

New Approaches to Data Assimilation and Transport Processes as Hybrid of Eulerian and Lagrangian Methods

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LONG-TERM GOAL

My long-term goal is to make substantial contributions to enhancement of forecast skills concerning the oceans and atmosphere, by deepening our knowledge for the nature of predictability. I place my emphasis on transition mechanism between dynamical regimes of planetary flows and coherent structures from both Eulerian and Lagrangian points of view.

OBJECTIVES

I wish to develop theoretical frameworks for enhancement of predictability based on dynamical systems theory. To help enhance predictability of sudden and severe events, I wish to investigate transition mechanisms between dynamical regimes. I also wish to throw a bridge between Eulerian and Lagrangian viewpoints and explore impact of severe events on large-scale transport in planetary flows. Knowledge obtained by these predictability studies will lead to a design of comprehensive ensemble-forecast systems and data-adaptive observing systems.

APPROACH

To achieve my goals, I plan to develop new theories and improve already existing methodologies so that they can be combined systematically. I start from assessing and extending individual elements of the theoretical framework, and develop new theories to fill the gaps between them as necessary. My approach involves: identification and detection of the predictability elements, Eulerian and Lagrangian descriptions of the probability density function evolution, treatment of nonlinearity as well as additive and multiplicative stochasticity in data assimilation systems. To improve forecast skills for severe and sudden events, I investigate role played by stochastic noises. Severe events can be viewed as rare extreme bursts and therefore may be related to stochastic noises whose probability distribution has heavy tail. I construct a new innovative methodology for data assimilation systems subject to dynamical and observational noises with heavy-tail distributions. To explore impact of transient flow dynamics on large-scale transport, I combine geometrical approach of dynamical systems theory and spatio-temporal data analysis technique.

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 30 SEP 2003		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2003 to 00-00-2003	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE New Approaches to Data Assimilation and Transport Processes as Hybrid of Eulerian and Lagrangian Methods				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Institute of Geophysics and Planetary &,Department of Atmospheric Sciences,UCLA,,Los Angeles,,CA,90095				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 6	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

WORK COMPLETED

An innovative method for direct assimilation of Lagrangian data in meteorology and oceanography has been formulated based on the extended Kalman filter (EKF). The method has been applied to the point vortex systems. A classification of the Lagrangian trajectories has been made for practical applications of the direct Lagrangian data assimilation method to complex ocean circulation models.

In order to examine the predictability of the coherent structures in the stratified ocean, a layer-model for point vortex system has been investigated. Judicious observing system, including parameter-estimation capacity, has been designed for improved estimation of the flow dynamics in the unobserved sub-surface layers.

To study predictability concerning transition from oscillatory to singular behavior, an idealized, highly nonlinear dynamical system has been developed. The model is based on interplay between restoring force and hysteresis in inertia, which can be found in many physical systems. The bifurcation diagram has been investigated to enhance forecast skill for the sudden transition.

A hybrid transport theory (TIME: transport induced by mean-eddy interaction) has been formulated to estimate transport induced by the anomaly in the large-scale atmosphere and ocean flows. It has been extended to identify signature and analyze role of variability in application to a large-scale atmospheric flow.

A comprehensive study to analyze transport in the Monterey bay surface flow has been pursued. In contrast to conventional Eulerian analysis techniques, Lagrangian synoptic maps have been used to study the Lagrangian ocean surface properties.

To address extended-range predictability in terms of the multiple-regime paradigm and preferred transition paths between them, the three-level quasi-geostrophic (QG) model has been investigated. Preferred transitions paths are examined also for a stochastically forced Lorenz system, to help explain the striking feature of the QG model.

RESULTS

The new Lagrangian data assimilation system augments the state variables with the Lagrangian tracer variables in addition to the prognostic variables of the dynamic model. The EKF computes not only the state variables but also the error covariance matrix. Through the cross correlation, the new assimilation system updates the unobserved prognostic variables using the observed Lagrangian tracers. This is based on the same idea as the parameter estimation using the EKF. Figure 1 shows a successful application of the EKF to the surface layer observing system for estimation of the dynamics using the point-vortex model that is the lowest-order representation of the coherent structures in the large-scale ocean flows. Performance of the data assimilation system crucially depends on the judicious choice of the key parameters in the observing system, in particular observation frequency.

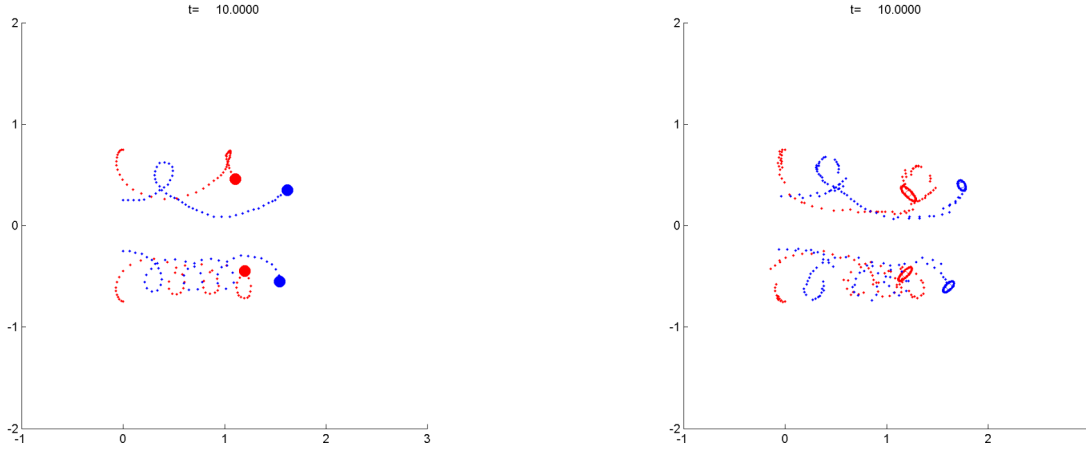


Figure 1. Surface layer observation system for subsurface layer estimation.
[Left: underlying truth by control run with surface (blue) and sub-surface (red) ocean dipole; Right: successful data assimilation with parameter estimation]

By applying the mixture model clustering technique to leading-order empirical orthogonal functions of the 500hPa level streamfunction field obtained by the QG model simulation, the four robust regimes roughly corresponding to opposite phases of the Arctic Oscillation and the North Atlantic Oscillation are found (Figure 2). The preferred transition paths are found not to be aligned with the line segments between regime centroids in most cases. It might point to heteroclinic or homoclinic connections between unstable equilibria as demonstrated using the Lorenz equations.

IMPACT/APPLICATION

The new data assimilation methodology currently being developed in this work can fill the gap between data assimilation and dynamical systems approach to Lagrangian transport theory, which has been one of the focuses in the ONR predictability DRI program. The methodology is general and can be applied to numerous observations that have not been assimilated using the conventional assimilation methods.

Extended-range weather prediction depends in a crucial way on skill at forecasting the duration of a regime event or other persistent anomaly, as well as the subsequent onset of another persistent anomaly after the break of the current one. The result obtained may suggest that a similar analysis of numerical weather prediction models could help forecast well in advance regime breaks and subsequent onsets. To do so would require an efficiently designed observational system that is able to track spatial signatures of regime transitions.

Extending TIME theory offers a variety of new directions for large-scale planetary flows, including analysis of transport processes and mechanism, impact of specific events in the flow dynamics, as well as role played by variability.

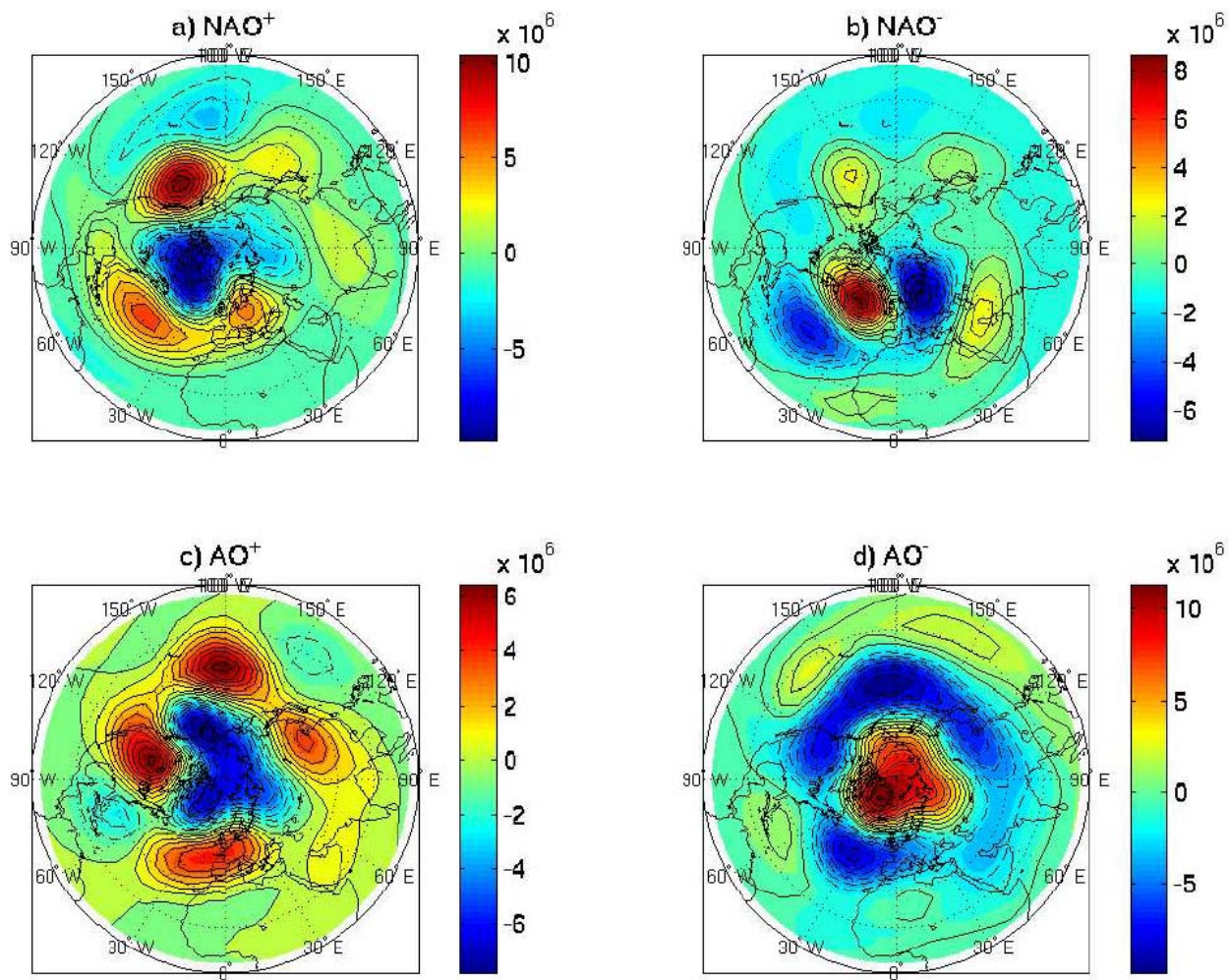


Figure 2. Streamfunction field of the four atmospheric weather regimes at 500hPa. [Positive (+) and negative (-) phases of North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) and Arctic Oscillation (AO)]

RELATED PROJECTS

1– NSF CMG Heavy Tailed Distributions in Geophysical flow: Physical Mechanisms and Data Assimilation, in collaboration with Richard McLaughlin, Roberto Camassa and Christopher K.R.T. Jones (UNC-CH) and Didier Sornette (UCLA).

2– ONR Development of a Data Assimilation System (DAS) for the Regional Ocean Modeling System (ROMS) Towards an Operational Forecasting off the U.S. West, in collaboration with Yi Chao and Zhijin Li (JPL) and James C. McWilliams (UCLA).

3– Los Alamos National Laboratory project on data assimilation studies for shock wave physics in collaboration with Jim Kao (Los Alamos National Laboratory).

PUBLICATIONS

Ide, K and D. Sornette, 2002. Oscillatory finite-time singularities in finance, population and rapture, *Physica A*, **307**, 63-106.

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