

# GROUP ACTIONS ON SPHERES WITH RANK ONE PRIME POWER ISOTROPY

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ABSTRACT. We show that a rank two finite group  $G$  admits a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X \simeq S^n$  with rank one prime power isotropy if and only if  $G$  does not  $p'$ -involve  $\text{Qd}(p)$  for any odd prime  $p$ . This follows from a more general theorem which allows us to construct a finite  $G$ -CW-complex by gluing together a given  $G$ -invariant family of representations defined on the Sylow subgroups of  $G$ .

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Actions of finite groups on spheres can be studied in various different geometrical settings. The fundamental examples come from the unit spheres  $S(V)$  in a real or complex  $G$ -representation  $V$ , and already natural questions arise for these examples about the dimensions of the non-empty fixed sets  $S(V)^H$ ,  $H \leq G$ , and the structure of the isotropy subgroups.

A useful way to measure the complexity of the isotropy is the *rank*. We say that  $G$  has rank  $k$  if it contains a subgroup isomorphic to  $(\mathbb{Z}/p)^k$ , for some prime  $p$ , but no subgroup  $(\mathbb{Z}/p)^{k+1}$ , for any prime  $p$ . In this paper we answer the following question:

**Question.** For which finite groups  $G$ , does there exist a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X \simeq S^n$  with all isotropy subgroups of rank one ?

By P. A. Smith theory, the rank one assumption on the isotropy subgroups implies that  $G$  must have  $\text{rank}(G) \leq 2$  (see [6, Corollary 6.3]). Since every rank one finite group can act freely on a finite complex homotopy equivalent to a sphere (Swan [17]), we can restrict our attention to rank two groups. Here are three natural settings for the study of finite group actions on spheres:

- (A) smooth  $G$ -actions on closed manifolds homotopy equivalent to spheres;
- (B) finite  $G$ -homotopy representations (see tom Dieck [20, Definition 10.1]);
- (C) finite  $G$ -CW-complexes  $X \simeq S^n$ .

In contrast to  $G$ -representation spheres  $S(V)$ , the non-linear smooth  $G$ -actions on a smooth manifold  $M \simeq S^n$  exhibit more flexibility. For example, in the linear case, the fixed sets  $S(V)^H$  are always linear subspheres. For smooth actions, the fixed sets are smoothly embedded submanifolds but may not even be integral homology spheres.

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Well-known general constraints on smooth actions arise from P. A. Smith theory: if  $H$  is a subgroup of  $p$ -power order, for some prime  $p$ , then  $M^H$  is a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology sphere. In addition, even if the fixed sets are diffeomorphic to spheres, they may be knotted or linked as embedded subspheres in  $M$  (see [21], [3]). One can also consider topological  $G$ -actions, usually with the assumption of local linearity, otherwise the fixed sets may not be locally flat submanifolds.

In the setting (B) of  $G$ -homotopy representations, the objects of study are finite (or more generally finite-dimensional)  $G$ -CW-complexes  $X$  satisfying the property that for each  $H \leq G$ , the fixed point set  $X^H$  is homotopy equivalent to a sphere  $S^{n(H)}$  where  $n(H) = \dim X^H$ . We could also consider a version of this setting where  $\dim X^H$  is the same as its homological dimension, and  $X^H$  is a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology  $n(H)$ -sphere, for  $H$  of  $p$ -power order.

The third setting (C) is the most flexible of all. Here we suppose that  $X \simeq S^n$  is a finite  $G$ -CW-complex homotopy equivalent to a sphere, but do not require that  $\dim X = n$ . Moreover, we make no initial assumptions about the homology of the fixed sets  $X^H$ , although the conditions imposed by P. A. Smith theory with  $\mathbb{F}_p$ -coefficients still hold. In the setting (C), we will see that  $\dim X^H$  must be (much) higher in general than its homological dimension, and this provides new obstructions to understanding our motivating question in setting (A) or (B).

In this paper we provide a complete answer for the existence question in setting (C). Our construction produces  $G$ -CW-complexes with prime power isotropy.

**Theorem A.** *Let  $G$  be a finite group of rank two. If  $G$  admits a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X \simeq S^n$  with rank one isotropy then  $G$  is  $\text{Qd}(p)$ -free. Conversely, if  $G$  is  $\text{Qd}(p)$ -free, then there exists a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X \simeq S^n$  with rank one prime power isotropy.*

The group  $\text{Qd}(p)$  is defined as the semidirect product

$$\text{Qd}(p) = (\mathbb{Z}/p \times \mathbb{Z}/p) \rtimes SL_2(p)$$

with the obvious action of  $SL_2(p)$  on  $\mathbb{Z}/p \times \mathbb{Z}/p$ . We say  $\text{Qd}(p)$  is  $p'$ -involved in  $G$  if there exists a subgroup  $K \leq G$ , of order prime to  $p$ , such that  $N_G(K)/K$  contains a subgroup isomorphic to  $\text{Qd}(p)$ . If a group  $G$  does not  $p'$ -involve  $\text{Qd}(p)$  for any odd prime  $p$ , then we say that  $G$  is  $\text{Qd}(p)$ -free.

In our earlier work [5] and [6], we studied this problem in the setting (B) of  $G$ -homotopy representations, introduced by tom Dieck (see [20, Definition 10.1]). We found a list of conditions on a rank two finite group  $G$  that guarantees the existence of a finite  $G$ -homotopy representation with rank one prime power isotropy. Identifying the full list of necessary and sufficient conditions is still an open problem, but we did provide a complete answer [6, Theorem C] for rank two finite simple groups.

The necessity of the  $\text{Qd}(p)$ -free condition was established in [23, Theorem 3.3] and [6, Proposition 5.4]. In the other direction, if  $G$  is a rank two finite group which is  $\text{Qd}(p)$ -free then  $G$  has a  $p$ -effective representation  $V_p: G_p \rightarrow U(n)$  (see Definition 5.6) which can be used to construct finite  $G$ -CW-complexes  $X \simeq S^n$  with rank one isotropy. The existence of these  $p$ -effective representations was proved by Jackson [8, Theorem 47] and they were also one of the main ingredients for the constructions in Hambleton-Yalçın [6].

To do the construction in Theorem A, we prove a more technical theorem. We now introduce more terminology to state this theorem. For each prime  $p$  dividing the order of  $G$ , let  $G_p$  denote a fixed Sylow  $p$ -subgroup of  $G$ .

**Definition 1.1.** Suppose that we are given a family of *Sylow representations*  $\{V_p\}$  defined on Sylow  $p$ -subgroups  $G_p$ , over all primes  $p$ . We say the family  $\{V_p\}$  is  *$G$ -invariant* if

- (i)  $V_p$  *respect fusion in  $G$* , i.e., the character  $\chi_p$  of  $V_p$  satisfies  $\chi_p(gxg^{-1}) = \chi_p(x)$  whenever  $gxg^{-1} \in G_p$  for some  $g \in G$  and  $x \in G_p$ ; and
- (ii) for all  $p$ ,  $\dim V_p$  is equal to a fixed positive integer  $n$ .

Given a  $G$ -invariant family of Sylow representations  $\{V_p\}$ , we construct a  $G$ -equivariant spherical fibration  $q: E \rightarrow B$  over a contractible  $G$ -space  $B$  with isotropy in  $\mathcal{P}$  such that for every  $x \in \text{Fix}(B, G_p) = B^{G_p}$ , the fiber  $q^{-1}(x)$  is  $G_p$ -homotopy equivalent to  $S(V_p^{\oplus k})$  for some  $k \geq 1$  (see Theorem 3.4). The total space of this  $G$ -fibration has many interesting properties: in particular, it admits a  $G$ -map

$$f_0: \coprod_p G \times_{G_p} S(V_p^{\oplus k}) \rightarrow E.$$

By adapting the  $G$ -CW-surgery techniques introduced by Oliver-Petrie [12] to this  $G$ -map, we obtain a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X \simeq S^{2kn-1}$  whose restriction to Sylow  $p$ -subgroups resembles the linear spheres  $S(V_p^{\oplus k})$ . In particular, we prove the following theorem (see Definition 3.6 for the definition of  $p$ -local  $G$ -equivalence).

**Theorem B.** *Let  $G$  be a finite group. Suppose that  $\{V_p: G_p \rightarrow U(n)\}$  is a  $G$ -invariant family of Sylow representations. Then there exists a positive integer  $k \geq 1$  and a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X \simeq S^{2kn-1}$  with prime power isotropy, such that the  $G_p$ -CW-complex  $\text{Res}_{G_p}^G X$  is  $p$ -locally  $G_p$ -equivalent to  $S(V_p^{\oplus k})$ , for every prime  $p \mid |G|$ ,*

This theorem was stated by Petrie [13, Theorem C] in a slightly different form and a sketched proof was provided. Related results were proved by tom Dieck (see [18, Satz 2.5], [19, Theorem 1.7]). Although we use some of the steps of these arguments, we believe that a proof of Theorem B does not exist in the literature. All the previous constructions seem to aim towards obtaining a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X \simeq S^m$  with  $\dim X = m$ . However, we showed in [5] and [6] that there are additional necessary conditions for obtaining such a complex with prime power isotropy. Here is a specific example.

**Example 1.2.** Let  $G$  denote the dihedral group of order  $2q$ , with  $q$  an odd prime. Let  $V_2$  be a trivial representation of  $G_2 = \mathbb{Z}/2$ , and let  $V_q$  be a free unitary representation of  $G_q = \mathbb{Z}/q$ , such that  $\dim V_2 = \dim V_q$ . Then Theorem B shows that there exists a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X \simeq S^m$ , with  $\text{Fix}(X, G_2) \simeq S^m$  (2-locally), and  $\text{Fix}(X, G_q) = \emptyset$ , for some integer  $m = 2kn - 1$ . However, these conditions imply that  $\dim X > m$  by [5, Proposition 2.10] (compare [15, Theorem 4.2]).

The paper is organized as follows: In Section 2, we show that for every finite group  $G$ , there is a finite-dimensional contractible  $G$ -space  $B$  with prime power isotropy, such that for every  $p$ -subgroup  $H$ , the fixed point set  $X^H$  is  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -acyclic. This might be of

independent interest, since P. A. Smith theory only guarantees that the fixed sets are  $\mathbb{F}_p$ -acyclic. In Section 3, using this space as base space, we construct a  $G$ -equivariant fibration  $q: E \rightarrow B$  with fiber type  $S(V_H^{\oplus k})$ , for a given compatible family  $\{V_H\}$  of representations. The total space  $E$  has only prime power isotropy and its restriction to  $G_p$  is  $p$ -locally  $G_p$ -equivalent to  $S(V_p^{\oplus k})$  for some  $k \geq 1$ . However,  $E$  is not a finite  $G$ -CW complex, and this means that the methods of [12] must be applied with care.

In Section 4, we prove Proposition 4.1 which allows us to kill homology groups to reach to a  $p$ -local homotopy equivalence on fixed points of  $p$ -subgroups. In Section 5, we prove our main theorems (Theorem A and Theorem B). Theorem A essentially follows from Theorem B once we apply a theorem of Jackson [8] on the existence of  $p$ -effective characters for rank two finite groups which are  $\text{Qd}(p)$ -free.

Finally, we remark that Theorem A was also stated in Jackson [8, Proposition 48], but the indication of proof appears to confuse homotopy actions with finite  $G$ -CW-complexes. The motivation for Theorem A comes from the work of Adem and Smith [1] on the existence of free actions of finite groups on a product of two spheres. There is an interesting set of conditions related to this problem which we discussed in detail in [6, Section 1]. We refer the reader to this discussion for further details on the history of this problem.

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## 2. ACYCLIC COMPLEXES WITH PRIME POWER ISOTROPY

The main purpose of this section is to prove the following theorem.

**Theorem 2.1.** *Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $\mathcal{P}$  denote the family of all subgroups of  $G$  with prime power order. Then there exists a finite-dimensional contractible  $G$ -CW-complex  $X$ , with isotropy in  $\mathcal{P}$ , such that for every  $p$ -subgroup  $P \leq G$ , the fixed point subspace  $X^P$  is  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -acyclic.*

There is a similar theorem by Leary and Nucinkis [10, Proposition 3.1] for infinite groups acting on contractible complexes, which implies in particular that for a finite group  $G$ , there is a finite-dimensional contractible  $G$ -CW-complex  $X$  with isotropy in  $\mathcal{P}$ . But this contractible complex is constructed using a mapping telescope, and the fixed point subspaces are  $\mathbb{F}_p$ -acyclic but do not have finitely generated  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology.

Let  $\mathcal{F}_p$  denote the family of all  $p$ -subgroups of  $G$ . The family  $\mathcal{P}$  is the union of families  $\mathcal{F}_p$  over all over all primes  $p$  dividing the order of  $G$ . To prove Theorem 2.1, we first prove the following result.

**Proposition 2.2.** *Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $p$  be a prime such that  $p \mid |G|$ . Then, there exists a finite-dimensional  $G$ -CW-complex  $X$ , with isotropy in  $\mathcal{F}_p$ , such that for every  $p$ -subgroup  $P \leq G$ , the fixed point subspace  $X^P$  is  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -acyclic.*

A finite-dimensional  $\mathbb{F}_p$ -acyclic complex with  $p$ -subgroup isotropy is constructed in [7, Theorem 2.14]. But this construction also uses a mapping telescope so it does not have finitely generated  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology.

The construction we propose uses some of our earlier methods for constructing  $G$ -CW-complexes. In particular, we use chain complexes over the orbit category. Recall that the orbit category  $\Gamma_G := \text{Or}_{\mathcal{H}} G$  over a family  $\mathcal{H}$  is the category with objects  $G/H$ , where  $H \in \mathcal{H}$ , and whose morphisms are given by  $G$ -maps  $G/H \rightarrow G/K$ . Given a commutative ring  $R$  with unity, an  $R\Gamma_G$ -module is defined as contravariant functors from  $\Gamma_G$  to the abelian category of  $R$ -modules. For more details on  $R\Gamma_G$ -modules we refer the reader to [4] (see also Lück [11, §9, §17] and tom Dieck [20, §10-11]).

Recall that for every family  $\mathcal{H}$ , there is a universal space  $E_{\mathcal{H}}G$  such that isotropy subgroups of  $E_{\mathcal{H}}G$  are in  $\mathcal{H}$  and for every  $H \in \mathcal{H}$ , the fixed point set  $(E_{\mathcal{H}}G)^H$  is contractible. If  $\mathbf{C} = \mathbf{C}(E_{\mathcal{H}}G^?; R)$  denote the cellular chain complex (over the orbit category) of the space  $E_{\mathcal{H}}G$ , then  $\mathbf{C}$  is a chain complex of free  $R\Gamma_G$ -modules. Note that the augmented complex

$$\tilde{\mathbf{C}} : \cdots \rightarrow \mathbf{C}_n \xrightarrow{\partial_n} \mathbf{C}_{n-1} \xrightarrow{\partial_{n-1}} \mathbf{C}_{n-2} \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow \mathbf{C}_1 \rightarrow \mathbf{C}_0 \rightarrow \underline{R} \rightarrow 0,$$

is an exact sequence, where  $\underline{R}$  denotes the constant functor. Hence  $\mathbf{C}$  is a projective resolution of  $\underline{R}$  as an  $R\Gamma_G$ -module.

**Lemma 2.3.** *Let  $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{F}_p$ , the family of all  $p$ -subgroups in  $G$ , and let  $R = \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ . Then there is a positive integer  $n$  such that  $\ker \partial_{n-1}$  is a projective  $R\Gamma_G$ -module.*

*Proof.* This follows from the fact that  $\underline{R}$  has a finite projective dimension as an  $R\Gamma_G$ -module (see [4, Corollary 3.15]). Note that  $n$  can be taken as any integer greater or equal to the homological dimension of  $\underline{R}$  as an  $R\Gamma_G$ -module.  $\square$

Now we are ready to prove Proposition 2.2.

*Proof of Proposition 2.2.* Let  $\mathbf{C} = \mathbf{C}(E_{\mathcal{F}_p}G^?; R)$  and  $P = \ker \partial_{n-1}$  denote the projective  $R\Gamma_G$ -module for a suitably large  $n$  (as in Lemma 2.3). To avoid problems in low dimensions, we also assume  $n \geq 3$ . Let  $Q$  be a projective  $R\Gamma_G$ -module such that  $P \oplus Q$  is a free  $R\Gamma_G$ -module. Using the Eilenberg swindle, we see that  $\ker \partial_n \oplus F \cong F$ , where  $F = Q \oplus P \oplus Q \oplus \cdots$  is an infinitely generated free  $R\Gamma_G$ -module. Adding the chain complex

$$\cdots \rightarrow 0 \rightarrow F \xrightarrow{id} F \rightarrow 0 \rightarrow \cdots$$

to the truncated complex, we obtain a complex of free  $R\Gamma_G$ -modules

$$0 \rightarrow F \xrightarrow{\varphi} \mathbf{C}_{n-1} \oplus F \xrightarrow{(\partial_{n-1}, 0)} \mathbf{C}_{n-2} \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow \mathbf{C}_1 \rightarrow \mathbf{C}_0 \rightarrow 0$$

where the map  $\varphi$  is defined as the composition  $F \cong \ker \partial_{n-1} \oplus F \hookrightarrow \mathbf{C}_{n-1} \oplus F$ . Note that this chain complex can be lifted to a chain complex of free  $\mathbb{Z}\Gamma_G$ -modules

$$\mathbf{D} : 0 \rightarrow \mathbf{D}_n \rightarrow \mathbf{D}_{n-1} \rightarrow \mathbf{D}_{n-2} \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow \mathbf{D}_0 \rightarrow 0$$

where the resulting complex has homology groups that are (possibly infinitely generated) abelian groups with torsion coprime to  $p$ . Because of the special structure of the original  $R\Gamma_G$ -complex, we can assume that the lifting  $\mathbf{D}$  is of the form

$$\mathbf{D} : 0 \rightarrow \hat{F} \xrightarrow{\hat{\varphi}} \hat{\mathbf{C}}_{n-1} \oplus \hat{F} \xrightarrow{(\partial_{n-1}, 0)} \hat{\mathbf{C}}_{n-2} \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow \hat{\mathbf{C}}_1 \rightarrow \hat{\mathbf{C}}_0 \rightarrow 0$$

where  $\hat{\mathbf{C}}_i = \mathbf{C}_i(E_{\mathcal{F}_p}G; \mathbb{Z})$  and  $\hat{F}$  is a free  $\mathbb{Z}\Gamma_G$ -module such that  $\hat{F} \otimes R \cong F$ .

The map  $\widehat{\varphi}$  is obtained as follows: let  $\{e_i\}$  be a basis for  $F$  as an  $R\Gamma_G$ -module. For each  $i$ , there is an integer  $s_i$ , coprime to  $p$ , such that  $\varphi(s_i e_i) \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}_{n-1} \oplus \widehat{F}$ . Let  $\widehat{F}$  be the  $\mathbb{Z}\Gamma_G$ -submodule of  $F$  generated by  $\{s_i e_i\}$  and  $\widehat{\varphi}$  be the map induced by  $\varphi$ . It is easy to see from this that the reduced homology of this complex  $\mathbf{D}$  is zero except at dimension  $n-1$  and  $H_{n-1}(\mathbf{D})$  is a torsion abelian group with torsion coprime to  $p$  (possibly infinitely generated).

Note that we can assume that  $\mathbf{D}$  is partially realized by the  $(n-1)$ -skeleton of the complex  $E_{\mathcal{F}_p}G$ . In fact, by attaching orbits of cells to  $E_{\mathcal{F}_p}G$  with  $p$ -subgroup isotropy, we can assume that  $\mathbf{D}$  is realized for dimensions  $\leq n-1$ . The last realization step can be done using [4, Lemma 8.1]. Note that for this step we need to assume  $n \geq 3$ .

Hence, we can conclude that for every finite group  $G$ , there is a finite-dimensional  $G$ -CW-complex  $X$  with isotropy in  $\mathcal{F}_p$ , such that

- (i)  $X$  is  $n$ -dimensional and  $(n-2)$ -connected where  $n = \max\{3, \text{homdim } R\}$ ;
- (ii) for each  $P \in \mathcal{F}_p$ , the only nontrivial reduced homology of the fixed point subspace  $X^P$  is at dimension  $n-1$  and  $H_{n-1}(X)$  is a torsion abelian group with torsion coprime to  $p$ .

In particular, for every  $P \in \mathcal{F}_p$ , the fixed point subspace  $X^P$  is  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -acyclic. Hence this completes the proof of Proposition 2.2.  $\square$

*Proof of Theorem 2.1.* In Proposition 2.2 we have constructed a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -acyclic complex  $X_p$  of dimension  $n_p$ , for each  $p \mid |G|$ . Let  $X$  be the join  $\ast X_p$  of all the  $X_p$ 's over all  $p \mid |G|$ . The reduced homology of  $X$  is nonzero only at dimension  $n-1$ , where  $n = \prod n_p$ , and

$$H_{n-1}(X) \cong \bigotimes_{p \mid |G|} H_{n_p-1}(X_p).$$

Since  $H_{n_p-1}(X_p)$  is a torsion group coprime to  $p$ , the homology group  $H_{n-1}(X)$  is a torsion abelian group with torsion coprime to  $|G|$ . Such an abelian group has two step free resolution. To see this, note that as a  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -module  $N = H_{n-1}(X)$  is cohomologically trivial since it is a torsion group with torsion coprime to the order of the group. If we take a free cover of  $N$ , then we get an exact sequence of the form

$$0 \rightarrow M \rightarrow F_0 \rightarrow N \rightarrow 0.$$

Note that the module  $M$  is both torsion free and cohomologically trivial. Hence by [2, Theorem 8.10, p. 152],  $M$  is a projective module. By an Eilenberg swindle argument, we can add free modules to  $M$  and  $F_0$  to obtain a two step free resolution for  $N$ . This means, we can kill the last homology group at dimension  $n-1$  by adding free orbits of cells. By taking further joins if necessary, we can assume that  $X$  is simply connected, hence the resulting  $G$ -CW-complex is contractible. For each  $1 \neq P \in \mathcal{F}_p$ , we have  $H_*(X^P; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}) \cong H_*(X_p^P; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}) \cong H_*(pt; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)})$ , so the fixed subspace  $X^P$  is  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -acyclic for every  $P \in \mathcal{F}_p$ .  $\square$

### 3. $G$ -EQUIVARIANT FIBRATIONS

Let  $G$  be a finite group. In this section, we first give some necessary definitions related to  $G$ -fibrations and then construct a  $G$ -fibration over a contractible base space with prime

power isotropy. For more details on this material we refer the reader to [24, Section 2] and to some earlier references mentioned in that paper.

**Definition 3.1.** A  $G$ -fibration is a  $G$ -map  $q: E \rightarrow B$  which satisfies the following homotopy lifting property for every  $G$ -space  $X$ : given a commuting diagram of  $G$ -maps

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X \times \{0\} & \xrightarrow{h} & E \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow q \\ X \times I & \xrightarrow{H} & B, \end{array}$$

there exists a  $G$ -map  $\tilde{H}: X \times I \rightarrow E$  such that  $\tilde{H}|_{X \times \{0\}} = h$  and  $p \circ \tilde{H} = H$ .

If  $p: E \rightarrow B$  is a  $G$ -fibration, then for every  $x \in B$ , the isotropy subgroup  $G_x \leq G$  acts on the fiber space  $F_x = q^{-1}(x)$ . So,  $F_x$  is a  $G_x$ -space.

**Definition 3.2.** Let  $\mathcal{H}$  be a family of subgroups of  $G$  and  $\{F_H\}$  denote a family of  $H$ -spaces over all  $H \in \mathcal{H}$ . If for every  $x \in B$ , the isotropy subgroup  $G_x$  lies in  $\mathcal{H}$  and the fiber space  $F_x$  is  $G_x$ -homotopy equivalent to  $F_{G_x}$ , then  $p: E \rightarrow B$  is said to have *fiber type*  $\{F_H\}$ .

Here and throughout the paper a *family of subgroups* always means a collection of subgroups which are closed under conjugation and taking subgroups. In general a  $G$ -fibration does not have to satisfy the above criteria: for  $x, y \in B$  with  $G_x = G_y = H$ , it may happen that  $F_x$  and  $F_y$  are not  $H$ -homotopy equivalent. Throughout the paper we only consider  $G$ -fibrations which do have a fiber type.

We will construct  $G$ -equivariant spherical fibrations whose fiber type is given by a family of linear  $G$ -spheres. To start we assume that we are given a compatible family of representations.

**Definition 3.3.** Let  $\mathcal{H}$  be a family of subgroups of  $G$  and  $\mathbf{V} = \{V_H\}$  denote a family of complex  $H$ -representations defined over  $H \in \mathcal{H}$ . We say  $\mathbf{V}$  is a *compatible family of representations* if  $f^*(V_K) \cong V_H$  for every  $G$ -map  $f: G/H \rightarrow G/K$ . In this case, we call  $\mathbf{V}$  an  $\mathcal{H}$ -representation (see [6, Definition 3.1]).

Note that since  $1 \in \mathcal{H}$ , all the  $H$ -representations  $V_H$  in  $\mathbf{V}$  have the same dimension. We call this common dimension the dimension of  $\mathbf{V}$ . We have the following result as a main tool for constructions of  $G$ -fibrations which was first proved by Klaus [9, Proposition 2.7]].

**Theorem 3.4.** *Let  $G$  be a finite group, with  $\mathcal{H}$  a family of subgroups. Let  $B$  be a finite-dimensional  $G$ -CW-complex such that the isotropy subgroup  $G_x$  lies in  $\mathcal{H}$ , for every  $x \in B$ . Given a compatible family of complex representations  $\mathbf{V} = \{V_H\}$  defined over  $\mathcal{H}$ , there exists an integer  $k \geq 1$  and a  $G$ -equivariant spherical fibration  $q: E \rightarrow B$  such that the fiber type of  $q$  is  $\{S(V_H^{\oplus k})\}$ .*

*Proof.* See [24, Proposition 4.3]. □

We will apply this theorem to construct a  $G$ -fibration over a base space with prime power isotropy. As before, let  $\mathcal{P}$  denote the family of all subgroups of  $G$  with prime power order, and  $\mathcal{F}_p$  denote the family of all  $p$ -subgroups of  $G$ .

**Lemma 3.5.** *Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $\{V_p\}$  be a  $G$ -invariant family of Sylow representations (see Definition 1.1). For each  $H \in \mathcal{F}_p$ , let  $V_H$  be the representation obtained from  $V_p$  via the map*

$$H \xrightarrow{c^g} gHg^{-1} \hookrightarrow G_p$$

where  $c^g$  denotes the conjugation map  $h \mapsto ghg^{-1}$  and the second map is the inclusion map (the element  $g \in G$  is chosen arbitrarily such that  $gHg^{-1} \leq G_p$ ). Then the collection  $\mathbf{V} = (V_H)_{H \in \mathcal{P}}$  is a compatible family of representations over  $\mathcal{P}$ .

*Proof.* We only need to check that when  $H, K \leq G_p$  are such that  $H = gKg^{-1}$  for some  $g \in G$ , then  $(c^g)^*(V_H) \cong V_K$  as  $K$ -representations. Note that the isomorphism holds because for every  $x \in K$ , we have

$$(c^g)^*(\chi_p)(x) = \chi_p(gxg^{-1}) = \chi_p(x)$$

by the character formula given in Definition 1.1. This also shows that the compatible family  $\{V_H\}$  does not depend on the elements  $g \in G$  chosen to define it (up to isomorphism).  $\square$

Suppose that we are given a  $G$ -invariant family of Sylow representations  $\{V_p\}$ . Then by Lemma 3.5, this gives a compatible family of representations  $\mathbf{V} = (V_H)$ . Let  $B$  be the  $G$ -CW-complex constructed in Proposition 2.1. By applying Proposition 3.4 to the base space  $B$  with family  $\mathbf{V}$ , we obtain a  $G$ -equivariant spherical fibration  $q: E \rightarrow B$  with fiber type  $\{S(V_H^{\oplus k})\}_{H \in \mathcal{P}}$  for some  $k \geq 1$ .

The total space  $E$  satisfies the certain properties which will be used in our construction of finite homotopy  $G$ -spheres.

**Definition 3.6.** A  $G$ -map  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  between two  $G$ -spaces is called a  $p$ -local  $G$ -equivalence if for every subgroup  $H \leq G$ , the map on fixed point sets  $f^H: X^H \rightarrow Y^H$  induces an isomorphism on  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology.

We say that two  $G$ -spaces  $X$  and  $Y$  are  $p$ -locally  $G$ -equivalent if for some  $k$  there are  $G$ -spaces  $\{X_i\}$  and  $\{Y_i\}$ , for  $0 \leq i \leq k$ , such that  $X_0 = X$  and  $Y_k = Y$ , together with two families of  $G$ -maps  $X_i \rightarrow Y_i$  for  $i \geq 0$ , and  $X_i \rightarrow Y_{i-1}$  for  $i > 0$ , which are  $p$ -local  $G$ -equivalences.

Now we prove the main result of this section.

**Proposition 3.7.** *Let  $G$  be a finite group, and let  $\{V_p\}$  be a  $G$ -invariant family of Sylow representations. Then there exists an integer  $k \geq 1$  and a finite-dimensional  $G$ -CW-complex  $E$ , with isotropy in  $\mathcal{P}$ , satisfying the following properties:*

- (i)  $E$  is homotopy equivalent to a sphere  $S^{2kn-1}$  where  $n = \dim V_p$ ;
- (ii) For every  $H \in \mathcal{P}$ , the fixed point subspace  $E^H$  is simply connected;
- (iii) For every  $p \mid |G|$ , there is a  $G_p$ -map  $j_p: S(V_p^{\oplus k}) \rightarrow E$  which is a  $p$ -local  $G_p$ -equivalence.



*Proof.* Let  $B$  be a contractible  $G$ -CW-complex as in Theorem 2.1, and  $E$  be the total space of a fibration  $q: E \rightarrow B$  with fiber type  $\{S(V_H^{\oplus k})\}_{H \in \mathcal{P}}$  for some  $k \geq 1$ . By construction of the  $G$ -fibration, the total space  $E$  is a  $G$ -homotopy equivalent to a finite-dimensional  $G$ -CW-complex (see [24, Proposition 4.4]). Since  $B$  has isotropy in  $\mathcal{P}$ , the total space  $E$  has isotropy in  $\mathcal{P}$ . Since  $B$  is contractible,  $E$  is homotopy equivalent to  $S^{2kn-1}$ .

For every  $H \leq G$ , the induced map  $q^H: E^H \rightarrow B^H$  on fixed subspaces is a fibration with fiber type  $F^H$ . We can assume that for every  $P \in \mathcal{F}_p$ , the fixed point subspace  $B^H$  is simply connected (if not we can replace  $B$  with  $B * B$ ). We can also assume that the subspaces  $F^H$  are simply connected by replacing  $k$  with a larger integer if necessary. Using the long exact homotopy sequence for the fibration  $F^H \rightarrow E^H \rightarrow B^H$ , we obtain that  $E^H$  is simply connected for every  $H \in \mathcal{P}$ .

For second statement, observe that for every  $p \mid |G|$ , the fixed point space  $B^{G_p}$  is non-empty, by P. A. Smith Theory. If we take  $x \in B^{G_p}$ , then the inclusion map  $i_x: \{x\} \rightarrow B^{G_p}$  induces a  $G_p$ -map  $j_x: F_x \rightarrow E$ , where  $F_x = q^{-1}(x)$ . By the definition of fiber type, we have  $F_x \simeq S(V_p^{\oplus k})$  as a  $G_p$ -space. We define  $j_p$  as the composite  $S(V_p^{\oplus k}) \simeq F_x \xrightarrow{j_x} E$  which is a  $G_p$ -map. For each subgroup  $H \leq G_p$ , we have a fibration diagram:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} F_x^H & \xlongequal{\quad} & F_x^H \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ F_x^H & \xrightarrow{j_x^H} & E^H \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \{x\} & \xrightarrow{i_x^H} & B^H. \end{array}$$

Since  $i_x^H$  induces a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology isomorphism, the map  $j_x^H$  also induces a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology isomorphism. This can be seen easily by a spectral sequence argument. Note that  $B^H$  is simply connected, so the  $E_2$ -term of the Serre spectral sequence for the second fibration is of the form  $E_2^{i,j} = H^i(B^H; H^j(F_x^H, \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}))$  with untwisted coefficients. By comparing two spectral sequences, we see that  $j_x^H$  induces an isomorphism on  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology. This shows that  $j_p$  is a  $p$ -local  $G_p$ -equivalence.  $\square$

#### 4. $p$ -LOCAL $G$ -CW-SURGERY

Let  $G$  be a finite group,  $\mathcal{P}$  denote the family of subgroups of  $G$  with prime power order, and  $\{V_p\}$  be a  $G$ -invariant family of Sylow representations  $V_p: G_p \rightarrow U(n)$  over all primes  $p$  dividing the order of  $G$ . In Section 3, we proved that there is a finite-dimensional  $G$ -CW-complex  $E$ , with isotropy in  $\mathcal{P}$ , homotopy equivalent to  $S^{2kn-1}$  for some  $k \geq 1$ , satisfying some further fixed point properties.

To prove Theorem B we will need to replace  $E$  with a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X$  having properties similar to  $E$ , with possibly a larger  $k \geq 1$ . We will do this by applying the  $G$ -CW-surgery techniques introduced in [12] to a particular  $G$ -map (see also [22]).

By part (iii) of Proposition 3.7, there is a  $G_p$ -map  $j_p: S(V_p^{\oplus k}) \rightarrow E$  which induces a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology isomorphism on fixed subspaces, for every  $p \mid |G|$ . Using these maps we

can define a  $G$ -map

$$f_0: \coprod_{p||G} G \times_{G_p} S(V_p^{\oplus k}) \rightarrow E$$

by taking  $f_0(g, x) = gj_p(x)$  for every  $g \in G$  and  $x \in S(V_p^{\oplus k})$ . It is clear that  $f_0$  is well-defined and it is a  $G$ -map, where the  $G$ -action on  $G \times_{G_p} S(V_p^{\oplus k})$  is by left multiplication. We will apply  $G$ -CW-surgery methods to this map to convert it to a homotopy equivalence.

The first step of this surgery method is to get a  $p$ -local homology equivalence on  $H$ -fixed subspaces for every nontrivial  $p$ -subgroup  $H \leq G$ . We will do this step-by-step by a downward induction starting from Sylow  $p$ -subgroups. At a particular step  $H$  we will need to attach cells to complete that step. The following proposition is the main result of this section and it states exactly what we will need to complete a particular step in the downward induction.

**Proposition 4.1.** *Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a  $G$ -map between two simply connected  $G$ -CW-complexes, with isotropy subgroups in  $\mathcal{F}_p$ , such that*

- (i)  $X$  is a finite complex and  $X^P$  is an odd-dimensional  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology sphere for every  $p$ -subgroup  $1 \neq P \leq G$ ;
- (ii)  $Y$  is a finite-dimensional complex with finitely generated  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology;
- (iii) The Euler characteristic  $\sum_i \dim_{\mathbb{Q}}(-1)^i [H_i(Y; \mathbb{Q})] = 0 \in R_{\mathbb{Q}}(G)$ , the rational representation ring of  $G$ .

If for every  $p$ -subgroup  $1 \neq P \leq G$ , the induced map  $f^P: X^P \rightarrow Y^P$  on fixed point sets is a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology equivalence, then by attaching finitely many free  $G$ -orbits of cells to  $X$ , we can extend  $f$  to a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology equivalence  $f': X' \rightarrow Y$ .

Given a  $G$ -map  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  between two  $G$ -CW-complexes, we define the  $n$ -th homotopy group of  $f$ , denoted by  $\pi_n(f)$ , as the equivalence classes of pairs of maps  $(\alpha, \beta)$  such that the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} S^{n-1} & \xrightarrow{i} & D^n \\ \downarrow \alpha & & \downarrow \beta \\ X & \xrightarrow{f} & Y \end{array}$$

commutes, where  $i: S^{n-1} \rightarrow D^n$  is the inclusion map of the boundary of  $D^n$ . The equivalence relation is given by a pair of homotopy that fits into a similar diagram. It is easy to show that  $\pi_n(f)$  is isomorphic to the  $n$ -th homotopy group of the pair  $\pi_n(Z_f, X)$ , where  $Z_f$  denotes the mapping cylinder  $(X \times I) \cup_f Y$ . We consider  $X$  as a subspace by identifying  $X$  with  $X \times \{0\}$ .

In a similar way, we can define relative homology group of a  $G$ -map  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  in coefficients in  $R$  as follows:

$$K_*(f; R) := H_*(Z_f, X; R) \cong \tilde{H}_*(M_f; R),$$

following the notation in [12], where  $M_f$  denotes the mapping cone of  $f$ . We recall the relative Hurewicz theorem for homotopy groups of pairs.

**Lemma 4.2.** *Let  $R = \mathbb{Z}$  or  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$  for some prime  $p$ , and let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a map between two simply connected spaces. For  $n \geq 2$ , if  $\pi_i(f) \otimes R = 0$  for all  $i < n$ , then  $K_n(f; R) = 0$  for all  $i < n$  and the Hurewicz map  $\pi_n(f) \otimes R \rightarrow K_n(f; R)$  is an isomorphism.*

*Proof.* See [14, Theorem 7.5.4]. □

The Hurewicz theorem allows us to realize homology classes as homotopy classes. We kill the corresponding homotopy class by attaching free orbits of cells to  $X$  and extending the map  $f$ . If the homotopy class is represented by a pair of maps  $(\alpha, \beta)$  as above, then the space  $X'$  is defined as the space  $X' = X \cup_{\alpha} D^n$  and the map  $f': X' \rightarrow Y$  is defined by

$$f'(x) = \begin{cases} f(x) & \text{if } x \in X \\ \beta(x) & \text{if } x \in D^n \end{cases}$$

In the homotopy group  $\pi_n(f')$ , the homotopy class for the pair  $(\alpha, \beta)$  is now zero and this cell attachment does not introduce any more homotopy classes at dimensions  $i \leq n$ .

Let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a  $G$ -map as in Proposition 4.1. By applying this cell attachment method we can assume that  $f$  is extended to a map  $f_1: X_1 \rightarrow Y$  such that  $d := \dim X_1 > \dim Y$  and  $f_1$  induces an  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology isomorphism in dimensions  $i < d$ . Since  $Y$  has finitely generated  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology, in the process only finitely many free  $G$ -orbits are attached to  $X$ . So  $X_1$  is still a finite complex.

Note that  $K_i(f_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)})$  is nonzero only at dimension  $i = d + 1$ , and

$$M := K_{d+1}(f_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}) \cong H_d(X_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}).$$

Since  $X_1$  is a finite complex and  $d = \dim X_1$ , as a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -module  $M$  is a finitely generated and torsion free. We claim that  $M$  is a free  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}G$ -module. First we prove a lemma which shows, in particular, that  $M$  is projective.

**Lemma 4.3.** *Let  $R = \mathbb{Z}$  or  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ , and let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a  $G$ -map such that  $d := \dim X > \dim Y$  and  $f$  induces an  $R$ -homology isomorphism on dimensions  $i < d$ . Assume also that for every  $1 \neq H \leq G$ , the induced map  $f^H: X^H \rightarrow Y^H$  on fixed point subspaces is an  $R$ -homology equivalence. Then  $K_{d+1}(f; R)$  is a projective  $RG$ -module.*

*Proof.* Let  $X^s = \cup_{1 \neq H \leq G} X^H$  and  $f^s: X^s \rightarrow Y^s$  denote the restriction of  $f$  to the singular set. For every nontrivial subgroup  $H \leq G$ , the induced map  $f^H: X^H \rightarrow Y^H$  is an  $R$ -homology equivalence. This gives, in particular, that  $f^s: X^s \rightarrow Y^s$  is an  $R$ -homology equivalence. Let  $Z_f^s := X \cup Z_{f^s}$ . Consider the homology sequence for the triple  $(Z_f, Z_f^s, X)$  with coefficients in  $R$ :

$$\cdots \rightarrow H_i(Z_f^s, X) \rightarrow H_i(Z_f, X) \rightarrow H_i(Z_f, Z_f^s) \rightarrow H_{i-1}(Z_f^s, X) \rightarrow \cdots$$

We have

$$H_i(Z_f^s, X) = H_i(X \cup Z_{f^s}, X) \cong H_i(Z_{f^s}, X^s) = 0$$

for all  $i$ , because  $f^s$  is an  $R$ -homology equivalence. From this we obtain that  $H_i(Z_f, Z_f^s) \cong H_i(Z_f, X)$ , hence  $H_i(Z_f, Z_f^s; R) = 0$  for  $i < d + 1$  and it is isomorphic to  $K_{d+1}(f; R)$  when  $i = d + 1$ .

The chain complex for the pair  $(Z_f, Z_f^s)$  in  $R$ -coefficients gives an exact sequence of  $RG$ -modules

$$0 \rightarrow K_{d+1}(f; R) \rightarrow C_{d+1}(Z_f, Z_f^s; R) \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow C_0(Z_f, Z_f^s; R) \rightarrow 0.$$

For all  $i$ , the modules  $C_i(Z_f, Z_f^s; R)$  are free  $RG$ -modules, hence this exact sequence splits and  $K_{d+1}(f; R)$  is a projective  $RG$ -module.  $\square$

Applying this lemma to the map  $f_1: X_1 \rightarrow Y$  constructed above, we obtain that  $M = K_{d+1}(f_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}) \cong H_d(X_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)})$  is a projective  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}G$ -module. Now we show that  $M$  is a free  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}G$ -module.

**Lemma 4.4.** *Let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a  $G$ -map as in Proposition 4.1 and  $f_1: X_1 \rightarrow Y$  is the map obtained by attaching cells to  $X$  as above. Then,  $K_{d+1}(f_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)})$  is a finitely-generated free  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}G$ -module.*

*Proof.* By Lemma 4.3,  $M = K_{d+1}(f_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)})$  is a projective  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}G$ -module. Let  $\mathbb{Q}M = \mathbb{Q} \otimes M$ . By [12, Lemma 2.4],  $M$  is a free  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}G$ -module if  $\chi_{\mathbb{Q}M}(g) = 0$  for all  $1 \neq g \in G$ . Since  $M \cong H_d(X_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)})$  and  $X_1$  is a finite  $G$ -CW-complex, we can calculate  $\chi_{\mathbb{Q}M}$  using the the chain complex of  $X_1$ . Let

$$0 \rightarrow C_d(X_1; \mathbb{Q}) \rightarrow C_{d-1}(X_1; \mathbb{Q}) \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow C_0(X_1; \mathbb{Q}) \rightarrow 0$$

be the chain complex for  $X_1$  in  $\mathbb{Q}$ -coefficients. In rational representation ring of  $G$ , we have

$$(-1)^d [H_d(X_1; \mathbb{Q})] + \sum_{i=0}^{d-1} (-1)^i [H_i(X_1; \mathbb{Q})] = \sum_{i=1}^d (-1)^i [C_i(X_1; \mathbb{Q})]$$

Since  $f_1$  induces  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology isomorphism at dimensions  $i < d$ , we get

$$\sum_{i=0}^{d-1} (-1)^i [H_i(X_1; \mathbb{Q})] = \sum_{i=0}^{d-1} (-1)^i [H_i(Y; \mathbb{Q})] = 0$$

by the assumption in Proposition 4.1. This gives that for every  $1 \neq g \in G$ ,

$$(-1)^d \chi_{\mathbb{Q}M}(g) = \sum_{i=1}^d (-1)^i \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} C_i(X_1^g; \mathbb{Q}) = \sum_{i=1}^d (-1)^i \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} H_i(X_1^g; \mathbb{Q}) = \chi(X_1^{(g)})$$

Since for every  $p$ -group  $1 \neq H \leq G$ , the fixed point set  $X_1^H$  is an odd dimensional  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology sphere, we have  $\chi(X_1^H) = 0$  for every nontrivial  $p$ -subgroup  $H \leq G$ . When  $1 \neq H \leq G$  is a  $p'$ -subgroup, then  $X_1^H$  is empty, so again the Euler characteristic is zero. Hence  $\chi_{\mathbb{Q}M}(g) = 0$  for all  $1 \neq g \in G$ . We conclude that  $M$  is a free  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}G$ -module.  $\square$

*Proof of Proposition 4.1.* Let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a  $G$ -map as in Proposition 4.1, and let  $f_1: X_1 \rightarrow Y$  be the  $G$ -map obtained by attaching cells, as described above, so that  $f_1$  induces an  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology isomorphism in dimensions  $i < d$ . By Lemma 4.4,  $M = K_{d+1}(f_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)})$  is a finitely-generated free  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}G$ -module. By Lemma 4.2,

$$K_{d+1}(f_1; \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}) \cong \pi_{d+1}(f_1) \otimes \mathbb{Z}_{(p)},$$

and hence  $\pi_{d+1}(f_1)$  contains a finitely-generated free  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -module  $M' \subseteq \pi_{d+1}(f_1)$  with index prime to  $p$ . We attach free orbits of  $G$ -cells to  $X_1$  using the pairs of maps  $(\alpha, \beta)$  representing homotopy classes of  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -basis elements in  $M'$ . The resulting map  $f': X' \rightarrow Y$  is a  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$ -homology equivalence.  $\square$

## 5. PROOF OF MAIN THEOREMS

In this section we prove Theorem A and Theorem B as stated in the introduction. Theorem A will follow from Theorem B almost directly by applying a theorem by Jackson [8, Theorem 47].

Let  $G$  be a finite group,  $\mathcal{P}$  denote the family of all subgroups of  $G$  with prime power order. Suppose we are given a  $G$ -invariant family of Sylow representations  $\{V_p\}$  over the primes dividing the order of  $G$ . We will construct a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X \simeq S^{2kn-1}$  such that for every  $p \mid |G|$ , the restriction of  $X$  to  $G_p$  is  $p$ -locally  $G_p$ -equivalent to  $S(V_p^{\oplus k})$ , for some  $k \geq 1$ . We showed in Section 4 that there is a  $G$ -map  $f_0: X_0 \rightarrow E$  where

$$X_0 = \coprod_{p \mid |G|} G \times_{G_p} S(V_p^{\oplus k})$$

and  $E$  is the total space of the fibration constructed in Section 3. The  $G$ -map  $f_0$  is induced from the  $G_p$ -maps  $j_p: S(V_p^{\oplus k}) \rightarrow E$  which were introduced in Proposition 3.7.

We will first show that by a downward induction and by attaching cells at each step, we can extend the map  $f_0$  to a map  $f_1: X_1 \rightarrow E$  such that  $f_1^H: X_1^H \rightarrow E^H$  is a  $p$ -local homology equivalence for every nontrivial  $p$ -subgroup  $H \leq G$ . Since we work with unitary representations, the fixed point subspace  $E^H$  is an odd dimensional sphere with trivial  $N_G(H)/H$ -action. This implies in particular that as an  $N_G(H)/H$ -space the fixed point subspace  $E^H$  satisfies the Euler characteristic condition for the target space in Proposition 4.1.

To show that each step of the downward induction can be performed, suppose  $H$  is a nontrivial  $p$ -subgroup such that  $f_1^K$  is a  $p$ -local homology equivalence for every  $K$  with  $|K| > |H|$ . Consider the induced  $N_G(H)/H$  action on  $X_1^H$ . By Proposition 4.1, we can add free  $N_G(H)/H$ -orbits of cells to  $X_1^H$  to extend  $f_1^H$  to a  $p$ -local homology equivalence. In fact, by adding cells of orbit type  $G/H$  (instead of just  $N_H(H)/H$ -orbits) to  $X_1$  we can make  $X_1^L$  a mod- $p$  equivalence for every  $L \leq G$  conjugate to  $G$ . This shows that downward induction can be carried out until we reach to a map  $f_1: X_1 \rightarrow E$  such that  $f_1^H$  is a  $p$ -local homology equivalence for every nontrivial  $p$ -subgroup  $H \leq G$ , for all the primes  $p \mid |G|$ .

As we did in the previous section, we can add free cells to  $X_1$  and extend  $f_1$  to a map  $f_2: X_2 \rightarrow E$  such that  $f_2$  induces a homotopy equivalence for dimensions  $i < d$  where  $d := \dim X_2 > \dim E$ .

**Lemma 5.1.** *The module  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -module  $M := K_{d+1}(f_2) \cong H_d(X_2, \mathbb{Z})$  is a finitely-generated projective module.*

*Proof.* It is enough to show that for every  $p \mid |G|$ , the  $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}G_p$ -module  $\text{Res}_{G_p}^G M \otimes \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$  is projective. This follows from Lemma 4.3.  $\square$

In general,  $M$  does not have to be a free  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -module, but we will obtain this condition by taking further joins. To describe the obstructions for finiteness, we need to introduce more definitions.

**Definition 5.2.** Let  $X$  be a finite  $G$ -CW-complex which has integral homology of an  $m$ -dimensional (orientable) sphere for  $i \leq m$  and for each  $i \geq m + 1$ , assume that  $H_i(X, \mathbb{Z})$  is a projective  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -module. Then we say  $X$  is a  $G$ -resolution of an  $m$ -sphere.

Let  $\tilde{K}_0(\mathbb{Z}G)$  denote the Grothendieck ring of finitely generated projective  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -modules, modulo finitely generated free modules. We define the finiteness obstruction of  $G$ -resolution of an  $m$ -sphere as follows:

**Definition 5.3.** Let  $X$  be a  $G$ -resolution of an  $m$ -sphere. The finiteness obstruction of  $X$  is defined as an element in  $\tilde{K}_0(X)$  as follows:

$$\sigma(X) = \sum_{i=m+1}^{\dim X} (-1)^i [H_i(X)] \in \tilde{K}_0(\mathbb{Z}G).$$

We have the following observation:

**Lemma 5.4.** Let  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  be  $G$ -resolutions of spheres of dimensions  $m_1 - 1$  and  $m_2 - 1$ . Then the join space  $X_1 * X_2$  is a resolution of a sphere of dimension  $m_1 + m_2 - 1$ . Moreover, we have  $\sigma(X_1 * X_2) = (-1)^{m_2} \sigma(X_1) + (-1)^{m_1} \sigma(X_2)$ .

*Proof.* Since tensor product (over  $\mathbb{Z}$ ) of a projective module with any torsion-free  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -module is projective, it is easy to see that all the homology above the dimension  $m_1 + m_2 - 1$  will be projective. So,  $X_1 * X_2$  is a  $G$ -resolution. Moreover, the tensor product of any two finitely generated projective  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -modules is stably free as a  $\mathbb{Z}G$ -module (See [4, Proposition 7.7]). So the only homology groups that contribute nontrivially to  $\sigma(X_1 * X_2)$  will be the homology modules of the form  $H_i(X_1) \otimes H_{m_2-1}(X_2)$ , with  $i \geq m_1$ , or of the form  $H_{m_1-1}(X_1) \otimes H_i(X_2)$ , with  $i \geq m_2$ .  $\square$

By Swan [16, Prop. 9.1], the obstruction group  $\tilde{K}_0(\mathbb{Z}G)$  is a finite abelian group, so we can apply the above lemma to conclude that there is a positive integer  $l$ , such that  $\sigma(*_l X_2) = 0$ . Note that  $f_2$  induces a  $G$ -map  $*_l f_2: *_l X_2 \rightarrow *_l E$ . We need the following result to complete the proof of Theorem B.

**Lemma 5.5.** Let  $X$  be a  $G$ -resolution of an  $(m-1)$ -dimensional sphere and let  $f: X \rightarrow E$  be a  $G$ -map which induces a homotopy equivalence in dimensions  $\leq m-1$ . If  $\sigma(X) = 0$  in  $\tilde{K}_0(\mathbb{Z}G)$ , then by adding finitely many free cells to  $X$ , the  $G$ -map  $f$  can be extended to a  $G$ -map  $f': X' \rightarrow E$  which induces an isomorphism on homology.

*Proof.* By adding free cells to  $X$  above dimension  $m-1$ , we can assume we have a map  $f_1: X_1 \rightarrow E$  such that all the homology of  $X_1$  is concentrated at  $d = \dim X_1 > m-1$ . Then, it is easy to see that  $(-1)^d [H_d(X_1)] = \sigma(X_1) = 0$ , hence  $H_d(X_1)$  is stably free. By adding free cells to  $X_1$  at dimension  $d$  and  $d-1$ , we can kill all the remaining homology and extend  $f$  to a  $G$ -map  $f': X' \rightarrow E$  which induces an isomorphism on homology.  $\square$

*Proof of Theorem B.* Starting from the map  $f_0: X_0 \rightarrow E$ , we first apply  $p$ -local surgery methods to get a map  $f_1: X_1 \rightarrow E$  which induced a  $p$ -local homology equivalence on fixed points  $X_1^H \rightarrow E^H$  for every nontrivial  $p$ -subgroup  $H \leq G$ . This is done by a downward induction as described above. Then we add free orbits of cells to  $X_1$  to obtain a map  $f_2: X_2 \rightarrow E$  where  $X_2$  is a  $G$ -resolution. Here we use Lemma 5.1 to conclude that  $X_2$  is indeed a  $G$ -resolution. Finally we use Lemma 5.4 and 5.5 to kill the remaining homology by taking further joins.

As a result of the above construction we obtain a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X$  and a  $G$ -map  $f: X \rightarrow *_l E$  which induces a homotopy equivalence. Since  $*_l E \simeq S^{2kln-1}$ , it follows that  $X$  is homotopy equivalent to a sphere of dimension  $2kln - 1$ . For every  $p \mid |G|$ , we have  $G_p$ -maps  $X \rightarrow E$  and  $S(V_p^{\oplus k}) \rightarrow E$  which induce  $p$ -local homology equivalences on fixed points. So  $\text{Res}_{G_p}^G X$  and  $S(V_p^{\oplus k})$  are  $p$ -locally  $G_p$ -equivalent.  $\square$

Before giving a proof for Theorem A, we recall the following definition.

**Definition 5.6.** A finite group  $G$  has a  $p$ -effective representation if it has a representation  $V_p: G_p \rightarrow U(n)$  which respects fusion (see Definition 1.1) and satisfies  $\langle V_p|_E, 1_E \rangle = 0$  for each elementary abelian  $p$ -subgroup  $E \leq G$  with  $\text{rank } E = \text{rank}_p G$ .

*Proof of Theorem A.* Let  $G$  be a finite group of rank two which is  $\text{Qd}(p)$ -free. By Jackson [8, Theorem 47], for each  $p \mid |G|$ , there is a  $p$ -effective representation  $V_p$ . By taking multiples of these representations if necessary, we can assume that they have a common dimension. This gives a  $G$ -invariant family  $\{V_p\}$  such that  $\langle V_p|_E, 1_E \rangle = 0$  for every elementary abelian  $p$ -subgroup  $E \leq G$  with  $\text{rank } E = 2$ . Applying Theorem B to this  $G$ -invariant family, we obtain a finite  $G$ -CW-complex  $X$  homotopy equivalent to a sphere  $S^{2kn-1}$ , for some  $k \geq 1$ , such that  $\text{Res}_{G_p}^G X$  is  $p$ -locally  $G_p$ -equivalent to  $S(V_p^{\oplus k})$ , for every  $p \mid |G|$ . In particular, for every  $p$ -subgroup  $H \leq G$ , the fixed point space  $X^H$  has the same  $p$ -local homological dimension as the fixed point sphere  $S(V_p^{\oplus k})^H$ . Since  $S(V_p)^E = \emptyset$ , we have  $S(V_p^{\oplus k})^H = \emptyset$  for every subgroup  $H \leq G$  with  $\text{rank}(H) = 2$ . Hence the isotropy subgroups of  $X$  are all rank one subgroups with prime power order.  $\square$

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