

Chromatic Homotopy Theory

Hongxiang Zhao

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1 Notations

For a topological space X , let $\pi_*^S(X) :=$ be its stable homotopy groups.

Let S be the sphere spectrum.

Let SG be the Moore spectrum of an abelian group G .

For spaces X, Y , let $[X, Y]_*^S := \text{colim}[\Sigma^{i+*} X, \Sigma^i Y]$ be the stable homotopy groups of maps.

For a homology theory E_* , let \overline{E}_* be the associated homology theory. By abuse of notation, we also denote the coefficient ring by $E_* := E_*(pt)$.

2 Rough Idea of Chromatic Homotopy Theory

In number theory, we have the Sullivan fracture square:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbb{Z} & \longrightarrow & \prod_{p: \text{prime}} \mathbb{Z}_p \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbb{Q} & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{Q} \otimes \left(\prod_{p: \text{prime}} \mathbb{Z}_p \right) \end{array}$$

There is a similar fracture square in homotopy theory. First, we have the similar definition of localization:

Definition 2.1 (E -acyclic, E -local, E -localization). Let E_* be a generalized homology theory. A spectrum X is E -**acyclic** if $E_*(X) = 0$. A space Y is E -**local** if $[X, Y]_* = 0$ for any E -acyclic X .

An E -**localization** of a spectrum X is a map $\eta: X \rightarrow L_E X$ such that $E_*(\eta)$ is an isomorphism.

Theorem 2.2 (Bousfield). *Such $L_E X$ always exists and is functorial in X .*

Theorem 2.3. *For any spectrum X ,*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \longrightarrow & \prod_{p: \text{prime}} L_p X \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ L_{\mathbb{Q}} X & \longrightarrow & L_{\mathbb{Q}} \left(\prod_{p: \text{prime}} L_p X \right) \end{array}$$

where $L_p X := L_{S\mathbb{F}_p} X$, $L_{\mathbb{Q}} X := L_{S\mathbb{Q}} X$ (which is the rationalization of X when X is a CW-complex).

That is, we can get the global information of the spectrum X through p -completion, rationalization and how they are glued together. Also, similar to algebra, the p -completion of the space X can be constructed from the completion of the p -localization of X , i.e., $L_{S\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}}X$. This inspires us to investigate the p -localization of a spectrum X , which turns out to have a nice structure and be computable.

Theorem 2.4 (Chromatic Convergence Theorem). *Suppose that X is a p -local spectrum, i.e., it is the p -localization of some spectrum. Then we have $X \cong \operatorname{holim} L_n X$, where $L_n X \cong L_{E_n} X$ and E_n is the Morava E -theory (also called Lubin-Tate theory).*

Theorem 2.5 (Smash Product Theorem). *For any spectrum X , $L_n X \cong X \wedge L_n S$.*

Therefore, we can recover the information of X from $L_n X \cong X \wedge L_n S$. Then we are reduced to compute $L_n S$, which can be decomposed further:

Proposition 2.6. *Let $K(n)$ be the Morava K -theory and X be an arbitrary spectrum.*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} L_n X & \longrightarrow & L_{K(n)} X \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ L_{n-1} X & \longrightarrow & L_{n-1} L_{K(n)} X \end{array}$$

Therefore, we are reduced to calculate $L_{K(n)} X$, which is somehow related to the equivariant stuff:

Theorem 2.7 (Devnatz-Hopkins). *$L_{K(n)} S \cong E_n^{h\mathbb{G}_n}$, where \mathbb{G}_n is called the Morava stabilizer group.*

3 Periodicity Theorem

Due to the discussion in Section 2, from now on we will focus on the case of p -local spectra. There is a sequence of useful homology theories in investigating p -local spectra called the Morava K -theory. They will give a filtration of the category of p -local spectra. The construction is tedious and artificial, so we only display some properties of $K(n)$ here:

Proposition 3.1. *For each prime p there is a sequence of homology theories $K(n)_*$ for $n \geq 0$ with the following properties.*

- (i) $K(0)_*(X) = H_*(X; \mathbb{Q})$ and $\overline{K(0)}_*(X) = 0$ when $\overline{H}_*(X)$ is all torsion.

- (ii) $K(1)_*(X)$ is one of $p - 1$ isomorphic summands of mod p complex K -theory.
- (iii) $K(0)_* = \mathbb{Q}$ and for $n > 0$, $K(n)_* = \mathbb{F}_p[v_n^\pm]$ where the dimension of v_n is $2p^n - 2$. This ring is a graded field in the sense that every graded module over it is free. For each $n \geq 0$, $K(n)_*(X)$ is a module over $K(n)_*$.
- (iv) $K(n)_*(X \times Y) \cong K(n)_*(X) \otimes_{K(n)_*} K(n)_*(Y)$.
- (v) Let X be a p -local finite CW-complex. If $\overline{K(n)}_*(X) = 0$, then $\overline{K(n-1)}_*(X) = 0$.
- (vi) Let X be a p -local finite CW-complex.

$$\overline{K(n)}_*(X) = K(n)_* \otimes_{\mathbb{F}_p} \overline{H}_*(X; \mathbb{F}_p)$$

for n sufficiently large. In particular, it is nontrivial if X is simply connected and not contractible.

Definition 3.2 (Type). A p -local finite complex X has **type** n if n is the smallest integer such that $\overline{K(n)}_*(X)$ is nontrivial. If X is contractible, it has **type** ∞ .

Besides the types, Morava K -theories are useful in detecting periodic self-maps of a spectrum, which will give finer structures of the homotopy groups.

Theorem 3.3 (Periodicity theorem). Let X, Y be p -local finite CW-complexes of type n for finite n .

- (i) There is a map $f: \Sigma^{d+i} X \rightarrow \Sigma^i X$ for some $i \geq 0$ such that $K(n)_*(f)$ is an isomorphism and $K(m)_*(f) = 0$ for $m \neq n$. (We will refer to such a map as a v_n -**map**) When $n = 0$ then $d = 0$, and when $n > 0$ then d is a multiple of $2p^n - 2$.
- (ii) Suppose $h: X \rightarrow Y$ is a continuous map. Assume that both have been suspended enough times to be the target of a v_n -map. Let $g: \Sigma^e Y \rightarrow Y$ be a self-map as in (i). Then there are positive integers i and j with $di = ej$ such that the following diagram commutes up to homotopy.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Sigma^{di} X & \xrightarrow{\Sigma^{di} h} & \Sigma^{di} Y \\ f^i \downarrow & & \downarrow g^j \\ X & \xrightarrow{h} & Y \end{array}$$

If we take $h = Id_X$, then the second part of the periodicity theorem says that the v_n -map is unique up to powers.

4 Geometric Chromatic Filtration and Telescope Conjecture

Theorem 2.4 tells us that there is a filtration of the homotopy group:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{C}_0^a(X) &:= \pi_*(X) \\ \mathcal{C}_n^a(X) &:= \ker(\pi_*(X) \rightarrow \pi_*(L_n X)) \\ \mathcal{C}_0^a(X) &\supset \mathcal{C}_1^a(X) \supset \mathcal{C}_2^a(X) \supset \dots\end{aligned}$$

This is called the algebraic chromatic filtration, but $K(n)$ and E_n are so manufactured. In this section, we are aiming to give a geometric model for this filtration.

Lemma 4.1. *Suppose X has type n . Then the cofiber W of the map $f: \Sigma^{d+i} X \rightarrow \Sigma^i X$ given by Theorem 3.3 has type $n+1$.*

Proof. For each m , we have a long exact sequence:

$$\dots \rightarrow \overline{K(m)}_t(\Sigma^{d+i} X) \xrightarrow{f_*} \overline{K(m)}_t(\Sigma^i X) \rightarrow \overline{K(m)}_t(W) \rightarrow \overline{K(m)}_{t-1}(\Sigma^{d+i} X) \xrightarrow{f_*} \dots$$

When $m < n$, $\overline{K(m)}_*(\Sigma^{d+i} X) = \overline{K(m)}_*(\Sigma^d X) = 0$, so $\overline{K(m)}_*(W) = 0$. When $m = n$, f_* are isomorphisms, so $\overline{K(m)}_*(W) = 0$ again. When $m = n+1$, $f_* = 0$, so $\overline{K(m)}_*(W) = \overline{K(m)}_{*-1}(\Sigma^{d+i} X)$ is nontrivial by Proposition 3.1. \square

Proposition 4.2. *Let X be a CW-complex and $X_{(p)} := L_{S\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}} X$. Then $\overline{E}_*(X_{(p)}) \cong \overline{E}_*(X) \otimes \mathbb{Z}_{(p)}$. If X is finite, $X_{(p)}$ is also finite.*

Suppose X is a p -local complex. Then each element $x \in \pi_k^S(X)$ has infinite order or order p^i for some i . If y has infinite order, then it has a nontrivial image in $\pi_k^S(X) \otimes \mathbb{Q}$, which is left for rational homotopy theory.

On the other hand, if x has order p^i for some i , then the composite (Here we omit the suspension for simplicity)

$$S^k \xrightarrow{p^i} S^k \xrightarrow{x} X$$

is null-homotopic. Technically, we localize at p here. Then x factors through the cofiber $W(1)$ of $p^i: S_{(p)}^k \rightarrow S_{(p)}^k$. Note that the sphere spectrum has type 0 and the map p^i is a v_0 -map. Thus, $W(1)$ has type 1. Therefore, it admits a v_1 -map $f_1: \Sigma^{d_1} W(1) \rightarrow W(1)$. Hence, we have the following diagram:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
S_{(p)}^k & \xrightarrow{p^i} & S_{(p)}^k & \xrightarrow{y} & X \\
& & \downarrow & \nearrow g_1 & \\
\Sigma^{d_1} W(1) & \xrightarrow{f_1} & W(1) & &
\end{array}$$

If the composite of g_1 and all powers of f_1 are not null-homotopic, then g_1 has a nontrivial image in $v_1^{-1}[W(1), Y]_*^S$, which is the colimit

$$[W(1), X]_*^S \xrightarrow{f_1^*} [\Sigma^{d_1} W(1), X]_*^S \xrightarrow{f_1^*} [\Sigma^{2d_1} W(1), X]_*^S \xrightarrow{f_1^*} \dots$$

On the other hand, if $g_1 f_1^{i_1}$ is null-homotopic for some i_1 . Let $W(2)$ be the cofiber of the map $f_1^{i_1} : \Sigma^{d_1 i_1} W(1) \rightarrow W(1)$. Iterating this process we get a diagram:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
S_{(p)}^k & \xrightarrow{p^i} & S_{(p)}^k & \xrightarrow{x} & X \\
& & \downarrow & \nearrow g_1 & \\
\Sigma^{d_1 i_1} W(1) & \xrightarrow{f_1^{i_1}} & W(1) & & \\
& & \downarrow & \nearrow g_2 & \\
\Sigma^{d_2 i_2} W(2) & \xrightarrow{f_2^{i_2}} & W(2) & & \\
& & \downarrow & & \\
& & \vdots & &
\end{array}$$

Definition 4.3 (Geometric chromatic filtration). If an element $x \in \pi_*^S(X)$ extends to a p -local complex $W(n)$ of type n , then x is v_{n-1} -**torsion**. If in addition x does not extend to a p -local complex of type $n+1$, it is v_n -**periodic**. The **geometric chromatic filtration** of $\pi_*^S(X)$ is the decreasing family of subgroups consisting of the v_n -torsion elements for various $n \geq 0$.

Conjecture 4.4 (Telescope Conjecture). *The algebraic chromatic filtration is the same with the geometric chromatic filtration.*

Finally, we want to talk about why this conjecture is called "telescope" and interpret the geometric filtration in the viewpoint of Bousfield localization.

Definition 4.5 (Telescope of a self-map). Let $f : \Sigma^d X \rightarrow X$ be a self-map. Then the **telescope** of f is the homotopy colimit

$$\hat{X} := f^{-1} X := \text{hocolim}(X \xrightarrow{\Sigma^{-d} f} \Sigma^{-d} X \xrightarrow{\Sigma^{-2d} f} \Sigma^{-2d} X \xrightarrow{\Sigma^{-3d} f} \dots)$$

By Theorem 3.3(ii), \hat{X} is independent of the choice of f , since the v_n -maps are unique up to powers.

In analogy with algebra, this looks

$$M[f^{-1}] = \text{colim}(M \xrightarrow{f} M \xrightarrow{f} M \rightarrow \cdots)$$

where M is an R -module and $0 \neq f \in R$.

Definition 4.6 (Telescope Localization). Let $Tel(n) := f_n^{-1}W(n)$, where $W(n)$ is defined as above. Define the **telescope localization** by

$$L_n^f X := L_{Tel(0) \vee \cdots \vee Tel(n)} X$$

We will prove that this definition does not rely on the choice of $W(n)$ when we talk more about Bousfield localization. Actually, we can take arbitrary p -local finite CW-complex of type n . That is why we take the p -localization at the beginning of the construction.

Example 4.7. If X is of type n with v_n -self map f , then $L_n^f X \cong \hat{X}$. See [Lur10, Lecture 28, Proposition 1]. That is why this is called the "telescope" localization.

Now suppose $x \in \pi_k(X)$ is v_0 -torsion, i.e., it can factor through $W(1)$ defined above. Due to [Rav92, Proposition 7.2.6], $\hat{S}_{(p)}^k \wedge W(1)$ is contractible, which is similar to $p^{-1}S \otimes S/p = 0$ in algebra. Therefore, $W(1)$ is $\hat{S}_{(p)}^k$ -acyclic. Since $L_0^f X = L_{\hat{S}_{(p)}^k} X$ is $\hat{S}_{(p)}^k$ -local, $[W(1), L_{\hat{S}_{(p)}^k} X] = 0$. Hence, x has trivial image in $\pi_*(X) \rightarrow \pi_*(L_n^f X)$. Conversely, $Tel(0) = p^{-1}S_{(p)}$, so $H_*(p^{-1}S_{(p)}) = p^{-1}\mathbb{Z}_{(p)} = \mathbb{Q}$. Therefore, $Tel(0) = S\mathbb{Q} = H\mathbb{Q} = K(0)$. If x has trivial image in $\pi_*(X) \rightarrow \pi_*(L_0^f X)$, then it factors through the fiber of $X \rightarrow L_0^f X$. Since the fiber is $Tel(0)$ -acyclic, it has type ≥ 1 , so x is v_0 -torsion.

This is true for the general case with more knowledge about Bousfield localization. Therefore, under the viewpoint of localization, the geometric chromatic filtration becomes

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{C}_0^g(X) &:= \pi_*(X) \\ \mathcal{C}_n^g(X) &:= \ker(\pi_*(X) \rightarrow \pi_*(L_n^f X)) \\ \mathcal{C}_0^g(X) &\supset \mathcal{C}_1^g(X) \supset \mathcal{C}_2^g(X) \supset \cdots \end{aligned}$$

And the telescope conjecture says that $\mathcal{C}_n^g = \mathcal{C}_n^a$ or $L_n^f = L_n$ in other word. By above discus-

sion, this is true when $n = 0$. When $n = 1$, the case of $p > 2$ is proved by Miller and the case of $p = 2$ is proved by Mahowald [Bea19, Part III].

The geometric side is more natural and conceptual while the algebraic side is more manufactured and computable. For example, we do not have a chromatic convergence theorem for $L_n^f X$ and the Adams-Novikov spectral sequence may not converge for $\pi_*(L_n^f X)$, so $\pi_*(L_n^f X)$ is hard to compute.

Now suppose that $x: S^k \rightarrow X$ is v_n -periodic and that it extends to $g_n: W(n) \rightarrow X$. Suppose $e: S^K \rightarrow W(n)$ is the bottom cell in $W(n)$. Then for each i , we have a composition

$$S^{K+d_n i} \xrightarrow{\Sigma^{d_n i} e} \Sigma^{d_n i} W(n) \xrightarrow{f_n^i} W(n) \xrightarrow{g_n} X$$

We can play the same game as above to get a nontrivial element in $\pi_*^S(X)$.

Definition 4.8 (v_n -periodic family). Given a v_n -periodic element $x \in \pi_*^S(X)$, the element described above for various $i > 0$ constitute the v_n -periodic family associated with x .

5 Thick Category Theorem

5.1 The category \mathbf{CT}

Let $L \cong \mathbb{Z}[x_1, x_2, \dots]$ be the Lazard ring and $G(x, y)$ be the universal formal group law over L .

Definition 5.1. Let Γ be the group of power series over \mathbb{Z} having the form $\gamma = x + b_1 x + b_2 x + \dots$ where $b_1, b_2, \dots \in \mathbb{Z}$. Then Γ acts on L by the following. Note that $\gamma^{-1} \left(G(\gamma(x), \gamma(y)) \right) \in FGL(L)$. It is determined by a homomorphism $L \rightarrow L$. Since γ is invertible, this endomorphism is an automorphism, which is the desired action.

Let MU be the complex cobordism theory. Then Γ also acts naturally on $MU_*(X)$ compatibly with the action on MU_* .

Remark. According to [Rav92, Section 3.3], this action is an analogy to the action of the group of multiplicative cohomology operations. For example, in the mod 2 case, the action by the total Steenrod square $\sum_{i \geq 0} Sq^i$ is determined by its effect on the generator of $H^1(\mathbb{RP}^\infty; \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z})$.

Definition 5.2. Let \mathbf{CT} be the category of finitely presented graded L -modules equipped with an action of Γ compatible with its action on L . Let \mathbf{FH} be the category of finite CW-complexes and homotopy classes of maps between them.

Therefore, MU_* is a functor from \mathbf{FH} to \mathbf{CT} , which is more accessible and is the main object in this subsection.

Let $v_n \in L$ denote the coefficient of x^{p^n} in the p -series for the universal formal group law. It can be shown that v_n can serve as a polynomial generator in dimension $2p^n - 2$ [Lur10, Lecture 13, Proposition 1]. Let $I_{p,n} \subset L$ denote the prime ideal (p, v_1, \dots, v_{n-1}) .

Theorem 5.3 (Invariant Prime Ideal Theorem). *The only prime ideals in L which are invariant under the action of Γ are the $I_{p,n}$ defined above, where p is a prime integer and $n \in \mathbb{N}$, possibly ∞ . By convention, $I_{p,0} = 0$.*

Moreover, $(L/I_{p,n})^\Gamma = \mathbb{F}_p[v_n]$ for $n > 0$ and $L^\Gamma = \mathbb{Z}$.

Proof. For references, see [Rav92, Theorem 3.3.6]. □

Theorem 5.4 (Landweber Filtration Theorem). *Every module M in \mathbf{CT} admits a finite filtration by submodules in \mathbf{CT} as above in which each subquotient is isomorphic to a suspension (recall these modules are graded) of $L/I_{p,n}$ for some prime p and finite n .*

Proof. For references, see [Rav92, Theorem 3.3.7]. □

Remark. *A finitely generated module M over a Noetherian ring R has a finite filtration with each subquotient equals to R/I for some prime ideal I . Note that L is not Noetherian, but it is a limit of Noetherian rings, so finitely presented modules over it admits similar filtrations. That is why we define \mathbf{CT} to be the category of such modules.*

Corollary 5.5. *Suppose M is a p -local module in \mathbf{CT} and $x \in M$.*

- (a) *If x is annihilated by some power of v_n , then it is annihilated by some power of v_{n-1} , so if $v_n^{-1}M = 0$, then $v_{n-1}^{-1}M = 0$.*
- (b) *If x is nonzero, then there is an n so that $v_n^k x \neq 0$ for all k , so if M is nontrivial, then so is $v_n^{-1}M$ for all sufficiently large n .*
- (c) *If $v_{n-1}^{-1}M = 0$, then there is a positive integer k such that multiplication by v_n^k in M commutes with the action of Γ .*

- (d) Conversely, if $v_{n-1}^{-1}M$ is nontrivial, then there is no positive integer k such that multiplication by v_n^k in M commutes with the action of Γ on x .

Proof. See [Rav92, Corollary 3.3.9]. □

The first two statements are similar to the one of Morava K -theory. In fact, for a finite p -local CW-complex X , $v_n^{-1}\overline{MU}_*(X)_{(p)} = 0$ if and only if $\overline{K}(n)_*(X) = 0$. One can replace $K(n)_*$ by $v_n^{-1}MU_{(p)}$ in the statement of the periodicity theorem. The third statement is an analogy of the periodicity theorem.

Definition 5.6. A p -local module M in \mathbf{CT} has **type** n if n is the smallest integer with $v_n^{-1}M$ nontrivial. A homomorphism $f: \Sigma^d M \rightarrow M$ in \mathbf{CT} is a v_n -map if it induces an isomorphism in $v_n^{-1}M$ and the trivial homomorphism in $v_m^{-1}M$ for $m \neq n$.

Corollary 5.7. If M in \mathbf{CT} is a p -local module with $v_{n-1}^{-1}M$ nontrivial, then M does admit a v_n -map.

Proof. See [Rav92, Corollary 3.3.11]. □

5.2 Thick Subcategories

Definition 5.8 (Thick Subcategory). A full subcategory \mathbf{C} of \mathbf{CT} is **thick** if it satisfies that if

$$0 \rightarrow M' \rightarrow M \rightarrow M'' \rightarrow 0$$

is a short exact sequence, then M is in \mathbf{C} if and only if M', M'' are in it.

A full subcategory \mathbf{F} of \mathbf{FH} is **thick** if it satisfies the following axioms:

- (a) If

$$X \xrightarrow{f} Y \rightarrow C_f$$

is a cofiber sequence in which two of the three spaces are in \mathbf{F} , then so is the third.

- (b) If $X \vee Y$ is in \mathbf{F} then so are X and Y .

Using Landweber filtration theorem we can prove that

Theorem 5.9. Let \mathbf{C} be a thick subcategory of $\mathbf{CT}_{(p)}$, the subcategory of all p -local modules in \mathbf{CT} . Then \mathbf{C} is either all of $\mathbf{CT}_{(p)}$, or consists of all p -local modules M in \mathbf{CT} with $v_{n-1}^{-1}M = 0$. We denote the latter category by $\mathbf{CT}_{p,n}$.

Proof. See [Rav92, Theorem 3.4.2]. □

There is an analogous result about thick subcategories of $\mathbf{FH}_{(p)}$.

Theorem 5.10 (Thick Category Theorem). *Let \mathbf{F} be a thick subcategory of $\mathbf{FH}_{(p)}$, the category of p -local finite CW-complexes. Then \mathbf{F} is either all of $\mathbf{FH}_{(p)}$, the trivial subcategory or consists of all p -local finite CW-complexes X with $\overline{K(n)}_*(X) = 0$, which is equivalent to say that $v_{n-1}^{-1}\overline{MU}_*(X) = 0$. We denote the latter category by $\mathbf{FH}_{p,n}$.*

Therefore, we have two sequences of thick subcategories, where $MU_*(\cdot)$ sends one to the other.

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{FH}_{(p)} &= \mathbf{FH}_{p,0} \supset \mathbf{FH}_{p,1} \supset \mathbf{FH}_{p,2} \supset \cdots \supset * \\ \mathbf{CF}_{(p)} &= \mathbf{CF}_{p,0} \supset \mathbf{CF}_{p,1} \supset \mathbf{CF}_{p,2} \supset \cdots \supset 0\end{aligned}$$

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