

Stochastic processes and SDEs

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- 1 Stochastic Processes
- 2 Brownian Motion
- 3 S. Differential Equations
- 4 Appendix
 - Laplace-De Moivre
 - Differentiable nowhere
 - Motivation

Stochastic Processes

Definition

A *stochastic process* is a collection of random variables $X_t \triangleq X(\omega, t)$ indexed by an index set T such that $|T| \geq |\mathbb{N}|$. For fixed ω , $X_t(\omega)$ is a *sample path* or *trajectory*.

- A finite collection of random variables is just a random vector
- T is typically called time but stochastic processes are not necessarily time series
- $\text{im}(X_t)$ and T can both be either continuous or discrete

$\text{im}(X_t) \setminus T$	cont.	disc.
cont.	Brownian motion (particle motion), Cox process (neuron spike trains)	Rust models
disc.	Contact process (epidemiology), Telegraph process (phase transitions)	Markov chain (noisy logic), Bernoulli process (gambling), Poisson process (queuing)

- Other: Dirichlet process, Pitman-Yor process, Random field

Definition

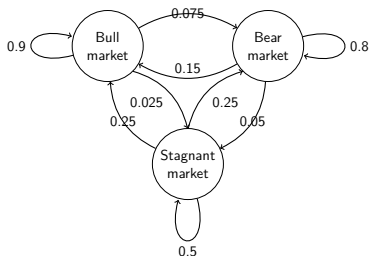
A stochastic process is *Markov* if $P(X_t \in A | \mathcal{F}_s) = P(X_t \in A | X_s)$.

- In particular, for a Markov chain

$$P\left(X_n = x_n \mid X_{n-1} = x_{n-1}, X_{n-2} = x_{n-2}, \dots, X_0 = x_0\right) = P\left(X_n = x_n \mid X_{n-1} = x_{n-1}\right)$$

i.e. only short term memory

- Intuitively a DFA with probabilistic transition function (not NFA)



	Bull	Bear	Stag.
Bull	0.9	0.075	0.025
Bear	0.15	0.8	0.05
Stag.	0.25	0.25	0.5

- Hidden Markov models (hierarchical model) great for speech recognition

Definition

A random variable N is distributed $\text{Poisson}(\lambda)$ on some unit interval u if at

$$P(N = n \text{ events in interval}) = \frac{\lambda^n e^{-\lambda}}{n!}$$

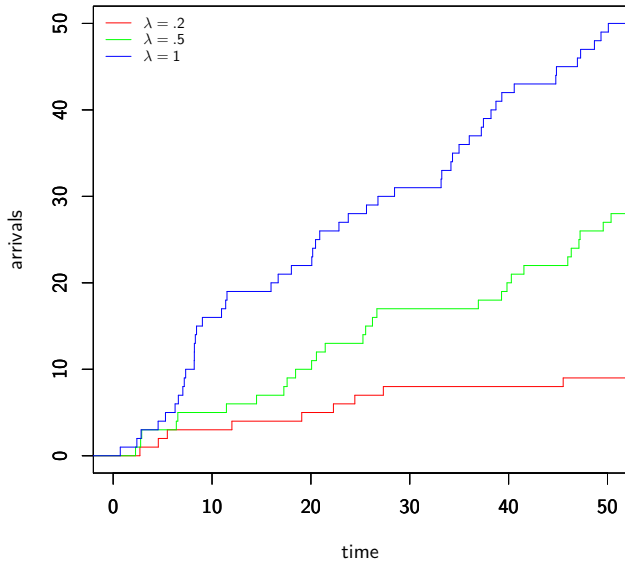
λ is called the rate parameter.

- Intuitively “time” between events is exponentially distributed but independent
- Phone calls at an exchange, arrivals bank queue, train arrivals (on a bad day!)

Example

A *Poisson process* N_t on $[0, \infty)$ with rate λ is a stochastic process where the number of events in any interval of length t is distributed $\text{Poisson}(\lambda t)$.

```
lambda <- 1  
x1 <- cumsum(rexp(50),rate=lambda)  
y1 <- cumsum(c(0,rep(1,50)))  
plot(stepfun(x1,y1),xlim = c(0,50),do.points = F)
```



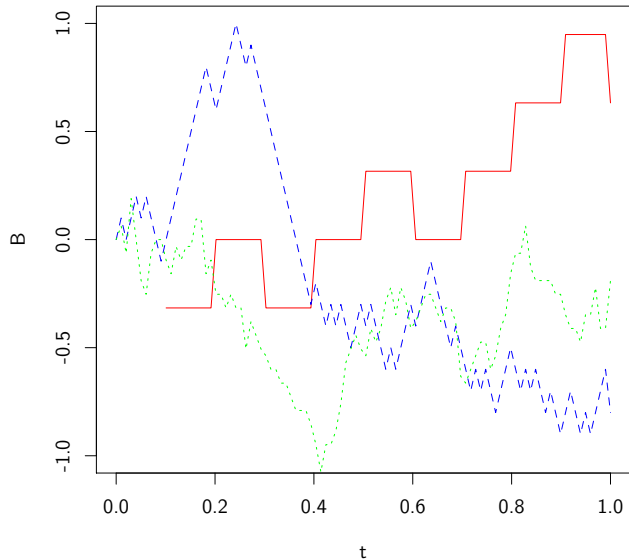
Example

A *random walk* on \mathbb{Z} is a stochastic process S_0, S_1, \dots such that

$$S_n = \sum_{j=0}^n X_j$$

and X_i are iid Bernoulli($\frac{1}{2}$) on $\{1, -1\}$.

- Flip a coin and go forward or backward one unit distance in dimension
- Extensions to higher dimensions (random walk on a lattice) involve discrete uniform distribution on directions
- Precursor to Brownian motion
- Drunk man, Drunk bird



Brownian Motion

“Rigorous” Brownian motion

Modify S_n such that $X_i \in \{0, 1\}$ and suppose spatial increments are Δx and time increments Δt . Note that $E(S_n) = \frac{n}{2}$ and $\text{Var}(X_i) = \frac{1}{4}$. Then

$$X(t) := X(n\Delta t) := \underbrace{S_n \Delta x}_{\text{positive dist}} - \underbrace{(n - S_n)(-\Delta x)}_{\text{negative dist}} = (2S_n - n) \Delta x$$

is the position of the particle at time $n\Delta t$. To use Laplace - De Moivre¹ we need

$$\text{Var}(X(n\Delta t)) = (\Delta x)^2 n = \frac{(\Delta x)^2}{\Delta t} t = Dt$$

Then

$$X(n\Delta t) = \sqrt{Dt} \left[\frac{\frac{1}{n} (\sum_{i=1}^n X_i) - \frac{1}{2}}{\sqrt{1/4}/\sqrt{n}} \right]$$

¹ $X_i \sim \text{Bernoulli}(p) \Rightarrow \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P(a \leq \sum X_i / \sqrt{np^2} \leq b) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_a^b e^{-\frac{x^2}{2}} dx$

and finally

$$\begin{aligned}\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P\left(a \leq \sqrt{Dt}X(t) \leq b\right) &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P\left(a \leq \sqrt{Dt}X(t) \leq b\right) \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{\frac{a}{\sqrt{Dt}}}^{\frac{b}{\sqrt{Dt}}} e^{-\frac{x^2}{2}} dx \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi Dt}} \int_a^b e^{-\frac{x^2}{2Dt}} dx\end{aligned}$$

So $X(t) \sim N(0, Dt)$

Rigorous Brownian motion

Due to Hida². For $s \in \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{R}}$ the Schwartz space of rapidly decreasing functions and its topological dual³ $\mathcal{S}'_{\mathbb{R}}$ let

$$e^{-\frac{1}{2}\|s\|_{\mathbf{L}_2(\mathbb{R})}^2} = \int_{\mathcal{S}'_{\mathbb{R}}} e^{\langle s', s \rangle} dP(s')$$

Defining $\Omega := \mathcal{S}'_{\mathbb{R}}$ we have $(\Omega, \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{S}'_{\mathbb{R}}), P)$ the white noise space and $\mathbf{L}_2(\Omega) \triangleq \mathbf{L}_2(\Omega, \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{S}'_{\mathbb{R}}), P)$. The measure P is the *white noise* measure. By taking power series of the integrand above we get a definition of $\langle \omega, f \rangle$. Then

$$B(t) \triangleq B(\omega, t) \triangleq \langle \omega, \mathbf{1}_{[0,t]} \rangle$$

²T. Hida. *Analysis of Brownian functionals*. Carleton Univ., Ottawa, Ont., 1975. Carleton Mathematical Lecture Notes, No. 13.

³Space of tempered distributions (all distributions whose Fourier transforms exist).

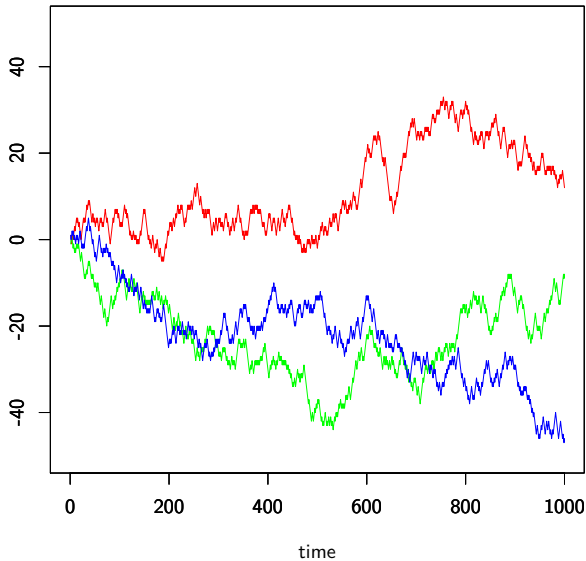
Definition

A stochastic process $B(t)$ is a Brownian motion if

- 1 $B(0) = 0$ almost surely, i.e. $P(B(0) = 0) = 1$
- 2 $B(t) - B(s) \sim N(0, t - s)$ for $t \geq s \geq 0$
- 3 For all $0 < t_1 < t_2 < \dots < t_n$ it's the case that $B(t_1) \perp B(t_2) - B(t_1) \perp \dots \perp B(t_n) - B(t_{n-1})$

Interesting facts

- $X_t(\omega)$ as a sample path is a continuous function from $\mathbb{R}^+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$
- Brownian motion “induces” a measure on functions $\mathbb{R}^+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$
- Concentrated on continuous but nowhere differentiable functions (i.e. probability of “drawing” a differentiable function is 0)



Stochastic Differential Equations

Motivation

Consider the problem of finding an interpretation of

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = b(t, x) + \sigma(t, x) \cdot \text{"noise"}$$

It turns out it's reasonable to model "noise" as some stochastic process W_t and so

$$\frac{dX_t}{dt} = b(t, X_t) + \sigma(t, X_t) \cdot W_t \quad (1)$$

$x \rightarrow X$ a random variable because noise is stochastic. Empirical fact (experience) suggests W_t should have three properties

- ① $t_1 \neq t_2 \Rightarrow W_{t_1} \perp W_{t_2}$
- ② $\{W_t\}$ is stationary, i.e. the joint distribution of $\{W_{t_1+\tau}, \dots, W_{t_k+\tau}\}$ does not depend on τ .
- ③ $E[W_t] = 0$ for all t .

Unfortunately property 1 not possible for continuous processes⁴. What to do? Discretize, require independent increments, take averages, redefine, and voila

$$X_k = X_0 + \int_0^t b(s, X_s) ds + \int_0^t \sigma(s, X_s) dB_s \quad (2)$$

But this begs the question; we still haven't defined $\int_0^t \sigma(s, X_s) dB_s$. Let $0 \leq Q < T$ and start by defining $\int_Q^T \{\cdot\} dB_s(\omega)$ for simple processes $S_n(t, \omega) = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} a_j(\omega) 1_{[j \cdot 2^{-n}, (j+1) \cdot 2^{-n})}(t)$

$$\int_Q^T S_n(s, \omega) dB_s \triangleq \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} a_j(\omega) \left[B_{s_{j+1}^{(n)}}(\omega) - B_{s_j^{(n)}}(\omega) \right]$$

Then extend by taking limits (which exist because Cauchy) under $\mathbf{L}_2(P)$ norm

$$\mathcal{I}[f](\omega) \triangleq \int_Q^T f(s, \omega) dB_s \triangleq \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_Q^T S_n(s, \omega) dB_s$$

⁴It is possible to represent W_t as a *generalized* process, meaning it can be constructed as a measure on the space of tempered distributions

Theorem

Some properties of the Ito integral: let $f, g \in \mathcal{V}(0, T)$ and $0 \leq Q < U < T$. Then

- ① $P\left(\int_Q^T f dB = \int_Q^U f dB + \int_U^T f dB\right) = 1$
- ② For $c \in \mathbb{R}$: $P\left(\int_Q^T (cf + g) dB = \int_Q^T cf dB + \int_Q^T g dB\right) = 1$
- ③ $E\left[\int_Q^T f dB\right] = 0$

Property 3 says that Ito integrals are martingales.

Definition

A stochastic process X_t is a *martingale* if for $s \leq t$

$$E(X_t | X_s) = X_s$$

i.e. “fair”; $E(X_t - X_s | X_s) = 0$, so $E(X_t) = E(X_0)$ for all t .

Theorem (Ito formula)

Let X_t be an Ito process and $g(t, x) \in C^2([0, \infty) \times \mathbb{R})$ then

$$Y_t = g(t, X_t)$$

is again an Ito process and

$$dY_t = \frac{\partial g}{\partial t} dt + \frac{\partial g}{\partial x} dX_t + \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial^2 g}{\partial x^2} \cdot (dX_t)^2 \quad (3)$$

where $(dX_t)^2 = (dX_t) \cdot (dX_t)$ is computed according to

$$dt \cdot dt = dt \cdot dB_t = dB_t \cdot dt = 0 \quad dB_t \cdot dB_t = dt$$

Kind of like change of variables from single variable calculus.

Four problems

- Charge $Q(t)$ in a capacitor an LRC circuit

$$LQ''(t) + RQ'(t) + \frac{1}{C}Q(t) = F(t), \quad Q(0) = Q_0, \quad Q'(0) = I_0 \quad (4)$$

If $F(t) = G(t) + \text{"noise"}$. How to solve for $Q(t)$?

- Noisy measurements

$$Z(s) = Q(s) + \text{"noise"}$$

What is the best estimate of $Q(t)$ satisfying eqn 4 based on $Z(s)$?
Kalman Filter.

- Equity price X_t obeys SDE with known r drift, α volatility (and discount rate ρ)

$$\frac{dX_t}{dt} = rX_t + \alpha X_t \cdot \text{"noise"}$$

Know X_s up to present t - when to sell? Since noisy *optimal stopping strategy* maximizes expected returns. Can be solved by solving a corresponding semi-elliptic second order PDE with Dirichlet boundary conditions.

- Suppose at some time t the person in problem 3 is offered the right (without obligation) to buy one unit of the risky asset at a specified price K at a specified future date $t = T$. Such a right/asset is called a *European call option*. How much should they be willing to pay for the option? Problem solved by Fischer Black and Myron Scholes - called the Black-Scholes equation for option pricing

$$\frac{\partial V}{\partial t} + \frac{1}{2}\sigma^2 S^2 \frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial S^2} + rS \frac{\partial V}{\partial S} - rV = 0$$

where V is the price of the option as a function of the price of the asset, r is the risk-free interest rate (free money - tbills for example), and σ is the volatility of the stock.

Appendix

Laplace - De Moivre

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Var}(X(n\Delta t)) &= \text{Var}((2S_n - n)\Delta x) = (\Delta x)^2 \text{Var}((2S_n - n)) \\ &= 4(\Delta x)^2 \text{Var}(S_n) = 4(\Delta x)^2 \text{Var}\left(\sum_{i=1}^n X_i\right) \\ &= 4(\Delta x)^2 n \text{Var}(X_i) = (\Delta x)^2 n = \frac{(\Delta x)^2}{\Delta t} t = Dt\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
X(n\Delta t) &= (2S_n - n) \Delta x = \sqrt{n} \Delta x \left(\frac{S_n - \frac{n}{2}}{\sqrt{n/4}} \right) \\
&= \sqrt{Dt} \left(\frac{(\sum_{i=1}^n X_i) - \frac{n}{2}}{\sqrt{n/4}} \right) = \sqrt{Dt} n \left(\frac{\frac{1}{n} (\sum_{i=1}^n X_i) - \frac{1}{2}}{\sqrt{n/4}} \right) \\
&= \sqrt{Dt} \left[\left(\frac{\frac{1}{n} (\sum_{i=1}^n X_i) - \frac{1}{2}}{\sqrt{1/4}/\sqrt{n}} \right) \right]
\end{aligned}$$

Differentiable nowhere

$B_t(\omega)$ has infinite total variation;

$$TV(f) := \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{j=1}^m \left| f\left(t_j^{(n)}\right) - f\left(t_{j-1}^{(n)}\right) \right|$$

over some $[Q, T]$ ⁵. Here's a short proof of this: first define quadratic variation

$$QV(f) := \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{j=1}^m \left| f\left(t_j^{(n)}\right) - f\left(t_{j-1}^{(n)}\right) \right|^2$$

and notice that if f is continuous then

$$\sum_{j=1}^m \left| f\left(t_j^{(n)}\right) - f\left(t_{j-1}^{(n)}\right) \right|^2 \leq \left(\max_{1 \leq j \leq m} \left| f\left(t_j^{(n)}\right) - f\left(t_{j-1}^{(n)}\right) \right| \right) \sum_{j=1}^m \left| f\left(t_j^{(n)}\right) - f\left(t_{j-1}^{(n)}\right) \right|$$

and so

$$\frac{\sum_{j=1}^m \left| f\left(t_j^{(n)}\right) - f\left(t_{j-1}^{(n)}\right) \right|^2}{\max_{1 \leq j \leq m} \left| f\left(t_j^{(n)}\right) - f\left(t_{j-1}^{(n)}\right) \right|} \leq \sum_{j=1}^m \left| f\left(t_j^{(n)}\right) - f\left(t_{j-1}^{(n)}\right) \right|$$

⁵Recall that $T - Q = m \cdot 2^{-n}$.

and hence any continuous f that has non-zero quadratic variation has infinite total variation⁶. So all we need to prove is that B_s has non-zero quadratic variation. First some lemmas.

Fact

If

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \text{Var} \left[\sum_{j=1}^m \left(B_{t_j^{(n)}} - B_{t_{j-1}^{(n)}} \right)^2 \right] = 0$$

then $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} QV(f) = T - Q$ in L^2 .

Proof: Let $\Delta B_j^2 = \left(B_{t_j^{(n)}} - B_{t_{j-1}^{(n)}} \right)^2$. Then if the variance goes to 0⁷

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} E \left[\left(\sum_{j=1}^m \Delta B_j^2 \right)^2 \right] &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left(E \left[\sum_{j=1}^m \Delta B_j^2 \right] \right)^2 = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left(\sum_{j=1}^m E \left[\Delta B_j^2 \right] \right)^2 \\ &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left(\sum_{j=1}^m \left(t_j^{(n)} - t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right) \right)^2 = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} (T - Q)^2 \end{aligned}$$

⁶Since $\max_{1 \leq j \leq m} \left| f \left(t_j^{(n)} \right) - f \left(t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right) \right| \rightarrow 0$ as $|\Pi| \rightarrow \infty$ for any continuous f and your only hope for the left side of the inequality not blowing up is if the numerator, $QV(f)$, is 0.

⁷Since $\text{Var}(X) = EX^2 - (EX)^2$.

and so

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left(E \left[\left(\sum_{j=1}^m \Delta B_j^2 \right)^2 \right] - (T - Q)^2 \right) \\ &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left(E \left[\left(\sum_{j=1}^m \Delta B_j^2 \right)^2 \right] - 2(T - Q)^2 + (T - Q)^2 \right) \\ &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left(E \left[\left(\sum_{j=1}^m \Delta B_j^2 \right)^2 \right] - 2(T - Q) E \left[\left(\sum_{j=1}^m \Delta B_j^2 \right) \right] + (T - Q)^2 \right) \\ &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left(E \left[\left(\sum_{j=1}^m \Delta B_j^2 - (T - Q) \right)^2 \right] \right) \end{aligned}$$

which is the definition of convergence in L^2 .

Fact

On refinement of the mesh

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \text{Var} \left[\sum_{j=1}^m \left(B_{t_j^{(n)}} - B_{t_{j-1}^{(n)}} \right)^2 \right] = 0$$

Proof:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Var} \left[\sum_{j=1}^m \left(B_{t_j^{(n)}} - B_{t_{j-1}^{(n)}} \right)^2 \right] &= \sum_{j=1}^m \text{Var} \left[\left(B_{t_j^{(n)}} - B_{t_{j-1}^{(n)}} \right)^2 \right] \\&= \sum_{j=1}^m \left(E \left[\left(B_{t_j^{(n)}} - B_{t_{j-1}^{(n)}} \right)^2 \right] - \left(E \left[\left(B_{t_j^{(n)}} - B_{t_{j-1}^{(n)}} \right)^2 \right] \right)^2 \right) \\&= \sum_{j=1}^m \left(E \left[\left(B_{t_j^{(n)}} - B_{t_{j-1}^{(n)}} \right)^2 \right] - \left(t_j^{(n)} - t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right)^2 \right) \\&\quad \text{by Kolmogorov continuity thm.} \\&= \sum_{j=1}^m \left(1(1+2) \left(t_j^{(n)} - t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right)^2 - \left(t_j^{(n)} - t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right)^2 \right) \\&= 2 \sum_{j=1}^m \left(t_j^{(n)} - t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right)^2\end{aligned}$$

which goes to 0 as the mesh is refined.

Theorem

For $f = B_t$ it's the case that $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} QV(f) = T - Q$ almost surely.

Proof: Let

$$X_i^{(n)} = \Delta B_j^2 - \left(t_j^{(n)} - t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right)$$

and

$$Y_n := \sum_{j=1}^m X_i^{(n)} = \sum_{j=1}^m \left(\Delta B_j^2 - \left(t_j^{(n)} - t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right) \right) = \sum_{j=1}^m \Delta B_j^2 - (T - Q)$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} EY_n &= E \left[\sum_{j=1}^m \left(B_{t_j^{(n)}} - B_{t_{j-1}^{(n)}} \right)^2 \right] - E(T - Q) \\ &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

and

$$EY_n^2 = E \left(\sum_{j=1}^m \left(X_i^{(n)} \right)^2 + \sum_{i < j} X_i^{(n)} X_j^{(n)} \right) = \sum_{j=1}^m E \left[\left(X_i^{(n)} \right)^2 \right] + \sum_{i < j} E \left[X_i^{(n)} X_j^{(n)} \right]$$

but $E \left[X_i^{(n)} X_j^{(n)} \right] = 0$ so

$$EY_n^2 = \sum_{j=1}^m E \left[\left(X_i^{(n)} \right)^2 \right]$$

and so by Chebyshev's inequality⁸

$$\begin{aligned} P(|Y_n| \geq \epsilon) &\leq \frac{E[(Y_n)^2]}{\epsilon^2} \\ &= \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \sum_{j=1}^m E \left[\left(X_i^{(n)} \right)^2 \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \sum_{j=1}^m \left(t_j^{(n)} - t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right)^2 \\ &\leq \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \frac{1}{2^n} \sum_{j=1}^m \left(t_j^{(n)} - t_{j-1}^{(n)} \right) \\ &= \frac{T - Q}{2^n \epsilon^2} \end{aligned}$$

⁸ $P(|X - \mu| \geq \epsilon) \leq \frac{E[(X - \mu)^2]}{\epsilon^2}$

and finally using Borel-Cantelli⁹ with

$$\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} P(|Y_n| \geq \epsilon) \leq \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{T - Q}{2^n \epsilon^2} = \frac{T - Q}{\epsilon^2}$$

which implies almost sure convergence¹⁰ of $Y_n \rightarrow 0$.

⁹If $\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} P(E_n) < \infty$ for some sequence of events E_n then $P(\limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} E_n) = 0$.

¹⁰ $P(\liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} |X_n - X| < \epsilon) = 1$ for all ϵ . Naturally this is to equivalent $P(\liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} |X_n - X| > \epsilon) = 0$ for all ϵ . Why? \liminf is the set of points ω that is ultimately in all of the sets and \limsup is the set of points ω appear infinitely often. So if the set of ω for which $|Y_n| \geq \epsilon$ occur infinitely often has measure 0 then set of ω for which $|Y_n| \leq \epsilon$ eventually always is almost all of them (otherwise $|Y_n| \geq \epsilon$ would keep happening once in a while).

Motivation

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = b(t, x) + \sigma(t, x) \cdot \text{"noise"}$$

becomes

$$X_{k+1} - X_k = b(t_k, X_k) \Delta t_k + \sigma(t_k, X_k) W_k \Delta t_k$$

where $X_k := X_{t_k}$. Restated the question is: does there exist some V_t such that for $\Delta V_k := V_{k+1} - V_k := V_{t_{k+1}} - V_{t_k}$

$$\begin{aligned} X_{k+1} - X_k &= b(t_k, X_k) \Delta t_k + \sigma(t_k, X_k) (V_{k+1} - V_k) \\ &= b(t_k, X_k) \Delta t_k + \sigma(t_k, X_k) \Delta V_k \end{aligned}$$

Assumptions 1,2,3 above suggest that stationary, independent, and mean 0 **increments**. Why? Because what appears in the discretized model are the increments. Turns out the only such process with continuous paths is Brownian motion B_t . Thus putting $V_t = B_t$ and taking sums we get

$$\sum_{i=0}^{k-1} (X_{k+1} - X_k) = X_k - X_0 = \sum_{i=0}^{k-1} (b(t_j, X_j) \Delta t_j + \sigma(t_j, X_j) \Delta B_j)$$