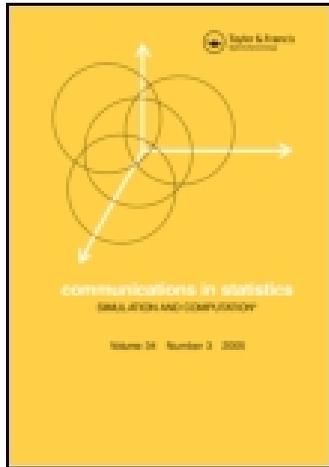


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Brownian Bridge and Other Path-dependent Gaussian Processes Vectorial Simulation

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The iterative simulation of the Brownian bridge is well known. In this article, we present a vectorial simulation alternative based on Gaussian processes for machine learning regression that is suitable for interpreted programming languages implementations. We extend the vectorial simulation of path-dependent trajectories to other Gaussian processes, namely, sequences of Brownian bridges, geometric Brownian motion, fractional Brownian motion, and Ornstein–Uhlenbeck mean reversion process.

Keywords Brownian bridge; Gaussian processes for machine learning regression; Path-dependent Gaussian processes; Vectorial simulation.

Mathematics Subject Classification Primary 60G15; 68U20; Secondary 65C20; 62-04; 90-04.

1. Introduction

Interpreted programming languages like Sage, Octave, Mathematica, and Matlab are currently important frameworks in research and development.

In these programming languages, it is crucial to use vectorial algorithms instead of iterative ones in order to achieve the execution speeds of compiled languages. This is because vectorial operations are typically supported by built-in functions which are implemented by optimized machine code.

The iterative simulation of the Brownian bridge is well known (Glasserman, 2003; Qua, 2012). In this article, we present a vectorial simulation alternative based on Gaussian processes for machine learning regression that is suitable for interpreted programming languages implementations.

We extend the vectorial simulation of path-dependent trajectories to other Gaussian processes, namely, sequences of Brownian bridges, geometric Brownian motion, fractional Brownian motion and Ornstein–Uhlenbeck mean reversion process, by developing a Gaussian path-dependent trajectories simulation vectorial framework.

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We illustrate the flexibility of the path-dependent vectorial simulation procedure by creating a two-dimensional Wiener process representation of a Norbert Wiener photograph.

Simulation of Gaussian processes immediately spread with computers availability and became an important tool in many science areas, such as mathematics (Kloeden and Platen, 1992), finance (Glasserman, 2003), engineering (Kasdin, 1995), hydrology (Mandelbrot, 1971), and geology (Alabert, 1987), among many others.

In particular, the simulation of Brownian bridges, geometric Brownian motion, fractional Brownian motion, and Ornstein–Uhlenbeck mean reversion process, play an important role in Monte Carlo methods (Moskowitz and Caffisch, 1996), securities pricing (Broadie and Glasserman, 1997), communication networks (Paxson, 1997) and particles motion (Gillespie, 1996), respectively.

A wide range of path-dependent Gaussian trajectories simulation methods exist, spanning from the earlier, based on sampling the unconditional distribution (Hoffman and Ribak, 1991), Cholesky factorization (Davis, 1987) or FFT (Dietrich and Newsam, 1996), to the more recent efforts of implementing the old methods in the emerging parallel architectures (Garland et al., 2008; Volkov and Demmel, 2008).

In this article, we use the Cholesky method. Despite having known limitations (Jean-François, 2000) it allows the extension to the path-dependent case and we show that it is relevant concerning the execution speed of interpreted programming languages implementations.

2. Brownian Bridge Iterative Simulation

A Brownian bridge is a standard Brownian motion W conditioned to $W(1) = 0$. The Brownian bridge condition $W(1) = 0$ can be generalized to other time instants greater than zero and to other values besides zero.

The standard Brownian motion W , defined in \mathbb{R}_0^+ , is also called a Wiener process (Björk, 2004) and has the following properties:

1. $W(0) = 0$;
2. W has independent increments, i.e. if $r < s \leq t < u$ then $W(u) - W(t)$ and $W(s) - W(r)$ are independent random variables;
3. For $s < t$ the random variable $W(t) - W(s)$ has the Gaussian distribution $\mathcal{N}(0, \sqrt{t - s})$;
4. W has almost surely continuous trajectories.

In addition, the Wiener process is a Gaussian process with mean function $m(t)$ and covariance function $\text{cov}(s, t)$:

$$m(t) = 0, \tag{1}$$

$$\text{cov}(s, t) = \min(s, t). \tag{2}$$

In order to illustrate the iterative simulation of a Brownian bridge trajectory B , consider that at some step we have $0 < u < s < t < 1$, $B(u) = \alpha$, $B(t) = \beta$ and we want to simulate the value $B(s)$ (Glasserman, 2003). Given the Wiener process properties, the random vector

$[B(u)B(s)B(t)]^T$ is Gaussian with mean vector and covariance matrix:

$$\begin{bmatrix} B(u) \\ B(s) \\ B(t) \end{bmatrix} \sim \mathcal{N} \left(\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} u & u & u \\ u & s & s \\ u & s & t \end{bmatrix} \right) \quad (3)$$

Therefore, the conditional distribution $B(s)|B(u), B(t)$ is given by

$$B(s)|B(u), B(t) \sim \mathcal{N} \left(\frac{(t-s)\alpha + (s-u)\beta}{t-u}, \frac{(s-u)(t-s)}{t-u} \right) \quad (4)$$

Thus, the value $B(s)$ is simulated by

$$B(s) = \frac{(t-s)\alpha + (s-u)\beta}{t-u} + \sqrt{\frac{(s-u)(t-s)}{t-u}} Z, \quad (5)$$

where $Z \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$ is an increment independent of all Z values previously used in the simulation.

Finally, the iterative simulation of a Brownian bridge trajectory consists of starting with $u = 0, t = 1, B(0) = 0, B(1) = 0$ and iteratively filling a trajectory sample at time s (between u and t) with Eq. (5), then moving one of the end points to the simulated sample and repeating the process until all trajectory samples are filled.

Figure 1 shows a sequence of 500 simulated independent Gaussian $\mathcal{N}(0, 1)$ increments (white noise), and the corresponding simulated Wiener process and Brownian bridge trajectories (sampled uniformly 500 times between zero and one). The Brownian bridge trajectory was simulated by the iterative procedure above.

3. Gaussian Processes for Machine Learning

The goal of Gaussian processes for machine learning regression is to find the nonlinear unknown mapping $y = f(\mathbf{x})$, from data (\mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y}) , using Gaussian distributions over functions (Rasmussen and Williams, 2005):

$$\mathcal{GP} \sim \mathcal{N}(m(\mathbf{x}), cov(\mathbf{x}_1, \mathbf{x}_2)). \quad (6)$$

The Gaussian process defined by $m(\mathbf{x})$ and $cov(\mathbf{x}_1, \mathbf{x}_2)$, in Eq. (6), is the prior process.

The pair (\mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y}) is the training set. The matrix \mathbf{X} collects a set of n vectors \mathbf{x} , where the value $y = f(\mathbf{x})$ was observed. The corresponding y values are collected in vector \mathbf{y} .

The set of vectors \mathbf{x}^* where the values $y^* = f(\mathbf{x}^*)$ were not observed, is collected in matrix \mathbf{X}^* . The matrix \mathbf{X}^* is the test set.

The regression function is the mean function of the process defined by all the trajectories of the prior process that passes through the training set. The regression confidence is the corresponding covariance function. The regression mean and the regression confidence define the posterior process on data.

As presented in the previous section, the Wiener process is a scalar Gaussian process

$$W \sim \mathcal{N}(m(t), cov(s, t)) \quad (7)$$

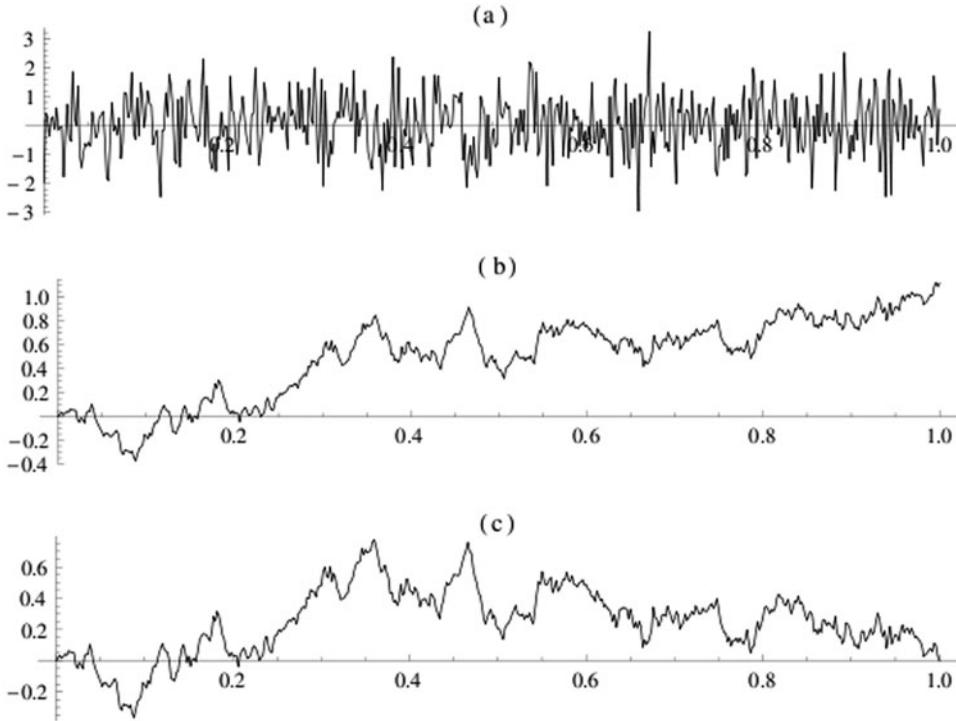


Figure 1. Simulated trajectories of: (a) white noise; (b) the corresponding Wiener process; (c) the corresponding Brownian bridge.

where $m(t)$ is given by Eq. (1) and $cov(s, t)$ by Eq. (2).

In this case, the mapping f is the scalar mapping $y = f(t)$, where y is the value of W at time t . This reduces the training set to the pair of vectors (\mathbf{t}, \mathbf{y}) , and the test set to vector \mathbf{t}^* .

Since the process is Gaussian (Rasmussen and Williams, 2005)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{y} \\ \mathbf{y}^* \end{bmatrix} \sim \mathcal{N} \left(\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{m} \\ \mathbf{m}^* \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{K} & \mathbf{K}_* \\ \mathbf{K}_*^T & \mathbf{K}_{**} \end{bmatrix} \right) \quad (8)$$

and

$$p(\mathbf{y}^* | \mathbf{t}^*, \mathbf{t}, \mathbf{y}) \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{m}^* + \mathbf{K}_*^T \mathbf{K}^{-1}(\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{m}), \mathbf{K}_{**} - \mathbf{K}_*^T \mathbf{K}^{-1} \mathbf{K}_*) \quad (9)$$

where \mathbf{m} and \mathbf{m}^* are mean vectors of training and test sets, \mathbf{K} is the training set covariance matrix, \mathbf{K}_* the training-test covariance matrix and \mathbf{K}_{**} the test set covariance matrix.

The conditional distribution

$$p(\mathbf{y}^* | \mathbf{t}^*, \mathbf{t}, \mathbf{y}) \quad (10)$$

corresponds to the posterior process on the data

$$\mathcal{GP}_{\mathcal{D}} \sim \mathcal{N}(m_{\mathcal{D}}(t), cov_{\mathcal{D}}(s, t)) \quad (11)$$

where

$$m_{\mathcal{D}}(t) = m(t) + \mathbf{K}_{\mathbf{t},t}^T \mathbf{K}^{-1} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{m}) \quad (12)$$

and

$$\text{cov}_{\mathcal{D}}(s, t) = \text{cov}(s, t) - \mathbf{K}_{\mathbf{t},s}^T \mathbf{K}^{-1} \mathbf{K}_{\mathbf{t},t} \quad (13)$$

where $\mathbf{K}_{\mathbf{t},t}$ is a covariance vector between every training instant and t .

Eq. (12) is the regression function, while Eq. (13) is the regression confidence. Eqs. (12) and (13) are the central equations of Gaussian processes for machine learning regression.

Figure 2 shows an example of Gaussian processes for machine learning regression using the Wiener process as the prior process and the set of 500 time instants, uniformly distributed between zero and one, as the test set.

4. Browning Bridge Vectorial Simulation

The vectorial simulation of Brownian bridge trajectories is as achieved by joining Sections 2 and 3 .

Considering:

1. the Wiener process W with mean and covariance functions given by Eqs. (1) and (2);
2. the training set with the single pair $(t, y) = (1, 0)$ corresponding to the Brownian bridge condition $W(1) = 0$;
3. the test vector $\mathbf{t}^* = [t_1, t_2, \dots, t_n]^T$ where t_1, t_2, \dots, t_n are the time instants where to sample the Brownian bridge trajectory.

The Brownian bridge process B is Gaussian and the random vector $\mathbf{B} = B(\mathbf{t}^*)$ is also Gaussian

$$\mathbf{B} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{m}_{\mathcal{D}}, \mathbf{cov}_{\mathcal{D}}) \quad (14)$$

where $\mathbf{m}_{\mathcal{D}}$ is \mathbf{B} mean vector and $\mathbf{cov}_{\mathcal{D}}$ is \mathbf{B} covariance matrix. The element i of vector $\mathbf{m}_{\mathcal{D}}$ is given by

$$\mathbf{m}_{\mathcal{D}i} = m_{\mathcal{D}}(t_i) \quad (15)$$

and the element i, j of matrix $\mathbf{cov}_{\mathcal{D}}$ is given by

$$\mathbf{cov}_{\mathcal{D}i,j} = \text{cov}_{\mathcal{D}}(t_i, t_j). \quad (16)$$

Functions $m_{\mathcal{D}}(t_i)$ and $\text{cov}_{\mathcal{D}}(t_i, t_j)$ are those of Eqs. (1) and (2).

Therefore, a Brownian bridge trajectory can be simulated as any other Gaussian vector (Glasserman, 2003), using:

$$\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{m}_{\mathcal{D}} + \mathbf{CZ} \quad (17)$$

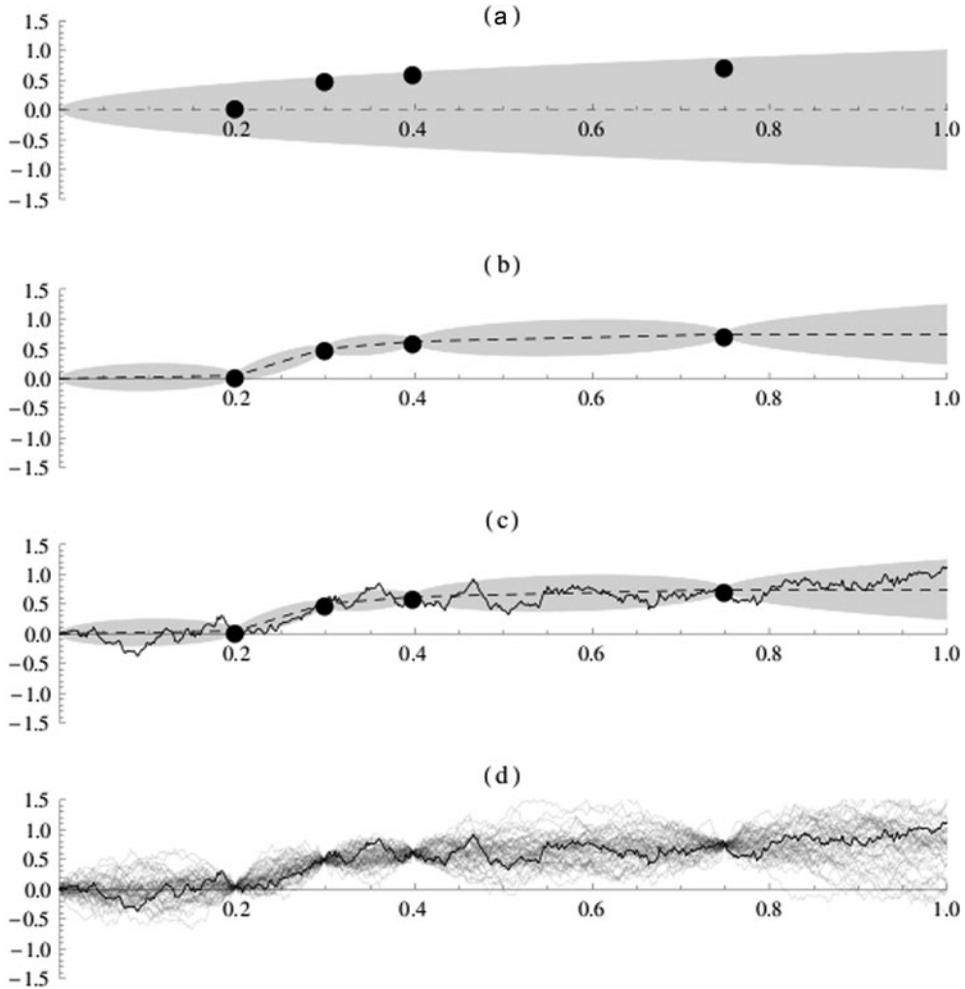


Figure 2. Gaussian processes for machine learning regression with the Wiener process as prior: (a) prior process mean (dashed), prior process two standard deviations band (gray) and the training set (circles); (b) regression function (dashed) and two standard deviations regression confidence band (gray); (c) training set simulated trajectory; (d) simulated Wiener process trajectories passing through the training set.

where \mathbf{C} is the Cholesky decomposition of \mathbf{cov}_D and \mathbf{Z} is a sample of the Gaussian random vector $\mathcal{N}(0, I)$.

Figure 3 shows some Brownian bridge trajectories simulated with the vectorial Eq. (17). The solid black one was simulated with the Gaussian increments of Fig. 1. Since Eq. (17) is just a vectorial alternative to the iterative procedure of Section 2, the solid black trajectory is, as it would be expected, equal to the Brownian bridge trajectory of Fig. 1.

5. Execution Time Comparison

In order to compare the execution times of the iterative Brownian bridge simulation procedure of Section 2 and the vectorial procedure of Section 4 under an interpreted language

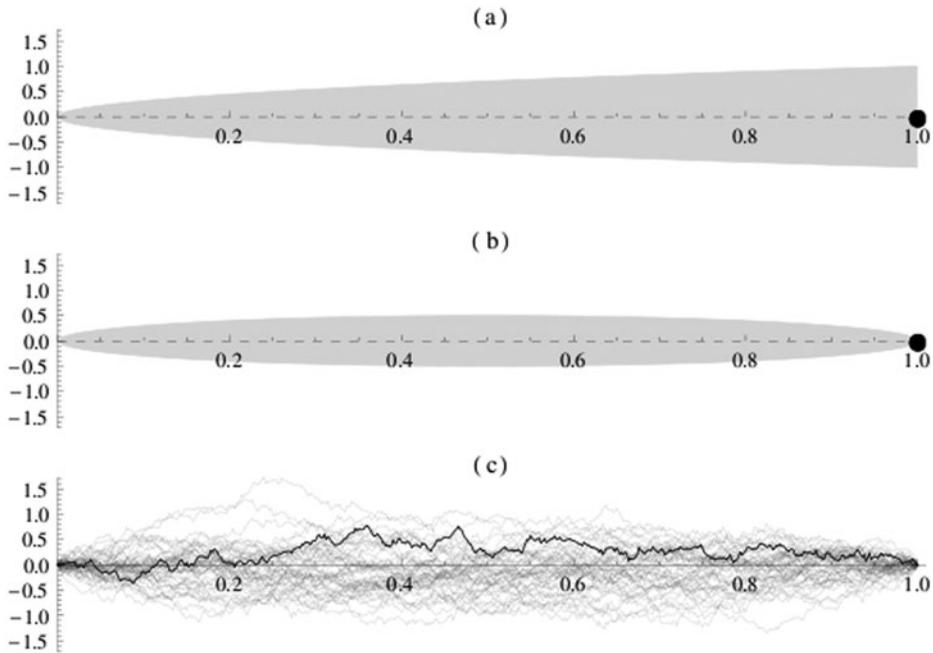


Figure 3. Brownian bridge trajectories simulated with the vectorial Eq. (17): (a) prior process mean (dashed), prior process two standard deviations band (gray) and the training set (circle); (b) regression function (dashed) and two standard deviation regression confidence band (gray); (c) Brownian bridge simulated trajectories.

framework, we implemented both using the Mathematica 8 language (Wolfram Research, 2011) and tested the two alternatives on two different stages:

Stage 1 Inspired by the order of magnitude of typical setups found in financial markets, such as 250 daily prices per year, and stock indices with up to 500 stocks, we defined the reference task of generating 1000 Brownian bridges sampled uniformly 1000 times. This would correspond to simulate four years, of daily prices, of an index as bigger as twice the S&P500.

Stage 2 In order to evaluate the performance sensitivity to the task specification, we varied both the number of samples per trajectory and the number of trajectories.

Table 1 describes the execution system, the reference task, and the execution times obtained for both alternatives on Stage 1.

As it would be expected, the Brownian bridge vectorial simulation with the Mathematica 8 language is faster than the iterative alternative. In the particular case of the reference task, approximately 10 times faster. As mentioned before, this is because vectorial operations are supported by built-in functions which are implemented by optimized machine code.

Tables 2 and 3 describe the execution times obtained for both alternatives on Stage 2.

Table 2 shows, in a clear way, the main limitation of the vectorial simulation procedure, which is memory space. Simulation of all trajectories at a time, using Eq. (17), requires memory space for the number-of-samples-by-number-of-samples square matrix \mathbf{C} and for the number-of-samples-by-number-of-trajectories rectangular matrix \mathbf{Z} . As the number of

Table 1
Iterative and vectorial execution times comparison for the reference task

(a) System	
CPU	Intel Core2 CPU 6300 1.86GHz
Memory	4GB
OS	Linux × 86 (32bit)
Language	Mathematica 8.0.4.0
(b) Task	
Simulation	Brownian bridge trajectories
Number of trajectories	1000
Number of samples per trajectory	1000 (uniformly)
(c) Execution Times (in seconds)	
Iterative	32.31
Vectorial	3.49

trajectories and the number of samples per trajectory grow, the memory space becomes a severe limitation of the vectorial simulation procedure.

Table 3 shows that, for a small number of trajectories (up to 100) with a reasonable number of samples (1000), the vectorial simulation procedure is useless, due to the overhead execution time for computing matrix C .

6. Extensions

It is clear by the Brownian bridge vectorial simulation construction that the simulation procedure can be naturally extended in the following three ways:

1. considering a condition different from $W(1) = 0$ (either in the time instant and its value);
2. considering more than one condition (sequences of bridges);
3. considering other Gaussian processes besides the Wiener process (considering mean and covariance functions different from the Wiener process ones).

Table 2
1000 trajectories execution time sensitivity to the number of samples

Number of samples	Execution time (s)		Improvement (times faster)
	Iterative	Vectorial	
10	0.26	0.003	86.67
100	3.39	0.04	84.75
1000	32.42	3.93	8.25
10000	305.43	Out of Memory	—
100000	2989.15	Out of Memory	—

Table 3
1000 samples per trajectory execution time sensitivity to the number of trajectories

Number of trajectories	Execution time (s)		Improvement (times faster)
	Iterative	Vectorial	
10	0.29	3.32	11.45 (slower)
100	3.40	3.36	1.01
1000	32.24	3.91	8.24
10000	300.28	8.48	35.41
100000	2981.13	Out of Memory	—

The first two ways were already illustrated by Fig. 2(d), where there were a total of four conditions, different from the Brownian bridge condition.

Regarding the third way Figs. 4–6 illustrate the same example of Fig. 2, but now for geometric Brownian motion, fractional Brownian motion and Ornstein–Uhlenbeck mean reversion process. We chose these processes for their importance in modeling stock prices

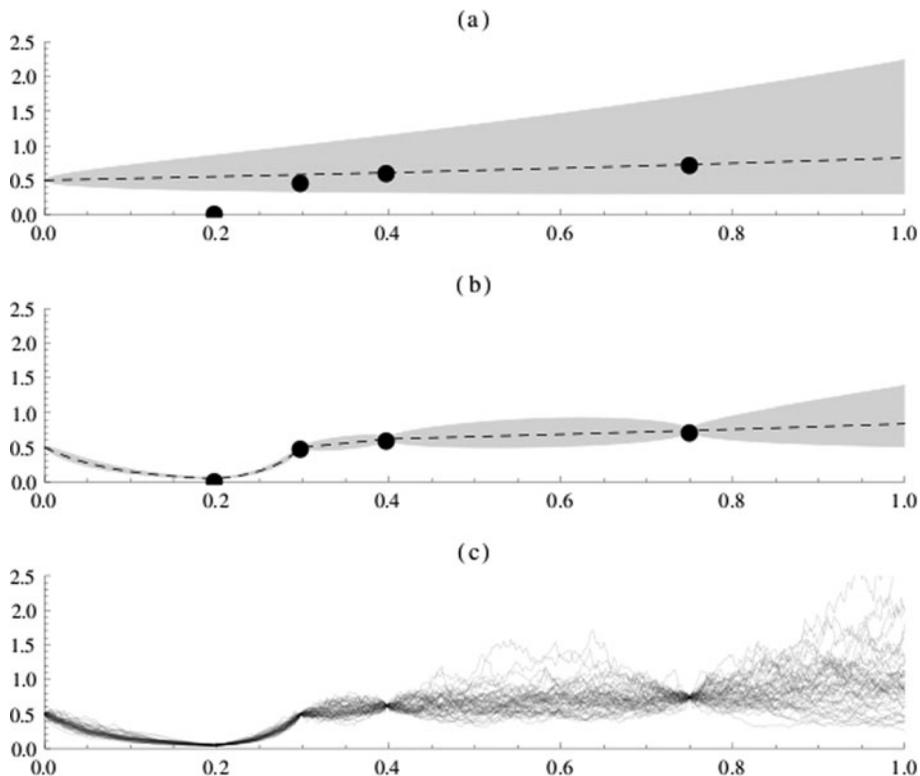


Figure 4. Gaussian processes for machine learning regression with geometric Brownian motion as prior: (a) prior process mean (dashed), prior process two standard deviations band (gray) and the training set (circle); (b) regression function (dashed) and two standard deviation regression confidence band (gray); (c) path-dependent simulated trajectories (passing through the training set).

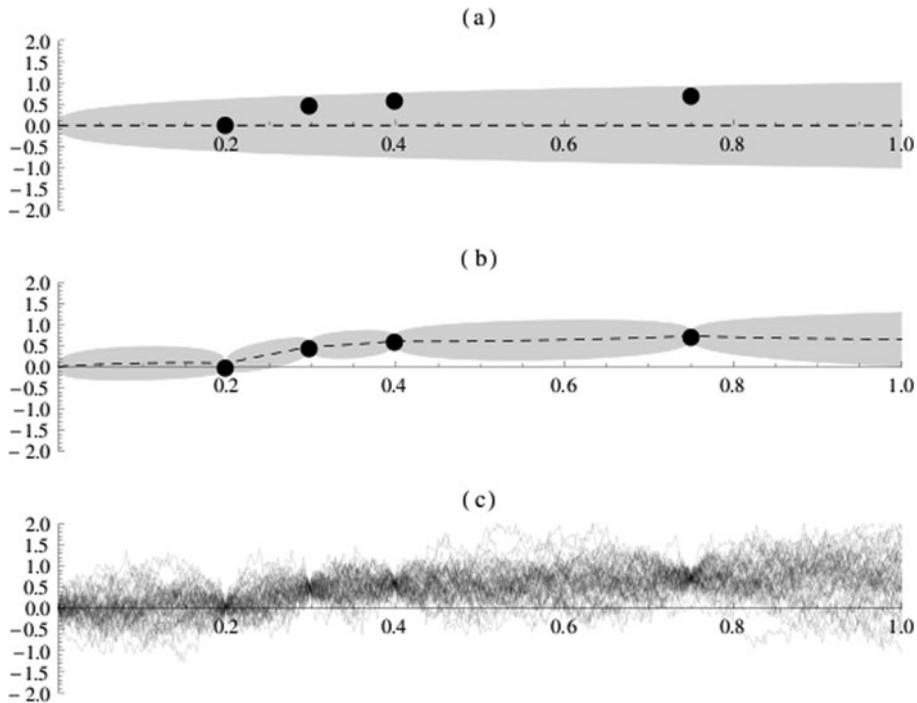


Figure 5. Gaussian processes for machine learning regression with the Ornstein–Uhlenbeck mean reversion process as prior: (a) prior process mean (dashed), prior process two standard deviations band (gray) and the training set (circles); (b) regression function (dashed) and two standard deviation regression confidence band (gray); (c) path-dependent simulated trajectories (passing through the training set).

and interest rates. The simulation procedure is the same as the one in the example of Fig. 2, except that the appropriate mean and covariance functions are used.

In the geometric Brownian motion case, the simulation was done for the underlying log normal process, which is a Gaussian process with mean and covariance functions given by

$$m(t) = \left(\mu - \frac{\sigma^2}{2} \right) t \quad (18)$$

and

$$\text{cov}(s, t) = \sigma^2 \min(s, t) \quad (19)$$

where μ is the drift and σ is the volatility. The geometric Brownian motion trajectories were obtained by taking the exponential of the log normal ones and multiplying by the process initial value x_0 . The values used in the simulation examples of Fig. 4 were: $x_0 = 0.5$; $\mu = 1.0$ and $\sigma = 1.0$.

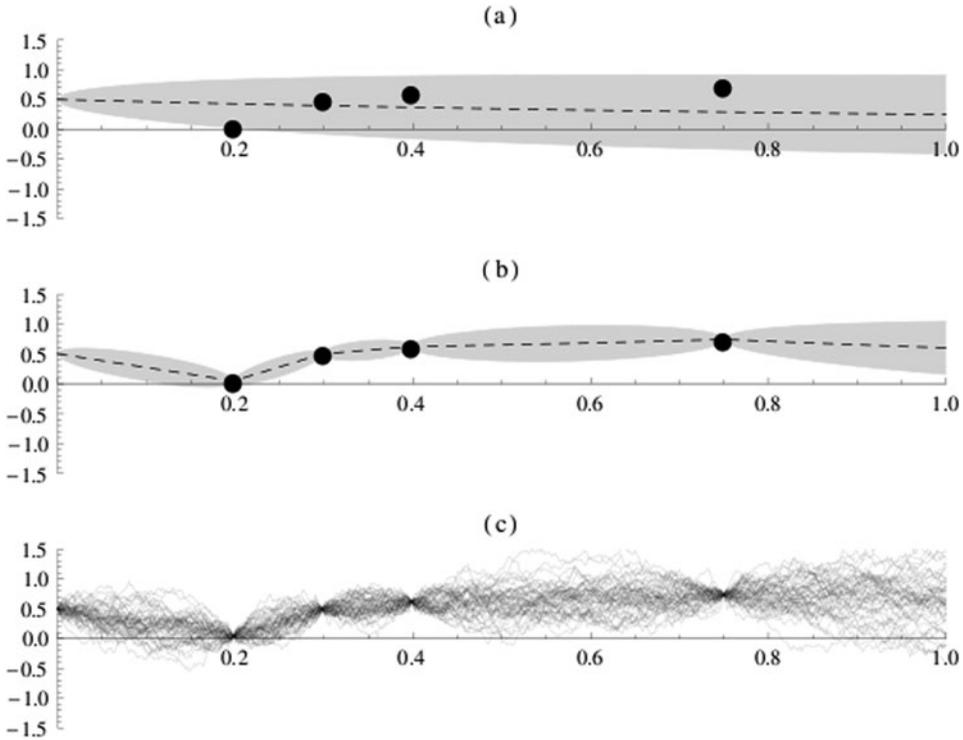


Figure 6. Gaussian processes for machine learning regression with fractional Brownian motion as prior: (a) prior process mean (dashed), prior process two standard deviations band (gray) and the training set (circles); (b) regression function (dashed) and two standard deviation regression confidence band (gray); (c) path-dependent simulated trajectories (passing through the training set).

In the fractional Brownian motion case, the mean and covariance functions are given by

$$m(t) = 0 \quad (20)$$

and

$$\text{cov}(s, t) = \frac{1}{2} (|s|^{2H} + |t|^{2H} - |s - t|^{2H}) \quad (21)$$

where H is the Hurst index. The value used in the simulation examples of Fig. 5 was: $H = 0.3$.

In the Ornstein–Uhlenbeck mean reversion process case, the mean and covariance functions are given by

$$m(t) = x_0 e^{-kt} + \theta(1 - e^{-kt}) \quad (22)$$



Figure 7. 2D Wiener process single path representation of a Norbert Wiener photo.

and

$$\text{cov}(s, t) = \frac{\sigma^2}{2k} e^{-k(s+t)} (e^{2k \min(s,t)} - 1) \quad (23)$$

where x_0 is the process initial value, k is the mean reversion velocity, θ is the mean reversion level, and σ is the volatility. The values used in the simulation examples of Fig. 6 were: $x_0 = 0.5$; $k = 2.0$; $\theta = 0.1$ and $\sigma = 0.5$.

7. Illustration

In this section, we illustrate the great flexibility of the path dependent vectorial simulation procedure by constructing a 2D Wiener process single path representation of a Norbert Wiener photo. The steps taken to construct the representation are the following:

1. Choose a white background photo.
2. Obtain a binarized with dithering version of the photo.
3. Obtain a possible sequence of nearest black pixels: starting at a random black pixel find its nearest black pixel neighbor; repeat the procedure from the found neighbor, not considering the pixels already processed, until reaching the last unprocessed pixel.
4. Consider the black pixels coordinates, x and y , as the conditioning constraints.
5. For the sequence of the x coordinate constraints, simulate a Wiener process trajectory by sampling uniformly 50 times each successive pair of constraints.
6. Repeat the previous step for the y coordinate (using increments independent from those used for the x coordinate).
7. Plot the y coordinate trajectory as a function of the x coordinate trajectory.

Figure 7 shows the resulting image.

8. Conclusions

The contribution of the present article is twofold:

1. It presents a vectorial alternative to the iterative simulation of Brownian bridge trajectories which is based on Gaussian processes for machine learning regression and is relevant regarding the execution speed of interpreted programming languages implementations. The main limitation of the presented alternative is memory space.
2. It extends in a natural way the vectorial simulation of path dependent trajectories to other Gaussian processes such as sequences of Brownian bridges, geometric Brownian motion, fractional Brownian motion, and Ornstein–Uhlenbeck mean reversion process.

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