



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

Exploration in Policy Search via Multiple Importance Sampling

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Co-supervisors: Matteo Papini, Alberto Maria Metelli

April 16th, 2019

Reinforcement Learning

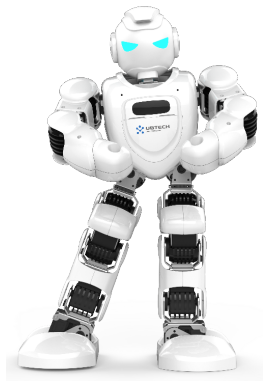
Reinforcement Learning



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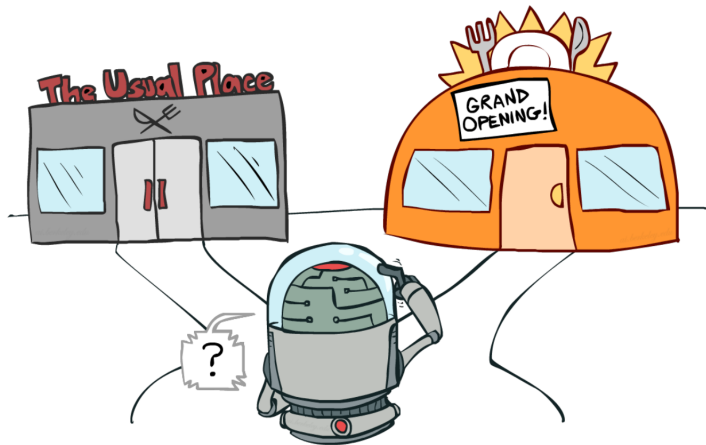


Reinforcement Learning



Exploitation VS Exploration

Exploitation VS Exploration



Plan

1. Basics of Reinforcement Learning
2. Exploration in Policy Search
3. Problem Formalization
4. OPTIMIST
5. Experiments
6. Conclusions

The Reinforcement Learning Framework

Environment



\mathcal{P}

The Reinforcement Learning Framework

Agent



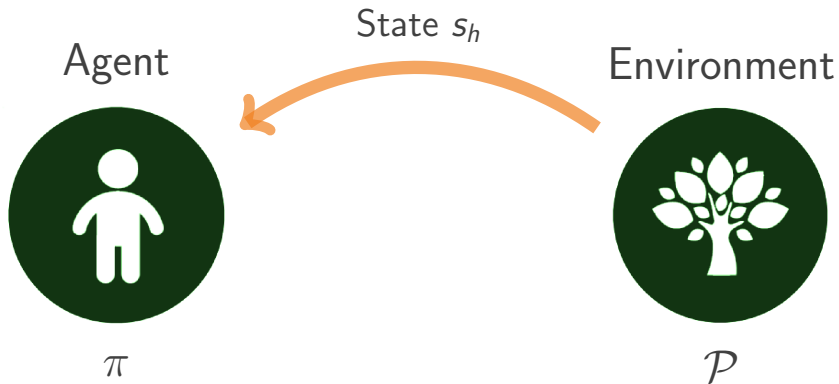
π

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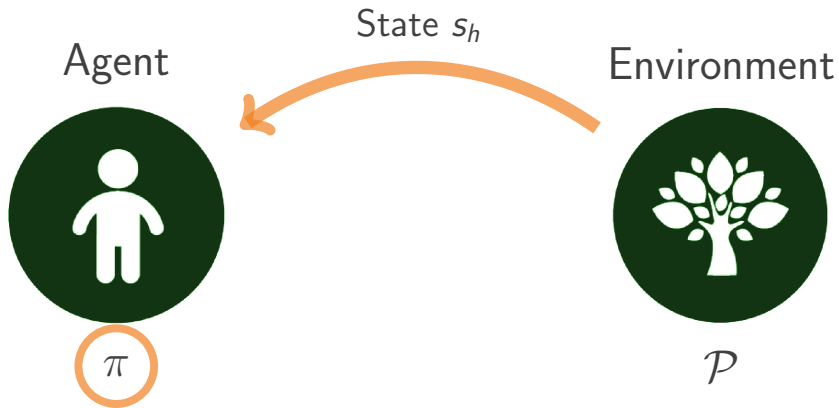


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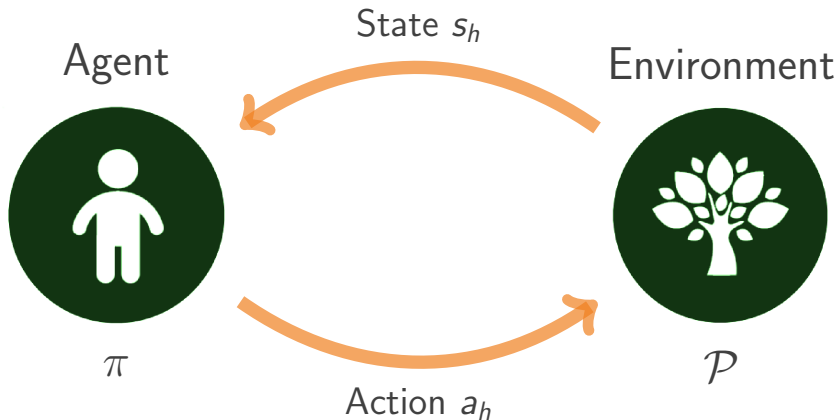
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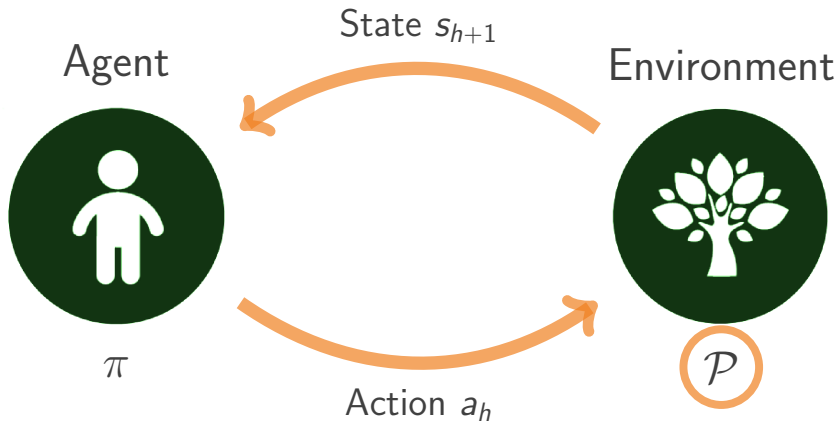
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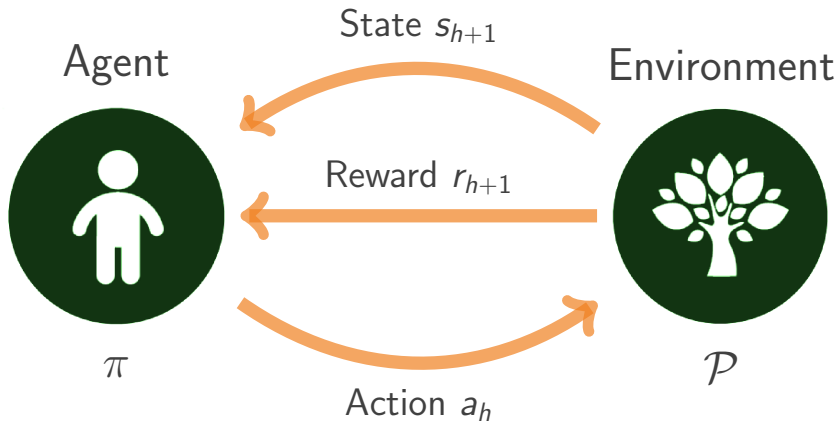
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Policy Search Formulation

Parametric policy:

$$\pi_{\theta} : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \Delta(\mathcal{A}) \quad \text{E.g.: } \pi_{\theta}(a|s) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{a - \theta^T s}{\sigma}\right)^2\right)$$

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Return of a trajectory τ :

$$\mathcal{R}(\tau) = \sum_{h=0}^{H-1} \gamma^h r_{h+1}, \text{ with } \tau = [s_0, a_0, s_1, a_1, \dots, s_{H-1}, a_{H-1}, s_H]$$

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$$\mu(\theta) = \mathbb{E}_{\tau \sim \pi_{\theta}} [\mathcal{R}(\tau)]$$

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Objective:

$$\theta^* = \arg \max_{\theta \in \Theta} \mu(\theta).$$

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Undirected exploration

Explore actions based on randomness, without any knowledge of the learning process.

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Directed exploration

Leverage on the knowledge acquired during learning.

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Problem Formalization

Decision Set

The parameter space $\Theta \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$.

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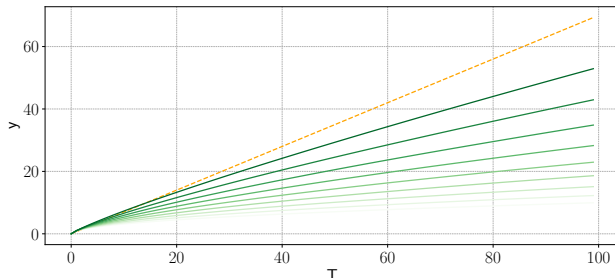
Goal

Minimize $\text{Regret}(T) = \sum_{t=0}^T \mu(\theta^*) - \mu(\theta_t)$, where $\theta^* = \arg \max_{\theta \in \Theta} \mu(\theta)$

Desideratum

Sub-linear Regret

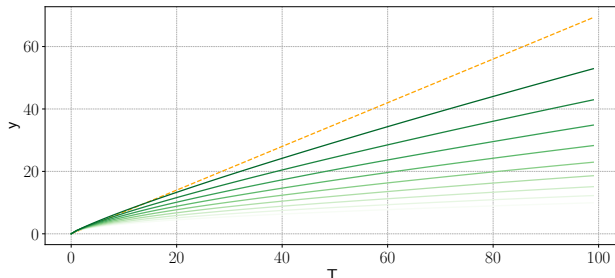
1. for any linear function $f(T)$, for sufficiently large input T , $\text{Regret}(T)$ grows slower than $f(T)$;
2. Alternatively, $\lim_{T \rightarrow \infty} \text{Regret}(T)/T = 0$.



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2. Alternatively, $\lim_{T \rightarrow \infty} \text{Regret}(T)/T = 0$.
3. **Meaning:** after a certain number of iterations, the policy keeps improving.



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$$B_t(\theta, \delta_t) = \check{\mu}_t^{MIS}(\theta) + C_b \sqrt{\frac{d_2(\pi_{\theta_t} \parallel \Phi_t) \log \frac{1}{\delta_t}}{t}}$$

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Exploration Bonus

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Regret Analysis - Discrete Arms Set

Theorem 1 - Discrete Parameter Space:

$$\text{Regret}(T) \leq \Delta_0 + C_1 \sqrt{T \left[v_1 \left(2 \log T + \log \frac{2\pi^2}{3\delta} \right) \right]}$$

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Theorem 2 - Compact Parameter Space:

$$\text{Regret}(T) \leq C_2 + C_3 \sqrt{T \left[v_1 \left(2(d+1) \log T + d \log d + \log \frac{\pi^2}{3\delta} \right) \right]}$$

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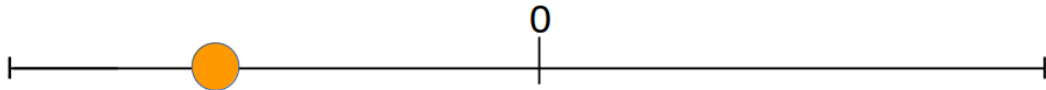
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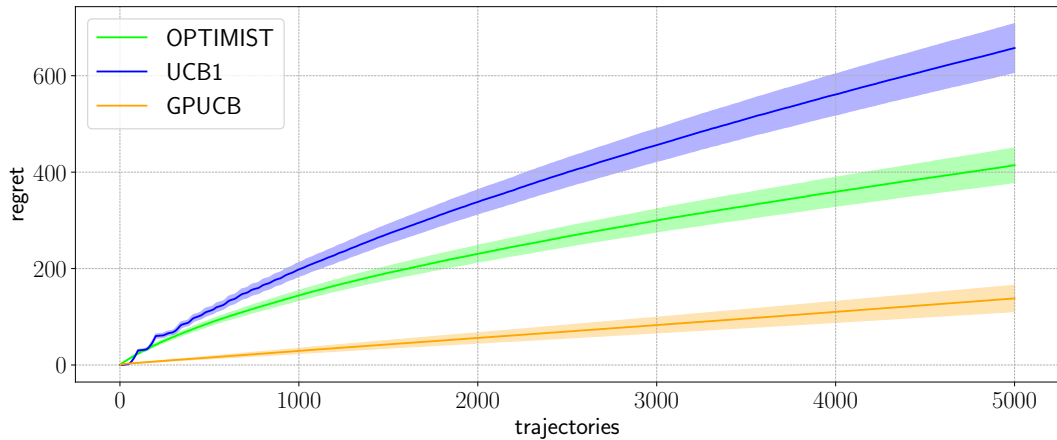
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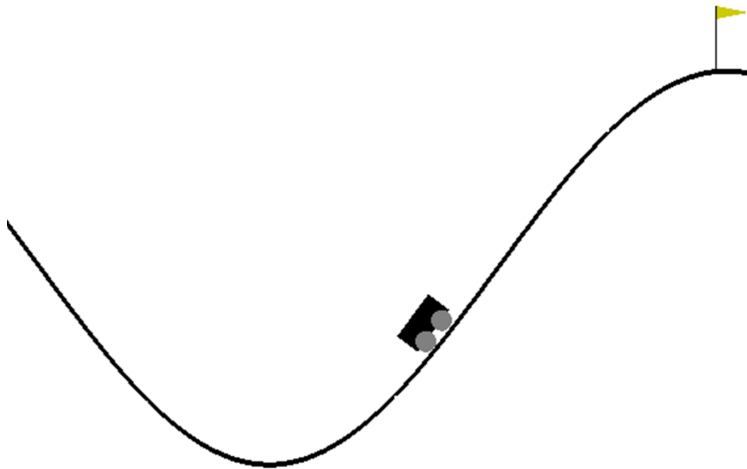
Linear Quadratic Gaussian Regulator



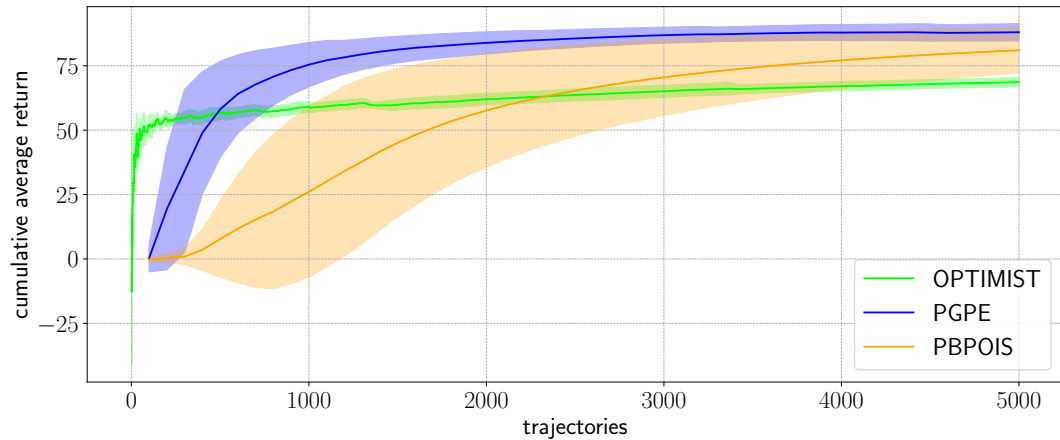
Linear Quadratic Gaussian Regulator - Regret



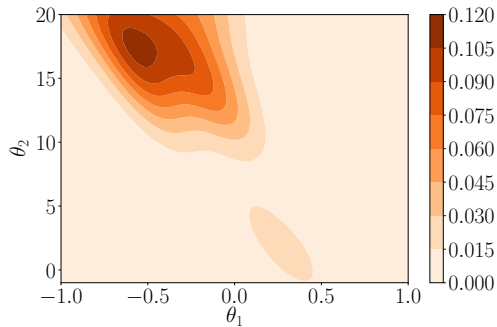
Mountain Car



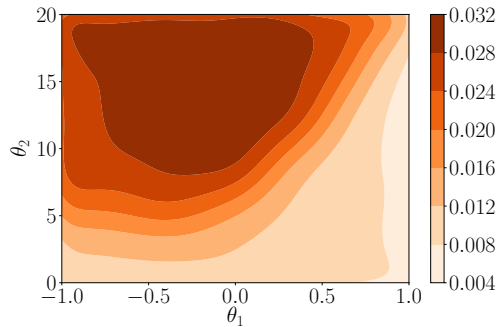
Mountain Car - Performance



Mountain Car - Parameter Space Exploration



PGPE



OPTIMIST

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Paper submission at **ICML2019** (International Conference on Machine Learning)

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Future Works

1. Study new solutions to the optimization problem arising for compact decision sets;

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Future Works

1. Study new solutions to the optimization problem arising for compact decision sets;
2. Leverage on posterior sampling techniques instead of upper confidence bound optimization.

Thank you for your attention!

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Markov Decision Processes

Reinforcement Learning

General class of algorithms that allow an agent to learn how to behave in a stochastic and possibly unknown environment by trial-and-error.

Markov Decision Process (MDP)

stochastic dynamical system specified by $\langle \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{A}, \mathcal{P}, \mathcal{R}, \gamma \rangle$

1. $(\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{S})$ is a measurable state space
2. $(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{A})$ is a measurable action space
3. $\mathcal{P} : \mathcal{S} \times \mathcal{A} \times \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is a Markov transition kernel
4. $\mathcal{R} : \mathcal{S} \times \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is a reward function
5. $0 < \gamma < 1$ is the discount factor.

Monte-Carlo Policy Gradient: Pseudocode

Input: Stochastic policy π_θ , Initial parameters θ_0 , learning rate $\{\alpha_k\}$

Output: Approximation of the optimal policy $\pi_{\theta^*} \approx \pi_*$

1: **repeat**

2: Sample M trajectories $h^{(m)} = \{(s_t^{(m)}, a_t^{(m)}, r_{t+1}^{(m)})\}_{t=0}^{T^{(m)}}$ under policy π_{θ_k}

3: Approximate policy gradient

$$\nabla_\theta J(\theta_k) \approx \frac{1}{M} \sum_{m=0}^M \sum_{u=0}^{T^{(m)}-1} \nabla_\theta \log \pi_{\theta_k} \left(s_u^{(m)}, a_u^{(m)} \right) \sum_{v \geq u}^{T^{(m)}-1} \gamma^{v-u} r_{v+1}^{(m)}$$

4: Update parameters using gradient ascent $\theta_{k+1} = \theta_k + \alpha_k \nabla_\theta J(\theta_k)$

5: $k \leftarrow k + 1$

6: **until** converged

Episodic PGPE Algorithm: Pseudocode

Input: Controller F_θ , hyper-distribution p_ξ , initial guess ξ_0 , learning rate $\{\alpha_k\}$

Output: Approximation of the optimal policy $F_{\xi^*} \approx \pi_*$

- 1: **repeat**
- 2: **for** $m = 1, \dots, M$ **do**
- 3: Sample controller parameters $\theta^{(m)} \sim p_{\xi_k}$
- 4: Sample trajectory $h^{(m)} = \{(s_t^{(m)}, a_t^{(m)}, r_{t+1}^{(m)})\}_{t=0}^{T^{(m)}}$ under policy $F_{\theta^{(m)}}$
- 5: **end for**
- 6: Approximate policy gradient

$$\nabla_\xi J(\xi_k) \approx \frac{1}{M} \sum_{m=1}^M \nabla_\xi \log p_\xi(\theta^{(m)}) \left[G(h^{(m)}) - b \right]$$

- 7: Update hyperparameters using gradient ascent $\xi_{k+1} = \xi_k + \alpha_k \nabla_\xi J(\xi_k)$
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Truncated Multiple Importance Sampling Estimator

Importance Sampling

Given a bounded function $f : \mathcal{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, and a set of i.i.d. outcomes z_1, \dots, z_N sampled from Q , the importance sampling estimator of $\mu := \mathbb{E}_{z \sim P} [f(z)]$ is:

$$\hat{\mu}_{\text{IS}} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N f(z_i) w_{P/Q}(z_i), \quad (1)$$

which is an unbiased estimator, i.e., $\mathbb{E}_{z_i \stackrel{\text{iid}}{\sim} Q} [\hat{\mu}_{\text{IS}}] = \mu$.

Truncated Estimator With Balance Heuristic

$$\check{\mu}_{\text{BH}} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{k=1}^K \sum_{i=1}^{N_k} \min \left\{ M, \frac{p(z_{ik})}{\sum_{j=1}^K \frac{N_j}{N} q_j(z_{ik})} \right\} f(z_{ik}). \quad (2)$$

Theorem

regretdiscretized Let \mathcal{X} be a d -dimensional compact arm set with $\mathcal{X} \subseteq [-D, D]^d$. For any $\kappa \geq 2$, under Assumptions 1 and 2, OPTIMIST2 with confidence schedule

$$\delta_t = \frac{6\delta}{\pi^2 t^2 \left(1 + \lceil t^{1/\kappa} \rceil^d\right)} \text{ and discretization schedule } \tau_t = \lceil t^{\frac{1}{\kappa}} \rceil \text{ guarantees, with}$$

probability at least $1 - \delta$:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Regret}(T) \leq & \Delta_0 + C_1 T^{(1-\frac{1}{\kappa})} d + C_2 T^{\frac{1}{1+\epsilon}} \\ & \cdot \left[v_\epsilon \left((2 + d/\kappa) \log T + d \log 2 + \log \frac{\pi^2}{3\delta} \right) \right]^{\frac{\epsilon}{1+\epsilon}}, \end{aligned}$$

where $C_1 = \frac{\kappa}{\kappa - 1} LD$, $C_2 = (1 + \epsilon) \left(2\sqrt{2} + \frac{5}{3} \right) \|f\|_\infty$, and Δ_0 is the instantaneous regret of the initial arm \mathbf{x}_0 .