

# Seesaw rotational dynamics

## 1. Newton's Second Law for Rotation

For any rigid body rotating about a pivot, Newton's second law takes the form

$$I \ddot{\theta} = \sum \tau,$$

where

- $I$  is the total moment of inertia,
- $\theta$  is the rotation angle, and
- $\sum \tau$  is the sum of the torques acting on the system.

Express each term of the torque sum and then divide by  $I$  to isolate  $\ddot{\theta}$ .

## 2. Gravitational Torque via the 2D Cross Product

### a. The Setup

Assume two point masses  $m_1$  and  $m_2$  are attached at the ends of a beam (or seesaw) of length  $L$ . If the pivot is at the beam's center, each mass is located at a distance  $r = L/2$  from the pivot.

### b. Using the Cross Product

The gravitational force on each mass is  $\mathbf{F}_g$  directed downward. The position vectors from the pivot to each mass are, for example,  $\mathbf{r}_1$  and  $\mathbf{r}_2$

$$\mathbf{F}_g = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ -m_i g \end{pmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{r}_1 = \frac{L}{2} \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta \\ \sin \theta \end{pmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{r}_2 = -\frac{L}{2} \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta \\ \sin \theta \end{pmatrix}$$

The choice of sign is made for convenience so that the gravitational term "supports" or "resists" depending on the difference in masses.

In two dimensions, the torque for each mass is given by the scalar (the "z-component" of the cross product):

$$\tau = \mathbf{r} \times \mathbf{F} = \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \times \begin{bmatrix} F_x \\ F_y \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{vmatrix} \mathbf{i} & \mathbf{j} & \mathbf{k} \\ x & y & 0 \\ F_x & F_y & 0 \end{vmatrix} = \mathbf{i} \cdot \begin{vmatrix} y & 0 \\ F_y & 0 \end{vmatrix} - \mathbf{j} \cdot \begin{vmatrix} x & 0 \\ F_x & 0 \end{vmatrix} + \mathbf{k} \cdot \begin{vmatrix} x & y \\ F_x & F_y \end{vmatrix} = xF_y - yF_x$$

For mass  $m_1$  (located at  $-\frac{L}{2}$  on one side)

$$\tau_1 = \mathbf{r}_1 \times \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ -m_1 g \end{pmatrix} = \left( \frac{L}{2} \cos \theta \right) (-m_1 g) - \left( \frac{L}{2} \sin \theta \right) (0) = -\frac{L}{2} m_1 g \cos \theta.$$

For mass  $m_2$  (located on the opposite side)

$$\tau_2 = \mathbf{r}_2 \times \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ -m_2 g \end{pmatrix} = \left( -\frac{L}{2} \cos \theta \right) (-m_2 g) - \left( -\frac{L}{2} \sin \theta \right) (0) = \frac{L}{2} m_2 g \cos \theta.$$

### c. Net Gravitational Torque

The net gravitational torque is then

$$\tau_g = \tau_1 + \tau_2 = \frac{(m_2 - m_1)g L}{2} \cos \theta,$$

Thus, when we divide by  $I$  (to write the angular acceleration), the gravitational term becomes

$$\tau_g = \gamma \cos \theta \quad , \quad \gamma = \frac{(m_2 - m_1)g L}{2 I}.$$

## 3. Friction Torque

### a. Viscous Friction

Viscous friction is modeled as being proportional to the angular velocity, where  $b$  is the viscous damping coefficient:

$$\tau_{\text{viscous}} = -b \dot{\theta},$$

### b. Coulomb Friction

The Coulomb (dry) friction torque is given by

$$\tau_{\text{Coulomb}} = -\mu_c N \frac{L}{2} \text{sgn}(\dot{\theta}),$$

where

- $\mu_c$  is the Coulomb friction coefficient,
- $N$  is the normal force (which we approximate using  $g$  in our gravitational context), and
- $L/2$  is the effective lever arm.

Because the sign function  $\text{sgn}(\dot{\theta})$  is discontinuous at zero, we use a smooth approximation:

$$\text{sgn}(\dot{\theta}) \approx \tanh\left(\frac{\dot{\theta}}{\epsilon}\right),$$

This approximation facilitates numerical simulation (continuity and derivability), especially useful if it is then linearized. With  $\epsilon$  as a small positive constant.

$$\tau_{\text{Coulomb}} \approx -\mu_c \frac{g L}{2} \tanh\left(\frac{\dot{\theta}}{\epsilon}\right).$$

## c. Total Friction Torque

$$\tau_{\text{friction}} = \tau_{\text{viscous}} + \tau_{\text{Coulomb}} = -b\dot{\theta} - \mu_c \frac{g L}{2} \tanh\left(\frac{\dot{\theta}}{\epsilon}\right)$$

When divided by the total moment of inertia  $I$ , the friction terms in the angular acceleration become

$$\tau_{\text{friction}} = -\alpha\dot{\theta} - \beta \tanh\left(\frac{\dot{\theta}}{\epsilon}\right) \quad , \quad \alpha = \frac{b}{I}, \quad \beta = \frac{\mu_c g L}{2 I}$$

# 4. Total Moment of Inertia

## a. Beam's Moment of Inertia

For a uniform bar (beam) of mass  $m_b$  and length  $L$  rotating about its center, the moment of inertia is obtained by integrating:

1. **Density:**  $\lambda = m_b/L$
2. **Elemental mass:**  $dm = \lambda dx$
3. **Moment contribution:**  $dI = x^2 dm = x^2 \lambda dx$
4. **Integrate:**

$$I_b = \int_{-L/2}^{L/2} x^2 \lambda dx = \lambda \int_{-L/2}^{L/2} x^2 dx = \frac{m_b}{L} \frac{L^3}{12} = \frac{1}{12} m_b L^2$$

## b. Point Masses' Moments of Inertia

Each point mass  $m_i$  located at a distance  $r = L/2$  from the pivot contributes

$$I_i = m_i \left(\frac{L}{2}\right)^2 = \frac{1}{4} m_i L^2.$$

Thus, for both masses:

$$I_{\text{points}} = \frac{1}{4} (m_1 + m_2) L^2.$$

## c. Total Moment of Inertia

Adding the beam's and the point masses' moments of inertia gives

$$I = I_b + I_{\text{points}} = \frac{1}{12}m_b L^2 + \frac{1}{4}(m_1 + m_2)L^2.$$

## 5. Adding the Control Force Torque

To include the contribution of a **control force**  $F$  generated by a **drone motor fixed vertically** on one end of the beam (e.g., at  $x = \frac{L}{2}$ ), we must analyze the **torque generated** by that force around the pivot.

We start from the general expression in scalar 2D form  $\tau = xF_y - yF_x$ . Alternatively, torque magnitude in terms of the angle between the vectors is  $\tau = r \cdot F \cdot \sin(\theta_{\text{rel}})$

where:

- $r = \|\mathbf{r}\| = \frac{L}{2}$  is the distance from the pivot to the point where the force is applied,
- $F = \|\mathbf{F}\|$ ,
- $\theta_{\text{rel}}$  is the angle between  $\mathbf{r}$  and  $\mathbf{F}$ .

### In our system:

- The motor is mounted **perpendicular to the beam** in the **vertical direction**, and thus,  $\mathbf{F} = (0, F)$  in the beam's reference frame.
- The point of application is at  $\mathbf{r} = (-\frac{L}{2}, 0)$ , i.e., the left end of the beam.
- The angle between  $\mathbf{r}$  and  $\mathbf{F}$  is exactly  $90^\circ$ , so  $\sin(\theta_{\text{rel}}) = 1$ .

Then:

$$\tau_{\text{control}} = \frac{L}{2} \cdot F \cdot \sin(90^\circ) = \frac{L}{2} \cdot F$$

Dividing both sides by  $I$ , we define  $\delta = L/(2I)$  :

$$\tau_{\text{control}} = \delta F$$

## 6. Assembling the Equation

Writing Newton's second law with all the torques:

$$I \ddot{\theta} = -b \dot{\theta} - \mu_c \frac{gL}{2} \tanh\left(\frac{\dot{\theta}}{\epsilon}\right) + \frac{(m_1 - m_2)gL}{2} \cos \theta + \frac{L}{2} F.$$

Dividing through by  $I$  gives

$$\ddot{\theta} = -\frac{b}{I} \dot{\theta} - \frac{\mu_c g L}{2I} \tanh\left(\frac{\dot{\theta}}{\epsilon}\right) + \frac{(m_1 - m_2)gL}{2I} \cos \theta + \delta F.$$

With the constant definitions

$$\alpha = \frac{b}{I}, \quad \beta = \frac{\mu_c g L}{2I}, \quad \gamma = \frac{(m_1 - m_2)g L}{2I}, \quad \delta = \frac{L}{2I},$$

this becomes

$$\ddot{\theta} + \alpha \dot{\theta} + \beta \tanh\left(\frac{\dot{\theta}}{\epsilon}\right) = \gamma \cos \theta + \delta F.$$

## 7. State-Space Representation

To express the model in state-space form, define the state vector

$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{pmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \theta \\ \dot{\theta} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Then, the state equations are

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{x}_1 &= x_2, \\ \dot{x}_2 &= -\alpha x_2 - \beta \tanh\left(\frac{x_2}{\epsilon}\right) + \gamma \cos x_1 + \delta F. \end{aligned}$$

As  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ ,  $\tanh(x_2/\epsilon) \rightarrow \text{sign}(x_2)$  but this function is undefined at zero

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{x}_1 &= x_2, \\ \dot{x}_2 &= -\alpha x_2 - \beta \text{sign}(x_2) + \gamma \cos x_1 + \delta F. \end{aligned}$$

with the constants defined as:

- $\alpha = \frac{b}{I},$
- $\beta = \frac{\mu_c g L}{2I},$
- $\gamma = \frac{(m_1 - m_2)g L}{2I},$
- $\delta = \frac{L}{2I}.$

## Linear Approximation of Dynamical Systems with Inputs and Outputs

### System Description

Consider a dynamical system with **state**  $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$ , **input**  $u \in \mathbb{R}^m$ , and **output**  $y \in \mathbb{R}^p$ :

$$\dot{x} = f(x, u) \quad , \quad y = g(x, u, t),$$

where  $f : \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}^m \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^n$  and  $g : \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}^m \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^p$  are smooth functions.

### Equilibrium Points

An equilibrium point  $(x_{\text{eq}}, u_{\text{eq}})$  satisfies:

$$f(x_{\text{eq}}, u_{\text{eq}}) = 0.$$

At equilibrium, the state remains stationary if undisturbed, and  $u_{\text{eq}}$  is the steady-state input.

## Multivariable Taylor Series Linearization

**State Dynamics Linearization:** Expand  $f(x, u)$  around  $(x_{\text{eq}}, u_{\text{eq}})$  using a first-order Taylor series:

$$f(x, u) \approx f(x_{\text{eq}}, u_{\text{eq}}) + \left. \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \right|_{\text{eq}} (x - x_{\text{eq}}) + \left. \frac{\partial f}{\partial u} \right|_{\text{eq}} (u - u_{\text{eq}}).$$

Since  $f(x_{\text{eq}}, u_{\text{eq}}) = 0$ , the linearized dynamics become:

$$\dot{x} \approx \underbrace{\left. \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \right|_{\text{eq}}}_A (x - x_{\text{eq}}) + \underbrace{\left. \frac{\partial f}{\partial u} \right|_{\text{eq}}}_B (u - u_{\text{eq}}).$$

**Output Equation Linearization:** Similarly, linearize  $y = g(x, u, t)$  around  $(x_{\text{eq}}, u_{\text{eq}})$ :

$$y \approx g(x_{\text{eq}}, u_{\text{eq}}, t) + \underbrace{\left. \frac{\partial g}{\partial x} \right|_{\text{eq}}}_C (x - x_{\text{eq}}) + \underbrace{\left. \frac{\partial g}{\partial u} \right|_{\text{eq}}}_D (u - u_{\text{eq}}).$$

## Linearized System Representation

**Perturbation Variables:** Define deviations from equilibrium:

$$\begin{aligned} z &= x - x_{\text{eq}}, \\ v &= u - u_{\text{eq}}, \\ \Delta y &= y - y_{\text{eq}}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $y_{\text{eq}} = g(x_{\text{eq}}, u_{\text{eq}}, t)$  is the equilibrium output.

**Linear State-Space Model:** The linearized system becomes:

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{z} &= Az + Bv, \\ \Delta y &= Cz + Dv. \end{aligned}$$

## Stability Analysis

- **Stability** depends on the eigenvalues of  $A = \left. \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \right|_{\text{eq}}$ :
  - **Stable:** All eigenvalues of  $A$  have  $\text{Re}(\lambda_i) < 0$ .
  - **Unstable:** Any eigenvalue has  $\text{Re}(\lambda_i) > 0$ .
  - **Marginal:** Eigenvalues with  $\text{Re}(\lambda_i) = 0$  (nonlinear terms dominate).

# Solution of the Linearized System

1. **The initial condition** for the linearized system  $z_0$  is defined as the deviation of the original system's initial state  $x_0$  at  $t_0$  from equilibrium  $x_{eq}$ :

$$z_0 = x_0 - x_{eq},$$

2. **State Trajectory:**

$$z(t) = e^{At}z(0) + \int_0^t e^{A(t-\tau)}Bv(\tau)d\tau \quad , \quad x(t) = x_{eq} + z(t)$$

3. **Output Response:**

$$\Delta y(t) = Cz(t) + Dv(t) \quad , \quad y(t) = y_{eq} + \Delta y(t)$$

## Equilibrium and Linearization Analysis

### 1. System Dynamics

The state-space model is:

$$\begin{aligned}\dot{x}_1 &= x_2 \\ \dot{x}_2 &= -\alpha x_2 - \beta \tanh\left(\frac{x_2}{\epsilon}\right) + \gamma \cos x_1 + \delta F\end{aligned}$$

where  $x_1 = \theta$ ,  $x_2 = \dot{\theta}$ , and the constants are:

- $\alpha = b/I$  (viscous damping)
- $\beta = \mu_c g L / (2I)$  (Coulomb friction magnitude)
- $\gamma = (m_2 - m_1)gL / (2I)$  (gravitational torque factor)
- $\delta = L / (2I)$  (control input gain)

### 2. Equilibrium Points

Equilibrium points ( $\mathbf{x}_{eq}$ ) occur when  $\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{0}$ .

$$1. \dot{x}_1 = x_2 = 0 \implies \dot{\theta}_{eq} = 0.$$

2. Substituting  $x_2 = 0$  into  $\dot{x}_2$ :

$$0 = -0 - \beta \tanh(0) + \gamma \cos x_1 + \delta F$$

$$\gamma \cos \theta_{eq} + \delta F = 0 \implies \cos \theta_{eq} = -\frac{\delta F}{\gamma}$$

- **Case 1: No Control ( $F = 0$ )**

$$\cos \theta_{eq} = 0 \implies \theta_{eq} = \frac{\pi}{2} + n\pi, \text{ for any integer } n.$$

The distinct equilibrium points are  $(\theta_{eq}, \dot{\theta}_{eq}) = (\pm \frac{\pi}{2}, 0)$ . These correspond to the vertical positions.

- **Case 2: With Control ( $F \neq 0$ )**

$$\text{Equilibrium points exist if } \left| \frac{\delta F}{\gamma} \right| \leq 1.$$

$$\text{If so, } \theta_{eq} = \pm \arccos\left(-\frac{\delta F}{\gamma}\right) + 2k\pi.$$

## 3. Linearization Analysis

### 1. Non-linear System Equations

Let the state vector be  $\mathbf{x} = \begin{pmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \theta \\ \dot{\theta} \end{pmatrix}$ .

The system can be written as  $\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}, F)$ , where

$$\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}, F) = \begin{pmatrix} x_2 \\ -\alpha x_2 - \beta \tanh\left(\frac{x_2}{\epsilon}\right) + \gamma \cos x_1 + \delta F \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} f_1(\mathbf{x}, F) \\ f_2(\mathbf{x}, F) \end{pmatrix}$$

**Note on tanh:** Using  $\tanh(x_2/\epsilon)$  instead of  $\text{sgn}(x_2)$  makes the function differentiable at  $x_2 = 0$ , allowing for straightforward Jacobian calculation at equilibrium.

### 3. Compute Jacobians

We linearize  $\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}, F)$  around an operating point  $(\mathbf{x}_{op}, F_{op})$

**Matrix A (Jacobian):**

$$A = \frac{\partial \mathbf{f}}{\partial \mathbf{x}} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial f_1}{\partial x_1} & \frac{\partial f_1}{\partial x_2} \\ \frac{\partial f_2}{\partial x_1} & \frac{\partial f_2}{\partial x_2} \end{pmatrix}$$

The partial derivatives are:

- $\frac{\partial f_1}{\partial x_1} = \frac{\partial(x_2)}{\partial x_1} = 0$
- $\frac{\partial f_1}{\partial x_2} = \frac{\partial(x_2)}{\partial x_2} = 1$
- $\frac{\partial f_2}{\partial x_1} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x_1}(-\alpha x_2 - \beta \tanh(\frac{x_2}{\epsilon}) + \gamma \cos x_1 + \delta F) = -\gamma \sin x_1$
- $\frac{\partial f_2}{\partial x_2} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x_2}(-\alpha x_2 - \beta \tanh(\frac{x_2}{\epsilon}) + \gamma \cos x_1 + \delta F) = -\alpha - \beta \frac{1}{\epsilon} \text{sech}^2(\frac{x_2}{\epsilon})$

Evaluate at the equilibrium point  $(\mathbf{x}_{eq}, F_{eq}) = (\theta_{eq}, 0, F_{eq})$ :

- $\left. \frac{\partial f_1}{\partial x_1} \right|_{eq} = 0$
- $\left. \frac{\partial f_1}{\partial x_2} \right|_{eq} = 1$



- $\left. \frac{\partial f_2}{\partial x_1} \right|_{eq} = -\gamma \sin \theta_{eq}$
- $\left. \frac{\partial f_2}{\partial x_2} \right|_{eq} = -\alpha - \frac{\beta}{\epsilon} \text{sech}^2(0) = -\alpha - \frac{\beta}{\epsilon}$

So, the Jacobian matrix at equilibrium is:

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -\gamma \sin \theta_{eq} & -\alpha - \beta/\epsilon \end{pmatrix}$$

**Matrix B (Input Matrix):**

$$B = \frac{\partial \mathbf{f}}{\partial F} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial f_1}{\partial F} \\ \frac{\partial f_2}{\partial F} \end{pmatrix}$$

- $\frac{\partial f_1}{\partial F} = \frac{\partial(x_2)}{\partial F} = 0$
- $\frac{\partial f_2}{\partial F} = \frac{\partial}{\partial F}(-\alpha x_2 - \beta \tanh(\frac{x_2}{\epsilon}) + \gamma \cos x_1 + \delta F) = \delta$

Evaluating at equilibrium (or anywhere, as it's constant):

$$B = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \delta \end{pmatrix}$$

## The Linearized System

The initial conditions for the linearized system are  $\mathbf{z}(0)$  and  $\mathbf{x}(0)$  are the initial conditions of the non linear system

$$\mathbf{z}(0) = \mathbf{x}(0) - \mathbf{x}_{eq}$$

The real input is  $\Delta F(t) = F(t) - F_{eq}$

$$\begin{pmatrix} \dot{z}_1 \\ \dot{z}_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -\gamma \sin \theta_{eq} & -\alpha - \beta/\epsilon \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} z_1 \\ z_2 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \delta \end{pmatrix} \Delta F$$

The restore the original coordinates use

$$\mathbf{x}(t) = \mathbf{x}_{eq} + \mathbf{z}(t)$$

This represents the linearized dynamics of the deviations ( $z_1 = \Delta\theta$ ,  $z_2 = \Delta\dot{\theta}$ ) from the equilibrium point  $(\theta_{eq}, 0)$  due to input deviations  $\Delta F$ .

## Analysis at Specific Points (assuming $F = 0$ )

- **Around  $\theta = 0$  (Horizontal):**
  - This is **not an equilibrium point** unless  $\gamma = 0$  ( $m_1 = m_2$ ).

- Linearizing here yields  $A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & -\alpha - \beta/\epsilon \end{pmatrix}$ .
- Linearized equation:  $\Delta\ddot{\theta} + (\alpha + \beta/\epsilon)\Delta\dot{\theta} = \delta\Delta F$ .
- **Issue:** The restoring force term dependent on  $\Delta\theta$  (from gravity) vanishes ( $-\gamma \sin(0) = 0$ ). The linearization **loses the essential angular dynamics** and doesn't capture the tendency to fall away from horizontal if  $m_1 \neq m_2$ .
- **Around  $\theta_{eq} = \pi/2$  (Vertical):**
  - $A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -\gamma & -\alpha - \beta/\epsilon \end{pmatrix}$ .
  - Linearized equation:  $\Delta\ddot{\theta} + (\alpha + \beta/\epsilon)\Delta\dot{\theta} + \gamma\Delta\theta = \delta\Delta F$ .
  - **Usefulness:** This is a standard 2nd order system. It captures the local dynamics. If  $\gamma > 0$  (i.e.,  $m_2 > m_1$ ), the  $+\gamma\Delta\theta$  term represents a **restoring torque**, making this equilibrium **stable** (assuming damping  $\alpha, \beta > 0$ ).
- **Around  $\theta_{eq} = -\pi/2$  (Vertical):**
  - $A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ \gamma & -\alpha - \beta/\epsilon \end{pmatrix}$ .
  - Linearized equation:  $\Delta\ddot{\theta} + (\alpha + \beta/\epsilon)\Delta\dot{\theta} - \gamma\Delta\theta = \delta\Delta F$ .
  - **Instability:** If  $\gamma > 0$  ( $m_2 > m_1$ ), the  $-\gamma\Delta\theta$  term represents an **anti-restoring torque**, pushing the system away from equilibrium. The linearized system has a positive eigenvalue, indicating **instability**, matching simulation observations.

## 4. Stability vs. $n$ and $\gamma$

The equilibrium angles are  $\theta_{eq} = \frac{\pi}{2} + n\pi$ . Stability depends on  $n$  (even/odd) and the sign of  $\gamma = (m_2 - m_1)gL/(2I)$ .

- **If  $n$  is even** (e.g., -2, 0, 2,...):  $\theta_{eq} \equiv \pi/2$ .
  - Linearized term:  $+\gamma\Delta\theta$ .
  - **Stable** if  $\gamma > 0$  ( $m_2 > m_1$ , heavier mass  $m_2$  is down).
  - **Unstable** if  $\gamma < 0$  ( $m_1 > m_2$ , heavier mass  $m_1$  is up).
- **If  $n$  is odd** (e.g., -1, 1, 3,...):  $\theta_{eq} \equiv -\pi/2$ .
  - Linearized term:  $-\gamma\Delta\theta$ .
  - **Stable** if  $\gamma < 0$  ( $m_1 > m_2$ , heavier mass  $m_1$  is down).
  - **Unstable** if  $\gamma > 0$  ( $m_2 > m_1$ , heavier mass  $m_2$  is up).

### Conclusion on negative $n$ :

The stability for  $\theta_{eq} = \pi/2 + n\pi$  with **negative**  $n$  depends on whether  $n$  is even or odd:

- If  $n$  is negative **odd** ( $\equiv -\pi/2$ ): Unstable if  $\gamma > 0$ , Stable if  $\gamma < 0$ .
- If  $n$  is negative **even** ( $\equiv \pi/2$ ): Stable if  $\gamma > 0$ , Unstable if  $\gamma < 0$ .

Swapping the masses ( $m_1 \leftrightarrow m_2$ ) flips the sign of  $\gamma$ , thus **reversing the stability** of both vertical equilibrium configurations ( $\pi/2$  and  $-\pi/2$ ).