

Solving PDE on the computer: How?

- Does it work?
- Is it efficient?

Finite differences: Based on difference quotients

For example  $u'_x \approx \frac{u(x+h) - u(x)}{h}$  for fixed  $h$ .

Straight forward to generalize to higher  $D$ .

Given a numerical method (FD, FE) for a PDE ( $\partial_x^2 u = f$ ), does it converge? In which sense?

Finite Elements

• Uses setup via minimizers of Energy.

• Choose finite dim subspace  $H_h \subseteq H_0^1(\Omega)$  and minimize

$$E(v) = \frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega} |\nabla v|^2 dx - \int_{\Omega} f v, \text{ over } H_h.$$

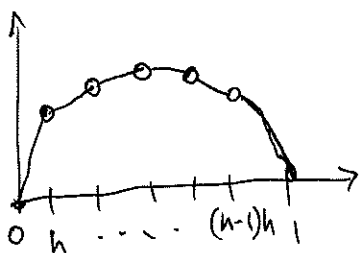
• Numerical soln. is given as  $u_h \in H_h$  s.t.  $E(v_h) \geq E(u_h)$

$\forall v_h \in H_h.$

More concretely:  $\partial_x^2 u = f$  on  $[0, 1]$  ;  $u: [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \in H_0^1(\Omega)$

$u(0) = u(1) = 0.$

$u_h: [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$



And consider piecewise linear approx. in each interval.

The space  $H_h$  of these piecewise linear functions is finite dimensional.

$$\dim H_h = \# \text{ interior nodes} \approx \frac{1}{h}$$

Write down a basis of  $H_h$ :

$$\Lambda_j(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & x \notin [x_{j-1}, x_{j+1}] \\ 1 & x = x_j \\ 0 & x = x_{j-1} \text{ or } x_{j+1} \\ \text{linear in } [x_{j-1}, x_{j+1}]. \end{cases}$$

$$u_h(x) = \sum_j c_j \Lambda_j(x).$$

The finite dimensional problem reduces to linear algebra.

That is: Minimize  $E(v_h)$ , where  $v_h(x) = \sum_j c_j \Lambda_j(x)$

$$\begin{aligned} E\left(\sum_j c_j \Lambda_j(x)\right) &= \frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega} \left[ \nabla \sum_j c_j \Lambda_j(x) \right] \left[ \nabla \sum_k c_k \Lambda_k(x) \right] \\ &\quad - \int_{\Omega} f \sum_j c_j \Lambda_j(x) \end{aligned}$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j,k} c_j c_k \underbrace{\int_{\Omega} \nabla \Lambda_j(x) \cdot \nabla \Lambda_k(x)}_{=: A_{jk}} - \sum_j c_j \underbrace{\int_{\Omega} f \Lambda_j(x)}_{F_j}$$

$$(E(\vec{c})) = \frac{1}{2} \vec{c}^T A \vec{c} - F \vec{c}$$

So,  $\min_{\vec{c} \in \mathbb{R}^n} E(\vec{c})$  is quadratic minimization problem.

Solve by derivative test:  $\frac{\partial}{\partial c_j} E(\vec{c}) = 0, \forall j$ .

$$\leadsto (A\vec{c} - F)_j = 0, \forall j. \quad \leadsto A\vec{c} = F, \text{ Lin. algebra.}$$

In 1D matrix  $A$  same as in finite difference case.

What is the derivative of a nondiff. function?

Key idea: Integration by parts

Def: Let  $u \in L^2(\Omega)$ . Then define  $\partial_x u$ , if it exists, as a function  $v \in L^2(\Omega)$  s.t. " $\int_{\Omega} (\partial_{x_i} u \cdot \phi) = - \int_{\Omega} u \cdot \partial_{x_i} \phi + \text{b.c.}$ "

$$(1) \int_{\Omega} v \phi = - \int_{\Omega} u \partial_{x_i} \phi, \quad \forall \phi \in C^{\infty}(\Omega) \\ 0 \text{ on } \partial\Omega.$$

Notation:  $\partial_{x_i} u := v$ .

Remark:

Any  $v_1, v_2$  which satisfy (1) differ only on set of measure 0.

Ex:  $u(x) = |x|$

$$\partial_x u = \begin{cases} -1 & x < 0 \\ \text{"anything"} & x = 0 \\ 1 & x > 0 \end{cases}$$

Def: (Sobolev)  $u \in H^k(\Omega)$ ,  $k \in \mathbb{N}_0$  if the weak derivatives up to order  $k$  exist and  $\int_{\Omega} |\partial^{\alpha} u|^2 dx < \infty$  for multi-index  $\alpha$ .

Norm:  $\|u\|_{H^k(\Omega)} := \left\{ u \in L^2 : \left( \int_{\Omega} |u|^2 + \int_{\Omega} |\partial u|^2 + \dots + \int_{\Omega} |\partial^k u|^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} < \infty \right\}$

Thm: (Poincaré-Friedrich ineq.)

$$\int_0^1 w^2 \leq \int_0^1 |\partial_x w|^2 \quad \forall w \in H_0^1(\Omega)$$

Proof: (for  $w \in C^1$ ) ← General case follows as  $C^1$  dense in  $H^1$ .

By FTC  $w(x) = w(0) + \int_0^x \partial_x w = \int_0^x \partial_x w$ .

$$w^2(x) = \left( \int_0^x \partial_x w \right)^2 \leq \left[ \left( \int_0^x 1 \right) \left( \int_0^x (\partial_x w)^2 \right) \right]^{\frac{1}{2}} \leq \int_0^1 (\partial_x w)^2.$$

Thm: Let  $u \in H_0^1(\Omega)$  be the minimizer of  $E$  over  $H_0^1(\Omega)$  and  $u_h \in H_h$  be the minimizer of  $E$  over  $H_h$ .

Then  $\|u - u_h\|_{H_0^1(\Omega)} \leq C \|u - v_h\|_{H_0^1(\Omega)}$ ,  $\forall v_h \in H_h$ .  
↑  
indep. of  $h$ .

- This means that up to a constant FE solution gives us the best possible approximation of  $u$  among all functions in  $H_h$ .