

## Multiplicative controllability for parabolic equations

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(joint works with U. Biccari, P. Cannarsa, A. Y. Khapalov, C. Nitsch, C. Trombetti)

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# Outline

- 1 Introduction
  - Control theory
- 2 1-D reaction-diffusion equations
  - Main results: multiplicative controllability for sign changing states
- 3 Two applications
  - m-D reaction-diffusion equations with radial symmetry
    - An idea of the proof
  - Degenerate equations
    - Motivations: Energy balance models in climatology
- 4 Open problems

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## Controllability (linear heat equation)

$$\begin{cases} u_t = \Delta u + vu + h(x, t)1\!\!1_\omega \\ u|_{\partial\Omega} = 0 \quad (\omega \subset \Omega) \\ u|_{t=0} = u_0 \end{cases}$$

Additive controls

(locally distributed source terms)

$$\begin{cases} u_t = \Delta u + vu \\ u|_{\partial\Omega} = g(t) \\ u|_{t=0} = u_0 \end{cases}$$

Boundary controls

$$\begin{cases} u_t = \Delta u + v(x, t)u \\ u|_{\partial\Omega} = 0 \\ u|_{t=0} = u_0 \end{cases}$$

Bilinear controls

(multiplicative controllability)

Definition (Exact controllability)

$\forall u_0 \in H_0, u^* \in H^*, (H_0, H^* \subseteq L^2(\Omega)), \exists \text{"a control function"}, T > 0 \text{ such that } u(\cdot, T) = u^*.$

Definition (Approximate controllability)

$\forall u_0 \in H_0, u^* \in H^*, (H_0, H^* \subseteq L^2(\Omega)), \forall \varepsilon > 0, \exists \text{"a control function"}, T > 0 \text{ such that } \|u(\cdot, T) - u^*\|_{L^2(\Omega)} < \varepsilon.$

Regularizing effect of the heat equation and obstruction to exact controllability:  
 $H^* \subset H_0 = L^2(\Omega)$ :

$$\begin{aligned} u_0 \in L^2(\Omega) &\implies \exists! u \in L^2(0, T; H_0^1(\Omega)) \cap C([0, T]; L^2(\Omega)); \\ &\implies u(\cdot, t) \in H_0^1(\Omega), \forall t > 0. \end{aligned}$$

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## Additive controls

$$u_t - \Delta u = v(x, t)u + h(x, t)\mathbf{1}_\omega, \quad \omega \subset \Omega$$

$\forall u_0 \in L^2(\Omega)$ ,  $u^* \in H$  ("suitable"  $H \subset L^2(\Omega)$ ),  $\exists \omega \subseteq \Omega$ ,  $h, T > 0$  such that  $u(\cdot, T) = u^*$ .

### Reference

*H. Fattorini, D. Russell* Exact controllability theorems for linear parabolic equations in one space dimension Arch. Rat. Mech. Anal., 4, (1971) 272–292

Additive controllability by a duality argument (J.L. Lions, 1989): observability inequality and Hilbert Uniqueness Method (HUM).

In literature see also, many papers due to Komornik, Cannarsa, Haraux, Zuazua, ....

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- controllability of the linearized problem;
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# Additive vs multiplicative controllability

Multiplicative controllability and Applied Mathematics

$$\Rightarrow \text{ rather than } u_t - \Delta u = v(x, t) \quad \downarrow \\ \text{use } \uparrow \quad \text{as control variable}$$

$$u_t - \Delta u = v(x, t) \quad u + h(x, t)$$

Remark

$\Phi : \text{"control"} \mapsto \text{"solution"}$

Additive controls

$\Phi : h \mapsto u$  is a linear map;

vs

Bilinear controls

$\Phi : v \mapsto u$  is a nonlinear map.

Some references on bilinear control of PDEs

- Ball, Marsden and Slemrod (1982)  
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# Control theory & Reaction-diffusion equations

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$\Omega \subseteq \mathbb{R}^m$  bounded

$$\begin{cases} u_t = \Delta u + v(x, t)u + f(u) & \text{in } Q_T := \Omega \times (0, T) \\ u|_{\partial\Omega} = 0 & t \in (0, T) \\ u|_{t=0} = u_0 \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

$v \in L^\infty(Q_T)$ ,  $f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  Lipschitz,  $\exists f'(0)$  and  $f(0) = 0$ .

Strong maximum principle

$f(u)$  is differentiable at 0 and  $f(0) = 0 \implies \frac{f(u)}{u} \in L^\infty(Q_T)$

Thus, the strong maximum principle (SMP) can be extend to semilinear parabolic equation:

$$u_t = \Delta u + \left(v + \frac{f(u)}{u}\right)u$$

Well-posedness result

$$u_0 \in L^2(\Omega) \implies \exists! u \in L^2(0, T; H_0^1(\Omega)) \cap C([0, T]; L^2(\Omega));$$

$$u_0 \in H_0^1(\Omega) \implies u \in H^1(0, T; L^2(\Omega)) \cap C([0, T]; H_0^1(\Omega)) \cap L^2(0, T; H^2(\Omega)).$$

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Strong Maximum Principle and obstruction to multiplicative controllability:  $H^* \neq H_0^1(\Omega)$

$$u_0(x) = 0 \implies u(x, t) = 0$$

$$u_0(x) \geq 0 \implies u(x, t) \geq 0$$

If  $u_0(x) \geq 0$  in  $\Omega$ , then the SMP demands that the respective solution to (1) remains nonnegative at any moment of time, regardless of the choice of  $v$ . This means that system (1) cannot be steered from any nonnegative  $u_0$  to any target state which is negative on a nonzero measure set in the space domain.

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H. Matano, Nonincrease of the lap-number of a solution for a one-dimensional semilinear parabolic equation, J. Fac. Sci. Univ. Tokyo Sect. IA Math., 29, no. 2, (1982) 401-441.

### Controllability:

- Nonnegative states
- Sign changing states

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We assume that  $u_0 \in H_0^1(0, 1)$  has a finite number of points of sign change, that is, there exist points  $0 = x_0^0 < x_1^0 < \dots < x_n^0 < x_{n+1}^0 = 1$  such that

$$\begin{aligned} u_0(x) = 0 &\iff x = x_l^0, \quad l = 0, \dots, n+1. \\ u_0(x)u_0(y) < 0, \quad \forall x \in (x_{l-1}^0, x_l^0), \quad \forall y \in (x_l^0, x_{l+1}^0). \end{aligned}$$

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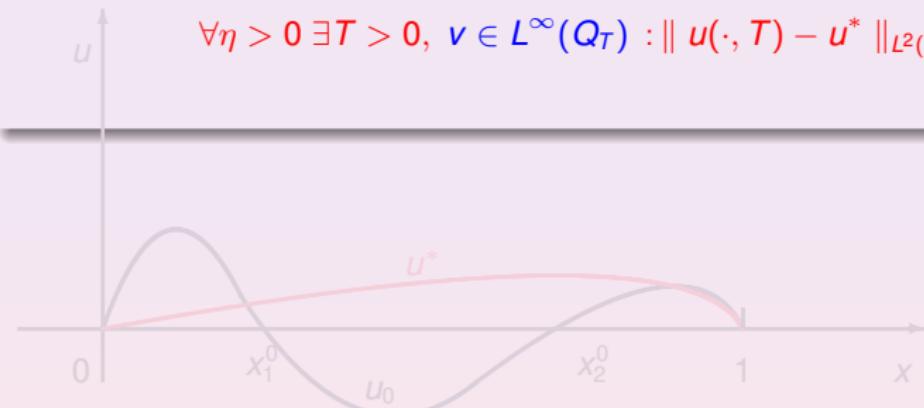
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Theorem (P. Cannarsa, G.F., A.Y. Khapalov)

Consider any  $u^* \in H_0^1(0, 1)$ , whose amount of points of sign change is less or equal than to the amount of such points for  $u_0$ . Then,

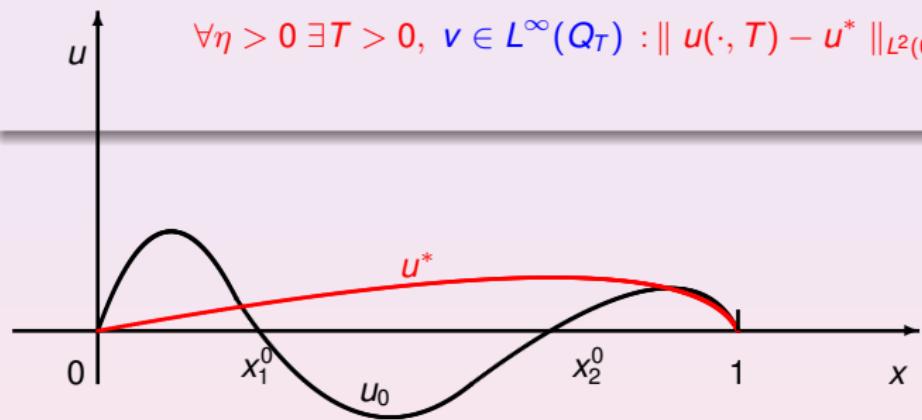
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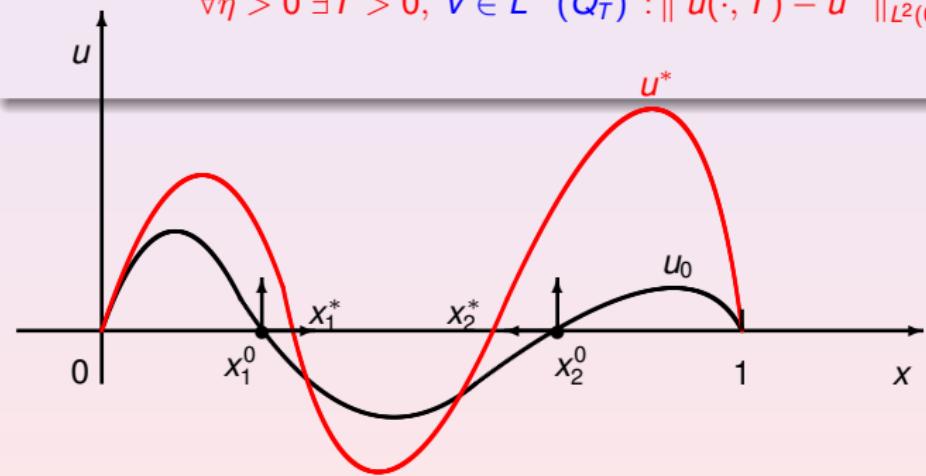


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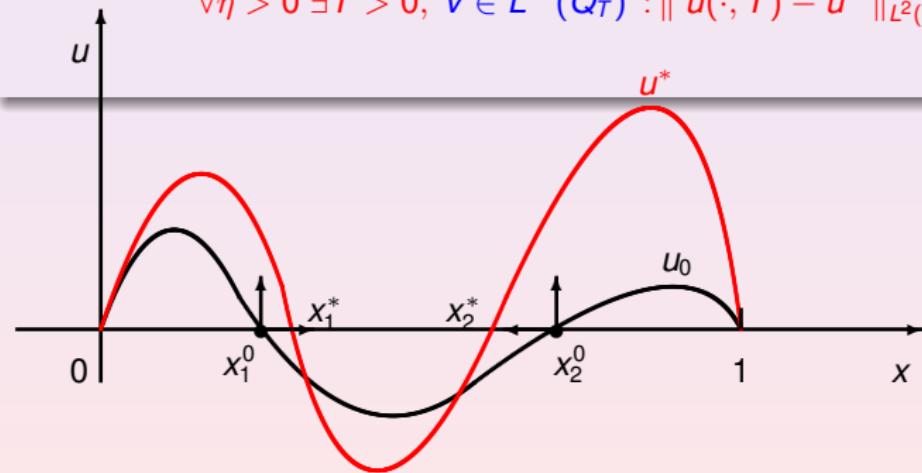


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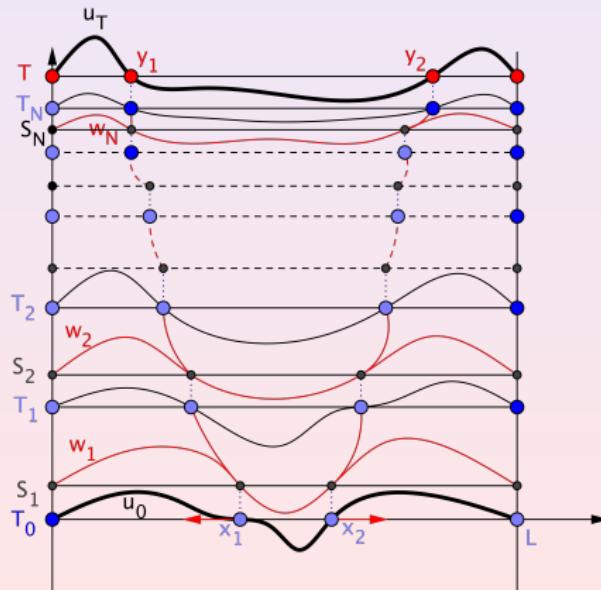


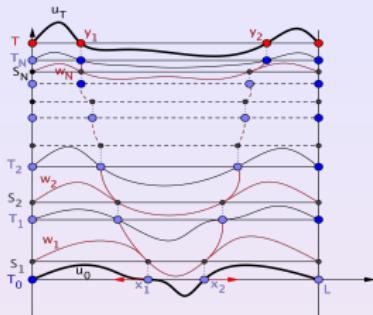
# Control strategy

Given  $N \in \mathbb{N}$  ( $N$  will be determined later) we consider the following partition of  $[0, T]$  in  $2N + 1$  intervals:

$$[0, S_1] \cup [S_1, T_1] \cup \cdots \cup [T_{k-1}, S_k] \cup [S_k, T_k] \cup \cdots \cup [T_{N-1}, S_N] \cup [S_N, T_N] \cup [T_N, T]$$

$$\nu_1 \neq 0 \quad 0 \quad \cdots \quad \nu_k \neq 0 \quad 0 \quad \cdots \quad \nu_N \neq 0 \quad 0 \quad \nu_{N+1} \neq 0$$





### Construction of the zero curves

- On  $[S_k, T_k]$  ( $1 \leq k \leq N$ ) we use of the Cauchy datum  $w_k \in C^{2+\theta}([0, 1])$  in

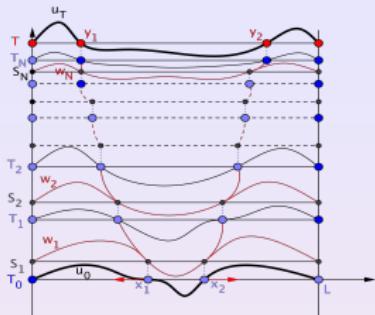
$$\begin{cases} w_t = w_{xx} + f(w), & \text{in } (0, 1) \times [S_k, T_k], \\ w(0, t) = w(1, t) = 0, & t \in [S_k, T_k], \\ w|_{t=S_k} = w_k(x), & w''(x)|_{x=0,1} = 0, \end{cases}$$

as a control parameter to be chosen to generate and to move the curves of sign change.

- The  $\ell$ -th curve of sign change ( $1 \leq \ell \leq n$ ) is given by solution  $\xi_\ell^k$

$$\begin{cases} \dot{\xi}_\ell^k(t) = -\frac{w_{xx}(\xi_\ell(t), t)}{w_x(\xi_\ell(t), t)}, & t \in [S_k, T_k] \\ \xi_\ell^k(S_k) = x_\ell^k \end{cases}$$

where the  $x_\ell^k$ 's are the zeros of  $w_k$  and so  $w(\xi_\ell^k(t), t) = 0$



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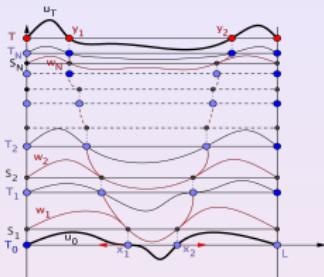
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The control parameters  $w_k$ 's will be chosen to move the curves of sign change in the following way

$$\begin{cases} \dot{\xi}_\ell(t) = -\frac{w_{xx}(\xi_\ell(t), t)}{w_x(\xi_\ell(t), t)}, & t \in [S_k, T_k] \\ \xi_\ell(S_k) = x_\ell^k, & \end{cases} \quad w(\xi_\ell^k(t), t) = 0 \implies$$

$$\implies \dot{\xi}_\ell(S_k) = -\frac{w_{xx}(\xi_\ell(S_k), S_k)}{w_x(\xi_\ell(S_k), S_k)} = -\frac{w_k''(\xi_\ell(S_k))}{w_k'(\xi_\ell(S_k))} = \operatorname{sgn}(y_I - x_I^0)$$

- To fill the gaps between two successive  $[S_k, T_k]$ 's, on  $[T_{k-1}, S_k]$  we construct the bilinear control  $v_k$  that steers the solution of

$$\begin{cases} u_t = u_{xx} + v_k(x, t)u + f(u), & \text{in } (0, 1) \times [T_{k-1}, S_k], \\ u(0, t) = u(1, t) = 0, & t \in [T_{k-1}, S_k], \\ u|_{t=T_{k-1}} = u_{k-1} + r_{k-1}, \end{cases}$$

from  $u_{k-1} + r_{k-1}$  to  $w_k$ , where  $u_{k-1}$  and  $w_k$  have the same points of sign change, and  $\|r_{k-1}\|_{L^2(0,1)}$  is small.  $v_k(x, t)$  piecewise static

Sketch of the proof. In the particular case:  $r_{k-1} = 0$  and

$$\exists \delta^* > 0 : \delta^* \leq \frac{w_k(x)}{u_{k-1}(x)} < 1, \quad \forall x \in (0, 1) \setminus \bigcup_{l=1}^n \{x_l\},$$

let us consider  $v_k(x, t) := \frac{1}{T} \bar{v}_k(x)$ , where

$$\bar{v}_k(x) = \begin{cases} \log \left( \frac{w_k(x)}{u_{k-1}(x)} \right), & \text{for } x \neq 0, 1, x_l \ (l = 1 \dots, n) \\ 0, & \text{for } x = 0, 1, x_l \ (l = 1 \dots, n). \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{aligned} u(x, T) &= e^{\bar{v}_k(x)} u_{k-1}(x) + \int_0^T e^{\bar{v}_k(x) \frac{(T-\tau)}{T}} (u_{xx}(x, \tau) + f(x, \tau, u(x, \tau))) d\tau \\ &\Rightarrow \|u(\cdot, T) - w_k(\cdot)\|_{L^2(0,1)}^2 \leq T \|u_{xx} + f(\cdot, \cdot, u)\|_{L^2(Q_T)}^2. \end{aligned}$$

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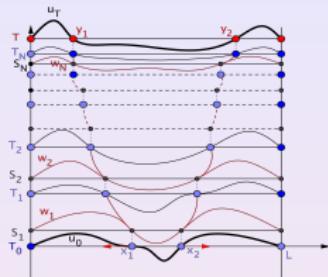
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# Closing the loop



- The **distance-from-target** function satisfies the following estimate, for some  $C_1, C_2 > 0$  and  $0 < \theta < 1$ ,

$$0 \leq \sum_{\ell=1}^n |\xi_\ell^N(T_N) - y_\ell| \leq \sum_{\ell=1}^n |x_\ell^0 - y_\ell| + C_1 \sum_{k=1}^N \frac{1}{k^{1+\frac{\theta}{2}}} - C_2 \sum_{k=n+1}^N \frac{1}{k} \xrightarrow{N \rightarrow \infty} -\infty$$

- So the distances of each branch of the null set of the solution from its target points of sign change decreases at a **linear-in-time** rate while the error caused by the possible displacement of points already near their targets is **negligible**
- This ensures, by contradiction argument, that  $\sum_{\ell=1}^n |\xi_\ell^N(T_N) - y_\ell| < \epsilon$  within a finite number of steps.

# Outline

## 1 Introduction

- Control theory

## 2 1-D reaction-diffusion equations

- Main results: multiplicative controllability for sign changing states

## 3 Two applications

- m-D reaction-diffusion equations with radial symmetry
  - An idea of the proof
- Degenerate equations
  - Motivations: Energy balance models in climatology

## 4 Open problems

# m-d radial case

$$\Omega = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^m : |x| = \sqrt{x_1^2 + \dots + x_m^2} \leq 1\}$$

$$\begin{cases} u_t = \Delta u + v(x, t)u + f(u) & \text{in } Q_T := \Omega \times (0, T) \\ u|_{\partial\Omega} = 0 & t \in (0, T) \\ u|_{t=0} = u_0 \end{cases}$$

$u_0$  and  $v(\cdot, t)$  radial functions. Moreover, all possible hypersurface (lines) of sign change of  $u_0$  are hyperspheres (circles) with center at the origin.

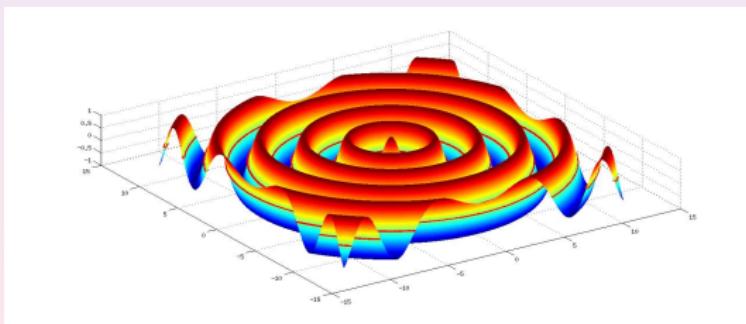


Figure:  $u_0(x, y) = \cos(2\sqrt{x^2 + y^2})$ , initial state

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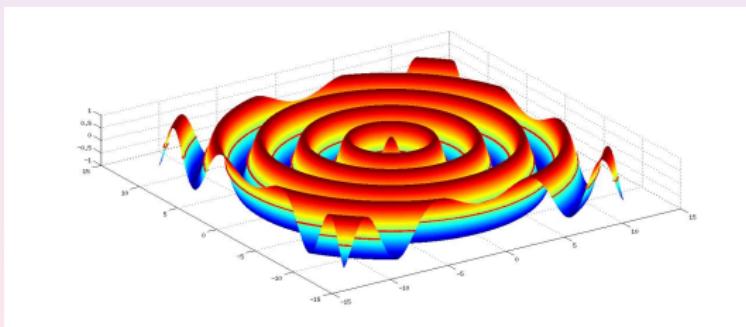


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# Main results

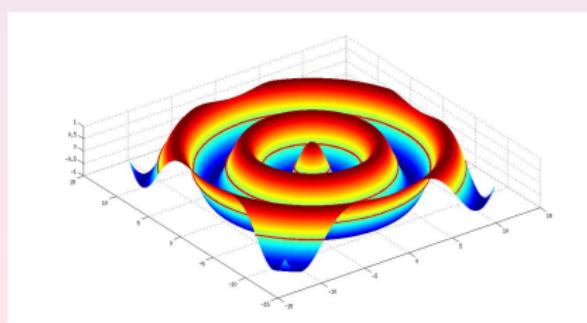
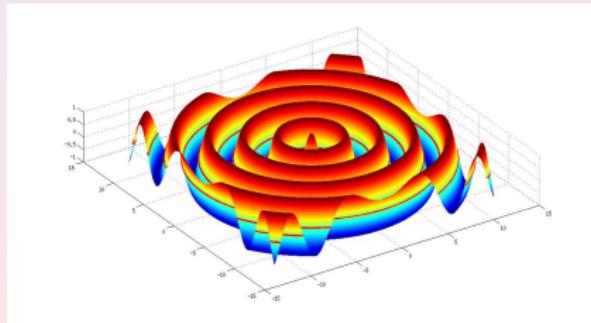
Theorem (G.F.)

Let  $u_0 \in H^2(\Omega) \cap H_0^1(\Omega)$ . Assume that  $u^* \in H^2(\Omega) \cap H_0^1(\Omega)$  has as many lines of sign change in the same order as  $u_0(x)$ . Then,

$$\forall \varepsilon > 0 \exists T > 0, v \in L^\infty(Q_T) \text{ such that } \|u(\cdot, T) - u^*\|_{L^2(\Omega)} < \varepsilon.$$

Corollary (G.F.)

The result of Theorem extends to the case when  $u^*$  has a lesser amount of lines of sign change which can be obtained by merging those of  $u_0$ .



$u_0$  and  $v(\cdot, t)$  radial functions:

$$u_0(x) = z_0(r) \quad \text{and} \quad v(x, t) = V(r, t) \quad \forall x \in \Omega, \quad \forall t \in [0, T]$$

where  $r = |x|$ . Then,

$$\begin{cases} z_t = z_{rr} + \frac{m-1}{r} z_r + V(r, t)z + f(z) & \text{in } (0, 1) \times (0, T) \\ \lim_{r \rightarrow 0^+} r^{\frac{m-2}{2}} z_r(0, t) = 0 = z(1, t) & t \in (0, T) \\ u_{|t=0} = z_0. \end{cases}$$

$z_0$  has finitely many points of change of sign in  $[0, 1]$ , that is, there exist points

$$0 = r_0^0 < r_1^0 < \dots < r_n^0 < r_{n+1}^0 = 1$$

such that  $\lim_{r \rightarrow 0^+} r^{\frac{m-2}{2}} z'_0(r) = 0$  and

$$z_0(r) = 0 \iff r = r_I^0, \quad I = 1, \dots, n+1$$

$$z_0(r)z_0(s) < 0, \quad \forall r \in (r_{I-1}^0, r_I^0), \quad \forall s \in (r_I^0, r_{I+1}^0) \quad I = 1, \dots, n.$$

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### • Degenerate equations

- Motivations: Energy balance models in climatology

## 4 Open problems

# Semilinear degenerate problems

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} u_t - (a(x)u_x)_x = \alpha(x, t)u + f(x, t, u) \quad \text{in } Q_T := (-1, 1) \times (0, T) \\ \\ \left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \beta_0 u(-1, t) + \beta_1 a(-1)u_x(-1, t) = 0 & t \in (0, T) \\ \gamma_0 u(1, t) + \gamma_1 a(1)u_x(1, t) = 0 & t \in (0, T) \\ a(x)u_x(x, t)|_{x=\pm 1} = 0 & t \in (0, T) \end{array} \right. \end{array} \right. \begin{array}{l} \text{(for WDP)} \\ \text{(for SDP)} \end{array} \\ u(0, x) = u_0(x) \quad x \in (-1, 1). \end{array}$$

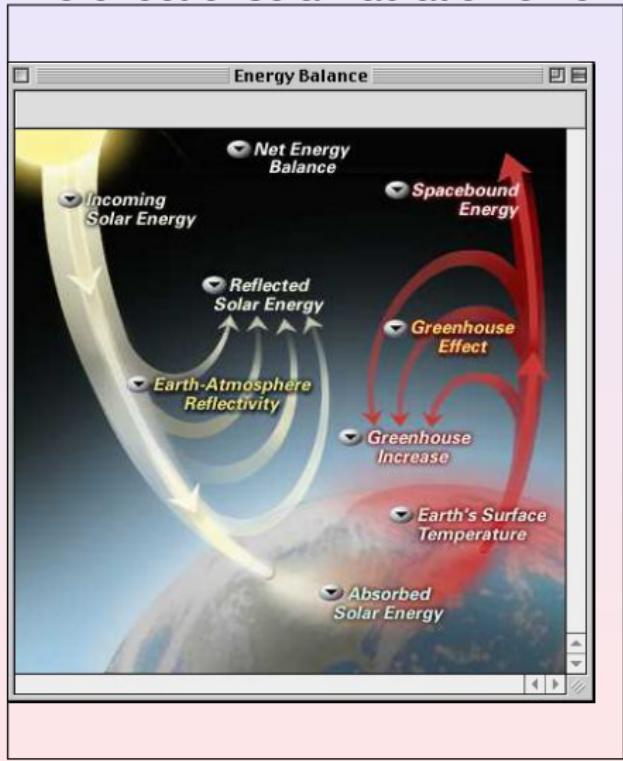
$$\mathbf{a} \in \mathbf{C}^0([-1, 1]) \cap \mathbf{C}^1([-1, 1]) : \mathbf{a}(x) > \mathbf{0} \quad \forall x \in (-1, 1), \quad \mathbf{a}(-1) = \mathbf{a}(1) = \mathbf{0}.$$

We distinguish two cases:

- \*  $\frac{1}{a} \in L^1(-1, 1)$  (WDP), e.g.  $a(x) = \sqrt{1 - x^2}$ ,  $\mathbf{a} \notin C^1([-1, 1])$   
 $(\beta_0\beta_1 \leq 0, \gamma_0\gamma_1 \geq 0)$ ;
- \*  $\frac{1}{a} \notin L^1(-1, 1)$  (SDP), e.g.  $a(x) = 1 - x^2$  (see later Budyko-Sellers climate model)  $\mathbf{a} \in C^1([-1, 1])$  (assume that  $\int_0^x \frac{1}{a(s)} ds \in L^{q_\vartheta}(-1, 1)$ , for same  $q_\vartheta \geq 1$ ).

# Energy balance models

## The effect of solar radiation on climate



heat variation

$$= R_a - R_e + D$$

- $R_a$  = absorbed energy
- $R_e$  = emitted energy
- $D$  = diffusion

# The Budyko-Sellers model (1969)

$\mathcal{M}$  compact surface without boundary (typically  $S^2$ )

$$u_t - \Delta_{\mathcal{M}} u = R_a(t, x, u) - R_e(t, x, u)$$

where  $u(t, x)$  = temperature distribution

- $R_a(x, u) = Q(t, x)\beta(u)$   $\begin{cases} Q = \text{insolation function} \\ \beta = \text{coalbedo} = 1 - \text{albedo} \end{cases}$

- $R_e(x, u) = A(t, x) + B(t, x)u$  Budyko

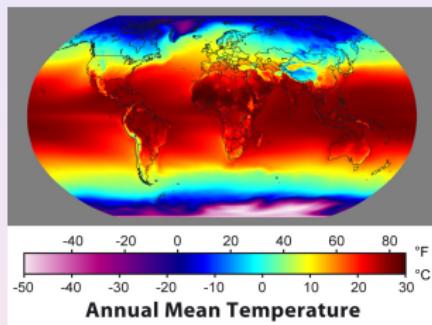
- $R_e(x, u) \asymp c u^4$  Sellers



## One-dimensional BS model

$$\text{on } \mathcal{M} = \Sigma^2, \quad \Delta_{\mathcal{M}} u = \frac{1}{\sin \phi} \left\{ \frac{\partial}{\partial \phi} \left( \sin \phi \frac{\partial u}{\partial \phi} \right) + \frac{1}{\sin \phi} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \lambda^2} \right\}$$

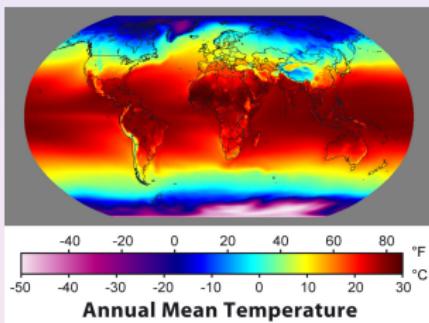
longitude



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$\phi$  = colatitude       $\lambda$  = longitude



taking average at  $x = \cos \phi$  BS model reduces to

$$\begin{cases} u_t - ((1-x^2)u_x)_x = g(t, x) h(u) + f(t, x, u) & x \in ]-1, 1[ \\ (1-x^2)u_{x|x=\pm 1} = 0 \end{cases}$$

## Reference

*Roques L., Chekroun M. D., Cristofol M., Soubeyrand Samuel, Ghil M., Parameter estimation for energy balance models with memory, Proc. Royal Soc. of London (2014)*

# A prophecy by J. von Neumann

Reference

*P. Cannarsa, P. Martinez, J. Vancostenoble, Memoirs AMS, 2016*

Nature (1955):



*Microscopic layers of colored matter spread on an icy surface, or in the atmosphere above one, could inhibit the reflection-radiation process, melt the ice and change the local climate.*

⇒ rather than  $\downarrow$

$$u_t - \Delta_M u = g(t, x, u) + f(t, x)$$

use  $\uparrow$  as control variable

Reference

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Reference

*P. Cannarsa, P. Martinez, J. Vancostenoble, Memoirs AMS, 2016*

Nature (1955):



*Microscopic layers of colored matter spread on an icy surface, or in the atmosphere above one, could inhibit the reflection-radiation process, melt the ice and change the local climate.*



rather than



$$u_t - \Delta_M u = g(t, x, u) + f(t, x)$$

use



as control variable

Reference

*Charles L. Epstein, Rafe Mazzeo, Degenerate Diffusion Operators Arising in Population Biology, book by Princeton University Press, 2011*

# Semilinear degenerate problems

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} u_t - (a(x)u_x)_x = \alpha(x, t)u + f(x, t, u) \quad \text{in } Q_T := (-1, 1) \times (0, T) \\ \\ \left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \beta_0 u(-1, t) + \beta_1 a(-1)u_x(-1, t) = 0 & t \in (0, T) \\ \gamma_0 u(1, t) + \gamma_1 a(1)u_x(1, t) = 0 & t \in (0, T) \\ a(x)u_x(x, t)|_{x=\pm 1} = 0 & t \in (0, T) \end{array} \right. \end{array} \right. \begin{array}{l} \text{(for WDP)} \\ \text{(for SDP)} \end{array} \\ u(0, x) = u_0(x) \quad x \in (-1, 1). \end{array}$$

$$\mathbf{a} \in \mathbf{C}^0([-1, 1]) \cap \mathbf{C}^1([-1, 1]) : \mathbf{a}(x) > \mathbf{0} \quad \forall x \in (-1, 1), \quad \mathbf{a}(-1) = \mathbf{a}(1) = \mathbf{0}.$$

We distinguish two cases:

- \*  $\frac{1}{a} \in L^1(-1, 1)$  (WDP), e.g.  $a(x) = \sqrt{1 - x^2}$ ,  $\mathbf{a} \notin C^1([-1, 1])$   
 $(\beta_0\beta_1 \leq 0, \gamma_0\gamma_1 \geq 0)$ ;
- \*  $\frac{1}{a} \notin L^1(-1, 1)$  (SDP), e.g.  $a(x) = 1 - x^2$  (see later Budyko-Sellers climate model)  $\mathbf{a} \in C^1([-1, 1])$  (assume that  $\int_0^x \frac{1}{a(s)} ds \in L^{q_\vartheta}(-1, 1)$ , for same  $q_\vartheta \geq 1$ ).

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} u_t - (a(x)u_x)_x = \alpha(x, t)u + f(x, t, u) \quad \text{in } Q_T := (-1, 1) \times (0, T) \\ \left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \beta_0 u(-1, t) + \beta_1 a(-1)u_x(-1, t) = 0 & t \in (0, T) \\ \gamma_0 u(1, t) + \gamma_1 a(1)u_x(1, t) = 0 & t \in (0, T) \\ a(x)u_x(x, t)|_{x=\pm 1} = 0 & t \in (0, T) \end{array} \right. \quad (\text{for WDP}) \\ u(0, x) = u_0(x) & x \in (-1, 1). \end{array} \right. \quad (3)$$

$\alpha \in L^\infty(Q_T)$ , (bilinear control),  $u_0 \in L^2(-1, 1)$ ;

$f : Q_T \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is such that

- $(x, t, u) \mapsto f(x, t, u)$  is a Carathéodory function;  $u \mapsto f(x, t, u)$  is differentiable at  $u = 0$ ;  $t \mapsto f(x, t, u)$  is locally absolutely continuous;
- $\exists \gamma_* \geq 0, \vartheta \geq 1$  and  $\nu \geq 0$  such that, for a.e.  $(x, t) \in Q_T, \forall u, v \in \mathbb{R}$ , we have

$$|f(x, t, u)| \leq \gamma_* |u|^\vartheta,$$

$$\begin{aligned} -\nu(1 + |u|^{\vartheta-1} + |v|^{\vartheta-1})(u - v)^2 &\leq (f(x, t, u) - f(x, t, v))(u - v) \leq \nu(u - v)^2, \\ f_t(x, t, u)u &\geq -\nu u^2; \end{aligned}$$

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(SD)  $H_a^1(-1, 1) := \{u \in L^2(-1, 1) : u \text{ loc. abs. continuous in } (-1, 1), \sqrt{a}u_x \in L^2\};$

(WD)  $H_a^1(-1, 1) := \{u \in L^2(-1, 1) : u \text{ absolutely continuous in } [-1, 1], \sqrt{a}u_x \in L^2\}.$

$$H_a^2(-1, 1) := \{u \in H_a^1(-1, 1) \mid au_x \in H^1(-1, 1)\}$$

Given  $T > 0$ , let us define the function spaces

$$\mathcal{B}(Q_T) := C^0([0, T]; L^2(-1, 1)) \cap L^2(0, T; H_a^1(-1, 1))$$

$$\mathcal{H}(Q_T) := L^2(0, T; D(A)) \cap H^1(0, T; L^2(-1, 1)) \cap C([0, T]; H_a^1(-1, 1))$$

Theorem

For all  $u_0 \in H_a^1(-1, 1)$  there exists a unique strict solution  $u \in \mathcal{H}(Q_T)$  to (3).

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G. F., Approximate controllability for nonlinear degenerate parabolic problems with bilinear control, Journal of Differential Equations (2014).

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Theorem (G.F., JDE 2014)

Consider any  $u_0, u^* \in L^2(-1, 1)$  nonnegative. Then,

$$\forall \eta > 0 \exists T > 0, v \in L^\infty(Q_T) : \| u(\cdot, T) - u^* \|_{L^2(-1,1)} \leq \eta.$$

Let  $u_0 \in H_a^1(-1, 1)$  have a finite number of points of sign change.

Theorem (G. F., C. Nitsch, C. Trombetti )

Consider any  $u^* \in H_0^1(-1, 1)$  which has exactly as many points of sign change in the same order as  $u_0$ . Then,

$$\forall \eta > 0 \exists T > 0, v \in L^\infty(Q_T) : \| u(\cdot, T) - u^* \|_{L^2(-1,1)} \leq \eta.$$

# Open problems

- Initial states that change sign: to investigate problems in **higher space dimensions** on domains with specific geometries
  - m-D non-degenerate case **without radial symmetry** and initial condition that change sign
- To extend this approach to other evolution equations:
  - Fractional heat equations (with Umberto Biccari)
  - Porous media equation
  - p-Laplacian operators
- Exact bilinear/multiplicative controllability (with P. Cannarsa and C. Urbani)
- 1-D degenerate reaction-diffusion equations on **networks**

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Thank you for your attention!