# THE DRINFELD CENTER OF THE CATEGORY OF MACKEY FUNCTORS

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We determine the center of the tensor category of Mackey functors for a finite group. Details are in [5].

## 1. The center of a tensor category

The center of a tensor category was defined by Drinfeld, Joyal and Street ([3]), and Magid ([4]). We review the definition. Let  $\mathcal{A}$  be a tensor category over a field. The tensor product of objects  $A, B \in \mathcal{A}$  is denoted by  $A \otimes B$ , and the unit object of  $\mathcal{A}$  is denoted by I.

The center  $\mathbb{Z}(\mathcal{A})$  is a category defined as follows. An object of  $\mathbb{Z}(\mathcal{A})$  is a pair  $(A, \theta)$ , where  $A \in \mathcal{A}$  and  $\theta$  is a family of isomorphisms  $\theta_B \colon B \otimes A \to A \otimes B$  for all  $B \in \mathcal{A}$  satisfying the conditions

$$\theta_{B\otimes B'}=(\theta_B\otimes 1)\circ (1\otimes \theta_{B'}) \quad \text{for all } B,B'\in \mathcal{A}, \ \theta_I=1.$$

A morphism  $(A, \theta) \to (A', \theta')$  of  $\mathbb{Z}(A)$  is a morphism  $f \colon A \to A'$  of A satisfying  $(f \otimes 1) \circ \theta_B = \theta'_B \circ (1 \otimes f) \quad \text{for all } B \in \mathcal{A}.$ 

#### 2. Mackey functors

We review the definition of a Mackey functor ([1], [2]). Let G be a finite group. Denote by S the category of finite G-sets. For  $X, Y \in S$ , we write the direct product  $X \times Y$  as XY, and the disjoint sum of X and Y as X + Y. Let K be a field. Denote by V the category of vector spaces over K.

A Mackey functor M on S consists of k-vector spaces M(X) for all G-sets X and linear maps  $f_*: M(X) \to M(Y)$  and  $f^*: M(Y) \to M(X)$  for all G-maps  $f: X \to Y$  satisfying the following conditions:

- (i) M(X) and  $f_*$  form a functor  $S \to V$ .
- (ii) M(X) and  $f^*$  form a functor  $S^{op} \to \mathcal{V}$ .

## (iii) For a pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \stackrel{p}{\longrightarrow} & X' \\ f \downarrow & & \downarrow f' \\ Y & \stackrel{q}{\longrightarrow} & Y' \end{array}$$

in S, the diagram

$$M(X) \stackrel{p^*}{\longleftarrow} M(X')$$
 $f_* \downarrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow f'_*$ 
 $M(Y) \stackrel{q^*}{\longleftarrow} M(Y')$ 

is commutative.

(iv) Let  $i_1: X_1 \to X_1 + X_2$  and  $i_2: X_2 \to X_1 + X_2$  be the inclusion maps in  $\mathcal{S}$ . Then the maps

$$(i_{1*}, i_{2*}) \colon M(X_1) \oplus M(X_2) \to M(X_1 + X_2), \ (i_1^*, i_2^*) \colon M(X_1 + X_2) \to M(X_1) \oplus M(X_2)$$

are inverse to each other.

(v) 
$$M(\emptyset) = 0$$
.

The category of Mackey functors on S is denoted by M(S).

We use the following fact later. If M is a Mackey functor and  $i: Y \to X$  is a monomorphism in S, then the composite

$$M(Y) \xrightarrow{i_*} M(X) \xrightarrow{i^*} M(Y)$$

is the identity. So the composite

$$M(X) \xrightarrow{i^*} M(Y) \xrightarrow{i_*} M(X)$$

is an idempotent endomorphism.

The category  $\mathbb{M}(S)$  is a tensor category. Its tensor product is defined as follows. Let  $M, M', M'' \in \mathbb{M}(S)$ . A bilinear morphism  $\phi \colon (M, M') \to M''$  is a family of linear maps  $\phi_{X,Y} \colon M(X) \otimes M'(Y) \to M''(XY)$  which commute with  $f_*$  and  $f^*$  for the both variables X,Y. Given  $M,M' \in \mathbb{M}(S)$ , there exists a bilinear morphism  $(M,M') \to M_0$  which is universal among all bilinear morphisms  $(M,M') \to M''$ . We define  $M_0 = M \otimes M'$ .

If C is a category with pullbacks and sums, Mackey functors on C are similarly defined. We denote by M(C) the category of Mackey functors on C.

#### 3. The main result

We define a category  $\mathcal{T}_{c*}$ . An object of  $\mathcal{T}_{c*}$  is a pair (X,a) of  $X \in \mathcal{S}$  and an automorphism  $a: X \to X$  of  $\mathcal{S}$  such that a leaves all G-orbits in X stable. A morphism  $(X,a) \to (X',a')$  of  $\mathcal{T}_{c*}$  is a morphism  $f: X \to X'$  of  $\mathcal{S}$  such that  $f \circ a = a' \circ f$ .

The category  $\mathcal{T}_{c*}$  has pullbacks and sums, so the category  $\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{T}_{c*})$  is defined. A construction of pullback in  $\mathcal{T}_{c*}$  is as follows. Given a diagram

$$(Y,b)$$

$$\downarrow$$
 $(X,a) \longrightarrow (Z,c)$ 
 $V$ 

in  $\mathcal{T}_{c*}$ , form a pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} W & \longrightarrow & Y \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \longrightarrow & Z \end{array}$$

in S. The maps  $a: X \to X$  and  $b: Y \to Y$  induce  $d: W \to W$ . Put

$$V = \bigcup \{U \mid U \text{ is a } G\text{-orbit in } W, d(U) = U\}$$

and e = d|V. Then

$$(V,e) \longrightarrow (Y,b)$$

$$\downarrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow$$

$$(X,a) \longrightarrow (Z,c)$$

is a pullback in  $\mathcal{T}_{c*}$ .

Our result is

**Theorem.** An equivalence of categories  $\mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(S)) \simeq \mathbb{M}(\mathcal{T}_{c*})$ .

By definition an object of  $\mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(S))$  is a pair  $(M,\theta)$  of  $M \in \mathbb{M}(S)$  and a family  $\theta$  of isomorphisms  $\theta_{M'} \colon M' \otimes M \to M \otimes M'$  for all  $M' \in \mathbb{M}(S)$  satisfying certain conditions. We may also regard an object of  $\mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(S))$  as a pair  $(M,\omega)$  of  $M \in \mathbb{M}(S)$  and a family  $\omega$  of isomorphisms  $\omega_{X,Y} \colon M(XY) \to M(YX)$  for all  $X,Y \in S$  satisfying (i)–(iii):

- (i)  $\omega_{X,Y}$  is natural in X,Y.
- (ii) The diagram

$$M(XYZ) \stackrel{\omega_{X,YZ}}{\longrightarrow} M(YZX)$$
 $\omega_{XY,Z} \searrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow^{\omega_{Y,ZX}}$ 
 $N(ZXY)$ 

commutes for all  $X, Y, Z \in \mathcal{S}$ .

(iii)  $\omega_{1,X} = 1$  for a one-element G-set 1.

The equivalence of the theorem is given as follows. Let  $(M, \omega) \in \mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(S))$ . For an object  $(X, a) \in \mathcal{T}_{c*}$ , define L(X, a) as the pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} L(X,a) & \rightarrow & M(X) \\ & & & \downarrow^{(a,1)_*} \\ \downarrow & & M(XX) \\ & & & \downarrow^{\omega_{X,X}} \\ M(X) & \xrightarrow[(1,1)_*]{} & M(XX) \end{array}$$

where  $(a,1): X \to XX$  is the map  $x \mapsto (a(x),x)$ , and  $(1,1): X \to XX$  is the diagonal map. Then the assignment  $(X,a) \mapsto L(X,a)$  becomes a Mackey functor L on  $\mathcal{T}_{c*}$ . The functor  $(M,\omega) \mapsto L$  gives the equivalence  $\mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{S})) \simeq \mathbb{M}(\mathcal{T}_{c*})$ .

#### 4. Outline of the proof

The equivalence of the theorem is obtained as the composite of equivalences

$$\mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{S})) \underset{(1)}{\simeq} _{\mathcal{S}}\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{S},\mathcal{S})_{\mathcal{S}} \underset{(2)}{\simeq} \mathbb{M}_{0}(\mathcal{W}') \underset{(3)}{\simeq} \mathbb{M}(\mathcal{W}_{ic*}) \underset{(4)}{\simeq} \mathbb{M}(\mathcal{T}_{c*}).$$

We will sketch each equivalence in order.

 $(1) \ \mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{S})) \simeq_{\mathcal{S}} \mathbb{M}(\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{S})_{\mathcal{S}}.$ 

A bi-Mackey functor N on S consists of vector spaces N(X, Y) for all G-sets X and Y, and linear maps

$$\langle f, g \rangle_* \colon N(X, Y) \to N(X', Y'),$$
  
 $\langle f, g \rangle^* \colon N(X', Y') \to N(X, Y)$ 

for all G-maps  $f: X \to X'$  and  $g: Y \to Y'$  satisfying (i)–(ix):

- (i) The collection of N(X,Y) and  $\langle f,g\rangle_*$  forms a functor  $\mathcal{S}\times\mathcal{S}\to\mathcal{V}$ .
- (ii) The collection of N(X,Y) and  $\langle f,g\rangle^*$  forms a functor  $\mathcal{S}^{\mathrm{op}}\times\mathcal{S}^{\mathrm{op}}\to\mathcal{V}$ .
- (iii) For G-maps  $f: X \to X'$  and  $g: Y \to Y'$ , the diagrams

$$N(X,Y) \xrightarrow{\langle f,1\rangle_*} N(X',Y) \qquad N(X,Y) \xleftarrow{\langle f,1\rangle^*} N(X',Y)$$

$$\langle 1,g\rangle^* \uparrow \qquad \qquad \uparrow \langle 1,g\rangle_* \qquad \langle 1,g\rangle_* \downarrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow \langle 1,g\rangle_*$$

$$N(X,Y') \xrightarrow{\langle f,1\rangle_*} N(X',Y') \qquad N(X,Y') \xleftarrow{\langle f,1\rangle^*} N(X',Y')$$

are commutative.

$$X_1 \xrightarrow{f_1} X'_1$$

$$\downarrow^{p'}$$

$$X_2 \xrightarrow{f_2} X'_2$$

is a pullback diagram, then

$$N(X_1,Y) \xrightarrow{\langle f_1,1\rangle_*} N(X_1',Y)$$

$$\langle p,1\rangle^* \uparrow \qquad \qquad \uparrow \langle p',1\rangle^*$$

$$N(X_2,Y) \xrightarrow{\langle f_2,1\rangle_*} N(X_2',Y)$$

is commutative.

- (v) The analogue of (iv) for the second variable.
- (vi) Let  $i_1: X_1 \to X_1 + X_2$ ,  $i_2: X_2 \to X_1 + X_2$  denote the inclusion maps. Then the maps

$$(\langle i_1, 1 \rangle_*, \langle i_2, 1 \rangle_*) \colon N(X_1, Y) \oplus N(X_2, Y) \to N(X_1 + X_2, Y),$$
$$(\langle i_1, 1 \rangle^*, \langle i_2, 1 \rangle^*) \colon N(X_1 + X_2, Y) \to N(X_1, Y) \oplus N(X_2, Y)$$

are inverse to each other.

- (vii) The analogue of (vi) for the second variable.
- (viii)  $N(\emptyset, Y) = 0$ .
- (ix)  $N(X, \emptyset) = 0$ .

A bi-Mackey functor on S with two-sided action is a bi-Mackey functor N on S equipped with maps

$$Z!: N(X,Y) \rightarrow N(ZX,ZY),$$
  
 $!Z: N(X,Y) \rightarrow N(XZ,YZ)$ 

for  $X, Y, Z \in \mathcal{S}$  satisfying (i)–(ix):

(i) For G-maps  $f: X \to X'$  and  $g: Y \to Y'$ , the diagrams

$$\begin{array}{ccc} N(X,Y) & \xrightarrow{\langle f,g\rangle_*} & N(X',Y') \\ & |z\downarrow & & & \downarrow !z \\ N(XZ,YZ) & \xrightarrow{\langle 1f,1g\rangle_*} & N(X'Z,Y'Z) \end{array}$$

and

$$N(X,Y) \leftarrow \stackrel{\langle f,g \rangle^*}{\longleftarrow} N(X',Y')$$
 $|z| \downarrow |z|$ 
 $N(XZ,YZ) \leftarrow \stackrel{\langle 1f,1g \rangle^*}{\longleftarrow} N(X'Z,Y'Z)$ 

are commutative.

(ii) For G-map  $h: Z \to Z'$ , the diagrams

$$\begin{array}{ccc} N(X,Y) & \xrightarrow{\cdot !Z} & N(XZ,YZ) \\ & :_{Z'} \downarrow & & & \downarrow^{\langle 1,1h \rangle_*} \\ N(XZ',YZ') & \xrightarrow{\langle 1h,1 \rangle^*} & N(XZ,YZ') \end{array}$$

and

$$N(X,Y) \xrightarrow{!Z} N(XZ,YZ)$$

$$!Z' \downarrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow \langle 1h,1 \rangle_{*}$$

$$N(XZ',YZ') \xrightarrow{\langle 1,1h \rangle_{*}} N(XZ',YZ)$$

are commutative.

(iii) The diagram

$$N(X,Y) \xrightarrow{1Z} N(XZ,YZ)$$
 $\downarrow 1Z'$ 
 $N(XZZ',YZZ')$ 

is commutative.

(iv) For a one-element G-set 1,

$$!1: N(X,Y) \to N(X1,Y1)$$

is the identity.

- (v)-(viii) The analogue of (i)-(iv) for Z!.
- (ix) The diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
N(X,Y) & \xrightarrow{Z!} & N(ZX,ZY) \\
!w & & \downarrow !w \\
N(XW,YW) & \xrightarrow{Z!} & N(ZXW,ZYW)
\end{array}$$

is commutative.

The category of bi-Mackey functors on  $\mathcal S$  with two-sided action is denoted by  $_{\mathcal S}M(\mathcal S,\mathcal S)_{\mathcal S}.$ 

**Proposition.** We have an equivalence  $\mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(S)) \simeq_{\mathcal{S}} \mathbb{M}(S, S)_{\mathcal{S}}$ .

This equivalence takes an object  $(M, \omega) \in \mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(S))$  to an object  $N \in \mathcal{S}\mathbb{M}(S, S)$  defined as follows. For  $X, Y \in S$ 

$$N(X,Y) = M(XY).$$

The operation

$$!Z: N(X,Y) \rightarrow N(XZ,YZ)$$

is the composite

$$M(XY) \xrightarrow{(11p)^*} M(XYZ) \xrightarrow{(11\Delta)_*} M(XYZZ) \xrightarrow{(1\tau 1)_*} M(XZYZ),$$

where  $\Delta: Z \to ZZ$  is the diagonal map and  $\tau: YZ \to ZY$  is the transposition. The operation

$$Z!: N(X,Y) \rightarrow N(ZX,ZY)$$

is the composite

$$M(XY) \stackrel{(p11)^*}{\longrightarrow} M(ZXY) \stackrel{(\Delta 11)^*}{\longrightarrow} M(ZZXY) \stackrel{\omega_{Z,ZXY}}{\longrightarrow} M(ZXYZ) \stackrel{(11\tau)^*}{\longrightarrow} M(ZXZY).$$

(2)  $_{\mathcal{S}}\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{S},\mathcal{S})_{\mathcal{S}}\simeq\mathbb{M}_{0}(\mathcal{W}').$ 

Let  $\mathcal{W}'$  be the category whose objects are diagrams

$$X \stackrel{U}{\searrow} Y$$

of G-sets such that the induced maps  $U \to XY$ ,  $V \to XY$  are injective, and morphisms are natural ones. This has pullbacks and sums, so one has the category  $\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{W}')$  of Mackey functors on  $\mathcal{W}'$ .

Suppose that  $(M, \omega) \in \mathbb{Z}(\mathbb{M}(S))$  corresponds to  $N \in \mathcal{SM}(S, S)_S$  under the equivalence (1). Let

$$\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} X & V \\ X & Y \end{pmatrix} \in \mathcal{W}'.$$

As noted after the definition of a Mackey functor, the injection  $V \to XY$  determines an idempotent endomorphism on M(XY). As M(XY) = N(X,Y), this is an idempotent endomorphism on N(X,Y), which we denote by

$$e^R(X \leftarrow V \rightarrow Y).$$

Similarly the injection  $U \to YX$  determines an idempotent endomorphism on M(YX). Through the isomorphism  $\omega_{X,Y} \colon M(XY) \to M(YX)$  and M(XY) = N(X,Y), this yields an idempotent endomorphism on N(X,Y), which we denote by

$$e^L(X \leftarrow U \rightarrow Y).$$

**Lemma.** The idempotent endomorphisms  $e^L(X \leftarrow U \rightarrow Y)$  and  $e^R(X \leftarrow V \rightarrow Y)$  on N(X,Y) commute with each other.

We set

$$H(\mathbf{X}) = \operatorname{Im} e^{L}(X \leftarrow U \rightarrow Y) \cap \operatorname{Im} e^{R}(X \leftarrow V \rightarrow Y)$$

Then the assignment  $X \mapsto H(X)$  becomes a Mackey functor H on  $\mathcal{W}'$ . We thus obtain a functor

$$_{\mathcal{S}}\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{S},\mathcal{S})_{\mathcal{S}} \to \mathbb{M}(\mathcal{W}')$$

$$N \mapsto H.$$

This is fully faithful. To describe its image, we define a full subcategory  $M_0(\mathcal{W}')$  of  $M(\mathcal{W}')$ .

An object of  $M_0(\mathcal{W}')$  is an object H of  $M(\mathcal{W}')$  which satisfies (i)-(viii):

(i) Suppose that

$$\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} U_1 + U_2 \\ X \swarrow & Y \\ V \end{pmatrix}$$

is an object of  $\mathcal{W}'$ . Put

$$\mathbf{X}_{1} = \begin{pmatrix} U_{1} \\ X \searrow Y \\ V \end{pmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{X}_{2} = \begin{pmatrix} U_{2} \\ X \searrow Y \\ V \end{pmatrix}$$

and let  $i_1: X_1 \to X$ ,  $i_2: X_2 \to X$  be the natural injections. Then the maps

$$(\mathbf{i_{1*}}, \mathbf{i_{2*}}) \colon H(\mathbf{X}_1) \oplus H(\mathbf{X}_2) \to H(\mathbf{X}),$$
  
 $(\mathbf{i_1^*}, \mathbf{i_2^*}) \colon H(\mathbf{X}) \to H(\mathbf{X}_1) \oplus H(\mathbf{X}_2)$ 

are inverse to each other.

(ii)

$$H\left(X \bigvee_{V} \bigvee_{V} Y\right) = 0.$$

- (iii) The analogue of (i) for the V-component.
- (iv) The analogue of (ii) for the V-component.
- (v) Let

$$\mathbf{X}_{1} = \begin{pmatrix} U_{1} \\ X_{1} & Y \\ V_{1} \end{pmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{X}_{2} = \begin{pmatrix} U_{2} \\ X_{2} & Y \\ V_{2} \end{pmatrix}$$

be objects of  $\mathcal{W}'$ . Put

$$\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} U_1 + U_2 \\ X_1 + X_2 & & \\ & & & Y \\ V_1 + V_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

and let  $\mathbf{j}_1 \colon \mathbf{X}_1 \to \mathbf{X}, \, \mathbf{j}_2 \colon \mathbf{X}_2 \to \mathbf{X}$  be the natural injections. Then the maps

$$(\mathbf{j_{1*}}, \mathbf{j_{2*}}) \colon H(\mathbf{X}_1) \oplus H(\mathbf{X}_2) \to H(\mathbf{X}),$$
  
 $(\mathbf{j_1^*}, \mathbf{j_2^*}) \colon H(\mathbf{X}) \to H(\mathbf{X}_1) \oplus H(\mathbf{X}_2)$ 

are inverse to each other.

(vi) The analogue of (v) for the Y-component.

(vii) Let

$$\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} U \\ a & b \\ X & Y \\ c & A \end{pmatrix}$$

be an object of  $\mathcal{W}'$ . Let

$$V_1 \xrightarrow{(c_1,d_1)} UU$$
 $e \downarrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow ab$ 
 $V \xrightarrow{(c,d)} XY$ 

be a pullback. Put

$$\mathbf{U} = \begin{pmatrix} U \\ 1 & \downarrow 1 \\ U & \downarrow 1 \\ C_1 & \downarrow d_1 \\ V_1 & \end{pmatrix}$$

and

$$\mathbf{a} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ a \\ e \end{pmatrix} : \mathbf{U} \to \mathbf{X}.$$

Then the maps

$$\mathbf{a}_* : H(\mathbf{U}) \to H(\mathbf{X}),$$
  
 $\mathbf{a}^* : H(\mathbf{X}) \to H(\mathbf{U})$ 

are inverse to each other.

(viii) The analogue of (vii) for the V-component.

The functor  $_{\mathcal{S}}\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{S},\mathcal{S})_{\mathcal{S}}\to\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{W}')$  constructed before has the image  $\mathbb{M}_0(\mathcal{W}')$ , and yields

**Proposition.** An equivalence  $_{\mathcal{S}}\mathbb{M}(\mathcal{S},\mathcal{S})_{\mathcal{S}}\simeq\mathbb{M}_{0}(\mathcal{W}')$ .

(3)  $\mathbb{M}_0(\mathcal{W}') \simeq \mathbb{M}(\mathcal{W}_{ic*}).$ 

Let  $W_{ic*}$  be the full subcategory of W' consisting of finite sums of diagrams

$$X \stackrel{V}{\searrow} Y$$

in which X, Y, U, V are transitive G-sets and the four arrows are isomorphisms.

Lemma. The inclusion functor  $\mathcal{W}_{ic*} \to \mathcal{W}'$  has a right adjoint.

Denote the inclusion  $W_{ic*} \to W'$  by i and a right adjoint by R.

**Proposition.** We have an equivalence  $M_0(\mathcal{W}') \simeq M(\mathcal{W}_{ic*})$ .

Under the equivalence objects  $H \in \mathbb{M}_0(\mathcal{W}')$  and  $K \in \mathbb{M}(\mathcal{W}_{ic*})$  correspond if

$$H \cong K \circ R, \quad K \cong H \circ i.$$

(4)  $M(W_{ic*}) \simeq M(T_{c*})$ .

An object of the category  $\mathcal{T}_{c*}$  is a pair (X, a) of  $X \in \mathcal{S}$  and an automorphism  $a: X \to X$  such that a leaves all G-orbits stable. The functor

$$(X,a) \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} X & X \\ 1 & X \\ X & X \end{pmatrix}$$

gives an equivalence  $\mathcal{T}_{c*} \simeq \mathcal{W}_{ic*}$ . This yields

**Proposition.** An equivalence  $M(W_{ic*}) \simeq M(T_{c*})$ .

Combining (1)-(4), we obtain  $\mathbb{Z}(M(S)) \simeq M(\mathcal{T}_{c*})$ .

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