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The Weil Conjectures

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Fix q a prime and $\mathbb{F} := \mathbb{F}_q$ the (unique) finite field with q elements, along with its (unique) degree n extensions

$$\mathbb{F}_{q^n} = \left\{ x \in \bar{\mathbb{F}}_q \;\middle|\; x^{q^n} - x = 0 \right\} \quad \forall \, n \in \mathbb{Z}^{\geq 2}$$

Definition (Projective Algebraic Varieties)

Let $J = \langle f_1, \cdots, f_M \rangle \;\unlhd\; k[x_0, \cdots, x_n]$ be an ideal, then a *projective algebraic* variety $X \subset \mathbb{P}^n_{\mathbb{F}}$ can be described as

$$X = V(J) = \left\{ \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{P}^n_{\mathbb{F}} \;\middle|\; f_1(\mathbf{x}) = \cdots = f_M(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{0} \right\}$$

where J is generated by *homogeneous* polynomials in $n + 1$ variables, i.e. there is a fixed $d = \deg f_i \in \mathbb{Z}^{\geq 1}$ such that

$$f(\mathbf{x}) = \sum_{\substack{I = (i_1, \cdots, i_n) \\ \sum_j i_j = d}} \alpha_I \cdot x_0^{i_1} \cdots x_n^{i_n} \quad \text{and} \quad f(\lambda \cdot \mathbf{x}) = \lambda^d f(\mathbf{x}), \lambda \in \mathbb{F}^{\times}.$$

Point Counts

– For a fixed variety X, we can consider its $\mathbb{F}$-points $X(\mathbb{F})$.
  – Note that $\#X(\mathbb{F}) < \infty$ is an integer
– For any $L/\mathbb{F}$, we can also consider $X(L)$
  – In particular, we can consider $X(\mathbb{F}_{q^n})$ for any $n \geq 2$.
  – We again have $\#X(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) < \infty$ and are integers for every such n.
– So we can consider the sequence

$$[N_1, N_2, \cdots, N_n, \cdots] := [\#X(\mathbb{F}), \ \#X(\mathbb{F}_{q^2}), \cdots, \ \#X(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}), \cdots].$$

– Idea: associate some generating function (a formal power series) encoding sequence, e.g.

$$F(z) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} N_n z^n = N_1 z + N_2 z^2 + \cdots.$$

Note that for such an ordinary generating functions, the coefficients are related to the real-analytic properties of F: we can easily recover the coefficients in the following way:

$$[z^n] \cdot F(z) = [z^n] \cdot T_{F, z=0}(z) = \frac{1}{n!} \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial z} \right)^n F(z) \Bigg|_{z=0} = N_n.$$

They are also related to the complex analytic properties: using the Residue theorem,

$$[z^n] \cdot F(z) := \frac{1}{2\pi i} \oint_{\mathbb{S}^1} \frac{F(z)}{z^{n+1}} \, dz = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \oint_{\mathbb{S}^1} \frac{N_n}{z} \, dz = N_n.$$

The latter form is very amenable to computer calculation.

An OGF is an infinite series, which we can interpret as an analytic function $\mathbb{C} \longrightarrow \mathbb{C}$ – in nice situations, we can hope for a closed-form representation.

A useful example: by integrating a geometric series we can derive

$$\frac{1}{1-z} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} z^n \qquad \left(= 1 + z + z^2 + \cdots\right)$$

$$\implies \int \frac{1}{1-z} = \int \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} z^n$$

$$= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \int z^n \quad for |z| < 1 \quad \text{by uniform convergence}$$

$$= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n+1} z^{n+1}$$

$$\implies -\log(1-z) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{z^n}{n} \qquad \left(= z + \frac{z^2}{2} + \frac{z^3}{3} + \cdots\right).$$

For completeness, also recall that

$$\exp(z) := \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{z^n}{n!}$$

Zeta Functions

Problem: count points of a (smooth?) projective variety $X/\mathbb{F}$ in all (finite) degree n extensions of $\mathbb{F}$.

Definition (Local Zeta Function)

The *local zeta function* of an algebraic variety X is the following formal power series:

$$Z_X(z) = \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} N_n \frac{z^n}{n}\right) \in \mathbb{Q}[[z]] \quad \text{where} \quad N_n := \#X(\mathbb{F}_n).$$

Note that

$$z\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial z}\right) \log Z_X(z) = z\frac{\partial}{\partial z}\left(N_1 z + N_2 \frac{z^2}{2} + N_3 \frac{z^3}{3} + \cdots\right)$$

$$= z\left(N_1 + N_2 z + N_3 z^2 + \cdots\right) \qquad \text{(unif. conv.)}$$

$$= N_1 z + N_2 z^2 + \cdots = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} N_n z^n,$$

which is an *ordinary* generating function for the sequence (N_n).

Examples

Take $X = \{\mathrm{pt}\} = V(\{f(x) = 0\})/\mathbb{F}$ a single point over $\mathbb{F}$, then

$$\#X(\mathbb{F}_q) := N_1 = 1$$
$$\#X(\mathbb{F}_{q^2}) := N_2 = 1$$
$$\vdots$$
$$\#X(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) := N_n = 1$$
$$\vdots$$

and so

$$Z_{\{\mathrm{pt}\}}(z) = \exp\left(1 \cdot z + 1 \cdot \frac{z^2}{2} + 1 \cdot \frac{z^3}{3} + \cdots\right)$$

$$= \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{z^n}{n}\right)$$

$$= \exp\left(-\log\left(1 - z\right)\right)$$

$$= \frac{1}{1 - z}.$$

Notice: Z admits a closed form **and** *is a rational function.*

Take $X = \mathbb{A}^1/\mathbb{F}$ the affine line over $\mathbb{F}$, then We can write

$$\mathbb{A}^1(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) = \left\{ \mathbf{x} = [x_1] \; \middle| \; x_1 \in \mathbb{F}_{q^n} \right\}$$

as the set of one-component vectors with entries in $\mathbb{F}_n$, so

$$X(\mathbb{F}_q) = q$$
$$X(\mathbb{F}_{q^2}) = q^2$$
$$\vdots$$
$$X(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) = q^n.$$

Then

$$Z_X(z) = \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} q^n \frac{z^n}{n} \right)$$
$$= \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(qz)^n}{n} \right)$$
$$= \exp(-\log(1 - qz))$$
$$= \frac{1}{1 - qz}.$$

Take $X = \mathbb{A}^m / \mathbb{F}$ the affine line over $\mathbb{F}$, then We can write

$$\mathbb{A}^m(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) = \left\{ \mathbf{x} = [x_1, \cdots, x_m] \ \bigg| \ x_i \in \mathbb{F}_{q^n} \right\}$$

as the set of one-component vectors with entries in $\mathbb{F}_n$, so

$$X(\mathbb{F}_q) = q^m$$
$$X(\mathbb{F}_{q^2}) = (q^2)^m$$
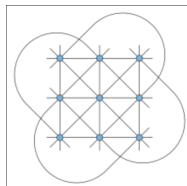$$\vdots$$
$$X(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) = q^{nm}.$$

Figure: $\mathbb{A}^2 / \mathbb{F}_3$ ($q = 3, m = 2, n = 1$)

Then

$$Z_X(z) = \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} q^{nm} \frac{z^n}{n} \right) = \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(q^m z)^n}{n} \right)$$
$$= \exp(-\log(1 - q^m z))$$
$$= \frac{1}{1 - q^m z}.$$

Take $X = \mathbb{P}^1/\mathbb{F}$, we can still count by enumerating coordinates:

$$\mathbb{P}^1(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) = \left\{ [x_1 : x_2] \;\middle|\; x_1, x_2 \neq 0 \in \mathbb{F}_{q^n} \right\} / \sim \;=\; \left\{ [x_1 : 1] \;\middle|\; x_1 \in \mathbb{F}_{q^n} \right\} \coprod \{[1 : 0]\}.$$

Thus

$$X(\mathbb{F}_q) = q + 1$$
$$X(\mathbb{F}_{q^2}) = q^2 + 1$$
$$\vdots$$
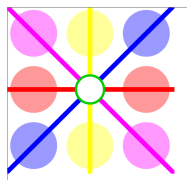$$X(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) = q^n + 1.$$

Figure: $\mathbb{P}^1/\mathbb{F}_3$ ($q = 3, n = 1$)

Thus

$$Z_X(z) = \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (q^n + 1) \frac{z^n}{n} \right)$$

$$= \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} q^n \frac{z^n}{n} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} 1 \cdot \frac{z^n}{n} \right)$$

$$= \frac{1}{(1 - qz)(1 - z)}.$$

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The Weil Conjectures

(Weil 1949)

Let X be a smooth projective variety of dimension N over $\mathbb{F}_q$ for q a prime, let $Z_X(z)$ be its zeta function, and define $\zeta_X(s) = Z_X(q^{-s})$.

1 (Rationality)
$Z_X(z)$ is a rational function:

$$Z_X(z) = \frac{p_1(z) \cdot p_3(z) \cdots p_{2N-1}(z)}{p_0(z) \cdot p_2(z) \cdots p_{2N}(z)} \in \mathbb{Q}(z), \quad \text{i.e.} \quad p_i(z) \in \mathbb{Z}[z]$$

$$P_0(z) = 1 - z$$

$$P_{2N}(z) = 1 - q^N z$$

$$P_j(z) = \prod_{j=1}^{\beta_i} (1 - a_{j,k} z) \quad \text{for some reciprocal roots} \quad a_{j,k} \in \mathbb{C}$$

where we've factored each P_i using its reciprocal roots a_{ij}.
In particular, this implies the existence of a meromorphic continuation of the associated function $\zeta_X(s)$, which a priori only converges for $\Re(s) \gg 0$. This also implies that for n large enough, N_n satisfies a linear recurrence relation.

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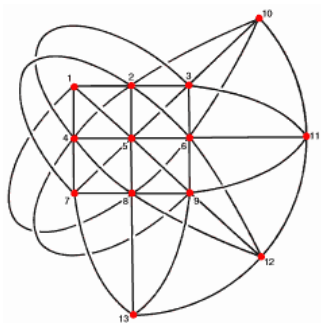
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Setup

Take $X = \mathbb{P}^m/\mathbb{F}$ We can write

$$\mathbb{P}^m(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) = \mathbb{A}^{m+1}(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) \setminus \{\mathbf{0}\} / \sim \ = \left\{ \mathbf{x} = [x_0, \cdots, x_m] \ \middle| \ x_i \in \mathbb{F}_{q^n} \right\} / \sim$$

But how many points are actually in this space?

Figure: Points and Lines in $\mathbb{P}^2/\mathbb{F}_3$

A nontrivial combinatorial problem!

To illustrate, this can be done combinatorially: identify $\mathbb{P}_{\mathbb{F}}^m = \mathrm{Gr}_{\mathbb{F}}(1, m+1)$ as the space of lines in $\mathbb{A}_{\mathbb{F}}^{m+1}$.

Theorem

The number of k-dimensional subspaces of $\mathbb{A}_{\mathbb{F}_q}^N$ is the q-analog of the binomial coefficient:

$$\begin{bmatrix} N \\ k \end{bmatrix}_q := \frac{(q^N - 1)(q^{N-1} - 1) \cdots (q^{N-(k-1)} - 1)}{(q^k - 1)(q^{k-1} - 1) \cdots (q - 1)}.$$

Remark: Note $\lim_{q \to 1} \begin{bmatrix} N \\ k \end{bmatrix}_q = \binom{N}{k}$, the usual binomial coefficient.

Proof: To choose a k-dimensional subspace,

- Choose a nonzero vector $\mathbf{v}_1 \in \mathbb{A}_{\mathbb{F}}^n$ in $q^N - 1$ ways.
  - For next step, note that $\#\mathrm{span}\{v_1\} = \#\left\{ \lambda v_1 \;\middle|\; \lambda \in \mathbb{F}_q \right\} = \#\mathbb{F}_q = q.$
- Choose a nonzero vector $\mathbf{v}_2$ *not* in the span of $\mathbf{v}_1$ in $q^N - q$ ways.
  - Now note $\#\mathrm{span}\{v_1, v_2\} = \#\left\{ \lambda_1 v_1 + \lambda_2 v_2 \;\middle|\; \lambda_i \in \mathbb{F} \right\} = q \cdot q = q^2.$

– Choose a nonzero vector $\mathbf{v}_3$ *not* in the span of $\mathbf{v}_1, \mathbf{v}_2$ in $q^N - q^2$ ways.
– $\cdots$ until $\mathbf{v}_k$ is chosen in

$$(q^N - 1)(q^N - q) \cdots (q^N - q^{k-1}) \quad \text{ways}$$

.

– This yields a k-tuple of linearly independent vectors spanning a k-dimensional subspace V_k

– This overcounts because many linearly independent sets span V_k, we need to divide out by the number of ways to choose a basis inside of V_k.
– By the same argument, this is given by

$$(q^k - 1)(q^k - q) \cdots (q^k - q^{k-1})$$

Thus

$$\#\text{subspaces} = \frac{(q^N - 1)(q^N - q)(q^N - q^2) \cdots (q^N - q^{k-1})}{(q^k - 1)(q^k - q)(q^k - q^2) \cdots (q^k - q^{k-1})}$$

$$= \frac{q^N - 1}{q^k - 1} \cdot \left(\frac{q}{q}\right) \frac{q^{N-1} - 1}{q^{k-1} - 1} \cdot \left(\frac{q^2}{q^2}\right) \frac{q^{N-2} - 1}{q^{k-2} - 1} \cdots \left(\frac{q^{k-1}}{q^{k-1}}\right) \frac{q^{N-(k-1)} - 1}{q^{k-(k-1)-1}}$$

$$= \frac{(q^N - 1)(q^{N-1} - 1) \cdots (q^{N-(k-1)} - 1)}{(q^k - 1)(q^{k-1} - 1) \cdots (q - 1)}.$$

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Note that we've actually computed the number of points in any Grassmannian.

Identify $\mathbb{P}^m_{\mathbb{F}} = \mathrm{Gr}_{\mathbb{F}}(1, m+1)$ as the space of lines in $\mathbb{A}^{m+1}_{\mathbb{F}}$.

We obtain a nice simplification for the number of lines corresponding to setting $k = 1$:

$$\begin{bmatrix} m+1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}_q = \frac{q^{m+1} - 1}{q - 1} = q^m + q^{m-1} + \cdots + q + 1 = \sum_{j=0}^{m} q^j.$$

Thus

$$X(\mathbb{F}_q) = \sum_{j=0}^{m} q^j$$

$$X(\mathbb{F}_{q^2}) = \sum_{j=0}^{m} \left(q^2\right)^j$$

$$\vdots$$

$$X(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) = \sum_{j=0}^{m} \left(q^n\right)^j.$$

So

$$Z_X(z) = \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sum_{j=0}^{m} (q^n)^j \frac{z^n}{n}\right)$$

$$= \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sum_{j=0}^{m} \frac{(q^j z)^n}{n}\right)$$

$$= \exp\left(\sum_{j=0}^{m} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(q^j z)^n}{n}\right)$$

$$= \exp\left(\sum_{j=0}^{m-1} -\log(1 - q^j z)\right)$$

$$= \prod_{j=0}^{m} \left(1 - q^j z\right)^{-1}$$

$$= \left(\frac{1}{1-z}\right)\left(\frac{1}{1-qz}\right)\left(\frac{1}{1-q^2 z}\right) \cdots \left(\frac{1}{1-q^m z}\right),$$

Miraculously, still a rational function!

An Easier Proof

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Quick recap:

$$Z_{\{pt\}} = \frac{1}{1-z} \qquad Z_{\mathbb{P}^1}(z) = \frac{1}{1-qz} \qquad Z_{\mathbb{A}^1}(z) = \frac{1}{(1-z)(1-qz)}.$$

Note that $\mathbb{P}^1 = \mathbb{A}^1 \coprod \{\infty\}$ and correspondingly $Z_{\mathbb{P}^1}(z) = Z_{\mathbb{A}^1}(z) \cdot Z_{\{pt\}}(z)$. This works in general:

Lemma (Excision)

If $Y/\mathbb{F}_q \subset X/\mathbb{F}_q$ is a closed subvariety, for $U = X \setminus Y$,
$Z_X(z) = Z_Y(z) \cdot Z_U(z)$.

Proof: Let $N_n = \#Y(\mathbb{F}_{q^n})$ and $M_n = \#U(\mathbb{F}_{q^n})$, then

$$\zeta_X(z) = \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (N_n + M_n)\frac{z^n}{n}\right)$$

$$= \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} N_n \cdot \frac{z^n}{n} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} M_n \cdot \frac{z^n}{n}\right)$$

$$= \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} N_n \cdot \frac{z^n}{n}\right) \cdot \exp\left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} M_n \cdot \frac{z^n}{n}\right) = \zeta_Y(z) \cdot \zeta_U(z).$$

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Note that geometry can help us here: we have a stratification
$\mathbb{P}^n = \mathbb{P}^{n-1} \coprod \mathbb{A}^n$, and so inductively

$$\mathbb{P}^m = \coprod_{j=0}^{m} \mathbb{A}^j = \mathbb{A}^0 \coprod \mathbb{A}^1 \coprod \cdots \coprod \mathbb{A}^m,$$

and recalling that

$$Z_{X \coprod Y}(z) = Z_X(z) \cdot Z_Y(z)$$

and $Z_{\mathbb{A}^j}(z) = \frac{1}{1 - q^j z}$ we have

$$Z_{\mathbb{P}^m}(z) = \prod_{j=0}^{m} Z_{\mathbb{A}^j}(z) = \prod_{j=0}^{m} \frac{1}{1 - q^j z}.$$

Notice that the highest degree is exactly m, and there is exactly one factor for each $j \leq m$. Note that $PP^m / \mathbb{F}_q$ can be though of as a mod q reduction of $\mathbb{R}\mathbb{P}^m$ or $\mathbb{C}\mathbb{P}^m$, and somehow Z "sees" its dimension.

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Consider now $X = \mathrm{Gr}(k, m)/\mathbb{F}$ — by the previous computation, we know

$$X(\mathbb{F}_{q^n}) = \begin{bmatrix} m \\ k \end{bmatrix}_{q^n} := \frac{(q^{nm} - 1)(q^{nm-1} - 1) \cdots (q^{nm - n(k-1)} - 1)}{(q^{nk} - 1)(q^{n(k-1)} - 1) \cdots (q^n - 1)}$$

but the corresponding Zeta function is much more complicated than the previous examples:

$$Z_X(z) = \exp \left(\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \begin{bmatrix} m \\ k \end{bmatrix}_{q^n} \frac{z^n}{n} \right) = \cdots ?.$$

Note that $\dim_{\mathbb{R}} \mathrm{Gr}_{\mathbb{R}}(k, m) = k(m - k)$ as a real manifold, so