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**PARTITIONED MANIFOLDS  
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Emphasizing special features of manifolds with symmetry in dimensions 2, 3, and 4 we develop various simple approaches to index theory over partitioned manifolds.

## PARTITIONED MANIFOLDS AND INVARIANTS IN DIMENSIONS 2, 3, AND 4

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**Abstract.** Emphasizing special features of manifolds with symmetry in dimensions 2, 3, and 4 we develop various simple approaches to index theory over partitioned manifolds.

**Key words:** Dirac operators, elliptic boundary problems, index theory, partitioned manifolds, spectral flow, surgery

Eugene Wigner's sarcastic remark in [1], that *mathematics is the science of skillful operations with concepts and rules invented just for this purpose*, might have been read by generations of mathematicians as a blank cheque to work with concepts *not chosen for their conceptual simplicity... but for their amenability to clever manipulations and to striking, brilliant arguments*. Since then it became socially accepted among mathematicians not to keep track of what was going on in physics. For a while, algebraic topology became more fashionable than partial differential equations.

Surprisingly, Wigner's expectation of *the mathematical concepts cropping up in physics* also held for the most elaborate and remote concepts of modern differential topology. To judge from the terminology or the content of the papers, some issues of learned journals in differential geometry and in mathematical physics can hardly be distinguished from each other. Mathematicians tend to give that fact an emphatic interpretation like Michael Atiyah [2]: *When the excitement is over and a proper perspective can be achieved the present decade (written in 1989) may well stand out as a landmark comparable to that of Einstein's Theory*. Physicists, trained in Wigner's way of thinking, do not always evaluate so positively the inflation of new topological and differential geometrical concepts turning up especially in quantum field theory and elementary particle theory. Usually they have two objections: They ask for the phenomena, which according to Wigner's first quality assessment criterion should find a *close and accurate description* by help of the fancy mathematical concepts. This question we leave to the physicists. And they ask for the *ingenious*

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*logical operations which appeal to our aesthetic sense both as operations and also in their results of great generality and simplicity*, Wigner's second quality assessment criterion. Is not the terminology becoming too much mathematized, too esoteric and too bizarre?

To this question we have an answer regarding the global analysis of elliptic boundary value problems: No! Understanding internal symmetries of partial (especially elliptic) differential equations in terms of invariants looks like a puzzle. But it is not since the basic building blocks in analysis and topology are the same: manifolds with boundary. Of course, the emphasis is different. In the *theory of partial differential equations* one traditionally treats higher order differential equations of greatest generality on bounded planar regions or open regions in higher dimensional Euclidean space, subject to local Dirichlet/Neumann or very abstract pseudo-differential boundary conditions. In *topology* one investigates combinatorial properties of quite general manifolds made up by glueing of simple pieces, cells or singular simplices. A link between these two very different theories is provided by *differential topology* which treats mainly geometrically defined first order differential operators of Dirac type, acting on sections of bundles of Clifford modules, subject to strong symmetry principles and concrete global spectral boundary conditions. That provides an abundance of cross references between analysis and topology. Whether they have a deep physical meaning or not, these cross references are interesting mathematics.

Computations of invariants like the index, the eta-invariant, and the determinant for a Dirac operator over a closed manifold can be in some cases reduced to the following scheme: We divide the manifold into two parts. One part may be complicated from a topological point of view; but the analysis is easy on this part. The other part may be topologically trivial, but interesting from the analytical point of view. Here we make explicit computations. This is the idea e.g. behind the recent work of Kirk and Klassen [3], [4] on Casson's invariant which gives one reason, why it is important to study the decomposition of manifolds and operators into problems over manifolds with boundary.

Let us look at a few concrete calculations to illustrate the most basic concepts and to argue for our philosophy that manifolds with boundary are, in principle, easier to grasp than closed manifolds. We shall restrict ourselves to the easiest case of the index. Modifications of our approach for the slightly more intricate situation of the eta-invariant and the truly more intricate situation of the determinant and torsion will be worked out separately.

## 1. A Simple Proof of the Index Theorem on $S^2$

Consider an elliptic differential or pseudo-differential operator over a closed manifold (i.e. compact and without boundary). The index denotes the difference of the dimensions of the kernel and the cokernel of the operator. It is continuous on a suitable space of Fredholm operators and hence locally constant on the connected components. Then the Atiyah-Singer index theorem expresses the index in terms of topological characteristics of the operator's coefficients.

We consider the simplest possible two-dimensional case and write the 2-sphere

$S^2$  as the closed double of the 2-disc  $D^2 := \{(x, y) \mid x^2 + y^2 \leq 1\}$ . We show that, correspondingly, up to homotopy any elliptic operator on  $S^2$  is completely determined by the pasting of trivial pieces of the operator. More precisely, we construct two operators  $A$  and  $A'$  which are, in topological language, non-trivial, i.e. their principal symbols define the two generators of the  $K$ -group  $K(TS^2)$ , one with vanishing index, the other with non-vanishing index. The building blocks are provided by the Cauchy-Riemann operator  $\bar{\partial} : C^\infty(D^2) \rightarrow C^\infty(D^2)$ , where  $\bar{\partial} := \frac{1}{2}(\partial/\partial x + i\partial/\partial y)$ . In polar coordinates out of the origin, this operator has the form  $\frac{1}{2}e^{i\varphi}(\partial_r + (i/r)\partial_\varphi)$ . Therefore, after some small smooth perturbations (and modulo the factor  $\frac{1}{2}$ ), we assume that  $\bar{\partial} = e^{i\varphi}(\partial_r + i\partial_\varphi)$  in a certain collar neighbourhood  $N$  of the boundary. Then  $(\bar{\partial})^* = e^{-i\varphi}(-\partial_u + i\partial_\varphi + 1)$  ( $u = r - 1$ ) in  $N$ , and

$$A = \bar{\partial} \cup (\bar{\partial})^* : C^\infty(S^2; H^1) \rightarrow C^\infty(S^2; H^{-1}) \quad (1)$$

is a well-defined elliptic differential operator. Here for integer  $k$ ,  $H^k$  denotes the Hopf bundle, which is obtained from two copies of  $D^2 \times \mathbb{C}$  by the identification  $(z, w) = (z, z^k w)$  near the equator. By definition, the kernels of  $A$  and its adjoint operator are isomorphic, hence  $\text{index } A = 0$ .

To produce an operator with a nontrivial index, we define an operator  $\bar{\partial}_1$  on the upper hemisphere, equal to  $\bar{\partial}$  outside of  $N$ . On  $N$  we define:

$$\bar{\partial}_1 := e^{i\varphi}(\partial_u + i\partial_\varphi - \chi(u)), \quad (2)$$

where  $\chi(u) \geq 0$  is a smoothing function equal 1 close to the equator  $u = 0$ . Then the operator

$$A' := \bar{\partial}_1 \cup (\bar{\partial})^* : C^\infty(S^2; H^2) \rightarrow C^\infty(S^2; H^0)$$

is well defined. The only difference from the operator  $\bar{\partial} \cup (\bar{\partial})^*$  is the modification on the collar  $N$ .

To compute  $\text{index } A' - \text{index } A$  observe that the index of any Dirac operator over a closed manifold  $M$  is given by a local formula

$$\text{index } A = \int_M \alpha(x),$$

where  $\alpha(x)$  is a density given at the point  $x$  by a complicated algebraic formula in terms of coefficients of the operator  $A$  in  $x$  (accounted for e.g. in [5]). It is a consequence of the locality of the index expressed in the preceding formula that we get:

$$\text{index } A' = \text{index } A' - \text{index } A = \text{index } [e^{i\varphi}(\partial_u + i\partial_\varphi - \chi(u))], \quad (3)$$

where the operator on the right side is a well-defined elliptic operator on the torus  $S^1 \times S^1$ . Its index coincides with the index of the elliptic operator  $T := \partial_u + i\partial_\varphi - u$  acting on functions  $f(u, \varphi)$  from  $C^\infty(\mathbb{R} \times S^1)$  which satisfy the periodicity condition:

$$f(u + 1, \varphi) = e^{-i\varphi} f(u, \varphi). \quad (4)$$

Separation of variables and series expansion of  $f$  shows that there is no non-trivial solution of  $Tf = 0$  with the required periodicity and that the kernel of  $T^*$  with the required periodicity is one-dimensional, hence

$$\text{index } A' = -1. \quad (5)$$

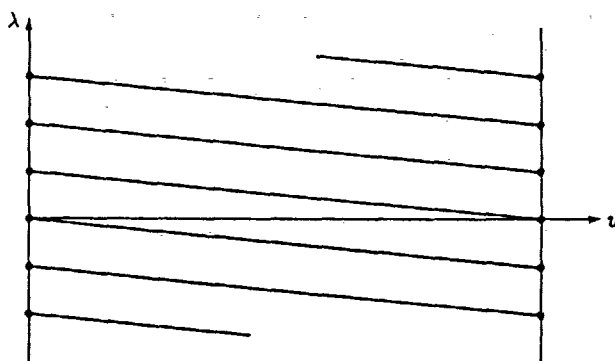


Fig. 1. The spectrum of  $\{i \frac{d}{d\varphi} - u\}_{u \in I}$

More generally, this argument proves the following result:

**Theorem 1** Let  $A'^k$  denote an operator over  $S^2$  which is equal to  $\bar{\partial}$  on  $D^2 \setminus N$ ,  $(\bar{\partial})^*$  on the second copy of  $D^2$ , and  $e^{i\varphi}(\partial_u + i\partial_\varphi - k\chi(u))$  on  $N$ . The operator  $A'^k$  is in fact the operator  $A \otimes Id_{H^k} : C^\infty(S^2; H^{k+1}) \rightarrow C^\infty(S^2; H^{k-1})$  and we have the following index theorem:

$$\text{index } A'^k = -k. \quad (6)$$

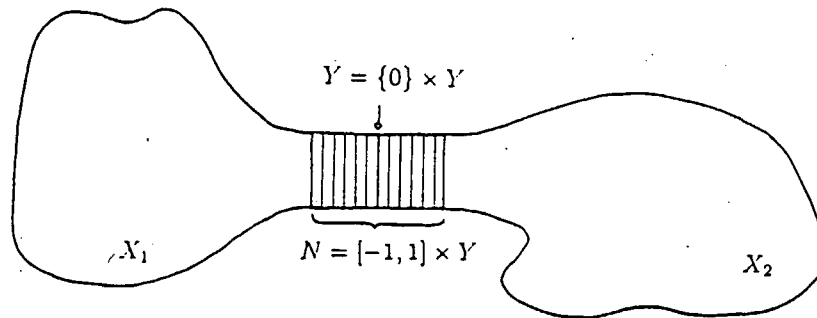
**Remarks 2** (a) Alternatively, we can prove (5) by a spectral argument. Consider the family  $\{B_u = i\partial_\varphi - u\}$  of self-adjoint differential operators over the circle  $S^1$ , parametrized by  $u \in S^1 = I/\{0,1\}$ . Such families have only one topological invariant, the *spectral flow*  $\text{sf}\{B_u\}$ . It is just the difference between the number of eigenvalues of  $B_u$ , which change the sign from  $-$  to  $+$  as  $u$  goes from 0 to 1, and the number of eigenvalues, which change the sign from  $+$  to  $-$ . With some work, involving  $K$ -theory, one finds some very fundamental relations between *families of self-adjoint elliptic differential operators*  $\{B_u\}$  over a closed manifold  $M$  parametrized by  $S^1$ ; their *suspension*  $\partial_u + B_u$  which is an elliptic differential operator over  $M \times S^1$ ; and their *desuspension*  $P_\geq - \Psi P_\lt$  which is an elliptic pseudo-differential operator over  $M$ . Here  $P_\geq$  and  $P_\lt$  denote the spectral projections of the operator  $B_0$  on the eigenspaces corresponding to the non-negative part and the negative part of the spectrum; and  $\Psi$  is a unitary morphism chosen in such a way that it provides a unitary equivalence  $B_1 = \Psi^{-1} B_0 \Psi$ , here  $\Psi(\varphi) = e^{i\varphi}$ . One gets for  $T = \partial_u + B_u$

$$\text{index}(\partial_u + B_u) = \text{sf}\{B_u\} = \text{index}(P_\geq - \Psi P_\lt), \quad (7)$$

hence, especially,  $\text{index } A' = \text{sf}\{B_u\} = -1$ , see Figure 1.

(b) Direct generalization yields the corresponding index theorem for Dirac operators on even-dimensional spheres which gives the Atiyah-Singer index theorem on these spheres by stable homotopy. That result, together with the computation of the signature operator on complex projective spaces, was the basis of the first proof of the index theorem.

(c) Notice that the cutting and pasting procedure explained above for the 2-sphere also provides a direct proof of the Atiyah-Singer index theorem for elliptic pseudo-differential operators on arbitrary closed Riemann surfaces.


 Fig. 2. The partitioned manifold  $M = X_1 \cup X_2$ 

## 2. Index Theory on Partitioned Manifolds

Let  $M = X_1 \cup X_2$  be an  $n$ -dimensional closed partitioned manifold with  $\partial X_1 = \partial X_2 = X_1 \cap X_2 = Y$ , let  $S$  be a  $Cl(M)$ -module, and let  $A : C^\infty(M; S) \rightarrow C^\infty(M; S)$  be a *generalized Dirac operator*, i.e. a linear differential operator of first order which can be written in terms of a local orthonormal frame  $v_1, \dots, v_n$  of  $TM$  as

$$As|_x = \sum_{\nu=1}^n v_\nu \cdot (D_{v_\nu} s)|_x,$$

where  $\cdot$  denotes Clifford multiplication. We assume  $n$  even and get a *chiral decomposition*

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & A^- \\ A^+ & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

The *partial Dirac operators*  $A^\pm$  are especially interesting in index theory since they are elliptic, but in general not self-adjoint and provide interesting integer-valued invariants as their indices. Like the Cauchy-Riemann operator all partial Dirac operators  $A^+$  can be written in product form

$$A^+ = G(u, y)(\partial_u + B_u) \quad (8)$$

in a bicollar neighbourhood  $N$  of  $Y$ , where  $u$  denotes the normal coordinate running from  $X_1$  to  $X_2$ , see Figure 2. We assume that the metrics of the manifold and the Clifford module bundle are product close to  $Y$ , hence  $G$  and  $B_u$  independent of  $u$ . Notice that  $G(y)$  is Clifford multiplication with the inward oriented normal tangent vector and  $B_0$  is again a Dirac operator, sometimes called the *tangential operator* or the *Hamiltonian*. Due to (8) all the constructions shown for the two-sphere and the Cauchy-Riemann operator have straight forward generalizations.

Let  $\Phi$  be a unitary automorphism of  $S^+|_Y$  (possibly with a shift  $f$  in the basis  $Y$ ). Let  $a$  denote the principal symbol of the operator  $A^+$ . In a bicollar neighbourhood of  $Y$ , the symbol  $a$  has the form:

$$a(u, y; \nu, \zeta) = G(y)(i\nu + b(y; \zeta)).$$

We assume *consistency* of  $\Phi$  and  $G$ , namely that for all  $y \in Y$  and  $\zeta \in T^*Y_y$ :

$$\Phi(y)G(y) = G(f(y))\Phi(y) \quad \text{and} \quad \Phi(y)b(y; \zeta) = b(f(y); (f^{-1})^*(\zeta)) \Phi(y).$$

**Theorem 3** ([6]) *Glueing*  $A_1 := A^+|_{X_1}$  with  $A_2 := A^+|_{X_2}$  in a bicollar neighbourhood of  $Y$  by consistent  $\Phi$  defines a new Dirac operator  $A^\Phi$  over  $M$  with

$$\text{index } A^\Phi - \text{index } A^+ = \text{index } T^\Phi = \text{sf}\{B_u\} = \text{index}(P_< - \Phi P_>).$$

Here  $\{B_u\}$  is a family connecting  $B_0$  and  $\Phi^{-1}B_0\Phi$ ;  $T^\Phi$  denotes the elliptic differential operator given by the formula  $G(\partial_u + B_u)$  over the mapping torus  $(I \times Y)/f$ ; and  $P_>, P_<$  denote the spectral projections of  $B_0$ .

**Corollary 4** *The index of the corresponding linear conjugation problem on the manifold  $M$  equals the index of the operator  $A^\Phi$ .*

### 3. Additivity Formula for Problems of Atiyah-Patodi-Singer Type

The principal symbol  $p_+$  of the spectral projection  $P_>$  is the projection onto the eigenspaces of the principal symbol  $b(y, \zeta)$  of  $B_0$  corresponding to non-negative eigenvalues. We call the space of pseudo-differential projections with the same principal symbol  $p_+$  the *Grassmannian*  $Gr_{p_+}$ . It has enumerable many connected components; two projections  $P_1, P_2$  belong to the same component, if and only if the *virtual codimension*

$$i(P_2, P_1) := \text{index}\{P_2 P_1 : \text{range } P_1 \rightarrow \text{range } P_2\} \quad (9)$$

of  $P_2$  in  $P_1$  vanishes; the higher homotopy groups of each connected component are given by Bott periodicity. The Grassmannian is a natural space for global elliptic boundary value problems, see [6] for the mathematics and [7] for the physics.

More precisely: The  $L^2$  realization  $(A_1)_{P_1}$  which acts like  $A_1$  and is determined by

$$\text{dom}(A_1)_{P_1} := \{s \in \mathcal{H}^1(X_1; S^+) \mid P_1(s|_Y) = 0\},$$

is a Fredholm operator from  $L^2(X_1; S^+)$  to  $L^2(X_1; S^-)$ . Its index is determined by a generalization of the *Atiyah-Patodi-Singer index formula*

$$\text{index}(A_1)_{P_1} = \int_{X_1} \alpha(x) - \frac{1}{2}(\eta_B(0) + \dim \ker B) + i(P_1, P_>). \quad (10)$$

Here  $\alpha(x)$  denotes the index density of  $A_1$  accounted for above and

$$\eta_B(z) := \sum_{\lambda \in \text{spec } B \setminus \{0\}} \text{sign } \lambda |\lambda|^{-z} \quad (11)$$

denotes the  $\eta$ -function of  $A_1$ 's tangential part  $B$ . It is (i) well defined through absolute convergence for  $\Re(z)$  large; (ii) it extends to a meromorphic function in the complex plane with isolated simple poles; (iii) its residues are given by a local formula; and (iv) it has a finite value at  $z = 0$  (see e.g. [5]).

Let  $A^+|_N = G(\partial_u + B)$ , i.e. independent of  $u$ . This can be obtained when the metrics of the manifold and the Clifford module are product close to  $Y$ . Then

$$A_1|_{[-1,0] \times Y} = (-G)(-\partial_u - B) \quad \text{and} \quad A_2|_{[0,1] \times Y} = G(\partial_u + B), \quad (12)$$

and it follows that  $(p_1)_+ = \text{id} - (p_2)_+$ .



**Theorem 5** Let  $P_i$  be projections belonging to  $\text{Gr}_{(p_i)_+}$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ . Then

$$\text{index } A^+ = \text{index } (A_1)_{P_1} + \text{index } (A_2)_{P_2} - \mathbf{i}(P_2, \text{Id} - P_1). \quad (13)$$

*Note.* It is immediate that  $\mathbf{i}(P_2, \text{Id} - P_1) = \text{index } (G(\partial_u + B); P_2, P_1)$  where the last operator is on  $[0, 1] \times Y$  with boundary condition  $P_2$  at  $u = 0$  and  $P_1$  at  $u = 1$ . Formulas similar to (13) hold also for some other interesting analytical invariants like the eta-invariant of Dirac operators on odd-dimensional manifolds and the spectral flow of families of operators (see [8], [9], and [10]).

**Proof** From (10) we get

$$\text{index } (A_1)_{P_1} = \int_{X_1} \alpha_{A_1}(x) - \frac{1}{2}(\eta_{-B}(0) + \dim \ker(-B)) + \mathbf{i}(P_1, P_{\geq}(-B))$$

and

$$\text{index } (A_2)_{P_2} = \int_{X_2} \alpha_{A_2}(x) - \frac{1}{2}(\eta_B(0) + \dim \ker B) + \mathbf{i}(P_2, P_{\geq}(B)).$$

Here  $\alpha_{A_i} := \alpha|_{X_i}$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} \text{index } (A_1)_{P_1} + \text{index } (A_2)_{P_2} & \quad (14) \\ &= \int_M \alpha(x) - \dim \ker B + \mathbf{i}(P_1, P_{\geq}(-B)) + \mathbf{i}(P_2, P_{\geq}(B)). \end{aligned}$$

Since

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{i}(P_1, P_{\geq}(-B)) &= -\mathbf{i}(\text{Id} - P_1, \text{Id} - P_{\geq}(-B)) \\ &= \mathbf{i}(\text{Id} - P_{\geq}(-B), \text{Id} - P_1) = \mathbf{i}(P_{>}(B), \text{Id} - P_1) \end{aligned}$$

and  $\mathbf{i}(P_{\geq}(B), P_{>}(B)) = -\dim \ker B$  we get

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{i}(P_1, P_{\geq}(-B)) &= \mathbf{i}(P_{\geq}(B), P_{>}(B)) + \mathbf{i}(P_{>}(B), \text{Id} - P_1) - \mathbf{i}(P_{\geq}(B), P_{>}(B)) \\ &= \mathbf{i}(P_{\geq}(B), \text{Id} - P_1) + \dim \ker B. \end{aligned}$$

Inserting the preceding result in (14) yields

$$\begin{aligned} \text{index } (A_1)_{P_1} + \text{index } (A_2)_{P_2} & \\ &= \text{index } A^+ - \dim \ker B + \mathbf{i}(P_2, P_{\geq}(B)) + \mathbf{i}(P_{\geq}(B), \text{Id} - P_1) + \dim \ker B \\ &= \text{index } A^+ + \mathbf{i}(P_2, \text{Id} - P_1). \end{aligned}$$

□

#### 4. Specific Features in Dimensions 2, 3, and 4

**Remarks 6** (a) Cutting and pasting of one single operator can generate (modulo stable homotopy) the whole space of elliptic operators over a partitioned closed manifold as was the case with the Cauchy-Riemann operator over  $S^2$  in Section

1. This requires that the group of unitary consistent automorphisms is sufficiently rich. In other cases the group is too small to influence the index. This is the case for the signature and the Euler characteristic which remain invariant under cutting and pasting, i.e. they are *rigid* and behave additively.

(b) For each Dirac operator  $A$  over a compact manifold  $X$  with smooth boundary  $Y$  one has a second canonical element of  $\text{Gr}_{p,+}$  besides the spectral projection  $P_{\geq}$ , namely the Calderón projection  $\mathcal{P}_+$  which maps sections over the boundary onto the Cauchy data, i.e. the traces on the boundary of the solutions. By definition index  $A_{\mathcal{P}_+}$  always vanishes.

Clearly, in dimension 2 the two projections for the Cauchy-Riemann operator coincide. In dimension 3 we consider a smooth flat connection on  $X \times \text{SU}(2)$  and the corresponding twisted signature operator over  $X$  with coefficients in  $X \times \text{su}(2)$  where  $\text{su}(2)$  denotes the Lie algebra of  $\text{SU}(2)$  (see [6]). The index of the corresponding Atiyah-Patodi-Singer problem does not vanish: it does not depend of the connection and can be expressed by  $3 - 3g$  where  $g \geq 2$  denotes the genus of  $Y$ . Exploiting an argument of [11], one can find an example in dimension 3 (with the genus of the connected boundary  $g > 3$ ) where  $P_{\geq}$  and  $\mathcal{P}_+$  change their connected components in  $\text{Gr}_{p,+}$  independently under a smooth change of the metric. In dimension 4 [12] shows that for the Euclidean Dirac operator on the 4-ball 'the boundary traces of zero mode spinors of even chirality coincide with the space of eigenfunctions of the Hamiltonian on the 3-sphere corresponding to non-negative eigenvalues', or in our language: the spectral projection and the Calderón projection coincide.

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