

## SMITH PROBLEM FOR A FINITE OLIVER GROUP WITH NON-TRIVIAL CENTER

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Smith problem is that two tangential representations are isomorphic or not for a smooth action on a homotopy sphere with exactly two fixed points. Two real  $G$ -modules  $U$  and  $V$  are called *Smith equivalent* if there exists a smooth action of  $G$  on a sphere  $\Sigma$  such that  $S^G = \{x, y\}$  for two points  $x$  and  $y$  at which  $T_x(\Sigma) \cong U$  and  $T_y(\Sigma) \cong V$  as real  $G$ -modules. We will consider a subset  $Sm(G)$  of the real representation ring  $RO(G)$  of  $G$  consisting of the differences  $U - V$  of real  $G$ -modules  $U$  and  $V$  which are Smith equivalent. We also define a subset  $CSm(G)$  of  $RO(G)$  consisting of the differences  $U - V \in Sm(G)$  of real  $G$ -modules  $U$  and  $V$  such that for the sphere  $\Sigma$  appearing in the notion of Smith equivalence of  $U$  and  $V$  satisfies that  $\Sigma^P$  is connected for every  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ . Moreover, we assume that  $0 \in CSm(G)$  as definition.

In many groups, Smith equivalent modules are not isomorphic. In this paper we discuss the Smith problem for an Oliver group with non-trivial center. Throughout this paper we assume a group is finite.

### 2. TOPOLOGICAL VIEWPOINT

We denote by  $\mathcal{P}(G)$  the family of subgroups of  $G$  consisting of the trivial subgroup of  $G$  and all subgroups of  $G$  of prime power order, and by  $\mathcal{L}(G)$  the family of large subgroups of  $G$ . Here, by a *large subgroup* of  $G$  we mean a subgroup  $H \leq G$  such that  $O^p(G) \leq H$  for some prime  $p$ , where  $O^p(G)$  is the smallest normal subgroup of  $G$  such that  $|G/O^p(G)| = p^k$  for some integer  $k \geq 0$ . A real  $G$ -module  $V$  is called  $\mathcal{L}(G)$ -free if  $\dim V^H = 0$  for each  $H \in \mathcal{L}(G)$ , which amounts to saying that  $\dim V^{O^p(G)} = 0$  for each prime  $p$  dividing  $|G|$ . Following [PSo], we denote by  $LO(G)$  the subgroup of  $RO(G)$  consisting of the differences  $U - V$  of two real  $\mathcal{L}(G)$ -free  $G$ -modules  $U$  and  $V$  such that  $\text{Res}_P^G(U) \cong \text{Res}_P^G(V)$  for every  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ .

For two subgroups  $P < H$  of  $G$  with  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ , and a smooth  $G$ -manifold  $X$  or a real  $G$ -module  $X$ , we consider the number

$$d_X(P, H) = \dim X^P - 2 \dim X^H$$

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where  $\dim$  means the dimension of the  $G$ -CW complex. Furthermore we define by  $\dim Z = \dim X - \dim Y$  for a virtual real  $G$ -module  $Z = X - Y$  of  $RO(G)$ . A smooth  $G$ -manifold  $X$  satisfies the *gap condition* (GC) if  $d_X(P, H) > 0$  for every pair  $(P, H)$  of subgroups  $P < H$  of  $G$  with  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ .

The following theorem goes back to [PSo], the Realization Theorem.

**Theorem 2.1** ([PSo]). *Let  $G$  be a finite Oliver gap group. Then  $LO(G) \subseteq CSm(G)$ .*

We impose a number of restrictions on a smooth  $G$ -manifold, in particular, a real  $G$ -module  $X$ . The restrictions are collected in the following conditions, where we consider series  $P < H \leq G$  of subgroups  $P$  and  $H$  of  $G$  always with  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ . We say that a smooth  $G$ -manifold  $X$  satisfies the *weak gap condition* (WGC) if the conditions (WGC1)–(WGC4) all hold (cf. [LM], [MP]), and we say that  $X$  satisfies the *semi-weak gap condition* (SWGC) if the conditions (WGC1) and (WGC2) both hold.

(WGC1)  $d_X(P, H) \geq 0$  for every  $P < H \leq G$ ,  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ .

(WGC2) If  $d_X(P, H) = 0$  for some  $P < H \leq G$ ,  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ , then  $[H : P] = 2$ ,  $\dim X^H > \dim X^K + 1$  for every  $H < K \leq G$ , and  $X^H$  is connected.

(WGC3) If  $d_X(P, H) = 0$  for some  $P < H \leq G$ ,  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ , and  $[H : P] = 2$ , then  $X^H$  can be oriented in such a way that the map  $g: X^H \rightarrow X^H$  is orientation preserving for any  $g \in N_G(H)$ .

(WGC4) If  $d_X(P, H) = d_X(P, H') = 0$  for some  $P < H$ ,  $P < H'$ ,  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ , then the smallest subgroup  $\langle H, H' \rangle$  of  $G$  containing  $H$  and  $H'$  is not a large subgroup of  $G$ .

Now, for a finite group  $G$ , we define subgroups  $VLO(G)$ ,  $WLO(G)$  and  $MLO(G)$  of the free abelian group  $LO(G)$  as follows.

$$VLO(G) = \{U - V \in LO(G) \mid U \oplus W \text{ and } V \oplus W \text{ both satisfy the gap condition for some real } \mathcal{L}(G)\text{-free } G\text{-module } W\}$$

$$WLO(G) = \{U - V \in LO(G) \mid U \oplus W \text{ and } V \oplus W \text{ both satisfy the weak gap condition for some real } \mathcal{L}(G)\text{-free } G\text{-module } W\}$$

$$MLO(G) = \{U - V \in LO(G) \mid U \oplus W \text{ and } V \oplus W \text{ both satisfy the semi-weak gap condition for some real } \mathcal{L}(G)\text{-free } G\text{-module } W\}$$

Note that if  $\mathcal{P}(G) \cap \mathcal{L}(G) = \emptyset$  then for an  $\mathcal{L}(G)$ -free real  $G$ -modules  $U$  and  $V$  there is a real  $\mathcal{L}(G)$ -free  $G$ -module  $W$  such that both  $U \oplus W$  and  $V \oplus W$  satisfy (WGC2), and if  $G$  is an Oliver group then for an  $\mathcal{L}(G)$ -free real  $G$ -modules  $U$  and  $V$  there is a real  $\mathcal{L}(G)$ -free  $G$ -module  $W$  such that both  $U \oplus W$  and  $V \oplus W$  satisfy (WGC2) and (WGC4).

In general,  $VLO(G) \subseteq WLO(G) \subseteq MLO(G) \subseteq LO(G)$  by definitions. But if  $G$  is a gap group, then for every  $U - V \in LO(G)$ , there exists a real  $\mathcal{L}(G)$ -free  $G$ -module  $W$  satisfying the gap condition, such that  $U \oplus W$  and  $V \oplus W$  also satisfy the gap condition, and thus  $U - V \in VLO(G)$ , and hence

$$VLO(G) = WLO(G) = MLO(G) = LO(G).$$

Therefore, the following theorem extends the result in Theorem 2.1 by using Theorem in [MP].

**Theorem 2.2.** *Let  $G$  be a finite Oliver group. Then  $WLO(G) \subseteq CSm(G)$ .*

### 3. ALGEBRAIC VIEWPOINT

We denote by  $PO(G)$  the subgroup of  $RO(G)$  of  $G$  consisting of the differences  $U - V$  of representations  $U$  and  $V$  such that  $\dim U^G = \dim V^G$  and  $\text{Res}_P^G(U) \cong \text{Res}_P^G(V)$  for any subgroup  $P$  of  $G$  of prime power order. We note that in [PSo],  $PO(G)$  is denoted by  $IO(G, G)$ . Similarly, we denote by  $\overline{PO}(G)$  the subgroup of  $RO(G)$  of  $G$  consisting of the differences  $U - V$  of representations  $U$  and  $V$  such that  $\dim U^G = \dim V^G$  and  $\text{Res}_P^G(U) \cong \text{Res}_P^G(V)$  for any subgroup  $P$  of  $G$  of odd prime power order and order 2, 4. By a theorem of Sanchez [Sa], the difference of two Smith equivalent representations lies in  $\overline{PO}(G)$  and the difference of two  $\mathcal{P}$ -matched Smith equivalent representations lies in  $PO(G)$ .

We define the Laitinen number  $a_G$  as the number of real conjugacy classes in  $G$  represented by elements of  $G$  not of prime power order. The rank of  $PO(G)$  is equal to the maximum of 0 and  $a_G - 1$ . Moreover the rank of  $\overline{PO}(G)$  is equal to the rank of  $PO(G)$  plus the number of all real conjugacy classes represented by 2-elements of order  $\geq 8$ . Now, let  $H$  be a normal subgroup of  $G$ . We denote by  $PO(G, H)$  the subgroup of  $RO(G)$  consisting of the differences  $U - V$  of representations  $U$  and  $V$  such that  $U^H \cong V^H$  as representations over  $G/H$ , and  $\text{Res}_P^G(U) \cong \text{Res}_P^G(V)$  for any subgroup  $P$  of prime power order. Again, we note that in [PSo],  $PO(G, H)$  is denoted by  $IO(G, H)$ . It holds that  $PO(G) = PO(G, G)$ . Let  $b_{G/H}$  be the number of all real conjugacy classes in  $G/H$  which are images from real conjugacy classes of  $G$  represented by elements not of prime power order by the surjection  $G \rightarrow G/H$ . Then the rank of  $PO(G, H)$  is equal to  $a_G - b_{G/H}$  (see [PSo]).

**Proposition 3.1** (cf. [PSo]). *It holds that*

$$PO(G, G^{nil}) \leq LO(G) \leq PO(G) \leq \overline{PO}(G) \leq RO(G).$$

Note that  $G^{nil} = \cap_p O^p(G)$ . Also it is known that

$$LO(G) \subseteq CSm(G) \subseteq Sm(G)$$

if  $G$  is an Oliver gap group.

### 4. UPPER RESTRICTION

Let  $S$  be a set of primes dividing  $|G|$  and 1, and let denote by  $G^{nS}$  the normal subgroup of  $G$  defined as

$$G^{nS} = \bigcap_{L \triangleleft G; [G:L] \in S} L.$$

**Theorem 4.1** ([M07a, KMK]). *Let  $G$  be a finite Oliver group. We set  $S = \{2, 3\}$  if a Sylow 2-subgroup of  $G$  is normal and set  $S = \{2\}$  otherwise. Then it holds that*

$$CSm(G) \subseteq PO(G, G^{\cap S}) \quad \text{and} \quad Sm(G) \subseteq \overline{PO}(G, G^{\cap S}).$$

*In addition if  $G$  is a gap group and  $G^{nil} = G^{\cap S}$ , then it holds that*

$$LO(G) = CSm(G) = PO(G, G^{nil}).$$

*Here  $G^{nil}$  is the minimal subgroup among normal subgroups  $N$  of  $G$  such that  $G/N$  is nilpotent.*

In particular,  $a_G = b_{G/G^{\cap S}}$  yields that  $CSm(G) = 0$ .

**Proposition 4.2** (cf. [PSu08]).  *$G/G^{\cap S}$  is an elementary abelian group.*

## 5. KNOWN RESULTS

In this section we summarize several known results ([Ju, M07a, M07b, PSo, PSu07, Su]). First we treat a non-solvable group. Pawałowski and Solomon [PSo] showed that  $0 \neq PO(G, G^{nil}) \subseteq CSm(G)$  if  $G$  is a non-solvable gap group with  $a_G \geq 2$ , Pawałowski and Sumi [PSu07] showed that  $0 \neq LO(G) \cap CSm(G)$  if  $G$  is a non-solvable group with  $a_G \geq 2$ , except  $Aut(A_6)$ ,  $P\Sigma L(2, 27)$ , and Morimoto [M07a, M07b] showed that  $Sm(Aut(A_6)) = 0$  and  $CSm(P\Sigma L(2, 27)) \neq 0$ . Combining these results we can state that

**Theorem 5.1.** *For a finite non-solvable group  $G$ ,  $Sm(G) \neq 0$  if and only if  $a_G \leq 1$  or  $G \cong Aut(A_6)$ .*

We say that an element not of prime power order is an NPP element. Morimoto showed the following theorem to get  $CSm(P\Sigma L(2, 27)) \neq 0$ .

**Theorem 5.2** (Morimoto). *Let  $G$  be an Oliver gap group. Suppose that  $O^2(G)$  has a dihedral subgroup  $D_{2pq}$  of order  $2pq$  with distinct primes  $p$  and  $q$  and  $G$  has two real conjugacy classes of NPP elements contained in  $O^2(G)$ . Then  $CSm(G) \neq 0$ .*

To show  $LO(G) \cap CSm(G) \neq 0$  for a non-solvable group with  $LO(G) \neq 0$ , Pawałowski and Sumi introduced a basic pair (cf. [PSu07, Su]). Let  $f: G \rightarrow G/G^{nil}$  be a natural homomorphism. For two NPP elements  $x$  and  $y$  of an finite Oliver group  $G$ , we call  $(x, y)$  a basic pair, if  $f(x) = f(y)$ ,  $x$  is not real conjugate to  $y$ , and one of the following claims is satisfied:

- (1)  $x$  and  $y$  are elements of some gap subgroup of  $G$ .
- (2)  $|x|$  is even and the involution of  $\langle x \rangle$  is conjugate to the involution of  $\langle y \rangle$  in  $G$ .

We denote by  $\pi(G)$  the set of all primes dividing the order of  $G$ . Note that  $\langle x \rangle G^{nil} = \langle y \rangle G^{nil}$  as  $f(x) = f(y)$ . Recall that if  $|x|$  is even, then for the involution  $c$  of  $\langle x \rangle$ ,  $c \in O^2(G)$  or  $|\pi(O^2(C_G(c)))| \geq 2$ , then  $\langle x \rangle O^2(G)$  is a gap group.

**Theorem 5.3** ([PSu07]). *If an Oliver group has a basic pair, it holds  $LO(G) \cap CSm(G) \neq 0$ .*

Recall that  $LO(G/G^{nil}) \subseteq LO(G)$ . Furthermore we have

**Proposition 5.4.**  $2LO(G/G^{nil}) \subseteq WLO(G)$  and in particular  $LO(G/G^{nil}) \neq 0$  implies  $CSm(G) \neq 0$ .

Then  $LO(G) \cap CSm(G) = 0$  implies  $LO(G/G^{nil}) = 0$ . Thus the following proposition is important.

**Proposition 5.5** ([PSu07]). *Let  $H$  be a nilpotent group with  $LO(H) = 0$ . Then  $H$  is isomorphic to one of the following groups:*

- (1) a  $p$ -group for a prime  $p$ ,
- (2)  $C_2 \times P$  for an odd prime  $p$  and a  $p$ -group  $P$ , or
- (3)  $P \times C_3$  for a 2-group  $P$  such that any element is self-conjugate.

**Lemma 5.6.** *If  $a_G \geq 2$  and  $LO(G) = 0$  it holds  $|\pi(G/G^{nil})| = 1, 2$ .*

*Proof.* If  $|\pi(G/G^{nil})| \geq 3$ , then  $G/G^{nil}$  is a gap group with  $LO(G/G^{nil}) \neq 0$ , a contrary. If  $|\pi(G/G^{nil})| = 0$ , then  $G$  is perfect and thus  $\text{rank } LO(G) = a_G - 1 > 0$ , a contrary.  $\square$

**Theorem 5.7.** *If  $LO(G) \cap CSm(G) = 0$ , then  $G$  has no element  $x$  with  $|\pi(\langle x \rangle)| \geq 3$ .*

*Proof.* We assume that  $x$  is an element of  $G$  of order  $pqr$  such that  $p, q, r$  are distinct primes. It is clear that  $a_G \geq 4$ . We may assume that  $x^{pq} \in G^{nil}$  by Lemma 5.6. Then  $(x^{pq}x^{qr}x^{pr}, x^{qr}x^{pr})$  is a basic pair, a contrary.  $\square$

Thus  $|\pi(\langle c \rangle)| \leq 2$  for each non-trivial element  $c \in Z(G)$ .

## 6. INDUCED MODULES AND $PO(G)$

Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $\text{NPP}(G)$  be the set of all elements of  $G$  not of prime power order. Note that  $\text{NPP}(G)$  does not contain the identity element. For the real representation ring  $RO(G)$ , the real vector space  $RO(G) \otimes \mathbb{R}$  is identified with the vector space consisting of all maps from the set of real conjugacy classes of  $G$  to the real number field  $\mathbb{R}$ . We denote by  $1_{(g)_{\pm}^G}$  the map defined by  $1_{(g)_{\pm}^G}((g)_{\pm}^G) = 1$  and  $1_{(g)_{\pm}^G}((a)_{\pm}^G) = 0$  if  $a$  is not real conjugate to  $g$ . Then

$$RO(G) \otimes \mathbb{R} \cong \langle 1_{(g)_{\pm}^G} \mid (g)_{\pm}^G \subseteq G \rangle$$

and

$$RO(G)_{\mathcal{P}(G)} \otimes \mathbb{R} \cong \langle 1_{(g)_{\pm}^G} \mid g \in \text{NPP}(G) \rangle.$$

Let  $K$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . The induced map  $\text{Ind}_K^G 1_{(k)_{\pm}^K}$  has a non-zero value at  $(g)_{\pm}^G$  only if  $g$  is real conjugate to  $k$  in  $G$ , i.e.  $(g)_{\pm}^G = (k)_{\pm}^G$ , since

$$\text{Ind}_K^G 1_{(k)_{\pm}^K}((a)_{\pm}^G) = \sum_{\substack{bKeG/K \\ b^{-1}ab \in K}} 1_{(k)_{\pm}^K}((b^{-1}ab)_{\pm}^K).$$

We denote by  $RO(G)_{\mathcal{P}(G)}$  the subset of  $RO(G)$  consisting the differences  $U - V$  of real representations  $U$  and  $V$  such that  $\text{Res}_P^G(U) \cong \text{Res}_P^G(V)$  for  $P \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ . It is clear that

$$PO(G) = \text{Ker}(\text{Fix}^G : RO(G)_{\mathcal{P}(G)} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}).$$

We have the following commutative diagram.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} RO(K)_{\mathcal{P}(K)} \otimes \mathbb{R} & \longrightarrow & (\text{Ind}_K^G RO(K)_{\mathcal{P}(K)}) \otimes \mathbb{R} & \xrightarrow{\subseteq} & RO(G)_{\mathcal{P}(G)} \otimes \mathbb{R} \\ \downarrow \cong & & \downarrow \cong & & \downarrow \cong \\ \langle 1_{(k)_{\pm}^K} \mid k \in \text{NPP}(K) \rangle & \longrightarrow & \langle 1_{(k)_{\pm}^G} \mid k \in \text{NPP}(K) \rangle & \xrightarrow{\subseteq} & \langle 1_{(g)_{\pm}^G} \mid g \in \text{NPP}(G) \rangle \end{array}$$

It holds that

$$(\text{Ind}_K^G RO(K)_{\mathcal{P}(K)}) \otimes \mathbb{R} = (\text{Ind}_K^G RO(K))_{\mathcal{P}(G)} \otimes \mathbb{R}$$

and then that

$$(\text{Ind}_K^G RO(K)_{\mathcal{P}(K)}) \otimes \mathbb{Q} = (\text{Ind}_K^G RO(K))_{\mathcal{P}(G)} \otimes \mathbb{Q}.$$

Since an element of  $RO(G)$  is a linear combination with rational coefficients of induced modules of  $RO(C)$  for cyclic subgroups  $C$  of  $G$ , we obtain that

$$\sum_{\substack{(C)^G \\ C \leq G}} (\text{Ind}_C^G RO(C)_{\mathcal{P}(C)}) \otimes \mathbb{Q} = RO(G)_{\mathcal{P}(G)} \otimes \mathbb{Q}.$$

Furthermore, noting  $\text{Ind}_C^G RO(C)_{\mathcal{P}(C)} = 0$  for  $C \in \mathcal{P}(G)$ , it holds that

$$\sum_{\substack{(g)^G \\ g \in \text{NPP}(G)}} (\text{Ind}_{\langle g \rangle}^G RO(\langle g \rangle)_{\mathcal{P}(\langle g \rangle)}) \otimes \mathbb{Q} = RO(G)_{\mathcal{P}(G)} \otimes \mathbb{Q}.$$

If  $g$  has order  $2p$  for an odd prime  $p$ , then  $RO(\langle g \rangle)_{\mathcal{P}(\langle g \rangle)} \otimes \mathbb{Q}$  is spanned by

$$(2\mathbb{R} - \mathbb{R}[\langle x^p \rangle]) \otimes (2\mathbb{R} - \eta)$$

for all real irreducible modules  $\eta$  over  $\langle g^2 \rangle$  and  $PO(\langle g \rangle) \otimes \mathbb{Q}$  is spanned by

$$(2\mathbb{R} - \mathbb{R}[\langle x^p \rangle]) \otimes (\eta - \eta')$$

for all non-trivial real irreducible modules  $\eta, \eta'$  over  $\langle g^2 \rangle$ . Hence we can investigate  $LO(G)$  for a finite non-gap group  $G$  with  $G/O^2(G)$  an elementary abelian 2-group. Letting  $C_2^n$  be an elementary abelian 2-group of order  $2^n$ , we obtain the following results.

**Theorem 6.1.** *Let  $G := K \times C_2^n$ ,  $n \geq 2$  be an Oliver group such that  $K/O^2(K)$  is an elementary abelian 2-group. Then it holds  $MLO(G) \subseteq CSm(G) \subseteq LO(G)$ . Furthermore if  $G$  is a gap group, it holds the equality  $CSm(G) = LO(G)$ .*

We will discuss in the case when  $G$  is a non-gap group in Theorem 6.1.

**Proposition 6.2.** *Let  $G$  be an Oliver non-gap group such that  $[G : O^2(G)] = 2$ . The following two claims are equivalent.*

- (1)  $MLO(G) = LO(G)$ .

(2) If two involutions  $x$  and  $y$  of  $G$  outside of  $O^2(G)$  are not conjugate then  $C_G(x)$  or  $C_G(y)$  is a 2-group.

The author does not know a group  $G$  with  $MLO(G) \neq LO(G)$ .

7. NON-TRIVIAL CENTRAL

In this section we consider whether  $CSm(G) = 0$  or not for an Oliver group  $G$  with  $a_G \geq 2$ . In the section 5 we know completely it for a non-solvable group  $G$ . From now on we assume that  $G$  is an Oliver solvable group with  $LO(G) \cap CSm(G) = 0$  and  $a_G \geq 2$ . Recall that  $PO(G, G^{nil}) \neq 0$  implies  $a_G \geq 2$ .

**Lemma 7.1.** *If  $Z(G) \neq \{1\}$  then  $|\pi(G^{nil})| = 2$ .*

*Proof.* Since  $LO(G/G^{nil}) = 0$ ,  $G/G^{nil}$  is isomorphic to  $P$ ,  $C_2 \times P$ , or  $C_3 \times P_2$ , where  $P$  is a  $p$ -group and  $P_2$  is a 2-group. Then for some subgroup  $K$  of  $G$ , the sequence  $G^{nil} \trianglelefteq K \trianglelefteq G$  such that  $|\pi(G/K)| = 1$  and  $K/G^{nil}$  is cyclic. Thus  $|\pi(G^{nil})| \geq 2$ . We assume that  $|\pi(G^{nil})| \geq 3$ . Take distinct primes  $p, q, r$  in  $\pi(G^{nil})$ . Let  $c \in Z(G)$  be an element of prime order. We may assume that  $|c| \neq q, r$ . Take elements  $x_q$  and  $x_r$  of  $G^{nil}$  of order  $q$  and  $r$  respectively. Then  $cx_q$  and  $cx_r$  are NPP elements of distinct order. Therefore  $(cx_q, cx_r)$  is a basic pair. □

**Lemma 7.2.**  *$Z(G)$  has no NPP element.*

*Proof.* We suppose that  $Z(G)$  has an NPP element  $c$  of order  $pq$  where  $p$  and  $q$  are primes. Then  $|\pi(G)| = 2$  and  $\pi(G) = \pi(\langle c \rangle) = \{p, q\}$  by Theorem 5.7. First we show that  $G^{nil}$  is not a subgroup of  $\langle c \rangle$ . Suppose  $G^{nil} \leq \langle c \rangle$ . Let  $f: G \rightarrow G/\langle c \rangle$  be a canonical epimorphism. Note that  $\pi(G/\langle c \rangle) = \{p, q\}$ . Since  $f(G)$  is nilpotent,  $O^q(f(G))$  is a Sylow  $p$ -subgroup of  $f(G)$  and a Sylow  $p$ -subgroup  $O^q(G)_p$  of  $O^q(G)$  is normal and its quotient  $O^q(G)/O^q(G)_p$  is cyclic. This is a contrary against  $G$  is Oliver.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 \langle c \rangle & \longrightarrow & G & \xrightarrow{f} & G/\langle c \rangle \\
 \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow \\
 \langle c \rangle \cap O^q(G) & \longrightarrow & O^q(G) & \longrightarrow & O^q(G/\langle c \rangle) \\
 \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow = \\
 \langle c \rangle \cap O^q(G)_p & \longrightarrow & O^q(G)_p & \longrightarrow & O^q(G/\langle c \rangle)
 \end{array}$$

Thus we can take an element  $x$  of  $G^{nil}$  which is not in  $\langle c \rangle$ . Since  $f$  sends two NPP elements  $xc$  and  $c$  to elements of distinct order,  $xc$  and  $c$  are not real conjugate. It is clear that they are sent to the same element by  $G \rightarrow G/G^{nil}$ . Then  $(xc, c)$  is a basic pair, which is a contrary. Thus  $Z(G)$  has no NPP element. □

The following can be straightforward checked.

**Lemma 7.3.** *Let  $c \in Z(G)$  be an element of order a prime  $p$ . If  $G^{nil}$  has an element  $x$  of order  $q^2$  for some prime  $q \neq p$ , then  $G$  has a basic pair  $(cx, cx^q)$ .*

We define the  $\text{DressLength}(G)$  as the minimal length  $n$  of sequences

$$G = G_0 > G_1 > G_2 > \cdots > G_n = \{1\}$$

such that  $O^{p_j}(G_{j-1}) = G_j$  with some prime  $p_j$  for each  $j$ . In convenient, we assume  $\text{DressLength}(G) = \infty$  if there is no sequence as above. For example,  $\text{DressLength}(G) = \infty$  for a non-solvable group. It is easy to see that  $\text{DressLength}(G) \geq 3$  if  $G$  is an Oliver group and that  $\text{DressLength}(G) \geq 3$  if  $G$  is a gap group.

Now we recall classical results. A finite group is called a CP group if it has no NPP elements.

**Lemma 7.4** (Higman, cf. [PSo, Lemma 2.5]). *Let  $H$  be a finite solvable CP group. Then one of the following conclusions holds:*

- (1)  $H$  is a  $p$ -group for some prime  $p$ ; or
- (2)  $H = K \rtimes C$  is a Frobenius group with kernel  $K$  and complement  $C$ , where  $K$  is a  $p$ -group and  $C$  is a  $q$ -group of  $q$ -rank 1 for two distinct primes  $p$  and  $q$ ; or
- (3)  $H = K \rtimes C \rtimes A$  is a 3-step group, in the sense that  $K \rtimes C$  is a Frobenius group as in the conclusion (2) with  $C$  cyclic, and  $C \rtimes A$  is a Frobenius group with kernel  $C$  and complement  $A$ , a cyclic  $p$ -group.

**Proposition 7.5** ([Hu, Proposition 22.3 and Remark on p.193]).  $\text{Aut}(C_{2^a}) = C_2 \times C_{2^{a-2}}$  where  $x \mapsto x^5$  is a generator of  $C_{2^{a-2}}$  and  $x \mapsto x^{-1}$  is a generator of  $C_2$ .  $\text{Aut}(C_{p^a}) = C_{p^{a-1}(p-1)}$  for an odd prime  $p$ .

With these results we use a Frattini subgroup and a Fitting subgroup and then we obtain the following results.

**Theorem 7.6.** *Let  $G$  be an Oliver solvable group with  $a_G \geq 2$  and  $Z(G) \neq \{1\}$ . If  $\text{CSm}(G) = 0$ , then it holds the following.*

- (1)  $Z(G)$  has no NPP element.
- (2) If  $Z(G)$  is a  $p$ -group, an element of  $G^{nil}$  not of  $p$  power order has prime order.
- (3)  $|\pi(G)| = 2$ .
- (4)  $\text{DressLength}(G) = 3, 4$ .

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