

# Introduction of Statistics in Optimization

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Joint work with  
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# Outline

## 1 Evolutionary Optimization

- Problem
- State of The Art algorithms
- Contribution

## 2 Multistage optimization

- Problem
- State of The Art algorithms
- Contributions

## 3 Combinatorial optimization

- Problem
- Current work

# Outline

## 1 Evolutionary Optimization

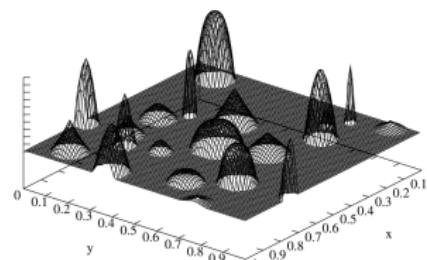
- Problem
- State of The Art algorithms
- Contribution

## 2 Multistage optimization

## 3 Combinatorial optimization

# Problem

- Data
  - Search Space  $\Omega$  (set of possible solutions)
  - Objective function (quality criterion)
- Goal
  - Find the best solution (according to the objective function)
- Formally
  - Consider  $\mathcal{F} : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$
  - $x^* \in \Omega / x^* = \operatorname{argmax}(\mathcal{F})$
- Additional properties
  - Black-box optimization
  - Continuous ( $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ )



⇒ Evolution Strategy

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# Evolution Strategy

[Rechenberg, 73][Schwefel, 74]

```
Initialize  $y, \sigma, C$ 
while we have time do
    for  $i \leftarrow 1 \dots \lambda$  do
         $x_i \leftarrow y + \sigma \mathcal{N}_i(0, C)$ 
        compute  $\mathcal{F}(x_i)$ 
    end for
    update  $y, \sigma, C$ 
end while
Return  $y$ 
```

$y \in \mathbb{R}^N$  represents the current search point  
 $\lambda$  is the population size  
 $C \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times N}$  is the covariance matrix  
 $\sigma \in \mathbb{R}_+$  is the step-size

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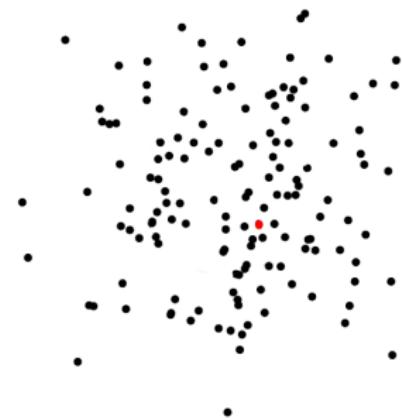
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- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} y \in \mathbb{R}^N \text{ represents the current search point} \\ \lambda \text{ is the population size} \\ C \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times N} \text{ is the covariance matrix} \\ \sigma \in \mathbb{R}_+ \text{ is the step-size} \end{array} \right.$

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update  $y, \sigma, C$

**end while**

Return  $y$

Updating  $y$ :  $y \leftarrow \sum_{i=1}^{\mu} w_{(i)} x_{(i)}$

$(\mu/\mu, \lambda)$ -ES

# Fitness Function

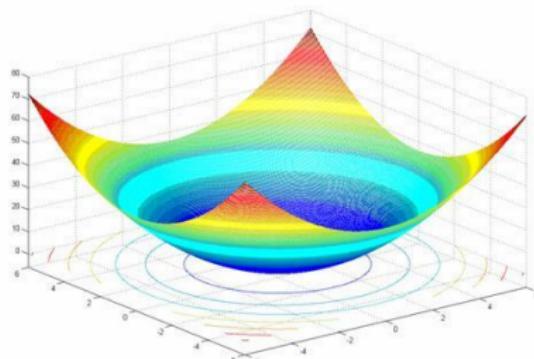
- Sphere function :  
 $x \rightarrow \|x\|$

- Minimization

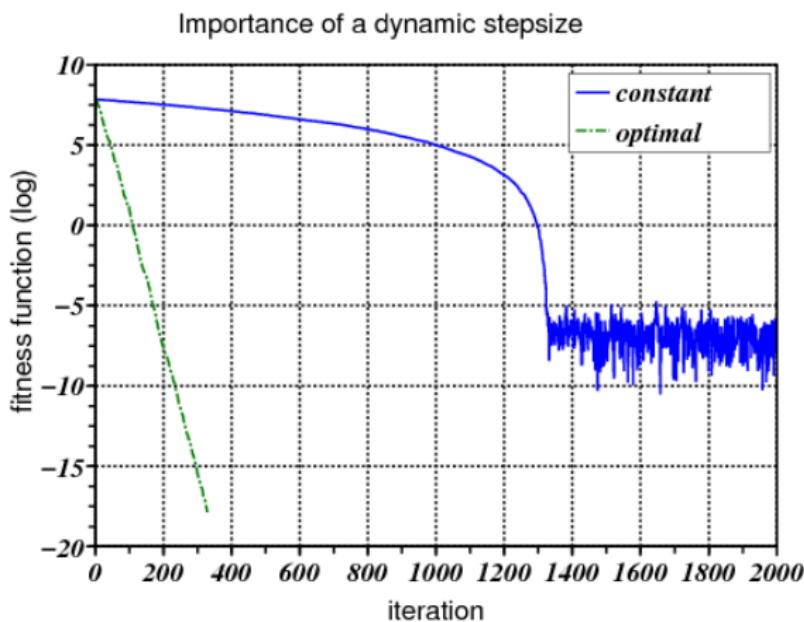
In all experiments



The lower the better



# Why updating the step-size ?



Scale invariant :  $\sigma \leftarrow \alpha ||y||$

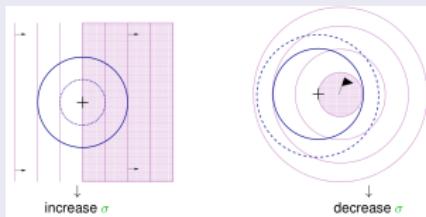
# Evolution Strategies

- Covariance matrix : Identity or diagonal
    - $\frac{1}{5^{th}}$  rule [Rechenberg, 73]
    - Self-Adaptation [Rechenberg, 73][Schwefel, 74]
    - Path Length Control (aka CSA) [Hansen & Ostermeier, 96, 01]
  - Full Covariance matrix - self adaptation [Schwefel, 81]
- State of the art algorithms
- Covariance Matrix Adaptation (CMA) [Hansen & Ostermeier, 01]
  - Covariance Matrix Self-Adaptation (CMSA) [Beyer & Sendhoff, 08]

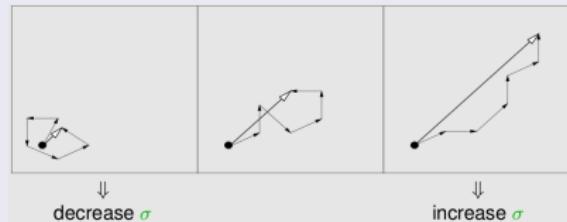
# Evolution Strategies

AUGER & HANSEN, CMA-ES TUTORIAL

## 1/5<sup>th</sup> rule



## CSA



## Self-Adaptation

$$\sigma_i \leftarrow \hat{\sigma} e^{\tau \mathcal{N}(0,1)}$$

with  $\tau \leftarrow 1/\sqrt{N}$  and  $N$  the dimension

# Estimation of Multivariate Normal Algorithm (EMNA)

[Larranaga & Lozano, 01]

- EDA : evolution of a parameterized probability distribution
  - Sample the domain with the current distribution
  - Evaluate the population
  - Select the best points
  - Update the parameters of the distribution
- EMNA
  - Example of EDA
  - Gaussian distribution ( $\sigma$ ,  $C$ )
  - Close to ES

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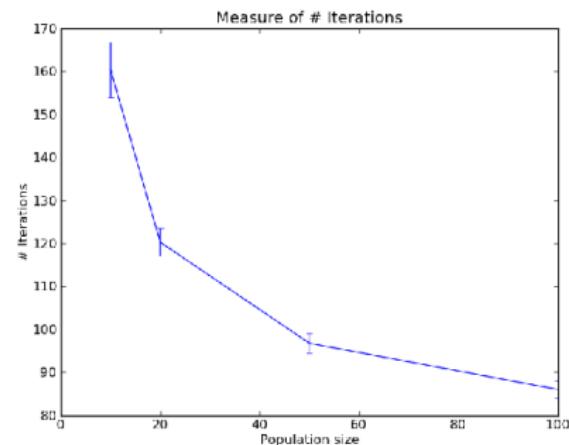
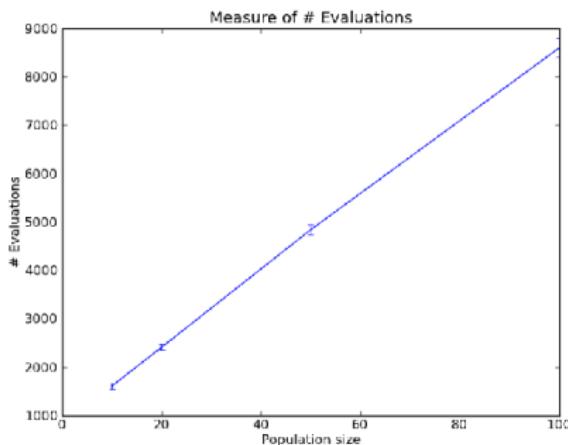
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## 2 Multistage optimization

## 3 Combinatorial optimization

# Motivation for parallelism

CMA, Sphere function,  $f_{target} = 10^{-10}$ ,  $N = 10$



# Theoretical bounds

[Teytaud & Fournier, 10]

## Speed-up for $p$ processors

$$S_p \leftarrow \frac{T_1}{T_p}$$

## $(1, \lambda)$ -ES

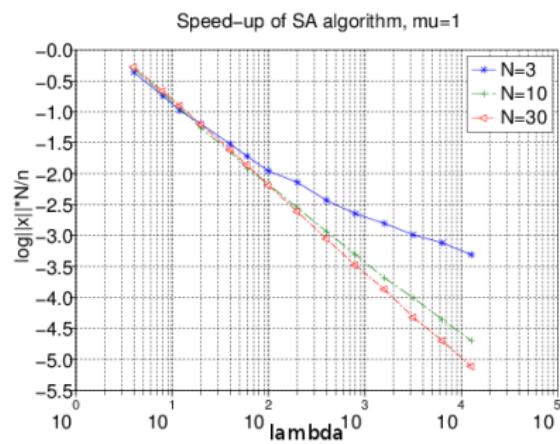
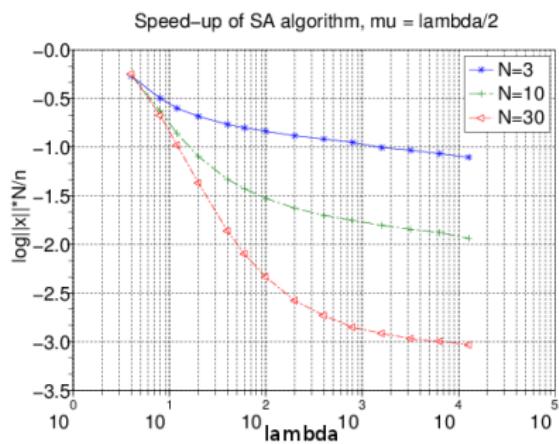
Speed-up **logarithmic** for all  $\lambda$

## $(\mu/\mu, \lambda)$ -ES

Speed-up **linear** until  $\lambda < N$  and then **logarithmic**

# Issues with large population sizes

[Evolnum, 09]



$\Rightarrow \mu = 1$  : empirically, a better choice than  $\frac{\lambda}{2}$  or  $\frac{\lambda}{4}$

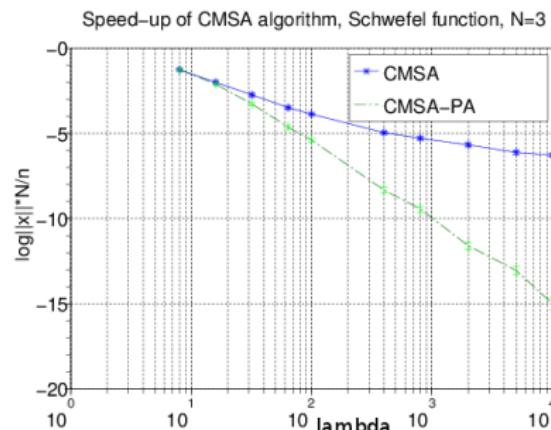
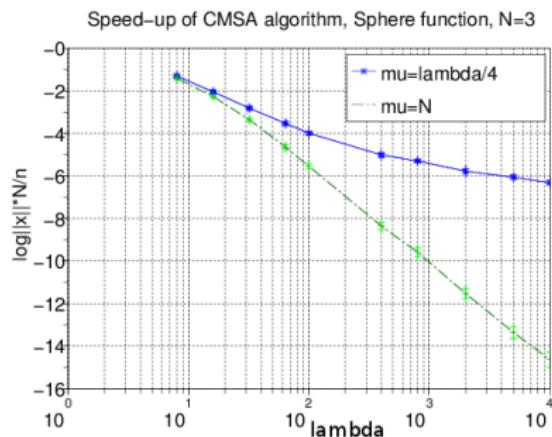
# New selection ratio

[Evolnum, 10]

- New selection ratio (aka PA)
  - Idea: Having a bounded selection ratio
  - Rule:  $\mu \leftarrow \min(N, \frac{\lambda}{4})$
- Experiments
  - CMSA, Sphere and Schwefel functions

# New selection ratio

## Results



# Log- $\lambda$ modification

[EA 09, GECCO 09, PPSN 10]

## Problems

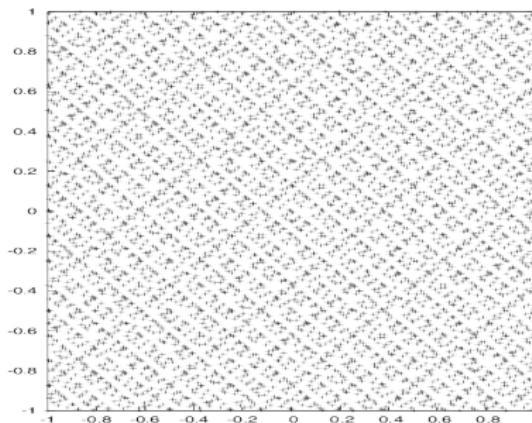
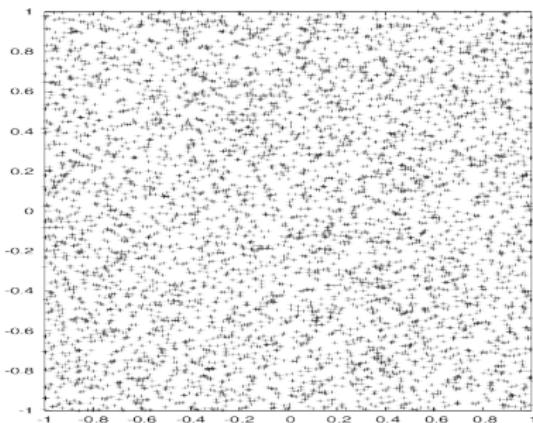
- The weighting trouble (bias ...)
- The limited behavior for large population size (... and then variance)
- Possible redundant mutations

## Ideas

- Reweighting
- A faster decrease of the step-size  $\sigma$
- Quasi-random mutations

# Quasi-Random mutations

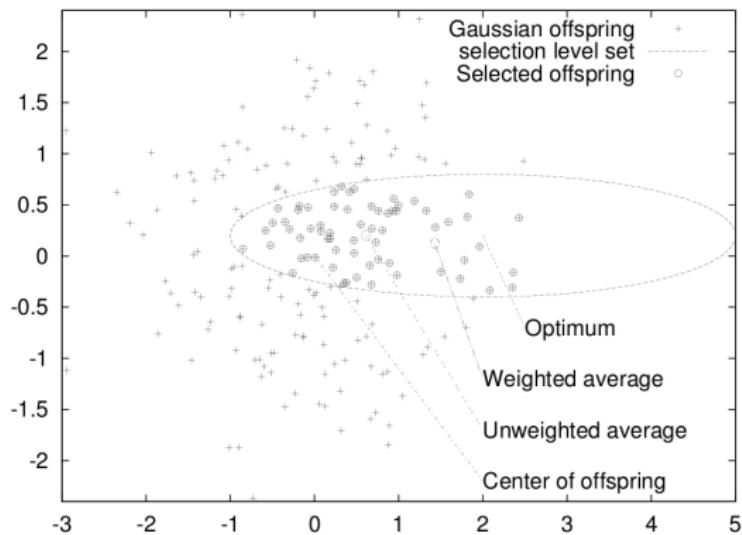
[Teytaud, 08]



# Correcting the bias

[Gecco, 09]

Compute: weight  $\leftarrow 1/\text{density of distribution}$



# Log- $\lambda$ modification

## Experiments

- EMNA with
  - Faster decrease of  $\sigma$
  - Reweighting
  - Quasi-Random mutations
- Function
  - Sphere function
- $\sigma$  initialization
  - Not tuned
- All differences statistically significant (with 95% confidence)

# Log- $\lambda$ modification

## Results

- Sphere function
- Initial  $\sigma$  not tuned

Dimension, lambda	Baseline	+QR	+ weight	+LB (IEMNA)
2,20	-0.000	-0.001	<b>-0.001</b>	-0.001
2,60	-0.001	-0.001	<b>-0.014</b>	-0.005
2,200	-0.001	-0.001	-1.501	<b>-2.106</b>
2,600	-0.001	-0.001	-1.748	<b>-2.640</b>
2,2000	-0.001	-0.001	-1.853	<b>-2.952</b>
3,30	-0.001	-0.001	<b>-0.003</b>	-0.002
3,90	-0.002	-0.003	<b>-0.165</b>	-0.096
3,300	-0.003	-0.003	-1.821	<b>-2.437</b>
3,900	-0.003	-0.003	-1.995	<b>-2.945</b>
4,40	-0.002	-0.003	<b>-0.005</b>	-0.004
4,120	-0.004	-0.004	-0.395	<b>-0.508</b>
4,400	-0.004	-0.005	-1.970	<b>-2.693</b>
4,1200	-0.005	-0.005	-2.131	<b>-3.086</b>
5,50	-0.003	-0.004	-0.007	<b>-0.008</b>
5,150	-0.005	-0.006	-0.609	<b>-0.779</b>
5,500	-0.006	-0.007	-2.087	<b>-2.786</b>
5,1500	-0.007	-0.007	-2.288	<b>-3.250</b>

# Discussion

- New selection ratio ( $\frac{\mu}{\lambda}$ )
  - Positive improvement
  - No new parameter
  - Better as  $\lambda$  increases
- Faster decrease of  $\sigma$ 
  - Improve the speed-up of EMNA
  - Can be dangerous if no proper reweighting/initialization
  - (Quasi-Random always good)

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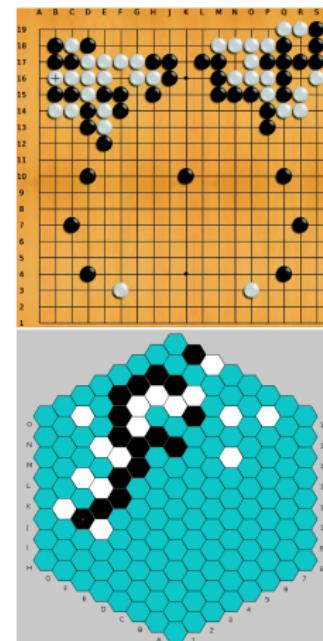
## 3 Combinatorial optimization

# Problem

- Making decisions in an environment which is
  - Discrete
  - Fully observable
  - With finite horizon
  - Reward at the end
  - With a large number of states
- Goal
  - Find the best decision for each state

# Games

- Why games ?
  - Well-designed
  - Simple and practical
  - Nice challenge for artificial intelligence
- Which games ?
  - Go
  - Havannah
- Goals
  - Improving the algorithm
  - Keeping the generality of the algorithm



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# State of the art algorithms

- Two-player games
  - Min-Max
  - Alpha-Beta
  - Monte-Carlo Tree Search
- One-player games
  - Dynamic programming
  - Nested Monte-Carlo Search
  - Nested Rollout Policy Adaptation

# Monte-Carlo Tree Search (MCTS)

- Recent developments

[Coulom 06][Chaslot et al., 06][Kocsis & Szepesvari, 06]

- Numourous applications

- Active learning [Rolet & al., 09]
- Non-linear Optimization [Auger & Teytaud, 10]
- Feature Selection [Gaudel & Sebag, 09]
- Planning [Xie et al., 11]
- Games
  - Go,
  - Havannah (First use [ACG 09])
  - Hex,
  - Amazon (combined with an evaluation function),
  - ...

# Monte-Carlo Tree Search (MCTS)

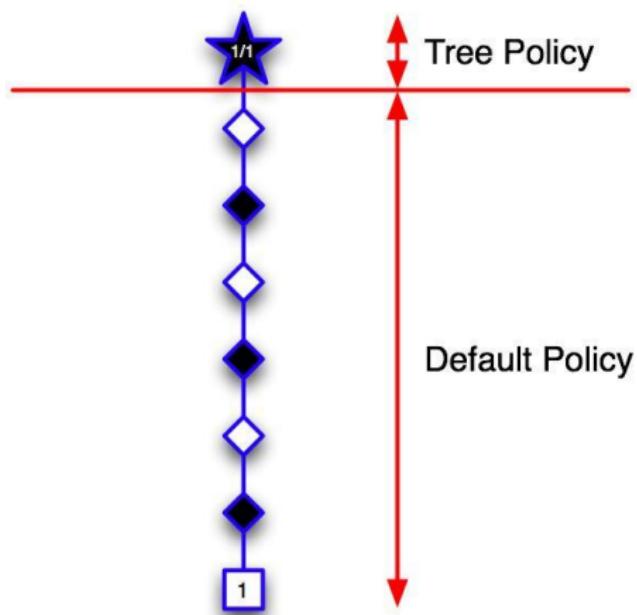
- Principle

- Construction of an imbalance subtree of possible futures
- Evaluation through Monte-Carlo simulations
- Use of a bandit formula to bias the subtree

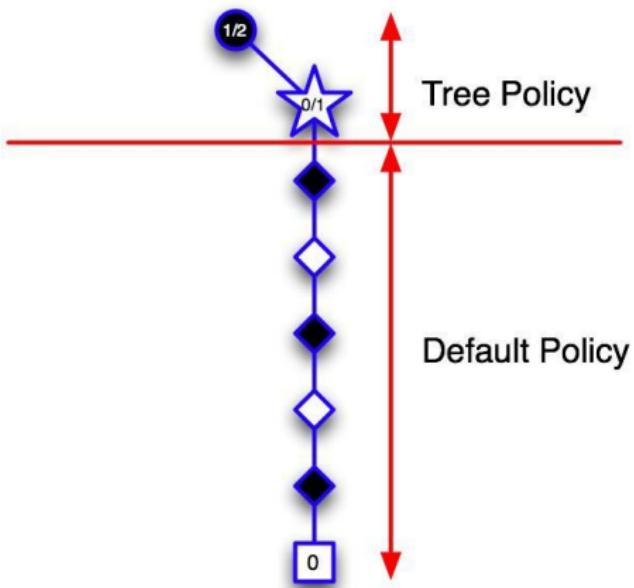
- 3 main steps

- Descent in the subtree
- Evaluation of the subtree
- Growth and update of the subtree

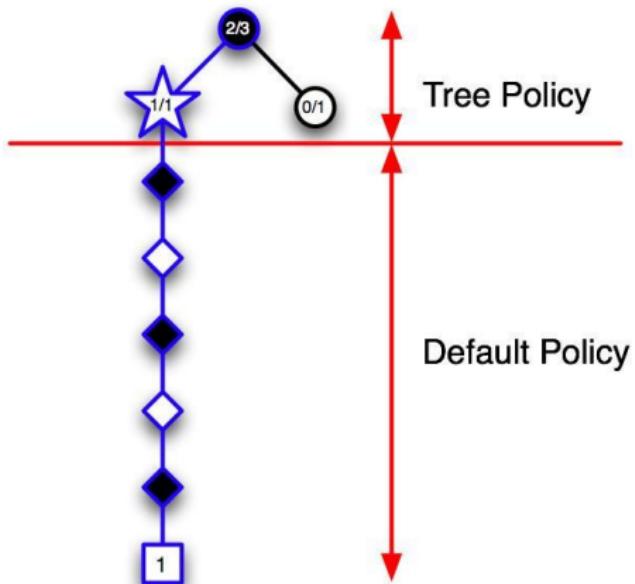
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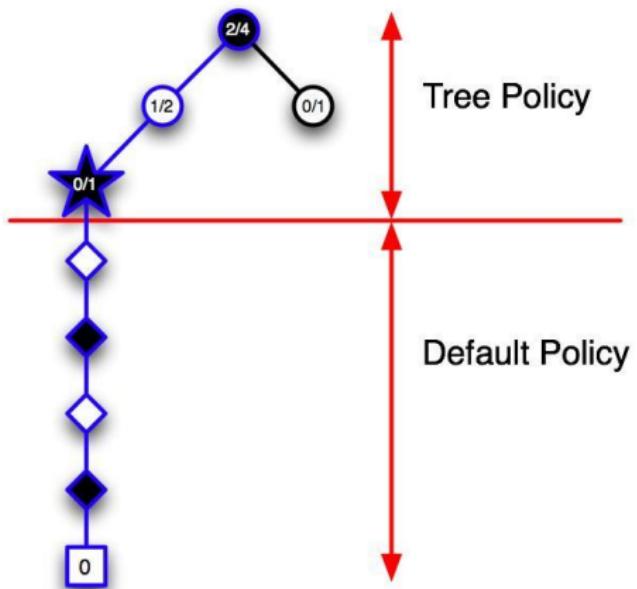
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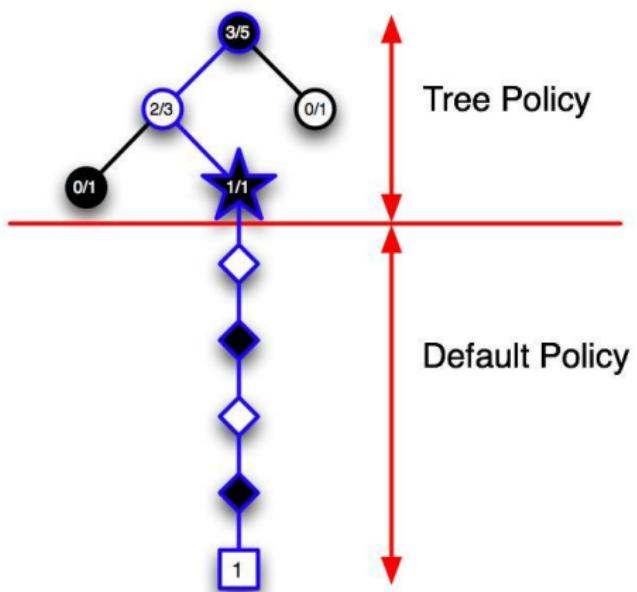
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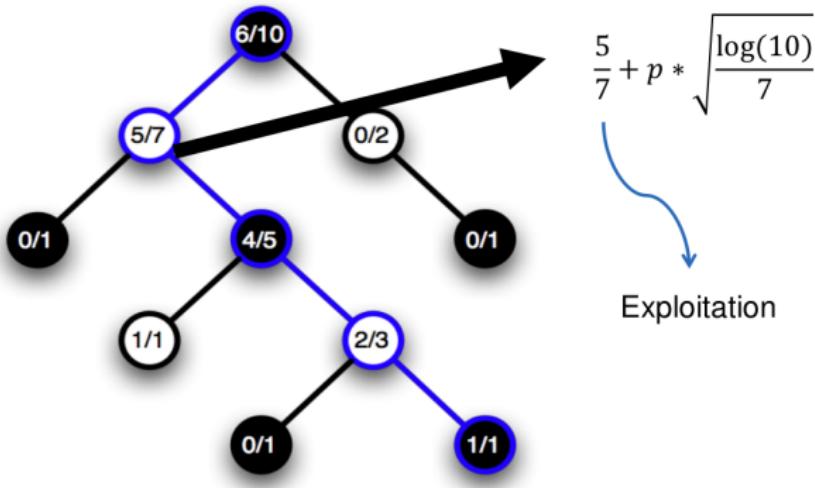
- Tree policy

- UCB1 formula [Auer et al., 02]
- Play arm  $i$  that maximizes  $\hat{X} + p\sqrt{\frac{\log T}{T_i}}$ 
  - $\hat{X}_i$  : Empirical average reward for move  $i$
  - $T$  : Total number of trials
  - $T_i$  : Number of trials for move  $i$

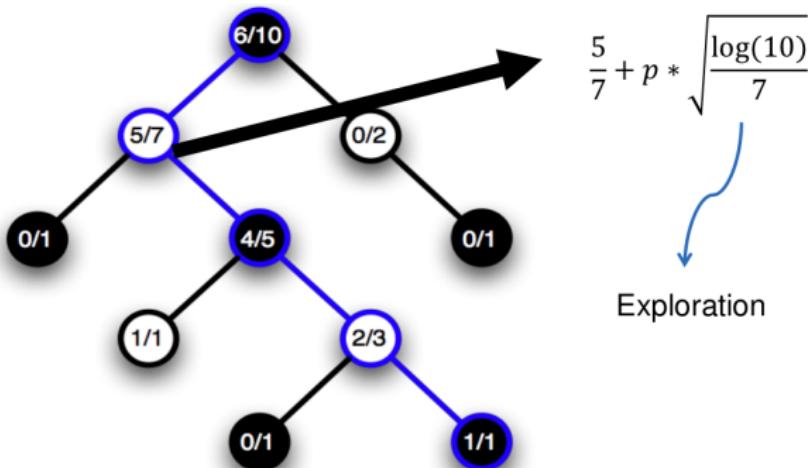
- Default policy

- Monte-Carlo Simulation
  - ⇒ Random choice until the end

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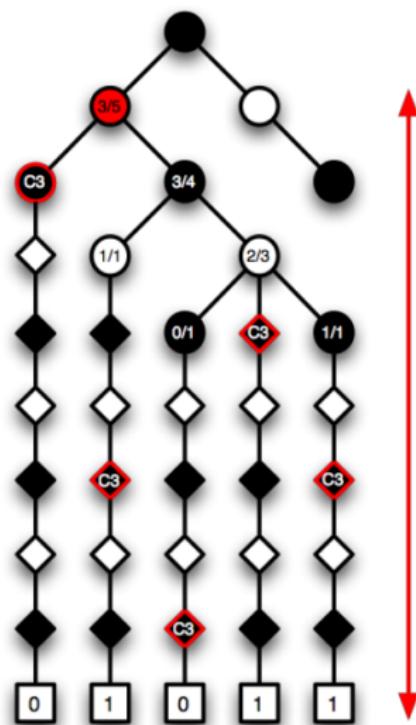


# Rapid Action Value Estimate (RAVE)

[Gelly & Sylver, 07]

- Keep for each node  $n$  and each move  $i$ :  
the number of wins and losses where  $i$  has been played *after*  $n$
- Compute a score  $V_{RAVE}(i)$ :  
empirical score when  $i$  has been played *after*  $n$
- NewScore  $\leftarrow (1 - \alpha)\hat{X}(i) + \alpha V_{RAVE}(i)$ + exploration  
with  $\alpha \leftarrow \sqrt{\frac{R}{R+n}}$
- RAVE scores are biased but have a small variance

# Rapid Action Value Estimate (RAVE)



# Monte-Carlo Tree Search (MCTS)

## Pros

- Efficient
- Evaluation function not needed
- Generic
- Anytime

## Cons

- Can we do better than pure Monte-Carlo ?  
⇒ Improving the default policy

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# Generic improvements

## 3 generic rules

- poolRave
- Contextual Monte-Carlo
- Decisive moves and anti-decisive moves

# Generic improvements

## 3 generic rules

- poolRave
- Contextual Monte-Carlo
- Decisive moves and anti-decisive moves [CIG 2010]

# PoolRave

## PoolRave [ACG 10]

- Based on RAVE
- Use RAVE values for biasing the next Monte-Carlo simulations
  - Compute a pool of good moves according to RAVE
  - When a decision has to be made in the default policy
    - Play a move in the pool with probability  $p$
    - Play a random move with probability  $1-p$

## CMC [EvoGames 2010]

- Keep for each node  $n$  and for each moves  $A$  and  $B$ : The number of wins and losses where  $A$  and  $B$  have been played after  $n$  by the current player
- Compute a score  $V_{CMC}(A, B)$ : empirical score when  $A$  and  $B$  have been played after  $n$ 
  - If  $B$  is the last move played by the current player
  - Find the move  $A$  which maximizes  $V_{CMC}(A, B)$ 
    - Play  $A$  with probability  $p$
    - Play a random move with probability  $1 - p$



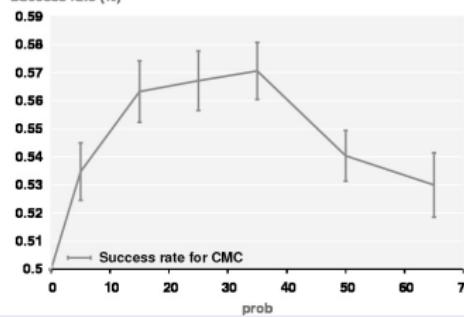
# Results

## Poolrave

Application	# of simulations	Best Score against the baseline
Havannah	1000	54.32% $\pm$ 0.46%
Havannah	10000	54.45% $\pm$ 0.75%
Havannah	20000	54.42% $\pm$ 0.89%
Go (9x9)	1000	62.7% $\pm$ 0.9%
Go (9x9)	10000	64.4% $\pm$ 0.4%

## CMC

Success rate for CMC version against standard version  
Success rate (%)



# Discussion

- All rules are generic
- A small but significative improvement
- PoolRave also tested against a baseline with handcrafted expert-knowledge  
→ 51.7%
- Comparison with (recent) existing methods:
  - Last Reply [Drake, 09]
  - N-grams [Stankiewicz et al, 11]

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# Traveling Salesman Problem (TSP)

## Data

- List of cities
- Distances between all cities

## Goal

- Find a path visiting each city exactly once
- The path must be as short as possible

# Formalization

## Data

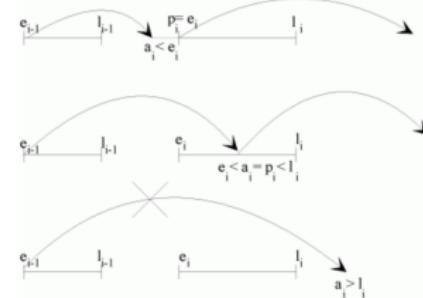
- $G(N, A)$  is a complete non directed graph
- $N = 0, 1, \dots, n$  is a set of nodes
- $A = N * N$  is a set of vertices
- $C : A \rightarrow R$  is a cost function
- A solution is a sequence  $P = (p_0, \dots, p_n, p_{n+1})$  where  $p_0$  and  $p_{n+1}$  correspond to the node 0 and  $p_0, \dots, p_n$  is a permutation of  $N$

## Goal

$$\text{cost}(P) \leftarrow \sum_{k=0}^n c(a_{p_k, p_{k+1}})$$

# Traveling Salesman Problem with Time Windows(TSPTW)

- Additional property: Time windows  
⇒ A city must be visited within a certain time interval



- Some problems have no solution
- Finding a path is NP-hard

# TSPTW

- The function to optimize is the same
- Each node  $i$  is associated to an interval  $[e_i, l_i]$
- These constraints must be satisfied:
  - $\forall p_k, r_{p_k} < l_{p_k}$
  - Departure time :  $d_{p_k} \leftarrow \max(r_{p_k}, e_{p_k})$   
where  $r_{p_k}$  is the arrival time at node  $p_k$
- $\text{NewCost}(P) \leftarrow \text{cost}(P) + 10^6 \times \Omega(P)$   
where  $\Omega(P)$  is the number of violated constraints

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# Nested Monte-Carlo Search (NMC)

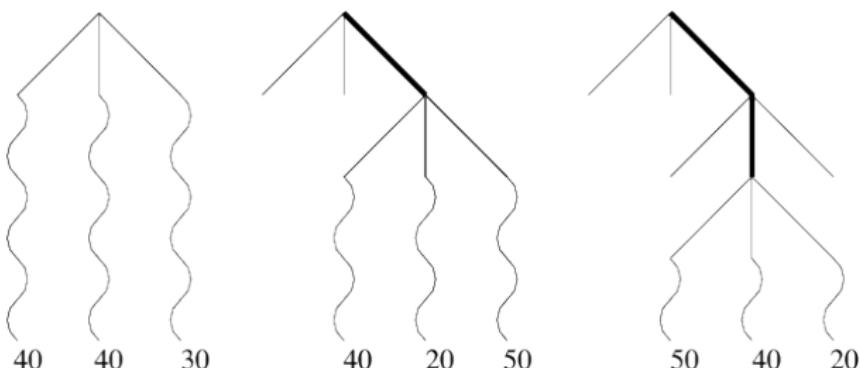
[Cazenave, 09]

- Tree exploration algorithm
- Evaluation with Monte-Carlo Simulations
- Particularly efficient for one player games and when late decisions are as important as early ones
- NMC plays a whole game and returns the associated score
- NMC takes for parameters the level and the current position (recursive algorithm)

# Nested Monte-Carlo Search (NMC)

- Level 0
  - Monte-Carlo policy
  - Each city is randomly chosen
- Level  $> 0$ 
  - Launch NMC(current level - 1)
  - The action with the highest score is chosen

# NMC(level 1) example



# Adding heuristics

[EvoTranslog 11]

- The algorithm can be improved by biasing the Monte-Carlo policy
- Instead of uniformly random, decisions are chosen accordingly to the probability (using a Boltzmann softmax policy):

$$\pi_{\sigma}(p, a) \leftarrow \frac{e^{\phi(p, a)^T \sigma}}{\sum_b e^{\phi(p, b)^T \sigma}}$$

$\phi(p, a)$  : heuristics vector  
 $\sigma$  : weights of the heuristics

- The added heuristics are :
  - The distance to the last node
  - The waiting time (related to  $e_i$ )
  - The remaining time before the end of the time window (related to  $I_i$ )
- Tuning of the weights done with an evolution strategy (SA-ES)



# Nested Rollout Policy Adaptation (NRPA)

[C. Rosin, 11]

- NMC can be improved by modifying the Monte-Carlo simulations
- Instead of random playouts, a policy is learned:
  - Increase weights of best decisions
  - Decrease weights of other decisions
  - For each city, compute a probability proportional to the exponential of its weight

# NRPA

- Level 0
  - Adapted policy
  - Each city is chosen accordingly to its probability
- Level  $> 0$ 
  - Launch  $N$  iterations of NRPA(current level - 1)
  - Update:
    - The scores
    - The sequences
    - The policy

# Adding heuristics

[LION 6, 2012]

## Guiding the rollout using domain-specific knowledge

- Force to visit cities as soon as they go after their window end
- Avoid visiting a city if it makes another city go after its window end
- Consider all cities if no city available after these two tests
- **Important point** : Optimal moves are not pruned

# Experiments and results

Problem	# cities	State of the art	NMC_EK score	NRPA score	NRPA_EK score
rc206.1	4	117.85	<b>117.85</b>	<b>117.85</b>	<b>117.85</b>
rc207.4	6	119.64	<b>119.64</b>	<b>119.64</b>	<b>119.64</b>
rc202.2	14	304.14	<b>304.14</b>	<b>304.14</b>	<b>304.14</b>
rc205.1	14	343.21	<b>343.21</b>	<b>343.21</b>	<b>343.21</b>
rc203.4	15	314.29	<b>314.29</b>	<b>314.29</b>	<b>314.29</b>
rc203.1	19	453.48	<b>453.48</b>	<b>453.48</b>	<b>453.48</b>
rc201.1	20	444.54	<b>444.54</b>	<b>444.54</b>	<b>444.54</b>
rc204.3	24	455.03	<b>455.03</b>	<b>455.03</b>	<b>455.03</b>
rc206.3	25	574.42	<b>574.42</b>	<b>574.42</b>	<b>574.42</b>
rc201.2	26	711.54	<b>711.54</b>	<b>711.54</b>	<b>711.54</b>
rc201.4	26	793.64	<b>793.64</b>	<b>793.64</b>	<b>793.64</b>
rc205.2	27	755.93	<b>755.93</b>	<b>755.93</b>	<b>755.93</b>
rc202.4	28	793.03	<b>793.03</b>	800.18	<b>793.03</b>
rc205.4	28	760.47	<b>760.47</b>	765.38	<b>760.47</b>

# Experiments and results

Problem	# cities	State of the art	NMC_EK score	NRPA score	NRPA_EK score
rc202.3	29	837.72	<b>837.72</b>	839.58	839.58
rc208.2	29	533.78	536.04	537.74	<b>533.78</b>
rc207.2	31	701.25	707.74	702.17	<b>701.25</b>
rc201.3	32	790.61	<b>790.61</b>	796.98	<b>790.61</b>
rc204.2	33	662.16	675.33	673.89	664.38
rc202.1	33	771.78	776.47	775.59	772.18
rc203.2	33	784.16	<b>784.16</b>	<b>784.16</b>	<b>784.16</b>
rc207.3	33	682.40	687.58	688.50	<b>682.40</b>
rc207.1	34	732.68	743.29	743.72	738.74
rc205.3	35	825.06	828.27	828.36	<b>825.06</b>
rc208.3	36	634.44	641.17	656.40	650.49
rc203.3	37	817.53	837.72	820.93	<b>817.53</b>
rc206.2	37	828.06	839.18	829.07	<b>828.06</b>
rc206.4	38	831.67	859.07	831.72	<b>831.67</b>
rc208.1	38	789.25	797.89	799.24	793.60
rc204.1	46	868.76	899.79	883.85	880.89

# Discussion

## Pros

- Successful optimization for the nested
- 77% of state of the art scores found for NRPA\_EK
- Better understanding of the NRPA algorithm (convergence to local optima)

## Cons

- No new record
- Difficulties for large number of nodes

# Conclusion

- Evolutionary optimization
  - Auto-adaptative solutions for black-box optimization
  - Continuous search space (but exists also in discrete)
- Making decisions under uncertainty
  - Discrete case (but exists also in continuous)
  - Combinatorial optimization

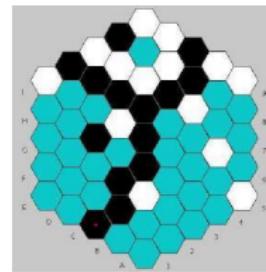
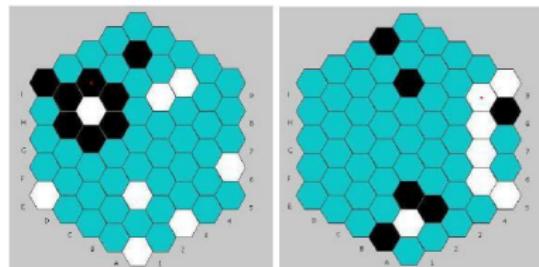
# Some other publications

- A cognitive science perspective (random positions in Go, Blind Go) [CIG 11]
- Using Quasi-Random restarts and decreasing  $\sigma$  for multimodal optimization [EA 11]
- Towards a solution of 7x7 Go with Meta-MCTS [ACG 11]  
1st serie of 20 wins over 20 games against pro players in 7x7 Go

# Thank you for your attention

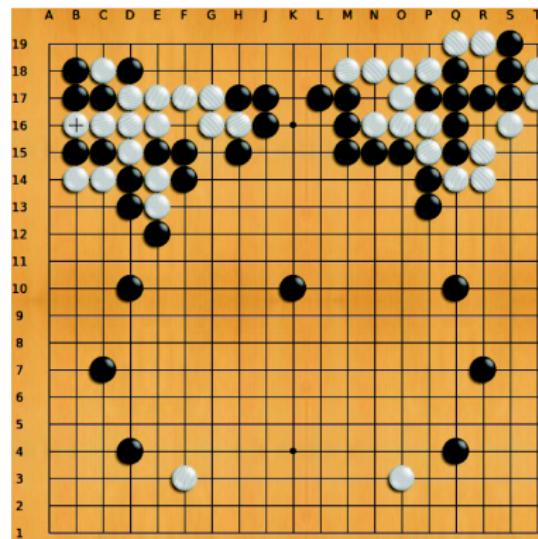
# Havannah

- Created by Christian Freeling
- Two-player board game
- Hexagonal board of hexagonal locations
- Connection game
- To win, a player has to realize
  - A ring
  - A bridge
  - A fork



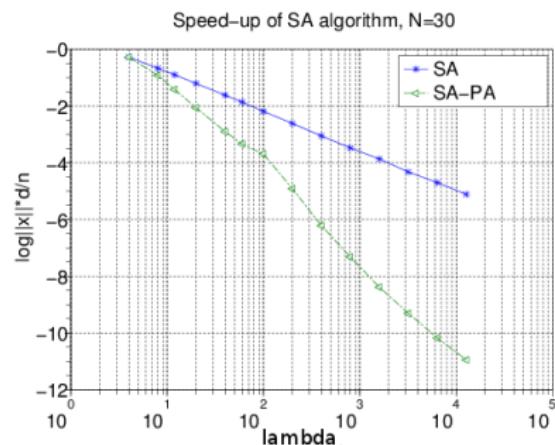
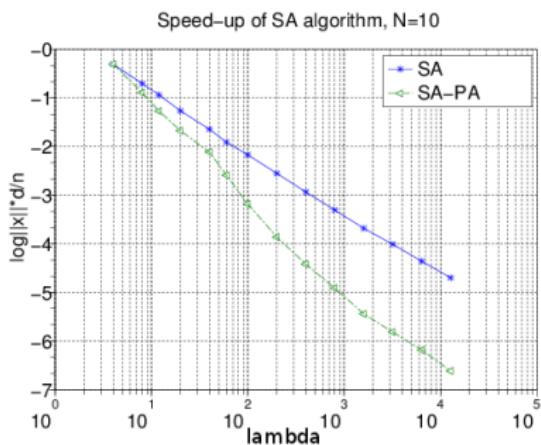
# Go

- Two-player board game
- Board 9x9, 19x19
- Each player puts alternatively a stone of the board
- A stone is removed if it has no more liberties
- The player with the biggest area wins



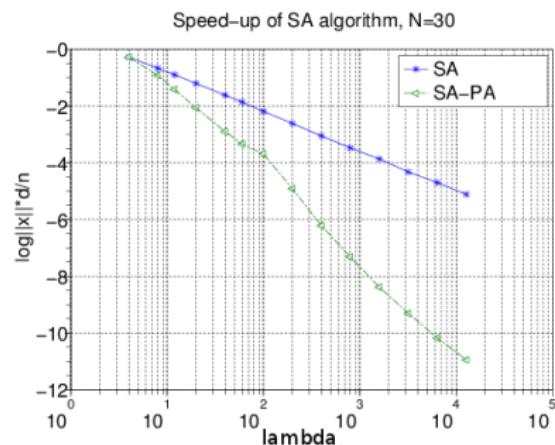
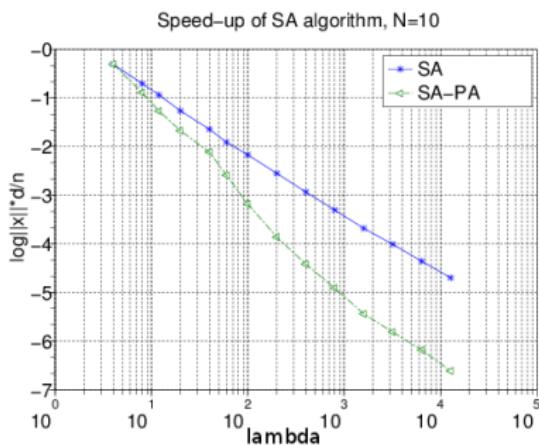
# New selection ratio

## Results



# New selection ratio

## Results



# Log- $\lambda$ modification

## Results

- Sphere function
- Initial  $\sigma$  tuned

Dimension, lambda	Baseline	+QR	+ weight	+LB (IEMNA)
2,20	-0.345	-1.252	-1.743	<b>-2.103</b>
2,60	-1.967	-2.086	-2.022	<b>-2.713</b>
2,200	-2.050	-2.089	-2.112	<b>-3.004</b>
2,600	-2.080	-2.101	-2.061	<b>-3.190</b>
2,2000	-2.103	-2.188	-2.111	<b>-3.434</b>
3,30	-0.697	-2.299	-2.277	<b>-2.398</b>
3,90	-2.330	-2.392	-2.282	<b>-3.047</b>
3,300	-2.340	-2.404	-2.293	<b>-3.302</b>
3,900	-2.369	-2.443	-2.320	<b>-3.519</b>
3,3000	-2.404	-2.476	-2.367	<b>-3.726</b>
4,40	-0.749	-2.541	-2.397	<b>-2.578</b>
4,120	-2.543	-2.627	-2.443	<b>-3.271</b>
4,400	-2.601	-2.658	-2.480	<b>-3.547</b>
4,1200	-2.642	-2.717	-2.519	<b>-3.764</b>
5,50	-1.330	-2.885	-2.677	<b>-2.730</b>
5,150	-2.790	-2.858	-2.622	<b>-3.488</b>
5,500	-2.828	-2.908	-2.673	<b>-3.750</b>
5,1500	-2.886	-2.964	-2.718	<b>-3.975</b>

# Log- $\lambda$ modification

## Results

- Multimodal function
- Initial  $\sigma$  tuned

Dimension, lambda	Baseline	+QR	+ weight	+LB (IEMNA)	P-value for QR
2,20	-0.709	<b>-1.301</b>	-1.105	-0.529	0
2,60	-1.139	<b>-1.181</b>	-0.655	-1.157	2.315e-07
2,200	<b>-1.104</b>	-1.074	-0.402	-0.822	1
2,600	-1.100	<b>-1.133</b>	-0.119	-0.534	0
2,2000	-1.124	<b>-1.146</b>	-0.124	-0.210	3.187e-09
2,6000	-1.144	<b>-1.162</b>	-0.173	-0.181	7.199e-11
3,30	-0.971	<b>-1.332</b>	-0.799	-0.537	1.721e-09
3,90	<b>-1.231</b>	-1.229	-0.481	-0.619	0.559
3,300	-1.210	<b>-1.243</b>	-0.178	-0.233	1.415e-05
3,900	-1.240	<b>-1.252</b>	-0.181	-0.179	0.031
3,3000	-1.269	<b>-1.307</b>	0.081	-0.031	6.342e-12
4,40	-1.204	<b>-1.388</b>	-0.713	-0.858	6.262e-06
4,120	<b>-1.357</b>	-1.353	-0.344	-0.480	0.624
4,400	-1.352	<b>-1.368</b>	-0.205	-0.183	0.013
4,1200	-1.389	<b>-1.427</b>	0.224	0.093	7.638e-10
5,50	-1.359	<b>-1.520</b>	-0.702	-0.445	0.000
5,150	-1.477	<b>-1.503</b>	-0.351	-0.391	0.010
5,500	-1.495	<b>-1.518</b>	-0.145	-0.161	0.001
5,1500	-1.539	<b>-1.579</b>	0.726	0.715	2.300e-08