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# Total variation estimates for the TCP process

Jean-Baptiste BARDET, Alejandra CHRISTEN,  
Arnaud GUILLIN, Florent MALRIEU and Pierre-André ZITT

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## Abstract

The TCP window size process appears in the modeling of the famous Transmission Control Protocol used for data transmission over the Internet. This continuous time Markov process takes its values in  $[0, \infty)$ , is ergodic and irreversible. The sample paths are piecewise linear deterministic and the whole randomness of the dynamics comes from the jump mechanism. The aim of the present paper is to provide quantitative estimates for the exponential convergence to equilibrium, in terms of the total variation and Wasserstein distances.

**Keywords.** Network Protocols; Queueing Theory; Additive Increase Multiplicative Decrease Processes (AIMD); Piecewise Deterministic Markov Processes (PDMP); Exponential Ergodicity; Coupling.

**AMS-MSC.** 68M12 ; 60K30 ; 60K25 ; 90B18

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## 1 Introduction and main results

The TCP protocol is one of the main data transmission protocols of the Internet. It has been designed to adapt to the various traffic conditions of the actual network. For a connection, the maximum number of packets that can be sent at each round is given

by a variable  $W$ , called the *congestion window size*. If all the  $W$  packets are successfully transmitted, then  $W$  is increased by 1, otherwise it is divided by 2 (detection of a congestion). As shown in [DGR02, GRZ04, OKM96], a correct scaling of this process leads to a continuous time Markov process, called the TCP window size process. This process  $X = (X_t)_{t \geq 0}$  has  $[0, \infty)$  as state space and its infinitesimal generator is given, for any smooth function  $f : [0, \infty) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ , by

$$Lf(x) = f'(x) + x(f(x/2) - f(x)). \quad (1)$$

The semi-group  $(P_t)_{t \geq 0}$  associated to  $(X_t)_{t \geq 0}$  is classically defined by

$$P_t f(x) = \mathbb{E}(f(X_t) | X_0 = x),$$

for any smooth function  $f$ . Moreover, for any probability measure  $\nu$  on  $[0, \infty)$ ,  $\nu P_t$  stands for the law of  $X_t$  when  $X_0$  is distributed according to  $\nu$ .

The process  $X_t$  increases linearly between jump times that occur with a state-dependent rate  $X_t$ . The first jump time of  $X$  starting at  $x \geq 0$  has the law of  $\sqrt{2E + x^2} - x$  where  $E$  is a random variable with exponential law of parameter 1. In other words, the law of this jump time has a density with respect to the Lebesgue measure on  $(0, +\infty)$  given by

$$f_x : t \in (0, +\infty) \mapsto (x + t)e^{-t^2/2 - xt}, \quad (2)$$

see [CMP10] for further details.

The sample paths of  $X$  are deterministic between jumps, the jumps are multiplicative, and the whole randomness of the dynamics relies on the jump mechanism. Of course, the randomness of  $X$  may also come from a random initial value. The process  $(X_t)_{t \geq 0}$  appears as an Additive Increase Multiplicative Decrease process (AIMD), but also as a very special Piecewise Deterministic Markov Process (PDMP). In this direction, [MZ09] gives a generalization of the scaling procedure to interpret various PDMPs as limits of discrete time Markov chains. In the real world (Internet), the AIMD mechanism allows a good compromise between the minimization of network congestion time and the maximization of mean throughput. One could consider more general processes (introducing a random multiplicative factor or modifying the jump rate) but their study is essentially the same than the one of the present process.

The TCP window size process  $X$  is ergodic and admits a unique invariant law  $\mu$ , as can be checked using a suitable Lyapunov function (for instance  $V(x) = 1 + x$ , see e.g. [BCG08, CD08, MT93, HM08] for the Meyn-Tweedie-Foster-Lyapunov technique). It can also be shown that  $\mu$  has a density on  $(0, +\infty)$  given by

$$x \in (0, +\infty) \mapsto \frac{\sqrt{2/\pi}}{\prod_{n \geq 0} (1 - 2^{-(2n+1)})} \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{(-1)^n 2^{2n}}{\prod_{k=1}^n (2^{2k} - 1)} e^{-2^{2n-1} x^2}, \quad (3)$$

(see [GRZ04, MZ09, MZ06, GK09] for further details). In particular, one can notice that the density of  $\mu$  has a Gaussian tail at  $+\infty$  and that all its derivatives are null at the origin. Nevertheless, this process is irreversible since time reversed sample paths are not sample paths and it has infinite support (see [LP11] for the description of the reversed process). In [RR96], explicit bounds for the exponential rate of convergence to equilibrium in total variation distance are provided for generic Markov processes in terms of a suitable

Lyapunov function but these estimates are very poor even for classical examples as the Ornstein-Uhlenbeck process. They can be improved following [RT00] if the process under study is *stochastically monotone* that is if its semi-group  $(P_t)_{t \geq 0}$  is such that  $x \mapsto P_t f(x)$  is nondecreasing as soon as  $f$  is nondecreasing. Unfortunately, due to the fact that the jump rate is an nondecreasing function of the position, the TCP process is not stochastically monotone. Moreover, we will see that our coupling provides better estimates for the example studied in [RT00].

The work [CMP10] was a first attempt to use the specific dynamics of the TCP process to get explicit rates of convergence for the law of  $X_t$  to the invariant measure  $\mu$ . The answer was partial and a bit disappointing since the authors did not succeed in proving explicit exponential rates.

Our aim in the present paper is to go one step further providing exponential rate of convergence for several classical distances: Wasserstein distance of order  $p \geq 1$  and total variation distance. Let us recall briefly some definitions.

**Definition 1.1.** If  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  are two probability measures on  $\mathbb{R}$ , we will call a *coupling* of  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  any probability measure on  $\mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}$  such that the two marginals are  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$ . Let us denote by  $\Gamma(\nu, \tilde{\nu})$  the set of all the couplings of  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$ .

**Definition 1.2.** For every  $p \geq 1$ , the *Wasserstein distance*  $W_p$  of order  $p$  between two probability measures  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  on  $\mathbb{R}$  with finite  $p^{\text{th}}$  moment is defined by

$$W_p(\nu, \tilde{\nu}) = \left( \inf_{\Pi \in \Gamma(\nu, \tilde{\nu})} \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} |x - y|^p \Pi(dx, dy) \right)^{1/p}. \quad (4)$$

**Definition 1.3.** The *total variation distance* between two probability measures  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  on  $\mathbb{R}$  is given by

$$\|\nu - \tilde{\nu}\|_{\text{TV}} = \inf_{\Pi \in \Gamma(\nu, \tilde{\nu})} \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} \mathbb{1}_{\{x \neq y\}} \Pi(dx, dy).$$

It is well known that, for any  $p \geq 1$ , the convergence in Wasserstein distance of order  $p$  is equivalent to weak convergence together with convergence of all moments up to order  $p$ , see e.g. [Rac91, Vil03]. A sequence of probability measures  $(\nu_n)_{n \geq 1}$  bounded in  $L^p$  which converges to  $\nu$  in total variation norm converges also for the  $W_p$  metrics. The converse is false: if  $\nu_n = \delta_{1/n}$  then  $(\nu_n)_{n \geq 1}$  converges to  $\delta_0$  for the distance  $W_p$  whereas  $\|\nu_n - \delta_0\|_{\text{TV}}$  is equal to 1 for any  $n \geq 1$ .

Any coupling  $(X, \tilde{X})$  of  $(\nu, \tilde{\nu})$  provides an upper bound for these distances. One can find in [Lin92] a lot of efficient ways to construct smart couplings in many cases. In the present work, we essentially use the coupling that was introduced in [CMP10]. Firstly, we improve the estimate for its rate of convergence in Wasserstein distances from polynomial to exponential bounds.

**Theorem 1.4.** *Let us define*

$$M = \frac{\sqrt{2}(3 + \sqrt{3})}{8} \sim 0.84 \quad \text{and} \quad \lambda = \sqrt{2}(1 - \sqrt{M}) \sim 0.12. \quad (5)$$

*For any  $\tilde{\lambda} < \lambda$ , any  $p \geq 1$  and any  $t_0 > 0$ , there is a constant  $C = C(p, \tilde{\lambda}, t_0)$  such that, for any initial probability measures  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  and any  $t \geq t_0$ ,*

$$W_p(\nu P_t, \tilde{\nu} P_t) \leq C \exp\left(-\frac{\tilde{\lambda}}{p} t\right).$$

Secondly, we introduce a modified coupling to get total variation estimates.

**Theorem 1.5.** *For any  $\tilde{\lambda} < \lambda$  and any  $t_0 > 0$ , there exists  $C$  such that, for any initial probability measures  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  and any  $t \geq t_0$ ,*

$$\|\nu P_t - \tilde{\nu} P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \leq C \exp\left(-\frac{2\tilde{\lambda}}{3}t\right),$$

where  $\lambda$  is given by (5).

**Remark 1.6.** In both Theorems 1.4 and 1.5, no assumption is required on the moments nor regularity of the initial measures. Note however that following Remark 3.4, one can obtain contraction type bounds when the initial measures  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  have initial moments of sufficient orders. In particular they hold uniformly over the Dirac measures. If  $\tilde{\nu}$  is chosen to be the invariant measure  $\mu$ , these theorems provide exponential convergence to equilibrium.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. We derive in Section 2 precise upper bounds for the moments of the invariant measure  $\mu$  and the law of  $X_t$ . Section 3 and Section 4 are respectively devoted to the proofs of Theorem 1.4 and Theorem 1.5. Unlike the classical approach "à la" Meyn-Tweedie, our total variation estimate is obtained by applying a Wasserstein coupling for most of the time, then trying to couple the two paths in one attempt. This idea is then adapted to others processes : Section 5 deals with two simpler PDMPs already studied in [PR05, LP09, CMP10, RT00] and Section 6 is dedicated to diffusion processes.

## 2 Moment estimates

The aim of this section is to provide accurate bounds for the moments of  $X_t$ . In particular, we establish below that any moment of  $X_t$  is bounded uniformly over the initial value  $X_0$ . Let  $p > 0$  and  $\alpha_p(t) = \mathbb{E}(X_t^p)$ . Then one has by direct computation

$$\alpha'_p(t) = p\alpha_{p-1}(t) - (1 - 2^{-p})\alpha_{p+1}(t). \quad (6)$$

### 2.1 Moments of the invariant measure

Equation (6) implies in particular that, if  $m_p$  denotes the  $p$ -th moment of the invariant measure  $\mu$  of the TCP process ( $m_p = \int x^p \mu(dx)$ ), then for any  $p > 0$

$$m_{p+1} = \frac{p}{1 - 2^{-p}} m_{p-1}.$$

It gives all even moments of  $\mu$ :  $m_2 = 2$ ,  $m_4 = \frac{48}{7}$ , ... and all the odd moments in terms of the mean. Nevertheless, the mean itself cannot be explicitly determined. Applying the same technique to  $\log X_t$ , one gets the relation  $\log(2)m_1 = m_{-1}$ . With Jensen's inequality, this implies that  $1/\sqrt{\log 2} \leq m_1 \leq \sqrt{2}$ .

## 2.2 Uniform bounds for the moments at finite times

The fact that the jump rate goes to infinity at infinity gives bounds on the moments at any positive time that are uniform over the initial distribution.

**Lemma 2.1.** *For any  $p \geq 1$  and  $t > 0$*

$$M_{p,t} := \sup_{x \geq 0} \mathbb{E}_x(X_t^p) \leq \left( \sqrt{2p} + \frac{2p}{t} \right)^p.$$

*Proof.* One deduces from (6) and Jensen's inequality that

$$\alpha'_p(t) \leq p\alpha_p(t)^{1-1/p} - (1 - 2^{-p})\alpha_p(t)^{1+1/p}.$$

Let  $\beta_p(t) = \alpha_p(t)^{1/p} - \sqrt{2p}$ . Then, using the fact that  $1 - 2^{-p} \geq \frac{1}{2}$ ,

$$\beta'_p(t) = \frac{1}{p}\alpha_p(t)^{1/p-1}\alpha'_p(t) \leq 1 - \frac{1}{2p}\alpha_p(t)^{2/p} = -\sqrt{\frac{2}{p}}\beta_p(t) - \frac{\beta_p(t)^2}{2p}.$$

In particular,  $\beta'_p(t) < 0$  as soon as  $\beta_p(t) > 0$ .

Let us now fix  $t > 0$ . If  $\beta_p(t) \leq 0$ , then  $\alpha_p(t) \leq (2p)^{p/2}$  and the lemma is proven. We assume now that  $\beta_p(t) > 0$ . By the previous remark, this implies that the function  $s \mapsto \beta_p(s)$  is strictly decreasing, hence positive, on the interval  $[0, t]$ . Consequently, for any  $s \in [0, t]$ ,

$$\beta'_p(s) \leq -\frac{\beta_p(s)^2}{2p}.$$

Integrating this last inequality gives

$$\frac{1}{\beta_p(t)} \geq \frac{1}{\beta_p(0)} + \frac{t}{2p} \geq \frac{t}{2p},$$

hence the lemma. □

Let us derive from Lemma 2.1 some upper bounds for the right tails of  $\delta_x P_t$  and  $\mu$ .

**Corollary 2.2.** *For any  $t > 0$  and  $r \geq 2e(1 + 1/t)$ , one has*

$$\mathbb{P}_x(X_t \geq r) \leq \exp\left(-\frac{t}{2e(t+1)}r\right). \quad (7)$$

Moreover, if  $X$  is distributed according to the invariant measure  $\mu$  then, for any  $r \geq \sqrt{2e}$ , one has

$$\mathbb{P}(X \geq r) \leq \exp\left(-\frac{r^2}{4e}\right).$$

*Proof.* Let  $t > 0$  and  $a = 2(1 + 1/t)$ . Notice that, for any  $p \geq 1$ ,  $\mathbb{E}_x(X_t^p)$  is smaller than  $(ap)^p$ . As a consequence, for any  $p \geq 1$  and  $r \geq 0$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}_x(X_t \geq r) \leq \exp(p \log(ap/r)).$$

Assuming that  $r \geq ea$ , we let  $p = r/(ea)$  to get:

$$\mathbb{P}_x(X_t \geq r) \leq e^{-r/(ea)}.$$

For the invariant measure, the upper bound is better:  $\mathbb{E}(X^p) \leq (2p)^{p/2}$ . Then, the Markov inequality provides that, for any  $p \geq 1$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(X \geq r) \leq \exp\left(p \log \frac{\sqrt{2p}}{r}\right).$$

As above, if  $r^2 \geq 2e$ , one can choose  $p = r^2/(2e)$  to get the desired bound.  $\square$

**Remark 2.3.** A better deviation bound should be expected from the expression (3) of the density of  $\mu$ . Indeed, one can get a sharp result (see [CMP10]). However, in the sequel we only need the deviation bound (7).

### 3 Exponential convergence in Wasserstein distance

This section is devoted to the proof of Theorem 1.4. We use the coupling introduced in [CMP10]. Let us briefly recall the construction and the dynamics of this stochastic process on  $\mathbb{R}_+^2$  whose marginals are two TCP processes. It is defined by the following generator

$$\mathfrak{L}f(x, y) = (\partial_x + \partial_y)f(x, y) + y(f(x/2, y/2) - f(x, y)) + (x - y)(f(x/2, y) - f(x, y))$$

when  $x \geq y$  and symmetric expression for  $x < y$ . We will call the dynamical coupling defined by this generator the Wasserstein coupling of the TCP process (see Figure 1 for a graphical illustration of this coupling). This coupling is the only one such that the lower component never jumps alone. Let us give the pathwise interpretation of this coupling. Between two jump times, the two coordinates increase linearly with rate 1. Moreover, two "jump processes" are simultaneously in action:

1. with a rate equal to the minimum of the two coordinates, they jump (*i.e.* they are divided by 2) simultaneously,
2. with a rate equal to the distance between the two coordinates (which is constant between two jump times), the bigger one jumps alone.

The existence of non-simultaneous jumps implies that the generator does not act in a good way on functions directly associated to Wasserstein distances. To see this, let us define  $V_p(x, y) = |x - y|^p$ . When we compute  $\mathfrak{L}V_p$ , the term coming from the deterministic drift disappears (since  $V_p$  is unchanged under the flow), and we get for  $x/2 \leq y \leq x$ :

$$\mathfrak{L}V_p(x, y) = -y(1 - 2^{-p})V_p(x, y) + (x - y)((y - x/2)^p - (x - y)^p).$$

For example, choosing  $p = 1$  gives:

$$\mathfrak{L}V_1(x, y) = -V_1(x, y)(y/2 - (y - x/2) + (x - y)) = -(3/2)V_1(x, y)^2.$$

This shows that  $\mathbb{E}[|X_t - Y_t|]$  decreases, but only gives a polynomial bound: the problem comes from the region where  $x - y$  is already very small.

Choosing  $p = 2$ , we get

$$\mathfrak{L}V_2(x, y) = -(3/4)yV_2(x, y) + (x - y)(-(3/4)x^2 + xy).$$

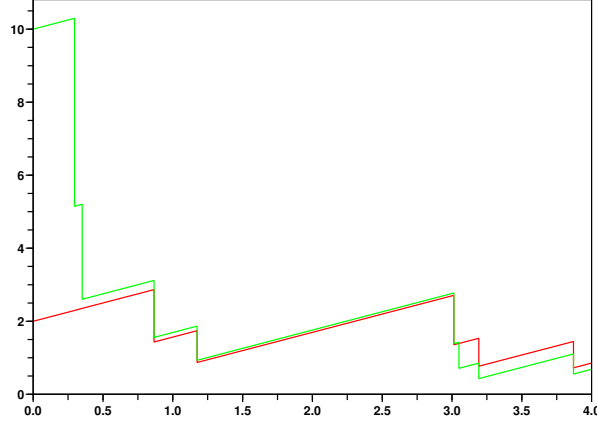


Figure 1: Two trajectories following the Wasserstein coupling; the bigger jumping alone can be good, making the distance between both trajectories smaller, or bad.

The effect of the jumps of  $X$  is even worse: if  $x = 1$  and  $x - y$  is small,  $\mathfrak{L}V_2(x, y)$  is positive ( $\approx (1/4)(x - y)$ ).

For  $p = 1/2$ , the situation is in fact more favorable: indeed, for  $0 < y \leq x$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathfrak{L}V_{1/2}(x, y) &= -y \left(1 - \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}\right) V_{1/2}(x, y) + (x - y) (\sqrt{|y - x/2|} - \sqrt{x - y}) \\ &= -V_{1/2}(x, y) \left[ x - \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}y - \sqrt{(x - y)(y - x/2)} \right] \\ &= -x \left[ 1 - \varphi\left(\frac{y}{x}\right) \right] V_{1/2}(x, y), \end{aligned}$$

with

$$\varphi(u) = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}u + \sqrt{(1 - u)|u - 1/2|} \quad \text{for } u \in [0, 1].$$

By a direct computation, one gets that

$$M := \max_{0 \leq u \leq 1} \varphi(u) = \varphi\left(\frac{9 + \sqrt{3}}{12}\right) = \frac{\sqrt{2}(3 + \sqrt{3})}{8} \sim 0.8365.$$

Hence, when  $0 < y \leq x$ ,

$$\mathfrak{L}V_{1/2}(x, y) \leq -x\lambda V_{1/2}(x, y), \tag{8}$$

with  $\lambda = 1 - M \sim 0.1635$ . This would give an exponential decay for  $V_{1/2}$  if  $x$  was bounded below: the problem comes from the region where  $x$  is small and the process does not jump.

To overcome this problem, we replace  $V_{1/2}$  with the function

$$\tilde{V}(x, y) = \psi(x \vee y)|x - y|^{1/2} = \psi(x \vee y)V_{1/2}(x, y),$$

where

$$\psi(x) = \begin{cases} 1 + \alpha(1 - x/x_0)^2, & x \leq x_0, \\ 1, & x \geq x_0, \end{cases}$$



the two positive parameters  $\alpha$  and  $x_0$  being chosen below. The negative slope of  $\psi$  for  $x$  small will be able to compensate the fact that the bound from (8) tends to 0 with  $x$ , hence to give a uniform bound. Indeed, for  $0 < y \leq x$ ,

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathfrak{L}\tilde{V}(x, y) &= \psi'(x)(x-y)^p + y\psi(x/2)\frac{(x-y)^p}{2^p} + (x-y)\psi(x/2 \vee y)|x/2 - y|^p - x\tilde{V}(x, y) \\
&= -\tilde{V}(x, y) \left[ -\frac{\psi'(x)}{\psi(x)} + x - \frac{\psi(x/2)}{\psi(x)}\frac{y}{2^p} - \frac{\psi(x/2 \vee y)}{\psi(x)}(x-y)^{1-p}|x/2 - y|^p \right] \\
&\leq -\tilde{V}(x, y) \left[ -\frac{\psi'(x)}{\psi(x)} + x \left( 1 - \frac{\psi(x/2)}{\psi(x)}\varphi\left(\frac{y}{x}\right) \right) \right] \\
&\leq -\tilde{V}(x, y) \left[ -\frac{\psi'(x)}{(1+\alpha)} + x(1 - (1+\alpha)M) \right] \\
&= \begin{cases} -\tilde{V}(x, y) \left[ \frac{2\alpha}{x_0(1+\alpha)} + x \left( 1 - (1+\alpha)M - \frac{2\alpha}{x_0^2(1+\alpha)} \right) \right] & \text{when } x \leq x_0, \\ -\tilde{V}(x, y)x(1 - (1+\alpha)M) & \text{when } x \geq x_0. \end{cases}
\end{aligned}$$

Finally, as soon as  $(1+\alpha)M < 1$ , one has

$$\mathfrak{L}\tilde{V}(x, y) \leq -\lambda_{\alpha, x_0}\tilde{V}(x, y) \quad \forall x, y > 0$$

with

$$\lambda_{\alpha, x_0} = \min \left( \frac{2\alpha}{x_0(1+\alpha)}, x_0(1 - (1+\alpha)M) \right).$$

By direct computations, one gets that the best possible choice of parameters  $\alpha$  and  $x_0$  is  $\alpha = 1/\sqrt{M} - 1 \sim 0.0934$  and  $x_0 = \sqrt{2}$ . We obtain finally, for any  $x, y > 0$  and

$$\mathfrak{L}\tilde{V}(x, y) \leq -\lambda\tilde{V}(x, y), \quad (9)$$

with  $\lambda = \lambda_{\alpha, x_0} = \sqrt{2}(1 - \sqrt{M}) \sim 0.1208$ . Hence, directly from (9), for any  $x, y > 0$

$$\mathbb{E}_{x, y}[\tilde{V}(X_t, Y_t)] \leq e^{-\lambda t}\tilde{V}(x, y). \quad (10)$$

Immediate manipulations lead to the following estimate.

**Proposition 3.1.** *Let*

$$M = \frac{\sqrt{2}(3 + \sqrt{3})}{8} \sim 0.84 \quad \text{and} \quad \lambda = \sqrt{2}(1 - \sqrt{M}) \sim 0.12. \quad (11)$$

*Then, for any  $x, y > 0$ , one has*

$$\mathbb{E}_{x, y}(|X_t - Y_t|^{1/2}) \leq \frac{1}{\sqrt{M}}e^{-\lambda t}|x - y|^{1/2}. \quad (12)$$

*Moreover, for any initial conditions  $(X_0, Y_0)$  and any  $t \geq t_0 > 0$ ,*

$$\mathbb{E}(|X_t - Y_t|^{1/2}) \leq \sqrt{\frac{2\sqrt{2} + 4t_0^{-1}}{M}}e^{-\lambda(t-t_0)}. \quad (13)$$

*Proof.* Equation (12) is a straightforward consequence of Equation (9) since  $\psi(\mathbb{R}^+)$  is the interval  $[1, 1 + \alpha]$ . As a consequence, for any  $t \geq t_0 > 0$ , one has

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}\left(|X_t - Y_t|^{1/2}\right) &\leq \frac{1}{\sqrt{M}} e^{-\lambda(t-t_0)} \mathbb{E}\left(|X_{t_0} - Y_{t_0}|^{1/2}\right) \\ &\leq \frac{e^{\lambda t_0}}{\sqrt{M}} \sqrt{\mathbb{E}(X_{t_0}) + \mathbb{E}(Y_{t_0})} e^{-\lambda t}. \end{aligned}$$

Then, Lemma 2.1 provides the estimate (13). □

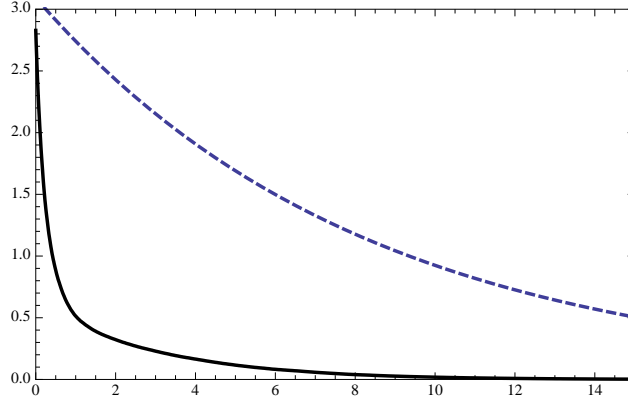


Figure 2: The “true” function  $\mathbb{E}_{x,y}(|X_t - Y_t|^{1/2})$  (solid, black; by Monte Carlo method with  $m = 10\,000$  copies) and the bound given in Equation (12) (dashed, blue), for  $x = 2$  and  $y = 10$ .

**Remark 3.2.** The upper bound obtained in Proposition 3.1 is compared graphically to the “true” function  $t \mapsto \mathbb{E}_{x,y}(|X_t - Y_t|^{1/2})$  in Figure 2. By linear regression on this data, one gets that the exponential speed of convergence of this function is on the order of 0.4. Note also that this method can be adapted to any  $V_p$  with  $0 < p < 1$ , giving even better (but less explicit) speed of convergence for some  $p \neq \frac{1}{2}$ : we estimated numerically that the best value for  $\lambda$  would be approximately 0.1326, obtained for  $p$  close to  $2/3$ .

We may now deduce from Proposition 3.1 estimates for the Wasserstein distance between the laws of  $X_t$  and  $Y_t$ .

**Theorem 3.3.** *Let  $p \geq 1$ . Then, for any initial conditions  $(X_0, Y_0)$ , any  $t \geq t_0 > 0$  and any  $\theta \in (0, 1)$ ,*

$$\mathbb{E}(|X_t - Y_t|^p) \leq C(p, t_0, \theta) \exp(-\lambda \theta t)$$

with

$$\begin{aligned} C(p, t_0, \theta) &= 2^{p-1+\theta} \left( \sqrt{\frac{2p-\theta}{1-\theta}} + \frac{2p-\theta}{(1-\theta)t_0} \right)^{p-\theta/2} \left( \frac{e^{\lambda t_0}}{\sqrt{M}} \left( \sqrt{2} + \frac{2}{t_0} \right) \right)^\theta \\ &\leq \frac{e^{\lambda t_0}}{\sqrt{M}} \left( \frac{2p-\theta}{1-\theta} \right)^p \left( 2 + \frac{2}{t_0} \right)^{p+1}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $M$  and  $\lambda$  are defined by (11).

*Proof of Theorem 3.3.* Let  $p \geq 1$ . For any  $0 < \theta < 1$ , Hölder's inequality gives, for any  $t \geq 0$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}(|X_t - Y_t|^p) \leq \left[ \mathbb{E} \left( |X_t - Y_t|^{\frac{2p-\theta}{2(1-\theta)}} \right) \right]^{1-\theta} \left[ \mathbb{E} \left( |X_t - Y_t|^{1/2} \right) \right]^\theta.$$

Thanks to Lemma 2.1 and the inequality  $(a + b)^q \leq 2^{q-1}(a^q + b^q)$ , one gets

$$\begin{aligned} \left[ \mathbb{E} \left( |X_t - Y_t|^{\frac{2p-\theta}{2(1-\theta)}} \right) \right]^{1-\theta} &\leq \left( 2^{\frac{2(p-1)+\theta}{2(1-\theta)}} M_{\frac{2p-\theta}{2(1-\theta)}, t} \right)^{1-\theta} \\ &\leq 2^{p-1+\theta/2} \left( \sqrt{\frac{2p-\theta}{1-\theta}} + \frac{2p-\theta}{(1-\theta)t} \right)^{p-\theta/2}. \end{aligned}$$

Then, it suffices to use Equation (13) to conclude the proof.  $\square$

Since  $W_p(\mathcal{L}(X_t), \mathcal{L}(Y_t))^p \leq \mathbb{E}(|X_t - Y_t|^p)$ , Theorem 1.4 is a direct consequence of this result.

**Remark 3.4.** Let us remark that we can obtain contraction-type bounds using a different combination of Thm. 3.3 and Prop. 3.1: for  $p > 1$  and any  $0 < \theta < 1$

$$\mathbb{E}(|X_t - Y_t|^p) \leq \frac{2^{p-1+\theta/2}}{\sqrt{M}} \left( \sqrt{\frac{2p-\theta}{1-\theta}} + \frac{2p-\theta}{(1-\theta)t} \right)^{p-\theta/2} e^{-\lambda\theta t} |x - y|^{\theta/2}.$$

We then obtain that if  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  have finite  $\theta/2$ -moments then for  $p > 1$

$$W_p(\nu P_t, \tilde{\nu} P_t) \leq \left( \frac{2^{p-1+\theta/2}}{\sqrt{M}} \left( \sqrt{\frac{2p-\theta}{1-\theta}} + \frac{2p-\theta}{(1-\theta)t} \right)^{p-\theta/2} \right)^{\frac{1}{p}} e^{-\frac{\lambda\theta}{p}t} W_{\frac{\theta}{2}}(\nu, \tilde{\nu})^{\frac{2}{p\theta}}$$

which still allows a control by some Wasserstein distance of the initial measures.

**Remark 3.5.** We estimated numerically the exponential speed of convergence:

- of the function  $t \mapsto \mathbb{E}_{x,y}(|X_t - Y_t|)$  for the Wasserstein coupling (by Monte Carlo method and linear regression). It seems to be on the order of 0.5 (we obtained 0.48 for  $x = 2$ ,  $y = 10$ ,  $m = 10\,000$  copies, and linear regression between times 2 and 10);
- of the Wasserstein distance  $t \mapsto W_1(\delta_x P_t, \delta_y P_t)$ , using the explicit representation of this distance for measures on  $\mathbb{R}$  to approximate it by the  $L^1$ -distance between the two empirical quantile functions. It is on the order of 1.6 (we get 1.67 for  $x = 2$ ,  $y = 0.5$ ,  $m = 1\,000\,000$  copies, and linear regression on 20 points until time 4).

In conclusion, our bound from Theorem 3.3 seems reasonable (at least when compared to those given by [RR96], see section 4.2 below), but is still off by a factor of 4 from the true exponential speed of convergence. Since the coupling itself seems to converge approximately 3 times slower than the true Wasserstein distance, one probably needs to find another coupling to get better bounds.

**Remark 3.6.** Let us end this section by advertising on a parallel work still to be completed by B. Cloez [Clo] who uses a completely different approach based on a particular Feynman-Kac formulation, to get some related results.

## 4 Exponential convergence in total variation distance

In this section, we provide the proof of Theorem 1.5 and we compare our estimate to the ones that can be deduced from [RR96].

### 4.1 From Wasserstein to total variation estimate

The fact that the evolution is partially deterministic makes the study of convergence in total variation quite subtle. Indeed, the law  $\delta_x P_t$  can be written as a mixture of a Dirac mass at  $x+t$  (the first jump time has not occurred) and an absolutely continuous measure (the process jumped at some random time in  $(0, t)$ ):

$$\delta_x P_t = p_t(x)\delta_{x+t} + (1 - p_t(x))\mathcal{L}(X_t|X_0 = x, T_1 \leq t)$$

where, according to Equation (2),

$$p_t(x) := \mathbb{P}_x(T_1 > t) = e^{-t^2/2 - xt}. \quad (14)$$

This implies that the map  $y \mapsto \|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}}$  is not continuous at point  $x$  since one has, for any  $y \neq x$ ,

$$\|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \geq p_t(x) \vee p_t(y) = e^{-t^2/2 - (x \wedge y)t}.$$

Nevertheless, one can hope that

$$\|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \underset{y \rightarrow x}{\sim} p_t(x).$$

The lemma below makes this intuition more precise.

**Lemma 4.1.** *Let  $t \geq \varepsilon \geq x - y > 0$ . There exists a coupling  $((X_t)_{t \geq 0}, (Y_t)_{t \geq 0})$  of two TCP processes driven by (1) and starting at  $(x, y)$  such that the probability  $\mathbb{P}(X_s = Y_s, s \geq t)$  is larger than*

$$\begin{aligned} q_t(x, y) &= \left( \int_{x-y}^t (f_x(s) \wedge f_y(s - x + y)) ds \right) p_{x-y} \left( \frac{x+t}{2} \right) \\ &\geq (p_\varepsilon(x) - p_t(x) - 2\varepsilon\alpha(x))p_\varepsilon \left( \frac{x+t}{2} \right), \end{aligned} \quad (15)$$

where  $f_x$  is defined in Equation (2) and  $\alpha(x) := \int_0^\infty e^{-u^2/2 - ux} du$ .

Moreover, for any  $x_0 > 0$  and  $\varepsilon > 0$ , let us define

$$A_{x_0, \varepsilon} = \{(x, y) : 0 \leq x, y \leq x_0, |x - y| \leq \varepsilon\}. \quad (16)$$

Then,

$$\inf_{(x, y) \in A_{x_0, \varepsilon}} q_t(x, y) \geq \exp \left( -\varepsilon^2 - \frac{3x_0 + t}{2}\varepsilon \right) - e^{-t^2/2} - \sqrt{2\pi}\varepsilon.$$

*Proof.* The idea is to construct an explicit coalescent coupling starting from  $x$  and  $y$ . The main difficulty comes from the fact that the jump are deterministic. Assume for simplicity that  $y < x$ . Let us denote by  $(T_k^x)_{k \geq 1}$  and  $(T_k^y)_{k \geq 1}$  the jump times of the two processes. If

$$T_1^x = T_1^y + x - y \quad \text{and} \quad T_2^y - T_1^y \geq x - y \quad (17)$$

then the two paths are at the same place at time  $T_1^x$  since in this case

$$X_{T_1^x} = \frac{x + T_1^x}{2} = \frac{y + T_1^y}{2} + T_1^x - T_1^y = Y_{T_1^x}.$$

The law of  $T_1^x$  has a density  $f_x$  given by (2). As a consequence, the density of  $T_1^y + x - y$  is given by  $s \mapsto f_y(s - x + y)$ . The first equality in (17) can be realised before a time  $t \geq x - y$  with a maximal probability given by

$$I(x, y, t) = \int_{x-y}^t (f_x(s) \wedge f_y(s - x + y)) ds.$$

Assume now that  $0 \leq x - y \leq \varepsilon \leq t$ . For any  $s \geq x - y$ , one has

$$\begin{aligned} f_y(s - x + y) &= (2y - x + s) \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}(s - x + y)^2 - y(s - x + y)\right) \\ &= (s + x - 2(x - y)) \exp\left(-\frac{s^2}{2} - xs + (2s + x - 3(x - y)/2)(x - y)\right) \\ &\geq (s + x - 2\varepsilon) \exp\left(-\frac{s^2}{2} - xs\right). \end{aligned}$$

As a consequence, if  $0 \leq x - y \leq \varepsilon \leq t$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} I(x, y, t) &\geq \int_{x-y}^t (s + x - 2\varepsilon) \exp\left(-\frac{s^2}{2} - xs\right) ds \\ &\geq p_\varepsilon(x) - p_t(x) - 2\varepsilon\alpha(x) \end{aligned}$$

where  $p_t(x)$  is defined in (14) and  $\alpha(x) = \int_0^\infty e^{-u^2/2 - ux} du$ .

Finally, one has to get a lower bound for the probability of the set  $\{T_2^y - T_1^y \geq x - y\}$ . For this, we notice that

$$z \in [0, +\infty) \mapsto \mathbb{P}(T_1^z \geq s) = p_s(z) = e^{-s^2/2 - sz}$$

is decreasing and that  $Y_{T_1^y} \leq (y + t)/2$  as soon as  $T_1^y \leq t$ . As a consequence,

$$\inf_{0 \leq z \leq (x+t)/2} \mathbb{P}(T_1^z \geq s) \geq p_{x-y}\left(\frac{x+t}{2}\right) \geq p_\varepsilon\left(\frac{x+t}{2}\right).$$

This provides the bound (15). The uniform lower bound on the set  $A_{x_0, \varepsilon}$  is a direct consequence of the previous one.  $\square$

Let us now turn to the proof of Theorem 1.5.

*Proof of Theorem 1.5.* We are looking for an upper bound for the total variation distance between  $\delta_x P_t$  and  $\delta_y P_t$  for two arbitrary initial conditions  $x$  and  $y$ . To this end, let us consider the following coupling: during a time  $t_1 < t$  we use the Wasserstein coupling. Then during a time  $t_2 = t - t_1$  we try to stick the two paths using Lemma 4.1. Let  $\varepsilon > 0$  and  $x_0 > 0$  be as in Lemma 4.1. If, after the time  $t_1$ , one has

$$(X_{t_1}, Y_{t_1}) \in A_{\varepsilon, x_0}$$

where  $A_{\varepsilon, x_0}$  is defined by (16), then the coalescent coupling will work with a probability greater than the one provided by Lemma 4.1. As a consequence, the coalescent coupling occurs before time  $t_1 + t_2$  with a probability greater than

$$\mathbb{P}((X_{t_1}, Y_{t_1}) \in A_{\varepsilon, x_0}) \inf_{(x, y) \in A_{\varepsilon, x_0}} q_{t_2}(x, y).$$

Moreover,

$$\mathbb{P}((X_{t_1}, Y_{t_1}) \notin A_{\varepsilon, x_0}) \leq \mathbb{P}(X_{t_1} \geq x_0) + \mathbb{P}(Y_{t_1} \geq x_0) + \mathbb{P}(|X_{t_1} - Y_{t_1}| \geq \varepsilon).$$

From the deviation bound (7), we get that, for any  $x_0 \geq 2e(1 + 1/t_1)$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(X_{t_1} \geq x_0) \leq e^{-a(t_1)x_0} \quad \text{with} \quad a(t_1) = \frac{t_1}{2e(t_1 + 1)}.$$

The estimate of Proposition 3.1 concerning the Wasserstein coupling ensures that

$$\mathbb{P}(|X_{t_1} - Y_{t_1}| \geq \varepsilon) \leq \frac{C}{\sqrt{\varepsilon}} e^{-\lambda t_1} \quad \text{with} \quad C = \sqrt{\frac{2\sqrt{2} + 4t_0^{-1}}{M}} e^{\lambda t_0},$$

for any  $0 < t_0 \leq t_1$ . As a consequence, the total variation distance between  $\delta_x P_t$  and  $\delta_y P_t$  is smaller than

$$D := 1 - e^{-\varepsilon^2 - \frac{3x_0 + t_2}{2}\varepsilon} + e^{-t_2^2/2} + \sqrt{2\pi}\varepsilon + 2e^{-a(t_1)x_0} + \frac{C}{\sqrt{\varepsilon}} e^{-\lambda t_1}.$$

In order to get a more tractable estimate, let us assume that  $t_2 \leq x_0$  and use that  $1 - e^{-u} \leq u$  to get

$$D \leq \varepsilon^2 + 2\varepsilon x_0 + e^{-t_2^2/2} + \sqrt{2\pi}\varepsilon + 2e^{-a(t_0)x_0} + \frac{C}{\sqrt{\varepsilon}} e^{-\lambda t_1}.$$

Finally let us set

$$t_2 = \sqrt{2\log(1/\varepsilon)}, \quad t_1 = \frac{3}{2\lambda} \log(1/\varepsilon), \quad x_0 = \frac{1}{a(t_0)} \log(1/\varepsilon).$$

Obviously, for  $\varepsilon$  small enough,  $x_0 \geq \max(t_2, 2e(1 + 1/t_1))$  and  $t_1 \geq t_0$ . Then, one gets that

$$\|\delta_x P_{t_1+t_2} - \delta_y P_{t_1+t_2}\|_{\text{TV}} \leq \frac{2}{a(t_0)} \varepsilon \log(1/\varepsilon) + (3 + C + \sqrt{2\pi} + \varepsilon)\varepsilon.$$

One can now express  $\varepsilon$  as a function of  $t_1$  to get that there exists  $K = K(t_0) > 0$  such that

$$\|\delta_x P_{t_1+t_2} - \delta_y P_{t_1+t_2}\|_{\text{TV}} \leq K(1 + t_1)e^{-\frac{2\lambda}{3}t_1}.$$

Since  $t_2 = \sqrt{(4\lambda/3)t_1}$ , one gets that

$$\|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \leq K(1 + t)e^{K\sqrt{t}} e^{-\frac{2\lambda}{3}t}.$$

This provides the conclusion of Theorem 1.5 when the initial measures are Dirac masses. The generalisation is straightforward.  $\square$

## 4.2 A bound via small sets

We describe here briefly the approach of [RR96] and compare it with the hybrid Wasserstein/total variation coupling described above. The idea is once more to build a successful coupling between two copies  $X$  and  $Y$  of the process. In algorithmic terms, the approach is the following:

- wait until  $X$  and  $Y$  both reach a given set  $C$ ,
- once they are in  $C$ , try to stick them together,
- repeat until the previous step is successful.

The first step is done by independent coupling, until the joint process hits a product set  $C \times C$ . To get a successful coupling afterwards, the idea is to find a time  $t^*$ , a probability measure  $\nu$  and an  $\alpha > 0$  such that

$$\forall x \in C, \quad \mathcal{L}(X_{t^*}|X_0 = x) \geq \alpha \nu. \quad (18)$$

If this holds, once the processes hit  $C$  together, we have a probability at least  $\alpha$  of coupling them in a time  $t^*$ . The set  $C$  is called a “small set”.

One can weaken the condition and ask for the existence of an  $\alpha$ , a  $t^*$  and measures  $\nu_{xy}$  such that

$$\forall x, y \in C^2, \quad \mathcal{L}(X_t|X_0 = x) \geq \alpha \nu_{xy} \text{ and } \mathcal{L}(X_t|X_0 = y) \geq \alpha \nu_{xy}. \quad (19)$$

In other words, the measure  $\nu$  in (18) may depend on the starting points  $x$  and  $y$ . In this situation  $C$  is called “pseudo-small”.

To control the time to come back to  $C \times C$ , [RR96] proposes an approach via a Lyapunov function. Their result can be stated as follows.

**Theorem 4.2** ([RR96], Theorem 3, Corollary 4 and Theorem 8). <sup>1</sup> *Suppose that there exists a set  $C$ , a function  $V \geq 1$ , and positive constants  $\lambda, \Lambda$  such that*

$$LV \leq -\lambda V + \Lambda \mathbf{1}_C. \quad (20)$$

*Suppose that  $\delta = \lambda - \Lambda / \inf_{x \notin C} V > 0$ . Suppose additionally that  $C$  is pseudo-small, with constant  $\alpha$ .*

*Then for  $A = \frac{\Lambda}{\delta} + e^{-\delta t^*} \sup_{x \in C} V$ ,  $A' = Ae^{\delta t^*}$ , and for any  $r < 1/t^*$ ,*

$$\|\mathcal{L}(X_t) - \mu\|_{\text{TV}} \leq (1 - \alpha)^{\lfloor rt \rfloor} + e^{-\delta(t-t^*)} (A')^{\lfloor rt \rfloor - 1} \mathbb{E}V(X_0).$$

If  $A'$  is finite, this gives exponential convergence: just choose  $r$  small enough so that  $(A')^{rt} e^{-\delta t}$  decreases exponentially fast.

Let us try to apply this approach. Choose  $V(x) = \frac{1}{x} + e^x$ . It is easy to check that (20) holds for example with  $C = [0.45, 1.85]$ ,  $\Lambda = 3$  and  $\lambda = 0.25$ . For  $\delta$  being positive, one has to enlarge  $C$ . For example, the interval  $C = [0.04, 3.2]$  gives  $\inf_{x \notin C} V = 24$  and

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<sup>1</sup>In fact, in [RR96], the result is given with  $A$  instead of  $A'$  in the upper bound. Joaquin Fontbona pointed out to us that Lemma 6 from [RR96] has to be corrected, adding the exponential term  $e^{\delta t^*}$  to the estimate. We thank him for this remark.

$\delta = 0.125$ . This makes the set  $C$  much too large to get a good coupling bound in (18): the  $\alpha$  obtained is around  $2 \cdot 10^{-19}$ . If we apply the better approach with pseudo small sets, we can use our bound from Lemma 4.1 to bound the coupling probability  $\alpha$  from Equation (19). For a value of  $t = 3.4$ , we obtain a value  $\alpha \approx 4 \cdot 10^{-14} \dots$

In this light, it could be a good idea to find a Lyapunov function that guarantees a return to a much smaller set  $C = [x_0, x_0 + \epsilon]$ . The “best” function should behave like  $\mathbb{E}[e^{\lambda \tau_C}]$ , which is discontinuous if  $\max C/2 < \min C$ . We can find a regular function that behaves like this optimal function, when  $x$  is small or large: choose  $V(x) = ae^{-\lambda(x-x_0)}$  when  $x < x_0$  and  $V(x) = be^{-c/x}$  when  $x > x_0 + \epsilon$ . Good choices of  $a, b, c$  and  $\lambda$  (depending on  $\epsilon$ ) ensure that (20) holds. However,  $\delta$  is not positive for these choices, and we need to enlarge  $C$  again to apply the theorem.

**Remark 4.3.** This strategy cannot provide reasonable bounds since large sets  $C$  are associated to very small  $\alpha$ 's and small sets  $C$  are associated to very long times to wait that two independent processes hit  $C$  at the same time...

## 5 Two other models

This section is devoted to the study of two simple PDMPs. The first one is a simplified version of the TCP process where the jump rate is assumed to be constant and equal to  $\lambda$ . It has been studied with different approaches: PDE techniques (see [PR05, LP09]) or probabilistic tools (see [LL08, OK08, CMP10]). The second one is studied in [RT00].

### 5.1 The TCP model with constant jump rate

In this section we investigate the long time behavior of the TCP process with constant jump rate given by its infinitesimal generator:

$$Lf(x) = f'(x) + \lambda(f(x/2) - f(x)) \quad (x \geq 0).$$

The jump times of this process are the ones of a homogeneous Poisson process with intensity  $\lambda$ . The convergence in Wasserstein distance is obvious.

**Lemma 5.1** ([PR05, CMP10]). *For any  $p \geq 1$ ,*

$$W_p(\delta_x P_t, \delta_y P_t) \leq |x - y| e^{-\lambda_p t} \quad \text{with} \quad \lambda_p = \frac{\lambda(1 - 2^{-p})}{p}. \quad (21)$$

**Remark 5.2.** The case  $p = 1$  is obtained in [PR05] by PDEs estimates using the following alternative formulation of the Wasserstein distance on  $\mathbb{R}$ . If the cumulative distribution functions of the two probability measures  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  are  $F$  and  $\tilde{F}$  then

$$W_1(\nu, \tilde{\nu}) = \int_{\mathbb{R}} |F(x) - \tilde{F}(x)| dx.$$

The general case  $p \geq 1$  is obvious from the probabilistic point of view: choosing the same Poisson process  $(N_t)_{t \geq 0}$  to drive the two processes provides that the two coordinates jump simultaneously and

$$|X_t - Y_t| = |x - y| 2^{-N_t}.$$



As a consequence, since the law of  $N_t$  is the Poisson distribution with parameter  $\lambda t$ , one has

$$\mathbb{E}_{x,y}(|X_t - Y_t|^p) = |x - y|^p \mathbb{E}(2^{-pN_t}) = |x - y|^p e^{-p\lambda t}.$$

This coupling turns out to be sharp. Indeed, one can compute explicitly the moments of  $X_t$  (see [LL08, OK08]): for every  $n \geq 0$ , every  $x \geq 0$ , and every  $t \geq 0$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}_x((X_t)^n) = \frac{n!}{\prod_{k=1}^n \theta_k} + n! \sum_{m=1}^n \left( \sum_{k=0}^m \frac{x^k}{k!} \prod_{\substack{j=k \\ j \neq m}}^n \frac{1}{\theta_j - \theta_m} \right) e^{-\theta_m t}, \quad (22)$$

where  $\theta_n = \lambda(1 - 2^{-n}) = n\lambda_n$  for any  $n \geq 1$ . Obviously, assuming for example that  $x > y$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} W_n(\delta_x P_t, \delta_y P_t)^n &\geq \mathbb{E}_x((X_t)^n) - \mathbb{E}_y((Y_t)^n) \\ &\underset{t \rightarrow \infty}{\sim} n! \left( \sum_{k=0}^n \frac{x^k - y^k}{k!} \prod_{j=k}^{n-1} \frac{1}{\theta_j - \theta_n} \right) e^{-\theta_n t}. \end{aligned}$$

As a consequence, the rate of convergence in Equation (21) is optimal for any  $n \geq 1$ .

Nevertheless this estimate for the Wasserstein rate of convergence does not provide on its own any information about the total variation distance between  $\delta_x P_t$  and  $\delta_y P_t$ . It turns out that this rate of convergence is the one of the  $W_1$  distance. This is established by Theorem 1.1 in [PR05]. It can be reformulated in our setting as follows.

**Theorem 5.3** ([PR05]). *Let  $\mu$  be the invariant measure of  $X$ . For any measure  $\nu$  with a finite first moment and  $t \geq 0$ ,*

$$\|\nu P_t - \mu\|_{\text{TV}} \leq e^{-\lambda t/2} (3\lambda W_1(\nu, \mu) + \|\nu - \mu\|_{\text{TV}}).$$

Let us provide here an improvement of this result by a probabilistic argument.

**Proposition 5.4.** *For any  $x, y \geq 0$  and  $t \geq 0$ ,*

$$\|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \leq \lambda e^{-\lambda t/2} |x - y| + e^{-\lambda t}. \quad (23)$$

As a consequence, for any measure  $\nu$  with a finite first moment and  $t \geq 0$ ,

$$\|\nu P_t - \mu\|_{\text{TV}} \leq \lambda e^{-\lambda t/2} W_1(\nu, \mu) + e^{-\lambda t} \|\nu - \mu\|_{\text{TV}}. \quad (24)$$

**Remark 5.5.** Note that the upper bound obtained in Equation (23) is non-null even for  $x = y$ . This is due to the persistence of a Dirac mass at any time, which implies that taking  $y$  arbitrarily close to  $x$  for initial conditions does not make the total variation distance arbitrarily small, even for large times.

*Proof of Proposition 5.4.* The coupling is a slight modification of the Wasserstein one. The paths of  $(X_s)_{0 \leq s \leq t}$  and  $(Y_s)_{0 \leq s \leq t}$  starting respectively from  $x$  and  $y$  are determined by their jump times  $(T_n^X)_{n \geq 0}$  and  $(T_n^Y)_{n \geq 0}$  up to time  $t$ . These sequences have the same distribution than the jump times of a Poisson process with intensity  $\lambda$ .

Let  $(N_t)_{t \geq 0}$  be a Poisson process with intensity  $\lambda$  and  $(T_n)_{n \geq 0}$  its jump times with the convention  $T_0 = 0$ . Let us now construct the jump times of  $X$  and  $Y$ . Both processes make exactly  $N_t$  jumps before time  $t$ . If  $N_t = 0$ , then

$$X_s = x + s \quad \text{and} \quad Y_s = y + s \quad \text{for } 0 \leq s \leq t.$$

Assume now that  $N_t \geq 1$ . The  $N_t - 1$  first jump times of  $X$  and  $Y$  are the ones of  $(N_t)_{t \geq 0}$ :

$$T_k^X = T_k^Y = T_k \quad 0 \leq k \leq N_t - 1.$$

In other words, the Wasserstein coupling acts until the penultimate jump time  $T_{N_t-1}$ . At that time, we have

$$X_{T_{N_t-1}} - Y_{T_{N_t-1}} = \frac{x - y}{2^{N_t-1}}.$$

Then we have to define the last jump time for each process. If they are such that

$$T_{N_t}^X = T_{N_t}^Y + X_{T_{N_t-1}} - Y_{T_{N_t-1}}$$

then the paths of  $X$  and  $Y$  are equal on the interval  $(T_{N_t}^X, t)$  and can be chosen to be equal for any time larger than  $t$ .

Recall that conditionally on the event  $\{N_t = 1\}$ , the law of  $T_1$  is the uniform distribution on  $(0, t)$ . More generally, if  $n \geq 2$ , conditionally on the set  $\{N_t = n\}$ , the law of the penultimate jump time  $T_{n-1}$  has a density  $s \mapsto n(n-1)t^{-n}(t-s)s^{n-2}\mathbb{1}_{(0,t)}(s)$  and conditionally on the event  $\{N_t = n, T_{n-1} = s\}$ , the law of  $T_n$  is uniform on the interval  $(s, t)$ .

Conditionally on  $N_t = n \geq 1$  and  $T_{n-1}$ ,  $T_n^X$  and  $T_n^Y$  are uniformly distributed on  $(T_{n-1}, t)$  and can be chosen such that

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbb{P}\left(T_n^X = T_n^Y + \frac{x - y}{2^{n-1}} \mid N_t^X = N_t^Y = n, T_{n-1}^X = T_{n-1}^Y = T_{n-1}\right) \\ &= \left(1 - \frac{|x - y|}{2^{n-1}(t - T_{n-1})}\right) \vee 0 \geq 1 - \frac{|x - y|}{2^{n-1}(t - T_{n-1})}. \end{aligned}$$

This coupling provides that

$$\begin{aligned} \|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}} &\leq 1 - \mathbb{E}\left[\left(1 - \frac{|x - y|}{2^{N_t-1}(t - T_{N_t-1})}\right) \mathbb{1}_{\{N_t \geq 1\}}\right] \\ &\leq e^{-\lambda t} + |x - y| \mathbb{E}\left[\frac{2^{-N_t+1}}{(t - T_{N_t-1})} \mathbb{1}_{\{N_t \geq 1\}}\right]. \end{aligned}$$

For any  $n \geq 2$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}\left(\frac{1}{t - T_{N_t-1}} \mid N_t = n\right) = \frac{n(n-1)}{t^n} \int_0^t u^{n-2} du = \frac{n}{t}.$$

This equality also holds for  $n = 1$ . Thus we get that

$$\mathbb{E}\left(\frac{2^{-N_t+1}}{(t - T_{N_t-1})} \mathbb{1}_{\{N_t \geq 1\}}\right) = \frac{1}{t} \mathbb{E}(N_t 2^{-N_t+1}) = \lambda e^{-\lambda t/2},$$

since  $N_t$  is distributed according to the Poisson law with parameter  $\lambda t$ . This provides the estimate (23). The general case (24) is a straightforward consequence: if  $N_t$  is equal to 0, a coupling in total variation of the initial measures is done, otherwise, we use the coupling above.  $\square$

## 5.2 A storage model example

The following example is studied in [RT00] as a good illustration of the efficiency of the main result, which is a refinement of [RR96] for the stochastically monotonous processes. The process  $(X_t)_{t \geq 0}$  on  $\mathbb{R}^+$  is driven by the generator

$$Lf(x) = -\beta x f'(x) + \alpha \int_0^\infty (f(x+y) - f(x)) e^{-y} dy.$$

In words, the current stock  $X_t$  decreases exponentially at rate  $\beta$ , and increases at random exponential times by a random (exponential) amount. Let us introduce a Poisson process  $(N_t)_{t \geq 0}$  with intensity  $\alpha$  and jump times  $(T_i)_{i \geq 0}$  (with  $T_0 = 0$ ) and a sequence  $(E_i)_{i \geq 1}$  of independent random variables with law  $\mathcal{E}(1)$  independent of  $(N_t)_{t \geq 0}$ . The process  $(X_t)_{t \geq 0}$  starting from  $x \geq 0$  can be constructed as follows: for any  $i \geq 0$ ,

$$X_t = \begin{cases} e^{-\beta(t-T_i)} X_{T_i} & \text{if } T_i \leq t < T_{i+1}, \\ e^{-\beta(T_{i+1}-T_i)} X_{T_i} + E_{i+1} & \text{if } t = T_{i+1}. \end{cases}$$

**Proposition 5.6.** *For any  $x, y \geq 0$  and  $t \geq 0$ ,*

$$W_p(\delta_x P_t, \delta_y P_t) \leq |x - y| e^{-\beta t},$$

and (when  $\alpha \neq \beta$ )

$$\|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \leq e^{-\alpha t} + |x - y| \alpha \frac{e^{-\beta t} - e^{-\alpha t}}{\alpha - \beta}. \quad (25)$$

Moreover, if  $\mu$  is the invariant measure of the process  $X$ , we have for any probability measure  $\nu$  with a finite first moment and  $t \geq 0$ ,

$$\|\nu P_t - \mu\|_{\text{TV}} \leq \|\nu - \mu\|_{\text{TV}} e^{-\alpha t} + W_1(\nu, \mu) \alpha \frac{e^{-\beta t} - e^{-\alpha t}}{\alpha - \beta}.$$

**Remark 5.7.** In the case  $\alpha = \beta$ , the upper bound (25) becomes

$$\|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \leq (1 + |x - y| \alpha t) e^{-\alpha t}.$$

**Remark 5.8** (Optimality). Applying  $L$  to the test function  $f(x) = x^n$  allows us to compute recursively the moments of  $X_t$ . In particular,

$$\mathbb{E}_x(X_t) = \frac{\alpha}{\beta} + \left(x - \frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right) e^{-\beta t}.$$

This relation ensures that the rate of convergence for the Wasserstein distance is sharp. Moreover, the coupling of total variation distance requires at least one jump. As a consequence, the exponential rate of convergence is greater than  $\alpha$ . Thus, Equation (25) provides the optimal rate of convergence  $\alpha \wedge \beta$ .

**Remark 5.9** (Comparison with previous work). By way of comparison, the original method of [RT00] does not seem to give these optimal rates. The case  $\alpha = 1$  and  $\beta = 2$  is treated in this paper (as an illustration of Theorem 5.1), with explicit choices for the

various parameters needed in this method. With these choices, in order to get the convergence rate, one first needs to compute the quantity  $\theta$  (defined in Theorem 3.1), which turns out to be approximately 5.92. The result that applies is therefore the first part of Theorem 4.1 (Equation (27)), and the convergence rate is given by  $\tilde{\beta}$  defined by Equation (22). The computation gives the approximate value 0.05, which is off by a factor 20 from the optimal value  $\alpha \wedge \beta = 1$ .

*Proof of Proposition 5.6.* Firstly, consider two processes  $X$  and  $Y$  starting respectively at  $x$  and  $y$  and driven by the same randomness (*i.e.* Poisson process and jumps). Then the distance between  $X_t$  and  $Y_t$  is deterministic:

$$X_t - Y_t = (x - y)e^{-\beta t}.$$

Obviously, for any  $p \geq 1$  and  $t \geq 0$ ,

$$W_p(\delta_x P_t, \delta_y P_t) \leq |x - y|e^{-\beta t}.$$

Let us now construct explicitly a coupling at time  $t$  to get the upper bound (25) for the total variation distance. The jump times of  $(X_t)_{t \geq 0}$  and  $(Y_t)_{t \geq 0}$  are the ones of a Poisson process  $(N_t)_{t \geq 0}$  with intensity  $\alpha$  and jump times  $(T_i)_{i \geq 0}$ . Let us now construct the jump heights  $(E_i^X)_{1 \leq i \leq N_t}$  and  $(E_i^Y)_{1 \leq i \leq N_t}$  of  $X$  and  $Y$  until time  $t$ . If  $N_t = 0$ , no jump occurs. If  $N_t \geq 1$ , we choose  $E_i^X = E_i^Y$  for  $1 \leq i \leq N_t - 1$  and  $E_{N_t}^X$  and  $E_{N_t}^Y$  in order to maximise the probability

$$\mathbb{P}\left(X_{T_{N_t}} + E_{N_t}^X = Y_{T_{N_t}} + E_{N_t}^Y \mid X_{T_{N_t}}, Y_{T_{N_t}}\right).$$

This maximal probability of coupling is equal to

$$\exp\left(-|X_{T_{N_t}} - Y_{T_{N_t}}|\right) = \exp\left(-|x - y|e^{-\beta T_{N_t}}\right) \geq 1 - |x - y|e^{-\beta T_{N_t}}.$$

As a consequence, we get that

$$\begin{aligned} \|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}} &\leq 1 - \mathbb{E}\left[\left(1 - |x - y|e^{-\beta T_{N_t}}\right) \mathbf{1}_{\{N_t \geq 1\}}\right] \\ &\leq e^{-\alpha t} + |x - y| \mathbb{E}\left(e^{-\beta T_{N_t}} \mathbf{1}_{\{N_t \geq 1\}}\right). \end{aligned}$$

The law of  $T_n$  conditionally on the event  $\{N_t = n\}$  has the density

$$u \mapsto n \frac{u^{n-1}}{t^n} \mathbf{1}_{[0,t]}(u).$$

This ensures that

$$\mathbb{E}\left(e^{-\beta T_{N_t}} \mathbf{1}_{\{N_t \geq 1\}}\right) = \int_0^1 e^{-\beta t v} \mathbb{E}(N_t v^{N_t-1}) dv.$$

Since the law of  $N_t$  is the Poisson distribution with parameter  $\lambda t$ , one has

$$\mathbb{E}(N_t v^{N_t-1}) = \alpha t e^{\alpha t(v-1)}.$$

This ensures that

$$\mathbb{E}\left(e^{-\beta T_{N_t}} \mathbf{1}_{\{N_t \geq 1\}}\right) = \alpha \frac{e^{-\beta t} - e^{-\alpha t}}{\alpha - \beta}$$

which completes the proof. Finally, to get the last estimate, we proceed as follows: if  $N_t$  is equal to 0, a coupling in total variation of the initial measures is done, otherwise, we use the coupling above.  $\square$

## 6 The case of diffusion processes

Let us consider the process  $(X_t)_{t \geq 0}$  on  $\mathbb{R}^d$  solution of

$$dX_t = A(X_t) dt + \sigma(X_t) dB_t, \quad (26)$$

where  $(B_t)_{t \geq 0}$  is a standard Brownian motion on  $\mathbb{R}^n$ ,  $\sigma$  is a smooth function from  $\mathbb{R}^d$  to  $\mathcal{M}_{d,n}(\mathbb{R})$  and  $A$  is a smooth function from  $\mathbb{R}^d$  to  $\mathbb{R}^d$ . Let us denote by  $(P_t)_{t \geq 0}$  the semi-group associated to  $(X_t)_{t \geq 0}$ . If  $\nu$  is a probability measure on  $\mathbb{R}^d$ ,  $\nu P_t$  stands for the law of  $X_t$  when the law of  $X_0$  is  $\nu$ .

Under ergodicity assumptions, we are interested in getting quantitative rates of convergence of  $\mathcal{L}(X_t)$  to its invariant measure in terms of classical distances (Wasserstein distances, total variation distance, relative entropy, ...). Remark that if  $A$  is not in gradient form (even if  $\sigma$  is constant),  $X_t$  is not reversible and the invariant measure is usually unknown, so that it is quite difficult to use functional inequalities such as Poincaré or logarithmic Sobolev to get a quantitative rate of convergence in total variation or Wasserstein distance (using for example Pinsker's inequality or more generally transportation-information inequality). Therefore the only general tool seems to be Meyn-Tweedie's approach, via small sets and Lyapunov functions, as explained in Section 4.2. However, we have seen that in practical examples the resulting estimate can be quite poor.

The main goal of this short section is to recall the known results establishing the decay in Wasserstein distance and then to propose a strategy to derive control in total variation distance.

### 6.1 Decay in Wasserstein distance

The coupling approach to estimate the decay in Wasserstein distance was recently put forward, see [CGM08] and [BGM10] or [Ebe11]. It is robust enough to deal with nonlinear diffusions or hypoelliptic ones. In [BGG11], the authors approach the problem directly, by differentiating the Wasserstein distance along the flow of the SDE.

Let us gather some of the results in these papers in the following statement.

**Proposition 6.1.** *1. Assume that there exists  $\lambda > 0$  such that for  $p > 1$*

$$\frac{p-1}{2}(\sigma(x) - \sigma(y))(\sigma(x) - \sigma(y))^t + (A(x) - A(y)) \cdot (x - y) \leq -\lambda|x - y|^2, \quad x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d. \quad (27)$$

*Then, for any  $\nu, \nu' \in \mathcal{P}_p(\mathbb{R}^d)$ , one has*

$$W_p(\nu P_t, \nu' P_t) \leq e^{-\lambda t} W_p(\nu, \nu'). \quad (28)$$

*2. Assume that for all  $x$ ,  $\sigma(x) = \alpha \mathbf{I}_d$  for some constant  $\alpha$  and that  $A$  is equal to  $-\nabla U$  where  $U$  is a  $\mathcal{C}^2$  function such that  $\text{Hess}(U) \leq -K \mathbf{I}_d$  outside a ball  $B(0, r_0)$  and  $\text{Hess}(U) \leq \rho \mathbf{I}_d$  inside this ball for some positive  $\rho$ . Then there exists  $c > 1, \alpha > 0$  such that*

$$W_1(\nu P_t, \nu' P_t) \leq c e^{-\alpha t} W_1(\nu, \nu'). \quad (29)$$

3. Suppose that the diffusion coefficient  $\sigma$  is constant. Assume that  $A$  is equal to  $-\nabla U$  where  $U$  a  $\mathcal{C}^2$  convex function such that  $\text{Hess}(U) \leq \rho \mathbf{I}_d$  outside a ball  $B(0, r_0)$ , with  $\rho > 0$ . Then there exists an invariant probability measure  $\nu_\infty$  and  $\alpha > 0$  such that

$$W_2(\nu P_t, \nu_\infty) \leq e^{-\alpha t} W_2(\nu, \nu_\infty). \quad (30)$$

*Proof.* The first point is usually proved using a trivial coupling (and it readily extends to  $p = 1$  in the case of constant diffusion coefficient), namely considering the same Brownian motion for two different solutions of the SDE starting with different initial measures. Note also that, in the case  $p = 2$ , the coercivity condition (27) is equivalent to the uniform contraction property (28) for the  $W_2$  metric (see [vRS05]).

The second point is due in this form to Eberle [Ebe11], using reflection coupling as presented by [LR86], used originally in this form by Chen and Wang to prove spectral gap estimates (see a nice short proof in [HSV11, Prop. 2.8]) in the reversible case.

Finally, the third part was proved by [BGG11] establishing the dissipation of the Wasserstein distance by an adequate functional inequality.  $\square$

**Remark 6.2.** • Let us remark that the contraction property of the two first points ensures the existence of an invariant probability measure  $\nu_\infty$  and an exponential rate of convergence towards this invariant measure in Wasserstein distance.

- Note also that in the hypoelliptic case of a kinetic Fokker-Planck equation:

$$\begin{cases} dx_t = v_t dt \\ dv_t = dB_t - F(x_t) dt - V(v_t) dt \end{cases}$$

with  $F(x) \sim ax$  and  $V(v) \sim bv$  for positive  $a$  and  $b$ , one has

$$W_2(\nu P_t, \nu' P_t) \leq c e^{-\alpha t} W_2(\nu, \nu')$$

for  $c > 1$  and a positive  $\alpha$  (see [CGM08]).

## 6.2 Total variation estimate

If  $\Sigma = 0$  in Equation (26), the process  $(X_t)_{t \geq 0}$  is deterministic and its invariant measure is a Dirac mass at the unique point  $\bar{x} \in \mathbb{R}^d$  such that  $A(\bar{x}) = 0$ . As a consequence, for any  $x \neq \bar{x}$ ,

$$\|\delta_x P_t - \delta_{\bar{x}}\|_{\text{TV}} = 1 \quad \text{and} \quad H(\delta_x P_t | \delta_{\bar{x}}) = +\infty.$$

A non-zero variance is needed to get a convergence estimate in total variation distance. Classically, the Brownian motion creates regularity and density. There are a lot of results giving regularity, in terms of initial points, of semigroup in small time. Let us quote the following result of Wang, which holds for processes living on a manifold.

**Lemma 6.3** ([Wan10]). *Suppose that  $\sigma$  is constant and denote by  $\eta$  the infimum of its spectrum. If  $A$  is a  $\mathcal{C}^2$  function such that*

$$\frac{1}{2}(\text{Jac } A + \text{Jac } A^T) \geq K \mathbf{I}_d$$

*then there exists  $K_\eta$  such that, for small  $\varepsilon > 0$ ,*

$$\|\delta_x P_\varepsilon - \delta_y P_\varepsilon\|_{\text{TV}} \leq K_\eta \frac{|x - y|}{\sqrt{\varepsilon}}.$$

**Remark 6.4.**

- There are many proofs leading to this kind of results, see for example Aronson [Aro67] for pioneering works, and [Wan10] using Harnack's and Pinsker's inequalities.
- Note that in [GW11], an equivalent bound was given for the kinetic Fokker-Planck equation but with  $\varepsilon$  replaced by  $\varepsilon^3$ .

Now that we have a decay in Wasserstein distance and a control on the total variation distance after a small time, we can use the same idea as for the TCP process. As a consequence, we get the following result.

**Theorem 6.5.** *Assume that  $\sigma$  is constant. Under Points 1. or 2. of Proposition 6.1, one has, for any  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  in  $\mathcal{P}_1(\mathbb{R}^d)$ ,*

$$\|\nu P_t - \tilde{\nu} P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \leq \frac{K e^{\lambda\varepsilon}}{\sqrt{\varepsilon}} W_1(\nu, \tilde{\nu}) e^{-\lambda t}.$$

*Under Point 3. of Proposition 6.1, one has, for any  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$  in  $\mathcal{P}_2(\mathbb{R}^d)$ ,*

$$\|\nu P_t - \tilde{\nu} P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \leq \frac{K e^{\lambda\varepsilon}}{\sqrt{\varepsilon}} W_2(\nu, \tilde{\nu}) e^{-\lambda t}.$$

*Proof.* The strategy is to construct a coalescent coupling with just one step. For  $\varepsilon < t$ , the Wasserstein coupling acts on the time interval  $[0, t - \varepsilon]$ . Then, we try to stick the two paths at the time  $\varepsilon$ . The Markov property (up to time  $t - \varepsilon$ ) ensures that

$$\|\delta_x P_t - \delta_y P_t\|_{\text{TV}} \leq \frac{K|x - y|}{\sigma\sqrt{\varepsilon}} e^{-\lambda(t-\varepsilon)}$$

thanks to Lemma 6.3 and Proposition 6.1. The theorem follows once we choose a good coupling of the initial distributions  $\nu$  and  $\tilde{\nu}$ .  $\square$

**Remark 6.6.** Once again, one can give in the case of kinetic Fokker-Planck equation estimate in total variation distance, using the previous remarks (see [BCG08] for qualitative results).

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