



Online Feedback Optimization with Applications to Transportation Networks

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Problem setting

Online Feedback Optimization

Design a controller that optimizes the operation of the system in the face of unknown disturbances

Physical system:

$$\begin{aligned} x_{k+1} &= Ax_k + Bu_k + Ew_k \\ y_k &= Cx_k + Dw_k \end{aligned}$$

Noise model:

$w_k \sim \mathcal{W}_k$ (time-varying distribution)

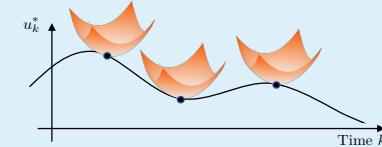
Steady-state map:

$$y = \underbrace{C(I - A)^{-1}B u}_{G} + \underbrace{(D + C(I - A)^{-1}E) w}_{H}$$

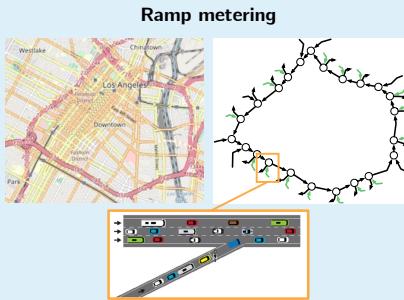
Objective: (equilibrium selection)

$$\min_{u^d} \mathbb{E}_{w_k} [\phi(u^d, \underbrace{Gu^d + Hw_k}_{\text{steady-state output}})]$$

- Implicitly defines optimal operating point for the system affected by current disturbance
- Challenge: noise is unmeasurable thus the optimization cannot be solved explicitly



Motivation: control and coordination of transportation



Objective:

Control ramp flows to maximize throughput

Difficulties:

- Complex, nonlinear, network model
- Rapid changes in traffic demand at peak hours

How is currently done:

- PI-type controller, local at ramps/corridors
- Simulation-based controller tuning, seasonal parameters update



Objective:

Decide ride prices to maximize company's profit

Difficulties:

- Humans-in-the-loop: demand elasticity vs prices
- Highly dynamic ride requests & vehicle availability

How is currently done:

- Customer-vehicle bipartite matching, locally

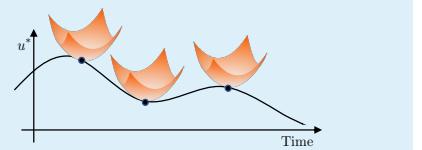
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Control objective: related work

Control objective:

$$\min_{u^d} \mathbb{E}_{w_k} [\phi(u^d, Gu^d + Hw_k)]$$



Conceptually-related problems:

- Output regulation:** control system so that output tracks a prescribed reference [Davidson '76], [Francis '77], [Yoon and Lin 16], ..., [Huang '03, '04], [Isidori '89], ...
- Extremum-seeking:** seek the extremum of a performance metric, adjusting control inputs online [Leblanc, '22], ... [Wittenmark & Urquhart, '95], ... [Krstić & Wang, '00], ... , [Feiling et.al., '18]
- MPC (real-time/online):** more general control objective, but harder to solve Real-time MPC [Zelinger et.al. '09], Optimizing control [Garcia & Morari '81], ...
- Optimal control (e.g., LQR):** more general control objective, requires noise knowledge [Bertsekas '95], ...



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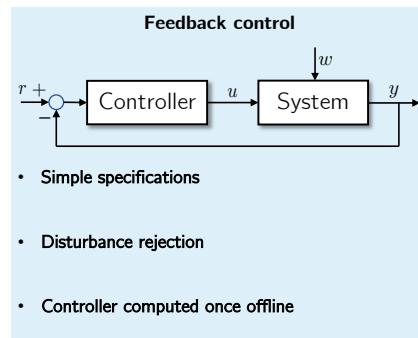
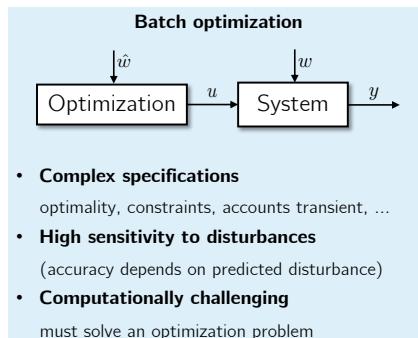
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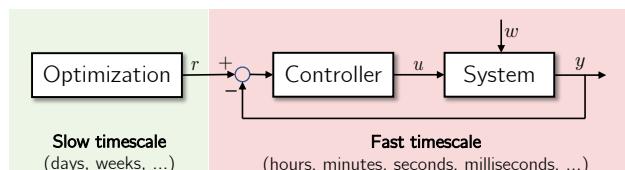
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Motivation



- The two approaches are often combined as follows:



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Talk outline

1. Algorithm design and tracking analysis

2. Direct design from data

3. Continuous-time and constrained optimization



G. Bianchin, J. Cortés, J. I. Poveda and E. Dall'Anese, "Time-Varying Optimization of LTI Systems via Projected Primal-Dual Gradient Flows," IEEE TCNS, 2022

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Online Stochastic Optimization for Unknown Linear Systems:
Data-Driven Controller Synthesis and Analysis

Gianluca Bianchin, Miguel Vaquero, Jorge Cortés, and Emiliano Dall'Anese

G. Bianchin, M. Vaquero, J. Cortés and E. Dall'Anese, "Online Stochastic Optimization for Unknown Linear Systems: Data-Driven Synthesis and Controller Analysis," IEEE TAC, (to appear)

Algorithms and closed-loop error tracking analysis

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Algorithm design idea

Review of classical optimization tools:

- Consider the **stochastic optimization problem**:

$$\min_{u^d} \mathbb{E}_{w_k} [\phi(u^d, Gu^d + Hw_k)]$$
- **Gradient descent** iteration:
(compute:) $\Phi(u_k) = (\nabla_u \circ \mathbb{E}_{w_k} \circ \phi)(u_k, Gu_k + Hw_k)$
 $u_{k+1} = u_k - \eta \Phi(u_k)$
- When distribution is unknown, **stochastic gradient descent**:
(sample:) $y_k = Gu_k + Hw_k$
(compute:) $\Phi^s(u_k, y_k) := (\nabla_u \circ \phi)(u_k, y_k)$
 $u_{k+1} = u_k - \eta \Phi^s(u_k, y_k)$

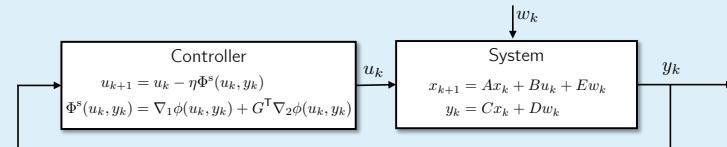
System to control:

$$x_{k+1} = Ax_k + Bu_k + Ew_k \\ y_k = Cx_k + Dw_k$$

with steady-state map:

$$y = Gu + Hw$$

Proposed framework: stochastic gradient descent in closed-loop with LTI system



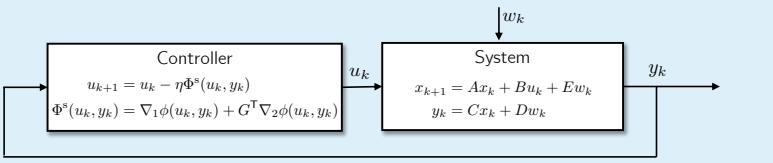
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Online optimization as a feedback controller

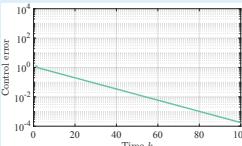
Proposed control framework:



What if we "feed" the state of a gradient-descent algorithm as input to a physical system?

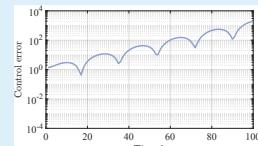
Algebraic system model:

$$u_k = u_{k-1} - \nabla \Phi(u_{k-1}, y_k) \quad y_k = Gu_k + Hw_k$$



Dynamic system model:

$$\begin{aligned} u_k &= u_{k-1} - \nabla \Phi(u_{k-1}, y_k) & x_{k+1} &= Ax_k + Bu_k + Ew_k \\ y_k &= Cx_k + Dw_k \end{aligned}$$



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Closed-loop tracking bound

Theorem: Assume

- Regularity of ϕ : ℓ -Lipschitz gradient and μ -strongly convex
- Plant properties: Controllability + Observability + Stability: $\exists P, Q : A^T P A - P = -Q$
- Define:

$$e_k^* := \left\| \begin{bmatrix} u_k \\ x_k \end{bmatrix} - \begin{bmatrix} u_k^* \\ x_k^* \end{bmatrix} \right\| \quad \text{samp-err}_k := (\nabla_u \circ \mathbb{E}_{w_k} \circ \phi)(u_k, Gu_k + Hw_k) - (\nabla_u \circ \phi)(u_k, Gu_k + Hw_k)$$

Then, for any $k \geq 0$:

$$\mathbb{E}[e_{k+1}^*] \leq \beta \mathbb{E}[e_k^*] + \gamma \mathbb{E}[\sup_{0 \leq \tau \leq k} \|e_{\tau+1}^* - e_\tau^*\|] + \eta \mathbb{E}[\|\text{samp-err}_k\|]$$

$$\text{where } \beta = \max\left\{ \sqrt{1 - \eta\mu}, \sqrt{\frac{\lambda(P)}{\lambda(P)}} \left(1 + \frac{(1-\kappa)\lambda(Q)}{\lambda(P)} \right) + \eta \bar{\ell}^N \|C\| \right\}$$

Impose < 1 < 1 if open-loop plant is contractive

Implications:

- If $\eta < \frac{1}{\mu}$, tracking error is contractive!
- Error bound depends on **temporal variability of the optimizer** and on **sampling error**

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Closed-loop stability analysis

Proof sketch of:

$$\mathbb{E}[e_{k+1}^*] \leq \beta \mathbb{E}[e_k^*] + \gamma \mathbb{E}[\sup_{0 \leq \tau \leq k} \|e_{\tau+1}^* - e_\tau^*\|] + \eta \mathbb{E}[\|\text{samp-err}_k\|]$$

The proof combines **gradient-descent contraction bounds** with **Lyapunov stability** bounds for LTI

$$\mathbb{E}[e_{k+1}^*] \leq \mathbb{E}[\|u_{k+1} - u_{k+1}^*\|] + \mathbb{E}[\|x_{k+1} - x_{k+1}^*\|]$$

contraction of stochastic
gradient-descent contraction of system state
(Lyapunov-like analysis)

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Test case: ride-service scheduling in Manhattan

Ride-hailing model

- Discretize region into pickup/dropoff areas
- Mass-conservation law:

$$x_{k+1}^i = x_k^i - \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}} a_{ij} x_k^j + \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}} a_{ji} x_k^j - \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}} d_k^j + \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}} \sum_{\tau=k-T}^{k-1} \sigma_{\tau}^{j,i,k-\tau} d_{\tau}^j + e_k^i$$

conservation pick ups drop offs

x_k^i = idle vehicles in region i at time k

Test scenario from Manhattan, NY



Optimization objectives

$$\text{Ride demand is elastic to prices: } d_k^{ij} = \delta_k^{ij} \left(1 - \theta^{ij} \frac{p_k^{ij}}{p_{\max}^{ij}} \right)$$

Control goal: set ride prices to maximize profit:

$$\begin{aligned} \max_{p,x,d} \quad & \sum_{i \in \mathcal{V}} \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}} p^{ij} d^{ij} - c^{ij} d^{ij} - \varrho \|x\|^2, && \text{(maximize profit)} \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & 0 = - \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}} a_{ij} x^j + \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}} a_{ji} x^j - \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}} d^{ij} + w_k^i, && \text{(steady-state map)} \\ & d^{ij} = \delta_k^{ij} \left(1 - \theta^{ij} \frac{p^{ij}}{p_{\max}^{ij}} \right) && \text{(demand elasticity)} \\ & d^{ij} \geq 0, x^i \geq 0 && \text{(feasibility)} \end{aligned}$$

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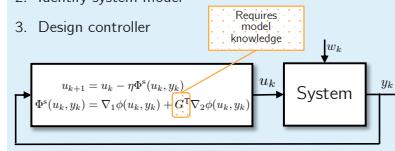
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Data-based implementation

Algorithm design idea

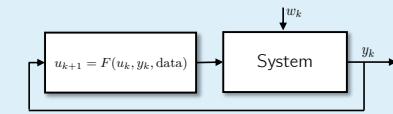
Model-based feedback optimization

1. Collect data
2. Identify system model
3. Design controller



Data-based feedback optimization

1. Collect data
2. Design controller



Necessary notation

- Assume availability of historical data: $y_{[0,T]}, u_{[0,T]}$
- Compute finite differences: $y^{\text{diff}} = (y_1 - y_0, y_2 - y_1, \dots, y_T - y_{T-1})$
- For a signal $z_{[0,T-1]}$, define Hankel matrix: $Z_{t,q} = \begin{bmatrix} z_0 & z_1 & \dots & z_{q-1} \\ z_1 & z_2 & \dots & z_q \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ z_{t-1} & z_t & \dots & z_{q+t-2} \end{bmatrix}$

Proposed data-based implementation:

$$u_{k+1} = u_k - \eta \left(\nabla_1 \phi(u_k, y_k) + \left([Y_{\nu,q}]_i \begin{bmatrix} Y_{\nu,q}^{\text{diff}} \\ U_{\nu,q} \end{bmatrix}^\dagger \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \mathbb{1}_\nu \otimes I_m \end{bmatrix} \right)^\top \nabla_2 \phi(u_k, y_k) \right)$$

direct computation of G^\top from data

Theoretical guarantees

Theorem. Assume

- System is controllable
- (joint) Input is persistently exciting of order $n + \nu$, n = state size, ν = observability index
- If historical data is noiseless:

$$C(I - A)^{-1}B = [Y_{\nu,q}]_i \begin{bmatrix} Y_{\nu,q}^{\text{diff}} \\ U_{\nu,q} \end{bmatrix}^\dagger \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \mathbb{1}_\nu \otimes I_m \end{bmatrix} := \hat{G}$$

- If historical data is noisy:

$$G - \hat{G} = [Y_{\nu,q}]_i \left(\begin{bmatrix} Y_{\nu,q}^{\text{diff}} \\ U_{\nu,q} \\ W_{\nu,q} \\ W_{\nu,q}^{\text{diff}} \end{bmatrix}^\dagger \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \mathbb{1}_\nu \otimes I_m \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} - \begin{bmatrix} Y_{\nu,q}^{\text{diff}} \\ U_{\nu,q} \end{bmatrix}^\dagger \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \mathbb{1}_\nu \otimes I_m \end{bmatrix} \right)$$

Proof sketch. Assume $C = I$, so that $\nu = 1$

- By the fundamental lemma: $\text{rank} \begin{bmatrix} U_{1,q} \\ X_{1,q} \end{bmatrix} = \nu m + n$ and $\begin{bmatrix} \bar{u}_{[0,\nu-1]} \\ \bar{y}_{[0,\nu-1]} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} U_{1,q} \\ Y_{1,q} \end{bmatrix} \alpha$
- At equilibrium: $0 = [I - A \quad -B] \begin{bmatrix} y^{\text{eq}} \\ u^{\text{eq}} \end{bmatrix} = [I - A \quad -B] \begin{bmatrix} Y_{1,q} \\ U_{1,q} \end{bmatrix} \alpha = Y_{1,q}^{\text{diff}} \alpha$

Thus, an equilibrium trajectory is characterized by the manifold $0 = Y_{\nu,q}^{\text{diff}} \alpha$

- Moreover, among all equilibrium trajectories, we want: $U_{\nu,q} \alpha = I$

Fundamental lemma:
Willems, Rapisarda, Markovsky, De Moor, "A note on persistency of excitation," Systems & Control Letters, 2005

Direct vs indirect estimation of G

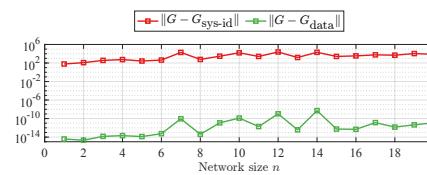
Direct method

$$\hat{G} = [Y_{\nu,q}]_i \begin{bmatrix} Y_{\nu,q}^{\text{diff}} \\ U_{\nu,q} \end{bmatrix}^\dagger \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \mathbb{1}_\nu \otimes I_m \end{bmatrix}$$

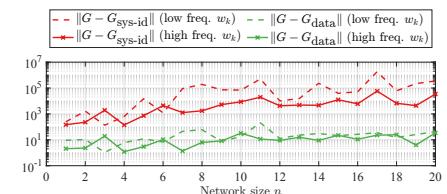
Indirect method (subspace id – [Ljung '99])

1. Estimate observability matrix \hat{O}
2. From \hat{O} , estimate \hat{A} and \hat{C}
3. From \hat{O} , estimate $\hat{x}(t)$
4. From $\hat{x}(t)$ and \hat{O} , estimate \hat{B} and \hat{D} , solving a linear regression
5. Compute: $\hat{G} = \hat{C}(I - \hat{A})^{-1}\hat{B}$

Noiseless data



Noisy data



Lesson learned from the numerics:

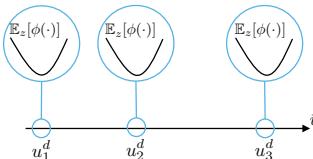
- Subspace id needs several assumptions: known system order, minimal realization
- Subspace id suffers from: many choices state variables, noise "propagates" through sequential id steps

The cost of an imprecise model description

If G is known with **exact precision**:

$$\min_{u^d} \mathbb{E}_w[\phi(u^d, Gu^d + Hw)]$$

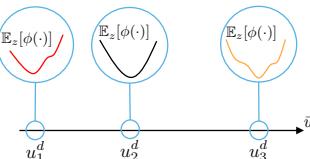
is a **classical** stochastic optimization problem



If G is known **approximately** as \hat{G} :

$$\min_{u^d} \mathbb{E}_z[\phi(u^d, \hat{G}u^d + \underbrace{(G - \hat{G})u^d + Hw}_{z(u^d)})]$$

optimization **decision-dependent distribution**



Notion of stable optimizer:

A **stable optimizer** is a fixed point of the map:

$$u^{so} = \arg \min_{u^d} \mathbb{E}_z[\phi(u^d, \hat{G}u^d + z(u^{so}))]$$

it is a point that solves the optimization, provided that the distribution remains fixed

J. C. Perdomo, T. Zrnic, C. Mandler-Dunner, and M. Hardt, "Performative prediction," International Conference on Machine Learning, pp. 7599-7609, 2020



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Continuous-time implementations and constrained optimization



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Stable optimizer and tracking bound

Theorem: Under the same assumptions as previous theorem

$$\text{Define: } e_k^{so} = \left\| \begin{bmatrix} u_k \\ x_k \end{bmatrix} - \begin{bmatrix} u_k^{so} \\ x_k^{so} \end{bmatrix} \right\| \quad \text{samp-err}_k := \nabla_1 \phi(u_k, y_k) + G^T \nabla_2 \phi(u_k, y_k) - \mathbb{E}_{y_k} [\nabla_1 \phi(u_k, y_k) + G^T \nabla_2 \phi(u_k, y_k)]$$

Then, for any $k \geq 0$:

$$\mathbb{E}[e_{k+1}^{so}] \leq \beta \mathbb{E}[e_k^{so}] + \gamma \mathbb{E}[\sup_{0 \leq \tau \leq k} \|e_{\tau+1}^{so} - e_\tau^{so}\|] + \eta \mathbb{E}[\|\text{samp-err}_k\|]$$

$$\text{Where } \beta = \max\{\sqrt{1 - \eta\mu + \eta\ell\nabla\|G - \hat{G}\|}, \sqrt{\frac{\lambda(P)}{\Delta(P)} \left(1 - \frac{(1-\kappa)\Delta(Q)}{\lambda(P)}\right)} + \eta\ell\nabla\|C\|\}$$

Impose < 1

Implications:

- **Tracking error is contractive if** $\eta < \frac{1}{\mu}$ and $\|G - \hat{G}\| \leq \frac{\mu}{\ell\nabla}$
- Error bound depends on **temporal variability of optimizer** and **sampling error**



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Continuous-time implementations

System to control:

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{x} &= Ax + Bu + Ew_t \\ y &= Cx + Dw_t \end{aligned}$$

Noise model:

w_t deterministic & time-varying

Steady-state map:

$$y = \underbrace{-CA^{-1}Bu}_{G} + \underbrace{(D - CA^{-1}E)w}_{H}$$

Control objective:

$$\min_{u^d} \phi_t(u^d, Gu^d + Hw_t)$$

Define measurements-based gradient:

$$\Phi_t^s(u, y) = \nabla_1 \phi_t(u, y) + G^T \nabla_2 \phi_t(u, y)$$

Online gradient flow:

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{u} &= -\eta \Phi_t^s(u, y) \\ \dot{x} &= Ax + B\dot{u} + Ew_t \\ y &= Cx + Dw_t \end{aligned}$$

For time-invariant optimization problems

A. Hauswirth, S. Bolognani, G. Hug, and F. Dörfler, "Timescale separation in autonomous optimization," IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 611-624, 2021.



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Projected gradient-flows

System to control:

$$\begin{aligned}\dot{x} &= Ax + Bu + Ew_t \\ y &= Cx + Dw_t\end{aligned}$$

Noise model:

w_t deterministic & time-varying

Steady-state map:

$$y = \underbrace{-CA^{-1}Bu}_{G} + \underbrace{(D - CA^{-1}E)w}_{H}$$

Control objective:

$$\begin{aligned}\min_{u^d} \quad & \phi_t(u^d, Gu^d + Hw_t) \\ \text{s.t. } \quad & u^d \in \mathcal{U}\end{aligned}$$

Define measurements-based gradient:

$$\Phi_t^s(u, y) = \nabla_1 \phi_t(u, y) + G^\top \nabla_2 \phi_t(u, y)$$

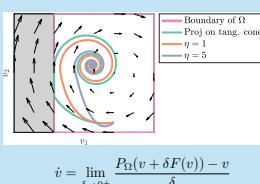
Projected gradient flow:

$$\dot{\bar{u}} = P_{\mathcal{U}}(u - \eta \Phi_t^s(u, y)) - u$$

$$\dot{x} = Ax + B\bar{u} + Ew_t$$

$$y = Cx + Dw_t$$

cf. Projection on tangent cone



$$\dot{v} = \lim_{\delta \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{P_{\Omega}(v + \delta F(v)) - v}{\delta}$$

Projected primal-dual gradient flows

System to control:

$$\begin{aligned}\dot{x} &= Ax + Bu + Ew_t \\ y &= Cx + Dw_t\end{aligned}$$

Noise model:

w_t deterministic & time-varying

Steady-state map:

$$y = \underbrace{-CA^{-1}Bu}_{G} + \underbrace{(D - CA^{-1}E)w}_{H}$$

Control objective:

$$\begin{aligned}\min_{u^d} \quad & \phi_t(u^d, Gu^d + Hw_t) \\ \text{s.t. } \quad & u^d \in \mathcal{U} \\ K_t \quad & (Gu^d + Hw(t)) \leq k_t\end{aligned}$$

Define measurements-based gradients of Lagrangian:

$$L_t^u(u, y, \lambda) := (\nabla \phi_t)(u, y) + G^\top K_t^\top \lambda \quad L_t^\lambda(y, \lambda) := K_t y - k_t - \nu \lambda$$

Online projected primal-dual gradient flow:

$$\dot{\bar{u}} = P_{\mathcal{U}}(u - \eta L_t^u(u, y, \lambda)) - u$$

$$\dot{x} = Ax + B\bar{u} + Ew_t$$

$$\dot{\lambda} = P_C(\lambda + \eta L_t^\lambda(y, \lambda)) - \lambda$$

$$y = Cx + Dw_t$$

Closed-loop tracking bound

Theorem: Assume

- Regularity of ϕ_t :** ℓ -Lipschitz gradient and μ -strongly convex
- Temporal regularity:** $\nabla \phi_t, K_t, k_t$ locally Lipschitz in time, w_t locally absolutely continuous
- Plant properties:** Controllab. + Observab. + Stability: $\exists P, Q : A^\top P + PA = -Q$
- Define: $e_t := \left\| \begin{bmatrix} u \\ \lambda \\ x \end{bmatrix} - \begin{bmatrix} u_t^* \\ \lambda_t^* \\ x_t^* \end{bmatrix} \right\|$

If $\eta < \max\left\{ \frac{4\mu}{\ell^2}, c_{A,B,C} \right\}$

$$e_t \leq \beta \|e_0\| \exp(-\alpha t) + \gamma_1 \text{ess sup}_{0 \leq \tau \leq t} \left\| \begin{bmatrix} \dot{u}_\tau^* \\ \dot{\lambda}_\tau^* \\ \dot{x}_\tau^* \end{bmatrix} \right\| + \gamma_2 \text{ess sup}_{0 \leq \tau \leq t} \|\dot{w}_\tau\|$$

Effect of initial conditions Shift of optimizer Variability of noise

Implications:

- If controller gain η is sufficiently small, input-to-state stability bound
- Error bound depends on **temporal variability of noise w_t** and on **shift of optimizer**

Ramp metering

Cell Transmission Model:



$$\dot{x}_i = -f_i^{\text{out}}(x) + f_i^{\text{in}}(x)$$

$$f_i^{\text{out}}(x) = \min\{d_i(x_i), s_j(x_j)/r_{ij}\}_{j \in i^+}$$

$$d_i(x_i) = \min\{\varphi_i x_i, d_i^{\max}\}$$

$$s_i(x_i) = \min\{\beta_i(x_i^{\text{jam}} - x_i), s_i^{\max}\}$$

$$f_i^{\text{in}}(x) = \sum_{j \in i^-} f_j^{\text{out}}(x)$$

↓
if traffic is controlled
in free-flow

$$\dot{x} = Ax + Bu + Ew_t$$

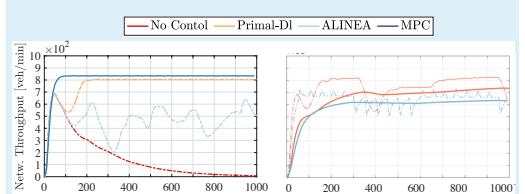
$$y = Cx + Dw_t$$

Steady-state control, constrained to free-flow:

$$\begin{aligned}\min_{u, y} \quad & (u - u^{\text{ref}})^\top Q_u(u - u^{\text{ref}}) - \Phi(y) \\ \text{s.t. } \quad & y = -((R^\top - I)F)^{-1}Bu + w \\ u_i & \geq 0, \quad y_i \leq \min\{x_i^{\text{crt},d}, x_i^{\text{crt},s}\}\end{aligned}$$

(reference tracking)
(steady-state map)
(free-flow traffic)

Test case from Los Angeles, USA



without disturbances

with disturbances

ALINEA:
Papageorgiou, Kotsialos, "Freeway ramp metering: An overview," IEEE T-ITS, 2002

Conclusions

- Increasing **need to combine control and optimization**
(Benefits: robustness against variable disturbances, simple controller structure)
- **Nontrivial** to "feed" state of optimization as input to physical system
- Analysis reveals controller design strategies
- **Input-to-state stability** type guarantees
- Several extensions (**data-driven, continuous-time, constraints**)



Thank you!

Special thanks to collaborators:

