数理解析研究所講究録
第 1965 巻 2015 年 112-120



# On SCT automorphism groups of divisible designs

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In this talk we consider automorphism groups SCTs of divisible designs acting regularly on the set of point classes and determine the relations among SCTs, RDSs and $\lambda$-planar functions.

§1 Divisible Designs and class regularity

A *divisible design* $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-DD is an incidence structure $(\mathbb{P}, \mathbb{B})$, where

(i) $\mathbb{P}$ is a set of $mu$ points partitioned into $m$ classes $\mathscr{C}$ (called *point classes*), each of size $u$,

(ii) $\mathbb{B}$ is a collection of $k$-subsets of $\mathbb{P}$ (called blocks),

(iii) Any two distinct points in the same point class are incident with no blocks and any two points in distinct point classes are incident with exactly $\lambda$ blocks.

We can show the following : $|\mathbb{P}| = mu,\ |\mathbb{B}| = u^2m(m-1)\lambda/k(k-1)$

An $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-DD with $k = m$ is called a *transversal design* and denoted by $\mathrm{TD}_\lambda(k, u)$. A $\mathrm{TD}_\lambda(k, u)$ is called a *symmetric transversal design* and denoted by $\mathrm{STD}_\lambda(k, u)$ with $k = u\lambda$ if its dual is also a $\mathrm{TD}_\lambda(k, u)$. We note that an $(m, 1, k, \lambda)$-DD is just a 2-$(m, k, \lambda)$ design.

### Partial difference matrices

**Definition.** (Jungnickel [2]) Let $U$ be a group of order $u$. An $m \times t$ matrix $D = [d_{ij}]$ with entries from $U \cup \{0\}$ is called an $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-*partial difference matrix* (PDM) over $U$ if the following conditions are satisfied :

(i) Each column of $D$ has exactly $k$ nonzero entries.

(ii) $\displaystyle\sum_{1\leq j\leq t} d_{ij}{d_{\ell j}}^{-1} = \lambda U,\ \forall i \neq \ell,$ where $0^{-1} = 0,\ 0 \cdot g = g \cdot 0 = 0\ \ \forall g \in U$ and $t = |\mathbb{B}|/|G| = m(m-1)u\lambda/k(k-1))$.

An $(m,u,k,\lambda)$-PDM with $m = k$ over a group $U$ of order $u$ is called a $(u,k,\lambda)$-*difference matrix* (DM). Moreover, a $(u,u\lambda,\lambda)$-DM, denoted by $\mathrm{GH}(u,\lambda)$, is called *a generalized Hadamard matrix.*

**Example.** Set $U = \langle a \rangle \simeq \mathbb{Z}_3$.

$$\underset{(5,3,4,1)\text{-PDM}}{\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & a & 0 & a^2 \\ 1 & a & 1 & a^2 & 0 \\ a & 1 & 0 & a^2 & a \\ 1 & 0 & a^2 & 1 & a \end{bmatrix}}, \quad \underset{(3,3,2)\text{-DM}}{\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & a & a & a^2 & a^2 \\ 1 & 1 & a^2 & a^2 & a & a \end{bmatrix}}, \quad \underset{\mathrm{GH}(3,1)}{\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & a & a^2 \\ 1 & a^2 & a \end{bmatrix}}$$

**Class regularity**

Following results are known.

**Result.** (D. Jungnickel [3]) The existence of an $(m,u,k,\lambda)$-DD admitting a class regular automorphism group $U$

$\Longleftrightarrow$ The existence of a $(m,u,k,\lambda)$-partial difference matrix over $U$

**Result.** (D.A. Drake [2]) Assume $U$ is a group of even order $u$ and $2 \nmid \lambda$. If a Sylow 2-subgroup of $U$ is cyclic then there exists no $(u,k,\lambda)$-DM over $U$ for $k \geq 3$.

We now consider *the regular action* of a subgroup $G$ of $\mathrm{Aut}(\mathcal{D})$ on the set of point classes $\mathscr{C} = \{\mathcal{C}_i \mid i \in I_m\}$, where $I_m = \{1, 2, \cdots, m\}$.

## §2 SCT groups and SCT matrices

Let $(\mathbb{P},\mathbb{B})$ be a $(m,u,k,\lambda)$-DD and $G \leq \mathrm{Aut}(\mathbb{P},\mathbb{B})$. We say $G$ is an *SCT*$(m,u,k,\lambda)$ *group* if $G$ is semiregular on $\mathbb{P} \cup \mathbb{B}$ and regular on the set of point classes $\mathscr{C} = \{\mathcal{C}_1, \cdots, \mathcal{C}_m\}$. (Note that $|G| = m$.)

Assume that $G$ is an SCT$(m,u,k,\lambda)$ group of a $(m,u,k,\lambda)$-DD $\mathcal{D}(= (\mathbb{P},\mathbb{B}))$. Choose a point class $\mathcal{C} = \{p_1, \cdots, p_u\} \in \mathscr{C}$. Then $\mathbb{P} = \bigcup_{i \in I_u} {p_i}^G$ and $\mathbb{B} = \bigcup_{j \in I_s} {B_j}^G$, where $s = |\mathbb{B}|/|G|$.

A $u \times s$ matrix $M_\mathcal{D} = [D_{ij}]$ $(D_{ij} \subset G)$ over $G$ is defined by

$$D_{ij} = \{g \in G \mid p_i^g \in B_j\} \quad (i \in I_u,\ j \in I_s)$$

**Theorem 1.** The following holds.

$$\sum_{j \in I_s} D_{ij} {D_{\ell j}}^{(-1)} = \begin{cases} \rho + \lambda(G-1) & \text{if } i = \ell, \\ \lambda(G-1) & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases}$$

where $\rho = (m-1)u\lambda/(k-1)$.

$$\sum_{i \in I_u} |D_{ij}| = k \qquad \forall j \in I_s$$

**Definition.** Let $G$ be a group of order $m$. Let $u, s \in \mathbb{N}$. For subsets $D_{ij} \subset G$ $(i \in I_u, j \in I_s)$ we call a $u \times s$ matrix $\begin{bmatrix} D_{11} & \cdots & D_{1s} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ D_{u1} & \cdots & D_{us} \end{bmatrix}$ an SCT$(m,u,k,\lambda)$-

matrix over $G$ if it satisfies the following for some $\rho \in \mathbb{N}$.

$$\sum_{j \in I_s} D_{ij} D_{\ell j}{}^{(-1)} = \begin{cases} \rho + \lambda(G-1) & \text{if } i = \ell, \\ \lambda(G-1) & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases}$$

$$\sum_{i \in I_u} |D_{ij}| = k \qquad \forall j \in I_s$$

**Remark.** (i) $s = (m-1)u^2\lambda/k(k-1), \quad \rho = (m-1)u\lambda/(k-1)$
(ii) An SCT$(m, 1, k, \lambda)$-matrix is just an $(m, k, \lambda)$-difference family.

$\star$ An incidence structure $\mathcal{D}(\mathbb{P}, \mathbb{B})$ defined by the following is an $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-DD admitting $G$ as an SCT group under the action $(i, w)g = (i, wg)$ for $i \in \{1, \cdots, u\}$ and $w, g \in G$.
$\mathbb{P} = \{1, 2, \cdots, u\} \times G$

$$\mathbb{B} = \{B_{j,g} \mid j \in I_s,\ g \in G\}, \text{ where } B_{j,g} = \bigcup_{i \in I_u} (i, D_{ij}g)$$

$\star$ $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-DD with SCT-group $\Longleftrightarrow$ SCT$(m, u, k, \lambda)$-matrix

**Example.** (i) The following is an SCT$(9, 2, 9, 9)$ matrix over $G := \langle a, b \rangle \simeq \mathbb{Z}_3 \times \mathbb{Z}_3$ :

$$\begin{bmatrix} \langle a \rangle & \langle b \rangle & G - \langle ab \rangle & G - \langle ab^2 \rangle \\ G - \langle a \rangle & G - \langle b \rangle & \langle ab \rangle & \langle ab^2 \rangle \end{bmatrix}$$

This matrix gives a $\mathrm{TD}_9(9, 2)$, which is not obtained from any difference matrix by Drake's result.

(ii) The following is an SCT$(12, 5, 11, 2)$ matrix over Alt$(4) = N \rtimes H$, $N = \{1, a, b, c\} \simeq E_4$, $H = \{1, d, d^2\} \simeq \mathbb{Z}_3$ :

$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 & \alpha & \beta & \gamma & \delta \\ \alpha & \beta & \gamma & \delta & 0 \\ \beta & \gamma & \delta & 0 & \alpha \\ \gamma & \delta & 0 & \alpha & \beta \\ \delta & 0 & \alpha & \beta & \gamma \end{bmatrix}, \text{ where } \begin{cases} \alpha = ad + cd^2 \\ \beta = d + bd^2 + d^2 + cd \\ \gamma = b + c \\ \delta = ad^2 + bd + a \end{cases}$$

From this we obtain a $(12, 5, 11, 2)$-DD with the full automorphism group isomorphic to Alt$(5)$ ($\geq$ Alt$(4) \simeq N \rtimes H$). This DD is not class regular, hence not obtained from any partial difference matrix.

**Relations among SCT aut. , Class regular aut. and RDS**

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \exists\ \text{SCT aut.} \Longleftrightarrow \exists\ \text{SCT mat.} & & \\ \qquad\qquad\qquad\quad \Downarrow & & \\ \qquad\qquad \text{Divisible design} \supset \text{Transversal design} & & \\ \qquad\qquad\qquad\quad \Uparrow \qquad\qquad\quad \Uparrow & & \\ \exists\ \text{class regular aut.} \Longleftrightarrow \exists\ \text{partial DM} \supset \text{DM} \supset \text{GH mat.} & & \end{array}$$

$\exists$ SCT aut. & $\exists$ class regular aut. $\Longleftrightarrow$ $\exists$ splitting relative difference set

### Difference families and SCT matrices

A family of $k$-subsets $\{D_1, \cdots, D_n\}$ of a group $G$ of order $v$ is called an $n$-$(v, k, \lambda)$ *difference family* if

$$D_1 D_1{}^{(-1)} + \cdots + D_n D_n{}^{(-1)} = kn + \lambda(G - 1).$$

From an $n$-$(v, k, \lambda)$ difference family in a group $G$ we obtain a 2-$(v, k, \lambda)$ design $(\mathbb{P}, \mathbb{B}) : \mathbb{P} = G, \ \ \mathbb{B} = \{D_i x \mid i \in I_n, \ x \in G\}$. In the following we give a relation between difference families and SCT matrices with $u = 2$.

**Theorem 2.** Let $\{D_1, \cdots, D_{4d}\}$ be a $4d$-$(m, k, d(4k - m))$ difference family in a group $G$ of order $m$. Set $C_i = G - D_i$ for $i \in I_{4d}$. Then the following is an SCT$(m, 2, m, dm)$ matrix corresponding to a TD$_{dm}(m, 2)$.

$$M = \begin{bmatrix} D_1 & \cdots & D_{2d} & C_{2d+1} & \cdots & C_{4d} \\ C_1 & \cdots & C_{2d} & D_{2d+1} & \cdots & D_{4d} \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \because \ C_i C_i{}^{(-1)} &= D_i D_i{}^{(-1)} + (m - 2k)G \\ D_i C_i{}^{(-1)} &= C_i D_i{}^{(-1)} = kG - D_i D_i{}^{(-1)} \end{aligned}$$

### Some theorems on difference families

The following results on difference families are known.

**Result.** (Leung-Ma-Schmidt [4]) Let $q$ be a prime power and $d > 0$ an integer. Suppose, either (i) $q \equiv 2d - 1 \pmod{4d}$ and $2 \nmid d$ or (ii) $q \equiv 4d - 1 \pmod{8d}$. Then there exists a $4d$-$(q^2, (q^2 - q)/2, dq^2 - 2dq)$ difference family in $(GF(q^2), +)$.

**Result.** (Q. Xiang [6]) Let $q$ be a power of a prime and $b, c$ positive integers such that $q + 1 = 2^c b$ and $c \geq 2$ with $2 \nmid b$. Then there exists a $2^c$-$(q^2, (q^2 - q)/2, 2^{c-2}(q^2 - 2q))$ difference family in $(GF(q^2), +)$.

**Remark.** Set $d = 2^{c-2}$ in the above result. Then $2^c$-$(q^2, (q^2 - q)/2, 2^{c-2}(q^2 - 2q))$ is identical with $4d$-$(q^2, (q^2 - q)/2, dq^2 - 2dq)$.

We now apply Theorem 2 to the above results for $m = q^2, k = (q^2 - q)/2$.

### TD$_{dq^2}(q^2, 2)$s admitting SCT groups

**Proposition.** Let $q$ be a power of a prime and $d$ a positive integer satisfying one of the following :

(i) $q \equiv 2d - 1 \pmod{4d}$.
(ii) $q \equiv 4d - 1 \pmod{8d}$.
(iii) $4d \mid q + 1, 8d \nmid q + 1$ with $d$ a power of 2.

Then, there exists an SCT$(q^2, 2, q^2, dq^2)$ matrix over $(GF(q^2), +)$ and the resulting TD$_{dq^2}(q^2, 2)$ admits an SCT automorphism group of order $q^2$.

**Remark.** If $2 \nmid dq$, then no TD$_{dq^2}(q^2, 2)$s are obtained from difference matrices by Drake's result.

## §3 Direct product RDSs and SCTs

Let $\mathcal{G}$ be a group of order $um$ and $U$ its (not necessarily normal) subgroup of order $u$. A $k$-subset $D$ of $\mathcal{G}$ is called an $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-*relative difference set* (or, RDS for short) relative to $U$ if $DD^{(-1)} = k + \lambda(\mathcal{G} - U)$. Usually $U$ is called the forbidden subgroup.

An $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-divisible design $\mathcal{D} = (\mathbb{P}, \mathbb{B})$ is obtained from $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-RDS in the following way : the set $\mathbb{P}$ of points are elements of $\mathcal{G}$ and the set of blocks $\mathbb{B}$ are subsets $Dx (x \in \mathcal{G})$. We note that the set of point classes are $\{Ug \mid g \in \mathcal{G}\}$.

We say $\mathcal{G}$ is *splitting* (over $U$) if there exists a subgroup $G$ of $\mathcal{G}$ of order $m$ such that $\mathcal{G} = GU$ and $G \cap U = 1$. In this case $G$ is an SCT$(m, u, k, \lambda)$ group of $\mathcal{D}$.

From now on we consider an SCT matrix obtained from a splitting abelian RDS ; $\mathcal{G} = G \times U$.

**Hypothesis 3.** Let $G = \{g_1, \cdots, g_m\}$ and $U = \{w_1, \cdots, w_u\}$ be abelian groups of order $m$ and $u$, respectively. Suppose $D$ is an $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-RDS in the group $\mathcal{G} = G \times U$ relative to $U$. Set $\mathbb{P} = \mathcal{G} = \{w_i g_j \mid i \in I_u, j \in I_m\}$ and $\mathbb{B} = \{Dw_i g_j \mid i \in I_u, j \in I_m\}$. Then $\mathcal{D}_{D,\mathcal{G}} := (\mathbb{P}, \mathbb{B})$ is a $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-DD with the set $\mathscr{C} := \{Ug_1, \cdots, Ug_m\}$ of point classes.

We now consider the action of $G$ on $(\mathbb{P}, \mathbb{B})$ as an SCT group.

$\{w_i G \mid i \in I_u\}$ : the set of $G$-orbits on $\mathbb{P}$,

$\{Dw_i G \mid i \in I_u\}$ : the set of $G$-orbits on $\mathbb{B}$,

$D = G_{w_1} w_1 \cup \cdots \cup G_{w_u} w_u \quad (\exists G_{w_1}, \cdots, \exists G_{w_u} \subset G)$.

We choose a point class $\mathcal{C} = \{w_1, \cdots, w_u\} (\in \mathscr{C})$ as a set of representatives of $G$-orbits on $\mathbb{P}$ and $\{Dw_1, \cdots, Dw_u\} (\subset \mathbb{B})$ as a set of representatives of $G$-orbits on $\mathbb{B}$.

**Direct product RDSs and SCTs**

Under Hypothesis 3, the corresponding $u \times u$ SCT matrix $[D_{ij}]$ is given by

$$D_{ij} = \{g \in G \mid (w_i)g \in Dw_j\} = G \cap Dw_i^{-1} w_j.$$

As $D = G_{w_1} w_1 \cup \cdots \cup G_{w_u} w_u \quad (G_{w_1}, \cdots, G_{w_u} \subset G)$,
we have $[D_{ij}] = [G_{w_i w_j^{-1}}]$, which we call *an SCT matrix of standard form with respect to* $\{D, G \times U\}$.

Similarly, if we choose a point class $\mathcal{C} = \{w_1 g, \cdots, w_u g\} \in \mathscr{C}$ $(g \in G)$ and $\{Dw_1 g_{n_1}, \cdots, Dw_u g_{n_u}\} \subset \mathbb{B}$ $(n_1, \cdots, n_u \in I_m)$ as sets of representatives of $G$-orbits on $\mathbb{P}$ and $\mathbb{B}$, respectively, then we have the following.

**Lemma 4.** Under Hypothesis 3, set $D = G_{w_1} w_1 \cup \cdots \cup G_{w_u} w_u$, where $G_{w_1}, \cdots, G_{w_u} \subset G$. Then a $u \times u$ matrix $[G_{w_i w_j^{-1}} g^{-1} g_{n_j}]$ is an SCT$(m, u, k, \lambda)$ matrix.

Let notations be as in Lemma 4. Then we have the following.

**Proposition 5.** Set $M = [G_{w_i w_j^{-1}}]$, the SCT matrix of standard form with respect to $\{D, G \times U\}$. Then,

(i) any SCT matrix is obtained from $M$ by multiplication of any column by an element of $G$ and any permutation of rows and columns;

(ii) $M$ is circulant if $u$ is a prime and $w_i = w^{i-1}$ for $i \in I_u$, where $U = \langle w \rangle$.

## §4 Spreads and SCTs

**Theorem 6.** Let $q = p^e$ be a power of a prime $p$ and let $G$ be an elementary abelian $p$-group of order $q^2$. Let $\{H_1, \cdots, H_{q+1}\}$ be a spread of $G$ (i.e. $|H_i| = q, |H_i \cap H_j| = 1,\ \forall i \neq j$). Set $q_0 = q/p^m\ (= p^{e-m})$ and

$A_i = H^*_{iq_0+1} + H^*_{iq_0+2} + \cdots + H^*_{(i+1)q_0} \quad (0 \leq i \leq p^m - 2),$

$A_{p^m-1} = H^*_{(p^m-1)q_0+1} + H^*_{(p^m-1)q_0+2} + \cdots + H^*_{p^m \cdot q_0} + H^*_{p^m \cdot q_0+1} + 1$

Let $L = [n_{ij}]$ be a Latin square of order $p^m$ with entries from $\{0, 1, \cdots, p^m - 1\}$. Then the following is an SCT$(p^{2e}, p^m, p^{2e}, p^{2e-m})$ matrix, which gives an STD$_{q^2/p^m}(p^{2e}, p^m)$.

$$\begin{bmatrix} A_{n_{1,1}} & A_{n_{1,2}} & \cdots & A_{n_{1,p^m}} \\ A_{n_{2,1}} & A_{n_{2,2}} & \cdots & A_{n_{2,p^m}} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ A_{n_{p^m,1}} & \cdots & A_{n_{p^m,p^m-1}} & A_{n_{p^m,p^m}} \end{bmatrix}$$

Sketch of proof : (1) $\sum_{i \in I_{p^m}} A_i A_i^{(-1)} = q^2 + qq_0(G-1) \quad (\forall i \in I_{p^m})$.

(2) If $\{n_{i1}, \cdots, n_{ip^m}\} = \{n_{\ell 1}, \cdots, n_{\ell p^m}\} = I_{p^m}$ and $n_{i,1} \neq n_{\ell,1}, \cdots, n_{ip^m} \neq n_{\ell p^m}$, then

$$A_{i1} A_{\ell 1}{}^{(-1)} + \cdots + A_{ip^m} A_{\ell p^m}{}^{-1} = q_0 q(G-1)$$

### An equivalence class in Latin squares of order $n$

We show that some of the STDs obtained in Theorem 6 admit no class regular automorphism groups. This implies that these STDs are never obtained from generalized Hadamard matrices. In order to prove this we need a lemma on the set of Latin squares.

**Definition.** Let $e_1 = (1, 0, 0, \cdots, 0), e_2 = (0, 1, 0, \cdots, 0), \cdots$ be vectors of $\mathrm{V}(n, \mathbb{C})$. For a permutation $\sigma = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & \cdots & n \\ r_1 & r_2 & \cdots & r_n \end{pmatrix}$ of $\Omega := \{1, 2, \cdots, n\}$, a permutation matrix $P_\sigma$ is defined by $e_i P_\sigma = e_{r_i}$ for each $i \in I_n$. Let $N$ be the group of permutation matrices of order $n$ and $\mathscr{L}$ the set of Latin squares on $\Omega$. We say Latin squares $L_1$ and $L_2$ in $\mathscr{L}$ are equivalent if $L_2 = PL_1Q$ for some $P, Q \in N$. Let $H := N \times N$ be the direct product and define the action of $H$ on $\mathscr{L}$ by $L(P, Q) = P^T LQ$ for $L \in \mathscr{L}$ . Then $H$ is a permutation group on $\mathscr{L}$.

### The number of Latin squares of order $n$

Let $\mathscr{L}_n$ be the set of Latin squares of order $n$ on $\{1, \cdots, n\}$.
By Theorem III.1.19 of [1],

$|\mathscr{L}_n| > f(n) := (n!)^{2n}/n^{n^2}$ for $n > 1$.

$|\mathscr{L}_2| = (2-1)!2! > \lceil f(2) \rceil = 1,$
$|\mathscr{L}_3| = (3-1)!3! > \lceil f(3) \rceil = 2,$
$|\mathscr{L}_4| = 4(4-1)!4! > \lceil f(4) \rceil = 25,$
$|\mathscr{L}_5| = 56(5-1)!5! = 161280 > \lceil f(5) \rceil = 2077$

$$\vdots$$

### Latin squares equivalent to a circulant one

$\mathscr{L}$ = the set of Latin squares on $\Omega := \{1, 2, \cdots, n\}$
$N$ = the group of permutation matrices of order $n$
$N \times N$ = the permutation group on $\mathscr{L}$ defined by $L(P,Q) = P^T LQ$

**Lemma.** Let $C$ be a circulant matrix of order $n$ whose first row is $(a_1, a_2, \cdots, a_n)$ with $\{a_1, a_2, \cdots, a_n\} = \Omega$. Let $T \in N$ be a circulant permutation matrix whose first row is $(0, 1, 0, \cdots, 0)$. If $Q, R \in N$ and $QC = CR$ then $Q = R$ and $Q \in \langle T \rangle$.

**Lemma 7.** Assume $C \in \mathscr{L}$ and $C$ is circulant. Then,

(i) The number of Latin squares in $\mathscr{L}$ equivalent to $C$ is $(n!)^2/n$;

(ii) If $n \geq 4$, then there exists a Latin square of $\mathscr{L}$ not equivalent to circulant one.

$\because$ By Theorem III.1.19 of [1], $|\mathscr{L}_n| > (n!)^{2n}/n^{n^2}$.
As $(n!)^{2n}/n^{n^2} > (n-1)!(n!)^2/n$, $(n \geq 4)$, the lemma holds.

### Non class regular STDs

**Theorem.** Let $p > 3$ be a prime and $A_L$ the $\mathrm{SCT}(p^{2e-1}, p^{2e}, p, p^{2e})$ matrix defined in Theorem 6. Then the $\mathrm{STD}_{p^{2e-1}}(p^{2e}, p)$ obtained from $A_L$ is not class regular.

*Proof.* By Lemma 7, there exists a Latin square $L$ not equivalent to a circulant one. Let $(\mathbb{P}, \mathbb{B})$ be the $\mathrm{STD}_{p^{2e-1}}(p^{2e}, p)$ obtained from $A_L$ and let $G$ be the $\mathrm{SCT}(p^{2e-1}, p^{2e}, p, p^{2e})$ automorphism group of order $p^{2e}$. Suppose false and let $U$ be a class regular automorphism group of $(\mathbb{P}, \mathbb{B})$. Then, as $G$ normalizes $U$ and $|U| = p$, $G$ centralizes $U$. The direct product $\mathcal{G} := G \times U$ contains a $(p^{2e}, p, p^{2e}, p^{2e-1})$-RDS corresponding to $(\mathbb{P}, \mathbb{B})$. By Proposition 5, $L$ must be equivalent to a circulant Latin square, a contradiction.

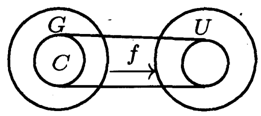
## §5 RDS and $\lambda$-planar functions

In this section we define a $\lambda$-planar function as a generalization of planar functions.

**Theorem.** Let $\mathcal{G} = GU$ be a group of order $mu$ and $G, U$ its subgroups with $|G| = m, |U| = u$ and $\mathcal{G} \rhd U$. Let $D$ be a $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-RDS in $\mathcal{G}$ relative to $U$. Then there exists a $k$-subset $C$ of $G$ and a function $f : C \longrightarrow U$ satisfying the following.

(i) $D = \{xf(x) \mid x \in C\}$

(ii) $\#\{x \in C \mid ax \in C,\ f(ax)^a f(x)^{-1} = b\} = \lambda$
for any $a \in G \setminus \{1\}$ and $b \in U$.




**Proposition.** Let $G, U$ be groups of order $m, u$, respectively. Let $\varphi$ be a homomorphism from $G$ to $\mathrm{Aut}(U)$ and $f$ a function form $C$ to $U$ for a $k$-subset $C$ of $G$. Assume that for any $a \in G \setminus \{1\}$ and $b \in U$

$$(\star)\quad \#\{x \in C \mid ax \in C,\ f(ax)^{\varphi(a)} f(x)^{-1} = b\} = \lambda.$$

Then $D = \{xf(x) \mid x \in C\}$ is a $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-RDS in a semi-direct product $\mathcal{G} = GU$ of $G$ by $U$ with respect to $\varphi$.

**Definition.** Let $G$ and $U$ be groups. Let $C$ be a subset of $G$ and $\varphi \in \mathrm{Hom}(G, \mathrm{Aut}(U))$. We call a function $f : C \longrightarrow U$ a **$\lambda$-planar function** relative to $(C, U, \varphi)$ if $f$ satisfies $(\star)$. If $\varphi$ is a trivial homomorphism, we say $f$ is a $\lambda$-planar function relative to $(C, U)$. We note that a 1-planar function relative to $(G, U)$ is just a planar function in the usual sense (see Pott [5]).

**Example.** Let $q = p^e$ be a power of a prime $p$ and set $G = F = (GF(q^2), +) \supset U = K = (GF(q), +)$. Then a function
$f(x) = x^{q+1}$ from $G$ to $U$ is a $q$-planar function relative to $(G, U)$.

$\because$ Let $0 \neq a \in G$ and $b \in U$. Then,

$$\begin{aligned} f(a+x) - f(x) = b &\iff (a^q + x^q)(a+x) - x^{q+1} = b \\ &\iff ax^q + a^q x = b - a^{q+1} \qquad (\star\star). \end{aligned}$$

As $ax^q + a^q x = ax^q + (ax^q)^q = \mathrm{Tr}_{F/K}(ax^q)$, $(\star\star)$ has exactly $q$ solutions in $G$. Thus $f$ is a $q$-planar function relative to $(G, U)$.

**$\lambda$-planar functions, SCTs, and RDSs**

**Theorem 8.** Let $G$ be a group of order $m$ and $U$ a group of order $u$. Let $D_y$ be subsets of $G$ for each $y \in U$. If a $u \times u$ matrix $D = [D_{yz^{-1}}]_{y,z \in U}$ over $\mathbb{Z}[G]$ is an SCT$(m, u, k, \lambda)$ matrix, then the following holds.

(i) Set $C = \bigcup_{y \in U} D_y (\subset G)$. Then $|C| = k, G = \langle C \rangle$ and a function $f : C \longrightarrow U$ defined by $f(D_y) = y \ \ (y \in U)$ is a $\lambda$-planar function relative to $(C, U)$.

(ii) Set $D = \{(x, f(x) \mid x \in C\}$. Then $D$ is an $(m, u, k, \lambda)$-RDS in $G \times U$ relative to $1 \times U$.

**Remark.** A $(u\lambda, u, u\lambda, \lambda)$-RDS is called semiregular. It is conjectured that any forbidden subgroup of a semiregular RDS is a $p$-group for a prime $p$. Concerning this we can show the following as an application of Theorems 6 and 8.

**Theorem.** *Any $p$-group can be a forbidden subgroup of a semiregular RDS.*

As a corollary we have the following, which gives another proof of de Launey's result on generalized Hadamard matrices (cf. [1], Theorem 5.9).

**Corollary** There exists a GH$(p^m, p^{2e-m})$ matrix over *any group of oder $p^m$* whenever $e \geq m$.

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