

The Hitchin fibration and real forms through spectral data

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THE PLAN

- 1 Higgs bundles.
 - Classical Higgs bundles
 - G^c -Higgs bundles.
- 2 The Hitchin fibration
 - Spectral data approach.
 - G-Higgs bundles as fixed points.
- 3 Spectral data approach for real forms
 - Discrete fixed point set.
 - Pos. dim. fixed point set.
 - No fixed point set.
- 4 Applications
 - Connected components.
 - Topological invariants.

Based on:

arXiv:1301.1981

arXiv:1111.2550

Spectral data also used in arXiv:1305.4638 [with D. Baraglia.](#)

CLASSICAL HIGGS BUNDLES

Σ compact Riemann surface of genus $g > 2$,
canonical bundle $K = T^*\Sigma$.

Definition

A *Higgs bundle* on a compact Riemann surface Σ of genus $g > 1$, is a pair (E, Φ) for E a holomorphic vector bundle on Σ and Φ a section in $H^0(\Sigma, \text{End}(E) \otimes K)$. [See example.](#)

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The *slope* of a vector bundle F be $\mu := \text{deg}(F)/\text{rk}(F)$. A Higgs bundle (E, Φ) is

- *stable* if for each Φ -invariant subbundle F one has $\mu(F) < \mu(E)$;
- *semi-stable* if for each Φ -invariant subbundle F one has $\mu(F) \leq \mu(E)$;
- *polystable* if $(E, \Phi) = (E_1, \Phi_1) \oplus (E_2, \Phi_2) \oplus \dots \oplus (E_r, \Phi_r)$, where (E_i, Φ_i) is stable with $\mu(E_i) = \mu(E)$ for all i .

[See example.](#)

G^c -HIGGS BUNDLES

G^c be a complex semisimple Lie group.

Definition

A G^c -Higgs bundle is a pair (P, Φ) where

- P is a principal G^c -bundle over Σ ,
- Higgs field Φ is a holomorphic section of the vector bundle $\text{Ad}P \otimes_{\mathbb{C}} K$,

for $\text{ad}P$ the vector bundle associated to the adjoint representation.

- Can extend stability notions. Then, call \mathcal{M}_{G^c} the moduli space of S -equivalence classes of semi-stable G^c -Higgs bundles.

G^c -HIGGS BUNDLES: EXAMPLES

- Classical Higgs bundles are given by $GL(n, \mathbb{C})$ -Higgs bundles.

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 - $SL(n, \mathbb{C})$

$$(E, \Phi) \text{ for } \begin{cases} E \text{ rk } n \text{ vector bundle s.t. } \Lambda^n E \cong \mathcal{O} \\ \Phi : E \rightarrow E \otimes K \text{ s.t. } \text{Tr}(\Phi) = 0 \end{cases}$$

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- $Sp(2n, \mathbb{C})$

$$(E, \Phi) \text{ for } \begin{cases} E \text{ rk } 2n \text{ symplectic vector bundle} \\ \text{symplectic form } \omega \text{ on } E \\ \Phi : E \rightarrow E \otimes K \text{ s.t. } \omega(\Phi v, w) = -\omega(v, \Phi w) \end{cases}$$

THE HITCHIN FIBRATION

Let d_i , for $i = 1, \dots, k$, be the degrees of the basic invariant polynomials p_i on the Lie algebra \mathfrak{g}^c of G^c .

Definition

The Hitchin fibration is

$$\begin{aligned}
 h : \mathcal{M}_{G^c} &\longrightarrow \mathcal{A}_{G^c} := \bigoplus_{i=1}^k H^0(\Sigma, K^{d_i}), \\
 (E, \Phi) &\mapsto (p_1(\Phi), \dots, p_k(\Phi)).
 \end{aligned}$$

- h is a proper map and $\dim \mathcal{A}_{G^c} = \dim \mathcal{M}_{G^c} / 2$.
- The Hitchin map makes the Higgs bundles moduli space into an integrable system.
- For most classical groups (not $SO(2n, \mathbb{C})$), we take polynomials on $\text{Tr}(\Phi^i)$ for a basis of invariant polynomials.

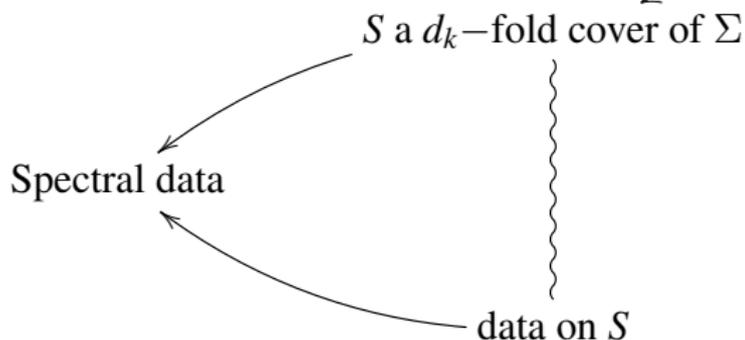
See examples.

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH

THE IDEA

$$\mathcal{M}_{G^c} \longrightarrow \mathcal{A}_{G^c} = \bigoplus_{i=1}^k H^0(\Sigma, K^{d_i})$$

$$(E, \Phi) \longmapsto \text{char}(\Phi) \rightsquigarrow a = (a_1, \dots, a_k)$$



SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH: $GL(n, \mathbb{C})$

$$h : (E, \Phi) \mapsto \text{char}(\Phi) \in \bigoplus_{i=1}^n H^0(\Sigma, K^i) = \mathcal{A}_{GL(n, \mathbb{C})}$$

$$\text{char}(\Phi) = \eta^n + a_1\eta^{n-1} + a_2\eta^{n-2} + \dots + a_{n-1}\eta + a_n$$

So the fibration looks as follows...

N.Hitchin '87, '07

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH: $GL(n, \mathbb{C})$

THE CONSTRUCTION

Starting with (S, M) we get a stable Higgs bundle (E, Φ) for

- The rank n vector bundle $E = \rho_*M$;
- The Higgs field Φ induced by

$$H^0(\rho^{-1}(\mathcal{U}), M) \xrightarrow{\eta} H^0(\rho^{-1}(\mathcal{U}), M \otimes \rho^*K)$$

for an open $\mathcal{U} \subset \Sigma$ by definition of direct image, gives

$$H^0(\mathcal{U}, \rho_*M) \longrightarrow H^0(\mathcal{U}, \rho_*M \otimes K)$$

Pushes down to $\Phi : E \rightarrow E \otimes K$.

Starting with a stable (E, Φ) we get the spectral data (S, M) for

- The smooth spectral curve S defined by $\det(\eta - \rho^*\Phi) = 0$;
- For the line bundle $U := \text{coker}(\eta - \rho^*\Phi)$, one has $\rho_*U = E$.

The generic fibre of the Hitchin fibration is isomorphic to the Jacobian of the spectral curve S

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH: $SL(n, \mathbb{C})$

AS CLASSICAL HIGGS BUNDLES + EXTRA DATA.

$$\Lambda^n E = \mathcal{O} \iff \Lambda^n \rho_* M \cong \mathcal{O}$$

From [Beauville-Narasimhan-Ramanan, 1989],

$$\Lambda^n \rho_* M \cong \text{Nm}(M) \otimes K^{-n(n-1)/2}.$$

$$\text{Nm} : \text{Pic}(S) \rightarrow \text{Pic}(\Sigma)$$

$$\sum n_i p_i \mapsto \sum n_i \rho(p_i)$$

Then $\Lambda^n \rho_* M = \mathcal{O}$ if and only if $\text{Nm}(M) \cong K^{n(n-1)/2}$, or equivalently

$$M \otimes \rho^* K^{-(n-1)/2} \in \text{Ker}(\text{Nm}) =: \text{Prym}(S, \Sigma).$$

The generic fibre of the Hitchin fibration is biholomorphically equivalent to the Prym variety $\text{Prym}(S, \Sigma)$.

G-HIGGS BUNDLES

SET UP

- G a real reductive Lie group;
- $\mathfrak{g}^{\mathbb{C}}$ complexified Lie algebra of G ;
- $\mathfrak{m}^{\mathbb{C}}$ such that

$$\mathfrak{g}^{\mathbb{C}} = \mathfrak{h}^{\mathbb{C}} \oplus \mathfrak{m}^{\mathbb{C}}$$
- $H \subset G$ the maximal compact subgroup;
- $\mathfrak{h}^{\mathbb{C}}$ complexified Lie algebra of H ;
- $Ad|_{H^{\mathbb{C}}} : H^{\mathbb{C}} \rightarrow GL(\mathfrak{m}^{\mathbb{C}})$ is the isotropy representation.

Definition

A *principal G-Higgs bundle* is a pair (P, Φ) where

- P is a holomorphic principal $H^{\mathbb{C}}$ -bundle;
- Φ is a holomorphic section of $(P \times_{Ad} \mathfrak{m}^{\mathbb{C}}) \otimes K$.

See example.

G -HIGGS BUNDLES AS FIXED POINTS

IN THE FIBRES OF THE G^c HITCHIN FIBRATION

- G a real form of G^c fixed by the anti-holomorphic involution τ
- ρ the compact real form of G^c .
- $\sigma = \rho\tau$ a holomorphic involution.

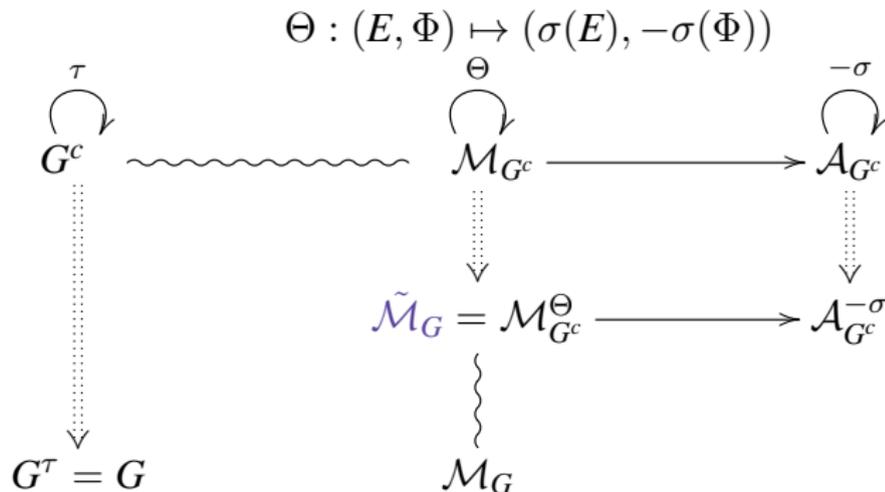
$$\Theta : (E, \Phi) \mapsto (\sigma(E), -\sigma(\Phi))$$

N.Hitchin '87, '92

G-HIGGS BUNDLES AS FIXED POINTS

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See Example.

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH I

DISCRETE INTERSECTION OF $\mathcal{M}_{G^c}^{\Theta}$ WITH THE SMOOTH FIBRES

G -Higgs bundles for split real forms ($G = SL(n, \mathbb{R}), Sp(2n, \mathbb{R}), \dots$)

Theorem (*thesis*)

The intersection of $\mathcal{M}_{G^c}^{\Theta}$ with the smooth fibres of the Hitchin fibration

$$h : \mathcal{M}_{G^c} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_{G^c}.$$

is the space of elements of order 2 over the regular locus of \mathcal{A}_{G^c} .

So we can study the fibration through the monodromy action...

$G = SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ case (*thesis*)

What happens for other groups?

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH II

POSITIVE DIMENSIONAL INTERSECTION OF $\mathcal{M}_{G^c}^\Theta$ WITH THE SMOOTH FIBRES

What kind of curve does $\text{char}(\Phi)$ define for a G -Higgs field Φ ?

Generically, a smooth curve for $G = U(p, p), SU(p, p) \dots$

Definition

A $U(p, p)$ -Higgs bundle over Σ is a pair (E, Φ) where $E = V \oplus W$ for V, W rank p vector bundles over Σ , and Φ the Higgs field given by

$$\Phi = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \beta \\ \gamma & 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

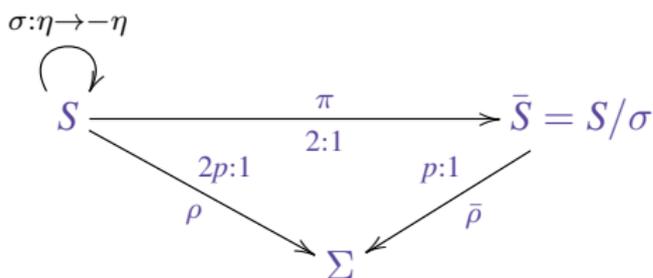
for $\beta : W \rightarrow V \otimes K$ and $\gamma : V \rightarrow W \otimes K$. When $\Lambda^p V \cong \Lambda^p W^*$, one has an $SU(p, p)$ -Higgs bundle.

$$\det(x - \Phi) = x^{2p} + a_1 x^{2p-2} + \dots + a_{p-1} x^2 + a_p$$

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH II

TOWARDS THE SPECTRAL DATA FOR $U(p, p)$ -HIGGS BUNDLES

- Smooth S given by $\eta^{2p} + a_1\eta^{2p-2} + \dots + a_{p-1}\eta^2 + a_p = 0$;
- Smooth \bar{S} given by $\xi^p + a_1\xi^{p-1} + \dots + a_{p-1}\xi + a_p = 0$ for $\xi = \eta^2$;
for η tautological section of ρ^*K and $a_i \in H^0(\Sigma, K^{2i})$.



Can be adapted to study $SU(p, p)$ -Higgs bundles...

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH II

SPECTRAL DATA FOR $U(p, p)$ -HIGGS BUNDLES (thesis)

There is a one to one correspondence between $U(p, p)$ -Higgs bundles $(V \oplus W, \Phi)$ on Σ with $\deg V > \deg W$ and non-singular spectral curve, and triples (\bar{S}, U_1, D) where

- $\bar{\rho} : \bar{S} \rightarrow \Sigma$ is an irreducible non-singular p -cover of Σ in the total space of K with equation

$$\xi^p + a_1 \xi^{p-1} + \dots + a_{p-1} \xi + a_p = 0,$$

for $a_i \in H^0(\Sigma, K^{2i})$, and ξ the tautological section of $\bar{\rho}^* K^2$.

- U_1 is a line bundle on \bar{S} whose degree is

$$\deg U_1 = \deg V + (2p^2 - 2p)(g - 1)$$

- D is a positive subdivisor of the divisor of a_p of degree

$$\tilde{m} = \deg W - \deg V + 2p(g - 1).$$

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH II

SPECTRAL DATA FOR $U(p, p)$ -HIGGS BUNDLES: THE INVARIANTS

Since $\sigma^*M \cong M$ then

$$H^0(\rho^{-1}(\mathcal{U}), M) = H^0(\rho^{-1}(\mathcal{U}), M)^+ \oplus H^0(\rho^{-1}(\mathcal{U}), M)^-$$

$$h^+ := \dim H^0(\rho^{-1}(\mathcal{U}), M)^+ = \dim H^0(\mathcal{U}, V),$$

$$h^- := \dim H^0(\rho^{-1}(\mathcal{U}), M)^- = \dim H^0(\mathcal{U}, W).$$

Use the L_σ Lefschetz number [Atiyah-Bott 1968] associated to the involution σ on S

$$L_\sigma = \sum (-1)^q \text{trace } \sigma|_{H^{0,q}(M)} = \text{trace } \sigma|_{H^0(M)} = h^+ - h^-$$

$$L_\sigma = \frac{(-\tilde{m}) + (4p(g-1) - \tilde{m})}{2} = 2p(g-1) - \tilde{m}.$$

$$\deg U_1 = v + (2p^2 - 2p)(g-1) = \frac{\deg M}{2} - \frac{\tilde{m}}{2},$$

$$\deg U_2 = w + (2p^2 - 2p)(g-1) = \frac{\deg M}{2} + \frac{\tilde{m}}{2} - 2p(g-1).$$

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH III

NO INTERSECTION OF $\mathcal{M}_{G^c}^\Theta$ WITH THE SMOOTH FIBRES

What kind of curve does $\text{char}(\Phi)$ define for a G -Higgs field Φ ?

Generically, a reducible curve for $G = Sp(2p, 2p), SU(p, q), \dots (p \neq q)$

Definition

An $Sp(2p, 2p)$ -Higgs bundle is a pair $(V \oplus W, \Phi)$ for V and W rank $2p$ symplectic vector bundles, and the Higgs field

$$\Phi = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \beta \\ \gamma & 0 \end{pmatrix} \text{ for } \begin{cases} \beta : W \rightarrow V \otimes K \\ \gamma : V \rightarrow W \otimes K \end{cases} \quad \text{and } \boxed{\beta = -\gamma^T},$$

for γ^T the symplectic transpose of γ .

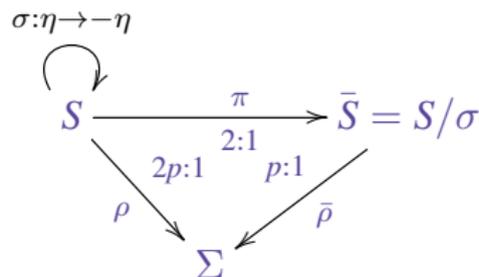
$$\det(x - \Phi) = (x^{2p} + a_1 x^{2p-2} + \dots + a_{p-1} x^2 + a_p)^2$$

Note this is the case of $SU^*(2p)$ and $SO^*(2p)$,
current work w/ N. Hitchin to appear soon.

SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH III

TOWARDS THE SPECTRAL DATA FOR $Sp(2p, 2p)$ -HIGGS BUNDLES

- Smooth S given by $\eta^{2p} + a_1\eta^{2p-2} + \dots + a_{p-1}\eta^2 + a_p = 0$;
- Smooth \bar{S} given by $\xi^p + a_1\xi^{p-1} + \dots + a_{p-1}\xi + a_p = 0$ for $\xi = \eta^2$;
for η tautological section of ρ^*K and $a_i \in H^0(\Sigma, K^{2i})$



SPECTRAL DATA APPROACH III

SPECTRAL DATA FOR $Sp(2p, 2p)$ -HIGGS BUNDLES (*thesis*)

There is a one to one correspondence between stable $Sp(2p, 2p)$ -Higgs bundle $(E = V \oplus W, \Phi)$ on Σ for which $\text{char}(\Phi)^{1/2} = 0$ defines a smooth curve, and the spectral data (S, M) where

- (a) the curve $\rho : S \rightarrow \Sigma$ is a smooth $2p$ -fold cover with equation

$$\eta^{2p} + a_1\eta^{2p-2} + \dots + a_{p-1}\eta^2 + a_p = 0,$$

in the total space of K , where $a_i \in H^0(\Sigma, K^{2i})$, and η is the tautological section of ρ^*K . The curve S has a natural involution σ acting by $\eta \mapsto -\eta$;

- (b) M is a rank 2 vector bundle on S with $\Lambda^2 M \cong \rho^*K^{-2p+1}$, and such that $\sigma^*M \cong M$. Over the fixed points of the involution, the vector bundle M is acted on by σ with eigenvalues $+1$ and -1 .

APPLICATIONS

CONNECTIVITY FOR $\mathcal{M}_{U(p,p)}$

$U(p,p)$ -Higgs bundle of fixed degree $\sim (\bar{S}, U_1, D)$ with fixed $\deg M$.

- The choice of D lies in the symmetric product $S^{\tilde{m}}\Sigma$;
- Together with a section s of $K^{2p}[-D]$ with distinct zeros, D gives the map $a_p \in H^0(\Sigma, K^{2p})$;
- The choice of a_p lies in a vector bundle of rank $(4p - 1)(g - 1) - \tilde{m}$ over $S^{\tilde{m}}\Sigma$, whose total space is \mathcal{E} ; There is a natural map

$$\alpha : \mathcal{E} \rightarrow H^0(\Sigma, K^{2p})$$

- The choice of \bar{S} is given by a point in a Zariski open \mathcal{A} in

$$H^0(\Sigma, K^{2p}) \oplus \bigoplus_{i=1}^{p-1} H^0(\Sigma, K^{2i});$$

- The choice of U_1 is given by a fibration of Jacobians $\mathcal{J}ac$ over \mathcal{A} ;

APPLICATIONS

CONNECTIVITY FOR $\mathcal{M}_{U(p,p)}$ (thesis)

Each pair of invariants (m, \tilde{m}) labels exactly one connected component of $\mathcal{M}_{U(p,p)}$ which intersects the non-singular fibres of the Hitchin fibration

$$\mathcal{M}_{GL(2p,\mathbb{C})} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_{GL(2p,\mathbb{C})}.$$

This component is given by the fibration of $\alpha^* \mathcal{J}ac$ over a Zariski open subset in

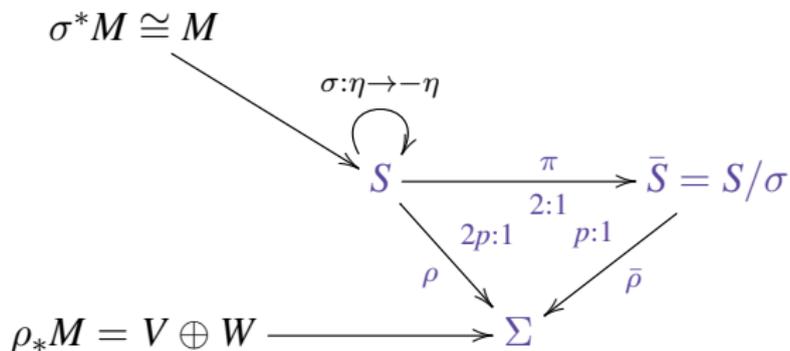
$$\mathcal{E} \oplus \bigoplus_{i=1}^{p-1} H^0(\Sigma, K^{2i}).$$

$\mathcal{M}_{U(p,q)}$ via Morse theory by Bradlow–García-Prada– Gothen ‘02

APPLICATIONS

CONNECTIVITY FOR $\mathcal{M}_{Sp(2p,2p)}$

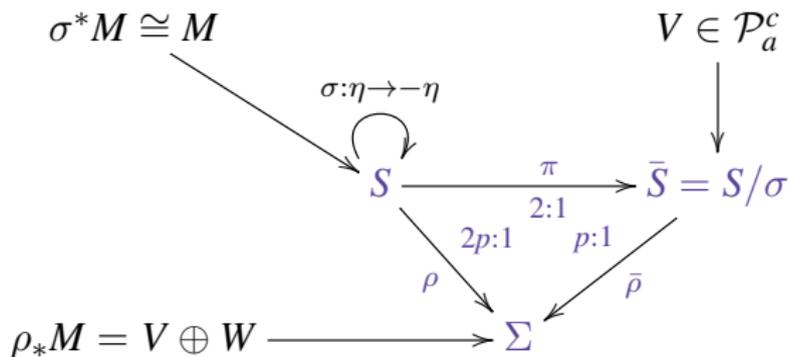
$Sp(2p, 2p)$ -Higgs bundles with smooth spectral curve $\sim (S, M)$ for M rank 2 vector bundle with $\Lambda^2 M \cong \rho^* K^{-2p+1}$ and conditions on $\sigma^* M \cong M$.



APPLICATIONS

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APPLICATIONS

CONNECTIVITY FOR $\mathcal{M}_{Sp(2p,2p)}$

$Sp(2p, 2p)$ -Higgs bundles with smooth spectral curve $\sim (S, M)$ for M rank 2 vector bundle with $\Lambda^2 M \cong \rho^* K^{-2p+1}$ and conditions on $\sigma^* M \cong M$.

- $\mathcal{N}^\sigma =$ fixed point set of σ in the moduli space of stable rank 2 vector bundles of determinant $\rho^* K^{2p-1}$;
- \mathcal{P}_a the moduli space parabolic rank 2 vector bundles on \bar{S} whose marked points are the fixed points of the involution σ , whose weights are $1/2$ and whose flag is by the distinguished eigenspaces corresponding to the eigenvalue -1 of σ [Andersen-Grove 2006];
 - Vector bundles in \mathcal{P}_a are stable [Nitsure 86];
 - $\mathcal{P}_a = \mathcal{P}_a^+ \sqcup \mathcal{P}_a^c$ through a natural involution on \mathcal{P}_a ;
 - \mathcal{P}_a^c is connected [Nitsure 86];

The choice of M is given by an element in

$$\mathcal{N}^\sigma \cong \mathcal{P}_a^c$$

APPLICATIONS

CONNECTIVITY FOR $\mathcal{M}_{Sp(2p,2p)}$ (thesis)

The space $\mathcal{M}_{Sp(2p,2p)}^s$ is given by the fibration of \mathcal{P}_a^c , over a Zariski open set in the space

$$\bigoplus_{i=1}^p H^0(\Sigma, K^{2i}).$$

$\mathcal{M}_{Sp(2p,2q)}$ via Morse Theory by García-Prada–Oliveira ‘12

APPLICATIONS

TOPOLOGICAL INVARIANTS

Milnor-Wood type inequalities for the Toledo invariant $\tau(v, w)$ associated to G -Higgs bundles appear naturally from the spectral data...

- $U(p, p)$ -Higgs bundles, for which $\tau(v, w) = v - w$
 - The invariant $\tilde{m} = w - v + 2p(g - 1)$ is the number of fixed points of σ with certain property.
 - Fixed points of σ are zeros of $a_p \in H^0(\Sigma, K^{2p})$, thus

$$0 \leq w - v + 2p(g - 1) \leq 4p(g - 1)$$

$$|\tau(v, w)| = |v - w| \leq 2p(g - 1)$$

- $SU(p, p)$ -Higgs bundles, for which $\tau(v, w) = v = -w$
 - Methods for $U(p, p)$ can be adapted, and we get

$$|\tau(v, w)| = |v| \leq p(g - 1)$$

- Also for $Sp(2n, \mathbb{R})$, $Sp(2p, 2p)$... **and possibly others?**

Thank you for listening!