

# A Seifert–van Kampen theorem in non-abelian algebra

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100th Peripatetic Seminar on Sheaves and Logic  
22nd of May 2016 | Cambridge

# Introduction: categorical tools for homological algebra

- ▶ Concrete aim: understanding (co)homology of groups
- ▶ Which aspects of group cohomology are typical for groups, and which function for purely formal reasons, so that a categorical argument suffices to understand and apply these in other settings?
- ▶ Conversely, what do our “homological needs” tell us about categories of non-abelian algebraic structures?

Today: towards an algebraic version of the *Seifert–van Kampen* theorem

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Today: towards an algebraic version of the *Seifert–van Kampen* theorem

# The classical Seifert–van Kampen theorem

[1931, 1933]

Consider a square of pointed topological spaces as on the left,

$$\begin{array}{ccc} O & \xrightarrow{j} & B \\ i \downarrow & \lrcorner & \downarrow \iota_B \\ A & \xrightarrow{\iota_A} & X \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \pi_1(O) & \xrightarrow{\pi_1(j)} & \pi_1(B) \\ \pi_1(i) \downarrow & \lrcorner & \downarrow \pi_1(\iota_B) \\ \pi_1(A) & \xrightarrow{\pi_1(\iota_A)} & \pi_1(X) \end{array}$$

where

- ▶  $A$ ,  $B$  and  $O$  are open, path-connected subspaces of  $X$ ;
- ▶  $X = A +_O B = A \cup B$ :  $A$  and  $B$  cover  $X$ , the square is a pushout;
- ▶  $O = A \times_X B = A \cap B$ : the square is a pullback.

Then the square on the right is a pushout in  $\text{Gp}$ .

- ▶ Many variations on this theme exist, in topology, in algebraic geometry and in algebra.
- ▶ Grothendieck's version in [SGA1, 1971] is based on descent theory.

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Let  $F: \mathbb{C} \rightarrow \mathbb{X}$  be a functor where

- ▶  $\mathbb{C}$  is semi-abelian algebraically coherent with enough projectives;
- ▶  $\mathbb{X}$  is (almost) abelian;
- ▶  $F$  is a regular epi–reflector which preserves pullbacks of regular epis along split epis

and consider in  $\mathbb{C}$  a pushout of split monomorphisms as on the left.

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- ▶ Any reflector from a *category of interest* to an abelian subvariety.
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- ▶ This is a first step: perhaps something more general is possible.

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# The semi-abelian context

Category is	Noteworthy aspects	Examples
abelian	classical homological algebra additive structure on homsets subobjects are normal	$\text{Ab}, \text{Mod}_R, \text{Sh}_{\mathcal{F}}(\text{Ab})$
semi-abelian + (LACC)	internal (co)homology	$\text{Gp}, \text{XMod}, \text{Lie}_K, \text{HopfAlg}_{K, \text{coc}}$
semi-abelian + algebraically coherent	Seifert–van Kampen universal central extensions three subobjects lemma	$\text{Nil}_n(\text{Gp}), \text{Gp}_{\text{lf}}, \text{Cat}^n(\text{Gp})$ all categories of interest: $\text{Rng}, \text{Alg}_K, \text{Leib}_K$
semi-abelian + (SH)	internal crossed modules action on abelian object is Beck module cohomology via higher centrality	$\text{NAAlg}_K, \text{Jordan algebras},$ Heyting semilattices
semi-abelian	basic homological algebra internal actions	$\text{Loop}, \text{DiGp}$ all varieties of $\Omega$ -groups

- ▶ **semi-abelian** = pointed + Barr exact + protomodular + finite sums
- ▶ Internal actions correspond to split extensions: if  $B$  acts on  $X$  via  $\xi$ ,

$$0 \longrightarrow X \triangleright \longrightarrow X \rtimes_{\xi} B \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{f} \\ \xleftarrow{s} \end{array} B \longrightarrow 0.$$

Thus an action corresponds to a **point**: a couple  $(f, s)$  with  $fs = 1_B$ .  
Think of a point as a “non-abelian module”.

- ▶ commutators measure non-abelianness  $\rightsquigarrow$  commutator conditions

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semi-abelian + (LACC)	internal (co)homology	$\text{Gp}, \text{XMod}, \text{Lie}_K, \text{HopfAlg}_{K, \text{coc}}$
<b>semi-abelian + algebraically coherent</b>	Seifert–van Kampen universal central extensions three subobjects lemma	$\text{Nil}_n(\text{Gp}), \text{Gp}_{\text{lf}}, \text{Cat}^n(\text{Gp})$ all <i>categories of interest</i> : $\text{Rng}, \text{Alg}_K, \text{Leib}_K$
semi-abelian + (SH)	internal crossed modules action on abelian object is Beck module cohomology via higher centrality	$\text{NAlg}_K, \text{Jordan algebras},$ Heyting semilattices
semi-abelian	basic homological algebra internal actions	$\text{Loop}, \text{DiGp}$ all <i>varieties of <math>\Omega</math>-groups</i>

- ▶ **semi-abelian** = pointed + Barr exact + protomodular + finite sums
- ▶ Internal actions correspond to split extensions: if  $B$  acts on  $X$  via  $\xi$ ,

$$0 \longrightarrow X \triangleright \longrightarrow X \rtimes_{\xi} B \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{f} \\ \xleftarrow{s} \end{array} B \longrightarrow 0.$$

Thus an action corresponds to a **point**: a couple  $(f, s)$  with  $fs = 1_B$ .  
Think of a point as a “non-abelian module”.

- ▶ commutators measure non-abelianness  $\rightsquigarrow$  commutator conditions



# The semi-abelian context

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## A Seifert–van Kampen theorem in non-abelian algebra

Let  $F: \mathbb{C} \rightarrow \mathbb{X}$  be a functor where

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and consider in  $\mathbb{C}$  a pushout of split monomorphisms as on the left.

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 O & \xrightarrow{j} & B \\
 \downarrow i & \dashrightarrow & \downarrow \iota_B \\
 A & \xrightarrow{\iota_A} & A +_O B
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 \pi_1^F(O) & \xrightarrow{\pi_1^F(j)} & \pi_1^F(B) \\
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Then the square on the right is a pushout square in  $\mathbb{X}$ .

# The fundamental group, I

[G Janelidze & GM Kelly, 1994]

*Categorical Galois theory* provides notions such as *central extensions* and *fundamental groups* relative to a suitable adjunction  $F: \mathbb{C} \rightarrow \mathbb{X}$ .

When  $\mathbb{C}$  is semi-abelian and  $F$  is a regular epi-reflector which preserves pullbacks of regular epimorphisms along split epimorphisms, there is a derived reflection  $F_1: \text{Ext}(\mathbb{C}) \rightarrow \text{NExt}(\mathbb{C})$ .

- ▶  $\text{NExt}(\mathbb{C})$  is the category of **normal extensions** relative to  $F$ .
- ▶ If  $F = \text{ab}: \text{Gp} \rightarrow \text{Ab}$ , then  $F_1: \text{Ext}(\text{Gp}) \rightarrow \text{CExt}(\text{Gp})$  is the **centralisation functor** sending  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  to  $F_1(f): \frac{X}{[X, \text{Ker}(f)]} \rightarrow Y$ .

The **fundamental group functor** of  $F$  is the right Kan extension  $\pi_1^F$  as in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Ext}(\mathbb{C}) & \xrightarrow{F_1} & \text{NExt}(\mathbb{C}) \\ \text{Cod} \downarrow & \nearrow & \downarrow \text{Ker} \\ \mathbb{C} & \xrightarrow{\pi_1^F} & \mathbb{X}. \end{array}$$

If  $\mathbb{C}$  has enough projectives, and  $\mathbb{X}$  is closed in  $\mathbb{C}$  under regular quotients, then  $\pi_1^F \cong L_1 F$ , the first simplicial left derived functor of  $F$ .

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[J Goedecke & TVdL, 2009]

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## The fundamental group, II

Taking the action of the centralisation functor as a definition of a commutator relative to the given adjunction,  $\pi_1^F$  looks as follows.

Let  $p: P \rightarrow A$  be a projective cover with kernel  $K$ ; apply  $F$  and  $F_1$ .

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & & 0 & & 0 & & 0 \\
 & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
 0 & \longrightarrow & \pi_1^F(A) & \rightrightarrows & \begin{array}{c} [P,P] \\ [P,K] \end{array} & \longrightarrow & [A,A] \longrightarrow 0 \\
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The Hopf formula [T Everaert & TVdL, 2004] says  $\pi_1^F(A) \cong \frac{K \cap [P,P]}{[P,K]}$ .

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Then the square on the right is a pushout square in  $\mathbb{X}$ .

## Higher degrees?

If  $O = 0$ , then the result becomes  $\pi_1^F(A + B) \cong \pi_1^F(A) \oplus \pi_1^F(B)$ .

This is what [M Barr & J Beck, 1969] call a *homology coproduct theorem*.

When  $A$  and  $B$  are groups, it is known that for all  $n \geq 1$ ,

$$H_{n+1}(A + B, \mathbb{Z}) \cong H_{n+1}(A, \mathbb{Z}) \oplus H_{n+1}(B, \mathbb{Z}),$$

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**Is this a general fact?**

[KW Johnson, 1974]

$$\pi_2^G(C_2 + C_2) = C_2 \oplus C_2 \oplus C_2 \not\cong C_2 \oplus C_2 = \pi_2^G(C_2) \oplus \pi_2^G(C_2),$$

for  $G = \text{ab}: \text{Nil}_2(\text{Gp}) \rightarrow \text{Ab}$  and  $C_2$  the cyclic group of order two.

A general homology coproduct theorem applicable to  $G$  cannot exist!

This leaves open only two courses of investigation:

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# The semi-abelian context

| Category is                              | Noteworthy aspects                                                                                      | Examples                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| abelian                                  | classical homological algebra<br>additive structure on homsets<br>subobjects are normal                 | $\text{Ab}, \text{Mod}_R, \text{Sh}_{\mathcal{F}}(\text{Ab})$                                                                                         |
| semi-abelian + (LACC)                    | internal (co)homology                                                                                   | $\text{Gp}, \text{XMod}, \text{Lie}_K, \text{HopfAlg}_{K, \text{coc}}$                                                                                |
| semi-abelian +<br>algebraically coherent | Seifert–van Kampen<br>universal central extensions<br>three subobjects lemma                            | $\text{Nil}_n(\text{Gp}), \text{Gp}_{\text{lf}}, \text{Cat}^n(\text{Gp})$<br>all categories of interest:<br>$\text{Rng}, \text{Alg}_K, \text{Leib}_K$ |
| semi-abelian + (SH)                      | internal crossed modules<br>action on abelian object is Beck module<br>cohomology via higher centrality | $\text{NAlg}_K, \text{Jordan algebras},$<br>Heyting semilattices                                                                                      |
| semi-abelian                             | basic homological algebra<br>internal actions                                                           | $\text{Loop}, \text{DiGp}$<br>all varieties of $\Omega$ -groups                                                                                       |

- ▶ **semi-abelian** = pointed + Barr exact + protomodular + finite sums
- ▶ Internal actions correspond to split extensions: if  $B$  acts on  $X$  via  $\xi$ ,

$$0 \longrightarrow X \triangleright \longrightarrow X \rtimes_{\xi} B \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{f} \\ \xleftarrow{s} \end{array} B \longrightarrow 0.$$

Thus an action corresponds to a **point**: a couple  $(f, s)$  with  $fs = 1_B$ .  
Think of a point as a “non-abelian module”.

- ▶ commutators measure non-abelianness  $\rightsquigarrow$  commutator conditions

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When the underlying object of a sum of  $B$ -actions  $(X, \xi) + (Y, \nu)$  is the sum  $X + Y$ , this means that the category  $\mathbb{C}$  is **(LACC)**.

When the canonical comparison  $X + Y \rightarrow K((X, \xi) + (Y, \nu))$  is merely a regular epimorphism (instead of an isomorphism), then the category  $\mathbb{C}$  is **algebraically coherent**.

Thus, algebraic coherence means that the change-of-base functors in the fibration of points preserve jointly strongly epimorphic pairs:

**if  $(X, \xi)$  and  $(Y, \nu)$  cover  $(Z, \zeta)$  in  $\text{Act}_B(\mathbb{C})$ , then  $X$  and  $Y$  cover  $Z$  in  $\mathbb{C}$ .**

This technical condition has strong categorical-algebraic consequences, while (in contrast with (LACC)) many semi-abelian categories satisfy it.

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## A Seifert–van Kampen theorem in non-abelian algebra

Let  $F: \mathbb{C} \rightarrow \mathbb{X}$  be a functor where

- ▶  $\mathbb{C}$  is semi-abelian algebraically coherent with enough projectives;
- ▶  $\mathbb{X}$  is (almost) abelian;
- ▶  $F$  is a regular epi–reflector which preserves pullbacks of regular epis along split epis

and consider in  $\mathbb{C}$  a pushout of split monomorphisms as on the left.

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 O & \xrightarrow{j} & B \\
 \downarrow i & \dashrightarrow & \downarrow \iota_B \\
 A & \xrightarrow{\iota_A} & A +_O B
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 \pi_1^F(O) & \xrightarrow{\pi_1^F(j)} & \pi_1^F(B) \\
 \downarrow \pi_1^F(i) & \dashrightarrow & \downarrow \pi_1^F(\iota_B) \\
 \pi_1^F(A) & \xrightarrow{\pi_1^F(\iota_A)} & \pi_1^F(A +_O B)
 \end{array}$$

Then the square on the right is a pushout square in  $\mathbb{X}$ .



# A glance at the proof of $\pi_1^F(A + B) \cong \pi_1^F(A) \oplus \pi_1^F(B)$

We take projective presentations:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 P & \rightleftarrows & P + Q & \rightleftarrows & Q \\
 \downarrow p & & \downarrow p+q & & \downarrow q \\
 A & \rightleftarrows & A + B & \rightleftarrows & B
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Since  $\pi_1^F(A)$  is the kernel of  $\text{Ker}(F_1(p)) \rightarrow F(P)$ , we consider

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We want a biproduct in the top row. The bottom row is a biproduct. We only need to prove that the second row is a biproduct: this follows from algebraic coherence.

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$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 P & \rightleftarrows & P + Q & \rightleftarrows & Q \\
 \downarrow p & & \downarrow p+q & & \downarrow q \\
 A & \rightleftarrows & A + B & \rightleftarrows & B
 \end{array}$$

Since  $\pi_1^F(A)$  is the kernel of  $\text{Ker}(F_1(p)) \rightarrow F(P)$ , we consider

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 \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\
 0 \longrightarrow & F(P) & \rightleftarrows & F(P + Q) & \rightleftarrows & F(Q) & \longrightarrow 0
 \end{array}$$

We want a biproduct in the top row. The bottom row is a biproduct.

We only need to prove that the second row is a biproduct:

this follows from algebraic coherence.

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The diagram

$$\text{Ker}(F_1(p)) \rightleftarrows \text{Ker}(F_1(p + q)) \rightleftarrows \text{Ker}(F_1(q))$$

is a biproduct by the next result.

### Proposition

In an algebraically coherent semi-abelian category, consider:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccc}
 0 & \longrightarrow & K' & \triangleright & \longrightarrow & Z & \rightleftarrows & T & \longrightarrow & 0 \\
 & & \downarrow \kappa & & & \downarrow z & & \downarrow t & & \\
 0 & \longrightarrow & K & \xrightarrow{k} & X & \xrightleftharpoons[f]{s} & Y & \longrightarrow & 0 \\
 & & \uparrow \kappa' & & \uparrow z' & & \uparrow t' & & \\
 0 & \longrightarrow & K'' & \triangleright & \longrightarrow & Z' & \rightleftarrows & T' & \longrightarrow & 0
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If  $f$  is a normal extension,  $\kappa$  and  $\kappa'$  are split monomorphisms and  $(z, z')$  is jointly strongly epimorphic, then  $(\kappa, \kappa')$  is jointly strongly epimorphic.

- This argument doesn't extend to higher degrees.

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# Conclusion

## Theorem

For  $F$  any reflector from a semi-abelian algebraically coherent variety to an abelian subvariety, its first left derived functor  $L_1F$  preserves pushouts of split monomorphisms.

- ▶ Main point for me: role of categorical-algebraic conditions such as *algebraic coherence*.  
This ingredient is missing in, for instance, [M Barr & J Beck, 1969].
- ▶ Concrete applications?
- ▶ What is the right context for a higher-order result?
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**Thank you!**