Generic properties of open billiards

Artur Lopes

Inst. Mat. - UFRGS

Porto Alegre - RS - Brazil

and

R. Daniel Mauldin[1]

Math. Dept. - University of North Texas

Denton - TX - USA

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Abstract - The purpose of this paper is to show that for a dense G_δ set of three smooth convex bodies with nowhere vanishing curvature (in the C^k topology, $2 \leq k \leq \infty$), the open billiard obtained from these convex bodies determines a potential (the one that defines the natural escape measure of this billiard) which is non-lattice. This result generalizes one of the results obtained in a previous work of A. Lopes and R. Markarian [1].

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1. The open billiard

The open billiard was previously analyzed in [1]. We refer the reader to [1] for most of the results we will use in the present paper. Most of the theorems of a dynamical nature mentioned in this paper [1] are stated for the open billiard defined by three circles with the same radius, but as was mentioned in [1] (see end of section 1), it can be easily extended to general convex bodies satisfying Morita's condition [2]. However, the proof of the result stated in section 8 [1] about the non-lattice property of the natural potential cannot be directly adapted from [1] to the general case. The purpose of the present paper is to eliminate this gap.

We refer the reader to [5] for a general reference for billiards.

We assume that the open billiard is defined by three convex bounded domains O_1, O_2 and O_3 in $\mathbf{R^2}$ each with a class $C^k, 2 \leq k \leq \infty$, (see [4] for definitions) boundary, and each with nonvanishing curvature everywhere. Let $\mathcal{F}$ be the space of all such curves. The space $\mathcal{F}$ carries a natural topology which we call the C^k topology under which it is a complete separable metric space (see [4]). We will assume that the open billiard is defined by three curves, implicitly given respectively by three $C^k, 2 \leq k \leq \infty$, expressions

$$f(x, y) = 0,$$

$$g(x, y) = 0$$

and

$$h(x, y) = 0,$$

that is $f, g, h \in \mathcal{F}$, where $\mathcal{F}$ is the set of C^k functions of $\mathbf{R^2}$ in $\mathbf{R}$.

Let F be the subset of $\mathcal{F}\times\mathcal{F}\times\mathcal{F}$ consisting such that for $(f, g, h) \in F$, the three curves $\gamma_1, \gamma_2, \gamma_3$ implicitly defined by the above equations are smooth Jordan curves and define convex bodies. We also assume of all $(O_1, O_2, 0_3)$ which satisfy Morita's condition [2]: the convex hull of any two of these bodies do not intersect the third one. The set F is a G_δ subset of $\mathcal{F} \times \mathcal{F} \times \mathcal{F}$.

For each $(O_1, O_2, O_3) \in F$, we consider the associated map $T_{(O_1,O_2,O_3)} = T$ restricted to the boundary values, i.e., position q and angle ϕ, of the billiard as in [1].

The two-dimensional map T associated to the boundary points $x = (q, \phi)$ is hyperbolic when restricted to the Cantor set Π of positions that do not escape to infinity [1]. The dynamical system T will be therefore defined from Π to itself.

The natural measure for this system (also called the escape measure) is the equilibrium state (see [3] for definitions) for a potential that will be denoted by ψ [1]. This function ψ will be described later.

If one considers as in [2] the ceiling function as potential, then the equilibrium measure is not anymore the escape measure.

Therefore, the questions adressed in [1] are of different nature that the ones in [2].

A function Θ defined on Π is called non-lattice if does not exist a function v, a constant α and a function G taking only integers values, such that for all $x \in \Pi$

$$v(T(x)) - v(x) + \alpha G(x) = \Theta(x).$$

Non-lattice functions defined on the non-wandering set of an hyperbolic dynamical system T determine nice statistical properties of the dynamical zeta function associated to the periodic orbits of T [3].

In [2], Morita shows that the ceiling potential is not lattice.

One of the results obtained in [1] is that for a dense set of values $a > 2$, the billiards of the form: three circles of radius one centered in the vertices of an equilateral triangle of side a, satisfy the following property: the associated natural potential ψ is non-lattice.

In this paper we prove

Theorem 1: For a dense G_δ set of parameters $(O_1, O_2, O_3) \in F$ in the C^k topology, $2 \leq k \leq \infty$, the open billiard defined by (O_1, O_2, O_3) is such that the natural potential ψ is non-lattice.

Note that the result of [1] do not follows from the above theorem, because the perturbations aloud here can leave the class of circular billiards.

2. Proof

Now we will prove the main theorem of last section.

Proof of Theorem 1 : Consider periodic orbits of period respectively 2 and 3 for T denoted by $a_1, a_2 \in \Pi$ and $b_1, b_2, b_3 \in \Pi$.

The proof proceeds by way of contradiction.

So, suppose that there exist a function v, a constant $\alpha \in \mathbf{R}$ and an integer valued function G such that $v \circ T - v + \alpha G = \psi$, where ψ is the natural potential for the escape measure.

Then

$$\psi(a_1) + \psi(a_2) = \psi(a_1) + \psi(T(a_1)) =$$
$$(v(a_2) - v(a_1) + \alpha G(a_1)) + (v(a_1) - v(a_2) + \alpha G(a_2)) = m_1 \alpha$$

for some $m_1 \in \mathbf{Z}$.

Similarly, we have

$$\psi(b_1) + \psi(b_2) + \psi(b_3) = n_1 \alpha$$

for some $n_1 \in \mathbf{Z}$.

Therefore,

$$\frac{1}{m_1}(\psi(a_1) + \psi(a_2)) = \frac{1}{n_1}(\psi(b_1) + \psi(b_2) + \psi(b_3)) \tag{1}$$

Now we need to use the analytic expression of ψ. Recall from [1] that $\phi(x)$ denotes the angle with the normal of the trajectory beginning at $x = (q, \phi)$ and $K(x) = K(q)$ is the curvature at q of the curve γ (one of the components of the boundary of the billiard) such that $q \in \gamma$. From [5], ψ is given by

$$\psi(x) = \log |1 + t(x)k(x)|,$$

for $x \in \Pi$, where $t(x) = \|q - q'\|$ is the distance between the successive hits $x = (q, \phi)$ and $T(x) = (q', \phi')$, and $k(x)$ is given by the continued fraction, $k(x) = [c_1(x), c_2(x), c_3(x), \ldots]$ or

$$k(x) = c_1(x) + \cfrac{1}{c_2(x) + \cfrac{1}{c_3(x) + \cfrac{1}{c_4(x) + \cdots}}}$$

where

$$c_{2k+1}(x) = \frac{2K(x)}{\cos \phi(T^{-k}(x))} \ , \ c_{2k}(x) = t(T^{-k}(x)) \ , k \in \mathbf{N}.$$

Expression (1) can be rewritten as

$$((1+t(a_1)k(a_1))(1+t(a_2)k(a_2)))^{n_1} =$$

$$((1+t(b_1)k(b_1))(1+t(b_2)k(b_2))(1+t(b_3)k(b_3)))^{m_1}. \tag{2}$$

We point out that the values a_1, a_2 defining the orbit of period 2 and the values b_1, b_2, b_3 defining the orbit of period 3 depend continuously on (O_1, O_2, O_3).

Note that $t(a_i), i \in \{1,2\}, t(b_j), j \in \{1,2,3\}$ are continuous functions of (O_1, O_2, O_3). Finally, note also that $\phi(a_i), \phi(b_j)$ and $K(a_i), K(b_j)$ are continuous functions of (O_1, O_2, O_3). Therefore, all these values t, K, ϕ and also $c_i, i \in \mathbf{N}$ are continuous functions of (O_1, O_2, O_3).

We claim that $k(a_i), i \in \{1,2\}$ and $k(b_j), j \in \{1,2,3\}$ are also continuous functions of (O_1, O_2, O_3).

In order to prove the claim, note that from the periodicity of a_1 and a_2

$$k(a_1) = c_1(a_1) + \cfrac{1}{c_2(a_1) + \cfrac{1}{c_3(a_1) + \cfrac{1}{c_4(a_1) + \cfrac{1}{k(a_1) + \cdots}}}},$$

or $k(a_1) = \overline{[c_1(a_1), c_2(a_1), c_3(a_1), c_4(a_1)]}$ is a periodic continued fraction.

Therefore, $k(a_1)$ is a solution of a quadratic equation with coefficients in

$$c_1(a_1), c_2(a_1), c_3(a_1), c_4(a_1).$$

Similarly, the same property also holds for $k(a_2)$.

Finally, from the periodicity of b_1, b_2, and b_3, the value $k(b_1)$ is also a solution of a quadratic equation with coefficients in

$$c_1(b_1), c_2(b_1), c_3(b_1), c_4(b_1), c_5(b_1), c_6(b_1)$$

since

$$k(b_1) = \overline{[c_1(b_1), c_2(b_1), c_3(b_1), c_4(b_1), c_5(b_1), c_6(b_1)]}.$$

Therefore, all the terms in (2) depend in a continuous fashion on (O_1, O_2, O_3). Thus, for a fixed m_1, n_1, the set B_{m_1,n_1} consisting of all $(O_1, O_2, O_3) \in F$ such that (2) holds is a closed set in F.

We now show that for fixed m_1, n_1 this set B_{m_1,n_1} is nowhere dense in F.

In order to do that we will show that for $(O_1, O_2, O_3) \in B_{m_1,n_1}$ one can perturb the three curves in F changing the value

$$((1 + t(a_1)k(a_1))(1 + t(a_2)k(a_2)))^{n_1}$$

"without changing the period three orbit" and also without changing

$$((1 + t(b_1)k(b_1))(1 + t(b_2)k(b_2))(1 + t(b_3)k(b_3)))^{m_1}.$$

Geometrical arguments easily show that one can perturb just the period two orbit (without changing the period three orbit at all) by changing a little bit the value $t(a_1) = t(a_2)$ and changing a little bit the values $K(a_1)$ and $K(a_2)$ (see fig 1).

We will show that these changes will indeed change the value

$$((1 + t(a_1)k(a_1))(1 + t(a_2)k(a_2))).$$

Denote $t = t(a_1) = t(a_2) = t(a_3) = \cdots$, $k_1 = k(a_1)$ and $k_2 = k(a_2)$.

Suppose that with the above described changes the value $(1+tk_1)(1+tk_2)$ remains constant equal to d.

The first equation we consider is

$$(1 + tk_1)(1 + tk_2) = d. \tag{3}$$

Note that

$$c_1 = 2K(a_1) = c_1(a_1), c_5(a_1), c_9(a_1), \ldots,$$

$$c_2 = 2K(a_2) = c_3(a_1), c_7(a_1), c_{11}(a_1), \ldots$$

and, for all $k \in \mathbf{N}$

$$c_{2k} = t.$$

Note also that $c_3(a_1) = c_1(a_2)$, etc...

Therefore,

$$k_1 = k(a_1) = c_1(a_1) + \cfrac{1}{c_2(a_1) + \cfrac{1}{c_1(a_2) + \cfrac{1}{c_2(a_2) + \cdots}}} = c_1 + \cfrac{1}{t + \cfrac{1}{k_2}},$$

and we obtain from this last expression our second equation

$$tc_1k_2 + c_1 + k_2 - tk_1k_2 - k_1 = 0, \tag{4}$$

So, k_1 and k_2 clearly depend continuously on c_1, c_2 and t.

From (3),

$$t(k_1 + k_2) + t^2k_1k_2 = d - 1. \tag{5}$$

Multiplying (4) by t one obtains

$$t^2c_1k_2 + c_1t + k_2t = tk_1 + t^2k_1k_2,$$

and now adding tk_2 to both members of last expression, one obtains from (5) that

$$t^2c_1k_2 + c_1t + 2k_2t = tk_1 + tk_2 + t^2k_1k_2 = d - 1.$$

The expression

$$t(tc_1k_2 + c_1 + 2k_2) = d - 1 \tag{6}$$

shows that k_2 depends only on t and c_1.

Note that in changing $K(a_1)$ (respectively $K(a_2)$) we also change $c_1 = \frac{2K(a_1)}{\cos\phi(a_1)} = 2K(a_1)$ (respectively c_2).

Now, from the periodicity of a_2

$$k_2 = k(a_2) = c_1(a_2) + \cfrac{1}{c_2(a_2) + \cfrac{1}{c_3(a_2) + \cfrac{1}{c_4(a_2) + \cfrac{1}{k_2 + \cdots}}}}$$

and finally

$$k_2 = c_2 + \cfrac{1}{t + \cfrac{1}{c_1 + \cfrac{1}{t + \cfrac{1}{k_2 + \cdots}}}}. \tag{7}$$

The last expression shows that k_2 depends on c_2, c_1 and t (in fact is a solution of a quadratic equation whose coefficients depend on c_1, c_2, t).

Note from (7) that k_2 really changes with the value c_2, that is, for t, c_1 fixed, k_2 depends on c_2. If (3) is true, then (6) says that k_2 is constant for t, c_1 fixed.

The conclusion is that the assumption (3) with d constant is false. Therefore we are able to perturb $(O_1, O_2, O_3) \in B_{m_1,n_1}$ obtaining that (2) is not true anymore.

Thus, each set B_{m_1,n_1} is nowhere dense, and therefore by the Baire Category Theorem, for a dense G_δ set of (O_1, O_2, O_3) in F, equation (1) is not true for any m_1, n_1.

Therefore, the potential ψ is non-lattice and the proof of Theorem 1 is complete.

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