Juliette Bruce's Research Statement

My research interests lie in pure mathematics, more specifically, in algebraic geometry and commutative algebra. Broadly these fields make use of deep connections between geometry and algebra to study the solutions of systems of polynomial equations. While these are areas of pure mathematics the usefulness and prevalence of non-linear models means that algebraic geometry and commutative algebra have found applications in numerous other fields including: biology and phylogenetics [PS05], string theory [CDH+10], chemical reaction networks [Cra15], and data science [CEYZ19] to name a few. Further, I am passionate about promoting inclusivity, diversity, and justice in the mathematics community.

1. Syzygies in Algebraic Geometry

The main objects of study in algebraic geometry are the sets of solutions to systems of polynomial equations (e.g. $y - x^2 + 3x + 1 = 0, y - 2x = 0$), which are often called algebraic varieties. In particular, algebraic geometry seeks to build a dictionary between the geometry of the solution sets (i.e. varieties) and the algebra of the given equations.

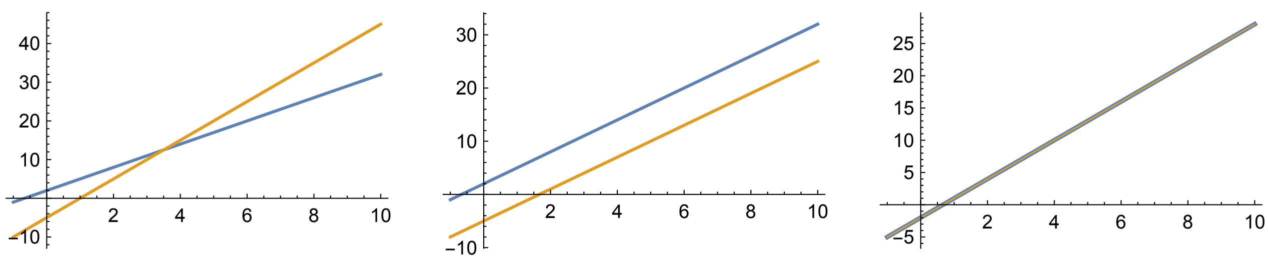

Figure 1. A toy example of this algebra-geometry diction is that one can analyze a system of two linear equations, $ax + by = 0, cx + dy = 0$, by considering the graphs of the corresponding lines. In particular, by studying the corresponding lines one can see that a system of two linear equations $ax + by = 0, cx + dy = 0$ has exactly one, zero, or infinitely many solutions depending on whether the corresponding lines intersect, are parallel, or are the same line.

My research focuses on furthering our understanding of how algebraic relations between polynomials affects the geometry of their solution sets. Given a collection of polynomials $f_1, f_2, \ldots, f_t$ a *syzygy* is another collection of polynomials $g_1, g_2, \ldots, g_t$ such that $f_1g_1 + f_2g_2 + \cdots + f_tg_t = 0$. Informally, a syzygy captures an algebraic relationship amoungst the polynomials $f_1, f_2, \ldots, f_t$. In my research I have sought to understand the syzygies of a number of of new and interesting examples.

The study of syzygies is formalized via commutative algebra in the following way. Given a graded module M over a graded ring R, a helpful tool for understanding the structure of M is its minimal graded free resolution. In essence, a minimal graded free resolution is a way of approximating M by a sequence of free R-modules. More formally, a *graded free resolution* of a module M is an exact sequence

$$\cdots \to F_k \xrightarrow{d_k} F_{k-1} \xrightarrow{d_{k-1}} \cdots \xrightarrow{d_1} F_0 \xrightarrow{\epsilon} M \to 0$$

where each F_i is a graded free R-module, and hence can be written as $\bigoplus_j R(-j)^{\beta_{i,j}}$. The module $R(-j)$ is the ring R with a twisted grading, so that $R(-j)_d$ is equal to R_{d-j} where R_{d-j} is the graded piece of degree $d - j$. The $\beta_{i,j}$'s are the *Betti numbers* of M, and they count the number of i-syzygies of M of degree j. We will use syzygy and Betti number interchangeably throughout.

Given a projective variety X embedded in $\mathbb{P}^r$, we associate to X the ring $S_X = S/I_X$, where $S = \mathbb{C}[x_0, \ldots, x_r]$ and I_X is the ideal of homogenous polynomials vanishing on X. As S_X is naturally a graded S-module we may consider its minimal graded free resolution, which is often closely related to both the extrinsic and intrinsic geometry of X. An example of this phenomenon is Green's Conjecture, which relates the Clifford index of a curve with the vanishing of certain $\beta_{i,j}$ for its canonical embedding [Voi02, Voi05, AFP+19]. See also [Eis05, Conjecture 9.6] and [Sch86, BE91, FP05, Far06, AF11, FK16, FK17].

1.1 Asymptotic Syzygies

Much of my work has focused on studying the asymptotic properties of syzygies of projective varieties. Broadly speaking, asymptotic syzygies is the study of the graded Betti numbers (i.e. the syzygies) of a projective variety as the positivity of the embedding grows. In many ways, this perspective dates back to classical work on the defining equations of curves of high degree and projective normality [Mum66, Mum70]. However, the modern viewpoint arose from the pioneering work of Green [Gre84a, Gre84b] and later Ein and Lazarsfeld [EL12].

To give a flavor of the results of asymptotic syzygies we will focus on the question: In what degrees do non-zero syzygies occur? Going forward we will let $X \subset \mathbb{P}^{r_d}$ be a smooth projective variety embedded by a very ample line bundle L_d. Following [EY18] we set,

$$\rho_q\left(X, L_d\right) \;\; := \;\; \frac{\#\left\{p \in \mathbb{N} \mid \mid \beta_{p,p+q}\left(X, L_d\right) \neq 0\right\}}{r_d},$$

which is the percentage of degrees in which non-zero syzygies appear [Eis05, Theorem 1.1]. The asymptotic perspective asks how $\rho_q(X; L_d)$ behaves along the sequence of line bundles $(L_d)_{d\in\mathbb{N}}$.

With this notation in hand, we may phrase Green's work on the vanishing of syzygies for curves of high degree as computing the asymptotic percentage of non-zero quadratic syzygies.

Theorem 1.1. [Gre84a] *Let $X \subset \mathbb{P}^r$ be a smooth projective curve. If $(L_d)_{d\in\mathbb{N}}$ is a sequence of very ample line bundles on X such that $\deg L_d = d$ then*

$$\lim_{d\to\infty} \rho_2\left(X; L_d\right) = 0.$$

Put differently, asymptotically the syzygies of curves are as simple as possible, occurring in the lowest possible degree. This inspired substantial work, with the intuition being that syzygies become simpler as the positivity of the embedding increases [OP01, EL93, LPP11, Par00, PP03, PP04].

In a groundbreaking paper, Ein and Lazarsfeld showed that for higher dimensional varieties this intuition is often misleading. Contrary to the case of curves, they show that for higher dimensional varieties, asymptotically syzygies appear in every possible degree.

Theorem 1.2. [EL12, Theorem C] *Let $X \subset \mathbb{P}^r$ be a smooth projective variety, $\dim X \geq 2$, and fix an index $1 \leq q \leq \dim X$. If $(L_d)_{d\in\mathbb{N}}$ is a sequence of very ample line bundles such that $L_{d+1} - L_d$ is constant and ample then*

$$\lim_{d\to\infty} \rho_q\left(X; L_d\right) = 1.$$

My work has focused on the behavior of asymptotic syzygies when the condition that $L_{d+1} - L_d$ is constant and ample is weakened to assuming $L_{d+1} - L_d$ is semi-ample. Recall a line bundle L is *semi-ample* if $|kL|$ is base point free for $k \gg 0$. The prototypical example of a semi-ample line bundle is $\mathcal{O}(1, 0)$ on $\mathbb{P}^n \times \mathbb{P}^m$. My exploration of asymptotic syzygies in the setting of semi-ample growth thus began by proving the following nonvanishing result for $\mathbb{P}^n \times \mathbb{P}^m$ embedded by $\mathcal{O}(d_1, d_2)$.

Theorem 1.3. [Bru19a, Corollary B] *Let $X = \mathbb{P}^n \times \mathbb{P}^m$ and fix an index $1 \leq q \leq n+m$. There exist constants $C_{i,j}$ and $D_{i,j}$ such that*

$$\rho_q\left(X; \mathcal{O}\left(d_1, d_2\right)\right) \geq 1 - \sum_{\substack{i+j=q \\ i \leq n,\, j \leq m}} \left(\frac{C_{i,j}}{d_1^i d_2^j} + \frac{D_{i,j}}{d_1^{n-i} d_2^{m-j}} \right) - O\begin{pmatrix} \textit{lower ord.} \\ \textit{terms} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Notice if both $d_1 \to \infty$ and $d_2 \to \infty$ then $\rho_q\left(\mathbb{P}^n \times \mathbb{P}^m; \mathcal{O}(d_1, d_2)\right) \to 1$, recovering the results of Ein and Lazarsfeld for $\mathbb{P}^n \times \mathbb{P}^m$. However, if d_1 is fixed and $d_2 \to \infty$ (i.e. semi-ample growth) my results bound the asymptotic percentage of non-zero syzygies away from zero. This together with work of Lemmens [Lem18] has led me to conjecture that, unlike in previously studied cases, in the semi-ample setting $\rho_q\left(\mathbb{P}^n \times \mathbb{P}^m; \mathcal{O}(d_1, d_2)\right)$ does not approach 1. Proving this would require a vanishing result for asymptotic syzygies, which is open even in the ample case [EL12, Conjectures 7.1, 7.5].

The proof of Theorem 1.3 is based upon generalizing the monomial methods of Ein, Erman, and Lazarsfeld. Such a generalization is complicated by the difference between the Cox ring and homogenous coordinate ring of $\mathbb{P}^n \times \mathbb{P}^m$. A central theme in this work is to exploit the fact that a key regular sequence I use has a number of non-trivial symmetries.

This work suggests that the theory of asymptotic syzygies in the setting of semi-ample growth is rich and substantially different from the other previously studied cases. Going forward I plan to use this work as a jumping-off point for the following question.

Question 1.4. *Let $X \subset \mathbb{P}^{r_d}$ be a smooth projective variety and fix an index $1 \leq q \leq \dim X$. Let $(L_d)_{d \in \mathbb{N}}$ be a sequence of very ample line bundles such that $L_{d+1} - L_d$ is constant and semi-ample, can one compute $\lim_{d\to\infty} \rho_q\left(X; L_d\right)$?*

A natural next case in which to consider Question 1.4 is that of Hirzebruch surfaces. I addressed a different, but related question for a narrow class of Hirzebruch surfaces in [Bru19b].

1.2 Syzygies via Highly Distributed Computing It is quite difficult to compute examples of syzygies. For example, until recently the syzygies of the projective plane embedded by the d-uple Veronese embedding were only known for $d \leq 5$. My co-authors and I exploited recent advances in numerical linear algebra and high-throughput high-performance computing to generate a number of new examples of Veronese syzygies. This data provided support for several existing conjectures, as well as led us to make a number of new conjectures [BEGSY18]. The resulting data has been made publicly available via SyzygyData.com as well as, a package for Macaualy2 [BEGSY19, M2].

Recently I have begun using similar computational techniques to compute the syzygies for Hirzebruch surfaces. Thus far, we have computed the syzygies in ~ 100 new examples. It is our hope that these examples will lead to new conjectures regarding the syzygies of Hirzebruch surfaces. In particular, we believe our data will be useful in addressing Question 1.4.

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