# Persistent Homology: Intro

Tao Hou, University of Oregon

### Outline for studying persistent homology

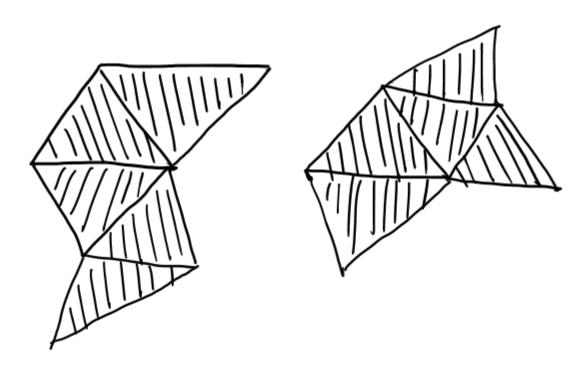
- 1. Intro to persistent homology
  - Build intuitions of persistent homology: what it does, what it produces
- 2. Formalizing persistent homology
  - Introduce its input (filtration) and study an algorithm for computation
- 3. Different ways for building filtrations
  - Vietoris-Rips filtration, sub-levelset filtration
  - Cubical complexes (for images)
- 4. Interpretation and stability of persistence diagram

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- Ex: The homology basis for the 1-cycles in the below simplicial complex contains the single red 1-cycle.
  - So that we can use the red cycle to represent the 1-dimensional "homological features" of the space

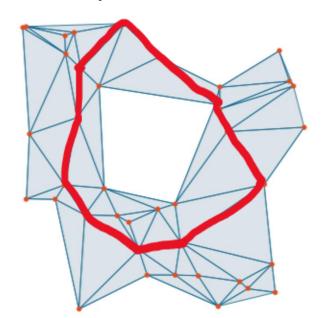
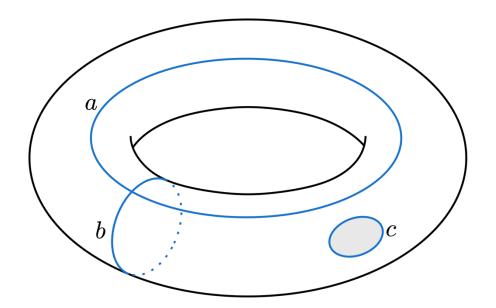


Image source: Yan et al. Persistence Landscape based Topological Data Analysis for Personalized Arrhythmia Classification

- We know now that, given a topological space (e.g., a simplicial complex), we can use homology (e.g., *Betti number* or *homology basis*) to infer the shape of the data in different dimensions
- Ex: The 1-dimensional homological features of a torus can be characterized by two cycles:
  - a (longitude) and b (meridian)



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- But is there any problem?
- We shall look at at least two problems with it

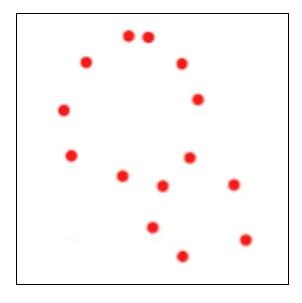


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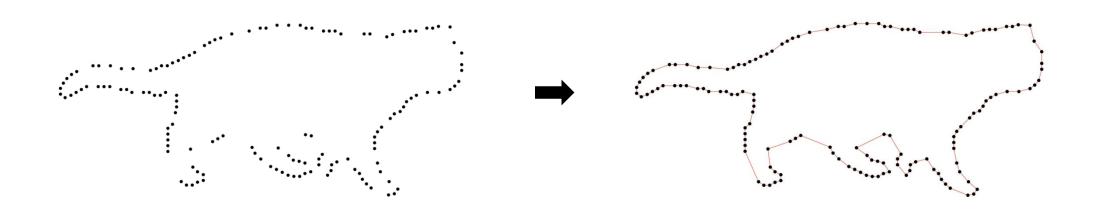
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- Simplicial complex is "highly structured" data, while in practice we don't have the luxury of always having data rich structure
- Typically, data come in as "unstructured" (e.g., point clouds)
- For the right point cloud (which is unstructured), everyone could see that it consists of two rings (1-cycles)
- But we have to construct a simplicial complex from the point cloud first to infer this information



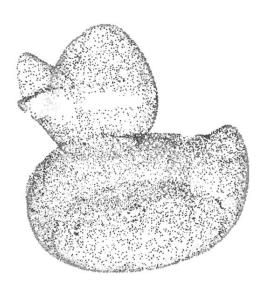
- There are mature methods on reconstruction from point clouds.
- In 2D:



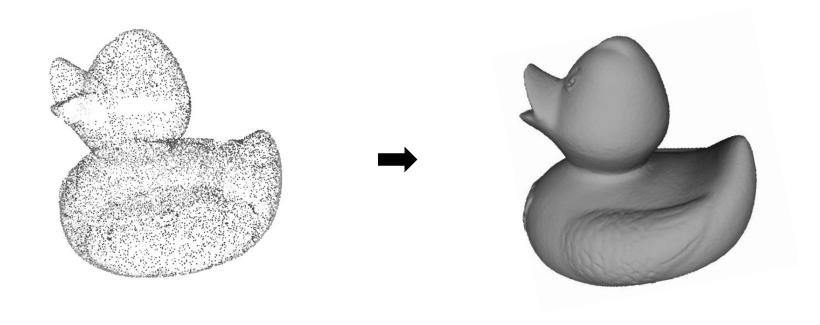
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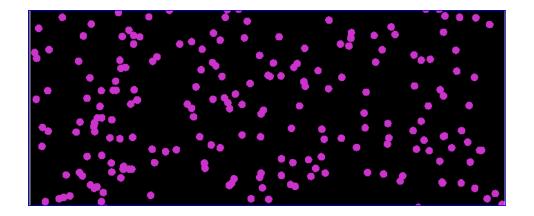
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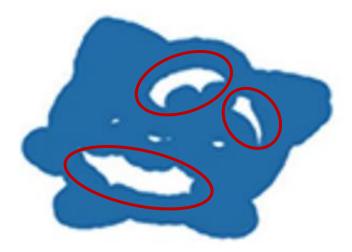
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- But there still are problems:
  - 1. The reconstructions process can be costly
  - 2. There are probably more information in the original unstructured data than is reconstructed
  - 3. Reconstruction from point clouds which are not nicely shaped is very hard if at all possible



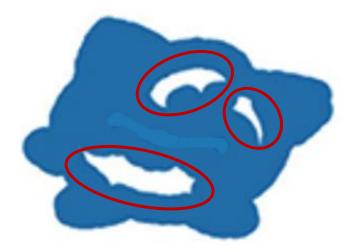
• In the following space, there are seven 1-dimensional holes (i.e., homology basis contains seven non-trivial 1-cycles)



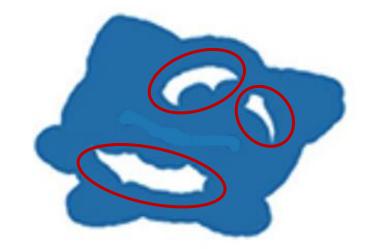
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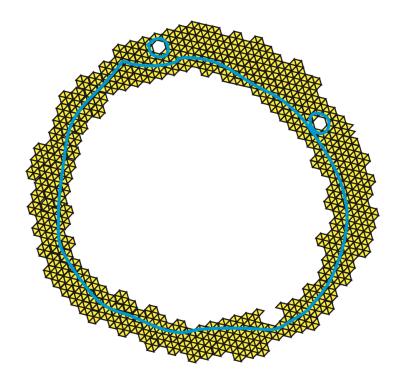
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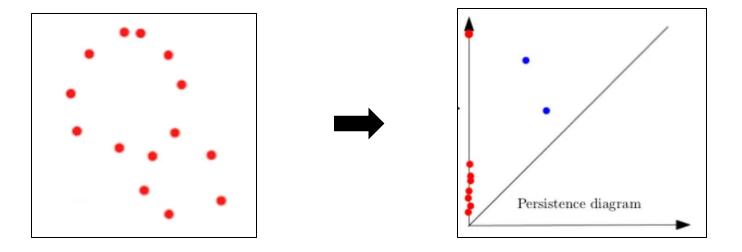
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- i.e., with some "perturbation" on the data, the four small holes could simply disappear
- But using homology basis we could not differentiate the "more significant holes" from the "less significant ones"



- Similarly, in the following space, there are three 1-dimensional holes, but there is clearly a "more significant" one and two "less significant" ones which also be some artifacts
- Again, using just homology basis we could not differentiate them

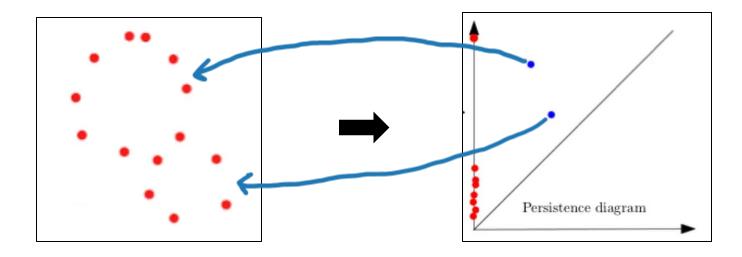


• Solving problem 1:



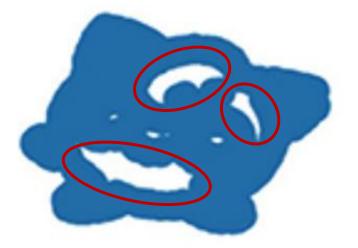
- For the point cloud, persistent homology produces a "topological signature" called persistence diagram
- In the diagram, the **blue dots** represents the two rings, thus correctly inferring the topological structure of the point cloud

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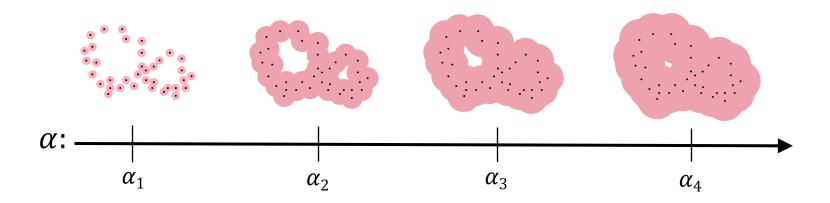


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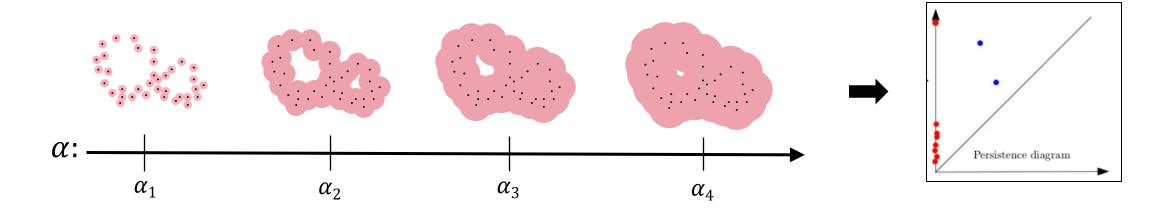
• Solving problem 2:



• For the above shape, its **persistence diagram** provides a measure of the "size" (i.e., "significance") of the 1-dimensional holes so that we can differentiate the three more significant ones from the remaining



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- Given this, it produces a persistence diagram, which is a robust (i.e., stable) "topological signature" that captures the multi-scale topological features (aka. holes) of the data in arbitrary dimensions

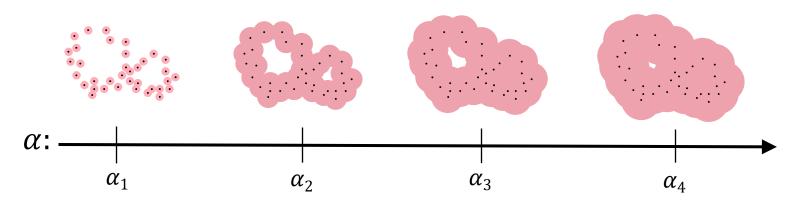
#### Idea:

• The growing space can be more formally defined as follows:

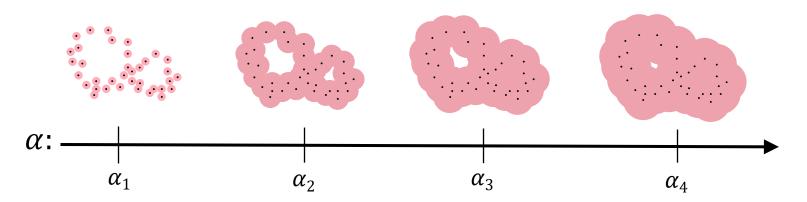
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  - We let a value  $\alpha$  ranges, say, from 0 to  $\infty$

*α*:\_\_\_\_\_\_

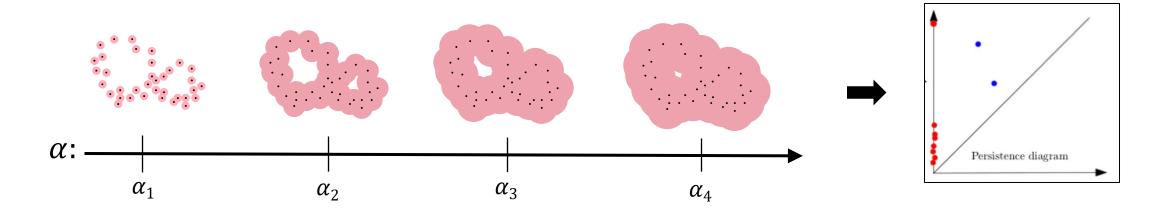
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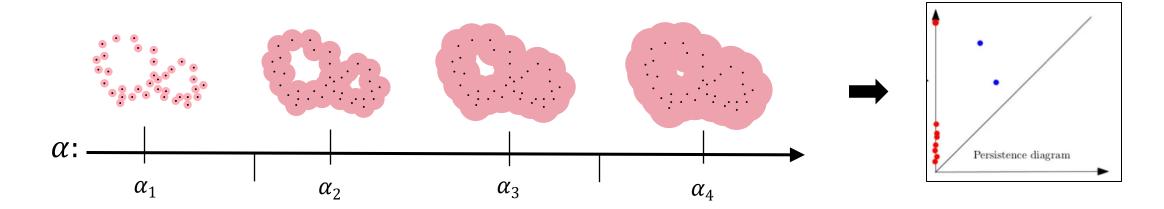


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  - The topological space grows as  $\alpha$  increases from 0 to  $\infty$
- Then, as  $\alpha$  increase, we track the changes of the homology features of the corresponding spaces

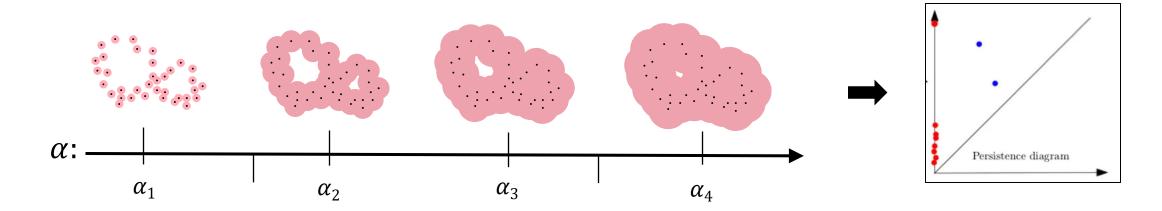


#### Examples:

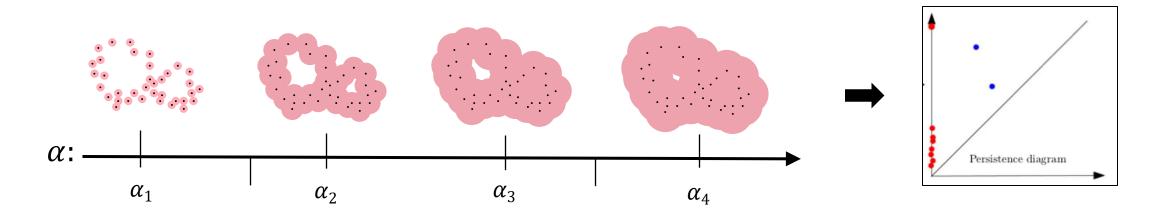
- https://gjkoplik.github.io/pers-hom-examples/0d\_pers\_2d\_data\_widget.html
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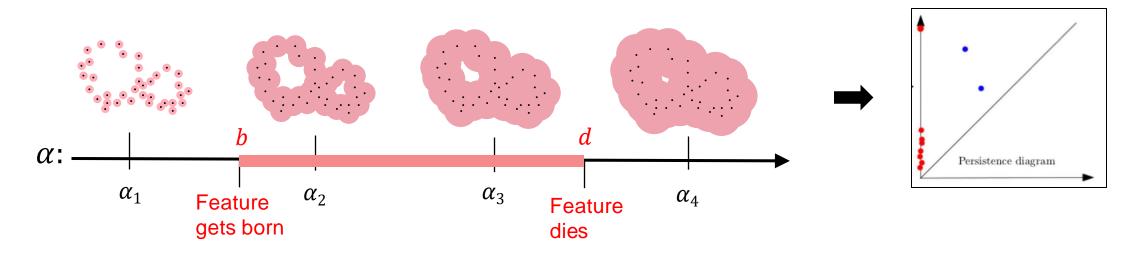
• **Definition**: A *persistence diagram (PD)* is a set of points on the 2D plane above the diagonal such that:



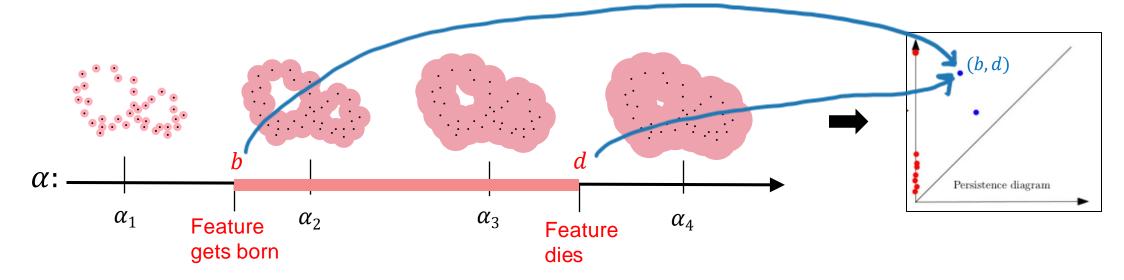
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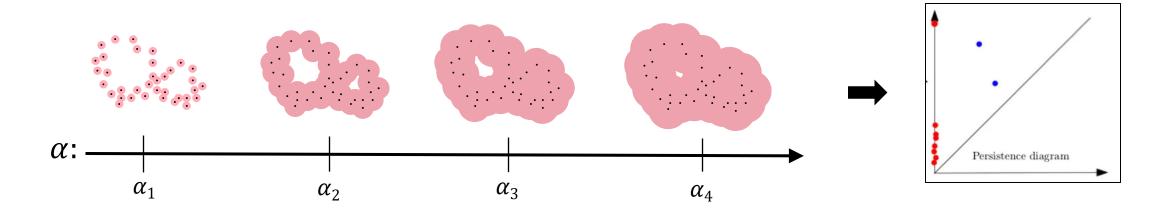
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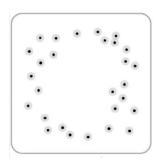


- Notice that homology features / holes are in different dimensions
- The PD where points corresponding to d-dimensional holes is also called the d-dimensional / d-th PD which is typically denoted as  $PD_d$
- And of course, we could also have the PD in all dimensions (this is the PD by default)

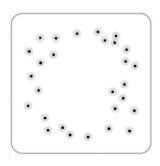
# Persistent homology: History

- Persistent homology is proposed roughly around 2000 (or earlier) by several works
- The following is by no means a comprehensive list of works:
  - Edelsbrunner, Letscher and Zomorodian, 2002. Topological persistence and simplification.
  - Zomorodian, A. and Carlsson, G., 2004, June. Computing persistent homology.
  - Carlsson, G., 2009. Topology and data.
  - Ghrist, R., 2008. Barcodes: the persistent topology of data.
  - Singh, G., Mémoli, F. and Carlsson, G.E., 2007. Topological methods for the analysis of high dimensional data sets and 3d object recognition.

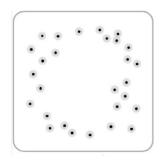
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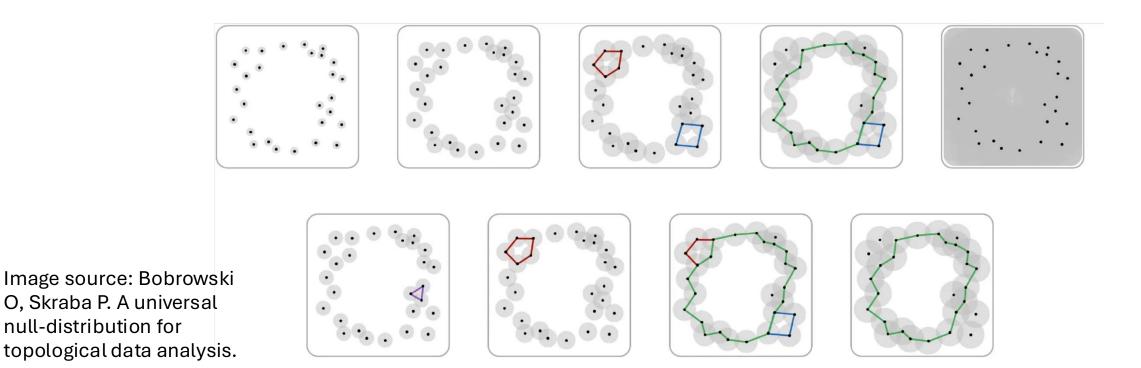
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- For this, we need to build a meaningful topological space



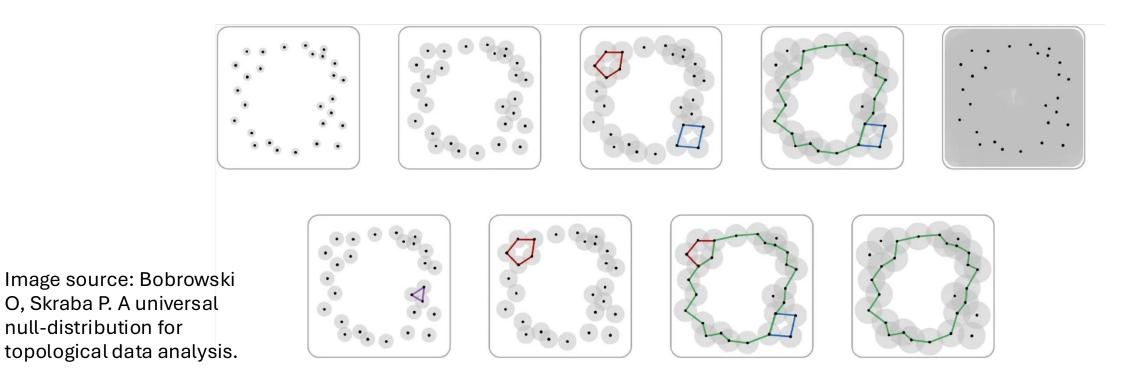
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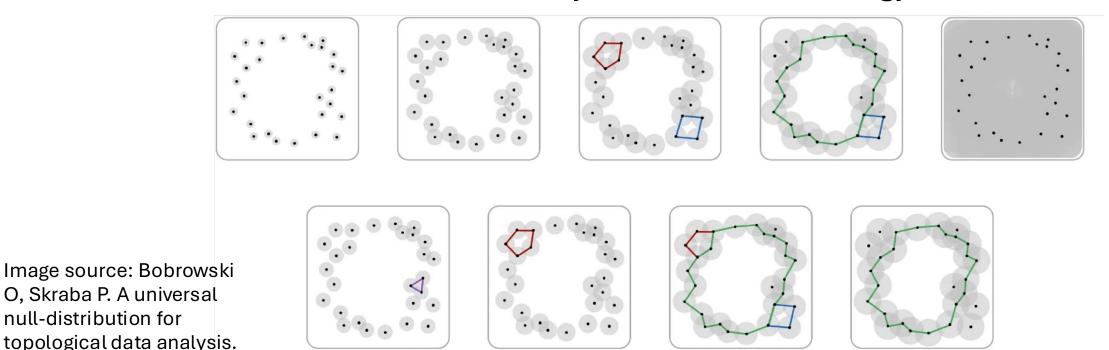
- We try to infer the homology for the following point cloud data
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- Our strategy is to connect the dots by increasing their size, as before
- Notice that there are different choices of the size



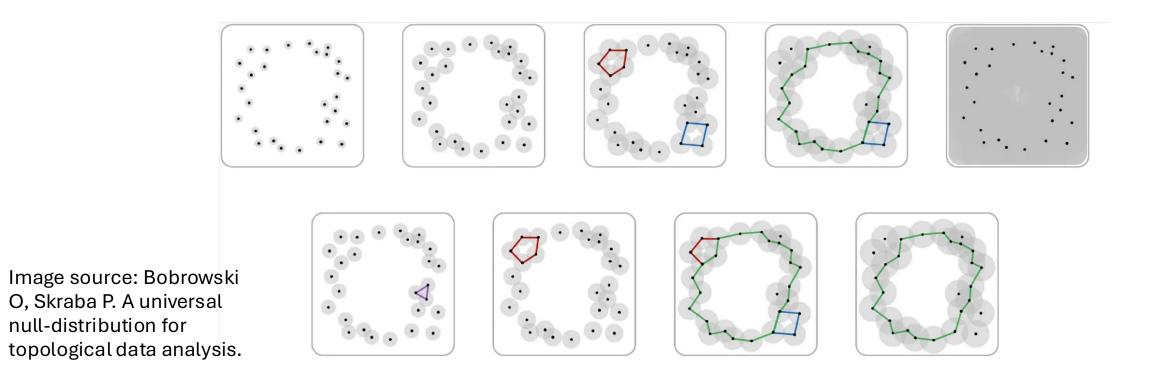
• Technically, a point does not have "size", so what we are actually doing here is that we put a 2-dimensional ball around each point, where all such balls have the **same** radius.



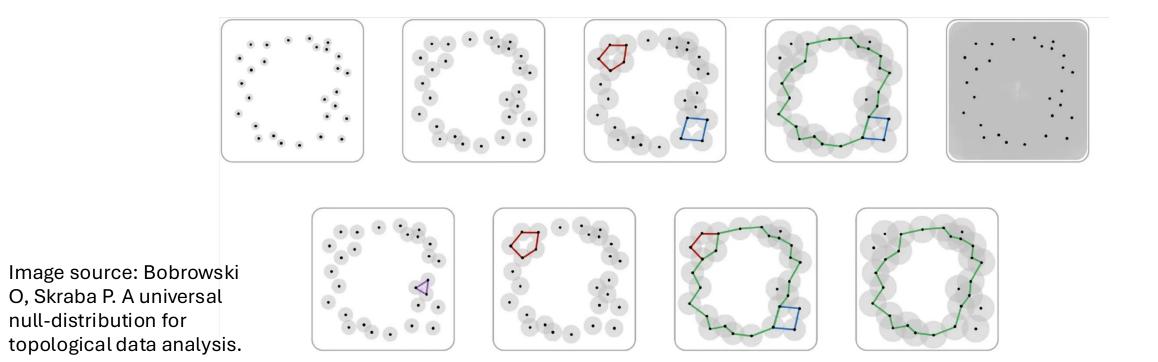
- Technically, a point does not have "size", so what we are actually doing here is that we put a 2-dimensional ball around each point, where all such balls have the same radius.
- For each different radius, the homology can be **vastly different**, with different cycles in the homology basis corresponding to the different radii
  - We focus on the 1-cycles (1-dimensional holes) in the example
  - For each radius, the colored cycles form the homology basis



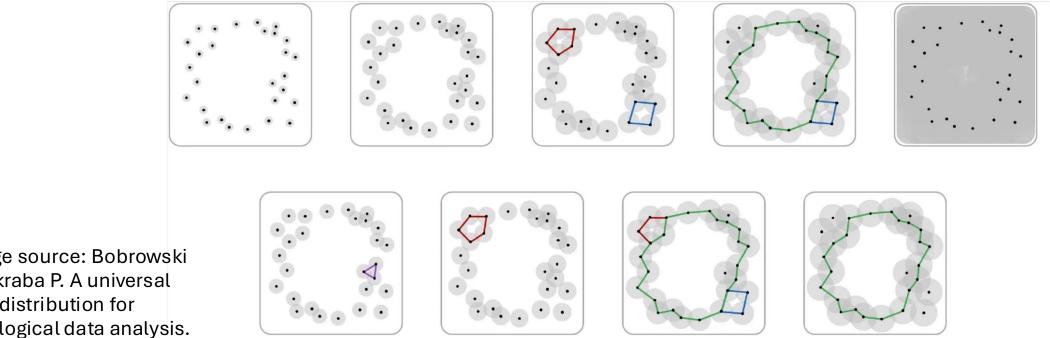
• Question: What is a correct radius to infer the shape of the point cloud?



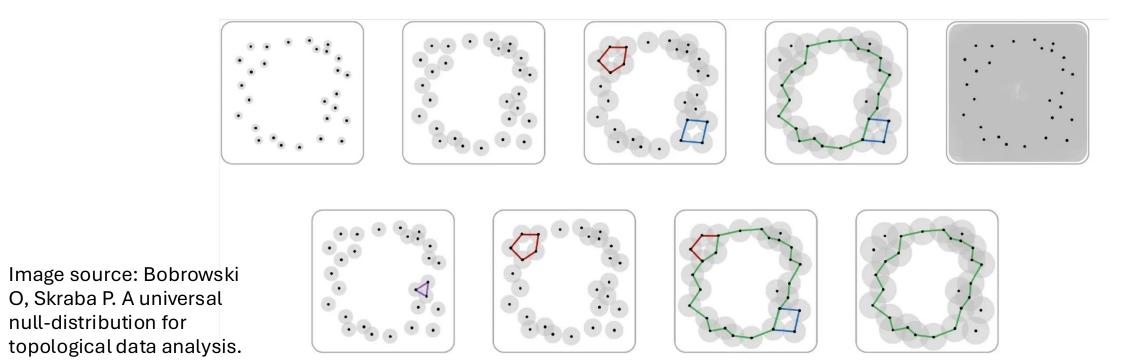
- Question: What is a correct radius to infer the shape of the point cloud?
- Answer: It's really hard to know, and there probably is no such "correct" radius



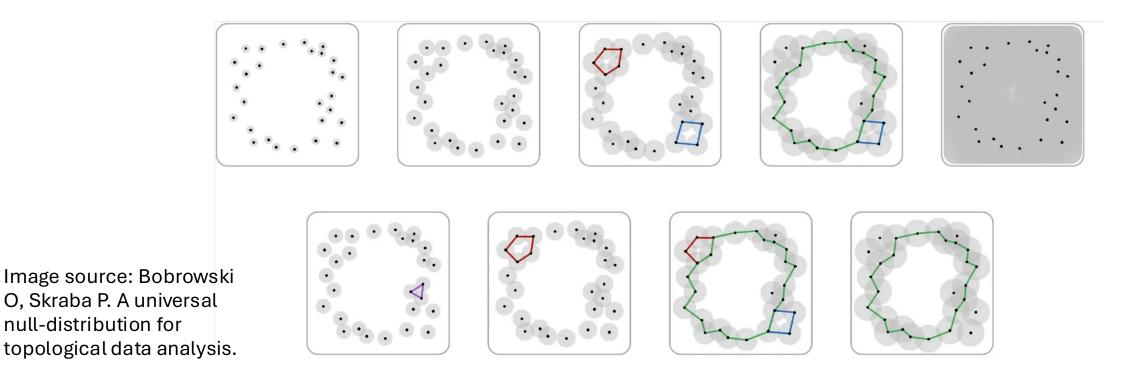
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- As the radius increases, different cycles in the basis could appear (getting born) or becomes trivial (dies).
- We pair the births and deaths, which are the points in the PD



•  $\alpha_0$ : nothing happens.



- $\alpha_0$ : nothing happens.
- $\alpha_1$ : purple cycle born

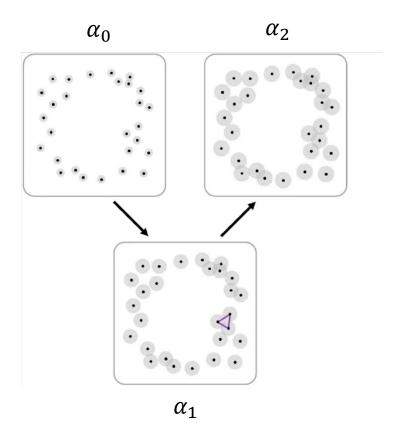


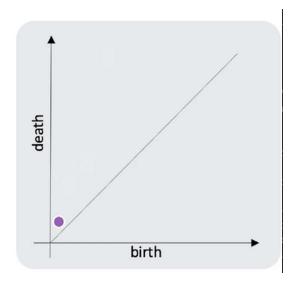
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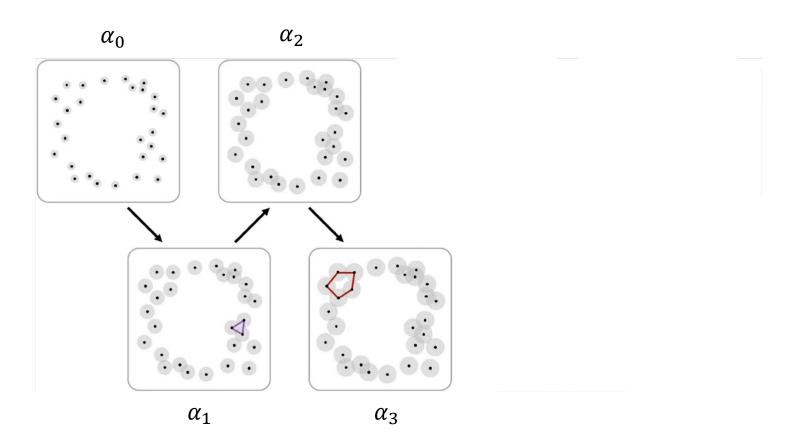
$$\Rightarrow (\alpha_1, \alpha_2)$$

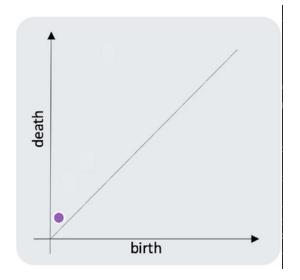




- $\alpha_0$ : nothing happens.  $\alpha_3$ : red cycle born
- $\alpha_1$ : purple cycle born
- $\alpha_2$ : purple cycle dies

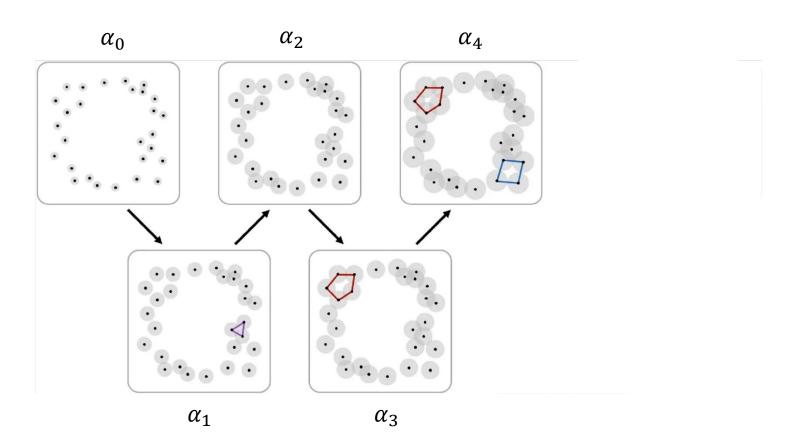
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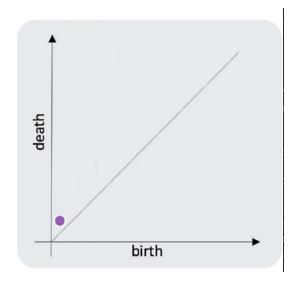




- $\alpha_0$ : nothing happens.
- $\alpha_3$ : red cycle born
- $\alpha_1$ : purple cycle born
- $\alpha_4$ : blue cycle born
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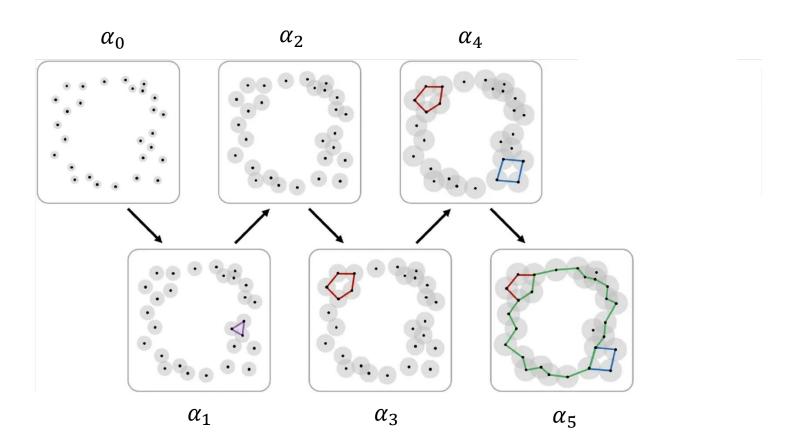
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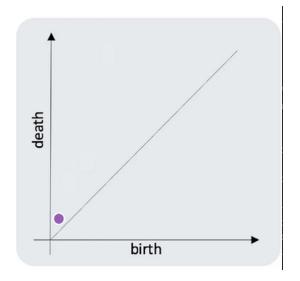




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  - $\Rightarrow (\alpha_1, \alpha_2)$

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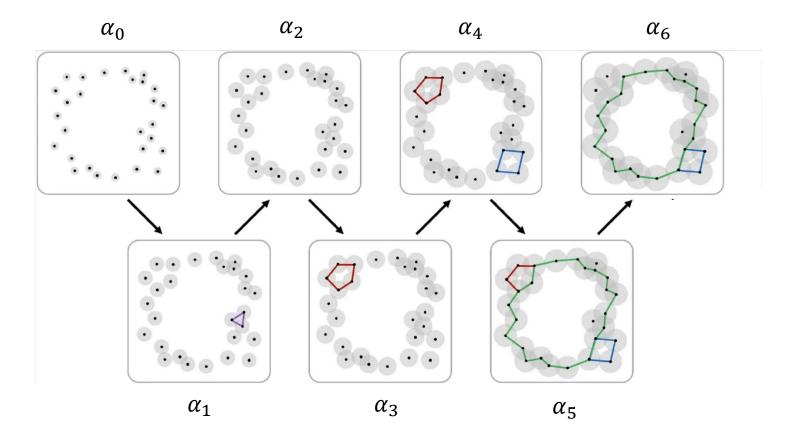


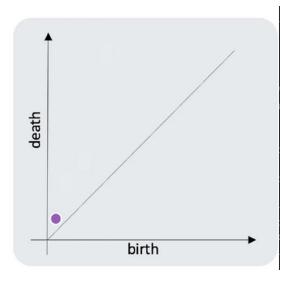


- $\alpha_0$ : nothing happens.
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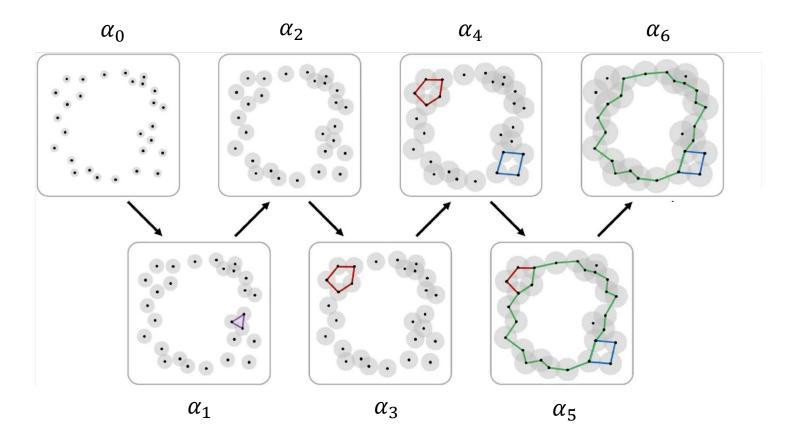
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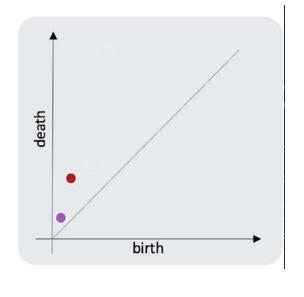
•  $\alpha_4$ : blue cycle born

•  $\alpha_2$ : purple cycle dies

•  $\alpha_5$ : green cycle born

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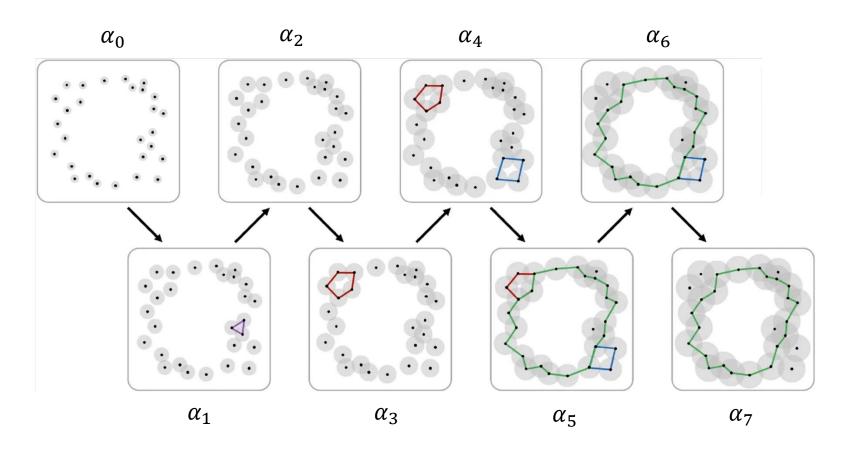




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- $\alpha_3$ : red cycle born
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- $\alpha_6$ : red cycle dies  $\Rightarrow (\alpha_3, \alpha_6)$
- $\alpha_7$ : blue cycle dies



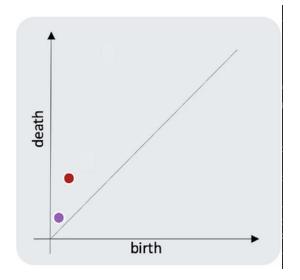


Image: Bobrowski, Skraba. A universal null-distribution for topological data analysis

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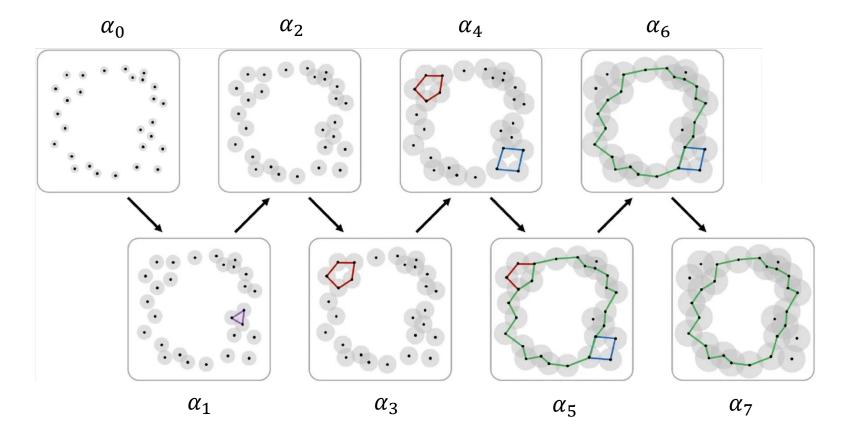
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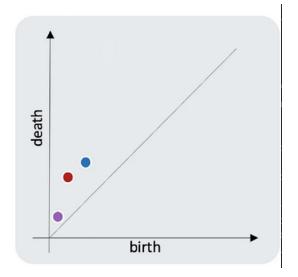


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- $\alpha_4$ : blue cycle born
- $\alpha_5$ : green cycle born
- $\alpha_6$ : red cycle dies  $\Rightarrow (\alpha_3, \alpha_6)$
- $\alpha_7$ : blue cycle dies  $\Rightarrow (\alpha_4, \alpha_7)$
- $\alpha_8$ : green cycle dies

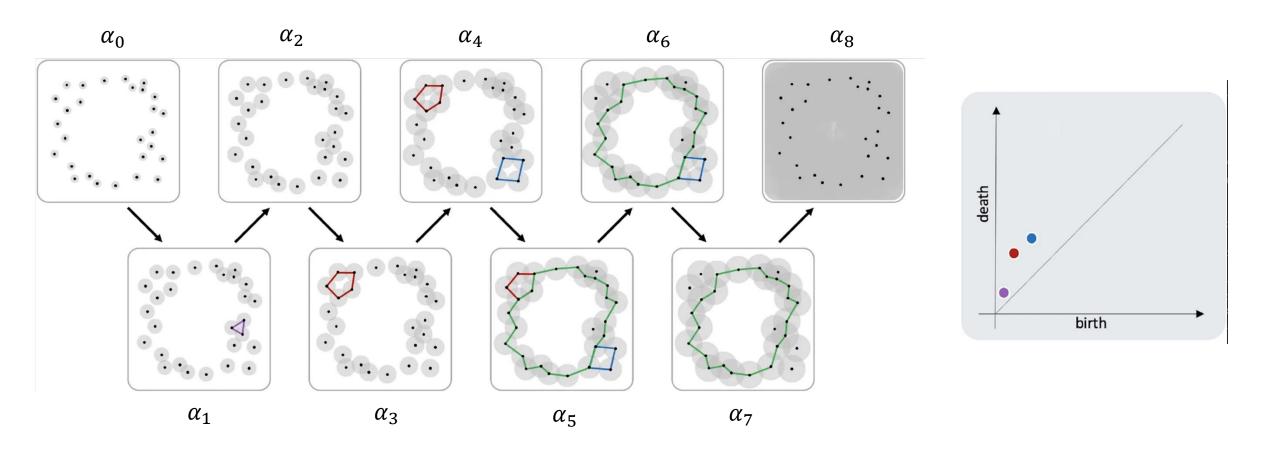


Image: Bobrowski, Skraba. A universal null-distribution for topological data analysis

- $\alpha_0$ : nothing happens.
- $\alpha_1$ : purple cycle born
- $\alpha_2$ : purple cycle dies  $\Rightarrow (\alpha_1, \alpha_2)$

- $\alpha_3$ : red cycle born
- $\alpha_4$ : blue cycle born
- $\alpha_5$ : green cycle born
- $\alpha_6$ : red cycle dies  $\Rightarrow (\alpha_3, \alpha_6)$
- $\alpha_7$ : blue cycle dies  $\Rightarrow (\alpha_4, \alpha_7)$
- $\alpha_8$ : green cycle dies  $\Rightarrow (\alpha_5, \alpha_8)$

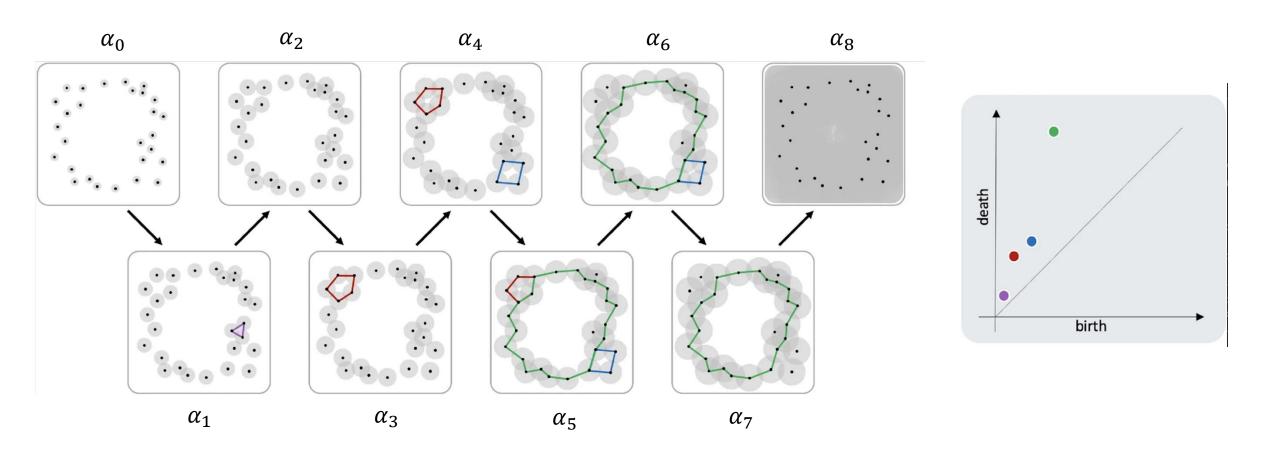


Image: Bobrowski, Skraba. A universal null-distribution for topological data analysis

• So we have a 1-dimensional PD on the left with the four points corresponding to the different cycles born and died in the growing spaces with different  $\alpha$  value, matching the colors

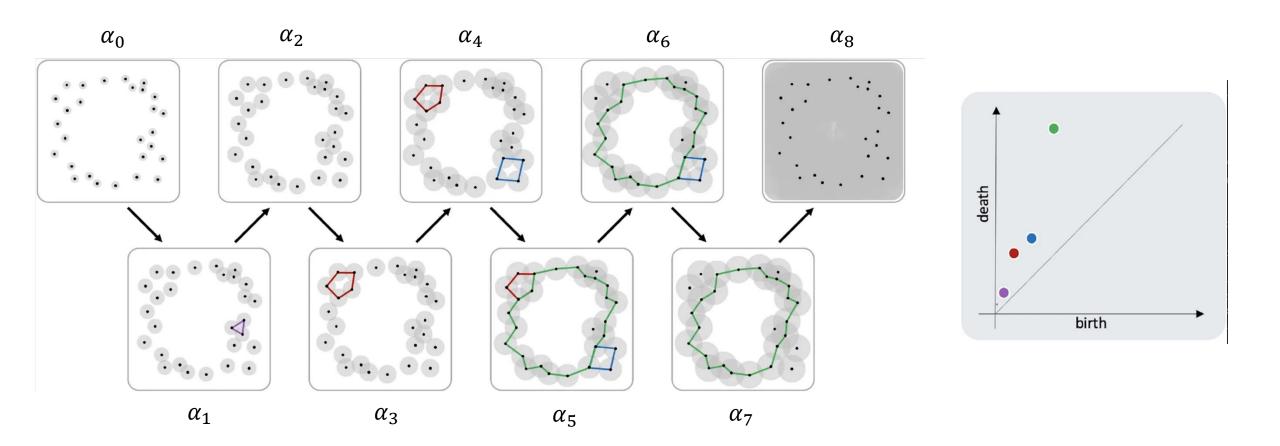


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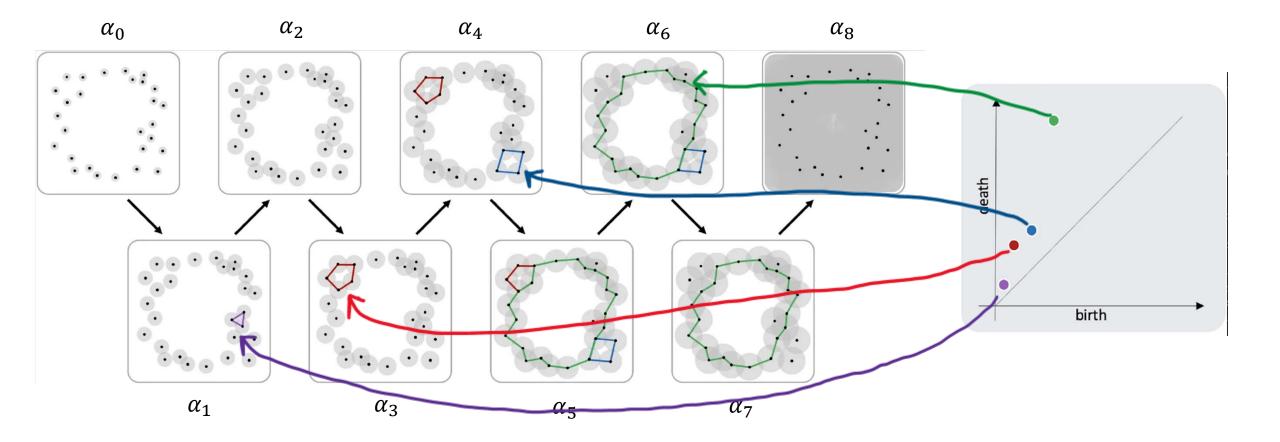


Image: Bobrowski, Skraba. A universal null-distribution for topological data analysis

• Furthermore, we have that distances of the points to diagonal indicate the difference of birth and death (how long a cycle persist), which in turn indicate the significance of the feature

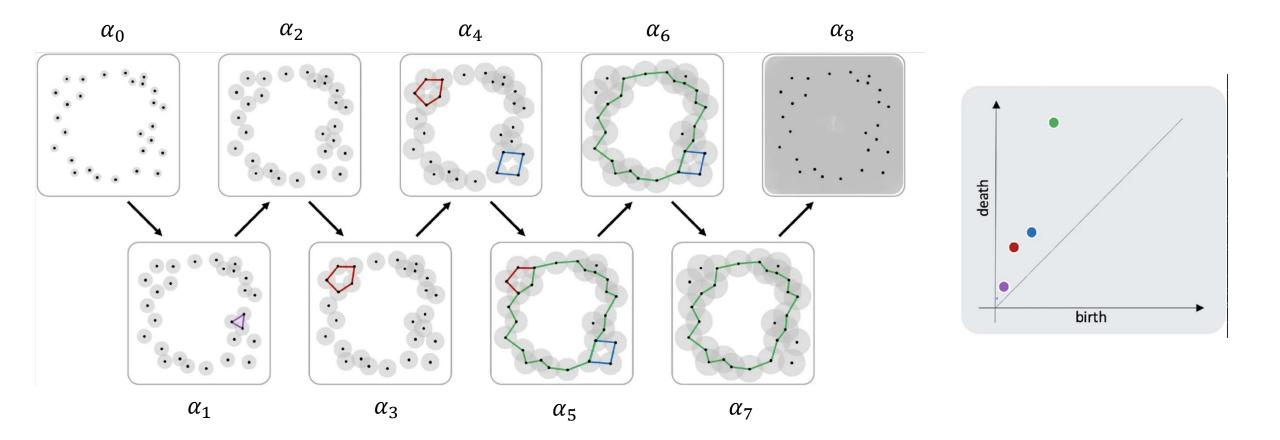
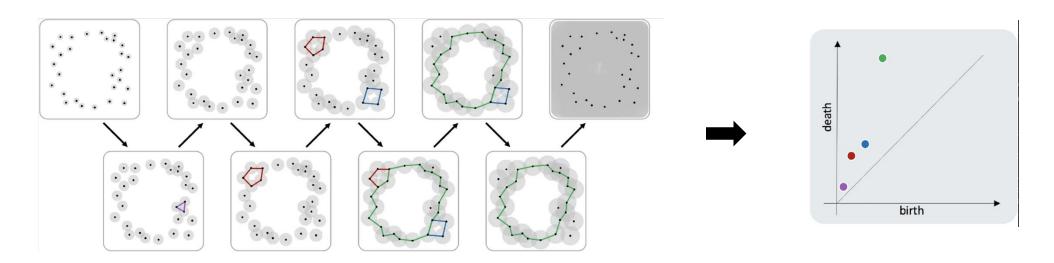


Image: Bobrowski, Skraba. A universal null-distribution for topological data analysis

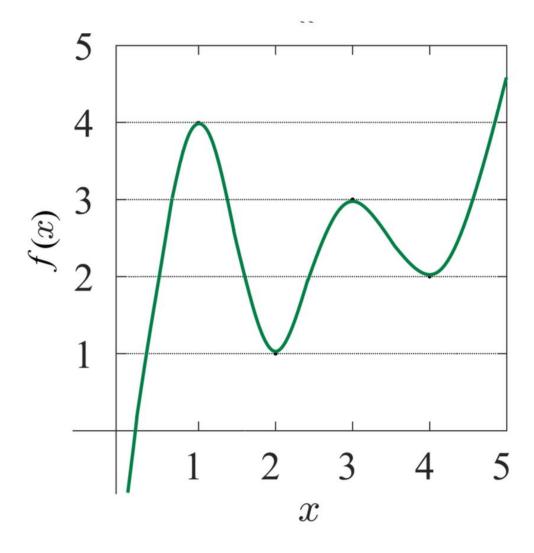
# Persistent homology: Brief Summary



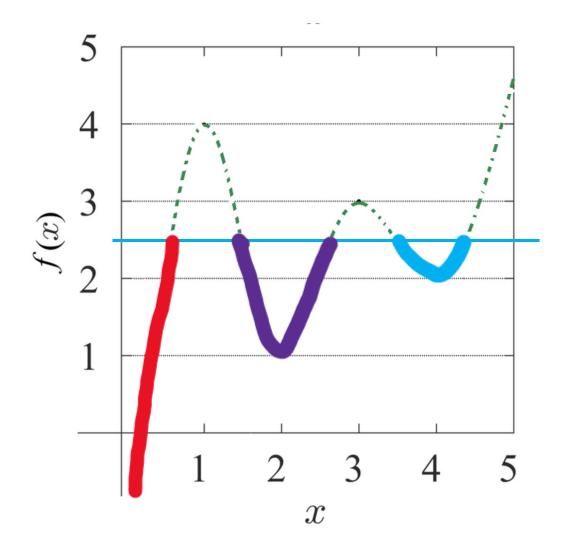
- Given a growing topological space, produce a set of points on the 2D plane (above the diagonal) called persistence diagram (PD) such that:
  - each point in the PD represents a homological feature (aka. cycle / hole) of the data in a certain dimension.

## Online resources

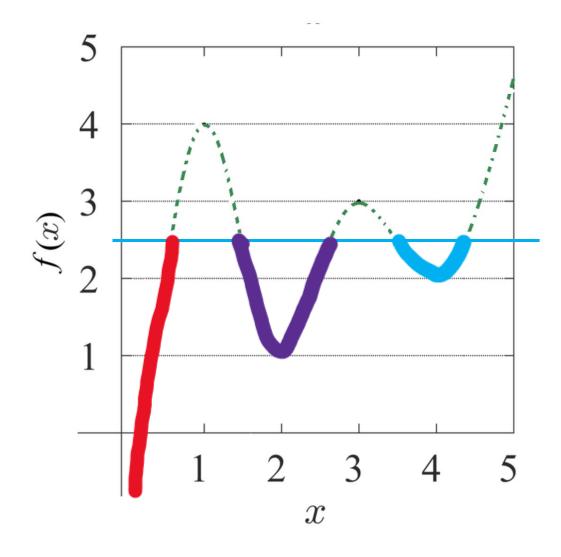
• A webpage for visualizing 1–dim PD: <a href="https://gjkoplik.github.io/pers-hom-examples/1d\_pers\_2d\_data\_widget.html">https://gjkoplik.github.io/pers-hom-examples/1d\_pers\_2d\_data\_widget.html</a>



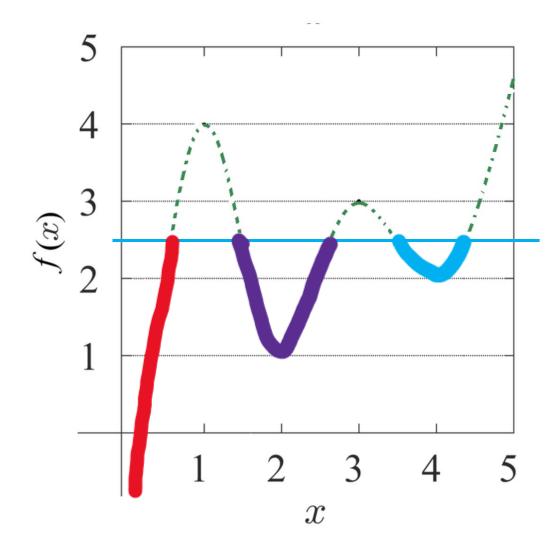
- For another example of persistent homology, we look at the left curve y=f(x)
- Again, we consider a growing space
- Each space in the growing sequence is part of the curve below a certain horizontal line



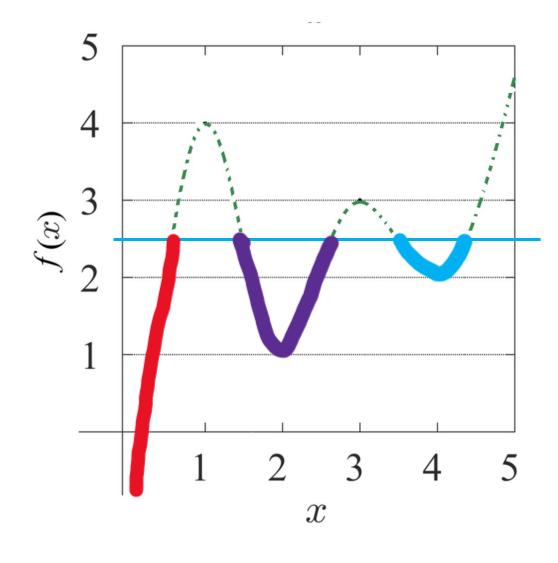
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- Left is an example for horizontal line y = 2.5



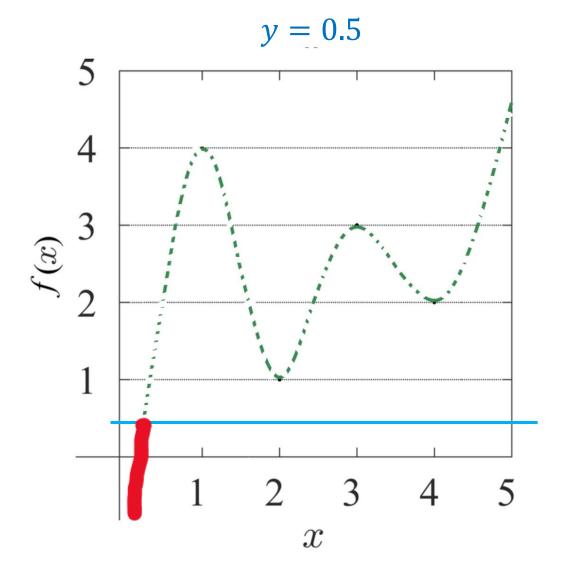
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- As the space grows, we track the changes of O-dimensional homology



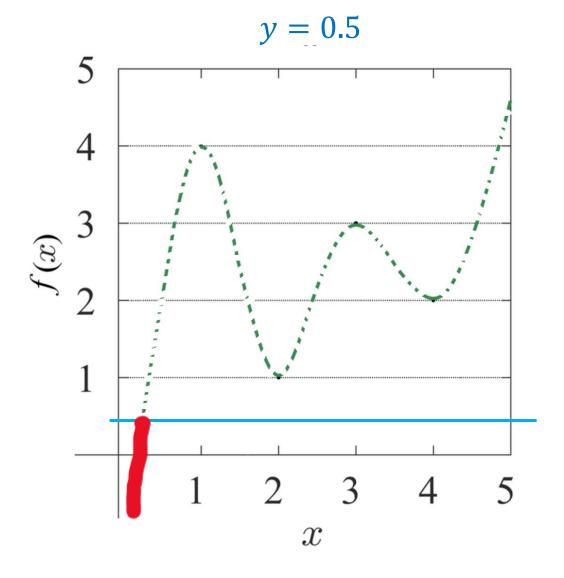
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- As the space grows, we track the changes of O-dimensional homology
- i.e., we track the changes of the connected components and the gaps in between



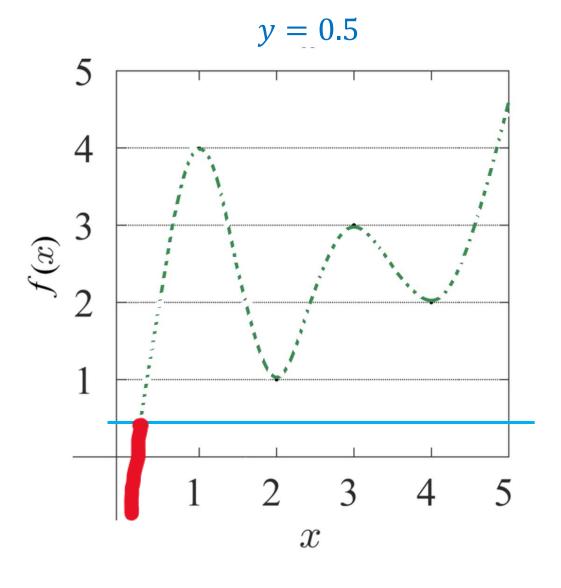
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- As the space grows, we track the changes of O-dimensional homology
- i.e., we track the changes of the connected components and the gaps in between
- On the left, there are three connected components with two gaps in between



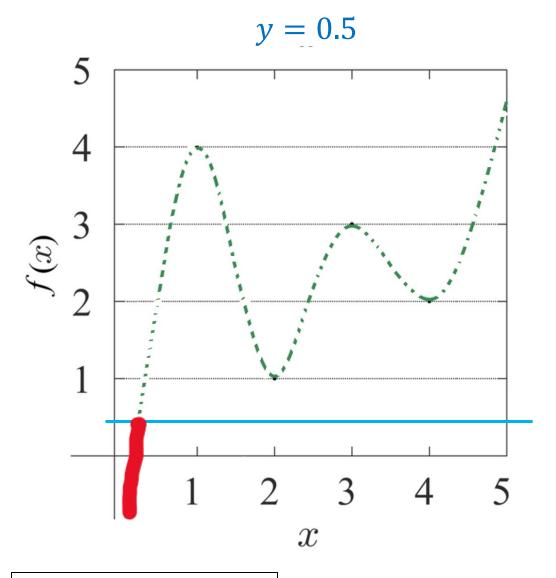
• We have that there is a single connected component (red) below the line y=0.5



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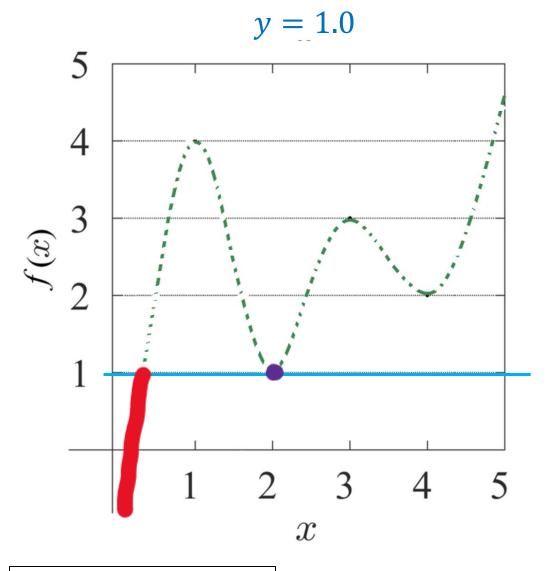


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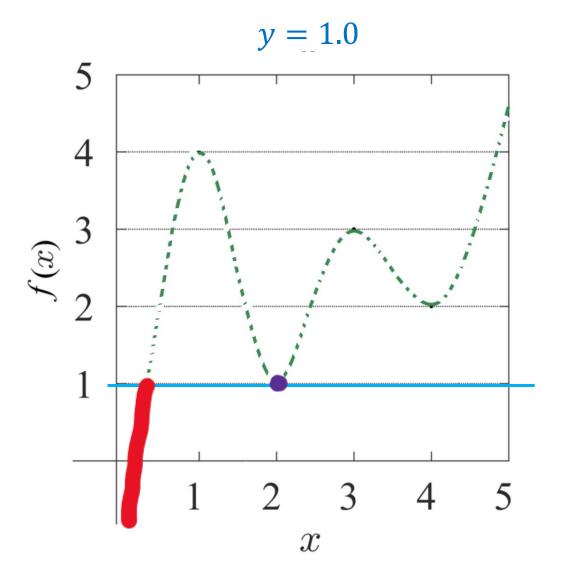
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• Red: born at -∞



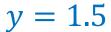
- Red component continues
- A new purple component is born

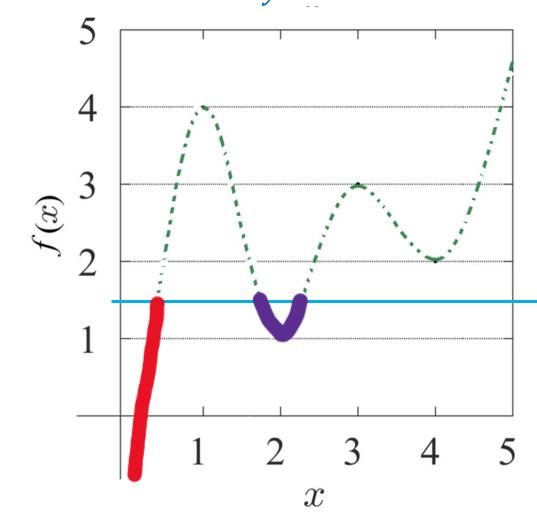
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- Red component continues
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- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0



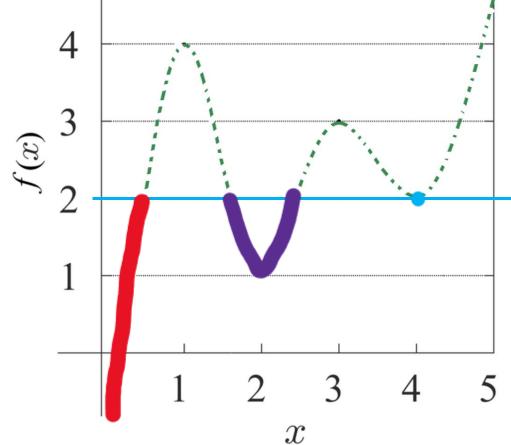


Red and purple components continue

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0

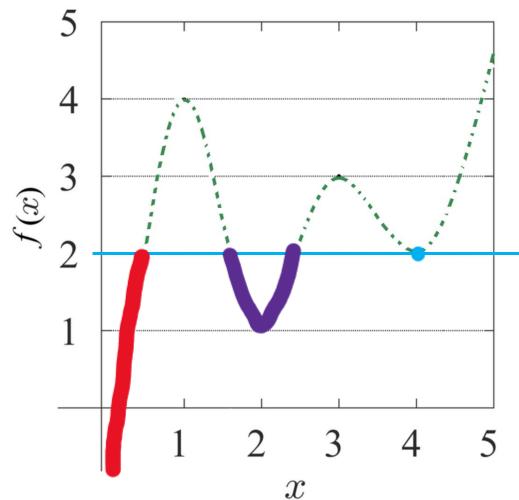
y = 2.0 4

- Red and purple components continue
- A new blue component is born



- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0

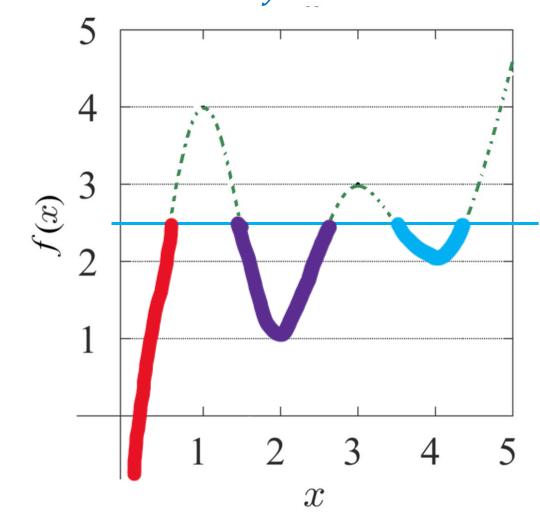
y = 2.0



- Red and purple components continue
- A new blue component is born

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- Blue: born at 2.0

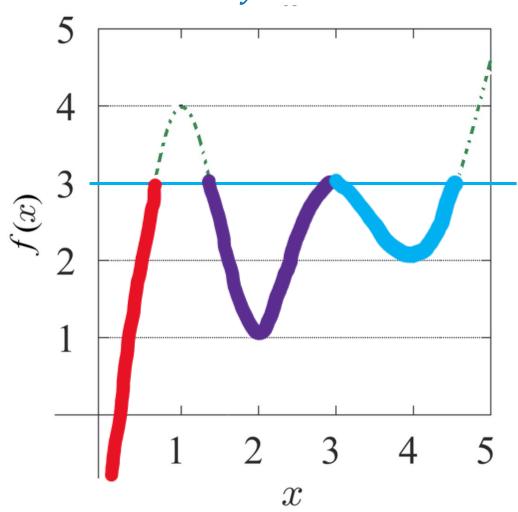
$$y = 2.5$$



• Three components continue

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- Blue: born at 2.0





 The purple and blue components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- Blue: born at 2.0

y = 3.0f(x)

 $\boldsymbol{x}$ 

- The purple and blue components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)
- The means that a 0-dimensional homology hole disappears (dies)

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- Blue: born at 2.0

y = 3.0

 $\mathcal{X}$ 

- The purple and blue components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)
- The means that a 0-dimensional homology hole disappears (dies)
- The gap between purple and blue components appears because of birth of the blue component

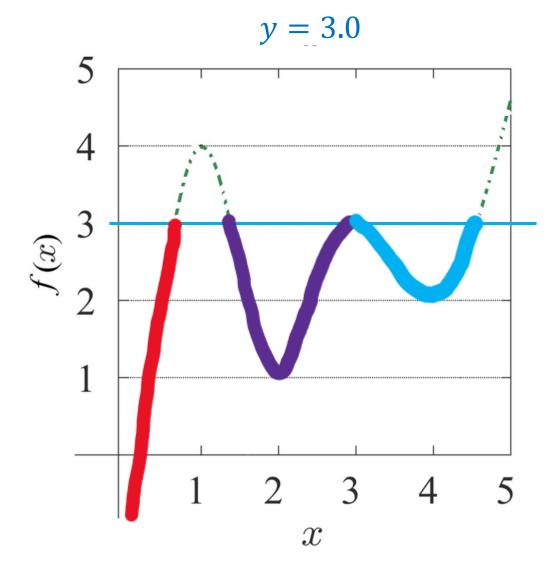
- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- Blue: born at 2.0

y = 3.0

 $\mathcal{X}$ 

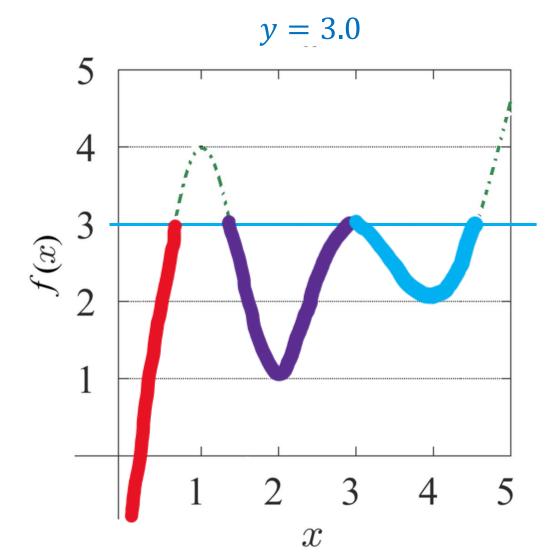
- The purple and blue components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)
- The means that a 0-dimensional homology hole disappears (dies)
- The gap between purple and blue components appears because of birth of the blue component
- So we consider the gap to be born when the blue component is born, i.e., at 2.0

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- Blue: born at 2.0



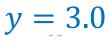
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- The means that a 0-dimensional homology hole disappears (dies)
- The gap between purple and blue components appears because of birth of the blue component
- So we consider the gap to be born when the blue component is born, i.e., at 2.0
- So we have a 0-dimensional hole born at 2.0 and dies at 3.0

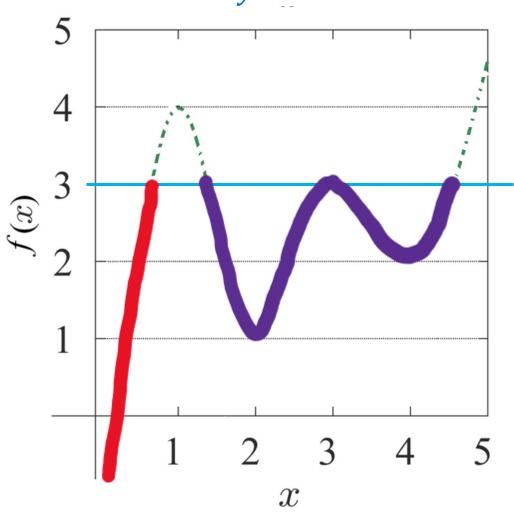
- Red: born at -∞
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- Blue: born at 2.0



- The purple and blue components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)
- The means that a 0-dimensional homology hole disappears (dies)
- The gap between purple and blue components appears because of birth of the blue component
- So we consider the gap to be born when the blue component is born, i.e., at 2.0
- So we have a 0-dimensional hole born at 2.0 and dies at 3.0

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- PD: (2.0, 3.0)





 For the merged component, we keep the one born earlier (purple), and kill the one born later (blue)

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- PD: (2.0, 3.0)

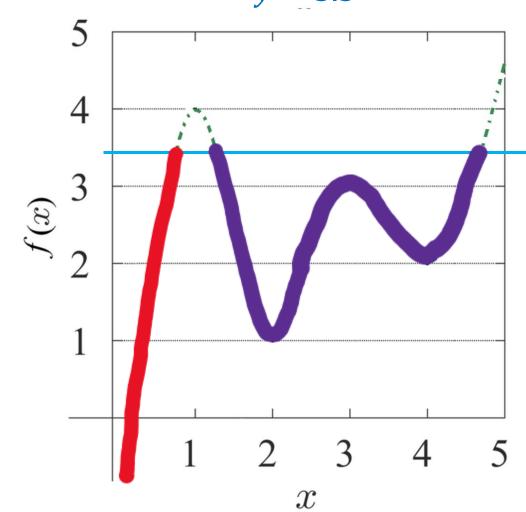
y = 3.0f(x)

 $\boldsymbol{x}$ 

- For the merged component, we keep the one born earlier (purple), and kill the one born later (blue)
- So we have a larger purple component born at 1.0

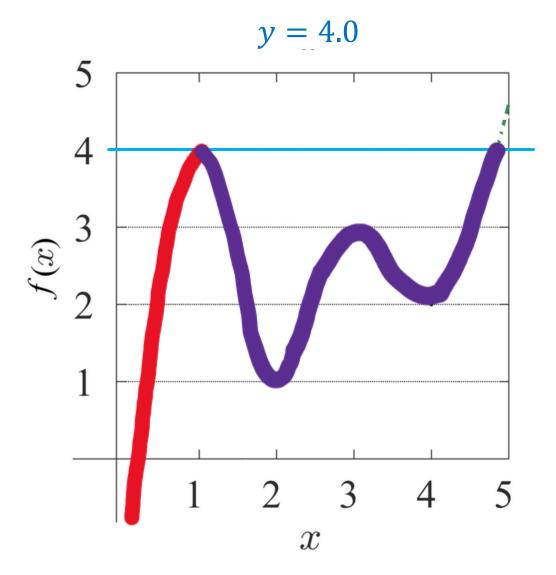
- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- PD: (2.0, 3.0)

$$y = 3.5$$



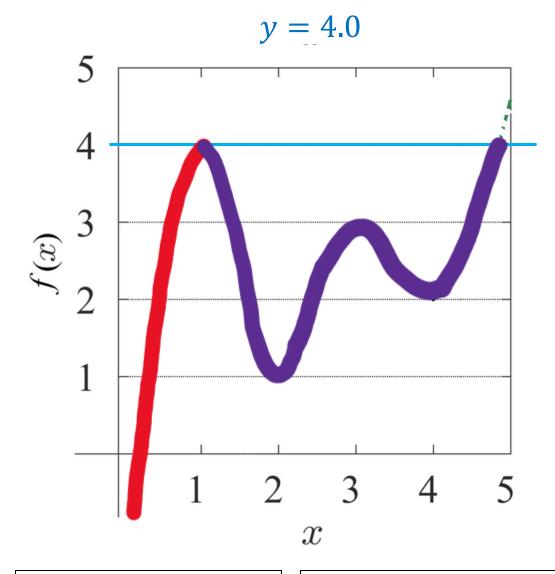
• Two components continue

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- PD: (2.0, 3.0)



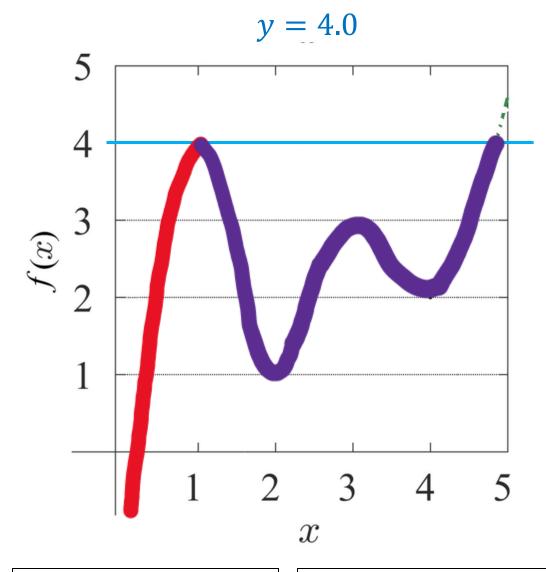
 The red and purple components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- PD: (2.0, 3.0)



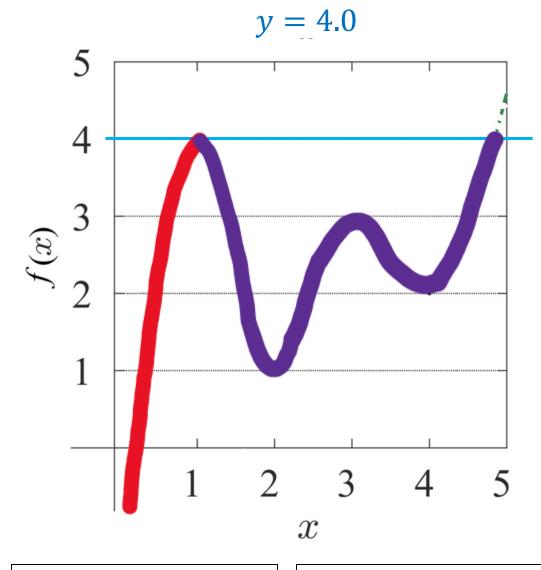
- The red and purple components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)
- A 0-dimensional homology hole disappears (dies)

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- PD: (2.0, 3.0)



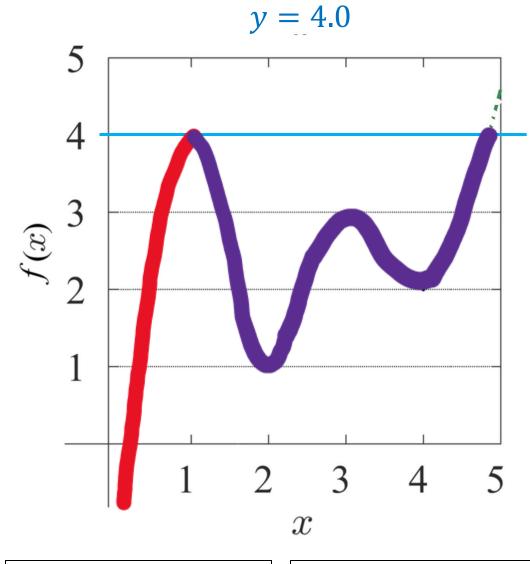
- The red and purple components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)
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- The gap between red and purple components appears because of birth of the purple component

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- PD: (2.0, 3.0)



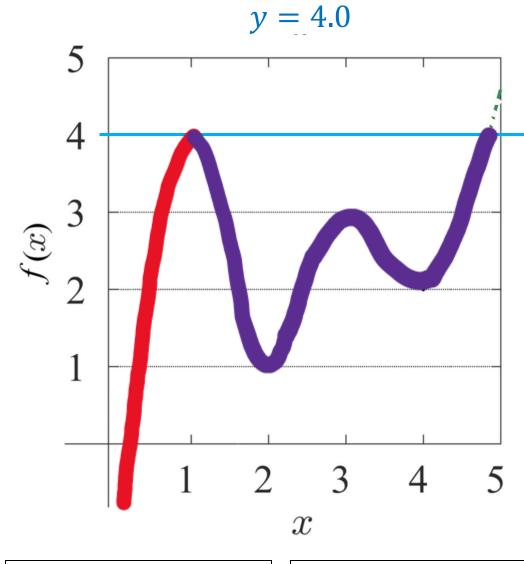
- The red and purple components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)
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- So the gap is born at 1.0

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- PD: (2.0, 3.0)



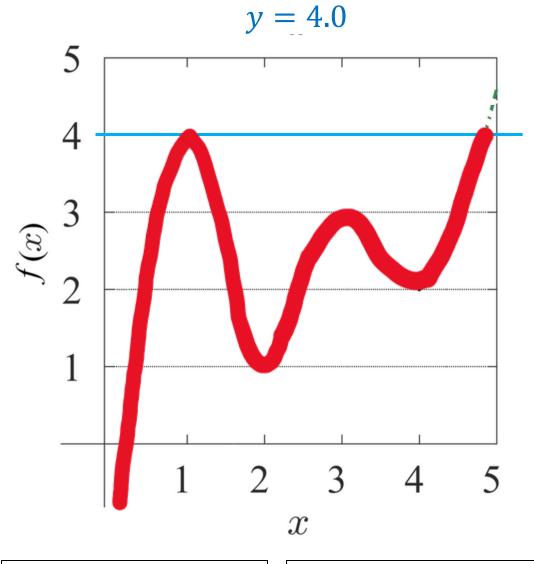
- The red and purple components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)
- A 0-dimensional homology hole disappears (dies)
- The gap between red and purple components appears because of birth of the purple component
- So the gap is born at 1.0
- So we have a 0-dimensional hole born at 1.0 and dies at 4.0

- Red: born at -∞
- Purple: born at 1.0
- PD: (2.0, 3.0)



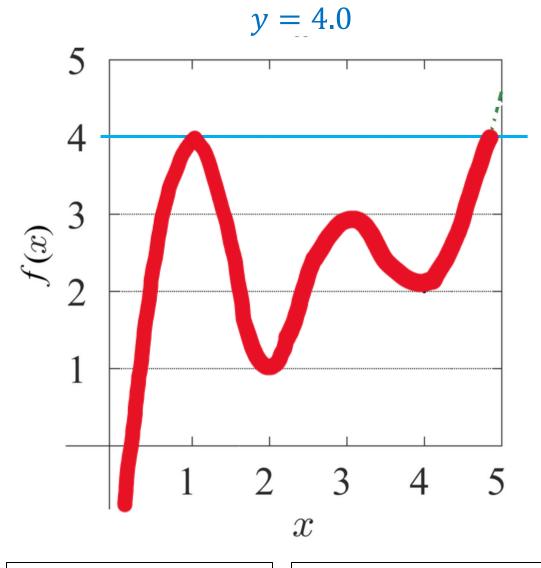
- The red and purple components merge into one (gaps between them disappear)
- A 0-dimensional homology hole disappears (dies)
- The gap between red and purple components appears because of birth of the purple component
- So the gap is born at 1.0
- So we have a 0-dimensional hole born at 1.0 and dies at 4.0

- Red: born at -∞
- PD: (1.0, 4.0)



 For the merged component, we keep the one born earlier (red), and kill the one born later (purple)

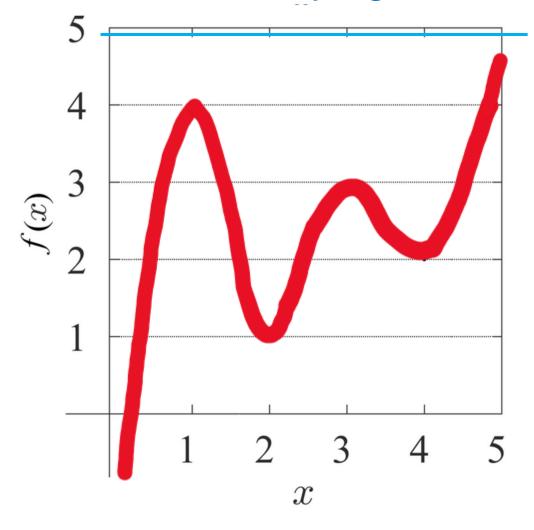
- Red: born at -∞
- PD: (1.0, 4.0)



- For the merged component, we keep the one born earlier (red), and kill the one born later (purple)
- So we have a single red component born at

- Red: born at -∞
- PD: (1.0, 4.0)

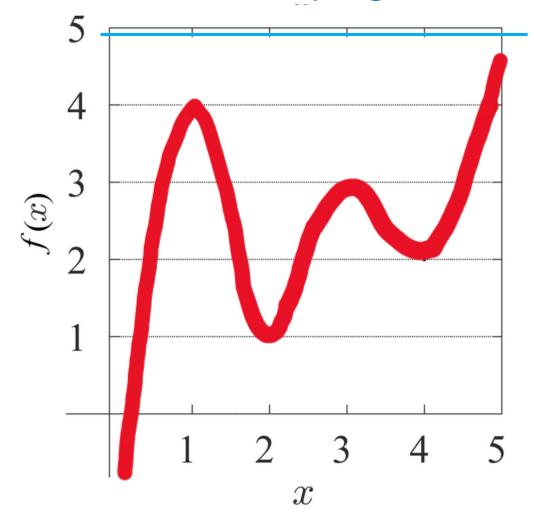
## $\alpha$ arbitrary large



- As the value for the line keeps on increasing to +∞, the single red component will keep on persisting
- So we have the red component born at -∞ and dies at +∞

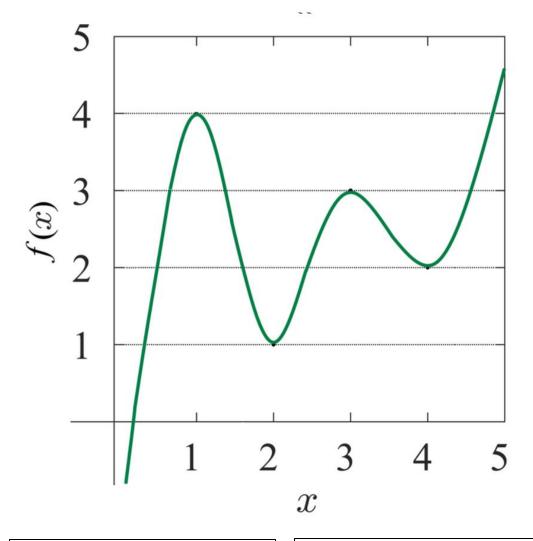
- Red: born at -∞
- PD: (1.0, 4.0)

## $\alpha$ arbitrary large



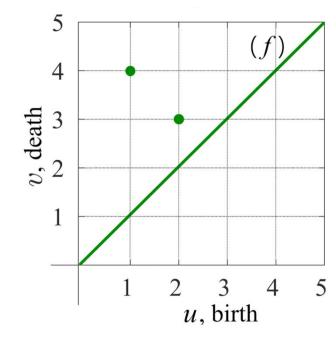
- As the value for the line keeps on increasing to +∞, the single red component will keep on persisting
- So we have the red component born at -∞ and dies at +∞

- PD:  $(-\infty, +\infty)$
- PD: (1.0, 4.0)

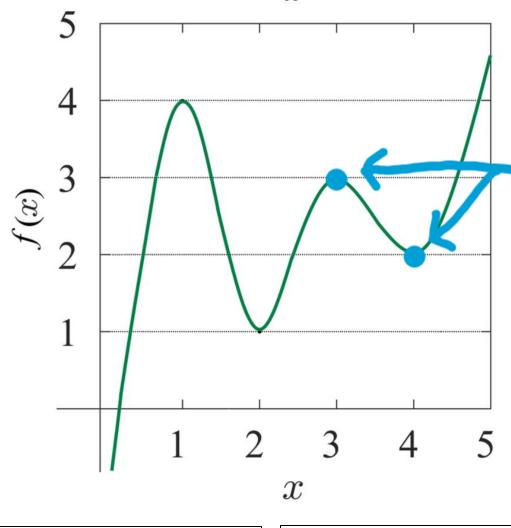


## **Summary:**

- We have three points in the 0-dimension PD
- Each point is tracking the birth and death of a connect component (or gap in between)

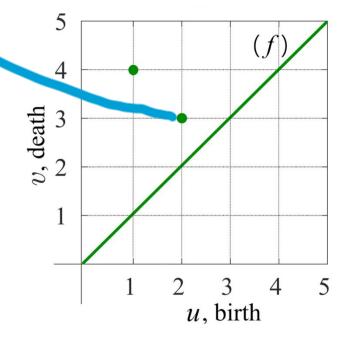


- PD:  $(-\infty, +\infty)$
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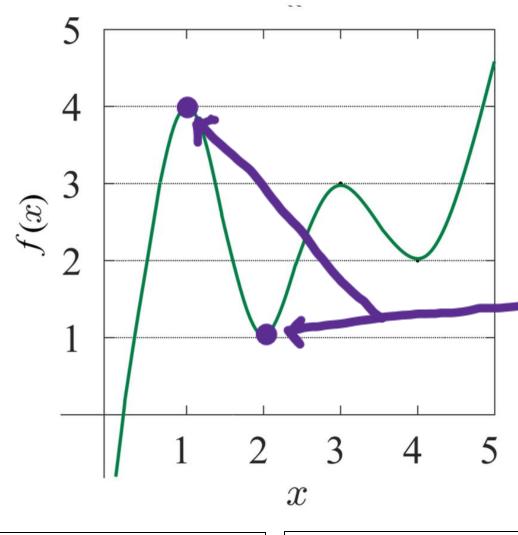
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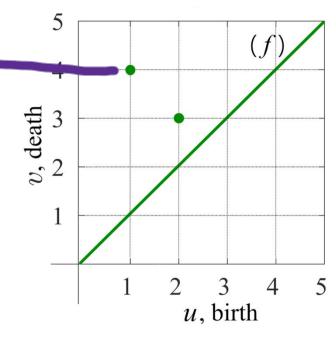
- PD:  $(-\infty, +\infty)$
- PD: (1.0, 4.0)

• PD: (2.0, 3.0)



#### **Summary:**

- We have three points in the 0-dimension PD
- Each point is tracking the birth and death of a connect component (or gap in between)



• PD:  $(-\infty, +\infty)$ 

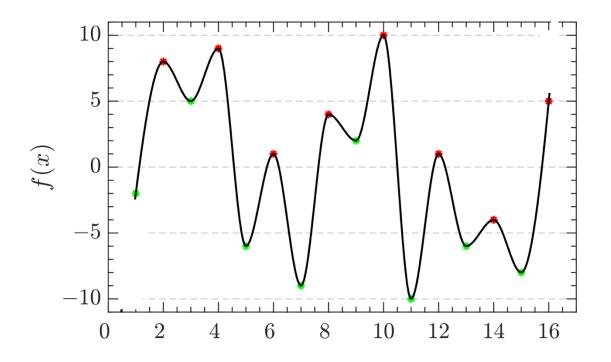
• PD: (1.0, 4.0)

• PD: (2.0, 3.0)

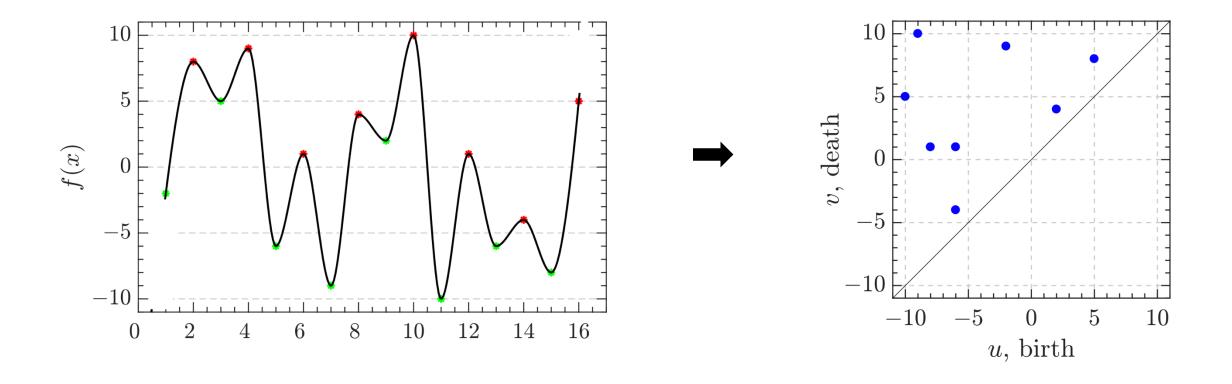
#### Online resources

• A webpage for visualizing 0–th PD: <a href="https://gjkoplik.github.io/pers-hom-examples/0d\_pers\_2d\_data\_widget.html">https://gjkoplik.github.io/pers-hom-examples/0d\_pers\_2d\_data\_widget.html</a>

# A similar but more involved example



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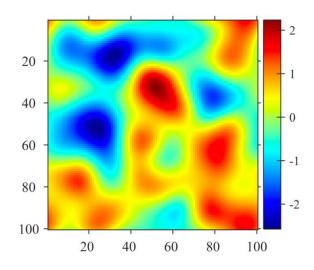
• Let's visualize another example on a 2D function

$$f: \mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}$$

Let's visualize another example on a 2D function

$$f: \mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}$$

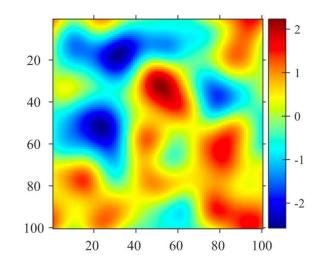
 Right is an example where the value is indicated by color (red for high and blue for low)

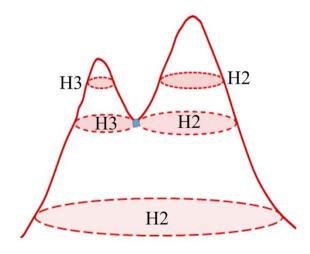


• Let's visualize another example on a 2D function

$$f: \mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}$$

- Right is an example where the value is indicated by color (red for high and blue for low)
- You can also treat the value on each point of  $\mathbb{R}^2$  as a "height", and plot the function like the bottom one

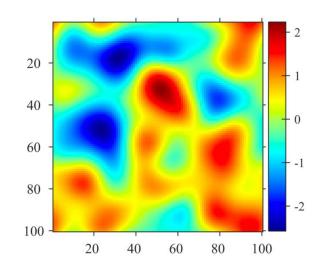


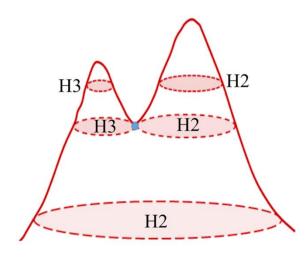


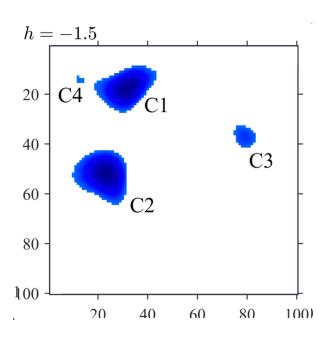
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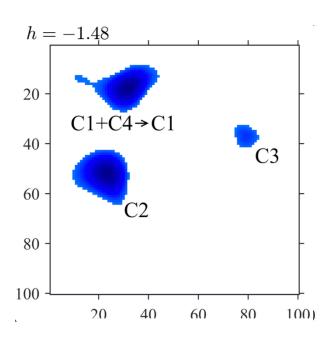
$$f: \mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}$$

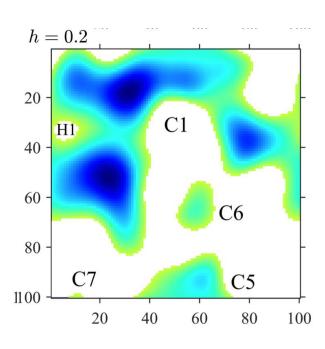
- Right is an example where the value is indicated by color (red for high and blue for low)
- You can also treat the value on each point of  $\mathbb{R}^2$  as a "height", and plot the function like the bottom one
- Similar to the previous 1D function, as we increase the value  $\alpha$ , we consider the part (subset) of the domain  $\mathbb{R}^2$  whose values are below  $\alpha$

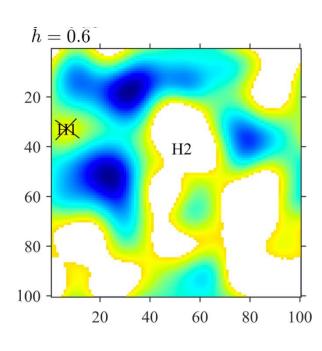


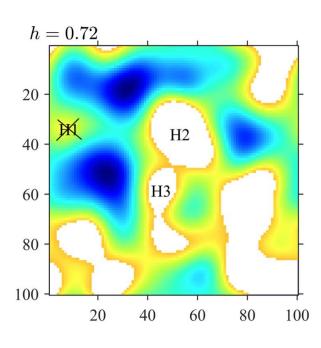


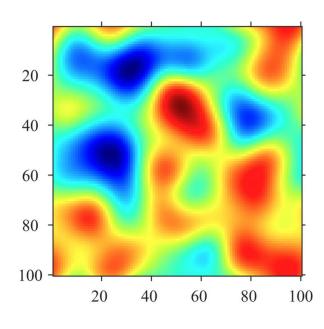


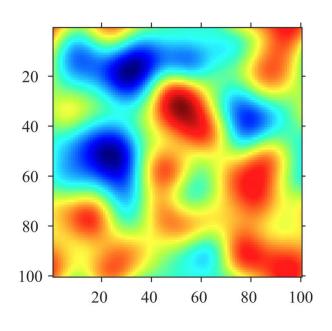




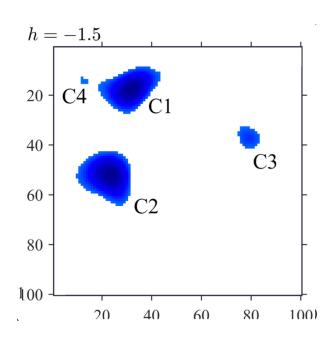




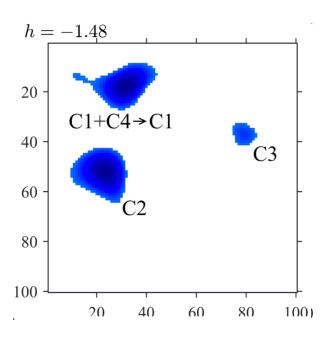




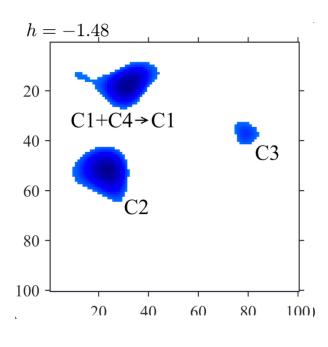
- Similar to the previous 1D function, as we increase the value  $\alpha$ , we consider the part (subset) of the domain  $\mathbb{R}^2$  whose values are below  $\alpha$
- Now let's track the birth and death of 0D/1D holes



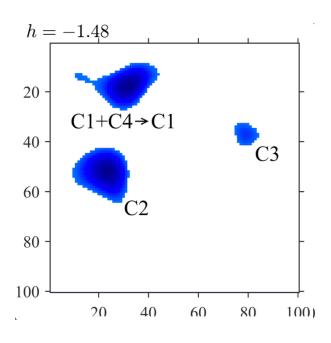
- Four connected components are born at different values
- (Will not display the birth of each component though)



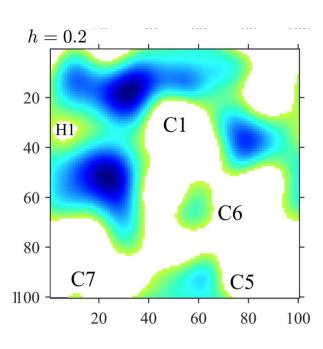
• C1 and C4 merged into the same connected component, thus the gap between them is filled



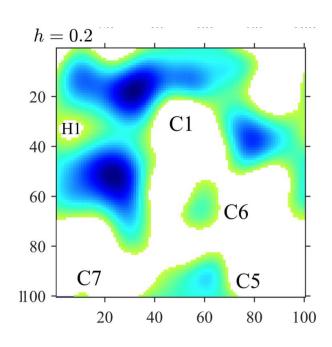
- C1 and C4 merged into the same connected component, thus the gap between them is filled
- Since C1 is born earlier, we keep C1 and kill C4 (the rule adopted by persistent homology)



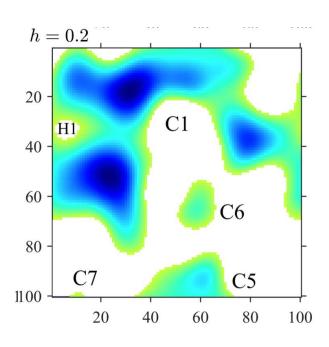
- C1 and C4 merged into the same connected component, thus the gap between them is filled
- Since C1 is born earlier, we keep C1 and kill C4 (the rule adopted by persistent homology)
- We then add a point (b,d) to the 0-d PD where b is the value in which C4 is born and d is current values where C4 dies (merges with other)



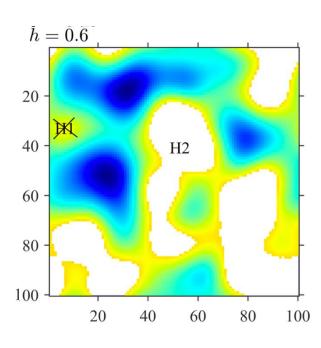
 As the value keep increasing, C1, C2 and C3 merged into the same connected component, producing two additional points in 0-d PD



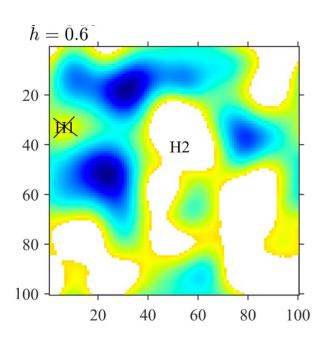
- As the value keep increasing, C1, C2 and C3 merged into the same connected component, producing two additional points in 0-d PD
- Three additional components C5, C6 and C7 are born



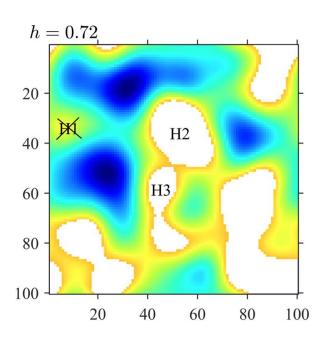
- As the value keep increasing, C1, C2 and C3 merged into the same connected component, producing two additional points in 0-d PD
- Three additional components C5, C6 and C7 are born
- Also, a 1-dimensional hole H1 is born



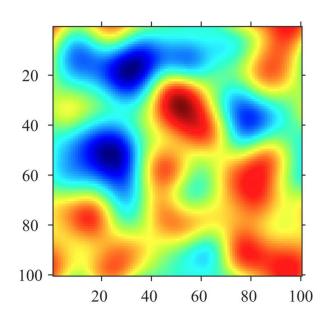
• H1 dies, producing a point in the 1-d PD



- H1 dies, producing a point in the 1-d PD
- A 1-dimensional hole H2 is born

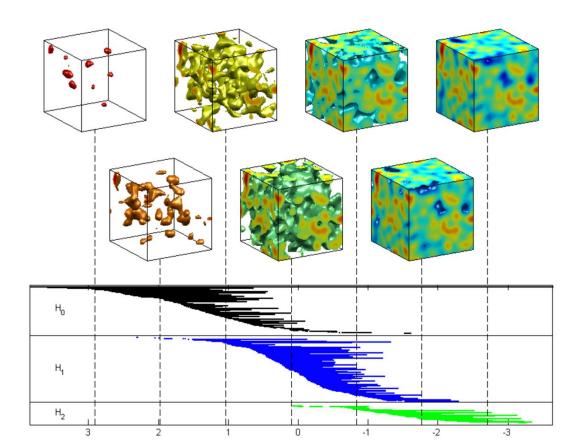


A 1-dimensional hole H3 is born

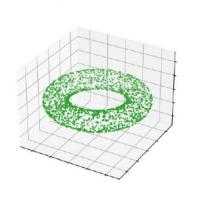


 H2 and H3 die, producing two additional points in the 1-d PD

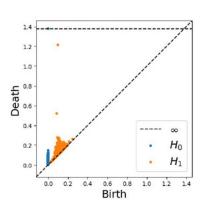
- We can also extend the prev. idea and define persistence on 3D function:  $f: \mathbb{R}^3 \to \mathbb{R}$
- Similarly, as we increase the value  $\alpha$ , we consider the part (subset) of the domain  $\mathbb{R}^3$  (or a cube) whose values are below  $\alpha$



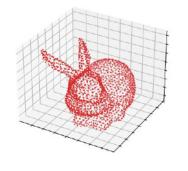
Adler, Robert J., Omer Bobrowski, Matthew S. Borman, Eliran Subag, and Shmuel Weinberger. "Persistent homology for random fields and complexes."



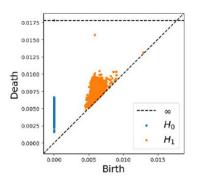
(c) 2000 points on a 3D torus.



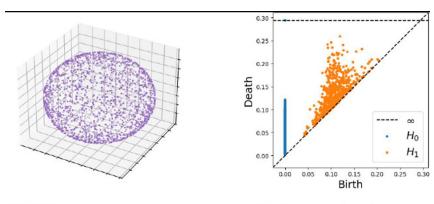
(d) Corresponding diagram.



(e) Stanford bunny with 1889 points.



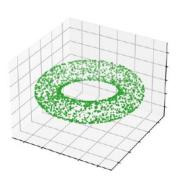
(f) Corresponding diagram.

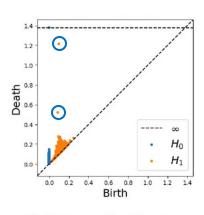


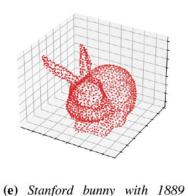
(a) 2000 points on a 3D sphere.

(b) Corresponding diagram.

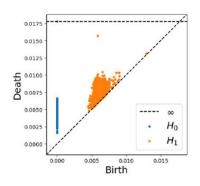
Image source: Wang et al. Stability for Inference with Persistent Homology Rank Functions







points.



(c) 2000 points on a 3D torus.

(d) Corresponding diagram.

(f) Corresponding diagram.

# Corresponding to meridian and longitude

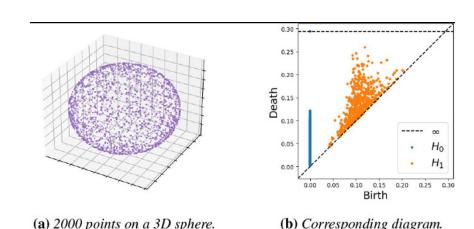
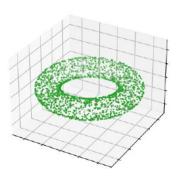
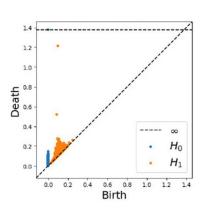


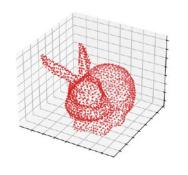
Image source: Wang et al. Stability for Inference with Persistent Homology Rank Functions



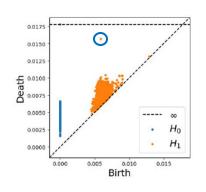
(c) 2000 points on a 3D torus.



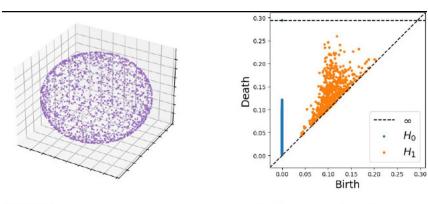
(d) Corresponding diagram.



(e) Stanford bunny with 1889 points.



(f) Corresponding diagram.

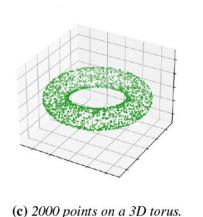


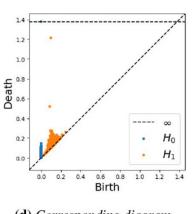
(a) 2000 points on a 3D sphere.

(b) Corresponding diagram.

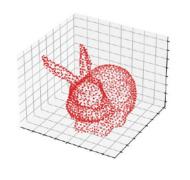
Corresponds to the "crust" of the bunny which is a 2D hole

Image source: Wang et al. Stability for Inference with Persistent Homology Rank Functions

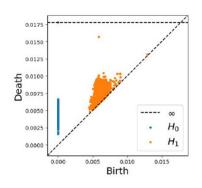




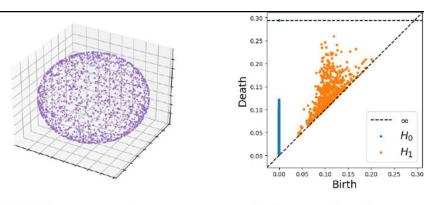
(d) Corresponding diagram.



(e) Stanford bunny with 1889 points.



(f) Corresponding diagram.



This is a solid ball which has no interesting holes

(a) 2000 points on a 3D sphere.

(b) Corresponding diagram.

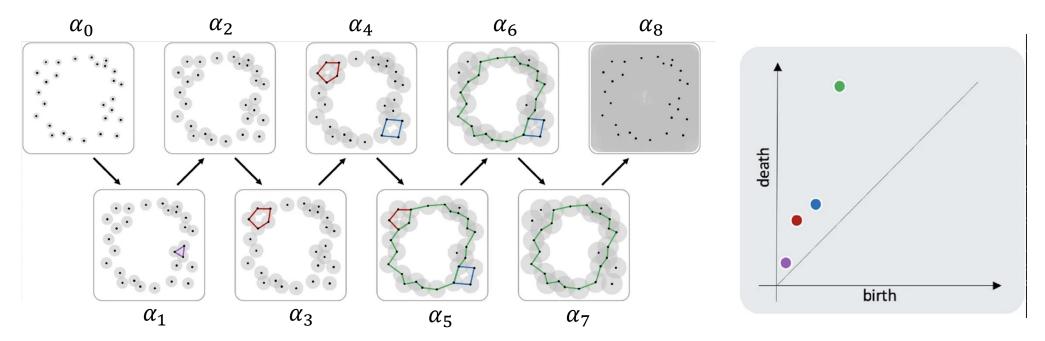
- **Definition**: A **persistence diagram** (PD) is a set of points on the 2D plane above the diagonal such that for each point (b, d):
  - b indicates birth value (the  $\alpha$  value in which the feature is born)
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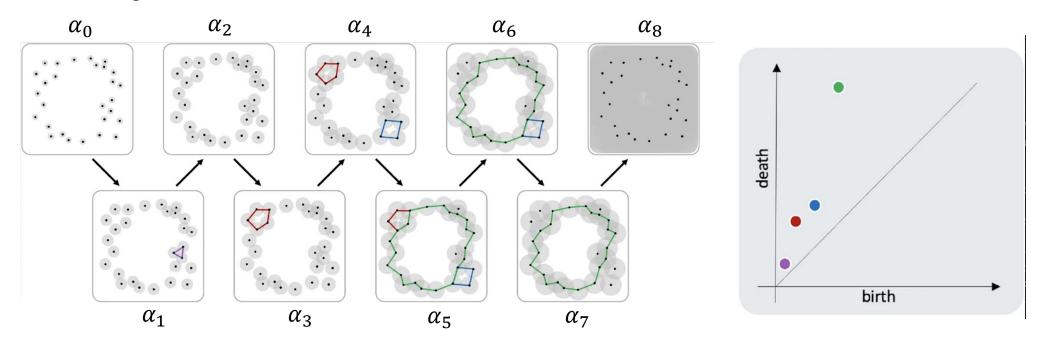
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- Notice that we sometimes use the terms "persistence diagram" and "persistence barcode" interchangeable, i.e., we may call a point in a PD also an interval.

# Example

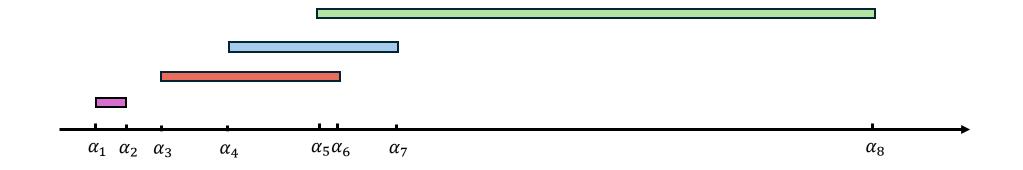


• Corresponding barcode:

# Example



• Corresponding barcode:



# Another example

