A Mathematician's Insight into the Saniga-Planat Theorem

Finite Projective Geometries in Quantum Theory (A Mini-Workshop)

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TECHNISCHE
UNIVERSITÄTHANS HAVLICEKTUDEFORSCHUNGSGRUPPEVIENNA
UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGYDIFFERENTIALGEOMETRIE UND
GEOMETRISCHE STRUKTURENDIFFERENTIALGEOMETRIE UNDINSTITUT FÜR DISKRETE MATHEMATIK UND GEOMETRIE
TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT WIEN
havlicek@geometrie.tuwien.ac.at

Part 1

Bridging the Gap

The Saniga-Planat Theorem links

- Kronecker products of Pauli matrices,
- symplectic polar spaces over $\operatorname{GF}(2)$,
- finite-dimensional vector spaces over GF(2)which are endowed with a non-degenerate alternating bilinear form.

We consider the Pauli matrices

$$\sigma_1 := \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \ \sigma_2 := \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i \\ i & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \ \sigma_3 := \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$
(1)

with entries in \mathbb{C} . Each σ_p is Hermitian, i. e. $\sigma_p = \sigma_p^{\mathrm{H}}$ (Hermitian transpose, conjugate transpose) and unitary, i. e. $\sigma_p^{-1} = \sigma_p^{\mathrm{H}}$. Hence $\sigma_p^{-1} = \sigma_p$.

Let (G, \cdot) be the subgroup of the unitary group (U_2, \cdot) generated by $\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \sigma_3$. This group *G* consists of all finite products of Pauli matrices and their inverses. (An empty product is, by definition, the identity matrix, which will be denoted by σ_0 .)

Problem 1. Given the group (G, \cdot) we aim at constructing "in a natural way":

- The Galois field with two elements, i. e. $(GF(2), +, \cdot)$,
- A two-dimensional vector space over the field $(GF(2), +, \cdot).$

Multiplication in *G* is governed by the following system of relations:

$$\sigma_p \sigma_p = \sigma_0 \quad \text{for all } p \in \{1, 2, 3\},$$

 $\sigma_p \sigma_q = i \sigma_r$ for all even permutations

 $\sigma_p \sigma_q = -i\sigma_r$ for all odd permutations

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ p & q & r \end{pmatrix},$$
$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ p & q & r \end{pmatrix}.$$

(2)

G is finite

The group G has precisely $16 = 2^4$ elements:

$$G = \left\{ i^{j} \sigma_{k} \mid j, k \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\} \right\}$$
(3)

It is a non-commutative group, because

$$\sigma_p \sigma_q = -\sigma_q \sigma_p$$
 for all $p, q \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ with $p \neq q$.

So *G* cannot be isomorphic to the additive group of any vector space.

The additive group of any vector space is commutative.

The centre of G equals

$$Z(G) = \left\{ i^{j} \sigma_{0} \mid j \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\} \right\}.$$
(4)

It is isomorphic to the cyclic group $(\mathbb{Z}_4, +)$, whence it cannot be isomorphic to the additive group of a vector space.

Any non-zero vector \vec{v} of a vector space over a field \mathbb{F} generates (with respect to addition) a cyclic group which is either isomorphic to $(\mathbb{Z}, +)$ or isomorphic to $(\mathbb{Z}_p, +)$, where $p = \operatorname{Char} \mathbb{F}$ is a prime number.

The Commutator Subgroup of G

The group theoretic commutator of $\alpha, \beta \in G$ is defined as

$$[\alpha,\beta] := \alpha\beta\alpha^{-1}\beta^{-1}.$$

It is not to be confused with their ring theoretic commutator $\alpha\beta - \beta\alpha$, which is usually also written as $[\alpha, \beta]$, but will not be used throughout this lecture!

Hence

$$[\alpha,\beta]\beta\alpha:=\alpha\beta.$$

The commutator subgroup [G, G] of G is the subgroup generated by all commutators $[\alpha, \beta]$, where α and β range in G. From (2), (3), and (4) one easily obtains

$$[G,G] = \{\sigma_0, -\sigma_0\} \cong \mathbb{Z}_2.$$
(5)

In fact, $([G,G], \cdot)$ is isomorphic to the additive group of GF(2) via $\sigma_0 \mapsto 0, -\sigma_0 \mapsto 1$.

The commutator subgroup $([G,G], \cdot)$ can serve as a model of the additive group of the Galois field GF(2). Note that multiplication in this field is trivial.

The Significance of [G, G]

Let Γ and Γ' be arbitrary groups and $f : \Gamma \to \Gamma'$ a homomorphism. The image $f(\Gamma)$ is a commutative subgroup of Γ' if, and only if,

 $[\Gamma, \Gamma] \subset \ker f.$

Or, in other words: Given a normal subgroup Σ of Γ the factor group Γ/Σ is commutative if, and only if, $[\Gamma, \Gamma] \subset \Sigma$.

Returning to our settings we obtain

 $G/[G,G] \cong \mathbb{Z}_2 \times \mathbb{Z}_2 \times \mathbb{Z}_2.$

Hence G/[G,G] is isomorphic to the additive group of a three-dimensional vector space over GF(2).

What is the geometric meaning (if any) of the group G/[G,G]?

Since $Z(G) = \{\sigma_0, -\sigma_0, i\sigma_0, -i\sigma_0\}$ contains $[G, G] = \{\sigma_0, -\sigma_0\}$, the factor group

$$G/Z(G) = \{ Z(G)\sigma_0, Z(G)\sigma_1, Z(G)\sigma_2, Z(G)\sigma_3 \}$$
(6)

is a commutative group of order 16: 4 = 4. Each of its elements coincides with its inverse, so we have

 $G/Z(G) \cong \mathbb{Z}_2 \times \mathbb{Z}_2.$

For example, an isomorphism is given by

$$Z(G)\sigma_0 \mapsto (0,0), \ Z(G)\sigma_1 \mapsto (1,0), \ Z(G)\sigma_2 \mapsto (0,1), \ Z(G)\sigma_3 \mapsto (1,1).$$

The factor group $(G/Z(G), \cdot)$ is isomorphic to the additive group of a two-dimensional vector space over GF(2).

Problem 2. Endow the vector space G/Z(G) with a non-degenerate alternating bilinear form which reflects in some way if two elements of *G* commute or not.

Let Γ be an arbitrary group. The following properties hold for all $\alpha, \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \beta \in \Gamma$:

$$[\alpha, \alpha] = \iota \text{ (the identity in } \Gamma\text{)}.$$

$$[\beta, \alpha] = \beta \alpha \beta^{-1} \alpha^{-1} = (\alpha \beta \alpha^{-1} \beta^{-1})^{-1} = [\alpha, \beta]^{-1}$$

$$[\alpha_1 \alpha_2, \beta] = (\alpha_1 \alpha_2) \beta (\alpha_1 \alpha_2)^{-1} \beta^{-1}$$

$$= \alpha_1 \underline{\alpha_2 \beta \alpha_2^{-1} \beta^{-1}} \alpha_1^{-1} \underline{\alpha_1 \beta \alpha_1^{-1} \beta^{-1}}$$

$$= \alpha_1 [\alpha_2, \beta] \alpha_1^{-1} \cdot [\alpha_1, \beta].$$

We have $[G,G] = \{\sigma_0, -\sigma_0\}$, whence for G these formulas turn into

$$[\alpha, \alpha] = \sigma_0.$$

$$[\beta, \alpha] = [\alpha, \beta].$$

$$[\alpha_1 \alpha_2, \beta] = [\alpha_1, \beta] \cdot [\alpha_2, \beta].$$
(7)

The Commutator Mapping

Let $\alpha, \beta \in G$. Then

$$[Z(G)\alpha, Z(G)\beta] = [Z(G), Z(G)] \cdot [Z(G), \beta] \cdot [\alpha, Z(G)] \cdot [\alpha, \beta]$$
$$= [\alpha, \beta].$$

Thus, $[\alpha, \beta]$ remains unaltered if α and β are replaced with any other element of $Z(G)\alpha$ and $Z(G)\beta$, respectively.

Altogether we obtain a well defined mapping

$$G/Z(G) \times G/Z(G) \to [G,G] : (Z(G)\alpha, Z(G)\beta) \mapsto [\alpha,\beta]$$

which, by abuse of notation, will also be denoted by $[\cdot, \cdot]$. For all $\alpha, \beta \in G$ we have

$$\alpha\beta = \beta\alpha \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad [\alpha,\beta] = \sigma_0 \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad \left[Z(G)\alpha, Z(G)\beta\right] = \sigma_0.$$

An Alternating Bilinear Form

The ultimate step merely amounts to applying the isomorphisms from the above:

$$G/Z(G) \to \operatorname{GF}(2)^2 : Z(G)\sigma_0 \mapsto (0,0), \ Z(G)\sigma_1 \mapsto (1,0),$$
$$Z(G)\sigma_2 \mapsto (0,1), \ Z(G)\sigma_3 \mapsto (1,1).$$
$$[G,G] \to \operatorname{GF}(2) : \sigma_0 \mapsto 0, \ -\sigma_0 \mapsto 1.$$

By virtue of these isomorphisms, we obtain a mapping

$$[\cdot, \cdot] : \operatorname{GF}(2)^2 \times \operatorname{GF}(2)^2 \to \operatorname{GF}(2).$$

Due to (7) and the trivial multiplication in GF(2), this is an alternating bilinear form.

The mapping $[\cdot, \cdot] : \operatorname{GF}(2)^2 \times \operatorname{GF}(2)^2 \to \operatorname{GF}(2)$ is an alternating bilinear form. Its matrix with respect to the standard basis of $\operatorname{GF}(2)^2$ equals

 $\left(\begin{array}{cc} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{array}\right),$

i. e., we have a non-degenerate form.

Summary

We have an exact sequence of groups

and the following commutative diagram:

(Koen Thas, 2007.)

Remark

The group G/[G,G] (without its identity element) may be illustrated as the smallest projective plane. It is endowed with a degenerate symplectic polarity which assigns to each point $p \neq \pm i\sigma_0$ the unique line through p and $\pm i\sigma_0$. The lines through $\pm i\sigma_0$ represent commuting elements of $G \setminus \{\pm \sigma_0\}$.



Part 2

Kronecker Products

We now extend our results from the first part of this lecture to Kronecker products of Pauli matrices.

This will be a straightforward task.

Let $N \ge 1$ be a fixed integer. We consider *N*-fold Kronecker products of the identity matrix σ_0 and the Pauli matrices

$$\sigma_1 := \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \ \sigma_2 := \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i \\ i & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \ \sigma_3 := \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

There are 4^N such products, all of them unitary, and they form a basis of the space of complex $2^N \times 2^N$ matrices.

Let (G_N, \cdot) be the subgroup of the unitary group (U_{2^N}, \cdot) generated by all products

$$\sigma_{p_1} \otimes \sigma_{p_2} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_N}$$
 with $p_1, p_2, \ldots p_N \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$.

- **Problem 3.** Given the group (G_N, \cdot) we aim at constructing "in a natural way":
- The Galois field with two elements, i. e. $(GF(2), +, \cdot)$,
- A 2^N-dimensional vector space over the field $(GF(2), +, \cdot).$

G_N is finite

For all $p_1, p_2, \ldots, p_N, q_1, q_2, \ldots, q_N \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ and all $z \in \mathbb{C}$ the following hold:

$$(\sigma_{p_1} \otimes \sigma_{p_2} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_N}) (\sigma_{q_1} \otimes \sigma_{q_2} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{q_N}) = (\sigma_{p_1} \sigma_{q_1}) \otimes (\sigma_{p_2} \sigma_{q_2}) \otimes \cdots \otimes (\sigma_{p_N} \sigma_{q_N})$$

$$(\sigma_{p_1} \otimes \sigma_{p_2} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_N})^{-1} = \sigma_{p_1}^{-1} \otimes \sigma_{p_2}^{-1} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_N}^{-1}$$

$$\sigma_{p_1} \otimes \cdots \otimes (z \sigma_{p_k}) \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_N} = z(\sigma_{p_1} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_k} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_N})$$

The last equation will only be used for $z \in \{1, -1, i, -i\}$.

The group G_N has precisely 4^{N+1} elements,

$$G_N = \left\{ i^j(\sigma_{p_1} \otimes \sigma_{p_2} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_N}) \mid j, p_1, p_2, \dots p_N \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\} \right\},\tag{8}$$

and it is a non-commutative group, because $G \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0$ is a subgroup of G_N isomorphic to G. So G_N cannot be isomorphic to the additive group of any vector space.

The Centre of G_N

Fix an index $k \in \{1, 2, ..., N\}$. An arbitrary element of G_N , say

$$i^j(\sigma_{p_1}\otimes\cdots\otimes\sigma_{p_k}\otimes\cdots\otimes\sigma_{p_N}),$$

is permutable with all elements of

$$\sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \sigma_0 \otimes \underbrace{G}_k \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0 \subset G_N$$

if, and only if, $\sigma_{p_k} = \sigma_0$. As k varies, we obtain:

The centre of G_N equals the cyclic group

$$Z(G_N) = \left\{ i^j(\sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0) \mid j \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\} \right\} \cong \mathbb{Z}_4,$$
(9)

whence it cannot be isomorphic to the additive group of a vector space.

The Commutator Subgroup of *G_N*

It is easy to calculate commutators in G_N , since we have

$$[i^{j}(\sigma_{p_{1}}\otimes\cdots\otimes\sigma_{p_{N}}),i^{k}(\sigma_{q_{1}}\otimes\cdots\otimes\sigma_{q_{N}})]=[\sigma_{p_{1}},\sigma_{q_{1}}]\otimes\cdots\otimes[\sigma_{p_{N}},\sigma_{q_{N}}].$$
 (10)

From (10) one immediately obtains

$$[G_N, G_N] = \{\sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0, -(\sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0)\} \cong \mathbb{Z}_2.$$
(11)

In fact, $([G_N, G_N], \cdot)$ is isomorphic to the additive group of GF(2) via

$$\sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0 \mapsto 0, \quad -(\sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0) \mapsto 1.$$

The commutator subgroup $([G_N, G_N], \cdot)$ can serve as a model of the additive group of the Galois field GF(2). Note that multiplication in this field is trivial.

Factoring through $[G_N, G_N]$

Now we exhibit the factor group $G_N/[G_N, G_N]$. From

$$i^{j}(\sigma_{p_{1}}\otimes\sigma_{p_{2}}\otimes\cdots\otimes\sigma_{p_{N}})\cdot i^{j}(\sigma_{p_{1}}\otimes\sigma_{p_{2}}\otimes\cdots\otimes\sigma_{p_{N}})=(-1)^{j}(\sigma_{0}\otimes\sigma_{0}\otimes\cdots\otimes\sigma_{0})$$

each element of $G_N/[G_N, G_N]$ coincides with its inverse.

Since $4^{N+1}: 2 = 2^{2N+1}$, we obtain

$$G_N/[G_N,G_N] \cong \underbrace{\mathbb{Z}_2 \times \mathbb{Z}_2 \times \cdots \times \mathbb{Z}_2}_{2N+1}.$$

Hence $G_N/[G_N, G_N]$ is isomorphic to the additive group of a 2N + 1-dimensional vector space over GF(2).

What is the geometric meaning (if any) of the group $G_N/[G_N, G_N]$?

The Centre Revisited

The factor group

$$G_N/Z(G_N) = \left\{ Z(G_N)(\sigma_{p_1} \otimes \sigma_{p_2} \otimes \dots \otimes \sigma_{p_N}) \mid p_1, p_2, \dots p_N \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\} \right\}$$
(12)

is a commutative group of order 4^{N+1} : $4 = 4^N$, since the centre $Z(G_N)$ contains the commutator subgroup $[G_N, G_N]$. Each element of $G_N/Z(G_N)$ coincides with its inverse, so

$$G_N/Z(G_N) \cong \underbrace{\mathbb{Z}_2 \times \mathbb{Z}_2 \times \cdots \times \mathbb{Z}_2}_{2N}.$$

In order to describe an isomorphism explicitly, we use a function

$$\vartheta: \{0, 1, 2, 3\} \to \mathbb{Z}_2^2: 0 \mapsto (0, 0), \ 1 \mapsto (1, 0), \ 2 \mapsto (0, 1), \ 3 \mapsto (1, 1).$$

Then an isomorphism is given by

$$Z(G_N)(\sigma_{p_1} \otimes \sigma_{p_2} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_N}) \mapsto (\vartheta(p_1), \vartheta(p_2), \dots, \vartheta(p_N))$$

The factor group $(G_N/Z(G_N), \cdot)$ is isomorphic to the additive group of a 2^N -dimensional vector space over GF(2). **Problem 4.** Endow the vector space $G_N/Z(G_N)$ with a non-degenerate alternating bilinear form which reflects in some way if two elements of G_N commute or not.

Recall that

$$[G_N,G_N] = \{\sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0, -\sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0\}$$

is isomorphic to \mathbb{Z}_2 . Hence the following properties hold for all $\alpha, \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \beta \in G_N$:

$$\begin{bmatrix} \alpha, \alpha \end{bmatrix} = \sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0.$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \beta, \alpha \end{bmatrix} = [\alpha, \beta].$$

$$[\alpha_1 \alpha_2, \beta] = [\alpha_1, \beta] \cdot [\alpha_2, \beta].$$

$$(13)$$

The Commutator Mapping

Let $\alpha, \beta \in G_N$. Then

$$[Z(G_N)\alpha, Z(G_N)\beta] = [Z(G_N), Z(G_N)] \cdot [Z(G_N), \beta] \cdot [\alpha, Z(G_N)] \cdot [\alpha, \beta]$$

= $[\alpha, \beta].$

Thus, $[\alpha, \beta]$ remains unaltered if α and β are replaced with any other element of $Z(G_N)\alpha$ and $Z(G_N)\beta$, respectively.

Altogether we obtain a well defined mapping

 $G_N/Z(G_N) \times G_N/Z(G_N) \to [G_N, G_N] : (Z(G_N)\alpha, Z(G_N)\beta) \mapsto [\alpha, \beta]$

which, by abuse of notation, will also be denoted by $[\cdot, \cdot]$. For all $\alpha, \beta \in G_N$ we have

 $\alpha\beta = \beta\alpha \iff [\alpha,\beta] = \sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0 \iff [Z(G_N)\alpha, Z(G_N)\beta] = \sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0.$

An Alternating Bilinear Form

The ultimate step merely amounts to applying the isomorphisms from the above:

$$G_N/Z(G_N) \to \operatorname{GF}(2)^{2N} : Z(G_N)(\sigma_{p_1} \otimes \sigma_{p_2} \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_{p_N}) \mapsto (\vartheta(p_1), \vartheta(p_2), \dots, \vartheta(p_N)).$$
$$[G_N, G_N] \to \operatorname{GF}(2) : \sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0 \mapsto 0, \quad -\sigma_0 \otimes \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0 \mapsto 1.$$

By virtue of these isomorphisms, we obtain a mapping

 $[\cdot, \cdot] : \operatorname{GF}(2)^{2N} \times \operatorname{GF}(2)^{2N} \to \operatorname{GF}(2).$

Due to (13) and the trivial multiplication in GF(2), this is an alternating bilinear form.

The mapping $[\cdot, \cdot] : \operatorname{GF}(2)^{2N} \times \operatorname{GF}(2)^{2N} \to \operatorname{GF}(2)$ is an alternating bilinear form. Its matrix with respect to the standard basis of $\operatorname{GF}(2)^2$ equals $\operatorname{diag}\left(\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \dots, \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}\right),$

i. e., we have a non-degenerate form.

Summary

We have an exact sequence of groups

$$\begin{cases} 1 \} \rightarrow Z(G_N) \rightarrow G_N \rightarrow \underbrace{G_N/Z(G_N)}_{\cong \operatorname{GF}(2)^{2N}} \rightarrow \{1\} \\ 1 \mapsto \sigma_0 \otimes \cdots \otimes \sigma_0 \\ \alpha \mapsto \alpha \\ \beta \mapsto Z(G_N)\beta \\ Z(G_N)\gamma \mapsto 1 \end{cases}$$

and the following commutative diagram:

(Koen Thas, 2007.)

An Illustration

In our illustration of the case N = 2 the element $Z(G_2)\sigma_j \otimes \sigma_k$ is denoted by jk.



(Metod Saniga, 2007.)