

Distributivity of Quotients of Countable Products of Boolean Algebras

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ABSTRACT. *We compute the distributivity numbers of algebras of the type $\mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ where \mathbb{B} is the trivial algebra $\{0, 1\}$, the countable atomless Boolean algebra, $\mathcal{P}(\omega)$, $\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin}$ and $(\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin})^\omega$.*

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1. Introduction

Given a Boolean algebra \mathbb{B} , the completion of \mathbb{B} is denoted by $\text{r.o.}(\mathbb{B})$. Formally, $\text{r.o.}(\mathbb{B})$ is defined as the Boolean algebra of regular open subsets of \mathbb{B} (see [12, p. 152]). Given a cardinal κ , $\text{r.o.}(\mathbb{B})$ is called κ -distributive if and only if the equality

$$\prod \left\{ \sum_{i \in I_\alpha} u_{\alpha, i} : \alpha < \kappa \right\} = \sum \left\{ \prod u_{\alpha, f(\alpha)} : f \in \prod_{\alpha < \kappa} I_\alpha \right\}$$

holds for every family $\langle u_{\alpha, i} : i \in I_\alpha \ \& \ \alpha < \kappa \rangle$ of members of \mathbb{B} . It is well known (see [12, p. 158]) that the following four statements are equivalent:

1. \mathbb{B} is κ -distributive.
2. The intersection of κ open dense sets in $\mathbb{B}^+ (= \mathbb{B} \setminus \{0\})$ is dense.
3. Every family of κ maximal antichains of \mathbb{B}^+ has a refinement.
4. Forcing with \mathbb{B} does not add a new subset of κ .

The *distributivity number* of \mathbb{B} is defined as the least κ such that $\text{r.o.}(\mathbb{B})$ is not κ -distributive. The distributivity number of \mathbb{B} is usually denoted by $\mathfrak{h}(\mathbb{B})$.

We are interested in computing the distributivity number of algebras of the type $\mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin}$. Here, \mathbb{B}^ω is the Boolean algebra of all functions $f : \omega \rightarrow \mathbb{B}$ with

pointwise operation. As usual, the *support* of an element $f \in \mathbb{B}^\omega$ is the set of all $n \in \omega$ for which $f(n) \neq 0 \in \mathbb{B}$. Finally, Fin is the ideal of all functions with finite support and $\mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ is the quotient algebra.

Boolean algebras of the type $\mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ have been recently an object of study, see for example [9], [1], [5], [4]. We are going to focus in some of the most natural algebras \mathbb{B} such as $\{0, 1\}$, $\mathcal{P}(\omega)$, $\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin}$ and the atomless countable Boolean algebra. The algebra $\mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ for these Boolean algebras correspond to the Stone-Čech remainders ($X^* = \beta X \setminus X$) of some well known spaces. It is easy to see that $\{0, 1\}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ is isomorphic to $\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin}$ and it is well known that its distributivity number is denoted by \mathfrak{h} , that $\aleph_1 \leq \mathfrak{h} \leq \mathfrak{c}$ and that ZFC does not determine the exact value of \mathfrak{h} . For example, Martin's Axiom implies $\mathfrak{h} = \mathfrak{c}$; on the other hand, $\mathfrak{h} = \aleph_1$ holds in the Cohen model for the failure of the Continuum Hypothesis. As $\{0, 1\}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ is isomorphic to $\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin}$ it follows that $\{0, 1\}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ corresponds to the Stone-Čech remainder, ω^* , of the compactification of the naturals. The study of the distributivity for this space was initiated in [2]. $(\mathcal{P}(\omega))^\omega / \text{Fin}$ topologically corresponds to $(\beta\omega \times \omega)^*$. The topological correspondent of $(\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin})^\omega / \text{Fin}$ is $(\omega \times \omega^*)^*$ and one of the first papers studying the distributivity of this space is [7] where this space is denoted by ω^{2^*} . Finally, one can choose to work with \mathbb{A} , the Boolean algebra of clopen subsets of the Cantor set 2^ω as the representative of the atomless countable Boolean algebra; then one can see that $\mathbb{A}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ is isomorphic to the algebra of clopen subsets of $\beta(2^\omega \times \omega) \setminus (2^\omega \times \omega)$. This space is, in particular, co-absolute with $\beta\mathbb{R} \setminus \mathbb{R}$. The study of the distributivity number of $\beta\mathbb{R} \setminus \mathbb{R}$ was initiated in [8].

2. Computing $\mathfrak{h}(\mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin})$.

Our terminology and notation are mostly standard and follows that of [12] and [3]. We refer the reader to those sources for undefined notions here. The phrase “for almost all” will mean “for all but, possibly, finitely many of”.

Since $\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin}$ is regularly embedded in $\mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ for any Boolean algebra \mathbb{B} . In [1] the authors showed that $\mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ can be written as an iteration of $\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin}$ and an ultra-power of \mathbb{B} modulo \mathcal{U} . For the sake of completeness we present here their result together with their short proof.

PROPOSITION 2.1 ([1]). $\mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin}$ is forcing equivalent to the iteration

$$\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin} * \mathbb{B}^\omega / \dot{\mathcal{U}},$$

where $\dot{\mathcal{U}}$ is the $\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin}$ -name for the Ramsey ultrafilter added by $\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin}$.

Proof. Define a function $\Phi : \mathbb{B}^\omega / \text{Fin} \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin} * \mathbb{B}^\omega / \dot{\mathcal{U}}$ by putting $\Phi(f) = \langle \text{supp}(f), [\dot{f}]_{\dot{\mathcal{U}}} \rangle$, where $[\dot{f}]_{\dot{\mathcal{U}}}$ is a $\mathcal{P}(\omega) / \text{fin}$ -name for

$$\{g \in \mathbb{B}^\omega : \{n \in \omega : f(n) = g(n)\} \in \mathcal{U}\}.$$

It is easy to verify that Φ is a dense embedding. \square

A consequence of the regular embedding of $\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\text{fin}$ into $\mathbb{B}^\omega/\text{Fin}$ is that

$$\mathfrak{h}(\mathbb{B}^\omega/\text{Fin}) \leq \mathfrak{h} \quad (1)$$

for any Boolean algebra \mathbb{B} . As we said before, for $\mathbb{B} = \{0, 1\}$ ZFC does not determine the value of \mathfrak{h} . One more comment we can make about this is that the natural forcing to increase \mathfrak{h} is the Mathias forcing; thus in the Mathias model \mathfrak{h} is \aleph_2 .

For $\mathbb{B} = \mathbb{A}$, the best known result is in [1]; it is a nice theorem which improves the result in [8] which says that $\mathfrak{h}(\mathbb{A}^\omega/\text{Fin}) = \aleph_1$ in the Mathias model.

THEOREM 2.2 ([1]). $\mathfrak{h}(\mathbb{A}^\omega/\text{Fin}) \leq \min\{\mathfrak{h}, \text{add}(\mathcal{M})\}$.

In [11] we use a natural modification of Mathias forcing which increases $\mathfrak{h}(\mathbb{A}^\omega/\text{Fin})$ the same way that Mathias forcing increases \mathfrak{h} ; that is, we produce a model where there is a tree π -base for $\mathbb{A}^\omega/\text{Fin}$ of height ω_2 without branches of length ω_2 . A *tree π -base* for a space X is a dense subset of the regular open algebra of subsets of X which forms a tree when ordered by reverse inclusion.

The forcing used in [11] uses a lot of the topological structure of the reals but in the general case it can be defined as follows: $\mathbb{M}_{\mathbb{B}}$ is the forcing whose conditions are pairs $\langle s, B \rangle$ where s is a finite subset of \mathbb{B}^+ and B is a regular open subset of \mathbb{B} with $s \cap B = \emptyset$ and with the ordering $\langle s, B \rangle \leq \langle r, A \rangle$ if and only if $r \subseteq s \subseteq r \cup A$ and $B \subseteq A$. Recall that $B \subseteq \mathbb{B}$ is regular open if whenever $a \leq b$ and $b \in B$ we have $a \in B$, and for every $b \notin B$ there is $a \leq b$ such that $B_a \cap B = \emptyset$, where $B_a = \{x \in \mathbb{B} : x \leq a\}$.

The first computation we do is for $\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}$. We wish to thank Professor Jörg Brendle for his help to fix a previous proof. This algebra is isomorphic to the algebra $\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\text{fin} \times \mathcal{P}(\omega)$.

PROPOSITION 2.3. $\mathfrak{h}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}) = \mathfrak{h}$.

Proof. For the purpose of the proof, for a function $f : A \rightarrow \omega$ and $A \subseteq \omega$ denote by A^f the set $\{\langle n, f(n) \rangle : n \in A\}$. Then it is easy to see that the family $\mathcal{D} = \{A^f : A \in [\omega]^\omega, f \in \omega^A\}$ is a dense subset of $\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}$.

It follows that $\mathfrak{h}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}) \leq \mathfrak{h}$ by (1). To prove the other inequality let $\kappa < \mathfrak{h}$ and consider a family $\{\mathcal{A}_\alpha : \alpha < \kappa\}$ of maximal antichains in \mathcal{D} . Given $A^f \in \mathcal{A}_0$, let $\mathcal{C}_{\alpha, f}$ be a maximal antichain in $\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}$ below A^f and below \mathcal{A}_α . Fix a maximal almost disjoint family $\mathcal{B}_{\kappa, f} = \{B \subseteq \omega : B^f \in \mathcal{C}_{\alpha, f}\}$ on A . Since $\kappa < \mathfrak{h}$ there is $\mathcal{B}_{\kappa, f}$ which is a common refinement of the families $\mathcal{B}_{\alpha, f}$ for $\alpha < \kappa$.

Letting $\mathcal{A}_\kappa = \{B^f \upharpoonright B : B \in \mathcal{B}_{\kappa, f} \ \& \ f \in \mathcal{A}_0\}$ we obtain a common refinement for each \mathcal{A}_α , as we wanted to show. \square

We pass now to compute $\mathfrak{h}((\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\text{fin})^\omega/\text{Fin})$; for short we write $\mathfrak{h}(\omega^{2*})$, see the introduction. Dow showed that a tree π -base for ω^{2*} cannot be ω_2 -closed and that Martin's Axiom (actually $\mathfrak{p} = \mathfrak{c}$) implies that the boolean algebra $(\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\text{fin})^\omega/\text{Fin}$ (which by the way is isomorphic to $\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\text{fin} \times \text{fin}$) is \mathfrak{c} -distributive, and hence $\mathfrak{h}(\omega^{2*}) = \mathfrak{c}$. We are showing now that exact value of $\mathfrak{h}(\omega^{2*})$ cannot be decided. At first glance one would think that $\mathfrak{h}(\omega^{2*}) = \mathfrak{h}$; however in the Mathias model they differ. To show that we are going to use a game theoretical characterization of $\mathfrak{h}(\mathbb{B})$. For more on games and distributivity laws in Boolean algebras see [6].

Let us consider the following game first introduced in [10]. For a homogeneous Boolean algebra \mathbb{B} and for any ordinal α , $\mathsf{G}(\mathbb{B}, \alpha)$ is the game of length α between Player I and Player II, who alternatively choose non-zero elements $b_\beta^I, b_\beta^{II} \in \mathbb{B}$ for $\beta < \alpha$ such that for $\beta < \beta' < \alpha$:

$$b_\beta^I \geq b_{\beta'}^{II} \geq b_{\beta'}^I \geq b_{\beta'}^{II}.$$

In the end, Player II wins if and only if the sequence of moves has no lower bound (this might happen if at some step $\beta < \alpha$, Player I does not have a legal move).

LEMMA 2.4. *$\mathfrak{h}(\mathbb{B})$ is the minimum cardinal κ such that in the game $\mathsf{G}(\mathbb{B}, \kappa)$ Player II has a winning strategy.*

The main result in [13] follows from the next two propositions which are going to be used in the sequel. We introduce some notation needed. Firstly, S_1^2 is the set of all ordinals $\alpha < \omega_2$ with $\text{cf}(\alpha) = \omega_1$; while \mathbb{P}_β denotes the countable support iteration of length $\beta \leq \omega_2$ of Mathias forcing, \mathbb{M} , and \dot{G}_α denotes the \mathbb{P}_α -name for the \mathbb{P}_α -generic filter. Also, the quotient forcing $\mathbb{P}_{\omega_2}/\dot{G}_\alpha$ is denoted by $\mathbb{P}_{\alpha\omega_2}$. Recall that ultrafilters \mathcal{U}_0 and \mathcal{U}_1 are *Rudin-Keisler equivalent* if exists a bijection $f : \omega \rightarrow \omega$ such that $\mathcal{U}_1 = \{f[U] : U \in \mathcal{U}_0\}$. An ultrafilter \mathcal{R} is a *Ramsey ultrafilter* if for every $k, n \in \omega$ and every partition $\varrho : [\omega]^n \rightarrow k$ there exists $H \in \mathcal{R}$ homogeneous for ϱ ; that is, $\varrho \upharpoonright [H]^n$ is constant. Ramsey ultrafilters are also known as selective ultrafilters. See [12, p. 478] and [3, p. 235] for more on Ramsey ultrafilters.

PROPOSITION 2.5 ([13]). *There exists an ω_1 -club $C \subseteq S_1^2$ such that for every $\alpha \in C$ the following holds: If \dot{r} is a $\mathbb{P}_{\alpha\omega_2}$ -name such that $\mathbb{P}_{\alpha\omega_2} \Vdash$ “ \dot{r} induces a Ramsey ultrafilter on $([\omega]^\omega)^V[\dot{G}_\alpha]$ ”, then there is a $\mathbb{P}_{\alpha\omega_2}$ -name \dot{r}' such that $\mathbb{P}_{\alpha\omega_2} \Vdash$ “ $\dot{r}' \in V[\dot{G}_{\alpha+1}]$, \dot{r} and \dot{r}' generate the same ultrafilter on $([\omega]^\omega)^V[\dot{G}_\alpha]$ ”.*

PROPOSITION 2.6 ([13]). *Suppose that V is a model of CH and that \dot{r} is a \mathbb{M} -name such that $\mathbb{M} \Vdash$ “ \dot{r} induces a Ramsey ultrafilter $\dot{\mathcal{R}}$ on $([\omega]^\omega)^V$ ”. Then $\mathbb{M} \Vdash$ “ $\dot{\mathcal{U}}$ and $\dot{\mathcal{R}}$ are Rudin-Keisler equivalent by some function $f \in (\omega^\omega)^V$ ”, where \mathcal{U} is the Ramsey ultrafilter added by $\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\text{fin}$.*

THEOREM 2.7. *Assume V is a model of CH. If G is \mathbb{P}_{ω_2} -generic over V , then $V[G] \models \mathfrak{h}(\omega^{2*}) = \aleph_1$.*

Proof. Suffices to define a winning strategy for Player II in the game

$$\mathbf{G}((\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\text{fin})^\omega / \text{Fin}, \omega_1)$$

played in $V[G]$. In order to do that, fix a ω_1 -club $C \subseteq S_1^2$ as in Proposition 2.5. For every $x \in V[G]$, let $o(x) = \min\{\alpha < \omega_2 : x \in V[G_\alpha]\}$ and fix a $\Gamma : \omega_1 \rightarrow \omega_1 \times \omega_1$ bijection such that $\Gamma(\alpha) = \langle \beta, \delta \rangle$ implies $\beta \leq \alpha$. Since $V[G_\alpha] \models \text{CH}$, for each $\alpha < \omega_2$, there is a function $g_\alpha : \omega_1 \rightarrow V[G_\alpha]$ which enumerates all triples $\langle a, \varrho, f \rangle \in V[G_\alpha]$ such that $a \in [\omega]^\omega$, $\varrho : [\omega]^n \rightarrow k$ for some $k, n \in \omega$ and $f : \omega \rightarrow \omega$ is a function.

The winning strategy for Player II is as follows:

If $\langle \langle p_\xi^I, p_\xi^{II} \rangle : \xi < \omega_1 \rangle$ is a play, there is $\alpha \in C$ such that $\langle p_\xi^{II}(n) : \xi < \omega_1 \rangle$ generates Ramsey ultrafilters on $([\omega]^\omega)^{V[G_\alpha]}$ for each $n \in \omega$ such that any two of them are not Rudin-Keisler equivalent by any $f \in (\omega^\omega)^{V[G_\alpha]}$.

The α -th move of Player II in a given play $\langle \langle p_\xi^I, p_\xi^{II} \rangle : \xi < \omega_1 \rangle$ is in such a way that if $\Gamma(\alpha) = \langle \beta, \delta \rangle$, $\xi \in C$ is minimal with the property that $\xi \geq \sup\{o(p_\eta^I(n) : \eta < \beta \ \& \ n \in \omega)\}$, and $g_\xi(\delta) = \langle a, \varrho, f \rangle$, then

1. $p_\alpha^{II}(n) \subseteq^* p_\alpha^I(n)$ for almost all $n \in \omega$,
2. $p_\alpha^{II}(n) \subseteq a$ or $p_\alpha^{II}(n) \cap a = \emptyset$,
3. $p_\alpha^{II}(n)$ is ϱ -homogeneous,
4. $f[p_\alpha^{II}(n)] \cap p_\alpha^{II}(m) =^* \emptyset$, for all $m, n \in \omega$.

To see that this is possible suppose we have chosen $p_\alpha^{II}(k)$ for $k < n$ satisfying (1), (2), (3) and (4) for $i, j < n$:

$$f[p_\alpha^{II}(i)] \cap p_\alpha^{II}(j) =^* \emptyset.$$

To choose $p_\alpha^{II}(n)$ start by choosing some $B_n^n \subseteq p_\alpha^I(n)$ which is ϱ -homogeneous and either $B_n^n \subseteq a$ or $B_n^n \cap a = \emptyset$. Then we keep choosing sets B_m^n for $m > n$ as follows: Assuming B_m^n has been defined, let B_{m+1}^n be B_m^n if $f[B_m^n] \cap p_\alpha^I(m+1) =^* \emptyset$, otherwise let B_{m+1}^n be some infinite subset of B_m^n such that $p_\alpha^I(m+1) \setminus f[B_{m+1}^n] \neq^* \emptyset$ and shrink $p_\alpha^I(m+1)$ to become $p_\alpha^I(m+1) \setminus f[B_{m+1}^n]$. (Here we abuse of the notation and we call this new set again $p_\alpha^I(m+1)$.) Finally let B be some infinite $B \subseteq^* B_m^n$ for all $m \geq n$.

Since the set $f[B]$ is almost disjoint from each $p_\alpha^I(m)$ for $m > n$ and the new sets $p_\alpha^{II}(m)$ are going to be subsets of $p_\alpha^I(m)$ the clause (4) will be preserved if we let $p_\alpha^{II}(n)$ be any infinite subset of B .

Notice that the fact that C is an ω_1 -club implies that the strategy is as desired.

To finish the proof we show that this strategy is a winning strategy for Player II. Suppose that $\langle p_\beta : \beta < \omega_1 \rangle$ are the moves of Player II according to the strategy, and suppose that the game is won by Player I. Then, there exists $r \in V[G]$ such that $r(n) \in [\omega]^\omega$ for almost all $n \in \omega$ and $r(n) \subseteq^* p_\beta(n)$ for almost all $n \in \omega$ and all $\beta < \omega_1$. Fix $\alpha \in C$ and Ramsey ultrafilters $\mathcal{U}(n)$ on $([\omega]^\omega)^{V[G_\alpha]}$ for $n < \omega$ such that each $\mathcal{U}(n)$ is generated by $\langle p_\beta(n) : \beta < \omega_1 \rangle$ and no two of them are Rudin-Keisler equivalent for any $f \in \omega^\omega \cap V[G_\alpha]$. Then $\mathcal{U}(n)$ is generated by $r(n)$. By Proposition 2.5, $r \in V[G_{\alpha+1}]$ and by Proposition 2.6 $\mathcal{U}(n)$ is Rudin-Keisler equivalent to \mathcal{U} by functions in $\omega^\omega \cap V[G_\alpha]$. However, by construction this is impossible. \square

3. Final remarks

The results presented here can be the beginning of a whole research on the cardinal invariants of algebras of the type \mathbb{B}/\mathcal{I} where \mathbb{B} is a subalgebra of $\mathcal{P}(\omega)$ and \mathcal{I} is an ideal over the natural numbers. As an instance of this, recall that by a result of Mazur an ideal \mathcal{I} is an F_σ ideal if and only if it is equal to $\text{Fin}(\varphi) = \{I \subseteq \omega : \varphi(I) < \infty\}$, for some lower semicontinuous submeasure φ . This can be used to easily show that $\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\mathcal{I}$ is σ -closed and hence $\mathfrak{h}_{\mathcal{I}} = \mathfrak{h}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\mathcal{I}) > \aleph_0$. We would like to know how to compute $\mathfrak{h}_{\mathcal{I}}$ for F_σ ideals \mathcal{I} .

The base tree matrix lemma of Balcar, Pelant and Simon [2] have proved to be an important tool, so we ask:

PROBLEM 3.1: For which ideals is the base tree matrix lemma still true for $\mathcal{P}(\omega)/\mathcal{I}$?

PROBLEM 3.2: Does the base tree matrix lemma implies that the collapse of \mathfrak{c} to the respective \mathfrak{h} ?

PROBLEM 3.3: What is the relationship between \mathfrak{h} and $\mathfrak{h}_{\mathcal{I}}$ for F_σ ideals \mathcal{I} ?

Going back to $\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}$, observe that if \mathcal{A} is a maximal almost disjoint family of subsets of ω and for each $A \in \mathcal{A}$ we define $f_A \in \mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega$ by

$$f_A(n) = \begin{cases} \omega, & \text{if } n \in A \\ \emptyset, & \text{if } n \notin A. \end{cases}$$

Then $\{f_A : A \in \mathcal{A}\}$ is a maximal antichain in $\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}$. It follows that $\mathfrak{a}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}) \leq \mathfrak{a}$.

PROBLEM 3.4: Does $\mathfrak{a} \leq \mathfrak{a}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin})$?

PROBLEM 3.5: Does $\mathfrak{b} \leq \mathfrak{a}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin})$?

Similar arguments to the above one shows that

$$\mathfrak{p}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}) \leq \mathfrak{p}, \mathfrak{t}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}) \leq \mathfrak{t} \text{ and } \mathfrak{s}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}) \leq \mathfrak{s}.$$

PROBLEM 3.6: Does $\mathfrak{t}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}) \geq \mathfrak{t}$?

PROBLEM 3.7: Does $\mathfrak{s}(\mathcal{P}(\omega)^\omega/\text{Fin}) \geq \mathfrak{s}$?

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