



Techniques for NRA in SMT

How to solve Nonlinear Real Arithmetic

... and a lot of references



Stanford University



Contains mostly other peoples work!

Contains joint work with: Erika Ábrahám, Florian Corzilius, James Davenport, Matthew England, Rebecca Haehn, Jasper Nalbach



Satisfiability modulo theories

Let's skip that...



SMT for Nonlinear Real Arithmetic

Here: Theory of the Reals



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Nonlinear Real Arithmetic:

- ▶ real variables $v := x_i \in \mathbb{R}$
- ▶ constants $c := q \in \mathbb{Z}$
- ▶ terms $t := v \mid c \mid t + t \mid t \cdot t$
- ▶ atoms $a := t \sim 0, \sim \in \{<, >, \leq, \geq, =, \neq\}$



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Linear arithmetic: essentially a solved problem.

Use Simplex (or sometimes Fourier-Motzkin)



Theory of the Reals in a nutshell

- ▶ **complete** (we have decision procedures that are sound and complete)
- ▶ **admits quantifier elimination** (quantifiers are conceptually easy)



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Some methods:

- ▶ [Tarski 1951] Tarski: first complete method, **non-elementary complexity**
- ▶ [Buchberger 1965] Gröbner bases: **limited applicability**, standard tool in CA
- ▶ [Collins 1974] CAD: **complete**, doubly exponential complexity
- ▶ [Weispfenning 1988] VS: **up to bounded degree**, singly exponential complexity
- ▶ [Gao et al. 2013] ICP: **heuristic interval reasoning**, incomplete
- ▶ [Fontaine et al. 2017] Subtropical satisfiability: incomplete **reduction to LRA**
- ▶ [Irfan 2018] Linearization: incomplete, **axiom instantiation**
- ▶ [Ábrahám et al. 2021] CDCAC: **conflict-driven** CAD
- ▶ and some more...



Overview

- 1 SMT for NRA
- 2 Linearization
- 3 Interval Constraint Propagation
- 4 Subtropical Satisfiability
- 5 Gröbner Bases
- 6 Virtual Substitution
- 7 Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition
- 8 Conflict-Driven Cylindrical Algebraic Coverings
- 9 Related topics



Linearization by example

[Irfan 2018] [Cimatti et al. 2018]

- ▶ Linearize atoms
- ▶ Solve
- ▶ Identify conflicts
- ▶ Instantiate axioms
- ▶ Add as lemmas
- ▶ Repeat



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$$x \cdot y \leq 0 \wedge x < 0 \wedge x + y = 0$$

$$\text{linearize: } z \leq 0 \wedge x < 0 \wedge x + y = 0 \quad z := x \cdot y$$

$$\text{atoms: } z \leq 0 \wedge x < 0 \wedge x + y = 0$$

$$\text{solve: } x \mapsto -1, y \mapsto 1, z \mapsto 0$$

$$\text{conflict: } 0 \neq -1 \cdot 1$$

$$\text{axiom: } z = 0 \Rightarrow (x = 0 \vee y = 0)$$

add axiom as lemma, proceed to next theory call

$$\text{atoms: } z \leq 0 \wedge x < 0 \wedge x + y = 0 \wedge z \neq 0$$

$$\text{solve: } x \mapsto -1, y \mapsto 1, z \mapsto -1$$

SAT!



Linearization

[Irfan 2018] [Cimatti et al. 2018]

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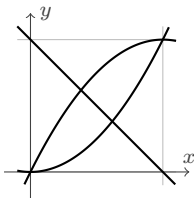
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Extensions:

- ▶ **Repair model** (if easily possible)
- ▶ Transcendental functions (\sin , \cos , ...)
- ▶ extended operators in general



Interval Constraint Propagation by example

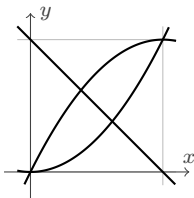


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$$x \times y$$



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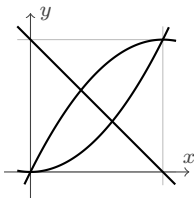
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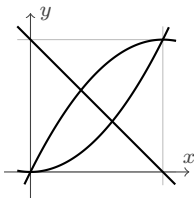
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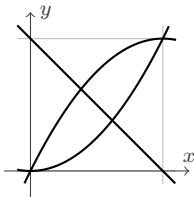
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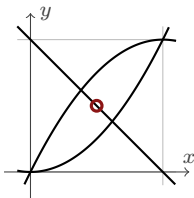
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$$\text{guess midpoint } (0.5, 0.5) \in (0, 1) \times (0, 1)$$

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Interval Constraint Propagation in a nutshell

[Benhamou et al. 2006] [Gao et al. 2013] [Scheibler et al. 2013] [Schupp 2013] [Tung et al. 2017]

Core idea:

- ▶ Maintain **interval assignment** (that represents the **current box**)
- ▶ Perform **over-approximating** contractions until
 - ▶ the current box is **empty** (UNSAT),
 - ▶ we can **guess a model** (SAT), or
 - ▶ we reach a **threshold**.
- ▶ When reaching a threshold
 - ▶ we terminate with **unknown** or
 - ▶ **split**: $x \in [0, 5] \rightsquigarrow (x < 3 \vee x \geq 3)$



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 - ▶ **split**: $x \in [0, 5] \rightsquigarrow (x < 3 \vee x \geq 3)$
- ▶ **Incomplete** solving procedure
- ▶ Used as **preprocessor** for other techniques [Loup et al. 2013]
- ▶ **Delicate tuning** of heuristics (splitting, thresholds, model guessing)



Subtropical satisfiability

[Fontaine et al. 2017] [Fontaine et al. 2018]

Core idea: reduce $p = 0$ to a **linear** problem in the **exponents of p**

- ▶ Assume $p(1, \dots, 1) < 0$ (otherwise consider $-p$)
- ▶ Find $x \in \mathbb{R}_+^n$ such that $p(x) > 0$
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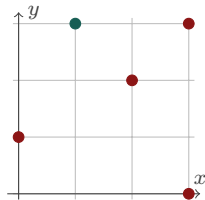
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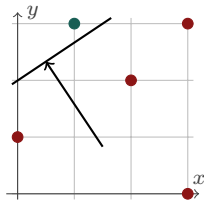
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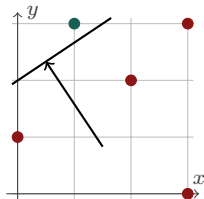
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Encoding in QF_LRA

Growing degree only impacts coefficient size





Gröbner basis

[Buchberger 1965] [Junges 2012]

- ▶ Canonical generators for a polynomial ideal
- ▶ For us: Normal form for sets of polynomials
- ▶ Maintains set of common complex roots
- ▶ The workhorse of computer algebra for polynomial equalities
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But: What about inequalities? How to go from \mathbb{C} to \mathbb{R} ?
see [Junges 2012] for some approaches.



Virtual Substitution

[Weispfenning 1988] [Weispfenning 1997] [Kořta et al. 2015] [Kořta 2016] [Nalbach 2017]

Core idea:

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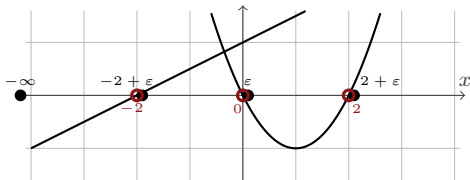
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What about **inequalities**?

- ▶ Construct test candidates for all **sign-invariant** regions in x
- ▶ Always try the **roots** and the **smallest values of the intermediate intervals**



- ▶ Introduces special terms $t + \varepsilon$ and $-\infty$



Virtual Substitution

Algorithmic core: a collection of substitution rules

Example: Substitute $e + \varepsilon$ for x into $a \cdot x^2 + b \cdot x + c > 0$:

$$\begin{aligned} & ((ax^2 + bx + c > 0)[e//x]) \\ \vee & ((ax^2 + bx + c = 0)[e//x] \quad \wedge \quad (2ax + b > 0)[e//x]) \\ \vee & ((ax^2 + bx + c = 0)[e//x] \quad \wedge \quad (2ax + b = 0)[e//x] \quad \wedge \quad (2a > 0)[e//x]) \end{aligned}$$



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Not always applicable:

- ▶ Solution formulas only exist **up to degree four**
- ▶ The above rule may introduce a **degree growth**
- ▶ **Efficient** if applicable
- ▶ [Košta et al. 2015] uses FO formulas, allows **arbitrary but fixed degrees** (needs precomputed substitution rules obtained by quantifier elimination)



Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition

The core idea: **sign-invariance** (or rather **truth-table equivalence**)

$$\text{sgn}(p(a)) = \text{sgn}(p(b)) \quad \forall p \in \varphi \quad \Rightarrow \quad \varphi(a) = \varphi(b)$$

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Abstraction: \mathbb{R}^n to **finite** set of cells, consider a single $a \in C$ per cell.



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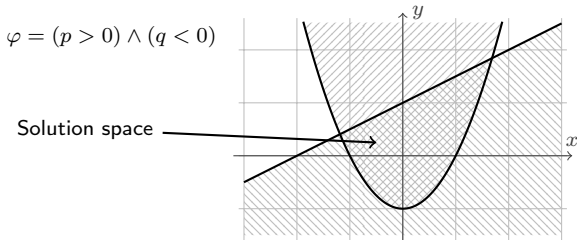
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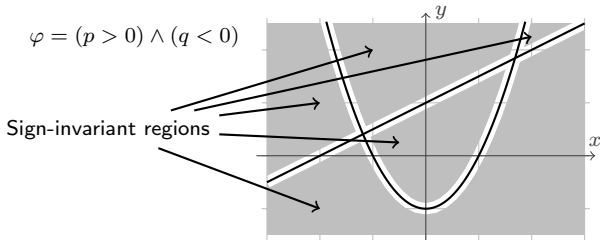
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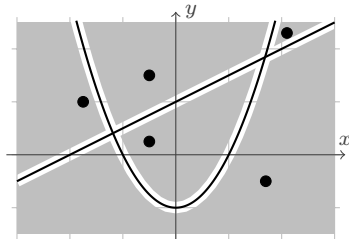
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$$\varphi = (p > 0) \wedge (q < 0)$$

Sample points





Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition

The core idea: **sign-invariance** (or rather **truth-table equivalence**)

$$\text{sgn}(p(a)) = \text{sgn}(p(b)) \quad \forall p \in \varphi \quad \Rightarrow \quad \varphi(a) = \varphi(b)$$

For our purpose, a and b are **equivalent**!

Construct a **sign-invariant decomposition** of \mathbb{R}^n :

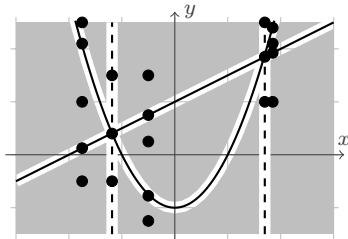
$$\text{cell } C \subset \mathbb{R}^n : \forall a, b \in C : \varphi(a) = \varphi(b)$$

Abstraction: \mathbb{R}^n to **finite** set of cells, consider a single $a \in C$ per cell.

$$\varphi = (p > 0) \wedge (q < 0)$$

Actual sample points

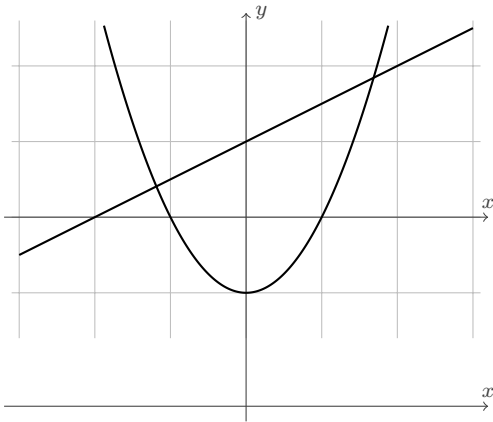
Arranged in **cylinders**





Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^2

Proceed **dimension-wise**: project to lower-dimensional problem, lift results.



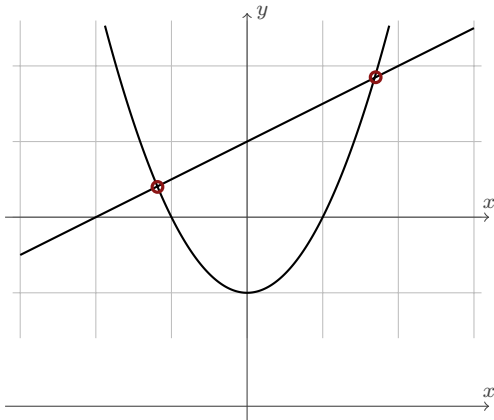


Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^2

Proceed **dimension-wise**: project to lower-dimensional problem, lift results.

Intuition

Critical points





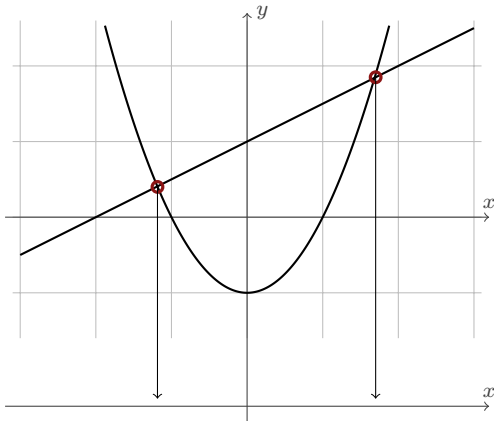
Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^2

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Intuition

Critical points

Project sample





Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^2

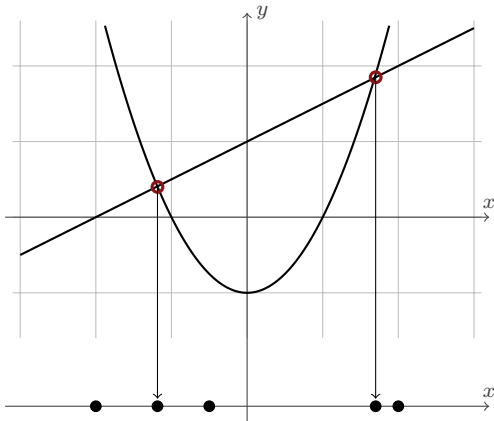
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Intuition

Critical points

Project sample

Solve 1-dim





Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^2

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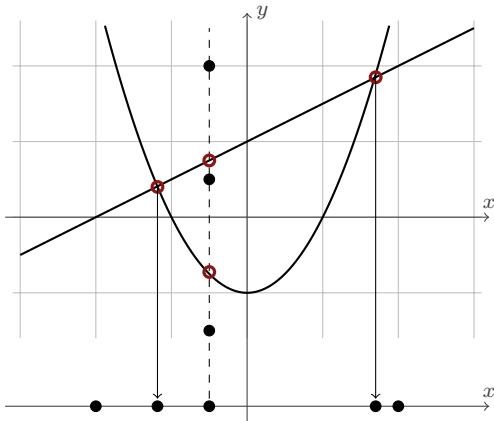
Intuition

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Project sample

Solve 1-dim

Lift to 2-dim





Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^2

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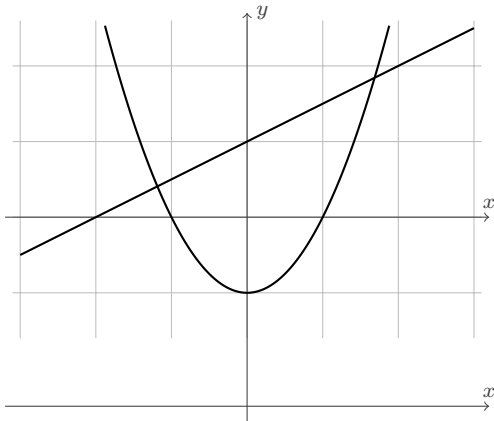
Intuition

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Implementation



Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^2

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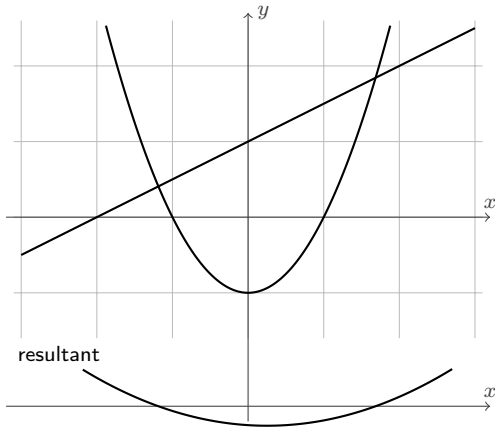
Project sample

Solve 1-dim

Lift to 2-dim

Implementation

Project polynomials





Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^2

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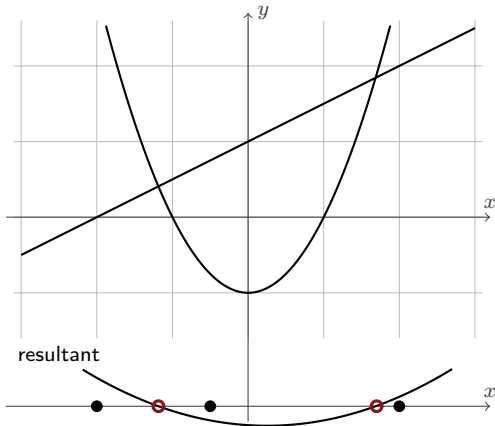
Intuition

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Project sample

Solve 1-dim

Lift to 2-dim



Implementation

Project polynomials

Solve 1-dim



Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^2

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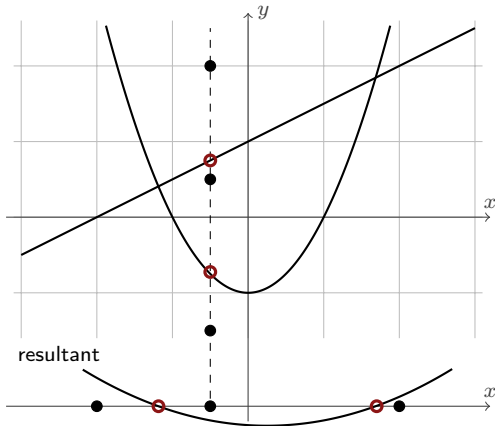
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Solve 1-dim

Lift to 2-dim

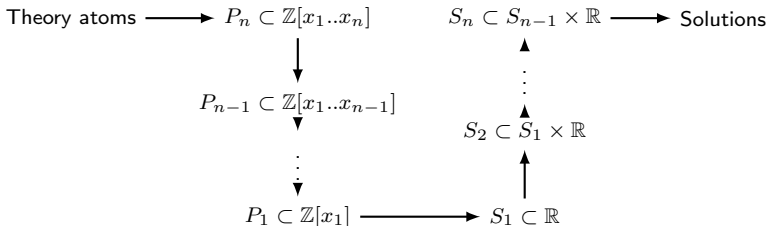


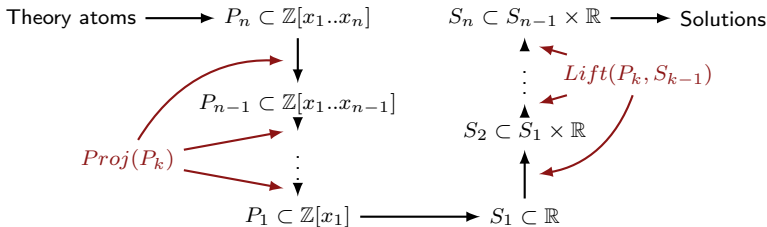
Implementation

Project polynomials

Solve 1-dim

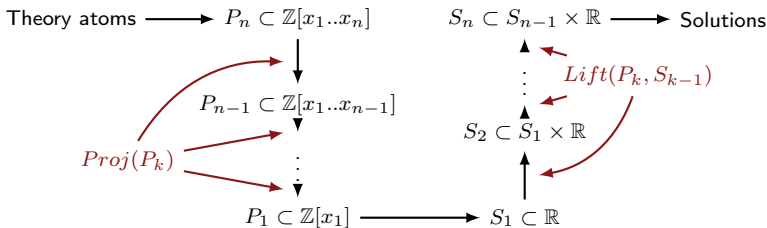
Lift to 2-dim

Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^n 

Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^n 

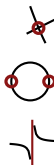


Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^n



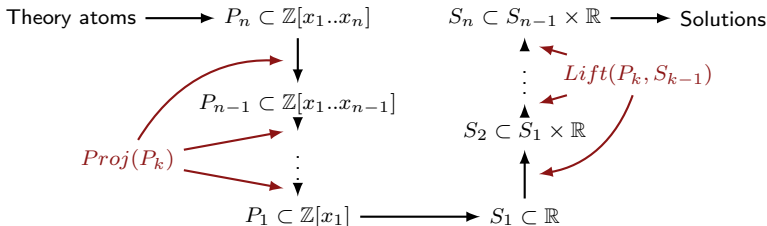
Projection:

- **Intersections** (resultants)
- **Flipping points** (discriminants)
- **Singularities** (coefficients)



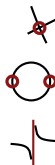


Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition in \mathbb{R}^n



Projection:

- Intersections (resultants)
- Flipping points (discriminants)
- Singularities (coefficients)



Lifting:

- **Substitution** $s \in S_k, p \in P_{k+1}$
 $p(s) \rightarrow p' \in \mathbb{Z}[x_{k+1}]^{***}$
- Isolate real roots of p'



Final notes on CAD

- ▶ Asymptotic complexity: $(n \cdot m)^{2^r}$ (r variables, m polynomials of degree n)
- ▶ Oftentimes way faster, but worst-case occurs in practice!
- ▶ Best complete method that is known and implemented. [Hong 1991]
- ▶ Active research:
 - ▶ Projection [McCallum 1984] [McCallum 1988] [Hong 1990] [Lazard 1994] [Brown 2001] [McCallum 2001] [McCallum et al. 2016] [McCallum et al. 2019]; [Strzeboński 2000] [Seidl et al. 2003] [Jovanović et al. 2012] [Brown 2013] [Strzeboński 2014] [Brown et al. 2015]
 - ▶ Lifting [Collins 1974] [Lazard 1994] [McCallum et al. 2016] [McCallum et al. 2019]
 - ▶ Equational constraints [Collins 1998] [McCallum 1999] [McCallum 2001] [England et al. 2015] [Haehn et al. 2018] [Nair et al. 2019]
 - ▶ Variable ordering [England et al. 2014] [Huang et al. 2014] [Nalbach et al. 2019] [Florescu et al. 2019]
 - ▶ Adaptions [Jovanović et al. 2012] [Brown 2013] [Brown 2015] [Ábrahám et al. 2021]
- ▶ Implementation needs groundwork: polynomial computation (resultants, multivariate gcd, optionally multivariate factorization), real algebraic numbers (representation, multivariate root isolation)



Conflict-Driven Cylindrical Algebraic Coverings

[Ábrahám et al. 2021]

Core idea: use **CAD techniques** in a **conflict-driven** way.

My intuition: MCSAT turned into a theory solver.



Conflict-Driven Cylindrical Algebraic Coverings

[Ábrahám et al. 2021]

Core idea: use **CAD techniques** in a **conflict-driven** way.

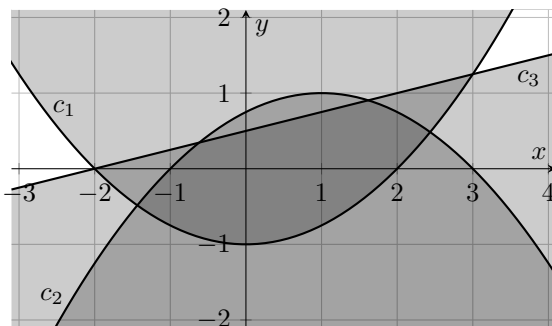
My intuition: MCSAT turned into a theory solver.

- ▶ Fix a **variable ordering**
- ▶ For the k th variable
 - ▶ Use constraints to **exclude unsatisfiable intervals**
 - ▶ **Guess** a value for the k th variable
 - ▶ Recurse to $k + 1$ st variable and obtain
 - ▶ a **full variable assignment** (\rightarrow return SAT)
 - ▶ or a **covering for the $k + 1$ st variable**
 - ▶ Use **CAD machinery** to infer an interval for the k th variable
- ▶ Until the collected intervals form a **covering** for the k th variable



An example

$$c_1 : 4 \cdot y < x^2 - 4 \quad c_2 : 4 \cdot y > 4 - (x - 1)^2 \quad c_3 : 4 \cdot y > x + 2$$

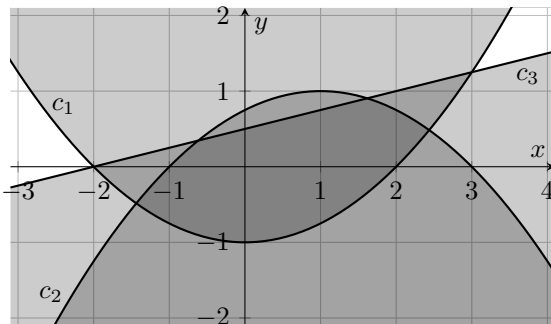




An example

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No constraint for x

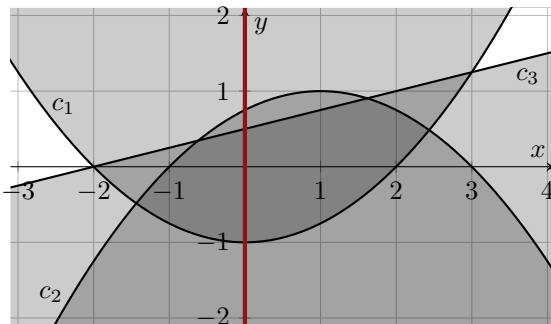




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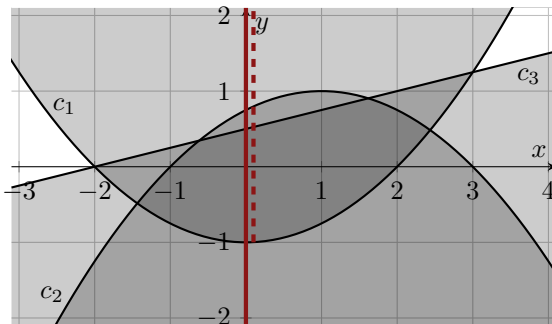
No constraint for x
Guess $x \mapsto 0$





An example

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No constraint for x

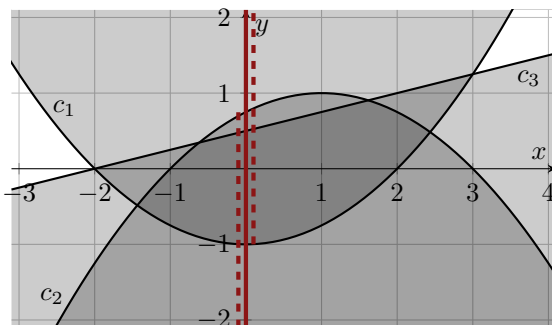
Guess $x \mapsto 0$

$c_1 \rightarrow y \notin (-1, \infty)$



An example

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No constraint for x

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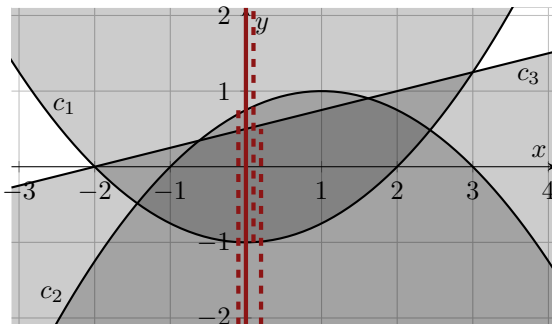
$$c_1 \rightarrow y \notin (-1, \infty)$$

$$c_2 \rightarrow y \notin (-\infty, 0.75)$$



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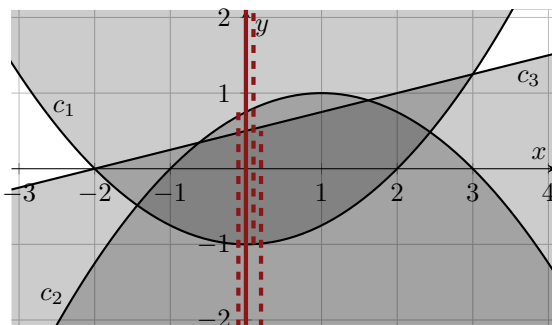
$$c_2 \rightarrow y \notin (-\infty, 0.75)$$

$$c_3 \rightarrow y \notin (-\infty, 0.5)$$



An example

$$c_1 : 4 \cdot y < x^2 - 4 \quad c_2 : 4 \cdot y > 4 - (x - 1)^2 \quad c_3 : 4 \cdot y > x + 2$$



No constraint for x

Guess $x \mapsto 0$

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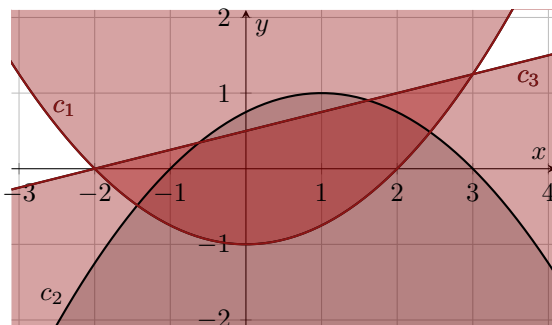
Construct covering

$$(-\infty, 0.5), (-1, \infty)$$



An example

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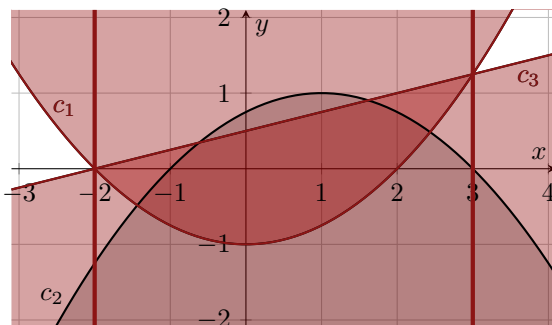
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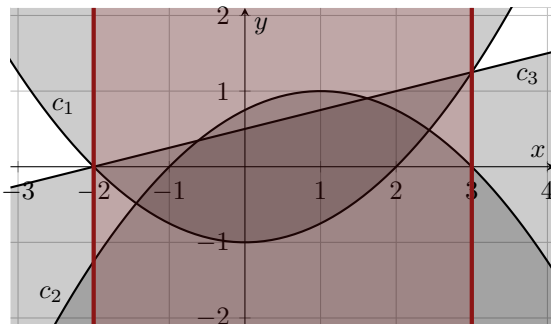
Construct interval for x

$$x \notin (-2, 3)$$



An example

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No constraint for x

Guess $x \mapsto 0$

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$$c_3 \rightarrow y \notin (-\infty, 0.5)$$

Construct covering

$$(-\infty, 0.5), (-1, \infty)$$

Construct interval for x

$$x \notin (-2, 3)$$

New guess for x



The main algorithm

```
function get_unsat_cover( $(s_1, \dots, s_{i-1})$ )  
  
   $\mathbb{I} := \text{get\_unsat\_intervals}(s)$   
  while  $\bigcup_{I \in \mathbb{I}} I \neq \mathbb{R}$  do  
     $s_i := \text{sample\_outside}(\mathbb{I})$   
    if  $i = n$  then return  $(\text{SAT}, (s_1, \dots, s_{i-1}, s_i))$   
     $(f, O) := \text{get\_unsat\_cover}((s_1, \dots, s_{i-1}, s_i))$   
    if  $f = \text{SAT}$  then return  $(\text{SAT}, O)$   
    else if  $f = \text{UNSAT}$  then  
       $R := \text{construct\_characterization}((s_1, \dots, s_{i-1}, s_i), O)$   
       $J := \text{interval\_from\_characterization}((s_1, \dots, s_{i-1}), s_i, R)$   
       $\mathbb{I} := \mathbb{I} \cup \{J\}$   
    end  
  end  
end  
return  $(\text{UNSAT}, \mathbb{I})$ 
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Real root isolation over a partial sample point



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Real root isolation over a partial sample point

Select sample from $\mathbb{R} \setminus \mathbb{I}$



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Real root isolation over a partial sample point

Select sample from $\mathbb{R} \setminus \mathbb{I}$

Recurse to next variable



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Real root isolation over a partial sample point

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Recurse to next variable

CAD-style projection:
Roots of polynomials restrict where covering is still applicable



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Real root isolation over a partial sample point

Select sample from $\mathbb{R} \setminus \mathbb{I}$

Recurse to next variable

CAD-style projection:
Roots of polynomials restrict where covering is still applicable

Extract interval from polynomials



The main algorithm

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Real root isolation over a partial sample point

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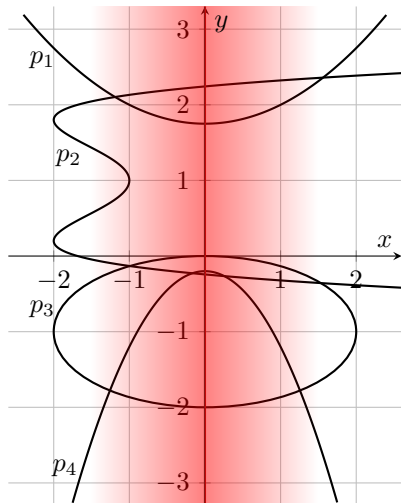
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Roots of polynomials restrict where covering is still applicable

Extract interval from polynomials



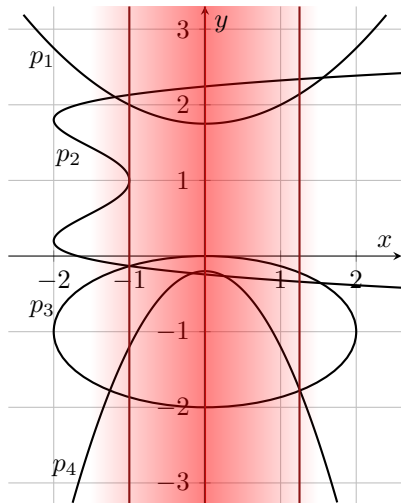
construct_characterization



Identify region around sample



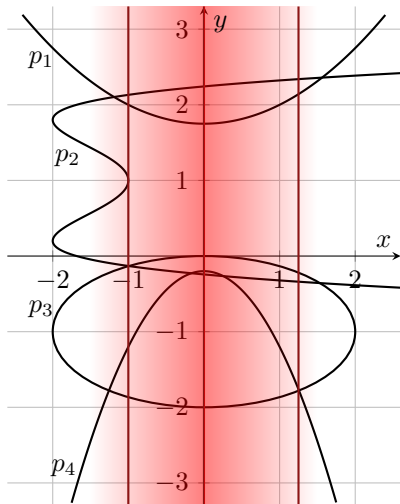
construct_characterization



Identify region around sample



construct_characterization



Identify region around sample

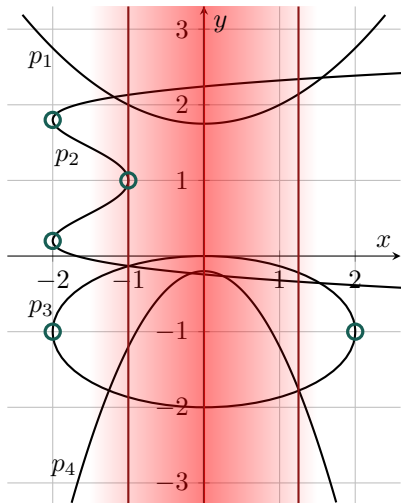
CAD projection:

Discriminants (and coefficients)

Resultants



construct_characterization



Identify region around sample

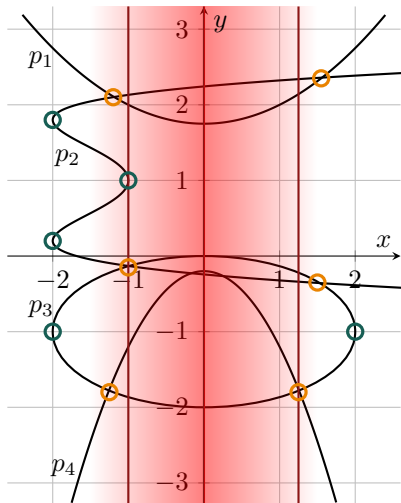
CAD projection:

Discriminants (and coefficients)

Resultants



construct_characterization



Identify region around sample

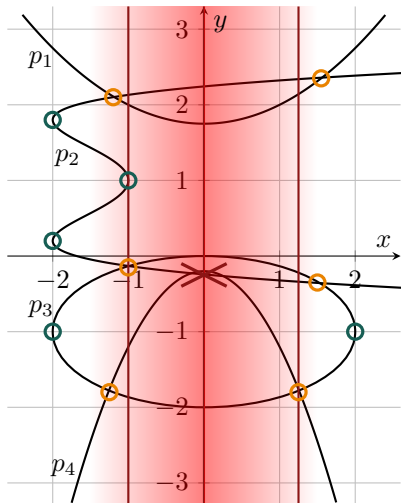
CAD projection:

Discriminants (and coefficients)

Resultants



construct_characterization



Identify region around sample

CAD projection:

Discriminants (and coefficients)

Resultants

Improvement over CAD:

Resultants between
neighbouring intervals only!



Other methods for (QF_)NRA

- ▶ Numerical methods [Kremer 2013]:
focus on **good approximation**, but no **formal guarantees**
- ▶ Tarski's method [Tarski 1951]:
theoretical breakthrough only, non-elementary complexity
- ▶ Grigor'ev and Vorobjov [Grigor'ev et al. 1988], Renegar [Renegar 1988]:
singly exponential, but impractical (see [Hong 1991])
- ▶ Basu, Pollack and Roy [Basu et al. 1996]:
"realizable sign conditions", **has not been implemented** (yet)
- ▶ Other CAD-based methods:
Regular Chains [Chen et al. 2009], NuCAD [Brown 2015]



Beyond QF_NRA

- ▶ Quantifiers:
 - ▶ Theory of the Reals **admits quantifier elimination**
 - ▶ CAD constructs φ' for $Q_x \varphi(x, y) \Leftrightarrow \varphi'(y)$
- ▶ Theory combination with Array, BV, FP, String, ... [Nelson et al. 1979]
- ▶ **Transcendentals**: extend linearization [Cimatti et al. 2018] [Irfan 2018]
- ▶ **Optimization**: CAD can **optimize for an objective** [Kremer 2020]
- ▶ **Integers**: Branch&Bound complements BitBlasting [Kremer et al. 2016]



Beyond CDCL(T)-style SMT

Other approaches for (QF_)NRA:

► MCSAT / NLSAT:

- Theory model construction integrated in the core solver
- SMT-RAT, yices, z3 [Jovanović et al. 2012] [Jovanović et al. 2013] [Moura et al. 2013] [Nalbach et al. 2019] [Kremer 2020]

► CAD is a **stand-alone tool**:

- Maple / RegularChains [Chen et al. 2009]
- Mathematica [Strzeboński 2014]
- QEPCAD B [Brown 2003]
- Redlog / Reduce [Dolzmann et al. 1997]

These can be **integrated as theory solvers** [Fontaine et al. 2018] [Kremer 2018]



cvc5

[Barrett et al. 2011]

- ▶ SMT solver developed at Stanford University & University of Iowa
- ▶ Supports a wide variety of theories (and their combinations)
Arithmetic (linear, non-linear, transcendentals), Arrays, Bags & Sets,
Bit-vectors, Datatypes, Floating-point, Separation logic, Strings,
Uninterpreted functions
- ▶ Also Quantifiers, Syntax-Guided Synthesis [Reynolds et al. 2019]



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obtain cvc5 from <https://cvc4.github.io/downloads.html> or
<https://github.com/cvc5/cvc5>



cvc5 for QF_NRA

- ▶ Linearization (`--nl-ext`)
- ▶ CDCAC (`--nl-cad`)
- ▶ Also: ICP-style propagations (`--nl-icp`)

Default strategy: CDCAC & selected parts of linearization



cvc5 for QF_NRA

- ▶ Linearization (`--nl-ext`)
- ▶ CDCAC (`--nl-cad`)
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Default strategy: CDCAC & selected parts of linearization

in progress / future work:

- ▶ Better **integration** of Linearization, CDCAC and ICP
- ▶ **Preprocessing** for nonlinear arithmetic
- ▶ Add **proofs**
- ▶ Improve **incrementality** (in particular CDCAC)
- ▶ Improvements **within CDCAC** (heuristics, factorization, ...)



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