Construction of combinatorial structures using rational idempotents

Ken W. Smith

Sam Houston State University

(In memory of Bob Liebler)

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Motivation

Many combinatorial configurations have a large group of symmetries.

A common theme in algebraic combinatorics: Use the structure of the group and its action on the points to obtain information about the configuration.

If an automorphism group G is sharply transitive on a set of points then we may view the structure from within the group ring $\mathbb{Z}[G]$.

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Examples of combinatorial structures in group rings

If the configuration has a sharply transitive automorphism group:

- symmetric (v, k, λ) design with sharply transitive $G \iff (v, k, \lambda)$ difference set $D \in \mathbb{Z}[G]$.
- A strongly regular (v, k, λ, μ) graph with sharply transitive $G \iff (v, k, \lambda, \mu)$ partial difference set $S \in \mathbb{Z}[G]$.
- A group divisible design (v, m, k, n) with sharply transitive $G \iff (v, m, k, n)$ relative difference set $R \in \mathbb{Z}[G]$.
- A distance regular graph with sharply transitive G \iff translation scheme $S \in \mathbb{Z}[G]$. Other examples include circulant weighing matrices, group developed weighing matrices, perfect ternary arrays....

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A little ring theory

Combinatorial objects involve the integers. If the object has a sharply transitive group G then we view it as living in $\mathbb{Z}[G]$. But analysis of the configuration often involves representations of the underlying group G and so we consider $\mathbb{C}[G]$.

So we consider a tower of group rings

 $\mathbb{Z}[G] \subset \mathbb{Q}[G] \subset K[G] \subset \mathbb{C}[G]$

(where $K = \mathbb{Q}(\zeta)$ is the splitting field of G.)

The interplay between $\mathbb{Z}[G]$ and $\mathbb{Q}(\zeta)[G]$ determines existence and nonexistence of potential combinatorial structures. We explore that relationship here.

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An example

Consider the (16, 6, 2) difference $D = \{x, x^3, y, y^3, xy, x^3y^3\}$ in $G = \langle x, y : x^4 = y^4 = [x, y] = 1 \rangle$.

This is a group-developed Hadamard 16×16 matrix with G acting on the rows and columns.

Write $D = x + x^3 + y + y^3 + xy + x^3y^3$. ("Abuse" of notation.) Abelian G has 16 characters (= linear representations)

- 1. The trivial character maps D to 6; it simply counts.
- 2. Six characters map D to the real number 2.
- 3. The remaining nine characters map D to -2.

 $D = 6E_0 + 2E_1 - 2E_2$ where E_0, E_1 and E_2 are idempotents corresponding to the eigenvalues (character values.)

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Array notation

If $G = \langle x, y \rangle$ then an element of $S \in \mathbb{Z}[G]$ has form

$$S = \sum_{i,j} s_{i,j} x^i y^j$$

We write this as an array

$$\begin{pmatrix} s_{0,0} & s_{0,1} & s_{0,2} & s_{0,3} \\ s_{1,0} & s_{1,1} & s_{1,2} & s_{1,3} \\ s_{2,0} & s_{2,1} & s_{2,2} & s_{2,3} \\ s_{3,0} & s_{3,1} & s_{3,2} & s_{3,3} \end{pmatrix}$$

Example: $S = y + 2y^2 + 3y^3 + 4x + 5xy + 6xy^2 + 7xy^3$ in $\mathbb{Z}[C_2 \times C_4]$ is written

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$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \end{pmatrix}$$

Homomorphisms

$$D = x + x^{3} + y + y^{3} + xy + x^{3}y^{3} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & | & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & | & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & | & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & | & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

has homomorphic images

$$D/ < x^{2} >= (2x + y + y^{3} + xy + xy^{3}) < x^{2} >= \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & | & 0 & 1 \\ 2 & 1 & | & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} < x^{2} >$$

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Homomorphisms and character values

These images are determined by certain character values:

$$D/ < x, y > = (6)$$
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 $D/\langle x, y^2 \rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 4 \end{pmatrix}$ adds an eigenvalue -2.

$$D/=\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 2\\ 2 & 2 \end{pmatrix}$$

adds two more copies of -2 as eigenvalue

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Rational Idempotents

If G is an abelian group, the group ring $\mathbb{C}[G]$ has two natural bases, the "standard" basis and the "Fourier" basis:

The standard basis is

 $B_1=\{g:g\in G\}.$

If $\chi \in G^*$ is a character of G then define

$$e_{\chi} := rac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} \overline{\chi(g)} \; g.$$

The "Fourier basis" is

$$B_2 = \{e_{\chi} : \chi \in G^*\}$$

We extend a character $\chi\in G^*$ to $\mathbb{C}[G]$ as follows:

$$\sum_{g \in G} s_g[g] \mapsto \sum_{g \in G} s_g[\chi(g)].$$

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The significance of the Fourier basis

Recall
$$e_{\chi} := rac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} \overline{\chi(g)} g.$$

Theorem. Let $\chi, \psi \in G^*$, $\chi \neq \psi$. Then (via orthogonality relations on characters)

1.
$$e_{\chi}e_{\psi} = 0.$$

Thus the set
$$B_2=\{e_\chi:\chi\in G^*\}$$
 is a set of "orthogonal" princip central idempotents.

Theorem. If $S\in \mathbb{C}[G]$ then $S=\sum_{\chi\in G^{+}}\chi(S)|e_{\chi}.$

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Furthermore, let $lpha_\chi$ be any element of $\mathbb{C}[G]$ such that $\chi(lpha_\chi)=\chi(S).$ Then

$$S = \sum_{\chi \in G^*} \chi(\alpha_{\chi}) e_{\chi}.$$

An element $lpha_\chi$ is an alias for S (with respect to χ_i)

An alias for S

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$$S = \sum_{\chi \in G^*} \chi(S) \ e_{\chi}.$$

Furthermore, let α_{χ} be any element of $\mathbb{C}[G]$ such that $\chi(\alpha_{\chi}) = \chi(S)$. Then

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Rational idempotents

Define an equivalence relation \sim on G^* by

$$\chi \sim \chi' \iff \operatorname{Ker}(\chi) = \operatorname{Ker}(\chi').$$

and define

$$[e_{\chi}] := \sum_{\chi' \sim \chi} e_{\chi'}.$$

 $[e_{\chi}]$ is an idempotent fixed by all Galois automorphisms of the splitting field K of G. Therefore $[e_{\chi}]$ is in $\mathbb{Q}[G]$; it is a rational idempotent. Furthermore: all the "primitive" rational idempotents of $\mathbb{Q}[G]$ have this form.

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Rational Idempotents, Main Theorem

Since

$$\mathbb{Z}[G] \subseteq \mathbb{Q}[G] \subseteq \mathcal{K}[G] \subseteq \mathbb{C}[G],$$

we seek to write all elements of $\mathbb{Z}[G]$ in terms of the rational idempotents.

Theorem. (EMPHASIZE!)

If $S \in \mathbb{Z}[G]$ then for <u>each</u> equivalence class of characters χ/\sim choose <u>any</u> alias $\alpha_{\chi} \in \mathbb{Z}[G]$ for *S*.

Then

$$S = \sum_{\chi \in G^* / \sim} lpha_{\chi} [e_{\chi}]$$

The aliases α_{χ} will vary with the equivalence classes of the characters but are constant across equivalence classes. (Notice the flexibility in the choice of aliases.)

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Rational Idempotents, cont.

If $G = \langle x : x^{p^b} = 1 \rangle$ is a cyclic *p*-group then the primitive rational idempotents of *G* have the form

$$[e_{\chi}] = rac{p < x^{p^{j+1}} > - < x^{p^{j}} >}{p^{b-j}}.$$

If G is cyclic, the primitive rational idempotents of G are products of primitive idempotents from the Sylow subgroups.

So we know all the primitive rational idempotents of cyclic groups.

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(Repeating...) Any element $X \in \mathbb{Z}[G]$ can be written (uniquely) in the form

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An effective means to constructing a combinatorial object in a cyclic group is to build it up from the rational idempotents, using the possible character values of the object.

This is particularly effective if we also take advantage of various homomorphic images.

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Cyclic groups, example

Suppose $G = C_{24} \cong C_3 \times C_8 = \langle y, z : y^3 = z^8 = [y, z] = 1 \rangle$. There are 4 rational idempotents for $C_8 = \langle z : z^8 = 1 \rangle$. They are



There are 2 rational idempotents for $C_3 = < y: y^3 = 1 >$. They are

$$\frac{\langle y \rangle}{3}$$
 and $\frac{3 \langle y^3 \rangle - \langle y \rangle}{3} = \frac{2 - y - y^2}{3}$.

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$$\frac{\langle z \rangle}{8}, \ \frac{2 \langle z^2 \rangle - \langle z \rangle}{8} = \frac{(1-z) \langle z^2 \rangle}{8},$$
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In array notation the idempotents of C_8 and C_3 are

$$\frac{1}{8} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$\frac{1}{8} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$\frac{1}{8} \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 & -2 & 0 & 2 & 0 & -2 & 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$\frac{1}{8} \begin{pmatrix} 4 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$\frac{1}{8} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}, \frac{1}{8} \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix},$$

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Cyclic groups, example

The eight rational idempotents of $C_3 \times C_8$ are just the products of these. (In our array notation, that is just the pointwise (Schur) product of these arrays.)

For example, the idempotent corresponding to any character of order 21 is

$$\frac{1}{3} \begin{pmatrix} 4 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \circ \frac{1}{3} \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{24} \begin{pmatrix} 8 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -8 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -4 & 0 & 0 & 4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -4 & 0 & 0 & 4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

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Some notation

lf

$$G = C_s \times C_t = \langle x : x^s = 1 \rangle \times \langle y : y^t = 1 \rangle,$$

write $\chi_{i,j}$ for the character which maps x to ζ_s^i and y to ζ_t^j .

If
$$G = \{x^i y^j\}$$
 then $G^* = \{\chi_{i,j}\}$

Extend this notation to $e_{i,j}$ and $[e_{i,j}]$.

The unique CW(24,9)

 $G := C_3 \times C_8 = \langle y, z : y^3 = z^8 = [y, z] = 1 >$ We seek $S \in \mathbb{Z}[G]$ such that $SS^{(-1)} = 9$ and $\forall g \in G, s_g \in \{-1, 0, 1\}$.

$$S = \alpha_{0,0} e_{0,0} + \alpha_{0,4} e_{0,4} + \alpha_{0,2} [e_{0,2}] + \alpha_{0,1} [e_{0,1}] + \alpha_{1,0} [e_{1,0}] + \alpha_{1,4} [e_{1,4}] + \alpha_{1,2} [e_{1,2}] + \alpha_{1,1} [e_{1,1}].$$

The C_4 image is $\alpha_{0,0}e_{0,0} + \alpha_{0,4}e_{0,4} + \alpha_{0,2}[e_{0,2}]$

$$= \frac{\alpha_{0,0}}{4} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$
$$+ \frac{\alpha_{0,4}}{4} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$
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where the $\alpha_{i,j}$ are aliases for $\chi(S)\overline{\chi S} = 9$ in the appropriate number theoretic ring.

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The C_4 image of S is

$$S/ < y, z^{4} >= \begin{pmatrix} \frac{3}{4} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$
$$+ \begin{pmatrix} \frac{3}{4} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$
$$+ \begin{pmatrix} \frac{3x^{i}}{4} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 & -2 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

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$$\begin{aligned} S/ < y, z^4 >&= \left(\frac{3}{4}\right) \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \\ &+ \left(\frac{3}{4}\right) \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \\ &+ \left(\frac{3x^i}{4}\right) \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 & -2 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \\ &= \frac{1}{4} \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 6 & 6 & -6 \end{pmatrix} \text{ or } \frac{1}{4} \begin{pmatrix} 12 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \end{aligned}$$

The C_3 and C_6 images of CW(24,9)

The
$$C_3$$
 image is $3e_{0,0} \pm 3[e_{1,0}] = \begin{pmatrix} 1\\1\\1 \end{pmatrix} \pm \begin{pmatrix} 2\\-1\\-1 \end{pmatrix}$
giving
$$\begin{pmatrix} 3\\0\\0 \end{pmatrix} \text{ or } \begin{pmatrix} -1\\2\\2 \end{pmatrix}$$

When we move on to C_6 , we get four solutions

 $3\mathbf{e}_{0,0} \pm 3[\mathbf{e}_{1,0}] + 3\mathbf{e}_{0,4} \pm 3[\mathbf{e}_{1,4}] =$ $\begin{pmatrix} 3 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 1 & -1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -2 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \text{ or } \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 0 \\ 2 & 0 \\ 2 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$

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The C_{12} images of CW(24,9)

We take previous C_{12} solution, multiply it by $\frac{1+z^2}{2}$ and add to that $3y^{i_1}[e_{0,2}] \pm 3y^{i_2}[e_{1,2}]$ $= \frac{1}{2}y^{i_1} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & -1 & 0\\ 1 & 0 & -1 & 0\\ 1 & 0 & -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$ $\pm \frac{1}{2}y^{i_2} \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 & -2 & 0\\ -1 & 0 & 1 & 0\\ -1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$

The C_{12} images of CW(24,9), II

This allows only four $C_{12} = C_3 \times C_4$ solutions. (The first is then prohibited by the coset bound.)

The final idempotents

To get the final object in C_{24} , we take the C_{12} image (one of three above), multiply it by $\frac{1+z^4}{2}$ and add alias-idempotent combinations

 $\alpha_{0,1}[e_{0,1}] + \alpha_{0,1}[e_{1,1}].$

The character of order 8 allows us to work in $\mathbb{Z}[\zeta_8]$ ($\zeta_8 := e^{\pi i/4}$) where we may write $9 = (1 + 2\sqrt{2}i)(-1 - 2\sqrt{2}i) = (1 + 2\zeta_8 + 2\zeta_8^3)(1 - 2\zeta_8 - 2\zeta_8^3)$. Thus $\alpha_{0,1}$ might be ± 3 or might be something more interesting like $\pm (1 + 2z + 2z^3)!$

The order-24 alias can even more interesting since there we allow a Gauss sum. In this case,

$\chi_{1,1}(\alpha_{1,1}) = (\omega - \omega^2)(1 + \sqrt{2}i) = (\omega - \omega^2)(1 + \zeta_6 + \zeta_6^3)$

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The choices

$$\begin{aligned} A_1 &= \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & -2 & 0 & 1 & 0 & -2 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \\ A_2 &= \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 2 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 2 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \\ A_3 &= \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 2 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 2 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 2 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 2 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

(2 0 $0 \ 0 \ -2$ 0 0 0) 0 0 0 0 0 0/ -2-4 0-4 2 2 2 2

1

-2

1 -2 0 0 -2 $-\overline{2}$ -20

0 0 0

-1 $^{-1}$ 0 $^{-1}$

1 1 0 1

0 0 0 0

-11 0 1 0

1 -1-1

0 0

0 4 4

Ken W. Smith

Construction of combinatorial structures using rational idempotents

The choices

So
$$A_3 + B_2 + C_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & -1 & -1 & 0 & -1 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

Similarly $A_3 + B_3 + C_3 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -1 & 0 & -1 & -1 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$
But these are equivalent under the automorphism $a \mapsto a^{-1}$

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But these are equivalent under the automorphism $g \mapsto g^{-1}$.

The unique CW(24,9)

$$S = -1 + (y + y^2)(1 + z^4) + (z + z^3)(1 - z^4)$$

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

is a CW(24,9) and it is unique up to a common notion of equivalence.

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The unique CW(24,9)

Write
$$G := C_3 \times C_8 = \langle y, z : y^3 = z^8 = [y, z] = 1 >$$

1. $A = \langle y \rangle - (3 - \langle y \rangle) = 2 \langle y \rangle - 3 = \begin{pmatrix} -1 \\ 2 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}$ has character

values of length 3 for all characters of G.

2. $B = -1 + (z + z^3) = (-1 \ 1 \ 0 \ 1 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0)$ has character values of length 3 for *most* characters of *G* Therefore,

3.
$$\left(\frac{1+z^4}{2}\right)A + \left(\frac{1-z^4}{2}\right)B = -1 + (y+y^2)(1+z^4) + (z+z^3)(1-z^4)$$

$$= egin{pmatrix} -1 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & -1 & -1 & 0 \ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

gives a CW(24,9).

The problem

A CW(24,9) is used by Vincent to construct a CW(96,36).

Is there a CW(48,36)?

This question has been open since at least 1989.

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A CW(48,36)

Suppose D is a CW(48, 36) in $G = \langle y, z : y^3 = z^{16} = [y, z] = 1 \rangle$. Write

$$D = A(\frac{1+z^8}{2}) + B(\frac{1-z^8}{2})$$

where A is a CW(24,9) in $G/\langle z^8 \rangle \cong C_{24}$.

(We can show that the entries in *B* must be even. Since *B* is even, so is *A*. Therefore $\frac{1}{2}A$ has the coefficients and character values to be a CW(24, 9) in $G/\langle z^8 \rangle$.)

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A CW(48,36)

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{A}(\frac{1+z^8}{2}) &= \left[-1+(y+y^2)(1+z^4)+(z+z^3)(1-z^4)\right](1+z^8).\\ &= \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & -1 & -1 & 0 & | & \cdots \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \cdots \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \cdots \end{pmatrix}. \end{aligned}$$

satisfies the character requirements for all characters which are principle on $< z^8 >$

A CW(48,36)

$$(1+y+y^2)(1-z^8) = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$

satisfies the character requirements for characters principle on < y > but not principle on $< z^8 >$.

$$(y-y^{2})(1+z^{2}+z^{6})(1-z^{8}) = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & | & \dots \\ -1 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & | & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$

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Shifting does not change the modulus of images under characters, so we may shift these three elements to form a set satisfying all the character requirements.

Three pieces to the jigsaw puzzle



Ken W. Smith Construction of combinatorial structures using rational idempotents

Three pieces to the jigsaw puzzle



Construction of combinatorial structures using rational idempotents Ken W. Smith

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$$\begin{pmatrix} - & + & 0 & + & 0 & - & - & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & 0 & 0 & + & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & 0 & 0 & + & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$
$$+g_1 \begin{pmatrix} + & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$
$$+g_2 \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & + & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ - & 0 & - & 0 & 0 & 0 & - & 0 & | & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$

Ken W. Smith Construction of combinatorial structures using rational idempotents

Three pieces to the jigsaw puzzle

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$$\begin{pmatrix} - & + & 0 & + & 0 & - & - & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & 0 & 0 & + & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & 0 & 0 & + & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$
$$+g_1 \begin{pmatrix} + & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & + & 0 & 0 & 0 & + & 0 & | & \dots \\ + & 0 & + & 0 & 0 & 0 & - & 0 & | & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$
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Ken W. Smith Construction of combinatorial structures using rational idempotents

One last example

Davis: Is there a (64, 18, 2, 6) PDS in $C_8 \times C_8$?

Exercise. The image of D in $G/ < x^2, y^2 >$ is

$$18[e_{0,0}] + 2([e_{0,4}] + [e_{4,0}] + [e_{4,4}]) = \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 4 \\ 4 & 4 \end{pmatrix} = (6 + 4x + 4y + 4xy) < x^2, y^2 > 0$$

This leaves

$$\begin{pmatrix} 2 & 2 & 4 & 2 \\ 0 & 2 & 4 & 2 \end{pmatrix}, \ \{\chi_{0,2}, \chi_{0,6}\} \subset S^*$$

(I can use a multiplier theorem and a natural duality to *eliminate* all choices in my search at this level.)

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Comments

This rational idempotent construction is essentially an algorithm for creating combinatorial objects with prescribed eigenvalues and a sharply transitive automorphism group.

- 1. When does this work best? (There are three main ingredients.)
 - 1.1 When the exponent of the group is relatively high, the rational idempotents collect *lots* of primitive idempotents.
 - 1.2 When the character values (eigenvalues) are tightly constrained, we have a limited number of choices for the aliases.
 - **1.3** We would like a nice sieve of homomorphic images of our group.
- 2. What if the group is nonabelian? There is an analogous theory for nonabelian groups, but the "idempotent decomposition" is not nearly as clean. And then there may be some "noncommutative number theory"! And the sieve of images may be more complicated too!
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