Classification of Quadratic Forms over $\mathbb{Q}$

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Notations

- K: an arbitrary field and $\operatorname{char} K \neq 2$.
- X, Y, Z: variables.
- $\mathbb{P}$: the set of prime numbers.
  - $p \in \mathbb{P}$.
  - $\mathbb{Q}_p$: the completion of $\mathbb{Q}$ at p.
- $\mathbb{V}=\mathbb{P} \cup \{\infty\}$.
  - $v \in \mathbb{V}$.
  - $\mathbb{Q}_\infty = \mathbb{R}$
- Denote by the same letter an element and its class modulo.

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Quadratic Froms

- $f(\vec{X}) = \sum_{i,j=1}^{n} a_{ij} X_i X_j$ is a quadratic form
  - $\vec{X} = (X_1, \cdots, X_n) \in K^n$ and $a_{ij} = a_{ji} \in K$.

- The matrix $A_f = (a_{ij})$ associated with f is Symmetric.
  - $f(\vec{X}) = \vec{X}^T A_f \vec{X}$.

- The pair (K^n, f) is a quadratic space.
  - $f \sim g$: $\exists P \in GL(n, K)$ s.t. $A_f = P^T A_g P$.

- $f(X_1, \cdots, X_n)$ and $g(X_1, \cdots, X_m)$

$$f \oplus g = f(X_1, \cdots, X_n) + g(X_{n+1}, \cdots, X_{n+m})$$

Background(17-18th century)

Theorem (Fermat's Two-Square Theorem)

An odd prime p *can be represented as the sum of two squares if and only if* $p \equiv 1 \pmod 4$.

Theorem (Gauss's Three-Square Theorem)

All positive integers except those of the form $4^a(8m-1)$ *can be represented as the sum of three squares.*

Background(19-20th century)

Theorem (Gauss's Classification of Quadratic Forms)

Quadratic forms in the same equivalence class represent exactly the same set of numbers.

Theorem (Hasse-Minkowski)

f *represents* 0 *over* $\mathbb{Q}$ *iff it represents* 0 *over all* $\mathbb{Q}_v$.

Representing Numbers

- f represents $a \in K$: $\exists 0 \neq x \in K^n$ s.t. $f(x) = a$.

Proposition

Let $a \in K^\times$. TFAE:

- *f represents a*
- *$f \sim f_1 \oplus aZ^2$ where f_1 is of rank $\operatorname{rank} f - 1$.*
- *$f_a = f \oplus -aZ^2$ represents 0.*

Corollary (Hasse-Minkowski Theorem)

f represents $a \in \mathbb{Q}^\times$ over $\mathbb{Q}$ iff it represents a over all $\mathbb{Q}_v$.

- Apply Hasse-Minkowski Theorem to $f_a = f \oplus -aZ^2$.

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Decomposing quadratic spaces

Theorem (Witt's cancellation)

$f_1 \oplus g_1 \sim f_2 \oplus g_2$ and $g_1 \sim g_2$ implies $f_1 \sim f_2$.

- (V, Q): A quadratic space.
- (U, Q) and (W, Q): Isomorphic subspaces.

$$
\begin{tikzcd}
V \arrow[r, dashed, dash, "\cong"] & V \\
U \arrow[u, dash, "\text{Lift}"] \arrow[r, "\cong"] & W \arrow[u, dash]
\end{tikzcd}
\qquad\qquad
\begin{tikzcd}
V \arrow[r, "\cong"] \arrow[d, dashed, dash, "\text{Restrict}"'] & V \arrow[d, dashed, dash] \\
U^{\perp} \arrow[r, "\cong"] & W^{\perp}
\end{tikzcd}
$$

Figure: Witt's Cancellation Theorem

$f \sim g$ over $\mathbb{Q}$

Theorem ([Ser73] p. 44, chap. 4, sec. 3.3, theorem 9)

Two non-degenerate quadratic forms of rank n over $\mathbb{Q}$ are equivalent iff they are equivalent over each $\mathbb{Q}_v$.

- Suppose $f \sim g$ over $\mathbb{Q}_v$ for all v. Take a represented by f over $\mathbb{Q}$.
- Then f represents a over all $\mathbb{Q}_v$. And a is represented by g over all $\mathbb{Q}_v$, since $f \sim g$ over all $\mathbb{Q}_v$.
- By the Hasse-Minkowski Theorem, a is represented by both f and g over $\mathbb{Q}$.
- Thus $f \sim aZ^2 \oplus f_1$, $g \sim aZ^2 \oplus g_1$, where $\operatorname{rank} f_1 = \operatorname{rank} g_1 = n - 1$.
- By Witt's cancellation, we have $f_1 \sim g_1$ over $\mathbb{Q}_v$ for all $v \in \mathbb{V}$.
- By induction on rank n, $f_1 \sim g_1$ over $\mathbb{Q}$, thus $f \sim g$ over $\mathbb{Q}$.

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General Ideas

- Reduce to classifying non-degenerate rank n quadratic forms of the shape $f \sim \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i X_i^2$, where $a_i \in K^\times/(K^\times)^2$.
  - Invariant rank: non-degenerate.
  - Symmetric matrices: diagonal.
  - $\sum a_i b_i^2 X_i^2 \sim \sum a_i X_i^2$: squared-free.

- If $f \sim g$, $\det(A_f) = \det(P^T A_g P) = \det(A_g)\det(P)^2$
  - Invariant discriminant: $d = \det(A)$ in $K^\times/(K^\times)^2$.

- $\mathbb{R}^\times/(\mathbb{R}^\times)^2 \cong \{1, -1\}$.
- $\mathbb{Q}_p^\times/(\mathbb{Q}_p^\times)^2 \cong K_4 = \{1, a, p, ap\}$.

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Case over $\mathbb{R}$

- Invariants:
  - Rank: $\operatorname{rank} f = n$.
  - Signature: $(r, s) :=$ (#positive eigenvalues, #negative eigenvalues).

Theorem (Sylvester's law of inertia)

Let $f = \sum_{i,j=1}^{n} a_{ij} X_i X_j$ be a quadratic form of rank n over $\mathbb{R}$. Then

$$f \sim X_1^2 + X_2^2 + \cdots + X_r^2 - X_{r+1}^2 - \cdots - X_{r+s}^2.$$

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Binary Quadratic Forms over $\mathbb{Q}_{p\neq 2}$

Theorem

Two quadratic forms of rank 2 over $\mathbb{Q}_{p\neq 2}$ are equivalent iff they have the same discriminant d and a common representive number a.

- Take a represented by both f and g.
- $f \sim f_1 \oplus aZ^2$ where $\operatorname{rank} f_1 = 1$.
- Then $f_1 = adX^2$. Thus f is determined. Similarly for g.

Binary Quadratic Forms over $\mathbb{Q}_{p\neq 2}$

d	1	a	p	ap
1	1	a	p	ap
a		1	ap	p
p			1	a
ap				1

(a) $p \equiv 1 \pmod 4$

d	1	a	p	ap
1	1	a	p	ap
a		1	ap	p
p			1	a
ap				1

(b) $p \equiv 3 \pmod 4$

Table: Equivalent classes of nondegenerate quadratic forms over $\mathbb{Q}_p$ when $n = 2$

- Fix d: classification depends on whether 1 can be represented.

Hilbert Symbol

- $f = aX^2 + bY^2$ represents $1 \iff Z^2 \oplus -f$ represents 0.
- Hilbert symbol:

$$(a,b) = \begin{cases} 1 & Z^2 - aX^2 - bY^2 \text{ represents 0,} \\ -1 & \text{Otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Computation of Hilbert Symbol

$(\cdot,\cdot)$	0	1	a	p
0	1	1	1	1
1		1	1	1
a			1	-1
p				$(-1)^{\frac{p-1}{2}}$

Table: Hilbert symbol, $p \neq 2$

- Hilbert symbol is a symmetric non-degenerate bilinear form.

Hasse Invariant

- $f \sim \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i X_i^2$ with $n \geq 3$.
  - Hasse invariant: $\varepsilon(f) = \prod_{i<j}(a_i, a_j)$

- $f = a_1 X_1^2 \oplus f_1$ with $f_1 = a_2 X_2^2 + \cdots + a_n X_n^2$
  - $d(f) = \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i = a_1 \prod_{i=2}^{n} a_i = a_1 d(f_1)$.
  - $\varepsilon(f) = \prod_{1 \leq i < j \leq n}(a_i, a_j) = \varepsilon(f_1) \cdot (a_1, a_2 \cdots a_n) = \varepsilon(f_1) \cdot (a_1, a_1 d(f))$.

Condition for a quadratic form to represent 0 or a over $\mathbb{Q}_p$

Theorem (([Ser73] p. 36, chap. 4, sec. 2.2, theorem 6))

f *represents* 0 *iff:*

- *For* $n = 2$*:* $d = -1$*;*
- *For* $n = 3$*:* $(-1, -d) = \varepsilon$*;*
- *For* $n = 4$*:* $d \neq 1$ *or* $d = 1$ *and* $\varepsilon = (-1, -1)$*;*
- *For* $n \geq 5$*: no conditions.*

By applying Theorem to $f_a = f \oplus -aZ^2$, we obtain:

Corollary (([Ser73] p. 37, chap. 4, sec. 2.2, corollary to themrem 6))

f *represents* $a \in \mathbb{Q}_p^\times / (\mathbb{Q}_p^\times)^2$ *iff:*

- *For* $n = 1$*:* $a = d$*;*
- *For* $n = 2$*:* $(a, -d) = \varepsilon$*;*
- *For* $n = 3$*:* $a \neq d$ *or* $a = d$ *and* $\varepsilon = (-1, -d)$*;*
- *For* $n \geq 4$*: no conditions.*

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$f \sim g$ over $\mathbb{Q}_p$

Theorem (([Ser73] p. 39, chap. 4, sec. 2.3, theorem 7))

Two non-degenerate quadratic forms of rank n over $\mathbb{Q}_p$ are equivalent iff they have the same discriminant d and Hasse invariant ε.

- f, g have same d and ε, thus there exists $a \in \mathbb{Q}_p^\times$ which both represented by f and g.
- Then $f \sim f_1 \oplus aZ^2$, where f_1 is of rank $n-1$. Similarly for g.
- d and ε of f_1 can be determined:
    - $d(f_1) = ad(f) = ad(g) = d(g_1)$
    - $\varepsilon(f_1) = \varepsilon(f) \cdot (a, ad(f)) = \varepsilon(g) \cdot (a, ad(g)) = \varepsilon(g_1)$
- Thus f_1, g_1 share the same d and ε. QED by induction.

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Classification of Quadratic Forms over $\mathbb{Q}_p$

The invariants d and ε satisfy the following relations:

- For $n = 1$: $\varepsilon = 1$;
- For $n = 2$: $d \neq -1$ or $\varepsilon = 1$;
- For $n \geq 3$: no conditions.

- $n = 1$: $f = dX^2$
- $n = 2$: $f = aX^2 + adY^2$
- $n = 3$: $f = g \oplus aZ^2$
  - $d(g) = ad$ and $\varepsilon(g) = \varepsilon(a, -d)$
- $n > 3$: $f = g(X_1, X_2, X_3) \oplus X_4^2 \oplus \cdots \oplus X_n^2$
  - $d(g) = d$ and $\varepsilon(g) = \varepsilon$

Classification of Quadratic Forms over $\mathbb{Q}$

Theorem (Product formula)

$(a,b)_v = 1$ *for almost all* $v \in \mathbb{V}$ *and* $\prod_{v\in\mathbb{V}}(a,b)_v = 1$

The invariants d_v and ε_v satisfy the following relations:

- $\varepsilon_v = 1$ for almost $v \in \mathbb{V}$, and $\prod_{v\in\mathbb{V}} \varepsilon_v = 1$.
- $\varepsilon_v = 1$ if $n = 1$ and if $n = 2$ and if the image d_v of d in $\mathbb{Q}_p^\times/{\mathbb{Q}_p^\times}^2$ is equal to -1.
- $r, s \geq 0$ and $r + s = \mathrm{rank}$.
- $d_\infty = (-1)^s$
- $\varepsilon_\infty = (-1)^{s(s-1)/2}$

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Theorem (Hasse-Minkowski)

f represents 0 over $\mathbb{Q}$ iff it represents 0 over $\mathbb{R}$ and all $\mathbb{Q}_p$.

Skeleton of Proof:

- n=2: Fermat's Two-Square Theorem.
- n=3： Gauss's Three-Square Theorem.
- n=4： Lagrange's Four-Square Theorem.
- n 5: Mathematical induction.

References I

[Ser73] Jean-Pierre Serre. *A Course in Arithmetic*. Vol. 7. Graduate Texts in Mathematics. New York, NY: Springer, 1973. ISBN: 978-0-387-90041-4 978-1-4684-9884-4. DOI: 10.1007/978-1-4684-9884-4.