

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Three examples	8
2.1	Riemannian geodesics	9
2.2	The Heisenberg algebra case	10
2.3	An abnormal minimizer	12
3	Notational conventions and definitions	16
3.1	Manifolds, charts, bundles, curves and arcs	16
3.2	Hamiltonian functions, Hamilton vector fields, and bicharacteristics	17
3.3	Hamiltonian lifts and characteristics	18
3.4	Distributions, admissible curves, orbits	19
3.5	Nonholonomic distributions; regularity	20
4	Abnormal extremals	22
5	Sub-Riemannian manifolds, length minimizers and extremals	25
5.1	The sub-Riemannian distance, length minimization and time optimality	26
5.2	Extremals	29
5.3	The relationship between minimality and extremality	31
6	Regular abnormal extremals for rank-two distributions	33
6.1	The regular abnormal foliation of a rank-two distribution	33
6.2	Regular abnormal biextremals of a sub-Riemannian manifold	41
7	Local optimality of regular abnormal extremals	43
7.1	The main inequality	46

7.2 The normal form theorem 51

7.3 The optimality theorem 59

8 Strict abnormality 60

9 Some special cases 61

9.1 2- and 3-generating distributions 62

9.2 3-Regular distributions 62

9.3 The 4- and 5-dimensional cases 68

9.4 The three-dimensional case 72

9.5 A Lie group example 73

9.6 A nonsmooth abnormal extremal 74

Appendix A: The Gaveau–Brockett problem 75

Appendix B: Proof of Theorem 1 81

B.1: Control systems 81

B.2: The Maximum Principle 84

Appendix C: Local optimality of normal extremals 89

**Appendix D: Rigid sub-Riemannian arcs and local opti-
mality 92**

Appendix E: A nonoptimality proof 99

References 102