

# Simulation of particle systems interacting through hitting times

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- We propose and analyse numerical schemes for the simulation of a specific McKean–Vlasov equation, where the interaction derives from feedback on the system when a certain threshold is hit.

$$Y_t = Y_0 + W_t - \alpha L_t, \quad t \in [0, T], \quad (1)$$

$$L_t = \mathbb{P}(\tau \leq t), \quad t \in [0, T], \quad (2)$$

$$\tau = \inf\{t \in [0, T] : Y_t \leq 0\}, \quad (3)$$

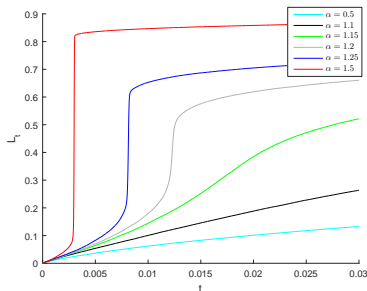
where  $\alpha, T \in \mathbb{R}_+$ ,  $W$  is a standard Brownian motion and  $Y_0$  is  $\mathbb{R}_+$ -valued random variable, independent of  $W$ .

- One motivation for studying these equations comes from mathematical finance, in particular, systemic risk.
- A large interconnected banking network can be approximated by a particle system with interactions by which the default of one firm, modeled as the hitting of a lower default threshold of its value, causes a downward move in the firm value of others.
- More details can be found in [Hambly et al., 2018] and [Nadtochiy and Shkolnikov, 2017].
- This model can also be viewed as the large pool limit of a structural default model for a pool of firms where interconnectivity is caused by mutual liabilities, such as in [Lipton, 2016]. The limit results can be found in [Lipton et al., 2018].

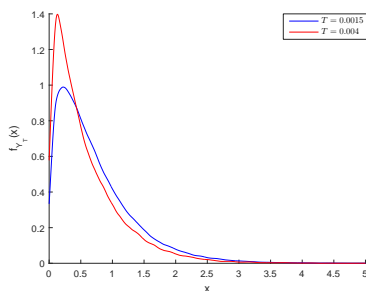
- Theoretical properties of (1)–(3) have been studied in [Hambly et al., 2018], who prove the existence of a differentiable solution  $(L_t)_{0 < t < t_*}$  up to an “explosion time”  $t_*$ .
- Conversely, they show that  $L$  cannot be continuous for all  $t$  for  $\alpha$  above a threshold determined by the law of  $Y_0$ . Such systemic events where discontinuities occur are also referred to as “blow-ups” in the literature.
- The question of the constructive solution, however, remained open.

# Introduction

The left plot shows the formation of a discontinuity in the loss function  $t \rightarrow L_t$  for increasing  $\alpha$ , with  $Y_0 \sim \text{Gamma}(1.5, 0.5)$ . The density of  $Y_T$  for  $T$  before and after the shock is displayed in the right panel.



(a)



(b)

**Figure:** (a)  $L_t$  for different  $\alpha$  near the jump (b) Distribution of  $Y_T$  for  $Y_T > 0$  before and after the jump.

# Discrete time Monte Carlo scheme for simulation of the loss process

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**Require:**  $N$  — number of Monte Carlo paths

**Require:**  $n$  — number of time steps:  $0 < t_1 < t_2 < \dots < t_n$

- 1: Draw  $N$  samples of  $Y_0$  (from initial distribution) and  $W$  (a Brownian path)
  - 2: Define  $\hat{L}_0 = 0$
  - 3: **for**  $i = 1 : n$  **do**
  - 4:     Estimate  $\tilde{L}_{t_i}$  by  $\hat{L}_{t_i}^N = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{k=1}^N \mathbb{1}_{\{\min_{j < i} \hat{Y}_{t_j}^{(k)} \leq 0\}}$
  - 5:     **for**  $k = 1 : N$  **do**
  - 6:         Update  $\hat{Y}_{t_i}^{(k)} = Y_0^{(k)} + W_{t_i}^{(k)} - \alpha \hat{L}_{t_i}^N$
  - 7:     **end for**
  - 8: **end for**
-

# Assumptions and convergence results

- Hölder continuity at 0 of the initial density, is key for the regularity of the solution. The Hölder exponent will also limit the rate of convergence of the discrete time schemes.

## Assumption

*We assume that  $Y_0$  has a density  $f_{Y_0}$  supported on  $\mathbb{R}_+$  such that*

$$f_{Y_0}(x) \leq Bx^\beta, \quad x \geq 0 \quad (4)$$

*for some  $\beta \in (0, 1]$ .*

# Assumptions and convergence results

- Under Assumption 1, we can refer to Theorem 1.8 in [Hambly et al., 2018] for the existence of a unique, differentiable solution  $t \rightarrow L_t$  for (1)–(3) up to time

$$t_* := \sup \{t > 0 : \|L\|_{H^1(0,t)} < \infty\} \in [0, \infty],$$

and a corresponding  $\hat{B}$  such that for every  $t < t_*$

$$L'_t \leq \hat{B} t^{-\frac{1-\beta}{2}} \text{ a.e.} \quad (5)$$

- Integrating (5), we have for future reference a bound for  $L_t$ ,

$$L_t \leq \tilde{B} t^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}}, \quad (6)$$

where  $\tilde{B} = 2\hat{B}/(1 + \beta)$ .



# Assumptions and convergence results

- The following assumption will be used to control the propagation of the discretisation error, by bounding the density (especially at 0) of the running minimum of  $Y$  and its approximations.

## Assumption

*We assume that  $T < \min(T^*, t_*)$ , where  $T^*$  is defined by*

$$\alpha B \left[ \sqrt{\frac{2T^*}{\pi}} + \alpha \tilde{B}(T^*)^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}} \right]^\beta = 1, \quad (7)$$

*with  $B$  and  $\tilde{B}$  the smallest constants such that (4) and (6) hold for given  $\beta$ .*

# Assumptions and convergence results

Consider a uniform time mesh  $0 = t_0 < t_1 < \dots < t_n = T$ , where  $t_i - t_{i-1} = h$ , and a discretized process, for  $1 \leq i \leq n$ ,

$$\tilde{Y}_{t_i} = Y_0 + W_{t_i} - \alpha \tilde{L}_{t_i}, \quad (8)$$

$$\tilde{L}_{t_i} = \mathbb{P}(\tilde{\tau} < t_i), \quad (9)$$

$$\tilde{\tau} = \min_{0 \leq j \leq n} \{\tilde{Y}_{t_j} \leq 0\}. \quad (10)$$

We extend  $\tilde{L}_{t_i}$  to  $[0, T]$  by setting  $\tilde{L}_s = \tilde{L}_{t_{i-1}}$  for  $t_{i-1} < s < t_i$ .

# Assumptions and convergence results: main results

## Theorem (1)

Consider  $\tilde{L}_{t_i}$  from (8)–(10) and  $L_t$  from (1)–(3). Then, for any  $\delta > 0$ , there exists  $C > 0$  independent of  $h$  such that

$$\max_{i \leq n} |\tilde{L}_{t_i} - L_{t_i}| \leq Ch^{\frac{1}{2} - \delta}. \quad (11)$$



## Theorem (2)

For all  $i \leq n$ ,

$$\hat{L}_{t_i} \xrightarrow[N \rightarrow \infty]{\mathbb{P}} \tilde{L}_{t_i}. \quad (12)$$



# Proof of Theorem 1

- We split the error into two contributions

$$\begin{aligned} |\tilde{L}_{t_i} - L_{t_i}| &= \left| \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} \tilde{Y}_{t_j} > 0 \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s < t_i} Y_s > 0 \right) \right| \\ &\leq \left| \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} \tilde{Y}_{t_j} > 0 \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > 0 \right) \right| \\ &\quad + \left| \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > 0 \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s < t_i} Y_s > 0 \right) \right|. \end{aligned}$$

- The second term can be estimated as

$$0 \leq \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > 0 \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s < t_i} Y_s > 0 \right) \leq \gamma h^{\frac{1}{2} - \delta},$$

for any  $\delta > 0$ .

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for any  $\delta > 0$ .

# Proof of Theorem 1

- Now we shall proceed by induction to estimate  $|\tilde{L}_{t_i} - L_{t_i}|$ . For  $t_0 = 0$ , we have  $L_0 = \tilde{L}_0$ . Assume we have shown  $\tilde{L}_{t_j} = L_{t_j} - \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta}$  for  $j < i$ , where  $\tilde{C}_j \geq 0$  as  $\tilde{L}_{t_j} \leq L_{t_j}$ . Then,
- The first term can be estimated as

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbb{P}\left(\min_{j < i} \tilde{Y}_{t_j} > 0\right) - \mathbb{P}\left(\min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > 0\right) \\ &= \mathbb{P}\left(\min_{j < i} \left(Y_{t_j} + \alpha \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta}\right) > 0\right) - \mathbb{P}\left(\min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > 0\right) \\ &\leq \mathbb{P}\left(\min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > -\alpha \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta}\right) - \mathbb{P}\left(\min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > 0\right) \\ &= \bar{F}_i(0) - \bar{F}_i\left(-\alpha \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta}\right) \\ &\leq \alpha \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta} \sup_{\theta \in [0,1]} \bar{\varphi}_i\left(-\theta \alpha \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta}\right) \end{aligned}$$

# Proof of Theorem 1

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- The first term can be estimated as

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} \tilde{Y}_{t_j} > 0 \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > 0 \right) \\ &= \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} \left( Y_{t_j} + \alpha \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta} \right) > 0 \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > 0 \right) \\ &\leq \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > -\alpha \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta} \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \min_{j < i} Y_{t_j} > 0 \right) \\ &= \bar{F}_i(0) - \bar{F}_i \left( -\alpha \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta} \right) \\ &\leq \alpha \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta} \sup_{\theta \in [0,1]} \bar{\varphi}_i \left( -\theta \alpha \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta} \right) \end{aligned}$$

# Proof of Theorem 1

- We got an estimate for  $\bar{\varphi}_i$

$$\bar{\varphi}_i \left( -\theta \frac{\alpha}{2} \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j h^{\frac{1}{2}-\delta} \right) \leq B \left[ \sqrt{\frac{2t_i}{\pi}} + \alpha \tilde{B} t_i^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}} \right]^\beta,$$

- As a result, we have the following inequality for  $\tilde{C}_i$ ,

$$\tilde{C}_i \leq \alpha \max_{j < i} \tilde{C}_j B \left[ \sqrt{\frac{2t_i}{\pi}} + \alpha \tilde{B} t_i^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}} \right]^\beta + \gamma,$$

- Hence  $\tilde{C}_i$  is bounded independent of  $i$  and  $h$  by Assumption 2.
- By induction we get (3).
- We also proved that the result of Theorem 1 can be extended up to the explosion time  $t_*$  under certain conditions on the parameters.



# Main results

## Theorem

Consider  $\tilde{L}_{t_i}$  from (8)–(10) and  $L_t$  from (1)–(3). Then, for any  $\delta > 0$ , there exists  $C > 0$  independent of  $h$  such that

$$\max_{i \leq n} |\tilde{L}_{t_i} - L_{t_i}| \leq Ch^{\frac{1}{2} - \delta}.$$



## Theorem

For all  $i \leq n$ ,

$$\hat{L}_{t_i} \xrightarrow[N \rightarrow \infty]{\mathbb{P}} \tilde{L}_{t_i}.$$



- We prove the convergence in probability of

$$\hat{L}_{t_i} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{k=1}^N \mathbb{1}_{\{\min_{j < i} \hat{Y}_{t_j}^{(k)} \leq 0\}}$$

in Algorithm 1 to  $\tilde{L}_{t_i}$  as  $N \rightarrow \infty$ .

- We note that we cannot directly apply the law of large numbers, as the summands are dependent through  $\hat{L}_{t_j}^N, j < i$ .
- However, we show that the dependence diminishes (i.e., the covariance goes to zero) as  $N \rightarrow \infty$ , which easily gives convergence, albeit without a Central Limit Theorem-type error estimate or a rate for the variance.

# Proof of Theorem 2

- First, we formulate an auxiliary lemma.

## Lemma

*Consider  $i \leq n$ . Assume for all  $j < i$*

$$\hat{L}_{t_j}^N \xrightarrow{\mathbb{P}} \tilde{L}_{t_j}.$$

*Then,*

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[\hat{L}_{t_i}^N] &\xrightarrow{N \rightarrow \infty} \tilde{L}_{t_i} \\ \mathbb{V}[\hat{L}_{t_i}^N] &\xrightarrow{N \rightarrow \infty} 0. \end{aligned}$$

# Proof of Theorem 2

- The proof is immediate by induction. The statement is true for  $i = 0$ . Now take  $i \geq 1$ .
- By the Lemma, there exists  $N^*$  such that for all  $N > N^*$ ,

$$|\mathbb{E}[\hat{L}_{t_i}^N] - \tilde{L}_{t_i}| \leq \frac{\varepsilon}{2}.$$

- Thus, by Chebyshev's inequality, we have

$$\mathbb{P}(|\hat{L}_{t_i}^N - \tilde{L}_{t_i}| > \varepsilon) \leq \mathbb{P}\left(|\hat{L}_{t_i}^N - \mathbb{E}[\hat{L}_{t_i}^N]| > \frac{\varepsilon}{2}\right) \leq \frac{4\mathbb{V}[\hat{L}_{t_i}^N]}{\varepsilon^2}.$$

- Using again the Lemma, we have that  $\mathbb{V}[\hat{L}_{t_i}^N] \xrightarrow{N \rightarrow \infty} 0$ . Hence,

$$\hat{L}_{t_i}^N \xrightarrow[N \rightarrow \infty]{\mathbb{P}} \tilde{L}_{t_i},$$

for  $i$  and by induction we have proved the theorem.

# Convergence improvement: Brownian bridges

- Next, we improve our scheme by using a Brownian bridge strategy to estimate the hitting probabilities.
- This is very similar to barrier option pricing.
- In order to do this, we consider the process

$$\check{Y}_t = Y_0 + W_t - \alpha \check{L}_t, \quad t \in [t_i, t_{i+1}), \quad (13)$$

$$\check{L}_t = \mathbb{P}(\check{\tau} < t_i), \quad t \in [t_i, t_{i+1}), \quad (14)$$

$$\check{\tau} = \inf_{0 \leq s \leq T} \{\check{Y}_s \leq 0\}. \quad (15)$$

- Then, for each Brownian path  $(W_t^{(k)})_{t \geq 0}$ , we compute  $\bar{Y}_t^{(k)} = Y_0^{(k)} + W_t^{(k)} - \alpha \bar{L}_t^N$  in  $(t_i, t_{i+1})$ , where  $\bar{L}_t^N$  is an  $N$ -sample estimator of  $\check{L}_{t_i}$  given on the next slide.

# Convergence improvement: Brownian bridges

- Hence, using Brownian bridges, we compute

$$\begin{aligned} p_{t_i}^{(k)} &= \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s < t_i} \bar{Y}_s^{(k)} > 0 \mid \bar{Y}_0^{(k)}, \dots, \bar{Y}_{t_i}^{(k)} \right) \\ &= \prod_{j=1}^i \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s \in [t_{j-1}, t_j)} \bar{Y}_s^{(k)} > 0 \mid \bar{Y}_{t_{j-1}}^{(k)}, \bar{Y}_{t_j}^{(k)} \right) \\ &= \prod_{j=1}^i \left( 1 - \exp \left( - \frac{2(\bar{Y}_{t_{j-1}}^{(k)} \vee 0)(\bar{Y}_{t_j}^{(k)} \vee 0)}{h} \right) \right). \end{aligned}$$

Thus, a natural choice for  $\bar{L}_{t_i}^N$  is

$$\bar{L}_{t_i}^N = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{k=1}^N \left( 1 - p_{t_i}^{(k)} \right). \quad (16)$$

# Discrete time scheme for simulation of the loss process using Brownian bridges

As a result, the new algorithm with the Brownian bridge modification is the following

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**Require:**  $N$  — number of Monte Carlo paths

**Require:**  $n$  — number of time steps:  $0 < t_1 < t_2 < \dots < t_n$

- 1: Draw  $N$  samples  $Y_0$  (from the initial distribution) and  $W$  (a Brownian path)
  - 2: **for**  $i = 1 : n$  **do**
  - 3:     Estimate  $\bar{L}_{t_i}^N = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{k=1}^N (1 - p_{t_i}^{(k)})$
  - 4:     **for**  $k = 1 : N$  **do**
  - 5:         Update  $\bar{Y}_{t_i}^{(k)} = Y_0^{(k)} + W_{t_i}^{(k)} - \alpha \bar{L}_{t_i}^N$
  - 6:     **end for**
  - 7: **end for**
-

# Main results: Modification using Brownian bridges

- The convergence rate for (14) is given in the following theorem

## Theorem

Consider  $\check{L}_t$  from (13)–(15) and  $L_t$  from (1)–(3),  $\beta \in (0, 1]$  from Assumption 1. Then, there exists  $C > 0$  independent of  $h$  such that

$$\max_{i \leq n} |\check{L}_{t_i} - L_{t_i}| \leq Ch^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}}.$$

- The convergence rate can be improved to 1 using a non-uniform grid

## Corollary

Consider a non-uniform time mesh  $t_i = (ih)^{\frac{2}{1+\beta}}$  for  $0 \leq i \leq n$  with  $h = T^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}}/n$ . Then, there exists  $C_1 > 0$ , independent of  $h$ , such that

$$\max_{i \leq n} |\check{L}_{t_i} - L_{t_i}| \leq C_1 h.$$



- We shall proceed by induction. Assume we have shown that  $|\check{L}_{t_j} - L_{t_j}| \leq C_j h^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}}$  for all  $j < i$  with some  $C_j > 0$ , and we want to estimate  $|\check{L}_{t_i} - L_{t_i}|$ .
- First, we have

$$\sup_{t_j \leq s < t_{j+1}} |\check{L}_s - L_s| \leq |\check{L}_{t_j} - L_{t_j}| + \hat{B} h^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}} \leq (C_j + \hat{B}) h^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}},$$

since  $L'_\zeta \leq \hat{B} \zeta^{-\frac{1-\beta}{2}}$ .

- Now consider

$$\begin{aligned} |\check{L}_{t_i} - L_{t_i}| &= \left| \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s \leq t_i} \check{Y}_s > 0 \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s \leq t_i} Y_s > 0 \right) \right| \\ &= \left| \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s \leq t_i} (Y_s + \alpha(L_s - \check{L}_s)) > 0 \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s \leq t_i} Y_s > 0 \right) \right| \\ &\leq \left| \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s \leq t_i} Y_s > -\alpha \sup_{s < t_i} |\check{L}_s - L_s| \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s \leq t_i} Y_s > 0 \right) \right| \\ &\leq \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s \leq t_i} Y_s > -\alpha \max_{j < i} (C_j + \hat{B}) h^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}} \right) - \mathbb{P} \left( \inf_{s \leq t_i} Y_s > 0 \right) \\ &\leq \alpha \max_{j < i} (C_j + \hat{B}) \sup_{\theta \in [0,1]} \varphi \left( -\theta \alpha \max_{j < i} (C_j + \hat{B}) h^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}} \right) h^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $\varphi_i(x)$  is the density of  $\inf_{s < t_i} Y_s$ .

- Then, using an estimate for the density, we have

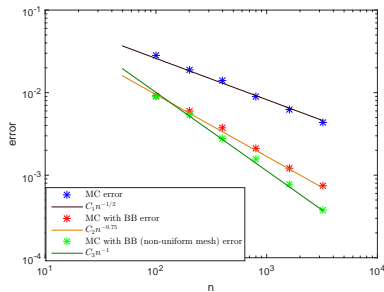
$$C_i \leq \alpha B \max_{j < i} (C_j + \hat{B}) \left[ \sqrt{\frac{2t_j}{\pi}} + \alpha \tilde{B} t_j^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}} \right]^\beta$$

$$\leq \gamma \sum_{k=0}^i (\alpha B)^k \prod_{j=1}^k \left[ \sqrt{\frac{2t_j}{\pi}} + \alpha \tilde{B} t_j^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}} \right]^\beta,$$

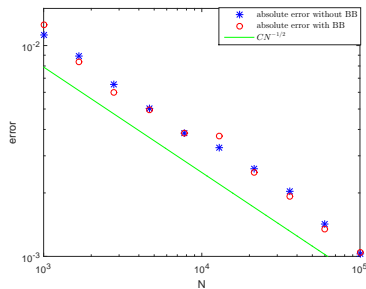
where  $\gamma = \alpha B \hat{B} \left[ \sqrt{\frac{2T}{\pi}} + \alpha \tilde{B} T^{\frac{1+\beta}{2}} \right]^\beta$ .

- Thus,  $C_i$  is bounded independent of  $h$  and  $i$  by (7).
- By induction we get the proof.

# Numerical results



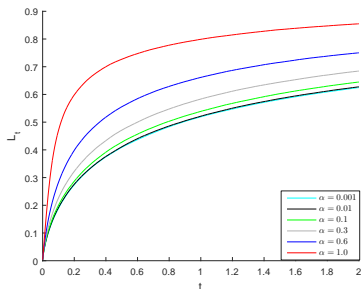
(a)



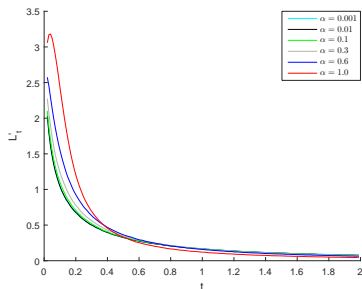
(b)

Figure: Error of the loss process at  $t = T$  for  $Y_0 \sim \text{Gamma}(3/2, 1/2)$ :  
(a) for increasing number  $n$  of timesteps; (b) for increasing number  $N$  of samples, both for Algorithms 1 and 2.

# Numerical results



(a)



(b)

Figure:  $L_t$  and  $L'_t$  for different values of  $\alpha$ .

# Conclusion

- We have developed particle methods with explicit timestepping for the simulation of (1)-(3).
- Convergence with a rate up to 1 in the timestep is shown under a condition on the model parameters and time horizon, when the loss function is differentiable.
- This opens up several theoretical and practical questions. The efficiency of the method could be significantly improved by a simple application of multilevel simulation.
- Theoretically, one would like guaranteed convergence also in the blow-up regime. This requires the choice of an appropriate metric – the Skorokhod distance may be suitable.
- Lastly, it would be interesting to investigate the extension to the models in [Nadtochiy and Shkolnikov, 2017] and [Delarue et al., 2015] in more detail.



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