#### Maximal Unitarity at Two Loops



Durham, LMS Symposium

Polylogarithms as a Bridge between Number Theory and Particle Physics

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Based on 1108.1180, 1205.0801, 1208.1754 (with S. Caron-Huot, H. Johansson and D. Kosower)

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- motivations for studying amplitudes
- modern methods for computation at one loop

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#### **Obvious motivation:** Large Hadron Collider

The searches at LHC for physics beyond the Standard Model require a detailed understanding of background, especially QCD, processes.



#### Examples of signals and QCD backgrounds

Signal: An example of a Higgs boson process:



Background: An example of a QCD background process:



In fact, there are two important motivations:

#### • LHC phenomenology

Quantitative estimates of QCD background: needed for precision measurements, uncertainty estimates of NLO calculations, and reducing renormalization scale dependence.

#### • Reveal fascinating structure in QFT

For  $\mathcal{N} = 4$  SYM: hidden symmetries (integrability  $\longrightarrow$  non-perturbative solution) and new dualities (to Wilson loops and correlators).

For  $\mathcal{N}\leq$  4: connection to multivariate complex analysis and algebraic geometry.

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#### The Feynman diagram prescription



In practice, the Feynman diagram prescription produces a very large number of terms: e.g. for the five-gluon tree-level amplitude

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 $k_1\cdot k_4\varepsilon_2\cdot k_1\varepsilon_1\cdot \varepsilon_3\varepsilon_4\cdot \varepsilon_5$ 

Yet, the final result for five-gluon tree-level amplitude is simple,

$$egin{aligned} &\mathcal{A}_5^{ ext{tree}}(1^\pm,2^+,3^+,4^+,5^+) \ = \ 0 \ &\mathcal{A}_5^{ ext{tree}}(1^-,2^-,3^+,4^+,5^+) \ = \ rac{i\langle 1\,2
angle^4}{\langle 1\,2
angle\langle 2\,3
angle\langle 3\,4
angle\langle 4\,5
angle\langle 5\,1
angle} \,. \end{aligned}$$

This strongly suggests there should exist better methods for computing amplitudes.

At one-loop level, unitarity has proven very successful, allowing e.g. the calculation of  $qg \rightarrow W +$ multi-jets.

This talk is about extending generalized unitarity (systematically) to two loops.

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### Integral reductions and integral basis

Feynman rules  $\longrightarrow$  numerator powers in integrals

At one loop, all such integrals can be expanded in a basis.

For example, consider the box insertion



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Use integral reductions to write the one-loop amplitude as a linear combination of *basis integrals* 



+ rational terms

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To determine  $c_i$ , apply cuts  $\frac{1}{(\ell-\kappa)^2} \longrightarrow \delta((\ell-\kappa)^2)$  to both sides.

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A triple cut will leave 4 - 3 = 1 free *complex* parameter *z*. Parametrizing the loop momentum,

$$\ell^{\mu} = \alpha_1 K_1^{\flat \mu} + \alpha_2 K_2^{\flat \mu} + \frac{z}{2} \langle K_1^{\flat -} | \gamma^{\mu} | K_2^{\flat -} \rangle + \frac{\alpha_4(z)}{2} \langle K_2^{\flat -} | \gamma^{\mu} | K_1^{\flat -} \rangle$$

one obtains an explicit formula for the triangle coefficient [Forde]



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- maximal cuts at two loops
- constructing two-loop amplitudes out of tree-level data
- $\bullet\,$  elliptic integrals in  $\mathcal{N}=4$  SYM amplitudes

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Expand the massless 4-point two-loop amplitude in a basis, e.g.



+ ints with fewer props + rational terms

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The machinery: contour integrals  $\oint_{\Gamma_i} (\cdots)$ 

The philosophy: basis integral  $I_i \leftrightarrow$  unique  $\Gamma_i$  producing  $c_i$ 

#### The anatomy of two-loop maximal cuts

Cutting all seven visible propagators in the double-box integral,



produces (cf. [Buchbinder, Cachazo]), setting  $\chi \equiv \frac{t}{s}$ ,

$$\int d^4 p \, d^4 q \prod_{i=1}^7 \frac{1}{\ell_i^2} \longrightarrow \int d^4 p \, d^4 q \prod_{i=1}^7 \delta^{\mathbb{C}}(\ell_i^2) = \oint_{\Gamma} \frac{dz}{z(z+\chi)},$$

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a contour integral in the complex plane.

Jacobian poles z = 0 and  $z = -\chi$ : composite leading singularities

encircle 
$$z = 0$$
 and  $z = -\chi$  with  $\Gamma = \omega_1 C_{\epsilon}(0) + \omega_2 C_{\epsilon}(-\chi)$   
 $\longrightarrow$  freeze  $z$  ("8<sup>th</sup> cut")

#### Choosing contours: die Qual der Wahl

Six inequivalent classes of solutions to on-shell constraints



4 massless external states  $\longrightarrow$  8 independent leading singularities

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Six inequivalent classes of solutions to on-shell constraints



4 massless external states  $\longrightarrow$  8 independent leading singularities

How do we select contours within this variety of possibilities?

## Principle for selecting contours

To fix the contours, insist that

vanishing Feynman integrals must have vanishing heptacuts.

This ensures that

$$I_1 = I_2 \implies \operatorname{cut}(I_1) = \operatorname{cut}(I_2).$$

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Origin of terms with vanishing  $\mathbb{R}^D \times \mathbb{R}^D$  integration: reduction of Feynman diagram expansion to a *basis of integrals* (including use of integration-by-parts identities).

Remarkable simplification:

- 4 massless external states: 22  $\longrightarrow$  2 double-box integrals
- 5 massless external states: 160  $\longrightarrow$  2 "turtle-box" integrals
- 5 massless external states: 76  $\longrightarrow$  1 pentagon-box integral

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#### Contour constraints, part 1/2

There are two classes of constraints on  $\Gamma$  's:

1) Levi-Civita integrals. For example,



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 integration by parts (IBP) identities must be preserved. For example,



The constraints in the case of four massless external momenta:



	$\omega_1 - \omega_2 = 0$
	$\omega_3 - \omega_4 = 0$
	$\omega_5 - \omega_6 = 0$
	$\omega_7 - \omega_8 = 0$
$\omega_3 + \omega_4 -$	$\omega_5 - \omega_6 = 0$
$\omega_1 + \omega_2 - \omega_5 - \omega_6 + \omega_6$	$-\omega_7 + \omega_8 = 0$

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leaving 8 - 4 - 2 = 2 free winding numbers.

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#### Master contours: the concept

Going back to the two-loop basis expansion

$$A_4^{2-\mathrm{loop}} = c_1(\epsilon)$$
 +  $c_2(\epsilon)$ 

+ ints with fewer props
+ rational terms

and applying a heptacut one finds



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Exploit free parameters  $\longrightarrow \exists$  contours with

 $\begin{array}{ll} {{\cal P}_1:\; \left( {{\rm{cut}}\left( {{\rm{I}}_1} \right),\,{\rm{cut}}\left( {{\rm{I}}_2} \right)} \right)\;=\; (1,0)} \\ {{\cal P}_2:\; \left( {{\rm{cut}}\left( {{\rm{I}}_1} \right),\,{\rm{cut}}\left( {{\rm{I}}_2} \right)} \right)\;=\; (0,1)\,. \end{array}$ 

We call such  $P_i$  master contours.

#### Master contours: results

With four massless external states,

$$c_{1} = \frac{i\chi}{8} \oint_{P_{1}} \frac{dz}{z(z+\chi)} \prod_{j=1}^{6} A_{j}^{\text{tree}}(z) \qquad c_{2} = -\frac{i}{4s_{12}} \oint_{P_{2}} \frac{dz}{z(z+\chi)} \prod_{j=1}^{6} A_{j}^{\text{tree}}(z)$$

With our choice of basis integrals, the  $P_i$  are



n =winding number

### Characterizing the on-shell solutions

There are six solutions for the heptacut loop momenta



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## Two-loop leading singularities

 $\begin{array}{l} \text{heptacut solutions} \longrightarrow \text{Riemann spheres} \\ (\text{e.g., } c_{\triangle} = \oint_{\mathcal{C}_{\epsilon}(\boldsymbol{\infty})} \frac{dz}{z} \prod_{j=1}^{3} A_{j}^{\text{tree}}(z) ) \end{array}$ 



points  $\in S_i \cap S_j \longrightarrow$  no notion of  $\bullet$  or  $\bigcirc \longrightarrow$  resp. prop. is soft also:  $S_i \cap S_j \subset \{\text{leading singularities}\}!$ 

two-loop leading singularities  $\longrightarrow$  IR singularities of integral

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## Two-loop leading vs. IR singularities

Observation: leading-singularity residues cancel between virtual (a) and real (b) contributions to cross section



in complete analogy with the KLN theorem on IR cancelations.

## Classification of heptacut solutions

Arbitrary # of external states. Define



The solution to  $\ell_i^2 = 0, i = 1, \dots, 7$  is

- case 1 (M,M,M): 1 torus
- case 2 (M,M,m) etc.: 2  $\mathbb{CP}^1$  with  $S_i \longleftrightarrow$  distrib. of  $\bullet$ ,  $\bigcirc$
- case 3 (M,m,m) etc.: 4  $\mathbb{CP}^1$  with  $S_i \leftrightarrow$  distrib. of  $\bullet$ ,  $\bigcirc$
- case 4 (m,m,m): 6  $\mathbb{CP}^1$  with  $S_i \longleftrightarrow$  distrib. of  $\bullet$ ,  $\bigcirc$

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Limits  $\mu_i \to m \implies$  chiral branchings: torus  $\stackrel{\mu_3 \to m}{\longrightarrow}$ 



Each torus-pinching: new IR-pole + new residue thm  $\implies$  # of lead. sing. same in all cases

In all cases: # of master  $\Gamma$ 's = # of basis integrals

- $\implies$  all linear relations are preserved
- $\implies$  perfect analogy with one-loop generalized unitarity

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## Symmetries and systematics of IBP constraints





The IBP constraints are invariant under flips.

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The IBP constraints are invariant under flips. Reverse logic  $\longrightarrow$  demand constraints to be

invariant under flips and  $\pi$ -rotations.

$$\begin{split} \{\mathsf{M},\mathsf{m},\mathsf{m}\} \text{ case: choose basis, e.g. } \omega_{1,2,5,6} &= 0\\ r_1^{(\mathrm{b})}(\omega_3 + \omega_4 + \omega_7 + \omega_8) + r_2^{(\mathrm{b})}(\omega_9 + \omega_{10} - \omega_{11} - \omega_{12}) &= 0\\ \text{where, in fact, } r_1^{(\mathrm{b})} &= r_2^{(\mathrm{b})} \neq 0. \end{split}$$



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(m,m,m) case:

1) constraint from {M,m,m} case inherited. 2) new flip symmetry  $\longrightarrow$  new constraint:  $r_1^{(c)}(\omega_3 + \omega_4) + r_2^{(c)}(\omega_{11} + \omega_{12} - \omega_{13} - \omega_{14}) = 0$ as expressed in the basis  $\omega_{1,2,5,6,7,8} = 0$ . In fact,  $r_1^{(c)} = -r_2^{(c)} \neq 0$ .

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#### Integrals with fewer propagators

Solution to slashed-box on-shell constraints:



On-shell constraints leave 8 - 5 = 3 free complex parameters.

Multivariate residues depend on the order of integration.

**Example:** 
$$f(z_i) = \frac{z_1}{z_2(a_1z_1+a_2z_2)(b_1z_1+b_2z_2)}$$
. Residues at  $(z_1, z_2) = (0, 0)$ :

$$\frac{1}{(2\pi i)^2} \int_{C_{\epsilon}(0) \times C_{\epsilon^2}(0)} dz_1 dz_2 f(z_i) = \frac{1}{a_1 b_1}$$
$$\frac{1}{(2\pi i)^2} \int_{C_{\epsilon}(0) \times C_{\epsilon^2}\left(-\frac{a_1}{a_2} z_1\right)} dz_1 dz_2 f(z_i) = \frac{a_2}{a_1(a_1 b_2 - a_2 b_1)}$$

## Elliptic curves vs. polylogs



sunrise integral not expressible through polylogs  $\longrightarrow$  neither should 10-point integral be

Analytic expression  $\leftrightarrow$  maximal cut?

Wilson-loop amplitude correspondence  $\Longrightarrow$ 

$$\mathcal{N} = 4$$
 SYM:  $A^{(2)}(10 - \text{scalar N}^3 \text{MHV}) \propto$ 



### Conclusions and outlook

- First steps towards fully automatized two-loop amplitudes
- Integration-by-parts identities  $\longrightarrow$  reduce # of Feynman integrals by factor of 10-100
- Two-loop master contours are unique

   — perfect analogy with one-loop unitarity
- Classification of maximal-cut solutions
- Maximal cuts contain vital information: pinches/punctures → IR/UV divergences branch cuts → non-polylogs in uncut integral
- Underlying algebraic geometry → deeper understanding of maximal cuts (i.e., contour constraints)

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#### Backup slides

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- ideal two-loop basis: chiral integrals
- evaluate 4-point chiral integrals analytically

The two-loop integral coefficients  $c_i$  have  $\mathcal{O}(\epsilon)$  corrections. Important to know, as the integrals have poles in  $\epsilon$ .

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The two-loop integral coefficients  $c_i$  have  $\mathcal{O}(\epsilon)$  corrections. Important to know, as the integrals have poles in  $\epsilon$ . IR-finite integrals  $\longrightarrow \mathcal{O}(\epsilon)$  corrections not needed for amplitude Candidates: num. insertions  $\rightarrow 0$  in collinear int. regions, e.g.

$$I_{++} \equiv I[[1|\ell_1|2\rangle\langle 3|\ell_2|4]] \times [23]\langle 14\rangle$$
$$I_{+-} \equiv I[[1|\ell_1|2\rangle\langle 4|\ell_2|3]] \times [24]\langle 13\rangle$$

Essentially the chiral integrals of [Arkani-Hamed et al.]

 $I_{++}$  and  $I_{+-}$  lin. independent  $\longrightarrow$  use in any gauge theory

Philosophy: maximally IR-finite basis

 $\longrightarrow$  minimize need for cuts in  $D = 4 - 2\epsilon$ 

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### Evaluation of chiral integrals (1/3)

 $I_{+\pm}$  are finite  $\longrightarrow$  can be computed in D=4

1) Feynman parametrize

$$I_{++} = -\chi^2 \left( 1 + (1+\chi) \frac{\partial}{\partial \chi} \right) I_1(\chi) \text{ and } I_{+-} = -(1+\chi)^2 \left( 1 + \chi \frac{\partial}{\partial \chi} \right) I_1(\chi)$$

where

$$h_{1}(\chi) = \int \frac{d^{3}a \ d^{3}b \ dc \ c \ \delta(1 - c - \sum_{i} a_{i} - \sum_{i} b_{i}) \left(\sum_{i} a_{i} \sum_{i} b_{i} + c(\sum_{i} a_{i} + \sum_{i} b_{i})\right)^{-1}}{\left(a_{1}a_{3}(c + \sum_{i} b_{i}) + (a_{1}b_{4} + a_{3}b_{6} + a_{2}b_{5}\chi)c + b_{4}b_{6}(c + \sum_{i} a_{i})\right)^{2}}$$

2) "Projectivize"  $l_1(\chi) = 6 \int_1^\infty dc \int_0^\infty \frac{d^7(a_1 a_2 a_3 a_{\mathcal{I}} b_1 b_2 b_3 b_{\mathcal{I}})}{\operatorname{vol}(\operatorname{GL}(1))} \frac{1}{(cA^2 + A.B + B^2)^4}$ 

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#### 3) Obtain symbol

Integrate projective form one variable at the time, at the level of the symbol.

$$\mathcal{S}[\mathit{h}_1(\chi)] \,=\, \frac{2}{\chi} \left[ \chi \otimes \chi \otimes (1+\chi) \otimes (1+\chi) \right] - \frac{2}{1+\chi} \left[ \chi \otimes \chi \otimes (1+\chi) \otimes \chi \right]$$

4) "Integrate" symbol, using

- a)  $I_1$  has transcendentality 4 (fact, not a conjecture)
- b)  $I_1$  has no *u*-channel discontinuity
- c) Regge limits:

$$\begin{split} h_1(\chi) &\to \ \frac{\pi^2}{6} \log^2 \chi + \left( 4\zeta(3) - \frac{\pi^2}{3} \right) \log \chi + \mathcal{O}(1) \quad \text{as} \quad \chi \to 0 \\ h_1(\chi) &\to \ 6\zeta(3) \frac{\log \chi}{\chi} + \mathcal{O}(\chi^{-1}) \quad \text{as} \quad \chi \to \infty \end{split}$$

In conclusion, for the "chiral" integrals

$$I_{++} \equiv I[[1|\ell_1|2\rangle\langle 3|\ell_2|4]] \times [23]\langle 14\rangle$$
$$I_{+-} \equiv I[[1|\ell_1|2\rangle\langle 4|\ell_2|3]] \times [24]\langle 13\rangle$$

we find the results

$$I_{++}(\chi) = 2H_{-1,-1,0,0}(\chi) - \frac{\pi^2}{3}\text{Li}_2(-\chi) \\ + \left(\frac{\pi^2}{2}\log(1+\chi) - \frac{\pi^2}{3}\log\chi + 2\zeta(3)\right)\log(1+\chi) - \frac{6\chi\zeta(3)}{6}$$
$$I_{+-}(\chi) = 2H_{0,-1,0,0}(\chi) - \pi^2\text{Li}_2(-\chi) - \frac{\pi^2}{6}\log^2\chi - 4\zeta(3)\log\chi - \frac{\pi^4}{10} - 6(1+\chi)\zeta(3)$$

Actual chiral integrals: transcendentality-breaking terms cancel.

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