

Random representations of the symmetric groups

I Notations and statement of the problem

1. Representation theory of finite groups.

Def: A repr (ρ, V) of a finite group G is:

- a finite dim \mathbb{C} -v.s. V
- a morphism $\rho: G \rightarrow GL(V)$

$$\boxed{k = \mathbb{C}}$$

The character of ρ is the function $\chi^\rho: G \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$

$$\chi^\rho(g) = \text{tr}(\rho(g))$$

Thm: • Every repr. of G is a direct sum of irred. representations
(+ unicity) \rightarrow we study only irred. rep.

- For a given group G , there are finitely many ir. rep.
(in fact, as many as conjugacy classes in G)

Notation: \mathcal{Y}_G index set of ir. rep. of G

λ typical elt of $\mathcal{Y}_G \rightsquigarrow V^\lambda, \rho^\lambda, \chi^\lambda, \hat{\chi}^\lambda = \frac{\chi^\lambda}{\dim(V^\lambda)}$

2. Plancherel measure

Def: \mathcal{P}_G is the probability measure on \mathcal{Y}_G defined by

$$\mathcal{P}_G(\lambda) = \frac{(\dim V_\lambda)^2}{|G|}$$

Rk: $\sum_{\lambda \in \mathcal{Y}_G} \mathcal{P}_G(\lambda) = 1$ as implicitly claimed

because $C[G] = \bigoplus_{\lambda \in \mathcal{Y}_G} V_\lambda^{\dim(V_\lambda)}$
 \uparrow
left reg. repr.

Prop: Fix $g \in G$

$$E_{\mathcal{P}_G}(\hat{\chi}^\bullet(g)) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } g = \text{id}_G; \\ 0 & \text{else.} \end{cases}$$

$\lambda \mapsto \hat{\chi}^\lambda(g)$ is a random variable on \mathcal{Y}_G .

Proof: $\text{tr}_{\mathbb{C}[G]}(g) = \sum_{\lambda \in \mathcal{Y}_G} (\dim(V_\lambda)) \chi^\lambda(g)$
" $\text{Sidg} \cdot |G|$ " $E_{\mathcal{P}_G}(\hat{\chi}^\bullet(g))$

Rk: This proposition characterizes Plancherel measure
We will only use this fact!

3. Our problem

- Take a sequence of group $(G_n)_{n \geq 1}$. Assume $G_1 \subseteq G_2 \subseteq \dots$
- For each n , let $\lambda^{(n)} \in \mathcal{Y}_{G_n}$ random representation (distrib: Plancherel)

Question: describe the asymptotic behaviour of $\lambda^{(n)}$.
→ vague: we don't know in general where $\lambda^{(n)}$ lives...

a precise related question:

fix $g \in G_k$. Describe asymp. of $(\hat{\chi}^{\lambda^{(n)}}(g))_{n \geq k}$.

4. Symmetric groups

Here, we focus on the case $G_n = S_n$

→ ext. to B_n (D_n? $G_{n,d,c}$?) should not be too hard;

→ some results exist for $GL_n(\mathbb{F}_q)$, q fixed.

→ dream: a general unified theorem for groups
"whose elements are functions"

well-known for S_n : $\mathcal{Y}_{S_n} = \{ \text{partitions of } n \} + \text{numerous formulas for character values}$

Young diagrams of size n

- we do not need them to answer the question about $\hat{\chi}^\circ(g)!$
- possible to define a notion of "v of Young diagrams" and to prove asympt. results for $\chi^{(n)}$. (3rd talk)

II Moment method

1. Preliminaries: group algebra and its center

Def: group algebra of G is

$$\mathbb{C}[G] := \left\{ \sum_{g \in G} c_g g, c_g \in \mathbb{C} \right\} \text{ i.e. formal linear combination of elements of } G$$

product by distributivity \Rightarrow algebra structure.

The center is $Z(\mathbb{C}[G]) := \{ x \in \mathbb{C}[G] : \forall y \in \mathbb{C}[G], xy = yx \}$

"Vect $(K_\mu)_{\mu \text{ conj class of } G}$ "

where $K_\mu := \sum_{g \text{ in the conj class } \mu} g$

Obs: repr of $G \iff (e, V)$ with $\begin{matrix} \cdot V \\ \cdot e \text{ unital algebra morphism } \\ \mathbb{C}[G] \rightarrow \text{End}(V) \end{matrix}$

in other terms, we extend e, χ^e, χ^e, \dots to the group algebra by linearity.

Lemma (Schur): Let $x \in Z(\mathbb{C}[G])$ and $\lambda \in \mathcal{Y}_G$. Then

$$e^\lambda(x) = \hat{\chi}^\lambda(x) \cdot \text{id}_{V_\lambda}$$

Corollary: Let $x \in Z(\mathbb{C}[G]), y \in \mathbb{C}[G]$ and $\lambda \in \mathcal{Y}_G$.

$$\hat{\chi}^\lambda(xy) = \hat{\chi}^\lambda(x) \hat{\chi}^\lambda(y).$$

2. Moments of $\hat{\chi}^\circ((1,2))$. (Ref. Hora, Comm. Math. Phys., 1998)

short not.
for E_{S_n}

$$E_n(\hat{\chi}^\circ((1,2))) = 0 \quad (\text{prop from intro})$$

$$E_n(\hat{\chi}^\circ((1,2))^2) = ? \quad \leftarrow \text{difficulty: } \tau \text{ is not multiplicative but } \hat{\chi} \text{ is multiplicative on the center!}$$

$$\Rightarrow \text{Write } \hat{\chi}^\circ((1,2))^2 = \frac{2}{n(n-1)} \hat{\chi}^\circ(K_{(2,1^{n-2})})$$

↑
sum of all transps in S_n

By Schur lemma, $\hat{\chi}^\circ(K_{(2,1^{n-2})})^2 = \hat{\chi}^\circ(K_{(2,1^{n-2})}^2)$

But $K_{(2,1^{n-2})}^2 = 2K_{(2,2,1^{n-2})} + 3K_{(3,1^{n-3})} + \binom{n}{2} K_{(1^n)}$

↑
= id_n

$$\Rightarrow E_n(\hat{\chi}^\circ((1,2))^2) = \frac{4}{n^2(n-1)^2} E_n(\hat{\chi}^\circ(2K_{(2,2,1^{n-2})} + 3K_{(3,1^{n-3})} + \binom{n}{2} K_{(1^n)}))$$

↑
exp. is zero.

$$= \frac{2}{n(n-1)}$$

Obs: only coef of identity is important

In general,

$$E_n(\hat{\chi}^\circ((1,2))^m) = \binom{m}{2^i}^{-m} \overbrace{\# \text{ factorisations of } \text{id}_n \text{ as a product of } m \text{ transpositions}}^{F_n^m}$$

(= 0 if m is odd)

(no close formula)

3. Asymptotics

$$F_n^{2m} = \frac{1}{2^m} \# \left\{ (i_1, j_1, \dots, i_{2m}, j_{2m}) : (i_1, j_1) \dots (i_{2m}, j_{2m}) = \text{id} \right. \\ \left. i_1 \neq j_1, \dots, i_{2m} \neq j_{2m} \right\}$$

To a list $(i_1, j_1, \dots, i_m, j_m)$, we associate a set partition $\text{Ker}(\pi)$ of $\{1, 1', \dots, 2m, 2m'\}$ such $t \sim s \Leftrightarrow i_t = i_s$.

Obs: condition $(i_1, j_1) \dots (i_m, j_m) = \text{id}$
 $i_t \neq j_t \dots i_m \neq j_m$ depends only on $\text{ker}(u, \nu)$
 \Rightarrow Call a set-partition π good if conditions are fulfilled.

$$2^{2m} F_n^{2m} = \sum_{\pi \text{ good}} \# \{ (i_1, j_1, \dots) : \text{Ker}(u, \nu) = \pi \}$$

$$\approx \sum_{\pi \text{ good}} \binom{m}{\pi} \ell(\pi)$$

\rightarrow We are interested in $n \rightarrow \infty$ asympt.

\Rightarrow What are the good set-partitions with maximal length?

Answer:

- clearly $\ell(\pi) \leq 2m$. (each number must appear at least twice)
- $\ell(\pi) = 2m \Rightarrow$ each transposition appear exactly twice

$$2^{2m} F_n^{2m} = \underbrace{(2m-1)!!}_{\text{matching}} \cdot \underbrace{2^m}_{\text{for each pair of equal transps either } i_t = i_s \text{ and } j_t = j_s \text{ or } i_t = j_s \text{ and } j_t = i_s} \cdot n^{2m} (1 + O(1/n))$$

$$\Rightarrow \mathbb{E}_n \left(\hat{\chi}^\circ((1,2)) \right)^{2m} = (2m-1)!! \cdot 2^m \cdot n^{-2m} (1 + O(1/n))$$

$$\frac{n \hat{\chi}^\circ((1,2))}{\sqrt{2}} \rightarrow \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$$

4. Comments

Key lemmas:
 in facts which contribute to asympt, cycles are pairwise inv. to each other

- Easy gen.: $n^{k/2} \hat{\chi}^\circ((1, \dots, k)) \xrightarrow{1/\sqrt{k}} \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$
 + asympt. independence for different k 's
- Harder: cv of $n^{k/2} \hat{\chi}^\circ(\sigma) \xrightarrow{d} \dots$
 \uparrow subtle combinatorics for $\sigma \in S_k$ w/t fixed points.

- bounds on speed of cv via Stein method. $O(m^{-1/4})$
(Fulman, 2003, F. Dolegga, 2014)

III Partial permutations and polynomial functions

1. Partial permutations

Goal: understand better relations as

$$K_{(2, 1^{n-2})}^2 = \binom{n}{2} K_{(1^n)} + 2 K_{(2, 2, 1^{n-2})} + 3 K_{(3, 1^{n-3})}$$

$$K_{(2, 1^{n-2})}^{2m} = (2m-1)!! \cdot 2^{-m} n^{2m} (1 + O(1/n)) K_{(1^n)} + \text{other terms.}$$

Def: A partial permutation is a pair (d, σ)

→ where $d \subseteq \mathbb{N}^*$ finite set

• $\sigma: d \rightarrow d$ bijection

equivalently,
perm. with two
type of fixed points

Not: $(\{1, 2, 5\}, (1, 5)) = (1, 5)(2) \neq (1, 5)(3) = (\{1, 3, 5\}, (1, 5))$

Product: $(d, \sigma), (d', \sigma') = (d \cup d', \tilde{\sigma} \circ \tilde{\sigma}')$

↑ ↑ $\tilde{\sigma}$ means that we extend perm with fixed points (here to $d \cup d'$)

def: $B_\infty =$ algebra of infinite linear comb of (σ, d)

Obs: $\varphi_n: B_\infty \rightarrow \mathbb{C}[S_n]$ extension to $\{1, \dots, n\}$
 $(d, \sigma) \mapsto \begin{cases} \tilde{\sigma} & \text{if } d \subseteq \{1, \dots, n\} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$

without d , we could not construct such a morphism. →

is an algebra morphism.

Let μ be an integer partition. Set

$$A_\mu = \sum_{\substack{d \in \mathbb{N} \\ \sigma: d \rightarrow d \\ \text{type } \mu}} (d, \sigma)$$

ex: $A_{(2)} = \sum_{i < j} (i, j)$

$$A_{(2,1)} = \sum_{\substack{i < j \\ k \neq i, j}} (i, j)(k)$$

Prop: $\text{Vect}(A_\mu)$ is a subalgebra of B_∞
 ↑
 finite l.c. μ partitions of all sizes

Proof: elements $\sum_{(d,\sigma)} c_{(d,\sigma)} (d,\sigma) \in \text{Vect}(A_\mu)$ are exactly
 elts of B_∞ s.t.:

- inv. by action of S_n $\tau \cdot (d,\sigma) = (\tau(d), \tau \circ \sigma)$
- $\{ |d|; \exists c_{(d,\sigma)} \neq 0 \}$ finite □

can be skipped

Prop: (A_k) alg basis of $\text{Vect}(A_\mu)$.

Proof: $A_{k_1} \cdots A_{k_r} = A_{(k_1, \dots, k_r)} + \sum_{\substack{|\nu| < k_1 + \dots + k_r \\ \nu \neq (k_1, \dots, k_r)}} * A_\nu$ □

Write $A_\mu \cdot A_\nu = \sum_e c_{\mu,\nu} A_e$

ex $A_{(2)} \cdot A_{(2)} = 2A_{(2,2)} + 3A_{(3)} + A_{(1^2)}$

$\Rightarrow K_{(2,1^{n-2})} \cdot K_{(2,1^{n-2})} = 2K_{(2,2,1^{n-4})} + 3K_{(3,1^{n-3})} + \binom{n}{2} K_{(1^n)}$

\Rightarrow always pol. coef in this kind of expressions
 (Farahat, Higuchi 1952
 Kerov, Ivanov 1989)
 (Gen in progress by O. Tout 2014+)

2. Polynomial functions

A_μ can be seen as a sequence $(a_n)_{n \geq 1}$, $a_n \in \mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{C}[S_n])$
 $(a_n = \varphi_n(A_\mu))$

Recall: $\hat{\chi}$ defines an algebra isomorphism

(discrete Fourier transform) $\mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{C}[G]) \rightarrow \mathbb{F}(Y_G, \mathbb{C})$
 $\chi \mapsto (\lambda \mapsto \hat{\chi}^\lambda(\chi))$
 set of all Young diagrams

Consequence

$\text{Vect}(A_\mu) \subseteq \mathbb{F}(Y_{S_n}, \mathbb{C})$

$A_\mu \mapsto (\lambda \mapsto \hat{\chi}^\lambda(\varphi_n(A_\mu))) =: \chi_\mu / z_\mu$

where $ch_{\mu}(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{n(n-1)\dots(n-k+1)}{z_{\mu}} \hat{x}^{\lambda} (\mu 1^{n-k}) \\ 0 \end{cases}$

Obs: $ch_{(1)}(x) = |x|$

Clearly, $\text{Vect}(ch_{\mu})$ is a subalgebra of $F(\mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{C})$
 called "polynomial functions on Young diagrams"
 denoted Λ^* (Kerov, Olshanski, 1994)

Note: multiplication is easier to understand on partial permutations.

Prop: $ch_{(\mu)}$ is an algebraic basis of Λ^* ,

3. Filtrations and asymptotics

Prop: let $I \subseteq \mathbb{N}$. Then

$\deg_I((\sigma, d)) = |d| + \sum_{i \in I} \underbrace{\# \text{cycles of size } i \text{ in } \sigma}_{m_i(\sigma)}$
 defines a filtration on B_{∞} .

Sketch of proof: Assume $(\sigma, A) \cdot (\tau, B) = (\pi, C)$
 $(C = A \cup B, \pi = \tilde{\sigma} \circ \tilde{\tau})$

We have to prove

$$\sum_{i \in I} m_i(\pi) - m_i(\sigma) - m_i(\tau) \leq \underbrace{|A| + |B| - |C|}_{|A \cap B|}$$

But, each "new" cycle of π contains at least one element in $A \cap B$.
 ← neither a cycle of σ nor a cycle of τ

Corollary: $\deg_I(ch_{\mu}) = |\mu| + \sum_{i \in I} m_i(\mu)$
 defines a filtration on Λ^*

$\{\text{Young diagrams}\} \subseteq \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{continuous 1-Lipschitz function} \\ \text{equal to } |x| \text{ outside a compact interval} \end{array} \right\}$
 \uparrow called "continuous Young diagrams"

Two notions of conv. of this space

"strong" conv.:

$$\|w_m(x) - w(x)\|_{\infty} \rightarrow 0$$

\leftarrow (on L^p)

"weak" conv.:

for $k \geq 0$, $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} (w_m(x) - w(x)) x^k dx \rightarrow 0$

Note: in our context, it is necessary to renormalize

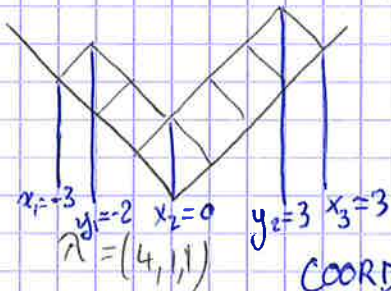
$$w_{\lambda^{(n)}}(x) := \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} w_{\lambda}(t\sqrt{n})$$

\uparrow dilatation of both axes to have est area (here, 2)



2. A formula for character values on cycles.

We know that $\chi^{\lambda^{(n)}}(\cdot)$ cv, we want to prove that $w_{\lambda^{(n)}}$ cv
 \rightarrow we need a formula to link both quantities.



COORDONNÉES
ENTRELACÉES
(Kerov, 1996)

$$G_{\lambda}(z) = \frac{\prod_{i=1}^{m-1} (z - y_i)}{\prod_{i=1}^m (z - x_i)}$$

$$H_{\lambda}(z) = 1 / G_{\lambda}(z)$$

careful analysis
of $\chi^{\lambda}(1, \dots, k)$
= $[s_{\lambda}] p_k p_1^{n-k}$
with det expression of s_{λ} .

$$\rightarrow ch_{\lambda}(z) = \frac{1}{k} [z^{-1}] H_{\lambda}(z) \dots H_{\lambda}(z-k+1)$$

\uparrow coef of z^{-1} in the expansion at $z=\infty$ (negative powers)
(Frobenius, 1900, Macdonald, 1995)

3. Functions \tilde{p}_k and their asymptotics

Define $\log(\tau G_\lambda(z)) = \sum_{k \geq 1} \frac{\tilde{p}_k(z)}{k} z^{-k}$

formula above implies

$$Ch_k = \frac{\tilde{p}_{k+1}}{k+1} + \text{polynom in } \tilde{p}_2, \tilde{p}_3, \dots, \tilde{p}_{k-1}$$

Rq: $\tilde{p}_1(z) = 0 \forall z$

Corollary: $(\tilde{p}_k)_{k \geq 2}$ is an algebraic basis of $\text{Vect}(Ch_k)$.

Obs: $\tilde{p}_k(z) = \sum_{i=1}^m x_i^k - \sum_{i=1}^{m-1} y_i^k = \frac{k(k-1)}{2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x^{k-2} (\omega_\lambda(x) - |x|) dx$

informally $\frac{1}{2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x^k (\omega_\lambda(x) - |x|) dx$

Thus weak convergence \iff convergence of the $\tilde{p}_k(z)$.

\rightarrow we need the top-component expr. of \tilde{p}_k in $(Ch_{(p)})$ basis

Prop: $\tilde{p}_k = \sum_{\substack{m_2, m_3, \dots \\ 2m_2 + 3m_3 + \dots = k}} \frac{\binom{k}{\sum m_i}}{\prod m_i!} \prod_{i \geq 2} (Ch_{(i-1)})^{m_i} + \text{smaller terms for degree}$

and $\tilde{p}_k = \begin{cases} \frac{(2m)!}{m!m!} Ch_{(2)}^m & \leftarrow k=2m \\ 0 & \leftarrow k \text{ odd} \end{cases} + k \sum_{j=0}^{\lfloor k-3/2 \rfloor} \binom{k-1}{j} Ch_{(k-1-j)}^j + \text{sm. terms for deg } \geq j$

$\Rightarrow \tilde{p}_k(\bar{x}^{(n)}) = \frac{p_k(z)}{n^k} \xrightarrow{\text{as.}} \begin{cases} \frac{(2m)!}{m!m!} & \text{if } k=2m \\ 0 & \text{if } k \text{ odd} \end{cases}$

$\Rightarrow \tilde{p}_k$ Gaussian fluctuation with explicit cov limits

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} n \text{Cov}(\tilde{p}_{k_1}(\bar{x}^{(n)}), \tilde{p}_{k_2}(\bar{x}^{(n)})) = \sum_{\substack{j_1, j_2 \\ 2j_1 \leq k_1 - 3 \\ 2j_2 \leq k_2 - 3 \\ k_1 - 2j_1 = k_2 - 2j_2}} k_1 k_2 \binom{k_1 - 1}{j_1} \binom{k_2 - 1}{j_2}$$

4. What is the limit shape?

$$\Omega(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{2}{\pi} \left(x \arcsin \frac{x}{2} + \sqrt{4-x^2} \right) & \text{for } |x| \leq 2 \\ |x| & \text{for } |x| > 2 \end{cases} \rightsquigarrow \Omega'(x) = \frac{2}{\pi} \arcsin \frac{x}{2}$$

Exercise: check that $\tilde{p}_k(\Omega) = \begin{cases} \frac{(2m)!}{m!m!} & \text{if } k=2m; \\ 0 & \text{if } k \text{ odd.} \end{cases}$

How to guess the formula for Ω :

- using $K(z) = G^{<-1>}(z)$ and free cumulants
see Biane 2001

- direct way by computing its Fourier transform?
I don't know.

5. Strong convergence

We know for each polynomial P ,

$$\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} w_{\lambda_n}(x) P(x) dx \rightarrow \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \Omega(x) P(x) dx$$

want to prove $\|w_{\lambda_n}(x) - \Omega(x)\|_{\infty} \rightarrow 0$

on a compact interval, that would be easy:

Weierstrass $\Rightarrow \int_I w_{\lambda_n}(x) f(x) dx \rightarrow \int_I \Omega(x) f(x) dx$
for f continuous

$f = \begin{cases} 1 & x \leq x_0 \\ 0 & x > x_0 \end{cases}$ + 1-Lipschitz $\Rightarrow w_{\lambda_n}(x_0) \rightarrow \Omega(x_0) \forall x_0 \in I$

1-Lipschitz $\Rightarrow \|w_{\lambda_n} - \Omega\|_{\infty} \rightarrow 0$

But \mathbb{R} not compact. However, one can show that,
with high proba $\text{Supp}(w_{\lambda_n}(x) - |x|) \subseteq [-3; 3]$

Lemme : λ random Young diagram with \mathbb{P}_n .

Then $P(\lambda_1' \leq 3\sqrt{n}) \rightarrow 1$

Proof: $P(\lambda_1 \geq 3\sqrt{n}) = P(\text{uniform rand perm has an incr. subsequence of length } 3\sqrt{n})$
 $\leq \mathbb{E}(\# \text{ incr subs of length } 3\sqrt{n} \text{ in a unif rand perm.})$
 $\leq \binom{n}{3\sqrt{n}}^2 (n - 3\sqrt{n})!$
... (Stirling)
 $\leq o(1).$

Conclusion : $\| \omega_{\lambda_n} - \Omega \|_{\infty} \rightarrow 0$

(Kerov, Vershik / Logan, Shepp 1977)
this proof: Kerov, Ivanov, Olshanski, 2002

