

A Flat Manifold with No Symmetries

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In this note, we give an example of a flat manifold having a trivial group of affinities by constructing a Bieberbach group with a trivial center and trivial outer automorphism group.

1. INTRODUCTION

The compact, connected, flat Riemannian manifolds (flat manifolds for short) are classified up to affine equivalence by their fundamental groups, the so-called Bieberbach groups. These groups are precisely the torsion-free groups satisfying an exact sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow L \longrightarrow \Gamma \longrightarrow G \longrightarrow 1 \quad (1-1)$$

where G is a finite group and L is a faithful $\mathbb{Z}G$ -lattice of finite rank, i.e., a free \mathbb{Z} -module of finite rank on which G acts faithfully. Let X be a flat manifold with fundamental group Γ . The group $\text{Aff}(X)$ of affine self-equivalences of X is a Lie group. Its identity component $\text{Aff}_0(X)$ is a torus whose dimension is the rank of the center of Γ , and $\text{Aff}(X)/\text{Aff}_0(X)$ is isomorphic to $\text{Out}(\Gamma)$, the outer automorphism group of Γ . Malfait conjectured [Malfait 98, Conjecture 5.13], that $\text{Aff}(X)$ is never torsion-free (where the trivial group is considered to be torsion-free). In Section 2, we will give an example of a Bieberbach group that has a trivial center and trivial outer automorphism group, and hence is the fundamental group of a flat manifold with trivial group of affinities. In particular, it is a counterexample to Malfait's conjecture. Let Γ be a Bieberbach group as in (1-1) and $\delta \in H^2(G, L)$ be the cohomology class giving rise to (1-1). Let N be the normalizer of G in $\text{Aut}(L)$. There is a natural action of N on $H^2(G, L)$, and $\text{Out}(\Gamma)$ satisfies the short exact sequence (see [Charlap 86, Theorem V.1.1])

$$0 \longrightarrow H^1(G, L) \longrightarrow \text{Out}(\Gamma) \longrightarrow N_\delta/G \longrightarrow 1, \quad (1-2)$$

where N_δ denotes the stabilizer of δ in N . The center of Γ is $L^G = \{v \in L \mid gv = v \forall g \in G\}$, so to find a flat manifold with no symmetries, it suffices to construct a

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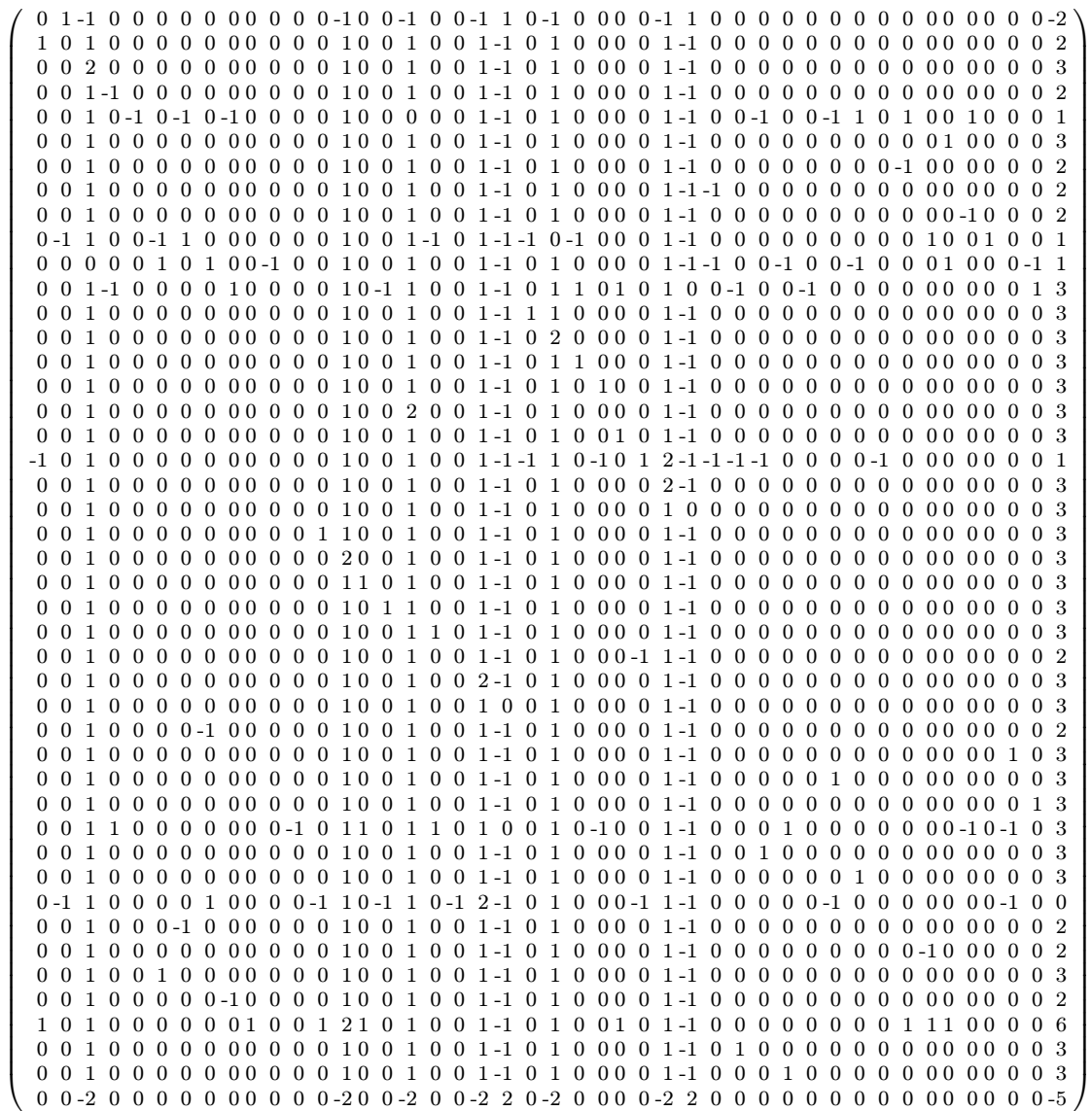


Figure 2(a).

torsion-free extension (1–1) such that L^G , $H^1(G, L)$, and N_δ/G are trivial. To do this, we need to know when an extension (1–1) is torsion-free, and this happens if and only if we have $\text{res}_U^G(\delta) \neq 0$ for all nontrivial subgroups U of G , where $\text{res}_U^G : H^2(G, L) \rightarrow H^2(U, L)$ denotes the restriction homomorphism (see [Charlap 86, Theorem III.2.1]). An element $\delta \in H^2(G, L)$ satisfying this condition is called special. By transitivity of restriction, it suffices to check this for subgroups of prime order, and by the action of G on $H^2(G, L)$, it suffices to consider representatives of conjugacy classes of subgroups. Also, for a Sylow p -subgroup U of G , the restriction homomorphism $\text{res}_U^G : H^2(G, L)_p \rightarrow H^2(U, L)$ is injective. Since it is difficult to compute $H^2(G, L)$, we use the isomorphic group $H^1(G, \mathbb{Q} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} L/L)$ instead.

2. THE EXAMPLE

Let $G = M_{11}$, the Mathieu group on 11 letters. Then G has a presentation

$$G \cong \langle a, b \mid a^2, b^4, (ab)^{11}, (ab^2)^6, \\ ababab^{-1}abab^2ab^{-1}abab^{-1}ab^{-1} \rangle,$$

and representatives of conjugacy classes of subgroups of order 2, respectively, 3 are $\langle a \rangle$, respectively, $\langle (ab^2)^2 \rangle$; see [Wilson et al. 01]. Let L_1 be the 20-dimensional integral representation of G from the Web-Atlas [Wilson et al. 01], let L_3 be the dual of the 44-dimensional integral representation of G from the Web-Atlas, and let L_2 and L_4 be the lattices given in Figure 1 and Figure 2, respectively. The lattices are given by the images of the generators a and b under the corresponding integral representation of G , i.e., the lattice is identified with \mathbb{Z}^n on which G acts by matrix multiplication. Furthermore, let $\delta_i \in H^1(G, \mathbb{Q} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} L_i/L_i)$ for $1 \leq i \leq 4$ be the cocycles given in Figure 3. A cocycle δ is given by vectors $v_a, v_b \in \mathbb{Q}^n$ such that $\delta(a) = v_a + \mathbb{Z}^n$ and $\delta(b) = v_b + \mathbb{Z}^n$. These have the following properties:

- (1) The character afforded by L_1 is $\chi + \bar{\chi}$, where χ is one of the two nonreal irreducible characters of G of degree 10. The order of δ_1 is 6, and we have $\text{res}_{\langle a \rangle}^G(\delta_1) = 0$, but $\text{res}_{\langle (ab^2)^2 \rangle}^G(\delta_1) \neq 0$.
- (2) The character afforded by L_2 is $\chi + \bar{\chi}$, where χ is one of the two irreducible characters of G of degree 16. The order of δ_2 is 5. Hence the restriction of δ_2 to any subgroup of order 5 is nonzero.
- (3) The character afforded by L_3 is the irreducible character of G of degree 44. The order of δ_3 is 6, and we have $\text{res}_{\langle a \rangle}^G(\delta_3) \neq 0$, but $\text{res}_{\langle (ab^2)^2 \rangle}^G(\delta_3) = 0$.
- (4) The character afforded by L_4 is the irreducible character of G of degree 45. The order of δ_4 is 11. Hence the restriction of δ_4 to any subgroup of order 11 is nonzero.

Thus $\delta := \delta_1 + \dots + \delta_4 \in H^1(G, \mathbb{Q} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} L/L)$, where $L := L_1 \oplus \dots \oplus L_4$, is a special element. Let Γ be an extension of L by G given by δ . Then Γ is torsion-free and has trivial center. Moreover, we have $H^1(G, L) = 0$. This is easily checked using the fact that, if $L^G = 0$, a prime p divides $|H^1(G, L)|$ if and only if $(L/pL)^G \neq 0$ (see [Hiss and Szczepański 97, Lemma 2.1]). Now it remains to check that $N_{\text{Aut}(L)}(G)_\delta = G$. Since G has no outer automorphisms, we have $N_{\text{Aut}(L)}(G) = C_{\text{Aut}(L)}(G)G$, and the centralizer of G in $\text{Aut}(L)$ is $C_{\text{Aut}(L_1)}(G) \times \dots \times C_{\text{Aut}(L_4)}(G)$. We claim that $C_{\text{Aut}(L_i)}(G) = \{\pm 1\}$ for $1 \leq i \leq 4$. This is obvious for $i = 3, 4$. Now $C_{\text{Aut}(L_i)}(G)$ is the unit group of $\text{End}_{\mathbb{Z}G}(L_i)$, which is a \mathbb{Z} -order in $\text{End}_{\mathbb{Q}G}(\mathbb{Q} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} L_i)$. For $i = 1, 2$, this endomorphism ring is isomorphic to $\mathbb{Q}(\chi)$, where χ is as above. In the first case, $\mathbb{Q}(\chi) = \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{-2})$, and in the second case, we have $\mathbb{Q}(\chi) = \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{-11})$. In both cases, all \mathbb{Z} -orders have unit group $\{\pm 1\}$, hence the claim. Now it is clear that $C_{\text{Aut}(L)}(G)_\delta = 1$ and we are done.

The computations in this example have been performed with GAP [GAP 02] and CARAT [Opgenorth et al. 01].

It would be desirable to have more than one example, preferably an infinite family. But to achieve this using the above strategy, one needs a family of lattices with the “right” properties, and I do not know of such a family.

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