



ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE FÉDÉRALE DE LAUSANNE

MATH-450. NUMERICAL INTEGRATION OF STOCHASTIC
DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS

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MINI PROJECT

Parameter inference for SDEs

BRUNO RODRIGUEZ CARRILLO

PROFESSOR:
DR. A. BLUMENTHAL

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In this mini project, we consider the problem of inferring the parameters of a stochastic differential equation (SDE) given continuous-time observations of its solution. Let $T > 0$ be a final time and $X = (X(t), 0 \leq t \leq T)$ be the Ornstein-Uhlenbeck process which solves the Ito SDE:

$$dX(t) = \alpha X(t)dt + \sqrt{2\sigma}dW(t), \quad X(0) = X_0 \in \mathbb{R}, \quad (1)$$

where $\alpha > 0$ is called the drift coefficient and $\sigma > 0$ is the diffusion coefficient.

Q1. We solved and studied (1) during the exercise session 8. It corresponds to exercise 6. Consequently, we have that the solution to(1) is given by

$$X(t) = X_0 e^{-\alpha t} + \sqrt{2\sigma} \int_0^t e^{-\alpha(t-s)} dW(s). \quad (2)$$

Furthermore, $X(t)$ follows a normal distribution $\mu_t = \mathcal{N}\left(X_0 e^{-\alpha t}, \frac{\sigma}{\alpha} (1 - e^{-2\alpha t})\right)$, and thus its probability density function ρ_t is given by (3).

$$\rho_t(x) = \sqrt{\frac{\alpha}{2\pi\sigma(1 - e^{-2\alpha t})}} \exp\left(-\frac{\alpha}{2\sigma(1 - e^{-2\alpha t})}(x - X_0 e^{-\alpha t})^2\right). \quad (3)$$

Q2. We are given the generator \mathcal{L} of the SDE (1):

$$\mathcal{L}\phi(x) = -\alpha x\phi'(x) + \sigma\phi''(x), \quad (4)$$

where $\phi : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$. Then to compute the L^2 - adjoint of the generator \mathcal{L} , denoted by \mathcal{L}^* , we know that \mathcal{L}^* satisfies:

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} v(x)\mathcal{L}u(x)dx = \int_{\mathbb{R}} u(x)\mathcal{L}^*v(x)dx,$$

where $u, v : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ are smooth functions with compact support. Then we have that:

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} v(x)\mathcal{L}u(x)dx = \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(-\alpha x \frac{du(x)}{dx}\right) v(x)dx + \sigma \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{d^2u(x)}{dx^2} v(x)dx. \quad (5)$$

Based on [1], we use integration by parts to solve the first term on the right-hand side of ((5) using $m = xv(x)$, $dn = dv$ and $\int m dn = mn - \int n dm$ thus:

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(-\alpha x \frac{du(x)}{dx}\right) v(x)dx &= -\alpha \left(v(x)x \int_{\mathbb{R}} du - \int_{\mathbb{R}} u(x)d(v(x)x)\right) \\ &= \alpha \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}} u(x)x dv + \int_{\mathbb{R}} u(x)v(x)dx\right) \\ &= \int_{\mathbb{R}} u(x)d(\alpha v(x)x) \end{aligned}$$

Where we assume that the functions u, v vanish at infinity. Likewise, we can use similar arguments for the second term on the right-hand side of (5). As a result, we have:

$$\mathcal{L}^* v(x) = \frac{d}{dx} (\alpha x v(x)) + \sigma \frac{d^2 v(x)}{dx^2} = \alpha v(x) + \alpha x v'(x) + \sigma v''(x). \quad (6)$$

Then we can compute the expected value and variance of $X(t)$ when $t \rightarrow \infty$ as follows:

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow +\infty} \mathbb{E}[X(t)] = \lim_{t \rightarrow +\infty} \mathbb{E} \left[X_0 e^{-\alpha t} + \sqrt{2\sigma} \int_0^t e^{-\alpha(t-s)} dW(s) \right] = 0,$$

and

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow +\infty} \mathbb{E} \left[(X(t) - \mathbb{E}[X(t)])^2 \right] = \frac{\sigma}{\alpha}.$$

Then, the invariant distribution is $\rho_\infty = \mathcal{N}\left(0, \frac{\sigma}{\alpha}\right)$. Consequently, we can make use of the Radon–Nikodym theorem to compute the invariant measure μ_∞ as follows:

$$\rho_\infty = \frac{d\mu_\infty}{dx}.$$

where dx is the Lebesgue measure. As a result, the invariant measure is:

$$d\mu_\infty(dx) = \sqrt{\frac{\alpha}{2\pi\sigma}} e^{-\frac{x^2}{2} \frac{\alpha}{\sigma}} dx \quad (7)$$

We now verify that ρ_∞ is the density function of the invariant measure by using the Fokker–Planck equation.

$$\mathcal{L}^* \rho_\infty = \frac{d}{dx} (\alpha x \rho_\infty) + \sigma \frac{d^2 \rho_\infty}{dx^2} = \alpha \rho_\infty \left(1 - \frac{x^2 \alpha}{\sigma}\right) + \alpha \rho_\infty \left(-1 + \frac{x^2 \alpha}{\sigma}\right) = 0,$$

and

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} \sqrt{\frac{\alpha}{2\pi\sigma}} e^{-\frac{x^2}{2} \frac{\alpha}{\sigma}} dx = 1.$$

Q3. When we solve (1) using the Euler-Maruyama scheme for $T = 10^4$, $h = 10^{-2}$, $M = 10^4$ different realizations of the Brownian motion, and setting $\alpha = 1$ and $\sigma = 1$, we obtain figure 1. We observe that the final distribution computed numerically when solving (1) is in accordance with the invariant distribution μ_∞ .

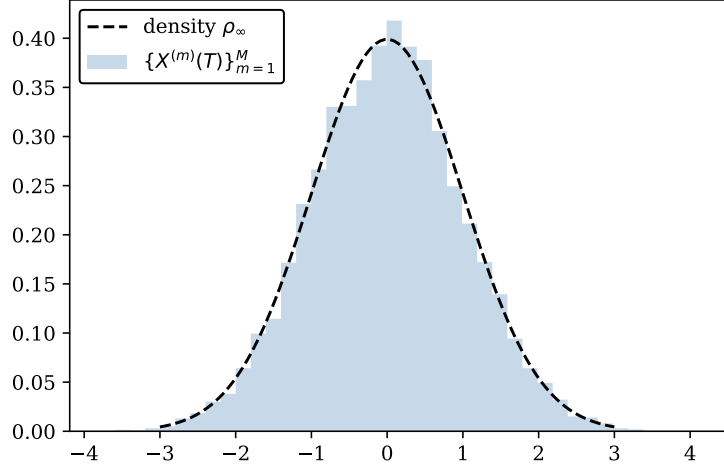


Figure 1: Distribution of $X^m(T)$.

Q4. To compute the covariance function when $s, t \rightarrow \infty$, from **Q2**, we know that the invariant distribution follows a normal distribution μ_∞ with zero mean and variance σ/α . Taking the solution to XX given in YYY, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{Cov}(X(s), X(t)) &= \\
&= \mathbb{E}[(X(t) - \mathbb{E}[X(t)])(X(s) - \mathbb{E}[X(s)])] \\
&= \mathbb{E}[(X(t))(X(s))] \\
&= 2\sigma \mathbb{E} \left[\int_0^s e^{-\alpha(s-u)} dW(u) \int_0^t e^{-\alpha(t-v)} dW(v) \right] \\
&=^* 2\sigma e^{-\alpha(s+t)} \cdot \mathbb{E} \left[\int_0^s e^{2\alpha u} du \right] \text{ if } s < t \\
&= \frac{\sigma}{\alpha} e^{-\alpha(s+t)} (e^{2\alpha s} - 1) \\
&=^{**} 2\sigma e^{-\alpha(s+t)} \cdot \mathbb{E} \left[\int_0^t e^{2\alpha v} dv \right] \text{ if } t < s \\
&= \frac{\sigma}{\alpha} e^{-\alpha(s+t)} (e^{2\alpha t} - 1).
\end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

In * and ** in (8), we use the Ito's isometry by noticing that if $s < t$ -the case for $t > s$ follows similarly-, we can split the stochastic integral into two terms. Due to independence of Brownian increments, we end with an integral of the form $\mathbb{E} \left[\int_0^s e^{\alpha(u)} dW(u) \int_0^s e^{\alpha(v)} dW(v) \right]$, then we apply Ito's isometry.

In either case $s < t$ or $t < s$ in (8), we obtain that

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{Cov}(X(s), X(t)) &= \\
&= \frac{\sigma}{\alpha} e^{-\alpha(s+t)} \left(e^{2\min\{s,t\}} - 1 \right) \\
&= \frac{\sigma}{\alpha} e^{-\alpha|t-s|},
\end{aligned} \tag{9}$$

since $s, t \rightarrow \infty$. Defining $C(s, t) := \text{Cov}(X(s), X(t))$, we have the desired result.

Q5. To compute, we directly use the hint given in the problem sheet for a function $g(\tilde{X}_n, \tilde{X}_{n+1}) := (\tilde{X}_n - \tilde{X}_{n+1})^2$. Thus we get the following

$$\sigma_\infty^N = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \hat{\sigma}_\infty^N = \frac{1}{2\Delta} \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} (\tilde{X}_{n+1} - \tilde{X}_n)^2 = \frac{1}{2\Delta} \mathbb{E}^{\mu_\infty} \left[(\tilde{X}_0 - \tilde{X}_\Delta)^2 \right].$$

Using linearity of expectation, the covariance function computed in **Q4**, and the fact that \tilde{X}_0 and \tilde{X}_Δ are distributed according to the invariant distribution in **Q2**, we obtain the desired result as follows

$$\sigma_\infty^N = \frac{1}{2\Delta} \mathbb{E}^{\mu_\infty} \left[(\tilde{X}_0 - \tilde{X}_\Delta)^2 \right] = \frac{1}{2\Delta} \left(2\frac{\sigma}{\alpha} - 2\frac{\sigma}{\alpha} e^{-\alpha|\Delta|} \right) = \frac{\sigma}{\alpha\Delta} \left(1 - e^{-\alpha|\Delta|} \right).$$

Similarly for α_∞^N

$$\alpha_\infty^N = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \hat{\alpha}_\infty^N = -\frac{1}{\Delta} \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n (\tilde{X}_{n+1} - \tilde{X}_n)}{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n^2}.$$

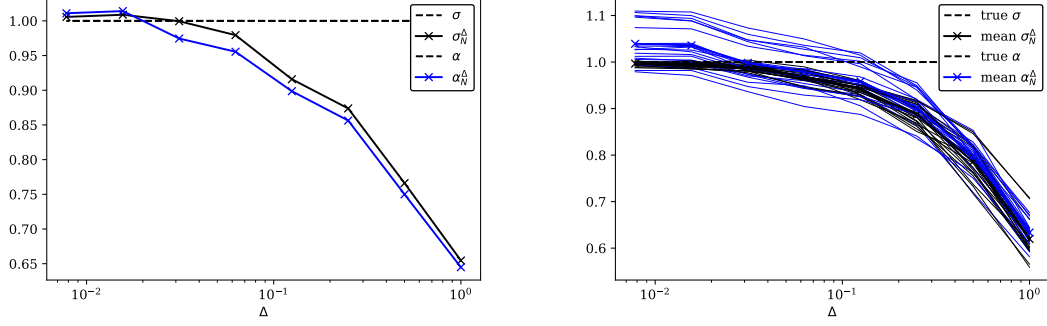
Then we use the hint given in the problem sheet, linearity of expectation, the covariance function computed in **Q4**, and the fact that \tilde{X}_0 and \tilde{X}_Δ are distributed according to the invariant distribution in **Q2**; we have

$$\alpha_\infty^N = -\frac{1}{\Delta} \frac{\mathbb{E}^{\mu_\infty} \left[(\tilde{X}_0 \tilde{X}_\Delta - \tilde{X}_0^2) \right]}{\mathbb{E}^{\mu_\infty} \left[\tilde{X}_0^2 \right]} = -\frac{\sigma}{\alpha\Delta} \left(\frac{e^{-\alpha|\Delta|} - 1}{\frac{\sigma}{\alpha}} \right) = -\frac{1}{\Delta} \left(e^{-\alpha|\Delta|} - 1 \right).$$

Q6. From **Q6**, we shall recall that it can be proven that $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{e^x - 1}{x} = 1$. Thus, we can make use of this result and observe that both $\lim_{\Delta \rightarrow 0} \sigma_\infty^N$ and $\lim_{\Delta \rightarrow 0} \alpha_\infty^N$ are of such a structure. Consequently, we have

$$\sigma_\infty^N = \sigma \text{ and } \alpha_\infty^N = \alpha.$$

Q7. We solve (1) for $T = 10^3$ using the Euler Maruyama scheme with $h = 10^{-3}$, $\alpha = 1$, $\sigma = 1$, and we consider different sampling rates $\Delta = 2^{-i}$ for $i = 0, 1, \dots, 7$. For each Δ , we compute and plot its corresponding value of the estimators of drift coefficient $\hat{\alpha}_N^\Delta$ and the diffusion coefficient $\hat{\sigma}_N^\Delta$. This leads to figure 2.



(a) $\hat{\alpha}_N^\Delta$ and $\hat{\sigma}_N^\Delta$, single realization of BM.

(b) $\hat{\alpha}_N^\Delta$ and $\hat{\sigma}_N^\Delta$, 20 realizations of BM.

Figure 2: Estimator for $\hat{\alpha}_N^\Delta$ and $\hat{\sigma}_N^\Delta$.

In figure 2, on the left-hand plot, we have a single realization of the Brownian motion; on the right-hand side we have 20 independent realization the Brownian motion. From these 20 runs, we compute the mean value of $\hat{\alpha}_N^\Delta$ and $\hat{\sigma}_N^\Delta$ at each Δ , which is plotted using a thicker line width.

Q8. In the problem sheet we are given the generator \mathcal{L} of the SDE. Then we directly express the eigenvalue $-\mathcal{L}_a \phi(x; a) = \lambda(a) \phi(x; a)$ problem as (10).

$$ax\phi'(x; a) - \sigma\phi''(x; a) = \lambda(a)\phi(x; a). \quad (10)$$

Q9. We are requested to prove that following recurrence relation for the eigenvalues $\{\lambda_j(a)\}_{j=0}^\infty$ and eigenfunctions $\{\phi_j(\cdot; a)\}_{j=0}^\infty$:

$$\begin{aligned} \lambda_j(a) &= ja, j \in \mathbb{N}. \\ \phi_0(x; a) &= 1, \\ \phi_1(x; a) &= x, \\ \phi_j(x; a) &= x\phi_{j-1}(x; a) - \frac{\sigma}{\alpha}(j-1)\phi_{j-2}(x; a), j \geq 2. \end{aligned} \quad (11)$$

We prove that (11) satisfies (12) for the eigenfunctions.

$$\phi_j'(x; a) = j\phi_{j-1}(x; a), j \geq 1. \quad (12)$$

We notice that for the base case $j = 1$, (12) holds $\phi'_1(x; a) = \phi_0(x; a) = 1$, which means $\phi_1(x; a) = x$. Similarly, for $j = 2$, we have $\phi'_2(x; a) = 2\phi_1(x; a) = 2x$; then, $\phi_2(x; a) = x^2 - \sigma/\alpha$ since σ/α is a constant.

We now assume that $\phi'_k(x; a) = k\phi_{k-1}(x; a)$ holds for $k \geq 2$ holds. Thus, by (12), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}\phi'_{k+1}(x; a) &= \phi_k(x; a) + x\phi'_k(x; a) - \frac{\sigma}{a}k\phi'_{k-1}(x; a) \\ &= \phi_k(x; a) + xk\phi_{k-1}(x; a) - k\frac{\sigma}{a}(k-1)\phi_{k-2}(x; a) \\ &= \phi_k(x; a) + k\left(x\phi_{k-1}(x; a) - \frac{\sigma}{a}(k-1)\phi_{k-2}(x; a)\right) \\ &= (k+1)\phi_k(x; a).\end{aligned}\tag{13}$$

Then (12) holds. In addition, we prove $\lambda_j(a) = ja$. It is straightforward to prove that for $j = 0$ and $j = 1$, such a relation holds using (12) and the eigenvalue problem as stated in **Q8**. We assume that $\lambda_k(a) = ka$ holds and we try proving $\lambda_{k+1}(a) = (k+1)a$.

We can see that $\phi''_k(x; a) = k\phi'_{k-1}(x; a) = k(k-1)\phi'_{k-2}(x; a)$. Using **Q8**, we have

$$-\mathcal{L}_a\phi_{k+1}(x; a) = ax(k+1)\phi_k(x; a) - \sigma k(k+1)\phi_{k-1}(x; a) = \lambda_{k+1}(a)\phi_{k+1}(x; a).$$

Rewriting this, we have

$$(k+1)a\phi_{k+1}(x; a) = \lambda_{k+1}(a)\phi_{k+1}(x; a) \Rightarrow (k+1)a = \lambda_{k+1}(a).$$

Q10. We are given the estimation function (14).

$$G(a) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^J \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \psi_j(\tilde{X}_n) \left(\phi_j(\tilde{X}_{n+1}; a) - e^{-\lambda_j(a)\Delta} \phi_j(\tilde{X}_n; a) \right). \tag{14}$$

We define the estimator $\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta$ as the solution of the nonlinear equation (14), i.e., $\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta := G(a) = 0$.

Now we take $J = 1$ and $\psi_1(x) = x$ and substitute these into (14). Furthermore, from **Q9**, we have that $\lambda_1(a) = a$ and $\phi_1(x; a) = x$; thus we obtain

$$G(a) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n \left(\tilde{X}_{n+1} - e^{-a\Delta} \tilde{X}_n \right). \tag{15}$$

To compute $\mathcal{G}(a) = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} G(a)$, we proceed as in **Q5**; that is we follow the hint given for **Q5**, which leads us to

$$\mathcal{G}(a) = \mathbb{E}^{\mu_\infty} \left[\tilde{X}_0 \tilde{X}_\Delta \right] - e^{-a\Delta} \mathbb{E}^{\mu_\infty} \left[\tilde{X}_0^2 \right] = \frac{\sigma}{\alpha} e^{-\alpha|\Delta|} - \frac{\sigma}{\alpha} e^{-a|\Delta|} = 0 \iff a = \alpha.$$

Q11. From **Q10**, we solve (15), $G(a) = 0$ for a . To recall from previous point, we refer to a such that $G(a) = 0$ as $\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta$. Consequently, we obtain

$$e^{-\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta \Delta} = \frac{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n \tilde{X}_{n+1}}{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n^2} \Rightarrow \tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta = -\frac{1}{\Delta} \ln \left(\frac{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n \tilde{X}_{n+1}}{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n^2} \right).$$

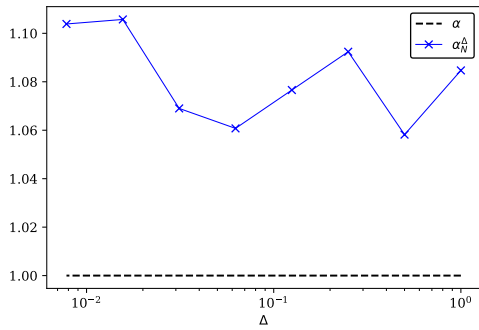
We now compute $\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta$, we follow the hint given in **Q5**. As a result, we have the following expression.

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta = -\frac{1}{\Delta} \left[\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \ln \left(\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n \tilde{X}_{n+1} \right) - \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \ln \left(\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n^2 \right) \right].$$

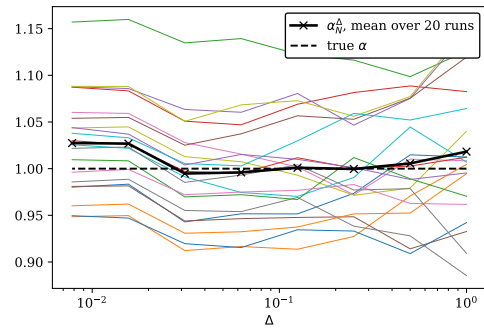
To actually use the hint given in **Q5**, we first point out that we can bring the $\ln(\cdot)$ outside the limit since it can be shown that $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \ln(f(x)) = \ln(\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} f(x))$ for a continuous function $f(x)$. We then have:

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta &= -\frac{1}{\Delta} \left[\ln \left(\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n \tilde{X}_{n+1} \right) - \ln \left(\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \tilde{X}_n^2 \right) \right] \\ &= -\frac{1}{\Delta} \left[\ln \mathbb{E}^{\mu_\infty} [\tilde{X}_0 \tilde{X}_\Delta] - \ln \mathbb{E}^{\mu_\infty} [\tilde{X}_0^2] \right] \\ &= -\frac{1}{\Delta} \left[\ln \left(\frac{\sigma}{\alpha} e^{-\alpha|\Delta|} \right) - \ln \left(\frac{\sigma}{\alpha} \right) \right] \\ &= \alpha \end{aligned}$$

Q12. We solve (1) for $T = 10^3$ using the Euler Maruyama scheme with $h = 10^{-3}$, $\alpha = 1$, $\sigma = 1$ and we consider different sampling rates $\Delta = 2^{-i}$ for $i = 0, 1, \dots, 7$. For each Δ , we compute and plot its corresponding value of the drift coefficient α using **Q11**. This leads to figure 3.



(a) $\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta$, single realization of BM.



(b) Mean $\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta$, 20 realizations of BM.

Figure 3: Estimator for $\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta$.

In figure 3, on the left-hand plot, we have a single realization of the Brownian motion; on the right-hand side we have 20 independent realization the Brownian motion. From these 20 runs, we compute the mean value of $\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta$ at each Δ , which is plotted using a thicker line width.

We observe in figure 3 that are close to the true value of α for each Δ , which is quite different from the estimator plotted in **Q7** where we observe a stronger dependence on Δ .

- Q13.** We solve (1) for $T = 10^3$ using the Euler Maruyama scheme with $h = 10^{-2}$, $\alpha = 1$, $\sigma = 1$, $M = 10^4$ different realizations of the Brownian motion, and we consider a sampling rate $\Delta = 1$. For each realization of the Brownian motion, we compute and plot it corresponding value of the drift coefficient $\tilde{\alpha}_N^{\Delta, (m)}$ using the expression given in **Q14**. This leads to figure 4.

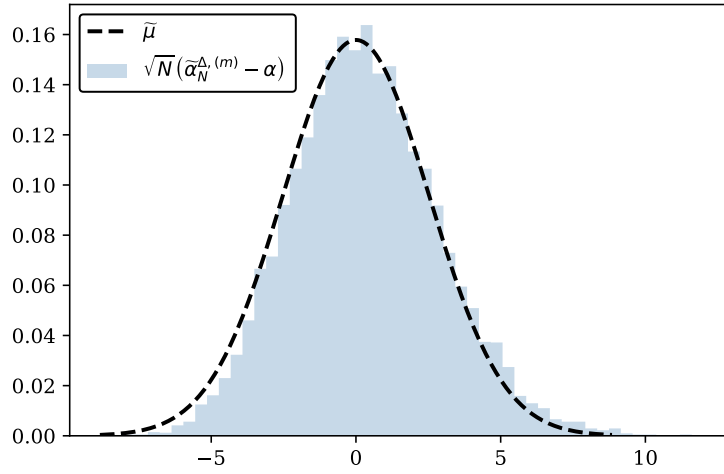


Figure 4: Distribution of several realizations of $\tilde{\alpha}_N^{\Delta, (m)}$.

In figure 4, we have $\tilde{\mu} = \mathcal{N}(0, \Sigma)$ where $\Sigma = \frac{e^{2\alpha\Delta} - 1}{\Delta^2}$. Based on the same figure, we can say that the distribution of the estimator $\tilde{\alpha}_N^{\Delta, (m)}$ follows what the central limit theorem states.

- Q14.** We are given a new estimation function to estimate both coefficients α and σ .

$$\mathbf{G}(a, s) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^J \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \Psi_j(\tilde{X}_n) \left(\phi_j(\tilde{X}_{n+1}; a, s) - e^{-\lambda_j(a, s)\Delta} \phi_j(\tilde{X}_n; a, s) \right), \quad (16)$$

where we choose a set $\{\Psi_j\}_{j=1}^J$ of vector-valued smooth functions such that $\Psi_j : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$. Setting $J = 2$, $\Psi_1(x) = \Psi_2(x) = (x^2 x)^T$, from **Q9**, $\lambda_1(a; s) = a$, $\lambda_2(a; s) = 2a$, $\phi_1(x; a, s) = x$, and $\phi_2(x; a, s) = x^2 - \frac{s}{a}$, and plugging these into (16), we obtain (17).

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{G}(a, s) &= \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \\ \iff \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \begin{pmatrix} \tilde{X}_n^2 \\ \tilde{X}_n \end{pmatrix} \left(\tilde{X}_{n+1} - e^{-a\Delta} \tilde{X}_n + \tilde{X}_{n+1}^2 - \frac{s}{a} - e^{-2a\Delta} \left(\tilde{X}_n^2 - \frac{s}{a} \right) \right) &= \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}. \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

Q15. We solve (1) for $T = 5 \cdot 10^3$ using the Euler Maruyama scheme with $h = 10^{-2}$, $\alpha = 1$, $\sigma = 1$, one realization of the Brownian motion, and we consider a sampling rate $\Delta = 1$. For each of the available observations of the solution to (1), we compute and plot its corresponding estimator for $\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta$ and $\tilde{\sigma}_N^\Delta$ solving the expression given in **Q14**. This leads to figure 5.

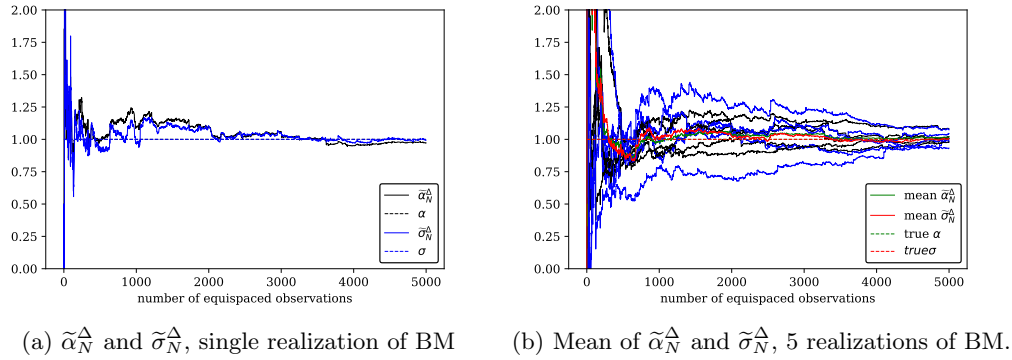


Figure 5: Estimators for $\tilde{\alpha}_N^\Delta$ and $\tilde{\sigma}_N^\Delta$.

References

- [1] Grigorios A Pavliotis. *Stochastic processes and applications: diffusion processes, the Fokker-Planck and Langevin equations*. Vol. 60. Springer, 2014.