Sparse Grids in a Nutshell

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Abstract The technique of sparse grids allows to overcome the curse of dimensionality, which prevents the use of classical numerical discretization schemes in more than three or four dimensions, under suitable regularity assumptions. The approach is obtained from a multi-scale basis by a tensor product construction and subsequent truncation of the resulting multiresolution series expansion. This entry level article gives an introduction to sparse grids and the sparse grid combination technique.

1 Introduction

The sparse grid method is a special discretization technique, which allows to cope with the curse of dimensionality of grid based approaches to some extent. It is based on a hierarchical basis [Fab09, Yse86, Yse92], a representation of a discrete function space which is equivalent to the conventional nodal basis, and a sparse tensor product construction.

The sparse grid method was originally developed for the solution of partial differential equations [Zen91, Gri91, Bun92]. Besides working directly in the hierarchical basis a sparse grid representation of a function can also be computed using the combination technique [GSZ92], here a certain sequence of partial functions represented in the conventional nodal basis is linearly combined. The sparse grid method in both its formulations is nowadays successfully used in many applications.

The underlying idea of sparse grids can be traced back to the Russian mathematician Smolyak [Smo63], who used it for numerical integration. The concept is also

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closely related to hyperbolic crosses [Bab60, Tem89, Tem93a, Tem93b], boolean methods [Del82, DS89], discrete blending methods [BDJ92] and splitting extrapolation methods [LLS95].

For the representation of a function f defined over a d-dimensional domain the sparse grid approach employs $\mathcal{O}(h_n^{-1} \cdot \log(h_n^{-1})^{d-1})$ grid points in the discretization process, where $h_n := 2^{-n}$ denotes the mesh size and n is the discretization level. It can be shown that the order of approximation to describe a function f, under certain smoothness conditions, is $\mathcal{O}(h_n^2 \cdot \log(h_n^{-1})^{d-1})$. This is in contrast to conventional grid methods, which need $\mathcal{O}(h_n^{-d})$ for an accuracy of $\mathcal{O}(h_n^2)$. Therefore, to achieve a similar approximation quality sparse grids need much less points in higher dimensions than regular full grids. The curse of dimensionality of full grid method arises for sparse grids to a much smaller extent and they can be used for higher dimensional problems.

For ease of presentation we will consider the domain $\Omega = [0,1]^d$ in the following. This situation can be achieved for bounded rectangular domains by a proper rescaling.

2 Sparse grids

We introduce some notation while describing the conventional case of a piecewise linear finite element basis. Let $\underline{l} = (l_1, \ldots, l_d) \in \mathbb{N}^d$ denote a multi-index. We define the anisotropic grid $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$ on $\bar{\Omega}$ with mesh size $h_{\underline{l}} := (h_{l_1}, \ldots, h_{l_d}) = 2^{-\underline{l}} := (2^{-l_1}, \ldots, 2^{-l_d})$; $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$ has different, but equidistant mesh sizes h_{l_t} in each coordinate direction t, $t = 1, \ldots, d$. This way the grid $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$ consists of the points

$$x_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} := (x_{l_1,j_1}, \ldots, x_{l_d,j_d}), \tag{1}$$

with $x_{l_t,j_t} := j_t \cdot h_{l_t} = j_t \cdot 2^{-l_t}$ and $j_t = 0, \ldots, 2^{l_t}$. For a grid $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$ we define an associated space $V_{\underline{l}}$ of piecewise d-linear functions[1]

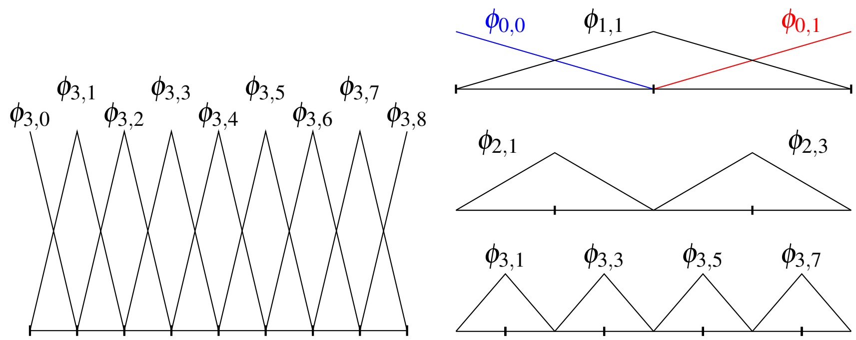
$$V_{\underline{l}} := \operatorname{span}\{\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} \mid j_t = 0, \ldots, 2^{l_t},\ t = 1, \ldots, d\} = \operatorname{span}\{\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} \mid 0 \le \underline{j} \le 2^{\underline{l}}\}, \tag{2}$$

which is spanned by the usual basis of d-dimensional piecewise d-linear hat functions

$$\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}(\underline{x}) := \prod_{t=1}^{d} \phi_{l_t,j_t}(x_t). \tag{3}$$

The one-dimensional functions $\phi_{l,j}(x)$ with support $[x_{l,j} - h_l, x_{l,j} + h_l] \cap [0,1] = [(j-1)h_l, (j+1)h_l] \cap [0,1]$ are defined by:

[1] "$\le$" refers to the element-wise relation for multi-indices: $\underline{k} \le \underline{l} :\Leftrightarrow \forall_t k_t \le l_t$. Furthermore, $a \le \underline{l}$ implies $\forall_t a \le l_t$.



(a) Nodal basis for V_3 (b) Hierarchical basis for V_3

Fig. 1: Nodal and hierarchical basis of level $n = 3$.

$$\phi_{l,j}(x) = \begin{cases} 1 - |x/h_l - j|, & x \in [(j-1)h_l, (j+1)h_l] \cap [0,1], \\ 0, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \tag{4}$$

In Figure 1a we give an example for the one-dimensional case and show all $\phi_{l,j} \in V_3$. Figure 2 shows a two-dimensional basis function.

2.1 Hierarchical subspace-splitting

Till now and in the following the multi-index $\underline{l} \in \mathbb{N}^d$ denotes the level, i.e. the discretization resolution, be it of a grid $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$, a space $V_{\underline{l}}$, or a function $f_{\underline{l}}$, whereas the multi-index $\underline{j} \in \mathbb{N}^d$ gives the spatial position of a grid point $x_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}$ or the corresponding basis function $\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}(\cdot)$.

We now define a hierarchical difference space $W_{\underline{l}}$ via

$$W_{\underline{l}} := V_{\underline{l}} \setminus \bigoplus_{t=1}^{d} V_{\underline{l}-\underline{e}_t}, \tag{5}$$

where $\underline{e}_t$ is the t-th unit vector. In other words, $W_{\underline{l}}$ consists of all $\phi_{\underline{k},\underline{j}} \in V_{\underline{l}}$ (using the hierarchical basis) which are not included in any of the spaces $V_{\underline{k}}$ smaller[2] than $V_{\underline{l}}$. To complete the definition, we formally set $V_{\underline{l}} := 0$, if $l_t = -1$ for at least one $t \in \{1, \ldots, d\}$. As can easily be seen from (2) and (5), the definition of the index set

[2] We call a discrete space $V_{\underline{k}}$ smaller than a space $V_{\underline{l}}$ if $\forall_t k_t \le l_t$ and $\exists t : k_t < l_t$. In the same way a grid $\Omega_{\underline{k}}$ is smaller than a grid $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$.

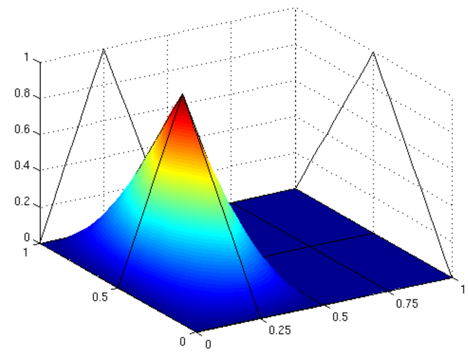


Fig. 2: Basis function $\phi_{1,1}$ on grid $\Omega_{2,1}$.

$$\mathsf{B}_{\underline{l}} := \left\{ \underline{j} \in \mathbb{N}^d \,\middle|\, \begin{array}{ll} j_t = 1,\ldots,2^{l_t}-1, & j_t \text{ odd}, t = 1,\ldots,d, \text{ if } l_t > 0, \\ j_t = 0,1, & t = 1,\ldots,d, \text{ if } l_t = 0 \end{array} \right\} \tag{6}$$

leads to

$$W_{\underline{l}} = \operatorname{span}\{\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} | \underline{j} \in \mathsf{B}_{\underline{l}}\}. \tag{7}$$

These hierarchical difference spaces now allow us the definition of a multilevel subspace decomposition. We can write $V_n := V_{\underline{n}}$ as a direct sum of subspaces

$$V_n := \bigoplus_{l_1=0}^{n} \cdots \bigoplus_{l_d=0}^{n} W_{\underline{l}} = \bigoplus_{|\underline{l}|_\infty \le n} W_{\underline{l}}. \tag{8}$$

Here, $|\underline{l}|_\infty := \max_{1\le t\le d} l_t$ and $|\underline{l}|_1 := \sum_{t=1}^d l_t$ are the discrete ℓ_∞- and the discrete ℓ_1-norm of $\underline{l}$, respectively.

The family of functions

$$\{\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} | \underline{j} \in \mathsf{B}_{\underline{l}}\}_{\underline{l}=\underline{0}}^{\underline{n}} \tag{9}$$

is just the hierarchical basis [Fab09, Yse86, Yse92] of V_n, which generalizes the one-dimensional hierarchical basis [Fab09], see Figure 1b, to the d-dimensional case with a tensor product ansatz. Observe that the supports of the basis functions $\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}(\underline{x})$, which span $W_{\underline{l}}$, are disjunct for $\underline{l} > 0$. See Figure 3 for a representation of the supports of the basis functions of the difference spaces W_{l_1,l_2} forming V_3.

Now, each function $f \in V_n$ can be represented as

$$f(\underline{x}) = \sum_{|\underline{l}|_\infty \le n} \sum_{\underline{j} \in \mathsf{B}_{\underline{l}}} \alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} \cdot \phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}(\underline{x}) = \sum_{|\underline{l}|_\infty \le n} f_{\underline{l}}(\underline{x}), \quad \text{with } f_{\underline{l}} \in W_{\underline{l}}, \tag{10}$$

where $\alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} \in \mathbb{R}$ are the coefficients of the representation in the hierarchical tensor product basis and $f_{\underline{l}}$ denotes the hierarchical component functions. The number of basis functions which describe a $f \in V_n$ in nodal or hierarchical basis is $(2^n+1)^d$.

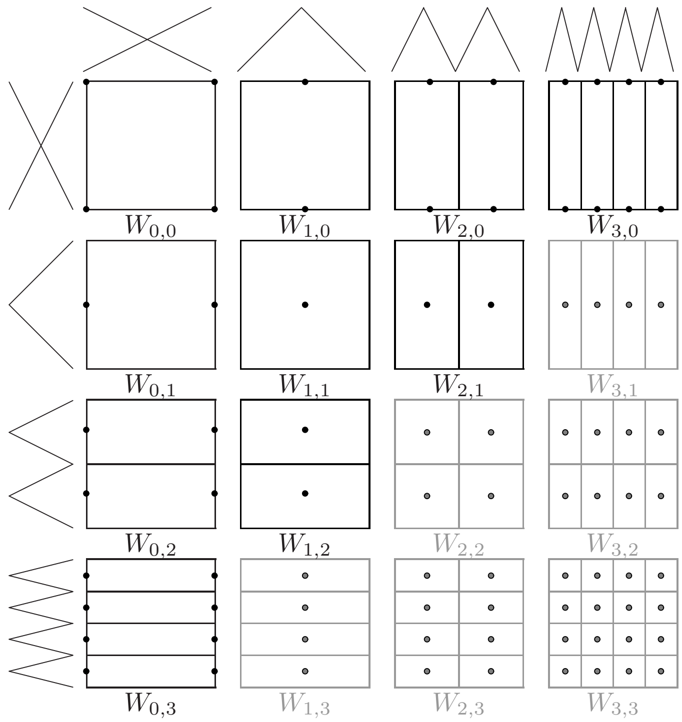


Fig. 3: Supports of the basis functions of the hierarchical subspaces $W_{\underline{l}}$ of the space V_3. The sparse grid space V_3^s contains the upper triangle of spaces shown in black.

For example a resolution of 17 points in each dimensions, i.e. $n = 4$, for a ten-dimensional problem therefore needs $2 \cdot 10^{12}$ coefficients, we encounter the curse of dimensionality.

Furthermore, we can define

$$V := \lim_{n\to\infty} \bigoplus_{\underline{k}\leq n} W_{\underline{k}},$$

which by a completion with respect to the H^1-norm, is simply the underlying Sobolev space H^1, i.e. $\overline{V}^{H^1} = H^1$. Any function $f \in V$ can be uniquely decomposed as [BG04]

$$f(\underline{x}) = \sum_{\underline{l}\in\mathbb{N}^d} f_{\underline{l}}(\underline{x}), \qquad \text{with } f_{\underline{l}} \in W_{\underline{l}}.$$

Note also, that for the spaces $V_{\underline{l}}$ the following decomposition holds

$$V_{\underline{l}} := \bigoplus_{k_1=0}^{l_1} \cdots \bigoplus_{k_d=0}^{l_d} W_{\underline{k}} = \bigoplus_{\underline{k}\leq \underline{l}} W_{\underline{k}}.$$

2.2 Properties of the hierarchical subspaces

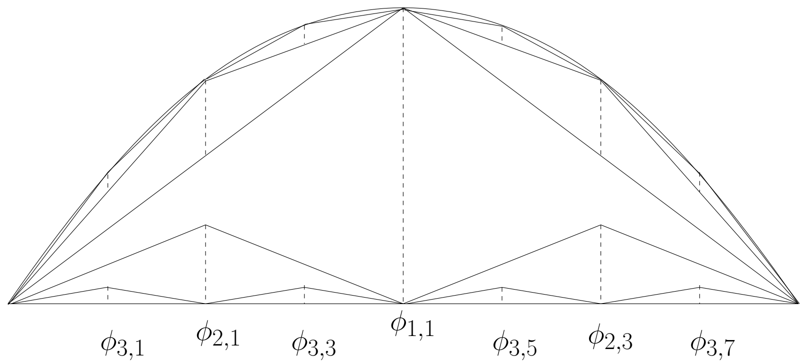


Fig. 4: Interpolation of a parabola with the hierarchical basis of level $n = 3$.

Now consider the d-linear interpolation of a function $f \in V$ by a $f_n \in V_n$, i.e. a representation as in (10). First we look at the linear interpolation in one dimension, for the hierarchical coefficients $\alpha_{l,j}$, $l \geq 1$, j odd, holds

$$\begin{aligned}\alpha_{l,j} &= f(x_{l,j}) - \frac{f(x_{l,j} - h_l) + f(x_{l,j} + h_l)}{2} = f(x_{l,j}) - \frac{f(x_{l,j-1}) + f(x_{l,j+1})}{2} \\ &= f(x_{l,j}) - \frac{f(x_{l-1,(j-1)/2}) + f(x_{l-1,(j+1)/2})}{2}.\end{aligned}$$

This and Figure 4 illustrate why the $\alpha_{l,j}$ are also called *hierarchical surplus*, they specify what has to be added to the hierarchical representation from level $l-1$ to obtain the one of level l. We can rewrite this in the following operator form

$$\alpha_{l,j} = \begin{bmatrix} -\frac{1}{2} & 1 & -\frac{1}{2} \end{bmatrix}_{l,j} f$$

and with that we generalize to the d-dimensional hierarchization operator as follows

$$\alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} = \left(\prod_{t=1}^{d} \begin{bmatrix} -\frac{1}{2} & 1 & -\frac{1}{2} \end{bmatrix}_{l_t,j_t} \right) f. \tag{11}$$

Note that the coefficients for the basis functions associated to the boundary are just $\alpha_{0,j} = f(x_{0,j}), j = 0, 1$.

Now let us define the so-called Sobolev-space with dominating mixed derivative H^2_{mix} in which we then will show approximation properties of the hierarchical basis. First we consider mixed derivatives and define

$$D^{\underline{k}} f := \frac{\partial^{|\underline{k}|_1} f}{\partial \underline{x}^{\underline{k}}} = \frac{\partial^{|\underline{k}|_1} f}{\partial x_1^{k_1} \cdots \partial x_d^{k_d}}$$

With that we define the norm as

$$\|f\|^2_{H^s_{mix}} = \sum_{0 \le \underline{k} \le s} \left| \frac{\partial^{|\underline{k}|_1}}{\partial \underline{x}^{\underline{k}}} f \right|^2_2 = \sum_{0 \le \underline{k} \le s} \left| D^{\underline{k}} f \right|^2_2,$$

and the space H^s_{mix} in the usual way:

$$H^s_{mix} := \left\{ f : \Omega \to \mathbb{R} \,\middle|\, \|f\|^2_{H^s_{mix}} < \infty \right\}.$$

Obviously it holds $H^s_{mix} \subset H^s$. Furthermore we define the semi-norm $|f|_{H^2_{mix}} := |f|_{H^{\underline{2}}_{mix}}$ by

$$|f|_{H^{\underline{k}}_{mix}} := \left| \frac{\partial^{|\underline{k}|_1}}{\partial \underline{x}^{\underline{k}}} f \right|_2 = \left| D^{\underline{k}} f \right|_2.$$

Note that the continuous function spaces H^s_{mix}, like the discrete spaces $V_{\underline{l}}$, have a tensor product structure [Wah90, Hoc99, GK00, HKZ00] and can be represented as a tensor product of one dimensional spaces:

$$H^s_{mix} = H^s \otimes \cdots \otimes H^s.$$

We now look at the properties of the hierarchical representation of a function f, especially at the size of the hierarchical surpluses. We recite the following proofs from [Bun92, Bun98, BG99, BG04], see these references for more details on the following and results in other norms like $\|\cdot\|_\infty$ or $\|\cdot\|_E$. For ease of presentation we assume $f \in H^2_{0,mix}(\bar{\Omega})$, i.e. zero boundary values, and $\underline{l} > 0$ to avoid the special treatment of level 0, i.e. the boundary functions in the hierarchical representation.

Lemma 1 *For any piecewise d-linear basis function $\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}$ holds*

$$\|\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}\|_2 = \left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^{d/2} \cdot 2^{-|\underline{l}|_1/2}.$$

Proof. Follows by straightforward calculation.

Lemma 2 *For any hierarchical coefficient $\alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}$ of $f \in H^2_{0,mix}(\bar{\Omega})$ in (10) it holds*

$$\alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} = \prod_{t=1}^{d} -\frac{h_{l_t}}{2} \int_\Omega \phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} \cdot D^{\underline{2}} f(\underline{x}) d\underline{x}. \tag{12}$$

Proof. In one dimension partial integration provides

$$\begin{aligned}
\int_\Omega \phi_{l,j}(x)\cdot\frac{\partial^2 f(x)}{\partial x^2}dx &= \int_{x_{l,j}-h_l}^{x_{l,j}+h_l} \phi_{l,j}(x)\cdot\frac{\partial^2 f(x)}{\partial x^2}dx \\
&= \left[\phi_{l,j}(x)\cdot\frac{\partial f(x)}{\partial x}\right]_{x_{l,j}-h_l}^{x_{l,j}+h_l} - \int_{x_{l,j}-h_l}^{x_{l,j}+h_l}\frac{\partial \phi_{l,j}(x)}{\partial x}\cdot\frac{\partial f(x)}{\partial x}dx \\
&= -\int_{x_{l,j}-h_l}^{x_{l,j}}\frac{1}{h_l}\cdot\frac{\partial f(x)}{\partial x}dx + \int_{x_{l,j}}^{x_{l,j}+h_l}\frac{1}{h_l}\cdot\frac{\partial f(x)}{\partial x}dx \\
&= \frac{1}{h_l}\cdot\big(f(x_{l,j}-h_l) - 2f(x_{l,j}) + f(x_{l,j}+h_l)\big) \\
&= -\frac{2}{h_l}\cdot\alpha_{l,j}.
\end{aligned}$$

The d-dimensional result is achieved via the tensor product formulation (11).

Lemma 3 *Let $f \in H^2_{0,mix}(\bar\Omega)$ be in hierarchical representation as above, it holds*

$$|\alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}| \le \frac{1}{6^{d/2}}\cdot 2^{-(3/2)\cdot|\underline{l}|_1}\cdot\left|f|_{supp(\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}})}\right|_{H^2_{mix}}.$$

Proof.

$$\begin{aligned}
|\alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}| &= \left|\prod_{t=1}^d -\frac{h_{l_t}}{2}\int_\Omega \phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}\cdot D^{\underline{2}} f(\underline{x})d\underline{x}\right| \le \prod_{t=1}^d\frac{2^{-l_t}}{2}\cdot\|\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}\|_2\cdot\left\|D^{\underline{2}} f|_{\mathrm{supp}(\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}})}\right\|_2 \\
&\le 2^{-d}\cdot\left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^{d/2}\cdot 2^{-(3/2)\cdot|\underline{l}|_1}\cdot\left|f|_{\mathrm{supp}(\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}})}\right|_{H^2_{mix}}
\end{aligned}$$

Lemma 4 *For the components $f_{\underline{l}} \in W_{\underline{l}}$ of $f \in H^2_{0,mix}(\bar\Omega)$ from (10) holds*

$$\|f_{\underline{l}}\|_2 \le 3^{-d}\cdot 2^{-2\cdot|\underline{l}|_1}\cdot|f|_{H^2_{mix}}. \tag{13}$$

Proof. Since the supports of all $\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}$ of $f_{\underline{l}}$ are mutually disjoint we can write

$$\|f_{\underline{l}}\|_2^2 = \left\|\sum_{\underline{j}\in \mathsf{B}_{\underline{l}}}\alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}\cdot\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}\right\|_2^2 = \sum_{\underline{j}\in \mathsf{B}_{\underline{l}}}|\alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}|^2\cdot\|\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}\|_2^2.$$

With Lemma 3 and 1 it now follows

$$\begin{aligned}
\|f_{\underline{l}}\|_2^2 &\le \sum_{\underline{j}\in \mathsf{B}_{\underline{l}}}\frac{1}{6^d}\cdot 2^{-3\cdot|\underline{l}|_1}\cdot\left|f|_{\mathrm{supp}(\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}})}\right|^2_{H^2_{mix}}\cdot\left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^d\cdot 2^{-|\underline{l}|_1} \\
&\le \frac{1}{3^{2d}}\cdot 2^{-4\cdot|\underline{l}|_1}\cdot|f|^2_{H^2_{mix}}
\end{aligned}$$

which completes the proof.

2.3 Sparse grids

Motivated by the relation (13) of the "importance" of the hierarchical components $f_{\underline{l}}$ Zenger [Zen91] introduced the so-called *sparse grids*, where hierarchical basis functions with a small support, and therefore a small contribution to the function representation, are not included in the discrete space of level n anymore.

Formally we define the sparse grid function space $V_n^s \subset V_n$ as

$$V_n^s := \bigoplus_{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n} W_{\underline{l}}. \tag{14}$$

We replace in the definition (8) of V_n in terms of hierarchical subspaces the condition $|\underline{l}|_\infty \leq n$ with $|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n$. In Figure 3 the employed subspaces $W_{\underline{l}}$ are given in black, whereas in grey are given the difference spaces $W_{\underline{l}}$ which are omitted in comparison to (8). Every $f \in V_n^s$ can now be represented, analogue to (10), as

$$f_n^s(\underline{x}) = \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n} \sum_{\underline{j} \in \mathsf{B}_{\underline{l}}} \alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} \phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}(\underline{x}) = \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n} f_{\underline{l}}(\underline{x}), \quad \text{with } f_{\underline{l}} \in W_{\underline{l}}. \tag{15}$$

The resulting grid which corresponds to the approximation space V_n^s is called sparse grid. Examples in two and three dimensions are given in Figure 5.

Note that sparse grids were introduced in [Zen91, Gri91], and are often used in this form, with a slightly different selection of hierarchical spaces using the definition

$$V_{0,n}^s := \bigoplus_{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n+d-1} W_{\underline{l}}, \qquad l_t > 0. \tag{16}$$

This definition is especially useful when no degrees of freedom exist on the boundary, e.g. for the numerical treatment of partial differential equations with Dirichlet boundary conditions. Using $V_{0,n}^s$ the finest mesh size which comes from the level of refinement n in the sparse grid corresponds to the full grid case again when only interior points are considered.

The following results hold for both definitions V_n^s and $V_{0,n}^s$. The proofs are somewhat easier without basis functions on the boundary, therefore we only consider this case here, full results can be found in the given literature, e.g. [Bun92, Bun98, BG99, Kna00, BG04]. Furthermore, in the following we use the sparse grid space $V_{0,n}^s$, this allows us to have the same smallest mesh size h^{-n} inside the sparse grid of level n as in the corresponding full grid of level n and more closely follows the referenced original publications.

First we look at approximation properties of sparse grids. For the proof we follow [BG04] and first look at the error for the approximation of a function $f \in H^2_{0,mix}$, which can be represented as $\sum_{\underline{l}} f_{\underline{l}}$, i.e. an infinite sum of partial functions from the hierarchical subspaces, by $f_{0,n}^s \in V_{0,n}^s$ which can be written as a corresponding finite sum. The difference therefore is

$$f - f_{0,n}^s = \sum_{\underline{l}} f_{\underline{l}} - \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n+d-1} f_{\underline{l}} = \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 > n+d-1} f_{\underline{l}}.$$

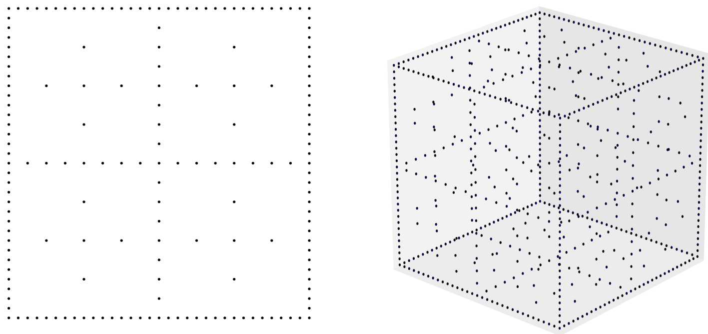


Fig. 5: Two-dimensional sparse grid (left) and three-dimensional sparse grid (right) of level $n = 5$.

For any norm now holds

$$\|f - f^s_{0,n}\| \leq \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 > n+d-1} \|f_{\underline{l}}\|. \tag{17}$$

We need the following technical lemma to estimate the interpolation error

Lemma 5 *For $s \in \mathbb{N}$ it holds*

$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 > n+d-1} 2^{-s|\underline{l}|_1} &= 2^{-s\cdot n} \cdot 2^{-s\cdot d} \sum_{i=0}^{\infty} 2^{-s\cdot i} \cdot \binom{i+n+d-1}{d-1} \\ &\leq 2^{-s\cdot n} \cdot 2^{-s\cdot d} \cdot 2 \cdot \left(\frac{n^{d-1}}{(d-1)!} + \mathcal{O}\left(n^{d-2}\right)\right),\end{aligned}$$

Proof. First we use that there are $\binom{i-1}{d-1}$ possibilities to represent i as a sum of d natural numbers

$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 > n+d-1} 2^{-s|\underline{l}|_1} &= \sum_{i=n+d}^{\infty} 2^{-s\cdot i} \cdot \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 = i} 1 \\ &= \sum_{i=n+d}^{\infty} 2^{-s\cdot i} \cdot \binom{i-1}{d-1} \\ &= 2^{-s\cdot n} \cdot 2^{-s\cdot d} \cdot \sum_{i=0}^{\infty} 2^{-s\cdot i} \cdot \binom{i+n+d-1}{d-1}.\end{aligned}$$

We now represent the sum as the $(d-1)$-derivative of a function and get

$$\begin{aligned}
&\sum_{i=0}^{\infty} x^i \cdot \binom{i+n+d-1}{d-1} \\
&= \frac{x^{-n}}{(d-1)!}\left(\sum_{i=0}^{\infty} x^{i+n+d-1}\right)^{(d-1)} = \frac{x^{-n}}{(d-1)!}\cdot\left(x^{n+d-1}\cdot\frac{1}{1-x}\right)^{(d-1)} \\
&= \frac{x^{-n}}{(d-1)!}\cdot\sum_{k=0}^{d-1}\binom{d-1}{k}\cdot\left(x^{n+d-1}\right)^{(k)}\cdot\left(\frac{1}{1-x}\right)^{(d-1-k)} \\
&= \sum_{k=0}^{d-1}\binom{d-1}{k}\cdot\frac{(n+d-1)!}{(n+d-1-k)!}\cdot x^{d-1-k}\cdot\frac{(d-1-k)!}{(d-1)!}\cdot\left(\frac{1}{1-x}\right)^{d-1-k+1} \\
&= \sum_{k=0}^{d-1}\binom{n+d-1}{k}\cdot\left(\frac{x}{1-x}\right)^{d-1-k}\cdot\frac{1}{1-x}.
\end{aligned}$$

With $x = 2^{-s}$ it follows

$$\sum_{i=0}^{\infty} 2^{-s\cdot i}\cdot\binom{i+n+d-1}{d-1} \leq 2\cdot\sum_{k=0}^{d-1}\binom{n+d-1}{k}.$$

The summand for $k = d-1$ is the largest one and it holds

$$2\cdot\frac{(n+d-1)!}{(d-1)!n!} = 2\cdot\left(\frac{n^{d-1}}{(d-1)!} + \mathcal{O}\left(n^{d-2}\right)\right)$$

which finishes the proof.

Theorem 1 *For the interpolation error of a function $f \in H^2_{0,mix}$ in the sparse grid space $V^s_{0,n}$ holds*

$$||f - f^s_n||_2 = \mathcal{O}(h_n^2 \log(h_n^{-1})^{d-1}). \tag{18}$$

Proof. Using Lemma 4 and 5 we get

$$\begin{aligned}
||f - f^s_n||_2 &\leq \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 > n+d-1} ||f_{\underline{l}}||_2 \leq 3^{-d}\cdot 2^{-2|\underline{l}|_1}\cdot |f|_{H^2_{mix}} \\
&\leq 3^{-d}\cdot 2^{-2\cdot n}\cdot |f|_{H^2_{mix}}\cdot\left(\frac{n^{d-1}}{(d-1)!} + \mathcal{O}(n^{d-2})\right),
\end{aligned}$$

which gives the desired relation.

Note that corresponding results hold in the maximum-norm as well:

$$||f - f^s_n||_\infty = \mathcal{O}\left(h_n^2 \log(h_n^{-1})^{d-1}\right)$$

for $f \in H^2_{0,mix}$ and that for the energy norm one achieves $\mathcal{O}(h_n)$, here the order is the same as in the full grid case [BG04].

We see that the approximation properties in the L_2-norm for functions from $H^2_{0,mix}$ when using sparse grids are somewhat worse in comparison to full grids, which achieve $\mathcal{O}(h_n^2)$. But this is offset by the much smaller number of grid points needed, as we will see when we now look at the size of the sparse grid space.

Lemma 6 *The dimension of the sparse grid space* $\mathring{V}_{0,n}^s$*, i.e. the number of inner grid points, is given by*

$$\left|\mathring{V}_{0,n}^s\right| = \mathcal{O}\left(h_n^{-1} \cdot \log(h_n^{-1})^{d-1}\right) \tag{19}$$

Proof. We again follow [BG04] and use in the first part the definition (16) and the size of a hierarchical subspace $|W_{\underline{l}}| = 2^{|\underline{l}-\underline{1}|_1}$. The following steps use similar arguments as in the preceding Lemma 5.

$$\begin{aligned}\left|\mathring{V}_{0,n}^s\right| = \left|\bigoplus_{|\underline{l}|_1 \le n+d-1} W_{\underline{l}}\right| &= \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 \le n+d-1} 2^{|\underline{l}-\underline{1}|_1} = \sum_{i=d}^{n+d-1} 2^{i-d} \cdot \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 = i} 1 \\ &= \sum_{i=d}^{n+d-1} 2^{i-d} \cdot \binom{i-1}{d-1} = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} 2^i \cdot \binom{i+d-1}{d-1}.\end{aligned}$$

We now represent the summand as the $(d-1)$-derivative of a function evaluated at $x = 2$

$$\begin{aligned}&\sum_{i=0}^{n-1} x^i \cdot \binom{i+d-1}{d-1} \\ &= \frac{1}{(d-1)!} \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} \left(x^{i+d-1}\right)^{(d-1)} = \frac{1}{(d-1)!} \left(x^{d-1} \cdot \frac{1-x^n}{1-x}\right)^{(d-1)} \\ &= \frac{1}{(d-1)!} \sum_{k=0}^{d-1} \binom{d-1}{k} \cdot \left(x^{d-1} - x^{n+d-1}\right)^{(k)} \cdot \left(\frac{1}{1-x}\right)^{(d-1-k)} \\ &= \sum_{k=0}^{d-1} \binom{d-1}{k} \cdot \frac{(d-1)!}{(d-1-k)!} \cdot x^{d-1-k} \cdot \frac{(d-1-k)!}{(d-1)!} \cdot \left(\frac{1}{1-x}\right)^{d-1-k+1} \\ &- \sum_{k=0}^{d-1} \binom{d-1}{k} \cdot \frac{(n+d-1)!}{(n+d-1-k)!} \cdot x^{n+d-1-k} \cdot \frac{(d-1-k)!}{(d-1)!} \cdot \left(\frac{1}{1-x}\right)^{d-1-k+1} \\ &= \sum_{k=0}^{d-1} \binom{d-1}{k} \cdot \left(\frac{x}{1-x}\right)^{d-1-k} \cdot \frac{1}{1-x} \\ &- x^n \cdot \sum_{k=0}^{d-1} \binom{n+d-1}{k} \cdot \left(\frac{x}{1-x}\right)^{d-1-k} \cdot \frac{1}{1-x}.\end{aligned}$$

We observe that the first sum is constant in n and therefore not relevant for the order, but note that for $x = 2$ that sum falls down to $(-1)^d$ anyway and get

$$(-1)^d + 2^n \cdot \sum_{k=0}^{d-1} \binom{n+d-1}{k} \cdot (-2)^{d-1-k}.$$

The summand for $k = d-1$ is again the largest one and it holds

$$2^n \cdot \frac{(n+d-1)!}{(d-1)!n!} = 2^n \cdot \left(\frac{n^{d-1}}{(d-1)!} + \mathcal{O}(n^{d-2}) \right)$$

which gives a total order of $\mathcal{O}(2^n \cdot n^{d-1})$ or in other notation, with $h_n = 2^{-n}$, of $\mathcal{O}(h_n^{-1} \cdot \log(h_n^{-1})^{d-1})$.

This is far less than the size of the corresponding full grid space $|\mathring{V}_n| = \mathcal{O}(h_n^{-d}) = \mathcal{O}(2^{d \cdot n})$ and allows the treatment of higher dimensional problems while still achieving good accuracy.

Note that a practical realisation of sparse grids involves suitable data structures and special algorithms, e.g. for efficient matrix-vector multiplications in Galerkin methods for the numerical solution of partial differential equations. Further details and references can be found for example in [Feu10, Pfl10, Zei10][3]. Also note that sparse grid functions do not possess some properties which full grid functions have, e.g. a sparse grid function need not be monotone [NH00, Pfl10].

The sparse grid structure introduced so far defines an a priori selection of grid points that is optimal if certain smoothness conditions are met, i.e. if the function has bounded second mixed derivatives, and no further knowledge of the function is known or used. If the aim is to approximate functions which do not fulfil this smoothness condition, or to represent functions that show significantly differing characteristics, e.g. very steep regions beyond flat ones, spatially adaptive refinement may be used as well. Depending on the characteristics of the problem and function at hand adaptive refinement strategies decide which points, and corresponding basis functions, should be incrementally added to the sparse grid representation to increase the accuracy.

In the sparse grid setting, usually an error indicator coming directly from the hierarchical basis is employed [Gri98, Feu10, PPB10, Pfl10]: depending on the size of the hierarchical surplus $\alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}$ it is decided whether a basis function should be marked for further improvement or not. This is based on two observations: First, the hierarchical surplus gives the absolute change in the discrete representation at point $x_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}$ due to the addition of the corresponding basis function $\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}$, it measures its contribution in a given sparse grid representation (15) in the maximum-norm. And second, a hierarchical surplus represents discrete second derivatives according to (12) and hence can be interpreted as a measure of the smoothness of the considered function at point $x_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}$. Further details on spatially adaptive sparse grids, their realisation and the state of the art can be found in [Feu10, Pfl10, PPB10].

[3] Note that for the purpose of interpolation a sparse grid toolbox for Matlab is available at `http://www.ians.uni-stuttgart.de/spinterp/`.

2.4 Hierarchy using constant functions

An alternative hierarchical representation of a function in V_n is based on a slightly different hierarchy, which starts at level -1 with the constant. To be precise, we define the one-dimensional basis functions $\widetilde{\phi}_{l,j}(x)$ by

$$\begin{aligned}\widetilde{\phi}_{-1,0} &:= 1,\\ \widetilde{\phi}_{0,0} &:= \phi_{0,1},\\ \widetilde{\phi}_{l,j} &:= \phi_{l,j} \quad \text{for } l \geq 1,\end{aligned}$$

with $\phi_{l,j}$ defined as in (4). Obviously it holds $\phi_{0,0} = \widetilde{\phi}_{-1,0} - \widetilde{\phi}_{0,0}$. The d-dimensional basis functions are constructed as a tensor product as before

$$\widetilde{\phi}_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}(\underline{x}) := \prod_{t=1}^{d} \widetilde{\phi}_{l_t,j_t}(x_t). \tag{20}$$

We introduce index sets $\widetilde{\mathsf{B}}_{\underline{l}}$ analogue to (6)

$$\widetilde{\mathsf{B}}_{\underline{l}} := \left\{ \underline{j} \in \mathbb{N}^d \,\middle|\, \begin{array}{ll} j_t = 1,\ldots,2^{l_t}-1, \quad j_t \text{ odd}, & t = 1,\ldots,d, \text{ if } l_t > 0, \\ j_t = 0, & t = 1,\ldots,d, \text{ if } l_t \in \{0,-1\} \end{array} \right\}.$$

Now we can define slightly modified hierarchical difference spaces $\widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}}$ analogue to (7) by

$$\widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}} = \operatorname{span}\{\widetilde{\phi}_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}, \underline{j} \in \widetilde{\mathsf{B}}_{\underline{l}}\}, \tag{21}$$

see Figure 6.

It is easy to see that $\widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}} = W_{\underline{l}}$ holds for $\underline{l} \geq \underline{0}$. We now can define a full grid space $\widetilde{V}_n$ by using the newly defined modified hierarchical subspaces

$$\widetilde{V}_n := \bigoplus_{l_1=-1}^{n} \cdots \bigoplus_{l_d=-1}^{n} \widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}} = \bigoplus_{|\underline{l}|_\infty \leq n} \widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}}. \tag{22}$$

Again it holds $\widetilde{V}_n = V_n$ for $n \geq 0$.

A corresponding definition of a sparse grid space $\widetilde{V}_n^s$ using

$$\widetilde{V}_n^s := \bigoplus_{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n} \widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}} \tag{23}$$

on the other hand does not give the original sparse grid space V_n^s. But if we exclude a few spaces it holds

$$V_n^s = \widetilde{V}_n^s \setminus \bigoplus_{\substack{|\underline{l}|_1 = n \text{ and} \\ \exists l_t = -1}} \widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}} \quad \text{for } n \geq 0, \tag{24}$$

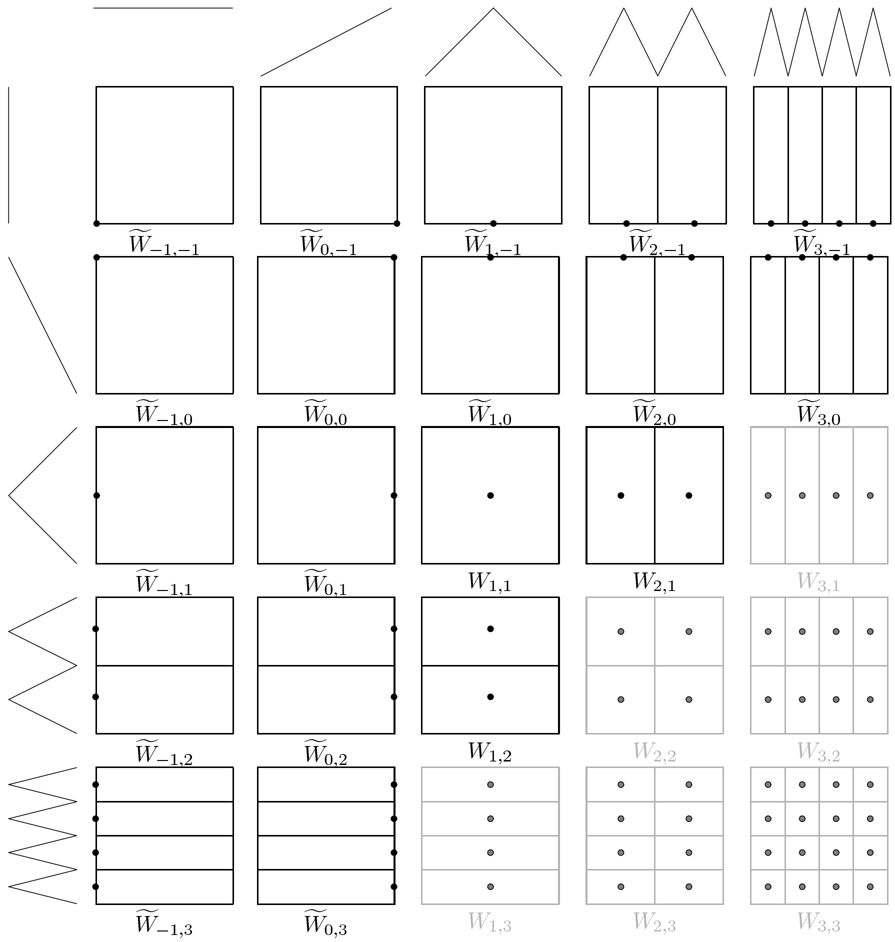


Fig. 6: Supports of the basis functions of the hierarchical subspaces $W_{\underline{l}}$ and $\widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}}$ of the space V_3. The sparse grid space V_3^s contains the upper triangle of spaces shown in black, the space $\widetilde{V}_3^s$ includes also $\widetilde{W}_{4,-1}$ and $\widetilde{W}_{-1,4}$, which are not shown.

see Figure 6.

As before, every $f \in \widetilde{V}_n^s$ can now be represented, analogue to (15), as

$$f(\underline{x}) = \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n} \sum_{\underline{j} \in \widetilde{\mathsf{B}}_{\underline{l}}} \alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} \phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}(\underline{x}) = \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n} f_{\underline{l}}(\underline{x}) \quad \text{with } f_{\underline{l}} \in \widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}}. \tag{25}$$

The key observation is now that the partial functions $f_{\underline{l}}$ with $\exists l_t = -1$ are lower-dimensional functions: they are constant in those dimensions t where $l_t = -1$; $f_{\underline{l}}$ possesses no degree of freedom in these dimensions. Such a function representation for $f(\underline{x})$ can therefore be formally written in the *ANalysis Of VAriance* (ANOVA) form, which is well known from statistics,

$$f(\underline{x}) = f_{\underline{-1}} + \sum_{\substack{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n \text{ and} \\ |\{l_t | l_t = -1\}| = d-1}} f_{\underline{l}} + \cdots + \sum_{\substack{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n \text{ and} \\ |\{l_t | l_t = -1\}| = 1}} f_{\underline{l}} + \sum_{\substack{|\underline{l}|_1 \leq n \text{ and} \\ |\{l_t | l_t = -1\}| = 0}} f_{\underline{l}}, \tag{26}$$

with $f_{\underline{l}} \in \widetilde{W}_{\underline{l}}$. The ANOVA order, the number of relevant non-constant dimensions, of the component functions $f_{\underline{l}}$ grows from 0 on the left to d on the right.

At this stage this is just a formal play with the representation, but it becomes quite relevant when one can build such a representation for a given function in an adaptive fashion, i.e. one chooses which component functions up to which ANOVA order are used for a reasonable approximation of some f. If the ANOVA order can be limited to q with $q \ll d$, the complexity estimates do not depend on the dimension d but on the ANOVA order q, allowing the treatment of even higher dimensional problems. An ANOVA-based dimension adaptive refinement algorithm in the hierarchical sparse grid basis is presented and evaluated in [Feu10].

3 Sparse grid combination technique

The so-called *combination technique* [GSZ92], which is based on multi-variate extrapolation [BGR94], is another method to achieve a function representation on a sparse grid. The function is discretized on a certain sequence of grids using a nodal discretization. A linear combination of these partial functions then gives the sparse grid representation. This approach can have numerical advantages over working directly in the hierarchical basis, where e.g. the stiffness matrix is not sparse and efficient computations of the matrix-vector-product are challenging in the implementation [Ach03, Bal94, Bun98, Feu10, Pfl10, Zei10]. There are close connections of the combination technique to boolean [Del82, DS89] and discrete blending methods [BDJ92], as well as the splitting extrapolation-method [LLS95].

In particular, we discretize a function f on a certain sequence of anisotropic grids $\Omega_{\underline{l}} = \Omega_{l_1,\ldots,l_d}$ with uniform mesh sizes $h_t = 2^{-l_t}$ in the t-th coordinate direction. These grids possess in general different mesh sizes for the different coordinate directions. To be precise, we consider all grids $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$ with

$$|\underline{l}|_1 := l_1 + \ldots + l_d = n - q, \quad q = 0,..,d-1, \quad l_t \geq 0. \tag{27}$$

The grids employed by the combination technique of level 4 in two dimensions are shown in Figure 7.

Note that in the original [GSZ92] and other papers, a slightly different definition was used:

$$|\underline{l}|_1 := l_1 + \ldots + l_d = n + (d-1) - q, \quad q = 0,..,d-1, \quad l_t > 0.$$

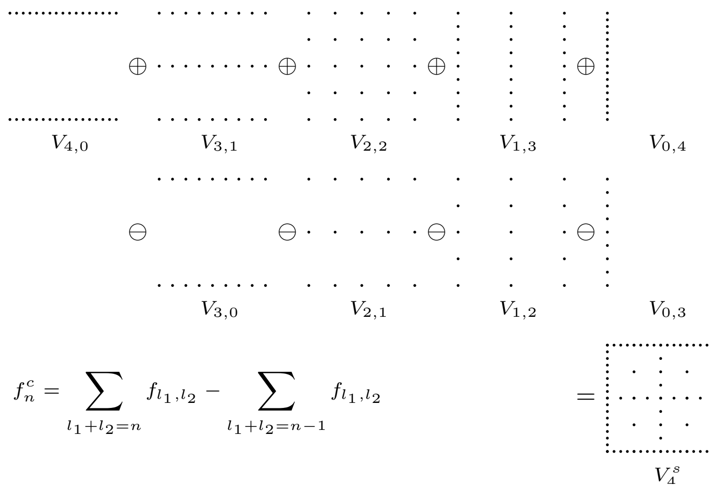


Fig. 7: Combination technique with level $n = 4$ in two dimensions

This is again in view of situations where no degrees of freedom are needed on the boundary, e.g. for Dirichlet boundary conditions, see (16) and the remarks afterwards.

A finite element approach with piecewise d-linear functions $\phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}(\underline{x})$ on each grid $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$ now gives the representation in the nodal basis

$$f_{\underline{l}}(\underline{x}) = \sum_{j_1=0}^{2^{l_1}} \dots \sum_{j_d=0}^{2^{l_d}} \alpha_{\underline{l},\underline{j}} \phi_{\underline{l},\underline{j}}(\underline{x}).$$

Finally, we linearly combine the discrete partial functions $f_{\underline{l}}(\underline{x})$ from the different grids $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$ according to the combination formula

$$f_n^c(\underline{x}) := \sum_{q=0}^{d-1} (-1)^q \binom{d-1}{q} \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1=n-q} f_{\underline{l}}(\underline{x}). \tag{28}$$

The resulting function f_n^c lives in the sparse grid space V_n^s, where the combined interpolant is identical with the hierarchical sparse grid interpolant f_n^s [GSZ92]. This can be seen by rewriting each $f_{\underline{l}}$ in their hierarchical representation (10) and some straightforward calculation using the telescope sum property, i.e. the hierarchical functions get added and subtracted.

Lemma 7 *For a given function f the interpolant f_n^c using the combination technique (28) is the hierarchical sparse grid interpolant f_n^s from (15).*

Proof. We write it exemplary in the two dimensional case, using $\hat{f}_{l_1+l_2} \in W_{l_1,l_2}$ instead of all the basis functions of W_{l_1,l_2} for ease of presentation:

$$
\begin{aligned}
f_n^c &= \sum_{l_1+l_2=n} f_{l_1,l_2} - \sum_{l_1+l_2=n-1} f_{l_1,l_2} \\
&= \sum_{l_1\le n}\sum_{k_1\le l_1}\sum_{k_2\le n-l_1} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2} - \sum_{l_1\le n-1}\sum_{k_1\le l_1}\sum_{k_2\le n-l_1-1} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2} \\
&= \sum_{k_1\le l_1=n}\sum_{k_2=0} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2} + \sum_{l_1\le n-1}\sum_{k_1\le l_1}\left(\sum_{k_2\le n-l_1} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2} - \sum_{k_2\le n-l_1-1} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2}\right) \\
&= \sum_{k_1\le l_1=n}\sum_{k_2=n-l_1} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2} + \sum_{l_1\le n-1}\sum_{k_1\le l_1}\sum_{k_2=n-l_1} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2} \\
&= \sum_{l_1\le n}\sum_{k_2=n-l_1}\sum_{k_1\le n-k_2} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2} \\
&= \sum_{k_2\le n}\sum_{k_1\le n-k_2} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2} = \sum_{k_1+k_2\le n} \hat{f}_{k_1,k_2}
\end{aligned}
$$

This last expression is exactly (15).

Alternatively, one can view the combination technique as an approximation of a projection into the underlying sparse grid space. The combination technique is then an exact projection into the sparse grid space if and only if the partial projections commute, i.e. the commutator $[P_{V_1}, P_{V_2}] := P_{V_1}P_{V_2} - P_{V_2}P_{V_1}$ is zero for all pairs of involved grids [HGC07].

Note that the solution obtained with the combination technique f_n^c for the numerical treatment of partial differential equations, i.e. when the solutions on the partial grids are combined according to the combination formula (28), is in general not the sparse grid solution f_n^s. However, the approximation property is of the same order as long as a certain series expansion of the error exists [GSZ92]. Its existence was shown for model-problems in [BGRZ94].

Lemma 8 *Assume that the exact solution f is sufficiently smooth and that the pointwise error expansion*

$$
f - f_{\underline{l}} = \sum_{i=1}^{d} \sum_{j_1,\ldots,j_m \subset 1,\ldots,d} c_{j_1,\ldots,j_m}(h_{j_1},\ldots,h_{j_m}) \cdot h_{j_1}^p \cdot \ldots \cdot h_{j_m}^p, \tag{29}
$$

with bounded $c_{j_1,\ldots,j_m}(h_{j_1},\ldots,h_{j_m}) \le \kappa$, holds for $\underline{l} \le n$. Then

$$
|f - f_n^c| = \mathcal{O}\left(h_n^2 \cdot \log(h_n^{d-1})\right). \tag{30}
$$

Proof. Let us again consider the two dimensional case and consider the pointwise error of the combined solution $f - f_n^c$ following [GSZ92]. We have

$$
\begin{aligned}
f - f_n^c &= f - \sum_{l_1+l_2=n} f_{l_1,l_2} + \sum_{l_1+l_2=n-1} f_{l_1,l_2} \\
&= \sum_{l_1+l_2=n} \left(f - f_{l_1,l_2}\right) - \sum_{l_1+l_2=n-1} \left(f - f_{l_1,l_2}\right).
\end{aligned}
$$

Plugging in the error expansion (29) leads to

$$
\begin{aligned}
f - f_n^c = & \sum_{l_1+l_2=n} \left(c_1(h_{l_1}) \cdot h_{l_1}^2 + c_2(h_{l_2}) \cdot h_{l_2}^2 + c_{1,2}(h_{l_1}, h_{l_2}) \cdot h_{l_1}^2 h_{l_2}^2 \right) \\
& - \sum_{l_1+l_2=n-1} \left(c_1(h_{l_1}) \cdot h_{l_1}^2 + c_2(h_{l_2}) \cdot h_{l_2}^2 + c_{1,2}(h_{l_1}, h_{l_2}) \cdot h_{l_1}^2 h_{l_2}^2 \right) \\
= & \Bigg(c_1(h_n) + c_2(h_n) + \sum_{l_1+l_2=n} c_{1,2}(h_{l_1}, h_{l_2}) \\
& - 4 \sum_{l_1+l_2=n-1} c_{1,2}(h_{l_1}, h_{l_2}) \Bigg) \cdot h_n^2 .
\end{aligned}
$$

And using $c_i \leq \kappa$ we get the estimate (30)

$$
\begin{aligned}
|f - f_n^c| & \leq 2\kappa \cdot h_n^2 + \left| \sum_{l_1+l_2=n} c_{1,2}(h_{l_1}, h_{l_2}) - 4 \sum_{l_1+l_2=n-1} c_{1,2}(h_{l_1}, h_{l_2}) \right| \cdot h_n^2 \\
& \leq 2\kappa \cdot h_n^2 + \sum_{l_1+l_2=n} \left| c_{1,2}(h_{l_1}, h_{l_2}) \right| \cdot h_n^2 + 4 \sum_{l_1+l_2=n-1} \left| c_{1,2}(h_{l_1}, h_{l_2}) \right| \cdot h_n^2 \\
& \leq 2\kappa \cdot h_n^2 + \kappa \cdot n h_n^2 + 4\kappa(n-1) h_n^2 \\
& = \kappa \cdot h_n^2 (5n-2) = \kappa \cdot h_n^2 (5 \log(h_n^{-1}) - 2) \\
& = \mathcal{O}\left(h_n^2 \cdot \log(h_n^{-1}) \right) .
\end{aligned}
$$

Observe that cancellation occurs for h_{l_i} with $l_i \neq n$ and the accumulated $h_{l_1}^2 h_{l_2}^2$-terms result in the $\log(h_n^{-1})$-term. The approximation order $\mathcal{O}(h_n^2 \cdot \log(h_n^{-1}))$ is just as in Theorem 1. See [GSZ92, PZ99, Rei04] for results in higher dimensions.

Similar to (26) one can consider an ANOVA representation in the form of a combination technique, which in general terms is a function representation for $f(\underline{x})$ of the type

$$
f(\underline{x}) = \sum_{\{j_1,\dots,j_q\} \subset \{1,\dots,d\}} c_{j_1,\dots,j_q} f_{j_1,\dots,j_q}(x_{j_1}, \dots, x_{j_q}), \tag{31}
$$

where each $f_{j_1,\dots,j_q}(x_{j_1}, \dots, x_{j_q})$ depends only on a subset of size q of the dimensions and may have different refinement levels for each dimension. Again, one especially assumes here that $q \ll d$, so that the computational complexity depends on the so-called *superposition* (or *effective*) dimension q. The hierarchy here again starts with a level -1 of constant functions and we note again that if one builds the tensor product between a constant in one dimension and a $(d-1)$-linear function the resulting d-dimensional function is still $(d-1)$-linear, one gains no additional degrees of freedom. But formally introducing a level -1, and using this as coarsest level, will allow us to write a combined function in the ANOVA-style (31), in other words each partial function might only depend on a subset of all dimensions. The size of each grid $\Omega_{\underline{l}}$ is now of order $\mathcal{O}(2^q(|\underline{l}|_1 + (d-q))$, where $q = \#\{l_i | l_i \geq 0\}$.

An advantage of such a viewpoint arises if one can select which grids to employ and does not use the grid sequence (27). In such a so-called dimension adaptive procedure one considers an index set I which only needs to fulfil the following *admissibility condition* [GG03, Heg03]

$$\underline{k} \in \mathsf{I} \text{ and } \underline{j} \leq \underline{k} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \underline{j} \in \mathsf{I}, \tag{32}$$

in other words an index $\underline{k}$ can only belong to the index set I if all smaller grids $\underline{j}$ belong to it. The combination coefficients for a dimension adaptive combination technique, which are related to the "inclusion/exclusion" principle from combinatorics, depend only on the index set [GG98, Heg03, HGC07]:

$$f_{\mathsf{I}}^{c}(\underline{x}) := \sum_{\underline{k} \in \mathsf{I}} \left(\sum_{\underline{z}=\underline{0}}^{\underline{1}} (-1)^{|\underline{z}|_1} \cdot \chi^{\mathsf{I}}(\underline{k}+\underline{z}) \right) f_{\underline{k}}(\underline{x}) \tag{33}$$

where χ^{I} is the characteristic function of I defined by

$$\chi^{\mathsf{I}}(\underline{k}) := \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } \underline{k} \in \mathsf{I}, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Further details on dimension adaptive algorithms and suitable refinement strategies for the sparse combination technique can be found in [GG03, Gar07a, Gar12].

3.1 Optimised combination technique

As mentioned, the combination technique only gives the same order if the above error expansion exists. In some cases even divergence of the combination technique can be observed [Gar04, Gar06, HGC07]. But an optimised combination technique [HGC07] can be used instead to achieve good approximations with a combination technique and especially to avoid the potential divergence. Here the combination coefficients are not fixed, but depend on the underlying problem and the function to be represented. Optimised combination coefficients are in particular relevant for dimension adaptive approaches [Gar07a, Gar12].

For ease of presentation we assume a suitable numbering of the involved spaces from (28) for now. To compute the optimal combination coefficients c_i one minimises the functional

$$J(c_1, \ldots, c_m) = \left\| P_n^s f - \sum_{i=1}^{m} c_i P_i f \right\|^2,$$

where one uses a suitable scalar product and a corresponding orthogonal projection P stemming from the problem under consideration. By $P_n^s f$ we denote the projection into the sparse grid space V_n^s, by $P_i f$ the projection into one of the spaces from (28).

By simple expansion one gets

$$J(c_1,\dots,c_m) = \sum_{i,j=1}^{m} c_i c_j \langle P_i f, P_j f\rangle - 2\sum_{i=1}^{m} c_i \|P_i f\|^2 + \|P_n^s f\|^2.$$

While this functional depends on the unknown quantity $P_n^s f$, the location of the minimum of J does not. By differentiating with respect to the combination coefficients c_i and setting each of these derivatives to zero we see that minimising this expression corresponds to finding c_i which have to satisfy

$$\begin{bmatrix} \|P_1 f\|^2 & \cdots & \langle P_1 f, P_m f\rangle \\ \langle P_2 f, P_1 f\rangle & \cdots & \langle P_2 f, P_m f\rangle \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \langle P_m f, P_1 f\rangle & \cdots & \|P_m f\|^2 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} c_1 \\ c_2 \\ \vdots \\ c_m \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \|P_1 f\|^2 \\ \|P_2 f\|^2 \\ \vdots \\ \|P_m f\|^2 \end{bmatrix}.$$

The solution of this small system creates little overhead. However, in general to compute the scalar product $\langle P_{\underline{i}} f, P_{\underline{j}} f\rangle$ of the two projections into the discrete spaces $V_{\underline{i}}$ and $V_{\underline{j}}$ one needs to embed both spaces into the joint space $V_{\underline{k}}$, with $k_t = \max(i_t, j_t)$, into which the partial solutions $P_{\underline{l}} f = f_{\underline{l}}, \underline{l} = \underline{i}, \underline{j}$ have to be interpolated. One easily observes that $V_{\underline{k}}$ is of size $\mathcal{O}(h_n^{-2})$ in the worst case, as opposed to $\mathcal{O}(h_n^{-1})$ for the $V_{\underline{l}}, \underline{l} = \underline{i}, \underline{j}$; an increase in computational complexity thus results, but does not depend on d. In specific situations the computational complexity can be smaller though [Gar06].

Using these optimal coefficients c_i the combination formula for a sparse grid of level n is now just

$$f_n^c(\underline{x}) := \sum_{q=0}^{d-1} \sum_{|\underline{l}|_1 = n-q} c_{\underline{l}} f_{\underline{l}}(\underline{x}). \tag{34}$$

Finally note that one also can interpret the optimised combination technique as a Galerkin formulation which uses the partial solutions as ansatz functions. That way one can formulate an optimised combination technique for problems where the projection arguments do not hold and are replaced by Galerkin conditions, which for example is the case for eigenvalue problems [Gar07b].

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