

Critical Sets of Random Smooth Functions on Compact Manifolds

Liviu I. Nicolaescu

- 1 A baby case
- 2 The general case
- 3 Proof outline and consequences
 - Outline
 - Consequences of the proof
 - Zonal domains of random harmonic polynomials
- 4 The key formula
- 5 A probabilistic interlude
 - Gaussian measures
 - The regression formula
 - Gaussian random fields (or processes)
- 6 The key formula through a probabilistic lens
- 7 The asymptotic estimates
- 8 Critical points of random trigonometric polynomials
- 9 Universal rescaling of the spectral function

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- **Answer:** $\mathbf{N}_d \sim \frac{8\pi}{3\sqrt{3}} d^2$ as $d \rightarrow \infty$.

Mental health break

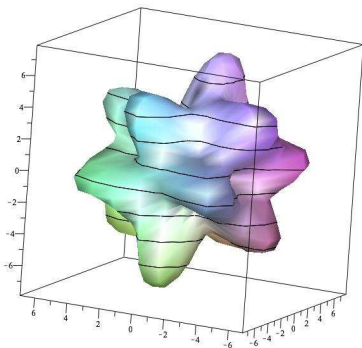


Figure: Random degree 6 polynomial on S^2 . [More](#)

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- For $L \gg 0$ almost all functions $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbf{U}_L$ are Morse. Denote by $\mathcal{N}_L(\mathbf{u})$ the number of critical points of $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbf{U}_L$ and define the **expected number of critical points** of a random function $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbf{U}_L$ to be

$$\mathbf{N}_L(M, g) := \int_{\mathbf{U}_L} \mathcal{N}_L(\mathbf{u}) d\gamma_L(\mathbf{u}).$$

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where

$$C'_m = \frac{C_m \omega_m}{(2\pi)^m},$$

$\omega_m =$ the volume of the m -dimensional unit Euclidean ball.

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where $d\gamma_*$ is the Gaussian probability measure on \mathcal{S}_m described by

$$d\gamma_*(X) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^{\frac{m(m+1)}{4}} \sqrt{\mu_m}} \cdot e^{-\frac{1}{4} \left(\text{tr} X^2 - \frac{1}{m+2} (\text{tr} X)^2 \right)} 2^{\frac{1}{2} \binom{m}{2}} \prod_{i \leq j} dx_{ij},$$
$$\mu_m = 2^{\binom{m}{2} + 1} (m+2)^{m-1}.$$

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$$\log C_m \sim \frac{m}{2} \log m \text{ as } m \rightarrow \infty.$$

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Step 1. We prove a **key formula** that describes a smooth function $\rho_L : M \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ such that

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Step 2. We use **probabilistic ideas** to express ρ_L in terms of the **spectral function** of the Laplacian of g , i.e., the Schwartz kernel of the orthogonal projection onto \mathbf{U}_L .

Idea of proof

Step 3. Using results of L. Hörmander (1968) and X. Bin (2004) about the spectral function we show that

$$L^{-\frac{m}{2}} \rho_L(\mathbf{x}) \rightarrow \text{const}_m \text{ as } L \rightarrow \infty,$$

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Step 4. We reduce the estimate of C_m to **Wigner's semi-circle theorem** in random matrix theory.

Corollaries

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Corollary (Asymptotic equidistribution of critical points)

The expected number $\mathbf{N}_L(\mathcal{O}, g)$ of critical points inside an open subset $\mathcal{O} \subset M$ of a random function in \mathbf{U}_L satisfies the asymptotic estimate

$$\mathbf{N}_L(\mathcal{O}, g) = \int_{\mathcal{O}} \rho_L(\mathbf{x}) |dV_g(\mathbf{x})| \sim \text{const}_m L^{\frac{m}{2}} \text{vol}_g(\mathcal{O}) \text{ as } L \rightarrow \infty.$$

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Consider the evaluation map

$$\mathbf{ev}_L : M \rightarrow \mathbf{U}_L^\vee := \text{Hom}(\mathbf{U}_L, \mathbb{R}), \quad \mathbf{x} \mapsto \mathbf{ev}_L(\mathbf{x}),$$

where

$$\mathbf{ev}_L(\mathbf{x})(\mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{u}(\mathbf{x}), \quad \forall \mathbf{u} \in \mathbf{U}_L.$$

For L large \mathbf{ev}_L is an embedding and we denote by g_L the pull back by \mathbf{ev}_L of the Euclidean metric on \mathbf{U}_L^\vee . Then

$$L^{-\frac{m+2}{2}} g_L \xrightarrow{\mathcal{C}^0} \text{const}_m \cdot g \text{ as } L \rightarrow \infty.$$

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Remark (R. Adler & J. Taylor)

The sectional curvature of the metric g_L has a simple and elegant probabilistic description.

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Theorem (Nic. 2010)

$$\mu_n \sim \frac{n^2}{\sqrt{3}} \text{ as } n \rightarrow \infty.$$

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- Previous work of Pleijel, Peetre, Bérard-Meyer implies that $a \leq \frac{4}{j_0^2} \approx 0.692$, where j_0 is the first positive zero of the Bessel function J_0 .

Water and ice

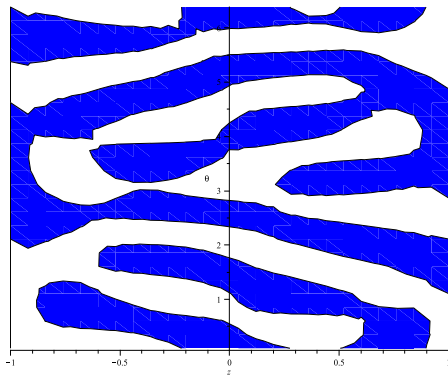


Figure: Zonal domains of a random harmonic polynomial of degree 7.

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$\mathbf{N}(\mathbf{U}, h)$ is the expected number of critical points of a random function $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbf{U}$.

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Find a density (measure) $\rho = \rho_{\mathbf{U},h}$ on M such that

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- A sample space (\mathbf{U}, h) on M is said to be **k -ample** if, for any $\mathbf{p} \in M$, and any $f \in C^\infty(M)$, there exists a function $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbf{U}$ whose k -jet at \mathbf{x} is equal to the k -jet of f at \mathbf{x} .

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- 1 \mathbf{U} is 1-ample $\iff \mathbf{ev}$ is an immersion.
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- For $\mathbf{p} \in M$, $\mathbf{U}_{\mathbf{p}}^0 :=$ the space of functions in \mathbf{U} that admit \mathbf{p} as critical point. (\mathbf{U} is 1-ample $\Rightarrow \dim \mathbf{U}_{\mathbf{p}}^0 = \dim \mathbf{U} - \dim M, \forall \mathbf{p}$.)
- For $\mathbf{p} \in M$ and $\mathbf{v} \in \mathbf{U}_{\mathbf{p}}^0$, $\text{Hess}_{\mathbf{p}}(\mathbf{v}) :=$ the Hessian of \mathbf{v} at \mathbf{p} .

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- we identify the bilinear form $\text{Hess}_p(\mathbf{u})$ with a linear operator $T_p M \rightarrow T_p M$ using the metric g .

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- The proof use the ubiquitous **double-fibration trick** in integral geometry applied to the double “fibration”

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We will alleviate these headaches using probabilistic methods.

Gaussian measures

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Identify Σ_{X_1, X_2} with a linear map $\mathbf{V}_2 \rightarrow \mathbf{V}_1$. ($\Sigma_{X_1, X_2} = 0$ iff X_1 and X_2 are independent.)

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Suppose that $f : \mathbf{V}_1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is a measurable function. Then the conditional expectation

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$$\Sigma_Y = \Sigma_{X_1} - \Sigma_{X_1, X_2} \Sigma_{X_2}^{-1} \Sigma_{X_1, X_2}^\dagger.$$

Above, A^\dagger denotes the adjoint (transpose) of a linear operator A between Euclidean spaces.

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- The covariance kernel contains all the important information about the gaussian random field.

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- This is a centered Gaussian field, with covariance kernel

$$\mathcal{E}(t_1, t_2) = \sum_{k=1}^N \Psi_k(t_1)\Psi_k(t_2),$$

where $(\Psi_k)_{1 \leq k \leq N}$ is an orthonormal basis of \mathbf{U} .

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$$\mathcal{E}_L(\mathbf{p}, \mathbf{q}) = \sum_{\lambda_n \leq L} \Psi_n(\mathbf{p}) \Psi_n(\mathbf{q}).$$

This function is also known as the **spectral function** of the Laplacian $\Delta_g(M)$.

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Fix $\mathbf{p} \in M$. We want to give probabilistic interpretations to the quantities

$$J_g(\mathbf{p}) \text{ and } h_L(\mathbf{p}) := \int_{\mathcal{U}_{\mathbf{p}}^0} |\det \text{Hess}_{\mathbf{p}}(\mathbf{u})| \frac{e^{-\frac{1}{2}|\mathbf{u}|^2}}{(2\pi)^{\frac{\dim \mathcal{U}_{\mathbf{p}}^0}{2}}} |d\mathbf{u}|.$$

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- The pushforward of the Gaussian measure on \mathbf{U}_L via the Hessian map $f \mapsto H_{\mathbf{p}}(f)$ is a centered Gaussian measure $d\Gamma_{L,\mathbf{p}}$ on $\mathcal{S}(T_{\mathbf{p}}M)$.

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- The pushforward of the Gaussian measure on \mathbf{U}_L via the Hessian map $f \mapsto H_{\mathbf{p}}(f)$ is a centered Gaussian measure $d\Gamma_{L,\mathbf{p}}$ on $\mathcal{S}(T_{\mathbf{p}}M)$. We denote by $\Sigma_{L,\mathbf{p}}$ its covariance form.

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- The pushforward of the gaussian measure on \mathbf{U}_L via the map $\mathbf{U}_L \ni \mathbf{u} \mapsto d\mathbf{u}(p) \in T_p^*M$ is a centered Gaussian measure $d\gamma_{L,p}$ with covariance form $\sigma_{L,p}$. One can prove that

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$$J_g(\mathbf{p}) = \sqrt{\det \sigma_{L,\mathbf{p}}}.$$

- The direct sum of the Gaussian random vectors $\mathbf{u} \mapsto H_{\mathbf{p}}(\mathbf{u})$ and $\mathbf{u} \mapsto d\mathbf{u}(\mathbf{p})$ is a Gaussian random vector. The co-area formula implies that the integral $h_L(\mathbf{p})$ is a **conditional expectation**

$$h_L(\mathbf{p}) = \mathbf{E}(|\det H_{\mathbf{p}}| \mid d\mathbf{u}(\mathbf{p}) = 0).$$

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where $Y : \mathbf{U} \rightarrow \mathcal{S}(T_{\mathbf{p}}M)$ is a centered Gaussian random symmetric matrix with covariance

$$\mathbf{S}_{L,\mathbf{p}} = \mathbf{\Sigma}_{L,\mathbf{p}} - \mathbf{C}_{L,\mathbf{p}}\sigma_{L,\mathbf{p}}^{-1}\mathbf{C}_{L,\mathbf{p}}^\dagger.$$

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The main point of the above equality is that the quantities $\sigma_{L,\mathbf{p}}$, $\mathbf{\Sigma}_{L,\mathbf{p}}$ and $\mathbf{C}_{L,\mathbf{p}}$ can be explicitly described in terms of derivatives the spectral function along directions normal to the diagonal in $M \times M$.

Estimating $\mathbf{N}_L(M, g)$

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[X. Bin \(2004\)](#) pushed Hörmander's technique further and obtained information about the partial derivatives of the spectral function along the diagonal.

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Using these estimates of the spectral function one can prove that as $L \rightarrow \infty$ we have

$$\mathbf{S}_{L,\mathbf{p}} \sim a_m L^{\frac{m+4}{2}} \mathbf{S}_m, \quad \sigma_{L,\mathbf{p}} = b_m L^{\frac{m+2}{2}} \mathbb{1}_m,$$

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Putting together these facts we obtained the **claimed asymptotic estimate** of $\mathbf{N}_L(M, g)$.

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The function $\rho_n(s)$ can be expressed explicitly in terms of Hermite polynomials.

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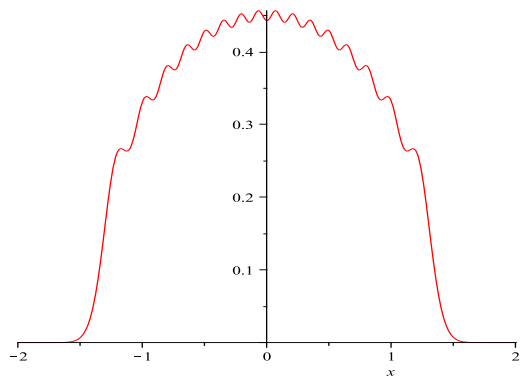


Figure: A depiction of $\rho_{16}(x)$, $|x| \leq 8$.

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Theorem (Wigner's semi-circle law)

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}\rho_n(\sqrt{nx}) \rightarrow \bar{\rho}_\infty(x) := \frac{1}{\pi} \begin{cases} \sqrt{2-x^2}, & |x| \leq \sqrt{2}, \\ 0, & |x| > \sqrt{2}, \end{cases} \text{ as } n \rightarrow \infty.$$

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- Now use Stirling's formula.

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where $c \approx 0.35$, \mathbf{E} = expectation, \mathbf{var} = variance.

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- Related recent results of [A. Granville](#), [I. Wigman](#) suggest that Z_ν satisfies a central limit theorem.

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- Along the diagonal in $S^2 \times S^2$ we have $\cos \varphi = 1$ and $\mathcal{E}_{n(n+1)}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{x}) = \frac{(n+1)^2}{4\pi}$.

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where

$$\cos \varphi = \mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{y}, \quad P_n(x) = \frac{1}{2^n n!} \frac{d^n}{dx^n} (x^2 - 1)^n.$$

- Along the diagonal in $S^2 \times S^2$ we have $\cos \varphi = 1$ and $\mathcal{E}_{n(n+1)}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{x}) = \frac{(n+1)^2}{4\pi}$.
- The Legendre polynomials $P_n(x)$ have a highly oscillatory behavior.

The spectral function

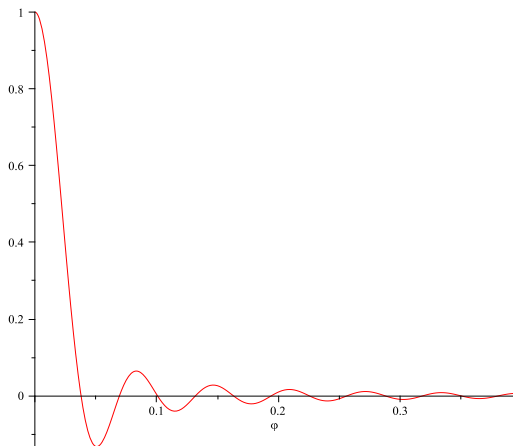


Figure: A depiction of $\frac{4\pi}{101^2} E_{100}(\varphi)$, $0 \leq \varphi \leq \frac{\pi}{8}$. Note that there are 11 zeros inside an interval of length $\frac{\pi}{8} < 0.4$

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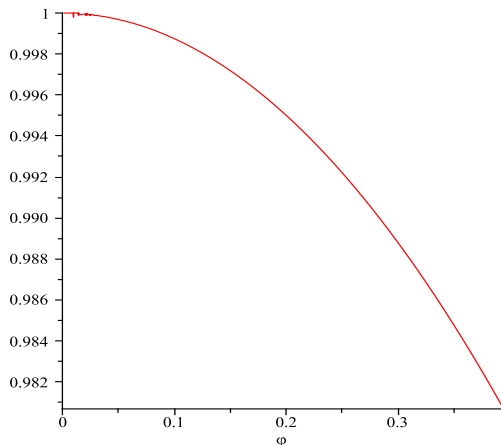


Figure: A depiction of $\frac{4\pi}{101^2} E_{100}\left(\frac{\varphi}{101}\right)$, $0 \leq \varphi \leq \frac{\pi}{8}$. The rescaling $\varphi \mapsto \frac{\varphi}{101}$ moved the oscillations at ∞ .

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- Suppose (M, g) compact Riemann manifold of dimension m , $\mathbf{p}_0 \in M$, and $x = (x^1, \dots, x^m)$ normal coordinates at \mathbf{p}_0 .

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- Define

$$\bar{\mathcal{E}}_{L, \mathbf{p}_0}(x) := \frac{1}{L^{\frac{m}{2}}} \mathcal{E}_L \left(\frac{x}{L^{\frac{1}{2}}}, \frac{y}{L^{\frac{1}{2}}} \right) \Big|_{x+y=0}.$$

We regard the space $V_{\mathbf{p}_0} := \{x + y = 0\}$ as the fiber over $(\mathbf{p}_0, \mathbf{p}_0)$ of the normal bundle of the diagonal.

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Denote by r the distance-to-the diagonal function

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Theorem ([Lapointe-Polterovich-Safarov, 2009](#))

The functions $\bar{\mathcal{E}}_{L, \mathbf{p}_0}(x)$ converge as $L \rightarrow \infty$ to the $SO(m)$ invariant function on $V_{\mathbf{p}_0}$

$$E_m(r) := \frac{1}{(2\pi r)^{\frac{m}{2}}} J_{\frac{m}{2}}(r),$$

where J_ν denotes the Bessel function of the first kind and order ν .

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$$\mathbf{E}_m^L(x, y) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^m} \int_{B_{\sqrt{L}}^m} e^{i(\xi, x-y)} |d\xi|, \quad \forall x, y \in \mathbb{R}^m$$

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- For any $x \in \mathbb{R}^m$ we have

$$E_m(|x|) = \mathbf{E}_m^1(x, 0) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^m} \int_{B_1^m} e^{i(\xi, x)} |d\xi|.$$