

# String integrability of defect CFT and dynamical reflection matrices

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New mathematical methods in solvable models and gauge/string dualities  
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based on JHEP **06** (2022) 033 [arXiv:2202.06824] and JHEP **05** (2021) 203 [arXiv:2102.12381] with  
Konstantin Zarembo

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## Section 1

### Introduction

# De facto boundaries and defects

Boundaries and defects go hand in hand with real-world physical systems... They are simply a manifestation of imperfection: impurities, domain walls, boundaries, interfaces and defects separate regions with different properties and break many of the underlying symmetries. Here are some examples:

## Formal aspects

- Holography & the AdS/CFT correspondence
- String theory
- Quantum entanglement

## Applied aspects

- Statistical systems near surfaces
- Topological materials such as graphene and topological insulators
- Out-of-equilibrium systems and quantum quenches

Naturally, boundaries and defects permeate all branches of physics, from high-energy and particle physics, to condensed matter, statistical, even gravity and mathematical physics.

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- The study of higher codimension defects and using them to bootstrap both the original and the boundary CFT forms part of the so-called Boundary Conformal Bootstrap program (initiated by [Liendo, Rastelli, van Rees, 2012](#)).
- The boundaries can either host new degrees of freedom or just provide BCs for the bulk fields

$$S = S_d + S_{d-1},$$

thus giving rise to boundary and defect CFTs (BCFTs & dCFTs)...

# The AdS/CFT correspondence

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$$\mathcal{N} = 4, \mathfrak{su}(N) \text{ super Yang-Mills theory in 4d} \Leftrightarrow \text{Type IIB superstring theory on } \text{AdS}_5 \times S^5$$

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There also exists an  $\text{AdS}_4/\text{CFT}_3$  duality... reading, for  $k^5 \gg N$ :

$$\mathcal{N} = 6, U(N)_k \times \hat{U}(N)_{-k} \text{ super Chern-Simons theory in 3d with Chern-Simons levels } \pm k \in \mathbb{Z} \Leftrightarrow \text{Type IIA string theory on } \text{AdS}_4 \times \mathbb{CP}^3 \text{ with } N \text{ units of flux in } \text{AdS}_4 \text{ and } k \text{ units in } \mathbb{CP}^3$$

(Aharony-Bergman-Jafferis-Maldacena, 2008)

IIA/ABJM is quantum integrable in the planar limit  $k, N \rightarrow \infty$ ,  $\lambda \equiv g_{\text{CS}}^2 N = \text{const.}$  ( $g_{\text{CS}}^2 \equiv 1/k$ ).

# $\mathcal{N} = 4$ , super Yang-Mills theory

$\mathcal{N} = 4$ , super Yang-Mills (SYM) theory is a 4-dimensional superconformal gauge theory:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{N}=4} = \frac{2}{g_{\text{YM}}^2} \cdot \text{tr} \left\{ -\frac{1}{4} F_{\mu\nu} F^{\mu\nu} - \frac{1}{2} (D_\mu \varphi_i)^2 + i \bar{\psi}_\alpha \not{D} \psi_\alpha + \frac{1}{4} [\varphi_i, \varphi_j]^2 + \right. \\ \left. + \sum_{i=1}^3 G_{\alpha\beta}^i \bar{\psi}_\alpha [\varphi_i, \psi_\beta] + \sum_{i=4}^6 G_{\alpha\beta}^i \bar{\psi}_\alpha \gamma_5 [\varphi_i, \psi_\beta] \right\}$$

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- Half-BPS boundary conditions were studied by [Gaiotto-Witten \(2008\)](#)...

# ABJM theory

ABJM theory is a 3-dimensional superconformal gauge theory:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{ABJM}} = \frac{k}{4\pi} \cdot \left[ \epsilon^{\mu\nu\rho} \text{tr} \left\{ A_\mu \partial_\nu A_\rho + \frac{2i}{3} A_\mu A_\nu A_\rho - \hat{A}_\mu \partial_\nu \hat{A}_\rho - \frac{2i}{3} \hat{A}_\mu \hat{A}_\nu \hat{A}_\rho \right\} - \text{tr} \left\{ (D_\mu Y_B)^\dagger D^\mu Y_B + i \psi_B^\dagger \not{D} \psi_B \right\} - V_{\text{ferm}} - V_{\text{bos}} \right], \text{ where } B = 1, \dots, 4,$$

where the potential contains mixed quartic and sextic bosonic terms which read

$$V_{\text{ferm}} = \frac{i}{2} \text{tr} \left\{ Y_A^\dagger Y_A \psi_B^\dagger \psi_B - Y_A Y_A^\dagger \psi_B \psi_B^\dagger + 2 Y_A Y_B^\dagger \psi_A \psi_B^\dagger - 2 Y_A^\dagger Y_B \psi_A^\dagger \psi_B - \epsilon^{ABCD} Y_A^\dagger \psi_B Y_C^\dagger \psi_D + \epsilon^{ABCD} Y_A \psi_B^\dagger Y_C \psi_D^\dagger \right\}$$

$$V_{\text{bos}} = -\frac{1}{12} \text{tr} \left\{ Y_A Y_A^\dagger Y_B Y_B^\dagger Y_C Y_C^\dagger + Y_A^\dagger Y_A Y_B^\dagger Y_B Y_C^\dagger Y_C + 4 Y_A Y_B^\dagger Y_C Y_A^\dagger Y_B Y_C^\dagger - 6 Y_A Y_B^\dagger Y_B Y_A^\dagger Y_C Y_C^\dagger \right\}.$$

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- Solution of the spectral problem via QSC... ([Cavaglià-Fioravanti-Gromov-Tateo, 2014](#))

## Section 2

# String integrability in AdS/CFT

Superstring theory on  $AdS_5 \times S^5$  and  $AdS_4 \times CP^3$ 

- The formulation of type IIB Green-Schwarz superstring theory on  $AdS_5 \times S^5$  is based on the observation that the target space is a product of cosets that spans the bosonic section of a supercoset:

$$AdS_5 \times S^5 = \frac{SO(4,2)}{SO(4,1)} \times \frac{SO(6)}{SO(5)} \subset \frac{PSU(2,2|4)}{SO(4,1) \times SO(5)},$$

(Metsaev-Tseytlin, 1998)

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- Similarly, the target space of type IIA Green-Schwarz superstring theory on  $AdS_4 \times CP^3$  is a product of cosets and the bosonic section of a supercoset:

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- Both of the above supercosets are semi-symmetric spaces... semi-symmetric spaces are known to give rise to integrable nonlinear sigma models that describe Green-Schwarz superstrings...

# Green-Schwarz $\sigma$ -models in semi-symmetric superspaces

Green-Schwarz superstrings in semi-symmetric spaces are described by nonlinear  $\sigma$ -models with action:

$$S = -\frac{T}{2} \int \text{str} \left[ J^{(2)} \wedge \star J^{(2)} + J^{(1)} \wedge J^{(3)} \right], \quad T \equiv \frac{\ell^2}{2\pi\alpha'}.$$



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The current  $J$  has a vanishing curvature, i.e.

$$dJ + J \wedge J = 0.$$

The equations of motion that follow from the superstring action afford a Lax representation:

$$dL + L \wedge L = 0,$$

where the Lax connection  $L$  is given by

$$L(x) = J^{(0)} + \frac{x^2 + 1}{x^2 - 1} J^{(2)} - \frac{2x}{x^2 - 1} \star J^{(2)} + \sqrt{\frac{x+1}{x-1}} J^{(1)} + \sqrt{\frac{x-1}{x+1}} J^{(3)},$$

and  $x$  is the spectral parameter.

## Green-Schwarz $\sigma$ -models in semi-symmetric superspaces

Green-Schwarz superstrings in semi-symmetric spaces are described by nonlinear  $\sigma$ -models with action:

$$S = -\frac{T}{2} \int \text{str} \left[ J^{(2)} \wedge \star J^{(2)} + J^{(1)} \wedge J^{(3)} \right], \quad T \equiv \frac{\ell^2}{2\pi\alpha'}$$

Defining the fixed-frame current (or left current)

$$j \equiv \mathfrak{g} J \mathfrak{g}^{-1} = d\mathfrak{g} \mathfrak{g}^{-1} = j^{(0)} + j^{(1)} + j^{(2)} + j^{(3)}, \quad j^{(n)} \equiv \mathfrak{g} J^{(n)} \mathfrak{g}^{-1}$$

the corresponding Lax connection assumes the following form:

$$a(x) = \frac{2}{x^2 - 1} \left( j^{(2)} - x \star j^{(2)} \right) + (z - 1) j^{(1)} + \left( \frac{1}{z} - 1 \right) j^{(3)}, \quad z \equiv \sqrt{\frac{x+1}{x-1}}$$

(Bena, Polchinski, Roiban, 2003)

The Green-Schwarz  $\sigma$ -model is classically integrable... Note also the fixed-frame flatness conditions:

$$dj - j \wedge j = 0, \quad da + a \wedge a = 0.$$

# Integrability of superstrings on $AdS_4 \times CP^3$

The notion of classical Liouville integrability is typically extended to (1 + 1 dimensional) field theory systems by means of a monodromy matrix:

$$\mathcal{M}(\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \tau; \mathbf{x}) \equiv \vec{P} \exp \left( \int_{\sigma_1}^{\sigma_2} ds a_\sigma(s, \tau; \mathbf{x}) \right).$$

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$$\mathcal{M}(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbb{1} - \frac{2}{\mathbf{x}} \int_0^{2\pi} ds j_\tau^{(2)} + \frac{2}{\mathbf{x}^2} \left[ \int_0^{2\pi} ds j_\sigma^{(2)} + 2 \int_0^{2\pi} \int_0^s ds ds' j_\tau^{(2)'} j_\tau^{(2)} \right] - \dots = \exp \left[ 2 \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} \left( -\frac{1}{\mathbf{x}} \right)^{r+1} Q_r \right]$$

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## Section 3

# Brane integrability in AdS/CFT

# Integrable holographic dCFTs

All these methods can be used to study boundaries and defects...

- *Holographic* dCFTs were first realized in the context of the AdS/CFT correspondence by [Karch-Randall \(2001\)](#), in an attempt to provide an explicit realization of gravity localization on an  $AdS_4$  brane.

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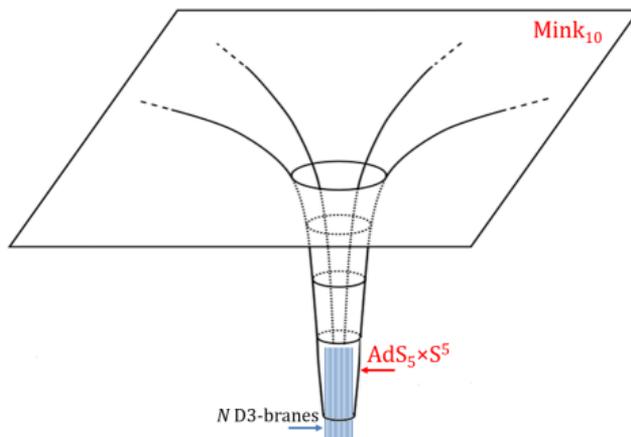
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- *Supersymmetric localization* methods were introduced by [Komatsu-Wang \(2020\)](#). They permit to carry out precision tests of the planar AdS/dCFT duality beyond perturbation theory.

To set the stage for the study of string BCs, let us briefly review the Karch-Randall system...

# The D3-D5 probe-brane system

Type IIB string theory on  $AdS_5 \times S^5$  is encountered very close to a system of  $N$  coincident D3-branes:

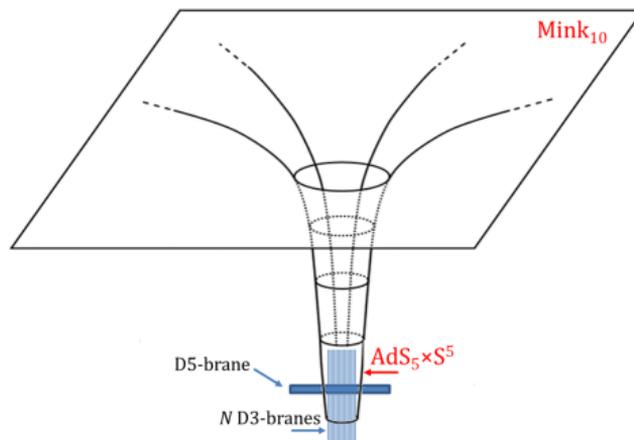


The D3-branes extend along  $x_1, x_2, x_3 \dots$

	$t$	$x_1$	$x_2$	$x_3$	$x_4$	$x_5$	$x_6$	$x_7$	$x_8$	$x_9$
D3	•	•	•	•						

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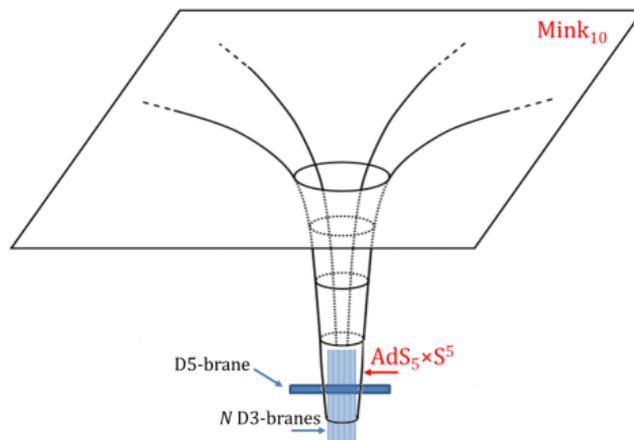


Now insert a single (probe) D5-brane at  $x_3 = x_7 = x_8 = x_9 = 0 \dots$

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D5	•	•	•		•	•	•			

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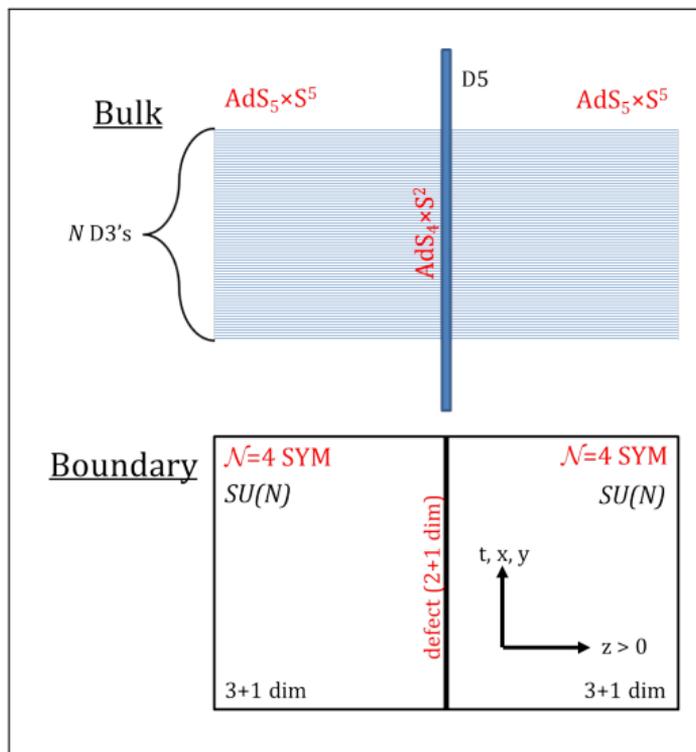
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D5	•	•	•		•	•	•			

# The dual defect SCFT



- In the bulk, the D3-D5 system describes IIB string theory on  $AdS_5 \times S^5$  bisected by a D5 brane with worldvolume geometry  $AdS_4 \times S^2$ .
- The dual field theory is still  $SU(N)$ ,  $\mathcal{N} = 4$  SYM in 3 + 1 dimensions, that interacts with a CFT living on the 2 + 1 dimensional defect:
 
$$S = S_{\mathcal{N}=4} + S_{2+1}.$$
 (DeWolfe, Freedman, Ooguri, 2001)
- Due to the presence of the defect, the total bosonic symmetry of the system is reduced from  $SO(4, 2) \times SO(6)$  to  $SO(3, 2) \times SO(3) \times SO(3)$ .
- The corresponding superalgebra  $\mathfrak{psu}(2, 2|4)$  becomes  $\mathfrak{osp}(4|4)$ .

## D5-brane embedding

There are also  $k$  units of magnetic flux through the  $S^2$ ... forcing  $k$  D3-branes to end on the D5-brane...

$$\int_{S^2} \frac{F}{2\pi} = k, \quad F = \frac{k}{4} \cdot \sum_{a,b,c=4}^6 \varepsilon_{abc} x_a dx_b \wedge dx_c.$$

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The geometry of the D5-brane in  $\text{AdS}_5 \times S^5$  will still be  $\text{AdS}_4 \times S^2$ ... Its embedding will be described by:

$$x_3 = \kappa \cdot Z, \quad \kappa \equiv \frac{\pi k}{\sqrt{\lambda}} \equiv \tan \alpha.$$

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where the metric of  $\text{AdS}_5 \times S^5$  is written as:

$$ds^2 = \frac{\ell^2}{z^2} \left( -dt^2 + dx_1^2 + dx_2^2 + dx_3^2 + dz^2 \right) + \ell^2 d\Omega_5^2, \quad z \equiv \frac{1}{r}$$

and the 2-sphere is parameterized by:

$$d\Omega_2^2 = d\theta^2 + \sin^2 \theta d\phi^2 = \sum_{a=4}^6 dx_a dx_a, \quad \sum_{a=4}^6 x_a x_a = 1, \quad x_7 = x_8 = x_9 = 0.$$

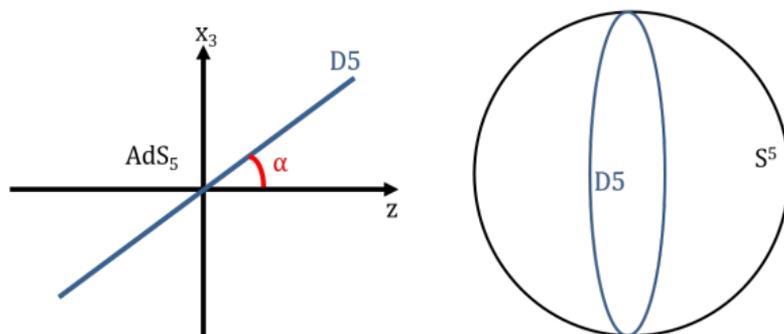
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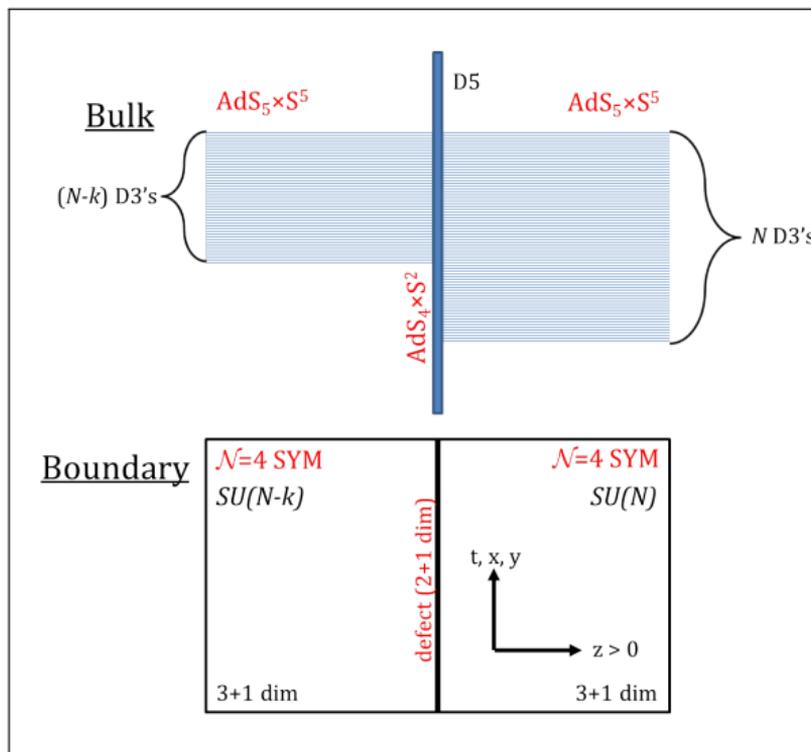
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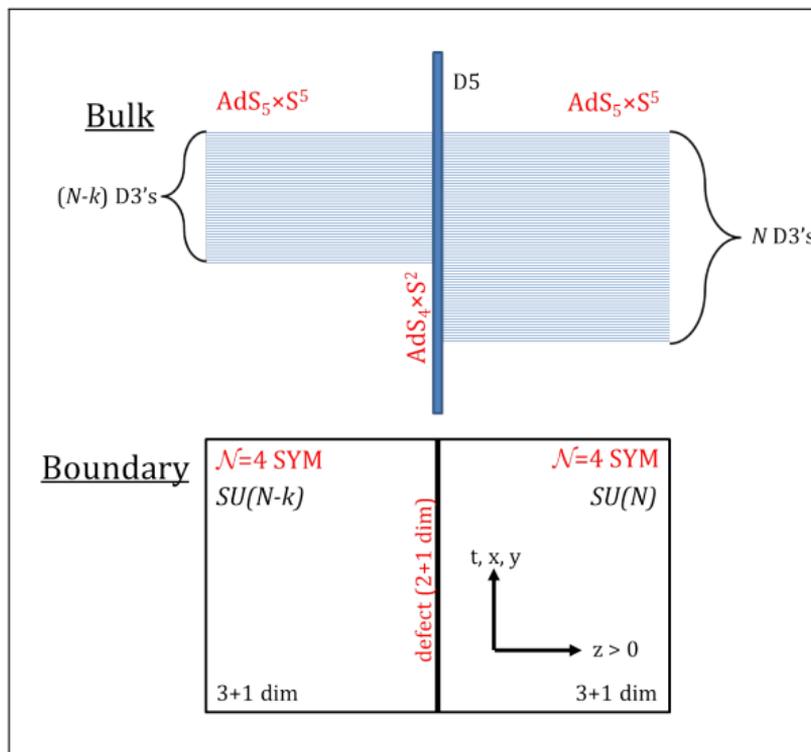


# The D3-D5 dSCFT



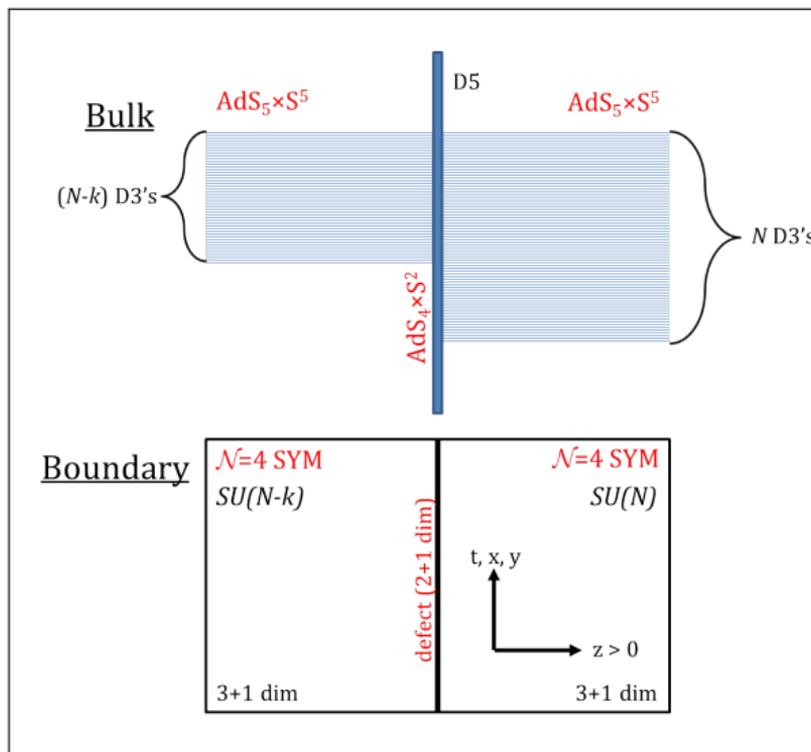
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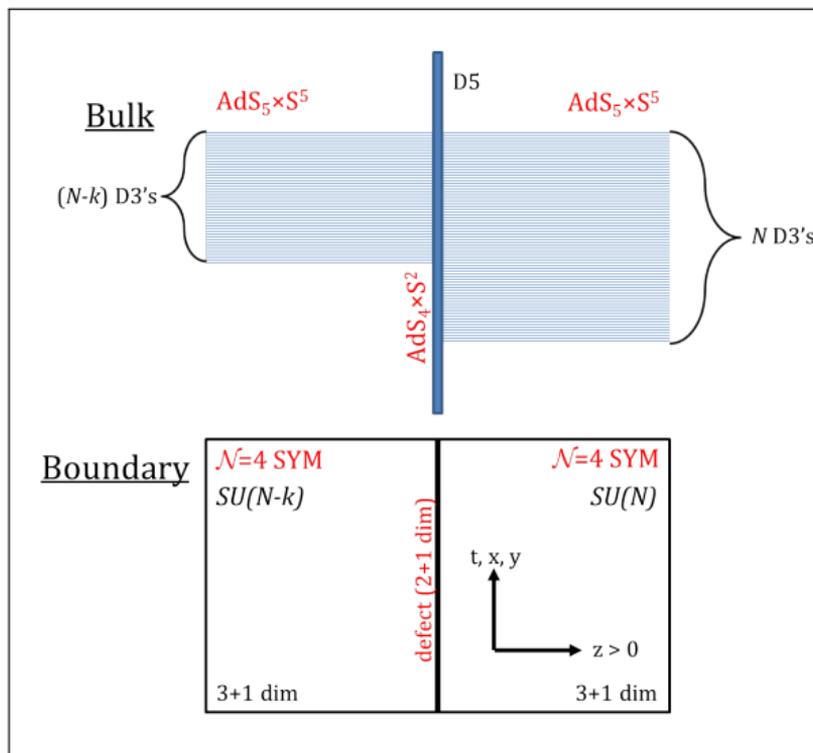
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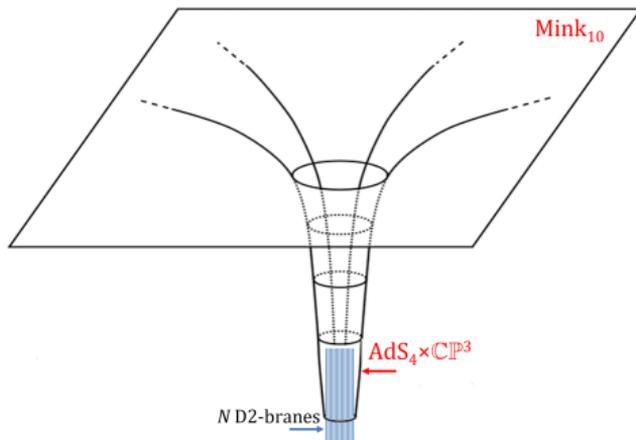
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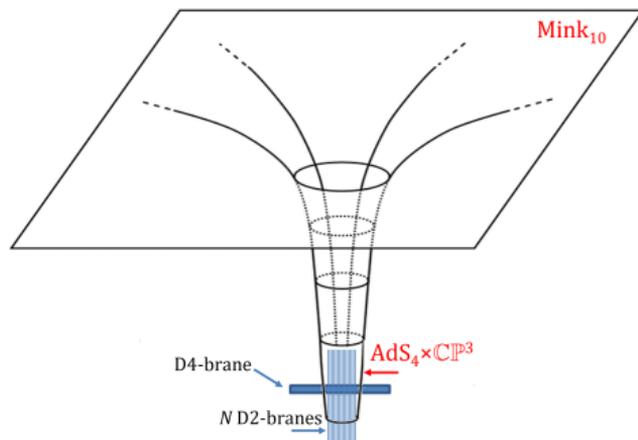


The D2-branes extend along  $x_1, x_2 \dots$

	$t$	$x_1$	$x_2$	$z$	$\xi$	$\theta_1$	$\phi_1$	$\theta_2$	$\phi_2$	$\psi$
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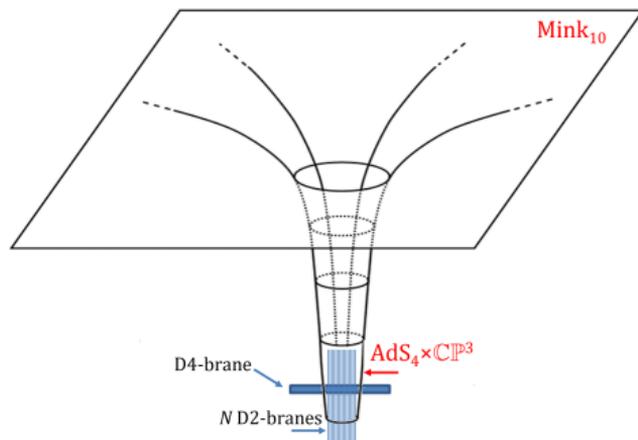


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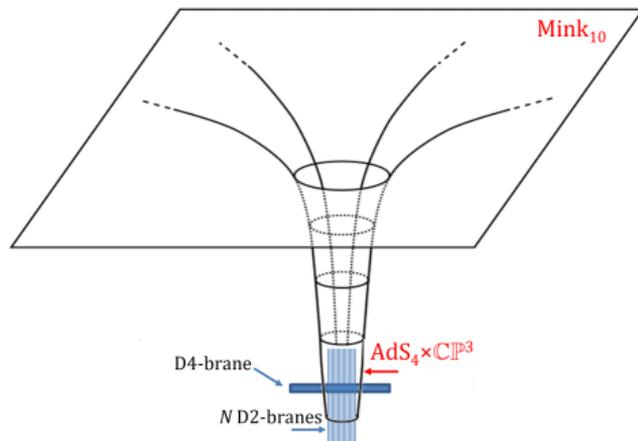


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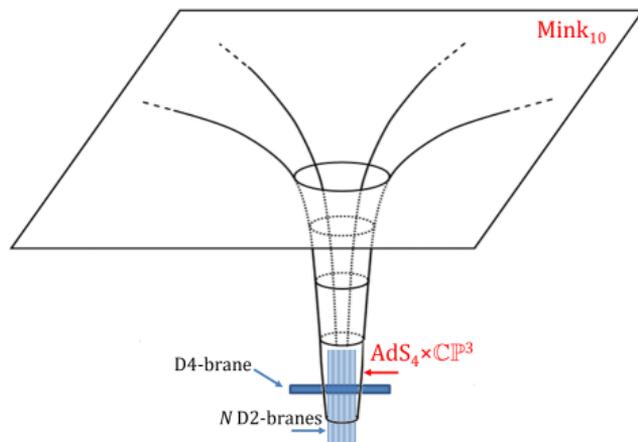
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$$ds^2 = \frac{\ell^2}{z^2} (-dx_0^2 + dx_1^2 + dx_2^2 + dz^2) + 4\ell^2 \left[ d\xi^2 + \cos^2 \xi \sin^2 \xi \left( d\psi + \frac{1}{2} \cos \theta_1 d\phi_1 - \frac{1}{2} \cos \theta_2 d\phi_2 \right)^2 + \frac{1}{4} \cos^2 \xi (d\theta_1^2 + \sin^2 \theta_1 d\phi_1^2) + \frac{1}{4} \sin^2 \xi (d\theta_2^2 + \sin^2 \theta_2 d\phi_2^2) \right],$$

where  $\xi \in [0, \pi/2)$ ,  $\theta_{1,2} \in [0, \pi]$ ,  $\phi_{1,2} \in [0, 2\pi)$ ,  $\psi \in [-2\pi, 2\pi]$ .

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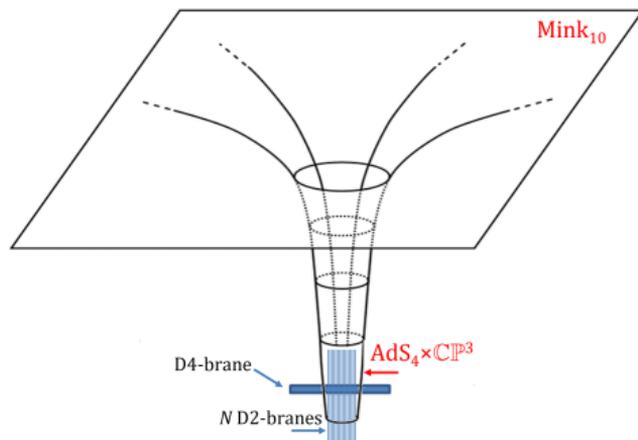
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$$ds^2 = \frac{\ell^2}{z^2} (-dx_0^2 + dx_2^2 + dz^2) + \ell^2 (d\theta_1^2 + \sin^2 \theta_1 d\phi_1^2).$$

Note that  $CP^1$  is just a 2-sphere:  $ds_{CP^1}^2 = \ell^2 (d\theta_1^2 + \sin^2 \theta_1 d\phi_1^2) = \sum_{i=4}^6 dx_i dx_i$ ,  $\sum_{i=4}^6 x_i x_i = \ell^2$ .

## D4-brane embedding

The brane geometry is also supported by  $Q$  units of magnetic flux through  $\mathbb{C}P^1$ ...

$$F = \ell^2 Q d \cos \theta_1 \wedge d\phi_1 = -\ell^2 Q \sin \theta_1 d\theta_1 d\phi_1 = dA.$$

The flux forces exactly  $q \equiv \sqrt{2\lambda} Q$  of the D2-branes to terminate on one side of the D4-brane...

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The  $AdS_3 \times \mathbb{C}P^1 \subset AdS_4 \times \mathbb{C}P^3$  embedding of the probe D4-brane is described by the set of equations:

$$x_2 \stackrel{!}{=} Q \cdot z \quad \& \quad \xi \stackrel{!}{=} 0, \quad \theta_2, \phi_2, \psi \stackrel{!}{=} \text{constant}.$$

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where,

$$ds^2 = \frac{\ell^2}{z^2} \left( -dx_0^2 + dx_1^2 + dx_2^2 + dz^2 \right) + 4\ell^2 \left[ d\xi^2 + \cos^2 \xi \sin^2 \xi \left( d\psi + \frac{1}{2} \cos \theta_1 d\phi_1 - \frac{1}{2} \cos \theta_2 d\phi_2 \right)^2 + \frac{1}{4} \cos^2 \xi \left( d\theta_1^2 + \sin^2 \theta_1 d\phi_1^2 \right) + \frac{1}{4} \sin^2 \xi \left( d\theta_2^2 + \sin^2 \theta_2 d\phi_2^2 \right) \right].$$

# D4-brane embedding

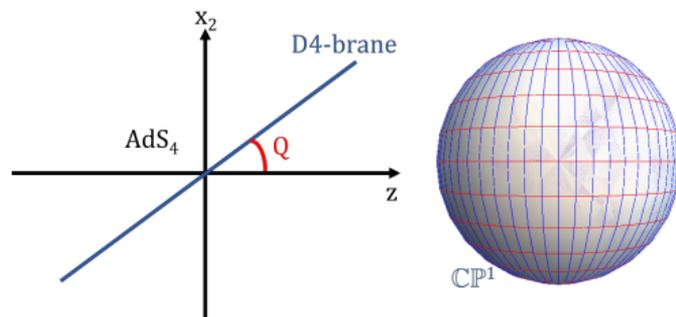
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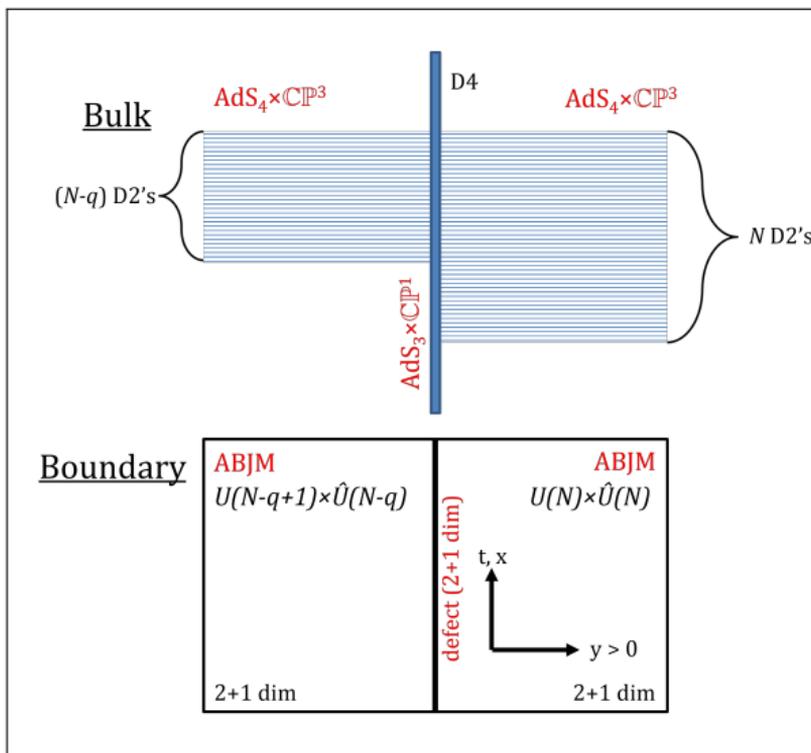
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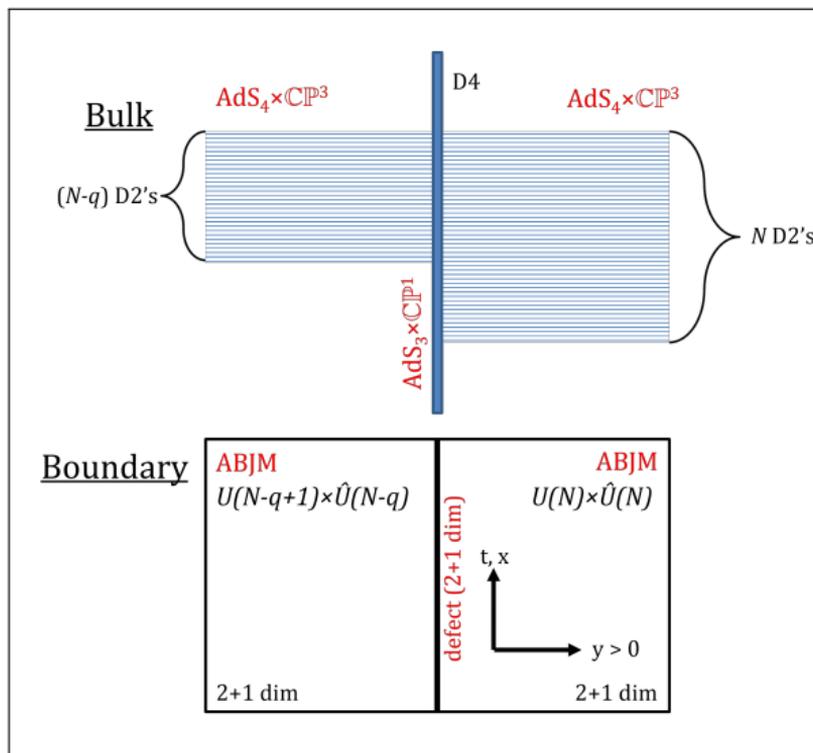


# The D2-D4 dSCFT



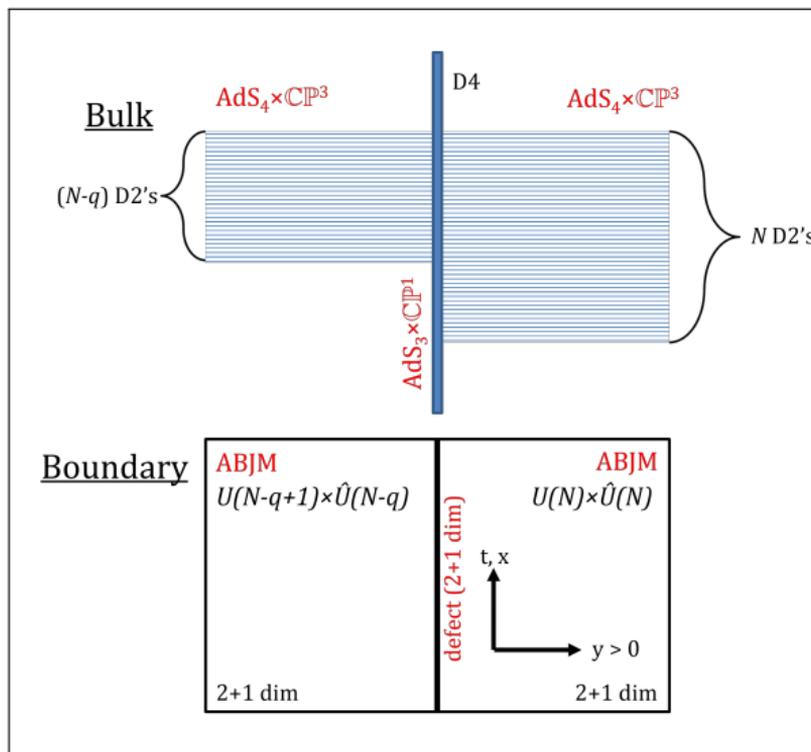
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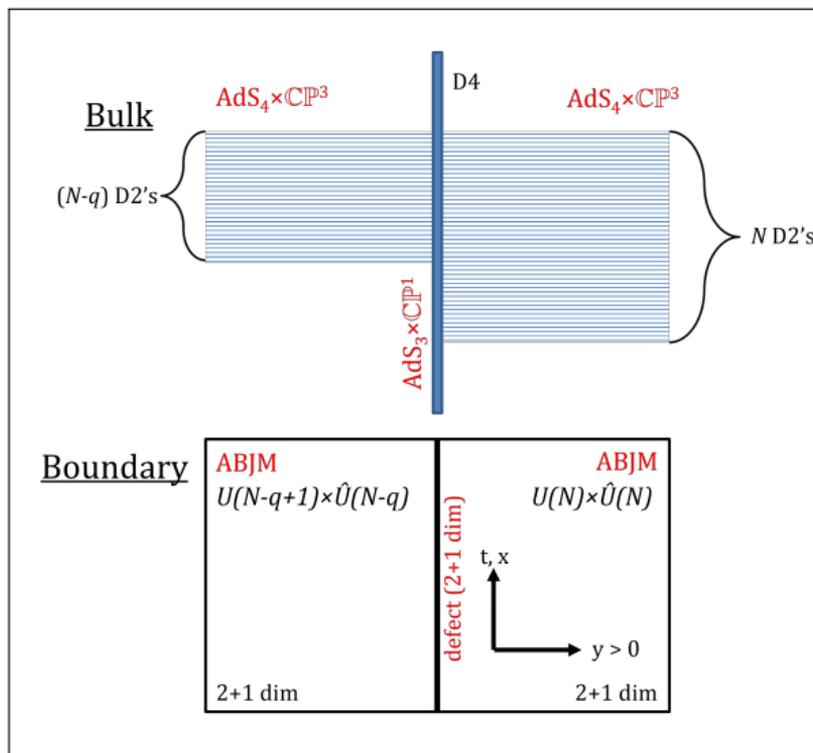
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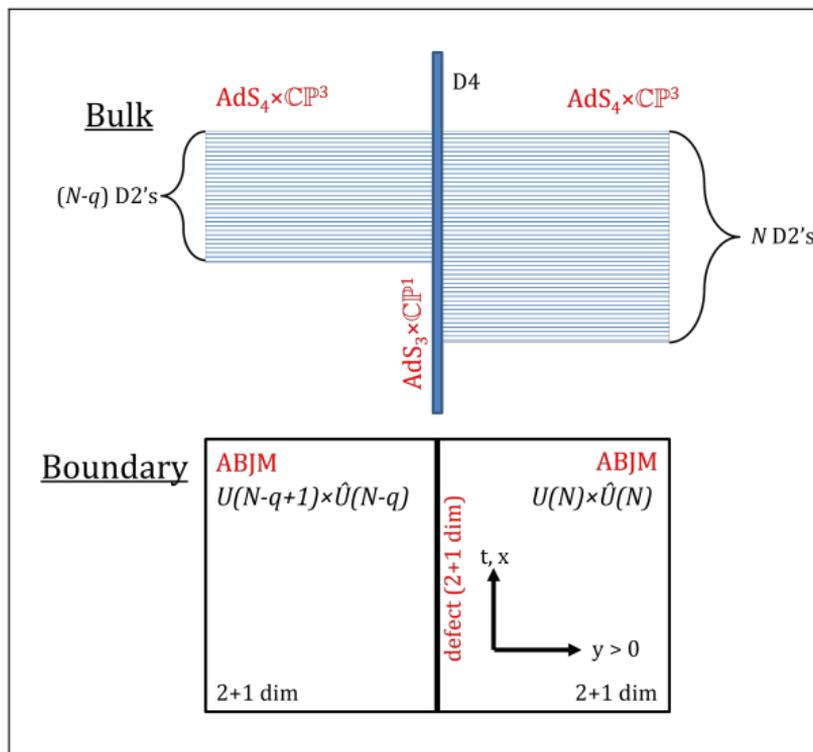
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- Dekel-Oz (2011) proved classical integrability of the D3-D5 & D2-D4 systems in the zero-flux case...

## Subsection 2

### D-brane integrability

# String boundary conditions

In the absence of fermions, the superstring action reduces to the string Polyakov action,

$$S = -\frac{1}{4\pi\alpha'} \int d\tau d\sigma G_{mn} \gamma^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha X^m \partial_\beta X^n + \int d\tau [A_i \dot{X}_i]_{\sigma=0},$$

on either  $\text{AdS}_5 \times S^5$  or  $\text{AdS}_4 \times \mathbb{CP}^3$ . Commonly, the brane cuts the string worldsheet at a constant- $\sigma$  section while the variations of the initial ( $\tau_1$ ) and final ( $\tau_2$ ) string states vanish:

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By varying the Polyakov action it is easy to derive the string boundary conditions:

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{X}_i - 2\pi\alpha' F_{ij} \dot{X}_j &\stackrel{!}{=} 0 && \text{(longitudinal: Neumann-Dirichlet)} \\ \dot{X}_a &\stackrel{!}{=} 0 && \text{(transverse: Dirichlet)}. \end{aligned}$$

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<p><u>AdS<sub>5</sub></u>: <math>\dot{x}_{0,1,2} \stackrel{!}{=} \dot{z} + \kappa \dot{x}_3 \stackrel{!}{=} 0</math> (Neumann)</p> <p><math>\dot{x}_3 - \kappa \dot{z} \stackrel{!}{=} 0</math> (Dirichlet)</p>	<p><u>S<sup>5</sup></u>: <math>\dot{x}_4 \stackrel{!}{=} \kappa (x_5 \dot{x}_6 - x_6 \dot{x}_5)</math> (Neumann-Dirichlet)</p> <p><math>\dot{x}_5 \stackrel{!}{=} \kappa (x_6 \dot{x}_4 - x_4 \dot{x}_6)</math></p> <p><math>\dot{x}_6 \stackrel{!}{=} \kappa (x_4 \dot{x}_5 - x_5 \dot{x}_4)</math></p> <p><math>\dot{x}_7 \stackrel{!}{=} \dot{x}_8 \stackrel{!}{=} \dot{x}_9 \stackrel{!}{=} 0</math> (Dirichlet).</p>
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AdS<sub>4</sub>

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$$\dot{x}_2 - Q \dot{z} \stackrel{!}{=} 0 \quad (\text{Dirichlet})$$

CP<sup>3</sup>

$$\dot{\theta}_1 + \tilde{Q} \sin \theta_1 \dot{\phi}_1 \stackrel{!}{=} \sin \theta_1 \dot{\phi}_1 - \tilde{Q} \dot{\theta}_1 \stackrel{!}{=} 0 \quad (\text{Neumann-Dirichlet})$$

$$\dot{\xi} \stackrel{!}{=} \dot{\theta}_2 \stackrel{!}{=} \dot{\phi}_2 \stackrel{!}{=} \dot{\psi} \stackrel{!}{=} 0 \quad (\text{Dirichlet}),$$

where we have defined  $\tilde{Q} \equiv q/\lambda$ .

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Is the probe D-brane integrable? To be able to answer this question we need to set up a formalism that takes into account the boundary at  $\sigma = 0$ . The double-row monodromy matrix ([Sklyanin, 1987](#)),

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is formed by joining two monodromy matrices through a reflection matrix  $\mathbb{U}$  which generally depends on both the spectral parameter  $x$  and the string embedding coordinates  $(x, z)$ . Taking the derivative,

$$\dot{\mathcal{T}}(x) = \mathcal{M}^{\text{st}}(-x) \cdot \left( \dot{\mathbb{U}}(x) - a_{\tau}^{\text{st}}(-x) \cdot \mathbb{U}(x) - \mathbb{U}(x) \cdot a_{\tau}(x) \right) \cdot \mathcal{M}(x),$$

we conclude that the corresponding transfer matrix will be conserved if

$$\dot{\mathbb{U}}(x) \stackrel{!}{=} a_{\tau}^{\text{st}}(-x) \cdot \mathbb{U}(x) + \mathbb{U}(x) \cdot a_{\tau}(x),$$

where  $a(x)$  stands for the flat fixed frame connection

$$a(x) = \frac{2}{x^2 - 1} \left( j^{(2)} - x \star j^{(2)} \right) + (z - 1) j^{(1)} + \left( \frac{1}{z} - 1 \right) j^{(3)}, \quad z \equiv \sqrt{\frac{x+1}{x-1}}.$$

# Integrable boundary conditions

In terms of the current  $j$ , the D-brane integrability condition becomes:

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{\mathbb{U}} \stackrel{!}{=} & \frac{2}{x^2 - 1} \cdot \left\{ j_\tau^{(2)\text{st}} \mathbb{U} + \mathbb{U} j_\tau^{(2)} \right\} + \frac{2x}{x^2 - 1} \cdot \left\{ j_\sigma^{(2)\text{st}} \mathbb{U} - \mathbb{U} j_\sigma^{(2)} \right\} + \\ & + (z - 1) \cdot \left\{ \mathbb{U} j_\tau^{(1)} + j_\tau^{(3)\text{st}} \mathbb{U} \right\} + \left( \frac{1}{z} - 1 \right) \cdot \left\{ \mathbb{U} j_\tau^{(3)} + j_\tau^{(1)\text{st}} \mathbb{U} \right\}, \end{aligned}$$

so that if the reflection matrix  $\mathbb{U}$  is a constant matrix that does not depend on  $x$  and  $\tau$ ,

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A given set of BCs is integrable, if a reflection matrix  $\mathbb{U}$  can be found that satisfies the above condition.

# Integrable D5-brane in AdS<sub>5</sub>

The coset representative of AdS<sub>5</sub> can be expressed in terms of the standard conformal generators:

$$\mathfrak{g}_{\text{AdS}} = e^{P_\mu x^\mu} z^D,$$

where  $\mu = 0, \dots, 3$  and the 4-dimensional conformal group dimensions is spanned by

$$D = \frac{\gamma_4}{2}, \quad P_\mu = \Pi_+ \gamma_\mu, \quad K_\mu = \Pi_- \gamma_\mu, \quad L_{\mu\nu} = \gamma_{\mu\nu}, \quad \Pi_\pm = \frac{1 \pm \gamma_4}{2}.$$

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The coset representative of AdS<sub>5</sub> can be expressed in terms of the standard conformal generators:

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while the reflection matrix that satisfies the D-brane integrability condition is dynamical:

$$\mathbb{U}_{\text{AdS}} = \gamma_3 + \frac{2\kappa}{x^2 + 1} \cdot \frac{x^\mu \gamma_\mu - \Pi_+ - (x^2 + z^2)\Pi_-}{z}.$$

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The no-flux case  $\kappa = 0$  trivially reduces to the [Dekel-Oz \(2011\)](#) result.

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The coset parametrization of  $S^5$  is

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similar to the D5-brane result [GL-Zarembo \(2021\)](#)... For  $Q = 0$  we obtain the [Dekel-Oz \(2011\)](#) result...

# Integrable D4-brane in $\mathbb{CP}^3$

The coset parametrization of  $\mathbb{CP}^3$  is

$$\mathfrak{g}_{\mathbb{CP}^3} = e^{-R_8\psi} e^{T_3\phi_1} e^{T_4\left(\theta_1 + \frac{\pi}{2}\right)} e^{R_3\phi_2} e^{R_4\left(\theta_2 + \frac{\pi}{2}\right)} e^{2T_6\xi}$$

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Благодаря!