Singularities of slices in the nilpotent cone

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General aim

Understand the singularities of nilpotent cones.

More specifically

- describe the singularities of one nilpotent orbit with respect to another orbit in its closure
- case of minimal degenerations: orbits are adjacent in partial order
- ► case of special nilpotent orbits: the duality of Kraft-Procesi from GL_n has an extension to all types
- case of special pieces: there is an analog of Lusztig's conjecture on special pieces for slices

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- \mathfrak{g} a complex simple Lie algebra (e.g. \mathfrak{sl}_n). *G* the adjoint Lie group of \mathfrak{g}
- $x \in \mathfrak{g}$ a nilpotent element, $\mathcal{O}_x := G \cdot x$, the nilpotent orbit of x.
 - The closure $\overline{\mathcal{O}}_x$ is a union of finitely many nilpotent orbits.
 - ▶ $\overline{\mathcal{O}}_x$ is smooth at any point of \mathcal{O}_x , but it's singular at any other point (Kaledin).

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Hasse diagram

For two orbits $\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{O}',$ denote by $\mathcal{O}' < \mathcal{O}$ if $\mathcal{O}' \subsetneq \overline{\mathcal{O}}.$ $0 < \mathcal{O}_{min} < \cdots$ could be very complicated $\cdots < \mathcal{O}_{subreg} < \mathcal{O}_{reg}$

- ► Unique maximal nilpotent orbit O_{reg} of dimension equal to the number of roots. Called the regular or principal nilpotent orbit.
- ► Unique orbit O_{subreg} containing all non-regular orbits in its closure. It is of codimension 2 in O_{reg}. Called the subregular nilpotent orbit.
- ▶ O_{min} is the minimal non-zero nilpotent orbit. Its closure O_{min} is normal with an isolated singularity at 0. It is the orbit of a highest root vector.
- In G_2 , the Hasse diagram is

$$0-A_1-\tilde{A_1}-G_2(a_1)-G_2$$

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Given \mathcal{O}' < \mathcal{O}. Let e \in \mathcal{O}'.
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Definition

A *transverse slice* of $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ at the point *e* is a locally closed subvariety $S \subset \overline{\mathcal{O}}$ such that $e \in S$ and the map

$$G \times S \to \overline{\mathcal{O}}$$

is smooth at (1, e).

If S is a slice, then $S \cap \mathcal{O}' = e$ (and reduced).

As we'll see in moment, slices always exist in the present situation.

Smooth Equivalence

We say two singularities $x \in X$ and $y \in Y$ are *smoothly equivalent* if there exists a variety Z and two morphisms

$$(X,x) \stackrel{\varphi}{\leftarrow} (Z,z) \stackrel{\psi}{\rightarrow} (Y,y)$$

with φ and ψ smooth at z.

We then write Sing(X, x) = Sing(Y, y).

Smooth equivalence preserves various (analytic) properties at x:

smoothness, normality, unibranchness, rational singularities

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Given a transverse slice $\mathcal{S} \subset \bar{\mathcal{O}}$ at \emph{e} , we have

$$\operatorname{Sing}(S, e) = \operatorname{Sing}(\overline{\mathcal{O}}, e).$$

There exists a natural slice, called the Slodowy slice.

Given nilpotent e, one can find an \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triple (e, h, f) in \mathfrak{g} , meaning

$$[e, f] = h,$$
 $[h, e] = 2e,$ $[h, f] = -2f$

We denote by \mathfrak{g}^f the centralizer of f in \mathfrak{g} . Then the affine subspace

$$S_e := e + \mathfrak{g}^f$$

is a transverse slice in $\mathfrak g$ at the point e.

And $S_e \cap \overline{\mathcal{O}}$ is a transverse slice in $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ at e.

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And $S_e \cap \overline{\mathcal{O}}$ is a transverse slice in $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ at *e*.

The reductive centralizer $Z := G^{\langle e,h,f \rangle}$ acts on $S_e = e + \mathfrak{g}^f$, and also on $S_e \cap \overline{\mathcal{O}}$.

In general, $S_e \cap \overline{\mathcal{O}}$ is not irreducible (always connected).

So the component group $A(e) := Z/Z^0$ will act on the irreducible components.

Goal

Identify $Sing(S_e \cap \overline{O}, e)$ together with the action of A(e)

For now, let $\mathcal{O}' < \mathcal{O}$ be adjacent in the partial order. Called a minimal degeneration.

In this case, the variety $S_e \cap \bar{\mathcal{O}}$ has an isolated singularity at e.

There are two families of singularities that arise in all but a finite number of cases.

- ► A-D-E or Du Val singularities (in the case of dimension two).
- ► Those associated to minimal nilpotent orbits (in the case of dimension ≥ 4.)

For each simple Lie algebra, we refer to the singularity of $\overline{\mathcal{O}}_{min}$ at 0 according to lower case letters:

$a_n, b_n, c_n, d_n, g_2, f_4, e_6, e_7, e_8.$

Some of these varieties carry natural actions which fix 0, coming from outer automorphisms of g. We write these as:

$$a_n^+, d_n^+, d_4^{++}, e_6^+,$$

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- Take a finite subgroup $\Gamma \subset \textit{SL}_2(\mathbb{C})$
- Define $X = \mathbb{C}^2 / \Gamma$, the quotient.
- The functions on X are the invariant functions $\mathbb{C}[x, y]^{\Gamma}$.
- X is two-dimensional, normal, and has an isolated singularity at 0.

Which Γ are possible?



 Γ' is the (rotational) symmetry group of a polyhedron.

- elongated pyramid \rightarrow cyclic group of order *n*
- elongated double pyramid \rightarrow dihedral group of order 2*n*
- ▶ tetrahedron, cube, icosahedron \rightarrow Alt₄, S_4 , Alt₅.

So Γ is a cover of Γ' with kernel of order at most 2.

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$$\{\pm I\}$$
 \downarrow
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Table of A-D-E singularities

Name	Equation	Group	Resolution graph
A_n	$x^2+y^2+z^{n+1}\\$	cyclic $\mathbb{Z}/(n+1)$	000
D_n	$x^2 + y^2 z + z^{n-1}$	binary dihedral BD _{4(n-2)}	0 — 0 — 0 — 0 0
E_6	$x^2 + y^3 + z^4$	binary tetrahedral	0 — 0 — 0 — 0 — 0 0
E_7	$x^2 + y^3 + yz^3$	binary octahedral	o — o — o — o — o — o 0
E_8	$x^2 + y^3 + z^5$	binary icosabedral	o — o — o — o — o — o — o 0

Part of the McKay correspondence story

These surfaces X also have automorphisms corresponding to the automorphisms of the Dynkin diagram. Corresponds to permuting the \mathbb{P}^{1} 's.

From the perspective of the finite group Γ , the automorphisms are induced from the normalizer of Γ in SL_2 .

For example, $V_4 = \Gamma'_{D_4}$ is normal in $S_4 = \Gamma'_{E_7}$ and the quotient is S_3 . This gives triality for D_4 . Refer to singularity of type X according to the type of its Dynkin diagram:

$$A_n, D_n, E_6, E_7, E_8$$

and accounting for the automorphisms:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} B_n = A_{2n-1}^+ & := & A_{2n-1} \text{ with } S_2\text{-action} \\ C_n = D_{n+1}^+ & := & D_{n+1} \text{ with } S_2\text{-action} \\ F_4 = E_6^+ & := & E_6 \text{ with } S_2\text{-action} \\ G_2 = D_4^{++} & := & D_4 \text{ with } S_3\text{-action} \end{array}$$

Note: $A_1 = a_1$.

How do these arise as singularities of slices?

Theorem (Brieskorn, 1970)

Suppose that \mathfrak{g} is of ADE type Γ . Then

$$\mathsf{Sing}(\overline{\mathcal{O}}_{\mathsf{reg}}, \mathcal{O}_{\mathsf{subreg}}) = \mathsf{\Gamma}$$

is an ADE singularity of the same type.

Slodowy explained what happens for non simply-laced Lie algebras:

$$B_n = A_{2n-1}^+$$

$$C_n = D_{n+1}^+$$

$$F_4 = E_6^+$$

$$G_2 = D_4^{++}$$

and the action is the one coming from A(e).

Theorem (Kraft-Procesi, case of \mathfrak{sl}_n)

If the r first lines and the s first columns of λ et μ are identical, and if $\hat{\lambda}$ and $\hat{\mu}$ are the partitions obtained by removing those common lines and columns, then

$$\mathsf{Sing}(\overline{\mathcal{O}}_{\lambda},\mathcal{O}_{\mu})=\mathsf{Sing}(\overline{\mathcal{O}}_{\hat{\lambda}},\mathcal{O}_{\hat{\mu}})$$

Eventually we get down to one of the two cases for a smaller rank $\mathfrak{{sl}}.$

It follows that all minimal degenerations are either:

- ► *A_k* (codimension 2)
- a_k (codimension > 2)

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Example: type A_5



Kraft-Procesi (1982)

In other classical types, if $\mathcal{O}' < \mathcal{O}$ a minimal degeneration, then $\operatorname{Sing}(\overline{\mathcal{O}}, \mathcal{O}')$ is equivalent to one of the following:

$$A_{2k-1} \\ D_k \\ A_{2k-1} \cup A_{2k-1} \\ b_k \\ c_k \\ d_k \\ d_k$$

Proposition (FJLS, 2012)

In the classical groups B_n , C_n , D_n , the component group A(e) acts as transitively as it possible can on irreducible components of minimal degenerations.

We must work in the full orthogonal group in type D.

The minimal degenerations with A(e)-action are:

$$B_k := A_{2k-1}^+$$

$$C_k := D_{k+1}^+$$

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In C_6 , which is Sp_{12} , orbits correspond to certain partitions of 12.

- \mathcal{O} corresponds to (5, 5, 1, 1)
- $e \in \mathcal{O}'$ corresponds to (4, 4, 2, 2)
- ▶ Kraft-Procesi say that the singularity is A₃ ∪ A₃.
- $\blacktriangleright A(e) = S_2 \times S_2.$
- one generator of A(e) flips the components, the other acts non-trivially on both components at the same time.

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- $A(e) = S_2 \times S_2$.
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Kraft 1989 Case of G₂.

New singularity, called *m*, for the singularity of \tilde{A}_1 along A_1 .

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbb{C}^2 & \to & \mathbb{C}^7 = \mathbb{C}^3 \oplus \mathbb{C}^4 \\ (u, v) & \mapsto & (u^2, uv, v^2; & u^3, u^2v, uv^2, v^3) \end{array}$$

The normalization of *m* is smooth. The normalization is just \mathbb{C}^2 .

Theorem: In the exceptional groups, the irreducible components of minimal degenerations are:

- ► A-D-E type
- minimal orbit closure (predicted by reductive centralizer, which acts transitively on smooth part)
- ► m
- Sing(A₃ + 2A₁, 2A₂ + 2A₁) in E₈, of dimension 4. It carries action of Sp₄, non-normal but unibranched. Its normalization is C⁴.
- Three distinct cases of dimension 4, that carry an action of SL₂, but **not** transitive on the smooth part:
 - $Sing(2A_2 + A_1, A_2 + 2A_1)$ in E_6
 - $Sing(A_4 + A_1, A_3 + A_2 + A_1)$ in E_7
 - $Sing(A_4 + A_3, A_4 + A_2 + A_1)$ in E_8

Also: A(e) acts transitively on irreducible components of slice

Normality of orbit closures

The singularity $B_k \cup B_k =: 2.B_k$ shows that the orbit $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ is not unibranched at $e \in \mathcal{O}'$. In particular, $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ is not normal at e.

A consequence of the Kraft-Procesi work is that in the classical groups is that this is the only way for $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ to be not normal.

That is, $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ fails to be normal if and only if it if it fails to be normal in codimension two and and the singularity is $B_k \cup B_k$.

In the exceptional groups, normality can fail in three additional ways (and these should conjecturally be all of them):

- ▶ it is branched at a minimal degeneration (e.g. $3.a_1$ or $2.g_2$).
- it is branched at a point farther down (detected by Green functions).
- ▶ the singularity *m* arises (non-normal and unibranched).
- the one case in E_8 (non-normal and unibranched).

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- the one case in E_8 (non-normal and unibranched).

If dim S = 2, general results say S has an isolated symplectic singularity at e and therefore, up to normalization, it is of type A - D - E.

Then we can locate a minimal resolution, similar to the Springer resolution of the whole nilpotent cone, and then use a result of Borho-MacPherson to count the number of \mathbb{P}^1 's over *e* to determine which *A*, *D*, *E* singularity occurs. This invokes using the Springer correspondence and looking up tables of Green functions.

If dim $S \ge 4$, then the singularity is closely related to the minimal orbit in a reductive centralizer of e. Many times, in fact, S is exactly e + this minimal orbit.

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Special nilpotent orbits

Springer correspondence: W = Weyl Group.

 $\{irreducible \ W - modules\} \hookrightarrow$

 $\{(\mathcal{O},\phi)|\mathcal{O} \text{ nilp. orbit, } \phi \text{ irred representation of } A(\mathcal{O})\}.$

A nilp. orbit $\mathcal O$ is called **special** if the irred. rep. $\rho_{(\mathcal O,1)}$ is a special W-representation.

Special nilpotent orbits play a key role in several problems in representation theory:

- Classification of irred. complex rep. of a reductive gp over a finite field
- classification of primitive ideals in the enveloping alg. of a semi-simple Lie algebra

- \mathfrak{g} of type A, every nilpotent orbit is special.
- 𝔅 of type B or C, 𝒪_p is special ⇔ the transpose partition p^t defines a nilpotent orbit in 𝔅.
- g of type D_n, O_p is special ⇔ the transpose partition p^t defines a nilp. orbit in C_n.

If we take the Hasse diagram of *special orbits*, then there exists an order-reversing Lusztig-Spaltenstein involution *d*.

It is obtained by tensoring the corresponding Springer representation by the sign rep (with 3 exceptions).

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It is obtained by tensoring the corresponding Springer representation by the sign rep (with 3 exceptions).

We can also view d as going between special orbits in \mathfrak{g} and those in its Langlands dual ${}^{L}\mathfrak{g}$.

The involution is given by the map $\mathbf{p} \mapsto \mathbf{p}^t$ in the case of types A, B, C.

Goal

Identify the singularities between adjacent special orbits and what happens under \boldsymbol{d}

We can look at the closure of the minimal non-zero special orbit in each simple Lie algebra. This is a normal variety.

In simply-laced cases, minimal orbit is special.

 $g_2^{s_1}$

In the non-simply laced cases, we obtain the varieties:

$$b_n^{sp} := 0 \stackrel{b_n}{\leftarrow} A_1 \stackrel{a_1}{\leftarrow} \tilde{A}_1$$
 $c_n^{sp} := 0 \stackrel{c_n}{\leftarrow} A_1 \stackrel{c_{n-1}}{\leftarrow} \tilde{A}_1$
 $f_4^{sp} := 0 \stackrel{f_4}{\leftarrow} A_1 \stackrel{c_3}{\leftarrow} \tilde{A}_1$
 $p := 0 \stackrel{g_2}{\leftarrow} A_1 \stackrel{m}{\leftarrow} \tilde{A}_1 \stackrel{a_1}{\leftarrow} G_2(a_1)$

These can also be viewed as taking a minimal orbit in a simply-laced Lie algebra and using the outer automorphism.

$$b_n^{sp} = d_{n+1}/S_2$$

$$c_n^{sp} = a_{2n-1}/S_2$$

$$f_4^{sp} = e_6/S_2$$

$$g_2^{sp}=d_4/S_3$$

Theorem, Duality

Let $(\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{O}')$ be a minimal degeneration of two special nilpotent orbits.

- ► Under a technical condition involving Lusztig's canonical quotient, duality interchanges types, just like Kraft-Procesi observed in GL_n:

The A(e)-action is critical. We quotient by part of the A(e)-action and the remaining action determines the duality.

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Type F₄





The duality fails, in some sense, when the A(e)-action does not descend to Lusztig's quotient A

 (e). When it does fail:
 In codimension 2, we always have C_k matched up with c_{k-1}.
 Stranger: in codim ≥ 4, we get some new singularities:

 d_4/S_4 matched with G_2 $d_k/(S_2 \times S_2)$ matched with C_{k-1} .

► Another beautiful phenomenon: the slice between special orbits (when the duality works) always comes from a smaller Lie algebra, except for the three exceptional orbits in E₇ and E₈ (these are the ones where tensoring with sign didn't quite work). There, the singularities are of type A₂⁺, A₄⁺ and a₂⁺, a₄⁺.

Definition

Let \mathcal{O} be a special nilp. orbit. The **special piece** $\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{O})$ containing \mathcal{O} is the locally-closed subvariety of \mathfrak{g} consisting of nilp. orbits $\mathcal{O}' \subset \overline{\mathcal{O}}$ which is not contained in the closure of any special nilp. orbits $\mathcal{O}_1 \subsetneq \overline{\mathcal{O}}$.

Lusztig conjectured in 1981 that every special piece is rationally smooth (i.e. a rational homology manifold).

This has been proved by Kraft-Procesi (for classical types), Beynon-Spaltenstein (for E_n), Shoji (for F_4) and Lusztig (for G_2).

A conjecture of Lusztig

In 1997, Lusztig formulated the following conj. to explain the rational smoothness:

Conjecture (Lusztig)

Every special piece $\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{O})$ is a finite quotient of a smooth variety P/H, and the orbits in $\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{O})$ correspond to the images of points in P whose H-stabilizer are conjugate in H.

- ► Known for classical Lie algebras by Kraft-Procesi (1989).
- ► For exceptional cases, Lusztig has predicted the group H and the correspondence between conj. classes in H and nilpotent orbits contained in P(O).

Conjecture (Achar-Sage, 2009)

Every special piece is normal.

Conjecture

Consider a special piece $\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{O})$ in an exceptional Lie algebra and let $\mathcal{O}_m \subset \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{O})$ be a minimal orbit in $\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{O})$. Then the transverse slice in $\overline{\mathcal{O}}$ to \mathcal{O}_m is isomorphic to one of the following

$$(\mathfrak{h}_n \oplus \mathfrak{h}_n^*)^k / \mathcal{S}_{n+1}$$

where \mathfrak{h}_n is a Cartan subalgebra in A_n on which the Weyl group $W(A_n) = S_{n+1}$ acts and n is an integer between 1 and 4.

This is the analog of Lusztig's conjecture in the setting of slices, since $H = S_{n+1}$.

Theorem

Our conjecture on slices of special pieces holds for all except the following two pieces in E_8 are unknown: $(E_8(a_7), A_4 + A_3) \rightsquigarrow (\mathfrak{h}_4 \oplus \mathfrak{h}_4^*)/S_5$ $(D_4(a_1) + A_1, 2A_2 + 2A_1) \rightsquigarrow (\mathfrak{h}_2 \oplus \mathfrak{h}_2^*)^2/S_3.$

A similar statement is also true in the classical groups, where H is elementary abelian.

Corollary

The normality conjecture of Achar-Sage holds for special pieces except possibly for the above two special pieces.

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