Ergodicity of conformal measures for unimodal polynomials

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1 Introduction

Our goal in this work is to study ergodic properties of polynomial dynamical systems using conformal measures.

Let $f : \mathbf{C} \to \mathbf{C}$ be a polynomial. Sullivan showed in [Sul80] that it is possible to construct a conformal measure for f with support on J(f), the Julia set of f, for at least one positive exponent δ . By a conformal measure (or δ -conformal measure, to be more precise) we understand a Borel probability measure μ satisfying the following condition:

$$\mu(f(A)) = \int_A |Df(z)|^{\delta} d\mu(z),$$

whenever f restricted to the set A is one to one.

We say that μ is ergodic if $\mu(X) = 0$ or $\mu(X) = 1$ whenever we have $X = f^{-1}(X)$. Notice that usually when one talks about ergodicity of a measure it is assumed that the measure is invariant. In our case, due to the definition of conformal measure we are not dealing with an invariant measure but rather a quasi-invariant measure. We will show that a conformal measure is ergodic if f is a polynomial with certain properties. Let us introduce some definitions in order to state our main result.

Let f be a quadratic polynomial with only repelling periodic points. Following [Lyu95b], we will say that f satisfies the *secondary limb condition* if there is a finite family of truncated secondary limbs L_i of the Mandelbrot set such that the hybrid classes of all renormalizations

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 $R^m(f)$ belong to $\cup L_i$. Let \mathcal{SL} stand for the class of quadratic polynomials satisfying the secondary limb condition.

Some examples of polynomials of class \mathcal{SL} are: Yoccoz and Lyubich polynomials, and also infinitely many times renormalizable real polynomials of degree two. A quadratic polynomial is a Yoccoz polynomial if it is at most finitely many times renormalizable, with only repelling periodic points. A Lyubich polynomial is an infinitely many times renormalizable quadratic polynomial in \mathcal{SL} with sufficiently high combinatorics as described in [Lyu93].

If $f: U \to V$ is a polynomial-like map, then we say that $\operatorname{mod}(f)$ is equal to the modulus of the topological annulus $A = V \setminus U$. We say that an infinitely renormalizable polynomial f has a priori bounds if there exists an $\epsilon > 0$ such that $\operatorname{mod}(R^m(f)) > \epsilon$, where $R^m(f)$ is the m^{th} renormalization of f, for infinitely many m. According to [GS], [LvS95a] and [LY95], all infinitely renormalizable real unimodal polynomials have a priori bounds. By unimodal polynomial we mean an even degree polynomial with just one critical point.

We will show the following:

Theorem 1 Let f be a polynomial with just one critical point and J(f) connected. Let μ be a conformal measure for f. Suppose that f is either:

- (i) of class \mathcal{SL} , finitely many times renormalizable, or infinitely many times renormalizable with a priori bounds, or
- (ii) a polynomial with a parabolic periodic point, or
- (iii) any unimodal polynomial with real coefficients.

Then μ is ergodic.

Ergodicity of conformal measures is known if f is expanding on J(f) (see [Bow75], [Sul80] and [Wal78]). Suppose that f has just one critical point and an attracting cycle. Then f is expanding on J(f). If J(f) is disconnected (and f has just one critical point) then f is again expanding when restricted to J(f). From this fact and Theorem 1 we conclude the following:

Corollary 2 If f is any unimodal polynomial with real coefficients and μ a conformal measure for f, then μ is ergodic.

The following is an immediate consequence of ergodicity of conformal measures:

Corollary 3 Let f be as in Theorem 1. Then for any $\delta > 0$, there exists at most one δ -conformal measure for f.

The situation studied in this paper is the complex counterpart for the ergodicity result in [BL91] where the Lebesgue measure is shown to be ergodic under S-unimodal maps.

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2 Renormalization and combinatorics

2.1 Non-renormalizable polynomials

We will briefly describe how to construct the Yoccoz puzzle pieces for a quadratic polynomial. See [Hub] and [Mil91] for a complete exposition of such construction.

In this section we will consider quadratic polynomials f with repelling periodic points. We shall keep in mind though that the construction of Yoccoz puzzles that will be described in this section can be repeated for polynomials with degree greater than two.

We say that $g: U \to U'$ is a quadratic – like map if it is a double branched covering and Uand U' are open topological discs with U compactly contained in U'. The filled in Julia set of g is the set $\{z \in U : g^n(z) \text{ is defined for all natural numbers } n\}$. There are two fixed points of g inside its filled in Julia set. If the filled in Julia set is connected and both fixed points are repelling, one of them, the dividing fixed point, disconnects the filled in Julia set of g in more than one connected component. The other does not. Usually the dividing fixed point is denoted by α . Quadratic-like maps were first introduced and studied in [DH85].

Remember that a polynomial or a polynomial-like map f with connected filled in Julia set is renormalizable if there exist open topological discs $U \subset U'$ with $0 \in U$ with $R(f) : U \to U'$ being a quadratic-like map with connected filled in Julia set. We define $R(f) = f^k|_U$, with k the smallest natural number bigger than 1 satisfying the previous conditions (we call k the period of renormalization). Here R(f) stands for the renormalization of f. We can ask whether R(f) is renormalizable or not and then define renormalizations of f of higher orders. So, each renormalization of f defines a quadratic polynomial-like map. We refer the reader to [McM94] for more details concerning renormalization.

Let f be a degree two non-renormalizable polynomial with both fixed points repelling and let G be the Green function of the filled Julia set of f. There are q external rays landing at the dividing fixed point of f, where $q \ge 2$. The q Yoccoz puzzle pieces of depth zero are the components of the topological disc defined by $G(z) < G_0$, where G_0 is any fixed positive constant, cut along the q external rays landing at the dividing fixed points. We denote $Y^0(x)$ the puzzle piece of depth zero containing x. We define the *puzzle pieces of depth* n as being the connected components of the pre-images of any puzzle piece of depth zero under f^n . Again, if x is an element of a given puzzle piece of depth n we denote such puzzle piece by $Y^n(x)$.

Suppose now that f is at most finitely renormalizable with only repelling periodic points. Let α be the dividing fixed point of the last renormalization of f. Let G be the Green function of the filled in Julia set of f. In that case we define the puzzle pieces of depth zero as being the components of the topological disc $G(z) < G_0$, G_0 a positive constant, cut along the rays landing at all points of the f-periodic orbit of α . As before we define the puzzle pieces of depth n as being the connected components of the pre-images under f^n of the puzzle pieces of depth zero. The puzzle piece at depth n containing x is denoted by $Y^n(x)$.

We will consider the Yoccoz puzzle pieces as open topological discs. Under this consideration the Yoccoz partition will be well defined over the Julia set of the polynomial f minus the set of pre-images of the dividing fixed point of the last renormalization of f (which is f itself in the non-renormalizable case).

A quadratic polynomial is a *Yoccoz polynomial* if it is at most finitely renormalizable with only repelling periodic points. We will need the following result:

Theorem 2.1 (Yoccoz) If f is a Yoccoz polynomial then $\bigcap_{n\geq 0} Y^n(x) = \{x\}$ for any x where the Yoccoz partition is defined.

The following is the analog Theorem for higher degree real unimodal polynomials:

Theorem 2.2 ([LvS95b]) Let $f(z) = z^{l} + c$, l even, c real and f finitely many times renormalizable with only repelling periodic points. Then for any x where the Yoccoz partition is defined we have: $\bigcap_{n>0} Y^{n}(x) = \{x\}$.

2.2 The \mathcal{SL} class

Here we will describe the secondary limb class of quadratic polynomials. See [Lyu95a] and [Lyu95b] for a detailed exposition on this matter. We will need some technical definitions.

Let us start with a quadratic polynomial f with only repelling periodic points. Given a Yoccoz puzzle piece Y_i^n of f and a point x such that $f^j(x)$ belongs to Y_i^n . We define the *pull* back of Y_i^n along the orbit of x as being the only connected component of $f^{-j}(Y_i^n)$ containing x. If moreover x belongs to Y_i^n and j is minimal and non-zero, then we say that j is the first return time of x to Y_i^n . A puzzle piece is said to be a critical puzzle piece if it contains the critical point. Notice that if we pull back a critical puzzle piece $Y^n(0)$ along the first return of the critical point to $Y^n(0)$ we get a new critical puzzle piece.

Suppose that f is not Douady-Hubbard immediately renormalizable (see [Lyu95a]). Then it is possible to find a critical puzzle piece (that will be denoted by $V^{0,0}$) satisfying the following: if the pull back of $V^{0,0}$ along the first return of the critical point to $V^{0,0}$ is denoted by $V^{0,1}$, then the closure of $V^{0,1}$ is properly contained in $V^{0,0}$. We keep repeating this procedure: define $V^{0,t+1}$, the puzzle piece of level t + 1, as being the pull back of $V^{0,t}$, the puzzle piece of level t, along the first return of the critical point to $V^{0,t}$. This procedure stops if the critical point does not return to a certain critical puzzle piece. If we assume that the critical point is combinatorially recurrent, then we can repeat this procedure forever. So let us assume that case. The collection $V^{0,t}$ for t being a natural number is the principal nest of the first renormalization level.

Now we have a sequence of first return maps $f^{l(t)}: V^{0,t+1} \to V^{0,t}$. By definition $V^{0,0}$ properly contains $V^{0,1}$. This implies that each $V^{0,t}$ properly contains $V^{0,t+1}$. It is also easy to see that each $f^{l(t)}: V^{0,t+1} \to V^{0,t}$ is a quadratic-like map.

We say that $f^{l(t)}: V^{0,t+1} \to V^{0,t}$ is a central return or that t is a central return level if $f^{l(t)}(0)$ belongs to $V^{0,t+1}$. A cascade of central returns is a set of subsequent central return levels. More precisely, a cascade of central returns is a collection of central return levels $t = t_0, ..., t_0 + (N-1)$ followed by a non-central return at level $t_0 + N$. In this case we say that the above cascade of central returns has length N. We could also have an infinite cascade of central returns. Notice that with the above terminology a non-central return level is a cascade of central return of length zero.

It is possible to show that the principal nest of the first renormalization level ends with an infinite cascade of central returns if and only if f is renormalizable (see [Lyu95a]). In that case, denote the first level of this infinite cascade of central returns by t(0). Then we define the first renormalization R(f) of f as being the quadratic-like map $f^{l(t(0))} : V^{0,t(0)+1} \to V^{0,t(0)}$. The filled-in Julia set of R(f) is connected (it is also possible to show that $\cap V^{0,n} = J(R(f))$). Again we can find the dividing fixed point of the Julia set of R(f), some external rays landing at it and define new puzzle pieces over the Julia set of R(f). The rays landing at the new dividing fixed point are not canonically defined (remember that R(f) is a polynomial-like map). We are not taking the external rays of the original polynomial. Instead we need to make a proper selection of those rays (see [Lyu95a]). As before we can construct the principal nest for R(f), provided that R(f) is not Douady-Hubbard immediately renormalizable. The elements of this new principal nest are denoted by $V^{1,0}, V^{1,1}, \dots, V^{1,t}, \dots$ and the nest is called the *principal nest* of the second renormalization level. If this new principal nest also ends in an infinite cascade of central returns, we repeat the procedure just described and construct a third principal nest. We repeat this process as many times as we can.

Now we define the *principal nest* of the polynomial f as being the set of critical puzzle pieces

$$V^{0,0} \supset V^{0,1} \supset \dots \supset V^{0,t(0)} \supset V^{0,t(0)+1} \supset V^{1,0} \supset V^{1,1} \supset \dots, V^{1,t(1)} \supset V^{1,t(1)+1} \supset \dots \supset V^{m,0} \supset V^{m,1} \supset \dots \supset V^{m,t(m)} \supset V^{m,t(m)+1} \supset \dots$$

In order to go ahead with the definition of the class of polynomials we are interested in, we need the notion of a truncated secondary limb. A *limb* in the Mandelbrot set M is the connected component of $M \setminus \{c_0\}$ not containing 0, where c_0 is a bifurcation point on the main cardioid. If we remove from the limb a neighborhood of its root c_0 , we get a *truncated limb*. A similar object corresponding to the second bifurcation from the main cardioid is a *truncated* secondary limb. We say that a quadratic polynomial with only repelling periodic points satisfies the secondary limb condition if there is a finite family of truncated secondary limbs L_i of the Mandelbrot set such that the hybrid class of all renormalizations $R^m(f)$ belongs to $\cup L_i$. Let \mathcal{SL} stand for the class of quadratic polynomials satisfying the secondary limb condition.

2.3 Complex Bounds

We say that f has a priori bounds or complex bounds if there exists an $\epsilon > 0$ such that $\operatorname{mod}(R^m(f)) > \epsilon$, for infinitely many renormalizations of f. A priori bounds is, as we shall see, one of the main properties that we will be using in this paper. In [Lyu95b] it was conjectured that the secondary limb condition described above implies a priori bounds. In [Lyu93] and [Lyu95b] it was constructed a large class of infinitely many times renormalizable quadratic polynomials satisfying the secondary limb condition with a priori bounds. The next Theorem follows from Theorem II in [Lyu95a].

Theorem 2.3 (Lyubich) Let f be a Yoccoz polynomial. There exists a constant c > 0 such that $mod(V^{0,t} \setminus V^{0,t+1}) > c$, for all t.

Complex bounds were proved first by Sullivan (see [dMvS93]) for infinitely renormalizable quadratic maps with bounded combinatorics. In [GS], [LvS95a] and [LY95] the restriction on the combinatorics was removed. Also [LvS95a] provides complex bounds for infinitely renormalizable polynomials of the form $f(z) = z^{l} + c$, where l is even and c is real.

Theorem 2.4 Let $f(z) = z^{l} + c$ be an infinitely renormalizable real polynomial of even degree l. If a_n is the period of the n^{th} renormalization of f, then there exist topological discs $V^{n,0}$ and $V^{n,1}$ such that:

- (*i*) $0 \in V^{n,1}$;
- (*ii*) $\operatorname{cl}(V^{n,1}) \subset V^{n,0};$
- (iii) $\operatorname{mod}(V^{n,0} \setminus V^{n,1}) \ge c > 0;$
- (iv) $f^{a_n}: V^{n,1} \to V^{n,0}$ is a polynomial-like map of degree l with connected filled in Julia set;
- (v) diam $(V^{n,0}) \to 0$ as $n \to \infty$.

2.4 Unbranched maps

Definition 2.5 ([Lyu91]) Let U and U_i be open topological discs, i = 0, 1, ..., n. Suppose that $cl(U_i) \subset U$ and $U_i \cap U_j = \emptyset$ if i is different than j. A generalized polynomial-like map is a map $f : \bigcup U_i \to U$ such that the restriction $f|U_i$ is a branched covering of degree $d_i, d_i \geq 1$.

We will not use the above Definition in full generality. From now on, all generalized polynomial-like maps in this work will have just one critical point. We will fix our notation as follows: $f|U_0$ is a branched covering of degree d onto U (with zero being the only critical point) and $f|U_i$ is an isomorphism onto U, if i = 1, ..., n.

For the next definition we will consider a polynomial f with just one critical point and $g: \bigcup V_i \to V$ a generalized polynomial-like map. Assume that g is defined in each V_i as the first return map to V under f of the elements of V_i . In particular we assume that V_0 is the pull back of V along the first return of the critical point of f to V.

Definition 2.6 ([LvS95b] and [McM94]) We say that g is unbranched if whenever $f^i(0)$ belongs to V, then $f^i(0)$ is an iterate of 0 under g.

Let g be as in the above definition. If we assume that the critical point is recurrent then the intersection of the critical set of f with V is contained in the domain of g. Notice that if f is renormalizable and if g is a renormalization of f, then the above definition coincides with the unbranched renormalization definition from [McM94].

Lemma 2.7 Suppose that $g: \bigcup V_i \to V$ is unbranched. Let z be an element in J(f) and k be the smallest positive number such that $f^k(z)$ belongs to V_0 . Then we can pull V back univalently along the orbit $z, f(z), ..., f^k(z)$.

Proof. Suppose this is not the case. Then for some positive r smaller than k, $f^{-r}(V)$ hits the critical value f(0). By $f^{-r}(V)$ we understand the pull back of V along the orbit $f^{k-r}(z), ..., f^k(z)$. In that case, $f^{i+1}(0) \in f^i(f^{-r}(V))$, for i = 0, ..., r. Suppose that there exists $0 \leq i_{max} < r$ maximal such that $f^{i_{max}+1}(0)$ belongs to V. In that case, by the unbranched property there exists a component V_j of the domain of g containing $f^{i_{max}+1}(0)$. As V_j is the pull back of V under the first return of $f^{i_{max}+1}(0)$ to V, we conclude that $f^{i_{max}}(f^{-r}(V)) \subset V_j$. Now, as the pull back of V_j under f along $0, ..., f^{i_{max}}(0)$ is contained in V_0 , it follows that $f^{-1}(f^{-r}(V)) \subset V_0$, contradicting the minimality of k. Suppose now that there is no i_{max} , i.e., if the first return time of 0 to V is r+1. Then $f^r: f^{-r}(V) \to V$ is the univalent branch of the first return map $f^{r+1}: V_0 \to V$. This also contradicts the minimality of k.

Lemma 2.8 Let f be an $S\mathcal{L}$ polynomial with a priori bounds. Then for infinitely many n we can find U_n and V_n such that the n^{th} -renormalization of f is given by $R^n(f) : U_n \to V_n$ and both the unbranched condition and the a priori bound condition is verified for U_n and V_n

Proof. See Lemma 2.3 in [Lyu95b] for the proof. \Box

Let $f^{a_n}: V^{n,1} \to V^{n,0}$ be the polynomial-like maps introduced on Theorem 2.4 (the n^{th} renormalization of $f(z) = z^l + c$). We have the following:

Lemma 2.9 Let $f(z) = z^{l} + c$, with l even and c real. Then the polynomial-like maps $f^{a_{n}}$: $V^{n,1} \rightarrow V^{n,0}$ are unbranched, for infinitely many n.

Proof. This is due to the construction of the set $V^{n,1}$ and $V^{n,0}$ in [LvS95a].

For the next Lemma, let f be either a Yoccoz polynomial or any finitely many times renormalizable real polynomial with only repelling periodic points and just one critical point. Suppose that this critical point is recurrent. Let $Y^n(0)$ be a critical Yoccoz piece and $Y^{n+k}(0)$ be the pull back of $Y^n(0)$ along of the first return of the critical point to $Y^n(0)$.

Lemma 2.10 Let be z an element of J(f) and let m be the smallest time that $f^m(z) = Y^{n+k}(0)$. Then we can univalently pull $Y^n(0)$ back along the orbit $z, \ldots, f^m(z)$.

Proof. If not, $f^{-t}(Y^n(0))$ would contain the critical point, for some t less than m (here f^{-t} means the branch of f^{-t} along the orbit of x). That would mean that t is greater or equal to the first return time of 0 to $Y^n(0)$. That would imply $f^{-t}(Y^n(0)) \subset Y^{n+k}(0)$ by the Markov property of puzzle pieces. In other words, z would hit $Y^{n+k}(0)$ on a time strictly less than m, contradicting the definition of m. \Box

Lemma 2.11 Let f be either a Yoccoz polynomial or any finitely many times renormalizable real polynomial with only repelling periodic points. Then for any critical puzzles $Y^{j}(0)$, we can find a topological disk D_{j} such that:

- 1. $Y^{j}(0) \subset D_{j}$
- 2. $mod(D_j \setminus Y^j(0)) > c(f) > 0$
- 3. if $z \in J(f)$ and m be the smallest time that $f^m(z) = Y^j(0)$. Then we can univalently pull D_j back along the orbit $z, \ldots, f^m(z)$.

Proof. For a Yoccoz polynomial this follows from Lemma 2.10 and Theorem 2.3. If f is real but not of degree two, then the Lemma follows from the proof of Theorem B in [LvS95a] (if the critical orbit is minimal), and from Proposition 1.2 in [LvS95b] if the critical orbit is not minimal. \Box

3 Density Estimates

From now on f will be a polynomial of even degree with just one critical point and μ will denote a δ -conformal measure concentrated on the Julia set of f.

The analytic tool that we will use is the well known Koebe distortion Theorem:

Theorem 3.1 (Koebe) Let $A \subset B$ be two topological discs contained in the complex plane. Suppose that f is univalent when restricted to B. Also suppose that $B \setminus A$ is a topological annulus with positive modulus m. Then

$$\frac{1}{K} \le \frac{|Df(z_1)|}{|Df(z_2)|} \le K$$

for all z_1 and z_2 in A, where the constant K depends only on the number m.

The constant K that appears in the Lemma is called the Koebe constant. Under the conditions of the above Lemma we say that f has bounded distortion inside the set A.

Let f be either a Yoccoz polynomial or a finitely many times renormalizable real polynomial with only repelling periodic points. Notice that if a periodic point of f in J(f) is expanding then the set of all its pre-images has zero μ -measure. As we used just expanding periodic points to construct puzzle pieces, given any closed subset X of J(f), we can create a cover K_i of X (up to a set of zero measure) built up by puzzles pieces and with $\lim \mu(K_i) = \mu(X)$. This follows from Theorem 2.1, Theorem 2.2 and the regularity of conformal measures.

Definition 3.2 The density of a set X inside a set Y is defined as follows: dens $(X|Y) = \frac{\mu(X \bigcap Y)}{\mu(Y)}$.

Lemma 3.3 Let f be either a Yoccoz polynomial or a finitely many times renormalizable real polynomial with only repelling periodic points. Let $X \subset J(f)$ be any measurable subset. If $\mu(X) > 0$, there is x in X such that $\limsup(\operatorname{dens}(X|Y^n(x))) = 1$.

Proof. Assume $\mu(X) > 0$. If X is not closed, take $W \subset X$ compact with $\mu(X \setminus W)$ small. Notice that $\operatorname{dens}(X|Y^n(x)) \geq \operatorname{dens}(W|Y^n(x))$ for any $Y^n(x)$. For all $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists $i(\varepsilon)$, such that $1 - \varepsilon \leq \frac{\mu(W \bigcap K_i)}{\mu(K_i)} \leq 1$ if $i > i(\varepsilon)$ (remember that K_i are the covers of X made out of puzzle pieces). So we have for i big $\operatorname{dens}(W|K_i) = \frac{\mu(W \bigcap K_i)}{\mu(K_i)} \geq 1 - \varepsilon$. As K_i is the union of puzzle pieces we can certainly find a puzzle piece in K_i , say $Y^{n(i)}(x_i)$ such that $\operatorname{dens}(W|Y^{n(i)}(x_i)) \geq 1 - \varepsilon$. Now replacing X by $X \cap Y^{n(i)}(x_i)$ and repeating this argument we will end up with the desired result. \Box

Definition 3.4 The point $x \in X$ obtained in the previous Lemma is called a weak density point of X.

Proposition 3.5 Let $A \subset B$ be two μ -measurable subsets of the complex plane. Suppose that f restricted to an open neighborhood of B is one to one. Also suppose that there exists a positive constant K such that

$$\frac{1}{K} \le \frac{|Df(z_1)|}{|Df(z_2)|} \le K$$

for all z_1 and z_2 in B, then

$$\frac{1}{K^{\delta}}\operatorname{dens}(A|B) \le \operatorname{dens}(f(A)|f(B)) \le K^{\delta}\operatorname{dens}(A|B).$$

Proof. Follows from the definition of conformal measure and the definition of dens(A|B).

If U is a subset of the complex plane, we will denote by U^c the complement of U inside the complex plane.

Lemma 3.6 Let f be either a Yoccoz polynomial or a finitely many times renormalizable real polynomial of even degree with only repelling periodic points. Let μ a conformal measure for f. Let U be any neighborhood of the critical point. Then the set

$$\{x \in \mathbf{C} : f^n(x) \in U^c, \text{ for all positive } n\}$$

has zero μ -measure.

Proof. It is enough to show this Lemma for $U = Y^i(0)$ because by Theorem 2.1 and Theorem 2.2 any neighborhood of the critical point contains some $Y^i(0)$, for *i* sufficiently big. Suppose that the set $A = \{x \in \mathbf{C} : f^n(x) \in Y^i(0)^c, \text{ for all } n \text{ positive }\}$ has positive measure, for some *i* fixed. Then this set has a point of weak density *x*, according to Lemma 3.3. So we can find some sequence $n(j) \to \infty$ such that dens $(A|Y^{n(j)}(x)) \to 1$.

Notice that $f^{n(j)-i}(Y^{n(j)}(x))$ is a puzzle piece of depth *i* and none of the puzzle pieces $Y^{n(j)}(x), f(Y^{n(j)}(x)) \dots, f^{n(j)-i}(Y^{n(j)}(x))$ contains the critical point. That is because of the Markov property of puzzle pieces and the fact that $Y^{n(j)}(x)$ contains elements of the set *A*. So for all $Y^{n(j)}(x), f^{n(j)-i}(Y^{n(j)}(x))$ is a puzzle piece of depth *i* distinct from $Y^{i}(0)$ and the restriction $f^{n(j)-i}: Y^{n(j)}(x) \to Y^{i}(f^{n(j)-i}(x))$ is an isomorphism. As there exist just finitely many puzzle pieces of depth *i* then there is a fixed puzzle piece $Y^{i}(y)$ (distinct from the one containing the critical point) such that $f^{n(j)-i}(Y^{n(j)}(x)) = Y^{i}(y)$ for infinitely many n(j). Passing to a subsequence and keeping the same notation we will assume that $f^{n(j)-i}: Y^{n(j)}(x) \to Y^{i}(y)$ is an isomorphism for all n(j).

We will construct a neighborhood of $Y^{i}(y)$ where the inverse branch $f^{-(n(j)-i)}$ along the orbit $x, f(x), \ldots, f^{n(j)-i}(x)$ is defined as an isomorphism.

Let $i_1 > i$ such that $mod(Y^i(0) \setminus Y^{i_1}(0))$ is positive. This is possible by Yoccoz's Theorem.

The boundary of $Y^i(y)$ is composed by pairs of external rays landing at points in the Julia set and equipotentials. The intersection of this boundary with the Julia set is finite. Let z be a point of such finite intersection. Consider all puzzle pieces of depth i_1 containing z on its boundary. The closure of the union of those puzzle pieces is a neighborhood of z in the plane. Let us call such neighborhood V_z . Notice that each equipotential and the pieces of external rays landing at z outside V_z are at some definite distance from the Julia set. Take a small tubular neighborhood (not intersecting the Julia set) of each one of the equipotentials and pieces of external rays contained in the boundary of $Y^i(y)$, but outside V_z . Now we define the neighborhood N of $Y^i(y)$ as being the union of each V_z with all tubular neighborhoods described above and $Y^i(y)$ itself (see Figure 1). Notice that we can make N into a topological disc if i_1 is big and the tubular neighborhoods small. Also notice that since the distance between the boundaries of $Y^i(y)$ and N is strictly positive, we get that $mod(N \setminus Y^i(y))$ is strictly positive.

Now let us prove that we can pull N back isomorphically along the orbit $x, \ldots, f^{n(j)-i}(x)$ for any n(j).

The pull back of $Y^{i}(y)$ along $x, \ldots, f^{n(j)-i}(x)$ cannot hit the critical point. This is because $Y^{n(j)}(x)$ contains points in the set A, the f-invariance of the set A and the Markov property of



Figure 1: Construction of the neighborhood N of $Y^{i}(y)$

puzzle pieces. None of the pull backs of the tubular neighborhoods can hit the critical point because those neighborhoods are outside the Julia set. The pull back of V_z along $x, \ldots, f^{n(j)-i}(x)$ can not touch the critical point. If the pull back of V_z would hit the critical point, then it would intersect the interior of $Y^{i_1}(0)$ (because V_z is made out of puzzle pieces of depth i_1). By the choice of $i_1 \pmod{Y^i(0) \setminus Y^{i_1}(0)} > 0$ and because all the puzzle pieces of V_z have a common boundary point with $Y^i(y)$ we would conclude that some pre-image of $Y^i(y)$ along $x, \ldots, f^{n(j)-i}(x)$ would intersect $Y^i(0)$. Contradiction!

So we can pull N back isomorphically along the orbit $x, \ldots, f^{n(j)-i}(x)$ for any n(j). By the construction of N we have: $\operatorname{mod}(N \setminus Y^i(y)) > 0$. So we conclude that $f^{n(j)-i}: Y^{n(j)}(x) \to Y^i(y)$ has bounded distortion with the Koebe constant not depending on n(j).

Using the above bounded distortion property, Proposition 3.5 and the fact that x is a density point for A, we conclude that $dens(A|Y^i(y))$ is arbitrarily close to one. On the other hand there exists some pre-image of $Y^i(0)$ inside $Y^i(y)$, so $dens(A|Y^i(y))$ is bounded away from 1. Contradiction! \Box

Let us prove a similar result for the classes of infinitely renormalizable polynomials that we are dealing with:

Lemma 3.7 Let f be any SL quadratic polynomial with a priori bounds and μ a conformal measure for f. Let U be any neighborhood of the critical point. Then the set

$$\{x \in \mathbf{C} : f^n(x) \in U^c, \text{ for all positive } n\}$$

has zero μ -measure.

Proof. Let us denote the set in the statement of this Lemma by A. We have $A = J(f) \setminus \bigcup_k f^{-k}(U)$. So A is a nowhere dense forward invariant set. Notice that $A \cap \overline{\mathcal{O}}$ is empty (because of the definition of A and because $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ is minimal if f is infinitely many times renormalizable with a priori bounds). In view of the Lebesgue density Theorem (see Theorem 2.9.11 in [Fed69]), the set of density points of A has full measure inside A. Here by density points we mean $x \in A$ such that $\lim_{r\to 0} \operatorname{dens}(A|B(x,r)) = 1$, where B(x,r) is the Euclidean ball with center at x and radius r. Suppose that $\mu(A)$ is positive. Then we conclude that there exists a density point x in A. There also exists y inside A and a sequence of natural numbers $k_j \to \infty$ such that $f^{k_j}(x) \to y$. We can pull back a ball of definite size centered in y along $x, f(x), \dots, f^{k_j}(x)$ (to be more precise, the size of this ball is $\operatorname{dist}(y, \overline{\mathcal{O}})$). That implies that we can fix a positive number η and pull back the ball $B(f^{k_j}(x), \eta)$, along $x, f(x), \dots, f^{k_j}(x)$. Since A is nowhere dense and μ is positive on non-empty open subsets of the Julia set, for large k_j we have:

$$\mu(B(f^{k_j}(x),\frac{\eta}{2}) \setminus A) \ge \mu(B(y,\frac{\eta}{4}) \setminus A) > 0.$$

As a consequence of Koebe's Theorem, the definition of conformal measure and the invariance of A we have:

$$K^{-1}\mu(B(x,K^{-1}\frac{\eta}{2}|Df^{k_{j}}(x)|^{-1})\setminus A) \leq |Df^{k_{j}}(x)|^{-\delta}\mu(B(f^{k_{j}}(x),\frac{\eta}{2})\setminus A) \leq \\ \leq K\mu(B(x,K\frac{\eta}{2}|Df^{k_{j}}(x)|^{-1})\setminus A).$$

Let us denote $r = K \frac{n}{2} |Df^{k_j}(x)|^{-1}$. From the above and from the definition of conformal measure we get:

$$\frac{\mu(B(x,r)\setminus A)}{\mu(B(x,r))} \ge \frac{|Df^{k_j}(x)|^{-\delta}K^{-1}\mu(B(f^{k_j}(x),\frac{\eta}{2})\setminus A)}{\mu(B(x,r))} \ge \frac{K^{-1}|Df^{k_j}(x)|^{\delta}}{\mu(f^{k_j}(B(x,r)))} |Df^{k_j}(x)|^{-\delta}K^{-1}\mu(B(f^{k_j}(x),\frac{\eta}{2})\setminus A) \ge \frac{K^{-2}\mu(B(f^{k_j}(x),\frac{\eta}{2})\setminus A)}{\mu(f^{k_j}(B(x,r)))} \ge \frac{K^{-2}\mu(B(f^{k_j}(x),\frac{\eta}{2})\setminus A)}{1} \ge \frac{K^{-2}\mu(B(y,\frac{\eta}{4})\setminus A)}{1} \ge K^{-2}\mu(B(y,\frac{\eta}{4})\setminus A) \ge c > 0.$$

As $\lim_{k_j\to\infty} |Df^{k_j}(x)| = \infty$ (because of bounded distortion and lack of normality inside J(f)) we get:

$$\operatorname{limsup}_{r \to 0} \frac{\mu(B(x,r) \setminus A)}{\mu(B(x,r))} > 0,$$

which contradicts the choice of x as a density point of A.

Lemma 3.8 Let $f(z) = z^{l} + c$, with l even and c real be an infinitely renormalizable polynomial and μ a conformal measure for f. Let U be any neighborhood of the critical point. Then the set

$$\{x \in \mathbf{C} : f^n(x) \in U^c, \text{ for all positive } n\}$$

has zero μ -measure.

Proof. The proof of this Lemma is identical to the proof of the previous Lemma. The essential information we used in the proof of Lemma 3.7 was the complex bounds. The complex bounds in the present case is guaranteed by Theorem 2.4. \Box

Note that in Lemma 3.7 and Lemma 3.8 we used the fact that f restricted to $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ is minimal which is not necessarily true for polynomials which are at most finitely many times renormalizable. On the other hand, in Lemma 3.6 we used the fact that we have a partition for the entire Julia set by puzzle pieces whose pre-images shrink to points. We do not have that for the polynomials in Lemma 3.7 and Lemma 3.8.

From the previous Lemmas we conclude that the set

$$\mathcal{W} = \{ z \in J(f) : 0 \in w(z) \}$$

has full measure, i. e., $\mu(\mathcal{W}) = 1$. Here w(z) denotes the *w*-limit set of *z*.

Remember that in the case of a finitely many times renormalizable polynomial (with only repelling periodic points), the first index of the principal nest is always 0: $V^{0,n}$. That is because we do not have renormalization levels.

Let $X \subset \mathcal{W}$ be any measurable set. If f is a finitely many times renormalizable polynomial (real, if the degree is greater than 2) with only repelling periodic points we can create a cover of X by puzzle pieces as follows: fix $V^{0,n}$. For every $x \in X$ there exists a first time m such that $f^m(x) \in V^{0,n}$. So we can pull $V^{0,n}$ along the orbit of x back to a puzzle piece containing x. Changing $x \in X$ we will obtain the desired cover. Let us call this cover O_n . We can make a similar construction for any \mathcal{SL} polynomial with a priori bounds using the sets $V^{m,t(m)}$ constructed in Subsection 2.2 (we will just consider the renormalizable polynomials we can also repeat the same construction using the sets $V^{n,1}$ introduced on Theorem 2.4. We have the following properties:

- (i) O_n is an open cover;
- (ii) $O_n \subset O_{n-1}$;
- (iii) $\bigcap O_n = X;$
- (iv) $\mu(O_n) \to \mu(X)$ as $n \to \infty$.

The first and the second properties are trivial. The third one is a consequence of Theorem 2.1 and Theorem 2.2, if f is a finitely many times renormalizable polynomial (real or degree two) with only repelling periodic points. The same fact follows for $S\mathcal{L}$ polynomials with a priori bounds, if we use Lemma 2.8. The last one follows by regularity of the measure μ .

To simplify the notation, elements of O_n will be denoted by the letter U (indexed in some convenient fashion).

Lemma 3.9 For all *i*, there exists U^i in O_i such that $dens(X|U^i) \to 1$, as $i \to \infty$.

Proof. Similar to Lemma 3.3. \Box

We will now finish this section with a Lemma for polynomials with parabolic periodic points:

Lemma 3.10 Let $f(z) = z^{l} + c$, l even and c complex, be a polynomial with a parabolic periodic point and μ a conformal measure for f. Let U be any neighborhood of the parabolic periodic point. Then the set

$$\{x \in \mathbf{C} : f^n(x) \in U^c, \text{ for all positive } n\}$$

has zero μ -measure.

Proof. We can assume that f has a fixed point w. If this is not the case, we change f by a convenient power f^n in order to get a fixed point.

The orbit of the critical set of f converges to w. That is because the critical set of f (or f^n) is contained in the union of the attracting petals of w. In that case, if U is any neighborhood of w, there exists an $\varepsilon > 0$ such that all the inverse branches of f^m , for any natural m, is defined in $B(z, \varepsilon)$, for any z outside U. If we denote by A the set in the statement of this Lemma, then the distance from A to the orbit of the critical set is positive. Now we can repeat step by step the proof of the Lemma 3.7. \Box

4 Proof of Theorem 1

4.1 The non-parabolic cases

Let $Y \subset \mathcal{W} = \{z \in J(f) : 0 \in w(z)\} \subset J(f)$ be an *f*-invariant set (remember that \mathcal{W} has full measure). Suppose that $\mu(Y) > 0$.

If f is a Yoccoz polynomial, by Lemma 3.9 we can find U^n in O_n such that dens $(Y|U^n) \to 1$. Let $f^{j(n)}: U^n \to V^{0,n}$ be an isomorphism (given by the definition of O_n). Then by Lemma 2.11 and Koebe's Theorem we conclude that $f^{j(n)}$ has bounded distortion, i.e.:

$$\frac{1}{K} \le \frac{|D(f^{j(n)})(z_1)|}{|D(f^{j(n)})(z_2)|} \le K$$

for all z_1 and z_2 in U^n , where K depends just on c(f), the constant that appears in the statement of Lemma 2.11.

Now let us apply Proposition 3.5 to the sets $Y^c \cap U^n$ and U^n with respect to the map $f^{j(n)}$. Due to the fact that the set Y is f-invariant and that $f^{j(n)}(U^n) = V^{0,n}$ we get $\frac{1}{K^{\delta}} \operatorname{dens}(Y^c|U^n) \leq \operatorname{dens}(Y^c|V^{0,n}) \leq K^{\delta} \operatorname{dens}(Y^c|U^n)$.

We know that dens $(Y|U^n) \to 1$. Passing to the complement of Y we get dens $(Y^c|U^n) \to 0$. From this and the above inequalities we conclude that dens $(Y^c|V^{0,n}) \to 0$ or dens $(Y|V^{0,n}) \to 1$.

Notice that if $\mu(Y^c) > 0$ then we can repeat the argument changing Y by Y^c . Doing this we get dens $(Y^c|V^{0,n}) \to 1$ and that contradicts the previous limit because dens $(Y|V^{0,n}) + dens(Y^c|V^{0,n}) = 1$.

So we conclude that $\mu(Y^c) = 0$, or equivalently, $\mu(Y) = 1$. This finishes the proof of the Theorem if f is a Yoccoz polynomial. For any other finitely many times renormalizable real polynomial with only repelling periodic points, the proof is identical.

If f is a \mathcal{SL} polynomial with a priori bounds, the proof of Theorem 1 is basically the same. The only difference is that we use Lemma 2.8 instead of Lemma 2.11. If $f(z) = z^l + c$ is infinitely many times renormalizable, l even and c real, then we need Theorem 2.4 and Lemma 2.9 to carry out the above argument. Again the proof is the same.

4.2 The parabolic case

Now, assume that $f(z) = z^{l} + c$, l even and c complex with a fixed parabolic point w. We know by Lemma 3.10 that if U is a neighborhood of w, then the set $\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} f^{-n}(U)$ has full measure. Let us assume that U has a small diameter. Then the set $f^{-1}(U)$ has l connected components: one containing w and the others containing w_i , the pre-images of w, other than w itself. The connected component of $f^{-1}(U)$ containing w_i will be denoted by U'_i . We will denote the union of all the U'_i 's by U'. If U is small, then $U \cap J(f)$ is contained in the union of the repelling petals of the parabolic point w. So, $f^{-1}(U) \subset U \cup U'$, up to a set of zero measure (remember that μ is supported on J(f)).

Taking into account all the previous observations, we conclude that up to a set of zero measure we have:

$$\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} f^{-n}(U) = \bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} f^{-n}(U') \cup U$$

 1^{st} case: Let us assume that $\mu(w) = 0$. Then by regularity of μ and by the last equality we have that the following is true: for any $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists a sufficiently small neighborhood U of w such that $\mu(\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} f^{-n}(U')) > 1 - \varepsilon$ (just take U such that $\mu(U) < \varepsilon$).

If $U_2 \subset U_1$ then $\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} f^{-n}(U'_2) \subset \bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} f^{-n}(U'_1)$. So $\mu(\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} f^{-n}(U'_1)) \geq \mu(\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} f^{-n}(U'_2)) > 1 - \varepsilon_2$, where ε_2 depends on U_2 . So if diam (U_2) is taken arbitrarily small, then ε_2 will be arbitrarily close to zero. Then we conclude that $\mu(\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} f^{-n}(U'_1)) = 1$.

As $f^n(0) \to w$, the points w_i are at a positive distance from the critical orbit. This implies that there exists a positive number α such that all the inverse branches of f^n are defined on the ball $B(w_i, \alpha)$. Let us show that μ is an ergodic measure. Let $Y \subset J(f)$ be an *f*-invariant set such that $\mu(Y) > 0$. In view of the Lebesgue density Theorem (see Theorem 2.9.11 in [Fed69]) the set of density points of Y has full measure inside Y.

By the previous paragraphs we conclude that there exist $x \in Y$ and a sequence $\{k_j\}$ of numbers such that $\lim_{r\to 0} \operatorname{dens}(Y|B(x,r)) = 1$ and that $\lim_{k_j\to\infty} f^{k_j}(x) = w_{i_0}$, for some fixed i_0 .

We will show that w_{i_0} is a density point of Y. If not, then $\lim_{r_i \to 0} \operatorname{dens}(Y|B(-w, r_i)) < 1$ for some sequence of positive numbers r_i tending to zero. So there exists $\eta < \alpha$ such that $\mu(B(w_{i_0}, \frac{\eta}{4}) \setminus Y) > 0$. Now we can mimic the proof of Lemma 3.7 to conclude that x is not a density point of Y. Contradiction! So we conclude that w_{i_0} is a density point of Y.

As the restriction of f to a small neighborhood of w_{i_0} is an isomorphism onto a neighborhood of w and Y is f-invariant, we conclude that w is a density point of Y.

If the measure of the complement of Y is positive, then we can show that w is a density point of the complement of Y. We do that just changing Y by its complement in the above reasoning. So we must have $\mu(Y) = 1$, and μ is ergodic.

 2^{nd} case: If $\mu(w) > 0$, then Lemma 11 and Theorem 13 from [DU91] shows that μ is supported on the grand-orbit of w, and then it is ergodic.

If f has a parabolic periodic point w of period p, then f^p has a fixed parabolic point. We can prove the Theorem in exactly the same way we did before. So we proved Theorem 1.

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