



Step 1:

Find a problem you like

Conjugacy problem for free-by-cyclic groups

Definition

Let $F_n = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n \mid \rangle$ be a free group on $\{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$ ($n \geq 2$), and let $\varphi \in \text{Aut}(F_n)$. The **free-by-cyclic** group $F_n \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z}$ is defined as

$$F_n \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z} = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n, t \mid t^{-1}x_it = x_i\varphi \rangle.$$

With $x_it = t(x_i\varphi)$ and $x_it^{-1} = t^{-1}(x_i\varphi^{-1})$, we can move all t 's to the left and get the usual **normal form** for elements in $F_n \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z}$:

$$t^r w, \text{ with } r \in \mathbb{Z}, w \in F_n.$$

Problem

Solve the conjugacy problem in $F_n \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z}$.

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Solve the conjugacy problem in $F_n \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z}$.

Converting it into a free group problem

Let $t^r u$, $t^s v$, $t^k g$ be arbitrary elements in $M_\varphi = F_n \rtimes_\varphi \mathbb{Z}$. Then,

$$\begin{aligned} (g^{-1} t^{-k})(t^r u)(t^k g) &= g^{-1} t^r (u \varphi^k) g \\ &= t^r (g \varphi^r)^{-1} (u \varphi^k) g. \end{aligned}$$

$$t^r u \text{ and } t^s v \text{ conj. in } M_\varphi \iff \begin{cases} r = s \\ v \sim_{\varphi^r} (u \varphi^k) \text{ for some } k \in \mathbb{Z}. \end{cases}$$

Definition

For $\varphi \in \text{End}(G)$, two elements $u, v \in G$ are said to be φ -twisted conjugated, denoted $u \sim_\varphi v$, if $v = (g\varphi)^{-1} u g$ for some $g \in G$.

Definition

The twisted conjugacy problem for G , denoted $TCP(G)$:
 "Given $\varphi \in \text{Aut}(G)$ and $u, v \in G$ decide whether $u \sim_\varphi v$ ".

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Step 3:

We solved it

$TCP(F_n)$ is solvable

Theorem (Bogopolski-Martino-Maslakova-V., 2005)

$TCP(F_n)$ for automorphisms is solvable.

Proof. Given $\varphi \in \text{Aut}(F_n)$ and $u, v \in F_n$:

1 Extend to $F_n * \langle z \rangle$ and $\hat{\varphi}: F_n * \langle z \rangle \rightarrow F_n * \langle z \rangle$, sending z to uzu^{-1} .

• **Claim:** for $g \in F_n$, $v = (g\varphi)^{-1}ug \Leftrightarrow g^{-1}zg \in \text{Fix}(\hat{\varphi}\gamma_v)$.

2 Compute a basis for $\text{Fix}(\hat{\varphi}\gamma_v)$.

3 Check whether $\text{Fix}(\hat{\varphi}\gamma_v)$ contains $g^{-1}zg$ for some $g \in F_n$, using Stallings' automata. \square

Theorem (Maslakova)

Fixed subgroups of automorphisms of free groups are computable.

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For every $\varphi \in \text{Aut}(F_n)$, $CP(F_n \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z})$ is solvable.

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- Thus, $CP(M_{\varphi})$ reduces to finitely many checks of $TCP(F_n)$.

Step 4:

A mistake was found

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► Case 1: $r \neq 0$

- To reduce to finitely many k 's, note that $u \sim_{\varphi} u \varphi$ (because $u = (u \varphi)^{-1} (u \varphi) u$), so $u \varphi^k \sim_{\varphi^r} u \varphi^{k \pm \lambda r}$; hence,

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- Thus, $CP(M_{\varphi})$ reduces to finitely many checks of $TCP(F_n)$.

$CP(F_n \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z})$ is solvable

► Case 2: $r = 0$

- Still infinitely many k 's:

$$u \text{ and } v \text{ conj. in } M_{\varphi} \iff v \sim u\varphi^k \text{ for some } k \in \mathbb{Z}.$$

- This is precisely Brinkmann's result:

Theorem (Brinkmann, 2006)

Given an automorphism $\phi: F_n \rightarrow F_n$ and $u, v \in F_n$, it is decidable whether $v \sim u\phi^k$ for some $k \in \mathbb{Z}$.

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Step 5:

Intuition always ahead

A crucial comment

A. Martino: “The whole argument essentially *works the same way* in presence of more stable letters, i.e. for free-by-free groups”

Definition

Let $F_n = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n \mid \rangle$ be the free group on $\{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$ ($n \geq 2$), and let $\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m \in \text{Aut}(F_n)$. The *free-by-free* group $F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m$ is

$$F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n, t_1, \dots, t_m \mid t_j^{-1} x_i t_j = x_i \varphi_j \rangle.$$

But this looks wrong, taking into account Miller's examples...

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$$F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n, t_1, \dots, t_m \mid t_j^{-1} x_i t_j = x_i \varphi_j \rangle.$$

But this looks wrong, taking into account Miller's examples...

The comment was right...

He was right... the whole argument essentially **works the same way** except that in the second case, a much stronger problem arises:

u and v conj.
in $M_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} \iff v \sim u\varphi$ for some $\varphi \in \langle \varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m \rangle \leq \text{Aut}(F_n)$.

Theorem

$CP(F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m)$ is solvable if and only if $\langle \varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m \rangle$ is orbit decidable.

Definition

A subgroup $A \leq \text{Aut}(F)$ is said to be **orbit decidable (O.D.)** if \exists an algorithm s.t., given $u, v \in F$ decides whether $v \sim u\alpha$ for some $\alpha \in A$.

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Step 6:

Extend as much as possible

The main result

Theorem (Bogopolski-Martino-V., 2008)

Let

$$1 \longrightarrow F \xrightarrow{\alpha} G \xrightarrow{\beta} H \longrightarrow 1$$

be an algorithmic short exact sequence of groups such that

- (i) $TCP(F)$ is solvable,
- (ii) $CP(H)$ is solvable,
- (iii) there is an algorithm which, given an input $1 \neq h \in H$, computes a finite set of elements $z_{h,1}, \dots, z_{h,t_h} \in H$ such that

$$C_H(h) = \langle h \rangle z_{h,1} \sqcup \dots \sqcup \langle h \rangle z_{h,t_h}.$$

Then,

$$CP(G) \text{ is solvable} \iff A_G = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \gamma_g: F \rightarrow F \\ x \mapsto g^{-1}xg \end{array} \mid g \in G \right\}$$

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The previous result

Previous result in this language:

Theorem (Brinkmann, 2006)

Cyclic subgroups of $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ are O.D.

Corollary (Bogopolski-Martino-Maslakova-V., 2005)

Free-by-cyclic groups have solvable conjugacy problem.

And Miller's examples must correspond to orbit undecidable subgroups of $\text{Aut}(F_n)$...

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Negative results

Proposition (Bogopolski-Martino-V., 2008)

Let F be a group, and let $A \leq B \leq \text{Aut}(F)$ and $w \in F$ be such that $B \cap \text{Stab}^(w) = 1$. Then,*

$OD(A)$ solvable \Rightarrow $MP(A, B)$ solvable.

Corollary

Let F be a group, and let $A \leq B \leq \text{Aut}(F)$ and $w \in F$ be such that $B \cap \text{Stab}^(w) = 1$. If $B \simeq F_2 \times F_2$ and A is the Mihailova subgroup corresponding to a group with unsolvable word problem then, $A \leq \text{Aut}(F)$ is orbit undecidable.*

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Negative results

With the following embedding (and $w = qaqbq$)

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 F_2 \times F_2 & \longrightarrow & \text{Aut}(F_3) \\
 (u, v) & \mapsto & {}_u\theta_v: F_3 \rightarrow F_3 \\
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More generally ...

A similar programme can be done for every extension $F \rtimes H$

$$1 \rightarrow F \rightarrow F \rtimes H \rightarrow H \rightarrow 1$$

satisfying

- (i) $TCP(F)$ is solvable,
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Free-by-free groups

Theorem (Brinkmann, 2006)

Cyclic subgroups of $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ are O.D.

Corollary (Bogopolski-Martino-Maslakova-V., 2005)

Free-by-cyclic groups have solvable conjugacy problem.

Theorem (Whitehead)

The full $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ is O.D.

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If $\langle \varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m \rangle = \text{Aut}(F_n)$ then $F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m$ has solvable conjugacy problem.

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Theorem (Miller, 70's)

There are free-by-free groups with unsolvable conjugacy problem.

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There exist 14 automorphisms $\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_{14} \in \text{Aut}(F_3)$ such that $\langle \varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_{14} \rangle \leq \text{Aut}(F_3)$ is orbit undecidable.

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(Free abelian)-by-free groups

Definition

Let $\mathbb{Z}^n = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n \mid [x_i, x_j] \rangle$ be the free abelian group of rank $n \geq 2$, and let $M_1, \dots, M_m \in \text{Aut}(\mathbb{Z}^n) = GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$. The *(free abelian)-by-free group* $\mathbb{Z}^n \rtimes_{M_1, \dots, M_m} F_m$ is defined as

$$F_n \rtimes_{M_1, \dots, M_m} F_m = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n, t_1, \dots, t_m \mid t_j^{-1} x_i t_j = x_i M_j, [x_i, x_j] = 1 \rangle.$$

The sequence

$$1 \longrightarrow \mathbb{Z}^n \longrightarrow \mathbb{Z}^n \rtimes_{M_1, \dots, M_m} F_m \longrightarrow F_m \longrightarrow 1$$

again satisfies (i), (ii) and (iii). So,

$$CP(\mathbb{Z}^n \rtimes_{M_1, \dots, M_m} F_m) \text{ is solvable} \Leftrightarrow \langle M_1, \dots, M_m \rangle \leq GL_n(\mathbb{Z}) \text{ is O.D.}$$

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Theorem (linear algebra)

Cyclic subgroups of $GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$ are O.D.

Corollary

\mathbb{Z}^n -by- \mathbb{Z} groups have solvable conjugacy problem.

Theorem (elementary)

The full $GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$ is O.D.

Corollary

If $\langle M_1, \dots, M_m \rangle = GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$ then $\mathbb{Z}^n \rtimes_{M_1, \dots, M_m} F_m$ has solvable conjugacy problem.

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Theorem (Bogopolski-Martino-V., 2008)

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(Free abelian)-by-free groups

$F_2 \times F_2 \leq GL_2(\mathbb{Z}) \times GL_2(\mathbb{Z}) \leq GL_4(\mathbb{Z})$. So...

Theorem (Bogopolski-Martino-V., 2008)

There exist 14 matrices $M_1, \dots, M_{14} \in GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$, for $n \geq 4$, such that $\langle M_1, \dots, M_{14} \rangle \leq GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$ is orbit undecidable.

Corollary

There exists a \mathbb{Z}^4 -by- F_{14} group with unsolvable conjugacy problem.

Question

Does $GL_3(\mathbb{Z})$ contain orbit undecidable subgroups ?

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Question

Does there exist \mathbb{Z}^3 -by-free groups with unsolvable conjugacy problem ?

(Free abelian)-by-free groups

$F_2 \times F_2 \leq GL_2(\mathbb{Z}) \times GL_2(\mathbb{Z}) \leq GL_4(\mathbb{Z})$. So...

Theorem (Bogopolski-Martino-V., 2008)

There exist 14 matrices $M_1, \dots, M_{14} \in GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$, for $n \geq 4$, such that $\langle M_1, \dots, M_{14} \rangle \leq GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$ is orbit undecidable.

Corollary

There exists a \mathbb{Z}^4 -by- F_{14} group with unsolvable conjugacy problem.

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- 1 The conjugacy problem for free-by-cyclic groups
- 2 The main theorem
- 3 The conjugacy problem for free-by-free groups
- 4 The conjugacy problem for (free abelian)-by-free groups
- 5 The conjugacy problem for Braid-by-free groups**
- 6 The conjugacy problem for Thompson-by-free groups
- 7 The conjugacy problem for automata

Braid-by-free groups

Consider the braid group on n strands, given by the classical presentation

$$B_n = \left\langle \sigma_1, \sigma_2, \dots, \sigma_{n-1} \mid \begin{array}{l} \sigma_i \sigma_j = \sigma_j \sigma_i \quad (|i - j| \geq 2) \\ \sigma_i \sigma_{i+1} \sigma_i = \sigma_{i+1} \sigma_i \sigma_{i+1} \quad (1 \leq i \leq n - 2) \end{array} \right\rangle.$$

Theorem

The conjugacy problem is solvable in B_n .

And the automorphism group is easy:

Theorem (Dyer, Grossman)

$|Out(B_n)| = 2$. More precisely, $Aut(B_n) = Inn(B_n) \sqcup Inn(B_n) \cdot \varepsilon$, where $\varepsilon: B_n \rightarrow B_n$ is the automorphism which inverts all generators, $\sigma_i \mapsto \sigma_i^{-1}$.

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Theorem (González-Meneses, V. 2009)

$TCP(B_n)$ is solvable.

Observation

Every subgroup $A \leq \text{Aut}(B_n)$ is orbit decidable.

Corollary (González-Meneses, V. 2009)

Every extension of B_n by a free group (or torsion-free hyperbolic) has solvable conjugacy problem.

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Thompson-by-free groups

Consider Thompson's group F (piecewise linear increasing maps $[0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$ with dyadic breakpoints, and slopes being powers of 2).

Theorem

The conjugacy problem is solvable in B_n .

And the automorphism group is big, but easy:

Theorem (Brin)

For every $\varphi \in \text{Aut}(F)$, there exists $\tau \in EP_2$ such that $\varphi(g) = \tau^{-1}g\tau$, for every $g \in F$.

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Theorem (Burillo-Matucci-V. 2010)

$TCP(F)$ is solvable.

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$F_2 \times F_2$ embeds in $Aut(F)$.

Corollary (Burillo-Matucci-V. 2010)

There are extensions of Thompson's group F by a free group, $F \rtimes F_m$, with unsolvable conjugacy problem.

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Automata groups

Proposition (Šunić-V., 2010)

For $d \geq 6$, the group $GL_d(\mathbb{Z})$ contains orbit undecidable, free subgroups.

So, for $d \geq 6$, there exists a group of the form

$$\Gamma = \mathbb{Z}^d \rtimes F_m \leq \mathbb{Z}^d \rtimes GL_d(\mathbb{Z})$$

with unsolvable conjugacy problem.

Theorem (Šunić-V., 2010)

Such a group $\Gamma = \mathbb{Z}^d \rtimes F_m$ can be realized as an automaton group.

Corollary

There exists automaton groups with unsolvable conjugacy problem.

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THANKS