

# Shapes of potential counterexamples to Nivat's conjecture

Mai-Linh Trần Công

– Joint work with Pierre Guillon, Jarkko Kari and Etienne Moutot –

March-June 2025

**Nivat's conjecture is the 2D  
generalization of the  
Morse-Hedlund theorem**

# Pattern complexity

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## Definition

**Alphabet:**

$$\mathcal{A} = \{ \boxed{0}, \boxed{\text{cyan}}, \boxed{\text{green}}, \boxed{\text{purple}}, \boxed{\text{orange}} \}$$

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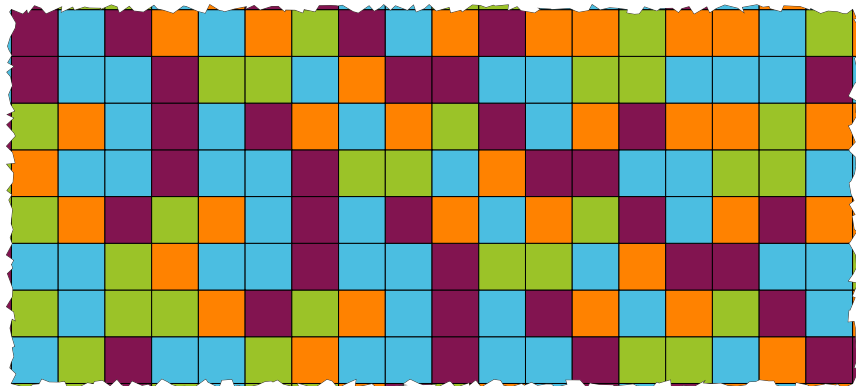
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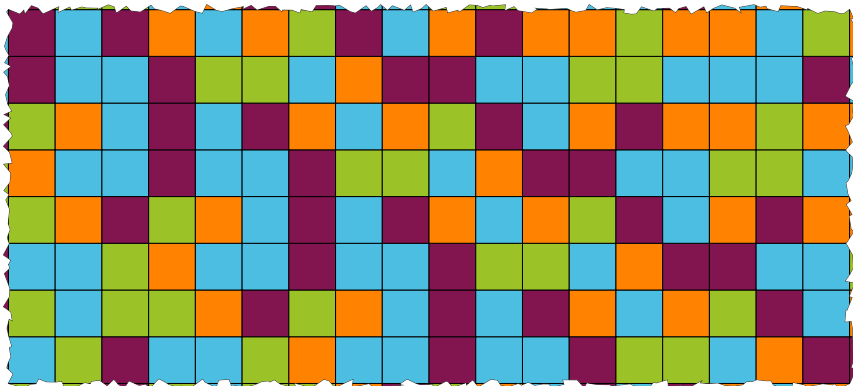


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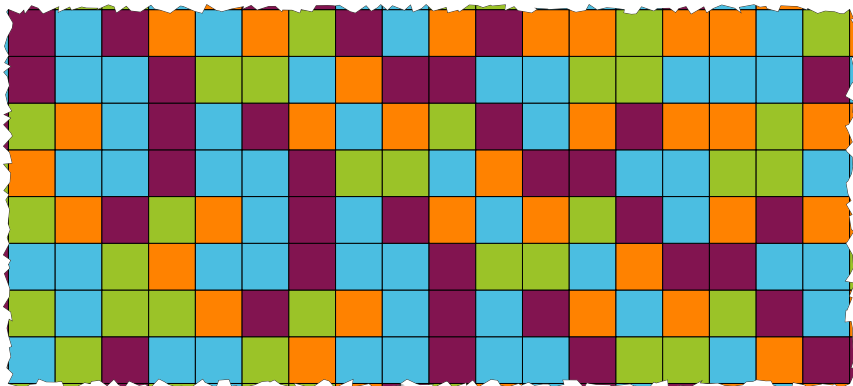
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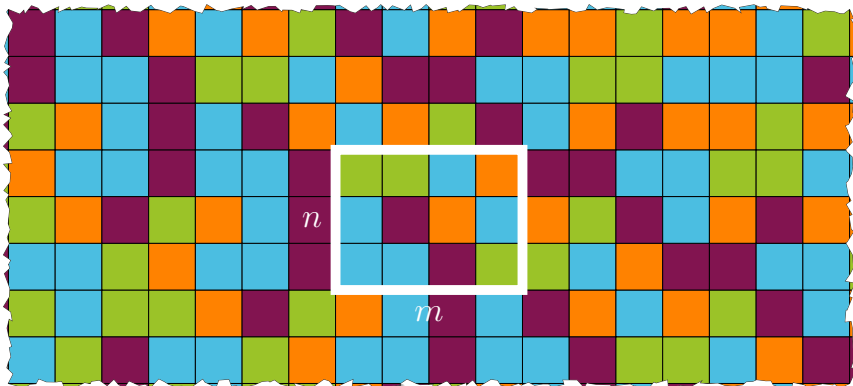
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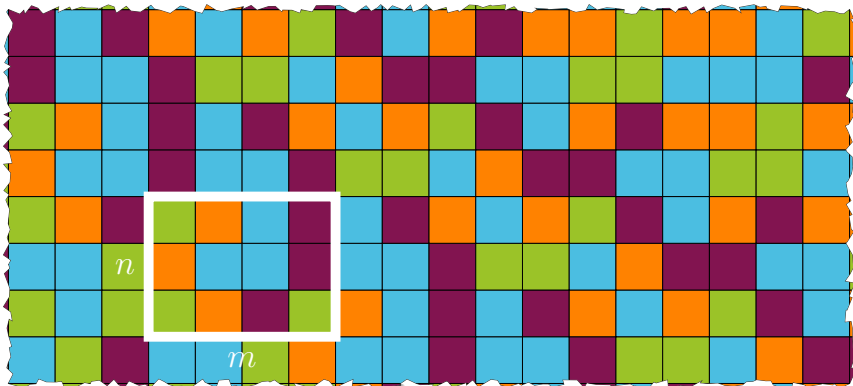
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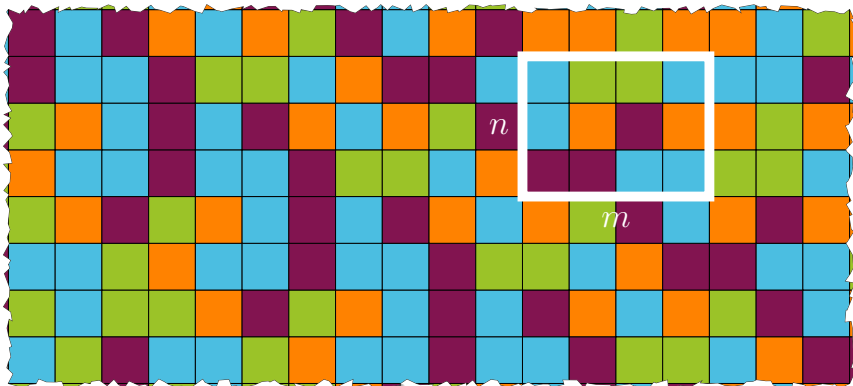
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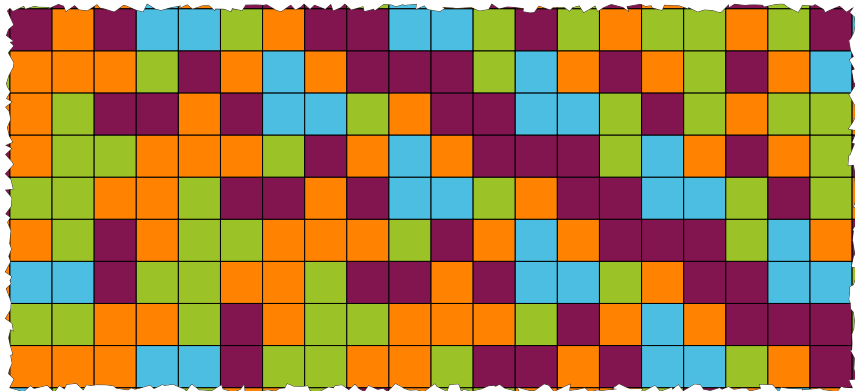
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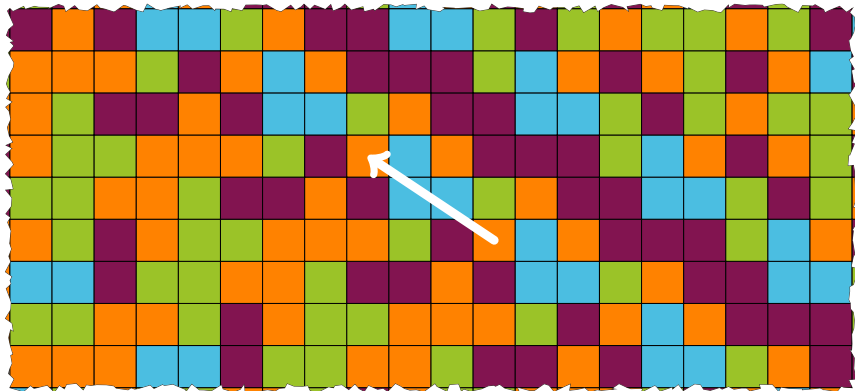


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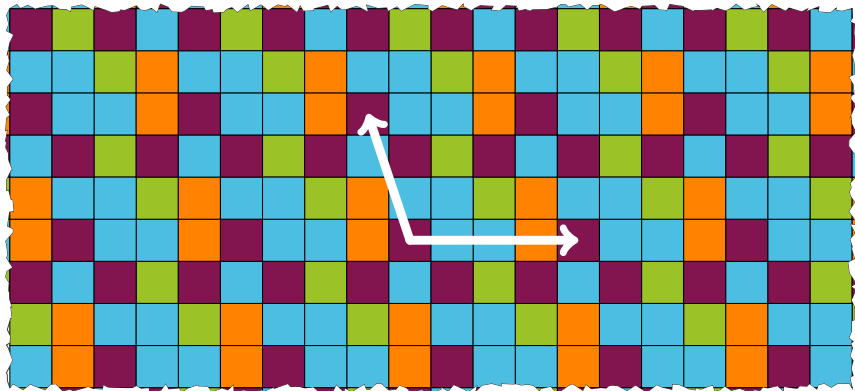


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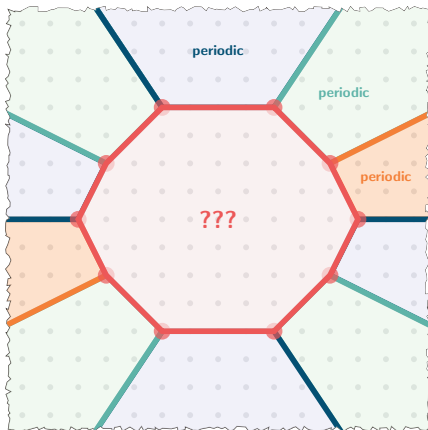
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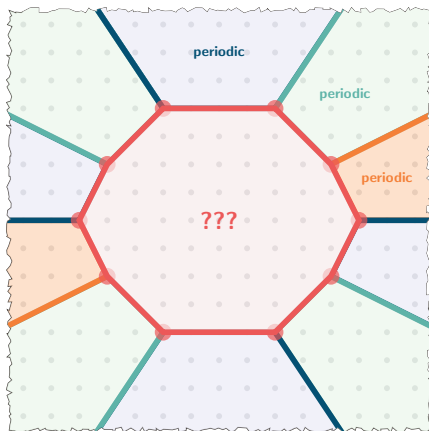
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Using an algebraic approach developed by Jarkko Kari and Michal Szabados [Sza18].

**An algebraic approach  
later...**

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# Focusing on null regions

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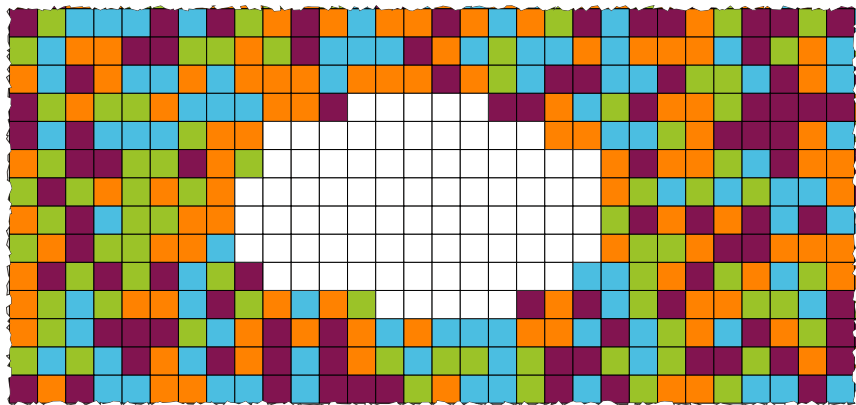
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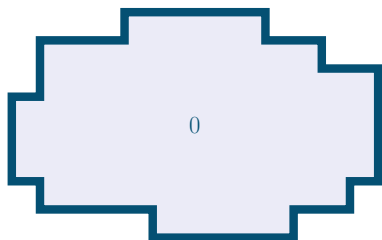


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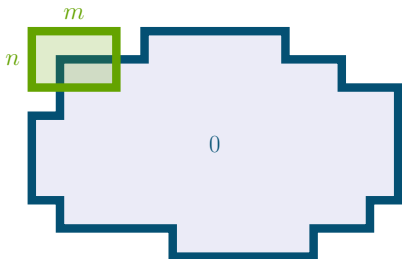
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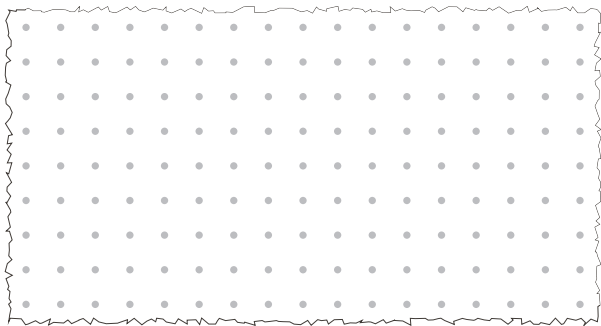
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The algebraic approach provides us with  $m$  lin. independant vectors  $\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_m$  and a set of points  $\phi$  which is their “product”.

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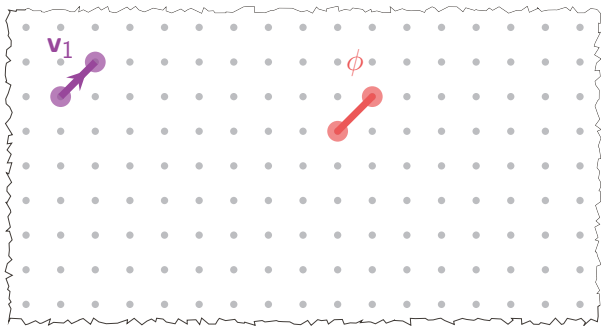
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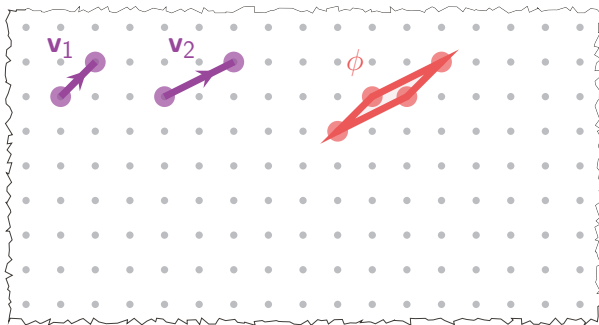
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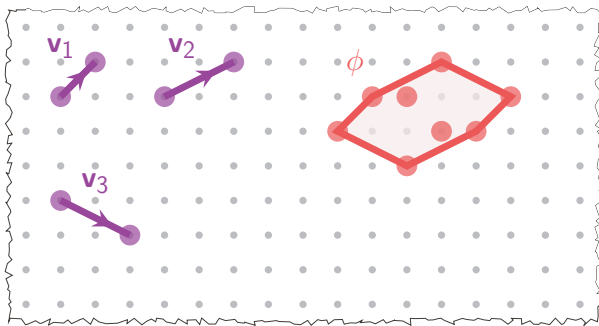
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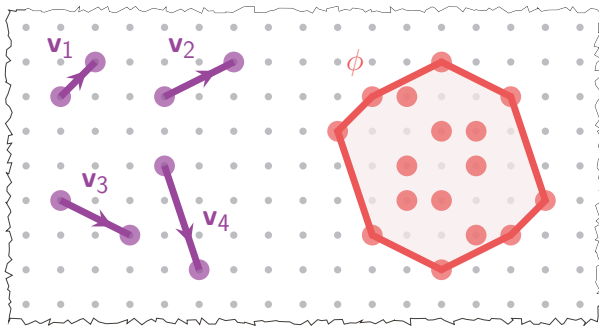
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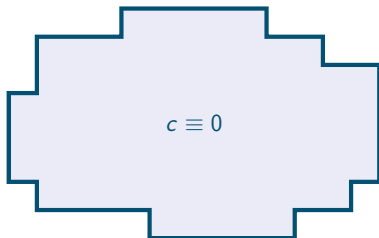
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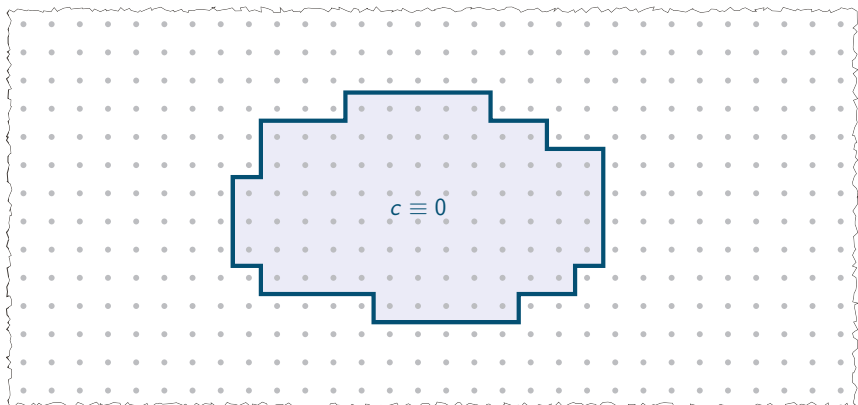
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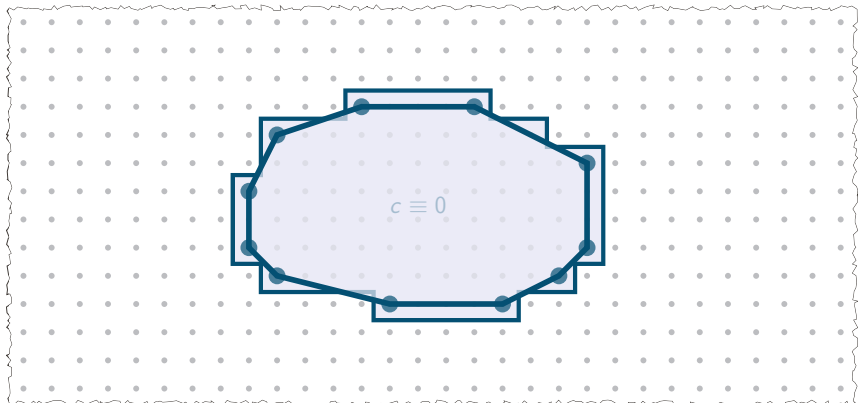


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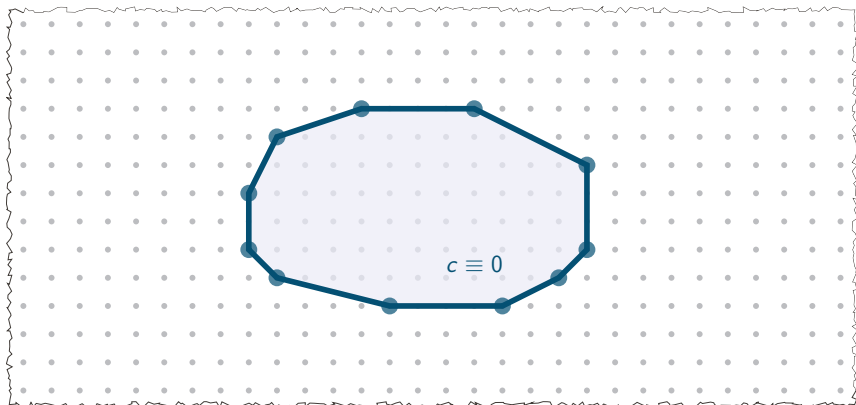


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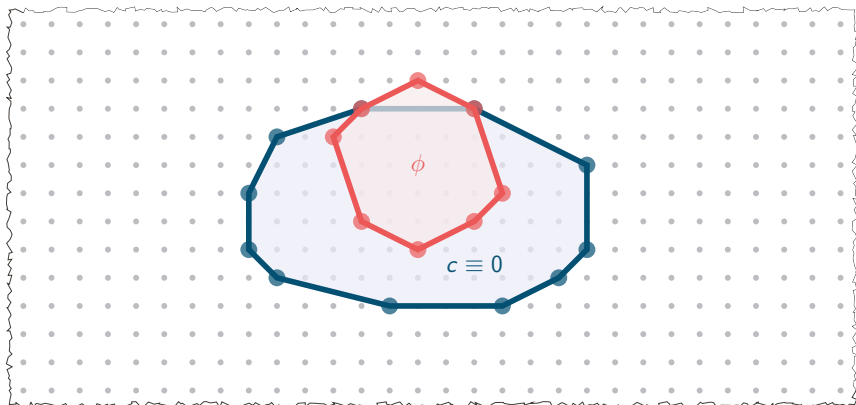


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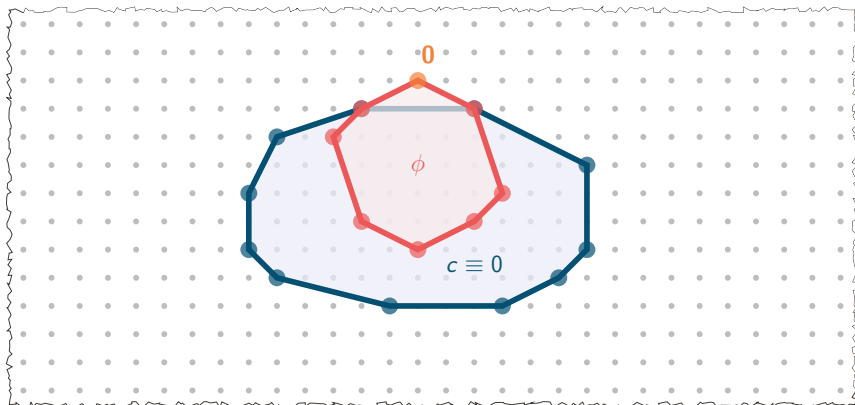


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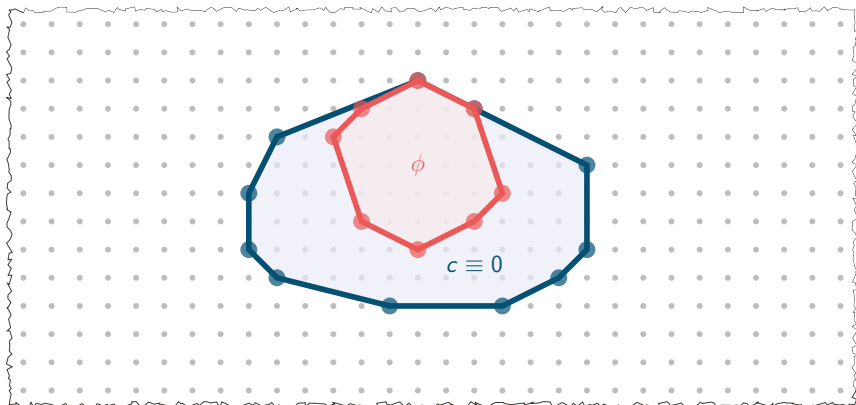


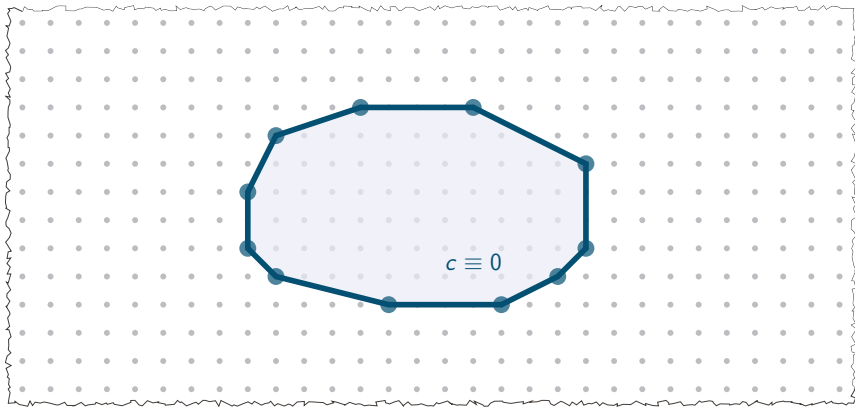
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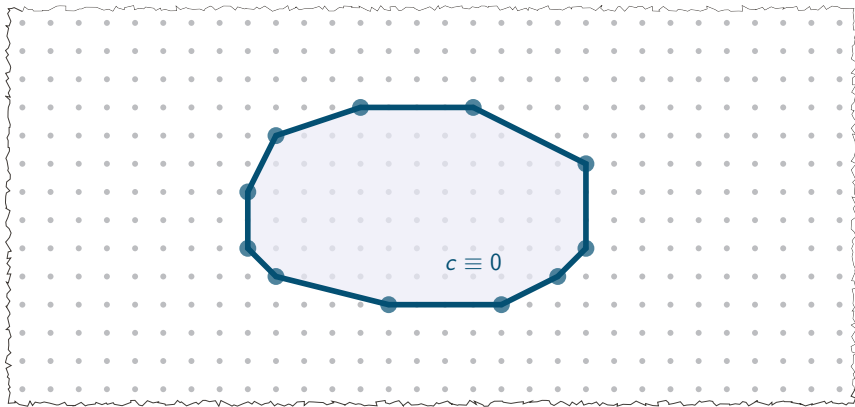
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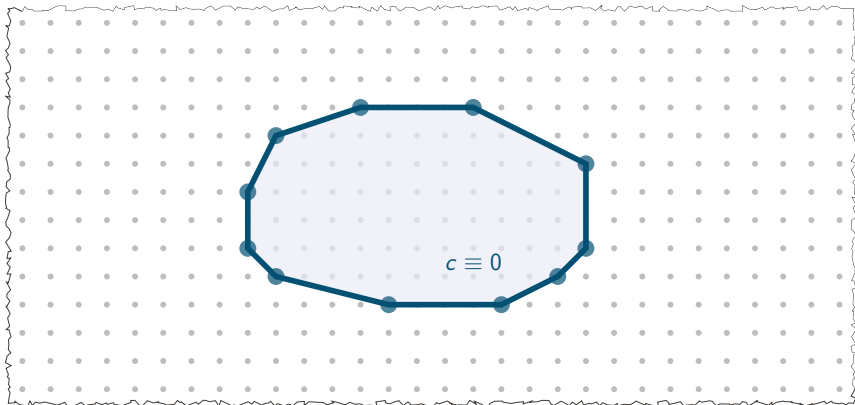
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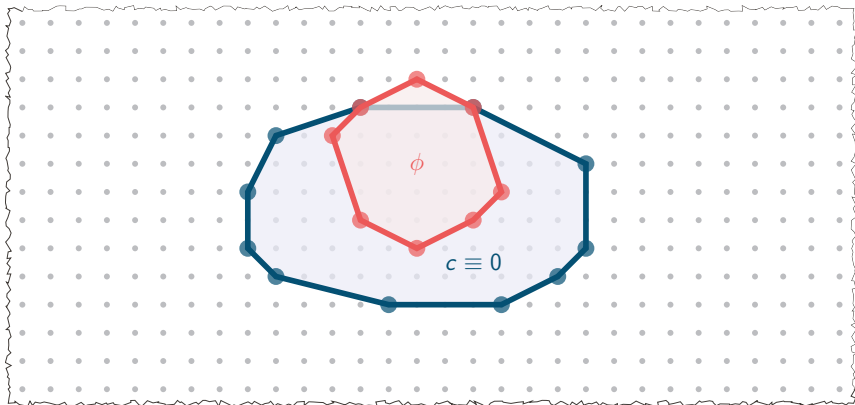
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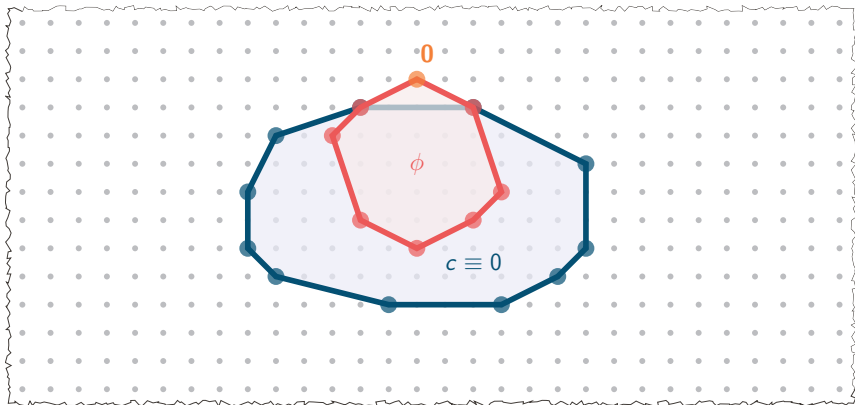
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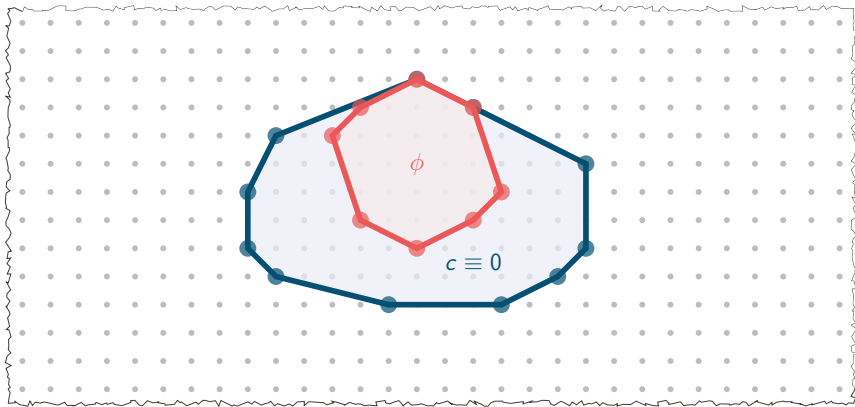
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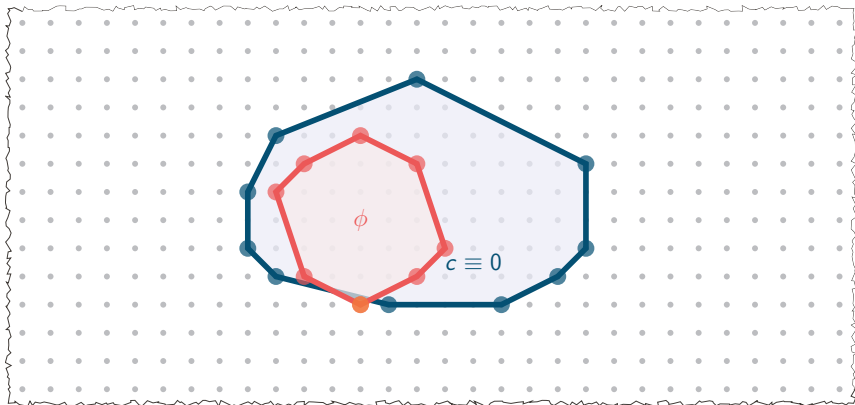
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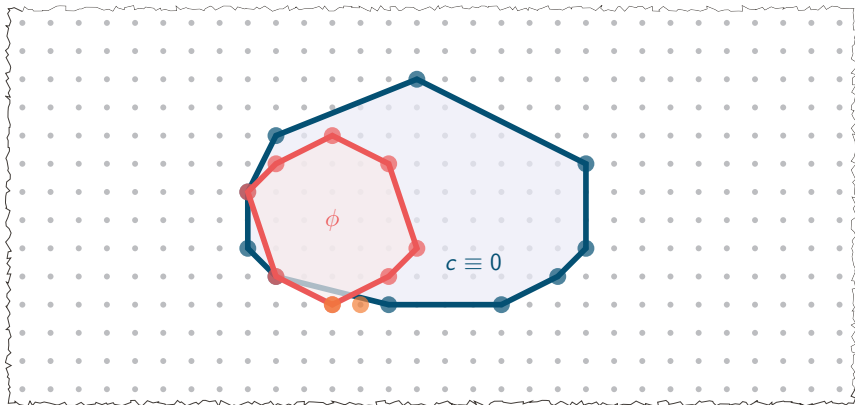
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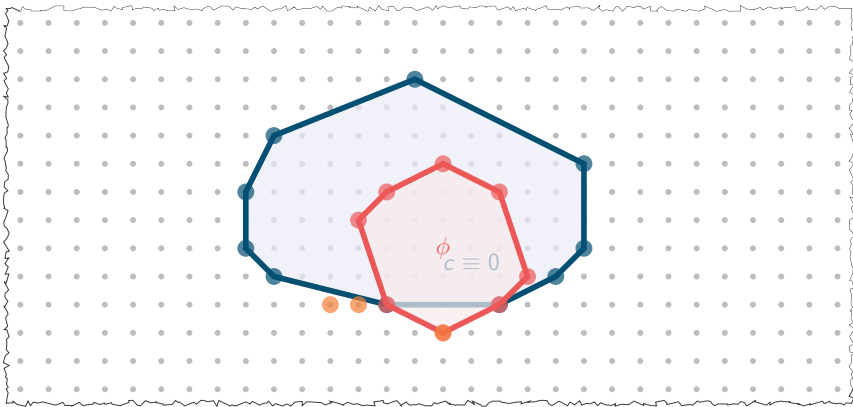
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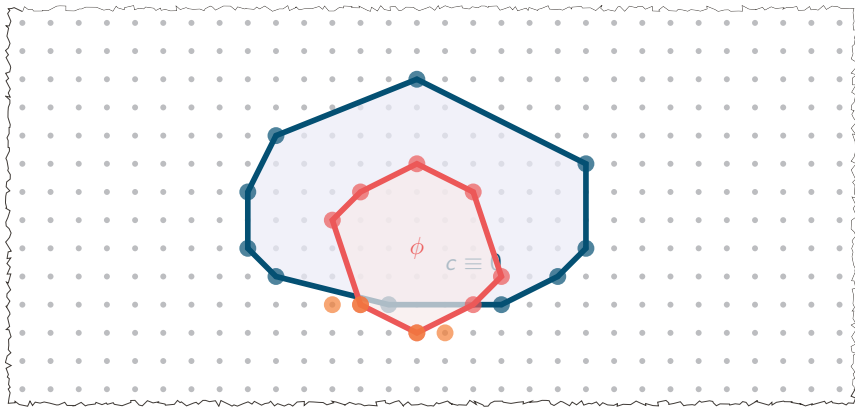
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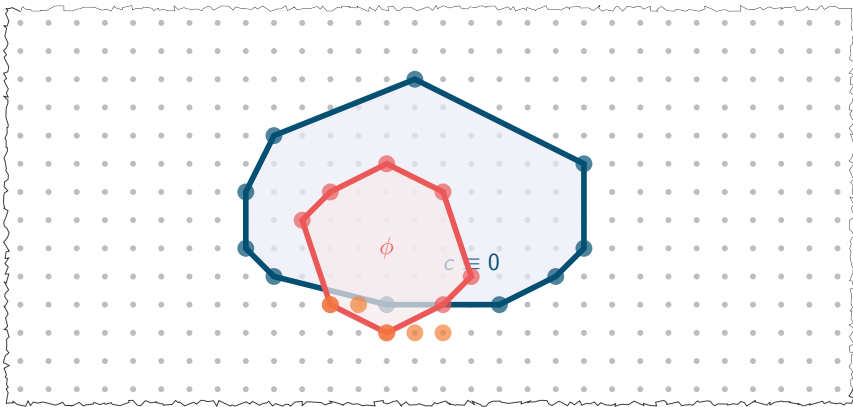
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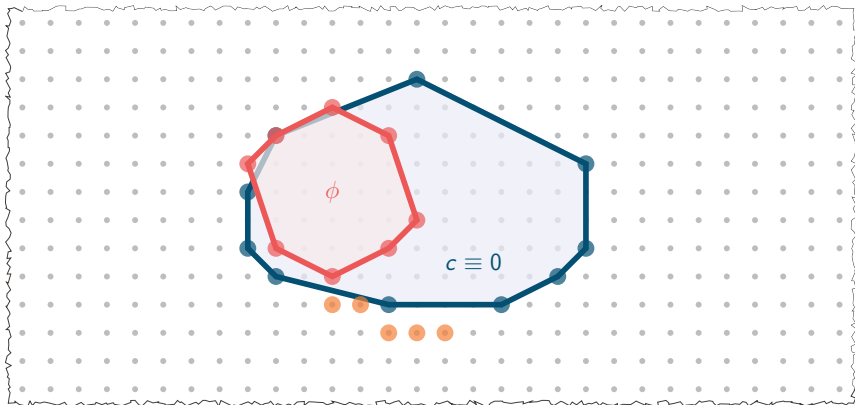
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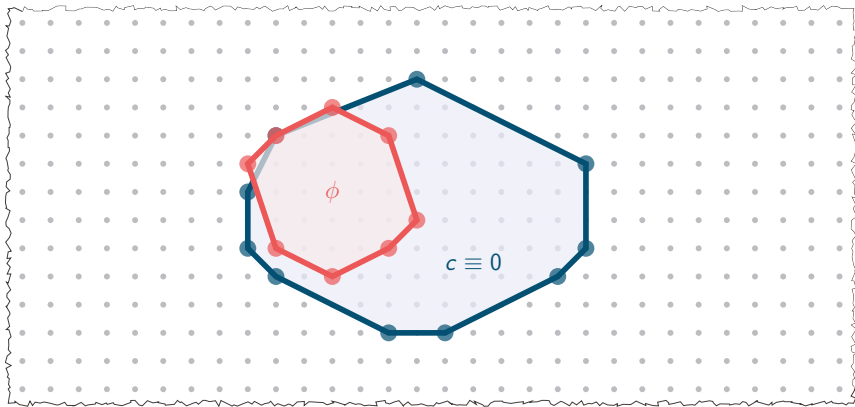
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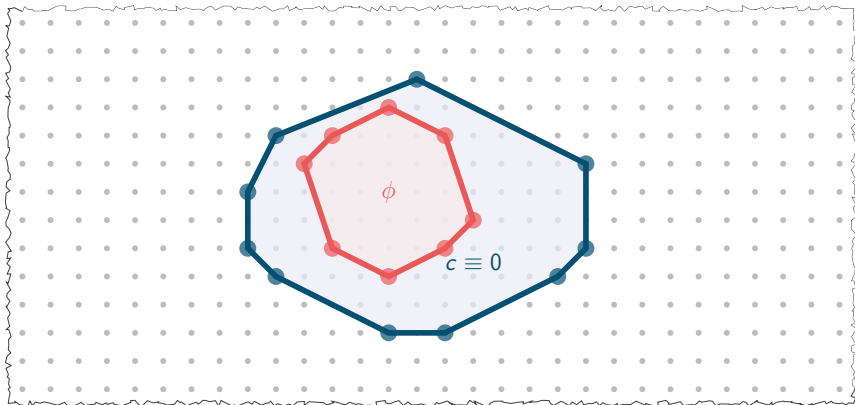
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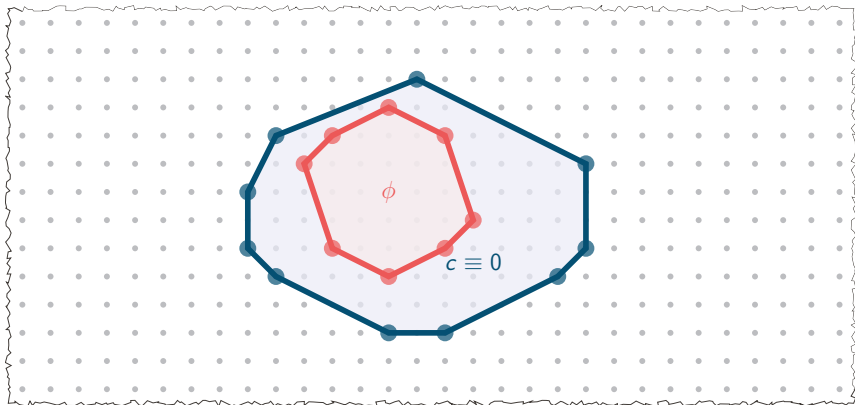
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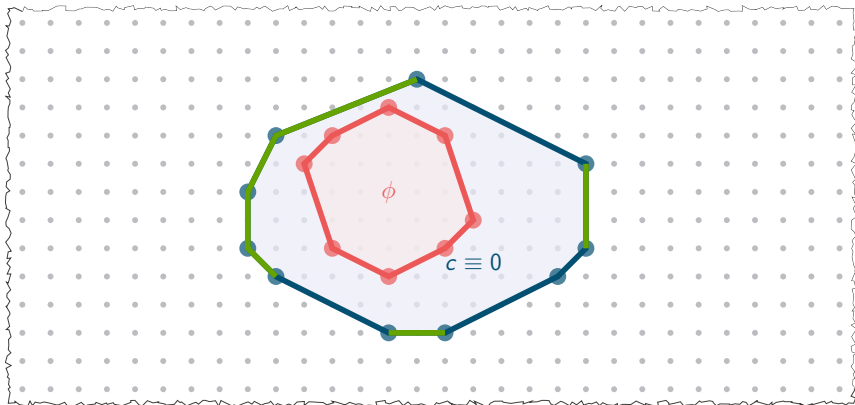
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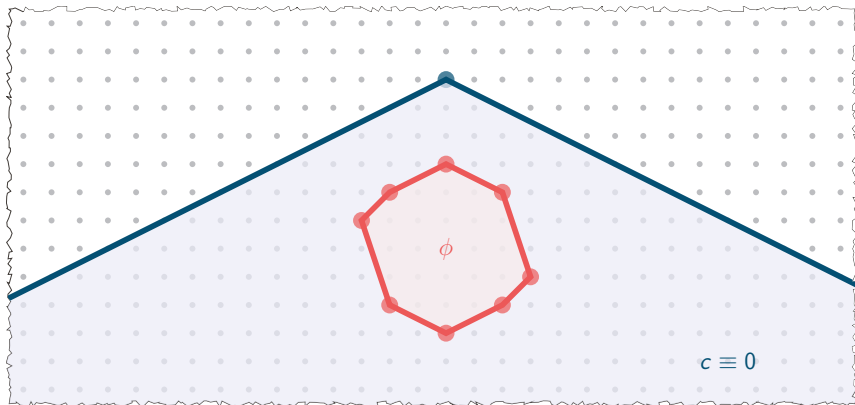


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**How does a shape evolve under  
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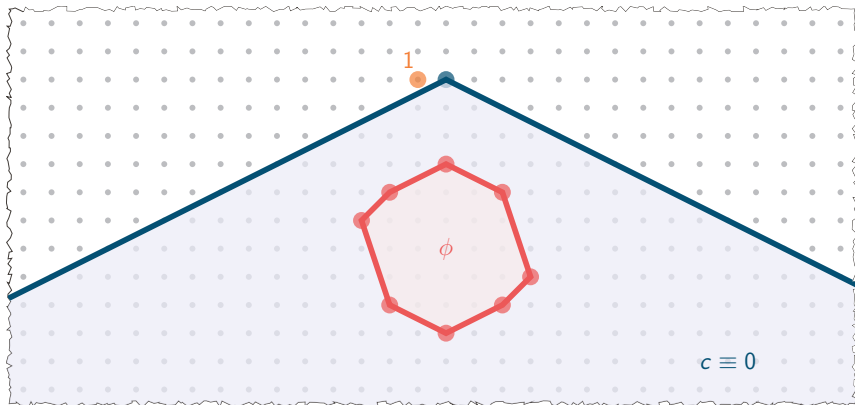
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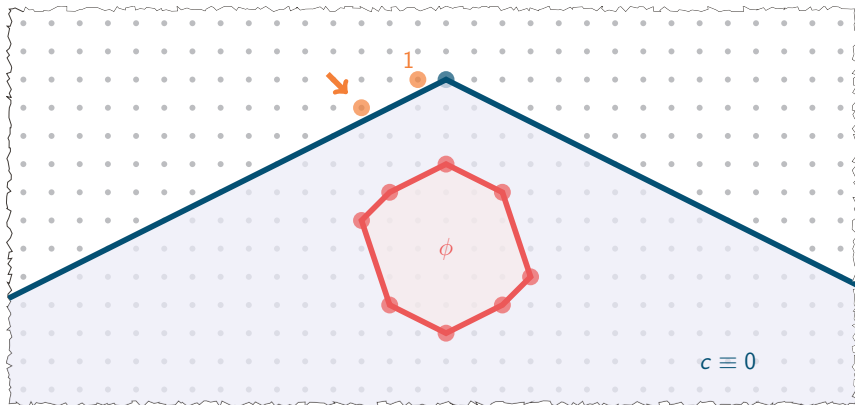
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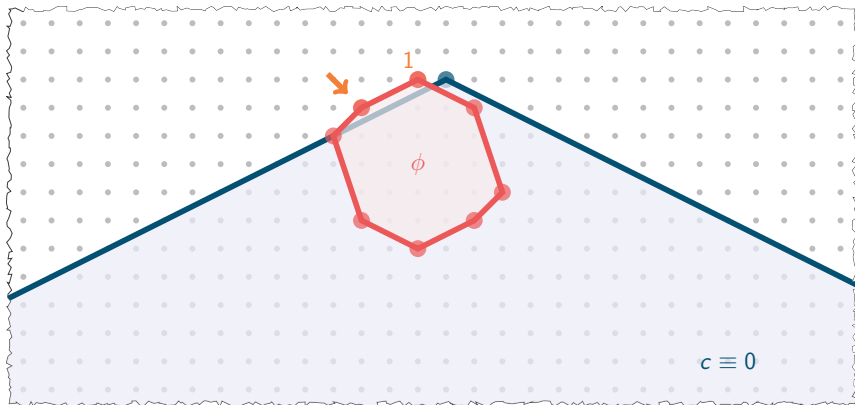
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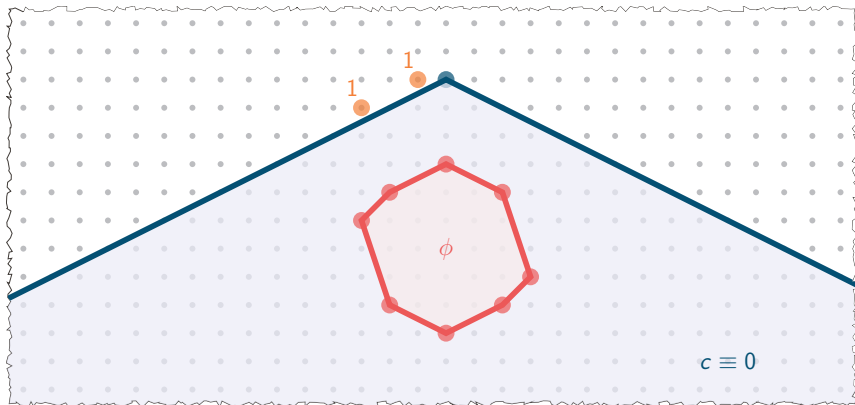
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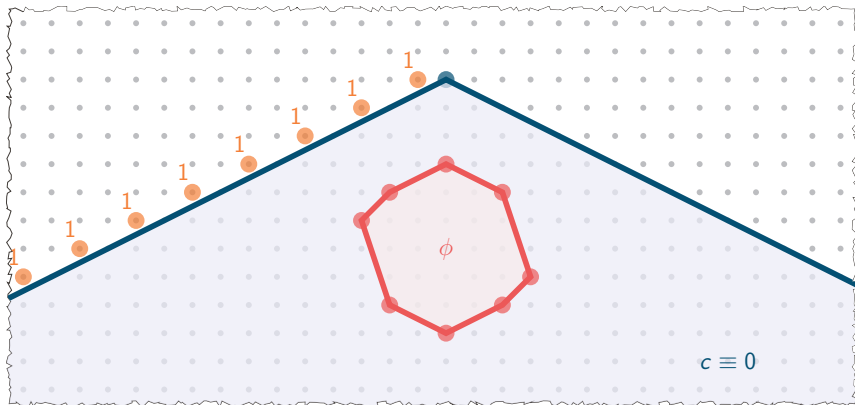
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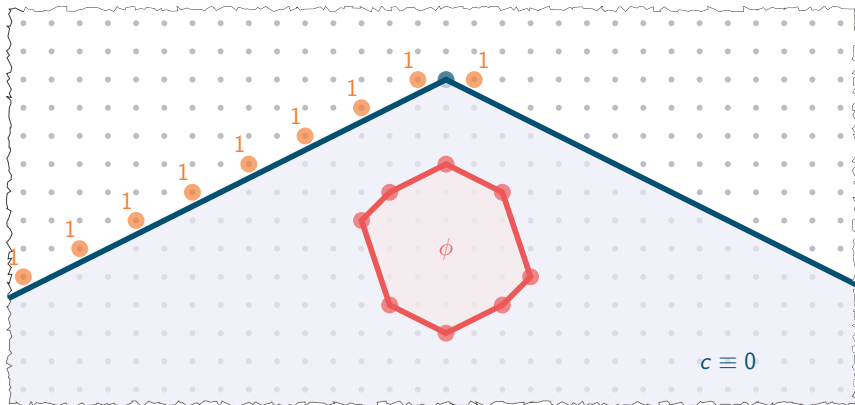
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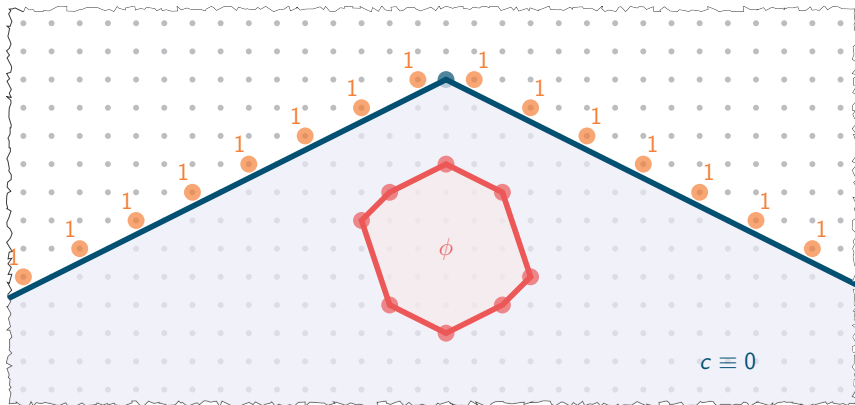
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## Arbitrary long parallel sides ?

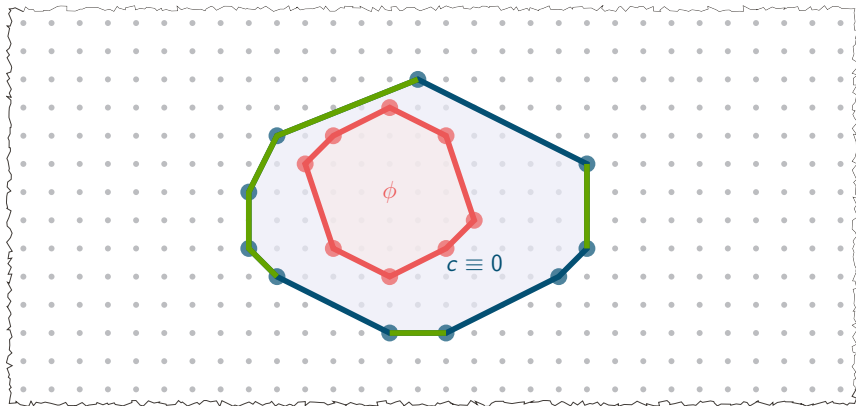
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“**Claim**”?: Arbitrary large **stable shapes** must contain an arbitrary long edge parallel to  $\phi$ .

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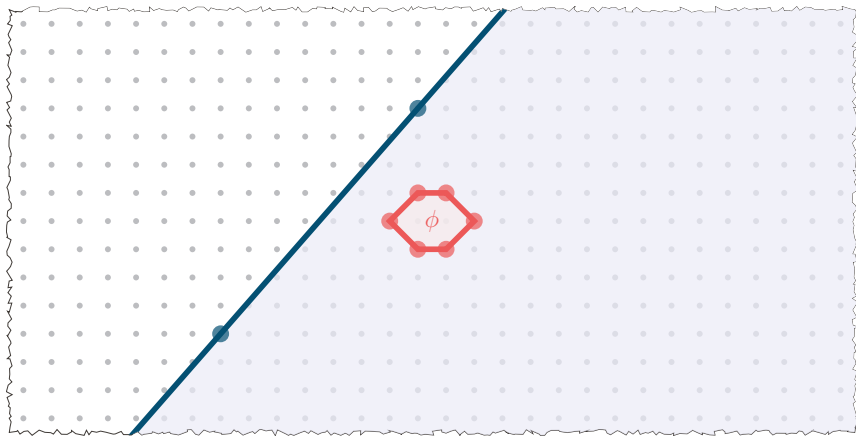
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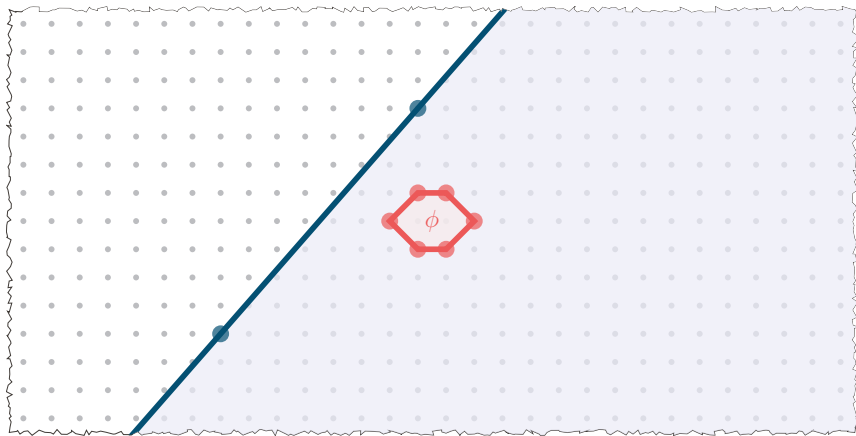
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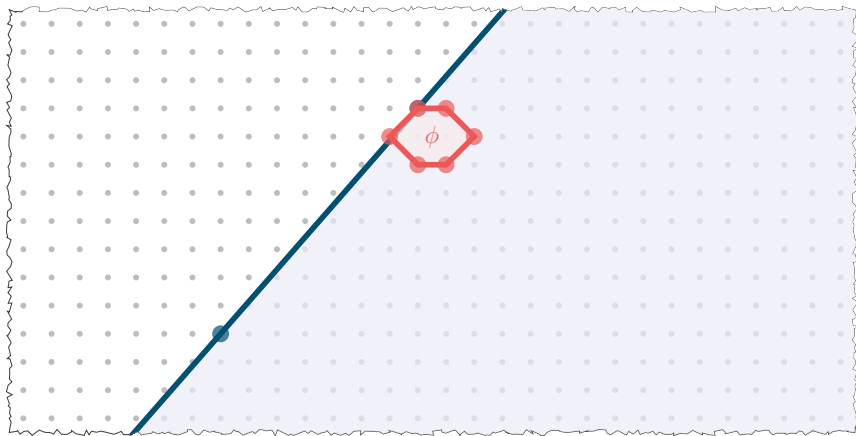


**What's true:** A non-parallel hyperplan cannot be stable.

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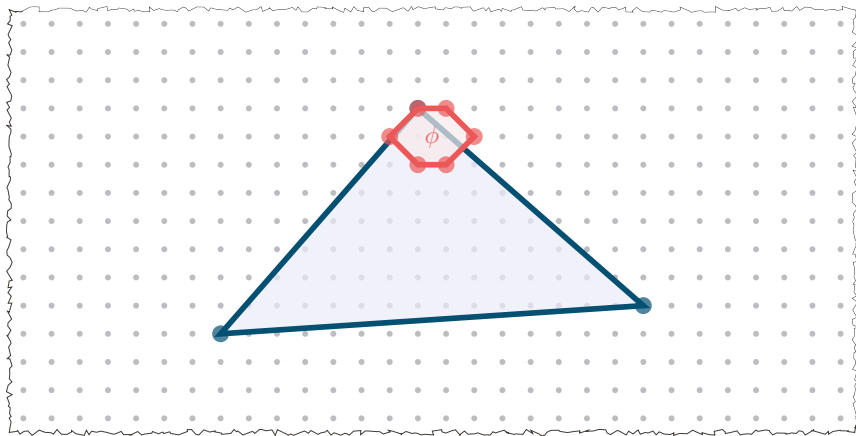


**What's true:** A non-parallel hyperplan cannot be stable.

## Arbitrary long parallel sides ?

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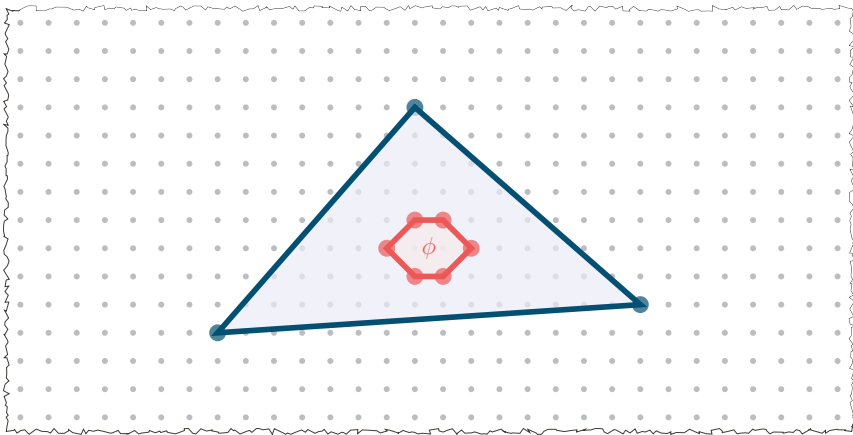


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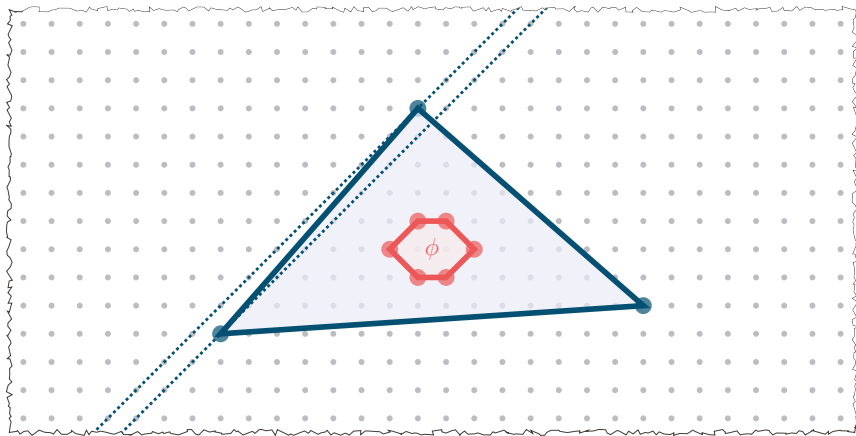


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**What's true:** A non-parallel hyperplan cannot be stable.

## Convexity preserving ?

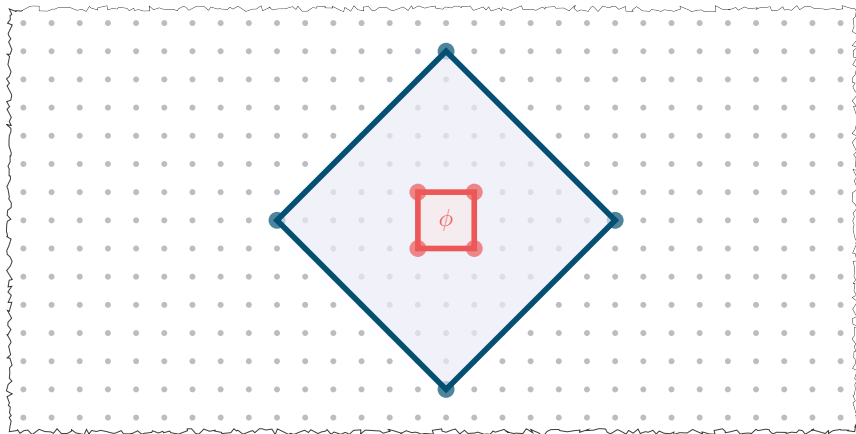
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**“Claim”?**: The expansion process preserves convexity, at least in a local way.

## Convexity preserving ?

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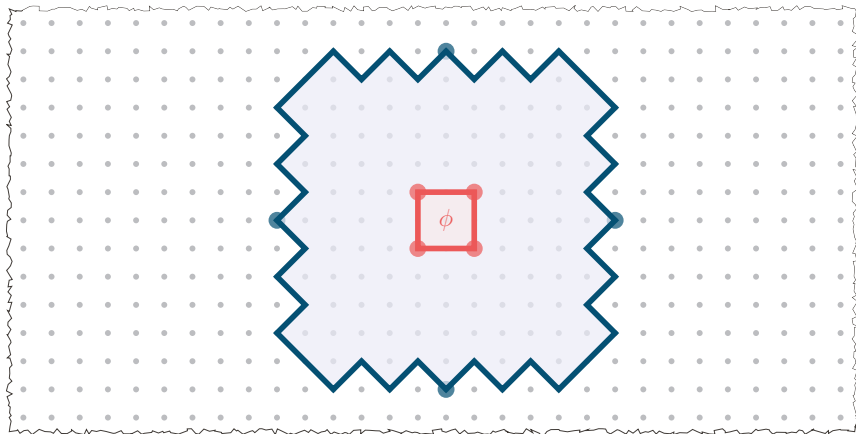
“Claim”?: The expansion process preserves convexity, at least in a local way.



## Convexity preserving ?

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“**Claim**”?: The expansion process preserves convexity, at least in a local way.



## Simple connectivity preserving ?

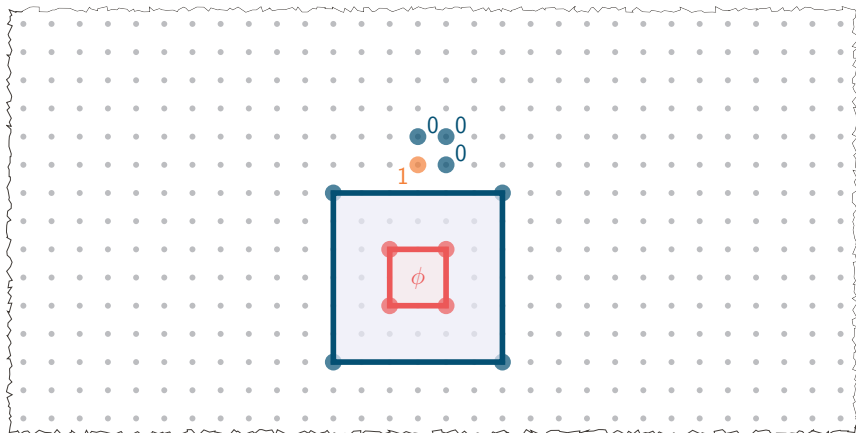
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**“Claim”?**: The expansion process preserves simple connectivity.

## Simple connectivity preserving ?

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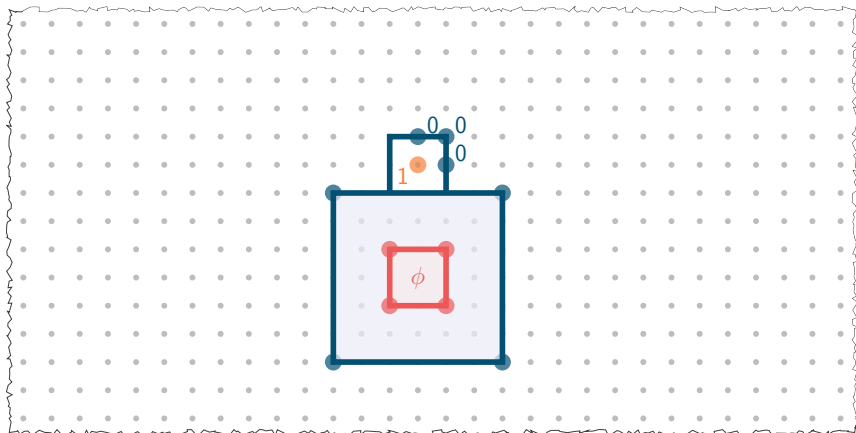
“Claim”?: The expansion process preserves simple connectivity.



## Simple connectivity preserving ?

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“Claim”?: The expansion process preserves simple connectivity.



**So, what do we do?**




# So, what do we do?

We find a maximal stable shape using Zorn's lemma  $\neg \_(\text{ツ})\_/\neg$

**Dziękuję**

# References I

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-  Jarkko Kari and Etienne Moutot, *Decidability and periodicity of low complexity tilings*, Theory of Computing Systems (2021).
-  Marston Morse and Gustav A. Hedlund, *Symbolic dynamics*, American Journal of Mathematics **60** (1938), no. 4, 815–866.
-  Michal Szabados, *An algebraic approach to nivat's conjecture*, Thèse de doctorat, University of Turku, Août 2018.

# Morse-Hedlund Theorem

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## Theorem (Morse, Hedlund [MH38])

A bi-infinite word  $c \in \mathcal{A}^{\mathbb{Z}}$  is periodic iff there exists  $n \in \mathbb{N}$  such that

$$P_c(n) \leq n.$$

# 3D counterexample

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