

Local index theory for the Rarita-Schwinger operator

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Algebraic, analytic and geometric structures emerging from
quantum field theory

4-15 March 2024

Sichuan University, Chengdu

References

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Classical results

- The Atiyah-Singer index theorem calculates the index of an elliptic operator on a closed manifold in terms of the topology.
- The original proof used methods from K-theory and cobordism theory.
- Over time, new proofs emerged, one of which was the heat kernel method, which led to the local index theorem.

The heat kernel method

- Let $E, F \rightarrow M$ be hermitian vector bundles over a closed Riemannian manifold M .
- Let $D : \Gamma(E) \rightarrow \Gamma(F)$ be a elliptic differential operator.
- Then D defines two heat semigroups $\exp(-tD^*D)$ and $\exp(-tDD^*)$.
- $\exp(-tD^*D)$ and $\exp(-tDD^*)$ are smoothing operators, i.e. they have smooth Schwartz kernels k_1, k_2 . In particular, they are trace-class operators.

The heat kernel method

A simple argument shows that for any $t > 0$

$$\begin{aligned}\operatorname{ind} D &= \operatorname{tr} \exp(-tD^*D) - \operatorname{tr} \exp(-tDD^*) \\ &= \int_M (\operatorname{tr} k_1(x, x)) - \operatorname{tr} k_2(x, x)) d\operatorname{vol}_g \\ &:= \int_M (\operatorname{str} \exp(-t\mathcal{D}^2)(x, x)) d\operatorname{vol}_g\end{aligned}$$

The **local index theorem** asks the question whether the limit

$$\lim_{t \searrow 0} (\operatorname{str} \exp(-\mathcal{D}^2)(x, x)) d\operatorname{vol}_g$$

exists and if so, what the limit is.

The local index theorem for twisted Dirac operators

The local index theorem is true for twisted Dirac operators:

Theorem (Gilkey '73, Atiyah-Bott-Patodi '73, Getzler '83, Bismut '84, Berline-Vergne '85,...)

Let (M, g) be a Riemannian spin manifold and $E \rightarrow M$ be a Hermitian vector bundle with connection ∇^E . Then for the twisted Dirac operator D_E , we have

$$\lim_{t \searrow 0} (\text{str} \exp(-tD_E^2)(x, x)) d\text{vol}_g = \left(\hat{A}(\nabla^g)(x) \wedge \text{ch}(\nabla^E)(x) \right)_n,$$

where ω_n denotes the n -form part of a mixed-degree differential form ω .

Categories & natural transformations

Let \mathbf{Man}_n be the category of compact, connected, smooth n -manifolds with local diffeomorphisms as morphisms.

- Set

$$\text{Met} : \mathbf{Man}_n^{op} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

to be the functor sending M to the set of metrics $\text{Met}(M)$ on M .

- Set

$$\Omega^q : \mathbf{Man}_n^{op} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

to be the functor sending M to the set $\Omega^q(M)$ of differential q -forms on M .

Riemannian invariants

By a monomial in the partial derivatives of a metric g on \mathbb{R}^n , we mean expressions of the form

$$m_\alpha(g) = \partial_x^{\alpha_1} g_{i_1 j_1} \cdots \partial_x^{\alpha_n} g_{i_n j_n}.$$

A natural transformation $\omega : \text{Met} \rightarrow \Omega^q$ is said to be

- *homogeneous of weight k* , if for every $\lambda > 0$ $\omega(\lambda^2 g) = \lambda^k \omega(g)$ holds.
- *regular*, if in coordinates, $\omega(g)$ takes the form

$$\omega(g)(x) = \sum_I \sum_{\alpha}^{\text{finite}} a_{\alpha, I}(g(x)) \cdot m_\alpha(g)(x) \cdot dx^{i_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge dx^{i_q},$$

where $a_{\alpha, I} : \text{Sym}_{>0} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ are C^∞ -functions.

Pontryagin forms

- Let Ω_g be the curvature 2-form of the Levi-Civita connection of $g \in \text{Met}(M)$.
- $\text{Pont}(g) = \{P(\Omega_g) \mid P : \mathfrak{o}(n) \rightarrow \mathbb{C} O(n) - \text{inv. polynomial}\}$
- The Pontryagin forms are given by

$$\det \left(t + \frac{\Omega_g}{2\pi} \right) = \sum t^{n-2k} p_k(g).$$

- These are generators of $\text{Pont}(g)$.
- $p_k : \text{Met} \rightarrow \Omega^{4k}$ defines a regular, homogeneous natural transformation of weight 0.

Gilkey's Theorem

Theorem (Gilkey '73, Atiyah-Bott-Patodi '73)

The only regular, homogeneous natural transformations $\omega : \text{Met} \rightarrow \Omega^q$ of weight ≥ 0 have values in the ring $\text{Pont}(g)$ generated by the Pontryagin forms of g , and these have weight 0.

Geometric structures

- Let $G_n \in \{O(n), SO(n), \text{Pin}(n), \text{Spin}(n)\}$.
- G_n has a natural action on \mathbb{R}^n .
- Given a manifold M^n , there are topological conditions for G_n -structures, the parameter spaces for the different G_n -structures are again determined by the topology of M .
- There is a subcategory $G_n - \mathbf{Man}_n$ of \mathbf{Man}_n , whose objects are the manifolds admitting G_n -structures.
- There is a functor

$$G_n - \text{Str} : G_n - \mathbf{Man}_n^{op} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set},$$

sending a manifold M to the set of different G_n -structures on M .

Geometric structures

The set of orientations $\mathcal{O}(M)$ on M is given by $\pi_0(\tilde{M})$, where \tilde{M} is the orientation double cover of M . \mathcal{O} is a functor from \mathbf{Man}_n^{op} to \mathbf{Set} .

G_n	$\text{Obj}(G_n - \mathbf{Man}_n)$	$G_n - \text{Str}$
$O(n)$	$\text{Obj}(\mathbf{Man}_n)$	$*$
$SO(n)$	M with $w_1(M) = 0$	\mathcal{O}
$\text{Pin}(n)$	M with $w_1(M) = w_2(M) = 0$	$H^1(\cdot, \mathbb{Z}_2)$
$\text{Spin}(n)$	M with $w_1(M) = w_2(M) = 0$	$\mathcal{O} \times H^1(\cdot, \mathbb{Z}_2)$

A G_n -manifold (M, α) is a pair with $M \in \text{Obj}(G_n - \mathbf{Man}_n)$ and $\alpha \in G_n - \text{Str}(M)$.

Constructions emerging from geometric structures

Let $M \in \text{Obj}(G_n - \mathbf{Man}_n)$.

- Each $g \in \text{Met}(M)$ and $\alpha \in G_n - \text{Str}(M)$ determines a G_n -principal bundle $PG_{g,\alpha}(M)$.
- The metric g induces a Levi-Civita connection 1-form ω^{LC} on $PG_{g,\alpha}(M)$.
- A G_n -representation $\rho : G_n \rightarrow \text{End}(V)$ induces an associated vector bundle $E_{V,g,\alpha} = PG_{g,\alpha}(M) \times_{\rho} V$.
- The connection 1-form ω^{LC} induces a covariant derivative ∇^{LC} on $E_{V,g,\alpha}$.

Geometric operators

Definition

A geometric symbol σ is a G_n -equivariant map

$$\sigma : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \text{Hom}(V, W),$$

V, W are hermitian representations of G_n . For a Riemannian G_n -manifold (M, g, α) , σ defines an (elliptic) first-order differential operator

$$D_{\sigma, g, \alpha} := \bar{\sigma} \circ \nabla^{LC} : C^\infty(M, E_{V, g, \alpha}) \rightarrow C^\infty(M, E_{W, g, \alpha}),$$

where $\bar{\sigma}$ is the to σ associated section of $T^*M \otimes \text{Hom}(E_{V, g, \alpha}, E_{W, g, \alpha})$. Operators constructed in this way are called geometric.

Geometric operators: Properties

- For $\lambda > 0$ there exists canonical vector bundle isomorphisms $\epsilon_V : E_{V,g,\alpha} \rightarrow E_{V,\lambda^2g,\alpha}$, $\epsilon_W : E_{W,g,\alpha} \rightarrow E_{W,\lambda^2g,\alpha}$ such that

$$\lambda D_{\sigma,\lambda^2g,\alpha} \circ \epsilon_V = \epsilon_W \circ D_{\sigma,g,\alpha}.$$

- In coordinates, the coefficients of $D_{\sigma,g,\alpha}$ are of the form

$$a(x, g) = \sum_{\alpha} a_{\alpha}(g(x)) m_{\alpha}(g)(x),$$

where $a_{\alpha} : \text{Sym}_{>0}(n) \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ are C^{∞} -functions.

Definition of Chiral Geometric Symbol

Definition

Let $H_n \in \{\text{Pin}(n), \text{O}(n)\}$, V be an H_n -representation, and $G_n \subseteq H_n$ be the connected component of $1 \in H_n$. A chiral (G_n -)geometric symbol (σ, ε) consists of:

- A H_n -geometric symbol $\sigma : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \text{Hom}(V)$,
- a H_n -geometric map $\varepsilon : \Lambda^n \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \text{Hom}(V)$,

such that

- $\sigma(\xi)$ is skew-adjoint for all $\xi \in \mathbb{R}^n$
- $\varepsilon(\mathbf{e}_1 \wedge \dots \wedge \mathbf{e}_n)^2 = 1$
- $\sigma \cdot \varepsilon(\mathbf{e}_1 \wedge \dots \wedge \mathbf{e}_n) = -\varepsilon(\mathbf{e}_1 \wedge \dots \wedge \mathbf{e}_n) \cdot \sigma$.

Geometric Operators from Chiral Symbols

- Let $G_n \in \{\text{SO}(n), \text{Spin}(n)\}$ and (σ, ε) be an G_n -geometric symbol.
- V^\pm are the ± 1 -eigenspaces of $\varepsilon(\mathbf{e}_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge \mathbf{e}_n)$.
- V^\pm are G_n -representations and

$$\sigma^\pm : \mathbb{R}^n \otimes V^\pm \rightarrow V^\mp$$

are G_n -equivariant.

Geometric Operators from Chiral Symbols

- Given a Riemannian G_n -manifold (M, g, α) , the chiral geometric symbol induces a \mathbb{Z}_2 -grading:

$$E_V = E_{V^+} \oplus E_{V^-}$$

- E_{V^\pm} can be identified as the ± 1 -eigenspaces of $\bar{\varepsilon}(dvol_g)$.
- Geometric operators obtained:

$$D_\sigma : E_V \rightarrow E_V, \quad D_{\sigma^+} : E_{V^+} \rightarrow E_{V^-}, \quad D_{\sigma^-} : E_{V^-} \rightarrow E_{V^+}.$$

- Such that:

$$D_\sigma = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & D_{\sigma^-} \\ D_{\sigma^+} & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

- Since D_σ is self-adjoint, we have:

$$(D_{\sigma^+})^* = D_{\sigma^-}.$$

Proposition

Let $G_n \in \{\mathrm{SO}(n), \mathrm{Spin}(n)\}$ and (σ, ε) be a chiral geometric symbol. Let (M, g, α) be a G_n -manifold and $\bar{\alpha} \in G_n - \mathrm{Str}(M)$ be the G_n -structure that is obtained from α by reversing the orientation. Then we have the following equalities

$$E_{V, \alpha} = E_{V, \bar{\alpha}}, \quad E_{V^{\pm}, \alpha} = E_{V^{\mp}, \bar{\alpha}}, \quad D_{\sigma^{\pm}, \alpha} = D_{\sigma^{\mp}, \bar{\alpha}}.$$

Higher Dirac operators

- For $n = 2k$, let V_j^\pm be the irreducible representation of $\text{Spin}(n)$ with dominant weight

$$\lambda_j^\pm = \left(\underbrace{\frac{3}{2}, \dots, \frac{3}{2}}_{j \text{ times}}, \frac{1}{2}, \dots, \frac{1}{2}, \pm \frac{1}{2} \right).$$

- $V_j = V_j^+ \oplus V_j^-$ is a $\text{Pin}(n)$ -representation.
- V_j appears once in $\Sigma_n \otimes \mathcal{N}^j \mathbb{C}^n$:

$$\Sigma_n \otimes \mathcal{N}^j \mathbb{C}^n = V_j \oplus W, \quad \Sigma_n^\pm \otimes \mathcal{N}^j \mathbb{C}^n = V_j^\pm \oplus W_\pm.$$

- All sums are $\text{Spin}(n)$ -equivariant, the first is $\text{Pin}(n)$ -equivariant.
- The (orthogonal) projection $\pi_j : \Sigma_n \otimes \mathcal{N}^j \mathbb{C}^n \rightarrow V_j$ is $\text{Pin}(n)$ -equivariant.

Higher Dirac operators

- Define twisted Clifford multiplication γ_j and involution

$$\omega_{\mathbb{C}} \otimes \text{id}_{\mathcal{N}^j \mathbb{C}^n},$$

$$\omega_{\mathbb{C}} = i^k e_1 \cdots e_n.$$

- Set $\sigma_j = \pi_j \circ \gamma_j|_{\mathbb{R}^n \otimes V_j}$, then $(\sigma_j, \omega_{\mathbb{C}} \otimes \text{id}|_{V_j})$ defines a chiral geometric symbol.
- Operators D_j obtained are called higher Dirac operators.
- D_0 is the Dirac operator, D_1 is the Rarita-Schwinger operator.
- $\text{ind } D_{j,+} = \langle (\text{ch}(\mathcal{N}^j T_{\mathbb{C}}^* M) + \text{ch}(\mathcal{N}^{j-1} T_{\mathbb{C}}^* M)) \hat{A}(M), [M] \rangle$

Index and heat kernel

Let (σ, ε) be a chiral geometric symbol, (M, g, α) closed and connected Riemannian G_n -manifold. Let

$$D : \Gamma(E) \rightarrow \Gamma(E)$$

the geometric symbol obtained from σ , $D_{\pm} : \Gamma(E_{\pm}) \rightarrow \Gamma(E_{\mp})$ the chiral parts. $\exp(-tD^2)$ is a smoothing operator, w.r.to the splitting $E = E_+ \oplus E_-$:

$$\exp(-tD^2) = \begin{pmatrix} \exp(-tD_- D_+) & 0 \\ 0 & \exp(-tD_+ D_-) \end{pmatrix}.$$

$$\text{ind } D_+ = \int^{\circ} \text{str}(\exp(-tD^2)(x, x)) d\text{vol}_{g, \circ}$$

\circ is the orientation induced from α ,

$$\text{str}(A) = \text{tr}(\bar{\varepsilon}(d\text{vol}_{g, \circ})A), \quad A \in \text{Hom}(E, E).$$

Construction of asymptotic expansion

Obtain an asymptotic expansion

$$\exp(-tD^2)(x, x) \sim \sum \Phi_k(x) t^{\frac{k-n}{2}} :$$

Let $\sigma_{D^2} = \sum_{k \leq 2} a_k$ is the total symbol of D^2 in coordinates, a_k being the homogeneous parts of degree k . Approximate the symbol of the parametrix $(D^2 - \lambda)^{-1}$ by inverting the symbol of $D^2 - \lambda$ formally:

- $b_0(x, \xi, \lambda) = (a_2(x, \xi) - \lambda)^{-1}$,
- For $D_x^\alpha = (-i)^{|\alpha|} \partial_x^\alpha$,

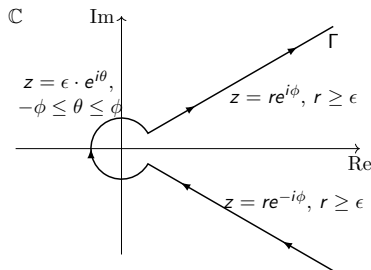
$$b_k = - \left(\sum_{\substack{|\alpha|+j+l=k \\ j < k}} \frac{1}{\alpha!} \frac{\partial^\alpha b_j}{\partial \xi^\alpha} \cdot D_x^\alpha a_{2-l} \right) \cdot b_0$$

The heat coefficients

The asymptotic expansion of the heat kernel is given by

$$\Phi_k(x) = \sqrt{\det g(x)}^{-1} \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int \int_{\Gamma} e^{-\lambda} b_k(x, \xi, \lambda) d\lambda d\xi,$$

where Γ is given by



The heat coefficients

- Let Φ_k be the asymptotic expansion of $\exp(-tD_{\sigma,g,\alpha}^2)$.
- Set $\omega_k^{(\sigma,\varepsilon)}(M, g, \alpha)(x) = \text{str}(\Phi_k(x))d\text{vol}_{g,\mathcal{O}}$.
- $\text{ind } D_{\sigma,g,\alpha}^+ = \int_M^{\mathcal{O}} \omega_n^{(\sigma,\varepsilon)}$.

Heat coefficients as natural transformations

$\omega_k^{(\sigma, \varepsilon)}(M, g, \alpha)$ does not depend on α :

- $\omega_k^{(\sigma, \varepsilon)}(M, g, \alpha)$ is a local construction.
- Locally, a G_n -structure is determined by the orientation.
- $\omega_k^{(\sigma, \varepsilon)}(M, g, \alpha)(x) = \text{tr}(\bar{\varepsilon}(d\text{vol}_{g, \circ})\Phi_k(x))d\text{vol}_{g, \circ}$
- For the reversed orientation $\bar{\circ}$ we have $d\text{vol}_{g, \bar{\circ}} = -d\text{vol}_{g, \circ}$.

Proposition

The k th heat coefficient $\omega_k^{(\sigma, \varepsilon)}$ defines a natural transformation $\text{Met} \rightarrow \Omega^n$.

Regularity of the heat coefficients

Lemma

The natural transformation $\omega_k^{(\sigma, \varepsilon)}$ is regular.

Proof of regularity

Sketch of proof:

- In coordinates, the coefficients of $D_{\sigma,g}$ are of the form

$$a(x, g) = \sum_{\alpha} a_{\alpha}(g(x))m_{\alpha}(g)(x), \quad (*)$$

where $a_{\alpha} : \text{Sym}_{>0}(n) \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ are C^{∞} -functions.

- Functions of the form $*$ are closed under addition, multiplications and taking derivatives in x .
- By carefully going through the construction of $\omega^{\sigma,\varepsilon}$ one obtains regularity.

Homogeneity of the heat coefficients

Lemma

The natural transformation $\omega_k^{(\sigma, \varepsilon)}$ is homogeneous of weight $\frac{n-k}{2}$ in g , i.e.

$$\omega_k(\lambda^2 g) = \lambda^{n-k} \omega_k(g).$$

This follows from $D_{\sigma, \lambda^2 g, \alpha} \cong \frac{1}{\lambda} D_{\sigma, g, \alpha}$.

Preliminary local index theorem

Theorem

For $k < n$, the heat coefficient $\omega_k^{(\sigma, \varepsilon)}$ is zero, and $\omega_n^{(\sigma, \varepsilon)} \in \text{Pont}(g)$. In particular, if (M, g, α) is a closed G_n -manifold and $D_{g, \alpha}$ the induced geometric operator, $\text{str} \left(e^{-tD_{g, \alpha}^2}(x, x) \right) d\text{vol}_g$ converges for $t \searrow 0$ with

$$\lim_{t \searrow 0} \text{str} \left(e^{-tD_{g, \alpha}^2}(x, x) \right) d\text{vol}_g = \omega_n(g)(x).$$

Atiyah-Singer index theorem

On an oriented manifold M^n with orientation \mathcal{O} , denote by $\chi(TM_{\mathcal{O}}) \in H^n(M, \mathbb{R})$ the Euler class of the TM with respect to the orientation \mathcal{O} .

Theorem (Atiyah-Singer)

Let (σ, ε) be a chiral G_n -geometric symbol for $n = 2m$ even and (M, g, α) be a Riemannian G_n -manifold. Then the characteristic class $(\text{ch}(E_{+,g,\alpha}) - \text{ch}(E_{-,g,\alpha}))/\chi(TM_{\mathcal{O}}) \in H^*(M, \mathbb{R})$ is well-defined and

$$\text{ind}(D_{+,g,\alpha}) = (-1)^m \left(\frac{\text{ch}(E_{+,g,\alpha}) - \text{ch}(E_{-,g,\alpha})}{\chi(TM_{\mathcal{O}})} \cdot \hat{A}(M)^2 \right) [M_{\mathcal{O}}].$$

Atiyah-Singer integrand

- Let V be the G_n -module σ acts on.
- Let \tilde{E}_+ , \tilde{E}_- , \tilde{T} be associated bundles to the G_n -representations V_+ , V_- , \mathbb{R}^n on the classifying space BG_n .
- The cohomology class

$$\frac{\text{ch}(\tilde{E}_+) - \text{ch}(\tilde{E}_-)}{\chi(\tilde{T})} \hat{A}(\tilde{T})^2 \in H^*(BG_n, \mathbb{R})$$

is well-defined.

- By Chern-Weil theory, there exists a G_n -invariant polynomial $P_{\sigma, \varepsilon} : \mathfrak{g}_n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ representing the above cohomology class.

- The mixed-degree form $P_{(\sigma,\varepsilon)}(\bar{\Omega}_{g,\alpha}^{LC})$ does not depend on α .
- $\omega_{(\sigma,\varepsilon)} : g \mapsto (P_{(\sigma,\varepsilon)}(\bar{\Omega}_g^{LC}))_n$ defines a zero-homogeneous, regular natural transformation $\text{Met} \rightarrow \Omega^n$.
- For all G_n -manifolds (M, g, α) ,

$$\int_M \omega_n = \text{ind}(D_{+,g,\alpha}) = \int_M \omega_{(\sigma,\varepsilon)}.$$

Thom's Theorem

Applying Gilkey's Theorem,

$$\omega_n = \sum_I a_I p_I, \quad \omega_{(\sigma, \varepsilon)} = \sum_I b_I p_I \quad a_I, b_I \in \mathbb{C},$$

where I runs over all partitions of n and $p_{(i_1, \dots, i_r)} = p_{i_1} \wedge \dots \wedge p_{i_r}$, p_i denotes the i -th Pontryagin form. To deduce $a_I = b_I$, we use the following Theorem by Thom:

Theorem

Let M_1 be the K3-surface and $M_i = \mathbb{H}P^i$ for $i \geq 2$. Then M_i is spinnable and the matrix

$$(p_I(M_{j_1} \times \dots \times M_{j_k}))_{I, J} \text{ partitions of } k$$

is non-singular.



The local index theorem

Rewrite

$$\frac{\text{ch}(\tilde{E}_+) - \text{ch}(\tilde{E}_-)}{\chi(\tilde{T})} (\nabla^{LC,g}) \cdot \hat{A}(\nabla^{LC,g})^2 = P_{(\sigma,\varepsilon)}(\bar{\Omega}_g^{LC}).$$

Our discussion shows:

Theorem

Let (σ, ε) be a chiral G_n -geometric symbol for $n = 2m$ even. Let (M, g, α) be a Riemannian G_n -manifold and $D_g: C^\infty(M, E) \rightarrow C^\infty(M, E)$ be the induced geometric operator. Then the equality

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{t \searrow 0} \text{str} \left(e^{-tD_g^2}(x, x) \right) d\text{vol}_g &= \\ &= (-1)^m \left(\frac{\text{ch}(\tilde{E}_+) - \text{ch}(\tilde{E}_-)}{\chi(\tilde{T})} (\nabla^{LC, g})(x) \cdot \hat{A}(\nabla^{LC, g})(x)^2 \right)_n \end{aligned}$$

holds.

Local index theorem for the Rarita-Schwinger operator

Corollary

Let $Q = D_1$ be the Rarita-Schwinger operator on an even-dimensional Riemannian spin-manifold (M, g) . Then

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{t \searrow 0} \operatorname{str} \left(e^{-tQ^2}(x, x) \right) d\operatorname{vol}_g &= \\ &= \left(\hat{A}(\nabla^{LC, g})(x) \left(\operatorname{ch}(\tilde{T}_{\mathbb{C}})(\nabla^{LC, g})(x) + 1 \right) \right)_n. \end{aligned}$$

Corollary

Let D_j be the higher Dirac operator on an even dimensional Riemannian spin-manifold (M, g) . Then

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{t \searrow 0} \operatorname{str} \left(e^{-tD_j^2}(x, x) \right) d\operatorname{vol}_g &= \\ &= \left(\hat{A}(\nabla^{LC, g})(x) \left(\operatorname{ch}(\Lambda^j \tilde{T}_{\mathbb{C}})(\nabla^{LC, g})(x) + \operatorname{ch}(\Lambda^{j-1} \tilde{T}_{\mathbb{C}})(\nabla^{LC, g})(x) \right) \right)_n. \end{aligned}$$

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