

# Generalizable equivariant diffusion models for non-Abelian lattice gauge theory

Diaa Eddin Habibi

Nordic Lattice Meeting,  
18th May 2026,  
Edinburgh



Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe

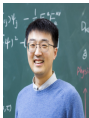
Based on arXiv:2601.19552



# DM-QFT collaboration



Yang-Yang Tan



Lingxiao Wang



Qianteng Zhu



Wei Wang



Zheyuan Peng



UNIVERSITÄT  
HEIDELBERG  
COLLEGE  
SEIT 1386



Renzo Kapust



Jan M. Pawłowski



Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe



Gert Aarts  
Swansea -> Bielefeld



Diaa E. Habibi



Shiyang Chen



Biagio Lucini



香港中文大學 (深圳)  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen



Kai Zhou



Andreas Ipp



Thomas Richard Ranner



David Müller

## Diffusion models applications on LFT in recent years

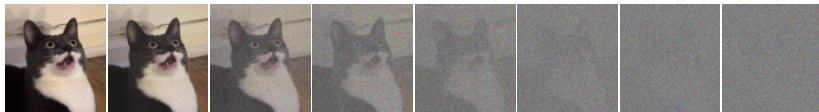
- 2d scalar fields
  - L. Wang, G. Aarts, K. Zhou, JHEP **05** (2024) 060 [[2309.17082](#)],
  - L. Wang, G. Aarts, K. Zhou, ML4PS NeurIPS 2023 [[2311.03578](#)]
  - G. Aarts, D.E. Habibi, L. Wang, K. Zhou, Mach. Learn. Sci. Tech. 6 (2025) [[2410.21212](#)]
- 2d U(1) and non-Abelian gauge theories
  - Q. Zhu, G. Aarts, W. Wang, K. Zhou, L. Wang, JHEP **03** (2026) [[2502.05504](#)] + [[2410.19602](#)]
  - O. Vega, J. Komijani, A. El-Khadra, M. Marinkovic, [[2510.26081](#)]
  - G. Aarts, D. E. Habibi, A. Ipp, T. Ranner, D. Müller, L. Wang, K. Zhou, Q. Zhu, W. Wang, [[2601.19552](#)]
  - H. Alharazin, J. Yu Panteleeva, B.D. Sun [[2602.09045](#)]
  - J. Komijani, M. Marinkovic, L. Turgut [[2605.06134](#)] (+ in 4d!)

# Diffusion models

DMs are a class of generative AI which learn distributions from data.

- Relies on a stochastic process to learn the *score function*
- Related to Stochastic Quantization [Wang, Aarts, Zhou 2309.17082](#)

Forward process (Data to noise)  $\longrightarrow$



$\longleftarrow$  Backward process (Noise to data)

$$\dot{\mathbf{x}}(t) = \frac{1}{2} \underbrace{\mathbf{K}[\mathbf{x}(t), t]}_{\text{drift}} + \underbrace{g(t)\boldsymbol{\eta}(t)}_{\text{noise}}, \quad 0 \leq t \leq T$$

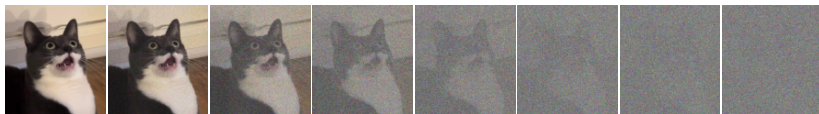
- Initial conditions determined by  $\mathbf{x}_0 \sim p_0(\mathbf{x}_0)$

# Diffusion models

DMs are a class of generative AI which learn distributions from data.

- Relies on a stochastic process to learn the *score function*
- Related to Stochastic Quantization [Wang, Aarts, Zhou 2309.17082](#)

Forward process (Data to noise)  $\longrightarrow$



$\longleftarrow$  Backward process (Noise to data)

$$\dot{\mathbf{x}}(t) = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{K}[\mathbf{x}(t), t] - g^2(t) \underbrace{\nabla \log p_t(\mathbf{x})}_{\text{score function}} + g(t) \boldsymbol{\eta}(t),$$

- Initial conditions sampled from a simple prior, eg Gaussian
- Process starts at  $t = T$  and flows backwards to  $t = 0$

# Score matching

- Processes described by a time-dependent distribution

$$p_t(x) = \int dx_0 p_t(x|x_0)p_0(x_0)$$

- The score is not known; approximate it with a time-dependent model  $s_\theta(x, t) \approx \nabla \log p_t(x)$
- Train using a Fisher objective [Hyvärinen 2005](#)

$$\mathcal{L}_\theta = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^T dt \mathbb{E}_{p_t(x)} [\sigma^2(t) \|s_\theta(x, t) - \nabla \log p_t(x)\|^2]$$

- Skipping some step, the above relation can be made tractable

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}_\theta &= \frac{1}{2} \int_0^T dt \mathbb{E}_{p_t(x)} \left[ \left\| \sigma(t) s_\theta(x, t) + \frac{x_t - x_0}{\sigma(t)} \right\|^2 \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \int_0^T dt \mathbb{E}_{p_t(x)} \left[ \left\| \sigma(t) s_\theta(x, t) + \eta(t) \right\|^2 \right] \end{aligned}$$

- In SQ, evolve random field configurations according to Langevin equation in fictitious time  $t$  [Parisi, Wu 1980](#)

$$\frac{d\phi(x, \tau)}{d\tau} = -\frac{\partial S[\phi(x, \tau)]}{\partial \phi(x, \tau)} + \sqrt{2} \eta(x, \tau), \quad \eta \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$$

- At  $\tau \rightarrow \infty$ , recover probability distribution,  $p(\phi) \propto e^{-S[\phi]}$
- Compare with the reverse process of a diffusion model (no drift term)

$$\frac{d\phi}{dt} = -g^2(t) \nabla_{\phi} \log p_t(\phi) + g(t) \eta(x, t)$$

- At  $t = 0$ , the model score learns the drift in SQ,

$$\nabla_{\phi} \log p_0(\phi) = -\nabla_{\phi} S[\phi]$$

- For applications to LGT, diffusion process needs to be adapted to group manifold geometry
- Stochastic dynamics known from stochastic quantization

$$U'_{x,\mu} = \exp \left[ i \sum_{a=1} T^a \left( \epsilon K_{x,\mu}^a + \sqrt{2\epsilon} \eta_{x,\mu}^a \right) \right] U_{x,\mu}$$

- Drift term  $K_{x,\mu}^a(U) = -D_{x,\mu}^a S_E(U)$  and  $\eta_{x,\mu}^a \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$
- Process will equilibrate to action, eg, Wilson for  $SU(N)$

$$Z = \int DU e^{-S_E(U)}, \quad S_E(U) = \frac{\beta}{N_c} \sum_{x,\mu < \nu} \text{Re Tr} [\mathbb{I} - P_{\mu\nu}]$$

- Define group-preserving forward process as solution to Stratonovich SDE

$$dU_{x,\mu} = i \sum_a T^a [K_{x,\mu}^a(U) dt + g(t) dW_{x,\mu}^a] \circ U_{x,\mu}$$

- Equivalently to flat space case

$$K_{x,\mu}^a(U) \rightarrow K_{x,\mu}^a(U) - g^2(t) D_{x,\mu}^a \log p_t(U)$$

with time running backward  $t = T \rightarrow 0$ .

- The initial conditions of the reverse process are sampled from the Haar uniform.

# Loss function - Score matching

- Approximate score function by neural network  $s_{\theta;x,\mu}^a(U, t)$ , minimizing

$$\int_0^T dt \mathbb{E}_{\substack{p_0(U^{(0)}) \\ p_{0t}(U^{(t)}|U^{(0)})}} \left[ \sum_{x,\mu,a} \left( s_{\theta;x,\mu}^a(U^{(t)}, t) - D_{x,\mu}^a \ln p_{0t}(U^{(t)}|U^{(0)}) \right)^2 \right]$$

- Consider forward process with zero drift  $K_{x,\mu}^a = 0$ ,

$$U_{x,\mu} = \exp \left[ i\sigma(t) \sum_a T^a \eta_{x,\mu}^a \right] U_{x,\mu}, \quad \sigma^2(t) = \int_0^t ds g^2(s)$$

- Disregard contributions from multiple wrappings

$$p_{0t}(U^{(t)}|U^{(0)}) \approx p(\eta) \propto \exp \left[ -\frac{1}{2} \sum_{a,x,\mu} (\eta_{x,\mu}^a)^2 \right]$$

- Tractable loss function

$$\int_0^T dt \mathbb{E}_{\substack{p_0(U^{(0)}) \\ p_{0t}(U^{(t)}|U^{(0)})}} \left[ \sum_{x,\mu,a} \left( s_{\theta;x,\mu}^a(U^{(t)}, t) + \frac{\eta_{x,\mu}^a}{\sigma(t)} \right)^2 \right]$$

# Gauge equivariant networks

- Process interpolates gauge invariant objects, prior and target distributions
- The score model itself has to respect gauge equivariance
- *Lattice Convolutional Neural Networks* (L-CNNs) can express arbitrary gauge invariant and equivariant functions

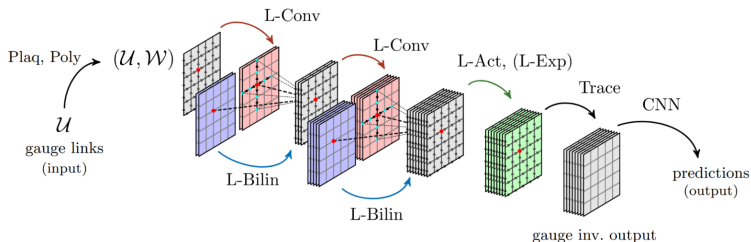


Figure: M. Favoni, A. Ipp, D.I. Müller, D. Schuh, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **128**, 3 (2022)

- Diffusion models are intended to generate field configurations.
- To do so, they need to be trained on a high-quality dataset
- What's the advantage?
- Extrapolate to bigger lattices
- Extrapolate to different couplings  $\rightarrow$  Metropolis-adjusted annealed Langevin

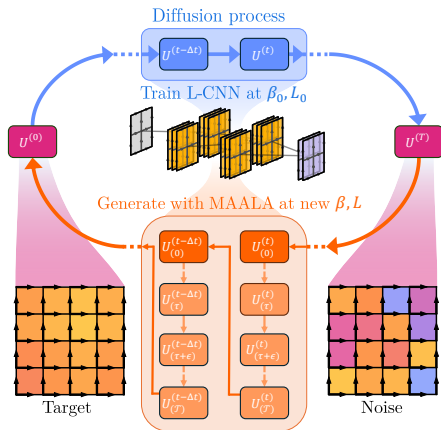
# Metropolis-adjusted Annealed Langevin

- After training at  $\beta_0$ , the model can be employed at different  $\beta$
- Solve SDE using *score rescaling* to generalize in  $\beta$

$$U_{\tau+\epsilon}^t = \exp \left[ i \left( \epsilon \frac{\beta}{\beta_0} \hat{s}_\theta(U, t) + \sqrt{2\epsilon} \hat{\eta} \right) \right] U_\tau^t$$

- Include accept reject w.r.t. target action

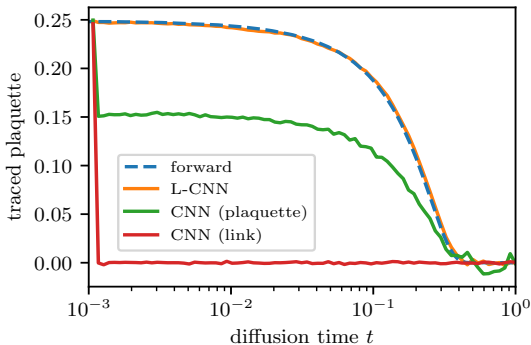
$$p_{\text{acc}} = \min \left\{ 1, \frac{p(\tilde{U}^{(t)}_{(\tau)}) q(U^{(t)}_{(\tau)} | \tilde{U}^{(t)}_{(\tau)})}{p(U^{(t)}_{(\tau)}) q(\tilde{U}^{(t)}_{(\tau)} | U^{(t)}_{(\tau)})} \right\}$$



- We consider  $U(2)$  and  $SU(2)$  in two dimensions
- Train using 100k HMC-generated data at  $\beta_0 = 2$ ,  $L = 16$
- Employ at range of values  $2 \leq \beta \leq 18$ , and  $L = 16, 32, 64$
- Wilson loops  $W_{\ell \times \ell}$  and topological charge/susc. ( $U(2)$  only)
- In strong coupling limit,  $\langle W_{\ell \times \ell} \rangle \rightarrow 0$  and  $\langle \chi_{\text{top}} \rangle \rightarrow \frac{1}{12}$

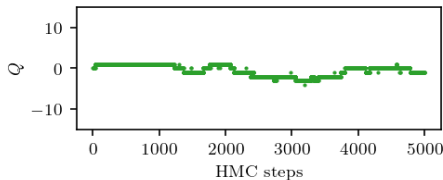
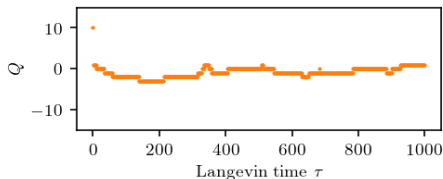
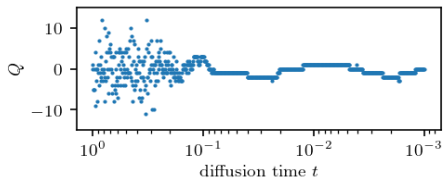
# Comparison with standard CNNs

- Naive link implementation on standard CNNs fail
- CNNs with invariant representations struggle to fully capture target
- L-CNNs manage to follow analytical expectations
- Minimal corrections from the Metropolis step



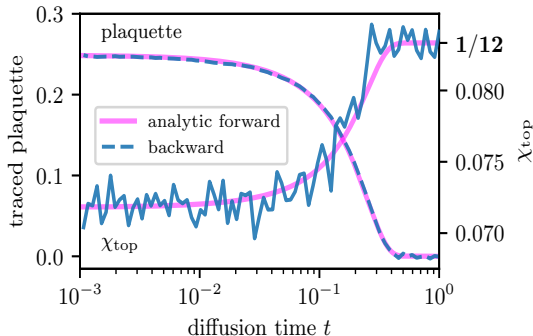
# Topological freezing?

- Evolution of topological charge  $Q$  for one field configuration at  $\beta = 14, L = 16$
- **MAALA** explores many topological vacua in the early stages of the de-noising process
- Standard **SQ** and **HMC** might remain trapped in a few topological sectors.



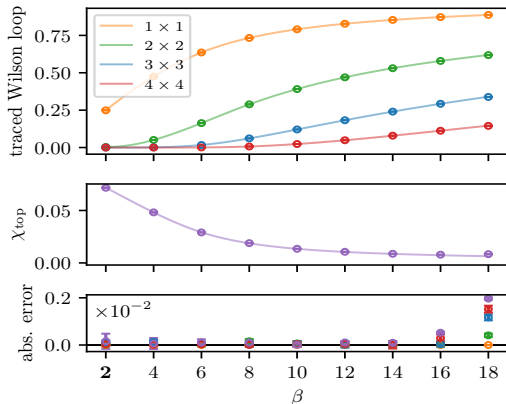
# Comparison of processes

- Observables interpolate between target and strong coupling values
- Forward process solved analytically using character expansions
- Time dependence  $\exp(-C_2(t)\sigma(t))$
- Excellent agreement with de-noising process



# Comparison of processes

- $W_{\ell \times \ell}$  and  $\chi_{top}$  in  $U(2)$
- Trained at  $\beta_0 = 2$ , generalize in  $\beta$
- Extrapolation breaks down at  $\beta \sim 16$
- However, it covered a large range of couplings



# Detailed comparison $U(2)$

**Table:** Numerical results for  $U(2)$  for larger Wilson loops and the topological susceptibility at  $L = 16, 32$  and  $64$  and three separate inverse couplings  $\beta$ . The DM was trained on  $\beta = 2, L = 16$  (highlighted). For  $L = 32$  and  $L = 64$  only 1000 samples were generated.

$U(2)$		$2 \times 2$	$3 \times 3$	$4 \times 4$	$\chi_{\text{top}}$
$\beta = 2$	<b><math>L = 16</math></b>	0.00381(7)	$1.3(7) \cdot 10^{-4}$	$-3(9) \cdot 10^{-5}$	0.0716(3)
	$L = 32$	0.0038(1)	$-1(1) \cdot 10^{-4}$	$0(1) \cdot 10^{-4}$	0.070(1)
	$L = 64$	0.00378(6)	$2(6) \cdot 10^{-5}$	$5(7) \cdot 10^{-5}$	0.072(1)
	exact	0.003835	$3.660 \cdot 10^{-6}$	$2.163 \cdot 10^{-10}$	0.071802
$\beta = 10$	$L = 16$	0.39106(9)	0.1209(1)	0.0234(1)	0.01345(8)
	$L = 32$	0.3909(2)	0.1210(2)	0.0236(2)	0.0137(2)
	$L = 64$	0.39108(7)	0.12102(9)	0.02335(8)	0.0135(2)
	exact	0.390989	0.120884	0.023370	0.013442
$\beta = 18$	$L = 16$	0.61824(7)	0.3383(1)	0.1450(1)	0.00837(5)
	$L = 32$	0.6184(1)	0.3390(2)	0.1459(2)	0.0084(1)
	$L = 64$	0.6184(1)	0.3390(2)	0.1460(2)	0.0084(1)
	exact	0.618647	0.339427	0.146478	0.006399

# Detailed comparison $SU(2)$

**Table:** Numerical results for  $SU(2)$  calculations on  $L = 16, 32$  and  $64$  lattices for Wilson loops at several inverse couplings  $\beta$ . The DM was trained on  $\beta = 2, L = 16$ .

$SU(2)$		$1 \times 1$	$2 \times 2$	$3 \times 3$	$4 \times 4$
$\beta = 2$	$L = 16$	0.4333(2)	0.0357(3)	0.0006(3)	-0.0003(3)
	$L = 32$	0.4333(4)	0.0349(5)	0.0014(5)	-0.0001(5)
	$L = 64$	0.4333(2)	0.0351(3)	0.0002(3)	0.0004(2)
	exact	0.433127	0.035194	0.000536	$1.534 \cdot 10^{-6}$
$\beta = 10$	$L = 16$	0.85420(7)	0.5325(3)	0.2421(5)	0.0807(5)
	$L = 32$	0.8541(1)	0.5326(4)	0.2422(8)	0.0808(8)
	$L = 64$	0.85420(5)	0.5323(2)	0.2421(4)	0.0805(4)
	exact	0.854185	0.532364	0.242086	0.080322
$\beta = 18$	$L = 16$	0.91793(4)	0.7097(2)	0.4621(4)	0.2533(6)
	$L = 32$	0.91782(7)	0.7096(3)	0.4620(7)	0.253(1)
	$L = 64$	0.91792(3)	0.7099(2)	0.4628(4)	0.2545(5)
	exact	0.917894	0.709854	0.462520	0.253909

- Diffusion models offer a new approach for ensemble generation in LFT
- Coupled with gauge equivariant architectures (L-CNNs), successfully sample non-Abelian LGTs
- Score rescaling enables single trained models to generalize across wide range of couplings
- Scaling to 4D  $SU(3)$  theories with large volumes (see also work by Komijani, Marinkovic, Turgut [[2605.06134](#)])
- Extend to include fermionic fields and test critical scaling

# Summary & Outlook

- Diffusion models offer a new approach for ensemble generation in LFT
- Coupled with gauge equivariant architectures (L-CNNs), successfully sample non-Abelian LGTs
- Score rescaling enables single trained models to generalize across wide range of couplings
- Scaling to 4D  $SU(3)$  theories with large volumes (see also work by Komijani, Marinkovic, Turgut [[2605.06134](#)])
- Extend to include fermionic fields and test critical scaling

Thank you for listening!