Unboundedness of some higher Euler classes

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Abstract

In this paper, we study Euler classes in groups of homeomorphisms of Seifert fibered 3-manifolds. We show that, in contrast to the familiar Euler class for Homeo$_0(S^1)\delta$, these Euler classes for Homeo$_0(M^3)\delta$ are unbounded classes. In fact, we give examples of flat topological $M$ bundles over a genus 3 surface whose Euler class takes arbitrary values.

For a topological group $G$, let $G^\delta$ denote $G$ with the discrete topology, and $H^*(G^\delta; R)$ the (group) cohomology of $G^\delta$ with $R = \mathbb{Z}$ or $\mathbb{R}$ coefficients. When $G$ is the group of homeomorphisms or diffeomorphisms of a manifold $M$, elements of $H^*(G^\delta; R)$ are characteristic classes of flat or foliated $M$ bundles with structure group $G$. One says that a class is bounded if it has a cocycle representative taking a bounded set of values. Determining which classes are bounded is an interesting and often very difficult question in its own right (see [12] for an introduction to this and related problems) but particularly relevant in the case where $G$ is a subgroup of Homeo($M$) for some $M$. In this case, bounds on characteristic classes give obstructions for topological $M$-bundles to be flat. On the flipside, showing that a class has no bounded representative is also an interesting as it often amounts to constructing new examples of flat bundles.

The earliest example of a bounded class comes from Milnor [18], who showed the Euler class for SL(2, $\mathbb{R}$)$^\delta$ is bounded. Wood [20] generalized this argument to Homeo$_0(S^1)$, the identity component of Homeo($S^1$), (which naturally contains SL(2, $\mathbb{R}$) as a subgroup) to obtain a complete characterization of the oriented, topological circle bundles over surfaces that admit a foliation transverse to the fiber. In modern language, their result can be reframed as follows:

**Milnor–Wood inequality** [18, 20]. The real Euler class in $H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(S^1)^\delta; \mathbb{R})$ is bounded, and has (Gromov) norm equal to 1/2.

More generally, when $G$ is a real algebraic subgroup of GL($n$, $\mathbb{R}$), it follows from [9] that elements of $H^*(G^\delta; R)$ have bounded representatives, and explicit bounds on their norms have been computed in several cases. See eg. [3, 6, 7] and references therein. However, much less is known for homeomorphism groups. Following an easy argument of Anderson [1] and a hard result of Edwards–Kirby [8], we know that $H^1(\text{Homeo}_0(M)^\delta; \mathbb{Z}) = 0$ for

\[1\] In the smooth setting, this is equivalent to admitting a flat connection, hence, even in the topological case such bundles are called “flat.”
any compact manifold $M$, so the first nontrivial examples of characteristic classes for flat bundles arise in degree two. Besides the aforementioned $M = S^1$, the most basic example of this is $M = \mathbb{R}^2$. (Despite noncompactness of $\mathbb{R}^2$, $H^1(\text{Homeo}_0(\mathbb{R}^2)\delta)$ is also zero.) Calegari [4] demonstrated that the Euler class in $H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(\mathbb{R}^3)\delta; \mathbb{R})$ – and in fact also its pullback to $H^2(\text{Diff}_0(\mathbb{R}^3)\delta; \mathbb{R})$ – is unbounded. But beyond this essentially nothing is known.

Here we consider Euler classes in homeomorphism groups of 3-manifolds. The existence of such classes comes from the work of Hatcher, Ivanov, and McCullough and Soma [10, 13, 17] who prove that, for many closed, prime Seifert fibered 3-manifolds $M$, rotation of the fibers gives a homotopy equivalence $\text{SO}(2) \to \text{Homeo}_0(M)$. Together with a deep result of Thurston, this implies that $H^*(\text{Homeo}_0(M)\delta; \mathbb{Z})$ is generated by an “Euler class” in degree 2. In a few other cases, including the obvious $M = T^2$, but also $M = T^3$ and some lens spaces, the inclusion $\text{SO}(2) \to \text{Homeo}_0(M)$ obtained by rotating fibers of a fibration or Seifert fibration induces an inclusion $\pi_1(\text{SO}(2)) \to \pi_1(\text{Homeo}_0(M))$ as a factor in a direct product decomposition, giving classes in $H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(M)\delta; \mathbb{Z})$ that are also analogous to the Euler class for $\text{Homeo}_0(S^1)$. These are described in more detail in Section 2.1.

Our main result is that all of these Euler classes are unbounded. Precisely, we show:

**Theorem 1.1.** Let $M$ be a closed Seifert fibered 3-manifold where rotation of fibers gives a homotopy equivalence $\text{SO}(2) \to \text{Homeo}_0(M)$. Then the Euler class in $H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(M)\delta; \mathbb{Z})$ is unbounded. More generally, if $M$ is such that the inclusion $\text{SO}(2) \to \text{Homeo}_0(M)$ induces an inclusion of $\pi_1(\text{SO}(2))$ as a direct factor in $\pi_1(\text{Homeo}_0(M))$, then any class $\alpha \in H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(M)\delta) \cong H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(M))$ with nonzero image in $H^2(\text{SO}(2))$ is unbounded.

This is a direct consequence of the following stronger result.

**Theorem 1.2.** Let $M$ be as in the general case of Theorem 1.1 and let $e \in H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(M)\delta; \mathbb{Z})$ have nonzero image in $H^2(\text{SO}(2); \mathbb{Z})$. Then, for any $k$, there exists a homomorphism $\rho$ from the fundamental group of a genus 3 surface $\Sigma$ to $\text{Homeo}_0(M)$ such that $\langle \rho^*(e), [\Sigma] \rangle = k$.

Our proof is fundamentally different than Calegari’s proof of unboundedness of the Euler class for $\text{Homeo}_0(\mathbb{R}^2)\delta$, which uses non-compactness of $\mathbb{R}^2$ in an essential way. It also differs considerably from an existing argument for unboundedness of cohomology classes in $\text{Homeo}_0(T^2)$ (see discussion in Section 2.1), which used the fact that $H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(T^2); \mathbb{Z}) \cong \mathbb{Z}^2$ has a $\text{GL}(2, \mathbb{Z})$ action (via conjugation, using the mapping class group of $T^2$).

Section 2 contains some brief background on bounded cohomology, Gromov norm, and cohomology of homeomorphism groups, giving the tools to derive Theorem 1.1 from Theorem 1.2. The proof of Theorem 1.2 is an explicit construction described in Section 3.

### Measure-preserving homeomorphisms

By contrast, suppose that $\mu$ is a probability measure on $M$ and let $G_\mu$ denote the subgroup of measure-preserving homeomorphisms in $\text{Homeo}_0(M)$. In contrast to Theorem 1.1 in the measure-preserving case we have the following.

**Theorem 1.3.** Let $M$ be as in Theorem 1.1. Let $e \in H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(M)\delta; \mathbb{Z})$ be a class with nonzero image in $H^2(\text{SO}(2); \mathbb{Z})$. Then the pullback of $e$ to $H^2(G_\mu^0; \mathbb{Z})$ is zero.
By averaging a measure over the SO(2) action, one may assume that $\mu$ is invariant under rotation of fibers, so there is an inclusion \( SO(2) \to G_\mu \to \Homeo_0(M) \). In this case, Theorem 1.3 implies that the Euler class in \( H^2(G_\delta^\mu; \mathbb{Z}) \) is zero.

In particular, for the special case of the 2-dimensional torus, since \( \pi_1(T^2) = \mathbb{Z}^2 \) is amenable (so any action on a manifold \( M \) has an invariant measure), this gives Corollary 1.4.

For \( M \) as in Theorem 1.3, flat \( M \)-bundles over \( T^2 \) always have zero Euler class.

Note that this statement would be implied by boundedness of \( e \in H^2(\Homeo_0(M)^\delta; \mathbb{Z}) \).

Acknowledgements. Thanks to Bena Tshishiku, Sam Nariman, and Wouter Van Limbeek for discussions and comments on this problem.

2 Preliminaries

We quickly review the standard theory of bounded cohomology and set up notation. A reader who is well-acquainted with bounded cohomology can skip quickly to Section 2.1 where we discuss cohomology of homeomorphism groups.

For \( M \) a manifold, and \( a \in H_*(M; \mathbb{R}) \) an element of singular homology, there is a pseudonorm\[ \|a\| := \inf \{ \sum |c_i| : [\sum c_i \sigma_i] = a \} \]
where the infimum is taken over all real singular chains representing \( a \) in homology. The \( L_1 \) norm on singular chains used in this definition gives a dual \( L_\infty \) norm on singular cochains; and the set of bounded cochains forms a subcomplex of \( C^*(M) \). The cohomology of this complex is the bounded cohomology \( H^*_b(M; \mathbb{R}) \) of \( M \). The (pseudo-)norm, \( \|\alpha\| \), of a cohomology class \( \alpha \) is the infimum of the \( L_\infty \) norms of representative cocycles; and if \( \|\alpha\| \) is finite we say that it is a bounded class.

One can extend these definitions quite naturally to the Eilenberg–MacLane group cohomology. Recall that, for a discrete group \( G \), the set of inhomogeneous \( k \)-chains, \( C_k(G) \), is the free abelian group generated by \( k \)-tuples \( (g_1, \ldots, g_k) \in G^k \) with an appropriate boundary operator. The homology of this complex is the (integral) group homology \( H_k(G; \mathbb{Z}) \); and \( H_k(G; \mathbb{R}) \) is the homology of the complex \( C^*_v(G) \otimes \mathbb{R} \). The homology of the dual complexes \( \text{Hom}(C_k, \mathbb{Z}) \) and \( \text{Hom}(C_k, \mathbb{R}) \) give the group cohomology \( H^k(G; \mathbb{Z}) \) and \( H^k(G; \mathbb{R}) \) respectively. As in the singular homology case above, there is a natural \( L_1 \) norm on \( k \)-chains given by \( \| \sum s_i(g_{i,1}, \ldots, g_{i,k}) \| = \sum |s_i| \), which descends to a pseudonorm on homology by taking the infimum over representative cycles. We also have a dual \( L_\infty \) norm on \( C^k(G) \), and for \( \alpha \in H^*(G; \mathbb{R}) \) define\[ \|\alpha\| := \inf \{ \|c\|_\infty : [c] = \alpha \} \]
Again, bounded (co)cycles are those with finite norm. Note that \( \|\alpha\| \) is finite if and only if there exists \( D \) such that \( |\alpha(g_1, g_2, \ldots, g_k)| < D \) holds for all \( (g_1, g_2, \ldots, g_k) \in G^k \).

A remarkable theorem of Gromov allows one to pass between groups and spaces:
Theorem 2.1 ([9]). There is a natural isometric isomorphism $H^*_b(\pi_1(M); \mathbb{R}) \to H^*_b(M; \mathbb{R})$.

We will make use of this in the next subsection.

Computing norms. In degree two, there is an effective means of computing the norm of a cohomology class through representations of surface groups. An integral class $c \in H_2(G; \mathbb{Z})$ can always be realized as the image of a map from a closed orientable surface $\Sigma$ of genus $\geq 1$ into a $K(G, 1)$ space; such a map induces a homomorphism $\rho : \pi_1(\Sigma) \to G$. Thus, on the level of group cohomology we have $c = \rho^*([\Sigma])$ and

$$\langle \alpha, c \rangle = \langle \rho^*(\alpha), [\Sigma] \rangle.$$

It is easy to verify that $[\Sigma]$ has norm $2\chi(\Sigma)$ (See [9, §2] for the computation.) Hence, $\|c\| \leq 2\chi(\Sigma)$, and showing that $\alpha$ is an unbounded class amounts to showing that

$$\sup_{\rho : \pi_1(\Sigma) \to G} \frac{\langle \rho^*(\alpha), [\Sigma] \rangle}{2\chi(\Sigma)} = \infty,$$

where the supremum is taken over all homomorphisms from surface groups into $G$.

Integrally, the quantity $\langle \rho^*(\alpha), [\Sigma] \rangle$ can be easily read off from a central extension. There is a well known correspondence between $H^2(G; A)$ and central extensions of $G$ by $A$ for any abelian group $A$. If $\alpha \in H^2(G; \mathbb{Z})$ is represented by the extension $0 \to \mathbb{Z} \to \hat{G} \to G \to 1$, then $\rho^*(\alpha)$ is represented by the pullback $0 \to \mathbb{Z} \to \rho^*(\hat{G}) \to \pi_1(\Sigma) \to 1$.

For a surface $\Sigma$ of genus $g$, we have a standard presentation

$$\pi_1(\Sigma) = \langle a_1, b_1, ..., a_g, b_g | \prod_{i=1}^g [a_i, b_i] \rangle$$

In this case, the integer $\langle \rho^*(\alpha), [\Sigma] \rangle$ can be computed by taking lifts $\tilde{a}_i, \tilde{b}_i$ of the generators $a_i$ and $b_i$ to elements of $\rho^*(\hat{G})$. Since this is a central extension, the value of any commutator $[\tilde{a}_i, \tilde{b}_i]$ is independent of the choice of lifts $\tilde{a}_i$ and $\tilde{b}_i$. The product of commutators $\prod_{i=1}^g [\tilde{a}_i, \tilde{b}_i]$ projects to the identity in $\pi_1(\Sigma)$, so can be identified with an element $n \in \mathbb{Z}$. In this case, one checks easily from the definition that $n = \langle \rho^*(\alpha), [\Sigma] \rangle$.

We note that, although not framed in the language of bounded cohomology, this strategy for computation is already present in Milnor and Wood’s work in [18] and [20] respectively.

2.1 Euler classes of homeomorphism groups

This section describes the known analogs of the Euler class in $\text{Homeo}_0(M)$, for various manifolds $M$, justifying some of the remarks made in the introduction. Our starting point is the following remarkable theorem of Thurston.

Theorem 2.2 (Thurston [19]). Let $M$ be a differentiable manifold. The identity homomorphism $\text{Homeo}(M)^\delta \to \text{Homeo}(M)$ induces an isomorphism $H^*(\text{Homeo}(M)^\delta; \mathbb{Z}) \cong H^*(B \text{Homeo}(M); \mathbb{Z})$.
Here we focus on the induced isomorphism on cohomology of the identity components of $\text{Homeo}_0(M)^{\delta} \to \text{Homeo}_0(M)$.

As a sample application of this theorem, one can conclude that the Euler class and its powers are the only characteristic classes of flat topological circle bundles. To see this, one first shows that the inclusion of the group of rotations $\text{SO}(2)$ into $\text{Homeo}_0(S^1)$ is a homotopy equivalence (a relatively easy exercise), hence $H^*(\text{Homeo}_0^\delta(S^1); \mathbb{Z}) \cong H^*(B\text{SO}(2); \mathbb{Z})$. As is well known, $B\text{SO}(2) \cong \mathbb{C}P^\infty$ is generated by the Euler class in degree two.

To apply Thurston’s theorem in other situations, we look for other manifolds where the homotopy type (or at least the cohomology) of $\text{Homeo}_0(M)$ is known. In dimension 2, as was mentioned in the introduction, $S^1 \to \text{Homeo}_0(\mathbb{R}^2)$ is a homotopy equivalence, but in contrast to the $M = S^1$ case, the Euler class of $\text{Homeo}_0(\mathbb{R}^2)^\delta$ is unbounded by $[4]$. For $M = T^2 = S^1 \times S^1$, rotating either of the $S^1$ factors gives a continuous homomorphism $\text{SO}(2) \to \text{Homeo}_0(T^2)$ which is injective on $\pi_1$ – in fact, the inclusion $\text{SO}(2) \times \text{SO}(2) \to \text{Homeo}_0(T^2)$ is a homotopy equivalence. Thus, the pullback of the Euler class in $H^2(B\text{SO}(2); \mathbb{Z})$ to $H^2(B\text{Homeo}(T^2); \mathbb{Z}) \cong H^2(\text{Homeo}(T^2)^\delta; \mathbb{Z})$ by either of these inclusions is nontrivial. A direct computation, given in $[16, \S4.2]$, shows that these classes are also unbounded.

Seifert fibered 3-manifolds give the natural generalization of the examples above to dimension 3, as the fibering gives an $\text{SO}(2)$ subgroup of $\text{Homeo}_0(M)$ acting freely on $M$. These are essentially the only other examples where the homotopy type of $\text{Homeo}_0(M)$ is both known and known to have a homotopically nontrivial $\text{SO}(2)$ subgroup.

The Haken case is covered by the following theorem of Hatcher and Ivanov.

Theorem 2.3 ([10], [14]). Suppose $M$ is an orientable, Haken, Seifert-fibered 3-manifold, $M \neq T^3$. Then the inclusion $S^1 \to \text{Homeo}_0(M)$ by rotations of the fibers is a homotopy equivalence.

In the case of $T^3$, it is also known that $\text{Homeo}_0(T^3) \cong T^3$. We remark that Hatcher’s original proof was in the PL category, but (as noted by Hatcher) this is equivalent to the topological category by the triangulation theorems of Bing and Moise [2]. Ivanov’s proof of the theorem above is for groups of diffeomorphisms, but an argument due to Cerf, together with Hatcher’s later proof of the the Smale conjecture implies that the inclusion of $\text{Diff}(M^3)$ into $\text{Homeo}(M^3)$ is a homotopy equivalence; this makes the smooth category equivalent as well.

McCullough–Soma [17] proved $\text{Homeo}_0(M) \cong S^1$ for the small Seifert-fibered non-Haken manifolds with $\mathbb{H}^2 \times \mathbb{R}$ and $\widetilde{\text{SL}}(2, \mathbb{R})$ geometries. For spherical manifolds, (and for prime 3-manifolds in general) it is conjectured that the inclusion $\text{Isom}(M) \to \text{Homeo}(M)$ is a homotopy equivalence, and this is known to be true in most cases by work of Ivanov [15] and later Hong, Kallioniis, McCullough and Rubinstein. See $[13]$ for references and a detailed exposition, as well as a table of homotopy types of $\text{Isom}(M)$ for the known cases. In several of these, rotation of the fibers gives a homotopically nontrivial $\text{SO}(2)$ subgroup which is a factor of $\pi_1$, hence examples to which Theorem 1.1 applies.
3 Proof of Theorems 1.1 and 1.2

Let $M$ be a Seifert fibered 3-manifold, and let $G = \text{Homeo}_0(M)$. Let $\iota : \text{SO}(2) \to G$ bet the action of rotating the fibers, and suppose that $\iota$ induces an inclusion $\mathbb{Z} \cong \pi_1(\text{SO}(2)) \to \pi_1(G)$ as a factor in a splitting as a direct product. Let $\tilde{G}$ be the covering group of $G$ corresponding to the subgroup $\pi_1(G)/\iota(\mathbb{Z}) \subset \pi_1(G)$. (Recall that $G$ is locally contractible by Cernavskii [5] or Edwards–Kirby [8], so standard covering space theory applies here.) If $\iota$ is also surjective on $\pi_1$, for instance, a homotopy equivalence, then $\tilde{G}$ is the universal covering group of $G$. In general, it is a central extension $0 \to \mathbb{Z} \to \tilde{G} \to G \to 1$.

We will show that this central extension represents a class $e$ in $H^2(\text{Homeo}_0(M)^\delta; \mathbb{Z}) \cong H^2(B\text{Homeo}_0(M); \mathbb{Z}) \cong \mathbb{Z}$ that is unbounded. This will prove Theorem 1.1. Following the framework discussed in Section 2 to show that $e$ is unbounded, it suffices to construct representations of surface groups $\rho : \pi_1(\Sigma) \to \text{Homeo}_0(M)$ with $\rho^*(e)/\chi(\Sigma)$ arbitrarily large. Although, in using this strategy, $a$ priori one may need to vary the genus of surface to construct representations with increasingly large values of $\rho^*(e)/\chi(\Sigma)$, in this case we need only to work with a surface of genus 3.

Put otherwise, we will show how to construct commutators $[a_i, b_i]$ with $a_i$ and $b_i \in G$ (for $i = 1, 2, 3$), such that $\prod_{i=1}^3 [a_i, b_i] = \text{id}$, but lifts $\prod_{i=1}^3 [\tilde{a}_i, \tilde{b}_i]$ to $\tilde{G}$ represent unbounded covering transformations. This will prove Theorem 1.2.

The first step is a local construction of bump functions.

**Definition 3.1.** A standard bump function on $D^2$ is a function $D^2 \to \mathbb{R}$, which, after conjugation by some $h \in \text{Homeo}_0(D^2)$ agrees with

$$f(re^{i\theta}) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } r < 1/3 \\ 2 - 3r & \text{if } 1/3 \leq r \leq 2/3 \\ 0 & \text{if } r > 2/3 \end{cases}$$

What we have in mind as particular examples are piecewise linear (or piecewise smooth) functions $f : D^2 \cong [-1, 1] \times [-1, 1] \to \mathbb{R}$ that are identically 0 on a neighborhood of the boundary, identically 1 on a neighborhood of $(0, 0)$, and with the level sets $f^{-1}(p)$ for $p \in (0, 1)$ piecewise linear (or piecewise smooth) curves. Moreover, these should have the property that some line $\lambda$ from 0 to $\partial([-1, 1] \times [-1, 1])$ is transverse to each level set of $f$, with $f$ monotone along $\lambda$. In this case, one can easily construct the conjugacy $h$ to the function above defined on the round disc as follows. For $p \in (0, 1)$, let $\ell_p$ be the total arc length of $f^{-1}(p)$ and, for $x \in f^{-1}(p)$, let $\ell_p(x)$ denote the arc length of the segment of $f^{-1}(p)$ (oriented as the boundary of $f^{-1}([p, 1])$) from $\lambda \cap f^{-1}(p)$ to $x$. Then, for $x \in f^{-1}(p)$, set $h(x) = \frac{2\pi}{\ell_p(x)} e^{i\theta_p(x)/\ell_p(x)}$. One may then extend $h$ arbitrarily to a homeomorphism defined on $f^{-1}(0)$ and $f^{-1}(1)$.

**Lemma 3.2.** Let $T = D^2 \times S^1$ be a $(p, q)$ standard fibered torus, let $f$ be a standard bump function, and let $k \in \mathbb{R}$. There exist $a, b \in \text{Diff}(T)$ such that the commutator $b^{-1}a^{-1}ba$ preserves fibers and rotates the fiber $\{x\} \times S^1$ by $2\pi kf(x)$ if $x \neq 0$, and the exceptional fiber by $2\pi qk$. 


Proof. We take local coordinates to identify $D^2$ with the rectangle $[-3,3] \times [-3,3] \subset \mathbb{R}^2$, so that the exceptional fiber passes through $(0,0)$, and we work in the PL setting. First, define $\phi$ to be a standard bump function that is 1 on $[-1,1]^2$, zero on the complement of $[-2,2]^2$, and in the topological annulus between these regions of definition, it is linear on each of the four sets cut out by the diagonals of $[-3,3]^2$. Level sets of $\phi$ are shown in Figure 1 left. For a point $(x,s)$ in $[-3,3]^2 \times S^1$, define $a(x,s) = (x,s + 2\pi qk\phi(x))$ if $x \neq (0,0)$ (i.e. a rotation of the fiber over $x$ by $2\pi qk\phi(x)$), and define $a$ to be a rotation by $2\pi k$ on the exceptional fiber.

To construct $b$, first define $F : [-3,3] \rightarrow [-3,3]$ by

$$F(u) = \begin{cases} 
    u & \text{if } u \geq 1 \\
    \frac{u+2}{3} & \text{if } -2 < u < 1 \\
    3(u+2) & \text{if } -3 \leq u \leq -2
\end{cases}$$

and define $b$ on $[-3,3] \times [-3,3] \times S^1$ by $b(u,v,e^{i\theta}) = (F(u), v, e^{i\theta})$.

Since both $a$ and $b$ preserve fibers, $ba^{-1}b^{-1}$ does as well. Moreover, $ba^{-1}b^{-1}$ rotates the fiber through a point $x \in [-3,3]^2$ by $-qk\phi(b^{-1}(x))$ for $x \neq 0$, and by $k\phi(b^{-1}(x))$ on exceptional fiber. It is now easily verified that the composition $b^{-1}a^{-1}ba$ rotates the fibers over $x$ by the standard bump function with level sets depicted in Figure 1 right.

The next step is to glue the bump functions given by Lemma 3.2 together into a nice partition of unity, subordinate to an open cover consisting of only three sets.

Lemma 3.3. Let $S$ be an orientable topological surface. There exists an open cover $O = \{O_1, O_2, O_3\}$ of $S$, with each $O_i$ a union of disjoint homeomorphic open balls, and a partition of unity $\lambda_i$ subordinate to $O$ such that the restriction of $\lambda_i$ to any connected component of $O_i$ is a standard bump function.

Proof. Let $\Gamma = (V,E)$ be a degree three graph on $S$, with polygonal faces. For example, $\Gamma$ may be constructed as the dual graph to a triangulation of $S$. First we define $O = \{O_1, O_2, O_3\}$. Let $N_\delta$ denote the union of the $\delta$-neighborhoods of the edges in $\Gamma$. Fixing an appropriate metric and PL structure on $S$, we may assume that the boundary of $N_\delta$, for any sufficiently small $\delta > 0$, consists of line segments parallel to the edges of $\Gamma$. 

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We assume that \( \delta \) is small enough so that connected components of \( O_1 \) are in one to one correspondence with faces of the graph, each the complement of a small \( \delta/2 \)-neighborhood of the boundary of the face. For each edge \( e \), let \( m_e \) denote its midpoint. In a neighborhood of \( m_e \), \( N_\delta \) has natural local coordinates as \( (-\delta, \delta) \times (-1, 1) \) with the edge given by \( 0 \times (-1, 1) \), \( m_e = (0, 0) \) and lines \( \{ p \} \times (-1, 1) \) parallel to the edge.

We assume that \( \delta \) is small enough so that we may choose these neighborhoods of midpoints to be pairwise disjoint and let \( U_e \) denote the neighborhood containing \( m_e \). Let \( O_2 \) be the union \( \bigcup_e U_e \). Finally, let \( X \) be the union of the sub-neighborhoods \( (-\delta, \delta) \times [-1/2, 1/2] \) and let \( O_3 \) be the complement of \( X \) in \( N_\delta \). See figure 2 for a local picture.

We now construct the desired partition of unity, with \( \lambda_i \) supported on \( O_i \). Define \( \lambda_1 \) to be constant 1 on \( S \setminus N_\delta \), constant 0 on \( N_\delta/2 \), and piecewise linear in the intermediate regions, with level sets consisting of polygons with edges parallel to the edges of \( \Gamma \).

Let \( g = 1 - \lambda_1 \), this is a function supported on \( O_2 \cup O_3 \). Define \( \lambda_2 \) to agree with \( g \) on the complement of \( \bigcup_{e \in E} U_e \). In coordinates \( U_e = (-\delta, \delta) \times (-1, 1) \) as given above, define the restriction of \( \lambda_2 \) to \( U_e \) to agree with \( g \) on \( (-\delta, \delta) \times (-1/2, 1/2) \), to be given by \( \lambda_2(x, y) = 2(1 - |y|)g(x, y) \) on \( (-\delta, \delta) \times (-1, -1/2) \cup (-\delta, \delta) \times (1/2, 1) \), and then extend \( \lambda_2 \) to be 0 elsewhere. This gives a continuous (in fact, piecewise linear) bump function supported on \( O_2 \). Finally, let \( \lambda_3 = 1 - \lambda_1 - \lambda_2 \), which is supported on \( O_3 \). It is easily verified that this is a standard bump function, as in the example discussed after Definition 3.1

To finish the proof of Theorem 1.2 let \( M \) be a Seifert fibered 3-manifold, and let \( S \) be the base orbifold. Take a cover \( \mathcal{O} = \{ O_1, O_2, O_3 \} \) of \( S \) as given by Lemma 3.3. Using the construction from Lemma 3.3 starting with a graph on \( M \), we may arrange for each exceptional fiber to be contained in only one set in \( \mathcal{O} \), and also to have each connected component of each element of \( \mathcal{O} \) contain at most one exceptional fiber. Let \( \{ \lambda_i \} \) be the partition of unity subordinate to this cover consisting of standard bump functions.

Fix a connected component \( B \) of some set \( O_i \in \mathcal{O} \), and let \( B \times S^1 \) be the union of fibers over \( B \). By construction this is a \((p, q)\) standard fibered torus for some \( p, q \). Fix \( K \in \mathbb{Z} \). Lemma 3.2 constructs homeomorphisms \( a_B, b_B \in \text{Homeo}_0(M^3) \) supported on \( B \times S^1 \) such that the commutator \([a_B, b_B] \) rotates each (nonexceptional) fiber over \( \{ x \} \times S^1 \) by \( 2\pi K \lambda_i(x) \). There is a natural path \( a_B(t) \) from the identity in \( \text{Homeo}_0(M) \) to \( a_B(1) = a_B \) by applying the construction of Lemma 3.2 to give rotations of a (non-exceptional) fiber through \( x \) by...
We introduce some preliminary definitions. Let \( M \) with a homomorphism \( a \).

The paths \( O \) where the product is taken over all connected components of \( \pi \).

\[ a_i = \prod_B a_B, \quad \text{and} \quad a_i(t) = \prod_B a_B(t) \]

where the product is taken over all connected components of \( O_i \). Similarly, let

\[ b_i = \prod_B b_B, \quad \text{and} \quad b_i(t) = \prod_B b_B(t). \]

Let \( \tilde{G} \) be the covering group of \( G = \text{Homeo}_0(M) \) as given at the beginning of this section; i.e. the central extension \( 0 \to \mathbb{Z} \to \tilde{G} \to G \to 1 \). One definition of this covering group is as the set of equivalence classes of paths based at the identity in \( G \), where two paths are equivalent if they have the same endpoint and their union is an element of \( \pi_1(G) \) that belongs to the subgroup \( \pi_1(G)/i(\mathbb{Z}) \). The group operation is pointwise multiplication, or equivalently, concatenation. In this interpretation, the inclusion of \( n \in \mathbb{Z} \) into \( \tilde{G} \) is given by a path \( g_t \) in \( G \), \( t \in [0,1] \) that rotates (nonexceptional) fibers by an angle of \( 2\pi nt \) at time \( t \).

Now we return to the machinery of Section 2. Consider the map of a genus 3 surface group into \( G \) where the images of the standard generators are \( a_i \) and \( b_i \) as defined above.

The paths \( a_i(t) \) and \( b_i(t) \) give lifts of \( a_i \) and \( b_i \) to \( \tilde{G} \), with commutator \( [a_i(t), b_i(t)] \) a path from the identity to a map that rotates fibers by \( 2\pi K \lambda_i(x) \). Hence, \( \prod_{i=1}^3 [a_i(t), b_i(t)] \) represents \( K \in \mathbb{Z} \). Thus, if \( \rho \) is the associated map of the surface group, and \( e \) the Euler class in \( H^2(G, \mathbb{Z}) \), this means that \( \langle \rho_*(\Sigma), e \rangle = K \). Since \( K \) can be chosen arbitrarily, this proves Theorem 1.2.

**Remark 3.4.** The constructions above can likely be realized in the smooth category (i.e. with a homomorphism \( \pi_1(\Sigma_3) \to \text{Diff}_0(M) \)), however, more care would be needed in the construction of the bump functions, as not all convex, smooth bump functions on a disc are smoothly conjugate.

### 4 Measure preserving case

We introduce some preliminary definitions. Let \( M \) be a Seifert fibered 3-manifold, and let \( \nu \) denote the signed length measure on fibers, where regular fibers are normalized to have length one. Locally, in a standard \((p,q)\) fibered torus \( D^2 \times S^1 \), where \( S^1 \) has unit length, \( \nu \) is \( \frac{1}{q} d\theta \). Define the fiber length of a rectifiable curve \( \gamma : [0,1] \to M \) by \( \ell(\gamma) = \int_0^1 d\nu \). Note that this definition is independent of the homotopy class of \( \gamma \) rel endpoints. Thus, we can extend this definition to *continuous curves* by defining \( \ell(\gamma) \) to be the length of a smooth approximation of \( \gamma \) that is homotopic to \( \gamma \) rel endpoints.

Let \( \mu \) be a probability measure on \( M \). For a path \( f_t \) in \( \text{Homeo}_0(M) \) from \( f_0 = \text{id} \) to \( f_1 = f \), and point \( x \in M \); \( f_t(x) \) defines a continuous path in \( M \). Thus, we may define the
average fiber rotation with respect to $\mu$ by

$$R_\mu(f_t) := \int_M \ell(f_t(x)) d\mu.$$ 

For future reference, we note some easy properties of $R_\mu$.

**Proposition 4.1** (properties of $R_\mu$).

1. $R_\mu$ is well defined on elements of the universal covering group of $\text{Homeo}_0(M)$.

2. $R_\mu$ is a homomorphism when restricted to the subgroup of the universal covering group consisting of paths to $\mu$-preserving homeomorphisms.

3. Identifying $\widetilde{SO}(2) \cong \mathbb{R}$ with the subgroup of fiber rotations in the universal covering group of $\text{Homeo}_0(M)$, so that $s \in \mathbb{R}$ is a path through rotations from identity to rotation by $2\pi s$ (so that $s \in \mathbb{R}$), we have 

$$R_\mu(s) = s.$$

**Proof.** The first assertion follows from the remark that length depends only on homotopy classes rel endpoints. To show the second, suppose that $f_t$ is a path such that $f_1$ preserves $\mu$. Then for a concatenation of paths $g_t f_t$ we have

$$R_\mu(g_t f_t) := \int_M \ell(g_t \circ f_t(x)) d\mu + \int_M \ell(f_t(x)) d\mu = R(g_t) + R(f_t).$$

which implies the assertion above. The third assertion is immediate from the definition.

**Proving Theorem 1.3 and Corollary 1.4** Applying this to our situation, let $M$ be a Seifert fibered 3-manifold, let $G = \text{Homeo}_0(M)$ and let $\hat{G}$ be the covering group corresponding to $\pi_1(G)/\iota(\mathbb{Z})$ as in the proof of Theorem 1.2. Recall that this is not necessarily the universal covering group of $G$, despite our notation $\hat{G}$. Let $\mu$ be a probability measure on $M$ and let $G_\mu$ denote the group of measure preserving homeomorphisms. Let $e \in H^2(G^\mu; \mathbb{Z})$ be a class with nonzero image in $H^2(SO(2); \mathbb{R})$. By the framework given in Section 2 in order to show that the pullback of $e$ to $H^2(G^\mu; \mathbb{Z})$ is zero, it suffices to show that $\rho^*(e) = 0$ for any orientable surface $\Sigma$ and $\rho : \pi_1(\Sigma) \to G_\mu$.

Let $\pi_1(\Sigma) = \langle a_1, b_1, ..., a_g, b_g : \prod_{i=1}^g [a_i, b_i] \rangle$ and suppose that $\rho : \pi_1(\Sigma) \to G$ has image in $G_\mu$. Let $\tilde{a}_i$, and $\tilde{b}_i$ be paths in $G$ from the identity to $a_i$ and $b_i$ respectively. Now we have

$$R_\mu(\prod_{i=1}^g [\tilde{a}_i, \tilde{b}_i]) = \prod_{i=1}^g [R_\mu(\tilde{a}_i), R_\mu(\tilde{b}_i)] = 0$$

since $R_\mu$ is a homomorphism by Proposition 4.1. Now consider the equivalence class of this path $\prod_{i=1}^g [\tilde{a}_i, \tilde{b}_i]$ as an element of $\hat{G}$. Since it is a lift of the identity, the definition of $\hat{G}$ implies that $\prod [R_\mu(\tilde{a}_i), R_\mu(\tilde{b}_i)]$ is equivalent to a path obtained by rotating fibers of $M$ by an integral amount, where $n = \rho^*(e) \in \mathbb{Z}$. Since $R(n) = n[F]$ by Proposition 4.1 it follows that $n = 0$, as claimed.

\[ \Box \]
To prove Corollary 1.4 it suffices to observe that $\pi_1(T^2)$ is amenable, so any action on a compact manifold $M$ has an invariant probability measure. Thus, any $\rho : \pi_1(T^2) \to \text{Homeo}_0(M)$ factors through $\rho : \pi_1(T^2) \to \text{Homeo}_\mu(M) \to \text{Homeo}_0(M)$ for some probability measure $\mu$, hence $\rho^*(e) = 0$.

\[\square\]

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