



Algebraic Complexity Theory

Lecture 2: Circuits for the Determinant; Parallel computation of rank

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Recap

- In the last lecture, we saw examples of problems wherein the output is a polynomial (or a rational function) in the input variables.
- Several of these problems involve computation of the determinant of a matrix.
- We also defined a natural model of computation, namely arithmetic circuits (a.k.a straight-line programs).

Circuits for the Determinant

The determinant

- Let $X = (x_{ij})_{i,j \in [n]}$. Then,

$$\text{Det}_n := \det(X) = \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} (-1)^{\text{sign}(\sigma)} \prod_{i \in [n]} x_{i \sigma(i)} ,$$

- **Question.** How fast can we compute Det_n ?
- The above formula gives an $O(n^n)$ -size, depth-2 circuit for Det_n . This circuit has only $+$ and \times gates.

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- The classical Gaussian elimination method yields a circuit of size $O(n^3)$ and depth $O(n)$. But the circuit has $+$, \times , and \div gates. Also, division by 0 is forbidden!

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- The classical Gaussian elimination method yields a circuit of size $O(n^3)$ and depth $O(n)$. But the circuit has $+$, \times , and \div gates. Also, division by 0 is forbidden!
- Question.** Can we remove \div gates? If yes, we can avoid division by 0.

Removing division gates

- **Theorem.** (*Strassen 1973*) Let $f \in \mathbb{F}[x]$ be a degree- d polynomial that is computable by a size- s circuit C having $+$, \times , and \div gates. Then, f is also computable by a circuit of size $\text{poly}(sd)$ that uses only $+$ and \times gates.

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- **Corollary.** The n^2 -variate, degree- n determinant polynomial Det_n is computable by a $\text{poly}(n)$ size circuit having only $+$ and \times gates.

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- **Proof sketch.** Assume that every gate of C has fan-in at most 2 . If not, transform the circuit appropriately (using binary trees) to ensure that this condition is satisfied. The process increases the size of C by a constant factor.

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- **Proof sketch.** Observe that a gate of C computes a rational function. The idea is to keep track of the numerators and denominators of these rational functions separately using the following relations:
 - $h_1/g_1 + h_2/g_2 = (h_1g_2 + h_2g_1)/(g_1g_2)$
 - $h_1/g_1 \times h_2/g_2 = (h_1h_2)/(g_1g_2)$

Only the o/p gate of the resulting circuit is a \div gate.

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- *Proof sketch.* The o/p \div gate computes $f = h/g$, for some $g \neq 0$. Observe that the degree of h and g could be as high as $D = 2^{O(s)}$. Suppose, $|\mathbb{F}| > D$.
- We'll handle the small field size case later.

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- **Proof sketch.** The o/p \div gate computes $f = h/g$, for some $g \neq 0$. Observe that the degree of h and g could be as high as $D = 2^{O(s)}$. Suppose, $|\mathbb{F}| > D$. Then, there's a point $\alpha \in \mathbb{F}^{|\mathbf{x}|}$ s.t. $c = g(\alpha) \neq 0$, and $g(\mathbf{x} + \alpha) = c \cdot (1 + g)$ for some constant-term-free $g \in \mathbb{F}[\mathbf{x}]$. We'll focus on getting a circuit for $f(\mathbf{x} + \alpha)$ first and then translate it back by $-\alpha$ to compute f .

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Removing division gates

- **Theorem.** (*Strassen 1973*) Let $f \in \mathbb{F}[x]$ be a degree- d polynomial that is computable by a size- s circuit C having $+$, \times , and \div gates. Then, f is also computable by a circuit of size $\text{poly}(sd)$ that uses only $+$ and \times gates.
- *Proof sketch.* Then, $f = h/(1+g) = h(1-g+g^2-g^3+\dots)$.
- Notice that the RHS has a power series expression; cancellation of terms “shrinks” it to a polynomial.

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- *Proof sketch.* Then, $f = h/(1+g) = h(1-g+g^2-g^3+\dots)$.
- Note, $\deg(f) \leq d$ & $\deg(g^i) \geq i$, as g is constant-term-free.
- So, it is sufficient to truncate the above series after g^d .

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- Note, $\deg(f) \leq d$ & $\deg(g^i) \geq i$, as g is *constant-term-free*.
- So, it is sufficient to truncate the above series after g^d .
- **Notation.** Denote the i^{th} homogeneous component of a polynomial p by $p^{[i]}$, i.e., $p^{[i]}$ is the sum of the degree- i monomials of p .


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- *Proof sketch.* Then, $f = h/(1+g) = h(1-g+g^2-g^3+\dots)$.
- Let $p = h(1-g+g^2-g^3+\dots+(-1)^d g^d)$. Then,
$$f = p^{[0]} + p^{[1]} + \dots + p^{[d]}$$


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- Let $p = h(1-g+g^2-g^3+\dots+(-1)^d g^d)$. Then,
$$f = p^{[0]} + p^{[1]} + \dots + p^{[d]}$$
- As h and g are computable by circuits of size $O(s)$, p is computable by a circuit of size $\text{poly}(sd)$.
- Can we compute the homogeneous components of p ?


Computing homogeneous components

- **Lemma.** (*Strassen 1973*) Let $p \in \mathbb{F}[x]$ be a degree- d polynomial that is computable by a size- s circuit having $+$ and \times gates. Then, $p^{[0]}, p^{[1]}, \dots, p^{[d]}$ are computable by a circuit of size $O(d^2s)$.
- **Proof sketch.** For every gate computing a polynomial q , create $d+1$ gates computing $q^{[0]}, q^{[1]}, \dots, q^{[d]}$. 

Computing homogeneous components

- **Lemma.** (*Strassen 1973*) Let $p \in \mathbb{F}[x]$ be a degree- d polynomial that is computable by a size- s circuit having $+$ and \times gates. Then, $p^{[0]}, p^{[1]}, \dots, p^{[d]}$ are computable by a circuit of size $O(d^2s)$.
- **Proof sketch.** For every gate computing a polynomial q , create $d+1$ gates computing $q^{[0]}, q^{[1]}, \dots, q^{[d]}$. 
- **Homework.** Fill in the details. Also, prove a black-box version of the above lemma (using interpolation).

Removing division gates

- **Theorem.** (*Strassen 1973*) Let $f \in \mathbb{F}[x]$ be a degree- d polynomial that is computable by a size- s circuit C having $+$, \times , and \div gates. Then, f is also computable by a circuit of size $\text{poly}(sd)$ that uses only $+$ and \times gates.
- *Proof sketch.* Then, $f = h/(1+g) = h(1-g+g^2-g^3+\dots)$.
- Let $p = h(1-g+g^2-g^3+\dots+(-1)^d g^d)$. Then,
$$f = p^{[0]} + p^{[1]} + \dots + p^{[d]}$$
- Compute $p^{[0]}, p^{[1]}, \dots, p^{[d]}$ using the previous lemma and then compute f using the above equation. 
- How to handle small fields?


Handling small fields

- **Obs.** Let \mathbb{F} be a finite field and \mathbb{K} be a field extension of \mathbb{F} of degree k . If $f \in \mathbb{F}[x]$ is computable by a size- s circuit over \mathbb{K} , then f is also computable by a circuit of size $O(k^2s)$ over \mathbb{F} .

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- **Proof sketch.** Field $\mathbb{K} \cong \mathbb{F}[y]/(h(y))$, where $h(y) \in \mathbb{F}[y]$ is an irreducible polynomial of degree k . A polynomial $g(\mathbf{x}) \in \mathbb{K}[\mathbf{x}]$ can be naturally expressed as
$$g(\mathbf{x}) = g_0(\mathbf{x}) + g_1(\mathbf{x})y + \dots + g_{k-1}(\mathbf{x})y^{k-1}$$
where each $g_i(\mathbf{x}) \in \mathbb{F}[\mathbf{x}]$.

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- **Proof sketch.** For every gate computing $g(\mathbf{x}) \in \mathbb{K}[\mathbf{x}]$, create k gates computing $g_0(\mathbf{x}), g_1(\mathbf{x}), \dots, g_{k-1}(\mathbf{x})$ using the polynomial $h(y)$. 
- **Homework.** Fill in the details. (Similar to the proof of the last lemma)

Handling small fields

- **Obs.** Let \mathbb{F} be a finite field and \mathbb{K} be a field extension of \mathbb{F} of degree k . If $f \in \mathbb{F}[x]$ is computable by a size- s circuit over \mathbb{K} , then f is also computable by a circuit of size $O(k^2s)$ over \mathbb{F} .
- **Note.** In the proof of Strassen's theorem, we may have to work with a field extension of \mathbb{F} of degree $O(s)$.

The determinant

- Let $X = (x_{ij})_{i,j \in [n]}$. Then,

$$\text{Det}_n := \det(X) = \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} (-1)^{\text{sign}(\sigma)} \prod_{i \in [n]} x_{i \sigma(i)} ,$$

- **Question.** How fast can we compute Det_n ?
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- Question.** How fast can we compute Det_n ?
- The Gaussian elimination method yields a circuit (having only $+$ and \times gates) of size and depth $\text{poly}(n)$.
- Valiant, Skyum, Berkowitz, Rackoff '83* gave a general depth-reduction result for circuits. (We'll discuss this later)
- Borodin, von zur Gathen, Hopcroft '82.* $O(n^{15})$ -size circuit of fan-in 2 and depth $O((\log n)^2)$ over any field, using the above depth reduction result.

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- **Question.** How fast can we compute Det_n ?
- The Gaussian elimination method yields a circuit (having only $+$ and \times gates) of size and depth $\text{poly}(n)$.
- But there are *low-depth circuits* for Det_n of significantly smaller size than what Gaussian elimination provides.

Low depth circuits for \det_n

- History:

1. *Csanky '76*. $O(n^4)$ -size circuit of depth $O((\log n)^2)$ over fields of characteristic 0 or $> n$.

- We'll discuss this algorithm in details.

Low depth circuits for \det_n

- History:

1. *Csanky '76*. $O(n^4)$ -size circuit of depth $O((\log n)^2)$ over fields of characteristic 0 or $> n$.
2. *Berkowitz '84*. $O(n^4 \log n)$ -size circuit of depth $O((\log n)^2)$ over any field.
3. *Chistov '84; Pippenger 2022*. $O(n^4 \log n)$ -size circuit of depth $O((\log n)^2)$ over any field.

- These circuits have fanin bounded by 2.

Low depth circuits for \det_n

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4. *Gupta, Kamath, Kayal, Saptharishi 2013; Tavenas 2013*. $n^{O(\sqrt{n})}$ -size (unbounded fanin) depth 3 circuit over any field. (We'll discuss this result later)

Csanky's algorithm: The idea

- Focus on $n = 2$, i.e., $X = (x_{ij})_{i,j \in [2]}$. Let y_1, y_2 be the eigenvalues of X . Then, $\det(X) = y_1 y_2$.
- Also, $\text{tr}(X) = y_1 + y_2$ and $\text{tr}(X^2) = y_1^2 + y_2^2$, where $\text{tr}(X)$ is the trace of X .

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- Hence, $\det(X) = \frac{1}{2} \cdot (\text{tr}(X)^2 - \text{tr}(X^2))$.
- We can compute \det by computing X, X^2 and then computing their traces, provided $\text{char}(\mathbb{F}) \neq 2$.

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- **Question.** For any n , can $\det(X)$ be expressed as a polynomial in $\text{tr}(X), \dots, \text{tr}(X^n)$?

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- **Question.** For any n , can $\det(X)$ be expressed as a polynomial in $\text{tr}(X), \dots, \text{tr}(X^n)$? **Yes!**
- Although the eigenvalues of X are *not* polynomials in the entries of X , $\text{tr}(X^i)$ is.

Csanky's algorithm

- Let $X = (x_{ij})_{i,j \in [n]}$ & $y = \{y_1, \dots, y_n\}$ the eigenvalues of X .
- The characteristic polynomial of X ,
$$h(y) = \det(yI_n - X) = (y - y_1) \cdot \dots \cdot (y - y_n)$$
$$= y^n + s_1 y^{n-1} + \dots + s_n, \text{ where } s_i = (-1)^i \cdot \text{ESym}_{n,i}(y).$$
- Each s_i is also a polynomial in $x = \{x_{ij}\}_{i,j \in [n]}$ of degree i .
- Notice that $s_n = (-1)^n \det(X)$. **Goal:** Circuit for s_1, \dots, s_n .

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- Further, $\text{tr}(X^i) = y_1^i + \dots + y_n^i = \text{PSym}_{n,i}(y)$, the i^{th} power symmetric polynomial. Denote $\text{PSym}_{n,i}(y)$ by p_i .

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- Easy to compute p_i from X^i .
- **Question.** Can we compute s_1, \dots, s_n from p_1, \dots, p_n ?

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- The characteristic polynomial of X ,

$$\begin{aligned} h(y) &= \det(yI_n - X) = (y - y_1) \cdot \dots \cdot (y - y_n) \\ &= y^n + s_1 y^{n-1} + \dots + s_n, \text{ where } s_i = (-1)^i \cdot \text{ESym}_{n,i}(y). \end{aligned}$$

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- Further, $\text{tr}(X^i) = y_1^i + \dots + y_n^i = \text{PSym}_{n,i}(y)$, the i^{th} power symmetric polynomial. Denote $\text{PSym}_{n,i}(y)$ by p_i .
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- **Question.** Can we compute s_1, \dots, s_n from p_1, \dots, p_n ?
Yes! using **Newton Identities**

Newton Identities

- **Theorem.** (*Girard 1629, Newton 1666*) For $k \leq n$,

$$ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i = 0; \text{ here } s_0 = 1.$$

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- **Proof.** Polynomial $h(y) = s_0 y^n + s_1 y^{n-1} + \dots + s_n$.
- **Case $k = n$:** As $h(y_i) = s_0 y_i^n + s_1 y_i^{n-1} + \dots + s_n = 0$,
summing over $i \in [n]$, we get $ns_n + \sum_{i \in [n]} s_{n-i} p_i = 0$.

Newton Identities

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- **Proof.** Polynomial $h(y) = s_0 y^n + s_1 y^{n-1} + \dots + s_n$.
- **Case $k < n$:** Every monomial in $ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i$ has support at most k in $\mathbf{y} = \{y_1, \dots, y_n\}$.
- Support of a monomial is the number of variables with nonzero exponents appearing in the monomial.

Newton Identities

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$$ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i = 0; \text{ here } s_0 = 1.$$

- **Proof.** Polynomial $h(y) = s_0 y^n + s_1 y^{n-1} + \dots + s_n$.
- **Case** $k < n$: Every monomial in $ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i$ has support at most k in $\mathbf{y} = \{y_1, \dots, y_n\}$.
- W.l.o.g let m be a monomial in $ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i$ in the variables $\mathbf{y}_k := \{y_1, \dots, y_k\}$. Let $\mathbf{z} = \mathbf{y} \setminus \mathbf{y}_k$.
- **Obs.** The coefficient of m in $ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i$ is the same as that in $[ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i]_{\mathbf{z}=0}$.

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- **Obs.** The coefficient of m in $ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i$ is the same as that in $k[s_k]_{\mathbf{z}=0} + \sum_{i \in [k]} [s_{k-i}]_{\mathbf{z}=0} [p_i]_{\mathbf{z}=0}$.

Newton Identities

- **Theorem.** (*Girard 1629, Newton 1666*) For $k \leq n$,

$$ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i = 0; \text{ here } s_0 = 1.$$

- **Proof.** Polynomial $h(y) = s_0 y^n + s_1 y^{n-1} + \dots + s_n$.
- **Case** $k < n$: Every monomial in $ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i$ has support at most k in $\mathbf{y} = \{y_1, \dots, y_n\}$.
- Notice that $[s_i]_{z=0} = (-1)^i \cdot \text{ESym}_{k,i}(\mathbf{y}_k) = s_i(\mathbf{y}_k)$, and $[p_i]_{z=0} = \text{PSym}_{k,i}(\mathbf{y}_k) = p_i(\mathbf{y}_k)$.
- **Obs.** The coefficient of \mathbf{m} in $ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i$ is the same as that in $k[s_k]_{z=0} + \sum_{i \in [k]} [s_{k-i}]_{z=0} [p_i]_{z=0}$.

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 $= 0$ by **Case** $k = n$

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- **Case $k < n$:** Every monomial in $ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i$ has support at most k in $\mathbf{y} = \{y_1, \dots, y_n\}$.
- Therefore, the coefficient of \mathbf{m} in $ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i$ is 0. As \mathbf{m} is chosen arbitrarily,

$$ks_k + \sum_{i \in [k]} s_{k-i} p_i = 0.$$



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- **Ref.** See the wiki page on Newton Identities for more on the *power symmetric*, the *elementary symmetric*, and the *complete homogeneous symmetric polynomial*.

Csanky's algorithm

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- | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 0 | 0 | ... | 0 |
| p_1 | 2 | 0 | ... | 0 |
| p_2 | p_1 | 3 | ... | 0 |
| \vdots | \vdots | \vdots | \ddots | \vdots |
| p_{n-1} | p_{n-2} | ... | p_1 | n |

 \cdot

s_1
s_2
s_3
\vdots
s_n

 $=$
 $-$

p_1
p_2
p_3
\vdots
p_n

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|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 0 | 0 | ... | 0 |
| $p_1/2$ | 1 | 0 | ... | 0 |
| $p_2/3$ | $p_1/3$ | 1 | ... | 0 |
| \vdots | \vdots | \vdots | \ddots | \vdots |
| p_{n-1}/n | p_{n-2}/n | ... | p_1/n | 1 |

 \cdot

s_1
s_2
s_3
\vdots
s_n

 $=$ $-$

p_1
$p_2/2$
$p_3/3$
\vdots
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Provided $\text{char}(\mathbb{F}) > n$.

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 \cdot

s_1
s_2
s_3
\vdots
s_n

 $=$ $-$

p_1
$p_2/2$
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\equiv
 $I_n + P$, where P is a nilpotent matrix, i.e., $P^n = 0$

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- | |
|----------|
| s_1 |
| s_2 |
| s_3 |
| \vdots |
| s_n |

 $= - (I_n + P)^{-1} \cdot$

p_1
$p_2/2$
$p_3/3$
\vdots
p_n/n

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- | |
|----------|
| s_1 |
| s_2 |
| s_3 |
| \vdots |
| s_n |

 $= - (I_n - P + P^2 - \dots + (-1)^{n-1} P^{n-1}) \cdot$

p_1
$p_2/2$
$p_3/3$
\vdots
p_n/n

 -- Equation 1

Csanky's algorithm

- **Claim.** Given an $n \times n$ matrix A , we can compute A^2, \dots, A^n using a circuit of size $O(n^4)$ & depth $O((\log n)^2)$.
- **Proof sketch.** The circuit has $O(\log n)$ stages. In the first stage compute A^2 , in the second compute A^3, A^4 , in the third compute A^5, A^6, A^7, A^8 , and so on. The i^{th} stage involves 2^{i-1} matrix multiplications.

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- Multiplication of two $n \times n$ matrices can be computed using a circuit of size $O(n^3)$ and depth $O(\log n)$. So, the overall size of the circuit is $O(n^4)$ and its depth is $O((\log n)^2)$.

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 1. Compute X^2, \dots, X^n .
 2. Compute p_1, \dots, p_n .
 3. Compute P^2, \dots, P^{n-1} .
 4. Compute $(I_n + P)^{-1}$ and s_1, \dots, s_n using **Equation 1**.

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 1. Compute X^2, \dots, X^n . (circuit size $O(n^4)$ & depth $O((\log n)^2)$)
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 1. Compute X^2, \dots, X^n .
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 3. Compute P^2, \dots, P^{n-1} .
 4. Compute $(I_n + P)^{-1}$ and s_1, \dots, s_n using **Equation 1**.
- **Corollary.** Det_n can be computed by a circuit of size $O(n^4)$ and depth $O((\log n)^2)$, provided $\text{char}(\mathbb{F}) > n$.

Computing inverse of a matrix

- As $y^n + s_1 y^{n-1} + \dots + s_n$ is the *characteristic polynomial* of X , by the Cayley-Hamilton theorem, $X^n + s_1 X^{n-1} + \dots + s_n = 0$.
- Hence, $X^{-1} = -s_n^{-1}(X^{n-1} + s_1 X^{n-2} + \dots + s_{n-1})$.
- **Corollary.** X^{-1} can be computed by a circuit of size $O(n^4)$ and depth $O((\log n)^2)$, provided $\text{char}(\mathbb{F}) > n$.
- The above circuit has only one \div gate at the top.

Parallel computation of rank

Schwartz-Zippel lemma

- **Lemma.** (*Schwartz 1980, Zippel 1979*) Let $f(x_1, \dots, x_n) \neq 0$ be a multivariate polynomial of (total) degree at most d over a field \mathbb{F} . Let $S \subseteq \mathbb{F}$ be finite, and $(a_1, \dots, a_n) \in S^n$ such that each a_i is chosen independently and uniformly at random from S . Then,

$$\Pr_{(a_1, \dots, a_n) \in_r S^n} [f(a_1, \dots, a_n) = 0] \leq d/|S|.$$

- *Proof sketch.* Roots are far fewer than non-roots. Use induction on the number of variables.

(Homework)

Linear independence of polynomials

- **Lemma 1.** Let $f_1(\mathbf{x}), \dots, f_m(\mathbf{x}) \in \mathbb{F}[\mathbf{x}]$ be \mathbb{F} -linearly independent n -variate, $\deg d$ polynomials. Then, the determinant of the following matrix is non-zero.

$f_1(\mathbf{x}_1)$	$f_2(\mathbf{x}_1)$...	$f_m(\mathbf{x}_1)$
$f_1(\mathbf{x}_2)$	$f_2(\mathbf{x}_2)$...	$f_m(\mathbf{x}_2)$
$f_1(\mathbf{x}_m)$	$f_2(\mathbf{x}_m)$...	$f_m(\mathbf{x}_m)$

Here, $\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_m$ are disjoint sets of n variables.

- *Proof sketch.* Use induction on m and the Schwartz-Zippel lemma. (*Homework*)

Linear independence of polynomials

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$f_1(\mathbf{a}_1)$	$f_2(\mathbf{a}_1)$...	$f_m(\mathbf{a}_1)$
$f_1(\mathbf{a}_2)$	$f_2(\mathbf{a}_2)$...	$f_m(\mathbf{a}_2)$
$f_1(\mathbf{a}_m)$	$f_2(\mathbf{a}_m)$...	$f_m(\mathbf{a}_m)$

Here, $\mathbf{a}_1, \dots, \mathbf{a}_m \in_r S^n$, where $S \subseteq \mathbb{F}$ and $|S| = |\mathbf{0}|md$.

- *Proof sketch.* Use the Schwartz-Zippel lemma.

Rank computation in NC

- **Remark.** If the input matrix is rectangular, pad it up with zeroes to make it a square matrix.
- **Notation.** Let $[M]_i$ be the principal $i \times i$ submatrix of a matrix M . Let $S \subseteq \mathbb{F}$ and $|S| = 20n$.
- **Algorithm.** **Input:** $A = (a_{ij})_{i,j \in [n]}$
 1. Pick $X \in_r S^{n \times n}$ and $Y \in_r S^{n \times n}$.
 2. Compute $d_i = \det([XAY]_i)$ for $i \in [n]$.
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} all in NC

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- **Theorem.** (*Borodin, Gathen, Hopcroft '82*) The algorithm outputs the rank of A with probability at least 0.9 .
- **Proof sketch.** Define linear forms $f_1(\mathbf{x}), \dots, f_n(\mathbf{x})$ whose coefficient vectors are the columns of A . Use **Corollary I** to argue that the first r rows of XA are linearly independent w.p. ≥ 0.95 , where $r = \text{rank}(A)$.

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- Define linear forms $g_1(\mathbf{x}), \dots, g_r(\mathbf{x})$ whose coefficient vectors are the first r rows of XA . Use **Corollary I** to argue that $[XAY]_r$ has rank r w.p. ≥ 0.95 .