Homotopy-coherent interchange and equivariant little disk operads

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INI Equivariant Homotopy Theory in Context

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A question you might happen upon

In trace methods for Real algebraic K-theory, THH has a Real analogue:¹

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \operatorname{Alg}_{\mathbb{E}_1}(\operatorname{Sp}) & \operatorname{Alg}_{\mathbb{E}_\sigma}(\operatorname{Sp}_{\operatorname{C}_2}) \\ & & & & & \downarrow \operatorname{ThR} \\ \operatorname{Sp} & & & & \operatorname{Sp}_{\operatorname{C}_2} \end{array}$$

In this, σ is the sign representation and \mathbb{E}_{σ} -algebras are a genuine-equivariant version of rings with anti-involution.

Question (c.f. Dotto-Moi-Patchkoria-Reeh² '17)

What algebraic structure does THR of highly structured C_2 -ring spectra have?

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¹ Emanuele Dotto. Stable real K-theory and real topological Hochschild homology. Thesis (Ph.D.)–Uniiversity of Copenhagen. 2012. arXiv: 1212. 4310 [math. AT].

² Emanuele Dotto, Kristian Moi, Irakli Patchkoria, and Sune Precht Reeh. "Real topological Hochschild homology". In: J. Eur. Math. Soc. (JEMS) 23.1 (2021), pp. 63–152.

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Observation

THH can be given a symmetric monoidal structure, so we may lift

Theorem (Dunn³ '88, Lurie⁴ '09)

 $\mathbb{E}_n \simeq \mathbb{E}_{n-1} \otimes \mathbb{E}_1$; hence THH takes \mathbb{E}_n -rings to \mathbb{E}_{n-1} -rings.

³Gerald Dunn. "Tensor product of operads and iterated loop spaces". In: J. Pure Appl. Algebra 50.3 (1988), pp. 237–258.

⁴ Jacob Lurie, Derived Algebraic Geometry VI: Ek Algebras, 2009, arXiv: 0911,0018 [math, AT].

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Observation (S.⁵)

THR can be given a C2-symmetric monoidal structure, so we may lift

$$\begin{split} \mathrm{Alg}_{\mathcal{O}\otimes\mathbb{E}_{\sigma}}(\mathrm{Sp}_{\textbf{C}_{2}}) & \simeq & \mathrm{Alg}_{\mathcal{O}}\underline{\mathrm{Alg}}_{\mathbb{E}_{\sigma}}^{\otimes}(\mathrm{Sp}_{\textbf{C}_{2}}) \xrightarrow{} & \mathrm{Alg}_{\mathcal{O}}(\mathrm{Sp}_{\textbf{C}_{2}}) \\ & \downarrow & \downarrow & \downarrow \\ & \mathrm{Alg}_{\mathbb{E}_{\sigma}}(\mathrm{Sp}_{\textbf{C}_{2}}) \xrightarrow{} & \mathrm{THR} & \mathrm{Sp}_{\textbf{C}_{2}} \end{split}$$

Conjecture

In the 1-categorical world, there is an equivalence $\mathbb{E}_V \otimes \mathbb{E}_W \simeq \mathbb{E}_{V \oplus W}$.

⁵ Natalie Stewart. On tensor products of equivariant commutative operads (draft). 2025.

Statement of the additivity theorem

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For this talk, all terms are defined ∞ -categorically.

Theorem (S.⁵)

Given V, W orthogonal G-representations, we have

$$\mathbb{E}_{V} \otimes \mathbb{E}_{W} \simeq \mathbb{E}_{V \oplus W};$$

hence there is an equivalence of ∞ -categories

$$\mathrm{Alg}_{\mathbb{E}_{V}} \underline{\mathrm{Alg}}_{\mathbb{E}_{W}}^{\otimes} \left(\mathrm{Sp}_{G} \right) \simeq \mathrm{Alg}_{\mathbb{E}_{V \oplus W}} \left(\mathrm{Sp}_{G} \right).$$

Corollary

THR of $\mathbb{E}_{V\oplus\sigma}$ -rings has a natural \mathbb{E}_{V} -ring structure, and no more.

⁵ Natalie Stewart. On homotopical additivity of equivariant little disks operads (forthcoming), 2025.

Myriad versions of this theorem

- May '72:6 $C_n \otimes C_m$ and C_{n+m} agree on **connected spaces**.
- 1 Dunn '88: $^7C_1^{\otimes n} \simeq C_n$ w.r.t. a **point-set** tensor product.
- **2** Rourke-Sanderson 'OO: 8 $D_V \otimes D_W$ and $D_{V \oplus W}$ agree on **connected** G-spaces.
- **3** Brinkmeier '00: ${}^9C_n \otimes C_m \simeq C_{n+m}$ w.r.t. a **point-set** tensor product.
- 4 Lurie '09: $^{10}\mathbb{E}_n^{\otimes}\overset{\text{BV}}{\otimes}\mathbb{E}_m^{\otimes}\simeq\mathbb{E}_{n+m}^{\otimes}$ with respect to a **homotopical** tensor product.
- **5** Fiedorowicz-Vogt '15:11 Dunn & Brinkmeier's result extends to **cofibrant** \mathbb{E}_n -operads.
- **6** Szczesny '24:¹² $D_V \otimes D_W \simeq D_{V \oplus W}$ w.r.t. a **point-set** tensor product.
- 7 S. '25: $\mathbb{E}_V^{\otimes} \overset{\text{BV}}{\otimes} \mathbb{E}_W^{\otimes} \simeq \mathbb{E}_{V \oplus W}^{\otimes}$ with respect to a **homotopical** tensor product.

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⁶J. P. May. The geometry of iterated loop spaces. Vol. Vol. 271. Lecture Notes in Mathematics. Springer-Verlag, Berlin-New York, 1972, pp. viii+175.

⁷Gerald Dunn. "Tensor product of operads and iterated loop spaces". In: J. Pure Appl. Algebra 50.3 (1988), pp. 237–258.

⁸Colin Rourke and Brian Sanderson. "Equivariant configuration spaces". In: J. London Math. Soc. (2) 62.2 (2000), pp. 544–552.

⁹ Michael Brinkmeier. On Operads. Thesis (Ph.D.)–Universitat Osnabrück. 2000.

¹⁰ Jacob Lurie. Derived Algebraic Geometry VI: Ek Algebras. 2009. arXiv: 0911.0018 [math.AT].

¹¹Z. Fiedorowicz and R. M. Vogt. "An additivity theorem for the interchange of E_B structures". In: Adv. Math. 273 (2015), pp. 421–484.

¹² Ben Szczesny. Equivariant Framed Little Disk Operads are Additive, 2024, arXiv: 2410, 20235 [math. AT].

A heavily abridged history of $G-\infty$ -categorical operads

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• Hill-Hopkins '16:¹³ G-commutative monoids are **semi-Mackey functors**.

Nardin-Shah '22:¹⁴ G-operads are a type of fibration over a genuine equivariant version $\underline{\mathbb{F}}_{G,*}$ of Segal's category Γ^{op} .

2 Barkan-Haugseng-Steinebrunner '22: 15 G-operads are also **fibrations over the** effective Burnside 2-category Span(\mathbb{F}_C).

S. '25:16 homotopy-coherent interchange is corepresented by **BV tensor products** and G-operads are monadic over G-symmetric sequences.

4 S. '25: 17 Algebras in (co)cartesian G-symmetric monoidal structures have concrete descriptions and $\mathcal{N}_{l\infty} \otimes \mathcal{N}_{l\infty} \simeq \mathcal{N}_{l \vee l \infty}$

¹³ Michael A. Hill and Michael J. Hopkins. Equivariant symmetric monoidal structures. 2016. arXiv: 1610.03114 [math.AT].

¹⁴ Denis Nardin and lay Shah. Parametrized and equivariant higher glashra, 2022, arXiv: 2203.00072 [math. AT].

¹⁵ Shaul Barkan, Rune Haugseng, and Ian Steinebrunner. Envelopes for Algebraic Patterns, 2022, arXiv: 2208,07183 [math.CT].

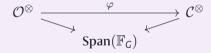
¹⁶ Natalie Stewart Fauiwariant operads, symmetric sequences, and Boardman-Voat tensor products, 2025, arXiv: 2501,02129 [math.CT].

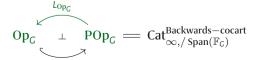
¹⁷ Natalie Stewart. On tensor products of equivariant commutative operads (draft), 2025.

A quasi-definition of G-operads

Definition

- A G-preoperad is a functor $\mathcal{O}^{\otimes} \to \operatorname{Span}(\mathbb{F}_G)$ with cocartesian lifts over backwards maps.
- A G-operad is required to satisfy "Segal conditions."
- An \mathcal{O} -algebra in \mathcal{C}^{\otimes} is a functor preserving cocartesian arrows :





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The underlying *G*-symmetric sequence

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Construction

Given $\mathcal{O} \in \operatorname{Op}_G$, $H \subset G$, and $S \in \mathbb{F}_G$, define the **structure space**

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{O}(S) & \longrightarrow & Mor\left(\mathcal{O}^{\otimes}\right) \\ & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \left\{Ind_{H}^{G}S \rightarrow [G/H]\right\} & \longrightarrow & Mor\left(Span(\mathbb{F}_{G})\right) \end{array}$$

Proposition (S.¹⁸)

If \mathcal{O}^{\otimes} has "one color" then is conservatively identified by $(\mathcal{O}(S))_{\substack{H \subset G \\ S \in \mathbb{F}_H}}$.

¹⁸ Natalie Stewart. Equivariant operads, symmetric sequences, and Boardman-Vogt tensor products. 2025. arXiv: 2501.02129 [math.CT].

Example

The little V-disks G-operad has S-ary structure space given by H-equivariant configurations of S in V:

$$\mathbb{E}_{V}(S) := Emb^{H,Affine} (S \cdot D(V), D(V)) \simeq Conf_{S}^{H}(V).$$

Example

Given a G-symmetric monoidal category \mathcal{C}^{\otimes} : Span(\mathbb{F}_{G}) \to Cat $_{\infty}$, its unstraightening is a G-operad. Given $X \in \mathcal{C}(G/G)$, there is an **endomorphism** G-operad with

$$\operatorname{End}_{X}(S) \simeq \operatorname{Map}_{\mathcal{C}_{H}}\left(\left(\operatorname{Res}_{H}^{G}X\right)^{\otimes S}, \operatorname{Res}_{H}^{G}X\right)$$

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In particular, an \mathbb{E}_{V} -algebra in \mathcal{C} consists of an object $X \in \mathcal{C}_{G}$ and homotopy-coherently compatible maps

$$Conf_S^H(V) \to Map_{\mathcal{C}_H}\left(\left(Res_H^G X\right)^{\otimes S}, Res_H^G X\right).$$

Example (Horev-Klang-Zou¹⁹ '20)

Let $\underline{\mathcal{S}}_G^{G-\times}$ be the *cartesian structure* on *G*-spaces. Then, for all $X \in \mathcal{S}_G$, we have $\Omega^V X \in \mathrm{Alg}_{\mathbb{E}_V}(\mathcal{S}_G)$.

Example (Horev-Klang-Zou '20, loc. cit.)

Let $\underline{\operatorname{Sp}}_{\operatorname{G}}^{\otimes}$ be the HHR G-symmetric monoidal structure. If $f\colon \Omega^{\operatorname{V}}X \to \underline{\operatorname{Pic}}(\underline{\operatorname{Sp}}_{\operatorname{G}})$ is a V-loop map, then $\operatorname{Th}(f) \in \operatorname{Alg}_{\mathbb{E}_V}(\operatorname{Sp}_{\operatorname{G}})$.

¹⁹ Jeremy Hahn, Asaf Horev, Inbar Klang, Dylan Wilson, and Foling Zou. Equivariant nonabelian Poincaré duality and equivariant factorization homology of Thom spectra. 2024. arXiv:

Modelling G-operadic constructions, two ways

Model categorist: **(co) fibrantly replace**, then apply a construction to monoids in *G*-symmetric sequences.

 ∞ -categorist: apply a G-preoperadic construction, then $L_{\mathrm{Op}_{G}}$ -localize.

Shared goal: model corepresenting object for **pairings** (aka interchanging algebras, bifunctors, etc.) akin to May.²⁰

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{O}^{\otimes} \times \mathcal{P}^{\otimes} & \xrightarrow{\text{"pairing"}} & \mathcal{Q}^{\otimes} \\ \downarrow^{\pi} & & \downarrow^{\pi} \\ & \text{Span}(\mathbb{F}_{G}) \times \text{Span}(\mathbb{F}_{G}) & \xrightarrow{\wedge} & \text{Span}(\mathbb{F}_{G}) \end{array}$$

Today, we are ∞ -categorists.

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²⁰ J. P. May. "Pairings of categories and spectra". In: J. Pure Appl. Algebra 19 (1980). pp. 299–346.

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Definition

$$\mathcal{O}^{\otimes} \overset{\scriptscriptstyle{\mathsf{BV}}}{\otimes} \mathcal{P}^{\otimes} := \mathsf{L}_{\mathsf{Op}_{\mathsf{G}}} \left(\mathcal{O}^{\otimes} \times \mathcal{P}^{\otimes} \longrightarrow \mathsf{Span}(\mathbb{F}_{\mathsf{G}})^2 \overset{\wedge}{\longrightarrow} \mathsf{Span}(\mathbb{F}_{\mathsf{G}}) \right)$$

 $\mathrm{Alg}_{\mathcal{O}}(\mathcal{C})$ lifts to a "pointwise" *G*-symmetric monoidal category $\mathrm{\underline{Alg}}_{\mathcal{O}}^{\otimes}(\mathcal{C})$.

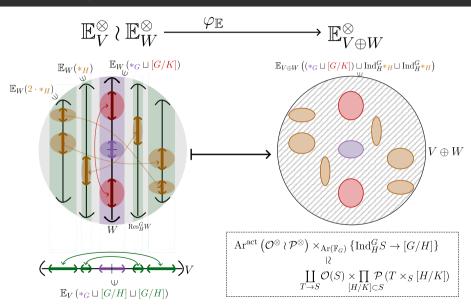
Proposition (S.²¹)

$$(-)\overset{\scriptscriptstyle\mathsf{BV}}{\otimes}\mathcal{O}^\otimes$$
 is left adjoint to $\operatorname{\underline{Alg}}^\otimes_\mathcal{O}(-)$, so

$$Alg_{\mathcal{O}}\underline{Alg}_{\mathcal{P}}^{\otimes}(\mathcal{C}) \simeq Alg_{\mathcal{O}\otimes\mathcal{P}}(\mathcal{C}).$$

²¹ Natalie Stewart. Equivariant operads, symmetric sequences, and Boardman-Vogt tensor products. 2025. arXiv: 2501.02129 [math.CT].

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Preoperad models for 1-colored G-operads

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Given $\mathcal{P}^{\otimes} \in \operatorname{POp}_{\mathsf{C}}$, We let $\mathcal{P}^{\operatorname{act}}_{/P}$ be the ∞ -category of arrows $P' \to P$ projecting to a forward map $T = T \to S$.

Definition

A map of G-preoperads $\alpha\colon \mathcal{P}^\otimes\to\mathcal{O}^\otimes$ with \mathcal{O}^\otimes a "one color" G-operad is a **weak** approximation if

- The G- ∞ -category of colors UP has a terminal G-object, and
- **2** For all $P \in \mathcal{P}^{\otimes}$ and $T \to \pi(P)$, the map of spaces

$$B\left(\mathcal{P}_{/P}^{\text{act}} \times_{\mathbb{F}_{G,/\pi(P)}} \{T \to \pi(P)\}\right) \to \prod_{[H/K] \subset \pi(P)} \mathcal{O}\left(T \times_{\pi(P)} [H/K]\right)$$

is a weak equivalence.

Preoperad models for 1-colored G-operads

Proposition (Harpaz²² '19 + reinterpretation)

If $\alpha\colon \mathcal{P}^\otimes \to \mathcal{O}^\otimes$ is a weak approximation, pullback is fully faithful

$$Alg_{\mathcal{O}}(\mathcal{S}_G) \subset Alg_{\mathcal{P}}(\mathcal{S}_G)$$

with image the \mathcal{P} -monoids whose "color" G-functors $U\mathcal{P} \to \underline{\mathcal{S}}_G$ are constant.

Weak approximations can be made to have many colors; a weak approximation α is a **strong approximation** if $UP \to UO$ is an equivalence.

Proposition (S.²³)

 $\mathrm{Alg}_{(-)}(\mathcal{S}_G)$ detects L_{Op_G} -equivalences when $U\mathcal{P} \to U\mathcal{O}$ is an equivalence; in particular, **strong approximations are** L_{Op_G} -equivalences.

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²³ Natalie Stewart. On tensor products of equivariant commutative operads (draft), 2025.

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Proof sketch.

Examine the free \mathcal{O} -G-space monad:²⁴

$$(T_{\mathcal{O}}X)^H \simeq \coprod_{S \in \mathbb{F}_H} \left(\mathcal{O}(S) \times \left(X^S \right)^H \right)_{h \operatorname{Aut}_H S}.$$

The inclusion $\operatorname{Aut}_H(S) \subset \operatorname{End}_H(S) = \left(S^S\right)^H$ yields natural splitting

$$(T_{\mathcal{O}}S)^{H} \simeq \mathcal{O}(S) \oplus Junk.$$

Use monadicity of $Alg_{\mathcal{O}}(\mathcal{S}_G) \to \mathcal{S}_G$ and conservativity of $(\mathcal{O}(S))$.

²⁴ Natalie Stewart. Equivariant operads, symmetric sequences, and Boardman-Vogt tensor products. 2025. arXiv: 2501.02129 [math.CT].

Approximating manifolds

Proposition (Dugger-Isaksen²⁵ '01)

If *X* is a topological space and $\mathfrak{O} \subset \mathscr{P}(X)$ a basis of contractible open subsets, then we get a weak equivalence

$$B\mathfrak{O} \xrightarrow{\sim} X$$

Corollary

Let $\mathfrak{O}_{S}^{H}(V) \subset \operatorname{Conf}_{S}^{H}(V)$ be the basis of configurations in affinely $\coprod_{S} D(V)$ -shaped invariant subspaces of D(V). We get a weak equivalence

$$B\mathfrak{O}_{S}^{H}(V) \stackrel{\sim}{\longrightarrow} Conf_{S}^{H}(V) \simeq \mathbb{E}_{V}(S).$$

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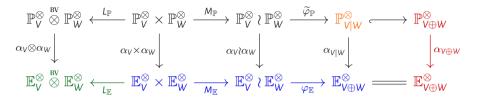
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²⁵ Daniel Dugger and Daniel C. Isaksen. "Topological hypercovers and A¹ -realizations", In: Math. Z. 246.4 (2004), pp. 667–689.



We define a G-preoperad \mathbb{P}_V^{\otimes} such that $\mathbb{P}_{V,/P}^{\operatorname{act}} \simeq \mathfrak{O}_S^H(V)$, yielding a weak approximation $\alpha_V \colon \mathbb{P}_V^{\otimes} \to \mathbb{E}_V^{\otimes}$. Then, we define a \mathbb{P} -Dunn map fitting into the above diagram.

Here, $\mathbb{P}_{V|W}^{\otimes}$ is the "G-preoperadic image, i.e. "decomposed little disks."

We're tasked with verifying that $\varphi_{\mathbb{E}} \circ M_{\mathbb{E}}$ induces an equivalence

$$Alg_{\mathbb{E}_{V \oplus W}}(\mathcal{S}_G) \xrightarrow{\sim} Alg_{\mathbb{E}_{V} \times Alg_{\mathbb{E}_{W}}}(\mathcal{S}_G) \xleftarrow{\sim} Alg_{\mathbb{E}_{V} \otimes \mathbb{E}_{W}}(\mathcal{S}_G)$$

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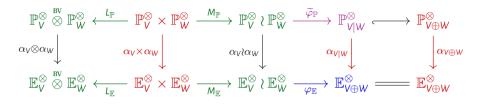
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- 1 $L_{\mathbb{P}}$ and $L_{\mathbb{E}}$ are $L_{\mathrm{Op}_{\mathbb{C}}}$ -equivalences by fiat.
- **2** A variant of Harpaz's strategy²⁶ shows that $M_{\mathbb{P}}$ and $M_{\mathbb{E}}$ are $L_{\mathrm{Op}_{c}}$ -equivalences.
- 3 Simple ∞ -category theory shows that $\alpha_V \times \alpha_W$ is a weak approximation.
- 4 A variant of Dunn's strategy²⁷ shows that $\alpha_{V|W}$ is a weak approximation.
- **5** Explicit 1-category theory shows that $\widetilde{\varphi}_{\mathbb{P}}$ is a strong approximation.
- **6** Routine bookkeeping then shows that $Alg_{\mathbb{E}_{V \oplus W}}(\mathcal{S}_G) \xrightarrow{\sim} Alg_{\mathbb{E}_{V} \times \mathbb{E}_{W}}(\mathcal{S}_G)$.

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²⁶ Yonatan Harpaz. Little cubes algebras and factorization homology (course notes).

²⁷ Gerald Dunn, "Tensor product of operads and iterated loop spaces", In: 1, Pure Appl, Algebra 50.3 (1988), pp. 237–258,

Stalkwise-linearizable tangential structures

Define $\mathbb{E}_{B_G^{\text{lin}}\text{Top}(n)}^{\otimes}$ to have colors the linearizable *G*-actions on \mathbb{R}^n and operations the *topological* embeddings.

Given a *G*-space *X* with stalkwise-linearizable equivariant \mathbb{R}^n -bundle $T_{\bullet} \colon X \to \mathcal{B}^{\mathrm{lin}}_{G}\mathrm{Top}(n)$, we define the assembly

$$\mathbb{E}_{X}^{\otimes} := L_{\operatorname{Op}_{G}} \left(\mathbb{E}_{g_{G}^{\operatorname{lin}}\operatorname{Top}(n)}^{\otimes} \times_{g_{G}^{\operatorname{lin}}\operatorname{Top}(n)^{G-\sqcup}} X^{G-\sqcup} \right).$$

Theorem (S.²⁸)

There is a natural equivariant colimit expression of operads

$$\underline{\operatorname{colim}}_{x \in X} \mathbb{E}_{T_x}^{\otimes} \stackrel{\sim}{-\!\!\!\!-\!\!\!\!-\!\!\!\!-}} \mathbb{E}_X^{\otimes}$$

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²⁸ Natalie Stewart. On homotopical additivity of equivariant little disks operads (forthcoming). 2025.

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Corollary (S.)

Given stalkwise-linearizable equivariant \mathbb{R}^k -bundles $X \to B_C^{\text{lin}} \text{Top}(n)$ and $Y \to B_C^{\text{lin}} \text{Top}(m)$, fixing the direct sum structure

$$X \times Y \longrightarrow B_G^{\text{lin}} \text{Top}(n) \times B_G^{\text{lin}} \text{Top}(m) \stackrel{\oplus}{\longrightarrow} B_G^{\text{lin}} \text{Top}(n+m),$$

there is an equivalence.

$$\mathbb{E}_{\mathsf{X}}^{\otimes} \overset{\scriptscriptstyle{\mathsf{BV}}}{\otimes} \mathbb{E}_{\mathsf{Y}}^{\otimes} \stackrel{\sim}{\longrightarrow} \mathbb{E}_{\mathsf{X} \times \mathsf{Y}}^{\otimes}.$$

Other cases that are covered by the original argument:

- (Equivariant) swiss cheese
- Stratified little disks

A curious corollary about algebraic topology

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Let $\underline{\mathrm{Disk}}_G^{X-\mathrm{fr},\sqcup} \subset \underline{\mathrm{Mfld}}_G^{X-\mathrm{fr},\sqcup}$ be the *G*-symmetric monoidal full category whose objects are disjoint unions of *X*-framed *G*-disks and whose mapping spaces are *X*-framed equivariant disk embeddings.

Corollary (S., c.f. Dwyer-Hess-Knudsen²⁹ '19)

There is a G-symmetric monoidal equivalence

$$\underline{\mathrm{Disk}}_{G}^{X-\mathrm{fr},\sqcup} \square \underline{\mathrm{Disk}}_{G}^{Y-\mathrm{fr},\sqcup} \simeq \underline{\mathrm{Disk}}_{G}^{X\times Y-\mathrm{fr},\sqcup}.$$

Here, \square is the box product of semi-Mackey functors valued in Cat_{∞} .

²⁹ William Dwyer, Kathryn Hess, and Ben Knudsen. "Configuration spaces of products". In: Trans. Amer. Math. Soc. 371.4 (2019), pp. 2963–2985.

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