

Roots of torsion polynomials and dominations

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We show that the nonzero roots of the torsion polynomials associated to the infinite cyclic covers of a given compact, connected, orientable 3–manifold M are contained in a compact part of \mathbb{C}^* a priori determined by M . This result is applied to prove that when M is closed, it dominates at most finitely many *Sol* manifolds.

[57M27](#);

Dedicated to the memory of Heiner Zieschang

1 Introduction

All manifolds are connected and orientable in this paper. All homology groups will have \mathbb{Q} –coefficients unless otherwise specified.

Suppose that M and N are compact 3–manifolds. We say that M *dominates* N if there is a nonzero degree map $f: (M, \partial M) \rightarrow (N, \partial N)$.

To each epimorphism $\psi: \pi_1(M) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ of the fundamental group of a compact 3–manifold one can associate a torsion polynomial $\Delta_\psi^M(t)$. Our first result shows that the absolute values of the nonzero roots of such polynomials are pinched between two constants depending only on M , even though $\pi_1(M)$ has infinitely many epimorphisms to \mathbb{Z} when its first Betti number is greater than one. We combine this result with a classical argument due to Wall for nonzero degree maps to show that the same conclusion holds for any 3–manifold dominated by M . As an application we prove that a closed 3–manifold M dominates at most finitely many *Sol* manifolds.

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2 Roots of torsion polynomials

Given a compact 3–manifold and an epimorphism $\psi: \pi_1(M) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$, let $\tilde{M}_\psi \rightarrow M$ be the associated infinite cyclic cover. The action on $H_1(\tilde{M}_\psi)$ of $t = (T_\psi)_*$ induced by the generator T_ψ of the deck transformation group corresponding to $1 \in \mathbb{Z}$ makes $H_1(\tilde{M}_\psi)$ a finitely generated Γ –module, where $\Gamma = \mathbb{Q}[\pi_1(M)/\ker(\psi)] \cong \mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]$. Since Γ is a principal domain, $H_1(\tilde{M}_\psi) \cong \Gamma^k \oplus_{i=1}^n \Gamma/(p_i(t))$ where $0 \neq p_i(t) \in \Gamma$. The product $\Delta_\psi^M(t) = p_1(t)p_2(t) \dots p_n(t)$, called the *torsion polynomial* of ψ , represents the order of the Γ –torsion submodule $\text{Tor}(H_1(\tilde{M}_\psi))$ of $H_1(\tilde{M}_\psi)$ and is well-defined up to multiplication by some unit rt^i of Γ ($i \in \mathbb{Z}$, $0 \neq r \in \mathbb{Q}$). In particular, the set of nonzero roots $\{t_0 \in \mathbb{C}^* : \Delta_\psi^M(t_0) = 0\}$ is independent of the choice of $\Delta_\psi^M(t)$. A straightforward calculation shows that $\Delta_\psi^M(t)$ coincides, up to units, with the characteristic polynomial of the automorphism of the \mathbb{Q} –vector space $\oplus_{i=1}^n \Gamma/(p_i(t))$ corresponding to multiplication by t .

Theorem 2.1 *A compact, connected, orientable 3–manifold M determines a constant $c_M > 0$ with the following property: If $t_0 \in \mathbb{C}^*$ is a root of a torsion polynomial $\Delta_\psi^M(t)$ associated to an epimorphism $\psi: \pi_1(M) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$, then $1/c_M \leq |t_0| \leq c_M$.*

Proof Since $1/t_0$ is a root of $\Delta_{-\psi}^M(t)$, it suffices to prove the existence of a constant c_M such that $|t_0| \leq c_M$.

For a group G and $\alpha = \sum_{g \in G} r_g g \in \mathbb{Q}[G]$, we set $\|\alpha\| = \sum_{g \in G} |r_g|$.

Consider a finite presentation $\langle x_j : r_i \rangle$ of $\pi_1(M)$ and let $J = \left(\frac{\partial r_i}{\partial x_j} \right)$ be the associated Jacobian matrix. Define $k(\langle x_j : r_i \rangle) = \sum_{i,j} \left\| \frac{\partial r_i}{\partial x_j} \right\| \in \mathbb{N}$ and set

$$k_M = \min\{k(\langle x_j : r_i \rangle) : \langle x_j : r_i \rangle \text{ presents } \pi_1(M)\}.$$

We assume that $\langle x_j : r_i \rangle$ has been chosen to realize k_M and that the number m of generators is minimal among such presentations.

Fix an epimorphism $\psi: \pi_1(M) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ and let Ψ be the composition $\mathbb{Z}[\pi_1(M)] \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}[\pi_1(M)/\ker(\psi)] = \mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]$. Recall that $J^\Psi = \left(\Psi \left(\frac{\partial r_i}{\partial x_j} \right) \right)$ presents the Γ –module $H_1(\tilde{M}_\psi) \oplus \Gamma$ (see Burde and Zieschang [1, Section 9], for example). Set $q_{ij}(t) = \Psi \left(\frac{\partial r_i}{\partial x_j} \right) \in \mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]$ and observe that $\|q_{ij}(t)\| \leq \left\| \frac{\partial r_i}{\partial x_j} \right\|$. Thus the following claim holds.

Claim 2.2 $\sum_{i,j} \|q_{ij}(t)\| \leq k_M$. □

If r denotes the Γ –rank of J^Ψ , then $\Delta_\psi^M(t)$ is, up to units, the g.c.d. of the r –rowed minors of J^Ψ (see Jacobson [2, Theorem 3.9], for example). Thus it suffices to show that the absolute values of the roots of some nonzero r –rowed minor of J^Ψ are

bounded above by a constant depending only on M . To that end, fix such a minor $D(t) \in \mathbb{Z}[t, t^{-1}]$ which, without loss of generality, we can assume is polynomial in t , and let $D_0(t)$ be the monic polynomial with the same roots. Since $r \leq m$, the expansion of $D(t)$ in terms of the $q_{ij}(t)$ shows that $m!k_M^m$ is an upper bound for the sum of the absolute values of its coefficients (cf Claim 2.2). It is evident that the same inequality holds for $D_0(t) = t^s + b_{s-1}t^{s-1} + \dots + b_0$. If $|t| > R = 1 + \sum_i |b_i|$, then $|D_0(t)| > R^n - (\sum_i |b_i|R^i) \geq R^{n-1}(R - \sum_i |b_i|) > 0$ so that the roots of $D_0(t)$ lie in the ball of radius $1 + \sum_i |b_i|$ centred at zero. Thus the theorem holds with $c_M = 1 + m!k_M^m$. \square

We generalize this result with our applications in mind.

Theorem 2.3 *For a compact, connected, orientable 3-manifold M , there is a constant $c_M > 0$ with the following property: If N is a compact 3-manifold dominated by M and $t_0 \in \mathbb{C}^*$ is a root of a torsion polynomial $\Delta_\psi^N(t)$ of an epimorphism $\psi: \pi_1(N) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$, then $1/c_M \leq |t_0| \leq c_M$*

Proof Suppose that $f: M \rightarrow N$ is a nonzero degree map and fix an epimorphism $\psi: \pi_1(N) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$. Since $\deg(f) \neq 0$, there is an integer $n \geq 1$ such that the image $(\psi \circ f_\#)(\pi_1(M)) = n\mathbb{Z}$. Denote by $\theta: \pi_1(M) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ the epimorphism $(1/n)(\psi \circ f_\#)$ and by $\Delta_\theta^M(t)$ the associated torsion polynomial. The theorem is a simple consequence of Theorem 2.1 and the following claim.

Claim 2.4 *If $t_0 \in \mathbb{C}^*$ is a root of $\Delta_\psi^N(t)$, then t_0^n is a root of $\Delta_\theta^M(t)$.*

Proof Let $\mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]_f$ be the $\mathbb{Z}[\pi_1(M)]$ -module whose underlying group is $\mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]$ and whose $\pi_1(M)$ action is that determined by the homomorphism $f_\#: \pi_1(M) \rightarrow \pi_1(N)$. Thus for $x \in \pi_1(M)$ and $p(t) \in \mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]$ we have $x \cdot p(t) = t^{(\psi \circ f_\#)(x)}p(t)$. When $n = 1$, this action coincides with that of $\mathbb{Z}[\pi_1(M)]$ on $\mathbb{Q}[\pi_1(M)/\ker(\psi \circ f_\#)]$ and so $H_1(M; \mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]_f) \cong H_1(\tilde{M}_\theta)$, where the latter has the Γ -action described above. In particular, since $\deg(f) \neq 0$, there is a Γ -module splitting

$$H_1(\tilde{M}_\theta) = H_1(M; \mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]_f) \cong H_1(N; \mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]) \oplus K = H_1(\tilde{N}_\psi) \oplus K$$

for some finitely generated Γ -submodule K of $H_1(\tilde{M}_\theta)$ (see the proof of [7, Lemma 2.1]). Hence when $n = 1$, $\text{Tor}(H_1(\tilde{N}_\psi))$ is a Γ -submodule of $\text{Tor}(H_1(\tilde{M}_\theta))$, and so its order $\Delta_\psi^N(t)$ divides $\Delta_\theta^M(t)$, which implies the claim in this case.

Next suppose $n > 1$ and let $\tilde{N}_{(\psi, n)} \rightarrow N$ be the n -fold cyclic cover with $\pi_1(\tilde{N}_{(\psi, n)})$ the kernel of the (mod n) reduction of ψ . Then f lifts to a π_1 -surjective, nonzero degree map $\tilde{f}: M \rightarrow \tilde{N}_{(\psi, n)} = N'$. Let

$$\psi': \pi_1(N') \rightarrow n\mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{1/n} \mathbb{Z}$$

be the epimorphism induced by ψ . The case $n = 1$ shows that any nonzero root of $\Delta_{\psi'}^{N'}(t)$ is also a root of $\Delta_{\theta}^M(t)$. On the other hand, it is easy to see that $(T_{\psi'})_* = (T_{\psi})_*^n$ on $H_1(\tilde{N}_{\psi'}) = H_1(\tilde{N}_{\psi})$ so that if $t_0 \in \mathbb{C}^*$ is a root of $\Delta_{\psi'}^{N'}(t)$, then $t_0^n \in \mathbb{C}^*$ is a root of $\Delta_{\psi'}^{N'}(t)$, and therefore of $\Delta_{\theta}^M(t)$. This completes the proof of the claim and therefore of [Theorem 2.3](#). \square

3 \mathbb{Q} -Homology surface bundles

Let F be a compact surface and A an abelian group. An A -homology $F \times I$ is a 3-manifold W with boundary containing two disjoint surfaces $F_1 \cong F_2 \cong F$ such that

- (i) $\overline{\partial W \setminus (F_1 \cup F_2)} \cong \partial F \times I$ where $\partial F \times \{0\} = \partial F_1$, $\partial F \times \{1\} = \partial F_2$, and
- (ii) the inclusion induced homomorphism $H_*(F_1; A) \rightarrow H_*(W; A)$ is an isomorphism.

(Duality and universal coefficients shows that (ii) is equivalent to each of the following three conditions: $H_*(W, F_1; A) = 0$; $H_*(W, F_2; A) = 0$; $H_*(F_2; A) \xrightarrow{\cong} H_*(W; A)$.) Note that W determines orientations on F_1 and F_2 well-defined up to simultaneous reversal. Thus the set $\text{Homeo}(F_2, F_1)^-$ of orientation reversing homeomorphisms $F_2 \rightarrow F_1$ is well-defined. For each $\varphi \in \text{Homeo}(F_2, F_1)^-$ we define W_{φ} to be the compact, orientable manifold obtained from W by identifying F_2 to F_1 via φ . The composition

$$H_1(F_1; A) \xrightarrow{\cong} H_1(W; A) \xrightarrow{\cong} H_1(F_2; A) \xrightarrow{\varphi_*} H_1(F_1; A)$$

determines an isomorphism

$$\varphi_*^W: H_1(F_1; A) \rightarrow H_1(F_1; A)$$

which we call the *algebraic monodromy* of W_{φ} . Set

$$\Delta_{\varphi}^W(t) = \det(\varphi_*^W - tI).$$

We call W_{φ} an A -homology F bundle.

Theorem 3.1 *For a compact, connected, orientable 3-manifold M , there is a constant $c_M > 0$ with the following property: If W_{φ} is a \mathbb{Q} -homology surface bundle which is dominated by M , then the absolute values of the roots of the characteristic polynomial $\Delta_{\varphi}^W(t)$ of φ_*^W are pinched between $1/c_M$ and c_M .*

Proof Let $F \subset W_{\varphi}$ be the nonseparating surface corresponding to $F_1 = \varphi(F_2)$. It determines a nonzero class $[F] \in H_2(W_{\varphi})$, well-defined up to sign, and an epimorphism

$$\psi: \pi_1(W_{\varphi}; \mathbb{Z}) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}, \alpha \mapsto \alpha \cdot [F].$$

Let $\tilde{W}_\varphi \rightarrow W_\varphi$ be the infinite cyclic cover associated to this epimorphism ψ . Note that $H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi) = H_1(W_\varphi; \Gamma)$ where Γ is the $\mathbb{Z}[\pi_1(W_\varphi)]$ -module $\mathbb{Q}[\pi_1(W_\varphi)/\ker(\psi)] \cong \mathbb{Q}[\mathbb{Z}] \cong \mathbb{Q}[t, t^{-1}]$. The $\mathbb{Z}[\pi_1(W_\varphi)]$ action on $H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi)$ factors through one of Γ in such a way that $t = (T_\varphi)_*$ where $T_\varphi: \tilde{W}_\varphi \rightarrow \tilde{W}_\varphi$ is a generator of the group of deck transformations of $\tilde{W}_\varphi \rightarrow W_\varphi$.

Claim 3.2 $H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi)$ is a torsion module over Γ whose order is represented by $\Delta_\varphi^W(t)$.

Proof The quotient map $W \rightarrow W_\varphi$ lifts to an inclusion of W into \tilde{W}_φ with image \tilde{W}_0 say. Let $\tilde{F}_0 \subset \partial\tilde{W}_0$ correspond to F_1 and set $\tilde{W}_j = T_\varphi^j(\tilde{W}_0)$, $\tilde{F}_j = T_\varphi^j(\tilde{F}_0)$. Then $\tilde{W}_\varphi = \cup_j \tilde{W}_j$ where $\tilde{W}_j \cap \tilde{W}_k = \emptyset$ if $|j - k| > 1$ and $\tilde{W}_j \cap \tilde{W}_{j-1} = \tilde{F}_j$. Since W is a \mathbb{Q} -homology $F_1 \times I$, the composition $H_1(F_1) = H_1(\tilde{F}_0) \rightarrow H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi)$ is an isomorphism under which the algebraic monodromy $\varphi_*^W: H_1(F_1) \rightarrow H_1(F_1)$ corresponds to $(T_\varphi)_*: H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi) \rightarrow H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi)$.

It is now clear that $H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi)$ is a torsion module over Γ since $H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi) \cong H_1(F_1)$ is finite dimensional over \mathbb{Q} . Hence the order of $H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi)$ as a Γ -module corresponds to the characteristic polynomial of the automorphism $(T_\varphi)_*$ of the \mathbb{Q} -vector space $H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi)$, at least up to multiplication by some unit Γ . Since $(T_\varphi)_*$ corresponds to φ_*^W under $H_1(F_1) \xrightarrow{\cong} H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi)$, $\Delta_\varphi^W(t)$ also represents the order of $H_1(\tilde{W}_\varphi)$. \square

Claim 3.2 shows that, up to multiplication by a unit, $\Delta_\varphi^W(t)$ is the torsion polynomial of the epimorphism ψ . **Theorem 3.1** now follows from **Theorem 2.3**. \square

Corollary 3.3 Let W be a \mathbb{Q} -homology $F \times I$. A compact, connected, orientable 3-manifold M determines a finite subset $\mathcal{P}_{(M,W)}$ of $\mathbb{Q}[t]$ such that if M dominates W_φ , then the characteristic polynomial of φ_*^W is contained in $\mathcal{P}_{(M,W)}$.

Proof Let $\beta_1(F)$ be the first Betti number of F . The reader will verify that since W is a \mathbb{Q} -homology $F \times I$, we can choose bases of for $H_1(F_1; \mathbb{Z})$ and $H_1(F_2; \mathbb{Z})$ with respect to which the matrix X of $H_1(F_1) \rightarrow H_1(W) \rightarrow H_1(F_2)$ lies in $SL_{\beta_1(F)}(\mathbb{Q})$ and the matrix Y of $H_1(F_2) \xrightarrow{\varphi_*} H_1(F_1)$ lies in $SL_{\beta_1(F)}(\mathbb{Z})$. Now φ_*^W is represented by YX so the denominators of its entries are bounded above by some constant N . Thus the coefficients of $\Delta_\varphi^W(t) = \det(YX - tI)$ have denominators bounded above by $N^{\beta_1(F)}$ and since its degree is $\beta_1(F)$, the corollary follows from **Theorem 3.1**. \square

Remark 3.4 (1) The finite set $\mathcal{P}_{(M,W)}$ described in the corollary depends on both M and W . In the case when $W \cong F \times I$, the matrix X of the proof of **Corollary 3.3** lies in $SL_{\beta_1(F)}(\mathbb{Z})$, so it is easy to see that $\mathcal{P}_{(M,W)}$ depends only on M and the Euler characteristic of the fibre.

(2) A given compact 3–manifold M can be the total space of infinitely many distinct surface bundles over the circle. Moreover, there are cases where the Euler characteristic of the fibres are unbounded. However, [Theorem 3.1](#) provides the following constraint on the monodromy of any such bundle structure on M .

Corollary 3.5 *Given a compact 3–manifold M , there is a constant $c_M > 0$ such that the absolute values of the roots of the characteristic polynomial of the algebraic monodromy of any surface bundle structure on M are pinched between $1/c_M$ and c_M . \square*

Recall that an element $\varphi \in SL_2(\mathbb{Z})$ is called *hyperbolic* if $|\text{trace}(\varphi)| > 2$.

Corollary 3.6 *A closed, connected, orientable 3–manifold M dominates only finitely many Sol manifolds.*

Proof First suppose that M dominates a torus bundle over the circle with hyperbolic monodromy $\varphi \in SL_2(\mathbb{Z})$. [Corollary 3.3](#) shows that there are only finitely many possibilities for $\text{trace}(\varphi)$, which is the negative of the coefficient of t in $\Delta_\varphi^{T^2 \times I}(t)$. On the other hand, there are only finitely many $SL_2(\mathbb{Z})$ conjugacy classes of hyperbolic elements of $SL_2(\mathbb{Z})$ with a given trace (eg see Wang and Zhou [9, Lemma 8]). Since the homeomorphism type of a torus bundle over the circle depends only on the conjugacy class of its monodromy $\varphi \in SL_2(\mathbb{Z})$, it follows that a closed, connected, orientable 3–manifold can dominate at most finitely many torus bundles over the circle with hyperbolic monodromy. But a closed, connected Sol manifold N is double covered by such a bundle \tilde{N} and so if M dominates N , some double cover of \tilde{M} dominates \tilde{N} . Since M has only finitely many double covers, there are only finitely many possibilities for \tilde{N} , and therefore for N [4, 3]. \square

It is known that if a closed, orientable 3–manifold dominates a manifold which admits a geometric structure based on the geometries \mathbb{S}^3 , Nil , or \widetilde{SL}_2 , then it dominates infinitely many distinct such manifolds [8]. This is false for the remaining geometries.

Corollary 3.7 *A closed, orientable 3–manifold dominates at most finitely many manifolds admitting an $\mathbb{S}^2 \times \mathbb{R}$, \mathbb{E}^3 , \mathbb{H}^3 , $\mathbb{H}^2 \times \mathbb{R}$, or Sol structure.*

Proof The corollary holds for dominations of $\mathbb{S}^2 \times \mathbb{R}$ and \mathbb{E}^3 manifolds since there are only finitely many such spaces (see eg Scott [5]). It holds for dominations of hyperbolic manifolds by Soma [6], for $\mathbb{H}^2 \times \mathbb{R}$ manifolds by Wang and Zhou [9], and for Sol manifolds by [Corollary 3.6](#). \square

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