

# Square-free Gröbner degenerations

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Let  $K$  be a field,  $S = K[X_1, \dots, X_n]$  be the polynomial ring in  $n$  variables over  $K$  equipped with a positive graded structure (namely  $\deg(X_i)$  is a positive integer for any  $i = 1, \dots, n$ ).

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Given a homogeneous ideal  $I \subset S$ , the *Krull dimension* of  $R = S/I$  ( $\dim R$ ) is equal to the minimum  $d \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $R/(f_1, \dots, f_d)$  is a finite dimensional  $K$ -vector space for some homogeneous elements  $f_1, \dots, f_d \in R$ .

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Homogeneous elements  $f_1, \dots, f_d \in R$  satisfying the property above are called a *homogeneous system of parameters* for  $R$ .

# Basic notions in Commutative Algebra

Homogeneous elements of positive degree  $f_1, \dots, f_k \in R = S/I$  form an *R-regular sequence* if  $\bar{f}_i$  is a nonzero divisor of  $R/(f_1, \dots, f_{i-1})$  for any  $i = 1, \dots, k$ .

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## Proposition

The following are equivalent:

- $R$  is Cohen-Macaulay.
- Every homogeneous system of parameters for  $R$  is an  $R$ -regular sequence.

# Monomial orders

Recall that  $S = K[X_1, \dots, X_n]$ : let  $\text{Mon}(S)$  be the set of monomials of  $S$ :

$$\text{Mon}(S) = \{X_1^{u_1} \cdots X_n^{u_n} : (u_1, \dots, u_n) \in \mathbb{N}^n\}.$$



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## Definition

A *monomial order* on  $S$  is a total order  $<$  on  $\text{Mon}(S)$  such that:

- (i)  $1 \leq \mu$  for every  $\mu \in \text{Mon}(S)$ ;
- (ii) If  $\mu_1, \mu_2, \nu \in \text{Mon}(S)$  such that  $\mu_1 \leq \mu_2$ , then  $\mu_1\nu \leq \mu_2\nu$ .

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$$\mu = 1 \cdot \mu \leq (\nu/\mu) \cdot \mu = \nu.$$

## Remark

The fact that a monomial order refines the divisibility partial order on  $\text{Mon}(S)$ , together with the Hilbert basis theorem, makes a monomial order on  $S$  a well-order on  $\text{Mon}(S)$ . This is the starting point for the theory of *Gröbner bases*.

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Note that, fixed a monomial order  $<$  on  $S$ , every nonzero polynomial  $f \in S$  can be written uniquely as

$$f = a_1\mu_1 + \dots + a_k\mu_k$$

with  $a_i \in K \setminus \{0\}$ ,  $\mu_i \in \text{Mon}(S)$  and  $\mu_1 > \mu_2 > \dots > \mu_k$ .

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Polynomials  $f_1, \dots, f_m$  of an ideal  $I \subset S$  are a *Gröbner basis* of  $I$  (w.r.t.  $<$ ) if  $\mathbf{in}(I) = (\mathbf{in}(f_1), \dots, \mathbf{in}(f_m))$ .

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## Example

Consider the ideal  $I = (f_1 = X_1^2 - X_2^2, f_2 = X_1X_3 - X_2^2)$  of  $K[X_1, X_2, X_3]$ . For the lexicographic monomial order the polynomials  $f_1, f_2$  are not a Gröbner basis of  $I$ , indeed  $X_1X_2^2 = \text{in}(X_3f_1 - X_1f_2)$  is a monomial of  $\text{in}(I)$  which is not in the ideal  $(\text{in}(f_1) = X_1^2, \text{in}(f_2) = X_1X_3)$ .

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As we saw, a system of generators of  $I$  may not be a Gröbner basis of  $I$ . On the contrary, a Gröbner basis of  $I$  is always a system of generators of  $I$ .

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There is a way to compute a Gröbner basis of an ideal  $I$  (and so  $\text{in}(I)$ ) starting from a system of generators of  $I$ , namely the *Buchsberger's algorithm*.

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## Remark

For any monomial order on  $S$  and ideal  $I \subset S$  it is easy to check that  $\dim S/I = \dim S/\text{in}(I)$ .

To describe further relations, it is useful to see the passage from  $I$  to  $\text{in}(I)$  as a deformation, interpretation given in the 80s by many people.



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## Proposition

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It is easy to find examples where the converse to the above implication fails...

An important instance in which the above implication can be reversed is:

**Theorem (Bayer-Stillman, 1987)**

For a degree reverse lexicographic monomial order, if the coordinates are generic (with respect to  $I$ ), then

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On a different perspective, *Algebras with Straightening Law (ASL)* were introduced in the 80s by De Concini, Eisenbud and Procesi. This notion arose as an axiomatization of the underlying combinatorial structure observed by many authors in classical algebras like coordinate rings of flag varieties, their Schubert subvarieties and various kinds of rings defined by determinantal equations.

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## Conjecture (Herzog)

Let  $I \subset S$  be a homogeneous ideal such that  $\text{in}(I)$  is square-free for some monomial order. Then

$$S/\text{in}(I) \text{ is Cohen-Macaulay} \iff S/I \text{ is Cohen-Macaulay.}$$

A first approach that one could try to prove Herzog's conjecture is to exploit Bayer and Stillman result and to show that:

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Let  $I \subset S$  be a homogeneous ideal such that  $\text{in}(I)$  is a square-free monomial ideal. Then,  $\text{gin}(\text{in}(I)) = \text{gin}(I)$ .

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Unfortunately it was exhibited a counterexample to the above statement by Conca in 2007.

## Theorem ( , 2009)

Let  $I \subset S$  be a homogeneous ideal such that  $S/I$  is Cohen-Macaulay. Then the simplicial complex associated to  $\sqrt{\text{in}(I)}$  via the Stanley-Reisner correspondence,  $\Delta(\sqrt{\text{in}(I)})$ , is strongly connected.

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Since a Cohen-Macaulay simplicial complex is strongly connected, the above statement goes in direction of Herzog's conjecture ( $\text{in}(I)$  is square-free iff  $\sqrt{\text{in}(I)} = \text{in}(I)$ ).

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Since a Cohen-Macaulay simplicial complex is strongly connected, the above statement goes in direction of Herzog's conjecture ( $\text{in}(I)$  is square-free iff  $\sqrt{\text{in}(I)} = \text{in}(I)$ ). However, it is not difficult to produce examples of homogeneous ideals  $I \subset S$  such that  $S/I$  is Cohen-Macaulay but  $S/\sqrt{\text{in}(I)}$  is not (for a monomial ideal  $J \subset S$ , it is always true that  $\text{depth } S/J \leq \text{depth } S/\sqrt{J}$ , so there are more chances of being Cohen-Macaulay for  $S/\sqrt{\text{in}(I)}$  than for  $S/\text{in}(I)$ ).



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As a consequence, we get the following:

## Corollary

For any ASL  $A$ , we have that  $A$  is Cohen-Macaulay if and only if  $A_D$  is Cohen-Macaulay.

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In view of the above result it is natural to inquire in more details homogeneous ideals admitting a square-free initial ideal.

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Conjecture (Constantinescu, De Negri, [\\_](#), 2019)

Let  $I \subset S$  be a homogeneous prime ideal defining a smooth variety. If  $\text{in}(I)$  is square-free for some monomial order, then  $\Delta(\text{in}(I))$  is contractible.

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Though all known ideals defining smooth projective varieties and admitting a square-free initial ideal (Grassmannians, Veronese embeddings and Segre products of projective spaces... ) satisfy the above conjecture, it is mostly open; we could prove it in a few cases:



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Theorem (Constantinescu, De Negri, [\\_](#), 2019)

Let  $I \subset S$  be a homogeneous prime ideal defining a smooth variety. If  $\text{in}(I)$  is square-free for a degrevlex monomial order, then  $\Delta(\text{in}(I))$  is contractible.

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If  $\dim S/I = 2$ , that is  $C = \text{Proj } S/I$  is a projective curve, we can say something also for monomial orders different from degrevlex:

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Let  $I \subset S$  be a homogeneous prime ideal defining a smooth curve and assume that  $\text{in}(I)$  is square-free for some monomial order. Then:

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- $\Delta(\text{in}(I))$  has at least one leaf.
- If  $K = \mathbb{Q}$ ,  $\Delta(\text{in}(I))$  has no cycles or more than one cycles.

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Let  $I \subset S$  be a homogeneous prime ideal defining a smooth curve and assume that  $\text{in}(I)$  is square-free for some monomial order.

Then:

- $\Delta(\text{in}(I))$  has at least one leaf.
- If  $K = \mathbb{Q}$ ,  $\Delta(\text{in}(I))$  has no cycles or more than one cycles.

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !

