

Deep learning algorithms for stochastic control and applications to energy storage problems

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Joint work with

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Discrete-time stochastic control on finite horizon

Markov Decision Process (MDP)

- **State process** $X = (X_n)_n$ in $\mathcal{X} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$, $n = 0, \dots, N$
- Controlled by $\alpha = (\alpha_n)_n$ **action/policy**: $\alpha_n = \pi_n(X_n)$ for some measurable sequence $\pi_n : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow \mathbb{A}$, $n = 0, \dots, N - 1$.
- **State dynamics** in a random environment: $X = X^\alpha$

$$X_{n+1} = F_n(X_n, \alpha_n, \varepsilon_{n+1})$$

↔ One-step transition probabilities:

$$\begin{aligned} P_n^a(x, dx') &= \mathbb{P}[X_{n+1}^\alpha \in dx' | X_n^\alpha = x, \alpha_n = a] \\ &= \mathbb{P}[F_n(x, a, \varepsilon_{n+1}) \in dx'] \end{aligned}$$

- **Reward**: running reward $f_n(x, a)$ and terminal reward $g(x)$

Performance criterion

$$J_n(x, \alpha) = \mathbb{E} \left[\sum_{k=n}^{N-1} f_k(X_k^\alpha, \alpha_k) + g(X_N^\alpha) \mid X_n^\alpha = x \right]$$

► **Goal:** Find optimal performance V and optimal action/policy $\alpha^* \leftrightarrow \pi^* = (\pi_n^*)_n$ valued in $\mathbb{A}^{\mathcal{X}}$:

$$V_n(x) := \sup_{\alpha} J_n(x, \alpha) = J_n(x, \alpha^*), \quad n = 0, \dots, N, \quad x \in \mathcal{X}.$$

Remark:

- MDP can also be viewed as time discretization of continuous-time stochastic control problem \leftrightarrow Bellman PDE

Dynamic Programming (DP) Bellman equation

From global to local optimization: Backward recursion on $V = (V_n)$
(Value function iteration)

$$\begin{cases} V_N(x) = g(x) \\ V_n(x) = \sup_{a \in \mathbb{A}} \left\{ \underbrace{f_n(x, a) + \mathbb{E}[V_{n+1}(X_{n+1}^\alpha) | X_n^\alpha = x, \alpha_n = a]}_{Q_n(x, a) := f_n(x, a) + P_n^a V_{n+1}(x)} \right\}, \quad n = N-1, \dots, 0. \end{cases}$$

→ Optimal policy: $\pi^* = (\pi_n^*)_n$ from the Q -value function

$$\pi_n^*(x) \in \arg \max_{a \in \mathbb{A}} Q_n(x, a), \quad n = N-1, \dots, 0$$

Remark.

$\{V_n(X_n^*) + \sum_{k=0}^n f(X_k^*, \alpha_k^*), n = 0, \dots, N\}$, is a martingale:

$$V_n(x) = f_n(x, \pi_n^*(x)) + P_n^{\pi_n^*(x)} V_{n+1}(x).$$

Numerical challenges

Two sources of curses of dimensionality:

- **Computations of the conditional expectation operator** $P_n^a V_{n+1}(x)$, $n = 0, \dots, N - 1$, for any $x \in \mathcal{X} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$, and $a \in \mathbb{A}$. Computational complexity in **high-dimension for the state space** \mathbb{R}^d and also the control space \mathbb{A} !
- **Computation of the optimal policy**: Supremum in $a \in \mathbb{A}$ of $Q_n(x, a) = f_n(x, a) + P_n^a V_{n+1}(x)$, for each $x \in \mathcal{X}$: \rightarrow optimal policy $\hat{\pi}(x)$. Computational complexity in **high dimension for the control space** \mathbb{A} !

Probabilistic numerical methods based on DP

- **Approximate dynamic programming (ADP)**

- (i) Approximate the Q -value function (conditional expectation) by Monte-Carlo regression on: basis functions, neural networks, SVM, etc
 - MC regression in the spirit of Longstaff-Schwartz (for optimal stopping problems)
 - Main issue: simulation of the endogenous controlled process
- (ii) Optimal control is then “computed” from $\arg \max_{a \in \mathbb{A}} \hat{Q}_n(x, a)$ where \hat{Q} is an approximation of the Q -value function. Typically:
 - \mathbb{A} finite set, or discretize \mathbb{A}
 - Newton method for the search of extremum

Numerical methods by direct approximation (without DP)

- **Control approximation:** Focus directly on the (parametric) approximation $\pi = (\pi_n)$ of the policy on the whole period

$$\pi_n(x) = A(x; \theta_n), \quad n = 0, \dots, N-1,$$

for some given function $A(\cdot, \theta)$ with parameters $\theta = (\theta_0, \dots, \theta_{N-1}) \in \mathbb{R}^{q \times N} \rightarrow$ maximize over θ

$$J_0(x_0, A(\cdot; \theta_0), \dots, A(\cdot; \theta_{N-1})) = \mathbb{E} \left[\sum_{n=0}^{N-1} f_n(X_n, A(X_n; \theta_n)) + g(X_N) \right].$$

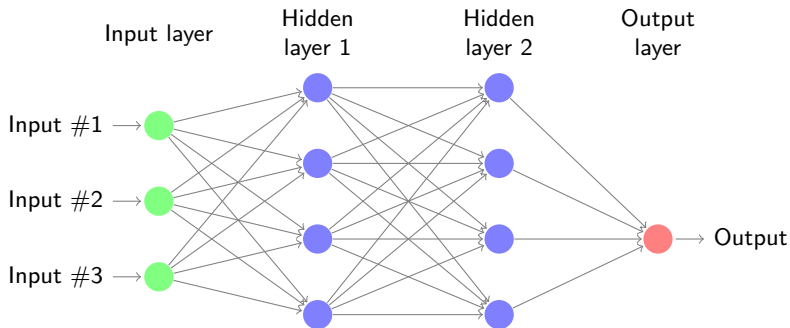
- Kou, Peng, Xu (16): E-M algorithm with basis functions for A
- J. Han, W. E, A. Jentzen (17): **Deep neural network (DNN)** for A and global optimization by stochastic gradient descent (SGD), see also P. Henry-Labordère (18)

Our approach and contributions

- Combine different ideas from maths (numerical probability) and computer science communities (reinforcement learning) to propose (and compare) three algorithms based on:
 - Dynamic programming (DP)
 - Deep Neural Networks (DNN) for the approximation/learning of
 - (i) Optimal policy
 - (ii) Value function
 - Monte-Carlo regressions with different characteristics:
 - Performance/policy iteration (PI) or hybrid iteration (HI)
 - Now or later/quantization
- Convergence analysis
- Numerical tests and an application to energy storage problems

Deep Neural networks (DNN): multilayer perceptron

Architecture of a DNN: composed of layers and neurons (units)



(Feedforward artificial NN)

Mathematical representation of DNN

- DNN: **composition of simple functions to approximate complicated ones** \neq usual additive approximation theory
- ▶ Represented by parametrized function:

$$\begin{aligned}
 x \in \mathbb{R}^d &\mapsto \Phi(x; \theta) = \mathcal{L}^{out} \circ \mathcal{L}^L \circ \dots \circ \mathcal{L}^1(x), \\
 \Phi_\ell &= \mathcal{L}^\ell \Phi_{\ell-1} := \sigma(w_\ell \Phi_{\ell-1} + b_\ell) \in \mathbb{R}^{d_\ell},
 \end{aligned}$$

with L hidden layers (layer ℓ with d_ℓ units), activation function σ (Sigmoid, ReLu, ELU, etc), and weights $\theta = (w_\ell, b_\ell)_\ell$.

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- Theoretical justification by universal approximation theorem (Hornick 91). Rate of convergence not yet well understood (partial results in the case of one hidden layer, see Bach 17).
- Key feature: automatic differentiation for computing derivatives of Φ used in SGD to find the “optimal” parameters.

Algo NNContPI: control learning by performance iteration

A combination of DP and Han, E, Jentzen algo:

- For $n = N - 1, \dots, 0$: keep track of the approximated optimal policies $\hat{\pi}_k$, $k = n + 1, \dots, N - 1$, and compute

$$\hat{\pi}_n \in \arg \max_{\pi} \mathbb{E} \left[f_n(X_n, \pi(X_n)) + \underbrace{\sum_{k=n+1}^{N-1} f_k(\hat{X}_k, \hat{\pi}_k(\hat{X}_k)) + g(\hat{X}_N)}_{\hat{Y}_{n+1}^{\pi}} \right]$$

where $X_n \sim \mu$ (probability distribution on \mathcal{X}), $(\hat{X}_k)_{k=n+1, \dots, N}$, generated from X_n , with control $(\pi, \hat{\pi}_k)_{k=n+1, \dots, N-1}$. \rightarrow Practical implementation:

- DNN for policy: $\pi(x) = A(x; \beta) \rightarrow$ optimization over parameter β
- SGD based on training samples $X_n^{(m)}, (\hat{X}_k^{(m)})_k, m = 1, \dots, M \rightarrow \hat{\pi}_n^M = A(\cdot; \hat{\beta}_n^M)$.

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Remarks.

- 1) **No value function iteration:** \hat{V}_n^M is simply computed as the gain functional associated to controls $(\hat{\pi}_k^M)_{k=n, \dots, N-1}$.
- 2) Low bias estimate, but possibly high variance estimate and large complexity, especially when N is large.

Algo Hybrid: control learning by hybrid iteration

- Initialization: $\hat{V}_N = g$
- For $n = N - 1, \dots, 0$:
 - (i) Compute the approximated optimal policy

$$\hat{\pi}_n \in \arg \max_{\pi} \mathbb{E} [f_n(X_n, \pi(X_n)) + \hat{V}_{n+1}(X_{n+1}^{\pi})]$$

where $X_n \sim \mu$, $X_{n+1}^{\pi} \sim P_n^{\pi(X_n)}(X_n, dx')$. Implemented by

- DNN for policy: $\pi(x) = A(x; \beta) \rightarrow$ optimization over parameter β
- SGD method based on training samples $X_n^{(m)}$, $m = 1, \dots, M \rightarrow \hat{\pi}_n^M = A(\cdot; \hat{\beta}_n^M)$.

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- SGD method based on training samples $X_n^{(m)}$, $m = 1, \dots, M \rightarrow \hat{\pi}_n^M = A(\cdot; \hat{\beta}_n^M)$.

(ii) Updating: compute the approximated value function

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{V}_n(x) &= \mathbb{E} [f_n(X_n, \hat{\pi}_n(X_n)) + \hat{V}_{n+1}(X_{n+1}^{\hat{\pi}_n}) | X_n = x] \\ &= f_n(x, \hat{\pi}_n(x)) + P_n^{\hat{\pi}_n(x)} \hat{V}_{n+1}(x) \end{aligned}$$

by Monte-Carlo regression: now or later

Algo Hybrid-Now

Regress now on a set \mathcal{F} of functions on \mathcal{X} (from $n + 1$ to n)

$$\hat{V}_n \in \arg \min_{\Phi \in \mathcal{F}} \mathbb{E} \left| f_n(X_n, \hat{\pi}_n(X_n)) + \hat{V}_{n+1}(X_{n+1}^{\hat{\pi}_n}) - \Phi(X_n) \right|^2$$

- For instance, \mathcal{F} class of DNN: $x \mapsto \Psi(x; \theta)$
- Optimization over θ by SGD based on training samples $X_n^{(m)} \rightsquigarrow \mu$,
 $m = 1, \dots, M$, $\rightarrow \hat{V}_n^M = \Psi(\cdot; \hat{\theta}_n^M)$.

Algo Hybrid-LaterQ

- (a) Later (at time $n + 1$) interpolation of the value function:

$$\tilde{V}_{n+1} \in \arg \min_{\Phi \in \mathcal{F}} \mathbb{E} \left[\ell(\hat{V}_{n+1}(X_{n+1}^{\hat{\pi}_n}) - \Phi(X_{n+1}^{\hat{\pi}_n})) \right]$$

for some loss function ℓ on \mathbb{R} , e.g., $\ell(y) = y^2$, and for instance, \mathcal{F} class of DNN: $x \mapsto \Psi(x; \theta)$.

- (b) Update the value function at time n by approximating **analytically by quantization** the conditional expectation

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{V}_n(X_n) &:= f_n(X_n, \hat{\pi}_n(X_n)) + \hat{P}_n^{\hat{\pi}_n(X_n)} \tilde{V}_{n+1}(X_n) \\ &:= f_n(X_n, \hat{\pi}_n(X_n)) + \sum_{j=1}^J p_j \hat{V}_{n+1}(F_n(X_n, \hat{\pi}_n(X_n), e_j)) \end{aligned}$$

where $\hat{\varepsilon}_{n+1} \rightsquigarrow \sum_{j=1}^J p_j \delta_{e_j}$ is a J -quantizer of ε_{n+1} .

Remark. Compared to Regress now, Regress Later MC reduces the variance of the estimated \hat{V}_n^M .

Case of finite control space: classification

- $\text{Card}(\mathbb{A}) = L < \infty$: $\mathbb{A} = \{a_1, \dots, a_L\}$
- Randomize the control: given a state value x , the controller chooses a_ℓ with a probability $p_\ell(x)$
 - (Deep) Neural Network for the probability vector $p = (p_\ell)_\ell$ with softmax output layer:

$$z \mapsto p_\ell(z; \beta) = \frac{\exp(\beta_\ell \cdot z)}{\sum_{\ell=1}^L \exp(\beta_\ell \cdot z)}, \quad \ell = 1, \dots, L.$$

- Optimization over the probability vector p via the parameter β

Remark. In practice, we then use pure control strategies: given a state value x , choose $a_{\ell^*(x)}$ with

$$\ell^*(x) \in \arg \max_{\ell=1, \dots, L} p_\ell(x).$$

Convergence of the algo NNcontPI

- M number of training samples
- Neural Network for policy:
 - \mathcal{A}_K^γ : class of NN with one hidden layer, K neurons, and total variation norm smaller than γ

Theorem. Under suitable conditions, and assuming the existence of an optimal policy $(\pi_k^*)_k$, we have for all $n = 0, \dots, N-1$:

$$\mathbb{E}_M |V_n(X_n) - \hat{V}_n^M(X_n)| = \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}} \left(\underbrace{\gamma_M^{N-n} \sqrt{\frac{\ln M}{M}} + \sup_{k=n, \dots, N-1} \inf_{A \in \mathcal{A}_K^\gamma} \|A(X_k) - \pi_k^*(X_k)\|_{L^1}}_{\varepsilon_n^{NN}(A)} \right), \quad (1)$$

where \mathbb{E}_M stands for the expectation conditioned on the training set used for computing the approximated optimal policies $\hat{\pi}_k^M$, and $(X_k)_k$ is the corresponding controlled process starting from $X_n \sim \mu$.

Proof. Arguments from statistical learning theory: Györfi et al. (02)

Convergence of the algo Hybrid

- M number of training samples
- Neural Network for policy and value function:
 - \mathcal{A}_K^γ : class of NN (valued in \mathbb{A}) with one hidden layer, K **neurons**, and **total variation norm** smaller than γ
 - \mathcal{F}_K^γ : class of NN (valued in \mathbb{R}) with one hidden layer, K **neurons**, and **total variation norm** smaller than γ

Theorem. Under suitable conditions, and assuming the existence of an optimal policy $(\pi_k^*)_k$, we have for all $n = 0, \dots, N - 1$:

$$\mathbb{E}_M |V_n(X_n) - \hat{V}_n^M(X_n)| = \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}} \left(\left(\gamma^4 K \frac{\ln M}{M} \right)^{\frac{1}{2(N-n)}} \right. \\ \left. + \underbrace{\sup_{k=n, \dots, N-1} \inf_{A \in \mathcal{A}_K^\gamma} \|A(X_k) - \pi_k^*(X_k)\|_{L^1}}_{\varepsilon_n^{NN}(A)} + \underbrace{\sup_{k=n, \dots, N} \inf_{\Psi \in \mathcal{F}_K^\gamma} \|\Psi(X_k) - V_k(X_k)\|_{L^2}}_{\varepsilon_n^{NN}(V)} \right)^{\frac{1}{2(N-n)}}.$$

Convergence of the algo LaterQ

- M number of training samples
- Neural Network for policy and value function:
 - \mathcal{A}_K^γ : class of NN (valued in \mathbb{A}) with one hidden layer, K **neurons**, and **total variation norm** smaller than γ
 - \mathcal{F}_K^γ : class of NN (valued in \mathbb{R}) with one hidden layer, K **neurons**, and **total variation norm** smaller than γ
 - L points for the **quantization** of the exogenous noise ε .

Theorem. Under suitable conditions, and assuming the existence of an optimal policy $(\pi_k^*)_k$, we have for all $n = 0, \dots, N - 1$:

$$\mathbb{E}_M |V_n(X_n) - \hat{V}_n^M(X_n)| = \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}} \left(\gamma^2 \sqrt{K \frac{\ln M}{M}} + \frac{\gamma}{L^{1/d}} \right. \\ \left. + \underbrace{\sup_{k=n, \dots, N-1} \inf_{A \in \mathcal{A}_K^\gamma} \|A(X_k) - \pi_k^*(X_k)\|_{L^1}}_{\varepsilon_n^{NN}(A)} + \underbrace{\sup_{k=n, \dots, N} \inf_{\Psi \in \mathcal{F}_K^\gamma} \|\Psi(X_k) - V_k(X_k)\|_{L^2}}_{\varepsilon_n^{NN}(V)} \right).$$

A semi-linear PDE with quadratic gradient term

$$\begin{cases} \frac{\partial v}{\partial t} + \Delta_x v - |D_x v|^2 = 0, & (t, x) \in [0, T) \times \mathbb{R}^d \\ v(T, x) = g(x) \end{cases}$$

This PDE can be written as an HJB equation associated to a stochastic control problem whose discrete-time version (time step $h = T/N$) is:

$$\begin{aligned} V_0(x_0) &= \inf_{\alpha} \mathbb{E} \left[\sum_{n=0}^{N-1} |\alpha_n|^2 h + g(X_N^\alpha) \right] \\ X_{n+1}^\alpha &= X_n^\alpha + 2\alpha_n h + \sqrt{2} \Delta W_{(n+1)h}, \quad X_0^\alpha = x_0. \end{aligned}$$

→ Explicit solution (via Hopf-Cole transformation):

$$V_0(x_0) = -\ln \left(\mathbb{E} \left[\exp \left(-g(x_0 + \sqrt{2} W_T) \right) \right] \right).$$

Implementation

Algo Hybrid-Now

- $N = 30$ time steps, $T = 1$, $h = 1/30$.
- DNN for policy (resp. value function): function from $\mathcal{X} = \mathbb{R}^d$ into $\mathbb{A} = \mathbb{R}^d$ (resp. \mathbb{R}):
 - Input layer with d neurons
 - 3 hidden layers with $d + 10$ neurons each
 - Output layer with d neurons (resp. 1 neuron)
- Exponential Linear Unit (ELU) activation function
- Optimization with Adam method in TensorFlow
 - Training distribution $\mu \rightsquigarrow \mathcal{N}(x_0, \sqrt{2h}I_d)$.

Test 1a: from Han, E, Jentzen (17)

- $d = 100$, $g(x) = \ln\left(\frac{1}{2}(1 + |x|^2)\right)$.

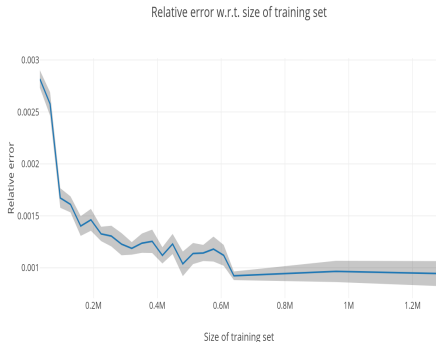


Figure: Relative error of the Algo Hybrid-Now for $V_0(x_0 = 0)$.
RelError = 0.092%; Standard deviation of $\hat{V}_0^M(0) = 0.00191\%$

Test 1b: comparison with quadratic BSDE methods (Richou's thesis)

• $d = 1$, $g(x) = -x^p 1_{0 \leq x \leq 1} - 1_{1 < x}$, $p \in (0, 1]$ (Non-Lipschitz at $x = 0$ when $p < 1$)

▶ $N = 40$, 3 hidden layers with $10 + 5 + 5$ neurons

▶ Estimation of $V_0(0)$:

p	Richou	Hybrid-LaterQ	Hybrid-Now	Bench
1	- 0.402	- 0.456	-0.460	-0.464
0.5	-0.466	- 0.495	- 0.507	-0.509

Model setup

Real-options valuation of gas storage (discrete-time version of the Carmona-Ludkovski model)

- Gas (random) price $(P_n)_n$
- Gas inventory $(C_n)_n$ controlled by the decision α_n to inject, do nothing, or withdraw gas:

$$C_{n+1} = \begin{cases} C_n + b_{in} & \text{if } \alpha_n = +1 & \text{(injection/buy gas)} \\ C_n & \text{if } \alpha_n = 0 & \text{(do nothing)} \\ C_n - s_{out} & \text{if } \alpha_n = -1 & \text{(withdraw/sell gas)} \end{cases}$$

with $b_{in}, s_{out} > 0$.

- Physical inventory constraint:

$$C_n \in [C_{min}, C_{max}].$$

Control problem

- Maximize over α on finite horizon N :

$$\mathbb{E} \left[\sum_{k=0}^{N-1} f(P_k, C_k, \alpha_k) + g(P_N, C_N) \right]$$

with

- Revenue at any time n :

$$f(p, c, a) = \begin{cases} -b_{in}p - \kappa c & \text{if } a = +1 & \text{(injection/buy gas)} \\ -\kappa c & \text{if } a = 0 & \text{(do nothing)} \\ s_{out}p - \kappa c & \text{if } a = -1 & \text{(withdraw/sell gas)} \end{cases}$$

with storage cost $\kappa > 0$.

- Terminal condition: penalization for having less gas than initially

$$g(p, c) = -\mu p (C_0 - c)_+$$

with $\mu > 0$.

Numerical results

- **Model parameters:**

- Mean-reverting gas price around $\bar{p} = 5$, with rate $\beta = 0.5$

$$P_{n+1} = \bar{p}(1 - \beta) + \beta P_n + \xi_{n+1}, \quad \xi_n \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma^2 = 0.05), \quad P_0 = 4,$$

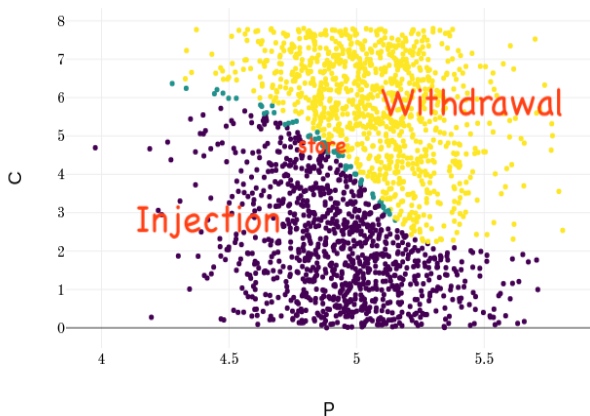
- $b_{in} = 0.06$, $s_{out} = 0.25$, $\kappa = 0.01$,
- $N = 30$, $\mu = 2$, $C_0 = 4$, $C_{min} = 0$, $C_{max} = 8$.

- Implementation by [Algo NNContPI with DNN classification](#):

- 3 hidden layers with $15 + 15 + 5$ neurons, output layer with 3 neurons
- ELU activation function
- Training samples of size $M = 250000$

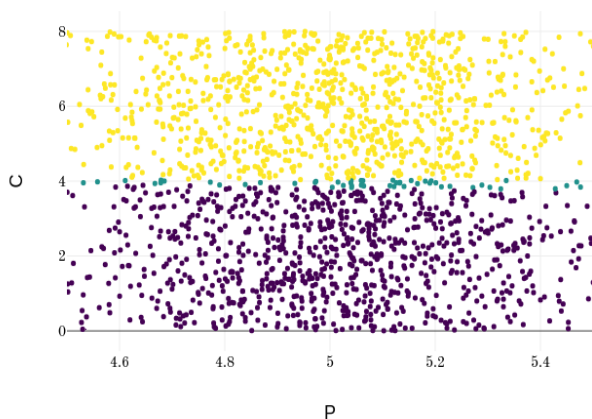
Optimal policy regions

Decision at time 19



Optimal policy regions near maturity

Decision at time 28



Model description

Model from Heynmann et al. (17), see also Alasseur et al. (18)

- **Microgrid** for satisfying a power demand (D_n):
 - Photovoltaic (PV) \rightarrow intermittent electricity production $(P_n)_n$
 - Generator (G) \rightarrow power control α_n when turn on
 - Battery storage with capacity (C_n) in $[0, C_{max}]$
- **Residual demand** $R_n = D_n - P_n$:
 - $R_n < 0$: one can store the surplus power in the battery for later use
 - $R_n > 0$: one should provide power through diesel or battery

Control problem

Minimize over α valued in $\{0\} \times [A_{min}, A_{max}]$

$$\mathbb{E} \left[\sum_{n=0}^{N-1} |\alpha_n|^2 + \kappa 1_{M_n \neq M_{n-1}} \right] \quad \text{subject to satisfying demand constraint,}$$

where

- $(M_n)_n$ mode of the diesel generator: 1 if turn on, 0 if turn off,
- $\kappa > 0$: switching cost for turning on/off the generator.

Numerical results

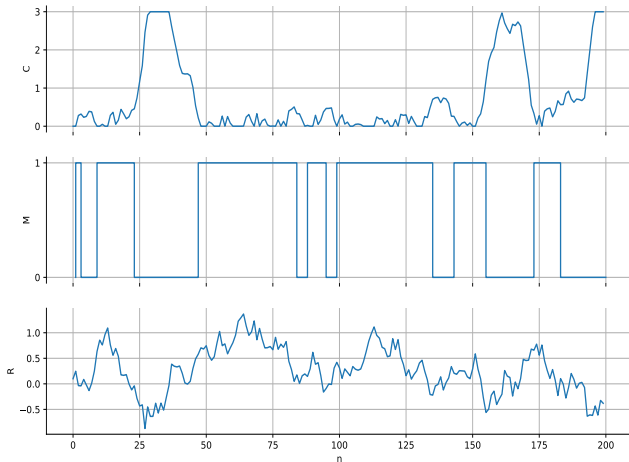
- **Model parameters**

- Mean-reverting model for (R_n) around $\bar{R} = 0.1$, $R_0 = 0.1$
- $A_{min} = 0.05$, $A_{max} = 10$, $C_{max} = 3$, $C_0 = 0$ s
- switching cost $\kappa = 0.1$
- $N = 200$,

- Implementation by [Algo NNContPI](#):

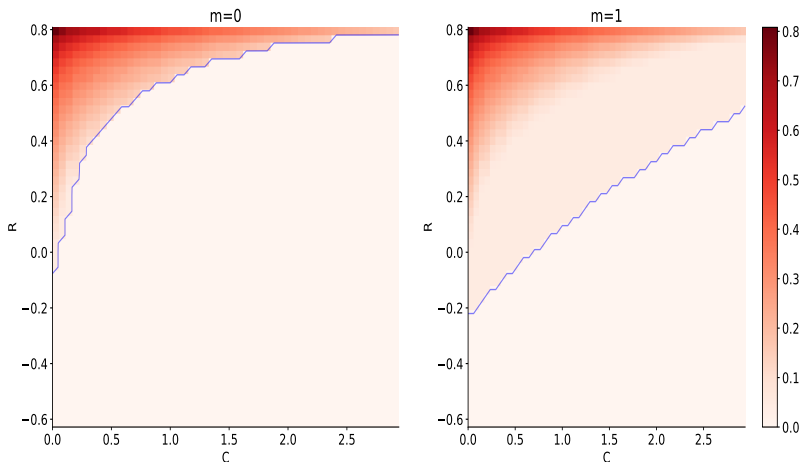
- 3 hidden layers with $100 + 50 + 50$ neurons,
- ELU activation function
- Training samples of size $M = 2^{16}$

Evolution of battery capacity and diesel mode for one trajectory of residual demand



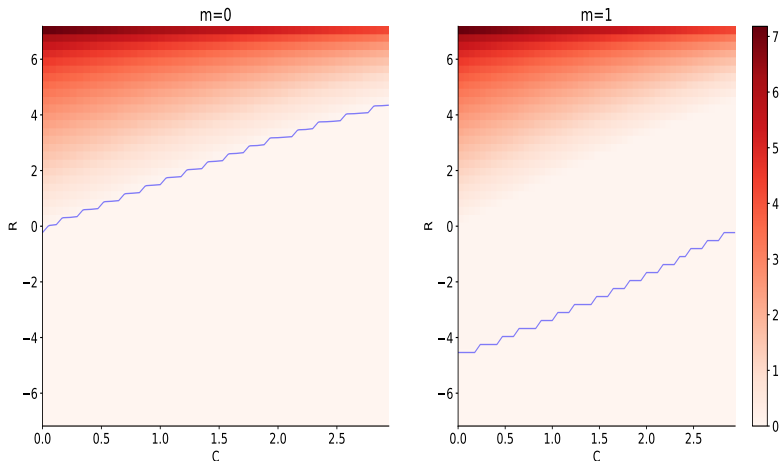
Diesel generator policy at time $n = 1$

Decision at time 1



Diesel generator policy near maturity $n = 199$

Decision at time 199



Concluding remarks

- Machine learning meets stochastic control
 - Neural network regression
 - Control learning
- We analyzed and tested three algorithms

Algo	Bias estimate	Variance	Complexity	Dimension	Time steps
NNContPI	+	-	-	+	-
Hybrid-Now	-	+	+	+	+
Hybrid-LaterQ	-	++	+	-	++

- Future work:
 - Extension to mean-field control problems ...