1046-14-749 **Sean Lawton*** (slawton@math.ist.utl.pt), University of Maryland, Department of Mathematics, College Park, MD 20742, and **Carlos Florentino** (cfloren@math.ist.utl.pt), Lisbon, Portugal. *The topology of the moduli of free group representations.*

Let G be a complex affine reductive group and let K be a maximal compact subgroup. We have recently proved that the moduli space of representations $\mathrm{Hom}(F_r, G)/\!\!/G$ deformation retracts to the quotient space $\mathrm{Hom}(F_r, K)/K$ for any rank r free group F_r. If F_r is replaced by other finitely generated groups the theorem may be false, but not always. In this talk we discuss this theorem and some examples. (Received September 10, 2008)