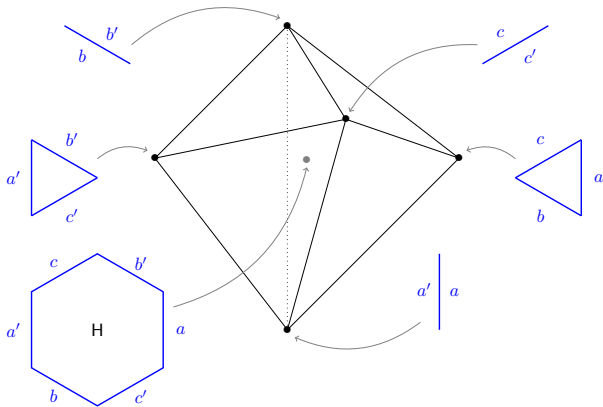


Minkowski indecomposability of polytopes

Germain Poullot with Arnau Padrol

ArXiv: 2512.05307



10 December 2025

- 1 What is a polytope?
 - Two definitions of polytopes
 - Faces and normal fans

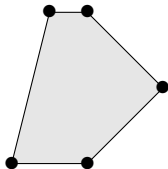
- 2 Deformations (weak Minkowski summands)
 - Minkowski decomposition
 - Cone of deformations

- 3 Graph of edge dependencies
 - Triangle, parallelograms
 - Graph of edge dependencies
 - Applications

What is a polytope?

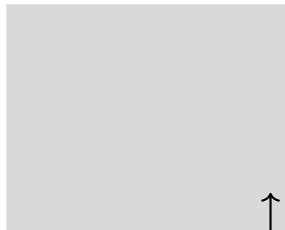
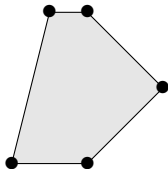
Definition

Polytope: convex hull of finitely many points in \mathbb{R}^n



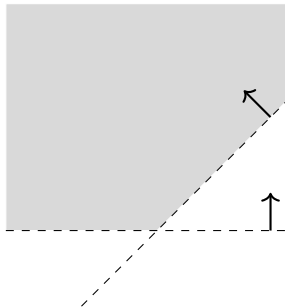
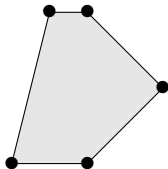
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Polytope: convex hull of finitely many points in \mathbb{R}^n
bounded intersection of finitely many half-spaces in \mathbb{R}^n



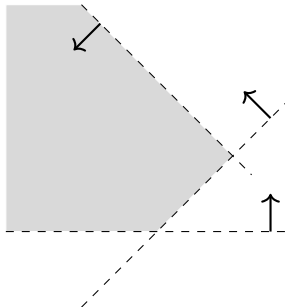
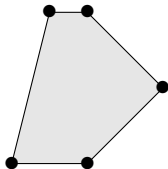
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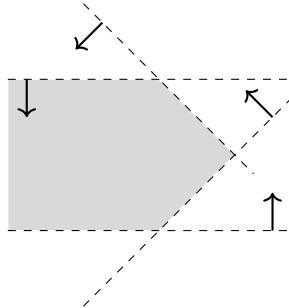
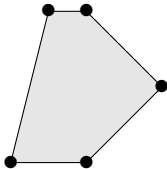
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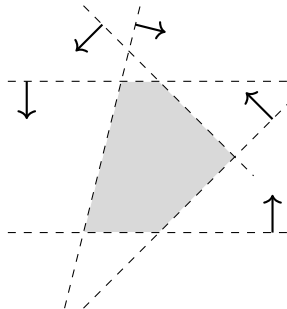
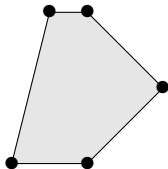
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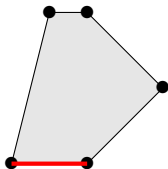
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Face: $P^c := \{ \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n ; \langle \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{c} \rangle = \max_{\mathbf{y} \in P} \langle \mathbf{y}, \mathbf{c} \rangle \}$

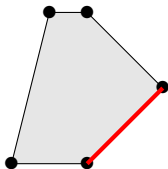


P



Definition

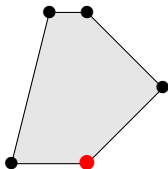
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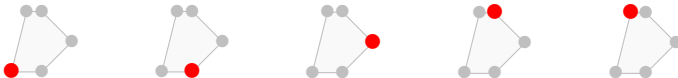


P



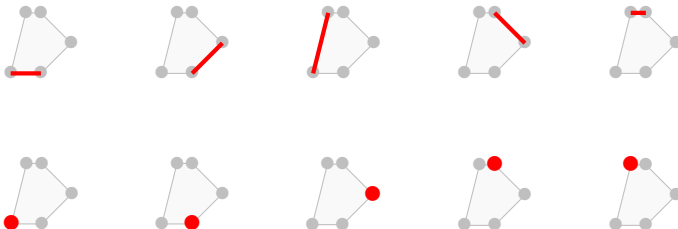
Face lattice

Face lattice: poset of inclusions of faces



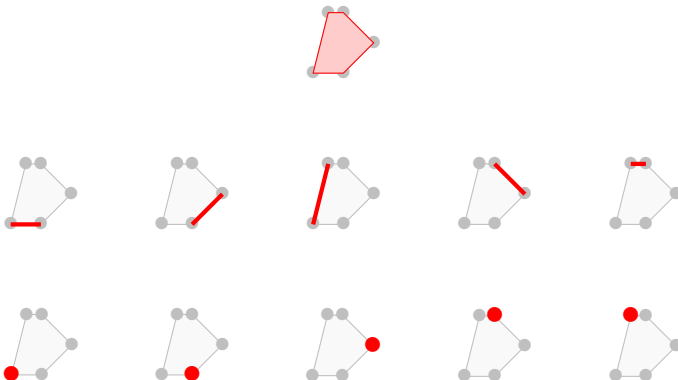
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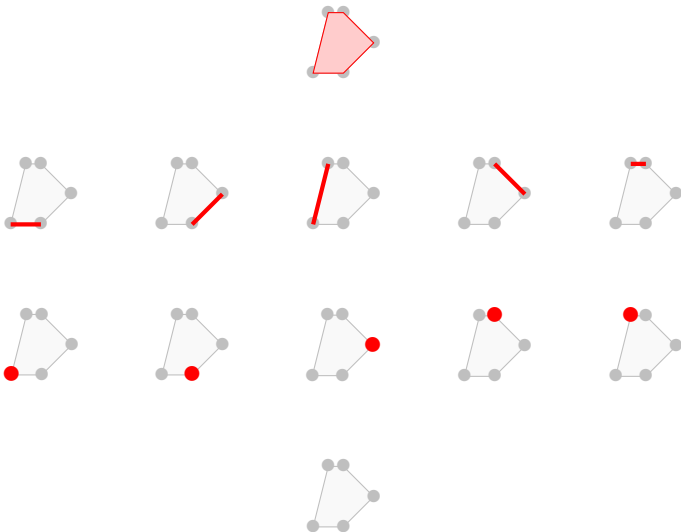
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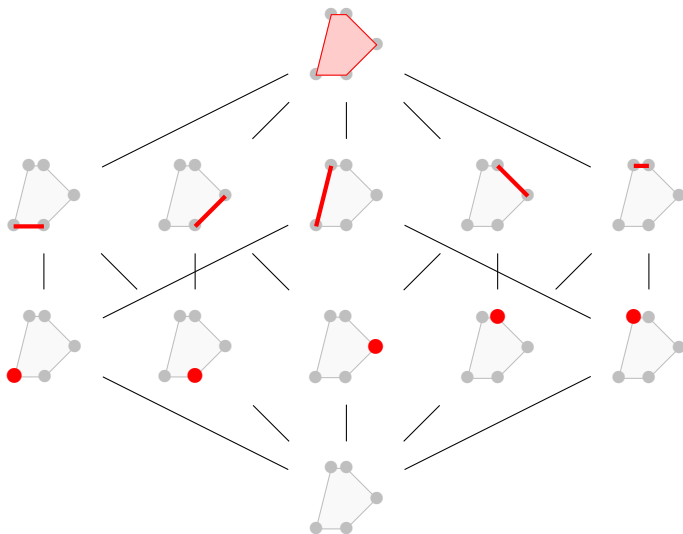
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Deformations (weak Minkowski summands)

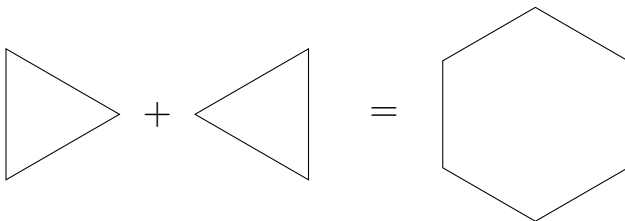
Minkowski sum

Definition

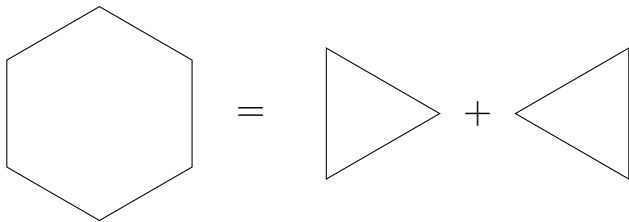
P, Q polytopes. *Minkowski sum*:

$$P + Q = \{ \mathbf{p} + \mathbf{q} \ ; \ \mathbf{p} \in P, \ \mathbf{q} \in Q \}$$

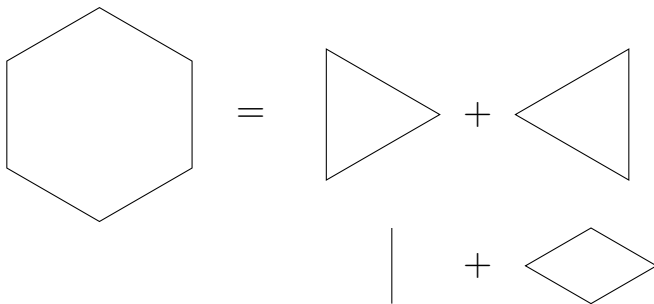
N.B. $\text{Vert}(P + Q) \subseteq \text{Vert}(P) + \text{Vert}(Q)$



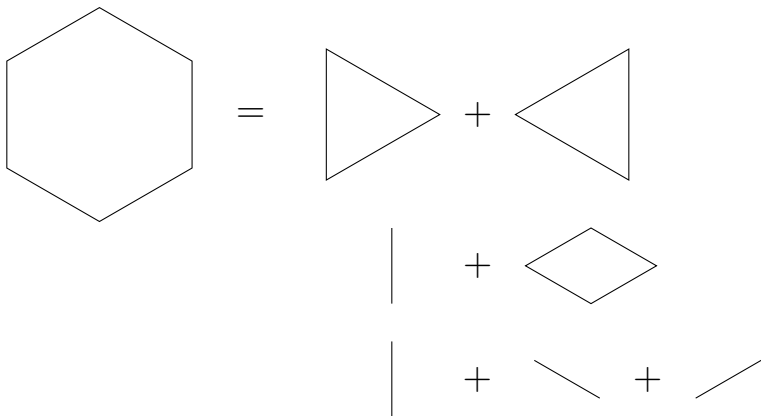
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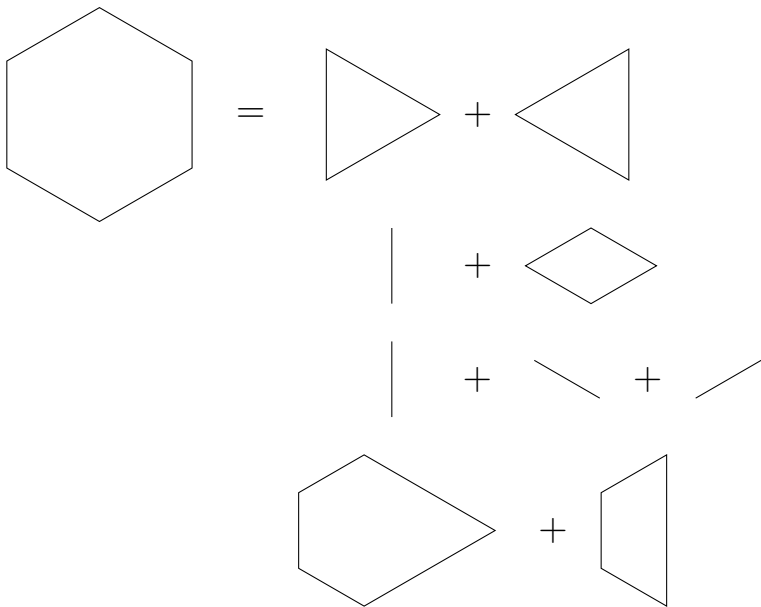
Minkowski sum



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Minkowski sum



Definition

Q is a *Minkowski summand*, a.k.a. *deformation*, of P when there exists R and $\lambda > 0$ with:

$$\lambda P = Q + R$$

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What is the best way to write P as a Minkowski sum ?

- With the fewest number of (indecomposable) summands ?
- With the (indecomposable) summands of smallest dimension ?
- Respecting some symmetries ?
- ...

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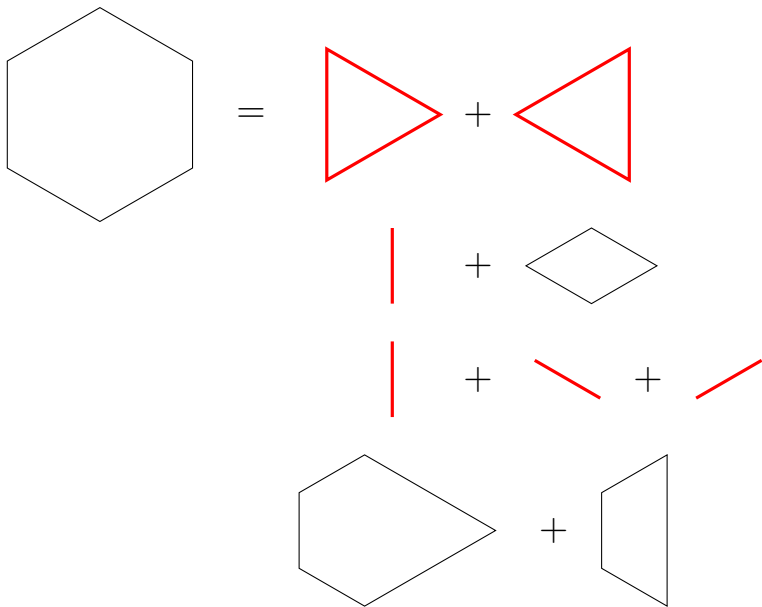
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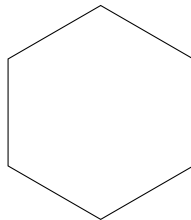
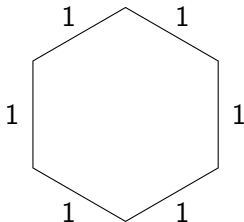
\implies What is the structure of $\mathbb{DC}(P)$?

Minkowski summands



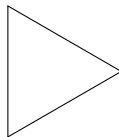
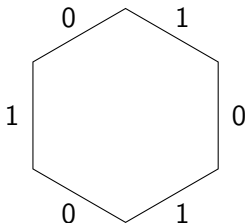
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If $P = Q + R$, then the edges of P “are” edges of Q or of R .
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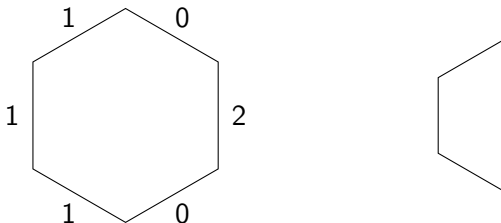
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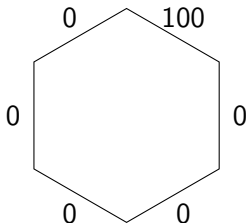
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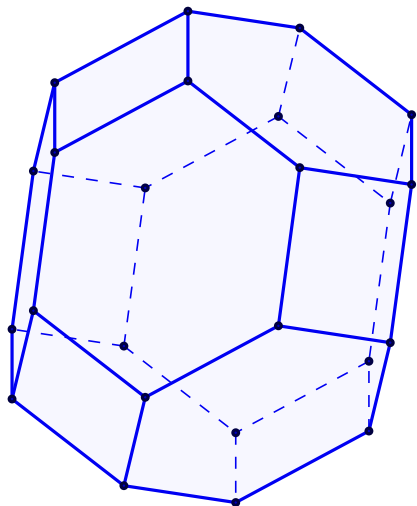


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Deformations of 3-dim permutahedron



Permutahedron Π_4

Sequence of deformations of Π_4

Edge-length deformation cone

Theorem

Q deformation of $P \Leftrightarrow$ same edge-directions, but different lengths

Definition

Edge-length deformation cone: $\mathbb{DC}(P) = \{Q ; Q \text{ same edge-dir } P\}$

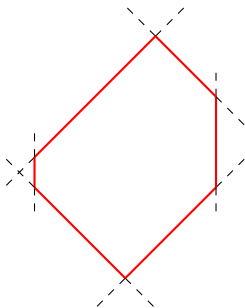
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$$\ell = (\ell_e)_{e \text{ edge}}$$

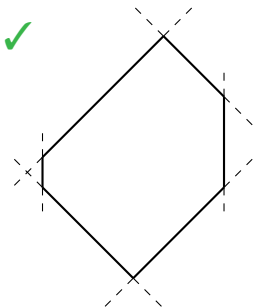
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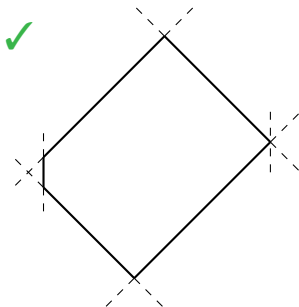
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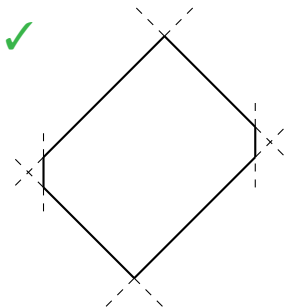
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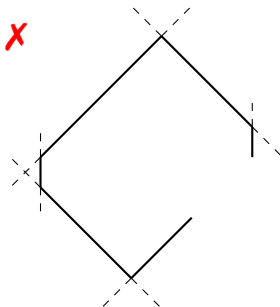
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Cycle equations:

linear equations on ℓ

$$\ell_e \geq 0 \text{ for all } e \text{ edge}$$

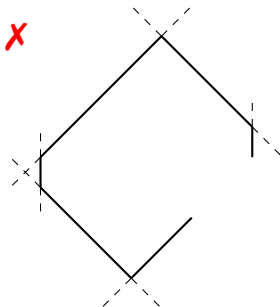
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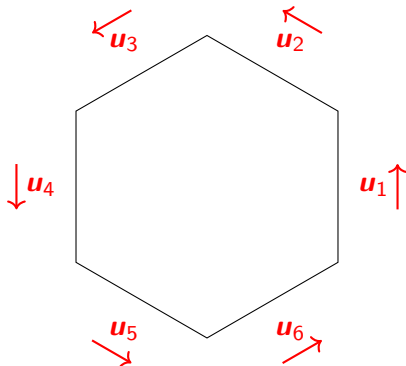
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P_ℓ = start at a vertex, find the coordinates of the other vertices from the graph of P and ℓ

Cycle equations



For F a 2-dim face of P :

$$\sum_e u_e = \mathbf{0} \quad , \quad u_e \text{ unit vector}$$

hence

$$\sum_e \ell_e u_e = \mathbf{0}$$

Summary on $\mathbb{DC}(P)$

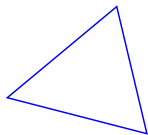
	$\mathbb{DC}(P)$	
Q	ℓ	h
Minkowski summands	edge-lengths	heights on rays
$Q_1 + Q_2$	$\ell_1 + \ell_2$	$h_1 + h_2$
Dilation λQ	$\lambda \ell$	λh
Translations	Has been fixed	Lineal
<i>complicated</i>	edge directions Cycle equations V -description	normal fan \mathcal{N}_P Wall-crossing ineq. H -description
Polytope algebra	Weight algebra	Polynomial algebra

$\mathbb{DC}(P)$ is a ray = P Minkowski indecomposable

$\mathbb{DC}(P)$ is simplicial cone = P has **unique** Minkowski decomposition

Graph of edge dependencies

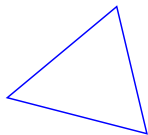
Cycle equation of a triangle, quadrilateral



Triangle:

3 variables (= lengths of the edges)

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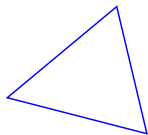


Triangle:

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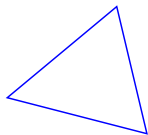
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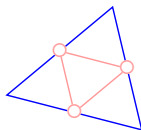
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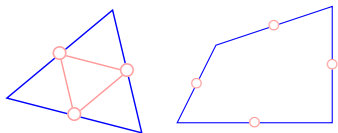
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Cycle equation of a triangle, quadrilateral



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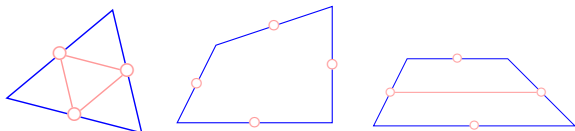
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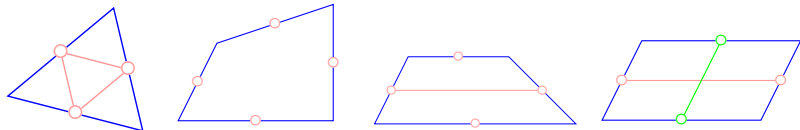
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Cycle equation of a triangle, quadrilateral



Triangle:

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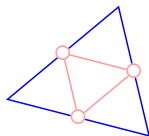
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Graph of edge dependencies

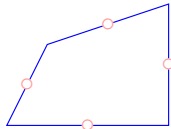
Graph of edge dependencies $ED(P)$:

nodes: edges of P

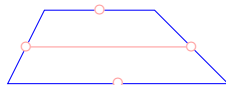
arcs: link two *dependent* edges, i.e. I can deduce the length of one from the length of the other, using the cycle equations



(a) Triangle



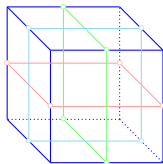
(b) Quadrilateral



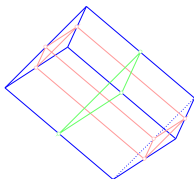
(c) Trapezoid



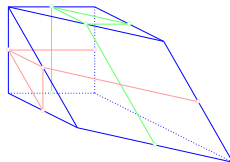
(d) Parallelogram



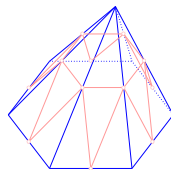
(e) Cube



(f) Prism



(g) Hemicube



(h) Pyramid

Problem 1:

How to find edges of $ED(P)$.

The two problems

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A Gale's criterion, '54

All 2-faces of P are triangles $\Rightarrow P$ indecomposable.

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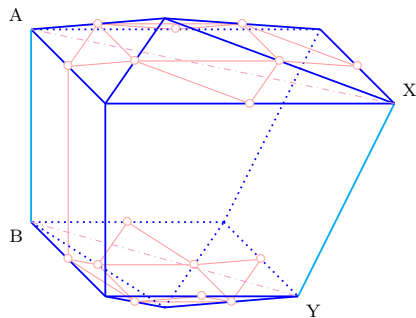
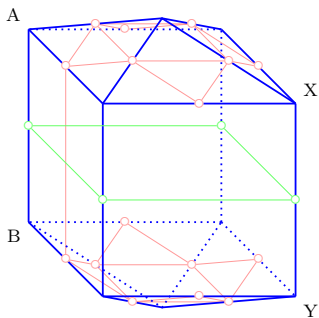
"triangles" \rightarrow edges in $ED(P)$

"all 2-faces" \rightarrow enough edges in $ED(P)$

Problem 1: creating edges

In $ED(P)$, two nodes e, f (\in edges of P) are linked if, e.g.:

- in a common triangle (not necessarily a 2-face),

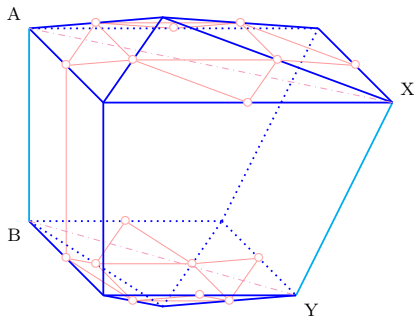
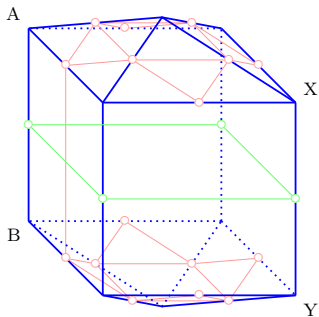


Problem 1: creating edges

In $ED(P)$, two nodes e, f (\in edges of P) are linked if, e.g.:

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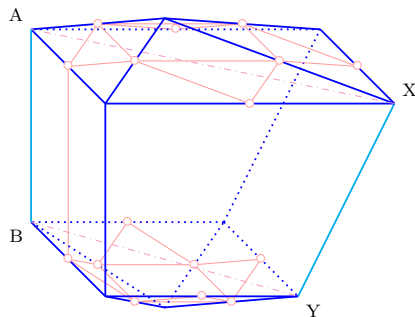
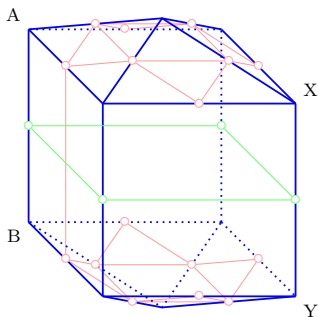
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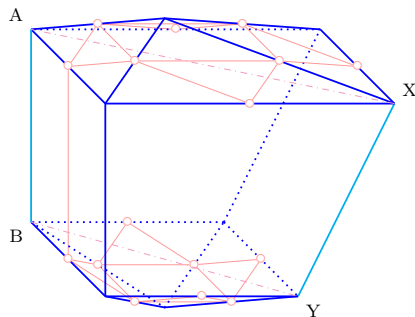
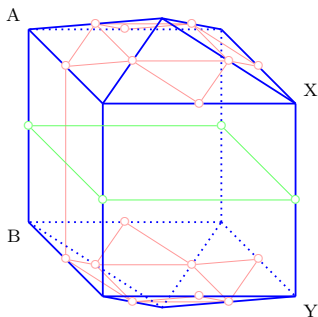
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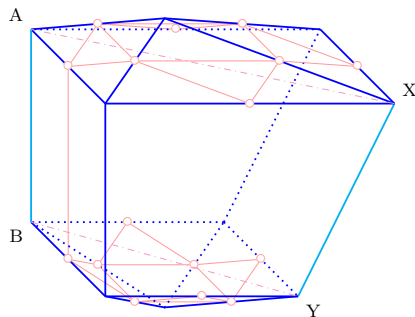
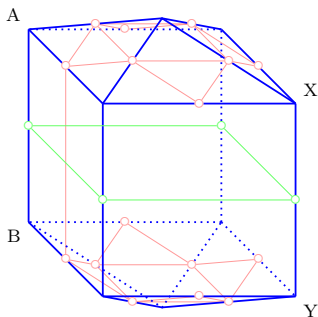
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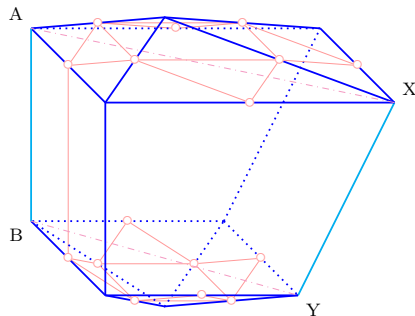
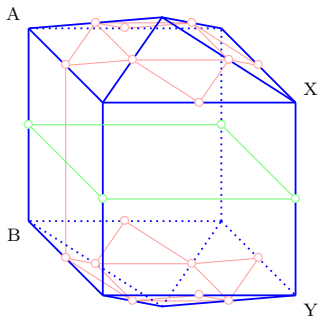


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- ... (there is a nicer way to write these properties)

+ implicit edges



Problem 2: consequences of $ED(P)$

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If there exists a set S of dependent vertices such that every facet contains a vertex of S , then P is indecomposable.

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Corollaries: Gale '54, Shepard '63, Kallay '82, McMullen '87, Yost–Przesławski '08 & '16 criteria...

Corollary (Padrol–P. '25)

If there is $S \subseteq V(P)$, and X_1, \dots, X_r dependent sets of edges with

- any two vertices of S are connected via $\bigcup_i X_i$, and*
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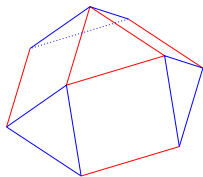
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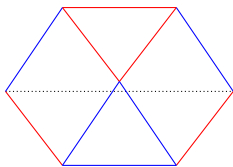
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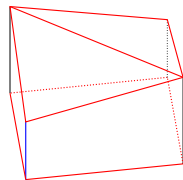
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(a) Triang. cupola

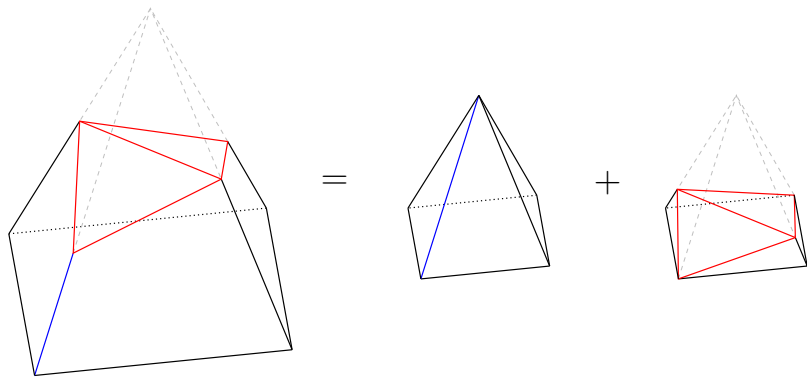


(b) Sum of 2 triangles



(c) Chiseled cube

$\dim \mathbb{DC}(P) = 2$, only one Minkowski decomposition (in 2 terms)



$\dim \mathbb{DC}(P) = 2$, this is the only Minkowski decomposition

New indecomposable generalized permutahedra

Generalized permutahedra: edge directions are $\mathbf{e}_i - \mathbf{e}_j$ for $i \neq j$

Edmonds problem '70: find all indecomposable gene. permut.

New indecomposable generalized permutahedra

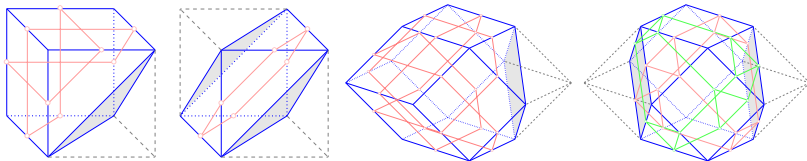
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The *graphical zonotope* of $G = (V, E)$ is: $Z_G = \sum_{i,j \in E} [\mathbf{e}_i, \mathbf{e}_j]$

Theorem (Padrol-P. '25)

For all complete bipartite graphs $K_{n,m}$ (except $n = m = 2$), it is possible to truncate 1 or 2 vertices of $Z_{K_{n,m}}$ to obtain an indecomposable generalized permutahedron.



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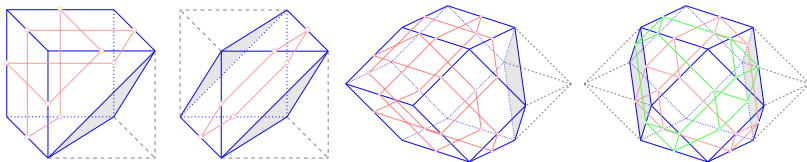
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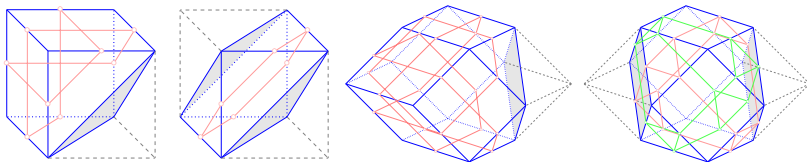
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Loho-Padrol-P.'25: we create $2^{2^{n-2}}$ indecomposable gene. permut.

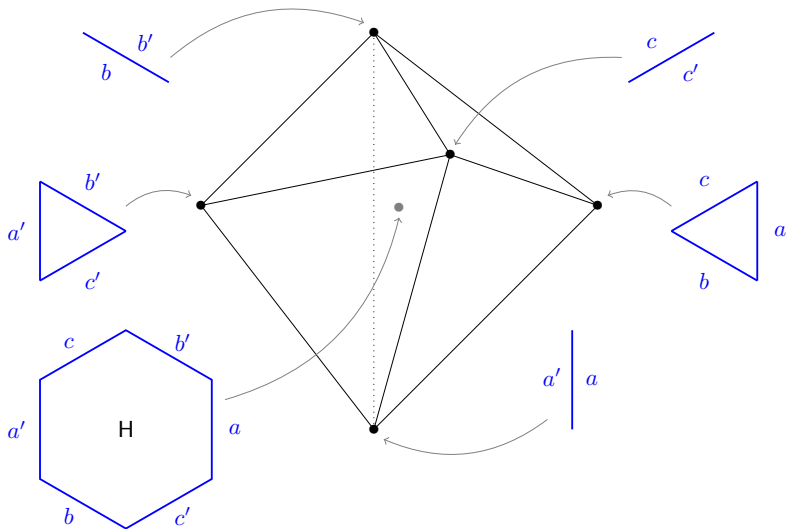
Other applications:

- parallelogramic Minkowski sums, product of polytopes
- “autonomous and dependent” parts of $ED(P)$ give rays of $\mathbb{DC}(P)$
- you can stack/delete vertices on polytopes, study indecomposability
- you can deal with zonotopes whose 2-faces are parallelograms
- new proof: matroid pol. indecomposable \Leftrightarrow matroid connected
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Be careful, $ED(P)$ is not always sufficient for recovering $\mathbb{DC}(P)$.



Merci !

Thank you!

Bonus slides...

What else do I do?

Submodular cone: “Many rays of the submodular cone”

Linear programming: “Vertices of the monotone path polytopes of hypersimplices” & “Pivot polytopes of products of simplices and shuffles of associahedra”

Random polytopes: “Unimodality of the number of paths per length on polytopes: Examples, counter-examples, and central limit theorem”

Ehrhart theory, triangulations: “Ehrhart non-positivity and unimodular triangulations for classes of s-lecture hall simplices”

3D polytopes, framing lattices, polytope/weight algebra, hypergraphs, Grey codes,...

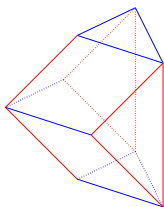
Anything that might contain a polytope somewhere is interesting !!

Parallelogramic Minkowski sums

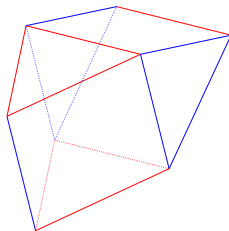
P, Q are in *parallelogramic position* if no edge of P is in a plane spanned by the 2-faces of Q

Theorem (Padrol–P. '25)

P, Q in *parallelogramic position*: $\mathbb{DC}(P + Q) \simeq \mathbb{DC}(P) \times \mathbb{DC}(Q)$.



(a) Diminished trapezohedron



(b) Gyrobifastigium

Corollary (Padrol–P. '25)

$\mathbb{DC}(P \times Q) \simeq \mathbb{DC}(P) \times \mathbb{DC}(Q)$