

2-Block Springer Fibers and Knot Homology

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- 1 Geometry of Springer fibers
 - Nilpotents in $\text{Mat}(n, n)$
 - 2-block nilpotents
- 2 Cohomology
 - Components of Springer fibers
 - Intersections of components
- 3 Convolution algebras
 - Combinatorics
 - Applications and generalizations

Nilpotents in $\text{Mat}(n, n)$

Definition

We call an element $N \in \text{Mat}(n, n)$ **nilpotent** if $N^n = 0$.

We denote the set of nilpotents by $\mathcal{N} \subset \text{Mat}(n, n)$, and call it the **nilcone**.

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Definition

We define the Springer fiber of N to be the set of flags preserved by N .

$$X_N = \{\underline{F} \in X \mid N(\underline{F}) \subset \underline{F}\}$$

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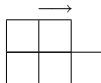
Note that $\pi^{-1}(N) \cong X_N$.

Young diagrams

For any nilpotent, the sizes of the Jordan blocks form a partition, which we can represent as a Young diagram. The number of rows is the number of Jordan blocks.

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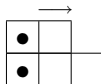
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We can think of each box in this diagram as a basis vector, and the nilpotent map sending each box to its right.

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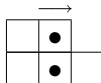
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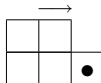
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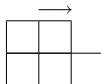
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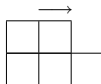
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By a general result of Spaltenstein, the components \mathcal{X}_S of X_N are in bijection with standard Young tableaux of the same shape.

A **standard tableau** on a diagram is a filling of each box with the numbers $[1, n]$, such that both columns and rows are strictly increasing.

Cup diagrams

For now on, we'll restrict to 2 row diagrams of shape $(n - k, k)$.

Proposition

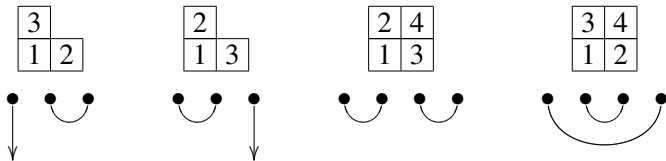
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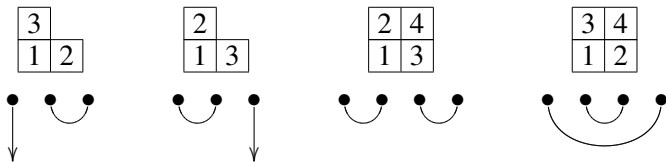


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If i is in the bottom row of the tableaux, let $\sigma(i)$ be the other end of the cup, and let $\delta(i) = (\sigma(i) - i + 1)/2$.

That is, $\delta(i)$ is the number of cups “nested inside” the one from i to $\sigma(i)$.

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The flag \mathcal{F} lies in the component \mathcal{X}_S if and only if for all i ,

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For example, when $n = 4, k = 2$:

$$\mathcal{X}_{\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 3 & 4 \\ \hline 1 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array}} = \{F_1 \subset F_2 \subset F_3 \subset \mathbb{C}^4 \mid N(F_3) = F_1\}$$

$$\mathcal{X}_{\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 2 & 4 \\ \hline 1 & 3 \\ \hline \end{array}} = \{F_1 \subset F_2 \subset F_3 \subset \mathbb{C}^4 \mid N(F_2) = \{0\}\}$$

The structure of components

Proposition (Fung)

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Proof.

Let's choose our spaces one at a time.

If i is in the bottom row, there are no restrictions coming from smaller subspaces, so we get to pick any line in $N^{-1}(V_{i-1})/V_{i-1}$. Since $\dim N^{-1}(V_i)/V_i = 2$, so we get a \mathbb{P}^1 .

If i is in the top row, $V_i = N^{-\delta(i)}(V_{\sigma^{-1}(i)-1})$, so we only have one choice, and the structure doesn't change.

Everything is in even degree, so the Serre spectral sequence has no differentials, and $\dim H^*(\mathcal{X}_S) = 2^k$. □

Cohomology of components

We let V_i denote the tautological i -dimensional vector bundle on X , and let $R \cong \mathbb{C}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$, and let e_i be the elementary symmetric polynomials in R .

We have maps given by taking Chern classes ($c_1(V_i/V_{i-1}) \mapsto x_i$), and getting “obvious” relations coming from K-theory.

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$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 H^*(X) & \longrightarrow & H^*(X_N) & \longrightarrow & H^*(\mathcal{X}_S) \\
 \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\
 R/(e_i) & \longrightarrow & R/(x_i^2, e_i) & &
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“Obvious” relations

Using the equations of a component, we have maps

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 V_{\sigma(i)} & \longrightarrow & N^{-1}(V_{i-1}) \\
 \uparrow & & \uparrow \\
 V_{\sigma(i)-1} & \longrightarrow & V_i \\
 \uparrow & & \uparrow \\
 N(V_{\sigma(i)}) & \longrightarrow & V_{i-1}
 \end{array}$$

We have an exact sequence $0 \rightarrow L_i \rightarrow J \rightarrow L_{\sigma(i)} \rightarrow 0$ where J is trivial in K-theory, so $\mathcal{O}_{\mathcal{X}_S} \cong L_i \otimes L_{\sigma(i)}$.

In Chern classes, this says $x_i + x_{\sigma(i)} = 0$ in $H^*(\mathcal{X}_S)$.

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The right hand map is an isomorphism for dimensional reasons.

Intersections of components

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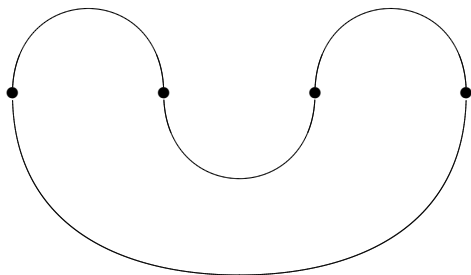
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$$\mathcal{X}_{\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 3 & 4 \\ \hline 1 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array}} \cap \mathcal{X}_{\begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 2 & 4 \\ \hline 1 & 3 \\ \hline \end{array}} \cong \mathbb{P}^1$$



Cohomology of intersections.

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$$R/(x_i + x_{\sigma_S(i)}, x_i + x_{\sigma_{S'}(i)}, x_i^2) \cong H^*(\mathcal{X}_S \cap \mathcal{X}_{S'})$$

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This tells us about the bimodule multiplication

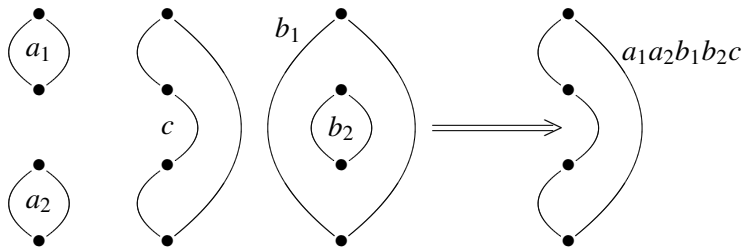
$$H^*(\mathcal{X}_S) \otimes H^*(\mathcal{X}_S \cap \mathcal{X}_{S'}) \otimes H^*(\mathcal{X}_{S'}) \rightarrow H^*(\mathcal{X}_S \cap \mathcal{X}_{S'}).$$

Combinatorial multiplication

We can describe this multiplication combinatorially using cobordisms.

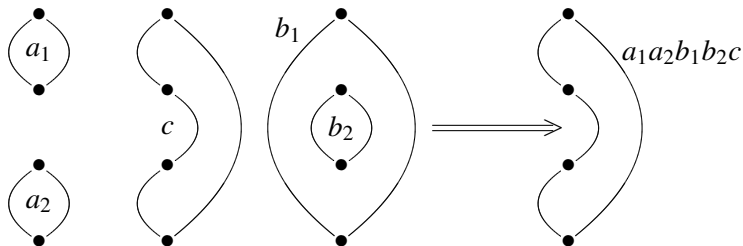
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Maybe some of you have seen this sort of multiplication before: it appears in Khovanov's algebra \mathcal{H}^k .

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This doesn't seem to be an algebra isomorphism! But it's very close!

Our algebra vs. Khovanov's

Let ω be a parameter satisfying $\omega^4 = 1$.

Theorem

There exists an algebra A_ω^k such that

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Proposition

This algebra/modified TQFT can be used to construct a knot homology theory Kh_ω which reduces to classical Khovanov homology when $\omega = \pm 1$.

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Question

Is Kh_ω honestly functorial for $\omega = \pm i$? Is it the same as Morrison and Walker's theory? I would suspect so, but I haven't found the isomorphism yet.

Generalizations

There are a large number of varieties with similar structures to Springer fibers, including quiver varieties, hypertoric varieties, and other hyperkähler quotients (more generally, symplectic singularities).

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Alternatively, you can think of them as a version of the cotangent bundle to a toric variety with some extra strata added that remember the original toric variety was a quotient by a non-free action.

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Furthermore, hyperplane arrangements (and thus hypertoric varieties) have a notion of duality. The geometry of this duality still rather mysterious.

Theorem (BLPW)

The algebras associated to Gale dual hypertoric varieties are Koszul dual.

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Thanks, y'all.