The inf-sup constant for Crouzeix-Raviart triangular elements of any polynomial order

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Abstract

In this paper, we consider the discretization of the two-dimensional stationary Stokes equation by Crouzeix-Raviart elements for the velocity of any polynomial order \( k \geq 1 \) on conforming triangulations and discontinuous pressure approximations of order \( k - 1 \). We will bound the inf-sup constant from below independent of the mesh size and analyse its \( k \) -dependence. Our assumptions on the mesh are quite general, for odd \( k \) we require that the triangulations contain at least one inner vertex while for even \( k \) we assume that the triangulations consist of more than a single triangle.

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1 Introduction

In this paper we consider the numerical discretization of the two-dimensional stationary Stokes problem by Crouzeix-Raviart elements. They were introduced in the seminal paper [13] in 1973 by Crouzeix and Raviart with the goal to obtain a stable and economic discretization of the Stokes equation. They can be considered as an non-conforming enrichment of conforming finite elements of polynomial degree \( k \) for the velocity and discontinuous pressures of degree \( k - 1 \). It is well known that the conforming \( (k, k-1) \) pair of finite elements can be unstable; for two-dimensions the proof of the inf-sup stability of Crouzeix-Raviart discretizations of general order \( k \) has been evolved over the last 50 years, the inf-sup stability for \( k = 1 \) has been proved in [13] and only recently the last open case \( k = 3 \), has been proved in [7]. We mention the papers [18], [25], [12], [5], [22], [8] which contain essential milestones in this development. Since higher order methods are becoming increasingly popular a natural question arises how the inf-sup constant depends on the polynomial degree \( k \). It is the goal of this paper to investigate this dependency.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 1.1 we introduce the Stokes problem and the Crouzeix-Raviart discretization of polynomial order \( k \). We state our main theorem that the discrete inf-sup constant can be estimated from below by \( c k^{-\alpha} \), where the positive constant
depends only on the shape-regularity of the mesh. The explicit value of $\alpha$ depends on the
mesh topology. The simplest case is that each triangle in triangulation contains at least one
inner vertex and then $\alpha = 2.25$ holds. We will give the value of $\alpha$ also for more general
triangulations.

The proof is given in Section 2. The key result is that for any discrete pressure $q$, there
exists a velocity $v$ from the Crouzeix-Raviart space such that $q - \text{div}_T v$ belongs to a certain
subspace (see (2.20)) of the Scott-Vogelius pressure space [30, R.1, R.2], [25, R.1, R.2] and $v$
depends continuously on $q$. The subspace property allows us to conclude from [25, R.1, 
R.2], [22] that the divergence operator has a right-inverse in the space of continuous velocity
approximations of order $k$ while it is chosen in such a way that, in contrast to the setting in 
[25, Thm. 5.1], [22, Thm. 1], the norm of the right-inverse does not deteriorate if a triangle
vertex is a “nearly-critical” point – a notion which will be introduced in Definition 2.11. This
key result is proved for odd polynomial degree in Section 2.2 and for even polynomial degree
in Section 2.3.

In the conclusions (Sec. 3) we summarize our main findings and compare our results with
existing results in the literature for other pairs of finite elements for the Stokes equation.

In the appendix, we prove a technical result for a Gram matrix related to the bilinear form
$(\text{div}_T \cdot, \cdot)_{L^2(\Omega)}$ applied to the Crouzeix-Raviart element and discontinuous pressure space.

1.1 The Stokes problem and its numerical discretization

Let $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ denote a bounded polygonal Lipschitz domain with boundary $\partial \Omega$. We consider
the Stokes equation

$$\begin{align*}
-\Delta u & - \nabla p = f \text{ in } \Omega, \\
\text{div } u & = 0 \text{ in } \Omega
\end{align*}$$

with Dirichlet boundary conditions for the velocity and a normalization condition for the
pressure

$$u = 0 \text{ on } \partial \Omega \quad \text{and} \quad \int_{\Omega} p = 0.$$ 

To formulate this equation in a variational form we first introduce the relevant function spaces.
Throughout the paper we restrict to vector spaces over the field of real numbers.

For $s \geq 0$, $1 \leq p \leq \infty$, $W^{s,p}(\Omega)$ denotes the classical Sobolev spaces of functions with norm $\| \cdot \|_{W^{s,p}(\Omega)}$. As usual we write $L^p(\Omega)$ instead of $W^{0,p}(\Omega)$ and $H^s(\Omega)$ for $W^{s,2}(\Omega)$. For $s \geq 0$, we denote by $H^s_0(\Omega)$ the closure of the space of infinitely smooth functions with compact support in $\Omega$ with respect to the $H^s(\Omega)$ norm. Its dual space is denoted by $H^{-s}(\Omega)$.

The scalar product and norm in $L^2(\Omega)$ are denoted respectively by

$$(u, v)_{L^2(\Omega)} := \int_{\Omega} uv \quad \text{and} \quad \| u \|_{L^2(\Omega)} := (u, u)^{1/2}_{L^2(\Omega)} \quad \text{in } L^2(\Omega).$$

Vector-valued and $2 \times 2$ tensor-valued analogues of the function spaces are denoted by bold
and blackboard bold letters, e.g., $H^s(\Omega) = (H^s(\Omega))^2$ and $H^s = (H^s(\Omega))^{2 \times 2}$ and analogously
for other quantities.

The $L^2(\Omega)$ scalar product and norm for vector valued functions are given by

$$(u, v)_{L^2(\Omega)} := \int_{\Omega} \langle u, v \rangle \quad \text{and} \quad \| u \|_{L^2(\Omega)} := (u, u)_{L^2(\Omega)}^{1/2},$$
where $\langle u, v \rangle$ denotes the Euclidean scalar product in $\mathbb{R}^3$. In a similar fashion, we define for $G, H \in L^2(\Omega)$ the scalar product and norm by

$$ (G, H)_{L^2(\Omega)} := \int_\Omega \langle G, H \rangle \quad \text{and} \quad \|G\|_{L^2(\Omega)} := (G, G)_{L^2(\Omega)}^{1/2}, $$

where $\langle G, H \rangle = \sum_{i,j=1}^3 G_{i,j} H_{i,j}$. Finally, let $L^2_0(\Omega) := \{u \in L^2(\Omega) : \int_\Omega u = 0\}$.

We introduce the bilinear form $a : H^1(\Omega) \times H^1(\Omega) \to \mathbb{R}$ by

$$ a(u, v) := (\nabla u, \nabla v)_{L^2(\Omega)}, $$

where $\nabla u$ and $\nabla v$ denote the derivatives of $u$ and $v$. The variational form of the Stokes problem is given by: For given $F \in H^{-1}(\Omega)$, find $(u, p) \in H^1_0(\Omega) \times L^2_0(\Omega)$ s.t.

$$ \begin{align*}
    a(u, v) + (p, \text{div} v)_{L^2(\Omega)} &= F(v) \quad \forall v \in H^1_0(\Omega), \\
    (\text{div} u, q)_{L^2(\Omega)} &= 0 \quad \forall q \in L^2_0(\Omega).
\end{align*} $$

(1.2)

It is well-known (see, e.g., [19]) that (1.2) is well posed. Since we consider non-conforming discretizations we restrict the space $H^{-1}(\Omega)$ for the right-hand side to a smaller space and assume from now on for simplicity that $F(v) = (f, v)_{L^2(\Omega)}$ for some $f \in L^2(\Omega)$; for a more general setting we refer to [28], [29]).

In the following a discretization for problem (1.2) is introduced. Let $\mathcal{T} = \{K_i : 1 \leq i \leq n\}$ denote a triangulation of $\Omega$ consisting of closed triangles which are conforming: the intersection of two different triangles is either empty, a common edge, or a common point. We also assume $\Omega = \text{dom} \mathcal{T}$, where

$$ \text{dom} \mathcal{T} := \text{int} \left( \bigcup_{K \in \mathcal{T}} K \right) $$

(1.3)

and $\text{int}(M)$ denotes the interior of a set $M \subset \mathbb{R}^2$. An important measure for the quality of a finite element triangulation is the shape-regularity constant, which we define by

$$ \gamma_{\mathcal{T}} := \max_{K \in \mathcal{T}} \frac{h_K}{\rho_K} $$

(1.4)

with the local mesh width $h_K := \text{diam} K$ and $\rho_K$ denoting the diameter of the largest inscribed ball in $K$. The global mesh width is given by $h_{\mathcal{T}} := \max \{h_K : K \in \mathcal{T}\}$.

Piecewise versions of differential operators such as $\nabla$ and div are defined for functions $u$ and vector fields $w$ which are sufficiently smooth in the interior of the triangles $K \subset \mathcal{T}$ by

$$ (\nabla_T u)|_K := \nabla \left( u|_K \right) \quad \text{and} \quad (\text{div}_T w)|_K := \text{div} \left( w|_K \right). $$

The values on $\partial K$ are arbitrary since $\partial K$ has measure zero.

**Remark 1.1** It is well known that the shape-regularity constant implies that there exists some $\phi_{\mathcal{T}} > 0$ depending only on $\gamma_{\mathcal{T}}$ such that every triangle angle in $\mathcal{T}$ is bounded from below by $\phi_{\mathcal{T}}$. In turn, every triangle angle in $\mathcal{T}$ is bounded from above by $\pi - 2\phi_{\mathcal{T}}$. 

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The set of edges in $T$ is denoted by $E(T)$, while the subset of boundary edges is $E_{\partial\Omega}(T) := \{E \in E(T) : E \subset \partial \text{dom } T\}$; the subset of inner edges is given by $E_\Omega(T) := E(T) \setminus E_{\partial\Omega}(T)$. For each edge $E \in E$ we fix a unit vector $n_E$ orthogonal to $E$ with the convention that $n_E$ is the outer normal vector for boundary edges $E \in E_{\partial\Omega}$.

The set of triangle vertices in $T$ is denoted by $V(T)$, while the subset of inner vertices is $V_\Omega(T) := \{V \in V(T) : V \notin \partial \text{dom } T\}$ and $V_{\partial\Omega}(T) := V(T) \setminus V_\Omega(T)$. For $K \in T$, the set of its vertices is denoted by $V_K$. For $E \in E(T)$, we define the edge patch by

$$T_E := \{K \in T : E \subset K\} \quad \text{and} \quad \omega_E := \bigcup_{K \in T_E} K.$$ 

For $z \in V(T)$, the nodal patch is defined by

$$T_z := \{K \in T : z \in K\} \quad \text{and} \quad \omega_z := \bigcup_{K \in T_z} K$$

with local mesh width $h_z := \max \{h_K : K \in T_z\}$. For $K \in T$, we set

$$T_K := \{K' \in T : K \cap K' \neq \emptyset\} \quad \text{and} \quad \omega_K := \bigcup_{K' \in T_K} K'.$$ 

For a subset $M \subset \mathbb{R}^2$, we denote by $[M]$ its convex hull; in particular, any edge $E$ with endpoints $a, b$ can be written as $E = [a, b] = [b, a]$.

Let $\mathbb{N} = \{1, 2, \ldots\}$ and $\mathbb{N}_0 := \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$. For $m \in \mathbb{N}$, we employ the usual multiindex notation for $\mu = (\mu_i)_{i=1}^m \in \mathbb{N}_0^m$ and points $x = (x_i)_{i=1}^m \in \mathbb{R}^m$

$$|\mu| := \mu_1 + \ldots + \mu_m, \quad x^\mu := \prod_{j=1}^m x_j^{\mu_j}.$$ 

Let $P_{m,k}$ denote the space of $m$-variate polynomials of maximal degree $k$, consisting of functions of the form

$$\sum_{\mu \in \mathbb{N}_0^m : |\mu| \leq k} a_{\mu} x^\mu$$

for real coefficients $a_{\mu}$. Formally, we set $P_{m,-1} := \{0\}$. To indicate the domain explicitly in notation we write sometimes $P_k(D)$ for $D \subset \mathbb{R}^m$ and skip the index $m$ since it is then clear from the argument $D$.

We introduce the following finite element spaces

$$P_k(T) := \left\{ q \in L^2(\Omega) \mid \forall K \in T : q|_K \in P_k(K) \right\},$$

and (cf. (1.3)) $P_{k,0}(T) := \left\{ q \in P_k(T) : \int_{\text{dom } T} q = 0 \right\}$.

Furthermore, let

$$S_k(T) := P_k(T) \cap H^1(\text{dom } T),$$

and $S_{k,0}(T) := S_k(T) \cap H^1_0(\text{dom } T)$.
The vector-valued versions are denoted by \( S_k(T) := S_k(T)^2 \) and \( S_{k,0}(T) := S_{k,0}(T)^2 \). Finally, we define the Crouzeix-Raviart space by

\[
CR_k(T) := \left\{ v \in \mathbb{P}_k(T) \mid \forall q \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1}(E) \quad \forall E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(T) \quad \int_E [v]_E q = 0 \right\}, \quad (1.8a)
\]

\[
CR_{k,0}(T) := \left\{ v \in CR_k(T) \mid \forall q \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1}(E) \quad \forall E \in \mathcal{E}_{\partial \Omega}(T) \quad \int_E v q = 0 \right\}. \quad (1.8b)
\]

Here, \([v]_E\) denotes the jump of \( v \in \mathbb{P}_k(T)\) across an edge \( E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(T)\) and \( \mathbb{P}_{k-1}(E)\) is the space of polynomials of maximal degree \( k - 1\) with respect to the local variable in \( E\).

We have collected all ingredients for defining the Crouzeix-Raviart discretization for the Stokes equation. For \( k \in \mathbb{N}\), let the discrete velocity space and pressure space be defined by

\[
CR_{k,0}(T) := (CR_{k,0}(T))^2 \quad \text{and} \quad M_{k-1}(T) := \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(T).
\]

Then, the discretization is given by: find \((u_{CR}, p_{\text{disc}}) \in CR_{k,0}(T) \times M_{k-1}(T)\) such that

\[
\begin{cases}
a_T(u_{CR}, v) - b_T(v, p_{\text{disc}}) = (f, v)_{L^2(\Omega)} \quad \forall v \in CR_{k,0}(T), \\
b_T(u_{CR}, q) = 0 \quad \forall q \in M_{k-1}(T),
\end{cases} \quad (1.9)
\]

where the bilinear forms \( a_T : CR_{k,0}(T) \times CR_{k,0}(T) \to \mathbb{R} \) and \( b_T : CR_{k,0}(T) \times M_{k-1}(T) \to \mathbb{R} \) are given by

\[
a_T(u, v) := (\nabla_T u, \nabla_T v)_{L^2(\Omega)} \quad \text{and} \quad b_T(v, q) := (\text{div}_T v, q)_{L^2(\Omega)}.
\]

It is well known that problem (1.9) is well-posed if the bilinear form \( a_T(\cdot, \cdot) \) is coercive and \( b_T(\cdot, \cdot) \) satisfies the inf-sup condition.

To verify the first condition we introduce, for a conforming triangulation \( T \) of the domain \( \Omega\), the broken Sobolev space

\[
H^1(T) := \left\{ u \in L^2(\Omega) \mid \forall K \in T : u|_K \in H^1(K) \right\}
\]

and define, for \( u \in H^1(T)\), the broken \( H^1\)-seminorm by

\[
\|u\|_{H^1(T)} := \|\nabla_T u\|_{L^2(\Omega)} = \left( \sum_{K \in T} \|\nabla u\|^2_{L^2(K)} \right)^{1/2}.
\]

In [13, Lem. 2]) it is proved that \( \|\cdot\|_{H^1(T)} \) defines a norm in \( CR_{k,0}(T) + H^1_0(\Omega) \) which is equivalent to the norm \( \left( \sum_{K \in T} \|u\|^2_{H^1(K)} \right)^{1/2} \) with equivalence constants independent of the polynomial degree and the mesh width (see Theorem C.1). This directly implies the coercivity of \( a_T(\cdot, \cdot)\):

\[
a_T(u, u) \geq \|u\|^2_{H^1(T)} \quad \forall u \in CR_{k,0}(T).
\]

Hence, well-posedness of (1.9) follows from the inf-sup condition for \( b_T(\cdot, \cdot)\).

**Definition 1.2** Let \( T \) denote a conforming triangulation for \( \Omega\). The pair \( CR_{k,0}(T) \times M_{k-1}(T) \) is inf-sup stable if there exists a constant \( c_{T,k} \) such that

\[
\inf_{p \in M_{k-1}(T) \setminus \{0\}} \sup_{v \in CR_{k,0}(T) \setminus \{0\}} \frac{(p, \text{div}_T v)_{L^2(\Omega)}}{\|v\|_{H^1(T)} \|p\|_{L^2(\Omega)}} \geq c_{T,k} > 0. \quad (1.10)
\]
We are now in the position to formulate our main theorem.

**Theorem 1.3** Let $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ be a bounded polygonal Lipschitz domain and let $\mathcal{T}$ denote a conforming triangulation of $\Omega$ consisting of more than a single triangle. Let $k \in \mathbb{N}$. If $k \geq 3$ is odd we assume that $\mathcal{T}$ contains at least one inner vertex. Then, the inf-sup condition (1.10) holds

$$c_{T,k} \geq c_{T,k}^{-\alpha}$$

for a constant $c_{T} > 0$ depending only on the shape-regularity of the mesh. In particular $c_{T}$ is independent of the mesh width $h_{T}$ and the polynomial degree $k$. The value of $\alpha \geq 0$ depends on the mesh topology:

$$\alpha = \begin{cases} 
1/4 + \kappa & \text{if } k \text{ is even,} \\
(1/4 + \kappa)(1 + L) & \text{otherwise,}
\end{cases}$$

for $\kappa = 2$ and $L$ denotes the number of steps involved in the step-by-step construction introduced in (2.11).

**Proof.** The estimate $c_{T,k} > 0$ follows, for $k = 1$ from [13], for $k = 2$ from [9, Thm. 3.1], for even $k \geq 4$ from [5], for odd $k \geq 5$ from [8], and for $k = 3$ from [7]. We set $$c_{T,\text{low}} := \min \{ c_{T,j} : 1 \leq j \leq 3 \}.$$ Estimate (1.11) for some $c_{T} := c_{T,\text{odd,high}} > 0$ for odd $k \geq 5$ is proved in Section 2.2, Lem. 2.22 while this estimate for some $c_{T} := c_{T,\text{even,high}} > 0$ for even $k \geq 4$ is proved in Section 2.3. Both constants $c_{T,\text{odd,high}}, c_{T,\text{even,high}}$ depend only on the shape-regularity of the mesh. Hence, $c_{T} \geq \min \{ c_{T,\text{low}}, c_{T,\text{odd,high}}, c_{T,\text{even,high}} \}$.

We emphasize that the original definition in [13] allows for slightly more general finite element spaces, more precisely, the spaces $\text{CR}_k (T)$ can be enriched by locally supported functions. From this point of view, the definition (1.8) describes the natural Crouzeix-Raviart space. The possibility for enrichment has been used frequently in the literature to prove inf-sup stability for the arising finite element spaces (see, e.g., [13], [21], [23]). In contrast, we will prove the $k$-explicit estimate for the inf-sup constant for the natural Crouzeix-Raviart family.

## 2 Proof of Theorem 1.3

In this section, we will analyse the $k$-dependence of the inf-sup constant in the form (1.11), first for odd polynomial degree $k \geq 5$ and then for even degree $k \geq 4$.

### 2.1 Barycentric coordinates and basis functions for the velocity

In this section, we introduce basis functions for the finite element spaces in Section 1.1. We begin with introducing some general notation.

**Notation 2.1** For vectors $a_i \in \mathbb{R}^n$, $1 \leq i \leq m$, we write $[a_1 \mid a_2 \mid \ldots \mid a_m]$ for the $n \times m$ matrix with column vectors $a_i$. For $v = (v_1) \in \mathbb{R}^2$ we set $v^+ := (v_2, -v_1)^T$. Let $e_{k,i} \in \mathbb{R}^k$ be the $i$-th canonical unit vector in $\mathbb{R}^k$. 
For $\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, $\|\mathbf{v}\|$ is the Euclidean vector norm and for a matrix $\mathbf{B} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$, $\|\mathbf{B}\| := \sup \{ \| \mathbf{B} \mathbf{x} \| / \| \mathbf{x} \| : \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{0\} \}$ is the induced matrix norm.

Vertices in a triangle are always numbered counterclockwise. In a triangle $K$ with vertices $\mathbf{A}_1, \mathbf{A}_2, \mathbf{A}_3$ the angle at $\mathbf{A}_i$ is called $\alpha_i$. If a triangle is numbered by an index (e.g., $K_1$), the angle at $A_{k,i}$ is called $\alpha_{k,i}$. For quantities in a triangle $K$ as, e.g., angles $\alpha_j$, $1 \leq j \leq 3$, we use the cyclic numbering convention $\alpha_{3+1} := \alpha_1$ and $\alpha_{1-1} := \alpha_3$.

For a $d$-dimensional measurable set $D$, we write $|D|$ for its measure; for a discrete set, say $\mathcal{J}$, we denote by $|\mathcal{J}|$ its cardinality.

In the proofs, we consider frequently nodal patches $\mathcal{T}_z$ for inner vertices $z \in \mathcal{V}_\Omega (\mathcal{T})$. The number $m$ denotes the number of triangles in $\mathcal{T}_z$. Various quantities in this patch such as, e.g., the triangles in $\mathcal{T}_z$, have an index which runs from 1 to $m$. Here, we use the cyclic numbering convention $K_{m+1} := K_1$ and $K_{1-1} := K_m$ and apply this analogously for other quantities in the nodal patch.

Let the closed reference triangle $\hat{K}$ be the triangle with vertices $\hat{\mathbf{A}}_1 := (0,0)$, $\hat{\mathbf{A}}_2 := (1,0)$, $\hat{\mathbf{A}}_3 := (0,1)$. The nodal points on the reference element of order $k \in \mathbb{N}_0$ are given by

$$
\hat{\mathcal{N}}_k := \begin{cases}
\left\{ \frac{1}{k} \mu \mid \mu \in \mathbb{N}^2_0 : \| \mu \| \leq k \right\} & k \geq 1,
\left\{ \left\{ \frac{1}{3}, \frac{1}{3} \right\} \right\} & k = 0.
\end{cases}
$$

For a triangle $K \subset \mathbb{R}^2$, we denote by $\chi_K : \hat{K} \rightarrow K$ an affine bijection. The mapped nodal points of order $k \in \mathbb{N}_0$ on $K$ are given by

$$
\mathcal{N}_k (K) := \left\{ \chi_K (z) : z \in \hat{\mathcal{N}}_k \right\}.
$$

The nodal points of order $k$ on $\mathcal{T}$ are defined by

$$
\mathcal{N}_k (\mathcal{T}) := \bigcup_{K \in \mathcal{T}} \mathcal{N}_k (K) \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{N}^k_{\partial \Omega} (\mathcal{T}) := \mathcal{N}_k (\mathcal{T}) \cap \partial \Omega, \quad \mathcal{N}_k,\Omega (\mathcal{T}) := \mathcal{N}_k (\mathcal{T}) \cap \Omega.
$$

We introduce the Lagrange basis for the space $S_k (\mathcal{T})$, which is indexed by the nodal points $z \in \mathcal{N}_k (\mathcal{T})$ and characterized by

$$
B_{k,z} \in S_k (\mathcal{T}) \quad \text{and} \quad \forall z' \in \mathcal{N}_k (\mathcal{T}) \quad B_{k,z} (z') = \delta_{z,z'}, \quad (2.1)
$$

where $\delta_{z,z'}$ is the Kronecker delta. A basis for the space $S_{k,0} (\mathcal{T})$ is given by $B_{k,z}, z \in \mathcal{N}_{k,0} (\mathcal{T})$.

Let $K$ denote a triangle with vertices $\mathbf{A}_i$, $1 \leq i \leq 3$, and let $\lambda_{K,\mathbf{A}_i} \in \mathbb{P}_1 (K)$ be the barycentric coordinate for the node $\mathbf{A}_i$ defined by

$$
\lambda_{K,\mathbf{A}_i} (\mathbf{A}_j) = \delta_{i,j} \quad 1 \leq i,j \leq 3. \quad (2.2)
$$

If the numbering of the vertices in $K$ is fixed, we write $\lambda_{K,i}$ short for $\lambda_{K,\mathbf{A}_i}$. For the barycentric coordinate on the reference element $\hat{K}$ for the vertex $\hat{\mathbf{A}}_j$ we write $\hat{\lambda}_j$, $j = 1,2,3$. Elementary calculation yield (see, e.g., [8, Appendix A])

$$
\partial_{n_k} \lambda_{K,\mathbf{A}_i} = \frac{|E_i|}{2 |K|} \times \left\{ \begin{array}{cl}
-1 & i = k, \\
\cos \alpha_\ell & \ell \text{ s.t. } \{ \ell, i, k \} = \{1,2,3\},
\end{array} \right. \quad (2.3)
$$

where $E_i$ is the edge of $K$ opposite to $\mathbf{A}_i$, $n_k$ the outward unit normal at $E_k$, and $\alpha_\ell$ the angle in $K$ at $\mathbf{A}_\ell$. 

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Definition 2.2 Let $L_k$ denote the usual univariate Legendre polynomial of degree $k$ (see [14, Table 18.3.1]). Let $k \in \mathbb{N}$ be even and $K \in \mathcal{T}$. Then, the non-conforming triangle bubble is given by

$$B_{k,K}^{\text{CR}} := \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2} \left( -1 + \sum_{i=1}^{3} L_k \left( 1 - 2\lambda_{K,i} \right) \right) & \text{on } K, \\ 0 & \text{on } \Omega \setminus K. \end{cases}$$

For $k$ odd and $E \in \mathcal{E} \left( \mathcal{T} \right)$, the non-conforming edge bubble is given by

$$B_{k,E}^{\text{CR}} := \begin{cases} L_k \left( 1 - 2\lambda_{K,A_{K,E}} \right) & \text{on } K \text{ for } K \in \mathcal{T}_E, \\ 0 & \text{on } \Omega \setminus \omega_E, \end{cases} \quad (2.4)$$

where $A_{K,E}$ denotes the vertex in $K$ opposite to $E$.

Different representations of the functions $B_{k,E}^{\text{CR}}$, $B_{k,K}^{\text{CR}}$ exist in the literature, see [27], [3], [9, for $p = 4, 6$], [10] while the formula for $B_{k,K}^{\text{CR}}$ has been introduced in [5] and the one for $B_{k,E}^{\text{CR}}$ in [8].

Proposition 2.3 A basis for the space $\text{CR}_{k,0} \left( \mathcal{T} \right)$ is given

1. for even $k$ by

$$\left\{ B_{k,z} \mid z \in N_{k,\Omega} \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \right\} \cup \left\{ B_{k,K}^{\text{CR}} \mid K \in \mathcal{T} \right\},$$

2. for odd $k$ by

$$\left\{ B_{k,z} \mid z \in N_{k,\Omega} \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \setminus \mathcal{V}_\Omega \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \right\} \cup \left\{ B_{k,K}^{\text{CR}} \mid K \in \mathcal{T} \right\}.$$

The proof of this proposition and the following corollary can be found, e.g., in [27, Rem. 3], [10, Thm. 22], [8, Cor. 3.4].

Corollary 2.4 A basis for the space $\text{CR}_{k,0} \left( \mathcal{T} \right)$ is given

1. for even $k$ by

$$\left\{ B_{k,z} \mathbf{v}_z \mid z \in N_{k,\Omega} \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \right\} \cup \left\{ B_{k,z} \mathbf{w}_z \mid z \in N_{k,\Omega} \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \right\} \cup \left\{ B_{k,K}^{\text{CR}} \mathbf{v}_K \mid K \in \mathcal{T} \right\} \cup \left\{ B_{k,K}^{\text{CR}} \mathbf{w}_K \mid K \in \mathcal{T} \right\}, \quad (2.5)$$

2. for odd $k$ by

$$\left\{ B_{k,z} \mathbf{v}_z \mid z \in N_{k,\Omega} \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \setminus \mathcal{V}_\Omega \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \right\} \cup \left\{ B_{k,z} \mathbf{w}_z \mid z \in N_{k,\Omega} \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \setminus \mathcal{V}_\Omega \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \right\} \cup \left\{ B_{k,E}^{\text{CR}} \mathbf{v}_E \mid E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \right\} \cup \left\{ B_{k,E}^{\text{CR}} \mathbf{w}_E \mid E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega \left( \mathcal{T} \right) \right\}. \quad (2.6)$$

Here, for any nodal point $z$, the linearly independent vectors $\mathbf{v}_z, \mathbf{w}_z \in \mathbb{R}^2$ can be chosen arbitrarily. The same holds for any triangle $K$ for the vectors $\mathbf{v}_K, \mathbf{w}_K \in \mathbb{R}^2$ in (2.5) and for any $E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega \left( \mathcal{T} \right)$ for the vectors $\mathbf{v}_E, \mathbf{w}_E \in \mathbb{R}^2$ in (2.6).

Remark 2.5 The original definition by [13] is implicit and given for conforming simplicial finite element meshes in $\mathbb{R}^d$, $d = 2, 3$. For their practical implementation, a basis is needed and Corollary 2.4 provides a simple definition. A basis for Crouzeix-Raviart finite elements in $\mathbb{R}^3$ has been introduced in [17] for $k = 2$ and a general construction is given in [11].
2.2 The case of odd $k \geq 5$

In this section, we assume for the following

\begin{align*}
\text{a)} & \quad k \geq 5 \text{ is odd and} \\
\text{b)} & \quad \mathcal{T} \text{ is a conforming triangulation and has at least one inner vertex.} \tag{2.7}
\end{align*}

This section is structured as follows. In §2.2.1 we generalize the concept of critical points (see [30], [25]) to $\eta$-critical points which turn out to be essential for estimates with constants depending on the mesh only via the shape-regularity constant. We split these $\eta$-critical points into a set of “obtuse” $\eta$–critical points and “acute” $\eta$–critical points. In §2.2.2, we provide the proof of Theorem 1.3 for a maximal partial triangulation that does not contain acute $\eta$–critical points and satisfies (2.7). Finally, in §2.2.3 we present the argument to allow for acute $\eta$–critical points.

2.2.1 Geometric preliminaries

For the analysis of the inf-sup constant we start with the definition of critical points (see [30], [25]).

**Definition 2.6** Let $\mathcal{T}$ denote a triangulation as in §1.1. For $\mathbf{z} \in \mathcal{V}(\mathcal{T})$, let

$$
\mathcal{E}_\mathbf{z} := \{ E \in \mathcal{E}(\mathcal{T}) : \mathbf{z} \text{ is an endpoint of } E \}.
$$

The point $\mathbf{z} \in \mathcal{V}(\mathcal{T})$ is a critical point for $\mathcal{T}$ if there exist two straight infinite lines $L_1, L_2$ in $\mathbb{R}^2$ such that all edges $E \in \mathcal{E}_\mathbf{z}$ satisfy $E \subset L_1 \cup L_2$. The set of all critical points in $\mathcal{T}$ is $\mathcal{C}_\mathcal{T}$.

**Remark 2.7** Geometric configurations where critical points occur are well studied in the literature (see, e.g., [25]). Any critical point $\mathbf{z} \in \mathcal{C}_\mathcal{T}$ belongs to one of the following cases (see Fig. 1):

Figure 1: Illustration of the four critical cases as in Remark 2.7. Left top: inner critical point, right top: acute critical point, left bottom: flat critical point, right bottom: obtuse critical point.
1. \( z \in V_\Omega (T) \) and \( T_z \) consists of four triangles and \( z \) is the intersections of the two diagonals in \( \omega_z \).

2. \( z \in V_{\partial \Omega} (T) \) and \( \text{card} \, E_z = 2 \), i.e., both edges \( E \in E_z \) are boundary edges which joint \( z \).

3. \( z \in V_{\partial \Omega} (T) \) and \( \text{card} \, E_z = 3 \) and two edges \( E \in E_z \) are boundary edges which lie on a straight boundary piece.

4. \( z \in V_{\partial \Omega} (T) \) and \( \text{card} \, E_z = 4 \) and each of the two boundary edges is aligned with one edge \( E_z \cap \Omega (T) \).

**Definition 2.8** Let \( T \) denote a triangulation as in §1.1. Let \( z \in V (T) \) and the nodal patch \( T_z \) as in (1.5). Let the triangles \( K_\ell, 1 \leq \ell \leq m, \) in \( T_z \) be numbered counterclockwise and denote the angle in \( K_\ell \) at \( z \) by \( \omega_k \). Then,

\[
\Theta (z) := \begin{cases} 
\max \{|\sin (\omega_1 + \omega_2)|, |\sin (\omega_2 + \omega_3)|, \ldots, |\sin (\omega_m + \omega_1)|\} & \text{if } z \in V_\Omega (T), \\
\max \{|\sin (\omega_1 + \omega_2)|, |\sin (\omega_2 + \omega_3)|, \ldots, |\sin (\omega_{m-1} + \omega_m)|\} & \text{if } z \in \Gamma \wedge m > 1, \\
0 & \text{if } z \in \Gamma \wedge m = 1.
\end{cases}
\]

**Remark 2.9** It is easy to see that \( z \in C_T \) if and only if \( \Theta (z) = 0 \).

**Lemma 2.10** Let \( \phi_T \) be as in Remark 1.1. Set

\[
\eta_0 := \min \left\{ \frac{1}{2}, c_1, \frac{3\phi_T}{\pi}, \sin \phi_T \right\}
\]

with

\[
c_1 := \begin{cases} 
\min \{|\sin 2\phi_T, |\sin (2\pi - 4\phi_T)|\} & \phi_T \leq \pi/8, \\
\sin 2\phi_T & \pi/8 < \phi_T \leq \pi/4, \\
1 & \phi_T > \pi/4.
\end{cases}
\]

Let \( 0 \leq \eta < \eta_0 \) be fixed. If, for \( z \in V (T) \), it holds \( \Theta (z) \leq \eta \), then, for any edge \( E = [z, z'] \in E_\Omega (T) \) it holds

\[
\Theta (z') \geq \eta_0.
\]

**Proof.** Let \( z \in V (T) \) and consider an edge \( E = [z, z'] \in E_\Omega (T) \). Then, there are two triangles \( K, K' \in T \) which are adjacent to \( E \). The angle in \( K \) resp. \( K' \) at \( z \) is denoted by \( \omega \) resp. \( \omega' \).

1st case. Let \( \omega + \omega' \leq \pi/2 \) or \( \omega + \omega' \geq \frac{3}{2} \pi \). Then, we conclude from Remark 1.1 that

\[
2\phi_T \leq \omega + \omega' \leq \frac{\pi}{2} \quad \text{or} \quad \frac{3}{2} \pi \leq \omega + \omega' \leq 2\pi - 4\phi_T.
\]

For the left inequality to hold, the minimal angle must satisfy \( \phi_T \leq \pi/8 \) while for the right inequality, it must hold \( \phi_T \leq \pi/4 \). For \( \phi_T > \pi/4 \), the 1st case is empty. We have

\[
\Theta (z) \geq \left\{ \begin{array}{lr}
\min \{|\sin 2\phi_T, |\sin (2\pi - 4\phi_T)|\} & \phi_T \leq \pi/8 \\
\sin 2\phi_T & \pi/8 < \phi_T \leq \pi/4
\end{array} \right\} \geq c_1 \geq \eta_0.
\]

Since \( \eta < \eta_0 \leq c_1 \) this case cannot appear.
2nd case. Let $\pi/2 \leq \omega + \omega' \leq 3\pi/2$. The condition $|\sin (\omega + \omega')| \leq \eta$ then implies that 

$$|\delta| \leq \arcsin \eta = \eta \sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty} \eta^{2\ell} \frac{(2\ell)!}{(\ell!)^2 4^\ell (2\ell + 1)} \leq \eta \sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty} 2^{-2\ell} \frac{(2\ell)!}{(\ell!)^2 4^\ell (2\ell + 1)} = \frac{\pi \eta}{3}. \quad (2.8)$$

Consequently the two angles $\alpha$ in $K$ and $\alpha'$ in $K'$ at $z'$ satisfy

$$\alpha + \alpha' = 2\pi - \omega - \omega' - \beta - \beta' = \pi - \delta - \beta - \beta' \leq \pi + \frac{\pi \eta}{3} - 2\phi_T \leq \pi - \phi_T,$$

where $\beta$ (resp. $\beta'$) denotes the third angle in $K$ (resp. $K'$). Hence, in this case

$$\Theta (z') \geq |\sin (\pi - \phi_T)| = \sin \phi_T \geq \eta_0.$$

\begin{definition}
Let $\eta_0$ be as in Lemma 2.10. For $0 \leq \eta < \eta_0$, the set of $\eta$-critical points $C_T (\eta)$ is given by

$$C_T (\eta) := \{ z \in V (T) \mid \Theta (z) \leq \eta \}.$$

A point $z \in C_T (\eta) \setminus C_T (0)$ is called a nearly critical point. An $\eta$-critical point $z \in C_T (\eta)$ is isolated if all edge $[z, z'] \in E (T)$ satisfy: $z'$ is not an $\eta$-critical point.

By perturbing the geometric configurations in Remark 2.7 we obtain the following subcases (see Fig. 2).

\begin{definition}
Let $\eta_0$ be as in Lemma 2.10 and $0 \leq \eta < \eta_0$. If $z \in V (T)$ satisfies

1. $z \in V_\Omega (T)$ and $\text{card} \ T_z = 4$ and $\Theta (z) \leq \eta$. Then $z$ is an inner $\eta$-critical point. Let

$$C_T^{\text{inner}} (\eta) := \{ z \in C_T (\eta) : z \text{ is an inner } \eta\text{-critical point} \}.$$

2. $z \in V_{\partial \Omega} (T)$ and $\text{card} \ E_z = 2$. Then $z$ is an acute critical point. Let

$$C_T^{\text{acute}} := \{ z \in C_T : z \text{ is an acute critical boundary point} \}.$$

3. $z \in V_{\partial \Omega} (T)$ and $\text{card} \ E_z = 3$ and $\Theta (z) \leq \eta$. Then $z$ is flat $\eta$-critical point. Let

$$C_T^{\text{flat}} (\eta) := \{ z \in C_T (\eta) : z \text{ is a flat } \eta\text{-critical boundary point} \}.$$

4. $z \in V_{\partial \Omega} (T)$ and $\text{card} \ E_z = 4$ and $\Theta (z) \leq \eta$. Then $z$ is a (locally) concave $\eta$-critical point. Let

$$C_T^{\text{concave}} (\eta) := \{ z \in C_T (\eta) : z \text{ is a concave } \eta\text{-critical point} \}.$$

The acute critical points require some special treatment and we denote the union of the others by

$$C_T^{\text{obtuse}} (\eta) := C_T^{\text{inner}} (\eta) \cup C_T^{\text{flat}} (\eta) \cup C_T^{\text{concave}} (\eta).$$

The following lemma states that for a possibly adjusted $\eta_0$, still depending only on the shape-regularity of the mesh, the $\eta$-critical points belong to one of the four categories described in Definition 2.12.

\footnote{Note that the set of acute critical boundary points is independent of $\eta$.}
Lemma 2.13 There exists some $\eta'_0 \in [0, \eta_0]$ depending only on the shape-regularity of the mesh such that for $0 \leq \eta < \eta'_0$ any $\eta$-critical point belongs to one of the four categories described in Definition 2.12.

Proof. We only consider the case $z \in V_\Omega (T)$ while the other cases follow by similar arguments. Let $m := \text{card} \, T_z$ and choose a counterclockwise numbering for the triangles in $T_z$, i.e., $K_i$, $1 \leq i \leq m$. The shape-regularity of the mesh implies that there is some $m_{\text{max}}$ depending only on $\phi_T$ such that $m \leq m_{\text{max}}$. Denote by $\omega_i$ the angle in $K_i$ at $z$. Let $\eta'_0 \in [0, \eta_0]$ which will be fixed later and assume $0 \leq \eta < \eta'_0$. Since $z$ is an $\eta$-critical point we have

$$|\sin (\omega_i + \omega_{i+1})| \leq \eta < \eta'_0 \quad \forall 1 \leq i \leq m.$$  

The shape-regularity implies $\phi_T \leq \omega_i \leq \pi - 2\phi_T$ and, for $\delta = \arcsin \eta'_0$, we get

$$\omega_i + \omega_{i+1} \in [2\phi_T, \delta] \cup [\pi - \delta, \pi + \delta] \cup [2\pi - \delta, 2\pi - 4\phi_T] \quad \text{for all } 1 \leq i \leq m. \quad (2.9)$$

Since $\arcsin : [0, 1] \to \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$ is monotonously increasing with $\arcsin 0 = 0$ and $\lim_{x \to 1} \arcsin x = +\infty$, we can select $\eta'_0$ such $0 < \delta < 2\phi_T$. In turn, the first and last interval in (2.9) are empty and

$$\omega_i + \omega_{i+1} \in [\pi - \delta, \pi + \delta] \quad \text{for all } 1 \leq i \leq m.$$  

We set $\omega_i + \omega_{i+1} =: \pi + \delta_i$ for some $|\delta_i| \leq \delta$ and obtain

$$4\pi = \sum_{i=1}^m (\omega_i + \omega_{i+1}) = m\pi + \sum_{i=1}^m \delta_i. \quad (2.10)$$

By adjusting $\eta'_0$ such that $m_{\text{max}} \delta < \pi$ we conclude that $m = 4$ and $\sum_{i=1}^m \delta_i = 0$. Hence, $z$ is an inner $\eta$-critical point.
Next, we collect the $\eta$–critical points in pairwise disjoint, edge-connected sets which we will define in the following.

We say two points $y, y' \in V(T)$ are edge-connected if there is an edge $E \in E(T)$ with endpoints $y, y'$. A subset $V' \subset V(T)$ is edge-connected if there is a numbering of the points in $V' = \{y_j : 1 \leq j \leq n\}$ such that $y_{j-1}, y_j$ are edge-connected for all $2 \leq j \leq n$. A point $z \in V(T)$ is edge-connected to $V'$ if $z \in V'$ or there is $y \in V'$ such that $z, y$ are edge-connected.

From Lemma 2.10 we know that two edge-connected points $z, z' \in V(T)$ can be both critical only if the connecting edge $E$ belongs to $E_{\eta \Omega}(T)$; as a consequence $z, z' \in V_{\eta \Omega}(T)$. Next, we will group the points in $C_T(\eta)$ into subsets called fans.

From Lemma 2.10 it follows that the points in $C_{\text{inner}}(\eta)$ are isolated. All other $\eta$-critical points lie on the boundary. Next, we define mappings $E : C_{\text{obtuse}}(\eta) \to E_{\Omega}(T), \mathcal{N} : C_{\text{obtuse}}(\eta) \to S_2$, and $\mathcal{V} : C_{\text{obtuse}}(\eta) \to V(T) \setminus C_T(\eta)$. The construction is illustrated in Figure 3.

For one edge $E \in E_\zeta \cap E_{\Omega}(T)$ and set $E(\zeta) := E$. Note that the choice of $E$ is unique for $z \in C_{\text{flat}}(\eta)$. For $z \in C_{\text{inner}}(\eta)$ the choice is arbitrary. For $z \in C_{\text{concave}}(\eta)$, the set $E_\zeta \cap E_{\Omega}(T)$ consists of two edges, say $E_1, E_2$. We fix one of them and set $E(z) := E_2$. Let $z' \in V(T)$ be such that $E(z) = [z, z']$. Then $V(z) := z'$. Lemma 2.10 implies that $z'$ is not an $\eta$-critical point. A unit vector $\mathcal{N}(z)$ orthogonal to $E(z)$ is defined by the condition that $z - z'$ and $\mathcal{N}(z)$ form a right-handed system.

**Definition 2.14** We decompose $C_{\text{obtuse}}(\eta)$ into disjoint fans $C_{T, \ell}(\eta), \ell \in J$, such that the following conditions are satisfied

1. $C_{\text{obtuse}}(\eta) = \bigcup_{\ell \in J} C_{T, \ell}(\eta)$,

2. for any $\ell \in J$, the set $C_{T, \ell}(\eta)$ is edge-connected,

3. for any $\ell \in J$, there is $z_\ell \in V(T) \setminus C_T(\eta)$ such that for all $z \in C_{T, \ell}(\eta)$ it holds $\mathcal{V}(z) = z_\ell$ and, vice versa:

4. any $z' \in C_{\text{obtuse}}(\eta)$ which is edge-connected to some $C_{T, \ell}(\eta)$ and satisfies $\mathcal{V}(z') = z_\ell$ belongs to $C_{T, \ell}(\eta)$.

The following lemma will allow us to construct the right-inverse of the divergence separately for each fan.
Figure 4: Nodal patch, illustrating edge-connected obtuse \( \eta \)-critical points of a fan \( \mathcal{C}_{T,\ell}(\eta) \). The left-most \( \eta \)-critical point is \( z_{\ell,n_{\ell}} \) and of type “flat”, the right-most is \( z_{\ell,1} \) of type “concave” with \( \mathcal{E}(z_{\ell,1}) = [z_{\ell,1}, z] \). The extremal points \( z_{\ell,0} \) and \( z_{\ell,n_{\ell}+1} \) do not belong to \( \mathcal{C}_{T,\ell}(\eta) \). The edge connecting \( z_{\ell} \) with \( z_{\ell,j} \) is denoted by \( E_{\ell,j} \).

**Lemma 2.15** Let \( \eta_0 \) be as in in Lemma 2.10 and let \( 0 \leq \eta < \eta_0 \) be fixed.

a. Then, the mapping \( \mathcal{E} : \mathcal{C}_{T}^{\text{obtuse}}(\eta) \to \mathcal{E}_\Omega(\mathcal{T}) \) is injective.

b. For \( \ell \in J \), let \( \omega_\ell := \bigcup_{z \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(\mathcal{T})} \omega_\ell(z) \). The domains \( \omega_\ell \) have pairwise disjoint interior.

**Proof.** **Part a.** The injectivity of the mapping \( \mathcal{E} : \mathcal{C}_{T}^{\text{obtuse}}(\eta) \to \mathcal{E}_\Omega(\mathcal{T}) \) follows from Lemma 2.10: if \( z \in \mathcal{C}_{T}(\eta) \) and \( z' \in \mathcal{V}(\mathcal{T}) \) is such that \( E := [z, z'] \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(\mathcal{T}) \) then \( z' \notin \mathcal{C}_{T}(\eta) \).

**Part b.** The following construction is illustrated in Figure 4. For fixed \( \ell \in J \), we number the points in \( \mathcal{C}_{T,\ell} \) by \( z_{\ell,j} \), \( 1 \leq j \leq n_{\ell} \), such that \( z_{\ell,j-1} \) and \( z_{\ell,j} \) are edge-connected for all \( 2 \leq j \leq n_{\ell} \) and \( z_{\ell,1} \) and \( z_{\ell,n_{\ell}} \) are the first and last point in the polygonal line through these points. Let \( K_{\ell,j} \) be the triangle with vertices \( z_{\ell,j-1}, z_{\ell,j}, 2 \leq j \leq n_{\ell} \) and let \( T_\ell := \{K_{\ell,j} : 2 \leq j \leq n_{\ell}\} \). Note that this set is empty if \( |\mathcal{C}_{T,\ell}| = 1 \). Let \( K_{\ell,1}, K_{\ell,n_{\ell}+1} \in T_\ell \) be two different triangles such that \( E_{\ell,1} := [z_{\ell,1}, z_{\ell}] \subset \partial K_{\ell,1} \) and \( E_{\ell,n_{\ell}} := [z_{\ell,n_{\ell}}, z_{\ell}] \subset \partial K_{\ell,n_{\ell}+1} \).

Let \( z_{\ell,0} \) be the third vertex in \( K_{\ell,1} \) and observe that it does not belong to \( \mathcal{C}_{T,\ell} \). Since \( E_{\ell,1} \) is an inner edge and \( z_{\ell,1} \) is an \( \eta \)-critical point, Lemma 2.10 implies that \( z_{\ell} \) is not an \( \eta \)-critical point. Next, we show that \( E_{\ell,0} := [z_{\ell,0}, z_{\ell}] \) does not belong to \( \mathcal{E}_\ell := \mathcal{E}(z) : z \in \mathcal{C}_{T}^{\text{obtuse}}(\eta) \); from this the assertion follows. We assume \( E_{\ell,0} \in \mathcal{E}_\ell \) and derive a contradiction. Since \( z_{\ell} \notin \mathcal{C}_{T}^{\text{obtuse}}(\eta) \), this assumption implies that \( z_{\ell,0} \in \mathcal{C}_{T}^{\text{obtuse}}(\eta) \). If \( \mathcal{E}(z_{\ell,0}) = z_{\ell} \) then Definition 2.14(4) implies that \( z_{\ell,0} \in \mathcal{C}_{T,\ell} \) and this is a contradiction. If \( \mathcal{E}(z_{\ell,0}) \neq z_{\ell} \), then \( E_{\ell,0} \notin \mathcal{E}_\ell \). □

Since the acute critical boundary points need some special treatment we define a sequence of triangulations \( T_i \), \( 1 \leq i \leq L \), with the properties

\[
T_1 \subset T_2 \subset \ldots \subset T_L = \mathcal{T}, \tag{2.11}
\]
2. $\mathcal{T}_1$ is a maximal subset of $\mathcal{T}$ such that $C^\text{acute}_{\mathcal{T}_1} = \emptyset$,

3. for $j = 1, 2, \ldots, L$,

$$
\mathcal{T}_j = \{ K \in \mathcal{T} | \exists E \subset \partial K \text{ s.t. } E \in \mathcal{E}(\mathcal{T}_{j-1}) \}.
$$

By this step-by-step procedure, triangles are attached to a previous triangulation $\mathcal{T}_{j-1}$ which have an edge in common with the set of edges in $\mathcal{T}_{j-1}$. The proof of Theorem 1.3 under assumption (2.7) then consists of first proving the inf-sup stability for $\mathcal{T}_1$ and then to investigate the effect of attaching a triangle to an inf-sup stable triangulation. A sufficient condition for $L = 0$ is that every triangle in $\mathcal{T}$ has an interior point.

### 2.2.2 The case $C^\text{acute}_T = \emptyset$

In this section, we prove the inf-sup stability for the triangulation $\mathcal{T}_1$ in (2.11) where $C^\text{acute}_T = \emptyset$. For simplicity we skip the index 1 and write $\mathcal{T}$, $\mathcal{C}_T(\eta)$, etc.

Next, we define some fundamental non-conforming Crouzeix-Raviart vector field which will be used to eliminate the critical pressures in the Stokes pair $(S_{k,0}(T), \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(T))$.

The essential properties of the Crouzeix-Raviart function $B_{k,E}^{\text{CR}}$ are: it is a polynomial of degree $k$ and a Legendre polynomial on each edge $E' \subset \partial \omega \cap \partial \omega$, so that the jump relations in (1.8b) are satisfied. Furthermore, $[B^{\text{CR}}_{k,E}]_E = 0$ and $\text{supp} B^{\text{CR}}_{k,E} \subset \omega_E$.

In the first step, we modify the function $B_{k,E}^{\text{CR}}$ by adding a continuous edge bubble in $S_{k,0}(T)$ such that the $H^1(\Omega)$ norm of the modified function has an improved behaviour with respect to $k$.

Let $E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(T)$ with endpoints $V_1, V_2$. Set $t_E = (V_2 - V_1)/\|V_2 - V_1\|$ and consider a function $w_E \in \mathbb{P}_k(T)$ with $\text{supp} w_E = \omega_E$ and

$$
w_E|_{K|E'} = B^{\text{CR}}_{k,E}|_{K|E'} \quad \forall K \in \mathcal{T}_E \text{ and } E' \subset \partial K \cap \partial \omega_E, \quad (2.12a)
$$

$$
[w_E]_E = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \partial_{t_E} w_E(V_1) = \partial_{t_E} w_E(V_2) = 0. \quad (2.12b)
$$

Then, $w_E$ also belongs to the space $\text{CR}_{k,0}(\mathcal{T})$ and

$$
\text{div}_T(w_E n_E)|_K(z) = \text{div}_T(B^{\text{CR}}_{k,E} n_E)|_K(z) \quad \forall K \in \mathcal{T} \quad \forall z \in \mathcal{V}(K).
$$

The last relation can be seen from the following reasoning. For $K \in \mathcal{T}$ and $z \in \mathcal{V}(K)$, set $t_y := (y - z)/\|y - z\|$ for all $y \in \mathcal{V}(K) \setminus \{z\}$. Clearly, $n_E = \sum_{y \in \mathcal{V}(K) \setminus \{z\}} \alpha_y t_y$ for some $\alpha_y \in \mathbb{R}$. The conditions (2.12) implies that for $y \in \mathcal{V}(K) \setminus \{z\}$ it holds

$$
\frac{\partial w_E|_K}{\partial t_y} = \frac{\partial B^{\text{CR}}_{k,E}|_K}{\partial t_y}.
$$

Hence,

$$
\text{div}_T(w_E n_E)|_K(z) = \sum_{y \in \mathcal{V}(K) \setminus \{z\}} \alpha_y \frac{\partial w_E|_K}{\partial t_y}(z) \quad (2.13)
$$

$$
= \sum_{y \in \mathcal{V}(K) \setminus \{z\}} \alpha_y \frac{\partial B^{\text{CR}}_{k,E}|_K}{\partial t_y}(z) = \frac{\partial B^{\text{CR}}_{k,E}|_K}{\partial n_E}(z) = \text{div}_T(B^{\text{CR}}_{k,E} n_E)|_K(z).
$$
Lemma 2.16 Let \( k \geq 5 \) be odd and for \( E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega (\mathcal{T}) \), let \( B^{CR}_{k,E} \) be as in (2.4). Then, there exists a function \( \widetilde{B}^{CR}_{k,E} \in CR_{k,0} (\mathcal{T}) \) with

1. \( \text{supp} \, \widetilde{B}^{CR}_{k,E} = \omega_E \).

2. for all \( K \in \mathcal{T} \), for all \( z \in \mathcal{V}(K) \):
   
   \[
   \text{div} \left( \left(\widetilde{B}^{CR}_{k,E} \mathbf{n}_E \right) |_K \right)(z) = \text{div} \left( \left( B^{CR}_{k,E} \mathbf{n}_E \right) |_K \right)(z),
   \]

3. for all \( K \in \mathcal{T}_E \), for all \( E' \subset \partial K \cap \partial \omega_E \):
   
   \[
   \widetilde{B}^{CR}_{k,E} \big|_{E'} = B^{CR}_{k,E} \big|_{E'} \quad \text{and} \quad \left[ \widetilde{B}^{CR}_{k,E} \right]_E = 0,
   \]

4. for all \( K \in \mathcal{T} \)
   
   \[
   \int_K \text{div} (\widetilde{B}^{CR}_{k,E} \mathbf{n}_E) = 0.
   \]

5. The piecewise gradient is bounded by
   
   \[
   \left\| \nabla \widetilde{B}^{CR}_{k,E} \right\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq Ck^{1/4}. \tag{2.16}
   \]

Proof. We employ the reference triangle as in [4] in order to apply the polynomial extension theorem therein. Let \( \tilde{K} \) be the equilateral triangle with vertices \( \tilde{A}_1 := (-1,0) \), \( \tilde{A}_2 := (1,0) \), \( \tilde{A}_3 := (0,\sqrt{3}) \) and let \( \tilde{E}_j \) denote the edge in \( \tilde{K} \) opposite to \( \tilde{A}_j \), \( 1 \leq j \leq 3 \).

Let \( E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega (\mathcal{T}) \) with endpoints \( V_1 \), \( V_2 \), and let \( K \in \mathcal{T}_E \). Choose an affine pullback \( \phi_K : \tilde{K} \rightarrow K \) such that \( \phi_K (\tilde{E}_3) = E \).

We employ the function \( \tilde{\psi}_k^- \in \mathbb{P}_k (\tilde{K}) \) which is analysed in the proof of Lemma A.1 [2, denoted by \( F_k \)] and set \( \tilde{\psi}_k^+ (x) := -\tilde{\psi}_k^- (-x) \). These functions satisfy \( \tilde{\psi}_k^\pm (\pm 1) = (\tilde{\psi}_k^-)' (1) = (\tilde{\psi}_k^+)' (-1) = 0 \) and \( (\tilde{\psi}_k^-)' (1) = (\tilde{\psi}_k^+)' (-1) = 1 \). Their norms can be estimated by

\[
\left\| \tilde{\psi}_k^\pm \right\|_{L^2([-1,1])} \leq Ck^{-3} \quad \text{and} \quad \left\| (\tilde{\psi}_k^\pm)' \right\|_{L^2([-1,1])} \leq Ck^{-1}.
\]

We set

\[
\tilde{\varphi}_k (x) = L_{k-1} (x) - L'_{k-1} (-1) \tilde{\psi}_k^- (x) - L'_{k-1} (1) \tilde{\psi}_k^+ (x).
\]

Clearly, it holds

\[
\tilde{\varphi}_k (\pm 1) = 1, \quad \tilde{\varphi}_k' (\pm 1) = 0.
\]

By using Lemma B.1, we get

\[
\left\| \tilde{\varphi}_k \right\|_{L^2([-1,1])} \leq Ck^{-1/2}, \quad \left\| \tilde{\varphi}_k \right\|_{H^1([-1,1])} \leq Ck.
\]

From [4, Thm. 7.4] we conclude that there is \( \tilde{w}_E \in \mathbb{P}_k (\tilde{K}) \) with

\[
\tilde{w}_E|_{\tilde{E}_j} = \left( \widetilde{B}^{CR}_{k,E} \right) \circ \phi_K|_{\tilde{E}_j}, \quad j = 1, 2 \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{w}_E|_{\tilde{E}_3} = \tilde{\varphi}_k.
\]
which satisfies
\[ \| \tilde{w}_E \|_{H^1(\tilde{K})} \leq C \| \tilde{w}_E \|_{H^{1/2}(\partial \tilde{K})} \]

for a constant \( C \) independent of \( k \). Since \( \partial \tilde{K} \) is closed we can interpolate between the spaces \( L^2(\partial \tilde{K}) \) and \( H^1(\partial \tilde{K}) \) and obtain
\[ \| \tilde{w}_E \|_{H^1(\tilde{K})} \leq C \| \tilde{w}_E \|^{1/2}_{L^2(\partial \tilde{K})} \| \tilde{w}_E \|^{1/2}_{H^1(\partial \tilde{K})} \leq C k^{1/4}. \tag{2.17} \]

By pullback to the triangle \( K \) via \( w_E|_K := \tilde{w}_E \circ \phi^{-1}_K, K \in T_E \), we see that this function is continuous across \( E \) (with value \( \check{w}_K \circ \phi^{-1}_K \)) and, on \( E' \subset \partial \omega_E \), it is a lifted Legendre polynomial. This implies property (3) for \( w_E \). Outside \( \omega_E \) we extend \( w_E \) by zero so that (1) holds for \( w_E \). Since the construction implies that the derivative of \( w_E \) in the direction of \( E \); evaluated at the endpoints \( V_1, V_2 \) of \( E \), is zero, we may apply the reasoning in (2.13) to obtain property (2) for \( w_E \).

From (2.17) we obtain in a standard way
\[ \| \nabla w_E \|_{L^2(K)} \leq C k^{1/4}. \]

Next, we modify \( w_E \) such that property (4) holds without affecting the other properties. Let \( \psi_E \in S_{4,0}(T) \) with supp \( \psi_E = \omega_E \) and
\[ \psi_E|_K := \alpha_K \lambda^2_{K,V_1} \lambda^2_{K,V_2} \quad \text{with} \quad \alpha_K := \left( \int_K \partial_{n_E} w_E \right) / \left( \int_K \partial_{n_E} (\lambda^2_{K,V_1} \lambda^2_{K,V_2}) \right) \quad \forall K \in T_E. \tag{2.18} \]

The modified function \( \tilde{B}_{k,E}^{CR} \) finally is defined by
\[ \tilde{B}_{k,E}^{CR} = w_E - \psi_E. \tag{2.19} \]

Since \( \text{div}_T \left( \tilde{B}_{k,E}^{CR} \right) \bigg|_K = \partial_{n_E} \left( \tilde{B}_{k,E}^{CR} \right) \bigg|_K \) property (4) follows by construction. The gradient \( \nabla \psi_E \) vanishes in the vertices of \( K \) so that \( (\partial_{n_E} \psi_E)(z) = 0 \) for all \( z \in V(K) \) and (2) is inherited from \( w_E \). Properties (1), (3) are obvious. Next, we verify (5). Let \( V_3 \) denote the vertex in \( K \) opposite to \( E \). We first compute
\[ \int_K \partial_{n_E} (\lambda^2_{K,V_1} \lambda^2_{K,V_2}) = \sum_{j=1}^2 2 \partial_{n_E} \lambda_{K,V_j} \int_K \lambda_{K,V_1} \lambda_{K,V_2} \lambda_{K,V_3-j} = \int_K \lambda^2_{K,V_1} \lambda_{K,V_2} \lambda_{K,V_3} \sum_{j=1}^2 2 \partial_{n_E} \lambda_{K,V_j} \]
\[ = -\frac{1}{15} \partial_{n_E} \lambda_{K,V_3} |K| \tag{2.3} \frac{|E|}{30}, \]
\[ \left| \int_K \partial_{n_E} w_E \right| \leq |K|^{1/2} \| \nabla w_E \|_{L^2(K)} \leq C |K|^{1/2} k^{1/4}. \]

In this way, \(|\alpha_K| \leq C k^{1/4}\) and an inverse inequality for quartic polynomials gives us
\[ \| \nabla \psi_E \|_{L^2(K)} \leq C h^{-1}_K \| \psi_E \|_{L^2(K)} \leq C h^{-1}_K k^{1/4} \| 1 \|_{L^2(K)} \leq C k^{1/4}. \]

Hence, property (5) follows. \( \blacksquare \)

Next we recall a result which goes back to Vogelius [30] and Scott-Vogelius [25], see also [22, Proof of Thm. 1].
Definition 2.17 Let $\eta_0$ be as in Lemma 2.10. For $0 \leq \eta < \eta_0$, the subspace $M_{\eta,k-1}^{SV}(T)$ of the pressure space $M_{k-1}(T)$ is given by

$$M_{\eta,k-1}^{SV}(T) := \{ q \in M_{k-1}(T) \mid \forall z \in C_T(\eta) : A_{T,z}(q) = 0 \}, \quad (2.20)$$

where, for $z \in C_T(\eta)$, the functional $A_{T,z}(q)$ is as follows: number the triangles in the patch $T_z$ counterclockwise $K_{\ell}$, $1 \leq \ell \leq m$, and set

$$A_{T,z}(q) = \sum_{\ell=1}^{m} (-1)^{\ell} \left( q|_{K_{\ell}} \right) (z). \quad (2.21)$$

Note that $M_{0,k-1}^{SV}(T)$ is the pressure space introduced by Vogelius [30] and Scott-Vogelius [25] and the following inclusions hold: for $0 \leq \eta \leq \eta' \leq \eta_0$

$$M_{\eta',k-1}^{SV}(T) \subset M_{\eta,k-1}^{SV}(T) \subset M_{0,k-1}^{SV}(T) = Q_{h}^{k-1}$$

with the pressure space $Q_{h}^{k-1}$ in [22, p. 517].

For the Scott-Vogelius pressure space $M_{0,k-1}^{SV}(T)$, the existence of a continuous right-inverse of the divergence operator into $S_{k,0}(T)$ was proved in Vogelius [30] and Scott-Vogelius [25].

Proposition 2.18 (Scott-Vogelius) For any $p \in M_{0,k-1}^{SV}(T)$ there exists some $v \in S_{k,0}(T)$ such that

$$\text{div } v = q \quad \text{and} \quad \| v \|_{H^1(\Omega)} \leq C \| q \|_{L^2(\Omega)},$$

for a constant which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh, the polynomial degree $k$, and on $\Theta_{\min}^{-1}$, where

$$\Theta_{\min} := \min_{z \in V(T) \cap C_T} \Theta(z). \quad (2.22)$$

In particular, the constant $C$ is independent of $h$.

In Lemma 2.20, we show that, by subtracting the divergence of a suitable Crouzeix-Raviart velocity from a given pressure in $M_{k-1}(T)$, the resulting modified pressure belongs to the reduced pressure space $M_{0,k-1}^{SV}(T)$. As a preliminary, we need a bound of the functional $A_{T,z}$ in (2.21) which is explicit with respect to the local mesh size and polynomial degree.

Lemma 2.19 There exists a constant $C$ which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh such that

$$|A_{T,z}(q)| \leq C \frac{k^2}{h_z} \| q \|_{L^2(\omega_z)} \quad \forall q \in P_{k-1}(T)$$

for any $k \in \mathbb{N}$.

Proof. Let $z \in V(T)$ and $K \in T_z$. The affine pullback to the reference triangle is denoted by $\chi_K : \hat{K} \to K$. For $q \in P_k(K)$, let $\hat{q} := q \circ \chi_K$ and $\hat{z} := \chi_K^{-1}(z)$. Then

$$|q(z)| = |\hat{q}(\hat{z})| \leq \frac{(k+1)(k+2)}{\sqrt{2}} \| \hat{q} \|_{L^2(\hat{K})} = \frac{k+2}{2} |K|^{-1/2} \| q \|_{L^2(K)}. \quad (2.23)$$

Note that for $|T_z| \geq 2$ the definition of $A_{T,z}$ is unique only up to a multiplication by a factor $(-1)$. This can be fixed by a numbering convention: $\mathcal{E}(z) = K_1 \cap K_2$. 


A summation over all \( K \in T_z \) leads to

\[
|A_{T,z}(q)| \leq \left( \begin{array}{c} k+2 \\ 2 \end{array} \right) \sum_{\ell=1}^{m} |K_\ell|^{-1/2} \|q\|_{L^2(K_\ell)} \leq C \left( \begin{array}{c} k+2 \\ 2 \end{array} \right) h_z^{-1} \|q\|_{L^2(\omega_z)},
\]

where \( C \) only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh. \( \blacksquare \)

The following lemma shows that the non-conforming Crouzeix-Raviart elements allow us to modify a general pressure \( q \in P_{k-1,0}(T) \) in such a way that the result belongs to \( M^\text{SV}_{\eta,k-1}(T) \) provided \( \mathcal{C}^\text{acute}_T = \emptyset \).

**Lemma 2.20** Let assumption (2.7) be satisfied and \( \mathcal{C}^\text{acute}_T = \emptyset \). There exists a constant \( \eta_2 > 0 \) which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh such that for any fixed \( 0 \leq \eta < \eta_2 \) and any \( q \in P_{k-1,0}(T) \), there exists some \( v_q \in \text{CR}_{k,0}(T) \) such that

\[
\int_K \text{div} v_q = 0 \quad \forall K \in T, \tag{2.24}
\]

\[
q - \text{div}_T v_q \in M^\text{SV}_{\eta,k-1}(T) \tag{2.25}
\]

and

\[
\|\nabla_T v_q\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq C_{\text{CR}k} k^{1/4} \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}. \tag{2.26}
\]

The constant \( C_{\text{CR}} \) depends only on the shape-regularity of the mesh.

**Proof.** Let \( q \in P_{k-1,0}(T) \). Let the fans \( \mathcal{C}_{T,\ell}(\eta) \), \( \ell \in J \), be as in Definition 2.14. For each fan \( \mathcal{C}_{T,\ell}(\eta) \) we employ an ansatz

\[
v_\ell := \sum_{z \in \mathcal{C}_{T,\ell}(\eta)} \alpha_{\ell,z} \tilde{B}_{CR_{k,E}(z)} N(z) \tag{2.27}
\]

for \( \tilde{B}_{CR_{k,E}(z)} \) as in (2.19), where the coefficients \( \alpha_{\ell,z} \in \mathbb{R} \) are defined next. The global function \( v_q \) is then given by

\[
v_q = \sum_{\ell=1}^{N} v_\ell.
\]

Property (2.24) follows from this ansatz by using Lemma 2.16. Next, we define the coefficients \( \alpha_{\ell,z} \) in (2.27) such that (2.25) holds and prove the norm estimates for \( v_q \). Our construction of the fans imply that open interiors of the supports of \( v_\ell \) are pairwise disjoint (see Lem. 2.15); as a consequence the definition of \( (\alpha_{\ell,z})_{z \in \mathcal{C}_{T}(\eta)} \) and the estimate of \( \nabla_T v_q \) can be performed for each fan separately.

For \( z \in \mathcal{C}_{T,\ell}(\eta) \), let \( E := E(z) \), \( n_{E} := N(z) \). Let \( K^{-}_z, K^{+}_z \), denote the triangles in \( T_E \) with the convention that \( n_E \) points into \( K^+ \). We use

\[
\text{div} \left( \frac{\tilde{B}_{CR_{k,E}} n_{E}}{K} \right)(V) \overset{(2.14)}{=} \text{div} \left( \frac{B_{CR_{k,E}} n_{E}}{K} \right)(V) \quad \forall V \in \mathcal{V}(K)
\]

and compute the divergence of \( B_{CR_{k,E}} n_{E} \)

\[
\text{div} \left( \frac{B_{CR_{k,E}} n_{E}}{K} \right) = (-1)^{i+1} \left\{ \begin{array}{ll}
\frac{|E|}{|K|} L'_{k} (1 - 2\lambda_{K,E}) & \text{on } K = K_i, \quad i = 1, 2, \\
0 & \text{otherwise}.
\end{array} \right. \tag{2.28}
\]
Well-known properties of Legendre polynomials applied to (2.28) imply that for any vertex $V$ of $K$ and odd polynomial degree $k$

$$\text{div} \left( \frac{\hat{B}_{k,E}^\text{CR}}{K} |_{E} \right) (V) = -\left( \frac{k+1}{2} \right) \times \begin{cases} \sigma |_{E} & \forall V \in V(K), \text{ if } K = K^\sigma_z, \sigma \in \{+, -\} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Hence the condition $A_{T,Y} (q - \text{div}_T \mathbf{v}) = 0$ for all $y \in C_{T,\eta}(\eta)$ is equivalent to the system of linear equation

$$M_\ell \alpha_\ell = r_\ell$$

(2.30)

with

$$M_\ell := \left(A_{T,Y} \left( \text{div}_T \left( B_{k,E}^\text{CR} \mathbf{M}(z) \right) \right) \right)_{y \in C_{T,\ell}(\eta)} = \left( \alpha_\ell, z \right)_{z \in C_{T,\ell}(\eta)}, \quad \alpha_\ell := \left( \alpha_\ell, z \right)_{z \in C_{T,\ell}(\eta)}, \quad r_\ell := \left( A_{T,Y} (q) \right)_{y \in C_{T,\ell}(\eta)}.$$  

(2.31)

The matrix $M_\ell$ is explicitly given by

$$M_\ell := -\left( \frac{k+1}{2} \right) \begin{bmatrix} |E_{\ell,1}| & |E_{\ell,1}| & |E_{\ell,2}| & \cdots & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ \frac{E_{\ell,1}}{|K_{\ell,1}|} & \frac{E_{\ell,2}}{|K_{\ell,2}|} & \frac{E_{\ell,2}}{|K_{\ell,2}|} & \cdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & 0 & \frac{E_{\ell,n_\ell}}{|K_{\ell,n_\ell}|} & \frac{E_{\ell,n_\ell}}{|K_{\ell,n_\ell}|} & \frac{E_{\ell,n_\ell}}{|K_{\ell,n_\ell}|} & \frac{E_{\ell,n_\ell+1}}{|K_{\ell,n_\ell+1}|} \end{bmatrix}.$$  

We use (cf. Fig. 5)

$$\frac{|E_{\ell,j}|}{|K_{\ell,j}|} = \frac{2 \sin(\alpha_{\ell,j,1} + \alpha_{\ell,j,2})}{|E_{\ell,j}|} \sin \alpha_{\ell,j,1} \sin \alpha_{\ell,j,2} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{|E_{\ell,j}|}{|K_{\ell,j+1}|} = \frac{2 \sin(\alpha_{\ell,j+1,1} + \alpha_{\ell,j+1,3})}{|E_{\ell,j}|} \sin \alpha_{\ell,j+1,1} \sin \alpha_{\ell,j+1,3}$$

and obtain

$$M_\ell = D_\ell (T_\ell + \Delta_\ell)$$

(2.32)
with $D_\ell = -k (k + 1) \text{diag } [|E_{\ell,j}|^{-1} : 1 \leq j \leq n_\ell]$ and

$$T_\ell := \begin{bmatrix} \frac{\sin (\alpha_{\ell,1,1} + \alpha_{\ell,2,1})}{\sin \alpha_{\ell,1,1} \sin \alpha_{\ell,2,1}} & \frac{1}{\sin \alpha_{\ell,2,1}} & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ \frac{1}{\sin \alpha_{\ell,2,1}} & \frac{\sin (\alpha_{\ell,2,1} + \alpha_{\ell,3,1})}{\sin \alpha_{\ell,2,1} \sin \alpha_{\ell,3,1}} & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \ddots & \ddots & 0 & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\ 0 & \cdots & 0 & \frac{1}{\sin \alpha_{\ell,n_\ell,1}} & \frac{\sin (\alpha_{\ell,n_\ell,1} + \alpha_{\ell,n_\ell+1,1})}{\sin \alpha_{\ell,n_\ell,1} \sin \alpha_{\ell,n_\ell+1,1}} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (2.33)$$

$$\Delta_\ell := \text{diag } \left[ \frac{\sin (\alpha_{\ell,j,2} + \alpha_{\ell,j,1,3})}{\sin \alpha_{\ell,j,2} \sin \alpha_{\ell,j,1,3}} : 1 \leq j \leq n_\ell \right].$$

In Lemma A.1, we prove that the matrix $T_\ell + \Delta_\ell$ is invertible and the inverse is bounded by a constant independent of $h_T$ and $k$. Hence,

$$\|\alpha_\ell\| \leq \tilde{C} \frac{h_{x_\ell}}{k (k + 1)} \|r_\ell\|. \quad (2.34)$$

Let $T_\ell := \{K_{\ell,j} : 1 \leq j \leq n_\ell + 1\}$ and $D_\ell := \text{dom } (T_\ell)$. We estimate the function $v_\ell$ in (2.27) by

$$\|\nabla_T v_\ell\|_{L^2(D_\ell)} \leq \left( \sum_{z \in C_{T,\ell}(\eta)} |\alpha_{\ell,z}|^2 \left\| \nabla_T \tilde{B}^{\text{CR}}_{k,\ell}(z) \mathfrak{M} (z) \right\|^2_{L^2(D_\ell)} \right)^{1/2} \leq \max_{z \in C_{T,\ell}(\eta)} \left\| \nabla_T \tilde{B}^{\text{CR}}_{k,\ell}(z) \mathfrak{M} (z) \right\|_{L^2(D_\ell)} \|\alpha_\ell\| \leq (2.16) \tilde{C} k^{1/4} \frac{h_{x_\ell}}{k (k + 1)} \|r_\ell\| \leq C h_{x_\ell} k^{-7/4} \|r_\ell\|.$$

In both estimates the constant $C$ only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh. We use Lemma 2.19 and conclude that

$$\|\nabla_T v_\ell\|_{L^2(D_\ell)} \leq C k^{1/4} \|q\|_{L^2(D_\ell)}.$$

Since the interiors of the supports $D_\ell$ have pairwise empty intersection the estimate

$$\|\nabla_T v_\ell\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq C k^{1/4} \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}$$

follows. \hfill \blacksquare

**Definition 2.21** Let assumption (2.7) be satisfied and $\eta_2 > 0$ as in Lemma 2.20. Fix $\eta \in [0, \eta_2]$. For $q \in P_{k,0} (T)$, the linear map $\Pi_k^{\text{CR}} : P_{k-1,0} (T) \to CR_k \cap (T)$ is given by

$$\Pi_k^{\text{CR}} q := \sum_{\ell \in \mathcal{T}} \sum_{z \in C_{T,\ell}(\eta)} \alpha_{\ell,z} \tilde{B}^{\text{CR}}_{k,\ell}(z) \mathfrak{M} (z)$$

with $\alpha_{\ell}$ as in (2.30).
For the proof of the following lemma we recall the definitions of some linear maps from the literature which are related to the right inverse of the divergence acting on some polynomial spaces.

Bernardi and Raugel introduced in [6, Lem. II.4] a linear mapping $\Pi^{BR} : M_{k-1}(\mathcal{T}) \to S_{2,0}(\mathcal{T})$ with the property: for any $q \in M_{k-1}(\mathcal{T})$, the function $\Pi^{BR}q \in S_{2,0}(\mathcal{T})$ satisfies

$$\int_K q = \int_K \text{div} (\Pi^{BR}q) \quad \forall K \in \mathcal{T} \quad (2.35)$$

and

$$\|\Pi^{BR}q\|_{H^1(\Omega)} \leq C_{BR} \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \quad (2.36)$$

for a constant $C_{BR}$ which is independent of the mesh width and the polynomial degree.

Next we consider some right inverse of the divergence operator on the space

$$M^Y_{k-1}(\mathcal{T}) := \left\{ q \in M_{k-1}(\mathcal{T}) \mid \left( \int_K q = 0 \quad \forall K \in \mathcal{T} \right) \right\}.$$  

Let

$$S^Y_k(\mathcal{T}) := \{ u \in S_k(\mathcal{T}) \mid \forall K \in \mathcal{T} : \left. u \right|_{\partial K} = 0 \}.$$  

There exists a linear operator $\Pi^Y : M^Y_{k-1}(\mathcal{T}) \to S^Y_k(\mathcal{T})$ such that for all $q \in M^Y_{k-1}(\mathcal{T})$

$$q = \text{div} \Pi^Y q,$$

$$\|\Pi^Y q\|_{H^1(\Omega)} \leq C_V \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \quad (2.37)$$

where the constant $C_V$ is independent of the mesh width and the polynomial degree. Note that in the original paper [30, Lem. 2.5] by M. Vogelius, the right-hand side in the estimate (2.37) contains an additional factor $k^{\beta V}$ for some positive $\beta V$ (independent of the mesh width). In [2, Thm. 3.4], the operator in [30, Lem. 2.5] is modified and the estimate in the form (2.37) is proved for the modified operator.

Finally, we employ the linear operator $\Pi^{GS} : M^{SV}_{\theta,k-1}(\mathcal{T}) \to S_{4,0}(\mathcal{T})$ introduced by Guzmán and Scott in [22, Proof of Lem. 6 and Lem. 7] with the property that, for any $q \in M^{SV}_{\theta,k-1}(\mathcal{T})$, it holds

$$\left( I - \text{div} \Pi^{GS} \right) q \in M^Y_{k-1}(\mathcal{T}),$$

$$\|\nabla \Pi^{GS} q\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq C_{GS} k^\kappa \eta^{-1} \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \quad \text{for } \kappa = 2. \quad (2.38a)$$

$$\quad \text{(2.38b)}$$

We emphasize that in [22, Lemma 7] the constant $\Theta^{-1}_{\min}$ (cf. (2.22)) instead of $\eta^{-1}$ appears in (2.38b) so that the estimate of $\|\nabla \Pi^{GS} q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}$ for $q \in M^{SV}_{0,k-1}(\mathcal{T})$ deteriorates in cases where the $z$ is a nearly singular point, i.e., very close to the geometric situations described in Remark 2.7. The proof of [22, Lemma 7] is split into an estimate related to points $z$ with $A_{\mathcal{T},z}(q) = 0$ (cf. (2.21)) and an estimate for the remaining points $z$ with $A_{\mathcal{T},z}(q) \neq 0$. Only in this second part, the constant $\Theta^{-1}_{\min}$ is involved. From Lemma 2.20, we conclude that $q - \text{div}_{\mathcal{T}} \left( \Pi^{CR}_k q \right) \in M^{SV}_{\theta,k-1}(\mathcal{T})$ and the second part of the proof in [22, Lemma 7] is applied only to points with

$$\min_{z \in V(\mathcal{T}) \cap C_{\mathcal{T}}(\eta)} \Theta(z) \geq \eta.$$  

Hence, (2.38b) follows for $\eta$ depending only on the shape-regularity of the mesh.
Lemma 2.22 Let assumption (2.7) be satisfied and let \( C_T^\text{acute} = \emptyset \). There exists a constant \( \eta > 0 \) which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh such that for any fixed \( 0 \leq \eta < \eta_2 \) and any \( q \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(T) \), there exists some \( w_q \in CR_{k,0}(T) \) such that

\[
q = \text{div}_T w_q
\]

and

\[
\|w_q\|_{H^1(T)} \leq C k^{1/4+\kappa} \eta^{-1} \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}.
\]

The constant \( C \) only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh and is independent of the mesh width and the polynomial degree \( k \).

**Proof.** For the construction of \( w_q \) we follow and modify the lines of proof in [22, Thm. 1] by a) involving the operator \( \Pi_k^{CR} \) and b) employing the concept of \( \eta \)-critical points.

For given \( q \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(T) \), we employ the operators \( \Pi_k^{CR}, \Pi_k^{BR}, \Pi_k^{GS}, \Pi \) in the definition of the function \( w_q \)

\[
w_q = T_1 + T_2 + T_3 + T_4,
\]

\[
T_1 := \Pi_k^{BR} q,
\]

\[
T_2 := \Pi_k^{CR} \left(I - \text{div} \Pi_k^{BR}\right) q,
\]

\[
T_3 := \Pi_k^{GS} \left(I - \text{div}_T \Pi_k^{CR}\right) \left(I - \text{div} \Pi_k^{BR}\right) q,
\]

\[
T_4 := \Pi \left(I - \text{div} \Pi_k^{GS}\right) \left(I - \text{div}_T \Pi_k^{CR}\right) \left(I - \text{div} \Pi_k^{BR}\right) q.
\]

By construction we have

\[
\text{div}_T w_q = q.
\]

The first two summands in (2.39) satisfy

\[
\|T_1\|_{H^1(\Omega)} \leq C_{BR} \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}, \tag{2.36}
\]

\[
\|T_2\|_{H^1(T)} \leq C_{CR} k \left(\|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)} + \|\Pi_k^{BR} q\|_{H^1(\Omega)}\right) \leq C_{CR} (1 + C_{BR}) k \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}. \tag{2.40}
\]

For the third term in (2.39) we get

\[
\|\nabla T_3\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq C_{GS} k^\kappa \eta^{-1} \left\| \left(I - \text{div}_T \Pi_k^{CR}\right) \left(I - \text{div} \Pi_k^{BR}\right) q \right\|_{L^2(\Omega)}
\]

\[
\leq C_{GS} k^\kappa \eta^{-1} \left(\|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)} + \|\text{div}_T \Pi_k^{CR} \left(I - \text{div} \Pi_k^{BR}\right) q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}\right). \tag{2.42}
\]

The combination with (2.36), (2.26) leads to

\[
\|\nabla T_3\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq C_{GS} (1 + C_{BR}) (1 + C_{CR}) k^{1/4+\kappa} \eta^{-1} \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}. \tag{2.43}
\]

For the fourth term we get in a similar way

\[
\|\nabla T_4\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq C_{V} \left(\|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)} + \|\text{div} T_1\|_{L^2(\Omega)} + \|\text{div}_T T_2\|_{L^2(\Omega)} + \|\text{div} T_3\|_{L^2(\Omega)}\right)
\]

\[
\leq C_{V} (1 + C_{BR}) \left(1 + C_{CR} k^{1/4} + C_{GS} (1 + C_{CR}) k^{1/4+\kappa} \eta^{-1}\right) \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}. \tag{2.44}
\]
The combination of (2.40), (2.41), (2.43), (2.44) with (2.39) leads to the assertion. ■

Lemma 2.22 implies that for conforming triangulations $\mathcal{T}$ which satisfy (2.7) and $C^{\text{acute}} = \emptyset$, there exists a bounded linear operator

$$\Pi_{\mathcal{T},k}^{\text{inv}} : \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T}) \to \mathbb{C} \mathbb{R}_{k,0}(\mathcal{T})$$

such that $\text{div}_{\mathcal{T}} \circ \Pi_{\mathcal{T},k}^{\text{inv}}$ is the identity on $\mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T})$ and

$$\left\| \Pi_{\mathcal{T},k}^{\text{inv}} q \right\|_{H^1(\mathcal{T})} \leq C_{\text{inv}} k^{1/4 + \kappa} \left\| q \right\|_{L^2(\Omega)}$$

for a constant $C_{\text{inv}}$ which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh.

2.2.3 The inf-sup stability for $\mathcal{T}$

In this section, we remove the condition $C^{\text{acute}} = \emptyset$ and construct a bounded right-inverse of the piecewise divergence operator for odd $k \geq 5$ and conforming triangulation which contains at least one inner point. The construction is based on the step-by-step procedure (cf. (2.11)) of the triangulation $\mathcal{T}_1$ to $\mathcal{T}$. Inductively, we assume that there is a triangulation $\mathcal{T}_j$ along a bounded right-inverse $\Pi_{\mathcal{T}_j,k}^{\text{inv}} : \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T}_j) \to \mathbb{C} \mathbb{R}_{k,0}(\mathcal{T}_j)$ of the piecewise divergence operator. A single extension step is analysed by the following lemma.

**Lemma 2.23** Let $\mathcal{T}$ denote a conforming triangulation for the domain $\Omega := \text{dom} \mathcal{T}$ and let $\mathcal{T}' \subset \mathcal{T}$ be a subset such that every triangle $K \in \mathcal{T} \setminus \mathcal{T}'$ has one edge, say $E$, which belongs to $\mathcal{E}(\mathcal{T}')$. We assume that $\mathcal{T}'$ has at least one inner vertex and set $\Omega' := \text{dom} \mathcal{T}'$. Assume that there exists a bounded linear operator $\Pi_{\mathcal{T}',k}^{\text{inv}} : \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T}') \to \mathbb{C} \mathbb{R}_{k,0}(\mathcal{T}')$ with $\text{div}_{\mathcal{T}_j} \circ \Pi_{\mathcal{T},k}^{\text{inv}} = \text{Id}$ on $\mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T})$ and

$$\left\| \Pi_{\mathcal{T}',k}^{\text{inv}} q \right\|_{H^1(\Omega')} \leq C_{\mathcal{T}'} \left\| q \right\|_{L^2(\Omega')} .$$

Then, there exists a linear operator $\Pi_{\mathcal{T},k}^{\text{inv}} : \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T}) \to \mathbb{C} \mathbb{R}_{k,0}(\mathcal{T})$ with $\text{div}_{\mathcal{T}} \circ \Pi_{\mathcal{T},k}^{\text{inv}} = \text{Id}$ on $\mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T})$ and

$$\left\| \Pi_{\mathcal{T},k}^{\text{inv}} q \right\|_{H^1(\Omega)} \leq C_{\mathcal{T}} \left\| q \right\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \quad \text{with} \quad C_{\mathcal{T}} := C_3 k^{1/4 + \kappa} C_{\mathcal{T}'} ,$$

for a constant $C_3$ which depends only on the shape-regularity of the mesh.

**Proof.** Let $q \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T})$. We set $v_0 := \Pi^{\text{BR}} q$ where the operator $\Pi^{\text{BR}}$ is as in (2.35) and satisfies

$$\left\| v_0 \right\|_{H^1(\Omega)} \leq C_{\text{BR}} \left\| q \right\|_{L^2(\Omega)} .$$

Hence, $q_1 := q - \text{div} v_0$ belongs to $\mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T})$ and has trianglewise integral mean zero.

The following construction is illustrated in Figure 6. Let $K' \in \mathcal{T}'$ such there exists a non-empty subset $\mathcal{T} (K') \subset \mathcal{T} \setminus \mathcal{T}'$ and any $K \in \mathcal{T} (K')$ shares an edge with $K'$. We have $|\mathcal{T} (K')| \leq 2$; indeed, if $|\mathcal{T} (K')| = 3$, then all three edges of $K'$ are boundary edges which implies $\mathcal{T}' = \{ K' \}$ and violates the condition that $\mathcal{T}'$ must contain an inner vertex.

For $K \in \mathcal{T} (K')$, let $z$ denote the vertex in $K$ opposite to $E$ and set $\omega_E = K \cup K'$. The endpoints of $E$ are denoted by $y_1, y_2$. We employ the ansatz (cf. (2.19))

$$ v_1 := \alpha \tilde{B}_{k,E,y} ,$$

(2.45)
Figure 6: The black triangles form the triangulation $\mathcal{T}'$. Left: One triangle $K$ is attached to $\mathcal{T}'$ having a common side $E$ with $K' \in \mathcal{T}'$ and $\mathcal{T}(K') = \{K\}$. Right: Here two triangles $K_1$, $K_2 \notin \mathcal{T}'$ are attached to a triangle $K' \in \mathcal{T}'$ and $\mathcal{T}(K') = \{K_1, K_2\}$.

with the convention that $n_E$ is the unit vector orthogonal to $E$ and directed into $K'$. By definition $v_1 \in \mathbf{CR}_{k,0}(\mathcal{T})$ and $\text{supp}\, v_1 \subset \omega_E$. We determine $\alpha$ in (2.45) such that $\text{div} (v_1|_K)(z) = q_1(z)$ and employ (2.29) to get

$$\text{div} \left( \hat{B}_{k,E}^{\text{CR}} n_E \right)(z) = \left( \frac{k+1}{2} \right) \frac{|E|}{|K|}. $$

Hence $\alpha = q_1(z) \frac{|K|}{|E|} / \left( \frac{k+1}{2} \right)$ and we conclude as in the proof of Lemma 2.20 that

$$\| \nabla \tau v_1 \|_{L^2(\omega_E)} \leq C_{\text{CR}k^{1/4}} \| q_1 \|_{L^2(K)}.$$  

We set

$$q_1 = \text{div} v_1 + q_2 \quad \text{for} \quad q_2 := q_1 - \text{div} v_1$$

and note that

$$\| q_2 \|_{L^2(K)} \leq \left( 1 + C_{\text{CR}k^{1/4}} \right) \| q_1 \|_{L^2(K)} .$$

The construction implies $q_2 \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(\mathcal{T})$, $q_2$ has trianglewise integral mean zero, and $q_2(z) = 0$. Next, we employ the function defined in [22, (3.5)]. For $K \in \{K, K'\}$, let $\eta_{E,1}|_K := \lambda_{K,y_1}^2 \lambda_{K,y_2}$ and $\eta_{E,2}|_K := \lambda_{K,y_1} \lambda_{K,y_2}^2$. For $j = 1, 2$ set

$$v_{E,j} = |E| \, t_{E,j} \eta_{E,j} \quad \text{for} \quad t_{E,1} = \frac{Y_2 - Y_1}{|E|} \quad \text{and} \quad t_{E,2} = -t_{E,1}.$$  

The properties of $v_{E,j}$ are listed in [22, (3.6)]: for $j = 1, 2$ it holds

$$\begin{align*}
\mathbf{v}_{E,j} &\in \mathbf{S}_{3,0}(\mathcal{T}), \quad \text{supp} \, \mathbf{v}_{E,j} \subset \omega_E, \\
\int_K \text{div} \, \mathbf{v}_{E,j} &= 0, \quad \forall K \in \mathcal{T}, \\
(\text{div} \, \mathbf{v}_{E,j}|_K)(\mathbf{v}) &= \delta_{\mathbf{v},y_j}, \quad \forall K \in \mathcal{T}, \quad \forall \mathbf{v} \in \mathbf{V}(K), \\
\| \nabla \mathbf{v}_{E,j} \|_{L^2(\omega_E)} &\leq C_0 |E|, \quad \text{for} \ C_0 \ \text{depending only on the shape-regularity.}
\end{align*}$$

(2.47)
We set
\[ v_2 := \sum_{j=1}^{2} q_j |_K (y_j) v_{E,j} \]
and define
\[ q_2 = \text{div } v_2 + q_3 \quad \text{for } q_3 := q_2 - \text{div } v_2. \] (2.48)
The function \( q_3 \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(T) \) has trianglewise integral mean zero and \( q_3 |_K \) vanishes in all vertices of \( K \). The norm \( \| \nabla v_2 \|_{L^2(K \cup K)} \) can be estimated in the same way as the function \( T_3 \) in (2.43); however the factor \( \eta^{-1} \) does not appear as in (2.43) since the last estimate in (2.47) does not depend on \( \eta \). In this way, we get
\[ \| \nabla_T v_2 \|_{L^2(\omega_E)} \leq C_1 k^{\kappa} \| q_2 \|_{L^2(K)} \]
(2.49)
\[ \leq C_1 (1 + C_{CR} k^{1/4}) k^{\kappa} \| q_1 \|_{L^2(K)}. \] (2.50)
Hence, from [2, Thm. 3.4] we deduce that there exists \( v_3 \in S_{k,0}(T) \) with \( \text{supp } v_3 \subseteq K \)
such that \( \text{div } v_3 = q_3 \) on \( K \) and
\[ h_K^{-1} \| v_3 \|_{L^2(K)} \leq C V \| q_3 \|_{L^2(K)} \leq C_V \| q_2 \|_{L^2(K)} \]
(2.48), (2.49)
\[ \leq C_V \| q_1 \|_{L^2(K)} \]
(2.46)
\[ \leq C_V (1 + C_1 k^{\kappa}) (1 + C_{CR} k^{1/4}) \| q_1 \|_{L^2(K)}. \]
In this way we have constructed the function \( v_K \in CR_{k,0}(T) \) by
\[ v_K = v_1 + v_2 + v_3 \]
such that \( \text{div } v_K = q_1 \) on \( K \), \( \text{supp } v_K \subseteq \omega_E \) and
\[ \| \nabla_T v_K \|_{L^2(\Omega)} = \| \nabla_T v_3 \|_{L^2(\omega_E)} \leq \sum_{\ell=1}^{3} \| \nabla_T v_{\ell} \|_{L^2(\omega_E)} \]
\[ \leq C_2 k^{1/4+\kappa} \| q_1 \|_{L^2(K)} \leq C_2 k^{1/4+\kappa} \left( \| q \|_{L^2(K)} + \| \nabla v_0 \|_{L^2(K)} \right), \]
where \( C_2 \) only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh through the constants \( C_V \), \( C_{CR} \), \( C_1 \). Let \( v_q := v_0 + \sum_{K \in T \setminus T'} v_K \) and note that by construction
\[ \text{div } v_q = q \quad \text{on } \Omega \setminus \overline{T'} \]
and
\[ \| \nabla_T v_q \|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq \| \nabla v_0 \|_{L^2(\Omega)} + \sum_{K \in T \setminus T'} \| \nabla_T v_K \|_{L^2(\omega_E)} \]
\[ \leq \| \nabla v_0 \|_{L^2(\Omega)} + 2 C_2 \sum_{K \in T \setminus T'} k^{1/4+\kappa} \left( \| q \|_{L^2(K)} + \| \nabla v_0 \|_{L^2(K)} \right) \]
\[ \leq C k^{1/4+\kappa} \| q \|_{L^2(\Omega)} . \]
Finally, the linear map \( \Pi^\text{inv}_{T,k} : \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(T) \to \mathbb{C}R_{k,0}(T) \) is defined by
\[ \Pi^\text{inv}_{T,k} q = v_q + \Pi^\text{inv}_{T',k} \left( (q - \text{div } v_q) |_{\Omega'} \right) \]
and satisfies \( \text{div} \circ \Pi^{\text{inv}}_{T,k} = \text{Id} \) on \( \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(T) \) and
\[
\left\| \nabla_T \Pi^{\text{inv}}_{T,k} q \right\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq C_3 k^{1/4 + \kappa} C_T \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}
\]
for some \( C_3 \) which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh. 

By iterating this argument we can prove Theorem 1.3 for the case (2.7).

**Theorem 2.24** Let \( T \) be a conforming triangulation which contains at least one interior vertex. Let \( k \geq 5 \) be odd and let \( L \in \mathbb{N}_0 \) the number of steps in the construction (2.11). Then, the inf-sup constant for the corresponding Crouzeix-Raviart discretization satisfies
\[
c_{T,k} \geq c_T k^{-(1/4 + \kappa)(L+1)}
\]
for some constant \( c_T \) which depends only on the shape-regularity of the mesh. If every triangle in \( T \) has an interior vertex than \( L = 0 \).

### 2.3 The case of even \( k \)

This case is slightly simpler that the case of odd \( k \) since the non-conforming Crouzeix-Raviart functions for even \( k \) have smaller support (i.e., one triangle) compared to two triangles (which share an edge) for odd \( k \).

In this section, we assume
1. \( k \geq 4 \) is even and
2. \( T \) is a conforming triangulation and contains more than a single triangle. (2.51)

**Remark 2.25** It is easy to verify that \(|T| > 1\) implies that there exists a mapping \( \mathcal{R} : C_T(\eta) \to T \) with \( \mathcal{R}(z) \in T_z \) and not all vertices of \( \mathcal{R}(z) \) are \( \eta \)-critical.

For an \( \eta \)-critical point \( z \in C_T(\eta) \), let \( n_z := |T_z| \) and fix a counterclockwise numbering of the triangles in
\[
T_z = \{ K^z_j : 1 \leq j \leq n_z \}
\]
such that \( K^z_j \) and \( K^z_{j+1} \) share an edge for all \( 1 \leq j \leq n_z - 1 \). For the case of even \( k \), we define the functional \( A_{T,z} \) for \( q \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(T) \) by
\[
A_{T,z} q := \sum_{j=1}^{n_z} (-1)^j q|_{K^z_j}(z).
\]

**Lemma 2.26** Let assumption (2.51) be satisfied. There exists a constant \( \eta_2 > 0 \) which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh such that for any fixed \( 0 \leq \eta < \eta_2 \) and any \( q \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1,0}(T) \), there exists some \( v_q \in \text{CR}_{k,0}(T) \) such that
\[
\int_K \text{div} v_q = 0 \quad \forall K \in T, \quad (2.53)
\]
\[
q - \text{div}_T v_q \in M_{\eta,k-1}^{SV}(T) \quad (2.54)
\]

and
\[
\|v_q\|_{H^1(T)} \leq C_{\text{CR}} k^{1/4} \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}. \quad (2.55)
\]
The constant \( C_{\text{CR}} \) depends only on the shape-regularity of the mesh.
Proof. For a triangle $K \in \mathcal{T}$, we set $\mathcal{C}_K (\eta) := \{ z \in \mathcal{V} (K) \cap \mathcal{C}_T (\eta) : K = \mathfrak{R}(z) \}$ and $n_K := |\mathcal{C}_K (\eta)|$. Note that $0 \leq n_K \leq 2$ (cf. Rem. 2.25). We number the vertices $V_j$ in $K$ counterclockwise with the convention $\{ V_j : 1 \leq j \leq n_K \} = \mathcal{C}_K (\eta)$. The angle in $K$ at $V_j$ is denoted by $\alpha_j$. Let $E_j$ be the edge in $K$ opposite to $V_j$ and let $n_j$ denote the outward unit normal vector at $E_j$.

In a similar way as for the construction of $\tilde{B}_{CR}^{k,E}$ in Lemma 2.16 there exists for any $c \in \mathbb{R}^2 \setminus \{ 0 \}$ a function $\tilde{B}_{CR}^{k,K} \in CR_{k,0} (T)$ (depending on $c$) with

1. $\text{supp} \ B_{CR}^{k,K} = K$,
2. for all $K \in \mathcal{T}$, for all $z \in \mathcal{V} (K)$
   \[ \text{div} \left( B_{CR}^{k,K} |_{K} c \right) (z) = \text{div} \left( B_{CR}^{k,K} |_{K} c \right) (z), \] (2.56)
3. for all $K \in \mathcal{T}$, for all $E' \subset \partial K$
   \[ \left. B_{CR}^{k,K} \right|_{E' \cap K} = \left. B_{CR}^{k,K} \right|_{E'} , \]
4. for all $K \in \mathcal{T}$
   \[ \int_K \text{div}_{\mathcal{T}} ( B_{CR}^{k,K} c ) = 0. \] (2.57)
5. The piecewise gradient is bounded by
   \[ \left\| \tilde{B}_{CR}^{k,K} \right\|_{H^1 (T)} \leq C k^{1/4}. \] (2.58)

For $j = 1, 2$, we define $\tilde{B}_{CR}^{k,K}$ by choosing $c = n_j$ and set

\[ \psi_{CR,j}^{k,K} := \begin{cases} \tilde{B}_{CR}^{k,K} n_j & \text{in } K, \\ 0 & \text{in } \Omega \setminus K, \end{cases} \] (2.59)

i.e., we fix $v_K := n_1$ and $w_K = n_2$ in (2.5). The divergence of $\psi_{CR,j}^{k,K}$ evaluated at a vertex $V_s$, $s = 1, 2$, is given by

\[ \text{div} \left( \psi_{CR,j}^{k,K} \right) (V_s) = \sum_{i=1}^{3} L_k' (1 - 2 \lambda_{K,i} (V_s)) \partial_{n_j} \lambda_{K,i} \] (2.56)
\[ = k (k + 1) \partial_{n_j} \lambda_{K,s} \times \begin{cases} -1 & j = s, \\ \cos \alpha_3 & j \neq s. \end{cases} \] (2.23)

Let $q \in P_{k-1,0} (T)$. We choose $\delta_K := (\delta_{K,j})_{j=1}^2$ by the condition

\[ A_{\mathcal{T},V_s} \left( \text{div}_{\mathcal{T}} \left( \sum_{j=1}^{2} \delta_{K,j} \psi_{CR,j}^{k,K} \right) \right) \mid_{V_s} = \begin{cases} A_{\mathcal{T},V_s} (q) & \text{if } V_s \in \mathcal{C}_K (\eta), \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \] (2.60)
For \( s = 1, 2 \), let \( \ell_s \) be defined by \( K_{\ell_s} = K \) (cf. (2.52)). Then,

\[
A_{T, V_s} \left( \text{div}_T \left( \sum_{j=1}^{2} \delta_{K,j} \psi_{k,K}^{\text{CR},j} \right) \right) = (-1)^{\ell_s} \sum_{j=1}^{2} \delta_{K,j} \left( \text{div} \, \psi_{k,K}^{\text{CR},j} \bigg|_K \right) (V_s)
= M_K \delta_K
\]

for

\[
M_K = (-1)^{\ell_s + 1} \left( \frac{k + 1}{2} \right) |K|^{-1} \begin{bmatrix} |E_1| & - |E_1| \cos \alpha_3 \\ - |E_2| \cos \alpha_3 & |E_2| \end{bmatrix}.
\]

We define \( r_K = (r_{K,s})_{s=1}^{2} \) by

\[
r_{K,s} := \begin{cases} A_{T, V_s} (q) & \text{if } V_s \in \mathcal{C}_K (\eta), \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}
\]

so that \( \delta_K \) is the solution of

\[
M_K \delta_K = r_K.
\]

Observe that

\[
\det \begin{bmatrix} |E_1| & - |E_1| \cos \alpha_3 \\ - |E_2| \cos \alpha_3 & |E_2| \end{bmatrix} = |E_1| |E_2| \sin^2 \alpha_3 = 2 |K| \sin \alpha_3
\]

and \( \sin \alpha_3 \geq \sin \phi_T > 0 \) due to the shape-regularity of the mesh. For the coefficient \( \delta_K \) we get explicitly

\[
\delta_K = \frac{(-1)^{\ell_s + 1}}{(k + 1) k \sin \alpha_3} \begin{bmatrix} \frac{|E_2|}{|E_2| \cos \alpha_3} & \frac{|E_1| \cos \alpha_3}{|E_1|} \end{bmatrix} r_K
\]

with an estimate

\[
\| \delta_K \| \leq C \frac{h_K}{k (k + 1)} \| r_K \|^{Lem. 2.19} \leq C \| q \|_{L^2(\omega_K)} \text{ if } \mathcal{C}_K (\eta) \neq \emptyset,
\]

where \( C \) only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh. Note that this is the analogue for even \( k \) to (2.34). If \( \mathcal{C}_K (\eta) = \emptyset \), it holds \( \delta_K = 0 \).

We define the global function

\[
v_q := \sum_{K \in T} \sum_{j=1}^{2} \delta_{K,j} \psi_{k,K}^{\text{CR},j} \qquad (2.62)
\]

From (2.57) we conclude that \( v_q \) satisfies (2.53).

Next, we verify (2.54). Let \( y \in \mathcal{C}_T (\eta) \) and recall the notation and convention as in (2.52). Let \( K^y_{\ell} = \mathfrak{r} (y) \). Then (2.54) follows from

\[
A_{T, y} \left( \text{div}_T \, v_q \right) = (-1)^{\ell} \left( \text{div} \, v_q \bigg|_{K^y_{\ell}} \right) (y) = (-1)^{\ell} \left( \text{div} \, \sum_{j=1}^{2} \delta_{K^y_{\ell},j} \psi_{k,K}^{\text{CR},j} \bigg|_{K^y_{\ell}} \right) (y)
= A_{T, y} (q).
\]
The estimate
\[ \left\| \nabla \psi_{k,K}^{CR,j} \right\|_{L^2(K)} \leq C k^{1/4} \]
for a constant $C$ which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh follows directly from (2.58) and the final estimate (2.55) is derived by repeating the arguments as in the proof of Lemma 2.20.

This lemma allows us to extend Definition 2.21 to the case of even $k$ by defining the coefficients $\delta_K$ by (2.61) and the functions $\psi_{k,K}^{CR}$ by (2.59) and set (cf. (2.62)) $\Pi_k^{CR} q := v_q$. Since $(I - \Pi_k^{CR}) q \in M_{n,k-1}^{SV}(T)$ we may apply the further steps in the proof of Lemma 2.22 to obtain the inf-sup stability for even $k$.

**Theorem 2.27** Let $\mathcal{T}$ be a conforming triangulation satisfies (2.51). Then, the inf-sup constant for the corresponding Crouzeix-Raviart discretization satisfies
\[ c_{\mathcal{T},k} \geq c_{\mathcal{T}} k^{-\nu} \]
for some constant $c_{\mathcal{T}}$ which depends only on the shape-regularity of the mesh.

3 Conclusion

In this paper, we have derived lower bounds for the inf-sup constant for Crouzeix-Raviart elements for the Stokes equation which are explicit with respect to the polynomial degree $k$ and are independent of the mesh size. Under very mild assumptions on the topology of the triangulation, more precisely,

1. for odd $k \geq 3$
   
   (a) we assume that $\mathcal{T}$ has at least one interior point and
   
   (b) for $k \geq 5$ we assume that $\mathcal{T}$ has no acute critical point,

2. for even $k \geq 4$ we assume that $\mathcal{T}$ contains more than one triangle,

the inf-sup constant can be bounded from below by $c_{\mathcal{T},k} \geq c_{\mathcal{T}} k^{-(1/4+\nu)}$ with $\nu = 2$. If for odd $k$, condition 1.b is not satisfied but a step-by-step construction (2.11) for some $L \geq 1$ is possible, then, $c_{\mathcal{T},k} \geq c_{\mathcal{T}} k^{-(1/4+\nu)(1+L)}$.

Finally, we compare these findings with some other stable pairs of Stokes elements on triangulations in the literature. The element $(S_{k,0}(T), P_{k-2,0}(T))$ has a discrete inf-sup constant which can be estimated from below by $C k^{-3}$ (see [24], [26]). The discrete inf-sup constant for the Scott-Vogelius element $(S_{k,0}(T), P_{k-1,0}(T))$ can be estimated from below by $c/(\Theta_{\min}^{k_m})$ for some integer $m$ sufficiently large (see [25], [30]). In [2], a conforming stable pair $(X_k(T), M_{k-1}(T))$ of Stokes elements on triangulations is introduced and it is proved that the discrete inf-sup constant can be estimated from below by $c/\Theta_{\min}$ for a constant $c$ independent of $h$ and $k$ and $\Theta_{\min} := \min_{z \in \partial \Omega} \Theta(z)$. However, the implementation requires finite elements for the velocity with $C^1$ continuity at the triangle vertices and pressures which are continuous in the triangle vertices.
A The inverse of the matrix $T_\ell + \Delta_\ell$ in (2.32)

**Lemma A.1** There exists $\eta_2 > 0$ which only depends on the shape-regularity $\gamma_T$ such that for any $0 < \eta < \eta_2$ the matrix $T_\ell + \Delta_\ell$ in (2.32) is invertible and there exists a constant $C$ depending only on the shape-regularity of the mesh such that (cf. Notation 2.1)

$$\| (T_\ell + \Delta_\ell)^{-1} \| \leq C.$$ 

Note that the matrix $T_\ell$ in (2.33) is the same as the matrix $T_n, \alpha$ which has been analysed in [8, (3.36)]. In particular, the formula

$$\det T_\ell = \frac{\sin \left( \sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell+1} \alpha_{\ell,j,1} \right)}{\prod_{j=1}^{n_\ell+1} \sin \alpha_{\ell,j,1}}$$

was proved.

Next we show that the sum $\sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell+1} \alpha_{\ell,j,1}$ is bounded away from 0 and $\pi$. The bound $\sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell+1} \alpha_{\ell,j,1} \geq \varphi_T$ follows from Remark 1.1. Since $z_{\ell,j}, 1 \leq j \leq n_\ell$ are $\eta$–critical points the sum of both angles adjacent to $E_{\ell,j}$ at $z_{\ell,j}$ satisfy

$$\sin (\alpha_{\ell,j,2} + \alpha_{\ell,j+1,3}) \leq \eta.$$ 

We write $\alpha_{\ell,j,2} + \alpha_{\ell,j+1,3} =: \pi + \delta_j$. From the proof of Lemma 2.10, in particular from the estimate (2.8) we conclude that $|\delta_j| \leq c_2 \eta$.

Since all points $z_{\ell,j}$ are edge-connected to the same point $z_\ell$, the number $n_\ell$ is bounded from above by a constant $n_{\text{max}}$ which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh. Hence,

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell+1} \alpha_{\ell,j,1} = \sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell+1} (\pi - \alpha_{\ell,j,2} - \alpha_{\ell,j,3}) = (n_\ell + 1) \pi - \alpha_{\ell,1,3} - \alpha_{\ell,n_\ell+1,2} - \sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell} (\alpha_{\ell,j,2} + \alpha_{\ell,j+1,3})$$

$$= (n_\ell + 1) \pi - \alpha_{\ell,1,3} - \alpha_{\ell,n_\ell+1,2} - \sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell} (\pi + \delta_j) = \pi - \alpha_{\ell,1,3} - \alpha_{\ell,n_\ell+1,2} - \sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell} \delta_j$$

$$\leq \pi - 2 \varphi_T + n_{\text{max}} c_2 \eta.$$ 

By adjusting the constant $\eta_0$ in Lemma 2.10 to $\eta_1 := \min \{ \eta_0, \varphi_T / (n_{\text{max}} c_2) \}$ it follows that

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell+1} \alpha_{\ell,j,1} \leq \pi - \varphi_T.$$ 

By using the trivial estimate $0 < \sin \alpha_{\ell,j,1} \leq 1$, we may conclude that

$$\det T_\ell = \frac{\sin \left( \sum_{j=1}^{n_\ell+1} \alpha_{\ell,j,1} \right)}{\prod_{j=1}^{n_\ell+1} \sin \alpha_{\ell,j,1}} \geq \sin \varphi_T > 0. \quad (A.1)$$

Note that the entries in the matrix $T_\ell$ (cf. 2.33) satisfy

$$\left| (T_\ell)_{y,z} \right| \leq \frac{1}{\sin^2 \varphi_T} \quad (A.2)$$
and hence the Frobenius norm $\|T_\ell\|_F$ can be estimated by

$$\|T_\ell\|_F \leq \frac{3n_\ell}{\sin^2 \varphi_T} \leq \frac{3n_{\text{max}}}{\sin^2 \varphi_T}.$$ 

It is well known that $\|T_\ell\| \leq \|T_\ell\|_F$ and hence the bound on $\|T_\ell\|$ follows.

We combine (A.1), (A.2), and $n_\ell \leq n_{\text{max}}$ to obtain by Cramer’s rule that there exists a constant $C$ which only depends on the shape-regularity $\gamma_T$ such that

$$\left|(T_\ell^{-1})_{y,z}\right| \leq C.$$ 

By the same arguments as before we conclude that $\|T_\ell^{-1}\| \leq \tilde{C}$ for a constant $\tilde{C}$ which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh.

Next we estimate $\|\Delta_\ell\|$. Since $\Delta_\ell$ is diagonal it suffices to estimate the diagonal entries

$$\left|\frac{\sin (\alpha_{j,2} + \alpha_{j+1,3})}{\sin \alpha_{j,2} \sin \alpha_{j+1,3}}\right| = \left|\frac{\sin (\pi + \delta_\ell)}{\sin \alpha_{j,2} \sin \alpha_{j+1,3}}\right| = \left|\frac{\sin \delta_\ell}{\sin \alpha_{j,2} \sin \alpha_{j+1,3}}\right| \leq \frac{c_2 \eta}{\sin^2 \varphi_T}.$$ 

We write $T_\ell + \Delta_\ell = T_\ell (I + T_\ell^{-1} \Delta_\ell)$ and obtain

$$\|T_\ell^{-1} \Delta_\ell\| \leq \|T_\ell^{-1}\| \|\Delta_\ell\| \leq \tilde{C} \frac{c_2 \eta}{\sin^2 \varphi_T}.$$ 

Next, we adjust the upper bound $\eta_1$ by setting $\eta_2 := \min\{\eta_1, \frac{\sin^2 \varphi_T}{2c_2}\}$ to obtain $\|T_\ell^{-1} \Delta_\ell\| \leq 1/2$ with implies the invertibility of $T_\ell + \Delta_\ell$ with bound

$$\|(T_\ell + \Delta_\ell)^{-1}\| \leq 2\tilde{C}.$$ 

\vspace{1cm}

\section{B Analytic evaluation of some integrals involving Legendre polynomials}

In the proof of Lemma 2.20 some integrals over Legendre polynomials appear and we present here their explicit evaluation.

\textbf{Lemma B.1} For $k \geq 0$, it holds

$$\int_{-1}^{1} L_k^2 (t) \, dt = \int_{-1}^{1} (t + 1) L_k^2 (t) \, dt = \frac{2}{2k + 1} \quad (B.1)$$

and

$$\int_{-1}^{1} (L_k' (t))^2 \, dt = \int_{-1}^{1} (t + 1) (L_k' (t))^2 \, dt = k (k + 1). \quad (B.2)$$

\textbf{Proof.} The relation $\int_{-1}^{1} L_k^2 (t) \, dt = 2/(2k + 1)$ follows from [20, 7.221(1)].

For $k = 0$, these relations follows from $L_0 (t) = 1$. Let $k \geq 1$. The recurrence relation in [14, 18.9.1, Table 18.9.1] imply
\[(t + 1) L_k(t) = \frac{k + 1}{2k + 1} L_{k+1}(t) + L_k(t) + \frac{k}{2k + 1} L_{k-1}(t).\]

Substituting \((t + 1) L_k(t)\) under the integral in (B.1) by this and taking into account the orthogonality relations of the Legendre polynomials leads to

\[
\int_{-1}^{1} (t + 1) L_k^2(t) \, dt = \int_{-1}^{1} L_k^2(t) \, dt = \frac{2}{2k + 1}.
\]

For the second integral (B.2) we employ integration by parts:

\[
\int_{-1}^{1} (t + 1) \left( \frac{d}{dt} L_k(t) \right)^2 \, dt = (t + 1) L_k(t) L_k(t) \bigg|_{-1}^{1} - \int_{-1}^{1} g_k(t) L_k(t) \, dt \quad \text{for } g(t) := ((t + 1) L_k'(t))^\prime.
\]

(B.3)

Since \(g \in \mathbb{P}_{k-1}\) the orthogonality properties of Legendre polynomials imply that the integral in the right-hand side of (B.3) is zero. By using \(L_k(\pm1) = (\pm1)^k\) (cf. [14, Table 18.6.1]) and \(L_k'(\pm1) = (\pm1)^{k+1} \binom{k+1}{2}\) (cf. [14, Combine 18.9.15 with Table 18.6.1]) we get

\[
\int_{-1}^{1} (t + 1) \left( \frac{d}{dt} L_k(t) \right)^2 \, dt = 2 L_k'(1) L_k(1) = k(k + 1).
\]

Finally

\[
\int_{-1}^{1} \left( \frac{d}{dt} L_k(t) \right)^2 \, dt = L_k(t) L_k(t) \bigg|_{-1}^{1} - \int_{-1}^{1} L_k''(t) L_k(t) \, dt.
\]

The last integral is zero due the orthogonality of the Legendre polynomials. The endpoint values of \(L_k\) and \(L_k'\) lead to the assertion. ■

C Norm equivalence for Crouzeix-Raviart spaces

It is well known that for \(V := H_0^1(\Omega) + \text{CR}_{k,0}(T)\), the norms \(\left( \|\nabla_T u\|_{L^2(\Omega)}^2 + \|u\|_{L^2(\Omega)}^2 \right)^{1/2}\) and \(\|\nabla_T u\|_{L^2(\Omega)}\) are equivalent. In this section, we state estimates for the constants in these equivalencies – the proof is a repetition of the well-known arguments for the case \(k = 1\) (see, e.g., [16, Lem. 36.6]).

**Theorem C.1** There exist a constant \(C > 0\) depending only on the shape-regularity of the mesh and the domain \(\Omega\) such that

\[
\|u\|_{H^1(T)} \leq \left( \|\nabla_T u\|_{L^2(\Omega)}^2 + \|u\|_{L^2(\Omega)}^2 \right)^{1/2} \leq C \|u\|_{H^1(T)} \quad \forall u \in V.
\]

In particular \(C\) is independent of the polynomial degree \(k \geq 1\) and the mesh size \(h_T\).

**Proof.** For \(u \in V\), we have

\[
\|u\|_{L^2(\Omega)} = \sup_{v \in L^2(\Omega) \setminus \{0\}} \frac{(u, v)_{L^2(\Omega)}}{\|v\|_{L^2(\Omega)}}, \tag{C.1}
\]
For \( v \in L^2(\Omega) \), there exists some \( w \in H^1(\Omega) \) such that \( \text{div} \ w = v \) and \( \|w\|_{H^1(\Omega)} \leq C_\Omega \|v\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \) for a constant \( C_\Omega \) which only depends on \( \Omega \). Hence,

\[
(u, v)_{L^2(\Omega)} = (u, \text{div} w)_{L^2(\Omega)} = - (\nabla_\tau u, w)_{L^2(\Omega)} + \sum_{\Delta K \in \partial T} \langle \text{w, } n_K \rangle u,
\]

where \( n_K \) is the unit normal vector pointing to the exterior of \( K \). Next, we rewrite the sum over the triangle boundaries as a sum over the edges. For \( E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(T) \) we fix the direction of a unit vector \( n_E \) which is orthogonal to \( E \) and for \( E \in \mathcal{E}_{\partial \Omega}(T) \) let \( n_E \) denote the unit vector, orthogonal to \( E \), pointing to the exterior of \( \Omega \). Let

\[
[u]_E(x) := \lim_{\varepsilon \searrow 0} (u(x + \varepsilon n_K) - u(x - \varepsilon n_K)).
\]

Then

\[
(u, v)_{L^2(\Omega)} = (u, \text{div} w)_{L^2(\Omega)} = - (\nabla_\tau u, w)_{L^2(\Omega)} - \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(T)} \int_E \langle w - q_E, n_E \rangle [u]_E + \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}_{\partial \Omega}(T)} \int_E \langle w - q_E, n_E \rangle u.
\]

Let \( K_E \in T_E \) be fixed and let \( q_E \in (\mathcal{P}_0(K_E))^2 \) be the function with constant value \( \frac{1}{|E|} \int_E w \). The orthogonality conditions of the Crouzeix-Raviart elements across edges (see (1.8b)) imply

\[
(u, v)_{L^2(\Omega)} = - (\nabla_\tau u, w)_{L^2(\Omega)} - \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(T)} \int_E \langle w - q_E, n_E \rangle [u]_E + \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}_{\partial \Omega}(T)} \int_E \langle w - q_E, n_E \rangle u
\]

\[
\leq \|\nabla_\tau u\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \|w\|_{L^2(\Omega)} + \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(T)} \|u\|_{L^2(E)} \|w - q_E\|_{L^2(E)} + \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}_{\partial \Omega}(T)} \|u\|_{L^2(E)} \|w - q_E\|_{L^2(E)}.
\]

We employ first a weighted trace inequality (see, e.g., [15, Lem. 12.15]) and then a Poincaré-Steklov estimate (see, e.g., [16, (12.17) for \( p = 2 \) and \( s = 1 \)] to get for \( h_E := |E| \)

\[
\|w - q_E\|_{L^2(E)} \leq C \left( h_E^{-1/2} \|w - q_E\|_{L^2(K_E)} + h_K^{1/2} \|\nabla (w - q_E)\|_{L^2(K_E)} \right) \leq C h_K^{1/2} \|\nabla w\|_{L^2(K_E)},
\]

(\ref{C.3})

where \( C \) only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh.

Next we estimate the jump of \( u \) across \( E \). For \( E \in \mathcal{E}_\Omega(T) \), we define \( u_E \in \mathcal{P}_0(T_E) \) as the function with constant value \( \frac{1}{|E|} \int_E u \) on \( K \in T_E \) and observe \( [u_E]_E = 0 \). Hence,

\[
\|u\|_{L^2(E)} = \|u - u_E\|_{L^2(E)} \leq \sum_{K \in T_E} \|u - u_K\|_{L^2(K)} \leq \sum_{K \in T_E} \left( h_K^{1/2} \|u - u_K\|_{L^2(K)} + h_K^{1/2} \|\nabla u\|_{L^2(K)} \right) \leq C \sum_{K \in T_E} h_K^{1/2} \|\nabla u\|_{L^2(K)},
\]

for a constant \( C \) which only depends on the shape-regularity of the mesh. For \( E \in \mathcal{E}_{\partial \Omega}(T) \) the estimate \( \|u\|_{L^2(E)} \leq h_K^{1/2} \|\nabla u\|_{L^2(K)} \) for \( K \in T_E \) follows in a similar fashion. The combination of (\ref{C.2}) with (\ref{C.3}) and the two trace estimates for \( u \) leads to

\[
(u, v)_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq \|\nabla_\tau u\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \|w\|_{L^2(\Omega)} + C \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}(T)} \|\nabla u\|_{L^2(\omega_E)} \|\nabla w\|_{L^2(\omega_E)}
\]

\[
\leq C \|\nabla_\tau u\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \|w\|_{H^1(\Omega)} \leq CC_\Omega \|\nabla_\tau u\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \|q\|_{L^2(\Omega)}.
\]

Using this estimate in (\ref{C.1}) finishes the proof.
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