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The Mean Field Ensemble Kalman Filter: Near-Gaussian Setting

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References:

- The Mean Field Ensemble Kalman Filter: Near-Gaussian Setting, [arXiv preprint](#), 2022;
- Statistical Accuracy of Approximate Filtering Methods, [arXiv preprint](#), 2024.

The discrete-time filtering problem

Error estimate for the mean field ensemble Kalman filter

Conclusions and perspectives

Notation: Probability measures and densities, Operators

State dynamics and observations

Stochastic dynamics: $v_{n+1} = \Psi(v_n) + \xi_n, \quad \xi_n \sim \mathbf{N}(0, \Sigma),$

Data model: $y_{n+1} = h(v_{n+1}) + \eta_{n+1}, \quad \eta_{n+1} \sim \mathbf{N}(0, \Gamma).$

Independence assumption:

$$v_0 \perp\!\!\!\perp \{\xi_n\} \perp\!\!\!\perp \{\eta_n\}$$

Initial state: $v_0 \sim \mathbf{N}(m_0, C_0).$

Notations:

- $\{v_n\}_{n \in \llbracket 0, N \rrbracket}$ is the unknown state in \mathbf{R}^d .
- $\{y_n\}_{n \in \llbracket 1, N \rrbracket}$ are the observations in \mathbf{R}^K .
- $\Psi: \mathbf{R}^d \rightarrow \mathbf{R}^d$ and $h: \mathbf{R}^d \rightarrow \mathbf{R}^K$ are nonlinear operators.
- $Y_n^\dagger = \{y_1^\dagger, \dots, y_n^\dagger\}$ is a given realization of the data up to time n .

Goal: Approximate sequentially $\mu_n = \text{Law}(v_n | Y_n^\dagger).$

Definition of \mathcal{P} , \mathcal{G}

- $\mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^r)$: all probability measures on \mathbf{R}^r .
- $\mathcal{G}(\mathbf{R}^r)$: all Gaussian probability measures on \mathbf{R}^r .

Definition of \mathbf{P}

$\mathbf{P}: \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d) \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d)$ is the linear operator:

$$\mathbf{P}\pi(u) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{(2\pi)^d \det \Sigma}} \int \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}|u - \Psi(v)|_{\Sigma}^2\right) \pi(v) dv.$$

Definition of \mathbf{Q}

$\mathbf{Q}: \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d) \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d \times \mathbf{R}^K)$ is the linear operator:

$$\mathbf{Q}\pi(u, y) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{(2\pi)^K \det \Gamma}} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}|y - h(u)|_{\Gamma}^2\right) \pi(u).$$

State dynamics and observations

$$\begin{array}{lll} \text{Stochastic dynamics:} & v_{n+1} = \Psi(v_n) + \xi_n, & \xi_n \sim \mathbf{N}(0, \Sigma), \\ \text{Data model:} & y_{n+1} = h(v_{n+1}) + \eta_{n+1}, & \eta_{n+1} \sim \mathbf{N}(0, \Gamma). \end{array}$$

Independence assumption:

$$v_0 \perp\!\!\!\perp \{\xi_n\} \perp\!\!\!\perp \{\eta_n\}$$

Initial state: $v_0 \sim \mathbf{N}(m_0, C_0)$.

Evolution of unconditioned dynamics

Let $v_n \sim \pi_n$ and $(v_n, y_n) \sim \chi_n$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} \pi_{n+1} &= \mathbf{P}\pi_n, \\ \chi_{n+1} &= \mathbf{Q}\pi_{n+1} \end{aligned}$$

Evolution of the true filtering distribution

Key Nonlinear Operator on \mathcal{P} : conditioning

$\mathbf{B}(\bullet; y^\dagger): \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d \times \mathbf{R}^K) \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d)$ describes conditioning on observation $y = y^\dagger$:

$$\mathbf{B}(\rho; y^\dagger)(u) = \frac{\rho(u, y^\dagger)}{\int_{\mathbf{R}^d} \rho(U, y^\dagger) dU}.$$

Probability Viewpoint (Nonlinear)

Notation: $Y_n^\dagger = \{y_\ell^\dagger\}_{\ell=1}^n$, $v_n | Y_n^\dagger \sim \mu_n$.

$$\hat{\mu}_{n+1} = \mathbf{P}\mu_n, \quad v_{n+1} | Y_n^\dagger \sim \hat{\mu}_{n+1}$$

$$\rho_{n+1} = \mathbf{Q}\hat{\mu}_{n+1}, \quad (v_{n+1}, y_{n+1}) | Y_n^\dagger \sim \rho_{n+1}$$

$$\mu_{n+1} = \mathbf{B}(\rho_{n+1}; y_{n+1}^\dagger), \quad \text{conditioning.}$$

Schematically,

$$\text{Law}(v_n | Y_n^\dagger) \xrightarrow{\mathbf{P}} \text{Law}(v_{n+1} | Y_n^\dagger) \xrightarrow{\mathbf{B} \circ \mathbf{Q}} \text{Law}(v_{n+1} | Y_{n+1}^\dagger).$$

Sequential Interleaving of Prediction and Bayes Theorem

$P\mu_n$ is prior prediction; $L(\bullet; y^\dagger) := B(\bullet; y^\dagger) \circ Q$ maps prior to posterior:

$$\mu_{n+1} = B(QP\mu_n; y_{n+1}^\dagger),$$

$$\mu_{n+1} = L(P\mu_n; y_{n+1}^\dagger).$$

Particle Filter^[1]

$S^J: \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^r) \times \Omega \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^r)$ is empirical approximation operator:

$$S^J \mu = \frac{1}{J} \sum_{j=1}^J \delta_{v_j}, \quad v_j \stackrel{\text{i.i.d.}}{\sim} \mu.$$

S^J is thus a random approximation of the identity operator on $\mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^r)$.

$$\mu_{n+1}^{\text{PF}} = L(S^J P\mu_n^{\text{PF}}; y_{n+1}^\dagger).$$

[1] A. DOUCET, N. de FREITAS, and N. GORDON, editors. *Statistics for Engineering and Information Science*. Springer-Verlag, New York, 2001.

Convergence of the Particle Filter (1/2)

Convergence of the particle filter^{[2][3]}

$$\sup_{0 \leq n \leq N} d(\mu_n, \mu_n^{\text{PF}}) \leq \frac{C}{\sqrt{J}}, \quad d(\mu, \nu)^2 := \sup_{|f| \leq 1} \mathbf{E}(\mu[f] - \nu[f])^2,$$

Comments on proof^{[4][5]}

- Metric $d(\bullet, \bullet)$ on random probability measures:
- Reduces to TV between deterministic measures.
- Consistency + Stability Implies Convergence.
- **Consistency**: $d(S^J \mu, \mu) \leq \frac{1}{\sqrt{J}}$.
- **Stability**: P, L Lipschitz in $d(\bullet, \bullet)$.
- Suffers from **weight collapse**.

[2] P. DEL MORAL. C. R. Acad. Sci. Paris Sér. I Math., 1997.

[3] P. DEL MORAL and A. GUIONNET. Ann. Inst. H. Poincaré Probab. Statist., 2001.

[4] P. REBESCHINI and R. van HANDEL. Ann. Appl. Probab., 2015.

[5] D. SANZ-ALONSO, A. STUART, and A. TAEB. Cambridge University Press, 2023.

True filtering distribution and particle filter:

$$\begin{aligned}\mu_{n+1} &= L(\mathbf{P}\mu_n; \mathbf{y}_{n+1}^\dagger) \\ \mu_{n+1}^{\text{PF}} &= L(\mathbf{S}^J \mathbf{P}\mu_n^{\text{PF}}; \mathbf{y}_{n+1}^\dagger).\end{aligned}$$

Sketch of proof

Consistency. Monte Carlo error

$$\forall \mu \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d), \quad d(\mathbf{S}^J \mu, \mu) \leq \frac{1}{\sqrt{J}}.$$

Stability. Under appropriate assumptions,

$$\forall (\mu, \nu) \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d) \times \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d), \quad d(\mathbf{P}\mu, \mathbf{P}\nu) \leq d(\mu, \nu), \quad d(\mathbf{L}\mu, \mathbf{L}\nu) \leq \ell_L d(\mu, \nu).$$

Main argument.

$$\begin{aligned}d(\mu_{n+1}, \mu_{n+1}^{\text{PF}}) &\leq \ell_L d(\mathbf{P}\mu_n, \mathbf{S}^J \mathbf{P}\mu_n^{\text{PF}}) \\ &\leq \ell_L d(\mathbf{P}\mu_n, \mathbf{P}\mu_n^{\text{PF}}) + \ell_L d(\mathbf{P}\mu_n^{\text{PF}}, \mathbf{S}^J \mathbf{P}\mu_n^{\text{PF}}) \\ &\leq \ell_L d(\mu_n, \mu_n^{\text{PF}}) + \frac{\ell_L}{\sqrt{J}}.\end{aligned}$$

Particle Filter (Weight Collapse)

$$\widehat{v}_{n+1}^{(j)} = \Psi(v_n^{(j)}) + \xi_n^{(j)}, \quad v_n^{(j)} \sim \mu_n^{\text{PF}},$$

$$\ell_{n+1}^{(j)} = \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} |y_{n+1}^\dagger - h(\widehat{v}_{n+1}^{(j)})|_\Gamma^2\right),$$

$$\mu_{n+1}^{\text{PF}} = \sum_{j=1}^J w_{n+1}^{(j)} \delta_{\widehat{v}_{n+1}^{(j)}}, \quad w_{n+1}^{(j)} = \ell_{n+1}^{(j)} / \left(\sum_{m=1}^J \ell_{n+1}^{(m)}\right).$$

Ensemble Kalman Filter (No Weight Collapse!)

$$\widehat{v}_{n+1}^{(j)} = \Psi(v_n^{(j)}) + \xi_n^{(j)},$$

$$\widehat{y}_{n+1}^{(j)} = h(\widehat{v}_{n+1}^{(j)}) + \eta_{n+1}^{(j)},$$

$$v_{n+1}^{(j)} = \widehat{v}_{n+1}^{(j)} + \mathcal{C}^{vy} (\rho_{n+1}^{\text{EK},J}) \mathcal{C}^{yy} (\rho_{n+1}^{\text{EK},J})^{-1} (y_{n+1}^\dagger - \widehat{y}_{n+1}^{(j)}),$$

$$\rho_{n+1}^{\text{EK},J} = \frac{1}{J} \sum_{j=1}^J \delta(\widehat{v}_{n+1}^{(j)}, \widehat{y}_{n+1}^{(j)}).$$

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Block Form Of State-Data Covariance

Write covariance under $\rho \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d \times \mathbf{R}^K)$ as:

$$\text{cov}_\rho = \begin{pmatrix} \mathcal{C}^{vv}(\rho) & \mathcal{C}^{vy}(\rho) \\ \mathcal{C}^{vy}(\rho)^\top & \mathcal{C}^{yy}(\rho) \end{pmatrix}.$$

Mean field ensemble Kalman filter

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{v}_{n+1} &= \Psi(v_n) + \xi_n, & \xi_n &\sim \mathbf{N}(0, \Sigma), \\ \hat{y}_{n+1} &= h(\hat{v}_{n+1}) + \eta_{n+1}, & \eta_{n+1} &\sim \mathbf{N}(0, \Gamma), \\ v_{n+1} &= \hat{v}_{n+1} + \mathcal{C}^{vy}(\rho_{n+1}^{\text{EK}}) \mathcal{C}^{yy}(\rho_{n+1}^{\text{EK}})^{-1} (y_{n+1}^\dagger - \hat{y}_{n+1}), \\ (\hat{v}_{n+1}, \hat{y}_{n+1}) &\sim \rho_{n+1}^{\text{EK}}. \end{aligned}$$

Approximate filtering distribution $\mu_n^{\text{EK}} = \text{Law}(v_n)$.

[6] E. CALVELLO, S. REICH, and A. M. STUART. *Acta Numerica*, 2025.

Key Nonlinear Operator on \mathcal{P}

$\mathsf{T}(\bullet; y^\dagger): \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d \times \mathbf{R}^K) \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d)$ approximates conditioning of ρ on $y = y^\dagger$:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathfrak{T}(\bullet, \bullet; \rho, y^\dagger): \mathbf{R}^d \times \mathbf{R}^K &\rightarrow \mathbf{R}^d; \\ (v, y) &\mapsto v + \mathcal{C}^{vy}(\rho)\mathcal{C}^{yy}(\rho)^{-1}(y^\dagger - y), \\ \mathsf{T}(\rho; y^\dagger) &= (\mathfrak{T}(\bullet, \bullet; \rho, y^\dagger))_{\#}\rho.\end{aligned}$$

With this notation:

$$\begin{aligned}\mu_{n+1} &= \mathsf{B}(\mathsf{QP}\mu_n; y_{n+1}^\dagger) \\ \mu_{n+1}^{\text{EK}} &= \mathsf{T}(\mathsf{QP}\mu_n^{\text{EK}}; y_{n+1}^\dagger), \quad \mu_0^{\text{EK}} = \mu_0.\end{aligned}$$

Key fact: $\mathsf{T}(\bullet; y^\dagger) \equiv \mathsf{B}(\bullet; y^\dagger)$ for Gaussian inputs.

\rightsquigarrow mean field ensemble Kalman is **exact in the Gaussian setting**.

Best Gaussian Approximation in KL

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{G} &: \mathcal{P} \rightarrow \mathcal{G}, \\ \mathbf{G}\pi &= \operatorname{argmin}_{\mathbf{p} \in \mathcal{G}} d_{\text{KL}}(\pi \| \mathbf{p}). \end{aligned}$$

More concretely, $\mathbf{G}\pi = \mathbf{N}(\operatorname{mean}_{\pi}, \operatorname{cov}_{\pi})$.

Weighted TV Metric

Let $g(v) = 1 + |v|^2$.

$$d_g(\mu_1, \mu_2) = \sup_{|f| \leq g} |\mu_1[f] - \mu_2[f]|, \quad \mu[f] = \int f(u) \mu(du).$$

Definition

Measure of how close true filter $\{\mu_n\}$ is to being Gaussian:

$$\varepsilon := \sup_{0 \leq n \leq N} d_g(\text{GQP} \mu_n, \text{QP} \mu_n).$$

Theorem^[7]

Let $\mu_0^{\text{EK}} = \mu_0$ and assume that $\|\Psi\|_{L^\infty}$, $\|h\|_{L^\infty}$ and $|h|_{C^{0,1}}$ are bounded by r . Then there is $C := C(N, r) > 0$ such that

$$\sup_{0 \leq n \leq N} d_g(\mu_n, \mu_n^{\text{EK}}) \leq C\varepsilon.$$

[7] J. A. CARRILLO, F. HOFFMANN, A. M. STUART, and U. VAES. [arXiv preprint, 2022.](#)

Assumptions

- Data Y_j^\dagger lies in set

$$B_y := \left\{ Y^\dagger \in \mathbf{R}^{KJ} : \max_{0 \leq j \leq J} |y_j^\dagger| \leq \kappa_y \right\}.$$

- $\Psi_0: \mathbf{R}^d \rightarrow \mathbf{R}^d$ and $h_0: \mathbf{R}^d \rightarrow \mathbf{R}^K$ are **constant functions**.

Denote by $B_{\Psi,h}(r)$ the set (Ψ, h) satisfying $\Psi \in B_{L^\infty}(\Psi_0, r)$, $h \in B_{L^\infty}(h_0, r)$.

Corollary^[8]

Suppose that the assumptions of the previous theorem and the assumption above are satisfied. Then for any $\epsilon > 0$ there is $\delta > 0$ such that

$$\sup_{Y^\dagger \in B_y} \sup_{(\Psi, h) \in B_{\Psi, h}(\delta)} \left(\sup_{0 \leq n \leq N} d_g(\mu_n, \mu_n^{\text{EK}}) \right) \leq \epsilon.$$

[8] J. A. CARRILLO, F. HOFFMANN, A. M. STUART, and U. VAES. [arXiv preprint, 2022.](#)

Linear Maps P, Q

The maps P, Q are globally Lipschitz on $\mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d)$ in d_g .

Nonlinear Conditioning Map B^{y^\dagger}

The maps $B^{y^\dagger}(\bullet) := B(\bullet; y^\dagger)$ satisfy:

$$\forall \mu \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d) \quad d_g(B^{y^\dagger}(GQP\mu), B^{y^\dagger}(QP\mu)) \leq \ell_B d_g(GQP\mu, QP\mu).$$

Let \mathcal{P}_R denote the following subset of probability measures

$$\mathcal{P}_R(\mathbf{R}^r) = \left\{ \mu \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^r) : \max\left\{ |\text{mean}(\mu)|, |\text{cov}(\mu)|^{\frac{1}{2}}, |\text{cov}(\mu)|^{-\frac{1}{2}} \right\} \leq R \right\}.$$

Using linearity of \mathfrak{T} , which defines nonlinear map T^{y^\dagger} :

Approximate Nonlinear Conditioning Map T^{y^\dagger}

The maps $\mathsf{T}^{y^\dagger}(\bullet) := \mathsf{T}(\bullet; y^\dagger)$ satisfy, using Ψ bounded,

$$\begin{aligned} \forall (\mu, \rho) \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}^d) \times \mathcal{P}_R(\mathbf{R}^d \times \mathbf{R}^K), \\ d_g(\mathsf{T}^{y^\dagger}(\mathsf{QP}\mu), \mathsf{T}^{y^\dagger}(\rho)) \leq \ell_T(R) d_g(\mathsf{QP}\mu, \rho), \end{aligned}$$

Moment bounds

Assume that $\|\Psi\|_{L^\infty}, \|h\|_{L^\infty}$ and $\Sigma, \Gamma \succ 0$. Then there is R such that

$$\text{Im}(\mathsf{QP}) \in \mathcal{P}_R(\mathbf{R}^{d+K})$$

Strategy: Consistency + Stability Implies Convergence

Since $\mathbf{T}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{G}\bullet) = \mathbf{B}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{G}\bullet)$ we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 d_g(\mu_{n+1}^{\text{EK}}, \mu_{n+1}) &= d_g\left(\mathbf{T}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{QP}\mu_n^{\text{EK}}), \mathbf{B}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{QP}\mu_n)\right) \\
 &\leq d_g\left(\mathbf{T}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{QP}\mu_n^{\text{EK}}), \mathbf{T}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{QP}\mu_n)\right) \\
 &\quad + d_g\left(\mathbf{T}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{QP}\mu_n), \mathbf{T}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{GQP}\mu_n)\right) \\
 &\quad + d_g\left(\mathbf{T}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{GQP}\mu_n), \mathbf{B}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{QP}\mu_n)\right) \\
 &\leq \ell_T(R) d_g\left(\mathbf{QP}\mu_n^{\text{EK}}, \mathbf{QP}\mu_n\right) \\
 &\quad + \ell_T(R) d_g\left(\mathbf{QP}\mu_n, \mathbf{GQP}\mu_n\right) \\
 &\quad + d_g\left(\mathbf{B}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{GQP}\mu_n), \mathbf{B}^{y_{n+1}^\dagger}(\mathbf{QP}\mu_n)\right) \\
 &\leq cd_g(\mu_n^{\text{EK}}, \mu_n) + (\ell_T(R) + \ell_B) \varepsilon.
 \end{aligned}$$

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Conclusions and perspectives

- Control growth of error with N ;
- Extend to continuous-time setting;
- Extend to unbounded setting (in progress);
- Extend to particle approximations^[9];
- Relax assumptions of non-zero noises;
- Extend to other transport maps^[10].

Thank you for your attention!

[9] F. LE GLAND, V. MONBET, and V.-D. TRAN. In *The Oxford handbook of nonlinear filtering*. Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, 2011.









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