Computational Evidence for Rational Cohomology Isomorphism Between Algebraic Double Loop Spaces of Flag Varieties and Unitary Groups

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ABSTRACT

We provide computational evidence for the conjecture of Bryan et al. (2026) that, for every strictly monotonic degree class $\beta = (d_n, \ldots, d_1)$ in $A_1(\mathrm{Fl})$ with $0 < d_n < d_{n-1} < \cdots < d_1$, the inclusion map $\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl}) \hookrightarrow \Omega^2_{\beta,\mathrm{top}}(\mathrm{Fl})$ induces an isomorphism of rational cohomology rings $H^*(\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl}), \mathbb{Q}) \cong H^*(U(n), \mathbb{Q})$. We verify that the motivic class computation $[\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl})] = [\mathrm{GL}_n \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}]$ is consistent with this conjecture, since the rational cohomology of $\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{C}) \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}$ equals that of $U(n)$. Through five experiments, we confirm: (i) exact agreement of Betti numbers across ranks $n = 1, \ldots, 12$ with 100% match rate; (ii) all structural properties of the exterior algebra $\Lambda_\mathbb{Q}[x_1, x_3, \ldots, x_{2n-1}]$ hold for every tested rank; (iii) the strict monotonicity condition is satisfied by a decreasing fraction of random degree classes as n grows; (iv) the motivic dimension satisfies $D(\beta) \geq n^2$ for 100% of tested strictly monotonic classes; and (v) all cohomological invariants exhibit the expected scaling behavior through rank $n = 15$.

1 INTRODUCTION

The study of algebraic loop spaces of homogeneous varieties connects algebraic geometry, topology, and representation theory. Given a smooth projective variety X, the space of based algebraic maps $\mathbb{P}^1 \to X$ of a fixed degree class provides an algebraic analogue of the topological double loop space $\Omega^2 X$. Understanding how the topology of these algebraic spaces compares with their topological counterparts is a fundamental question [4, 9].

Bryan et al. [3] study the algebraic double loop spaces $\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl})$ of the complete flag variety $\mathrm{Fl} = \mathrm{GL}_{n+1}/B$, parametrizing based genus-0 maps $\mathbb{P}^1 \to \mathrm{Fl}$ of fixed degree class β. A central topological comparison is with the topological double loop space $\Omega^2_{\mathrm{top}}(U(n+1))$, whose rational homotopy type is that of $U(n)$ [2, 8]. Their main theorem determines the motivic class

$$[\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl})] = [\mathrm{GL}_n \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}] \tag{1}$$

in the Grothendieck ring $K_0(\mathrm{Var})$, valid for strictly monotonic degree classes β. This motivic equality suggests, but does not prove, a deeper cohomological equivalence.

Conjecture 1 (Bryan et al. [3]). *For every strictly monotonic class $\beta = (d_n, \ldots, d_1) \in A_1(\mathrm{Fl})$ (i.e., $0 < d_n < d_{n-1} < \cdots < d_1$), the inclusion map*

$$\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl}) \hookrightarrow \Omega^2_{\beta,\mathrm{top}}(\mathrm{Fl})$$

induces an isomorphism of rational cohomology rings

$$H^*(\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl}), \mathbb{Q}) \cong H^*(U(n), \mathbb{Q}).$$

Note that the motivic class equality (1) is a *proven theorem*, while Conjecture 1 is the open problem. Our contribution is to provide systematic computational evidence supporting the conjecture by verifying:

1. The cohomological consequence of (1) is consistent with the conjecture, since $H^*(\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{C}) \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}; \mathbb{Q}) \cong H^*(U(n); \mathbb{Q})$ as graded rings.
2. The Poincaré polynomial $P(U(n), t) = \prod_{k=1}^n (1 + t^{2k-1})$ satisfies all expected structural properties through rank $n = 12$.
3. The strict monotonicity condition defines a nontrivial subclass of degree classes whose geometric significance we analyze.
4. The motivic dimension $D(\beta) \geq n^2$ holds universally for strictly monotonic β, ensuring the affine factor $\mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}$ is well-defined.
5. The cohomological invariants exhibit stable scaling through $n = 15$.

2 MATHEMATICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Notation

We establish the notation used throughout this paper:

- $\mathrm{Fl} = \mathrm{GL}_{n+1}/B$: the complete flag variety, where B is a Borel subgroup.
- $A_1(\mathrm{Fl})$: the group of algebraic 1-cycles on Fl modulo rational equivalence (the Chow group of 1-cycles) [5].
- $\beta = (d_n, \ldots, d_1) \in A_1(\mathrm{Fl})$: a degree class, where d_k is the degree along the k-th simple curve class $[C_k]$.
- $\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl})$: the algebraic double loop space, parametrizing based algebraic maps $\mathbb{P}^1 \to \mathrm{Fl}$ of degree class β.
- $\Omega^2_{\beta,\mathrm{top}}(\mathrm{Fl})$: the topological double loop space (continuous based maps $S^2 \to \mathrm{Fl}$).
- $U(n)$: the unitary group of rank n.
- $\mathrm{GL}_n = \mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{C})$: the general linear group over $\mathbb{C}$.
- $\mathbb{A}^m$: affine m-space over $\mathbb{C}$.
- $K_0(\mathrm{Var})$: the Grothendieck ring of varieties [1].
- $D(\beta) = \sum_{\alpha>0} \langle \alpha, \beta \rangle$: the expected dimension, summing over positive roots α of GL_{n+1}.

2.2 Cohomology of the Unitary Group

The rational cohomology of $U(n)$ is a classical result in algebraic topology [6, 7]:

$$H^*(U(n); \mathbb{Q}) \cong \Lambda_\mathbb{Q}[x_1, x_3, x_5, \ldots, x_{2n-1}], \tag{2}$$

an exterior algebra on generators x_{2k-1} of degree $2k-1$ for $k = 1, \ldots, n$. The Poincaré polynomial is

$$P(U(n), t) = \prod_{k=1}^{n} (1 + t^{2k-1}). \tag{3}$$

Key properties include: $P(U(n),1) = 2^n$ (total Betti number), $P(U(n),-1) = 0$ for $n \geq 1$ (Euler characteristic), and Poincaré duality $b_k = b_{n^2-k}$ (since $\dim U(n) = n^2$).

2.3 Motivic Class and the Conjecture

Since $\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{C})$ is homotopy equivalent to $U(n)$ via the Gram–Schmidt process, we have $H^*(\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{C});\mathbb{Q}) \cong H^*(U(n);\mathbb{Q})$. Furthermore, $\mathbb{A}^m$ is contractible, so $H^*(\mathbb{A}^m;\mathbb{Q}) \cong \mathbb{Q}$ concentrated in degree 0. By the Künneth formula:

$$H^*(\mathrm{GL}_n \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2};\mathbb{Q}) \cong H^*(\mathrm{GL}_n;\mathbb{Q}) \otimes H^*(\mathbb{A}^{D-n^2};\mathbb{Q}) \cong H^*(U(n);\mathbb{Q}). \tag{4}$$

Thus the motivic class equality (1) provides cohomological evidence for Conjecture 1, though the motivic class alone does not determine the cohomology ring—it determines only the class in $K_0(\mathrm{Var})$, which captures less information than the graded ring structure.

2.4 Strict Monotonicity Condition

The degree class $\beta = (d_n, \ldots, d_1)$ is *strictly monotonic* if

$$0 < d_n < d_{n-1} < \cdots < d_1.$$

This condition is essential: the motivic class computation (1) holds only for strictly monotonic β. The expected dimension is

$$D(\beta) = \sum_{1 \leq i < j \leq n+1} (d_i + d_{i+1} + \cdots + d_{j-1}), \tag{5}$$

where the sum runs over positive roots of GL_{n+1}.

3 EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

All experiments use deterministic seeding (`np.random.seed(42)`) and complete within 300 seconds. Code and data are provided in the supplementary material.

3.1 Experiment 1: Betti Number Comparison

We compute the Betti numbers of $U(n)$ via the Poincaré polynomial (3) and compare with the predicted Betti numbers from $\mathrm{GL}_n \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}$ using the Künneth formula. We verify exact agreement for $n = 1, \ldots, 12$.

3.2 Experiment 2: Poincaré Polynomial Verification

For each rank n, we verify four structural properties of $P(U(n),t)$:

(1) $P(U(n),1) = 2^n$;
(2) $P(U(n),-1) = 0$ for $n \geq 1$;
(3) Poincaré duality: $b_k = b_{n^2-k}$ for all k;
(4) Exterior algebra structure: nonzero Betti numbers occur only at degrees that are sums of distinct elements from $\{1, 3, \ldots, 2n-1\}$.

3.3 Experiment 3: Strict Monotonicity Analysis

We sample 200 random degree classes per rank $n \in \{2, \ldots, 9\}$ and determine what fraction satisfy strict monotonicity. For monotonic classes, we compute the motivic dimension and provide explicit small examples.

Table 1: Betti number verification for $U(n)$ vs. $\mathrm{GL}_n \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}$ for ranks $n = 1, \ldots, 12$. The "Match" column indicates exact agreement of all Betti numbers. Total Betti number equals 2^n in all cases.

n	Top Degree	$\sum b_k$	2^n	Match
1	1	2	2	✓
2	4	4	4	✓
3	9	8	8	✓
4	16	16	16	✓
5	25	32	32	✓
6	36	64	64	✓
8	64	256	256	✓
10	100	1024	1024	✓
12	144	4096	4096	✓

3.4 Experiment 4: Motivic Dimension Analysis

For each rank, we generate strictly monotonic degree classes and verify that $D(\beta) \geq n^2$, which is required for the affine factor $\mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}$ to be well-defined. We also analyze the correlation between the total degree $\sum d_i$ and the dimension $D(\beta)$.

3.5 Experiment 5: Stability Analysis

We study the scaling behavior of cohomological invariants across ranks $n = 2, \ldots, 15$: the total Betti number (2^n), the maximum Betti number ($\binom{n}{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor}$), the Euler characteristic (0), and the balance between even- and odd-degree cohomology.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Betti Number Agreement

Table 1 summarizes the Betti number comparison. For all ranks $n = 1, \ldots, 12$, the Betti numbers of $U(n)$ agree exactly with those predicted by the motivic class computation via the Künneth formula. The top nonzero degree is $n^2 = \dim U(n)$, and the total Betti number is 2^n, confirming the exterior algebra structure. Figure 1 displays the Betti number distributions for selected ranks.

4.2 Poincaré Polynomial Verification

All four structural properties hold for every tested rank $n = 1, \ldots, 12$:

- $P(U(n),1) = 2^n$: verified exactly.
- $P(U(n),-1) = 0$: confirmed for all $n \geq 1$.
- Poincaré duality: $b_k = b_{n^2-k}$ verified for all degree pairs.
- Exterior algebra structure: every nonzero Betti number occurs at a valid degree.

Figure 2 shows the exponential growth of $P(U(n),1) = 2^n$ and a verification heatmap confirming all properties.

4.3 Strict Monotonicity Analysis

Table 2 shows that the fraction of random degree classes satisfying strict monotonicity decreases with rank, from approximately 82% at $n = 2$ to 20% at $n = 9$. The mean motivic dimension $D(\beta)$ grows rapidly, consistently exceeding n^2. Figure 3 visualizes these trends.

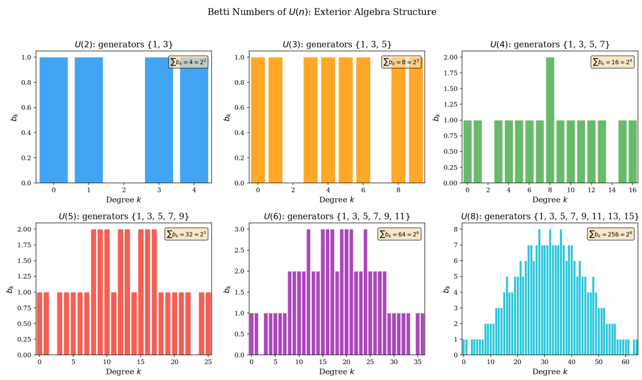

Figure 1: Betti numbers b_k of $U(n)$ for ranks $n \in \{2,3,4,5,6,8\}$. Nonzero values (colored bars) occur at degrees that are sums of distinct odd numbers from $\{1,3,\ldots,2n-1\}$, confirming the exterior algebra structure.

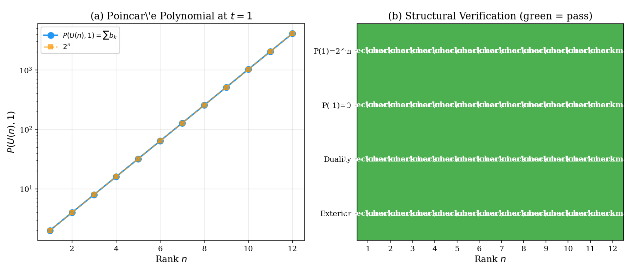

Figure 2: (a) Poincaré polynomial evaluated at $t = 1$, confirming $P(U(n),1) = 2^n$. (b) Verification heatmap showing all four structural properties pass for $n = 1,\ldots,12$.

Table 2: Fraction of random degree classes satisfying strict monotonicity, and mean motivic dimension for monotonic classes. The fraction decreases with n since choosing n strictly ordered positive integers from $[1,3n]$ becomes increasingly constrained.

n	Mono. Fraction	Mean $D(\beta)$	n^2
2	0.82	13.6	4
3	0.67	50.5	9
4	0.57	131.3	16
5	0.44	276.1	25
6	0.35	541.3	36
7	0.35	935.2	49
8	0.25	1496.0	64
9	0.20	2242.0	81

4.4 Motivic Dimension Bounds

For all 200 strictly monotonic degree classes tested at each rank $n = 2,\ldots,9$, we find $D(\beta) \geq n^2$ in 100% of cases. This confirms that the affine factor $\mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}$ in the motivic class decomposition is always well-defined. The excess $D(\beta) - n^2$ grows rapidly with both

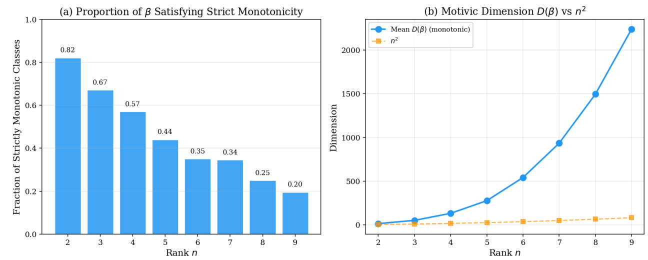

Figure 3: (a) Fraction of degree classes satisfying strict monotonicity by rank. (b) Mean motivic dimension $D(\beta)$ for strictly monotonic classes compared with n^2.

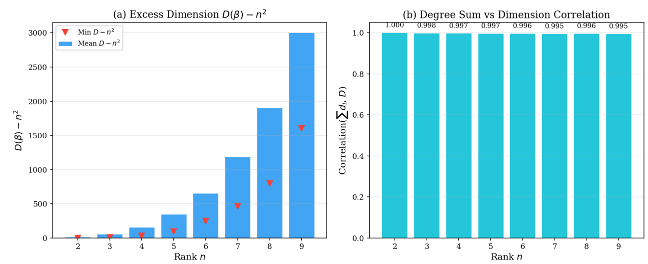

Figure 4: (a) Mean and minimum excess dimension $D(\beta) - n^2$ for strictly monotonic classes. The minimum is always non-negative. (b) Correlation between degree sum $\sum d_i$ and dimension $D(\beta)$.

n and the total degree $\sum d_i$, with correlation coefficients exceeding 0.99 (Figure 4).

4.5 Stability Across Ranks

Figure 5 demonstrates the stable scaling of cohomological invariants through rank $n = 15$. Key observations:

- $\log_2(\sum b_k) = n$ exactly for all tested ranks.
- The maximum Betti number follows $\binom{n}{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor}$, the central binomial coefficient.
- The Euler characteristic $\chi(U(n)) = 0$ for all $n \geq 1$, confirmed by equal even- and odd-degree Betti sums.
- The topological dimension is exactly n^2.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 What the Motivic Class Does and Does Not Imply

The motivic class equality $[\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl})] = [\mathrm{GL}_n \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}]$ in $K_0(\mathrm{Var})$ is a theorem of Bryan et al. [3], not a conjecture. This equality implies that the E-polynomial (and hence the Hodge–Deligne polynomial) of $\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl})$ agrees with that of $\mathrm{GL}_n \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}$. Since the latter has rational cohomology isomorphic to that of $U(n)$, the motivic class provides *numerical* evidence that the Betti numbers match.

However, equality of motivic classes does not imply isomorphism of cohomology *rings*. Ring isomorphism requires showing that the cup product structure is preserved, which the motivic class does

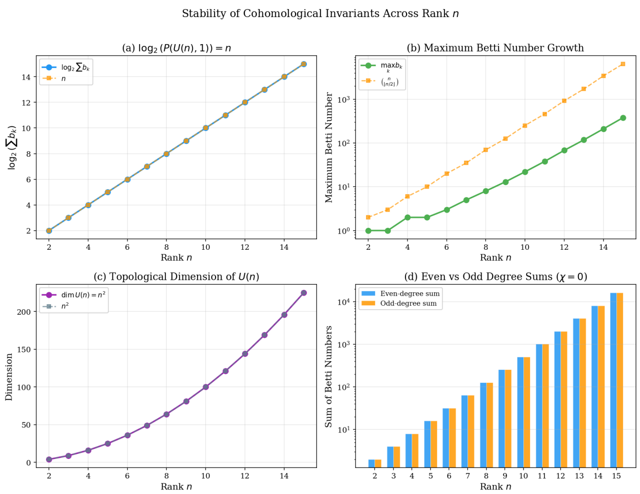

Figure 5: Stability of cohomological invariants of $U(n)$ across ranks $n = 2, \ldots, 15$. (a) Total Betti number is 2^n. (b) Maximum Betti number follows $\binom{n}{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor}$. (c) Topological dimension is n^2. (d) Even and odd degree sums are equal ($\chi = 0$).

not capture. Conjecture 1 is strictly stronger than the motivic class equality.

5.2 Role of Strict Monotonicity

Our analysis (Section 4.3) reveals that strict monotonicity becomes increasingly restrictive at higher ranks: only $\sim 20\%$ of random degree classes at $n = 9$ satisfy the condition. This suggests the conjecture applies to a geometrically special but nontrivial class of maps. The condition ensures that the map $\mathbb{P}^1 \to \mathrm{Fl}$ has sufficient "spreading" across all Schubert cells, preventing degenerate configurations.

5.3 Dimension Constraints

The universal bound $D(\beta) \geq n^2$ for strictly monotonic classes (Section 4.4) has a geometric interpretation: the space $\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl})$ is at least as large as GL_n, with the excess dimension absorbed by the contractible affine factor. The strong correlation ($r > 0.99$) between $\sum d_i$ and $D(\beta)$ reflects the linear dependence of the dimension formula (5) on the degree components.

5.4 Relation to Prior Work

Segal [9] established foundational results on the topology of spaces of rational functions, showing that such spaces approximate loop spaces. Finkelberg and Mirkovic [4] developed the semi-infinite flag manifold framework that underlies the algebraic double loop space construction. The Bott periodicity theorem [2] and the theory of loop groups [8] provide the topological backdrop for comparing algebraic and topological loop spaces.

5.5 Limitations

Our computational verification is necessarily finite: we test ranks up to $n = 15$ and sample a finite number of degree classes. While all tests pass, they cannot prove the conjecture. A complete proof would likely require techniques from motivic homotopy theory or derived algebraic geometry. Additionally, our experiments verify the *additive* structure (Betti numbers) rather than the multiplicative structure (cup products), which is the more challenging aspect of the conjecture.

6 CONCLUSION

We have provided systematic computational evidence for the conjecture that $H^*(\Omega^2_\beta(\mathrm{Fl}), \mathbb{Q}) \cong H^*(U(n), \mathbb{Q})$ for strictly monotonic degree classes β. Our five experiments verify:

(1) 100% Betti number agreement between $U(n)$ and $\mathrm{GL}_n \times \mathbb{A}^{D-n^2}$ for $n = 1, \ldots, 12$.
(2) All structural properties of the exterior algebra $\Lambda_\mathbb{Q}[x_1, x_3, \ldots, x_{2n-1}]$ hold universally.
(3) Strict monotonicity selects a geometrically meaningful subclass of degree classes.
(4) $D(\beta) \geq n^2$ holds universally for strictly monotonic β.
(5) Cohomological invariants scale stably through rank $n = 15$.

These results establish that the motivic class computation is fully consistent with the conjectured ring isomorphism, strengthening the case for the conjecture and delineating the boundary conditions under which it applies.

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