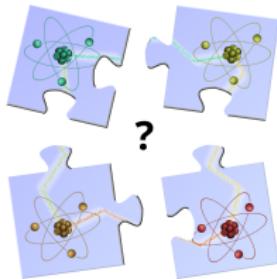


# The Quantum Marginal Problem

Otfried Gühne

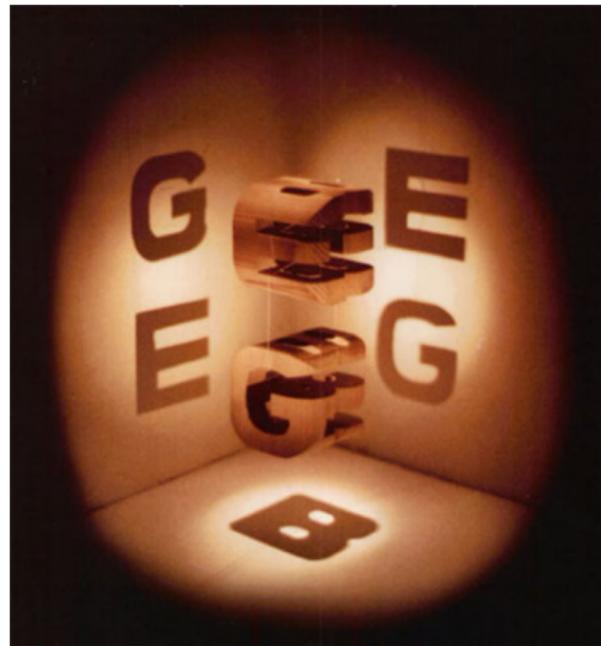
F. Huber, H. C. Nguyen, J. Siewert, T. Simnacher, N. Wyderka,  
X.-D. Yu,



Department Physik, Universität Siegen



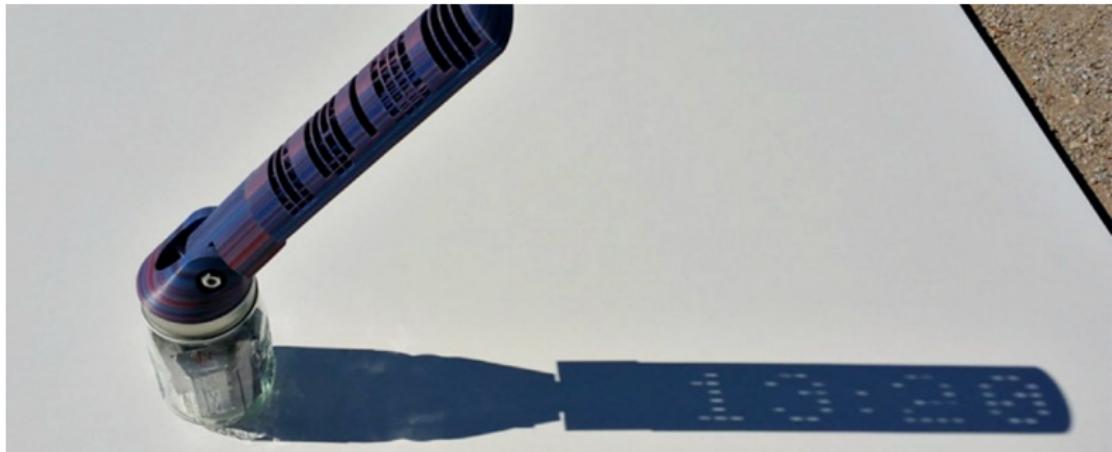
# Gödel, Escher, Bach



# Digital sundial



# Digital sundial



Theorem (Falconer, 1987)

Consider 2D shadows in all spatial directions. Then there is a 3D object having these shadows (up to measure zero).

# Marginal distributions

## Question

Can  $p(x, y, z)$  be reconstructed from  $p(x, y)$ ,  $p(y, z)$ , and  $p(x, z)$ ?

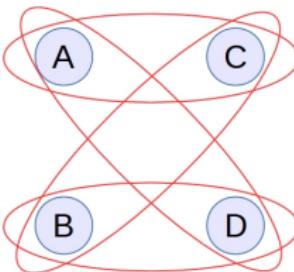
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## Example

Consider 4 variables  $A, B, C, D$  with values  $\pm 1$  and the marginal distributions  $(A, C)$ ,  $(A, D)$ ,  $(B, C)$  and  $(B, D)$ . When do they come from a global distribution?



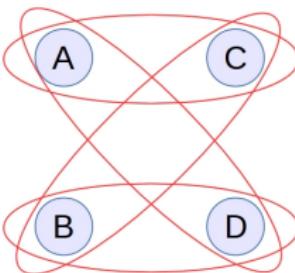
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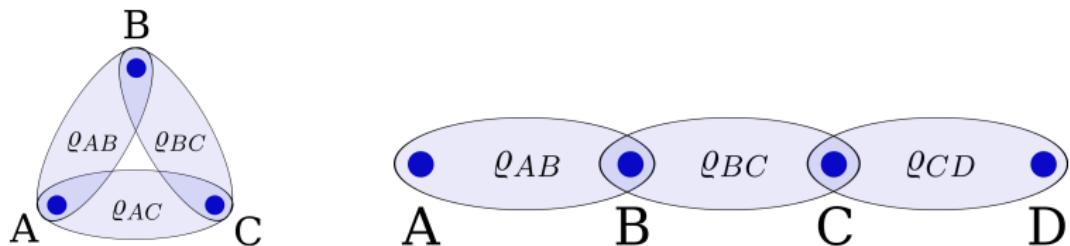
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Iff they obey the CHSH inequality, A. Fine, PRL 48, 291 (1981).

# The quantum case

- How do local properties determine the global properties of a quantum state?
- Which quantum states are determined as thermal states of a local Hamiltonian?



# Maximally entangled states

## How entangled can two couples get?

A. Higuchi, A. Sudbery \*

*Dept. of Mathematics, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD, UK*

### Results and Questions

- A bipartite pure state is maximally entangled, if the marginals are maximally mixed.
- For four qubits, there is no state that is maximally entangled for any bipartition.
- What happens for general states of  $N$  particles?

# Three qubits

VOLUME 89, NUMBER 20

PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS

11 NOVEMBER 2002

## Almost Every Pure State of Three Qubits Is Completely Determined by Its Two-Particle Reduced Density Matrices

N. Linden,<sup>1</sup> S. Popescu,<sup>2</sup> and W. K. Wootters<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Mathematics, University of Bristol, University Walk, Bristol BS8 1TW United Kingdom

### Results and Questions

- Nearly all pure three-qubit states are determined by their reduced two-body marginals.
- ⇒ All pure three-qubit states can be approximated by ground states of two-body Hamiltonians.
- For more qubits, are there states which cannot be approximated by two-body thermal states?

# Graph states

PHYSICAL REVIEW A 77, 012301 (2008)

## Graph states as ground states of many-body spin-1/2 Hamiltonians

M. Van den Nest,<sup>1</sup> K. Luttmer,<sup>1</sup> W. Dür,<sup>1,2</sup> and H. J. Briegel<sup>1,2</sup>

### Results and Questions

- Graph states cannot be exact ground states of two-body Hamiltonians.
- If they can be approximated, then the energy gap vanishes.
- But can one approximate them at all? Or is there a finite distance?

# Outline

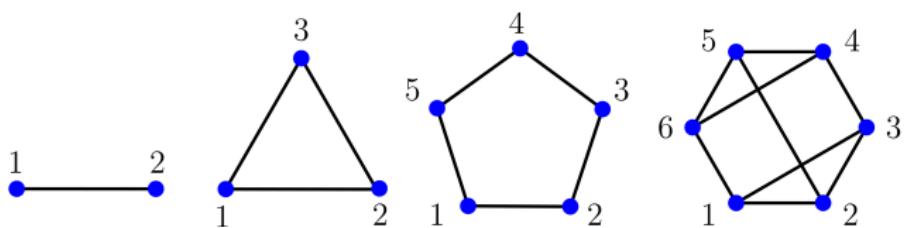
## Questions

- Given a set of reduced states, is there a global state compatible with it?
- Given a global state, is it uniquely determined by its reduced states?
- Given a global state, which properties can be inferred by looking at the marginals only?

## Outline

- ➊ Are there  $N$ -particle pure states, for which many marginals are maximally mixed?
- ➋ How can we address the general pure state marginal problem?

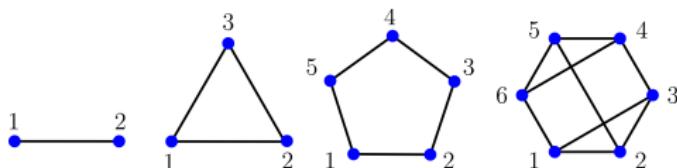
## Maximally entangled states



# Absolutely maximally entangled states

## Results on AME states

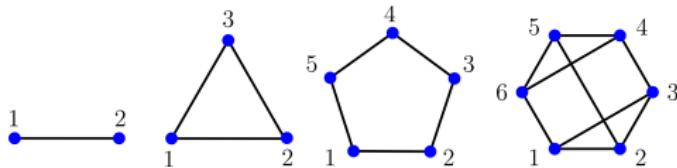
- An  $N$ -particle state where all  $\lfloor N/2 \rfloor$ -particle reduced states are maximally mixed is called AME.
- Examples: Bell states, GHZ states, quantum codewords, ...



# Absolutely maximally entangled states

## Results on AME states

- An  $N$ -particle state where all  $\lfloor N/2 \rfloor$ -particle reduced states are maximally mixed is called AME.
- Examples: Bell states, GHZ states, quantum codewords, ...



- AME states correspond to  $((N, 1, \lfloor N/2 \rfloor + 1))_D$  quantum codes.
- If  $D$  is large enough, they exist for any  $N$ .
- Qubits: They exist for  $N = 2, 3, 5, 6$  but not for  $N = 4$  and  $N \geq 8$ .
- So what happens for  $N = 7$ ?

Note: Not all AME states are graph states, A. Burchardt & Z. Raissi, PRA 102, 022413 (2020).

# The seven qubit case

## First result

There is no AME state for seven qubits.

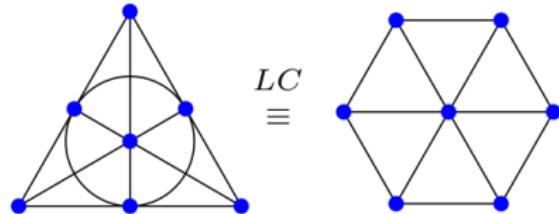
# The seven qubit case

## First result

There is no AME state for seven qubits.

## Second result

The best approximation to a seven qubit AME state is a graph state where 32 of the 35 three-body density matrices are maximally mixed.



F. Huber et al., PRL 118, 200502 (2017).

# Proof idea

(a) We use the Bloch decomposition and sort the correlations:

$$\varrho \sim \sum_{\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_n} r_{\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n} \sigma_{\alpha_1} \otimes \dots \otimes \sigma_{\alpha_N} \sim (\mathbb{I}^{\otimes n} + \sum_{j=1}^N P_j).$$

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(b) From the Schmidt decomposition of a 7-qubit AME state  $\varrho = |\phi\rangle\langle\phi|$  it follows for the five-qubit reductions

$$\varrho_{(5)}^2 = \frac{1}{4} \varrho_{(5)}.$$

and

$$\varrho_{(4)} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{\otimes 3} |\phi\rangle = \frac{1}{8} |\phi\rangle \quad \text{and} \quad \varrho_{(5)} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{\otimes 2} |\phi\rangle = \frac{1}{4} |\phi\rangle.$$

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(c) Inserting this in the Bloch picture and using the commutation relation of the Paulis leads to a contradiction.

# General strategies

## Rains' shadow inequality

Consider positive operators  $X$  and  $Y$  on  $N$  particles and  $T \subset \{1, \dots, N\}$ . Then:

$$\sum_{S \subset \{1, \dots, N\}} (-1)^{|S \cap T|} \text{Tr}_S [\text{Tr}_{S^c}(X) \text{Tr}_{S^c}(Y)] \geq 0$$

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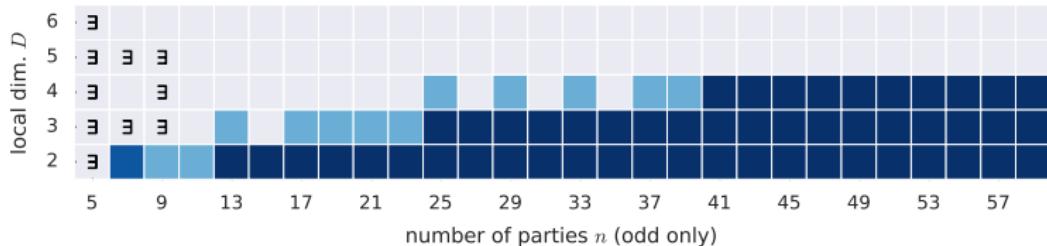
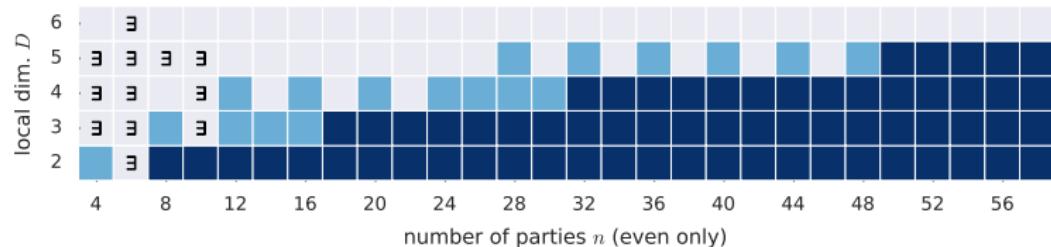
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## Application to the AME problem

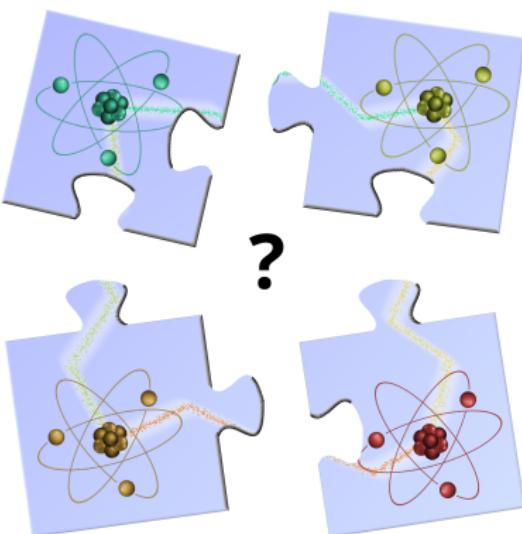
- Assume that an AME state  $|\psi\rangle$  exists and set  $X = Y = |\psi\rangle\langle\psi|$ .
- Since  $|\psi\rangle$  is AME, many  $[\text{Tr}_{S^c}(X)^2]$  in the SI are known as proportional to the identity.
- If one finds a contradiction, the AME does not exist.

# General results

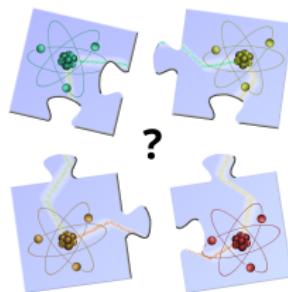
Using similar ideas and the theory of weight and shadow enumerators one can exclude many more cases:



## General approach to the marginal problem



# The problem

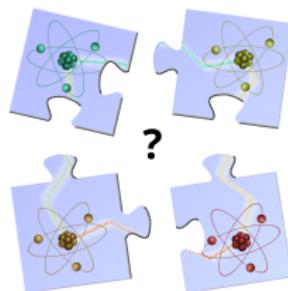


Find a pure  $n$ -particle state  $|\varphi\rangle$  for some given marginals  $\varrho_I$ :

find:  $|\varphi\rangle$

subject to:  $Tr_{I^c}(|\varphi\rangle\langle\varphi|) = \varrho_I, I \subset \{1, \dots, n\}$ .

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subject to:  $Tr_{I^c}(|\varphi\rangle\langle\varphi|) = \varrho_I, I \subset \{1, \dots, n\}$ .

- If the marginals  $I$  are not overlapping: Only the eigenvalues of the  $\varrho_I$  matter, a solution is known.

A. Klyachko, [quant-ph/0409113](#)

- The AME problem is a special case of it:  $\varrho_I \sim \mathbb{1}$

## Compatible states

The set of compatible states is given by

$$\mathcal{C} = \{\varrho \mid \varrho \geq 0, \ Tr_{I^c}(\varrho) = \varrho_I \ \forall I\}.$$

Question: Does  $\mathcal{C}$  contain a pure state?

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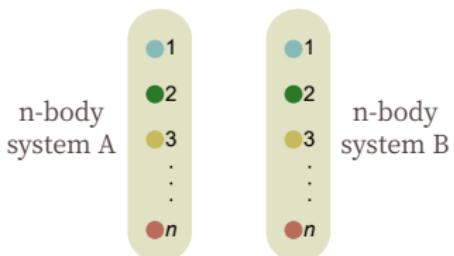
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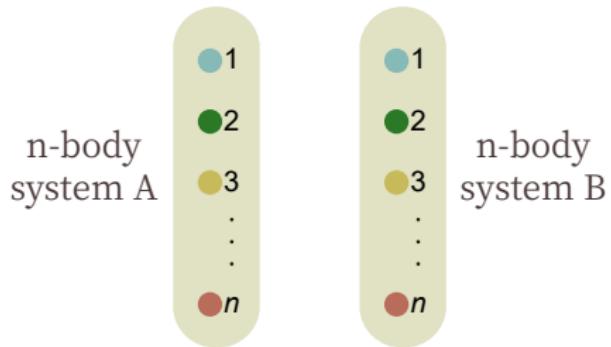
## Trick

Take the convex hull of two copies of the compatible states:

$$\mathcal{C}_2 = \text{conv}\{\varrho \otimes \varrho \mid \varrho \in \mathcal{C}\} = \left\{ \sum_k p_k \varrho_k \otimes \varrho_k \mid \varrho_k \in \mathcal{C} \right\},$$



# The purity constraint

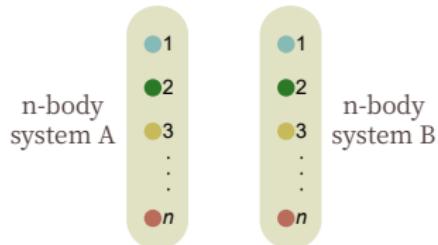


- If  $F_{AB}$  is the flip operator, then  $\text{Tr}(F_{AB}\varrho_A \otimes \varrho_B) = \text{Tr}(\varrho_A \varrho_B)$ .
- So, for  $\Phi_{AB} \in \mathcal{C}_2$  :

$$\text{Tr}(F_{AB}\Phi_{AB}) = \sum_k p_k \text{Tr}(\varrho_k^2) \leq 1.$$

- Equality holds if and only if there is a pure state in  $\mathcal{C}$ .

# First main result



There exists a pure global state for the marginal problem if and only if the result of the following optimization equals one:

$$\max_{\Phi_{AB}} \text{Tr}(F_{AB} \Phi_{AB})$$

subject to:  $\Phi_{AB}$  is separable and normalized,

$$\text{Tr}_{A^{lc}, B^{lc}}(\Phi_{AB}) = \varrho_I \otimes \varrho_I.$$

Remains to show: If  $\Phi_{AB}$  obeys the marginal condition, then all (pure!) terms in the convex combination do it also.  
X.-D. Yu et al., Nature Comm. 12, 1012 (2021).

## Remarks

- If  $\text{Tr}(F_{AB}\Phi_{AB}) = 1$ , then  $\Phi_{AB}$  acts on the symmetric subspace only.

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- For characterizing separability, it is convenient to go to more copies:

$\varrho_{AB} = \sum_k p_k |a_k\rangle\langle a_k| \otimes |b_k\rangle\langle b_k|$  is separable

$\Rightarrow \varrho_{ABB'} = \sum_k p_k |a_k\rangle\langle a_k| \otimes |b_k\rangle\langle b_k| \otimes |b_k\rangle\langle b_k|$  exists!

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- The semidefinite program

find:  $\varrho_{ABB'}$

subject to:  $\text{Tr}_{B'}(\varrho_{ABB'}) = \text{Tr}_B(\varrho_{ABB'}) = \varrho_{AB},$

$\varrho_{ABB'} \geq 0, \quad \text{Tr}(\varrho_{ABB'}) = 1$

is a test for separability of  $\varrho_{AB}$ .

R.F. Werner, Lett. Math. Phys. 17, 359 (1989), A. C. Doherty et al., PRL 88, 187904 (2002).

# The complete hierarchy

There exists a pure global state for the marginal problem if and only if for all  $N$  there exists an  $N$ -party quantum state  $\Phi_{AB\dots Z}$  such that

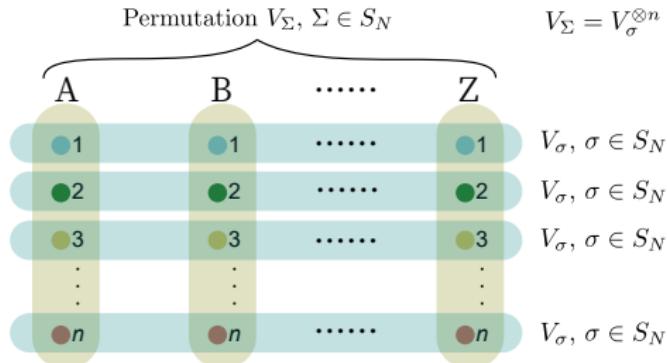
$$P_N^+ \Phi_{AB\dots Z} P_N^+ = \Phi_{AB\dots Z}$$

$$\Phi_{AB\dots Z} \geq 0, \quad \text{Tr}(\Phi_{AB\dots Z}) = 1$$

$$\text{Tr}_{A_I^c}(\Phi_{AB\dots Z}) = \rho_I \otimes \text{Tr}_A(\Phi_{AB\dots Z})$$

where  $P_N^+$  is a projector onto the symmetric space.

This is a sequence of semidefinite programs!



# Symmetries & AME states

## Observation

If the marginals in  $Tr_{A_{lc}, B_{lc}}(\Phi_{AB}) = \rho_I \otimes \rho_I$  obey some symmetry

$$X = gXg^\dagger,$$

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⇒ The set of possible  $\Phi_{AB}$  becomes smaller ...

## Observation

Potential AME states have two symmetries:

- An AME state remains AME under permutation of the  $n$  particles.
- An AME state remains AME under local unitaries.

# AME = Separability

$\Phi_{AB}$  is unique

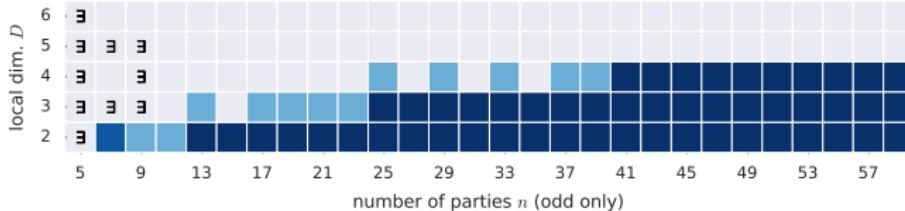
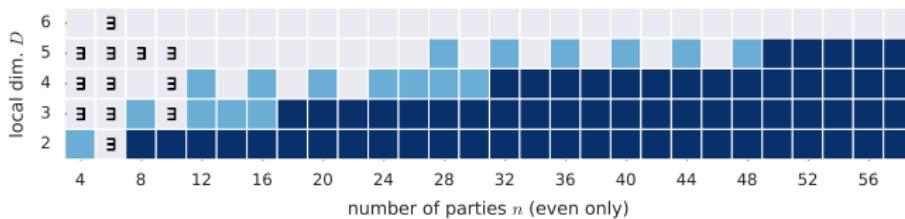
An  $\text{AME}(n, d)$  state exists if and only if an explicitly given operator  $\Phi_{AB}$  is a separable state w.r.t. the bipartition  $(A|B)$ .

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An  $\text{AME}(n, d)$  state exists if and only if an explicitly given operator  $\Phi_{AB}$  is a separable state w.r.t. the bipartition  $(A|B)$ .

If  $\Phi_{AB}$  is not a state or NPT, the AME cannot exist.



This reproduces all known nonexistence results, apart from  $\text{AME}(7, 2)!$

## Challenge

- Alice and Bob have four six-dimensional systems each. Let  $|\phi^+\rangle = (\sum_{k=0}^5 |kk\rangle)/\sqrt{6}$  be the maximally entangled state, define  $\Pi^\perp = \mathbb{1} - |\phi^+\rangle\langle\phi^+|$ .
- Then:

$$\begin{aligned}\Phi_{AB}^{T_B} = & \frac{1}{1296} |\phi^+\rangle\langle\phi^+|^{\otimes 4} \\ & + \frac{1}{1587600} \left[ |\phi^+\rangle\langle\phi^+|^{\otimes 1} \otimes (\Pi^\perp)^{\otimes 3} + \text{permutations} \right] \\ & + \frac{11}{18522000} \left[ (\Pi^\perp)^{\otimes 4} \right].\end{aligned}$$

- If this state is entangled, the AME(4, 6) does not exist.

# 2021 Euros

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- If this state is entangled, the AME(4, 6) does not exist.
- This would solve one of the “five selected open problems” in quantum information theory.

P. Horodecki, Ł. Rudnicki, K. Życzkowski, arXiv:2002.03233. Probably the money goes to: S.A. Rather et al., arXiv:2104.05122.

# Training example

## The seven-qubit problem

- Alice and Bob have seven qubits each. Let  $P_+$  ( $P_-$ ) projectors onto the (anti)symmetric subspace of the  $2 \times 2$  system.
- Consider the state:

$$\begin{aligned}\Phi_{AB} = & \frac{113}{1119744} (P_+)^{\otimes 7} \\ & + \frac{17}{124416} \left[ (P_+)^{\otimes 5} \otimes (P_-)^{\otimes 2} + \text{permutations} \right] \\ & + \frac{1}{13824} \left[ (P_+)^{\otimes 3} \otimes (P_-)^{\otimes 4} + \text{permutations} \right] \\ & + \frac{1}{1536} \left[ (P_+)^{\otimes 1} \otimes (P_-)^{\otimes 6} + \text{permutations} \right]\end{aligned}$$

- This state is entangled, since AME(7, 2) does not exist.
- Can one see the entanglement directly?

# Conclusion

## Results

- Not all AME states exist.
- The pure state marginal problem can be solved with a hierarchy of SDPs.
- The AME problem is equivalent to a specific separability problem.

## Literature

- F. Huber, O. Gühne, J. Siewert,  
Phys. Rev. Lett. 118, 200502 (2017).
- X.-D. Yu, T. Simnacher, N. Wyderka, H. C. Nguyen, O. Gühne,  
Nature Comm. 12, 1012 (2021).

# Acknowledgements



Alexander von Humboldt  
Stiftung / Foundation



# Proof ingredients

(a) We use the Bloch decomposition and sort the correlations:

$$\varrho \sim \sum_{\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_n} r_{\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n} \sigma_{\alpha_1} \otimes \dots \otimes \sigma_{\alpha_N} \sim (\mathbb{I}^{\otimes n} + \sum_{j=1}^N P_j).$$

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(b) For anticommutators of Paulis we have the parity rule:

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(c) Take a 7-qubit AME state  $\varrho = |\phi\rangle\langle\phi|$ . The five-qubit reduction fulfills

$$\varrho_{(5)}^2 = \frac{1}{4} \varrho_{(5)}.$$

and

$$\varrho_{(4)} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{\otimes 3} |\phi\rangle = \frac{1}{8} |\phi\rangle \quad \text{and} \quad \varrho_{(5)} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{\otimes 2} |\phi\rangle = \frac{1}{4} |\phi\rangle.$$

## Proof steps

(d) Expand  $\varrho_{(4)}$  and  $\varrho_{(5)}$  in the Bloch basis

$$\varrho_{(4)} = \frac{1}{2^4}(\mathbb{1} + P_4), \quad \varrho_{(5)} = \frac{1}{2^5}(\mathbb{1} + \sum_{j=1}^5 P_4^{[j]} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{(j)} + P_5).$$

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(e) Resulting eigenvalue equations:

$$P_4^{[j]} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{\otimes 3} |\phi\rangle = 1|\phi\rangle, \quad P_5 \otimes \mathbb{1}^{\otimes 2} |\phi\rangle = 2|\phi\rangle.$$

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$$\varrho_{(4)} = \frac{1}{2^4} (\mathbb{1} + P_4), \quad \varrho_{(5)} = \frac{1}{2^5} (\mathbb{1} + \sum_{j=1}^5 P_4^{[j]} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{(j)} + P_5).$$

(e) Resulting eigenvalue equations:

$$P_4^{[j]} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{\otimes 3} |\phi\rangle = 1|\phi\rangle, \quad P_5 \otimes \mathbb{1}^{\otimes 2} |\phi\rangle = 2|\phi\rangle.$$

(f) Expanding  $\varrho_{(5)}^2 = \frac{1}{4}\varrho_{(5)}$  gives **two** equations due to the parity rule.  
One of them:

$$\{P_5, \sum_{j=1}^5 P_4^{[j]} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{(j)}\} = 6P_5.$$

## Proof steps

(d) Expand  $\varrho_{(4)}$  and  $\varrho_{(5)}$  in the Bloch basis

$$\varrho_{(4)} = \frac{1}{2^4} (\mathbb{1} + P_4), \quad \varrho_{(5)} = \frac{1}{2^5} (\mathbb{1} + \sum_{j=1}^5 P_4^{[j]} \otimes \mathbb{1}^{(j)} + P_5).$$

(e) Resulting eigenvalue equations:

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(f) Expanding  $\varrho_{(5)}^2 = \frac{1}{4}\varrho_{(5)}$  gives **two** equations due to the parity rule.  
One of them:

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(g) Multiplying with  $|\phi\rangle$  from the right:

$$(2 \cdot 5 \cdot 1 + 5 \cdot 1 \cdot 2) |\phi\rangle = 6 \cdot 2 |\phi\rangle.$$