

The C_2 -equivariant analog of the subalgebra of \mathcal{A} generated by Sq^1 and Sq^2

Homotopy theory:
tools and applications
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Joint work with



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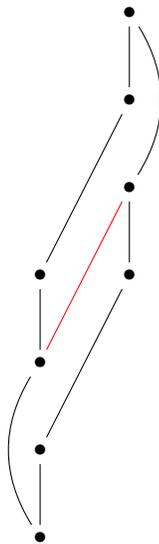


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1.1



1.2

1 Equivariant homotopy theory

1.1 Some spheres with group action

Equivariant homotopy theory

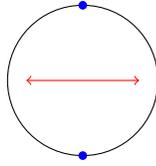
This talk is about equivariant homotopy theory. The group G in question will always be C_2 , the group of order 2.

Every finite dimensional orthogonal representation V of G is isomorphic to $m + n\sigma$, where $m, n \geq 0$ are integers, and σ denotes the [sign representation](#).

Given such a representation V ,

- $S(V)$ denotes its [unit sphere](#), which is underlain by S^{m+n-1} , and
- S^V denotes its [one point compactification](#), which is underlain by S^{m+n} .

Here is a picture of S^σ , [the twisted circle](#), whose fixed point set is S^0 :



1.2 The Hopf map

The surprising property of the equivariant Hopf map

Recall the Hopf map

$$\mathbb{C}^2 \supset S^3 \xrightarrow{\eta} \mathbb{C}P^1 = S^2.$$

The composite map



is known to be null homotopic.

Both source and target of η have a C_2 -action induced by complex conjugation. The Hopf map η preserves it, so we get an **equivariant map**

$$S(2 + 2\sigma) \approx S^{1+2\sigma} \xrightarrow{\bar{\eta}} S^{1+\sigma}$$

and the induced map of fixed point sets is the degree 2 map

$$S(2) \approx S^1 \xrightarrow{[2]} \mathbb{R}P^1 = S^1.$$

The surprising property of the equivariant Hopf map (continued)

Iterating the equivariant Hopf map $\bar{\eta} : S^{1+2\sigma} \rightarrow S^{1+\sigma}$ gives a diagram of equivariant maps and fixed point sets

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccccc} S^{1+5\sigma} & \xrightarrow{\Sigma^{3\sigma}\bar{\eta}} & S^{1+4\sigma} & \xrightarrow{\Sigma^{2\sigma}\bar{\eta}} & S^{1+3\sigma} & \xrightarrow{\Sigma\sigma\bar{\eta}} & S^{1+2\sigma} & \xrightarrow{\bar{\eta}} & S^{1+\sigma} & & \\ S^1 & \xrightarrow{[2]} & S^1 & \xrightarrow{[2]} & S^1 & \xrightarrow{[2]} & S^1 & \xrightarrow{[2]} & S^1 & & \end{array}$$

where Σ^σ denotes the **twisted suspension** $S^\sigma \wedge -$. The composite map of fixed point sets is essential since it is the degree 16 map. In fact, **any** iterate of $\bar{\eta}$ induces a nontrivial map on fixed points. This means that **the stable equivariant Hopf map is not equivariantly nilpotent, unlike the classical stable Hopf map.**

2 The mod 2 homology of a point

The equivariant mod 2 homology of a point

In equivariant stable homotopy theory we can speak of homology and homotopy groups graded over $RO(G)$, the real orthogonal representation ring of G . We will now describe $H_*^{C_2}(S^{-0}; \mathbb{Z}/2)$, the equivariant mod 2 homology of the sphere spectrum S^{-0} . The cohomology group $H_{C_2}^*(S^{-0}; \mathbb{Z}/2)$ is isomorphic to it, but **oppositely graded**.

There are two elements of interest.

- The inclusion map of the fixed point set (the north and south poles) $a : S^0 \rightarrow S^\sigma$ defines an element $a \in \pi_{-\sigma}^{C_2} S^{-0}$, and we use the same symbol for its mod 2 Hurewicz image. We call a the **polar generator**. It is also called an **Euler class**.
- One can show that

$$H_1^{C_2}(S^\sigma; \mathbb{Z}/2) = H_{1-\sigma}^{C_2}(S^{-0}; \mathbb{Z}/2) = \mathbb{Z}/2,$$

and we denote its generator by u .

The equivariant mod 2 homology of a point (continued)

Dually we have

$$a \in H_{C_2}^\sigma \quad \text{and} \quad u \in H_{C_2}^{\sigma-1}.$$

In real motivic homotopy theory one has analogous elements

$$\rho \in H_{\mathbb{R}}^{(1,1)} \quad \text{and} \quad \tau \in H_{\mathbb{R}}^{(0,1)},$$

where the motivic bidegree (s, w) (for **stem** and **weight**) corresponds to the $RO(C_2)$ degree $s - w + w\sigma$. The element ρ is trivial image in complex motivic homotopy theory.

It is known that, for appropriate versions of the sphere spectrum S^{-0} ,

$$\mathbf{M}_{\mathbb{C}}^* := H_{\mathbb{C}}^*(S^{-0}; \mathbb{Z}/2) = \mathbb{Z}/2[\tau],$$

$$\mathbf{M}_{\mathbb{R}}^* := H_{\mathbb{R}}^*(S^{-0}; \mathbb{Z}/2) = \mathbb{Z}/2[\rho, \tau]$$

and

$$\mathbf{M}^* := H_{C_2}^*(S^{-0}; \mathbb{Z}/2) \supset \mathbb{Z}/2[a, u].$$

The equivariant mod 2 homology of a point (continued)

We have

$$\mathbf{M}^* H_{C_2}^*(S^{-0}; \mathbb{Z}/2) \supset \mathbb{Z}/2[a, u] \text{ with } a \in H_{C_2}^\sigma \text{ and } u \in H_{C_2}^{\sigma-1},$$

but there is an additional summand called the **negative cone NC**, namely

$$NC = \Sigma \mathbb{Z}/2[a, u] / (a^\infty, u^\infty) = \bigoplus_{i,j>0} \mathbb{Z}/2 \left\{ \frac{w}{a^i u^j} \right\}$$

Here w has cohomological degree 1, so

$$:= \left| \frac{w}{a^i u^j} \right| = 1 - i\sigma - j(\sigma - 1) = (1 + j) - (i + j)\sigma.$$

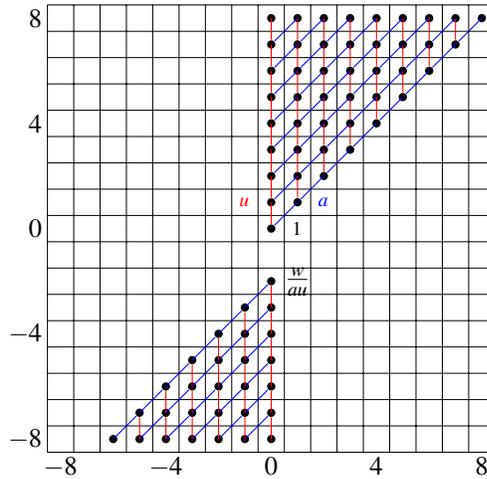
We abbreviate this element by $w_{i,j}$. The fractional notation is meant to indicate that

$$aw_{i+1,j} = w_{i,j} = uw_{i,j+1} \quad \text{and} \quad a^i w_{i,j} = u^j w_{i,j} = 0.$$

Each $w_{i,j}$ is both a -divisible and u -divisible.

2.1 The equivariant mod 2 cohomology of a point

The equivariant mod 2 cohomology of a point



The point (x, y) above represents degree $x - y + y\sigma$.
 Red and blue lines indicate multiplication by u and a .

1.9

3 The Steenrod algebra

The Steenrod algebra



Vladimir
Voevodsky



Igor Kriz and Po Hu

The analog of the mod 2 Steenrod algebra \mathcal{A} was described by Voevodsky in the motivic case and by Hu-Kriz in the equivariant case. The two answers are essentially the same.

1.10

The Steenrod algebra (continued)

One has squaring operations Sq^k for $k \geq 0$ whose degrees are

$$|Sq^k| = \begin{cases} i(1 + \sigma) & \text{for } k = 2i \\ i(1 + \sigma) + 1 & \text{for } k = 2i + 1. \end{cases}$$

As in the classical case, $Sq^0 = 1$. The algebra acts on the coefficient ring \mathbf{M} , acting trivially on a and w with

$$Sq^k u = \begin{cases} u & \text{for } k = 0 \\ a & \text{for } k = 1 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Its action on other elements is determined by the Cartan formula to be given below.

1.11

The Steenrod algebra (continued)

Half of the Cartan formula is

$$Sq^{2i}(xy) = \sum_{0 \leq r \leq i} Sq^{2r}(x)Sq^{2i-2r}(y) + u \sum_{0 \leq s < i} Sq^{2s+1}(x)Sq^{2i-2s-1}(y)$$

The factor of u in the second sum is needed for degree reasons.

The operation Sq^1 is a derivation with $Sq^1 Sq^1 = 0$ as usual with $Sq^1 Sq^{2i} = Sq^{2i+1}$ and $Sq^1 u = a$. Applying it to both sides of the above gives the other half of the Cartan formula,

$$Sq^{2i+1}(xy) = \sum_{0 \leq j \leq 2i+1} Sq^j(x)Sq^{2i+1-j}(y) + a \sum_{0 \leq s < i} Sq^{2s+1}(x)Sq^{2i-2s-1}(y).$$

Note that setting $u = 1$ and $a = 0$ reduces this to the classical Cartan formula.

1.12

The Steenrod algebra (continued)

For the Adem relations, let $0 < m < 2n$. The formula for $Sq^m Sq^n$ depends on the parity of $m+n$. When it is even we nearly have the classical relation,

$$Sq^m Sq^n = \sum_{j=0}^{\lfloor m/2 \rfloor} \binom{n-1-j}{m-2j} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} u \text{ for } j \text{ odd} \\ \text{and} \\ m, n \text{ even} \\ 1 \text{ otherwise} \end{array} \right\} Sq^{m+n-j} Sq^j.$$

When $m+n$ is odd we have a more complicated formula,

$$Sq^m Sq^n = \sum_{j=0}^{\lfloor m/2 \rfloor} \binom{n-1-j}{m-2j} Sq^{m+n-j} Sq^j + a \sum_{j \text{ odd}} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \binom{n-1-j}{m-2j} \text{ for } m \text{ odd} \\ \binom{n-1-j}{m-2j-1} \text{ for } n \text{ odd} \end{array} \right\} Sq^{m+n-j-1} Sq^j.$$

As before, setting $u = 1$ and $a = 0$ reduces this to the classical Adem relation. [The above are due to Jöel Riou, 2012. Voevodsky got it wrong.](#)

1.13

The Steenrod algebra (continued)

For example we have the usual

$$Sq^1 Sq^n = \begin{cases} Sq^{n+1} & \text{for } n \text{ even} \\ 0 & \text{for } n \text{ odd,} \end{cases}$$

$$Sq^2 Sq^n = \begin{cases} Sq^{n+2} + u Sq^{n+1} Sq^1 & \text{for } n \equiv 0 \pmod{4} \\ Sq^{n+1} Sq^1 & \text{for } n \equiv 1 \pmod{4} \\ u Sq^{n+1} Sq^1 & \text{for } n \equiv 2 \pmod{4} \\ Sq^{n+2} + Sq^{n+1} Sq^1 & \text{for } n \equiv 3 \pmod{4} \end{cases}$$

and

$$Sq^3 Sq^n = \begin{cases} Sq^{n+3} + a Sq^{n+1} Sq^1 & \text{for } n \equiv 0 \pmod{4} \\ Sq^{n+2} Sq^1 & \text{for } n \equiv 1 \pmod{4} \\ a Sq^{n+1} Sq^1 & \text{for } n \equiv 2 \pmod{4} \\ Sq^{n+2} Sq^1 & \text{for } n \equiv 3 \pmod{4}. \end{cases}$$

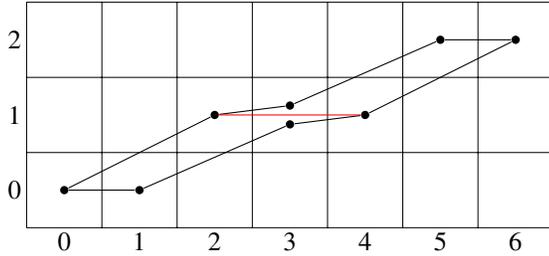
1.14

3.1 The subalgebra $\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)$

sec-

The subalgebra $\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)$

It follows that the subalgebra $\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)$ generated by Sq^1 and Sq^2 is a free \mathbf{M} -module with the expected basis as shown here.



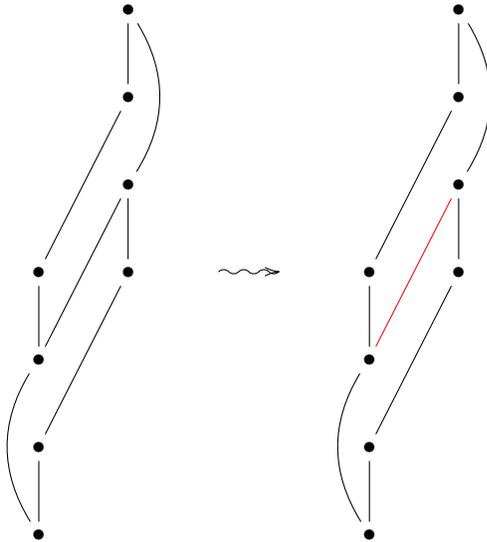
As before an element at (x, y) has degree $x - y + y\sigma$. Black lines of slopes 0 and $1/2$ indicate left multiplication by Sq^1 and Sq^2 respectively, with the Adem relation

$$Sq^2 Sq^2 = u Sq^3 Sq^1 = u Sq^1 Sq^2 Sq^1$$

indicated by the red line.

1.15

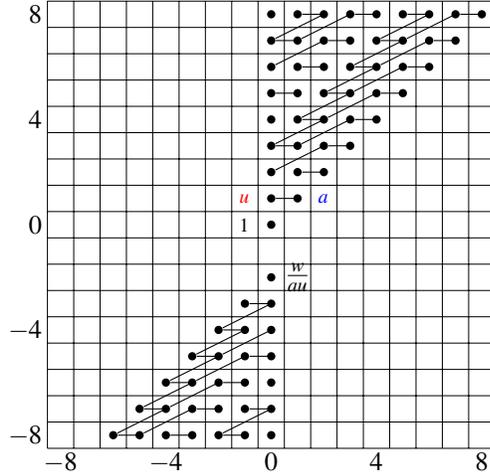
The subalgebra $\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)$ (continued)



1.16

The subalgebra $\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)$ (continued)

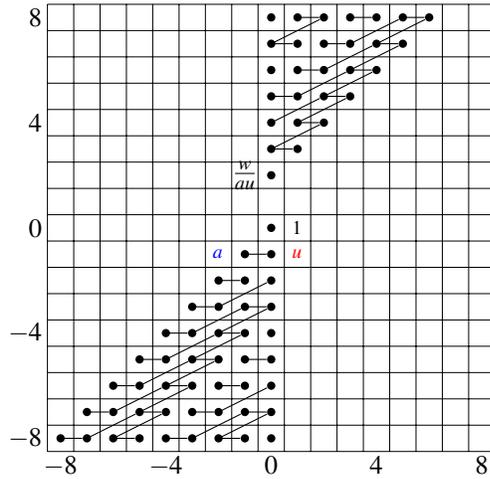
This chart shows the action of $\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)$ on $H_{C_2}^*(S^{-0})$.



1.17

The subalgebra $\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)$ (continued)

This chart shows the action of $\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)$ on the oppositely graded $H_*^{C_2}(S^{-0})$.



In this case Steenrod operations **lower** the stem degree.

1.18

4 The dual equivariant Steenrod algebra

The dual equivariant Steenrod algebra

Recall that the classical dual Steenrod algebra \mathcal{A}_* is a Hopf algebra over $\mathbb{Z}/2$, namely

$$\mathcal{A}_* = \mathbb{Z}/2[\xi_1, \xi_2, \dots], \quad \text{where } |\xi_i| = 2^i - 1,$$

with coproduct

$$\Delta(\xi_n) = \sum_{0 \leq i < n} \xi_{n-i}^{2^i} \otimes \xi_i, \quad \text{where } \xi_0 = 1.$$

We will rewrite this as

$$\mathcal{A}_* = \mathbb{Z}/2[\tau_0, \tau_1, \dots; \xi_1, \xi_2, \dots] / (\xi_i + \tau_{i-1}^2 : i > 0)$$

where $|\xi_i| = 2(2^i - 1)$ and $|\tau_i| = 1 + |\xi_i|$, with a similar coproduct. Thus we are renaming the original ξ_i as τ_{i-1} , and using the symbol ξ_i to denote the square of the original ξ_i .

The dual Steenrod algebra at an odd prime has a similar description with $\tau_i^2 = 0$.

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The dual equivariant Steenrod algebra (continued)

$$\mathcal{A}_* = \mathbb{Z}/2[\tau_0, \tau_1, \dots; \xi_1, \xi_2, \dots]/(\tau_i^2 + \xi_{i+1} : i \geq 0).$$

The equivariant dual Steenrod algebra $\mathcal{A}_*^{C_2}$ has a similar description.

Instead of being a Hopf algebra over $\mathbb{Z}/2$, it is a **Hopf algebroid** over \mathbf{M}_* , the oppositely graded dual of the ring \mathbf{M}^* described earlier. There is a right unit map η_R with

$$\eta_R(a) = a \quad \text{and} \quad \eta_R(u) = u + a\tau_0 =: \bar{u}.$$

The degrees of the generators are

$$|\xi_i| = (1 + \sigma)(2^i - 1) \quad \text{and} \quad |\tau_i| = 1 + |\xi_i|.$$

The multiplicative relations are

$$\tau_i^2 = a\tau_{i+1} + \bar{u}\xi_{i+1} \quad \text{for} \quad i \geq 0.$$

Setting $a = 0$ and $u = 1$ gives us the description of \mathcal{A}_* above.

1.20

5 $\mathcal{A}_*^{C_2}(1)_*$

The quotient $\mathcal{A}_*^{C_2}(1)_*$

$$\mathcal{A}_*^{C_2}(1)_* = \mathbf{M}_*[\tau_0, \tau_1, \dots; \xi_1, \xi_2, \dots]/(\tau_i^2 + \bar{u}\xi_{i+1} + a\tau_{i+1} : i \geq 0).$$

One could try to compute the group

$$\text{Ext}_{\mathcal{A}_*^{C_2}}^{*,*}(\mathbf{M}_*, \mathbf{M}_*),$$

but this is very complicated. One can start by replacing $\mathcal{A}_*^{C_2}$ by the subalgebra $\mathcal{A}_*^{C_2}(1)$ generated by Sq^1 and Sq^2 .

Classically we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{A}(1)_* &= \mathcal{A}_*/(\tau_0^4, \tau_1^2, \tau_2, \dots; \xi_1^2, \xi_2, \dots) \\ &= \mathbb{Z}/2[\tau_0, \tau_1, \xi_1]/(\tau_0^2 + \xi_1, \tau_1^2, \xi_1^2). \end{aligned}$$

Equivariantly we have

$$\mathcal{A}_*^{C_2}(1)_* = \mathbf{M}_*[\tau_0, \tau_1, \xi_1]/(\tau_0^2 + \bar{u}\xi_1 + a\tau_1, \tau_1^2, \xi_1^2).$$

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5.1 Inverting a

Inverting the element a

$$\mathcal{A}_*^{C_2}(1)_* = \mathbf{M}_*[\tau_0, \tau_1, \xi_1]/(\tau_0^2 + \bar{u}\xi_1 + a\tau_1, \tau_1^2, \xi_1^2).$$

Recall that $\mathbf{M}_* = \mathbf{M}_*^{\mathbb{R}} \oplus NC$ and $\mathbf{M}_*^{\mathbb{R}} = \mathbb{Z}/2[a, u]$. Thus $\mathbf{M}_*^{\mathbb{R}}$ is \mathbf{M}_* without the negative cone.

Suppose we formally invert a , which is the algebraic counterpart to passing to geometric fixed points. This will kill NC because each element in it is a -torsion. Thus we get a 4-term exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow NC \rightarrow \mathbf{M} \rightarrow a^{-1}\mathbf{M} = a^{-1}\mathbf{M}^{\mathbb{R}} \rightarrow \mathbf{M}^{\mathbb{R}}/(a^\infty) \rightarrow 0.$$

The multiplicative relation $\tau_0^2 + \bar{u}\xi_1 + a\tau_1 = 0$ can be rewritten as

$$\tau_1 = a^{-1}(\tau_0^2 + \bar{u}\xi_1).$$

It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} a^{-1}\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)_* &= a^{-1}\mathbf{M}_*[\tau_0, \tau_1, \xi_1]/(\tau_0^2 + \bar{u}\xi_1 + a\tau_1, \tau_1^2, \xi_1^2). \\ &= a^{-1}\mathbf{M}_*^{\mathbb{R}}[\tau_0, \xi_1]/(\tau_0^4, \xi_1^2). \end{aligned}$$

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Inverting the element a (continued)

We have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)_* &= \mathbf{M}_*[\tau_0, \tau_1, \xi_1]/(\tau_0^2 + \bar{u}\xi_1 + a\tau_1, \tau_1^2, \xi_1^2) \\ a^{-1}\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)_* &= a^{-1}\mathbf{M}_*^{\mathbb{R}}[\tau_0, \xi_1]/(\tau_0^4, \xi_1^2) \\ &= \mathbb{Z}/2[a^{\pm 1}, u][\tau_0, \xi_1]/(\tau_0^4, \xi_1^2), \end{aligned}$$

and the right unit is

$$u \mapsto u + a\tau_0 \quad \text{and} \quad u^2 \mapsto u^2 + a^2\tau_0^2 = u^2 + a^2(\bar{u}\xi_1 + a\tau_1).$$

The resulting Ext group is easily seen to be

$$a^{-1}\text{Ext}_{\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)}^{*,*}(\mathbf{M}_*, \mathbf{M}_*) = \mathbb{Z}/2[a^{\pm 1}, u^4][h_1],$$

where $h_1 = [\xi_1] \in \text{Ext}^{1,1+\sigma}$. This element is related to the equivariant Hopf map η mentioned at the start of the talk. **The nonnilpotence of h_1 in this Ext group is related to that of η in the equivariant stable homotopy category.**

1.23

5.2 Killing a

Killing the element a

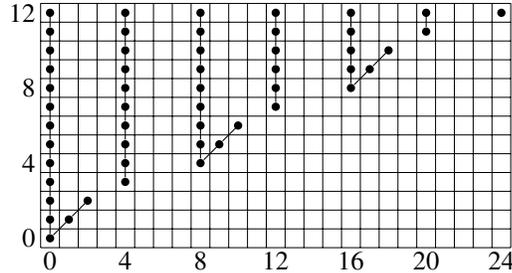
Again we have

$$\mathcal{A}^{C_2}(1)_* = \mathbf{M}_*[\tau_0, \tau_1, \xi_1]/(\tau_0^2 + \bar{u}\xi_1 + a\tau_1, \tau_1^2, \xi_1^2).$$

Now we consider the effect of **formally killing $a \in \mathbf{M}_*$** . Like inverting a , this will kill the negative cone since each element in it is divisible by a . Thus we have

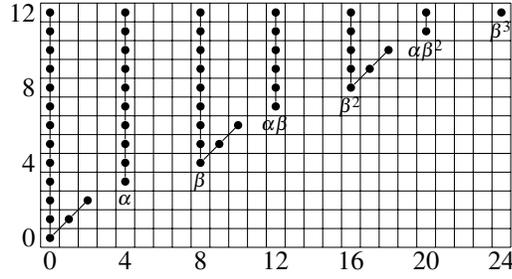
$$\mathbf{M}_*/(a) = \mathbf{M}_*^{\mathbb{R}}/(a) = \mathbf{M}_*^{\mathbb{C}} = \mathbb{Z}/2[u].$$

Recall that if we also set $u \mapsto 1$, we get the classical quotient $\mathcal{A}(1)_*$. Its Ext group is well known and is shown below.



1.24

Killing the element a (continued)



As a ring with generators and relations, we have

$$\text{Ext}_{\mathcal{A}(1)_*} = \mathbb{Z}/2[h_0, h_1, \alpha, \beta] / (h_0 h_1, h_1^3, h_1 \alpha, \alpha^2 + h_0^2 \beta),$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} h_0 &= [\tau_0] \in \text{Ext}^{1,1}, & h_1 &= [\xi_1] \in \text{Ext}^{1,2}, \\ \alpha &= \langle h_1^2, h_1, h_0 \rangle \in \text{Ext}^{3,7}, & \text{and } \beta &= \langle h_1^2, h_1, h_1^2, h_1 \rangle \in \text{Ext}^{4,12}. \end{aligned}$$

1.25

Killing the element a (continued)

As a ring with generators and relations, we have

$$\text{Ext}_{\mathcal{A}(1)_*} = \mathbb{Z}/2[h_0, h_1, \alpha, \beta] / (h_0 h_1, h_1^3, h_1 \alpha, \alpha^2 + h_0^2 \beta),$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} h_0 &= [\tau_0] \in \text{Ext}^{1,1}, & h_1 &= [\xi_1] \in \text{Ext}^{1,2}, \\ \alpha &= \langle h_1^2, h_1, h_0 \rangle \in \text{Ext}^{3,7}, & \text{and } \beta &= \langle h_1^2, h_1, h_1^2, h_1 \rangle \in \text{Ext}^{4,12}. \end{aligned}$$

The complex motivic answer is **only slightly different**.

$$\text{Ext}_{\mathcal{C}(1)_*} = \mathbf{M}^{\mathbb{C}}[h_0, h_1, \alpha, \beta] / (h_0 h_1, u h_1^3, h_1 \alpha, \alpha^2 + h_0^2 \beta),$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} h_0 &= [\tau_0] \in \text{Ext}^{1,1}, & h_1 &= [\xi_1] \in \text{Ext}^{1,1+\sigma}, \\ \alpha &= \langle u h_1^2, h_1, h_0 \rangle \in \text{Ext}^{3,5+2\sigma}, & \text{and } \beta &= \langle u h_1^2, h_1, u h_1^2, h_1 \rangle \in \text{Ext}^{4,8+4\sigma}. \end{aligned}$$

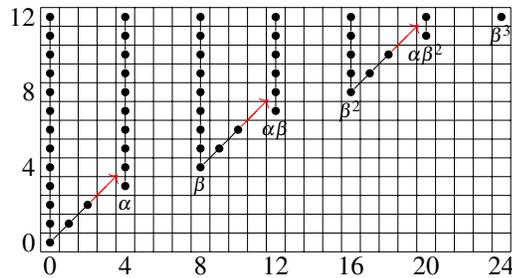
Note that while $u h_1^3 = 0$, all powers of h_1 itself are nontrivial, as was the case when we inverted a .

1.26

Killing the element a (continued)

$$\text{Ext}_{\mathcal{C}(1)_*} = \mathbf{M}^{\mathbb{C}}[h_0, h_1, \alpha, \beta] / (h_0 h_1, u h_1^3, h_1 \alpha, \alpha^2 + h_0^2 \beta),$$

Here is an illustrative chart.



Each red arrow is shorthand for a diagonal tower of elements related by h_1 and killed by u . The elements in black are u -torsion free. As before, an element in $\text{Ext}^{f,x+y\sigma}$ is shown at $(x+y-f, f)$. For example, the elements

$$h_1^4 \in \text{Ext}^{4,4+4\sigma} \quad \text{and} \quad h_0\alpha \in \text{Ext}^{4,6+2\sigma}$$

would both appear at $(4, 4)$.

1.27

5.3 The polar spectral sequence

The polar spectral sequence

$$\text{Ext}_{\mathcal{A}^C(1)_*} = \mathbf{M}^C[h_0, h_1, \alpha, \beta] / (h_0h_1, uh_1^3, h_1\alpha, \alpha^2 + h_0^2\beta),$$

Filtering $\mathbf{M}_*^{\mathbb{R}}$ (which is \mathbf{M}_* without the negative cone) by powers of a , the polar filtration, yields the polar spectral sequence

$$\mathbb{Z}/2[a] \otimes \text{Ext}_{\mathcal{A}^C(1)_*} \implies \text{Ext}_{\mathcal{A}^{\mathbb{R}}(1)_*}.$$

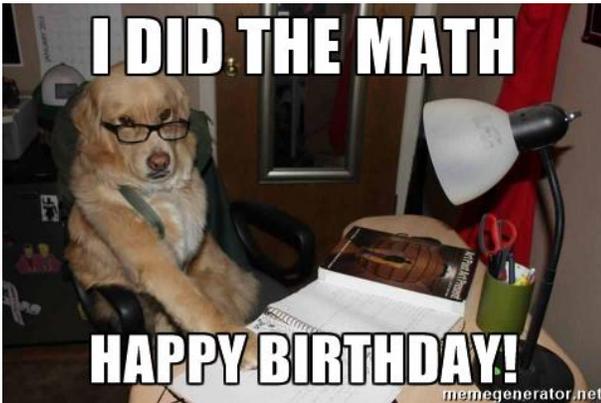
It has three differentials:

$$d_1(u) = ah_0, \quad d_2(u^2) = a^2uh_1 \quad \text{and} \quad d_3(u^3h_1^2) = a^3\alpha.$$

This leads to a ring with 9 generators and 22 relations.

The answer for the negative cone is even more complicated.

1.28



HAPPY BIRTHDAY,

PAUL!

1.29