MASSEY PRODUCTS IN GALOIS COHOMOLOGY AND THE ELEMENTARY TYPE CONJECTURE

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Abstract. Let $p$ be a prime. We prove that a positive solution to Efrat’s Elementary Type Conjecture implies a positive solution to a strengthened version of Minač–Tân’s Massey Vanishing Conjecture in the case of finitely generated maximal pro-$p$ Galois groups whose pro-$p$ cyclotomic character has torsion-free image. Consequently, the maximal pro-$p$ Galois group of a field $K$ containing a root of 1 of order $p$ (and also $\sqrt{-1}$ if $p = 2$) satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$ (which is equivalent to the cup-defining $n$-Massey product property for every $n > 2$, as defined by Minač–Tân) in several relevant cases.

1. Introduction

Throughout the paper, $p$ will denote a prime number. Given a field $K$, let $\bar{K}$ denote a separable closure of $K$, and let $K(p)$ denote the maximal pro-$p$-extension of $K$ inside $\bar{K}$. The absolute Galois group $G_K = \text{Gal}(\bar{K}/K)$ is a profinite group, and the Galois group $G_K(p) := \text{Gal}(\bar{K}(p)/K) = \lim_{\leftarrow} \text{Gal}(L/K)$, called the maximal pro-$p$ Galois group of $K$, is the maximal pro-$p$ quotient of $G_K$. A major difficult problem in Galois theory is the characterization of profinite groups which occur as absolute Galois groups of fields, and of pro-$p$ groups which occur as maximal pro-$p$ Galois groups (see, e.g., [21, §3.12] and [40, §2.2]). Observe that if a pro-$p$ group $G$ does not occur as the maximal pro-$p$ Galois group of a field containing a root of 1 of order $p$, then it does not occur as the absolute Galois group of any field.

In the ’90s, I. Efrat formulated a conjecture — the Elementary Type Conjecture on maximal pro-$p$ Galois groups, see [7] — which proposes a description of finitely generated pro-$p$ groups which occur as maximal pro-$p$ Galois groups containing a root of 1 of order $p$: it predicts that if $K$ is a field containing a root of 1 of order $p$ with $G_K(p)$ finitely generated, then $G_K(p)$ may be constructed starting from free pro-$p$ groups and Demushkin pro-$p$ groups and iterating free pro-$p$ products and certain semidirect products with $\mathbb{Z}_p$ (see also [32, §10] and [19, §7.5]). The pro-$p$ groups which are constructible in this way are called pro-$p$ groups of elementary type (see Definition 3.4 below). The Elementary Type Conjecture is verified, for example, if $K$ is an extension of relative transcendence degree 1 of a pseudo algebraically closed field (see [19, Ch. 11] and [12, §5]); or if $K$ is an algebraic extension of a global field of characteristic not
p (see [8]). Moreover, in [54] I. Snopce and P.A. Zalesski˘ı provided new evidence in support of the Elementary Type Conjecture, as they proved that within the family of right-angled Artin pro-p groups — which is an extremely rich family of pro-p groups —, the only members which occur as maximal pro-p Galois groups (and thus as absolute Galois groups) are of elementary type.

The proof of the celebrated Bloch-Kato conjecture — now called Norm Residue Theorem — by M. Rost and V. Voevodsky, with the so-called “Weibel’s patch” (see [24, 51, 55, 59]) provided new insights in the study of maximal pro-p Galois groups and absolute Galois groups of fields (see, e.g., [3, 16, 39] and references therein). Indeed, the Norm Residue Theorem implies that the ring structure of the $\mathbb{F}_p$-cohomology algebra

$$H^\ast(G_K(p)) = \prod_{n \geq 0} H^n(G_K(p), \mathbb{F}_p)$$

of a field $K$ containing a root of 1 of order $p$, endowed with the graded-commutative cup-product

$$\alpha \smile \beta : H^s(G, \mathbb{F}_p) \times H^t(G, \mathbb{F}_p) \to H^{s+t}(G, \mathbb{F}_p), \quad s, t \geq 0,$$

is determined by degrees 1 and 2 (see, e.g., [48, §1]) — observe that this is true also for every closed subgroup of $G_K(p)$, as every closed group is again a maximal pro-p Galois group. It is worth underlining that all pro-p groups of elementary type satisfy hereditarily this cohomological condition (i.e., the ring structure of the $\mathbb{F}_p$-cohomology algebra of every closed subgroup is determined by degrees 1 and 2, see [49, Thm. 1.4]); on the other hand, it is remarkable that we do not know examples of finitely generated pro-p groups satisfying hereditarily this cohomological condition other than pro-p groups of elementary type.

In recent years — especially after the publication of the work of M. Hopkins and K. Wickelgren [26] —, much of the research on absolute Galois groups and maximal pro-p Galois groups focused on the study of Massey products in Galois cohomology (see, e.g., [13, 44, 56] and references therein). Given a pro-p group $G$ and an integer $n \geq 2$, the $n$-fold Massey product is a multi-valued map which associates a sequence $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$ of elements of $H^1(G, \mathbb{Z}/p)$ to a (possibly empty) subset

$$\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \subseteq H^2(G, \mathbb{F}_p).$$

If $n = 2$ it coincides with the cup-product, namely, $\langle \alpha_1, \alpha_2 \rangle = \{ \alpha_1 \smile \alpha_2 \}$. For $n > 2$, a pro-p group $G$ is said to satisfy the $n$-Massey vanishing property if the set $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ contains 0 whenever it is non-empty. In [41], J. Minač and N.D. Tǎn conjectured the following.

**Conjecture 1.1.** Let $K$ be a field containing a root of 1 of order $p$. Then the maximal pro-p Galois group $G_K(p)$ of $K$ satisfies the $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$.

One has the following partial — but very remarkable — results:

(a) E. Matzri proved that the maximal pro-p Galois group of every field containing a root of 1 of order $p$ satisfies the 3-Massey vanishing property (see the preprint [33], see also the published works [15, 32]);

(b) J. Minač and N.D. Tǎn proved Conjecture 1.1 for local fields (see [44]);

(c) Y. Harpaz and O. Wittenberg proved Conjecture 1.1 for number fields (see [25]);
A. Merkurjev and F. Scavia proved that the maximal pro-2 Galois group of every field satisfies the 4-Massey vanishing property (see [37]).

A. Pál and G. Quick proved a strengthened version of Conjecture 1.1 in case $p = 2$ for fields with virtual cohomological dimension at most 1 (see [46]).

Further interesting results on Massey products in Galois cohomology have been obtained by various authors (see, e.g., [20, 22, 23, 31, 34, 35, 38, 60]).

The purpose of the present work is to prove a strengthened version of Conjecture 1.1 for fields whose maximal pro-$p$ Galois group is of elementary type.

Given a pro-$p$ group $G$ and a positive integer $n > 2$, if the set $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$, associated to a sequence $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$ of elements of $H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$, is non-empty, then necessarily

\begin{equation}
\alpha_1 \bowtie \alpha_2 = \alpha_2 \bowtie \alpha_3 = \ldots = \alpha_{n-1} \bowtie \alpha_n = 0
\end{equation}

— we underline that the triviality condition (1.1) is also sufficient to imply the non-emptiness of $\langle \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3 \rangle$, in the case $n = 3$. A pro-$p$ group $G$ is said to satisfy the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property, for $n > 2$, if every sequence $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$ of elements of $H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$ satisfying condition (1.1) yields an $n$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ containing 0 (see [47, Def. 1.2]). The strong $n$-Massey vanishing property is stronger than the $n$-Massey vanishing property; observe that, since the two properties coincide for $n = 3$, E. Matzri’s result implies that the maximal pro-$p$ Galois group of a field containing a root of 1 of order $p$ satisfies, “for free”, also the strong 3-Massey vanishing property.

By construction, a pro-$p$ group of elementary type $G$ comes endowed with an orientation, namely, a homomorphism of pro-$p$ groups $G \to 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$, where $1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$ denotes the multiplicative group of principal units of $\mathbb{Z}_p$ (we give a brief review of orientations of pro-$p$ groups in §3.1). Our main result is the following.

**Theorem 1.2.** Let $G$ be a pro-$p$ group of elementary type. If $p = 2$ assume further that the image of the orientation associated to $G$ is a subgroup of $1 + 4\mathbb{Z}_2$. Then $G$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$.

To prove Theorem 1.2, we exploit a result — whose original formulation, for discrete groups, is due to W. Dwyer, see [6] — which interprets the vanishing of Massey products in the $\mathbb{F}_p$-cohomology of a pro-$p$ group $G$ in terms of the existence of certain upper unitriangular representations of $G$. Moreover, we use the Kummerian property — a formal version of Hilbert 90, introduced in [17] —, which guarantees the vanishing of “cyclic” Massey products (see Theorem 3.10), and which is enjoyed both by pro-$p$ groups of elementary type and maximal pro-$p$ Galois groups of fields containing a root of 1 of order $p$ (we give a brief review of the Kummerian property in §3.3).

Let $K$ be a field containing a root of 1 of order $p$. It has been shown that $G_K(p)$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$, if $p$ is odd and $K$ is $p$-rigid, by J. Minač and N.D. Tăń (see [41, Thm. 8.5]); and if $K$ has virtual cohomological dimension at most 1 or it is pseudo $p$-adically closed, by A. Pál and E. Szabó (see [17]). As a consequence of Theorem 1.2 we obtain the following.

**Corollary 1.3.** Let $K$ be a field containing a root of 1 of order $p$, such that the quotient $K^\times /([K^\times]^p)$ is finite. If $p = 2$ suppose further that $\sqrt{-1} \in K$. Then $G_K(p)$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$ in the following cases:
(a) \( K \) is a local field, or an extension of transcendence degree 1 of a local field;
(b) \( K \) is a PAC field, or an extension of relative transcendence degree 1 of a PAC field;
(c) \( K \) is \( p \)-rigid (for the definition of \( p \)-rigid fields see [58, p. 722]);
(d) \( K \) is an algebraic extension of a global field of characteristic not \( p \);
(e) \( K \) is a valued \( p \)-Henselian field with residue field \( \kappa \), and \( G_\kappa(p) \) satisfies the strong \( n \)-Massey vanishing property for every \( n > 2 \).

In [43, Question 4.2], J. Minač and N.D. Tăn asked the following.

**Question 1.4.** Let \( p \) be a prime, and let \( K \) be a field containing a root of 1 of order \( p \). Does the maximal pro-\( p \) Galois group \( G_K(p) \) of \( K \) satisfy the strong \( n \)-Massey vanishing property for every \( n > 2 \)?

The original formulation of [43, Question 4.2] involves the *cup-defining \( n \)-fold Massey product property*, which is equivalent to the strong \( n \)-Massey vanishing property, if required for all \( n \geq 3 \) — see [43, Rem. 4.6] and Remark 2.5 below. Question 1.4 has a negative answer in case \( p = 2 \). Indeed, in [22, Example A.15], O. Wittenberg produced an example (suggested by Y. Harpaz) of a number field \( K \) not containing \( \sqrt{-1} \) whose maximal pro-2 Galois group \( G_K(2) \) does not satisfy the strong 4-Massey vanishing property. Moreover, recently A. Merkurjev and F. Scavia showed that every field \( K \) has an extension \( L \) whose maximal pro-2 Galois group \( G_L(2) \) does not satisfy the strong 4-Massey vanishing property (cf. [36, Thm. 6.3]).

Wittenberg’s example and Merkurjev-Scavia’s result involve pro-2 groups that are not finitely generated. Thus, we ask whether Question 1.4 may have a positive answer under the further conditions that the maximal pro-\( p \) Galois group is *finitely generated*, and \( \sqrt{-1} \in K \) if \( p = 2 \).

**Question 1.5.** Let \( K \) be a field containing a root of 1 of order \( p \), such that the quotient \( K^\times/(K^\times)^p \) is finite. If \( p = 2 \) suppose further that \( \sqrt{-1} \in K \). Does the maximal pro-\( p \) Galois group \( G_K(p) \) of \( K \) satisfy the strong \( n \)-Massey vanishing property for every \( n > 2 \)?

By Theorem 1.2, a positive solution of the Elementary Type Conjecture would yield a positive answer to Question 1.5.

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### 2. Massey products and pro-\( p \) groups

Let \( G \) be a pro-\( p \) group, and let \( \mathbb{F}_p \) be the finite field with \( p \) elements, considered as a trivial \( G \)-module. For basic notions on pro-\( p \) groups and their \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-cohomology, we refer \cite[Ch. I, § 4]{53} and \cite[Ch. I, and Ch. III § 3]{45}.

Given a pro-\( p \) group \( G \), and two subsets \( S_1, S_2 \) of \( H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p) \), we set
\[
S_1 \rightsquigarrow S_2 = \{ \alpha_1 \rightsquigarrow \alpha_2 \mid \alpha_1 \in S_1, \alpha_2 \in S_2 \}.
\]
2.1. Massey products in Galois cohomology. Here we give a brief review on Massey products in the Galois cohomology of pro-$p$ groups. Throughout the paper, we will be merely concerned with Massey products of elements in the first cohomology group $H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$, whose definition will be recalled here below. Our main references are [44] and [50] — for a general definition of Massey products on the level of cochains the reader may consult [6][29].

For $n \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ let $\mathcal{C}^n$ denote the $\mathbb{F}_p$-vector spaces of continuous maps

$$c: \underbrace{G \times \cdots \times G}_{n \text{ times}} \to \mathbb{F}_p$$

($G \times \cdots \times G$ is to be intended as the cartesian product of topological spaces). These vector spaces come equipped with homomorphisms $\partial^n: \mathcal{C}^n \to \mathcal{C}^{n+1}$, $n = 1, 2$, defined by

$$\partial^1(c)(g_1, g_2) = c(g_1) - c(g_1g_2) + c(g_2),$$
$$\partial^2(c')(g_1, g_2, g_3) = c'(g_1, g_2) - c'(g_1, g_2g_3) + c'(g_1g_2, g_3) - c'(g_2, g_3),$$

for every $c \in \mathcal{C}^1$, $c' \in \mathcal{C}^2$, and $g_1, g_2, g_3 \in G$. We recall that

\begin{equation}
H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p) = \text{Ker}(\partial^1) = \text{Hom}(G, \mathbb{F}_p)
\end{equation}

— where the latter is the group of homomorphisms of pro-$p$ groups $G \to \mathbb{F}_p$, with $\mathbb{F}_p$ considered as a cyclic group of order $p$ —, while

\begin{equation}
H^2(G, \mathbb{F}_p) = \text{Ker}(\partial^2) / \text{Im}(\partial^1).
\end{equation}

For $c, c' \in \mathcal{C}^1$, one defines $c \cdot c' \in \mathcal{C}^2$ by $(c \cdot c')(g_1, g_2) = c(g_1) \cdot c'(g_2)$ for every $g_1, g_2 \in G$. Then $\partial^2(c \cdot c') = \partial^1(c) \cdot c' - c \cdot \partial^1(c')$ (cf. [45] Prop. 1.4.1)). Consequently, for $\alpha, \alpha' \in H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$ one has $\alpha \cdot \alpha' \in \text{Ker}(\partial^2)$, so that one defines the cup-product $\alpha \smile \alpha'$ of $\alpha$ and $\alpha'$ to be the class of $\alpha \cdot \alpha'$ in $H^2(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$.

Remark 2.1. For every $\alpha, \alpha' \in H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$, one has $\alpha \smile \alpha = -\alpha \smile \alpha'$ (cf. [45] Prop. 1.4.4]). In particular, if $p \neq 2$ then $\alpha \smile \alpha = 0$.

For $n \geq 2$ let $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$ be a sequence of elements of $H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$. A collection $\mathfrak{c} = (c_{ij})$, $1 \leq i \leq j \leq n$, of elements of $\mathcal{C}^1$ is called a defining set for the $n$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ if the following conditions hold:

(a) $c_{ii} = \alpha_i$ for every $i = 1, \ldots, n$;
(b) for every couple $(i, j)$ such that $1 \leq i < j \leq n$ and $(i, j) \neq (1, n)$, one has

\begin{equation}
\partial^1(c_{ij}) = \sum_{h=1}^{j-1} c_{i,h} \cdot c_{h+1,j}.
\end{equation}

Then $\sum_{h=1}^{n-1} c_{1,h} \cdot c_{h+1,n}$ lies in $\text{Ker}(\partial^2)$, and its class in $H^2(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$ is called the value of $\mathfrak{c}$. The $n$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ is the subset of $H^2(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$ consisting of the values of all its defining sets. Observe that if $n = 2$, then

\begin{equation}
\langle \alpha_1, \alpha_2 \rangle = \{ \alpha_1 \cdot \alpha_2 + \text{Im}(\partial^1) \} = \{ \alpha_1 \smile \alpha_2 \}.
\end{equation}

Remark 2.2. Let $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$ be a sequence of elements of $H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$, $n > 2$. By (2.3), the existence of a defining set for the $n$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ implies that $\alpha_i \cdot \alpha_{i+1} \in \text{Im}(\partial^1)$ for every $i = 1, \ldots, n - 1$, i.e., $\alpha_i \smile \alpha_{i+1} = 0$. 
Moreover, if \( n = 3 \) this condition is also sufficient for the existence of a defining set
\( c = (c_{ij}) \) for the 3-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3 \rangle \): indeed, if \( \alpha_1 \circ \alpha_2 = \alpha_2 \circ \alpha_3 = 0 \)
then there exist \( c_{1,2}, c_{2,3} \in \mathbb{F}^1 \) such that \( \partial^1(c_{1,2}) = \alpha_1 \cdot \alpha_2 \) and \( \partial^1(c_{2,3}) = \alpha_2 \cdot \alpha_3 \), and thus \( \langle \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3 \rangle \neq \emptyset \).

**Definition 2.3.** Let \( G \) be a pro-\( p \) group, let \( n \) be a positive integer, \( n \geq 2 \), and let
\( \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \) be a sequence of elements of \( H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p) \).

(a) The \( n \)-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \) is said to be defined if it is non-empty — i.e., if there exists at least one defining set.

(b) The \( n \)-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \) is said to vanish if \( 0 \in \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \).

**Definition 2.4.** Let \( G \) be a pro-\( p \) group, and let \( n \) be a positive integer, \( n \geq 2 \).

(a) The group \( G \) is said to satisfy the cup-defining \( n \)-fold Massey property (with respect to \( \mathbb{F}_p \)) if every \( n \)-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \) in the \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-cohomology of \( G \) is defined whenever
\[
\alpha_i \circ \alpha_{i+1} = 0 \quad \text{for every} \; i = 1, \ldots, n-1.
\]

(b) The group \( G \) is said to satisfy the \( n \)-Massey vanishing property (with respect to \( \mathbb{F}_p \)) if every defined \( n \)-fold Massey product in the \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-cohomology of \( G \) vanishes.

(c) The group \( G \) is said to satisfy the strong \( n \)-Massey vanishing property (with respect to \( \mathbb{F}_p \)) if it satisfies both the cup-defining \( n \)-fold Massey property and the \( n \)-fold Massey vanishing property; namely, the \( n \)-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \) vanishes whenever condition (2.5) is satisfied.

**Remark 2.5.** If a pro-\( p \) group \( G \) has the cup-defining \( n \)-fold Massey property, with \( n \geq 4 \), then \( G \) has the vanishing \( (n-1) \)-fold Massey vanishing property, as observed in [13] Rem. 4.6]. Therefore, \( G \) has the strong \( n \)-fold Massey vanishing property for every \( n \geq 3 \) if, and only if, it has the cup-defining \( n \)-fold Massey product property for every \( n \geq 3 \). In particular, [13] Question 4.2 is equivalent to Question 1.4.

Massey products in the \( \mathbb{F}_p \)-cohomology of pro-\( p \) groups enjoy the following properties (cf., e.g., [56] Prop. 1.2.3–1.2.4 and [44] Rem. 2.2).

**Proposition 2.6.** Let \( G \) be a pro-\( p \) group and let \( \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \) be a sequence of elements of
\( H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p) \), with \( n \geq 2 \). Suppose that the \( n \)-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \) is defined.

(i) If \( \alpha_i = 0 \) for some \( i \), then the \( n \)-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \) vanishes.

(ii) If the \( n \)-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \) is defined, then for every \( a \in \mathbb{F}_p \) and \( i \in \{1, \ldots, n\} \) one has
\[
\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, a\alpha_i, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \supseteq \{ a\beta \mid \beta \in \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \}.
\]

(iii) If the set \( \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \) is not empty, then it is closed under adding \( \alpha_1 \circ \alpha \) and \( \alpha_n \circ \alpha' \) for any \( \alpha, \alpha' \in H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p) \).

2.2. **Massey products and upper untriangular matrices.** Massey products may be “translated” in terms of unipotent upper-triangular homomorphisms of \( G \) as follows.
For $n \geq 2$ let

$$U_{n+1} = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & a_{1,2} & \cdots & a_{1,n+1} \\ 1 & a_{2,3} & \cdots & \vdots \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 1 & & & a_{n,n+1} \\ \end{pmatrix} \mid a_{i,j} \in F_p \right\} \subseteq GL_{n+1}(F_p)$$

be the group of unipotent upper-triangular $(n+1) \times (n+1)$-matrices over $F_p$. Let $I_{n+1}$ denote the $(n+1) \times (n+1)$ identity matrix, and for $1 \leq i < j \leq n+1$, let $E_{ij}$ denote the $(n+1) \times (n+1)$-matrix with 1 at the entry $(i,j)$, and 0 elsewhere. We set $\bar{U}_{n+1} = U_{n+1}/Z$, where $Z$ denotes the normal subgroup

$$(2.6) \quad Z = \{ I_{n+1} + aE_{1,n+1} \mid a \in F_p \}.$$

For a homomorphism of pro-$p$ groups $\rho: G \to U_{n+1}$, and for $1 \leq i \leq n$, let $\rho_{i,i+1}$ denote the projection of $\rho$ on the $(i,i+1)$-entry. Observe that $\rho_{i,i+1}: G \to F_p$ is a homomorphism of pro-$p$ groups, and thus we may consider $\rho_{i,i+1}$ as an element of $H^1(G,F_p)$. One has the following “pro-$p$ translation” of Dwyer’s result on Massey products (cf., e.g., [17, Lemma 9.3], see also [13, § 8]).

**Proposition 2.7.** Let $G$ be a pro-$p$ group and let $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$ be a sequence of elements of $H^1(G,F_p)$, with $n \geq 2$.

(i) The $n$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ is defined if, and only if, there exists a continuous homomorphism $\bar{\rho}: G \to \bar{U}_{n+1}$ such that $\bar{\rho}_{i,i+1} = \alpha_i$ for every $i = 1, \ldots, n$.

(ii) The $n$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ vanishes if, and only if, there exists a continuous homomorphism $\rho: G \to U_{n+1}$ such that $\rho_{i,i+1} = \alpha_i$ for every $i = 1, \ldots, n$.

By Proposition 2.6 (i), in order to check that a pro-$p$ group satisfies the $n$-Massey vanishing property for some $n \geq 2$, it suffices to verify that every defined $n$-fold Massey product associated to a sequence of non-trivial cohomology elements of degree 1 vanishes. Analogously, we use Proposition 2.7 to show that, in order to check that a pro-$p$ group satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property, it suffices to verify that every sequence of length at most $n$ of non-trivial cohomology elements of degree 1 whose cup-products satisfy the triviality condition (1.1) yields a Massey product containing 0.

**Proposition 2.8.** Given $N > 2$, a pro-$p$ group $G$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $3 \leq n \leq N$ if, and only if, for every $3 \leq n \leq N$, every sequence $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$ of non-trivial elements of $H^1(G,F_p)$ satisfying the triviality condition (1.1) yields an $n$-fold Massey product containing 0.

**Proof.** If $G$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property, then obviously $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ vanishes for every sequence $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$ with $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \neq 0$ satisfying the triviality condition (1.1).

So assume that for every sequence $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n$, with $\alpha_i \neq 0$ for every $i = 1, \ldots, n$ and satisfying the triviality condition (1.1), one has $0 \in \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$. Now pick an arbitrary
sequence $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_m$ with $\alpha_i \in H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$ and $3 \leq m \leq N$ such that $\alpha_i \preceq \alpha_{i+1} = 0$ for every $i = 1, \ldots, m - 1$. Let

$$0 = m_1 < m_2 < \ldots < m_r < m_{r+1} = m$$

be positive integers such that: either

$$\alpha_1 = \alpha_{m_2+1}, \ldots, \alpha_{m_2} \neq 0, \quad \alpha_{m_2+1}, \ldots, \alpha_{m_3} = 0, \quad \alpha_{m_3+1}, \ldots, \alpha_{m_4} \neq 0, \quad \ldots$$

and so on, if $\alpha_1 \neq 0$; or conversely

$$\alpha_1 = \alpha_{m_2+1}, \ldots, \alpha_{m_2} = 0, \quad \alpha_{m_2+1}, \ldots, \alpha_{m_3} \neq 0, \quad \alpha_{m_3+1}, \ldots, \alpha_{m_4} = 0, \quad \ldots$$

and so on, if $\alpha_1 = 0$. For every $j = 1, \ldots, r$ put $n_j = m_{j+1} - m_j$. By hypothesis, for every $j$ such that $\alpha_{m_j+1}, \ldots, \alpha_{m_j+1} \neq 0$, the $n_j$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_{m_j+1}, \ldots, \alpha_{m_j+1} \rangle$ vanishes. Hence, by Proposition 2.7 (ii) there exists a homomorphism $\rho_j : G \rightarrow \mathbb{U}_{n_j}$ such that $(\rho_j)_{i, i+1} = \alpha_{m_j+1}$ for every $i = 1, \ldots, n_j$. On the other hand, if $j$ is such that $\alpha_{m_j+1}, \ldots, \alpha_{m_j+1} = 0$ and $n_j > 1$, then we set $\rho_j : G \rightarrow \mathbb{U}_{n_j-1}$ to be the homomorphism constantly equal to $I_{n_j-1}$.

Thus, we may define blockwise a homomorphisms $\rho : G \rightarrow \mathbb{U}_{m+1}$, where

$$\rho = \begin{pmatrix} \rho_1 & 0 \\ \rho_2 & \ddots \\ 0 & \rho_r \end{pmatrix},$$

where we omit $\rho_j$ if $\alpha_{m_j+1} = 0$, $n_j = 1$, and $j \neq 1, r$. For example, if $\alpha_1 \neq 0$ and $n_2 = 1$ then one has

$$\rho = \begin{pmatrix} \rho_1 \\ \begin{array}{c} \alpha_{m_2+1} \\ \vdots \\ \alpha_{m_3+1} \end{array} \end{pmatrix},$$

where $m_2 + 1 = m_3$ and $\alpha_{m_2+1} = 0$. Then

$$\rho_{i,i+1} = (\rho_j)_{i-m_j-i-m_j+1} = \alpha_i, \quad \text{if } m_j < i \leq m_j+1, \quad \alpha_{m_j+1} \neq 0,$$

and $\rho_{i,i+1} = 0 = \alpha_i$ otherwise. Therefore, Proposition 2.7 (ii) implies that the $m$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_m \rangle$ vanishes.

2.3. **Commutators of upper unitriangular matrices.** Let $L = \bigoplus_{k \geq 1} L_k$ be a graded Lie algebra over $\mathbb{F}_p$. Suppose that $L_k = 0$ for $k > n$, for some positive $n$, and that for $1 \leq k \leq n$ every subspace $L_k$ has dimension $n + 1 - k$. Suppose further that each non-trivial subspace $L_k$ has a basis

$$\{ e_{1,1+k}, e_{2,2+k}, \ldots, e_{n+1-k,n+1} \} \subseteq L_k,$$

whose elements satisfy

$$[e_{i,j}, e_{i',j'}] = \begin{cases} e_{i,j'}, & \text{if } j = j', \\
-e_{i',j}, & \text{if } i = j', \\
0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} (2.7)$$
Lemma 2.9. Let $L = \bigoplus_{k \geq 1} L_k$ be a graded Lie $\mathbb{F}_p$-algebra as above, and let $a$ be an element of $L_1$ such that

$$a = \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i e_{i,i+1}, \quad a_1, \ldots, a_n \in \mathbb{F}_p$$

satisfying $a_1 a_2 \cdots a_{n+1-k'} \neq 0$ or $a_{k'} a_{k'+1} \cdots a_n \neq 0$ for some $k', 2 \leq k' \leq n$. Then for every $c \in L_{k'}$ there exists $b \in L_{k'-1}$ such that $[b, a] = c$.

Proof. Write $c = \sum_{i=1}^{n+2-k'} c_i e_{i,i+k}$, with $c_i \in \mathbb{F}_p$, and

$$b = \sum_{j=1}^{n+2-k'} b_j e_{j,j+k'-1}, \quad b_j \in \mathbb{F}_p$$

for an arbitrary element $b \in L_{k'-1}$. Then applying (2.7) yields

$$[b, a] = \sum_{j=1}^{n+2-k'} \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_j a_i [e_{j,j+k'-1}, e_{i,i+1}]$$

$$= \sum_{j=1}^{n+1-k'} b_j a_j [e_{j,j+1}, e_{j,j+k'} - \sum_{j=2}^{n+2-k'} b_j a_{j-1} e_{j-1,j+k'-1}$$

$$= \sum_{j=1}^{n+1-k'} (b_j a_{j+k'-1} - b_{j+1} a_j) e_{j,j+k'}.$$ 

Therefore, $[b, a] = c$ if, and only if, the system

$$\begin{pmatrix}
   a_{k'} & -a_1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\
   a_{k'+1} & -a_2 & \cdots & 0 \\
   \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots \\
   a_n & -a_{n+1-k'} & \end{pmatrix}
\begin{pmatrix}
   b_1 \\
   b_2 \\
   \vdots \\
   b_{n+1-k'} \\
   b_{n+2-k'}
\end{pmatrix}
= \begin{pmatrix}
   c_1 \\
   c_2 \\
   \vdots \\
   c_{n+1-k'}
\end{pmatrix}$$

— where $b_1, \ldots, b_{n+2-k'}$ are the indeterminates — is solvable. The condition on the coefficients $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ ensures that rank of the matrix of coefficients is $n + 1 - k'$; so the system is solvable, yielding a suitable $b \in L_{k'-1}$. \hfill \Box

Given an arbitrary group $U$, and two elements $g, h \in U$, we write $g h = gh^{-1}$, and $[g, h] = g h \cdot h^{-1} = ghg^{-1} h^{-1}$. Given three elements $g_1, g_2, h$ of $U$, one has the identities

$$[g_1 g_2, h] = [g_1, [g_2, h]] [g_2, h][g_1, h],$$

$$[h, g_1 g_2] = [h, g_1] [g_1, h][g_2, h].$$

Let $(U_k)_{k \geq 1}$ denote the descending central series of $U$, i.e.,

$$U_{(1)} = U \quad \text{and} \quad U_{(k+1)} = [U_{(k)}, U].$$

Within this subsection, we fix an integer $n \geq 2$, and for simplicity we write $U$ instead of $U_{n+1}$, and $I$ instead of $I_{n+1}$. The following properties of $U$ are well-known (cf., e.g.,
For every $k \geq 1$, the $k$-th term $U_{(k)}$ of the descending central sequence of $U$ is the subgroup

$$U_{(k)} = \left\{ I + \sum_{j-i \geq k} a_{ij} E_{ij} \mid a_{ij} \in \mathbb{F}_p \right\}. $$

In particular, $U_{(n)}$ is the subgroup $Z$ of $U$ defined in (2.6), while $U_{(k)} = 0$ for $k > n$. Moreover, every quotient $U_{(k)}/U_{(k+1)}$ is a $p$-elementary abelian group. Altogether, the graded $\mathbb{F}_p$-vector space

$$L(U) = \bigoplus_{k \geq 1} L(U)_k, \quad L(U)_k = U_{(k)}/U_{(k+1)}$$

is a graded Lie algebra over $\mathbb{F}_p$, endowed with the Lie brackets induced by commutators. Moreover, for every $1 \leq k \leq n$ one has $\dim(L(U)_k) = n+1-k$, and $L(U)_k$ comes endowed with a basis $\{e_{1,1+k}, \ldots, e_{n+1-k,n+1}\}$ with

$$e_{i,i+k} = (I + E_{i,i+k}) U_{k+1} \in L(U)_k, \quad \text{with } 1 \leq i \leq n+1-k.$$  

Straightforward computations show that the elements $e_{i,i+k}$ above satisfy (2.7) — cf., e.g., [47, Lemma 4.3]. From this we deduce the following.

**Proposition 2.10.** Let $A \in U$ be the matrix with coset $a \in L(U)_1$, $a = \sum_{i=1}^n a_i e_{i,1+i}$, with $a_i \neq 0$ for all $i = 1, \ldots, n$, and let $k$ be a positive integer such that $3 \leq k \leq n$. For every $C \in U_{(k)}$ there exists a matrix $B \in U_{(k-1)}$ such that

$$[B, A] = C.$$  

Proof. For $l \geq 1$ we produce matrices $B_1, \ldots, B_l \in U_{(k-1)}$ satisfying

$$(2.10) \quad [B_1 \cdots B_2 B_1, A] \equiv C \mod U_{(k+l)}.$$  

Since $k + l \geq n + 1$ for $l$ sufficiently large, one has $U_{(k+l)} = \{1\}$, and thus from (2.10) one obtains $[B_l \cdots B_1, A] = C$. So we may put $B = B_l \cdots B_1$, so that $B$ satisfies (2.10).

Observe that the coset $a \in L(U)_1$ of $A$ satisfies the hypothesis of Lemma 2.3. Let $c \in L(U)_k$ be the coset of $C$. Lemma 2.4 yields an element $b \in L(U)_{k-1}$ such that $[b, c] = a$. Therefore, any matrix $B_1 \in U_{(k-1)}$ with coset $b$ satisfies (2.10) with $l = 1$. Now suppose that $l \geq 1$, and that we have found $l$ matrices $B_1, \ldots, B_l \in U_{(k-1)}$ satisfying (2.10). Namely, one has

$$C_l := [B_l \cdots B_2 B_1, A]^{-1} C \in U_{(k+l)}.$$  

Then again Lemma 2.4 yields $B_{l+1} \in U_{(k+l-1)}$ — hence $B_{l+1}$ lies in $U_{(k-1)}$, too — such that $[B_{l+1}, A] \equiv C_l \mod U_{(k+l-1)}$. The commutator identities imply

$$[B_{l+1}, [B_l \cdots B_2 B_1, A]] \cdot [B_l \cdots B_2 B_1, A] \cdot [B_l+1, A] \equiv [B_l+1, [B_l \cdots B_2 B_1, A]] \cdot C \mod U_{(k+l+1)} \equiv C \mod U_{(k+l+1)},$$

as $[B_{l+1}, [B_l \cdots B_2 B_1, A]] \in U_{(k+l-1)+k}$ and $2k + l - 1 \geq k + l + 1$. Altogether, $B_1, \ldots, B_{l+1}$ lie in $U_{(k-1)}$, and they satisfy (2.10) (with $l+1$ instead of $l$). \[\square\]
3. Oriented pro-$p$ groups

Recall that, given a pro-$p$ group $G$, the Frattini subgroup $\Phi(G)$ of $G$ is the subgroup $G^p \cdot \text{cl}([G,G])$, where the latter factor is the closure of the commutator subgroup $[G,G]$ with respect to the topology of $G$. By (2.1), one has an isomorphism of $\mathbb{F}_p$-vector spaces

\[ H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p) = (G/\Phi(G))^*, \]

where $\cdot^*$ denotes the $\mathbb{F}_p$-dual space (c.f., e.g., [53, Ch. I, § 4.2, p. 29]).

3.1. Orientations. Recall that $1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$ denotes the multiplicative group of principal units of the ring of $p$-adic integers $\mathbb{Z}_p$, i.e.,

\[ 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p = \{ 1 + p\lambda \mid \lambda \in \mathbb{Z}_p \}. \]

If $p = 2$ then $1 + 2\mathbb{Z}_2 = \{ \pm 1 \} \times (1 + 4\mathbb{Z}_2)$, which is isomorphic to $(\mathbb{Z}/2) \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ as an abelian pro-2 group; while $1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$ is a free cyclic pro-$p$ group if $p \neq 2$.

Let $G$ be a pro-$p$ group. A homomorphism of pro-$p$ groups $\theta: G \to 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$ is called an orientation, and the pair $(G, \theta)$ is called an oriented pro-$p$ group (cf. [49]; oriented pro-$p$ groups were introduced by I. Efrat in [9], with the name “cyclotomic pro-$p$ pairs”).

An orientation $\theta: G \to 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$ of a pro-$p$ group $G$ is said to be torsion-free if $p \neq 2$, or if $p = 2$ and $\text{Im}(\theta) \subseteq 1 + 4\mathbb{Z}_2$.

If $(G, \theta)$ and $(H, \tau)$ are two oriented pro-$p$ groups, a homomorphism of oriented pro-$p$ groups

\[ \phi: (G, \theta) \to (H, \tau) \]

is a homomorphism of pro-$p$ groups $\phi: G \to H$ such that $\theta = \tau \circ \phi$.

Example 3.1. The maximal pro-$p$ Galois group $G_K(p)$ of a field $K$ containing a root of 1 of order $p$ comes endowed naturally with an orientation: namely, the $p$-cyclotomic character $\theta_K: G_K(p) \to 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$, satisfying

\[ g(\zeta) = \zeta^{\theta_K(g)} \quad \text{for every} \quad g \in G_K(p), \]

for any root $\zeta \in K(p)$ of 1 of order a power of $p$ (cf. [17, § 4]). The image of $\theta_K$ is $1 + p^f\mathbb{Z}_p$, where $f$ is the maximal positive integer such that $K$ contains the roots of 1 of order $p^f$. If such a number does not exists, i.e., if $K$ contains all roots of 1 of $p$-power order, then $\text{Im}(\theta_K) = \{ 1 \}$, and one sets $f = \infty$. Observe that if $p \neq 2$, or if $p = 2$ and $\sqrt{-1} \in K$, then $\theta_K$ is a torsion-free orientation.

From now on, given an orientation $\theta: G \to 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$ of a pro-$p$ group $G$ the notation $\text{Im}(\theta) = 1 + p^\infty\mathbb{Z}_p$ will mean that the image of $\theta$ is trivial.

Example 3.2. A Demushkin group is a pro-$p$ group $G$ satisfying the following:

(i) $\dim(H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)) < \infty$;
(ii) $H^2(G, \mathbb{F}_p) \cong \mathbb{F}_p$;
(iii) the cup-product induces a non-degenerate bilinear form

\[ H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p) \times H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p) \longrightarrow H^2(G, \mathbb{F}_p); \]
groups one has the following two constructions (cf. [9, $\S$3.2].) If the canonical orientation $\theta_G$ is torsion-free, then

\[(3.2) \quad G = \left\langle x_1, \ldots, x_d \mid x_1^{p^f}[x_1, x_2] \cdots [x_{d-1}, x_d] = 1 \right\rangle\]

for some even positive integer $d$, and with $f \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{\infty\}$ such that $\text{Im}(\theta_G) = 1 + p^f\mathbb{Z}_p$ (cf., e.g., [28, p. 254]).

Remark 3.3. If $K$ is an $\ell$-adic local field, with $\ell$ a prime different to $p$ — respectively if $K$ is a $p$-adic local field —, containing a root of $1$ of order $p$, then its maximal pro-$p$ Galois group is a Demushkin group $G$, with

$$\dim(H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)) = \begin{cases} 2, & \text{if } K : \mathbb{Q}_p + 2 \\ \text{respectively} & - \text{in particular, in the former case (i.e., } K \text{ is } \ell\text{-adic) one has } G \simeq \mathbb{Z}_p \times \mathbb{Z}_p \text{ —} \\
\end{cases}$$

(cf. [25, Prop. 7.5.9, Thm. 7.5.11]). In this case the canonical orientation $\theta_G$ coincides with the pro-$p$ cyclotomic character $\theta_K$ (see Example 3.9–(b) below). Also, $\mathbb{Z}/2$ is the maximal pro-$2$ Galois group of $\mathbb{R}$. It is still an open problem to determine whether any other Demushkin group occurs as the maximal pro-$p$ Galois group of a field containing a root of $1$ of order $p$: for example, the simplest example for which this is not known is the Demushkin pro-3 group

$$G = \left\langle x_1, x_2, x_3 \mid x_1^3[x_2, x_3] = 1 \right\rangle$$

(cf. [27, Rem. 5.5]); while the only Demushkin group on 4 generators which is known to be realizable as a maximal pro-$p$ Galois group is the pro-3 group

$$G = \left\langle x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 \mid x_1^3[x_1, x_2][x_3, x_4] = 1 \right\rangle,$$

which occurs as the maximal pro-3 Galois group of $\mathbb{Q}_3(\zeta_3)$, where $\zeta_3$ is a root of $1$ of order $3$ (cf. [28, p. 254]).

3.2. Oriented pro-$p$ groups of elementary type. In the family of oriented pro-$p$ groups one has the following two constructions (cf. [9 $\S$3]).

(a) Let $(G_0, \theta)$ be an oriented pro-$p$ group, and let $A$ be a free abelian pro-$p$ group. The semidirect product $(A \rtimes_\theta G_0, \tilde{\theta})$ is the oriented pro-$p$ group where $A \rtimes_\theta G_0$ is the semidirect product of pro-$p$ groups with action $gag^{-1} = a^{\theta(g)}$ for every $g \in G_0$ and $a \in A$, and where

$$\tilde{\theta} : A \rtimes_\theta G_0 \longrightarrow 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$$

is the orientation induced by $\theta$, i.e., $\tilde{\theta} = \theta \circ \pi$, where $\pi : A \rtimes_\theta G_0 \to G_0$ is the canonical projection.

(b) Let $(G_1, \theta_1)$, $(G_2, \theta_2)$ be two oriented pro-$p$ groups. The free product $(G_1 * G_2, \theta)$ is the oriented pro-$p$ group where $G_1 * G_2$ denote the free pro-$p$ product of the two pro-$p$ groups $G_1, G_2$, while

$$\theta : G_1 * G_2 \longrightarrow 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$$
is the orientation induced by the orientations $\theta_1, \theta_2$ via the universal property of the free pro-$p$ product.

**Definition 3.4.** The family of oriented pro-$p$ groups of elementary type is the smallest family of oriented pro-$p$ groups containing

(a) every oriented pro-$p$ group $(F, \theta)$, where $F$ is a finitely generated free pro-$p$ group, and $\theta: F \to 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$ is arbitrary,

(b) every Demushkin group endowed with its canonical orientation $(G, \theta_G)$ (cf. Example 3.2); and such that

(c) if $(G_0, \theta)$ is an oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type, then also the semidirect product $(\mathbb{Z}_p \rtimes G_0, \tilde{\theta})$ is an oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type,

(d) if $(G_1, \theta_1), (G_2, \theta_2)$ are two oriented pro-$p$ groups of elementary type, then also the free product $(G_1 \ast G_2, \theta)$ is an oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type.

**Remark 3.5.**

(a) If $(G, \theta)$ is an oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type, and $H$ is a finitely generated subgroup of $G$, then also the oriented pro-$p$ group $(H, \theta|_H)$ is of elementary type (cf., e.g., [49, Rem. 5.10–(b)].

(b) Given an oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type $(G, \theta)$, there might be another orientation $\tau: G \to 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p$, $\tau \neq \theta$, such that also $(G, \tau)$ is of elementary type — e.g., if $G = F$ is a finitely generated free pro-$p$ group.

I. Efrat’s Elementary Type Conjecture asks whether the maximal pro-$p$ Galois group $G_{\mathbb{K}}(p)$ of every field $\mathbb{K}$ containing a root of 1 of order $p$ such that $[\mathbb{K}^\times : (\mathbb{K}^\times)^p] < \infty$ may be obtained in this way. More precisely, the conjecture states the following (cf. [7], see also [8], Question 4.8, [32] § 10, [49] § 7.5 and [39] Conj. 4.8).

**Conjecture 3.6.** In Definition 3.4 replace item (b) with

(b') every oriented pro-$p$ group $(G_\mathbb{K}(p), \theta_\mathbb{K})$, where $\mathbb{K}$ is a $p$-adic field containing a root of 1 (cf. Remark 3.3), and also the oriented pro-$2$ group $(\mathbb{Z}_2/2, \theta_{\mathbb{Z}_2/2})$, with $\text{Im}(\theta_{\mathbb{Z}_2/2}) = \{\pm 1\}$, if $p = 2$.

Then the family of oriented pro-$p$ groups $(G_\mathbb{K}(p), \theta_\mathbb{K})$, where $\mathbb{K}$ is a field containing a root of 1 of order $p$ such that $[\mathbb{K}^\times : (\mathbb{K}^\times)^p] < \infty$, coincides with the family of oriented pro-$p$ groups obtained from Definition 3.4, with (b') instead of item (b).

On the one hand, one knows that all oriented pro-$p$ groups constructed as in Conjecture 3.6 occur as maximal pro-$p$ Galois groups (endowed with the pro-$p$ cyclotomic character), as the realizability as maximal pro-$p$ Galois group is preserved by semidirect products and free pro-$p$ products (cf. [9] Rem. 3.4). On the other hand, one has the following.

**Proposition 3.7.** Let $\mathbb{K}$ be a field satisfying $[\mathbb{K}^\times : (\mathbb{K}^\times)^p] < \infty$ and containing a root of 1 of order $p$. Then the oriented pro-$p$ group $(G_\mathbb{K}(p), \theta_\mathbb{K})$ is of elementary type in the following cases:

(i) $\mathbb{K}$ is finite;

(ii) $\mathbb{K}$ is a PAC field, or an extension of relative transcendence degree 1 of a PAC field;
(iii) $K$ is a local field, or an extension of transcendence degree 1 of a local field, with characteristic not $p$;

(iv) $K$ is $p$-rigid (cf. [58, p. 722]);

(v) $K$ is an algebraic extension of a global field of characteristic not $p$;

(vi) $K$ is a valued $p$-Henselian field with residue field $\kappa$, where $(G_\kappa(p), \theta_\kappa)$ is of elementary type.

(vii) $K$ is a Pythagorean field, if $p = 2$.

For Proposition 3.7 see [39, Thm. D, Prop. 6.2–6.3]. See also: Remark 3.3 and [11] for item (iii); [4, § 3] for item (iv); [8] for item (v); [18, § 1] for item (vi) in case char($\kappa$) $\neq p$, and [10, § 3] for item (vi) in case char($\kappa$) = $p$; and [39, Thm. 6.5] for item (vii).

### 3.3. Kummerian oriented pro-$p$ groups

An oriented pro-$p$ group $(G, \theta)$, with $\theta$ a torsion-free orientation, is said to be $\theta$-abelian if Ker($\theta$) is a free abelian pro-$p$ group, and there exists a complement $G_0 \subseteq G$ to Ker($\theta$) — thus, $G_0 \simeq \text{Im}(\theta) —$, and

\[(G, \theta) \simeq \text{Ker}(\theta) \rtimes (G_0, \theta|_{G_0})\]

(cf. [18, § 1]). Equivalently, $(G, \theta)$ is $\theta$-abelian if, and only if, $G$ has a presentation

\[G = \left\langle x_0, x_h \mid h \in J, x_0^x = x_h^\theta(x_0), [x_h, x_l] = 1 \forall h, l \in J \right\rangle,\]

for some set $J$ (cf. [18, Prop. 3.4]).

The following notion was introduced in [17] (here we use the formulation given in [50, § 2], which is the most useful for our purposes).

**Definition 3.8.** An oriented pro-$p$ group $(G, \theta)$, with torsion-free orientation $\theta$, is said to be *Kummerian* if there exists an epimorphism of oriented pro-$p$ groups

\[\phi: (G, \theta) \twoheadrightarrow (\bar{G}, \bar{\theta})\]

with $(\bar{G}, \bar{\theta})$ a $\bar{\theta}$-abelian oriented pro-$p$ group, such that Ker($\phi) \subseteq \Phi(G)$.

By [41, Ker($\phi) \subseteq \Phi(G)$ if, and only if, $\phi$ yields an isomorphism

\[\phi^* : H^1(\bar{G}, \mathbb{F}_p) \iso \rightarrow H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p).\]

Now let $\mathbb{K}$ be a field containing a root of 1 of order $p$ (and also $\sqrt{-1}$ if $p = 2$), and let $\mathbb{K}(\sqrt[n]{a})$ be the compositum of all extensions $\mathbb{K}(\sqrt[n]{a})$ with $a \in \mathbb{K}^\times$ and $n \geq 1$. Then the restriction

\[\phi: G_\mathbb{K}(p) = \text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(p)/\mathbb{K}) \twoheadrightarrow \text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(\sqrt[n]{a})/\mathbb{K})\]

induces an isomorphism $\phi^*: H^1(\text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(\sqrt[n]{a})/\mathbb{K}), \mathbb{F}_p) \iso \rightarrow H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)$, as Ker($\phi) \subseteq \Phi(G_\mathbb{K}(p))$; moreover, by Kummer theory both cohomology groups are isomorphic to the quotient $\mathbb{K}^\times/([\mathbb{K}^\times]_p)^p$.

Moreover, let $\mathbb{K}(\zeta_{p^n})$ be the compositum of all $p$-power cyclotomic extensions of $\mathbb{K}$. Then either $\text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(\zeta_{p^n})/\mathbb{K})$ is isomorphic to $\mathbb{Z}_p$, or it is trivial (if $\mathbb{K}$ contains all roots of 1 of $p$-power order). Furthermore, again by Kummer theory one has

\[\text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(\sqrt[n]{a})/\mathbb{K}) \simeq \text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(\sqrt[n]{a})/\mathbb{K}(\zeta_{p^n})) \times \text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(\zeta_{p^n})/\mathbb{K}),\]

where $\text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(\sqrt[n]{a})/\mathbb{K}(\zeta_{p^n}))$ is a free abelian pro-$p$ group, and the action of the right-hand side factor on the left-hand side factor is induced by the $p$-cyclotomic character $\theta_\mathbb{K}$ — i.e.,

\[ghg^{-1} = h^\lambda \quad \forall g \in \text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(\zeta_{p^n})/\mathbb{K}), h \in \text{Gal}(\mathbb{K}(\sqrt[n]{a})/\mathbb{K}(\zeta_{p^n})),\]
where \( \lambda \in 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p \) is defined by \( g(\zeta) = \zeta^\lambda \) with \( \zeta \in \mathbb{K}(\zeta_{p^n}) \) a root of 1 of order a power of \( p \). Therefore, the oriented pro-\( p \) group \( (\text{Gal}(\sqrt[n]{K}/K), \theta) \) is \( \theta \)-abelian, where \( \tilde{\theta} \) is the orientation satisfying \( \theta_K = \tilde{\theta} \circ \phi \). Thus, the oriented pro-\( p \) group \( (G_K(p), \theta_K) \) is Kummerian (cf. [17] Thm. 4.2) and [50] Thm. 2.8). Moreover, for every \( p \)-extension \( L/K \), \( K \) can be replaced by \( L \) and thus also the oriented pro-\( p \) group \( (G_L(p), \theta_L) \) is Kummerian — we underline that \( \theta_l \) is the restriction of \( \theta_K \) to \( G_L(p) \).

One has also the following examples of Kummerian oriented pro-\( p \) groups.

**Example 3.9.** (a) If \( G \) is a finitely generated free pro-\( p \) group, then the oriented pro-\( p \) group \( (G, \theta) \) is Kummerian for any torsion-free orientation \( \theta : G \to 1 + p\mathbb{Z}_p \) (cf. [17] Prop. 5.5). Indeed, the subgroup

\[
N = \left\{ [g, h]^{\theta(g)^{-1}} | g \in G, h \in \text{Ker}(\theta) \right\} \subseteq G
\]

is a normal subgroup of \( G \) contained in both \( \Phi(G) \) and \( \text{Ker}(\theta) \), and the quotient \( G/N \) has a presentation as in (3.4).

(b) If \( G \) is a Demushkin pro-\( p \) group whose canonical orientation \( \theta_G \) is torsion-free, then \( \theta_G \) is the only orientation which completes \( G \) into a Kummerian oriented pro-\( p \) group (cf. [30] Thm. 4], see also [17] Thm. 7.6]). In particular, if \( G \) occurs as the maximal pro-\( p \) Galois group of a field containing a root of 1 of order \( p \), then \( \theta_G = \theta_K \).

(c) If \( (G_0, \theta) \) is a Kummerian oriented pro-\( p \) group, with \( \theta \) a torsion-free orientation, and \( A \simeq \mathbb{Z}_p \), then also \( (A \rtimes_0 G_0, \theta) \) is Kummerian (cf. [17] Prop. 3.6)). Also, if \( (G_1, \theta_1) \) and \( (G_2, \theta_2) \) are Kummerian oriented pro-\( p \) groups, with \( \theta_1, \theta_2 \) torsion-free orientations, then also \( (G_1 \ast G_2, \theta) \) is Kummerian (cf. [17] Prop. 7.5)).

(d) By the previous examples, every oriented pro-\( p \) group of elementary type with torsion-free orientation \( \theta \) is Kummerian (cf. [17] § 7 and [50] § 5.3)).

Let \( \mathbb{K} \) be a field containing a root of 1 of order \( p \) (and also \( \sqrt{-1} \) if \( p = 2 \)). Then it is well-known that for every \( \alpha \in \mathbb{H}^1(G_K(p), \mathbb{F}_p) \) one has \( \alpha \sim \alpha = 0 \) (cf. Remark 2.1 and, e.g., [50] Rem. 4.2) if \( p = 2 \). In [41] Thm. 8.1], J. Minač and N.D. Tăn proved the following: for every \( \alpha \in \mathbb{H}^1(G_K(p), \mathbb{F}_p) \) and for every \( n > 2 \), the \( n \)-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha, \ldots, \alpha \rangle \) is defined, and vanishes.

We prove that pro-\( p \) groups which may be completed into a Kummerian oriented pro-\( p \) group with torsion-free orientation enjoy the same property.

**Theorem 3.10.** Let \( (G, \theta) \) be a Kummerian oriented pro-\( p \) group, with torsion-free orientation \( \theta \). Then for every \( \alpha \in \mathbb{H}^1(G_K(p), \mathbb{F}_p) \) and for every \( n > 2 \), the \( n \)-fold Massey product \( \langle \alpha, \ldots, \alpha \rangle \) vanishes.

**Proof.** First of all, observe that, if \( p = 2 \), then \( \alpha \sim \alpha = 0 \) for every \( \alpha \in \mathbb{H}^1(G, \mathbb{F}_2) \), as \( (G, \theta) \) is Kummerian and \( \theta \) is torsion-free (cf., e.g., [49] Fact. 7.1]), while if \( p \neq 2 \) this is true anyway (cf. Remark 2.1, so that the sequence \( \alpha, \ldots, \alpha \) of length \( n \) satisfies the triviality condition (1.1).

Suppose first that \( (G, \theta) \) is \( \theta \)-abelian. Then \( G \) has a presentation

\[
(3.5) \quad G = \langle x_h | h \in J, [x_h, x_l] = 1 \forall h, \forall l \in J \rangle
\]

for some set \( J \), if \( \text{Ker}(\theta) = G \); or

\[
(3.6) \quad G = \langle x_0, x_h | h \in J, [x_0, x_h] = x_0^q, [x_h, x_l] = 1 \forall h, \forall l \in J \rangle,
\]
for some set \( J \) and \( q = p^f \) with \( f \geq 1 \) (and \( f \geq 2 \) if \( p = 2 \)), if \( \text{Ker}(\theta) \neq G \) (cf. \((3.3)\)).

Put \( U = U_{n+1} \) and \( I = I_{n+1} \), and set

\[
A = I + \sum_{i=1}^{n} E_{i,i+1} = \begin{pmatrix}
1 & 1 & 0 \\
1 & 1 & \\
& & \ddots \\
& & & 1 \\
& & & & 1
\end{pmatrix} \in U.
\]

For every integers \( a, b \) such that \( 0 \leq a, b \leq p - 1 \), one has

\[
A^a \equiv I + \sum_{i=1}^{n} \bar{a} \cdot E_{i,i+1} \mod U_{(2)},
\]

where \( \bar{a} \in \mathbb{F}_p \) denotes the class represented by \( a \), and obviously \([A^a, A^b] = I\). Moreover, one has

\[
A^a = \begin{cases} 
I, & \text{if } q > n, \\
I + \sum_{i=1}^{n+1-q} E_{i,i+q} \in U_{(q)}, & \text{if } q \leq n,
\end{cases}
\]

where \( q = p^f \) is as in \((3.3)\). In the latter case, by Proposition \(2.10\) there exists \( B \in U_{(q-1)} \) such that \([B, A] = A^a\).

Now for every \( h \in J \) set \( a_0, a_h \in \mathbb{Z} \) such that \( 0 \leq a_j \leq p - 1 \) and \( \bar{a}_j = \alpha(x_j) \) for every \( j \in J \cup \{0\} \). Observe that

\[
[B^{a_0}, A^{a_h}] = [B^{a_0} \cdot A^{a_h}] = I \cdot \left( A^{a_h-1} [B, A] \cdots [B, A] \right) = A^{a_h q}.
\]

Then the assignment \( \rho(x_h) = A^{a_h} \) for all \( h \in J \), and \( \rho(x_0) = B A^{a_0} \) if \( \text{Ker}(\theta) \neq G \), gives a continuous homomorphism \( \rho: G \to U \), which satisfies \( \rho_{i,i+1}(x_j) = \bar{a}_j = \alpha(x_j) \) for every \( i = 1, \ldots, n \) and every \( j \in J \cup \{0\} \) by \((3.7)\) — observe that

\[
\rho(x_0) \equiv A^{a_0} \mod U_{(2)}
\]

as \( B \in U_{(2)} \). Hence the \( n \)-fold Massey product \( (\alpha, \ldots, \alpha) \) vanishes by Proposition \(2.7\)–(ii).

If \((G, \theta)\) is an arbitrary Kummerian oriented pro-\( p \) group, then there exists an epimorphism of oriented pro-\( p \) groups \( \phi: (G, \theta) \to (\bar{G}, \bar{\theta}) \) with \((\bar{G}, \bar{\theta})\) a \( \bar{\theta} \)-abelian pro-\( p \) group and \( \text{Ker}(\phi) \subseteq \Phi(G) \). Therefore, the inflation map

\[
\inf_{\bar{G},G}^1: H^1(\bar{G}, \mathbb{F}_p) \to H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)
\]

induced by \( \phi \) is an isomorphism, and there exists \( \bar{\alpha} \in H^1(\bar{G}, \mathbb{F}_p) \) such that \( \inf_{\bar{G},G}^1(\bar{\alpha}) = \alpha \), i.e. \( \alpha = \bar{\alpha} \circ \phi \). The argument above yields a continuous homomorphism \( \rho: G \to U \) satisfying \( \rho_{i,i+1} = \bar{a} \) for every \( i = 1, \ldots, n \), and thus the continuous homomorphism \( \rho \circ \phi: G \to U \) satisfies

\[
(\rho \circ \phi)_{i,i+1} = \bar{a} \circ \phi = \alpha \quad \text{for every } i = 1, \ldots, n.
\]

Hence the \( n \)-fold Massey product \( (\alpha, \ldots, \alpha) \) vanishes by Proposition \(2.7\)–(ii). \(\square\)

By Example \(3.9\)–(d), Theorem \(3.10\) implies the following.
Corollary 3.11. Let \((G, \theta)\) be an oriented pro-\(p\) group of elementary type with torsion-free orientation \(\theta\), and let \(\alpha\) be an element of \(H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)\). Then for every \(n \geq 2\) the \(n\)-fold Massey product \(\langle \alpha, \ldots, \alpha \rangle\) vanishes.

4. ORIENTED PRO-\(p\) GROUPS AND VANISHING OF MASSEY PRODUCTS

4.1. Semidirect products. Let \((G_0, \theta_0)\) be an oriented pro-\(p\) group, let \(Z \simeq \mathbb{Z}_p\) be a cyclic pro-\(p\) group, and set
\[
(G, \theta) = Z \rtimes_{\theta_0} (G_0, \theta_0).
\]
Then the first and second \(F_p\)-cohomology groups of \(G\) decompose as follow:
\[
\begin{align*}
H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p) &= H^1(G_0, \mathbb{F}_p) \oplus H^1(Z, \mathbb{F}_p), \\
H^2(G, \mathbb{F}_p) &= H^2(G_0, \mathbb{F}_p) \oplus (H^1(G_0, \mathbb{F}_p) \sim H^1(Z, \mathbb{F}_p)),
\end{align*}
\]
(cf. \[49\], Thm. 3.13) — observe that \(H^n(Z, \mathbb{F}_p) = 0\) for every \(n \geq 2\). Moreover, if \(\{\chi_h \mid h \in J\}\) is a basis of \(H^1(G_0, \mathbb{F}_p)\), and \(\psi\) generates \(H^1(Z, \mathbb{F}_p) \simeq \mathbb{F}_p\), then
\[
\{ \chi_h \sim \psi \mid h \in J \}
\]
is a basis for \(H^1(G_0, \mathbb{F}_p) \sim H^1(Z, \mathbb{F}_p)\).

Remark 4.1. The description of the \(F_p\)-cohomology of the semidirect product \((4.1)\) has been provided first by A. Wadsworth (cf. \[57\], Cor. 3.4 and Thm. 3.6)).

Theorem 4.2. Let \((G_0, \theta_0)\) be a Kummerian oriented pro-\(p\) group with torsion-free orientation \(\theta_0\), and let \(Z \simeq \mathbb{Z}_p\) be a cyclic pro-\(p\) group. Set \(G = Z \rtimes_{\theta_0} G_0\).

(i) If \(G_0\) satisfies the \(n\)-Massey vanishing property for every \(n \geq 2\), then also \(G\) satisfies the \(n\)-Massey vanishing property for every \(n \geq 2\).

(ii) If \(G_0\) satisfies the strong \(n\)-Massey vanishing property for every \(n \geq 2\), then also \(G\) satisfies the strong \(n\)-Massey vanishing property for every \(n \geq 2\).

Proof. First of all, since \((G_0, \theta_0)\) is Kummerian, also the semidirect product \((G, \theta) = Z \rtimes_{\theta_0} (G_0, \theta_0)\) is Kummerian, cf. Example \[02\], (c). Let \(\pi: G \rightarrow G_0\) denote the canonical projection.

Let \(\psi\) be a generator of \(H^1(Z, \mathbb{F}_p)\), and let \(\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n\) be a sequence of non-trivial elements of \(H^1(G, \mathbb{F}_p)\) satisfying \((4.2)\). By \([4.2]\), for every \(i = 1, \ldots, n\) one has \(\alpha_i = \alpha_i|_{G_0} + b_i\psi\) for some \(b_i \in \mathbb{F}_p\). Hence
\[
0 = \alpha_i \sim \alpha_{i+1} = (\alpha_i|_{G_0} \sim \alpha_{i+1}|_{G_0}) + (b_{i+1}\alpha_i|_{G_0} - b_i\alpha_{i+1}|_{G_0}) \sim \psi
\]
for every \(i = 1, \ldots, n - 1\). By \((4.3)\), equality \((4.3)\) holds if, and only if,
\[
\alpha_i|_{G_0} \sim \alpha_{i+1}|_{G_0} = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad b_{i+1}\alpha_i|_{G_0} = b_i\alpha_{i+1}|_{G_0}
\]
for every \(i = 1, \ldots, n - 1\) — indeed, for any \(\alpha \in H^1(G_0, \mathbb{F}_p)\), \(\alpha \sim \psi = 0\) implies \(\alpha = 0\). Altogether, one has two cases:

(a) either \(b_i = 0\) and
\[
\alpha_i = \alpha_i|_{G_0} \circ \pi \neq 0
\]
for every \(i = 1, \ldots, n\);
Kummerian, Theorem 3.10 implies that the $n$ in $H$

Case (b).

This proves (ii) in case (a).

Then again by Proposition 2.7–(i), the $\rho$ yields a homomorphism $\bar{\rho}: G \to \mathbb{U}_{n+1}$ such that $\bar{\rho}_{i,i+1} = \alpha_i$ for all $i = 1, \ldots, n$. Then consider the restriction

$\bar{\rho}|_{G_0}: G_0 \to \mathbb{U}_{n+1}$.

Then again by Proposition 2.7–(i) the $n$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ is defined in $H^\bullet(G_0)$, and that $\alpha_i \neq 0$ for every $i$ (cf. Proposition 2.7–(i)), to prove statement (i). By Proposition 2.7–(i), there exists a homomorphism $\bar{\rho}: G \to \mathbb{U}_{n+1}$ such that $\bar{\rho}_{i,i+1} = \alpha_i$ for all $i = 1, \ldots, n$. Now consider the restriction

$\bar{\rho}|_{G_0}: G_0 \to \mathbb{U}_{n+1}$.

Then (b) or

$$b_i \neq 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \alpha_i = \frac{b_i}{b_1} (\alpha_1|_{G_0} + b_1 \psi) = \frac{b_i}{b_1} \cdot \alpha_1$$

for every $i = 1, \ldots, n$ (recall that we are assuming that $\alpha_i \neq 0$ for every $i$, so that if $b_i = 0$ for some $i$ then $\alpha_i|_{G_0} \neq 0$, and conversely if $\alpha_i|_{G_0} = 0$ then $b_i \neq 0$).

Case (a). Assume that the $n$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ is defined in $H^\bullet(G)$, and that $\alpha_i \neq 0$ for every $i$ (cf. Proposition 2.6–(i)), to prove statement (i). By Proposition 2.6–(i), there exists a homomorphism $\bar{\rho}: G \to \mathbb{U}_{n+1}$ such that $\bar{\rho}_{i,i+1} = \alpha_i$ for all $i = 1, \ldots, n$. Now consider the restriction

$\bar{\rho}|_{G_0}: G_0 \to \mathbb{U}_{n+1}$.

This proves both (i) and (ii) in case (b). \(\square\)

Case (b). Assume the $\alpha_i$'s are non-trivial multiples of each other. Since $(G, \theta)$ is Kummerian, Theorem 3.10 implies that the $n$-fold Massey product $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_1 \rangle$ vanishes in $H^\bullet(G)$. Then by Proposition 2.6–(ii), one has

$$\langle \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \supset \left\{ \frac{b_2}{b_1} \cdot \beta \mid \beta \in \langle \alpha_1, \alpha_1, \alpha_3, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle \right\}$$

$$\vdots$$

$$\supset \left\{ \frac{b_2 \cdots b_n}{b_1^n} \cdot \beta \mid \beta \in \langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_1 \rangle \right\} \supset 0,$$

and thus $\langle \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n \rangle$ vanishes in $H^\bullet(G)$. This proves both (i) and (ii) in case (b).

From Theorem 4.2 we deduce the following.

**Corollary 4.3.** Let $\mathbb{K}$ be a field containing a root of 1 of order $p$ (and $\sqrt{p-1} \in \mathbb{K}$, if $p = 2$). Then the maximal pro-$p$ Galois group $G_\mathbb{K}(p)$ of $\mathbb{K}$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$ in the following cases:

(i) $\mathbb{K}$ is a $p$-rigid field;

From Theorem 4.2 we deduce the following.
(ii) $K$ is a valued $p$-Henselian field whose residue field $\kappa$ has maximal pro-$p$ Galois group satisfying the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$.

**Proof.** In the first case, the oriented pro-$p$ group $(G(p, \theta_K))$ is $\theta_K$-abelian by [4, Cor. 3.17]. In the second case one has $G(p, \theta) = A \rtimes_{\theta} G_\kappa(p)$, with $A$ a free abelian pro-$p$ group, as shown in [18, §1] if char($\kappa) \neq p$ (see also [57, Thm. 3.6]), and [10, §3] if char($\kappa) = p$. □

### 4.2. Proof of Theorem 1.2

**Theorem 4.4.** Let $(G, \theta)$ be an oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type, and suppose that either $\theta$ is a torsion-free orientation. Then $G$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$.

**Proof.** We proceed following the inductive construction of the oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type.

If $G$ is a free pro-$p$ group, then it is straightforward to see that $G$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n \geq 0$ by Proposition 2.7–(ii) (cf., e.g., [44, Ex. 4.1]).

If $G$ is a Demushkin group, then $G$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property as shown by A. Pál and E. Szabó in [47, Thm. 3.5] (see also [43, Prop. 4.1]).

If $(G_1, \theta_1)$ and $(G_2, \theta_2)$ are two oriented pro-$p$ groups such that both $G_1$ and $G_2$ satisfy the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property, then also the free pro-$p$ product $G_1 \ast G_2$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property (cf. [43, Prop. 4.8] and [2, Rem. 5.2]).

Finally, suppose that $(G_0, \theta)$ is an oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type with $G_0$ satisfying the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$, and consider the semidirect product

$$(G, \tilde{\theta}) = (\mathbb{Z}_p \rtimes_{\theta} G_0, \tilde{\theta}).$$

Since $\theta$ is a torsion-free orientation, $(G, \tilde{\theta})$ is Kummerian by Example 3.9–(d), and thus also $\mathbb{Z}_p \rtimes_{\theta} G_0$ satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$ by Theorem 4.2. □

Items (a)–(e) of Corollary 1.3 follow from Proposition 3.7 and Theorem 4.4, and Items (d)–(e) of Corollary 1.3 follow from Corollary 4.3.

**Remark 4.5.** Let $(G, \theta)$ be an oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type such that $\theta$ is a torsion-free orientation. Since $(H, \theta_H)$ is again an oriented pro-$p$ group of elementary type for every finitely generated subgroup $H \subset G$ (cf. Remark 3.5, Theorem 1.4) implies that every finitely generated subgroup of $G$ — in particular, every open subgroup (as an open subgroup of a finitely generated pro-$p$ group is again finitely generated; cf., e.g., [5, Prop. 1.7]) — satisfies the strong $n$-Massey vanishing property for every $n > 2$.

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