Bull Braz Math Soc, New Series 37(1), 127-137

A Borsuk-Ulam Theorem for compact Lie group actions

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Abstract. Let G be a compact Lie group. Let X, Y be free G-spaces. In this paper, we consider the question of the existence of G-maps $f: X \to Y$. As a consequence, we obtain a theorem about the existence of $\mathbb{Z}_p$-coincidence points.

Keywords: Borsuk-Ulam Theorem, compact Lie group, free actions, equivariant maps.

Mathematical subject classification: Primary 55M20; Secondary 55M35 47H09.

1 Introduction

One formulation of the Borsuk-Ulam Theorem [2] is that there is no map from S^m to S^n equivariant with respect to the antipodal map, when $m > n$ (see, for example, [1,7.2]). In [13], it was proved that if X and Y are Hausdorff, pathwise connected and paracompact spaces equipped with free involutions $T: X \to X$ and $S: Y \to Y$ such that for some natural $m \geq 1$, $H^q(X; \mathbb{Z}_2) = 0$ for $1 \leq q \leq m$ and $H^{m+1}(Y/S; \mathbb{Z}_2) = 0$, where Y/S is the orbit space of Y by S, then there is no equivariant map $f: (X, T) \to (Y, S)$. Our objective, in this paper, is to generalize this result for free actions of a compact Lie group G.

Let R be a PID and G a compact Lie group. Let X, Y be free G-spaces. We denote by $\beta_i(X; R)$ the i-th Betti number of X. Specifically, we prove

Theorem 1.1. *Let G be a compact Lie group and X, Y free G-spaces, Hausdorff, pathwise connected and paracompact. Suppose that for some natural $m \geq 1$, $H^q(X; R) = 0$ for $0 < q < m$ and $H^{m+1}(Y/G; R) = 0$. Then, if $\beta_m(X; R) < \beta_{m+1}(BG; R)$, there is no G-equivariant map $f: X \to Y$.*

Received 10 January 2005.

*The author was supported by FAPESP of Brazil Grant 01/02226-9.

Let us observe that if Y is a topological manifold with a free action of a compact Lie group G, then $\dim(Y/G) = \dim(Y) - \dim(G)$, where dim denote the usual topological dimension. Thus, if $\dim(G) \geq 1$, one has that $\dim(Y/G) < \dim(Y)$. We have the following Corollary of Theorem 1.1.

Corollary 1.2. *Let G be a compact Lie group of dimension p. Let X be a free G-space, Hausdorff, pathwise connected and paracompact such that $H^q(X; R) = 0$, for $0 < q < m$ and let Y be a $(m + p)$-dimensional topological manifold with a free action of G. If $\beta_m(X; R) < \beta_{m+1}(BG; R)$, then there is no G-equivariant map $f : X \to Y$.*

Proof of Corollary 1.2. Since Y is a $(m + p)$-dimensional manifold with a free action of G, $\dim(Y/G) = m$ and therefore $H^{m+1}(Y/G; R) = 0$. It follows from Theorem 1.1 that there is no G-equivariant map $f : X \to Y$. $\square$

The following examples illustrate Corollary 1.2.

Example 1.3. Let $R = \mathbb{Z}$, $G = S^1 \times S^1$, $X = S^5 \times S^5$ and $Y = S^3 \times S^3$, which admit free action of G. One has that $H^q(X; \mathbb{Z}) = 0$, for $0 < q < m = 5$ and $H^6(Y/G; \mathbb{Z}) = 0$, since $\dim(Y/G) = 4$. Moreover, $B(S^1 \times S^1) = \mathbb{C}P^\infty \times \mathbb{C}P^\infty$, which implies $\beta_5(X; \mathbb{Z}) = 2 < \beta_6(BG; \mathbb{Z}) = 4$. It follows from Corollary 1.2 that there is no G-equivariant map $f : X \to Y$.

Example 1.4. Let $R = \mathbb{Z}_2$, $G = \mathbb{Z}_2 \times S^1$, $X = S^4 \times S^5$, $Y = S^2 \times S^3$, which admit free action of G. One has that $H^q(X; \mathbb{Z}_2) = 0$, for $0 < q < m = 4$ and $H^5(Y/G; \mathbb{Z}_2) = 0$, since $\dim(Y/G) = 4$. Moreover, $B(\mathbb{Z}_2 \times S^1) = \mathbb{R}P^\infty \times \mathbb{C}P^\infty$, which implies $\beta_4(X; \mathbb{Z}_2) = 1 < \beta_5(BG; \mathbb{Z}_2) = 3$. It follows from Corollary 1.2 that there is no G-equivariant map $f : X \to Y$.

Remark 1.5. The referee pointed us that Example 1.3 can be obtained by using results in [9].

When $G = \mathbb{Z}_q$, where $q > 1$ is an integer, another consequence of Theorem 1.1 is the following

Corollary 1.6. *Let X, Y be free $\mathbb{Z}_q$-spaces, Hausdorff, pathwise connected and paracompact, where $q > 1$ is an integer. Let p be a prime which divides q. Suppose that $H^r(X; \mathbb{Z}_q) = 0$, for $1 \leq r \leq m$ and $H^{m+1}(Y/\mathbb{Z}_p; \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$. Then there is no $\mathbb{Z}_q$-equivariant map $f : X \to Y$.*

Proof of Corollary 1.6. Since $\mathbb{Z}_p$ is a subgroup of $\mathbb{Z}_q$, we have that X, Y are free $\mathbb{Z}_p$-spaces. The hypothesis $H^r(X; \mathbb{Z}_q) = 0$, for $1 \leq r \leq m$ implies that $H^r(X; \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$, for $1 \leq r \leq m$. In particular, $H^m(X; \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$ implies that $\beta_m(X; \mathbb{Z}_p) < \beta_{m+1}(B\mathbb{Z}_p; \mathbb{Z}_p) = 1$. In this way, the assumptions of Theorem 1.1 are satisfied for $G = \mathbb{Z}_p$, then there is no $\mathbb{Z}_p$-equivariant map $f: X \to Y$. Consequently, there is no $\mathbb{Z}_q$-equivariant map $f: X \to Y$. $\square$

Remark 1.7. Corollary 1.6 extends for free $\mathbb{Z}_q$-actions, $q > 2$, Theorem 1 proved in [13].

Remark 1.8. Suppose that in Corollary 1.6, Y is a m-dimensional manifold, thus $H^{m+1}(Y/\mathbb{Z}_p; \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$. Then there is no $\mathbb{Z}_q$-equivariant map $f: X \to Y$. This particular case of Corollary 1.6 extends the following result proved by T. Kobayashi in [11, Theorem 1]: if X is a Hausdorff and pathwise connected space such that $H_r(X; \mathbb{Z}_q) = 0$, for $1 \leq r \leq m - 1$, then there is no $\mathbb{Z}_q$-equivariant map $f: X \to S^n$, where m, n are odd, $m > n$, S^n with the standard action of $\mathbb{Z}_q$, $q > 1$.

2 Preliminaries

We start by introducing some basic notions and notations. We assume that all spaces under consideration are Hausdorff and paracompact spaces. Throughout this paper, H_* and H^* will always denote the singular homology and cohomology groups. For a given space B, let $\mathcal{G}$ be a system of local coefficients for B. We will denote by $H_*(B; \mathcal{G})$ the homology groups of B with local coefficients in $\mathcal{G}$. The symbol $\cong$ will denote an appropriate isomorphism between algebraic objects.

Suppose that G is a compact Lie group which acts freely on a Hausdorff and paracompact space X, then $X \to X/G$ is a principal G-bundle [3, Theorem II.5.8] and one can take

$$h: \frac{X}{G} \to BG \tag{2.1}$$

a classifying map for the G-bundle $X \to X/G$.

Remark 2.1. Let us observe that if $\hat{h}$ is another classifying map for the principal G-bundle $X \to X/G$, then there is a homotopy between h and $\hat{h}$.

Given the G-space X, consider the product $EG \times X$ with the diagonal action given by $g(e, x) = (ge, gx)$ and let $EG \times_G X = (EG \times X)/G$ be its orbit space. The first projection $EG \times X \to EG$ induces a map

$$p_X \colon EG \times_G X \to \frac{(EG)}{G} = BG, \tag{2.2}$$

which is a fibration with fiber X and base space BG being the classifying space of G. This is called the *Borel construction*. It associates to each G-space X a space $EG \times_G X$, which will be denoted by X_G, over BG and to each G-map $X \to Y$ a fiber preserving map $EG \times_G X \to EG \times_G Y$ over BG.

Remark 2.2. If G acts freely on X, then the map

$$X_G \to \frac{X}{G} \tag{2.3}$$

induced by the second projection $EG \times X \to X$ is a fibration with a contractible fibre EG and therefore a homotopy equivalence (for details, see [7]).

Now, let us recall the following theorems of Leray-Serre for fibrations, as given in [12, theorems 5.1, 5.2].

Theorem 2.3 [The homology Leray-Serre Spectral Sequence]. *Let G be an abelian group. Given a fibration $F \hookrightarrow E \xrightarrow{p} B$, where B is pathwise connected, there is a first quadrant spectral sequence $\{E^r_{*,*}, d^r\}$, with*

$$E^2_{p,q} \cong H_p(B; \mathcal{H}_q(F; G)), \tag{2.4}$$

the homology of B with local coefficients in the homology of F, the fibre of p, and coverging to $H_*(E; G)$. Furthermore, this spectral sequence is natural with respect to fibre-preserving maps of fibrations.

Theorem 2.4 [The cohomology Leray-Serre Spectral Sequence]. *Let R be a commutative ring with unit. Given a fibration $F \hookrightarrow E \xrightarrow{p} B$ where B is pathwise connected, there is a first quadrant spectral sequence of algebras $\{E_r^{*,*}, d_r\}$, with*

$$E_2^{p,q} \cong H^p(B; \mathcal{H}^q(F; R)), \tag{2.5}$$

the cohomology of B with local coefficients in the cohomology of F, the fibre of p, and coverging to $H^*(E; R)$ as an algebra. Furthermore, this spectral sequence is natural with respect to fibre-preserving maps of fibrations.

3 Proof of Theorem 1.1

The proof of Theorem 1.1 will follow from the following lemmas

Lemma 3.1. *Let R be a PID and $E \xrightarrow{p} B$ a fibration with fiber F and base space B pathwise connected. Suppose that $H_q(F, R) = 0$, for $0 < q < m$. Then, there exists an exact sequence with coefficients in R,*

$$H_{m+1}(E) \xrightarrow{p_*} H_{m+1}(B) \xrightarrow{\tau} H_0(B, \mathcal{H}_m(F)) \to H_m(E) \xrightarrow{p_*} H_m(B) \to \cdots$$
$$\cdots \to H_2(E) \xrightarrow{p_*} H_2(B) \xrightarrow{\tau} H_0(B, \mathcal{H}_1(F)) \to H_1(E) \xrightarrow{p_*} H_1(B) \to 0,$$

where τ is the transgression homomorphism and $\mathcal{H}_i(F)$ denotes the system of local coefficients over B.

Proof. It follows from Theorem 2.3 that there exists a first quadrant spectral sequence $\{E^r_{*,*}, d^r\}$, with

$$E^2_{p,q} \cong H_p(B; \mathcal{H}_q(F)), \tag{3.1}$$

the homology of B with local coefficients in the homology of F, the fibre of p, and coverging to $H_*(E; R)$. Since F is pathwise connected the local coefficients system $\mathcal{H}_0(F)$ over B is trivial and follows from [12, Proposition 5.18] that

$$E^2_{p,0} \cong H_p(B; \mathcal{H}_0(F)) = H_p(B; H_0(F)) = H_p(B), \quad \forall p. \tag{3.2}$$

On the other hand, $H_q(F) = 0$, for $0 < q < m$ and follows from (3.1) that $E^2_{p,q} = E^\infty_{p,q} = 0$, for $0 < q < m$. Furthermore, the spectral sequence is a first quadrant spectral sequence, then we have

$$H_{m+1}(B) = E^2_{m+1,0} = E^3_{m+1,0} = \cdots = E^{m+1}_{m+1,0} \tag{3.3}$$
$$H_0(B; \mathcal{H}_m(F)) = E^2_{0,m} = E^3_{0,m} = \cdots = E^{m+1}_{0,m} \tag{3.4}$$
$$H_p(B) = E^2_{p,0} = E^3_{p,0} = \cdots = E^p_{p,0} = E^\infty_{p,0}, \quad \forall p \leq m. \tag{3.5}$$

Consider the following exact sequences

$$0 \to E^\infty_{0,r} \to H_r(E) \to E^\infty_{r,0} \to 0 \tag{3.6}$$
$$0 \to E^\infty_{r,0} \to E^r_{r,0} \xrightarrow{d^r} E^r_{0,r-1} \to E^\infty_{0,r-1} \to 0, \tag{3.7}$$

for any $r \leq m+1$. Putting together these sequences, one obtains the exact sequence

$$H_{m+1}(E) \to E^{m+1}_{m+1,0} \xrightarrow{d^{m+1}} E^{m+1}_{0,m} \to H_m(E) \to E^m_{m,0} \xrightarrow{d^m} E^m_{0,m-1} \to \cdots$$
$$\cdots \to H_2(E) \to E^2_{2,0} \xrightarrow{d^2} E^2_{0,1} \to H_1(E) \to E^\infty_{1,0} \to 0$$

where $d^r : E^r_{r,0} \to E^r_{0,r-1}$ is the transgression homomorphism [12, theorem 6.5]. If we replace in (3.8) the equalities (3.3), (3.4) and (3.5), one obtains the desired sequence, that is,

$$H_{m+1}(E) \xrightarrow{p_*} H_{m+1}(B) \xrightarrow{\tau} H_0(B, \mathcal{H}_m(F)) \to H_m(E) \xrightarrow{p_*} H_m(B) \to \cdots$$
$$\to \cdots H_2(E) \xrightarrow{p_*} H_2(B) \xrightarrow{\tau} H_0(B, \mathcal{H}_1(F)) \to H_1(E) \xrightarrow{p_*} H_1(B) \to 0$$

This completes the proof. □

Lemma 3.2. *Let R be a PID and $E \xrightarrow{p} B$ a fibration with fiber F and base space B pathwise connected. Suppose that $H^q(F, R) = 0$, for $0 < q < m$. Then, there exists an exact sequence with coefficients in R,*

$$0 \to H^1(B) \xrightarrow{p^*} H^1(E) \to H^0(B; \mathcal{H}^1(F)) \xrightarrow{\tau} H^2(B) \xrightarrow{p^*} H^2(E) \to \cdots$$
$$\to \cdots H^m(B) \xrightarrow{p^*} H^m(E) \to H^0(B; \mathcal{H}^m(F)) \xrightarrow{\tau} H^{m+1}(B) \xrightarrow{p^*} H^{m+1}(E)$$

where τ is the transgression homomorphism and $\mathcal{H}^i(F)$ denotes the system of local coefficients over B.

Proof. The proof is analogous to Lemma 3.1, considering the cohomology Leray-Serre Spectral Sequence (Theorem 2.4) associated to the fibration $E \xrightarrow{p} B$. □

Lemma 3.3. *Let X be a free G-space, Hausdorff, pathwise connected and paracompact. For a natural number $m \geq 1$, suppose that $H^q(X; R) = 0$, for $0 < q < m$ and that $\beta_m(X; R) < \beta_{m+1}(BG; R)$. Then the homomorphism $h^* \colon H^{m+1}(BG; R) \to H^{m+1}(X/G; R)$ is nontrivial, where $h \colon X/G \to BG$ is a classifying map for the principal G-bundle $X \to X/G$.*

Proof. Let $EG \to BG$ be the universal G-bundle and $h\colon X/G \to BG$ a classifying map for the principal G-bundle $X \to X/G$. Let $p_X\colon X_G \to BG$ the Borel-fibration associated to the G-space X, where X_G is the Borel space, as in (2.2). It follows from Remark 2.2 that the map $X_G \to X/G$ is a homotopy equivalence. Let $r\colon X/G \to X_G$ be its homotopy inverse. Then $p_X \circ r\colon X/G \to BG$ also classifies the principal G-bundle $X \to X/G$, and it follows from Remark 2.1 that the map $(p_X \circ r)$ is homotopic to h. Since

$$r^*\colon H^{m+1}(X_G; R) \to H^{m+1}\left(\frac{X}{G}; R\right)$$

is an isomorphism, it suffices to prove that $p_X^*\colon H^{m+1}(BG; R) \to H^{m+1}(X_G; R)$ is nontrivial. In fact, since $H^q(X; R) = 0$, for $0 < q < m$, it follows from Lemma 3.2 that there exists an exact sequence with coefficients in R,

$$\begin{gathered} 0 \to \cdots \to H^m(X_G) \to \cdots \\ \cdots \to H^0(BG; \mathcal{H}^m(X)) \xrightarrow{\tau} H^{m+1}(BG) \xrightarrow{p_X^*} H^{m+1}(X_G) \end{gathered} \tag{3.9}$$

Suppose that $p_X^*\colon H^{m+1}(BG; R) \to H^{m+1}(X_G; R)$ is the zero homomorphism. From (3.9), we have that $\tau\colon H^0(BG; \mathcal{H}^m(X)) \to H^{m+1}(BG)$ is a surjective homomorphism, which implies that

$$\operatorname{rank} H^0(BG; \mathcal{H}^m(X)) \geq \beta_{m+1}(BG; R). \tag{3.10}$$

On the other hand, since $H^0(BG; \mathcal{H}^m(X))$ is isomorphic to a submodule of $H^m(X; R)$ [14, theorem 3.2] and by hypothesis $\beta_m(X; R) < \beta_{m+1}(BG; R)$,

$$\operatorname{rank} H^0(BG; \mathcal{H}^m(X)) < \operatorname{rank} H^m(X; R) = \beta_m(X; R) < \beta_{m+1}(BG; R),$$

which contradicts 3.10. □

Remark 3.4. A similar result to Lemma 3.1 has been proved in [10, Lemma 2], when G is a finite group.

Proof of Theorem 1.1. Suppose that $f\colon X \to Y$ is a G-equivariant map. Since Y is a Hausdorff paracompact space, one can take a classifying map $g\colon Y/G \to BG$ for the principal G-bundle $Y \to Y/G$. Then the map $h = g \circ \bar{f}\colon X/G \to BG$ can be taken as a classifying map for the principal G-bundle $X \to X/G$, where $\bar{f}\colon X/G \to Y/G$ is the map induced by f between the orbit spaces. Since by hypothesis $H^{m+1}(Y/G; R) = 0$

one has that $g^*\colon H^{m+1}(BG; R) \to H^{m+1}(Y/G; R)$ is trivial and consequently $h^*\colon H^{m+1}(BG; R) \to H^{m+1}(X/G; R)$ is the zero homomorphism, which contradicts Lemma 3.3. $\square$

Suppose X equipped with a free action of the cyclic group $\mathbb{Z}_p$ generated by a periodic homeomorphism $T: X \to X$ of period p, where p is a prime. We set $Y^* = \Pi_{i=1}^p Y^i - \Delta$, where

$$\Delta = \{(y_1, y_2, \cdots, y_p) \in \Pi_{i=1}^p Y^i; y_1 = y_2 = \cdots = y_p)\}$$

is the usual diagonal in $\Pi_{i=1}^p Y^i$. Then, Y^* admits a free action of $\mathbb{Z}_p$, generated by a periodic homeomorphism $t_Y: Y^* \to Y^*$ of period p given by

$$t_Y(y_1, y_2, \cdots, y_p) = (y_2, y_3, \cdots, y_p, y_1).$$

Under these conditions, we obtain the following

Theorem 3.5. *For a natural number $m \geq 1$, suppose that $H^r(X; \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$, for $1 \leq r \leq m$ and that $H^{m+1}(Y^*/t_Y; \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$, where p is a prime. Then every continuous map $f: X \to Y$ has a $\mathbb{Z}_p$-coincidence, that is, there exists a point $x \in X$ such that $f(x) = f(gx)$ for any $g \in \mathbb{Z}_p$.*

Proof. Let $f: X \to Y$ be a map without $\mathbb{Z}_p$-coincidences. Then we can define the $\mathbb{Z}_p$-equivariant map $F: X \to Y^*$ by

$$F(x) = (f(x), f(T(x)), \cdots, f(T^{p-1}(x)).$$

The existence of such a map contradicts Corollary 1.6. $\square$

Remark 3.6. Let us observe that Theorem 3.5 extends for free $\mathbb{Z}_p$-actions, $p > 2$, Theorem 3 proved in [13].

Remark 3.7. Suppose that in Theorem 3.5, Y is a finite connected k-dimensional CW-complex. Then $Y^*/\mathbb{Z}_p$ admits a pk-dimensional structure of a CW-complex, thus, $H^{pk+1}(Y^*/\mathbb{Z}_p, \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$. Then, every continuous map $f: X \to Y$ has a $\mathbb{Z}_p$-coincidence, if $n > pk$ (this also follows from Theorem 1 of [10]; in fact, Theorem 1 of [10] gives additionally that the result is also valid for $n = pk$).

Remark 3.8. Let X be a Hausdorff space which supports a free $\mathbb{Z}_p$-action, where $p \geq 2$ is a prime. In [4], F. Cohen and J.E. Connett obtained a Borsuk-Ulam result for continuous maps $f : X \to \mathbb{R}^n$, with $n \geq 2$. The following statement was proved: if X is $(n-1)(p-1)$-connected, then there exist $x \in X$ and $g \in \mathbb{Z}_p$, $g \neq$ identity, such that $f(x) = f(g(x))$. In the following Theorem, we replace the hypothesis "X is $(n-1)(p-1)$-connected" by a cohomological condition on X.

Theorem 3.9. *Let X be a Hausdorff, pathwise connected and paracompact space, equipped with a free action of the cyclic group $\mathbb{Z}_p$ generated by a periodic homeomorphism $T : X \to X$ of period p, where p is a prime. Suppose that $H^r(X, \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$, for $1 \leq r \leq (n-1)(p-1)$. Then for every continuous map $f : X \to \mathbb{R}^n$, there exists $x \in X$ and $1 \leq i \leq p-1$ such that $f(x) = f(T^i(x))$.*

Remark 3.10. It is interesting to note that Theorem 3.9 is stronger than the result proved in [4], since a $(n-1)(p-1)$-connected space has $H^r(X, \mathbb{Z}_p)$ equal to zero for $1 \leq r \leq (n-1)(p-1)$.

To prove Theorem 3.9, we recall the definition of the *configuration space* of a manifold M, studied by Fadell and Neuwirth [8] in 1962. The ordered *configuration space* is the space of the all ordered k-tuples of distinct points in M defined by

$$F(M, k) = \{\langle x_1, x_2, \cdots, x_k\rangle \in M^k : x_i \neq x_j, \quad \text{for all} \quad i \neq j\}. \tag{3.11}$$

When $M = \mathbb{R}^n$, the space $F(\mathbb{R}^n, k)$ is the complement of a linear arrangement of subspaces of codimension n in $\mathbb{R}^{kn}$. The cohomology of these spaces was obtained by Cohen [5, 6]. It is again torsion free, with generators of degree $(n-1)$ corresponding to individual subspaces, and relations corresponding to triples with the same pairwise intersection.

The symmetric group $\sum_k$ on k letters acts freely on $F(M, k)$ by permutation of coordinates. If G is any finite group, there exists an integer k such that $G \subset \sum_k$. Thus $\mathbb{Z}_p$, the cyclic group of order p, acts freely on $F(\mathbb{R}^n, p)$, via the action given by a homomorphism $\mathbb{Z}_p \to \sum_p$ which sends $1 \in \mathbb{Z}_p$ to the cycle $(1, 2, \cdots, p)$.

In [4], Cohen and Connett proved the following result

Lemma 3.11. $H^r(F(\mathbb{R}^n, p)/\mathbb{Z}_p; \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$, *for* $r > (n-1)(p-1)$.

Proof of Theorem 3.9. Suppose that $f(x) \neq f(T^i(x))$, for any $x \in X$ and $1 \leq i \leq p-1$. Thus, we can define a $\mathbb{Z}_p$-map $F : X \to F(\mathbb{R}^n, p)$ given by

$$F(x) = \langle f(x), f(Tx), \cdots, f(T^{p-1}x) \rangle.$$

Since $H^r(X, \mathbb{Z}_p) = 0$, for $1 \leq r \leq (n-1)(p-1)$ and by Lemma 3.11, $H^r(F(\mathbb{R}^n, p)/\mathbb{Z}_p; \mathbb{Z}_p)$ is zero, for $r > (n-1)(p-1)$, one has that X and $F(\mathbb{R}^n, p)$ satisfy the hypotheses of Corollary 1.6 and the existence of such a $\mathbb{Z}_p$-equivariant map is a contradiction.

Acknowledgements. The authors express their thanks to Professor Pedro Luiz Queiroz Pergher of the Federal University of São Carlos for their helpful comments and important suggestions which led to this present version. Also we are grateful to the referee for his careful reading and helpful comments concerning the presentation of this article.

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