

Bijjective proofs of alternating sign matrix theorems

Ilse Fischer

Universität Wien

Joint work with Matjaž Konvalinka

Some remarks

- We **translate** non-bijective proofs into **combinatorics** !
- The combinatorial point of view led to many modifications and it is hard to recognize the original proofs from our bijective proofs.
- In the original proofs, **signs** are unavoidable and this makes it necessary to work with signed sets. This causes the use of a generalization of the **involution principle** by **Garsia and Milne**.
- We have written a **computer code** that performs the bijections.
- **Simpler bijections ?!** Hopefully there are simpler bijections. On the other hand, there are also no simple non-bijective proofs so far and all of them involve subtractions.

Outline

I. ASMs, DPPs and Bijections 1 & 2

II. Signed sets and sijections

III. Some details of our constructions

I. ASMs, DPPs and Bijections 1 & 2

Alternating Sign Matrices = ASMs

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & -1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & -1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

Square matrix with entries in $\{0, \pm 1\}$ such that in each **row** and each **column**

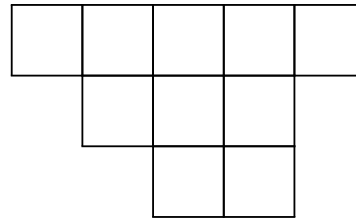
- the non-zero entries appear with alternating signs, and
- the sum of entries is 1.

$$\# \text{ of } n \times n \text{ ASMs} = \prod_{i=0}^{n-1} \frac{(3i+1)!}{(n+i)!}$$

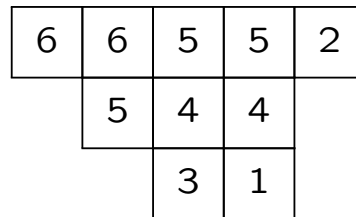
Mills, Robbins, Rumsey, Zeilberger, Kuperberg in the 1980s and 1990s.

Descending Plane Partitions = DPPs

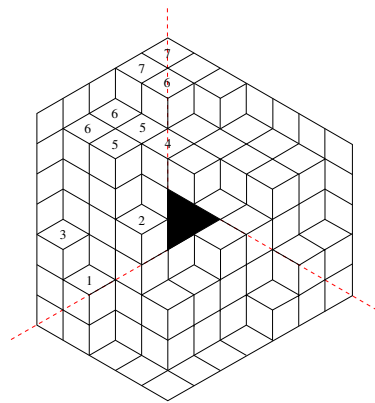
- A **strict partition** is a partition $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_l)$ with distinct parts, i.e., $\lambda_1 > \lambda_2 > \dots > \lambda_l > 0$. The **shifted Young diagram** of shape $(5, 3, 2)$ is as follows.



- A **column strict shifted plane partition** is a filling of a shifted Young diagram with positive integers such that **rows decrease weakly** and **columns decrease strictly**.



- A DPP is such a column strict shifted PP where the first part in each row is greater than the length of its row and less than or equal to the length of the previous row. Ugly condition?



- The number of DPPs with parts no greater than n is also $\prod_{i=0}^{n-1} \frac{(3i+1)!}{(n+i)!}$ (Andrews).

Bijection 1 (Bijective Proof of the Product Formula)

ASM_n = set of $n \times n$ ASMs

$ASM_{n,i}$ = set of $n \times n$ ASMs $(a_{p,q})_{1 \leq p,q \leq n}$ with $a_{1,i} = 1$

B_n = set of $(2n - 1)$ -subsets of $[3n - 2] = \{1, 2, \dots, 3n - 2\}$; $|B_n| = \binom{3n-2}{2n-1}$

$B_{n,i}$ = set of elements of B_n whose median is $n + i - 1$; $|B_{n,i}| = \binom{n+i-2}{n-1} \binom{2n-i-1}{n-1}$

DPP_n = set of DPPs with parts no greater than n

We have constructed a bijection between the following sets:

$$DPP_{n-1} \times B_{n,1} \times ASM_{n,i} \longrightarrow DPP_{n-1} \times ASM_{n-1} \times B_{n,i}$$

Then we also have a bijection

$$DPP_{n-1} \times B_{n,1} \times ASM_n \longrightarrow DPP_{n-1} \times ASM_{n-1} \times B_n.$$

Iterating this, we obtain a bijection

$$DPP_0 \times \dots \times DPP_{n-1} \times B_{1,1} \times \dots \times B_{n,1} \times ASM_n \longrightarrow DPP_0 \times \dots \times DPP_{n-1} \times B_1 \times \dots \times B_n.$$

Bijection 2 (ASMs and DPPs)

$\text{DPP}_{n,i}$ = subset of DPP_n with DPPs that have $i - 1$ occurrences of n .

We have constructed a bijection between the following sets:

$$\text{DPP}_{n-1} \times \text{ASM}_{n,i} \longrightarrow \text{ASM}_{n-1} \times \text{DPP}_{n,i}$$

- Once such a bijection is constructed, it follows that

$$|\text{DPP}_{n-1}| \cdot |\text{ASM}_{n,i}| = |\text{ASM}_{n-1}| \cdot |\text{DPP}_{n,i}|.$$

- By induction, we can assume $|\text{DPP}_{n-1}| = |\text{ASM}_{n-1}|$ and so $|\text{ASM}_{n,i}| = |\text{DPP}_{n,i}|$.
- Summing this over all i implies $|\text{DPP}_n| = |\text{ASM}_n|$.

II. Signed sets and sijections

A short introduction to signed sets

A **signed set** is a pair of disjoint finite sets: $\underline{S} = (S^+, S^-)$ with $S^+ \cap S^- = \emptyset$.

- The **size** of a signed set \underline{S} is $|\underline{S}| = |S^+| - |S^-|$.
- The **opposite** signed set of \underline{S} is $-\underline{S} = (S^-, S^+)$.
- The **Cartesian product** of signed sets \underline{S} and \underline{T} is

$$\underline{S} \times \underline{T} = (S^+ \times T^+ \cup S^- \times T^-, S^+ \times T^- \cup S^- \times T^+).$$

- The **disjoint union** of signed sets \underline{S} and \underline{T} is

$$\underline{S} \sqcup \underline{T} = (\underline{S} \times (\{0\}, \emptyset)) \cup (\underline{T} \times (\{1\}, \emptyset)).$$

- The **disjoint union of a family of signed sets** \underline{S}_t indexed with a signed set \underline{T} is

$$\bigsqcup_{t \in \underline{T}} \underline{S}_t = \bigcup_{t \in \underline{T}} (\underline{S}_t \times \underline{\{t\}}).$$

Addition, subtraction, multiplication but not division

Recall our approach: We translate some of my non-bijective proofs into combinatorics.

Note that

- $|\underline{S} \sqcup \underline{T}| = |\underline{S}| + |\underline{T}|$,
- $|\underline{-S}| = -|\underline{S}|$, and
- $|\underline{S} \times \underline{T}| = |\underline{S}| \cdot |\underline{T}|$.

and so we can “deal” with all arithmetic operations except for **division**.

The latter explains the “redundant” factors in our bijections.

Crucial example: Signed intervals

For $a, b \in \mathbb{Z}$, we set

$$\underline{[a, b]} = \begin{cases} ([a, b], \emptyset) & \text{if } a \leq b \\ (\emptyset, [b+1, a-1]) & \text{if } a > b+1, \\ (\emptyset, \emptyset) & \text{if } a = b+1 \end{cases}$$

where $[a, b]$ stands for an interval in \mathbb{Z} in the usual sense.

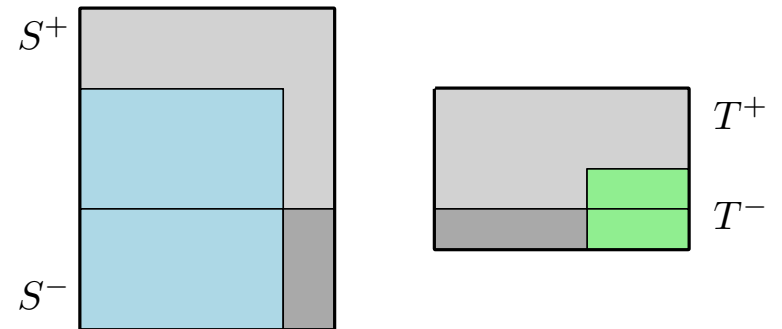
The signed sets in our constructions are typically **signed boxes** (= Cartesian products of signed intervals) and **disjoint unions of signed boxes**.

Sijections

The role of **bijections** for signed sets is played by “signed bijections”, which we call **sijections**. A sijection is a “manifestation” of the fact that two signed sets have the same size.

A **sijection** is a collection of

- a **sign-reversing involution** on a **subset** of \underline{S} ,
- a **sign-reversing involution** on a **subset** of \underline{T} ,
- a **sign-preserving bijection** between the remaining elements of \underline{S} and the remaining elements of \underline{T} .



Simpler: A sijection φ from \underline{S} to \underline{T} , $\varphi: \underline{S} \Rightarrow \underline{T}$, is an involution on the set $(S^+ \cup S^-) \sqcup (T^+ \cup T^-)$ with the property $\varphi(S^+ \sqcup T^-) = S^- \sqcup T^+$. This implies:

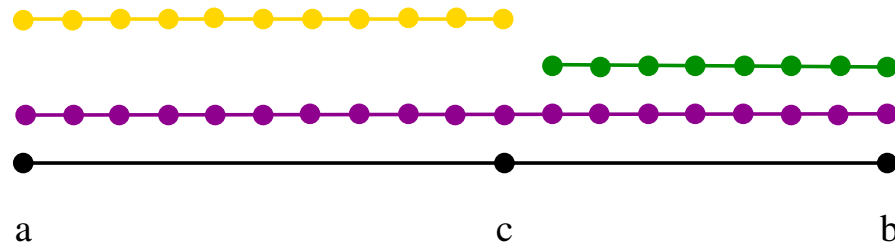
$$|\underline{S}| = |S^+| - |S^-| = |T^+| - |T^-| = |\underline{T}|$$

The fundamental sijection

Given $a, b, c \in \mathbb{Z}$, construct a sijection

$$\alpha = \alpha_{a,b,c}: [a, c] \Rightarrow [a, b] \sqcup [b+1, c].$$

Construction: For $a \leq b \leq c$ and $c < b < a$, there is nothing to prove. For, say, $a \leq c < b$, we have that $[b+1, c] = -[c+1, b]$ is “contained” in $[a, b]$, but due to its opposite sign this subset “cancels” and what remains is $[a, c]$.

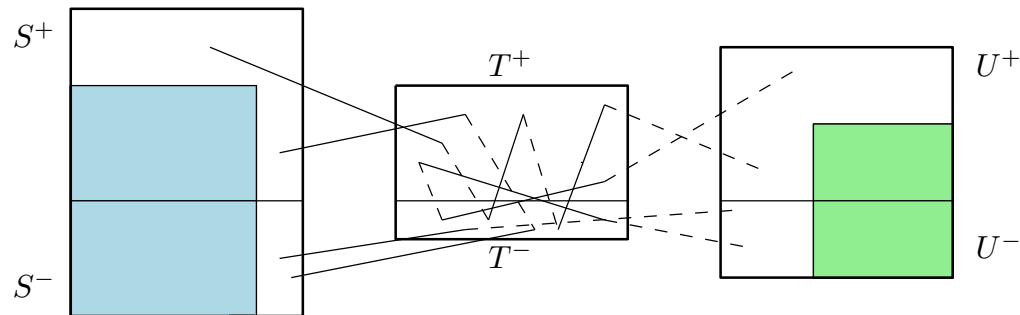


The cases $b < a \leq c$, $b \leq c < a$, and $c < a \leq b$ are analogous.

Use straightforward constructions for the **Cartesian product** of sijections and the **disjoint union** to obtain more complicated sijections.

Composition of sijections

Suppose $\underline{S}, \underline{T}, \underline{U}$ are signed sets and $\varphi : \underline{S} \Rightarrow \underline{T}$, $\psi : \underline{T} \Rightarrow \underline{U}$, then we can construct a sijection $\psi \circ \varphi : \underline{S} \rightarrow \underline{U}$ by alternating applications of φ (solid lines) and ψ (dashed lines) as sketched next.



The special case $S^- = U^- = \emptyset$ is the **Garsia-Milne involution principle**.

III. Some details of our constructions

ASMs \rightarrow Monotone Triangles

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & -1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & -1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \Rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \Rightarrow \begin{array}{cccccc} & & & & 2 & \\ & & & & 1 & 4 \\ & & & 1 & 2 & 5 \\ & 1 & & 2 & 3 & 5 \\ 1 & 2 & & 3 & 4 & 5 \end{array}$$

- A **monotone triangle** is a triangular array of integers that **increases weakly** in \nearrow -direction and in \searrow -direction, and **strictly** along rows.
- The set of monotone triangles with bottom row k_1, \dots, k_n is denoted by $\underline{MT}(k_1, \dots, k_n)$.
- If we **drop** the condition that **rows are strictly increasing**, then we obtain the well-known **Gelfand-Tsetlin patterns**.

Gelfand-Tsetlin patterns with arbitrary bottom row in \mathbb{Z}^n

- Gelfand-Tsetlin patterns have **weakly increasing rows**, in particular this is true for the bottom row (k_1, \dots, k_n) .
- The number of Gelfand-Tsetlin patterns with bottom row k_1, \dots, k_n is $\prod_{1 \leq i < j \leq n} \frac{k_j - k_i + j - i}{j - i}$.
- There is a very natural extension of Gelfand-Tsetlin patterns to **arbitrary** $(k_1, \dots, k_n) \in \mathbb{Z}^n$ and a very natural notion of a **sign**.
- The signed set of these extended Gelfand-Tsetlin patterns with bottom row (k_1, \dots, k_n) is denoted by $\underline{GT}(k_1, \dots, k_n)$, and we have

$$|\underline{GT}(k_1, \dots, k_n)| = \prod_{1 \leq i < j \leq n} \frac{k_j - k_i + j - i}{j - i}.$$

- Also monotone triangles can be defined for any bottom row $(k_1, \dots, k_n) \in \mathbb{Z}^n$. The signed set of these monotone triangles is denoted by $\underline{MT}(k_1, \dots, k_n)$.

Arrow patterns ...

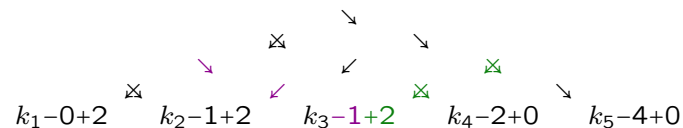
... are triangular arrays

$$T = \begin{array}{cccccccc} & & & & & & & t_{1,n} \\ & & & & & & t_{1,n-1} & & t_{2,n} \\ & & & & & t_{1,n-2} & & t_{2,n-1} & & t_{3,n} \\ & & & & & \vdots & & \vdots & & \vdots \\ & & & & & t_{2,3} & & \dots & & \dots \\ & & & & & \vdots & & \vdots & & \vdots \\ & & & & & t_{1,2} & & \dots & & \dots \\ & & & & & & & & & t_{n-1,n} \end{array},$$

with $t_{p,q} \in \{\swarrow, \searrow, \bowtie\}$. The **sign** of an arrow pattern is **1** if the number of \bowtie 's is even and **-1** otherwise, and the **signed set of arrow patterns of order n** is denoted by \underline{AP}_n .

The role of an arrow pattern of order n is that it induces a **deformation** of (k_1, \dots, k_n) :

- Add k_1, \dots, k_n as bottom row of T (i.e., $t_{i,i} = k_i$).
- For each \swarrow or \bowtie which is in the same \swarrow -diagonal as k_i add 1 to k_i .
- For each \searrow or \bowtie which is in the same \searrow -diagonal as k_i subtract 1 from k_i .



We let $d(\mathbf{k}, T)$ denote this deformation for $\mathbf{k} = (k_1, \dots, k_n)$ and $T \in \underline{AP}_n$.

Shifted Gelfand-Tsetlin patterns

For $\mathbf{k} = (k_1, \dots, k_n)$, a **shifted Gelfand-Tsetlin pattern** is the disjoint union of deformed Gelfand-Tsetlin patterns over arrow patterns of order n :

$$\underline{SGT}(\mathbf{k}) = \bigsqcup_{T \in \underline{AP}_n} \underline{GT}(d(\mathbf{k}, T)).$$

Given $\mathbf{k} = (k_1, \dots, k_n) \in \mathbb{Z}^n$ and $x \in \mathbb{Z}$, we have constructed a bijection

$$\Gamma = \Gamma_{\mathbf{k}, x}: \underline{MT}(\mathbf{k}) \Rightarrow \underline{SGT}(\mathbf{k}).$$

Example $k = (1, 2, 3)$ and $x = 0$

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 \begin{array}{l} 1 \\ 12 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 1 \\ 11 \\ 111 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) & \begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 12 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 12 \\ 122 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) & \begin{array}{l} 1 \\ 13 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 1 \\ 12 \\ 122 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) \\
 \\
 \begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 13 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 23 \\ 223 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) & \begin{array}{l} 3 \\ 13 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 3 \\ 23 \\ 223 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) & \begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 23 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 22 \\ 312 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \end{array} \right) \\
 \\
 \begin{array}{l} 3 \\ 23 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 3 \\ 33 \\ 333 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) & \left(\begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 22 \\ 223 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 22 \\ 222 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \times \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) \\
 \\
 \left(\begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 22 \\ 231 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \end{array} \right) \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 22 \\ 222 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \end{array} \right) & \left(\begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 22 \\ 122 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{l} 2 \\ 22 \\ 222 \end{array}, \begin{array}{l} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right)
 \end{array}$$

Example $k = (1, 2, 3)$ and $x = 1$

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 \begin{array}{c} 1 \\ 12 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} 1 \\ 11 \\ 111 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) & \begin{array}{c} 2 \\ 12 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} 2 \\ 22 \\ 223 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) & \begin{array}{c} 1 \\ 13 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} 1 \\ 12 \\ 122 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) \\
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 \begin{array}{c} 3 \\ 23 \\ 123 \end{array} \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} 3 \\ 33 \\ 333 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) & \left(\begin{array}{c} 2 \\ 12 \\ 122 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} 2 \\ 22 \\ 222 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \times \\ \swarrow \downarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) \\
 \left(\begin{array}{c} 2 \\ 22 \\ 312 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} 2 \\ 22 \\ 222 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) & \left(\begin{array}{c} 2 \\ 22 \\ 231 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right) \leftrightarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} 2 \\ 22 \\ 222 \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \swarrow \\ \swarrow \downarrow \times \\ \swarrow \downarrow \end{array} \right)
 \end{array}$$

Rotation of monotone triangles

Given (k_1, \dots, k_n) , we have constructed a sijection

$$\underline{MT}(k_1, \dots, k_n) \implies (-1)^{n-1} \underline{MT}(k_2, \dots, k_n, k_1 - n).$$

Using $\Gamma : \underline{MT} \implies \underline{SGT}$, it suffices to construct a sijection

$$\underline{SGT}(k_1, \dots, k_n) \implies (-1)^{n-1} \underline{SGT}(k_2, \dots, k_n, k_1 - n).$$

...after several more steps we obtain the Bijections 1 & 2.

Thank you!