From Discrete Morse Theory to Combinatorial Topological Dynamics

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Classical Morse Theory

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Classical Morse Theory: maps $f : M \to \mathbb{R}$ give topological information about the manifold M

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Morse inequalities: If α_k is the number of critical points of index k, $\alpha_k - \alpha_{k-1} + \ldots + (-1)^k \alpha_0 \ge b_k(M) - b_{k-1}(M) + \ldots + (-1)^k b_0(M)$.

Discrete Morse Theory by R. Forman

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K a simplicial complex. A map $f: S_K \to \mathbb{R}$ is a discrete Morse function if for every $\sigma \in K$, $\sharp\{\tau \subsetneq \sigma | f(\tau) \ge f(\sigma)\} \le 1$ and $\sharp\{\tau \supsetneq \sigma | f(\tau) \le f(\sigma)\} \le 1$.

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Morse inequalities: α_k the number of critical simplices of index k, $\alpha_k - \alpha_{k-1} + \ldots + (-1)^k \alpha_0 \ge b_k(M) - b_{k-1}(M) + \ldots + (-1)^k b_0(M)$. Applications: Topological combinatorics, Topological Data Analysis, Biology, Computer Science, etc.



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For every
$$\sigma \in K$$
 we have that
 $I_{\sigma} = \sharp \{ \tau \subsetneq \sigma | f(\tau) \ge f(\sigma) \} \le 1,$
 $u_{\sigma} = \sharp \{ \tau \supseteq \sigma | f(\tau) \le f(\sigma) \} \le 1.$
Gradient vector field: is the map
 $V : \{ \sigma | I_{\sigma} = 0 \} \rightarrow \{ \sigma | u_{\sigma} = 0 \}$
which maps σ to τ if $\tau \supseteq \sigma$ and
 $f(\tau) \le f(\sigma)$. If no such τ exists,
 $V(\sigma) = \sigma$.

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 $\sigma_i \neq \sigma_{i+1}$ for each *i*.



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Gradient path: $\sigma_0 \prec \tau_0 \succ \sigma_1 \prec \tau_1 \succ \ldots \succ \sigma_n$ with $V(\sigma_i) = \tau_i$ and $\sigma_i \neq \sigma_{i+1}$ for each *i*. Morse complex: For each $p \ge 0$ let C_p be the free abelian group generated

by the critical *p*-simplices. Define ∂ : $C_{p+1} \rightarrow C_p$ by $\partial(\sigma) = \sum c_{\tau,\sigma} \tau$ where $c_{\tau,\sigma} = \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma(\sigma,\tau)} m(\gamma), m(\gamma) = \pm 1$ de-

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Example: $\mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{2} \mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{0} \mathbb{Z}$.



General definition of vector field in K: is map $V : A \to B$ for subsets $A, B \subseteq S_K$ such that i) for every $\sigma \in A$, $V(\sigma) = \sigma$ or σ is a codimension 1 face of $V(\sigma)$, ii) $A \cup B = S_K$, iii) $A \cap B = \text{Fix}(V)$.

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1. Continuous-time dynamical systems on finite sets are trivial. Discrete-time dynamical system generated by a map $S_K \rightarrow S_K$.

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3. What is a topology in the finite set S_K ?

Finite topological spaces: what is an interesting topology on S_K ?

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Closed sets=up-sets. Locally closed= intersection of an open and a closed subset = intervals of the poset.

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Connectivity: The Sierpiński space



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Do finite spaces have interesting homotopy features (non-trivial homotopy groups, homology)?

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