is the complex number

$$T(\sigma_1,\sigma_2,\sigma_3)=(1-\sigma_2^*\sigma_1)^{-1}(1-\sigma_2^*\sigma_3)(1-\sigma_1^*\sigma_3)^{-1}\,.$$

The group $\mathrm{GL}(q,\mathbf{C})\simeq\mathbf{C}^*$ acts on the upper halfplane by $(\lambda,z)\mapsto|\lambda|^2z$ and so the orbits are described by the argument of the complex number z. So the characteristic invariant in this case is just

$$\arg\left((1-\sigma_2^*\sigma_1)^{-1}(1-\sigma_2^*\sigma_3)(1-\sigma_1^*\sigma_3)^{-1}\right).$$

It is equivalent to the invariant θ considered in [KR]. This invariant, almost in our terms, was known to E. Cartan (see [Ca]).

REMARK 2. Let us consider the case where $p=q$. Then the Stiefel manifold is $\mathrm{U}(q)$, and the content of Proposition 4.2 is that for $(\sigma_1,\sigma_2,\sigma_3)\in S^3_\top$

$$T(\sigma_1,\sigma_2,\sigma_3)=(1-\sigma_2^*\sigma_1)^{-1}(1-\sigma_2^*\sigma_3)(1-\sigma_1^*\sigma_3)^{-1}$$

is an invertible skew-Hermitian matrix. The orbits of $\mathrm{GL}(q,\mathbf{C})$ in its action on nondegenerate Hermitian forms are characterized by the signature. So the characteristic invariant as described in Theorem 4.3 in this case reduces to $\operatorname{sgn} iT(\sigma_1,\sigma_2,\sigma_3)$. As concerns Theorem 4.4, notice that the invariant S is trivial (equal to $-\mathbf{1}_q$), so one is only concerned with the invariant $\arg\det T$. The bounded domain D is of tube type and the description of the invariant through the function $\arg\det$ coincides with the approach of this problem in [CØ], where the invariant was introduced under the name of *generalized Maslov index.*

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Jean-Louis Clerc

Institut Élie Cartan
Université Henri Poincaré
B.P. 239
F-54506 Vandœuvre-lès-Nancy Cedex
France
e-mail: clerc@iecn.u-nancy.fr