Stacky Curves in Characteristic p

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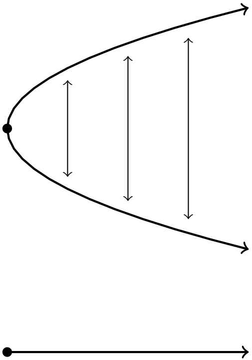
UC SANTA CRUZ

Introduction

Common problem: all sorts of information is lost when we consider quotient objects and/or singular objects.



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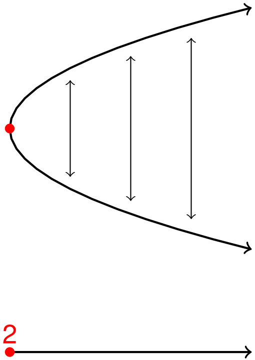
Solution: Keep track of lost information using *orbifolds* (topological and intuitive) or *stacks* (algebraic and fancy).



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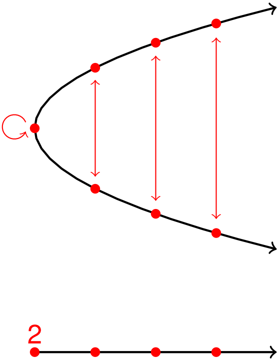

Example: For the plane curve $X : y^2 - x = 0$, stacks remember automorphisms like $(x, y) \leftrightarrow (x, -y)$ using groupoids

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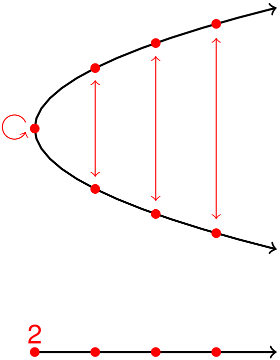
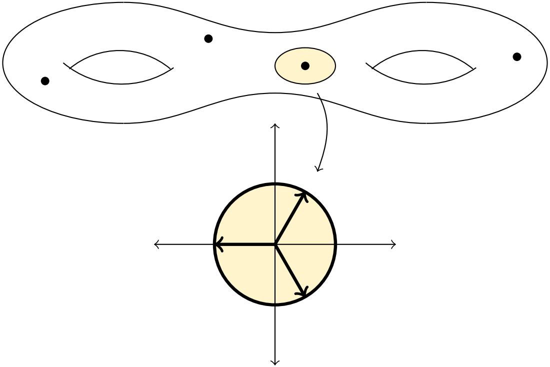


Goal: Classify stacky curves (= orbifold curves) in char. p
(First steps: "Artin–Schreier Root Stacks", arXiv:1910.03146)

Complex Orbifolds

Definition

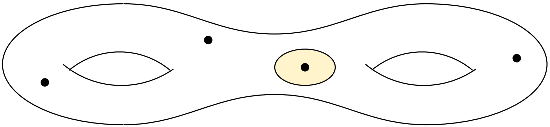
A **complex orbifold** is a topological space admitting an atlas $\{U_i\}$ where each $U_i \cong \mathbb{C}^n/G_i$ for a finite group G_i, satisfying compatibility conditions (think: manifold atlas but with extra info).



Algebraic Stacks

There's also a version of orbifold in algebraic geometry: an **algebraic stack**.

Important class of examples we will focus on are **Deligne–Mumford stacks** $\approx$ smooth varieties or schemes with a finite automorphism group attached at each point.



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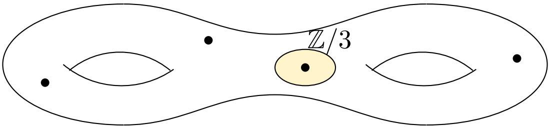

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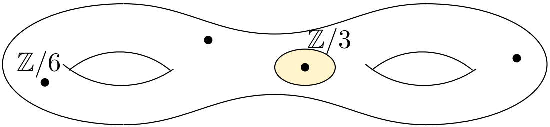

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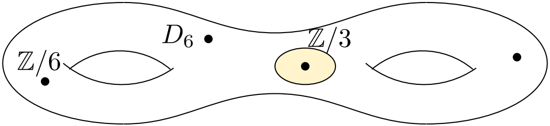

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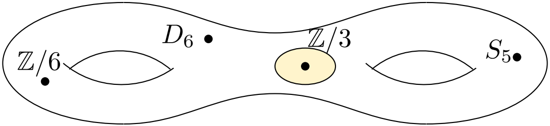

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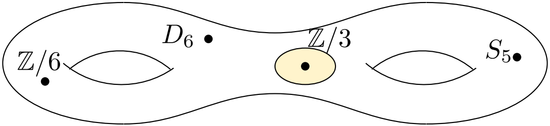


Focus on curves for the rest of the talk

Goal: Classify stacky curves in char. p.

Main obstacle to overcome:

- In char. 0, local structure is determined by a cyclic group action.
- In char. p, this is not enough information – need more invariants than just the order of a cyclic group.

Results (K. '20):

- Every p-cover of curves factors étale-locally through an **Artin–Schreier root stack**.
- Every stacky curve with order p automorphism group is étale-locally an Artin–Schreier root stack.
- For any algebraic curve X, there are infinitely many non-isomorphic Deligne–Mumford stacks with coarse space X and degree p automorphism groups at the same sets of points.

Root Stacks

Key fact: in char. 0, all stabilizers (automorphism groups) are *cyclic*.

So stacky curves can be locally modeled by a *root stack*: charts look like

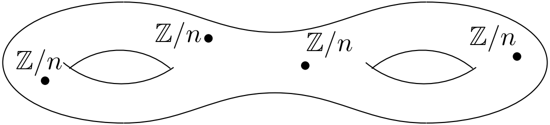
$$U \cong [\operatorname{Spec} A/\mu_n]$$

where $A = K[y]/(y^n - \alpha)$ and μ_n is the group of nth roots of unity.

(Think: degree n branched cover mod μ_n-action, but remember the action using groupoids.)

Root Stacks

More rigorously, Cadman '07 and Abramovich–Olsson–Vistoli '08 define the notion of a **root stack** $\sqrt[n]{(L,s)/X}$ of a scheme X along a line bundle $L \to X$ and a section $s \in \Gamma(X,L)$.



Interpretation: $\sqrt[n]{(L,s)/X}$ admits a canonical tensor nth root of (L,s), i.e. (M,t) such that $M^{\otimes n} = L$ and $t^n = s$ (after pullback).

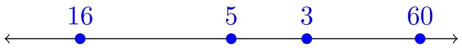
Root Stacks

Theorem (Geraschenko–Satriano '15)

Every smooth separated **tame** *Deligne–Mumford stack of finite type with trivial generic stabilizer is* a root stack over its coarse space.*

Corollary

Tame *stacky curves are completely described by their coarse space and a finite list of numbers corresponding to the orders of cyclic stabilizers at a finite number of stacky points.*



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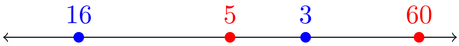


What happens with **wild** stacky curves in char. p?

Artin–Schreier Root Stacks

In trying to classify **wild** stacky curves in char. p, we face the following problems:

1. Stabilizer groups need not be cyclic (or even abelian)
2. Cyclic $\mathbb{Z}/p^n\mathbb{Z}$-covers of curves occur in families
3. Root stacks don't work, e.g. dealing with $M^{\otimes p}$ is a problem

Key case: cyclic $\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$ stabilizers

Artin–Schreier Root Stacks

Idea: replace **tame** cyclic covers $y^n = f(x)$ with **wild** cyclic covers $y^p - y = f(x)$.

More specifically: **Artin–Schreier theory** classifies cyclic degree p-covers of curves in terms of the **ramification jump** (e.g. if $f(x) = x^m$ then m is the jump).

This suggests introducing wild stacky structure using the local model

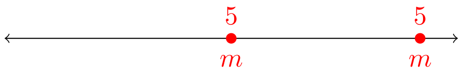
$$U = [\operatorname{Spec} A/(\mathbb{Z}/p)]$$

where $A = k[y]/(y^p - y - f(x))$ and $\mathbb{Z}/p$ acts additively.

Artin–Schreier Root Stacks

More rigorously, in [K. '20] I define the notion of an **Artin–Schreier root stack** $\wp_m^{-1}((L, s, f)/X)$ of a scheme X along a triple (L, s, f) where:

- (L, s) are a line bundle and a section as before;
- $f \in \Gamma(Z(s), L^{\otimes m})$ is an auxiliary section of $L^{\otimes m}$ defined at the zeroes of s.



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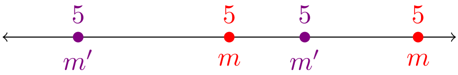

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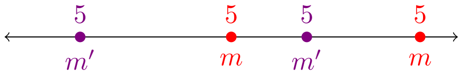

Interpretation: $\wp_m^{-1}((L, s, f)/X)$ admits a canonical pth root of L, i.e. a line bundle M such that $M^{\otimes p} = L$, and an AS root of s.

Classification of (Some) Wild Stacky Curves

So let's classify us some wild stacky curves!
(Assume: everything defined over $k = \bar{k}$)

Theorem 1 (K. '20)

Every Galois cover of curves $\varphi : Y \to X$ with an inertia group $\mathbb{Z}/p$ factors étale-locally through an Artin–Schreier root stack:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} Y & & \xrightarrow{\quad\varphi\quad} & & X \\ \text{ét}\uparrow & & & & \uparrow\text{ét} \\ V & \longrightarrow & \wp_m^{-1}((L,s,f)/U) & \longrightarrow & U \end{array}$$

Informal consequence: there are infinitely many non-isomorphic stacky curves over $\mathbb{P}^1$ with a single stacky point of order p.

This phenomenon only occurs in char. p.

Classification of (Some) Wild Stacky Curves

Main result:

Theorem 2 (K. '20)

Every stacky curve $\mathcal{X}$ with a stacky point of order p is étale-locally isomorphic to an Artin–Schreier root stack $\wp_m^{-1}((L, s, f)/U)$ over an open subscheme U of the coarse space of $\mathcal{X}$.

This can even be done globally if $\mathcal{X}$ has coarse space $\mathbb{P}^1$.

Generalizations

What about $\mathbb{Z}/p^2$-covers, stacky points of order p^2, and beyond?

For cyclic stabilizer groups $\mathbb{Z}/p^n$, Artin–Schreier theory is subsumed by **Artin–Schreier–Witt theory**:

- AS equations $y^p - y = f(x)$ are replaced by Witt vector equations $\underline{y}^p - \underline{y} = \underline{f}(\underline{x}) = (f_0(\underline{x}), \dots, f_n(\underline{x}))$.
- Covers are characterized by *sequences of ramification jumps*.
- Local structure is $U = [\operatorname{Spec} A/(\mathbb{Z}/p^n)]$ where

$$A = K[\underline{y}]/(\underline{y}^p - \underline{y} - \underline{f})$$

  where $\underline{f} = (f_0, \dots, f_{n-1})$ is a Witt vector over $\overline{K}$.

This local structure can be formally introduced using **Artin–Schreier–Witt root stacks** (work in progress).

Generalizations

¡Gracias por su atención!