either better or worse). Since the other three methods performed so similarly, we recommend using Largest because of its simplicity (it only requires storing values from 1 draw in the past). Therefore, we selected only Quadratic+ and Largest for further comparisons.

In this section, we will compare their performance with $\eta_0 = 0.51$ and $d = 100$ (as selected in Section 4.3) against Largest with $\eta_0 = 0.52$ and $d = 50$ (the default in [7]). We used all contests with 6 or fewer candidates for the comparison.

Figure 3 shows the average reduction in the mean sample size, plotted against the margin of each contest. The Largest and Quadratic+ schemes both perform similarly. There is a substantial reduction in sampling effort for elections with small-to-medium margins, and a very slight increase for large-to-huge margins. Figure 4 compares the average reduction in mean sample size for the two new default choices in more detail. For the majority of contests, the Largest scheme is slightly better than Quadratic+.

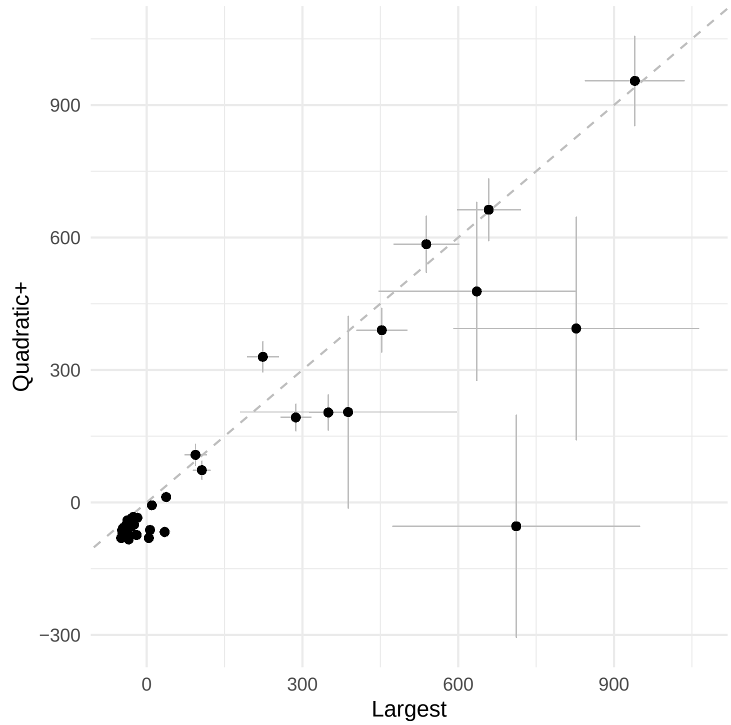

Fig. 4. Average reduction in mean sample size for our two default choices; now ±1 standard error in both directions. Each point represents a single contest (averaged over 500 simulated audits). The majority of points are on the right-hand side of the diagonal, indicating a larger average reduction when using Largest as compared to Quadratic+.

5 Improving Weighting Schemes Using More Sophisticated Portfolio Approaches

As discussed earlier in Section 3.4, previous theoretical work has shown that the optimal weighting scheme will be a constant rebalanced portfolio, for a set of weights that can only be determined in hindsight.

We conjecture that for typical elections, the optimal set of weights concentrates on a single requirement, and perhaps sometimes across a small number of requirements (when some base test supermartingales frequently swap leadership positions).

It would be interesting to explore this conjecture by approximating the optimal constant rebalanced weighting scheme using some kind of optimisation algorithm with the full set of ballots. If the conjecture is true, then it would explain why Largest and similar schemes often performed well in our comparisons. In elections where the conjecture is false, it would be worth exploring some more complex schemes.

The class of F-weighted portfolio algorithms is natural to consider based on asymptotic results, although we note that their short-run performance and computational complexity are typically poor.

The Linear scheme is in fact an F-weighted portfolio algorithm, for a rather restrictive choice of the distribution F; see Theorem 1 below. Most of the other schemes, including Largest, are not in that class because they can change zero weights to non-zero weights over time (not possible with an F-weighted algorithm). However, these schemes might be able to be approximated by an F-weighted algorithm, by "rounding off" weights that are very close to 0 or 1.

This suggests that we could work with more complex F-weighted portfolio algorithms if we approximate them appropriately. For example, consider the "general universal portfolio" by Cover [6], which creates an F that places positive mass on every face of a simplex. We could mimic this in a more heuristic and computationally efficient way by greedily grouping only the best base martingales together and optimising the weight amongst them with a general F. Such a calculation would require applying possible weights (within the group) across the full history every time the weights are updated, which is more demanding than our current schemes, but it might be feasible for a small group of requirements.

Theorem 1. *Linear is an F-weighted portfolio algorithm.*

Proof. Consider a set of requirements R_i. Let $\vec{b} := (b_1, b_2, \ldots, b_{r_i})$ be a vector of nonnegative weights for the base test supermartingales for the r_i requirements in this set. Let $M_t(\vec{b})$ be the intersection test supermartingale obtained using the weight vector $\vec{b}$ at each time step (a constant rebalanced portfolio).

An *F-weighted portfolio* updates the weights at each time step using a performance-weighted average of constant rebalanced portfolios and an initial distribution F across possible weight vectors:

$$\vec{b}_t = \frac{\int \vec{b} M_{t-1}(\vec{b}) F(\vec{b})\, d\vec{b}}{\int M_{t-1}(\vec{b}) F(\vec{b})\, d\vec{b}}.$$

Let $\vec{b}_r = (0, 0, \ldots, 1, \ldots, 0)$, consisting of a weight 1 for the rth component and 0 for all others. Using these weights yields the base test supermartingale for requirement r. In other words, $M_t(\vec{b}_r) = M_{r,t}$.

Consider a distribution F that places mass on all vectors $\vec{b}_r$, and zero probability elsewhere: $F(\vec{b}) = 1/r_i \sum_{r=1}^{r_i} \delta_{\vec{b}_r}(\vec{b})$, where δ is the Dirac delta function. We show that this produces the Linear weighting scheme:

$$\vec{b}_t = \frac{\int \vec{b} M_{t-1}(\vec{b}) 1/r_i \sum_{r=1}^{r_i} \delta_{\vec{b}_r}(\vec{b})\, d\vec{b}}{\int M_{t-1}(\vec{b}) 1/r_i \sum_{r=1}^{r_i} \delta_{\vec{b}_r}(\vec{b})\, d\vec{b}} = \frac{\sum_{r=1}^{r_i} \vec{b}_r M_{t-1}(\vec{b}_r)}{\sum_{r=1}^{r_i} M_{t-1}(\vec{b}_r)} = \frac{\sum_{r=1}^{r_i} \vec{b}_r M_{r,t-1}}{\sum_{r=1}^{r_i} M_{r,t-1}}.$$

This is precisely the weight vector for the Linear scheme ($w_{r,t} := M_{r,t-1}$). □

6 Discussion

AWAIRE has many adjustable parameters including tuning parameters in the base ALPHA test supermartingales and the adaptive selection of weights in combining the base test supermartingales. We explored an extensive range of weighting schemes and of tuning parameters for `shrinkTrunc()` in ALPHA, providing a deeper understanding of the trade-offs. We provided recommendations for default choices of the parameters in `shrinkTrunc()` for ALPHA and the adaptive weights.

This work focused on auditing IRV contests when the election reports a winner but does not report the interpretation of individual ballot cards (CVRs). [7] shows that reliable CVRs, if they are available, can make AWAIRE more efficient. In some jurisdictions, CVRs are not available but some information about the election count is, such as round-by-round vote tallies. It might be possible to use such tallies to tune AWAIRE parameters. For example, the last-round margin is often the margin of the contest as a whole, or at least provides an upper bound. This could be used to set η_0 to a useful default value specific for that contest, rather than simply using our default choice.

For any specific alt-order, the requirements will have a range of assorter margins, each with a different optimal tuning for ALPHA. Absent any information (such as CVRs) to tune the tests individually, we proposed a default value of η_0 to use for all requirements. Large values of d will make ALPHA adapt very slowly to the data, which will be helpful for some requirements but reduce efficiency for others, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Our work has useful implications for a "lazy" implementation of AWAIRE that decreases the computational burden. Essentially, only schemes that have sparse weights (such as Largest) are feasible. The fact that Largest and its variants were among the best schemes suggests that a lazy implementation should not incur a large penalty in statistical performance. The major challenge will be to ensure that a good requirement is found early on in any lazy algorithm, but once that is done the audit should perform competitively without needing to explore for more requirements.

It was difficult to find many practically useful software implementations of existing portfolio algorithms. That limited how many we could include in our comparison. However, many portfolio algorithms are known to be either computationally inefficient, or only asymptotically optimal but perform poorly for small time horizons; thus, they would not fare well in our comparisons anyway. It may be the case that some existing algorithms would perform better than all of the ones we have tried thus far. Future work can explore implementing any algorithms that are expected to be computationally efficient and also perform well on short time horizons.

There may be a theoretically best weighting scheme that could be determined from the complete set of ballots (i.e., "in hindsight"). Future work could investigate optimal weighting and ways to approximate it efficiently and adaptively in practice.

It would be interesting to see to what extent the theoretically best schemes place nearly all of their weight on only a few requirements. We suspect this might be the case, given how well the Largest scheme performs in our comparisons.

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