

# Machine Learning for Fluid Dynamics

*von Karman Institute Lecture Series*

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Edited by

M. A. Mendez and A. Parente

Sint-Genesius-Rode, Belgium



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FOR FLUID DYNAMICS**

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# Preface

This book originated as a collection of lecture notes from the VKI lecture series *Machine Learning for Fluid Dynamics*, jointly organized by the von Karman Institute (VKI) and the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and held in Brussels from January 29 to February 2, 2024. The course program, the recording of some of the lectures, and additional information on all course editions are available on the course webpage <https://www.datadrivenfluidmechanics.com/>.

## Book Overview

The book is organized around four main topics: (1) modeling (Chapters 2 to 5), (2) control (Chapters 6 and 7), (3) dimensionality reduction (Chapters 8 and 9), and (4) applications in aerodynamics and reactive flows (Chapters 10 and 11). These core sections are framed by an introductory chapter on the machine learning workflow (Chapter 1) and a concluding chapter discussing the future of Digital Twinning technology (Chapter 12).

**Chapter 1** with a high-level overview of machine learning for scientific discovery by Steve Brunton. This chapter reviews the process of formulating a machine-learning problem for scientific purposes in its five key stages: problem formulation, data collection, model architecture, loss function design, and optimization algorithm selection. It emphasizes the role of physics-informed machine learning in enhancing model accuracy and offers an example of sparse identification of nonlinear dynamics (SINDy).

The session on modeling opens in **Chapter 2**, by Miguel A. Mendez, which delves into the fundamentals of regression, covering parametric and non-parametric regression methods, the notion of maximum likelihood estimation, bootstrapping and cross-validation, and the definition of various cost functions. It closes with the applications of these tools for data-driven scientific computing. This chapter is complemented by **Chapter 3**, which bridges theory with hands-on applications in data-driven fluid mechanics. This chapter, by Miguel A. Mendez and co-workers, provides three Python tutorials in physics-constrained regression. Three exercises are considered, from "gap filling" and super-resolution to turbulence modeling and real-time data assimilation. **Chapter 4**, by Paola Cinnella, explores data-driven approaches for identifying turbulent stress closures using high-fidelity simulation and experimental data, focusing on Reynolds-Averaged Navier-Stokes (RANS) modeling. Bayesian methods and non-parametric approaches are introduced to handle uncertainty and

enhance model adaptability, illustrated through several case studies highlighting key research trends in the field. **Chapter 5**, by Luca Magri and co-workers, dives into the prediction with chaotic dynamical systems. Starting from an introduction to key concepts such as Lyapunov exponents to measure sensitivity to initial conditions, this chapter introduces machine learning methods such as Recurrent Neural Networks (RNN) and Echo State Networks (ESNs) and their applications to forecast short-term behaviors for seemingly unpredictable systems.

Within the session on flow control, **Chapter 6**, by Onofrio Semeraro, provides an introduction to Reinforcement Learning (RL) and its potential for flow control. This chapter links fundamental notions of RL –such as the Bellman equation, rewards, and policies– to more traditional optimal control settings and its standard tools – such as the Riccati equation and Linear Quadratic Regulators. It also provides a broad literature review and perspective on its applications in fluid mechanics. **Chapter 7**, by Stefano Discetti and co-workers, complements the tour in control application with an introduction to Model Predictive Control (MPC) for linear and nonlinear systems. This chapter features a case study on wake control to illustrate how MPC can stabilize fluid flows by predicting and adjusting control actions in real time, making it valuable for applications requiring high responsiveness.

Within the session on dimensionality reduction, **Chapter 8**, by Miguel A. Mendez and co-workers, reviews the fundamentals of dimensionality reduction, starting from the classic Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and moving towards classic data-driven decompositions and more complex autoencoders and manifold learning methods. **Chapter 9**, by Soledad Le Clainche and co-workers complements the session on dimensionality reduction with an overview of hybrid linear and nonlinear methods, combining traditional modal analysis with deep learning architecture to enhance pattern identification performances.

In the session on applications, **Chapter 9**, by Philippe Bekemeyer and co-workers, gives a broad overview of machine learning methods for aerodynamic design optimization, focusing on surrogate models for computational efficiency, uncertainty quantification, and robust design. The presentation is enriched by an example case study on airfoil design to illustrate how machine learning can create faster and more efficient optimization workflows. **Chapter 10**, by Alessandro Parente and co-workers, presents recent advances in dimensionality reduction and classification for reactive flows, such as those encountered in combustion and chemical reactions. Several topics linked to the aim of reducing computational

costs are discussed: from feature extraction to transport of principal components and chemistry acceleration techniques.

Finally, the book closes with **Chapter 12** by Omer San, exploring the notion of digital twins, their potential, challenges, and enabling technologies. The chapter introduces the main scopes of digital twinning, including predictive maintenance, operational efficiency, and performance optimization, and discusses how these could be applied in complex fluid systems like engines, wind turbines, and HVAC systems.

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### About the VKI lecture series

The von Karman Institute (VKI) Lecture Series offers specialized, intensive courses in fluid dynamics, aerodynamics, thermodynamics, and computational methods designed for graduate students, researchers, and industry professionals. Each series focuses on a single, advanced topic, taught by leading experts actively contributing to cutting-edge research. Known for its immersive approach, VKI combines lectures with hands-on sessions, case studies, and practical labs, particularly in computational areas like CFD and, more recently, machine learning for fluid dynamics. These courses deepen technical expertise and foster international collaboration and networking, drawing a global audience each year. VKI's lecture series is widely recognized for its high-quality, specialized content, providing participants with unparalleled learning experiences in applied physics and engineering. For more information about the upcoming VKI lecture series and the VKI educational programs, please visit [www.vki.ac.be](http://www.vki.ac.be).

### About the Lecturers and Authors

**Steven L. Brunton** (Senior Member, IEEE) earned his B.S. in mathematics from Caltech in 2006, focusing on control and dynamical systems, and his Ph.D. in mechanical and aerospace engineering from Princeton in 2012. He is a Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Data Science Fellow at the Science Institute, University of Washington. Renowned for his work in sparse sensing, Koopman operator theory, and machine learning methods like dynamic mode decomposition (DMD) and sparse identification of nonlinear dynamics (SINDy), Prof. Brunton's research spans diverse scientific and engineering applications. He is also known for his educational outreach, making computational science widely accessible through online courses and tutorials.

**Miguel A. Mendez** received his Ph.D. in Engineering Science from the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) in 2018. He is an Associate Professor at the von Karman Institute for Fluid Dynamics (VKI), where he teaches fluid modeling, measurement techniques, and machine learning for fluid flows. His research focuses on coating flows, experimental fluid mechanics, reduced-order modeling, and flow control in low-speed and cryogenic applications. In 2021, he launched the VKI lecture series *Hands-On Machine Learning for Fluid Dynamics*. He is currently leading the ERC Starting Grant project *RE-TWIST*, integrating reinforcement learning and model-based control with real-time data assimilation.



**Paola Cinnella** is a full professor at the Institut Jean Le Rond D'Alembert, Sorbonne Université, France. She graduated summa cum laude in Mechanical Engineering from Politecnico di Bari (Italy) in 1995 and earned her Ph.D. in Fluid Mechanics (summa cum laude) from ENSAM, Paris, in 1999. She is Editor-in-Chief of *Computers & Fluids* and serves as Associate Editor for the *International Journal of Heat and Fluid Flow* and as board member of *Flow, Turbulence and Combustion*. Her research focuses on computational fluid dynamics (CFD), covering high-order methods, uncertainty quantification, data-driven modeling, and applications in compressible flows with real gas effects.

**Luca Magri** is a Full Professor at Imperial College London, where he holds the first chair in Scientific Machine Learning. He is also a Fellow and Group Leader at The Alan Turing Institute and a Full Professor of Fluid Dynamics at Politecnico di Torino. His research bridges the gap between physical sciences and artificial intelligence, focusing on optimizing complex engineering systems for net-zero aerospace propulsion, healthcare, and more. He also explores quantum algorithms for nonlinear equations. Magri's innovative work has garnered significant recognition, including awards such as the ERC Starting Grant and the Royal Academy of Engineering Fellowship.

**Soledad Le Clainche** is Professor of Applied Mathematics at the School of Aeronautics of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM). She earned her Ph.D. in 2013 at the same university, in the Department of Fluid Dynamics and Aerospace Propulsion. Her research focuses on computational fluid dynamics, data analysis, machine learning, and the development of predictive reduced-order models based on physical principles. She leads several national and EU-funded projects aimed at developing strategies to reduce air pollution, improve combustion systems and aerodynamic designs, and advance personalized medicine through data-driven modeling.

**Stefano Discetti** is Full Professor in the Department of Aerospace Engineering of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. He received his Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Naples and was a visiting researcher at Arizona State University. He serves on the Editorial Board of *Measurement Science and Technology*. His research interests include non-intrusive measurement techniques in aerodynamics, machine learning-based flow control, and low-order modelling techniques. He was awarded a Starting Grant from the European

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Research Council for his project *NEXTFLOW*, developing and applying machine learning to optical flow diagnostics and flow control.

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**Alessandro Parente** earned his Master’s (2005) and Ph.D. (2009) in Chemical Engineering from the Università di Pisa. He was a Research Associate at the University of Utah (2007–2009) and joined the von Karman Institute in 2009. Since 2010, he has been at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, where he became a Full Professor in 2019. Co-chair of the Brussels Institute for Thermal-Fluid Systems and Clean Energy (BRITE) since 2021, his research spans experimental and numerical studies of reacting and non-reacting flows, with applications in air quality and industrial decarbonization. He also leads efforts in machine learning for fluid simulations and digital twins, coordinating the European network *cypher.ulb.be* for decarbonizing hard-to-abate sectors.

**Omer San** graduated in Aeronautical Engineering from Istanbul Technical University in 2005 and earned his Ph.D. in Engineering Mechanics from Virginia Tech in 2012. He is currently an Associate Professor of Aerospace Engineering at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. His research focuses on advancing computational methods in science and engineering, with emphasis on scientific machine learning for fluid dynamics across various scales. He has led or co-led projects funded by DOD, DOE, NSF, NASA, ASHRAE, the Research Council of Norway, and NVIDIA.

# Machine Learning for Scientific Discovery

STEVE BRUNTON,\*

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These notes provide a brief overview of how machine learning is being used to advance scientific discovery. Specifically, we focus on how to use machine learning to build data-driven models in fluid mechanics. The process of machine learning is broken down into five stages: (1) formulating a problem to model, (2) collecting and curating training data to inform the model, (3) choosing an architecture with which to represent the model, (4) designing a loss function to assess the performance of the model, and (5) selecting and implementing an optimization algorithm to train the model. At each stage, we discuss how prior physical knowledge may be embedded into the process, with specific examples from the field of fluid mechanics. Finally, we give an example of the sparse identification of nonlinear dynamics (SINDy) approach to model discovery.

## 1.1 Introduction

The field of fluid mechanics is rich with data and rife with problems, which makes it a perfect playground for machine learning. Machine learning is the art of building models from data using optimization and regression algorithms. Many of the challenges in fluid mechanics may be posed as optimization problems, such as designing a wing to maximize lift while minimizing drag at cruise velocities, estimating a flow field from limited measurements, controlling turbulence for mixing enhancement in a chemical plant, or reducing drag behind a vehicle, among myriad others. These optimization tasks fit well with machine learning algorithms, which are designed to handle nonlinear and high-dimensional problems. In fact, machine learning and fluid mechanics both tend to rely on

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the same assumption that there are patterns that can be exploited, even in high-dimensional systems (Taira et al., 2017). Often, the machine learning algorithm will model some aspect of the fluid, such as the lift profile given a particular airfoil geometry, providing a *surrogate* that may be optimized over. Machine learning may also be used to directly solve the fluid optimization task, such as designing a machine learning model to manipulate the behavior of the fluid for some engineering objective with active control (Rabault et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2020).

In either case, it is important to realize that machine learning is *not* an automatic or turn-key procedure for extracting models from data. Instead, it requires expert human guidance at every stage of the process, from deciding on the problem to collecting and curating data that might inform the model, to selecting the machine learning architecture best capable of representing or modeling the data, to designing custom loss functions to quantify performance and guide the optimization, to implementing specific optimization algorithms to train the machine learning model to minimize the loss function over the data. A better name for machine learning might be “expert humans teaching machines how to learn a model to fit some data,” although this is not as catchy. Particularly skilled (or lucky!) experts may design a learner or a learning framework capable of learning a variety of tasks, generalizing beyond the training data, and mimicking other aspects of intelligence. However, such artificial intelligence is rare, even more so than human intelligence. The majority of machine learning models are just that, models, which should fit directly into the decades old practice of model-based design, optimization, and control (Brunton et al., 2020).

With its unprecedented success on many challenging problems in computer vision and natural language processing, machine learning is rapidly entering the physical sciences, and fluid mechanics is no exception. The simultaneous promise and overpromise of machine learning are causing many researchers to have a healthy mixture of optimism and skepticism. In both cases, there is a strong desire to understand machine learning’s uses and limitations and best practices for incorporating it into existing research and development workflows. It is also important to realize that while it is now relatively simple to train a machine learning model for a well-defined task, creating a new model that outperforms traditional numerical algorithms and physics-based models is still difficult. Incorporating partially known physics into the machine learning pipeline improves model generalisation and interpretability, which are key elements of modern machine learning (Du et al., 2019; Molnar, 2020).

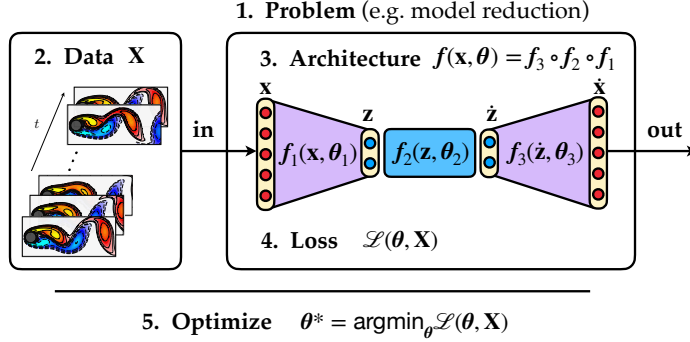


Figure 1.1: Schematic of the five stages of machine learning on an example of reduced-order modeling. In this case, the goal is to learn a low dimensional coordinate system  $\mathbf{z} = \mathbf{f}_1(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_1)$  from data in a high-dimensional representation  $\mathbf{x}$ , along with a dynamical system model  $\dot{\mathbf{z}} = \mathbf{f}_2(\mathbf{z}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_2)$  for how the state  $\mathbf{z}$  evolves in time. Finally, this latent state derivative  $\dot{\mathbf{z}}$  must be able to approximate the high dimensional derivative  $\dot{\mathbf{x}}$  through the decoder  $\dot{\mathbf{x}} \approx \mathbf{f}_3(\dot{\mathbf{z}}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_3)$ . The loss function  $\mathcal{L}(\boldsymbol{\theta}, \mathbf{X})$  defines how well the model performs, averaged over the data  $\mathbf{X}$ . Finally, the parameters  $\boldsymbol{\theta} = \{\boldsymbol{\theta}_1, \boldsymbol{\theta}_2, \boldsymbol{\theta}_3\}$  are found through optimization.

## 1.2 Physics Informed Machine Learning for Fluid Mechanics

Applied machine learning may be separated into a few canonical steps, each of which provides an opportunity to embed prior physical knowledge: (1) choosing the problem to model or the question to answer; (2) choosing and curating the data used to train the model; (3) deciding on a machine learning architecture to best represent or model this data; (4) designing loss functions to quantify performance and to guide the learning process; and (5) implementing an optimization algorithm to train the model to minimize the loss function over the training data. See Fig. 1.1 for a schematic of this process on the example of reduced-order modeling. This organization of steps is only approximate, and there are considerable overlaps and tight interconnections between each stage. For example, choosing the problem to model and choosing the data to inform this model are two closely related decisions. Similarly, designing a custom loss function and implementing an optimization algorithm to minimize this loss function are tightly coupled. In most modern machine learning workflows, it is common to iteratively revisit earlier stages based on the outcome at later stages so that the machine learning researcher is constantly asking new questions and

revising the data, the architecture, the loss functions, and the optimization algorithm to improve performance. Here, we discuss these canonical stages of machine learning, investigate how to incorporate physics, and review examples in the field of fluid mechanics. This discussion is largely meant to be a high-level overview, and many more details can be found in recent reviews (Duraisamy et al., 2019; Brenner et al., 2019; Brunton et al., 2020; Brenner & Koumoutsakos, 2021).

### 1.2.1 The problem

Data science is the art of asking and answering questions with data. The sub-field of machine learning is concerned with leveraging historical data to build models that may be deployed to automatically answer these questions, ideally in real-time, given new data. It is critical to select the right system to model, motivated by a problem that is both important and tractable. Choosing a problem involves deciding on input data that will be readily available in the future and output data that will represent the desired output, or prediction, of the model. The output data should be determinable from the inputs, and the functional relationship between these is precisely what the machine learning model will be trained to capture.

The nature of the problem, specifically what outputs will be modeled given what inputs, determines the large classes of machine learning algorithms: *supervised*, *unsupervised*, and *reinforcement learning*. In supervised learning, the training data will have expert labels that should be predicted or modeled with the machine learning algorithm. These output labels may be discrete, such as a categorical label of a ‘dog’ or a ‘cat’ given an input image, in which case the task is one of *classification*. If the labels are continuous, such as the average value of lift or drag given a specified airfoil geometry, then the task is one of *regression*. In unsupervised learning, there are no expert labels, and structure must be extracted from the input data alone; thus, this is often referred to as *data mining*, and constitutes a particularly challenging field of machine learning. Again, if the structure in the data is assumed to be discrete, then the task is *clustering*. After the clusters are identified and characterized, these groupings may be used as proxy labels to then classify new data. If the structure in the data is assumed to be continuously varying, then the task is typically thought of as an *embedding* or *dimensionality reduction* task. Principal component analysis (PCA) or proper orthogonal decomposition (POD) may be thought of

as unsupervised learning tasks that seek a continuous embedding of reduced dimension (Brunton & Kutz, 2019). Reinforcement learning is a third, large branch of machine learning research, in which an *agent* learns to make control decisions to interact with an environment for some high-level objective (Sutton & Barto, 1998). Examples include learning how to play games (Mnih et al., 2015; Silver et al., 2017), such as chess and go.

**Embedding physics:** Deciding on what phenomena to model with machine learning is often inherently related to the underlying physics. Although classical machine learning has been largely applied to “static” tasks, such as image classification and the placement of advertisements, increasingly it is possible to apply these techniques to model physical systems that evolve in time according to some *rules* or *physics*. For example, we may formulate a learning problem to find and represent a conserved quantity, such as a Hamiltonian, purely from data (Kaiser et al., 2018a). Alternatively, the machine learning task may be to model time-series data as a differential equation, with the learning algorithm representing the dynamical system (Schmidt & Lipson, 2009; Schmid, 2010; Brunton et al., 2016b; Pathak et al., 2017; Vlachas et al., 2018). Similarly, the task may involve learning a coordinate transformation where these dynamics become simplified in some *physical* way; i.e., coordinate transformations to linearize or diagonalize/decouple dynamics (Lusch et al., 2018; Wehmeyer & Noé, 2018; Mardt et al., 2018; Takeishi et al., 2017; Li et al., 2017; Yeung et al., 2017; Otto & Rowley, 2019; Champion et al., 2019).

**Examples in fluid mechanics:** There are many *physical* modeling tasks in fluid mechanics that are benefiting from machine learning (Brenner et al., 2019; Brunton et al., 2020). A large field of study focuses on formulating turbulence closure modeling as a machine learning problem (Duraissamy et al., 2019; Ahmed et al., 2021a), such as learning models for the Reynolds stresses (Ling et al., 2016b; Kutz, 2017) or sub-gridscale turbulence (Maulik et al., 2019b; Novati et al., 2021). Designing useful input features is also an important way that prior physical knowledge is incorporated into turbulence closure modeling (Wang et al., 2017; Zhu et al., 2019a, 2021). Similarly, machine learning has recently been focused on the problem of improving computational fluid dynamics (CFD) solvers (Bar-Sinai et al., 2019; Thaler et al., 2019; Stevens & Colonius, 2020; Kochkov et al., 2021). Other important problems in fluid mechanics that benefit from machine learning include super-resolution (Erichson et al., 2020; Fukami et al., 2019), robust modal decompositions (Taira et al., 2017, 2020; Scherl et al., 2020), network and cluster modeling (Nair & Taira, 2015; Kaiser et al.,

2014; Fernex et al., 2021), control (Maceda et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2020) and reinforcement learning (Fan et al., 2020; Verma et al., 2018), and design of experiments in cyberphysical systems (Fan et al., 2019). Aerodynamics is a large related field with significant data-driven advances (Kou & Zhang, 2021). The very nature of these problems embeds the learning process into a larger physics-based framework so that the models are more physically relevant by construction.

### 1.2.2 The data

Data is the lifeblood of machine learning, and our ability to build effective models relies on what data is available or may be collected. As discussed earlier, choosing data to inform a model is closely related to choosing what to model in the first place, and therefore this stage cannot be strictly separated from the choice of a problem above. The quality and quantity of data directly affect the resulting machine learning model. Many machine learning architectures, such as deep neural networks, are essentially sophisticated interpolation engines, and so having a diversity of training data is essential to these models being useful on unseen data. For example, modern deep convolutional neural networks rose to prominence with their unprecedented classification accuracy (Krizhevsky et al., 2012) on the ImageNet data base (Deng et al., 2009), which contains over 14 million labeled images with over 20,000 categories, providing a sufficiently large and rich set of examples for training. This pairing of a vast labeled data set with a novel deep learning architecture is widely regarded as the beginning of the modern era of deep learning (Goodfellow et al., 2016).

**Embedding physics:** The training data provides several opportunities to embed prior physical knowledge. If a system is known to exhibit symmetry, such as translational or rotational invariance, then it is possible to augment and enrich the training data with shifted or rotated examples. More generally, it is often assumed that with an abundance of training data, these physical invariances will automatically be learned by a sufficiently expressive architecture. However, this approach tends to require considerable resources, both to collect and curate the data, as well as to train increasingly large models, making it more appropriate for industrial scale, rather than academic scale research. In contrast, it is also possible to use physical intuition to craft new features from the training data, for example, by applying a coordinate transformation that may simplify the representation or training. Physical data often comes from multiple



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Preview Sample



# Fundamentals of Regression

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This chapter opens with a review of classic tools for regression, a subset of machine learning that seeks to find relationships between variables. With the advent of scientific machine learning<sup>†</sup> this field has moved from a purely data-driven (statistical) formalism to a constrained or “physics-informed” formalism, which integrates physical knowledge and methods from traditional computational engineering. In the first part, we introduce the general concepts and the statistical flavor of regression versus other forms of curve fitting. We then move to an overview of traditional methods from machine learning and their classification and ways to link these to traditional computational science. Finally, we close with a note on methods to combine machine learning and numerical methods for physics

## 2.1 A note on notation and style

**Vectors, Matrices and lists.** We use lowercase letters for scalar quantities, i.e.  $a \in \mathbb{R}$ . Bold lowercase letters are used for vectors, i.e.,  $\mathbf{a} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_a}$ . The  $i$ -th entry of a vector is denoted with a subscript as  $\mathbf{x}_i$  or with Python-like notation as  $\mathbf{x}[i]$ . We use square brackets to create vectors from a set of scalars, e.g.  $\mathbf{a} = [a_0, a_1, \dots, a_{n_a-1}] \in \mathbb{R}^{n_a}$ . Unless otherwise stated, a vector is a column

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† The term “scientific machine learning” refers to the integration of machine learning with models, principles, and data arising from the natural sciences and engineering. It does not imply that other forms of machine learning are non-scientific. Instead, it highlights a focus on problems where physical laws (e.g., conservation laws, PDEs, thermodynamics) play a central role. Scientific machine learning typically involves combining data-driven methods with domain knowledge, physics-based modeling, numerical simulation, and uncertainty quantification. The emphasis is on developing algorithms that are constrained by—or informed by—scientific theory, enabling improved prediction, interpretability, and generalization in complex physical systems.

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“equally” by the training optimizer. Even when an appropriate balance is reached, the optimal solution usually seeks a compromise that does not ensure the fulfillment of the condition to machine precision. This can be problematic for problems extremely sensitive to, e.g., boundary conditions. A remedy is the use of methods for re-scaling\* the gradient of the cost function during the training (Wang et al., 2021).

In summary, penalties are usually of great help and always worth considering, given how simple it is to set them up. However, one should not solely rely on these to fully enforce the physics-driven information unless fairly sophisticated methods are used.

3. **Lagrange Multipliers and Hard Constraints.** If the previous approach can be viewed as adding *soft* constraints, this framework enforces *hard* constraints. The training problem is formulated as a constrained optimization, where the data-driven cost function  $\mathcal{J}$  is minimized subject to the physics-driven constraint  $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{D}} = 0$ . The literature on constrained optimization is extensive (see Nocedal & Wright (2006) and Martins & Ning (2021) for overviews), and many algorithmic strategies are available.

The general idea is to introduce the augmented function  $\mathcal{A} = \mathcal{J} + \boldsymbol{\lambda}^\top \mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{D}}$ , where  $\boldsymbol{\lambda} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_f}$  is the vector of Lagrange multipliers and  $n_f$  is the number of constraints. Unlike the soft-constraint approach, this formulation requires solving for both  $\boldsymbol{f}$  and  $\boldsymbol{\lambda}$ , making the problem numerically more involved.

For linear methods such as Radial Basis Functions (RBFs), this constrained formulation recovers well-known structures when addressing classical PDEs. When enforcing PDE constraints together with standard boundary conditions (e.g., Dirichlet or Neumann), the resulting system often reduces to a quadratic objective with linear constraints, leading to a large linear system (Sperotto et al., 2022). More broadly, the use of RBF expansions to solve PDEs without a computational mesh dates back to Kansa (1990a,b), and has since generated a substantial literature (see, e.g., Fornberg & Flyer (2015); Šarler (2005); Chen & Tanaka (2002); Chen (2003); Šarler (2007)). RBF-based meshless methods extend classical pseudo-spectral approaches (Fornberg, 1996), where Fourier or Chebyshev expansions are

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\* A comprehensive and didactic talk concerning this problem is provided by Paris Perdikaris and is available, at the time of writing, at <http://www.ipam.ucla.edu/abstract/?tid=15853&pcode=MLPWS3>.

typically used, and can be interpreted as a class of collocation schemes. *Arguably*, one of the main reasons these methods have not achieved the same widespread adoption as FEM is that the resulting linear systems tend to be significantly less sparse, and therefore more memory-intensive.

For nonlinear methods, the constraining leads to less explored territory. To the authors' knowledge, no attempt has been made to combine a fully constrained formalism with Genetic Programming for solving PDEs, at least for fluid dynamic applications, and all known approaches in this direction rely on a penalization framework (see Tsoulos & Lagaris (2006); Sobester et al. (2008); Pratama et al. (2023); Oh et al. (2023)). Concerning constrained ANNs, this is arguably the most promising and recent avenue. The first approach was recently proposed by Basir & Senocak (2022) (see also Basir & Senocak (2023) and Son et al. (2023)). Much development can be expected soon.

## 2.4 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter provided a broad overview of regression methods in machine learning and of strategies for incorporating physics-based information into the learning process. We began by framing regression as the task of fitting not just a single curve, but a stochastic process—a distribution of possible functions—to observed data. The simplest viewpoint treated the function as the sum of a deterministic component and a zero-mean stochastic term. We then moved to a probabilistic interpretation, showing how different assumptions on the stochastic term lead to different cost functions, which we referred to as *data-driven* cost functions. We concluded this part by introducing bootstrapping and cross-validation, fundamental tools for assessing generalization performance and understanding the impact of limited data.

We then contrasted the data-driven learning framework with the classical setting of *scientific computing*, where the target function is the solution of a physics-based model, typically expressed as a PDE. Drawing parallels between training parametric models and solving PDEs numerically allowed us to outline methods that combine these two perspectives: seeking functions that both match the available data *and* satisfy the governing physical laws.

With this foundation in place, we are now prepared to move to the next chapter, which presents three tutorial exercises illustrating practical approaches to such hybridization.

# Learning with Physical Constraints

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This chapter complements the previous by providing three tutorial exercises on physics-constrained regression. These are implemented as “toy problems” that seek to mimic grand challenges in (1) the super-resolution and data assimilation of the velocity field in image velocimetry, (2) data-driven turbulence modeling, and (3) system identification and digital twinning for forecasting and control. The Python codes for all exercises are provided in the course repository.

## 3.1 Problem 1: "Fill the Gaps" and super-resolution

### 3.1.1 General Context

In experimental fluid mechanics, velocity fields are often measured using image velocimetry. This includes traditional Particle Image Velocimetry (PIV, Raffel et al. (2018)), which relies on cross-correlation to estimate particle displacement on a regular grid, and Particle Tracking Velocimetry (PTV, Schröder & Schanz (2023)), in which individual particles are localized and tracked to obtain velocity measurements at scattered spatial locations. Both approaches require post-processing to address missing or unreliable data: filtering and outlier removal in PIV can create gaps in the grid, while PTV data are inherently scattered. Historically, PIV gaps were filled using non-parametric local averaging methods (see Section 2.2.5). However, with the increasing adoption of three-dimensional velocimetry techniques (Elsinga et al., 2006; Schanz et al., 2016), the emphasis has shifted toward parametric and physics-informed regression methods for reconstructing complete flow fields.

The key advantage of a parametric model is its analytical representation, which allows for compact storage and facilitates the enforcement of constraints

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such as exact divergence-free conditions in incompressible flows. The resulting analytic velocity field can be evaluated at *any* spatial location and provides symbolic (rather than numerical) derivatives, a capability often referred to as super-resolution. This removes the need to interpolate the data onto a specific grid or to compute derivatives using finite-difference approximations. The incorporation of physical priors or governing equations in the reconstruction process is commonly referred to as data assimilation, a field that has grown substantially in recent years (see Gesemann et al. (2016); Schneiders & Scarano (2016); Agarwal et al. (2021); Sperotto et al. (2022); Sciacchitano et al. (2022); Jeon et al. (2022)). The present "toy problem" therefore serves as an introductory exercise in data assimilation for image velocimetry.

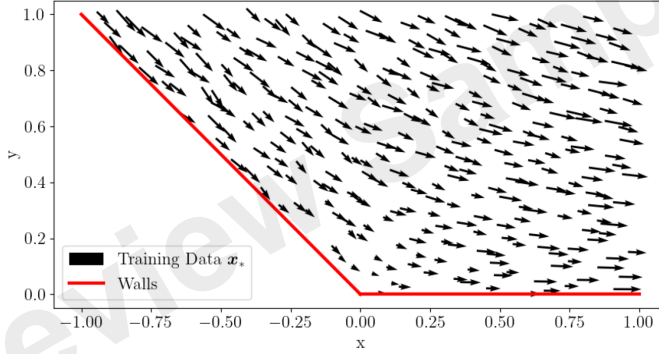


Figure 3.1: Quiver plot of the training data in the constrained RBF regression exercise of Section 3.1.

### 3.1.2 Proposed Exercise

In this exercise, we make use of the RBF-constrained framework proposed in Sperotto et al. (2022) and implemented in the open-source software SPICY\* (meshless Pressure from Image velocimetry), developed at VKI (Sperotto et al., 2024). The version provided to participants includes recent extensions contributed by Manuel Ratz, who currently leads ongoing developments on meshless data assimilation for turbulence statistics (see Ratz & Mendez (2024)).

In the terminology of Section 2.3, the method belongs to the third category, in

\* [https://github.com/mendezVKI/SPICY\\_VKI](https://github.com/mendezVKI/SPICY_VKI)

which *hard constraints* are used to enforce physical priors during regression. The task is to reconstruct a noisy velocity field measured in a two-dimensional corner flow while imposing (1) boundary conditions, (2) divergence-free constraints, and (3) curl-free conditions. In addition to these hard constraints, we also include a global penalty term promoting divergence-free behavior. As we will briefly discuss, enforcing constraints increases memory requirements and numerical difficulty, whereas penalty terms introduce no additional memory cost and can therefore assist the regression.

The flow considered here is shown in Figure 3.1. Training samples are depicted as velocity arrows, and the walls are shown in red. The reference flow is a 2D potential corner flow with potential  $Ar^n \cos(n\Theta)$ , where  $A = 1$  and  $n = 4/3$ , corresponding to a corner angle of  $135^\circ$ . We sample the resulting velocity field at 298 quasi-random scattered points and add 30% uniform, uncorrelated noise to emulate measurement conditions. While this level of noise is higher than what is typically encountered in practice, it serves to clearly illustrate the robustness of constrained regression.

### 3.1.3 Methodology and Results

The constrained RBF approach consists of minimizing the augmented cost function

$$\mathcal{A}(\mathbf{w}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}) = \mathcal{J}(\mathbf{w}) + \alpha \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{w}) + \boldsymbol{\lambda}^T \mathcal{H}(\mathbf{w}), \quad (3.1)$$

where  $\mathcal{P}$  is a quadratic penalty,  $\mathcal{H}$  a linear constraint, and  $\mathbf{w}$  are the weights for the RBF regression (as in (2.13)). The reason for taking the penalties as quadratic functions and the constraints as linear functions is that by doing so, setting the gradients  $d\mathcal{A}/d\mathbf{w} = 0$  and  $d\mathcal{A}/d\boldsymbol{\lambda} = 0$  leads to a linear system. Moreover, the minimization must treat both  $\mathbf{w}$  and  $\boldsymbol{\lambda}$  as unknown. Let us analyze each of the terms in (3.1) independently.

The first term is the data-driven cost function. We consider a standard  $l_2$  norm at the scope. For the regression of a vector field with training data  $\mathbf{w}_U^* = \mathbf{u}(\mathbf{x}^*) = (u(\mathbf{x}^*), v(\mathbf{x}^*))$  this reads:

$$\mathcal{J}(\mathbf{w}_U) = \left\| \begin{pmatrix} \Phi(\mathbf{x}_*) & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \Phi(\mathbf{x}_*) \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{w}_u \\ \mathbf{w}_v \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{u}_* \\ \mathbf{v}_* \end{pmatrix} \right\|_2^2 = \|\Phi_U(\mathbf{x}_*)\mathbf{w}_U - \mathbf{U}\|_2^2, \quad (3.2)$$

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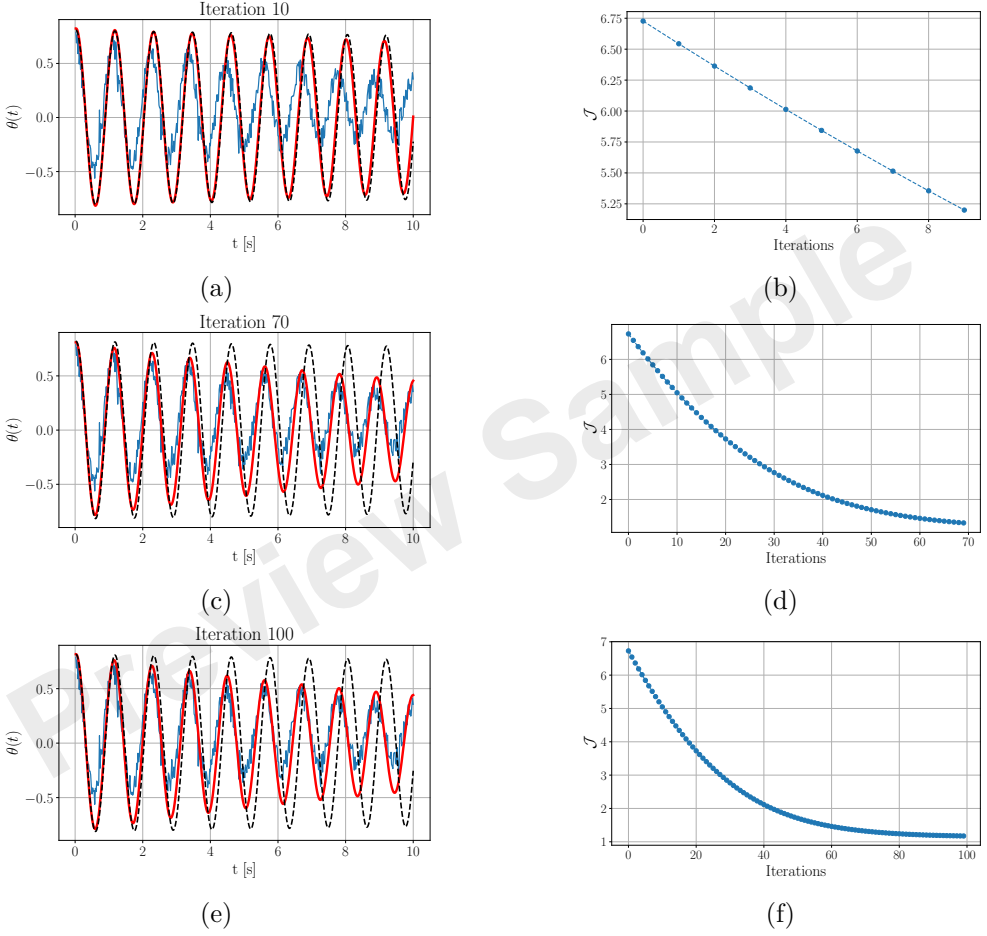


Figure 3.13: Pendulum assimilation performances. The left-hand side shows the time-series of (a) the real system (blue), the initial guess (dashed black line), and the current assimilated prediction (solid red line). The right-hand side depicts the cost function history at the  $i$ -th iteration.



# Data Driven Turbulence Modeling

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This chapter provides an introduction to data-driven techniques for the development and calibration of closure models for the Reynolds-Averaged Navier-Stokes (RANS) equations. RANS models are the workhorse for engineering applications of computational fluid dynamics (CFD) and are expected to play an important role for decades to come. However, RANS model inadequacies for complex, nonequilibrium flows, and uncertainties in modeling assumptions and calibration data are still major obstacles to the predictive capability of RANS simulations. In the following, we briefly recall the origin and limitations of RANS models and then review their shortcomings and uncertainties. Then, we provide an introduction to data-driven approaches to RANS turbulence modeling. The latter can range from simple model parameter inference to sophisticated machine learning techniques. We conclude with some perspectives on current and future research trends.

## 4.1 Introduction

Accurate predictions of turbulent flows are of vital importance to natural and engineering systems, including climate, weather forecast, ocean dynamics, astrophysics, aerospace applications, energy conversion systems, civil engineering, and many others. The dynamics of fluid flows is described through conservation for mass, momentum, and energy. While many of the above-mentioned applications may involve compressible flows, reacting flows, or multi-phase flows, hereafter we restrict our attention to incompressible, single-phase, Newtonian fluids with constant properties, described by the celebrated Navier-Stokes (NS) equations,

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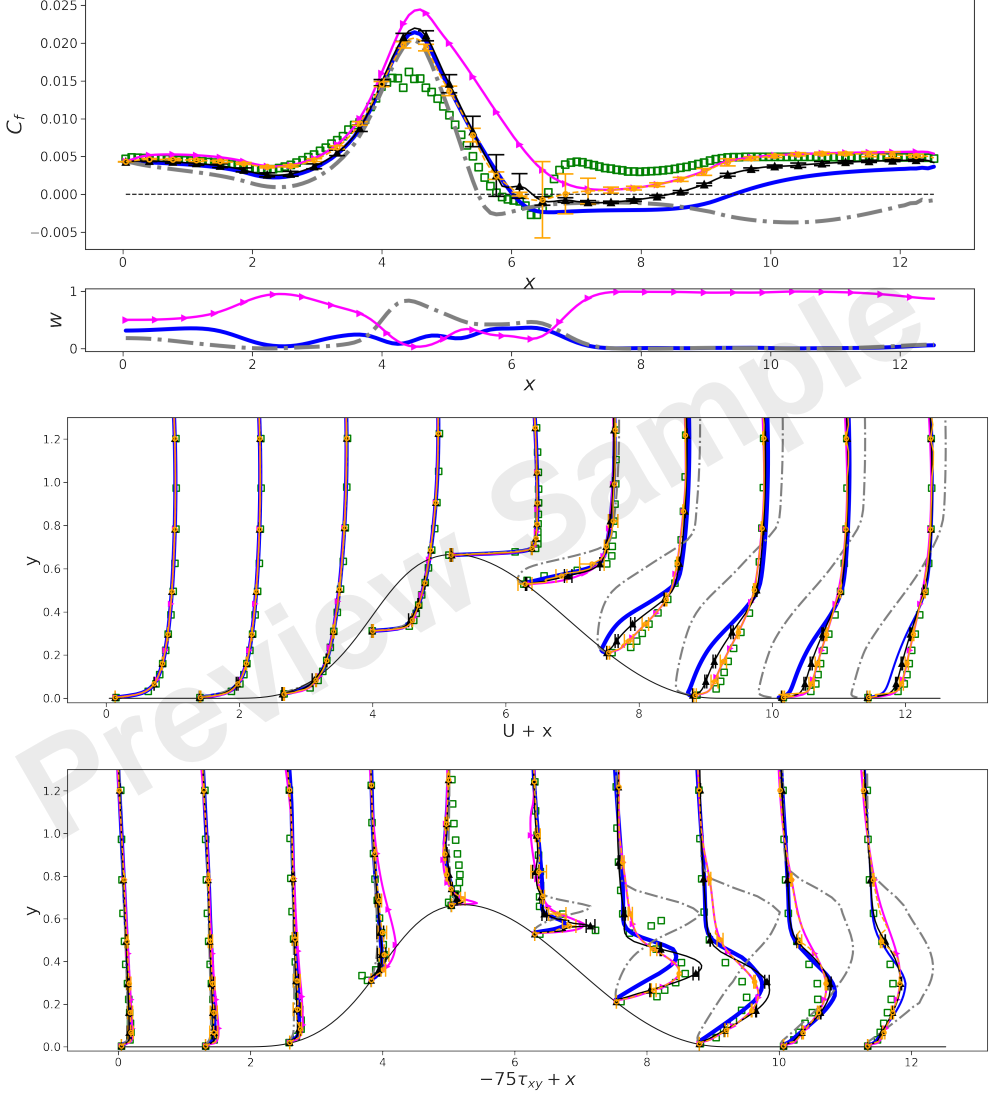


Figure 4.16: Horizontal velocity  $U$  and Reynolds shear stresses  $\tau_{xy}$  at various  $x$  positions for the CD flow case. Baseline  $k-\omega$  SST (—);  $M^{(ANSJ)}$  (— · —);  $M^{(SEP)}$  (—△—); High-fidelity data ( $\square$ ); Non-intrusive X-MA (orange with error bars); Intrusive X-MA (black with error bars).



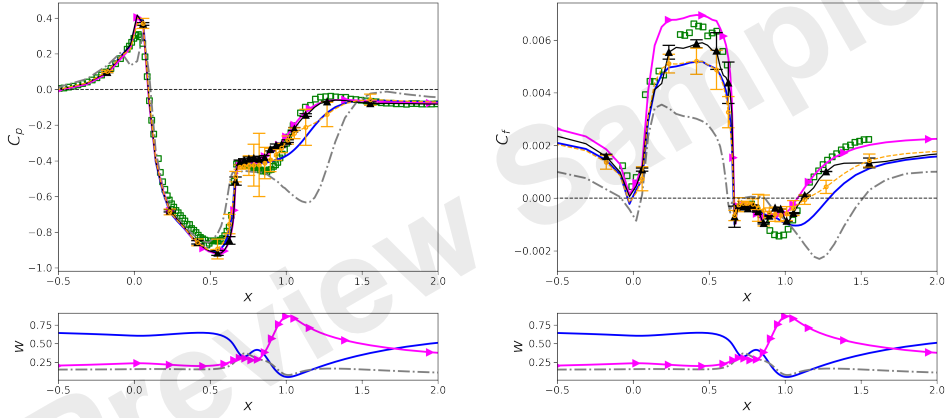


Figure 4.17: Pressure coefficient  $C_p$  and friction coefficient  $C_f$  along  $x$  axis for the WMH flow case. Baseline  $k-\omega$  SST (—);  $M^{(ANSJ)}$  (- · -);  $M^{(SEP)}$  (-△-); High-fidelity data (□); Non-intrusive X-MA (orange with error bars); Intrusive X-MA (black with error bars).

# Prediction of chaotic dynamics from data: An introduction

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This chapter offers a principled approach to the prediction of chaotic systems from data. First, we introduce some concepts from dynamical systems' theory and chaos theory. Second, we introduce machine learning approaches for time-forecasting chaotic dynamics, such as echo state networks and long short-term memory networks, whilst keeping a dynamical systems' perspective. Third, the lecture contains informal interpretations and pedagogical examples with prototypical chaotic systems (e.g., the Lorenz system), which elucidate the theory. The chapter is complemented by coding tutorials (online) at <https://github.com/MagriLab/Tutorials>.

## 5.1 Chaotic dynamical systems

In this lecture, we work with deterministic systems. Deterministic systems are noise-free systems, which means that there exists only one solution that corresponds to an initial condition. Chaos is a deterministic phenomenon, which is characterized by erratic behaviour that is difficult—yet possible, in principle—to predict. Chaotic dynamics are characterized by extreme sensitivity to small perturbations, such as changes in the initial conditions, parameters, or external forcing. Two nearby initial conditions, which can differ by a very small amount, will practically diverge in time from each other with an initial exponential rate (Figure 5.1). This makes the time accurate prediction of the solution difficult, which is sometimes informally referred to as *the butterfly effect* (Lorenz, 1969).

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But not all is lost. The long-term statistics of chaotic systems may be more predictable than the instantaneous time dynamics. The statistics, in fact, may not be significantly affected by tiny perturbations, whereas the instantaneous solution may be. For example, running the same code with the same initial conditions on a different number of processors should, in principle, provide two statistically equivalent solutions,\* but with completely different instantaneous fields after a few time steps (Figure 5.1).

In this section, we present some basic concepts and nomenclature, which will be used throughout this lecture. Detailed references in the subject of chaos are Holmes & Guckenheimer (1983); Hilborn (2000); Pikovsky & Politi (2016); Boffetta et al. (2002), among many others.

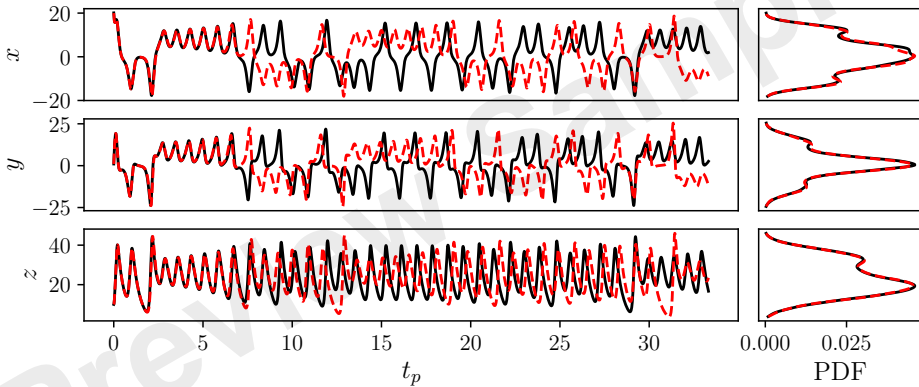


Figure 5.1: Solution of the Lorenz 63 in Lyapunov times (Section 5.1.5) solved for  $\mathbf{x}_0 = [20.0, 1.0, 10.0]$  (black line) and for  $\mathbf{x}_0 = [20.1, 1.0, 10.0]$  (red dashed line) with a fourth-order Runge-Kutta method.

### 5.1.1 Dynamical systems' equations

We work with chaotic systems that can be described as autonomous dynamical systems as

$$\dot{\mathbf{x}}(t) = \mathbf{F}(\mathbf{x}(t), \mathbf{p}), \quad \mathbf{x}(0) = \mathbf{x}_0 \quad (5.1)$$

where the overdot ( $\dot{\cdot}$ ) is Newton's notation for time differentiation;  $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^{N_x}$  is the state vector, where the integer  $N_x$  denotes the degrees of freedom; the

\* In this lecture, we work with ergodic systems, see Sec. 5.1.1.

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Lorenz 63			
$\lambda_i$	target	ESN	LSTM
1	0.9050	0.9067	0.873
2	$9 \times 10^{-5}$	$-8 \times 10^{-5}$	$-8 \times 10^{-3}$
3	-14.572	-14.664	-14.0959

Table 5.3: Lyapunov Exponents from LSTM and ESN.

## Appendix A: Ridge regression for ESN training

The weights of the output matrix  $\mathbf{W}_{\text{out}}$  are obtained by solving

$$\underset{\mathbf{W}_{\text{out}}}{\text{argmin}} \quad \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \|\mathbf{W}_{\text{out}} \mathbf{r}(t_i) - \mathbf{x}(t_i)\|_2^2 + \frac{\gamma}{N_x} \sum_{j=1}^{N_x} \|\mathbf{w}_{\text{out},j}\|_2^2 \equiv \mathcal{J}(\mathbf{W}_{\text{out}}) \quad (5.61)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{s.t.} \quad & \mathbf{r}(t_i) = \tanh(\sigma_{\text{in}} \mathbf{W}_{\text{in}} \mathbf{x}(t_{i-1}) + \rho \mathbf{W} \mathbf{r}(t_{i-1})), \\ & \mathbf{r}(t_0) = \mathbf{0}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $\gamma$  is the Tikhonov regularisation parameter,  $\sigma_{\text{in}}$  is the input scaling factor, and  $\rho$  is the spectral radius. The minimization problem (5.61) has an analytical solution, which is obtained by minimizing the cost function  $\mathcal{J}$  with respect to the output matrix  $\mathbf{W}_{\text{out}}$ , and setting the result to zero, such that

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d\mathcal{J}}{d\mathbf{W}_{\text{out}}} &= \frac{1}{NN_x} \sum_{i=1}^N \left\{ 2(\mathbf{W}_{\text{out}} \mathbf{r}(t_i) - \mathbf{x}(t_i)) \mathbf{r}(t_i)^T + 2\gamma \mathbf{W}_{\text{out}} \right\} \\ &= \frac{1}{NN_x} \sum_{i=1}^N 2 \left\{ (\mathbf{W}_{\text{out}} \mathbf{r}(t_i) \mathbf{r}(t_i)^T + \gamma \mathbf{W}_{\text{out}}) - \mathbf{x}(t_i) \mathbf{r}(t_i)^T \right\} = \mathbf{0}. \end{aligned}$$

Rearranging the terms in (5.62) we find that

$$\sum_{i=1}^N \mathbf{W}_{\text{out}} (\mathbf{r}(t_i) \mathbf{r}(t_i)^T + \gamma \mathbf{I}) = \sum_{i=1}^N \mathbf{x}(t_i) \mathbf{r}(t_i)^T \quad (5.62)$$

$$\Rightarrow \sum_{i=1}^N (\mathbf{r}(t_i)^T \mathbf{r}(t_i) + \gamma \mathbf{I}) \mathbf{W}_{\text{out}}^T = \sum_{i=1}^N \mathbf{r}(t_i) \mathbf{x}(t_i)^T, \quad (5.63)$$

which can be written in the compact form

$$(\mathbf{R} \mathbf{R}^T + \gamma \mathbf{I}) \mathbf{W}_{\text{out}}^T = \mathbf{R} \mathbf{X}^T, \quad (5.64)$$

where  $\mathbf{R} = [\mathbf{r}(t_1) | \dots | \mathbf{r}(t_N)]$  and  $\mathbf{X} = [\mathbf{x}(t_1) | \dots | \mathbf{x}(t_N)]$  are the horizontal time-concatenation of the output augmented reservoir state and training data. The hyperparameters  $\sigma_{\text{in}}, \rho$  and  $\gamma$  can be optimized during training through Recycle Validation (Racca & Magri, 2021).

Preview Sample

# Reinforcement Learning for Fluid Mechanics: an overview on Fundamentals from a Control Perspective

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This chapter introduces some theoretical foundations of reinforcement learning and its applications to fluid mechanics from a control theory perspective. This choice is intended to provide the reader accustomed to flow control the key ideas in a more familiar vocabulary and a perspective on a vast literature blooming with tremendous momentum. First, we set the stage by introducing flow control and re-framing motivations and goals using reinforcement learning. Next, we shift our focus on some basic concepts by discussing the Hamilton-Jacobi-Bellman equation, the dynamic programming for nonlinear optimal control, and the iterative schemes used for approximate solution. Finally, the chapter closes by reconciling these elements with the terminology of reinforcement learning practice.

## 6.1 Flow control and reinforcement learning

Control applications in fluid mechanics have attracted the attention of numerous research efforts as it is nowadays recognized that the optimization of aerodynamic flows in aircraft and vehicles design may have a deep impact on the reduction of pollutant emissions, mitigation of acoustic noise or control of highly complex conditions such as separation and stall (Abergel & Temam, 1990; Gad-el Hak, 2000; Kim & Bewley, 2007; Brunton & Noack, 2015; Duriez et al., 2016; Rowley

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& Dawson, 2017). Several methodologies have been applied to control fluids, ranging from passive to active strategies. Here, we consider active flow control (AFC): the dynamics is modified by injecting energy into the system using actuators, acting as transducers for the flow manipulation (Cattafesta III & Sheplak, 2011). The action of the actuators is modulated by policies aimed at optimizing the performance and the dynamic response in a prescribed manner (open-loop) or as a function of some observations of the system at hand (closed-loop). The identification of these policies based on measurements and models of the physics is the objective of the control design.

In principle, AFC strategies optimize the flow in real time; in practice, these techniques are mostly used in limited numerical and experimental test cases. Indeed, approximations based on reduced-order models of the physical system can critically lose accuracy when control is applied, resulting in poor performance and lack of robustness. Addressing these challenges using machine learning (ML) tools (Brunton et al., 2020) and, more specifically, reinforcement learning (RL) can be a key factor in extending flow control to realistic cases by circumventing models limitations or lack of robustness due to their data-driven nature. A possible definition based on the main goals of RL is the following:

*"RL studies how to use past data to enhance the future manipulation of a dynamical system"* (Recht, 2019).

The description applies equivalently to standard control theory. This suggestive similarity in definition and purpose is not coincidental: the common roots of RL and modern control theory can be found in dynamic programming (DP), a nonlinear optimization protocol based on the Bellman equation (Bellman, 1958). Starting from DP, these two disciplines evolved in parallel in the last decades, leading to the co-development of different approaches to similar problems (Bertsekas, 1995; Sutton & Barto, 2018). The solution of the Bellman equation is the value function, a nonlinear function, which is related to a score associated with a given action or controlled trajectory. Once the value function is known, one can determine the optimal policy. However, the Bellman equation results to be computationally impractical in most cases, even when models are available or direct methods applied. For this reason, a large body of literature is dedicated to the numerical approximation of the Bellman equation and the iterative schemes used for its solution. Iterative methods are particularly interesting as they can be applied with and without a prior model at hand: from a theoretical viewpoint these are the premises on the top of which RL algorithms stand (Sutton &



Barto, 2018).

RL algorithms are iterative, data-driven and solely relying on limited measurements; models are completely replaced or updated during the iterative process by exploration: the state space of the system is learnt by using past data extracted from the measurements and the interactions of the system or agent with the environment. The set of all the actions the agent can act out in an environment is called action space and a score is assigned to each action for the value function evaluation. In the limit of full knowledge of this space, the resulting policy is optimal if the Bellman equation associated with the value function is fulfilled. In that sense, RL is inspired by nature as it tries to mimic the process of learning of living beings.

A further ingredient is represented by artificial neural networks (ANN). The success of ML applications in very diverse fields, ranging from computer vision and natural language processing to medical diagnosis, is mainly due to the versatility of ANN and their effectiveness in supervised and unsupervised learning (Goodfellow et al., 2016). From a mathematical viewpoint, their versatility is motivated by their properties of universal approximators of nonlinear functions: the combination of ANN, for the approximation of the policy and the value function, with RL led to the Deep RL (DRL) framework. The first application of ANN in RL is often credited to the work by Tesauro (1994), who developed a program – TD-Gammon – combining temporal difference and ANN to play backgammon. In the same years, the application of ANN in combination with dynamic programming was discussed in seminal works on the subject by Bertsekas (1995), under the name of neuro-dynamic programming; the recent developments in the field of deep learning and the super-human performance achieved by DRL in solving games such as *go* and *shogi* (Silver et al., 2017) boosted the popularity of the approach. Together with the vast availability of open-source packages, this is also one of the reasons why DRL is often seen "only" as one of the main subfields of ML and used as a black-box tool. However, this limited perspective risks being rather simplistic: RL is well grounded in optimal control theory, and the interaction between these two disciplines could play a key role in future technological challenges such as the development of driverless cars, self-supervised learning or flow control.

### 6.1.1 Standard approaches in flow control: a brief overview

In the following, we introduce a brief, non-exhaustive overview of active flow control. From a physical point of view, the range of applications is as broad as the cases in which the presence of a fluid impacts the efficiency or performance of the dynamical system under investigation; among the examples we can cite, control mechanisms range from quenching the instabilities responsible for the transition to turbulence at relatively low Reynolds numbers (Sipp & Schmid, 2016) to the modification of the mean-flow or of the large scale structures for turbulent cases (Kühnen et al., 2018).

The DP framework provides the theoretical ground for generalizing the optimal control problem from linear to nonlinear cases (Bertsekas, 1995, 2019). A special case is the linear quadratic regulator (LQR), a standard solution of optimal control which can be derived directly from the Bellman equation and reduces to the algebraic Riccati equation in the linear, steady limit (Lewis et al., 2012); when the LQR is combined with optimal estimators, we obtain the linear quadratic Gaussian (LQG). In these hypotheses, LQR/LQG controllers are an ideal benchmark for assessing the optimality of the policies. In flow control, examples can be found in Högberg & Henningson (2002); Högberg et al. (2003); Chevalier et al. (2007). In alternative to the direct methods, one can resort to the adjoint-based formulation in the same linear/linearized limit (Luchini & Bottaro, 2014); the latter can be extended to nonlinear cases and model predictive controllers (MPC) (Glad & Ljung, 2000; Bewley et al., 2001; Xiao & Papadakis, 2019) or adaptive controllers (Åström & Wittenmark, 2008). These techniques have been widely used in fluid mechanics and require for the control design a physical model, describing the behavior of the system.\*

When a physical model is available, as in the case of fluid mechanics, solving the governing equations can be too slow with respect to the dynamics at play to be useful, if not even unfeasible: for instance, direct computations of LQR controllers are limited by the degrees of freedom  $n$  that cannot exceed  $n \approx 10^4$ , unless resorting to iterative methods (Semeraro et al., 2013). Alternatively, one can reduce the problem’s dimensionality by identifying suitable low-order models that preserve the system’s dynamics for control design while meeting computational and real-time constraints. In fluid mechanics, model reduction

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\* Note: the term *model* will refer only to *physical* models, including low-order ones. In contrast, in the ML community, the term defines approximations or parameterized functions, such as input-output relations mediated by ANN.

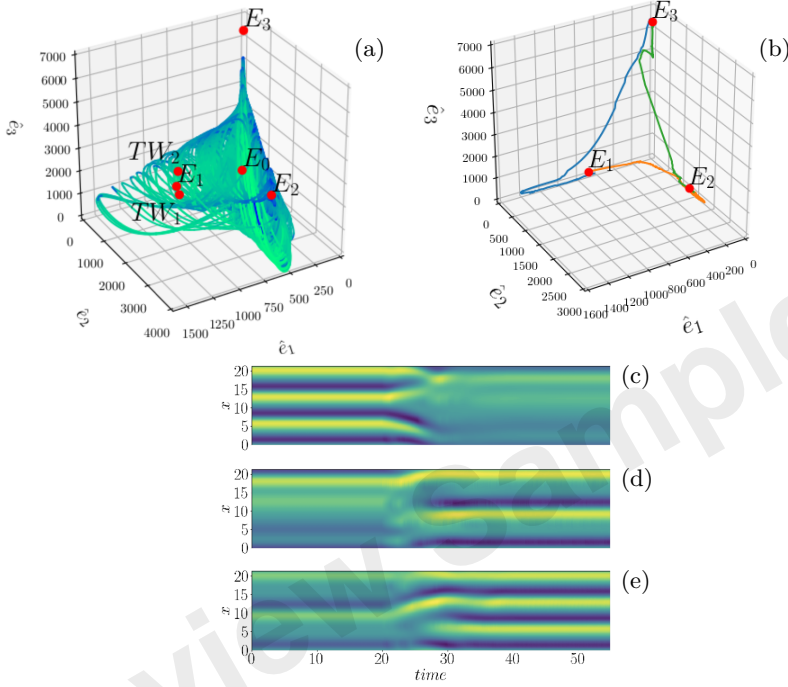


Figure 6.1: Example of a nonlinear dynamical system controlled using localized actuators, localized sensors, and an actor-critic algorithm (see Sec. 6.3); the figure is adapted from Bucci et al. (2019). In (a), the uncontrolled dynamics governed by the Kuramoto-Sivashinsky equation is shown in phase-space, by projecting on the first three Fourier modes ( $\hat{e}_i$ ). Red dots indicate the 4 unstable equilibria ( $E$ ) and 2 travelling waves ( $TW$ ) characterizing the dynamics when the domain length  $L = 22$  (Cvitanović et al., 2010). Chaotic behavior is observed. In (b), the system controlled by RL is shown: three policies are computed, driving the system towards each nontrivial equilibrium. The controlled trajectories are shown in the spatio-temporal plots (c)-(d)-(e) for  $E_3 \rightarrow E_1$ ,  $E_1 \rightarrow E_2$ , and  $E_2 \rightarrow E_3$ , respectively.

and system identification enjoyed widespread popularity in the last two decades, with applications ranging from balance truncation (Rowley, 2005; Ma et al., 2011) to system identification (Ljung, 1999; Noack et al., 2011; Hervé et al.,

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physics or the guidance of a risk metric (Garcia & Fernández, 2015).

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Preview Sample



# Model Predictive Control

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This chapter provides an overview of Model Predictive Control (MPC). The concept of receding horizon control is introduced, and the main strengths and limitations of the technique for controlling linear and nonlinear dynamical systems are discussed. The implementation of MPC for linear discrete time-invariant systems is presented as a scenario to familiarize the reader with the main concepts and on-time implementation challenges. The solution via batch approach is included as an interesting exercise for the reader to dive into the optimization process.

The formulation for nonlinear dynamical systems is then presented, including a discussion of the control's feasibility, stability, and hyperparameter tuning. Finally, a test case of the application of data-driven MPC for controlling the wake of a fluidic pinball is presented, in which system identification, hyperparameter tuning, and control optimization are entirely data-driven.

## 7.1 What is Model Predictive Control?

The term Model Predictive Control (MPC), also referred to as Receding Horizon Control (RHC), designates a large class of control methods based on the use of a model of the system to predict future behavior and identify optimal control inputs over a recurrently shifting horizon (hence the term *receding horizon*). The flexible framework of MPC fostered research efforts in the last decades, with a recent renaissance thanks to the new opportunities brought by the advances of machine-learning techniques.

The literature on MPC is very vast and varied. Providing a complete overview here would be a daunting task. These notes aim to provide a walkthrough of the main implementation steps, challenges, and caveats without the pretense of being exhaustive. The interested reader can dive into more profound waters

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by referring to books, covering a broad spectrum of topics within MPC, from foundational theories to practical applications, and from linear to nonlinear systems (Maciejowski, 2001; Camacho & Alba, 2013; Wang, 2009; Kouvaritakis & Cannon, 2016; Borrelli et al., 2017; Grüne et al., 2017; Rawlings et al., 2017; Rossiter, 2017). Several excellent review papers also cover fundamentals and industrial applications of the method, see e.g. Qin & Badgwell (1997); Lee (2011); Mayne (2014); Hewing et al. (2020); Schwenzer et al. (2021) among others.

This section describes the ingredients of MPC and briefly outlines its main advantages and limitations over other classical control strategies. Finally, it closes with a short historical perspective on the development of MPC and a brief overview of recent successful applications in fluid flows.

### 7.1.1 The rational behind MPC

The main strategy of MPC is sketched in Figure 7.1. The following steps are generally followed:

- The state of the system is observed at time  $t_j$ .
- The system's behavior under different input sequences is predicted with a plant model. The model incorporates previous inputs and states to output the expected dynamics based on a sequence of future control actions. A control and a prediction window/horizon are set. If the control window is shorter than the prediction one, the input is most often left unchanged after the last instant of the control window.
- The input sequence is optimized to achieve a certain control objective. This process typically involves minimizing a cost function containing penalties for the input and the discrepancy with the objective. The optimization process can include constraints, e.g. bounds for the acceptable values of states and inputs, rate of change of inputs/outputs, total energy expenditure, etc. The setpoint, i.e., the target to be achieved for each of the state coordinates, can be time-dependent. Future changes to the setpoint can easily be integrated or even be anticipated to account for time delays in the practical implementation.
- The optimal control sequence is applied only for a short time (in discrete systems, ideally, down to a single step).



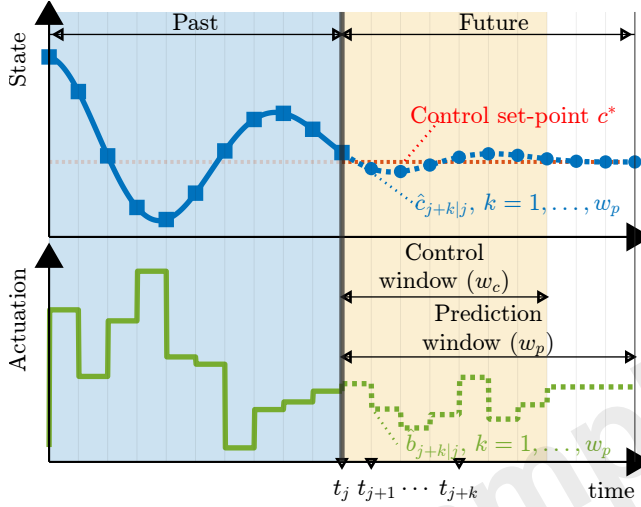


Figure 7.1: Graphical representation of the MPC strategy for stabilizing around a setpoint (horizontal dashed line). Past measurements (light-blue-shaded region) depict system state (blue lines with squares) and actuation (green line). The control window, of length  $w_c$ , is shown in orange. Dashed lines indicate future state and actuation predictions. Blue circles represent a discrete sampling of the system state prediction. The continuous formulation allows non-mandatory discrete sampling and allows step-like actuation requirements to be relaxed. Figure reproduced from Marra et al. (2024), licensed under CC BY 4.0.

- The state is observed after applying the control, and the prediction process is repeated to update the control action.

The open approach of MPC is particularly well-suited for controlling systems with multiple inputs and outputs, allowing for the easy incorporation of hard constraints and flexible implementation of control objectives. The cornerstone of MPC is the plant model, which should be sufficiently accurate and robust to ensure accurate prediction of future states under control actions but, at the same time, simple enough to allow real-time computation.

### 7.1.2 Main advantages and limitations

MPC is a powerful control strategy that brings forth several desirable features:

- The framework is highly flexible, allowing the application to linear, non-linear, continuous, and discrete dynamical systems, as long as the plant is modeled with sufficient accuracy.
- The implementation of constraints is straightforward. This is particularly relevant for applications where safety concerns are critical. Furthermore, control feasibility studies can be performed offline if a plant model is available. For instance, technological constraints such as intrinsic time delays, rate of change/update of the actuation, and upper/lower bounds of control actions can easily be tested and stressed.
- It incorporates a model of the system, implemented in a predictive framework, which allows anticipating future events and taking corrective actions in advance. This provides a significant advantage with respect to reactive controllers, which react to current and past states/errors.
- The prediction framework handles multiple inputs and outputs, thus allowing the development of coordinated control strategies.
- Online updates of the model enable adaptive control under changes in operating conditions, parameters of the dynamics, etc. In contrast, classical control strategies often require manual re-tuning.
- The update of the initial state of the prediction implicitly introduces a degree of robustness. Deviations from the expected state are indeed directly observed when updating subsequent control actions, and the control input is updated according to such discrepancy.

On the downside, online implementation is still a grand challenge. Solving the optimization problem is computationally intensive. The computational cost increases with the model complexity. Long prediction horizons can easily lead to large latency times, thus jeopardizing real-time control. Short prediction horizons reduce the computational cost, but on the other hand, might lead to *short-sighted* control policies which might be affected by stability issues and poor performance. Fast-paced advances in hardware, however, are paving the way toward more affordable MPC implementation, thus further expansion of this control strategy is to be expected shortly.

Furthermore, the model is a cornerstone of MPC implementation. Models should be parsimonious for efficient implementation but, at the same time,

accurate over sufficiently long time horizons. While for some systems, analytical models might be available from applications of first principles and governing equations, in general, plant models must be distilled from data of the system behavior. Reliable system identification is the key to an effective implementation of MPC. Recent advances in data-driven system identification and modeling are progressively eroding this barrier, enlarging the portfolio of possible applications of MPC.

### **7.1.3 Towards application to chaotic high-dimensional systems and fluid flows**

The concept of formulating a control problem as a moving-horizon controller, i.e., a sequence of optimizations of open-loop sequences with a recursive update of the state, roots back to the work of Propoi (1963). The first step towards practical applications was taken only a decade later, with the works of Richalet et al. (1978) and Cutler & Ramaker (1980). Richalet et al. (1978) refers to the method as Model Predictive Heuristic Control (MPHC), stressing the heuristic nature of the control strategy. A few years later, Cutler & Ramaker (1980) developed the Dynamic Matrix Control (DMC), primarily targeted to the oil refining industry. The DMC is based on a piecewise linear model, progressively updated using the discrepancy between the predicted output and the measured states. The work was later expanded by Garcia & Morshedi (1986), with the Quadratic Dynamic Matrix Control (QDMC). The method integrates quadratic programming into DMC, allowing it to handle directly process constraints.

During the 80s, the work on MPC was mostly directed at establishing theoretical grounds for its application in industry. In the following decade, strong efforts were targeted at addressing the robustness and stability of the procedure, with the introduction of Robust Model Predictive Control (Campo & Morari, 1987). For an excellent survey on the topic, the reader is referred to the review by Bemporad & Morari (2007).

Since then, MPC has been widely used in numerous industrial applications. MPC is particularly popular in the process industry, with the petrochemical sector as its main historical promoter. It found also extensive application in power electronics (Vazquez et al., 2014), building climate control (Oldewurtel et al., 2012), agriculture (Ding et al., 2018), robotics (Shi & Zhang, 2021), automotive (Hrovat et al., 2012), among others (see Schwenzer et al., 2021 for a detailed review).

Applying MPC to turbulent flow control is extremely challenging since the system to be controlled is often strongly nonlinear and high-dimensional and evolves at timescales that are difficult to tackle with current hardware. Nonetheless, the potential to disclose unforeseen optimal control strategies fueled the interest in MPC for flow control. Early efforts have targeted using simulation as an exact plant model (Bewley et al., 2001) to relaminarize a channel flow using unsteady blowing/suction with zero net mass flux. Exploiting receding horizon control strategies undisclosed the interesting result that formulations targeted to drag minimization are less effective than formulations aimed to control the terminal (i.e., at the end of the optimization horizon) turbulent kinetic energy if relaminarization is sought. The results highlight that strategies that allow exploration or deviation from the desired state in the short term can still effectively achieve the final goal at the end of the horizon.

A remarkable evaluation of MPC against other model-based and model-free techniques for the delay of the laminar/turbulent transition has been conducted by Fabbiane et al. (2014). More recently, Morton et al. (2018) proposed a framework called DeepMPC, which combines the receding-horizon approach with a deep neural network for the plant model (in this case to approximate the mapping of the Koopman operator), and applied it to the control of the flow past a circular cylinder. A data-driven Koopman-based MPC framework was also used by Arbabi et al. (2018) to stabilize a lid-driven cavity. The basic idea is to lift the nonlinear dynamics in a higher dimensional space where the dynamics leverage the Koopman operator and delay embeddings.

More recently, Bieker et al. (2020) applied DeepMPC to the wake of a fluidic pinball and extended the capability of the framework to account for state observation from a limited number of sensors. The low-order model is approximated using a Recurrent Neural Network (RNN). To reduce the computational cost associated with online optimization, Sasaki & Tsubakino (2020) proposed a method to design a control law using regression analysis. In this approach, data from offline simulations was used to approximate the behavior of MPC. Additionally, Krishna et al. (2022) investigated the use of MPC to optimize the trajectory planning of an active mobile sensor in an unsteady fluid flow field. In this case, the plant model is imposed as a double-gyre flow field, and the focus is on the effect of actuation and state penalty parameters on the strategy adopted by MPC to exploit unsteady coherent structures. Recently, Déda et al. (2023) compared MPC with a neural-network controller for several systems, including the compressible flow past a cylinder.

Neural network controllers show promising results when sufficient data are available for training; however, in the low-data limit, parsimonious descriptions of the dynamics of the system (see Kaiser et al., 2018b) would provide an advantage to MPC.

## 7.2 A glimpse of MPC of linear systems

This section focuses on the formulation and implementation of MPC for the control of linear systems. While exploring a simpler scenario can certainly help the reader grasp the fundamental concepts behind MPC implementation, it is also important to note that the history of fluid mechanics is rich with successful applications of linear model-based flow control, such as transition delay (Bewley & Liu, 1998; Bagheri et al., 2009a; Semeraro et al., 2013) or skin friction drag reduction (Cortelezzi et al., 1998; Kim, 2003). The problem formulation and a strategy to solve it via batch approach are presented here.

### 7.2.1 Problem formulation

Consider the following linear discrete time-invariant (DTI) system:

$$\mathbf{x}_{k+1} = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x}_k + \mathbf{B}\mathbf{u}_k \quad (7.1)$$

$$\mathbf{y}_k = \mathbf{C}\mathbf{x}_k + \mathbf{D}\mathbf{u}_k \quad (7.2)$$

Here  $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ ,  $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbb{R}^m$  and  $\mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{R}^p$  are the state, input and output vectors, respectively. The state-transition matrix  $\mathbf{A}$  contains  $n \times n$  elements (assumed here being real). The eigenvalues of  $\mathbf{A}$  define the stability of the system. In particular, the system is stable if all eigenvalues have a norm smaller than 1. The matrices  $\mathbf{B}$ ,  $\mathbf{C}$ ,  $\mathbf{D}$  are referred to as input (or control) matrix, output (or measurement) matrix, and feedthrough matrix. For a single input system,  $\mathbf{B}$  is simply a column vector of size  $n \times 1$ , weighing the effect of the input on each of the state variables. The output matrix  $\mathbf{C}$  contains  $p \times n$  elements if  $p$  linear combinations of the  $n$  state variables are measured; in the case of full-state measurement  $\mathbf{C}$  is the identity matrix  $\mathbb{I}_n$  of size  $n \times n$ . The feedthrough matrix  $\mathbf{D}$ , of size  $p \times n$  represents the effect of the input directly on the measured output variables, without any interaction with the system dynamics.

We will assume in the remainder of this section full-state measurement (i.e.,  $\mathbf{C} = \mathbb{I}_n$ ) with no feedthrough ( $\mathbf{D} = \mathbf{0}$ ).

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the nonlinear behavior of turbulent flows. Variants of MPC, such as Robust MPC and Stochastic MPC, are designed to take into account the parametric uncertainty of the model, external disturbances, etc. Nonetheless, modeling these effects is often a complicated task, and implementation of Robust and Stochastic MPC entails a substantial increase in the computational cost of the procedure, which would be very challenging to afford for real-time control. Furthermore, latency and time delays of turbulent flows introduce the additional complication of potential shift between actuation and effect on the flow. Longer prediction horizons are required to account for this issue. This further pushes towards models capable of delivering reliable long-term predictions of the flow, at least for those directions object of the control. The rewards for addressing these challenges are significant; Bewley et al. (2001) identified already more than 20 years ago that efficient actions for flow control should be long-sighted, at least in the framework of relaminarization and drag reduction of wall-bounded flows.

- **Dependence on the expertise of the user:** the performances of MPC depend on the selection of hyperparameter and, consequently, on user expertise. Learning-based MPC offers solutions to learn parameters based on simpler performance indicators. It is foreseeable that there will be a more intense blending in the future of MPC with deep-learning methods to leverage this principle.

In conclusion, while the limitations underscore the current challenges, they also unveil interesting opportunities for refining Model Predictive Control in fluid flow applications.





# Fundamentals of Dimensionality Reduction

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This chapter reviews the fundamentals of dimensionality reduction, a subset of machine learning that seeks to identify low-dimensional representation of high-dimensional data. This is the essence of many data processing tasks, from filtering to pattern identification. The lecture begins with a brief review of the general concepts and the two main families of methods, namely autoencoders and manifold learning. We then move to *linear autoencoders*, which encompasses various popular decompositions in fluid dynamics, such as the Proper Orthogonal Decomposition, Dynamic Mode Decomposition and their variants (e.g. Spectral POD (sPOD) and Multiscale POD (mPOD)). Finally, we complete the tour with a brief overview of nonlinear methods for manifold learning, including kernel PCA, Isometric Mapping (ISOMAP), Locally Linear Embedding (LLE), and t-SNE (t-Distributed Stochastic Neighbor Embedding). To promote hands-on experience, this lecture provides two tutorial sessions. The Python codes for all exercises are provided in the course repository.

## 8.1 A note on notation and style

We stick to the notation introduced in 2.1, with the following additional elements:

**Sampling** The sampling of a continuous function is stored in a vector or a matrix. We assume uniform sampling both in space and time. For vector  $\mathbf{d}(t)$  sampled the time domain  $t$ , considering a discretization  $t_k = k\Delta t$ , with  $f_s = 1/\Delta t$  the sampling frequency and  $k = [0, 1, \dots, n_t - 1]$ , we could write  $\mathbf{d}[k]$  or  $\mathbf{d}_k$  or  $\mathbf{d}(t_k)$ . The same is true for the space domain, although a matrix linear index must be introduced. This is important when we transform a matrix (for

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example, a spatial realization of a quantity) into a vector.

For example, let  $p[i, j]$  be the 2D discretization of a pressure field  $p(x, y)$ , where the axes were discretized as  $i \in [0, n_x - 1]$  and  $j \in [0, n_y - 1]$ . For the purpose of this lecture, that field would be written as a single "snapshot" vector  $\mathbf{p} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_s}$ , with  $n_s = n_x n_y$ . The entries in this vector would be accessed with a matrix linear index, denoted in bold, i.e.  $\mathbf{p}[\mathbf{i}]$ . The way this accesses the data in the matrix depends on whether the flattening is performed column-wise or row-wise. For example, for a matrix  $\mathbf{A} \in \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}$ , the column-wise and the row-wise matrix indices are\*

$$\text{column-wise } \mathbf{i} : \mathbf{A} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 3 & 6 \\ 1 & 4 & 7 \\ 2 & 5 & 8 \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{row-wise } \mathbf{i} : \mathbf{A} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 2 \\ 3 & 4 & 5 \\ 6 & 7 & 8 \end{bmatrix}, .$$

In a vector quantity, e.g. a velocity field  $\mathbf{U}[u(\mathbf{x}_i), v(\mathbf{x}_i)] \in \mathbb{R}^{n_s \times 2}$ , we consider that the reshaping stacks all the components one below the other producing a state vector of size  $n_s = n_C n_x n_y$  where  $n_C = 2$  is the number of velocity components.

## 8.2 General Concepts

Dimensionality reduction aims to represent high-dimensional data in a lower-dimensional space while retaining the key features and patterns of variability. The underlying assumption is that, although the data may appear high-dimensional, its meaningful structure often lies on a much lower-dimensional manifold. For example, in face recognition, the variability in images of different individuals can often be explained by a few dominant factors such as pose, lighting, or expression. By identifying these dominant patterns, one can construct a reduced set of basis images that retains the information necessary for recognition (Swets & Weng, 1996; Turk & Pentland, 1991).

In its most general form, the process of dimensionality reduction is an "information bottleneck" (Vladimir Cherkassky, 2008) composed of an encoder mapping and a decoder mapping, as shown in the schematic of Figure 8.1. A high dimensional vector  $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_x}$  is mapped onto a low dimensional one  $\mathbf{z} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_z}$  (with  $n_z \ll n_x$ ) by a mapping  $\mathbf{z} = \mathcal{E}(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{X}^*)$ , called **encoder**, which must be

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\* Recall that here use Python-like indexing. Hence, the first entry is 0 and not 1

inferred from a set of training data  $\mathbf{X}^* \in \mathbb{R}^{n_x \times n_t}$ . The opposite process is carried out by a mapping  $\tilde{\mathbf{x}} = \mathcal{D}(\mathbf{z}|\mathbf{Z}^*)$ , called **decoder**, which seeks to bring the mapping back to the original dimension and is trained on a set of training data  $\mathbf{Z}^* \in \mathbb{R}^{n_z \times n_t}$ . The composition of the encoder and the decoder is referred to as **autoencoder** and the space  $\mathbb{R}^{n_z}$  is referred to as **latent space**. Both the encoder and the decoder functions can take the form of a parametric or nonparametric function (see Chapter 2).

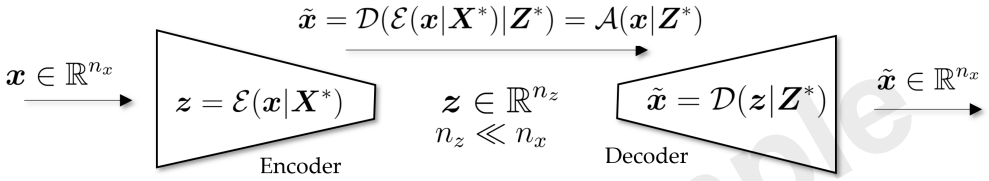


Figure 8.1: Schematic illustration of the general process of dimensionality reduction, viewed as an “information bottleneck”. The encoder maps a high-dimensional input to a low-dimensional one, often called latent space. The decoder does the opposite.

**Autoencoders** provide a general framework for dimensionality reduction. The goal is to learn a compressed representation  $\mathbf{z}$  of the data  $\mathbf{x}$  such that an approximate reconstruction  $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}$  can still be obtained and the essential features of the original data are preserved. This is useful for at least three reasons. First, it offers interpretability and economy: if the relevant variability in the data is contained in  $n_z \ll n_x$  dimensions, then the remaining  $n_x - n_z$  dimensions can be ignored. Second, the reduced representation  $\mathbf{z}$  may serve as input to simpler models or supervised learning methods, lowering computational cost. Third, by focusing on salient features, the autoencoder can learn to discount irrelevant variability, such as noise or outliers—indeed, most denoising strategies can be viewed as autoencoding.

A related but distinct class of techniques is **manifold learning**. These methods do not aim to reconstruct the original data and therefore do not require a decoder. Instead, their objective is to embed the data in a lower-dimensional space while preserving some notion of similarity or neighborhood structure. The central assumption (Zheng & Xue, 2009) is that the high-dimensional data lie on (or near) a low-dimensional manifold, and the task is to uncover coordinates on this manifold that faithfully represent the relationships between data points. Manifold learning is widely used for visualizing high-dimensional

datasets, detecting clusters or anomalies, and exploring geometric structure.

The distinction between autoencoders and manifold learning is subtle but important. While certain autoencoder architectures can serve as manifold learners and vice versa, most manifold learning algorithms produce compressed representations that are *not* designed to be decoded back to the original high-dimensional space.

### 8.3 Linear autoencoding and manifold learning: PCA

We consider first a simplified toy problem. Consider the dataset in Figure 8.2. This set consists of  $n_p = 150$  datapoints  $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 1}$  that have been sampled from three distributions in a three-dimensional space. The color in the markers encodes the different distributions (clusters). The dataset can be compactly represented by a dataset matrix  $\mathbf{X} \in \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 150}$  with each point (vector) along its columns. The data has been mean-centered (i.e. the mean vector over the rows of  $\mathbf{X}$  is zero).

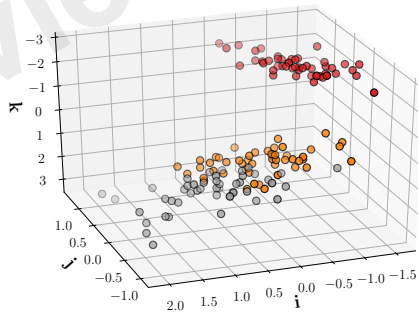


Figure 8.2: Plot of the dataset considered in this section:  $n_p = 150$  belonging to three probability density functions are sampled in a three-dimensional space.

To illustrate the main ideas behind dimensionality reduction, we here seek to identify the best 2D representation of the data. That is, we seek a compression ratio 3:2, from  $\mathbb{R}^3$  to  $\mathbb{R}^2$ . A simple approach would consist in projecting along any of the planes defined by the Cartesian coordinate frame. The projection requires defining a basis matrix, here denoted by  $\mathbf{B}$ , whose columns collect the basis vectors in the projected space. For instance, the projection onto the  $(i, j)$

plane is

$$\mathbf{Z}_B = \mathbf{B}^T \mathbf{X} \quad \text{with} \quad \mathbf{B} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{Z}_B \in \mathbb{R}^{2 \times 150}. \quad (8.1)$$

We evaluate the quality of a projection by the amount of information it preserves. The operation in (8.1) is a linear **encoder**. The matrix  $\mathbf{B}$  has no inverse. Nevertheless, it is possible to show\* that the “best possible” inversion of (8.1), in an  $l_2$  sense, is

$$\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_B = \mathbf{B} \mathbf{Z}_B = \mathbf{B} \mathbf{B}^T \mathbf{X} = \mathcal{A}_B \mathbf{X}, \quad (8.2)$$

where  $\mathcal{A}_B = \mathbf{B} \mathbf{B}^T$  is the linear **autoencoder** associated with the basis  $\mathbf{B}$ . In this simple example, the autoencoder removes the last row of  $\mathbf{X}$ , and this information cannot be recovered.

We measure the performance of this linear autoencoder using the  $l_2$  norm:

$$J(\mathbf{B}) = \|\mathbf{X} - \tilde{\mathbf{X}}_B\|_2 = \|\mathbf{X} - \mathcal{A}_B \mathbf{X}\|_2. \quad (8.3)$$

A natural question is that of identifying the basis vectors that allows to minimize (8.3). This leads to the **Principal Component Analysis** (PCA). Without entering into the details of the derivation,<sup>†</sup> the basis that leads to this optimal reconstruction is the solution of the following eigenvalue problem:

$$(\mathbf{X} \mathbf{X}^T) \mathbf{u}_j = \lambda_j \mathbf{u}_j \iff (\mathbf{X} \mathbf{X}^T) \mathbf{U} = \mathbf{A} \mathbf{U}, \quad (8.4)$$

where the eigenvectors  $\mathbf{u}_j$  are the **principal components**, collected as columns of the matrix  $\mathbf{U} \in \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 150}$  and the eigenvalues  $\lambda_j$  (collected in the diagonal of  $\mathbf{A} \in \mathbb{R}^{3 \times 3}$ ) controls their relative importance. It is easy to show that these are non-negative positive numbers and (8.4) is the first step to compute the **Singular Value Decomposition** (SVD) of  $\mathbf{X}$ . Keeping the focus on the definition of the best linear autoencoder, we have

$$\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_U = \mathbf{U} \mathbf{Z}_U = \mathbf{U} \mathbf{U}^T \mathbf{X} \iff \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_k = \sum_{i=1}^2 c_{ki} \mathbf{u}_i \quad \text{with} \quad c_{ki} = \mathbf{u}_i^T \mathbf{x}_k, \quad (8.5)$$

\* This follows from minimizing  $\|\mathbf{X} - \mathbf{B} \mathbf{Z}\|_2$  with respect to  $\mathbf{Z}$ : the optimal solution is  $\mathbf{Z} = \mathbf{B}^T \mathbf{X}$ , which is equivalent to using the Moore–Penrose pseudoinverse of  $\mathbf{B}$ .

† An extensive presentation is proposed by Jolliffe (2002) and Bishop et al. (2006).

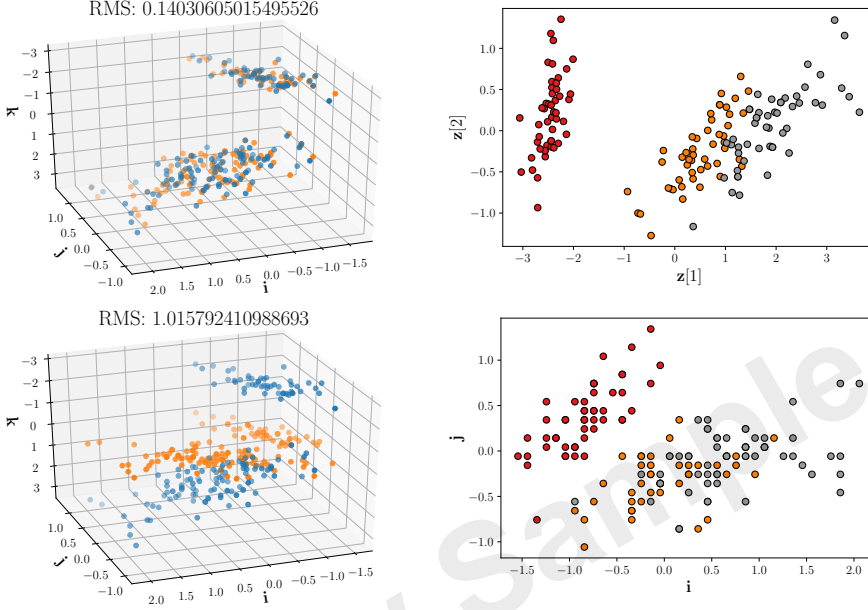


Figure 8.3: Comparison of the data reconstruction via the autoencoder  $\mathcal{A}_V$  (top left) versus the autoencoder  $\mathcal{A}_B$  (bottom left). On the right, the data is shown in the 2D representations provided by each base, keeping the cluster colour code.

with  $\mathcal{A}_U = \mathbf{U}\mathbf{U}^T$  the PCA autoencoder. The summation on the right recalls that each of the approximation ( $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_k$ ) of a data point ( $\mathbf{x}_k$ ) is a linear combination of the principal components  $\mathbf{u}_j$ . The coefficients  $c_{kj} = \hat{\mathbf{x}}_U[j] \in \mathbb{R}^{n_z}$ , written as a vector over the index  $j$ , is the PCA-transformed data: that is the projection of the  $k$ -th data point  $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_x}$  onto the principal components.

This is the encoding function  $\mathcal{E}$  introduced in Figure 8.1; the entries of the encoded representation are inner products:

$$\mathbf{z}_i = \mathcal{E}(\mathbf{x}_i) \rightarrow \mathbf{z}_i[j] = \mathbf{x}_i^T \mathbf{u}_j = \mathbf{u}_j^T \mathbf{x}_i. \quad (8.6)$$

The decoding function for the PCA is simply  $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i = \mathcal{D}(\mathbf{z}_i) = \mathbf{U}\mathbf{z}_i$ .

Figure 8.3 shows a comparison between the PCA and the trivial projection onto  $\mathbf{B}$ . The figures on the left show the reconstructions  $\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_U$  (top) and  $\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_B$  (bottom) while the figures on the right show the data in the reduced space: the plane  $(\mathbf{u}_1, \mathbf{u}_2)$  for the PCA and the plane  $(i, j)$  for the trivial projection. In the reconstruction plots, the blue markers indicate the original data, while the

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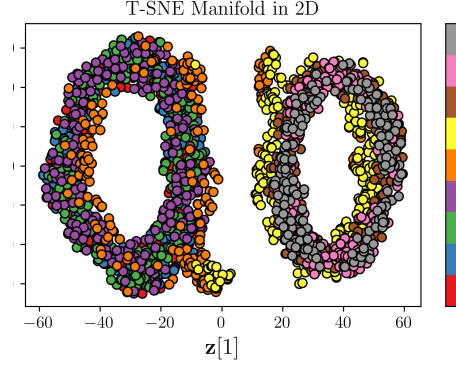


Figure 8.16: Mapping of the cylinder dataset onto  $\mathbb{R}^2$  using t-SNE.

## 8.8 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter surveyed linear and nonlinear dimensionality reduction methods, emphasizing the distinction between autoencoders (which focus on reconstruction) and manifold learning (which focuses on preserving relational geometry). We began with PCA—a foundational linear method interpretable both as an optimal linear autoencoder and as a manifold-learning procedure preserving pairwise correlations—and then branched into two directions: (i) linear methods for data-driven modal analysis and (ii) nonlinear manifold learning, which can uncover low-dimensional embeddings even when the underlying structure is curved. While the latter remains relatively unexplored in fluid mechanics, the tutorials presented here aim to provide intuition and encourage further use.

Regarding data-driven modal analysis, the main conclusions from the four investigated decompositions (POD, DMD, SPODs, mPOD) are as follows:

1. **POD** offers the strongest autoencoding and therefore the most effective dimensionality reduction. This makes it ideal for data compression, noise reduction, and statistical filtering. However, its modes typically contain a broad range of frequencies, which can make physical interpretation less transparent.
2. **DMD** provides the cleanest frequency separation and, in principle, can identify the normal modes of the underlying dynamics. It is the method of choice for data-driven stability analysis and for flows dominated by



coherent oscillations at fixed frequencies (e.g., vortex shedding, cavity tones). However, DMD relies on representing the temporal dynamics of each mode as a single complex exponential. When the dataset contains intermittent phenomena, time-varying frequencies, or broadband structures (as is common in experimental and turbulent flows), the DMD modes either decay rapidly (modulus  $< 1$ ) or distribute across many weak modes. In such cases, the decomposition does not converge.

3. **Spectral POD (Towne et al. 2018)** provides frequency-resolved modes with strong robustness to noise, thanks to its Welch-type averaging. This makes it particularly well-suited for stationary datasets with long time histories. It is primarily an *analysis* tool rather than a compression method (it generates far too many modes!), and it is not directly applicable to transient flows.
4. **Filtered SPOD (Sieber et al. 2016)** provides a simple and tunable bridge between POD and harmonic decompositions by applying a diagonal temporal filter to the correlation matrix. It is robust to noise and practical for exploratory analysis of leading frequency ranges. However, the relationship between the filter parameter and the resulting spectral selectivity is indirect, and the method assumes stationarity.
5. **mPOD** allows explicit partitioning of the data into prescribed frequency bands while retaining energy optimality within each band. It is well suited for multiscale and transient flows and provides useful time–frequency localization. However, it involves more hyperparameters and requires user experience to tune. Moreover, when the prescribed bands become too narrow, the underlying filter design becomes poorly localized, making mPOD unsuited for identifying purely harmonic modes.

Finally, the nonlinear manifold learning examples demonstrated that different similarity metrics (Euclidean, geodesic, or local linear) lead to different low-dimensional embeddings, yet all revealed qualitatively consistent low-dimensional structure. In our case, a dataset in  $\mathbb{R}^{4260}$  could be meaningfully represented in just 2 or 3 dimensions. Whether such reduced spaces can be used to formulate predictive dynamical models—and then be reliably lifted back to physical space—remains one of the most exciting open frontiers in physics-informed machine learning and reduced-order modeling.

# Data-driven post-processing and reduced order modelling

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This chapter delves into data-driven equation-free models, focusing on integrating physical insights through reduced order models (ROMs). It emphasizes the transformative potential of these approaches in advancing our understanding of complex non-linear dynamical systems. The chapter reviews cutting-edge techniques and case studies across various industries, demonstrating the power of data-driven modeling. The chapter introduces data analysis and post-processing methods, resulting in precise and entirely data-driven hybrid ROMs. By combining modal decomposition and deep learning, these methods unveil fundamental patterns in dynamic systems, enhancing our grasp of underlying physics. They also enable database reconstruction from limited measurements and forecasting of system dynamics. These hybrid methods, combining experimental and numerical data, offer accurate alternatives to resource-intensive numerical simulations, reducing computational costs. They prove versatile for optimization and control, particularly in fluid mechanics, providing valuable insights into complex non-linear dynamical systems. The chapter elucidates the mathematical foundations of these hybrid methods and provides practical application examples, offering a comprehensive guide to their implementation and potential in both scientific and practical contexts.

## 9.1 Introduction

In recent years, the proliferation of high-quality data has ushered in a transformative era in the realms of machine learning and reduced order modeling. This surge in data availability has paved the way for novel approaches to un-

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raveling the intricacies of complex non-linear dynamical systems without the need for a priori knowledge of governing equations. In this exciting landscape, data-driven equation-free models have emerged as a beacon of promise, offering an alternative path to comprehending and manipulating these intricate systems. Using the power of machine learning, these models have the capacity to extract knowledge directly from data, bypassing the traditional reliance on theoretical principles. This paradigm shift encourages the exploration of data-driven avenues to unveil new hypotheses and construct models that hitherto may have remained concealed.

The implications of this transformation extend far and wide, with applications spanning diverse industries such as aerospace, automotive, construction, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, manufacturing, and more. The ability to harness data to decipher complex systems has the potential to revolutionize problem-solving and decision-making across these domains.

Broadly categorized, there are two primary approaches to data-driven modeling, each offering unique advantages and insights. The first approach centers on data forecasting models, which are adept at predicting future data trajectories through the utilization of machine learning techniques, prominently including deep neural networks. Notably, these models do not incorporate explicit physical principles into their construction. In contrast, the second approach is exemplified by reduced order models (ROMs) enriched with physical insights. These hybrid models skillfully integrate an understanding of the underlying physics with advanced pattern identification techniques such as proper orthogonal decomposition Sirovich (1987) and dynamic mode decomposition Schmid (2010). This amalgamation of physical principles and data-driven methodologies enables the extraction of pertinent spatio-temporal information from the data, providing a deeper understanding of the system's behavior.

The integration of hybrid data-driven ROMs into the study of non-linear dynamical systems brings forth a multitude of advantages over relying solely on deep neural networks. These ROMs empower researchers to identify key instabilities and mechanisms within the studied systems, shedding light on critical aspects of the underlying physics. Furthermore, they pave the way for the development of potent tools for optimization and control. Armed with a profound understanding of the physical intricacies at play, these models facilitate more accurate system phase predictions, the adoption of controlled and robust strategies, a reduction in computational costs for numerical simulations, and the streamlining of information collection in experimental setups.

In this Chapter, we explore data-driven equation-free models, emphasizing the integration of physical insights through ROMs. We delve into the opportunities and challenges presented by these innovative approaches, while highlighting their potential to reshape our understanding of complex nonlinear dynamical systems. Through a comprehensive review of current state-of-the-art techniques and case studies spanning multiple industries, we aim to demonstrate the power of data-driven modeling in advancing scientific knowledge and practical applications.

More specifically, this chapter introduces two distinctive data-driven methodologies for the development of ROMs: modal decomposition tools and deep learning architectures. Modal decomposition techniques, notably prevalent in fluid dynamics, serve as invaluable instruments for extracting the physical patterns driving the dynamical systems in question. These patterns are often intimately linked to flow instabilities that trigger profound changes within the flow itself. By distilling the dimensionality of the system to a select few relevant patterns that encapsulate the flow dynamics, these methodologies lay the foundation for more concise and interpretable models. It is within this reduced dimensionality framework that deep learning architectures are employed, enabling the creation of diverse ROMs grounded in the principles of flow physics, often referred to as hybrid physics-aware ROMs, with broad-ranging applications.

The synergy between modal decomposition and deep learning techniques offers a clear advantage, fostering the development of hybrid physics-aware ROMs, also known as hybrid machine learning tools. In the expansive realm of fluid dynamics, where datasets are characterized by immense dimensions, often reaching tens of millions of grid points in typical computational fluid dynamics (CFD) problems, the integration of these methodologies becomes not only advantageous but also essential. Such an approach alleviates computational bottlenecks associated with purely deep learning models, streamlining the calibration of neural network schemes (NN) and reducing the overall computational cost. This reduction in dimensionality facilitates the implementation of more straightforward schemes, such as one-dimensional designs, as opposed to the computationally intensive three-dimensional architectures. In doing so, it opens new horizons for the efficient modeling of complex systems within fluid dynamics and beyond.

The models presented in this Chapter, whether they are solely based on modal decomposition or hybrid models based on deep learning and physical principles,

can be used to develop three different applications: (1) patterns identification, suitable to study the physics behind the data analyzed; (2) data reconstruction, capable of reconstructing two- or three- dimensional databases from a set of selected points, using data from sensors, or repairing missing data; (3) data forecasting, which builds ROMs to predict the spatio-temporal evolution of the signal analyzed. This chapter reviews the mathematical background behind each method and will illustrate some of their most relevant applications.

This summary reveals the fusion of modal decomposition and deep learning methodologies, promising to illuminate the path toward enhanced understanding, more efficient modeling, and transformative applications in the realm of reduced-order modeling. As we embark on this exploration, we invite the reader to delve into the depths of these innovative techniques, unlocking the potential to bridge the gap between data-driven and physics-informed models and advance the frontiers of knowledge and practical implementation.

## 9.2 Methodology

This section introduces the methodology encompassing modal decomposition and deep learning architectures, with a focus on developing diverse ROMs. These ROMs, refined through complex database treatments, become versatile tools for addressing a wide array of complex applications. As previously introduced, the deep learning models are actually hybrid since modal decomposition algorithms are integrated into these in the data pre-processing stage: as mentioned before, these models are known as hybrid physic-aware ROMs. Compressing the input data down to its main features and then training a neural network with this data increases the model's performance whilst reducing its computational cost. The PYTHON codes of the hybrid methods presented in this chapter can be found in ModelFLOWS-app.\*

These fully data-driven methods inputs datasets in matrix form, consisting of a set of  $K$  snapshots  $\mathbf{v}_k = \mathbf{v}(t_k)$ , where  $t_k$  is the time value at instant  $k$ , which are conveniently collected into a *snapshot matrix* as

$$\mathbf{V}_1^K = [\mathbf{v}_1, \mathbf{v}_2, \dots, \mathbf{v}_k, \mathbf{v}_{k+1}, \dots, \mathbf{v}_{K-1}, \mathbf{v}_K]. \quad (9.1)$$

Depending on the dataset's complexity, it might be more advantageous to restructure the data into a "snapshot tensor." This involves segregating and

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\* [modelflows.github.io/modelflowsapp/](https://github.com/modelflows/modelflowsapp/)

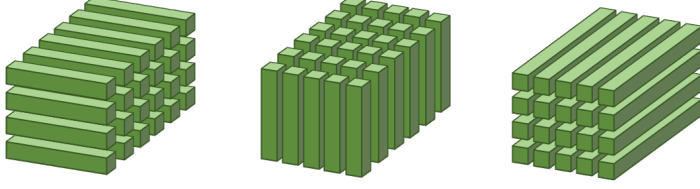


Figure 9.1: The fibers of a third-order tensor.

arranging the various components of the dataset into distinct tensor components while also separating the spatial coordinates for improved organization. A fluid dynamics dataset is usually formed by velocity components, but other components can also be included as part of the database analyzed (depending on the problem under study). For example, in atmospheric boundary layer flows, such as those encountered in meteorology, we typically consider both velocity and pressure fields; when addressing turbulent combustion problems, our dataset expands to encompass temperature, pressure fields, and various chemical species; in the case of flutter analysis during flight tests, an array of accelerometers strategically placed on the aircraft's surface gathers crucial system data, forming a signal that undergoes analysis to predict the evolution of this instability, among other scenarios, et cetera.

Within a snapshot tensor, the snapshot matrix is accommodated within a multidimensional array, contingent on several indices. The *fibers* of the snapshot tensor are formed by the corresponding rows and columns of the matrix. An illustrative example of a third-order tensor showcasing these tensor fibers is presented in Figure 9.1.

The methods outlined in this chapter typically employ fourth and fifth-order tensors for analyzing two-dimensional and three-dimensional datasets, respectively. To illustrate this concept more clearly, let us consider a two-dimensional dataset (a plane) with three velocity components: stream-wise velocity  $u_x$ , normal velocity  $u_y$ , both part of the in-plane velocity  $\mathbf{u}$ , in a Cartesian coordinate system with dimensions  $J_2 \times J_3$ , as follows:

$$\mathbf{u}(x_{j_2}, y_{j_3}, t_k) \quad \text{for } j_2 = 1, \dots, J_2, \quad j_3 = 1, \dots, J_3, \quad k = 1, \dots, K. \quad (9.2)$$

The snapshot data can then be re-arranged into a fourth-order  $J_1 \times J_2 \times J_3 \times K$ -tensor  $\mathbf{V}$ , and now the components  $V_{j_1, j_2, j_3, k}$  are defined as

$$V_{1, j_2, j_3, k} = u_x(x_{j_2}, y_{j_3}, t_k), \quad V_{2, j_2, j_3, k} = u_y(x_{j_2}, y_{j_3}, t_k). \quad (9.3)$$

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Two different architectures of neural networks are used, RNN and CNN. The model collects data from the transient stage of the numerical simulation and predicts its evolution in time. In Fig. 9.15, we present a representative snapshot of the  $CO_2$  concentration along with the predictions and the temporal evolution of two characteristic points. Both architectures correctly predict the snapshots. The point situated in the far field is accurately predicted, as is the point located within the mixing layer between the fuel and the oxidizer. The ROM is more than 100 times faster than the CFD simulation and the RRMSE in the predictions is less than 3 – % for the RNN architecture and 4% for the CNN.

## 9.4 Conclusions

Our exploration of data-driven equation-free models, with a strong emphasis on the integration of physical insights through ROMs, reveals a landscape brimming with potential for understanding and manipulating complex non-linear dynamical systems. This chapter has elucidated the transformative power of data-driven modeling, showcasing its capacity to advance both scientific knowledge and practical applications across diverse industries.

We introduced two pivotal data-driven methodologies: modal decomposition tools and deep learning architectures, each with its unique advantages and applications. Modal decomposition, rooted in fluid dynamics, provides a means to extract physical patterns governing dynamic systems. These patterns are intimately linked to flow instabilities, offering a deeper understanding of complex phenomena. Deep learning, on the other hand, leverages the prowess of neural networks to create versatile ROMs grounded in flow physics, forming the basis of hybrid physics-aware ROMs.

The synergy between these methodologies, demonstrated through hybrid physics-aware ROMs or hybrid machine learning tools, presents an opportunity to overcome computational bottlenecks, reduce costs, and streamline model development. This is especially crucial in domains with vast datasets, such as computational fluid dynamics, where dimensional reduction enables more efficient modeling.

We also highlighted the diverse applications of these models, including pattern identification, data reconstruction, and data forecasting, underscoring their adaptability and versatility. These applications provide insights into underlying physics, identifying modes, in some cases, connected to flow instabilities and



triggering changes in the flow. This knowledge opens new avenues for flow control applications and reveal physical phenomena hitherto unknown in complex problems.

Our results presented focusing into the fusion of modal decomposition and deep learning methodologies serves as a summary to the potential of data-driven modeling. By combining modal decomposition methods, to reduce data dimensionality and extract physical patterns of the flow, with neural networks, we unlock new avenues for enhanced understanding and efficient modeling of complex systems. As we look ahead, these innovative techniques are poised to push the boundaries of knowledge and practical implementation, making data-driven equation-free models a powerful tool for tackling the challenges of the modern scientific landscape.

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# Data-Driven Modeling for Enhanced Aerodynamic

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Machine learning and artificial intelligence techniques have transformed our everyday lives within the past few years. In areas where vast amounts of data are available, the aforementioned techniques have had tremendous success, especially when mathematical models are lacking. Instead, engineering tools in general and computational fluid dynamics tools in particular rely on first-order principles that directly enable the description and investigation of system behavior. Based on these principles, derived tools significantly contribute to the green transformation of the aviation sector. However, such tools are far from perfect and suffer several shortcomings, e.g., computational bottlenecks once a massive amount of simulations is required or the problem of deriving accurate turbulence models to describe small-scale turbulent behavior. Machine learning techniques are generally regarded as a possibility to enhance and complement first-order based numerical simulation tools to circumvent these shortcomings and yield a pathway towards enhanced aerodynamics. This lecture will shed some light on how machine learning can be used in this direction and is split into two parts. The first part focuses on how machine learning models can be employed during optimization and uncertainty quantification. This will be demonstrated based on an airfoil example. The second part will focus on special requirements for machine learning arising from the nature of fluid dynamics and showcase a few examples of research performed at the German Aerospace Center in this direction.

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## 10.1 Motivation

When designing and optimizing an aircraft, it is crucial to accurately analyze and handle the available aerodynamic data, whether scalar- or vector-valued quantities. In fact, a correct interpretation of data helps the aerodynamic engineer to gain insights into complex physical phenomena as well as reliably judge new technologies. Moreover, aerodynamic data sets represent the common interface to other disciplines such as flight mechanics, loads analysis or overall aircraft design. Quantity and quality of these data sets highly depend on the methodology used to gather them. While flight tests are known to provide data within a real environment but at a substantial cost, numerical analyses are a cheaper alternative at a reduced fidelity level. The efficient usage, combination and handling of such data sets have always been a focus of the aerodynamics community. However, in the past decade, this trend has significantly intensified due to increasing computational resources available and the rise in popularity of machine learning (ML) methods. In fact, big data, ML and deep learning (DL) are regularly seen as driving factors of the aerospace industry in the upcoming years. Looking at potential benefits and existing demands from several application fields, the German Aerospace Center (DLR), Institute of Aerodynamics and Flow Technology decided to intensify research on ML for applied aerodynamic challenges several years ago. This lecture aims at transferring knowledge gained throughout the years to interest students and colleagues who are new to the field. It is split in two parts. First, Bayesian optimization, also known as surrogate-based optimization (SBO), is introduced and demonstrated for an airfoil optimization. The same methodology is also employed to handle uncertainties. Second, an overview of the challenges and differences of ML for computation fluid dynamics compared to “classical” ML is given.

## 10.2 Machine Learning for Efficient Design

In commercial aviation, an ongoing need exists to decrease fuel consumption. This imperative arises from the necessity to fulfill strict environmental objectives established by governmental bodies. The European Commission delineates these ecological objectives, stipulating a 75% decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> and a 90% decrease in NO<sub>x</sub> emissions per passenger kilometer by 2050 (Publications Office of the European Union, 2011). Given that the tube and wing layout that has already been highly optimized is dominating the market, and seems to do so also for

upcoming years, improvements are no longer trivial to obtain. Hence, the integration of aerodynamic shape optimization with advanced technologies has become increasingly prevalent. Especially designing for laminar instead of turbulent flow on large areas of an aircraft offers a significant reduction in viscous drag and, hence, directly reduces fuel consumption. Note that while laminarity is not a new concept in general, it remains relatively novel in the context of commercial aircraft wing design. Throughout the years, direct shape optimization has been used in designing airfoils and wings to achieve natural laminar flow (NLF) (Han et al., 2018). For all these ambitions, typically, a large number of solution evaluations, e.g., CFD simulations, is necessary. This is the place where ML comes into play by ensuring intelligent data collection and usage.

### 10.2.1 Surrogate-based Optimization

Solving a global optimization problem may require a large number of function (black-box) evaluations depending on the design space and the non-linearity of the function. This can rapidly turn intractable and infeasible, e.g., when - (i) the design space is high-dimensional and/or (ii) the function evaluation is expensive (e.g., a typical CFD simulation). Next, an efficient optimization technique is discussed that is known as surrogate-based optimization (SBO) or Bayesian Optimization; see Forrester & Keane (2009) for further details. It leverages machine learning models to reduce computational cost while preserving high accuracy. For a general optimization problem, let  $y \in \mathbb{R}$  be the quantity of interest (QoI), which is usually a performance measure such as the drag coefficient, depending (mostly non-linearly) on the design variables  $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^d$  at operating conditions  $\mathbf{A}$ . The goal of optimization is to find an optimal set of design variables  $\mathbf{x}^*$  at constant operating conditions  $\mathbf{A}_0$  while satisfying  $k$  constraints on the design variables,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{x}^* &= \arg \min_{\mathbf{x}} \{y(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{A}_0)\}, \\ g_i(\mathbf{x}) &\leq 0, \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, k. \end{aligned} \tag{10.1}$$

The workflow of SBO is displayed in Figure 10.1 and consists of four steps. The first step contains generating the initial DoE sampling in the design space and evaluating the objective function (and constraints) at all sampling points. Second, a surrogate model for the objective function (and constraints) is constructed and iteratively refined using an active infill criteria to sequentially reach the

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network receives both parameters as additional inputs. The training points are therefore sampled in a four-dimensional domain. Moreover, we introduce a locally varying artificial viscosity factor that is also determined automatically during training from the network. For optimal space filling a non-uniform point distribution is used. Half of the points are distributed uniformly across the entire physical domain  $\Omega = (-1, 1) \times (-1, 1)$  using the Halton sequence (Halton, 1960). For the other half of the points, the y-coordinate is sampled using a normal distribution with a variance of  $\sigma = 0.07$  and with a uniform distribution for the x-coordinate. The resulting predictions for the Mach number field for three exemplary cases are shown in Figure 10.14. One can see that for the cylindrical shape ( $a = 0.1$ ), even at  $M_\infty = 0.4$ , close to the critical Mach number, the

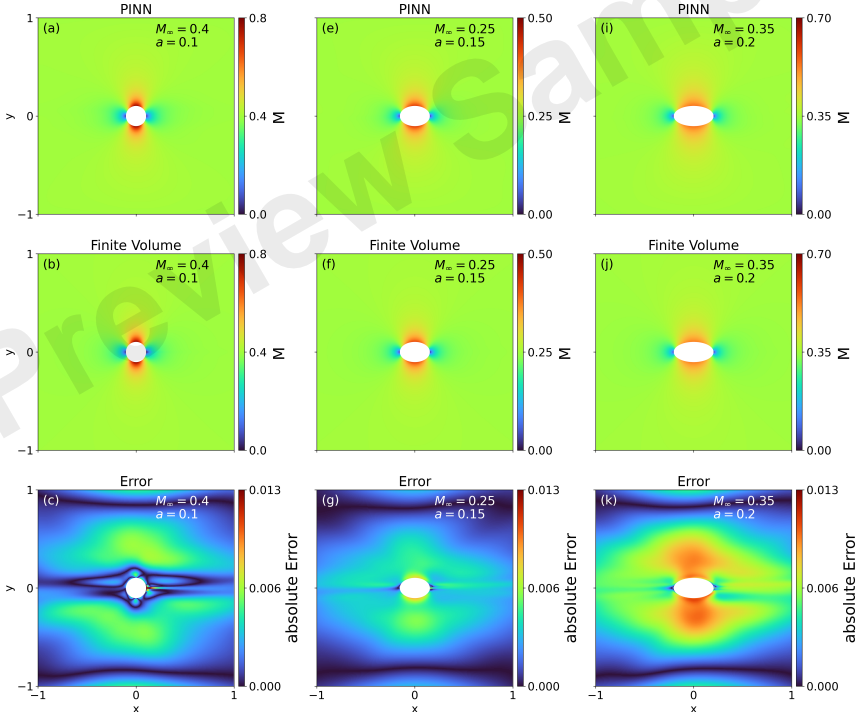


Figure 10.14: Exemplary predictions of parametric PINN for local Mach number for parametric flow around a cylinder. The first row shows the PINN approximation for three different parameter sets. The second row shows a reference solution and the third row shows the absolute error.

results are visually indistinguishable from the reference solution. The plot of the absolute error reveals that inaccuracies are most prevalent near the cylinder surface and directly up-/down-stream. For the other two parameter sets with ellipsoidal shapes, a similar quality of the results can be observed. Furthermore, slight asymmetries between the upper and lower side can be observed. While this accuracy is inferior to established numerical solvers, the method might still be of value in situations where rapid predicts for various parameter combinations, e.g. optimization or loads analysis, are of interest. Further details including additional studies also on a supersonic test case can be found in Wassing et al. (2024)

### 10.4 Conclusions

Machine Learning has a tremendous potential to enhance and improve currently established tools as well as workflow within the field of applied aerodynamics. In fact, strength of machine learning models such as rapid turn-around times while accounting for highly non-linear phenomena naturally addresses several shortcomings of traditional methods and approaches. This lecture is split into two parts. The first part focuses on how machine learning models can be used for optimization and uncertainty quantification with an applied aerodynamics example. The second part shed some light on differences between machine learning tasks and settings within the field of fluid dynamics and outside of it. Based on this some research directions are highlighted that account for such differences. Overall machine learning is powerful tool for enhancing aerodynamics but it is not a golden bullet that magically solves all existing problems. Instead it should be employed in a knowledgeable way by practitioners. Moreover, additional research is needed to overcome still existing challenges and advance the state-of-the-art.

# Dimensionality reduction, classification and reduced-order modelling for reacting flow simulations

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The use of machine learning algorithms to predict the behaviors of complex systems is gaining interest in the combustion community. The key to an effective use of machine-learning tools in multi-physics problems, including combustion, is to couple them to physical and computer models, to embody in them all the prior knowledge and physical constraints that can enhance their performances, and to improve them based on the feedback coming for the validation experiments. In other words, we need to adapt the scientific method to bring machine learning into the picture and make the best use of the massive amount of data we have produced thanks to the advances in numerical computing. The present talk reviews some of the open opportunities for the application of data-driven, reduced-order modelling of combustion systems. Examples of feature extraction in turbulent combustion data, empirical low dimensional manifold identification, classification, regression and reduced-order modelling are provided.

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## 11.1 Introduction

The simulation of turbulent combustion is a very challenging task, for a number of aspects beyond turbulence. Indeed, combustion is intrinsically multi-scale and multi-physics. It is characterized by a variety of scales inherently coupled, in space and time, through thermo-chemical and fluid dynamic interactions (Pope, 2013). Typical chemical mechanisms describing the evolution of fuels consist of hundreds of species involved in thousands of reactions, spanning twelve decades of temporal scales (Frassoldati et al., 2003). The interaction of these scales with the fluid dynamic ones defines the nature of the combustion regime as well as the limiting process in the determination of the overall fuel oxidation rate (Kuo & Acharya, 2012). When the characteristic chemical scales are much smaller than the fluid dynamic ones, the combustion problem becomes a mixing one (i.e., mixed is burnt (Magnussen, 1981)): combustion and chemistry are decoupled and the problem is highly simplified. Likewise, for chemical time scales much larger than the fluid dynamic ones, the system can be described taking into account chemistry only, neglecting the role of fluid dynamics altogether. The intensity of the interactions between turbulent mixing and chemistry is measured using the Damkhöler number, defined as the ratio between the characteristic mixing,  $\tau_m$ , and chemical,  $\tau_c$ , time scales:

$$Da = \frac{\tau_m}{\tau_c}. \quad (11.1)$$

In terms of  $Da$  number,  $Da \gg 1$  indicates a mixing-controlled, fast chemistry process. On the other hand,  $Da \ll 1$  denotes a chemistry-controlled, slow chemistry process. Most practical combustion systems operate at conditions characterized by a non-negligible overlap between flow and chemical scales. This is particularly true for novel combustion technologies, where the use of diluted conditions and the enhanced mixing leads to a  $Da$  distribution close to unity. This grants some control on the combustion process, thanks to the increase of the characteristic chemical scales compared to the mixing ones. In particular, the operating conditions (temperature and compositions) can be adjusted in such a way that the emissions are kept below the required values (Cavaliere & de Joannon, 2004; J.Wünning & J.Wünning, 1997; Parente et al., 2011). The condition  $Da \approx 1$  is generally referred to as finite-rate chemistry, to indicate that combustion is not infinitely fast but of finite speed. Modelling these combustion regimes is very challenging because both fluid mechanics and chemistry must be accurately modeled. In particular, chemistry cannot be described using

simplified global mechanisms, resulting in a significant burden for combustion simulations. Indeed, the solution of turbulent combustion problems requires the solution of hundreds of transport equations for (tightly coupled) chemical species on top of the conservation equations for mass, momentum and energy, and the corresponding closure models (i.e., turbulence models). Beside the dimensionality problem, the transport equations of reacting scalars also require closure models, when the reacting structures are not fully resolved on the numerical grid. The challenges associated to turbulent combustion modelling makes the use of machine learning very attractive. While turbulent combustion models are spread across combustion industries, their current predictive capabilities fall well short of what would be needed in decision making for new designs and regulations (Pope, 2013). High-fidelity, direct numerical simulations (DNS) of combustion systems are still limited to particular aspect of a turbulent combustion process and simple ‘building blocks’. Still, these high-fidelity simulations are rich in information that could help decode the complexity of turbulence-chemistry interactions and guide the development of filtered and lower-fidelity modelling approaches for faster evaluations. The objective of the present lecture is to demonstrate the potential of data-driven modelling in the context of combustion simulations. In particular, we present:

- The application of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and other linear and non-linear techniques to identify low-dimensional manifolds in high-fidelity combustion data-sets and reveal the key features of complex non-equilibrium phenomena. Different techniques are compared to PCA, including Non-negative Matrix Factorization (NMF), Autoencoders and Local PCA in Section 11.2.
- The development of reduced-order models (ROMs), to be used in conjunction with, or to replace high-fidelity simulation tools, to reduce the burden associated with the large number of species in detailed chemical mechanisms. First, the use of transport models based on PCA are presented in Section 11.3. Then, the application of a dynamic adaptive chemistry approach based on the combination of classification and non-linear regression is discussed in Section 11.4. Finally, the development of digital twins of combustion systems is shown in Section 11.5.

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designed for diagnostic, predictive, prescriptive, or autonomous purposes, these digital twins signify a progression toward more human-in-the-loop systems. In this paradigm, human attention is directed towards critical decision-making, while automated processes take on repetitive, dull, dirty, and dangerous tasks, optimizing the utilization of AI technologies.

Preview Sample



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