

# Year 3 — Groups, Rings and Fields

Based on lectures by Professor Mohamed Saïdi

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These notes are not endorsed by the lecturers, and I have modified them (often significantly) after lectures. They are nowhere near accurate representations of what was actually lectured, and in particular, all errors are almost surely mine.

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# 1 Basics of Groups

We start by defining a group, it is an example of an algebraic structure.

Lecture 1

**Definition 1.1** (Group).  $G$  is a nonempty set and endowed with a composition rule  $(\cdot)$ . We denote this  $(G, \cdot)$ .  $(\cdot)$  is well defined, so we can associate another element  $a \cdot b \in G$  and  $a \cdot b$  is unique.  $(\cdot)$  must be associative,

$$a \cdot (b \cdot c) = (a \cdot b) \cdot c$$

The brackets are irrelevant when combining more than two elements. We also have **natural element**, so,

$$c \cdot e_G = c = e_G \cdot c$$

There are also inverses, so,

$$a \cdot a^{-1} = e_G = a^{-1} \cdot a$$

So the inverse naturalises the element.

If we just have a group usually  $a \cdot b \neq b \cdot a$ , if  $a \cdot b = b \cdot a$  are called abelian or commutative groups. This is in reference to the mathematician Abel.

If  $G$  is finite as a set, then we can say that  $G$  is a finite group and we denote the size or cardinality of  $G$  as  $|G|$ , sometimes this is said to be the order. The cardinality can be infinite.

**Example.** We know a very important group, the group of integers  $\mathbb{Z}$ . This set is infinite as  $n \neq n + 1$  and the composition law is  $+$  and we know that it's associative and natural element of 0 and each element  $n$  has an inverse of  $-n$ . We can also say,

$$k_1 + k_2 = k_2 + k_1$$

and so we have an infinite abelian group.

**Example.** We can also consider groups of integers module  $n$ , denoted,

$$\mathbb{Z}_n = \{[0]_n, [1]_n, \dots, [n-1]_n\}$$

where we have modulo classes (see Number Theory notes week 2). We can say, if  $[k]_n = [l]_n$  if and only if  $n \mid k - l$ . Also if you have  $[k_1]_n$  and  $[k_2]_n$ , then  $[k_1]_n + [k_2]_n = [k_1 + k_2]_n$ . We have to check if this addition is well defined and it is, as you can just multiply by a constant as  $[k + rn]_n = [k]_n$ . This is also a group with natural element of  $[0]_n$  the inverse of  $[k]_n$  is just  $[-k]_n$  as  $[k]_n + [-k]_n = [0]_n$ . This is a finite abelian group and  $|\mathbb{Z}_n| = n$ .

There is two worlds, non-commutative and commutative. Nature is not commutative, things aren't that nice. Our best example of the non-commutative group is the group of permutations. Let  $n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$  and then let there be a set  $S_n = \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$  and consider all possible bijections  $\sigma$  from that set to itself. As these are finite sets and of the same cardinality, it suffices to check it's injective.

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & \dots & n-1 & n \\ \sigma(1) & \sigma(2) & \dots & \sigma(n-1) & \sigma(n) \end{pmatrix}$$

saying this is a bijection says the bottom row, given they are integers from 1 to  $n$ , appear only once, they don't appear twice.

**Example.** Let us take  $S_4$ , then we can take an element,

$$\sigma = \begin{pmatrix} 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

and we can call this  $\sigma$  and is an element of the group.

New question, what is  $|S_n|$ , how many  $\sigma$  are there? It's  $n!$ .

*Proof.* Define  $\sigma$  and you have to consider  $\sigma(1)$  and there's  $n$  possibilities, then for  $\sigma(2)$  there's  $n-1$  possibilities, then we can't use  $\sigma(1)$  or  $\sigma(2)$  and hence there's  $n-2$  possibilities for  $\sigma(3)$  and so on. So we have,

$$n(n-1) \cdot (n-2) \cdot (n-3) \dots 2 \cdot 1 = n!$$

□

We can form a group where the composition is just  $\circ$  on our set of bijections  $\sigma$ . If we take a  $\sigma \circ \tau$  then this is also a bijection into  $S_n$ . This is associative and we get a natural element of  $\text{id}_{S_n}$ . Then every bijection has an inverse  $\sigma^{-1}$ , which is unique. What is  $\sigma^{-1}$ , just reverse the order of the rows,

$$\sigma^{-1} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix}$$

This group is non-commutative if  $n \geq 3$  then  $S_n$  is not commutative. If we an integer  $1 \leq k \leq n$  and take  $k$  elements  $\{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_k\} \subset \{1, 2, 3, \dots, n\}$ . Then we define

**Definition 1.2** ( $k$ -cycle). A  $k$  cycle,  $\sigma = (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_k) \in S_n$  is a permutation,

$$\begin{pmatrix} a_1 & a_2 & \dots & a_{k-1} & a_k \\ a_2 & a_3 & \dots & a_k & a_1 \end{pmatrix}$$

A  $k$ -cycle is a permutation and a bijection as you only write each number from 1 to  $n$  once. The 1-cycle is just the identity. The 2-cycle is the transposition. Then onwards it just shifts elements around. We can count the number of  $k$ -cycles, which is,

$$\frac{n(n-1) \dots (n+k-1)}{k}$$

We can now see the dihedral group  $D_{2n}$ ,

**Definition 1.3** (Dihedral Group). Let us take the  $n$ -gon ( $n \geq 3$ ) and depending on when  $n$  is odd or even we have a vertex along with the vertex one, you get them lying on the  $y$ -axis. Then you get all the rotations symmetries in the plane, which maps the  $n$ -gon to itself. There are  $2n$  of them, the rotation clockwise with angle  $\frac{2\pi}{n}$ , there are  $n$  of these. Then we have the elements where we flip the shape,  $s$ , first where  $s^2 = 1$ .

$$D_{2n} = \{1, r, r^2, \dots, r^{n-1}, s, sr, sr^2, \dots, sr^{n-1}\}$$

Then this is our  $2n$  elements. This is indeed a group with composition of rotations and  $n \geq 3$  then the group isn't abelian. We also have the interesting rule which spits out the non-commutative behavior, Lecture 2

$$sr^i = r^{-i}s = r^{n-i}s$$

We can describe the group by it's elements and it's composition rule. We can define  $D_4$  quite nicely,

$$D_4 = \{1, r, s, sr\}$$

and we find this to be commutative. Hence,  $D_4$  is abelian.

**Lemma 1.4.** The following are true:

- The natural element is unique
- The inverse of each element is unique
- $(ab)^{-1} = b^{-1}a^{-1}$
- $au = av \implies u = v$  and  $ub = vb \implies u = v$ .
- Exponentiation makes sense
- Associativity means that any string of elements combined with the composition rule can be done in any order.

## 1.1 Subgroups and Orders

**Definition 1.5** (Subgroup). A subgroup,  $H \subset G$ , of a group  $(G, \cdot)$ ,

- $\forall x, y \in H, x \cdot y \in H$
- $\forall x \in H, x^{-1} \in H$

This leads to also us being able to say  $x \cdot x^{-1} = e_G \in H$ , so the natural element must also be in  $H$ .

**Example.** –  $(G, \cdot)$  is a subgroup of itself.

- We can take the trivial subgroup  $\{e_G\}$ .
- Given a  $m \in \mathbb{Z}$  the subset  $m\mathbb{Z} = \{mk : k \in \mathbb{Z}\}$  of integers is a subgroup of  $(\mathbb{Z}, +)$ .
- If we take  $\{1, r, r^2, \dots, r^{n-1}\}$  this is a subgroup of  $D_{2n}$ .

**Definition 1.6** (Order of an element). Let  $G$  be a group and  $a \in G$ . The order of  $a$  is,

$$\text{ord}(a) = \min\{n \geq 1 : a^n = e_G\}$$

If you never reach the natural element, we call  $\text{ord } a$  to be infinite.

**Lemma 1.7.** The following are true,

- $\text{ord } a = 1$  if and only if  $a = e_G$
- Let  $0 \neq n \in \mathbb{Z}$ , then  $\text{ord } n = \infty$
- Every element in a finite group must have finite order. As if the order was infinite, then you must have infinitely elements, namely,  $\{1, a, a^2, a^3, \dots, a^i, a^{i+1}, \dots\}$  which are all distinct and so  $G$  cannot be finite.
- Consider some  $k = \text{ord } a < \infty$  and  $n \geq 1$  with  $a^n = e_G$ , then  $k \mid n$

*Proof.* We have instantly that  $n \geq k$  and now let  $n = tk + r$  with  $0 \leq r < k$ . Then,  $a^n = a^{tk+r} = a^{tk} \cdot a^r = (a^k)^t a^r = e_G^t a^r = a^r = e_G$ . Hence, we can say that  $r = 0$  as  $n$  is the smallest number such that  $a^n = e_G$ .  $\square$

If we consider the symmetric group, then we can say,

**Lemma 1.8.** Let  $n \geq k \geq 1$  and  $\sigma = (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_k) \in S_n$  and is a  $k$ -cycle. Then  $\text{ord } \sigma = k$ . Further, if  $\sigma \in S_n$  then one can write  $\sigma = \tau_1 \circ \tau_2 \circ \dots \circ \tau_m$  and we can find the order of this disjoint composition of cycles. We find that this is,  $\text{ord}(\text{lcm}(\tau_i))_{i=1}^m$

**Remark.** Disjoint cycles commute and the decomposition is unique.

Lecture 3

**Lemma 1.9.** If we take  $\mathbb{Z}_n$ , then we can take the order of say  $[k]$ , then we say that,

$$\text{ord}[k] = \frac{n}{\text{gcd}(n, k)}$$

**Definition 1.10** (Generator). If  $G$  is a group,  $a \in G$ , the subset  $H = \{a^n : n \in \mathbb{Z}\}$  of  $G$  consisting of all powers of the element  $a$  is a subgroup, and is called the cyclic subgroup of  $G$  generated by  $a$ , and  $a$  is called a generator of  $H$ . The subgroup is denoted by  $\langle a \rangle$ .

**Definition 1.11** (Cyclic Group). A group  $G$  is called cyclic if  $\exists a \in G$  such that  $G = \langle a \rangle$  equals the (sub)group generated by  $a$ .

**Lemma 1.12.** If a group is generated by  $a$ , it is also generated by  $a^{-1}$

*Proof.* If we have any  $a$ , then we can write this:  $a = (a^{-1})^{-1}$  and so the generator is not unique.  $\square$

We notice that this works because we can cycle around  $n$  and this can be proved using Euclidean division.

**Example.** –  $\mathbb{Z} = \langle 1 \rangle$ , is an infinite cyclic group generated by 1. NB! Here  $a^n = a \cdot n$

– on a similar note,  $\mathbb{Z}_n = \langle [1]_n \rangle$ . However, we can go further! If  $k \geq 1$ , with  $\gcd(k, n) = 1$ , then  $\mathbb{Z}_n = \langle [k]_n \rangle$  is also generated by  $[k]_n$ . This is proved as  $\text{ord}[k]_n = \frac{n}{\gcd(k, n)} = n$  and so the order is the group and so  $H = \langle k \rangle = \mathbb{Z}_n$ .

– We can talk about  $H = \langle (1234) \rangle$ , which is a cyclic subgroup of  $S_4$ .

**Definition 1.13** (Product of Groups). Let  $(G, \circ)$  and  $(H, *)$  be two groups. We define a new group  $(G \times H, \cdot)$  called the product group of  $G$  and  $H$ , as follows,

$$G \times H = \{(g, h) : g \in G, h \in H\}$$

is the set-theoretic product of  $G$  and  $H$ . The composition law  $(\cdot)$  is defined by,

$$(g_1, h_1) \cdot (g_2, h_2) = (g_1 \circ g_2, h_1 * h_2)$$

The from this, the rest of the group axioms follow trivially.

**Lemma 1.14.** Let  $(G, \circ)$  and  $(H, *)$  be groups. If  $G$  and  $H$  are abelian, then so is  $G \times H$ . If both  $G$  and  $H$  are finite, then so is  $G \times H$  and  $|G \times H| = |G||H|$

*Proof.* Assume that  $G, H$  are abelian, and  $g_1, g_2 \in G$  and  $h_1, h_2 \in H$  then  $(g_1, h_1) \cdot (g_2, h_2) = (g_1 \circ g_2, h_1 * h_2) = (g_2 \circ g_1, h_2 * h_1) = (g_2, h_2) \cdot (g_1, h_1)$ , hence abelian. If both groups are finite, then the number of elements in  $G \times H$  is the same as the number of pairs of elements and so that must be  $|G| \times |H|$ .  $\square$

## 1.2 Homomorphism

Lecture 4

**Definition 1.15** (Homomorphism). Let there be a group  $(G, \circ)$  and  $(H, *)$  and define a homomorphism from  $G \rightarrow H$  which satisfy,

(i) For  $g_1, g_2 \in G$ ,  $f(g_1 \circ g_2) = f(g_1) * f(g_2)$

(ii)  $f(e_G) = e_H$

If we take  $\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_n$  then we define the map  $f(k) = [k]_n$  and we can see this by,  $f(k_1 + k_2) = [k_1 + k_2]_n = [k_1]_n + [k_2]_n = f(k_1) + f(k_2)$

$$\begin{aligned} f(k_1 + k_2) &= [k_1 + k_2]_n \\ &= [k_1]_n + [k_2]_n \\ &= f(k_1) + f(k_2) \end{aligned}$$

So this is a homomorphism and it's surjective. If we let  $f : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$  and have  $m \rightarrow km$  and this is also a homomorphism.

$$\begin{aligned} f(k_1 + k_2) &= m(k_1 + k_2) \\ &= mk_1 + mk_2 \\ &= f(k_1) + f(k_2) \end{aligned}$$

**Definition 1.16** (Image). Let  $f : G \rightarrow H$  be a homomorphism, we define the image as,

$$\text{Im } f = \{h \in H \mid \exists g \in G, h = f(g)\}$$

**Definition 1.17** (Kernel). Let  $f : G \rightarrow H$  be a homomorphism, we define the kernel as,

$$\text{Ker } f = \{h \in H \mid f(h) = e_G\}$$

For example, consider  $f : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_n$  where  $f(k) = [k]_n$  and so we can say  $\text{Ker } f = \{nz \mid z \in \mathbb{Z}\}$ , we notice this is a subgroup. However, if  $g : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$  where  $z \mapsto mz$  we say  $\text{Ker } g = \{0\}$  if  $m \neq 0$ , another subgroup. This leads us to the following lemmas,

**Lemma 1.18.**  $\text{Im } f$  is a subgroup of  $H$  and  $\text{Ker } f$  is a subgroup of  $G$ .

*Proof.* The first part, follows quite nicely from absorbing and splitting using the definition of group homomorphisms. the second part is also follows nicely, so we verify the subgroup axiom,

- Closure,  $g_1, g_2 \in \text{Ker } f$  and so,  $f(g_1) = f(g_2) = e_H$  and show  $f(g_1 \circ g_2) = f(g_1) * f(g_2) = e_H * e_H = e_H$ .
- If  $f(g) = e_H$  then prove  $f(g^{-1}) = e_H$  and so,  $e_H = f(g \circ g^{-1}) = f(e_G) = f(g) * f(g^{-1})$ , hence,  $f(g^{-1}) = (f(g))^{-1}$ . Hence,  $f(g)^{-1} \in \text{Ker } f$ .

□

**Lemma 1.19.** Let  $f : G \rightarrow H$  be a homomorphism.

- $f$  is surjective if and only if  $\text{Im } H = f$ .
- $f$  is injective if and only if  $\text{Ker } f = e_G$

*Proof.* Assume that  $f$  is injective, so  $\text{Ker } f = \{e_G\}$ , so if  $g \in \text{Ker } f$  then  $g = e_G$ . We also know that the kernel also always contains  $e_G$  and  $g$  and we know  $f$  is injective and so  $g = e_G$  as they both map to  $e_H$ . Now suppose that  $\text{Ker } f = \{e_G\}$  and show that  $f$  is injective. Take  $g_1, g_2 \in G$  and assume that  $f(g_1) = f(g_2)$ . We get  $f(g_1) \circ f(g_2)^{-1} = e_H$  and so,  $f(g_1 \circ g_2^{-1}) = e_H$  and hence, we must have  $g_1 \circ g_2^{-1} \in \text{Ker } f$ . However  $\text{Ker } f = \{e_G\}$  and so,  $g_1 \circ g_2^{-1} = e_G$  and so,  $g_1 = g_2$ . □

## 2 Cosets and Normal Subgroups

Consider  $G$  be a group and consider a subgroup  $H$  of  $G$ . We want to define the left coset, but before we define a relation, Lecture 5

**Definition 2.1** (Relation).  $x \sim y \implies x^{-1}y = h \in H$

This can then be proved to be an equivalence relation,

*Proof.* (i) Reflexive,  $x \sim x$  which means  $x^{-1}x = e_G \in H$  as  $H$  is a subgroup.

(ii) Symmetry,  $x \sim y \implies y \sim x$ . If  $x \sim y$ ,  $y = xh$  implies  $yh^{-1} = x$  but  $h^{-1} \in H$  and so  $y \sim x$ .

(iii) Transitivity,  $x \sim y$  and  $y \sim z$  then  $x \sim z$ . We have  $y = xh$  and  $z = yh'$  and so  $z = yhh'$  and  $hh' \in H$  and so  $x \sim z$ . □

Now we can consider equivalence classes of elements of this relation, which is,

$$\bar{x} = \{x \sim y \mid y \in G\} = \{xh \mid h \in H\} = xH$$

**Definition 2.2** (Left Coset). We define the left coset as this equivalence relation.

We also know that equivalence classes form a partition,

$$G = \bigcup_{x \in G} \bar{x} = \bigcup_{x \in G} xH$$

Cosets are also not unique, we can have  $x_1H = x_2H$  when  $x_1 \sim x_2$ .

If we consider all of the left cosets  $(G/H)_{\text{left}} = \{xH : x \in G\}$ . If  $G$  is finite, so there are finitely many left cosets. This is the index of  $H \in G$  and denoted,  $|G : H|$

**Example.** Consider  $\mathbb{Z}$  and  $n\mathbb{Z}$  as our groups, then if we consider  $a \sim b$  this is just saying  $-a + b \in n\mathbb{Z}$ , however this just says  $b - a \in n\mathbb{Z}$  which is the definition for divisibility. Let  $a \in \mathbb{Z}$ , then  $a = kn + r$ , then we can say  $a \sim r$  which is equivalent to  $\bar{a} = \bar{r}$ . Hence,

$$\mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} = \{\bar{0}, \bar{1}, \bar{2}, \dots, \overline{n-1}\} = n\mathbb{Z}$$

**Theorem 2.3** (Lagrange's Theorem). Let  $G$  be a group and  $H$  be a subgroup. Then,

$$|G| = |H||G : H|$$

*Proof.* Firstly, we aim to show that all left cosets have the same number of elements, more specifically  $|H| = |xH|$ . We aim to find a bijection  $H \rightarrow xH$ , we can try  $x \mapsto xh$ . Now prove this is a bijection, surjectivity is obvious, so prove injectivity. Hence we prove that if  $\phi(h_1) = \phi(h_2)$  then  $h_1 = h_2$ . We have that  $xh_1 = xh_2$  and so injectivity is clear. So we can say that  $|H| = |xH|$ , and as we know,

$$G = \bigcup_{x \in G} xH$$

then  $|G| = |G : H||H|$  □

**Corollary 2.4.** – Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $H$  a subgroup. Then  $|H| \mid |G|$ .

– Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $x \in G$  then  $\text{ord}(x) = |\langle x \rangle| \mid |G|$

**Theorem 2.5** (Cauchy's Theorem). Let  $G$  be finite group and let  $p$  be a prime, then if  $p \mid |G|$ , then you can find a subgroup and an element of order  $p$

We will see Sylow's theorem later, which is a converse to Lagrange's theorem and instead of relating just to  $p$ , it related to  $p^n$ .

Suppose that  $H$  is a subgroup, we have seen a left coset,  $xH$ . We can do the same with  $Hx$  which is the right coset. In general  $xH \neq Hx$  as the group law is not generally commutative, as we want  $xh = h'x$ . However this works for more than just commutativity, so we define a normal subgroup.

## 2.1 Normal Subgroups

**Definition 2.6** (Normal Subgroup). A subgroup  $H$  of  $G$  is called normal if,

$$xH = Hx = \{h'x : h' \in H\} \quad \forall x \in G$$

Lets consider a non-example,

**Example.** Consider  $K = \langle s \rangle$  of  $D_8$  and we claim it's not normal, so  $rK \neq Kr$ . We have  $H' = \{1, s\}$  and  $rK = \{r, rs = sr^2\}$  and  $Kr = \{r, sr\}$ <sup>1</sup>. However,  $Kr \neq rK$  as  $sr \neq sr^2$ . Hence, not normal.

**Definition 2.7** (Conjugate). Two elements  $g, h \in G$  if we can find a  $x \in G$  such that,

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$$g = xhx^{-1}$$

and we call it the conjugate of  $g$  by  $x$ .

If we consider a subgroup to be normal we must have  $Hx = xH$ , this is equivalent to saying  $H = xHx^{-1} = \{xhx^{-1} : h \in H\}$ . This can be seen by writing  $xh = hx$ .

**Lemma 2.8.** If we have a group homeomorphism  $\phi : G \rightarrow H$ , then  $\text{Ker } \phi$  is a normal subgroup.

*Proof.* So we have to prove that any  $g \in \text{Ker } \phi$  and then  $xgx^{-1} \in \text{Ker } \phi$  and so consider  $f(xgx^{-1}) = f(x)f(g)f(x^{-1}) = f(x)e_H f(x)^{-1} = f(x)f(x)^{-1} = e_H$  as so  $xgx^{-1} \in \text{Ker } \phi$  as required.  $\square$

Now we will consider the symmetry group. If we have some  $\sigma \in S_n$ , then we can decompose a  $\sigma$  uniquely as  $\sigma = (a_1 a_2 \dots a_{n_1}) \dots (b_1 b_2 \dots b_{n_k})$ . The  $k$ -tuple of  $(n_1 n_2 \dots n_k)$  is called the cycle type of  $\sigma$ .

**Example.** The permutation  $(12)(3456)$  has type  $(2, 4)$ .

**Proposition 2.9.** If two permutations are conjugate if and only if they have the same cycle type.

*Proof.* In notes  $\square$

Consider our permutation  $\sigma = (12)(3456)$  and another one of the same type  $\tilde{\sigma} = (34)(1256)$  then there exists  $\tau \in S_6$  such that  $\tilde{\sigma} = \tau\sigma\tau^{-1}$  we write out,

$$\begin{array}{ll} \sigma & (12)(3456) \\ \tilde{\sigma} & (34)(1256) \\ \tau & (13)(24)(5)(6) \end{array}$$

The important thing is that,  $\tau$  is not unique. Note, that in  $S_3$  all three elements must be conjugate. We have two three cycles and two transpositions, and we know that a two cycle can't be conjugate to a three cycle, which shows the power of this proposition.

In  $S_n$  we have a subgroup  $A_n$  (the subgroup of even permutations). If  $\sigma = (a_1 a_2 \dots a_k)$ , ie. a  $k$ -cycle.

---

<sup>1</sup>Check this



**Definition 2.10** (Signature). If we consider  $\varepsilon : S_n \rightarrow \{\bar{0}, \bar{1}\}$  and consider a new map,  $\sigma \mapsto \varepsilon(\sigma)$  where we define,

$$\varepsilon(\sigma) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \sigma \text{ is even} \\ 1 & \text{if } \sigma \text{ is odd} \end{cases}$$

A  $k$ -cycle can be considered as a product of transpositions is to start with  $\sigma = (a_k a_{k-1})(a_{k-2})(a_{k-3}) \dots (a_1 a_0)$ . We can also say that  $A_n$  is normal as if we consider  $\varepsilon$  we really have  $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$  and we have a homomorphism, ie.  $\varepsilon(\sigma_1\sigma_2) = \varepsilon(\sigma_1)\varepsilon(\sigma_2)$ . The kernel is just the even permutations,  $A_n$ . Hence,  $A_n$  is normal.

Take two  $\sigma_1, \sigma_2 \in A_n$ , when are they conjugate in  $A_n$ ? Hence find,  $\tau \in A_n$  such that  $\sigma_2 = \tau\sigma_1\tau^{-1}$ . We need them to find two of the same cycle type, but we see that this  $\tau$  doesn't exist. Consider  $A_4 = \{e, (123), (abc)(cd)\}$ , if we look to the product of transpositions, they are conjugate, but if we look at the three cycles,  $(123)(132)$  there doesn't exist a  $\tau \in A_4$ .

## 2.2 Quotient Groups

We are going to consider a factor group, so we are going to start with  $H$ , a normal subgroup of  $G$ .

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**Definition 2.11** (Quotient Group Law). We define a composition law  $(\cdot)$  on the set of left cosets  $G/H$  by,

$$\begin{aligned} (\cdot) : G/H \times G/H &\rightarrow G/H \\ (xH, yH) &\mapsto xH \cdot yH = xyH \end{aligned}$$

This is well defined as  $H$  is normal,  $x'H = xH$  and  $y' = yH \implies x'y'H = xyH$ .

**Proposition 2.12.**  $(G/H, \cdot)$  is a group and it is called the quotient group of  $G$  by  $H$

*Proof.* Associativity can be checked quickly, then  $e_{G/H}$  is just  $e_G H = H$ , we can see this by  $e_G H \cdot xH = e_g xH = xH$ . The inverse, is just  $x^{-1}H$ , then we see,  $xHx^{-1}H = xx^{-1}H = e_G H = H$   $\square$

Now consider  $\phi : G \rightarrow G/H$  and get  $\phi(g) = gH$ . This is a group homomorphism.

**Proposition 2.13.** The map  $\phi$  is a group homomorphism and  $\text{Ker } \phi = H$ .

*Proof.* The fact that  $\phi$  is surjective is clear as  $gH = \phi(g)$ . It is a homomorphism as,

$$\phi(g_1 g_2) = g_1 g_2 H = (g_1 H) \cdot (g_2 H) = \phi(g_1) \phi(g_2)$$

We now show that  $\text{Ker } \phi = H$ , first  $H \subset \text{Ker } \phi$  since if  $g \in H$ , then  $e_G^{-1}g = g \in H$  and  $e_G \sim g$  hence  $\phi g = gH = e_G H$ . Conversely let  $g \in \text{Ker } \phi$  meaning  $\phi g = gH = e_G H$ , then  $e_G \sim g$  and  $e_G^{-1}g = g \in H$ .  $\square$

### 2.2.1 First Isomorphism Theorem

**Theorem 2.14** (First Isomorphism Theorem). Suppose  $f : G \rightarrow H$  is a group homomorphism. The quotient group  $G/\text{Ker}(f) \cong \text{Im}(f)$

*Proof.* Consider  $\pi : G/\text{Ker}(f) \rightarrow \text{Im}(f)$  defined by  $\pi(g \text{Ker}(f)) = f(g)$  and we show  $\pi$  is a group isomorphism. Firstly, check  $\pi$  is well defined. Assume  $g \text{Ker}(\pi) = g' \text{Ker}(\pi)$  meaning  $g'^{-1}g = \tilde{g} \in \text{Ker}(\pi)$ . Then,

$$\begin{aligned} f(g) &= f(g'\tilde{g}) \\ &= f(g')f(\tilde{g}) \\ &= f(g')e_H \\ &= f(g') \end{aligned}$$

since  $\tilde{g} \in \text{Ker}(f)$ . Further  $\pi$  is a homomorphism:

$$\begin{aligned}\pi(g \text{Ker}(f) \cdot g' \text{Ker}(f)) &= \pi(gg' \text{Ker}(f)) \\ &= f(gg') \\ &= f(g)f(g') \\ &= \pi(g \text{Ker}(f))\pi(g' \text{Ker}(f))\end{aligned}$$

The homomorphism is surjective, if  $f(g) \in \text{Im}(f)$ ,  $g \in G$ , then  $f(g) = \pi(g \text{Ker}(f))$ . It is also injective, assume  $f(g) = \pi(g \text{Ker}(f)) = \pi(g' \text{Ker}(f)) = f(g')$ , then  $f(g')^{-1}f(g) = f(g'^{-1}g) = e_H$  and  $g'^{-1}g \in \text{Ker}(f)$  and so  $g \text{Ker}(f) = g' \text{Ker}(f)$ .  $\square$

**Corollary 2.15.** Suppose  $G$  is finite, and we have a group homomorphism,  $f : G \rightarrow H$ , then,

$$\frac{|G|}{|\text{Ker}(f)|} = |\text{Im}(f)|$$

*Proof.* As  $G/\text{Ker}(f) \cong \text{Im}(f)$  then if  $G$  is finite, then everything is finite. Further, we can say  $|G/H| = |\text{Im } f|$ , now applying Lagrange's Theorem, we get the result,

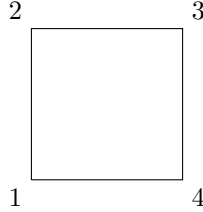
$$\frac{|G|}{|\text{Ker } f|} = |\text{Im } f|$$

$\square$

### 3 Group Actions

Groups acts on sets and so we can focus our attention to something called group actions. Let's start with a motivating example. Consider  $D_8$ , which is linked to the four vertices of a square. We can consider a rotation of  $\frac{\pi}{2}$  and  $s$  which is just the symmetry.  $D_8$  acts on the vertices 1, 2, 3, 4

Lecture 8



What it does to this square is just a group action.

**Definition 3.1** (Group Action). Let  $(G, *)$  be a group and a set  $A$ . A group action is a map,

$$(\cdot) : G \times A \rightarrow A$$

$$(g, a) \mapsto g \cdot a$$

satisfying,

$$(g_1 * g_2) \cdot a = g_1 \cdot (g_2 \cdot a) \quad \forall g_1, g_2 \in G, \quad a \in A \quad (1)$$

$$e_G \cdot a = a \quad \forall a \in A \quad (2)$$

A group can act on itself, in two ways; by left multiplication and conjugation.

**Definition 3.2** (Action by left multiplication). Consider  $(\cdot) : G \times G \rightarrow G$  and define  $(h, g) \mapsto h \cdot g = h * g$ . Axiom (1) is satisfied,

$$(h_1 * h_2) \cdot g = (h_1 * h_2) * g = h_1 * (h_2 * g) = h_1 \cdot (h_2 \cdot g)$$

and axiom (2) is also satisfied.

**Definition 3.3** (Action by conjugation). A group  $(G, *)$  acts on itself defined by  $(h, g) \mapsto (h \cdot g) = h * g * h^{-1}$ . Now check the axioms,

$$\begin{aligned} (h_1 * h_2) \cdot g &= (h_1 * h_2) * g * (h_1 * h_2)^{-1} \\ &= (h_1 * h_2) * g * (h_2^{-1} * h_1^{-1}) \\ &= h_1 * (h_2 * g * h_2^{-1}) * h_1^{-1} \\ &= h_1 \cdot (h_2 \cdot g) \end{aligned}$$

The second axiom is also satisfied.

We are now going to consider a permutation action, if we have a map,  $\tau_g : A \rightarrow A$  such that  $\tau_g(a) = g \cdot a$  and this is a bijection. It has an inverse,  $\tau_{g^{-1}} : A \rightarrow A$ ,

$$\tau_{g^{-1}} \circ \tau_g = \tau_g \circ \tau_{g^{-1}} = \text{id}_A$$

Or more precisely,

$$\begin{aligned}
 (\tau_{g^{-1}} \circ \tau_g)(a) &= \tau_{g^{-1}}(\tau_g(a)) \\
 &= \tau_{g^{-1}}(g \cdot a) \\
 &= g^{-1} \cdot (g \cdot a) \\
 &= (g^{-1} * g) \cdot a \\
 &= e_G \cdot a \\
 &= a
 \end{aligned}$$

**Definition 3.4** (Permutation Representation). Let  $(S_A, \circ)$  be the group of all bijections from  $A \rightarrow A$ ;  $S_A$  is the group of symmetries of  $A$ , the group law is just composition of bijections. The map,

$$\tau : G \rightarrow S_A$$

is defined by,

$$\tau(g) = \tau_g$$

is a group homomorphism,

$$\begin{aligned}
 \tau(g_1 * g_2)(a) &= (g_1 * g_2) \cdot a \\
 &= g_1 \cdot (g_2 \cdot a) \\
 &= \tau_{g_1}(\tau_{g_2}(a)) \\
 &= (\tau(g_1) \circ \tau(g_2))(a)
 \end{aligned}$$

and we call  $\tau$  the permutation representation associated to the action  $(\cdot)$ .

If  $A$  is finite, say  $|A| = n$ , then we can list the elements of  $A = \{a_1, \dots, a_n\}$  and label them. This isn't unique, but then what is the group of bijections? It's just  $S_n$ .

We now define the kernel of a representation,

**Definition 3.5** (Kernel of representation). The kernel of  $\tau : G \rightarrow S_A$

$$\text{Ker } \tau = \{g \in G : \tau_g = \text{id}_A\} = \{g \in G : g \cdot a = a\}$$

is just the kernel of the representation  $\tau$ . If we find  $\text{Ker } \tau = \{e_G\}$ , or  $\tau$  is injective, we say  $(\cdot)$  is faithful.

Lecture 9

### 3.1 Stabilisers and Orbits

Consider a group  $G$  acting on a set  $A$ ,

**Definition 3.6** (Stabiliser). We define the following set called the stabiliser

$$\text{Stab}(a) = \{g \in G : g \cdot a = a\}$$

**Remark.** These are the elements that when acted on  $a$  doesn't change it. They fix  $a$ .

The interesting thing is that

**Proposition 3.7.**  $\text{Stab}(a)$  is a subgroup of  $G$ .

*Proof.* We begin by seeing that  $e_G \cdot a = a$  and so  $e_G \in \text{Stab}(a)$ . Then we can prove that  $g^{-1} \in \text{Stab}(a)$ ,

$$a = e_G \cdot a = (g^{-1} \cdot g) \cdot a = g^{-1} \cdot (g \cdot a) = g^{-1} \cdot a$$

Furthermore, let  $g_1, g_2 \in \text{Stab}(a)$  and then,

$$(g_1 * g_2) \cdot a = g_1 \cdot (g_2 \cdot a) = g_1 \cdot a = a$$

□

Let us define a relation among elements of a non-empty set,  $a \sim b \iff \exists g \in G : a = g \cdot b$

**Proposition 3.8.** This relation is an equivalence relation.

*Proof.* Simple. □

**Definition 3.9** (Orbit). Let  $a \in A$ . The equivalence class of  $a$  for the relation  $\sim$  is,

$$\bar{a} = \{b \in A : \exists g \in G, b = g \cdot a\} = \{g \cdot a : g \in G\}$$

is called the orbit of  $a$ , for the given action, and is denoted  $\text{orb}(a)$ .

We note that also,

$$A = \bigcup_{a \in A} \text{orb}(a)$$

meaning  $A$  is equal to the disjoint union of its orbits under the given action of  $G$ .

The action is transitive if there is only one orbit in which case this orbit necessarily contains all elements of  $A$ . In this case,  $A = \text{orb}(a)$  for every  $a \in A$ .

**Example.** For example consider the action,

$$\begin{aligned} S_n \times \{1, 2, \dots, n\} &\rightarrow \{1, 2, \dots, n\} \\ (\sigma, i) &\mapsto \sigma(i) \end{aligned}$$

Then this is transitive as we just have to find that for any  $i$  and  $j$  we can map  $i$  to  $j$ . Hence, if  $i = j$ , then take the identity. Otherwise, take the transposition  $(ij)$ .

**Theorem 3.10** (The Orbit-Stabiliser Theorem). Assume  $(G, *)$  is a group acting on a set  $A$  and  $G$  is finite. Then the orbit  $\text{orb}(a)$  of an element  $a \in A$  is finite and,

$$|\text{orb}(a)| = \frac{|G|}{|\text{Stab}(a)|}$$

*Proof.* Consider the map,

$$f : \text{orb}(a) \rightarrow G/\text{Stab}(a)$$

defined by,

$$f(g \cdot a) = g \cdot \text{Stab}(a)$$

We check that this map is well defined, it is. Then we prove that this is injective and it is surjective. Then  $f$  is a bijection. Hence, we get nicely the result. □

Recall the left regular representation of  $G$  on itself by left multiplication. Assume  $G$  is of finite cardinality  $n$ . If we label the elements of  $G$  as  $\{g_1, \dots, g_n\}$  the regular representation defined a faithful permutation representation (an injective homomorphism),

$$\rho : G \rightarrow S_n$$

called the regular permutation representation defined as followed,

**Definition 3.11** (Regular permutation representation). If  $g \in G$ ,  $\rho(g)$  is the permutation defined for  $i, j \in \{1, \dots, n\}$  by,

$$\rho(g)(i) = j \quad \text{if } g * g_i = g_j$$

The permutation representation  $\rho$  depends on the give labelling of the elements of  $G$ . In particular, since  $\text{Ker } \rho = \{e_G\}$  we obtain by the FIT that  $G$  is isomorphic to it's image  $\rho(G)$ ; a subgroup of  $S_n$ . Hence, we obtain,

**Theorem 3.12** (Cayley's Theorem). A finite group of cardinality  $n$  is isomorphic to a subgroup of  $S_n$ .

Next, we define the left action of a group  $G$  on the set of left cosets of a given subgroup. Let  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$  and  $A = (G/H)_{\text{left}}$  the set of left cosets of  $H$ . The group  $G$  acts on  $A$  by

$$g \cdot (g'H) = (g * g')H$$

This action is called the action of  $G$  on the left cosets of  $H$  by left multiplication. If  $|G : H| = m$  is finite, and we level the elementsof  $A$  as  $\{g_1H, \dots, g_mH\}$ , then the above representation defines a homomorphism

$$\tau : G \rightarrow S_m$$

as follows: if  $g \in G$ ,  $\tau(g)$  is the permutation defined for  $i, j \in \{1, \dots, m\}$  by

$$\tau(g)(i) = j \quad \text{if } g \cdot g_iH = (g * g_i)H = g_jH$$

The permutation representation  $\tau$  depends on the given labelling of the elements of  $A$ .

Let  $\tau_H : G \rightarrow S_{G/H}$  be the permutation representation associated to the action of  $G$  by left multiplication on the left cosets of  $H$ . Thus if  $g \in G$ ,

$$\tau_H(g) : G/H \rightarrow G/H$$

is the bijection defined by,

$$\tau_H(g)(g'H) = (g * g')H$$

**Theorem 3.13.** The following hold,

- $G$  acts transitively on  $G/H$ .
- The stabiliser of  $e_GH$  is the subgroup  $H$ .
- $\text{Ker}(\tau_H) = \bigcap_{x \in G} xHx^{-1}$ , and  $\text{Ker}(\tau_H)$  is the largest normal subgroup of  $G$  contained in  $H$ .

*Proof.* – Let  $aH, bH \in G/H$  and  $g = b * a^{-1}$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} g \cdot (aH) &= (b * a^{-1}) \cdot aH \\ &= (b * a * a^{-1})H \\ &= bH \end{aligned}$$

- The stabiliser of  $e_GH$  is

$$\begin{aligned} \{g \in G : g \cdot (e_GH) = gH = H\} &= \{g \in G : gH = H\} \\ &= H \end{aligned}$$

– By definition,

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Ker}(\pi_H) &= \{g \in G : g \cdot (xH) = xH, \forall x \in G\} \\
 &= \{g \in G : (g * x)H = xH, \forall x \in G\} \\
 &= \{g \in G : (x^{-1} * g * x)H = H, x \in G\} \\
 &= \{g \in G : x^{-1} * g * x \in H, \forall x \in G\} \\
 &= \{g \in G : g \in xHx^{-1}, \forall x \in G\} \\
 &= \bigcap_{x \in G} xHx^{-1}
 \end{aligned}$$

Further  $\text{Ker}(\pi_H)$  is a normal subgroup of both  $G$  and  $H$ . Now let  $N$  be a normal subgroup of  $G$  contained in  $H$  then  $N = xHx^{-1} \subset xHx^{-1}, \forall x \in G$  hence,  $N \subset \bigcap_{x \in G} xHx^{-1} = \text{Ker}(\pi_H)$ . This shows that  $\text{Ker}(\pi_H)$  is the largest subgroup of  $G$  contained in  $H$ .  $\square$

**Corollary 3.14.** Let  $G$  be a finite group of cardinality  $n$  and  $p$  the smallest prime number dividing  $n = |G|$ , then any subgroup of  $G$  of index  $p$  is normal. In particular, if  $G$  has a subgroup of index 2 then this subgroup must be normal.

*Proof.* Let  $H \leq G$  and then  $\pi_H$  is the permutation representation by the multiplication of left cosets of  $H$  in  $G$ . Let  $K = \text{Ker } \pi_H$  and so  $|G : K| = |G : H||H : K| = pm$ .

Since  $H$  has  $p$  left cosets,  $G/K$  is isomorphic to a subgroup of  $S_p$  ( $\pi_H(G)$ ) by the FIT. By Lagrange's Theorem,  $pm = |G/K| \mid |S_p| = p!$ . Thus  $m \mid \frac{p!}{p} = (p-1)!$ . But all prime factors of  $(p-1)! < p$  and by the minimality of  $p$ , every possible prime divisor of  $m \geq p$ . This forces  $m = 1$  as  $m \mid |G|$ , so  $H = K$  is a normal subgroup of  $G$  (since  $K$  is normal): the equality  $|H : K| = 1$  just means that  $H = K$ .  $\square$

## 4 Class Equation

### 4.1 Normalisers, Centralisers and Centers

Lecture 11

We are going to consider the class equation which relates to conjugation. We are going to consider the subsets of  $G$ ,  $\mathcal{S}(G) = \{A \subset G\}$ , these are not necessarily subgroups, they are just subsets. Then we have the following action,

$$\begin{aligned} (\cdot) : G \times \mathcal{S}(G) &\rightarrow \mathcal{S}(G) \\ (g, A) &\mapsto gAg^{-1} = \{gag^{-1} : a \in A\} \end{aligned}$$

If you have a group action, you have a stabiliser and an orbit.

$$\text{Stab}(A) = \{g \in G : gAg^{-1} = A\}$$

and this is the normaliser.

**Definition 4.1** (Normaliser). The stabiliser of the above group action,

$$N_G(A) = \{g \in G : gAg^{-1} = A\}$$

The normaliser is a subgroup of  $G$  as it is just a stabiliser. The normaliser of  $a$  acts on  $A$  itself,

$$\begin{aligned} \phi_A : N_G(A) \times A &\rightarrow A \\ (g, a) &\mapsto gag^{-1} \end{aligned}$$

this is a group action and we are interested in this group action. We can go deeper and find the stabiliser of  $\phi_A$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \text{orb}(a) &= \{gag^{-1} : g \in N_G(A)\} \\ \text{Stab}(a) &= \{g \in N_G : gag^{-1} = a \iff ga = ag\} \end{aligned}$$

Hence the stabiliser is just the commuting elements of this. Hence, we now look towards the kernel of  $\phi_A$  and we say that,

**Definition 4.2** (Centraliser). We say that the kernel of the  $\phi_A$  is the centraliser,

$$C_G(A) = \text{Ker } \phi_A = \bigcap_{a \in A} \text{Stab}(a) = \{g \in N_G(A) : Lga = gaL, \forall a \in A\}$$

and these are just all the commuting elements.

and we know that

**Lemma 4.3.** The  $C_G(A)$  is always a normal subgroup of  $N_G(A)$ .

Now we ask, what happens when  $A = G$  and so we ask, what is  $N_G(G)$ ?  $G$ , and what is  $C_G(G)$ ? Well we write it out,

$$Z(G) = \{g \in G : gh = hg, \forall h \in G\}$$

and this is called the center of  $G$ .

**Definition 4.4** (Center of  $G$ ). The center is a normal abelian subgroup of  $G$  such that,

$$Z(G) = \{g \in G : gh = hg, \forall h \in G\}$$

**Example.** If  $G$  is abelian, then  $Z(G) = G$ , so we are only interested when  $G$  is not abelian.

We also note that the center is contained in the centraliser of every subset of  $A$ . The center is the intersection of all centralisers of  $A \in G$ .<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>check this



## 4.2 The Class Equation

Let us consider  $g \in G$  and the subset  $\{g\} \subset G$ , then,

$$N_G(\{g\}) = C_G(\{g\}) = \{h \in G : hgh^{-1} = g\} = \{h \in G : hg = gh\}$$

This is then the subgroup of elements that commute with  $g$ . We note that  $C_G(g) = \text{Stab}(g)$  is precisely the stabiliser of  $g$  under the conjugation action of  $G$  onto itself. The orbit of  $\{g\}$  under conjugation is,

$$\text{orb}(g) = \{hgh^{-1} : h \in G\}$$

and consists of all elements of  $G$  which are conjugate to  $g$ .

We note that  $\text{orb}(g) = \{g\} \iff hgh^{-1} = g$  for all  $h \in G$  and this is equivalent to  $g \in Z(G)$ . Thus,

$$|\text{orb}(g)| = 1 \iff g \in Z(G)$$

Now assume that  $G$  is finite. The orbit-stabiliser theorem states that,

$$|\text{orb}(g)| = \frac{|G|}{|C_G(g)|}$$

The conjugacy classes of elements of  $G$  form a partition of  $G$

$$G = \bigcup_{g \in G} \text{orb}(g)$$

where the union is disjoint. By the above discussion, we have,

$$Z(G) = \bigcup_{g \in G, |\text{orb}(g)|=1} \text{orb}(g)$$

where the union is over all of these elements of  $G$  with  $|\text{orb}(g)| = 1$ . Let  $\{\text{orb}(g_1), \dots, \text{orb}(g_r)\}$  be the distinct conjugacy classes of  $G$  that are **not** contained in  $Z(G)$ . Then,

$$G = Z(G) \bigcup \left( \bigcup_{i=1}^r \text{orb}(g_i) \right)$$

Counting the number of elements of  $G$ , and considering the relation  $|\text{orb}(g_i)| = |G : C_G(g_i)|$ , we find the class equation:

**Theorem 4.5** (The Class Equation). Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $\{\text{orb}(g_1), \dots, \text{orb}(g_r)\}$  be the distinct conjugacy classes of  $G$  which are **not** contained in  $Z(G)$ , then,

$$|G| = |Z(G)| + \sum_{i=1}^r |G : C_G(g_i)|$$

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**Theorem 4.6.** If  $p$  is a prime and  $|G| = p^m$  then  $Z(G)$  is non-trivial.

*Proof.* Considering the class equation, we know  $p \mid |G|$  and we claim  $p \mid |G : C_G(g_i)|$ , this is true as  $|G : C_G(g_i)| \mid |G|$  but as  $|G| = p^m$  we must know that  $|G : C_G(g_i)|$  is a power of  $p$  and so  $p \mid |G : C_G(g_i)|$  and so hence know that  $p \mid |Z(G)|$  and it must be non-trivial.  $\square$

Here a weaker version of Sylow's theorem,

**Theorem 4.7** (Cauchy's Theorem). Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $p$  a prime number which divides  $|G|$ . Then there exists an element of  $G$  of order  $p$ , and a subgroup of  $G$  of cardinality  $p$ .

### 4.2.1 Conjugacy Classes of $S_n$

We will now look to find all of the cycles that commute with some cycle  $\sigma$ .

Take  $1 \leq m \leq n \in \mathbb{Z}$  and say  $\sigma = (a_1 a_2 \dots a_m) \in S_m$ . There are  $\frac{n(n-1)\dots(n+m-1)}{m}$  and this is  $|\text{orb}(\sigma)|$  and so using orbit-stabiliser theorem,

$$\frac{n!}{|C_{S_n}(\sigma)|} = \frac{n(n-1)\dots(n+m-1)}{m}$$

and so we get that,

$$|C_{S_n}(\sigma)| = (n-m)!m$$

We can determine this centraliser in a nicer way. The centraliser is just  $\{\tau \in S_n : \tau\sigma = \sigma\tau\}$  and we know that  $\{\sigma^i\tau, \}$  where  $0 \leq i \leq m-1$  and  $\tau$  is disjoint. Looking at the cardinality of this set, we find that it's just  $m(n-m)!$ , which says that we must just have the centraliser as  $C_{S_n}(\sigma) = \{\sigma^i\tau\}$ .

## 4.3 Simple Groups

Simple groups are not simple.

**Definition 4.8** (Simple Groups).  $G$  is simple if the only normal subgroups of  $G$  are  $H = G$  and  $H = \{e_G\}$ .

**Theorem 4.9.**  $A_5$  is a simple subgroup.

*Proof.* We consider all the different cycles in  $A_5$ , you have

$$1 \quad (1\ 2\ 3) \quad (1\ 2\ 3\ 4\ 5) \quad (1\ 2)(3\ 4)$$

Now we count the amount of each cycle. There are one 1-cycles. There are 20 3-cycles, 24 5-cycles and 15 of the rest. Now let us find their orbits.

We consult the orbit-stabiliser theorem. We see that,

$$|\text{orb}_{A_5}((1\ 2\ 3))| = \frac{|A_5|}{|C_{A_5}((1\ 2\ 3))|}$$

We can find the centraliser in  $S_5$  so we then take that and consider  $C_{A_5}((1\ 2\ 3)) = C_{S_5}((1\ 2\ 3)) \cap A_5$  and so we see that  $C_{A_5}((1\ 2\ 3)) = 3$ . Hence,

$$|\text{orb}_{A_5}((1\ 2\ 3))| = \frac{|A_5|}{|C_{A_5}((1\ 2\ 3))|} = \frac{60}{3} = 20$$

and so all 3-cycles conjugate in  $S_5$  are conjugate in  $A_5$ .

We now do the same for the 5-cycles. We find that  $|\text{orb}_{A_5}((1\ 2\ 3\ 4\ 5))|$ . Then we see that there are two conjugacy classes with both cardinality 12.

Now for the last type. We can check that there is no odd permutation such that it commutes. Hence the cardinality of the centraliser of this is even and it divides  $|A_5|$  and so we see it must be 15.

Now suppose  $H$  is normal, now it must be the union of the conjugacy classes. Find ways to sum,  $\{1, 12, 12, 15, 20\}$  to make 60. There is only way to do this, by adding them all together. Hence it's either 1 or 60 and so  $A_5$  is simple.  $\square$

## 5 Sylow's Theorems

Lecture 13

Suppose we have a finite group  $G$ ,  $|G| = n$ . We know if we have a subgroup, then the cardinality of the subgroup we know this divides  $n$ . Sylow's Theorems regards the converse of this, if we have some  $k \mid n$ , is there some  $H$  such that  $|H| = k$ . Sylow's Theorems provides an answer, but only for positive powers of primes.

Suppose we have some prime  $p$ , such that  $|G| = p^r \cdot m$ , where  $r \geq 1$  and  $\gcd(m, p) = 1$ . If we have a group that has cardinality that is some  $p^r$ , this is a  $p$ -group. If we have some  $p$ -group, then any subgroup is also a  $p$ -group. The subgroups of some group  $G$ , that are  $p$ -groups, are called the  $p$ -subgroups of  $G$ . More formally,

**Definition 5.1** ( $p$ -group). Let  $p$  be a prime number. A group of cardinality  $p^t$  for some  $t \geq 1$  is called a  $p$ -group. A non-trivial subgroup of a  $p$ -group is a  $p$ -group.

These  $p$ -subgroups, which have maximal cardinality, ie. if  $|H| = p^r$ , then we call this the Sylow  $p$ -subgroup.

**Definition 5.2** (Sylow  $p$ -group). If we consider a group  $G$ , such that  $|G| = m \cdot p^r$ , then the subgroups  $H_i$ , cardinality  $|H_i| = p^r$  is called the Sylow  $p$ -groups.

**Remark.** We can consider a Sylow  $p$ -group for each prime in the prime decomposition of  $|G|$ .

If we consider the set of all Sylow  $p$ -groups,

$$\text{Syl}_p(G) = \{H \subset G : |H| = p^r\}$$

and we consider  $|\text{Syl}_p(G)|$ , we say  $|\text{Syl}_p(G)| = n_p(G)$

Sylow's Theorem tells us that for any power of  $p^i \mid |G|$  there exists a subgroup with cardinality  $p^i$ , in particular there exists  $p$ -Sylow Subgroups, ie.  $n_p(G)$  is non-empty.

**Example.** Let's consider  $S_3$  and we know  $|S_3| = 6$  and so we can consider a 3-Sylow subgroup. We get  $\{1, (1\ 2\ 3), (1\ 3\ 2)\}$ , ie. the subgroup generated by a 3-subgroup. Now we consider the 2-Sylow subgroups, there are 3 of them. There are something very special about the number of these subgroups.

There are four statements,

**Theorem 5.3** (Sylow's Theorems). Let  $p$  be a prime such that  $p \mid |G|$ ,

- (i)  $n_p(G)$  is nonempty, there exists subgroups of cardinality  $p^i$  for every  $p^i \mid |G|$ . Every  $p$ -subgroup is contained a  $p$ -Sylow subgroup. In fact we find that a  $p$ -Sylow subgroup is just the elements of order  $p^i$ .
- (ii) Any two  $p$ -Sylow groups must be conjugate. They form an orbit on  $G$  by the action of conjugation.
- (iii) (a) The number of  $p$ -Sylow subgroups  $\equiv 1 \pmod{p}$ . It also says that the number of Sylow subgroups must divide  $m$ .  
 (b) The number of  $p$ -Sylow subgroups is just the index of the normaliser of the  $p$ -sylow subgroups.

We now are going to try and focus on the proof of each of these. We need more than orbit-stabiliser theorem. Let us consider a finite  $p$ -group which acts on a finite set. We consider the congruence and point formula.

Suppose we have a group  $|H| = p^r$  and  $H$  acts on a finite set, then let's look at what happens to the orbits of some  $x \in X$ .

$$\text{orb}(x) = \{h \cdot x : h \in H\}$$

and we know

$$|\text{orb}(x)| = \frac{|H|}{|\text{Stab}(x)|}$$

let us see what happens, the first possibility is that  $|\text{orb}(x)| > 1$ , this means that  $\text{Stab}(x) \neq H$  and  $p \mid |\text{orb}(x)|$  as  $|H| = p^r$ . Conversely, if  $|\text{orb}(x)| = 1$ , then  $\text{Stab}(x) = H$ , hence  $h \cdot x = x$  for any  $h \in H$ . If you have a group action and an element that satisfies this, then we call it the fixed point.

**Definition 5.4** (Fixed Point). Consider a group  $H$  acting on a set  $X$  and take a  $x \in X$ . Then if  $h \cdot x = x$  for all  $h \in H$ , then we say that  $x$  is a fixed point of the action.

We know that,

$$X = \bigcup_{x \in X} \text{orb}(x)$$

and now we can distinguish the elements of cardinality one and not one.

$$X = \bigcup_{|\text{orb}(x)|=1} \text{orb}(x) + \bigcup_{|\text{orb}(x)|>1} \text{orb}(x)$$

Then, of course as  $X$  is finite we can count this, we get the cardinality of the set of fixed points in the first union. In the second union, we get a sum of some powers of  $p$ .

$$X = |\{x \in X : \forall h \in H, h \cdot x = x\}| + \bigcup_{|\text{orb}(x)|>1} \text{orb}(x)$$

Then we consider this mod  $p$ , then the second union disappears, for convenience, let us call  $\text{Fix}_H(X) = \{x \in X : \forall h \in H, h \cdot x = x\}$

$$|X| \equiv |\text{Fix}_H(X)| \pmod{p}$$

This is the congruence point formula, or fixed point congruence formula.

**Theorem 5.5** (Fixed Point Congruence). Let  $H$  be a finite  $p$ -group acting on a finite set  $X$  and  $\text{Fix}_H(X)$  is the subset of fixed points of  $X$  under this action. Then,

$$|X| \equiv |\text{Fix}_H(X)| \pmod{p}$$

**Corollary 5.6.** Let  $H$  be a finite  $p$ -group on a finite set  $X$ . Suppose  $\gcd(|X|, p) = 1$ , then there exists fixed points.

## 5.1 Proof of Sylow I

**Proof of Sylow I.** We will prove a stronger result, take any  $1 \leq i \leq r-1$  and take a subgroup of  $G$  of cardinality of  $p^i$ . There exists some  $H \subset H' \subset G$  and  $|H'| = p^{i+1}$ . We will prove this by induction on  $i$ .

For  $i = 1$ , this is just Cauchy's Theorem. This implies  $\exists H = \langle x \rangle \subset G$  and  $|H| = p$ .

Now we assume that there is a  $H'$  such that  $H \subset H' \subset G$  where  $|H| = p^r$ , and hence prove that there exists some other  $H''$  that satisfies the chain condition but  $|H''| = p^r$ . To do this we consider the action,

$$H \times G/H \rightarrow G/H$$

$$(h, gH) \mapsto hgH$$

and now we consider the fixed points of this action. Hence,

$$|G/H| \equiv |\text{Fix}_H(G/H)| \pmod{p}$$

Let  $gH \in \text{Fix}_H(G/H)$ . Then  $\forall h \in H$  we have,

$$\begin{aligned} hgH &= gH \iff hg \in gH \iff g^{-1}hg \in H \\ g^{-1}Hg \subset H &\iff g^{-1}Hg = H \iff g \in N_G(H) \end{aligned}$$

where the forth step follows from  $|g^{-1}Hg| = |H|$ . Thus,

$$\text{Fix}_H(G/H) = \{gH : g \in N_G(H)\} = N_G(H)/H$$

and so,

$$|G/H| \equiv |N_G(H)/H| \pmod{p}$$

We know that  $|H| = p^i$  and then  $p \mid |G/H| = p^{r-i}m$  it then divides  $|N_G(H)/H|$  by the fixed point congruence formula. Then we consult Cauchy's Theorem,  $N_G(H)/H$  has a subgroup of order  $p$  which is of the form  $\hat{H}/H$  where  $\hat{H} \subset N_G(H)$  containing  $H$ . Thus, we can say  $|\hat{H}/H| = p$  and so,  $|H'| = p|H| = p^{i+1}$ .

Then we can continue this, until we reach a subgroup of order  $G$  of order  $p^r$  which must be a  $p$ -sylow subgroup of  $G$ .  $\square$

## 5.2 Proof of Sylow II

Sylow II says that all  $p$ -sylow subgroups are conjugate.

Lecture 14

**Proof of Sylow II.** Let  $P$  and  $Q$  be Sylow subgroups of  $G$ , we show there exists some  $g \in G$  such that  $Q = gPg^{-1}$ . Consider the action,

$$\begin{aligned} Q \times G/P &\rightarrow G/P \\ (g', gP) &\mapsto g'gP \end{aligned}$$

Since  $Q$  is a finite  $p$ -group we have the fixed point congruence,

$$|G/P| \equiv |\text{Fix}_Q(G/P)| \pmod{p}$$

As  $P$  is a Sylow  $p$ -group of  $G$ ,  $|G/P| = m$  is not  $0 \pmod{p}$ , hence  $|\text{Fix}_Q(G/P)|$  is not  $0 \pmod{p}$ . The latter implies that  $g'g \in gP$  for all  $g' \in Q$ , which implies  $g' \in gPg^{-1}$  for all  $g' \in Q$  hence  $Q \subset gPg^{-1}$ . This implies the equality  $Q = gPg^{-1}$  since both  $Q$  and  $gPg^{-1}$  have the same cardinality  $p^r$ . Hence,  $P$  and  $Q$  are conjugate.  $\square$

## 5.3 Proof of Sylow III

Sylow III says that the number of Sylow subgroups is congruent to  $1 \pmod{p}$ .

**Proof of Sylow III.** We know that there are at least one sylow subgroups. Let us take  $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ . Consider the action,

$$\begin{aligned} P \times \text{Syl}_p(G) &\rightarrow \text{Syl}_p(G) \\ (g, Q) &\mapsto gQg^{-1} \end{aligned}$$

due to Sylow II we know that  $gQg^{-1}$  is also a  $p$ -subgroup. We apply the fixed point congruence theorem,

$$|\text{Syl}_p(G)| \equiv |\text{Fix}_P(\text{Syl}_p(G))| \pmod{p}$$

Sylow III says that  $|\text{Fix}_P(\text{Syl}_p(G))| \equiv 1 \pmod{p}$ , but in fact  $|\text{Fix}_P(\text{Syl}_p(G))| = 1$ . Hence we claim,

**Claim.**  $\text{Fix}_P(\text{Syl}_p(G)) = \{P\}$

*Proof.* Let  $Q \in \text{Fix}_P(\text{Syl}_p(G))$ , this means that  $gQg^{-1} = Q, \forall g \in P$ . This just means that  $g \in N_G(Q)$  and so  $P \subset N_G(Q)$ , but also we know  $Q \subset N_G(Q)$  and  $Q$  is always normal in its normaliser. Apply Sylow II, as we know that both  $P$  and  $Q$  are  $p$ -Sylow subgroups of the normaliser, we can say that under the normaliser  $P = hQh^{-1}$  for some  $h \in N_G(Q)$  and hence as  $Q$  is normal, then  $hQh^{-1} = Q = P$ . Hence, the only fixed point is just  $P$ . Hence, we have proved our claim.

Note when we proved Sylow III, we considered an action by conjugation, but when we proved Sylow II we considered left multiplication. Here we will consider a slightly different action.

$$G \times \text{Syl}_p(G) \rightarrow \text{Syl}_p(G)$$

$$(g, G) = gGg^{-1}$$

Let  $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ , we consider  $\text{orb}(P) = \{g \in G : gPg^{-1}\}$ . The orbit is contained in  $\text{Syl}_p(G)$  as it's just lots of  $p$ -Sylow subgroups. In Sylow II, we proved that any two  $p$ -Sylow subgroups are conjugate, and so we can say that these two subgroups are going to be equal. Hence, there is only one orbit for all  $p$ -Sylow subgroups. Now apply Orbit-Stabiliser Theorem,

$$|\text{orb}(g)| = \frac{|G|}{|\text{Stab}(g)|}$$

and so as we know that  $|G| = p^r \cdot m$  and  $\gcd(p, m) = 1$  and so by Sylow III, we know that  $\gcd(|n_p(G)|, p) = 1$ . Here we have an integer which is coprime to  $p$  which is coprime to  $|n_p(G)|$ , hence it must divide  $m$ .  $\square$

Hence, we have proved that  $|\text{Fix}_P(\text{Syl}_p(G))| = 1$  and that  $n_p(G) \mid m$  so we have proved Sylow III.  $\square$

In fact we can go further and say precisely that  $n_p(G)$  is the number of  $p$ -Sylow groups. We aim to show that  $n_p(G) = \frac{|G|}{|N_G(P)|}$

**Proof of Sylow III** †. Let  $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ , then there is only one orbit by conjugation and so we use a the Orbit Stabiliser Theorem, we know that  $\text{Stab}(g) = N_G(P)$ . This then says that

$$n_p(G) = |\text{Syl}_p(G)| = |\text{orb}(P)| = \frac{|G|}{|\text{Stab}_G(\{P\})|} = \frac{|G|}{|N_G(P)|}$$

$\square$

Let us take a  $p$ -Sylow subgroup of a group  $G$ , which is a subgroup of the normaliser of  $G$ . This subgroup is normal in the normaliser. We proved  $n_p(G) \mid m$ , which is the index. If we consider  $|G/N_G(P)| = \beta$ , we know that  $\beta \mid m$ . In Sylow III we proved that  $n_p(G) \mid m$  and in dagger we proved that  $n_p(G) = \beta$ .

**Corollary 5.7.** Let  $P$  be a Sylow  $p$ -subgroup of a finite group  $G$ . Then  $P$  is the unique subgroup of  $G$  (ie.  $n_p(G) = 1$ ) if and only if  $P$  is a normal subgroup of  $G$ .

*Proof.* Note that every conjugate  $gPg^{-1}$  of  $P$  is a Sylow  $p$ -group, and the converse holds by (Sylow II). Thus,

$$\text{Syl}_p(G) = \{gPg^{-1} : g \in G\}$$

Now  $n_p(G) = 1$  ( $\text{Syl}_p(G) = \{P\}$ ) if and only if  $gPg^{-1} = P$  for all  $g \in G$ , and so  $P$  is normal.  $\square$

Again, the Sylows Theorems aren't interesting when the group is abelian as  $gPg^{-1} = gg^{-1}P = P$ . This means that finite abelian group is easy to understand.

An interesting theorem we never got to cover is that,

**Theorem 5.8** (Structure Theorem for finite abelian groups). Every finite group is isomorphic to a product of finite cyclic groups.

$$G \cong \mathbb{Z}^r \oplus \mathbb{Z}/a_1\mathbb{Z} \oplus \mathbb{Z}/a_2\mathbb{Z} \oplus \cdots \oplus \mathbb{Z}/a_n\mathbb{Z}$$

then this is unique up to isomorphism modulo the following condition; there exists some unique integers such that,

$$a_1 \mid a_2 \mid \cdots \mid a_n$$

**Example.** – Let  $G$  be a finite abelian group, then for any prime  $p \mid |G|$ , there exists only one  $p$ -Sylow subgroup.

- Take  $\mathbb{Z}/2^2\mathbb{Z}$  and  $\mathbb{Z}/3^3\mathbb{Z}$  and consider the product. We get an abelian group, with cardinality of  $2^2 \times 3^3$  for a 2-subgroup is 2 or 4 and for a 3-subgroup, we must have 3, 6, 9 and so the 2-sylow must have cardinality 4 and the 3-sylow subgroup must have cardinality 9. We can go further and say that there is only 1 2-sylow and it is  $\mathbb{Z}/2^2\mathbb{Z} \times \{0\}$  and the 3-sylow is just  $\{0\} \times \mathbb{Z}/3^3\mathbb{Z}$
- Sylows Theorems only tell us about groups with cardinality with one prime, it can't go further. There is no more general theorem past Sylow Theorems.

## 5.4 Classifying groups through Sylow

We want to use Sylow's Theorems to classify small groups. Consider the following example,  $|G| = p$ , then we know that it's cyclic and we know the subgroup. If we go forward and consider  $|G| = pq$ , where  $p$  and  $q$  are distinct. Assume  $p < q$  wlog, if we look to the number of  $q$ -Sylow subgroups. We know  $n_q(G) = 1 + tq$  where  $t \geq 0$ , but we also know that  $n_q(G) \mid p$ . As  $q > p$ , it cannot divide  $p$  and so we know that  $t = 0$  and so if  $Q \in \text{Syl}_q(G)$  then  $Q$  must be normal.

If we consider  $p$ , then we know that  $n_p(G) = 1 + sp$  and we know that  $n_p(G) \mid q$ , but  $q$  is a prime, so  $n_p(G) = 1$  or  $n_p(G) = q$ . If  $n_p(G) = q = 1 + sp$  and so  $q \equiv 1 \pmod{p}$ . Hence we either have one normal subgroup or  $p \mid q - 1$ .

**Example.** If  $p = 5$  and  $q = 13$ , we know that the 13-Sylow subgroup must be unique and the 5-Sylow subgroup is also unique as  $13 \not\equiv 1 \pmod{5}$ .

However, if we take  $p = 3$  and  $q = 7$ , then the 7-Sylow subgroup is unique and normal and the 3-Sylow subgroup is not necessarily unique as  $7 \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$ .

If we take  $\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z}/q\mathbb{Z}$  here  $n_p(G) = n_q(G) = 1$ . If we have a group of cardinality of 21 and has 7 3-Sylow subgroups can't be abelian. This can be constructed through semi-direct product.

Let us consider a general group of cardinality 12. Consider  $|G| = 2^2 \times 3$ , we can say that  $n_3(G) \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$  and it must divide 4 and so it's either 1 or 4. If it's one then  $G$  has a normal Sylow subgroup. If it's 4, then  $G$  is isomorphic to  $A_4$ .

**Claim.** Let  $G$  be a group, if  $|G| = 12$  and  $G$  has four 3-Sylow subgroups then it is isomorphic to  $A_4$ .

*Proof.* We will have four 3-sylow subgroups,  $\text{Syl}_3(G) = \{P_1, P_2, P_3, P_4\}$  and we know they form an orbit under conjugation.

$$\begin{aligned} G \times \text{Syl}_3(G) &\rightarrow \text{Syl}_3(G) \\ (g, P_i) &\mapsto gP_i g^{-1} \end{aligned}$$

If we label the three subgroups, we get a permutation representation, hence a homomorphism,  $\phi : G \rightarrow S_4$  such that  $g \mapsto \sigma_g$ . We also know that  $n_3(G) = \frac{|G|}{|N_G(P_i)|} = 4$  but also we know that  $P_i \subset N_G(P_i)$  both of them has three elements and so they must be equal,  $P_i = N_G(P_i)$ . We consider  $\text{Ker } \phi$ , we know this is just the intersection of the stabilisers. However, the stabilisers are just the normalisers. Hence,

$$\text{Ker } \phi = \bigcap_{i=1}^4 N_G(P_i) = \bigcap_{i=1}^4 P_i$$

$P_i$  are distinct and their cardinality is a prime. Hence, their intersection must be trivial.

$$\bigcap_{i=1}^4 P_i = e_G$$

Hence,  $\phi$  is injective and so by FIT we have that  $G \cong \phi(G)$  as  $G$  has eight elements of order 3 and hence so does  $\phi(G)$ . All three cycles in  $S_4$  are in  $A_4$ . So consider  $\phi(G) \cap A_4$ ,  $8 \leq |\phi(G) \cap A_4| \leq 12$ . Hence  $|\phi(G) \cap A_4| = 12$ , therefore  $\phi(G) \cong A_4$ . By transitivity of isomorphisms as  $G \cong \phi(G)$ , then  $G \cong A_4$ .  $\square$

More generally,  $|G| = p^2 q$  where  $p$  and  $q$  are distinct primes. We first consider  $q < p$ , then  $n_p(G) \equiv 1 \pmod{p} \implies n_p(G) = 1 + tp$  and  $n_p(G) \mid q$  and these both imply that  $t = 0$ . Hence there is a unique  $p$ -Sylow subgroup that is normal. Now suppose  $p < q$ , then consider  $n_q(G) = 1 + sq$  and  $q \mid p^2$ . Hence  $n_q(G) = 1, p$  or  $p^2$  either  $s = 0$ , hence we have a unique Sylow subgroup. If  $s > 0$  then we have that  $q = p^2$  as  $q > p$ . Hence  $sq = p^2 - 1 = (p + 1)(p - 1)$ . Hence  $q \mid p + 1$ . Hence  $q = p + 1$ . So  $p = 2$  and  $q = 3$ . Hence we have a group of cardinality 12. Therefore  $n_q(G) = 1$  or  $p = 2$  and  $q = 3$  and  $|G| = 12 \implies G \cong A_4$ .