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FIXED SETS OF INVOLUTIONS

FRANK LEWIS CAPOBIANCO

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In their work *Differentiable Periodic Maps*, Conner and Floyd posed the following question: Given a closed smooth n -manifold M^n , for what values of k does there exist a closed $(n+k)$ -manifold V^{n+k} with smooth involution T whose fixed point set is diffeomorphic to M^n ? In this paper we show that for many values of k there is a closed manifold with involution (T, V^{n+k}) whose fixed point set is cobordant to M^n .

We begin by defining I_n^k to be the set of classes in the n -dimensional unoriented cobordism group \mathfrak{N}_n which are represented by an n -manifold which is the fixed point set of a closed $(n+k)$ -manifold with smooth involution. Some properties of I_n^k are easy to see—for instance, that I_n^k is a subgroup of \mathfrak{N}_n , that $I_n^0 = \mathfrak{N}_n$, and that $I_*^k = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} I_n^k$ is an ideal in \mathfrak{N}_* . It follows from [4] that if the manifold with involution (T, V^{n+1}) has fixed point set F^n , then F^n bords; hence $I_n^1 = (0)$. It is well-known that if the manifold with involution (T, V^{n+k}) has fixed point set F^n , then the mod 2 Euler characteristics $w_n(F^n)$ and $w_{n+k}(V^{n+k})$ are equal; hence for k odd I_n^k is contained in χ_n , the subgroup of classes in \mathfrak{N}_n with zero Euler characteristic.

The main result of this paper is the following:

THEOREM. *For $2 \leq k \leq n$ and k even, $I_n^k = \mathfrak{N}_n$; for $2 < k \leq n$ and k odd, $I_n^k = \chi_n$.*

To prove this result we first verify that I_n^k is as claimed for $k = 2, 3$ and that I_n^k contains an indecomposable cobordism class for each n not of the form $2^r - 1$ and each k such that $4 \leq k \leq n$. Once these facts are established, the theorem itself follows easily by induction.

It is tempting to conjecture that $I_n^k = (0)$ for $k > n$. In fact, the techniques employed in Section 2 of this paper originally appeared in a dissertation written under the supervision of R. E. Stong at the University of Virginia which verified this conjecture for $n \leq 5$. In this regard, the author wishes to express his gratitude and indebtedness to Professor Stong for the generous advice which underlies most of this work.

2. The structure of I_n^2 . Because a smooth involution on a closed manifold can not fix an odd number of points, $I_0^k = (0)$ for $k > 0$. In this section we shall prove that for $n > 0$, $I_n^2 = \mathfrak{N}_n$ by using the

Boardman homomorphism J' introduced in [1]. In what follows we adopt the notation and terminology of [4].

Let $\mathcal{M}_m = \sum_{j=0}^m \mathfrak{N}_j(\text{BO}(m-j))$. We define a map $J': \mathcal{M}_* \rightarrow \mathfrak{N}_*[[\theta]]$, where $\mathfrak{N}_*[[\theta]]$ denotes the ring of formal power series in one variable, as follows: If x is an element of \mathcal{M}_m , set $J'_n(x) = \Delta^n JI^{n+1}(x)$. As an element of $\mathfrak{N}_n(\mathbf{Z}_2)$, $J'_n(x)$ may be written as a sum $\sum_{i=0}^n \beta_i [A, S^{n-i}]$ for a unique choice of classes $\beta_i \in \mathfrak{N}_i$. We define $J'(x) = \sum_{i=0}^\infty \beta_i \theta^i$. Arguments similar to those found in [3] prove that J' is a homomorphism of rings.

LEMMA 2.1. *Let $\bigcup_{j=0}^m \nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j$ be a disjoint union of $(m-j)$ -plane bundles. Let β be an element of \mathfrak{N}_m . There exists a manifold with involution (T, V^m) such that β is the class of V^m and $\bigcup_{j=0}^m \nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j$ is the normal bundle to the fixed point set of (T, V^m) if and only if $J'(\sum_{j=0}^m [\nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j]) = \beta \theta^m + \text{higher power terms}$.*

Proof. Without loss of generality we may suppress the fact we are considering a disjoint union of bundles. Assume (T, V^m) fixes $\nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j$. Then $J'_m([\nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j]) = \Delta^m JI^{m+1}([\nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j]) = [V^m][A, S^0]$ by [4]; so $J'([\nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j]) = [V^m] \theta^m + \text{higher power terms}$. Assume $J'([\nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j]) = \beta \theta^m + \text{higher power terms}$. By definition,

$$0 = J'_{m-1}([\nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j]) = \Delta^m JI^m([\nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j]) = [A, S(\nu^{m-j})].$$

Suppose $(A, S(\nu^{m-j}))$ bounds (S, M^m) . Let

$$V^m = (D(\nu^{m-j}) \cup M^m) / (S(\nu^{m-j})) \cong \partial M^m$$

and $T = A \cup S$. The normal bundle to the fixed point set of (T, V^m) is $\nu^{m-j} \rightarrow F^j$ and hence $\beta = [V^m]$.

We use Lemma 2.1 to explicitly compute J' on a basis for \mathcal{M}_* : Let T be the involution on $\mathbf{RP}(n+1)$ defined by mapping $[x_0, \dots, x_{n+1}]$ to $[-x_0, x_1, \dots, x_{n+1}]$. The normal bundle to the fixed point set of $(T, \mathbf{RP}(n+1))$ is $\mathbf{R}^{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{RP}(0) \cup \lambda \rightarrow \mathbf{RP}(n)$, where λ is the canonical line bundle. Let λ_n denote the cobordism class of $\lambda \rightarrow \mathbf{RP}(n)$. Then by 2.1, $J'(\lambda_n) = 1 + \sum_{i=0}^\infty [V(n+1, i)] \theta^{n+i+1}$, where the $V(n+1, i)$ are the manifolds studied in [5]. In particular, $[V(n+1, 0)] = [\mathbf{RP}(n+1)]$ and

$$[V(n+1, i)] = [\mathbf{RP}(n+i+1)] + [\mathbf{RP}(\lambda \oplus \mathbf{R}^{i+1})] + \sum_{k=0}^{i-1} [\mathbf{RP}(i-k)] [V(n+1, k)],$$

where $\mathbf{RP}(\lambda \oplus \mathbf{R}^{i+1})$ is used here to denote the total space of the projective space bundle associated to $\lambda \oplus \mathbf{R}^{i+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{RP}(n)$.

LEMMA 2.2. *Let $\alpha \in \mathfrak{N}_n$. α belongs to I_n^2 if and only if there exists a 2-plane bundle $\nu^2 \rightarrow F^n$ such that $\alpha = [F^n]$ and the first nonzero term appearing in the power series expansion of $J'([\nu^2 \rightarrow F^n])$ is at least $(n + 1)$ -dimensional.*

Proof. Lemma 2.1 implies that α belongs to I_n^2 if and only if there exists a 2-plane bundle $\nu^2 \rightarrow F^n$ such that $\alpha = [F^n]$ and the first nonzero term appearing in the power series expansion of $J'([\nu^2 \rightarrow F^n])$ is at least $(n + 2)$ -dimensional. By [5; 2.1], $J(\mathfrak{N}_n(\text{BO}(2))) \subset \mathfrak{N}_{n+1}(\mathbf{Z}_2)$. Thus, requiring that the first nonzero term be at least $(n + 1)$ -dimensional is sufficient.

LEMMA 2.3. $I_n^2 = \mathfrak{N}_n$ for $n \geq 1$.

Proof. We use Lemma 2.2 to show that for each positive dimension n , not of the form $2^r - 1$, I_n^2 contains an indecomposable cobordism class; the result then follows from [7]. Because conjugation on $\text{CP}(2)$ fixes $\text{RP}(2)$, I_2^2 contains the class of $\text{RP}(2)$. Because $J'(\lambda_{4n+2}\lambda_0 + \lambda_{2n+1}^2) = ([V(4n + 3, 1)] + [V(2n + 2, 0)]^2)\theta^{4n+4} + \text{higher power terms}$, I_{4n+2}^2 contains the class of $\text{RP}(4n + 2)$. Because $J'(\lambda_{4n}\lambda_0 + \lambda_{2n}^2) = [V(4n + 1, 1)]\theta^{4n+2} + \text{higher power terms}$, I_{4n}^2 contains the class of $\text{RP}(4n) \cup \text{RP}(2n) \times \text{RP}(2n)$. Suppose $n = 2^p(2q + 1) - 1$ for $p, q > 0$. For each j , $0 \leq j \leq n$, let the cobordism class γ_j be defined by

$$\gamma_j = \begin{cases} 1 & j = 0 \\ 0 & 1 \leq j \leq 2^p + 1 \\ [V(2^p + 1, j - 2^p - 1)] & 2^p + 2 \leq j \leq 2^{p+1}q - 1 \\ [V(2^p + 1, j - 2^p - 1)] + [V(2^{p+1}q, j - 2^{p+1}q)] & 2^{p+1}q \leq j \leq n. \end{cases}$$

Let $\gamma = \sum_{j=0}^n \gamma_j \lambda_{n-j} \lambda_0$. Then $J'(\lambda_{2^p}^2 \lambda_{2^{p+1}q-1} + \gamma) = \beta \theta^{n+1} + \text{higher power terms}$, for some class $\beta \in \mathfrak{N}_{n+1}$. By Lemma 2.2, the base of $\lambda_{2^p}^2 \lambda_{2^{p+1}q-1} + \gamma$ belongs to I_n^2 ; by [5; 4.2] and [6; 3.4], this class is indecomposable.

3. The structure of I_n^k , $2 < k \leq n$. Let $\xi^k \rightarrow M^{n-k+1}$ be an arbitrary k -plane bundle and let $\text{RP}(\xi^k)$ denote the total space of the associated projective space bundle.

LEMMA 3.1. I_n^k contains the cobordism class of $\text{RP}(\xi^k) \cup M^{n-k+1} \times \text{RP}(k - 1)$.

Proof. Consider the Whitney sum $\xi^k \oplus \mathbf{R}^k \rightarrow M^{n-k+1}$ and the total space $\mathbf{RP}(\xi^k \oplus \mathbf{R}^k)$ of the associated projective space bundle. Multiplication by -1 in the fibers of ξ^k induces an involution on $\mathbf{RP}(\xi^k \oplus \mathbf{R}^k)$ whose fixed point set is $\mathbf{RP}(\xi^k) \cup M^{n-k+1} \times \mathbf{RP}(k-1)$.

LEMMA 3.2. $I_n^3 = \chi_n$.

Proof. Recall from §1 that I_*^3 is contained in $\chi_* = \sum_{n=0}^\infty \chi_n$, the ideal of classes in \mathfrak{N}_* with zero Euler characteristic. It is not hard to see that χ_n contains an indecomposable cobordism class for each dimension $n \geq 4$, $n \neq 2^r - 1$, and that χ_* is generated by these elements. In [6; 8.1] Stong exhibited for each $n \geq 4$, $n \neq 2^r - 1$, a 3-plane bundle $\xi^3 \rightarrow M^{n-2}$ such that the cobordism class of $\mathbf{RP}(\xi^3)$ is indecomposable. Thus by Lemma 3.1 I_n^3 contains the indecomposable class $\mathbf{RP}(\xi^3) \cup M^{n-2} \times \mathbf{RP}(2)$, and therefore $I_*^3 = \chi_*$.

To prove that I_n^k is as stated in §1 we need finally to show that I_n^k contains an indecomposable cobordism class for each dimension n not of the form $2^r - 1$ and each k such that $4 \leq k \leq n$.

LEMMA 3.3. I_n^k contains an indecomposable cobordism class for each $n \neq 2^r - 1$ and each k such that $4 \leq k \leq \alpha(n)$, where $\alpha(n)$ denotes the number of ones in the dyadic expansion of n .

Proof. Recall the Stong manifolds from [6]: Let (n_1, \dots, n_k) be a partition of $n + k - 1$ and let $p: \mathbf{R}(P(n_1, \dots, n_k)) \rightarrow \mathbf{RP}(n_1) \times \dots \times \mathbf{RP}(n_k)$ be the projective space bundle associated to $\lambda_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \lambda_k \rightarrow \mathbf{RP}(n_1) \times \dots \times \mathbf{RP}(n_k)$, where λ_i is the pullback of the canonical line bundle over the i th factor. By Lemma 3.1 I_n^k contains the cobordism class of $\mathbf{RP}(n_1, \dots, n_k) \cup \mathbf{RP}(n_1) \times \dots \times \mathbf{RP}(n_k) \times \mathbf{RP}(k-1)$; and by [6; 3.4] this class is indecomposable if and only if $\binom{n-1}{n_1} + \dots + \binom{n-1}{n_k} = 1 \pmod 2$. It suffices then to exhibit for each choice of n and k a partition (n_1, \dots, n_k) of $n - k + 1$ such that $\binom{n-1}{n_1} + \dots + \binom{n-1}{n_k} = 1 \pmod 2$. If $n = 2^{r_1} + \dots + 2^{r_t}$, $r_1 > \dots > r_t > 0$, and $4 \leq k \leq t$, then

$$(2^{r_1} + \dots + 2^{r_{t-k+2}}, 2^{r_{t-k+3}} - 1, \dots, 2^{r_{t-1}} - 1, 2^{r_{t-1}} - 1, 2^{r_{t-1}} - 1)$$

is as required. If $n = 2^{r_1} + \dots + 2^{r_t}$, where $r_1 > \dots > r_t = 0$ and there exists an i , $2 \leq i \leq t$, such that $r_{i-1} > r_i + 1$, and $4 \leq k \leq t$, then

$$(2^{r_1} - 2, 2^{r_2} - 1, \dots, 2^{r_{k-2}} - 1, 2^{r_{k-1}} + \dots + 2^{r_{t-1}}, 1)$$

is as required.

To prove that I_n^k contains an indecomposable class for each $n \neq 2^r - 1$ and each k such that $\alpha(n) < k \leq n$ we must use a different technique, provided by the following:

LEMMA 3.4. *If M^n is a closed manifold such that $w_i(M^n) = 0$ for $i > \alpha(n) + 1$, then I_n^k contains the class of M^n for $\alpha(n) < k \leq n$.*

Proof. The twist involution on $M^n \times M^n$ is defined by sending (x, y) to (y, x) and has fixed point set M^n ; furthermore, the normal bundle to M^n in $M^n \times M^n$ is the tangent bundle $\tau M^n \rightarrow M^n$. By Lemma 2.1 $J'([\tau M^n \rightarrow M^n]) = [M^n \times M^n] \theta^{2n} + \text{higher power terms}$. By [4], since $w_i(M^n) = 0$ for $i > \alpha(n) + 1$ there exists an $(\alpha(n) + 1)$ -plane bundle $\xi \rightarrow N^n$ such that $\xi \oplus \mathbb{R}^{n-\alpha(n)-1} \rightarrow N^n$ is cobordant to $\tau M^n \rightarrow M^n$. Therefore, $J'([\xi \rightarrow N^n]) = J'([\tau M^n \rightarrow M^n]) = [M^n \times M^n] \theta^{2n} + \text{higher power terms}$. By Lemma 2.1, for each k such that $\alpha(n) < k \leq n$ there exists a manifold with involution (T, V^{n+k}) such that the normal bundle to the fixed point set of T is $\xi \oplus \mathbb{R}^{k-\alpha(n)-1} \rightarrow N^n$. Therefore the cobordism class of M^n , which is the same as that of N^n , belongs to I_n^k for $\alpha(n) < k \leq n$.

It remains then to show that for each dimension $n \neq 2^r - 1$ there is an indecomposable manifold M^n such that $w_i(M^n) = 0$ for $i > \alpha(n) + 1$. For this purpose we define generalized Stong manifolds as follows: Let $N = (N_1, \dots, N_k)$ be a k -tuple where for each i , $1 \leq i \leq k$, N_i is a t_i -tuple $(n_{i1}, \dots, n_{iu_i})$ of nonnegative integers. Define $\mathbb{R}P(N_1, \dots, N_k)$ to be the total space of the projective space bundle associated to $\lambda_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \lambda_k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}P(N_1) \times \dots \times \mathbb{R}P(N_k)$, where λ_i is the pullback of the canonical line bundle over the Strong manifold $\mathbb{R}P(N_i)$. Letting $|N_i|$ denote $n_{i1} + \dots + n_{iu_i} + t_i - 1$ and $|N| = |N_1| + \dots + |N_k| + k - 1$, we see that $\mathbb{R}P(N_1, \dots, N_k)$ is an $|N|$ -dimensional manifold.

LEMMA 3.5. $\mathbb{R}P(N_1, \dots, N_k)$ represents an indecomposable cobordism class if and only if

$$\binom{|N| - 1}{|N_1|} + \dots + \binom{|N| - 1}{|N_k|} \text{ is odd.}$$

Proof. There is a degree one map $\mathbb{R}P(N_1) \times \dots \times \mathbb{R}P(N_k) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}P(|N_1|) \times \dots \times \mathbb{R}P(|N_k|)$ such that the pullback of $\lambda_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \lambda_k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}P(N_1) \times \dots \times \mathbb{R}P(N_k)$ is $\lambda_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \lambda_k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}P(|N_1|) \times \dots \times \mathbb{R}P(|N_k|)$. By [6; 2.4], $\mathbb{R}P(N_1, \dots, N_k)$ is indecomposable if and only if $\mathbb{R}P(|N_1|, \dots, |N_k|)$ is; but, by [6; 3.4] $\mathbb{R}P(|N_1|, \dots, |N_k|)$ is indecomposable if and only if

$$\binom{|N|-1}{|N_1|} + \cdots + \binom{|N|-1}{|N_k|} \text{ is odd.}$$

The cohomology and Stiefel–Whitney classes of $\mathbf{RP}(N_1, \dots, N_k)$ are explicitly computable from [4]. In fact, let $H^*(\mathbf{RP}(n_y); \mathbf{Z}_2) = \mathbf{Z}_2[\alpha_y]/(\alpha_y^{n_y+1} = 0)$ and c_i and e represent the characteristic class of the canonical line bundle over $\mathbf{RP}(N_i)$ and $\mathbf{RP}(N_1, \dots, N_k)$ respectively. Suppressing all bundle maps, we may write

$$w(\mathbf{RP}(N_1, \dots, N_k)) = \prod_{i=1}^k \prod_{j=1}^{i_1} (1 + \alpha_{y_j})^{n_{y_j}+1} (1 + c_i + \alpha_{y_j}) (1 + e + c_i).$$

LEMMA 3.6. *For each dimension $n \neq 2^r - 1$ there is an indecomposable manifold M^n such that $w_i(M^n) = 0$ for $i > \alpha(n) + 1$.*

Proof. If $n = 2^{r_1} + \cdots + 2^{r_t}$, $r_1 > \cdots > r_t > 0$, let $M^n = \mathbf{RP}((2^{r_1} - 1, \dots, 2^{r_{t-1}} - 1, 0), (2^{r_1-1} - 1), (2^{r_{t-1}-1} - 1))$. If $n = 2^{r_1} + \cdots + 2^{r_t} + 2^j + 2^{j-1} + \cdots + 1$, $r_1 > \cdots > r_t > j + 1$, let $M^n = \mathbf{RP}((2^{r_1} - 1, \dots, 2^{r_{t-1}} - 1, 2^{r_{t-1}} - 1, 0), (2^{r_1-1} - 1), (2^j - 1), \dots, (2^0 - 1))$. That these manifolds are indecomposable is a direct consequence of Lemma 3.5. That $w_i(M^n) = 0$ for $i > \alpha(n) + 1$ is immediate from the given expansion of $w(\mathbf{RP}(N_1, \dots, N_k))$ taken with the fact that multiplication in $H^*(\mathbf{RP}(N_1, \dots, N_k); \mathbf{Z}_2)$ is subject to the relations $\prod_{j=1}^{i_1} (c_i + \alpha_{y_j}) = 0$ for each i , $1 \leq i \leq k$, and $\prod_{i=1}^k (e + c_i) = 0$.

Let now assemble the above lemmas to prove:

THEOREM. *For $2 \leq k \leq n$ and k even, $I_n^k = \mathfrak{N}_n$; for $2 < k \leq n$ and k odd, $I_n^k = \chi_n$.*

Proof. Let $4 \leq k \leq n$ and assume inductively that for $2 \leq j < k \leq n$ and j even, $I_n^j = \mathfrak{N}_n$, while for $2 < j < k \leq n$ and j odd, $I_n^j = \chi_n$. We must show that I_n^k is as claimed. Let $\alpha \in \mathfrak{N}_n$ with $w_n(\alpha) = 0$ if k is odd. If α is decomposable, say $\alpha = \beta\gamma$ where $\beta \in \mathfrak{N}_p$ and $\gamma \in \mathfrak{N}_q$ with $w_q(\gamma) = 0$ if k is odd, then by induction $\beta \in I_p^2$ and $\gamma \in I_q^{k-2}$. Clearly $I_p^2 I_q^{k-2} \subset I_n^k$, so $\alpha \in I_n^k$. If α is indecomposable, then by Lemmas 3.3–3.6 α belongs to I_n^k mod decomposables; but, since I_n^k contains all decomposables, $\alpha \in I_n^k$.

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Susan Jane Zimmerman Andima and W. J. Thron, <i>Order-induced topological properties</i>	297
Gregory Wade Bell, <i>Cohomology of degree 1 and 2 of the Suzuki groups</i> ...	319
Richard Body and Roy Rene Douglas, <i>Rational homotopy and unique factorization</i>	331
Frank Lewis Capobianco, <i>Fixed sets of involutions</i>	339
L. Carlitz, <i>Some theorems on generalized Dedekind-Rademacher sums</i>	347
Mary Rodriguez Embry and Alan Leslie Lambert, <i>The structure of a special class of weighted translation semigroups</i>	359
Steve Ferry, <i>Strongly regular mappings with compact ANR fibers are Hurewicz fiberings</i>	373
Ivan Filippenko and Marvin David Marcus, <i>On the unitary invariance of the numerical radius</i>	383
H. Groemer, <i>On the extension of additive functionals on classes of convex sets</i>	397
Rita Hall, <i>On the cohomology of Kuga's fiber variety</i>	411
H. B. Hamilton, <i>Congruences on N-semigroups</i>	423
Manfred Herrmann and Rolf Schmidt, <i>Regular sequences and lifting property</i>	449
James Edgar Keesling, <i>Decompositions of the Stone-Ćech compactification which are shape equivalences</i>	455
Michael Jay Klass and Lawrence Edward Myers, <i>On stopping rules and the expected supremum of S_n/T_n</i>	467
Ronald Charles Linton, <i>λ-large subgroups of C_λ-groups</i>	477
William Owen Murray, IV and L. Bruce Treybig, <i>Triangulations with the free cell property</i>	487
Louis Jackson Ratliff, Jr., <i>Polynomial rings and H_1-local rings</i>	497
Michael Rich, <i>On alternate rings and their attached Jordan rings</i>	511
Gary Sampson and H. Tuy, <i>Fourier transforms and their Lipschitz classes</i>	519
Helga Schirmer, <i>Effluent and noneffluent fixed points on dendrites</i>	539
Daniel Byron Shapiro, <i>Intersections of the space of skew-symmetric maps with its translates</i>	553
Edwin Spanier, <i>Tautness for Alexander-Spanier cohomology</i>	561
Alan Stein and Ivan Ernest Stux, <i>A mean value theorem for binary digits</i> ...	565
Franklin D. Tall, <i>Normal subspaces of the density topology</i>	579
William Yslas V�lez, <i>Prime ideal decomposition in $F(\mu^{1/p})$</i>	589
James Chin-Sze Wong, <i>Convolution and separate continuity</i>	601