

# Conditional particle filters with bridge backward sampling

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# Outline



Introduction: Smoothing & conditional particle filters

Problematic case: Time-discretised path integral model

Solution: CPF with bridge backward sampling

## Introduction: Smoothing & conditional particle filters

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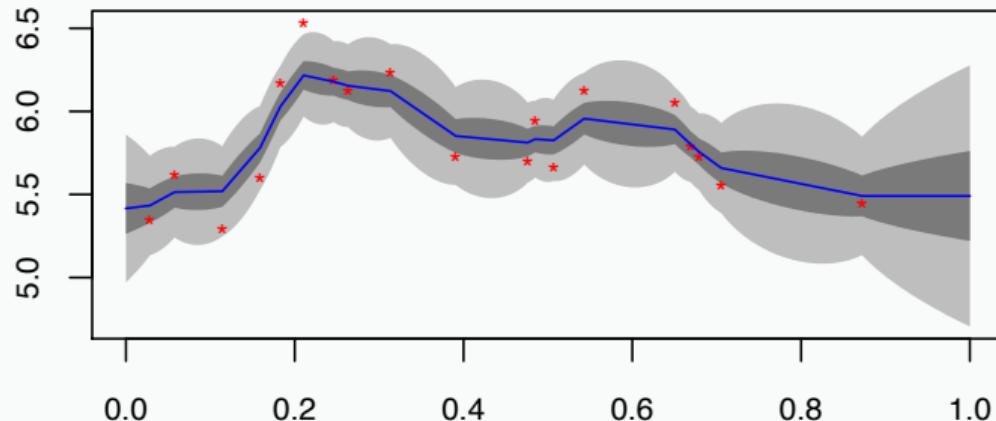


# The smoothing problem

Hidden Markov model (a.k.a. general state space model):

- Latent Markov chain  $X_k$  with initial law  $m_1(\cdot)$  and transitions  $m_k(x_{k-1}, \cdot)$
- Conditionally independent observations  $y_k$  with densities  $g_k(\cdot | X_k)$

We aim at inferring  $\pi_T = \mathcal{L}(X_{1:T} | Y_{1:T} = y_{1:T})$  (smoothing).



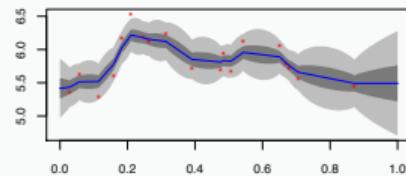


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The Feynman–Kac notation/generalisation:

- Proposal distributions:  $M_1(\cdot)$ ,  $M_k(x_{k-1}, \cdot)$  e.g.  $M_k \equiv m_k$
- Potential (or weight) functions:  $G_k(\cdot) \geq 0$  e.g.  $G_k(\cdot) \equiv g_k(y_k | \cdot)$

~~ different 'proposal distributions', 'lookaheads' and more general models...



# Conditional particle filter (CPF)

Markov transition  $x_{1:T}^* \rightarrow (X_1^{B_1}, \dots, X_T^{B_T})$  leaving  $\pi_T$  invariant  $\forall N \geq 2!$ <sup>1</sup>

1. Reference path  $x_{1:T}^*$
2. Sample remaining  $N - 1$  particles sequentially from  $M_1, M_2, \dots, M_T$ ;  
conditional resample proportional to  $G_k(\cdot)$
3. Pick particle  $B_T$  at last time  $T$ ;  
Ancestor trace  $B_{T-1}, \dots, B_1$  and output  $(X_1^{B_1}, \dots, X_T^{B_T})$

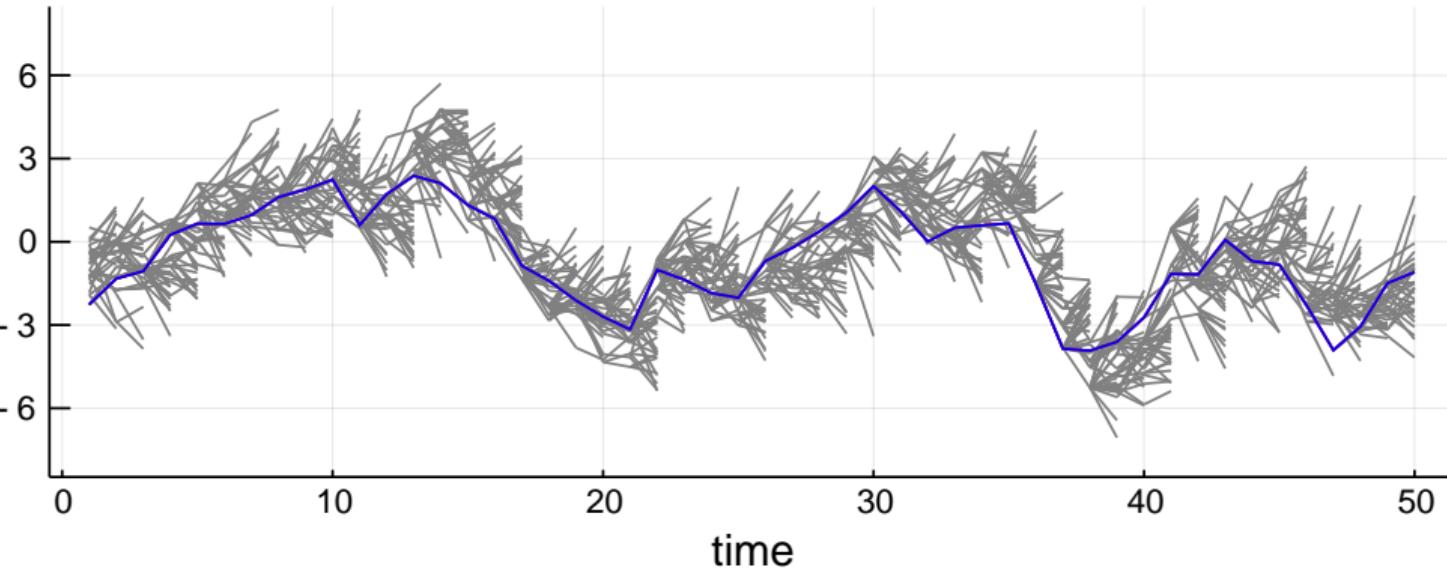
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<sup>1</sup>Andrieu, Doucet & Holenstein (*J. Roy. Statist. Soc. Ser. B.*, 2010)

# Iterated CPF on noisy AR(1)



iteration 2

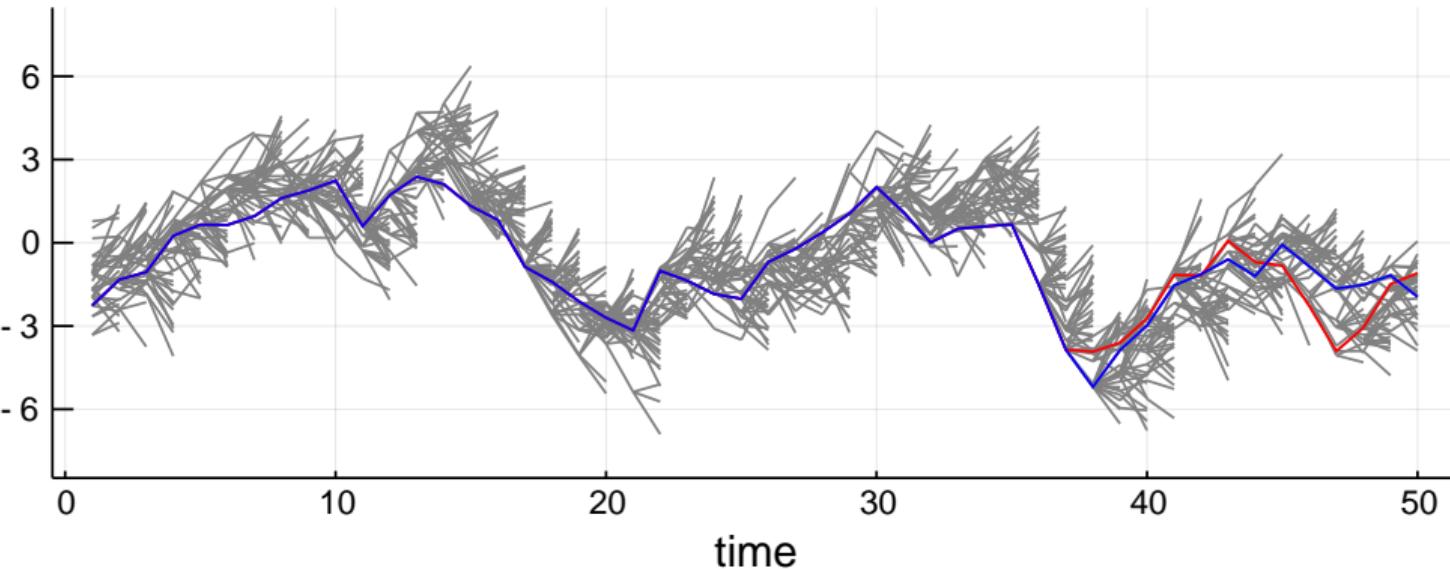


- Reference  $x_{1:T}^*$ , Output  $X_{1:T}^{B_{1:T}}$

# Iterated CPF on noisy AR(1)



iteration 3

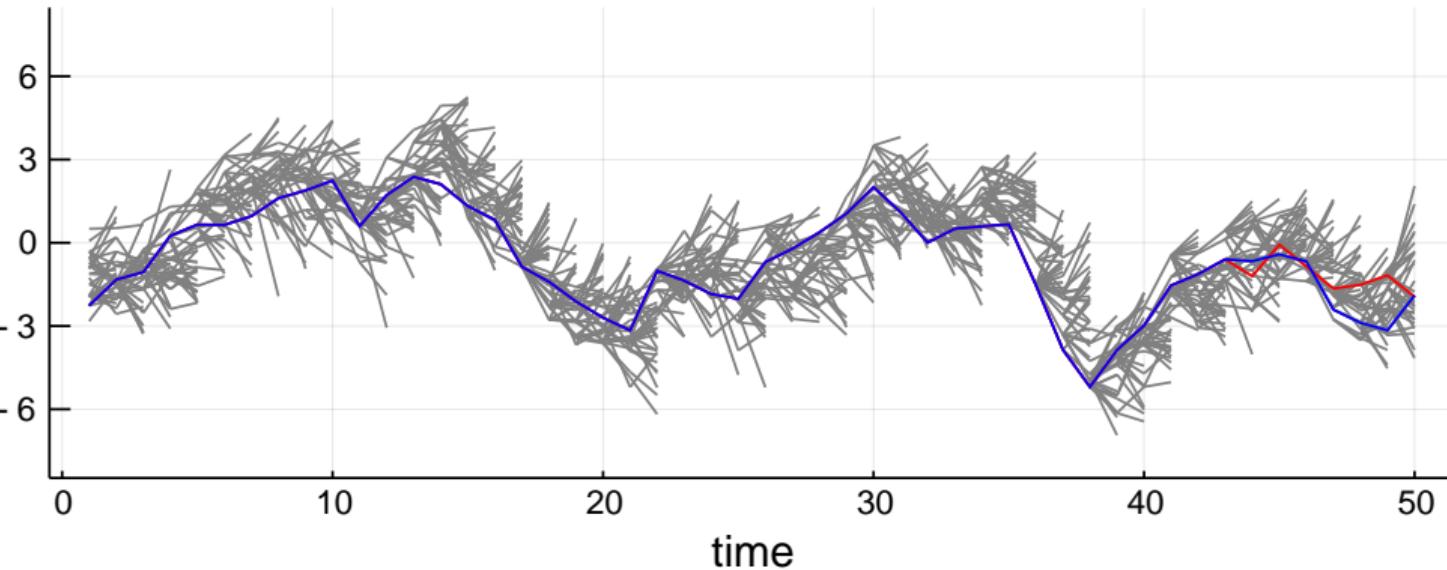


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# Iterated CPF on noisy AR(1)



iteration 4

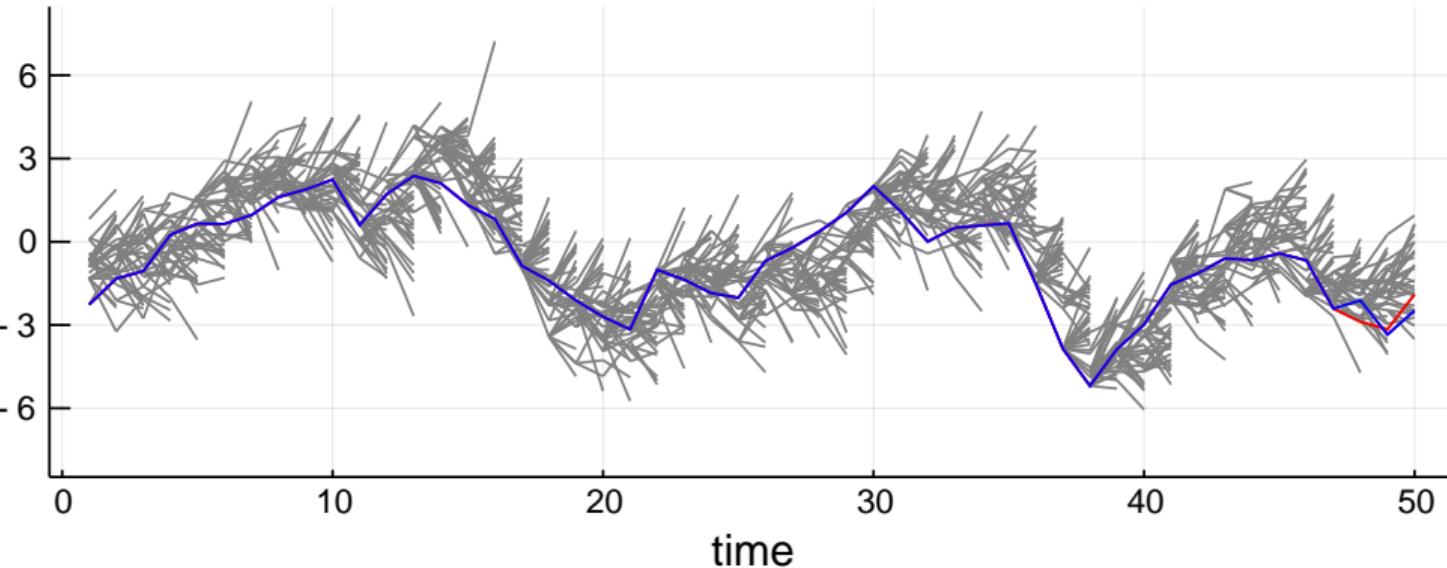


- Reference  $x_{1:T}^*$ , Output  $X_{1:T}^{B_{1:T}}$

# Iterated CPF on noisy AR(1)



iteration 5



- Reference  $x_{1:T}^*$ , Output  $X_{1:T}^{B_{1:T}}$

# Conditional particle filter with backward sampling (CPF-BS)



Efficient MCMC smoothing:  $\pi_T$ -invariant transition  $x_{1:T}^* \rightarrow (X_1^{B_1}, \dots, X_T^{B_T})^2$

1. Reference path  $x_{1:T}^*$
2. Sample remaining  $N - 1$  particles sequentially from  $M_1, M_2, \dots, M_T$ ;  
conditional resample proportional to  $G_k(\cdot)$
3. Pick particle  $B_T$  at last time  $T$ ;  
Backward sample  $B_{T-1}, \dots, B_1$  and output  $(X_1^{B_1}, \dots, X_T^{B_T})$

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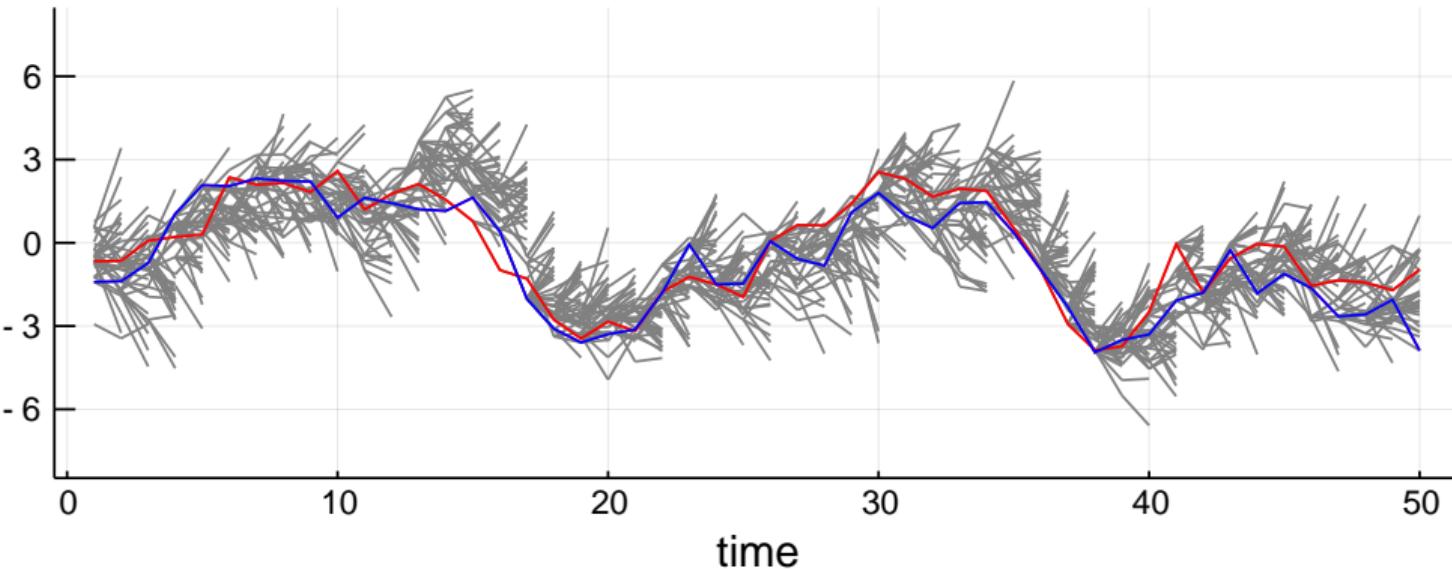
<sup>2</sup>Whiteley (*J. Roy. Statist. Soc. Ser. B.*, 2010);

Algorithmic variant: Lindsten, Jordan & Schön (*J. Mach. Learn. Res.*, 2014) ancestor sampling CPF

# Iterated CPF-BS on noisy AR(1)



iteration 2

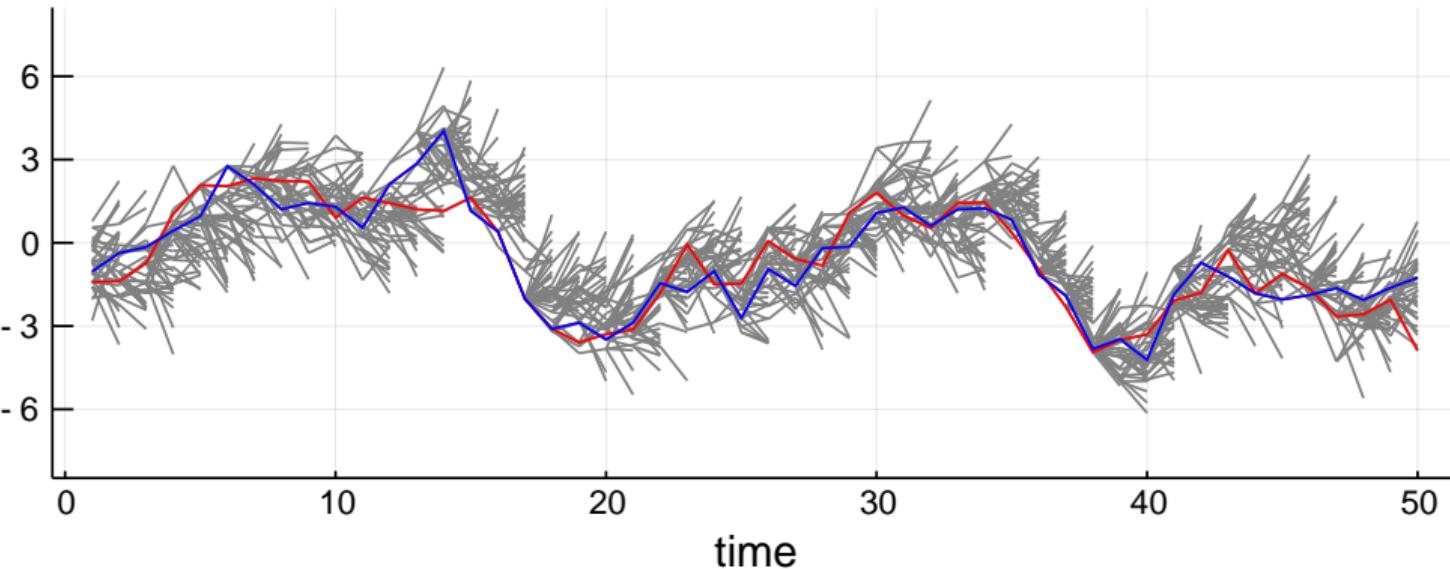


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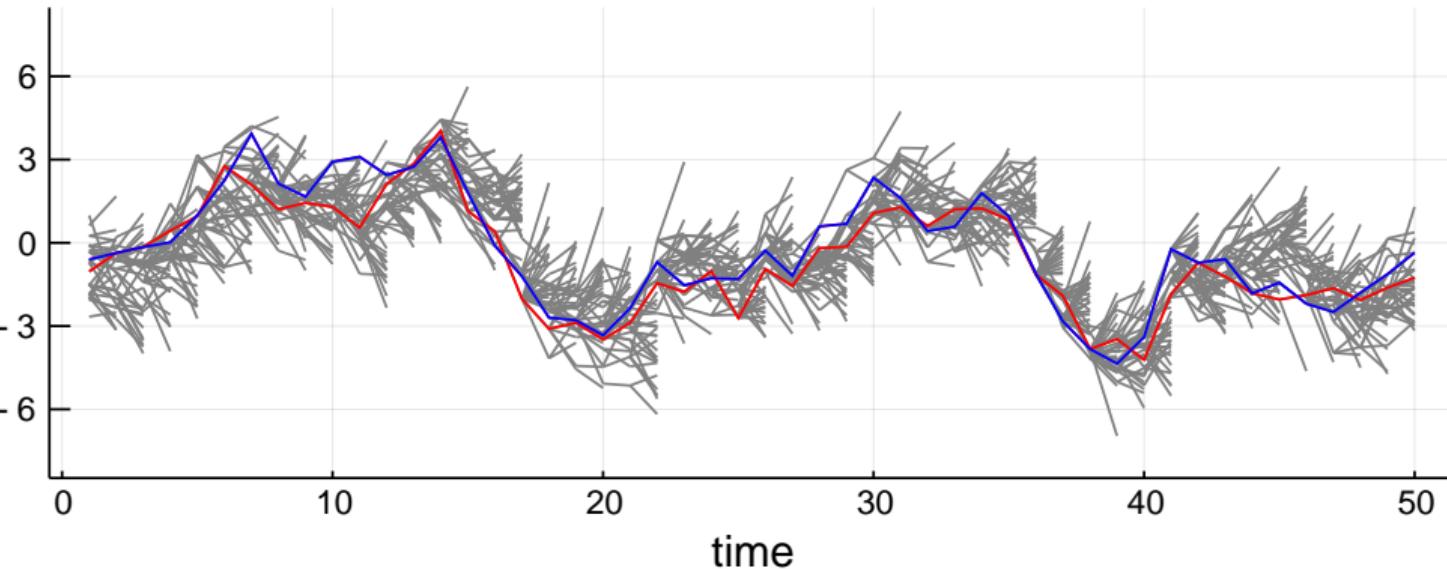


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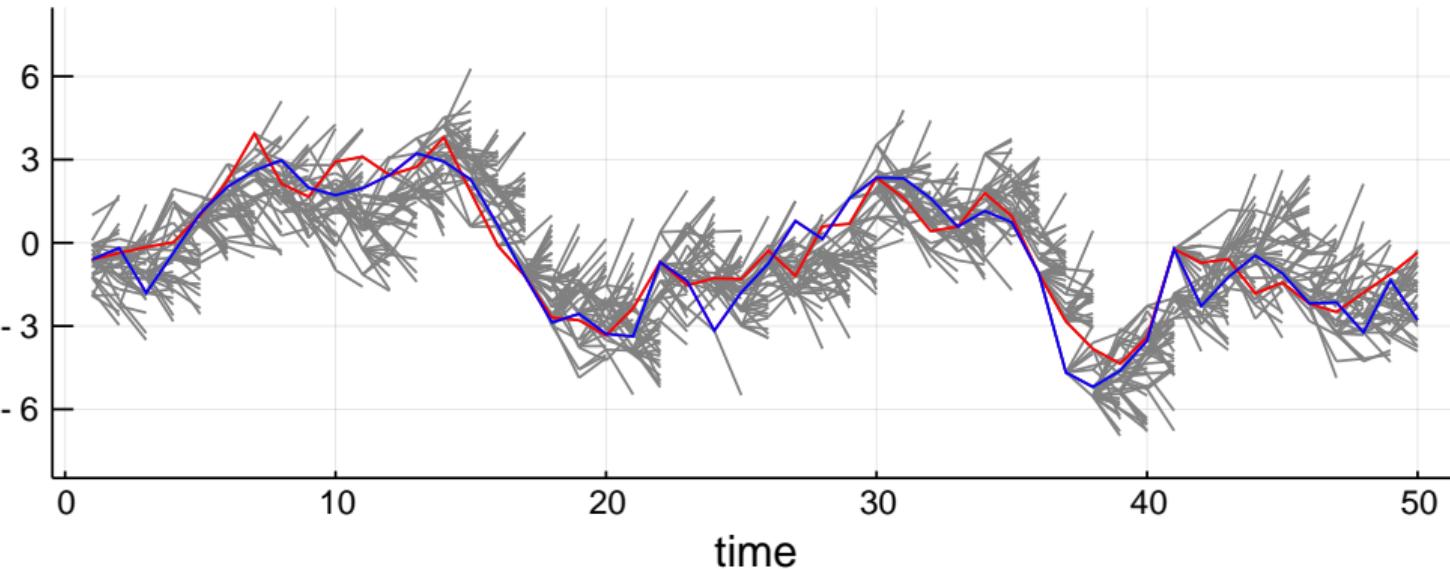


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# Iterated CPF-BS on noisy AR(1)



iteration 5



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# Why to use CPF-BS?

- Hard high-dimensional inference problem:  $X_k \in \mathbb{R}^d \implies X_{1:T} \in \mathbb{R}^{dT}$ .
- Impressive empirical performance even with very large  $T$
- Theoretical guarantees under general conditions<sup>3</sup>:
  - Number of particles  $N$  sufficiently large (but **constant in  $T$ !**)
  - Mixing time at most **linear in  $T$**
- CPF-BS can be plugged into **particle Gibbs**, where the model has unknown parameters  $\theta$ :
  - Update  $X_{1:T} | \theta$  by CPF-BS (using  $(M_{1:T}^\theta, G_{1:T}^\theta)$ )
  - Update  $\theta | X_{1:T}$  by your favourite MCMC...

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<sup>3</sup>Lee, Singh & V (*Ann. Statist.*, 2020)

## Problematic case: Time-discretised path integral model

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# The path integral model

- A continuous-time analogue of the HMM:

$$\Pi_\tau(A) = \underbrace{\frac{1}{\mathcal{Z}} \mathbb{E} \left[ \underbrace{1(Z_{[0,\tau]} \in A)}_{\text{Markov process law}} \exp \left( - \int_0^\tau V(Z_u) du \right) \right]}_{\text{Weight}},$$

where  $(Z_t)_{t \geq 0} \sim \mathbb{M}$  is a Markov process (typically diffusion, from SDE) and  $\mathcal{Z} > 0$  is a normalising constant.

- Potential function  $V \geq 0$  modulates the law  $\mathbb{M}$  – the ‘environment’
  - $V(x)$  has small ‘penalty’ value  $\rightsquigarrow$  preferred state  $x$
  - $V(x)$  has high ‘penalty’ value  $\rightsquigarrow$  unlikely state  $x$



# Time-discretised path integral model

- Time-discretisation  $0, \Delta, 2\Delta, \dots, \Delta T = \tau$  and Riemann sum approximation:

$$\pi_T(x_{1:T}) = \frac{1}{Z} \left( M_1(x_1) \prod_{k=2}^T M_k^\Delta(x_k \mid x_{k-1}) \right) \left( \overbrace{\prod_{k=1}^{T-1} e^{-\Delta V(x_k)}}^{G_k^\Delta(x_k)} \right),$$

where

- $X_k = Z_{\Delta(k-1)}$
- $M_k^\Delta$  are the (approximate) transition probabilities from  $Z_{\Delta(k-1)}$  to  $Z_{\Delta k}$
- When  $\Delta \rightarrow 0$ :
  - $M_k^\Delta(x_k \mid x_{k-1}) \rightarrow \delta_{x_{k-1}}(x_k)$
  - $G_k^\Delta(x) \approx 1 - \Delta V(x) \rightarrow 1$
  - $T = \tau/\Delta \rightarrow \infty$
- Problem should not get ‘harder’ as  $\Delta \rightarrow 0$ , but ‘standard’ CPF-BS degenerates...



# CPF resampling for $\Delta \rightarrow 0$

- Original CPF & CPF-BS used conditional **multinomial resampling**<sup>4</sup>
  - Degenerates ✗
- Two other conditional resamplings for CPF<sup>5</sup>:
  - **residual** degenerates ✗
  - **systematic** seems stable ✓ (empirically...)
- Can we say something more about resamplings in the limit?

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<sup>4</sup>Andrieu, Doucet & Holenstein (*J. Roy. Statist. Soc. Ser. B.*, 2010)

<sup>5</sup>Chopin & Singh (*Bernoulli*, 2015)

<sup>6</sup>Chopin, Singh, Soto & V, *Ann. Statist.* (2022)



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  - **residual** degenerates ✗
  - **systematic** seems stable ✓ (empirically...)
- Can we say something more about resamplings in the limit?
- At least for ~~conditional~~ particle filters<sup>6</sup>:
  - ‘Killing’ ✓
  - ‘Stratified’ (with mean partition) ✓
  - ‘Systematic’ (w.m.p.) ✓
  - ‘Srinivasan Sampling process’ (w.m.p.) (SSP) ✓

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## Interlude (for experts): Particle filter limit as $\Delta \rightarrow 0$

### Assumption: Instantaneous resampling rate

For all  $v^{1:N} \geq 0$  and all  $a^{1:N} \in \{1:N\}^N$ ,  $a^{1:N} \neq 1:N$  the limit:

$$\iota(a^{1:N}, v^{1:N}) = \lim_{\Delta \rightarrow 0+} \frac{1}{\Delta} r(a^{1:N} \mid \exp(-\Delta v^1), \dots, \exp(-\Delta v^N))$$

exists and the term inside the limit is uniformly bounded for bounded potentials  $v^{1:N} \leq v^* < \infty$  and  $\Delta \in (0, 1)$ .

### Theorem (Chopin, Singh, Soto, V, 2022)

*Under Assumption & technical conditions, the discrete-time particle filter converges to Markov process with generator*

$$\mathcal{L}f(x^{1:N}) = \mathcal{L}^{\mathbb{M}}f(x^{1:N}) + \sum_{a^{1:N} \neq 1:N} \iota(a^{1:N}, (V(x^1), \dots, V(x^N))) (f(x^{a^{1:N}}) - f(x^{1:N}))$$



## Interlude (cont): Limiting overall death rates

- Simple expressions for the overall death rate:

$$\iota^*(v^{1:N}) = \sum_{a^{1:N} \neq 1:N} \iota(a^{1:N}, v^{1:N}),$$

which captures  $\mathbb{P}(A_k^{1:N} \neq 1:N) \approx \Delta \iota^*(V(X_k^1), \dots, V(X_k^N))$

### Proposition

$$\iota_{\text{killing}}^*(v^{1:N}) = \frac{N-1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N (v^i - v_{\min}) = (N-1)(\bar{v} - v_{\min}) \quad v_{\min} = \min_j v^j$$

$$\iota_{\text{stratified}}^*(v^{1:N}) = \sum_{j=1}^N j(\bar{v} - v^{\varpi(j)}) \quad \bar{v} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N v^i$$

$$\iota_{\text{systematic}}^*(v^{1:N}) = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^N |\bar{v} - v^i| = \iota_{\text{ssp}}^*(v^{1:N})$$



## Interlude (cont.): Ordering the overall death rates

Theorem (Chopin, Singh, Soto, V, 2022)

*The overall resampling intensities of killing, stratified and systematic/SSP resampling satisfy*

$$\iota_{\text{killing}}^*(v^{1:N}) \geq \iota_{\text{systematic}}^*(v^{1:N}), \quad \text{and} \quad \iota_{\text{stratified}}^*(v^{1:N}) \geq \iota_{\text{systematic}}^*(v^{1:N}),$$

*for all potential values  $v^{1:N}$ . However,  $\iota_{\text{killing}}^*$  and  $\iota_{\text{stratified}}^*$  do not satisfy such order in general.*

- ~~> Systematic/SSP with mean partition preferable
  - Karppinen, Singh & V (to appear):
    - Conditional killing resampling
    - Conditional systematic with mean partition ✓✓



# Backward sampling with stiff dynamics $M_k$

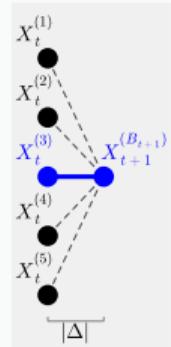
As  $\Delta \rightarrow 0$ :

- Continuous paths  $\implies M_k^\Delta(\cdot | x) \rightarrow \delta_x(\cdot)$ .
- Backward sampling step:

$$\mathbb{P}(B_k = i | B_{k+1}) \propto G_k^\Delta(X_k^i) \overbrace{M_{k+1}^\Delta(X_{k+1}^{B_{k+1}} | X_k^i)}^{\approx 0 \text{ for } i \neq A_{k+1}^{B_{k+1}}}$$

$\implies B_k = A_{k+1}^{B_{k+1}}$  with high probability.

$\therefore$  CPF-BS degenerates to CPF with ancestor tracing;  
the benefits of backward sampling are lost...



## Solution: CPF with bridge backward sampling

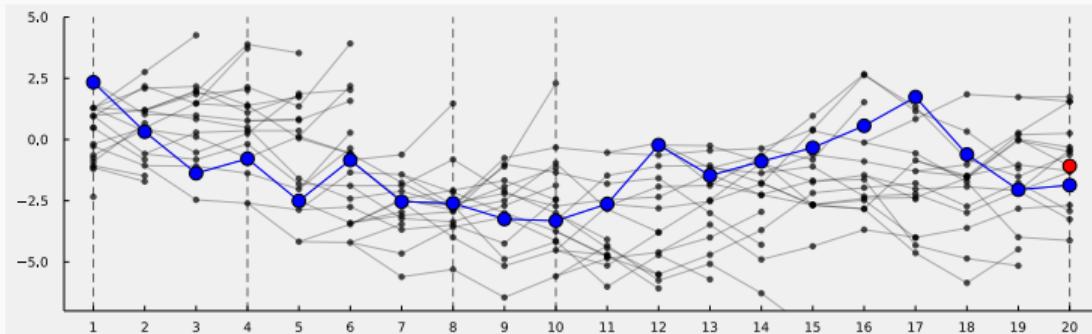
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# CPF with bridge backward sampling (CPF-BBS)

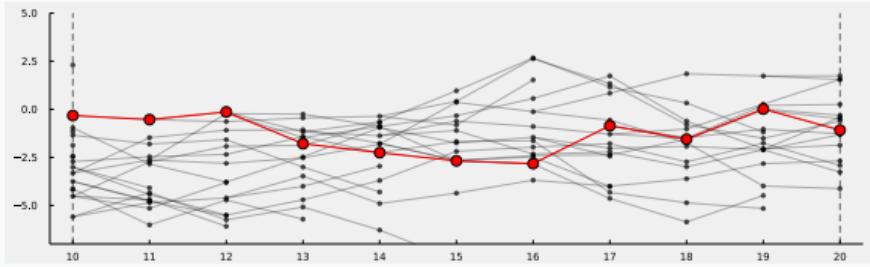
Generalisation of backward sampling to blocks of length > 1

- We use auxiliary ‘bridge CPF’ steps
- Requires tractable  $M_k$  (can calculate conditionals, such as linear-Gaussian)
- Initialisation: run CPF with reference  $x_{1:T}^*$  and choose a particle  $X_T^{(B_T)}$





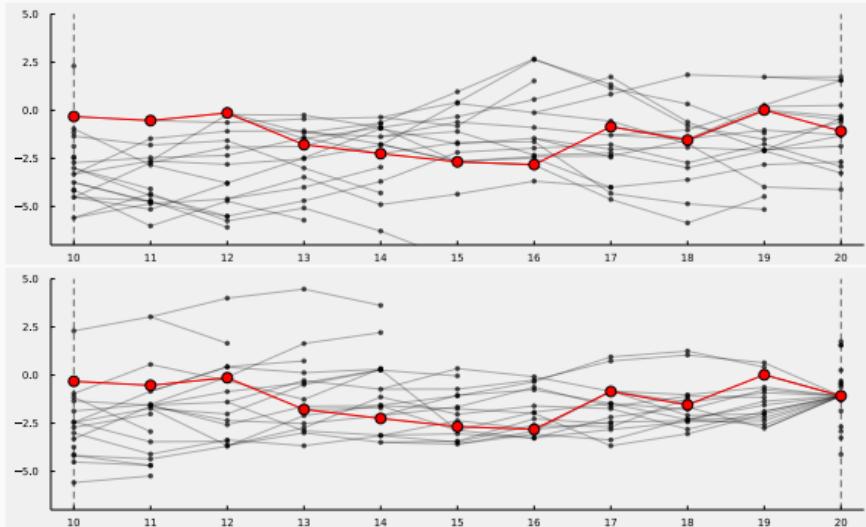
# Bridge CPF: block from $\ell = 10$ to $u = 20$



1 Trace back from  $X_u^{B_u}$   
→ ‘block reference’  $\hat{X}_{\ell:u}$



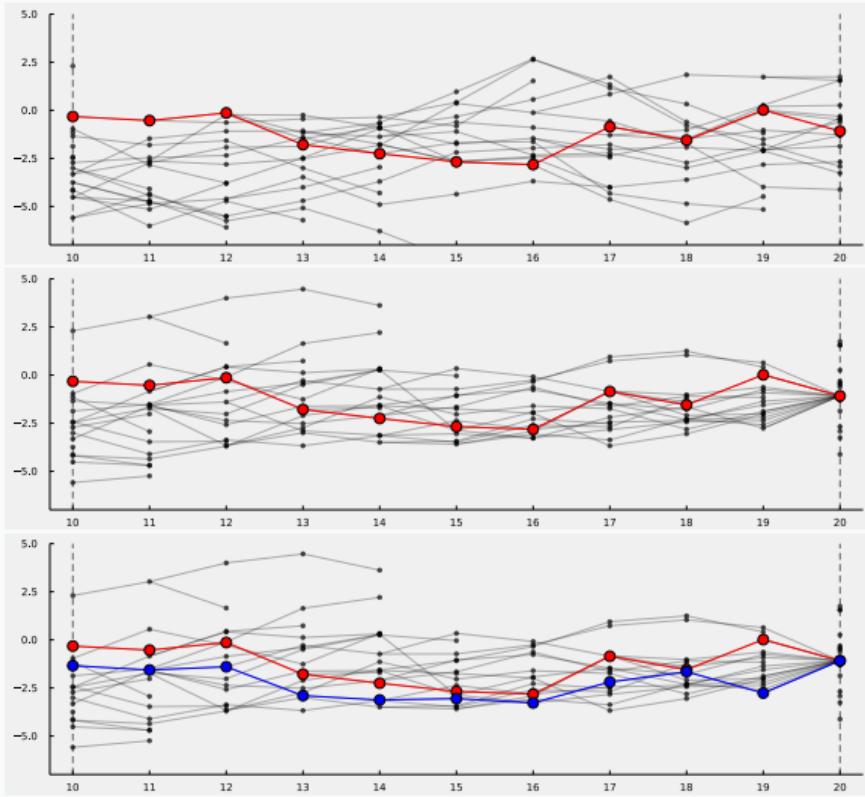
# Bridge CPF: block from $\ell = 10$ to $u = 20$



- 1 Trace back from  $X_u^{B_u}$   
→ ‘block reference’  $\hat{X}_{\ell:u}$
- 2 Simulate particles  $\tilde{X}_{\ell+1:u-1}^{1:N}$  with auxiliary CPF:
  - reference  $\hat{X}_{\ell:u}$
  - conditional transitions  $M_{k|k-1,u}(\cdot | x_{k-1}, \hat{X}_u)$
  - modified potentials  $G_k(x_{k-1}, x_k) M_{u|\ell}(\hat{X}_u | x_\ell)^{\frac{1}{u-\ell}}$ ,



# Bridge CPF: block from $\ell = 10$ to $u = 20$



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  - modified potentials  $G_k(x_{k-1}, x_k) M_{u|\ell}(\hat{X}_u | x_\ell)^{\frac{1}{u-\ell}}$ ,
- 3 Output trajectory  $\tilde{X}_{\ell:u}^{\tilde{B}_{\ell:u}}$



# Choosing the blocks

- CPF-BBS efficient if blocks chosen appropriately
- Natural rule: maximise ‘probability of local update’ (PLU):

$$\mathbb{P}(\tilde{X}_\ell^{\tilde{B}_\ell} \neq \hat{X}_\ell)$$



# Choosing the blocks

- CPF-BBS efficient if blocks chosen appropriately
- Natural rule: maximise ‘probability of local update’ (PLU):

$$\mathbb{P}(\tilde{X}_\ell^{\tilde{B}_\ell} \neq \hat{X}_\ell) \approx \text{PLU}_M(\ell, u) \text{PLU}_G(\ell, u) \left(1 - \frac{1}{N}\right)^{-1}$$

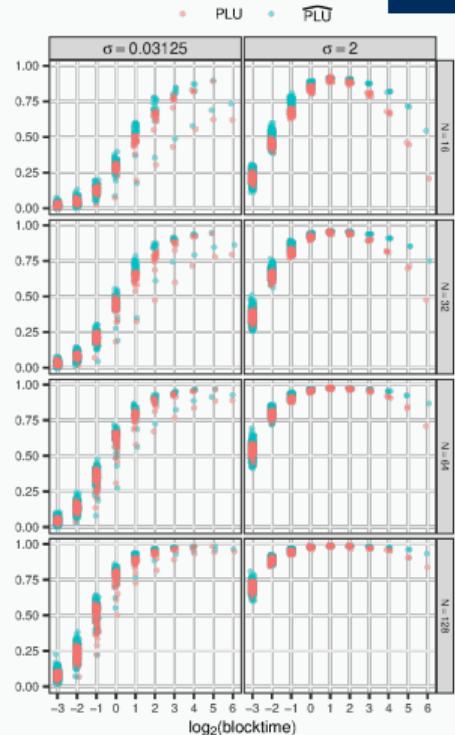
- Based on two approximate estimators for PLU:

$$\text{PLU}_M(\ell, u) = 1 - \frac{M_{u|\ell}(x_u^* | x_\ell^*)}{\sum_{j=1}^N M_{u|\ell}(x_u^* | x_\ell^{(j)})} \quad (\text{short blocks})$$

$$\text{PLU}_G(\ell, u) = \left(1 - \frac{1}{N}\right) \prod_{k=\ell}^{u-1} \left(1 - \frac{p_k N}{(N-1)^2}\right) \quad (\text{long blocks}),$$

where  $p_k = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^N |W_k^i - \frac{1}{N}|$  systematic ‘resampling rate’

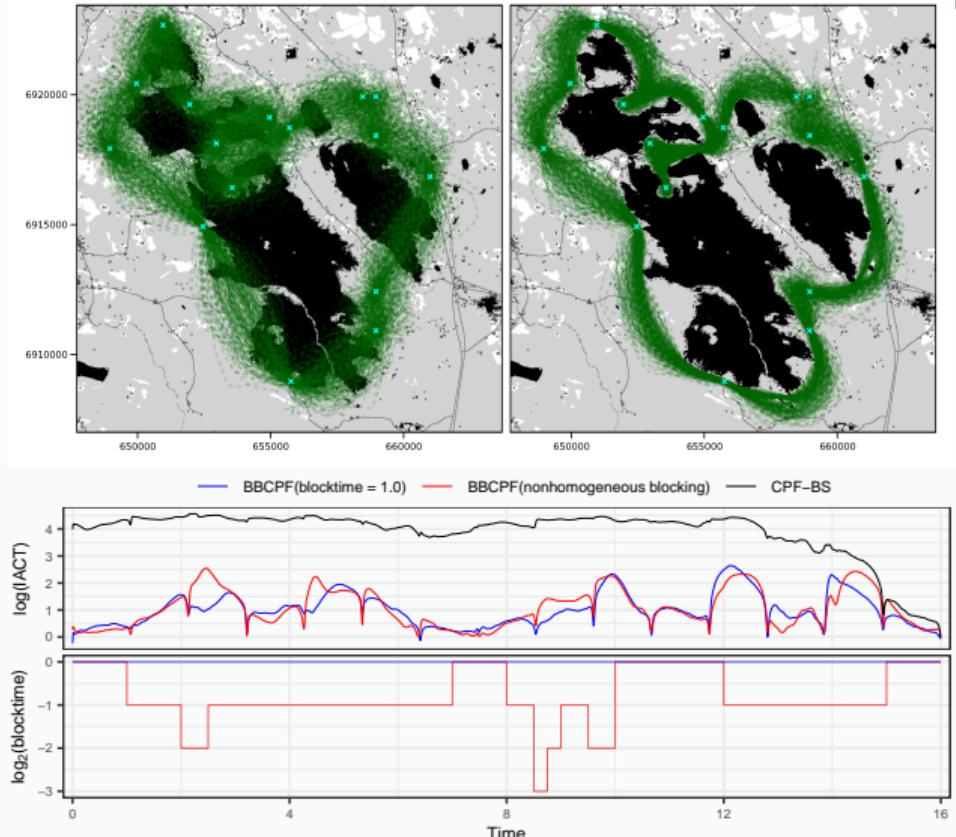
- One trial run, can evaluate with multiple candidate  $\ell, u \dots$





# Example: Interpolation with terrain preferences

- Ornstein–Uhlenbeck velocity conditioned on linear Gaussian observations  $\times$  (left)
- Path integral model: avoid dark water bodies (right)<sup>a</sup>
- Hand-tuned constant size blocking
- PLU-based automatic ‘optimised’ blocking



<sup>a</sup>Animation: @MattiVihola



## Concluding remarks

CPF can work with weakly informative  $G_k$ :

- Use conditional systematic resampling with mean partition with CPF

CPF-BS can be extended to work with stiff  $M_k$  (if tractable):

- Use bridge backward sampling CPF
- Good heuristics to choose appropriate blocking

Discussion:

- Weak potentials and stiff dynamics arise with HMMs, too!
- The method requires tractable  $M_{1:T}$ , which can be from a Gaussian approximation...
- Blocked particle Gibbs (Singh, Lindsten & Moulines, *Biometrika*, 2015) can also be used, but requires block size & *block overlap* calibration...



# References

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Julia package <https://github.com/skarppinen/Resamplings.jl>  
& codes <https://github.com/skarppinen/cpf-bbs>



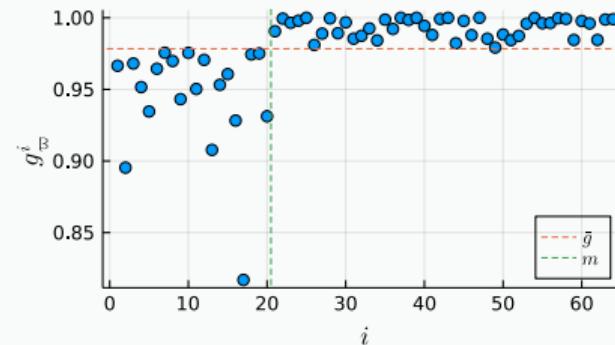
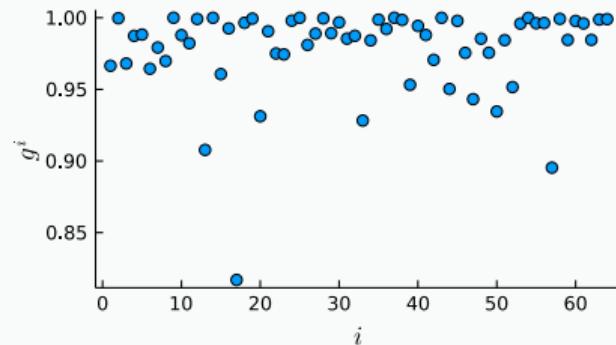
# Mean partition

## Definition

Suppose that  $g^{1:N} \in \mathbb{R}^N$ . A permutation  $\varpi$  of  $1:N$  is a mean partition (order) for  $g^{1:N}$  if the re-indexed  $g_{\varpi}^i = g^{\varpi(i)}$  satisfy

$$g_{\varpi}^1, \dots, g_{\varpi}^m \leq \bar{g} \quad \text{and} \quad g_{\varpi}^{m+1}, \dots, g_{\varpi}^N > \bar{g},$$

where the pivot  $\bar{g}$  is the mean  $\bar{g} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N g^i$ .

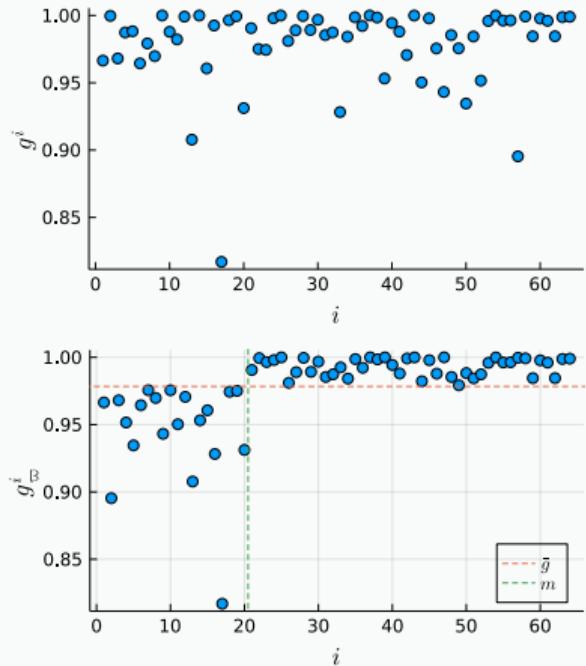


# Stratified/Systematic/SSP with mean partition



Slightly modified resampling schemes:

1. Mean partition order the  $g^{1:N} \rightarrow g_{\varpi}^{1:N}$ 
  - costs  $O(N)$ , like the first stage of Quicksort...
2. Apply the Strat./Syst./SSP resampling:  
 $\tilde{A}^{1:N} \sim r(\cdot \mid g_{\varpi}^{1:N})$
3. Map the  $\tilde{A}^{1:N}$  back to ‘original indexing’  
 $A^{1:N}$ :  
$$A^{\varpi(i)} = \varpi(\tilde{A}^i)$$

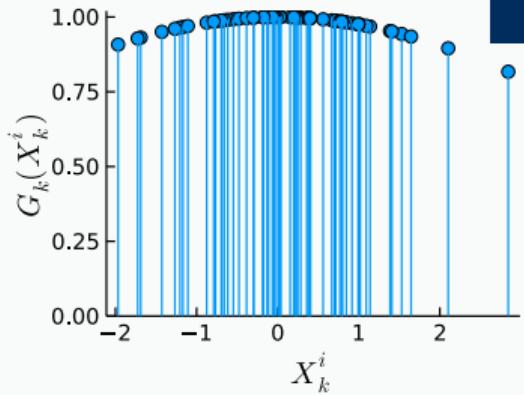




# Weak potentials

The potentials  $G_k$  are ‘weakly informative’ if the weights  $G_k(X_k^1), \dots, G_k(X_k^N)$  are ‘nearly constant’

$$\rightsquigarrow \text{Normalised weights } W_k^i = \frac{G_k(X_k^i)}{\sum_{j=1}^N G_k(X_k^j)} \approx \frac{1}{N}$$

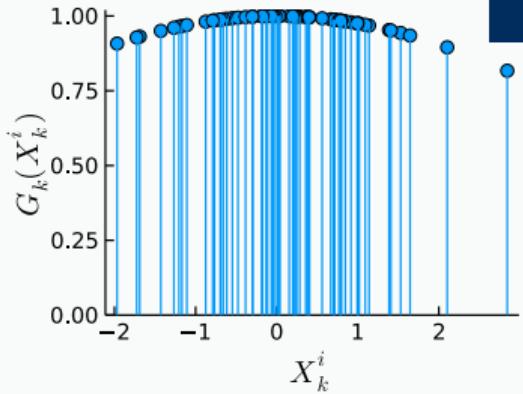




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Examples of weakly informative scenarios:

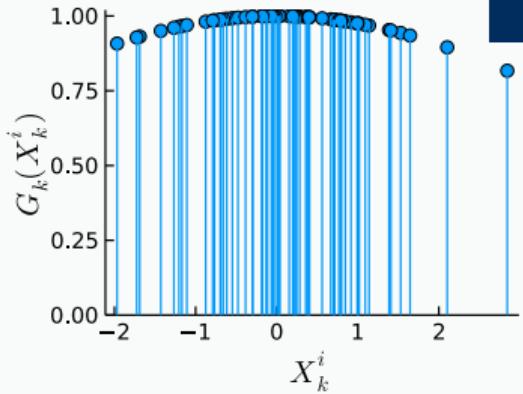
1. If  $G_k(x_k) = g_k(y_k | x_k)$  in the HMM context,  $Y_k$  have high variability wrt.  $M_k$



# Weak potentials

The potentials  $G_k$  are ‘weakly informative’ if the weights  $G_k(X_k^1), \dots, G_k(X_k^N)$  are ‘nearly constant’

$$\rightsquigarrow \text{Normalised weights } W_k^i = \frac{G_k(X_k^i)}{\sum_{j=1}^N G_k(X_k^j)} \approx \frac{1}{N}$$



Examples of weakly informative scenarios:

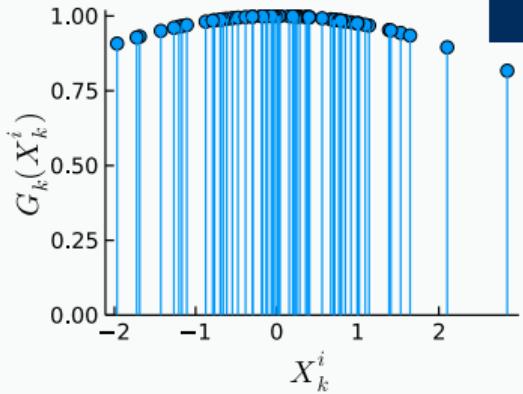
1. If  $G_k(x_k) = g_k(y_k | x_k)$  in the HMM context,  $Y_k$  have high variability wrt.  $M_k$
2. When  $M_k$  form a good approximation of the smoothing distribution  
(e.g. Laplace approximation with linear-Gaussian  $m_k$  and nonlinear  $g_k\dots$ )



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2. When  $M_k$  form a good approximation of the smoothing distribution  
(e.g. Laplace approximation with linear-Gaussian  $m_k$  and nonlinear  $g_k$ ...)
3. When  $M_k, G_k$  come from a continuous-time path integral model

**BRIDGECPF**( $\underline{x}_\ell, b_{\ell:u-1}^*, x_{\ell+1:u}^*$ )

- 1:  $W_\ell^{(1:N)} \leftarrow M_{u|\ell}(x_u^* | \underline{x}_\ell)^{\frac{1}{u-\ell}}; \tilde{\mathbf{X}}_\ell \leftarrow \underline{x}_\ell$
- 2: **for**  $v = \ell + 1 : u - 1$  **do**
- 3:    $\tilde{A}_{v-1}^{(1:N)} \leftarrow r^{(b_{v-1}^*, b_v^*)}(\cdot | G_{v-1}(\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_{v-1}^{(1:N)}) W_{v-1}^{(1:N)})$
- 4:   Draw  $\tilde{X}_v^{(i)} \sim \bar{M}_v(\cdot | \tilde{X}_{v-1}^{(\tilde{A}_{v-1}^{(i)})}, \tilde{X}_u^*)$  for  $i \neq b_v^*$  and set  $\tilde{X}_v^{(b_v^*)} = x_v^*$
- 5:   Set  $\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_v^{(i)} \leftarrow (X_{v-1}^{(\tilde{A}_{v-1}^{(i)})}, \tilde{X}_v^{(i)})$  for  $i \in \{1:N\}$ .
- 6:    $W_v^{(1:N)} \leftarrow W_{v-1}^{(\tilde{A}_{v-1}^{(1:N)})}$
- 7: **end for**
- 8: Draw  $\tilde{B}_{u-1} \sim \text{Categorical}(\tilde{\omega}_{u-1}^{(1:N)})$  where  $\tilde{\omega}_{u-1}^{(j)} = G_{u-1}(\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_{u-1}^{(j)}) G_u(\tilde{X}_{u-1}^{(j)}, x_u^*) W_{u-1}^{(j)}$
- 9:  $\tilde{B}_{\ell:u-2} \leftarrow \text{ANCESTORTRACE}(\tilde{A}_{\ell:u-2}, \tilde{B}_{u-1})$
- 10: **output**  $((x_\ell^{(\tilde{B}_\ell)}, \tilde{X}_{\ell+1:u-1}^{(\tilde{B}_{\ell+1:u-1})}), \tilde{B}_{\ell:u-1})$



# Conditional particle filter (CPF)

Markov transition  $x_{1:T}^* \rightarrow (X_1^{B_1}, \dots, X_T^{B_T})$  leaving  $\pi_T$  invariant  $\forall N \geq 2$ !

**CONDITIONALPARTICLEFILTER**( $M_{1:T}, G_{1:T}, r, N, x_{1:T}^*, b_{1:T}^*$ )

- 1:  $X_1^{b_1^*} \leftarrow x_1^*$  and  $X_1^i \sim M_1(\cdot)$  for  $i \neq b_1$
- 2: **for**  $k = 2, \dots, T$  **do**
- 3:    $A_k^{1:N} \sim r^{(b_{k-1}^*, b_k^*)}(G_{k-1}(X_{k-1}^1), \dots, G_{k-1}(X_{k-1}^N))$    Conditional resample
- 4:    $X_k^{b_k^*} \leftarrow x_k^*$  and  $X_k^i \sim M_k(\cdot | X_{k-1}^{A_k^i})$  for  $i \neq b_k^*$
- 5: **end for**
- 6: Draw  $B_T \sim \text{Categorical}(G_T(X_T^1), \dots, G_T(X_T^N))$     Pick particle at end time  $T$
- 7: **for**  $k = T - 1, \dots, 1$  **do**
- 8:    $B_k \leftarrow A_{k+1}^{B_{k+1}}$     Ancestor trace
- 9: **end for**
- 10: **output**  $(X_1^{B_1}, \dots, X_T^{B_T})$

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<sup>6</sup>Andrieu, Doucet & Holenstein (*J. Roy. Statist. Soc. Ser. B.*, 2010)



# Conditional particle filter with backward sampling (CPF-BS)

Efficient MCMC smoothing:  $\pi_T$ -invariant transition  $x_{1:T}^* \rightarrow (X_1^{B_1}, \dots, X_T^{B_T})^7$

**CPF-BS**( $M_{1:T}, G_{1:T}, r, N, x_{1:T}^*, b_{1:T}^*$ )

- 1:  $X_1^{b_1^*} \leftarrow x_1^*$  and  $X_1^i \sim M_1(\cdot)$  for  $i \neq b_1$
- 2: **for**  $k = 2, \dots, T$  **do**
- 3:    $A_k^{1:N} \sim r^{(b_{k-1}^*, b_k^*)}(G_{k-1}(X_{k-1}^1), \dots, G_{k-1}(X_{k-1}^N))$    Conditional resample
- 4:    $X_k^{b_k^*} \leftarrow x_k^*$  and  $X_k^i \sim M_k(\cdot \mid X_{k-1}^{A_k^i})$  for  $i \neq b_k^*$
- 5: **end for**
- 6: Draw  $B_T \sim \text{Categorical}(G_T(X_T^1), \dots, G_T(X_T^N))$     Pick index at end
- 7: **for**  $k = T - 1, \dots, 1$  **do**
- 8:    $B_k \sim \text{Categorical}(w_k^{1:N})$ , where  $w_k^i = G_k(X_k^i)M_{k+1}(X_{k+1}^{(B_{k+1})} \mid X_k^{(i)})$
- 9: **end for**
- 10: **output**  $(X_1^{B_1}, \dots, X_T^{B_T})$

<sup>7</sup>Whiteley (*J. Roy. Statist. Soc. Ser. B.*, 2010);

Algorithmic variant: Lindsten, Jordan & Schön (*J. Mach. Learn. Res.*, 2014) ancestor sampling CPF