# A gentle introduction to the Exclusion Process: traffic jams, hydrodynamics and fluctuations 

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Traffic jams
Arriving to a traffic jam
Leaving a traffic jam
Being ageless

Totally Asymmetric Simple Exclusion Process
Stationary distribution
The infinite model

On large scales
Start of the traffic jam
End of the traffic jam
Surprise!

## Arriving to a traffic jam

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## Arriving to a traffic jam



We notice the slow cars $\rightsquigarrow$ strong braking immediately.
Arriving to a traffic jam is always sharp.

## Arriving to a traffic jam



We notice the slow cars $\rightsquigarrow$ strong braking immediately.
Arriving to a traffic jam is always sharp.
This is one aspect that makes motorways dangerous places.

## Leaving a traffic jam

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Traffic jams Ageless TASEP Large scales Surprise! Start End

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## Leaving a traffic jam



Continuous, long acceleration for those starting from the rear

## Leaving a traffic jam



Continuous, long acceleration for those starting from the rear
Leaving a traffic jam is always soft, "blurry".

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Continuous, long acceleration for those starting from the rear
Leaving a traffic jam is always soft, "blurry".
Why is there such a difference between the two ends of a traffic jam?

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Leaving a traffic jam is always soft, "blurry".
Why is there such a difference between the two ends of a traffic jam?

Totally asymmetric simple exclusion process: an explanation

## Being ageless

We first seek a random time that does not remember its past.
Let $\tau>0$ be a random time such that

$$
\mathbf{P}\{\tau>t\}=\mathrm{e}^{-t} \quad \text { for all } t>0 . \quad \text { (Exponential distribution) }
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Suppose that this time has not passed yet at $t$. What is the probability that it will not pass before another $s$ seconds?
That is, out of those cases when $\tau>t$ occurs, in what
percentage will $\tau>t+s$ also occur?

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The answer is:

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\frac{\mathbf{P}\{\tau>t+\boldsymbol{s}\}}{\mathbf{P}\{\tau>t\}}=\frac{\mathrm{e}^{-(t+s)}}{\mathrm{e}^{-t}}=\mathrm{e}^{-s}=\mathbb{P}\{\tau>s\} .
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The same as $\mathbf{P}\{\tau>s\}$, regardless of $t$ !

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The same as $\mathbf{P}\{\tau>s\}$, regardless of $t$ !
We have found the secret of being ageless.

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$$
\mathbf{P}\{\tau \leq t\}=1-\mathbf{P}\{\tau>t\}=1-\mathrm{e}^{-t}=1-(1-t)+\mathfrak{o}(t)=t+\mathfrak{o}(t)
$$

## Being ageless

Q2 $\leftarrow$ This will be the ageless alarm clock that rings at time $\tau$
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$\rightsquigarrow$ What is the probability that two independent (2) ${ }^{2}$ both ring within a small time $t$ ?

## Being ageless

Q $<$ : This will be the ageless alarm clock that rings at time $\tau$
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$\rightsquigarrow$ What is the probability that two independent $\mathbb{S}_{\alpha}^{2}$ both ring within a small time $t$ ?

$$
\mathbf{P}\{\tau \leq t\} \cdot \mathbf{P}\{\tau \leq t\}=t^{2}+\mathfrak{o}(t)=\mathfrak{o}(t) .
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$\rightarrow$ More (3)'s, even smaller probability.

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$$
\begin{aligned}
\mathbf{P}\{\text { none of them ring }\} & =\mathbf{P}\{\tau>t\}^{k} \\
& =\mathrm{e}^{-k t} \\
& =(1-k t)+\mathfrak{o}(t) .
\end{aligned}
$$

## The Totally Asymmetric Simple Exclusion Process

## TASEP


$m$ balls in $N$ possible slots.

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$m$ balls in $N$ possible slots.
Each listening to its own ST $^{2}$. When that rings, the ball tries to jump to the right.

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Each listening to its own Shen that rings, the ball tries to jump to the right. But sometimes it's blocked.

## The Totally Asymmetric Simple Exclusion Process

## TASEP


$m$ balls in $N$ possible slots.
Each listening to its own (3). When that rings, the ball tries to jump to the right. But sometimes it's blocked. Ageless, independent Q $^{2}$ 's $\Rightarrow$ if we know the present, no need to know the past. Markov property, makes things handy.

## Stationary distribution

Random process $\rightsquigarrow$ need to talk about distributions.

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What is the stationary distribution the one that's unchanged in time?

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Theorem
With $N$ and $m$ fixed, the distribution that gives equal chance to each ( $m$-ball) configuration, is stationary.

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$1^{\text {st }}$ remark.
In this case every configuration occurs with probability $1 /\binom{N}{m}$.

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In this case every configuration occurs with probability $1 /\binom{N}{m}$.
$2^{\text {nd }}$ remark.
With fixed $N, m$, there is no other stationary distribution.

Stationary distribution
Almost proof


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Almost proof

pre-images of $\omega$

$k=2$ pre-images

## Stationary distribution

## Almost proof


pre-images of $\omega$

$k=2$ pre-images

The number of critical clocks for $\omega=$ the number of pre-images of $\omega=k$

## Stationary distribution

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Suppose that each configuration has the same probability $p$ at time $s$. What is the probability of the state $\omega$ after a small time $t$ ?

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\mathbf{P}\{\omega \text { at time } s+t\}
$$

## Stationary distribution

## Almost proof

Suppose that each configuration has the same probability $p$ at time $s$. What is the probability of the state $\omega$ after a small time $t$ ?
$\mathbf{P}\{\omega$ at time $s+t\}$
$=\mathbf{P}\{\omega$ at time $s$ and no jumps within time $t\}$
$+\mathbf{P}\{$ was a pre-image of $\omega$ at time $s$, and jumps to $\omega\}$
$+\mathfrak{o}(t)$ (at least two jumps occur within the small time $t$ )

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$+\mathfrak{o}(t)$ (at least two jumps occur within the small time $t$ )
$=\mathbf{P}\left\{\omega\right.$ at time $s$ and none of the $k$ critical $\mathbb{S}^{\prime}$ 's ring $\}$
$+\quad \sum \mathbf{P}\left\{\eta\right.$ at time $s$ and the right critical $Q^{2}$ rings $\}$
$\eta$ is a pre-image of $\omega$
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$\eta$ is a pre-image of $\omega$
$+\mathfrak{o}(t)$
$=p \cdot(1-k t)+\sum_{\eta \text { is a pre-image of } \omega} p \cdot t+\mathfrak{o}(t)$

## Stationary distribution

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$=p \cdot(1-k t)+\sum_{\eta \text { is a pre-image of } \omega} p \cdot t+\mathfrak{o}(t)$
$=p \cdot(1-k t)+k \cdot p \cdot t+\mathfrak{o}(t)$

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$=p \cdot(1-k t)+\sum_{\eta \text { is a pre-image of } \omega} p \cdot t+\mathfrak{o}(t)$
$=p \cdot(1-k t)+k \cdot p \cdot t+\mathfrak{o}(t)=p+\mathfrak{o}(t)$.

## Stationary distribution

## Almost proof

$\mathbf{P}\{\omega$ at time $s+t\}$
$=\mathbf{P}\{\omega \text { at time } s \text { and none of the } k \text { critical }\}_{\gamma}^{\prime}$ 's ring $\}$

$\eta$ is a pre-image of $\omega$
$+\mathfrak{o}(t)$
$=p \cdot(1-k t)+\sum_{\eta \text { is a pre-image of } \omega} p \cdot t+\mathfrak{o}(t)$
$=p \cdot(1-k t)+k \cdot p \cdot t+\mathfrak{o}(t)=p+\mathfrak{o}(t)$.
Take, say, 1 sec . and $t=\frac{1}{n}$. Then the errors $\mathfrak{o}(t)=\mathfrak{o}\left(\frac{1}{n}\right)$ stay small even if summed up: $\sum_{k=1}^{n} \mathfrak{o}\left(\frac{1}{n}\right) \rightarrow 0$ for large $n$.

## Stationary distribution



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## Stationary distribution

$\left.\begin{array}{c}40 \% \\ 36 \% \\ 32 \% \\ 28 \% \\ 24 \%-- \\ 20 \% \\ 16 \% \\ 12 \% \\ 8 \% \\ - \\ 4 \% \\ 0 \%\end{array}\right]$


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 $20 \%$$18 \%$
$16 \%$
$14 \%$
$12 \%$
$10 \%$
$8 \%$
$6 \%$
$4 \%$
$2 \%$
$0 \%$

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## The infinite model

Take now $N$ (the number of slots) and $m$ (the number of balls) to infinity such that $m / N \simeq \varrho$.

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What is the probability of two neighboring slots with a ball each?

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Etc.

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Etc. In the limit, on $\mathbb{Z}$ : ball with probability $\varrho$, no ball with probability $1-\varrho$, independently for each slot.

## On large scales

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\frac{\partial}{\partial T} \hat{\varrho}+\frac{\partial}{\partial X}[\hat{\varrho}(1-\hat{\varrho})]=0 \quad \text { (Burgers eq.). }
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## Burgers eq.: characteristics

$\frac{\partial}{\partial T} \hat{\varrho}+\frac{\partial}{\partial X}[\hat{\varrho}(1-\hat{\varrho})]=0 \quad$ Burgers eq.: nonlinear PDE.

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\end{array}
$$

The characteristic velocity: $\dot{X}(T)=1-2 \hat{\varrho}$.

## On large scales



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The start of the jam: sharpens.

## On large scales



$$
\dot{x}(T)=1-2 \hat{\varrho}
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End of the jam: smoothens.

## Remarks.

In general, non-linear differential equations are fun. (And difficult.)
E.g., solitary waves were discovered by John Scott Russell in 1834: he chased one along a channel for miles!

http://youtu.be/MADng1fqECY

## Remarks.

- Of course there are much more sophisticated models for traffic modelling.


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- Of course there are much more sophisticated models for traffic modelling.
- http://youtu.be/Suugn-p5C1M
- But TASEP is already very interesting from the mathematics point of view, with many nice theorems and interesting open questions.


## The Central Limit Theorem

Add many iid. variables $Y_{k}$ (with finite second moment), rescale, and you converge to the Normal distribution:

$$
\frac{Y_{1}+\cdots+Y_{n}-n \cdot \mathbf{E} Y_{1}}{\sqrt{n \cdot \operatorname{Var} Y_{1}}} \underset{n \rightarrow \infty}{\Longrightarrow} \mathcal{N}(0,1)
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Example. Take a single car on an empty road (the US still has those...), and $Y_{k}$ the distance covered in the $k^{\text {th }}$ second, $Y_{1}+\cdots+Y_{t}$ is the position at time $t$.

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$\rightsquigarrow Y_{k} \sim$ Poisson(1), iid.; $\quad \mathbf{E} Y_{1}=1 ; \quad \operatorname{Var} Y_{1}=1$;

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\frac{Y_{1}+\cdots+Y_{t}-t}{t^{1 / 2}} \underset{t \rightarrow \infty}{\Longrightarrow} \mathcal{N}(0,1)
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## The current

A traffic engineer walks with the characteristic velocity $1-2 \varrho$. He starts with $J(0)=0$, and

- he adds one to $J$ every time a cars passes him;
- subtracts one from $J$ every time he passes a car.

At time $t$ he has the current $J(t)$.

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The expectation is

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\mathbf{E} J(t)=(1-\varrho-(1-2 \varrho)) \cdot t \cdot \varrho=\varrho^{2} \cdot t .
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At time $t$ he has the current $J(t)$.
The expectation is

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## Tracy-Widom

Take an $N \times N$ Hermitian matrix with

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M_{j k} & \sim \mathcal{N}\left(0, \frac{1}{2}\right)+i \cdot \mathcal{N}\left(0, \frac{1}{2}\right), & 1 \leq j<k \leq N \\
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(all $\mathcal{N}$ 's independent).
Denote the largest eigenvalue by $\lambda_{\max }$. Then

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\frac{\lambda_{\max }-\sqrt{2 N}}{\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \cdot N^{-1 / 6}} \underset{N \rightarrow \infty}{\Longrightarrow} \text { Tracy-Widom(II) distribution. }
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## Scaling

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Thank you.

