The $\ell^2$-cohomology of hyperplane complements

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Abstract

We compute the $\ell^2$-Betti numbers of the complement of a finite collection of affine hyperplanes in $\mathbb{C}^n$. At most one of the $\ell^2$-Betti numbers is non-zero.

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1 Introduction

Suppose $X$ is a finite CW complex with universal cover $\tilde{X}$. For each $p \geq 0$, one can associate to $X$ a Hilbert space, $\mathcal{H}^p(\tilde{X})$, the $p$-dimensional “reduced $\ell^2$-cohomology,” cf. [3]. Each $\mathcal{H}^p(\tilde{X})$ is a unitary $\pi_1(X)$-module. Using the $\pi_1(X)$-action, one can attach a nonnegative real number called “von Neumann dimension” to such a Hilbert space. The “dimension” of $\mathcal{H}^p(\tilde{X})$ is called the $p$th $\ell^2$-Betti number of $X$.

Here we are interested in the case where $X$ is the complement of a finite number of affine hyperplanes in $\mathbb{C}^n$. (Technically, in order to be in compliance with the first paragraph, we should replace the complement by a homotopy equivalent finite CW complex. However, to keep from pointlessly complicating the notation, we shall ignore this technicality.) Let $\mathcal{A}$ be the finite collection of hyperplanes, $\Sigma(\mathcal{A})$ their union and $M(\mathcal{A}) := \mathbb{C}^n - \Sigma(\mathcal{A})$.

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The rank of $A$ is the maximum codimension $l$ of any nonempty intersection of hyperplanes in $A$. It turns out that the ordinary (reduced) homology of $\Sigma(A)$ vanishes except in dimension $l - 1$ (cf. Proposition 2.1). Let $\beta(A)$ denote the rank of $\overline{H}_{l-1}(\Sigma(A))$. Our main result, proved as Theorem 6.2, is the following.

**Theorem A.** Suppose $A$ is an affine hyperplane arrangement of rank $l$. Only the $l$th $\ell^2$-Betti number of $M(A)$ can be nonzero and it is equal to $\beta(A)$.

This is reminiscent of a well-known result about the cohomology of $M(A)$ with coefficients in a generic flat line bundle ("generic" is defined in Section 5). This result is proved as Theorem 5.3. We state it below.

**Theorem B.** Suppose that $L$ is a generic flat line bundle over $M(A)$. Then $H^*(M(A); L)$ vanishes except in dimension $l$ and $\dim_\mathbb{C} H^l(M(A); L) = \beta(A)$.

Both theorems have similar proofs. In the case of Theorem A the basic fact is that the $\ell^2$-Betti numbers of $S^1$ vanish. (In other words, if the universal cover $R$ of $S^1$ is given its usual cell structure, then $H^*(R) = 0$.) Similarly, for Theorem B, if $L$ is a flat line bundle over $S^1$ corresponding to an element $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}^*$, with $\lambda \neq 1$, then $H^*(S^1; L) = 0$. By the Künneth Formula, there are similar vanishing results for any central arrangement. To prove the general results, one considers an open cover of $M(A)$ by "small" open sets each homeomorphic to the complement of a central arrangement. The $E_1$-page of the resulting Mayer-Vietoris spectral sequence is nonzero only along the bottom row, where it can be identified with the simplicial cochains with constant coefficients on a pair $(N(U), N(U_{\text{sing}}))$, which is homotopy equivalent to $(\mathbb{C}^n, \Sigma)$. It follows that the $E_2$-page can be nonzero only in position $(l, 0)$. (Actually, in the case of Theorem A, technical modifications must be made to the above argument. Instead of reduced $\ell^2$-cohomology one takes local coefficients in the von Neumann algebra associated to the fundamental group and the vanishing results only hold modulo modules which do not contribute to the $\ell^2$-Betti numbers.)

In [2] the first and third authors proved a similar result for the $\ell^2$-cohomology of the universal cover of the Salvetti complex associated to an arbitrary Artin group (as well as a formula for the cohomology of the Salvetti complex with generic, 1-dimensional local coefficients). This can be interpreted as a computation of the $\ell^2$-cohomology of universal covers of hyperplane complements associated to infinite reflection groups. Although the
main argument in [2] uses an explicit description of the chain complex of the Salvetti complex, an alternative argument, similar to the one outlined above, is given in [2, Section 10].

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2 Hyperplane arrangements

A hyperplane arrangement $\mathcal{A}$ is a finite collection of affine hyperplanes in $\mathbb{C}^n$. A subspace of $\mathcal{A}$ is a nonempty intersection of hyperplanes in $\mathcal{A}$. Denote by $L(\mathcal{A})$ the poset of subspaces, partially ordered by inclusion, and let $T(\mathcal{A}) := L(\mathcal{A}) \cup \{\mathbb{C}^n\}$. An arrangement is central if $L(\mathcal{A})$ has a minimum element. Given $G \in L(\mathcal{A})$, its rank, $rk(G)$, is the codimension of $G$ in $\mathbb{C}^n$. The minimal elements of $L(\mathcal{A})$ are a family of parallel subspaces and they all have the same rank. The rank of an arrangement $\mathcal{A}$ is the rank of a minimal element in $L(\mathcal{A})$. $\mathcal{A}$ is essential if $rk(\mathcal{A}) = n$.

The singular set $\Sigma(\mathcal{A})$ of the arrangement is the union of hyperplanes in $\mathcal{A}$ (so that $\Sigma(\mathcal{A})$ is a subset of $\mathbb{C}^n$). The complement of $\Sigma(\mathcal{A})$ in $\mathbb{C}^n$ is denoted $M(\mathcal{A})$. When there is no ambiguity we will drop the “$\mathcal{A}$” from our notation and write $L$, $\Sigma$ or $M$ instead of $L(\mathcal{A})$, $\Sigma(\mathcal{A})$ or $M(\mathcal{A})$.

**Proposition 2.1.** $\Sigma$ is homotopy equivalent to a wedge of $(l - 1)$-spheres, where $l = rk(\mathcal{A})$. (So, if $\mathcal{A}$ is essential, the spheres are $(n - 1)$-dimensional.)

**Proof.** The proof follows from the usual “deletion-restriction” argument and induction. If the rank $l$ is 1, then $\Sigma$ is the disjoint union of a finite family of parallel hyperplanes. Hence, $\Sigma$ is homotopy equivalent to a finite set of points, i.e., to a wedge of 0-spheres. Similarly, when $l = 2$, it is easy to see that $\Sigma$ is homotopy equivalent to a connected graph; hence, a wedge of 1-spheres. So, assume by induction that $l > 2$. Choose a hyperplane $H \in \mathcal{A}$, let $\mathcal{A}' = \mathcal{A} - \{H\}$ and let $\mathcal{A}''$ be the restriction of $\mathcal{A}$ to $H$ (i.e., $\mathcal{A}'' := \{H' \cap H \mid H' \in \mathcal{A}'\}$). Put $\Sigma' = \Sigma(\mathcal{A}')$, $\Sigma'' = \Sigma(\mathcal{A}'')$, $l' = rk(\mathcal{A}')$ and $l'' = rk(\mathcal{A}'')$. We can also assume by induction on Card($\mathcal{A}$) that $\Sigma'$ and $\Sigma''$ are homotopy equivalent to wedges of spheres. If $l' < n$ and $H$ is transverse to the minimal elements of $L(\mathcal{A}')$, then $l'' = l$, the arrangement splits as a product, $\Sigma = \Sigma'' \times \mathbb{C}$, and we are done by induction. In all other cases $l' = l$ and $l'' = l - 1$. We have $\Sigma = \Sigma' \cup H$ and $\Sigma' \cap H = \Sigma''$. $H$ is simply connected and since $l > 2$, $\Sigma'$ is simply connected and $\Sigma''$ is connected. By
van Kampen’s Theorem, \( \Sigma \) is simply connected. Consider the exact sequence of the pair \((\Sigma, \Sigma')\):

\[
\rightarrow H_*(\Sigma') \rightarrow H_*(\Sigma) \rightarrow H_*(\Sigma, \Sigma') \rightarrow .
\]

There is an excision isomorphism, \( H_*(\Sigma, \Sigma') \cong H_*(H, \Sigma'') \). Since \( H \) is contractible it follows that \( H_*(H, \Sigma'') \cong \mathcal{P}_{-1}^*(\Sigma'') \). By induction, \( \mathcal{P}_*(\Sigma') \) is concentrated in dimension \( l - 1 \) and \( \mathcal{P}_*(\Sigma'') \) in dimension \( l - 2 \). So, \( \mathcal{P}_*(\Sigma) \) is also concentrated in dimension \( l - 1 \). It follows that \( \Sigma \) is homotopy equivalent to a wedge of \( l - 1 \) spheres. \( \square \)

3 Certain covers and their nerves

Suppose \( \mathcal{U} = \{U_i\}_{i \in I} \) is a cover of some space \( X \) (where \( I \) is some index set). Given a subset \( \sigma \subset I \), put \( U_\sigma := \bigcap_{i \in \sigma} U_i \). Recall that the nerve of \( \mathcal{U} \) is the simplicial complex \( N(\mathcal{U}) \), defined as follows. Its vertex set is \( I \) and a finite, nonempty subset \( \sigma \subset I \) spans a simplex of \( N(\mathcal{U}) \) if and only if \( U_\sigma \) is nonempty.

We shall need to use the following well-known lemma several times in the sequel, see [4, Cor. 4G.3 and Ex. 4G(4)]

**Lemma 3.1.** Let \( \mathcal{U} \) be a cover of a paracompact space \( X \) and suppose that either (a) each \( U_i \) is open or (b) \( X \) is a CW complex and each \( U_i \) is a subcomplex. Further suppose that for each simplex \( \sigma \) of \( N(\mathcal{U}) \), \( U_\sigma \) is contractible. Then \( X \) and \( N(\mathcal{U}) \) are homotopy equivalent.

Suppose \( \mathcal{A} \) is a hyperplane arrangement in \( \mathbb{C}^n \). An open convex subset \( U \) in \( \mathbb{C}^n \) is small (with respect to \( \mathcal{A} \)) if the following two conditions hold:

(i) \( \{G \in \mathcal{T}(\mathcal{A}) \mid G \cap U \neq \emptyset\} \) has a unique minimum element \( \text{Min}(U) \).

(ii) A hyperplane \( H \in \mathcal{A} \) has nonempty intersection with \( U \) if and only if \( \text{Min}(U) \subset H \).

The intersection of two small convex open sets is also small; hence, the same is true for any finite intersection of such sets.

Now let \( \mathcal{U} = \{U_i\}_{i \in I} \) be an open cover of \( \mathbb{C}^n \) by small convex sets. Put

\[
\mathcal{U}_{\text{sing}} := \{U \in \mathcal{U} \mid U \cap \Sigma \neq \emptyset\}.
\]
Lemma 3.2. $N(U)$ is a contractible simplicial complex and $N(U_{\text{sing}})$ is a subcomplex homotopy equivalent to $\Sigma$. Moreover, $H_*(N(U), N(U_{\text{sing}}))$ is concentrated in dimension $l$, where $l = \text{rk}\, \mathcal{A}$.

Proof. $U_{\text{sing}}$ is an open cover of a neighborhood of $\Sigma$ which deformation retracts onto $\Sigma$. For each simplex $\sigma$ of $N(U)$, $U_{\sigma}$ is contractible (in fact, it is a small convex open set). By Lemma 3.1, $N(U)$ is homotopy equivalent to $C_n$ and $N(U_{\text{sing}})$ is homotopy equivalent to $\Sigma$. The last sentence of the lemma follows from Proposition 2.1. \qed

Remark 3.3. Lemma 3.1 can also be used to show that the geometric realization of $L$ is homotopy equivalent to $\Sigma$.

Definition 3.4. $\beta(\mathcal{A})$ is the rank of $H_l(N(U), N(U_{\text{sing}}))$.

Equivalently, $\beta(\mathcal{A})$ is the rank of $H_l(\mathbb{C}^n, \Sigma(\mathcal{A}))$ (or of $\overline{H}_{l-1}(\Sigma(\mathcal{A}))$). Also, it is not difficult to see that $(-1)^l \beta(\mathcal{A}) = \chi(\mathbb{C}^n, \Sigma) = 1 - \chi(\Sigma) = \chi(M)$, where $\chi(\cdot)$ denotes the Euler characteristic.

Remark 3.5. Suppose $\mathcal{A}_\mathbb{R}$ is an arrangement of real hyperplanes in $\mathbb{R}^n$ and $\Sigma_\mathbb{R} \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ is the singular set. Then $\mathbb{R}^n - \Sigma_\mathbb{R}$ is a union of open convex sets called chambers and $\beta(\mathcal{A}_\mathbb{R})$ is the number of bounded chambers. If $\mathcal{A}$ is the complexification of $\mathcal{A}_\mathbb{R}$, then $\Sigma(\mathcal{A}) \sim \Sigma(\mathcal{A}_\mathbb{R})$. Hence, $\beta(\mathcal{A}) = \beta(\mathcal{A}_\mathbb{R})$.

For any small open convex set $U$, put

$$\hat{U} := U - \Sigma(\mathcal{A}) = U \cap M(\mathcal{A}).$$

Since $U$ is convex, $(U, U \cap \Sigma(\mathcal{A}))$ is homeomorphic to $(\mathbb{C}^n, \Sigma(\mathcal{A}_G))$, where $G = \text{Min}(U)$ and $\mathcal{A}_G$ is the central subarrangement defined by

$$\mathcal{A}_G := \{ H \in \mathcal{A} \mid G \subset H \}.$$

($G$ might be $\mathbb{C}^n$, in which case $\mathcal{A}_G = \emptyset$.) Hence, $\hat{U}$ is homeomorphic to $M(\mathcal{A}_G)$, the complement of a central subarrangement.

The next lemma is well-known.

Lemma 3.6. Suppose $U$ is a small open convex set. Then $\pi_1(\hat{U})$ is a retract of $\pi_1(M(\mathcal{A}))$.

Proof. The composition of the two inclusions, $\hat{U} \hookrightarrow M(\mathcal{A}) \hookrightarrow M(\mathcal{A}_G)$ is a homotopy equivalence, where $G = \text{Min}(U) \in L(\mathcal{A})$. \qed
By intersecting the elements of $\mathcal{U}$ with $M (= \mathbb{C}^n - \Sigma)$ we get an induced cover $\widehat{\mathcal{U}}$ of $M$. An element of $\widehat{\mathcal{U}}$ is a deleted small convex open set $\widehat{U}$ for some $U \in \mathcal{U}$. Similarly, by intersecting $\mathcal{U}_{\text{sing}}$ with $M$ we get an induced cover $\widehat{\mathcal{U}}_{\text{sing}}$ of a deleted neighborhood of $\Sigma$. The key observation is the following.

**Observation 3.7.** $N(\widehat{\mathcal{U}}) = N(\mathcal{U})$ and $N(\widehat{\mathcal{U}}_{\text{sing}}) = N(\mathcal{U}_{\text{sing}})$.

### 4 The Mayer-Vietoris spectral sequence

Let $X$ be a space, $\pi = \pi_1(X)$ and $r : \widetilde{X} \to X$ the universal cover. Given a left $\pi$-module $A$, define

$$C^*(X; A) := \text{Hom}_\pi(C_*(\widetilde{X}), A),$$

the cochains with *local coefficients in* $A$. Taking cohomology gives $H^*(X; A)$.

Let $\mathcal{U}$ be an open cover of $X$ and $N = N(\mathcal{U})$ its nerve. Let $N^{(p)}$ denote the set of $p$-simplices in $N$. There is an induced cover $\widetilde{\mathcal{U}} := \{r^{-1}(U)\}_{U \in \mathcal{U}}$ with the same nerve. There is a Mayer-Vietoris double complex

$$C_{p,q} = \bigoplus_{\sigma \in N^{(p)}} C_q(r^{-1}(U_\sigma))$$

(cf. [1, §VII.4]) and a corresponding double cochain complex with local coefficients:

$$C^{p,q}(A) := \text{Hom}_\pi(C_{p,q}; A).$$

The cohomology of the total complex is $H^*(X; A)$. Now suppose that for each simplex $\sigma$ of $N$, $U_\sigma$ is connected and that $\pi_1(U_\sigma) \to \pi_1(X)$ is injective. (This implies that $r^{-1}(U_\sigma)$ is a disjoint union of copies of the universal cover $\widetilde{U}_\sigma$.) We get a spectral sequence with $E_1$-page

$$E_1^{p,q} = \bigoplus_{\sigma \in N^{(p)}} H^q(U_\sigma; A). \quad (1)$$

Here $H^q(U_\sigma; A)$ means the cohomology of $\text{Hom}_\pi(C_*(r^{-1}(U_\sigma)), A)$ or equivalently, of $\text{Hom}_{\pi_1(U_\sigma)}(C_*(\widetilde{U}_\sigma); A)$. The $E_2$-page has the form $E_2^{p,q} = H^p(N; \mathcal{F}^q)$, where $\mathcal{F}^q$ means the functor $\sigma \to H^q(U_\sigma; A)$. The spectral sequence converges to $H^*(X; A)$.

In the next two sections we will apply this spectral sequence to the case where $X$ is $M(A)$ and the open cover is $\widehat{\mathcal{U}}$ from the previous section. By
Lemma 3.6. \( \pi_1(\hat{U}_\sigma) \rightarrow \pi_1(M(\mathcal{A})) \) is injective so we get a spectral sequence with \( E_1 \)-page given by (1). Moreover, the \( \pi \)-module \( A \) will be such that for any simplex \( \sigma \) in \( N(\hat{U}_{\text{sing}}) \), \( H^q(\hat{U}_\sigma; A) = 0 \) for all \( q \) (even for \( q = 0 \)) while for a simplex \( \sigma \) of \( N(\hat{U}) \) which is not in \( N(\hat{U}_{\text{sing}}) \), \( H^q(\hat{U}_\sigma; A) = 0 \) for all \( q > 0 \) and \( H^q_1 \) can be identified with the cochain complex \( C^*(N(\hat{U}), N(\hat{U}_{\text{sing}})) \) with constant coefficients.

5. Generic coefficients

Here we will deal with 1-dimensional local coefficient systems. We begin by considering such local coefficients on \( S^1 \). Let \( \alpha \) be a generator of the infinite cyclic group \( \pi_1(S^1) \). Suppose \( k \) is a field of characteristic 0 and \( \lambda \in k^\ast \). Let \( A_{\lambda} \) be the \( k[\pi_1(S^1)] \)-module which is a 1-dimensional \( k \)-vector space on which \( \alpha \) acts by multiplication by \( \lambda \).

Lemma 5.1. If \( \lambda \neq 1 \), then \( H^*(S^1; A_{\lambda}) \) vanishes identically.

Proof. If \( S^1 \) has its usual CW structure with one 0-cell and one 1-cell, then in the chain complex for its universal cover both \( C_0 \) and \( C_1 \) are identified with the group ring \( k[\pi_1(S^1)] \) and the boundary map with multiplication by \( 1 - t \), where \( t \) is the generator of \( \pi_1(S^1) \). Hence, the coboundary map \( C^0(S^1; A_{\lambda}) \rightarrow C^1(S^1; A_{\lambda}) \) is multiplication by \( 1 - \lambda \).

Next, consider \( M(\mathcal{A}) \). Its fundamental group \( \pi \) is generated by loops \( a_H \) for \( H \in \mathcal{A} \), where the loop \( a_H \) goes once around the hyperplane \( H \) in the “positive” direction. Let \( \alpha_H \) denote the image of \( a_H \) in \( H_1(M(\mathcal{A})) \). Then \( H_1(M(\mathcal{A})) \) is free abelian with basis \( \{\alpha_H\}_{H \in \mathcal{A}} \). So, a homomorphism \( H_1(M(\mathcal{A})) \rightarrow k^\ast \) is determined by an \( \mathcal{A} \)-tuple \( \Lambda \in (k^\ast)^\mathcal{A} \), where \( \Lambda = (\lambda_H)_{H \in \mathcal{A}} \) corresponds to the homomorphism sending \( \alpha_H \) to \( \lambda_H \). Let \( \psi_\Lambda : \pi \rightarrow k^\ast \) be the composition of this homomorphism with the abelianization map \( \pi \rightarrow H_1(M(\mathcal{A})) \). The resulting local coefficient system on \( M(\mathcal{A}) \) is denoted \( A_{\Lambda} \). The next lemma follows from Lemma 5.1.

Lemma 5.2. Suppose \( \mathcal{A} \) is a nonempty central arrangement and \( \Lambda \) is such that \( \prod_{H \in \mathcal{A}} \lambda_H \neq 1 \). Then \( H^q(M(\mathcal{A})) \) vanishes for all \( q \).

Proof. Without loss of generality we can suppose the elements of \( \mathcal{A} \) are linear hyperplanes. The Hopf bundle \( M(\mathcal{A}) \rightarrow M(\mathcal{A})/S^1 \) is trivial (cf. [6], Prop.
5.1, p. 158); so, $M(\mathcal{A}) \cong B \times S^1$, where $B = M(\mathcal{A})/S^1$. Let $i : S^1 \to M(\mathcal{A})$ be inclusion of the fiber. The induced map on $H_1(\cdot)$ sends $\alpha$ to $\sum \alpha_H$. Thus, if we pull back $A_\Lambda$ to $S^1$, we get $A_\lambda$, where $\lambda = \prod_{H \in \mathcal{A}} \lambda_H$. The condition on $\Lambda$ is $\lambda \neq 1$, which by Lemma 5.1 implies that $H^*(S^1; A_\lambda)$ vanishes identically. By the Künneth Formula $H^*(M(\mathcal{A}); A_\Lambda)$ also vanishes identically.

Returning to the case where $\mathcal{A}$ is a general arrangement, for each simplex $\sigma$ in $N(\hat{U})$, let $A_\sigma := A_{\text{Min}(U_\sigma)}$ be the corresponding central arrangement (so that $\hat{U}_\sigma \cong M(A_\sigma)$). Given $\Lambda \in (k^*)^A$, put

$$\lambda_\sigma := \prod_{H \in A_\sigma} \lambda_H.$$ 

Call $\Lambda$ generic if $\lambda_\sigma \neq 1$ for all $\sigma \in N(U_{\text{sing}})$.

**Theorem 5.3.** (Compare [7, Thm. 4.6, p. 160]). Let $\mathcal{A}$ be an affine arrangement of rank $l$ and $\Lambda$ a generic $\mathcal{A}$-tuple in $k^*$. Then $H^*(M(\mathcal{A}); A_\Lambda)$ is concentrated in degree $l$ and

$$\dim_k H^l(M(\mathcal{A}); A_\Lambda) = \beta(\mathcal{A}).$$

**Proof.** We have an open cover of $\widetilde{M}(\mathcal{A}), \{r^{-1}U\}_{U \in \mathcal{U}}$. By Observation 3.7, its nerve is $N(\mathcal{U})$. By Lemma 5.2 and the last paragraph of Section 4, the $E_1$-page of the Mayer-Vietoris spectral sequence is concentrated along the bottom row where it can be identified with $C^*(N(\mathcal{U}), N(U_{\text{sing}}); k)$. So, the $E_2$-page is concentrated on the bottom row and $E_2^{p,0} = H^p(N(\mathcal{U}), N(U_{\text{sing}}); k)$. By Lemma 3.2 this group is nonzero only for $p = l$ and

$$\dim_k E_2^{l,0} = \dim_k H^l(N(\mathcal{U}), N(U_{\text{sing}}); k) = \beta(\mathcal{A}).$$

**Remark 5.4.** When $k = \mathbb{C}$, a 1-dimensional local coefficient system on $X$ is the same thing as a flat line bundle over $X$.

**6 \ $\ell^2$-cohomology**

For a discrete group $\pi$, $\ell^2 \pi$ denotes the Hilbert space of complex-valued, square integrable functions on $\pi$. There are unitary $\pi$-actions on $\ell^2 \pi$ by
either left or right multiplication; hence, \( \mathbb{C}\pi \) acts either from the left or right as an algebra of operators. The associated von Neumann algebra \( \mathcal{N}\pi \) is the commutant of \( \mathbb{C}\pi \) (acting from, say, the right on \( \ell^2\pi \)).

Given a finite CW complex \( X \) with fundamental group \( \pi \), the space of \( \ell^2 \)-cochains on its universal cover \( \tilde{X} \) is the same as \( C^*(X;\ell^2\pi) \), the cochains with local coefficients in \( \ell^2\pi \). The image of the coboundary map need not be closed; hence, \( H^*(X;\ell^2\pi) \) need not be a Hilbert space. To remedy this, one defines the reduced \( \ell^2 \)-cohomology \( H^*(\tilde{X}) \) to be the quotient of the space of cocycles by the closure of the space of coboundaries. We shall also use the notation \( H^*(X;\ell^2\pi) \) for the same space.

The von Neumann algebra admits a trace. Using this, one can attach a “dimension,” \( \dim_{\mathcal{N}\pi} V \), to any closed, \( \pi \)-stable subspace \( V \) of a finite direct sum of copies of \( \ell^2\pi \) (it is the trace of orthogonal projection onto \( V \)). The nonnegative real number \( \dim_{\mathcal{N}\pi}(H^p(X;\ell^2\pi)) \) is the \( p \)th \( \ell^2 \)-Betti number of \( X \).

A technical advance of Lück [5, Ch. 6] is the use local coefficients in \( \mathcal{N}\pi \) in place of the previous version of \( \ell^2 \)-cohomology. He shows there is a well-defined dimension function on \( \mathcal{N}\pi \)-modules, \( A \rightarrow \dim_{\mathcal{N}\pi} A \), which gives the same gives the same answer for \( \ell^2 \)-Betti numbers, i.e., for each \( p \) one has that \( \dim_{\mathcal{N}\pi} H^p(X;\mathcal{N}\pi) = \dim_{\mathcal{N}\pi} H^p(X;\ell^2\pi) \). Let \( \mathcal{T} \) be the class of \( \mathcal{N}\pi \)-modules of dimension 0. The dimension function is additive with respect to short exact sequences. This allows one to define \( \ell^2 \)-Betti numbers for spaces more general than finite complexes. The class \( \mathcal{T} \) is a Serre class of \( \mathcal{N}\pi \)-modules [8], which allows one to compute \( \ell^2 \)-Betti numbers by working with spectral sequences modulo \( \mathcal{T} \).

**Lemma 6.1.** Suppose \( A \) is a nonempty central arrangement. Then, for all \( q \geq 0 \), \( H^q(M(A);\mathcal{N}\pi) \) lies in \( \mathcal{T} \). In other words, all \( \ell^2 \)-Betti numbers of \( M(A) \) are zero.

**Proof.** The proof is along the same line as that of Lemma 5.2. It is well-known that the reduced \( \ell^2 \)-cohomology of \( \mathbb{R} \) vanishes. Since \( M(A) = S^1 \times B \), the result follows from the Künneth Formula for \( \ell^2 \)-cohomology in [5, 6.54 (5)].

**Theorem 6.2.** Suppose \( A \) is an affine hyperplane arrangement. Then
\[
H^*(M(A);\mathcal{N}\pi) \cong H^*(N(U),N(U_{\text{sing}})) \otimes \mathcal{N}\pi \quad (\text{mod } \mathcal{T})
\]
Hence, for \( l = \text{rk}(A) \), the \( \ell^2 \)-Betti numbers of \( M(A) \) vanish except in dimension \( l \), where \( \dim_{\mathcal{N}\pi} \mathcal{H}^l(M(A)) = \beta(A) \).
Proof. For each $\sigma \in \mathcal{N}(\mathcal{U}_{\text{sing}})$, let $\pi_\sigma := \pi_1(U_{\sigma})$. By Lemma 6.1,

$$\dim_{\mathcal{N}_\pi} H^*(M(\mathcal{A}_\sigma); \mathcal{N}_{\pi_\sigma}) = 0.$$ 

Since the $\mathcal{N}_\pi$-module $H^*(M(\mathcal{A}_\sigma), \mathcal{N}_\pi)$ is induced from $H^*(M(\mathcal{A}_\sigma), \mathcal{N}_\pi)$,

$$\dim_{\mathcal{N}_\pi} H^*(M(\mathcal{A}_\sigma); \mathcal{N}_\pi) = \dim_{\mathcal{N}_\pi} H^*(M(\mathcal{A}_\sigma); \mathcal{N}_{\pi_\sigma}) = 0.$$ 

As in the proof of Theorem 5.3, it follows that the $E_1$-page of the spectral sequence consists of modules in $\mathcal{T}$, except that $E_1^{*,0}$ is identified with $C^*(\mathcal{N}(\mathcal{U}), \mathcal{N}(\mathcal{U}_{\text{sing}})) \otimes \mathcal{N}(\pi)$. Similarly, the $E_2$-page consists of modules in $\mathcal{T}$, except that $E_2^{*,0}$ is identified with $H^*(\mathcal{N}(\mathcal{U}), \mathcal{N}(\mathcal{U}_{\text{sing}})) \otimes \mathcal{N}_\pi$. For each subsequent differential, either the source or the target is a module in $\mathcal{T}$, and hence for each $i$ and $j$ one has that $E_\infty^{i,j} \cong E_2^{i,j}$ (mod $\mathcal{T}$). The claim follows since the filtration of $H^*(M(\mathcal{A}); \mathcal{N}_\pi)$ given by the $E_\infty$-page of the spectral sequence is finite. \hfill \qed

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