

# A NOTE ON THE EQUALITY OF ALGEBRAIC AND GEOMETRIC D-BRANE CHARGES IN WZW MODELS

PETER BOUWKNEGT AND DAVID RIDOUT

ABSTRACT. The algebraic definition of charges for symmetry-preserving D-branes in Wess-Zumino-Witten models is shown to coincide with the geometric definition, for all simple Lie groups. The charge group for such branes is computed from the ambiguities inherent in the geometric definition.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We consider symmetry-preserving D-branes in a Wess-Zumino-Witten model on a compact, connected, simply-connected, simple Lie group  $G$ . Let  $T$  be a maximal torus, and let  $\mathfrak{g}$  and  $\mathfrak{t}$  be the respective Lie algebras. Classically, the symmetry-preserving D-branes of the WZW model on  $G$  at level  $k$  coincide, as submanifolds, with certain conjugacy classes. The quantised classes are in bijection with the integrable highest weight modules at level  $k$  of the associated affine Lie algebra  $\hat{\mathfrak{g}}$ .

Every conjugacy class intersects any chosen maximal torus in a finite number of points. If  $h \in T$  is such a point for a conjugacy class corresponding to a (symmetry-preserving) D-brane, then we may identify the brane manifold with  $G/Z$ , embedded in  $G$ , where  $Z$  is the centraliser of  $h$  [1]. When  $h$  is a regular element,  $Z = T$ , and we will call the brane regular. These are the symmetry-preserving branes of maximal dimension, and correspond to weights (via the exponential map) in the interior of the affine fundamental alcove<sup>1</sup> (at level  $k$ ). When  $h$  is singular,  $Z \supset T$ , and we refer to these (lower dimensional) branes as singular. They correspond to weights on the boundary of the fundamental alcove.

There are at least two types of definition of D-brane charge in the literature. In [2], Fredenhagen and Schomerus introduced what we shall refer to as the algebraic definition, based on the conformal field theory approach “coupled” with renormalisation flow methods. If  $\hat{\lambda}$  is the highest weight of the integrable highest weight module labelling a D-brane, then their definition amounts to the charge

$$Q_{\text{alg}}(\lambda) = \dim L(\lambda), \quad (1.1)$$

where  $L(\lambda)$  is the irreducible highest weight module of  $\mathfrak{g}$  with (dominant integral) highest weight  $\lambda$ , the projection of  $\hat{\lambda}$  onto the weight space  $\mathfrak{t}^*$  of the horizontal subalgebra. To be precise, their charge is this dimension modulo some integer which needs to be determined from the fusion rules. This integer was determined in [2, 3] for symmetry-preserving branes in (supersymmetric) WZW models on  $SU(n)$ , and for the other simple Lie groups in [4]. For instance, such branes on  $SU(2)$  admit charges valued modulo  $k + 2$ . This charge definition

---

PB is financially supported by the Australian Research Council, and DR would like to thank La Trobe University for hospitality during various stages of this project.

<sup>1</sup>To be precise, we mean the simplex in  $\mathfrak{t}^*$  corresponding to the affine fundamental alcove.

appears to fit in nicely with the notion that D-brane charges should be classified by twisted K-theory, in that the charge groups are in agreement with the relevant K-theoretic results which are presently known [3, 5, 6].

By contrast, the geometric definition is a little more involved, and we shall review its construction, and a little of its history, in Section 2. We take some care with this construction, in particular with the “U(1) flux”, so as to isolate the ambiguities involved in defining the geometric brane charge. In Section 3, we compute geometric charges for the regular branes in  $SU(3)$  in order to provide a non-trivial example (that is, not  $SU(2)$ ) showing that the geometric charge coincides with the algebraic charge. This obviously suggests that the algebraic and geometric charges might coincide for all (simple) groups. Section 4 is devoted to proving this. In Section 5, we return to the ambiguities in the geometric charge definition and investigate what this implies for D-brane charge groups.

## 2. GEOMETRIC CHARGES

WZW models come equipped with an integral 3-form  $H \in H^3(G; \mathbb{Z}) \cong \mathbb{Z}$  of period  $k$ , and each D-brane (labelled by  $\lambda$ ) comes with a 2-form  $\omega_\lambda \in \Omega^2(G/\mathbb{Z})$  whose derivative is  $H$  restricted to the D-brane [7]. Locally then  $H = dB$ , so  $F_\lambda = B - \omega_\lambda$  represents a degree-two cohomology class wherever it is defined.  $F_\lambda$  is sometimes referred to as the U(1) flux [9]. The coupling of the Ramond-Ramond fields in string theory [8, 9] then suggests a charge

$$Q'_{\text{geo}}(\lambda) = \int_{G/\mathbb{Z}} e^{F_\lambda}, \quad (2.1)$$

where the integration is over the entire brane  $G/\mathbb{Z}$ . This definition has been known for some time to require modification, and a careful analysis of certain quantum anomalies suggests the correct modification [10]. We will consider the modified charge shortly (Eqn. (2.3)), but first we would like to examine the 2-form  $F_\lambda$  in more detail.

For the case  $G = SU(2)$  whose D-brane charges have been computed many times [9, 11, 12], explicit calculations are elementary. However, in general, there is an issue regarding how one defines an appropriate  $B$  on the entire brane.  $H$  is exact there, but in the absence of further constraints on  $B$ , adding a closed form to any candidate  $B$  would allow us to produce any numerical value we like for the geometric charge.

Let us instead follow [11, 13] and note in that the standard procedure leading to brane quantisation, integers associated with each (allowed) brane naturally arise. These are the possible ambiguities in the action, and take the form

$$Q_{\text{amb}}(\lambda, S^2, M) = \int_M H - \int_{S^2} \omega_\lambda, \quad (2.2)$$

where  $S^2$  is an arbitrary 2-sphere in the brane and  $M$  is an arbitrary 3-chain whose boundary is  $S^2$ .

If one considers  $SU(2)$ , whose group manifold is a 3-sphere,  $S^2 = SU(2)/U(1)$  to be a regular brane<sup>2</sup>, and  $M$  to be a side of the 3-sphere bounded by the brane,  $Q_{\text{amb}}$  can be easily computed and is found to agree remarkably with the algebraic charge (to be precise, we find  $Q_{\text{alg}} - Q_{\text{amb}} = 1$ ). Moreover, if we take  $M$  to be the other side of the brane, then  $Q_{\text{amb}}$  changes by  $k$ , the period of  $H$  over the 3-sphere. With the usual quantum shift,  $k \rightarrow k + h^\vee$

---

<sup>2</sup>The argument extends trivially to singular branes by taking  $S^2$  to be a degenerate 2-sphere of zero radius.

( $h^\vee$  the dual Coxeter number of  $\mathfrak{g}$ ), we conclude that  $Q_{\text{amb}}$  is therefore defined modulo  $k+2$ , again in remarkable agreement with the algebraic result. It appears then that for  $\text{SU}(2)$ ,  $Q_{\text{amb}}$  defines a geometric charge for branes.

Eqn. (2.1) suggests that to generalise this to other groups, we need to trivialise  $H$ , and exponentiate. We shall do exactly this to define  $F_\lambda$ , and thus  $Q'_{\text{geo}}(\lambda)$ . Consider therefore the brane  $G/Z$ . When  $Z$  is the centraliser of a torus<sup>3</sup>, the homology of  $G/Z$  has no torsion and vanishes in odd degrees [15]. Choose a set  $\{S_i^2\}$  of generators of  $H_2(G/Z; \mathbb{Z})$  (we may take 2-spheres as generators by the Hurewicz isomorphism), and let  $M_i$  be a 3-chain whose boundary is  $S_i^2$  (since  $H_2(G; \mathbb{Z}) = 0$ , we may choose them to be 3-cells). As the brane generally has non-vanishing second homology group, the  $M_i$  are not usually contained within the brane. Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be the complex obtained by attaching each 3-cell  $M_i$  to the brane along each corresponding  $S_i^2$ . Then  $H_2(\mathcal{C}; \mathbb{Z})$  clearly vanishes, and the Mayer-Vietoris sequence for attaching [16] shows that  $H_3(\mathcal{C}; \mathbb{Z})$  vanishes also. As attaching 3-cells leaves the first homology group invariant, it follows from the universal coefficient theorem that  $\mathcal{C}$  has vanishing cohomology in degrees 2 and 3. Thus  $B$  may be defined on  $\mathcal{C}$ , so  $F_\lambda = B - \omega_\lambda$  is defined on the whole brane. Note we are free to add any closed 2-form on  $\mathcal{C}$  to  $B$ , but these are all exact on  $\mathcal{C}$ , hence exact on the brane. Thus  $F_\lambda$  is well-defined in cohomology, so  $Q'_{\text{geo}}(\lambda)$  is also well-defined<sup>4</sup>.

Note that  $Q_{\text{amb}}(\lambda, S_i^2, M_i)$  is just the period of  $F_\lambda$  over  $S_i^2$ . A little Morse theory suggests [17] that for the  $S_i^2$  we may take (translates of) certain conjugacy classes of  $\text{SU}(2)_{\alpha_i}$ , the embedded  $\text{SU}(2)$ -subgroups corresponding to the simple roots  $\alpha_i$ . The standard choice is now to take  $M_i$  to be one side of (the translated)  $\text{SU}(2)_{\alpha_i}$ , thus reducing the computation of  $Q_{\text{amb}}$  for general simple groups to the  $\text{SU}(2)$  case. This is a standard computation and gives

$$Q_{\text{amb}}(\lambda, S_i^2, M_i) = \langle \lambda, \alpha_i^\vee \rangle.$$

That is, the period of  $F_\lambda$  over the chosen homology generator  $S_i^2$  is just the Dynkin label  $\lambda_i$ .

As noted above, the algebraic and geometric charges are in close agreement for  $\text{SU}(2)$ . The computation for  $\text{SU}(3)$  does not seem to appear in the literature. It may be performed without fuss (for regular branes) using Schubert calculus, and we shall outline it in Section 3. We find that this time, the algebraic and (naïve) geometric charges differ by a non-constant amount, suggesting that the geometric charge needs modifying.

As noted above, such a modification was suggested in [10], based on the cancellation of quantum anomalies. There it was also shown that their modified charge has a natural K-theoretic interpretation. Their result, after specialising to the case we are interested in, amounts to

$$Q_{\text{geo}}(\lambda) = \int_{G/Z} e^{F_\lambda} \text{Td}(T(G/Z)), \quad (2.3)$$

where  $T(M)$  denotes the tangent bundle of the manifold  $M$ , and  $\text{Td}(E)$  denotes the Todd class of the vector bundle  $E$ .

In [12] this charge is computed for  $\text{SU}(2)$  and is found to exactly agree with the algebraic charge (no discrepancy of 1). In Section 3 we will extend this to regular branes in  $\text{SU}(3)$ , using Schubert calculus (although we need the Chern classes of the tangent bundle of the

---

<sup>3</sup>This is almost always true, as follows from a theorem of Steinberg [14]. In fact, at each level, there are at most  $n+1$  exceptions, where  $n$  is the rank of  $G$ . We are chiefly concerned with regular branes, and so we shall not consider these exceptions any further.

<sup>4</sup>Given  $\mathcal{C}$ —see Section 5.

brane manifold), and find again exact agreement. We therefore adopt this definition as our geometric brane charge. In Section 4, we will prove that the algebraic and geometric charges coincide for all simple Lie groups (but without invoking any Schubert theory).

### 3. $SU(3)$ CALCULATIONS

We now digress to perform a couple of computations regarding regular brane charges in  $SU(3)$  using the technology of Schubert calculus [18]. This approach is convenient as the brane manifolds are examples of (complete) flag manifolds. The independent homology cycles of the regular branes  $SU(3)/U(1)^2$ , called Schubert cells, are labelled by the elements of the Weyl group,  $W = S_3$ , of  $SU(3)$ . The 2-spheres  $S_i^2$  associated with the simple roots  $\alpha_i$  (considered in Section 2), in fact correspond to the simple reflections  $w_i$ .

The computational utility of Schubert calculus becomes apparent when we take Poincaré duals and consider the cohomology ring. The Schubert cell  $X_w \in H_{\ell(w)}(SU(3)/U(1)^2; \mathbb{Z})$  corresponding to  $w \in S_3$  ( $\ell(w)$  is the length of  $w$ ) has Poincaré dual denoted by  $p_{w_0 w} \in H^{\ell(w_0 w)}(SU(3)/U(1)^2; \mathbb{Z})$ , where  $w_0 = w_1 w_2 w_1 = w_2 w_1 w_2$  is the longest element of  $S_3$ . In turn, the  $p_w$  may be expressed as polynomials (called Schubert polynomials) in certain generators  $x_1, x_2 \in H^2(SU(3)/U(1)^2; \mathbb{Z})$ . These generators are chosen to be naturally permuted by  $S_3$ . To be specific, we have in the usual representation,

$$\begin{aligned} p_e &= 1 & p_{w_1} &= x_1 & p_{w_2} &= x_1 + x_2 \\ p_{w_1 w_2} &= x_1 x_2 & p_{w_2 w_1} &= x_1^2 & p_{w_1 w_2 w_1} &= x_1^2 x_2. \end{aligned}$$

Finally, we also need the cohomology ring of  $SU(3)/U(1)^2$  which is a special case of a famous result of Borel:

$$H^*(SU(3)/U(1)^2; \mathbb{Z}) \cong \frac{\mathbb{Z}[x_1, x_2]}{\langle x_1^2 + x_1 x_2 + x_2^2, x_1^3 \rangle}.$$

The general result (Theorem 1) will be important in Section 4. Note that the  $p_w$  given above generate the integral cohomology of  $SU(3)/U(1)^2$ .

We will compute both  $Q'_{\text{geo}}(\lambda)$  and  $Q_{\text{geo}}(\lambda)$  for regular branes in  $SU(3)$ . First, we determine  $F_\lambda$  in terms of the Schubert basis. We have

$$\lambda_1 = \int_{X_{w_1}} F_\lambda = \int_{SU(3)/U(1)^2} F_\lambda \wedge p_{w_1 w_2} = \int_{SU(3)/U(1)^2} F_\lambda \wedge x_1 x_2$$

and similarly,  $\lambda_2 = \int_{SU(3)/U(1)^2} F_\lambda \wedge x_1^2$ . A little algebra now gives

$$F_\lambda = (\lambda_1 + \lambda_2) x_1 + \lambda_2 x_2.$$

Hence, making much use of the form of the cohomology ring,

$$Q'_{\text{geo}}(\lambda) = \frac{1}{3!} \int_{SU(3)/U(1)^2} F_\lambda^3 = \frac{1}{2} (\lambda_1^2 \lambda_2 + \lambda_1 \lambda_2^2), \quad (3.1)$$

which is not equal to the dimension of the irreducible representation with highest weight  $\lambda$ .

We therefore turn to the computation of  $Q_{\text{geo}}(\lambda)$ . For  $E$  a complex vector bundle, the homogeneous components,  $Td_n(E)$ , of the Todd class  $Td(E)$  can be expressed as polynomials

(the Todd polynomials) in the Chern classes,  $c_i(E)$ , of  $E$ . The first few are [19]:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Td}_0(E) &= 1 & \text{Td}_1(E) &= \frac{1}{2}c_1(E) \\ \text{Td}_2(E) &= \frac{1}{12} [c_1(E)^2 + c_2(E)] & \text{Td}_3(E) &= \frac{1}{24}c_1(E)c_2(E). \end{aligned}$$

The contributing part of the integrand of  $Q_{\text{geo}}(\lambda)$  is therefore

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Td}_3(E) + \text{Td}_2(E)F_\lambda + \frac{1}{2}\text{Td}_1(E)F_\lambda^2 + \frac{1}{3!}\text{Td}_0(E)F_\lambda^3 \\ = \frac{1}{24}c_1(E)c_2(E) + \frac{1}{12}[c_1(E)^2 + c_2(E)]F_\lambda + \frac{1}{4}c_1(E)F_\lambda^2 + \frac{1}{6}F_\lambda^3, \end{aligned}$$

where  $E = T(\text{SU}(3)/\text{U}(1)^2)$ , considered as a complex vector bundle.

Evidently we need the Chern classes of this tangent bundle. These may be computed using a result of Borel and Hirzebruch which we shall use in Section 4 (Theorem 2). We leave it as an easy exercise to show from this result that<sup>5</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} c_1(T(\text{SU}(3)/\text{U}(1)^2)) &= 4x_1 + 2x_2 \\ \text{and } c_2(T(\text{SU}(3)/\text{U}(1)^2)) &= 6x_1^2 + 6x_1x_2. \end{aligned}$$

It immediately follows that

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{24}c_1(E)c_2(E) &= x_1^2x_2, \\ \frac{1}{12}[c_1(E)^2 + c_2(E)]F_\lambda &= \frac{3}{2}(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2)x_1^2x_2, \\ \frac{1}{4}c_1(E)F_\lambda^2 &= \frac{1}{2}(\lambda_1^2 + 4\lambda_1\lambda_2 + \lambda_2^2)x_1^2x_2, \end{aligned}$$

and from Eqn. (3.1) that

$$\frac{1}{6}F_\lambda^3 = \frac{1}{2}(\lambda_1^2\lambda_2 + \lambda_1\lambda_2^2)x_1^2x_2.$$

Thus, the geometric charge is

$$\begin{aligned} Q_{\text{geo}}(\lambda) &= \int_{\text{SU}(3)/\text{U}(1)^2} \left[ 1 + \frac{3}{2}(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2) + \frac{1}{2}(\lambda_1^2 + 4\lambda_1\lambda_2 + \lambda_2^2) + \frac{1}{2}(\lambda_1^2\lambda_2 + \lambda_1\lambda_2^2) \right] x_1^2x_2 \\ &= \frac{1}{2}(\lambda_1 + 1)(\lambda_2 + 1)(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + 2) = \dim L(\lambda). \end{aligned}$$

So the algebraic and geometric charges agree in this case.

---

<sup>5</sup>Note that  $c_3(T(\text{SU}(3)/\text{U}(1)^2)) = 6x_1^2x_2$  is elementary, but is not required for this calculation.

#### 4. PROOF: THE CHARGES COINCIDE GENERALLY

We now prove that the charges  $Q_{\text{alg}}(\lambda)$  and  $Q_{\text{geo}}(\lambda)$  in fact coincide for symmetry-preserving WZW D-branes in compact, connected, simply-connected, simple Lie groups. Actually, for the purposes of clarity, we will only prove this for regular branes. The computation itself is also essentially contained in [20], though there the motivation is of course purely mathematical.. The extension to singular branes is left as an exercise for the interested reader.

The proof is based on two results which were alluded to in Section 3, one due to Borel [21], and the other to Borel and Hirzebruch [22]. Before presenting these results, it is convenient to introduce a formalism in which brane cohomology is interpreted in terms of Lie-theoretic data. We have a natural sequence of isomorphisms,

$$H_2(G/T; \mathbb{Z}) \cong \pi_1(T) \cong \ker \{\exp : t \rightarrow T\} = Q^\vee,$$

where the first is transgression composed with the isomorphism between  $H_1(T; \mathbb{Z})$  and  $\pi_1(T)$ , or alternatively, Hurewicz composed with the isomorphism from the homotopy long exact sequence, and  $Q^\vee$  is the coroot (integral) lattice of  $\mathfrak{g}$ . It follows now that in a very natural sense,

$$H^2(G/T; \mathbb{Z}) = \text{Hom}(H_2(G/T; \mathbb{Z}), \mathbb{Z}) \cong (Q^\vee)^* = P,$$

where  $P$  is the weight lattice of  $\mathfrak{g}$ .

Thus we may say that the fundamental weights generate the second cohomology group of the regular branes. With this formalism, Borel's famous result on the cohomology of  $G/T$  is:

**Theorem 1** ([21]). *Let  $\Lambda_i$  denote the fundamental weights of  $G$  (simple of rank  $r$ ), and  $W$  denote the Weyl group of  $G$ . Then the rational cohomology ring of  $G/T$  is generated by the  $\Lambda_i$  (and the unit) modulo the  $W$ -invariant polynomials of positive degree. Specifically,*

$$H^*(G/T; \mathbb{Q}) = \frac{\mathbb{Q}[\Lambda_1, \dots, \Lambda_r]}{\mathcal{I}_+},$$

where  $\mathcal{I}_+$  is the ideal generated by the  $W$ -invariants of positive degree.

When the cohomology of  $G$  has no torsion, that is  $G = \text{SU}(r+1)$  or  $\text{Sp}(2r)$ , then the result also holds over the integers.

The other result concerns the characteristic classes of the tangent bundle to  $G/T$ . Via the splitting principle [16], this bundle (treated as a complex vector bundle) is cohomologically equivalent to a direct sum of line bundles. The Chern classes of the bundle are then the elementary symmetric polynomials in the first Chern classes of the associated line bundles.

**Theorem 2** ([22]). *With the above formalism, the first Chern classes of the line bundles associated to  $T(G/T)$  under the splitting principle, are the positive roots of  $G$ . Thus if  $\Delta_+$  denotes the set of positive roots, the total Chern class of  $T(G/T)$  is given by*

$$c(T(G/T)) = \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} (1 + \alpha).$$

We can now show that the algebraic and geometric charges coincide. First however, note the beautiful interpretation of the cohomology class of our 2-form  $F_\lambda$  in this formalism.

As the periods of this form are just the Dynkin labels and the fundamental weights are generators of  $H^2(G/T; \mathbb{Z})$ , it follows that in this formalism,  $F_\lambda$  is identified with  $\lambda$ .

Consider the integrand of the geometric charge. We have [19]

$$\begin{aligned} e^\lambda Td(T(G/T)) &= e^\lambda \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \frac{\alpha}{1 - e^{-\alpha}} = e^\lambda \frac{\prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} e^{\alpha/2}}{\prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} (e^{\alpha/2} - e^{-\alpha/2})} \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha \\ &= \frac{e^{\lambda + \rho}}{\prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} (e^{\alpha/2} - e^{-\alpha/2})} \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha, \end{aligned}$$

where  $\rho = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha$  is the Weyl vector of  $G$ .

Note that  $\prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha$  is cohomologically non-trivial, for it is the top Chern class:

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{G/T} \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha &= \int_{G/T} c_m(T(G/T)) = \int_{G/T} e(T(G/T)) \\ &= \chi(G/T) = |W|, \end{aligned}$$

the last equality from the fact that the odd Betti numbers vanish and the homology classes are in correspondence with  $W$  [17]. Here  $m = |\Delta_+|$  (so  $\dim G = 2m + r$ ),  $e(E)$  is the Euler class of  $E$  and  $\chi(M)$  is the Euler characteristic of  $M$ .

Now the only component of the integrand which contributes is that in  $H^{2m}(G/T; \mathbb{R})$ . Since  $\prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha$  generates this cohomology group, we should only have to consider the degree-zero term in the prefactor

$$\frac{e^\lambda}{\prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} (1 - e^{-\alpha})}.$$

This prefactor, as a function on  $t$ , has a pole of order  $m$  at the origin, and so it is not straight-forward to extract its degree-zero term. However, we recognise this as the character of the Verma module for  $\mathfrak{g}$  of highest weight  $\lambda$ . This is an infinite-dimensional module, hence the non-analytic behaviour. Finite-dimensional modules, on the other hand, have characters which are analytic everywhere.

With this in mind, let us note that the product of the roots is anti-invariant under  $W$ :

$$w \left( \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha \right) = (-1)^{\ell(w)} \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha = \det w \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha.$$

As  $G/T$  is  $W$ -invariant (up to a change in orientation), we have

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{G/T} e^\lambda \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \frac{\alpha}{1 - e^{-\alpha}} &= \det w \int_{G/T} w \left( e^{\lambda + \rho} \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \frac{\alpha}{e^{\alpha/2} - e^{-\alpha/2}} \right) \\ &= \det w \int_{G/T} e^{w(\lambda + \rho) - \rho} \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \frac{\alpha}{1 - e^{-\alpha}}. \end{aligned}$$

We may therefore write

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{G/T} e^\lambda \operatorname{Td}(T(G/T)) &= \frac{1}{|W|} \int_{G/T} \sum_{w \in W} \det w e^{w(\lambda+\rho)-\rho} \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \frac{\alpha}{1-e^{-\alpha}} \\ &= \frac{1}{|W|} \int_{G/T} \chi_\lambda \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha, \end{aligned}$$

where we recognise Weyl's character formula for the character,  $\chi_\lambda$ , of the irreducible module  $L(\lambda)$  with highest weight  $\lambda$ . As we now have a finite-dimensional module, extracting the degree-zero term is trivial. Obviously,

$$\begin{aligned} Q_{\text{geo}}(\lambda) &= \frac{1}{|W|} \int_{G/T} \chi_\lambda \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha = \frac{\dim L(\lambda)}{|W|} \int_{G/T} \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \alpha \\ &= \dim L(\lambda) = Q_{\text{alg}}(\lambda), \end{aligned}$$

which completes the proof.

It is interesting to observe that in the integrand,

$$e^{\lambda+\rho} \prod_{\alpha \in \Delta_+} \frac{\alpha}{e^{\alpha/2} - e^{-\alpha/2}},$$

the product is  $W$ -invariant, and so by Theorem 1, it is cohomologically equivalent to its zero-degree term. Therefore, we may replace the product by a constant, which is easily seen to be in fact 1. It follows that for our regular branes, the geometric charge in fact reduces to

$$Q_{\text{geo}}(\lambda) = \int_{G/T} e^{\lambda+\rho}.$$

That is, the naïve geometric charge is only altered by the quantum shift  $\lambda \rightarrow \lambda + \rho$ . Therefore, we have the satisfying conclusion that the modified geometric charge of [10], in this special case, reduces to the “naïve” charge of [8] *after quantisation is taken into account*. One can of course check that the computation in Section 3 is consistent with this observation.

## 5. CHARGE GROUP CONSTRAINTS

Let us briefly review the constraints on the charge group derived from the algebraic theory. These charges were considered with regard to brane condensation processes in [2]. There, a formal analogy with the Kondo model of condensed matter physics was exploited to suggest charge conservation conditions of the form

$$Q_{\text{alg}}(\lambda) Q_{\text{alg}}(\mu) = \sum_{\nu} \mathcal{N}_{\lambda\mu}^{\nu} Q_{\text{alg}}(\nu), \quad (5.1)$$

where  $\mathcal{N}_{\lambda\mu}^{\nu}$  denotes the fusion coefficients of the WZW theory (we assume symmetry-preserving branes for simplicity). These conditions are not usually satisfied over the integers, and instead are interpreted as holding in the charge group of the symmetry-preserving branes, which is of the form  $\mathbb{Z}_x$ . Under the assumption that these constraints are exhaustive, the

integer  $x$  was thereby determined for  $SU(n)$  in [2, 3], and general simple Lie groups  $G$  in [4] as

$$x = \frac{k + h^\vee}{\gcd\{k + h^\vee, y\}}, \quad (5.2)$$

where  $y \in \mathbb{Z}$  depends only on  $G$  and is explicitly given in Table 1 of [4] (recall  $k$  is the level and  $h^\vee$  the dual Coxeter number of  $\mathfrak{g}$ ). Subsequently [5], the computation of the relevant K-theories was reduced to a point where it could be directly compared with the formalism of [4], showing why the two approaches should agree. This relied heavily on the theorem of Freed, Hopkins and Teleman [24, 6] which says that twisted equivariant K-theory is in fact the fusion algebra.

Consider now the geometric definition of brane charge. We have labelled our brane by a weight  $\lambda$  which lies in the affine fundamental Weyl alcove, and shown that the charge is given by  $\dim L(\lambda)$ . This labelling arises [23] from the fact that symmetry-preserving branes correspond to conjugacy classes through some  $h \in T$ , where (after quantisation)  $h = \exp\{2\pi i y\}$ , and  $y \in \mathfrak{t}$  is given as the image of  $(\lambda + \rho)/(k + h^\vee)$  under the canonical isomorphism  $\mathfrak{t} \cong \mathfrak{t}^*$ . Insisting that  $\lambda$  belong to the affine fundamental alcove fixes it uniquely, which is why we use it to label our brane, but it is clear that there are choices being made here. Indeed, a cursory examination of Sections 2 and 4 should convince the reader that there is no reason why  $\lambda$  must be taken in the affine fundamental alcove.

First,  $h \in T$ , and therefore  $y \in \mathfrak{t}$ , is only determined up to the action of  $W$ . Hence  $\lambda \in \mathfrak{t}^*$  is ambiguous up to the shifted action of  $W$ ,  $w \cdot \lambda = w(\lambda + \rho) - \rho$ . It follows that for the geometric charge to be well-defined, we must have<sup>6</sup>

$$\dim L(\lambda) = \det w \dim L(w \cdot \lambda) \quad (5.3)$$

for each integral  $\lambda$  in the fundamental alcove, and each  $w \in W$ . The  $\det w$  factor arises as  $w$  may reverse the orientation of the brane manifold. It is an easy exercise to prove that Eqn. (5.3) is always satisfied (over  $\mathbb{Z}$ ).

Next,  $\exp : \mathfrak{t} \rightarrow T$  is not injective, hence  $h \in T$  only determines  $y \in \mathfrak{t}$  up to the integral lattice, which is the coroot lattice  $Q^\vee$  (since  $G$  is simply-connected). Thus  $\lambda$  is also ambiguous up to translations by  $(k + h^\vee)$  times the coroot lattice. Together with the first ambiguity, we therefore find that  $\lambda$  is only determined up to the shifted action of the *affine* Weyl group (at level  $k$ ),  $\widehat{W}_k$ . Hence for the geometric charge to be well-defined,

$$\dim L(\lambda) = \det \widehat{w} \dim L(\widehat{w} \cdot \lambda), \quad (5.4)$$

for all integral  $\lambda$  in the fundamental alcove (and hence all integral  $\lambda$ ), and each  $\widehat{w} \in \widehat{W}_k$ . These relations do not hold in general over  $\mathbb{Z}$  and should be interpreted as constraints on the charge group  $\mathbb{Z}_x$ .

Recall that the affine Weyl group is used to compute the fusion coefficients via the Kac-Walton formula [25, 26]

$${\mathcal N}_{\lambda\mu}{}^\nu = \sum_{\substack{\widehat{w} \in \widehat{W}_k \\ \widehat{w} \cdot \nu \in P_+}} \det \widehat{w} N_{\lambda\mu}{}^{\widehat{w}\cdot\nu},$$

---

<sup>6</sup>Of course we must extend  $\dim$ , in the obvious way, as a polynomial form on  $\mathfrak{t}^*$ . The expression  $L(\lambda)$  is not to be taken literally if  $\lambda$  is outside the fundamental chamber.

where  $N_{\lambda\mu}^{\nu}$  are the tensor-product multiplicities ( $L(\lambda) \otimes L(\mu) \cong \bigoplus_{\nu} N_{\lambda\mu}^{\nu} L(\nu)$ ) and  $\mathsf{P}_+$  is the set of dominant integral weights. It therefore seems reasonable to compare the charge groups obtained from the constraints (5.4) with those of (5.1).

For  $\mathsf{G} = \mathsf{SU}(2)$  at level  $k$ , (5.4) admits the charge group<sup>7</sup>  $\mathbb{Z}_{2(k+2)}$ , whereas (5.1) gives  $\mathbb{Z}_{k+2}$ . Numerical computations for the other groups (low ranks and levels) suggest that in fact the constraints (5.4) reproduce exactly the charge groups computed in [4], except for  $\mathsf{Sp}(2n)$ ,  $n$  a power of 2 (note that  $\mathsf{SU}(2) = \mathsf{Sp}(2)$ ). As one would expect, the exceptions noted there are not reproduced<sup>8</sup>. When these charge groups disagree, (5.4) gives  $\mathbb{Z}_x$  where  $x$  is twice what Eqn. (5.2) predicts. This appears to be due to fixed points of the  $\widehat{W}_k$ -action. For instance, a weight  $\lambda$  on the boundary of the (shifted) affine alcove is fixed by some reflection  $\widehat{w} \in \widehat{W}_k$ . This leads to a constraint

$$2 \dim L(\lambda) = 0 \mod x,$$

allowing this dimension to be non-zero in  $\mathbb{Z}_x$  if  $x$  is even, whereas in the fusion ring, boundary weights vanish.

There is still another ambiguity we have not accounted for yet. Recall in Section 2 that we constructed a complex  $\mathcal{C}$  by attaching 3-cells to  $\mathsf{G}/\mathsf{T}$  (for regular branes) along a basis of homology 2-spheres. The 3-cells correspond to “halves” of translated  $\mathsf{SU}(2)$ -subgroups of  $\mathsf{G}$ , and are essentially chosen so that the periods of  $F_{\lambda}$  could be easily computed. However, we may attach any 3-chains, with the correct boundaries, that we like (in particular we could choose either half of the  $\mathsf{SU}(2)$ -subgroups). Whilst this will change  $\mathcal{C}$ , the periods of  $F_{\lambda}$  can only change by a multiple of  $(k + h^\vee)$ . As  $F_{\lambda}$  is identified with  $\lambda$  in the formalism of section 4, we conclude that for the purposes of  $Q_{\text{geo}}(\lambda)$ ,  $\lambda$  is ambiguous up to translations by  $(k + h^\vee)$  times the weight lattice  $\mathsf{P}$  (for  $\mathsf{Z} = \mathsf{T}$ ; generally, only translations by a sublattice). That is, for the geometric charge to be well-defined, we must have

$$\dim L(\lambda) = \dim L(\lambda + (k + h^\vee)\mu), \quad (5.5)$$

for all  $\lambda, \mu \in P$ . Note that as  $Q^\vee \subseteq P$ , the constraints (5.5) are stronger than (5.4).

For  $\mathsf{SU}(2)$ , we recover from these stronger constraints the correct charge group  $\mathbb{Z}_{k+2}$ . In fact, this ambiguity is what was used in [12, 13] to compute this charge group. Numerical computations for the other groups indicate that these constraints (5.5) also reproduce exactly the charge groups of [4], except for  $\mathsf{Sp}(2n)$ , this time for  $n$  not a power of 2 (now  $x$  may be half of what (5.2) predicts). These weight lattice charge groups were also investigated in [4] in the context of symmetries of the charges obtained from (5.1). Specifically, it was observed there that these charges displayed symmetries corresponding to weight lattice translations for all groups except  $\mathsf{Sp}(2n)$ ,  $n$  not a power of 2, and moreover, by imposing such symmetries on  $\mathsf{Sp}(2n)$ , one finds an aesthetically pleasing universal formula for the integer  $y$  of Eqn. (5.2), namely

$$y = \text{lcm}\{1, 2, \dots, h - 1\},$$

---

<sup>7</sup>We have again accounted for the quantum shift.

<sup>8</sup>In light of comments in [5, 27], we would like to point out that at low level, the constraints (5.1), by themselves, give rise to parameters  $x$  which may differ from (5.2), and that these exceptions were *explicitly* noted in [4] to imply charge groups that are absurd from a K-theoretic viewpoint. Implicitly then, the constraints (5.1), as interpreted there, are not completely exhaustive at sufficiently low levels.

where  $h$  is the Coxeter number of  $\mathfrak{g}$ . The constraints (5.5) thus provide a theoretical justification for this observation.

**Note Added:** After this note was prepared, another independent K-theory computation appeared [28] which gives explicit results for the (universal covers of the) classical groups and  $G_2$ . The torsion parts of these results appear to agree with the results, (5.2), obtained from the dynamical constraints.

## REFERENCES

- [1] A Yu Alekseev and V Schomerus. D-branes in the WZW Model. *Physical Review*, D60(061901), 1999. [[arXiv:hep-th/9812193](#)].
- [2] S Fredenhagen and V Schomerus. Branes on Group Manifolds, Gluon Condensates, and Twisted K-theory. *Journal of High Energy Physics*, 0104:007, 2001. [[arXiv:hep-th/0012164](#)].
- [3] J Maldacena, G Moore, and N Seiberg. D-Brane Instantons and K-theory Charges. *Journal of High Energy Physics*, 0111:062, 2001. [[arXiv:hep-th/0108100](#)].
- [4] P Bouwknegt, P Dawson, and D Ridout. D-Branes on Group Manifolds and Fusion Rings. *Journal of High Energy Physics*, 0212:065, 2002. [[arXiv:hep-th/0210302](#)].
- [5] V Braun. Twisted K-Theory of Lie Groups. [[arXiv:hep-th/0305178](#)].
- [6] D Freed, M Hopkins, and C Teleman. Twisted K-Theory and Loop Group Representations. [[arXiv:math.at/0312155](#)].
- [7] C Klimčík and P Ševera. Open Strings and D-Branes in WZNW models. *Nuclear Physics*, B488:653–676, 1997. [[arXiv:hep-th/9609112](#)].
- [8] J Polchinski. Dirichlet-Branes and Ramond-Ramond Charges. *Physical Review Letters*, 75:4724–4727, 1995. [[arXiv:hep-th/9510017](#)].
- [9] C Bachas, M Douglas, and C Schweigert. Flux Stabilisation of D-branes. *Journal of High Energy Physics*, 0005:048, 2000. [[arXiv:hep-th/0003037](#)].
- [10] R Minasian and G Moore. K-Theory and Ramond-Ramond Charge. *Journal of High Energy Physics*, 9711:002, 1997. [[arXiv:hep-th/9710230](#)].
- [11] S Stanciu. A Note on D-Branes in Group Manifolds: Flux Quantisation and D0-Charge. *Journal of High Energy Physics*, 0010:015, 2000. [[arXiv:hep-th/0006145](#)].
- [12] A Yu Alekseev and V Schomerus. RR Charges of D2-Branes in the WZW model. [[arXiv:hep-th/0007096](#)].
- [13] J Figueroa-O’Farrill and S Stanciu. D-Brane Charge, Flux Quantisation and Relative (Co)homology. *Journal of High Energy Physics*, 0101:006, 2001. [[arXiv:hep-th/0008038](#)].
- [14] R Steinberg. *Endomorphisms of Linear Algebraic Groups*, volume 80 of *Memoirs of the American Mathematical Society*. American Mathematical Society, Providence, 1968.
- [15] R Bott. An Application of the Morse Theory to the Topology of Lie Groups. *Bulletin de la Societe Mathematique de France*, 84:251–281, 1956.
- [16] R Bott and L Tu. *Differential Forms in Algebraic Topology*, volume 82 of *Graduate Texts in Mathematics*. Springer-Verlag, New York, 1982.
- [17] R Bott. The Geometry and Representation Theory of Compact Lie Groups. In G Luke, editor, *Representation Theory of Lie Groups*, pages 65–90, 1977.
- [18] W Fulton. *Young Tableaux*, volume 35 of *London Mathematical Society Student Texts*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- [19] F Hirzebruch. *Topological Methods in Algebraic Geometry*, volume 131 of *Grundlehren der Mathematischen Wissenschaften*. Springer-Verlag, Berlin, 1978.
- [20] A Borel and F Hirzebruch. Characteristic Classes and Homogeneous Spaces II. *American Journal of Mathematics*, 81:315–382, 1959.

- [21] A Borel. Sur la Cohomologie des Espaces Fibrés Principaux et des Espaces Homogènes de Groupes de Lie Compacts. *Annals of Mathematics*, 57:115–207, 1953.
- [22] A Borel and F Hirzebruch. Characteristic Classes and Homogeneous Spaces I. *American Journal of Mathematics*, 80:458–538, 1958.
- [23] G Felder, J Fröhlich, J Fuchs, and C Schweigert. The Geometry of WZW Branes. *Journal of Geometry and Physics*, 34:162–190, 2000. [[arXiv:hep-th/9909030](https://arxiv.org/abs/hep-th/9909030)].
- [24] D Freed. The Verlinde Algebra is Twisted Equivariant K-Theory. *Turkish Journal of Mathematics*, 25(1):159–167, 2001. [[arXiv:math.RT/0101038](https://arxiv.org/abs/math.RT/0101038)].
- [25] M Walton. Fusion Rules in Wess-Zumino-Witten Models. *Nuclear Physics*, B340:777–790, 1990.
- [26] M Walton. Algorithm for WZW Fusion Rules: A Proof. *Physics Letters*, B241(3):365–368, 1990.
- [27] M Gaberdiel and T Gannon. The Charges of a Twisted Brane. [[arXiv:hep-th/0311242](https://arxiv.org/abs/hep-th/0311242)].
- [28] C Douglas. On the Twisted K-Homology of Simple Lie Groups. [arXiv:math.AT/0402082](https://arxiv.org/abs/math.AT/0402082).

(Peter Bouwknegt) DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS, AND DEPARTMENT OF PURE MATHEMATICS, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE, ADELAIDE, SA 5005, AUSTRALIA

*E-mail address:* pbouwkne@physics.adelaide.edu.au, pbouwkne@maths.adelaide.edu.au

(David Ridout) DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE, ADELAIDE, SA 5005, AUSTRALIA

*E-mail address:* dridout@physics.adelaide.edu.au