

Configuration spaces via factorization homology

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CGP

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Configuration spaces

For M a manifold of dimension d , consider the space of distinct k -tuples in M :

Definition

$$F_k(M) := \{(x_1, \dots, x_k) \in M^k \mid x_i \neq x_j \text{ for } i \neq j\}.$$

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This space has a natural action of the symmetric group S_k . The quotient by this action is the space of k unordered distinct points in M :

Definition

$$B_k(M) := F_k(M)/S_k$$

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$$B_k(\mathbb{R}^2) = K(Br_k, 1)$$

These spaces are useful and interesting.

History: Prehistory

Let's talk about $H_*B_k(M)$ and $H^*B_k(M)$. Isolated special cases have been known for some time.

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Theorem (Arnold, 69)

For $M = \mathbb{R}^2$, $H^*F_k(M)$ is the group cohomology of the pure braid group

$$\bigwedge_{1 \leq a < b \leq k} G_{ab} / (G_{ab}G_{bc} + G_{ac}G_{ab} + G_{bc}G_{ac} = 0)$$

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The spaces $B_k(\mathbb{R}^n)$ are homotopy equivalent to the “little n -disks” which had been used by Boardman-Vogt and May to study loop spaces. Their homology was determined by F. Cohen (and others?) in the early 70s.

History: Part I: McDuff 1975

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Typically X has a basepoint and one identifies these spaces by allowing points decorated by the basepoint to disappear. Then if $X = S^0$,

$$B(M; S^0) = \coprod B_k(M).$$

History, Part IIB: Bökigheimer-Cohen-Taylor 1989

Their calculation gave a *somewhat* explicit recipe to calculate the ranks of homology groups.

Results

For d odd and arbitrary even n ,

$$H_i B_k(M) \cong Gr_k \bigotimes_{\alpha \in H_*(M)} H_{nk+i} \Omega^{d-|\alpha|} S^{d+n}$$

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- in even dimensions, they have to twist their space by a sign representation of S_k , so the results only work for \mathbb{F}_2 .

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Theorem (Stability)

For $k \gg n$ the homology group $H_n B_k(M)$ (d odd or \mathbb{F}_2 coefficients) is independent of k .

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They were soon able to get the following:

Results

Explicit closed form numerical formulas for the ranks of $H_n(B_k(M), \mathbb{Q})$ for M a once punctured surface of genus g .

These results using the same methods and an application of the Serre spectral sequence.

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Method

They give a chain complex for calculating the configurations with values in an even sphere:

$$H^* B(M; S^{2n}) \cong (\text{Sym}(V), d)$$

for explicit V and d , by fitting these spaces into quasifibrations involving $B(D^2, S^{2n})$.

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V is spanned by the following basis:

Construction

$$\underbrace{w}_{\text{degree } 2n}, \underbrace{\tilde{x}_1, \tilde{y}_1, \dots, \tilde{x}_g, \tilde{y}_g}_{\text{degree } 4n+2}, \underbrace{\tilde{w}}_{\text{degree } 2n+1}, \underbrace{x_1, \dots, y_g}_{\text{degree } 2n+1}$$

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To calculate $H^* B_k(M)$ it was necessary to take configurations with values in a sphere of dimension equal to the order of the Thom space of d times the bundle $B_k(M, \mathbb{R}) \rightarrow B_k(M)$ and desuspend by k times that order.

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Feelings about this

This is so annoying! Wouldn't it be better to just be able to pick out the pieces from $(Sym(V), d)$ directly?

History, Part IVA: Félix-Thomas 2000

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$$\bigoplus H^* B_k(M)[qk] \cong \tilde{H}^* \left(\bigwedge \left(\underbrace{H_* M[q+d]}_{\text{weight 1}} \oplus \underbrace{H_*[M][2q+2d-1]}_{\text{weight 2}} \right), d \right)$$

where d goes from the weight 2 factor to the weight 1 factor by the coproduct in $H_* M$.

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Method

The spectral sequence is compatible with *ℓ -adic weight* and because we are working with smooth projective varieties, the *ℓ -adic weight* is fairly degenerate. This gives degeneration of the spectral sequence and allows us to recover the ring structure.

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For instance, stability is not at all clear from this picture.

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Theorem

If M is odd dimensional, with coefficients in \mathbb{Q} or \mathbb{F}_p with $p > k$,

$$H^* B_k M \cong \bigwedge^k H^*(M)$$

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For M a smooth projective complex variety, there is an isomorphism of algebras (in rational coefficients)

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with differential induced by the coproduct and a messy formula for the product that nevertheless only depends on the product on $H^ M$.*

Example

For $k \geq 4$,

$$H^* B_k(\mathbb{C}P^2) \cong \bigwedge (x, y) / x^3.$$

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Factorization homology: motivation

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- a 2-disk algebra is a BV_∞ algebra

Construction of factorization homology

Construction (inexplicit)

Factorization homology with coefficients in the d -disk algebra A

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We will basically only need formal properties of this definition.

Factorization homology in the free d -disk algebra

Let X be a space. Consider $C_*(X)$ as a chain complex with trivial $O(d)$ action. Then:

Theorem (Ayala-Francis)

$$\int_M \text{Free}(C_*X) \cong \bigoplus_k C_*(B_k(M; X))$$

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Corollary

With $X = \text{pt}$ we get:

$$\int_M \text{Free}(\mathbb{F}) \cong \bigoplus_k C_*(B_k(M)).$$

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So factorization homology gives

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This fact comes from a characterization of \int_M in terms of Koszul duality of $Disk_n$ -algebras and cochains on M due to Beilinson-Drinfeld.

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Next

Let's do some explicit calculations!