Polynomial maps over finite fields and residual finiteness of mapping tori of group endomorphisms

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Abstract

We prove that every mapping torus of any free group endomorphism is residually finite. We show how to use a not yet published result of E. Hrushovski to extend our result to arbitrary linear groups. The proof uses algebraic self-maps of affine spaces over finite fields. In particular, we prove that when such a map is dominant, the set of its fixed closed scheme points is Zariski dense in the affine space.

1 Introduction

This article contains results in group theory and algebraic geometry. We think that both the results and the relationship between them are interesting and will have other applications in the future.

We start with group theory. Let $G$ be a group given by generators $x_1, \ldots, x_k$ and a set of defining relations $R$, and let $\phi: x_i \mapsto w_i$, $1 \leq i \leq k$ be an injective endomorphism of $G$. Then the group

$\text{HNN}_\phi(G) = \langle x_1, \ldots, x_k, t \mid R, tx_it^{-1} = w_i, i = 1, \ldots, k \rangle$

is called the mapping torus of $\phi$ (or ascending HNN extension of $G$ corresponding to $\phi$). This group has an easy geometric interpretation as the fundamental group of the mapping torus of the standard 2-complex of $G$.

*The research of the second author was supported in part by the NSF grants DMS 9978802, 0072307, 0245600, and the US-Israeli BSF grant 1999298.
with bounding maps the identity and $\phi$. The simplest and one of the most important cases is when $G$ is the free group $F_k$ of rank $k$, i.e. when $R$ is empty. These groups appear often in group theory and topology. In particular, many one-relator groups are ascending HNN extensions of free groups (more on that below).

Some essential information about the mapping tori of free group endomorphisms is known. In particular, Feighn and Handel [3] proved that these groups are coherent, that is, all their finitely generated subgroups are finitely presented. They also characterized all finitely generated subgroups of such groups. We know [6] that these groups are Hopfian, that is every surjective endomorphism of such a group must be injective. On the other hand, ascending HNN extensions of arbitrary residually finite groups are not necessarily Hopfian [16].

Many of the groups of the form $\text{HNN}_\phi(F_k)$ are hyperbolic (see [1] and [9]). One of the outstanding problems about hyperbolic groups is whether they are residually finite. Recall that a group is called residually finite if the intersection of its subgroups of finite index is trivial. This leads to the following question:

**Problem 1.1.** Are all mapping tori of free groups residually finite?

This question also arises naturally when one tries to characterize residually finite one-related groups. As far as we know Problem 1.1 was explicitly formulated first by Moldavanskii in [13] (it is also mentioned in [18] and listed as Problem 1 in the list of ten interesting open problems about ascending HNN extensions of free groups in [9]).

Notice that ascending HNN extensions of residually finite groups may be not residually finite. They can even have very few finite homomorphic images as is the case for Grigorchuk’s group [16]. However if $\phi$ is an automorphism and $G$ is residually finite then $\text{HNN}_\phi(G)$ is also residually finite [12]. Thus the interesting case in Problem 1.1 is when $\phi$ is not surjective. Some special cases of Problem 1.1 have been solved in [18] (these cases proved to be useful in Wise’s residually finite version of Rips’ construction), and in [8] (where it is proved that the mapping tori of polycyclic groups are residually finite).

Notice also that the groups $\text{HNN}_\phi(F_k)$ do not necessarily satisfy properties that are known to be somewhat stronger than the residual finiteness. For example, the group $\langle a, t \mid tat^{-1} = a^2 \rangle$ is not a LERF group ($a$ cannot be separated from the cyclic group $\langle a^2 \rangle$ by a homomorphism onto a finite group).
One of the main goals of this paper is to solve Problem 1.1.

**Theorem 1.2.** The mapping torus of any injective endomorphism of a free group is residually finite.

Computer experiments conducted by Ilya Kapovich, Paul Schupp, and the second author of this paper seem to show that most 1-related groups are subgroups of ascending HNN extensions of a free group\(^1\). Thus it could well be true that groups with one defining relation are generically inside ascending HNN extensions of free groups. If this conjecture turns out to be true then Theorem 1.2 would imply that one-related groups are generically residually finite. (Recall that there exist non-residually finite one-related groups, for example the Baumslag-Solitar group \(BS(2,3) = \langle a, t \mid tat^{-1} = a^3 \rangle\).) Anyway, it is clear that Theorem 1.2 applies to very many one-related groups.

The proof of Theorem 1.2 was obtained in a rather unexpected way. The proofs of the previous major results about mapping tori of groups (see for example [3], [6], [9]) were of topological nature. We know of several attempts (see [8], [18]) to apply similar methods to Problem 1.1 residual finiteness of the fundamental group of a CW-complex is equivalent to the existence of enough finite covers of that complex to separate all elements of the fundamental groups. But these approaches produced only partial results. Even simple examples like the group \(\langle a, b, t \mid tat^{-1} = ab, tbt^{-1} = ba \rangle\) have been untreatable so far by the topological methods.

Our approach is based on a reduction of Problem 1.1 to some questions about periodic orbits of algebraic maps over finite fields (see Section 2). More precisely, we study the orbits consisting of points conjugate over the base field. In the language of schemes these orbits correspond to the fixed closed scheme points. Such points appeared in the Deligne Conjecture, and were extensively studied before (see, e.g., [4], [14]). However, these investigations were limited to the quasi-finite maps and most of our maps are not quasi-finite.

**Definition 1.3.** Suppose \(\Phi: X \to X\) is a self-map of a variety over a finite field \(\mathbb{F}_q\). A geometric point \(x\) of \(X\) over some finite extension of \(\mathbb{F}_q\) is

\(^{1}\)A simple Maple program written by the second author of this paper checked 30,000 random two-letter group words of length 300,000 Schupp’s program checked 50,000 two-letter random words of length between 100,000 and 110,000. Both programs found that at least 99.6% of the corresponding 1-related groups are subgroups of ascending HNN extensions of finitely generated free groups.
called quasi-fixed with respect to $\Phi$ if $\Phi(x) = Fr^m(x)$. Here $Fr^m$ is the $m$-th composition power of the geometric Frobenius morphism.

If $X$ is the affine space, the above definition becomes the following. Let $\Phi: A^n(\mathbb{F}_q) \to A^n(\mathbb{F}_q)$ be a polynomial map, defined over the finite field $\mathbb{F}_q$. It is given in coordinates by the polynomials $\phi_1,...,\phi_n$ from $\mathbb{F}_q[x_1,...,x_n]$. Suppose a point $a = (a_1,a_2,...,a_n) \in A^n$ is defined over the algebraic closure $\overline{\mathbb{F}}_q$ of $\mathbb{F}_q$. It is a quasi-fixed point of $\Phi$ if and only if for some $Q = q^m$ for all $i$

$$\phi_i(a_1,a_2,...,a_n) = a_i^Q.$$

Here is our main theorem regarding such maps.

**Theorem 1.4.** Let $\Phi^n: A^n(\mathbb{F}_q) \to A^n(\mathbb{F}_q)$ be the $n$-th iteration of $\Phi$. Let $V$ be the Zariski closure of $\Phi^n(A^n)$. Then the following holds.

1. All quasi-fixed points of $\Phi$ belong to $V$.

2. Quasi-fixed points of $\Phi$ are Zariski dense in $V$. In other words, suppose $W \subset V$ is a proper Zariski closed subvariety of $V$. Then for some $Q = q^m$ there is a point $(a_1,...,a_n) \in U \setminus W$ such that for all $i$ $f_i(a_1,...a_n) = a_i^Q$.

After we obtained the proof of Theorem 1.4 we received a preprint [7] of E. Hrushovski where he proves a more general result. In particular, his results imply the following.

**Theorem 1.5.** (Hrushovski, [7]) Let $\Phi: X \to X$ be a dominant self-map of an absolutely irreducible variety over a finite field. Then the set of the quasi-fixed points of $\Phi$ is Zariski dense in $X$.

Our Theorem 1.4 is a partial case of Theorem 1.5 where $X$ is the Zariski closure of $\Phi^n(A^n)$ (in particular, our theorem captures the case when $\Phi: A^n \to A^n$ is dominant).

Theorem 1.5 allowed us to prove the following statement that is much stronger than Theorem 1.2.

**Theorem 1.6.** The mapping torus of any injective endomorphism of a finitely generated linear group\(^2\) is residually finite.

\(^2\)That is a group representable by matrices of any size over any field.
As we mentioned before, for non-linear residually finite groups this statement is not true [16]. In fact Theorem 1.2 can serve as a tool to show that a group is not linear. For example, the non-Hopfian example from [16] is an ascending HNN extension of a residually finite finitely generated group that is an amalgam of two free groups. By Theorem 1.6 that amalgam of free groups is not linear.

It is well known that free groups, polycyclic groups, etc. are linear. Thus Theorem 1.2 immediately implies all known positive results about residual finiteness of mapping tori of non-surjective endomorphisms [8], [6], [13], [18].

The proof of Theorem 1.5 is complicated and uses some heavy machinery from algebraic geometry and Hrushovski’s theory of difference schemes. In comparison, our proof of Theorem 1.4 is basically elementary.

**Remark 1.7.** Theorems 1.2 and 1.6 will remain true if we drop the requirement that the endomorphism \( \phi \) is injective. Indeed, it is easy to see that for every endomorphism \( \phi \) of a linear group \( G \), the sequence \( \ker(\phi) \subseteq \ker(\phi^2) \subseteq \ker(\phi^3) \subseteq \ldots \) eventually stabilizes (see [11, Theorem 11]). Then, for some \( n \), \( \phi \) is injective on \( \phi^n(G) \), and the group \( HNN_\phi(G) \) is isomorphic to the ascending HNN extension of \( \phi^n(G) \). Since \( \phi^n(G) \) is again a linear group, we can apply Theorem 1.6 (see details in [10]).

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we reduce Theorems 1.2 and 1.6 to Theorems 1.4 and 1.5. In Section 3, we give a proof of Theorem 1.4. In Section 4 we apply Theorem 1.6 to a question about extendability of endomorphisms of linear groups to automorphisms of their profinite completions. We also present some open problems.

**Acknowledgments.** The authors are grateful to Ilya Kapovich, Yakov Varshavsky and Dani Wise for very useful remarks.

# 2 HNN extensions and dynamical systems

Let \( T = HNN_\phi(G) \) be the ascending HNN extension of a group

\[ G = \langle x_1, \ldots, x_k \mid R \rangle \]

corresponding to an injective endomorphism \( \phi \). Let \( t \) be the free letter of this HNN extension, so that \( tx_it^{-1} = \phi(x_i) \) for every \( i = 1, \ldots, k \).

It is easy to see that every element \( g \) of \( T \) can be written as a product \( t^awt^b \) for some integers \( a \leq 0 \) and \( b \geq 0 \), \( w \in G \). The map \( z : T \to \mathbb{Z} \)
that sends $t^aw^tb$ to $a + b$ is a homomorphism, so if $a + b \neq 0$ then $g$ can be separated from 1 by a homomorphism onto a finite group. If $a = -b$ then $g$ and $w$ are conjugate, so for every homomorphism $\psi$, $\psi(g) \neq 1$ if and only if $\psi(w) \neq 1$. Therefore the following fact is true.

**Lemma 2.1.** The group $T$ is residually finite if and only if for every $w \in G$, $w \neq 1$, there exists a homomorphism $\psi$ of $T$ onto a finite group such that $\psi(w) \neq 1$.

Let $\phi$ be an endomorphism of $G$ defined by a sequence of words $w_1, ..., w_k$ from $F_k$ (that is the images of $w_i$ in $G$ under the natural homomorphism $F_k \to G$ generate a subgroup that is isomorphic to $G$). Let $H$ be any group (or, more generally, a group scheme). Then we can define a map $\phi_H: H^k \to H^k$ that takes every $k$-tuple $(h_1, ..., h_k)$ to the $k$-tuple

$$(w_1(h_1, ..., h_k), w_2(h_1, ..., h_k), ..., w_k(h_1, ..., h_k)).$$

Notice that this map is not a homomorphism. Nevertheless it defines a dynamical system on $H^k$.

The following lemma reformulates residual finiteness in terms of these dynamical systems.

**Lemma 2.2.** The group $T = \text{HNN}_\phi(G)$ is residually finite if and only if for every $w = w(x_1, ..., x_k) \neq 1$ in $G$ there exists a finite group $H = H_w$ and an element $h = (h_1, ..., h_k)$ in $H^k$ such that

(i) $h_1, ..., h_k$ satisfy the relations from $R$ (where $h_i$ is substituted for $x_i$, $i = 1, ..., k$).

(ii) $h$ is a fixed point of some power of $\phi_H$, and

(iii) $w(h_1, ..., h_k) \neq 1$ in $H$.

**Proof.** $\Rightarrow$ Suppose $T$ is residually finite. Take any word $w \neq 1$ in $G$. Then there exists a homomorphism $\gamma$ from $G$ onto a finite group $H$ such that $\gamma(w) \neq 1$. Let $t$ be the free letter in $G$. Then $\gamma(t)\gamma(G)\gamma(t^{-1}) \subseteq \gamma(G)$. Since $H$ is finite, $\gamma(t)$ acts on $\gamma(G)$ by conjugation. It is clear that for every element $h = (h_1, ..., h_k)$ in $\gamma(G)^k$,

$$\phi_H(h) = (\gamma(t)h_1\gamma(t^{-1}), ..., \gamma(t)h_k\gamma(t^{-1})) \in \gamma(F_k)^k. \quad (2.1)$$
Take $h = (\gamma(x_1), ..., \gamma(x_k))$. Property (i) is obvious. Property (iii) holds because $\gamma(w) \neq 1$. Property (ii) holds also because by (2.1) powers of $\phi_H$ act on $\gamma(G)^k$ as conjugation by the corresponding powers of $\gamma(t)$, and some power of $\gamma(t)$ is equal to 1 since $H$ is finite.

$\leftarrow$ Suppose that for every $w \neq 1$ in $G$ there exists a finite group $H = H_w$ and an element $h = (h_1, ..., h_k)$ in $H^k$ such that conditions (i), (ii) and (iii) hold. We need to prove that $G$ is residually finite. By Lemma 2.1 it is enough to show that every such $w$ can be separated from 1 by a homomorphism of $G$ onto a finite group.

Pick a $w \neq 1$ in $G$. Let a finite group $H$, $h \in H^k$, be as above. By (ii), there exists an integer $n \geq 1$ such that $\phi_H^n(h) = h$. Let $P$ be the wreath product of $H$ and a cyclic group $C = \langle c \rangle$ of order $n$. Recall that $P$ is the semidirect product of $H^n$ and $C$ where elements of $C$ act on $H^n$ by cyclically permuting the coordinates.

Consider the $\phi_H$-orbit $h^{(0)} = h, h^{(1)} = \phi_H(h), ..., h^{(n-1)} = \phi_H^{n-1}(h)$ of $h$. Let $h^{(i)} = (h_1^{(i)}, ..., h_k^{(i)}), i = 0, ..., n-1$. For every $j = 1, ..., k$ let $y_j$ be the $n$-tuple $(h_1^{(0)}, h_1^{(1)}, ..., h_1^{(n-1)})$. Notice that since $h$ satisfies relations from $R$, $\phi_H(h)$, $\phi_H^2(h), ...$ also satisfy these relations because $\phi$ is an endomorphism of $G$. This and (ii) immediately imply that the map $\phi: t \mapsto c, x_j \mapsto y_j, j = 1, ..., k$, can be extended to a homomorphism of $T$ onto a subgroup of $P$ generated by $c, y_1, ..., y_k$. Notice that the image of $w$ under this homomorphism is an $n$-tuple $w(y_1, ..., y_k)$ from $H^n$ whose first coordinate is $w(h_1, ..., h_k) \neq 1$ in $H$ by property (iii). Thus $w$ can be separated from 1 by a homomorphism of $T$ onto a finite group.

Now we are going to show how to apply Lemma 2.2 to free groups and other linear groups. First we need to fix some notations.

Let us identify the scheme $M_r$ of all $r$ by $r$ matrices with the scheme $\text{Spec} \mathbb{Z}[a_{i,j}], 1 \leq i, j \leq r$. The scheme $\text{GL}_r$ is its open subscheme obtained by localization by the determinant polynomial $\det$. This is a group scheme (see [17]). The group scheme $\text{SL}_r = \text{Spec} \mathbb{Z}[a_{i,j}]/(\det - 1)$ is a closed subscheme of $M_r$. For every field $K$ the group schemes $\text{GL}_r(K)$ and $\text{SL}_r(K)$ are obtained from $\text{GL}_r$ and $\text{SL}_r$ by the base change. Then the groups $\text{GL}_r(K)$ and $\text{SL}_r(K)$ are the groups of the $K$-rational geometric points of the corresponding group schemes.

The multiplicative abelian group scheme $T_m$ acts on $M_r$ by scalar multiplication. The scheme $\text{GL}_r$ is invariant under this action. This induces the action of the multiplicative group $K^*$ on the group $\text{GL}_r(K)$. The quotient of
GL_r(K) by this action is the group PGL_r(K).

For every group word w we consider the formal expression \( \bar{w} \) which is obtained from w by replacing every letter \( x^{-1} \) by the symbol \( \text{adj}(x) \). Thus to every word w in k letters, we can associate a polynomial map \( \pi_w : M_k^r \to M_r \) which takes every k-tuple of matrices \( (A_1, ..., A_k) \) to \( \bar{w}(A_1, ..., A_k) \) where \( \text{adj}(A_i) \) is interpreted as the adjoint of \( A_i \). This map coincides with w on SL_r since for the matrices in SL_r, the adjoint coincides with the inverse.

Similarly, for every endomorphism \( \phi \) of the free group \( F_k \), we can extend the map \( \phi_{\text{SL}_r} : \text{SL}_r^k \to \text{SL}_r^k \) to a self-map of \( M_k^r \) which we shall denote by \( \Phi \).

The map \( \Phi \) is a self-map of the scheme \( \text{Spec} \mathbb{Z}[a_{i,j}^m], 1 \leq i, j \leq r, 1 \leq m \leq k \). By base change it induces a self-map of the scheme \( \text{Spec} K[a_{i,j}^m], 1 \leq i, j \leq r, 1 \leq m \leq k \) for every field \( K \). This map can be restricted to the self-map of \( \text{GL}_r^k(K) \). The induced map on the \( K \)-rational points is \( \phi_{\text{GL}_r(K)} \). It descends to the self-map of \( \text{PGL}_r^k(K) \) which coincides with the map \( \phi_{\text{PGL}_r(K)} \) defined above.

Now we are ready to derive Theorems 1.2 and 1.6 from Theorems 1.4 and 1.5, respectively.

**Proof of Theorem 1.2** Let \( \phi \) be an injective endomorphism of the free group \( F_k = \langle x_1, ..., x_k \rangle \) and \( 1 \neq w \in F_k \). Consider the self-map \( \Phi \) of the scheme \( M_2^k \) as above. Denote \( n = 4k \). Similarly to Theorem 1.3, we denote by \( V \) the Zariski closure of \( \Phi^n(M_2^k) \). This is a scheme over \( \text{Spec} \mathbb{Z} \). Consider the map \( \pi_w : V \to M_2 \) as above. We have the following lemma.

**Lemma 2.3.** In the above notations, \( \pi_w(V) \) is not contained in the scheme of the scalar matrices.

**Proof.** By the result of Sanov [15] there is an embedding \( \gamma : F_k \to \text{SL}_2(\mathbb{Z}) \). Obviously, \( \gamma(F_k) \) does not contain the matrix \( -\text{Id} \). Since \( \phi \) is injective, \( \phi^n(w) \neq 1 \). Therefore \( \pi_w(\Phi^n(\gamma(x_1), ..., \gamma(x_k))) = \gamma(\phi^n(w)) \) is not a scalar matrix. \( \square \)

Now we fix a big enough prime \( p \) and make a base change from \( \mathbb{Z} \) to the finite field \( \mathbb{F}_p \). Slightly abusing the notation, we will from now on denote by \( \Phi \) and \( \pi_w \) the maps of the corresponding schemes over \( \mathbb{F}_p \). And \( V \) will also denote the corresponding scheme over \( \mathbb{F}_p \). From Lemma 2.3, for big enough \( p \), \( \pi_w V \) is not contained in the scheme of scalar matrices. Consider the subscheme \( Z_w \) of \( V \) which is the union of the \( \pi_w \)-pullback of scalar matrices and the subscheme of \( V \) consisting of \( k \)-tuples where one of the coordinates is singular. We have that \( Z_w \) is a proper subscheme of of \( V \). By Theorem 1.4...
there exists a point \( h = (a_1, ..., a_k) \in V \setminus Z_w \) such that \( \Phi(h) = (a_1^Q, ..., a_k^Q) \) for some \( Q = p^s \). Then the powers of \( \Phi \) take the point \( h \) to \( (a_1^{Q^l}, ..., a_k^{Q^l}) \), \( l \geq 1 \) (we use the fact that, in characteristic \( p \), the Frobenius commutes with every polynomial map defined over \( \mathbb{F}_p \)). Therefore some power of \( \Phi \) fixes \( h \). In addition \( \pi_w(h) \) is not a scalar matrix and each \( a_i \) is not a singular matrix because \( h \not\in Z_w \). Taking the factor over the torus action, we get a point \( h' \) in \( \text{PGL}_2(\mathbb{F}_p) \) that is fixed by some power of the map \( \Phi \) and such that \( w(h') \neq 1 \) in \( \text{PGL}_2(\mathbb{F}_p) \). Thus the group \( \text{PGL}_2(\mathbb{F}_p) \) and the point \( h' \) satisfy all three conditions of Lemma 2.2. Since \( w \in F_k \) was chosen arbitrarily, the group \( \text{HNN}_\phi(F_k) \) is residually finite. This completes the proof of Theorem 1.2.

Proof of Theorem 1.6. Suppose \( G \subseteq \text{SL}_r(K) \). Here \( K \) is some field and \( G = \langle x_1, ..., x_k | R \rangle \). Let \( U_G \) be the representation scheme of the group \( G \) in \( \text{SL}_r \), i.e. the reduced scheme of \( k \)-tuples of matrices from \( \text{SL}_r \) satisfying the relations from \( R \). This is a scheme over Spec\( K \). Suppose \( \phi \) is an injective endomorphism of \( G \), the representation subscheme \( U_G \) is invariant under \( \Phi \). Obviously, for big enough \( m \) the map \( \Phi \) is dominant on the subscheme \( V \), which is the Zariski closure of \( \Phi^m(U_G) \). Note that \( V \) may be reducible because \( U_G \) may be reducible. Since \( \phi \) is injective, \( \phi^m(w) \neq 1 \). Therefore \( \pi_w(V) \neq \{Id\} \). By the usual specialization argument (as in [11]) there exists a finite field \( \mathbb{F}_q \) such that for the corresponding schemes and maps over \( \mathbb{F}_q \) the same properties are satisfied. That is, \( \Phi \) is dominant on \( V \), where \( V \) is the Zariski closure of \( \Phi^m(U_G) \), everything over \( \mathbb{F}_q \). In addition, \( \pi_w(V) \neq \{Id\} \). Consider the subscheme \( Z_w \) of \( V \) which is the \( \pi_w \)-pullback of the identity. We have that \( Z_w \) is a proper subscheme of \( V \). We enlarge the finite field to make all irreducible components of \( V \) defined over \( \mathbb{F}_q \). Some power of \( \Phi \) maps each of these components into itself, dominantly. We now apply Theorem 1.3 to this power of \( \Phi \), the scheme \( V \subseteq \text{SL}_r \) and its subscheme \( Z_w \). As in the proof of Theorem 1.2, we find a point \( h \in V(\mathbb{F}_q) \setminus Z_w(\mathbb{F}_q) \) that is fixed by some power of \( \Phi \). Since \( h \) belongs to the representation variety \( U_G \), its coordinates satisfy all the relations from \( R \), so the condition (i) of Lemma 2.2 is satisfied. Other conditions of the lemma hold as before. Thus we can take the group \( \text{SL}_r(\mathbb{F}_q) \) as \( H_w \), and \( h \) as the point required by Lemma 2.2. This completes the proof of Theorem 1.6.
3 Polynomial maps over finite fields

In this section, we shall give a self-contained proof of Theorem 1.4. Let $\mathbb{A}^n$ be the affine space. Consider a map $\Phi : \mathbb{A}^n \to \mathbb{A}^n$ given in coordinates by polynomials $f_1(x_1, \ldots, x_n), f_2(x_1, \ldots, x_n), \ldots, f_n(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$.

The coordinate functions of the composition power $\Phi^k$ will be denoted by $f_i^k(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$, for $1 \leq i \leq n$. In what follows, $\Phi$ will be defined over the finite field $\mathbb{F}_q$ of $q$ elements (this just means that all coefficients of $f_i$ belong to $\mathbb{F}_q$). The number $Q$ will always mean some (big enough) power of $q$.

We define by induction a chain of irreducible closed subvarieties of $\mathbb{A}^n$.

Let $V_0 = \mathbb{A}^n$, and for every $i \geq 1$ let $V_i$ be the Zariski closure in $\mathbb{A}^n$ of $\Phi(V_{i-1})$. Alternatively, $V_i$ is the Zariski closure of $\Phi^i(\mathbb{A}^n)$.

The varieties $V_i$ are irreducible (as polynomial images of an irreducible variety) and $V_{i+1} \subseteq V_i$ for all $i$. Because the dimension could only drop $n$ times, $V_n = V_{n+1} = \ldots$. We will denote this variety $V_n$ by $V$. Note that $V = \mathbb{A}^n$ if and only if $\Phi$ is a dominant map.

Suppose a point $a = (a_1, a_2, \ldots, a_n) \in \mathbb{A}^n$ is defined over the algebraic closure $\overline{\mathbb{F}}_q$ of $\mathbb{F}_q$. Recall that $a$ is called quasi-fixed (with respect to $\Phi$) if there exists $Q = q^m$ such that $f_i(a_1, a_2, \ldots, a_n) = a_i^Q$, $i = 1, \ldots, n$.

In other words, the quasi-fixed points are those that are mapped by $\Phi$ to their conjugates. They correspond to the closed scheme points of $\mathbb{A}^n$, which are fixed by $\Phi$.

The following lemma is the first part of Theorem 1.4.

**Lemma 3.1.** All quasi-fixed points belong to the variety $V$.

**Proof.** Since $\Phi$ is defined over $\overline{\mathbb{F}}_q$, all varieties $V_i$, $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$ are defined over $\overline{\mathbb{F}}_q$. For a point $a = (a_1, \ldots, a_n) \in \mathbb{A}^n$ we denote by $a^Q$ the point $\text{Fr}_q^m(a) = (a_1^Q, \ldots, a_n^Q)$. Then suppose $\Phi(a) = a^Q$, for $Q = q^m$. This implies that $a^Q \in V_1$.

Since the Frobenius $\text{Fr}_q$ commutes with $\Phi$, all varieties $V_i$ are invariant with respect to $\text{Fr}_q$. Therefore $a \in V_1$. Hence $a^Q = \Phi(a) \in V_2$ and $a \in V_2$. By induction, we get $a \in V$. 

In the above notations, our main goal is to prove the following (this is the second part of Theorem 1.4).
Theorem 3.2. Let $V$ be the Zariski closure of $\Phi^n(A^n)$. Then quasi-fixed points of $\Phi$ are Zariski dense in $V$. In other words, suppose $W \subset V$ is a proper Zariski closed subvariety. Then for some $Q$ there is a point $(a_1, \ldots, a_n) \in V \setminus W$ such that $f_i(a_1, \ldots a_n) = a_i^Q, i = 1, \ldots, n$.

We denote by $I_Q$ the ideal in $\mathbb{F}_Q[x_1, \ldots, x_n]$ generated by the polynomials $f_i(x_1, \ldots, x_n) - x_i^Q$, for $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$.

Lemma 3.3. For a big enough $Q$ the ideal $I_Q$ has finite length.

Proof. We compactify $A_n$ to the projective space $P^n$ in the usual way. We also projectivize the polynomials $f_i - x_i^Q$. If there is a curve in $P^n$ on which all of these projective polynomials vanish, then it must have some points on the infinite hyperplane of $P^n$. But this is impossible if $Q$ is bigger than the degrees of $f_i$. Thus the scheme of common zeroes is zero-dimensional, which implies the result. \qed

Lemma 3.4. For all $1 \leq i \leq n$ and $j \geq 1$

$$f_i^{(j)}(x_1, \ldots, x_n) - x_i^{Qj} \in I_Q.$$ 

Proof. We use induction on $j$. For $j = 1$ the statement is obvious. Suppose it is true for some $j \geq 1$. Then

$$f_i^{(j+1)}(x_1, \ldots, x_n) = f_i(f_i^{(j)}, \ldots, f_n^{(j)}) \equiv f_i(x_1^{Qj}, \ldots, x_n^{Qj}) =$$

$$= f_i(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^{Qj} \equiv x_i^{Qj+1}(\text{mod } I_Q)$$ \qed

The next lemma is the crucial step in the proof.

Lemma 3.5. There exists a number $k$ such that for every quasi-fixed point $(a_1, \ldots, a_n)$ with big enough $Q$ and for every $1 \leq i \leq n$ the polynomial

$$(f_i^{(n)}(x_1, \ldots, x_n) - f_i^{(n)}(a_1, \ldots, a_n))^k$$

is contained in the localization of $I_Q$ at $(a_1, \ldots, a_n)$.\end{document}
Proof. Let us fix \(i\) from 1 to \(n\). The polynomials \(x_i, f_i, f_i^{(2)}, \ldots, f_i^{(n)}\) are algebraically dependent over \(\mathbb{F}_q\). This means that

\[
\sum_s a_s \cdot (x_i)^{\alpha_{0,s}} \cdot (f_i)^{\alpha_{1,s}} \cdot \ldots \cdot (f_i^{(n)})^{\alpha_{n,s}} = 0 \tag{3.2}
\]

with some non-zero \(a_s \in \mathbb{F}_q\). By Lemma 3.4 the polynomial in the left hand side of (3.2) is congruent modulo \(I_Q\) to

\[
P_Q(x_i) = \sum_s a_s \cdot x_i^{\alpha_s},
\]

where \(\alpha_s = \sum_{j=0}^n \alpha_{j,s} Q^j\). For big enough \(Q\), the polynomial \(P_Q\) is non-zero. For any \((a_1, \ldots, a_n)\) we rewrite \(P_Q(x_i)\) as \(\sum_t b_t \cdot (x_i - a_i)^{\beta_t}\).

So in the local ring of \((a_1, \ldots, a_n)\), the polynomial \(P_Q(x_i)\) is equal to

\[
(x_i - a_i)^{\beta} \cdot u,
\]

where \(u\) is invertible and \(\beta \leq \max \beta_t\). Clearly, \(\max \beta_t\) is bounded by \(kQ^n\) for some \(k\) that does not depend on \(Q, a_1, \ldots, a_n\). Denote by \(I_Q^{(a_1, \ldots, a_n)}\) the localization of \(I_Q\) in the local ring of \((a_1, \ldots, a_n)\). Then by (3.2) \((x_i - a_i)^{kQ^n} \equiv 0 \pmod{I_Q^{(a_1, \ldots, a_n)}}\). Now we note that

\[
f_i^{(n)}(x_1, \ldots, x_n) - f_i^{(n)}(a_1, \ldots, a_n) =
\]

\[
= f_i^{(n)}(x_1, \ldots, x_n) - a_i^{Q^n} \equiv x_i^{Q^n} - a_i^{Q^n} = (x_i - a_i)^{Q^n} \pmod{I_Q^{(a_1, \ldots, a_n)}}.
\]

\(\square\)

Let us fix some polynomial \(D\) with the coefficients in a finite extension of \(\mathbb{F}_q\) such that it vanishes on \(W\) but not on \(V\). By base change we will assume that all coefficients of \(D\) are in \(\mathbb{F}_q\).

**Lemma 3.6.** There exists a positive integer \(K\) such that for all quasi-fixed points \((a_1, \ldots, a_n) \in W\) with big enough \(Q\) we get

\[
(D(f_1^{(n)}(x_1, \ldots, x_n), \ldots, f_n^{(n)}(x_1, \ldots, x_n)))^K \equiv 0 \pmod{I_Q^{(a_1, \ldots, a_n)}}
\]

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Proof. For every \((a_1, \ldots, a_n) \in W\) we can rewrite \(D(x_1, \ldots, x_n)\) as a polynomial in \(x_i - a_i^Q\). This polynomial has no free term because \(D\) vanishes on \(W\) and \((a_1, \ldots, a_n) \in W\) by the assumption. The number of non-zero terms of \(D\) is bounded independently of \(a_i\) and \(Q\) by some number \(N\). Then by the binomial formula and Lemma 3.5 we can take \(K = N(k - 1) + 1\) where \(k\) is the constant from Lemma 3.5.

The polynomial \(P = (D(f_1^{(n)}(x_1, \ldots, x_n), \ldots, f_n^{(n)}(x_1, \ldots, x_n)))^K\) is non-zero because \(D\) does not vanish on the whole \(U\) and the map \(\Phi\) is dominant on \(U\). We now complete the proof of Theorem 3.2.

In fact we give two proofs. The first one uses the Bezout theorem, while the second one is elementary and self-contained.

Proof # 1. We denote by \(Z\) the subscheme of \(A^n\) that corresponds to \(P\). Note that \(Z\) does not depend on \(Q\). Now for every \(Q\) consider the \(\mathbb{F}_q\)-linear subspace of polynomials spanned by \(f_i - x_i^Q, 1 \leq i \leq n\). By Lemma 3.3 its base locus is zero-dimensional, i.e. these polynomials do not vanish simultaneously at any curve. The scheme \(Z\) is of pure dimension \((n - 1)\). A general element \(\tau_1\) of the above linear subspace does not vanish at any of the irreducible components of \(Z\), or their positive-dimensional intersections. So its scheme of zeroes intersects \(Z\) properly, the intersection \(Z_1\) has pure dimension \((n - 2)\). Then we choose \(\tau_2\) that intersects \(Z_1\) properly to get \(Z_2\), and so on. After choosing \((n - 1)\) elements \(\tau_1, \tau_2, \ldots, \tau_{n-1}\) we get an ideal \(I_Q^k(D^k, \tau_1, \tau_2, \ldots, \tau_{n-1})\) of finite length. After localization at any \((a_1, \ldots, a_n) \in W\) this ideal is contained in \(I_Q\). By Bezout theorem (cf., e.g. [5]) the length of \(I_Q\) is equal to \(\text{const} \cdot Q^{n-1}\). But the length of \(I_Q\) is equal to \(Q^n\), which is bigger for big enough \(Q\). This implies the existence of quasi-fixed points in \(V \setminus W\).

Proof # 2. Fix \(Q = q^j\) such that it is bigger than the degrees of \(f_i\) and \(P\). By Lemma 3.1 all points with \(\Phi(x) = x^Q\) belong to \(V\). If they all actually belong to \(W\), then \(P\) lies in the localizations of \(I_Q\) with respect to all maximal ideals of \(\mathbb{F}[x_1, \ldots, x_n]\). Therefore \(P \in I_Q\) (otherwise consider a maximal ideal containing \(I_Q : F\)). This means that there exist polynomials \(u_1, \ldots, u_n\) such that

\[
P = \sum_{i=1}^{n} u_i \cdot (f_i - x_i^Q) \tag{3.3}
\]

The right hand side of (3.3) can be modified as follows. For every \(i < j\) and any polynomial \(A\), we can add \(A(f_j - x_j^Q)\) to \(u_i\) and subtract \(A(f_i - x_i^Q)\) from...
This transformation can be used to make (for every \( i < j \)) the degree of \( x_i \) in every monomial in \( u_j \) is smaller than \( Q \). Now consider the monomial of the highest total power in \((3.3)\). Since \( Q \) is bigger than the degree of \( P \), that monomial has the form \( \bar{u}_j x_j^Q \) for some \( j \) where \( \bar{u}_j \) is the leading monomial in \( u_j \). That monomial does not occur in the left hand side of \((3.3)\). Therefore it must coincide with the leading monomial \( \bar{u}_i x_i^Q \) for some \( i \neq j \). But then \( u_i \) must be divisible by \( x_j^Q \) and \( u_j \) must be divisible by \( u_i^Q \), and we get a contradiction in each of the cases \( i < j \) or \( i > j \).

4 Extendable endomorphisms of linear groups, and some open problems

Recall that a profinite group is, by definition, a projective limit of finite groups.

**Definition 4.1.** Let \( G \) be a residually finite group, \( \phi \) be an endomorphism of \( G \). We say that \( \phi \) is extendable if there exists a profinite group \( \bar{G} \) containing \( G \) as a dense subgroup, and a (continuous) automorphism \( \bar{\phi} \) of \( \bar{G} \) such that \( \phi \) is the restriction of \( \bar{\phi} \) on \( G \).

Notice that even if \( \phi \) is injective and continuous in a profinite topology of \( G \), its (unique) extension to the corresponding completion of \( G \) may not be injective. Injective endomorphisms of free groups that have injective extensions in \( p \)-adic (resp. pro-solvable, and many other profinite) topologies of a free group are completely described in [2].

There is a close connection between extendable endomorphisms and residually finite HNN extensions.

**Theorem 4.2.** An injective endomorphism \( \phi \) of a residually finite group \( G \) is extendable if and only if \( \text{HNN}_\phi(G) \) is residually finite.

**Proof.** Suppose that \( P = \text{HNN}_\phi(G) \) is residually finite. Let \( \Psi \) be the set of all homomorphisms of \( P \) onto finite groups, \( \Psi' \) be the set of all restrictions of homomorphisms from \( \Psi \) to \( G \). Let \( \mathcal{T} \) be the smallest profinite topology on \( G \) for which all the homomorphisms from \( \Psi' \) are continuous. The base of neighborhoods of 1 for \( \mathcal{T} \) is formed by the kernels of all the homomorphisms from \( \Psi' \).

It is easy to see that for every \( \psi \in \Psi' \), the homomorphism \( \phi \psi \) is also in \( \Psi' \). Therefore the endomorphism \( \phi \) is continuous in the topology \( \mathcal{T} \). Let \( \bar{G} \)
be the profinite completion of $G$ with respect to $\mathcal{T}$, and let $\bar{\phi}$ be the (unique) continuous extension of $\phi$ onto $\bar{G}$. Let us prove that $\bar{\phi}$ is an automorphism of $\bar{G}$.

Suppose that $\bar{\phi}$ is not injective. This means that there is a sequence of elements $w_i, i \geq 1$, in $G$ such that $w_i$ do not converge to 1 in $\bar{G}$ but $\phi(w_i)$ converge to 1. The latter means that there exists a sequence of subgroups $N_i = \text{Ker}(\psi_i) \subset P, \psi_i \in \Psi$, such that $\bigcap N_i = \{1\}$, $\phi(w_i) \in N_i, i \geq 1$.

Notice that by definition of $P = \text{HNN}_\phi(G)$, $\phi(w_i)N_i$ is a conjugate of $w_iN_i$ in $P/N_i$ (the conjugating element is $tN_i$ where $t$ is the free letter of the HNN extension). Thus we can conclude that $w_i \in N_i, i \geq 1$. Hence $w_i \to 1$ in $\mathcal{T}$, a contradiction. Therefore $\bar{\phi}$ is injective.

Let us prove that $\bar{\phi}$ is surjective. Consider a Cauchy sequence $w = \{w_i, i \geq 1\}$ in $G$, that is suppose there exist $N_i = \text{Ker}(\psi_i), \psi_i \in \Psi, i \geq 1$, such that $\bigcap N_i = \{1\}$ and $w_i^{-1}w_j \in N_i$ for every $j > i$.

For every $x \in G$ we have $\phi(x)N_i = txt^{-1}N_i$, and $P/N_i$ is finite. So $\phi$ induces an automorphism in $G/(N_i \cap G)$. Hence for every $i \geq 1$, we can find an element $u_i$ in $G$ such that $\phi(u_i)N_i = w_iN_i$. Moreover since $w_i^{-1}w_j \in N_i$ for all $j > i$, $u_i^{-1}u_j \in N_i$ as well. Therefore $\{u_i, i \geq 1\}$ is a Cauchy sequence and $\bar{\phi}(u) = w$. Thus $\bar{\phi}$ is an automorphism of $\bar{G}$. Notice that since $\bar{G}$ is compact, $\phi^{-1}$ is also continuous.

Suppose now that $\phi$ can be extended to a continuous automorphism $\bar{\phi}$ of a profinite group $\bar{G} \geq G$. Let $w \neq 1 \in G$. Notice that for every $w \in G$, $\bar{\phi}(w) = \phi(w)$. Therefore there exists a homomorphism $\theta$ from $P$ to the semidirect product $G \rtimes \langle \phi \rangle$ which is identity on $G$ and sends $t$ to $\bar{\phi}$. This homomorphism is clearly injective: it is easy to check that no non-trivial element $t^kw^l$ can lie in the kernel of $\theta$. It remains to prove that $G \rtimes \langle \phi \rangle$ is residually finite. But that can be done exactly as in the case of split extensions of finitely generated residually finite groups \cite{12}. Indeed, since $\bar{G}$ is finitely generated as a profinite group, it has only finitely many open subgroups of any given (finite) index, and the automorphism $\bar{\phi}$ permutes these subgroups. Hence $\bar{\phi}$ leaves invariant their intersection which also is of finite index. Therefore $\bar{G} \rtimes \langle \phi \rangle$ is residually finite-by-cyclic, so $G \rtimes \langle \phi \rangle$ is residually finite. \[ \Box \]

Theorems 1.6 and 4.2 immediately imply:

**Corollary 4.3.** Every injective endomorphism of a finitely generated linear group is extendable.

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Finally let us mention two open problems.

**Problem 4.4.** Let $\phi$ and $\psi$ be two injective endomorphisms of the free group $F_k = \langle x_1, \ldots, x_k \rangle$. Consider the corresponding HNN extension of $F_k$ with two free letters $t, u$:

$$\text{HNN}_{\phi, \psi}(F_k) = \langle x_1, \ldots, x_k, t, u \mid tx_it^{-1} = \phi(x_i), ux_iu^{-1} = \psi(x_i), 1 \leq i \leq k \rangle.$$ 

Is $\text{HNN}_{\phi, \psi}(F_k)$ always residually finite?

We believe that the answer is negative in a very strong sense: the groups $\text{HNN}_{\phi, \psi}$ should be generically non-residually finite. Since many of these groups are hyperbolic, this may provide a way to construct hyperbolic non-residually finite groups.

The next question is natural to ask for any residually finite groups.

**Problem 4.5.** Are mapping tori of free group endomorphisms linear?

Notice that although we use linear groups in our proof of Theorems 1.2 and 1.6, our proof does not prove linearity of the mapping tori. It is easy to extract from our proof that the mapping torus a linear group endomorphism is embeddable into the wreath product of a linear group and the infinite cyclic group. Notice that this wreath product is not even residually finite.

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