Nonlinear Sciences > Chaotic Dynamics

Connecting period-doubling cascades to chaos

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(Submitted on 17 Feb 2010)

The appearance of infinitely-many period-doubling cascades is one of the most prominent features observed in the study of maps depending on a parameter. They are associated with chaotic behavior, since bifurcation diagrams of a map with a parameter often reveal a complicated intermingling of period-doubling cascades and chaos. Period doubling can be studied at three levels of complexity. The first is an individual period-doubling bifurcation. The second is an infinite collection of period doublings that are connected together by periodic orbits in a pattern called a cascade. It was first described by Myrberg and later in more detail by Feigenbaum. The third involves infinitely many cascades and a parameter value \$\mu_2\$ of the map at which there is chaos. We show that often virtually all (i.e., all but finitely many) ``regular" periodic orbits at \$\mu_2\$ are each connected to exactly one cascade by a path of regular periodic orbits; and virtually all cascades are either paired -- connected to exactly one other cascade, or solitary -- connected to exactly one regular periodic orbit at \$\mu_2\$. The solitary cascades are robust to large perturbations. Hence the investigation of infinitely many cascades is essentially reduced to studying the regular periodic orbits of \$F(\mu_2, \cdot)\$. Examples discussed include the forced-damped pendulum and the double-well Duffing equation.

Comments:29 pages, 13 figuresSubjects:Chaotic Dynamics (nlin.CD)Cite as:arXiv:1002.3363v1 [nlin.CD]

Submission history

From: Evelyn Sander [view email] [v1] Wed, 17 Feb 2010 20:48:06 GMT (2204kb,D)

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