A simple model for traffic jams

Márton Balázs

School of Mathematics

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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

Remarks

Start End



Start End

Arriving to a traffic jam

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Start End

Arriving to a traffic jam

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Arriving to a traffic jam



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Arriving to a traffic jam













We notice the slow cars ~> strong braking immediately.

Arriving to a traffic jam is always sharp.



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This is one aspect that makes motorways dangerous places.






































Start End

















































































































































Continuous, long acceleration for those starting from the rear

End



Continuous, long acceleration for those starting from the rear

End

Leaving a traffic jam is always soft, "blurry".



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Why is there such a difference between the two ends of a traffic jam?



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Totally asymmetric simple exclusion process: an explanation

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

 $\mathfrak{G} \leftarrow$ This will be the ageless alarm clock that rings at time au

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 \rightsquigarrow What is the probability that an \mathfrak{P} rings within a small time *t*?

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 \rightarrow More ${\mathfrak S}$'s, even smaller probability.

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$$P\{\text{none of them ring}\} = P\{\tau > t\}^{k}$$
$$= e^{-kt}$$
$$\simeq (1 - kt) + \text{error.}$$



m balls in *N* possible slots.



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m balls in *N* possible slots.

Each listening to its own \mathfrak{S} . When that rings, the ball tries to jump to the right. But sometimes it's blocked. Ageless, independent \mathfrak{S} 's \Rightarrow if we know the present, no need to know the past. *Markov property*, makes things handy.

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

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 2^{nd} remark. With fixed *N*, *m*, there is no other stationary distribution.













Almost proof



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

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- $\mathbf{P}{\omega \text{ at time } s+t}$
- $= \mathbf{P}\{\omega \text{ at time } s \text{ and no jumps within time } t\}$
 - + **P**{was a pre-image of ω at time *s*, and jumps to ω }
 - + error (at least two jumps occur within the small time t)

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$$= p \cdot (1 - kt) + \sum_{\eta ext{ is a pre-image of } \omega} p \cdot t + ext{error}$$

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 $+ \, \text{error}$

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In fact error $\simeq t^2$, stays small if summed up for more and more smaller and smaller intervals of length *t*.

Stationary distribution The infinite model
















































































Stationary distribution The infinite model

















































































































































































































































































































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Stationary distribution The infinite model































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































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Whether a slot has a ball and its neighbours have balls are less and less dependent of each other.

In the limit we obtain a model on \mathbb{Z} . In its stationary distribution we have a ball with probability ϱ , and don't have one with probability $1 - \varrho$ independently for each slot.

Let us now look at the infinite model on the large scale, and let it evolve for a long time. If we change the initial density ρ on the large (X) scale, then the process will not be stationary anymore. Instead, its density will change on the large time scale (T).

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Theorem

The density $\rho(T, X)$ as a function of the large scale variables satisfies the differential equation

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial T} \varrho + \frac{\partial}{\partial X} [\varrho(1-\varrho)] = 0$$

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The following are solutions of this equation:



























































































































The start of the jam: sharpens.
































































End of the jam: smoothens.

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 canal for miles!



http://youtu.be/MADng1fqECY

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Thank you.