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The Geometry of Infinite-Dimensional Groups

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To our Teachers:

to Vladimir Igorevich Arnold
and to the memory of Peter Slodowy

Preface

The aim of this monograph is to give an overview of various classes of infinite-dimensional Lie groups and their applications, mostly in Hamiltonian mechanics, fluid dynamics, integrable systems, and complex geometry. We have chosen to present the unifying ideas of the theory by concentrating on specific types and examples of infinite-dimensional Lie groups. Of course, the selection of the topics is largely influenced by the taste of the authors, but we hope that this selection is wide enough to describe various phenomena arising in the geometry of infinite-dimensional Lie groups and to convince the reader that they are appealing objects to study from both purely mathematical and more applied points of view. This book can be thought of as complementary to the existing more algebraic treatments, in particular, those covering the structure and representation theory of infinite-dimensional Lie algebras, as well as to more analytic ones developing calculus on infinite-dimensional manifolds.

This monograph originated from advanced graduate courses and mini-courses on infinite-dimensional groups and gauge theory given by the first author at the University of Toronto, at the CIRM in Marseille, and at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris in 2001–2004. It is based on various classical and recent results that have shaped this newly emerged part of infinite-dimensional geometry and group theory.

Our intention was to make the book concise, relatively self-contained, and useful in a graduate course. For this reason, throughout the text, we have included a large number of problems, ranging from simple exercises to open questions. At the end of each section we provide bibliographical notes, trying to make the literature guide more comprehensive, in an attempt to bring the interested reader in contact with some of the most recent developments in this exciting subject, the geometry of infinite-dimensional groups. We hope that this book will be useful to both students and researchers in Lie theory, geometry, and Hamiltonian systems.

It is our pleasure to thank all those who helped us with the preparation of this manuscript. We are deeply indebted to our teachers, collaborators, and

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Contents

Preface VII

Introduction 1

I Preliminaries 7
1 Lie Groups and Lie Algebras 7
1.1 Lie Groups and an Infinite-Dimensional Setting 7
1.2 The Lie Algebra of a Lie Group 9
1.3 The Exponential Map 12
1.4 Abstract Lie Algebras 15
2 Adjoint and Coadjoint Orbits 17
2.1 The Adjoint Representation 17
2.2 The Coadjoint Representation 19
3 Central Extensions 21
3.1 Lie Algebra Central Extensions 22
3.2 Central Extensions of Lie Groups 24
4 The Euler Equations for Lie Groups 26
4.1 Poisson Structures on Manifolds 26
4.2 Hamiltonian Equations on the Dual of a Lie Algebra . . . 29
4.3 A Riemannian Approach to the Euler Equations 30
4.4 Poisson Pairs and Bi-Hamiltonian Structures 35
4.5 Integrable Systems and the Liouville–Arnold Theorem . 38
5 Symplectic Reduction 40
5.1 Hamiltonian Group Actions 41
5.2 Symplectic Quotients 42
6 Bibliographical Notes 44

II Infinite-Dimensional Lie Groups: Their Geometry, Orbits, and Dynamical Systems 47
1 Loop Groups and Affine Lie Algebras 47
1.1 The Central Extension of the Loop Lie algebra 47

1.2 Coadjoint Orbits of Affine Lie Groups 52
1.3 Construction of the Central Extension of the Loop Group 58
1.4 Bibliographical Notes 65
2 Diffeomorphisms of the Circle and the Virasoro–Bott Group . . 67
2.1 Central Extensions 67
2.2 Coadjoint Orbits of the Group of Circle Diffeomorphisms 70
2.3 The Virasoro Coadjoint Action and Hill's Operators . . . 72
2.4 The Virasoro–Bott Group and the Korteweg–de Vries Equation 80
2.5 The Bi-Hamiltonian Structure of the KdV Equation . . . 82
2.6 Bibliographical Notes 86
3 Groups of Diffeomorphisms 88
3.1 The Group of Volume-Preserving Diffeomorphisms and Its Coadjoint Representation 88
3.2 The Euler Equation of an Ideal Incompressible Fluid . . . 90
3.3 The Hamiltonian Structure and First Integrals of the Euler Equations for an Incompressible Fluid 91
3.4 Semidirect Products: The Group Setting for an Ideal Magnetohydrodynamics and Compressible Fluids 95
3.5 Symplectic Structure on the Space of Knots and the Landau–Lifschitz Equation 99
3.6 Diffeomorphism Groups as Metric Spaces 105
3.7 Bibliographical Notes 109
4 The Group of Pseudodifferential Symbols 111
4.1 The Lie Algebra of Pseudodifferential Symbols 111
4.2 Outer Derivations and Central Extensions of ψDS 113
4.3 The Manin Triple of Pseudodifferential Symbols 117
4.4 The Lie Group of α-Pseudodifferential Symbols 119
4.5 The Exponential Map for Pseudodifferential Symbols . . 122
4.6 Poisson Structures on the Group of α-Pseudodifferential Symbols 124
4.7 Integrable Hierarchies on the Poisson Lie Group $\widetilde{G}_{\mathrm{INT}}$. 129
4.8 Bibliographical Notes 132
5 Double Loop and Elliptic Lie Groups 134
5.1 Central Extensions of Double Loop Groups and Their Lie Algebras 134
5.2 Coadjoint Orbits 136
5.3 Holomorphic Loop Groups and Monodromy 138
5.4 Digression: Definition of the Calogero–Moser Systems . . 142
5.5 The Trigonometric Calogero–Moser System and Affine Lie Algebras 146
5.6 The Elliptic Calogero–Moser System and Elliptic Lie Algebras 149
5.7 Bibliographical Notes 152

III Applications of Groups: Topological and Holomorphic Gauge Theories . . . 155
1 Holomorphic Bundles and Hitchin Systems . . . 155
1.1 Basics on Holomorphic Bundles . . . 155
1.2 Hitchin Systems . . . 159
1.3 Bibliographical Notes . . . 162
2 Poisson Structures on Moduli Spaces . . . 163
2.1 Moduli Spaces of Flat Connections on Riemann Surfaces . . . 163
2.2 Poincaré Residue and the Cauchy–Stokes Formula . . . 170
2.3 Moduli Spaces of Holomorphic Bundles . . . 173
2.4 Bibliographical Notes . . . 179
3 Around the Chern–Simons Functional . . . 180
3.1 A Reminder on the Lagrangian Formalism . . . 180
3.2 The Topological Chern–Simons Action Functional . . . 184
3.3 The Holomorphic Chern–Simons Action Functional . . . 187
3.4 A Reminder on Linking Numbers . . . 189
3.5 The Abelian Chern–Simons Path Integral and Linking Numbers . . . 192
3.6 Bibliographical Notes . . . 196
4 Polar Homology . . . 197
4.1 Introduction to Polar Homology . . . 197
4.2 Polar Homology of Projective Varieties . . . 202
4.3 Polar Intersections and Linkings . . . 206
4.4 Polar Homology for Affine Curves . . . 209
4.5 Bibliographical Notes . . . 211

Appendices . . . 213
A.1 Root Systems . . . 213
1.1 Finite Root Systems . . . 213
1.2 Semisimple Complex Lie Algebras . . . 215
1.3 Affine and Elliptic Root Systems . . . 216
1.4 Root Systems and Calogero–Moser Hamiltonians . . . 218
A.2 Compact Lie Groups . . . 221
2.1 The Structure of Compact Groups . . . 221
2.2 A Cohomology Generator for a Simple Compact Group 224
A.3 Krichever–Novikov Algebras . . . 225
3.1 Holomorphic Vector Fields on $\mathbb{C}^*$ and the Virasoro Algebra . . . 225
3.2 Definition of the Krichever–Novikov Algebras and Almost Grading . . . 226
3.3 Central Extensions . . . 228
3.4 Affine Krichever–Novikov Algebras, Coadjoint Orbits, and Holomorphic Bundles . . . 231
A.4 Kähler Structures on the Virasoro and Loop Group Coadjoint Orbits . . . 234

4.1 The Kähler Geometry of the Homogeneous Space $\mathrm{Diff}(S^1)/S^1$ . . . 234
4.2 The Action of $\mathrm{Diff}(S^1)$ and Kähler Geometry on the Based Loop Spaces . . . 237
A.5 Diffeomorphism Groups and Optimal Mass Transport . . . 240
5.1 The Inviscid Burgers Equation as a Geodesic Equation on the Diffeomorphism Group . . . 240
5.2 Metric on the Space of Densities and the Otto Calculus 244
5.3 The Hamiltonian Framework of the Riemannian Submersion . . . 247
A.6 Metrics and Diameters of the Group of Hamiltonian Diffeomorphisms . . . 250
6.1 The Hofer Metric and Bi-invariant Pseudometrics on the Group of Hamiltonian Diffeomorphisms . . . 250
6.2 The Infinite L^2-Diameter of the Group of Hamiltonian Diffeomorphisms . . . 252
A.7 Semidirect Extensions of the Diffeomorphism Group and Gas Dynamics . . . 256
A.8 The Drinfeld–Sokolov Reduction . . . 260
8.1 The Drinfeld–Sokolov Construction . . . 260
8.2 The Kupershmidt–Wilson Theorem and the Proofs . . . 263
A.9 The Lie Algebra $\mathfrak{gl}_\infty$ . . . 267
9.1 The Lie Algebra $\mathfrak{gl}_\infty$ and Its Subalgebras . . . 267
9.2 The Central Extension of $\mathfrak{gl}_\infty$ . . . 268
9.3 q-Difference Operators and $\mathfrak{gl}_\infty$ . . . 269
A.10 Torus Actions on the Moduli Space of Flat Connections . . . 272
10.1 Commuting Functions on the Moduli Space . . . 272
10.2 The Case of SU(2) . . . 274
10.3 $\mathrm{SL}(n,\mathbb{C})$ and the Rational Ruijsenaars–Schneider System . . . 277

References . . . 281

Index . . . 301

Introduction

What is a group? Algebraists teach that this is supposedly a set with two operations that satisfy a load of easily-forgettable axioms...

V.I. Arnold "On teaching mathematics" [20]

Today one cannot imagine mathematics and physics without Lie groups, which lie at the foundation of so many structures and theories. Many of these groups are of infinite dimension and they arise naturally in problems related to differential and algebraic geometry, knot theory, fluid dynamics, cosmology, and string theory. Such groups often appear as symmetries of various evolution equations, and their applications range from quantum mechanics to meteorology. Although infinite-dimensional Lie groups have been investigated for quite some time, the scope of applicability of a general theory of such groups is still rather limited. The main reason for this is that infinite-dimensional Lie groups exhibit very peculiar features.

Let us look at the relation between a Lie group and its Lie algebra as an example. As is well known, in finite dimensions each Lie group is, at least locally near the identity, completely described by its Lie algebra. This is achieved with the help of the exponential map, which is a local diffeomorphism from the Lie algebra to the Lie group itself. In infinite dimensions, this correspondence is no longer so straightforward. There may exist Lie groups that do not admit an exponential map. Furthermore, even if the exponential map exists for a given group, it may not be a local diffeomorphism. Another pathology in infinite dimensions is the failure of Lie's third theorem, stating that every finite-dimensional Lie algebra is the Lie algebra attached to some finite-dimensional Lie group. In contrast, there exist infinite-dimensional Lie algebras that do not correspond to any Lie group at all.

In order to avoid such pathologies, any version of a general theory of infinite-dimensional Lie groups would have to restrict its attention to certain classes of such groups and study them separately. For example, one might consider the class of Banach Lie groups, i.e., Lie groups that are locally modeled

on Banach spaces and behave very much like finite-dimensional Lie groups. For Banach Lie groups the exponential map always exists and is a local diffeomorphism. However, restricting to Banach Lie groups would already exclude the important case of diffeomorphism groups, and so on. This is why the attempts to develop a unified theory of infinite-dimensional differential geometry, and hence, of infinite-dimensional Lie groups, are still far from reaching greater generality.

In the present book, we choose a different approach. Instead of trying to develop a general theory of such groups, we concentrate on various examples of infinite-dimensional Lie groups, which lead to a realm of important applications.

The examples we treat here mainly belong to three general types of infinite-dimensional Lie groups: groups of diffeomorphisms, gauge transformation groups, and groups of pseudodifferential operators. There are numerous interrelations between various groups appearing in this book. For example, the group of diffeomorphisms of a compact manifold acts naturally on the group of currents over this manifold. When this manifold is a circle, this action gives rise to a deep connection between the representation theory of the Virasoro algebra and the Kac–Moody algebras. In the geometric setting of this book, this relation manifests itself in the correspondence between the coadjoint orbits of these groups.

Another strand connecting various groups considered below is the theme of the "ladder" of current groups. We regard the passage from finite-dimensional Lie groups (i.e., "current groups at a point") to loop groups (i.e., current groups on the circle), and then to double loop groups (current groups on the two-dimensional torus) as a "ladder of groups." On the side of dynamical systems this is revealed in the passage from rational to trigonometric and to elliptic Calogero–Moser systems. The passage from ordinary loop groups to double loop groups also serves as the starting point of a "real–complex correspondence" discussed in the chapter on applications of groups. There we study moduli spaces of flat or integrable connections on real and complex surfaces using the geometry of coadjoint orbits of these two types of groups.

Most of main objects studied in the book can be summarized in the table below.

In Chapter II, in a sense, we are moving horizontally, along the first row of this table. We study affine and elliptic groups, their orbits and geometry, as well as the related Calogero–Moser systems. We also describe in this chapter many Lie groups and Lie algebras outside the scope of this table: groups of diffeomorphisms, the Virasoro group, groups of pseudodifferential operators. In the appendices one can find the Krichever–Novikov algebras, $\mathfrak{gl}_\infty$, and other related objects.

In Chapter III we move vertically in this table and mostly focus on the current groups and on their parallel description in topological and holomorphic contexts. While affine and elliptic Lie groups correspond to the base dimension

Base dimension	Real / topological theory	Complex / holomorphic theory
1	affine (or, loop) groups (orbits $\sim$ monodromies over a circle)	elliptic (or, double loop) groups (orbits $\sim$ holomorphic bundles over an elliptic curve)
2	flat connections over a Riemann surface (Poisson structures)	holomorphic bundles over a complex surface (holomorphic Poisson structures)
3	connections over a threefold (Chern–Simons functional, singular homology, classical linking)	partial connections over a complex threefold (holomorphic Chern–Simons functional, polar homology, holomorphic linking)

1, either real or complex, in dimension 2 we describe the spaces of connections on real or complex surfaces, as well as the symplectic and Poisson structures on the corresponding moduli spaces. (In the table the main focus of study is mentioned in the parentheses of the corresponding block.) In dimension 3 the study of the Chern–Simons functional and its holomorphic version leads one to the notions of classical and holomorphic linking, and to the corresponding homology theories. (Although we confined ourselves to three dimensions, one can continue this table to dimension 4 and higher, which brings in the Yang–Mills and many other interesting functionals; see, e.g., [85].)

Note that the objects (groups, connections, etc.) in each row of this table usually dictate the structure of objects in the row above it, although the "interaction of the rows" is different in the real and complex cases. Namely, in the real setting, the lower-dimensional manifolds appear as the boundary of real manifolds of one dimension higher. For the complex case, the low-dimensional complex varieties arise as divisors in higher-dimensional ones; see details in Chapter III.

Overview of the content. Here are several details on the contents of various chapters and sections.

In Chapter I, we recall some notions and facts from Lie theory and symplectic geometry used throughout the book. Starting with the definition of a Lie group, we review the main related concepts of its Lie algebra, the adjoint and coadjoint representations, and introduce central extensions of Lie groups and algebras. We then recall some notions from symplectic geometry, including Arnold's formulation of the Euler equations on a Lie group, which are the equations for the geodesic flow with respect to a one-sided invariant metric on the group. This setting allows one to describe on the same footing many finite- and infinite-dimensional dynamical systems, including the classical Euler equations for both a rigid body and an ideal fluid, the Korteweg–de Vries equation, and the equations of magnetohydrodynamics. Finally, the preliminaries cover the Marsden–Weinstein Hamiltonian reduction, a method often

used to describe complicated Hamiltonian systems starting with a simple one on a nonreduced space, by "dividing out" extra symmetries of the system.

Chapter II is the main part of this book, and can be viewed as a walk through the zoo of the various types of infinite-dimensional Lie groups. We tried to describe these groups by presenting their definitions, possible explicit constructions, information on (or, in some cases, even the complete classification of) their coadjoint orbits. We also discuss relations of these groups to various Hamiltonian systems, elaborating, whenever possible, on important constructions related to integrability of such systems. The table of contents is rather self-explanatory.

We start this chapter by introducing the loop group of a compact Lie group, one of the most studied types of infinite-dimensional groups. In Section 1, we construct its universal central extension, the corresponding Lie algebra (called the affine Kac–Moody Lie algebra), and classify the corresponding coadjoint orbits. We also return to discuss the relation of this Lie algebra to the Landau–Lifschitz equation and the Calogero–Moser integrable system in the later sections.

In Section 2 we turn to the group of diffeomorphisms of the circle and its Lie algebra of smooth vector fields. Both the group and the Lie algebra admit universal central extensions, called the Virasoro–Bott group and the Virasoro algebra respectively. It turns out that the coadjoint orbits of the Virasoro–Bott group can be classified in a manner similar to that for the orbits of the loop groups. The Euler equation for a natural right-invariant metric on the Virasoro–Bott group is the famous Korteweg–de Vries (KdV) equation, which describes waves in shallow water. Furthermore, the Euler nature of the KdV helps one to show that this equation is completely integrable.

Section 3 is devoted to various diffeomorphism groups and, in particular, to the group of volume-preserving diffeomorphisms of a compact Riemannian manifold M. The Euler equations on this group are the Euler equations for an ideal incompressible fluid filling M. Enlarging the group of volume-preserving diffeomorphisms by either smooth functions or vector fields on M gives the Euler equations of gas dynamics or of magnetohydrodynamics, respectively. We also mention some results on the Riemannian geometry of diffeomorphism groups and discuss the relation of the latter to the the Marsden–Weinstein symplectic structure on the space of immersed curves in $\mathbb{R}^3$.

Section 4 deals with the group of pseudodifferential symbols (or operators) on the circle. It turns out that this group can be endowed with the structure of a Poisson Lie group, where the corresponding Poisson structures are given by the Adler–Gelfand–Dickey brackets. The dynamical systems naturally corresponding to this group are the Kadomtsev–Petviashvili hierarchy, the higher n-KdV equations, and the nonlinear Schrödinger equation.

Section 5 returns to the loop groups "at the next level": here we deal with their generalizations, elliptic Lie groups and the corresponding Lie algebras. These groups are extensions of the groups of double loops, i.e., the groups of smooth maps from a two-dimensional torus to a finite-dimensional complex

Lie group. The central extension of such a group relies on the choice of complex structure on this torus (i.e., on the choice of the underlying elliptic curve). The coadjoint orbits of the elliptic Lie groups can be classified in terms of holomorphic principal bundles over the elliptic curve.

This section also unifies several classes of the groups considered earlier in the light of an application to the Calogero–Moser systems. It turns out that the integrable types of potentials in these systems (rational, trigonometric, and elliptic ones) can be obtained, respectively, from the finite-dimensional semisimple Lie algebras, the affine algebras, and the elliptic Lie algebras by Hamiltonian reductions.

Chapter III deals with far-reaching applications of the parallelism between the affine and elliptic Lie algebras, which resembles the "real–complex" correspondence. The infinite-dimensional Lie groups we are concerned with here are groups of gauge transformations of principal bundles over real and complex surfaces. We show how the classification of coadjoint orbits of loop groups (respectively, double loop groups) can be used to study the Poisson structure on the moduli space of flat connections (respectively, semistable holomorphic bundles) over a Riemann surface (respectively, a complex surface).

The correspondence between the real and complex cases leads to somewhat surprising analogies between notions in differential topology (such as orientation, boundary, and the Stokes theorem) and those in complex algebraic geometry (a meromorphic differential form, its divisor of poles, and the Cauchy–Stokes formula). These analogies are formalized in the notion of polar homology, and their applications include the construction of a holomorphic linking number for a pair of complex curves in a complex threefold. The definition of the latter is closely related to a holomorphic version of the Chern–Simons functional.

In the appendices we mention several topics serving either as an explanation to some facts used in the main text, or as an indication of further developments. In particular, we include reminders on root systems and some important facts from the theory of compact Lie groups. Other appendices provide brief introductions and guides to the literature on the algebra $\mathfrak{gl}_\infty$, the Krichever–Novikov algebras (generalizing the Virasoro algebra and loop algebras to higher-genus Riemann surfaces), integrable systems on the moduli of flat connections, the Kähler structures on Virasoro orbits, a relation of diffeomorphism groups to optimal mass transport, the Hofer metric on the group of Hamiltonian diffeomorphisms, the Drinfeld–Sokolov reduction, as well as proofs of several statements from the main text.

Numeration system and shortcuts. We have employed a single numeration of definitions, theorems, etc. The Roman numeral in the cross-references addresses to the chapter number, while its absence indicates that the cross-references are within the same chapter.

The different sections in Chapter II can be read to a large degree independently. Furthermore, Chapter III is based on just two sections from Chapter

II: those on the affine groups (Section 1) and on the elliptic Lie groups (Sections 5). The section on polar homology is also rather independent, although motivated by the preceding exposition in Chapter III.

For a first reading we recommend the following "shortcut" through the book: After Chapter I on preliminaries, one can proceed to Sections 1, 2, and 5 of Chapter II and Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter III. The reader more interested in applications to Hamiltonian systems will find them mostly in Sections 2 through 5 of Chapter II, while for applications to moduli spaces of flat connections one may choose to proceed to Chapter III after reading only Sections 1 and 5 of Chapter II.