

# SEMIFREE DIFFERENTIABLE ACTIONS OF $S^1$ ON HOMOTOPY $(4k + 3)$ -SPHERES

Hsu-Tung Ku and Mei-Chin Ku

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We shall call an action of  $S^1$  *semifree* if it is free outside the set  $F$  of fixed points. It is well-known that if  $S^1$  acts semifreely on a homotopy  $(4k + 3)$ -sphere  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$  with fixed point set  $F$  of codimension 4, then the orbit space has a natural differentiable structure and is a homotopy  $(4k + 2)$ -sphere. In this paper, we study the semifree differentiable actions of  $S^1$  on homotopy  $(4k + 3)$ -spheres ( $k \geq 2$ ), the fixed point sets consisting of the homotopy  $(4k - 1)$ -spheres. The only complete result in this direction is the following theorem of Montgomery and Yang [7, Theorem 3].

**THEOREM.** *On any homotopy 7-sphere, there are infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of the circle group  $S^1$ , each having  $S^3$  as the fixed point set.*

The following five theorems are immediate consequences of the main theorem.

**THEOREM 1.** *If there exists a semifree differentiable action of  $S^1$  on a homotopy  $(4k + 3)$ -sphere  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$ , and if its fixed point set is a homotopy  $(4k - 1)$ -sphere  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$  and its orbit space is a homotopy  $(4k + 2)$ -sphere  $\Sigma^{4k+2}$ , then there exist infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  on  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$  with fixed point set  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$  and orbit space  $\Sigma^{4k+2}$ .*

**THEOREM 2.** *Every homotopy sphere  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$  in  $bP_{4k+4}$  admits infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  with fixed point sets of codimension 4. For example, let  $\Sigma_M^{4k+3}$  and  $\Sigma_M^{4k-1}$  be the Milnor spheres of dimensions  $4k + 3$  and  $4k - 1$ , respectively. Then, for each integer  $n \geq 1$ , the homotopy sphere  $n\Sigma_M^{4k+3}$  admits infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  with fixed point set  $n\Sigma_M^{4k-1}$ . (For the notation  $bP_n$ , see [5, p. 510].)*

**THEOREM 3.** *There exist infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  on  $S^{4k+3}$  with fixed point set  $S^{4k-1}$  and orbit space  $S^{4k+2}$ .*

**THEOREM 4.** (i) *For each homotopy sphere  $\Sigma^7$  in  $4\theta_7$ , there exist infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  on  $S^{11}$  with fixed point set  $\Sigma^7$ .*

(ii) *On each homotopy sphere  $\Sigma^{11}$  in  $2\theta_{11}$ , there are infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  with orbit space  $S^{10}$ .*

(iii) *On each homotopy sphere in  $4\theta_{11}$ , there are infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  with fixed point set  $S^7$  and orbit space  $S^{10}$ .*

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**THEOREM 5.** (i) *For each homotopy sphere  $\Sigma^{11}$  in  $32\theta_{11}$ , there exist infinitely many differentiably distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  on  $S^{15}$  with fixed point set  $\Sigma^{11}$ .*

(ii) *Each homotopy sphere in  $bP_{16}$  admits infinitely many differentiably distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  with orbit space  $S^{14}$ .*

(iii) *On each homotopy sphere in  $32bP_{16} \approx Z_{254}$ , there are infinitely many differentiably distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  with fixed point set  $S^{11}$  and orbit space  $S^{14}$ .*

(iv) *On each homotopy 15-sphere, there are infinitely many differentiably distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  whose fixed point sets are of co-dimension 4.*

The proofs used in this paper depend heavily on the results of Montgomery and Yang [8] and of Levine [6], but they are more algebraic in character. Throughout the paper, we assume  $k \geq 2$ .

## 2. PRELIMINARIES AND NOTATION

*Definition 2.1.* By a standard action of  $S^1$  on  $S^{4k+3}$  we mean the following. Let

$$S^{4k+3} = \{(z_1, \dots, z_{2k+2}) \in C^{2k+2} \mid \sum_{i=1}^{2k+2} |z_i|^2 = 1\},$$

and let  $S^1$  act on  $S^{4k+3}$  on the last two coordinates via the linear action  $S^1 \subset U(2)$ . Under this action, the fixed point set is  $S^{4k-1} \times \{0\}$ , which we identify with  $S^{4k-1}$ . The orbit space is easily seen to be diffeomorphic to  $S^{4k+2}$ . The imbedding of  $S^{4k-1}$  onto the submanifold  $S^{4k-1} \times \{0\}$  of  $S^{4k+3}$  is called a *standard imbedding*.

**PROPOSITION 2.2** (Montgomery and Yang [8, Proposition 4]). *Let  $\Sigma^{n-1}$  and  $\Sigma^{n-4}$  be homotopy spheres of dimension  $n - 1$  and  $n - 4$  ( $n \geq 7$ ), and let  $f$  be an imbedding of  $\Sigma^{n-4}$  into  $\Sigma^{n-1}$ . Then there exists a semifree, differentiable action of the circle group  $S^1$  on a homotopy  $n$ -sphere  $\Sigma^n$  whose fixed point set is diffeomorphic to  $\Sigma^{n-4}$  and whose orbit space is diffeomorphic to  $\Sigma^{n-1}$ .*

*Definition 2.3.* We shall denote the set of isotopy classes of knotted  $(4k - 1)$ -spheres in  $S^{4k+2}$  by  $\theta^{4k+2, 4k-1}$ ; it is an infinite abelian group of rank 1 [6]. We denote the equivalence class of  $(S^{4k+2}, \Sigma^{4k-1})$  by  $[S^{4k+2}, \Sigma^{4k-1}]$ . Let  $(S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, F)$  be a semifree, differentiable action of  $S^1$  on a homotopy  $(4k + 3)$ -sphere  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$  that has fixed point set  $F \in \theta_{4k-1}$ . The equivariant diffeomorphism class of  $(S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, F)$  is denoted by  $\{S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, F\}$ . Let  $\Sigma_{*}^{4k+3, 4k-1}$  be the totality of diffeomorphism classes  $\{S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, F\}$  modulo the subset

$$\left\{ \{S^1, S^{4k+3}, S^{4k-1}\} \mid \text{the imbedding of } S^{4k-1} \text{ into } S^{4k+3} \text{ is isotopic to the standard imbedding} \right\}.$$

Denote the equivalence class of  $\{S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, F\}$  by  $[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, F]$ . It is easy to verify that  $\Sigma_{*}^{4k+3, 4k-1}$  is an abelian group under the connected sum operation

$$[S^1, \Sigma_1^{4k+3}, F_1] + [S^1, \Sigma_2^{4k+3}, F_2] = [S^1, \Sigma_1^{4k+3} \# \Sigma_2^{4k+3}, F_1 \# F_2].$$

Furthermore, if there are two semifree, differentiable actions  $(S^1, \Sigma_1^{4k+3}, F_1)$  and  $(S^1, \Sigma_2^{4k+3}, F_2)$ , then

$$(\Sigma_1^{4k+3} \# \Sigma_2^{4k+3})/S^1 = (\Sigma_1^{4k+3}/S^1) \# (\Sigma_2^{4k+3}/S^1).$$

Thus the subset  $\Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1}$  of  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3,4k-1}$  defined by

$$\Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1} = \{[S^1, \Sigma_*^{4k+3}, F] \in \Sigma_*^{4k+3,4k-1} \mid \Sigma_*^{4k+3}/S^1 = S^{4k+2}\}$$

is a well defined subgroup of  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3,4k-1}$ .

LEMMA 2.4. *The groups  $\Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1}$  and  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3,4k-1}$  are infinite.*

*Proof.* Define a homomorphism  $\phi: \Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1} \rightarrow \theta^{4k+2,4k-1}$  by

$$\phi[S^1, \Sigma_*^{4k+3}, F] = [\Sigma^{4k+3}/S^1, F].$$

By Proposition 2.2,  $\phi$  is onto. Since  $\theta^{4k+2,4k-1}$  is infinite,  $\Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1}$  is infinite.

Definition 2.5. Define the homomorphisms

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha: \Sigma_*^{4k+3,4k-1} &\rightarrow \theta_{4k+3}, & \beta: \Sigma_*^{4k+3,4k-1} &\rightarrow \theta_{4k-1}, & \gamma: \Sigma_*^{4k+3,4k-1} &\rightarrow \theta_{4k+2}, \\ \alpha^*: \Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1} &\rightarrow \theta_{4k+3}, & \text{and} & & \beta^*: \Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1} &\rightarrow \theta_{4k-1} \end{aligned}$$

as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, \Sigma^{4k-1}] &= \Sigma^{4k+3}, & \beta[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, \Sigma^{4k-1}] &= \Sigma^{4k-1}, \\ \gamma[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, \Sigma^{4k-1}] &= \Sigma^{4k+3}/S^1, \\ \alpha^* &= \alpha \mid \Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1}, & \text{and} & & \beta^* &= \beta \mid \Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1}. \end{aligned}$$

LEMMA 2.6. (i)  $\text{Im } \alpha \supset \text{bP}_{4k+4}$  and  $\text{Im } \beta \supset \text{bP}_{4k}$ .

(ii)  $\text{Im } \alpha^* \supset (\text{ord } \theta_{4k+2})\text{bP}_{4k+4}$  and  $\text{Im } \beta^* \supset (\text{ord } \theta_{4k+2})\text{bP}_{4k}$ . In particular,

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Im } \alpha^{*11,7} &\supset 2\theta_{11}, & \text{Im } \alpha^{*15,11} &\supset 2\text{bP}_{16}, \\ \text{Im } \beta^{*11,7} &\supset 2\theta_7, & \text{Im } \beta^{*15,11} &\supset 2\theta_{11}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $\alpha^{*4k+3,4k-1}$  means  $\alpha^*: \Sigma_{**}^{4k+3,4k-1} \rightarrow \theta_{4k+3}$ , and so forth.

(iii)  $\gamma$  is surjective.

*Proof.* Let us recall the explicit description of homotopy spheres in  $\text{bP}_{4k+4}$  given by Brieskorn and Hirzebruch [3], [4]:

$$\begin{aligned} \Sigma_{3,6n-1}^{4k+3} &= \{(z_1, \dots, z_{2k+3}) \in C^{2k+3} \mid z_1^3 + z_2^{6n-1} + z_3^2 + \dots + z_{2k+3}^2 = 0, \\ & \quad |z_1|^2 + \dots + |z_{2k+3}|^2 = 1\} \approx n\Sigma_M^{4k+3}. \end{aligned}$$

Consider the action of  $S^1$  on the last two variables of  $\Sigma_{3,6n-1}^{4k+3}$  via the representation  $S^1 \subset U(2)$ , which gives  $\Sigma_{3,6n-1}^{4k-1}$  as a fixed point set and a homotopy  $(4k+2)$ -sphere as orbit space. Applying Proposition 2.2, we obtain (i). The action induces an action of  $S^1$  on the homotopy sphere  $(\text{ord } \theta_{4n+2})\Sigma_{3,6n-1}^{4k+3}$  with fixed point set  $(\text{ord } \theta_{4n+2})\Sigma_{3,6n-1}^{4k-1}$  and orbit space  $S^{4k+2}$ . This implies (ii), by Proposition 2.2. The particular cases follow from the fact (see [5]) that

$$\theta_7 = \mathbb{Z}_{28}, \quad \theta_{10} = \mathbb{Z}_6, \quad \theta_{11} = \mathbb{Z}_{992}, \quad \theta_{14} = \mathbb{Z}_2, \quad bP_{16} = \mathbb{Z}_{8128}.$$

We turn to the proof of (iii). For each homotopy sphere  $\Sigma^{4k+2} \in \theta_{4k+2}$ , there exists a sequence of imbeddings

$$S^{4k-1} \rightarrow D^{4k} \rightarrow D^{4k+2} \rightarrow \Sigma^{4k+2}.$$

Again we can apply Proposition 2.2 to the pair  $(\Sigma^{4k+2}, S^{4k-1})$  to get an element  $[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, S^{4k-1}] \in \Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}$  such that

$$\gamma[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, S^{4k-1}] = \Sigma^{4k+2}.$$

*Problem:* Determine the groups  $\text{Im } \alpha$ ,  $\text{Im } \alpha^*$ ,  $\text{Im } \beta$ , and  $\text{Im } \beta^*$ .

### 3. THE MAIN THEOREM

**LEMMA 3.1.** *The quotient groups  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}/\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta$ ,  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}/\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \gamma$ , and  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}/\text{Ker } \beta \cap \text{Ker } \gamma$  are finite; hence, the subgroups  $\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta$ ,  $\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \gamma$ , and  $\text{Ker } \beta \cap \text{Ker } \gamma$  are infinite.*

*Proof.* The groups  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}/\text{Ker } \alpha$ ,  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}/\text{Ker } \beta$ , and  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}/\text{Ker } \gamma$  are finite because

$$\begin{aligned} \Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}/\text{Ker } \alpha &\approx \text{Im } \alpha, & \Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}/\text{Ker } \beta &\approx \text{Im } \beta, \\ \Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}/\text{Ker } \gamma &\approx \text{Im } \gamma, \end{aligned}$$

and because  $\text{Im } \alpha$ ,  $\text{Im } \beta$ , and  $\text{Im } \gamma$  are finite [5]. Consider the exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \text{Ker } \alpha / \text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta \rightarrow \Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1} / \text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta \rightarrow \Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1} / \text{Ker } \alpha \rightarrow 0.$$

By the second isomorphism theorem

$$\text{Ker } \alpha / \text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta \approx (\text{Ker } \alpha + \text{Ker } \beta) / \text{Ker } \beta,$$

and the right-hand member is a subgroup of the finite group  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1} / \text{Ker } \beta$ . Similar proofs apply to the other two cases. This completes the proof of the lemma.

**LEMMA 3.2.** *The group  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1} / \text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta \cap \text{Ker } \gamma$  is finite. Hence the group  $\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta \cap \text{Ker } \gamma$  is infinite.*

*Proof.* The sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \frac{\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta}{\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta \cap \text{Ker } \gamma} \rightarrow \frac{\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}}{\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta \cap \text{Ker } \gamma} \rightarrow \frac{\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1}}{\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta} \rightarrow 0$$

is exact, and the group  $(\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta) / (\text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta \cap \text{Ker } \gamma)$  is isomorphic to a subgroup of the finite group  $\Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1} / \text{Ker } \gamma$ . Lemma 3.1 now gives the result.

**MAIN THEOREM.** *Let the homotopy spheres  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$ ,  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$ , and  $\Sigma^{4k+2}$  belong to  $\text{Im } \alpha$ ,  $\text{Im } \beta$ , and  $\theta_{4k+2}$ , respectively. Then*

(i)  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$  admits infinitely many differentiably distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  whose fixed point sets have codimension 4.

(ii) If  $\alpha^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+3}) \cap \beta^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k-1}) \neq \emptyset$ , then there are infinitely many differentially nonequivalent, semifree actions of  $S^1$  on  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$  with fixed point set  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$ .

(iii) If  $\alpha^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+3}) \cap \gamma^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+2}) \neq \emptyset$ , then there exist infinitely many distinct, semifree, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  on  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$  with orbit space  $\Sigma^{4k+2}$ .

(iv) If  $\beta^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k-1}) \cap \gamma^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+2}) \neq \emptyset$ , then there exists at least one homotopy  $(4k+3)$ -sphere that admits infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree actions of  $S^1$  whose fixed point set is  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$  and whose orbit space is  $\Sigma^{4k+2}$ .

(v) If  $\alpha^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+3}) \cap \beta^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k-1}) \cap \gamma^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+2}) \neq \emptyset$ , then there are infinitely many differentially distinct, differentiable actions of  $S^1$  on  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$  with fixed point set  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$  and orbit space  $\Sigma^{4k+2}$ .

*Proof.* (i) is clear. We give only the proof of (v), because the proofs of (ii) to (v) are exactly the same. Let

$$\psi: \Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1} \rightarrow \Sigma_*^{4k+3, 4k-1} / \text{Ker } \alpha \cap \text{Ker } \beta \cap \text{Ker } \gamma$$

be the natural map. Then, for each element

$$[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, \Sigma^{4k-1}] \in \alpha^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+3}) \cap \beta^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k-1}) \cap \gamma^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+2}),$$

$\psi^{-1}(\psi[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, \Sigma^{4k-1}])$  contains infinitely many elements, by Lemma 3.2, and clearly

$$\psi^{-1}(\psi[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, \Sigma^{4k-1}]) \subset \alpha^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+3}) \cap \beta^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k-1}) \cap \gamma^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+2}).$$

By definition, the set  $\alpha^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+3}) \cap \beta^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k-1}) \cap \gamma^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+2})$  contains all the elements  $[S^1, \Sigma^{4k+3}, \Sigma^{4k-1}]$  with fixed point set  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$  and orbit space  $\Sigma^{4k+2}$ . This completes the proof of the main theorem.

Theorem 1 is a restatement of part (v) of the Main Theorem. Theorem 2 follows from Lemma 2.6 and parts (i) and (ii) of the Main Theorem, and Theorem 3 can be deduced either from Lemma 3.2 or from part (v) of the Main Theorem.

*Proof of Theorem 4.* It is known that  $S^1$  can act semifreely on  $S^{11}$  in such a way that the set of fixed points is any prescribed homotopy sphere in  $4\theta_7$  and its orbit space is  $S^{10}$  [8]. This implies (i). Part (ii) follows from Lemma 2.6, because  $\text{Im } \alpha^{*11,7} \supset 2\theta_{11}$ . Since  $84\theta_{11} = 4\theta_{11}$ , we can deduce (iii) by using the Brieskorn-Hirzebruch description of homotopy spheres in  $\theta_{11}$ .

*Proof of Theorem 5.* By using again the Brieskorn-Hirzebruch equations, we see that  $S^1$  can act semifreely on  $S^{15}$  with fixed point set in  $32\theta_{11}$  and with orbit space  $S^{14}$ . This proves (i). To prove (ii) and (iv), it suffices to show that the homomorphism

$$\alpha: \Sigma_*^{15,11} \rightarrow \theta_{15}$$

is surjective. This will imply that  $S^1$  can act on  $2\theta_{15} = bP_{16}$  with orbit space in  $2\theta_{14}$ . By [1] and [2], there exists a homotopy sphere  $\Sigma^{15} \notin bP_{16}$  such that  $\Sigma^{15} \in \text{Im } \alpha$ . Thus  $\text{Im } \alpha \supset \{\Sigma^{15}, bP_{16}\}$ . Hence,  $\text{Im } \alpha = \theta_{15}$ , because  $\theta_{15}/bP_{16} = Z_2$  [5]. Finally,  $S^1$  can act semifreely on  $992bP_{16} = 32bP_{16}$  with fixed point set in  $992\theta_{11}$  and orbit space in  $992\theta_{14}$ . This completes the proof of (iii).

**COROLLARY 3.3.**  $\text{Im } \alpha^{15,11} = \theta_{15}$  and  $\text{Im } \alpha^{*15,11} \supset bP_{16}$ .

*Problems.* Determine all possible homotopy spheres  $\Sigma^{4k+3}$ ,  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$ , and  $\Sigma^{4k+2}$  that satisfy one of the conditions

$$\alpha^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+3}) \cap \beta^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k-1}) \neq \emptyset,$$

$$\alpha^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+3}) \cap \beta^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k-1}) \cap \gamma^{-1}(\Sigma^{4k+2}) \neq \emptyset,$$

...

Notice that if  $\Sigma^{4k-1} \in \mathfrak{b}P_{4k}$ , then  $\Sigma^{4k-1} \times D^3 \approx S^{4k-1} \times D^3$  [9]. Thus  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$  can be imbedded in  $S^{4k+2}$ . Therefore  $\text{Im } \beta^* \supset \mathfrak{b}P_{4k}$  (see [8]).

Part (iv) of the Main Theorem implies the following.

**THEOREM 3.4.** *Corresponding to each homotopy sphere  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$  in  $\mathfrak{b}P_{4k}$ , there exists at least one homotopy  $(4k+3)$ -sphere that admits infinitely many differentially distinct, semifree actions of  $S^1$  whose fixed point set is  $\Sigma^{4k-1}$  and whose orbit space is  $S^{4k+2}$ .*

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The Institute for Advanced Study  
 Princeton, New Jersey 08540  
 and  
 University of Massachusetts  
 Amherst, Massachusetts 01002