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**FIXED POINTS OF  $S^1$ -FIBRATIONS**

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Let  $M$  be a  $S^1$ -fibration over a space  $B$  and  $f: M \rightarrow M$  a map over  $B$ . We give some results when  $f$  can be deformed over  $B$  to a fixed point free map. When the fibration is principal then we compute  $\check{H}^{n-1}(\text{Fix}(f), k)$  where  $n = \dim M$  and we find  $g$  homotopic to  $f$  over  $B$  which minimize the fixed points.

**Introduction.** In [1] or [2], A. Dold defined a fixed point index for fibre-preserving maps, i.e. for every map  $f: U \subset E \rightarrow E$  which commutes with the projection  $p: E \rightarrow B$  he defines an index  $I(f)$  s.t.  $I(f) \neq 0$  implies that every map  $g$  homotopic to  $f$  through a fibre-preserving homotopy has at least one fixed point. (We call fibre-preserving homotopy a homotopy over  $B$ ). From [1] one can see that this index is not easy to compute even in the case where the fibration is

$$S^1 \times S^1 \xrightarrow{p} S^1,$$

$p$  is the projection in the first coordinate and  $f(x, y) = (x, xy)$ . The purpose of this paper is to study the fixed point of a fibre-preserving map  $f: M \rightarrow M$  where  $M$  is a  $S^1$ -fibration over a space  $B$  and  $M, B$  are compact manifolds without boundary.

The paper is divided in 3 parts: In Part I we give a criterion, in terms of the fundamental group, for  $f$  to be deformed over  $B$  to a fixed point free map. This is Proposition 1.3. Some corollaries of this result are given. In Part II we look at orientable  $S^1$ -fibrations. We give a lower bound for the number of Nielsen classes over  $B$  of  $f$  as well as the topological dimension of this class. This is Theorem 2.5.

In Part III we state the question of realizing a homotopy class over  $B$  by a map  $f$  s.t.  $\text{Fix}(f) =$  the set of fixed points of  $f$  is minimal in the sense we will describe. We will answer this question in the case where the fibration and the total space are orientable. This is Theorem 3.7.

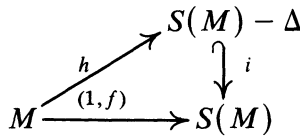
I would like to thank, Professors A. Dold, D. Sullivan, Drs. C. Biasi and O. Manzoli Neto for the help I had in writing this paper.

**Part I. Detecting fixed points.** Let

$$\begin{array}{c} S^1 \rightarrow M \\ \downarrow \\ B \end{array}$$

be a  $S^1$ -fibration over  $B$  where  $M, B$  are compact manifolds without boundary and  $f: M \rightarrow M$  be a map over  $B$  i.e.  $p \circ f = p$ . For the study of the category of spaces over  $B$  see [1] and [2]. By a deformation over  $B$  we mean a fibre-preserving homotopy. Let  $M \times_B M$  be the fibre square which we denote by  $S(M)$  and  $\Delta$  the diagonal in  $S(M)$ . Now we will recall Proposition 2.4 of [3].

**PROPOSITION 1.1.** *The map  $f$  can be deformed over  $B$  to a fixed point free map if and only if there is a map  $h: M \rightarrow S(M) - \Delta$  which makes the diagram below commutative up to homotopy.*



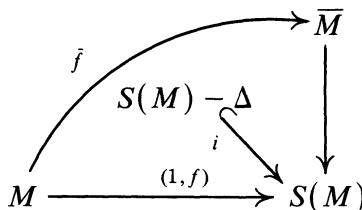
In [3], they consider fibrations  $F \rightarrow M \rightarrow B$  where  $F$  is a manifold of dimension greater than or equal to three. Under this hypothesis they show that the homotopy fibre of the inclusion  $i: M \times M - \Delta \rightarrow M \times M$  is at least 1-connected. Therefore by general obstruction theory we can always lift the map  $(1, f)$  over the 2-skeleton of  $M$  and the obstructions to lift over the higher dimensional skeletons are cohomology classes. On the other hand if  $F$  is the circle  $S^1$  or a 2-dimensional surface, different from  $S^2$  or  $RP^2$ , the obstructions to lift  $(1, f)$  are no longer cohomology classes. In these cases the problem of lifting  $(1, f)$  can be treated in terms of  $\Pi_1$ . The case where  $F$  is a 2-dimensional surface is much more complicated than the case where  $F = S^1$ . We return to the case  $F = S^1$ .

Let  $x_0 \in M$  be a base point of  $M$  and let us assume that  $f(x_0) \neq x_0$ . Denote  $(x_0, f(x_0))$  the base point of  $S(M) - \Delta$  and  $S(M)$ .

**PROPOSITION 1.2.** *The map  $h$  exists if and only if*

$$(1, f)_\#(\Pi_1(M, x_0)) = i_\#(\Pi_1(S(M) - \Delta; (x_0, f(x_0))))$$

*Proof.* Let  $\bar{M}$  be the covering space of  $S(M)$  which corresponds to the subgroup  $(1, f)_\#(\Pi_1(M, x_0))$ . So we have the commutative diagram:



where  $\tilde{f}$  is a lifting of  $(1, f)$  which exists by elementary properties of covering spaces.

Now let us assume that

$$(1, f)_\#(\Pi_1(M, x_0)) = i_\#(\Pi_1(S(M) - \Delta; (x_0, f(x_0))))).$$

Then there is a map  $j: S(M) - \Delta \rightarrow \bar{M}$  which is a lifting of  $i$ . By Proposition 2.1. of [3] we have

$$\Pi_i(S(M), S(M) - \Delta) \approx \Pi_i(S^1, S^1 - y_0) = 0, \quad i > 1.$$

So  $j$  induces isomorphisms in all homotopy groups. Since  $S(M) - \Delta$  and  $\bar{M}$  are CW-complexes, there exists  $l: \bar{M} \rightarrow S(M) - \Delta$  which is a homotopy inverse of  $j$ . Take  $h = l \circ \tilde{f}$ .

Now suppose that  $h$  exists. Since  $i \circ h$  is homotopic to  $(1, f)$ , it follows that

$$(1, f)_\#(\Pi_1(M, x_0)) \subset i_\#(\Pi_1(S(M) - \Delta, (x_0, f(x_0)))).$$

Let  $p_1: S(M) \rightarrow M$  be the projection on the first coordinate. We have the fibration

$$\begin{array}{c} S^1 - \{x_0\} \rightarrow S(M) \\ \downarrow \\ M \end{array}$$

Therefore  $p_{1*}: \Pi_1(S(M)) \rightarrow \Pi_1(M)$  is an isomorphism. Since  $p_1 \circ h \approx id$  we have that  $h_\#$  is an isomorphism and the equality  $(1, f)_\#(\Pi_1(M, x_0)) = i_\#(\Pi_1(S(M) - \Delta, (x_0, f(x_0))))$  follows.

**PROPOSITION 1.3.** *A map  $f$  can be deformed over  $B$  to a fixed point free map if and only if*

$$(1, f)_\#(\Pi_1(M, x_0)) = i_\#(\Pi_1(S(M) - \Delta, (x_0, f(x_0)))).$$

*Proof.* This follows directly from Proposition 1.1. and 1.2.

Let us consider a fibre preserving map  $A: M \rightarrow M$  whose restriction to each fibre is the antipodal map. Such a map exists because  $M \rightarrow B$  is a locally trivial  $S^1$ -fibration. Without loss of generality let us assume that  $f(x_0) = A(x_0)$ .

**PROPOSITION 1.4.** *If  $\text{im}(i_\#) = \text{im}(1, f)_\#$  then  $A_\# = f_\#$ . Conversely if  $\Pi_1(S^1) \rightarrow \Pi_1(M)$  is injective or surjective then  $A_\# = f_\#$  implies  $\text{im}(i_\#) = \text{im}(1, f)_\#$ .*

*Proof.* The map  $(1, A): M \rightarrow S(M)$  is a left inverse of  $p_1$ . Since  $\Pi_1(S(M) - \Delta) \rightarrow \Pi_1(M)$  is an isomorphism, (see the proof of Proposition 2.2) it follows that

$$(1, A)_\# \Pi_1(M) \rightarrow \Pi_1(S(M) - \Delta)$$

is an isomorphism. Therefore  $\text{im}(i_\#) = \text{im}(i \circ (1, A))_\#$ . But

$$\text{im}(i \circ (1, A))_\# = \text{im}(1, f)_\#$$

is equivalent to  $(i \circ (1, A))_\#(\alpha) = (1, f)_\#(\alpha)$  for every  $\alpha \in \Pi_1(M)$ . This implies  $A_\#(\alpha) = f_\#(\alpha)$ .

For the second part let us assume first that

$$\Pi_1(S^1) \rightarrow \Pi_1(M)$$

is injective. From the diagram below

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Pi_1(S^1) & & \Pi_1(S^1) \\ \downarrow j_2 & & \downarrow j \\ \Pi_1(S(M)) & \xrightarrow{p_2} & \Pi_1(M) \\ \downarrow p_1 & & \downarrow p_1 \\ \Pi_1(M) & \xrightarrow{p} & \Pi_1(B) \end{array}$$

we have

$$p_{1\#} \circ (1, A)_\#(\alpha) = p_{1\#}(1, f)_\#(\alpha) \Rightarrow [(1, A)_\#(\alpha) - (1, f)_\#(\alpha)] = j_{2\#}(\beta)$$

for some  $\beta \in \Pi_1(S^1)$ . So

$$p_{2\#} [(1, A)_\#(\alpha) - (1, f)_\#(\alpha)] = A_\#(\alpha) - f_\#(\alpha) = j_\#(\beta) = 0.$$

Since  $j_\#$  is injective we have  $\beta = 0$ . Therefore  $(1, A)_\#(\alpha) = (1, f)_\#(\alpha)$  and the result follows. Finally let us assume that  $j_\#: \Pi_1(S^1) \rightarrow \Pi_1(M)$  is surjective. We have the diagram:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} S^1 & \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{(1, A|_{S^1})} \\ \xrightarrow{(1, f|_{S^1})} \end{array} & S^1 \times S^1 \\ j \downarrow & & \downarrow j_1 \times j_2 \\ M & \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{(1, A)} \\ \xrightarrow{(1, f)} \end{array} & S(M) \end{array}$$

From the fact that  $f_\# = A_\#$  and using the long exact sequence in homotopy of the fibration  $S^1 \rightarrow M \rightarrow B$  we have that  $(A|_{S^1})_\# = (f|_{S^1})_\#$ . Given  $\alpha \in \Pi_1(M)$ , there exists  $\beta \in \Pi_1(S^1)$  s.t.  $j_\#(\beta) = \alpha$ . So we have

$$\begin{aligned} (1, A)_\#(\alpha) + (1, f)_\#(\alpha) &= (1, A)_\#j_\#(\beta) - (1, f)_\#j_\#(\beta) \\ &= (j_1 \times j_2)_\#(1, A|_{S^1})_\#(\beta) - (1, f|_{S^1})_\#(\beta) = 0 \end{aligned}$$

and the result follows.

**COROLLARY 1.5.** *Let  $S^1 \rightarrow K \rightarrow S^1$  be the  $S^1$ -fibration where  $K$  is the Klein bottle. Then the  $1_K: K \rightarrow K$   $1_K =$  identity map cannot be deformed over  $B$  to a fixed point free map.*

**COROLLARY 1.6.** *Let*

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 f: B \times S^1 & \longrightarrow & B \times S^1 \\
 & \searrow p_1 & \swarrow p_1 \\
 & & B
 \end{array}$$

*be a fibre-preserving map. Then  $f$  can be deformed over  $B$  to a fixed point free map if and only if  $f = (1, g)$  where  $g: B \times S^1 \rightarrow S^1$  is homotopic to  $p_2: B \times S^1 \rightarrow S^1$  defined by  $p_2(x, y) = y$ .*

*Proof.* The “if” part is clear. So let us assume that  $f$  can be deformed over  $B$  to a fixed point free map. By Proposition 1.4. we have  $f_{\#} = A_{\#}$  and therefore  $p_{2\#}f_{\#} = p_{2\#}A_{\#}$  or  $(p_2 \circ f)_{\#} = (p_2 \circ A)_{\#}$ . But this means that

$$(p_2 \circ f)^* = (p_2 \circ A)^*: H^1(S^1) \rightarrow H^1(B \times S^1)$$

and consequently  $p_2 \circ f$  is homotopic to  $p_2 \circ A$  which is homotopic to  $p_2$ . So the result follows.

**REMARK.** In general  $f_{\#} = A_{\#}$  does not imply  $\text{im}(1, f)_{\#} = \text{im}(i)_{\#}$ . We can construct a counter-example with  $B = S^1 \times S^1 \times S^2$  and the fibration is the induced fibration from the universal  $S^1$ -fibration by the map  $g: S^1 \times S^1 \times S^2 \rightarrow K(Z, 2)$  which is represented by  $\alpha_2 \otimes 1 + 2 \otimes \beta_2 \in H^2(S^1 \times S^1 \times S^2)$ ,  $\alpha_2, \beta_2$  being generators of  $H^2(S^1 \times S^1), H^2(S^2)$  respectively.

**Part II. The homology of the fixed points set.** We will start by recalling some results of [4].

Let  $x, y \in \text{Fix}(f)$ , where  $f$  is a fibre-preserving map and  $S^1 \rightarrow M \rightarrow B$  is a  $S^1$ -fibration. We say that  $x$  is equivalent to  $y$  over  $B$  if there is a path  $\lambda: [0, 1] \rightarrow M$  s.t.  $\lambda(0) = x, \lambda(1) = y$  and  $\lambda$  is homotopic to  $f(\lambda)$  rel  $\{x, y\}$  over  $B$ .

**DEFINITION 2.1.** The equivalence classes are called the Nielsen classes of  $f$  over  $B$ .

**PROPOSITION 2.2.** *If  $M$  is compact then the number of Nielsen classes over  $B$  is finite.*

*Proof.* This is Lemma 2.1 of [4].

In [4] he also defines essential Nielsen classes and the Nielsen number of  $f$ . Now we will define a lower bound for the number of non-empty Nielsen classes of  $f$  over  $B$  for the case of a principal  $S^1$ -fibration. I believe it would be interesting to compare this number with the Nielsen number as defined in [4].

Let  $S^1 \rightarrow M \rightarrow B$  be an orientable  $S^1$ -fibration and  $\Theta: S^1 \times M \rightarrow M$  the  $S^1$ -action. Given  $f: M \rightarrow M$  a fibre-preserving map, there is a map  $\theta_f: M \rightarrow S^1$ , which satisfies the equation  $f(x) = \theta_f(x) \cdot x$ , where  $\theta_f(x) \cdot x$  means  $\Theta(\theta_f(x), x)$ .

**PROPOSITION 2.3.** *Given an orientable fibration and a map  $f$  then  $\text{Fix}(f) = \theta_f^{-1}(1)$  where  $1 \in S^1$ .*

*Proof.* Obvious.

Let  $i(f)$  denote the number of elements of the group

$$\Pi_1(S^1)/\theta_{f\#}(\Pi_1(M)).$$

**PROPOSITION 2.4.** *If  $i(f) = \infty$  then  $f$  can be deformed over  $B$  to a fixed point free map.*

*Proof.* If  $i(f) = \infty$  then  $\theta_{f\#}$  is the constant map. Therefore  $\theta_f$  is homotopic to the constant map equal to  $-1 \in S^1$ . Therefore  $f$  is homotopic over  $B$  to the antipodal map  $A$ .

**THEOREM 2.5.** *Let  $i(f) = r < \infty$ . If  $g$  is homotopic to  $f$  over  $B$  then there exist at least  $r$  Nielsen classes  $F_1, \dots, F_r$  such that  $\check{H}^{n-1}(F_i, K) \neq 0$  (Čech cohomology) where  $K$  is  $\mathbf{Z}$  or  $\mathbf{Z}_2$  depending on whether  $M$  is an orientable or a non-orientable  $n$ -dimensional compact manifold.*

*Proof.* Let us first assume that  $r = 1$ . Then we have the following commutative diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} H_1(M) & \rightarrow & H_1(M, M - \text{Fix}(f)) & \rightarrow & H_0(M - \text{Fix}(f)) & & \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ H_1(S^1) & \rightarrow & H_1(S^1, S^1 - \{1\}) & \rightarrow & H_0(S^1 - \{1\}) & \rightarrow & \check{H}_0(S^1) \end{array}$$

where the coefficients are in  $\mathbf{Z}$  or  $\mathbf{Z}_2$ . Since  $H_1(M) \rightarrow H_1(S^1)$  is surjective then  $H_1(M, M - \text{Fix}(f)) \neq 0$ . So by Poincaré Duality it follows that  $\check{H}^{n-1}(\text{Fix}(f)) \neq 0$  and the result follows.

Now let  $i(f) = r$  and  $S^1 \xrightarrow{p_r} S^1$  be the  $r$ -fold covering map. There is a lifting  $\bar{\Theta}_f: M \rightarrow S^1$  where

$$\text{Fix}(f) = \bigcup_{k=0}^{r-1} \bar{\Theta}_f^{-1}(e^{2\Pi iK/r})$$

and we have that  $\bar{\Theta}_{f\#}: \Pi_1(M) \rightarrow \Pi_1(S^1)$  is surjective. By the case  $r = 1$  we have that

$$\check{H}^{n-1}(\bar{\Theta}_f^{-1}(e^{2\Pi iK'/r})) \neq 0.$$

It is easy to see that

$$x \in \bar{\Theta}_f^{-1}(e^{2\Pi iK/r}), \quad y \in \bar{\Theta}_f^{-1}(e^{2\Pi iK'/r})$$

and  $K \neq K'$  then  $x$  and  $y$  do not belong to the same Nielsen class. Therefore the result follows.

**REMARK.** (1) The Proposition 2.2. and Theorem 2.5. suggest what should be a function  $g \in [f]$  over  $B$  s.t.  $\text{Fix}(g)$  is minimal. The definition will be given in Part III.

(2) I have not been able to extend the definition of this lower bound for non-orientable fibrations.

**Part III. The realization problem.** From now on let us assume that  $S^1 \rightarrow M \rightarrow B$  is a principal  $S^1$ -fibration and  $M$  is a compact orientable  $n$ -manifold. Let  $f: M \rightarrow M$  be a fibre-preserving map.

**DEFINITION 3.1.** We say that  $\text{Fix}(g)$  is minimal, where  $g$  is homotopic to  $f$  over  $B$ , if  $\text{Fix}(g)$  is an  $n - 1$ -submanifold with  $i(f)$  connected components.

**PROPOSITION 3.2.** *Given  $f: M \rightarrow M$  we can find  $g$  homotopic to  $f$  over  $B$  such that  $\text{Fix}(g)$  is an  $n - 1$ -submanifold.*

*Proof.* Let  $\theta_f: M \rightarrow S^1$  be as defined in Part II. Now we can deform  $\theta_f$  to a map  $\bar{\Theta}: M \rightarrow S^1$  such that  $1 \in S^1$  is a regular value. Therefore  $g(x) = \bar{\Theta}(x)$ .  $x$  is homotopic to  $f$  over  $B$  and  $\text{Fix}(g) = \bar{\Theta}^{-1}(1)$  is an  $n - 1$ -submanifold.

**PROPOSITION 3.3.** *The homology class  $[\bar{\Theta}^{-1}(1)]$  represented by the submanifold  $\bar{\Theta}^{-1}(1)$  is the Poincaré dual of the 1-dimensional cohomology class  $\bar{\Theta}^*(i_1)$  where  $\bar{\Theta}^*: H^1(S^1, \mathbb{Z}) \rightarrow H^1(M, \mathbb{Z})$  and  $i_1$  is the generator of  $H^1(S^1, \mathbb{Z})$ .*



*Proof.* See [6].

Recall that  $H^1(M, \mathbf{Z})$  is a free abelian group and  $H_{n-1}(M, \mathbf{Z})$  is also a free abelian group by Poincaré Duality.

**PROPOSITION 3.4.** *If  $\bar{\Theta}_\# : \pi_1(M) \rightarrow \pi_1(S^1)$  is surjective then  $\bar{\Theta}^*(i_1)$  is indivisible.*

*Proof.* Let  $\bar{\Theta}^*(i_1) = \lambda\alpha$ ,  $\lambda \in \mathbf{R}$ ,  $\alpha \in H^1(M, \mathbf{Z})$ .

So

$$\langle i_1, h\bar{\Theta}_\#(x) \rangle = \langle \bar{\Theta}^*(i_1), h(x) \rangle = \langle \lambda\alpha, h(x) \rangle = \lambda \langle \alpha, h(x) \rangle$$

where  $h$  is the Hurewicz homomorphism,  $x \in \Pi_1(M)$  and  $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$  is the evaluation. Therefore  $\text{im } \bar{\Theta}_\# \subset \lambda \cdot \mathbf{Z}$ . Since  $\bar{\Theta}_\#$  is surjective we have  $\lambda = 1$  and the result follows.

**PROPOSITION 3.5 (D. Sullivan).** *Given an indivisible homology class of  $H_{n-1}(M, \mathbf{Z})$  then it can be represented by a connected  $n - 1$ -submanifold.*

*Proof.* See [5] or the appendix.

**THEOREM 3.6.** *If  $\theta_f : \Pi_1(M) \rightarrow \Pi_1(S^1)$  is surjective then  $f$  can be deformed over  $B$  to a map  $g$  s.t.  $\text{Fix}(g)$  is a connected  $n - 1$ -submanifold.*

*Proof.* Since  $\theta_{f\#} : \pi_1(M) \rightarrow \pi_1(S^1)$  is surjective, by Proposition 3.4.  $\theta_f$  defines an  $n - 1$ -homology class of  $M$  which is indivisible. By Proposition 3.5 there is a connected  $n - 1$ -submanifold  $N$  which represents this class. Now let us take a tubular neighborhood of this submanifold. This neighborhood is homeomorphic to  $N \times (-\epsilon, \epsilon)$ . Then we define  $\bar{\Theta} : M \rightarrow S^1$  such that  $\bar{\Theta}^{-1}(1) = N$  and  $1$  is a regular value of  $\bar{\Theta}$ . By Proposition 3.3  $\bar{\Theta}$  is homotopic to  $\theta_f$  and  $g(x) = \bar{\Theta}(x) \cdot x$  is a function such as we are looking for.

Finally the main result.

**THEOREM 3.7.** *Given  $f : M \rightarrow M$  there is a map  $g$  homotopic to  $f$  over  $B$  such that  $\text{Fix}(f)$  is minimal.*

*Proof.* Let  $\tilde{\theta}_f : M \rightarrow S^1$  be a lifting of  $\theta_f$  i.e.  $p_r \circ \tilde{\theta}_f = \theta_f$  where  $p_r$  is the  $r$ -fold cover of  $S^1$ . By Theorem 3.6  $\tilde{\theta}_f$  is homotopic to a map  $\tilde{\theta} : M \rightarrow S^1$  such that  $\tilde{\theta}^{-1}(1)$  is a connected  $n - 1$ -submanifold. Let  $\phi : S^1 \rightarrow S^1$  be a diffeomorphism homotopic to the identity which sends the

set  $\{e^{2\pi iK/r} \mid K = 0, 1, \dots, r - 1\}$  into a small neighbourhood of 1 whose points are regular values of  $\tilde{\Theta}$ . Let  $\bar{\Theta} = p_r \circ \phi^{-1} \circ \tilde{\Theta}$ . Then  $g(x) = \bar{\Theta}(x) \cdot x$  is a function such as we are looking for.

**Appendix.** Now let us sketch the proof of Proposition 3.5. (This is due to Prof. D. Sullivan.)

*Proof.* Let  $M$  be a compact orientable manifold of dimension  $n$  and  $N \subset M$  an  $n - 1$ -compact embedded submanifold. Suppose  $n \geq 3$  and  $N$  has more than 1 connected component. Call  $N_1, N_2$  two components. Given  $p \in N_1, q \in N_2$  there is a path  $\lambda$  in  $M$  such that  $\lambda(0) = p, \lambda(1) = q$  since  $M$  is connected. We can assume that  $\lambda[0, 1] \cap N$  is a finite set  $\{a_1, \dots, a_i\}$  and  $a_1 = p, a_i = q$ . Let  $\lambda$  have the natural orientation. At each point  $a_i$  we have the intersection number of  $\lambda$  and  $N$  which is  $+1, -1$  or  $0$ . We can assume that the intersection number of  $a_i$  is either  $+1$  or  $-1$ , otherwise we deform  $\lambda$  in such a way that  $a_i$  is not in the intersection. Now let us suppose that the total intersection number of  $\lambda$  and  $N$  is equal to zero. Then we can find 2 consecutive points,  $a_i, a_{i+1}$  such that one has intersection number  $+1$  and the other has intersection number  $-1$ . Now we apply surgery, replacing two small discs around  $a_i, a_{i+1}$  by a tube around the arc from  $a_i$  to  $a_{i+1}$ . The new manifold represents the same homology class. Since  $m \geq 3$  the following fact is true: if  $a_i, a_{i+1}$  belong to the same component of  $N$  then the new submanifold has the same number of components as  $N$ , otherwise the number of components decreases by one. Because the total intersection number is zero we can continue this process and end up with a submanifold  $N'$  with less components than  $N$ . If  $N'$  is not connected we apply the above procedure again until we get a connected submanifold.

Now let me show that it is always possible to connect one point of  $N_1$  to a point of  $N_2$  by a curve which has total intersection number zero. Let  $p \in N_1, q \in N_2$  and  $\lambda$  a curve from  $p$  to  $q$  such that  $\lambda[0, 1] \cap N$  is finite. Call  $r$  the intersection number of  $\lambda$  and the submanifold  $N$ . Since  $[N] \in H_{m-1}(M, \mathbf{Z})$  is indivisible by Poincaré Duality we can pass by  $g$  an embedded circle  $\phi: [0, 1] \rightarrow M$   $\phi(0) = \phi(1) = g$  which has total intersection number  $+1$  with  $N$ . Given a number  $s$  let  $s \cdot \phi = \phi * \dots * \phi$  where  $*$  is the composition of paths. Let  $T$  be a tubular neighborhood of  $\phi[0, 1]$ . Since  $M$  is orientable then  $T \approx D^{n-1} \times S^1$  where  $D^{n-1}$  is the  $n - 1$ -disc. Now we can deform  $s\phi$  to  $\bar{\phi}_s$  in such a way that  $\bar{\phi}_s([0, 1])$  is an embedded circle. Finally let  $\phi'_s$  be a small deformation of  $\bar{\phi}_s$  such that  $\phi'_s(1) = g' \neq g$  and  $g' \in N_2$  and near  $g$ . Now consider the following curve  $\lambda * \phi'_s$ . Call  $I_\lambda(g)$  and  $I_{\phi'_s}(g)$  the intersection numbers of  $g$  as points of  $\lambda$  and  $\phi'_s$

respectively. If  $I_\lambda(g) = -I_{\phi'_s}(g)$  then let  $s = r - I_\lambda(g)$ . If  $I_\lambda(g) = I_{\phi'_s}(g)$  let  $s = r$ . Then we have that the total intersection number of  $\lambda * \phi'_s$  is zero.

Now let  $m = 2$ . The fact that, in this case, an indivisible homology class can be represented by an embedded circle is classical and was known by Poincaré.

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