

Mandelbrot percolations

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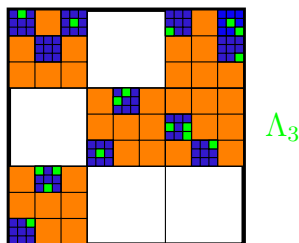
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File A

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Fractal percolation, introduced by Mandelbrot early 1970's:

We partition the unit square into M^2 congruent sub squares each of them are independently retained with probability p and discarded with probability $1 - p$. In the squares retained after the previous step we repeat the same process at infinitum.



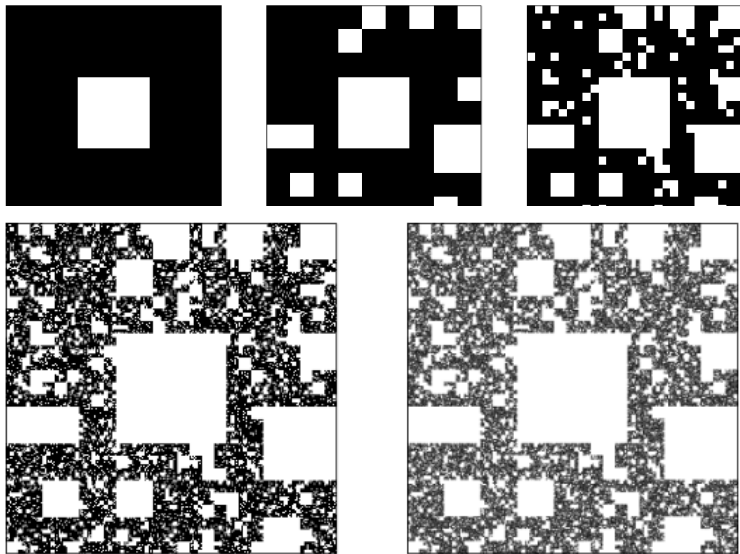


Figure: The Figure is from [3]. The first 5 approximation $M = 3$, $p = 0.85$

Let \mathcal{E}_n be the set of retained level n squares. We write

$$\Lambda_n := \bigcup_{Q \in \mathcal{E}_n} Q.$$

Then the statistically self-similar set of interest is:

$$\Lambda := \bigcap_{n=1}^{\infty} \Lambda_n.$$

Definition 1.1

Officially: The process \mathcal{E}_n is called

Fractal percolation or Mandelbrot *percolation* (and it has a number of other names) and Λ is its limit sets. However, **in practice** many people call the limit set Λ Mandelbrot (or fractal) percolation.

The formal definition

The following formal definition of the Mandelbrot percolation in \mathbb{R}^d was given by M. Dekking [2]. Let $\mathcal{I} := \{1, \dots, M^d\}$. We define $\mathcal{I}^0 := \emptyset$. Let $\mathcal{T} := \bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} \mathcal{I}^n$ be the M^d -array tree.

The probability space is $\Omega := \{0, 1\}^{\mathcal{T}}$ the set of labeled M^d -array trees.

The probability measure \mathbb{P}_p on Ω is defined in such a way that the family of labels $X_i \in \{0, 1\}$ of nodes $\mathbf{i} \in \mathcal{T}$ satisfy:

- $\mathbb{P}_p(X_\emptyset = 1) = 1$
- $\mathbb{P}_p(X_{i_1, \dots, i_n}) = p_{i_n}$
- $\{X_i\}_{i \in \mathcal{T}}$ are independent .

Following [2] we define the survival set of level n by

$$S_n := \{\mathbf{i} \in \mathcal{I}^n : X_{i_1, \dots, i_k} = 1, \forall 1 \leq k \leq n\}.$$

Then

$$\Lambda_n = \bigcup_{\mathbf{i} \in S_n} Q_{\mathbf{i}}, \quad \Lambda = \bigcap_{n=1}^{\infty} \Lambda_n,$$

where $Q_{\mathbf{i}}$ are defined for finite words $\mathbf{i} \in \mathcal{I}^n$ by the following Figure:

The formal definition

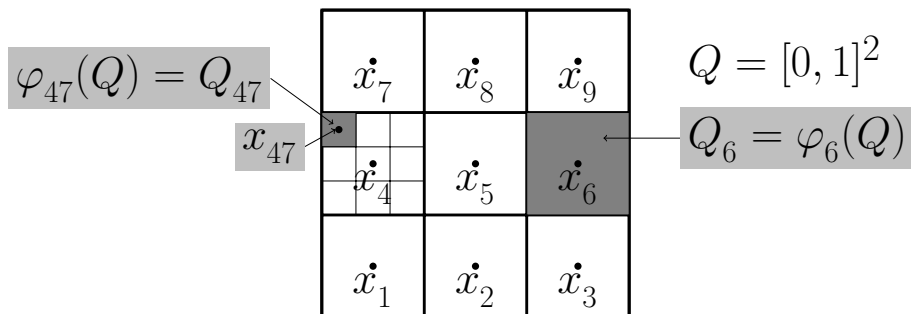


Figure: Definition of level n squares

It was proved by Falconer and independently Mauldin, Williams that conditioned on non-extinction:

$$(1) \quad \dim_{\mathbb{H}} \Lambda = \dim_{\mathbb{B}} \Lambda = \frac{\log(M^2 \cdot p)}{\log M} \text{ a.s.}$$

The meaning of the nominator of (1):

$$M^2 \cdot p = \mathbb{E}[\#\mathcal{E}_1].$$

Therefore

$$(2) \quad M^2 \cdot p < 1 \implies \Lambda = \emptyset \text{ a.s.}$$

Another consequence of (1) is:

(3) $\dim_{\text{H}} \Lambda > 1$ a.s. conditioned on nonextinction

$$\iff p > \frac{1}{M}.$$

Observe that $\#\mathcal{E}_n$ is a Galton-Watson Branching process with offspring distribution $\text{Bin}(M^2, p)$. So, now we recall couple of things from Probability Theory about such processes.

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Notation used throughout this chapter

- In this chapter we always assume that X is a r.v., whose values can only be non-negative integers.
- $\forall k \in \mathbb{N}$ let $p_k := \mathbb{P}(X = k)$.
- Probability Generator Function (p.g.f.) for r.v. X :

$$g_X(s) := \mathbb{E}[s^X] = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} p_k \cdot s^k.$$

The probability generator function (in short p.g.f.) have the following three basic properties:

p.g.f.

- (a) The p.g.f. uniquely defines the distribution function,
 - (b) p.g.f. of sums of independent, non-negative r.v. is equal to the product of their p.g.f.
 - (c) $\mathbb{E}[X(X-1)\cdots(X-k)] = g^{(k+1)}(1)$, where $g^{(k+1)}$ is the $k+1^{\text{st}}$ derivative of g.f. g . So
- (4)
- $$\mathbb{E}[X] = g'(1) \text{ and } \mathbb{E}[X^2] = g''(1) + g'(1).$$

Lemma 2.1

Let X and N be independent, non-negative r.v., the generator functions: g_X and g_N . Let $\{X_i\}$ be independent, $X_i \stackrel{d}{=} X$.

$R := X_1 + \dots + X_N$ and then:

$$(5) \quad g_R(s) = g_N(g_X(s)).$$

From here:

$$(6) \quad \mathbb{E}[R] = g'_R(1) = g'_N(\underbrace{g_X(1)}_1) \cdot g'_X(1) = \mathbb{E}[N] \cdot \mathbb{E}[X].$$

Galton -Watson branching process $\{X_k\}_{k=0}^{\infty}$ is defined as follows: Given numbers $p_k \in [0, 1]$ such that $\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} p_k = 1$.

We start with one individual. $X_0 := 1$. It has k offsprings with probability p_k . Then each of these offsprings (if there are any) has the same offspring distribution $\{p_k\}$. More formally: let Y be a r.v. with

$$\mathbb{P}(Y = k) = p_k, \quad k \geq 0.$$

Let

$\{Y_i^{(n)}\}_{n,i \geq 1}$ be independent copies of Y .

The size of n -th generation is:

$$(7) \quad X_{n+1} := \sum_{i=1}^{X_n} Y_i^{(n+1)}.$$

That is $Y_i^{(n+1)}$ is the number of offsprings of the i -th individual on level n . Let

$$g(s) := g_1(s) =: \mathbb{E} [e^Y] = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} p_n \cdot s^n.$$

Branching processes

Let

$$g_n := \mathbb{E} [s^{X_n}],$$

so g_n is the generator function of number X_n of individuals in the n^{th} generation. It follows from Lemma 2.1

$$g_{n+1} = g_n(g(s)).$$

From here we get by induction, that

$$(8) \quad g_n(s) = \underbrace{g \circ \cdots \circ g}_n(s) =: g^n(s).$$

Branching processes (cont.)

Applying this for $s = 0$:

$$(9) \quad \mathbb{P}(X_n = 0) = g^n(0).$$

Hence,

$$\mathbb{P}(\text{the probability of extinction}) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}(X_n = 0).$$

The event:

$$\{\exists n, X_n = 0\} = \{X_n \rightarrow 0\}$$

is called **extinction** .

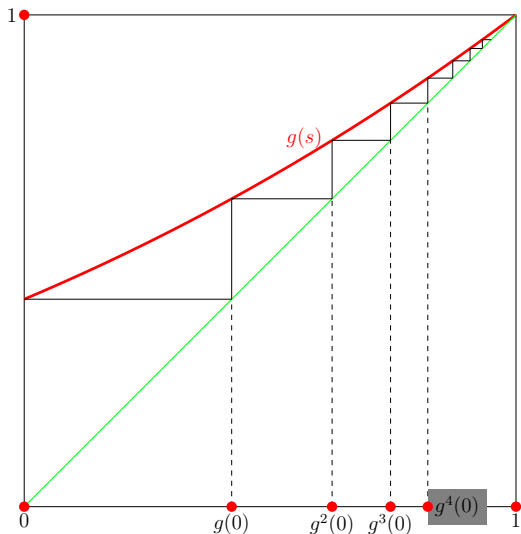
Proposition 2.2

Assume that $p_1 \neq 1$. Then on the event of nonextinction we have

$$Z_n \rightarrow \infty.$$

We write **q** for the extinction probability.

$$\mathbb{E}[Y] = g'(1) < 1 \implies \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}(X_n = 0) = 1$$



So, the probability of one individual has n children is p_n . Then the expected value of number of children is $m := \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} p_n \cdot n$. We have defined generator function

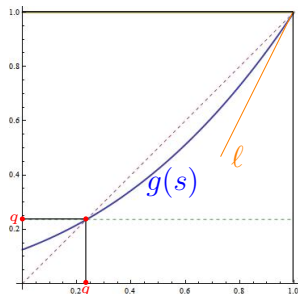
$g(s) := \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} p_n \cdot s^n$. The function g

goes over point $(1, 1)$. Let ℓ be the tangent line of g in $s = 1$. Then gradient of ℓ : $g'(1) = m$. If $m > 1$, then part of ℓ which goes in $[0, 1]^2$ lies under $y = x$ so there exists "another" fix point $q < 1$ of g in $[0, 1]$. From the graph:

$0 \leq g'(q) < 1$. So if $g^n := \underbrace{g \circ \dots \circ g}_n$, then

$g^n(x) \rightarrow q, \forall x < 1$.

From the previous slide and from the graph: q is the probability of extinction.



We say that the branching process is **subcritical**, **critical** or **supercritical** if the expected number of offsprings $m < 1$, $m = 1$ or $m > 1$ respectively.

Clearly

$$\mathbb{E}[X_n] = (g^n)'(1) = (g'(1))^n = m^n.$$

It is easy to prove that

Lemma 2.3

The sequence

$$\frac{X_n}{m^n}$$

is a martingale.

Since $\frac{X_n}{m^n}$ is non-negative, it converges. We call the limit W .

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{X_n}{m^n} =: W.$$

Theorem 2.4 (Kesten-Stigum)

Assume that $m > 1$. then the following are equivalent

- (i) $\mathbb{P}(W = 0) = q$, (*probability of extinction*).
- (ii) $\mathbb{E}[W] = 1$.
- (iii) $\mathbb{E}[Y \cdot \log Y] < \infty$.

That is, if (iii) holds then $W > 0$ a.s. conditioned on nonextinction. This follows from a general zero-one property for the Galton-Watson branching process:

Definition 2.5 (inherited property)

We say that a property of trees is **inherited** if

- whenever the tree has this property so do all the descendent trees of the offspring of the root and
- every finite tree has this property.

The proof of the following Proposition is available in [4, Proposition 5.6].

Proposition 2.6

Every inherited property has probability either 0 or 1 conditioned on nonextinction.

Let $\tau(d)$ be the probability that a Galton- Watson tree contain a d -ary sub-tree begging at the root (initial individual). (In particular $\tau(1)$ is the survival probability.) Dekking and Pakes [5] proved that

Proposition 2.7 (Dekking, Pakes)

Let g be the p.g.f. of a super critical Galton-Watson process. Put

$$D_d(s) := \sum_{j=1}^{d-1} (1-s)^j \frac{(D^j g)(s)}{j!}.$$

Then $1 - \tau(d)$ is the smallest fixed point of G_d in $[0, 1]$.

Using the previous proposition and the fact that for a $\text{Bin}(N, p)$ distribution the p.g.f. is:

$$(10) \quad g(s) = (p \cdot s + (1 - p))^N.$$

one can show as a homework exercise that

Corollary 2.8

If the offspring distribution in a Galton-Watson tree is $\text{Bin}(d + 1, p)$, then for $p < 1$ large enough we have $\tau(d) > 0$.

In the case of **Mandelbrot percolation** with parameters (M, p) , the offspring distribution is $\text{Bin}(M^2, p)$.

Definition 2.9

We say that a deterministic set $E \subset [0, 1]^2$ is **SC-like** if it can be presented as

$$E := \bigcap_{n=1}^{\infty} E_n,$$

where E_n is the union of $(M^2 - 1)^n$ level n squares in such a uniform way that any $Q \subset E_n$ level n square contains exactly $M^2 - 1$ level $n + 1$ squares which are contained in E_{n+1} . Similarly to the Sierpinski Carpet we deleted one level n square in every step of the construction. However, as oppose to the Sierpiński-Carpet we do not require that the only deleted square assume in each step the same position.

Corollary 2.10

*If we choose $p < 1$ sufficiently close to 1 then $\Lambda(p)$ contains an SC-like set with **positive probability**.*

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The following theorem is due to Dvoretzky, Erdős , Kakutani, Taylor. Consider the d -dimensional **Brownian trace**:

$$[B_d] := \{B_d(t) : t \in [0, 1]\}$$

where $B_d(t)$ is the d -dimensional Brownian motion started from a point in \mathbb{R}^d or the distribution of the initial point has bounded density on $[0, 1]^d$.

Theorem 3.1 (Intersection of Brownian traces)

- (i) $d \geq 4$: *Two independent Brownian traces which started from different points are disjoint.*
- (ii) $d = 3$:
 - ① *Two independent Brownian traces intersect a.s.*
 - ② *Three independent Brownian traces started from different points, have no mutual points of intersection .*

Theorem 3.1 cont.

- (iii) $d = 2$: any finite number of Brownian motions have mutual points of intersections.

Actually more is true. Hawkes proved in 1971 that for every k , if we consider k independent Brownian traces on the plane and $H \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ is an arbitrary Borel set then the Hausdorff dimension of those points of H which are mutual intersection points of these k Brownian traces is equal to the Hausdorff dimension of H .

Definition

Consider the Mandelbrot Percolation on \mathbb{R}^d for $M = 2$ and for a given $p \in (0, 1)$. Since we always choose here $M = 2$ the resulted random set is denoted by $\Lambda_d(p)$.

Yuval Peres provided a simpler proof in [6] using Mandelbrot percolations. We sketch some ideas of this way of verifying Theorem 3.1 above.

Preliminaries

The following Theorem were proved by Hawkes 1981 and Lyons 1990.

Theorem 3.2

Let $p = 2^{-\beta} < 1$. For any set $H \subset [0, 1]^d$ we have

- (i) If $\dim_{\text{H}}(H) < \beta$ then $H \cap \Lambda_d(p) = \emptyset$ a.s..
- (ii) If $\dim_{\text{H}}(H) > \beta$ then $H \cap \Lambda_d(p) \neq \emptyset$ with positive probability.

An important tool

Let μ be a Borel measure on \mathbb{R}^d . The β -energy of μ is

$$\mathcal{E}_\beta := \int \int |x - y|^{-\beta} d\mu(x) d\mu(y).$$

Given a Borel set $H \subset \mathbb{R}^d$. We define

$$\text{Cap}_\beta(H) := \left[\inf_{\text{spt}(\mu) \subset H} \mathcal{E}_\beta(\mu) \right]^{-1},$$

where the infimum is taken for probability measures with the convention $1/\infty = 0$.

Frostman 1935

Theorem 3.3

For $K \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ we have

$$(11) \quad \dim_{\text{H}}(K) = \inf \{ \beta > 0 : \text{Cap}_{\beta}(K) = 0 \}.$$

The following Proposition was stated in [6, Corollary 4.3] and it follows from theorems due to Benjamini, Lyons, Pemantle, Peres

Proposition 3.4

Let $\beta \geq 0$ and $d \geq 1$. then for any closed $K \subset [0, 1]^d$ we have

$$\mathbb{P}(Q_d(2^{-\beta}) \cap K \neq \emptyset) \asymp \text{Cap}_\beta(K).$$

Definition 3.5

Two random Borel set A and B in \mathbb{R}^d are intersection-equivalent $A \sim_i B$ in the open set U , if for any closed set $H \subset U$, we have

$$(12) \quad \mathbb{P}(A \cap H \neq \emptyset) \asymp \mathbb{P}(B \cap H \neq \emptyset),$$

where \asymp means that the ratio of the two sides are in between two positive constants. In this case (3.5) holds for every Borel set H .

This section is about the intersection equivalence between some Mandelbrot percolation sets and Brownian traces.

The following theorem was proved by Yuval Peres [6] in 1996.

Theorem 3.6

- (i) If $d \geq 3$ then $[B_d]$ is *intersection-equivalent* to $\Lambda_d(2^{2-d})$ in the unit cube.
- (ii) Let $d = 2$. For any Borel set H

$$\exists p < 1 \text{ s.t. } \mathbb{P}(\Lambda_2(p) \cap H) > 0$$

$$\implies \mathbb{P}([B_2] \cap H) = 1.$$

Lemma 3.7

Let A_1, \dots, A_k and F_1, \dots, F_k be random Borel sets in \mathbb{R}^d for some d , s.t. $A_j \sim_i B_j$ for all $j = 1, \dots, k$. Then

$$(13) \quad A_1 \cap \dots \cap A_k \sim_i F_1 \cap \dots \cap F_k.$$

proof

It is enough to prove for $k = 2$ (induction). Further, it is enough to prove that

$$(14) \quad A_1 \cap A_2 \sim_i F_1 \cap A_2.$$

This is done by conditioning on A_2 :

proof cont.

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(A_1 \cap A_2 \cap H \neq \emptyset) &= \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{P}(A_1 \cap A_2 \cap H \neq \emptyset | A_2)] \\ &\asymp \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{P}(F_1 \cap A_2 \cap H \neq \emptyset | A_2)] \\ &= \mathbb{P}(F_1 \cap A_2 \cap H \neq \emptyset). \square \end{aligned}$$

Lemma 3.8

For any $0 < p, q < 1$, if $\Lambda_d(p)$ and $\Lambda'_d(q)$ are independent, then

$$(15) \quad \Lambda_d(p) \cap \Lambda'_d(q) \stackrel{d}{=} \Lambda_d(pq).$$

The proof is immediate from the construction.

Proof of Thm 3.1 (i)

Let $d = 4$. Then

$$\Lambda_4 \left(\frac{1}{4} \right) \sim_i \{B_4(t) : t \geq \varepsilon\},$$

and

$$\Lambda_4 \left(\frac{1}{4} \right) \sim_i \{B'_4(s) : s \geq \varepsilon\}$$

So, by Lemma 3.7, we have

Proof of Thm 3.1 (i) cont.

$$\begin{aligned} \{B_4(t) : t \geq \varepsilon\} \cap \{B'_4(s) : s \geq \varepsilon\} \cap [0, 1]^4 \\ \sim_i \Lambda_4\left(\frac{1}{4}\right) \cap \tilde{\Lambda}_4\left(\frac{1}{4}\right) \cap [0, 1]^4. \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}\left(\{B_4(t) : t \geq \varepsilon\} \cap \{B'_4(s) : s \geq \varepsilon\} \cap [0, 1]^4 \neq \emptyset\right) \\ \asymp \mathbb{P}\left(\Lambda_4\left(\frac{1}{4}\right) \cap \tilde{\Lambda}_4\left(\frac{1}{4}\right) \neq \emptyset\right) \\ = \mathbb{P}\left(\Lambda_4\left(\frac{1}{16}\right) \neq \emptyset\right) = \mathbf{0}. \end{aligned}$$

Hence, there are no intersections apart from possibly the initial points.

Proof of Thm 3.1 (ii)

$$\{B_3(t) : t \geq \varepsilon\} \sim_i \Lambda_3 \left(\frac{1}{2} \right)$$

$$\{B'_3(s) : s \geq \varepsilon\} \sim_i \Lambda'_3 \left(\frac{1}{2} \right)$$

Hence

(16)

$$\left(\{B_3(t) : t \geq \varepsilon\} \cap \{B'_3(s) : s \geq \varepsilon\} \cap [0, 1]^3 \right) \sim_i \Lambda_3 \left(\frac{1}{4} \right).$$

Proof of Thm 3.1 (ii) cont.

In case of $\Lambda_3\left(\frac{1}{4}\right)$ every individual has maximum 8 children independently each with probability $1/4$ that is

$$\text{expected number of offsprings is } = 8 \cdot \frac{1}{4} = 2 > 1$$

This implies that with positive probability $\Lambda_3\left(\frac{1}{4}\right) \neq \emptyset$. So, from (16) we obtain that two independent copies of Brownian traces in \mathbb{R}^3 intersect with positive probability.

Proof of Thm 3.1 (ii) cont.

The mutual intersection of three independent Brownian traces is intersection equivalent to

$$\Lambda_3 \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) \cap \tilde{\Lambda}_3 \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) \cap \hat{\Lambda}_3 \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) \sim_i \Lambda_3 \left(\frac{1}{8} \right).$$

(processes of different color are independent). Then

expected number of offsprings is $= 8 \cdot \frac{1}{8} = 1$.

It is well known from the theory of Branching processes that this implies that $\Lambda_3 \left(\frac{1}{8} \right) = \emptyset$ a.s.. So, the same holds for the mutual intersection of three Brownian traces started from different points.

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Λ percolates

Let $\Lambda(\omega)$ be a realization of the Mandelbrot percolation random Cantor set. We say that $\Lambda(\omega)$ **percolates** if there is a connected component of $\Lambda(\omega)$ which connects the left and the right walls of the square $[0, 1]^2$.

Let us write $\Lambda_{|\leftrightarrow|}$ for the event that the random self-similar set Λ **percolates**.

Theorem [J.T Chayes, L. Chayes, R. Durrett] [1]

Let TD be the event that Λ is totally disconnected. That is all connected components are singletons. Let

$$p_c := \inf \{ p : \mathbb{P}_p (E_{|\leftrightarrow|}) > 0 \}$$

Then $0 < p_c < 1$ and

$$p_c = \sup \{ p : \mathbb{P}_p (TD) = 1 \}.$$

If $p < p_c < 1$ then all connected components of Λ are singletons. If $p \geq p_c$ then Λ percolates with positive probability. (As opposed to the usual percolation, which percolates at p_c with zero probability.)

Henk Don [3] in 2013 published some new bounds on the critical probability for different values of M .

lower bounds: $p_c(2) > 0.881$ and $p_c(3) > 0.784$.

upper bounds : $p_c(2) < 0.993$, $p_c(3) < 0.94$ and
 $p_c(4) < 0.972$.

The weaker assertion that we prove

In what follows we prove that following weaker assertion:
 Let $M \geq 3$ be fixed. We consider the Mandelbrot percolation on the plane which corresponds to probability p . Let us denote it by $\Lambda(p)$. We prove that

$$(17) \quad \exists p_c < 1, \text{ s.t. } p > p_c, \quad \mathbb{P}(\Lambda(p) \text{ percolates.}) > 0.$$

That is $\Lambda(p)$ contains a continuous path $t \mapsto (x(t), y(t))$, $t \in [0, 1]$ such that $x(0) = 0$ and $x(1) = 1$. Sometimes we express this as $\Lambda(p)$ has a left-right crossing.

Lemma 4.1

Assume that $M \geq 3$. Assume that each level n square gives birth to at least $M^2 - 1$ level $n + 1$ squares. Then there is a left-to-right crossing at all levels n . More precisely:

For every n , there is a sequence

$$Q_1, \dots, Q_k \in \mathcal{E}_n$$

of level n retained squares such that any two consecutive squares share a common side and Q_1 has a common side with the Eastern and Q_k has a common side with the Western wall of $[0, 1]^2$.

Proof

Recall that we write \mathcal{E}_n for the collection of retained level n squares. Observe that

$$(18) \quad \forall Q \in \mathcal{E}_n, \forall C, D \in \mathcal{E}_{n+1}, C, D \subset Q, \\ C \text{ side connected to } D.$$

Assume that there is a left-to-right crossing

$$Q_1, \dots, Q_r \in \mathcal{E}_n.$$

We define

$$Q_0 = Q_{r+1} := [0, 1]^2.$$

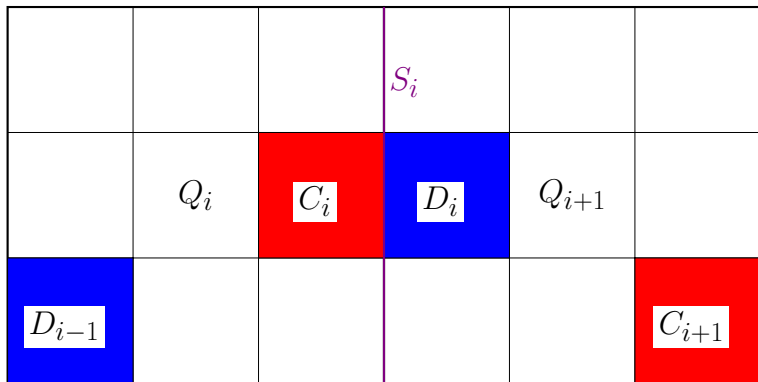


Figure: Figure for the proof of Lemma 4.1

Proof cont.

For every $i = 0, \dots, r$, let S_i be the common side of Q_i and Q_{i+1} for $i = 0, \dots, r$. We define

$C_i, D_i \in \mathcal{E}_{n+1}$, $C_i \subset Q_i$, and $D_i \subset Q_{i+1}$ share a side.

By (18) D_i is side connected to C_{i+1} . This implies that there is a left-to-right crossing from D_0 to C_r . \square

So, what we prove is the following special case of Theorem 4.9

Theorem 4.2

For $M \geq 3$ the left-right crossing probability $\theta_\infty(p)$ is positive.

The same is true for $M = 2$ but it requires extra steps in the proof.

Proof.

By Corollary 2.10 $\Lambda(p)$ contains an SC-like set with positive probability. However, in Lemma 4.1 we have proved that in an SC-like set we can always find a left-to-right crossing. □

Preparation for the case of $M = 2$

Let $\Lambda_{n,M}(p)$ be the n -th approximation of the Mandelbrot percolation set on the plane when we divide the square into M^2 congruent sub-squares of size M^{-1} and the probability of retaining them is p . We need the definition of stochastic ordering:

Definition 4.3 (Stochastic domination)

Let X, Y be r.v. not necessarily living on the same probability space. We say that Y stochastically dominates X , ($Y \succeq X$) if

$$(19) \quad \forall x, \mathbb{P}(X \leq x) \geq \mathbb{P}(Y \leq x).$$

The case of $M = 2$

Our aim is to sketch why Lemma 4.1 holds for $M = 2$.

- For every $p \in (0, 1)$ there is a $q \in (0, 1)$ such that if $Y \sim \text{Bernoulli}(q)$ and X_1, \dots, X_{M^2} are independent and $X_i \sim \text{Bernoulli}(\sqrt{p})$ then

$$Y \succeq \max \{X_1, \dots, X_{M^2}\}$$

- Then $\mathcal{E}_{2,M}(q) \succeq \mathcal{E}_{1,M^2}(p)$
- In case of $M = 2$ we can apply Lemma 4.1 for $\mathcal{E}_{1,4}(p)$ which completes the proof.

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