



Validity of relativistic hydrodynamics beyond local equilibrium

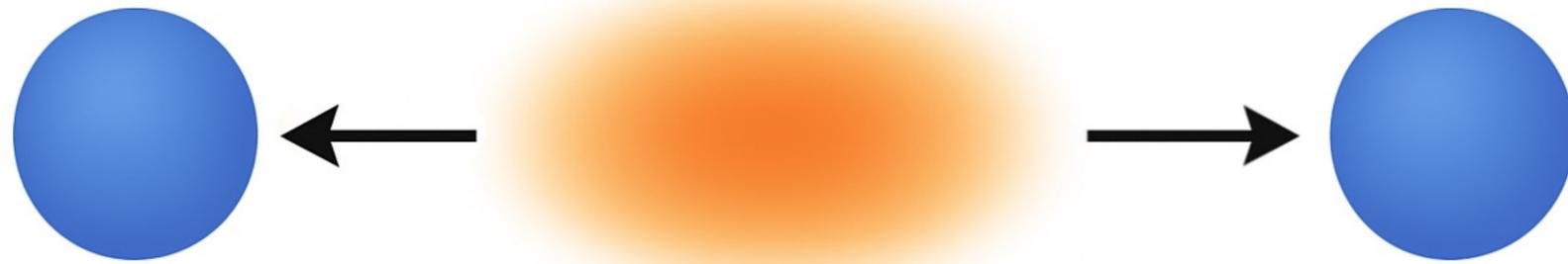
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Overview

- Heavy-Ion Collisions and Hydrodynamics
- The hydrodynamisation problem
- Hydrodynamics and Kinetic Theory
- Convergence of Gradient Expansion
- 0+1D system
- Hydrodynamics from Moments
- Summary

Quark-Gluon
Plasma (QGP)



Hydrodynamic
Evolution

The Hydrodynamisation Problem

- **Empirical validity** of Hydrodynamics at large gradients
 - Viscous Hydrodynamics is derived near equilibrium
- **Divergence** of the gradient expansion
 - Higher order gradient corrections are asymptotically divergent
- Hydrodynamisation
 - When is the system well defined by hydrodynamic equations?

Hydrodynamics

- A system at **local thermal equilibrium** can be described by macroscopic fields, energy momentum tensor and number density
- The dynamics of the system can be obtained from **conservation laws** and equation of state.
- Systems **near equilibrium** can be described by **adding gradient corrections** to the fields.
- For **causal evolution** of the system additional degrees of freedom and their evolution equations are required.

$$\begin{aligned} \bullet \quad T_{eq}^{\mu\nu} &= \epsilon U^\mu U^\nu - P \Delta^{\mu\nu} \\ n^\mu &= n U^\mu \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \bullet \quad \partial_\mu T^{\mu\nu} &= 0 \\ \partial_\mu n^\mu &= 0, \quad \epsilon = \epsilon(P) \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \bullet \quad T^{\mu\nu} &= T_{eq}^{\mu\nu} + \Pi^{\mu\nu} \\ \dot{\Pi}^{\mu\nu} &\sim F(\Pi^{\mu\nu}, \partial^\mu U^\nu) \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Kinetic Theory

Evolution of phase space distribution function for low density systems.

- The one particle phase space **distribution function** can describe a system at **low densities**.
- The Evolution of the distribution function is given by the **Boltzmann Equation**.
- We can obtain macroscopic fields from the moments of the distribution function.
- The dynamics is obtained from the Boltzmann Equation.

$$\bullet \quad p^\mu \partial_\mu f = C(f, f) \quad (4)$$

$$\bullet \quad T^{\mu\nu} = \int \frac{d^3p}{p^0} p^\mu p^\nu f \quad (5)$$

$$n^\mu = \int \frac{d^3p}{p^0} p^\mu f$$

$$\bullet \quad \dot{\Pi}^{\mu\nu} = \int \frac{d^3p}{p^0} p^\mu p^\nu \delta \dot{f} \quad (6)$$

The Gradient Expansion

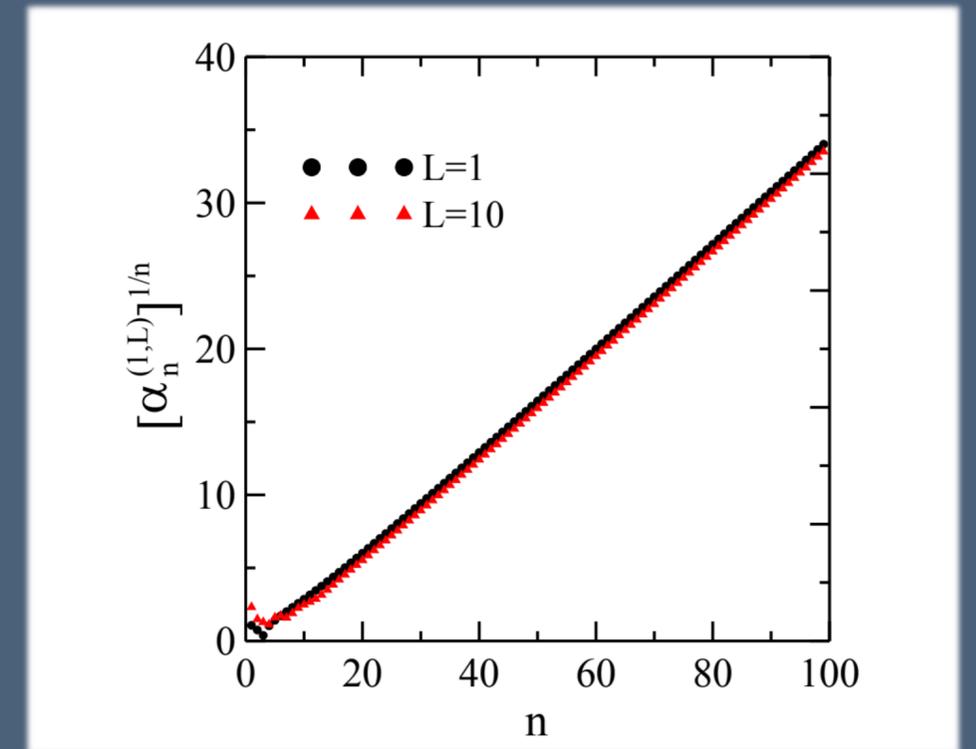
Expanding the distribution function near equilibrium

- $p^\mu \partial_\mu f = -\frac{u \cdot p}{\tau_R} (f - f_{eq}).$ (RTA kernel) (7)

- We can obtain an expansion (Chapman-Enskog) of the distribution function in terms of equilibrium fields

- $f = f_{eq} - \frac{\tau_R}{u \cdot p} p^\mu \partial_\mu f \longrightarrow f(p, x) = f_{eq} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left[-\frac{\tau_R}{u \cdot p} p^\mu \partial_\mu \right]^n f_{eq}(p, x)$ (8)

- This expansion is **divergent**



Coefficient of gradient expansion vs order. †

†Divergence of the Chapman-Enskog expansion in relativistic kinetic theory

Gabriel S. Denicol, Jorge Noronha, arXiv:1608.07869

Why is it divergent?

The Toy Model

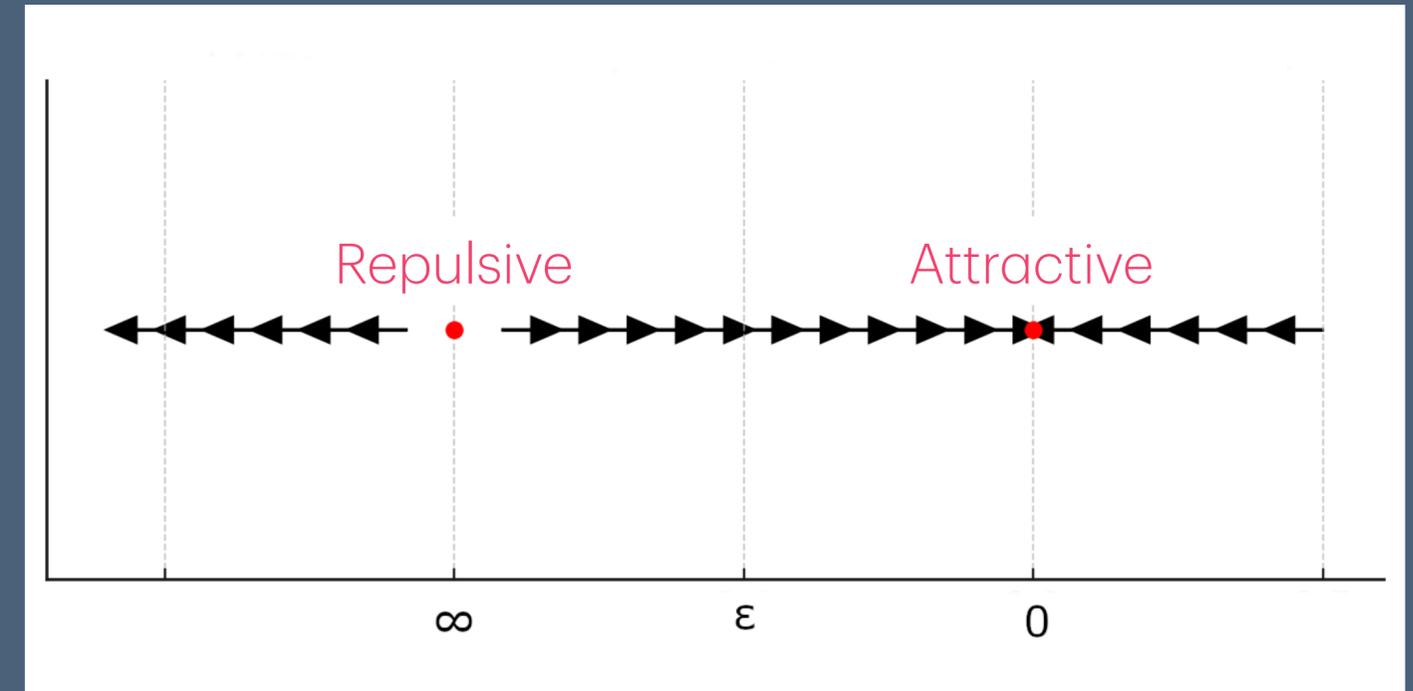
$$\bullet \frac{df}{dt} = -\frac{1}{\epsilon}(f - g) \quad (9)$$

$$\bullet f \sim g - \epsilon g' + \epsilon^2 g'' \dots - \text{expansion in } \epsilon \quad (10)$$

$$\bullet f(x) \sim e^{-t/\epsilon} f(0) + \int_0^t \frac{e^{-s/\epsilon}}{\epsilon} g(s) ds. \quad - \text{Exact solution} \quad (11)$$

$$\bullet f(t) = e^{-t/\epsilon} f(0) + [g(t) - e^{-t/\epsilon} g(0)] - \epsilon [g'(t) - e^{-t/\epsilon} g'(0)] + \dots - \text{Exact solution expansion} \quad (12)$$

$$f(t) = e^{-t/\delta} f(0) + \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left(1 - e^{-t/\epsilon} \sum_{k=0}^n \frac{(t/\epsilon)^k}{k!} \right) \frac{d^n g(t)}{dt^n} \quad (13)$$



Fixed point schematic

Exact Solution to the Distribution

- $$\left(p^\mu \partial_\mu + \frac{u \cdot p}{\tau_R} \right) f = \frac{u \cdot p}{\tau_R} f_{eq} \quad (14)$$

- Formal Solution

$$f(t) = e^{-\xi_0} f_0(t, t_0) + \int_{t_0}^t \frac{dt'}{p^0} \frac{u(t, t') \cdot p}{\tau_R(t, t')} e^{-\xi(t, t')} f_{eq}(t, t') , \quad (15)$$

- $$\xi' = \int_{t'}^t \frac{u \cdot p}{p^0 \tau_R} dt'' \quad (16)$$

- The first term is a damped **free streaming** term and the second term contains the contributions from **collisions**.

Exact Gradient Expansion

- We can obtain the exact gradient expansion*

$$f_G = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left\{ 1 - e^{-\xi_0} \sum_{k=0}^n \frac{\xi_0^k}{k!} \right\} \left[-\frac{\tau_R}{p \cdot u} p^\mu \partial_\mu \right]^n f_{eq}(x, t) \quad (17)$$

- First sum gives the Chapman Enskog gradients and the second sum gives exponentially damped terms.
- This expansion is convergent.
- Integrating the gradient expansion of the distribution function to get moment evolution is difficult.

* Convergence problem of the gradient expansion in the relaxation time approximation
Reghukrishnan Gangadharan, Victor Roy *Phys.Rev.D* 111 (2025) 7, L071901

Gradient Expansion of The Moments

Moments give bulk information

- We already know the gradient expansion of the distribution function. Why do we need to study gradient expansion of the moments?
 - Moments give **bulk information**.
 - The gradient expansion of moments give **hydrodynamic equations**.
 - Understanding their structure is key to understanding the **applicability of hydrodynamics**.

The 0+1 D system[†]

- The Symmetries : reduces system to 0 + 1
 - **Boost invariance** : no η dependence.
 - Transverse **rotational** and **translational** symmetry : no r and θ dependence
 - System can depend only on τ
 - Bjorken Flow profile

[†]Validity of relativistic hydrodynamics beyond local equilibrium , arxiv:2508.17543
Reghukrishnan Gangadharan, *Ancient Rishi

The 0+1 D solution for the Moments

Bjorken Flow

- Moment definitions

$$\rho_{n,l}(\tau) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int d^3p (p^0)^n \left(\frac{p^z}{p^0} \right)^{2l} f(p, p^z, \tau) \quad (18)$$

- The evolution equations

$$\partial_\tau \rho_{n,l} + \frac{2l+1}{\tau} \rho_{n,l} - \frac{2l-n}{\tau} \rho_{n,l+1} = -\frac{1}{\tau_R} \left(\rho_{n,l} - \rho_{n,l}^{eq} \right) \quad (19)$$

The Operator Formalism

Vectorisation of moment equations

$$\cdot \left[\partial_\tau + \left(\frac{2l+1}{\tau} \hat{\mathbf{I}} - \frac{2l-n}{\tau} \hat{\mathbf{S}} \right) \right] \rho_{n,l}(\tau, l) = -\frac{1}{\tau_R} \left(\rho_{n,l}(\tau) - \rho_{n,l}^{\text{eq}}(\tau) \right) \quad (20)$$

$$\cdot \hat{\mathbf{S}} h_l = h_{l+1} \quad \text{- The } l \text{- shift operator}$$

$$\cdot \hat{\mathbf{D}} \equiv \partial_\tau + \hat{\mathbf{F}} \quad , \quad \hat{\mathbf{F}} \equiv \frac{2l+1}{\tau} \hat{\mathbf{I}} - \frac{2l-1}{\tau} \hat{\mathbf{S}} \quad (21)$$

The Operator Formalism

Vectorisation of moment equations

$$\bullet \hat{\mathbf{D}}\rho_{n,l}(\tau, l) = -\frac{1}{\tau_R} \left(\rho_{n,l}(\tau) - \rho_{n,l}^{\text{eq}}(\tau) \right) \quad (22)$$

$$\bullet \rho_n(\tau, l) = \rho_n^{\text{eq}}(\tau, l) + [\tau_R \mathbf{D}] \rho_n(\tau, l). \quad \text{- iterative structure} \quad (23)$$

$$\bullet \rho_n(\tau, l) = \rho_n^{\text{eq}}(\tau, l) + [\tau_R \mathbf{D}] \rho_n^{\text{eq}} + [\tau_R \mathbf{D}]^2 \rho_n^{\text{eq}} + \dots \quad \text{- Gradient Expansion}$$

Solution to Moment Equation

Formal Integral Solution

- $\left[\partial_\tau + \hat{\mathbf{F}} + \frac{1}{\tau_R} \right] \rho_{n,l} = \frac{\rho_{n,l}^{eq}}{\tau_R}$ - Relaxation equation (24)

- $\rho_{n,l}(\tau) = e^{-\xi_0} e^{-\hat{\mathbf{K}}(\tau, \tau_0)} \rho_{n,l}(\tau_0) + \int_{\tau_0}^{\tau} d\tau' \frac{e^{-\xi'}}{\tau_R} e^{-\hat{\mathbf{K}}(\tau, \tau')} \rho_{n,l}^{eq}(\tau')$ (25)

$$\hat{\mathbf{K}}(\tau, \tau') = \int_{\tau'}^{\tau} \hat{\mathbf{F}} d\tau'$$

- $\hat{\mathcal{K}}(\tau, \tau_0) = e^{-\xi_0} e^{-\hat{\mathbf{K}}(\tau, \tau_0)}$ - Green's function ~ Propagator

The Gradient Expansion of Moments

$$\bullet \rho_{n,l}(\tau) = e^{-\xi_0} e^{-\hat{\mathbf{K}}(\tau, \tau_0)} \rho_{n,l}(\tau_0) + \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \left(1 - e^{-\xi_0} \sum_{k=0}^n \frac{\xi_0^k}{k!} \right) \left[-\tau_R \hat{\mathbf{D}} \right]^k \rho_{n,l}^{\text{eq}}(\tau) \quad (26)$$

$$\bullet \rho_{n,l}(\tau) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \left[-\tau_R \hat{\mathbf{D}} \right]^k \rho_{n,l}^{\text{eq}}(\tau) + e^{-\xi_0} e^{-\hat{\mathbf{K}}(\tau, \tau_0)} \left(\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \left[-\tau_R \hat{\mathbf{D}} \right]^k \rho_{n,l}^{\text{eq}}(\tau_0) + \rho_{n,l}(\tau_0) \right) \quad (27)$$

Gradient expansion of the Moments

Non-Equilibrium components

- $\rho_{n,l}(\tau) = \rho_{n,l}^{eq}(\tau) + \pi_{nl}$ (28) - Decomposing to Equilibrium and non-equilibrium

- $\pi_{nl} = \pi_{n,l}^G(\tau) + \pi_{n,l}^T(\tau)$ (29) - Decomposing to Gradient and Transient terms

- $$\pi_{n,l}(\tau) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} [\tau_R \hat{\mathbf{D}}]^k \rho_{n,l}^{eq}(\tau) - e^{-\xi_0} e^{-\hat{\mathbf{K}}(\tau, \tau_0)} \left(\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} [\tau_R \hat{\mathbf{D}}]^k \rho_{n,l}^{eq}(\tau_0) - \rho_{n,l}(\tau_0) \right)$$
 (30)

Non-Equilibrium Dynamics

- $\pi_{nl} = \pi_{n,l}^G(\tau) + \pi_{n,l}^T(\tau)$ (31)

- $\hat{\mathbf{D}}\pi_{n,l}^G(\tau) = -\frac{\pi_{n,l}^G(\tau)}{\tau_R} - \hat{\mathbf{D}}\rho_{n,l}^{eq}(\tau)$ (32)

- Dynamics of the Gradient Corrections

- $\hat{\mathbf{D}}\pi_{n,l}^T(\tau) = -\frac{\pi_{n,l}^T(\tau)}{\tau_R}$ (33)

- Dynamics of the Transient Corrections

- $\hat{\mathbf{D}}\pi_{n,l} = -\frac{\pi_{n,l}}{\tau_R} - \hat{\mathbf{D}}\rho_{n,l}^{eq}(\tau)$ (34)

- Combined dynamics - Same as Gradient

The Hydrodynamic Equations

Bulk pressure evolution

$$\cdot \Pi = -\frac{m^2}{3}\pi_{-1,0} \quad (35)$$

$$\cdot \hat{\mathbf{D}}\pi_{-1,0} = -\frac{\pi_{-1,0}}{\tau_R} - \hat{\mathbf{D}}\rho_{-1,0}^{eq}(\tau) \quad (36)$$

$$\cdot \partial_\tau \Pi + \frac{\Pi}{\tau_R} = \frac{\Pi}{\tau} - \hat{\mathbf{D}}P - \frac{m^2}{3} \frac{\pi_{-1,1}}{\tau} \quad (37) \quad \text{- Exact evolution equation for Bulk pressure}$$

The Hydrodynamic Equations

Bulk anisotropy evolution

$$\bullet \quad \partial_\tau \Pi + \frac{\Pi}{\tau_R} = \frac{\Pi}{\tau} - \hat{\mathbf{D}}P - \frac{m^2}{3} \frac{1}{\tau} \left(\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{\gamma(k+1, \xi_0)}{k!} [\tau_R \hat{\mathbf{D}}]^k \rho_{-1,1}^{\text{eq}}(\tau) \right) - e^{-\xi_0} e^{-\hat{F}(\tau, \tau_0)} \rho_{-1,1}(\tau_0) \quad (38)$$

- **Exact evolution ~ gradient expanded hydro + transport coefficient rescaling**

Relativistic Hydrodynamics can accommodate non-equilibrium evolution

- The evolution equation of **second order hydrodynamics** is **structurally similar** to **exact evolution equation**.
- Second order hydrodynamics can **accommodate transient terms** and therefore **early time dynamics**.
- The **difference** is between the two equations is **absorbed** in the **transport coefficients**.
(Similar conclusion from fixed point analysis[†])
- Hydrodynamics works for QGP not because its at local thermal equilibrium but because hydrodynamic equations can **interpolate between free streaming and equilibrium dynamics**.

[†] From moments of the distribution function to hydrodynamics: The non-conformal case.

[Sunil Jaiswal](#), [Jean-Paul Blaizot](#), [Rajeev S. Bhalerao](#), [Zenan Chen](#), [Amaresh Jaiswal](#)

References

1. Divergence of the Chapman-Enskog expansion in relativistic kinetic theory
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2. Convergence problem of the gradient expansion in the relaxation time approximation
Reghukrishnan Gangadharan, Victor Roy *Phys.Rev.D* 111 (2025) 7, L071901
3. Validity of relativistic hydrodynamics beyond local equilibrium ,
Reghukrishnan Gangadharan, *Ancient Rishi. [arXiv:2508.17543](#)
4. From moments of the distribution function to hydrodynamics: The non-conformal case.
[Sunil Jaiswal](#), [Jean-Paul Blaizot](#), [Rajeev S. Bhalerao](#), [Zenan Chen](#), [Amaresh Jaiswal](#) *Phys. Rev. C* 106, 044912

Thank You