

## THE SPECTRUM OF A FINITE LATTICE: BREADTH AND LENGTH TECHNIQUES

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Efforts to determine the orders of the sublattices of an arbitrary finite lattice date back at least to the early 1930's, and notably, in the work of Fritz Klein-Barmen [3], [4]. Nevertheless, very little that is new has appeared in the literature since that time.

The *spectrum* of a lattice  $L$ , denoted by  $\text{sp}(L)$ , is the set of all integers  $n$  such that  $L$  has an  $n$ -element sublattice. We say that the spectrum of a finite lattice  $L$  is *complete* provided that  $\text{sp}(L) = \{n \mid 0 \leq n \leq |L|\}$ . While Klein-Barmen [3] was the first to make the observation, it is a simple computation to verify that every lattice with at most seven elements has a complete spectrum. On the other hand, the lattice  $2^n$  of all subsets of an  $n$ -element set does not have a complete spectrum in case  $n \geq 3$ . A lattice may, however, have a complete spectrum even though sublattices of it do not. The lattice illustrated in Figure 1 is such an example; it is also an instance of our first main result.

Let  $l(L)$  denote the *length* of a lattice  $L$ , that is, the order of a maximum-sized chain of  $L$  minus one.

**THEOREM.** *Every finite modular lattice  $L$  satisfying*

$$|L| \leq 2l(L) + 1$$

*has a complete spectrum. Moreover, this is a best possible estimate.*

The proof of this theorem involves a further arithmetical invariant of a lattice  $L$ , namely, its *breadth*,  $b(L)$ , that is, the least integer  $b$  such that every join  $\bigvee_{i=1}^n x_i$ ,  $n > b$ , is a join of  $b$  of the  $x_i$ 's. In fact, as the following result indicates the breadth and length together provide a great deal of information concerning the spectrum of a modular lattice.

A lattice  $L$  is *linearly decomposable* if it contains nonempty sublattices  $A$  and  $B$ ,  $A \neq B$ , such that  $L = A \cup B$  and, for each  $a \in A$  and for each  $b \in B$ ,  $a \geq b$ ; otherwise,  $L$  is said to be *linearly nondecomposable*.

**THEOREM.** *Let  $L$  be a finite, linearly nondecomposable, modular lattice. Then*

$$2^i + j \in \text{sp}(L)$$

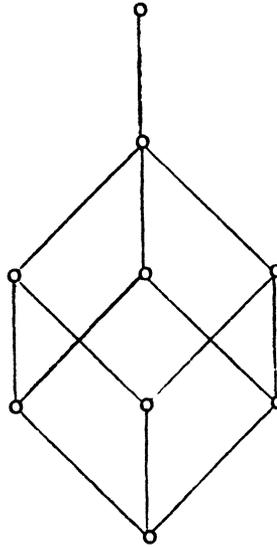


Figure 1

for all integers  $i$  and  $j$  satisfying

$$1 \leq i \leq b(L) \quad \text{and} \quad 0 \leq j \leq 2(l(L) - i).$$

There is another approach to the problem of determining the spectrum of an arbitrary finite lattice and it, too, finds its roots in the work of Klein-Barmen. In particular, he showed in [4] that, for every integer  $n \leq 6$  and any modular lattice  $L$ ,  $n \in \text{sp}(L)$  whenever  $|L| \geq 6$ . Again, the lattice  $2^3$  shows that this is no longer true for  $n = 7$ .

**THEOREM.** *Let  $L$  be a finite distributive lattice and let  $n$  be any positive integer. If*

$$|L| \geq n2^{n/4}$$

*then  $n \in \text{sp}(L)$ .*

Interestingly enough, the proof of this theorem will rely on yet another relationship between breadth and length.

**THEOREM.** *Let  $L$  be a finite distributive lattice. Then*

$$|L| \leq \left( \frac{l(L)}{b(L)} + 1 \right)^{b(L)}.$$

*Moreover, this inequality is best possible.*

**Modular lattices with complete spectrum.** The purpose of this section is to prove the first two theorems announced above. To this end, we first dispense with certain preliminary considerations.

For elements  $a$  and  $b$  of a lattice  $L$ , we write  $a > b$  or  $b < a$  ( $a$  covers  $b$  or  $b$  is covered by  $a$ ) if, for every element  $c$  of  $L$   $a \geq c > b$  implies  $a = c$ .

LEMMA 1. *Let  $a$  and  $b$  be noncomparable elements of a finite modular lattice  $L$ . Then there exists an element  $c$  of  $L$  such that  $a \vee c > a$  and  $a \vee c > c$ .*

**Proof.** Choose elements  $x$  and  $y$  in  $L$  such that  $a < x \leq a \vee b$  and  $b \leq y < a \vee b$  and set  $c = x \wedge y$ .

Let  $J(L)$ ,  $M(L)$  and  $D(L)$  denote, respectively, the set of all join irreducible, meet irreducible and doubly irreducible elements of a lattice  $L$ . Recall that a lattice  $L$  with  $n$  elements is *dismantlable* if there is a chain  $L = L_0 \supset L_1 \supset \dots \supset L_n = \emptyset$  of sublattices of  $L$  such that  $|L_{i-1} - L_i| = 1$  for each  $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ . Evidently,  $L_{i-1} - L_i \subseteq D(L)$  for each  $i$ ; *a fortiori*,  $L$  has a complete spectrum.

LEMMA 2. *Let  $C$  be a maximal chain of a finite modular lattice  $L$ . Then there is a sublattice  $S$  of  $L$  containing  $C$  and satisfying:*

- (i)  $S$  is dismantlable;
- (ii)  $l(S) = l(L)$ ;
- (iii)  $|S| = |C| + |C - J(L)|$ .

**Proof.** Let  $\{x_1 > x_2 > \dots > x_n\} = C - J(L)$  and note that each  $x_i$  covers an element of  $L - C$ . Choose  $y_1 \in L - C$  such that  $x_1 > y_1$ . For  $i > 1$ , choose  $y_i \in L - C$  satisfying  $x_i > y_i$  provided that  $x_i \wedge y_{i-1} \in C$  while, if  $x_i \wedge y_{i-1} \notin C$  choose  $y_i = x_i \wedge y_{i-1}$ . In view of this construction it suffices to show that  $S = C \cup \{y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n\}$  is a sublattice of  $L$  and that it is dismantlable.

First, we observe that, by virtue of modularity,  $x_i > y_i$  for each  $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ . Let  $a$  and  $b$  be noncomparable elements of  $S$ . If  $a = y_i$ , say, then  $b \in S - \{y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n\}$ , whence,  $a \vee b = x_i \in S$ . That  $a \wedge b \in S$  is an immediate consequence of modularity; hence,  $S$  is a sublattice of  $L$ . Finally, as  $y_1 \in D(S)$  and  $y_i \in D(S - \{y_1, y_2, \dots, y_{i-1}\})$ , for each  $i = 2, 3, \dots, n$ , it follows that  $S$  is dismantlable.

LEMMA 3. *Let  $L$  be a finite, linearly nondecomposable, modular lattice. Then  $L$  contains a dismantlable sublattice  $S$  such that  $l(S) = l(L)$  and satisfying  $|S| = 2l(L)$ .*

**Proof.** In view of Lemma 2 it is enough to construct a maximal chain  $C$  of  $L$  such that  $|C - J(L)| = l(L) - 1$ . In fact, we construct a maximal chain  $C = \{1 = c_1 > c_2 > \dots > c_n = 0\}$  of  $L$  such that  $C \cap J(L) = \{c_{n-1}, c_n\}$ . As  $L$  is linearly nondecomposable  $c_1 = 1 \notin J(L)$ . Let us suppose that  $c_1 > c_2 > \dots > c_i$  have been chosen such that each of  $c_1, c_2, \dots, c_i$  is join reducible and let us suppose that  $c_i > x > x_* > 0$  where  $x \in J(L)$ . Since  $L$  is linearly nondecomposable there exists  $y \in L$  noncomparable to  $x_*$  and, in view of Lemma 1, we may suppose that  $x_* \vee y > x_*$  and  $x_* \vee y > y$ . Now pick  $j$  maximum such that  $y < c_j$ .

Then  $y \vee c_{j+1} = c_j$ . Moreover, by modularity,  $c_j = y \vee c_{j+1} > y \vee c_{j+2} > \cdots > y \vee c_i > y \vee x > y \vee x_*$ . Then each of the  $i+1$  elements in the chain

$$c_1 > c_2 > \cdots > c_j > y \vee c_{j+2} > \cdots > y \vee c_i > y \vee x > y \vee x_*$$

is join reducible. Proceeding in this way we can construct a maximal chain of  $L$  with the desired properties.

We are now in a position to prove

**THEOREM 4.** *Let  $L$  be a finite, linearly nondecomposable, modular lattice. Then*

$$2^i + j \in \text{sp}(L)$$

for all integers  $i$  and  $j$  satisfying

$$1 \leq i \leq b(L) \quad \text{and} \quad 0 \leq j \leq 2(l(L) - i).$$

**Proof.** The first step in the proof is to construct a sublattice  $S$  of  $L$  such that  $l(S) = l(L)$  and  $|S| = 2^{b(L)} + 2(l(L) - b(L))$ .

It is well known that every finite modular lattice  $L$  contains a sublattice  $T \cong 2^{b(L)}$  such that, for  $x, y \in T$ ,  $x > y$  in  $T$  whenever  $x > y$  in  $L$ . If the least element  $0_T$  of  $T$  coincides with the least element  $0_L$  of  $L$  and the greatest element  $1_T$  of  $T$  coincides with the greatest element  $1_L$  of  $L$  then we set  $S = T$ . Since  $L$  is modular it follows that  $l(L) = b(L)$  so that  $S$  satisfies the required properties.

Let  $0_T > 0_L$ . Note that every element  $a$  which covers  $0_T$  belongs to  $[0_T, 1_T]$  since otherwise  $L$  contains a sublattice isomorphic to  $T \times \{0_T, a\} \cong 2^{b(L)+1}$  which, however, would imply that  $L$  has breadth at least  $b(L) + 1$ . For each  $a > 0_T$  choose  $x_a \in L$  distinct from  $0_L$  and minimal with respect to the condition  $[0_L, a] = [0_L, x_a] \cup [x_a, a]$  and let  $x_0$  be a minimal element of  $\{x_a \mid a > 0_T\}$ .

Since  $L$  is linearly nondecomposable, there exists  $y \in L$  noncomparable to  $x_0$ . By Lemma 1 we may choose  $y$  such that  $x_0 \vee y > x_0$  and  $x_0 \vee y > y$  whence, by modularity,  $0_T \vee y > 0_T$ . Let  $x_0 < x_1 < \cdots < x_m = 0_T$ . Then  $x_i \vee y$  is noncomparable to  $x_{i+1}$  for each  $i = 1, 2, \dots, m-1$  so that  $x_b < x_0$ , where  $b = 0_T \vee y$ , contradicting the minimality of  $x_0$ . It follows that  $[0_L, a]$  is linearly nondecomposable for some  $a > 0_T$ . By Lemma 3 there exists a dismantlable sublattice  $A$  of  $[0_L, a]$  such that  $l(A) = l([0_L, a])$  and  $|A| = 2l(A)$ . By duality there exists a dismantlable sublattice  $B$  of  $[b, 1_L]$  such that  $l(B) = l([b, 1_L])$  and  $|B| = 2l(B)$ , where  $1_T > b$ .

We now select a sublattice  $T'$  of  $[0_T, 1_T]$  containing  $a$  and  $b$  and isomorphic to  $T \cong 2^{b(L)}$ . If  $a$  is noncomparable to  $b$  choose elements  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{b(L)-1}$  from  $[0_T, 1_T]$ , each covering  $0_T$ , such that  $a_1 \vee a_2 \vee \cdots \vee a_{b(L)-1} = b$  and take  $T'$  to be the sublattice of  $L$  generated by  $\{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{b(L)-1}, a\}$ . If  $b \geq a$  choose

elements  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{b(L)-2}$  from  $[0_T, 1_T]$ , each covering  $0_T$ , such that  $a_1 \vee a_2 \vee \dots \vee a_{b(L)-2} \vee a = b$ . Then choose an element  $a' > 0_T$  noncomparable to  $b$  and take  $T'$  to be the sublattice of  $L$  generated by  $\{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{b(L)-2}, a, a'\}$ .

Under any circumstances we obtain a sublattice  $S = A \cup T' \cup B$  such that  $l(S) = l(L)$  and  $|S| = 2^{b(L)} + 2(l(L) - b(L))$ .

The next step of the proof is to construct a sublattice  $S'$  of  $S$  such that  $l(S') = l(S)$  and  $|S'| = 2^i + (l(S) - i)$ , where  $1 \leq i \leq b(L)$ . If  $a$  is noncomparable to  $b$  choose  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{i-1}$  from  $T'$  each covering  $0_{T'}$  and each beneath  $b$  and choose  $a_1 \vee a_2 \vee \dots \vee a_{i-1} < x_i < x_{i+1} < \dots < x_{b(L)-2} < b < 1_{T'}$ . Set  $B' = B \cup \{a_1 \vee a_2 \vee \dots \vee a_{i-1}, x_i, x_{i+1}, \dots, x_{b(L)-2}, a_1 \vee a_2 \vee \dots \vee a_{i-1} \vee a, a \vee x_i, a \vee x_{i+1}, \dots, a \vee x_{b(L)-2}\}$  and let  $T''$  be the sublattice of  $T'$  generated by  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{i-1}, a$ . Then  $S' = A \cup T'' \cup B'$  is the required sublattice. If  $a \leq b$  replace  $a_1$  by  $a$  and  $a$  by an element  $a' > 0_{T'}$ ,  $a' \not\leq b$ , in the preceding argument.

Finally,  $T'' \cong 2^i$ , while both  $A$  and  $B'$  are dismantlable sublattices of  $L$ .

The next theorem is motivated by the following elementary result established in [6] by I. Rival.

LEMMA 5. *Every finite lattice  $L$  satisfies*

$$|L| \geq 2(l(L) + 1) - |D(L)|.$$

In particular, a finite lattice  $L$ , with no doubly irreducible elements, must have at least  $2(l(L) + 1)$  elements. For example, any finite linearly decomposable lattice consisting of disjoint linearly nondecomposable lattices each isomorphic to  $2^3$  is of this type (see Figure 2). In other words, there are finite (modular) lattices  $L$  with precisely  $2(l(L) + 1)$  elements but without a complete spectrum. This, in turn, shows that the estimate of the next theorem is best possible.

THEOREM 6 (cf. I. Rival [5]). *Every finite modular lattice  $L$  satisfying*

$$|L| \leq 2l(L) + 1$$

*has a complete spectrum.*

**Proof.** We proceed by induction on  $|L|$ .

In view of Lemma 5,  $D(L) \neq \emptyset$ . Moreover, if  $D(L)$  is not a chain in  $L$  then there exists  $a \in D(L)$  such that  $l(L - \{a\}) = l(L)$  and  $|L - \{a\}| \leq 2l(L - \{a\}) + 1$  so that by the induction hypothesis  $L - \{a\}$ , and hence  $L$ , both have a complete spectrum. We shall assume, then, that  $D(L)$  is a chain in  $L$ . If  $D(L) = L$ , that is,  $L$  is a chain, then we are obviously done.

Otherwise, let  $L_1, L_2, \dots, L_m$  be the maximal, linearly nondecomposable lattices of which  $L$  is composed; evidently,  $m > 1$ . Moreover,  $L$  contains a nontrivial linearly nondecomposable sublattice  $L_1$ , say, such that  $D(L_1) = \emptyset$ . Let  $L' = L - L_1$  and  $L'' = L' - D(L)$ .

We consider only the case that the greatest element of  $L_1$  does not belong to

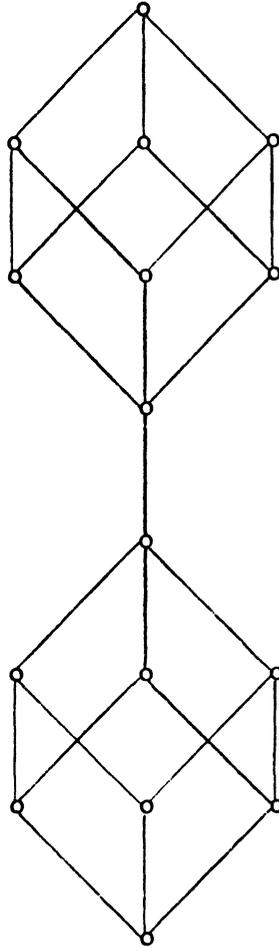


Figure 2

$\bigcup_{i=2}^m L_i$ ; the other case is similar. First, we observe that

$$\begin{aligned} |L| &= |L_1| + |L''| + |D(L)| \\ &\leq 2(l(L_1) + l(L'')) + |D(L)| + 1 \end{aligned}$$

whence,

$$|D(L)| \geq |L''| - (2l(L'') + 1) + |L_1| - 2(l(L_1) + 1).$$

Since  $D(L'') = \emptyset$  we have, by Lemma 5, that  $|L''| \geq 2(l(L'') + 1)$  so that

$$(*) \quad |D(L)| \geq |L_1| - (2l(L_1) + 1).$$

Similarly,  $D(L_1) = \emptyset$  which, in view of Lemma 5 again, yields  $|L_1| \geq 2(l(L_1) + 1)$ . But  $|L| \leq 2l(L) + 1$  and  $l(L) = l(L_1) + l(L'') + 1$  from which it follows

that

$$|L'| \leq 2l(L) + 1 - 2(l(L_1) + 1) \leq 2l(L') + 1.$$

Applying the induction hypothesis to  $L'$  we have that  $L'$  has a complete spectrum, that is,  $n \in \text{sp}(L')$  for each integer  $n$  satisfying  $1 \leq n \leq |L''| + |D(L)|$ . In view of (\*) we conclude that

$$\{1, 2, \dots, |L''| + |L_1| - (2l(L_1) + 1)\} \subseteq \text{sp}(L').$$

By Theorem 4,

$$\{1, 2, \dots, 2l(L_1)\} \subseteq \text{sp}(L_1)$$

so that

$$\{1, 2, \dots, |L''| + |L_1| - 1\} \subseteq \text{sp}(L_1 \cup L') = \text{sp}(L).$$

Finally, by considering the sublattices of  $L$  obtained by removing doubly irreducible elements one at a time we have that

$$\{|L''| + |L_1|, |L''| + |L_1| + 1, \dots, |L|\} \subseteq \text{sp}(L)$$

and  $L$  has a complete spectrum.

**Distributive lattices with  $n$ -element sublattices.** For a positive integer  $n$  let  $\Delta(n)$  denote the smallest integer such that every finite distributive lattice with at least  $\Delta(n)$  elements contains an  $n$ -element sublattice. Our purpose in this section is twofold: first, we determine  $\Delta(n)$  for small  $n$  (actually for  $1 \leq n \leq 14$ ); second, we establish an upper bound for  $\Delta(n)$ .

A finite distributive lattice has breadth at most two if and only if it is dismantlable (cf. D. Kelly and I. Rival [2]); in particular, every finite distributive lattice with breadth at most two has a complete spectrum. Hence, in order to show that a given finite distributive lattice  $L$  contains an  $n$ -element sublattice we may assume that  $L$  has breadth at least three. Moreover, as such a lattice must contain a sublattice isomorphic to  $2^3$  we conclude at once that  $\Delta(n) = n$ , for  $1 \leq n \leq 6$ , and  $\Delta(8) = 8$ .

Let  $L$  be a finite distributive lattice. It is well known that  $l(L) \geq m + 1$  whenever  $|L| > 2^m$ , where  $m$  is any positive integer. Let  $|L| \geq 9$ . Then  $l(L) \geq 4$  and since  $b(L) \geq 3$ ,  $L$  contains a sublattice  $S \cong 2^3$  in which, for  $x, y \in S$ ,  $x > y$  in  $S$  if  $x > y$  in  $L$ . Obviously,  $7 \in \text{sp}(L)$ . Since, however,  $7 \notin \text{sp}(2^3)$  we conclude that  $\Delta(7) = 9$ . This argument also shows that  $\Delta(9) = 9$ . Let  $|L| \geq 10$ . If  $L$  is linearly decomposable then a simple application of the values of  $\Delta(n)$  for  $n \leq 9$  yields that  $10 \in \text{sp}(L)$ . Otherwise,  $L$  is linearly nondecomposable and, since  $b(L) \geq 3$ ,  $l(L) \geq 4$ . Applying Theorem 4 we obtain  $\Delta(10) = 10$ . As the lattice  $2^4$  contains no 11-element sublattice,  $\Delta(11) \geq 17$ . Furthermore, the same technique which established  $\Delta(10) = 10$  above, now yields  $\Delta(11) = 17$ .

We digress momentarily to prove the

**THEOREM 7.** *Let  $L$  be a finite distributive lattice. Then*

$$|L| \leq \left( \frac{l(L)}{b(L)} + 1 \right)^{b(L)}.$$

*Moreover, this inequality is best possible.*

**Proof.** According to a well known result of R. P. Dilworth [1]  $L$  can be embedded in the direct product of chains  $C_1, C_2, \dots, C_{b(L)}$ . Moreover, this embedding can be so carried out that the universal bounds of  $L$  correspond to the universal bounds of  $C_1 \times C_2 \times \dots \times C_{b(L)}$  and

$$l(L) = \sum_{i=1}^{b(L)} l(C_i).$$

It follows that

$$|L| \leq \prod_{i=1}^{b(L)} (l(C_i) + 1).$$

A simple argument shows that *dexter* is maximized when

$$\frac{l(L)}{b(L)} = l(C_i)$$

for each  $i = 1, 2, \dots, b(L)$ .

Finally, the lattices  $2^n$  satisfy  $l(L) = b(L)$ , which shows that the inequality is best possible.

This inequality is handy. For instance, let  $L$  be a finite distributive lattice with at least twelve elements. If  $b(L) = 3$  and  $l(L) = 4$  then Theorem 7 implies that  $|L| = 12$ . If  $b(L) = 4$  and  $l(L) = 4$  then  $L \cong 2^4$  in which case  $12 \in \text{sp}(L)$ . Otherwise,  $l(L) \geq 5$ . Finally, applying Theorem 4 and the values of  $\Delta(n)$  for  $n < 12$  to the linearly nondecomposable lattices which constitute  $L$  yields  $\Delta(12) = 12$ . Similar arguments show that  $\Delta(13) = 17$  and  $\Delta(14) = 18$ . On the other hand, since the lattice illustrated in Figure 3 has no 15-element sublattice it follows that  $\Delta(15) \geq 21$ .

Theorems 4 and 7 provide the essential ingredients for our final result – an upper bound on  $\Delta(n)$ .

**THEOREM 8.** *For every positive integer  $n$*

$$\Delta(n) \leq n2^{n/4}.$$

**Proof.** We divide the proof into two parts.

First, for  $n \geq 8$ , we show that  $\Delta(n) \leq 2^{n/2-1}$ . Indeed, we have already verified this inequality for  $8 \leq n \leq 12$ . Now, let  $L$  be a finite distributive lattice and let

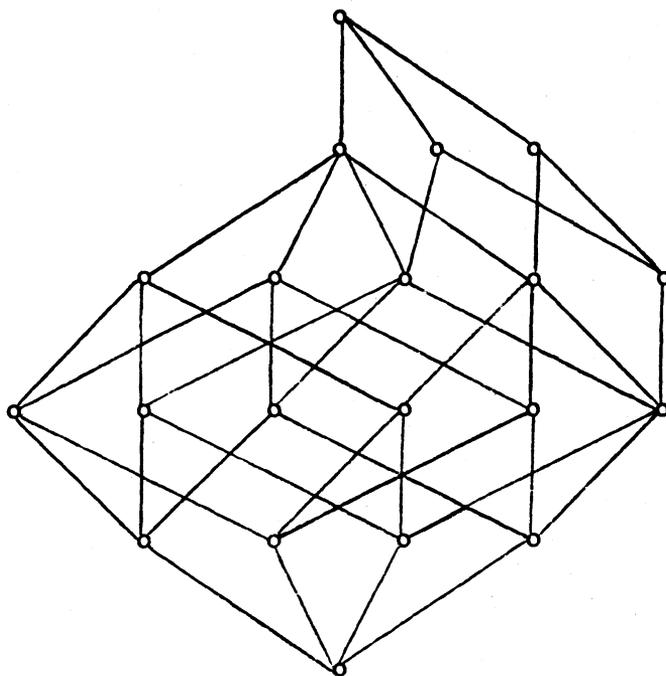


Figure 3

$|L| \geq 2^{n/2-1}$ . Then  $l(L) \geq n/2 - 1$ . We may suppose that  $b(L) \geq 3$ . If  $L$  is linearly nondecomposable, Theorem 4 implies that  $m \in \text{sp}(L)$  for every integer  $m$  satisfying

$$8 \leq m \leq n \leq 8 + 2(l(L) - 3) = 2l(L) + 2.$$

Now let  $L$  be linearly decomposable and let  $L_1, L_2, \dots, L_k, k \geq 2$ , be the maximal, linearly nondecomposable lattices which constitute  $L$ . We may assume that  $|L_1| \leq |L_i|$  for each  $i \leq k$ . If  $|L_1| \leq 3$  then

$$|L - L_1| \geq 2^{n/2-1} - 3 \geq 2^{(n-1)/2-1}.$$

Hence, by the induction hypothesis,  $L - L_1$  contains an  $(n - 1)$ -element sublattice. Adjoining a disjoint element from  $L_1$  yields  $n \in \text{sp}(L)$ . If  $|L_1| \geq 4$  then

$$|L - L_1| \geq \frac{k-1}{k} |L| \geq \frac{k-1}{k} 2^{n/2-1} \geq 2^{(n-2)/2-1}$$

so that  $L - L_1$  contains an  $(n - 2)$ -element sublattice which together with two disjoint elements from  $L_1$  produces an  $n$ -element sublattice.

In view of these remarks it is enough to show that for every finite distributive

lattice  $L$ ,  $n \in \text{sp}(L)$  whenever  $|L| \geq n2^{n/4}$  and  $n \geq 16$ . To this end let  $m$  be a positive integer such that  $2^m \leq n < 2^{m+1}$ . Then

$$2(\log_2 |L| - m) + 2^m \geq n.$$

Under any circumstances,  $|L| \leq 2^{l(L)}$  so that

$$2(l(L) - m) + 2^m \geq n \geq 2^m.$$

Let  $L$  be linearly nondecomposable. If  $b(L) \geq m$  then Theorem 4 guarantees, in view of the last inequality, that  $n \in \text{sp}(L)$ . If, on the other hand,  $b(L) \leq m - 1$  then

$$\left(\frac{l(L)}{b(L)} + 1\right)^{b(L)} \geq |L| \geq n2^{n/4}$$

implies that

$$l(L) \geq b(L)((n2^{n/4})^{1/b(L)} - 1).$$

As we may assume that  $b(L) \geq 3$  we conclude that

$$l(L) \geq 3((n2^{n/4})^{1/(-1+\log_2 n)} - 1) \geq n/2$$

for  $n \geq 16$ . Again, Theorem 4 guarantees that  $L$  contains an  $n$ -element sublattice.

Finally, let us suppose that  $L$  is linearly decomposable and that  $L$  consists of the maximal, linearly nondecomposable lattices  $L_1, L_2, \dots, L_k$ , such that  $|L_1| \leq |L_i|$  for each  $i \leq k$ . Then

$$|L - L_1| \geq \frac{k-1}{k} n2^{n/4} > (n-4)2^{(n-4)/4}.$$

Hence, by the induction hypothesis,  $L - L_1$  contains an  $(n-4)$ -element sublattice  $S$ . If  $|L_1| \geq 5$  we may adjoin a 4-element sublattice of  $L_1$ , disjoint from  $L - L_1$ , to  $S$ . If  $|L_1| \leq 4$  then

$$|L - L_1| \geq n2^{n/4} - 4 \geq (n-1)2^{(n-1)/4}$$

for  $n \geq 7$ . Hence,  $L - L_1$  contains an  $(n-1)$ -element sublattice to which we may adjoin a disjoint element of  $L_1$  and again  $n \in \text{sp}(L)$ .

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