

OSCILLATORY INTEGRALS WITH POLYNOMIAL PHASE

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§1. Introduction.

Let \mathcal{P}_N be the space of real-valued polynomials on \mathbb{R} of degree at most N . This paper is concerned with uniform estimates for integrals of the form

$$\int_a^b e^{ip(x)} \psi(x) dx, p \in \mathcal{P}_N$$

when the weight $\psi(x)$ is a power of a derivative of p . Here is an easy example: since

$$\left| \int_a^b e^{ip(x)} p'(x) dx \right| \leq 2$$

for any continuously differentiable p such that p' has constant sign on $[a, b]$, it follows that

$$(1) \quad \left| \int_a^b e^{ip(x)} |p'(x)| dx \right| \leq 2N \text{ if } p \in \mathcal{P}_N \text{ and } a < b.$$

The form of this estimate is prototypical for our results, Theorems 1 and 2 below.

THEOREM 1. *If N and n are positive integers, there is $C(N, n)$ such that*

$$\left| \int_a^b e^{ip(x)} |p^{(n)}(x)|^{1/n} dx \right| \leq C(N, n) \text{ if } p \in \mathcal{P}_N \text{ and } a < b.$$

THEOREM 2. *If N is a positive integer and $n = 1$ or 2 , there is $C(N, n)$ such that*

$$\left| \int_a^b e^{ip(x)} |p^{(n)}(x)|^{1/n+is} dx \right| \leq C(N, n)(1 + |s|)^{1/n} \text{ if } p \in \mathcal{P}_N, a < b, \text{ and } s \in \mathbb{R}.$$

COMMENTS:

(a) If $N = n$, our results are direct consequences of van der Corput's lemma, which is the case $\psi(x) \equiv 1$ of the following result.

LEMMA 0. ([S], p. 311) *For $a \leq x \leq b$ assume that $\varphi(x)$ and $\psi(x)$ are smooth, that $\varphi(x)$ is real-valued, and that for some positive integer n we have $|\varphi^{(n)}(x)| \geq 1$. If $n = 1$ assume additionally that $\varphi'(x)$ is monotonic. Then*

$$\left| \int_a^b e^{ir\varphi(x)} \psi(x) dx \right| \leq C(n) |r|^{-1/n} \left[|\psi(b)| + \int_a^b |\psi'(x)| dx \right] \text{ for } r \in \mathbb{R}.$$

(b) These results are vaguely analogous to those of [C] concerning multi-dimensional oscillatory integrals damped with a power of the curvature. The proof of Theorem 1 depends on an idea present in that paper.

(c) Our interest in results like these stems from the problem of embedding certain measures on curves in \mathbb{R}^k into analytic families of distributions. Here is an example in the case $k = 2$: suppose $p \in \mathcal{P}_N$ and $a < b$. Following [D] we define a measure $d\sigma$ by

$$\int \varphi d\sigma = \int_a^b \varphi(x, p(x)) |p''(x)|^{1/3} dx$$

and an analytic family of distributions $d\sigma_z$ by

$$\int \varphi d\sigma_z = \frac{\pi^{(z-1)/2}}{\Gamma(z/2)} \int_a^b \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \varphi(x, y) \left[\frac{|y - p(x)|}{|p''(x)|^{1/3}} \right]^{-1+z} dy dx.$$

Here $\varphi \in C_0^\infty(\mathbb{R}^2)$, say. If $z = -\frac{1}{2} + i\gamma$, then Theorem 2 in the case $n = 2$ combines with the calculation of $\hat{\sigma}_z$ in [D] to show that $\|\hat{\sigma}_z\|_\infty \leq C(z, N)$. Thus the proof of Theorem 1 in [D] yields the inequality

$$\left| \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} (f_1 * f_2) d\sigma \right| \leq C(N) \|f_1\|_{3/2} \|f_2\|_{3/2}$$

for $f_1, f_2 \in L^{3/2}(\mathbb{R}^2)$.

(d) There is no finite C such that the inequality

$$\left| \int_a^b e^{ip(x)} |p''(x)|^{1/2} dx \right| \leq C$$

holds for, say, all twice continuously differentiable functions p with p' and p'' of constant sign on $[a, b]$. (Take $p(x) = \log \log x$.) Thus there is no proof of Theorem 1 analogous to the proof of (1) given above.

(e) Much work on oscillatory integrals is, like Lemma 0, concerned with the decay as $r \rightarrow \infty$ of integrals

$$\int e^{ir\phi(x)} \psi(x) dx.$$

Theorems 1 and 2 can be cast in this form simply by replacing p with rp and then factoring $|r|^{1/n}$ from the integral. For example, Theorem 1 yields the estimate

$$\left| \int_a^b e^{irp(x)} |p^{(n)}(x)|^{1/n} dx \right| \leq r^{-1/n} C(N, n) \text{ if } p \in \mathcal{P}(N), a < b, \text{ and } r > 0.$$

Letting $a = 0$, $b = 1$, and $p(x) = x^N$ shows that such an estimate cannot be substantially improved.

(f) We conjecture that Theorem 2 is true for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$.

§2. Proof of Theorem 1.

Theorem 1 is a consequence of two elementary lemmas, the first of which we give in a little more generality than we require.

LEMMA 1. *Suppose ψ is a real-valued continuously differentiable function on a closed interval I such that ψ and ψ' are of constant sign on I . Then*

$$\left| \int_I e^{irx} \psi(x) dx \right| \leq 5 \sup \left\{ \left| \int_J \psi \right| : J \text{ is a subinterval of } I \text{ with length } \leq \frac{1}{|r|} \right\}.$$

PROOF. Write $I = [a, b]$. Without loss of generality we may assume that $1/|r| \leq b - a$ and that $\psi, \psi' \geq 0$ on I . An integration by parts shows that

$$\left| \int_a^{b-1/|r|} e^{irx} \psi(x) dx \right| \leq \psi(b-1/|r|) \left| \int_a^{b-1/|r|} e^{irt} dt \right| + \left| \int_a^{b-1/|r|} \int_a^x e^{irt} dt \psi'(x) dx \right|.$$

Since ψ' is nonnegative on I and because

$$\left| \int_a^x e^{irt} dt \right| \leq 2/|r|,$$

this is dominated by

$$\frac{2}{|r|} \psi(b - 1/|r|) + \frac{2}{|r|} [\psi(b - 1/|r|) - \psi(a)].$$

But $\psi(a) \geq 0$ so the last sum does not exceed

$$\frac{4}{|r|} \psi(b - 1/|r|).$$

Now the fact that ψ is increasing on I gives

$$\left| \int_a^{b-1/|r|} e^{irx} \psi(x) dx \right| \leq 4 \int_{b-1/|r|}^b \psi(x) dx.$$

The estimate

$$\left| \int_{b-1/|r|}^b e^{irx} \psi(x) dx \right| \leq \int_{b-1/|r|}^b \psi(x) dx$$

thus completes the proof.

The next result is analogous to Lemma 4.2 of [C].

LEMMA 2. *There is a positive constant $C(N, n)$ such that*

$$\int_a^b |p^{(n)}(t)|^{1/n} dt \leq C(N, n) \|p\|_{L^\infty(a,b)}^{1/n} \text{ for } p \in \mathcal{P}_N \text{ and } a < b.$$

PROOF. Since linear operators on finite-dimensional normed spaces are bounded, there is $C(N, n)$ such that

$$\|p^{(n)}\|_{L^\infty(0,1)} \leq C(N, n) \|p\|_{L^\infty(0,1)} \text{ for } p \in \mathcal{P}_N.$$

Thus

$$\int_0^1 |p^{(n)}(t)|^{1/n} dt \leq C(N, n) \|p\|_{L^\infty(0,1)}^{1/n} \text{ for } p \in \mathcal{P}_N.$$

A linear change of variable completes the proof.

It is enough to prove Theorem 1 when p' is of constant sign on $[a, b]$. Then there is a positive function $\psi(x) (= |p^{(n)}(p^{-1}(x))/p'(p^{-1}(x))|)$ and an interval \tilde{I} such that

$$\int_a^b f(p(t)) |p^{(n)}(t)|^{1/n} dt = \int_{\tilde{I}} f \psi$$

for all reasonable functions f on \mathbb{R} . A computation shows that (since $p \in \mathcal{P}_N$) there is some $M = M(N, n)$ such that ψ' can have at most M zeroes on \tilde{I} . Thus it is enough to show that

$$\left| \int_I e^{ix} \psi(x) dx \right| \leq C(N, n)$$

if ψ' is of constant sign on the subinterval I of \tilde{I} . For such an I , Lemma 1 gives

$$\begin{aligned} \left| \int_I e^{ix} \psi(x) dx \right| &\leq 5 \sup \left\{ \int_J \psi(x) dx : J \subseteq I, \text{length}(J) \leq 1 \right\} = \\ &5 \sup \left\{ \int_e^f |p^{(n)}(t)|^{1/n} dt : a \leq e < f \leq b, |p(e) - p(f)| \leq 1 \right\}. \end{aligned}$$

Now if $a \leq e < f \leq b$, the monotonicity of p on $[a, b]$ shows that $\|p - p(f)\|_{L^\infty(e, f)} \leq 1$. Thus Lemma 2, applied to the polynomial $p(x) - p(f)$, yields

$$\int_e^f |p^{(n)}(t)|^{1/n} dt \leq C(N, n).$$

This completes the proof of Theorem 1.

§3. Proof of Theorem 2.

Theorem 2 depends on a technical lemma.

LEMMA 3. Fix N . There are positive constants $K = K(N)$ and $L = L(N)$ such that if

$$r(x) = \prod_{j=1}^{J_1} (x - a_j) \prod_{j=J_1+1}^{J_2} [(x - a_j)^2 + b_j] \doteq \prod_{j=1}^{J_2} g_j(x)$$

is a monic polynomial of degree not exceeding N with the a_j 's distinct and each $b_j > 0$, then there exists a collection $\{I_l\}_{l=1}^{L_1}$ of pairwise disjoint subintervals of \mathbb{R} with $L_1 \leq L$ satisfying

$$\int_{R \sim \cup I_l} \left| \frac{r'}{r} \right| \leq K$$

and such that for each l there are $C = C(l) \in (0, \infty)$, $j = j(l) \in \{1, 2, \dots, J_2\}$, and a nonnegative integer $t = t(l)$ with

$$\frac{C}{K} |x - a_j|^t \leq |r(x)| \leq KC |x - a_j|^t, x \in I_l$$

and

$$\frac{1}{K |x - a_j|} \leq \left| \frac{r'(x)}{r(x)} \right| \leq \frac{K}{|x - a_j|}, x \in I_l.$$

PROOF. Given r we write

$$\frac{r'}{r} = \sum_{j=1}^{J_2} f_j,$$

where each $f_j(x)$ is either

$$\frac{1}{x - a_j}$$

(in which case we will say that f_j is of type I) or

$$\frac{2(x - a_j)}{(x - a_j)^2 + b_j}$$

(type II). The proof is a consequence of the three observations, Steps I-III, below. In what follows K and L will denote constants, not necessarily the same at each occurrence, depending only on N .

Step I. There is L such that given r , R can be written as the disjoint union of at most L subintervals I_l with the property that for each I_l there is a $j(l)$ with

$$|f_j(x)| \leq |f_{j_0}(x)| \text{ if } x \in I_l, 1 \leq j \leq J_2.$$

PROOF OF STEP I. This is a consequence of the facts that there are at most N functions f_j and that each equation $|f_{j_1}(x)| = |f_{j_2}(x)|$ ($j_1 \neq j_2$) can have at most six solutions.

Step II. There exist K and L such that the following holds: given an interval I and an index j_0 such that

$$|f_j(x)| \leq |f_{j_0}(x)| \text{ for } x \in I, 1 \leq j \leq J_2,$$

there is a subset \tilde{I} of I with

$$(2) \quad \int_{\tilde{I}} \left| \frac{r'}{r} \right| \leq K,$$

with $I \sim \tilde{I}$ the disjoint union of at most L intervals, and such that

$$(3) \quad \frac{1}{4|x - a_{j_0}|} \leq \left| \frac{r'(x)}{r(x)} \right| \leq \frac{2N}{|x - a_{j_0}|} \text{ if } x \in I \sim \tilde{I}.$$

PROOF OF STEP II. For ease of notation assume $j_0 = 1$. Define

$$T = \{x \in I: \text{for each } j \neq 1 \text{ either } |f_j(x)| \leq \frac{|f_1(x)|}{2N} \text{ or } f_j(x) \cdot f_1(x) \geq 0\}.$$

Since

$$\frac{r'(x)}{r(x)} = \sum_{j=1}^{J_2} f_j(x) \text{ and } |f_j(x)| \leq |f_1(x)| \leq \frac{2}{|x - a_1|} \text{ if } x \in I,$$

we have

$$\frac{|f_1(x)|}{2} \leq \left| \frac{r'(x)}{r(x)} \right| \leq N |f_1(x)| \leq \frac{2N}{|x - a_1|} \text{ if } x \in T.$$

If f_1 is of type I, define \tilde{I} by $I \sim \tilde{I} = T$, while if f_1 is of type II, set $I \sim \tilde{I} = T \sim (a_1 - \sqrt{b_1}, a_1 + \sqrt{b_1})$. Reasoning similar to that used to establish Step I shows that there is L (depending only on N) such that $I \sim \tilde{I}$ is the disjoint union of at most L intervals. If f_1 is of type II, then

$$\frac{1}{2|x - a_1|} \leq |f_1(x)| \text{ if } x \notin (a_1 - \sqrt{b_1}, a_1 + \sqrt{b_1}),$$

and so (3) holds whether f_1 is of type I or II. We will complete Step II by showing that

$$\int_{I \sim T} \left| \frac{r'}{r} \right| \leq K.$$

With the calculation

$$\int_{a_1 - \sqrt{b_1}}^{a_1 + \sqrt{b_1}} |f_1| = 2 \ln 2$$

if f_1 is of type II and the fact that then

$$\tilde{I} \subset (I \sim T) \cup (a_1 - \sqrt{b_1}, a_1 + \sqrt{b_1}),$$

(2) will follow from

$$\left| \frac{r'(x)}{r(x)} \right| \leq N |f_1(x)| \text{ if } x \in I.$$

Now $I \sim T \subseteq \bigcup U_j$, where

$$U_j = \left\{ x \in I: |f_j(x)| > \frac{|f_1(x)|}{2N} \text{ and } f_j(x) \cdot f_1(x) < 0 \right\}.$$

Define \tilde{U}_j to be

$$U_j \sim \bigcup_i (a_i - \sqrt{b_i}, a_i + \sqrt{b_i})$$

where the union is over $\{i \in \{1, j\}: f_i \text{ is of type II}\}$. Since

$$\int_{a_i - \sqrt{b_i}}^{a_i + \sqrt{b_i}} |f_i| = 2 \ln 2$$

if f_i is of type II, since

$$\left| \frac{r'}{r} \right| \leq N |f_1| \leq 2N^2 |f_j|$$

on U_j , and since

$$|f_1(x)| \leq \frac{2}{|x - a_1|},$$

it suffices to show that

$$(4) \quad \int_{\tilde{U}_j} \frac{dx}{|x - a_1|} \leq K.$$

If $x \in \tilde{U}_j$ then

$$(5) \quad \frac{1}{2|x - a_1|} \leq |f_1(x)| \leq 2N |f_j(x)| \leq \frac{4N}{|x - a_j|}.$$

Assume for the moment that $a_1 < a_j$. Since $f_j(x) \cdot f_1(x) < 0$ on \tilde{U}_j , \tilde{U}_j is contained in (a_1, a_j) . Now if $x \in \tilde{U}_j$ (5) implies that $a_j - x \leq 8N(x - a_1)$, so $a_j + 8N a_1 \leq (8N + 1)x$, and finally $(a_j - a_1)/(8N + 1) \leq x - a_1$. Since also $x - a_1 \leq a_j - a_1$

if $x \in \tilde{U}_j$, (4) is true with $K = \ln(8N + 1)$. If $a_j < a_1$, (4) follows similarly. Thus the proof of Step II is complete.

Step III. There are K and L such that the following holds: suppose given an interval I and an index j_0 such that

$$|f_j(x)| \leq |f_{j_0}(x)| \text{ for } x \in I, 1 \leq j \leq J_2.$$

Then I can be written as the union of at most L disjoint intervals I_l such that for each l there are $C = C(l) \in (0, \infty)$ and $t = t(l) \in \mathbb{N}$ with

$$\frac{C}{K} |x - a_{j_0}|^t \leq |r(x)| \leq KC |x - a_{j_0}|^t, x \in I_l.$$

PROOF OF STEP III. Assume $j_0 = 1$. With the g_j as in the statement of Lemma 3 and since $J_2 \leq N$, it is enough to show the following: there exist absolute constants P and B such that given g_j we can write I as the union of at most P subintervals I_p and on each I_p either

(6) there is $C \in (0, \infty)$ with $\frac{C}{B} \leq |g_j(x)| \leq BC, x \in I_p,$

or

(7) $\frac{|x - a_1|}{B} \leq |g_j(x)| \leq B|x - a_1|, x \in I_p,$

or

$$\frac{(x - a_1)^2}{B} \leq g_j(x) \leq B(x - a_1)^2, x \in I_p.$$

The proof of the next lemma is elementary.

LEMMA. Suppose $x, a_1, a_j \in \mathbb{R}$ and $|x - a_1| \leq 4|x - a_j|$.

(a) If $|a_1 - a_j|/2 \leq |x - a_1|$, then $|x - a_1|/4 \leq |x - a_j| \leq 3|x - a_1|$.

(b) If $|a_1 - a_j|/2 > |x - a_1|$, then $|a_j - a_1|/2 \leq |x - a_j| \leq 3|a_j - a_1|/2$.

Now if f_j is of type I, then $|f_j| \leq |f_1|$ on I implies $|x - a_1| \leq 2|x - a_j|$ if $x \in I$. Thus the Lemma and the fact that $g_j(x) = x - a_j$ give subintervals of I on which (6) or (7) hold. If f_j is of type II, then in the interval $(a_j - \sqrt{b_j}, a_j + \sqrt{b_j})$ we have $b_j \leq g_j \leq 2b_j$. If $x \in I \sim (a_j - \sqrt{b_j}, a_j + \sqrt{b_j})$ then

$$\frac{1}{2|x - a_j|} \leq |f_j(x)| \leq |f_1(x)| \leq \frac{2}{|x - a_1|}$$

and so $|x - a_1| \leq 4|x - a_j|$. Since then $(x - a_j)^2 \leq g_j(x) \leq 2(x - a_j)^2$, the lemma gives

$$\frac{(x - a_1)^2}{16} \leq (x - a_j)^2 \leq g_j(x) \leq 2(x - a_j)^2 \leq 18(x - a_1)^2 \text{ if } \frac{|a_1 - a_j|}{2} \leq |x - a_1|,$$

while

$$\frac{(a_1 - a_j)^2}{4} \leq (x - a_j)^2 \leq g_j(x) \leq 2(x - a_j)^2 \leq \frac{9}{2}(a_1 - a_j)^2 \text{ if } \frac{|a_1 - a_j|}{2} > |x - a_1|.$$

This completes the proofs of Step III and Lemma 3.

We begin the proof of Theorem 2 with some reductions: first, a scaling argument shows that we may assume $p'(x)$ to be monic. Then an approximation argument shows that it is enough to prove Theorem 2 under the additional assumption that $r(x) \doteq p'(x)$ meets the other hypotheses of Lemma 3. Finally, it will suffice to show that, for such $p \in \mathcal{P}_N$, the conclusion of Theorem 2 holds if p' , p'' , and

$$\left| \frac{p''}{(p')^2} \right| - \frac{1}{4(1 + |s|)}$$

are of constant sign on $I \doteq (a, b)$.

$$\text{Case I. } \left| \frac{p''}{(p')^2} \right| \leq \frac{1}{4(1 + |s|)} \text{ on } I.$$

After making the change of variable $u = p(x)$ we have to estimate an integral of the form

$$\int_J e^{i(u + ns \log |p'(p^{-1}(u))|)} \left| \frac{p^{(n)}(p^{-1}(u))}{p'(p^{-1}(u))^n} \right|^{1/n + is} du$$

where the derivative

$$1 + \frac{ns p''(p^{-1}(u))}{p'(p^{-1}(u))^2}$$

of the phase function has absolute value exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ on J . If $n = 1$ an appeal to van der Corput's lemma (see Comment (a) at the beginning of the paper) will now suffice. If $n = 2$, let $C(N)$ stand for a constant depending only on N and note that

$$\int_J \left| \frac{d}{du} \left| \frac{p''(p^{-1}(u))}{p'(p^{-1}(u))^2} \right|^{1/2 + is} \right| du =$$

$$|1/2 + is| \int_J \left| \frac{d}{du} \left| \frac{p''(p^{-1}(u))}{p'(p^{-1}(u))^2} \right|^{1/2} \right| du \leq$$

$$C(N)|1/2 + is| \sup_{u \in J} \left| \frac{p''(p^{-1}(u))}{p'(p^{-1}(u))^2} \right|^{1/2} \leq$$

$$C(N)(1 + |s|)^{1/2}.$$

Here the first inequality follows from the fact that, since $p \in \mathcal{P}_N$,

$$\frac{d}{du} \left| \frac{p''(p^{-1}(u))}{p'(p^{-1}(u))^2} \right|^{1/2}$$

will have at most $C(N)$ sign changes on J . (The second inequality is a consequence of the inequality which defines Case I.) Now Case I follows from Lemma 0.

Case II. $\frac{1}{4(1 + |s|)} \leq \left| \frac{p''}{(p')^2} \right|$ on I .

Take $r = p'$ in Lemma 3 and let the intervals I_t be as in that lemma, so that

$$(8) \quad \int_{R \sim \cup I_t} \left| \frac{p''}{p'} \right| \leq K.$$

Put $I' = I \sim \cup I_t$ and $I'' = I \cap \cup I_t$. Then

$$\int_{I'} |p'| \leq 4(1 + |s|) \int_{I'} \left| \frac{p''}{p'} \right| \leq 4K(1 + |s|),$$

and

$$\int_{I'} |p''|^{1/2} \leq 2(1 + |s|)^{1/2} \int_{I'} \left| \frac{p''}{p'} \right| \leq 2K(1 + |s|)^{1/2},$$

both by the Case II assumption and (8).

For the integrals over I'' it is enough to estimate an integral of $|p'|$ or $|p''|^{1/2}$ over one of the intervals $I \cap I_t$. It follows from Lemma 3 that there are $a \in R$, $C \in (0, \infty)$, and a nonnegative integer t such that for $x \in I_t$ we have

$$\frac{C}{K} |x - a|^t \leq |p'(x)| \leq CK|x - a|^t,$$

$$\frac{1}{K|x-a|} \leq \left| \frac{p''(x)}{p'(x)} \right| \leq \frac{K}{|x-a|},$$

and so

$$\left| \frac{p''(x)}{p'(x)^2} \right| \leq \frac{K^2}{C|x-a|^{t+1}},$$

and

$$|p''(x)| \leq CK^2|x-a|^{t-1}.$$

Thus

$$\int_{I \cap I_1} |p'| \leq CK \int_{\{1/4(1+|s|) \leq K^2/C|x-a|^{t+1}\}} |x-a|^t dx \leq \frac{8K^3(1+|s|)}{t+1}$$

and

$$\int_{I \cap I_1} |p''|^{1/2} \leq C^{1/2}K \int_{\{1/4(1+|s|) \leq K^2/C|x-a|^{t+1}\}} |x-a|^{(t-1)/2} dx \leq \frac{8K^2(1+|s|)^{1/2}}{t+1}$$

This completes the proof of Theorem 2.

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