

# Nonlinear Dynamics and Self-organization in the Presence of Metastable Phases

G. Nicolis and C. Nicolis

# Self-organization phenomena involving nanosized materials (protein solutions, zeolites, etc ...)

*Common feature :*

Weak and short ranged attractive interactions compared to simple atoms

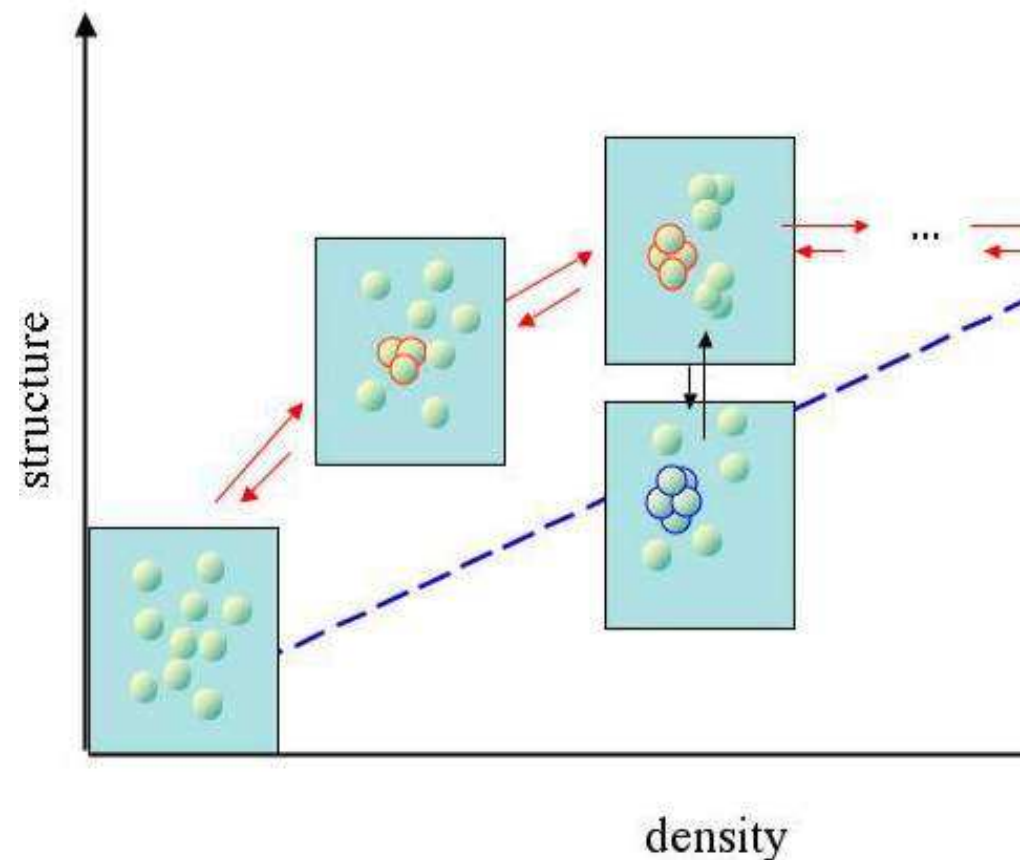
Spontaneous self-assembly towards ordered phases compromised by presence of high nucleation barriers (for the crystallization of protein solutions in ordinary conditions)

Increasing evidence of presence, in such materials, of metastable phases (high concentration protein solutions, etc...) and of their interference

# Standard nucleation mechanisms with combined structural and density fluctuations

Importance of kinetic effects arising from the co-existence of competing mechanisms

Enhancement of nucleation rate under certain conditions via favorable pathways in the two-parameter phase diagram



# *Objectives :*

Describe the free energy landscape

Address the kinetic aspects of the process

Determine conditions for  
minimization

- Background : classical density functional theory
- Phase diagram
- The effect of metastable liquid phases on free energy landscape
- Kinetics of barrier crossing : formulation
- Kinetic potential and its bifurcation set
- Transition dynamics
- Conclusions and perspectives

# background : classical density functional theory

starting point:

Free energy is a unique functional  $F[\rho]$  of the local density  $\rho(r)$

Fluid

$$\rho(r) = \bar{\rho} = \text{const}$$

Crystallinity

$$m = \exp\left(-\frac{k_1^2}{4\alpha}\right)$$

Solid

$$\begin{aligned}\rho(r) &= \sum_i f(r - R_i) \\ &= \bar{\rho} + \bar{\rho} \sum_i \exp(ik_i r) \exp\left(-\frac{k_i^2}{4\alpha}\right)\end{aligned}$$

$$F[\rho] = F_{HS}[\rho] + \int \int dr_1 dr_2 \rho(r_1) \rho(r_2) u(r_1, r_2)$$

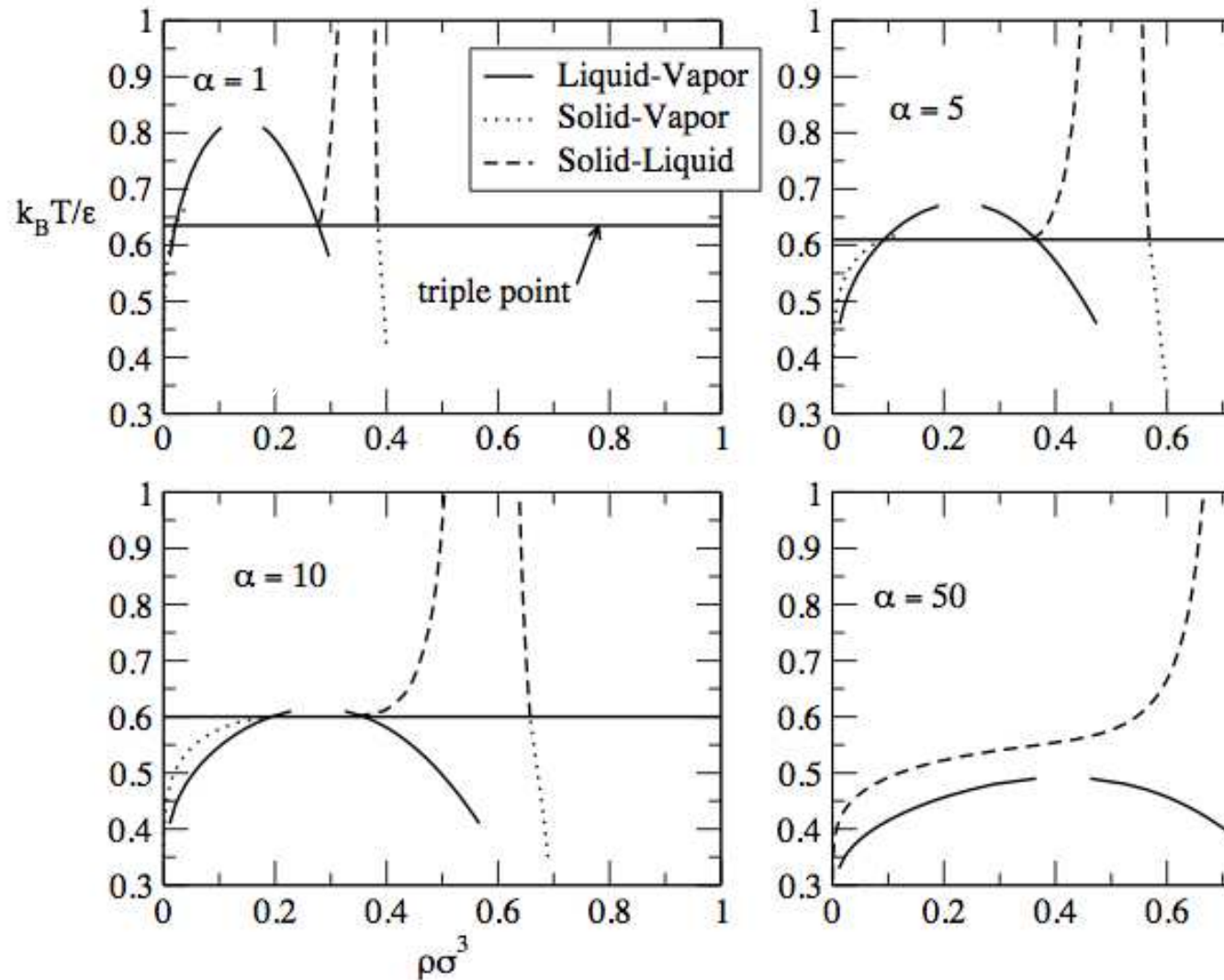
$$= \begin{cases} \infty & r < \sigma \\ \frac{4\epsilon}{\alpha^2} \left( \frac{1}{\left(\left(\frac{r}{\sigma}\right)^2 - 1\right)^6} - \alpha \frac{1}{\left(\left(\frac{r}{\sigma}\right)^2 - 1\right)^3} \right) & r > \sigma \end{cases}$$

$$\frac{r_{min}}{\sigma} = \sqrt{1 + \left(\frac{2}{\alpha}\right)^{1/3}} \quad u(r_{min}) = -\epsilon$$

$$\frac{u(2\sigma)}{u(r_{min})} = \frac{108\alpha - 4}{729\alpha^2} \quad (\text{ten Wolde-Frenkel})$$

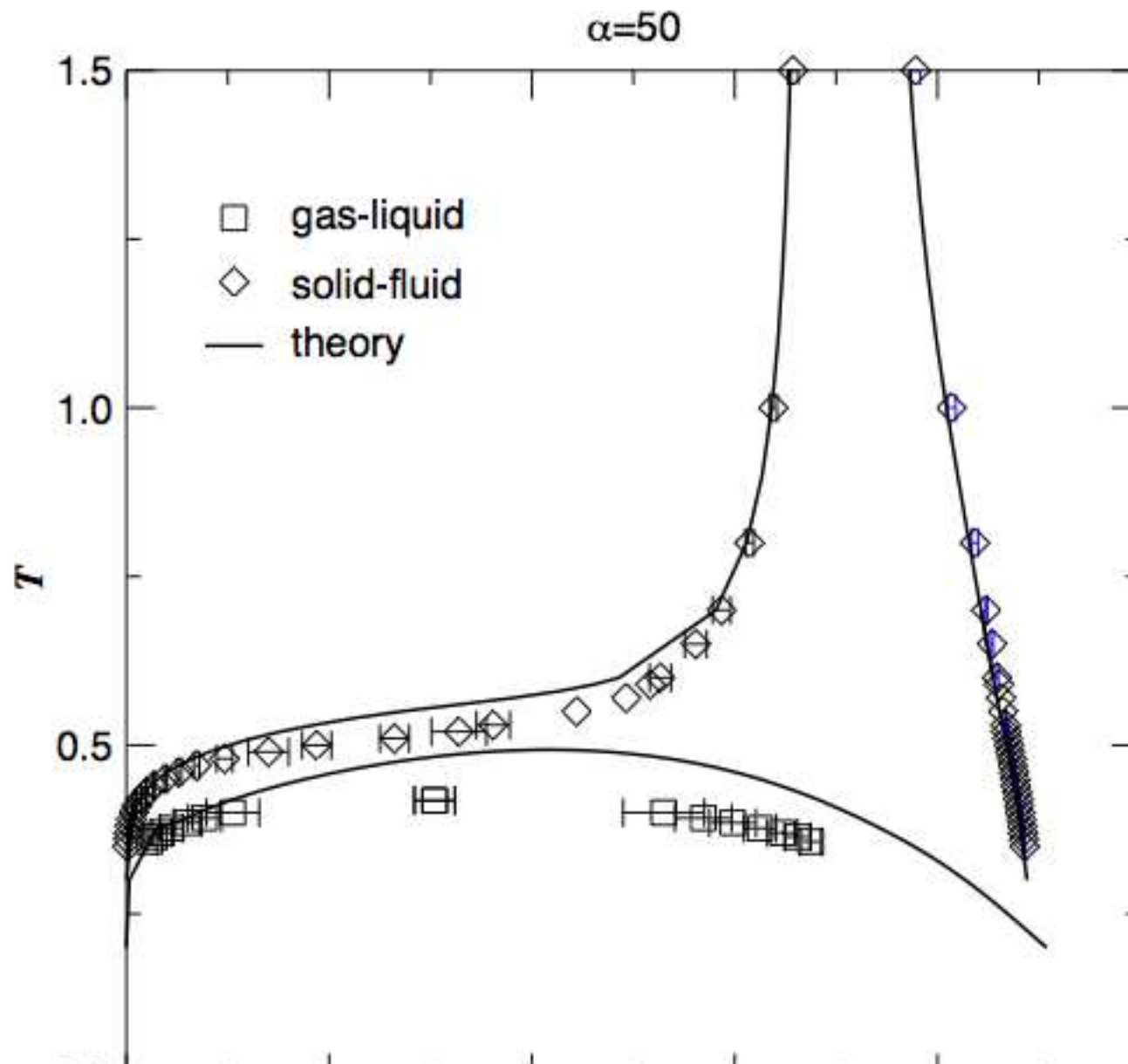
# Phase diagram

significant and generic  
difference in the phase  
diagrams between the ten-  
body-Frenkel interaction  
model and the standard  
Lennard-Jones interaction



Metastable fluid-fluid transition for  $\alpha$

# Frenkel potential



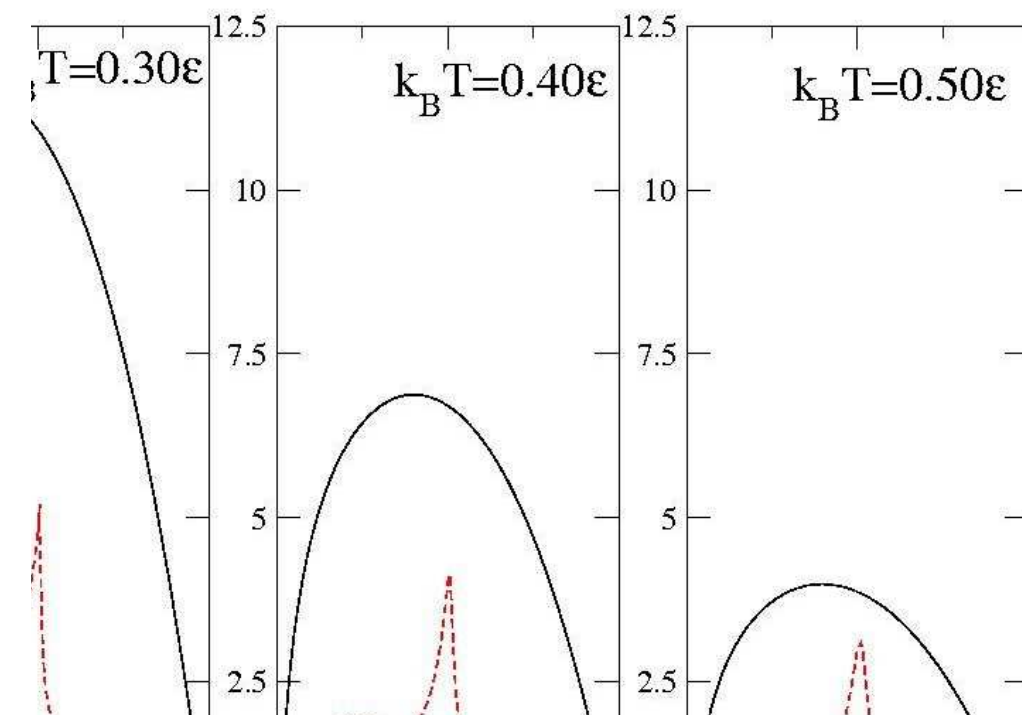


# Effect of metastable liquid on free energy landscape

classical path

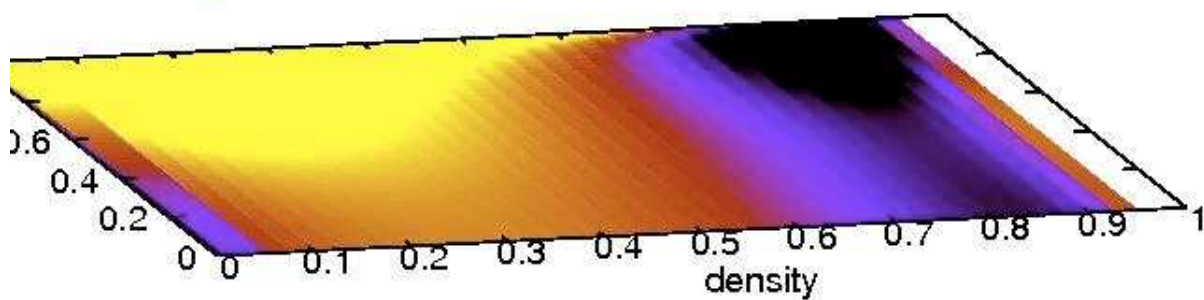
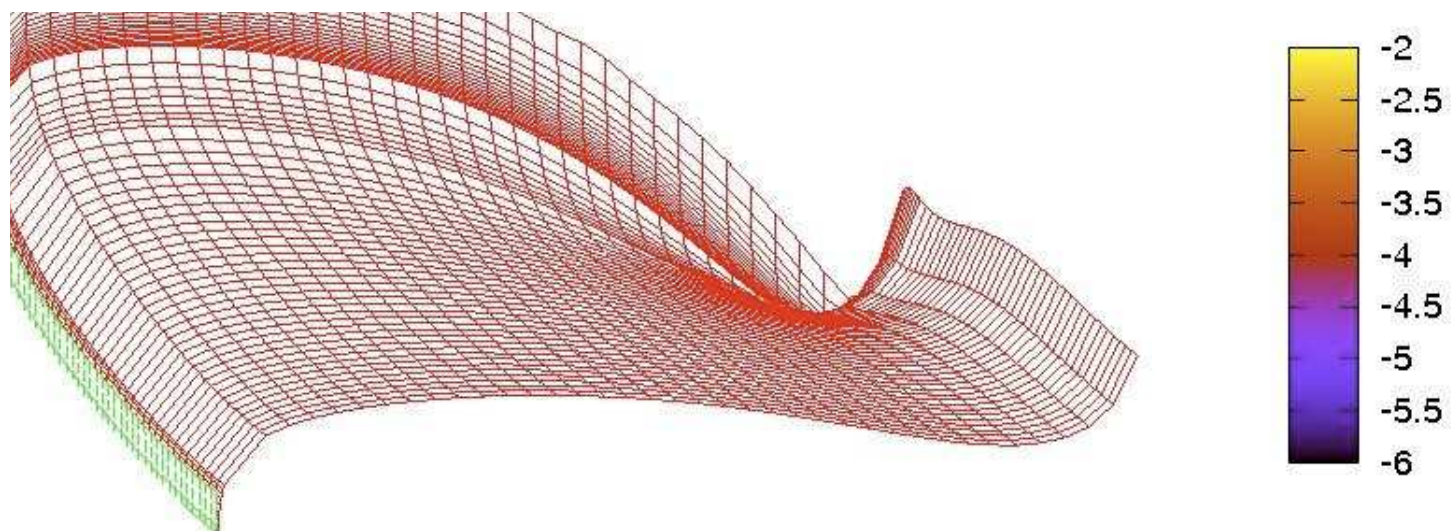
$$\left. \begin{aligned} \bar{\rho} &= \bar{\rho}_{\text{fluid}} + (\bar{\rho}_{\text{solid}} - \bar{\rho}_{\text{fluid}})x \\ m(x) &= xm_{\text{solid}} \end{aligned} \right\}$$

requires overcoming a higher free energy barrier compared to a *non-classical*



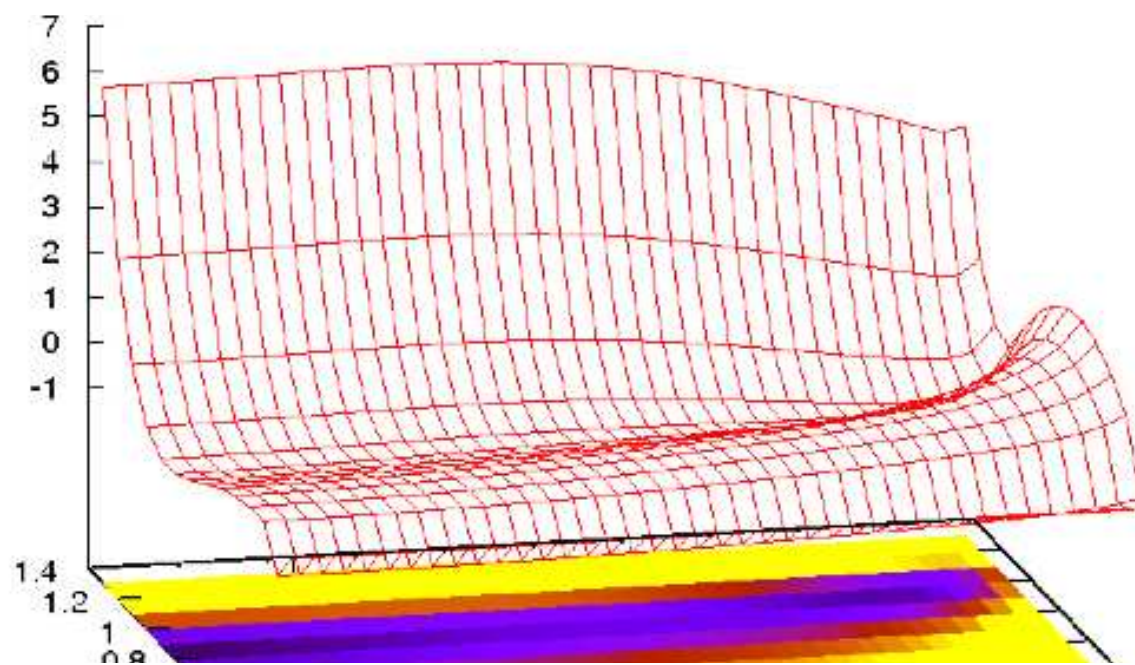
$$\bar{\rho}(x) = (\bar{\rho}_{\text{fluid}} + 2x(\bar{\rho}_{\text{solid}} - \bar{\rho}_{\text{fluid}}) \theta\left(\frac{1}{2} - x\right) + \bar{\rho}_{\text{solid}} \theta\left(x - \frac{1}{2}\right)$$

$$m(x) = \theta\left(x - \frac{1}{2}\right) (2x - 1) m_{\text{solid}}$$



energy landscape

"land



# Kinetics of barrier crossing : formulation

$m$  order parameters

$\mu, \dots$  control parameters

Landau type free energy

matrix of Onsager coefficients

Transitions between states governed by

$$\frac{d}{dt} \begin{pmatrix} \rho \\ m \end{pmatrix} = -\mathbf{L} \cdot \nabla F(\rho, m) + \begin{pmatrix} R_\rho \\ R_m \end{pmatrix}$$

where  $R_\rho, R_m$  are Gaussian white noises whose covariance matrix must satisfy fluctuation-dissipation type relationships

Fokker-Planck equation integrating  
the above condition

$$\frac{\partial P}{\partial t} = \text{div} (\mathbb{L} (\nabla F' P + \epsilon \nabla P))$$

where  $\epsilon$  is small  
e.g.  $k_B T$  or  $1/(\text{system size})$

Original dynamics does not derive from  
potential. Mapping to a dynamics in terms  
of new order parameters  $x, y$  deriving  
a *kinetic* potential,  $U$  by means of  
congruent transformation,

$$\Lambda = \tilde{\phi} \mathbb{L} \phi$$

diagonalizing  $\mathbb{L}$ :

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial P}{\partial t} = & \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( \frac{\partial U}{\partial x} P + \epsilon \frac{\partial P}{\partial x} \right) \\ & + \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( \frac{\partial U}{\partial y} P + \epsilon \frac{\partial P}{\partial y} \right) \end{aligned}$$

# Kinetic potential and its bifurcation set

Requirements : Switch as the control parameters are varied, from

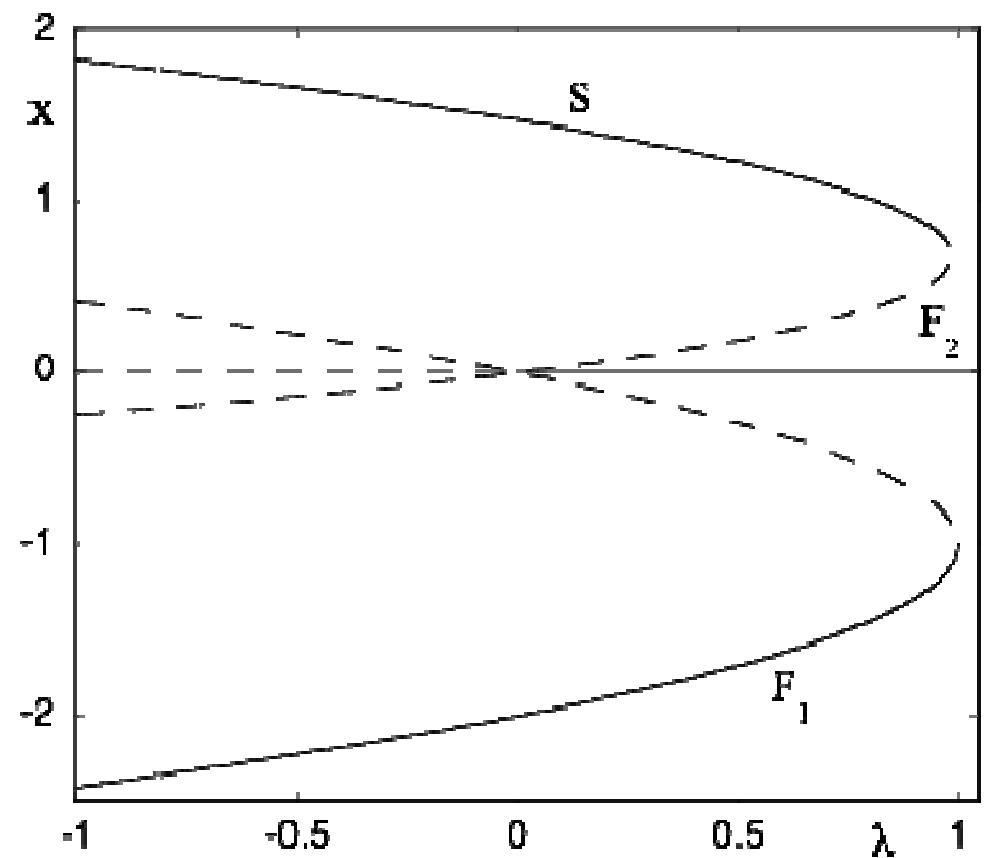
$$F_1 \rightarrow S \text{ (2 - well } U)$$

$$F_1 \begin{matrix} \leftarrow \\ \rightarrow \end{matrix} F_2 \rightarrow S \text{ (3 - well } U)$$

Parabolic umbilic catastrophe scenario. Full unfolding by control parameters

absence of external fields  
and other sources of  
asymmetry

$$V(x, y) = \frac{\lambda}{2} (x^2 + y^2) + \frac{\mu}{3} x^3 - \gamma x y^2 + \frac{1}{4} (x^4 + y^4)$$



# Transition dynamics

•  $\lambda < 0$ ,  $\mu$  fixed :

ect  $F_1 \rightarrow$  Stransition

$$\frac{dp_1}{dt} = -k_1 p_1$$

•  $\lambda > 0$ ,  $\mu$  fixed :

transition via  $F_2$

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dp_1}{dt} &= -k_1 p_1 + k'_1 p_2 \\ \frac{dp_2}{dt} &= k_1 p_1 - (k'_1 + k_2) p_2\end{aligned}$$

where the  $k'$ 's are related to mean first passage times statistics associated to the Fokker-Planck equation

$$\frac{1}{2\pi} \left( \frac{\sigma_u^+}{|\sigma_u^-|} \right)^{1/2} (\sigma_{s_1} \sigma_{s_2})^{1/2} \exp \left( \frac{U(\text{unst}) - U(\text{st})}{\epsilon} \right)$$

$(F_1 \rightarrow S)$ : lowest eigenvalue

- for  $\lambda < 0$

$$k_1$$

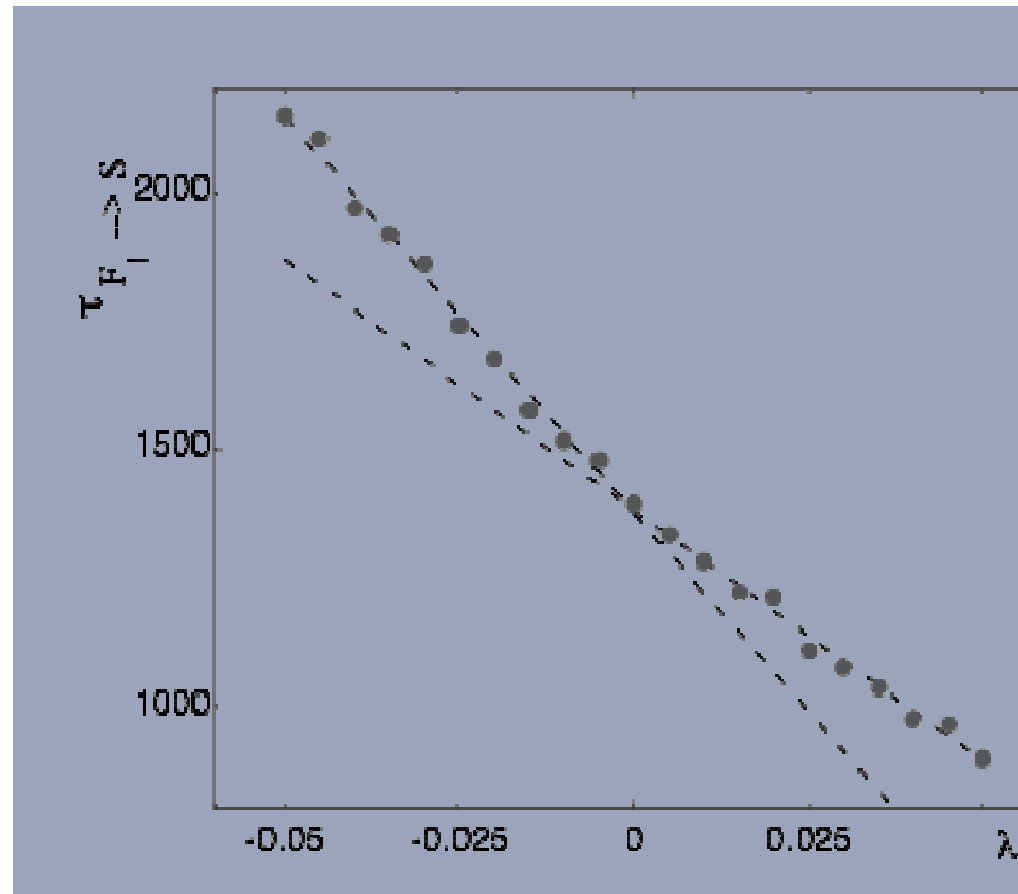
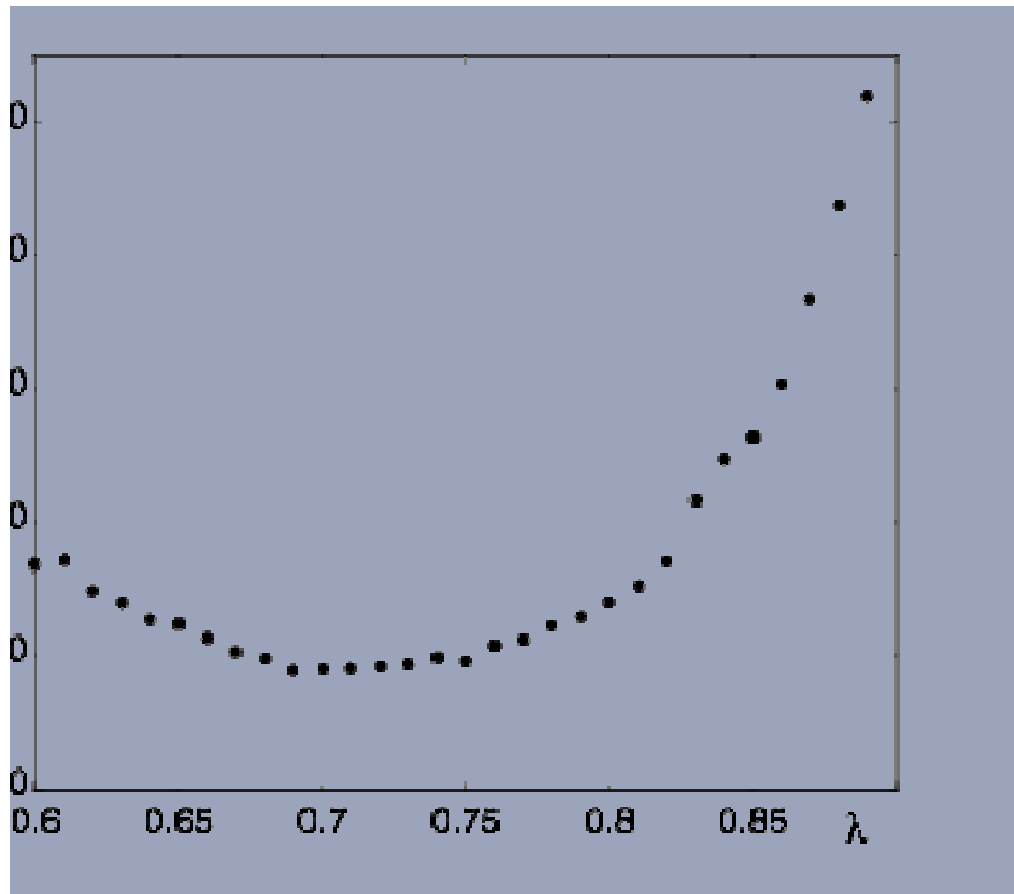
- for  $\lambda > 0$

$$\frac{1}{2} | - (k_1 + k_2 + k_3)$$

$$\sqrt{(k_1 - k_2)^2 + k_1'^2 + 2k_1' (k_1 + k_2)}$$

$$(\rightarrow k_2 \text{ for } k_1' \ll k_1)$$





optimization near the  $F_1 - F_2$  coexistence

on -trivial cross-over at  $\lambda = 0$

# Conclusions and perspectives

Enhancement of nucleation by the presence of  $F_2$  is a generic possibility

Universality

Thermodynamic (Landau) versus kinetic potential

► Connection to experiment and suggestions for further experiments

► Further unfolding scenarios

► Spatial degrees of freedom, asymmetric interactions