## From Discrete Morse Theory to Combinatorial Topological Dynamics

## Jonathan Barmak (part I) and Thomas Wanner (part II)

Universidad de Buenos Aires and George Mason University

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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  $\alpha_k$  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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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  $\sigma$  to  $\tau$  if  $\tau \supseteq \sigma$  and  
 $f(\tau) \le f(\sigma)$ . If no such  $\tau$  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*.



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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  $\partial$ :  $C_{p+1} \rightarrow C_p$  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:  $\mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{2} \mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{0} \mathbb{Z}$ .



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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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Thm: Two continuous maps  $f, g: X \to Y$  between finite spaces are homotopic iff there is a sequence  $f = f_0 \le f_1 \ge f_2 \le \dots = f_n = g$ , where  $h \le h'$  means  $h(x) \le h'(x)$  for every  $x \in X$ .

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

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