

\textbf{p-CENTRAL GROUPS AND POINCARÉ DUALITY}

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Abstract. In this note we investigate the mod $p$ cohomology ring of finite $p$-central groups with a certain extension property. For $p$ odd it turns out that the structure of the cohomology ring characterizes this class of groups up to extensions by $p'$-groups. For certain examples the cohomology ring can be calculated explicitly. As a by-product one gets an alternative proof of a theorem of M. Lazard which states that the Galois cohomology of a uniformly powerful pro-$p$-group of rank $n$ is isomorphic to $\Lambda[x_1,\ldots,x_n]$.

1. Introduction

One problem in group cohomology is to relate the structure of a finite group $G$ with its mod $p$ cohomology ring $H^\bullet(G) := H^\bullet(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$ and to determine the isomorphism type of $H^\bullet(G)$. In this note we characterize the finite groups $G$ for which the reduced mod $p$ cohomology ring $H^\bullet(G)_{\text{red}}$, $p$ odd, is a polynomial algebra generated in degree 2, where $A^\bullet_{\text{red}} = A^\bullet/\text{nil}(A^\bullet)$ and $\text{nil}(\text{ ) denotes the ideal consisting of all nilpotent elements in the commutative } \mathbb{N}_0\text{-graded } \mathbb{F}_p\text{-algebra } A^\bullet$. We know that, apart from trivial examples, these are the easiest reduced cohomology rings which might occur (cf. [QU1]).

For a group $G$ and a fixed prime number $p$ one defines

$$\Omega_k(G) = \{ g \in G \mid g^k = 1 \}.$$ 

The group $G$ is called $p^k$-central if $\Omega_k(G) \leq Z(G)$. We say that the $p$-central group has the $\Omega$-extension property (= $\Omega$EP) if there exists a $p$-central group $H$ such that $G = H/\Omega_1(H)$. Using Quillen’s stratification theorem, one deduces that for $p$ odd, $H^\bullet(G)_{\text{red}}$ is a polynomial algebra generated in degree 2 if and only if $G$ is $p$-nilpotent and $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ is $p$-central and has the $\Omega$EP (cf. Thm. 2.1).

Some effort is spent to determine the isomorphism type of the $\mathbb{F}_p$-cohomology ring $H^\bullet(G)$ for $G$ a $p$-central finite group with $\Omega$EP. A finite-dimensional connected commutative $\mathbb{N}_0$-graded $\mathbb{F}_p$-algebra $A^\bullet$ satisfies Poincaré duality in dimension $d$ if $\dim_{\mathbb{F}_p}(A^d) = 1$, $\dim_{\mathbb{F}_p}(A^k) = 0$ for $k > d$, and the bilinear mapping $A^k \otimes A^{d-k} \to A^d$ induced by the product is non-degenerate for $k = 0,\ldots,d$.

Using a splitting theorem for comodule algebras (cf. Thm. 3.1) and the Lyndon-Hochschild-Serre spectral sequence for certain group extensions (cf. §4), we will prove the following.
Theorem A. Let $G$ be a finite group and $p$ odd. Then the following are equivalent:

1. $H^\bullet(G)_{red} \simeq \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_r]$, where $y_i$ are homogeneous generators of degree 2,
2. $H^\bullet(G) \simeq \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_r] \otimes C^\bullet$, where $y_i$ are homogeneous generators of degree 2 and $C^\bullet$ is a connected commutative $\mathbb{F}_p$-algebra satisfying Poincaré duality in dimension $r$,
3. $G$ is $p$-nilpotent, $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ is $p$-central with $\Omega EP$, and $r = \dim_{\mathbb{F}_p}(\Omega_1(P))$.

Note that the isomorphism in (1) and (2) is an isomorphism as $\mathbb{F}_p$-algebras.

Recall that a finite $p$-group $P$ is called powerful, if $[P, P] \leq P^p$ for $p$ odd, respectively $[P, P] \leq P^4$ for $p = 2$ (cf. [DD]). Theorem A has also the following consequence, which can be seen as the classification of finite groups with mod $p$ cohomology ring isomorphic to the mod $p$ cohomology ring of an abelian group, $p$ odd.

Theorem B. Let $G$ be a finite group and $p$ odd. Then the following are equivalent:

1. $H^\bullet(G) \simeq \Lambda[x_1, \ldots, x_r] \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_r]$, where $x_i, y_j$ are homogeneous generators with $|x_i| = 1$, $|y_j| = 2$.
2. $G$ is $p$-nilpotent, $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ is powerful and $p$-central with $\Omega EP$, and $r = \dim_{\mathbb{F}_p}(\Omega_1(P))$.

The mod $p$ cohomology of $p$-central groups has been studied by many authors. It is known that for $G$ $p$-central the mod $p$ cohomology ring $H^\bullet(G)$ is a Cohen-Macaulay algebra (cf. [Du], [BrH]). Hence $H^\bullet(G)$ satisfies a weak form of Poincaré duality which was introduced by D.Benson and J.F.Carlson (cf. [BC]). In particular, the Poincaré series

$$p(t) := p_{H^\bullet(G)}(t) = \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_0} \dim_{\mathbb{F}_p}(H^k(G)) \cdot t^k$$

satisfies the functional equation

$$p(1/t) = (-t)^r \cdot p(t),$$

where $r = \dim_{\mathbb{F}_p}(\Omega_1(G))$. If $G$ is a finite group and $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ is $p$-central, $p$ odd, then $G$ is a Swan group (cf. [HP], [MP]), i.e., the canonical mapping

$$\text{res} : H^\bullet(G) \rightarrow H^\bullet(N_G(P))$$

is an isomorphism.

What are the standard examples of $p$-central $p$-groups with $\Omega EP$? For $W$ a finite $\mathbb{Z}_p$-module let

$$PL(W) = \{ \alpha \in \text{End}_{\mathbb{Z}_p}(W) \mid \exists \beta \in \text{End}_{\mathbb{Z}_p}(W), \alpha = id_W + p\beta \},$$

where $p = p(p) = p$ for $p$ odd, and $p(2) = 4$. Then $PL(W)$ is $p$-central for $p$ odd, respectively 4-central for $p = 2$. Furthermore, $PL(W)$ is powerful and has the $\Omega EP$ (cf. [W]). Note that if $W$ is a finitely generated free $\mathbb{Z}/p^k\mathbb{Z}$-module, then $PL(W)$ coincides with $\ker(GL(W) \rightarrow GL(W \otimes \mathbb{F}_p))$. A $p$-group $P$ is called $p$-linear if it is a subgroup of $PL(W)$ for some finite $\mathbb{Z}_p$-module $W$. For $p$ odd, $p$-linear groups are $p$-central with $\Omega EP$ (cf. [W]). Furthermore, if $p \geq 5$, every powerful $p$-central group with $\Omega EP$ is in fact $p$-linear (cf. [W]).

Although the class of groups we consider seems to be rather small, one can use these results to compute the mod $p$ Galois cohomology of finitely generated uniformly powerful pro-$p$-groups $\hat{G}$, reproving a remarkable result of M.Lazard (cf. Remark 5.2).
2. Finite groups with polynomial reduced cohomology

For \( p = 2 \) we have to consider a condition which is stronger than \( 4 \)-centrality. A finite \( 2 \)-group \( G \) is called \( 4^* \)-central, if \( \Omega_2(G) \) is a homocyclic group of exponent 4, i.e., \( \Omega_2(G) = (\mathbb{Z}/4,\mathbb{Z})^r \) for some \( r \in \mathbb{N}_0 \). For a \( p \)-central \( p \)-group (resp. a \( 4^* \)-central \( 2 \)-group) \( G \) we put for short \( l\text{-rk}_p(G) := \dim_{\mathbb{F}_p}(\Omega_1(G)) \) and \( \Omega(G) := \Omega_1(G) \) for \( p \) odd, respectively \( \Omega(G) = \Omega_2(G) \) for \( p = 2 \). The following theorem shows that the \( \Omega \text{EP} \) is closely related to the structure of the \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-cohomology ring.

**Theorem 2.1.** Let \( G \) be a finite \( p \)-central \( p \)-group, \( p \) odd, or a finite \( 4^* \)-central \( 2 \)-group. Then the following are equivalent:

1. \( H^\bullet(G)_{\text{red}} \) is a polynomial \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-algebra of Krull dimension \( l\text{-rk}_p(G) \) generated in degree 2.
2. The reduced restriction mapping \( j_{\text{red}}: H^\bullet(G)_{\text{red}} \to H^\bullet(\Omega(G))_{\text{red}} \) is surjective.
3. The reduced restriction mapping \( j_{\text{red}} \) is surjective in degree 2.
4. \( G \) has the \( \Omega \text{EP} \).

**Proof.** Since \( G \) is \( p \)-central, \( j_{\text{red}}: H^\bullet(G)_{\text{red}} \to H^\bullet(\Omega(G))_{\text{red}} \) is an \( F \)-isomorphism (cf. [QU1]), in particular, \( j_{\text{red}} \) is injective. Thus (1), (2) and (3) are obviously equivalent. Hence it suffices to show that (3) and (4) are equivalent.

For any group \( K \) and any 2-cocycle \( c \in C^2(K,M) \), where

\[
C^2(K,M) = \{ f \in \mathfrak{Z}(K^2,M) \mid f(y,z) + f(x,yz) = f(xy,z) + f(x,y), \ x,y,z \in K \}
\]

and \( M \) a trivial \( \mathbb{F}_p K \)-module, we denote by \( K_c := K \times M \) the group with multiplication given by

\[
(k_1, m_1)(k_2, m_2) := (k_1k_2, m_1 + m_2 + c(k_1, k_2)).
\]

Let \( S \) be an elementary abelian \( p \)-group, \( p \) odd, or a homocyclic \( 2 \)-group of exponent 4, \( l\text{-rk}_p(S) = r \), and \( M = \mathbb{F}_p^r \) a trivial \( \mathbb{F}_p S \)-module. For \( c \in C^2(S,M) \) one checks easily that \( \Omega_1(S_c) = M \) if and only if \( \tau(c_1) \ldots \tau(c_r) \) span \( H^2(S)_{\text{red}} \), where \( \tau: C^2(S,\mathbb{F}_p) \to H^2(S)_{\text{red}} \) denotes the canonical projection, and \( c = (c_1, \ldots, c_r) \).

Assume that \( G \) satisfies (3), and let \( c_1, \ldots, c_r \in C^2(G,\mathbb{F}_p) \) be such that \( \tau(j_{\text{red}}(c_1)) \ldots \tau(j_{\text{red}}(c_r)) \) span \( H^2(\Omega(G))_{\text{red}} \). Then \( H = G_c \), \( c = (c_1, \ldots, c_r) \), is \( p \)-central and \( G = H/\Omega_1(H) \). Hence \( G \) has the \( \Omega \text{EP} \). Assume that \( G \) has the \( \Omega \text{EP} \) and that \( H \) is \( p \)-central satisfying \( H/\Omega_1(H) = G \). We may also assume that \( l\text{-rk}_p(G) = l\text{-rk}_p(H) = r \) (cf. [W]). Then \( H \cong G_c \) for some \( c \in C^2(G,\mathbb{F}_p^r) \). Let \( \tilde{c} = (\tilde{c}_1, \ldots, \tilde{c}_r) \in H^2(G)_{\text{red}} \) denote the image of \( c \) under the projection to the reduced cohomology. Then the previous remark shows that \( j_{\text{red}}(\tilde{c}_1), \ldots, j_{\text{red}}(\tilde{c}_r) \) span \( H^2(\Omega(G))_{\text{red}} \). This completes the proof.

Theorem 2.1 yields the following property of \( p \)-central groups with \( \Omega \text{EP} \).

**Proposition 2.2.** Let \( p \) be odd, and let \( G \) be a finite \( p \)-central \( p \)-group with \( \Omega \text{EP} \). Let \( A \leq \Omega_1(G) \) be such that \( A \cap \Omega_2(G) = 1 \). Then \( \overline{G} := G / A \) is a \( p \)-central \( p \)-group with \( \Omega \text{EP} \).

**Proof.** By [W] Prop. 4.1.(d)], \( \overline{G} \) is a \( p \)-central \( p \)-group and satisfies \( l\text{-rk}_p(G) = l\text{-rk}_p(\overline{G}) + l\text{-rk}_p(A) \). Consider the Lyndon-Hochschild-Serre spectral sequence associated to the extension

\[
1 \longrightarrow A \longrightarrow G \longrightarrow \overline{G} \longrightarrow 1.
\]
By Theorem 2.1, $\text{Tot}(E_\infty)_{\text{red}}$ is a polynomial $\mathbb{F}_p$-algebra of Krull dimension $r = \text{l-rk}_p(G)$ generated in degree 2. $H^\bullet(A)$ is a polynomial $\mathbb{F}_p$-algebra of Krull dimension $\text{l-rk}_p(A)$ generated in degree 2. Since $\text{Tot}(E_\infty)_{\text{red}}$ is a subquotient of $\text{Tot}(E_2)_{\text{red}}$, it follows that $\text{Tot}(E_2)_{\text{red}}$ has to contain a polynomial $\mathbb{F}_p$-subalgebra of Krull dimension $r$ generated in degree 2. But $\text{Tot}(E_2) \simeq H^\bullet(G) \otimes H^\bullet(A)$, and therefore $\text{Tot}(E_2)_{\text{red}} \simeq H^\bullet(\overline{G})_{\text{red}} \otimes H^\bullet(A)_{\text{red}}$. Since $\overline{G}$ is $p$-central, $H^\bullet(\overline{G})_{\text{red}}$ is a polynomial $\mathbb{F}_p$-algebra of Krull dimension $\text{l-rk}_p(\overline{G})$ generated in degree $2, p^{\alpha_i}$, $\alpha_i \in \mathbb{N}_0, i = 1, ..., \text{l-rk}_p(\overline{G})$ (cf. [BH]). Hence, $H^\bullet(\overline{G})_{\text{red}}$ must be generated in degree 2, and the claim follows from Theorem 2.1.

For $p$-groups one has the following $p$-centrality criterium.

**Lemma 2.3.** Let $P$ be a finite $p$-group, and assume that $A \leq P$ is a maximal elementary abelian $p$-subgroup of $P$ such that $N_P(A) = C_P(A)$. Then $N_P(A) = C_P(A) = P$, i.e., $P$ is $p$-central and $A = \Omega_1(P) = \Omega_1(Z(P))$.

**Proof.** Assume the assertion is false and let $P$ denote a minimal counterexample (with respect to $|P|$), i.e., $N_P(A) \neq P$. Let $M \leq P$ denote a maximal subgroup of $P$ containing $N_P(A)$. Then $M$ is normal in $P$, $A$ is a maximal elementary abelian $p$-subgroup of $M$ and

\[(2.2) \quad N_M(A) = M \cap N_P(A) = M \cap C_P(A) = C_M(A).\]

Hence the assertion holds for $M$, i.e., $A = \Omega_1(Z(M))$. In particular, $A$ is characteristic in $M$ and thus normal in $P$, a contradiction.

The following theorem is a direct consequence of the stratification theorem [QU1] and the characterization of $p$-nilpotency given in [QU2].

**Theorem 2.4.** Let $G$ be a finite group and let $A \leq G$ be an elementary abelian $p$-subgroup of $G$ such that

\[\text{res}_{G,A}: H^\bullet(G) \longrightarrow H^\bullet(A)\]

is an $F$-isomorphism. Then $A$ is a maximal elementary abelian $p$-subgroup of $G$, $N_G(A) = C_G(A)$, and $\{A^g \mid g \in G\}$ is the unique $G$-conjugacy class of maximal elementary abelian $p$-subgroups of $G$. Furthermore, $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ is a $p$-central $p$-group. If $p \neq 2$, $G$ is $p$-nilpotent.

**Proof.** Obviously, $H^\bullet(G)$ and $H^\bullet(A)$ must have the same Krull dimension. Hence, $A$ has to be a maximal elementary abelian $p$-subgroup (cf. [QU2, Cor.3.3]), and since $H^\bullet(G)_{\text{red}}$ is a domain, there is a unique $G$-conjugacy class of maximal elementary abelian $p$-subgroups of $G$ (cf. [QU2, Cor.3.2]). From [QU2, Th.3.7], it follows that $W(A) := N_G(A)/C_G(A) = 1$. Assume $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ contains $A$. As in (2.2), one obtains $N_P(A) = C_P(A)$, and thus $P$ must be $p$-central (cf. Lemma 2.3).

Let $p$ be odd. As $\text{res}_{P,A}: H^\bullet(P) \rightarrow H^\bullet(A)$ is an $F$-isomorphism and since $\text{res}_{G,P}: H^\bullet(G) \rightarrow H^\bullet(P)$ is injective, $\text{res}_{G,P}$ is an $F$-isomorphism. Hence $G$ is $p$-nilpotent (cf. [QU2]).

Note that for $p = 2$ a finite group as claimed in Theorem 2.4 does not have to be 2-nilpotent (cf. [QU2, Ex. after Th. 1.4]).
Corollary 2.5. Let $G$ be a finite group and $p$ be odd. Then

$$H^*(G)_{\text{red}} \simeq \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_n],$$

where all generators $y_i$ have degree 2, if and only if $G$ is $p$-nilpotent, $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ is a $p$-central group with $\Omega EP$, and $l \cdot \text{rk}_p(P) = n$.

Proof. If $G$ is $p$-nilpotent, one has $H^*(G) = H^*(P)$. Hence (2.3) follows from Theorem 2.1.

Assume that $G$ is a finite group such that (2.3) holds. Hence $H^*(G)_{\text{red}}$ is a domain and $G$ has a unique $G$-conjugacy class of maximal elementary abelian $p$-subgroups $\{ A^g \mid g \in G \}$ (cf. [QU2 Cor.3.2]). Thus $j_{\text{red}}: H^*(G)_{\text{red}} \to H^*(A)_{\text{red}}$ must be injective (cf. [QU2 Th.3.1.]). Since $H^*(G)_{\text{red}}$ and $H^*(A)_{\text{red}}$ are generated in degree 2 and have the same Krull dimension (cf. [QU2 Cor.3.3.]), $j_{\text{red}}$ must be bijective. In particular, $j_{\text{red}}$ is an $F$-isomorphism. Hence the claim follows from Theorems 2.1 and 2.4. \hfill $\square$

3. A splitting theorem for comodule algebras

Throughout this section let $K$ denote a field. Let $(A, \phi_A, \Delta_A, \eta_A, \varepsilon_A)$ be a $K$-Hopf algebra, $B = \prod_{k \in \mathbb{N}_0} B_k$ a graded $K$-module and

$$\phi_B: B \otimes B \to B, \quad \eta_B: K \to B, \quad \Delta_B: B \to A \otimes B, \quad \varepsilon_B: B \to K,$$

be morphisms of graded $K$-modules such that

1. $(B, \Delta_B)$ is a left $A$-comodule,
2. $(B, \phi_B, \eta_B, \varepsilon_B)$ is an augmented $K$-algebra,
3. $\phi_B: B \otimes B \to B$ is a morphism of left $A$-comodules,
4. $\eta_B: K \to B$ is a morphism of left $A$-comodules,

Then $(B, \phi_B, \Delta_B, \eta_B, \varepsilon_B)$ is called an augmented left $A$-comodule algebra. For an augmented left $A$-comodule algebra $B$ one has a canonical mapping $j: B \to A$ given by

$$j: B \xrightarrow{\Delta_B} A \otimes B \xrightarrow{id_A \otimes \varepsilon_B} A \otimes K \xrightarrow{\phi_A \circ (id_A \otimes \eta_A)} A$$

which is a morphism of graded $K$-modules. If one gives $A \otimes B$ the left $A$-comodule structure defined by $\Delta_{A \otimes B} := \Delta_A \otimes id_B$, one sees easily that all morphisms are morphisms of left $A$-comodules. Hence $j: B \to A$ is a morphism of left $A$-comodules.

Let $C := K \Box_A B$ denote the cotensor product of the $A$-bicodule $K$ with the left $A$-comodule $B$. Note that $C$ is a trivial left $A$-subcomodule of $K \otimes B$. Let $\iota_C: C \to K \otimes B$ denote the canonical embedding. Then one has a canonical mapping $i: C \to B$ given by

$$i: C \xrightarrow{\iota_C} K \otimes B \xrightarrow{\eta_B \circ id_B} B \otimes B \xrightarrow{\phi_B} B$$

which is a morphism of left $A$-comodules. There are uniquely determined mappings of graded $K$-modules

$$\phi_C: C \otimes C \to C, \quad \eta_C: K \to C$$

making $(C, \phi_C, \eta_C, \varepsilon_C)$ a $K$-algebra and $i: C \to B$ an injective morphism of augmented $K$-algebras. (cf. [MM Prop.4.6]).

Let $A$ be a $K$-Hopf algebra. We call $A$ of affine type, if:
1. As a $K$-algebra $A$ is isomorphic to a free commutative $K$-algebra,

$$A \simeq \Lambda[x_{\mu} \mid \mu \in S_1] \otimes K[x_{\lambda} \mid \lambda \in S_2]$$

for some sets $S_1, S_2$, where for $\text{char}(K) \neq 2$, $x_{\mu}, \mu \in S_1$, are homogeneous elements of odd degree, $x_{\lambda}, \lambda \in S_2$, are homogeneous elements of even degree; for $\text{char}(K) = 2$, $S_1 = \emptyset$ and $x_{\lambda}, \lambda \in S_2$, are homogeneous elements of positive degree.

2. For all $x_{\lambda} \in P(A) := \{ a \in A \mid \Delta_A(a) = 1_A \otimes a + a \otimes 1_A \}$.

For $K$-Hopf algebras of affine type Theorem 4.7 in [MM] specializes to the following:

**Theorem 3.1.** Let $A$ be a $K$-Hopf algebra of affine type and $B$ a connected augmented left $A$-comodule algebra. Assume further that the canonical homomorphism of $A$-comodules $j: B \to A$ is surjective and additionally also a morphism of $K$-algebras. Then:

(a) There exists a section $\sigma: A \to B$ which is an injective homomorphism of $K$-algebras and $A$-comodules satisfying $j \circ \sigma = \text{id}_A$.

(b) Let $C := K \Box_A B$. Then there exists an isomorphism

$$h^* = \phi_B \circ (\sigma \otimes i): A \otimes C \to B$$

which is simultaneously an isomorphism of left $A$-comodules, right $C$-modules and left $A$-modules, where the left $A$-module structure on $B$ and $A \otimes C$ is given by

$$\psi_B = \phi_B \circ (\sigma \otimes id_B): A \otimes B \to B,$$

$$\psi_{A \otimes C} = \phi_A \otimes id_C: A \otimes A \otimes C \to A \otimes C.$$

(c) If $B$ is a commutative $K$-algebra, then $h^*$ as given in (b) is an isomorphism of $K$-algebras.

**Proof.** (a) Let

$$P_j(B) := \{ b \in B \mid \Delta_B(b) = 1_A \otimes b + j(b) \otimes 1_B \}$$

denote the $j$-primitive elements in the left $A$-comodule $B$. As $j$ is a morphism of $K$-algebras, one has $j(1_B) = 1_A$. Since $j$ is a morphism of left $A$-comodules, it follows that

$$j_* := j|_{P_j(B)}: P_j(B) \to P(A).$$

We claim that $j_*$ is surjective. By Theorem 4.7 in [MM] (cf. proof of Thm.4.4. in [MM]), there exists a morphism of $A$-comodules $g: A \to B$ satisfying $j \circ g = \text{id}_A$. As $A$ and $B$ are connected, one obtains $g(1_A) = 1_B$. Furthermore, the composition

$$h: A \otimes C \xrightarrow{g \otimes i} B \otimes B \xrightarrow{\phi_B} B$$

is an isomorphism of left $A$-comodules. Hence $h(A \otimes 1_C)$ is a left $A$-subcomodule of $B$ with

$$j \circ h(a \otimes 1_C) = a, \text{ for all } a \in A.$$
Let $a \in P(A)$ be a primitive element in $A$. Hence it follows that
\[
\Delta_B(h(a \otimes 1_C)) = (id_A \otimes h) \circ \Delta_{A \otimes C}(a \otimes 1_C) = (id_A \otimes h)(a \otimes 1_A \otimes 1_C + 1_A \otimes a \otimes 1_C) = a \otimes h(1_A \otimes 1_C) + 1 \otimes h(a \otimes 1_C) = a \otimes 1_B + 1_A \otimes h(a \otimes 1_C)
\]
By (3.3), one concludes that $h(a \otimes 1) \in P_j(B)$. Hence, $j_*$ is surjective.

By hypothesis, $A = \Lambda[x_\mu | \mu \in S_1] \otimes K[x_\lambda | \lambda \in S_2]$, where all $x_\mu$, $\lambda \in S_1 \cup S_2$, are primitive homogeneous elements of positive degree. Let $t_\lambda \in P_j(B)$ be a homogeneous preimage of $x_\lambda$ under $j$, i.e., $j(t_\lambda) = x_\lambda$ for all $\lambda \in S_1 \cup S_2$. Let $D := \langle t_\lambda | \lambda \in S_1 \cup S_2 \rangle_{K-alg} \leq B$ denote the $K$-subalgebra of $B$ generated by the elements $t_\lambda$ and $\sigma : A \to D$ denote the induced homomorphism of graded $K$-algebras, which exists, since $A$ is a free commutative $K$-algebra. Then by construction $\sigma \circ j^{|D} = id_D$ and $j^{|D} \circ \sigma = id_A$. Hence $\sigma$ is an isomorphism of graded $K$-algebras. Since $D$ is generated by $j$-primitive elements $t_\lambda$, one concludes easily by induction that $D$ is a left $A$-subcomodule of $B$.

(b) By the proof of Theorem 4.7 in [MM], one knows that for any morphism $g : A \to B$ of left $A$-comodules with $j \circ g = id_A$, the composition
\[
h : A \otimes C \xrightarrow{g \otimes i} B \otimes B \xrightarrow{\phi_B} B
\]
is an isomorphism of left $A$-comodules and right $C$-modules. Let
\[
h^* : A \otimes C \xrightarrow{\sigma \otimes i} B \otimes B \xrightarrow{\phi_B} B
\]
with $\sigma : A \to B$ as in part (a). Hence $h^*$ is an isomorphism of left $A$-comodules and right $C$-modules. Furthermore, for $a', a \in A$ and $c \in C$ one obtains
\[
h^* \circ \psi_{A \otimes C}(a' \otimes a \otimes c) = h^*(a', a \otimes c) = \sigma(a').\sigma(a).i(c) = \psi_B(a' \otimes h^*(a \otimes c)).
\]
Hence $h^*$ is also an isomorphism of left $A$-modules.

(c) Since $h^*(1_A \otimes 1_C) = 1_B$, it suffices to show that the diagram
\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
A \otimes C & \xrightarrow{\varphi_{A \otimes C}} & A \otimes C \\
\downarrow{h^* \otimes h^*} & & \downarrow{h^*} \\
B \otimes B & \xrightarrow{\phi_B} & B
\end{array}
\]
commutes. Let $a_1, a_2 \in A$, $c_1, c_2 \in C$ be homogeneous elements with $a_2$ of degree $p$ and $c_1$ of degree $q$. Hence one obtains
\[
\phi_B \circ (h^* \otimes h^*)(a_1 \otimes c_1 \otimes a_2 \otimes c_2) = \sigma(a_1).i(c_1).\sigma(a_2).i(c_2)
\]
and
\[
h^* \circ \varphi_{A \otimes C}(a_1 \otimes c_1 \otimes a_2 \otimes c_2) = (-1)^{pq}.\sigma(a_1).\sigma(a_2).i(c_1).i(c_2).
\]
Hence the commutativity of the considered diagram follows from the commutativity of the $K$-algebra $B$, and this completes the proof of the theorem.

If $G$ is a group and $A \leq Z(G)$ is a central subgroup of $G$, the product mapping $A \times G \to G$ is a homomorphism of groups. This implies that $H^\bullet(G)$ becomes an augmented left $H^\bullet(A)_{red}$-comodule algebra. Furthermore, the mapping $j : H^\bullet(G) \to H^\bullet(A)_{red}$ coincides with the “reduced restriction mapping” and hence is a morphism of algebras. Hence one obtains
Corollary 3.2. Let \( p \) be odd and \( P \) be a finite \( p \)-central \( p \)-group, respectively \( p = 2 \) and \( P \) be a 4\(^*\)-central 2-group. Assume further that \( P \) has the \( \Omega \)EP. Then \( H^\bullet(P) \simeq C \otimes H^\bullet(\Omega(P))_{\text{red}} \) for some finite dimensional \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-algebra \( C \), and the isomorphism is an isomorphism as \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-algebras.

Proof. From Theorem 2.1 and Theorem 3.1 one obtains a splitting \( H^\bullet(P) \simeq C \otimes H^\bullet(\Omega(P))_{\text{red}} \) for some \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-algebra \( C \) consisting of nilpotent elements. Since \( H^\bullet(P) \) is finitely generated as an algebra (cf. [3 Cor.4.2.2]), so is \( C \). Hence \( C \) is finite dimensional. \( \square \)

4. Spectral sequences of \( p \)-central extensions

Let \( G \) be a finite \( p \)-central \( p \)-group, \( p \) odd. In this section we investigate the Lyndon-Hochschild-Serre spectral sequence (LHS spectral sequence) associated to the extension

\[
(\dagger) \quad 1 \longrightarrow A \longrightarrow G \longrightarrow \overline{G} \longrightarrow 1
\]

where \( A := \Omega_1(G) \) and \( \overline{G} := G/A \). One knows by [W] Prop.5.4.(a) that \( \overline{G} \) is again a \( p \)-central group and \( \overline{G} \) has the \( \Omega \)EP. Thus

\[
(4.1) \quad H^\bullet(\overline{G}) \simeq C \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_n],
\]

\( n = l \cdot \text{rk}(\overline{G}) \), \( |y_i| = 2 \), and \( C \) is a finite dimensional commutative \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-algebra (cf. Corollary 3.2). Since \( A \) is central in \( G \), the \( E_2 \)-term of the LHS spectral sequence is given by \( E_2^{r,s} = H^r(\overline{G}) \otimes H^s(A) \). The higher terms are described in the following theorem.

Theorem 4.1. Let \( G \) be a finite \( p \)-central \( p \)-group, \( p \) odd. Assume further that \( l \cdot \text{rk}(\overline{G}) = l \cdot \text{rk}(G) = n \). Then

\[
E_3^{r,s} = C_r \otimes S_s,
\]

where \( S_s \) denotes the \( s \)th homogeneous component of the \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-algebra \( \mathbb{F}_p[z_1, \ldots, z_n] \), \( |z_i| = 2 \), and \( C = \bigoplus_{r \in \mathbb{N}_0} C_r \) is given as in (4.1). The product on \( E_3 \) is the naturally given one. Furthermore, \( E_3 = E_\infty \) if and only if \( G \) has the \( \Omega \)EP. In this case one has

\[
(4.2) \quad H^\bullet(G) \simeq \text{im}(\inf_{\overline{G}} \circ \text{im}(\text{res}_{G,A})),
\]

and this isomorphism is an isomorphism as \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-algebras.

Proof. As (\( \dagger \)) is a central extension, all the characteristic classes \( v^N \) vanish (cf. [CV] \S 7). Hence, the differential \( d_2 : E_2 \rightarrow E_2 \) depends only on the element \( \alpha \in H^2(\overline{G}, A) \) representing the extension (\( \dagger \)) (cf. [CV] Main Theorem). Let \( H^\bullet(A) = A[a_1, \ldots, a_n] \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[z_1, \ldots, z_n] \). Since \( A = \Omega_1(G) \), we may assume that \( \alpha \in H^2(\overline{G}, A) = H^2(\overline{G}, \mathbb{F}_p) \otimes H_1(A, \mathbb{F}_p) \) is given by

\[
(4.3) \quad \alpha = \sum_{i=1}^n y_i \otimes a_i^*,
\]

where \( \{ a_i^* \mid i = 1, \ldots, n \} \subset H_1(A, \mathbb{F}_p) \) is the basis dual to \( \{ a_i \mid i = 1, \ldots, n \} \). From [CV] \S 5 one deduces that \( P_* (\alpha) \in H^2(\overline{G}, \mathbb{F}_p) \otimes \text{Hom}_{\mathbb{F}_p}(H^*(A), H^{*+1}(A)) \) is given by

\[
(4.4) \quad P_* (\alpha) = \sum_{i=1}^n y_i \otimes \partial_i,
\]
where \( \partial_i \) are the derivations satisfying
\[
\partial_i(a_j) = \begin{cases} 
1 & \text{for } i = j, \\
0 & \text{for } i \neq j,
\end{cases}
\]
and \( \partial_i(z_j) = 0 \) for all \( i, j \).

Note that \( \partial_i \circ \partial_j = -\partial_j \circ \partial_i \) for all \( i, j \). For \( u \otimes v \in E^{r,s}_2 \) the image under \( d_2 \) is given by
\[
d_2(u \otimes v) = -\sum_{i=1}^{n} (-1)^r u_i \otimes \partial_i(v).
\]
In particular, \( (\mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_n] \otimes \Lambda[a_1, \ldots, a_n], d_2) \) coincides with the Koszul complex for the polynomial algebra \( \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_n] \) and thus is an acyclic complex (cf. [HS]). Hence, \( E_3 = H_\bullet(E_2, d_2) \cong C \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[z_1, \ldots, z_n] \), and the algebra structure on \( E_3 \) is the natural one.

The group \( G \) has the \( \Omega \text{EP} \) if and only if \( E_0^{0,s} \cong \ker(d_2) \) for all \( k \geq 3 \). As \( d_k : E_k \to E_{k-1} \) are derivations for \( k \geq 2 \) (cf. [Be]), this is equivalent to \( E_3 = E_\infty \).

Statement (4.2) follows from Corollary 3.2.

**Corollary 4.2.** Let \( G \) be a powerful \( p \)-central \( p \)-group with \( \Omega \text{EP} \), \( p \) odd, and put \( n := l \text{-rk}(G) \). Then
\[
H_\bullet(G) \cong \Lambda[x_1, \ldots, x_n] \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_n],
\]
where \( |x_i| = 1, |y_j| = 2 \).

**Proof.** We proceed by induction on \( |G| \). For \( G \) abelian the assertion is obvious. Hence assume that the assertion holds for all powerful \( p \)-central \( p \)-groups with \( \Omega \text{EP} \) which have order smaller than \( G \).

If \( \Omega_1(G) \not\subseteq G^p \), we choose a complement \( B \) for \( \Omega_1(G) \cap G^p \) in \( \Omega_1(G) \). Hence
\[
B \simeq B^* = \Omega_1(G).G^p/G^p.
\]
We choose a complement \( H^* \) to \( B^* \) in \( G/G^p \), and let \( H \leq G \) denote its preimage under the canonical projection \( \pi : G \to G/G^p \). By construction \( H^p = G^p \), and hence \( H \) is powerful \( p \)-central with \( \Omega \text{EP} \) (cf. [W Prop. 5.4.(d)]). Furthermore, \( G = H \times B \). Thus the assertion follows in this case.

Assume that \( \Omega_1(G) \subseteq G^p \). Hence, \( l \text{-rk}(G) = l \text{-rk}(\overline{G}) \), where \( \overline{G} := G/\Omega_1(G) \).
By [W Prop. 5.4.(a)], \( \overline{G} \) is powerful \( p \)-central with \( \Omega \text{EP} \). Hence the desired result follows by induction and Theorem 4.1.

Next we consider another type of extension and the associated LHS spectral sequence. Let \( G \) be \( p \)-central with \( \Omega \text{EP} \) and \( A \leq \Omega_1(G), |A| = p \) such that \( A \cap \Omega_2(G)^p = 1 \). Hence by Proposition 2.2 one knows that \( \overline{G} := G/A \) is also \( p \)-central with \( \Omega \text{EP} \). Let \( n = l \text{-rk}(G) = l \text{-rk}(\overline{G}) + 1 \). Hence,
\[
H_\bullet(\overline{G}) = D \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_{n-1}], \quad H_\bullet(A) = \Lambda[x] \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y].
\]
We consider the extension
\[
1 \longrightarrow A \longrightarrow G \longrightarrow \overline{G} \longrightarrow 1
\]
and the associated LHS spectral sequence. As in the previous case we may assume that the cocycle \( \gamma \in H^2(\overline{G}, A) = H^2(\overline{G}) \otimes H_1(A) \) representing the extension (†) is given by \( \gamma = c \otimes x^* \) for some element \( c \in D_2 \). This implies
\[
P_\bullet(\gamma) = c \otimes \partial,
\]
where $\partial : H^*(A) \to H^*(A)$ denotes the derivation given by $\partial(x) = 1$, $\partial(y) = 0$. Hence, for $u \otimes v \in E^x_{2,s}$ the image under $d_2$ is given by

$$d_2(u \otimes v) = (-1)^s u \cdot c \otimes \partial(v).$$

(4.9)

Since $F_p \otimes F_p[y_1, \ldots, y_{n-1}] \otimes F_p \otimes F_p[y]$ is contained in the kernel of $d_2$, it follows that

$$E_3 = F_p[y_1, \ldots, y_{n-1}] \otimes H_*(D \otimes \Lambda[x], \partial) \otimes F_p[y],$$

where $\partial$ denotes the induced differential on the algebra $D \otimes \Lambda[x]$. More precisely we obtain

**Theorem 4.3.** Let $G$ be a $p$-central $p$-group, $p$ odd, with $\Omega E P$ and $A \leq \Omega(G)$, $|A| = p$, such that $A \cap \Omega_2(G)^p = 1$. Let $n := \ell \cdot \text{rk}(G)$ and $\mathcal{G} := G/A$. Let $H^*(\mathcal{G}) = D \otimes T$, where $T$ is a polynomial $F_p$-algebra of Krull dimension $n - 1$ generated in degree 2, and $D$ is a finite-dimensional commutative $F_p$-algebra (cf. Cor. 3.2). Let $c \in D_3$ be given as above, and let $C^{\bullet, \bullet}$ denote the bigraded $F_p$-algebra

$$C^{\bullet, 0} = D \otimes 1/D.c \otimes 1, \quad C^{\bullet, 1} = \text{Ann}_D(c) \otimes x, \quad C^{\bullet, k} = 0 \quad \text{for} \quad k \geq 2,$

with the natural $F_p$-algebra structure. Then

$$E^{3,s}_{r} = \sum_{i+j=r \atop i+m=s} T_i \otimes C^{j,i} \otimes S^i_m,$$

where $S = \prod_{m \in \mathbb{N}_0} S_m = F_p[y]$.

Furthermore, $E^{3,s}_{r} = E_{\infty}^{3,s}$.

If $D$ satisfies Poincaré duality in dimension $n - 1$, the algebra $\text{Tot}(C^{\bullet, \bullet})$ satisfies Poincaré duality in dimension $n$.

**Proof.** From (4.9.) one concludes that

$$\ker(\partial) = D \otimes 1 + \text{Ann}_D(c) \otimes x$$

and

$$\text{im}(\partial) = D.c \otimes 1.$$

Hence $C^{\bullet, \bullet} = H_*(D \otimes \Lambda[x], \partial)$. If $D$ satisfies Poincaré duality in dimension $n - 1$, it is easily seen that the product on $\text{Tot}(C^{\bullet, \bullet})$ induces a non-degenerate pairing between $D \otimes 1/D.c \otimes 1$ and $\text{Ann}_D(c) \otimes x$. Hence, $\text{Tot}(C^{\bullet, \bullet})$ satisfies Poincaré duality in dimension $n$.

Let $d_k : E^{t,s}_{r} \to E^{t+k,s-k+1}_{r}, \ k \geq 3$, denote the higher differentials. Then one concludes as in the proof of Proposition 2.2 that $T \otimes 1 \otimes 1, 1 \otimes 1 \otimes S \leq \ker(d_k)$. Since $C^{\bullet, \bullet}$ is a bigraded algebra concentrated on the $0^{th}$ and $1^{st}$ bottom rows, one has also $C^{\bullet, \bullet} \leq \ker(d_k), \ k \geq 3$. This shows that $E^{3,s}_{r} = E_{\infty}^{3,s}$. \hfill $\Box$

Note that the product on $H^*(G)$ does not necessarily coincide with the product on $\text{Tot}(E^{3,s}_{r}) = \text{Tot}(E^{3,s}_{\infty})$. However, if $H^*(G) = R \otimes F_p[y_1, \ldots, y_n]$ one has $R \simeq \text{Tot}(C^{\bullet, \bullet})$ as $\mathbb{F}_p$-modules. With the natural identification one gets for $a \in C^{r,s},\ b \in C^{m,n}$

$$a \circ b = a.b + \bigoplus_{i+j=r+s+u+v \atop j \leq s+v-1} C^{i,j},$$

(4.11)

where $\circ$ denotes the product in $\text{Tot}(C^{\bullet, \bullet})$ and $\cdot$ denotes the product in $R \leq H^*(G)$ (cf. [H Th. 3.9.3]). This yields:
Corollary 4.4. Let $G$ and $\overline{G}$ be as in Theorem 4.3, $H^\bullet(G) = C \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_n]$, $H^\bullet(\overline{G}) = D \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_{n-1}]$. If $D$ satisfies Poincaré duality in dimension $n-1$, then $C$ satisfies Poincaré duality in dimension $n$.

Proof. This follows from Theorem 4.3 and (4.11).

5. The Proofs of Theorems A and B

Proof of Theorem A. In Theorem 2.2 it was shown that (1) and (3) are equivalent. (2) implies (3). Hence, it remains to show that (3) implies (2). Without loss of generality we may assume that $G$ is a $p$-central $p$-group with $\Omega \mathbb{E}P$. We proceed by induction on $|G|$. If $G$ is elementary abelian there is nothing to prove. Thus we may assume that $\Omega_1(G) \leq G$. The group $G/\Omega_1(G)$ is again $p$-central with $\Omega \mathbb{E}P$ (cf. [W Prop.5.4.(a)]). If $l \text{-} \text{rk}(G) = l \text{-} \text{rk}(G/\Omega_1(G))$, the claim follows by induction and Theorem 4.1. Hence we may assume that

$$n := l \text{-} \text{rk}(G) \geq l \text{-} \text{rk}(G/\Omega_1(G)).$$

This implies that $\Omega_2(G)^p \leq \Omega_1(G)$ (cf. [W Prop.4.1.(d)]). Let $A \leq \Omega_1(G)$, $|A| = p$, be such that $A \cap \Omega_2(G)^p = 1$. Then $G := G/A$ is again a $p$-central group with $\Omega \mathbb{E}P$ (cf. Prop.2.2). By induction, $H^\bullet(\overline{G}) = D \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_{n-1}]$, where $D$ is a finite dimensional $\mathbb{F}_p$-algebra satisfying Poincaré duality in dimension $n-1$. Then Theorem 4.3 and Corollary 4.4 imply that $H^\bullet(G) = C \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_n], |y_i| = 2$, and $C$ is a finite-dimensional $\mathbb{F}_p$-algebra satisfying Poincaré duality in dimension $n$. \hfill \Box

Remark 5.1. (a) The Poincaré duality of $C$ can be shown also by the spectral sequence introduced by D.Benson and J.Carlson (cf. [BC Th.5.5]).

(b) The proof of Theorem A shows also that $\chi_C = 0$, where $\chi_C = p_C(-1)$ denotes the Euler characteristic.

Proof of Theorem B. Corollary 4.2 yields that $(2) \Rightarrow (1)$. On the other hand if $G$ is a finite group such that $H^\bullet(G) = \Lambda[x_1, \ldots, x_n] \otimes \mathbb{F}_p[y_1, \ldots, y_n], |x_i| = 1, |y_j| = 2, p$ odd, then $G$ is $p$-nilpotent, $P \leq \text{Syl}_p(G)$ is $p$-central with $\Omega \mathbb{E}P$, and $n = l \text{-} \text{rk}(P)$ (cf. Cor. 2.5). Furthermore, one also has

$$P/[P,P],P^p = H_1(P,\mathbb{F}_p) = \mathbb{F}_p^n.$$

But this implies that $P$ is in addition powerful (cf. [W Prop.4.3]), and this completes the proof of the theorem. \hfill \Box

Remark 5.2. Theorem B can also be used to compute the Galois cohomology of a uniformly powerful pro-$p$-group $\hat{P}, p$ odd, of rank $n$. Then $\hat{P}/\hat{P}^n$ is a powerful $p$-central $p$-group with $\Omega \mathbb{E}P$. Then it follows from Theorem 4.1 that

$$H^\bullet_{\text{gal}}(\hat{P},\mathbb{F}_p) = \lim H^\bullet(\hat{P}/\hat{P}^n,\mathbb{F}_p) \simeq \Lambda[x_1, \ldots, x_n]$$

(cf. [La Chap.V, §2.2]).

Remark 5.3. Let $A_p$ denote the Steenrod algebra for the prime $p$ and $A_p^*$ is the subalgebra generated by the reduced power actions. It can be shown easily that for every powerful $p$-central group $G$ with $\Omega \mathbb{E}P$, $l \text{-} \text{rk}(G) = n, p$ odd, one has

$$H^\bullet(G) \simeq H^\bullet(\mathbb{F}_p^n)$$

as $A_p^*$-module. However, this isomorphism is not an isomorphism as $A_p$-module (cf. [BP]). One can speculate whether the isomorphism type of $G$ is determined by $H^\bullet(G)$ as $A_p$-module with the Bockstein spectral sequence. Some groups are
known which have this property (cf. \[BrL\]). W.Browder and J.Pakianathan have shown that the isomorphism type of a uniformly powerful $p$-group of depth 2 with $\Omega\text{EP}$ is uniquely determined by the isomorphism type of $H^\bullet(G)$ as $A_p$-module (cf. \[BP\]).

References


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