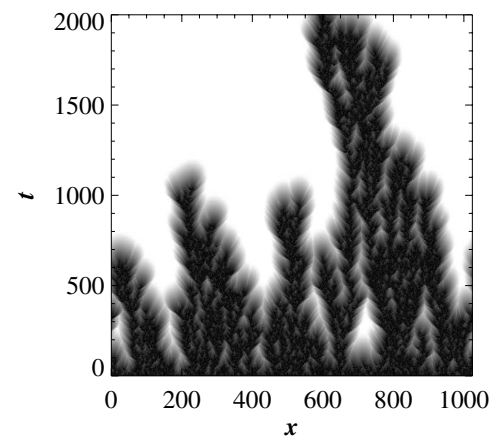
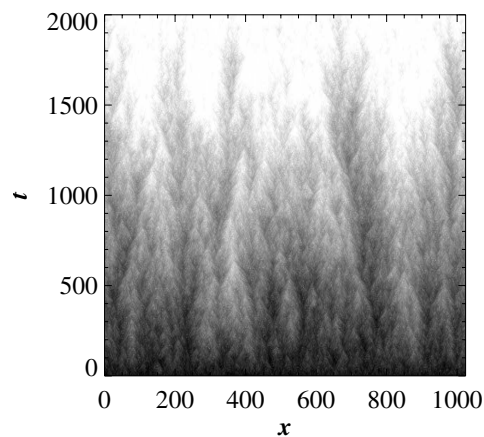


Chaotic Synchronization of spatially extended systems

Alessandro Torcini

Istituto dei Sistemi Complessi - CNR & CSDC

Firenze - Italy



Plan of the Talk

Summary of Old Results

- Chaotic Synchronization in Low Dimensional Systems $\lambda_T = 0$
- Chaotic Synchronization in Spatially Extended Systems $V_F = 0$ (Diffusive Coupling)
 - The transition is analyzed as a a non-equilibrium phase transition
 - The transition is continuous and its critical properties correspond to
 - Multiplicative Noise (MN) $V_F = \lambda_T = 0$
 - Directed Percolation (DP) $V_F = 0$; $\lambda_T < 0$

Plan of the Talk

Summary of Old Results

- Chaotic Synchronization in Low Dimensional Systems $\lambda_T = 0$
- Chaotic Synchronization in Spatially Extended Systems $V_F = 0$ (Diffusive Coupling)
 - The transition is analyzed as a non-equilibrium phase transition
 - The transition is continuous and its critical properties correspond to
 - Multiplicative Noise (MN) $V_F = \lambda_T = 0$
 - Directed Percolation (DP) $V_F = 0$; $\lambda_T < 0$

New Results

- Spatially Extended Chaotic Systems with Power-Law Coupling
- The synchronization transitions (STs) are continuous
- The critical indexes vary continuously with the interaction range
- The family of STs correspond to Anomalous Directed Percolation (ADP)
 - ADP has been found for Lévy-flight spreading of epidemic processes
 - ADP critical exponents have been measured for stochastic lattice models



Low Dimensional Chaotic Systems

Chaotic Dynamics

$\dot{u}_k(t) = \varphi_k(\mathbf{u}(t)) \quad k = 1, 2, 3, \dots$ maximum Lyapunov exponent $\lambda > 0$

Low Dimensional Chaotic Systems

Chaotic Dynamics

$\dot{u}_k(t) = \varphi_k(\mathbf{u}(t)) \quad k = 1, 2, 3, \dots$ maximum Lyapunov exponent $\lambda > 0$

Systems Coupled via Stochastic forcing

Two **replicas** \mathbf{u} and \mathbf{w} of the same dynamical system:

$$\dot{u}_k(t) = \varphi_k(\mathbf{u}(t)) + \gamma \cdot \eta(t) \quad \mathbf{u}(0) \neq \mathbf{w}(0)$$

$$\dot{w}_k(t) = \varphi_k(\mathbf{w}(t)) + \gamma \cdot \eta(t)$$

η is a **δ -correlated** random variable $\langle \eta(t')\eta(t) \rangle = \delta(t' - t)$.

For a sufficiently large noise amplitude $\gamma > \gamma_c$ the replicas can eventually **synchronize**.

Low Dimensional Chaotic Systems

Chaotic Dynamics

$$\dot{u}_k(t) = \varphi_k(\mathbf{u}(t)) \quad k = 1, 2, 3, \dots \quad \text{maximum Lyapunov exponent } \lambda > 0$$

Mutually Coupled Systems

Two **replicas** \mathbf{u} and \mathbf{w} of the same dynamical system:

$$\dot{u}_k(t) = (1 - \gamma) \cdot \varphi_k(\mathbf{u}(t)) + \gamma \cdot \varphi_k(\mathbf{w}(t)) \quad \mathbf{u}(0) \neq \mathbf{w}(0)$$

$$\dot{w}_k(t) = (1 - \gamma) \cdot \varphi_k(\mathbf{w}(t)) + \gamma \cdot \varphi_k(\mathbf{u}(t))$$

For a sufficiently strong coupling $\gamma > \gamma_c$ the replicas can eventually **synchronize**

Low Dimensional Chaotic Systems

Chaotic Dynamics

$\dot{u}_k(t) = \varphi_k(\mathbf{u}(t)) \quad k = 1, 2, 3, \dots$ maximum Lyapunov exponent $\lambda > 0$

Def: **Synchronization** is achieved if the distance between replicas **asymptotically vanishes**

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} z(t) = \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} |u(t) - w(t)| = 0$$

In order to observe synchronization in **low dimensional systems** :

$$\lambda_{\perp} = \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \lim_{z(0) \rightarrow 0} \ln \frac{z(t)}{z(0)} < 0$$

the **transverse Lyapunov exponent (TLE)** should be **negative** .

Maritan & Banavar, PRL (1994); Pikovsky, PLA (1992), PRL (1994);
Herzel & Freund, PRE (1995); Lai & Zhou, EPL (1998)



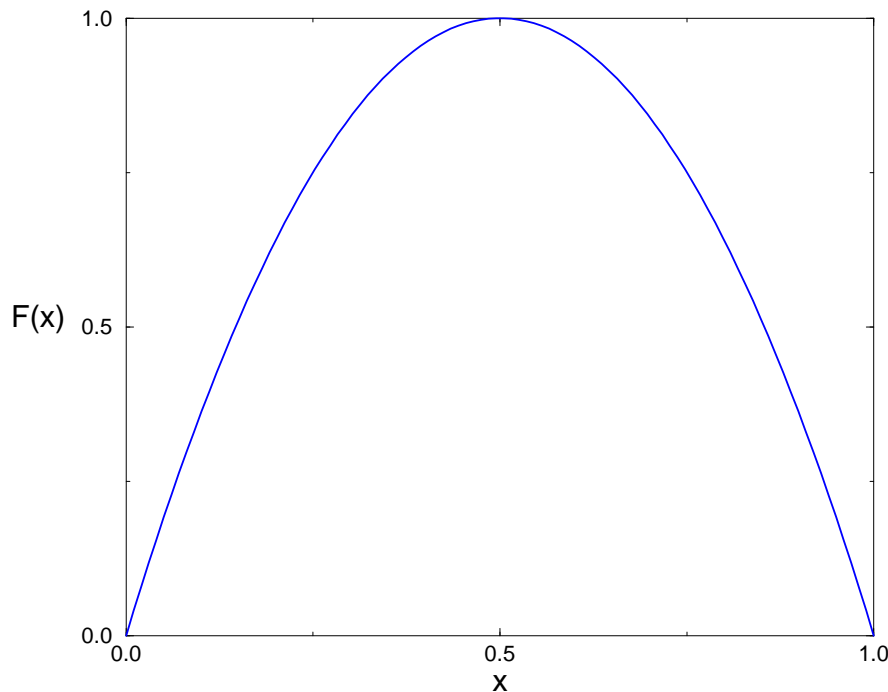
Spatially Extended Systems

Coupled Map Lattices

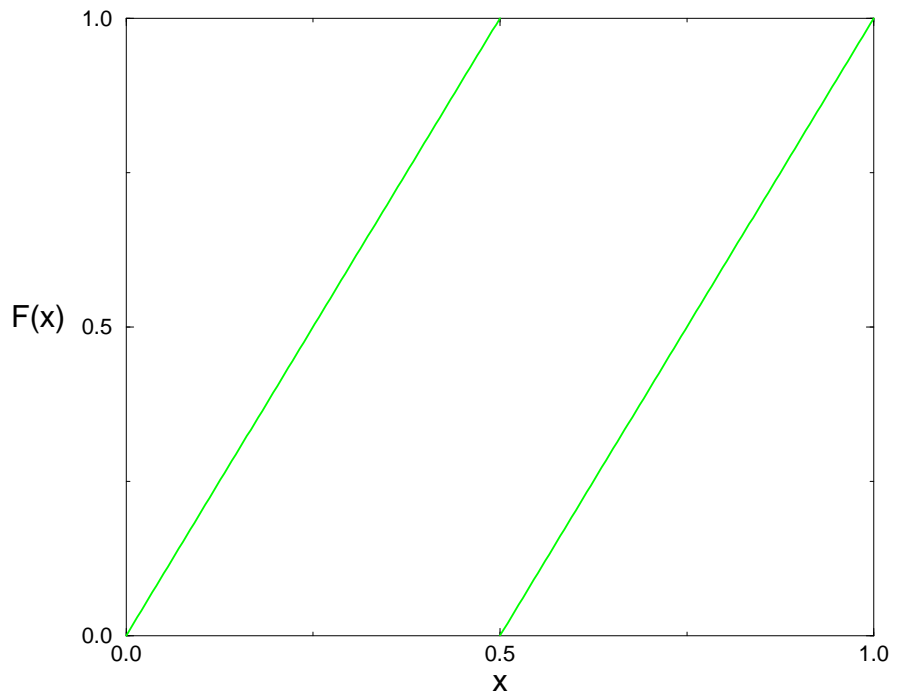
$$u_x^{t+1} = F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) u_x^t \right] \quad \nabla_\varepsilon^2 u_x = \varepsilon \{ [u_{x+1} + u_{x-1}] / 2 - u_x \}$$

where x and t are discrete, F is a **chaotic map**, typically one dimensional.

Logistic Map $F(x)=4x(1-x)$



Bernoulli Shift $F(x)=\text{Mod}(2x,1)$



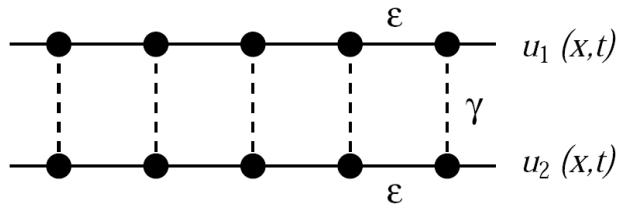
Spatially Extended Systems

Coupled Map Lattices

$$u_x^{t+1} = F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) u_x^t \right] \quad \nabla_\varepsilon^2 u_x = \varepsilon \{ [u_{x+1} + u_{x-1}] / 2 - u_x \}$$

where x and t are discrete, F is a **chaotic map**, typically one dimensional.

Mutually Coupled



$$u_x^{t+1} = (1 - \gamma) F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) u_x^t \right] + \gamma \cdot F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) w_x^t \right]$$

$$w_x^{t+1} = (1 - \gamma) F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) w_x^t \right] + \gamma \cdot F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) u_x^t \right]$$

Stochastic Forcing

$$u_x^{t+1} = F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) u_x^t \right] + \gamma \cdot \zeta_x^t$$

$$w_x^{t+1} = F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) w_x^t \right] + \gamma \cdot \zeta_x^t$$

where the noise is δ -correlated in **space** and **time** $\langle \zeta_x^t \zeta_y^s \rangle \propto \delta_{x,y} \delta_{t,s}$.

The local **difference field** is defined as $z_x^t = |u_x^t - w_x^t|$.

Spatially Extended Systems

Coupled Map Lattices

$$u_x^{t+1} = F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) u_x^t \right] \quad \nabla_\varepsilon^2 u_x = \varepsilon \{ [u_{x+1} + u_{x-1}] / 2 - u_x \}$$

where x and t are discrete, F is a **chaotic map**, typically one dimensional.

Synchronization

For sufficiently strong coupling γ the spatially averaged **difference field**

$$\rho(t) = \langle z(t) \rangle = \frac{1}{L} \sum_{x=1}^L z_x^t$$

could eventually vanish in the long time limit.

The **synchronization transition** is no longer fully described in terms of the **transverse Lyapunov exponent (TLE)**.

An extreme nonlinearity in the local map F can induce transport of **Finite Size Disturbances** even for linearly stable states (i.e. **Negative TLE**).

A **new** indicator is required to fully characterize the transition for **spatially extended systems**.



Spatially Extended Systems

Coupled Map Lattices

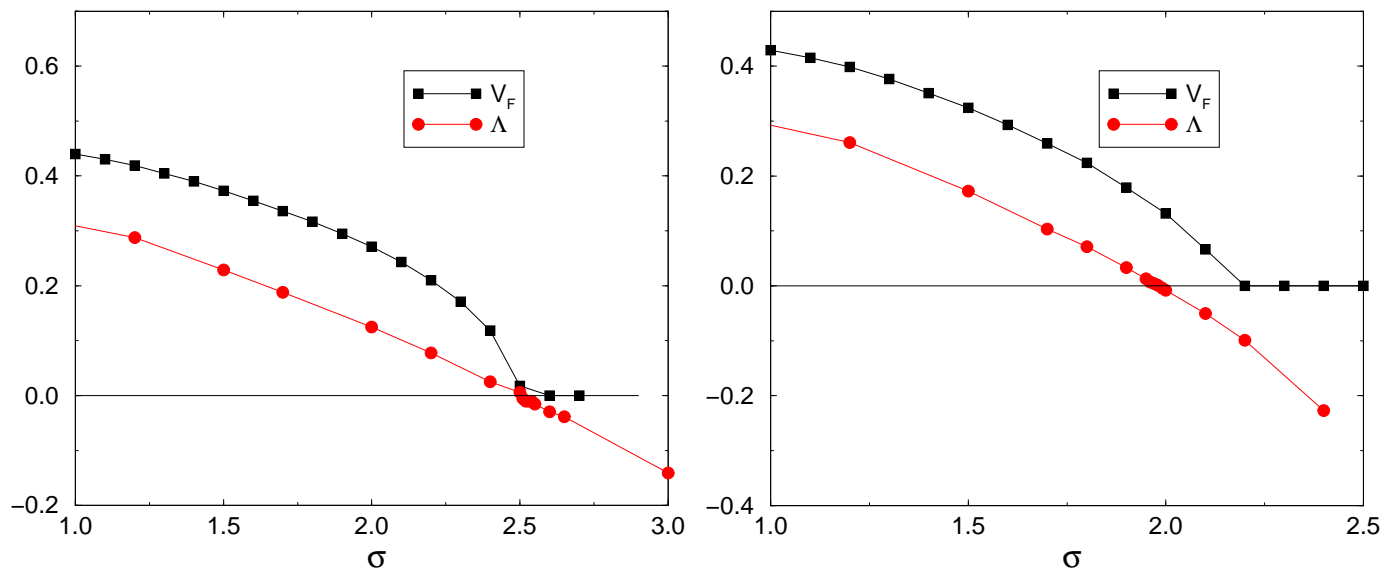
$$u_x^{t+1} = F \left[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^2) u_x^t \right] \quad \nabla_\varepsilon^2 u_x = \varepsilon \{ [u_{x+1} + u_{x-1}] / 2 - u_x \}$$

where x and t are discrete, F is a **chaotic map**, typically one dimensional.

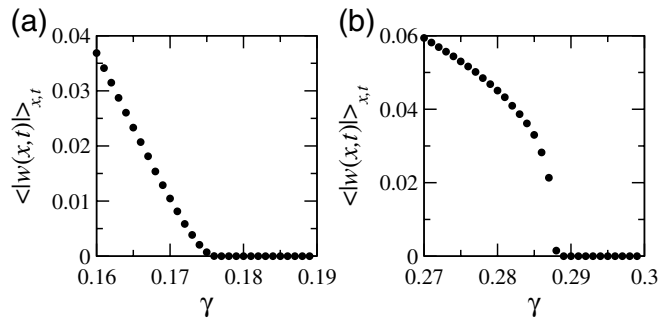
Propagation Velocity of Finite Size Perturbations

A droplet of unsynchronized sites ($N(0)$) is inserted in a completely synchronized state:

$$v_F = \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \frac{N(t) - N(0)}{2t}$$



Universality Classes



The **Synchronization Transition** is a **Non-Equilibrium Phase Transition** leading from an “active phase” ($\rho > 0$) to an “absorbing phase” ($\rho \equiv 0$).

The transition point a_c is located in the **thermodynamic limit** ($L \rightarrow \infty$) by the vanishing of the **order parameter** $\rho(t) \equiv \langle z(t) \rangle \rightarrow 0$.

A continuous transition is typically characterized by a critical behavior :

$$\rho(t) \propto t^{-\delta} \quad \rho(t) = L^{-z\delta} g(t/L^z) \quad \text{at} \quad a \equiv a_c$$

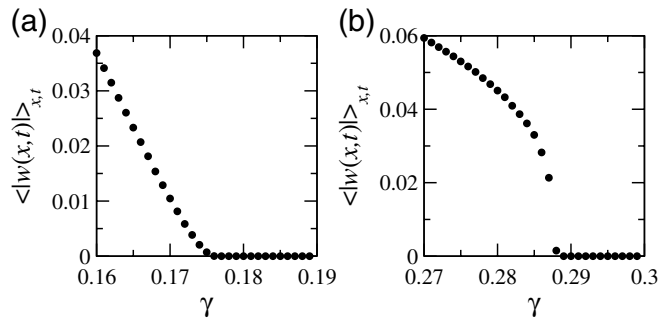
$$\langle \rho \rangle_t \propto |a - a_c|^\beta$$

$$L_c \propto |a - a_c|^{-\nu_{\parallel}} \quad T_c \propto |a - a_c|^{-\nu_{\perp}}$$

only **3 exponents** are independent (e.g. δ , β and z)



Universality Classes



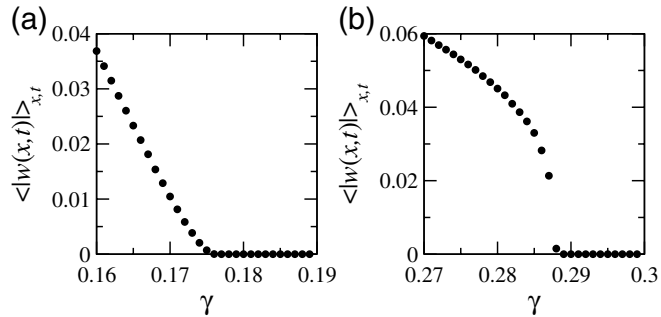
The **Synchronization Transition** is a **Non-Equilibrium Phase Transition** leading from an “active phase” ($\rho > 0$) to an “absorbing phase” ($\rho \equiv 0$).

Two different types of transitions have been observed:

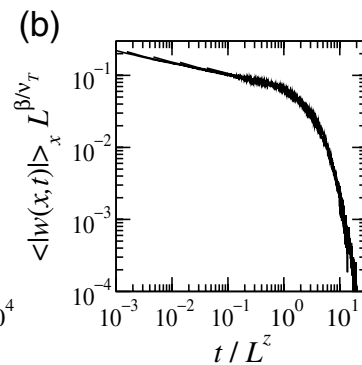
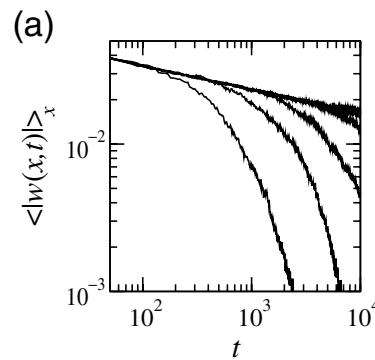
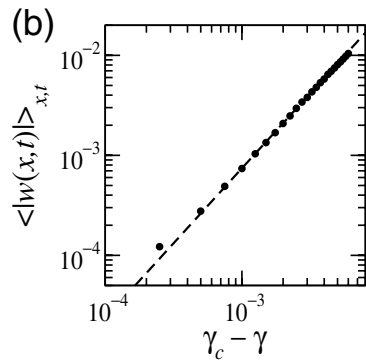
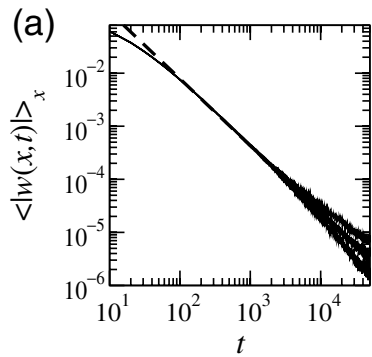
- **Multiplicative Noise**
 - $v_F = \lambda_{\perp} = 0$
 - Linear Effects rule the Transition
- **Directed Percolation**
 - $v_F = 0 \quad \lambda_{\perp} < 0$
 - Strong Nonlinear Effects ($|F'| \gg 1$)

Baroni, Livi & AT , PRE 63, 036226 (2001); Ahlers & Pikovsky, PRL, 88, 254101 (2002)

Universality Classes



The **Synchronization Transition** is a **Non-Equilibrium Phase Transition** leading from an “active phase” ($\rho > 0$) to an “absorbing phase” ($\rho \equiv 0$).



	MN	Tent	DP	Bernoulli
δ	1.10(5)	1.26(3)	0.159464(6)	0.16
β	1.70(5)	1.50(5)	0.276486(6)	0.28
z	1.53(7)	1.5	1.580745(6)	1.581

Ahlers & Pikovsky, PRL, 88, 254101 (2002); V. Ahlers, PhD Thesis (Berlin, 2001)

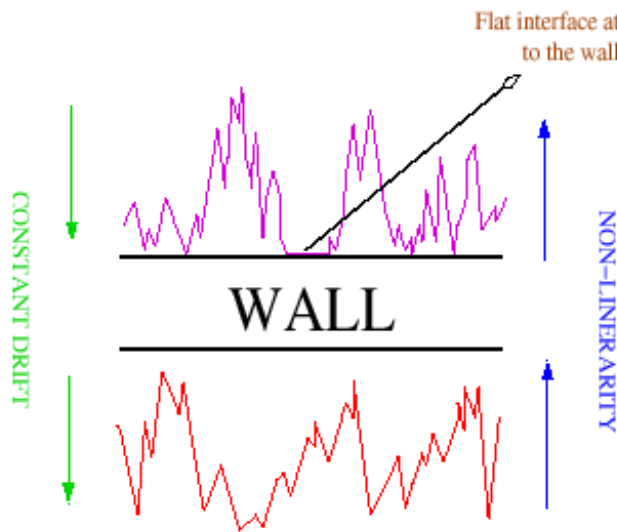


Multiplicative Noise

The corresponding field equation for the coarse-grained variable $w(x, t) = \bar{z}$ is:

$$\dot{w}(x, t) = \nabla^2 w(x, t) + aw(x, t) - bw^p(x, t) + w(x, t)\eta(x, t)$$

where η is a Gaussian noise δ -correlated in space and time and $p \geq 2$. [Pikovsky & Kurths \(94\)](#) have shown that this model describes the dynamics of CMLs within a **linear framework**.



This problem can be mapped on that of a **depinning** of a **KPZ interface** from a **hard substrate** through a Hopf-Cole Transformation $h(x, t) = -\ln w(x, t)$. This leads to a KPZ-like equation

$$\dot{h}(x, t) = \nabla^2 h(x, t) - (\nabla h(x, t))^2 - a' - be^{-(p-1)h(x, t)} + \eta(x, t)$$

The adsorbing state $w = 0$ is now mapped into $h = \infty$

[[M.A. Muñoz](#), cond-mat/0303650 (2003)]

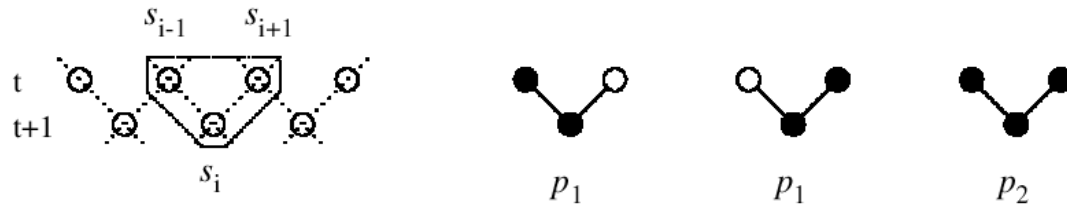
Directed Percolation

The corresponding field equation is:

$$\dot{w}(x, t) = \nabla^2 w(x, t) + aw(x, t) - bw^2(x, t) + \sqrt{w(x, t)}\eta(x, t)$$

where η is a Gaussian noise δ -correlated in space and time.

This equation is usually associated to **Infection Spreading Models**: the Domany-Kinzel cellular automaton:



black sites are infected (active phase), **white sites** are healthy (absorbing phase).

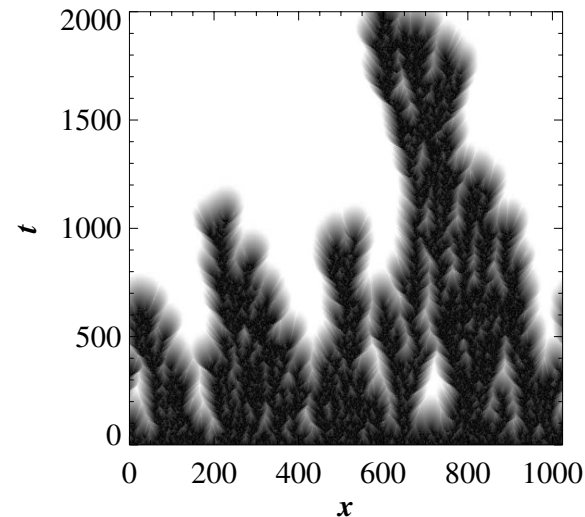
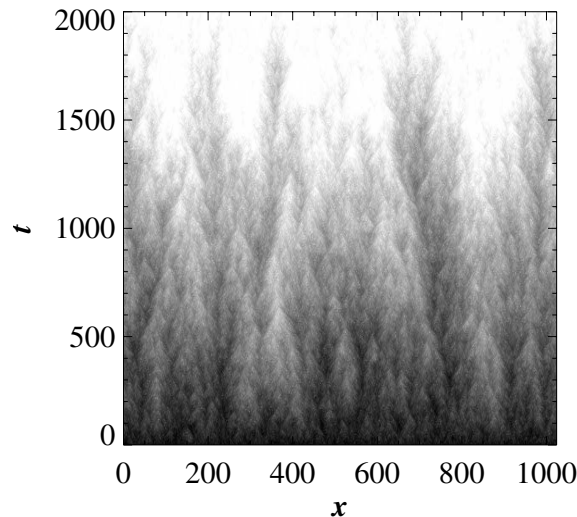
- The infection spreads only by contact
- No revival of infection within healthy region: **the absorbing state is stable**

[H. Hinrichsen Adv. Phys. 49, 815–958 (2000)]

Experimental measure of DP exponents for a ring of oscillating ferrofluidic spikes at the transition to spatiotemporal intermittency Rupp, Richter, & Rehberg, PRE (2003)

Summary of the first part

- In spatially extended systems (CMLs) with diffusive coupling **two different synchronization transitions** are observed :
 - if the **linear** behaviour prevails on **nonlinear** effects the transition belongs to the **MN** universality class;
 - if **nonlinear** effects dominate the dynamics **DP** scaling laws are observed.



In collaboration with:

Francesco Ginelli (Saclay - Paris)

- V. Ahlers* (Germany)
 - R. Livi (Firenze)
 - A. Pikovsky (Potsdam)
 - L. Baroni* (Italy)
 - D. Mukamel (Rehovot)
 - A. Politi (Firenze)
- * Working in private companies



Long-Range Interactions

Coupled Map Lattices with Power-Law Coupling

$$u_x^{t+1} = F \left[(1 + \nabla_{\epsilon}^{\sigma}) u_x^t \right] \quad \nabla_{\epsilon}^{\sigma} u_x = -\epsilon u_x + \frac{\epsilon}{\eta(\sigma)} \sum_{m=1}^M \frac{u_{x-j_m(q)} + u_{x+j_m(q)}}{(j_m(q))^{\sigma}}$$

where $x \in [1, L]$ and t are discrete, $F = 2x \pmod{1}$ is the **Bernoulli map** and periodic boundary conditions are assumed.

$$\eta(\sigma) = 2 \sum_{m=1}^M \frac{1}{(j_m(q))^{\sigma}} \quad \text{normalization factor}$$

$\sigma \rightarrow 0$ Globally Coupled Maps $\sigma \rightarrow \infty$ Usual CMLs

Long-Range Interactions

Coupled Map Lattices with Power-Law Coupling

$$u_x^{t+1} = F \left[(1 + \nabla_{\epsilon}^{\sigma}) u_x^t \right] \quad \nabla_{\epsilon}^{\sigma} u_x = -\epsilon u_x + \frac{\epsilon}{\eta(\sigma)} \sum_{m=1}^M \frac{u_{x-j_m(q)} + u_{x+j_m(q)}}{(j_m(q))^{\sigma}}$$

where $x \in [1, L]$ and t are discrete, $F = 2x \pmod{1}$ is the **Bernoulli map** and periodic boundary conditions are assumed.

$$\eta(\sigma) = 2 \sum_{m=1}^M \frac{1}{(j_m(q))^{\sigma}} \quad \text{normalization factor}$$

$\sigma \rightarrow 0$ Globally Coupled Maps $\sigma \rightarrow \infty$ Usual CMLs

Coupling Schemes

- **Fully Coupled:** $j_m(q) = m$, $M = (L - 1)/2$
- **Reduced Coupling:** $j_m(q) = q^m - 1$, $M = \log_q(L/2)$ with $q = 2, 4$ and 8

The coupling scheme does not alter the critical properties of the transition, but the reduced scheme is much faster ($\mathcal{O}(L \log_q L)$ versus $\mathcal{O}(L^2)$),

Chaotic Synchronization

The synchronization transition of two coupled replicas is studied

$$\begin{aligned}u_x^{t+1} &= (1 - \gamma)F [(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^\sigma)u_x^t] + \gamma \cdot F [(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^\sigma)w_x^t] \\w_x^{t+1} &= (1 - \gamma)F [(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^\sigma)w_x^t] + \gamma \cdot F [(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^\sigma)u_x^t]\end{aligned}$$

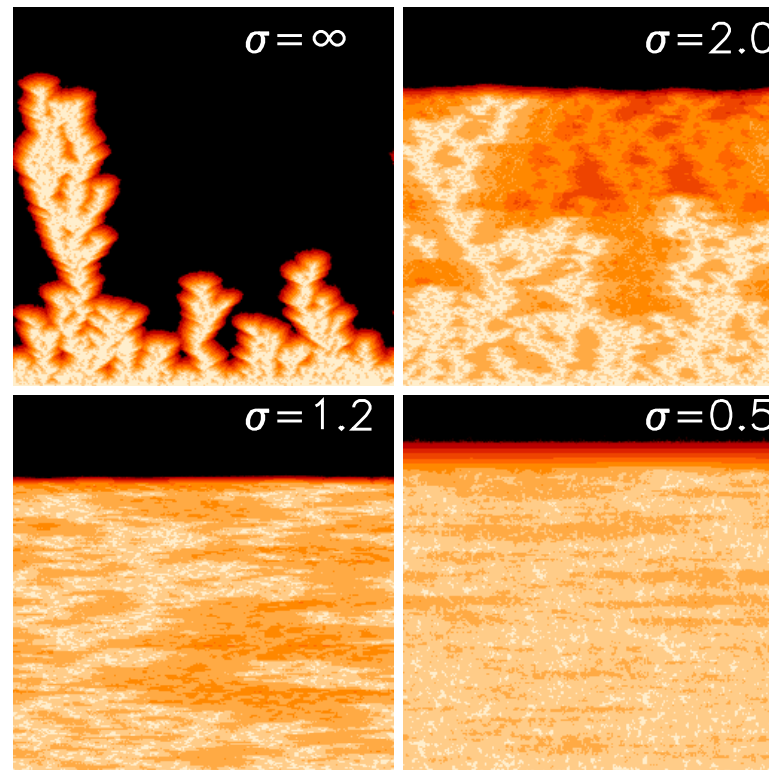
by examining the synchronization error $z_x^t = |u_x^t - w_x^t|$ for different coupling exponents σ .

Chaotic Synchronization

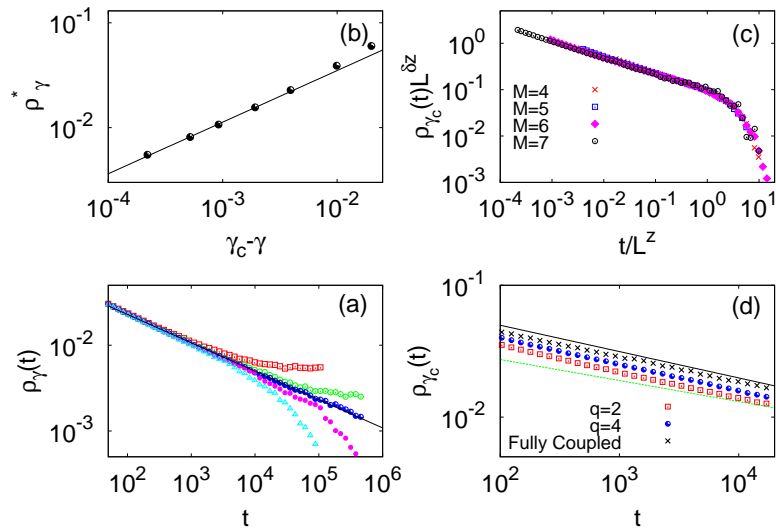
The synchronization transition of two coupled replicas is studied

$$u_x^{t+1} = (1 - \gamma)F[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^\sigma)u_x^t] + \gamma \cdot F[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^\sigma)w_x^t]$$
$$w_x^{t+1} = (1 - \gamma)F[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^\sigma)w_x^t] + \gamma \cdot F[(1 + \nabla_\varepsilon^\sigma)u_x^t]$$

by examining the synchronization error $z_x^t = |u_x^t - w_x^t|$ for different coupling exponents σ .



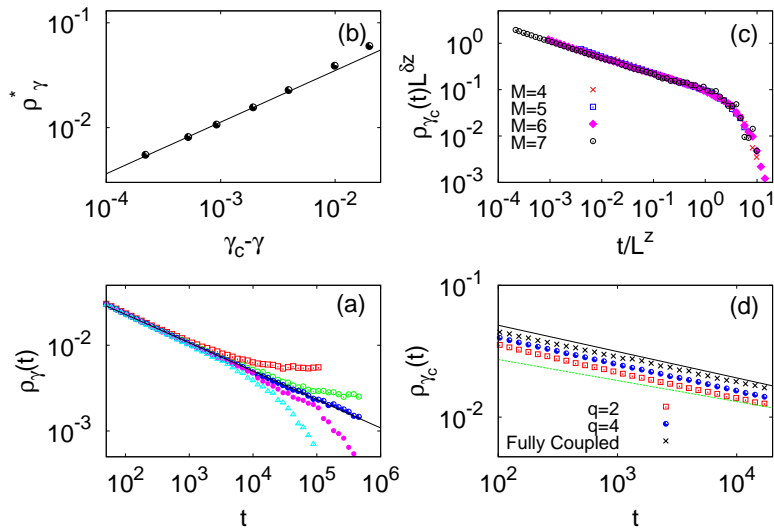
The critical exponents



System size $6 \times 10^4 \leq L \leq 4 \times 10^6$

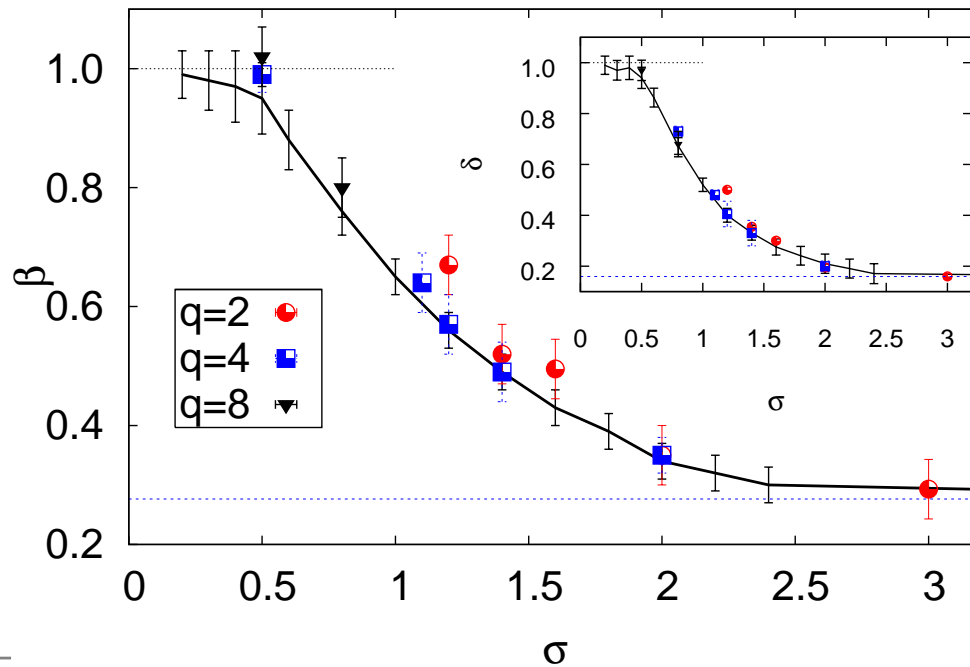
Averages over 100 – 1000 different realizations

The critical exponents



System size $6 \times 10^4 \leq L \leq 4 \times 10^6$

Averages over 100 – 1000 different realizations



The critical exponents vary continuously, we have a family of universality classes labelled by the coupling exponent σ .

$$\delta_{DP} \sim 0.16$$

$$\beta_{DP} \sim 0.27$$

Anomalous Directed Percolation

In many realistic spreading processes short-range interactions do not appropriately describe the transport mechanism of the infection

- infectious disease transported by insects;
- disease spread triggered by aviation traffic;
- spreading agent subjected to a turbulent flow.

The motion of the agent can be [super-diffusive](#).

[Mollison](#) in 1977 proposed a generalization of the usual DP in which the agent can perform [Lévy flights](#), where the distribution of the spreading distances r is given by

$$P(r) \propto 1/r^{d+\sigma} \quad \sigma > 0$$

d being the spatial dimension of the system.

[Mollison](#), J R Stat Soc B 39 (1977) 283; [Grassberger](#), Fractals in physics, (1986)

Distribution of human travels

[Brockmann et al.](#) Nature (2006)



Field Theoretic Prediction

The generalization of the usual field equation to anomalous DP reads as:

$$\dot{w}(x, t) = (\nabla^2 + \nabla^\alpha)w(x, t) + aw(x, t) - bw^2(x, t) + \sqrt{w(x, t)}\eta(x, t)$$

where η is a Gaussian noise δ -correlated in space and the anomalous diffusion operator is defined as

$$\nabla^\sigma e^{ikx} = -k^\sigma e^{ikx}$$

The renormalization group calculations indicate that

- for $\sigma < 0.5$ the mean-field description should become exact;
- for $\sigma > 2.0677(2)$ the usual DP results should be recovered

Mean-field exponents obtained by neglecting correlations are:

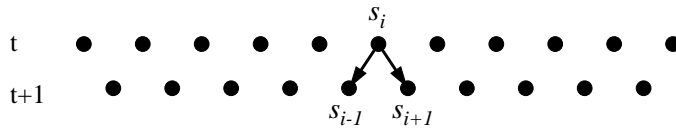
$$\beta_{MF} = \delta_{MF} = 1.0 \quad z_{MF} = \sigma$$

Janssen et al. EPJB 7 (1999) 137; Hinrichsen & Howard EPJB 7 (1999) 635.

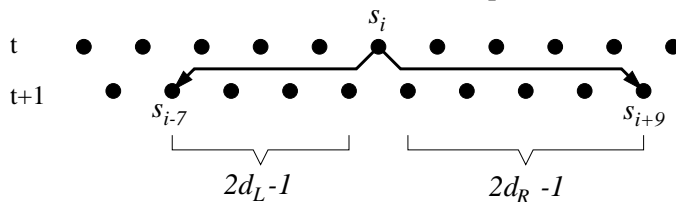


Stochastic Lattice Model

(a) Ordinary directed bond percolation:



(b) Anomalous directed bond percolation:



$s_i = 1$ (infected) - $s_i(t) = 0$ (healthy)

Only infected sites can propagate the disease.

The control parameter is

the bond probability $0 \leq p \leq 1$

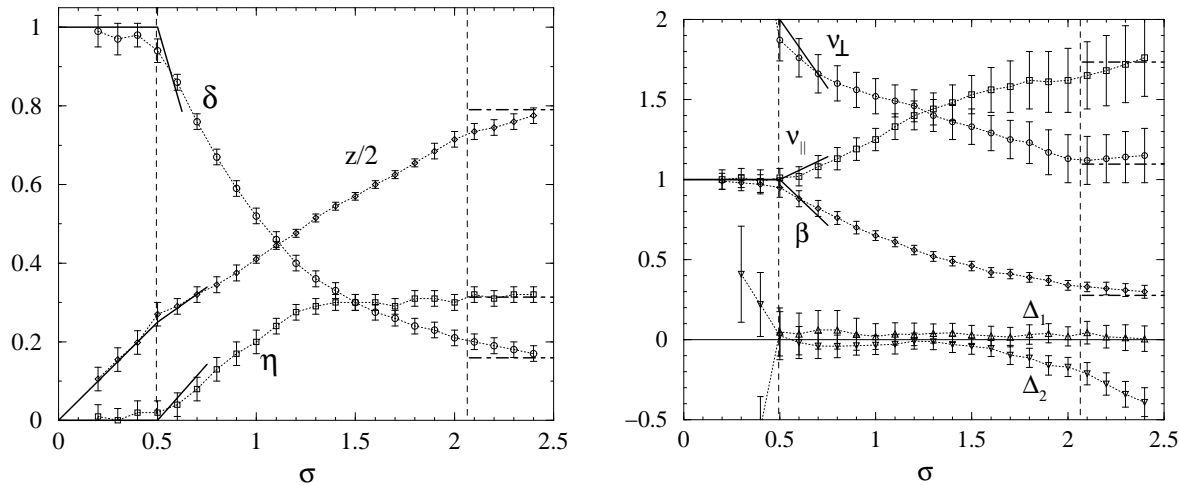
- At the next time $t + 1$ all the sites are initially healthy;
- two distances (d_L, d_R) are randomly generated from the distribution $P(r) \propto 1/r^{1+\sigma}$;
- the sites located at those distances from a site i (infected at time t) become infected if by choosing two random numbers (y_L, y_R) between 0 and 1
 - $s_{i+1-2d_L}(t = 1) = 1$ if $y_L < p$
 - $s_{i-1+2d_R}(t = 1) = 1$ if $y_R < p$

The length of the examined system was $L = 4 \times 10^{19}$, no finite size effects.

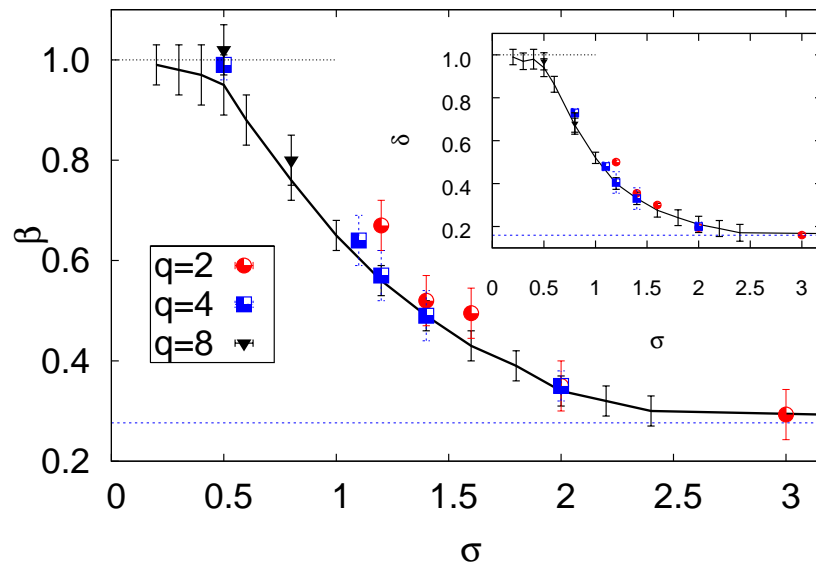
Hinrichsen & Howard EPJB 7 (1999) 635.

Critical Indexes

Extremely accurate estimation of the critical exponents in the whole range $0 < \sigma < 2.4$.



Our results for the chaotic synchronization transitions are in very good agreement



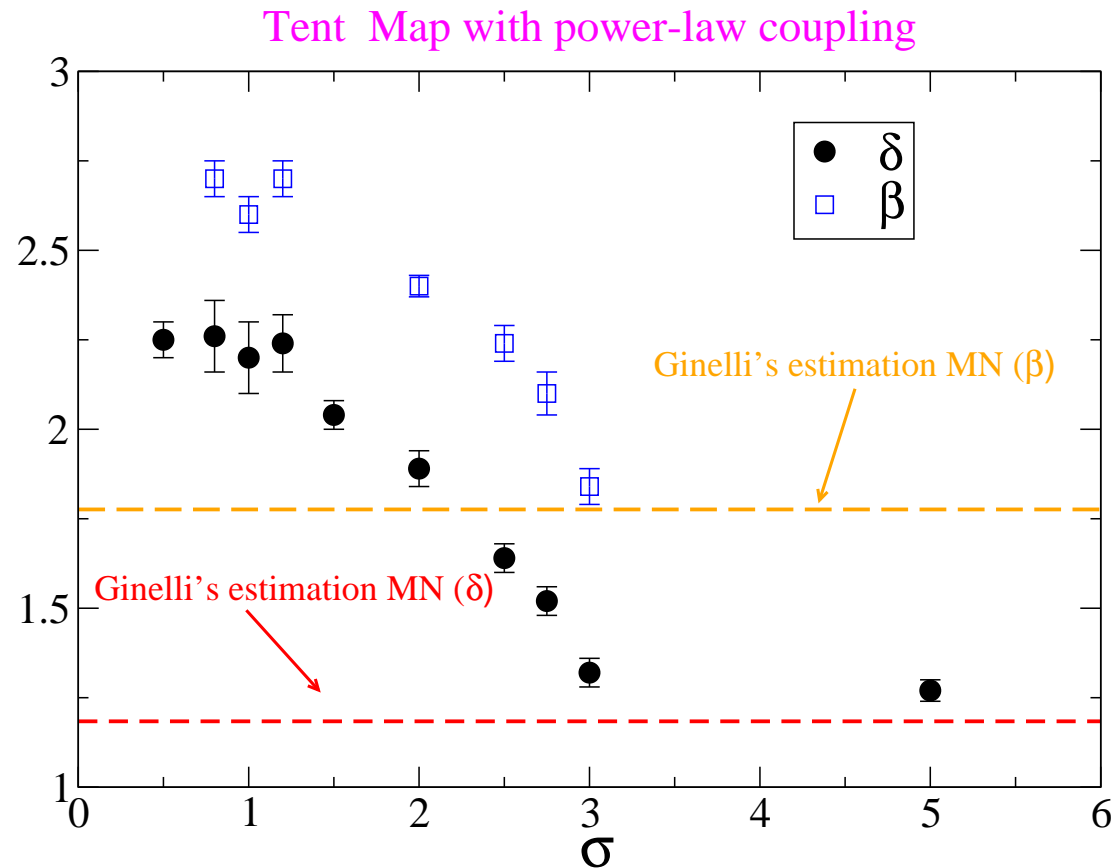
Conclusions & Perspectives

- The **synchronization transition** (ST) of two replicas of **chaotic discontinuous coupled maps** with **long range interactions** is characterized by a **continuum of universality classes** labeled by the exponent σ .
- The critical properties of these STs correspond to **Anomalous Directed Percolation**, previously examined in the context of **epidemic spreading**.
- Preliminary results indicate that also for **continuous maps** the exponents depend on σ , but they **do not belong** to the anomalous DP class.
- **Anomalous Multiplicative Noise** has been not yet studied, therefore a completely open problem is to find to which universality class ST for continuous maps correspond.

C.J. Tessone, M. Cencini & AT, PRL (2006)



Continuous Maps



Kissinger et al. (2005) - **Multiplicative noise** - numerical estimations

$$\delta_{MN} = 1.184(10) \text{ and } \beta_{MN} = 1.776(15)$$

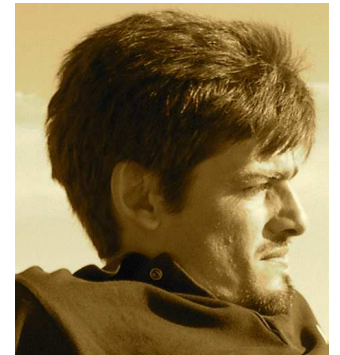
Munoz (2000) – **Mean-field results** β depends on noise amplitude, **it is not universal**.

Credits

- Claudio Juan Tessone - Post-Doc (2007-)
- ETH - Zurich - Switzerland



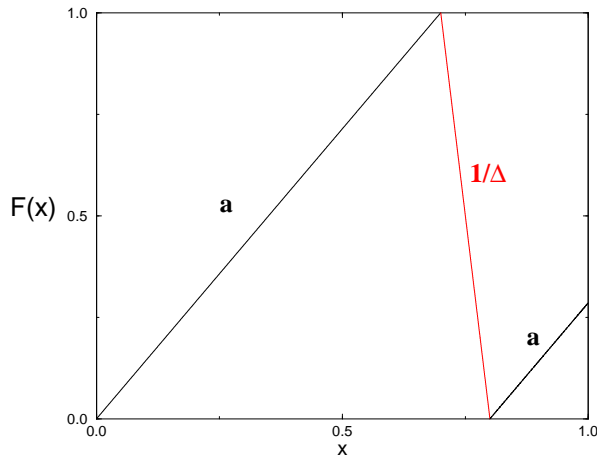
- Massimo Cencini - Researcher (2005-)
- INFN – CNR - Rome



<http://www.fi.isc.cnr.it/users/alessandro.torcini/>

Random Multipliers Model

A stochastic model is introduced to mimic the dynamics of the difference field z_x^t for 2 chains of mutually coupled CMLs.



$$z_x^{t+1} = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{w.p. } p = av_x^t \\ av_x^t, & \text{w.p. } 1 - p \end{cases}, \quad \text{if } v_x^t > \Delta$$

$$z_x^{t+1} = \begin{cases} v_x^t / \Delta, & \text{w.p. } p = a\Delta \\ av_x^t, & \text{w.p. } 1 - p \end{cases}, \quad \text{if } v_x^t \leq \Delta$$

where $v_x^t = (1 + \nabla_\epsilon^2)z_x^t$ and PBC are assumed.

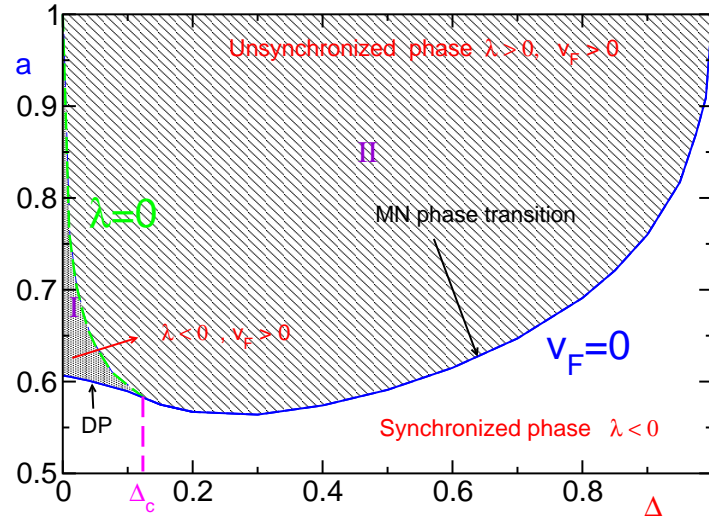
The model is controlled by two parameters a and Δ , for fixed coupling $\epsilon = 2/3$.

The stochastic nature of the model avoids the emergence of possible long time correlations as in the original deterministic CMLs.

- For small $\Delta < \Delta_c$, the nonlinear mechanisms prevail over the linear ones
- For $\Delta > \Delta_c$, the linear analysis is sufficient to describe the dynamics

Ginelli, Livi, & Politi JPA 35, 499 (2002)

Phase Diagram



- **Region II:** due to the linear instability any perturbation of the synchronized state will persist forever independently of L
- **Region I:** a finite perturbation can eventually die in a finite chain, but its life time increases exponentially with L

The critical properties of the model have been studied mainly by analyzing $\rho(t)$ (the averaged density of unsynchronized sites). But the definition of ρ requires to fix a threshold W in order to distinguish a **synchronized site** ($z_x^t < W$) from an **unsynchronized one** ($z_x^t > W$).

Ginelli, Livi, Politi, & AT PRE 67, 046217 (2003)



DP or not DP ?

- Microscopic models exhibiting DP critical behaviour are typically defined in terms of **discrete** and **finite state** variables (e.g. cellular automata).

DP or not DP ?

- Microscopic models exhibiting DP critical behaviour are typically defined in terms of **discrete** and **finite state** variables (e.g. cellular automata).
- In such cases an absorbed region is stable, it can only be changed from its boundaries (**contact process**).

DP or not DP ?

- Microscopic models exhibiting DP critical behaviour are typically defined in terms of **discrete** and **finite state** variables (e.g. cellular automata).
- In such cases an absorbed region is stable, it can only be changed from its boundaries (**contact process**).
- In the present case the condition $z_x^t = 0$ is never exactly fulfilled at every **finite time**, even for **finite systems**.

DP or not DP ?

- Microscopic models exhibiting DP critical behaviour are typically defined in terms of **discrete** and **finite state** variables (e.g. cellular automata).
- In such cases an absorbed region is stable, it can only be changed from its boundaries (**contact process**).
- In the present case the condition $z_x^t = 0$ is never exactly fulfilled at every **finite time**, even for **finite systems**.
- Therefore, one is obliged to fix an arbitrary threshold W below which trajectories are assumed to be synchronized.

DP or not DP ?

- Microscopic models exhibiting DP critical behaviour are typically defined in terms of **discrete** and **finite state** variables (e.g. cellular automata).
- In such cases an absorbed region is stable, it can only be changed from its boundaries (**contact process**).
- In the present case the condition $z_x^t = 0$ is never exactly fulfilled at every **finite time**, even for **finite systems**.
- Therefore, one is obliged to fix an arbitrary threshold W below which trajectories are assumed to be synchronized.
- A priori, one cannot exclude that due to **large fluctuations** the system will be driven out of the absorbing state, sooner or later.

DP or not DP ?

- Microscopic models exhibiting DP critical behaviour are typically defined in terms of **discrete** and **finite state** variables (e.g. cellular automata).
- In such cases an absorbed region is stable, it can only be changed from its boundaries (**contact process**).
- In the present case the condition $z_x^t = 0$ is never exactly fulfilled at every **finite time**, even for **finite systems**.
- Therefore, one is obliged to fix an arbitrary threshold W below which trajectories are assumed to be synchronized.
- A priori, one cannot exclude that due to **large fluctuations** the system will be driven out of the absorbing state, sooner or later.
- The existence of an **effective absorbing state** will be shown by analyzing the **first passage times**.

First Passage Times

$\tau(W)$ is the (ensemble) average time needed for $\rho(t)$ to become smaller than a certain threshold for the first time.

By analytical and scaling arguments it can be shown that:

$$\tau(W) = \frac{\ln W}{\lambda_{\perp}} - L^z g(W L^{\delta z}, W_c)$$

the first term accounts for linear stable behaviour, while the second term for nonlinear effects.

The linear stable behaviour holds below a certain threshold $W_c \propto L^{-z(1+\delta)}$, that vanishes in the thermodynamic limit.

In a finite cellular automaton the minimal meaningful density is $\rho_m = 1/L$, W_c plays the role of ρ_m in continuous systems.

