

Robust Optimal Design of Large-Scale Nonlinear Bayesian Inverse Problems

Abhijit Chowdhary ¹ Ahmed Attia ² Alen Alexanderian ¹

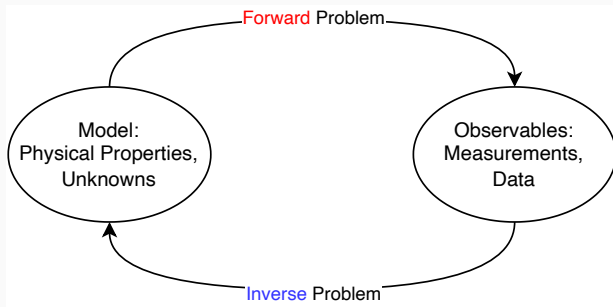
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Introduction

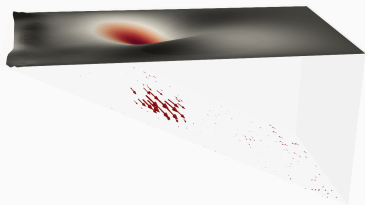
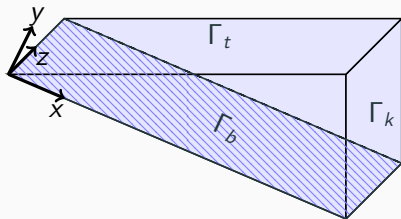
Introduction: Motivation



Applications

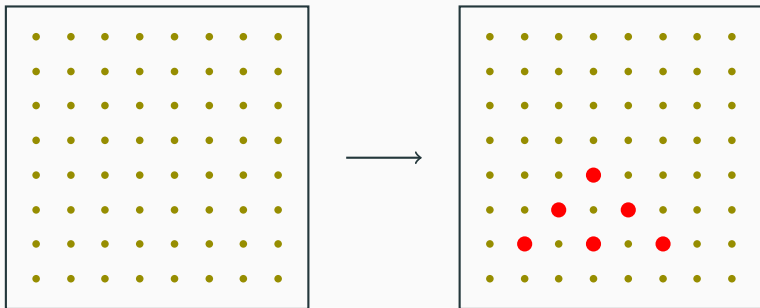
1. Fault-slip inference
2. Contaminant-source identification
3. Permeability field inversion in porous medium flow
4. Epidemic model calibration

Example: 3D Linear Elasticity Modeling Fault Slip Inference



$$\begin{aligned} -\nabla \cdot [\mu(\nabla \mathbf{u} + (\nabla \mathbf{u})^T) + \lambda \nabla \cdot \mathbf{u}] &= \mathbf{0} && \text{in } \Omega, \\ \sigma(\mathbf{u})\mathbf{n} &= \mathbf{0} && \text{on } \Gamma_t, \\ \mathbf{u} + \beta_k \sigma(\mathbf{u})\mathbf{n} &= \mathbf{0} && \text{on } \Gamma_k, \\ \mathbf{u} + \beta_s \sigma(\mathbf{u})\mathbf{n} &= \mathbf{h} && \text{on } \Gamma_s, \\ \mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{n} &= 0 && \text{on } \Gamma_b, \\ \delta \mathbf{T}(\sigma(\mathbf{u})\mathbf{n}) + \mathbf{T}\mathbf{u} &= \mathbf{m} && \text{on } \Gamma_b. \end{aligned}$$

Selecting the Optimal Experimental Design



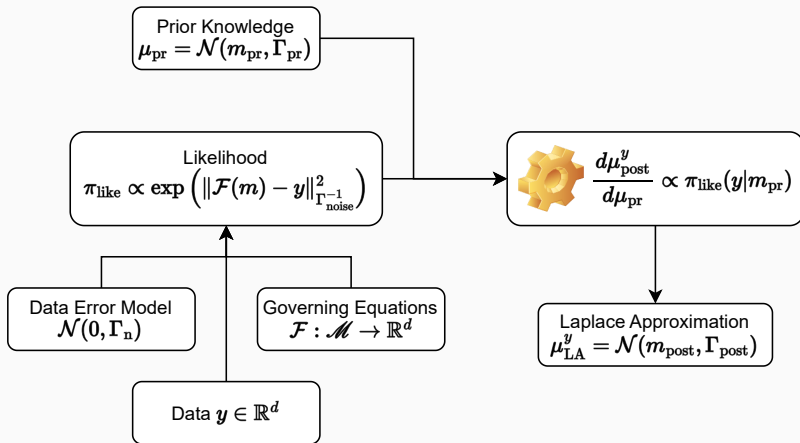
Optimal Experimental Design for Sensor Placement

Q: Where should I allocate my sensor budget?

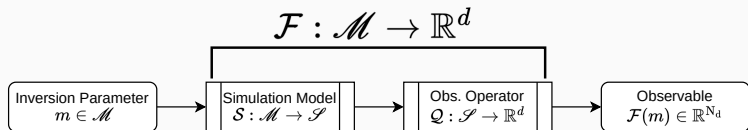
Goal: Enable robust (worst-case) optimal experimental design for infinite-dimensional nonlinear Bayesian inverse problems.

PDE-Constrained Bayesian Inversion

High Level Overview of Bayesian Inversion

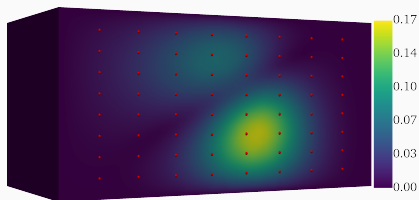


Parameter to Observable Map



Definition

The map $\mathcal{F} : \mathcal{M} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{N_d}$ is the parameter to observable map.



Governing Equations

For some appropriate space \mathcal{U} , consider the abstract weak PDE formulation: Given $m \in \mathcal{M}$, find $u \in \mathcal{U}$ such that

$$a(u, p, m) = \langle p, \mathcal{A}(u, p) \rangle = 0, \quad \forall p \in \mathcal{V}, \quad (1)$$

- $u \in \mathcal{U}$ is the state variable,
- $m \in \mathcal{M}$ is the parameter to be inferred,
- $p \in \mathcal{V}$ is the test function,
- $a : \mathcal{U} \times \mathcal{V} \times \mathcal{M} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is the weak form of the PDE

MAP Estimation and the Laplace Approximation

Definition (MAP Point)

Define the functional

$$\Phi(m) = \frac{1}{2} \|\mathcal{F}(m) - \mathbf{y}\|_{\Gamma_n^{-1}}^2 + \frac{1}{2} \|m - m_{\text{pr}}\|_{\mathcal{C}_{\text{pr}}^{-1}}^2$$

The **MAP point** m_{post} is the minimizer of Φ .

Definition (The Laplace Approximation)

The Laplace Approximation to the posterior measure is

$$\hat{\mu}_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}} = \mathcal{N}(m_{\text{post}}, \mathcal{C}_{\text{post}})$$

where $\mathcal{C}_{\text{post}}^{-1} := \mathcal{H}_m(m_{\text{post}}) + \mathcal{C}_{\text{pr}}^{-1}$ and

$$\mathcal{H}_m(m_{\text{post}}) := \mathcal{J}(m_{\text{post}})^T \Gamma_n^{-1} \mathcal{J}(m_{\text{post}}).$$

Adjoint-Based Gradient Computation

Derivatives of Φ can be understood using the adjoint method.

$$\mathcal{L}(u, m, p) = \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{y} - \mathcal{Q}u\|_{\Gamma_n^{-1}}^2 + \frac{1}{2} \|m - m_{\text{pr}}\|_{\mathcal{C}_{\text{pr}}^{-1}}^2 + a(u, m, p).$$

The action of \mathcal{H}_m at \hat{m} on m is

$$\mathcal{H}_m(m)(\hat{m}, \tilde{m}) = \langle \tilde{m}, a_{mp}(u, m, p)\hat{p} \rangle,$$

where for all $\tilde{p} \in \mathcal{V}$ and $\tilde{u} \in \mathcal{V}$,

$$a(u, m, \tilde{p}) = 0, \quad (\text{State})$$

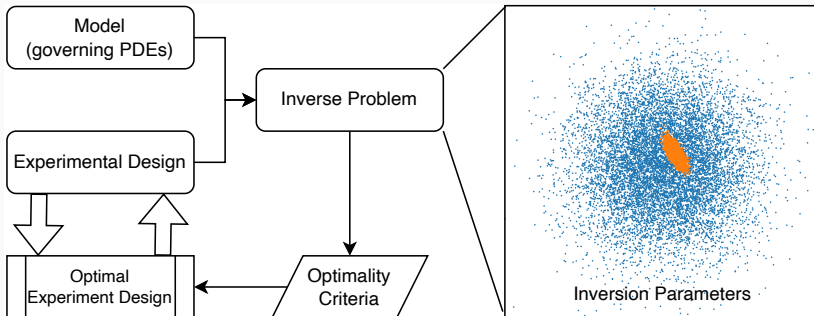
$$\langle \tilde{u}, a_u(u, m, p) \rangle + \langle \tilde{u}, \mathcal{Q}^* \Gamma_n^{-1} (\mathbf{y} - \mathcal{Q}u) \rangle = 0, \quad (\text{Adjoint})$$

$$\langle \tilde{p}, a_{pu}(u, m, p)\hat{u} \rangle + \langle \tilde{p}, a_{pm}(u, m, p)\hat{m} \rangle = 0, \quad (\text{Incr. State})$$

$$\langle \tilde{u}, a_{up}(u, m, p)\hat{p} \rangle + \langle \tilde{u}, \mathcal{Q}^* \Gamma_n^{-1} \mathcal{Q}\hat{u} \rangle = 0. \quad (\text{Incr. Adjoint})$$

Robust Optimal Experimental Design

Optimal Experimental Design of Bayesian Inverse Problems



Definition (Optimal Experimental Design (OED))

Suppose

- $\xi \in \{0, 1\}^{N_d}$ is a binary encoding of the observational configuration ($\xi_i = 1$ if sensor i is active, 0 otherwise),
- and $N_b \ll N_d$ is some budget constraint.

Then, the OED problem is defined as the optimization problem

$$\max_{\xi \in \mathcal{S}(N_b)} \mathcal{U}(\xi),$$

where

$$\mathcal{S}(N_b) = \left\{ \xi \in \{0, 1\}^{N_d} : \sum_{i=1}^{N_d} \xi_i = N_b \right\},$$

and the utility (objective) \mathcal{U} is chosen to quantify the quality of the design.

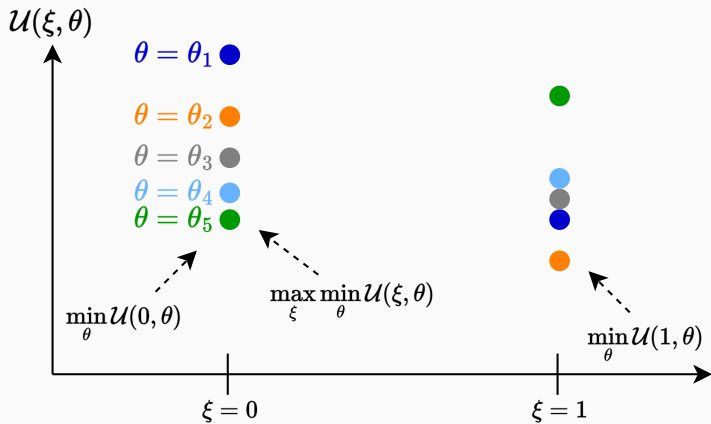
Definition (Robust Optimal Experimental Design (ROED))

Additionally, suppose there exists a set of parameters $\theta \in \Theta$ that we are a-priori uncertain about. Then, the ROED problem is defined as the optimization problem

$$\max_{\xi \in \mathcal{S}(N_b)} \min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{U}(\xi, \theta),$$

where

$$\mathcal{S}(N_b) = \left\{ \xi \in \{0, 1\}^{N_d} : \sum_{i=1}^{N_d} \xi_i = N_b \right\},$$



Budget-Aware Probabilistic ROED

Idea: Model ξ as a random variable!

- **Probabilistic OED**: Ahmed Attia, Sven Leyffer, and Todd S. Munson. “Stochastic Learning Approach for Binary Optimization: Application to Bayesian Optimal Design of Experiments”. In: *SIAM Journal on Scientific Computing* 44.2 (2022), B395–B427
- **Robust OED**: Ahmed Attia, Sven Leyffer, and Todd Munson. “Robust A-Optimal Experimental Design for Bayesian Inverse Problems”. In: (2023). eprint: [arXiv:2305.03855](https://arxiv.org/abs/2305.03855)
- **Budget-Aware Probabilistic OED**: Ahmed Attia. “Probabilistic Approach to Black-Box Binary Optimization with Budget Constraints: Application to Sensor Placement”. In: *arXiv preprint arXiv:2406.05830* (2024)

Budget-Aware Probabilistic ROED

Definition (Conditional Bernoulli Model)

Let $\xi \in \{0, 1\}^{N_d}$ be a multivariate Bernoulli random variable parameterized by the policy $\mathbf{p} \in [0, 1]^{N_d}$. Let $|\xi| \equiv |\xi| = \sum_{i=1}^{N_d} \xi_i$ be the total number of active (equal to 1) entries in ξ , and define

$$S = \{1, \dots, N_d\}; \quad O = \{i \in S : p_i = 0\}; \quad I = \{i \in S : p_i = 1\}; \quad T = S \setminus \{O \cup I\}.$$

Then, the probability mass function (PMF) of the conditional Bernoulli model is

$$\mathbb{P}(\xi | \mathbf{p}, |\xi| = z) = \begin{cases} \frac{\prod_{i \in T} w_i^{\xi_i}}{R(z - |I|, T)}, & \text{if } \xi_j = p_j, \forall j \in \{I \cup O\} \text{ and } \sum_{j \in T} \xi_j = z - |I| \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

where

$$R(k, A) = \sum_{\substack{B \subseteq A \\ |B|=k}} \prod_{i \in B} w_i; \quad w_i = \frac{p_i}{1 - p_i}, \forall i \in \{1, \dots, N_d\}.$$

Budget-Aware Probabilistic ROED

Assume that ξ is a random variable endowed with the **conditional Bernoulli distribution** $\mathbb{P}(\xi|\mathbf{p}, |\xi| = N_b)$.

$$\max_{\mathbf{p} \in [0,1]^{N_d}} \mathcal{U}(\mathbf{p}) := \mathbb{E}_{\xi \sim \mathbb{P}(\xi|\mathbf{p}, |\xi|=N_b)} \left[\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{U}(\xi, \theta) \right].$$

Budget-Aware Probabilistic ROED

Assume that ξ is a random variable endowed with the **conditional Bernoulli distribution** $\mathbb{P}(\xi|\mathbf{p}, |\xi| = N_b)$.

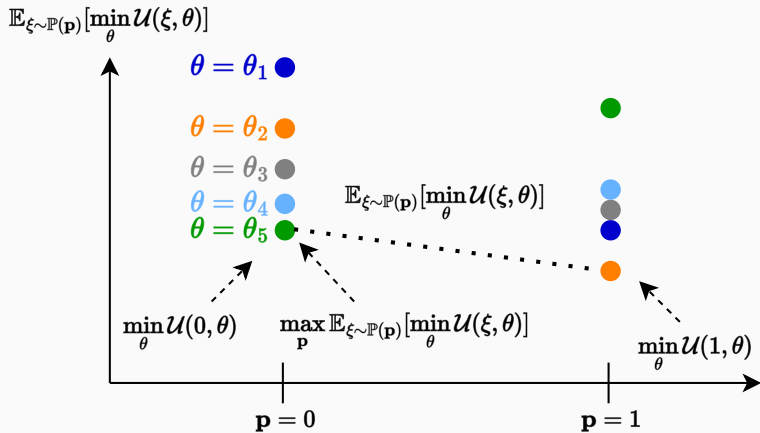
$$\max_{\mathbf{p} \in [0,1]^{N_d}} \mathcal{U}(\mathbf{p}) := \mathbb{E}_{\xi \sim \mathbb{P}(\xi|\mathbf{p}, |\xi|=N_b)} \left[\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{U}(\xi, \theta) \right].$$

Furthermore,

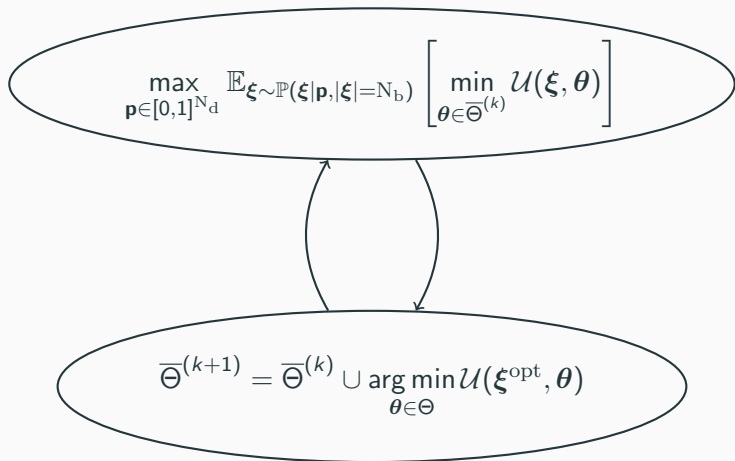
$$\nabla_{\mathbf{p}} \mathcal{U}(\mathbf{p}) = \mathbb{E}_{\xi \sim \mathbb{P}(\xi|\mathbf{p}, |\xi|=N_b)} \left[\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{U}(\xi, \theta) \nabla_{\mathbf{p}} \log \mathbb{P}(\xi|\mathbf{p}, |\xi| = N_b) \right].$$

Policy Optimization

Can use gradient based optimization for \mathbf{p} without requiring gradients of \mathcal{U} !



Polyak's Algorithm



$\bar{\Theta}^{(k)}$ is a sample of k uncertain parameters.

The Expected Information Gain

- **Expected Information Gain for Large-Scale OED:** Keyi Wu, Peng Chen, and Omar Ghattas. “A Fast and Scalable Computational Framework for Large-Scale High-Dimensional Bayesian Optimal Experimental Design”. In: *SIAM/ASA Journal on Uncertainty Quantification* 11.1 (2023), pp. 235–261
- **Adjoint-Based Eigenvalue Sensitivities:** Abhijit Chowdhary et al. “Sensitivity analysis of the information gain in infinite-dimensional Bayesian linear inverse problems”. In: *International Journal for Uncertainty Quantification* 14.6 (2024)

Definition (Information Gain)

$$D_{\text{KL}}(\mu_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}} \parallel \mu_{\text{pr}}) = \int \log \left(\frac{d\mu_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}}}{d\mu_{\text{pr}}} \right) d\mu_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}}$$

Definition (Expected Information Gain)

$$\begin{aligned} \overline{D_{\text{KL}}} &= \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{y}} \left[D_{\text{KL}}(\mu_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}} \parallel \mu_{\text{pr}}) \right] \\ &= \int_{\mathcal{M}} \int_{\mathcal{Y}} D_{\text{KL}}(\mu_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}} \parallel \mu_{\text{pr}}) \pi_{\text{like}}(\mathbf{y} | m) d\mathbf{y} d\mu_{\text{pr}}(m) \end{aligned}$$

Definition (EIG using the Laplace Approximation)

Under the Laplace approximation, it can be shown that

$$D_{\text{KL}}(\hat{\mu}_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}} \parallel \mu_{\text{pr}}) = \frac{1}{2} \left[\log \det \left(\mathcal{I} + \tilde{\mathcal{H}}_{\text{m}} \right) - \text{tr} \left(\tilde{\mathcal{H}}_{\text{m}} \left[\mathcal{I} + \tilde{\mathcal{H}}_{\text{m}} \right]^{-1} \right) + \left\| m_{\text{post}} - m_{\text{pr}} \right\|_{\mathcal{C}_{\text{pr}}^{-1}}^2 \right]$$

with $\tilde{\mathcal{H}}_{\text{m}} = \mathcal{C}_{\text{pr}}^{1/2} \mathcal{H}_{\text{m}} \mathcal{C}_{\text{pr}}^{1/2}$. Hence,

$$\overline{D_{\text{KL}}} \approx \frac{1}{N_{\text{SAA}}} \sum_{i=1}^{N_{\text{SAA}}} D_{\text{KL}}(\hat{\mu}_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}_i} \parallel \mu_{\text{pr}}),$$

where for every $i \in \{1, \dots, N_{\text{SAA}}\}$, the data \mathbf{y}_i is

$$\mathbf{y}_i = \mathcal{F}(m_i) + \boldsymbol{\eta}_i,$$

where $m_i \sim \mu_{\text{pr}}$ and $\boldsymbol{\eta}_i \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \Gamma_{\text{n}})$.

Low-Rank Approximation of the EIG

$\tilde{\mathcal{H}}_m$ is often low-rank, hence

$$\tilde{\mathcal{H}}_m \phi = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \lambda_n \langle \phi, \omega_n \rangle \omega_n \approx \sum_{n=1}^r \lambda_n \langle \phi, \omega_n \rangle \omega_n, \quad \phi \in \mathcal{M},$$

so, we can define

$$\overline{D_{\text{KL}}} \approx \frac{1}{N_{\text{SAA}}} \sum_{i=1}^{N_{\text{SAA}}} D_{\text{KL}}^{(r)}(\hat{\mu}_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}_i} \parallel \mu_{\text{pr}}),$$

with

$$D_{\text{KL}}^{(r)}(\hat{\mu}_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}_i} \parallel \mu_{\text{pr}})(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) = \sum_{n=1}^r \left[\log \left(1 + \lambda_n^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) - \frac{\lambda_n^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta})}{1 + \lambda_n^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta})} \right] + \left\| m_{\text{post}}^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) - m_{\text{pr}} \right\|_{C_{\text{pr}}^{-1}}^2.$$

Low-Rank Approximation of the EIG with fixed MAP estimate

$\tilde{\mathcal{H}}_m$ is often low-rank, hence

$$\tilde{\mathcal{H}}_m \phi = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \lambda_n \langle \phi, \omega_n \rangle \omega_n \approx \sum_{n=1}^r \lambda_n \langle \phi, \omega_n \rangle \omega_n, \quad \phi \in \mathcal{M},$$

so, we can define

$$\overline{D}_{\text{KL}} \approx \frac{1}{N_{\text{SAA}}} \sum_{i=1}^{N_{\text{SAA}}} D_{\text{KL}}^{(r)}(\hat{\mu}_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}_i} \parallel \mu_{\text{pr}}),$$

with

$$D_{\text{KL}}^{(r)}(\hat{\mu}_{\text{post}}^{\mathbf{y}_i} \parallel \mu_{\text{pr}})(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) = \sum_{n=1}^r \left[\log \left(1 + \lambda_n^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) - \frac{\lambda_n^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta})}{1 + \lambda_n^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta})} \right] + \|m_{\text{post}}^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) - m_{\text{pr}}\|_{C_{\text{pr}}^{-1}}^2.$$

Utility for ROED

For the ROED problem, we will use the utility

$$u(\xi, \theta) = \frac{1}{N_{\text{SAA}}} \sum_{i=1}^{N_{\text{SAA}}} \hat{u}(\mathbf{y}_i, \xi, \theta)$$

with

$$\hat{u}(\mathbf{y}_i, \xi, \theta) = \sum_{n=1}^r \left[\log\left(1 + \lambda_n^i(\xi, \theta)\right) - \frac{\lambda_n^i(\xi, \theta)}{1 + \lambda_n^i(\xi, \theta)} \right] + C_i.$$

$$\nabla_{\theta}\mathcal{U}(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) = \frac{1}{N_{\text{SAA}}} \sum_{i=1}^{N_{\text{SAA}}} \nabla_{\theta}\hat{\mathcal{U}}(\mathbf{y}_i, \boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta}),$$

$$\nabla_{\theta}\hat{\mathcal{U}}(\mathbf{y}_i, \boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) = \nabla_{\theta} \left(\frac{1}{2} \sum_{n=1}^r \left[\log(1 + \lambda_n^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta})) - \frac{\lambda_n^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta})}{1 + \lambda_n^i(\boldsymbol{\xi}, \boldsymbol{\theta})} \right] \right).$$

Q: How do we compute $\nabla_{\theta} \lambda_n^i(\xi, \theta)$?

$$\frac{1}{2} \sum_{n=1}^r \left[\log(1 + \lambda_n) - \frac{\lambda_n}{1 + \lambda_n} \right],$$

The above expression has the following constraints

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \phi, \mathcal{H}_m \psi_n \rangle &= \lambda_n \langle \phi, \psi_n \rangle_{\mathcal{C}_{pr}^{-1}}, & \forall \phi \in \mathcal{V}, \forall n = 1, \dots, r, \\ \langle \psi_n, \psi_n \rangle_{\mathcal{C}_{pr}^{-1}} &= 1, & \forall n = 1, \dots, r, \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\mathcal{H}_m(m)(\psi_n, \phi) = \langle \phi, a_{mp}(u, m, p) \hat{p} \rangle,$$

such that for all $\tilde{p} \in \mathcal{V}$ and $\tilde{u} \in \mathcal{V}$,

$$\langle \tilde{p}, a_p(u, m, p) \rangle = 0, \quad (\text{State})$$

$$\langle \tilde{u}, a_u(u, m, p) \rangle + \langle \tilde{u}, \mathcal{Q}^* \hat{\Gamma}_n^\dagger(\xi, \theta)(\mathbf{y} - \mathcal{Q}u) \rangle = 0, \quad (\text{Adjoint})$$

$$\langle \tilde{p}, a_{pu}(u, m, p) \hat{u}_n \rangle + \langle \tilde{p}, a_{pm}(u, m, p) \psi_n \rangle = 0, \quad (\text{Incr. State})$$

$$\langle \tilde{u}, a_{up}(u, m, p) \hat{p}_n \rangle + \langle \tilde{u}, \mathcal{Q}^* \hat{\Gamma}_n^\dagger(\xi, \theta) \mathcal{Q} \hat{u}_n \rangle = 0, \quad (\text{Incr. Adjoint})$$

Lagrangian for $\nabla_{\theta}\mathcal{U}$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathcal{L}^{\text{IG}} & \left(u, m, p, \{\psi_n\}_{n=1}^r, \{\hat{u}_n\}_{n=1}^r, \{\hat{p}_n\}_{n=1}^r, \right. \\
 & \left. u^*, p^*, \{\lambda_n^*\}_{n=1}^r, \{\hat{u}_n^*\}_{n=1}^r, \{\hat{p}_n^*\}_{n=1}^r; \theta \right) \\
 & = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{n=1}^r \left[\log \left(1 + \langle \psi_n, a_{mp} \hat{p}_n \rangle \right) - \frac{\langle \psi_n, a_{mp} \hat{p}_n \rangle}{1 + \langle \psi_n, a_{mp} \hat{p}_n \rangle} \right] \\
 & + \langle p^*, a_p \rangle + \langle u^*, a_u \rangle + \left\langle u^*, \mathcal{Q}^* \hat{\Gamma}_n^\dagger (\mathbf{y} - \mathcal{Q}u) \right\rangle \\
 & + \sum_{n=1}^r \left[\langle \hat{p}_n^*, a_{pu} \hat{u}_n + a_{pm} \psi_n \rangle + \langle \hat{u}_n^*, a_{up} \hat{p}_n \rangle + \left\langle \hat{u}_n^*, \mathcal{Q}^* \hat{\Gamma}_n^\dagger \mathcal{Q} \hat{u}_n \right\rangle \right] \\
 & + \sum_{n=1}^r \lambda_n^* \left[\langle \psi_n, \psi_n \rangle_{\mathcal{C}_{\text{pr}}^{-1}} - 1 \right].
 \end{aligned}$$

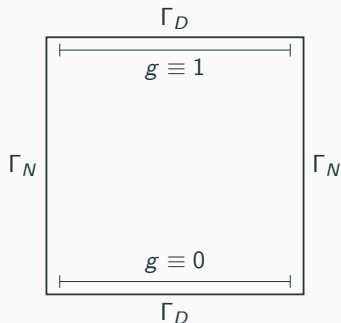
Computational Complexity Summary for \mathcal{U}

Procedure	Cost (in PDE solves)
Evaluation	$\mathcal{O}(4N_b \cdot N_{SAA})$
Gradient	$\mathcal{O}((3 + 5N_b) \cdot N_{SAA})$
Simultaneous Value/Gradient	$\mathcal{O}((3 + 5N_b) \cdot N_{SAA})$

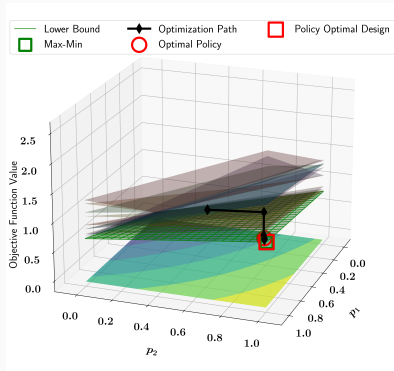
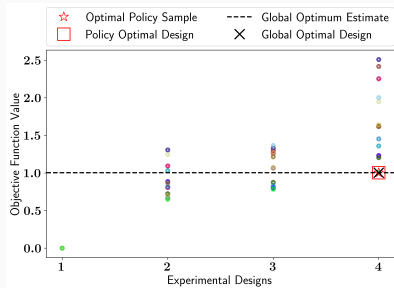
Numerical Results

Example: Permeability Identification in Poisson's Equation

$$\begin{aligned} -\nabla \cdot (\exp(m)\nabla u) &= 0 && \text{in } \Omega := (0, 1)^2, \\ \exp(m)\nabla u \cdot \mathbf{n} &= 0 && \text{on } \Gamma_N := \{0, 1\} \times (0, 1), \\ u &= g && \text{on } \Gamma_D := (0, 1) \times \{0, 1\}. \end{aligned}$$

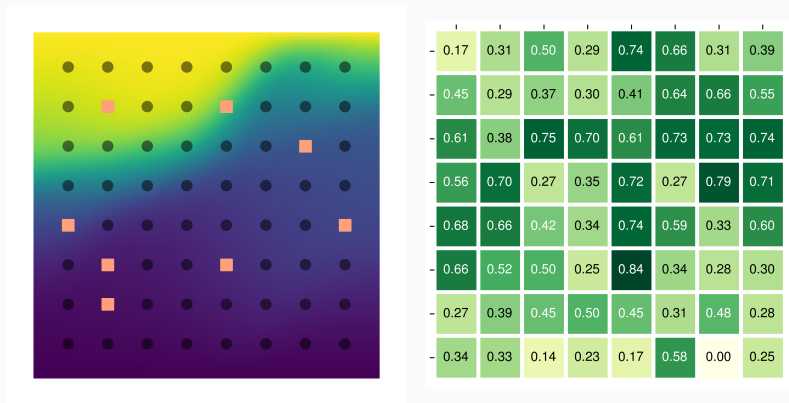


Two Sensor Experiment



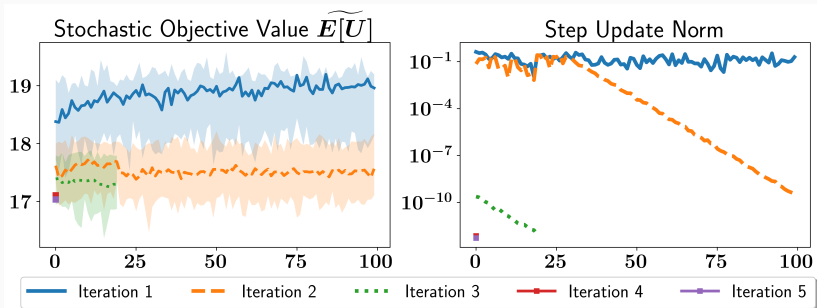
$$\Gamma_n(\theta := [\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \rho]) = \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1^2 & \rho\sigma_1\sigma_2 \\ \rho\sigma_1\sigma_2 & \sigma_2^2 \end{bmatrix}.$$

64 Sensor, Budget 8 Experiment



Results of the 64 sensor, budget 8, experiment. Left: Optimal design discovered by sampling from policy and selecting the design with the highest utility. Right: Optimal policy $\mathbf{p}_\theta^{\text{opt}}$ discovered by the stochastic optimization algorithm, visualized across the sensor grid.

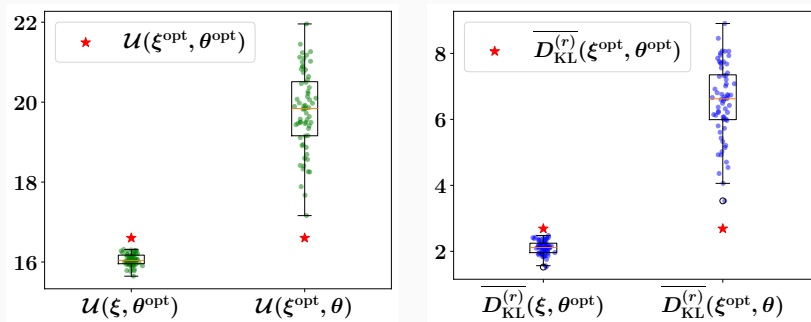
Progression of the ROED algorithm



Optimization trajectory of the 64 sensor, budget 8, experiment.

- Left: Progress of an estimate to the expectation of the utility \mathcal{U} over designs sampled from the policy. The line represents the mean of the expectation whereas the top and bottom of the shaded region represent the maximum and minimum respectively.
- Right: Norm of the update in the policy \mathbf{p} .

Sanity check for \mathcal{U}



A visualization of the quality of $(\xi^{\text{opt}}, \theta^{\text{opt}})$ for the 64 sensor, budget 8, ROED experiment.

Conclusion

Future Directions

- Moving beyond the Laplace approximation
- Further Surrogate Modeling

To be presented in a minisymposia at **SIAM CSE 2025!**

Abhijit Chowdhary, Ahmed Attia, and Alen Alexanderian. “Robust optimal design of large-scale Bayesian nonlinear inverse problems”. In: *arXiv preprint arXiv:2409.09137* (2024)

