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# Holomorphic Curve Theories in Symplectic Geometry

## Lecture VI

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# Goal of lecture

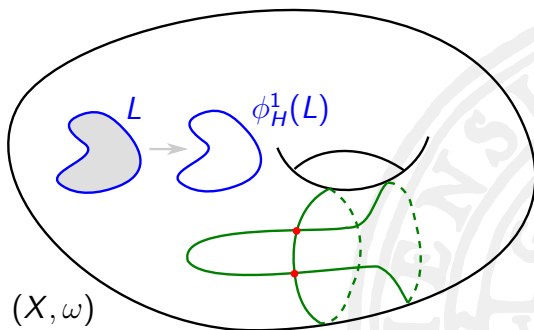
## Today:

- Definition of Floer homology in the exact case.
- Application: Obstructs Hamiltonian displaceability.
- Moduli space of discs with boundary punctures (Associahedra).



# Take-home Message

If a closed Lagrangian can be displaced by a Hamiltonian isotopy, then it admits a non-constant pseudoholomorphic disc.



**Figure:** The **blue** Lagrangian  $L$  is displaceable by a Hamiltonian isotopy and bounds a holomorphic disc; the **green** Lagrangian which is homologically essential is not Hamiltonian displaceable.



# Plan

- 1 Goal of lecture
- 2 Displaceability
- 3 The maximum principle
- 4 The Floer complex
- 5 Associahedra
- 6 References



# Displaceability

## Definition

We say that a compact subset  $C \subset (X, \omega)$  is *Hamiltonian displaceable* if there exists a Hamiltonian  $H: X \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  for which  $C \cap \phi_H^1(C) = \emptyset$ .

- Gromov showed in [Gro85] that a closed Lagrangian  $L$  which is Hamiltonian displaceable must admit a  $J$ -holomorphic disc with boundary on  $L$  for all tame  $J$ . Also see Chekanov's refinement [Che98].
- Floer later refined this to a chain complex in [Flo88], whose homology is a lower bound for

$$|L \frown \phi_H^1(L)| \geq 0$$

This complex is typically impossible, or at least difficult, to define in the presence of pseudoholomorphic discs with boundary on  $L$ .

# Displaceability

## Example

- Any compact subset  $C \subset (\mathbb{C}^n, \omega_0)$  is Hamiltonian displaceable; e.g. the translation  $x_i \mapsto x_i + t$  is generated by the Hamiltonian  $H = -y_i$ .
- For curves in surfaces, the question of Hamiltonian displaceability can be solved completely by *area considerations*.

## Remark

In order to deduce the existence of a  $J$ -holomorphic disc with boundary on a closed displaceable Lagrangian inside a non-compact symplectic manifold, one needs to control the behaviour of  $J$  outside of a compact subset



# Displaceability

## Why we need control at infinity:

- There are plenty of Hamiltonian isotopies, and they act on the space of tame almost complex structures:

$$(\phi_H^1)_* J := (D\phi_H^1)^{-1} \circ J \circ D\phi_H^1.$$

- We may use this action repeatedly to push some part of the interior of a  $J_0$ -holomorphic curve in  $\mathbb{C}^n$ ,  $n > 1$ , with boundary on a fixed Lagrangian out to  $\infty$  (make sure it leaves every compact subset).

## Conditions on $J$

To gain control at infinity of a noncompact  $(X, \omega)$  we will here assume that  $J \in \mathcal{J}^{tame}(X, \omega)$  satisfies the following property: there exists a smooth proper function  $f: X \rightarrow [-N, +\infty)$  such that:

Non-negativity of the “Levi two-form” on  $J$ -complex lines, i.e.

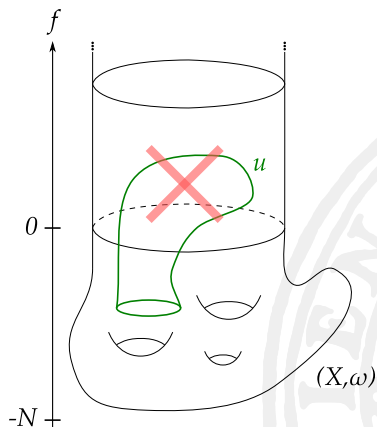
$$-dd^c f(v, Jv) \geq 0, \quad v \in T_p X,$$

holds for all  $p \in f^{-1}[0, +\infty) \subset X$ .

(This is a condition only on  $J$  outside of some compact subset.)

We will now derive a maximum-principle under these assumptions, that makes it impossible for  $J$ -holomorphic curves to partly escape to infinity.



Conditions on  $J$ 

## Conditions on $J$

### Proposition

Let  $u: (\Sigma, j) \rightarrow (X, J)$  be pseudoholomorphic, and  $\Sigma$  a connected (possibly open) Riemann surface whose boundary is contained inside  $f^{-1}[-N, 0]$ . If  $f \circ u: \Sigma \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  assumes a positive value, then  $f \circ u$  is constant.

### Proof (1/2).

It suffices to show that  $f \circ u$  is sub-harmonic in local coordinates near a point which maps to a positive value under  $f \circ u$ .

## Conditions on $J$

### Proposition

Let  $u: (\Sigma, j) \rightarrow (X, J)$  be pseudoholomorphic, and  $\Sigma$  a connected (possibly open) Riemann surface whose boundary is contained inside  $f^{-1}[-N, 0]$ . If  $f \circ u: \Sigma \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  assumes a positive value, then  $f \circ u$  is constant.

### Proof (2/2).

For a loc. def.  $J$ -holomorphic map  $u: (B_\epsilon^2, j_0) \rightarrow (X, J)$  we have

$$4\Delta(f \circ u)dx \wedge dy = 2i\partial\bar{\partial}(f \circ u) = -dd^c(f \circ u)$$

(see [Lecture I]). The assumption on the Levi form gives

$$4\Delta(f \circ u)dx \wedge dy(\partial_x, j_0\partial_y) \geq 0$$

## Conditions on $J$

- The above is clearly satisfied for  $\mathbb{C}^n$ : for  $J = J_0$  and  $f = \|\mathbf{z}\|^2/4$  we even have

$$-dd^c f = \omega_0.$$

- More generally: when  $(X, \omega)$  is symplectomorphic to a “half symplectisation”

$$((0, +\infty)_t \times Y, d(e^t \alpha))$$

outside of a compact subset (where  $(Y, \alpha)$  is a closed contact manifold) one can take  $f = e^t$  and  $J$  to be *cylindrical* in the same subset. (See next slide.)

### Example

The latter condition is satisfied for  $(T^*M, d\theta_M)$  for  $M$  closed; take e.g. the complement of any fibre-wise convex smooth domain.

# Cylindrical almost complex structures

## Definition

An almost complex structure  $J \in J^{comp}$  on the symplectisation

$$(\mathbb{R}_t \times Y, d(e^t \alpha))$$

is said to be *cylindrical* if

- $J$  is  $t$ -invariant,
- $J(\ker \alpha \cap TY) = \ker \alpha \cap TY$  (i.e.  $J$  preserves the contact planes  $\ker \alpha \subset TY$ )
- $J\partial_t \in TY$  and satisfies

$$d\alpha(J\partial_t, \cdot) = 0 \text{ and } \alpha(J\partial_t) = 1$$

(i.e.  $J\partial_t$  is the Reeb vector field on  $Y$  defined by  $\alpha$ ).

## Cylindrical almost complex structures

An almost complex structure  $J \in J^{comp}$  on the symplectisation

$$(\mathbb{R}_t \times Y, d(e^t \alpha))$$

which is cylindrical satisfies

$$-dd^c e^t = d(e^t \alpha) = \omega.$$

In other words, if  $(X, \omega)$  can be equipped with an almost complex structure which is “cylindrical outside of a compact subset,” then the aforementioned maximum principle is satisfied.

## The Floer complex: The vector space

For two closed Lagrangians  $L_0, L_1 \subset (X, \omega)$  that intersect transversely  $L_0 \pitchfork L_1$  (the intersection is a finite number of points) we define:

$$CF(L_0, L_1) = \bigoplus_{x \in L_0 \cap L_1} \mathbb{F} \cdot x$$

- The above canonical basis is graded under the presence of suitable additional data. (To be dealt with later.)
- The coefficients are taken to be in a suitable field  $\mathbb{F}$ ; in general one needs the “Novikov field”, i.e. power series of the form

$$\Lambda^R := \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} a_i T^{\lambda_i}, \quad a_i \in R, \lambda_i \in \mathbb{R}, \lim_{i \rightarrow +\infty} \lambda_i = +\infty \right\}.$$

# The Floer complex: The vector space

For two closed Lagrangians  $L_0, L_1 \subset (X, \omega)$  that intersects transversely  $L_0 \pitchfork L_1$  (the intersection is a finite number of points) we define:

$$CF(L_0, L_1) = \bigoplus_{x \in L_0 \cap L_1} \mathbb{F} \cdot x$$

- We can always take  $\mathbb{F} = \mathbb{Z}_2$  when both  $L_i$  are *exact* Lagrangians.
- If, in addition,  $L_i$  are equipped with *spin structures* we we can take  $\mathbb{F} = \mathbb{Q}$  (or even  $\mathbb{Z}$ ).



## The Floer complex: The vector space

From now on we will assume that  $L_i$  are closed, connected, *exact* Lagrangians and will take  $\mathbb{F} = \mathbb{Z}_2$ .

In particular  $(X, \omega) = (X, d\lambda)$  and  $\lambda|_{TL_i} = df_i$  for primitives

$$f_i: L_i \rightarrow \mathbb{R}.$$

### Definition

The *action* of an intersection  $x \in L_0 \cap L_1$  is

$$a(x) := f_0(x) - f_1(x) \in \mathbb{R}$$

- The primitives  $f_i$  of  $d\lambda|_{TL_i}$  are only determined by the embedding  $L_i \subset (X, d\lambda)$  *up to an unspecified constant*.
- Likewise, only *difference of action* between two generators is uniquely determined by  $L_i \subset X$ .

# The Floer complex: The differential

The differential

$$d: CF(L_0, L_1) \rightarrow CF(L_0, L_1)$$

is defined as follows.

- The differential  $d$  depends only on the choice  $J_t$  of a generic one-parameter family of tame almost complex structures on  $(X, \omega)$
- For  $x \in L_0 \cap L_1$  a basis element of  $CF(L_0, L_1)$  we define

$$d(x) = \sum_{y \in L_0 \cap L_1} \sum_{\substack{M \in \pi_0(\mathcal{M}_{J_t}(x, y)) \\ \text{index } M = 1}} y$$

where we proceed to describe the moduli space  $\mathcal{M}_{J_t}(x, y)$ .

# The Floer complex: The moduli space

The “moduli space of Floer strips from  $x$  to  $y$ ”

$$\mathcal{M}_{J_t}(x, y)$$

consists of those smooth maps

$$u: (\{s + it; t \in [0, 1]\}, \{t = 0\}, \{t = 1\}) \rightarrow (X, L_0, L_1)$$

which

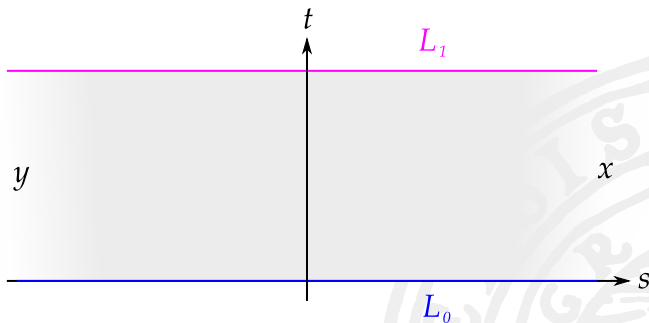
- are pseudoholomorphic for the domain-dependent complex structure  $J_t$  on  $X$ , i.e.

$$du(\partial_t) = du(j_0 \cdot \partial_s) = J_t \cdot du(\partial_s)$$

is satisfied.

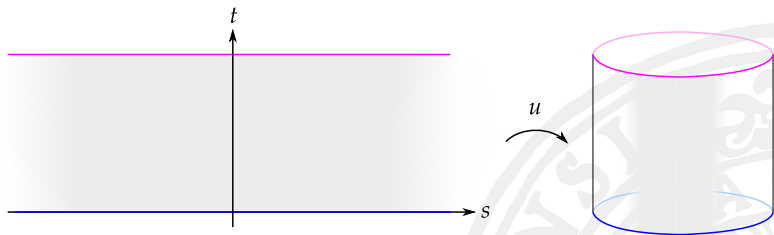
- have finite energy  $0 \leq \int_u \omega < \infty$ .
- $t \mapsto u_s(t) = u(s + it)$  converge uniformly to the constant map  $t \mapsto x \in L_0 \cap L_1$  (resp.  $t \mapsto y$ ) as  $s \rightarrow +\infty$  (resp.  $s \rightarrow -\infty$ ).

# The Floer complex: The moduli space



**Figure:** A Floer strip used in the differential. The input is  $x \in L_0 \cap L_1$  and the output is  $y \in L_0 \cap L_1$ .

# The Floer complex: The moduli space



**Figure:** A strip whose symplectic area is infinite; it is given as the universal cover of a holomorphic annulus with boundary on two disjoint Lagrangians.

# The Floer complex: The moduli space

- The reason why we need a  $t$ -dependence is to achieve transversality, so that the moduli spaces of Floer strips becomes a smooth manifold of the expected dimension i.e. the Fredholm index.
- In [EES07] Ekholm–Etnyre–Sullivan managed to get rid of this assumption in the exact case (for a carefully chosen almost complex structure).

# The Floer complex: The moduli space

- The requirement of finite symplectic area (energy) together with holomorphicity gives an a priori uniform convergence of the functions  $t \mapsto u_s(t) = u(s + it)$  to constants as  $s \rightarrow \pm\infty$ .
- One can get rid of the domain-dependence of the Cauchy–Riemann equation by considering instead  $\mathbf{J}$ -holomorphic sections over

$$X \times \{s + it; t \in [0, 1]\} \rightarrow \{s + it; t \in [0, 1]\}$$

with  $\mathbf{J}_{(pt,s,t)} = J_t(pt) \oplus j_0$ .

# The Floer complex: The moduli space

By Stokes' theorem, any  $u \in \mathcal{M}_{J_t}(x, y)$  satisfies

$$\int_u \omega = \int_u d\lambda = \mathfrak{a}(x) - \mathfrak{a}(y)$$

(Exactness is of course crucial here!) On the other hand, recall that pseudoholomorphic maps satisfy

$$\int_u \omega \geq 0$$

with equality if and only if  $u$  is constant.



# The Floer complex: The moduli space

- The moduli space of Floer strips has a linearisation which is elliptic, and hence there is a well-defined Fredholm index.
- The index of a constant strip in  $\mathcal{M}_{J_t}(x, x)$  which maps into a double point  $x \in L_0 \cap L_1$  is equal to zero.
- In the exact case, only the constant strip lives in the moduli space  $\mathcal{M}_{J_t}(x, x)$ ; the formula for its symplectic area in terms of the asymptotics yields  $\alpha(x) - \alpha(x) = 0$ ;
- The moduli space has a natural  $\mathbb{R}$ -action by reparametrisation  $s \rightarrow s + s_0$  which is free unless the strip is constant (by its asymptotic properties).

# The Floer complex: The differential

The differential

$$d: CF(L_0, L_1) \rightarrow CF(L_0, L_1)$$

is defined on a basis element  $x \in L_0 \cap L_1$  by

$$d(x) = \sum_{y \in L_0 \cap L_1} \sum_{\substack{M \in \pi_0(\mathcal{M}_{J_t}(x,y)) \\ \text{index } M = 1}} y$$

where the area formula (Stoke's theorem) implies that  $d(x)$  is a sum of generators action strictly lower than  $\alpha(x)$ .

# The Floer complex

## Theorem

*Floer [Flo88] When  $L_i \subset (X, d\lambda)$ ,  $i = 0, 1$ , are closed exact Lagrangian submanifolds and  $J_t$  is cylindrical outside of a compact subset then*

- ①  *$d$  is well-defined;*
- ②  *$d^2(x) = 0$ ;*
- ③ *A compactly supported Hamiltonian isotopy  $\phi_H^t$  of  $(X, d\lambda)$ , and choice of two-parameter family of almost complex structures  $J_{s,t}$ , induces a chain map*

$$\Phi_{H, J_{s,t}} : CF(L_0, L_1; J_{-1,t}) \rightarrow CF(L_0, \phi_H^1(L_1); J_{1,t})$$

*which induces isomorphism in homology; and*

# The Floer complex

## Theorem

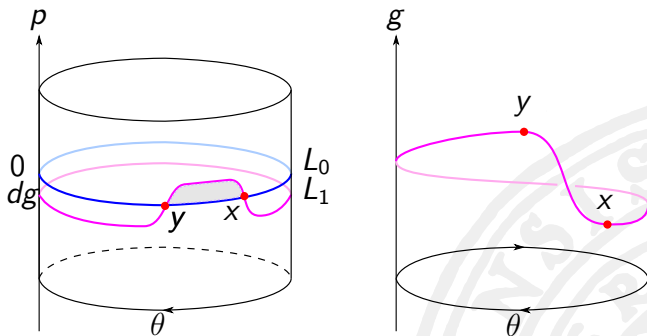
*Floer [Flo88] When  $L_i \subset (X, d\lambda)$ ,  $i = 0, 1$ , are closed exact Lagrangian submanifolds and  $J_t$  is cylindrical outside of a compact subset then*

- ④ *When  $L_1$  is obtained by perturbing  $L_0$  to the graph of  $dg \in \Omega^1(L)$  inside a Weinstein neighbourhood  $U \subset T^*L_0$  of  $L_0$ , then suitable choices yields an identification*

$$(CF(L_0, L_1), d) = (C^{Morse}(-g), \partial^{Morse}),$$

*of complexes with action filtration (R.H.S. is the Morse homology complex of  $-g: L_0 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  generated by  $\text{crit}(g)$ ).*

# The Floer complex: An example



**Figure:** The Floer homology complex  $CF(L_0, L_1)$  for  $L_0 = 0_M$  the zero section in  $(T^*S^1, dp \wedge d\theta)$  and  $L_1 = dg$  the exterior derivative of a Morse function  $g: S^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  with precisely two critical points. The two holomorphic strips contribute  $d(x) = y - y = 0$ .

# The Floer complex

## Corollary

- *When the homology  $HF(L_0, L_1)$  is nonzero, then  $L_0$  intersects any image of  $L_1$  under any compactly supported Hamiltonian isotopy.*
  - *Since the Morse homology always is non-zero, it follows that a closed exact Lagrangian is not Hamiltonian displaceable.*
- 
- Instead of proving isomorphism with Morse homology, the next lecture we will mimic the proof of the fact that “Morse homology is nonvanishing” to give a condition for when the Floer homology is nonvanishing.

# The Floer complex

Proof that  $d$  is well-def.

This follows from a version of Gromov's compactness theorem that we will formulate later:

- Since  $L_i$  are exact, the components of the moduli spaces  $\mathcal{M}_{J_t}(x, y)$  which consist of solutions of  $\text{index} = 1$  become compact zero-dimensional manifold after taking quotients by automorphisms (translations).
- For compactness, the fact that the energy of solutions in  $\mathcal{M}_{J_t}(x, y)$  are automatically bounded, is crucial. (Gromov's compactness needs an assumption of energy bound!)



# The Floer complex

Proof that  $d^2 = 0$ .

This follows from a compactness argument together with a gluing argument, that we will postpone until next time.

Roughly:

- Two strips  $u, v$  can be glued to a new solution  $u\#v$  if their asymptotics match;
- The Fredholm index is *additive* under this operation  
i.e.  $\text{index}(u\#v) = \text{index}(u) + \text{index}(v)$ ;
- After taking a quotient by reparam. we obtain a compact  $1 + 1 - 1 = 1$ -dimensional manifold; A compact one-dimensional manifold has an *even* number of boundary points!





# The Floer complex

Proof of invariance (1/3).

Today we define the chain map

$$\Phi_{H, J_{s,t}} : CF(L_0, L_1; J_{-1,t}) \rightarrow CF(L_0, \phi_H^t(L_1); J_{1,t}).$$

The chain-map property, as well as the property of being invertible in homology, will be postponed until next time.

We assume that

- $J_{s,t}$  is constant inside  $\{|s| \geq 1\}$ ;
- $\phi_H^s = \text{Id}_X$  for  $s \leq 0$ , and  $\phi_H^s = \phi_H^1$  for  $s \geq 1$ .

# The Floer complex

## Proof of invariance (2/3).

Consider a moduli space  $\mathcal{M}_{J,s,t}(x, y)$  is defined similarly as before; It consists of smooth maps

$$u: (\{s + it; t \in [0, 1]\}, \{t = 0\}) \rightarrow (X, L_0)$$

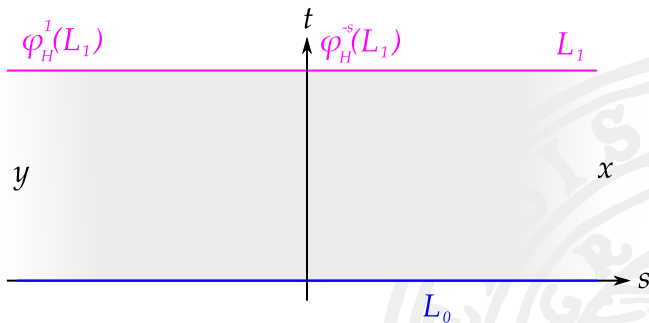
which

- satisfy the boundary condition  $u(s + i) \in \phi_H^{-s}(L_1)$
- satisfies the Cauchy–Riemann equation

$$du(\partial_t) = J_{-s,t} du(\partial_s)$$

- The asymptotic at  $s = +\infty$  (resp.  $s = -\infty$ ) is  $x \in L_0 \cap L_1$  (resp.  $y \in L_0 \cap \phi_H^1(L_1)$ ).

# The Floer complex: The moduli space



**Figure:** A strip used in the continuation map, the input is  $x \in L_0 \cap L_1$  while the output is  $y \in L_0 \cap \phi_H^1(L_1)$ .

# The Floer complex

Proof of invariance (3/3).

We finally define

$$\Phi_{H, J_s, t}(x) = \sum_{y \in L_0 \cap \phi_H^1(L_1)} \sum_{\substack{M \in \pi_0(\mathcal{M}_{J_s, t}(x, y)) \\ \text{index } M = 0}} y$$

on any basis element  $x \in L_0 \cap L_1$ , where  $y \in L_0 \cap \phi_H^1(L_1)$ .

Note that the components of the above moduli spaces that are counted all have expected dimension zero. (In the definition of the differential, the components had expected dimension one.) □

# The Floer complex

## Definition

The map

$$\Phi_{H, J_{s,t}} : CF(L_0, L_1; J_{-1}) \rightarrow CF(L_0, \phi_H^1(L_1); J_1)$$

between Floer complexes induced by the Hamiltonian isotopy  $\phi_H^t$  and path of almost complex structures  $J_{s,t}$  is called a *continuation map*.

## Exercise

The continuation map induced by  $H \equiv 0$  and  $J_{s,t} \equiv J_t$  is the *identity map*.

# Associahedra

For more operations in Floer homology, we need to introduce the configurations space of boundary punctures on  $D^2$ .

## Recall:

- There is a unique simply connected Riemann surface with boundary by the *uniformisation theorem*:  $(D^2, j_0)$ .
- The real Möbius transformations  $\text{Aut}(D^2)$  act transitively on triples of distinct cyclically ordered points in  $\partial D^2$ . (Any element in  $\text{Aut}(D^2)$  is determined uniquely by its image of such a triple.)

## Associahedra

Set  $p_0 = -1 \in \partial D^2$ . The space of configurations of  $d \geq 2$  additional distinct points

$$\iota: \{p_1, \dots, p_d\} \hookrightarrow \partial D^2 \setminus \{p_0\},$$

called *boundary punctures*, which are required to

- respect the order on  $(-\pi, \pi) = \partial D^2 \setminus \{p_0\}$ , i.e.

$$\iota(p_1) < \dots < \iota(p_d),$$

and where

- we identify two such configurations that differ by an element in  $\text{Aut}(D^2)$  (which thus fixes  $p_0$ ),

will be denoted by

$$\mathcal{R}_d = \text{Emb}^{\text{ord}}(\{p_1, \dots, p_d\}, \partial D^2 \setminus \{p_0\}) / \sim$$

# Associahedra

Since  $\text{Aut}(D^2)$  acts transitively on three cyclically ordered distinct points, one deduces that

$$\mathcal{R}_d \cong \mathbb{R}^{d-2}, \quad d \geq 2.$$

We can e.g. pick the unique representatives which satisfy

$$p_1 \mapsto 1 \text{ and } p_2 \mapsto \sqrt{-1}.$$

BUT, there are of course many other choices:  $\text{Aut}(D^2)$  is a non-compact group.

- Non-compactness of the space is a result of the fact that, in a sequence  $\{r_i \in \mathcal{R}_n\}_i$ , two or more points can collide.



# Associahedra

- Assume that  $\{r_i\}$  is a sequence of representatives of elements in  $\mathcal{R}_d$  which diverge.
- After acting by  $\phi_i \in \text{Aut}(D^2)$  with  $\phi_i(-1) = -1$ , we obtain a possibly different divergent sequence.
- For a suitable choice of sequence  $\phi_i \circ r_i$  of representatives, we may assume that a subsequence converges to an element in  $\mathcal{R}_{d'}$  for  $2 \leq d' \leq d$ . (Roughly speaking: the automorphisms  $\phi_i$  can be used to separate the limiting clusters of points, making sure that *at least* three clusters form.)

# Associahedra

There are many *different* choices of reparametrisations which can be used to extract a limit configuration. Here is one example:

## Exercise

For any  $j_0 \neq 0$  (resp.  $j_0 = 0$ ), there is a sequence  $\{\phi_i\}$ , where  $\phi_i(-1) = -1$ , under which

- $\phi_i \circ r_i(p_{j_0}) = 1$  (resp.  $\phi_i \circ r_i(p_{j_0}) = -1$ ),
- no sequence  $\{\phi_i \circ r_i(p_j)\}$  for  $j \neq j_0$  has 1 (resp.  $-1$ ) as a limit point,
- there are at least three distinct limit points.

I.e. we can “zoom in” on the  $j_0$ :th boundary puncture in the limit, and extract an element in  $\mathcal{R}_{d'+1}$  in which  $p_{j_0}$  is not forming a cluster of colliding points.

# Associahedra

Theorem (Devadoss [Dev99])

For a suitable metric on  $\mathcal{R}_d$  there is a natural compactification

$$\overline{\mathcal{R}}_d \cong K_d$$

by adding “nodal configurations”, where  $K_d$  denotes the  $d - 2$ -dimensional associahedron (a.k.a. Stasheff polyhedron). Moreover, the boundary faces of the polyhedron  $K_d = \overline{\mathcal{R}}_d$  of dimension  $\dim \overline{\mathcal{R}}_d - 1 = d - 3$  is given by the products

$$K_{d'} \times K_{d''} = \overline{\mathcal{R}}_{d'} \times \overline{\mathcal{R}}_{d''}$$

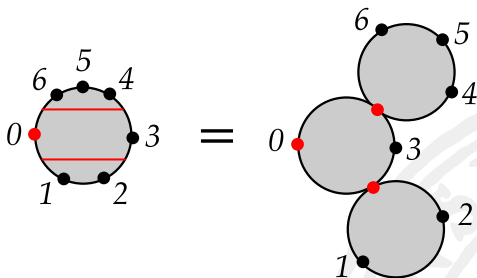
with  $d' + d'' = d + 1$ , where these products naturally correspond to nodal configurations.

# Associahedra

The metric on  $K_d$  gives the same notion of convergence as in Gromov's compactness theorem:

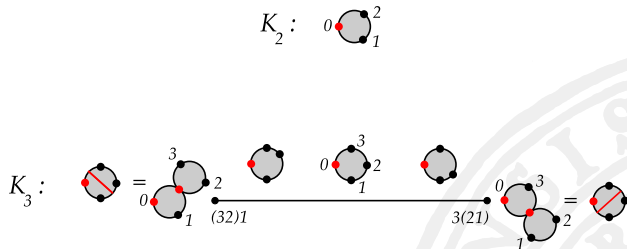
- There exists a nodal disc in the “Gromov sense”, whose every disc component has at least three boundary points which are either *nodes* or *boundary punctures*.
- All nodes and boundary punctures are distinct.
- There exists a sequence of diffeomorphisms  $\phi_i$  of  $D^2$  which identifies  $(D^2, j_0)$  with  $(D^2, \Gamma, j_i)$ , and where  $(D^2, j_i)$  together and its boundary punctures converge in  $C_{loc}^\infty$  to the nodal disc away from the curves  $\Gamma$ , and which respects the position of the boundary punctures.

# The Floer complex: The moduli space



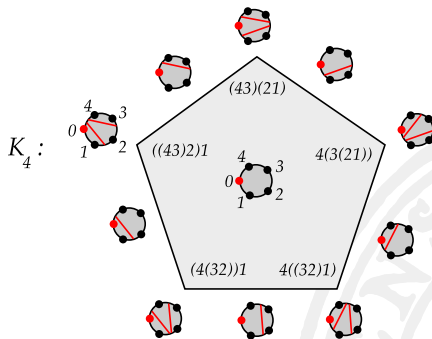
**Figure:** A nodal disc with boundary punctures which lives in  $\mathcal{R}_3 \times \mathcal{R}_3 \times \mathcal{R}_2$ . Note that each component has at least three boundary points which are either nodes or boundary punctures. In addition, nodes and boundary punctures are disjoint.

# Associahedra



**Figure:** The associahedra  $K_2 = \overline{\mathcal{R}}_2 = \{\star\}$  and  $K_3 = \overline{\mathcal{R}}_3 = I$ . The boundary vertices correspond to possible decompositions of the  $d$ -ary multiplication  $d \cdot (d - 1) \cdot \dots \cdot 1$  into sequences of binary operations.

# Associahedra



**Figure:** The associahedron  $K_4 = \overline{\mathcal{R}}_4$  is the pentagon. The boundary vertices corresponds to possible decompositions of the 4-ary multiplication  $4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2 \cdot 1$  into sequences of binary operations.

# Associahedra

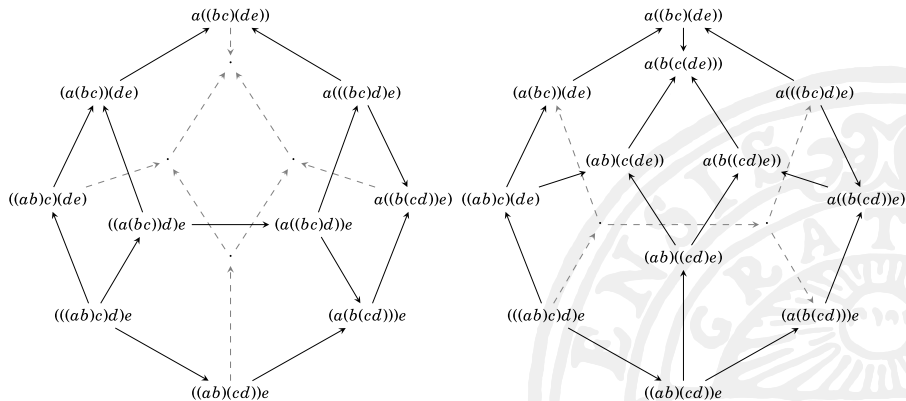







Figure: The space  $K_5$ . Source: Wikipedia





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