ACYCLIC 2-DIMENSIONAL COMPLEXES AND
QUILLEN’S CONJECTURE

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Abstract: Let $G$ be a finite group and $\mathcal{A}_p(G)$ be the poset of nontrivial elementary abelian $p$-subgroups of $G$. Quillen conjectured that $O_p(G)$ is nontrivial if $\mathcal{A}_p(G)$ is contractible. We prove that $O_p(G) \neq 1$ for any group $G$ admitting a $G$-invariant acyclic $p$-subgroup complex of dimension 2. In particular, it follows that Quillen’s conjecture holds for groups of $p$-rank 3. We also apply this result to establish Quillen’s conjecture for some particular groups not considered in the seminal work of Aschbacher–Smith.

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1. Introduction

The study of the poset $\mathcal{S}_p(G)$ of nontrivial $p$-subgroups of a finite group $G$ started when K. S. Brown proved that the Euler characteristic $\chi(K(\mathcal{S}_p(G)))$ of its order complex is 1 modulo the greatest power of $p$ dividing the order of $G$ [6]. Recall that the order complex $K(X)$ of a poset $X$ is the simplicial complex whose simplices are the finite nonempty totally ordered subsets of $X$. Some years later, D. Quillen studied the homotopy properties of $K(\mathcal{S}_p(G))$ [11]. In that article, Quillen considered the subposet $\mathcal{A}_p(G)$ of nontrivial elementary abelian $p$-subgroups and proved that its order complex is homotopy equivalent to $K(\mathcal{S}_p(G))$ [11].

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Proposition 2.1]. Quillen also proved that, if the largest normal $p$-subgroup $O_p(G)$ of $G$ is nontrivial, then $\mathcal{K}(A_p(G))$ is contractible [11, Proposition 2.4] and conjectured that the converse should hold.

In this paper we study the following version of Quillen’s conjecture. Recall that the homology of a poset is the homology of its order complex.

**Quillen’s conjecture.** If $O_p(G) = 1$, then $\tilde{H}_*(A_p(G)) \neq 0$.

Aschbacher and Smith’s formulation relates rational acyclicity of $\mathcal{K}(A_p(G))$ with nontriviality of $O_p(G)$ [3]. Thus, our integral homology version is stronger than Quillen’s original statement but weaker than the Aschbacher–Smith version.

Quillen proved the conjecture for solvable groups [11, Theorem 12.1]. In [3] M. Aschbacher and S. D. Smith made a huge progress on the study of this conjecture. By using the classification of finite simple groups, they proved that Quillen’s conjecture holds if $p > 5$ and $G$ does not contain certain unitary components. Previously, Aschbacher and Kleidman ([1]) had proved Quillen’s conjecture for almost simple groups (i.e. finite groups $G$ such that $L \leq G \leq \text{Aut}(L)$ for some non-abelian simple group $L$).

The main result of our paper, which depends on the classification of the finite simple groups, is the following.

**Theorem 3.2.** If $X$ is an acyclic and 2-dimensional $G$-invariant subcomplex of $\mathcal{K}(S_p(G))$, then $O_p(G) \neq 1$.

Recall that the action of $G$ on $S_p(G)$ is by conjugation. The previous result provides then a convenient tool to prove that a group verifies Quillen’s conjecture.

**Corollary 3.3.** Let $G$ be a finite group. Suppose that $\mathcal{K}(S_p(G))$ admits a 2-dimensional and $G$-invariant subcomplex homotopy equivalent to itself. Then Quillen’s conjecture holds for $G$.

In particular, it follows that Quillen’s conjecture holds for groups of $p$-rank 3. Recall that the $p$-rank of $G$, usually denoted by $m_p(G)$, is the maximum possible rank of an elementary abelian $p$-subgroup of $G$. The $p$-rank 2 case was considered by Quillen [11, Proposition 2.10] and is a consequence of Serre’s result: an action of a finite group on a tree has a fixed point.

In Section 4 we make an extensive use of Corollary 3.3 to establish Quillen’s conjecture for some particular groups (of $p$-ranks 3 and 4) for which the hypotheses of the results of Aschbacher–Smith ([3]) do not hold.
A related conjecture, due to C. Casacuberta and W. Dicks, is that a finite group acting on a contractible 2-complex has a fixed point \([7]\). This conjecture was studied by Aschbacher and Segev in \([2]\). Posteriorly, Oliver and Segev classified the groups which admit a fixed point free action on an acyclic (finite) 2-complex \([10]\). Our proof of Theorem 3.2 is built upon the results of \([10]\), which depend on the classification of finite simple groups. Theorem 3.2 can also be seen as a special case of the Casacuberta–Dicks conjecture.

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2. The results of Oliver and Segev

In this section we review the results of \([10]\) needed in the proof of Theorem 3.2. By a \(G\)-complex we mean a \(G\)-CW complex. Note that the order complex of a \(G\)-poset is always a \(G\)-complex.

**Definition 2.1** (\([10]\)). A \(G\)-complex \(X\) is **essential** if there is no normal subgroup \(1 \neq N \triangleleft G\) such that for each \(H \subseteq G\), the inclusion \(X^{HN} \to X^H\) induces an isomorphism on integral homology.

The main results of \([10]\) are the following two theorems.

**Theorem 2.2** (\([10\), Theorem A\]). For any finite group \(G\), there is an essential fixed point free 2-dimensional (finite) acyclic \(G\)-complex if and only if \(G\) is isomorphic to one of the simple groups \(\text{PSL}_2(2^k)\) for \(k \geq 2\), \(\text{PSL}_2(q)\) for \(q \equiv \pm 3 \pmod{8}\) and \(q \geq 5\), or \(\text{Sz}(2^k)\) for odd \(k \geq 3\). Furthermore, the isotropy subgroups of any such \(G\)-complex are all solvable.

**Theorem 2.3** (\([10\), Theorem B\]). Let \(G\) be any finite group, and let \(X\) be any 2-dimensional acyclic \(G\)-complex. Let \(N\) be the subgroup generated by all normal subgroups \(N' \triangleleft G\) such that \(X^{N'} \neq \emptyset\). Then \(X^N\) is acyclic; \(X\) is essential if and only if \(N = 1\); and the action of \(G/N\) on \(X^N\) is essential.

The set of subgroups of \(G\) will be denoted by \(S(G)\).

**Definition 2.4** (\([10]\)). By a **family** of subgroups of \(G\) we mean any subset \(\mathcal{F} \subseteq S(G)\) which is closed under conjugation. A nonempty family is said to be **separating** if it has the following three properties: (a) \(G \notin \mathcal{F}\); (b) if \(H' \subseteq H\) and \(H \in \mathcal{F}\), then \(H' \in \mathcal{F}\); (c) for any \(H \triangleleft K \subseteq G\) with \(K/H\) solvable, \(K \in \mathcal{F}\) if \(H \in \mathcal{F}\).
For any family $F$ of subgroups of $G$, a $(G,F)$-complex will mean a $G$-complex all of whose isotropy subgroups lie in $F$. A $(G,F)$-complex is $H$-universal if the fixed point set of each $H \in F$ is acyclic.

**Lemma 2.5** ([10, Lemma 1.2]). Let $X$ be any 2-dimensional acyclic $G$-complex without fixed points. Let $F$ be the set of subgroups $H \subseteq G$ such that $X^H \neq \emptyset$. Then $F$ is a separating family of subgroups of $G$, and $X$ is an $H$-universal $(G,F)$-complex.

If $G$ is not solvable, the separating family of solvable subgroups of $G$ is denoted by $SLV$.

**Proposition 2.6** ([10, Proposition 6.4]). Assume that $L$ is one of the simple groups $PSL_2(q)$ or $Sz(q)$, where $q = p^k$ and $p$ is prime ($p = 2$ in the second case). Let $G \subseteq \text{Aut}(L)$ be any subgroup containing $L$, and let $F$ be a separating family for $G$. Then there is a 2-dimensional acyclic $(G,F)$-complex if and only if $G = L$, $F = SLV$, and $q$ is a power of 2 or $q \equiv \pm 3 \pmod{8}$.

**Definition 2.7** ([10, Definition 2.1]). For any family $F$ of subgroups of $G$ define

$$i_F(H) = \frac{1}{[N_G(H) : H]}(1 - \chi(K_{>H})).$$

**Lemma 2.8** ([10, Lemma 2.3]). Fix a separating family $F$, a finite $H$-universal $(G,F)$-complex $X$, and a subgroup $H \subseteq G$. For each $n$, let $c_n(H)$ denote the number of orbits of $n$-cells of type $G/H$ in $X$. Then $i_F(H) = \sum_{n \geq 0} (-1)^n c_n(H)$.

**Proposition 2.9** ([10, Tables 2, 3, 4]). Let $G$ be one of the simple groups $PSL_2(2^k)$ for $k \geq 2$, $PSL_2(q)$ for $q \equiv \pm 3 \pmod{8}$ and $q \geq 5$, or $Sz(2^k)$ for odd $k \geq 3$. Then $i_{SLV}(1) = 1$.

### 3. The two-dimensional case

Using the results of Oliver and Segev stated in the previous section we prove the following.

**Theorem 3.1.** Every acyclic 2-dimensional $G$-complex has an orbit with normal stabilizer.

**Proof:** If $X^G \neq \emptyset$, we are done. Otherwise, $G$ acts fixed point freely on $X$. Consider the subgroup $N$ generated by the subgroups $N' \triangleleft G$ such that $X^{N'} \neq \emptyset$. Clearly $N$ is normal in $G$. By Theorem 2.3, $Y = X^N$ is acyclic (in particular it is nonempty) and the action of $G/N$ on $Y$ is essential and fixed point free. By Lemma 2.5, $F = \{H \leq G/N : Y^H \neq \emptyset\}$ is a separating family and $Y$ is an $H$-universal $(G/N,F)$-complex. Thus,
Theorem 2.2 asserts that $G/N$ must be one of the groups $\mathrm{PSL}_2(2^k)$ for $k \geq 2$, $\mathrm{PSL}_2(q)$ for $q \equiv \pm 3 \pmod{8}$ and $q \geq 5$, or $\mathrm{Sz}(2^k)$ for odd $k \geq 3$. In any case, by Proposition 2.6 we must have $F = \mathcal{SLV}$. By Proposition 2.9, $i_{\mathcal{SLV}}(1) = 1$. Finally, by Lemma 2.8, $Y$ must have at least one free $G/N$-orbit. Therefore, $X$ has a $G$-orbit of type $G/N$ and we are done.

**Theorem 3.2.** If $X$ is an acyclic and 2-dimensional $G$-invariant subcomplex of $\mathcal{K}(\mathcal{S}_p(G))$, then $O_p(G) \neq 1$.

**Proof:** By Theorem 3.1 there is a simplex $\sigma = (A_0 < \cdots < A_j)$ of $X$ with stabilizer $N \triangleleft G$. Since $A_0 \triangleleft N$, we deduce that $O_p(N)$ is nontrivial. On the other hand, $N \triangleleft G$ and $O_p(N) \text{ char } N$ implies that $O_p(N) \triangleleft G$. Therefore, $O_p(N) \leq O_p(G)$ and $O_p(G)$ is thus nontrivial.

From Theorem 3.2 we deduce

**Corollary 3.3.** Let $G$ be a finite group. Suppose that $\mathcal{K}(\mathcal{S}_p(G))$ admits a 2-dimensional and $G$-invariant subcomplex homotopy equivalent to itself. Then Quillen’s conjecture holds for $G$.

Since the $p$-rank of $G$ is equal to $\dim \mathcal{K}(\mathcal{A}_p(G)) + 1$ we obtain:

**Corollary 3.4.** Let $G$ be a finite group of $p$-rank 3. If $\tilde{H}_*(\mathcal{A}_p(G)) = 0$, then $O_p(G) \neq 1$.

We now apply Corollary 3.3 to obtain results for some related $p$-subgroup complexes. Recall that a $p$-subgroup $Q \leq G$ is radical if $Q = O_p(N_G(Q))$. The Bouc poset $\mathcal{B}_p(G)$ is the poset of nontrivial radical $p$-subgroups of $G$. It is well-known that $\mathcal{K}(\mathcal{B}_p(G))$ is homotopy equivalent to $\mathcal{K}(\mathcal{S}_p(G))$ [5]. Then, by Corollary 3.3, we have

**Corollary 3.5.** Let $G$ be a finite group such that $\mathcal{B}_p(G)$ has height 2. If $\tilde{H}_*(\mathcal{B}_p(G)) = 0$, then $O_p(G) \neq 1$.

We say that a poset $X$ is a reduced lattice if it is obtained from a finite lattice by removing its minimum and maximum. If $X$ is a reduced lattice, $i(X)$ denotes the subposet of $X$ given by the elements which can be written as the infimum of a set of maximal elements of $X$. It is a general fact that the order complex of $i(X)$ is homotopy equivalent to the order complex of $X$ for any reduced lattice $X$ [4, Subsection 9.1]. Hence, by Corollary 3.3, we have

**Corollary 3.6.** Let $G$ be a finite group. If either $i(\mathcal{S}_p(G))$ or $i(\mathcal{A}_p(G))$ has height 2, then $G$ satisfies Quillen’s conjecture.

For a detailed account of the relations between the different $p$-subgroup complexes, see [12].
4. Some examples

In this section we apply the corollaries of Theorem 3.2 to establish Quillen’s conjecture for some groups constructed so that the hypotheses of the results of [3] are not satisfied. The main result of [3] is the following.

**Theorem 4.1** (Aschbacher–Smith [3, Main Theorem]). Let \( G \) be a finite group and \( p > 5 \) a prime number. Assume that whenever \( G \) has a unitary component \( U_n(q) \) with \( q \equiv -1 \pmod{p} \) and \( q \) odd, then the Quillen dimension property at \( p \) holds for all \( p \)-extensions of \( U_n(q^{p^e}) \) with \( m \leq n \) and \( e \in \mathbb{Z} \). Then \( G \) satisfies Quillen’s conjecture.

Recall that a group \( H \) satisfies the Quillen dimension property at \( p \) if \( \tilde{H}_{m_p(H)-1}(A_p(H)) \neq 0 \). The presence of simple components of \( G \) isomorphic to \( L_2(2^3) \) or \( U_3(2^3) \) (in the \( p = 3 \) case) and \( \text{Sz}(2^5) \) (in the \( p = 5 \) case) is an obstruction to extending Theorem 4.1 to \( p = 3 \) and \( p = 5 \). The case \( p = 2 \) is not considered in [3] and would require a much more detailed analysis. One of the first steps in the proof of Theorem 4.1 is the reduction to the case \( O_{p'}(G) = 1 \) (see [3, Proposition 1.6]). To do this, [3, Theorems 2.3 and 2.4] are needed and these theorems make a strong use of the hypothesis \( p > 5 \). Concretely, it is not possible to apply [3, Theorem 2.3] if a component of \( C_G(O_{p'}(G)) \) is isomorphic to \( L_2(2^3) \), \( U_3(2^3) \) (if \( p = 3 \)), or \( \text{Sz}(2^5) \) (if \( p = 5 \)).

Before presenting the examples for \( p = 3 \) and \( p = 5 \), we give some motivation. Most of the groups \( G \) in these examples satisfy the following conditions. First, \( O_{p'}(G) \neq 1 \) and \( C_G(O_{p'}(G)) \) contains a component isomorphic to \( U_3(2^3) \) if \( p = 3 \) and to \( \text{Sz}(2^5) \) if \( p = 5 \). Thus, we cannot find nontrivial homology for \( A_p(G) \) in the same way it is done in the proof of [3, Proposition 1.6] since we are not able to invoke [3, Theorems 2.3 and 2.4]. Secondly, since there is an inclusion \( \tilde{H}_*(A_p(G/O_{p'}(G)); \mathbb{Q}) \hookrightarrow \tilde{H}_*(A_{p'}(G); \mathbb{Q}) \) (see [3, Lemma 0.12]), we require \( O_{p'}(G/O_{p'}(G)) \neq 1 \) so that \( \tilde{H}_*(A_p(G/O_{p'}(G))) = 0 \). Finally, we require \( O_{p'}(G) = 1 \).

The groups presented in Examples 4.5 and 4.7 have \( p \)-rank 3. The groups presented in Examples 4.6 and 4.8 have \( p \)-rank 4 and are constructed in the following way. We take a direct product of a group \( N \), consisting of one or more copies of a particular simple \( p' \)-group, by a group \( K \) consisting of one or more copies of \( L = U_3(2^3) \) if \( p = 3 \) or \( L = \text{Sz}(2^5) \) if \( p = 5 \). Then we take two cyclic \( p \)-groups \( A \) and \( B \) and we let them act on the direct product \( N \times K \) as follows. We take a faithful action of \( A \times B \) on \( N \), and we choose a representation \( A \times B \rightarrow \text{Aut}(K) \) such that \( O_p(K \rtimes (A \times B)) \cong O_p(C_A(K)) \neq 1 \). The group \( G = (N \times K) \rtimes (A \times B) \) satisfies the conditions \( O_{p'}(G) = 1 \), \( O_{p'}(G) = \hat{N} \neq 1 \), \( C_G(N) = K \), and
$O_p(G/N) = O_p(K \times (A \times B)) \neq 1$. Moreover, since the $p$-rank of $L$ is at most 2, we can construct $G$ to have $p$-rank 4 by adjusting the number of copies of $L$ in $K$.

For these groups we show that $\mathcal{K}(S_p(G))$ has a 2-dimensional $G$-invariant subcomplex homotopy equivalent to itself, and thus Corollary 3.3 applies.

In Examples 4.10 and 4.11 we describe two groups of 2-rank 4 such that $\mathcal{K}(S_2(G))$ admits a 2-dimensional $G$-invariant homotopy equivalent subcomplex.

For the claims on the structure of the automorphism group of the finite groups of Lie type we refer to [8] and [9].

**Lemma 4.2.** Let $1 \to N \to G \to K \to 1$ be an extension of finite groups. Then

$$m_p(G) = \max_{A \in S} m_p(C_N(A)) + m_p(A),$$

where $S$ is the set of elementary abelian $p$-subgroups $1 \leq A \leq G$ such that $A \cap N = 1$. In particular, we have $m_p(G) \leq m_p(N) + m_p(K)$.

**Proof:** If $A \in S$, we have $C_N(A) \times A \cong C_N(A)A$ and hence $m_p(C_N(A)) + m_p(A) \leq m_p(C_N(A)A) \leq m_p(G)$. Taking maximum over $A \in S$ gives the lower bound for $m_p(G)$. We now prove the other inequality. Let $E$ be an elementary abelian $p$-subgroup of $G$ and write $E = (E \cap N)A$ for some complement $A$ of $E \cap N$ in $E$. Then $m_p(E \cap N) \leq m_p(C_N(A))$ and $A \in S$. Now $m_p(E) = m_p(E \cap N) + m_p(A) \leq m_p(C_N(A)) + m_p(A)$, giving the upper bound for $m_p(G)$. For the last claim note that $C_N(A) \leq N$ and $m_p(A) \leq m_p(K)$ by the isomorphism theorems. \hfill \Box

The following lemma will be used to obtain proper subcomplexes of $\mathcal{K}(A_p(G))$ without changing the homotopy type. We write $X \simeq Y$ if the order complexes $\mathcal{K}(X)$ and $\mathcal{K}(Y)$ are homotopy equivalent.

**Lemma 4.3.** Let $G$ be a finite group and let $H \leq G$. In addition, suppose that $O_p(C_H(E)) \neq 1$ for each $E \in A_p(G)$ with $E \cap H = 1$. Then $A_p(G) \simeq A_p(H)$.

**Proof:** Consider the subposet $\mathcal{N} = \{E \in A_p(G) : E \cap H \neq 1\}$. We have order preserving maps $r: \mathcal{N} \to A_p(H)$ and $i: A_p(H) \to \mathcal{N}$, given by $r(E) = E \cap H$ and $i(E) = E$ such that $ir(E) \leq E$ and $ri(E) = E$. Therefore, $\mathcal{N} \simeq A_p(H)$.

Let $S = \{E \in A_p(G) : E \cap H = 1\}$ be the complement of $\mathcal{N}$ in $A_p(G)$. For any $E \in S$ consider $A_p(G)_{>E} \cap \mathcal{N} = \{A \in \mathcal{N} : A > E\}$. It is easy to see that $r: A_p(G)_{>E} \cap \mathcal{N} \to A_p(C_H(E))$ defined by $r(B) = B \cap H$ is a homotopy equivalence with inverse $i(B) = BE$. Then $A_p(G)_{>E} \cap \mathcal{N} \simeq A_p(C_H(E))$ is contractible since $O_p(C_H(E)) \neq 1$. 


Now take a linear extension $E_1, \ldots, E_r$ of $S$ (i.e. enumerate the elements of $S$ so that $E_i \leq E_j$ implies $i \leq j$) and let $X^i = N \cup \{E_1, \ldots, E_i\}$. Note that $X^i = X^{i-1} \cup \{E_i\}$ and by the linear extension $X^i_{\geq E_i} = A_p(G)_{\geq E_i} \cap N$, which is contractible. Now $X^i_{\geq E_i}$ is a cone over $X^i_{\geq E_i}$ with vertex $E_i$. Therefore, $X^{i-1} \mapsto X^i$ is a homotopy equivalence for each $1 \leq i \leq r$. In consequence,

$$A_p(G) = X^r \simeq X^0 = N \simeq A_p(H).$$

\[\square\]

Remark 4.4. In the above result it can be shown that if $H \triangleleft G$, then the homotopy equivalence is $G$-equivariant.

Example 4.5. Let $p = 3$ and let $L = L_2(2^3) \times L_2(2^3) \times L_2(2^3)$. Let $A$ be a cyclic group of order 3 acting on $L$ by permuting the copies of $L_2(2^3)$. Take $G = L \rtimes A$. Since $m_3(L_2(2^3)) = 1$ and $C_L(A) \cong L_2(2^3)$, we see that $m_3(G) = 3$. By Corollary 3.4, $G$ satisfies Quillen’s conjecture.

Example 4.6. Let $p = 3$, $N = Sz(2^3) \times Sz(2^3) \times Sz(2^3)$, and $U = U_3(2^3)$. Let $A = \langle a \rangle$ and $B = \langle b \rangle$ be cyclic groups of order 3. We construct a semidirect product $G = (N \times U) \rtimes (A \times B)$. To do this we need to define a map $A \times B \to \text{Aut}(N \times U) = \text{Aut}(N) \times \text{Aut}(U)$.

Choose a field automorphism $\phi \in \text{Aut}(U_3(2^3))$ of order 3. By the properties of the $p$-group actions, there exists an inner automorphism $x \in \text{Inn}(U_3(2^3))$ of order 3 commuting with $\phi$. Then $A \times B \to \text{Aut}(U_3(2^3))$ is given by $a \mapsto x$ and $b \mapsto \phi$. Choose a field automorphism $\psi \in \text{Aut}(Sz(2^3))$ of order 3. Let $A$ act on each coordinate of $N$ as $\psi$ and let $B$ act on $N$ by permuting its coordinates. This gives rise to a well defined map $A \times B \to \text{Aut}(N)$.

The 3-rank of $G$ is $m_3(G) = m_3(U_3(2^3)AB)$. We can take an elementary abelian subgroup $E \leq C_U(\phi)$ of order 9 containing $x$ since $C_U(\phi) \cong \text{PGU}_3(2) \cong ((C_3 \times C_3) \times Q_8) \rtimes C_3$ by [9, Chapter 4, Lemma 3.10] and $A_3(\text{PGU}_3(2))$ is connected of height 1. Then $EAB$ is an elementary abelian subgroup of order $3^4$. Hence, $m_3(UAB) \geq 4$. Since $m_3(U_3(2^3)) = 2$ and $m_3(AB) = 2$, by Lemma 4.2 we have $m_3(G) = 4$.

By Corollary 3.3, to show that Quillen’s conjecture holds for $G$ and $p = 3$, it is enough to find a 2-dimensional $G$-invariant subcomplex $X$ of $\mathcal{K}(\mathcal{S}_3(G))$ homotopy equivalent to $\mathcal{K}(\mathcal{S}_3(G))$ (or, equivalently, to $\mathcal{K}(A_3(G))$).

Let $H = (N \times U) \rtimes A$. Note that $H \triangleleft G$ and $m_3(H) = 3$. Therefore, $\mathcal{K}(A_3(H))$ is a 2-dimensional $G$-invariant subcomplex of $\mathcal{K}(A_3(G))$. Now the plan is to use Lemma 4.3 to show that $\mathcal{A}_3(H) \simeq A_3(G)$. Let $E \in A_3(G)$ be such that $E \cap H = 1$. Then $E \cong EH/H \leq B \cong C_3$ and hence $E$ is cyclic generated by some element $e \in E$. Write $e = nua^ib^j$ with
Let $U \in \text{Acyclic}_2$ or $3 \pmod{5}$ and let $q$. Let $v \in U$, then
\[ v^e = v^{nua^i b^j} = (v^{ua^i})^{b^j}. \]

Since $j \neq 0$ and $e$ induces an automorphism of $U$ of order 3 in $\text{Inn}(U)\phi^j$, by [8, Proposition 4.9.1] and the definition of field automorphisms [8, Definition 2.5.13], $e$ is Inndiag$(U)$-conjugate to $\phi^j$ and acts as a field automorphism on $U$. In particular, $C_U(E) = C_U(e) \cong C_U(\phi^j) = C_U(\phi)$. Note that $O_3(C_U(E)) \cong O_3(C_U(\phi)) \cong C_3 \times C_3 \neq 1$. Since $C_U(E) \triangleleft C_H(E)$ and $O_3(C_U(E)) \neq 1$, we conclude that $O_3(C_H(E)) \neq 1$. By Lemma 4.3, $A_3(G) \simeq A_3(H)$, which is 2-dimensional and $G$-invariant. In conclusion, the subcomplex $K(A_3(H))$ satisfies the hypothesis of Corollary 3.3, and therefore Quillen’s conjecture holds for $G$.

Note that $O_3(G) = 1$, $O_{3'}(G) = N$, $C_G(O_{3'}(G)) = U_3(2^3)$, and $O_3(G/O_{3'}(G)) = O_3(U_3(2^3)AB) = \langle ax^{-1} \rangle \cong C_3$.

**Example 4.7.** Let $p = 5$. Let $r$ be a prime number such that $r \equiv 2$ or $3 \pmod{5}$ and let $q = r^{5n}$ with $n \geq 2$. Let $N$ be one of the simple groups $L_2(q)$, $G_2(q)$, $3D_4(q^3)$, or $2G_2(3^m)$ and let $A = \langle a \rangle$ be a cyclic group of order $5^n$. Note that $5 \nmid |N|$. Let $a$ act on $N$ as a field automorphism of order $5^n$. Choose a field automorphism $\phi \in \text{Aut}(Sz(2^5))$ of order 5 and let $A$ act on Sz$(2^5) \times Sz(2^5)$ as $\phi \times \phi$. Now consider the semidirect product $G = (N \times Sz(2^5) \times Sz(2^5)) \rtimes A$ defined by this action.

Since the Sylow 5-subgroups of Sz$(2^5)$ are cyclic of order 25, by Lemma 4.2 we have that $m_5(G) = 3$. By Corollary 3.4, Quillen’s conjecture holds for $G$.

Moreover, $O_5(G) = 1$, $O_{5'}(G) = N$, $C_G(O_{5'}(G)) = Sz(2^5)^2$, and $O_5(G/O_{5'}(G)) = C_A(Sz(2^5)^2) = \langle a^5 \rangle \neq 1$.

**Example 4.8.** Let $p = 5$ and let $N = L^5$, where $L$ is one of the simple $5'$-groups of the previous example. Let $A = \langle a \rangle \cong C_{5^n}$ and $B = \langle b \rangle \cong C_5$. Let $G = (N \times Sz(2^5)^2) \rtimes (A \times B)$, where $a$ acts on each copy of $L$ as a field automorphism of order $5^n$ and trivially on Sz$(2^5)^2$, and $b$ permutes the copies of $L$ and acts as a field automorphism of order 5 on each copy of Sz$(2^5)$.

To compute the 5-rank of $G$ we use Lemma 4.2:
\[ m_5(G) = m_5(Sz(2^5)^2 \rtimes (A \times B)) \]
\[ = m_5(A \times (Sz(2^5)^2 \rtimes B)) \]
\[ = m_5(A) + m_5(Sz(2^5)^2 \rtimes B) \]
\[ = 1 + 3 \]
\[ = 4. \]
Now the aim is to apply Corollary 3.3 on \( G \) by finding a 2-dimensional \( G \)-invariant homotopy equivalent subcomplex \( X \) of \( \mathcal{K}(S_5(G)) \).

Let \( H = (N \times Sz(2^5))^2 \times A = NA \times Sz(2^5)^2 \). Note that \( H \triangleleft G \) and \( m_5(H) = 3 \). Hence \( \mathcal{K}(A_5(H)) \) is 2-dimensional and \( G \)-invariant. We will show that \( A_5(H) \sim A_5(G) \) by applying Lemma 4.3.

Let \( E \in A_5(G) \) be such that \( E \cap H = 1 \). Then \( E \) is cyclic generated by an element \( e \) of order 5 and \( e = lsa^ib^j \) with \( l \in N, s \in Sz(2^5)^2, 0 \leq i \leq 5^n - 1, \) and \( j \in \{1, 2, 3, 4\} \). Thus \( E \) acts by field automorphisms on each copy of the Suzuki group and \( e \) is Inndiag\((Sz(2^5))\)-conjugate to the field automorphism induced by \( b^j \) on \( Sz(2^5) \) (see [8, Proposition 4.9.1] and Example 4.6). Hence, \( C_H(E) = C_{NA}(E) \times C_{Sz(2^5)}^2(E) \). Note that \( C_{Sz(2^5)}^2(E) \triangleleft C_H(E) \) and \( C_{Sz(2^5)}^2(E) \cong C_{Sz(2^5)}(E) \cong (C_5 \times C_4)^2 \) has a nontrivial normal 5-subgroup. Therefore, \( A_5(G) \sim A_5(H) \) by Lemma 4.3 and Quillen’s conjecture holds for \( G \) by Corollary 3.3 applied to the subcomplex \( \mathcal{K}(A_5(H)) \).

Note that \( O_{5'}(G) = N \) and \( C_G(O_{5'}(G)) = Sz(2^5)^2 \). On the other hand, \( O_5(G) = 1 \) and \( O_5(G/O_{5'}(G)) = A \neq 1 \).

We conclude with two examples of groups satisfying Quillen’s conjecture for \( p = 2 \). We say that a finite group \( G \) has the trivial intersection property at \( p \) if any two different Sylow \( p \)-subgroups of \( G \) have trivial intersection.

**Proposition 4.9.** Let \( L_1 \) and \( L_2 \) be two finite groups with the trivial intersection property at \( p \). Let \( L = L_1 \times L_2 \) and take an extension \( G \) of \( L \) such that \( |G : L| = p \). Then \( i(S_p(G)) \) and \( B_p(G) \) are at most 2-dimensional. If in addition the Sylow \( p \)-subgroups of \( L_1 \) and \( L_2 \) have abelian \( \Omega_1 \), then \( i(A_p(G)) \) is at most 2-dimensional.

**Proof:** The elements of \( i(S_p(L)) \) are of the form \( P_1 \times P_2, 1 \times P_2, \) or \( P_1 \times 1 \), where \( P_i \leq L_i \) are Sylow \( p \)-subgroups. Hence, \( i(S_p(L)) \) is 1-dimensional.

Now suppose that \( Q_0 < Q_1 < \cdots < Q_n \) is a chain in \( i(S_p(G)) \). Then

\[
Q_0 \cap L \leq Q_1 \cap L \leq \cdots \leq Q_n \cap L
\]

is a chain in \( i(S_p(L)) \). We claim that there is at most one index \( i \) such that \( Q_i \cap L = Q_{i+1} \cap L \). To see this note that

\[
|Q_j : Q_j \cap L| = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } Q_j \subseteq L, \\ p & \text{if } Q_j \nsubseteq L. \end{cases}
\]

We have \( |Q_{i+1} : Q_i| \cdot |Q_i : Q_i \cap L| = |Q_{i+1} : Q_{i+1} \cap L| \cdot |Q_{i+1} \cap L : Q_i \cap L| \).

Then, if \( Q_i \cap L = Q_{i+1} \cap L \), since \( |Q_{i+1} : Q_i| \geq p \), we must have \( |Q_i : Q_i \cap L| = 1 \) and \( |Q_{i+1} : Q_{i+1} \cap L| = p \). Then \( i = \max\{j : Q_j \subseteq L\} \).
From this we conclude that \( \dim i(S_p(G)) \leq 1 + \dim i(S_p(L)) = 2 \). It is well-known that \( B_p(G) \) is a subposet of \( i(S_p(G)) \) (i.e. every radical \( p \)-subgroup is an intersection of Sylow \( p \)-subgroups). Then \( B_p(G) \) is at most 2-dimensional also. The same proof can be easily adapted to prove that if the Sylow \( p \)-subgroups of \( L_1 \) and \( L_2 \) have abelian \( \Omega_1 \), \( i(A_p(G)) \) is at most 2-dimensional.

In the following examples we use the fact that the groups \( A_5 \) and \( U_3(2^2) \) have the trivial intersection property at 2 and that \( \Omega_1(P) \) is abelian for \( P \) a Sylow 2-subgroup of either \( A_5 \) or \( U_3(2^2) \).

**Example 4.10.** Let \( G \) be the group extension \((A_5 \times A_5) \rtimes C_2\), where the generator of \( C_2 \) acts on each coordinate as conjugation by the transposition \((1\ 2)\). Since \( m_2(A_5) = 2 = m_2(\text{Aut}(A_5)) \), by Lemma 4.2, \( G \) has 2-rank 4. By Proposition 4.9, \( i(A_2(G)), i(S_2(G)) \), and \( B_2(G) \) are 2-dimensional and then Quillen’s conjecture holds for \( G \) since Corollaries 3.5 and 3.6 apply.

**Example 4.11.** Let \( G = (U_3(2^2) \times A_5) \rtimes C_2 \) be the semidirect product constructed in the following way. Let \( H = U_3(2^2) \times A_5 \). Then \( \text{Out}(H) \cong \text{Aut}(U_3(2^2))/\text{Inn}(U_3(2^2)) \times \text{Aut}(A_5)/\text{Inn}(A_5) \cong C_4 \times C_2 \). Take \( t \in \text{Out}(H) \) to be the involution which acts nontrivially on both factors. Therefore, \( G = H \rtimes \langle t \rangle \). Since \( m_2(U_3(2^2)) = 2 = m_2(A_5) = m_2(\text{Aut}(A_5)) \) and \( m_2(\text{Aut}(U_3(2^2))) = 3 \), by Lemma 4.2, \( G \) has 2-rank 4. Just as before, Quillen’s conjecture holds for \( G \).

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