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Ramified covers and root stacks

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A ramified cover X of a surface S gives rise to ramification data in the following sense: the locus in S over which X is ramified will look like a union of curves and to each curve we associate the corresponding ramification index. Conversely, given a finite number of curves in S intersecting only transversely, and a positive integer for each curve, we may ask when such data comes from a ramified cover. We will explain how to give a criteria for when this is the case, using root stacks.

Presenter: AHLQVIST, Eric (KTH)