THE EULER CLASS FOR “PIECEWISE” GROUPS

PETER ABRAHAM GREENBERG
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The Euler class is a semiconjugacy invariant of a discrete group \( G \) of orientation preserving homeomorphisms of the circle. An element of the second cohomology group of \( G \) with integral coefficients, it is often difficult to calculate, but even its nonvanishing seems related to dynamical complexity of \( G \). In this note, we consider a family of discrete groups \( \Gamma_{H,S(p,q)} \) of homeomorphisms of the circle, whose definition generalizes that of piecewise linear homeomorphisms. We define an invariant with which one can verify the vanishing of the Euler class in a surprising range of cases. On the other hand, the vanishing of the invariant, together with a simple geometric condition, assures the nonvanishing of the Euler class.

The invariant has a simple "operational" definition, but can also be interpreted as an element of the fundamental group of the classifying space of a certain pseudogroup. We also apply it to the question of the existence of elements of finite order in the groups \( \Gamma_{H,S(p,q)} \).

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1. Definitions and results.

1.1. The groups. Let \( H \) be a group of analytic, orientation preserving homeomorphisms of the real line \( \mathbb{R} \), and let \( S \) be an \( H \)-invariant subset of \( \mathbb{R} \). Let \( p < q \) be elements of \( S \) in the same \( H \)-orbit. Let \( S_{p,q}^1 \) denote the closed interval \([p, q]\) with \( p \) and \( q \) identified as the basepoint. Define \( \Gamma_{H,S(p,q)} \) to be the group of homeomorphisms \( g \) of \( S_{p,q}^1 \) such that there exist \( s_i \in S, p = s_0 < \cdots < s_n = q \), so that the restriction of \( g \) to \([s_i, s_{i+1}]\) agrees pointwise with an element \( h_i \) of \( H \). Thus, \( \Gamma_{H,S(p,q)} \) is "the group of piecewise-\( H \) homeomorphisms of \( S_{p,q}^1 \), with breakpoints in \( S \)."

1.2. The invariant. Let \( N = N(S) \) denote the normal subgroup of \( H \) generated by all elements which fix some point in \( S \). If \( p, q \in S \) are in the same \( H \)-orbit, the equivalence class in \( H/N \) of an element
h ∈ H such that \( h(p) = q \) depends on \( p \) and \( q \) only. This equivalence class will be called the manifold class \( h \) of the circle \( S_{p,q}^1 \).

1.3. A flexibility condition. We say that a pair \((H, S)\) is flexible if the following condition is satisfied: let \( a, b, c, d \in S \), \( a < b \), \( c < d \). Suppose there are \( g, h \in H \), with \( g \equiv h \) in \( H/N \), such that \( g(a) = c \), \( h(b) = d \). Then there are \( s_i \in S \), \( a = s_0 < \cdots < s_n = b \), and \( g_i \in H \) so that \( g_1(a) = c \), \( g_n(b) = d \), and \( g_i(s_i) = g_{i+1}(s_i) \), \( 1 \leq i \leq n - 1 \). That is, there is a piecewise-\( H \) homeomorphism from \([a, b]\) to \([c, d]\).

We can now state the main results, staying with the notation established above. Suppose that \( G \) is a group acting on the circle. By the rational Euler class of \( G \) we mean the rational reduction in \( H^2(G; \mathbb{Q}) \) of the (integral) Euler class.

1.4. Theorem. If no nonzero power of the manifold class of \( S_{p,q}^1 \) can be written as a product of commutators in \( H/N \), then the rational Euler class of \( \Gamma_{H,S}(p,q) \) vanishes.

One can restate the hypothesis; it requires that the manifold class be of infinite order in the abelianization of \( H/N \).

1.5. Corollary. If \( H/N \) is abelian and the manifold class is of infinite order, then the rational Euler class of \( \Gamma_{H,S}(p,q) \) vanishes.

A partial converse to 1.4 is the following.

1.6. Theorem. Suppose that \((H, S)\) is flexible, and that the manifold class of \( S_{p,q}^1 \) is null. Then the Euler class is nonzero, and not divisible in \( H^2(\Gamma_{H,S}(p,q); \mathbb{Z}) \).

Regarding elements of torsion, we have the following result.

1.7. Theorem. Suppose there is a \( g \in \Gamma_{H,S}(p,q) \) and \( s \in [p, q] \cap S \) such that the orbit \( \{g^k(s)\}_{k \in \mathbb{Z}} \) has \( m \) elements, \( m < \infty \). Then the manifold class of \( S_{p,q}^1 \) is an \( m \)th power in \( H/N \).

1.8. Corollary. If the manifold class is not divisible in \( H/N \), \( \Gamma_{H,S}(p,q) \) is torsion free.

Before stating results about divisibility of the integral Euler class and embeddings of surface groups, let us pause to consider two families of examples.
1.9. **Piecewise linear examples.** Let $A$ be an additive subgroup of the real numbers, and let $U$ be a multiplicative subgroup of the positive real numbers, such that for all $a \in A$, $u \in U$, we have $ua \in A$. Let $H$ be the group of affine transformations of the form $h(x) = ux + a$, $u \in U$, $a \in A$, and let $S$ be the $H$-orbit of $0$, that is $A$. From ([Gr1], 1.13) we extract:

1.10. **PROPOSITION.** (a) $(H, S)$ is flexible.
(b) $H/N \cong A/(u - 1)$, the quotient of $A$ by the subgroup generated by all $ua - a$, $u \in U$, $a \in A$. If $h \in H$, $h(x) = ux + a$, the equivalence class of $h$ in $H/N$ is that of $a$ in $A/(u - 1)$.

For example, take $r \in \mathbb{R}$, $r > 1$, and let $A = Q[r, r^{-1}]$ be the ring of finite rational Laurent series in $r$. Let $U = \{r^n, n \in \mathbb{Z}\}$. Let $p = 0$, $q = 1$, and consider $\Gamma_{H,A}(0, 1)$. The manifold class of $S^1_{0,1}$ is the equivalence class of $h(x) = x + 1$ in $A/(r^n - 1)$. This class is 0 if $r$ is algebraic and of infinite order if $r$ is transcendental, and the Euler class of $\Gamma_{H,A}(0, 1)$ is nonzero or zero accordingly.

Note that the Euler class of $\Gamma_{H,A}(0, r - 1)$ is always nonzero.

1.11. **Piecewise projective examples.** We begin with a slight modification of the original construction. Let $G$ be a group of orientation preserving analytic homeomorphisms of the circle $S^1$. Let $H = \hat{G}$ be the group of homeomorphisms of the universal cover $\tilde{S}^1$ which cover elements of $G$. Recall that $H$ is a central extension $\mathbb{Z} \to H \to G$, where the $\mathbb{Z} = \pi_1(S^1)$ is identified as the group of covering transformations of $\tilde{S}^1$ over $S^1$. Let $T$ denote the positive generator of $\pi_1(S^1)$ (that is $Tx > x$, $x \in \tilde{S}^1$).

Let $S$ be a $G$-invariant subset of $S^1$, and $\tilde{S} \subseteq \tilde{S}^1$ its inverse image. The manifold class of $S^1_{p,Tp}$, $p \in \tilde{S}$, is simply $T \in H/N$; we consider the group $\Gamma_{H,\tilde{S}}(p, Tp)$.

In particular we will consider subgroups $G$ of $\text{PSL}_2 \mathbb{R}$, acting as usual on $S^1 = \mathbb{R} \cup \{\infty\}$ by linear fractional transformations. For example, take $G = \text{PSL}_2 F$, $F$ a subfield of $\mathbb{R}$, and let $S = F \cup \{\infty\}$. The results of [Gr2] imply:

1.12. **PROPOSITION.** (a) $\text{PSL}_2(F, \tilde{S})$ is flexible.
(b) $\text{PSL}_2 F/N$ is the group with one element.

As a consequence, the Euler class of $\Gamma_{H,\tilde{S}}(p, Tp)$ is nonvanishing.
Now set $G = \text{PSL}_2 \mathbb{Z}$, and $S = \mathbb{Q} \cup \{\infty\}$ the $G$-orbit of 0. The group $\Gamma_{H, S}(p, T_p)$ can be shown (following a remark of Thurston) to be isomorphic to the "remarkable group" studied by Etienne Ghys and Vlad Sergiescu in [GhS]. It turns out ([GhS]) that $H$, $S$ is flexible, and that $\Gamma_{H, S}(p, T_p)$ has a nonzero Euler class.

The situation changes when we pass to congruence subgroups of $\text{PSL}_2 \mathbb{Z}$. Consider $G = \Gamma(M)$, the set of matrices congruent to $\pm I$ modulo $M \in \mathbb{Z}$, $M > 1$. It is known (see [Sh], Chap. 1) that $\Gamma(M)$ is a free group. More precisely, a model for $K(\Gamma(M), 1)$ is a certain Riemann surface with punctures; $\mathbb{Q} \cup \{\infty\}$ breaks up into a finite number of $\Gamma(M)$-orbits, corresponding to the punctures. A small circle about a puncture is the conjugacy class in $\Gamma(M)$ of an element fixing a point in the corresponding orbit. If the surface has nonzero genus, the group is not generated by these stabilizers.

Let $S$ be the union of one or more of these orbits. Since any central extension of a free group is trivial, $H \cong G \times \mathbb{Z}$, and $T$ corresponds to $(e, 1)$; further, $H/N \cong G/N \times \mathbb{Z}$, where $N$ denotes the subgroup of $G$ generated by stabilizers of points in $S$. Thus if the genus of $G$ is nonzero, the Euler class of $\Gamma_{H, S}(p, T_p)$ is 0. Or, if the genus of $G$ is zero, but $S$ does not contain at least two of the orbits which comprise $\mathbb{Q} \cup \{\infty\}$, the Euler class of $\Gamma_{H, S}(p, T_p)$ vanishes.

1.13. Divisibility and surface groups. The following rather technical result will be combined with the Milnor-Wood inequality ([Mi], [W]) to obtain a result (1.15) on embedding surface groups in the $\Gamma_{H, S}(p, q)$.

1.14. Propostion. Suppose that $H/N$ is abelian, that the manifold class of $S^1_{p, q}$ is nonzero, and that the rational Euler class of $\Gamma_{H, S}(p, q)$ is nonzero. Then the manifold class of $S^1_{p, q}$ is torsion, and its order in $H/N$ divides the integral Euler class.

Let $\pi_g = \langle a_i, b_i, i = 1, \ldots, g | \pi[a_i, b_i] = 1 \rangle$ be the fundamental group of a compact surface of genus $g$. Etienne Ghys has asked ([Gh3]) for conditions under which $\pi_g$ may be embedded into certain subgroups of homeomorphisms of the circle.

1.15. Corollary. Suppose that $H/N$ is abelian, that the manifold class of $S^1_{p, q}$ is nonzero, and that there is a homeomorphism $f: \pi_g \to \Gamma_{H, S}(p, q)$ such that the pullback to $H^2(\pi_g; \mathbb{Z})$ of the Euler class is nonzero.
Then the manifold class is torsion, and its order divides a natural number less than \(2g - 1\).

**Proof.** By the assumptions and 1.14, the manifold class is torsion, and its order divides the Euler class of \(\Gamma_{H,S}(p, q)\), and hence its order divides the pullback of \(E\) in \(H^2(\pi_g; \mathbb{Z})\). But the Milnor-Wood inequality asserts that this pullback is at most \(\pm(2g - 2)\) times the generator of \(H^2(\pi_g; \mathbb{Z})\). Consequently, the order of the manifold class divides some natural number less than \(2g - 1\).

1.16. **Example.** Consider the piecewise linear example (1.10) with \(A = \mathbb{Z}[^1_n]\), \(n \in \mathbb{Z}\), \(n > 1\), and \(U = \{n^k\}_{k \in \mathbb{Z}}\). Then \(H/N \cong \mathbb{Z}/n - 1\), and the manifold class of \(S_{0,1}^1\) generates. Consequently, for a homomorphism \(\pi_t : \Gamma_{H,S}(S_{0,1}^1)\) to pull back a nonzero Euler class, it is necessary that \(n - 1\) divide one of \(2, \ldots, 2g - 2\). In particular, \(n \leq 2g\).

1.17. **Organization.** In the next section we give proofs of the results above, save 1.6. In §3 we interpret the manifold class as an element of the fundamental group of a certain pseudogroup, and prove 1.6.

2. The homomorphism \(C\). After introducing some notation, we enunciate a Lemma 2.1 and use it to prove various results. Then the lemma is proved. We continue with the notation already established, and consider an \(H, S\) and \(p, q \in S, p < q\).

Let \(\tilde{S}_1^1\) denote the universal cover of \(S_{p,q}^1\), and let \(T\) denote the positive generator of the group of covering transformations of \(S_{p,q}^1\). Let \(\Gamma_{H,S}(p, q)\) denote the group of lifts of elements of \(\Gamma_{H,S}(p, q)\) to homeomorphisms of \(\tilde{S}^1\). Choose a lift \(\tilde{p}\) of \(p\). Let \(\tilde{S}\) denote the set of lifts of points in \(S\) to \(\tilde{S}^1\).

2.1. **Lemma.** There is a homomorphism \(C : \Gamma_{H,S} \to H/N\) such that

(i) \(C(T)\) is the manifold class of \(S_{p,q}^1\).

(ii) \(C(g_1) = C(g_2)\) if \(g_1(s) = g_2(s), s \in \tilde{S}\).

**Proof of 1.4.** Suppose that the rational Euler class of \(\Gamma_{H,S}(p, q)\) is nonzero. Then there are \(a_i, b_i \in \Gamma_{H,S}(p, q), i = 1, \ldots, k\), such that, choosing lifts \(\tilde{a}_i, \tilde{b}_i \in \Gamma_{H,S}(p, q)\), we have \(\prod_{i=1}^k [\tilde{a}_i, \tilde{b}_i] = T^m, m \neq 0\). Applying the homomorphism \(C\) of 2.1, we see that the \(m\)th power of the manifold class is a product of commutators.
Proof of 1.7. Suppose that \( g \in \Gamma_{H,S}(p, q) \), and that for \( s \in S \cap [p, q] \), \( \{g^k(s)\}_{k \in \mathbb{Z}} \) has cardinality \( m < \infty \). Possibly replacing \( g \) with a power of \( g \), there is a lift \( \tilde{g} \in \tilde{\Gamma}_{H,S}(p, q) \), and a lift \( \tilde{s} \in S \), such that \( \tilde{g}^m(\tilde{s}) = T\tilde{s} \). Applying 2.1 (ii), \( C(\tilde{g})^m \) is the manifold class of \( S^1_{p,q} \).

Proof of 1.14. Since the rational Euler class is nonzero, the integral Euler class is nonzero, and further, not torsion. Consequently, there is some least \( m \neq 0 \) such that the \( m \)th power of the manifold class is a product of commutators in \( H/N \). The latter being abelian, this \( m \)th power is zero. Thus, viewed as a homomorphism from \( H_2(\Gamma_{H,S}(p, q); \mathbb{Z}) \) to \( \mathbb{Z} \), the image of the Euler class is contained in \( m\mathbb{Z} \). Thus, the Euler class is divisible by \( m \).

We now construct the homomorphism \( C \), and prove Lemma 2.1. As it happens, the natural domain of \( C \) is a certain collection of homeomorphisms between open subsets of the line. Namely, let \( g: U \to V \) be a homeomorphism between open subsets of the line. Then \( g \in \Gamma_{H,S} \), and we say \( g \) is piecewise-H with breakpoints in \( S \) if there exists a subset \( X \) of \( U \cap S \), \( X \) discrete in \( U \), such that for any connected component \( K \) of \( U - X \), the restriction of \( g \) to \( K \) agrees pointwise with an element \( h_K \) of \( H \). We call \( X \) the set of breakpoints of \( g \). The set of homeomorphisms \( \Gamma_{H,S} \) is a pseudogroup ([Ha]); it is closed under restriction to open subsets, taking inverses, and (where defined) composition.

2.2. Lemma. Let \( g \in \Gamma_{H,S} \) with connected domain \( U \). Let \( X \) be the set of breakpoints of \( g \), and let \( h_K \in H \) denote the restriction of \( g \) to a component \( K \) of \( U - X \). Then the equivalence class of \( h_K \) in \( H/N \) is independent of the component \( K \).

Proof. We must show that if \( K, K' \) are two components of \( U - X \), then \( h_K = h_{K'} \) in \( H/N \). Since \( X \) is discrete in \( U \), we can assume that \( K \) and \( K' \) are adjacent, that is \( K \cap K' = s \in S \). Then \( h_K(s) = h_{K'}(s) \), since \( g \) is continuous. Thus \( h_K h_{K'}^{-1}(s) = s \), so that \( h_K h_{K'}^{-1} \in N \).

2.3. Definition. Let \( g \in \Gamma_{H,S} \), with connected domain. We denote by \( \sigma(g) \) the common value of the \( h_K \) in \( H/N \).

2.4. Lemma. Let \( g_i: U_i \to V_i, \ i = 1, 2, \ g_i \in \Gamma_{H,S}, \) with \( U_i \) connected. If \( V_1 \subseteq U_2 \), then \( \sigma(g_2 \circ g_1) = \sigma(g_2)\sigma(g_1) \).

Proof. Left to the reader.
2.5. Lemma. Let $g_1, g_2 \in \Gamma_{H,S}$ with connected domains whose intersection contains a point $s \in S$. If $g_1(s) = g_2(s)$, then $\sigma(g_1) = \sigma(g_2)$.

Proof. Restricting to subsets if necessary, we can assume that $g_1$ and $g_2$ have a common range $V$ which contains $g_1(s) = g_2(s)$. Thus $g_1^{-1}g_2$ is well-defined, and $g_1^{-1}g_2(s) = s$. Consequently, the restriction of $g_1^{-1}g_2$ to a small interval to the right of $s$ agrees with an element of $N$, and so $\sigma(g_1) = \sigma(g_2)$.

Proof of 2.1. Pick $h \in H$ so that $h(p) = q$. Let $U = \bigcup_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} h^n[p, q]$. Then $U$ is a connected open subset of $\mathbb{R}$ on which the infinite cyclic group $\{h^k\}_{k \in \mathbb{Z}}$ acts, properly discontinuously.

Choose a lift $L: [p, q] \to \tilde{S}^1$, that is, a continuous map such that the diagram

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
[p, q] & \xrightarrow{L} & \tilde{S}^1 \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
S_{p,q} = [p, q]/\sim & & \end{array}
\]

commutes, and such that $L(p) = \tilde{p}$. There is a unique homeomorphism $f: \tilde{S}^1 \to U$ such that $fL(x) = x$, $x \in [p, q]$, and such that $f \circ T = h \circ f$. Indeed, every $x \in \tilde{S}^1$ can be written uniquely as $T^kL(y)$, for some $y \in [p, q]$; we define $f(x) = h^k(y)$.

It now follows that if $g \in \Gamma_{H,S}(p, q)$ then $fgf^{-1} \in \Gamma_{H,S}$. Define $C(g) = \sigma(fgf^{-1})$. Then $C(T) = \sigma(fTf^{-1}) = h$, and 2.5 implies that $C(g)$ depends only on $g(s)$, $s \in \tilde{S}$.

3. Haefliger structures on the circle. In this section we describe a general context for the results of this paper. We use the language of pseudogroups and their classifying spaces as developed by André Haefliger ([Ha]). A result of Dusa McDuff, ([McD]) as presented by Etienne Ghys and Vlad Sergiescu ([GhS]) is applied to prove 1.6.

Let $\Gamma$ be a pseudogroup of orientation preserving homeomorphisms between open subsets of the line. We shall assume:

3.1. Assumption. Every germ in $\Gamma$ admits an extension to a homeomorphism of the real line which is in $\Gamma$.

We can think of $\Gamma$ as its space of germs, with the sheaf topology. Then 3.1 implies that $\pi_0\Gamma$ inherits the structure of a group from $\Gamma$. The construction of the homomorphism $C$ in §2 proves:
3.2. **Proposition.** \( \pi_0 \Gamma_{H,S} \cong H/N \). Indeed, the function \( \sigma \) of 2.3 gives the isomorphism.

Associated to a pseudogroup \( \Gamma \) is its classifying space \( B\Gamma \), and it follows from Assumption 3.1 that \( \pi_1 B\Gamma \cong \pi_0 \Gamma \). Now, \( \pi_1 B\Gamma \) is identified in the theory of Haefliger ([Ha]) with the set of homotopy classes of \( \Gamma \)-structures on \( S^1 \) with a distinguished basepoint. Indeed, given \( h \in \pi_0 \Gamma \) represented by \( h \in \Gamma \), such that for some \( p \in \mathbb{R} \), \( q = h(p) > p \), we can construct a \( \Gamma \)-structure on \( S^1 \) corresponding to \( h \in \pi_0 \Gamma = \pi_1 B\Gamma \) by “gluing \( p \) to \( q \) using \( h \)” as described below. Hence, what we defined in 1.2 as the manifold class of \( S^1_{p,q} \) corresponds, via 3.2, to the element of \( \pi_1 B\Gamma \) which \( S^1_{p,q} \), with basepoint \( p \sim q \) and its \( \Gamma_{H,S} \)-structure, represents.

We now make precise the “gluing” construction referred to above. Pick a global extension of \( h \) in \( \Gamma \), to a homeomorphism of \( \mathbb{R} \) which we will also denote \( h \in \Gamma \) (using 3.1). Let \( U = \bigcup_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} h^n[p, q] \). This is a connected open interval in \( \mathbb{R} \), on which the infinite cyclic group \( C_n = \{h^k\}_{k \in \mathbb{Z}} \) acts properly discontinuously. We define \( S^1_h \) as \( U \) modulo the action of \( C_h \). Then \( S^1_h \), with basepoint \( p \), is a circle with \( \Gamma \)-structure corresponding to \( \Lambda_G \pi_0 \Gamma \).

Let \( \Gamma|_U \) denote the pseudogroup \( \Gamma \) restricted to \( U \). The group \( C_h \) acts on the space \( \Gamma|_U \) on the left and the right, by composition, and the quotient, denoted \( \Gamma_h \), is the sheaf of locally-\( \Gamma \) homeomorphisms between open subsets of \( S^1_h \).

Let \( \Gamma(S^1_h) \) be the group of global sections of \( \Gamma_h \) over \( S^1_h \), such that composition with the target map gives a homeomorphism of \( S^1_h \). Then \( \Gamma(S^1_h) \) is the group of locally-\( \Gamma \) homeomorphisms of \( S^1_h \). When \( \Gamma = \Gamma_{H,S} \), \( \Gamma(S^1_h) \) is precisely the group \( \Gamma_{H,S}(p, q) \). We generalize 1.4 as follows.

3.3. **Proposition.** If no nonzero power of \( h \) is a commutator in \( \pi_0 \Gamma \), then the rational Euler class of \( \Gamma(S^1_h) \) vanishes.

**Proof (Sketch).** As in §2, we must define a homomorphism \( C: \tilde{\Gamma}(S^1_h) \to \pi_0 \Gamma \), where \( \tilde{\Gamma}(S^1_h) \) is the group of homeomorphisms of \( \tilde{S}^1_h \) which cover elements of \( \Gamma(S^1_h) \). Having constructed \( S^1_h \) as a quotient of \( U = \tilde{S}^1 \), we see that \( \tilde{\Gamma}(S^1_h) \) is the subgroup of the group \( \Gamma(U) \) of \( \Gamma \)-homeomorphisms of \( U \), consisting of elements which commute with \( h \). Then \( C \) is just the composition \( \tilde{\Gamma}(S^1_h) \to \Gamma(U) \to \pi_0 \Gamma \). The rest of the proof is as in §2.
In order to prove 1.6, we will invoke a theorem of Dusa McDuff [McD] to provide a homological model of the Eilenberg-Mac Lane spaces $B\Gamma_{H,S}(p,q)$, when $(H,S)$ is flexible. We begin by recalling some properties of the free loop space.

3.4. **Remarks on $LX$.** Suppose that $X$ is a connected and simply connected space. Let $\Lambda X$ denote the space of maps from $S^1$ to $X$, without regard to basepoint. The group $\text{Homeo}^+S^1$ of orientation preserving homeomorphisms of $S^1$ acts on $\Lambda X$ on the left (composition with the inverse) and we denote by $LX$ the homotopy quotient $(E\text{Homeo}^+S^1) \times_{\text{Homeo}^+S^1} (\Lambda X)$. Then $LX$ is functorial in $X$. The evident map $X \to *$ induces a map $LX \to L^* = B\text{Homeo}^+S^1$, and thus we can pull the Euler class of $B\text{Homeo}^+S^1$ back to an element of $H^2(LX;\mathbb{Z})$, which we call the Euler class of $LX$.

3.5. **Lemma.** If $X$ is connected and simply connected, the Euler class of $LX$ is nonzero and not divisible.

*Proof.* Apply the construction $L$ to the inclusion and retraction of a point in $X$. We obtain $B\text{Homeo}^+S^1 \to LX \to B\text{Homeo}^+S^1$ whose composition is homotopic to the identity, whence the lemma.

3.6. **Germ-connectedness and flexibility.** In [McD] Dusa McDuff proved that there is a map $f: B\text{Diff}^+S^1 \to LB\Gamma^\infty$, where $\text{Diff}^+S^1$ is the discrete group of orientation preserving diffeomorphisms of the circle and $\Gamma^\infty$ is the pseudogroup of orientation preserving diffeomorphisms between open subsets of $\mathbb{R}$, such that $f$ induces an isomorphism in homology, and further, such that the pullback by $f$ of the Euler class of $LB\Gamma^\infty$ is the Euler class of $\text{Diff}^+S^1$. (The latter from the construction of $f$ as a quotient of the map between certain circle bundles). It turns out, following the careful exposition in [GhS], that her result holds for a wider class of pseudogroups.

3.7. **Definition ([Gr 1]).** Let $\Gamma$ be a pseudogroup of orientation preserving homeomorphisms between open subsets of $\mathbb{R}$. We say that $\Gamma$ is germ-connected to the identity if, given germs in $\Gamma$, $g: a \to c$, $h: b \to d$ with $a < b$, $c < d$, there is an $s \in \Gamma$, whose connected domain contains both $a$ and $b$, such that $s|_a \equiv g$, $s|_b \equiv h$.

3.8. **Remark.** Evidently, $\Gamma_{H,S}$ is germ-connected to the identity if and only if $H = N$ and $(H,S)$ is flexible.

Let $\Gamma$ be a pseudogroup of orientation preserving homeomorphisms on $\mathbb{R}$. A $\Gamma$-circle is a manifold homeomorphic to $S^1$, but with charts
and gluing data from $\Gamma$; the $\Gamma$-structures $S^1_h$ constructed above are examples. Not every $\Gamma$-structure, in general, is homotopic to a $\Gamma$-circle. However, if $\Gamma$ is germ-connected to the identity, then any two $\Gamma$-circles are $\Gamma$-homeomorphic (in the obvious sense). Thus, the group $\Gamma(S^1)$ of $\Gamma$-homeomorphisms of a $\Gamma$-circle is well defined. The careful argument in ([GhS], §2) proves:

3.9. Proposition ([GhS], 2.11). Suppose that $\Gamma$ is a pseudogroup of homeomorphisms between open subsets of $\mathbb{R}$, and that $\Gamma$ is germ-connected to the identity. There is a map $B\Gamma(S^1) \to LBT$ inducing isomorphism on homology, and pulling the Euler class of $LBT$ back to that of the group $\Gamma(S^1)$.

We conclude with the proof of 1.6.

Proof of 1.6. Since the manifold class of $S^1_{p, q}$ is null, the group $\Gamma_{H,S}(p, q)$ exists and is a subgroup of $\Gamma_{H,S}(p, q)$. It suffices to show that the Euler class of $\Gamma_{N,S}(p, q)$ is non-zero and not divisible. Since $(H, S)$ is flexible, $\Gamma_{N,S}$ is germ connected to the identity by 3.8 and we are done, by 3.9.

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**Université de Grenoble**  
38402 St. Martin D’Hères Cedex  
France
PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MATHEMATICS
EDITORS

V. S. VARADARAJAN
(Managing Editor)
University of California
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1555
vsv@math.ucla.edu

HERBERT CLEMENS
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, UT 84112
clemens@math.utah.edu

F. MICHAEL CHRIST
University of California
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1555
christ@math.ucla.edu

THOMAS ENRIGHT
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, CA 92093
tenright@ucsd.edu

NICHOLAS ERCOLANI
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721
ercolani@math.arizona.edu

R. FINN
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305
finn@gauss.stanford.edu

VAUGHAN F. R. JONES
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720
vfr@math.berkeley.edu

STEVEN KERCKHOFF
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305
spk@gauss.stanford.edu

C. C. MOORE
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

MARTIN SCHARLEMMANN
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106
msgcharl@henri.ucsb.edu

HAROLD STARK
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, CA 92093

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