Algebraic combinatorics around a problem in enumerative geometry



#### **Philippe Nadeau**

Soutenance HDR, ICJ, 5 mai 2025

## Outline

#### I. Quasisymmetric polynomials revisited

We first recall the connection between symmetric and Schubert polynomials, via divided differences and permutations.

#### We present an analogue theory for quasisymmetric polynomials.

We have new trimming operators  $T_i$ . The combinatorics is given by certain forests, and we get a dual basis of forest polynomials.

#### II. The original problem in enumerative geometry

Let w be a permutation in  $S_n$ .

 $a_w$  = number of points in the intersection of the permutahedral variety Perm<sub>n</sub> with a generic Schubert variety  $X^w$ .

#### Manifestly positive rules for the coefficients *a<sub>w</sub>*

III. Extra combinatorics (parking procedures)

I. Quasisymmetric polynomials revisited

#### Symmetric polynomials and divided differences

**Polynomials** Fix  $n \ge 1$ , and define  $Pol_n := \mathbb{Q}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ .

Let also  $Pol := \mathbb{Q}[x_1, x_2, ...]$  which we see as  $Pol = \bigcup_n Pol_n$ .

Let  $S_n$  be the group of permutations of  $\{1, ..., n\}$ , generated by  $s_i = (i, i + 1)$  for i < n. Let also  $S_{\infty} = \bigcup_n S_n$ 

= { Permutations w of  $\mathbb{Z}_{>0} = \{1, 2, ...\}$  such that w(i) = i for i >> 0.}.

 $S_n$  acts on Pol<sub>n</sub>, and  $f \in Pol_n$  is called symmetric ( $f \in Sym_n$ ) if fixed by the action. **Example** for n = 3, elementary symmetric polynomials  $e_1 = x_1 + x_2 + x_3$ ,  $e_2 = x_1x_2 + x_1x_3 + x_2x_3$ ,  $e_3 = x_1x_2x_3$ .

#### Symmetric polynomials and divided differences

**Polynomials** Fix  $n \ge 1$ , and define  $Pol_n := \mathbb{Q}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ .

Let also  $Pol := \mathbb{Q}[x_1, x_2, ...]$  which we see as  $Pol = \bigcup_n Pol_n$ .

Let  $S_n$  be the group of permutations of  $\{1, ..., n\}$ , generated by  $s_i = (i, i + 1)$  for i < n. Let also  $S_{\infty} = \bigcup_n S_n$ 

= { Permutations w of  $\mathbb{Z}_{>0} = \{1, 2, ...\}$  such that w(i) = i for i >> 0.}.

 $S_n$  acts on  $Pol_n$ , and  $f \in Pol_n$  is called symmetric ( $f \in Sym_n$ ) if fixed by the action.

**Operators** Define the *divided difference*  $\partial_i = \frac{id - s_i}{x_i - x_{i+1}}$  on Pol<sub>n</sub> and Pol. Then  $f \in Pol_n$  is symmetric if and only if  $\partial_i f = 0$  for i = 1, ..., n - 1.

#### Symmetric polynomials and divided differences

**Polynomials** Fix  $n \ge 1$ , and define  $Pol_n := \mathbb{Q}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ .

Let also  $Pol := \mathbb{Q}[x_1, x_2, ...]$  which we see as  $Pol = \bigcup_n Pol_n$ .

Let  $S_n$  be the group of permutations of  $\{1, ..., n\}$ , generated by  $s_i = (i, i + 1)$  for i < n. Let also  $S_{\infty} = \bigcup_n S_n$ 

= { Permutations w of  $\mathbb{Z}_{>0} = \{1, 2, ...\}$  such that w(i) = i for i >> 0.}.

 $S_n$  acts on  $Pol_n$ , and  $f \in Pol_n$  is called symmetric ( $f \in Sym_n$ ) if fixed by the action.

**Operators** Define the *divided difference*  $\partial_i = \frac{id - s_i}{x_i - x_{i+1}}$  on Pol<sub>n</sub> and Pol. Then  $f \in Pol_n$  is symmetric if and only if  $\partial_i f = 0$  for i = 1, ..., n - 1.

**Monoid** We now look at the monoid of all composites  $\partial_{i_1} \partial_{i_2} \cdots \partial_{i_k}$  in the ring of endomorphisms of Pol.

It is isomorphic to the *nilCoxeter monoid*, with underlying set  $S_{\infty}$  and multiplication  $w \cdot w' = ww'$  if  $\ell(w) + \ell(w') = \ell(ww')$ , and 0 otherwise.

 $\Rightarrow$  Composite operators  $\partial_{w} := \partial_{i_1} \partial_{i_2} \cdots \partial_{i_{k-1}} \partial_{i_k}$  when  $s_{i_1} \cdot s_{i_2} \cdots s_{i_{k-1}} \cdot s_{i_k} = w$ .

**Definition-Theorem**. The Schubert polynomials  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  for  $w \in S_\infty$ , are the unique family of homogeneous polynomials in Pol such that  $\mathfrak{S}_{id} = 1$  and

$$\partial_i \mathfrak{S}_w = \begin{cases} \mathfrak{S}_{ws_i} & \text{if } w(i) > w(i+1), \end{cases}$$
 (i is a descent)  
0 otherwise.

*Proof Sketch*: Pick *n* such that  $w \in S_n$ , define  $\mathfrak{S}_w = \partial_{w^{-1}w_o}(x_1^{n-1}x_2^{n-2}\cdots x_{n-1}^1)$ , and check that this does not depend on *n*.

**Ex (** $w \in S_3$ **)** 

$$\mathfrak{S}_{123} = 1$$
 $\mathfrak{S}_{213} = x_1$  $\mathfrak{S}_{321} = x_1^2 x_2$  $\mathfrak{S}_{132} = x_1 + x_2$  $\mathfrak{S}_{312} = x_1^2$  $\mathfrak{S}_{231} = x_1 x_2$ 

**Definition-Theorem**. The Schubert polynomials  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  for  $w \in S_\infty$ , are the unique family of homogeneous polynomials in Pol such that  $\mathfrak{S}_{id} = 1$  and

$$\partial_i \mathfrak{S}_w = \begin{cases} \mathfrak{S}_{ws_i} & \text{if } w(i) > w(i+1), \end{cases}$$
 (it is a descent)  
0 otherwise.

*Proof Sketch*: Pick *n* such that  $w \in S_n$ , define  $\mathfrak{S}_w = \partial_{w^{-1}w_o}(x_1^{n-1}x_2^{n-2}\cdots x_{n-1}^1)$ , and check that this does not depend on *n*.

**Ex (** $w \in S_3$ **)** 

 $\mathfrak{S}_{123} = 1$  $\mathfrak{S}_{213} = x_1$  $\mathfrak{S}_{321} = x_1^2 x_2$  $\mathfrak{S}_{132} = x_1 + x_2$  $\mathfrak{S}_{312} = x_1^2$  $\mathfrak{S}_{231} = x_1 x_2$ 

**Corollary** (Duality). For any  $w, w' \in S_{\infty}$ , Constant term of  $\partial_w(\mathfrak{S}_{w'}) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } w = w' \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$ 

**Origin:**  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  encodes the cohomology class of the Schubert subvariety  $X_{w_ow}$  inside the full flag variety. [Lascoux-Schützenberger '82]

 $\rightarrow$  The  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  form nice bases of various spaces:

•  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  is symmetric in  $x_1, \ldots, x_n \Leftrightarrow w$  has a unique descent at i = n.

**Proposition.** In that case  $\mathfrak{S}_w = s_\lambda(x_1, \dots, x_n)$  (a Schur polynomial).

- The  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  with  $w \in S_\infty$  form an integral basis of Pol.
- Let  $\operatorname{Sym}_n^+ \subset \operatorname{Pol}_n$  be the ideal generated by the  $f \in \operatorname{Sym}_n$  with f(0) = 0.

**Proposition.** The  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  for  $w \in S_n$  project to a basis of the coinvariant space  $\operatorname{Pol}_n/\operatorname{Sym}_n^+$ .

 $\rightarrow$  The  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  form nice bases of various spaces:

•  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  is symmetric in  $x_1, \ldots, x_n \Leftrightarrow w$  has a unique descent at i = n.

**Proposition.** In that case  $\mathfrak{S}_w = s_\lambda(x_1, \dots, x_n)$  (a Schur polynomial).

- The  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  with  $w \in S_\infty$  form an integral basis of Pol.
- Let  $\operatorname{Sym}_n^+ \subset \operatorname{Pol}_n$  be the ideal generated by the  $f \in \operatorname{Sym}_n$  with f(0) = 0.

**Proposition.** The  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  for  $w \in S_n$  project to a basis of the coinvariant space  $\operatorname{Pol}_n/\operatorname{Sym}_n^+$ .

#### ightarrow Positivity questions

- From their definition, not clear that  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  has positive coefficients. Needs extra work  $\Rightarrow$  Combinatorial interpretation as pipe dreams.
- This approach says little about the known positivity of the coefficients  $c_{uv}^{w}$ :

$$\mathfrak{S}_{u}\mathfrak{S}_{v}=\sum c_{u,v}^{w}\mathfrak{S}_{w}.$$

#### Quasisymmetric polynomials

**Definition.** Let  $f \in \text{Pol}_n$ . Then f is quasisymmetric if for all  $a_1, \ldots, a_k > 0$ , for all  $i_1, \ldots, i_k$  such that  $1 \leq i_1 < \ldots < i_k \leq n$ , Coeff of  $x_1^{a_1} \cdots x_k^{a_k} = \text{Coeff of } x_{i_1}^{a_1} \cdots x_{i_k}^{a_k}$  in f.

For 
$$n = 3$$
,  $f = \underbrace{4x_1^2x_2 + 4x_1^2x_3 + 4x_2^2x_3}_{a_1, a_2 = 2, 1} - \underbrace{3x_1 - 3x_2 - 3x_3}_{a_1 = 1} + \underbrace{2x_1x_2x_3^2}_{a_1, a_2, a_3 = 1, 1, 2}$ 

We let  $QSym_n$  be the space of these polynomials, graded by degree.

## Quasisymmetric polynomials

**Definition.** Let  $f \in \text{Pol}_n$ . Then f is quasisymmetric if for all  $a_1, \ldots, a_k > 0$ , for all  $i_1, \ldots, i_k$  such that  $1 \leq i_1 < \ldots < i_k \leq n$ , Coeff of  $x_1^{a_1} \cdots x_k^{a_k} = \text{Coeff of } x_{i_1}^{a_1} \cdots x_{i_k}^{a_k}$  in f.

For 
$$n = 3$$
,  $f = \underbrace{4x_1^2x_2 + 4x_1^2x_3 + 4x_2^2x_3}_{a_1, a_2 = 2, 1} - \underbrace{3x_1 - 3x_2 - 3x_3}_{a_1 = 1} + \underbrace{2x_1x_2x_3^2}_{a_1, a_2, a_3 = 1, 1, 2}$ 

We let  $QSym_n$  be the space of these polynomials, graded by degree.

#### Motivation(s)

- Introduced in Stanley's thesis (1970), explicitly identified by Gessel (1984). They are the natural setting for certain generating functions for posets.
- Relation to symmetric polynomials: create bases that refine symmetric bases, expand (quasi)symmetric polynomials in these bases,...
- Terminal object in the category of combinatorial Hopf algebras.

(More precisely this holds for quasisymmetric *functions*, which are the power series limits of these polynomials)

We define operators that "detect quasisymmetry".

**Definition.** For  $f \in Pol_n$  and i < n, define

 $\mathsf{R}_{i}(f(x_{1},...,x_{n})) \coloneqq f(x_{1},...,x_{i-1},0,x_{i},x_{i+1},...,x_{n-1})$ 

This is an algebra morphism  $Pol_n \rightarrow Pol_{n-1}$ .

We define operators that "detect quasisymmetry".

```
Definition. For f \in Pol_n and i < n, define
```

```
\mathsf{R}_{i}(f(x_{1},...,x_{n})) := f(x_{1},...,x_{i-1},0,x_{i},x_{i+1},...,x_{n-1})
```

This is an algebra morphism  $Pol_n \rightarrow Pol_{n-1}$ .

**Lemma.**  $f \in QSym_n$  if and only if  $R_1(f) = R_2(f) = \cdots = R_n(f)$ .

This characterization is related to (Hivert, 2000).

**Corollary.**  $QSym_n$  is a subalgebra of  $Pol_n$ .

We define operators that "detect quasisymmetry".

```
Definition. For f \in Pol_n and i < n, define
```

```
\mathsf{R}_{i}(f(x_{1},...,x_{n})) \coloneqq f(x_{1},...,x_{i-1},0,x_{i},x_{i+1},...,x_{n-1})
```

This is an algebra morphism  $Pol_n \rightarrow Pol_{n-1}$ .

**Lemma.**  $f \in QSym_n$  if and only if  $R_1(f) = R_2(f) = \cdots = R_n(f)$ .

This characterization is related to (Hivert, 2000).

**Corollary.**  $QSym_n$  is a subalgebra of  $Pol_n$ .

 $\rightarrow$  "Trimming" operators T<sub>i</sub>.

**Definition.** For  $f \in Pol_n$  and i < n,

$$\mathsf{T}_i := \frac{\mathsf{R}_{i+1} - \mathsf{R}_i}{x_i}.$$

 $\Rightarrow f \in \operatorname{QSym}_n$  if and only if  $T_1 f = T_2 f = \cdots = T_{n-1} f = 0$ .

Explicitly,

$$\mathsf{T}_{i}(f) = \frac{f(x_{1}, \dots, x_{i-1}, x_{i}, 0, x_{i+1}, \dots, x_{n-1}) - f(x_{1}, \dots, x_{i-1}, 0, x_{i}, x_{i+1}, \dots, x_{n-1})}{x_{i}}$$

Note that  $T_i$ (monomial of degree d) =  $\pm$  a monomial of degree d - 1 (or zero).

Explicitly,

$$\mathsf{T}_{i}(f) = \frac{f(x_{1}, \dots, x_{i-1}, \mathbf{x}_{i}, \mathbf{0}, x_{i+1}, \dots, x_{n-1}) - f(x_{1}, \dots, x_{i-1}, \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{x}_{i}, x_{i+1}, \dots, x_{n-1})}{x_{i}}$$

Note that  $T_i$ (monomial of degree d) =  $\pm$  a monomial of degree d - 1 (or zero).

Let  $n \to \infty$  and consider the T<sub>i</sub> as operators on Pol.

The  $T_i$  satisfy the relations of the Thompson monoid.

(The group given by this presentation is Thompson group *F*)

$$\mathsf{T}_i\mathsf{T}_j = \mathsf{T}_j\mathsf{T}_{i+1} \text{ if } i > j.$$

Explicitly,

$$\mathsf{T}_{i}(f) = \frac{f(x_{1}, \dots, x_{i-1}, \mathbf{x}_{i}, \mathbf{0}, x_{i+1}, \dots, x_{n-1}) - f(x_{1}, \dots, x_{i-1}, \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{x}_{i}, x_{i+1}, \dots, x_{n-1})}{x_{i}}$$

Note that  $T_i$ (monomial of degree d) =  $\pm$  a monomial of degree d - 1 (or zero).

Let  $n \to \infty$  and consider the T<sub>i</sub> as operators on Pol.

The  $T_i$  satisfy the relations of the Thompson monoid.

(The group given by this presentation is Thompson group *F*)

$$\mathsf{T}_i\mathsf{T}_j=\mathsf{T}_j\mathsf{T}_{i+1} \text{ if } i>j.$$

To study the combinatorics, associate to  $T_i$  the elementary diagram  $\tilde{i}$ :

$$\tilde{i} = \frac{\begin{array}{cccc} 1 & 2 & i \\ \hline / & / & \ddots & \ddots \\ 1 & 2 & i & i+1 \end{array}}{i & i+1}$$

#### Monoid elements as forests



#### Monoid elements as forests



#### Combinatorics

**Definition.** An indexed forest *F* is a sequence of plane binary trees, eventually trivial.



#### Combinatorics

**Definition.** An indexed forest *F* is a sequence of plane binary trees, eventually trivial.



Let For be the set of indexed forests.

**Proposition.** Define  $F \cdot G =$  the forest *H* obtained by identifying the leaves of *F* with the roots of *G*. Then For  $\simeq$  Thompson monoid.

 $\Rightarrow$  We can define  $T_F = T_{i_1} \cdots T_{i_k}$  by taking any decomposition  $F = \tilde{i_1} \cdots \tilde{i_k}$ .

#### Combinatorics

**Definition.** An indexed forest *F* is a sequence of plane binary trees, eventually trivial.



Let For be the set of indexed forests.

**Proposition.** Define  $F \cdot G =$  the forest *H* obtained by identifying the leaves of *F* with the roots of *G*. Then For  $\simeq$  Thompson monoid.

 $\Rightarrow$  We can define  $T_F = T_{i_1} \cdots T_{i_k}$  by taking any decomposition  $F = \tilde{i_1} \cdots \tilde{i_k}$ .

• Let LTer(F) be the set of left leaves *i* of a terminal node of *F*.

**Example**  $LTer(F) = \{2, 4, 7, 11\}$  above

• F/i is defined when  $i \in LTer(F)$  by removing said terminal node.

#### Example



**Definition-Theorem**[N.-Spink-Tewari '24] The forest polynomials  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  for  $F \in$  For are the unique family of homogeneous polynomials such that  $\mathfrak{P}_{\emptyset} = 1$  and

$$\mathsf{T}_i(\mathfrak{P}_F) = egin{cases} \mathfrak{P}_{F/i} & ext{if } i \in \mathsf{LTer}(F), \ 0 & ext{otherwise}. \end{cases}$$

**Definition-Theorem**[N.-Spink-Tewari '24] The forest polynomials  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  for  $F \in$  For are the unique family of homogeneous polynomials such that  $\mathfrak{P}_{\emptyset} = 1$  and

$$\mathsf{T}_i(\mathfrak{P}_{\mathsf{F}}) = egin{cases} \mathfrak{P}_{\mathsf{F}/i} & ext{if } i \in \mathsf{LTer}(\mathsf{F}), \ 0 & ext{otherwise}. \end{cases}$$

**Proof Sketch.** Direct combinatorial definition of  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  in terms of certain colorings of F, and a technical check that it satisfies the condition.

**Definition-Theorem**[N.-Spink-Tewari '24] The forest polynomials  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  for  $F \in$  For are the unique family of homogeneous polynomials such that  $\mathfrak{P}_{\emptyset} = 1$  and

$$\mathsf{T}_i(\mathfrak{P}_{\mathsf{F}}) = egin{cases} \mathfrak{P}_{\mathsf{F}/i} & ext{if } i \in \mathsf{LTer}(\mathsf{F}), \ 0 & ext{otherwise}. \end{cases}$$

**Proof Sketch.** Direct combinatorial definition of  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  in terms of certain colorings of F, and a technical check that it satisfies the condition.

By iteration one gets:

**Corollary.** (Duality) For  $F, G \in$  For, we have

Constant term of 
$$\mathsf{T}_{\mathsf{F}}(\mathfrak{P}_{\mathsf{G}}) = egin{cases} 1 & ext{ if } \mathsf{G} = \mathsf{F}, \ 0 & ext{ otherwise} \end{cases}$$

#### Back to Example

Some polynomials  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  $x_1^2 x_2 + x_1^2 x_3$ 3 2 1 3  $x_{1}^{2}$  $\mathbf{X}_1 \mathbf{X}_2$ <del>×</del> 4 ★ 4 <del>×</del> 3 <del>×</del> 2 <del>×</del> 3 2 2 1 **X**<sub>1</sub> <del>×</del>− 4 <del>×</del> 3 <del>×</del> 2 1 1 3

#### $\rightarrow$ Nice bases of various spaces:

•  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  is quasisymmetric in  $x_1, \ldots, x_n$  if and only F has a unique terminal node at i = n.

**Proposition.** If so,  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  is a fundamental quasisymmetric polynomial  $F_{\alpha}(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ .

- $(\mathfrak{P}_F)_F$  is an integral basis of Pol.
- Let  $\operatorname{QSym}_n^+ \subset \operatorname{Pol}_n^-$  be the ideal generated by the  $f \in \operatorname{QSym}_n^-$  with f(0) = 0.

**Proposition.**  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  for  $F \in \operatorname{For}_n$  project to a basis of the coinvariant space  $\operatorname{Pol}_n/\operatorname{QSym}_n^+$ .

This means that all nontrivial leaves are in  $\{1, ..., n\}$ .

#### ightarrow Nice bases of various spaces:

•  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  is quasisymmetric in  $x_1, \ldots, x_n$  if and only F has a unique terminal node at i = n.

**Proposition.** If so,  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  is a fundamental quasisymmetric polynomial  $F_{\alpha}(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ .

- $(\mathfrak{P}_F)_F$  is an integral basis of Pol.
- Let  $\operatorname{QSym}_n^+ \subset \operatorname{Pol}_n^-$  be the ideal generated by the  $f \in \operatorname{QSym}_n^-$  with f(0) = 0.

**Proposition.**  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  for  $F \in \operatorname{For}_n$  project to a basis of the coinvariant space  $\operatorname{Pol}_n/\operatorname{QSym}_n^+$ .

```
This means that all nontrivial leaves are in \{1, ..., n\}.
```

#### ightarrow Positivity results

- By their combinatorial definition, the  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  have positive coefficients.
- The structure constants  $\mathfrak{P}_F \mathfrak{P}_G = \sum_H d_{FG}^H \mathfrak{P}_H$  are positive. This can be proved combinatorially.

(**Key**: Leibniz rule  $T_i(fg) = T_i(f)R_{i+1}(g) + R_i(f)T_i(g)$ .)

#### Positivity of Schubert polynomials

A direct check shows:

$$\mathsf{T}_i=\mathsf{R}_i\partial_i$$

Now for  $f \in \text{Pol with } f(0) = 0$ ,

f

$${\sf F} = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} ({\sf R}_{i+1}(f) - {\sf R}_i(f)) + {\sf R}_1(f)$$
  
 $= \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} x_i {\sf T}_i(f) + {\sf R}_1(f) = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} x_i {\sf R}_i \partial_i(f) + {\sf R}_1(f)$ 

Choose  $f = \mathfrak{S}_w$  with  $w \neq id$ 

$$\mathfrak{S}_w = \sum_{i \in \mathsf{Des}(w)} x_i \mathsf{R}_i(\mathfrak{S}_{ws_i}) + \mathsf{R}_1(\mathfrak{S}_w).$$

- This is a **new recurrence**.
- Probably the simplest proof that  $\mathfrak{S}_w$  has positive coefficients.
- Can be interpreted combinatorially on pipe dreams.

## General framework

**Summary** In both cases, we have

- Operators  $X = (X_i)$  of degree -1 which generate a certain monoid M.
- A theorem stating the existence and uniqueness of homogenous dual polynomials  $S_m$  for  $m \in M$  (i.e.  $S_1 = 1$  and  $X_i S_m = S_{m/i}$  if m/i exists, 0 otherwise).

How can we ensure that such a theorem exists ? And in that case, can we have a simple construction for the the dual polynomials ?

## General framework

**Summary** In both cases, we have

- Operators  $X = (X_i)$  of degree -1 which generate a certain monoid M.
- A theorem stating the existence and uniqueness of homogenous dual polynomials  $S_m$  for  $m \in M$  (i.e.  $S_1 = 1$  and  $X_i S_m = S_{m/i}$  if m/i exists, 0 otherwise).

How can we ensure that such a theorem exists ? And in that case, can we have a simple construction for the the dual polynomials ?

We give a solution based on the existence of creation operators  $Y_i$ : these must satisfy for  $f \in Pol$  with f(0) = 0,

$$\sum_{i=1}^{\infty} Y_i X_i(f) = f.$$

**Theorem**[N.-Spink-Tewari '24] Under certain conditions, if  $Y_i$  are creation operators, then the dual family  $(S_m)_{m \in M}$  is unique, forms a basis of Pol, and is given by

$$S_m = \sum_{(i_1,\ldots,i_k)\in\mathsf{Fact}(m)} Y_{i_k}\cdots Y_{i_1}(1).$$

If the creation operators preserve coefficient positivity of polynomials, we get immediately that the  $S_m$  have positive coefficients.

## **Related work**

 $\rightarrow$  Double Schubert polynomials are a generalization of Schubert polynomials, related to equivariant algebraic geometry.

We can also define double versions of forest polynomials, using an operator approach. These have surprising connections with noncrossing partitions.

This is joint work with N. Bergeron, L. Gagnon, H. Spink and V. Tewari: see Equivariant quasisymmetry and noncrossing partitions, arXiv:2504.15234.

 $\rightarrow$  There are non-homogenous versions of Schubert polynomials called Grothendieck polynomials, related to *K*-theory.

We can also define non-homogeneous versions of forest polynomials, called grove polynomials, using an operator approach.

This is work in progress with H. Spink and V. Tewari.

## II. A problem in enumerative geometry

 $\rightarrow$  The flag variety FI(n) is the set of complete flags  $V_{\bullet} = (V_0 = \{0\} \subset V_1 \subset V_2 \subset \cdots \subset V_n = \mathbb{C}^n).$ 

It admits a natural structure of a smooth projective variety of dimension  $\binom{n}{2}$ . Fix  $V_{\bullet}^{ref} \in Fl(n)$ . The Schubert varieties  $X_w(V_{\bullet}^{ref}) \subset Fl(n)$  are defined for  $w \in S_n$ .

 $\rightarrow$  The flag variety FI(n) is the set of complete flags

$$V_{\bullet} = (V_0 = \{0\} \subset V_1 \subset V_2 \subset \cdots \subset V_n = \mathbb{C}^n).$$

It admits a natural structure of a smooth projective variety of dimension  $\binom{n}{2}$ . Fix  $V_{\bullet}^{ref} \in Fl(n)$ . The Schubert varieties  $X_w(V_{\bullet}^{ref}) \subset Fl(n)$  are defined for  $w \in S_n$ .

 $\rightarrow$  The cohomology ring  $H^*(Fl(n))$  over  $\mathbb{Q}$  is a graded commutative ring.

For any irreducible subvariety  $Y \subset Fl(n)$  of dimension d, we have a fundamental class  $[Y] \in H^{n(n-1)-2d}(Fl(n))$ . In particular  $\sigma_w := [X_{w_0w}(V_{\bullet}^{ref})] \in H^{2\ell(w)}$ .

These form a linear basis:  $H^*(Fl(n)) = \bigoplus_{w \in S_n} \mathbb{Q}\sigma_w$ .

 $\rightarrow$  The flag variety FI(n) is the set of complete flags

$$V_{\bullet} = (V_0 = \{0\} \subset V_1 \subset V_2 \subset \cdots \subset V_n = \mathbb{C}^n).$$

It admits a natural structure of a smooth projective variety of dimension  $\binom{n}{2}$ . Fix  $V_{\bullet}^{ref} \in Fl(n)$ . The Schubert varieties  $X_w(V_{\bullet}^{ref}) \subset Fl(n)$  are defined for  $w \in S_n$ .

 $\rightarrow$  The cohomology ring  $H^*(Fl(n))$  over  $\mathbb{Q}$  is a graded commutative ring.

For any irreducible subvariety  $Y \subset Fl(n)$  of dimension d, we have a fundamental class  $[Y] \in H^{n(n-1)-2d}(Fl(n))$ . In particular  $\sigma_w := [X_{w_0w}(V_{\bullet}^{ref})] \in H^{2\ell(w)}$ .

These form a linear basis:  $H^*(Fl(n)) = \bigoplus_{w \in S_n} \mathbb{Q}\sigma_w$ .

 $\rightarrow$  For Y of dimension *d*, write  $[Y] = \sum_{w} b_{w}(Y) \sigma_{w}$ .

The numbers  $b_w(Y)$  are nonnegative integers: they count the number of intersection points of Y with generic Schubert subvarieties of codimension d.

In particular when  $Y = X_u \cap X_v$ , finding a manifestly positive rule for  $c_{uv}^w = b_w(Y)$  is a major open problem.

 $\rightarrow$  The flag variety FI(n) is the set of complete flags

$$V_{\bullet} = (V_0 = \{0\} \subset V_1 \subset V_2 \subset \cdots \subset V_n = \mathbb{C}^n).$$

It admits a natural structure of a smooth projective variety of dimension  $\binom{n}{2}$ . Fix  $V_{\bullet}^{ref} \in Fl(n)$ . The Schubert varieties  $X_w(V_{\bullet}^{ref}) \subset Fl(n)$  are defined for  $w \in S_n$ .

 $\rightarrow$  The cohomology ring  $H^*(Fl(n))$  over  $\mathbb{Q}$  is a graded commutative ring.

For any irreducible subvariety  $Y \subset Fl(n)$  of dimension d, we have a fundamental class  $[Y] \in H^{n(n-1)-2d}(Fl(n))$ . In particular  $\sigma_w := [X_{w_0w}(V_{\bullet}^{ref})] \in H^{2\ell(w)}$ .

These form a linear basis:  $H^*(Fl(n)) = \bigoplus_{w \in S_n} \mathbb{Q}\sigma_w$ .

 $\rightarrow$  For Y of dimension d, write  $[Y] = \sum_{w} b_{w}(Y) \sigma_{w}$ .

The numbers  $b_w(Y)$  are nonnegative integers: they count the number of intersection points of Y with generic Schubert subvarieties of codimension d.

In particular when  $Y = X_u \cap X_v$ , finding a manifestly positive rule for  $c_{uv}^w = b_w(Y)$  is a major open problem.

 $\rightarrow$  Connection with Schubert polynomials: There exists a surjective morphism  $j_n$ : Pol<sub>n</sub>  $\rightarrow$   $H^*(Fl(n))$  with kernel Sym<sup>+</sup><sub>n</sub>. It satisfies  $j_n(\mathfrak{S}_w) = \sigma_w$  for  $w \in S_n$ .

## The numbers $a_w$

The permutahedral variety Perm(n) is the generic orbit closure of the maximal torus acting in Fl(n).

(It can also be described as a regular semisimple Hessenberg variety, or abstractly as the toric variety associated with the braid arrangement.)

It is a smooth variety of dimension n - 1.

Write  $S'_n$  for the set of permutations in  $S_n$  of length n - 1.

**Definition** Let  $w \in S'_n$  and  $V^{ref}_{\bullet}$  generic.

 $a_w$  is the number of points in  $Perm(n) \cap X_{w_ow}(V^{ref}_{\bullet})$ .

In the rest of this section, we will see three different *positive* formulas for  $a_w$ .

## The numbers $a_w$

The permutahedral variety Perm(n) is the generic orbit closure of the maximal torus acting in Fl(n).

(It can also be described as a regular semisimple Hessenberg variety, or abstractly as the toric variety associated with the braid arrangement.)

It is a smooth variety of dimension n - 1.

Write  $S'_n$  for the set of permutations in  $S_n$  of length n - 1.

**Definition** Let  $w \in S'_n$  and  $V^{ref}_{\bullet}$  generic.

 $a_w$  is the number of points in  $Perm(n) \cap X_{w_ow}(V_{\bullet}^{ref})$ .

In the rest of this section, we will see three different *positive* formulas for  $a_w$ .

Note that if  $j_n(f) = [\text{Perm}(n)]$ , then one transforms the computation of  $a_w$  into finding the coefficients of a polynomial in its Schubert basis expansion.

The first two formulas are based on this approach; the third one is based on computations in the cohomology ring of Perm(n).

## A (non manifestly positive) formula

We introduce the operator of divided symmetrization  $\langle \cdot \rangle_n$ . This is the linear operator on Pol<sub>n</sub> defined by:

$$\langle f(x_1,\ldots,x_n)\rangle_n \coloneqq \sum_{w\in S_n} w \cdot \left(\frac{f(x_1,\ldots,x_n)}{\prod_{1\leq i\leq n-1}(x_i-x_{i+1})}\right)$$

**Proposition**[N.-Tewari '21] For any  $w \in S'_n$ ,

$$a_{\mathsf{w}} = \big\langle \mathfrak{S}_{\mathsf{w}}(\mathsf{x}_1,\ldots,\mathsf{x}_n) \big\rangle_n.$$

This follows from the fact that  $j_n$  sends

$$\prod_{\substack{1 \leq i < j \leq n \\ j > i+1}} (x_i - x_j)$$

to [Perm(n)], a special case of a result of Anderson and Tymoczko ['10].

**Proposition** [N.-Spink-Tewari '24] For any  $f \in Pol_n$  of degree n - 1,  $\langle f \rangle_n = \mathsf{T}_1(\mathsf{T}_1 + \mathsf{T}_2) \cdots (\mathsf{T}_1 + \cdots + \mathsf{T}_{n-1})f.$ 

**Remark:** This factorization was the starting point of the theory developed in the first section of this talk.

Proposition [N.-Spink-Tewari '24] For any  $f \in Pol_n$  of degree n - 1,  $\langle f \rangle_n = T_1(T_1 + T_2) \cdots (T_1 + \cdots + T_{n-1})f.$ 

**Remark:** This factorization was the starting point of the theory developed in the first section of this talk.

By expanding and applying to  $\mathfrak{S}_w$ , we obtain

Formula 1 For any  $w \in S'_n$  $a_w = \sum_{\substack{(i_1,...,i_{n-1})\\1 \le i_j \le j}} \mathsf{T}_{i_1} \cdots \mathsf{T}_{i_{n-1}} \mathfrak{S}_w.$ 

Proposition [N.-Spink-Tewari '24] For any  $f \in Pol_n$  of degree n - 1,  $\langle f \rangle_n = T_1(T_1 + T_2) \cdots (T_1 + \cdots + T_{n-1})f.$ 

**Remark:** This factorization was the starting point of the theory developed in the first section of this talk.

By expanding and applying to  $\mathfrak{S}_w$ , we obtain

Formula 1 For any 
$$w \in S'_n$$
  
$$a_w = \sum_{\substack{(i_1, \dots, i_{n-1}) \\ 1 \leq i_j \leq j}} \mathsf{T}_{i_1} \cdots \mathsf{T}_{i_{n-1}} \mathfrak{S}_w.$$

One can show that  $T_i \mathfrak{S}_w$  is always a sum of Schubert polynomials.  $\Rightarrow$  this shows by induction that  $a_w \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$ .

By a careful analysis, one can in fact show from this formula that  $a_w \in \mathbb{Z}_{>0}$ .

Here we start again with the expression

$$a_{w} = \langle \mathfrak{S}_{w}(x_{1}, \dots, x_{n}) \rangle_{n}.$$

This time we decompose  $\mathfrak{S}_w = \sum b_w^F \mathfrak{P}_F$ , via a certain combinatorial procedure.

Now forest polynomials  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  behave well with  $\langle \cdot \rangle_n$ : they either vanish or give a simple combinatorial quantity.

The final result can then be expressed via a certain "parking procedure":

Here we start again with the expression

$$a_{\mathsf{w}} = \big\langle \mathfrak{S}_{\mathsf{w}}(\mathsf{x}_1, \dots, \mathsf{x}_n) \big\rangle_n.$$

This time we decompose  $\mathfrak{S}_w = \sum b_w^F \mathfrak{P}_F$ , via a certain combinatorial procedure.

Now forest polynomials  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  behave well with  $\langle \cdot \rangle_n$ : they either vanish or give a simple combinatorial quantity.

The final result can then be expressed via a certain "parking procedure":

**Parking procedure**  $\Omega$ : Consider parking spots indexed by  $\mathbb{Z}$ . Cars 1, 2, ... arrive successively, with car *i* preferring spot  $v_i$ . If spot  $v_i$  is empty, then car *i* parks there. Otherwise,  $v_i$  belongs to a maximal interval [a, b]. Let j < i be maximal such that  $v_j \in [a, b]$ . The parking rule is then that car *i* parks in b + 1 if  $v_i \ge v_j$ , while it parks in a - 1 if  $v_i < v_j$ .

A  $\Omega$ -parking function is a word  $v_1 \cdots v_n$  such that all cars park in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$ .

Here we start again with the expression

$$a_{w} = \langle \mathfrak{S}_{w}(x_{1}, \ldots, x_{n}) \rangle_{n}.$$

This time we decompose  $\mathfrak{S}_w = \sum b_w^F \mathfrak{P}_F$ , via a certain combinatorial procedure.

Now forest polynomials  $\mathfrak{P}_F$  behave well with  $\langle \cdot \rangle_n$ : they either vanish or give a simple combinatorial quantity.

The final result can then be expressed via a certain "parking procedure":

**Parking procedure**  $\Omega$ : Consider parking spots indexed by  $\mathbb{Z}$ . Cars 1, 2, ... arrive successively, with car *i* preferring spot  $v_i$ . If spot  $v_i$  is empty, then car *i* parks there. Otherwise,  $v_i$  belongs to a maximal interval [a, b]. Let j < i be maximal such that  $v_j \in [a, b]$ . The parking rule is then that car *i* parks in b + 1 if  $v_i \ge v_j$ , while it parks in a - 1 if  $v_i < v_j$ .

A  $\Omega$ -parking function is a word  $v_1 \cdots v_n$  such that all cars park in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$ .

**Formula 2** [N.-Tewari '24] Let  $w \in S'_n$ . Then  $a_w$  is the number of reduced words of  $w^{-1}$  that are also  $\Omega$ -parking functions.

From this  $a_w \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$  (but it is not obvious that  $a_w > 0$  !).

This last formula relies on seminal work of Klyachko ['85].

He essentially computed the action of the natural map  $H^*(Fl(n)) \mapsto H^*(Perm(n))$  on Schubert classes.

One also needs to introduce Posnikov's mixed Eulerian numbers  $A_i$  ['09]: these are defined as "mixed volumes of hypersimplices"  $\Rightarrow$  The  $A_i$  are in  $\mathbb{Z}_{>0}$ .

This last formula relies on seminal work of Klyachko ['85].

He essentially computed the action of the natural map  $H^*(Fl(n)) \mapsto H^*(Perm(n))$  on Schubert classes.

One also needs to introduce Posnikov's mixed Eulerian numbers  $A_i$  ['09]: these are defined as "mixed volumes of hypersimplices"  $\Rightarrow$  The  $A_i$  are in  $\mathbb{Z}_{>0}$ .

**Formula 3** [N.-Tewari '23] For any  $w \in S'_n$ ,

$$a_w = \sum_{\mathbf{i} \in \mathsf{Red}(w)} \frac{\mathsf{A}_{\mathbf{i}}}{(n-1)!}.$$

This formula implies that  $a_w > 0$  (but not that it is an integer!).

Because of the properties of mixed Eulerian numbers, it also follows that  $a_w = a_{w^{-1}}$ , a property that is more mysterious from the other formulas.

#### Perspectives

 $\rightarrow$  The link between the various formulas can be explained algebraically. It would be interesting to also match the combinatorics of the various expressions.

 $\rightarrow$  One should also try to find manifestly positive rules to compute the "Schubert coefficients" of the other regular semimple Hessenberg varieties.

This is an interesting family of size the *n*th Catalan number, whose cohomology is linked to the Shareshian–Wachs conjecture about certain chromatic (quasi)symmetric functions.

Extra Combinatorics (Parking procedures)

#### Classical parking procedure ([Konheim-Weiss '66]).

- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the *nearest available spot on the right*.

#### Example.

#### $a_1 a_2 a_3 a_4 a_5 a_6 a_7 = 3525895$



- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the *nearest available spot on the right*.



- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the nearest available spot on the right.



- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the *nearest available spot on the right*.



- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the nearest available spot on the right.



- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the *nearest available spot on the right*.



#### Classical parking procedure ([Konheim-Weiss '66]).

- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the *nearest available spot on the right*.

# Example. $a_1a_2a_3a_4a_5a_6a_7 = 3525895$

- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the nearest available spot on the right.



#### Classical parking procedure ([Konheim-Weiss '66]).

- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the nearest available spot on the right.



**Definition.** A word  $a_1a_2 \dots a_r$  is called a parking function if the parking procedure ends up with all spots 1, ..., *r* occupied.

#### Example.

Bilateral parking procedure ([Nadeau '22]).

- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the *nearest available spot on the right or on the left*, according to a predetermined rule  $\mathcal{P}$ .



Bilateral parking procedure ([Nadeau '22]).

- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the *nearest available spot on the right or on the left*, according to a predetermined rule  $\mathcal{P}$ .



**Example.** ( $\mathcal{P}_{prime}$ ) Count the number of cars on the block. If this is a *prime number*, go right, otherwise go left.

**Example.** ( $\mathcal{P}_{closest}$ ) Count the number of cars on the block to your left ( $n_L$ ) and to your right ( $n_R$ ). If  $n_L \ge n_R$ , go right, otherwise go left.

**Example.** ( $\Omega$ ) If the desired spot of the last car that parked on the block is to your left, go right, otherwise go left.

#### Bilateral parking procedure ([Nadeau '22]).

- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the *nearest available spot on the right or on the left*, according to a predetermined rule  $\mathcal{P}$ .
- A  $\mathcal{P}$ -parking function is a word  $a_1 \cdots a_r$  such that all cars park in the spots  $\{1, \dots, r\}$ .
- One can define the notion of a local procedure  $\mathcal{P}$ : roughly speaking, this means the the rule is "shift-invariant" and depends only on the block where one wants to park. All of our previous examples are local.

#### Bilateral parking procedure ([Nadeau '22]).

- *r* cars want to park on  $\mathbb{Z}$ .
- The *i*th car has a preferred spot  $a_i$ .
- If the spot is available, it parks there.
- If not, it parks in the *nearest available spot on the right or on the left*, according to a predetermined rule  $\mathcal{P}$ .
- A  $\mathcal{P}$ -parking function is a word  $a_1 \cdots a_r$  such that all cars park in the spots  $\{1, \dots, r\}$ .

One can define the notion of a local procedure *P*: roughly speaking, this means the the rule is "shift-invariant" and depends only on the block where one wants to park.
All of our previous examples are local.

 $\rightarrow$  We have the following "discrete universality result":

**Theorem** ([N. '22+]). Let  $\mathcal{P}$  be a local parking procedure. Then the number of  $\mathcal{P}$ -parking functions of size r is  $(r+1)^{r-1}$ .

The proof relies on a generalization of Pollak's "cyclic lemma" argument.

## A probabilistic parking procedure

 $\rightarrow$  Fix a real number  $q \ge 0$ , and consider the following procedure  $\mathcal{P}^q$ : when the desired spot is occupied, go one spot to the left with probability q/(1+q), and to the right with probability 1/(1+q).

Continue until you find an empty parking spot.

## A probabilistic parking procedure

 $\rightarrow$  Fix a real number  $q \geq 0$ , and consider the following procedure  $\mathcal{P}^q$ : when the desired spot is occupied, go one spot to the left with probability q/(1+q), and to the right with probability 1/(1+q).

Continue until you find an empty parking spot.

Let  $p_{v_1 \dots v_r}(q)$  be the probability that all cars are parked in  $\{1, \dots, r\}$  starting from the list of desired spots  $v_1, \dots, v_r$ .

 $\rightarrow$  Given a word **v**, define the remixed Eulerian number ([N.-Tewari '21])

 $\mathsf{A}_{\mathbf{v}}(q) \coloneqq (r)_q! p_{\mathbf{v}}(q). \qquad \text{Here } (r)_q! = (r)_q (r-1)_q \cdots (1)_q$ where  $(i)_q = (1-q^i)/(1-q).$ 

By a result of Petrov ['18],  $A_v(1) = A_v$ , Posnikov's mixed Eulerian number.

## A probabilistic parking procedure

 $\rightarrow$  Fix a real number  $q \geq 0$ , and consider the following procedure  $\mathcal{P}^q$ : when the desired spot is occupied, go one spot to the left with probability q/(1+q), and to the right with probability 1/(1+q).

Continue until you find an empty parking spot.

Let  $p_{v_1 \dots v_r}(q)$  be the probability that all cars are parked in  $\{1, \dots, r\}$  starting from the list of desired spots  $v_1, \dots, v_r$ .

 $\rightarrow$  Given a word **v**, define the remixed Eulerian number ([N.-Tewari '21])

 $A_{\mathbf{v}}(q) \coloneqq (r)_q! p_{\mathbf{v}}(q). \qquad \text{Here } (r)_q! = (r)_q (r-1)_q \cdots (1)_q$ where  $(i)_q = (1-q^i)/(1-q).$ 

By a result of Petrov ['18],  $A_v(1) = A_v$ , Posnikov's mixed Eulerian number.

 $\rightarrow$  More generally these polynomials comprise several well-known families of standard "q-analogues" of classical numbers. Furthermore,

**Theorem** [N.-Tewari '23]  $A_v(q)$  is a polynomial in q with positive integral coefficients. It is symmetric and unimodal.

## FIN