

Hamiltonian Mechanics unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der höheren Lehranstalten

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1 Fixed-Period Problems: The Sublinear Case

With this chapter, the preliminaries are over, and we begin the search for periodic solutions to Hamiltonian systems. All this will be done in the convex case; that is, we shall study the boundary-value problem

$$\begin{aligned}\dot{x} &= JH'(t, x) \\ x(0) &= x(T)\end{aligned}$$

with $H(t, \cdot)$ a convex function of x , going to $+\infty$ when $\|x\| \rightarrow \infty$.

1.1 Autonomous Systems

In this section, we will consider the case when the Hamiltonian $H(x)$ is autonomous. For the sake of simplicity, we shall also assume that it is C^1 .

We shall first consider the question of nontriviality, within the general framework of (A_∞, B_∞) -subquadratic Hamiltonians. In the second subsection, we shall look into the special case when H is $(0, b_\infty)$ -subquadratic, and we shall try to derive additional information.

The General Case: Nontriviality. We assume that H is (A_∞, B_∞) -subquadratic at infinity, for some constant symmetric matrices A_∞ and B_∞ , with $B_\infty - A_\infty$ positive definite. Set:

$$\gamma := \text{smallest eigenvalue of } B_\infty - A_\infty \tag{1}$$

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Theorem 1 tells us that if $\lambda + \gamma < 0$, the boundary-value problem:

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has at least one solution \bar{x} , which is found by minimizing the dual action functional:

$$\psi(u) = \int_0^T \left[\frac{1}{2} (\Lambda_o^{-1} u, u) + N^*(-u) \right] dt \quad (4)$$

on the range of Λ , which is a subspace $R(\Lambda)_L^2$ with finite codimension. Here

$$N(x) := H(x) - \frac{1}{2} (A_\infty x, x) \quad (5)$$

is a convex function, and

$$N(x) \leq \frac{1}{2} ((B_\infty - A_\infty) x, x) + c \quad \forall x. \quad (6)$$

Proposition 1. *Assume $H'(0) = 0$ and $H(0) = 0$. Set:*

$$\delta := \liminf_{x \rightarrow 0} 2N(x) \|x\|^{-2}. \quad (7)$$

If $\gamma < -\lambda < \delta$, the solution \bar{u} is non-zero:

$$\bar{x}(t) \neq 0 \quad \forall t. \quad (8)$$

Proof. Condition (7) means that, for every $\delta' > \delta$, there is some $\varepsilon > 0$ such that

$$\|x\| \leq \varepsilon \Rightarrow N(x) \leq \frac{\delta'}{2} \|x\|^2. \quad (9)$$

It is an exercise in convex analysis, into which we shall not go, to show that this implies that there is an $\eta > 0$ such that

$$f \|x\| \leq \eta \Rightarrow N^*(y) \leq \frac{1}{2\delta'} \|y\|^2. \quad (10)$$

Fig. 1. This is the caption of the figure displaying a white eagle and a white horse on a snow field

Since u_1 is a smooth function, we will have $\|hu_1\|_\infty \leq \eta$ for h small enough, and inequality (10) will hold, yielding thereby:

$$\psi(hu_1) \leq \frac{h^2}{2} \frac{1}{\lambda} \|u_1\|_2^2 + \frac{h^2}{2} \frac{1}{\delta'} \|u_1\|^2 . \quad (11)$$

If we choose δ' close enough to δ , the quantity $(\frac{1}{\lambda} + \frac{1}{\delta'})$ will be negative, and we end up with

$$\psi(hu_1) < 0 \quad \text{for } h \neq 0 \text{ small} . \quad (12)$$

On the other hand, we check directly that $\psi(0) = 0$. This shows that 0 cannot be a minimizer of ψ , not even a local one. So $\bar{u} \neq 0$ and $\bar{u} \neq \Lambda_o^{-1}(0) = 0$. \square

Corollary 1. *Assume H is C^2 and (a_∞, b_∞) -subquadratic at infinity. Let ξ_1, \dots, ξ_N be the equilibria, that is, the solutions of $H'(\xi) = 0$. Denote by ω_k the smallest eigenvalue of $H''(\xi_k)$, and set:*

$$\omega := \text{Min} \{ \omega_1, \dots, \omega_k \} . \quad (13)$$

If:

$$\frac{T}{2\pi} b_\infty < -E \left[-\frac{T}{2\pi} a_\infty \right] < \frac{T}{2\pi} \omega \quad (14)$$

then minimization of ψ yields a non-constant T -periodic solution \bar{x} .

We recall once more that by the integer part $E[\alpha]$ of $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}$, we mean the $a \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $a < \alpha \leq a + 1$. For instance, if we take $a_\infty = 0$, Corollary 2 tells us that \bar{x} exists and is non-constant provided that:

$$\frac{T}{2\pi} b_\infty < 1 < \frac{T}{2\pi} \quad (15)$$

or

$$T \in \left(\frac{2\pi}{\omega}, \frac{2\pi}{b_\infty} \right) . \quad (16)$$

Proof. The spectrum of Λ is $\frac{2\pi}{T} \mathbb{Z} + a_\infty$. The largest negative eigenvalue λ is given by $\frac{2\pi}{T} k_o + a_\infty$, where

$$\frac{2\pi}{T} k_o + a_\infty < 0 \leq \frac{2\pi}{T} (k_o + 1) + a_\infty . \quad (17)$$

Hence:

$$k_o = E \left[-\frac{T}{2\pi} a_\infty \right] . \quad (18)$$

The condition $\gamma < -\lambda < \delta$ now becomes:

$$b_\infty - a_\infty < -\frac{2\pi}{T} k_o - a_\infty < \omega - a_\infty \quad (19)$$

which is precisely condition (14). \square

Lemma 1. *Assume that H is C^2 on $\mathbb{R}^{2n} \setminus \{0\}$ and that $H''(x)$ is non-degenerate for any $x \neq 0$. Then any local minimizer \tilde{x} of ψ has minimal period T .*

Proof. We know that \tilde{x} , or $\tilde{x} + \xi$ for some constant $\xi \in \mathbb{R}^{2n}$, is a T -periodic solution of the Hamiltonian system:

$$\dot{x} = JH'(x) . \quad (20)$$

There is no loss of generality in taking $\xi = 0$. So $\psi(x) \geq \psi(\tilde{x})$ for all \tilde{x} in some neighbourhood of x in $W^{1,2}(\mathbb{R}/T\mathbb{Z}; \mathbb{R}^{2n})$.

But this index is precisely the index $i_T(\tilde{x})$ of the T -periodic solution \tilde{x} over the interval $(0, T)$, as defined in Sect. 2.6. So

$$i_T(\tilde{x}) = 0 . \quad (21)$$

Now if \tilde{x} has a lower period, T/k say, we would have, by Corollary 31:

$$i_T(\tilde{x}) = i_{kT/k}(\tilde{x}) \geq ki_{T/k}(\tilde{x}) + k - 1 \geq k - 1 \geq 1 . \quad (22)$$

This would contradict (21), and thus cannot happen. \square

Notes and Comments. The results in this section are a refined version of [1]; the minimality result of Proposition 14 was the first of its kind.

To understand the nontriviality conditions, such as the one in formula (16), one may think of a one-parameter family x_T , $T \in (2\pi\omega^{-1}, 2\pi b_\infty^{-1})$ of periodic solutions, $x_T(0) = x_T(T)$, with x_T going away to infinity when $T \rightarrow 2\pi\omega^{-1}$, which is the period of the linearized system at 0.

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Theorem 1 (Ghoussoub-Preiss). *Assume $H(t, x)$ is $(0, \varepsilon)$ -subquadratic at infinity for all $\varepsilon > 0$, and T -periodic in t*

$$H(t, \cdot) \quad \text{is convex} \quad \forall t \quad (23)$$

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$$H(t, x) \geq n(\|x\|) \quad \text{with } n(s)s^{-1} \rightarrow \infty \quad \text{as } s \rightarrow \infty \quad (25)$$

$$\forall \varepsilon > 0, \quad \exists c : H(t, x) \leq \frac{\varepsilon}{2} \|x\|^2 + c. \quad (26)$$

Assume also that H is C^2 , and $H''(t, x)$ is positive definite everywhere. Then there is a sequence x_k , $k \in \mathbb{N}$, of kT -periodic solutions of the system

$$\dot{x} = JH'(t, x) \quad (27)$$

such that, for every $k \in \mathbb{N}$, there is some $p_o \in \mathbb{N}$ with:

$$p \geq p_o \Rightarrow x_{pk} \neq x_k. \quad (28)$$

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Example 1 (External forcing). Consider the system:

$$\dot{x} = JH'(x) + f(t) \quad (29)$$

where the Hamiltonian H is $(0, b_\infty)$ -subquadratic, and the forcing term is a distribution on the circle:

$$f = \frac{d}{dt}F + f_o \quad \text{with } F \in L^2(\mathbb{R}/T\mathbb{Z}; \mathbb{R}^{2n}), \quad (30)$$

where $f_o := T^{-1} \int_o^T f(t)dt$. For instance,

$$f(t) = \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}} \delta_k \xi, \quad (31)$$

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A Borelian function $H : [0, T] \times \mathbb{R}^{2n} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is called (A_∞, B_∞) -subquadratic at infinity if there exists a function $N(t, x)$ such that:

$$H(t, x) = \frac{1}{2} (A_\infty(t)x, x) + N(t, x) \quad (32)$$

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If $A_\infty(t) = a_\infty I$ and $B_\infty(t) = b_\infty I$, with $a_\infty \leq b_\infty \in \mathbb{R}$, we shall say that H is (a_∞, b_∞) -subquadratic at infinity. As an example, the function $\|x\|^\alpha$, with $1 \leq \alpha < 2$, is $(0, \varepsilon)$ -subquadratic at infinity for every $\varepsilon > 0$. Similarly, the Hamiltonian

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