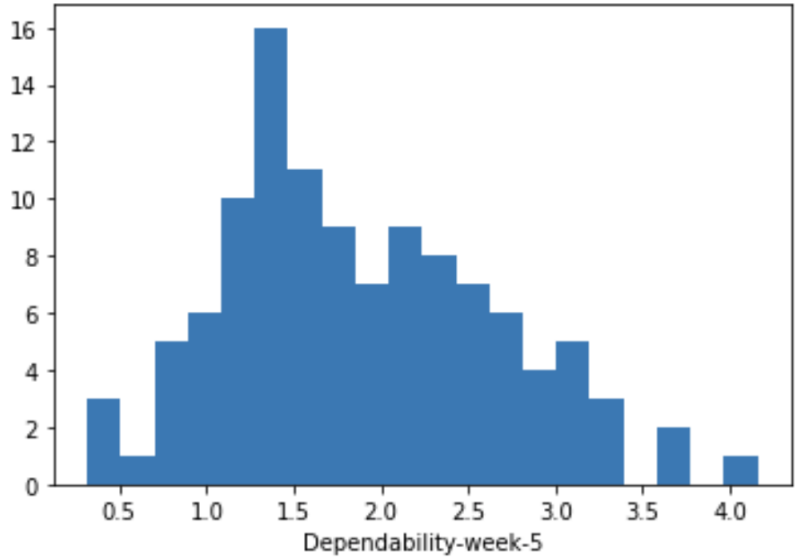
Privacy

Lecture 5-1

Computers & Society (CPSC 430)

Kevin Leyton-Brown

https://www.cs.ubc.ca/~kevinlb/teaching/cs430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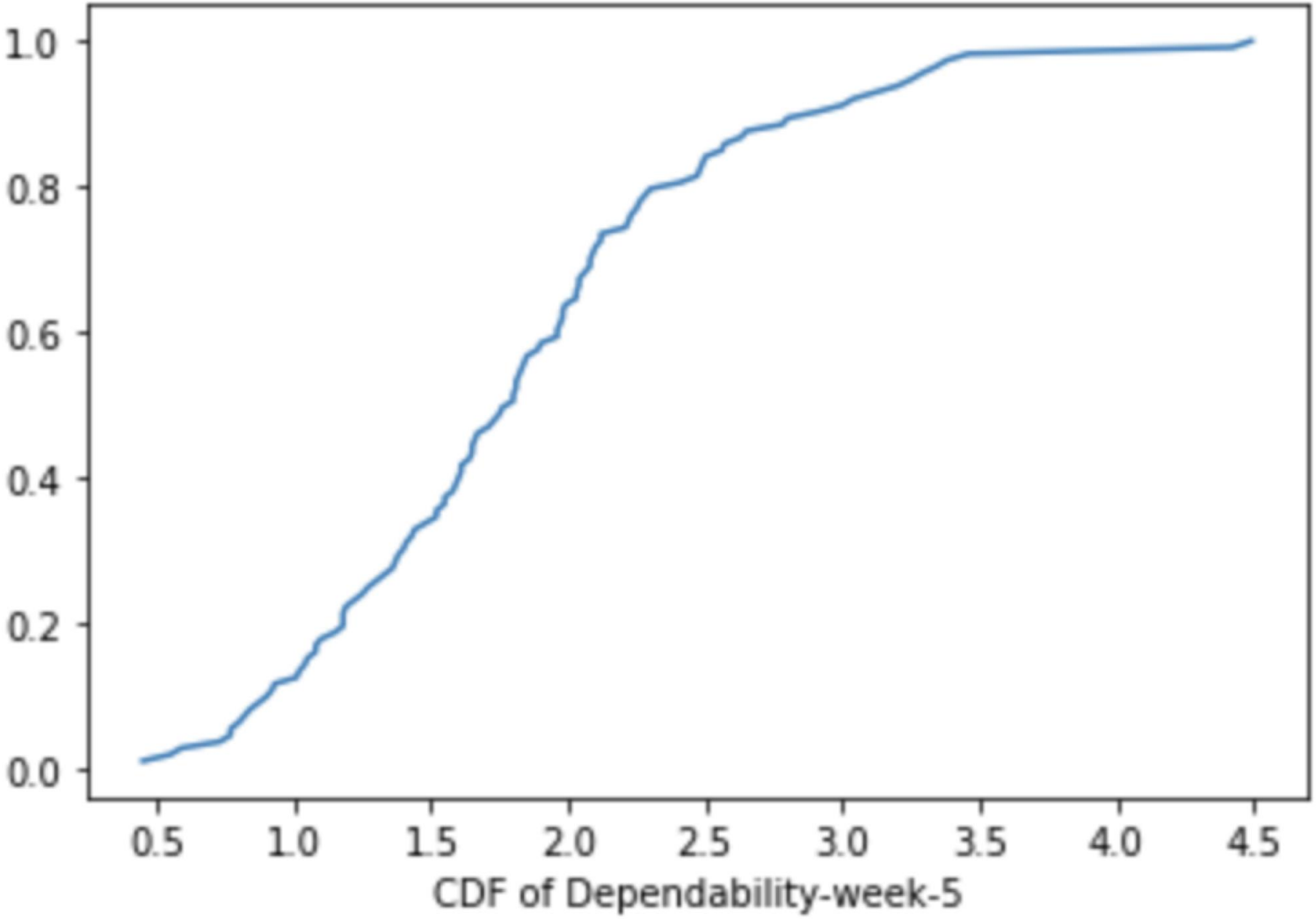
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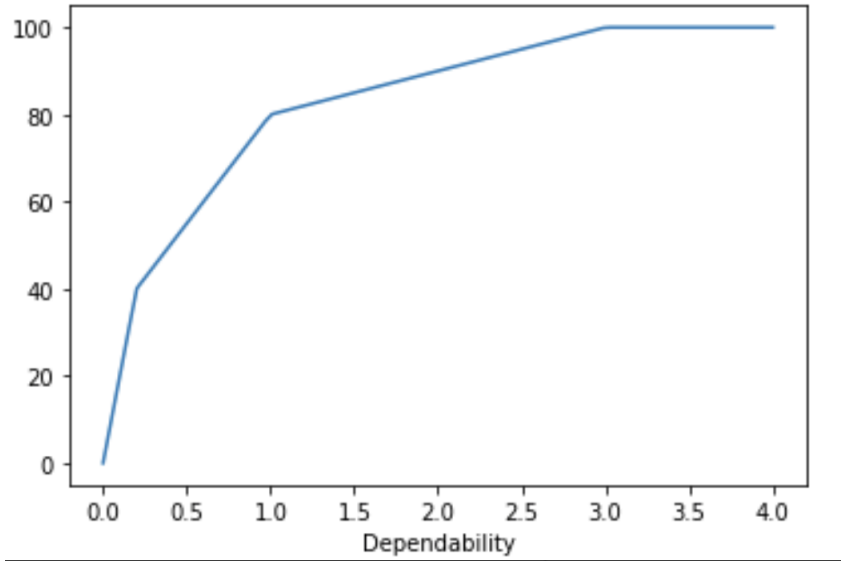
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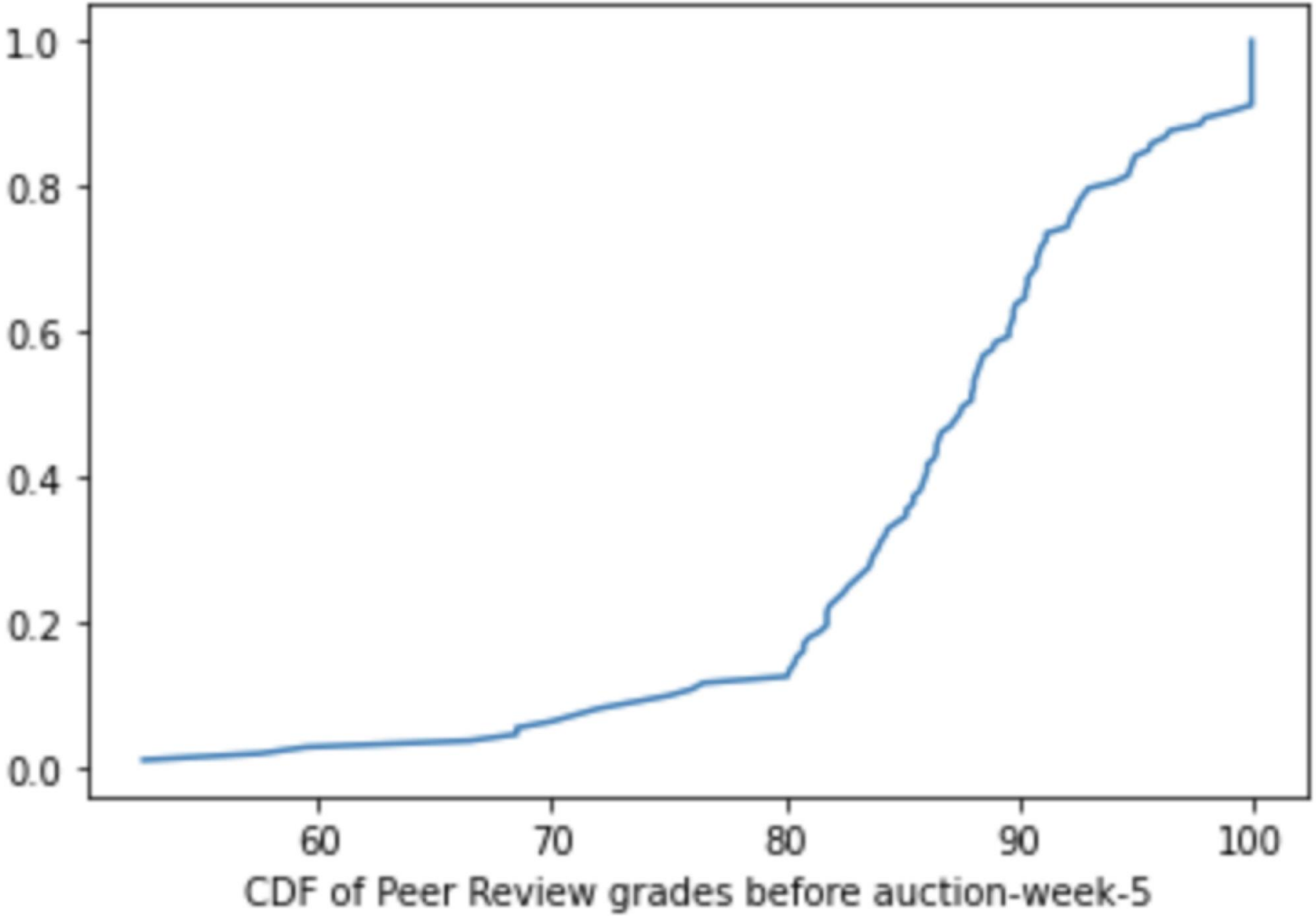
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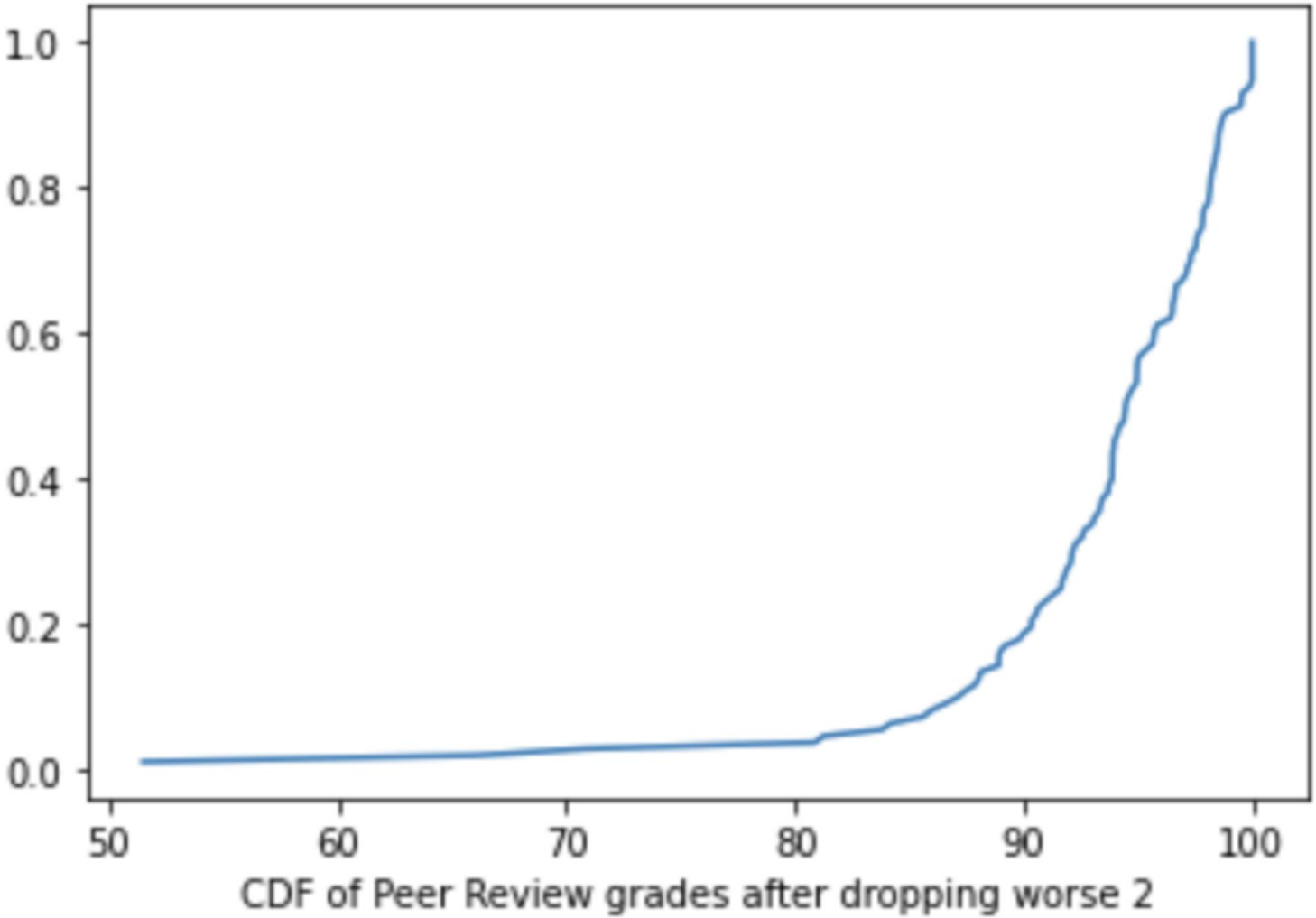
CDF of Peer Review grades before auction-week-5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CDF of Peer Review grades after dropping worse 2

Getting Started with Privacy

- What is Privacy?
  - Work in a group.
  - Come up with the best definition of the term you can.
  - Try to think of
    - The example least like privacy that is still captured by your definition
    - The example most like privacy that fails your definition
  - (We're not worried at this point about whether privacy ought to be a right; that's our next topic)

Defining Privacy

- Privacy is related to the notion of access
  - Physical proximity to you
  - Knowledge about you
- Byrne: Privacy is a “zone of inaccessibility”
  - your ability to deny others access to you
- Bloustein: Privacy violations are an affront to human dignity
- Too much individual privacy can harm society
  - *Can you think of examples?*
- Key question: Where to draw the line?

Benefits and Harms

- Harms of Privacy
  - Cover for illegal or immoral activities
  - Burden on the nuclear family
    - With less privacy comes more broadly shared responsibility
    - Relatedly, allows dysfunctional families to remain hidden
  - Ignored people on society's fringes
    - cursed with too much privacy
- Benefits of Privacy
  - Individual growth & responsibility
    - Individuation, a key psychological stage, requires privacy
    - Without privacy, you can't be considered free, hence held responsible
  - Freedom to be yourself
    - not having to act as though others are watching, maintain a public persona
    - Focus your thoughts on a creative (or religious) task without interruption
  - Development of loving, trusting, caring, intimate relationships
    - inconceivable without the "moral capital" of privacy