The Yamabe Problem

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Outline

Motivation

In 2D case

Uniformazation Theorem

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- *the unit disk*
- *the complex plane*
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The theorem is consequence of the fact that every Riemann surface has a conformal metric with constant Gaussian curvature.

Definition

Two Riemannian metrics g and h are **conformal** if there exists positive function $f \in C^\infty(M)$ such that $h = e^{2f} g$.

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The Yamabe Problem

Given a compact Riemannian manifold (M, g) with $n = \dim M \geq 3$, find a metric conformal to g with constant scalar curvature.

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Given two metrics g and $\tilde{g}$, the transformation law between the scalar curvatures S and $\tilde{S}$,

$$\tilde{S} = \varphi^{1-p}(a\Delta\varphi + S\varphi).$$

Here φ satisfies $\tilde{g} = \varphi^{p-2}g$ and $a = \dfrac{4(n-1)}{n-2}$, $p = \dfrac{2n}{n-2}$ are constants.

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Define $\square = a\Delta + S$ and call it the **conformal Laplacian**. Let $\tilde{S} = \lambda =$ const. Then

$$\square\varphi = \lambda\varphi^{p-1}. \tag{$\star$}$$

Equation $(\star)$ is the Euler-Lagrange equation for the **Yamabe functional**

$$Q_g(\varphi) = \frac{\int_M a|\nabla\varphi|^2 + S\varphi^2 \,\mathrm{d}V_g}{\left(\int_M |\varphi|^p \,\mathrm{d}V_g\right)^{2/p}} = \frac{E(\varphi)}{\|\varphi\|_p^2}.$$

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By Hölder's inequality $Q_g(\varphi)$ is bounded below so we can take the infimum

Definition

The **Yamabe invariant** is the constant

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda(M) &= \inf\{Q_g(\varphi) \mid \varphi \in C^\infty(M) \text{ and positive}\}\\ &= \inf\{Q_g(\varphi) \mid \varphi \in L_1^2(M)\}.\end{aligned}$$

$\lambda(M)$ is an invariant of the conformal class of (M, g).

Main Results

Theorem A (Yamabe, Trudinger, Aubin)

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Theorem B (Aubin)

If M has dimension $n \geq 6$ and M is not locally conformally flat, then $\lambda(M) < \lambda(S^n)$.

Theorem C (Schoen)

If M has dimension $n = 3, 4, 5$ or M is locally conformally flat, then either $\lambda(M) < \lambda(S^n)$ or M is conformal to the n-sphere.

Definition

A map $F : (M, g) \to (N, h)$ is **conformal** if the induced metric F^*h is conformal to the original metric g on M. If F is a diffeomorphism, then we call F a **conformal diffeomorphism**.

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Example

The stereographic map $\sigma : S^n - \{N\} \to \mathbb{R}^n$ is a conformal diffeomorphism.

We can use this to construct the group of conformal diffeomorphisms of S^n. It is the group generated by rotations, $\sigma^{-1}\tau_v\sigma$ and $\sigma^{-1}\delta_\alpha\sigma$.

The Yamabe Problem on the Sphere

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Let $(S^n, \bar{g})$ be the n-sphere with standard metric. The scalar curvature of $\bar{g}$ is constant. So the Yamabe problem is solvable on the sphere. Moreover, one can prove the following.

Theorem

The Yamabe functional $Q_g(\varphi)$ on $(S^n, \bar{g})$ is minimized by constant multiples of $\bar{g}$ and its images under conformal diffeomorphisms. These are the only metrics conformal to $\bar{g}$ with constant scalar curvature.

An Upper Bound for $\lambda(M)$

Lemma (Aubin)

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Proof.

Step 1. Consider the function $\varphi = \eta \cdot u_\alpha(x)$ where

- η is a radical cut off function, such that $0 \leq \eta \leq 1$, and $\operatorname{supp} \eta = B_{2\epsilon}$;
- $u_\alpha(x) = \left(\frac{|x|^2+\alpha^2}{\alpha}\right)^{(n-2)/2}$, u_α satisfies $a\|\nabla u_\alpha\|_2^2 = \Lambda \|u_\alpha\|_p^2$.

We can find an upper bound for $\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} a|\nabla\varphi|^2 \,\mathrm{d}x$. Note that φ and η are radical, $\nabla = \partial_r$.

$$\begin{aligned}
\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} a|\nabla\varphi|^2 \,\mathrm{d}x &= \int_{B_{2\epsilon}} (a\eta^2|\nabla u_\alpha| + 2\alpha\eta u_\alpha < \nabla\eta, \nabla u_\alpha > + a u_\alpha^2 |\nabla\eta|^2) \,\mathrm{d}x \\
&\le \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} a|\partial_r u_\alpha|^2 \,\mathrm{d}x + C\int_{B_{2\epsilon}-B_\epsilon} (u_\alpha|\partial_r u_\alpha| + u_\alpha^2) \,\mathrm{d}x \\
&\le \Lambda\Big(\int_{B_{2\epsilon}} \varphi^p \,\mathrm{d}x\Big)^{2/p} + O(\alpha^{n-2})
\end{aligned}$$

The lase step is because $u_\alpha \le \alpha^{(n-2)/2} \cdot r^{2-n}$ and $|\partial_r u_\alpha| \le (n-2)\alpha^{(n-2)/2} \cdot r^{1-n}$.

Step 2. On a compact manifold M, choose normal coordinates $\{x^i\}$ in a neighbourhood of $P \in M$. Let $\varphi = \eta \cdot u_\alpha$ as before. For normal coordinates on M, $\mathrm{d}V_g = (1 + O(r))\,\mathrm{d}x$. So

$$\int_{B_{2\epsilon}} a|\nabla\varphi|^2\,\mathrm{d}V_g \le (1 + C\epsilon)(\Lambda\|\varphi\|_p^2 + C\alpha^{n-2}),$$

and

$$Q_g(\varphi) = \frac{\int_M a|\nabla\varphi|^2 + S\varphi^2\,\mathrm{d}V_g}{\|\varphi\|_p^2} \le (1 + C\epsilon)(\Lambda + C\alpha).$$

Choosing ϵ and α small, then $\lambda(M) \le \Lambda$.

Proof of Theorem A

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- Instead we seek for a subcritical solution. The following equation is call **subcritical equation**

$$\Box\varphi = \lambda_s\, \varphi^{s-1}. \qquad (\star')$$

$Q^s(\varphi) = \frac{E(\varphi)}{\|\varphi\|_s^2}$, $\lambda_s = \inf\{Q^s(\varphi) : \varphi \in C^\infty(M)\}$.

Proof of Thm A.

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We can multiply the metric g by a constant, so that the volume is always 1. Since $E(u) = \int_M a|\nabla u|^2 + Su^2 \,\mathrm{d}V_g$ does not depend on s,

$$Q^s(u)\|u\|_s^2 = Q^{s'}(u)\|u\|_{s'}^2.$$

If $s \le s'$, then $\|u\|_s \le \|u\|_{s'} \implies Q^{s'}(u) \le Q^s(u)$ and thus $|\lambda_s|$ is non-increasing.

If $\lambda_s < 0$ for some s then we can choose a smooth function u, such that $Q^s(u) < 0$, then $Q^{s'}(u) < 0$ for all s', and thus $\lambda_{s'} < 0$.

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If we assueme $\lambda(M) \geq 0$, then $\lambda_s \geq 0$ for $2 \leq s \leq p$.

The definition of λ_s gives, $\forall \epsilon > 0$, $\exists u \in C^\infty(M)$ such that $Q^s(u) < \lambda_s + \epsilon$. Since $\|u\|_s$ is continuous as a function of s, when $s' \leq s$ and s' close to s,

$$\lambda_{s'} \leq Q^{s'}(u) < \lambda_s + 2\epsilon.$$

So λ_s is continuous from the left.

Step 3. Suppose $\lambda(M) < \Lambda$, and let φ_s be the subcritical solution. Then there exists $C > 0$, s_0 and r with $s_0 < p < r$ such that $\|\varphi_s\|_r \leq C$ for all $s \geq s_0$.

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For $\delta > 0$ and $w = \varphi_s^{1+\delta}$, the sharp Sobolev inequality and Hölder's inequality imply

$$\|w\|_p^2 \leq (1+\epsilon)\frac{(1+\delta)^2}{1+2\delta} \cdot \frac{\lambda_s}{\Lambda} \cdot \|\varphi_s\|_{(s-2)n/2}^{s-2} \cdot \|w\|_p^2 + C'_\epsilon \cdot \|w\|_2^2.$$

We need $\lambda(M) < \Lambda$ to choose δ and ϵ, so that $\|w\|_p^2 \leq C\|w\|_2^2$. Then

$$\|w\|_2 = 1 \implies \|w\|_p = \left\|\varphi_s^{1+\delta}\right\|_{p(1+\delta)}^{1+\delta} \leq \tilde{C}.$$

Step 4. As $s \to p$, there is a subsequence of subcritical solutions that converges uniformly. So the limiting function φ is the solution of $\square\varphi = \lambda(M)\varphi^{p-1}$.

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The functions $\{\varphi_s\}$ are uniformly bounded in $L^r(M)$, and thus in $C^{2,\alpha}(M)$. Apply Arzela-Ascoli Theorem, to obtain a subsequence in C^2 that converges to $\varphi \in C^2(M)$.

One can check that φ solves the equation above (needs Step 2), and $\varphi \in C^\infty(M)$ (ellptic regularity).

In Step 3, we assumed $\lambda \geq 0$. The fact that $\Lambda = \lambda(S^n) > 0$ completes the proof.

Remarks on Theorem B and C

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If M has dimension $n \geq 6$ and M is not locally conformally flat, then $\lambda(M) < \lambda(S^n)$.

Theorem C (Schoen)

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If M has dimension $n \geq 6$ and M is not locally conformally flat, then $\lambda(M) < \lambda(S^n)$.

In this case the estimation of $E(\varphi)$ gives:

$$E(\varphi) = \begin{cases} \Lambda \|\varphi\|_p^2 - C|W(P)|^2 \alpha^4 + o(\alpha^{-k-1}) & n > 6 \\ \Lambda \|\varphi\|_p^2 - C|W(P)|^2 \alpha^4 \ln(1/\alpha) + O(\alpha^{-4}) & n = 6 \end{cases}$$

If M is not locally conformally flat, then there exists $P \in M$ with $|W(P)|^2 > 0$, so $\lambda(M) < \Lambda$.

Theorem C (Schoen)

If M has dimension $n = 3, 4, 5$ or M is locally conformally flat, then either $\lambda(M) < \lambda(S^n)$ or M is conformal to the n-sphere.

In this case the estimation of $E(\varphi)$ gives:

$$E(\varphi) = \begin{cases} \Lambda\|\varphi\|_p^2 - C\mu\alpha^{-k} + O(\alpha^{-k-1}) & n \neq 6 \text{ or } M \text{ conformally flat} \\ \Lambda\|\varphi\|_p^2 - C\mu\alpha^{-4}\ln\alpha + O(\alpha^{-4}) & n = 6 \end{cases}$$

If the distortion $\mu > 0$ and $\lambda(M) > 0$, then $\lambda(M) < \Lambda$.

Reference

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