Differential cohomology in a cohesive ∞-topos

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Abstract

We formulate differential cohomology and Chern-Weil theory - the theory of connections on bundles and of gauge fields - abstractly in the context of a certain class of ∞-toposes that we call *cohesive*. Cocycles in this differential cohomology classify principal ∞-bundles equipped with *cohesive structure* (topological, smooth, synthetic differential, supergeometric, etc.) and equipped with ∞-*connections*. We discuss models and applications to quantum field theory and string theory.

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We formulate differential cohomology and Chern-Weil theory - the theory of connections on bundles and of gauge fields - abstractly in the context of a certain class of ∞-toposes that we call *cohesive*. Cocycles in this differential cohomology classify principal ∞-bundles equipped with *cohesive structure* (topological, smooth, synthetic differential, etc.) and equipped with ∞-*connections*.

We construct the cohesive ∞-topos of smooth ∞-groupoids and ∞-Lie algebroids and show that in this concrete context the general abstract theory reproduces ordinary differential cohomology (Deligne cohomology/differential characters), ordinary Chern-Weil theory, the traditional notions of smooth principal bundles with connection, abelian and nonabelian gerbes/bundle gerbes with connection, principal 2-bundles with 2-connection, connections on 3-bundles, etc. and generalizes these to higher degree and to base spaces that are orbifolds and generally smooth ∞-groupoids, such as smooth realizations of classifying spaces/moduli stacks for principal ∞-bundles and configuration spaces of gauge theories.

We exhibit a general abstract ∞-*Chern-Weil homomorphism* and observe that it generalizes the Lagrangian of Chern-Simons theory to ∞-*Chern-Simons theory*. For every invariant polynomial on an ∞-Lie algebroid it sends principal ∞-connections to Chern-Simons circle $(n+1)$-bundles (n-gerbes) with connection, whose higher parallel transport is the corresponding higher Chern-Simons Lagrangian. There is a general abstract formulation of the higher holonomy of this parallel transport and this provides the action functional of ∞-Chern-Simons theory as a morphism on its cohesive configuration ∞-groupoid.

We show that in smooth ∞-groupoids and their variants this construction reproduces the ordinary Chern-Weil homomorphism, hence ordinary Chern-Simons functionals, and generalizes it to subsume the following classes of action functionals of quantum field theories.

For the Killing form on the special orthogonal Lie algebra and its higher analog on the string Lie 2-algebra the construction yields action functionals for 3-dimensional and *7-dimensional non-abelian Chern-Simons theory*, respectively, incarnated as differential refinements of the first two *fractional Pontryagin classes*. Their homotopy fibers define *twisted differential string structures* and *twisted differential fivebrane structures* that control the *Green-Schwarz anomaly cancellation mechanism* in heterotic string theory and magnetic dual heterotic string theory. Similarly for the third integral Stiefel-Whitney class the corresponding homotopy fibers are *twisted differential* spin^c*-structures* that control the *Freed-Witten anomaly cancellation mechanism* in type II string theory. For the canonical invariant polynomial on a strict Lie 2-algebra over a semisimple Lie algebra the construction yields the action functional of *BF-theory* coupled to *topological Yang-Mills theory* with cosmological constant. For the canonical quadratic invariant polynomial on a symplectic Lie n-algebroid it yields the corresponding *AKSZ σ-model* action functional, such as in lowest degree the *Poisson σ-model* (hence also the *A-model* and the *B-model*) and the *Courant σ-model*; as well as *higher abelian Chern-Simons theory* in general degree $4k+3$. For Chern-Simons elements on shifted central extensions of the super-Poincaré Lie algebra linearized in the curvatures it yields the Lagrangians of *higher dimensional supergravity* theories. The ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism also applies to *discrete* ∞-groups. For ordinary discrete groups the resulting ∞-Chern-Simons theory is *Dijkgraaf-Witten theory*. For discrete 2-groups it is the *Yetter model*. It also applies to invariant polynomials on infinite dimensional L_∞-algebras. In the general case this yields action functionals of the type of *closed string field theory*.

We think of these results as providing a further ingredient of the recent identification of the mathematical foundations of quantum field and perturbative string theory [SaSch11]: while the cobordism theorem [LurieTQFT] identifies topological quantum field theories with a universal construction in higher category theory (representations of free symmetric monoidal (∞, n)-categories), our results indicate that the geometric structures that these arise from under quantization originate in a universal construction in higher topos theory: *cohesion*.

This work has grown out of and subsumes the author's previous work [ScWaI] [ScWaII] [ScWaIII] [BCSS07] [RoSc08] [SSS09a] [SSS09b] [SSS09c] [FSS10] [FRS11a] [FRS11b].

Main contents

In 1 we motivate our discussion, give an informal introduction to the main concepts involved and survey various constructions and applications. This introduction roughly parallels the sections to follow in an expository and more elementary way and may be all that some readers want to see, while other readers may want to skip it entirely.

In 2 we set up and study a general abstract theory of differential cohomology and Chern-Weil theory in terms of canonical constructions in ∞-topos theory. This is in the spirit of Lawvere's proposals [Lawv07] for axiomatic characterizations of those *gros toposes* that serve as contexts for abstract *geometry* in general and *differential geometry* in particular: *cohesive toposes*. We claim that the decisive role of these axioms is realized when generalizing from topos theory to ∞-topos theory [LuHTT] and we discuss a fairly long list of geometric structures that is induced by the axioms in this case. Notably we show that every ∞-topos satisfying the immediate analog of Lawvere's axioms – every *cohesive ∞-topos*– comes with a good intrinsic notion of differential cohomology and Chern-Weil theory.

In 3 we discuss models of the axioms. The main model of interest for our applications is the cohesive ∞-topos Smooth∞Grpd as well as its infinitesimal thickening SynthDiff∞Grpd, which we construct. Then we go step-by-step through the list of general abstract structures in cohesive ∞-toposes and unwind what these amount to in this model for higher differential geometry. We demonstrate that these subsume and generalize various traditional definitions and constructions in differential geometry and differential cohomology.

In 4 we discuss applications of the higher Chern-Weil theory thus obtained in the context of Smooth∞Grpd and its synthetic and super refinements: fractional differential characteristic classes, twisted differential structures, higher symplectic geometry, and ∞-Chern-Simons action functionals.

Contents

1 Introduction

We present motivation for our developments in 1.1. Then we give a leisurely survey of the general abstract theory in 1.2 and of the concrete implementation in 1.3.

1.1 Motivation

In 1.1.1 we give a heuristic motivation from considerations in gauge theory in broad terms, then in 1.1.2 a more technical motivation proceeding from the problem of quantum anomaly cancellation and the inadequacy of classical Chern-Weil theory to describe this.

1.1.1 From gauge theory

The discovery of *gauge theory* is effectively the discovery of groupoids in fundamental physics. The notion of *gauge transformation* is close to synonymous to the notion *isomorphism* and more generally to *equivalence in an ∞-category*. From a modern point of view, the mathematical model for a gauge field in physics is a cocycle in (nonabelian) differential cohomology: principal bundles with connection and their higher analogs. These naturally do not form just a set, but a groupoid and generally an ∞-groupoid, whose morphisms are gauge transformations, and higher morphisms are gauge-of-gauge transformations. The development of differential cohomology has to a fair extent been motivated and influenced by its application to fundamental theoretical physics in general and gauge theory in particular.

Around 1850 Maxwell realized that the field strength of the electromagnetic field is modeled by what today we call a closed differential 2-form on spacetime. In the 1930s Dirac observed that more precisely this 2-form is the curvature 2-form of a $U(1)$-principal bundle with connection, hence that the electromagnetic field is modeled as what today is called a degree 2-cocycle in ordinary differential cohomology.

Meanwhile, in 1915, Einstein had identified also the field strength of the field of gravity as the $\mathfrak{so}(d,1)$-valued curvature 2-form of the canonical $O(d,1)$-principal bundle with connection on a $d+1$-dimensional spacetime Lorentzian manifold. This is a cocycle in differential nonabelian cohomology: in Chern-Weil theory.

In the 1950s Yang-Mills-theory identified the field strength of all the gauge fields in the standard model of particle physics as the $\mathfrak{u}(n)$-valued curvature 2-forms of $U(n)$-principal bundles with connection. This is again a cocycle in differential nonabelian cohomology.

Entities of ordinary gauge theory
Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ with gauge Lie group G — connection with values in $\mathfrak{g}$ on G-principal bundle over a smooth manifold X

It is noteworthy that already in this mathematical formulation of experimentally well-confirmed fundamental physics the seed of higher differential cohomology is hidden: Dirac had not only identified the electromagnetic field as a line bundle with connection, but he also correctly identified (rephrased in modern language) its underlying cohomological Chern class with the (physically hypothetical but formally inevitable) magnetic charge located in spacetime. But in order to make sense of this, he had to resort to removing the support of the magnetic charge density from the spacetime manifold, because Maxwells equations imply that at the support of any magnetic charge the 2-form representing the field strength of the electromagnetic field is in fact not closed and hence in particular not the curvature 2-form of an ordinary connection on an ordinary bundle.

In [Free00] Diracs old argument was improved by refining the model for the electromagentic field one more step: Dan Freed notices that the charge current 3-form is itself to be regarded as a curvature, but for a connection on a circle 2-bundle with connection - also called a bundle gerbe -, which is a cocycle in degree-3 ordinary differential cohomology. Accordingly, the electromagnetic field is fundamentally not quite a line bundle, but a *twisted bundle* with connection, with the twist being the magnetic charge 3-cocycle. Freed shows that this perspective is inevitable for understanding the quantum anomaly of the action functional for electromagnetism is the presence of magnetic charge.

In summary, the experimentally verified models, to date, of fundamental physics are based on the notion of (twisted) $U(n)$-principal bundles with connection for the Yang-Mills field and $O(d,1)$-principal bundles with connection for the description of gravity, hence on nonabelian differential cohomology in degree 2 (possibly with a degree-3 twist).

In attempts to better understand the structure of these two theories and their interrelation, theoretical physicists were led to consider variations and generalizations of them that are known as *supergravity* and *string theory*. In these theories the notion of gauge field turns out to generalize: instead of just Lie algebras, Lie groups and connections with values in these, one finds structures called *Lie 2-algebras*, *Lie 2-groups* and the gauge fields themselves behave like generalized connections with values in these.

Entities of 2-gauge theory
Lie 2-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ with gauge Lie 2-group G — connection with values in $\mathfrak{g}$ on a G-principal 2-bundle/gerbe over an orbifold X

Notably the string is charged under a field called the *Kalb-Ramond field* or *B-field* which is modeled by a $\mathbf{B}U(1)$-principal 2-bundle with connection, where $\mathbf{B}U(1)$ is the Lie 2-group delooping of the circle group: the circle Lie 2-group. Its Lie 2-algebra $\mathbf{B}\mathfrak{u}(1)$ is given by the differential crossed module $[\mathfrak{u}(1) \to 0]$ which has $\mathfrak{u}(1)$ shifted up by one in homological degree.

So far all these differential cocycles were known and understood mostly as concrete constructs, without making their abstract home in differential cohomology explicit. It is the next gauge field that made Freed and Hopkins propose [FrHo00] that the theory of differential cohomology is generally the formalism that models gauge fields in physics:

The superstring is charged also under what is called the *RR-field*, a gauge field modeled by cocycles in differential K-theory. In even degrees we may think of this as a differential cocycle whose curvature form has coefficients in the L_∞-algebra $\oplus_{n\in\mathbb{N}}\mathbf{B}^{2n}\mathfrak{u}(1)$. Here $\mathbf{B}^{2n}\mathfrak{u}(1)$ is the abelian $2n$-Lie algebra whose underlying complex is concentrated in degree $2n$ on $\mathbb{R}$. So fully generally, one finds ∞-*Lie algebras*, ∞-*Lie groups* and gauge fields modeled by connections with values in these.

Entities of general gauge theory
∞-Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ with gauge ∞-Lie group G — connection with values in $\mathfrak{g}$ on a G-principal ∞-bundle over a smooth ∞-groupoid X

Apart from generalizing the notion of gauge Lie groups to Lie 2-groups and further, structural considerations in fundamental physics also led theoretical physicists to consider models for spacetime that are more general than the notion of a smooth manifold. In string theory spacetime is allowed to be more generally an orbifold or a generalization thereof, such as an orientifold. The natural mathematical model for these generalized spaces are Lie groupoids or, essentially equivalently, *differentiable stacks*.

It is noteworthy that the notions of generalized gauge groups and the generalized spacetime models encountered this way have a natural common context: all of these are examples of *smooth ∞-groupoids*. There is a natural mathematical concept that serves to describe contexts of such generalized spaces: a *big ∞-topos*. The notion of *differential cohomology in an ∞-topos* provides a unifying perspective on the mathematical structure encoding the generalized gauge fields and generalized spacetime models encountered in modern theoretical physics in such a general context.

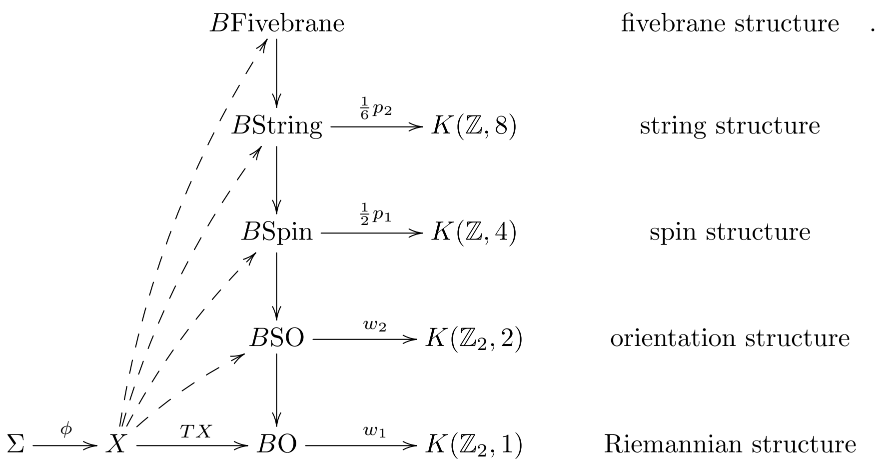
1.1.2 From quantum anomaly cancellation

One may wonder to which extent the higher gauge fields, that above in 1.1.1 we said motivate the theory of higher differential cohomology, can themselves be motivated more formally, beyond their role in physics phenomenology. It turns out that an important class of examples is in fact purely formally required by consistency of the quantum mechanics of higher dimensional fermionic ("spinning") quantum objects.

We indicate now how the full description of this *quantum anomaly cancellation* forces one to go beyond classical Chern-Weil theory to a more comprehensive theory of higher differential cohomology.

Consider a topological manifold X. Its tangent bundle TX is a real vector bundle of rank $n = \mathrm{dim}X$. This is classified by some continuous function to the classifying space $B\mathrm{O}(n)$, which we shall denote $TX : X \to B\mathrm{O}(n)$. A standard question to inquire about X is whether it is orientable. If so, *choice* of orienation is, in terms of this classifying map, given by a lift through the canonical map $B\mathrm{SO}(n) \to B\mathrm{O}(n)$ from the classifying space of the special orthogonal group. Further, we may ask if X admits a Spin-*structure*. If so, a choice of Spin-structure corresponds to a further lift through the canonical map $B\mathrm{Spin}(n) \to B\mathrm{O}(n)$ from the classifying space of the Spin-group. (Details on these basic notions are reviewed at the beginning of 4 below.)

These lifts of structure groups are just the first steps through a whole tower of higher group extensions, called the *Whitehead tower* of $B\mathrm{O}(n)$, as shown in the following picture.



Here all subdiagrams of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B\hat{G} & & \\ \downarrow & & \\ BG & \xrightarrow{c} & K(A,n) \end{array}$$

are homotopy fiber sequences, meaning that $B\hat{G}$ is the homotopy fiber of the characteristic map c. By the universal property of the homotopy pullback, this implies the obstruction theory for the existence of these lifts. The fist two of these are classical. For instance the orientation structure exists if the *first Stiefe-Whitney class* $w_1(TX) \in H^1(X, \mathbb{Z}_2)$ is trivial. Then a Spin-structure exists if moreover the *second Stiefel-Whiney class* $w_2(TX) \in H^2(X, \mathbb{Z}_2)$ is trivial.

Analogously, a *string structure* exists on X if moreover the *first fractional Pontryagin class* $\frac{1}{2}p_1(X) \in H^4(X, \mathbb{Z})$ is trivial, and if so, a *fivebrane structure* exists if moreover the *second fractional Pontryagin class* $\frac{1}{6}p_2(X) \in H^8(X, \mathbb{Z})$ is trivial.

The names of these structures indicate their role in quantum physics. Let Σ be a $d+1$-dimensional manifold and assume now that also X is smooth. Then a smooth map $\phi : \Sigma \to X$ may be thought of as modelling the trajectory of a d-dimensional object propagating through X. For instance for $d = 0$ this would be the trajectory of a point particle, for $d = 1$ it would be the worldsheet of a *string*, and for $d = 5$ the 6-dimensional worldvolume of a *5-brane*. The intrinsic "spin" of point particles and their higher dimensional analogs is described by a spinor bundle $S \to \Sigma$ equipped for each $\phi : \Sigma \to X$ with a Dirac operato $D_{\phi^* TX}$ that is twisted by the pullback of the tangent bundle of X along ϕ. The fermionic part of the *path integral* that gives the quantum dynamics of this setup computes the analog of the determinant of this Dirac operator, which is an element in a complex line called the *Pfaffian line* of $D_{\phi^* TX}$. As ϕ varies, these Pfaffian lines arrange into a line bundle on the mapping space

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
\{\mathrm{Pfaff}(D_{\phi^* TX})\} & & & & \\
\downarrow & & & & \\
\{\phi : \Sigma \to X\} & = & \mathrm{SmthMaps}(\Sigma, X) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tg}_\Sigma(c)} & K(\mathbb{Z}, 2)
\end{array} .
$$

Since the result of the fermionic part of the path integral is therefore a section of this line bundle, the resulting effective action functional can be a well defined function only if this line bundle is trivializable, hence if its Chern class vanishes. Therefore the Chern class of the Pfaffian line bundle over the bosonic configuration space is called the *global quantum anomaly* of the system. It is an obstruction to the existence of quantum dynamics of d-dimensional objects with spin on X.

Now, it turns out that this Chern class is the *transgression* $\mathrm{tg}_\Sigma(c)$ of the corresponding class c appearing in the picture of the Whitehead tower above. Therefore the vanishing of these classes implies the vanishing of the quantum anomaly.

For instance a choice of a *spin structure* on X cancels the global quantum anomaly of the quantum spinning particle. Then a choice of *string structure* cancels the global quantum anomaly of the quantum spinning string, and a choice of *fivebrane structure* cancels the global quantum anomaly of the quantum spinning 5-brane.

However, the Pfaffian line bundle turns out to be canonically equipped with more refined differential structure: it carries a *connection.* Moreover, in order to obtain a consistent quantum theory it needs to be trivialized as a bundle with connection.

For the Pfaffian line bundle with connection still to be the transgression of the correspinding obstruction class on X, evidently the entire story so far needs to be refined from cohomology to a differentially refined notion of cohomology.

Classical Chern-Weil theory achieves this, in parts, for the first few steps through the Whitehead tower (see [GHV] for a classical textbook reference and [HoSi05] for the refinement to differential cohomology that we need here). For instance, since maps $X \to B\mathrm{Spin}$ classify Spin-principal bundles on X, and since Spin is a Lie group, it is clear that the coresponding differential refinement is given by Spin-principal connections. Write $H^1(X, \mathrm{Spin})_{\mathrm{conn}}$ for the equivalence classes of these structures on X.

For every $n \in \mathbb{N}$ there is a notion of differential refinement of $H^n(X, \mathbb{Z})$ to the *differential cohomology group* $H^n(X, \mathbb{Z})_{\mathrm{conn}}$. These groups fit into square diagrams as indicated on the right of the following diagram.

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
H^1_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathrm{Spin}) & \xrightarrow{[\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1]} & H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbb{Z}) & & \\
 & \swarrow^{\text{curvature}} & & \searrow^{\text{top. class}} & \\
 & \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) & & & H^4(X, \mathbb{Z}) \\
 & & \searrow \quad \swarrow & & \\
 & & H^4_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) \simeq H^4(X, \mathbb{R}) & &
\end{array} .
$$

As shown there, an element in $H^n(X, \mathbb{Z})$ involves an underlying ordinary integral class, but also a differential n-form on X such that both structures represent the same class in real cohomology (using the de Rham isomorphism between real cohomology and de Rham cohomology). The differential form here is to be thought of as a *higher curvature form* on a higher line bundle corresponding to the given integral cohomology class.

Finally, the refined form of classical Chern-Weil theory provides differential refinements for instance of the first fractional Pontryagin class $[\frac{1}{2}p_1] \in H^4(X, \mathbb{Z})$ to a differential class $[\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1]$ as shown in the above diagram. This is the differential refinement that under transgression produces the differential refinement of our Pfaffian line bundles.

But this classical theory has two problems.

1. Beyond the Spin-group, the topological groups String, Fivebrane etc. do not admit the structure of finite-dimensional Lie groups anymore, hence ordinary Chern-Weil theory fails to apply.

2. Even in the situation where it does apply, ordinary Chern-Weil theory only works on cohomology classes, not on cocycles. Therefore the differential refinements cannot see the homotopy fiber sequences anymore, that crucially characterized the obstruction problem of liftin through the Whitehead tower.

The source of the first problem may be thought to be the evident fact that the category Top of topological spaces does, of course, not encode smooth structure. But the problem goes deeper, even. In homotopy theory, Top is not even about topological structure. Rather, it is about homotopies and *discrete* geometric structure.

One way to make this precise is to say that there is a *Quillen equivalence* between the model category structures on topological spaces and on simplicial sets.

$$\mathrm{Top} \underset{\mathrm{Sing}}{\overset{|-|}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet} \qquad \mathrm{Ho}(\mathrm{Top}) \simeq \mathrm{Ho}(\mathrm{sSet})\,.$$

Here the *singular simplicial complex functor* Sing sends a topological space to the simplicial set whose k-cells are maps from the topological k-simplex into X.

In more abstract modern language we may restate this as saying that there is an equivalence

$$\mathrm{Top} \xrightarrow[\simeq]{\Pi} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

between the homotopy theory of topological spaces and that of ∞-*groupoids*, exhibited by forming the *fundamental* ∞-*groupoid* of X.

To break this down into a more basic statement, let $\mathrm{Top}_{\leq 1}$ be the subcategory of homotopy 1-types, hence of these topological spaces for which only the 0th and the first homotopy groups may be nontrivial. Then the above equivalence resticts to an equivalence

$$\mathrm{Top}_{\leq 1} \xrightarrow[\simeq]{\Pi} \mathrm{Grpd}$$

with ordinary groupoids. Restricting this even further to (pointed) connected 1-types, hence spaces for which only the first homotopy group may be non-trivial, we obatain an equivalence

$$\mathrm{Top}_{1,\mathrm{pt}} \xrightarrow[\simeq]{\pi_1} \mathrm{Grp}$$

with the category of groups. Under this equivalence a connected 1-type topological space is simply identified with its first fundamental group.

Manifestly, the groups on the right here are just bare groups with no geometric structure; or rather with *dicrete* geometric structure. Therefore, since the morphism Π is an equivalence, also Top_1 is about *discrete* groups, $\mathrm{Top}_{\leq 1}$ is about *discrete* groupoids and Top is about *discrete* ∞-*groupoids*.

There is a natural solution to this problem. This solution and the differential cohomology theory that it supports is the topic of this book.

The solution is to equip discrete ∞-groupoids A with *smooth structure* by equipping them with information about what the *smooth families* of k-morphisms in it are. In other words, to assign to each smooth parameter space U an ∞-groupoid of smoothly U-parameterized families of cells in A.

If we write $\mathbf{A}$ for A equipped with smooth structure, this means that we have an assignment

$$\mathbf{A} : U \mapsto \mathbf{A}(U) =: \mathrm{Maps}(U, A)_{\mathrm{smooth}} \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

such that $\mathbf{A}(*) = A$.

Notice that here the notion of smooth maps into A is not defined before we declare $\mathbf{A}$, rather it is defined *by* declaring $\mathbf{A}$. A more detailed discussion of this idea is below in 1.2.1.

We can then define the homotopy theory of *smooth* ∞-groupoids by writing

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} := L_W \mathrm{Funct}(\mathrm{SmoothMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet})\,.$$

Here on the right we have the category of contravarian functors on the category of smooth manifolds, such as the $\mathbf{A}$ from above. In order for this to inform this simple construction about the local nature of smoothness, we need to formally invert some of the morphisms between such functors, which is indicated by the symbol L_W on the left. The set of morphisms W that are to be inverted are those natural transformation that are *stalkwise* weak homotopy equivalences of simplicial sets.

We find that there is a canonical notion of *geoemtric realization* on smooth ∞-groupoids

$$|-| : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \stackrel{\Pi}{\to} \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \stackrel{|-|}{\to} \mathrm{Top}\,,$$

where Π is the derived left adjoint to the embedding

$$\mathrm{Disc} : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

of bare ∞-groupoids as discrete smooth ∞-groupoids. We may therefore ask for *smooth refinements* of given topological spaces X, by asking for smooth ∞-groupoids $\mathbf{X}$ such that $|\mathbf{X}| \simeq X$.

A simple example is obtained from any Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$. Consider the functor $\exp(\mathfrak{g}) : \mathrm{SmoothMfd}^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{sSet}$ given by the assignment

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g}) : U \mapsto ([k] \mapsto \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat,vert}} U \times \Delta^k, \mathfrak{g})\,,$$

where on the right we have the set of differential forms on the parameter space times the smooth k-simplex which are flat and vertical with respect to the projection $U \times \Delta^k \to U$.

We find that the 1-truncation of this smooth ∞-groupoid is the Lie groupoid

$$\tau_1 \exp(\mathfrak{g}) = \mathbf{B}G$$

that has a single object and whose morphisms form the simply connected Lie group G that integrates $\mathfrak{g}$. We may think of this Lie groupoid also as the *moduli stack* of smooth G-principal bundles. In particular, this is a smooth refinement of the classifying space for G-principal bundles in that

$$|\mathbf{B}G| \simeq BG\,.$$

So far this is essentially what classical Chern-Weil theory can already see. But smooth ∞-groupoids now go much further.

In the next step there is a *Lie 2-algebra* $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{string}$ such that its exponentiation is

$$\tau_2 \exp(\mathfrak{string}) = \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}$$

is a smooth 2-groupoid, which we may think of as the *moduli 2-stack of* String-*principal* which is a smooth refinement of the String-classifying space

$$|\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}| \simeq B\mathrm{String}\,.$$

Next there is a Lie 6-algebra $\mathfrak{fivebrane}$ such that

$$\tau_6 \exp(\mathfrak{fivebrane}) = \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Fivebrane}$$

with

$$|\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Fivebrane}| \simeq B\mathrm{Fivebrane}\,.$$

Moreover, the characteristic maps that we have seen now refine first to smooth maps on these moduli stacks, for instance

$$\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)\,,$$

and then further to *differential* refinement of these maps

$$\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} ,$$

where now on the left we have the moduli stack of smooth Spin-connections, and on the right the moduli 3-stack of *circle n-bundles with connection*.

A detailed discussion of these constructions is below in 4.1.

In addition to capturing smooth and differential refinements, these constructions have the property that they work not just at the level of cohomology classes, but at the level of the full cocycle ∞-groupoids. For instance for X a smooth manifold, postcomposition with $\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}$ may be regarded not only as inducing a function

$$H^1_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathrm{Spin}) \to H^4_{\mathrm{conn}}(X)$$

on cohomology sets, but a morphism

$$\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}(X) : \mathbf{H}^1(X, \mathrm{Spin}) \to \mathbf{H}^3(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}})$$

from the groupoid of smooth principal Spin-bundles with connection to the 3-groupoid of smooth circle 3-bundles with connection. Here the boldface $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ denotes the ambient ∞-topos of smooth ∞-groupoids and $\mathbf{H}(-,-)$ its hom-functor.

By this refinement to cocycle ∞-groupoids we have access to the homotopy fibers of the morphism $\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1$. Before differential refinement the homotopy fiber

$$\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \longrightarrow \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}) \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1} \mathbf{H}(X, B^3 U(1)) \ ,$$

is the 2-groupoid of smooth String-principal 2-bundles on X: smooth *string structures* on X. As we pass to the differential refinement, we obtain *differential string structures* on X

$$\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}}) \longrightarrow \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{\mathrm{conn}}) \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1} \mathbf{H}(X, B^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}) \ .$$

A cocycle in the 2-groupoid $\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}})$is naturally identified with a tuple consisting of

- a smooth Spin-principal bundle $P \to X$ with connection ∇;
- the Chern-Simons 2-gerbe with connection $CS(\nabla)$ induced by this;
- a choice of trivialization of this Chern-Simons 2-gerbe and its connection.

We may think of this as a refinement of secondary characteristic classes: the first Pontryagin curvature characteristic form $\langle F_\nabla \wedge F_\nabla \rangle$ itself is constrained to vanish, and so the Chern-Simons form 3-connection itself constitutes cohomological data.

More generally, we have access not only to the homotopy fiber over the 0-cocycle, but may pick one cocycle in each cohomology class to a total morphism $H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) \to \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}})$ and consider the collection of all homotopy fibers over all connected components as the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1\mathrm{Struc}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X) & \longrightarrow & H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{\mathrm{conn}}) & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}) \end{array} .$$

This yields the 2-groupoid of *twisted differential string structure*. These objects, and their higher analogs given by twisted differential fivebrane structures, appear in background field structure of the heterotic string and its magnetic dual, as discussed in [SSS09c].

These are the kind of structures that ∞-Chern-Weil theory studies.

1.1.3 From higher topos theory

The history of theoretical fundamental physics is the story of a search for the suitable mathematical notions and structural concepts that naturally model the physical phenomena in question. Examples include, roughly in historical order,

1. the identification of symplectic geometry as the underlying structure of classical Hamiltonian mechanics;

2. the identification of (semi-)Riemannian differential geometry as the underlying structure of gravity;

3. the identification of group and representation theory as the underlying structure of the zoo of fundamental particles;

4. the identification of Chern-Weil theory and differential cohomology as the underlying structure of gauge theories.

All these examples exhibit the identification of the precise mathematical language that naturally captures the physics under investigation. Modern theoretical insight in theoretical fundamental physics is literally *unthinkable* without these formulations.

Therefore it is natural to ask whether one can go further. Not only have we seen above in 1.1.2 that some of these formulations leave open questions that we would want them to answer. But one is also led to wonder if this list of mathematical theories cannot be subsumed into a single more fundamental system altogether.

In a philosophical vein we should ask

Where does physics take place, conceptually?

Such philosophical-sounding questions can be given useful formalizations in terms of category theory. In this context "place" translates to *topos*, "taking place" translates to *inernalization* and whatever it is that takes places is characterized by a collection of *universal constructions* (categorical limits and colimits, categorical adjunctions).

So we translate

Physics	takes	place.
Certain universal constructions	internalize	in a suitable topos.

(For the following explanation of what precisely this means the reader only needs to know the concept of *adjoint functors*.)

The remaining question is

What characterizes a suitable topos and what are the universal constructions capturing physics.

At the bottom of it there are two aspects to physics, *kinematics* and *dynamics*. Roughly, kinematics is about the nature of *geometric spaces* appearing in physics, dynamics is about *trajectories* – paths – in these spaces. We will argue that

- the notion of a topos of geometric spaces is usefully given by what goes by the technical term *local topos*;

- the notion of a topos of spaces with trajectories is usefully given by what goes by the technical term *∞-connected topos*.

A topos that is both local and ∞-connected we call *cohesive*.

$$
\begin{array}{cc}
\overbrace{\text{kinematic} \qquad\qquad \text{dynamics}}^{\text{physics}} \\
\\
\underbrace{\text{local topos} \qquad \infty\text{-connected topos}}_{\text{cohesive topos}}
\end{array}
\,.
$$

1.1.3.1 Kinematics – local toposes. With a notion of *bare* spaces give, a notion of geometric spaces comes with a forgetful functor GeometricSpaces $\to$ BareSpaces that forgets this structure. The claim is that two extra conditions on this functor guarantee that indeed the structure it forgets is some *geometric structure*.

- There is a category C of *local models* such that every geometric space is obtained by *gluing* of local models. The operation of gluing following a blueprint is left adjoint to the inclusion of geometric spaces into blueprints for geometric spaces.
- Every bare space can canonically be equipped with the two universal cases of geometric structure, *discrete* and *indiscrete* geometric structure. (For instance a set can be equipped with discrete topology or discrete smooth structure.)

  Equipping with these structure is left and right adjoint, respectively, to forgetting geometric structure.

$$
\text{BlueprintsOfGeometricSpaces} \underset{\hookleftarrow}{\xrightarrow{\text{glue local models}}} \text{GeometricSpaces} \begin{array}{c} \xleftarrow{\text{form discrete geometric structure}} \\ \xrightarrow{\text{forget geometric structure}} \\ \xleftarrow[\text{form indiscrete geometric structure}]{} \end{array} \text{BareSpaces} \,.
$$

If we take a bare space to be a set of points, then this translates into the following formal statement.

$$
\mathrm{Func}(C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}) \underset{\hookleftarrow}{\xrightarrow{\text{sheafification}}} \mathrm{Sh}(C) \begin{array}{c} \xleftarrow{\mathrm{Disc}} \\ \xrightarrow{\Gamma} \\ \xleftarrow[\mathrm{coDisc}]{} \end{array} \mathrm{Set} \,.
$$

The category of geometric spaces embeds into the category of contravarian functors on test spaces, and this embedding has a left adjoint. It is a basic fact of topos theory that such *reflective embeddings* are precisely categories of *sheaves* on C with respect to some Grothendieck topology on C (which is defined by the reflective embedding). Therefore the first demand above says that GeometricSpaces is to be what is called a *sheaf topos*.

Another basic fact of topos theory says that this already implies the first part of the second demand, and uniquely so. There is unique pair of adjoint functors ($\mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma$) as indicated. The demand of the further right adjoint embedding coDisc is what makes the sheaf topos a *local topos*.

These and the following axioms are very simple. Nevertheless, by the power of category theory, it turns out that they have rich implications. But we will we show that for them to have implications *just rich enough* to indeed formalize the kind of structures mentioned at the beginning, we want to pass to ∞-toposes instead. Then the above becomes

$$
\infty\mathrm{Func}(C^{\mathrm{op}}, \infty\mathrm{Grpd}) \underset{\hookleftarrow}{\xrightarrow{\infty-\text{stackification}}} \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C) \begin{array}{c} \xleftarrow{\mathrm{Disc}} \\ \xrightarrow{\Gamma} \\ \xleftarrow[\mathrm{coDisc}]{} \end{array} \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \,.
$$

1.1.3.2 Dynamics – ∞-connected toposes

With a notion of *discrete ∞-groupoids* inside geometric ∞-groupoids given, we can ask for discrete ∞-bundles over any X to be characterized by the the *parallel transport* that takes their fibers into each other, as they move along paths in X. By the basic idea of *Galois theory*, this completely characterizes a notion of trajector.

Formally this means that we require a further left adjoint $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc})$.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{Geometric}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathrm{Disc}K) & \simeq & \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Pi(X), K) \\ \\ \begin{array}{l}\text{bundles of} \\ \text{discrete } \infty\text{-groupoids} \\ \text{on } X\end{array} & & \begin{array}{l}\text{parallel transport} \\ \text{of discrete } \infty\text{-groupoids} \\ \text{along trajectories} \\ \text{in } X\end{array} \end{array} .$$

This means that for any X we can think of $\Pi(X)$ as the ∞-groupoid of paths in X, of paths-between-paths in X, and so on.

In order for this to yield a consistent notion of paths in the geometric context, we want to demand that there are no non-trivial paths in the point (the terminal object), hence that

$$\Pi(*) \simeq * .$$

An ordinary topos for which Π exists and satisfies this property is called *locally connected and connected*. Hence an ∞-topos for which Π exists and satisfies this extra condition we call *∞-connected*. This terminology is good, but a bit subtle, since it refers to the meta-topology of the *collection of all geometric spaces* rather than to any that of any topological space itself. The reader is advised to regard it just as a technical term for the time being.

1.1.3.3 Physics – cohesive toposes

An ∞-topos that is both local as well as ∞-connected we call *cohesive*. The idea is that the extra adjoints on it encode the information of how sets of cells in an ∞-groupoid are geometrically held together, for instance in that there are smooth paths between them. In the models of cohesive ∞-toposes that we wiil construct the local models are *open balls* with geometric structure and each such open ball can be thought of as a "cohesive blob of points".

The axioms on a cohesive topos are simple and fully formal. They involve essentially just the notion of adjoint functors.

We can ask now for universal constructions such that internalized in any cohesive ∞-topos they usefully model differental geometry, differential cohomology, action functionals for physical systems, etc. Below in 2.3 we a comprehensive discussion of an extensive list of such structures. Here we highlight one them. Differential forms.

One consequence of the axioms of cohesion is that every *connected* object in a cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ has am essentially unique point (whereas in general it may fail to have a point). We have an equivalence

$$\infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H}) \underset{\mathbf{B}}{\overset{\Omega}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathbf{H}_{*,\geq 1}$$

between group objects G in $\mathbf{H}$ and (uniquely pointed) connected objects in $\mathbf{H}$.

Define now

$$(\mathbf{\Pi} \dashv \flat) := (\mathrm{Disc}\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc}\Gamma) .$$

The $(\mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma)$-counit gives a morphism

$$\flat \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}G .$$

We write $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$ for the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G & \longrightarrow & \flat\mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \end{array} .$$

We show in 3.3.8 that with this construction internalized in smooth ∞-groupoids, the object $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$ is the coefficient object for flat $\mathfrak{g}$-valued differential forms, where $\mathfrak{g}$ is the ∞-Lie algebra of G.

Moreover, there is a canonical such form on G itself. This is obtained by forming the pasting diagram of ∞-pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccc} A & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \theta} & & \downarrow \\ \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G & \longrightarrow & \flat\mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \end{array} .$$

We show below in 3.3.10 that this theta is canonical (Maurer-Cartan) $\mathfrak{g}$-valued form on G. Then in 3.3.11 we show that for G a shifted abelian group, this form is the *universal curvature characteristic*. Flat parallel G-valued transport that is *twisted* by this form encodes non-flat ∞-connections. Gauge fields and higher gauge fields are examples.

In 3.3.13 we show that, just as canonically, action functionals for these higher gauge fields exist in $\mathbf{H}$.

All this just from a system of adjoint ∞-functors.

1.2 General abstract theory

We present an invitation to the theory of higher differential cohomology that is developed formally in 2 below.

The framework of all our constructions is *topos theory* [John03] or rather, more generally, ∞-*topos theory* [LuHTT]. In the sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 we recall and survey basic notions with an eye towards our central example of an ∞-topos: that of smooth ∞-groupoids. In these sections the reader is assumed to be familiar with basic notions of category theory (such as adjoint functors) and basic notions of homotopy theory (such as weak homotopy equivalences). A brief introduction to relevant basic concepts (such as Kan complexes and homotopy pullbacks) is given in section 1.3, which can be read independently of the discussion here.

Then in 1.2.3 and 1.2.4 we describe, similarly in a leisurely manner, the intrinsic notions of cohomology and geometric homotopy in an ∞-topos. Most aspects of what we say here involve fairly well-known facts, but the general abstract perspective of cohesive or at least locally ∞-connected ∞-toposes seems to have not been fully appreciated before.

Finally in 1.2.5 we indicate how the combination of the intrinsic cohomology and geometric homotopy in a locally ∞-connected ∞-topos yields a good notion of differential cohomology in an ∞-topos.

1.2.1 Toposes

There are several different perspectives on the notion of *topos*. One is that a topos is a category that looks like a category of spaces that sit by local homeomorphisms over a given base space: all spaces that are locally modeled on a given base space.

The archetypical class of examples are sheaf toposes over a topological space X denoted $\mathrm{Sh}(X)$. These are equivalently categories of étale spaces over X: topological spaces Y that are equipped with a local homeomorphisms $Y \to X$. When $X = *$ is the point, this is just the category Set of all sets: spaces that are modeled on the point. This is the archetypical topos itself.

What makes the notion of toposes powerful is the following fact: even though the general topos contains objects that are considerably different from and possibly considerably richer than plain sets and even richer than étale spaces over a topological space, the general abstract category theoretic properties of every topos are essentially the same as those of Set. For instance in every topos all small limits and colimits exist and it is cartesian closed (even locally). This means that a large number of constructions in Set have immediate analogs internal to every topos, and the analogs of the statements about these constructions that are true in Set are true in every topos.

This may be thought of as saying that toposes are *very nice categories of spaces* in that whatever construction on spaces one thinks of – for instance formation of quotients or of intersections or of mapping spaces – the resulting space with the expected general abstract properties will exist in the topos. In this sense toposes are *convenient categories for geometry* - as in: *convenient category of topological spaces*, but even more convenient than that.

On the other hand, we can de-emphasize the role of the objects of the topos and instead treat the topos itself as a "generalized space" (and in particular, a categorified space). We then consider the sheaf topos $\mathrm{Sh}(X)$ as a representative of X itself, while toposes not of this form are "honestly generalized" spaces. This point of view is supported by the fact that the assignment $X \mapsto \mathrm{Sh}(X)$ is a full embedding of (sufficiently nice) topological spaces into toposes, and that many topological properties of a space X can be detected at the level of $\mathrm{Sh}(X)$.

Here we are mainly concerned with toposes that are far from being akin to sheaves over a topological space, and instead behave like abstract *fat points with geometric structure*. This implies that the objects of these toposes are in turn generalized spaces modeled locally on this geometric structure. Such toposes are called *gros toposes* or *big toposes*. There is a formalization of the properties of a topos that make it behave like a big topos of generalized spaces inside of which there is geometry: this is the notion of *cohesive toposes*.

More concretely, the idea of sheaf toposes formalizes the idea that any notion of space is typically modeled on a given collection of simple test spaces. For instance differential geometry is the geometry that is modeled Cartesian spaces $\mathbb{R}^n$, or rather on the category $C = \mathrm{CartSp}$ of Cartesian spaces and smooth functions between them.

A presheaf on such C is a functor $X : C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{Set}$ from the opposite category of C to the category of sets. We think of this as a rule that assigns to each test space $U \in C$ the set $X(U) :=: \mathrm{Maps}(U, X)$ of structure-preserving maps from the test space U into the would-be space X - the *probes* of X by the test space U. This assignment defines the generalized space X modeled on C. Every category of presheaves over a small category is an example of a topos. But these presheaf toposes, while encoding the *geometry* of generalized spaces by means of probes by test spaces in C fail to correctly encode the *topology* of these spaces. This is captured by restricting to *sheaves* among all presheaves.

Each test space $V \in C$ itself specifies presheaf, by forming the hom-sets $\mathrm{Maps}(U, V) := \mathrm{Hom}_C(U, V)$ in C. This is called the *Yoneda embedding* of test spaces into the collection of all generalized spaces modeled on them. Presheaves of this form are the *representable presheaves*. A bit more general than these are the *locally representable presheaves*: for instance on $C = \mathrm{CartSp}$ this are the smooth manifolds $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}$, whose presheaf-rule is $\mathrm{Maps}(U, X) := \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{SmoothMfd}}(U, X)$. By definition, a manifold is locally isomorphic to a Cartesian space, hence is locally representable as a presheaf on CartSp.

These examples of presheaves on C are special in that they are in fact *sheaves*: the value of X on a test space U is entirely determined by the restrictions to each U_i in a *cover* $\{U_i \to U\}_{i \in I}$ of the test space U by other test spaces U_i. We think of the subcategory of sheaves $\mathrm{Sh}(C) \hookrightarrow \mathrm{PSh}(C)$ as consisting of those special presheaves that are those rules of probe-assignments which respect a certain notion of ways in which test spaces $U, V \in C$ may glue together to a bigger test space.

One may axiomatize this by declaring that the collections of all covers under consideration forms what is called a *Grothendieck topology* on C that makes C a *site*. But of more intrinsic relevance is the equivalent fact that categories of sheaves are precisely the subtoposes of presheaves toposes

$$\mathrm{Sh}(C) \underset{\hookrightarrow}{\overset{L}{\leftarrow}} \mathrm{PSh}(C) = [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}]\,,$$

meaning that the embedding $\mathrm{Sh}(X) \hookrightarrow \mathrm{PSh}(X)$ has a left adjoint functor L that preserves finite limits. This may be taken to be the *definition* of Grothendieck toposes. The left adjoint is called the *sheafification functor*. It is determined by and determines a Grothendieck topology on C.

For the choice $C = \mathrm{CartSp}$ such is naturally given by the good open cover coverage, which says that a bunch of maps $\{U_i \to U\}$ in C exhibit the test object U as being glued together from the test objects $\{U_i\}$

if these form a good open cover of U. With this notion of coverage every smooth manifold is a sheaf on CartSp.

But there are important genenralized spaces modeled on CartSp that are not smooth manifolds: topological spaces for which one can consistently define which maps from Cartesian spaces into them count as smooth in a way that makes this assignment a sheaf on CartSp, but which are not necessarily locally isomorphic to a Cartsian space: these are called *diffeological spaces*. A central example of a space that is naturally a diffeological space but not a finite dimensional manifold is a mapping space $[\Sigma, X]$ of smooth functions between smooth manifolds Σ and X: since the idea is that for U any Cartesian space the smooth U-parameterized families of points in $[\Sigma, X]$ are smooth U-parameterized families of smooth maps $\Sigma \to X$, we can take the plot-assigning rule to be

$$[\Sigma, X] : U \mapsto \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{SmoothMfd}}(\Sigma \times U, X)\,.$$

It is useful to relate all these phenomena in the topos $\mathrm{Sh}(C)$ to their image in the archetypical topos Set. This is simply the category of sets, which however we should think of here as the category $\mathrm{Set} \simeq \mathrm{Sh}(*)$ of sheaves on the category $*$ which contains only a single object and no nontrivial morphism: objects in here are generalized spaces *modeled on the point*. All we know about them is how to map the point into them, and as such they are just the sets of all possible such maps from the point.

Every category of sheaves $\mathrm{Sh}(C)$ comes canonically with an essentially unique topos morphism to the topos of sets, given by a pair of adjoint functors

$$\mathrm{Sh}(C) \underset{\Gamma}{\overset{\mathrm{Disc}}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{Sh}(*) \simeq \mathrm{Set}\ .$$

Here Γ is called the *global sections functor*. If C has a terminal object $*$, then it is given by evaluation on that object: the functor Γ sends a plot-assigning rule $X : C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{Set}$ to the set of plots by the point $\Gamma(X) = X(*)$. For instance in $C = \mathrm{CartSp}$ the terminal object exists and is the ordinary point $* = \mathbb{R}^0$. If $X \in \mathrm{Sh}(C)$ is a smooth manifold or diffeological space as above, then $\Gamma(X) \in \mathrm{Set}$ is simply its underlying set of points. So the functor Γ can be thought of as forgetting the *cohesive structure* that is given by the fact that our generalized spaces are modeled on C. It remembers only the underlying point-set.

Conversely, its left adjoint functor Disc takes a set S to the sheafification $\mathrm{Disc}(S) = L\mathrm{Const}(S)$ of the constant presheaf $\mathrm{Const} : U \mapsto S$, which asserts that the set of its plots by any test space is always the same set S. This is the plot-rule for the *discrete space* modeled on C given by the set S: a plot has to be a constant map of the test space U to one of the elements $s \in S$. For the case $C = \mathrm{CartSp}$ this interpretation is literally true in the familiar sense: the generalized smooth space $\mathrm{Disc}(S)$ is the discrete smooth manifold or discrete diffeological space with point set S.

The examples for generalized spaces X modeled on C that we considered so far all had the property that the collection of plots $U \to X$ into them was a subset of the set of maps of sets from U to their underlying set $\Gamma(X)$ of points. These are called *concrete sheaves*. Not every sheaf is concrete. The concrete sheaves form a subcategory inside the full topos which is itself almost, but not quite a topos: it is called the *quasitopos* of concrete objects.

$$\mathrm{Conc}(C) \overset{\leftarrow}{\hookrightarrow} \mathrm{Sh}(C)\,.$$

Non-concrete sheaves over C may be exotic as compared to smooth manifolds, but they are still usefully regarded as generalized spaces modeled on C. For instance for $n \in \mathbb{N}$ there is the sheaf $\kappa(n, \mathbb{R})$ given by saying that plots by $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ are identified with closed differential n-forms on U:

$$\kappa(n, \mathbb{R}) : U \mapsto \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(U)\,.$$

This sheaf describes a very non-classical space, which for $n \geq 1$ has only a single point, $\Gamma(\kappa(n, \mathbb{R})) = *$, only a single curve, a single surface, etc., up to a single $(n-1)$-dimensional probe, but then it has a large number of n-dimensional probes. Despite the fact that this sheaf is very far in nature from the test spaces that it is modeled on, it plays a crucial and very natural role: it is in a sense a model for an Eilenberg-MacLane space

$K(n, \mathbb{R})$. We shall see in 3.3.9 that these sheaves are part of an incarnation of the ∞-Lie-algebra $b^n\mathbb{R}$ and the sense in which it models an Eilenberg-MacLane space is that of Sullivan models in rational homotopy theory. In any case, we want to allow ourselves to regard non-concrete objects such as $\kappa(n, \mathbb{R})$ on the same footing as diffeological spaces and smooth manifolds.

1.2.2 ∞-Toposes

While therefore a general object in the sheaf topos $\mathrm{Sh}(C)$ may exhibit a considerable generalization of the objects $U \in C$ that it is modeled on, for many natural applications this is still not quite general enough: if for instance X is a smooth orbifold, then there is not just a set, but a groupoid of ways of probing it by a Cartesian test space U: if a probe $\gamma : U \to X$ is connected by an orbifold transformation to another probe $\gamma' : U \to X$, then this constitutes a morphism in the groupoid $X(U)$ of probes of X by U.

Even more generally, there may be an entire ∞-groupoid of probes of the generalized space X by the test space U: a set of probes with morphisms between different probes, 2-morphisms between these 1-morphisms, and so on.

Such structures are described in ∞-category theory: where a category has a set of morphisms between any two objects, an ∞-category has an ∞-grouopoid of morphisms, whose compositions are defined up to higher coherent homotopy. The theory of ∞-categories is effectively the combination of category theory and homotopy theory. The main fact about it, emphasized originally by André Joyal and then further developed in [LuHTT], is that it behaves formally entirely analously to category theory: there are notions of ∞-functors, ∞-limits, adjoint ∞-functors etc., that satisfy all the familiar relations from category theory. For instance right adjoint ∞-functors preserve all ∞-limits; there is an adjoint ∞-functor theorem; an ∞-Grothendieck construction-theorem; and so on.

In particular, there is a notion of ∞-presheaves on a category (or ∞-category) C: ∞-functors

$$X : C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

to the ∞-category $\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ of ∞-groupoids – there is an ∞-Yoneda embedding, and so on. Accordingly, ∞-topos theory proceeds in its basic notions along the same lines as we sketched above for topos theory:

an ∞-topos of ∞-sheaves is defined to be a reflective sub-∞-category

$$\mathrm{Sh}_{(\infty,1)}(C) \underset{\hookrightarrow}{\overset{L}{\leftarrow}} \mathrm{PSh}_{(\infty,1)}(C)$$

of an ∞-category of ∞-presheaves. As before, such is essentially determined by and determines a Grothendieck topology or coverage on C. (For this to be precise we need to demand that the inclusion is a *topological localization.*) Since a 2-sheaf with values in groupoids is usually called a *stack*, an ∞-sheaf is often also called an ∞*-stack*.

In the spirit of the above discussion, the objects of the ∞-topos of ∞-sheaves on $C = \mathrm{CartSp}$ we shall think of as smooth ∞-groupoids. This is our main running example. We shall write $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} := \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp})$ for the ∞-topos of smooth ∞-groupoids.

But a crucial point of developing our theory in the language of ∞-toposes is that all constructions work in great generality. By simply passing to another site C, all constructions apply to the theory of generalized spaces modeled on the test objects in C. Indeed, to really capture all aspects of ∞-Lie theory, we should and will adjoin to our running example $C = \mathrm{CartSp}$ that of the slightly larger site $C = \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ of infinitesimally thickened Cartesian spaces. Ordinary sheaves on this site are the generalized spaces considered in *synthetic differential geometry*: these are smooth spaces such as smooth loci that may have infinitesimal extension. For instance the first order jet $D \subset \mathbb{R}$ of the origin in the real line exists as an infinitesimal space in $\mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}})$. Accordingly, ∞-groupoids modeled on $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ are smooth ∞-groupoids that may have k-morphisms of infinitesimal extension. We will see that a smooth ∞-groupoid all whose morphisms has infinitesimal extension is a Lie algebra or Lie algebroid or generally an ∞-Lie algebroid.

While ∞-category theory provides a good abstract definition and theory of ∞-groupoids modeled on test objects in a category C in terms of the ∞-category of ∞-sheaves on C, for concrete manipulations it is often useful to have a presentation of the ∞-categories in question in terms of generators and relations in ordinary category theory. Such a generators-and-relations-presentation is provided by the notion of a *model category* structure. Specifically, the ∞-toposes of ∞-presheaves that we are concerned with are presented in this way by a model structure on simplicial presheaves, i.e. on the functor category $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ from C to the category sSet of simplicial sets. In terms of this model, the corresponding ∞-category of ∞-sheaves is given by another model structure on $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$, called the *left Bousfield localization* at the set of covers in C.

These models for ∞-stack ∞-toposes have been proposed, known and studied since the 1970s and are therefore quite well understood. The full description and proof of their abstract role in ∞-category theory was established in [LuHTT].

As before for toposes, there is an archetypical ∞-topos, which is $\infty\mathrm{Grpd} = \mathrm{Sh}_{(\infty,1)}(*)$ itself: the collection of generalized ∞-groupoids that are modeled on the point. All we know about these generalized spaces is how to map a point into them and what the homotopies and higher homotopies of such maps are, but no further extra structure. So these are bare ∞-groupoids without extra structure. Also as before, every ∞-topos comes with an essentially unique geometric morphism to this archetypical ∞-topos given by a pair of adjoint ∞-functors

$$\mathrm{Sh}_{(\infty,1)}(C) \underset{\Gamma}{\overset{\mathrm{Disc}}{\rightleftarrows}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \; .$$

Again, if C happens to have a terminal object $*$, then Γ is the operation that evaluates an ∞-sheaf on the point: it produces the bare ∞-groupoid underlying an ∞-groupoid modeled on C. For instance for $C = \mathrm{CartSp}$ a smooth ∞-groupoid $X \in \mathrm{Sh}_{(\infty,1)}(C)$ is sent by Γ to to the underlying ∞-groupoid that forgets the smooth structure on X.

Moreover, still in direct analogy to the 1-categorical case above, the left adjoint Disc is the ∞-functor that sends a bare ∞-groupoid S to the ∞-stackification $\mathrm{Disc}S = L\mathrm{Const}S$ of the constant ∞-presheaf on S. This models the discretely structured ∞-groupoid on S. For instance for $C = \mathrm{CartSp}$ we have that $\mathrm{Disc}S$ is a smooth ∞-groupoid with discrete smooth structure: all smooth families of points in it are actually constant.

1.2.3 Cohomology

We had mentioned that every topos behaves in most general abstract ways as the archetypical topos Set. Analogously, every ∞-topos behaves in most general abstract ways as the archetypical ∞-topos $\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$. This, in turn, by the homotopy hypothesis-theorem, is equivalent to Top, the category of topological spaces, regarded as an ∞-category by taking the 2-morphisms to be homotopies between continuous maps, 3-morphisms to be homotopies of homotopy, and so forth:

$$\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \simeq \mathrm{Top} \, .$$

In Top it is familiar – from the notion of classifying space and the Brown representability theorem – that the cohomology of a topological space X is defined as the set of homotopy classes of maps from X to some coefficient space A

$$H(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathrm{Top}(X, A) \, .$$

For instance for $A = K(n, \mathbb{Z}) \simeq B^n\mathbb{Z}$ an Eilenberg-MacLane space, we have that

$$H(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathrm{Top}(X, B^n\mathbb{Z}) \simeq H^n(X, \mathbb{Z})$$

is the ordinary integral singular cohomology of X. Also *nonabelian cohomology* is modeled this way: for G a (possibly nonabelian) topological group and $A = BG$ its classifying space we have that

$$H(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathrm{Top}(X, BG) \simeq H^1(X, G)$$

is the degree-1 nonabelian cohomology of X with coeffients in G, which classifies G-principal bundles on X.

Since this only involves forming ∞-categorical hom-spaces and since this is an entirely categorical operation, we may *define* for X, A any two objects in an arbitrary ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ the intrinsic cohomology of X with coefficients in A to be

$$H(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, A) \, ,$$

where $\mathbf{H}(X,A)$ denotes the ∞-groupoid of morphism from X to A in $\mathbf{H}$. It turns out that essentially every notion of cohomology considered in the literature is an example of this simple definition, for a suitable choice of $\mathbf{H}$. Notably abelian sheaf cohomology over a given site C is the special case where $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C)$ and A takes values in abelian simplicial groups. This example alone subsumes a wealth of further special cases, such as for instance Deligne cohomology.

There are some definitions in the literature of cohomology theories that are not special cases of this general concept, but in these cases it seems that the failure is with the traditional definition, not with the above notion. We shall be interested in particular in the group cohomology of Lie groups. Originally this was defined using a naive direct generalization of the formula for bare group cohomology as

$$H^n_{\mathrm{naive}}(G,A) = \{\text{smooth maps } G^{\times n} \to A\}/\sim \;.$$

But this definition was eventually found to be too coarse: there are structures that ought to be cocycles on Lie groups but do not show up in this definition. Graeme Segal therefore proposed a refined definition that was later rediscovered by Jean-Luc Brylinski, called *differentiable Lie group cohomology* $H^n_{\mathrm{diffbl}}(G,A)$. This refines the naive Lie group cohomology in that there is a natural morphism $H^n_{\mathrm{naive}}(G,A) \to H^n_{\mathrm{diffbl}}(G,A)$.

But in the ∞-topos of smooth ∞-groupoids $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp})$ we have the natural intrinsic definition of Lie group cohomology as

$$H^n_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(G,A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{B}G, \mathbf{B}^n A)$$

and one finds that this naturally includes the Segal/Brylinski definition

$$H^n_{\mathrm{naive}}(G,A) \to H^n_{\mathrm{diffrbl}}(G,A) \to H^n_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(G,A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{B}G, \mathbf{B}^n A)\,.$$

and at least for A a discrete group, or the group of real numbers or a quotient of these such as $U(1) = \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$, the notions coincide

$$H^n_{\mathrm{diffrbl}}(G,A) \simeq H^n_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(G,A)\,.$$

This general abstract reformulation of Lie group cohomology in ∞-topos theory allows to deduce some properties of it in great generality. For instance one of the crucial aspects of the notion of cohomology is that a cohomology class on X *classifies* certain structures over X.

It is a classical fact that if G is a (discrete) group and BG its delooping in Top, then the structure classified by a cocycle $g : X \to BG$ is the G-principal bundle over X obtained as the 1-categorical pullback $P \to X$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & EG \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{g} & BG \end{array}$$

of the universal G-principal bundle $EG \to BG$. But one finds that this pullback construction is just a 1-categorical *model* for what intrinsically is something simpler: this is just the *homotopy pullback* in Top of the point

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & \swarrow_{\simeq} & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow[g]{} & BG \end{array}$$

This form of the construction of the G-principal bundle classified by a cocycle makes sense in any ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$:

we shall say that for $G \in \mathbf{H}$ a group object in $\mathbf{H}$ and $\mathbf{B}G$ its delooping and for $g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ a cocycle (any morphism in $\mathbf{H}$) that the *G-principal ∞-bundle* classified by g is the ∞-pullback/homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & \swarrow_{\simeq} & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow[g]{} & BG \end{array}$$

in $\mathbf{H}$. (Beware that usually we will notationally suppress the homotopy filling this square diagram.)

Let G be a Lie group and X a smooth manifold, both regarded naturally as objects in the ∞-topos of smooth ∞-groupoids. Let $g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ be a morphism in $\mathbf{H}$. One finds that in terms of the presentation of Smooth∞Grpd by the model structure on simplicial presheaves this is a Čech 1-cocycle on X with values in G. The corresponding ∞-pullback P is (up to equivalence or course) the smooth G-principal bundle classified in the usual sense by this cocycle.

The analogous proposition holds for G a Lie 2-group and P a G-principal 2-bundle.

Generally, we can give a natural definition of G-principal ∞-bundle in any ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ over any ∞-group object $G \in \mathbf{H}$. One finds that it is the Giraud axioms that characterize ∞-toposes that ensure that these are equivalently classified as the ∞-bullbacks of morphisms $g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$. Therefore the intrinsic cohomology

$$H(X, G) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, BG)$$

in $\mathbf{H}$ classifies G-principal ∞-bundles over X. Notice that X here may itself be any object in $\mathbf{H}$.

1.2.4 Homotopy

Every ∞-sheaf ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ canonically comes equipped with a geometric morphism given by pair of adjoint ∞-functors

$$(L\mathrm{Const} \dashv \Gamma) : \mathbf{H} \underset{\Gamma}{\overset{L\mathrm{Const}}{\rightleftarrows}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

relating it to the archeytpical ∞-topos of ∞-groupoids. Here Γ produces the global sections of an ∞-sheaf and LConst produces the constant ∞-sheaf on a given ∞-groupoid.

In the cases that we are interested in here $\mathbf{H}$ is a big topos of ∞-groupoids equipped with cohesive structure, notably equipped with smooth structure in our motivating example. In this case Γ has the interpretation of sending a cohesive ∞-groupoid $X \in \mathbf{H}$ to its underlying ∞-groupoid, after forgetting the cohesive structure, and LConst has the interpretation of forming ∞-groupoids equipped with discrete cohesive structure. We shall write Disc $:= L$Const to indicate this.

But in these cases of cohesive ∞-toposes there are actually more adjoints to these two functors, and this will be essentially the general abstract definition of cohesiveness. In particular there is a further left adjoint

$$\Pi : \mathbf{H} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

to Disc: the *fundamental ∞-groupoid functor on a locally ∞-connected ∞-topos*. Following the standard terminology of *locally connected toposes* in ordinary topos theory we shall say that $\mathbf{H}$ with such a property is a *locally ∞-connected ∞-topos*. This terminology reflects the fact that if X is a locally contractible topological space then $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(X)$ is a locally contractible ∞-topos. A classical result of Artin-Mazur implies, that in this case the value of Π on $X \in \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(X)$ is, up to equivalence, the *fundamental ∞-groupoid of X*:

$$\Pi : (X \in \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(X)) \mapsto (\mathrm{Sing}X \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}) ,$$

which is the ∞-groupoid whose

- objects are the points of X;
- morphisms are the (continuous) paths in X;
- 2-morphisms are the continuous homotopies between such paths;
- k-morphisms are the higher order homotopies between $(k-1)$-dimensional paths.

This is the object that encodes all the homotopy groups of X in a canonical fashion, without choice of fixed base point.

Also the big ∞-topos $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} = \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp})$ turns out to be locally ∞-connected

$$(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma) : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \underset{\Gamma}{\overset{\Pi}{\underset{\xleftarrow{\mathrm{Disc}}}{\longrightarrow}}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

as a reflection of the fact that every Cartesian space $\mathbb{R}^n \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ is contractible as a topological space. We find that for X any paracompact smooth manifold, regarded as an object of $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$, again $\Pi(X) \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is the corresponding fundamental ∞-groupoid. More in detail, under the *homotopy-hypothesis*-equivalence $(|-| \dashv \mathrm{Sing}) : \mathrm{Top} \underset{\mathrm{Sing}}{\overset{|-|}{\underset{\longrightarrow}{\overset{\simeq}{\longleftarrow}}}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ we have that the composite

$$|\Pi(-)| : \mathbf{H} \xrightarrow{\Pi} \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \xrightarrow{|-|} \mathrm{Top}$$

sends a smooth manifold X to its homotopy type: the underlying topological space of X, up to weak homotopy equivalence.

Analogously, for a general object $X \in \mathbf{H}$ we may think of $|\Pi(X)|$ as the generalized geometric realization in Top. For instance we find that if $X \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is presented by a simplicial paracompact manifold, then $|\Pi(X)|$ is the ordinary geometric realization of the underlying simplicial topological space of X. This means in particular that for $X \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ a Lie groupoid, $\Pi(X)$ computes its *homotopy groups of a Lie groupoid* as traditionally defined.

The ordinary homotopy groups of $\Pi(X)$ or equivalently of $|\Pi(X)|$ we call the *geometric homotopy groups* of $X \in \mathbf{H}$, because these are based on a notion of homotopy induced by an intrisic notion of geometric paths in objects in X. This is to be contrasted with the *categorical homotopy groups* of X. These are the homotopy groups of the underlying ∞-groupoid $\Gamma(X)$ of X. For instance for X a smooth manifold we have that

$$\pi_n(\Gamma(X)) \simeq \begin{cases} X \in \mathrm{Set} & | n = 0 \\ 0 & | n > 0 \end{cases}$$

but

$$\pi_n(\Pi(X)) \simeq \pi_n(X \in \mathrm{Top}) \,.$$

This allows us to give a precise sense to what it means to have a *cohesive refinement* (continuous refinement, smooth refinement, etc.) of an object in Top. Notably we are interested in smooth refinements of classifying spaces $BG \in \mathrm{Top}$ for topological groups G by deloopings $\mathbf{B}G \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ of ∞-Lie groups G and we may interpret this as saying that

$$\Pi(\mathbf{B}G) \simeq BG$$

in $\mathrm{Top} \simeq \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$.

1.2.5 Differential cohomology

We now indicate how the combination of the *intrinsic cohomology* and the *geometric homotopy* in a locally ∞-connected ∞-topos yields a good notion of *differential cohomology in an ∞-topos*.

Using the defining adjoint ∞-functors $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma)$ we may reflect the fundamental ∞-groupoid $\Pi : \mathbf{H} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ from Top back into $\mathbf{H}$ by considering the composite endo-edjunction

$$(\mathbf{\Pi} \dashv \flat) := (\mathrm{Disc} \circ \Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \circ \Gamma) : \mathbf{H} \underset{\longrightarrow}{\longleftarrow} \mathbf{H} \,.$$

The $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc})$-unit $X \to \mathbf{\Pi}(X)$ may be thought of as the inclusion of X into its fundamental ∞-groupoid as the collection of constant paths in X.

As always, the boldface $\mathbf{\Pi}$ is to indicate that we are dealing with a cohesive refinement of the topological structure Π. The symbol "$\flat$" ("flat") is to be suggestive of the meaning of this construction:

For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ any cohesive object, we may think of $\Pi(X)$ as its cohesive fundamental ∞-groupoid. A morphism

$$\nabla : \mathbf{\Pi}(X) \to \mathbf{B}G$$

(hence a G-valued cocycle on $\mathbf{\Pi}(X)$) may be interpreted as assigning:

- to each point $x \in X$ the fiber of the corresponding G-principal ∞-bundle classified by the composite $g : X \to \mathbf{\Pi}(X) \stackrel{\nabla}{\to} \mathbf{B}G$;
- to each path in X an equivalence between the fibers over its endpoints;
- to each homotopy of paths in X an equivalence between these equivalences;
- and so on.

This in turn we may think as being the *flat higher parallel transport* of an ∞-connection on the bundle classified by $g : X \to \mathbf{\Pi}(X) \stackrel{\nabla}{\to} \mathbf{B}G$.

The adjunction equivalence allows us to identify $\flat\mathbf{B}G$ as the coefficient object for this flat differential G-valued cohomology on X:

$$H_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, G) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, \flat\mathbf{B}G) \simeq \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}(X), \mathbf{B}G)\,.$$

In $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ and with $G \in \mathbf{H}$ an ordinary Lie group and $X \in \mathbf{H}$ an ordinary smooth manifold, we have that $H_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, G)$ is the set of equivalence classes of ordinary G-principal bundles on X with flat connections.

The $(\mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma)$-counit $\flat\mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}G$ provides the forgetful morphism

$$H_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, G) \to H(X, G)$$

form G-principal ∞-bundles with flat connection to their underlying principal ∞-bundles. Not every G-principal ∞-bundle admits a flat connection. The failure of this to be true - the obstruction to the existence of flat lifts - is measured by the homotopy fiber of the counit, which we shall denote $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$, defined by the fact that we have a fiber sequence

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G \to \flat\mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}G\,.$$

As the notation suggests, it turns out that $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$ may be thought of as the coefficient object for nonabelian generalized de Rham cohomology. For instance for G an odinary Lie group regarded as an object in $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$, we have that $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$ is presented by the sheaf $\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-, \mathfrak{g})$ of Lie algebra valued differential forms with vanishing curvature 2-form. And for the circle Lie n-group $\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)$ we find that $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ is presented by the complex of sheaves whose abelian sheaf cohomology is de Rham cohomology in degree n. (More precisely, this is true for $n \geq 2$. For $n = 1$ we get just the sheaf of closed 1-forms. This is due to the obstruction-theoretic nature of $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}$: as we shall see, in degree 1 it computes 1-form curvatures of groupoid principal bundles, and these are not quotiented by exact 1-forms.) Moreover, in this case our fiber sequence extends not just to the left but also to the right

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n U(1) \to \flat\mathbf{B}^n U(1) \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}}{\to} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)\,.$$

The induced morphism

$$\mathrm{curv}_X : \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \to \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1))$$

we may think of as equipping an $\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)$-principal n-bundle (equivalently an $(n-1)$-bundle gerbe) with a connection, and then sending it to the higher curvature class of this connection. The homotopy fibers

$$\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \to \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}}{\to} \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1))$$

of this map therefore have the interpretation of being the cocycle ∞-groupoids of circle n-bundles with connection. This is the realization in $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ of our general definition of ordinary differential cohomology in an ∞-topos.

All these definitions make sense in full generality for any locally ∞-connected ∞-topos. We used nothing but the existence of the triple of adjoint ∞-functors $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma) : \mathbf{H} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$. We shall show for the special case that $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ and X an ordinary smooth manifold, that this general abstract definition reproduces ordinary differential cohomology over smooth manifolds as traditionally considered.

The advantage of the general abstract reformulation is that it generalizes the ordinary notion naturally to base objects that may be arbitrary smooth ∞-groupoids. This gives in particular the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism in an almost tautological form:

for $G \in \mathbf{H}$ any ∞-group object and $\mathbf{B}G \in \mathbf{H}$ its delooping, we may think of a morphism

$$\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$$

as a representative of a characteristic class on G, in that this induces a morphism

$$[\mathbf{c}(-)] : H(X, G) \to H^n(X, U(1))$$

from G-principal ∞-bundles to degree-n cohomology-classes. Since the classification of G-principal ∞-bundles by cocycles is entirely general, we may equivalently think of this as the $\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)$-principal ∞-bundle $P \to \mathbf{B}G$ given as the homotopy fiber of $\mathbf{c}$. A famous example is the Chern-Simons circle 3-bundle (bundle 2-gerbe) for G a simply connected Lie group.

By postcomposing further with the canonical morphism $\mathrm{curv} : \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)$ this gives in total a *differential characteristic class*

$$\mathbf{c}_{\mathrm{dR}} : \mathbf{B}G \stackrel{\mathbf{c}}{\to} \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}}{\to} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)$$

that sends a G-principal ∞-bundle to a class in de Rham cohomology

$$[\mathbf{c}_{\mathrm{dR}}] : H(X, G) \to H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) \,.$$

This is the generalization of the plain Chern-Weil homomorphism.associated with the characteristic class c. In cases accessible by traditional theory, it is well known that this may be refined to what are called the assignment of *secondary characteristic classes* to G-principal bundles with connection, taking values in ordinary differential cohomology

$$[\hat{\mathbf{c}}] : H_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, G) \to H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) \,.$$

We will discuss that in the general abstract formulation this corresponds to finding objects $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$ that lift all curvature characteristic classes to their corresponding circle n-bundles with connection, in that it fits into the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
\mathbf{H}(-, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}) & \longrightarrow & \prod_i \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(-, \mathbf{B}^{n_i} U(1)) & \longrightarrow & \prod_i H^{n_i+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(-) \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
\mathbf{H}(-, \mathbf{B}G) & \longrightarrow & \prod_i \mathbf{H}(-, \mathbf{B}^{n_i} U(1)) & \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}}{\longrightarrow} & \prod_i \mathbf{H}(-, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n_i+1} U(1))
\end{array}$$

The cocycles in $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}G) := \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}})$ we may identify with ∞-connections on the underlying principal ∞-bundles. Specifically for G an ordinary Lie group this captures the ordinary notion of connection on a bundle, for G Lie 2-group it captures the notion of connection on a 2-bundle/gerbe.

1.3 Models and applications

Ordinary Chern-Weil theory studies connections on G-principal bundles over a Lie group G. In the context of the cohesive ∞-topos Smooth∞Grpd of smooth ∞-groupoids these generalize to ∞-connections on principal $\infty-$bundles over ∞-Lie groups G. Accordingly ∞*-Chern-Weil theory* deals with these higher connections and their relation to ordinary differential cohomology.

Here we describe introductory basics of this general theory in concrete terms.

Two simple special cases of general ∞-Chern-Weil theory are obtained by

1. restricting attention to low categorical degree; studying principal 1-bundles, principal 2-bundles and3-bundles; in terms of groupoids, 2-groupoids and 3-groupoids;

2. restricting attention to infinitesimal aspects; studying not smooth ∞-groupoids but just their L_∞-algebroids. In terms of this it is easy to raise categorical degree to $n = \infty$, but this misses various global cohomological effects (very similar to how rational homotopy theory describes just non-torsion phenomena of genuine homotopy theory).

These are the special cases that this introduction section concentrates on.

We start by describing *smooth principal n-bundles* in section 1.3.1 for low n in detail, connecting them to standard theory, but presenting everything in such as way as to allow straightforward generalization to the full discussion of principal ∞-bundles. Then in the same spirit we discuss *connections on principal n-bundles* in section 1.3.3 for low n in a fashion that connects to the ordinary notion of parallel transport and points the way to the fully-fledged formulation in terms of the path ∞-groupoid functor. This leads to differential-form expressions that we eventually reformulate in terms of L_∞*-algebra valued connections* in section 1.3.6. We end this introductory survey by indicating how under Lie integration the constructions lifts to full ∞-Chern-Weil theory.

- Higher gauge theory in low degree
  - 1.3.1 – Principal n-bundles for low n
  - 1.3.2 – A model for principal ∞-bundles
  - 1.3.3 – Parallel n-transport for low n
  - 1.3.4 – Characteristic classes in low degree
- Infinitesimal data of higher gauge theory
  - 1.3.5 – L_∞-algebraic structures
  - 1.3.6 – The ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism in low degree

1.3.1 Principal n-bundles for low n

The following is an exposition of the notion of *principal bundles* in higher but low degree.

We assume here that the reader has a working knowledge of groupoids and at least a rough idea of 2-groupoids. For introductions see for instance [BrHiSi11] [Por]

Below in 1.3.2 a discussion of the formalization of ∞-groupoids in terms of Kan complexes is given and is used to present a systematic way to understand these constructions in all degrees.

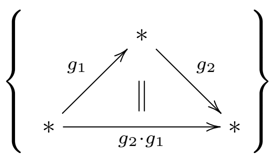
1.3.1.1 Principal 1-bundles Let G be a Lie group and X a smooth manifold (all our smooth manifolds are assumed to be finite dimensional and paracompact). We give a discussion of smooth G-principal bundles on X in a manner that paves the way to a straightforward generalization to a description of principal ∞-bundles. From X and G are naturally induced certain Lie groupoids.

From the group G we canonically obtain a groupoid that we write BG and call the *delooping groupoid* of G. Formally this groupoid is

$$BG = (\, G \rightrightarrows * \,)$$

with composition induced from the product in G. A useful cartoon of this groupoid is

$BG =$



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where the $g_i \in G$ are elements in the group, and the bottom morphism is labeled by forming the product in the group. (The order of the factors here is a convention whose choice, once and for all, does not matter up to equivalence.)

But we get a bit more, even. Since G is a Lie group, there is smooth structure on BG that makes it a Lie groupoid, an internal groupoid in the category SmoothMfd of smooth manifolds: its collection of objects (trivially) and of morphisms each form a smooth manifold, and all structure maps (source, target, identity, composition) are smooth functions. We shall write

$$\mathbf{B}G \in \mathrm{LieGrpd}$$

for BG regarded as equipped with this smooth structure. Here and in the following the boldface is to indicate that we have an object equipped with a bit more structure - here: smooth structure - than present on the object denoted by the same symbols, but without the boldface. Eventually we will make this precise by having the boldface symbols denote objects in the ∞-topos Smooth∞Grpd which are taken by forgetful functors to objects in ∞Grpd denoted by the corresponding non-boldface symbols.

Also the smooth manifold X may be regarded as a Lie groupoid - a groupoid with only identity morphisms. Its cartoon description is simply

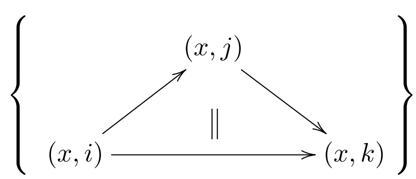
$$X = \{ \, x \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Id}} x \, \}$$

for all $x \in X$ But there are other groupoids associated with X: let $\{U_i \to X\}_{i \in I}$ be an open cover of X. To this is canonically associated the Čech-groupoid $C(\{U_i\})$. Formally we may write this groupoid as

$$C(\{U_i\}) = \left\{ \, \coprod_{i,j} U_i \cap U_j \rightrightarrows \coprod_i U_i \, \right\} .$$

A useful cartoon description of this groupoid is

$C(\{U_i\}) =$



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This indicates that the objects of this groupoid are pairs (x, i) consisting of a point $x \in X$ and a patch $U_i \subset X$ that contains x, and a morphism is a triple (x, i, j) consisting of a point and two patches, that both contain the point, in that $x \in U_i \cap U_j$. The triangle in the above cartoon symbolizes the evident way in which these morphisms compose. All this inherits a smooth structure from the fact that the U_i are smooth manifolds and the inclusions $U_i \hookrightarrow X$ are smooth functions. Hence also $C(\{U_i\})$ becomes a Lie groupoid.

There is a canonical projection functor

$$C(\{U_i\}) \to X : (x, i) \mapsto x \,.$$

This functor is an internal functor in SmoothMfd and moreover it is evidently essentially surjective and full and faithful. However, while essential surjectivity and full-and-faithfulness implies that the underlying bare functor has a homotopy-inverse, that homotopy-inverse never has itself smooth component maps, unless X itself is a Cartesian space and the chosen cover is trivial.

We do however want to think of $C(\{U_i\})$ as being equivalent to X even as a Lie groupoid. One says that a smooth functor whose underlying bare functor is an equivalence of groupoids is a *weak equivalence* of Lie groupoids, which we write as $C(\{U_i\}) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} X$. Moreover, we shall think of $C(\{U_i\})$ as a *good* equivalent replacement of X if it comes from a cover that is in fact a *good open cover* in that all its non-empty finite intersections $U_{i_0, \cdots, i_n} := U_{i_0} \cap \cdots \cap U_{i_n}$ are diffeomorphic to the Cartesian space $\mathbb{R}^{\dim X}$.

We shall discuss later in which precise sense this condition makes $C(\{U_i\})$ *good* in the sense that smooth functors out of $C(\{U_i\})$ model the correct notion of morphism out of X in the context of smooth groupoids (namely it will mean that $C(\{U_i\})$ is cofibrant in a suitable model category structure on the category of Lie groupoids). The formalization of this statement is what ∞-topos theory is all about, to which we will come. For the moment we shall be content with accepting this as an ad hoc statement.

Observe that a functor

$$g : C(\{U_i\}) \to \mathbf{B}G$$

is given in components precisely by a collection of smooth functions

$$\{g_{ij} : U_{ij} \to G\}_{i,j \in I}$$

such that on each $U_i \cap U_j \cap U_k$ the equality $g_{jk} g_{ij} = g_{ik}$ of functions holds.

It is well known that such collections of functions characterize G-principal bundles on X. While this is a classical fact, we shall now describe a way to derive it that is true to the Lie-groupoid-context and that will make clear how smooth principal ∞-bundles work.

First observe that in total we have discussed so far spans of smooth functors of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C(\{U_i\}) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ X & & \end{array} .$$

Such spans of functors, whose left leg is a weak equivalence, are sometimes known, essentially equivalently, as *Morita morphisms*, as *generalized morphisms* of Lie groupoids, as *Hilsum-Skandalis morphisms*, or as *groupoid bibundles* or as *anafunctors*. We are to think of these as concrete models for more intrinsically defined direct morphisms $X \to \mathbf{B}G$ in the ∞-topos of smooth ∞-groupoids.

Now consider yet another Lie groupoid canonically associated with G: we shall write $\mathbf{E}G$ for the groupoid – the *smooth universal G-bundle* – whose formal description is

$$\mathbf{E}G = \left(G \times G \underset{p_1}{\overset{(-)\cdot(-)}{\rightrightarrows}} G \right)$$

with the evident composition operation. The cartoon description of this groupoid is

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{ccccc} & & g_2 & & \\ & {}^{g_2 g_1^{-1}}\nearrow & \| & \searrow^{g_3 g_2^{-1}} & \\ g_1 & & \xrightarrow[g_3 g_1^{-1}]{} & & g_3 \end{array} \right\},$$

This again inherits an evident smooth structure from the smooth structure of G and hence becomes a Lie groupoid.

There is an evident forgetful functor

$$\mathbf{E}G \to \mathbf{B}G$$

which sends

$$(g_1 \to g_2) \mapsto (\bullet \stackrel{g_2 g_1^{-1}}{\to} \bullet)\,.$$

Consider then the pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \tilde{P} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{E}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ C(\{U_i\}) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

in the category Grpd(SmoothMfd). The object $\tilde{P}$ is the Lie groupoid whose cartoon description is

$$\tilde{P} = \left\{ \; (x, i, g_1) \longrightarrow (x, j, g_2 = g_{ij}(x) g_1) \; \right\}\;;$$

where there is a unique morphism as indicated, whenever the group labels match as indicated. Due to this uniqueness, this Lie groupoid is weakly equivalent to one that comes just from a manifold P (it is 0-truncated)

$$\tilde{P} \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} P\,.$$

This P is traditionally written as

$$P = \left(\coprod_i U_i \times G \right) / \sim\,,$$

where the equivalence relation is precisely that exhibited by the morphisms in $\tilde{P}$. This is the traditional way to construct a G-principal bundle from cocycle functions $\{g_{ij}\}$. We may think of $\tilde{P}$ as *being* P. It is a particular representative of P in the ∞-topos of Lie groupoids.

While it is easy to see in components that the P obtained this way does indeed have a principal G-action on it, for later generalizations it is crucial that we can also recover this in a general abstract way. For notice that there is a canonical action

$$(\mathbf{E}G) \times G \to \mathbf{E}G\,,$$

given by the group action on the space of objects. Then consider the pasting diagram of pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \tilde{P}\times G & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{E}G\times G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \tilde{P} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{E}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle\simeq} & & \\ X & & \end{array} \;.$$

Here the morphism $\tilde{P}\times G \to \tilde{P}$ exhibits the principal G-action of G on $\tilde{P}$.

In summary we find the following

Observation 1.3.1. For $\{U_i \to X\}$ a good open cover, there is an equivalence of categories

$$\mathrm{SmoothFunc}(C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}G) \simeq G\mathrm{Bund}(X)$$

between the functor category of smooth functors and smooth natural transformations, and the groupoid of smooth G-principal bundles on X.

It is no coincidence that this statement looks akin to the maybe more familiar statement which says that equivalence classes of G-principal bundles are classified by homotopy-classes of morphisms of topological spaces

$$\pi_0 \mathrm{Top}(X, BG) \simeq \pi_0 G\mathrm{Bund}(X)\,,$$

where $BG \in \mathrm{Top}$ is the topological classifying space of G. What we are seeing here is a first indication of how cohomology of bare ∞-groupoids is lifted to a richer ∞-topos to cohomology of ∞-groupoids with extra structure.

In fact, all of the statements that we considered so far becomes conceptually simpler in the ∞-topos. We had already remarked that the anafunctor span $X \stackrel{\simeq}{\leftarrow} C(\{U_i\}) \stackrel{g}{\to} \mathbf{B}G$ is really a model for what is simply a direct morphism $X \to \mathbf{B}G$ in the ∞-topos. But more is true: that pullback of $\mathbf{E}G$ which we considered is just a model for the homotopy pullback of just the *point*

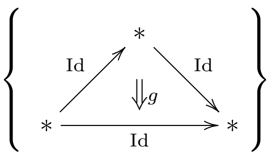
$$\vdots \qquad\qquad \vdots \qquad\qquad \vdots \qquad\qquad \vdots$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \tilde{P}\times G & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{E}G\times G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \tilde{P} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{E}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle\simeq} & & \\ X & & \end{array} \qquad\qquad \begin{array}{ccc} P\times G & \longrightarrow & G \\ \downarrow & \swarrow_{\simeq} & \downarrow \\ P & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & \swarrow_{\simeq} & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow[g]{} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

in the model category $\qquad\qquad$ in the ∞-topos

1.3.1.2 Principal 2-bundles and twisted 1-bundles The discussion above of G-principal bundles was all based on the Lie groupoids $\mathbf{B}G$ and $\mathbf{E}G$ that are canonically induced by a Lie group G. We now discuss the case where G is generalized to a *Lie 2-group*. The above discussion will go through essentially verbatim, only that we pick up 2-morphisms everywhere. This is the first step towards higher Chern-Weil theory. The resulting generalization of the notion of principal bundle is that of *principal 2-bundle*. For historical reasons these are known in the literature often as *gerbes* or as *bundle gerbes*, even though strictly speaking there are some conceptual differences.

Write $U(1) = \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ for the circle group. We have already seen above the groupoid $\mathbf{B}U(1)$ obtained from this. But since $U(1)$ is an abelian group this groupoid has the special property that it still has itself the structure of a group object. This makes it what is called a *2-group*. Accordingly, we may form its delooping once more to arrive at a Lie 2-groupoid $\mathbf{B}^2U(1)$. Its cartoon picture is

$\mathbf{B}^2U(1) =$ 

for $g \in U(1)$. Both horizontal composition as well as vertical composition of the 2-morphisms is given by the product in $U(1)$.

Let again X be a smooth manifold with good open cover $\{U_i \to X\}$. The corresponding Čech groupoid we may also think of as a Lie 2-groupoid,

$$C(U) = \left(\coprod_{i,j,k} U_i \cap U_j \cap U_k \xrightarrow{\quad}\!\!\!\!\!\!\!\!\!\!\rightrightarrows \coprod_{i,j} U_i \cap U_j \rightrightarrows \coprod_i U_i \right) .$$

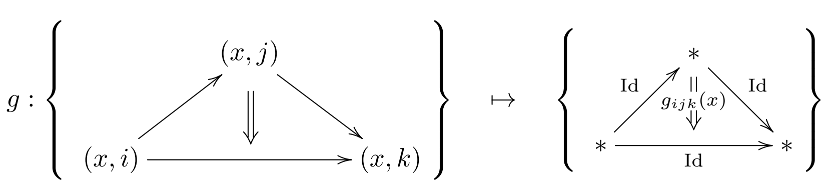
What we see here are the first stages of the full *Čech nerve* of the cover. Eventually we will be looking at this object in its entirety, since for all degrees this is always a *good* replacement of the manifold X, as long as $\{U_i \to X\}$ is a good open cover. So we look now at 2-anafunctors given by spans

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C(\{U_i\}) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}^2U(1) \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

of internal 2-functors. These will model direct morphisms $X \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$ in the ∞-topos. It is straightforward to read off the following

Observation 1.3.2. A smooth 2-functor $g : C(\{U_i\}) \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$ is given by the data of a 2-cocycle in the Čech cohomology of X with coefficients in $U(1)$.

Because on 2-morphisms it specifies an assignment



that is given by a collection of smooth functions

$$(g_{ijk} : U_i \cap U_j \cap U_k \to U(1)) .$$

On 3-morphisms it gives a constraint on these functions, since there are only identity 3-morphisms in $\mathbf{B}^2U(1)$:

$$\left(\left(\begin{array}{ccc} (x,j) & \longrightarrow & (x,k) \\ \uparrow & \nearrow & \downarrow \\ (x,i) & \longrightarrow & (x,l) \end{array}\right) \Rightarrow \left(\begin{array}{ccc} (x,j) & \longrightarrow & (x,k) \\ \uparrow & \searrow & \downarrow \\ (x,i) & \longrightarrow & (x,l) \end{array}\right)\right) \mapsto \left(\left(\begin{array}{ccc} * & \longrightarrow & * \\ \uparrow & {}^{g_{ijk}(x)}\Downarrow \nearrow \Downarrow_{g_{ikl}(x)} & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & * \end{array}\right) = \left(\begin{array}{ccc} * & \longrightarrow & * \\ \uparrow & {}^{g_{ijl}(x)}\Downarrow \searrow \Downarrow_{g_{jkl}(x)} & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & * \end{array}\right)\right).$$

This relation

$$g_{ijk} \cdot g_{ikl} = g_{ijl} \cdot g_{jkl}$$

defines degree-2 cocycles in *Čech cohomology* with coefficients in $U(1)$.

In order to find the circle principal 2-bundle classified by such a cocycle by a pullback operation as before, we need to construct the 2-functor $\mathbf{EB}U(1) \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$ that exhibits the universal principal 2-bundle over $U(1)$. The right choice for $\mathbf{EB}U(1)$ – which we justify systematically in 1.3.2 – is indicated by

$$\mathbf{EB}U(1) = \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} & * & \\ {}^{c_1}\nearrow & \Downarrow g & \searrow^{c_2} \\ * & \xrightarrow[c_3 = g c_2 c_1]{} & * \end{array} \right\}$$

for $c_1, c_2, c_3, g \in U(1)$, where all possible composition operations are given by forming the product of these labels in $U(1)$. The projection $\mathbf{EB}U(1) \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$ is the obvious one that simply forgets the labels c_i of the 1-morphisms and just remembers the labels g of the 2-morphisms.

Definition 1.3.3. With $g : C(\{U_i\}) \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$ a Čech cocycle as above, the $U(1)$-*principal 2-bundle* or *circle 2-bundle* that it defines is the pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \tilde{P} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{EB}U(1) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ C(\{U_i\}) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}^2U(1) \\ \simeq\downarrow & & \\ X & & \end{array} .$$

Unwinding what this means, we see that $\tilde{P}$ is the 2-groupoid whose objects are that of $C(\{U_i\})$, whose morphisms are finite sequences of morphisms in $C(\{U_i\})$, each equipped with a label $c \in U(1)$, and whose 2-morphisms are generated from those that look like

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & (x,j) & \\ {}^{c_1}\nearrow & \Downarrow g_{ijk}(x) & \searrow^{c_2} \\ (x,i) & \xrightarrow[c_3]{} & (x,k) \end{array}$$

subject to the condition that

$$c_1 \cdot c_2 = c_3 \cdot g_{ijk}(x)$$

in $U(1)$. As before for principal 1-bundles P, where we saw that the analogous pullback 1-groupoid $\tilde{P}$ was equivalent to the 0-groupoid P, here we see that this 2-groupoid is equivalent to the 1-groupoid

$$P = \left(C(U)_1 \times U(1) \rightrightarrows C(U) \right)$$

with composition law

$$((x,i) \stackrel{c_1}{\to} (x,j) \stackrel{c_2}{\to} (x,k)) = ((x,i) \stackrel{(c_1 \cdot c_2 \cdot g_{ijk}(x))}{\to} (x,k))\,.$$

This is a groupoid central extension

$$\mathbf{B}U(1) \to P \to C(\{U_i\}) \simeq X\,.$$

Centrally extended groupoids of this kind are known in the literature as *bundle gerbes* (over the surjective submersion $Y = \coprod_i U_i \to X$). They may equivalently be thought of as given by a line bundle

$$\begin{array}{ccc} L & & \\ \downarrow & & \\ (C(U)_1 = \coprod_{i,j} U_i \cap U_j) & \longrightarrow & (C(U)_0 = \coprod_i U_i) \\ & & \downarrow \\ & & X \end{array}$$

over the space $C(U)_1$ of morphisms, and a line bundle morphism

$$\mu_g : \pi_1^* L \otimes \pi_2^* L \to \pi_1^* L$$

that satisfies an evident associativity law, equivalent to the cocycle codition on g. In summary we find that:

Observation 1.3.4. Bundle gerbes are presentations of Lie groupoids that are total spaces of $\mathbf{B}U(1)$-principal 2-bundles, def. 1.3.3.

Notice that, even though there is a close relation, the notion of *bundle gerbe* is different from the original notion of $U(1)$-*gerbe*. This point we discuss in more detail below in 1.3.16 and more abstractly in 3.2.5.

This discussion of *circle 2-bundles* has a generalization to 2-bundles that are principal over more general *2-groups*.

Definition 1.3.5.
1. A smooth *crossed module* of Lie groups is a pair of homomorphisms $\partial : G_1 \to G_0$ and $\rho : G_0 \to \mathrm{Aut}(G_1)$ of Lie groups, such that for all $g \in G_0$ and $h, h_1, h_2 \in G_1$ we have $\rho(\partial h_1)(h_2) = h_1 h_2 h_1^{-1}$ and $\partial\rho(g)(h) = g\partial(h)g^{-1}$.
2. For $(G_1 \to G_0)$ a smooth crossed module, the corresponding *strict Lie 2-group* is the smooth groupoid $G_0 \times G_1 \rightrightarrows G_0$, whose source map is given by projection on G_0, whose target map is given by applying ∂ to the second factor and then multiplying with the first in G_0, and whose composition is given by multiplying in G_1.

   This groupoid has a strict monoidal structure with strict inverses given by equipping $G_0 \times G_1$ with the semidirect product group structure $G_0 \ltimes G_1$ induced by the action ρ of G_0 on G_1.
3. The corresponding one-object strict smooth 2-groupoid we write $\mathbf{B}(G_1 \to G_0)$. As a simplicial object (under Duskin nerve of 2-categories) this is of the form

$$\mathbf{B}(G_1 \to G_0) = \mathrm{cosk}_3\left(G_0^{\times 3} \times G_1^{\times 3} \,\substack{\longrightarrow\\ \longrightarrow\\ \longrightarrow}\, G_0^{\times 2} \times G_1 \rightrightarrows G_0 \longrightarrow * \right)\,.$$

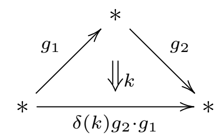
The infinitesimal analog of a crossed module of groups is a *differential crossed module*.

Definition 1.3.6. A *differential crossed module* is a chain complex of vector space of length 2 $V_1 \to V_0$ equipped with the structure of a dg-Lie algebra.

Example 1.3.7. For $G_1 \to G_0$ a smooth crossed module of Lie groups, differentiation of all structure maps yields a corresponding differential crossed module $\mathfrak{g}_1 \to \mathfrak{g}_0$.

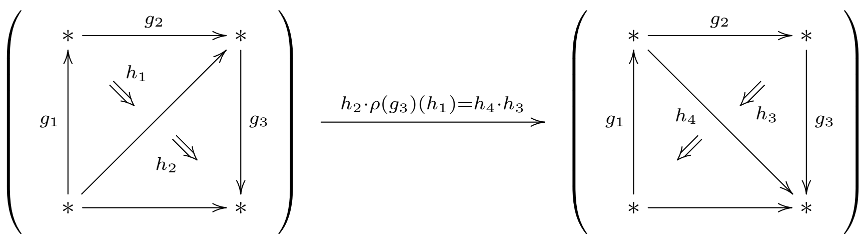
Observation 1.3.8. For $G := [G_1 \xrightarrow{\delta} G_0]$ a crossed module, the 2-groupoid delooping a 2-group coming from a crossed module is of the form

$$\mathbf{B}G = \left\{ \quad \right.$$



$$\left. \quad \mid \; g_1, g_2 \in G_0, k \in G_1 \right\} ,$$

where the 3-morphisms – the composition identities – are



Remark 1.3.9. All ingredients here are functorial, so that the above statements hold for presheaves over sites, hence in particular for cohesive 2-groups such as smooth 2-groups. Below in corollarly 2.3.22 it is shown that every cohesive 2-group has a presentation by a crossed module this way.

Notice that there are different equivalent conventions possible for how to present $\mathbf{B}G$ in terms of the correspondiung crossed module, given by the choices of order in the group products. Here we are following convention "LB" in [RoSc08].

Example 1.3.10 (shift of abelian Lie group)**.** For K an abelian Lie group then $\mathbf{B}K$ is the delooping 2-group coming from the crossed module $[K \to 1]$ and $\mathbf{BB}K$ is the 2-group coming from the complex $[K \to 1 \to 1]$.

Example 1.3.11 (automorphism 2-group)**.** For H any Lie group with automorphism Lie group $\mathrm{Aut}(H)$, the morphism $H \stackrel{\mathrm{Ad}}{\to} \mathrm{Aut}(H)$ that sends group elements to inner automorphisms, together with $\rho = \mathrm{id}$, is a crossed module. We write $\mathrm{AUT}(H) := (H \to \mathrm{Aut}(H))$ and speak of the *automorphism 2-group* of H.

Example 1.3.12. The inclusion of any normal subgroup $N \hookrightarrow G$ with conjugation action of G on N is a crossed module, with the canonical induced conjugation action of G on N.

Example 1.3.13 (string 2-group)**.** For G a compact, simple and simply connected Lie group, write PG for the smooth group of based paths in G and $\hat{\Omega}G$ for the universal central extension of the smooth group of based loops. Then the evident morphism $(\hat{\Omega}G \to PG)$ equipped with a lift of the adjoint action of paths on loops is a crossed module [BCSS07]. The corresponding strict 2-group is (a presentation of what is) called the *string 2-group* extension of G. The string 2-group we discuss in detail in 4.1.10.

It follows immediately that

Observation 1.3.14. For $G = (G_1 \to G_0)$ a 2-group coming from a crossed module, a cocycle

$$X \stackrel{\simeq}{\leftarrow} C(U_i) \stackrel{g}{\to} \mathbf{B}G$$

is given by data

$$\{h_{ij} \in C^\infty(U_{ij}, G_0), g_{ijk} \in C^\infty(U_{ijk}, G_1)\}$$

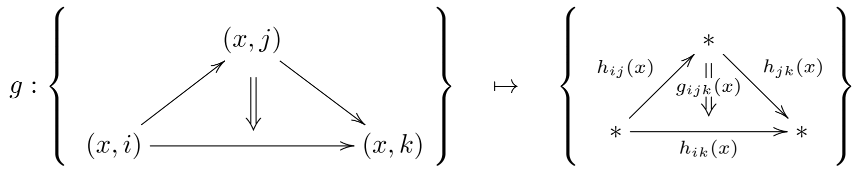
such that on each U_{ijk} we have

$$h_{ik} = \delta(h_{ijk}) h_{jk} h_{ij}$$

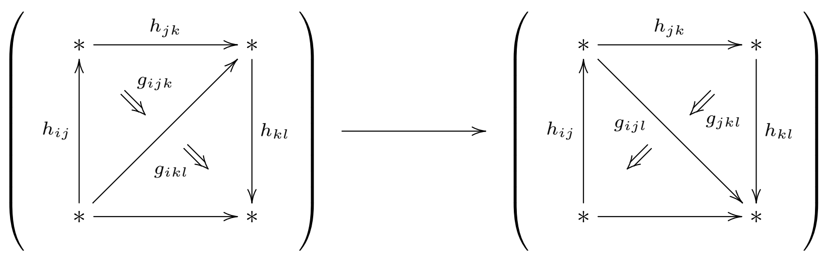
and on each U_{ijkl} we have

$$g_{ikl} \cdot \rho(h_{jk})(g_{ijk}) = g_{ijk} \cdot g_{jkl} \, .$$

Because under the above correspondence between crossed modules and 2-groups, this is the data that encodes assignments



that satisfy



For the case of the crossed module $(U(1) \to 1)$ this recovers the cocycles for circle 2-bundles from observation 1.3.2.

Apart from the notion of *bundle gerbe*, there is also the original notion of *gerbe*. The terminology is somewhat unfortunate, since neither of these concepts is, in general, a special case of the other. But they are of course closely related. We consider here the simple cocycle-characterization of gerbes and the relation of these to cocycles for 2-bundles.

Definition 1.3.15 (G-gerbe)**.** Let G be a smooth group. Then a cocycle for a smooth G-*gerbe* over a manifold X is a cocycle for a $\mathrm{AUT}(G)$-principal 2-bundle, where $\mathrm{AUT}(G)$ is the automorphism 2-group from example 1.3.11.

Observation 1.3.16. For every 2-group coming from a crossed module $(G_1 \xrightarrow{\delta} G_0, \rho)$ there is a canonical morphism of 2-groups

$$(G_1 \to G_0) \to \mathrm{AUT}(G_1)$$

given by the commuting diagram of groups

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G_1 & \xrightarrow{\delta} & G_0 \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \mathrm{id}} & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle \rho} \\ G_1 & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Ad}} & \mathrm{Aut}(G_0) \end{array} .$$

Accordingly, every $(G_1 \to G_0)$-principal 2-bundle has an underlying G_1-gerbe, def. 1.3.15. But in general the passage to this underlying G_1-gerbe discards information.

Example 1.3.17. For G a simply connected and compact simple Lie group, let $\mathrm{String} \simeq (\hat{\Omega} G \to PG)$ be the corresopnding String 2-group from example 1.3.13. Then by observation 1.3.16 every String-principal 2-bundle has an underlying $\hat{\Omega}G$-gerbe. But there is more information in the String-2-bundle than in this gerbe underlying it.

Example 1.3.18. Let $G = (\mathbb{Z} \hookrightarrow \mathbb{R})$ be the crossed module that includes the additive group of integers into the additive group of real numbers, with trivial action. The canonical projection morphism

$$\mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R}) \xrightarrow{\simeq} \mathbf{B}U(1)$$

is a weak equivalence, by the fact that locally every smooth $U(1)$-valued function is the quotient of a smooth $\mathbb{R}$-valued function by a (constant) $\mathbb{Z}$-valued function. This means in particular that up to equivalence, $(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R})$-2-bundles are the same as ordinary circle 1-bundles. But it means a bit more than that:

On a manifold X also $\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}$-principal 2-bundles have the same classification as $U(1)$-bundles. But the *morphisms* of $\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}$-principal 2-bundles are essentially different from those of $U(1)$-bundles. This means that the 2-groupoid $\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}\mathrm{Bund}(X)$ is not, in general equivalent to $U(1)\mathrm{Bund}(X)$. But we do have an equivalence of 2-groupoids

$$(\mathbb{Z} \to U(1))\mathrm{Bund}(X) \simeq U(1)\mathrm{Bund}(X)\,.$$

Example 1.3.19. Let $\hat{G} \to G$ be a central extension of Lie groups by an abelian group A. This induces the crossed module $(A \to \hat{G})$. There is a canonical 2-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}(A \to \hat{G}) & \xrightarrow{c} & \mathbf{B}(A \to 1) = \mathbf{B}^2 A \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ \mathbf{B}G & & \end{array}$$

from $\mathbf{B}G$ to $\mathbf{B}^2 A$. This can be seen to be the *characteristic class* that classifies the extension (see 1.3.4 below): $\mathbf{B}\hat{G} \to \mathbf{B}G$ is the A-principal 2-bundle classified by this cocycle.

Accordingly, the collection of all $(A \to \hat{G})$-principal 2-bundles is, up to equivalence, the same as that of plain G-1-bundles. But they exhibit the natural projection to $\mathbf{B}A$-2-bundles. Fixing that projection gives *twisted G-1-bundles.*

more in detail: the above 2-anafunctor indiuces a 2-anafunctor on cocycle 2-groupoid

$$\begin{array}{ccc} (A \to \hat{G})\mathrm{Bund}(X) & \xrightarrow{c} & \mathbf{B}A\mathrm{Bund}(X) \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ G\mathrm{Bund}(X) & & \end{array}\,.$$

If we fix a $\mathbf{B}A$-2-bundle g we can consider the fiber of the characteristic class c over g, hence the pullback $G\mathrm{Bund}_{[g]}(X)$ in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G\mathrm{Bund}_{[g]}(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle g} \\ (A \to \hat{G})\mathrm{Bund}(X) & \xrightarrow{c} & \mathbf{B}A\mathrm{Bund}(X) \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ G\mathrm{Bund}(X) & & \end{array}\,.$$

This is the groupoid of $[g]$*-twisted G-bundles*. The principal 2-bundle classfied by g is also called the *lifting gerbe* of the G-principal bundles underlying the $[g]$-twisted $\hat{G}$-bundle: because this is the obstruction to lifting the former to a genuine $\hat{G}$-principal bundle.

If g is given by a Čech cocycle $\{g_{ijk} \in C^\infty(U_{ijk}, A)\}$ then $[g]$-twisted G-bundles are given by data $\{h_{ij} \in C^\infty(U_{ij}, G)\}$ which does not quite satisfy the usual cocycle condition, but instead a modification by g:

$$h_{ik} = \delta(g_{ijk}) h_{jk} h_{ij}\,.$$

For instance for the extension $U(1) \to U(n) \to PU(n)$ the corresponding twisted bundles are those that model *twisted K-theory* with n-torsion twists (3.3.6).

1.3.1.3 Principal 3-bundles and twisted 2-bundles As one passes beyond (smooth) 2-groups and their 2-principal bundles, one needs more sophisticated tools for presenting them. While the crossed modules from def. 1.3.5 have convenient higher analogs – called *crossed complexes* – the higher analog of remark 1.3.9 does not hold for these: not every (smooth) 3-group is presented by them, much less every n-group for $n > 3$. Therefore below in 1.3.2 we switch to a different tool for the general situation: simplicial groups.

However, it so happens that a wide range of relevant examples of (smooth) 3-groups and generally of smooth n-groups does have a presentation by a crossed complex after all, as do the examples which we shall discuss now.

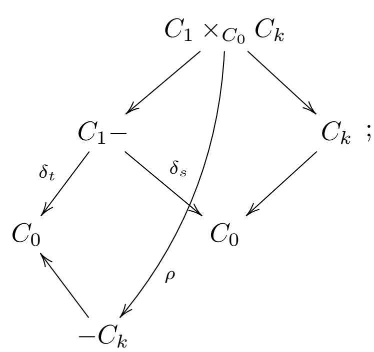
Definition 1.3.20. A crossed complex is a diagram

$$C_\bullet = \left(\begin{array}{ccccccccc} \cdots & \xrightarrow{\delta} & C_3 & \xrightarrow{\delta} & C_2 & \xrightarrow{\delta} & C_1 & \overset{\delta_t}{\underset{\delta_s}{\rightrightarrows}} & C_0 \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle \delta_s} & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle =} \\ \cdots & \xrightarrow[=]{} & C_0 & \xrightarrow[=]{} & C_0 & \xrightarrow[=]{} & C_0 & \xrightarrow[=]{} & C_0 \end{array} \right)$$

such that

1. $C_1 \overset{\delta_t}{\underset{\delta_s}{\rightrightarrows}} C_0$ is a 1-groupoid and the $C_k \longrightarrow C_0$, for all $k \geq 2$, are bundles of groups, abelian for $k \geq 2$;
2. the maps δ_k, $k \geq 2$ are morphisms of groupoids over C_0 compatible with the action by C_1;
3. $\delta_{k-1} \circ \delta_k = 0$; k ≥ 3.

and equipped with an action ρ of the groupoid C_1 on the C_k, $k \geq 2$,



such that $\mathrm{im}(\delta_2) \subset C_1$ acts by conjugation on C_2 and trivially on C_k, $k \geq 3$;

Surveys of standard material on crossed complexes are in [BrHiSi11][Por]. We discuss sheaves of crossed complexes, hence *cohesive crossed complexes* in more detail below in 2.1.6. As mentioned there, the key aspect of crossed complexes is that they provide an equivalent encoding of precisely those ∞-groupoids that are called *strict*.

Definition 1.3.21. If $C_0 = *$ we shall simply denote the crossed complex by

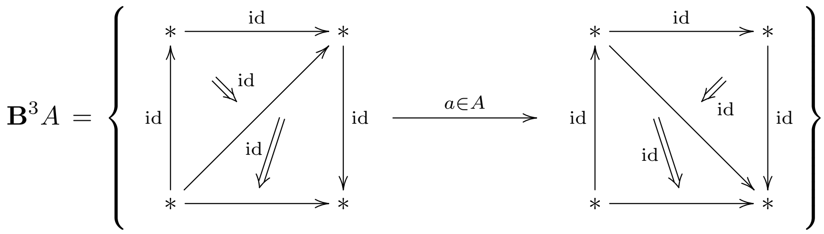
$$(\cdots \to C_3 \to C_2 \to C_1)\,.$$

If the complex of groups is constant on the trivial group beyond C_n, we say this is a *strict n-group*.

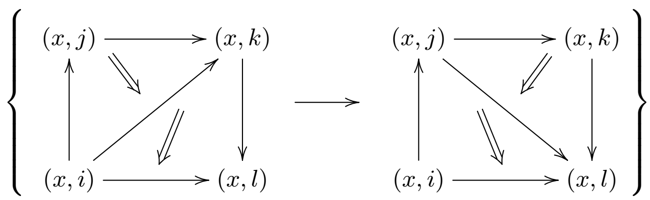
For $n = 2$ this reproduces the notion of *crossed module* and *strict 2-group*, def. 1.3.5. If furthermore C_2 and C_1 here are abelian and the action of C_1 is trivial, then this is an ordinary *complex of abelian groups* as considered in homological algebra. Indeed, all of homological algebra may be thought of as the study of this presentation of abelian ∞-groups. (More on this in 2.1.6 below.)

We consider now examples of strict 3-groups and of the corresponding principal 3-bundles.

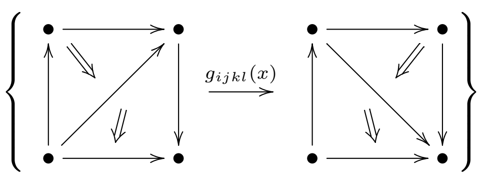
Example 1.3.22. For A an abelian group, the delooping of the 3-group given by the complex $(A \to 1 \to 1)$ is the one-object 3-groupoid that looks like



Therefore an ∞-anafunctor $X \overset{\simeq}{\leftarrow} C(\{U_i\}) \overset{g}{\to} \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)$ sends 3-simplices in the Čech groupoid

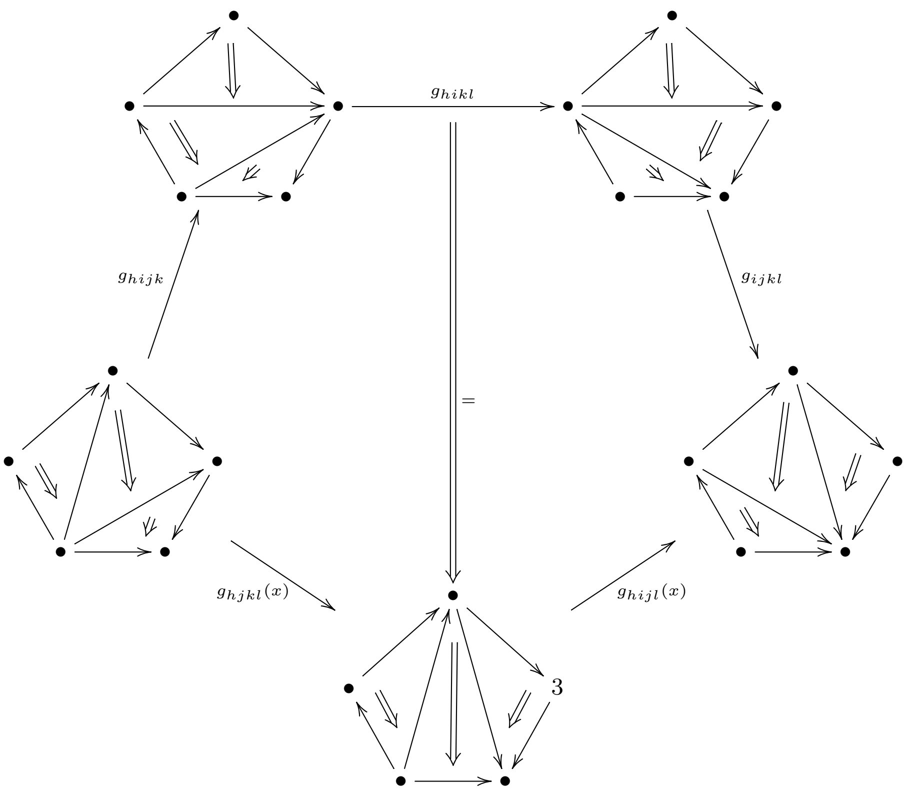


to 3-morphisms in $\mathbf{B}^3 U(1)$ labeled by group elements $g_{ijkl}(x) \in U(1)$



(where all 1-morphisms and 2-morphisms in $\mathbf{B}^3 U(1)$ are necessarily identities).

The 3-functoriality of this assignment is given by the following identity on all Čech 4-simplices (x,(h,i,j,k,l)):



This means that the cocycle data $\{g_{ijkl}(x)\}$ has to satisfy the equations

$$g_{hijk}(x)g_{hikl}(x)g_{ijkl}(x) = g_{hjkl}(x)g_{hijl}(x)$$

for all (h, i, j, k, l) and all $x \in U_{hijkl}$. Since $U(1)$ is abelian this can equivalently be rearranged to

$$g_{hijk}(x)g_{hijl}(x)^{-1}g_{hikl}(x)g_{hjkl}(x)^{-1}g_{ijkl}(x) = 1\,.$$

This is the usual form in which a Čech 3-cocycles with coefficients in $U(1)$ are written.

Definition 1.3.23. Given a cocycle as above, the total space object $\tilde{P}$ given by the pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \tilde{P} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{E}\mathbf{B}^2U(1) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}^3U(1) \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

is the corresponding *circle principal 3-bundle*.

In direct analogy to the argument that leads to observation 1.3.4 we find:

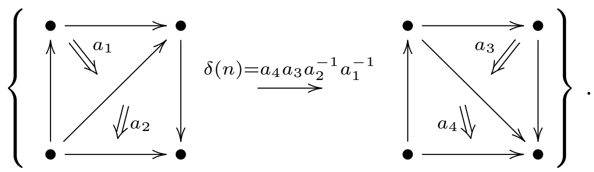
Observation 1.3.24. The structures known as *bundle 2-gerbes* [St01] are presentations of the 2-groupoids that are total spaces of circle principal 2-bundles, as above.

Again, notice that, despite a close relation, this is different from the original notion of *2-gerbe*. More discussion of this point is below in 3.2.5.

The next example is still abelian, but captures basics of the central mechanism of twistings of principal 2-bundles by principal 3-bundles.

Example 1.3.25. Consider a morphism $\delta : N \to A$ of abelian groups and the corresponding shifted crossed complex $(N \to A \to 1)$. The corresponding delooped 3-group looks like

$\mathbf{B}(N \to A \to 1) =$



A cocycle for a $(N \to A \to 1)$-principal 3-bundle is given by data

$$\{a_{ijk} \in C^\infty(U_{ijk}, A),\ n_{ijkl} \in C^\infty(U_{ijkl}, N)\}$$

such that

1. $a_{jkl}a_{ijk}^{-1}a_{ijk}a_{ikl}^{-1} = \delta(n_{ijkl})$
2. $n_{hijk}(x)n_{hikl}(x)n_{ijkl}(x) = n_{hjkl}(x)n_{hijl}(x)$.

The first equation on the left is the cocycle for a 2-bundle as in observation 1.3.2. But the extra term n_{ijkl} on the right "twists" the cocycle. This twist itself satisfies a higher order cocycle condition.

Notice that there is a canonical projection

$$\mathbf{B}(N \to A \to 1) \to \mathbf{B}(N \to 1 \to 1) = \mathbf{B}^3 N\,.$$

Therefore we can consider the higher analog of the notion of twisted bundles in example 1.3.19:

Definition 1.3.26. Let $N \to A$ be an inclusion and consider a fixed $\mathbf{B}^2N$-principal 3-bundle with cocycle g, let $\mathbf{B}(A/N)\mathrm{Bund}_{[g]}(X)$ be the pullback in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}(A/N)\mathrm{Bund}_{[g]}(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle g} \\ \mathbf{B}(N \to A)\mathrm{Bund}(X) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^2 N\mathrm{Bund}(X) \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ \mathbf{B}(A/N)\mathrm{Bund}(X) & & \end{array} .$$

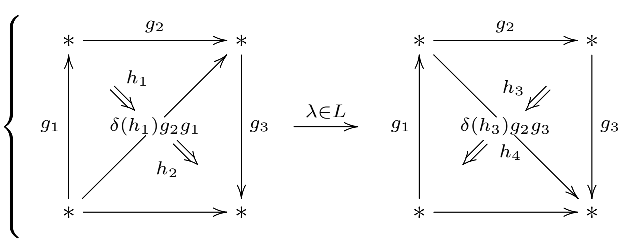
We say an object in this 2-groupoid is a $[g]$-*twisted* $\mathbf{B}(A/N)$-*principal 2-bundle*.

Below in example 1.3.65 we discuss this and its relation to characteristic classes of 2-bundles in more detail.

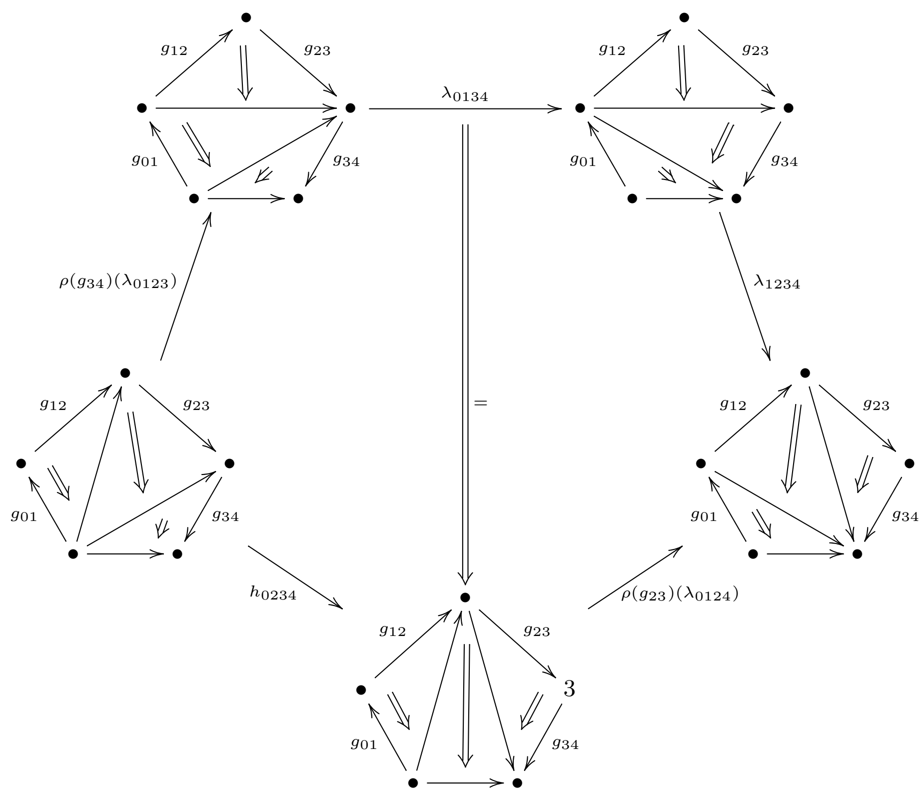
We now turn to the most general 3-group that is presented by a crossed complex.

Observation 1.3.27. For $(L \stackrel{\delta}{\to} H \stackrel{\delta}{\to} G)$ an arbitrary strict 3-group, def. 1.3.21, the delooping 3-groupoid looks like

$\mathbf{B}(L \to H \to G) =$



$\Big|\ h_4h_3 = \delta(\lambda)\cdot h_2 \cdot \rho(g_3)(h_1)$, with the 4-cells – the composition identities – being



If follows that a cocycle

$$X \overset{\simeq}{\twoheadleftarrow} C(U_i) \overset{(\lambda,h,g)}{\to} \mathbf{B}(L \to H \to G)$$

for a $(L \to H \to G)$-principal 3-bundle is a collection of functions

$$\{g_{ij} \in C^\infty(U_{ij}, G),\ h_{ijk} \in C^\infty(U_{ijk}, H),\ \lambda_{ijkl} \in C^\infty(U_{ijkl}, L)\}$$

satisfying the cocycle conditions

$$g_{ik} = \delta(h_{ijk})g_{jk}g_{ij} \quad \text{on } U_{ijk}$$

$$h_{ijl}h_{jkl} = \delta(\lambda_{ijkl}) \cdot h_{ikl} \cdot \rho(g_3)(h_{ijk}) \quad \text{on } U_{ijkl}$$

$$\lambda_{ijkl}\lambda_{hikl}\rho(g_{kl})(\lambda_{hijk}) = \rho(g_{jk})\lambda_{hijl}\lambda_{hjkl} \quad \text{on } U_{hijkl}\,.$$

Definition 1.3.28. Given such a cocycle, the pullback 3-groupoid P we call the corresponding *principal* $(L \to H \to G)$*-3-bundle*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{EB}(L \to H \to G) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ C(U_i) & \xrightarrow{(\lambda,h,g)} & \mathbf{B}(L \to H \to G) \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

We can now give the higher analog of the notion of twisted bundles, def. 1.3.19.

Definition 1.3.29. Given a 3-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}(L \to H \to G) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(L \to 1 \to 1) = \mathbf{B}^3 L \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ \mathbf{B}(H/L \to G) & & \end{array}$$

then for g the cocycle for an $\mathbf{B}^2 L$-principal 3-bundle we say that the pullback $(H \to G)\mathrm{Bund}_g(X)$ in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} (H \to G)\mathrm{Bund}_g(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{g} \\ (L \to H \to G)\mathrm{Bund}(X) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^3 L\mathrm{Bund}(X) \end{array}$$

is the 3-groupoid of *g-twisted $(H \to G)$-principal 2-bundles* on X.

Example 1.3.30. Let G be a compact and simply connected simple Lie group. By example 1.3.13 we have associated with this the *string 2-group* crossed module $\hat{\Omega} G \to PG$, where

$$U(1) \to \hat{\Omega} G \to \Omega G$$

is the Kac-Moody central extension of level 1 of the based loop group of G. Accordingly, there is an evident crossed complex

$$U(1) \to \hat{\Omega} G \to PG\,.$$

The evident projection

$$\mathbf{B}(U(1) \to \hat{\Omega} G \to PG) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}G$$

is a weak equivalence. This means that $(U(1) \to \hat{\Omega} G \to PG)$-principal 3-bundles are equivalent to G-1-bundles. For fixed projection g to a $\mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$-3-bundle a $(U(1) \to \hat{\Omega} G \to PG)$-principal 3-bundles may hence be thought of as a g-twisted string-principal 2-bundle.

One finds that these serve as a resolution of G-1-bundles in attempts to lift to string-2-bundles (discussed below in 4.1).

1.3.2 A model for principal ∞-bundles

We have seen above that the theory of ordinary smooth principal bundles is naturally situated within the context of Lie groupoids, and then that the theory of smooth principal 2-bundles is naturally situated within the theory of Lie 2-groupoids. This is clearly the beginning of a pattern in higher category theory where in the next step we see smooth 3-groupoids and so on. Finally the general theory of principal ∞-bundles deals with smooth ∞-groupoids. A comprehensive discussion of such smooth ∞-groupoids is given in section 3.3. In this introduction here we will just briefly describe the main tool for modelling these and describe principal ∞-bundles in this model. We first look at bare ∞-groupoids and then discuss how to equip these with smooth structure.

An ∞-groupoid is first of all supposed to be a structure that has *k-morphisms* for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$, which for $k \geq 1$ go between $(k-1)$-morphisms. A useful tool for organizing such collections of morphisms is the notion of a *simplicial set*. This is a functor on the opposite category of the simplex category Δ, whose objects are the abstract cellular k-simplices, denoted $[k]$ or $\Delta[k]$ for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$, and whose morphisms $\Delta[k_1] \to \Delta[k_2]$ are all ways of mapping these into each other. So we think of such a simplicial set given by a functor

$$K : \Delta^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{Set}$$

as specifying

- a set $[0] \mapsto K_0$ of *objects*;
- a set $[1] \mapsto K_1$ of *morphisms*;
- a set $[2] \mapsto K_2$ of *2-morphisms*;
- a set $[3] \mapsto K_3$ of *3-morphisms*;

and generally

- a set $[k] \mapsto K_k$ of *k-morphisms.*

as well as specifying

- functions $([n] \hookrightarrow [n+1]) \mapsto (K_{n+1} \to K_n)$ that send $n+1$-morphisms to their boundary n-morphisms;
- functionss $([n+1] \to [n]) \mapsto (K_n \to K_{n+1})$ that send n-morphisms to identity $(n+1)$-morphisms on them.

The fact that K is supposed to be a functor enforces that these assignments of sets and functions satisfy conditions that make consistent our interpretation of them as sets of k-morphisms and source and target maps between these. These are called the *simplicial identities*. But apart from this source-target matching, a generic simplicial set does not yet encode a notion of *composition* of these morphisms.

For instance for $\Lambda^1[2]$ the simplicial set consisting of two attached 1-cells

$$\Lambda^1[2] = \left\{ \begin{array}{ccccc} & & 1 & & \\ & \nearrow & & \searrow & \\ 0 & & & & 2 \end{array} \right\}$$

and for $(f,g) : \Lambda^1[2] \to K$ an image of this situation in K, hence a pair $x_0 \xrightarrow{f} x_1 \xrightarrow{g} x_2$ of two *composable* 1-morphisms in K, we want to demand that there exists a third 1-morphisms in K that may be thought of as the *composition* $x_0 \xrightarrow{h} x_2$ of f and g. But since we are working in higher category theory, we want to identify this composite only up to a 2-morphism equivalence

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} & & x_1 & & \\ & {}^{f}\nearrow & \Downarrow\simeq & \searrow^{g} & \\ x_0 & & \xrightarrow[h]{} & & x_2 \end{array} .$$

From the picture it is clear that this is equivalent to demanding that for $\Lambda^1[2] \hookrightarrow \Delta[2]$ the obvious inclusion of the two abstract composable 1-morphisms into the 2-simplex we have a diagram of morphisms of simplicial sets

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Lambda^1[2] & \xrightarrow{(f,g)} & K \\ \downarrow & \nearrow_{\exists h} & \\ \Delta[2] & & \end{array} .$$

A simplicial set where for all such (f,g) a corresponding such h exists may be thought of as a collection of higher morphisms that is equipped with a notion of composition of adjacent 1-morphisms.

For the purpose of describing groupoidal composition, we now want that this composition operation has all inverses. For that purpose, notice that for

$$\Lambda^2[2] = \left\{ \begin{array}{ccccc} & & 1 & & \\ & \nearrow & & \searrow & \\ 0 & & & & 2 \end{array} \right\}$$

the simplicial set consisting of two 1-morphisms that touch at their end, hence for

$$(g,h) : \Lambda^2[2] \to K$$

two such 1-morphisms in K, then if g had an inverse g^{-1} we could use the above composition operation to compose that with h and thereby find a morphism f connecting the sources of h and g. This being the case is evidently equivalent to the existence of diagrams of morphisms of simplicial sets of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Lambda^2[2] & \xrightarrow{(g,h)} & K \\ \downarrow & \nearrow_{\exists f} & \\ \Delta[2] & & \end{array} .$$

Demanding that all such diagrams exist is therefore demanding that we have on 1-morphisms a composition operation with inverses in K.

In order for this to qualify as an ∞-groupoid, this composition operation needs to satisfy an associativity law up to 2-morphisms, which means that we can find the relevant tetrahedra in K. These in turn need to be connected by *pentagonators* and ever so on. It is a nontrivial but true and powerful fact, that all these coherence conditions are captured by generalizing the above conditions to all dimensions in the evident way:

let $\Lambda^i[n] \hookrightarrow \Delta[n]$ be the simplicial set – called the ith n-horn – that consists of all cells of the n-simplex $\Delta[n]$ except the interior n-morphism and the ith $(n-1)$-morphism.

Then a simplicial set is called a *Kan complex* , , if for all images $f : \Lambda^i[n] \to K$ of such horns in K, the missing two cells can be found in K – in that we can always find a *horn filler* σ in the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Lambda^i[n] & \xrightarrow{f} & K \\ \downarrow & \nearrow_{\exists \sigma} & \\ \Delta[n] & & \end{array} .$$

The basic example is the *nerve* $N(C) \in \mathrm{sSet}$ of an ordinary groupoid C, which is the simplicial set with $N(C)_k$ being the set of sequences of k composable morphisms in C. The nerve operation is a full and faithful functor from 1-groupoids into Kan complexes and hence may be thought of as embedding 1-groupoids in the context of general ∞-groupoids.

But we need a bit more than just bare ∞-groupoids. In generalization to Lie groupoids, we need smooth ∞-groupoids. A useful way to encode that an ∞-groupoid has extra structure modeled on geometric test objects that themselves form a category C is to remember the rule which for each test space U in C produces the ∞-groupoid of U-parameterized families of k-morphisms in K. For instance for a smooth ∞-groupoid we could test with each Cartesian space $U = \mathbb{R}^n$ and find the ∞-groupoids $K(U)$ of smooth n-parameter families of k-morphisms in K.

This data of U-families arranges itself into a presheaf with values in Kan complexes

$$K : C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{KanCplx} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{sSet}\,,$$

hence with values in simplicial sets. This is equivalently a simplicial presheaf of sets. The functor category $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ on the opposite category of the category of test objects C serves as a model for the ∞-category of ∞-groupoids with C-structure.

While there are no higher morphisms in this functor 1-category that could for instance witness that two ∞-groupoids are not isomorphic, but still equivalent, it turns out that all one needs in order to reconstruct *all* these higher morphisms (up to equivalence!) is just the information of which morphisms of simplicial presheaves would become invertible if we were keeping track of higher morphism. These would-be invertible morphisms are called *weak equivalences* and denoted $K_1 \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} K_2$.

For common choices of C there is a well-understood way to define the weak equivalences $W \subset \mathrm{Mor}[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$, and equipped with this information the category of simplicial presheaves becomes a *category with weak equivalences*. There is a well-developed but somewhat intricate theory of how exactly this 1-cagtegorical data models the full higher category of structured groupoids that we are after, but for our purposes here we essentially only need to work inside the category of *fibrant* objects of a model structure on presheaves, which in practice amounts to the fact that we use the following three basic constructions:

1. **∞-anafunctors** –

2. ∞-anafunctor A morphisms $X \to Y$ between ∞-groupoids with C-structure is not just a morphism $X \to Y$ in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$, but is a span of such ordinary morphisms

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \hat{X} & \longrightarrow & Y \\ {\scriptstyle \simeq}\downarrow & & \\ X & & \end{array} ,$$

   where the left leg is a weak equivalence. This is sometimes called an ∞-*anafunctor* from X to Y.

3. **homotopy pullback** – For $A \to B \overset{p}{\leftarrow} C$ a diagram, the ∞-pullback of it is the ordinary pullback in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ of a replacement diagram $A \to B \overset{\hat{p}}{\leftarrow} \hat{C}$, where $\hat{p}$ is a *good replacement* of p in the sense of the following factorization lemma.

4.

Proposition 1.3.31 (factorization lemma)**.** *For $p : C \to B$ a morphism in* $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$*, a* good replacement *$\hat{p} : \hat{C} \to B$ is given by the composite vertical morphism in the ordinary pullback diagram*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \hat{C} & \longrightarrow & C \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle p} \\ B^{\Delta[1]} & \longrightarrow & B \\ \downarrow & & \\ B & & \end{array} ,$$

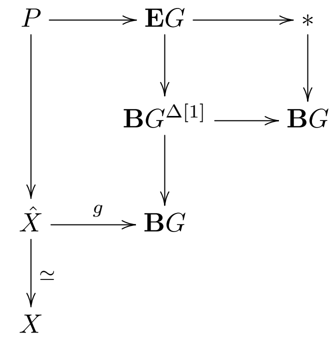
where $B^{\Delta[1]}$ is the path object of B: the presheaf that is over each $U \in C$ the simplicial path space $B(U)^{\Delta[1]}$.

The principal ∞-bundles that we wish to model are already the main and simplest example of the application of these three items:

Consider an object $\mathbf{B}G \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ which is an ∞-groupoid with a single object, so that we may think of it as the delooping of an ∞-group G. Let $*$ be the point and $* \to \mathbf{B}G$ the unique inclusion map. The *good replacement* of this inclusion morphism is the *universal G-principal ∞-bundle* $\mathbf{E}G \to \mathbf{B}G$ given by the pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{E}G & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ (\mathbf{B}G)^{\Delta[1]} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow & & \\ \mathbf{B}G & & \end{array} .$$

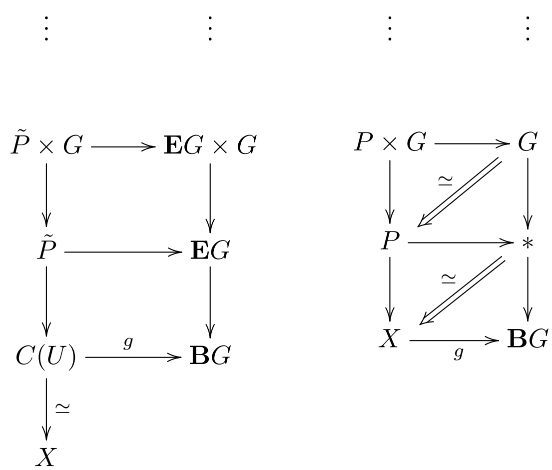
An ∞-anafunctor $X \overset{\simeq}{\twoheadleftarrow} \hat{X} \to \mathbf{B}G$ we call a *cocycle* on X with coefficients in G, and the ∞-pullback P of the point along this cocycle, which by the above discussion is the ordinary limit



we call the principal ∞-bundle $P \to X$ *classified* by the cocycle.

Example 1.3.32. A detailed description of the 3-groupoid fibration that constitutes the universal principal 2-bundle $\mathbf{E}G$ for G any strict 2-group in given in [RoSc08].

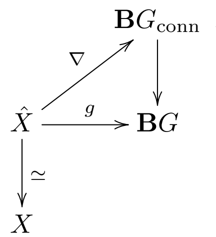
It is now evident that our discussion of ordinary smooth principal bundles above is the special case of this for $\mathbf{B}G$ the nerve of the one-object groupoid associated with the ordinary Lie group G. So we find the complete generalization of the situation that we already indicated there, which is summarized in the following diagram:



in the model category in the ∞-topos

1.3.3 Parallel n-transport for low n

With a decent handle on principal ∞-bundles as described above, we now turn to the description of *connections on ∞-bundles*. It will turn out that the above cocycle-description of G-principal ∞-bundles in terms of ∞-anafunctors $X \overset{\simeq}{\twoheadleftarrow} \hat{X} \overset{g}{\to} \mathbf{B}G$ has, under mild conditions, a natural generalization where $\mathbf{B}G$ is replaced by a (non-concrete) simplicial presheaf $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$, which we may think of as the ∞-groupoid of ∞-Lie algebra valued forms. This comes with a canonical map $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}G$ and an ∞-connection ∇ on the ∞-bundle classified by g is a lift ∇ of g in the diagram



In the language of ∞-stacks we may think of $\mathbf{B}G$ as the ∞-stack (on CartSp) or ∞-prestack (on SmoothMfd) $G\mathrm{TrivBund}(-)$ of *trivial* G-principal bundles, and of $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$ correspondingly as the object $G\mathrm{TrivBund}_\nabla(-)$ of trivial G-principal bundles with (non-trivial) connection. In this sense the statement that ∞-connections are cocycles with coefficients in some $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$ is a tautology. The real questions are:

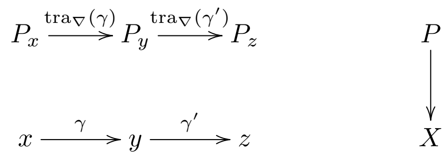
1. What is $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$ in concrete formulas?
2. Why are these formulas what they are? What is the general abstract concept of an ∞-connection? What are its defining abstract properties?

A comprehensive answer to the second question is provided by the general abstract concepts discussed in section 2. Here in this introduction we will not go into the full abstract theory, but using classical tools we get pretty close. What we describe is a generalization of the concept of *parallel transport* to *higher parallel transport*. As we shall see, this is naturally expressed in terms of ∞-anafunctors out of path n-groupoids. This reflects how the full abstract theory arises in the context of an ∞-connected ∞-topos that comes canonically with a notion of fundamental ∞-groupoid.

Below we begin the discussion of ∞-connections by reviewing the classical theory of connections on a bundle in a way that will make its generalization to higher connections relatively straightforward. In an analogous way we can then describe certain classes of connections on a 2-bundle – subsuming the notion of connection on a bundle gerbe. With that in hand we then revisit the discussion of connections on ordinary bundles. By associating to each bundle with connection its corresponding *curvature 2-bundle with connection* we obtain a more refined description of connections on bundles, one that is naturally adapted to the construction of curvature characteristic forms in the Chern-Weil homomorphism. This turns out to be the kind of formulation of connections on an ∞-bundle that drops out of the general abstract theory. In classical terms, its full formulation involves the description of circle n-bundles with connection in terms of Deligne cohomology and the description of the ∞-groupoid of ∞-Lie algebra valued forms in terms of dg-algebra homomorphisms. The combination of these two aspects yields naturally an explicit model for the Chern-Weil homomorphism and its generalization to higher bundles.

Taken together, these constructions allow us to express a good deal of the general ∞-Chern-Weil theory with classical tools. As an example, we describe how the classical Čech-Deligne cocycle construction of the refined Chern-Weil homomorphism drops out from these constructions.

1.3.3.1 Connections on a principal bundle There are different equivalent definitions of the classical notion of a connection. One that is useful for our purposes is that a connection ∇ on a G-principal bundle $P \to X$ is a rule tra_∇ for *parallel transport* along paths: a rule that assigns to each path $\gamma : [0,1] \to X$ a morphism $tra_\nabla(\gamma) : P_x \to P_y$ between the fibers of the bundle above the endpoints of these paths, in a compatible way:



In order to formalize this, we introduce a (diffeological) Lie groupoid to be called the *path groupoid* of X. (Constructions and results in this section are from [ScWaI].

Definition 1.3.33. For X a smooth manifold let $[I, X]$ be the set of smooth functions $I = [0,1] \to X$. For U a Cartesian space, we say that *a U-parameterized smooth family of points in* $[I, X]$ is a smooth map $U \times I \to X$. (This makes $[I, X]$ a diffeological space).

Say a path $\gamma \in [I, X]$ has *sitting instants* if it is constant in a neighbourhood of the boundary ∂I. Let $[I, P]_{\mathrm{si}} \subset [I, P]$ be the subset of paths with sitting instants.

Let $[I, X]_{\mathrm{si}} \to [I, X]_{\mathrm{si}}^{\mathrm{th}}$ be the projection to the set of equivalence classes where two paths are regarded as equivalent if they are cobounded by a smooth thin homotopy.

Say a U-parameterized smooth family of points in $[I, X]_{\mathrm{si}}^{\mathrm{th}}$ is one that comes from a U-family of representatives in $[I, X]_{\mathrm{si}}$ under this projection. (This makes also $[I, X]_{\mathrm{si}}^{\mathrm{th}}$ a diffeological space.)

The passage to the subset and quotient $[I, X]_{\mathrm{si}}^{\mathrm{th}}$ of the set of all smooth paths in the above definition is essentially the minimal adjustment to enforce that the concatenation of smooth paths at their endpoints defines the composition operation in a groupoid.

Definition 1.3.34. The *path groupoid* $\mathbf{P}_1(X)$ is the groupoid

$$\mathbf{P}_1(X) = ([I, X]_{\mathrm{si}}^{th} \stackrel{\to}{\to} X)$$

with source and target maps given by endpoint evaluation and composition given by concatenation of classes $[\gamma]$ of paths along any orientation preserving *diffeomorphism* $[0,1] \to [0,2] \simeq [0,1] \coprod_{1,0} [0,1]$ of any of their representatives

$$[\gamma_2] \circ [\gamma_1] : [0,1] \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} [0,1] \coprod_{1,0} [0,1] \stackrel{(\gamma_2, \gamma_1)}{\to} X\,.$$

This becomes an internal groupoid in diffeological spaces with the above U-families of smooth paths. We regard it as a groupoid-valued presheaf, an object in $[CartSp^{op}, \mathrm{Grpd}]$:

$$\mathbf{P}_1(X) : U \mapsto (\mathrm{SmoothMfd}(U \times I, X)_{\mathrm{si}}^{\mathrm{th}} \stackrel{\to}{\to} \mathrm{SmoothMfd}(U, X))\,.$$

Observe now that for G a Lie group and $\mathbf{B}G$ its delooping Lie groupoid discussed above, a smooth functor $\mathrm{tra} : \mathbf{P}_1(X) \to \mathbf{B}G$ sends each (thin-homotopy class of a) path to an element of the group G

$$\mathrm{tra} : (x \stackrel{[\gamma]}{\to} y) \mapsto (\bullet \stackrel{\mathrm{tra}(\gamma) \in G}{\to} \bullet)$$

such that composite paths map to products of group elements :

$$\mathrm{tra} : \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} & y & \\ {}^{[\gamma]}\nearrow & \| & \searrow^{[\gamma']} \\ x & \xrightarrow[{[\gamma' \circ \gamma]}]{} & z \end{array} \right\} \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} & * & \\ {}^{\mathrm{tra}(\gamma)}\nearrow & \| & \searrow^{\mathrm{tra}(\gamma')} \\ * & \xrightarrow[\mathrm{tra}(\gamma')\mathrm{tra}(\gamma)]{} & * \end{array} \right\}.$$

and such that U-families of smooth paths induce smooth maps $U \to G$ of elements.

There is a classical construction that yields such an assignment: the *parallel transport* of a *Lie-algebra valued 1-form.*

Definition 1.3.35. Suppose $A \in \Omega^1(X, \mathfrak{g})$ is a degree-1 differential form on X with values in the Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ of G. Then its parallel transport is the smooth functor

$$\mathrm{tra}_A : \mathbf{P}_1(X) \to \mathbf{B}G$$

given by

$$[\gamma] \mapsto P\exp(\int_{[0,1]} \gamma^* A) \ \in G\,,$$

where the group element on the right is defined to be the value at 1 of the unique solution $f : [0,1] \to G$ of the differential equation

$$d_{\mathrm{dR}} f + \gamma^* A \wedge f = 0$$

for the boundary condition $f(0) = e$.

Proposition 1.3.36. *This construction $A \mapsto \mathrm{tra}_A$ induces an equivalence of categories*

$$[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Grpd}](\mathbf{P}_1(X), \mathbf{B}G) \simeq \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}(X)\,,$$

where on the left we have the hom-groupoid of groupoid-valued presheaves and where on the right we have the groupoid of Lie-algebra valued 1-forms*, whose*

- *objects are 1-forms $A \in \Omega^1(X, \mathfrak{g})$,*
- *morphisms $g : A_1 \to A_2$ are labeled by smooth functions $g \in C^\infty(X, G)$ such that $A_2 = g^{-1} A g + g^{-1} dg$.*

This equivalence is natural in X, so that we obtain another smooth groupoid.

Definition 1.3.37. Define $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} : \mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{Grpd}$ to be the (generalized) Lie groupoid

$$\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} : U \mapsto [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Grpd}](\mathbf{P}_1(-), \mathbf{B}G)$$

whose U-parameterized smooth families of groupoids form the groupoid of Lie-algebra valued 1-forms on U.

This equivalence in particular subsumes the classical facts that parallel transport $\gamma \mapsto P\exp(\int_{[0,1]} \gamma^* A)$

- is invariant under orientation preserving reparameterizations of paths;
- sends reversed paths to inverses of group elements.

Observation 1.3.38. There is an evident natural smooth functor $X \to \mathbf{P}_1(X)$ that includes points in X as constant paths. This induces a natural morphism $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}G$ that forgets the 1-forms.

Definition 1.3.39. Let $P \to X$ be a G-principal bundle that corresponds to a cocycle $g : C(U) \to \mathbf{B}G$ under the construction discussed above. Then a *connection* ∇ on P is a lift ∇ of the cocycle through $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}G$.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \\ & \overset{\nabla}{\nearrow} & \downarrow \\ C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

Observation 1.3.40. This is equivalent to the traditional definitions.

A morphism $\nabla : C(U) \to \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$ is

- on each U_i a 1-form $A_i \in \Omega^1(U_i, \mathfrak{g})$;
- on each $U_i \cap U_j$ a function $g_{ij} \in C^\infty(U_i \cap U_j, G)$;

such that

- on each $U_i \cap U_j$ we have $A_j = g_{ij}^{-1}(A + d_{\mathrm{dR}}) g_{ij}$;
- on each $U_i \cap U_j \cap U_k$ we have $g_{ij} \cdot g_{jk} = g_{ik}$.

Definition 1.3.41. Let $[I, X]^{\mathrm{th}}_{\mathrm{si}} \to [I, X]^h$ the projection onto the full quotient by smooth homotopy classes of paths. Write $\mathbf{\Pi}_1(X) = ([I, X]^h \rightrightarrows X)$ for the smooth groupoid defined as $\mathbf{P}_1(X)$, but where instead of thin homotopies, all homotopies are divided out.

Proposition 1.3.42. *The above restricts to a natural equivalence*

$$[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Grpd}](\mathbf{\Pi}_1(X), \mathbf{B}G) \simeq \flat\mathbf{B}G\,,$$

where on the left we have the hom-groupoid of groupoid-valued presheaves, and on the right we have the full sub-groupoid $\flat\mathbf{B}G \subset \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$ on those $\mathfrak{g}$-valued differential forms whose curvature 2-form $F_A = d_{\mathrm{dR}}A + [A \wedge A]$ vanishes.

A connection ∇ is flat *precisely if it factors through the inclusion $\flat\mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$.*

For the purposes of Chern-Weil theory we want a good way to extract the curvature 2-form in a general abstract way from a cocycle $\nabla : X \overset{\simeq}{\leftarrow} C(U) \to \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$. In order to do that, we first need to discuss connections on 2-bundles.

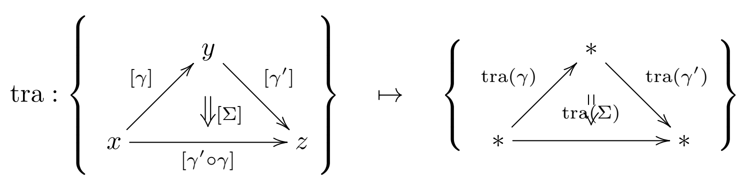
1.3.3.2 Connections on a principal 2-bundle There is an evident higher dimensional generalization of the definition of connections on 1-bundles in terms of functors out of the path groupoid discussed above. This we discuss now. We will see that, however, the obvious generalization captures not quite all 2-connections. But we will also see a way to recode 1-connections in terms of flat 2-connections. And that recoding then is the right general abstract perspective on connections, which generalizes to principal ∞-bundles and in fact which in the full theory follows from first principles.

(Constructions and results in this section are from [ScWaII], [ScWaIII].)

Definition 1.3.43. The path *path 2-groupoid* $\mathbf{P}_2(X)$ is the smooth strict 2-groupoid analogous to $\mathbf{P}_1(X)$, but with nontrivial 2-morphisms given by thin homotopy-classes of disks $\Delta^2_{Diff} \to X$ with sitting instants.

In analogy to the projection $\mathbf{P}_1(X) \to \mathbf{\Pi}_1(X)$ there is a projection to $\mathbf{P}_2(X) \to \mathbf{\Pi}_2(X)$ to the 2-groupoid obtained by dividing out full homotopy of disks, relative boundary.

We want to consider 2-functors out of the path 2-groupoid into connected 2-groupoids of the form $\mathbf{B}G$, for G a *2-group*, def. 1.3.5. A smooth 2-functor $\mathbf{\Pi}_2(X) \to \mathbf{B}G$ now assigns information also to surfaces



and thus encodes *higher parallel transport.*

Proposition 1.3.44. *There is a natural equivalence of 2-groupoids*

$$[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, 2\mathrm{Grpd}](\mathbf{\Pi}_2(X), \mathbf{B}G) \simeq \flat\mathbf{B}G$$

where on the right we have the 2-groupoid of Lie 2-algebra valued forms] whose

- *objects are pairs $A \in \Omega^1(X, \mathfrak{g}_1)$, $B \in \Omega^2(X, \mathfrak{g}_2)$ such that the 2-form curvature*

  $$F_2(A, B) := d_{\mathrm{dR}}A + [A \wedge A] + \delta_* B$$

  and the 3-form curvature

  $$F_3(A, B) := d_{\mathrm{dR}}B + [A \wedge B]$$

  vanish.

- *morphisms $(\lambda, a) : (A, B) \to (A', B')$ are pairs $a \in \Omega^1(X, \mathfrak{g}_2)$, $\lambda \in C^\infty(X, G_1)$ such that $A' = \lambda A \lambda^{-1} + \lambda d\lambda^{-1} + \delta_* a$ and $B' = \lambda(B) + d_{\mathrm{dR}}a + [A \wedge a]$*

- *The description of 2-morphisms we leave to the reader (see [ScWaII]).*

As before, this is natural in X, so that we that we get a presheaf of 2-groupoids

$$\flat \mathbf{B}G : U \mapsto [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, 2\mathrm{Grpd}](\mathbf{\Pi}_2(U), \mathbf{B}G)\,.$$

Proposition 1.3.45. *If in the above definition we use $\mathbf{P}_2(X)$ instead of $\mathbf{\Pi}_2(X)$, we obtain the same 2-groupoid, except that the 3-form curvature $F_3(A,B)$ is not required to vanish.*

Definition 1.3.46. Let $P \to X$ be a G-principal 2-bundle classified by a cocycle $C(U) \to \mathbf{B}G$. Then a structure of a *flat connection on a 2-bundle* ∇ on it is a lift

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & {}^{\nabla_{\mathrm{flat}}}\nearrow & \flat \mathbf{B}G \\ & & \downarrow \\ C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}\,.$$

For $G = \mathbf{B}A$, a *connection on a 2-bundle* (not necessarily flat) is a lift

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & {}^{\nabla_{\mathrm{flat}}}\nearrow & [\mathbf{P}_2(-), \mathbf{B}^2 A] \\ & & \downarrow \\ C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}\,.$$

We do not state the last definition for general Lie 2-groups G. The reason is that for general G 2-anafunctors out of $\mathbf{P}_2(X)$ do not produce the fully general notion of 2-connections that we are after, but yield a special case in between flatness and non-flatness: the case where precisely the 2-form curvature-components vanish, while the 3-form curvature part is unrestricted. This case is important in itself and discussed in detail below. Only for G of the form $\mathbf{B}A$ does the 2-form curvature necessarily vanish anyway, so that in this case the definition by morphisms out of $\mathbf{P}_2(X)$ happens to already coincide with the proper general one. This serves in the following theorem as an illustration for the toolset that we are exposing, but for the purposes of introducing the full notion of ∞-Chern-Weil theory we will rather focus on flat 2-connections, and then show below how using these one does arrive at a functorial definition of 1-connections that does generalize to the fully general definition of ∞-connections.

Proposition 1.3.47. *Let $\{U_i \to X\}$ be a good open cover, a cocycle $C(U) \to [\mathbf{P}_2(-), \mathbf{B}^2 A]$ is a cocycle in Čech-Deligne cohomology in degree 3.*

Moreover, we have a natural equivalence of bicategories

$$[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, 2\mathrm{Grpd}](C(U), [\mathbf{P}_2(-), \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)]) \simeq U(1)\mathrm{Gerb}_\nabla(X)\,,$$

where on the right we have the bicategory of $U(1)$-bundle gerbes with connection [Gaje97].

In particular the equivalence classes of cocycles form the degree-3 ordinary differential cohomology of X:

$$H^3_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbb{Z}) \simeq \pi_0([C(U), [\mathbf{P}_2(-), \mathbf{B}^2 U(1))\,.$$

A cocycle as above naturally corresponds to a 2-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccc} Q & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^2 U(1) \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ \mathbf{P}_2(X) & & \end{array}$$

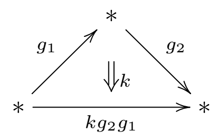
The value of this on 2-morphisms in $\mathbf{P}_2(X)$ is the higher parallel transport of the connection on the 2-bundle. This appears for instance in the action functional of the sigma model that describes strings charged under a Kalb-Ramond field.

The following example of a flat nonabelian 2-bundle is very degenerate as far as 2-bundles go, but does contain in it the seed of a full understanding of connections on 1-bundles.

Definition 1.3.48. For G a Lie group, its inner automorphism 2-group $\mathrm{INN}(G)$ is as a groupoid the universal G-bundle $\mathbf{E}G$, but regarded as a 2-group with the group structure coming from the crossed module $[G \stackrel{Id}{\to} G]$.

The cartoon presentation of the delooping 2-groupoid $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(G)$ is

$$\mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(G) = \left\{ \quad \right.$$



$$\left. \quad | \; g_1, g_2 \in G, k \in G \right\} .$$

This is the Lie 2-group whose Lie 2-algebra $\mathrm{inn}(\mathfrak{g})$ is the one whose Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra is the Weil algebra of $\mathfrak{g}$.

Example 1.3.49. By the above theorem we have that there is a bijection of sets

$$\{\mathbf{\Pi}_2(X) \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(G)\} \simeq \Omega^1(X, \mathfrak{g})$$

of flat $\mathrm{INN}(G)$-valued 2-connections and Lie-algebra valued 1-forms. Under the identifications of this theorem this identification works as follows:

- the 1-form component of the 2-connection is A;
- the vanishing of the 2-form component of the 2-curvature $F_2(A, B) = F_A + B$ identifies the 2-form component of the 2-connection with the curvature 2-form, $B = -F_A$;
- the vanishing of the 3-form component of the 3-curvature $F_3(A, B) = dB + [A \wedge B] = d_A + [A \wedge F_A]$ is the Bianchi identity satisfied by any curvature 2-form.

This means that 2-connections with values in $\mathrm{INN}(G)$ actually model 1-connections *and* keep track of their curvatures. Using this we see in the next section a general abstract definition of connections on 1-bundles that naturally supports the Chern-Weil homomorphism.

1.3.3.3 Curvature characteristics of 1-bundles

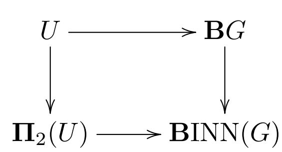
We now describe connections on 1-bundles in terms of their *flat curvature 2-bundles* .

Throughout this section G is a Lie group, $\mathbf{B}G$ its delooping 2-groupoid and $\mathrm{INN}(G)$ its inner automorphism 2-group and $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(G)$ the corresponding delooping Lie 2-groupoid.

Definition 1.3.50. Define the smooth groupoid $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}} \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Grpd}]$ as the pullback

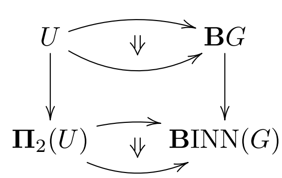
$$\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}} = \mathbf{B}G \times_{\mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(G)} \flat\mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(G) .$$

This is the groupoid-valued presheaf which assigns to $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ the groupoid whose objects are commuting diagrams



,

where the vertical morphisms are the canonical inclusions discussed above, and whose morphisms are compatible pairs of natural transformations



,

of the horizontal morphisms.

By the above theorems, we have over any $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ that

- an object in $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}}(U)$ is a 1-form $A \in \Omega^1(U, \mathfrak{g})$;
- amorphism $A_1 \stackrel{(g,a)}{\to} A_2$ is labeled by a function $g \in C^\infty(U, G)$ and a 1-form $a \in \Omega^1(U, \mathfrak{g})$ such that

$$A_2 = g^{-1} A_1 g + g^{-1} dg + a \,.$$

  Notice that this can always be uniquely solved for a, so that the genuine information in this morphism is just the data given by g.

- ther are *no* nontrivial 2-morphisms, even though $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(G)$ is a 2-groupoid: since $\mathbf{B}G$ is just a 1-groupoid this is enforced by the commutativity of the above diagram.

From this it is clear that

Proposition 1.3.51. *The projection* $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}} \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}G$ *is a weak equivalence.*

So $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}}$ is a resolution of $\mathbf{B}G$. We will see that it is the resoluton that supports 2-anafunctors out of $\mathbf{B}G$ which represent curvature characteristic classes.

Definition 1.3.52. For $X \stackrel{\simeq}{\twoheadleftarrow} C(U) \to \mathbf{B}U(1)$ a cocycle for a $U(1)$-principal bundle $P \to X$, we call a lift ∇_{ps} in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}} \\ & \nearrow^{\nabla_{\mathrm{ps}}} & \downarrow \\ C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

a *pseudo-connection* on P.

Pseudo-connections in themselves are not very interesting. But notice that every ordinary connection is in particular a pseudo-connection and we have an inclusion morphism of smooth groupoids

$$\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \hookrightarrow \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}} \,.$$

This inclusion plays a central role in the theory. The point is that while $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}}$ is such a boring extension of $\mathbf{B}G$ that it is actually equivalent to $\mathbf{B}G$, there is no inclusion of $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$ into $\mathbf{B}G$, but there is into $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}}$. This is the kind of situation that resolutions are needed for.

It is useful to look at some details for the case that G is an abelian group such as the circle group $U(1)$. In this abelian case the 2-groupoids $\mathbf{B}U(1)$, $\mathbf{B}^2U(1)$, $\mathbf{B}INN(U(1))$, etc., that so far we noticed are given by crossed complexes are actually given by ordinary chain complexes: we write

$$\Xi : \mathrm{Ch}_\bullet^+ \to s\mathrm{Ab} \to \mathrm{KanCplx}$$

for the Dold-Kan correspondence map that identifies chain complexes with simplicial abelian group and then considers their underlying Kan complexes. Using this map we have the following identifications of our 2-groupoid valued presheaves with complexes of group-valued sheaves

$$\mathbf{B}U(1) = \Xi[C^\infty(-, U(1)) \to 0]$$

$$\mathbf{B}^2U(1) = \Xi[C^\infty(-, U(1)) \to 0 \to 0]$$

$$\mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}U(1) = \Xi[C^\infty(-, U(1)) \stackrel{\mathrm{Id}}{\to} C^\infty(-, U(1)) \to 0] \,.$$

Observation 1.3.53. For $G = A$ an abelian group, in particular the circle group, there is a canonical morphism $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(U(1)) \to \mathbf{B}\mathbf{B}U(1)$.

On the level of chain complexes this is the evident chain map

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} [C^\infty(-,U(1)) & \xrightarrow{Id} & C^\infty(-,U(1)) & \longrightarrow & 0 \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ [C^\infty(-,U(1)) & \longrightarrow & 0 & \longrightarrow & 0] \end{array} .$$

On the level of 2-groupoids this is the map that forgets the labels on the 1-morphisms

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} & * & \\ {}^{g_1}\nearrow & \Downarrow k & \searrow^{g_2} \\ * & \xrightarrow[kg_2g_1]{} & * \end{array} \right\} \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} & * & \\ {}^{\mathrm{Id}}\nearrow & \Downarrow k & \searrow^{\mathrm{Id}} \\ * & \xrightarrow[\mathrm{Id}]{} & * \end{array} \right\}$$

In terms of this map $\mathrm{INN}(U(1))$ serves to interpolate between the single and the double delooping of $U(1)$. In fact the sequence of 2-functors

$$\mathbf{B}U(1) \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(U(1)) \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$$

is a model for the universal $\mathbf{B}U(1)$-principal 2-bundle

$$\mathbf{B}U(1) \to \mathbf{EB}U(1) \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)\,.$$

This happens to be an exact sequence of 2-groupoids. Abstractly, what really matters is rather that it is a fiber sequence, meaning that it is exact in the correct sense inside the ∞-category Smooth∞Grpd. For our purposes it is however relevant that this particular model is exact also in the ordinary sense in that we have an ordinary pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}U(1) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(U(1)) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^2U(1) \end{array} ,$$

exhibitng $\mathbf{B}U(1)$ as the kernel of $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(U(1)) \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$.

We shall be interested in the pasting composite of this diagram with the one defining $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}}$ over a domain U:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} U & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}U(1) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{\Pi}_2(U) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(U(1)) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^2U(1) \end{array} ,$$

The total outer diagram appearing this way is a component of the following (generalized) Lie 2-groupoid.

Definition 1.3.54. Set

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^2U(1) := * \times_{\mathbf{B}^2U(1)} \flat\mathbf{B}^2U(1)\,.$$

Over any $U \in$ CartSp this is the 2-groupoid whose objects are sets of diagrams

$$\begin{array}{ccc} U & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{\Pi}_2(U) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^2U(1) \end{array} .$$

This are equivalently just morphisms $\mathbf{\Pi}_2(U) \to \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$, which by the above theorems we may identify with closed 2-forms $B \in \Omega^2_{\mathrm{cl}}(U)$.

The morphisms $B_1 \to B_2$ in $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$ over U are compatible pseudonatural transformations of the horizontal morphisms

$$\begin{array}{ccc} U & \underset{\Downarrow}{\rightrightarrows} & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{\Pi}_2(U) & \underset{\Downarrow}{\rightrightarrows} & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(G) \end{array} ,$$

which means that they are pseudonatural transformations of the bottom morphism whose components over the points of U vanish. These identify with 1-forms $\lambda \in \Omega^1(U)$ such that $B_2 = B_1 + d_{\mathrm{dR}}\lambda$. Finally the 2-morphisms would be modifications of these, but the commutativity of the above diagram constrais these to be trivial.

In summary this shows that

Proposition 1.3.55. *Under the Dold-Kan correspondence $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$ is the sheaf of truncated de Rham complexes*

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1) = \Xi[\Omega^1(-) \stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \Omega^2_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)] .$$

Corollary 1.3.56. *Equivalence classes of 2-anafunctors*

$$X \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$$

are canonically in bijection with the degree 2 de Rham cohomology of X.

Notice that – while every globally defined closed 2-form $B \in \Omega^2_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)$ defines such a 2-anafunctor – not every such 2-anafunctor comes from a globally defined closed 2-form. Some of them assign closed 2-forms B_i to patches U_1, that differ by differentials $B_j - B_i = d_{\mathrm{dR}}\lambda_{ij}$ of 1-forms λ_{ij} on double overlaps, which themselves satisfy on triple intersections the cocycle condition $\lambda_{ij} + \lambda_{jk} = \lambda_{ik}$. But (using a partition of unity) these non-globally defined forms are always equivalent to globally defined ones.

This simple technical point turns out to play a role in the abstract definition of connections on ∞-bundles: generally, for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$ the cocycles given by globally defined forms in $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ constitute curvature characteristic forms of *genuine* connections. The non-globally defined forms *also* constitute curvature invariants, but of pseudo-connections. The way the abstract theory finds the genuine connections inside all pseudo-connections is by the fact that we may find for each cocycle in $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ an equivalent one that does comes from a globally defined form.

Observation 1.3.57. There is a canonical 2-anafunctor $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1^{\mathrm{dR}} : \mathbf{B}U(1) \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1) \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ \mathbf{B}U(1) & & \end{array} ,$$

where the top morphism is given by forming the pasting-composite with the universal $\mathbf{B}U(1)$-principal 2-bundle, as described above.

For emphasis, notice that this span is governed by a presheaf of diagrams that over $U \in CartSp$ is of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} U & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}U(1) & \qquad & \text{transition function} \\ \downarrow && \downarrow && \\ \mathbf{\Pi}_2(U) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(U) && \text{connection} \\ \downarrow && \downarrow && \\ \mathbf{\Pi}_2(U) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^2U(1) && \text{curvature} \end{array} .$$

The top morphisms are the components of the presheaf $\mathbf{B}U(1)$. The top squares are those of $\mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{diff}}$. Forming the bottom square is forming the bottom morphism, which necessarily satifies the constraint that makes it a components of $\flat\mathbf{B}^2U(1)$.

The interpretation of the stages is as indicated in the diagram:

1. the top morphism is the transition function of the underlying bundle;
2. the middle morphism is a choice of (pseudo-)connection on that bundle;
3. the bottom morphism picks up the curvature of this connection.

We will see that full ∞-Chern-Weil theory is governed by a slight refinement of presheaves of essentially this kind of diagram. We will also see that the three stage process here is really an incarnation of the computation of a connecting homomorphism, reflecting the fact that behind the scenes the notion of *curvature* is exhibited as the obstruction cocycle to lifts from bare bundles to flat bundles.

Observation 1.3.58. For $X \stackrel{\simeq}{\leftarrow} C(U) \stackrel{g}{\to} \mathbf{B}U(1)$ the cocycle for a $U(1)$-principal bundle as described above, the composition of 2-anafunctors of g with $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1^{\mathrm{dR}}$ yields a cocycle for a 2-form $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1^{\mathrm{dR}}(g)$

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} & \stackrel{\nabla}{\nearrow} & \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} & & \\ & & \downarrow & & \\ C(V) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^2U(1) \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ C(U) & \stackrel{g}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}U(1) & & \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ X & & & & \end{array} .$$

If we take $\{U_i \to X\}$ to be a good open cover, then we may assume $V = U$. We know we can always find a pseudo-connection $C(V) \to \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{diff}}$ that is actually a genuine connection on a bundle in that it factors through the inclusion $\mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{diff}}$ as indicated.

The corresponding total map $c_1^{\mathrm{dR}}(g)$ represented by $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1^{\mathrm{dR}}(\nabla)$ is the cocycle for the curvature 2-form of this connection. This represents the first Chern class of the bundle in de Rham cohomology.

For X, A smooth 2-groupoids, write $\mathbf{H}(X, A)$ for the 2-groupoid of 2-anafunctors between them.

Corollary 1.3.59. *Let $H^2_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) \to \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^2U(1))$ be a choice of one closed 2-form representative for* *each degree-2 de Rham cohomology-class of X. Then the pullback groupoid $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}U(1))$ in*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}U(1)) & \longrightarrow & H^2_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{diff}}) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^2U(1)) \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}U(1)) \simeq U(1)\mathrm{Bund}(X) & & \end{array}$$

is equivalent to disjoint union of groupoids of $U(1)$-bundles with connection whose curvatures are the chosen 2-form representatives.

1.3.3.4 Circle n-bundles with connection For A an abelian group there is a straightforward generalization of the above constructions to $(G = \mathbf{B}^{n-1}A)$-principal n-bundles with connection for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$. We spell out the ingredients of the construction in a way analogous to the above discussion. A first-principles derivation of the objects we consider here below in 3.3.11.

This is content that appeared partly in [SSS09c], [FSS10]. we restrict attention to the circle n-group $G = \mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)$.

There is a familiar traditional presentation for ordinary differential cohomology in terms of Cech cohomology—Cech-Deligne cohomology. We briefly recall how this works and then indicate how this presentation can be derived along the above lines as a presentation of circle n-bundles with connection.

Definition 1.3.60. For $n \in \mathbb{N}$ the *Deligne-Beilinson complex* is the chain complex of sheaves (on CartSp for our purposes here) of abelian groups given as follows

$$\mathbb{Z}(n+1)^\infty_D = \left[\begin{array}{ccccc} C^\infty(-, \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}) \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \Omega^1(-) d_{\mathrm{dR}} \longrightarrow & \cdots \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \Omega^{n-1}(-) \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \Omega^n(-) \\ n & n-1 & \cdots & 1 & 0 \end{array} \right].$$

This definition goes back to [Del71] [Bel85]. This is similar to the n-fold shifted de Rham complex with two important differences

- In degree n we have the sheaf of $U(1)$-valued functions, not of $\mathbb{R}$-valued functions (= 0-forms). The action of the de Rham differential on this is sometimes written $dlog : C^\infty(-, U(1)) \to \Omega^1(-)$. But if we think of $U(1) \simeq \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ then it is just the ordinary de Rham differential applied to any representative in $C^\infty(-, \mathbb{R})$ of an element in $C^\infty(-, \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z})$.
- In degree 0 we do not have closed differential n-forms (as one would have for the the de Rham complex shifted into non-negative degree), but all n-forms.

As before we may use of the Dold-Kan correspondence $\Xi : \mathrm{Ch}^+_\bullet \xrightarrow{\simeq} sAb \xrightarrow{U} sSet$ to identify sheaves of chain complexes with simplicial sheaves.

For $\{U_i \to X\}$ a good open cover, the Deligne cohomology of X in degree $(n+1)$ is

$$H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) = \pi_0[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \Xi\mathbb{Z}(n+1)^\infty_D).$$

Further using the Dold-Kan correspondence this is equivalently the cohomology of the Čech-Deligne double complex. A cocycle in degre $(n+1)$ then is a tuple

$$(g_{i_0, \cdots, i_n}, \cdots, A_{ijk}, B_{ij}, C_i)$$

with

- $C_i \in \Omega^n(U_i)$;
- $B_{ij} \in \Omega^{n-1}(U_i \cap U_j)$;
- $A_{ijk} \in \Omega^{n-2}(U_i \cap U_j \cap U_k)$
- and so on
- $g_{i_0,\cdots,i_n} \in C^\infty(U_{i_0} \cap \cdots \cap U_{i_n}, U(1))$

satisfying the cocycle condition

$$(d_{\mathrm{dR}} + (-1)^{deg}\delta)(g_{i_0,\cdots,i_n}, \cdots, A_{ijk}, B_{ij}, C_i) = 0\,,$$

where $\delta = \sum_i (-1)^i p_i^*$ is the alternating sum of the pullback of forms along the face maps of the Čech nerve.

This is a sequence of conditions of the form

- $C_i - C_j = dB_{ij}$;
- $B_{ij} - B_{ik} + B_{jk} = dA_{ijk}$;
- and so on
- $(\delta g)_{i_0,\cdots,i_{n+1}} = 0$.

For low n we have seen these conditions in the dicussion of line bundles and of line 2-bundles (bundle gerbes) with connection above. Generally, for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$, this is Čech-cocycle data for a *circle n-bundle* with connection, where

- C_i are the local connection n-forms;
- $g_{i_0,\cdots,i_n}$ is the transition function of the circle n-bundle.

We now indicate how the Deligne complex may be derived from differential refinement of cocycles for circle n-bundles along the lines of the above discussions.

Write

$$\mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{ch}} := \Xi U(1)[n]\,,$$

for the simplicial presheaf given under the Dold-Kan correspondence by the chain complex

$$U(1)[n] = (C^\infty(-, U(1)) \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0)$$

with the sheaf represented by $U(1)$ in degree n.

Proposition 1.3.61. *For $\{U_i \to X\}$ an open cover of a smooth manifold X and $C(U)$ its Čech nerve, ∞-anafunctors*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

are in natural bijection to tuples of smooth functions

$$g_{i_0\cdots i_n} : U_{i_0} \cap \cdots \cap U_{i_n} \to \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$$

satisfying

$$(\partial g)_{i_0\cdots i_{n+1}} := \sum_{k=0}^{n} g_{i_0\cdots i_{k-1} i_k \cdot i_n} = 0\,,$$

that is, to cocycles in degree-n Čech cohomology on U with values in $U(1)$.

Transformations

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C(U)\cdot\Delta^1 & \xrightarrow{(g\xrightarrow{\lambda}g')} & \mathbf{B}^nU(1) \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ X\cdot\Delta^1 & & \end{array}$$

are in natural bijection to tuples of smooth functions

$$\lambda_{i_0\cdots i_{n-1}} : U_{i_0}\cap\cdots\cap U_{i_{n-1}} \to \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$$

such that

$$g'_{i_0\cdots i_n} - g_{i_0\cdots i_n} = (\delta\lambda)_{i_0\cdots i_n}\,,$$

that is, to Čech coboundaries.

The ∞-bundle $P \to X$ classified by such a cocycle we may call a *circle n-bundle*. For $n = 1$ this reproduces the ordinary $U(1)$-principal bundles that we considered before, for $n = 2$ the bundle gerbes and for $n = 3$ the bundle 2-gerbes.

To equip these circle n-bundles with connections, we consider the differential refinements $\mathbf{B}^nU(1)_{\mathrm{diff}}$, $\mathbf{B}^nU(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ and $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1)$.

Definition 1.3.62. Write

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1)_{\mathrm{chn}} := \Xi\left(\Omega^1(-)\stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to}\Omega^2(-)\stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to}\cdots\stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to}\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)\right)$$

– the *truncated de Rham complex* – and

$$\mathbf{B}^nU(1)_{\mathrm{diff}} = \left\{\begin{array}{ccc} (-) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^nU(1) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{\Pi}(-) & \rightarrowtail & \mathbf{B}^n\mathrm{INN}(U(1)) \end{array}\right\} = \Xi\left(\begin{array}{ccccccc} C^\infty(-,\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}) & \rightarrowtail & \Omega^1(-) & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \cdots & \longrightarrow & \Omega^n(-) \\ \oplus & \nearrow^{\mathrm{Id}} & & & & \nearrow^{\mathrm{Id}} & \\ \Omega^1(-) & \xrightarrow[d_{\mathrm{dR}}]{} & \cdots & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \Omega^n(-) & & \end{array}\right)$$

and

$$\mathbf{B}^nU(1)_{conn} = \Xi\left(C^\infty(-,\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z})\stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to}\Omega^1(-)\stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to}\Omega^2(-)\stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to}\cdots\stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to}\Omega^n(-)\right)$$

– the *Deligne complex*, def. 1.3.60.

Observation 1.3.63. We have a pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}^nU(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(-) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}^nU(1)_{\mathrm{diff}} & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}} & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1) \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ \mathbf{B}^nU(1) & & \end{array}$$

in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{op},\mathrm{sSet}]$. This models an ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}^nU(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(-) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}^nU(1) & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1) \end{array}$$

in the ∞-topos Smooth∞Grpd, and hence for each smooth manifold X (in particular) a homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}) & \longrightarrow & \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n-1} U(1)) \end{array}$$

Objects in $\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}})$ are modeled by ∞-anafunctors $X \overset{\simeq}{\leftarrow} C(U) \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{conn}$, and these are in natural bijection with tuples

$$\left(C_i, B_{i_0 i_1}, A_{i_0 i_1, i_2}, \cdots Z_{i_0 \cdots i_{n-1}}, g_{i_0 \cdots i_n}\right) ,$$

where $C_i \in \Omega^n(U_i)$, $B_{i_0 i_1} \in \Omega^{n-1}(U_{i_0} \cap U_{i_1})$, etc. such that

$$C_{i_0} - C_{i_1} = dB_{i_0 i_1}$$

and

$$B_{i_0 i_1} - B_{i_0 i_2} + B_{i_1 i_2} = dA_{i_0 i_1 i_2} ,$$

etc. This is a cocycle in Čech-Deligne cohomology. We may think of this as encoding a circle n-bundle with connection. The forms (C_i) are the local *connection n-forms*.

Remark. Everything in this construction turns out to follow from general abstract reasoning in every cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ – except the sheaf $\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)$ of closed n-forms, which is a non-intrinsic truncation of $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)$, whose definition uses concretely the choice of model $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$. But since by the above this object is used to pick homotopy fibers, and since these depend up to equivalence only on the connected component over which they are taken, for fixed X no information is lost by passing instead to the de Rham cohomology set $H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)$ and choosing a morphism $H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) \to \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1))$ that picks a closed $(n+1)$-form in each cohomology class. Then we can replace the above by the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) & \longrightarrow & H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}^n U(1) & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n-1} U(1) \end{array}$$

without losing information. And this is defined fully intrinsically.

The definition of ∞-connections on G-principal ∞-bundles for nonabelian G may be reduced to this definition, by *approximating* every G-cocylce $X \overset{\simeq}{\leftarrow} C(U) \to \mathbf{B}G$ by abelian cocycles in all possible ways, by postcomposing with all possible *characteristic classes* $\mathbf{B}G \overset{\simeq}{\leftarrow} \hat{\mathbf{B}G} \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ to extract a circle n-bundle from it. This is what we turn to now.

1.3.4 Characteristic classes in low degree

We discuss explicit presentations of *characteristic classes* of principal n-bundles for low values of n and for low degree of the characteristic class.

- General concept
- Examples
  - example 1.3.64 – First Chern class of unitary 1-bundles
  - example 1.3.65 – Dixmier-Douady class of circle 2-bundles (of bundle gerbes)
  - example 1.3.66 – Obstruction class of central extension
  - example 1.3.67 – First Stiefel-Whitney class of an O-principal bundles
  - example 1.3.68 – Second Stiefel-Whitney class of an SO-principal bundles
  - example 1.3.69 – Bockstein homomorphism
  - example 1.3.70 – Third integral Stiefel-Whitney class
  - example 1.3.71 – First Pontryagin class of Spin-1-bundles and twisted string-2-bundles

In the context of higher (smooth) groupoids the notion of characteristic class is conceptually very simple: for G some n-group and $\mathbf{B}G$ the corresponding one-object n-groupoid, a characteristic class of degree $k \in \mathbb{N}$ with coefficients in some abelian (Lie-)group A is presented simply by a morphism

$$c : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^n A$$

of cohesive ∞-groupoids. For instance if $A = \mathbb{Z}$ such a morphism represents a *universal integral characteristic class* on $\mathbf{B}G$. Then for

$$g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$$

any morphism of (smooth) ∞-groupoids that classifies a given G-principal n-bundle $P \to X$, as discussed above in 1.3.1, the corresponding characteristic class of P (equivalently of g) is the class of the composite

$$c(P) : \ X \xrightarrow{g} \mathbf{B}G \xrightarrow{c} \mathbf{B}^K A \ ,$$

in the cohomology group $H^k(X, A)$ of the ambient ∞-topos.

In other words, in the abstract language of cohesive ∞-toposes the notion of characteristic classes of cohesive principal ∞-bundles is verbatim that of principal fibrations in ordinary homotopy theory. The crucial difference, though, is in the implementation of this abstract formalism.

Namely, as we have discussed previously, all the abstract morphisms $f : A \to B$ of cohesive ∞-groupoids here are presented by ∞-*anafunctors*, hence by spans of genuine morphisms of Kan-complex valued presheaves, whose left leg is a weak equivalence that exhibits a resolution of the source object.

This means that the characteristic map itself is presented by a span

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \widehat{\mathbf{B}G} & \xrightarrow{c} & \mathbf{B}^k A \ , \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ \mathbf{B}G & & \end{array}$$

as is of course the cocycle for the principal n-bundle

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C(U_i) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

and the characteristic class $[c(P)]$ of the corresponding principal n-bundle is presented by a (any) span composite

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} C(T_i) & \xrightarrow{\hat{g}} & \widehat{\mathbf{B}G} & \xrightarrow{c} & \mathbf{B}^k A \;, \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ C(U_i) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G & & \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & & & \\ X & & & & \end{array}$$

where $C(T_i)$ is, if necessary, a refinement of the cover $C(U_i)$ over which the $\mathbf{B}G$-cocycle g lifts to a $\widehat{\mathbf{B}G}$-cocycle as indicated.

Notice the similarity of this situation to that of the discussion of twisted bundles in example 1.3.19. This is not a coincidence: every characteristic class induces a corresponding notion of *twisted n-bundles* and, conversely, every notion of twisted n-bundles can be understood as arising from the failure of a certain characteristic class to vanish.

We discuss now a list of examples.

Example 1.3.64 (first Chern class)**.** Let $N \in \mathbb{N}$. Consider the unitary group $U(N)$. By its definition as a matrix Lie group, this comes canonically equipped with the determinant function

$$\det : U(N) \to U(1)$$

and by the standard properties of the determinant, this is in fact a group homomorphism. Therefore this has a delooping to a morphism of Lie groupoids

$$\mathbf{B}\det : \mathbf{B}U(N) \to \mathbf{B}U(1)\,.$$

Under geometric realization this maps to a morphism

$$|\mathbf{B}\det| : BU(N) \to BU(1) \simeq K(\mathbb{Z}, 2)$$

of topological spaces. This is a characteristic class on the classifying space $BU(N)$: the ordinary *first Chern class*. Hence the morphism $\mathbf{B}\det$ on Lie groupoids is a *smooth refinement* of the ordinary first Chern class.

This smooth refinement acts on smooth $U(n)$-principal bundles as follows. Postcomposition of a Čech cocycle

$$P : \qquad \begin{array}{ccc} C(\{U_i\}) & \xrightarrow{(g_{ij})} & \mathbf{B}U(N) \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

for a $U(N)$-principal bundle on a smooth manifold X with this characteristic class yields the cocycle

$$\det P : \qquad \begin{array}{ccccc} C(\{U_i\}) & \xrightarrow{(g_{ij})} & \mathbf{B}U(N) & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{B}\det} & \mathbf{B}U(1) \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \simeq} & & & & \\ X & & & & \end{array}$$

for a circle bundle (or its associated line bundle) with transition functions $(\det(g_{ij}))$: the *determinant line bundle* of P.

It is a standard and basic fact that the cohomology class of line bundles can be identified within the second *integral cohomology* of X. For our purposes here it is instructive to rederive this fact in terms of anafunctors, *lifting gerbes* and twisted bundles.

To that end, consider from example 1.3.18 the equivalence of the 2-group $(\mathbb{Z} \hookrightarrow \mathbb{R})$ with the ordinary circle group, which supports the 2-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R}) & \xrightarrow{c_1} & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to 1) & = & \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z} \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}U(1) & & & & \end{array} .$$

We see now that this presents an integral characteristic class in degree 2 on $\mathbf{B}U(1)$. Given a cocycle $\{h_{ij} \in C^\infty(U_{ij}, U(1))\}$ for any circle bundle, the postcomposition with this 2-anafunctor amounts to the following:

1. refine the cover, if necessary, to a *good* open cover (where all non-empty $U_{i_0,\cdots,i_k}$ are contractible) – we shall still write $\{U_i\}$ now for this good cover;
2. choose on each U_{ij} a (any) lift of the circle-valued functor $h_{ij} : U_{ij} \to U(1)$ through the quotient map $\mathbb{R} \to U(1)$ to a function $\hat{h}_{ij} : U_{ij} \to \mathbb{R}$ – this is always possible over the contractible U_{ij};
3. compute the failures of the lifts thus chosen to constitute the cocycle for an $\mathbb{R}$-principal bundle: these are the elements
$$\lambda_{ijk} := \hat{h}_{ik}\hat{h}_{ij}^{-1}\hat{h}_{jk}^{-1} \in C^\infty(U_{ijk}, \mathbb{Z}) ,$$
which are indeed $\mathbb{Z}$-valued (hence constant) smooth functions due to the fact that the original $\{h_{ij}\}$ satisfied its cocycle law;
4. notice that by observation 1.3.14 this yields the construction of the cocycle for a $(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R})$-principal 2-bundle
$$\{\hat{h}_{ij} \in C^\infty(U_{ij}, \mathbb{R}), \lambda_{ijk} \in C^\infty(U_{ijk}, \mathbb{Z})\} ,$$
which by example 1.3.19 we may also read as the cocycle for a twisted $\mathbb{R}$-1-bundle, with respect to the central extension $\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R} \to U(1)$;
5. finally project out the cocycle for the "lifting $\mathbb{Z}$-gerbe" encoded by this, which is the the $\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}$-principal 2-bundle given by the $\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}$ cocycle
$$\{\lambda_{ijk} \in C^\infty(U_{ijk}, \mathbb{Z})\} ,$$

This last cocycle is manifestly in degree-2 integral Čech cohomology, and hence indeed represents a class in $H^2(X, \mathbb{Z})$. This is the first Chern class of the circle bundle given by $\{h_{ij}\}$. If here $h_{ij} = \det g_{ij}$ is the determinant circle bundle of some unitary bundle, the this is also the first Chern class of that unitary bundle.

Example 1.3.65 (Dixmier-Douady class)**.** The discussion in example 1.3.64 of the first Chern class of a circle 1-bundle has an immediate generalization to an analogous canonical class of circle 2-bundles, def. 1.3.3, hence, by observation 1.3.4, to bundle gerbes. As before, while this amounts to a standard and basic fact, for our purposes it shall be instructive to spell this out in terms of ∞-anafunctors and twisted principal 2-bundles.

To that end, notice that by delooping the equivalence $\mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R}) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}U(1)$ yields

$$\mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R}) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}^2U(1) .$$

This says that $\mathbf{B}U(1)$-principal 2-bundles/bundle gerbes are equivalent to $\mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R})$-principal 3-bundles, def. 1.3.23.

As before, this supports a canonical integral characteristic class, now in degree 3, presented by the ∞-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R}) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \to 1) & = & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to 1 \to 1) \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}^2U(1) & & & & \end{array} .$$

The corresponding class in $H^3(\mathbf{B}U(1), \mathbb{Z})$ is the (smooth lift of) the *universal Dixmier-Douady class.*

Explicitly, for $\{g_{ijk} \in C^\infty(U_{ijk}, U(1))\}$ the Čech cocycle for a circle-2-bundle, def. 1.3.3, this class is computed as the composite of spans

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} C(U_i) & \xrightarrow{(\hat{g},\lambda)} & \mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R}) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{Z} \ , \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ C(U_i) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}^2 U(1) & & \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ X & & & & \end{array}$$

where we assume for simplicity of notation that the cover $\{U_i \to X\}$ already has be chosen (possibly after refining another cover) such that all patches and their non-empty intersections are contractible.

Here the lifted cocycle data $\{\hat{g}_{ijk} : U_{ijk} \to U(1)\}$ is through the quotient map $\mathbb{R} \to U(1)$ to real valued functions. These lifts will, in general, not satisfy the condition of a cocycle for a $\mathbf{B}\mathbb{R}$-principal 2-bundle. The failure is uniquely picked up by the functions

$$\lambda_{ijkl} := \hat{g}_{jkl} g_{ijk}^{-1} g_{ijl} g_{ikl}^{-1} \in C^\infty(U_{ijkl}, \mathbb{Z}) \,.$$

By example 1.3.25 this data constitutes the cocycle for a $(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R} \to 1)$-principal 3-bundle or, by def. 1.3.26 that of a *twisted* $\mathbf{B}R$*-principal 2-bundle.*

The above composite of spans projects out the integral cocycle

$$\lambda_{ijkl} \in C^\infty(U_{ijkl}, \mathbb{Z}) \,,$$

which manifestly gives a class in $H^3(X, \mathbb{Z})$. This is the Dixmier-Douady class of the original circle 3-bundle, the higher analog of the Chern-class of a circle bundle.

Example 1.3.66 (obstruction class of central extension)**.** For $A \to \hat{G} \to G$ a central extension of Lie groups, there is a long sequence of (deloopings of) Lie 2-groups

$$\mathbf{B}A \to \mathbf{B}\hat{G} \to \mathbf{B}G \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}} \mathbf{B}^2 A \,,$$

where the characteristic class $\mathbf{c}$ is presented by the ∞-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}(A \to \hat{G}) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(A \to 1) & = & \mathbf{B}^2 A \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}G & & & & \end{array}$$

with $(A \to \hat{G})$ the crossed module from example 1.3.12.

The proof of this is discussed below in prop. 3.3.33.

Example 1.3.67 (first Stiefel-Whitney class)**.** The morphism of groups

$$\mathrm{O}(n) \to \mathbb{Z}_2$$

which sends every element in the connected component of the unit element of $\mathrm{O}(n)$ to the unit element of $\mathbb{Z}_2$ and every other element to the non-trivial element of $\mathbb{Z}_2$ induces a morphism of delooping Lie groupoids

$$\mathbf{w}_1 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{O}(n) \to \mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}_2 \,.$$

This represents the universal smooth *first Stiefel-Whiteney class.*

The relation of $\mathbf{w}_1$ to orientation structure is discussed below in 4.1.1.

Example 1.3.68 (second Stiefel-Whitney class)**.** The exact sequence that characterizes the Spin-group is

$$\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{Spin} \to \mathrm{SO}$$

induces, by example 1.3.66, a long fiber sequence

$$\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO} \stackrel{\mathbf{w}_2}{\to} \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 \,.$$

Here the the morphism $\mathbf{w}_2$ is presented by the ∞-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{Spin}) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to 1) & = & \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO} & & & & \end{array} \,.$$

This is a smooth incarnation of the *universal second Stiefel-Whitney class*. The $\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}_2$-principal 2-bundle associated by $\mathbf{w}_2$ to any $\mathrm{SO}(n)$-principal bundles is dicussed in [MuSi03] in terms of the corresponding bundle gerbe, via. observation 1.3.4.

Example 1.3.69 (Bockstein homomorphism)**.** The exact sequence

$$\mathbb{Z} \stackrel{\cdot 2}{\to} \mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{Z}_2$$

induces, by example 1.3.66, for each $n \in \mathbb{N}$ a characteristic class

$$\beta_2 : \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{Z} \,.$$

This is the *Bockstein homomorphism*.

Example 1.3.70 (third integral Stiefel-Whitney class)**.** The composite of the second Stiefel-Whitney class from example 1.3.68 with the Bockstein homomorphism from example 1.3.69 is the *third integral Stiefel-Whitney class*

$$W_3 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO} \stackrel{\mathbf{w}_2}{\to} \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 \stackrel{\beta_2}{\to} \mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{Z} \,.$$

This has a refined factorization through the universal Dixmier-Douady class from example 1.3.65:

$$\mathbf{W}_3 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO} \to \mathbf{B}^2 U(1) \,.$$

This is discussed in lemma 4.4.26 below.

Example 1.3.71 (first Pontryagin class)**.** Let G be a compact and simply connected simpl Lie group. Then the resolution from example 1.3.30 naturally supports a characteristic class presented by the 3-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}(U(1) \to \hat{\Omega} G \to PG) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(U(1) \to 1 \to 1) & = & \mathbf{B}^3 U(1) \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}G & & & & \end{array} \,.$$

For $G = \mathrm{Spin}$ the spin group, this presents one half of the universal *first Pontryagin class*. This we dicuss in detail in 4.1.

Composition with this class sends G-principal bundles to circle 2-bundles, 1.3.3, hence by 1.3.24 to bundle 2-gerbes. Our discussion in 4.1 shows that these are the *Chern-Simons 2-gerbes*.

1.3.5 L_∞-algebraic structures

A Lie algebra is, in a precise sense, the infinitesimal approximation to a Lie group. This statement generalizes to *smooth n-groups* (the strict case of which we had seen in definition 1.3.20); their infinitesimal approximation are *Lie n-algebras* which for arbitrary n are known as *L_∞-algebras*. The statement also generalizes to *Lie groupoids* (discussed in 1.3.1); their infinitesimal approximation are *Lie algeboids*. Both these are special cases of a joint generalization; where smooth n-groupoids have *L_∞-algebroids* as their infinitesimal approximation.

The following is an exposition of basic L_∞-algebraic structures, their relation to smooth n-groupoids and the notion of connection data with coefficients in L_∞-algebras.

The following discussion proceeds by these topics:

- L_∞-algebroids;
- Lie integration;
- Characteristic cocycles from Lie integration;
- L_∞-algebra valued connections;
- Curvature characteristics and Chern-Simons forms;
- ∞-Connections from Lie integration;

1.3.5.1 L_∞-algebroids There is a precise sense in which one may think of a Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ as the infinitesimal sub-object of the delooping groupoid $\mathbf{B}G$ of the corresponding Lie group G. Without here going into the details, which are discussed in detail below in 3.4.1, we want to build certain smooth ∞-groupoids from the knowledge of their infinitesimal subobjects: these subobjects are *L_∞-algebroids* and specifically *L_∞-algebras*.

For $\mathfrak{g}$ an $\mathbb{N}$-graded vector space, write $\mathfrak{g}[1]$ for the same underlying vector space with all degrees shifted up by one. (Often this is denoted $\mathfrak{g}[-1]$ instead). Then

$$\wedge^\bullet \mathfrak{g} = \mathrm{Sym}^\bullet(\mathfrak{g}[1])$$

is the *Grassmann algebra* on $\mathfrak{g}$; the free graded-commutative algebra on $\mathfrak{g}[1]$.

Definition 1.3.72. An *L_∞-algebra* structure on an $\mathbb{N}$-graded vector space $\mathfrak{g}$ is a family of multilinear maps

$$[-,\cdots,-]_k : \mathrm{Sym}^k(\mathfrak{g}[1]) \to \mathfrak{g}[1]$$

of degree -1, for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$, such that the *higher Jacobi identities*

$$\sum_{k+l=n+1} \sum_{\sigma \in \mathrm{UnSh}(l,k-1)} (-1)^\sigma t_{a_1}, \cdots, t_{a_l}], t_{a_{l+1}}, \cdots, t_{a_{k+l-1}}] = 0$$

are satisfied for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and all $\{t_{a_i} \in \mathfrak{g}\}$.

See [SSS09a] for a review and for references.

Example 1.3.73. If $\mathfrak{g}$ is concentrated in degree 0, then an L_∞-algebra structure on $\mathfrak{g}$ is the same as an ordinary Lie algebra structure. The only non-trivial bracket is $[-,-]_2 : \mathfrak{g} \otimes \mathfrak{g} \to \mathfrak{g}$ and the higher Jacobi identities reduce to the ordinary Jacobi identity.

We will see many other examples of L_∞-algebras. For identifying these, it turns out to be useful to have the following dual formulation of L_∞-algebras.

Proposition 1.3.74. *Let $\mathfrak{g}$ be a $\mathbb{N}$-graded vector space that is degreewise finite dimensional. Write $\mathfrak{g}^*$ for the degreewise dual, also $\mathbb{N}$-graded.*

Then dg-algebra structures on the Grassmann algebra $\wedge^\bullet \mathfrak{g}^* = \mathrm{Sym}^\bullet \mathfrak{g}[1]^*$ are in canonical bijection with L_∞-algebra structures on $\mathfrak{g}$, def. 1.3.72.

Here the sum is over all $(l, k-1)$*unshuffles*, which means all permutations $\sigma \in \Sigma_{k+l-1}$ that preserves the order within the first l and within the last $k-1$ arguments, respectively, and $(-1)^{\mathrm{sgn}}$ is the Koszul-sign of the permutation: the sign picked up by "unshuffling" $t^{a_1} \wedge \cdots, \wedge t^{a_{k+l-1}}$ according to σ.

Proof. Let $\{t_a\}$ be a basis of $\mathfrak{g}[1]$. Write $\{t^a\}$ for the dual basis of $\mathfrak{g}[1]^*$, where t^a is taken to be in the same degree as t_a.

A derivation $d : \wedge^\bullet \mathfrak{g}^* \to \wedge^\bullet \mathfrak{g}^*$ of the Grassmann algebra is fixed by its value on generators, where it determines and is determined by a sequence of brackets graded-symmetric multilinear maps $\{[-, \cdots, -]_k\}_{k=1}^{\infty}$ by

$$d : t^a \mapsto -\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{k!} [t_{a_1}, \cdots, t_{a_k}]^a \, t^{a_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge t^{a_k} \,,$$

where a sum over repeated indices is understood. This derivation is of degree +1 precisely if all the k-ary maps are of degree -1. It is straightforward to check that the condition $d \circ d = 0$ is equivalent to the higher Jacobi identities. □

Definition 1.3.75. The dg-algebra corresponding to an L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ by prop. 1.3.74 we call the *Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra* $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ of $\mathfrak{g}$.

Example 1.3.76. For $\mathfrak{g}$ an ordinary Lie algebra, as in example 1.3.73, the notion of Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra from def. 1.3.75 coincides with the traditional notion.

Examples 1.3.77.

- A *strict* L_∞-algebra algebra is a dg-Lie algebra $(\mathfrak{g}, \partial, [-,-])$ with $(\mathfrak{g}^*, \partial^*)$ a cochain complex in non-negative degree. With $\mathfrak{g}^*$ denoting the degreewise dual, the corresponding CE-algebra is $CE(\mathfrak{g}) = (\wedge^\bullet \mathfrak{g}^*, d_{CE} = [-,-]^* + \partial^*$.

- We had already seen above the infinitesimal approximation of a Lie 2-group: this is a Lie 2-algebra. If the Lie 2-group is a smooth strict 2-group it is encoded equivalently by a crossed module of ordinary Lie groups, and the corresponding Lie 2-algebra is given by a differential crossed module of ordinary Lie algebras.

- For $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $n \geq 1$, the Lie n-algebra $b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}$ is the infinitesimal approximation to $\mathbf{B}^n U(\mathbb{R})$ and $\mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}$. Its CE-algebra is the dg-algebra on a single generators in degree n, with vanishing differential.

- For any ∞-Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ there is an L_∞-algebra $\mathrm{inn}(\mathfrak{g})$ defined by the fact that its CE-algebra is the Weil algebra of $\mathfrak{g}$:

  $$\mathrm{CE}(\mathrm{inn}(\mathfrak{g})) = \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) = (\wedge^\bullet(\mathfrak{g}^* \oplus \mathfrak{g}^*[1]), d_{\mathrm{W}}|_{\mathfrak{g}^*} = d_{CE} + \sigma) \,,$$

  where $\sigma : \mathfrak{g}^* \to \mathfrak{g}^*[1]$ is the grading shift isomorphism, extended as a derivation.

Example 1.3.78. For $\mathfrak{g}$ an L_∞-algebra, its *automorphism L_∞-algebra* $\mathfrak{der}(\mathfrak{g})$ is the dg-Lie algebra whose elements in degree k are the derivations

$$\iota : \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$$

of degree $-k$, whose differential is given by the graded commutator $[d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})}, -]$ and whose Lie bracket is the commutator bracket of derivations.

In the context of rational homotopy theory, this is discussed on p. 312 of [Su77].

One advantage of describing an L_∞-algebra in terms of its dual Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra is that in this form the correct notion of morphism is manifest.

Definition 1.3.79. A morphism of L_∞-algebras $\mathfrak{g} \to \mathfrak{h}$ is a morphism of dg-algebras $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{h})$.

The category $L_\infty\mathrm{Alg}$ of L_∞-algebras is therefore the full subcatgeory of the opposite category of dg-algebras on those whose underlying graded algebra is free:

$$L_\infty\mathrm{Alg} \stackrel{\mathrm{CE}(-)}{\to} \mathrm{dgAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}^{\mathrm{op}} .$$

Replacing in this characterization the ground field $\mathbb{R}$ by an algebra of smooth functions on a manifold $\mathfrak{a}_0$, we obtain the notion of an L_∞*-algebroid* $\mathfrak{g}$ over $\mathfrak{a}_0$. Morphisms $\mathfrak{a} \to \mathfrak{b}$ of such ∞-Lie algebroids are dually precisely morphisms of dg-algebras $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{b})$.

Definition 1.3.80. The category of L_∞*-algebroids* is the opposite category of the full subcategory of dgAlg

$$\infty\mathrm{LieAlgbd} \subset \mathrm{dgAlg}^{op}$$

on graded-commutative cochain dg-algebras in non-negative degree whose underlying graded algebra is an exterior algebra over its degree-0 algebra, and this degree-0 algebra is the algebra of smooth functions on a smooth manifold.

Remark 1.3.81. More precisely the above definition is that of *affine* C^∞-L_∞-algebroids. There are various ways to refine this to something more encompassing, but for the purposes of this introductory discussion the above is convenient and sufficient. A more comprehensive discussion is in 3.4.1 below.

Example 1.3.82.

- The *tangent Lie algebroid* TX of a smooth manifold X is the infinitesimal approximation to its fundamental ∞-groupoid. Its CE-algebra is the de Rham complex

  $\mathrm{CE}(TX) = \Omega^\bullet(X)$.

1.3.5.2 Lie integration We discusss *Lie integration*: a construction that sends an L_∞-algebroid to a smooth ∞-groupoid of which it is the infinitesimal approximation.

The construction we want to describe may be understood as a generalization of the following proposition. This is classical, even if maybe not reflected in the standard textbook literature to the extent it deserves to be.

Definition 1.3.83. For $\mathfrak{g}$ a (finite-dimensional) Lie algebra, let $\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ be the simplicial presheaf given by the assignment

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g}) : U \mapsto \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^\bullet)_{\mathrm{vert}}) ,$$

in degree k of dg-algebra homomorphisms from the Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra of $\mathfrak{g}$ to the dg-algebra of vertical differential forms with respect to the trivial bundle $U \times \Delta^k \to U$.

Shortly we will be considering variations of such assignments that are best thought about when writing out the hom-sets on the right here as sets of arrows; as in

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g}) : (U, [k]) \mapsto \left\{ \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) \stackrel{A_{\mathrm{vert}}}{\leftarrow} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \right\} .$$

For $\mathfrak{g}$ an ordinary Lie algebra it is an ancient and simple but important observation that dg-algebra morphisms $\Omega^\bullet(\Delta^k) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ are in natural bijection with Lie-algebra valued 1-forms that are *flat* in that their curvature 2-forms vanish: the 1-form itself determines precisely a morphism of the underlying graded algebras, and the respect for the differentials is exactly the flatness condition. It is this elementary but similarly important observation that historically led Eli Cartan to Cartan calculus and the algebraic formulation of Chern-Weil theory.

One finds that it makes good sense to generally, for $\mathfrak{g}$ any ∞-Lie algebra or even ∞-Lie algebroid, think of $\mathrm{Hom}_{dgAlg}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet(\Delta^k))$ as the set of ∞-Lie algebroid valued differential forms whose curvature forms (generally a whole tower of them) vanishes.

Proposition 1.3.84. *Let G be the simply-connected Lie group integrating $\mathfrak{g}$ according to Lie's three theorems and $\mathbf{B}G \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Grpd}]$ its delooping Lie groupoid regarded as a groupoid-valued presheaf on* CartSp. *Write $\tau_1(-)$ for the truncation operation that quotients out 2-morphisms in a simplicial presheaf to obtain a presheaf of groupoids.*

We have an isomorphism

$$\mathbf{B}G = \tau_1 \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \,.$$

To see this, observe that the presheaf $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ has as 1-morphisms U-parameterized families of $\mathfrak{g}$-valued 1-forms A_{vert} on the interval, and as 2-morphisms U-parameterized families of *flat* 1-forms on the disk, interpolating between these. By identifying these 1-forms with the pullback of the Maurer-Cartan form on G, we may equivalently think of the 1-morphisms as based smooth paths in G and 2-morphisms smooth homotopies relative endpoints between them. Since G is simply-connected this means that after dividing out 2-morphisms only the endpoints of these paths remain, which identify with the points in G.

The following proposition establishes the Lie integration of the shifted 1-dimensional abelian L_∞-algebras $b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}$.

Proposition 1.3.85. *For $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $n \geq 1$. Write*

$$\mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{ch}} := \Xi \mathbb{R}[n]$$

for the simplicial presheaf on CartSp *that is the image of the sheaf of chain complexes represented by $\mathbb{R}$ in degree n and 0 in other degrees, under the Dold-Kan correspondence $\Xi : \mathrm{Ch}_\bullet^+ \to \mathrm{sAb} \to \mathrm{sSet}$.*

Then there is a canonical morphism

$$\int_{\Delta^\bullet} : \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \xrightarrow{\simeq} \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{ch}$$

given by fiber integration of differential forms along $U \times \Delta^n \to U$ and this is an equivalence (a global equivalence in the model structure on simplicial presheaves).

The proof of this statement is discussed in 3.3.9.

This statement will make an appearance repeatedly in the following discussion. Whenever we translate a construction given in terms $\exp(-)$ into a more convenient chain complex representation.

1.3.5.3 Characteristic cocycles from Lie integration We now describe characteristic classes and curvature characteristic forms on G-bundles in terms of these simplicial presheaves. For that purpose it is useful for a moment to ignore the truncation issue – to come back to it later – and consider these simplicial presheaves untruncated.

To see characteristic classes in this picture, write $\mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$ for the commutative real dg-algebra on a single generator in degree n with vanishing differential. As our notation suggests, this we may think as the Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra of a *higher Lie algebra* – the ∞-Lie algebra $b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}$ – which is an Eilenberg-MacLane object in the homotopy theory of ∞-Lie algebras, representing ∞-Lie algebra cohomology in degree n with coefficients in $\mathbb{R}$.

Restating this in elementary terms, this just says that dg-algebra homomorphisms

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) : \mu$$

are in natural bijection with elements $\mu \in \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ of degree n, that are closed, $d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})}\mu = 0$. This is the classical description of a cocycle in the Lie algebra cohomology of $\mathfrak{g}$.

Definition 1.3.86. Every such ∞-Lie algebra cocycle μ induces a morphism of simplicial presheaves

$$\exp(\mu) : \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \to \exp(b^n\mathbb{R})$$

given by postcomposition

$$\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^l) \stackrel{A_{\mathrm{vert}}}{\leftarrow} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \stackrel{\mu}{\leftarrow} \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R}) \,.$$

Example 1.3.87. Assume $\mathfrak{g}$ to be a semisimple Lie algebra, let $\langle -,-\rangle$ be the Killing form and $\mu = \langle -,[-,-]\rangle$ the corresponding 3-cocycle in Lie algebra cohomology. We may assume without restriction that this cocycle is normalized such that its left-invariant continuation to a 3-form on G has integral periods. Observe that since $\pi_2(G)$ is trivial we have that the 3-coskeleton of $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ is equivalent to $\mathbf{B}G$. By the inegrality of μ, the operation of $\exp(\mu)$ on $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ followed by integration over simplices descends to an ∞-anafunctor from $\mathbf{B}G$ to $\mathbf{B}^3U(1)$, as indicated on the right of this diagram in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & & \exp(\mathfrak{g}) & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu)} & \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \\
 & & \downarrow & & \downarrow {\scriptstyle \int_{\Delta^\bullet}} \\
C(V) & \xrightarrow{\hat g} & \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{g}) & \xrightarrow{\int_{\Delta^\bullet} \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mu)} & \mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z} \\
\downarrow {\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \downarrow {\scriptstyle \simeq} & & \\
C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G & & \\
\downarrow {\scriptstyle \simeq} & & & & \\
X & & & &
\end{array}
$$

Precomposing this – as indicated on the left of the diagram – with another ∞-anafunctor $X \stackrel{\simeq}{\leftarrow} C(U) \stackrel{g}{\to} \mathbf{B}G$ for a G-principal bundle, hence a collection of transition functions $\{g_{ij} : U_i \cap U_j \to G\}$ amounts to choosing (possibly on a refinement V of the cover U of X)

- on each $V_i \cap V_j$ a lift $\hat g_{ij}$ of g_{ij} to a familly of smooth based paths in G – $\hat g_{ij} : (V_i \cap V_j) \times \Delta^1 \to G$ – with endpoints g_{ij};
- on each $V_i \cap V_j \cap V_k$ a smooth family $\hat g_{ijk} : (V_i \cap V_j \cap V_k) \times \Delta^2 \to G$ of disks interpolating between these paths;
- on each $V_i \cap V_j \cap V_k \cap V_l$ a a smooth family $\hat g_{ijkl} : (V_i \cap V_j \cap V_k \cap V_l) \times \Delta^3 \to G$ of 3-balls interpolating between these disks.

On this data the morphism $\int_{\Delta^\bullet} \exp(\mu)$ acts by sending each 3-cell to the number

$$\hat g_{ijkl} \mapsto \int_{\Delta^3} \hat g_{ijkl}^* \mu \mod \mathbb{Z}\,,$$

where μ is regarded in this formula as a closed 3-form on G.

We say this is *Lie integration of Lie algebra cocycles.*

Proposition 1.3.88. *For $G = \mathrm{Spin}$, the Čech cohomology cocycle obtained this way is the first fractional* Pontryagin class *of the G-bundle classified by G.*

We shall show this below, as part of our L_∞-algebraic reconstruction of the above motivating example. In order to do so, we now add differential refinement to this Lie integration of characteristic classes.

1.3.5.4 L_∞-algebra valued connections In 1.3.1 we described ordinary connections on bundles as well as connections on 2-bundles in terms of parallel transport over paths and surfaces, and showed how such is equivalently given by cocycles with coefficients in Lie-algebra valued differential forms and Lie 2-algebra valued differential forms, respectively.

Notably we saw for the case of ordinary $U(1)$-principal bundles, that the connection and curvature data on these is encoded in presheaves of diagrams that over a given test space $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ look like

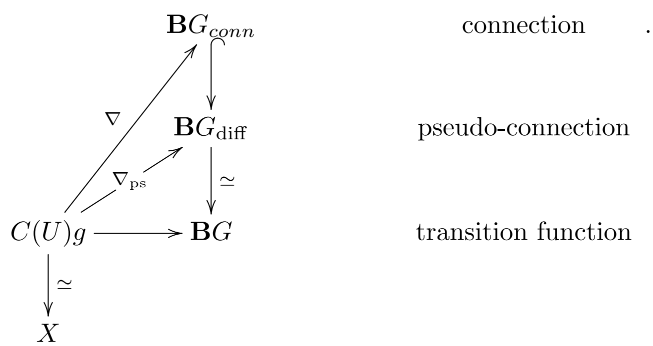
$$\begin{array}{ccccc} U & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}U(1) & & \text{transition function} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ \mathbf{\Pi}(U) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{INN}(U) & & \text{connection} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ \mathbf{\Pi}(U) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^2U(1) & & \text{curvature} \end{array}$$

together with a constraint on the bottom morphism.

It is in the form of such a kind of diagram that the general notion of connections on ∞-bundles may be modeled. In the full theory in 2 this follows from first principles, but for our present introductory purpose we shall be content with taking this simple situation of $U(1)$-bundles together with the notion of Lie integration as sufficient motivation for the constructions considered now.

So we pass now to what is to some extent the reverse construction of the one considered before: we define a notion of L_∞-algebra valued differential forms and show how by a variant of Lie integration these integrate to coefficient objects for connections on ∞-bundles.

1.3.5.5 Curvature characteristics and Chern-Simons forms For G a Lie group, we have described above connections on G-principal bundles in terms of cocycles with coefficients in the Lie-groupoid of Lie-algebra valued forms $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$



In this context we had *derived* Lie-algebra valued forms from the parallel transport description $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} = [\mathbf{P}_1(-), \mathbf{B}G]$. We now turn this around and use Lie integration to construct parallel transport from Lie-algebra valued forms. The construction is such that it generalizes verbatim to ∞-Lie algebra valued forms. For that purpose notice that another classical dg-algebra associated with $\mathfrak{g}$ is its *Weil algebra* $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$.

Proposition 1.3.89. *The Weil algebra* $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ *is the free dg-algebra on the graded vector space* $\mathfrak{g}^*$*, meaning that there is a natural bijection*

$$\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(W(\mathfrak{g}), A) \simeq \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Vect}_{\mathbb{Z}}}(\mathfrak{g}^*, A)\,,$$

which is singled out among the isomorphism class of dg-algebras with this property by the fact that the projection of graded vector spaces $\mathfrak{g}^* \oplus \mathfrak{g}^*[1] \to \mathfrak{g}^*$ *extends to a dg-algebra homomorphism*

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \leftarrow W(\mathfrak{g}) : i^*\,.$$

(Notice that general the dg-algebras that we are dealing with are *semi-free* dg-algebras in that only their underlying graded algebra is free, but not the differential).

The most obvious realization of the free dg-algebra on $\mathfrak{g}^*$ is $\wedge^\bullet(\mathfrak{g}^* \oplus \mathfrak{g}^*[1])$ equipped with the differential that is precisely the degree shift isomorphism $\sigma : \mathfrak{g}^* \to \mathfrak{g}^*[1]$ extended as a derivation. This is not the Weil algebra on the nose, but is of course isomorphic to it. The differential of the Weil algebra on $\wedge^\bullet(\mathfrak{g}^* \oplus \mathfrak{g}^*[1])$ is given on the unshifted generators by the sum of the CE-differential with the shift isomorphism

$$d_{W(\mathfrak{g})}|_{\mathfrak{g}^*} = d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})} + \sigma \, .$$

This uniquely fixes the differential on the shifted generators – a phenomenon known (at least after mapping this to differential forms, as we discuss below) as the *Bianchi identity*.

Using this, we can express also the presheaf $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}}$ from above in diagrammatic fashion

Observation 1.3.90. For G a simply connected Lie group, the presheaf $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}} \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Grpd}]$ is isomorphic to

$$\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}} = \tau_1 \left(\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} : (U,[k]) \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) A_{\mathrm{vert}} & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) A & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \end{array} \right\} \right)$$

where on the right we have the 1-truncation of the simplicial presheaf of diagrams as indicated, where the vertical morphisms are the canonical ones.

Here over a given U the bottom morphism in such a diagram is an arbitrary $\mathfrak{g}$-valued 1-form A on $U \times \Delta^k$. This we can decompose as $A = A_U + A_{\mathrm{vert}}$, where A_U vanishes on tangents to Δ^k and A_{vert} on tangents to U. The commutativity of the diagram asserts that A_{vert} has to be such that the curvature 2-form $F_{A_{\mathrm{vert}}}$ vanishes when both its arguments are tangent to Δ^k.

On the other hand, there is in the above no further constraint on A_U. Accordingly, as we pass to the 1-truncation of $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}}$ we find that morphisms are of the form $(A_U)_1 \xrightarrow{g} (A_U)_2$ with $(A_U)^i$ arbitrary. This is the definition of $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}}$.

We see below that it is not a coincidence that this is reminiscent to the first condition on an Ehresmann connection on a G-principal bundle, which asserts that restricted to the fibers a connection 1-form on the total space of the bundle has to be flat. Indeed, the simplicial presheaf $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}}$ may be thought of as the ∞-sheaf of pseudo-connections on *trivial* ∞-bundles. Imposing on this also the second Ehresmann condition will force the pseudo-connection to be a genuine connection.

We now want to lift the above construction $\exp(\mu)$ of characteristic classes by Lie integration of Lie algebra cocycles μ from plain bundles classified by $\mathbf{B}G$ to bundles with (pseudo-)connection classified by $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}}$. By what we just said we therefore need to extend $\exp(\mu)$ from a map on just $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ to a map on $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}}$. This is evidently achieved by completing a square in dgAlg of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})\mu & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) & \xleftarrow{cs} & \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \end{array}$$

and defining $\exp(\mu)_{\mathrm{diff}} : \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} \to \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{diff}}$ to be the operation of forming pasting composites with this.

Here $\mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$ is the Weil algebra of the Lie n-algebra $b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}$. This is the dg-algebra on two generators c and k, respectively, in degree n and $(n+1)$ with the differential given by $d_{\mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})} : c \mapsto k$. The commutativity of this diagram says that the bottom morphism takes the degree-n generator c to an element $\mathrm{cs} \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ whose restriction to the unshifted generators is the given cocycle μ.

As we shall see below, any such choice cs will extend the characteristic cocycle obtained from $\exp(\mu)$ to a characteristic differential cocycle, exhibiting the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism. But only for special nice choices of cs will this take genuine ∞-connections to genuine ∞-connections – instead of to pseudo-connections. As we discuss in the full ∞-Chern-Weil theory, this makes no difference in cohomology. But in practice it is useful to fine-tune the construction such as to produce nice models of the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism given by genuine ∞-connections. This is achieved by imposing the following additional constraint on the choice of extension cs of μ:

Definition 1.3.91. For $\mu \in \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ a cocycle and $\mathrm{cs} \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ a lift of μ through $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$, we say that $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}$ is an invariant polynomial *in transgression* with μ if $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}$ sits entirely in the shifted generators, in that $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})} \in \wedge^\bullet \mathfrak{g}^*[1] \hookrightarrow W(\mathfrak{g})$.

Definition 1.3.92. Write $\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) \subset \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ (or $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{basic}}$) for the sub-dg-algebra on invariant polynomials.

Observation 1.3.93. We have $\mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \simeq \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R})$.

Using this, we can now encode the two conditions on the extension cs of the cocycle μ as the commutativity of this double square diagram

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) & \xleftarrow{\mu} & \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & \text{cocycle} \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\
\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) & \xleftarrow{\mathrm{cs}} & \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & \text{Chern-Simons element} \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\
\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) & \xrightarrow{\langle - \rangle} & \mathrm{inv}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & \text{invariant polynomial}
\end{array} .
$$

Definition 1.3.94. In such a diagram, we call cs the *Chern-Simons element* that exhibits the transgression between μ and $\langle - \rangle$.

We shall see below that under the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism, Chern-Simons elements give rise to the familiar Chern-Simons forms – as well as their generalizations – as local connection data of secondary characteristic classes realized as circle nn-bundles with connection.

Observation 1.3.95. What this diagram encodes is the construction of the connecting homomorphism for the long exact sequence in cohomology that is induced from the short exact sequence

$$
\ker(i^*) \to \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})
$$

subject to the extra constraint of basic elements.

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & & \langle - \rangle & \longleftarrow\!\shortmid & \langle - \rangle \\
 & & {\scriptstyle d_W} \uparrow & & \\
\mu & \longleftarrow\!\shortmid & \mathrm{cs} & & \\
 & & & & \\
\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) & \xleftarrow{i^*} & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g})
\end{array} .
$$

To appreciate the construction so far, recall the following classical fact

Fact 1.3.96. *For G a compact Lie group, the rationalization $BG \otimes k$ of the classifying space BG is the rational space whose Sullivan model is given by the algebra* $\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g})$ *of invariant polynomials on the Lie algebra* $\mathfrak{g}$.

So we have obtained the following picture:

delooped ∞-group	$\mathbf{B}G$	$\mathfrak{g}$	$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$	Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra
	$\downarrow$	$\downarrow$	$\uparrow$	
delooped groupal universal ∞-bundle	$\mathbf{BE}G$	$\mathrm{inn}(\mathfrak{g})$	$\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) = \mathrm{CE}(\mathrm{inn}(\mathfrak{g}))$	Weil algebra
	$\downarrow$	$\downarrow$	$\uparrow$	
rationalized classifying space	$\prod_i \mathbf{B}^{n_i}\mathbb{R}$	$\prod_i b^{n_i-1}\mathbb{R}$	$\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g})$	algebra of invariant polynomials

$$\xleftarrow{\text{Lie integration}}$$

Example 1.3.97. For $\mathfrak{g}$ a semisimple Lie algebra, $\langle -, - \rangle$ the Killing form invariant polynomial, there is a Chern-Simons element $\mathrm{cs} \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ witnessing the transgression to the cocycle $\mu = -\frac{1}{6}\langle -, [-,-]\rangle$. Under a $\mathfrak{g}$-valued form $\Omega^\bullet(X) \leftarrow W(\mathfrak{g}) : A$ this maps to the ordinary degree 3 Chern-Simons form

$$\mathrm{cs}(A) = \langle A \wedge dA \rangle + \frac{1}{3}\langle A \wedge [A \wedge A] \rangle \,.$$

1.3.5.6 ∞-Connections from Lie integration For $\mathfrak{g}$ an L_∞-algebroid we have seen above the object $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}}$ that represents pseudo-connections on $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$-principal ∞-bundles and serves to support the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism. We now discuss the genuine ∞-connections among these pseudo-connections. A derivation from first principles of the following construction is given below in 3.3.12.

The construction is due to [SSS09c] and [FSS10].

Definition 1.3.98. Let X be a smooth manifold and $\mathfrak{g}$ an L_∞-algebra algebra or more generally an L_∞-algebroid.

An *L_∞-algebroid valued differential form* on X is a morphism of dg-algebras

$$\Omega^\bullet(X) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) : A$$

from the Weil algebra of $\mathfrak{g}$ to the de Rham complex of X. Dually this is a morphism of L_∞-algebroids

$$A : TX \to \mathrm{inn}(\mathfrak{g})$$

from the tangent Lie algebroid to the Weil algebra—inner automorphism ∞-Lie algebra.

Its *curvature* is the composite of morphisms of graded vector spaces

$$\Omega^\bullet(X) \xleftarrow{A} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \xleftarrow{F_{(-)}} \mathfrak{g}^*[1] : F_A \,.$$

Precisely if the curvatures vanish does the morphism factor through the Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra

$$(F_A = 0) \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad \left(\begin{array}{ccc} & & \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \\ & \swarrow^{\exists A_{\mathrm{flat}}} & \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet(X) & \xleftarrow{A} & W(\mathfrak{g}) \end{array} \right)$$

in which case we call A *flat*.

Remark 1.3.99. For $\{x^a\}$ a coordinate chart of an L_∞-algebroid $\mathfrak{a}$ and

$$A^a := A(x^a) \in \Omega^{\deg(x^a)}(X)$$

the differential form assigned to the generator x^a by the $\mathfrak{a}$-valued form A, we have the curvature components

$$F_A^a = A(\mathbf{d}x^a) \in \Omega^{\deg(x^a)+1}(X)\,.$$

Since $d_{\mathrm{W}} = d_{\mathrm{CE}} + \mathbf{d}$, this can be equivalently written as

$$F_A^a = A(d_{\mathrm{W}} x^a - d_{\mathrm{CE}} x^a)\,,$$

so the *curvature* of A precisely measures the "lack of flatness" of A. Also notice that, since A is required to be a dg-algebra homomorphism, we have

$$A(d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a})} x^a) = d_{\mathrm{dR}} A^a\,,$$

so that

$$A(d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a})} x^a) = d_{\mathrm{dR}} A^a - F_A^a\,.$$

Assume now A is a degree 1 $\mathfrak{a}$-valued differential form on the smooth manifold X, and that cs is a Chern-Simons element transgressing an invariant polynomial $\langle - \rangle$ of $\mathfrak{a}$ to some cocycle μ, by def. 1.3.91. We can then consider the image $A(\mathrm{cs})$ of the Chern-Simons element cs in $\Omega^\bullet(X)$. Equivalently, we can look at cs as a map from degree 1 $\mathfrak{a}$-valued differential forms on X to ordinary (real valued) differential forms on X.

Definition 1.3.100. In the notations above, we write

$$\Omega^\bullet(X) \xleftarrow{A} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a}) \xleftarrow{\mathrm{cs}} \mathrm{W}(b^{n+1}\mathbb{R}) \ : \mathrm{cs}(A)$$

for the differential form associated by the Chern-Simons element cs to the degree 1 $\mathfrak{a}$-valued differential form A, and call this the *Chern-Simons differential form* associated with A.

Similarly, for $\langle - \rangle$ an invariant polynomial on $\mathfrak{a}$, we write $\langle F_A \rangle$ for the evaluation

$$\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{closed}}(X) \xleftarrow{A} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a}) \xleftarrow{\langle - \rangle} \mathrm{inv}(b^{n+1}\mathbb{R}) \ : \langle F_A \rangle\,.$$

We call this the *curvature characteristic forms* of A.

Definition 1.3.101. For U a smooth manifold, the ∞*-groupoid of* $\mathfrak{g}$*-valued forms* is the Kan complex

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}}(U) : [k] \mapsto \left\{ \Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) \overset{A}{\leftarrow} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \ \mid \ \forall v \in \Gamma(T\Delta^k) : \iota_v F_A = 0 \right\}$$

whose k-morphisms are $\mathfrak{g}$-valued forms A on $U \times \Delta^k$ with sitting instants, and with the property that their curvature vanishes on vertical vectors.

The canonical morphism

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \exp(\mathfrak{g})$$

to the untruncated Lie integration of $\mathfrak{g}$ is given by restriction of A to vertical differential forms (see below).

Here we are thinking of $U \times \Delta^k \to U$ as a trivial bundle.

The *first* Ehresmann condition can be identified with the conditions on lifts ∇ in ∞-anafunctors

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}} \\ & \overset{\nabla}{\nearrow} & \downarrow \\ C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

that define connections on ∞-bundles.

1.3.5.6.1 Curvature characteristics

Proposition 1.3.102. *For $A \in \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}}(U,[k])$ a $\mathfrak{g}$-valued form on $U \times \Delta^k$ and for $\langle - \rangle \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ any invariant polynomial, the corresponding curvature characteristic form $\langle F_A \rangle \in \Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k)$ descends down to U.*

To see this, it is sufficient to show that for all $v \in \Gamma(T\Delta^k)$ we have

1. $\iota_v \langle F_A \rangle = 0$;
2. $\mathcal{L}_v \langle F_A \rangle = 0$.

The first condition is evidently satisfied if already $\iota_v F_A = 0$. The second condition follows with Cartan calculus and using that $d_{\mathrm{dR}} \langle F_A \rangle = 0$:

$$\mathcal{L}_v \langle F_A \rangle = d\iota_v \langle F_A \rangle + \iota_v d \langle F_A \rangle = 0\,.$$

Notice that for a general ∞-Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ the curvature forms F_A themselves are not generally closed (rather they satisfy the more Bianchi identity), hence requiring them to have no component along the simplex does not imply that they descend. This is different for abelian ∞-Lie algebras: for them the curvature forms themselves are already closed, and hence are themselves already curvature characteristics that do descent.

It is useful to organize the $\mathfrak{g}$-valued form A, together with its restriction A_{vert} to vertical differential forms and with its curvature characteristic forms in the commuting diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k)_{\mathrm{vert}} & \stackrel{A_{\mathrm{vert}}}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) & & \text{gauge transformation} \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\
\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) & \stackrel{A}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) & & \mathfrak{g}\text{-valued form} \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\
\Omega^\bullet(U) & \stackrel{\langle F_A \rangle}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) & & \text{curvature characteristic forms}
\end{array}$$

in dgAlg. The commutativity of this diagram is implied by $\iota_v F_A = 0$.

Definition 1.3.103. Write $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{CW}}(U)$ for the ∞-groupoid of $\mathfrak{g}$-valued forms fitting into such diagrams.

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{CW}(U) : [k] \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc}
\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k)_{\mathrm{vert}} & \stackrel{A_{\mathrm{vert}}}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) & \stackrel{A}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\Omega^\bullet(U) & \stackrel{\langle F_A \rangle}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g})
\end{array} \right\}\,.$$

We call this the coefficient for $\mathfrak{g}$-valued ∞-*connections*

1.3.5.6.2 1-Morphisms: integration of infinitesimal gauge transformations

The 1-morphisms in $\exp(\mathfrak{g})(U)$ may be thought of as *gauge transformations* between $\mathfrak{g}$-valued forms. We unwind what these look like concretely.

Definition 1.3.104. Given a 1-morphism in $\exp(\mathfrak{g})(X)$, represented by $\mathfrak{g}$-valued forms

$$\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^1) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) : A$$

consider the unique decomposition

$$A = A_U + (A_{\mathrm{vert}} := \lambda \wedge dt) \quad ,$$

with A_U the horizonal differential form component and $t : \Delta^1 = [0,1] \to \mathbb{R}$ the canonical coordinate.

We call λ the *gauge parameter*. This is a function on Δ^1 with values in 0-forms on U for $\mathfrak{g}$ an ordinary Lie algebra, plus 1-forms on U for $\mathfrak{g}$ a Lie 2-algebra, plus 2-forms for a Lie 3-algebra, and so forth.

We describe now how this encodes a gauge transformation

$$A_0(s=0) \stackrel{\lambda}{\to} A_U(s=1)\,.$$

Observation 1.3.105. By the nature of the Weil algebra we have

$$\frac{d}{ds} A_U = d_U \lambda + [\lambda \wedge A] + [\lambda \wedge A \wedge A] + \cdots + \iota_s F_A\,,$$

where the sum is over all higher brackets of the ∞-Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$.

In the Cartan calculus for the case that $\mathfrak{g}$ an ordinary one writes the corresponding *second Ehremsnn condition* $\iota_{\partial_s} F_A = 0$ equivalently

$$\mathcal{L}_{\partial_s} A = \mathrm{ad}_\lambda A\,.$$

Definition 1.3.106. Define the *covariant derivative of the gauge parameter* to be

$$\nabla \lambda := d\lambda + [A \wedge \lambda] + [A \wedge A \wedge \lambda] + \cdots\,.$$

Remark 1.3.107. In this notation we have

- the general identity
$$\frac{d}{ds} A_U = \nabla \lambda + (F_A)_s$$
- the *horizontality* constraint or *second Ehresmann condition* $\iota_{\partial_s} F_A = 0$, the differential equation
$$\frac{d}{ds} A_U = \nabla \lambda\,.$$

This is known as the equation for *infinitesimal gauge transformations* of an ∞-Lie algebra valued form.

Observation 1.3.108. By Lie integration we have that A_{vert} – and hence λ – defines an element $\exp(\lambda)$ in the ∞-Lie group that integrates $\mathfrak{g}$.

The unique solution $A_U(s=1)$ of the above differential equation at $s=1$ for the initial values $A_U(s=0)$ we may think of as the result of acting on $A_U(0)$ with the gauge transformation $\exp(\lambda)$.

1.3.5.7 Examples of ∞-connections We discuss some examples of ∞-groupoids of ∞-connections obtained by Lie integration, as discussed in 1.3.5.6 above.

- 1.3.5.7.1 – Connections on ordinary principal bundles
- 1.3.5.7.2

1.3.5.7.1 Connections on ordinary principal bundles Let $\mathfrak{g}$ be an ordinary Lie algebra and write G for the simply connected Lie group integrating it. Write $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$ the groupoid of Lie algebra-valued forms from prop. 1.3.36.

Proposition 1.3.109. *The 1-truncation of the object* $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}}$ *from def. 1.3.101 is equivalent to the coefficient object for G-principal connections from prop. 1.3.36. We have an equivalence*

$$\tau_1 \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}} = \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

Proof. To see this, first note that the sheaves of objects on both sides are manifestly isomorphic, both are the sheaf of $\Omega^1(-,\mathfrak{g})$. For morphisms, observe that for a form $\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^1) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) : A$ which we may decompose into a horizontal and a verical piece as $A = A_U + \lambda \wedge dt$ the condition $\iota_{\partial_t} F_A = 0$ is equivalent to the differential equation

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t} A = d_U \lambda + [\lambda, A] .$$

For any initial value $A(0)$ this has the unique solution

$$A(t) = g(t)^{-1}(A + d_U) g(t) ,$$

where $g : [0,1] \to G$ is the parallel transport of λ:

$$\begin{aligned} &\frac{\partial}{\partial t}\left(g_(t)^{-1}(A + d_U) g(t)\right) \\ =& g(t)^{-1}(A + d_U)\lambda g(t) - g(t)^{-1}\lambda(A + d_U) g(t) \end{aligned}$$

(where for ease of notation we write actions as if G were a matrix Lie group).

In particular this implies that the endpoints of the path of $\mathfrak{g}$-valued 1-forms are related by the usual cocycle condition in $\mathbf{B}G_{conn}$

$$A(1) = g(1)^{-1}(A + d_U) g(1) .$$

In the same fashion one sees that given 2-cell in $\exp(\mathfrak{g})(U)$ and any 1-form on U at one vertex, there is a unique lift to a 2-cell in $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{conn}$, obtained by parallel transporting the form around. The claim then follows from the previous statement of Lie integration that $\tau_1 \exp(\mathfrak{g}) = \mathbf{B}G$. □

1.3.5.7.2 $\mathfrak{string}$-2-connections We discuss the $\mathfrak{string}$ Lie 2-algebra and local differential form data for $\mathfrak{string}$-2-connections. A detailed discussion of the corresponding String-principal 2-bundles is below in 4.1.3, more discussion of the 2-connections and their twisted generalization is in 4.4.4.

Let $\mathfrak{g}$ be a semisimple Lie algebra. Write $\langle -,- \rangle : \mathfrak{g}^{\otimes 2} \to \mathbb{R}$ for its Killing form and

$$\mu = \langle -, [-,-] \rangle : \mathfrak{g}^{\otimes 3} \to \mathbb{R}$$

for the canonical 3-cocycle.

We discuss two very different looking, but nevertheless equivalent Lie 2-algebras.

Definition 1.3.110 (skeletal version of $\mathfrak{string}$)**.** Write $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$ for the Lie 2-algebra whose underlying graded vector space is

$$\mathfrak{g}_\mu = \mathfrak{g} \oplus \mathbb{R}[-1] ,$$

and whose nonvanishing brackets are defined as follows.

- The binary bracket is that of $\mathfrak{g}$ when both arguments are from $\mathfrak{g}$ and 0 otherwise.
- The trinary bracket is the 3-cocycle

$$[-,-,-]_{\mathfrak{g}_\mu} := \langle -, [-,-]\rangle : \mathfrak{g}^{\otimes 3} \to \mathbb{R}\,.$$

Definition 1.3.111 (strict version of $\mathfrak{string}$)**.** Write $(\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{g} \to P_*\mathfrak{g})$ for the Lie 2-algebra coming from the differential crossed module, def. 1.3.6, whose underlying vector space is

$$(\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{g} \to P\mathfrak{g}) = P_*\mathfrak{g} \oplus (\Omega\mathfrak{g} \oplus \mathbb{R})[-1]\,,$$

where $P_*\mathfrak{g}$ is the vector space of smooth maps $\gamma : [0,1] \to \mathfrak{g}$ such that $\gamma(0) = 0$, and where $\Omega\mathfrak{g}$ is the subspace for which also $\gamma(1) = 0$, and whose non-vanishing brackets are defined as follows

- $[-]_1 = \partial := \Omega\mathfrak{g} \oplus \mathbb{R} \to \Omega\mathfrak{g} \hookrightarrow P_*\mathfrak{g}$;
- $[-,-] : P_*\mathfrak{g} \otimes P_*\mathfrak{g} \to P_*\mathfrak{g}$ is given by the pointwise Lie bracket on $\mathfrak{g}$ as

$$[\gamma_1, \gamma_2] = (\sigma \mapsto [\gamma_1(\sigma), \gamma_2(\sigma)])\,;$$

- $[-,-] : P_*\mathfrak{g} \otimes (\Omega\mathfrak{g} \oplus \mathbb{R}) \to \Omega\mathfrak{g} \oplus \mathbb{R}$ is given by pairs

$$[\gamma, (\ell, c)] := \left([\gamma, \ell],\ 2\int_0^1 \langle \gamma(\sigma), \frac{d\ell}{d\sigma}(\sigma)\rangle d\sigma\right)\,, \tag{1.1}$$

  where the first term is again pointwise the Lie bracket in $\mathfrak{g}$.

Proposition 1.3.112. *The linear map*

$$P_*\mathfrak{g} \oplus (\Omega\mathfrak{g} \oplus \mathbb{R})[-1] \to \mathfrak{g} \oplus \mathbb{R}[-1]\,,$$

which in degree 0 is evaluation at the endpoint

$$\gamma \mapsto \gamma(1)$$

and which in degree 1 is projection onto the $\mathbb{R}$-summand, induces a weak equivalence of L_∞ algebras

$$\mathfrak{string} \simeq (\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{g} \to P_*\mathfrak{g}) \simeq \mathfrak{g}_\mu$$

Proof. This is theorem 30 in [BCSS07]. □

Definition 1.3.113. We write $\mathfrak{string}$ for the *string Lie 2-algebra* if we do not mean to specify a specific presentation such as so_μ or $(\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{so} \to P_*\mathfrak{so})$.

In more technical language we would say that $\mathfrak{string}$ is defined to be the homotopy fiber of the morphism of L_∞-algebras $\mu_3 : \mathfrak{so} \to b^2\mathbb{R}$, well defined up to weak equivalence.

Remark 1.3.114. Proposition 1.3.112 says that the two Lie 2-algebras $(\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{g} \to P_*\mathfrak{g})$ and $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$, which look quite different, are actually equivalent. Therefore also the local data for a String-2 connection can take two very different looking but nevertheless equivalent forms.

Let U be a smooth manifold. The data of $(\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{g} \to P_*\mathfrak{g})$-valued forms on X is a triple

1. $A \in \Omega^1(U, P\mathfrak{g})$;
2. $B \in \Omega^2(U, \Omega\mathfrak{g})$;
3. $\hat{B} \in \Omega^2(U, \mathbb{R})$.

consisting of a 1-form with values in the path Lie algebra of $\mathfrak{g}$, a 2-form with values in the loop Lie algebra of $\mathfrak{g}$, and an ordinary real-valued 2-form that contains the central part of $\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{g} = \Omega\mathfrak{g} \oplus \mathbb{R}$. The curvature data of this is

1. $F = dA + \frac{1}{2}[A \wedge A] + B \in \Omega^2(U, P\mathfrak{g})$;
2. $H = d(B + \hat{B}) + [A \wedge (B + \hat{B})] \in \Omega^3(U, \Omega\mathfrak{g} \oplus \mathbb{R})$, ,

where in the last term we have the bracket from (1.1). Notice that if we choose a basis $\{t_a\}$ of $\mathfrak{g}$ such that we have structure constant $[t_b, t_c] = f^a{}_{bc} t_a$, then for instance the first equation is

$$F^a(\sigma) = dA^a(\sigma) + \frac{1}{2} f^a{}_{bc} A^b(\sigma) \wedge A^c(\sigma) + B^a(\sigma)\,.$$

On the other hand, the data of forms in the equation Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$ on U is a tuple

1. $A \in \Omega^1(U, \mathfrak{g})$;
2. $\hat{B} \in \Omega^2(U, \mathbb{R})$,

consisting of a $\mathfrak{g}$-valued form and a real-valued 2-form. The curvature data of this is

1. $F = dA + [A \wedge A] \in \Omega^2(\mathfrak{g})$;
2. $H = d\hat{B} + \langle A \wedge [A \wedge A]\rangle \in \Omega^3(U)$.

While these two sets of data look very different, proposition 1.3.112 implies that under their respective higher gauge transformations they are in fact equivalent.

Notice that in the first case the 2-form is valued in a nonabelian Lie algebra, whereas in the second case the 2-form is abelian, but, to compensate this, a trilinear term appears in the formula for the curvatures. By the discussion in section 1.3.5.6 this means that a $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$-2-connection looks simpler on a single patch than an $(\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{g} \to P_*\mathfrak{g})$-2-connection, it has relatively more complicated behavious on double intersections.

Moreover, notice that in the second case we see that one part of Chern-Simons term for A occurs, namely $\langle A \wedge [A \wedge A]\rangle$. The rest of the Chern-Simons term appears in this local formula after passing to yet another equivalent version of $\mathfrak{string}$, one which is well-adapted to the discussion of twisted String 2-connections. This we discuss in the next section.

The equivalence of the skeletal and the strict presentation for $\mathfrak{string}$ corresponds under Lie integration to two different but equivalent models of the smooth String-2-group.

Proposition 1.3.115. *The degeewise Lie integration of* $\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{so} \to P_*\mathfrak{so}$ *yields the strict Lie 2-group* $(\hat{\Omega}\mathrm{Spin} \to P_*\mathrm{Spin})$*, where* $\hat{\Omega}\mathrm{Spin}$ *is the level-1 Kac-Moody central extension of the smooth loop group of* Spin*.*

Proof. The nontrivial part to check is that the action of $P_*\mathfrak{so}$ on $\hat{\Omega}\mathfrak{so}$ lifts to a compatible action of $P_*\mathrm{Spin}$ on $\hat{\Omega}\mathrm{Spin}$. This is shown in [BCSS07]. □

Below in 4.1.3 we show that there is an equivalence of smooth n-stacks

$$\mathbf{B}(\hat{\Omega}\mathrm{Spin} \to P_*\mathrm{Spin}) \simeq \tau_2 \exp(\mathfrak{g}_\mu)\,.$$

1.3.6 The ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism in low degree

We now come to the discussion the Chern-Weil homomorphism and its generalization to the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism.

We have seen in 1.3.1 G-principal ∞-bundles for general smooth ∞-groups G and in particular for abelian groups G. Naturally, the abelian case is easier and more powerful statements are known about this case. A general strategy for studying nonabelian ∞-bundles therefore is to *approximate* them by abelian bundles. This is achieved by considering characteristic classes. Roughly, a characteristic class is a map that functorially sends G-principal ∞-bundles to $\mathbf{B}^n K$-principal ∞-bundles, for some n and some abelian group K. In some cases such an assignment may be obtained by integration of infinitesimal data. If so, then the assignment refines to one of ∞-bundles with connection. For G an ordinary Lie group this is then what is called the *Chern-Weil homomorphism*. For general G we call it the ∞-*Chern-Weil homomorphism*.

The material of this section is due to [SSS09a] and [FSS10].

1.3.6.1 Motivating examples A simple motivating example for characteristic classes and the Chern-Weil homomorphism is the construction of determinant line bundles from example 1.3.64. This construction directly extends to the case where the bundles carry connections. We give an exposition of this *differential refinement* of the *universal first Chern class*, example 1.3.64. A more formal discussion of this situation is below in 4.4.2.

We may canonically identify the Lie algebra $\mathfrak{u}(n)$ with the matrix Lie algebra of skew-hermitian matrices on which we have the trace operation

$$\mathrm{tr} : \mathfrak{u}(n) \to \mathfrak{u}(1) = i\mathbb{R}\,.$$

This is the differential version of the determinant in that when regarding the Lie algebra as the infinitesimal neighbourhood of the neutral element in $U(N)$ the determinant becomes the trace under the exponential map

$$\det(1 + \epsilon A) = 1 + \epsilon \mathrm{tr}(A)$$

for $\epsilon^2 = 0$. It follows that for $\mathrm{tra}_\nabla : \mathbf{P}_1(U_i) \to \mathbf{B}U(N)$ the parallel transport of a connection on P locally given by a 1-forms $A \in \Omega^1(U_i, \mathfrak{u}(N))$ by

$$\mathrm{tra}_\nabla(\gamma) = \mathcal{P}\exp \int_{[0,1]} \gamma^* A$$

the determinant parallel transport

$$\det(\mathrm{tra}_\nabla =: \mathbf{P}_1(U_i) \stackrel{\mathrm{tra}_\nabla}{\to} \mathbf{B}U(N) \stackrel{\det}{\to} \mathbf{B}U(1)$$

is locally given by the formula

$$\det(\mathrm{tra}_\nabla(\gamma)) = \mathcal{P}\exp \int_{[0,1]} \gamma^* \mathrm{tr} A\,,$$

which means that the local connection forms on the determinant line bundle are obtained from those of the unitary bundle by tracing.

$$(\det, \mathrm{tr}) : \{(g_{ij}), (A_i)\} \mapsto \{(\det g_{ij}), (\mathrm{tr} A_i)\}\,.$$

This construction extends to a functor

$$(\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1) := (\det, \mathrm{tr}) : U(N)\mathrm{Bund}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X) \to U(1)\mathrm{Bund}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X)$$

natural in X, that sends $U(n)$-principal bundles with connection to circle bundles with connection, hence to cocycles in degree-2 ordinary differential cohomology.

This assignment remembers of a unitary bundle one inegral class and its differential refinement:

- the integral class of the determinant bundle is the first Chern class the $U(N)$-bundle

$$[\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1(P)] = c_1(P)\,;$$

- the curvature 2-form of its connection is a representative in de Rham cohomology of this class

$$[F_{\nabla_{\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1(P)}}] = c_1(P)_{\mathrm{dR}}\,.$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & H^2_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) & \\ \swarrow & & \searrow \\ H^2(X,\mathbb{Z}) & & \Omega^2_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ccc} & \hat{\mathbf{c}}_1(P) & \\ \swarrow & & \searrow \\ c_1(P) & & \mathrm{tr}(F_\nabla) \end{array}$$

Equivalently this assignment is given by postcomposition of cocycles with a morphism of smooth ∞-groupoids

$$\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1 : \mathbf{B}U(N)_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \,.$$

We say that $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1$ is a *differential characteristic class*, the differential refinement of the first Chern class.

In [BrMc96b] an algorithm is given for contructing differential characteristic classes on Čech cocycles in this fashion for more general Lie algebra cocycles.

For instance these authors give the following construction for the diffrential refinement of the first Pontryagin class [BrMc93].

Let $N \in \mathbb{N}$, write $\mathrm{Spin}(N)$ for the Spin group and consider the canonical Lie algebra cohomology 3-cocycle

$$\mu = \langle -, [-,-] \rangle : \mathfrak{so}(n) \to \mathbf{b}^2\mathbb{R}$$

on semisimple Lie algebras, where $\langle -,- \rangle$ is the Killing form invariant polynomial. Let $(P \to X, \nabla)$ be a $\mathrm{Spin}(N)$-principal bundle with connection. Let $A \in \Omega^1(P, \mathfrak{so}(N))$ be the Ehresmann connection 1-form on the total space of the bundle.

Then construct a Čech cocycle for Deligne cohomology in degree 4 as follows:

1. pick an open cover $\{U_i \to X\}$ such that there is a choice of local sections $\sigma_i : U_i \to P$. Write

   $$(g_{ij}, A_i) := (\sigma_i^{-1}\sigma_j, \sigma_i^* A)$$

   for the induced Čech cocycle.

2. Choose a lift of this cocycle to an assignment

   - of based paths in $\mathrm{Spin}(N)$ to double intersections

     $$\hat{g}_{ij} : U_{ij} \times \Delta^1 \to Spin(N)\,,$$

     with $\hat{g}_{ij}(0) = e$ and $\hat{g}_{ij}(1) = g_{ij}$;
   - of based 2-simplices between these paths to triple intersections

     $$\hat{g}_{ijk} : U_{ijk} \times \Delta^2 \to \mathrm{Spin}(N)\,;$$

     restricting to these paths in the obvious way;
   - similarly of based 3-simplices between these paths to quadruple intersections

     $$\hat{g}_{ijkl} : U_{ijkl} \times \Delta^3 \to \mathrm{Spin}(N)\,.$$

   Such lifts always exists, because the Spin group is connected (because already $SO(N)$ is), simply connected (because $Spin(N)$ is the universal cover of $SO(N)$) and also has $\pi_2(Spin(N)) = 0$ (because this is the case for every compact Lie group).

3. Define from this a Deligne-cochain by setting

   $$\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1(P) := (g_{ijkl}, A_{ijk}, B_{ij}, C_i) := \begin{pmatrix} \int_{\Delta^3} (\sigma_i \cdot \hat{g}_{ijkl})^* \mu(A) mod \mathbb{Z}, \\ \int_{\Delta^2} (\sigma_i \cdot \hat{g}_{ijk})^* \mathrm{cs}(A), \\ \int_{\Delta^1} (\sigma_i \cdot \hat{g}_{ij})^* \mathrm{cs}(A), \\ \sigma_i^* \mu(A) \end{pmatrix}\,,$$

   where $\mathrm{cs}(A) = \langle A \wedge F_A \rangle + c \langle A \wedge [A \wedge A] \rangle$ is the Chern-Simons form of the connection form A with respect to the cocyle $\mu(A) = \langle A \wedge [A \wedge A] \rangle$.

They then prove:

1. This is indeed a Deligne cohomology cocycle;
2. it represents the differential refinement of the first fractional Pontryagin class of P.

$$
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) & & & & \tfrac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1(P) & \\
 \swarrow & & \searrow & & \swarrow & & \searrow \\
H^4(X,\mathbb{Z}) & & \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) & & \tfrac{1}{2}p_1(P) & & d\mathrm{cs}(A)
\end{array}
\,.
$$

In the form in which we have (re)stated this result here the second statement amounts, in view of the first statement, to the observation that the curvature 4-form of the Deligne cocycle is proportional to

$$
d\mathrm{cs}(A) \propto \langle F_A \wedge F_A \rangle \in \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)
$$

which represents the first Pontryagin class in de Rham cohomology. Therefore the key observation is that we have a Deligne cocycle at all. This can be checked directly, if somewhat tediously, by hand.

But then the question remains: where does this successful *Ansatz* come from? And is it *natural*? For instance: does this construction extend to a morphism of smooth ∞-groupoids

$$
\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}(N)_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}
$$

from Spin-principal bundles with connection to circle 3-bundles with connection?

In the following we give a natural presentation of the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism by means of Lie integration of L_∞-algebraic data to simplicial presheaves. Among other things, this construction yields an understanding of why this construction is what it is and does what it does.

The construction proceeds in the following broad steps

1. The infinitesimal analog of a characteristic class $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ is an L_∞-algebra cocycle
$$
\mu : \mathfrak{g} \to b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}\,.
$$
2. There is a formal procedure of universal Lie integration which sends this to a morphism of smooth ∞-groupoids
$$
\exp(\mu) : \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \to \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \simeq \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}
$$
presented by a morphism of simplicial presheaves on CartSp.
3. By finding a Chern-Simons element cs that witnesses the transgression of μ to an invariant polynomial on $\mathfrak{g}$ this construction has a differential refinement to a morphism
$$
\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs}) : \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{conn}}
$$
that sends L_∞-algebra valued connections to line n-bundles with connection.
4. The n-truncation $\mathbf{cosk}_{n+1}\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ of the object on the left produces the smooth ∞-groups on interest – $\mathbf{cosk}_{n+1}\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \simeq \mathbf{B}G$ – and the corresponding truncation of $\exp((\mu, cs))$ carves out the lattice Γ of periods in G of the cocycle μ inside $\mathbb{R}$. The result is the differential characteristic class
$$
\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs}) : \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}/\Gamma_{\mathrm{conn}}\,.
$$
Typically we have $\Gamma \simeq \mathbb{Z}$ such that this then reads
$$
\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs}) : \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}\,.
$$

1.3.6.2 The ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism In the full ∞-Chern-Weil theory the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism is conceptually very simple: for every n there is canonically a morphism of smooth ∞-groupoids $\mathbf{B}^n U(1) \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)$ where the object on the right classifies ordinary de Rham cohomology in degree $n+1$. For G any ∞-group and any characteristic class $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1)$, the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism is the operation that takes a G-principal ∞-bundle $X \to \mathbf{B}G$ to the composite $X \to \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)$.

All the construction that we consider here in this introduction serve to *mode* this abstract operation. The ∞-connections that we considered yield resolutions of $\mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ and $\mathbf{B}G$ in terms of which the abstract morphisms are modeled as ∞-anafunctors.

1.3.6.2.1 ∞-Chern-Simons functionals If we express G by Lie integration of an ∞-Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$, then the basic ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism is modeled by composing an ∞-connection $(A_{\mathrm{vert}}, A, \langle F_A \rangle)$ with the transgression of an invariant polynomial $(\mu, \mathrm{cs}, \langle - \rangle)$ as follows

$$
\left(
\begin{array}{ccc}
\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k)_{\mathrm{vert}} \xleftarrow{A_{\mathrm{vert}}} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) & & \text{Čech cocycle} \\
\uparrow \qquad\qquad \uparrow & & \\
\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) \xleftarrow{A} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) & & \text{connection} \\
\uparrow \qquad\qquad \uparrow & & \\
\Omega^\bullet(U) \xleftarrow{\langle F_A \rangle} \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) & & \begin{array}{c}\text{curvature}\\ \text{characteristic forms}\end{array}
\end{array}
\right)
\circ
\left(
\begin{array}{ccc}
\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \xleftarrow{\mu} \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & \text{cocycle} \\
\uparrow \qquad\qquad \uparrow & & \\
\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \xleftarrow{\mathrm{cs}} \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & \begin{array}{c}\text{Chern-Simons}\\ \text{element}\end{array} \\
\uparrow \qquad\qquad \uparrow & & \\
\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) \xleftarrow{\langle - \rangle} \mathrm{inv}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & \begin{array}{c}\text{invariant}\\ \text{polynomial}\end{array}
\end{array}
\right)
$$

$$
= \left(
\begin{array}{ccccc}
\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k)_{\mathrm{vert}} \xleftarrow{A_{\mathrm{vert}}} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \xleftarrow{\mu} \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & : \mu(A_{\mathrm{vert}}) & & \text{characteristic class} \\
\uparrow \qquad\qquad \uparrow \qquad\qquad \uparrow & & & & \\
\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) \xleftarrow{A} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \xleftarrow{\mathrm{cs}} \mathrm{W}(b^n - 1\mathbb{R}) & & : \mathrm{cs}_\mu(A) & & \text{Chern-Simons form} \\
\uparrow \qquad\qquad \uparrow \qquad\qquad \uparrow & & & & \\
\Omega^\bullet(U) \xleftarrow{\langle F_A \rangle} \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) \xleftarrow{\langle - \rangle} \mathrm{inv}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & : \langle F_A \rangle_\mu & & \begin{array}{c}\text{curvature}\\ \text{characteristic forms}\end{array}
\end{array}
\right) .
$$

This evidently yields a morphism of simplicial presheaves

$$\exp(\mu)_{\mathrm{conn}} : \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

and, upon restriction to the top two horizontal layers, a morphism

$$\exp(\mu)_{\mathrm{diff}} : \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} \to \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{diff}} .$$

Projection onto the third horizontal component gives the map to the curvature classes

$$\exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{diff}} \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \exp(b^n\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{simp}} ,$$

In total, this constitutes an ∞-anafunctor

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu)_{\mathrm{diff}}} & \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} b^n \mathbb{R} \\
\downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\
\exp(\mathfrak{g}) & & & &
\end{array}
$$

Postcomposition with this is the simple ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism: it sends a cocycle

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C(U) & \longrightarrow & \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

for an $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$-principal bundle to the curvature form represented by

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} C(V) & \xrightarrow{(g,\nabla)} & \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu)_{\mathrm{diff}}} & \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} b^n \mathbb{R} \;. \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & \downarrow^{\simeq} & & & & \\ C(U) & \xrightarrow{g} & \exp(\mathfrak{g}) & & & & \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & & & & & \\ X & & & & & & \end{array}$$

Proposition 1.3.116. *For $\mathfrak{g}$ an ordinary Lie algebra with simply connected Lie group G, the image under $\tau_1(-)$ of this diagram constitutes the ordinary Chern-Weil homomorphism in that:*

for g the cocycle for a G-principal bundle, any ordinary connection on a bundle constitutes a lift (g, ∇) to the tip of the anafunctor and the morphism represented by that is the Čech-hypercohomology cocycle on X with values in the truncated de Rham complex given by the globally defined curvature characteristic form $\langle F_\nabla \wedge \cdots \wedge F_\nabla \rangle$.

But evidently we have more information available here. The ordinary Chern-Weil homomorphism refines from a map that assigns curvature characteristic forms, to a map that assigns secondary characteristic classes in the sense that it assigns circle n-bundles with connection whose curvature is this cuvature characteristic form. The local connection forms of these circle bundles are given by the middle horizontal morphisms. These are the Chern-Simons forms

$$\Omega^\bullet(U) \stackrel{A}{\leftarrow} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \stackrel{cs}{\leftarrow} \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) : \mathrm{cs}(A)\,.$$

1.3.6.2.2 Secondary characteristic classes So far we discussed the untruncated coefficient object $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}}$ of $\mathfrak{g}$-valued ∞-connections. The real object of interest is the k-truncated version $\tau_k \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}}$ where $k \in \mathbb{N}$ is such that $\tau_k \exp)\mathfrak{g} \simeq \mathbf{B}G$ is the delooping of the ∞-Lie group in question.

Under such a truncation, the integrated ∞-Lie algebra cocycle $exp(\mu) : exp(\mathfrak{g}) \to exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$ will no longer be a simplicial map. Instead, the periods of μ will cut out a lattice Γ in $\mathbb{R}$, and $\exp(\mu)$ does descent to the quotient of $\mathbb{R}$ by that lattice

$$\exp(\mu) : \tau_k \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \to \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}/\Gamma\,.$$

We now say this again in more detail.

Suppose $\mathfrak{g}$ is such that the $(n+1)$-coskeleton $\mathbf{cosk}_{n+1}\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to}\simeq \mathbf{B}G$ for the desired G. Then the periods of μ over $(n+1)$-balls cut out a lattice $\Gamma \subset \mathbb{R}$ and thus we get an ∞-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{cosk}_{n+1}\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}/\Gamma_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}/\Gamma \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}G & & & & \end{array}$$

This is *curvature characteristic class*. We may always restrict to genuine ∞-connections and refine

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
\mathbf{cosk}_{n+1}\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}/\Gamma_{\mathrm{conn}} & & \\
\big\downarrow & & \big\downarrow & & \\
\mathbf{cosk}_{n+1}\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}/\Gamma_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}/\Gamma \\
\big\downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\
\mathbf{B}G & & & &
\end{array}
$$

which models the refined ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism with values in ordinary differential cohomology

$$
H_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, G) \to \mathbf{H}^{n+1}_{conn}(X, \mathbb{R}/\Gamma)\,.
$$

Example 1.3.117. Applying this to the discussion of the Chern-Simons circle 3-bundle above, we find a differential refinement

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & & \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}}\exp(\mu)_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{diff}}\;. \\
 & & \big\downarrow & & \big\downarrow{\textstyle\int_{\Delta^\bullet}} \\
C(V) & \xrightarrow{(\hat{g},\hat{\nabla})} & \mathbf{cosk}_3\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^3U(1)_{\mathrm{diff}} \\
\big\downarrow{\simeq} & & \big\downarrow & & \\
C(U) & \xrightarrow{(g,\nabla)} & \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{diff}} & & \\
\big\downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\
X & & & &
\end{array}
$$

Chasing components through this composite one finds that this descibes the cocycle in Deligne cohomology given by

$$
(CS(\sigma_i^*\nabla),\ \int_{\Delta^1} CS(\hat{g}_{ij}^*\nabla), \int_{\Delta^2} CS(\hat{g}_{ijk}^*\nabla), \int_{\Delta^3} \hat{g}_{ijkl}^*\mu)\,.
$$

This is the cocycle for the circle n-bundle with connection.

This is precisely the form of the Čech-Deligne cocycle for the first Pontryagin class given in [BrMc96b], only that here it comes out automatically normalized such as to represent the fractional generator $\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1$.

By feeding in more general transgressive ∞-Lie algebra cocycles through this machine, we obtain cocycles for more general differential characteristic classes. For instance the next one is the second fractional Pontryagin class of String-2-bundles with connection [FSS10]. Moreover, these constructions naturally yield the full cocycle ∞-groupoids, not just their cohomology sets. This allows to form the homotopy fibers of the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism and thus define *differential string structures* etc. and *twisted* differential string structures etc. [SSS09c].

2 General abstract theory

We discuss a general abstract theory of ∞-toposes that serve as contexts for higher geometry of cohesive ∞-groupoids.

In 2.1 we consider basic notions of ∞-topos theory to set up our context and notation. In 2.2 we present axiomatics of *cohesive ∞-toposes*. These induce a wealth of general internal structures, which we list and discuss in 2.3. In 2.4 we add one more axiom that characterizes infinitesimal cohesive structure and again discuss the induced structures.

2.1 ∞-Toposes

The theory of ∞-toposes has been given a general abstract formulation in [LuHTT], using the ∞-category theory introduced by [Joyal] and building on [Re05] and [ToVe02]. One of the central results proven there is that the old homotopy theory of simplicial presheaves, originating around [Br73] and developed notably in [Jard87] and [Dugg01], is indeed a *presentation* of ∞-topos theory.

In the following sections we collect definitions and basic results of ∞-topos theory that we need in our subsequent developments. Much of this is a review of material available in the literature and the reader familiar with this theory can skip ahead to our main contribution, the discussion of *cohesive ∞-toposes* in 2.2. We shall refer back to this section here as needed.

- 2.1.1 – ∞-Categories and their presentations
- 2.1.2 – ∞-Category theory;
- 2.1.3 – ∞-Toposes;
- 2.1.4– Presentations of ∞-toposes;
- 2.1.5 – ∞-Sheaves and descent
- 2.1.6 – ∞-Sheaves with values in chain complexes and strict ∞-groupoids

2.1.1 ∞-Categories and their presentations

The natural joint generalization of the notion of *category* and of *homotopy type* is that of *∞-category*: a collection of objects, such that between any ordered pair of them there is a homotopy type of morphisms. We briefly survey key definitions and properties in the theory of ∞-categories.

Definition 2.1.1. An *∞-category* is a simplicial set C such that all horns $\Lambda^i[n] \to C$ that are *inner*, in that $0 < i < n$, have an extension to a simplex $\Delta[n] \to C$.

An *∞-functor* $f : C \to D$ between ∞-categories C and D is a morphism of the underlying simplicial sets.

This definition is due [Joyal].

Remark 2.1.2. For C an ∞-category, we think of C_0 as its collection of *objects*, and of C_1 as its collection of *morphisms* and generally of C_k as the collection of *k-morphisms*. The inner horn filling property can be seen to encode the existence of composites of k-morphisms, well defined up to coherent $(k+1)$-morphisms. It also implies that for $k > 1$ these k-morphisms are invertible, up to higher morphisms. To emphasize this fact one also says that C is an *$(\infty, 1)$-category*. (More generally an *(∞, n)-category* would have k morphisms for all k such that for $k > n$ these are equivalences.)

A convenient way of handling ∞-categories is via sSet-enriched categories: categories which for each ordered pair of objects has not just a set of morphisms, but a simplicial set of morphisms (see [Ke82] for enriched category theory in general and section A of [LuHTT] for sSet-enriched category theory in the context of ∞-category theory in particular):

Proposition 2.1.3. *There exists an adjunction between simplicially enriched categories and simplicial sets*

$$(|-| \dashv N_h) : \mathrm{sSetCat} \underset{N_h}{\overset{|-|}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet}$$

such that

- *if $S \in \mathrm{sSetCat}$ is such that for all objects $X, Y \in S$ the simplicial set $S(X,Y)$ is a Kan complex, then $N_h(S)$ is an ∞-category;*
- *the unit of the adjunction is an equivalence of ∞-categories (see def. 2.1.5 below).*

This is for instance prop. 1.1.5.10 in [LuHTT].

Remark 2.1.4. In particular, for C an ordinary category, regarded as an sSet-category with simplicially constant hom-objects, $N_h C$ is an ∞-category. A functor $C \to D$ is precisely an ∞-functor $N_h C \to N_h D$. In this and similar cases we shall often notationally suppress the N_h-operation. This is justified by the following statements.

Definition 2.1.5. For C an ∞-category, its *homotopy category* $\mathrm{Ho}(C)$ (or Ho_C) is the ordinary category obtained from $|C|$ by taking connected components of all simplicial hom-sets:

$$\mathrm{Ho}_C(X,Y) = \pi_0(|C|(X,Y)) .$$

A morphism $f \in C_1$ is called an *equivalence* if its image in $\mathrm{Ho}(C)$ is an isomorphism. Two objects in C connected by an equivalence are called *equivalent objects*.

Definition 2.1.6. An ∞-functor $F : C \to D$ is called an *equivalence of ∞-categories* if

1. It is *essentially sujective* in that the induced functor $\mathrm{Ho}(f) : \mathrm{Ho}(C) \to \mathrm{Ho}(D)$ is essentially surjective;
2. and it is *full and faithful* in that for all objects X, Y the induced morphism $f_{X,Y} : |C|(X,Y) \to |D|(X,Y)$ is a weak homotopy equivalence of simplicial sets.

For C an ∞-category and X, Y two of its objects, we write

$$C(X,Y) := |C|(X,Y)$$

and call this Kan complex the *hom-∞-groupoid* of C from X to Y.

The following assertion guarantees that sSet-categories are indeed a faithful presentation of ∞-categories.

Proposition 2.1.7. *For every ∞-category C the unit of the $(|-| \dashv N_h)$-adjunction from prop. 2.1.3 is an equivalence of ∞-categories*

$$C \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} N_h|C| .$$

This is for instance theorem 1.1.5.13 together with remark 1.1.5.17 in [LuHTT].

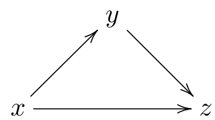
Definition 2.1.8. An ∞-groupoid is an ∞-category in which all morphisms are equivalences.

Proposition 2.1.9. *∞-groupoids in this sense are precisely Kan complexes.*

This is due to [Joyal02]. See also prop. 1.2.5.1 in [LuHTT].

A convenient way of constructing ∞-categories in terms of sSet-categories is via categories with weak equivalences.

Definition 2.1.10. A *category with weak equivalences* (C, W) is a category C equipped with a subcategory $W \subset C$ which contains all objects of C and such that W satsifies the *2-out-of-3 property*: for every commuting triangle



in C with two of the three morphisms in W, also the third one is in W.

Definition 2.1.11. The *simplicial localization* of a category with weak equivalences (C, W) is the sSet-category

$$L_W C \in \mathrm{sSetCat}$$

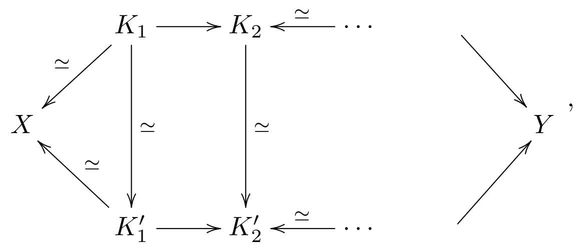
(or LC for short, when W is understood) given as follows: the objects are those of C; and for $X, Y \in C$ two objects, the simplicial hom-set $LC(X, Y)$ is the nerve of the following category:

- objects are equivalence classes of zig-zags of morphisms

  $$X \xleftarrow{\simeq} K_1 \longrightarrow K_2 \xleftarrow{\simeq} \cdots \longrightarrow Y$$

  in C, such that the left-pointing morphisms are in W;

- morphisms are equivalence classes of transformations of such zig-zags

  such that the vertical morphisms are in W;

- subject to the equivalence relation that identifies two such (transformations of) zig-zags if one is obtained from the other by discarding identity morphisms and then composing consecutive morphisms.

This simplicial "hammock localization" is due to [DwKa80a].

Proposition 2.1.12. *Let (C, W) be a category with weak equivalences and LC be its simplicial localization. Then its homotopy category in the sense of def. 2.1.5 is equivalent to the ordinary homotopy category* $\mathrm{Ho}(C, W)$ *(the category obtained from C by universally inverting the morphisms in W):*

$$\mathrm{Ho} L_W C \simeq \mathrm{Ho}(C, W)\,.$$

A convenient way of controlling simplicial localizations is via $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$-enriched model category structures (see section A.2 of [LuHTT] for a good discussion of all related issues).

Definition 2.1.13. A *model category* is a category with weak equivalences (C, W) that has all limits and colimits and is equipped with two further classes of morphisms, $\mathrm{Fib}, \mathrm{Cof} \subset \mathrm{Mor}(C)$ – the *fibrations* and *cofibrations* – such that $(\mathrm{Cof}, \mathrm{Fib} \cap W)$ and $(\mathrm{Cof} \cap W, \mathrm{Fib})$ are two weak factorization systems on C.

An $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$-enriched model category is a model category equipped with the structure of an sSet-enriched category, such that the sSet-tensoring functor

$$\cdot : C \times \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}} \to C$$

is a left Quillen bifunctor.

An object $X \in C$ is called *cofibrant* if the canonical morphism $\emptyset \to X$ is a cofibration. It is called *fibrant* if the canonical morphism $X \to *$ is a fibration.

Remark 2.1.14. The axioms on model categories directly imply that every object is weakly equivalent to a fibrant object, and to a cofibrant objects and in fact to a fibrant and cofibrant objects.

Definition 2.1.15. For C an (sSet-enriched) model category write

$$C^\circ \in \mathrm{sSetCat}$$

for the full sSet-subcategory on the fibrant and cofibrant objects.

Proposition 2.1.16. *Let C be an $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$-enriched model category. Then there is an equivalence of ∞-categories*

$$C^\circ \simeq LC\,.$$

This is corollary 4.7 with prop. 4.8 in [DwKa80b].

Proposition 2.1.17. *The hom-∞-groupoids $(N_h C^\circ)(X,Y)$ are already correctly given by the hom-objects in C from a cofibrant to a fibrant representative of the weak equivalence class of X and Y, respectively.*

In this way $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$-enriched model category structures constitute particularly convenient extra structure on a category with weak equivalences for constructing the corresponding ∞-category.

2.1.2 ∞-Category theory

The power of the notion of ∞-categories is that it supports the higher analogs of all the crucial facts of ordinary category theory. This is a useful meta-theorem to keep in mind, originally emphasized by André Joyal and Charles Rezk.

Fact 2.1.18. *In general*

- *∞-Category theory parallels category theory;*
- *∞-Topos theory parallels topos theory.*

More precisely, essentially all the standard constructions and theorems have their ∞-analogs if only we replace *isomorphism* between objects and equalities between morphisms consistently by *equivalence*s and coherent higher equivalences in an ∞-category.

Definition 2.1.19. Let $\mathrm{KanCplx} \subset \mathrm{sSet}$ be the full subcategory of sSet on the Kan complexes, regarded naturally as an sSet-enriched category. We say that

$$\infty\mathrm{Grpd} := N_h \mathrm{KanCplx}$$

is the *∞-category of ∞-groupoids*.

Proposition 2.1.20. *For C and D two ∞-categories,* $\mathrm{sSet}(C,D)$ *is an ∞-category.*

Definition 2.1.21. We write $\mathrm{Func}(C,D)$ for the ∞-category and speak of the *∞-category of ∞-functors* between C and D.

Remark 2.1.22. The objects of $\mathrm{Func}(C,D)$ are indeed the ∞-functors from def. 2.1.1. The morphisms may be called *∞-natural transformations*.

Definition 2.1.23. The *opposite* C^{op} of an ∞-category C is the ∞-category corresponding to the opposite of the corresponding sSet-category.

Definition 2.1.24. For C an ∞-category, we write

$$\mathrm{PSh}_\infty(C) := \mathrm{Func}(C^{\mathrm{op}}, \infty\mathrm{Grpd})$$

and speak of the *∞-category of ∞-presheaves* on C.

The following is the ∞-category theory analog of the Yoneda lemma.

Proposition 2.1.25. *For C an ∞-category, $U \in C$ any object, $j(U) \simeq C(-, U) : C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ an ∞-presheaf represented by U we have for every ∞-presheaf $F \in \mathrm{PSh}_\infty(C)$ a natural equivalence of ∞-groupoids*

$$\mathrm{PSh}_\infty(C)(j(U), F) \simeq F(U)\,.$$

From this derives a notion of ∞-limits and of adjoint ∞-functors and they satisfy the expected properties.

For instance we shall have ample application for the following immediate ∞-category theoretic generalization of a basic 1-categorical fact.

Proposition 2.1.26 (pasting law for ∞-pullbacks)**.** *Let*

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} a & \longrightarrow & b & \longrightarrow & c \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ d & \longrightarrow & e & \longrightarrow & f \end{array}$$

be a diagram in an ∞-category and suppose that the right square is an ∞-pullback. Then the left square is an ∞-pullback precisely if the outer rectangle is.

This appears as [LuHTT], lemma 4.4.2.1. Notice that here and in the following we do not explicitly display the 2-morphisms/homotopies that do fill these diagrams in the given ∞-category.

In terms of this presentation of ∞-categories, adjoint ∞-functors are presented by *simplicial Quillen adjunctions* between simplicial model categories: the restriction of a simplicial Quillen adjunction to fibrant-cofibrant objects is the sSet-enriched functor that presents the ∞-derived functor under the model of ∞-categories by simplicially enriched categories.

Proposition 2.1.27. *Let C and D be simplicial model categories and let*

$$(L \dashv R) : C \underset{R}{\overset{L}{\rightleftarrows}} D$$

be an sSet*-enriched adjunction whose underlying ordinary adjunction is a Quillen adjunction. Let C° and D° be the ∞-categories presented by C and D (the Kan complex-enriched full* sSet*-subcategories on fibrant-cofibrant objects). Then the Quillen adjunction lifts to a pair of adjoint ∞-functors*

$$(\mathbb{L}L \dashv \mathbb{R}R) : C^\circ \rightleftarrows D^\circ$$

On the decategorified level of the homotopy categories these are the total left and right derived functors, respectively, of L and R.

This is [LuHTT], prop 5.2.4.6.

The following proposition states conditions under which a simplicial Quillen adjunction may be detected already from knowing of the right adjoint only that it preserves fibrant objects (instead of all fibrations).

Proposition 2.1.28. *If C and D are simplicial model categories and D is a left proper model category, then for an* sSet*-enriched adjunction*

$$(L \dashv R) : C \rightleftarrows D$$

to be a Quillen adjunction it is already sufficient that L preserves cofibrations and R preserves fibrant objects.

This appears as [LuHTT], cor. A.3.7.2.

We will use this for finding simplicial Quillen adjunctions into left Bousfield localizations of left proper model categories: the left Bousfield localization preserves the left properness, and the fibrant objects in the Bousfield localized structure have a good characterization: they are the fibrant objects in the original model structure that are also local objects with respect to the set of morphisms at which one localizes. Therefore for D the left Bousfield localization of a simplicial left proper model category E at a class S of morphisms, for checking the Quillen adjunction property of $(L \dashv R)$ it is sufficient to check that L preserves cofibrations, and that R takes fibrant objects c of C to such fibrant objects of E that have the property that for all $f \in S$ the derived hom-space map $\mathbb{R}\mathrm{Hom}(f, R(c))$ is a weak equivalence.

2.1.3 ∞-Toposes

The natural context for discussing the geometry of spaces that are locally modeled on test spaces in some category C (and equipped with a notion of coverings) is the category called the *sheaf topos* $\mathrm{Sh}(C)$ over C [John03]. Analogously, the natural context for discussing the *higher* geometry of such spaces is the ∞-category called the ∞-*sheaf topos* $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C)$ [LuHTT].

Following [LuHTT], for us "∞-topos" means this:

Definition 2.1.29. An ∞-topos is an acessible ∞-geometric embedding

$$\mathbf{H} \underset{\hookrightarrow}{\overset{L}{\leftarrow}} \mathrm{Func}(C^{\mathrm{op}}, \infty\mathrm{Grpd})$$

into an ∞-category of ∞-presheaves over some small ∞-category C.

We say this is an ∞-*category of* ∞-*sheaves* (as opposed to a hypercompletion of such) if $\mathbf{H}$ is the reflective localization at the covering sieves of a Grothendieck topology on the homotopy category of C (a *topological localization*), and then write $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C)$ with the site structure on C understood.

For $\mathbf{H}$ an ∞-topos we write $\mathbf{H}(X, Y)$ for its hom-∞-groupoid between objects X and Y and write $H(X, Y) = \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, Y)$ for the hom-set in the homotopy category.

The theory of cohesive ∞-toposes revolves around situations where the following fact has a refinement:

Proposition 2.1.30. *For every ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ there is an essentially unique geometric morphism to the ∞-topos $\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$.*

$$(\Delta \dashv \Gamma) : \mathbf{H} \underset{\Gamma}{\overset{\Delta}{\rightleftarrows}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

This is prop 6.3.41 in [LuHTT].

Proposition 2.1.31. *Here Γ takes global sections – $\Gamma(-) \simeq \mathbf{H}(*, -)$ – and Δ forms constant ∞-sheaves – $\Delta(-) \simeq L\mathrm{Const}(-)$.*

Proof. By prop. 2.1.30 it is sufficient to exhibit an ∞-adjunction $(L\mathrm{Const}(-) \dashv \mathbf{H}(*, -))$ such that the left adjoint preserves finite ∞-limits. The latter follows since $\mathrm{Const} : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \mathrm{PSh}_\infty(C)$ preserves all limits (for C some ∞-site of definition for $\mathbf{H}$) and $L : \mathrm{PSh}(C) \to \mathbf{H}$ by definition preserves finite ∞-limits. To show the ∞-adjunction we use the fact ([LuHTT], cor. 4.4.4.9) that every ∞-groupoid is the ∞-colimit over itself of the ∞-functor constant on the point: $S \simeq \lim_{\to S} *$. From this we obtain the natural hom-equivalence

$$
\begin{aligned}
\mathbf{H}(L\mathrm{Const}S, X) &\simeq \mathrm{PSh}_C(\mathrm{Const}S, X) \\
&\simeq \mathrm{PSh}(\mathrm{Const}\lim_{\to S} *, X) \\
&\simeq \lim_{\leftarrow S} \mathrm{Psh}(\mathrm{Const}*, X) \\
&\simeq \lim_{\leftarrow S} \mathbf{H}(L\mathrm{Const}*, X) \\
&\simeq \lim_{\leftarrow S} \mathbf{H}(*, X) \\
&\simeq \lim_{\leftarrow S} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(*, \mathbf{H}(*, X)) \\
&\simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\lim_{\to S} *, \mathbf{H}(*, X)) \\
&\simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(S, \mathbf{H}(*, X))\,.
\end{aligned}
$$

Here and in the following "$*$" always denotes the terminal object in the corresponding ∞-category. We used that LConst preserves the terminal object (the empty ∞-limit.) □

Another class of geometric morphisms that plays a role is *base change*.

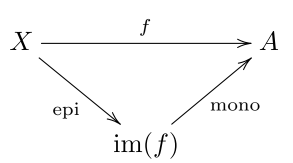
Proposition 2.1.32. *For $f : X \to Y$ any morphism in an ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$, the over ∞-categories $\mathbf{H}/X$ and $\mathbf{H}/Y$ are themselves ∞-toposes and there is a geometric morphism*

$$(f^* \dashv f^*) : \ \mathbf{H}/X \underset{f_*}{\overset{f^*}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathbf{H}/X \ ,$$

where f^* is ∞-pullback along f.

This is prop. 6.3.5.1, remark 6.3.5.10 of [LuHTT].

In an ordinary topos every morphism has a unique factorization into an epimorphism followed by a monomorphism, the *image factorization*.



In an ∞-topos this notion generalizes to a tower of factorizations.

Definition 2.1.33.
- An ∞-groupoid is called *k-truncated* if all its homotopy groups $\pi_{\geq k}$ are trivial. It is called (-1)*-truncated* it is is either empty or contractible and *(-2)-truncated* if it is non-empty and contractible.
- An ∞-functor between ∞-groupoids is called *k-truncated* for $-2 \leq k \leq \infty$ if all its homotopy fibers are k-truncated.
- A morphism $f : A \to B$ in an ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ is k-truncated if for all objects $X \in \mathbf{H}$ the induced ∞-functor $\mathbf{H}(X, f) : \mathbf{H}(X, A) \to \mathbf{H}(X, B)$ is k-truncated.
- A morphism is *k-connected* if it is an effective epimorphism and all homotopy groups $\pi_{\leq q}$ are trivial.

This is [LuHTT] def. 5.5.6.8, def. 6.5.1.10.

Remark 2.1.34.
- A morphism is (-2)-truncated precisely if it is an equivalence.

- A morphism between ∞-groupoids that is (-1)-truncated is a *full and faithful ∞-functor*. A general morphism that is (-1)-truncated is an *∞-monomorphism*.

Proposition 2.1.35. *In an ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ for any $-2 \leq k \leq \infty$, every morphism $f : X \to Y$ admits a factorization*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \xrightarrow{\quad f \quad} & A \\ & \searrow \quad \nearrow & \\ & \mathrm{im}_k(f) & \end{array}$$

into a k-connected morphism followed by a k-truncated morphism and the space of choices of such factorizations is contractible.

This is [LuHTT], example 5.2.8.18.

Remark 2.1.36. For $k = -1$ this is the immediate generalization of the epi/mono factorization in ordinary toposes. In particular, the (-1)-image factorization of a morphism between 0-truncated objects is the ordinary image factorization.

2.1.4 Presentations of ∞-toposes

For computations it is useful to employ a generators-and-relations presentation for presentable ∞-categories in general and ∞-toposes in particular, given by ordinary sSet-enriched categories equipped with the structure of combinatorial simplicial model categories. These may be obtained by left Bousfield localization of a model structure on simplicial presheaves. (See appendix 2 and 3 of [LuHTT].)

Definition 2.1.37. Let C be a small category.

- Write $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ for the category of functors $C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{sSet}$ to the category of simplicial sets. This is naturally equivalent to the category $[\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}$ of simplicial objects in the category of presheaves on C. Therefore one speaks of the *category of simplicial presheaves* over C.

- For $\{U_i \to U\}$ a cover in the site C, write

$$C(\{U_i\}) \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] := \int^{[k] \in \Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot \coprod_{i_0, \cdots, i_k} j(U_{i_0}) \times_{j(U)} \cdots \times_{j(U)} j(U_{i_k})$$

  for the *Čech nerve* simplicial presheaf. This is canonically equipped with a morphism $C(\{U_i\}) \to j(U)$. (Here $j : C \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}]$ is the Yoneda embedding.)

- The category $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is naturally an sSet-enriched category. For any two objects $X, A \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ write $\mathrm{Maps}(X, A) \in \mathrm{sSet}$ for the simplicial hom-set.

- Write $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ for the category of simplicial presheaves equipped with the following choices of classes of morphisms (which are natural transformations between sSet-valued functors):

  - the *fibrations* are those morphisms whose component over each object $U \in C$ is a Kan fibration of simplicial sets;
  - the *weak equivalences* are those morphisms whose component over each object is a weak equivalence in the Quillen model structure on simplicial sets;
  - the *cofibrations* are the morphisms having the right lifting property against th morphisms that are both fibrations as well as weak equivalences.

  This makes $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ into a combinatorial simplicial model category.

- Write $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ for model category structure on simplicial presheaves which is the left Bousfield localization of $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ at the set of morphisms of the form $C(\{U_i\}) \to U$ for all covering families $\{U_i \to U\}$ of C.

  This is called the *projective* local model structure on simplicial presheaves [Dugg01].

Definition 2.1.38. The operation of forming objectwise simplicial homotopy groups extends to functors

$$\pi_0^{\mathrm{PSh}} : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}]$$

and for $n > 1$

$$\pi_n^{\mathrm{PSh}} : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_* \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}]\,.$$

These presheaves of homotopy groups may be sheafified. We write

$$\pi_0 : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \stackrel{\pi_0^{\mathrm{PSh}}}{\to} [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}] \to \mathrm{Sh}(C)$$

and for $n > 1$

$$\pi_n : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_* \stackrel{\pi_n^{\mathrm{PSh}}}{\to} [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}] \to \mathrm{Sh}(C)\,.$$

Proposition 2.1.39. *For $X \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ fibrant, the homotopy sheaves $\pi_n(X)$ from def. 2.1.38 coincide with the abstractly defined homotopy groups of $X \in \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C)$ from [LuHTT].*

Proof. One may observe that the $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$-powering of $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ does model the abstract ∞Grpd-powering of $\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C)$. □

Definition 2.1.40. A site C has *enough points* if a morphism $(A \stackrel{f}{\to} B) \in \mathrm{Sh}(C)$ in its sheaf topos is an isomorphism precisely if for every geometric morphism

$$(x^* \dashv x_*) : \mathrm{Set} \underset{x_*}{\overset{x^*}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{Sh}(C)$$

from the topos of sets we have that $x^*(f) : x^*A \to x^*B$ is an isomorphism.

Remark 2.1.41. By definition of geometric morphism the functor i^* is left adjoint to i_* – therefore preserving all colimits – and in addition preserves *finite* limits.

Example 2.1.42. The following sites have enough points.

- The category SmthMfd of smooth, finite-dimensional paracompact manifolds and smooth functions between them;
- the category CartSp of Cartesian spaces $\mathbb{R}^n$ for $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and smooth functions between them.

We restrict from now on attention to this case:

Assumption 2.1.43. The site C has enough points.

Theorem 2.1.44. *For C a site with enough points, the weak equivalences in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ are precisely the stalkwise weak equivalences in* $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$

Proof. By theorem 17 in [Ja96] and using our assumption 2.1.43 the statement is true for the local injective model structure. The weak equivalences there coincide with those of the local projective model structure. □

Definition 2.1.45. We say a morphism $f : A \to B$ in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is a *local fibration* or a *local weak equivalence* precisely if for all topos points x the morphism $x^* f : x^* A \to x^* B$ is a fibration of weak equivalence, respectively.

Warning. While by theorem 2.1.44 the local weak equivalences are indeed the weak equivalences in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$, it is not true that the fibrations in this model structure are the local fibrations of def. 2.1.45.

Proposition 2.1.46. *Pullbacks in* $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *along local fibrations preserve local weak equivalences.*

Proof. Let

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} A & \longrightarrow & C & \longleftarrow & B \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ A' & \longrightarrow & C' & \longleftarrow & B' \end{array}$$

be a diagram where the vertical morphisms are local weak equivalences. Since the inverse image x^* of a topos point x preserves finite limits and in particular pullbacks, we have

$$x^*(A \times_C B \xrightarrow{f} A' \times_{C'} B') = (x^* A \times_{x^* C} x^* B \xrightarrow{x^* f} x^* A' \times_{x^* C'} x^* B')\,.$$

On the right the pullbacks are now by assumption pullbacks of simplicial sets along Kan fibrations. Since $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ is right proper, these are homotopy pullbacks and therefore preserve weak equivalences. So $x^* f$ is a weak equivalence for all x and thus f is a local weak equivalence. □

The following characterization of ∞-toposes is one of the central statements of [LuHTT]. For the purposes of our discussion here the reader can take this to be the *definition* of ∞-toposes.

Theorem 2.1.47. *For C a site with enough points, the ∞-topos over C is the simplicial localization*

$$\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C) \simeq N_h L([C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$$

of the category of simplicial presheaves on C at the local weak equivalences.

This is prop. 6.5.2.14 in [LuHTT].

We shall also have use of the following different presentation of $\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C)$.

Definition 2.1.48. Let C be a small site with enough points. Write $\bar{C} \subset [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ for the free coproduct completion.

Let $(\bar{C}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}}, W)$ be the category of simplicial objects in $\bar{C}$ equipped with the stalkwise weak equivalences inherited from the canonical embedding

$$i : \bar{C}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}} \hookrightarrow [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]\,.$$

Proposition 2.1.49. *The induced ∞-functor*

$$N_h L \bar{C}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}} \to N_h L[C^{\mathrm{op}}.\mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$$

is an equivalence of ∞-categories.

This is due to [NSSb].

Proof. Let $Q : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \to \bar{C}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}}$ be the functor which sends a simplicial presheaf X to the simplicial object QX given by

$$(QX)_k = \coprod_{j(U_0) \to \cdots \to j(U_k) \to X_k} j(U_0)\,,$$

where the coproduct runs over all sequences of morphisms of representables U_i as indicated, and where the face and degeneracy maps are induced from thos on $N(C)$ and on X in the evident way.

In [Dugg01] it is shown that for all X the simplicial presheaf QX is cofibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ and that the natural morphism $QX \to X$ is a weak equivalence. Since left Bousfield localization does not affect the cofibrations and only enlarges the weak equivalences, the same is still true in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.

Therefore we have a natural transformation

$$i \circ Q \to \mathrm{Id} : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$$

whose components are weak equivalences. From this the claim follows by prop. 3.5 in [DwKa80a]. □

Remark 2.1.50. If the site C is moreover equipped with the structure of a *geometry* as in [LuSp] then there is canonically the notion of a *C-manifold*: a sheaf on C that is *locally* isomorphic to a representable in C. Write

$$\bar{C} \hookrightarrow C\mathrm{Mfd} \hookrightarrow [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}]$$

for the full subcategory of presheaves on the C-manifolds.

Then the above argument applies verbatim also to the category $C\mathrm{Mfd}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}}$ of simplicial C-manifolds. Therefore we find that the ∞-topos over C is presented by the simplicial localization of simplicial C-manifolds at the stalkwise weak equivalences:

$$\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C) \simeq N_h L C\mathrm{Mfd}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}} .$$

Example 2.1.51. Let $C = \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ be the full subcategory of the category SmthMfd of smooth manifolds on the Cartesian spaces, $\mathbb{R}^n$, for $n \in \mathbb{R}$. Then $\bar{C} \subset \mathrm{SmthMfd}$ is the full subcatgory on manifolds that are disjoint unions of Cartesian spaces and $C\mathrm{Mfd} \simeq \mathrm{SmthMfd}$. Therefore we have an equivalence of ∞-categories

$$\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{SmthMfd}) \simeq \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp}) \simeq L\mathrm{SmthMfd}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}} .$$

The following proposition establishes the model category analog of the statement that by left exactness of ∞-sheafification finite ∞-limits of ∞-sheafified ∞-presheaves may be computed as the ∞-sheafification of the finite ∞-limit of the ∞-presheaves.

Proposition 2.1.52. *Let C be a site and $F : D \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ be a finite diagram.*

Write $\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{glob}} \lim_{\leftarrow} F \in [C^{op}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ for (any representative of) the homotopy limit over F computed in the global model structure $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, well defined up to isomorphism in the homotopy category.

Then $\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{glob}} \lim_{\leftarrow} F \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ presents also the homotopy limit of F in the local model structure $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.

Proof. By [LuHTT], theorem 4.2.4.1, we have that the homotopy limit $\mathbb{R}\lim_{\leftarrow}$ computes the corresponding ∞-limit. Since ∞-sheafification L is by definition a left exact ∞-functor it preserves these finite ∞-limits:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} ([D, [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}]_{\mathrm{inj}})^\circ & \xleftarrow{L_*} & ([D, [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}]_{\mathrm{inj}})^\circ \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \mathbb{R}\lim_{\leftarrow}} & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle \mathbb{R}\lim_{\leftarrow}} \\ ([C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}})^\circ & \xleftarrow{L \simeq \mathbb{L}\mathrm{Id}} & ([C^{op}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}})^\circ \end{array} .$$

Here $L \simeq \mathbb{L}\mathrm{Id}$ is the left derived functor of the identity for the left Bousfield localization. Therefore for F a finit diagram in simplicial presheaves, its homotopy limit in the local model structure $\mathbb{R}\lim_{\leftarrow} L_* F$ is equivalently computed by $\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Id}\mathbb{R}\lim_{\rightarrow} F$, with $\mathbb{R}\lim_{\leftarrow} F$ the homotopy limit in the global model structure. □

2.1.5 ∞-Sheaves and descent

We discuss some details of the notion of *∞-sheaves* from the point of view of the presentations discussed above in 2.1.4.

By def. 2.1.29 we have, abstractly, that an ∞-sheaf over some site C is an ∞-presheaf that is in the essential image of a given reflective inclusion $\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C) \hookrightarrow \mathrm{PSh}_\infty(C)$. By prop. 2.1.47 this reflective embedding is presented by the Quillen adjunction that exhibits the left Bousfield localization of the model category of simplicial presheaves at the Čech covers

$$\begin{array}{ccc} ([C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}})^\circ & \underset{\mathbb{R}\mathrm{Id}}{\overset{\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Id}}{\rightleftarrows}} & ([C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}})^\circ \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \downarrow \simeq \\ \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C) & \underset{}{\overset{L}{\hookleftarrow}} & \mathrm{PSh}_\infty(X) \end{array} .$$

Since the Quillen adjunction that exhibits left Bousfield localization is given by identity-1-functors, as indicated, the computation of ∞-sheafification (∞-stackification) L by deriving the left Quillen functor is all in the cofibrant replacement in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ followed by fibrant replacement in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. Since the collection of cofibrations is preserved by left Bousfield localization, this simply amounts to cofibrant-fibrant replacement in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. Since, finally, the derived hom space $\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(U, A)$ is computed in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ already on a fibrant resolution of A out of a cofibrant resolution of U, and since every representable is necessarily cofibrant, one may effectively identify the ∞-sheaf condition in $\mathrm{PSh}_\infty(C)$ with the fibrancy condition in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.

We discuss aspects of this fibrancy condition.

Definition 2.1.53. For C a site, we say a covering family $\{U_i \to U\}$ is a *good cover* if the corresponding Čech nerve

$$C(U_i) := \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \coprod_{i_0, \cdots, i_k} j(U_{i_0}) \times_{j(U)} \cdots \times_{j(U)} j(U_k) \quad \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$$

(where $j : C \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is the Yoneda embedding) is degreewise a coproduct of representables, hence if all non-empty finite intersections of the U_i are again representable:

$$j(U_{i_0, \cdots, i_k}) = U_{i_0} \times_U \cdots \times_U U_{i_k} .$$

Proposition 2.1.54. *The Čech nerve $C(U_i)$ of a good cover is cofibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ as well as in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.*

Proof. In the terminology of [DuHoIs04] the good-ness condition on a cover makes its Čech nerve a *split hypercover*. By the result of [Dugg01] this is cofirant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. Since left Bousfield localization preserves cofibrations, it is also cofibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. □

Definition 2.1.55. For A a simplicial presheaf with values in Kan complexes and $\{U_i \to U\}$ a good cover in the site C, we say that

$$\mathrm{Desc}(\{U_i\}, A) := [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(U_i), A) ,$$

where on the right we have the sSet-enriched hom of simplicial presheaves, is the *descent object* of A over $\{U_i \to U\}$.

Remark 2.1.56. By assumption A is fibrant and $C(U_i)$ is cofibrant (by prop. 2.1.54) in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. Since this is a simplicial model category, it follows that $\mathrm{Desc}(\{U_i\}, A)$ is a Kan complex, an ∞-groupoid. We may also speak of the *descent ∞-groupoid*. Below we show that its objects have the interpretation of *gluing data* or *descent data* for A. See [DuHoIs04] for more details.

Proposition 2.1.57. *For C a site whose topology is generated from good covers, a simplicial presheaf A is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ precisely if it takes values in Kan complexes and if for each generating good cover $\{U_i \to U\}$ the canonical morphism*

$$A(U) \to \mathrm{Desc}(\{U_i\}, A)$$

is a weak equivalence of Kan complexes.

Proof. By standard results recalled in A.3.7 of [LuHTT] the fibrant objects in the local model structure are precisely those which are fibrant in the global model structure and which are *local* with respect to the morphisms at which one localizes: such that the derived hom out of these morphisms into the given object produces a weak equivalence.

By prop. 2.1.54 we have that $C(U_i)$ is cofibrant for $\{U_i \to U\}$ a good cover. Therefore the derived hom is computed already by the enriched hom as in the above statement. □

Remark 2.1.58. The above condition manifestly generalizes the *sheaf* condition on an ordinary sheaf [John03]. One finds that

$$(\pi_0^{\mathrm{PSh}}(C(U_i)) \to \pi_0^{\mathrm{PSh}}(U)) = (S(U_i) \hookrightarrow U)$$

is the (subfunctor corresponding to the) *sieve* associated with the cover $\{U_i \to U\}$. Therefore when A is itself just a presheaf of sets (of simplicially constant simplicial sets) the above condition reduces to the statement that

$$A(U) \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}](S(U_i), A)$$

is an isomorphism. This is the standard sheaf condition.

We discuss the descent object, def. 2.1.55, in more detail.

Definition 2.1.59. Write

$$\mathrm{coDesc}(\{U_i\}, A) \in \mathrm{sSet}^{\Delta}$$

for the cosimlicial simplicial set that in degree k is given by the value of A on the k-fold intersections:

$$\mathrm{coDesc}(\{U_i\}, A)_k = \prod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k} A(U_{i_0,\cdots,i_k}) \,.$$

Proposition 2.1.60. *The descent object from def. 2.1.55 is the* totalization *of the codescent object:*

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{Desc}(\{U_i\}, A) &= \mathrm{tot}(\mathrm{coDesc}(\{U_i\}), A) \\ &:= \int_{[k]\in\Delta} \mathrm{sSet}(\Delta[k], \mathrm{coDesc}(\{U_i\}, A)_k) \end{aligned}$$

Here and in the following equality signs denote isomorphism (such as to distinguish from just weak equivalences of simplicial sets).

Proof. Using sSet-enriched category calculus for the sSet-enriched and sSet-tensored category of simplicial presheaves (for instance [Ke82] around (3.67)) we compute as follow

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{Desc}(\{U_i\}, A) &:= [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(U_i), A) \\ &= [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](\int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot C(U_i)_k, A) \\ &= \int_{[k]\in\Delta} [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](\Delta[k] \cdot C(U_i), A) \\ &= \int_{[k\in\Delta]} \mathrm{sSet}(\Delta[k], [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(U_i)_k), A) \\ &= \int_{[k\in\Delta]} \mathrm{sSet}(\Delta[k], A(C(U_i)_k)) \\ &= \mathrm{tot}(A(C(U_i)_\bullet)) \\ &= \mathrm{tot}\,(\mathrm{coDesc}(\{C(U_i)\}, A)) \,. \end{aligned}$$

Here we used in the first step that every simplicial set Y (hence every simplicial presheaf) is the realization of itself, in that

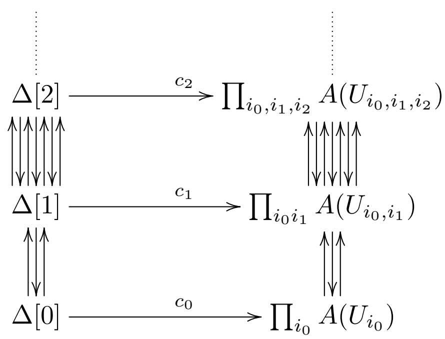
$$Y = \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot Y_k \,,$$

which is effectively a variant of the Yoneda-lemma. □

Remark 2.1.61. This provides a fairly explicit description of the objects in $\mathrm{Desc}(\{U_i\}, A)$: notice that an element c of the end $\int_{[k]\in\Delta} \mathrm{sSet}(\Delta[k], \mathrm{coDesc}(\{U_i\}, A))$ is by definition of *end*s a collection of morphisms

$$\{c_k : \Delta[k] \to \prod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k} A_k(U_{i_0,\cdots,i_k})\}$$

that makes commuting all parallel diagrams in the following:



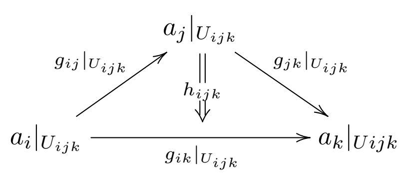
.

This says in words that c is

1. a collection of objects $a_i \in A(U_i)$ on each patch;
2. a collection of morphisms $\{g_{ij} \in A_1(U_{ij})\}$ over each double intersection, such that these go between the restrictions of the objects a_i and a_j, respectively

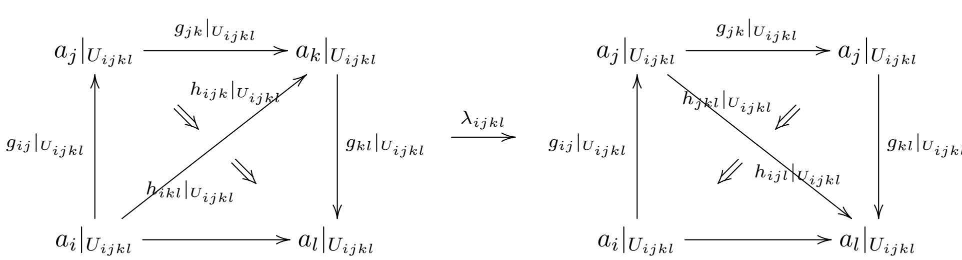
$$a_i|_{U_{ij}} \xrightarrow{g_{ij}} a_j|_{U_{ij}}$$

3. a collection of 2-morphisms $\{h_{ijk} \in A_2(U_{ijk})\}$ over triple intersections, which go between the corresponding 1-morphisms:



,

4. a collection of 3-morphisms $\{\lambda_{ijkl} \in A_3(U_{ijkl})\}$ of the form



;

5. and so on.

This recovers the cocycle diagrams that we have discussed more informally in 1.3.1 and generalizes them to arbitrary coefficient objects A.

2.1.6 ∞-Sheaves with values in chain complexes and strict ∞-groupoids

Many simplicial presheaves appearing in practice are (equivalent) to objects in sub-∞-categories of $\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C)$ of ∞-sheaves with values in abelian or at least in strict ∞-groupoids. These subcategories typically offer convenient and desireable contexts for formulating and proving statements about special cases of general simplicial presheaves.

One well-known such notion is given by the *Dold-Kan correspondence* (discussed for instance in [GoJa99]). This identifies chain complexes of abelian groups with strict and strictly symmetric monoidal ∞-groupoids.

Proposition 2.1.62. *Let $\mathrm{Ch}^+_{\mathrm{proj}}$ be the standard projective model structure on chain complexes of abelian groups in non-negative degree and let $\mathrm{sAb}_{\mathrm{proj}}$ be the standard projective model structure on simplicial abelian groups. Let C be any small category. There is a composite Quillen adjunction*

$$((N_\bullet F)_* \dashv \Xi) : \; [C^{\mathrm{op}}, Ch^+_{\mathrm{proj}}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \underset{\Gamma_*}{\overset{(N_\bullet)_*}{\underset{\simeq}{\leftrightarrows}}} [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sAb}_{\mathrm{proj}}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \underset{U_*}{\overset{F_*}{\leftrightarrows}} [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \;,$$

where the first is given by postcomposition with the Dold-Puppe-Kan correspondence and the second by post-composition with the degreewise free-forgetful adjunction for abelian groups over sets.

Dropping the condition on symmetric monoidalness we obtain a more general such inclusion, a kind of non-abelian Dold-Kan correspondence: the identification of *crossed complexes*, def. 1.3.20, with strict ∞-groupoids (see [BrHiSi11][Por] for details). This means that we have a sequence of inclusions

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathrm{ChainCplx} & \hookrightarrow & \mathrm{CrsCpl} & \hookrightarrow & \mathrm{KanCplx} \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \downarrow \simeq & & \downarrow \simeq \\ \mathrm{StrAbStr}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} & \hookrightarrow & \mathrm{Str}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} & \hookrightarrow & \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \end{array}$$

of strict ∞-groupoids into all ∞-groupoids, where in the top row we list the explicit presentation and in the bottom row the general abstract notions.

We state a useful theorem for the computation of descent for presheaves, prop. 2.1.57, with values in strict ∞-groupoids.

Suppose that $\mathcal{A} : C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{Str}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is a presheaf with values in strict ∞-groupoids. In the context of strict ∞-groupoids the standard n-simplex is given by the nth *oriental* $O(n)$ [Stre04]. This allows to perform a construction that looks like a descent object in $\mathrm{Str}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$:

Definition 2.1.63 (Street 04)**.** The descent object for $\mathcal{A} \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Str}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}]$ relative to $Y \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is

$$\mathrm{Desc}_{\mathrm{Street}}(Y, \mathcal{A}) := \int_{[n]\in\Delta} \mathrm{Str}\infty\mathrm{Cat}(O(n), \mathcal{A}(Y_n)) \;\in \mathrm{Str}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}\,,$$

where the end is taken in $\mathrm{Str}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$.

This object had been suggested by Ross Street to be the right descent object for strict ∞-category-valued presheaves in [Stre04].

Canonically induced by the orientals is the ω-nerve

$$N : \mathrm{Str}\omega\mathrm{Cat} \to \mathrm{sSet}$$

Applying this to the descent object of prop. 2.1.63 yields the simplicial set $N\mathrm{Desc}(Y, \mathcal{A})$. On the other hand, applying the ω-nerve componentwise to $\mathcal{A}$ yields a simplicial presheaf $N\mathcal{A}$ to which the ordinary simplicial descent from def. 2.1.55 applies. The following theorem asserts that under certain conditions the ∞-groupoids presented by both these simplicial sets are equivalent.

Proposition 2.1.64 (Verity 09)**.** *If* $\mathcal{A} : C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Str}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *and* $Y : C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{sSet}$ *are such that* $N\mathcal{A}(Y_\bullet) : \Delta \to$ *sSet is fibrant in the Reedy model structure* $[\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}}$*, then*

$$N\mathrm{Desc}_{\mathrm{Street}}(Y, \mathcal{A}) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{Desc}(Y, N\mathcal{A})$$

is a weak homotopy equivalence of Kan complexes.

This is proven in [Veri09]. In our applications the assumptions of this theorem are usually satisfied:

Corollary 2.1.65. *If* $Y \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *is such that* $Y_\bullet : \Delta \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}] \hookrightarrow [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *is cofibrant in* $[\Delta, [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}}$ *then for* $\mathcal{A} : C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{Str}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *we have a weak equivalence*

$$N\mathrm{Desc}(Y, \mathcal{A}) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{Desc}(Y, N\mathcal{A})\,.$$

Proof. If $Y_\bullet$ is Reedy cofibrant, then by definition the canonical morphisms

$$\lim_{\to}(([n] \stackrel{+}{\to} [k]) \mapsto Y_k) \to Y_n$$

are cofibrations in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. Since the latter is an $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$-enriched model category and $N\mathcal{A}$ is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, it follows that the hom-functor $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](-, N\mathcal{A})$ sends cofibrations to fibrations, so that

$$N\mathcal{A}(Y_n) \to \lim_{\leftarrow}([n] \stackrel{+}{\to} [k] \mapsto N\mathcal{A}(Y_k))$$

is a Kan fibration. But this says that $N\mathcal{A}(Y_\bullet)$ is Reedy fibrant, so that the assumption of prop. 2.1.64 is met. □

2.2 Cohesive ∞-toposes

We introduce the axioms for those ∞-toposes that we call *cohesive*, consider basic properties, and give an explicit construction of a class of examples in terms of a site of definition.

Ample justification for these definitions and constructions is given below in 2.3.

2.2.1 Definition and basic properties of cohesive ∞-toposes

The first definition below follows the standard notion of a locally and globally *connected topos* [John03]: a topos whose terminal geometric morphism has an extra left adjoint that computes geometric connected components, hence a geometric notion of π_0. The following asserts that as we pass to ∞-toposes, the extra left adjoint provides a good definition of all geometric homotopy groups.

Definition 2.2.1. An ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ we call *locally ∞-connected* if the (essentially unique) global section ∞-geometric morphism from prop. 2.1.30 is an *essential ∞-geometric morphism* in that it has a further left adjoint Π:

$$(\Pi \dashv \Delta \dashv \Gamma) : \mathbf{H} \underset{\Gamma}{\overset{\overset{\Pi}{\longrightarrow}}{\underset{\longrightarrow}{\xleftarrow{\Delta}}}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \ .$$

- If in addition Π preserves the terminal object we say that $\mathbf{H}$ is a locally ∞-connected and *∞-connected ∞-topos.*
- If Π preserves even all finite ∞-products we say that $\mathbf{H}$ is a *strongly ∞-connected ∞-topos.*
- If Π preserves even all finite ∞-limits we say that $\mathbf{H}$ is a *totally ∞-connected ∞-topos.*

Proposition 2.2.2. *For a locally and globally ∞-connected ∞-topos, the functor Δ is full and faithful.*

Proof. This follows verbatim the proof for the familiar statement about connected toposes, since all the required properties have ∞-analogs: we have that

- the right adjoint ∞-functor Δ is full and faithful precisely if $\Pi\Delta \simeq \mathrm{Id}$ ([LuHTT], p. 308);
- every ∞-groupoid S is the ∞-colimit over itself of the ∞-functor constant on the point:

  $$S \simeq \lim_{\to S} * \ .$$

  ([LuHTT], corollary 4.4.4.9).

With the assumption that with Δ also Π is a left adjoint and that Π preserves the terminal object we therefore have for all $S \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ that

$$\begin{aligned} \Pi\Delta S &\simeq \Pi\Delta \lim_{\to S} * \\ &\simeq \lim_{\to S} \Pi\Delta * \\ &\simeq \lim_{\to S} * \\ &\simeq S \end{aligned} \ .$$

□

The following definition is the direct generalization to ∞-toposes of the main axioms in the definition of *topos of cohesion* from [Lawv07].

Definition 2.2.3. A *cohesive ∞-topos* $\mathbf{H}$ is

1. a strongly ∞-connected topos $\mathbf{H}$ (def 2.2.1)
2. which in addition is a *local ∞-topos*: the global section functor Γ has a right adjoint;
3. such that
   - *pieces have points*: for all $X \in \mathbf{H}$ the image under Γ of the $(\Pi \dashv \Delta)$-unit

$$\Gamma X \stackrel{\Gamma\iota}{\to} \Gamma\Delta\Pi X$$

     is a regular epimorphism in ∞Grpd, equivalently an epimorphism on connected components.
   - *discrete objects are concrete*: for all $S \in \mathrm{Set} \hookrightarrow \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ the unit

$$\Delta S \to \nabla\Gamma\Delta S$$

     is a monomorphism (a -1-truncated morphism).

The first two conditions say in summary that a cohesive ∞-topos has a quadruple of adjoint ∞-functors

$$(\Pi \dashv \Delta \dashv \Gamma \dashv \nabla) : \ \mathbf{H} \underoverset{\underset{\nabla}{\longleftarrow}}{\overset{\Pi}{\longrightarrow}}{\underset{\Gamma}{\overset{\Delta}{\leftrightarrows}}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

such that Π preserves finite products. We record some immediate consequences of these axioms.

Proposition 2.2.4. *A nontrivial cohesive ∞-topos*

1. *has the shape of the point ([LuHTT], section 7.1.6);*
2. *has homotopy dimension 0 ([LuHTT], section 7.2.1);*
3. *has cohomological dimension 0 ([LuHTT], section 7.2.2);*

Proof. The first is a direct consequence of ∞-connectedness. The second follows from locality by an argument analogous to [LuHTT], ex. 7.2.1.2. The third is a consequence of the second by [LuHTT], cor. 7.2.2.30. □

This means that when regarded as a generalized space itself, a cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ looks like a fat point. Notice that every object $X \in \mathbf{H}$ may be identified with the étale geometric morphism $\mathbf{H}/X \to \mathbf{H}$ over $\mathbf{H}$, exhibiting $\mathbf{H}/X$ as *locally modeled on* the space $\mathbf{H}$ ([LuHTT], remark 6.3.5.10). Since we are going to think of the objects of the cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ as spaces equipped with cohesive structure, we may think of $\mathbf{H}$ itself as the fat point that is an abstract *blob of cohesive structure*.

Corollary 2.2.5. *Every cohesive ∞-topos is hypercomplete.*

Proof. By prop. 2.2.4 is has finite homotopy dimension. The claim then follows with [LuHTT], cor. 7.2.1.12. □

2.2.2 ∞-Cohesive site of definition

We discuss a class of sites with the property that the ∞-topos of ∞-sheaves over them (2.1.4) is cohesive, def. 2.2.3.

Definition 2.2.6. We call a site (a small category equipped with a coverage) *locally and globally ∞-connected* if

1. it has a terminal object $*$;
2. for every generating covering family $\{U_i \to U\}$ in C
   (a) $\{U_i \to U\}$ is a *good covering*, def. 2.1.53: the Čech nerve $C(\{U_i\}) \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is degreewise a coproduct of representables;
   (b) the colimit $\varinjlim : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \to \mathrm{sSet}$ of $C(\{U_i\})$ is weakly contractible

$$\varinjlim C(\{U_i\}) \xrightarrow{\simeq} * \,.$$

Proposition 2.2.7. *For C a locally and globally ∞-connected site, the ∞-topos $Sh_\infty(C)$ is locally and globally ∞-connected.*

We prove this after noting two lemmas.

Lemma 2.2.8. *For $\{U_i \to U\}$ a covering family in the ∞-connected site C, the Čech nerve $C(\{U_i\}) \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is a cofibrant resolution of U both in the global projective model structure $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ as well as in the local model structure $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.*

Proof. By assumption on C we have that $C(\{U_i\})$ is a split hypercover [DuHoIs04]. This implies that $C(\{U_i\})$ is cofibrant in the global model structure. By general properties of left Bousfield localization we have that the cofibrations in the local model structure as the same as in the global one. Finally that $C(\{U_i\}) \to U$ is a weak equivalence in the local model structure holds effectively by definition (since we are localizing at these morphisms). □

Proposition 2.2.9. *On a locally and globally ∞-connected site C, the global section ∞-geometric morphsm* $(\Delta \dashv \Gamma) : \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C) \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *is presented under prop. 2.1.27 by the simplical Quillen adjunction*

$$(\mathrm{Const} \dashv \Gamma) : \; [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}} \underset{\Gamma}{\overset{\mathrm{Const}}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}} \;\; ,$$

where Γ is the functor that evaluates on the terminal object, $\Gamma(X) = X(*)$ *and* Const *is the functor that assigns constant presheaves* $\mathrm{Const}S : U \mapsto S$.

Proof. That we have a 1-categorical adjunction $(\mathrm{Const} \dashv \Gamma)$ follows by noticing that since C has a terminal object we have that $\Gamma = \varprojlim$ is given by the limit operation.

To see that we have a Quillen adjunction first notice that we have a Quillen adjunction on the global model structure

$$(\mathrm{Const} \dashv \Gamma) : \; [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \underset{\Gamma}{\overset{\mathrm{Const}}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}} \;\; ,$$

since Γ manifestly preserves fibrations and acyclic fibrations there. Since $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ is left proper and has the same cofibrations as the global model structure, it follows with prop. 2.1.28 that for this to descend to a Quillen adjunction on the local model structure it is sufficient that Γ preserves locally fibrant objects. But every fibrant object in the local structure is in particular fibrant in the global structure, hence in particular fibrant over the terminal object of C.

The left derived functor $\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Const}$ of $\mathrm{Const} : \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}} \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ preserves ∞-limits (because ∞-limits in an ∞-category of ∞-presheaves are computed objectwise), and moreover ∞-stackification, beeing the left derived functor of $\mathrm{Id} : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, is a left exact ∞-functor, therefore the left derived functor of $\mathrm{Const} : \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}} \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ preserves finite ∞-limits.

This means that our Quillen adjunction does model an ∞-geometric morphism $\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C) \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$. By prop. 2.1.30 this is indeed a representative of the terminal geometric morphism as claimed. □

Proof of theorem 2.2.7. By general abstract facts the sSet-functor Const : sSet $\to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ given on $S \in \mathrm{sSet}$ by $\mathrm{Const}(S) : U \mapsto S$ for all $U \in C$ has an sSet-left adjoint

$$\Pi : X \mapsto \int^U X(U) = \varinjlim X$$

naturally in X and S, given by the colimit operation. Notice that since sSet is itself a category of presheaves (on the simplex category), these colimits are degreewise colimits in Set. Also notice that the colimit over a representable functor is the point (by a simple Yoneda lemma-style argument).

Regarded as a functor $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}} \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ the functor Const manifestly preserves fibrations and acyclic fibrations and hence

$$(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Const}) : \ [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \underset{\mathrm{Const}}{\overset{\varinjlim}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$$

is a Quillen adjunction, in particular $\Pi : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \to \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ preserves cofibrations. Since by general properties of left Bousfield localization the cofibrations of $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ are the same, also $\Pi : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}} \to \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ preserves cofibrations.

Since $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ is a left proper model category it follows with prop. 2.1.28 that for

$$(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Const}) : \ [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}} \underset{\mathrm{Const}}{\overset{\varinjlim}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$$

to to be a Quillen adjunction, it suffices now that Const preserves fibrant objects. This means that constant simplicial presheaves satisfy descent along covering families in the ∞-cohesive site C: for every covering family $\{U_i \to U\}$ in C and every simplicial set S it must be true that

$$[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](U, \mathrm{Const} S) \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathrm{Const} S)$$

is a homotopy equivalence of Kan complexes. (Here we use that U, being a representable, is cofibrant, that $C(\{U_i\})$ is cofibrant by the lemma 2.2.8 and that $\mathrm{Const} S$ is fibrant in the projective structure by the assumption that S is fibrant. So the simplicial hom-complexes in the above equaltion really are the correct derived hom-spaces.)

But that this is the case follows by the condition on the ∞-connected site C by which $\varinjlim C(\{U_i\}) \simeq *$: using this we have that

$$[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathrm{Const} S) = \mathrm{sSet}(\varinjlim C(\{U_i\}), S) \simeq \mathrm{sSet}(*, S) = S\,.$$

So we have established that $(\varinjlim \dashv \mathrm{Const})$ is also a Quillen adjunction on the local model structure.

It is clear that the left derived functor of $\varinjlim$ preserves the terminal object: since that is representable by assumption on C, it is cofibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$, hence $\mathbb{L}\varinjlim * \simeq \varinjlim * = *$. □

Definition 2.2.10. An ∞-*cohesive site* is a site such that

1. it has finite products;
2. every object $U \in C$ has at least one point: $C(*, U) \neq \emptyset$;
3. for every covering family $\{U_i \to U\}$ its Čech nerve $C(\{U_i\}) \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is degreewise a coproduct of representables

4. the canonical morphisms $C(\{U_i\}) \to U$ are taken to weak equivalences by both limit and colimit $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \to \mathrm{sSet}$:

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{\to} C(\{U_i\}) &\overset{\simeq}{\to} \lim_{\to} U_i \\ \lim_{\leftarrow} C(\{U_i\}) &\overset{\simeq}{\to} \lim_{\leftarrow} U_i \end{aligned} .$$

Notice that for the representable U we have $\lim_{\to} U \simeq *$ and that since C is assumed to have finite products and hence in particular a terminal object $\lim_{\leftarrow} U = C(*, U)$.

Proposition 2.2.11. *The ∞-sheaf ∞-topos over an ∞-cohesive site is a cohesive ∞-topos.*

Proof. Since an ∞-cohesive site is in particular a locally and globally ∞-connected site (def. 2.2.6) it follows with theorem 2.2.7 that Π exists and preserves the terminal object. Moreover, by the discussion there Π acts by sending a fibrant-cofibrant simplicial presheaf $F : C^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{sSet}$ to its colimit. Since C is assumed to have finite products, C^{op} has finite coproducts, hence is a sifted category. Therefore taking colimits of functors on C^{op} commutes with taking products of these functors. Since the ∞-produuct of ∞-presheaves is modeled by the ordinary product on fibrant simplicial presheaves, it follows that over an ∞-cohesive site Π indeed exhibits a strongly ∞-connected ∞-topos.

Using the notation and results of the proof of theorem 2.2.7, we show that the further right adjoint Δ exists by exhibiting a suitable right Quillen adjoint to $\Gamma : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \to \mathrm{sSet}$, which is given by evaluation on the terminal object. Its sSet-enriched right adjoint is given by

$$\nabla S : U \mapsto \mathrm{sSet}(\Gamma(U), S)$$

as confirmed by the following end/coend computation:

$$\begin{aligned} (X, \nabla(S)) &= \int_{U \in C} \mathrm{sSet}(X(U), \mathrm{sSet}(\Gamma(U), S) \\ &= \int_{U \in C} \mathrm{sSet}(X(U) \times \Gamma(U), S) \\ &= \mathrm{sSet}(\int^{U \in C} X(U) \times \Gamma(U), \quad S) \\ &= \mathrm{sSet}(\int^{U \in C} X(U) \times \mathrm{Hom}_C(*, U), \quad S) \\ &= \mathrm{sSet}(X(*), S) \\ &= \mathrm{sSet}(\Gamma(X), S) \end{aligned} ,$$

We have that

$$(\Gamma \dashv \nabla) : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \underset{\nabla}{\overset{\Gamma}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$$

is a Quillen adjunction, since ∇ manifestly preserves fibrations and acyclic fibrations. Since $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ is a left proper model category, to see that this descends to a Quillen adjunction on the local model structure it is sufficient by prop. 2.1.28 to check that $\nabla : \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}} \to [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ preserves fibrant objects, in that for S a Kan complex we have that ∇S satisfies descent along Čech nerves of covering families.

This is implied by the second defining condition on the ∞-local site C, that $\lim\limits_{\leftarrow} C(\{U_i\}) = \mathrm{Hom}_C(*, C(\{U_i\})) \simeq \mathrm{Hom}_C(*, U) = \lim\limits_{\leftarrow} U$ is a weak equivalence. Using this we have for fibrant $S \in \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ the descent weak equivalence

$$\begin{aligned} [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](U, \nabla S) &= \mathrm{sSet}(\mathrm{Hom}_C(*, U), S) \\ &\simeq \mathrm{sSet}(\mathrm{Hom}_C(*, C(U)), S)\,, \\ &= [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(U), \nabla S) \end{aligned}$$

where we use in the middle step that $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ is a simplicial model category so that homming the weak equivalence between cofibrant objects into the fibrant object S indeed yields a weak equivalence.

It remains to show that *pieces have points* and that *discrete objects are concrete* in $\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C)$. For the first statement we use the cofibrant replacement theorem from [Dugg01] for $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ which says that for X any simplicial presheaf, a functorial projective cofibrant replacement is given by the object

$$QX := \left(\cdots \rightrightarrows \coprod_{U_0 \to U_1 \to X_1} U_0 \rightrightarrows \coprod_{U_0 \to X_0} U_0 \right) ,$$

where the coproducts are over the set of morphisms of presheaves from representables U_i as indicated. By the above discussion, the presentations of Γ and Π by left Quillen functors $\lim\limits_{\leftarrow}$ and $\lim\limits_{\rightarrow}$ takes this to the morphism $\lim\limits_{\leftarrow} QX \to \lim\limits_{\rightarrow} QX$ induced in components by

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \cdots \rightrightarrows & \coprod_{U_0 \to U_1 \to X_1} C(*.U_0) & \rightrightarrows & \coprod_{U_0 \to X_0} C(*, U_0) & . \\ & \downarrow & & \downarrow & \\ \cdots \rightrightarrows & \coprod_{U_0 \to U_1 \to X_1} * & \rightrightarrows & \coprod_{U_0 \to X_0} * & \end{array}$$

By assumption on C we have that all sets $C(*, U_0)$ are non-empty, so that this is componentwise an epimorphism and hence induces in particular an epimorphism on connected components.

Finally, for S a Kan complex we have by the above that $\mathrm{Disc}S$ is the presheaf constant on S. Its homotopy sheaves are the presheaves constant on the homotopy groups of S. The inclusion of these into the homotopy sheaves of $\mathrm{coDisc}S$ is over each $U \in C$ the diagonal injection

$$\pi_n(S, x) \hookrightarrow \pi_n(S, x)^{C(*,U)} .$$

Therefore also *discrete objects are concrete* in the ∞-topos over the ∞-cohesive site C. □

Below we discuss in detail the following examples.

Examples 2.2.12. The following sites are ∞-cohesive.

- The site $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$ of Cartesian spaces, continuous maps between them and good open covers (prop. 3.2.2).
- The site $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ of Cartesian spaces, smooth maps between them and good open covers (prop. 3.3.6),
- The site $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{SynthDiff}}$ of Cartesian spaces with infinitesimal thickening, smooth maps between the and good open covers that are the identity on the thickening (prop. 3.4.6).
- The site $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{super}}$ of super-Cartesian spaces, morphisms of supermanifolds between them and good open covers (prop. 3.5.10).

2.2.3 Fibrancy over ∞-cohesive sites

The condition on an object $X \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ to be fibrant models the fact that X is an ∞-*presheaf of* ∞-*groupoids*. The condition that X is also fibrant as an object in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ models the higher analog of the sheaf condition: it makes X an ∞-*sheaf*. For generic sites C, fibrancy in the local model structure is a property rather hard to check or establish concretely. But often a given site can be replaced by another site on which the condition is easier to control, without changing the corresponding ∞-topos, up to equivalence. Here we discuss for ∞-cohesive sites, def. 2.2.10, explicit conditions for a simplicial presheaf over them to be fibrant. This turns out to be a comparatively weak condition: cohesive ∞-sites have many fibrant objects, but few cofibrant objects. This is useful, because Dugger's results about cofibrancy in the projective model structure [Dugg01] often provides sufficient means to construct suitable cofibrant resolutions in practice. More discussion of this point is below around remark 3.2.12.

In order to discuss descent over C it is convenient to introduce the following notation for "cohomology over the site C". For the moment this is just an auxiliary technical notion. Later we will see how it relates to an intrinsically defined notion of cohomology.

Definition 2.2.13. For C an ∞-cohesive site, $A \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ fibrant, and $\{U_i \to U\}$ a good cover in U, we write

$$H^n_C(\{U_i\}, A) := \pi_0 \mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A) \,.$$

Moreover, if A is equipped with (abelian) group structure we write

$$H^n_C(\{U_i\}, A) := \pi_0 \mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), \bar{W}^n A) \,.$$

Definition 2.2.14. An object $A \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is called *C-acyclic* if

1. for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$ the homotopy group presheaves π_n^{PSh} from def. 2.1.38 are already sheaves $\pi_n(A) \in \mathrm{Sh}(C)$;
2. for $n = 1$ and $k = 1$ as well as $n \geq 2$ and $k \geq 1$ we have $H^k_C(\{U_i\}, \pi_n(A)) \simeq *$ for all good covers $\{U_i \to U\}$.

Remark 2.2.15. This definition can be formulated and the following statements about it are true over any site whatsoever. However, on generic sites C the C-acyclic objects are not very interesting. On ∞-cohesive sites on the other hand they are of central importance.

Observation 2.2.16. If A is C-acyclic then for every point $x : * \to A$ also $\Omega_x A$ is C-acyclic (for any model of the loop space object in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$).

Proof. The standard statement in $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$

$$\pi_n \Omega X \simeq \pi_{n+1} X$$

directly prolongs to $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. □

Theorem 2.2.17. *Let C be an ∞-cohesive site. Sufficient conditions for an object $A \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ to be fibrant in the local model structure $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ are*

- *A is 0-truncated and C-acyclic;*
- *A is connected and C-acyclic;*
- *A is a group object and C-acyclic.*

We demonstrate this statement in several stages.

Proposition 2.2.18. *A 0-truncated object is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ precisely if it is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ and weakly equivalent to a sheaf: to an object in the image of the canonical inclusion*

$$\mathrm{Sh}_C \hookrightarrow [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}] \hookrightarrow [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \,.$$

Proof. From general facts of left Bousfield localization we have that the fibrant objects in the local model structure are necessarily fibrant also in the global structure.

Since moreover $A \to \pi_0(A)$ is a weak equivalence in the global model structure by assumption, we have for every covering $\{U_i \to U\}$ in C a sequence of weak equivalences

$$\mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), \pi_0(A)) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{Maps}(\pi_0 C(\{U_i\}), \pi_0(A)) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{Sh}_C(S(\{U_i\}), \pi_0(A)) \,,$$

where $S(\{U_i\}) \hookrightarrow U$ is the sieve corresponding to the cover. Therefore the descent condition

$$\mathrm{Maps}(U, A) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A)$$

is precisely the sheaf condition for $\pi_0(A)$. □

Proposition 2.2.19. *A connected fibrant object $A \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ if for all objects $U \in C$*

1. *$H_C(U, A) \simeq *$;*
2. *ΩA is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$,*

where ΩA is any fibrant object in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ representing the looping of A.

Proof. For $\{U_i \to U\}$ a covering we need to show that the canonical morphism

$$\mathrm{Maps}(U, A) \to \mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A)$$

is a weak homotopy equivalence. This is equivalent to the two morphisms

1. $\pi_0\mathrm{Maps}(U, A) \to \pi_0\mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A)$
2. $\Omega\mathrm{Maps}(U, A) \to \Omega\mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A)$

being weak equivalences. Since A is connected the first of these says that there is a weak equivalence $* \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} H_C(U, A)$. The second condition is equivalent to $\mathrm{Maps}(U, \Omega A) \to \mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), \Omega A)$, being a weak equivalence, hence to the descent of ΩA. □

Proposition 2.2.20. *An object A which is connected, 1-truncated and C-acyclic is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.*

Proof. Observe that for a connected and 1-truncated objects we have a weak equivalence $A \simeq \bar{W}\pi_1(A)$ in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. The first condition of prop. 2.2.19 is then implied by C-connectedness. The second condition there is that $\pi_1(A)$ satisfies descent. By C-connectedness this is a sheaf and it is 0-truncated, hence satisfies descent by prop 2.2.18. □

Proposition 2.2.21. *Every connected and C-acyclic object $A \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.*

Proof. We first show the statement for truncated A and afterwards for the general case.

The k-truncated case in turn we consider by induction over k. If A is 1-truncated the proposition holds by prop. 2.2.18. Assuming then that the statement has been shown for k-truncated A, we need to show it for $(k+1)$-truncated A.

This we do by decomposing A into its canonical Postnikov tower: For $n \in \mathbb{N}$ let

$$A(n) := A/_{\sim_n}$$

be the quotient simplicial presheaf where two cells

$$\alpha, \beta : \Delta^n \times U \to A$$

are identified, $\alpha \sim_n \beta$, precisely if they agree on their n-skeleton:

$$\mathrm{sk}_n\alpha = \mathrm{sk}_n\beta : \mathrm{sk}_n\Delta \hookrightarrow \Delta^n \to A(U)\,.$$

It is a standard fact (shown in [GoJa99], theorem VI 3.5 for simplicial sets, which generalizes immediately to the global model structure $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$) that for all $n > 1$ we have sequences

$$K(n) \to A(n) \to A(n-1)\,,$$

where $A(n-1)$ is $(n-1)$-truncated with homotopy groups in degree $\leq n-1$ those of A, and where the right morphism is a Kan fibration and the left morphism is its kernel, such that

$$A = \lim_{\leftarrow_n} A(n)\,.$$

Moreover, there are canonical weak homotopy equivalences

$$K(n) \to \Xi((\pi_{n-1}A)[n])$$

to the Eilenberg-MacLane object on the nth homotopy group in degree n.

Since $A(n-1)$ is $(n-1)$-truncated and connected the induction assumption implies that it is fibrant in the local model structure.

Moreover we see that $K(n)$ is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$: the first condition of 2.2.19 holds by the assumption that A is C-connected. The second condition is implied again by the induction hypothesis, since $\Omega K(n)$ is $(n-1)$-truncated, connected and still C-acyclic, by observation 2.2.16.

Therefore in the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
\mathrm{Maps}(U, K(n)) & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{Maps}(U, A(n)) & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{Maps}(U, A(n-1)) \\
\downarrow{\simeq} & & \downarrow & & \downarrow{\simeq} \\
\mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), K(n)) & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A(n)) & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A(n-1))
\end{array}$$

for $\{U_i \to U\}$ any good cover in C the top and bottom rows are fiber sequences and the left and right vertical morphisms are weak equivalences in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. It follows that also the middle morphism is a weak equivalence. This shows that $A(n)$ is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. By completing the induction the same then follows for the object A itself.

This establishes the claim for truncated A. To demonstrate the claim for general A notice that the limit over a sequence of fibrations is a homotopy limit. Therefore we have

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
\mathrm{Maps}(U, A) & \simeq & \lim\limits_{\leftarrow_n} \mathrm{Maps}(U, A(n)) \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow{\simeq} \\
\mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A) & \simeq & \lim\limits_{\leftarrow_n} \mathrm{Maps}(C(\{U_i\}), A(n))
\end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical morphism is a morphism between homotopy limits in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ induced by a weak equivalence of diagrams, hence is itself a weak equivalence. Therefore A is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. □

Lemma 2.2.22. *For $G \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ a group object, the canonical sequence*

$$G_0 \to G \to G/G_0$$

is a homotopy fiber sequence in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

Proof. Since homotopy pullbacks of presheaves are computed objectwise, it is sufficient to show this for $C = *$, hence in $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$. One checks that generally, for X a Kan complex and G a simplicial group acting on X the quotient morphism $X \to X/G$ is a Kan fibration. Therefore the homotopy fiber of $G \to G/G_0$ is presented by the ordinary fiber in sSet. Since the action of G_0 on G is free, this is indeed $G_0 \to G$. □

Proposition 2.2.23. *Every C-acyclic group object $G \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ for which G_0 is a sheaf is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.*

Proof. By lemma 2.2.22 we have a fibration sequence

$$G_0 \to G \to G/G_0 \,.$$

Since G_0 is assumed to be a sheaf it is fibrant in the local model structure by prop. 2.2.18. Since G/G_0 is evidently connected and C-acyclic it is fibrant in the local model structure by prop. 2.2.21. As before in the proof there this implies that also G is fibrant in the local model structure. □

In total, this proves theorem 2.2.17.

We discuss some examples.

Proposition 2.2.24. *Let $(\delta : G_1 \to G_0)$ be a crossed module, def. 1.3.5, of sheaves over an ∞-cohesive site C. Then the simplicial delooping $\bar{W}(G_1 \to G_0)$ is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ if the image factorization of $G_0 \times G_1 \to G_0 \times G_0$ has sections over each $U \in C$ and if the presheaf $\ker\delta$ is a sheaf.*

Proof. The existence of the lift ensures that the homotopy presheaf $\pi_1^{\mathrm{PSh}} \bar{W}G$ is a sheaf. Notice that $\pi_2^{\mathrm{PSh}} \bar{W}G = \ker(\delta)$. Since moreover $\bar{W}G$ is manifestly connected, the claim follows with theorem 2.2.17. □

2.3 Structures in a cohesive ∞-topos

The axioms of a *cohesive ∞-topos* (def. 2.2.3) are meant to encode properties that characterize ∞-toposes of ∞-groupoids that are equipped with extra *cohesive structure*. In order to reflect this geometric interpretation notationally we shall from now on write

$$(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc}) : \mathbf{H} \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{\Pi} \\ \xleftarrow{\mathrm{Disc}} \\ \xrightarrow{\Gamma} \\ \xleftarrow[\mathrm{coDisc}]{} \end{array} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

for the defining ∞-connected and ∞-local geometric morphism and say for $S \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ that

- $\mathrm{Disc}S \in \mathbf{H}$ is S equipped with *discrete cohesive structure*;
- $\mathrm{coDisc}S \in \mathbf{H}$ is S equipped with *indiscrete cohesive structure*

and for $X \in \mathbf{H}$ that

- $\Gamma X \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is the *underlying ∞-groupoid* of X;
- ΠX is the *fundamental ∞-groupoid* or *geometric path ∞-groupoid* of X.

We exhibit now a fairly extensive list of general abstract homotopical, cohomological and geometric structures that exist in every cohesive ∞-topos on general grounds. In sections 3 and 4 we consider concrete implementations of these.

- 2.3.1 – Concrete objects
- 2.3.2 – ∞-Groups
- 2.3.3 – Cohomology
- 2.3.4 – Principal ∞-bundles
- 2.3.5 – Twisted cohomology
- 2.3.6 – ∞-Gerbes
- 2.3.7 – Geometric homotopy and Galois theory
- 2.3.8 – Paths and geometric Postnikov towers
- 2.3.9 – Universal coverings and geometric Whitehead towers
- 2.3.10 – Flat ∞-connections and local systems
- 2.3.11 – de Rham cohomology
- 2.3.12 – Exponentiated ∞-Lie algebras
- 2.3.13 – Maurer-Cartan forms and curvature characteristic forms
- 2.3.14 – Differential cohomology
- 2.3.15 – Chern-Weil homomorphism
- 2.3.16 – Higher holonomy
- 2.3.17 – Chern-Simons functionals
- 2.3.18 – Wess-Zumino-Witten functionals

2.3.1 Concrete objects

The cohesive structure on an object in a cohesive ∞-topos need not be supported by points. We discuss a general abstract characterization of objects that do have an interpretation as bare n-groupoids equipped with cohesive structure.

The content of this section is taken from [CarSch].

Proposition 2.3.1. *On a cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ both* Disc *and* coDisc *are full and faithful ∞-functors and* coDisc *exhibits* ∞Grpd *as a sub-∞-topos of $\mathbf{H}$ by an ∞-geometric embedding*

$$\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \underset{\mathrm{coDisc}}{\overset{\Gamma}{\hookleftarrow}} \mathbf{H} \; .$$

Proof. The full and faithfulness of Disc was shown in prop. 2.2.2 and that for coDisc follows from the same kind of argument. Since Γ is also a right adjoint it preserves in particular finite ∞-limits, so that $(\Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc})$ is indeed an ∞-geometric morphism. □

Corollary 2.3.2. *The ∞-topos* ∞Grpd *is equivalent to the full sub-∞-category of $\mathbf{H}$ on those objects $X \in \mathbf{H}$ for which the canonical morphism*

$$X \to \mathrm{coDisc}\Gamma X$$

is an equivalence.

Proof. This follows by general facts about reflective sub-∞-categories ([LuHTT], section 5.5.4). □

Proposition 2.3.3. *Let $\mathbf{H}$ be the ∞-topos over an ∞-cohesive site C. For a 0-truncated object X in $\mathbf{H}$ the morphism*

$$X \to \mathrm{coDisc}\Gamma X$$

is a monomorphism precisely if X is a concrete sheaf *in the sense of [Dub79].*

Proof. Monomorphisms of sheaves are detected objectwise. So by the Yoneda lemma and using the $(\Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc})$-adjunction we have that $X \to \mathrm{coDisc}\Gamma X$ is a monomorphism precisely if for all $U \in C$ the morphism

$$X(U) \simeq \mathbf{H}(U, X) \to \mathbf{H}(U, \mathrm{coDisc}\Gamma X) \simeq \mathbf{H}(\Gamma(U), \Gamma(X))$$

is a monomorphism. This is the traditional definition. □

Definition 2.3.4. We say

- an object $X \in \mathbf{H}$ is *n-concrete* if it is n-truncated and the unit $X \to \mathrm{coDisc}\Gamma X$ is an $(n-1)$-truncated morphism;
- a k-truncated object for $k \leq 0$ is *concrete* if it is 0-concrete;
- an object that is not k-truncated for $k \leq 0$ is concrete if, recursively,
  1. it has a *concrete atlas*: an effective epimorphism $U \to X$ where U is 0-concrete;
  2. the ∞-pullback $U \times_X U$ is itself concrete.

We write $\mathrm{Conc}(\mathbf{H}) \hookrightarrow \mathbf{H}$ for the full sub-∞-category on the conccrete objects.

Remark 2.3.5. For untruncated objects the above recursion never terminates: an untruncated object is concrete if it has a concrete atlas, whose fiber product with itself has a concrete atlas, and so forth. For an n-truncated object the last recursion step requires a 0-concrete atlas whose fiber product is 0-concrete.

Observation 2.3.6. The restriction of Γ and Π to $\mathrm{Conc}(\mathbf{H})$ yields a quadruple of adjunctions

$$(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc}) : \ \mathrm{Conc}(\mathbf{H}) \underset{\mathrm{coDisc}}{\overset{\Pi}{\rightleftarrows}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \ ,$$

where Π preserves finite products.

Proof. Since $\mathrm{Conc}(\mathbf{H})$ is a full sub-∞-category it suffices to check that $\mathrm{Disc}, \mathrm{coDisc} : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \mathbf{H}$ both factor through the inclusion $\mathrm{Conc}(\mathbf{H}) \hookrightarrow \mathbf{H}$. For coDisc this is evident. For Disc this follows from the content of the third axiom on a cohesive ∞-topos: *discrete objects are concrete.* □

Definition 2.3.7. For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ a k-truncated object, we say its *k-concretification*, $\mathrm{conc}_k X$, is the k-image factorization, according to prop. 2.1.35, of the $(\Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc})$-unit

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{coDisc}\Gamma X \\ & \searrow \quad \nearrow & \\ & \mathrm{conc}_k X & \end{array} .$$

2.3.2 Cohesive ∞-Groups

Every ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ comes with a notion of *∞-group objects* that generalizes the ordinary notion of group objects in a topos as well as that of grouplike A_∞ spaces in $\mathrm{Top} \simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$.

Definition 2.3.8. Write

- $\mathbf{H}_* := */\mathbf{H}$ for the ∞-category of pointed objects in $\mathbf{H}$;
- $\mathbf{H}^{\mathrm{conn}}$ for for the full subcategory of $\mathbf{H}$ on the connected objects;
- $\mathbf{H}_*^{\mathrm{conn}}$ for the full subcategory of the pointed objects on the connected ones.

Definition 2.3.9. Write

$$\Omega : \mathbf{H}_* \to \mathbf{H}$$

for the ∞-functor that sends a pointed object $* \to X$ to its *loop space object*: the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Omega X & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & X \end{array} .$$

Definition 2.3.10. An *∞-group* in $\mathbf{H}$ is an A_∞-algebra G in $\mathbf{H}$ such that $\pi_0(G)$ is a group object.

Write $\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$ for the ∞-category of ∞-groups in $\mathbf{H}$.

This is def. 5.1.3.2 in [Lur11], together with remark 5.1.3.3.

Theorem 2.3.11. *Every loop space object canonically has the structure of an ∞-group, and this construction extends to an ∞-functor*

$$\Omega : \mathbf{H}_* \to \mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H}) .$$

This constitutes an equivalence of ∞-categories

$$(\Omega \dashv \mathbf{B}) : \ \mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H}) \underset{\mathbf{B}}{\overset{\Omega}{\underset{\simeq}{\leftrightarrows}}} \mathbf{H}_*^{\mathrm{conn}}$$

of ∞-groups with connected pointed objects in $\mathbf{H}$.

This is lemma 7.2.2.1 in [LuHTT]. (See also theorem 5.1.3.6 of [Lur11] where this is the equivalence denoted ϕ_0 in the proof).

We call the inverse $\mathbf{B} : \mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H}) \to \mathbf{H}_*^{\mathrm{conn}}$ the *delooping* functor of $\mathbf{H}$. By convenient abuse of notation we write $\mathbf{B}$ also for the composite $\mathbf{B} : \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{H}) \to \mathbf{H}_*^{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{H}$ with the functor that forgets the basepoint and the connectedness.

Remark 2.3.12. While by prop. 2.2.4 every connected object in a cohesive ∞-topos has a unique point, nevertheless the homotopy type of the full hom-∞-groupoid $*/\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{B}G, \mathbf{B}H)$ of pointed objects in general differs from that of unpointed objects $\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{B}G, \mathbf{B}H)$.

Definition 2.3.13. A *groupoid object* in $\mathbf{H}$ is a simplicial object

$$\mathcal{G} : \Delta^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathbf{H}$$

such that all its Segal-maps are equivalences: for every $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and every partition $[k] \coprod [k'] \to [n]$ into to subsets with exactly one joint element, the canonical diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{G}[n] & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{G}[k] \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathcal{G}[k'] & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{G}[*] \end{array}$$

is an ∞-pullback diagram.

Write

$$\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{H}) \subset \mathrm{Func}(\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathbf{H})$$

for the full subcategory of the ∞-category of simplicial objects in $\mathbf{H}$ on the groupoid objects.

This is def. 6.1.2.7 of [LuHTT], using prop. 6.1.2.6.

Theorem 2.3.14. *In an ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ we have*

1. *Every groupoid object in $\mathbf{H}$ is* effective*: it is the Čech nerve of the map into its ∞-colimit:*

$$\mathcal{G} \simeq C(\mathcal{G}_0 \to \varinjlim \mathcal{G}_\bullet)\,.$$

Moreover, this extends to a natural equivalence of ∞-categories

$$\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{H}) \simeq (\mathbf{H}^{\Delta[1]})_{\mathrm{eff}}\,,$$

where on the right we have the full sub-∞-category of the arrow category of $\mathbf{H}$ on the effective epimorphisms.

2. *The ∞-pullback along any morphism preserves ∞-colimits*

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \varinjlim_i f^* P_i & \simeq & f^* \varinjlim_i P_i & \longrightarrow & \varinjlim_i P_i \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ & & Y & \xrightarrow{f} & X \end{array}$$

This are two of the Giraud-Lurie axioms [LuHTT] that characterize ∞-toposes. (The equivalence of ∞-categories in the first point follows with the remark below corollary 6.2.3.5 of [LuHTT].)

Remark 2.3.15. In particular for every groupoid object $\mathcal{G}$ the canonical morphism $\mathcal{G}_0 \to \varinjlim \mathcal{G}_\bullet$ is an effective epimorphism.

Proposition 2.3.16. *∞-groups G in $\mathbf{H}$ are equivalently those groupoid objects $\mathcal{G}$ in $\mathbf{H}$ for which $\mathcal{G}_0 \simeq *$.*

This is the statement of the compound equivalence $\phi_3\phi_2\phi_1$ in the proof of theorem 5.1.3.6 in [Lur11].

Remark 2.3.17. This means that for G an ∞-group object the Čech nerve extension of its delooping fiber sequence $G \to * \to \mathbf{B}G$ is the simplicial object

$$\cdots \rightrightarrows G \times G \rightrightarrows G \rightrightarrows * \twoheadrightarrow \mathbf{B}G$$

that exhibits G as a groupoid object over $*$. In particular it means that for G an ∞-group, the essentially unique morphism $* \to \mathbf{B}G$ is an effective epimorphism.

Definition 2.3.18. For $f : Y \to Z$ any morphism in $\mathbf{H}$ and $z : * \to Z$ a point, the *∞-fiber* or *homotopy fiber* of f over this point is the ∞-pullback $X := * \times_Z Y$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ Y & \xrightarrow{f} & Z \end{array} .$$

Observation 2.3.19. Suppose that also Y is pointed and f is a morphism of pointed objects. Then the ∞-fiber of an ∞-fiber is the loop object of the base.

This means that we have a diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \Omega_z Z & \longrightarrow & X & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & Y & \xrightarrow{f} & Z \end{array} .$$

where the outer rectangle is an ∞-pullback if the left square is an ∞-pullback. This follows from the pasting law prop. 2.1.26.

Proposition 2.3.20. *If the cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ has an ∞-cohesive site of definition C (def. 2.2.10), then*

- *every ∞-group object has a presentation by a presheaf of simplicial groups*

  $$G \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sGrp}] \xrightarrow{U} [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$$

  which is fibrant in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$;

- *the corresponding delooping object is presented by the presheaf*

  $$\bar{W}G \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}_0] \hookrightarrow [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$$

  which is given over each $U \in C$ by $\bar{W}(G(U))$.

(Here we use notation as in [GoJa99], chapter V.)

Proof. Let $* \to X \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ be a locally fibrant representative of $* \to \mathbf{B}G$. Since the terminal object $*$ is indeed presented by the presheaf constant on the point we have functorial choices of basepoints in all the $X(U)$ for all $U \in C$ and by assumption that X is connected all the $X(U)$ are connected. Hence without loss of generality we may assume that X is presented by a presheaf of reduced simplicial sets $X \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}_0] \hookrightarrow X \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$.

There is a Quillen equivalence between the model structure on reduced simplicial sets and the model structure on simplicial groups

$$(\Omega \dashv \bar{W}) : \ \mathrm{sGrp} \underset{\bar{W}}{\overset{\Omega}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet}_0 \ .$$

whose unit is a weak equivalences (prop. 6.3 in ch V. of [GoJa99])

$$Y \xrightarrow{\simeq} \bar{W}\Omega Y$$

for every $Y \in \mathrm{sSet}_0 \hookrightarrow \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ and $\bar{W}\Omega Y$ is always a Kan complex. Therefore

$$\bar{W}\Omega X \in [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$$

is an equivalent representative for X, fibrant at least in the global model structure. Since the finite ∞-limit involved in forming loop space objects is equivalently computed in the global model structure, by prop. 2.1.52, it is sufficient to observe that

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Omega X & \longrightarrow & W\Omega X \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \bar{W}\Omega X \end{array}$$

is

- a pullback diagram in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ (because it is so over each $U \in C$ by the general theory of simplicial groups);
- hence a homotopy pullback of the point along itself

□

Remark 2.3.21. Since a presheaf of simplicial groups is equivalently a group object (in the sense of 1-category theory) in the category of simplicial presheaves, prop. 2.3.20 is a *strictification* result: every ∞-group has a presentation by an object that is equipped with a strict group structure.

Corollary 2.3.22. *Every 1-truncated ∞-group object has a presentation by a presheaf of strict 2-groups, coming from a presheaf of crossed modules, def. 1.3.5.*

Proof. By prop. 2.3.20 the group object has a presentation by a presheaf G of simplicial groups that is objectwise 1-truncated. Since quotients of sets commute with products, as does the coskeletal extension

$$\mathrm{cosk}_2 : \mathrm{Set}^{\Delta_{\leq 1}} \to \mathrm{sSet}\,,$$

being a right adjoined, it follows that the objectwise 2-coskeletal extension $\mathrm{cosk}_2(\mathrm{tr}_1 G/_{G_2})$ of the quotient of the 1-truncation of G by 2-cells is still a simplicial group, and the morphism

$$G \xrightarrow{\simeq} \mathrm{cosk}_2(\mathrm{tr}_1 G/_{G_2})$$

is objectwise a weak equivalence and respects the strict group structure. Since the object on the right is a Kan complex in the image of cosk_2 it is necessarily objectwise the nerve of a 1-groupoid, and this 1-groupoid is hence equipped with strict group structure. Since strict 2-groups are precisely the strict group objects in the 1-category of groupoids, this proves the claim. □

Remark 2.3.23. We discuss below in observation 2.3.42 that, since $WG \to \bar{W}G$ is objectwise a fibration resolution of the point inclusion it serves as a *universal G-principal ∞-bundle.*

2.3.3 Cohomology

There is an intrinsic notion of *cohomology* and of *principal ∞-bundles* in every ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$. For G an ∞-group object, G-principal ∞-bundles are naturally classified by cohomology with coefficients in G.

Definition 2.3.24. For $X, A \in \mathbf{H}$ two objects, we say that

$$H(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, A)$$

is the *cohomology set* of X with coefficients in A. If $A = G$ is an ∞-group we write

$$H^1(X, G) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$$

for cohomology with coefficients in its delooping. Generally, if $K \in \mathbf{H}$ has a p-fold delooping for some $p \in \mathbb{N}$, we write

$$H^p(X, K) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^p K)\,.$$

In the context of cohomology on X wth coefficients in A we we say that

- the hom-space $\mathbf{H}(X, A)$ is the *cocycle ∞-groupoid*;
- a morphism $g : X \to A$ is a *cocycle*;
- a 2-morphism : $g \Rightarrow h$ is a *coboundary* between cocycles.
- a morphism $c : A \to B$ represents the *characteristic class*

$$[c] : H(-, A) \to H(-, B)\,.$$

If X is not 0-truncated (not a cohesive 0-groupoid) then cohomology on X is *equivariant cohomology* .

Remark 2.3.25. There is also a notion of cohomology in the *petit* ∞-topos of $X \in \mathbf{H}$, the slice of $\mathbf{H}$ over X

$$\mathcal{X} := \mathbf{H}/X\,.$$

This is canonically equipped with the étale geometric morphism ([LuHTT], remark 6.3.5.10)

$$(X_! \dashv X^* \dashv X_*) : \mathbf{H}/X \underset{X_*}{\overset{X_!}{\underset{\leftarrow X^* -}{\rightrightarrows}}} \mathbf{H}\ ,$$

where $X_!$ simply forgets the morphism to X and where $X^* = X \times (-)$ forms the product with X. Accordingly $X^*(*_{\mathbf{H}}) \simeq *_{\mathcal{X}} =: X$ and $X_!(*_{\mathcal{X}}) = X \in \mathbf{H}$. Therefore cohomology over X with coefficients of the form $X^* A$ is equivalently the cohomology in $\mathbf{H}$ of X with coefficients in A:

$$\mathcal{X}(X, X^* A) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, A)\,.$$

For a general coeffcient object $A \in \mathcal{X}$ the A-cohomology over X in $\mathcal{X}$ is a *twisted* cohomology of X in $\mathbf{H}$, discussed below in 2.3.5.

Typically one thinks of a morphism $A \to B$ in $\mathbf{H}$ as presenting a *characteristic class* of A if B is "simpler" than A, notably if B is an Eilenberg-MacLane object $B = \mathbf{B}^n K$ for K a 0-truncated abelian group in $\mathbf{H}$. In this case the characteristic class may be regarded as being in the degree-n K-cohomology of A

$$[c] \in H^n(A, K)\,.$$

Definition 2.3.26. For every morphism $c : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}H \in \mathbf{H}$ define the *long fiber sequence to the left*

$$\cdots \to \Omega G \to \Omega H \to F \to G \to H \to \mathbf{B}F \to \mathbf{B}G \stackrel{c}{\to} \mathbf{B}H$$

to be given by the consecutive pasting diagrams of ∞-pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
\vdots & & \vdots & & & & \\
 & & & & & & . \\
\Omega H & \longrightarrow & G & \longrightarrow & * & & \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\
* & \longrightarrow & H & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}F & \longrightarrow & * \\
 & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
 & & * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G & \stackrel{c}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}H
\end{array}$$

Proposition 2.3.27. *This is well-defined, in that the objects in the fiber sequence are indeed as indicated.*

Proof. Repeatedly apply the pasting law 2.1.26 and definition 2.3.9. □

Proposition 2.3.28. *1. The long fiber sequence to the left of $c : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}H$ becomes constant on the point after n iterations if H is n-truncated.*

2. For every object $X \in \mathbf{H}$ we have a long exact sequence of pointed cohomology sets

$$\cdots \to H^0(X, G) \to H^0(X, H) \to H^1(X, F) \to H^1(X, G) \to H^1(X, H)\,.$$

Proof. The first statement follows from the observation that a loop space object $\Omega_x A$ is a fiber of the free loop space object $\mathcal{L}A$ and that this may equivalently be computed by the ∞-powering A^{S^1}, where $S^1 \in \mathrm{Top} \simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is the circle.

The second statement follows by observing that the ∞-hom-functor $\mathbf{H}(X, -)$ preserves all ∞-limits, so that we have ∞-pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
\mathbf{H}(X, F) & \longrightarrow & * \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
\mathbf{H}(X, G) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, H)
\end{array}$$

etc. in ∞Grpd at each stage of the fiber sequence. The statement then follows with the familiar long exact sequence for homotopy groups in Top $\simeq$ ∞Grpd. □

To every cocycle $g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ is canonically associated its homotopy fiber $P \to X$, the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
P & \longrightarrow & * \quad . \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
X & \stackrel{g}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}G\,.
\end{array}$$

We discuss now that such P canonically has the structure of a *G-principal ∞-bundle* and that $\mathbf{B}G$ is the fine moduli space – the moduli ∞-stack – for G-principal ∞-bundles.

2.3.4 Principal ∞-bundles

Definition 2.3.29. For $G \in \mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$ an ∞-group we say a *G-action* on an object $P \in \mathbf{H}$ is a groupoid object $P//G$ of the form

$$\cdots \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} P \times G \times G \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} P \times G \rightrightarrows P$$

such that the degreewise projections $P \times G^n \to G^n$ constitute a morphism of groupoid objects

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \cdots & \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} & P \times G \times G & \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} & P \times G & \rightrightarrows & P \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \cdots & \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} & G \times G & \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} & G & \rightrightarrows & * \end{array} .$$

With convenient abuse of notation we also write

$$P//G := \varinjlim P \times G^{\times \bullet} \quad \in \mathbf{H}$$

for the corresponding ∞-colimit object.

Write

$$G\mathrm{Action} \subset \mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{H})/(*//G)$$

for the full sub-∞-category of groupoid objects over $*//G$ on those that are G-actions.

Remark 2.3.30. Since the face and degeneracy maps in the groupoid object $G^\bullet$ are fixed, this definition fixes all face and degeneracy maps in $P//G$ except the outermost face maps. This is what defines the action $P \times G \to G$.

Remark 2.3.31. Using this notation in prop. 2.3.16 we have

$$\mathbf{B}G \simeq *//G\,.$$

Definition 2.3.32. For $G \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$, a morphism $P \to X$ in $\mathbf{H}$ together with a G-action on P is a *G-∞-torsor* over X if $X \simeq P//G$.

A morphism of G-torsors $P_1 \to P_2$ over X is a morphism of the corresponding action groupoid objects that preserves X.

Remark 2.3.33. By theorem 2.3.14 this means in particular that a G-∞-torsor $P \to X$ is an effective epimorphism.

Proposition 2.3.34. *For $g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ a morphism, its homotopy fiber $P \to X$ canonically carries the structure of a G-∞-torsor over X.*

Proof. That $P \to X$ is the fiber of $g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ means that we have an ∞-pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array} .$$

By the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks this induces a compound diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccc} \cdots & \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} & P \times G \times G & \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} & P \times G & \rightrightarrows & P & \longrightarrow & X \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle g} \\ \cdots & \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} & G \times G & \substack{\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow\\[-1ex]\longrightarrow} & G & \rightrightarrows & * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

where each square and each composite rectangle is an ∞-pullback. This exhibits the G-action on P. Since $* \to \mathbf{B}G$ is an effective epimorphism, so is its ∞-pullback $P \to X$. Since ∞-colimits are preserved by ∞-pullbacks we have $X \simeq P//G$. $\square$

Observation 2.3.35. For $P \to X$ a G-∞-torsor obtained as in prop. 2.3.34 $x : * \to X$ any point of X we have a canonical equivalence

$$x^* P \xrightarrow{\simeq} G$$

between the fiber of P over X and the ∞-group object G.

Proof. This follows from the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks, which gives the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} G & \longrightarrow & P & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \xrightarrow{x} & X & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

in which both squares as well as the total rectangle are ∞-pullbacks. □

Definition 2.3.36. A *locally trivial G-∞-torsor* or *G-principal ∞-bundle* over X is a G-∞-torsor $P \to X$ such that diagram of ∞-colimits

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} & & P & \longrightarrow & * & & \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ X & \simeq & \varinjlim_n P \times G^{\times n} & \longrightarrow & \varinjlim_n G^{\times n} & \simeq & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

is an ∞-pullback diagram.

Lemma 2.3.37. *In any ∞-topos a morphism*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} A & \xrightarrow{f} & B \\ & \searrow \quad \swarrow & \\ & X & \end{array}$$

over an object X is an equivalence precisely if for any effective epimorphism $p : Y \to X$ the pullback $p^* f$ in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} p^* A & \xrightarrow{p^* f} & p^* B \\ & \searrow \quad \swarrow & \\ & Y & \end{array}$$

is an equivalence.

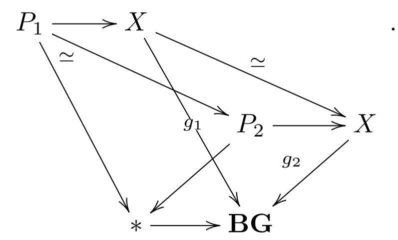
Proof. Since effective epimorphisms as well as equivalences are preserved by pullback we get a simplicial diagram of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \cdots \substack{\longrightarrow\\ \longrightarrow\\ \longrightarrow} & p^* A \times_A p^* A & \substack{\longrightarrow\\ \longrightarrow} & p^* A & \twoheadrightarrow & A & . \\ & \downarrow \simeq & & \downarrow \simeq & & \downarrow f & \\ \cdots \substack{\longrightarrow\\ \longrightarrow\\ \longrightarrow} & p^* B \times_B p^* B & \substack{\longrightarrow\\ \longrightarrow} & p^* B & \twoheadrightarrow & B & \end{array}$$

By definition of effective epimorphisms this exhibits f as an ∞-colimit over equivalences, hence as an equivalence. □

Proposition 2.3.38. *Every morphism between G-torsors over X that are G-principal ∞-bundles over X is an equivalence.*

Proof. Since a morphism of G-torsors $P_1 \to P_2$ is a morphism of Čech nerves that fixes their ∞-colimit X, up to equivalence, and since $* \to \mathbf{B}G$ is an effective epimorphism, we are in the situation of lemma 2.3.37.



□

Definition 2.3.39. The ∞-category $G\mathrm{Bund}(X)$ of G-principal ∞-bundles over X is the ∞-pullback in the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} G\mathrm{Bund}(X) & \longrightarrow & & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{H}^I) \\ \downarrow & & & & \downarrow \varinjlim \\ (\mathbf{H}^{X\square_{\mathbf{B}G}})_{\mathrm{eff,ex}} & \hookrightarrow & (\mathbf{H}^{X\square_{\mathbf{B}G}})_{\mathrm{eff}} & \longrightarrow & (\mathbf{H}^{\square})_{\mathrm{eff}} \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ & & * & \xrightarrow{(X,\mathbf{B}G)} & \mathbf{H}\times\mathbf{H} \end{array} ,$$

where

- $\mathbf{H}^{\square}$ is the ∞-category of squares
$$\left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} p & \longrightarrow & t \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ x & \longrightarrow & b \end{array} \right\} \to \mathbf{H}$$
in $\mathbf{H}$ (the arrow category of the arrow category) and $(\mathbf{H}^{\square})_{\mathrm{eff}}$ is the full subcategory on those squares whose vertical morphisms are both effective epimorphisms in $\mathbf{H}$;
- the morphism $\mathbf{H}^{\square} \to \mathbf{H}\times\mathbf{H}$ is the restriction to the two bottom objects x and b
- the ∞-groupoid $\mathbf{H}^{X\square_{\mathbf{B}G}}$ is the homotopy fiber of this projection over $(X, \mathbf{B}G)$;
- the full inclusion $(\mathbf{H}^{X\square_{\mathbf{B}G}})_{\mathrm{eff,ex}} \hookrightarrow (\mathbf{H}^{X\square_{\mathbf{B}G}})_{\mathrm{eff}}$ is that of those squares which are ∞-pullbacks.

Remark 2.3.40. The objects and the morphism in $G\mathrm{Bund}$ are indeed those of def. 2.3.36: the ∞-pullback picks those groupoid objects

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \cdots & \substack{\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow} & \mathcal{P}_2 & \substack{\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow} & \mathcal{P}_1 & \substack{\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow} & \mathcal{P}_0 \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \cdots & \substack{\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow} & \mathcal{G}_2 & \substack{\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow} & \mathcal{G}_1 & \substack{\longrightarrow\\\longrightarrow} & \mathcal{G}_0 \end{array}$$

in the arrow category such that their colimiting cocone square is of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{P}_0 & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{G}_0 \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

and such that it is an ∞-pullback square.

Proposition 2.3.41. *For all $X, \mathbf{B}G \in \mathbf{H}$ there is a natural equivalence of ∞-groupoids*

$$G\mathrm{Bund}(X) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$$

which on vertices is the construction of def. 2.3.34: a bundle $P \to X$ is mapped to a morphism $X \to \mathbf{B}G$ such that $P \to X \to \mathbf{B}G$ is a fiber sequence.

We therefore say

- $\mathbf{B}G$ is the *classifying object* for G-principal ∞-bundles;
- a morphism $c : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ is a *cocycle* for the corresponging G, bundle and its class $[c] \in \mathrm{H}^1_{\mathbf{H}}(X, G)$ is its *characteristic class.*

Proof. Observe that for $\mathbf{H}$ an ∞-topos also the arrow-∞-category $\mathbf{H}^I$ is an ∞-topos. For instance for C any ∞-site of definition for $\mathbf{H}$ we have that $\mathbf{H}^I \simeq \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C \times I)$, where $C \times I$ is equipped with the product Grothendieck topology of the given one of C and the trivial one on I.

Since ∞-limits and ∞-colimits of ∞-presheaves are computed objectwise, an effective epimorphism in $\mathbf{H}^I$ is a square $\square \to \mathbf{H}$ such that the two vertical morphisms are effective epimorphisms in $\mathbf{H}$. Therefore by the Giraud-Lurie theorem 2.3.14 the right vertical morphism in the above pullback diagram is an equivalence $\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{H}^I) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} (\mathbf{H}^\square)_{\mathrm{eff}}$. Since equivalences are preserved by ∞-pullbacks, it follows that also

$$G\mathrm{Bund}(X) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} (\mathbf{H}^{X \square_{\mathbf{B}G}})_{\mathrm{eff,ex}}$$

is an equivalence.

Now consider the functor

$$\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G) \to (\mathbf{H}^{X \square_{\mathbf{B}G}})_{\mathrm{eff,ex}}$$

which sends a morphism $c : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ to the ∞-pullback square

$$\begin{array}{ccc} c^*(*) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \stackrel{c}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array} \quad .$$

Since $* \to \mathbf{B}G$ is an effective epimorphism (by prop. 2.3.16, remark 2.3.17) and since these are stable under pullback, this functor does indeed land in squares in $\mathbf{H}$ with vertical morphisms being effective epimorphisms.

We claim now that the universality of the ∞-pullback implies that this functor is an equivalence: that a morphism of cospan diagrams essentially uniquely extends to a morphism of the corresponding pullback diagrams. To show with we make use of a model category presentation of $\mathbf{H}$.

First notice that $\mathrm{H}_{\mathrm{eff}}^{X \square_{\mathbf{B}G}}$ is simply the full sub-∞-category of $\mathbf{H}^\square$ on squares with vertical effective epimorphisms whose bottom horizontal morphism is of the form $X \to \mathbf{B}G$. One way to see this is to choose a quasi-category incarnation of $\mathbf{H}$ and notice that in terms of this the morphism

$$(\mathbf{H}^\square \to \mathbf{H} \times \mathbf{H}) = \mathrm{sSet}(* \coprod * \hookrightarrow \square, \mathbf{H})$$

is the simplicial hom of a Joyal-cofibration into a Joyal fibrant object, hence is a Joyal-fibration. Therefore the homotopy fiber $\mathbf{H}^{X \square_{\mathbf{B}G}}$ of this morphism is indeed equivalent to the ordinary fiber of quasi-categories. The same argument shows that $\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G) \simeq \mathbf{H}^{X \lrcorner^{*}_{\mathbf{B}G}}$.

Then notice that for J a small category the diagram category $\mathbf{H}^J$ is presented by the model category

$$[J, [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj,loc}}]_{\mathrm{inj}} \, .$$

For our case consider the standard Quillen adjunction

$$[\lrcorner, [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj,loc}}]_{\mathrm{inj}} \underset{i_*}{\overset{i^*}{\rightleftarrows}} [\square, [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj,loc}}]_{\mathrm{inj}} \quad ,$$

where i_* is right Kan extension along $i : \lrcorner \hookrightarrow \Box$. The right derived functor of this is equivalent to the ∞-functor that we want to analyze.

$$\mathbb{R}i_*|_{X,\mathbf{B}G} : \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G) \to (\mathbf{H}^{X \Box \mathbf{B}G})$$

Notice that a square in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is a pullback square precisely if it is in the image under i_*. Therefore it is a homotopy-pullback square in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj,loc}}$ if it is in the image under i_* of an injectively fibrant pullback diagram, and every homotopy pullback square arises this way, up to equivalence. Since i_* is right Quillen, such squares are themselves injectively fibrant. Since moreover all objects in the above two model structures are cofibrant, we find that the essential image of $\mathbb{R}i_*|_{X,\mathbf{B}G}$ is equivalent to the full simplicial sub-category of $[\Box, [C^{\mathrm{op}}\mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj,loc}}]_{\mathrm{inj}}$ on those fibrant-cofibrant objects which are in addition pullback squares.

Thereby finally the standard 1-categorical analog statement applies: morphisms between pullbck squares are uniquely fixed by their restriction to the underlying cospan diagram. This show that the hom-objects in this subcategory are isomorphic to those in $[\lrcorner, [C^{\mathrm{op}}\mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj,loc}}]_{\mathrm{inj}}$, and hence that

$$\mathbb{R}i_*|_{X,\mathbf{B}G} \to (\mathbf{H}^{X \Box \mathbf{B}G})_{\mathrm{ex}}$$

is not only essentially surjective, but also full and faithful, and hence an equivalence. □

We discuss a general concrete presentation of principal ∞-bundles by simplicial presheaves

Observation 2.3.42. Let $G \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$ an ∞-group over a site C. By prop. 2.3.20 we can always present G by an ordinary group object in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$, which we shall denote here by the same symbol, and its delooping by the degreewise simplicial delooping $\bar{W}G$.

Therefore every cocycle $c \in \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$ has a presentation by a morphism $X \to \bar{W}G$ in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$. There is a standard construction of the universal simplicial G-bundle $WG \to \bar{W}G$, recalled in more detail below in 3.1.3. As discussed there, this is a presentation by a fibration in $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ of the point inclusion $* \to \mathbf{B}G$. With prop. 2.1.52 it follows that the ordinary pullback of simplicial presheaves P in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & WG \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \longrightarrow & \bar{W}G \end{array}$$

is a presentation of the principal ∞-bundle that is classified by c. By prop. 2.3.41 every principal ∞-bundle arises this way, up to equivalence. Therefore the presheaf of universal simplicial bundles $WG \to \bar{W}G$ serves as a *universal principal ∞-bundle*.

Of special interest are principal ∞-bundles over classifying objects: those of the form $P \to \mathbf{B}G$:

Definition 2.3.43. We say a sequence of cohesive ∞-groups

$$A \to \hat{G} \to G$$

exhibits $\hat{G}$ as an extension of G by A if the corresponding delooping sequence

$$\mathbf{B}A \to \mathbf{B}\hat{G} \to \mathbf{B}G$$

is a fiber sequence. If this fiber sequence extends one step further to the right to a morphism $\phi : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^2 A$, we have by def. 2.3.36 that $\mathbf{B}\hat{G} \to \mathbf{B}G$ is the $\mathbf{B}A$-principal ∞-bundle classified by the cocycle ϕ; and $\mathbf{B}A \to \mathbf{B}\hat{G}$ is its fiber over the unique point of $\mathbf{B}G$.

Given an extension and a G-principal ∞-bundle $P \to X$ in $\mathbf{H}$ we say an *extension* $\hat{P}$ of P to a $\hat{G}$-principal ∞-bundle is a factorization of its classifying cocycle $g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ through the extension

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \overset{\hat{g}}{\nearrow} & \mathbf{B}\hat{G} \\ & & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{g} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array} .$$

Proposition 2.3.44. *Let $A \to \hat{G} \to G$ be an extension of cohesive ∞-groups in $\mathbf{H}$ and let $P \to X$ be a G-principal ∞-bundle.*

Then a $\hat{G}$-extension $\hat{P} \to X$ of P is in particular also an A-principal ∞-bundle $\hat{P} \to P$ over P with the property that its restriction to any fiber of P is equivalent to $\hat{G} \to G$.

We may summarize this as saying: an extension of ∞-bundles is an ∞-bundle of extensions.

Proof. This follows from repeated application of the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks, prop. 2.1.26 applied to the following diagram in $\mathbf{H}$:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \hat{G} & \longrightarrow & \hat{P} & \longrightarrow & * & & \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ G & \longrightarrow & P & \xrightarrow{q} & \mathbf{B}A & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \xrightarrow{x} & X & \xrightarrow{\hat{g}} & \mathbf{B}\hat{G} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \\ & & & & \underset{g}{\smile} & & \end{array} .$$

The bottom composite $g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ is a cocycle for the given G-principal ∞-bundle $P \to X$ and it factors through $\hat{g} : X \to \mathbf{B}\hat{G}$ by assumption of the existence of the extension $\hat{P} \to P$.

Since also the bottom right square is an ∞-pullback by the given ∞-group extension, the pasting law asserts that the square over $\hat{g}$ is also am ∞-pullback, and then that so is the square over q. This exhibits $\hat{P}$ as an A-principal ∞-bundle over P classified by thhe cocycle q on P.

Now choose any point $x : * \to X$ of the base space as on the left of the diagram. Pulling this back upwards through the diagram and using the pasting law and the definition of loop space objects $G \simeq \Omega \mathbf{B}G \simeq * \prod_{\mathbf{B}G} *$ the diagram completes by ∞-pullback squares on the left as indicated, which proves the claim. □

2.3.5 Twisted cohomology

A slight variant of cohomology is often relevant: twisted cohomology.

Definition 2.3.45. For $\mathbf{H}$ an ∞-topos, let $\mathbf{c} : B \to C$ be a morphism representing a characteristic class $[\mathbf{c}] \in H(B, C)$. Let C be pointed and write $A \to B$ for its homotopy fiber.

We say that the *twisted cohomology* with coefficients in A relative to $\mathbf{c}$ is the intrinsic cohomology of the over-∞-topos $\mathbf{H}/C$ with coefficients in f.

If $\mathbf{c}$ is understood and $\phi : X \to B$ is any morphism, we write

$$\mathbf{H}_\phi(X, A) := \mathbf{H}/C(\phi, \mathbf{c})$$

and speak of the *cocycle ∞-groupoid of twisted cohomology on X with coefficients in A and twisting cocycle ϕ relative to* $[\mathbf{c}]$.

For short we often say *twist* for *twisting cocycle*.

Proposition 2.3.46. *We have the following immediate properties of twisted cohomology:*

1. *The ϕ-twisted cohomology relative to $\mathbf{c}$ depends, up to equivalence, only on the characteristic class $[\mathbf{c}] \in H(B, C)$ represented by $\mathbf{c}$ and also only on the equivalence class $[\phi] \in H(X, C)$ of the twist.*

2. *If the characteristic class is terminal, $\mathbf{c} : B \to *$ we have $A \simeq B$ and the corresponding twisted cohomology is ordinary cohomology with coefficients in A.*

Proposition 2.3.47. *Let the characteristic class* $\mathbf{c} : B \to C$ *and a twist* $\phi : X \to C$ *be given. Then the cocycle* ∞*-groupoid of twisted* A*-cohomology on* X *is given by the* ∞*-pullback*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_\phi(X,A) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\phi} \\ \mathbf{H}(X,B) & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}_*} & \mathbf{H}(X,C) \end{array}$$

in ∞Grpd.

Proof. This is an application of the general pullback-formula for hom-spaces in an over-∞-category, [LuHTT] prop 5.5.5.12. □

Proposition 2.3.48. *If the twist is trivial,* $\phi = 0$ *(meaning that it factors as* $\phi : X \to * \to C$ *through the point of the pointed object* C*), the corresponding twisted* A*-cohomology is equivalent to ordinary* A*-cohomology*

$$\mathbf{H}_{\phi=0}(X,A) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X,A)\,.$$

Proof. In this case we have that the characterizing ∞-pullback diagram from prop. 2.3.47 is the image under the hom-functor $\mathbf{H}(X,-) : \mathbf{H} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ of the pullback diagram $B \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}} C \leftarrow *$. By definition of A as the homotopy fiber of $\mathbf{c}$, its pullback is A. Since the hom-functor $\mathbf{H}(X,-)$ preserves ∞-pullbacks the claim follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{H}_{\phi=0}(X,A) &\simeq \mathbf{H}(X,B) \prod_{\mathbf{H}(X,C)} \mathbf{H}(X,*) \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}(X, B \prod_C *) \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}(X,A) \end{aligned} .$$

□

Often twisted cohomology is formulated in terms of homotopy classes of sections of a bundle (see for instance section 22 of [MaSi07]). The following asserts that this is equivalent to the above definition.

By the discussion in 2.3.3 we may understand the twist $\phi : X \to C$ as the cocycle for an ΩC-principal ∞-bundle over X, being the ∞-pullback of the point inclusion $* \to C$ along ϕ, where the point is the homotopy-incarnation of the universal ΩC-principal ∞-bundle, observation 2.3.42. The characteristic class $\mathbf{c} : B \to C$ in turn we may think of as an ΩA-bundle associated to this universal bundle. Accordingly the pullback $P_\phi := X \times_C B$ is the associated ΩA-bundle over X classified by ϕ.

Proposition 2.3.49. *Let* $P_\phi := X \times_C B$ *be the* ∞*-pullback of the characteristic class* $\mathbf{c}$ *along the twisting cocycle* ϕ

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P_\phi & \longrightarrow & B \\ \downarrow^{p} & & \downarrow^{\mathbf{c}} \\ X & \xrightarrow{\phi} & C \end{array} .$$

Then the ϕ*-twisted* A*-cohomology of* X *is equivalently the space of sections* $\Gamma_X(P_\phi)$ *of* P_ϕ *over* X*:*

$$\mathbf{H}_\phi(X,A) \simeq \Gamma_X(P_\phi)\,,$$

where on the right we have the ∞*-pullback*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Gamma_X(P_\phi) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\mathrm{id}} \\ \mathbf{H}(X,P_\phi) & \xrightarrow{p_*} & \mathbf{H}(X,X) \end{array} .$$

Proof. Consider the pasting diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{H}_\phi(X,A) & \stackrel{\simeq}{\longrightarrow} & \Gamma_\phi(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\mathrm{id}} \\ & & \mathbf{H}(X,P_\phi) & \stackrel{p_*}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{H}(X,X) \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\phi_*} \\ & & \mathbf{H}(X,B) & \stackrel{\mathbf{c}_*}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{H}(X,C) \end{array} .$$

Since the hom-functor $\mathbf{H}(X,-)$ preserves ∞-limits the bottom square is an ∞-pullback. By the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks, prop. 2.1.26, so is then the total outer diagram. Noticing that the right vertical composite is $* \stackrel{\phi}{\to} \mathbf{H}(X,C)$ the claim follows with prop. 2.3.47. □

Remark. In applications one is typically interested in situations where the characteristic class $[\mathbf{c}]$ and the domain X is fixed and the twist ϕ varies. Since by prop. 2.3.46 only the equivalence class $[\phi] \in H(X,C)$ matters, it is sufficient to pick one representative ϕ in each equivalence class. Such as choice is equivalently a choice of section

$$H(X,C) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X,C) \to \mathbf{H}(X,C)$$

of the 0-truncation projection $\mathbf{H}(X,C) \to H(X,C)$ from the cocycle ∞-groupoid to the set of cohomology classes. This justifies the following terminology.

Definition 2.3.50. With a characteristic class $[\mathbf{c}] \in H(B,C)$ with homotopy fiber A understood, we write

$$\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X,A) := \coprod_{[\phi] \in H(X,C)} \mathbf{H}_\phi(X,A)$$

for the *total twisted cohomology*: the union of all twisted cohomology cocycle ∞-groupoids.

Observation 2.3.51. We have that $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X,A)$ is the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X,A) & \stackrel{\mathrm{tw}}{\longrightarrow} & H(X,C) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X,B) & \stackrel{\mathbf{c}_*}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{H}(X,C) \end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical morphism in any section of the projection from C-cocycles to C-cohomology.

Remark 2.3.52. When the ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ is presented by a model structure on simplicial presheaves and model for X and C is chosen, then the cocycle ∞-groupoid $\mathbf{H}(X,C)$ is presented by an explicit simplicial presheaf $\mathbf{H}(X,C)_{\mathrm{simp}} \in sSet$. Once these choices are made, there is therefore the inclusion of simplicial presheaves

$$\mathrm{const}(\mathbf{H}(X,C)_{\mathrm{simp}})_0 \to \mathbf{H}(X,C)_{\mathrm{simp}} ,$$

where on the left we have the simplicially constant object on the vertices of $\mathbf{H}(X,C)_{\mathrm{simp}}$. This morphism, in turn, presents a morphism in ∞Grpd that in general contains a multitude of copies of the components of any $H(X,C) \to \mathbf{H}(X,C)$: a multitude of representatives of twists for each cohomology class of twists. Since by prop. 2.3.46 the twisted cohomology does not depend, up to equivalence, on the choice of representative, the coresponding ∞-pullback yields in general a larger coproduct of ∞-groupoids as the corresponding twisted cohomology. This however just contains copies of the homotopy types already present in $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X,A)$ as defined above.

2.3.6 ∞-Gerbes

We now consider a notion of ∞-bundles that are not principal, 2.3.4, but are *associated*to principal ∞-bundles [NSSb]. This notion makes sense generally in any ∞-topos, but it is of interest in ∞-toposes $\mathcal{X}$ that one thinks of as being "*petit*": such as that over a fixed topological space X ($\mathcal{X} := \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{Op}(X))$), or such as any of the slice toposes $\mathbf{H}/X$ for $\mathbf{H}$ any big ∞-topos and $X \in \mathbf{X}$ an object.

In all these cases the external object X is internally the terminal object, and so we shall write $X := * \in \mathcal{X}$.

The original definition of a *gerbe* on X [Gir71] is: a stack E (i.e. a 1-truncated ∞-stack) that is locally connected and locally non-empty. In more intrinsic terms, these two conditions simply say that E is *1-connective*: the 0th homotopy sheaf is terminal, $\pi_0(E) \simeq *$ (and the morphism $E \to *$ is an effective epimorphism). This modern reformulation is made explicit in the literature for instance in section 5 of [JaLu04] and in section 7.2.2 of [LuHTT].

Definition 2.3.53. For $\mathcal{X}$ an ∞-topos, a *gerbe* in $\mathcal{X}$ is an object $E \in \mathcal{X}$ which is

1. 1-connective (= connected);
2. 1-truncated.

Remark 2.3.54. Notice that this definition *a priori* has little in common with the definition that has been given the name *bundle gerbe* (reviewed in [NiWa11]). Bundle gerbes are instead presentations of total spaces of principal ∞-bundles (or the cocycles that define them). The classification result below in 2.3.64 exhibits the relation between the two concepts.

This definition has various obvious generalizations. The following is considered in [LuHTT].

Definition 2.3.55. For $n \in \mathbb{N}$, an *EM n-gerbe* is an object $E \in \mathcal{X}$ which is

1. n-connective;
2. n-truncated.

Remark 2.3.56. This is almost the definition of an *Eilenberg-MacLane object* in $\mathcal{X}$, only that the condition requiring a global section $* \to E$ (hence $X \to E$) is missing. Indeed, the Eilenberg-MacLane objects of degree n in $\mathcal{X}$ are precisely the EM n-gerbes of *trivial class*, according to proposition 2.3.64 below.

There is also an earlier established definition of *2-gerbes* in the literature [Br94], which is more general than EM 2-gerbes. Stated in the above fashion it reads as follows.

Definition 2.3.57. A *2-gerbe* in $\mathcal{X}$ an object $E \in \mathcal{X}$ which is

1. 1-connective (= connected) ;
2. 2-truncated.

This definition has an evident generalization to arbitrary degree, which we shall adopt.

Definition 2.3.58. An *n-gerbe* in $\mathcal{X}$ is an object $E \in \mathcal{X}$ which is

1. connected;
2. n-truncated.

An ∞-*gerbe* is a connected object.

Write $G\mathrm{Gerbe} \subset \mathcal{X}$ for the core (the maximal ∞-groupoid inside) the full sub-∞-category of $\mathcal{X}$ on the G-∞-gerbes.

Remark 2.3.59. Therefore ∞-gerbes (and hence EM n-gerbes and 2-gerbes and hence gerbes) are much like deloopings of ∞-groups, only that there is no requirement that there exists a global section. An ∞-gerbe for which there is a morphism $* = X \to E$ we call *trivializable*. By theorem 2.3.11 trivializable and (canonically) pointed ∞-gerbes are equivalent to ∞-group objects in $\mathcal{X}$.

But *locally* every ∞-gerbe E is of this form. For let

$$(x^* \dashv x_*) : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \underset{x_*}{\overset{x^*}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathcal{X}$$

be a topos point. Then the stalk $x^*E \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ of the ∞-gerbe is 1-connective: because inverse images preserve the finite ∞-limits involved in the definition of homotopy sheaves, and preserve the terminal object. Therefore

$$\pi_0 x^* E \simeq x^* \pi_0 E \simeq x^* * \simeq * .$$

Hence for every point x we have a stalk ∞-group G_x and an equivalence

$$x^* E \simeq BG_x .$$

Therefore one is interested in the following notion.

Definition 2.3.60. For $G \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X})$ an ∞-group object, a G-*∞-gerbe* is an ∞-gerbe E such that there exists

1. an effective epimorphism $U \to *$;
2. an equivalence $E|_U \simeq \mathbf{B}G|_U$.

In words this says that a G-∞-gerbe is one that locally looks like the ∞-stack of G-principal ∞-bundles.

Example 2.3.61. For X a topological space and $\mathcal{X} = \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(X)$ the ∞-topos of ∞-sheaves over it, these notions reduce to the following.

- a 0-group object $G \in \mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X}) \subset \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X})$ is a sheaf of groups on X;
- for $\{U_i \to X\}$ any open cover, the canonical morphism $\coprod_i U_i \to X$ is an effective epimorphism to the terminal object;
- $\mathbf{B}G_{U_i}$ is the stack of $G|_{U_i}$-torsors.

It is clear that one way to construct a G-∞-gerbe should be to start with an $\underline{\mathrm{Aut}}(\mathbf{B}G)$-principal ∞-bundle and then canonically *associate* a fiber ∞-bundle to it.

Definition 2.3.62. For $F \in \mathcal{X}$ any object, write

$$\underline{\mathrm{Aut}}(F) \hookrightarrow [F, F] \in \mathcal{X}$$

for the maximal subobject on the internal hom $[F, F]$ on those elements that are equivalences $F \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} F$. For $G \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X})$ we write

$$\mathrm{AUT}(G) := \underline{\mathrm{Aut}}(\mathbf{B}G) .$$

Example 2.3.63. For $G \in \mathrm{Grp}(\infty\mathrm{Grpd})$ an ordinary group, $\mathrm{AUT}(G)$ is usually called its *automorphism 2-group*. Its underlying groupoid is equivalent to

$$\mathrm{Aut}_{\mathrm{Grp}}(G) \times G \underset{p_1}{\overset{p_1(-)\cdot \mathrm{Ad}(p_2(-))}{\rightrightarrows}} \mathrm{Aut}_{\mathrm{Grp}}(G) \ .$$

This is the action groupoid of G acting on $\mathrm{Aut}(G)$ by the morphism $\mathrm{Ad} : G \to \mathrm{Aut}(G)$.

We have the following classification theorem for ∞-gerbes.

Proposition 2.3.64. *Let $\mathcal{X}$ be a 1-localic ∞-topos (one that has a 1-site of definition).*

For $G \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X})$ any ∞-group object, G-principal ∞-gerbes are classified by AUT(G)*-cohomolohy:*

$$\pi_0 G\mathrm{Gerbe} \simeq \pi_0 \mathcal{X}(*, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{AUT}(G)) =: H^1_{\mathcal{X}}(X, \mathrm{AUT}(G)) \, .$$

A G-gerbe E has trivial $AUT(G)$-cohomology precisely if it has a global section $X \to E$. Moreover, the equivalence is induced by sending an AUT(G)*-principal ∞-bundle to its canonically associated ∞-bundle with fiber $\mathbf{B}G$.*

Proof. Inspection shows that this statement is a special case of the more general classification resul in [We11], namely the special case where the fiber object F in that account is $F = \mathbf{B}G$.

In that case

1. definition 3.5 there is the definition of G-∞-gerbe here;
2. the object denoted "$B(*, \mathrm{hAut}_\bullet(F), *)$" there (the two-sided bar construction on a simplicial group representation of $\mathrm{AUT}(G)$) presents the object denoted $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{AUT}(G)$ here;
3. theorem 5.10 there is then the statement to be proven here.

Under this equivalence $\mathrm{AUT}(G)$-cocycles are sent to pullbacks of the universal $\mathbf{B}G$-fibration. One sees that this is a fibration presentation of an effective epimorphism. Therefore the pullback is a homotopy pullback of an effective epimorphism and hence itself an effective epimoprhism. Therefore the corresponding G-gerbes indeed sit by an effective epimorpism over X. □

For the case that G is 0-truncated (an ordinary group object) this is also the content of theorem 23 in [JaLu04].

Examples 2.3.65. For $G \in \mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X}) \subset \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X})$ an ordinary 1-group object, this reproduces the classical result of [Gir71], which originally motivated the whole subject: by example 2.3.63 in this case $\mathrm{AUT}(G)$ is the traditional automorphism 2-group and

$$H^1_{\mathcal{X}}(X, \mathrm{AUT}(G))$$

is Giraud's nonabelian G-cohomology that classifies G-gerbes.

For $G \in 2\mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X}) \subset \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathcal{X})$a 2-group, we recover the classification of 2-gerbes as in [Br94][Br06].

Remark 2.3.66. In section 7.2.2 of [LuHTT] the special case that here we called *EM-n-gerbes* is considered. Beware that there are further differences: for instance the notion of morphisms between n-gerbes as defined there is more restrictive than considered here. For instance with our definition (and hence also that in [Br94]) each group automorphism of an abelian group object A induces an automorphism of the trivial A-2-gerbe $\mathbf{B}^2 A$. But, except for the identity, this is not admitted in [LuHTT] (manifestly so by the diagram above lemma 7.2.2.24 there). Accordingly, the classification result in [LuHTT] is different: it involves the cohomology group $H^{n+1}_{\mathcal{X}}(X, A)$. Notice that there is a canonical morphism

$$H^{n+1}_{\mathcal{X}}(X, A) \to H^1_{\mathcal{X}}(X, \mathrm{AUT}\mathbf{B}^n A)$$

induced from the morphism $\mathbf{B}^{n+1} A \to \underline{\mathrm{Aut}}(\mathbf{B}^n A)$.

Remark 2.3.67. By prop. 2.3.64 we may effectively think of G-∞-gerbes in terms of the $\mathrm{AUT}(G)$-principal ∞-bundles that they are associated to. As for ordinary associated bundles, this way most notions for principal ∞-bundles carry over to ∞-gerbes. For instance an *∞-connection* on a G-∞-gerbe we may take to be an ∞-connection on the corresponding principal ∞-bundle, discussed below in 2.3.15.

From the classification prop. 2.3.64 are naturally derived the following further notions.

Definition 2.3.68. Fix $k \in \mathbb{N}$. For $G \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X})$ a k-truncated ∞-group object (a $(k+1)$-group), write

$$\mathrm{Out}(G) := \tau_k \mathrm{AUT}(G)$$

for the k-truncation of $\mathrm{AUT}(G)$. (Notice that this is still an ∞-group, since by lemma 6.5.1.2 in [LuHTT] τ_n preserves all ∞-colimits but also all products.) We call this the *outer automorphism n-group* of G.

Example 2.3.69. For $G \in \mathrm{Grpd}(\infty\mathrm{Grpd})$ an ordinary group, $\mathrm{Out}(G)$ is the coimage of $\mathrm{Ad} : G \to \mathrm{Aut}(G)$, which is the traditional group of outer automorphisms of G.

Notice that by definition there is a canonical morphism

$$\mathbf{B}\mathrm{AUT}(G) \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Out}(G)\,.$$

Definition 2.3.70. Write $\mathbf{B}^2 Z(G)$ for the ∞-fiber of this morphism, fitting into a fiber sequence

$$\mathbf{B}^2 Z(G) \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{AUT}(G) \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Out}(G)\,.$$

We call $Z(G)$ the *center* of the ∞-group G.

Example 2.3.71. For $\mathcal{X} = \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ and $k = 0$ we have that G is an ordinary discrete group, $\mathrm{AUT}(G)$ is the strict 2-group coming from the crossed module, def. 1.3.5, $[G \stackrel{\mathrm{Ad}}{\to} \mathrm{Aut}(G)]$ and the canonical morphism of crossed modules

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow^{\mathrm{Ad}} & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{Aut}(G) & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{Out}(G) \end{array}$$

induces a fibration of connected 2-groupoids. Therefore its homotopy fiber is equivalent to its ordinary fiber, which is given by the crossed complex $[G \stackrel{\mathrm{Ad}}{\to} \mathrm{Inn}(G)]$. This is weakly equivalent to the 2-group $\mathbf{B}Z(G)$ given by the crossed module $[Z(G) \to 1]$, where $Z(G)$ is the center of G in the traditional sense.

By theorem 2.3.64 this induces a morphism

$$\mathrm{Band} : \pi_0 G\mathrm{Gerbe} \to H^1_{\mathcal{X}}(X, \mathrm{Out}(G))\,.$$

Definition 2.3.72. For $E \in G\mathrm{Gerbe}$ we call $\mathrm{Band}(E)$ the *band* of E.

Fix an element $[K] \in H^1_{\mathcal{X}}(X, \mathrm{Out}(G))$. The ∞-groupoid $G\mathrm{Gerbe}_K$ of K-banded gerbes is the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G\mathrm{Gerbe}_K & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{K} \\ \mathcal{X}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{AUT}(G)) & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{X}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Out}(G)) \end{array} \quad .$$

Remark 2.3.73. To even specify the band we need to have the group object G specified. More in detail the data of a K-banded gerbe is therefore a pair $(G \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X}), [K] \in H^1_{\mathcal{X}}(X, \mathrm{Out}(G)))$. For instance if G an *abelian* group then the class $[K]$ is necessarily trivial, and so G itself is the information given by the band.

Observation 2.3.74. For $K = *$ the trivial band, it follows from the universality of the ∞-bullback that

$$\pi_0 G\mathrm{Gerbe}_{K=*} \simeq H^2_{\mathcal{X}}(X, Z(G))\,.$$

Therefore for general K we may think of $\pi_0 G\mathrm{Gerbe}_K$ as the *K-twisted $Z(G)$-cohomology*, def. 2.3.45, in degree 2 (which of course may itself be cohomology in higher degree when $Z(G)$ itself is higher connected).

Example 2.3.75. For G a 0-group this reduces to the notion of band as introduced in [Gir71].

2.3.7 Geometric homotopy and Galois theory

We discuss canonical internal realizations of the notions of geometric realization, geometric homotopy groups, local systems and Galois theory in any cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$.

Definition 2.3.76. For $\mathbf{H}$ a locally ∞-connected ∞-topos and $X \in \mathbf{H}$ an object, we call $\Pi(X) \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ the *fundamental ∞-groupoid* of X.

The ordinary homotopy groups of $\Pi(X)$ we call the *geometric homotopy groups* of X

$$\pi_\bullet^{\mathrm{geom}}(X \in \mathbf{H}) := \pi_\bullet(\Pi(X \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}))\,.$$

Definition 2.3.77. For $|-| : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \overset{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{Top}$ the canonical equivalence of ∞-toposes, we write

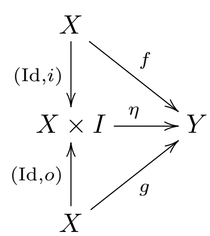
$$|X| := |\Pi X| \in \mathrm{Top}$$

and call this the *geometric realization* of X.

Remark. In presentations of $\mathbf{H}$ by simplicial presheaves as in prop. 2.2.11 aspects of this abstract notion are more or less implicit in the literature. See for instance around remark 2.22 of [SiTe]. But the key insight is, more or less explicitly, in [ArMa69]. This we discuss in detail in 3.2.2.

In some applications we need the following characterization of geometric homotopies in a cohesive ∞-topos.

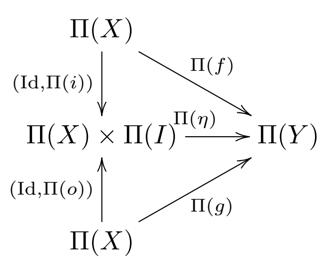
Definition 2.3.78. We say a *geometric homotopy* between two morphisms $f, g : X \to Y$ in $\mathbf{H}$ is a diagram



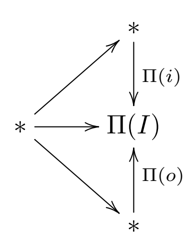
such that I is geometrically connected, $\pi_0^{geom}(I) = *$.

Proposition 2.3.79. *If two morphism $f, g : X \to Y$ in a cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ are geometrically homotopic then their images $\Pi(f), \Pi(g)$ are equivalent in ∞Grpd.*

Proof. By the condition that Π preserves products in a strongly ∞-connected ∞-topos we have that the image of the geometric homotopy in ∞Grpd is a diagram of the form



Since $\Pi(I)$ is connected by assumption, there is a diagram



in ∞Grpd (filled with homotopies, which we do not display, as usual, that connect the three points in $\Pi(I)$). Taking the product of this diagram with $\Pi(X)$ and pasting the result to the above image $\Pi(\eta)$ of the geometric homotopy constructs the equivalence $\Pi(f) \Rightarrow \Pi(g)$ in ∞Grpd. □

Proposition 2.3.80. *For* $\mathbf{H}$ *a locally* ∞*-connected* ∞*-topos, also all its objects* $X \in \mathbf{H}$ *are locally* ∞*-connected, in the sense that their over-*∞*-toposes* $\mathbf{H}/X$ *are locally* ∞*-connected* $(\Pi_X \dashv \Delta_X \dashv \Gamma_X) : \mathbf{H}/X \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$.

The two notions of fundamental ∞*-groupoids of any object* X *induced this way do agree, in that there is a natural equivalence*

$$\Pi_X(X \in \mathbf{H}/X) \simeq \Pi(X \in \mathbf{H})\,.$$

Proof. By the general properties of over-∞-toposes ([LuHTT], prop 6.3.5.1) we have a a composite essential ∞-geometric morphism

$$(\Pi_X \dashv \Delta_X \dashv \Gamma_X) : \; \mathbf{H}/X \underset{X_*}{\overset{X_!}{\underset{\longrightarrow}{\overset{\longrightarrow}{\longleftarrow X^* -}}}} \mathbf{H} \underset{\Gamma}{\overset{\Pi}{\underset{\longrightarrow}{\overset{\longrightarrow}{\longleftarrow \Delta -}}}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

and $X_!$ is given by sending $(Y \to X) \in \mathbf{H}/X$ to $Y \in \mathbf{H}$. □

Definition 2.3.81. For κ a regular cardinal write

$$\mathrm{Core}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

for the ∞-groupoid of κ-small ∞-groupoids: the core (maximal ∞-groupoid inside an ∞-category) of the full sub-∞-category of ∞Grpd on the κ-small ones.

Remark 2.3.82. We have

$$\mathrm{Core}\,\infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa \simeq \coprod_i \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Aut}(F_i)\,,$$

where the coproduct ranges over all κ-small homotopy types $[F_i]$ and where $\mathrm{Aut}(F_i)$ is the automorphism ∞-group of any representative F_i of $[F_i]$.

Definition 2.3.83. For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ write

$$\mathrm{LConst}(X) := \mathbf{H}(X, \mathrm{Disc}(\mathrm{Core}(\infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa)))$$

for the cocycle ∞-groupoid on X with coefficients in the discretely cohesive ∞-groupoid on the ∞-groupoid of κ-small ∞-groupoids. We call this the ∞-groupoid of *locally constant* ∞*-stacks* on X.

Since Disc is left adjoint and right adjoint it commutes with coproducts and with delooping and therefore

$$\mathrm{Disc}(\mathrm{Core}\,\infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa) \simeq \coprod_i \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Disc}(\mathrm{Aut}(F_i))\,.$$

Therefore, by the discussion in 2.3.3, a cocycle $P \in \mathrm{LConst}(X)$ may be identified on each geometric connected component of X with a $\mathrm{Disc}\,\mathrm{Aut}(F_i)$-principal ∞-bundle $P \to X$ over X for the ∞-group object $\mathrm{DiscAut}(F_i) \in \mathbf{H}$. We may think of this as an object $P \in \mathbf{H}/X$ in the little topos over X. This way the objects of $\mathrm{LConst}(X)$ are indeed identified ∞-stacks over X.

The following proposition says that the central statements of Galois theory hold for these canonical notions of geometric homotopy groups and locally constant ∞-stacks.

Proposition 2.3.84. *For* $\mathbf{H}$ *locally and globally* ∞*-connected, we have*

1. a natural equivalence

$$\mathrm{LConst}(X) \simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Pi(X), \infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa)$$

of locally constant ∞-stacks on X with ∞-permutation representations of the fundamental ∞-groupoid of X (local systems *on X);*

2. for every point $x : * \to X$ a natural equivalence of the endomorphisms of the fiber functor x^* and the loop space of $\Pi(X)$ at x

$$\mathrm{End}(x^* : \mathrm{LConst}(X) \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}) \simeq \Omega_x \Pi(X)\,.$$

Proof. The first statement is essentially just the $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc})$-adjunction :

$$\begin{aligned}\mathrm{LConst}(X) &:= \mathbf{H}(X, \mathrm{Disc}(\mathrm{Core}\,\infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa)) \\ &\simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Pi(X), \mathrm{Core}\,\infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa)\,. \\ &\simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Pi(X), \infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa)\end{aligned}$$

Using this and that Π preserves the terminal object, so that the adjunct of $(* \to X \to \mathrm{Disc}\,\mathrm{Core}\,\infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa)$ is $(* \to \Pi(X) \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}_\kappa)$ the second statement follows with an iterated application of the ∞-Yoneda lemma:

The fiber functor $x^* : \mathrm{Func}_\infty(\Pi(X), \infty\mathrm{Grpd}) \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ evaluates an ∞-presheaf on $\Pi(X)^{\mathrm{op}}$ at $x \in \Pi(X)$. By the ∞-Yoneda lemma this is the same as homming out of $j(x)$, where $j : \Pi(X)^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{Func}(\Pi(X), \infty\mathrm{Grpd})$ is the ∞-Yoneda embedding:

$$x^* \simeq \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{PSh}(\Pi(X)^{op})}(j(x), -)\,.$$

This means that x^* itself is a representable object in $\mathrm{PSh}_\infty(\mathrm{PSh}_\infty(\Pi(X)^{\mathrm{op}})^{\mathrm{op}})$. If we denote by $\tilde{j} : \mathrm{PSh}_\infty(\Pi(X)^{\mathrm{op}})^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{PSh}_\infty(\mathrm{PSh}_\infty(\Pi(X)^{\mathrm{op}})^{\mathrm{op}})$ the corresponding Yoneda embedding, then

$$x^* \simeq \tilde{j}(j(x))\,.$$

With this, we compute the endomorphisms of x^* by applying the ∞-Yoneda lemma two more times:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathrm{End}(x^*) &\simeq \mathrm{End}_{\mathrm{PSh}(\mathrm{PSh}(\Pi(X)^{\mathrm{op}})^{\mathrm{op}})}(\tilde{j}(j(x))) \\ &\simeq \mathrm{End}(\mathrm{PSh}(\Pi(X))^{\mathrm{op}})(j(x)) \\ &\simeq \mathrm{End}_{\Pi(X)^{\mathrm{op}}}(x,x) \\ &\simeq \mathrm{Aut}_x \Pi(X) \\ &=: \Omega_x \Pi(X)\end{aligned}\,.$$

□

2.3.8 Paths and geometric Postnikov towers

The above construction of the fundamental ∞-groupoid of objects in $\mathbf{H}$ as an object in ∞Grpd may be reflected back into $\mathbf{H}$, where it gives a notion of *homotopy path n-groupoids* and a geometric notion of Postnikov towers of objects in $\mathbf{H}$.

Definition 2.3.85. For $\mathbf{H}$ a locally ∞-connected ∞-topos define the composite adjoint ∞-functors

$$(\mathbf{\Pi} \dashv \flat) := (\mathrm{Disc} \circ \Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \circ \Gamma) : \mathbf{H} \to \mathbf{H}\,.$$

We say for any $X, A \in \mathbf{H}$

- $\mathbf{\Pi}(X)$ is the *path ∞-groupoid* of X – the reflection of the fundamental ∞-groupoid from 2.3.7 back into the cohesive context of $\mathbf{H}$;

- $\flat A$ ("flat A") is the coefficient object for *flat differential A-cohomology* or for *A-local systems* (discussed below in 2.3.10).

Write

$$(\tau_n \dashv i_n) : \mathbf{H}_{\leq n} \underset{i}{\overset{\tau_n}{\hookleftarrow\!\!\!\rightarrow}} \mathbf{H}$$

for the reflective sub-∞-category of n-truncated objects ([LuHTT], section 5.5.6) and

$$\tau_n : \mathbf{H} \xrightarrow{\tau_n} \mathbf{H}_{\leq n} \hookrightarrow \mathbf{H}$$

for the localization funtor. We say

$$\mathbf{\Pi}_n : \mathbf{H} \xrightarrow{\mathbf{\Pi}_n} \mathbf{H} \xrightarrow{\tau_n} \mathbf{H}$$

is the *homotopy path n-groupoid* functor. The (truncated) components of the $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc})$-unit

$$X \to \mathbf{\Pi}_n(X)$$

we call the *constant path inclusion*. Dually we have canonical morphisms

$$\flat A \to A$$

natural in $A \in \mathbf{H}$.

Observation 2.3.86. If $\mathbf{H}$ is cohesive, then $\flat$ has a right adjoint $\mathbf{\Gamma}$

$$(\mathbf{\Pi} \dashv \flat \dashv \mathbf{\Gamma}) := (\mathrm{Disc}\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc}\,\Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc}\,\Gamma) : \ \mathbf{H} \underset{\mathbf{\Gamma}}{\overset{\mathbf{\Pi}}{\underset{\xleftarrow{\flat}}{\rightarrow}}} \mathbf{H} \ .$$

and this makes $\mathbf{H}$ be ∞-connected and locally ∞-connected over itself.

Definition 2.3.87. For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ we say that the *geometric Postnikov tower* of X is the categorical Postnikov tower ([LuHTT] def. 5.5.6.23) of $\mathbf{\Pi}(X) \in \mathbf{H}$:

$$\mathbf{\Pi}(X) \to \cdots \to \mathbf{\Pi}_2(X) \to \mathbf{\Pi}_1(X) \to \mathbf{\Pi}_0(X)\,.$$

The main purpose of geometric Postnikov towers for us is the notion of *geomtric Whitehead towers* that they induce, discussed in the next section.

2.3.9 Universal coverings and geometric Whitehead towers

We discuss an intrinsic notion of Whitehead towers in a locally ∞-connected ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$.

Definition 2.3.88. For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ a pointed object, the *geometric Whitehead tower* of X is the sequence of objects

$$X^{(\infty)} \to \cdots \to X^{(\mathbf{2})} \to X^{(\mathbf{1})} \to X^{(\mathbf{0})} \simeq X$$

in $\mathbf{H}$, where for each $n \in \mathbb{N}$ the object $X^{(n+1)}$ is the homotopy fiber of the canonical morphism $X \to \mathbf{\Pi}_{n+1}X$ to the path $(n+1)$-groupoid of X (2.3.8). We call $X^{(\mathbf{n+1})}$ the $(n+1)$-fold *universal covering space* of X. We write $X^{(\infty)}$ for the homotopy fiber of the untruncated constant path inclusion.

$$X^{(\infty)} \to X \to \mathbf{\Pi}(X)\,.$$

Here the morphisms $X^{(\mathbf{n})} \to X^{\mathbf{n-1}}$ are those induced from this pasting diagram of ∞-pullbacks

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
X^{(\mathbf{n})} & \longrightarrow & * & & \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\
X^{(\mathbf{n-1})} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^n \pi_n(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
X & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{\Pi}_n(X) & \xrightarrow{\tau_{\leq (n-1)}} & \mathbf{\Pi}_{(n-1)}(X)
\end{array}
,
$$

where the object $\mathbf{B}^n \pi_n(X)$ is defined as the homotopy fiber of the bottom right morphism.

Proposition 2.3.89. *Every object $X \in \mathbf{H}$ is covered by objects of the form $X^{(\infty)}$ for different choices of base points in X, in the sense that every X is the ∞-colimit over a diagram whose vertices are of this form.*

Proof. Consider the diagram

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
\varinjlim_{s \in \Pi(X)} (i^* *_s) & \longrightarrow & \varinjlim_{s \in \Pi(X)} *_s \\
\downarrow \simeq & & \downarrow \simeq \\
X & \xrightarrow{i} & \mathbf{\Pi}(X)
\end{array}
.
$$

The bottom morphism is the constant path inclusion, the $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc})$-unit. The right morphism is the equivalence that is the image under Disc of the decomposition $\varinjlim_S * \xrightarrow{\simeq} S$ of every ∞-groupoid as the ∞-colimit over itself of the ∞-functor constant on the point. The left morphism is the ∞-pullback along i of this equivalence, hence itself an equivalence. By universality of ∞-colimits in the ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ the top left object is the ∞-colimit over the single homotopy fibers $i^* *_s$ of the form $X^{(\infty)}$ as indicated. □

We would like claim that moreover each of the patches $i^* *$ of the object X in a cohesive ∞-topos is geometrically contractible, thus exhibiting a generic cover of any object by contractibles. However, the following only states something slightly weaker than this.

Proposition 2.3.90. *The inclusion $\Pi(i^* *) \to \Pi(X)$ of the fundamental ∞-groupoid $\Pi(i^* *)$ of each of these patches into $\Pi(X)$ is homotopic to the point.*

Proof. We apply $\Pi(-)$ to the above diagram over a single vertex s and attach the $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc})$-counit to get

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
\Pi(i^* *) & \longrightarrow & & \longrightarrow & * \\
\downarrow & & & & \downarrow \\
\Pi(X) & \xrightarrow{\Pi(i)} & \Pi \mathrm{Disc} \Pi(X) & \longrightarrow & \Pi(X)
\end{array}
.
$$

Then the bottom morphism is an equivalence by the $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc})$-zig-zag-identity. □

2.3.10 Flat ∞-connections and local systems

We describe for a locally ∞-connected ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ a canonical intrinsic notion of*flat connections on ∞-bundles*, *flat higher parallel transport* and ∞-*local systems*.

Let $\mathbf{\Pi} : \mathbf{H} \to \mathbf{H}$ be the path ∞-groupoid functor from def. 2.3.85.

Definition 2.3.91. For $X, A \in \mathbf{H}$ we write

$$
\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, A) := \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi} X, A)
$$

and call $H_{\text{flat}}(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}_{\text{flat}}(X, A)$ the *flat (nonabelian) differential cohomology* of X with coefficients in A. We say a morphism $\nabla : \mathbf{\Pi}(X) \to A$ is a *flat ∞-connnection* on the principal ∞-bundle corresponding to $X \to \mathbf{\Pi}(X) \stackrel{\nabla}{\to} A$, or an *A-local system* on X.

The induced morphism

$$\mathbf{H}_{\text{flat}}(X, A) \to \mathbf{H}(X, A)$$

we say is the forgetful functor that *forgets flat connections.*

The object $\mathbf{\Pi}(X)$ has the interpretation of the path ∞-groupoid of X: it is a cohesive ∞-groupoid whose k-morphisms may be thought of as generated from the k-morphisms in X and k-dimensional cohesive paths in X. Accordingly a mophism $\mathbf{\Pi}(X) \to A$ may be thought of as assigning

- to each point of X a fiber in A;
- to each path in X an equivalence between these fibers;
- to each disk in X a 2-equivalalence between these equivaleces associated to its boundary
- and so on.

This we think of as encoding a flat *higher parallel transport* on X, coming from some flat ∞-connection and *defining* this flat ∞-connection.

Observation 2.3.92. By the $(\mathbf{\Pi} \dashv \flat)$-adjunction we have a natural equivalence

$$\mathbf{H}_{\text{flat}}(X, A) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \flat A) .$$

A cocycle $g : X \to A$ for a principal ∞-bundle on X is in the image of

$$\mathbf{H}_{\text{flat}}(X, A) \to \mathbf{H}(X, A)$$

precisely if there is a lift ∇ in the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \flat A \\ & {}^{\nabla}\nearrow & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{g} & A \end{array} .$$

We call $\flat A$ the *coefficient object for flat A-connections.*

Proposition 2.3.93. *For* $G := \mathrm{Disc}(G_0) \in \mathbf{H}$ *discrete ∞-group (2.3.2) the canonical morphism* $\mathbf{H}_{\text{flat}}(X, \mathbf{B}G) \to \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$ *is an equivalence.*

Proof. This follows by definition 2.3.85 $\flat = \mathrm{Disc}\,\Gamma$ and using that Disc is full and faithful. □

This says that for discrete structure ∞-groups G there is an essentially unique flat ∞-connection on any G-principal ∞-bundle. Moreover, the further equivalence

$$\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}(X), \mathbf{B}G) \simeq \mathbf{H}_{\text{flat}}(X, \mathbf{B}G) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$$

may be read as saying that the G-principal ∞-bundle for discrete G is entirely characterized by the flat higher parallel transport of this unique ∞-connection.

2.3.11 de Rham cohomology

We discuss how in every locally ∞-connected ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ there is an intrinsic notion of *nonabelian de Rham cohomology*.

Definition 2.3.94. Let $\mathbf{H}$ be a locally ∞-connected ∞-topos. For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ an object, write $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X := * \coprod_X \mathbf{\Pi} X$ for the ∞-pushout

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{\Pi}(X) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X \end{array} .$$

For $\mathrm{pt}_A : * \to A$ any pointed object in $\mathbf{H}$, write $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} A := * \prod_A \flat A$ for the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} A & \longrightarrow & \flat A \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & A \end{array} .$$

Proposition 2.3.95. *This construction yields a pair of adjoint ∞-functors*

$$(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} \dashv \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}) : \; */\mathbf{H} \underset{\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\overset{\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathbf{H} \; .$$

Proof. We check the defining natural hom-equivalence

$$*/\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X, A) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} A) \, .$$

The hom-space in the under-∞-category $*/\mathbf{H}$ is computed ([LuHTT], prop. 5.5.5.12) by the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} */\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X, A) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X, A) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{pt}_A} & \mathbf{H}(*, A) \end{array} .$$

By the fact that the hom-functor $\mathbf{H}(-,-) : \mathbf{H}^{\mathrm{op}} \times \mathbf{H} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ preserves ∞-limits in both arguments we have a natural equivalence

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X, A) &:= \mathbf{H}(* \coprod_X \mathbf{\Pi}(X), A) \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}(*, A) \prod_{\mathbf{H}(X,A)} \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}(X), A) \end{aligned} .$$

We paste this pullback to the above pullback diagram to obtain

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} */\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X, A) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X, A) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}(X), A) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{pt}_A} & \mathbf{H}(*, A) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, A) \end{array} .$$

By the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks, prop. 2.1.26, the outer diagram is still a pullback. We may evidently rewrite the bottom composite as in

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} */\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X, A) & & \longrightarrow & & \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}(X), A) \\ \downarrow & & & & \downarrow \\ * & \xrightarrow{\simeq} & \mathbf{H}(X, *) & \xrightarrow{(\mathrm{pt}_A)_*} & \mathbf{H}(X, A) \end{array} .$$

This exhibits the hom-space as the pullback

$$*/\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X), A) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, *) \prod_{\mathbf{H}(X,A)} \mathbf{H}(X, \flat A),$$

where we used the $(\mathbf{\Pi} \dashv \flat)$-adjunction. Now using again that $\mathbf{H}(X, -)$ preserves pullbacks, this is

$$\cdots \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, * \prod_A \flat A) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} A) .$$

□

Observation 2.3.96. If $\mathbf{H}$ is also local, then there is a further right adjoint $\mathbf{\Gamma}_{\mathrm{dR}}$

$$(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} \dashv \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \dashv \mathbf{\Gamma}_{\mathrm{dR}}) : \mathbf{H} \underset{\mathbf{\Gamma}_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\overset{\overset{\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\longrightarrow}}{\underset{\longrightarrow}{\overset{\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\longleftarrow}}}} */\mathbf{H}$$

given by

$$\mathbf{\Gamma}_{\mathrm{dR}} X := * \coprod_X \mathbf{\Gamma}(X) .$$

Definition 2.3.97. For $X, A \in \mathbf{H}$ we write

$$\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) := \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X, A) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} A) .$$

A cocycle $\omega : X \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} A$ we call a *flat A-valued differential form* on X.

We say that $H_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A)$ is the *de Rham cohomology* of X with coefficients in A.

Observation 2.3.98. A cocycle in de Rham cohomology

$$\omega : \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X \to A$$

is precisely a flat ∞-connection on a *trivializable* A-principal ∞-bundle. More precisely, $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A)$ is the homotopy fiber of the forgetful functor from ∞-bundles with flat ∞-connection to ∞-bundles: we have an ∞-pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, A) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, A) \end{array} .$$

Proof. This follows by the fact that the hom-functor $\mathbf{H}(X, -)$ preserves the defining ∞-pullback for $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} A$. □

Just for emphasis, notice the dual description of this situation: by the universal property of the ∞-colimit that defines $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X$ we have that ω corresponds to a diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{\Pi}(X) & \xrightarrow{\omega} & A \end{array} .$$

The bottom horizontal morphism is a flat connection on the ∞-bundle which in turn is given by the composite cocycle $X \to \mathbf{\Pi}(X) \stackrel{\omega}{\to} A$. The diagram says that this is equivalent to the trivial bundle given by the trivial cocycle $X \to * \to A$.

Proposition 2.3.99. *The de Rham cohomology with coefficients in discrete objects is trivial: for all* $S \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *we have*

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathrm{Disc}S \simeq * \,.$$

Proof. Using that in a ∞-connected ∞-topos the functor Disc is a full and faithful ∞-functor so that unit $\mathrm{Id} \to \Gamma\mathrm{Disc}$ is an equivalence and using that by the zig-zag identity the counit component $\flat\mathrm{Disc}S := \mathrm{Disc}\Gamma\mathrm{Disc}S \to \mathrm{Disc}S$ is also an equivalence, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathrm{Disc}S &:= * \prod_{\mathrm{Disc}S} \flat\mathrm{Disc}S \\ &\simeq * \prod_{\mathrm{Disc}S} \mathrm{Disc}S \;, \\ &\simeq * \end{aligned}$$

since the pullback of an equivalence is an equivalence. □

Proposition 2.3.100. *For every* X *in a cohesive* ∞*-topos* $\mathbf{H}$*, the object* $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}X$ *is globally connected in that* $\pi_0\mathbf{H}(*, \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}X) = *$.

If X *has at least one point* ($\pi_0(\Gamma X) \neq \emptyset$) *and is geometrically connected* ($\pi_0(\Pi X) = *$) *then* $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)$ *is also locally connected:* $\tau_0\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} \simeq * \in \mathbf{H}$.

Proof. Since Γ preserves ∞-colimits in a cohesive ∞-topos we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{H}(*, \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}X) &\simeq \Gamma\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}X \\ &\simeq * \coprod_{\Gamma X} \mathbf{\Gamma\Pi X} \;, \\ &\simeq * \coprod_{\Gamma X} \mathbf{\Pi X} \end{aligned}$$

where in the last step we used that Disc is full and faithful, so that there is an equivalence $\Gamma\mathbf{\Pi}X := \Gamma\mathrm{Disc}\Pi X \simeq \Pi X$.

To analyse this ∞-pushout we present it by a homotopy pushout in $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$. Denoting by ΓX and ΠX any represetatives in $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ of the objects of the same name in $\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$, this may be computed by the ordinary pushout of simplicial sets

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Gamma X & \longrightarrow & (\Gamma X) \times \Delta[1] \coprod_{\Gamma X} * \;, \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \Pi X & \longrightarrow & Q \end{array}$$

where on the right we have inserted the cone on ΓX in order to turn the top morphism into a cofibration. From this ordinary pushout it is clear that the connected components of Q are obtained from those of ΠX by identifying all those in the image of a connected component of ΓX. So if the left morphism is surjective on π_0 then $\pi_0(Q) = *$. This is precisely the condition that *pieces have points* in $\mathbf{H}$.

For the local analysis we consider the same setup objectwise in the injective model structure $[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj,loc}}$. For any $U \in C$ we then have the pushout Q_U in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X(U) & \longrightarrow & (X(U)) \times \Delta[1] \coprod_{X(U)} * \;, \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{sSet}(\Gamma(U), \Pi X) & \longrightarrow & Q_U \end{array}$$

as a model for the value of the simplicial presheaf presenting $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)$. If X is geometrically connected then $\pi_0 \mathrm{sSet}(\Gamma(U), \Pi(X)) = *$ and hence for the left morphism to be surjective on π_0 it suffices that the top left object is not empty. Since the simplicial set $X(U)$ contains at least the vertices $U \to * \to X$ of which there is by assumption at least one, this is the case. □

Remark. In summary we see that in any cohesive ∞-topos the objects $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)$ have the essential abstract properties of pointed *geometric de Rham homotopy types* ([Toën06], section 3.5.1). In section 3 we will see that, indeed, the intrinsic de Rham cohomology of the cohesive ∞ -topos $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$

$$H_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X, A)$$

reproduces ordinary de Rham cohomology in degree $d > 1$.

In degree 0 the intrinsic de Rham cohomology is necessarily trivial, while in degree 1 we find that it reproduces closed 1-forms, not divided out by exact forms. This difference to ordinary de Rham cohomology in the lowest two degrees may be understood in terms of the obstruction-theoretic meaning of de Rham cohomology by which we essentially characterized it above: we have that the intrinsic $H^n_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, K)$ is the home for the obstructions to flatness of $\mathbf{B}^{n-2}K$-principal ∞-bundles. For $n = 1$ this are groupoid-principal bundles over the *groupoid* with K as its space of objects. But the 1-form curvatures of groupoid bundles are not to be regarded modulo exact forms.

2.3.12 Exponentiated ∞-Lie algebras

We consider an intrinsic notion of *exponentiated* ∞-Lie algebras in every cohesive ∞-topos. In order to have a general abstract notion of the ∞-Lie algebras themselves we need the further axiomatics of *infinitesimal cohesion*, discussed below in 2.4 and 2.4.3.

Definition 2.3.101. For a connected object $\mathbf{B}\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ in $\mathbf{H}$ that is *geometrically contractible*

$$\Pi(\mathbf{B}\exp(\mathfrak{g})) \simeq *$$

we call its loop space object (see 2.3.2) $\exp(\mathfrak{g}) := \Omega_* \mathbf{B}\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ a *Lie integrated ∞-Lie algebra* in $\mathbf{H}$.

Definition 2.3.102. Set

$$\exp \mathrm{Lie} := \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} \circ \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} : */\mathbf{H} \to */\mathbf{H} \,.$$

Observation 2.3.103. If $\mathbf{H}$ is cohesive, then $\exp \mathrm{Lie}$ is a left adjoint.

Proof. By observation 2.3.86. □

Example 2.3.104. For all $X \in \mathbf{H}$ the object $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)$ is geometrically contractible.

Proof. Since on the locally ∞-connected and ∞-connected $\mathbf{H}$ the functor Π preserves ∞-colimits and the terminal object, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \Pi \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X &:= \Pi(*) \coprod_{\Pi X} \Pi \mathbf{\Pi} X \\ &\simeq * \coprod_{\Pi X} \Pi \mathrm{Disc} \Pi X \\ &\simeq * \coprod_{\Pi X} \Pi X \qquad \simeq * \end{aligned},$$

where we used that on the ∞-connected $\mathbf{H}$ the functor Disc is full and faithful. □

Corollary 2.3.105. *We have for every $(* \to A) \in */\mathbf{H}$ that $\exp \mathrm{Lie} A$ is geometrically contractible.*

We shall write $\mathbf{B}\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ for $\exp \mathrm{Lie} \mathbf{B} G$, when the context is clear.

Proposition 2.3.106. *Every de Rham cocycle (2.3.11) $\omega : \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X \to \mathbf{B}G$ factors through the Lie integrated ∞-Lie algebra of G*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \mathbf{B}\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \\ & \nearrow & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X & \xrightarrow{\omega} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array} .$$

Proof. By the universality of the $(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} \dashv \flat_{\mathrm{dR}})$-counit we have that ω factors through the counit $\epsilon : \exp \mathrm{Lie}\mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}G$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} X & \\ {}^{\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}\tilde{\omega}}\swarrow & & \searrow^{\omega} \\ \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}G & \xrightarrow{\epsilon} & \mathbf{B}G \end{array} ,$$

where $\tilde{\omega} : X \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}G$ is the adjunct of ω. □

Therefore instead of speaking of a G-valued de Rham cocycle, it is less redundant to speak of an $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$-valued de Rham cocycle. In particular we have the following.

Corollary 2.3.107. *Every morphism $\mathbf{B}\exp(\mathfrak{h}) := \exp \mathrm{Lie}\mathbf{B}H \to \mathbf{B}G$ from a Lie integrated ∞-Lie algebra to an ∞-group factors through the Lie integrated ∞-Lie algebra of that ∞-group*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\exp(\mathfrak{h}) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \\ & \searrow & \downarrow \\ & & \mathbf{B}G \end{array} .$$

2.3.13 Maurer-Cartan forms and curvature characteristic forms

In the intrinsic de Rham cohomology of the cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ there exist canonical cocycles that we may identify with *Maurer-Cartan forms* and with universal *curvature characteristic forms.*

Definition 2.3.108. For $G \in \mathrm{Group}(\mathbf{H})$ an ∞-group in the cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$, write

$$\theta : G \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}G$$

for the G-valued de Rham cocycle on G induced by this pasting of ∞-pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G & \longrightarrow & * \\ {\scriptstyle \tilde{\theta}}\downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}G & \longrightarrow & \flat \mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

using prop. 2.3.106.

We call θ the *Maurer-Cartan form* on G.

For any object X, postcomposition the Maurer-Cartan form sends G-valued functions on X to $\mathfrak{g}$-valued forms on X

$$[\theta_*] : H^0(X, G) \to H^1_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, G) .$$

Definition 2.3.109. For $G = \mathbf{B}^n A$ an Eilenberg-MacLane object, we also write

$$\mathrm{curv} : \mathbf{B}^n A \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A$$

for its intrinsic Maurer-Cartan form and call this the intrinsic *universal curvature characteristic form* on $\mathbf{B}^n A$.

These curvature characteristic forms serve to define differential cohomology in the next section.

2.3.14 Differential cohomology

Fix a 0-truncated abelian group object $A \in \mathrm{Grp}(\tau_{\leq 0}\mathbf{H}) \hookrightarrow \mathbf{H}$. For all $n \in \mathbf{N}$ we have then the Eilenberg-MacLane object $\mathbf{B}^n A$.

Definition 2.3.110. For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ any object and $n \geq 1$ write

$$\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) := \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) \prod_{\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A)} H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A)$$

for the cocycle ∞-groupoid of *twisted cohomology*, 2.3.5, of X with coefficients in A relative to the canonical curvature characteristic morphism $\mathrm{curv} : \mathbf{B}^n A \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A$ (2.3.13). By prop. 2.3.47 this is the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) & \xrightarrow{[F]} & H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) \\ \downarrow^{c} & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}_*} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A) \end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical morphism $\pi_0 \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A)$ is any choice of cocycle representative for each cohomology class: a choice of point in every connected component.

We call

$$H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A)$$

the degree-n *differential cohomology* of X with coefficient in A.

For $\nabla \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A)$ a cocycle, we call

- $[c(\nabla)] \in H^n(X, A)$ the *characteristic class* of the *underlying* $\mathbf{B}^{n-1}A$*-principal* ∞*-bundle*;
- $[F](\nabla) \in H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A)$ the *curvature* class of c (this is the *twist*).

We also say that ∇ is an ∞*-connection* on the principal ∞-bundle $\eta(\nabla)$.

Observation 2.3.111. The differential cohomology $H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, A)$ does not depend on the choice of morphism $H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A)$ (as long as it is an isomorphism on π_0, as required). In fact, for different choices the corresponding cocycle ∞-groupoids $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A)$ are equivalent.

Proof. This is a special case of observation 2.3.46. The set

$$H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) = \coprod_{H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A)} *$$

is, as a 0-truncated ∞-groupoid, an ∞-coproduct of the terminal object ∞Grpd. By universal colimits in this ∞-topos we have that ∞-colimits are preserved by ∞-pullbacks, so that $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A)$ is the coproduct

$$\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) \simeq \coprod_{H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A)} \left(\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) \prod_{\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A)} * \right)$$

of the homotopy fibers of curv_* over each of the chosen points $* \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A)$. These homotopy fibers only depend, up to equivalence, on the connected component over which they are taken. □

Proposition 2.3.112. *When restricted to vanishing curvature, differential cohomology coincides with flat differential cohomology (2.3.10)*

$$H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, A)|_{[F]=0} \simeq H_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) .$$

Moreover this is true at the level of cocycle ∞-groupoids

$$\left(\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) \prod_{H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,A)} \{[F] = 0\} \right) \simeq \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) .$$

Proof. This is a special case of prop. 2.3.48. By the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks the claim is equivalently that we have an ∞-pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) & \longrightarrow & * \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle [F]=0} \\
\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) & \xrightarrow{[F]} & H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) \\
\downarrow{\scriptstyle \eta} & & \downarrow \\
\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}_*} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A)
\end{array} .$$

By definition of flat cohomology, def. 2.3.91 and of intrinsic de Rham cohomology, def. 2.3.97, in $\mathbf{H}$, the outer rectangle is

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
\mathbf{H}(X, \flat \mathbf{B}^n A) & \longrightarrow & * \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}_*} & \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A)
\end{array} .$$

Since the hom-functor $\mathbf{H}(X, -)$ preserves ∞-limits this is a pullback if

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
\flat \mathbf{B}^n A & \longrightarrow & * \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
\mathbf{B}^n A & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}} & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A
\end{array}$$

is. Indeed, this is one step in the fiber sequence

$$\cdots \to \flat \mathbf{B}^n A \to \mathbf{B}^n A \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}}{\to} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A \to \flat \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A \to \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A$$

that defines curv (using that $\flat$ preserves limits and hence looping and delooping). □

The following establishes the characteristic short exact sequences that characterizes intrinsic differential cohomology as an extension of curvature forms by flat ∞-bundles and of bare ∞-bundles by connection forms.

Proposition 2.3.113. *Let* $\mathrm{im} F \subset H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A)$ *be the image of the curvatures. Then the differential cohomology group* $H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, A)$ *fits into a short exact sequence*

$$0 \to H^n_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, A) \to H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, A) \to \mathrm{im} F \to 0$$

Proof. Form the long exact sequence in homotopy groups of the fiber sequence

$$\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) \stackrel{[F]}{\to} H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A)$$

of prop. 2.3.112 and use that $H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,A)$ is, as a set – a homotopy 0-type – to get the short exact sequence on the bottom of this diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
\pi_1(H_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,A)) & \longrightarrow & \pi_0(\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(X,\mathbf{B}^nA)) & \longrightarrow & \pi_0(\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X,\mathbf{B}^nA)) & \xrightarrow{[F]} & \pi_0(H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,A)) \\
\| & & \| & & \| & & \downarrow \\
0 & \longrightarrow & H^n_{\mathrm{flat}}(X,A) & \longrightarrow & H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X,A) & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{im}[F]
\end{array} .$$

□

Proposition 2.3.114. *The differential cohomology group $H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X,A)$ fits into a short exact sequence of abelian groups*

$$0 \to H^n_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,A)/H^{n-1}(X,A) \to H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X,A) \xrightarrow{c} H^n(X,A) \to 0 .$$

Proof. We claim that for all $n \geq 1$ we have a fiber sequence

$$\mathbf{H}(X,\mathbf{B}^{n-1}A) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,\mathbf{B}^nA) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X,\mathbf{B}^nA) \to \mathbf{H}(X,\mathbf{B}^nA)$$

in ∞Grpd. This implies the short exact sequence using that by construction the last morphism is surjective on connected components (because in the defining ∞-pullback for $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}$ the right vertical morphism is by assumption surjective on connected components).

To see that we do have the fiber sequence as claimed consider the pasting composite of ∞-pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,\mathbf{B}^{n-1}A) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X,\mathbf{B}^nA) & \longrightarrow & H_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A) \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
* & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X,\mathbf{B}^nA) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A)
\end{array} .$$

The square on the right is a pullback by the above definition. Since also the square on the left is assumed to be an ∞-pullback it follows by the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks, prop. 2.1.26, that the top left object is the ∞-pullback of the total rectangle diagram. That total diagram is

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
\Omega\mathbf{H}(X,\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A) & \longrightarrow & H(X,\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A) \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
* & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X,\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A)
\end{array} ,$$

because, as before, this ∞-pullback is the coproduct of the homotopy fibers, and they are empty over the connected components not in the image of the bottom morphism and are the loop space object over the single connected component that is in the image.

Finally using that

$$\Omega\mathbf{H}(X,\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X,\Omega\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A)$$

and

$$\Omega\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A \simeq \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\Omega\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A$$

since both $\mathbf{H}(X,-)$ as well as $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}$ preserve ∞-limits and hence formation of loop space objects, the claim follows. □

Remark 2.3.115. This are essentially the short exact sequences whose form is familiar from the traditional definition of ordinary differential cohomology [HoSi05] only up to the following slight nuances in notation:

- The cohomology groups of the short exact sequence above denote the groups obtained in the given ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$, not in Top. Notably for the case $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ discussed in 3.3, $A = U(1) = \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ the circle group and $|\Pi(X)| \in \mathrm{Top}$ the geometric realization of a paracompact manifold X, we have that $H^n(X, \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z})$ above is $H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{sing}}(|\Pi(X)|, \mathbb{Z})$.
- The fact that on the left of the short exact sequence for differential cohomology we have the de Rham cohomology set $H^n_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A)$ instead of something like the set of all flat forms as familiar from ordinary differential cohomology is because the latter has no intrinsic meaning but depends on a choice of model. After fixing a specific presentation of $\mathbf{H}$ by a model category C we can consider instead of $H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A)$ the inclusion of the set of objects $\Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(X, A) := \mathbb{R}\mathrm{Hom}_C(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A)_0 \hookrightarrow \mathbb{R}\mathrm{Hom}_C(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A)$ to get the bigger cohomology set traditionally considered.

Details on how traditional ordinary differential cohomology is implied by the above are discussed in 3.3.11.

2.3.15 Chern-Weil homomorphism

We discuss an intrinsic realization of the Chern-Weil homomomorphism in an arbitrary cohesive ∞-topos.

Definition 2.3.116. For G an ∞-group and

$$\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^n A$$

a representative of a characteristic class $[\mathbf{c}] \in H^n(\mathbf{B}G, A)$ we say that the composite

$$\mathbf{c}_{\mathrm{dR}} : \mathbf{B}G \stackrel{\mathbf{c}}{\to} \mathbf{B}^n A \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}}{\to} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A$$

represents the *curvature characteristic class* $[\mathbf{c}_{\mathrm{dR}}] \in H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(\mathbf{B}G, A)$. The induced map on cohomology

$$(\mathbf{c}_{\mathrm{dR}})_* : H^1(-, G) \to H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(-, A)$$

we call the (unrefined) ∞-*Chern-Weil homomorphism* induced by $\mathbf{c}$.

The following construction universally lifts the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism from taking values in the de Rham cohomology to values in the differential cohomology of $\mathbf{H}$.

Definition 2.3.117. For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ any object, define the ∞-groupoid $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$ as the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}G) & \xrightarrow{(\hat{\mathbf{c}}_i)_i} & \prod_{[\mathbf{c}_i] \in H^{n_i}(\mathbf{B}G, A); i \geq 1} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n_i}A) \\ \downarrow^{\eta} & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G) & \xrightarrow{(\mathbf{c}_i)_i} & \prod_{[\mathbf{c}_i] \in H^{n_i}(\mathbf{B}G, A); i \geq 1} \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n_i}A) \end{array} .$$

We say

- a cocycle in $\nabla \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$ is an ∞-*connection*
- on the principal ∞-bundle $\eta(\nabla)$;
- a morphism in $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$ is a *gauge transformation* of connections;
- for each $[\mathbf{c}] \in H^n(\mathbf{B}G, A)$ the morphism

  $$[\hat{\mathbf{c}}] : H_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}G) \to H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, A)$$

  is the (full/refined) ∞-*Chern-Weil homomorphism* induced by the characteristic class $[\mathbf{c}]$.

Observation 2.3.118. Under the curvature projection $[F] : H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X,A) \to H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,A)$ the refined Chern-Weil homomorphism for $\mathbf{c}$ projects to the unrefined Chern-Weil homomorphism.

Proof. This is due to the existence of the pasting composite

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X,\mathbf{B}G) & \xrightarrow{(\hat{\mathbf{c}}_i)_i} & \prod_{[\mathbf{c}_i]\in H^{n_i}(\mathbf{B}G,A);i\geq 1} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X,\mathbf{B}^{n_i}A) & \xrightarrow{[F]} & \prod_{[\mathbf{c}_i]\in H^{n_i}(\mathbf{B}G,A);i\geq 1} H^{n_i+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,A) \\
\downarrow^{eta} & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
\mathbf{H}(X,\mathbf{B}G) & \xrightarrow{(\mathbf{c}_i)_i} & \prod_{[\mathbf{c}_i]\in H^{n_i}(\mathbf{B}G,A);i\geq 1} \mathbf{H}(X,\mathbf{B}^{n_i}A) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}_*} & \prod_{[\mathbf{c}_i]\in H^{n_i}(\mathbf{B}G,A);i\geq 1} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X,\mathbf{B}^{n_i+1},A)
\end{array}$$

of the defining ∞-pullback for $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X,\mathbf{B}G)$ with the products of the definition ∞-pullbacks for the $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X,\mathbf{B}^{n_i}A)$. □

2.3.16 Higher holonomy

The notion of ∞-connections in a cohesive ∞-topos induces a notion of *higher holonomoy.*

Definition 2.3.119. We say an object $\Sigma \in \mathbf{H}$ has *cohomological dimension* $\leq n \in \mathbb{N}$ if for all Eilenberg-MacLane objects $\mathbf{B}^{n+1}A$ the corresponding cohomology on Σ is trivial

$$H(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A) \simeq * .$$

Let $\dim(\Sigma)$ be the maximum n for which this is true.

Observation 2.3.120. If Σ has cohomological dimension $\leq n$ then its de Rham cohomology, def. 2.3.97, vanishes in degree $k > n$

$$H^{k>n}_{\mathrm{dR}}(\Sigma, A) \simeq * .$$

Proof. Since $\flat$ is a right adjoint it preserves delooping and hence $\flat\mathbf{B}^k A \simeq \mathbf{B}^k\flat A$. It follows that

$$\begin{aligned}
H^k_{\mathrm{dR}}(\Sigma,A) &:= \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^k A) \\
&\simeq \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, * \prod_{\mathbf{B}^k A} \mathbf{B}^k \flat A) \\
&\simeq \pi_0 \left(\mathbf{H}(\Sigma,*) \prod_{\mathbf{H}(\Sigma,\mathbf{B}^k A)} \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^k \flat A) \right) \\
&\simeq \pi_0(*)
\end{aligned}.$$

□

Let now A be fixed as in 2.3.14.

Definition 2.3.121. Let $\Sigma \in \mathbf{H}$, $n \in \mathbf{N}$ with $\dim\Sigma \leq n$. We say that the composite

$$\int_\Sigma : \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n A) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \infty\mathrm{Gprd}(\Pi(\Sigma), \Pi(\mathbf{B}^n A)) \stackrel{\tau_{\leq n-dim(\Sigma)}}{\to} \tau_{n-dim(\Sigma)} \infty\mathrm{Gprd}(\Pi(\Sigma), \Pi(\mathbf{B}^n A))$$

of the adjunction equivalence followed by truncation as indicated is the *flat holonomy* operation on flat ∞-connections.

More generally, let

- $\nabla \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A)$ be a differential coycle on some $X \in \mathbf{H}$
- $\phi : \Sigma \to X$ a morphism.

Write

$$\phi^* : \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n A) \simeq \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n A)$$

(using prop. 2.3.112) for the morphism on ∞-pullbacks induced by the morphism of diagrams

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A) & \longleftarrow & H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, A) \\
\downarrow{\scriptstyle \phi^*} & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle \phi^*} & & \downarrow \\
\mathbf{H}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n A) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A) & \longleftarrow & *
\end{array}$$

The *holonomomy* of ∇ over σ is the flat holonomy of $\phi^*\nabla$:

$$\int_\phi \nabla := \int_\Sigma \phi^* \nabla \,.$$

This is a special case of the following more general notion.

Definition 2.3.122. For Σ of dimension $k \leq n$ we say that the morphism

$$\int_\Sigma : [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n A_{\mathrm{diff}}] \to \mathrm{conc}_{n-k-1} \tau_{n-k} [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n A_{\mathrm{diff}}]$$

is the *fiber integration* over Σ on the moduli ∞-stack of differental A-cocycles.

Here angular brackets indicate the internal hom in the ∞-topos and $\mathrm{conc}_{n-k-1}(-) isthen - k - 1$-concretification from prop. 2.3.7.

2.3.17 Chern-Simons functionals

Combining the refined ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism, 2.3.15 with the higher holonomy, 2.3.16, of the ∞-connections that it takes values in produces a notion of higher *Chern-Simons functionals*.

Definition 2.3.123. Let $\Sigma \in \mathbf{H}$ be of cohomological dimension $\dim\Sigma = n \in \mathbb{N}$ and let $\mathbf{c} : X \to \mathbf{B}^n A$ a representative of a characteristic class $[\mathbf{c}] \in H^n(X, A)$ for some object X. We say that the composite

$$\exp(S_{\mathbf{c}}(-)) : \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, X) \stackrel{\hat{\mathbf{c}}}{\to} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n A) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{H}_{flat}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n A) \stackrel{\int_\Sigma}{\to} \tau_{\leq 0} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Pi(\Sigma), \Pi\mathbf{B}^n A)$$

is the ∞-*Chern-Simons functional* induced by $\mathbf{c}$ on Σ.

Here $\hat{\mathbf{c}}$ denotes the refined Chern-Weil homomorphism, 2.3.15, induced by $\mathbf{c}$, and $\int_\Sigma$ is the holonomy over Σ, 2.3.16, of the resulting n-bundle with connection.

In the language of σ-model quantum field theory the ingredients of this definition have the following interpretation

- Σ is the *worldvolume of a fundamental* ($\dim\Sigma - 1$)-*brane* ;
- X is the *target space*;
- $\hat{\mathbf{c}}$ is the *background gauge field* on X;
- $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(\Sigma, X)$ is the *space of worldvolume field configurations* $\phi : \Sigma \to X$ or *trajectories* of the brane in X;
- $\exp(S_{\mathbf{c}}(\phi)) = \int_\Sigma \phi^* \hat{\mathbf{c}}$ is the value of the action functional on the field configuration ϕ.

In suitable situations this construction refines to an internal construction.

Assume that $\mathbf{H}$ has a canonical line object $\mathbb{A}^1$ and a natural numbers object $\mathbb{Z}$. Then the action functional $\exp(iS(-))$ may lift to the internal hom with respect to the canonical cartesian closed monoidal structure on any ∞-topos to a morphism of the form

$$\exp(iS_{\mathbf{c}}(-)) : [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}] \to \mathbf{B}^{n-dim\Sigma}\mathbb{A}^1/\mathbb{Z}\,.$$

We call $[\Sigma, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}]$ the configuration space of the ∞-*Chern-Simons theory* defined by $\mathbf{c}$ and $\exp(iS_{\mathbf{c}}(-))$ the action functional in codimension $(n - dim\Sigma)$ defined on it.

2.3.18 Wess-Zumino-Witten functionals

To every ∞-Chern-Simons functional on $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$, 2.3.17, is associated a corresponding *Wess-Zumino-Witten functional* on G.

Before giving the definition it is useful to restate the content of prop. 2.3.44 in the following way.

Definition 2.3.124. Let $G \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$ be an ∞-group and

$$\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A$$

a characteristic map classifying *Chern-Simons* $(\mathbf{B}^nA)$*-bundle* $\mathbf{B}\hat{G} \to \mathbf{B}G$.

We say that its image $\hat{G} \to G$ under forming loop space objects is the corresponding *Wess-Zumino-Witten* $(\mathbf{B}^nA)$-principal bundle.

Remark 2.3.125. By prop. 2.3.27, the WZW ∞-bundle sits in the pasting diagram of ∞-pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \hat{G} & \longrightarrow & * & & \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ G & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}\hat{G} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}\,.$$

The WZW action functional arises from the differential refinement of this situation.

Definition 2.3.126. Let

$$\hat{\mathbf{c}} : \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

be a differential refinement, inducing an ∞-Chern-Simons functional, by 2.3.17. We say that the morphism $\mathrm{WZW}(\hat{\mathbf{c}})$ in the pasting diagram of ∞-pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} G & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{WZW}(\hat{\mathbf{c}})} & \mathbf{B}^nA^{\hat{\mathbf{c}}}_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}\hat{G}_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \end{array}$$

is the corresponding *WZW connection.* For Σ of dimension $(n+1)$ we say that the composition with the holonomy over Σ, def. 2.3.121,

$$\exp(S_{\mathrm{WZW}(\hat{\mathbf{c}})}) : \ \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, G) \xrightarrow{\mathrm{WZW}(\hat{\mathbf{c}})} \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A_{\mathrm{conn}}) \xrightarrow{\int_\Sigma} A$$

is the corresponding exponentiated *WZW action functional* induced by $\hat{\mathbf{c}}$.

Observation 2.3.127. The object $\mathbf{B}^n A^{\hat{\mathbf{c}}}_{\mathrm{conn}}$ is a moduli ∞-stack of circle n-bundles with connection whose curvature n-form is the globally defined connection n-form of $\hat{\mathbf{c}}$ evaluated on a trivial G-principal bundle with flat connection.

We have an ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}^n A^{\hat{\mathbf{c}}}_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B} G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\hat{\mathbf{c}}} \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^{n+1} A_{\mathrm{conn}} \end{array} .$$

Proof. By the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks, prop. 2.1.26. □

2.4 Infinitesimal cohesion

We discuss extra structure on a cohesive ∞-topos that encodes a refinement of the corresponding notion of cohesion to *infinitesimal cohesion*. More precisely, we consider inclusions $\mathbf{H} \hookrightarrow \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ of cohesive ∞-toposes that exhibit the objects of $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ as infinitesimal cohesive neighbourhoods of objects in $\mathbf{H}$.

Definition 2.4.1. Given a cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$ we say that an *infinitesimal cohesive neighbourhood* of $\mathbf{H}$ is another cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ equipped with a quadruple of adjoint ∞-functors

$$(i_! \dashv i^* \dashv i_* \dashv i^!) : \mathbf{H} \underset{\underset{i^!}{\longleftarrow}}{\overset{\overset{i_!}{\hookrightarrow}}{\underset{\underset{i_*}{\longrightarrow}}{\overset{i^*}{\longleftarrow}}}} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$$

such that $i_!$ is a full and faithful ∞-functor that preserves the terminal object.

Observation 2.4.2. This implies that also i_* is full and faithful.

Proof. By the characterizaton of full and faithful adjoint ∞-functors the condition on $i_!$ is equivalent to $i^* i_! \simeq \mathrm{id}$. Since $(i^* i_! \dashv i^* i_*)$ it follows by essential uniqueness of adjoint ∞-functors that also $i^* i_* \simeq \mathrm{id}$. □

This definition captures the characterization of infinitesimal objects as having a single global point surrounded by an infinitesimal neighbourhood: as we shall see in more detail below in 2.4.1, the ∞-functor i^* may be thought of as contracting away any infinitesimal extension of an object. Thus X being an infinitesimal object amounts to $i^* X \simeq *$, and the ∞-adjunction $(i_! \dashv i^*)$ then implies that X has only a single global point, since

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(*, X) &\simeq \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(i_! *, X) \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}(*, i^* X) \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}(*, *) \\ &\simeq * \end{aligned} .$$

Observation 2.4.3. The inclusion into the infinitesimal neighbourhood is necessarily a morphism of ∞-toposes over ∞Grpd.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H} & \xrightarrow{(i^* \dashv i_*)} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}} \\ & {\scriptstyle \Gamma_{\mathbf{H}}} \searrow \quad \swarrow {\scriptstyle \Gamma_{\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}}} & \\ & \infty\mathrm{Grpd} & \end{array}$$

as is the induced ∞-geometric morphism $(i_* \dashv i^!) : \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}} \to \mathbf{H}$:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}} & \xrightarrow{(i_* \dashv i^!)} & \mathbf{H} \\ & {\scriptstyle \Gamma_{\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}}} \searrow \quad \swarrow {\scriptstyle \Gamma_{\mathbf{H}}} & \\ & \infty\mathrm{Grpd} & \end{array} .$$

Proof. By essential uniqueness of the terminal global section geometric morphism. In both cases the direct image functor has as left adjoint that preserves the terminal object. Therefore we compute in the first case

$$\begin{aligned} \Gamma_{\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}}(i_* X) &\simeq \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(*, i_* X) \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}(i^* *, X) \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}(*, X) \\ &\simeq \Gamma_{\mathbf{H}}(X) \end{aligned}$$

and analogously in the second. □

We now establish a class of examples of infinitesimal neighbourhoods constructed from suitable neighbourhoods of sites.

Definition 2.4.4. Let C be an ∞-cohesive site, def. 2.2.10. We say a site C_{th}

- equipped with a coreflective embedding

$$(i \dashv p) : C \underset{p}{\overset{i}{\underset{\leftarrow}{\hookrightarrow}}} C_{\mathrm{th}}$$

- such that
  - i preserves pullbacks along morphisms in covering families;
  - both i and p send covering families to covering families;
  - for all $\mathbf{U} \in C_{\mathrm{th}}$ and for all covering families $\{U_i \to p(\mathbf{U})\}$ in C there is a lift through p to a covering family $\{\mathbf{U}_i \to \mathbf{U}\}$ in C_{th}

is an *infinitesimal neighbourhood site* of C.

Proposition 2.4.5. *Let C be an ∞-cohesive site and $(i \dashv p) : C \underset{p}{\overset{i}{\underset{\leftarrow}{\hookrightarrow}}} C_{\mathrm{th}}$ an infinitesimal neighbourhood site.*

Then the ∞-category of ∞-sheaves on C_{th} is a cohesive ∞-topos and the restriction i^* along i exhibits it as an infinitesimal neighbourhood of the cohesive ∞-topos over C.

$$(i_! \dashv i^* \dashv i_* \dashv i^!) : \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C) \to \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C_{\mathrm{th}}) .$$

Moreover, $i_!$ restricts on representables to the ∞-Yoneda embedding factoring through i:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C & \hookrightarrow & \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C) \\ \downarrow^{i} & & \downarrow^{i_!} \\ C_{\mathrm{th}} & \hookrightarrow & \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C_{\mathrm{th}}) \end{array} .$$

Proof. We demonstrate this in the model category presentation of $\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(C_{\mathrm{th}})$ as in the proof of prop. 2.2.11.

Consider the right Kan extension $\mathrm{Ran}_i : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \to [C_{\mathrm{th}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ of simplicial presheaves along the functor i. On an object $\mathbf{K} \in C_{\mathrm{th}}$ it is given by

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{Ran}_i F : \mathbf{K} \mapsto & \int_{U \in C} \mathrm{sSet}(C_{\mathrm{th}}(i(U), \mathbf{K}), F(U)) \\ \simeq & \int_{U \in C} \mathrm{sSet}(C(U, p(\mathbf{K})), F(U)) \\ \simeq & F(p(\mathbf{K})) \end{aligned} ,$$

where in the last step we use the Yoneda reduction-form of the Yoneda lemma.

This shows that the right adjoint to $(-) \circ i$ is itself given by precomposition with a functor, and hence has itself a further right adjoint, which gives us a total of four adjoint functors

$$[C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Lan}_i} \\ \xleftarrow{(-)\circ i} \\ \xrightarrow{(-)\circ p} \\ \xleftarrow[\mathrm{Ran}_p]{} \end{array} [C_{\mathrm{th}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] .$$

From this are induced the corresponding simplicial Quillen adjunctions on the global projective and injective model structure on simplicial presheaves

$$(\mathrm{Lan}_i \dashv (-) \circ i) : [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \underset{(-)\circ i}{\overset{\mathrm{Lan}_i}{\rightleftarrows}} [C_{\mathrm{th}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} ;$$

$$((-)\circ i \dashv (-)\circ p) : \; [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \underset{(-)\circ p}{\overset{(-)\circ i}{\leftrightarrows}} [C_{\mathrm{th}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \;\; ;$$

$$((-)\circ p \dashv \mathrm{Ran}_p) : \; [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj}} \underset{\mathrm{Ran}_p}{\overset{(-)\circ p}{\rightleftarrows}} [C_{\mathrm{th}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj}} \;\; .$$

By prop. 2.1.28, for these Quillen adjunctions to descend to the Čech-local model structure on simplicial presheaves it suffices that the right adjoints preserve locally fibrant objects.

We first check that $(-)\circ i$ sends locally fibrant objects to locally fibrant objects. To that end, let $\{U_i \to U\}$ be a covering family in C. Write $\int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k]\cdot \coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k}(j(U_{i_0})\times_{j(U)} j(U_{i_1})\times_{j(U)}\cdots\times_{j(U)} j(U_k))$ for its Čech nerve, where j denotes the Yoneda embedding. Recall by the definition of the ∞-cohesive site C that all the fiber products of representable presheaves here are again themselves representable, hence $\cdots = \int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot\coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k}(j(U_{i_0}\times_U U_{i_1}\times_U\cdots\times_U U_k))$. Using that the left adjoint Lan_i preserves the coend and tensoring, that it restricts on representables to i and by the assumption that i preserves pullbacks along covers we have that

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathrm{Lan}_i C(\{U_i\to U\}) &\simeq \int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot\coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k}\mathrm{Lan}_i(j(U_{i_0}\times_U U_{i_1}\times_U\cdots\times_U U_k)) \\
&\simeq \int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot\coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k} j(i(U_{i_0}\times_U U_{i_1}\times_U\cdots\times_U U_k)) \\
&\simeq \int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot\coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k} j(i(U_{i_0})\times_{i(U)} i(U_{i_1})\times_{i(U)}\cdots\times_{i(U)} i(U_k))
\end{aligned} \quad .$$

By the assumption that i preserves covers, this is the Čech nerve of a covering family in C_{th}. Therefore for $F\in[C_{\mathrm{th}}^{\mathrm{op}},\mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ fibrant we have for all coverings $\{U_i\to U\}$ in C that the descent morphism

$$i^*F(U) = F(i(U)) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} [C_{\mathrm{th}}^{\mathrm{op}},\mathrm{sSet}](C(\{i(U_i)\}),F) = [C^{\mathrm{op}},\mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), i^*F)$$

is a weak equivalence.

To see that $(-)\circ p$ preserves locally fibrant objects, we apply the analogous reasoning after observing that its left adjoint $(-)\circ i$ preserves all limits and colimits of simplicial presheaves (as these are computed objectwise) and by observing that for $\{\mathbf{U}_I \stackrel{p_i}{\to} \mathbf{U}\}$ a covering family in C_{th} we have that its image under $(-)\circ i$ is its image under p, by the Yoneda lemma:

$$\begin{aligned}
[C^{\mathrm{op}},\mathrm{sSet}](K,((-)\circ i)(\mathbf{U})) &\simeq C_{\mathrm{th}}(i(K),\mathbf{U}) \\
&\simeq C(K,p(\mathbf{U}))
\end{aligned}$$

and using that p preserves covers by assumption.

Therefore $(-)\circ i$ is a left and right local Quillen functor with left local Quillen adjoint Lan_i and right local Quillen adjoint $(-)\circ p$.

Finally to see by the above reasoning that also Ran_p preserves locally fibant objects notice that for every covering family $\{U_i\to U\}$ in C and every morphism $\mathbf{K}\to p^*U$ in C_{th} we may find a covering $\{\mathbf{K}_j\to\mathbf{K}\}$ such that we have commuting diagrams as on the left of

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{K}_j & \longrightarrow & p^*U_{i(j)} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{K} & \longrightarrow & p^*U \end{array} \quad \leftrightarrow \quad \begin{array}{ccccc} p(\mathbf{K}_j) & = & i^*(\mathbf{K}_j) & \longrightarrow & U_{i(j)} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ p(\mathbf{K}) & = & i^*(\mathbf{K}) & \longrightarrow & U \end{array} \quad ,$$

because by the $(i^* \dashv p^*)$ adjunction established above these correspond to the diagrams as indicated on the right, which exist by definition of coverage and the fact that, by definition, in C_{th} covers lift through p.

This implies that $\{p^* U_i \to p^* U\}$ is a *generalized cover* in the terminology of [DuHoIs04], which by the discussion there implies that the corresponding Čech nerve projection $C(\{p^* U_i\}) \to p^* U$ is a weak equivalence in $[C_{\mathrm{th}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.

This establishes the quadruple of adjoint ∞-functors as claimed and that $i_!$ preserves the terminal object. It remains to see that $i_!$ is a full and faithful ∞-functor.

For that notice the general fact that left Kan extension along a full and faithful functor i satisfies $\mathrm{Lan}_i \circ i \simeq \mathrm{id}$. It only remains to observe that since $(-) \circ i$ is not only right but also left Quillen by the above, we have that $i^* \circ \mathrm{Lan}_i$ applied to a cofibrant object is already the derived functor of the composite. □

Definition 2.4.6. For $(i_! \dashv i^* \dashv i_* \dashv i^!) : \mathbf{H} \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ an infinitesimal neighbourhood of a cohesive ∞-topos, we write

$$(\Pi_{\mathrm{inf}} \dashv \mathrm{Disc}_{\mathrm{inf}} \dashv \Gamma_{\mathrm{inf}}) := (i^* \dashv i_* \dashv i^!)\,,$$

so that the locally connected terminal geometric morphism of $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ factors as

$$(\Pi_{\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}} \dashv \mathrm{Disc}_{\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}} \dashv \flat_{\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}}) : \; \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}} \underset{\Gamma_{\mathrm{inf}}}{\overset{\Pi_{\mathrm{inf}}}{\underset{\longleftarrow \mathrm{Disc}_{\mathrm{inf}} \longrightarrow}{\longrightarrow}}} \mathbf{H} \underset{\Gamma_{\mathbf{H}}}{\overset{\Pi_{\mathbf{H}}}{\underset{\longleftarrow \mathrm{Disc}_{\mathbf{H}} \longrightarrow}{\longrightarrow}}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}\,.$$

We discuss now structures that are canonically present in a cohesive ∞-topos equipped with infinitesimal cohesion, def. 2.4.1. These structures parallel the structures in a general cohesive ∞-topos, 2.3.

- 2.4.1 – Infinitesimal paths and de Rham spaces
- 2.4.2 – Flat ∞-connections and local systems
- 2.4.3 – Formal cohesive ∞-groupoids

2.4.1 Infinitesimal paths and de Rham spaces

In the presence of infinitesimal cohesion there is an infinitesimal analog of the geometric paths ∞-groupoid, 2.3.8. We discuss this *infnitesimal path ∞-groupoid* and various structures that it gives rise to:

- Infinitesimal path ∞-groupoid
- Jet ∞-bundles
- Formally smooth/étale/unramified morphisms

2.4.1.1 Infinitesimal path ∞-groupoid Let $(i_! \dashv i^* \dashv i_* \dashv i^1) : \mathbf{H} \to \mathbf{H}_{th}$ be an infinitesimal neighbourhood of a cohesive ∞-topos.

Definition 2.4.7. For $(i_! \dashv i^* \dashv i_* \dashv i^!) : \mathbf{H} \hookrightarrow \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ an infinitesimal cohesive neighbourhood, define the triple of adjoint ∞-functors

$$(\mathbf{Red} \dashv \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}} \dashv \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}) : (i_! i^* \dashv i_* i^* \dashv i_* \dashv i^!) : \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}} \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}} \,.$$

For $X \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ we say that

- $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$ is the *infinitesimal path ∞-groupoid* of X;
  The $(i^* \dashv i_*)$-unit
  $$X \to \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$$
  we call the *constant infinitesimal path inclusion.*
- $\mathbf{Red}(X)$ is the *reduced cohesive ∞-groupoid* underlying X.
  The $(i_* \dashv i^*)$-counit
  $$\mathbf{Red}X \to X$$
  we call the *inclusion of the reduced part* of X.

Remark. This is an abstraction of the setup considered in [SiTe]. In traditional contexts as considered there, the object $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$ is called the *de Rham space* of X or the *de Rham stack* of X. Here we may tend to avoid this terminology, since by 2.3.11 we have a good notion of intrinsic de Rham cohomology in every cohesive ∞-topos already without equipping it with infinitesimal cohesion. From this point of view the object $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$ is not primarily characterized by the fact that (in some models, see 3.4.2 below) it does co-represent de Rham cohomology – because the object $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)$ from def. 2.3.94 does, too – but by the fact that it does so in an explicitly synthetic infinitesimal way in the sense of [Kock10].

Observation 2.4.8. There is a canonical natural transformation

$$\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X) \to \mathbf{\Pi}(X)$$

that factors the finite path inclusion through the infinitesimal path inclusion

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X) \\ & \nearrow & \downarrow \\ X & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{\Pi}(X) \end{array} .$$

Proof. This is just the formula for the unit of the composite adjunction

$$\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}} \underset{\mathrm{Disc}_{\mathrm{inf}}}{\overset{\Pi_{\mathrm{inf}}}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathbf{H} \underset{\mathrm{Disc}}{\overset{\Pi}{\rightleftarrows}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

□

2.4.1.2 Jet ∞-bundles

Definition 2.4.9. For any object $X \in \mathbf{H}$ write

$$\mathrm{Jet} : \mathbf{H}/X \underset{i_*}{\overset{i^*}{\leftrightarrows}} \mathbf{H}/\mathbf{\Pi}_{inf}(X)$$

for the base change geometric morphism, prop. 2.1.32, induced by the constant infinitesimal path inclusion $i : X \to \mathbf{\Pi}_{inf}(X)$, def. 2.4.7.

For $(E \to X) \in \mathbf{H}/X$ we call $\mathrm{Jet}(E) \to \mathbf{\Pi}_{inf}(X)$ as well as its pullback $i^*\mathrm{Jet}(E) \to X$ (depending on context) the *jet ∞-bundle* of $E \to X$.

2.4.1.3 Formally smooth/étale/unramified morphisms

Definition 2.4.10. We say an object $X \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ is *formally smooth* if the constant infinitesimal path inclusion

$$X \to \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$$

is an effective epimorphism.

In this form this is the direct ∞-categorical analog of the characterization of formal smoothness in [SiTe].

Proposition 2.4.11. *An object $X \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ is formally smooth according to def. 2.4.10 precisely if the canonical morphism*

$$\phi : i_! X \to i_* X$$

is an effective epimorphismeffective epimorphism.

Proof. The canonical morphism is the composite

$$\phi := i_! \overset{\eta i_!}{\to} \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}} i_! := i_* i^* i_! \overset{\simeq}{\to} i_* \,.$$

By the condition that $i_!$ is a full and faithful ∞-functor the second morphism here in an equivalence as indicated and hence the component of the composite on X being an effective epimorphism is equivalent to the component $i_! X \to \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}} i_! X$ being an effective epimorphism. □

Remark. In this form this characterization of formal smoothness is the evident generalization of the condition given in section 4.1 of [RoKo04]. (Notice that the notation there is related to the one used here by $u^* = i_!$, $u_* = i^*$ and $u^! = i_*$.)

Therefore we have the following more general definition.

Definition 2.4.12. For $f : X \to Y$ a morphism in $\mathbf{H}$, we say that

1. f is a *formally smooth morphism* if the canonical morphism

$$i_! X \to i_! Y \prod_{i_* Y} i_* Y$$

is an effective epimorphism;

2. f is a *formally étale morphism* if this morphism is an equivalence, equivalently if the naturality square

$$\begin{array}{ccc} i_! X & \xrightarrow{i_! f} & i_! Y \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \phi_X} & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle \phi_Y} \\ i_* X & \xrightarrow{i_* f} & i_* Y \end{array}$$

is an ∞-pullback square.

3. f is a *formally unramified morphism* if this is a (-1)-truncated morphism. More generally, f is an *order-k formally unramified morphisms* for $(-2) \leq k \leq \infty$ if this is a k-truncated morphism ([LuHTT], 5.5.6).

Remark. An order-(-2) formally unramified morphism is equivalently a formally étale morphism. Only for 0-truncated X does formal smoothness together with formal unramifiedness imply formal étaleness.

Proposition 2.4.13. *The collection of formally étale morphisms in* $\mathbf{H}$*, def. 2.4.12, is closed under the following operations.*

1. *Every equivalence is formally étale.*
2. *The composite of two formally étale morphisms is itself formally étale.*
3. *If*

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} & & Y & & \\ & {\scriptstyle f}\nearrow & & \searrow{\scriptstyle g} & \\ X & & \xrightarrow{h} & & Z \end{array}$$

is a diagram such that g and h are formally étale, then also f is formally étale.

4. *Any retract of a formally étale morphisms is itself formally étale.*
5. *The ∞-pullback of a formally étale morphisms is formally étale if the pullback is preserved by $i_!$.*

The statements about closure under composition and pullback appears as prop. 5.4, prop. 5.6 in [RoKo04]. The extra assumption that $i_!$ preserves the pullback is implicit in their setup.

Proof. The first statement follows trivially because ∞-pullbacks are well defined up to equivalence. The second two statements follow by the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks, prop. 2.1.26: let $f : X \to Y$ and $g : Y \to Z$ be two morphisms and consider the pasting diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} i_! X & \xrightarrow{i_! f} & i_! Y & \xrightarrow{i_! g} & Z \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ i_* X & \xrightarrow{i_* f} & i_* Y & \xrightarrow{i_* g} & i_* Z \end{array} \quad .$$

If f and g are formally étale then both small squares are pullback squares. Then the pasting law says that so is the outer rectangle and hence $g \circ f$ is formally étale. Similarly, if g and $g \circ f$ are formally étale then the right square and the total reactangle are pullbacks, so the pasting law says that also the left square is a pullback and so also f is formally étale.

For the fourth claim, let $\mathrm{Id} \simeq (g \to f \to g)$ be a retract in he arrow ∞-category $\mathbf{H}^I$. By applying the natural transformation $\phi : i_! \to i_*$ this becomes a retract

$$\mathrm{Id} \simeq ((i_! g \to i_* g) \to (i_! f \to i_* f) \to (i_! g \to i_* g))$$

in the category of squares $\mathbf{H}^{\Box}$. By assumption the middle square is an ∞-pullback square and we need to show that the also the outer square is. This follows generally: a retract of an ∞-limiting cone is itself ∞-limiting. To see this, we invoke the presentation of ∞-limits by *derivators* (thanks to Mike Shulman for this argument): we have

1. ∞-limits in $\mathbf{H}$ are computed by homotopy limits in an presentation by a model category $K := [C^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{loc}}$ [LuHTT];
2. for $j : J \to J^{\triangleleft}$ the inclusion of a diagram into its cone (the join with an initial element), the homotopy limit over C is given by forming the right Kan extension $j_* : \mathrm{Ho}(K^J (W^J)^{-1}) \to \mathrm{Ho}(K^{J^{\triangleleft}} (W^{J^{\triangleleft}})^{-1})$,
3. a $J^{\triangleleft}$-diagram F is a homotopy limiting cone precisely if the unit

   $$F \to j_* j^* F$$

   us an isomorphism.

Therefore we have a retract in $[\Delta[1], [\Box, K$

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} (i_! g \to i_! g) & \longrightarrow & (i_! f \to i_! f) & \longrightarrow & (i_! g \to i_! g) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ j^* j_* (i_! g \to i_! g) & \longrightarrow & j^* j_* (i_! f \to i_! f) & \longrightarrow & j^* j_* (i_! g \to i_! g) \end{array} ,$$

where the middle morphism is an isomorphism. Hence so is the outer morphism and therefore also g is formally étale.

For the last claim, consider an ∞-pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} A \times_Y X & \longrightarrow & X \\ \downarrow^{p} & & \downarrow^{f} \\ A & \longrightarrow & Y \end{array}$$

where f is formally étale. Applying the natural transformation $\phi : i_! \to i_*$ to this yields a square of squares. Two sides of this are the pasting composite

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} i_! A \times_Y X & \longrightarrow & i_! X & \xrightarrow{\phi_X} & i_* X \\ \downarrow^{i_! p} & & \downarrow^{i_! f} & & \downarrow^{i_* f} \\ i_! A & \longrightarrow & i_! Y & \xrightarrow{\phi_Y} & i_* Y \end{array}$$

and the other two sides are the pasting composite

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} i_! A \times_Y X & \xrightarrow{\phi_{A \times_Y X}} & i_* A \times_Y A & \longrightarrow & i_* X \\ \downarrow^{i_! p} & & \downarrow^{i_* p} & & \downarrow^{i_* f} \\ i_! A & \xrightarrow{\phi_A} & i_* A & \longrightarrow & i_* Y \end{array} .$$

Counting left to right and top to bottom, we have that

- the first square is a pullback by assumption that $i_!$ preserves the given pullback;
- the second square is a pullback, since f is formally étale.
- the total top rectangle is therefore a pullback, by the pasting law;
- the fourth square is a pullback since i_* is right adjoint and so also preserves pullbacks;
- also the total bottom rectangle is a pullback, since it is equal to the top total rectangle;
- therefore finally the third square is a pullback, by the other clause of the pasting law. Hence p is formally étale.

□

Remark 2.4.14. The properties listed in prop. 2.4.13 correspond to the axioms on the "admissible maps" modelling a notion of *local homeomorphism* in a *geometry for structured* ∞*-toposes* according to def. 1.2.1 of [LuSp]. This means that the intrinsic noition of local étaleness induced from a notion of infinitesimal cohesion itself canonically induces a notion of ∞-toposes equipped with cohesive ∞-structure sheaves.

In order to interpret the notion of formal smoothness, we turn now to the discussion of infinitesimal reduction.

Observation 2.4.15. The operation **Red** is an idempotent projection of $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ onto the image of $\mathbf{H}$ under $i_!$:

$$\mathbf{Red}\,\mathbf{Red} \simeq \mathbf{Red}\,.$$

Accordingly also

$$\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}} \simeq \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}$$

and

$$\flat_{\mathrm{inf}}\flat_{\mathrm{inf}} \simeq \flat_{\mathrm{inf}}\,.$$

Proof. By definition of infinitesimal neighbourhood we have that $i_!$ is a full and faithful ∞-functor. It follows that $i^* i_! \simeq \mathrm{id}$ and hence

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{Red}\mathbf{Red} &\simeq i_! i^* i_! i^* \\ &\simeq i_! i^* \\ &\simeq \mathbf{Red} \end{aligned}\,.$$

□

Observation 2.4.16. For every $X \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$, we have that $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$ is formally smooth according to def. 2.4.10.

Proof. By prop. 2.4.15 we have that

$$\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X) \to \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}X$$

is an equivalence. As such it is in particular an effective epimorphism. □

2.4.2 Flat ∞-connections and local systems

We discuss the infinitesimal analog of intrinsic flat cohomology, 2.3.10.

Definition 2.4.17. For $X, A \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ we say that

$$H_{\mathrm{infflat}}(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X), A) \simeq \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{inf}} A)$$

is the *infinitesimal flat cohomology* of X with coefficient in A.

Remark 2.4.18. In traditional contexts, such as considered in [SiTe], this is de Rham cohomology. To distinguish the abstract notion from the closely related but slightly different intrinsic de Rham cohomology of def. 2.3.11 we shall also say *synthetic de Rham cohomology* for the notion of def. 2.4.17. In this case we shall write

$$H_{\mathrm{dR,th}}(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X), A) .$$

Remark 2.4.19. By observation 2.4.8 we have canonical natural morphisms

$$\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, A) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{infflat}}(X, A) \to \mathbf{H}(X, A)$$

The objects on the left are principal ∞-bundles equipped with flat ∞-connection. The first morphism forgets their higher parallel transport along finite volumes and just remembers the parallel transport along infinitesimal volumes. The last morphism finally forgets also this connection information.

Definition 2.4.20. For $A \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ a 0-truncated abelian ∞-group object we say that the *de Rham theorem* for A-coefficients holds in $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ if for all $X \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ the infinitesimal path inclusion of observation 2.4.8

$$\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X) \to \mathbf{\Pi}(X)$$

is an equivalence in A-cohomology, hence if for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$ we have that

$$\pi_0 \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(\mathbf{\Pi}(X), \mathbf{B}^n A) \to \pi_0 \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(\mathbf{\Pi}_{inf}(X), \mathbf{B}^n A)$$

is an isomorphism.

If we follow the notation of remark 2.4.18 and moreover write $|X| = |\Pi X|$ for the intrinsic geometric realization, def. 2.3.77, then this becomes

$$H^\bullet_{\mathrm{dR,th}}(X, A) \simeq H^\bullet(|X|, A_{\mathrm{disc}}) ,$$

where on the right we have ordinary cohomology in top (for instance realized as singular cohomology) with coefficients in the discrete group $A_{\mathrm{disc}} := \Gamma A$ underlying the cohesive group A.

In certain contexts of infinitesimal neighbourhoods of cohesive ∞-toposes the de Rham theorem in this form has been considered in [SiTe]. We discuss a realization below in 3.4.2.

2.4.3 Formal cohesive ∞-groupoids

The infinitesimal analog of an exponentiated ∞-Lie algebra, 2.3.12, is a formal cohesive ∞-group.

Definition 2.4.21. An object $X \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ is a *formal cohesive ∞-groupoid* if $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}} X \simeq *$.

An ∞-group object $\mathfrak{g} \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ that is infinitesimal we call a *formal ∞-group.*

For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ any object, we say $\mathfrak{a} \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ is an *formal cohesive ∞-groupoid over X* if $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(\mathfrak{a}) \simeq \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$; equivalently: if there is a morphism

$$\mathfrak{a} \to \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$$

equivalent to the infinitesimal path inclusion, def. 2.4.7, for $\mathfrak{a}$.

Proposition 2.4.22. *An infinitesimal cohesive ∞-groupoid, def. 2.4.21 – $X \in \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}$ with $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X) \simeq *$ – is both geometrically contractible and has as underlying discrete ∞-groupoid the point:*

- $\Pi X \simeq *$
- $\Gamma X \simeq *$.

Proof. The first statement is implied by observation 2.4.2, which says that both $i_!$ as well as i_* are full and faithful. This means that if $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X) \simeq *$ then already $i^* X = \Pi_{\mathrm{inf}}(X) \simeq *$. Since $\Pi_{\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}} \simeq \Pi_{\mathbf{H}} \Pi_{\mathrm{inf}}$ and $\Pi_{\mathbf{H}}$ preserves the terminal object by cohesiveness, this implies the first claim.

The second statement follows by

$$\begin{aligned} \Gamma X &\simeq \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(*, X) \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(\mathbf{Red}*, X) \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(*, \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)) \, . \\ &\simeq \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{th}}(*, *) \\ &\simeq * \end{aligned}$$

□

Observation 2.4.23. For all $X \in \mathbf{H}$, we have that X and $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$ are formal cohesive ∞-groupoids over X, X by the constant infinitesimal path inclusion and $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$ by the identity.

Proof. For X this is tautological, for $\mathbf{\Pi}(X)$ it follows from prop. 2.4.15 and the $(i^* \dashv i_*)$-zig-zag-identity. □

Proposition 2.4.24. *The delooping $\mathbf{B}\mathfrak{g}$ of a formal ∞-group $\mathfrak{g}$, def. 2.4.21, is a formal ∞-groupoid over the point.*

Proof. Since both i^* and i_* are right adjoint, $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}$ commutes with delooping. Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}} \mathbf{B}\mathfrak{g} &\simeq \mathbf{B} \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}} \mathfrak{g} \\ &\simeq \mathbf{B}* \\ &\simeq * \\ &\simeq \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}} * \end{aligned} \, .$$

□

3 Models

In this section we construct specific cohesive ∞-toposes, 2.2, and discuss the nature of the general abstract structures, 2.3, in these models.

- 3.1 – discrete cohesion;
- 3.2 – Euclidean-topological cohesion;
- 3.3 – smooth cohesion;
- 3.4 – synthetic differential cohesion;
- 3.5 – super cohesion.

3.1 Discrete ∞-groupoids

For completeness, and because it serves to put some important concepts into a useful perspective, we record aspects of the case of *discrete* cohesion.

Observation 3.1.1. The terminal ∞-sheaf ∞-topos ∞Grpd is trivially a cohesive ∞-topos, where each of the defining four ∞-functors $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc}) : \infty Grpd \to \infty Grpd$ is an equivalence of ∞-categories.

Definition 3.1.2. In the context of cohesive ∞-toposes we say that ∞Grpd defines *discrete cohesion* and refer to its objects as *discrete ∞-groupoids*.

More generally, given any other cohesive ∞-topos

$$(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc}) : \mathbf{H} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

the inverse image Disc of the global section functor is a full and faithful ∞-functor and hence embeds ∞Grpd as a full sub-∞-category of $\mathbf{H}$. We say $X \in \mathbf{H}$ is a *discrete ∞-groupoid* if it is in the image of Disc.

This generalizes the traditional use of the terms *discrete space* and *discrete group*:

- a *discrete space* is equivalently a 0-truncated discrete ∞-groupoid;
- a *discrete group* is equivalently a 0-truncated group object in discrete ∞-groupoids.

We now discuss some of the general abstract structures in cohesive ∞-toposes, 2.3, in the context of discrete cohesion.

- Geometric homotopy and Galois theory – 3.1.1
- Cohomology and principal ∞-bundles – 3.1.3

3.1.1 Geometric homotopy and Galois theory

We discuss geometric homotopy and path ∞-groupoids, 2.3.7, in the context of discrete cohesion, 3.1. Using $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ as a presentation for ∞Grpd this is entirely trivial, but for the equivalent presentation by $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ it becomes effectively a discussion of the classical Quillen equivalence $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}} \simeq \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ from the point of view of cohesive ∞-toposes.

By the homotopy hypothesis-theorem the ∞-toposes Top and ∞Grpd are equivalent, hence indistinguishable by general abstract constructions in ∞-topos theory. However, in practice it can be useful to distinguish them as two different presentations for an equivalence class of ∞-toposes. For that purposes consider the following

Definition 3.1.3. Define the quasi-categories

$$\mathrm{Top} := N(\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}})^{\circ}$$

and

$$\infty\mathrm{Grpd} := N(\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}})^{\circ} .$$

Here on the right we have the standard model structure on topological spaces, $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$, and the standard model structure on simplicial sets, $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$, and $N((-)^{\circ})$ denotes the homotopy coherent nerve of the simplicial category given by the full sSet-subcategory of these simplicial model categories on fibrant-cofibrant objects.

For

$$(|-| \dashv \mathrm{Sing}) : \ \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}} \underset{\mathrm{Sing}}{\overset{|-|}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$$

the standard Quillen equivalence given by the singular simplicial complex-functor and geometric realization, write

$$(\mathbb{L}|-| \dashv \mathbb{R}\mathrm{Sing}) : \mathrm{Top} \underset{\mathbb{R}\mathrm{Sing}}{\overset{\mathbb{L}|-|}{\rightleftarrows}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

for the corresponding derived ∞-functors (the image under the homotopy coherent nerve of the restriction of $|-|$ and Sing to fibrant-cofibrant objects followed by functorial fibrant-cofibrant replacement) that constitute a pair of adjoint ∞-functors modeled as morphisms of quasi-categories.

Since this is an equivalence of ∞-categories either functor serves as the left adjoint and right ∞-adjoint and so we have

Observation 3.1.4. Top is exhibited as a cohesive ∞-topos by

$$(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc}) : \mathrm{Top} \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Sing}} \\ \xleftarrow{\mathbb{R}|-|} \\ \xrightarrow{\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Sing}} \\ \xleftarrow{\mathbb{R}|-|} \end{array} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

In particular a presentation of the intrinsic fundamental ∞-groupoid is given by the familiar singular simplicial complex construction

$$\Pi(X) \simeq \mathbb{R}\mathrm{Sing} X\,.$$

Notice that the topology that enters the explicit construction of the objects in Top here does *not* show up as cohesive structure. A topological space here is a model for a *discrete* ∞-groupoid, the topology only serves to allow the construction of Sing$X$. For discussion of ∞-groupoids equipped with genuine *topological cohesion* see 3.2.

3.1.2 Cohesive ∞-groups

We discuss the notion of cohesive ∞-groups, 2.3.2 in the context of discrete cohesion: *discrete ∞-groups.*

Definition 3.1.5. Write sGrp = Grp(sSet) for the category of simplicial groups.

A classical reference is section 17 of [May67].

Proposition 3.1.6.
- *The category* sGrpd *inherits a model structure transferred along the forgetful functor* $F : \mathrm{sGrp} \to \mathrm{sSet}$.
- *The category* $\mathrm{sSet}_0 \hookrightarrow \mathrm{sSet}$ *of reduced simplicial sets (simplicial sets with a single vertex) carries a model category structure whose weak equivalences and cofibrations are those of* $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$.
- *There is a Quillen equivalence*

$$(G \dashv \bar{W}) : \mathrm{sGrpd} \underset{\bar{W}}{\overset{G}{\rightleftarrows}} \mathrm{sSet}_0\ ,$$

which presents the abstract looping/delooping equivalence of ∞-categories

$$(\Omega \dashv \mathbf{B}) : \infty\mathrm{Grp} \underset{\mathbf{B}}{\overset{\Omega}{\rightleftarrows}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}|_{\pi_0 = *}\ ,$$

Proof. The model structures and the Quillen equivalence are classical, discussed in section V of [GoJa99]. □

This means on abstract grounds that for G a simplicial group, $\bar{W}G \in \mathrm{sSet}$ is a model of the classifying delooping object $\mathbf{B}G$ for G-principal discrete ∞-bundles.

3.1.3 Cohomology and principal ∞-bundles

We discuss the general abstract notion of cohomology and principal ∞-bundles in cohesive ∞-toposes, 2.3.3, in the context of discrete cohesion.

Definition 3.1.7. For G a simplicial group and $\bar{W}G$ the model for $\mathbf{B}G$ given by prop. 3.1.6, write

$$WG \to \bar{W}G$$

for the simplicial décalage on $\bar{W}G$.

This characterization of the object going by the classical name WG is made fairly explicit on p. 85 of [Dus75].

Proposition 3.1.8. *The morphism $WG \to \bar{W}G$ is a Kan fibration resolution of the point inclusion $* \to \bar{W}G$.*

Proof. This follows directly from the characterization of $WG \to \bar{W}G$ by décalage. □
Pieces of this statement appear in [May67]: lemma 18.2 there gives the fibration property, prop. 21.5 the contractibility of WG.

The following statement expands on observation 2.3.42 for the discrete case.

Corollary 3.1.9. *)) For G a simplicial group, the sequence of simplicial sets*

$$G \to WG \to \bar{W}G$$

is a presentation of the fiber sequence

$$G \to * \to \mathbf{B}G\,.$$

Hence $WG \to \bar{W}G$ is a model for the universal G-principal discrete ∞-bundle: every G-principal discrete ∞-bundle $P \to X$ in ∞Grpd*, which by definition is a homotopy fiber*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

in ∞Grpd*, is presented in the model category* $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ *by the ordinary pullback*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & WG \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \longrightarrow & \bar{W}G \end{array} .$$

The explicit statement that the sequence $G \to WG \to \bar{W}G$ is a model for the looping fiber sequence appears on p. 239 of [Por]. The universality of $WG \to \bar{W}G$ for G-principal simplicial bundles is the topic of section 21 in [May67], where however it is not made explicit that the "twisted cartesian products" considered there are precisely the models for the pullbacks as above. This is made explicit on page 148 of [Por].

In 3.2.4 we discuss how this model of discrete principal ∞-bundles by simplicial principal bundles lifts to a model of topological principal ∞-bundles by simplicial topological bundles principal over simplicial topological groups.

3.2 Euclidean-topological ∞-groupoids

We discuss *Euclidean-topological cohesion*, modeled on Euclidean topological spaces and continuous maps between them.

Definition 3.2.1. Let $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$ be the site whose underlying category has as objects the Cartesian spaces $\mathbb{R}^n$, $n \in \mathbb{N}$ equipped with the standard Euclidean topology and as morphisms the continuous maps between them; and whose coverage is given by good open covers.

Proposition 3.2.2. *The site* $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$ *is an* ∞*-cohesive site (def 2.2.10).*

Proof. Clearly $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{loc}}$ has finite products, given by $\mathbb{R}^k \times \mathbb{R}^l \simeq \mathbb{R}^{k+l}$, and clearly every object has a point $* = \mathbb{R}^0 \to \mathbb{R}^n$. In fact $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}(*, \mathbb{R}^n)$ is the underlying set of the Cartesian space $\mathbb{R}^n$.

Let $\{U_i \to U\}$ be a good open covering family in $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$. By the very definition of *good cover* it follows that the Čech nerve $C(\coprod_i U_i \to U) \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is degreewise a coproduct of representables.

The condition $\lim_{\to} C(\coprod_i U_i) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \lim_{\to} U = *$ follows from the nerve theorem [Bors48], which asserts that $\lim_{\to} C(\coprod_i U_i \to U) \simeq \mathrm{Sing} U$ and using that as a topological space every Cartesian space is contractible.

The condition $\lim_{\leftarrow} C(\coprod_i U_i) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \lim_{\leftarrow} U = \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{loc}}(*, U)$ is immediate. Explicitly, for $(x_{i_0} \in U_{i_0}, \cdots, x_{i_n} \in U_{i_n})$ a sequence of points in the covering patches of U such that any two consecutive ones agree in U, then they all agree in U. So the morphism of simplicial sets in question has the right lifting property against all boundary inclusions $\partial\Delta[n] \to \Delta[n]$ and is therefore is a weak equivalence. □

Definition 3.2.3. Define

$$\mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} := \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}})$$

to be the ∞-category of ∞-sheaves on $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$.

Proposition 3.2.4. *The* ∞*-category* $\mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *is a cohesive* ∞*-topos.*

Proof. This follows with prop. 3.2.2 by prop. 2.2.11. □

Definition 3.2.5. We say that $\mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ defines *Euclidean-topological cohesion.* An object in $\mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ we call a *Euclidean-topological* ∞*-groupoid.*

Definition 3.2.6. Write TopMfd for the category whose objects are topological manifolds that are

- finite-dimensional;
- paracompact;
- with an arbitrary set of connected components (hence not assumed to be second-countable);

and whose morphisms are continuous functions between these. Regard this as a (large) site with the standard open-cover coverage.

Proposition 3.2.7. *The* ∞*-topos* ETop∞*Grpd is equivalently that of hypercomplete* ∞*-sheaves ([LuHTT], section 6.5) on* TopMfd

$$\mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \simeq \hat{\mathrm{Sh}}_\infty(\mathrm{TopMfd}) .$$

Proof. Since every topological manifold admits an cover by open balls homeomorphic to a Cartesian space, we have that $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$ is a dense sub-site of TopMfd. By theorem C.2.2.3 in [John03] it follows that the sheaf toposes agree

$$\mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}) \simeq \mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{TopMfd}) .$$

From this it follows directly that the Joyal model structures on simplicial sheaves over both sites (see [Jard87]) are Quillen equivalent. By [LuHTT], prop 6.5.2.14, these present the hypercompletions

$$\hat{\mathrm{Sh}}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}) \simeq \hat{\mathrm{Sh}}_\infty(\mathrm{TopMfd})\,.$$

of the corresponding ∞-sheaf ∞-toposes. But by corollary 2.2.5 we have that ∞-sheaves on $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$ are already hypercomplete, so that

$$\mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}) \simeq \hat{\mathrm{Sh}}_\infty(\mathrm{TopMfd})\,.$$

□

Definition 3.2.8. Let $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ be the 1-category of compactly generated and Hausdorff topological spaces and continuous functions between them.

Proposition 3.2.9. *The category* $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ *is cartesian closed.*

See [Stee67]. We write $[-,-] : \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}^{\mathrm{op}} \times \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}} \to \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ for the corresponding internal hom-functor.

Definition 3.2.10. There is an evident functor

$$j : \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}} \to \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

that sends each topological space X to the 0-truncated ∞-sheaf (ordinary sheaf) represented by it

$$j(X) : (U \in \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}) \mapsto \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}\,\mathrm{cgH}}(U, X) \in \mathrm{Set} \hookrightarrow \infty\mathrm{Grpd}\,.$$

Corollary 3.2.11. *The functor* j *exhibits* TopMfd *as a full sub-*∞*-category of* $\mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$

$$j : \mathrm{TopMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

Proof. By prop. 3.2.7 this is a special case of the ∞-Yoneda lemma. □

Remark 3.2.12. While according to prop. 3.2.7 the model categories $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ and $[\mathrm{TopMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ (after hypercompletion) are both presentations of $\mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$, they lend themselves to different computations: in the former there are more fibrant objects, fewer cofibrant objects than in the latter, and vice versa.

In 2.2.3 we gave a general discussion concerning this point, here we amplify specific detail for the present case.

Proposition 3.2.13. *Let* $X \in [\mathrm{TopMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *be an object that is* globally fibrant*,* separated *and* locally trivial*, meaning that*

1. $X(U)$ *is a non-empty Kan complex for all* $U \in \mathrm{TopMfd}$*;*
2. *for every covering* $\{U_i \to U\}$ *in* TopMfd *the descent morphism* $X(U) \to [\mathrm{TopMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), X)$ *is a full and faithful* ∞*-functor;*
3. *for contractible* U *we have* $\pi_0[\mathrm{TopMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), X) \simeq *$.

Then the restriction of X *along* $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{TopMfd}$ *is a fibrant object in the local model structure* $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.

Proof. The fibrant objects in the local model structure are precisely those that are Kan complexes over every object and for which the descent morphism is an equivalence for all covers. The first condition is given by the first assumption. The second and third assumptions imply the second condition over contractible manifolds, such as the Cartesian spaces. □

Example. Let G be a topological group, regarded as the presheaf over TopMfd that it represents. Write $\bar{W}G$ for the simplicial presheaf on TopMfd given by the nerve of the topological groupoid $(G \overset{\to}{\to} *)$. (We discuss this in more detail in 3.2.1 below.)

The fibrant resolution of $\bar{W}G$ in $[\mathrm{TopMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ is (the rectification of) its stackification: the stack $G\mathrm{Bund}$ of topological G-principal bundles. But the canonical morphism

$$\bar{W}G \to G\mathrm{Bund}$$

is a full and faithful functor (over each object $U \in \mathrm{TopMfd}$): it includes the single object of $\bar{W}G$ as the trivial G-principal bundle. The automorphisms of the single object in $\bar{W}G$ over U are G-valued continuous functions on U, which are precisely the automorphisms of the trivial G-bundle. Therefore this inclusion is full and faithful, the presheaf $\bar{W}G$ is a separated prestack.

Moreover, it is locally trivial: every Čech cocycle for a G-bundle over a Cartesian space is equivalent to the trivial one. Equivalently, also $\pi_0 G\mathrm{Bund}(\mathbb{R}^n) \simeq *$. Therefore $\bar{W}G$, when restricted $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$, does become a fibrant object in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.

On the other hand, let $X \in \mathrm{TopMfd}$ be any non-contractible manifold. Since in the projective model structure on simplicial presheaves every representable is cofibrant, this is a cofibrant object in $[\mathrm{Mfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.However, it fails to be cofibrant in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. Instead, there a cofibrant replacement is given by the Čech nerve $C(\{U_i\})$ of any good open cover $\{U_i \to X\}$.

This yields two different ways for computing the first nonabelian cohomology

$$H^1_{\mathrm{ETop}}(X, G) := \pi_0 \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$$

in ETop∞Grpd on X with coefficients in G:

1. $\cdots \simeq \pi_0[\mathrm{Mfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](\mathrm{X}, G\mathrm{Bund}) \simeq \pi_0 G\mathrm{Bund}(X)$;
2. $\cdots \simeq \pi_0[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \bar{W}G) \simeq H^1(X, G)$.

In the first case we need to construct the fibrant replacement $G\mathrm{Bund}$. This amounts to constructing G-principal bundles over *all* paracompact manifolds and then evaluate on the given one, X, by the 2-Yoneda lemma. In the second case however we cofibrantly replace X by a good open cover, and then find the Čech cocycles with coefficients in G on that.

For ordinary G-bundles the difference between the two computations may be irrelevant in practice, because ordinary G-principal bundles are very well understood. However, for more general coefficient objects, for instance general topological simplicial groups G, the first approach requires to find the full ∞-sheafification to the ∞-sheaf of all principal ∞-bundles, while the second approach requires only to compute specific coycles over one specific base object. In practice the latter is often all that one needs

We now discuss some of the general abstract structures in any cohesive ∞-topos, 2.3, realized in ETop∞Grpd.

- 3.2.1 – Cohesive ∞-groups
- 3.2.2 – Geometric homotopy and Galois theory
- 3.2.3 – Paths and geometric Postnikov towers
- 3.2.4 – Cohomology and principal ∞-bundles
- 3.2.6 – Universal coverings and geometric Whitehead towers

3.2.1 Cohesive ∞-groups

We discuss cohesive ∞-group objects, def 2.3.2, realized in ETop∞Grpd: *Euclidean-topological ∞-groups*. Recall that by prop. 2.3.20 every ∞-group object in ETop∞Grpd has a presentation by a presheaf of simplicial groups. Among the presentations for concrete ∞-groups in ETop∞Grpd are therefore *simplicial topological groups*.

Write $\mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ for the category of simplicial objects in $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$, def. 3.2.8. For $X, Y \in \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$, write

$$\mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}(X,Y) := \int_{[k]\in\Delta} [X_k, Y_k] \quad \in \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$$

for the hom-object, where in the integrand of the end $[-,-]$ is the internal hom of $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$.

Definition 3.2.14. We say a morphism $f : X \to Y$ of simplicial topological spaces is a *global Kan fibration* if for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $0 \leq k \leq n$ the canonical morphism

$$X_n \to Y_n \ \times_{\mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}(\Lambda[n]_i, Y)} \ \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}(\Lambda[n]_i, X)$$

in $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ has a section, where $\Lambda[n]_i \in \mathrm{sSet} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ is the ith n-horn regarded as a discrete simplicial topological space.

We say a simplicial topological space $X_\bullet$ is a *(global) Kan simplicial space* if the unique morphism $X_\bullet \to *$ is a global Kan fibration, hence if for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and all $0 \leq i \leq n$ the canonical continuous function

$$X_n \to \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}(\Lambda[n]_i, X)$$

into the topological space of ith n-horns admits a section.

This global notion of topological Kan fibration is considered for instance in [BrSz89], def. 2.1, def. 6.1. In fact there a stronger condition is imposed: a Kan complex in Set automatically has the lifting property not only against all full horn inclusions but also against sub-horns; and in [BrSz89] all these fillers are required to be given by global sections. This ensures that with X globally Kan also the internal hom $[Y, X] \in \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ is globally Kan, for any simplicial topological space Y. This is more than we need and want to impose here. For our purposes it is sufficient to observe that if f is globally Kan in the sense of [BrSz89], def. 6.1, then it is so also in the above sense.

For G a simplicial group, there is a standard presentation of its universal simplicial bundle by a morphism of Kan complexes traditionally denoted $WG \to \bar{W}G$. This construction has an immediate analog for simplicial topological groups. A review is in [RoSt11].

Proposition 3.2.15. *Let G be a simplicial topological group. Then*

1. *G is a globally Kan simplicial topological space;*
2. *$\bar{W}G$ is a globally Kan simplicial topological space;*
3. *$WG \to \bar{W}G$ is a global Kan fibration.*

This says that $WG \to \bar{W}G$ is a presentation of the universal G-principal ∞-bundle, 1.3.2.). Proof. The first and last statement appears as [BrSz89], theorem 3.8 and lemma 6.7, respectively, the second is noted in [RoSt11]. □

Let for the following $\mathrm{Top}_s \subset \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ be any small full subcategory. Under the degreewise Yoneda embedding $\mathrm{sTop}_s \hookrightarrow [\mathrm{Top}_s^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ simplicial topological spaces embed into the category of simplicial presheaves on Top_s. We equip this with the projective model structure on simplicial presheaves $[\mathrm{Top}_s^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

Proposition 3.2.16. *Under this embedding a global Kan fibration, def. 3.2.14, $f : X \to Y$ in sTop_s maps to a fibration in $[\mathrm{Top}_s^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.*

Proof. By definition, a morphism $f : X \to Y$ in $[\mathrm{Top}_s^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ is a fibration if for all $U \in \mathrm{Top}_s$ and all $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $0 \leq i \leq n$ diagrams of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Lambda[n]_i \cdot U & \longrightarrow & X \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{f} \\ \Delta[n] \cdot U & \longrightarrow & Y \end{array}$$

have a lift. This is equivalent to saying that the function

$$\mathrm{Hom}(\Delta[n] \cdot U, X) \to \mathrm{Hom}(\Delta[n] \cdot U, Y) \times_{\mathrm{Hom}(\Lambda[n]_i \cdot U, Y)} \mathrm{Hom}(\Lambda[n]_i \cdot U, X)$$

is surjective. Notice that we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{Hom}_{[\mathrm{Top}_s^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]}(\Delta[n] \cdot U, X) &= \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{sTop}_s}(\Delta[n] \cdot U, X) \\ &= \int_{[k] \in \Delta} \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}_s}(\Delta[n]_k \times U, X_k) \\ &= \int_{[k] \in \Delta} \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}_s}(U, [\Delta[n]_k, X_k]) \\ &= \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}}(U, \int_{[k] \in \Delta} [\Delta[n]_k, X_k]) \\ &= \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}_s}(U, \mathrm{sTop}(\Delta[n], X)) \\ &= \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}_s}(U, X_n) \end{aligned}$$

and analogously for the other factors in the above morphism. Therefore the lifting problem equivalently says that the function

$$\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}}(U,\ X_n \to Y_n \times_{\mathrm{sTop}_s(\Lambda[n]_i, Y)} \mathrm{sTop}_s(\Lambda[n]_i, X)\ )$$

is surjective. But by the assumption that $f : X \to Y$ is a global Kan fibration of simplicial topological spaces, def. 3.2.14, we have a section $\sigma : Y_n \times_{\mathrm{sTop}_s(\Lambda[n]_i), Y} \mathrm{sTop}_s(\Lambda[n]_i, X) \to X_n$. Therefore $\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}_s}(U, \sigma)$ is a section of our function. □

In the next section we use this in the discussion of geometric realization of simplicial topological groups.

3.2.2 Geometric homotopy and Galois theory

We discuss the geometric homotopy ∞-groupoid (2.3.7) in ETop∞Grpd. This turns out to be related to the notion of *geometric realization* of simplicial topoological spaces and so we start with some facts about that.

Definition 3.2.17. For $X_\bullet \in \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ a simplicial topological space, write

- $|X_\bullet| := \int^{[k] \in \Delta} \Delta^k_{\mathrm{Top}} \times X_k$ for its *geometric realization*;
- $\|X_\bullet\| := \int^{[k] \in \Delta_+} \Delta^k_{\mathrm{Top}} \times X_k$ for its *fat geometric realization*,

where in the second case the coend is over the subcategory $\Delta_+ \hookrightarrow \Delta$ spanned by the face maps.

See [RoSt11] for a review.

Proposition 3.2.18. *Ordinary geometric realization* $|-| : \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}} \to \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ *preserves pullbacks. Fat geometric realization preserves pullbacks when regarded as a functor* $\|-\| : \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}} \to \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}/\|*\|$.

Definition 3.2.19. We say

- a simplicial topological space $X \in \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$, def. 3.2.8, is *good* if all degeneracy maps $s_i : X_n \to X_{n+1}$ are closed Hurewicz cofibrations;
- a simplicial topological group G is *well pointed* if all units $i_n : * \to G_n$ are closed Hurewicz cofibrations.

The notion of good simplicial topological spaces goes back to [Sega73]. For a review see [RoSt11].

Proposition 3.2.20. *For* $X \in \mathrm{sTop}_s$ *a good simplicial topological space, its ordinary geometric realization is equivalent to its homotopy colimit, when regarded as a simplicial diagram:*

$$\mathrm{sTop}_s \hookrightarrow [\mathrm{Top}_s^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \overset{\mathrm{hocolim}}{\to} \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}\,.$$

Proof. Write $\|-\|$ for the fat geometric realization. By standard facts about geometric realization of simplicial topological spaces [Sega70] we have the following zig-zag of weak homotopy equivalences

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \|X_\bullet\| & \xleftarrow{\simeq} & \|\,|\mathrm{Sing}(X_\bullet)|\,\| & & & & \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle\simeq} & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle\simeq} & & & & \\ |X_\bullet| & & |\,|\mathrm{Sing}(X_\bullet)|\,| & \underset{\mathrm{iso}}{=\!=} & |\mathrm{diagSing}(X_\bullet)_\bullet| & \xrightarrow{\simeq} & |\mathrm{hocolim}_n \mathrm{Sing} X_n| \end{array}\,.$$

By the Bousfield-Kan map, the object on the far right is manifestly a model for the homotopy colimit $\mathrm{hocolim}_n X_n$. ☐

Proposition 3.2.21. *For* $X \in \mathrm{TopMfd}$ *and* $\{U_i \to X\}$ *a good open cover, the Čech nerve* $C(\{U_i\}) := \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot \coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_n} U_{i_0} \times_X \cdots \times U_{i_n}$ *is cofibrant in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ *and the canonical projection* $C(\{U_i\}) \to X$ *is a weak equivalence.*

Proof. Since the open cover is good, the Čech nerve is degreewise a coproduct of representables, hence is a *split hypercover* in the sense of [DuHoIs04], def. 4.13. Moreover $\coprod_i U_i \to X$ is directly seen to be a *generalized cover* in the sense used there (below prop. 3.3) By corollary A.3 there, $C(\{U_i\}) \to X$ is a weak equivalence. ☐

Proposition 3.2.22. *Let* X *be a paracompact topological space that admits a good open cover by open balls (for instance a topological manifold). Write* $i(X) \in \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *for its incarnation as a 0-truncatd Euclidean-topological* ∞*-groupoid. Then* $\Pi(X) := \Pi(i(X)) \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *is equivalent to the standard fundamental* ∞*-groupoid of* X*, presented by the singular simplicial complex* $\mathrm{Sing}X : [k] \mapsto \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}}(\Delta^k, X)$

$$\Pi(X) \simeq \mathrm{Sing}X\,.$$

Equivalently, under geometric realization $\mathbb{L}|-| : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \mathrm{Top}$ *we have that there is a weak homotopy equivalence*

$$X \simeq |\Pi(X)|\,.$$

Proof. By the proof of prop. 2.2.11 we have an equivalence $\Pi(-) \simeq \mathbb{L} \lim_{\to}$ to the derived functor of the sSet-colimit functor $\lim_{\to} : [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}} \to \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$.

To compute this derived functor, let $\{U_i \to X\}$ be a good open cover by open balls, hence homeomorphically by Cartesian spaces. By goodness of the cover the Čech nerve $C(\coprod_i U_i \to X) \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is degreewise a coproduct of representables, hence a split hypercover. By [DuHoIs04] we have that in this case the canonical morphism

$$C(\coprod_i U_i \to X) \to X$$

is a cofibrant resolution of X in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. Accordingly we have

$$\Pi(X) \simeq (\mathbb{L} \lim_{\to})(X) \simeq \lim_{\to} C(\coprod_i U_i \to X) .$$

Using the equivalence of categories $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \simeq [\Delta^{op}, [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}]$ and that colimits in presheaf categories are computed objectwise, and finally using that the colimit of a representable functor is the point (an incarnation of the Yoneda lemma) we have that $\Pi(X)$ is presented by the Kan complex that is obtained by contracting in the Čech nerve $C(\coprod_i U_i)$ each open subset to a point.

The classical nerve theorem [Bors48] asserts that this implies the claim. □

Regarding Top itself as a cohesive ∞-topos by 3.1.1, the above proposition may be stated as saying that for X a paracompact topological space with a good covering, we have

$$\Pi_{\mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}}(X) \simeq \Pi_{\mathrm{Top}}(X) .$$

Proposition 3.2.23. *Let $X_\bullet$ be a good simplicial topological space that is degreewise paracompact and degreewise admits a good open cover, regarded naturally as an object $X_\bullet \in \mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}} \to \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$.*

We have that the intrinsic $\Pi(X_\bullet) \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ coincides under geometric realization $\mathbb{L}|-| : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{Top}$ with the ordinary geometric realization of simplicial topological spaces $|X_\bullet|_{\mathrm{Top}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}}}$ from def. 3.2.18:

$$|\Pi(X_\bullet)| \simeq |X_\bullet| .$$

Proof. Write Q for Dugger's cofibrant replacement functor on $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ [Dugg01]. On a simplicially constant simplicial presheaf X it is given by

$$QX := \int^{[n] \in \Delta} \Delta[n] \cdot \left(\coprod_{U_0 \to \cdots \to U_n \to X} U_0 \right) ,$$

where the coproduct in the integrand of the coend is over all sequences of morphisms from representables U_i to X as indicated. On a general simplicial presheaf $X_\bullet$ it is given by

$$QX_\bullet := \int^{[k] \in \Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot QX_k ,$$

which is the simplicial presheaf that over any $\mathbb{R}^n \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ takes as value the diagonal of the bisimplicial set whose (n,r)-entry is $\coprod_{U_0 \to \cdots \to U_n \to X_k} \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}(\mathbb{R}^n, U_0)$. Since coends are special colimits, the colimit functor itself commutes with them and we find

$$\begin{aligned} \Pi(X_\bullet) &\simeq (\mathbb{L} \lim_{\to}) X_\bullet \\ &\simeq \lim_{\to} QX_\bullet \\ &\simeq \int^{[n] \in \Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot \lim_{\to} (QX_k) . \end{aligned}$$

By general facts about the Reedy model structure on bisimplicial sets, this coend is a homotopy colimit over the simplicial diagram $\lim_{\to} QX_\bullet : \Delta \to \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$

$$\cdots \simeq \mathrm{hocolim}_\Delta \lim_{\to} QX_\bullet .$$

By prop. 3.2.22 we have for each $k \in \mathbb{N}$ weak equivalences $\lim_{\to} QX_k \simeq (\mathbb{L} \lim_{\to}) X_k \simeq \mathrm{Sing} X_k$, so that

$$\begin{aligned} \cdots &\simeq \mathrm{hocolim}_\Delta \mathrm{Sing} X_k \\ &\simeq \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot \mathrm{Sing} X_k \cdot \\ &\simeq \mathrm{diag}\, \mathrm{Sing}(X_\bullet)_\bullet \end{aligned}$$

By prop. 3.2.20 this is the homotopy colimit of the simplicial topological space $X_\bullet$, given by its geometric realization if $X_\bullet$ is proper. □

3.2.3 Paths and geometric Postnikov towers

We discuss the general abstract notion of path ∞-groupoid, 2.3.8, realized in ETop∞Grpd.

Proposition 3.2.24. *Let X be a paracompact topological space, canonically regarded as an object of* ETop∞Grpd*, then the path ∞-groupoid $\mathbf{\Pi}(X)$ is presented by the simplicial presheaf* $\mathrm{Disc}\,\mathrm{Sing}X \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *which is constant on the singular simplicial complex of X:*

$$\mathrm{Disc}\,\mathrm{Sing}X : (U,[k]) \mapsto \mathrm{Sing}X .$$

Proof. By definition we have $\mathbf{\Pi}(X) = \mathrm{Disc}\,\Pi(X)$. By prop. 3.2.22 $\Pi(X) \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is presented by $\mathrm{Sing}X$. By prop. 2.2.11 the ∞-functor Disc is presented by the left derived functor of the constant presheaf functor. Since every object in $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ is cofibrant this is just the plain constant presheaf functor. □
A more natural presentation of the idea of a topological path ∞-groupoid may be one that remembers the topology on the space of k-dimensional paths:

Definition 3.2.25. For X a paracompact topological space, write $\mathbf{Sing}X \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ for the simplicial presheaf given by

$$\mathbf{Sing}X : (U,[k]) \mapsto \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Top}}(U \times \Delta^k, X) .$$

Proposition 3.2.26. *Also* $\mathrm{Sing}X$ *is a presentation of* $\mathbf{\Pi}X$*.*

Proof. For each $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ the canonical inclusion of simplicial sets

$$\mathrm{Sing}X \to \mathbf{Sing}(X)(U)$$

is a weak homotopy equivalence, because U is continuously contractible. Therefore the canonical inclusion of simplicial presheaves

$$\mathrm{DiscSing}X \to \mathbf{Sing}X$$

is a weak equivalence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. □

Remark 3.2.27. Typically one is interested in mapping out of $\mathbf{\Pi}(X)$. While $\mathrm{DiscSing}X$ is always cofibrant in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, the relevant resolutions of $\mathbf{Sing}(X)$ may be harder to determine.

3.2.4 Cohomology and principal ∞-bundles

We dicuss aspects of the intrinsic cohomology (2.3.3) in ETop∞Grpd.

Proposition 3.2.28. *For* $X \in \mathrm{TopMfd}$ *and* $A \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ *a fibrant representative of an object in* ETop∞Grpd*, the intrinsic cocycle* ∞*-groupoid* ETop∞Grpd *is given by the Čech cohomology cocycles on* X *with coefficients in* A*.*

Proof. Let $\{U_i \to X\}$ be a good open cover. By prop. 3.2.21 its Čech nerve $C(\{U_i\}) \xrightarrow{\simeq} X$ is a cofibrant replacement for X (it is a split hypercover [Dugg01] and hence cofibrant because the cover is good, and it is a weak equivalence because it is a *generalized cover* in the sense of [DuHoIs04]). Since $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ is a simplicial model category, it follows that the cocycle ∞-groupoid in question is given by the Kan complex $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), A)$. One checks that its vertices are Čech cocycles as claimed, its edges are Čech homotopies, and so on. □

Definition 3.2.29. Let $A \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ be any discrete ∞-groupoid. Write $|A| \in \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ for its geometric realization. For X any topological space, the nonabelian cohomology of X with coefficients in A is the set of homotopy classes of maps $X \to |A|$

$$H_{\mathrm{Top}}(X, A) := \pi_0 \mathrm{Top}(X, |A|)\,.$$

We say $\mathrm{Top}(X, |A|)$ itself is the cocycle ∞-groupoid for A-valued nonabelian cohomology on X.

Similarly, for $X, \mathbf{A} \in \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ two Euclidean-topological ∞-groupoids, write

$$H_{\mathrm{ETop}}(X, \mathbf{A}) := \pi_0 \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{A})$$

for the intrinsic cohomology of ETop∞Grpd on X with coefficients in $\mathbf{A}$.

Proposition 3.2.30. *Let* $A \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *, write* $\mathrm{Disc}A \in \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *for the corresponding discrete topological* ∞*-groupoid. Let* X *be a paracompact topological space admitting a good open cover, regarded as 0-truncated Euclidean-topological* ∞*-groupoid.*

We have an isomorphism of cohomology sets

$$H_{\mathrm{Top}}(X, A) \simeq H_{\mathrm{ETop}}(X, \mathrm{Disc}A)$$

and in fact an equivalence of cocycle ∞*-groupoids*

$$\mathrm{Top}(X, |A|) \simeq \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathrm{Disc}A)\,.$$

Proof. By the $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc})$-adjunction of the locally ∞-connected ∞-topos ETop∞Grpd we have

$$\mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathrm{Disc}A) \simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Pi(X), A) \xrightarrow[\simeq]{|-|} \mathrm{Top}(|\Pi X|, |A|)\,.$$

From this the claim follows by prop. 3.2.22. □

We now discuss topological principal ∞-bundles presented by simplicial principal bundles.

Proposition 3.2.31. *If* G *is a well-pointed simplicial topological group, def. 3.2.19, then both* WG *and* $\bar{W}G$ *are good simplicial topological spaces.*

Proof. For $\bar{W}G$ this is [RoSt11] prop. 19. For WG this follows with their lemma 10, lemma 11, which says that $WG = \mathrm{Dec}_0 \bar{W}G$ and the observations in the proof of prop. 16 that $\mathrm{Dec}_0 X$ is good if X is. □

Proposition 3.2.32. *For G a well-pointed simplicial topological group, the geometric realization of the universal simplicial principal bundle $WG \to \bar{W}G$*

$$|WG| \to |\bar{W}G|$$

is a fibration resolution in $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ *of the point inclusion $* \to B|G|$ into the classifying space of the geometric realization of G.*

This is [RoSt11], prop. 14.

Proposition 3.2.33. *Let $X_\bullet$ be a good simplicial topological space and G a well-pointed simplicial topological group. Then for every morphism*

$$\tau : X \to \bar{W}G$$

the corresponding topological simplicial principal bundle P over X is itself a good simplicial topological space.

Proof. The bundle is the pullback $P = X \times_{\bar{W}G} WG$ in $\mathrm{sTop}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & \bar{W}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{\tau} & \bar{W}G \end{array} .$$

By assumption on X and G and using prop. 3.2.31 we have that X, $\bar{W}G$ and WG are all good simplicial spaces. This means that the degeneracy maps of $P_\bullet$ are induced degreewise by morphisms between pullbacks in $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{cgH}}$ that are degreewise closed cofibrations, where one of the morphisms in each pullback is a fibration. This implies that also these degeneracy maps of $P_\bullet$ are closed cofibrations. □

Proposition 3.2.34. *The homotopy colimit operation*

$$\mathrm{sTop}_s \hookrightarrow [\mathrm{Top}_s^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \stackrel{\mathrm{hocolim}}{\to} \mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$$

preserves homotopy fibers of morphisms $\tau\colon X \to \bar{W}G$ with X good and G well-pointed (def. 3.2.19) and globally Kan (def. 3.2.14).

Proof. By prop. 3.2.15 and prop. 3.2.16 we have that $WG \to \bar{W}G$ is a fibration resolution of the point inclusion $* \to \bar{W}G$ in $[\mathrm{Top}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. By general properties of homotopy limits this means that the homotopy fiber of a morphism $\tau\colon X \to \bar{W}G$ is computed as the ordinary pullback P in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \longrightarrow & WG \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{\tau} & \bar{W}G \end{array}$$

(since all objects X, $\bar{W}G$ and WG are fibrant and at least one of the two morphisms in the pullback diagram is a fibration) and hence

$$\mathrm{hofib}(\tau) \simeq P .$$

By prop. 3.2.15 and prop. 3.2.33 it follows that all objects here are good simplicial topological spaces. Therefore by prop. 3.2.20 we have

$$\mathrm{hocolim} P_\bullet \simeq |P_\bullet|$$

in $\mathrm{Ho}(\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}})$. By prop. 3.2.18 we have that

$$\cdots = |X_\bullet| \times_{|\bar{W}G|} |WG| .$$

But prop. 3.2.32 says that this is again the presentation of a homotopy pullback/homotopy fiber by an ordinary pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} |P| & \longrightarrow & |WG| \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ |X| & \xrightarrow{\tau} & |\bar{W}G| \end{array} ,$$

because $|WG| \to |\bar{W}G|$ is again a fibration resolution of the point inclusion. Therefore

$$\mathrm{hocolim} P_\bullet \simeq \mathrm{hofib}(|\tau|) .$$

Finally by prop. 3.2.20 and using the assumption that X and $\bar{W}G$ are both good, this is

$$\cdots \simeq \mathrm{hofib}(\mathrm{hocolim}\tau) .$$

In total we have shown

$$\mathrm{hocolim}(\mathrm{hofib}(\tau)) \simeq \mathrm{hofib}(\mathrm{hocolim}(\tau)) .$$

□

We will now generalize the model of *discrete* principal ∞-bundles by simplicial principal bundles over simplicial groups, from 3.1.3, from discrete to Euclidean-topological cohesion.

Proposition 3.2.35. *Let G be a well-pointed simplicial group object in* TopMfd*. Then the ∞-functor* $\Pi : \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *preserves homotopy fibers of all morphisms of the form $X \to \mathbf{B}G$ that are presented in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ *by morphism of the form $X \to \bar{W}G$ with X fibrant*

$$\Pi(\mathrm{hofib}(X \to \bar{W}G)) \simeq \mathrm{hofib}(\Pi(X \to \bar{W}G)) .$$

Proof. By prop. 2.1.52 we may discuss the homotopy fiber in the global model structure on simplicial presheaves. Write $QX \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} X$ for the global cofibrant resolution given by $QX : [n] \mapsto \coprod_{\{U_{i_0} \to \cdots \to U_{i_n} \to X_n\}} U_{i_0}$, where the U_{i_k} range over $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$ [Dugg01]. This has degeneracies splitting off as direct summands, and hence is a good simplicial topological space that is degreewise in TopMfd. Consider then the pasting of two pullback diagrams of simplicial presheaves

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} P' & \xrightarrow{\simeq} & P & \longrightarrow & WG \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ QX & \xrightarrow{\simeq} & X & \longrightarrow & \bar{W}G \end{array} .$$

Here the top left morphism is a global weak equivalence because $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ is right proper. Since the square on the right is a pullback of fibrant objects with one morphism being a fibration, P is a presentation of the homotopy fiber of $X \to \bar{W}G$. Hence so is P', which is moreover the pullback of a diagram of good simplicial spaces. By prop. 3.2.23 we have that on the outer diagram Π is presented by geometric realization of simplicial topological spaces $|-|$. By prop. 3.2.32 we have a pullback in $\mathrm{Top}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} |P| & \longrightarrow & |WG| \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ |QX| & \longrightarrow & |\bar{W}G| \end{array}$$

which exhibits $|P|$ as the homotopy fiber of $|QX| \to |\bar{W}G|$. But this is a model for $|\Pi(X \to \bar{W}G)|$. □

3.2.5 ∞-gerbes

We discuss ∞-gerbes, 2.3.6, in the context of Euclidean-topological cohesion, with respect to the cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H} := \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ from def. 3.2.3.

For $X \in \mathrm{TopMfd}$ write

$$\mathcal{X} := \mathbf{H}/X$$

for the slice of $\mathbf{H}$ over X, as in remark 2.3.25. This is equivalently the ∞-category of ∞-sheaves on X itself

$$\mathcal{X} \simeq \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(X)\,.$$

By remark 2.3.25 this comes with the canonical étale essential geometric morphism

$$(X_! \dashv X^* \dashv X_*) : \; \mathbf{H}/X \underset{X_*}{\overset{X_!}{\underset{\leftarrow X^* -}{\rightrightarrows}}} \mathbf{H}\;.$$

Any topological group G is naturally an object $G \in \mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H}) \subset \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$ and hence as an object

$$X^* G \in \mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X})\,.$$

Under the identification $\mathcal{X} \simeq \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(X)$ this is the sheaf of grpups which assigns sets of continuous functions from open subsets of X to G:

$$X^*G : (U \subset X) \mapsto C(U, G)\,.$$

Since the inverse image X^* commutes with looping and delooping, we have

$$X^* \mathbf{B}G \simeq \mathbf{B}X^*G\,.$$

On the left $\mathbf{B}G$ is the abstract stack of topological G-principal bundles, regarded over X, on the right is the stack over X of X^*G-torsors.

More generally, an arbitrary group object $G \in \mathrm{Grp}(\mathcal{X})$ is (up to equivalence) any sheaf of groups on X, and $\mathbf{B}G \in \mathcal{X}$ is the corresponding stack of G-torsors over X. (A detailed discussion of these is for instance in [Br06].)

Definition 3.2.36. Let $G = U(1) := \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ and $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $n \geq 1$. Write $\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1) \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$ for the topological *circle n-group.*

A $\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)$-n-gerbe we call a *circle n-gerbe.*

Proposition 3.2.37. *The automorphism ∞-groups, def. 2.3.62, of the circle n-groups, def. 3.2.36, are given by the following crossed complexes (def. 1.3.21)*

$$\mathrm{AUT}(U(1)) \simeq [U(1) \xrightarrow{0} \mathbb{Z}_2]\,,$$

$$\mathrm{AUT}(\mathbf{B}U(1)) \simeq [U(1) \xrightarrow{0} U(1) \xrightarrow{0} \mathbb{Z}_2]\,.$$

Here $\mathbb{Z}_2$ acts on the $U(1)$ by the canonical action via $\mathbb{Z}_2 \simeq \mathrm{Aut}_{\mathrm{Grp}}(U(1))$.

The outer automorphism ∞-groups, def. 2.3.68 are

$$\mathrm{Out}(U(1)) \simeq \mathbb{Z}_2\,;$$

$$\mathrm{Out}(\mathbf{B}U(1)) \simeq [U(1) \xrightarrow{0} \mathbb{Z}_2]\,.$$

Hence both ∞-groups are, of course, their own center.

With prop. 2.3.64 it follows that

$$\pi_0 U(1)\mathrm{Gerbe}(X) \simeq H^1(X, [U(1) \stackrel{0}{\to} \mathbb{Z}_2)$$

$$\pi_0 \mathbf{B}U(1)\mathrm{Gerbe}(X) \simeq H^1(X, [U(1) \stackrel{0}{\to} U(1) \stackrel{0}{\to} \mathbb{Z}_2)\,.$$

Notice that this classification is different (is richer) than that of $U(1)$ *bundle gerbes* and $U(1)$ *bundle 2-gerbes*. These are really models for $\mathbf{B}U(1)$-principal 2-bundles and $\mathbf{B}^2U(1)$-principal 3-bundles on X, and hence instead have the classification of prop. 2.3.41:

$$\pi_0 \mathbf{B}U(1)\mathrm{Bund}(X) \simeq H^1(X, [U(1) \to 1]) \simeq H^2(X, U(1))\,,$$

$$\pi_0 \mathbf{B}^2U(1)\mathrm{Bund}(X) \simeq H^1(X, [U(1) \to 1 \to 1]) \simeq H^3(X, U(1))\,.$$

Alternatively, this is the classification of the $U(1)$-1-gerbes and $\mathbf{B}U(1)$-2-gerbes with trivial *band*, def. 2.3.72, in $H^1(X, \mathrm{Out}(U(1)))$ and $H^1(X, \mathrm{Out}(\mathbf{B}U(1)))$.

$$\pi_0 U(1)\mathrm{Gerbe}_{* \in H^1(X, \mathrm{Out}(U(1)))}(X) \simeq H^2(X, U(1))\,,$$

$$\pi_0 \mathbf{B}U(1)\mathrm{Gerbe}_{* \in H^1(X, \mathrm{Out}(U(1)))}(X) \simeq H^3(X, U(1))\,.$$

3.2.6 Universal coverings and geometric Whitehead towers

We discuss geometric Whitehead towers (2.3.9) in ETop∞Grpd.

Proposition 3.2.38. *Let X be a pointed paracompact topological space that admits a good open cover. Then its ordinary Whitehead tower $X^{(\infty)} \to \cdots X^{(2)} \to X^{(1)} \to X^{(0)} = X$ in* Top *coincides with the image under the intrinsic fundamental ∞-groupoid functor $|\Pi(-)|$ of its geometric Whitehead tower $* \to \cdots X^{\mathbf{(2)}} \to X^{\mathbf{(1)}} \to X^{\mathbf{(0)}} = X$ in* ETop∞Grpd*:*

$$\begin{aligned} |\Pi(-)| : (X^{(\infty)} \to \cdots X^{\mathbf{(2)}} \to X^{\mathbf{(1)}} \to X^{\mathbf{(0)}} = X) &\in \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \\ \mapsto (* \to \cdots X^{(2)} \to X^{(1)} \to X^{(0)} = X) &\in \mathrm{Top} \end{aligned}\,.$$

Proof. The geometric Whitehead tower is characterized for each n by the fiber sequence

$$X^{\mathbf{(n)}} \to X^{\mathbf{(n-1)}} \to \mathbf{B}^n \pi_n(X) \to \mathbf{\Pi}_n(X) \to \mathbf{\Pi}_{(n-1)}(X)\,.$$

By the above prop. 3.2.22 we have that $\mathbf{\Pi}_n(X) \simeq \mathrm{Disc}(\mathrm{Sing}X)$. Since Disc is right adjoint and hence preserves homotopy fibers this implies that $\mathbf{B}\pi_n(X) \simeq \mathbf{B}^n \mathrm{Disc}\pi_n(X)$, where $\pi_n(X)$ is the ordinary nth homotopy group of the pointed topological space X.

Then by prop. 3.2.35 we have that under $|\Pi(-)|$ the space $X^{\mathbf{(n)}}$ maps to the homotopy fiber of $|\Pi(X^{\mathbf{(n-1)}})| \to B^n|\mathrm{Disc}\pi_n(X)| = B^n\pi_n(X)$.

By induction over n this implies the claim. □

3.3 Smooth ∞-groupoids

We discuss *smooth* cohesion.

Definition 3.3.1. Write SmoothMfd for the category whose objects are smooth manifolds that are

- finite-dimensional;
- paracompact;
- with arbitrary set of connected components;

and whose morphisms are smooth functions between these.

Notice the evident forgetful functor

$$i : \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \to \mathrm{TopMfd}$$

to the category of topological manifolds, from def. 3.2.6.

Definition 3.3.2. For $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}$, say an open cover $\{U_i \to X\}$ is a *differentiably good open cover* if each non-empty finite intersection of the U_i is *diffeomorphic* to a Cartesian space $\mathbb{R}^n$.

Proposition 3.3.3. *Every paracompact smooth manifold admits a differentiably good open cover.*

Proof. This is a folk theorem. A detailed proof is in the appendix of [FSS10]. □

Notice that the statement here is a bit stronger than the familiar statement about topologically good open covers, where the intersections are only required to be homeomorphic to a ball.

Definition 3.3.4. Regard SmoothMfd as a large site equipped with the coverage of differentiably good open covers. Write $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothMfd}$ for the full sub-site on Cartesian spaces.

Observation 3.3.5. Differentiably good open covers do indeed define a coverage and the Grothendieck topology generated from it is the standard open cover topology.

Proof. For X a paracompact smooth manifold, $\{U_i \to X\}$ an open cover and $f : Y \to X$ any smooth function from a paracompact manifold Y, the inverse images $\{f^{-1}(U_i) \to Y\}$ form an open cover of Y. Since $\coprod_i f^{-1}(U_1)$ is itself a paracompact smooth manifold, there is a differentiably good open cover $\{K_j \to \coprod_i U_i\}$, hence a differentiably good open cover $\{K_j \to Y\}$ such that for all j there is an $i(j)$ such that we have a commuting square

$$\begin{array}{ccc} K_j & \longrightarrow & U_{i(j)} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ Y & \xrightarrow{f} & X \end{array} \; .$$

□

Proposition 3.3.6. $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ *is an ∞-cohesive site.*

Proof. By the same kind of argument as in prop. 3.2.2. □

Definition 3.3.7. The ∞-topos of *smooth ∞-groupoids* is the ∞-sheaf ∞-topos on $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$:

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} := \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}) \, .$$

Since $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ is similar to the site $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$ from def. 3.2.1, various properties of Smooth∞Grpd are immediate analogs of the corresponding properties of ETop∞Grpd from def. 3.2.3.

Proposition 3.3.8. Smooth∞Grpd *is a cohesive ∞-topos.*

Proof. With prop. 3.3.6 this follows by prop. 2.2.11. □

Proposition 3.3.9. Smooth∞Grpd *is equivalent to the hypercompletion of the ∞-sheaf ∞-topos over* SmoothMfd*:*

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \simeq \hat{\mathrm{Sh}}_\infty(\mathrm{SmoothMfd})\,.$$

Proof. Observe that $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ is a small dense sub-site of SmoothMfd. With this the claim follows as in prop. 3.2.7. □

Corollary 3.3.10. *The canonical embedding of smooth manifolds as 0-truncated objects of* Smooth∞Grpd *extends to a full and faithful ∞-functor*

$$\mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}.$$

Proof. With prop. 3.3.9 this follows from the ∞-Yoneda lemma. □

Remark 3.3.11. By example 2.1.51 there is an equivalence of ∞-categories

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \simeq L_W \mathrm{SmthMfd}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}}\,,$$

where on the right we have the simplicial localization of the category of simplicial smooth manifolds (with arbitrary set of connected components) at the stalkwise weak equivalences.

This says that every smooth ∞-groupoid has a presentation by a simplicial smooth manifold (not in general a locally Kan simplicial manifold, though) and that this identification is even homotopy-full and faithful.

Consider the canonical forgetful functor

$$i : \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \to \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$$

to the site of definition for the cohesive ∞-topos ETop∞Grpd of Euclidean-topological ∞-groupoids, def. 3.2.3.

Proposition 3.3.12. *The functor i extends to an essential geometric morphism*

$$(i_! \dashv i^* \dashv i_*) : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \underset{i_*}{\overset{\overset{i_!}{\to}}{\overset{\overset{i^*}{\leftarrow}}{\to}}} \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

such that the ∞-Yoneda embedding is factored through the induced inclusion $\mathrm{SmoothMfd} \overset{i}{\hookrightarrow} \mathrm{Mfd}$ *as*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{SmoothMfd} & \hookrightarrow & \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \\ \downarrow^{i} & & \downarrow^{i_!} \\ \mathrm{Mfd} & \hookrightarrow & \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \end{array}$$

Proof. Using the observation that i preserves coverings and pullbacks along morphism in covering families, the proof follows the steps of the proof of prop. 2.4.3. □

Corollary 3.3.13. *The essential global section* ∞*-geometric morphism of* Smooth∞Grpd *factors through that of* ETop∞Grpd

$$(\Pi_{\mathrm{Smooth}} \dashv \mathrm{Disc}_{\mathrm{Smooth}} \dashv \Gamma_{\mathrm{Smooth}}) : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \underset{i_*}{\overset{i_!}{\underset{\longleftarrow i^* \longrightarrow}{\longrightarrow}}} \mathrm{ETop}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \underset{\Gamma_{\mathrm{ETop}}}{\overset{\Pi_{\mathrm{ETop}}}{\underset{\longleftarrow \mathrm{Disc}_{\mathrm{ETop}} \longrightarrow}{\longrightarrow}}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

Proof. This follows from the essential uniqueness of the global section ∞-geometric morphism, prop 2.1.30, and of adjoint ∞-functors. □

The functor $i_!$ here is the forgetful functor that *forgets smooth structure* and only *remembers Euclidean topology-structure.*

We now discuss the various general abstract structures in a cohesive ∞-topos, 2.3, realized in Smooth∞Grpd.

- 3.3.1 – Concrete objects
- 3.3.2 – Cohesive ∞-groups
- 3.3.3 – Geometric homotopy and Galois theory
- 3.3.4 – Paths and geometric Postnikov towers
- 3.3.5 – Cohomology and principal ∞-bundles
- 3.3.6 – Twisted cohomology
- 3.3.7 – Flat ∞-connections and local systems
- 3.3.8 – de Rham cohomology
- 3.3.9 – Exponentiated ∞-Lie algebras
- 3.3.10 – Maurer-Cartan forms and curvature characteristic forms
- 3.3.11 – Differential cohomology
- 3.3.12 – ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism
- 3.3.13 – Higher holonomy and ∞-Chern-Simons functional

3.3.1 Concrete objects

We discuss the general notion of *concrete objects* in a cohesive ∞-topos, 2.3.1, realized in Smooth∞Grpd.

The following definition generalizes the notion of smooth manifold and has been used as a convenient context for differential geometry. It goes back to [Sour79] and, in a slight variant, to [Chen77]. The formulation of differential geometry in this context is carefully exposed in [Igle]. The sheaf-theoretic formulation of the definition that we state is amplified in [BaHo09].

Definition 3.3.14. A sheaf X on $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ is a *diffeological space* if it is a *concrete sheaf* in the sense of [Dub79]: if for every $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ the canonical function

$$X(U) \simeq \mathrm{Sh}(U, X) \stackrel{\Gamma}{\to} \mathrm{Set}(\Gamma(U), \Gamma(X))$$

is an injection.

The following observations are due to [CarSch].

Proposition 3.3.15. *Write* $\mathrm{Conc}(\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd})_{\leq 0}$ *for the full subcategory on the 0-truncated concrete objects, according to def. 2.3.4. This is equivalent to the the full subcategory of* $\mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}})$ *on the diffeological spaces:*

$$\mathrm{DiffeolSpace} \simeq \mathrm{Conc}(\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd})_{\leq 0}\,.$$

Proof. Let $X \in \mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}) \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ be a sheaf. The condition for it to be a concrete object according to def. 2.3.4 is that the $(\Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc})$-unit

$$X \to \mathrm{coDisc}\Gamma X$$

is a monomorphism. Since monomorphisms of sheaves are detected objectwise this is equivalent to the statement that for all $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ the morphism

$$X(U) \simeq \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(U, X) \to \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(U, \mathrm{coDisc}\Gamma X) \simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Gamma U, \Gamma X)$$

is a monomorphism of sets, where in the first step we used the ∞-Yoneda lemma and in the last one the $(\Gamma \dashv \mathrm{coDisc})$-adjunction. This is manifestly the defining condition for concrete sheaves that define diffeological spaces. □

Corollary 3.3.16. *The canonical embedding* SmoothMfd $\hookrightarrow$ Smooth∞Grpd *from prop. 3.3.10 factors through diffeological spaces: we have a sequence of full and faithful ∞-functors*

$$\mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{DiffeolSpace} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}\,.$$

Definition 3.3.17. Write DiffeolGrpd $\hookrightarrow$ SmoothGrpd for the full sub-∞-category on those smooth ∞-groupoids that are represented by a groupoid object internal to diffeological spaces.

Proposition 3.3.18. *There is a canonical equivalence*

$$\mathrm{DiffeolGrpd} \simeq \mathrm{Conc}(\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd})_{\leq 1}$$

identifying diffeological groupoids with the concrete 1-truncated smooth ∞-groupoids.

Proof. By definition, an object $X \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is concrete precisely if there exists a 0-concrete object U, and an effective epimorphism $U \to X$ such that $U \times_X U$ is itself 0-concrete. By prop. 3.3.15 both U and $U \times_X U$ are equivalent to diffeological spaces. Therefore the groupoid object $(U \times_X U \rightrightarrows U)$ internal to Smooth∞Grpd comes from a groupoid object internal to diffeological spaces. By Giraud's axioms for ∞-toposes, X is equivalent to (the ∞ colimit over) this groupoid object:

$$X \simeq \varinjlim(U \times_X U \rightrightarrows U)\,.$$

□

3.3.2 Cohesive ∞-groups

We discuss some cohesive ∞-group objects, according to 2.3.2, in Smooth∞Grpd.

Let $G \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}$ be a Lie group. Under the embedding SmoothMfd $\hookrightarrow$ Smooth∞Grpd this is canonically identifed as a 0-truncated ∞-group object in Smooth∞Grpd. Write $\mathbf{B}G \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ for the corresponding delooping object.

Proposition 3.3.19. *A fibrant presentation of the delooping object $\mathbf{B}G$ in the projective local model structure on simplicial presheaves $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ is given by the simplicial presheaf that is the nerve of the one-object Lie groupoid*

$$\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{ch}} := (G \rightrightarrows *)$$

regarded as a simplicial manifold and canonically embedded into simplicial presheaves:

$$\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{ch}} : U \mapsto N(C^\infty(U,G) \rightrightarrows *)\,.$$

Proof. This is essentially a special case of prop. 3.2.13. The presheaf is clearly objectwise a Kan complex, being objectwise the nerve of a groupoid. It satisfies descent along good open covers $\{U_i \to \mathbb{R}^n\}$ of Cartesian spaces, because the descent ∞-groupoid $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}G)$ is $\cdots \simeq G\mathrm{Bund}(\mathbb{R}^n) \simeq G\mathrm{TrivBund}(\mathbb{R}^n)$: an object is a Čech 1-cocycle with coefficients in G, a morphism a Čech coboundary. This yields the groupoid of G-principal bundles over U, which for the Cartesian space U is however equivalent to the groupoid of trivial G-bundles over U.

To show that $\mathbf{B}G$ is indeed the delooping object of G it is sufficient by prop. 2.1.52 to compute the ∞-pullback $G \simeq * \times_{\mathbf{B}G} * \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ in the global model structure $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. This is accomplished by the ordinary pullback of the fibrant replacement diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G & \longrightarrow & N(G \times G \overset{p_1 \cdot p_2}{\underset{p_1}{\rightrightarrows}} G) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{p_2} \\ * & \longrightarrow & N(G \rightrightarrows *) \end{array} .$$

□

Definition 3.3.20. Write equivalently

$$U(1) = S^1 = \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$$

for the *circle Lie group*, regarded as a 0-truncated ∞-group object in Smooth∞Grpd under the embedding prop. 3.3.10.

For $n \in \mathbb{N}$ the n-fold delooping $\mathbf{B}^n U(1) \in$ Smooth∞Grpd we call the circle *Lie* $(n+1)$*-group*.

Write

$$U(1)[n] := [\cdots \to 0 \to C^\infty(-, U(1)) \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0] \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{Ch}_{\bullet \geq 0}]$$

for the chain complex of sheaves concentrated in degree n on $U(1)$. Recall the right Quillen functor $\Xi : [\mathrm{CartSp}^{op}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{Ch}^+]_{\mathrm{proj}} \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ from prop. 2.1.62.

Proposition 3.3.21. *The simplicial presheaf* $\Xi(U(1)[n])$ *is a fibrant representative in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ *of the circle Lie* $(n+1)$*-group* $\mathbf{B}^n U(1)$*.*

Proof. First notice that since $U(1)[n]$ is fibrant in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{Ch}_\bullet]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ we have that $\Xi U(1)[n]$ is fibrant in the global model structure $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. By prop. 2.1.52 we may compute the ∞-pullback that defines the loop space object in Smooth∞Grpd in terms of a homotopy pullback in this global model structure.

To that end, consider the global fibration resolution of the point inclusion $* \to \Xi(U(1)[n])$ given under Ξ by the morphism of chain complexes

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccc} [C^\infty(-,U(1)) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Id}} & C^\infty(-,U(1)) & \longrightarrow & 0 & \longrightarrow & \cdots & \longrightarrow & 0] \\ \downarrow^{\mathrm{Id}} & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & & & \downarrow \\ [C^\infty(-,U(1)) & \longrightarrow & 0 & \longrightarrow & 0 & \longrightarrow & \cdots & \longrightarrow & 0] \end{array} .$$

The underlying morphism of chain complexes is clearly degreewise surjective, hence a projective fibration, hence its image under Ξ is a projective fibration. Therefore the homotopy pullback in question is given by the ordinary pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Xi[0 \to C^\infty(-,U(1)) \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0] & \longrightarrow & \Xi[C^\infty(-,U(1)) \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Id}} C^\infty(-,U(1)) \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0] \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \Xi[0 \to 0 \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0] & \longrightarrow & \Xi[C^\infty(-,U(1)) \to 0 \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0] \end{array} ,$$

computed in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Ch}^+]$ and then using that Ξ is the right adjoint and hence preserves pullbacks. This shows that the loop object $\Omega\Xi(U(1)[n])$ is indeed presented by $\Xi(U(1)[n-1])$.

Now we discuss the fibrancy of $U(1)[n]$ in the local model structure. We need to check that for all differentiably good open covers $\{U_i \to U\}$ of a Cartesian space U we have that the mophism

$$C^\infty(U, U(1))[n] \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \Xi(U(1)[n]))$$

is an equivalence of Kan complexes, where $C(\{U_i\})$ is the Čech nerve of the cover. Observe that the Kan complex on the right is that whose vertices are cocycles in degree-n Čech cohomology (see [FSS10] for more on this) with coefficients in $U(1)$ and whose morphisms are coboundaries between these.

We proceed by induction on n. For $n = 0$ the condition is just that $C^\infty(-, U(1))$ is a sheaf, which clearly it is. For general n we use that since $C(\{U_i\})$ is cofibrant, the above is the derived hom-space functor which commutes with homotopy pullbacks and hence with forming loop space objects, so that

$$\pi_1[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \Xi(U(1)[n])) \simeq \pi_0[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \Xi(U(1)[n-1]))$$

by the above result on delooping. So we find that for all $0 \leq k \leq n$ that $\pi_k[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \Xi(U(1)[n]))$ is the Čech cohomology of U with coefficients in $U(1)$ in degree $n-k$. By standard facts about Čech cohomology (using the short exact sequence of abelian groups $\mathbb{Z} \to U(1) \to \mathbb{R}$ and the fact that the cohomology with coefficients in $\mathbb{R}$ vanishes in positive degree, for instance by a partition of unity argument) we have that this is given by the integral cohomology groups

$$\pi_0[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \Xi(U(1)[n])) \simeq H^{n+1}(U, \mathbb{Z})$$

for $n \geq 1$. For the contractible Cartesian space all these cohomology groups vanish.

So we find that $\Xi(U(1)[n])(U)$ and $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \Xi U(1)[n])$ both have homotopy groups concentrated in degree n on $U(1)$. The above looping argument together with the fact that $U(1)$ is a sheaf also shows that the morphism in question is an isomorphism on this degree-n homotopy group, hence is indeed a weak homotopy equivalence. □

Notice that in the equivalent presentation of Smooth∞Grpd by simplicial presheaves on the large site SmoothMfd the objects $\Xi(U(1)[n])$ are far from being locally fibrant. Instead, their locally fibrant replacements are given by the n-stacks of circle n-bundles.

3.3.3 Geometric homotopy and Galois theory

We discuss the intrinsic fundamental ∞-groupoid construction, 2.3.7, realized in Smooth∞Grpd.

Proposition 3.3.22. *If $X \in$ Smooth∞Grpd is presented by $X_\bullet \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}} \hookrightarrow [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$, then its image $i_!(X) \in$ ETop∞Grpd under the relative topological cohesion morphism, prop. 3.3.12, is presented by the underlying simplicial topological space $X_\bullet \in \mathrm{TopMfd}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}} \hookrightarrow [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{top}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$.*

Proof. Let first $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothMfd}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}}$ be simplicially constant. Then there is a differentiably good open cover, 3.3.3, $\{U_i \to X\}$ such that the Čech nerve projection

$$\left(\int^{[k] \in \Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot \coprod_{i_0, \cdots, i_k} U_{i_0} \times_X \cdots \times_X U_{i_k} \right) \xrightarrow{\simeq} X$$

is a cofibrant resolution in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ which is degreewise a coproduct of representables. That means that the left derived functor $\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Lan}_i$ on X is computed by the application of Lan_i on this coend, which by the fact that this is defined to be the left Kan extension along i is given degreewise by i, and since i

preserves pullbacks along covers, this is

$$
\begin{aligned}
(\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Lan}_i)X &\simeq \mathrm{Lan}_i\left(\int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot\coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k} U_{i_0}\times_X\cdots\times_X U_{i_k}\right)\\
&= \int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot\coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k}\mathrm{Lan}_i(U_{i_0}\times_X\cdots\times_X U_{i_k})\\
&\simeq \int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot\coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k} i(U_{i_0}\times_X\cdots\times_X U_{i_k})\\
&\simeq \int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot\coprod_{i_0,\cdots,i_k}(i(U_{i_0})\times_{i(X)}\cdots\times_{i(X)} i(U_{i_k}))\\
&\simeq i(X)
\end{aligned}
,
$$

The last step follows from observing that we have manifestly the Čech nerve as before, but now of the underlying topological spaces of the $\{U_i\}$ and of X.

The claim then follows for general simplicial spaces by observing that $X_\bullet = \int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot X_k \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ presents the ∞-colimit over $X_\bullet : \Delta^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ and the left adjoint ∞-functor $i_!$ preserves these. □

Corollary 3.3.23. *If $X \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is presented by $X_\bullet \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}} \hookrightarrow [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$, then the image of X under the fundamental ∞-groupoid functor, 2.3.7,*

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \xrightarrow{\Pi} \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \underset{\simeq}{\xrightarrow{|-|}} \mathrm{Top}$$

is weakly homotopy equivalent to the geometric realization of (a Reedy cofibrant replacement of) the underlying simplicial topological space

$$|\Pi(X)| \simeq |QX_\bullet|\,.$$

In particular if X is an ordinary smooth manifold then

$$\Pi(X) \simeq \mathrm{Sing}X$$

is equivalent to the standard fundamental ∞-groupoid of X.

Proof. By prop. 3.3.13 the functor Π factors as $\Pi X \simeq \Pi_{\mathrm{ETop}} i_! X$. By prop. 3.3.22 this is Π_{Etop} applied to the underlying simplicial topological space. The claim then follows with prop. 3.2.23. □

Corollary 3.3.24. *The ∞-functor $\Pi : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ preserves homotopy fibers of morphisms that are presented in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ by morphisms of the form $X \to \bar{W}G$ with X fibrant and G a simplicial group in* SmoothMfd*.*

Proof. By prop. 3.3.13 the functor factors as $\Pi_{\mathrm{Smooth}} \simeq \Pi_{\mathrm{ETop}} \circ i_!$. By prop. 3.3.22 $i_!$ assigns the underlying topological spaces. If we can show that this preserves the homotopy fibers in question, then the claim follows with prop. 3.2.35. We find this as in the proof of the latter proposition, by considering the pasting diagram of pullbacks of simplicial presheaves

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
P' & \xrightarrow{\simeq} & P & \longrightarrow & WG \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
QX & \xrightarrow{\simeq} & X & \longrightarrow & \bar{W}G
\end{array}
.
$$

Since the component maps of the right vertical morphisms are surjective, the degreewise pullbacks in SmoothMfd that define P' are all along transversal maps, and thus the underlying objects in TopMfd are the pullbacks of the underlying topological manifolds. Therefore the degreewise forgetful functor SmoothMfd $\to$ TopMfd presents $i_!$ on the outer diagram and sends this homotopy pullback to a homotopy pullback. □

3.3.4 Paths and geometric Postnikov towers

We discuss the general abstract notion of path ∞-groupoid, 2.3.8, realized in *Smooth*∞Grpd.

The presentation of $\mathbf{\Pi}(X)$ in ETop∞Grpd, 3.2.3 has a direct refinement to smooth cohesion:

Definition 3.3.25. For $X \in$ SmthMfd write $\mathbf{Sing}X \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ for the simplicial presheaf given by

$$\mathbf{Sing}X : (U, [k]) \mapsto \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{SmthMfd}}(U \times \Delta^k, X)\,.$$

Proposition 3.3.26. *The simplicial presheaf* $\mathbf{Sing}X$ *is a presentation of* $\mathbf{\Pi}(X) \in$ Smooth∞Grpd*.*

Proof. This reduces to the argument of prop. 3.2.26 after using the Steenrod approximation theorem [Wock09] to refine continuous paths to smooth paths □

3.3.5 Cohomology and principal ∞-bundles

We discuss the intrinsic cohomology, 2.3.3, in Smooth∞Grpd.

Proposition 3.3.27. *Let* $A \in \infty$Grpd*, write* Disc$A \in$ Smooth∞Grpd *for the corresponding discrete smooth ∞-groupoid. Let* $X \in$ SmoothMfd $\overset{i}{\hookrightarrow}$ Smooth∞Grpd *be a paracompact topological space regarded as a 0-truncated Euclidean-topological ∞-groupoid.*

We have an isomorphism of cohomology sets

$$H_{\mathrm{Top}}(X, A) \simeq H_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X, \mathrm{Disc}A)$$

and in fact an equivalence of cocycle ∞-groupoids

$$\mathrm{Top}(X, |A|) \simeq \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathrm{Disc}A)\,.$$

More generally, for $X_\bullet \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}^{\Delta^{op}}$ *presenting an object* $X \in$ Smooth∞Grpd *we have*

$$H_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X_\bullet, \mathrm{Disc}A) \simeq H_{\mathrm{Top}}(|X|, |A|)\,.$$

Proof. This follows from the ($\Pi \dashv$ Disc)-adjunction and prop. 3.3.23. □

Theorem 3.3.28. *For* $G \in$ SmoothMfd $\hookrightarrow$ Smooth∞Grpd *a Lie group and* A *either*

1. *a discrete abelian group*
2. *the additive Lie group of real numbers* $\mathbb{R}$

the intrinsic cohomology of G *in* Smooth∞Grpd *coincides with the refined Lie group cohomology of Segal [Sega70][Bryl00]*

$$H^n_{\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}}(\mathbf{B}G, A) \simeq H^n_{\mathrm{Segal}}(G, A)\,.$$

In particular we have in general

$$H^n_{\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}}(\mathbf{B}G, \mathbb{Z}) \simeq H^n_{\mathrm{Top}}(BG, \mathbb{Z})$$

and for G *compact and* $n \geq 1$ *also*

$$H^n_{\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}}(\mathbf{B}G, U(1)) \simeq H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{Top}}(BG, \mathbb{Z})\,.$$

Proof. The statement about constant coefficients is a special case of prop. 3.3.27. The statement about real coefficients is a special case of a more general statement in the context of synthetic differential ∞-groupoids that will be proven as prop. 3.4.29. The last statement finally follows from this using that $H^n_{\mathrm{Segal}}(G,\mathbb{R}) \simeq 0$ for positive n and G compact and using the fiber sequence induced by the short sequence $\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z} \simeq U(1)$. □

The following proposition asserts that the notion of smooth principal ∞-bundle reproduces traditional notions of smooth bundles and smooth higher bundles.

Proposition 3.3.29. *For G a Lie group and $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}$, we have that*

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}G) \simeq G\mathrm{Bund}(X)$$

is equivalent to the groupoid of smooth principal G-bundles and smooth morphisms between these, as traditionally defined, where the equivalence is established by sending a morphism $g : X \to \mathbf{B}G$ in Smooth∞Grpd *to the corresponding principal ∞-bundle $P \to X$ according to prop. 2.3.34.*

For $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $G = \mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)$ the circle Lie n-group, def. 3.3.20, and $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}$, we have that

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \simeq U(1)(n-1)\mathrm{BundGerb}(X)$$

is equivalent to the n-groupoid of smooth $U(1)$-bundle $(n-1)$gerbes.

Proof. Presenting Smooth∞Grpd by the local projective model structure $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ on simplicial presheaves over the site of Cartesian spaces, we have that $\mathbf{B}G$ is fibrant, by prop. 3.3.19, and that a cofibrant replacement for X is given by the Čech nerve $C(\{U_i\})$ of any differentiably good open cover $\{U_i \to X\}$. The cocycle ∞-groupoid in question is then presented by the simplicial set $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}G)$ and this is readily seen to be the groupoid of Čech cocycles with coefficients in $\mathbf{B}G$ relative to the chosen cover.

This establishes that the two groupoids are equivalent. That the equivalence is indeed established by forming homotopy fibers of morphisms has been discussed in 1.3.1 (observing that by the discussion in 1.3.2 the ordinary pullback of the morphism $\mathbf{E}G \to \mathbf{B}G$ serves as a presentation for the homotopy pullback of $* \to \mathbf{B}G$). □

This establishes the situation for smooth nonabelian cohomology in degree 1 and smooth abelian cohomology in arbitrary degree. We turn now to a discussion of smooth nonabelian cohomology "in degree 2", the case where G is a *Lie 2-group*: *G-principal 2-bundles*.

When $G = \mathrm{AUT}(H)$ the *automorphism 2-group* of a Lie group H (see below) these structures have the same classification as smooth H-1-gerbes, def. 2.3.60. To start with, note the general abstract notion of smooth 2-groups:

Definition 3.3.30. A *smooth 2-group* is a 1-truncated group object in $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp})$. These are equivalently given by their (canonically pointed) delooping 2-groupoids $\mathbf{B}G \in \mathbf{H}$, which are precisely, up to equivalence, the connected 2-truncated objects of $\mathbf{H}$.

For $X \in \mathbf{H}$ any object, $G2\mathrm{Bund}_{\mathrm{smooth}}(X) := \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$ is the 2-groupoid of smooth G-principal 2-bundles on G.

We consider the presentation of smooth 2-groups by Lie crossed modules, def. 1.3.5, according to prop. 2.3.22. Write $[G_1 \xrightarrow{\delta} G_0]$ for the *2-group* which is the groupoid

$$G_0 \times G_1 \underset{p_1}{\overset{p_1(-)\cdot\delta(p_2(-))}{\rightrightarrows}} G_0$$

equipped with a strict group structure given by the semidirect product group structure on $G_0 \times G_1$ that is induced from the action ρ. The commutativity of the above two diagrams is precisely the condition for this to be consistent. Recall the examples of crossed modules, starting with example 1.3.10.

We discuss sufficient conditions for the delooping of a crossed module of presheaves to be fibrant in the projective model structure. Recall also the conditions from prop. 2.2.24.

Proposition 3.3.31. *Suppose that the smooth crossed module $(G_1 \to G_0)$ is such that the quotient $\pi_0 G = G_0/G_1$ is a smooth manifold and the projection $G_0 \to G_0/G_1$ is a submersion.*
Then $\mathbf{B}(G_1 \to G_0)$ is fibrant in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.

Proof. We need to show that for $\{U_i \to \mathbb{R}^n\}$ a good open cover, the canonical descent morphism

$$B(C^\infty(\mathbb{R}^n, G_1) \to C^\infty(\mathbb{R}^n, G_0)) \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}(G_1 \to G_0))$$

is a weak homotopy equivalence. The main point to show is that, since the Kan complex on the left is connected by construction, also the Kan complx on the right is.

To that end, notice that the category CartSp equipped with the open cover topology is a *Verdier site* in the sense of section 8 of [DuHoIs04]. By the discussion there it follows that every hypercover over $\mathbb{R}^n$ can be refined by a split hypercover, and these are cofibrant resolutions of $\mathbb{R}^n$ in both the global and the local model structure $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. Since also $C(\{U_i\}) \to \mathbb{R}^n$ is a cofibrant resolution and since $\mathbf{B}G$ is clearly fibrant in the *global* structure, it follows from the existence of the global model structure that morphisms out of $C(\{U_i\})$ into $\mathbf{B}(G_1 \to G_0)$ capture all cocycles over any hypercover over $\mathbb{R}^n$, hence that

$$\pi_0[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}(G_1 \to G_0)) \simeq H^1_{\mathrm{smooth}}(\mathbb{R}^n, (G_1 \to G_0))$$

is the standard Čech cohomology of $\mathbb{R}^n$, defined as a colimit over refinements of covers of equivalence classes of Čech cocycles.

Now by prop. 4.1 of [NiWa11] (which is the smooth refinement of the statement of [BSt] in the continuous context) we have that under our assumptions on $(G_1 \to G_0)$ there is a topological classifying space for this smooth Čech cohomology set. Since $\mathbb{R}^n$ is topologically contractible, it follows that this is the singleton set and hence the above descent morphism is indeed an isomorphism on π_0.

Next we can argue that it is also an isomorphism on π_1, by reducing to the analogous local trivialization statement for ordinary principal bundles: a loop in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}(G_1 \to G_0))$ on the trivial cocycle is readily seen to be a $G_0//(G_0 \ltimes G_1)$-principal groupoid bundle, over the action groupoid as indicated. The underlying $G_0 \ltimes G_1$-principal bundle has a trivialization on the contractible $\mathbb{R}^n$ (by classical results or, in fact, as a special case of the previous argument), and so equivalence classes of such loops are given gy G_0-valued smooth functions on $\mathbb{R}^n$. The descent morphism exhibits an isomorphism on these classes.

Finally the equivalence classes of spheres on both sides are directly seen to be smooth $\ker(G_1 \to G_0)$-valued functions on both sides, identified by the descent morphism. □

Corollary 3.3.32. *For $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \subset \mathbf{H}$ a paracompact smooth manifold, and $(G_1 \to G_0)$ as above, we have for any good open cover $\{U_i \to X\}$ that the 2-groupoid of smooth $(G_1 \to G_0)$-principal 2-bundles is*

$$(G_1 \to G_0)\mathrm{Bund}(X) := \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}(G_1)) \simeq [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}(G_1 \to G_0))$$

and its set of connected components is naturally isomorphic to the nonabelian Čech cohomology

$$\pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}(G_1 \to G_0)) \simeq H^1_{\mathrm{smooth}}(X, (G_1 \to G_0))\,.$$

In particular, for $G = \mathrm{AUT}(H)$, $\mathbf{B}G \in \mathbf{H}$ is the moduli 2-stack for smooth H-gerbes, def. 2.3.53.

Proposition 3.3.33. *For $A \to \hat{G} \to G$ a central extension of Lie groups such that $\hat{G} \to G$ is a locally trivial A-bundle, we have a long fiber sequence in* Smooth∞Grpd *of the form*

$$A \to \hat{G} \to G \to \mathbf{B}A \to \mathbf{B}\hat{G} \to \mathbf{B}G \stackrel{\mathbf{c}}{\to} \mathbf{B}^2 A\,,$$

where the morphism $\mathbf{c}$ is presented by the span of simplicial presheaves

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}(A \to \hat{G})_c & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(A \to 1)_c & = & \mathbf{B}^2 A_c \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}G_c & & & & \end{array}$$

coming from crossed complexes, def. 1.3.20, as indicated.

Proof. We need to show that

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\hat{G}_c & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}G_c & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}} & \mathbf{B}^2 A \end{array}$$

is an ∞-pullback. To that end, we notice that we have an equivalence

$$\mathbf{B}(A \to \hat{G})_c \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}G_c$$

and that the morphism of simplicial presheaves $\mathbf{B}(A \stackrel{\mathrm{id}}{\to} A)_c \to \mathbf{B}^2 A_c$ is a fibration replacement of $* \to \mathbf{B}^2 A_c$, both in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

By prop. 2.1.52 it is therefore sufficient to observe the ordinary pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}(1 \to A)_c & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(A \stackrel{\mathrm{id}}{\to} A)_c \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}(A \to \hat{G}) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(A \to 1)_c \end{array} .$$

□

3.3.6 Twisted cohomology

We discuss examples of twisted cohomology, 2.3.5, and the corresponding twisted principal ∞-bundles, realized in Smooth∞Grpd. All of the discussion here goes through verbatim also for in ETop∞Grpd, 3.2.

3.3.6.1 Twisted 1-bundles and twisted K-theory We discuss twisted principal bundles, a model for twisted K-theory [CBMMS02], as a realization of the general notion of twisted cohomology, 2.3.5, realized in $\mathbf{H} = $ Smooth∞Grpd.

We shall concentrate here for definiteness on twists in $\mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$-cohomology, since that reproduces the usual notions of twisted bundles found in the literature. But every other choice would work, too, and yield a corresponding notion of twisted bundles.

Fix once and for all an ∞-group $G \in \mathbf{H}$ and a cocycle

$$\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$$

representing a characteristic class

$$[\mathbf{c}] \in H^2_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(\mathbf{B}G, U(1))$$

Notice that if G is a compact Lie group, as usual for the discussion of twisted bundles where $G = PU(n)$ is the projective unitary group in some dimension n, then by theorem 3.3.28 we have that

$$H^2_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(\mathbf{B}G, U(1)) \simeq H^3(BG, \mathbb{Z}) ,$$

where on the right we have the ordinary integral cohomology of the classifying space $BG \in \mathrm{Top}$ of G.

Write

$$\mathbf{B}\hat{G} \to \mathbf{B}G \stackrel{\mathbf{c}}{\to} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$$

for the homotopy fiber of $\mathbf{c}$. This identifies $\hat{G}$ as the group extension of G by the 2-cocycle $\mathbf{c}$. Equivalently this means by the discussion in2.3.3 that

$$\mathbf{B}U(1) \to \mathbf{B}\hat{G} \to \mathbf{B}G$$

is the smooth circle 2-bundle/bundle gerbe classified by $\mathbf{c}$; and its loop space object

$$U(1) \to \hat{G} \to G$$

is the corresponding circle group principal bundle on G.

Let $X \in \mathbf{H}$ be any object. From def. 2.3.50 we have the following notion.

Definition 3.3.34. The degree-1 *total twisted cohomology* $H^1_{\mathrm{tw}}(X, \hat{G})$ of X with coefficients in $\hat{G}$, relative to the characteristic class $[\mathbf{c}]$ is the set

$$H^1_{\mathrm{tw}}(X, \hat{G}) := \pi_0 \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X, \mathbf{G}\hat{H})$$

of connected components of the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X, \mathbf{B}\hat{G}) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tw}} & H^2_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X, U(1)) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G) & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}_*} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)) \end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical morphism is any section of the truncation projection from cocycles to cohomology classes.

Given a twisting class $[\alpha] \in H^2_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(U(1))$ we say that

$$H^1_{[\alpha]}(X, \hat{G}) := H^1_{\mathrm{tw}}(X, \hat{G}) \times_{[\alpha]} *$$

is the $[\alpha]$-*twisted cohomology* of X with coefficients in $\hat{G}$ relative to $\mathbf{c}$.

Observation 3.3.35. For $[\alpha] = 0$ the trivial twist, $[\alpha]$-twisted cohomology coincides with ordinary cohomology:

$$H^1_{[\alpha]=0}(X, \hat{G}) \simeq H^1_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X, \hat{G}) .$$

By the discussion at 2.3.3 we may identify the elements of $H^1_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X, \hat{G})$ with $\hat{G}$-principal ∞-bundles $P \to X$. In particular if $\hat{G}$ is an ordinary Lie group and X is an ordinary smooth manifold, then by prop. 3.3.29 these are ordinary $\hat{G}$-principal bundles over X. This justifies equivalently calling the elements of $H^1_{\mathrm{tw}}(X, \hat{G})$ *twisted principal* ∞-*bundles*; and we shall write

$$\hat{G}\mathrm{TwBund}(X) := H^1_{\mathrm{tw}}(X, \hat{G}) ,$$

where throughout we leave the characteristic class $[\mathbf{c}]$ with respect to which the twisting is defined implcitly understood.

We now unwind the abstract definition, def. 3.3.34, to obtain the explicit definition of twisted bundles by Čech cocycles the way they appear for instance in [CBMMS02] (there called *gerbe modules*).

Proposition 3.3.36. *Let $U(1) \to \hat{G} \to G$ be a group extension of Lie groups. Let $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ be a smooth manifold with differentiably good open cover $\{U_i \to X\}$.*

1. *Relative to this data every twisting cocycle $[\alpha] \in H^2_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X, U(1))$ is a Čech-cohomology representative given by a collection of functions*

$$\{\alpha_{ijk} : U_i \cap U_j \cap U_k \to U(1)\}$$

satisfying on every quadruple intersection the equation

$$\alpha_{ijk}\alpha_{ikl} = \alpha_{jkl}\alpha_{ijl} .$$

2. *In terms of this cocycle data, the twisted cohomology $H^1_{[\alpha]}(X, \hat{G})$ is given by equivalence classes of cocycles consisting of*

   (a) *collections of functions*
   $$\{g_{ij} : U_i \cap U_j \to \hat{G}\}$$
   subject to the condition that on each triple overlap the equation
   $$g_{ij}\dot{g}_{jk} = g_{ik} \cdot \alpha_{ijk}$$
   holds, where on the right we are injecting α_{ijk} via $U(1) \to \hat{G}$ into $\hat{G}$ and then form the product there;

   (b) *subject to the equivalence relation that identifies two such collections of cocycle data $\{g_{ij}\}$ and $\{g'_{ij}\}$ if there exists functions*
   $$\{h_i : U_i \to \hat{G}\}$$
   and
   $$\{\beta_{ij} : U_i \cap U_j \to \hat{U}(1)\}$$
   such that
   $$\beta_{ij}\beta_{jk} = \beta_{ik}$$
   and
   $$g'_{ij} = h_i^{-1} \cdot g_{ij} \cdot h_j \cdot \beta_{ij} \,.$$

Proof. We pass to the standard presentation of Smooth∞Grpd by the projective local model structure on simplicial presheaves over the site $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$. We then compute the defining ∞-pullback by a homotopy pullback there.

Write $\mathbf{B}\hat{G}_c, \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)_c \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ etc. for the standard models of the abstract objects of these names by simplicial presheaves, as discussed in 3.3.2. Write accordingly $\mathbf{B}(U(1) \to \hat{G})_c$ for the delooping of the crossed module 2-group associated to the central extension $\hat{G} \to G$.

In terms of this the characteristic class $\mathbf{c}$ is represented by the ∞-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}(U(1) \to \hat{G})_c & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}} & \mathbf{B}(U(1) \to 1)_c = \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)_c \;, \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ \mathbf{B}G_c & & \end{array}$$

where the top horizontal morphism is the evident projection onto the $U(1)$-labels. Moreover, the Čech nerve of the good open cover $\{U_i \to X\}$ forms a cofibrant resolution

$$\emptyset \hookrightarrow C(\{U_i\}) \stackrel{\simeq}{\twoheadrightarrow} X$$

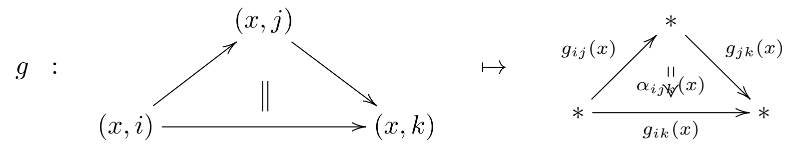
and so α is presented by an ∞-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C(\{U_i\}) & \xrightarrow{\alpha} & \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)_c \;. \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ X & & \end{array}$$

Using that $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ is a simplicial model category this means in conclusion that the homotopy pullback in question is given by the ordinary pullback of simplicial sets

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}^1_{[\alpha]}(X, \hat{G}) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \alpha \\ [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}(U(1) \to \hat{G})_c) & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}_*} & [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)_c) \end{array} .$$

An object of the resulting simplicial set is then seen to be a simplicial map $g : C(\{U_i\}) \to \mathbf{B}(U(1) \to \hat{G})_c$ that assigns



such that projection out along $\mathbf{B}(U(1) \to \hat{G})_c \to \mathbf{B}(U(1) \to 1)_c = \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)_c$ produces α.

Similarily for the morphisms. Writing out what these diagrams in $\mathbf{B}(U(1) \to \hat{G})_c$ mean in equations, one finds the formulas claimed above. □

Proposition 3.3.37. *Let $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and let $G = PU(n)$ be the projective unitary group and let $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$ be a cocycle for the characteristic class that classifies the extension $U(1) \to U(n) \to PU(n)$.*

Then for $X \in$ SmoothMfd the Grothendieck group of the corresponding twisted cohomology

$$K(H^1_{\mathrm{tw}}(X, U(n))) \simeq K_{\mathrm{tw,ntor}}(X)$$

is canonically identified with the submodule of twisted complex K-theory of X whose twists are n-torsion elements in $H^3(X, \mathbb{Z})$.

Proof. After the identification of $H^1_{\mathrm{tw}}(X, U)$ with equivalence classes of twisted bundles / gerbe modules by prop. 3.3.36 this is [CBMMS02], prop. 6.4. □

3.3.7 Flat ∞-connections and local systems

We discuss the intrinsic notion of flat ∞-connections, 2.3.10, in Smooth∞Grpd.

Proposition 3.3.38. *Let $X, A \in$ Smooth∞Grpd be any two objects and write $|X| \in$ Top for the intrinsic geometric realization, def. 2.3.77. We have that the flat cohomolog in* Smooth∞Grpd *of X with coefficients in A is equivalent to the ordinary cohomology in* Top *of $|X|$ with coefficients in underlying discrete object of A:*

$$H_{\mathrm{Smooth,flat}}(X, A) \simeq H(|X|, |\Gamma A|)\,.$$

Proof. By definition we have

$$H_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, A) \simeq H(\mathbf{\Pi} X, A) \simeq H(\mathrm{Disc}\Pi X, A)\,.$$

Using the (Disc) ⊣ Γ-adjunction this is

$$\cdots \pi_0 \infty Grpd(\Pi X, \Gamma A)\,.$$

Finally applying the equivalence $|\cdot| : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \mathrm{Top}$ this is

$$\cdots \simeq H(|\Pi X|, |\Gamma A|)\,.$$

The claim hence follows as in prop. 3.3.27. □

Let G be a Lie group regarded as a 0-truncated ∞-group in Smooth∞Grpd. Write $\mathfrak{g}$ for its Lie algebra. Write $\mathbf{B}G \in$ Smooth∞Grpd for its delooping. Recall the fibrant presentation $\mathbf{B}G_c \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ from prop. 3.3.19.

Proposition 3.3.39. *The object* $\flat \mathbf{B}G \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *has a fibrant presentation* $\flat \mathbf{B}G_c \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ *given by the groupoid of Lie-algebra valued forms*

$$\flat \mathbf{B}G_c = N \left(C^\infty(-,G) \times \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}) \underset{p2}{\overset{\mathrm{Ad}_{p_1}(p_2)+p_1^{-1}dp_1}{\rightrightarrows}} \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}) \right)$$

and this is such that the canonical morphism $\flat \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}G$ *is presented by the canonical morphism of simplicial presheaves* $\flat \mathbf{B}G_c \to \mathbf{B}G_c$ *which is a fibration in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

This means that a U-parameterized family of objects of $\flat \mathbf{B}G_c$ is given by a Lie-algebra valued 1-form $A \in \Omega^1(U) \otimes \mathfrak{g}$ whose curvature 2-form $F_A = d_{\mathrm{dR}}A + [A, \wedge A] = 0$ vanishes, and a U-parameterized family of morphisms $g : A \to A'$ is given by a smooth function $g \in C^\infty(U,G)$ such that $A' = \mathrm{Ad}_g A + g^{-1}dg$, where $\mathrm{Ad}_g A = g^{-1}Ag$ is the adjoint action of G on its Lie algebra, and where $g^{-1}dg := g^*\theta$ is the pullback of the Maurer-Cartan form on G along g.

Proof. By the proof of prop. 2.2.11 we have that $\flat \mathbf{B}G$ is presented by the simplicial presheaf that is constant on the nerve of the one-object groupoid

$$G_{\mathrm{disc}} \rightrightarrows * ,$$

for the discrete group underlying the Lie group G. The canonical morphism of that into $\mathbf{B}G_c$ is however not a fibration. We claim that the canonical inclusion $N(G_{\mathrm{disc}} \rightrightarrows) \to \flat \mathbf{B}G_c$ factors the inclusion into $\mathbf{B}G_c$ by a weak equivalence followed by a global fibration.

To see the weak equivalence, notice that it is objectwise an equivalence of groupoids: it is essentially surjective since every flat $\mathfrak{g}$-valued 1-form on the contractible $\mathbb{R}^n$ is of the form $g d g^{-1}$ for some function $g : \mathbb{R}^n \to G$ (let $g(x) = P\exp(\int_0^x)A$ be the parallel transport of A along any path from the origin to x). Since the gauge transformation automorphism of the trivial $\mathfrak{g}$-valued 1-form are precisely given by the constant G-valued functions, this is also objectwise a full and faithful functor. Similarly one sees that the map $\flat \mathbf{B}G_c \to \mathbf{B}G$ is a fibration.

Finally we need to show that $\flat \mathbf{B}G_c$ is fibrant in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. This is implied by theorem 2.2.17. More explicitly, this can be seen by observing that this sheaf is the coefficient object that in Čech cohomology computes G-principal bundles with flat connection and then reasoning as above: every G-principal bundle with flat connection on a Cartesian space is equivalent to a trivial G-principal bundle whose connection is given by a globally defined $\mathfrak{g}$-valued 1-form. Morphisms between these are precisely G-valued functions that act on the 1-forms by gauge transformations as in the groupoid of Lie-algebra valued forms. □

Let now $\mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ be the circle $(n+1)$-Lie group, def. 3.3.20. Recall the notation and model category presentations as discussed there.

Proposition 3.3.40. *For* $n \geq 1$ *a fibration presentation in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ *of the canonical morphism* $\flat \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ *in* $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *is given by the image under* $\Xi : [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Ch}^+] \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *of the morphism of chain complexes*

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} C^\infty(-,U(1)) & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \Omega^1(-) & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \cdots & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(-) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & & & \downarrow \\ C^\infty(-,U(1)) & \longrightarrow & 0 & \longrightarrow & \cdots & \longrightarrow & 0 \end{array} ,$$

where at the top we have the flat *Deligne complex.*

Proof. It is clear that the morphism of chain complexes is an objectwise surjection and hence maps to a projective fibration under Ξ. It remains to observe that the flat Deligne complex is a presentation of $\flat \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$:

By the proof of prop. 2.2.11 we have that $\flat = \mathrm{Disc} \circ \Gamma$ is presented in the model category on fibrant objects by first evaluating on the point and then extending back to a constant simplicial presheaf. Since

$\Xi U(1)[n]$ is indeed globally fibrant, a fibrant presentation of $\flat \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ is given by the *constant* presheaf $U(1)_{\mathrm{const}}[n] : U \mapsto \Xi(U(1)[n])$.

The inclusion $U(1)_{\mathrm{const}}[n] \to U(1)[n]$ is not yet a fibration. But by a basic fact of abelian sheaf cohomology – using the Poincaré lemma – we have a global weak equivalence $U(1)_{\mathrm{const}} \xrightarrow{\simeq} [C^\infty(-,U(1)) \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} \cdots \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)]$ that factors this inclusion by the above fibration. □

3.3.8 de Rham cohomology

We discuss intrinsic de Rham cohomology, 2.3.11, in Smooth∞Grpd.

Let G be a Lie group. Write $\mathfrak{g}$ for its Lie algebra.

Proposition 3.3.41. *The object* $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B} G \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *has a fibrant presentation in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ *by the sheaf* $\flat \mathbf{B} G_c := \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g})$ *of flat Lie algebra-valued forms*

$$\flat \mathbf{B} G_c : U \mapsto \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(U,\mathfrak{g})\,.$$

Proof. By prop. 3.3.39 we have a fibration $\flat \mathbf{B} G_c \to \mathbf{B} G_c$ in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ modeling the canonical inclusion $\flat \mathbf{B} G \to \mathbf{B} G$. Therefore we may get a presentation for the defining ∞-pullback

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B} G := * \times_{\mathbf{B} G} \flat \mathbf{B} G$$

in Smooth∞Grpd by the ordinary pullback

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B} G_c \simeq * \times_{\mathbf{B} G_c} \flat \mathbf{B} G_c$$

in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. The resulting simplicial presheaf is fibrant in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ because it is a sheaf. □

For $n \in \mathbb{N}$, let now $\mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ be the circle Lie $(n+1)$-group of def. 3.3.20. Recall the notation and model category presentations from the discussion there.

Proposition 3.3.42. *A fibrant representative in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ *of the de Rham coefficent object* $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ *from def. 2.3.94 is given by the truncated ordinary de Rham complex of smooth differential forms*

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{chn}} := \Xi[\Omega^1(-) \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} \Omega^2(-) \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} \cdots \to \Omega^{n-1}(-) \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)]\,.$$

Proof. By definition and using prop. 2.1.52 the object $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ is given by the homotopy pullback in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, Ch_{\bullet \geq 0}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ of the inclusion $U(1)_{\mathrm{const}}[n] \to U(1)[n]$ along the point inclusion $* \to U(1)[n]$. We may compute this as the ordinary pullback after passing to a resolution of this inclusion by a fibration. By prop. 3.3.40 such a fibration replacement is given by the map from the flat Deligne complex. Using this we find the ordinary pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Xi[0 \to \Omega^1(-) \to \cdots \to \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)] & \longrightarrow & \Xi[C^\infty(-,U(1)) \to \Omega^1(-) \to \cdots \to \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)] \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \Xi[0 \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0] & \longrightarrow & \Xi[C^\infty(-,U(1)) \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0] \end{array}\,.$$

□

Proposition 3.3.43. *Let X be a smooth manifold regarded under the embedding* $\mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$. *Write* $H^n_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)$ *for the ordinary de Rham cohomology of X.*

For $n \in \mathbb{N}$ we have isomorphisms

$$\pi_0 \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \simeq \begin{cases} H^n_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) & | n \geq 2 \\ \Omega^1_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) & | n = 1 \\ 0 & | n = 0 \end{cases}$$

Proof. Let $\{U_i \to X\}$ be a differentiably good open cover. The Čech nerve $C(\{U_i\}) \to X$ is a cofibrant resolution of X in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. Therefore we have for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \simeq [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \Xi[\Omega^1(-) \stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \cdots \to \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)]) .$$

The right hand is the ∞-groupoid of cocylces in the Čech hypercohomology of the truncated complex of sheaves of differential forms. A cocycle is given by a collection

$$(C_i, B_{ij}, A_{ijk}, \cdots, Z_{i_1, \cdots, i_n})$$

of differential forms, with $C_i \in \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(U_i)$, $B_{ij} \in \Omega^{n-1}(U_i \cap U_j)$, etc. , such that this collection is annihilated by the total differential $D = d_{\mathrm{dR}} \pm \delta$, where d_{dR} is the de Rham differential and δ the alternating sum of the pullbacks along the face maps of the Čech nerve.

It is a standard result of abelian sheaf cohomology that such cocycles represent classes in de Rham cohomology of $n \geq 2$. For $n = 1$ and $n = 0$ our truncated de Rham complex degenerates to $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B} U(1)_{\mathrm{chn}} = \Xi[\Omega^1_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)]$ and $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} U(1)_{\mathrm{chn}} = \Xi[0]$, respectively, which obviously has the cohomology as claimed above. □

Recall from the discussion in 2.3.11 that the failure of the intrinsic de Rham cohomology of Smooth∞ to coincide with traditional de Rham cohomology in degree 0 and 1 is due to the fact that the intrinsic de Rham cohomology in degree n is the home for curvature classes of circle $(n-1)$-bundles. For $n = 1$ these curvatures are not to be taken module exact forms. And for $n = 0$ they vanish.

3.3.9 Exponentiated ∞-Lie algebras

We discuss the intrinsic notion of exponentiated ∞-Lie algebras, 2.3.12, realized in Smooth∞Grpd.

Recall the characterization of L_∞-algebras, def. 1.3.72, by dual dg-algebras, prop. 1.3.74 – their *Chevalley-Eilenberg algebras*–, and the characterization of the category $L_\infty\mathrm{Alg}$ as the full subcategory

$$L_\infty \stackrel{\mathrm{CE}}{\hookrightarrow} \mathrm{dgAlg}^{\mathrm{op}} .$$

We describe now a presentation of the exponentiation of an L_∞ algebra to a smooth ∞-group. The following somewhat technical definition serves to control the smooth structure on these exponentiated objects.

Definition 3.3.44. For $k \in \mathbb{N}$ regard the k-simplex Δ^k as a smooth manifold with corners in the standard way. We think of this embedded into the Cartesian space $\mathbb{R}^k$ in the standard way with maximal rotation symmetry about the center of the simplex, and equip Δ^k with the metric space structure induced this way.

A smooth differential form ω on Δ^k we say has *sitting instants* along the boundary if, for every $(r < k)$-face F of Δ^k there is an open neighbourhood U_F of F in Δ^k such that ω restricted to U is constant in the directions perpendicular to the r-face on its value restricted to that face.

More generally, for any $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ a smooth differential form ω on $U \times \Delta^k$ is said to have sitting instants if there is $0 < \epsilon \in \mathbb{R}$ such that for all points $u : * \to U$ the pullback along $(u, \mathrm{Id}) : \Delta^k \to U \times \Delta^k$ is a form with sitting instants on ϵ-neighbourhoods of faces.

Smooth forms with sitting instants form a sub-dg-algebra of all smooth forms. We write $\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k)$ for this sub-dg-algebra.

We write $\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k)$ for the further sub-dg-algebra of vertical differential forms with respect to the projection $p : U \times \Delta^k \to U$, hence the coequalizer

$$\Omega^{\bullet \geq 1}(U) \underset{0}{\overset{p^*}{\rightrightarrows}} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k) \longrightarrow \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) .$$

Definition 3.3.45. For $\mathfrak{g} \in L_\infty$ write $\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ for the simplicial presheaf defined over $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ and $n \in \mathbb{N}$ by

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g}) : (U, [n]) \mapsto Hom_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^n), \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}))$$

with the evident structure maps given by pullback of differential forms.

This definition of the ∞-groupoid associated to an L_∞-algebra realized in the smooth context appears in [FSS10] and in similar form in [Royt10] as the evident generalization of the definition in Banach spaces in [Henr08] and for discrete ∞-groupoids in [Getz09], which in turn goes back to [Hini97].

Proposition 3.3.46. *The objects* $\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *are*

1. *connected;*

2. *Kan complexes over each* $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$.

Proof. That $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_0 = *$ follows from degree-counting: $\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^0) = C^\infty(U)$ is entirely in degree 0 and $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ is in degree 0 the ground field $\mathbb{R}$.

To see that $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ has all horn-fillers over each $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ observe that the standard continuous horn retracts $f : \Delta^k \to \Lambda^k_i$ are smooth away from the preimages of the $(r < k)$-faces of $\Lambda[k]^i$.

For $\omega \in \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Lambda[k]^i)$ a differential form with sitting instants on ϵ-neighbourhoods, let therefore $K \subset \partial\Delta^k$ be the set of points of distance $\leq \epsilon$ from any subface. Then we have a smooth function

$$f : \Delta^k \setminus K \to \Lambda^k_i \setminus K \,.$$

The pullback $f^*\omega \in \Omega^\bullet(\Delta^k \setminus K)$ may be extended constantly back to a form with sitting instants on all of Δ^k. The resulting assignment

$$(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \stackrel{A}{\to} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Lambda^k_i)) \mapsto (\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \stackrel{A}{\to} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Lambda^k_i) \stackrel{f^*}{\to} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^n))$$

provides fillers for all horns over all $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$. □

Definition 3.3.47. We say that the loop space object $\Omega \exp(\mathfrak{g})$ is the *smooth* ∞*-group* exponentiating $\mathfrak{g}$.

Proposition 3.3.48. *The objects* $\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *are geometrically contractible:*

$$\Pi \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \simeq * \,.$$

Proof. Observe that every simplicial presheaf X is the homotopy colimit over its component presheaves $X_n \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Set}] \hookrightarrow [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$

$$X \simeq \mathbb{L}\lim_{\to n} X_n \,.$$

(Use for instance the injective model structure for which $X_\bullet$ is cofibrant in the Reedy model structure $[\Delta^{op}, [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj,loc}}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}}$). Therefore it is sufficient to show that in each degree n the 0-truncated object $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_n$ is geometrically contractible.

To exhibit a geometric contraction, def. 2.3.78, choose for each $n \in \mathbb{N}$, a smooth retraction

$$\eta_n : \Delta^n \times [0,1] \to \Delta^n$$

of the n-simplex: a smooth map such that $\eta_n(-,1) = \mathrm{Id}$ and $\eta_n(-,0)$ factors through the point. We claim that this induces a diagram of presheaves

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \exp(\mathfrak{g})_n & & \\ \downarrow^{(\mathrm{id},1)} & \searrow^{\mathrm{id}} & \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g})_n \times [0,1] & \stackrel{\eta_n^*}{\longrightarrow} & \exp(\mathfrak{g})_n \\ \uparrow^{(\mathrm{id},0)} & & \uparrow \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g})_n & \longrightarrow & * \end{array} ,$$

where over $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ the middle morphism is given by

$$\eta_n^* : (\alpha, f) \mapsto (f, \eta_n)^* \alpha \,,$$

where

- $\alpha : \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^n)$ is an element of the set $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_n(U)$,
- f is an element of $[0,1](U)$;
- (f, η_n) is the composite morphism

$$U \times \Delta^n \stackrel{(\mathrm{id}, f)\times \mathrm{id}}{\to} U \times [0,1] \times \Delta^n \stackrel{(\mathrm{id}, \eta_n)}{\to} U \times \Delta^n$$

- $(f, \eta)^* \alpha$ is the postcomposition of α with the image of (f, η_n) under $\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(-)$.

Here the last item is well defined given the coequalizer definition of $\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}$ because (f, η_n) is a morphism of bundles over U

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} U \times \Delta^n & \xrightarrow{(\mathrm{id}, f)\times id} & U \times [0,1] \times \Delta^n & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{id}\times \eta_n} & U \times \Delta^n \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ U & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{id}} & U & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{id}} & U \end{array} \,.$$

Similarly, for $h : K \to U$ any morphism in $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ the naturality condition for a morphism of presheaves follows from the fact that the composites of bundle morphisms

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} K \times \Delta^n & \xrightarrow{h \times \mathrm{id}} & U \times \Delta^n \to & \xrightarrow{(\mathrm{id}, f)\times \mathrm{id}} & U \times [0,1] \times \Delta^n & \xrightarrow{(\mathrm{id}, \eta_n)} & U \times \Delta^n \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ K & \xrightarrow{h} & U & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{id}} & U & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{id}} & U \end{array}$$

and

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} K \times \Delta^n & \xrightarrow{((\mathrm{id}, f\circ h)\times \mathrm{id}} & K \times [0,1] \times \Delta^n & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{id}\times \eta_n} & K \times \Delta^n & \xrightarrow{h \times \mathrm{id}} & U \times \Delta^n \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ K & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{id}} & K & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{id}} & K & \xrightarrow{h} & U \end{array}$$

coincide.

Moreover, notice that the lower morphism in our diagram of presheaves indeed factors through the point as indicated, because for an L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ we have that the Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ is in degree 0 the ground field algebra algebra $\mathbb{R}$, so that there is a unique morphism $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^0) \simeq C^\infty(U)$ in dgAlg.

Finally, since $[0,1]$ is a contractible paracompact manifold, we have that $\Pi([0,1]) \simeq *$ by prop. 3.2.22. Therefore the above diagram of presheaves presents a geometric homotopy in Smooth∞Grpd from the identity map to a map that factors through the point. It follows by prop 2.3.79 that $\Pi(\exp(\mathfrak{g})_n) \simeq *$ for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$. And since Π preserves the homotopy colimit $\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \simeq \mathbb{L}\lim_{\to n} \exp(\mathfrak{g})_n$ we have that $\Pi(\exp(\mathfrak{g})) \simeq *$, too. □

We may think of $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ as the smooth geometrically ∞-*simply connected Lie integration* of $\mathfrak{g}$. Notice however that $\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \in$ Smooth∞Grpd in general has nontrivial and interesting homotopy sheaves. The above statement says that its *geometric homotopy groups* vanish .

3.3.9.1 Examples Let $\mathfrak{g} \in L_\infty$ be an ordinary (finite dimensional) Lie algebra. Standard Lie theory provides a simply connected Lie group G integrating $\mathfrak{g}$. Write $\mathbf{B}G \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ for its delooping. According to prop. 3.3.19 this is presented by the simplicial presheaf $\mathbf{B}G_c \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$.

Proposition 3.3.49. *The operation of parallel transport $P\exp(\int -) : \Omega^1([0,1], \mathfrak{g}) \to G$ yields a weak equivalence (in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$)*

$$P\exp(\int -) : \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \simeq \mathbf{cosk}_2 \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \simeq \mathbf{B}G_c \,.$$

Proof. Notice that a flat smooth $\mathfrak{g}$-valued 1-form on a contractible space X is after a choice of basepoint canonically identified with a smooth function $X \to G$. The claim then follows from the observation that by the fact that G is simply connected any two paths with coinciding endpoints have a continuous homotopy between them, and that for smooth paths this may be chose to be smooth, by the Steenrod approximation theorem [Wock09]. □

Let now $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $n \geq 1$.

Definition 3.3.50. Write

$$b^{n-1}\mathbb{R} \in L_\infty$$

for the L_∞-algebra whose Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra is given by a single generator in degree n and vanishing differential. We call this the *line Lie n-algebra*.

Observation 3.3.51. The discrete ∞-groupoid underlying $\exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$ is given by the Kan complex that in degree k has the set of closed differential n-forms with sitting instants on the k-simplex

$$\Gamma(\exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})) : [k] \mapsto \Omega^n_{\mathrm{si,cl}}(\Delta^k)$$

Definition 3.3.52. We write equivalently

$$\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} := \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \,.$$

Proposition 3.3.53. *We have that $\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}}$ is indeed a presentation of the smooth line n-group $\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}$, from 3.3.20.*

Concretely, with $\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}} \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ the standard presentation given under the Dold-Kan correspondence by the chain complex of sheaves concentrated in degree n on $C^\infty(-,\mathbb{R})$ the equivalence is induced by the fiber integration of differential n-forms over the n-simplex:

$$\int_{\Delta^\bullet} : \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \,.$$

Proof. First we observe that the map

$$\int_{\Delta^\bullet} : (\omega \in \Omega^n_{\mathrm{si,vert,cl}}(U \times \Delta^k)) \mapsto \int_{\Delta^k} \omega \in C^\infty(U, \mathbb{R})$$

is indeed a morphism of simplicial presheaves $\exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \to \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}}$ on. Since it goes between presheaves of abelian simplicial groups, by the Dold-Kan correspondence it is sufficient to check that we have a morphism of chain complexes of presheaves on the corresponding normalized chain complexes.

The only nontrivial degree to check is degree n. Let $\lambda \in \Omega^n_{\mathrm{si,vert,cl}}(\Delta^{n+1})$. The differential of the normalized chains complex sends this to the signed sum of its restrictions to the n-faces of the $(n+1)$-simplex. Followed by the integral over Δ^n this is the piecewise integral of λ over the boundary of the n-simplex. Since λ has sitting instants, there is $0 < \epsilon \in \mathbb{R}$ such that there are no contributions to this integral in an ϵ-neighbourhood of the $(n-1)$-faces. Accordingly the integral is equivalently that over the smooth surface inscribed into the $(n+1)$-simplex. Since λ is a closed form on the n-simplex, this surface integral vanishes, by the Stokes theorem. Hence $\int_{\Delta^\bullet}$ is indeed a chain map.

It remains to show that $\int_{\Delta^\bullet} : \mathbf{cosk}_{n+1} \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \to \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}}$ is an isomorphism on simplicial homotopy groups over each $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$. This amounts to the statement that

- a smooth family of closed $n < k$-forms with sitting instants on the boundary of Δ^{k+1} may be extended to a smooth family of closed forms with sitting instants on Δ^{k+1}
- a smooth family of closed n-forms with sitting instants on the boundary of Δ^{n+1} may be extended to a smooth family of closed forms with sitting instants on Δ^{n+1} precisely if their smooth family of integrals over $\partial Delta^{n+1}$ vanishes.

To demonstrate this, we want to work with forms on the $(k+1)$-ball instead of the $(k+1)$-simplex. To achieve this, choose again $0 < \epsilon \in \mathbb{R}$ and construct the diffeomorphic image of $S^k \times [1-\epsilon, 1]$ inside the $(k+1)$-simplex as indicated by the above construction: outside an ϵ-neighbourhood of the corners the image is a rectangular ϵ-thickening of the faces of the simplex. Inside the ϵ-neighbourhoods of the corners it bends smoothly. By the Steenrod-approximation theorem [Wock09] the diffeomorphism from this ϵ-thickening of the smoothed boundary of the simplex to $S^k \times [0,1]$ extends to a smooth function from the $(k+1)$-simplex to the $(k+1)$-ball. By choosing ϵ smaller than each of the sitting instants of the given n-form on $\partial \Delta^k$, we have that this n-form vanishes on the ϵ-neighbourhoods of the corners and is hence entirely determined by its restriction to the smoothed simplex, identified with the $(k+1)$-ball.

It is now sufficient to show: a smooth family of smooth n-forms $\omega \in \Omega^n_{\mathrm{vert,cl}}(U \times S^k)$ extends to a smooth family of closed n-forms $\hat{\omega} \in \Omega^n_{\mathrm{vert,cl}}(U \times B^{n+1})$ that is radially constant in a neighbourhood of the boundary for all $n < k$ and for $n = k$ precisely if its smooth family of integrals $\int_{S^n} \omega = 0 \in C^\infty(U, \mathbb{R})$ vanishes.

Notice that over the point this is a direct consequence of the de Rham theorem: all $k < n$ forms are exact on S^k and n-forms are exact precisely if their integral vanishes. In that case there is an $(n-1)$-form A with $\omega = dA$. Choosing any smoothing function $f : [0,1] \to [0,1]$ (smooth, surjective non,decreasing and constant in a neighbourhood of the boundary) we obtain a n-form $f \wedge A$ on $(0,1] \times S^n$, vertically constant in a neighbourhood of the ends of the interval, equal to A at the top and vanishing at the bottom. Pushed forward along the canonical $(0,1] \times S^n \to D^{n+1}$ this defines a form on the $(n+1)$-ball, that we denote by the same symbol $f \wedge A$. Then the form $\hat{\omega} := d(f \wedge A)$ solves the problem.

To complete the proof we have to show that this argument does extend to smooth families of forms in that we can find suitable smooth families of the form A in the above discussion. This may be accomplished for instance by invoking Hodge theory: If we equip S^k with a Riemannian metric then the refined form of the Hodge theorem says that we have an equality

$$\mathrm{id} - \pi_{\mathcal{H}} = [d, d^* G]\,,$$

of operators on differential forms, where $\pi_{\mathcal{H}}$ is the orthogonal projection on harmonic forms and G is the Green operator of the Hodge-Laplace operator. For ω an exact form its harmonic projection vanishes so that this gives a homotopy

$$\omega = d(d^* G \omega)\,.$$

This operation $\omega \mapsto d^* G \omega$ depends smoothly on ω. □

3.3.9.2 flat coefficients. We consider now the flat coefficient object, 2.3.10, $\flat \exp(\mathfrak{g})$ of exponentiated L_∞ algebras $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$, 3.3.9.

Definition 3.3.54. Write $\flat \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{smp}}$ for the simplicial presheaf given by

$$\flat \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{smp}} : (U, [n]) \mapsto \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^n))\,.$$

Proposition 3.3.55. *The canonical morphism* $\flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R} \to \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}$ *in* Smooth∞Grpd *is presented in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *by the composite*

$$\mathrm{const}\,\Gamma\, \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \xrightarrow{\simeq} \flat \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{smp}} \twoheadrightarrow \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})\ ,$$

where the first morphism is a weak equivalence and the second a fibration in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

We discuss the two morphisms in the composite separately in two lemmas.

Lemma 3.3.56. *The canonical inclusion*

$$\mathrm{const}\Gamma(\exp(\mathfrak{g})) \to \flat \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{smp}}$$

is a weak equivalence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

Proof. The morphism in question is on each object $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ the morphism of simplicial sets

$$\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(\Delta^k)) \to \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k))\,,$$

which is given by pullback of differential forms along the projection $U \times \Delta^k \to \Delta^k$.

To show that for fixed U this is a weak equivalence in the standard model structure on simplicial sets we produce objectwise a left inverse

$$F_U : \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^\bullet)) \to \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(\Delta^\bullet))$$

and show that this is an acyclic fibration of simplicial sets. The statement then follows by the 2-out-of-3-property of weak equivalences.

We take F_U to be given by evaluation at $0 : * \to U$, i.e. by postcomposition with the morphisms

$$\Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) \stackrel{Id \times 0^*}{\to} \Omega^\bullet(* \times \Delta^k) = \Omega^\bullet(\Delta^k)\,.$$

(This of course is not natural in U and hence does not extend to a morphism of simplicial presheaves. But for our argument here it need not.) The morphism F_U is an acyclic Kan fibration precisely if all diagrams of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \partial\Delta[n] & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{Hom}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^\bullet)) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle F_U} \\ \Delta[n] & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{Hom}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(\Delta^\bullet)) \end{array}$$

have a lift. Using the Yoneda lemma over the simplex category and since the differential forms on the simplices have sitting instants, we may, as above, equivalently reformulate this in terms of spheres as follows: for every morphism $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(D^n)$ and morphism $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times S^{n-1})$ such that the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) & \longrightarrow & \Omega^\bullet(U \times S^{n-1}) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(D^n) & \longrightarrow & \Omega^\bullet(S^{n-1}) \end{array}$$

commutes, this may be factored as

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) & & & & \\ & \searrow & & & \\ & & \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times D^n) & \longrightarrow & \Omega^\bullet(U \times S^{n-1}) \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ & & \Omega^\bullet(D^n) & \longrightarrow & \Omega^\bullet(S^{n-1}) \end{array}\,.$$

(Here the subscript "$_{\mathrm{si}}$" denotes differential forms on the disk that are radially constant in a neighbourhood of the boundary.)

This factorization we now construct. Let first $f : [0,1] \to [0,1]$ be any smoothing function, i.e. a smooth function which is surjective, non-decreasing, and constant in a neighbourhood of the boundary. Define a smooth map $U \times [0,1] \to U$ by $(u, \sigma) \mapsto u \cdot f(1-\sigma)$, where we use the multiplicative structure on the Cartesian space U. This function is the identity at $\sigma = 0$ and is the constant map to the origin at $\sigma = 1$. It exhibits a smooth contraction of U.

Pullback of differential forms along this map produces a morphism

$$\Omega^\bullet(U \times S^{n-1}) \to \Omega^\bullet(U \times S^{n-1} \times [0,1])$$

which is such that a form ω is sent to a form which in a neighbourhood $(1-\epsilon, 1]$ of $1 \in [0,1]$ is constant along $(1-\epsilon, 1] \times U$ on the value $(0, Id_{S^{n-1}})^*\omega$.

Let now $0 < \epsilon \in \mathbb{R}$ some value such that the given forms $CE(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(D^k)$ are constant a distance $d \leq \epsilon$ from the boundary of the disk. Let $q : [0, \epsilon/2] \to [0,1]$ be given by multiplication by $1/(\epsilon/2)$ and $h : D^k_{1-\epsilon/2} \to D^n_1$ the injection of the n-disk of radius $1-\epsilon/2$ into the unit n-disk.

We can then glue to the morphism

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet(U \times S^{n-1}) \to \Omega^\bullet(U \times [0,1] \times S^{n-1}) \stackrel{id \times q^* \times id}{\to_{\simeq}} \Omega^\bullet(U \times [0, \epsilon/2] \times S^{n-1})$$

to the morphism

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet(D^n) \to \Omega^\bullet(U \times \{1\} \times D^n) \stackrel{h^*}{\to_{\simeq}} \Omega^\bullet(U \times \{1\} \times D^n_{1-\epsilon/2})$$

by smoothly identifying the union $[0, \epsilon/2] \times S^{n-1} \coprod_{S^{n-1}} D^n_{1-\epsilon/2}$ with D^n (we glue a disk into an annulus to obtain a new disk) to obtain in total a morphism

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet(U \times D^n)$$

with the desired properties: at $u = 0$ the homotopy that we constructed is constant and the above construction hence restricts the forms to radius $\leq 1 - \epsilon/2$ and then extends back to radius ≤ 1 by the constant value that they had before. Away from 0 the homotopy in the rmaining $\epsilon/2$ bit smoothly interpolates to the boundary value. □

Lemma 3.3.57. *The canonical morphism*

$$\flat \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{smp}} \to \exp(\mathfrak{g})$$

is a fibration in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

Proof. Over each $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ the morphism is induced from the morphism of dg-algebras

$$\Omega^\bullet(U) \to C^\infty(U)$$

that discards all differential forms of non-vanishing degree.

It is sufficient to show that for

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times (D^n \times [0,1]))$$

a morphism and

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times D^n)$$

a lift of its restriction to $\sigma = 0 \in [0,1]$ we have an extension to a lift

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times (D^n \times [0,1]))\,.$$

From these lifts all the required lifts are obtained by precomposition with some evident smooth retractions.

The lifts in question are obtained from solving differential equations with boundary conditions, and exist due to the existence of solutions of first order systems of partial differential equations and the identity $d^2_{\mathrm{dR}} = 0$. □

We have discussed now two different presentations for the flat coefficient object $\flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}$:

1. $\flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}}$ – prop. 3.3.40;

2. $\flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}}$ – prop. 3.3.55;

There is an evident degreewise map

$$(-1)^{\bullet+1}\int_{\Delta^\bullet} : \flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{simp}} \to \flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}}$$

that sends a closed n-form $\omega \in \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(U \times \Delta^k)$ to $(-1)^{k+1}$ times its fiber integration $\int_{\Delta^k} \omega$.

Proposition 3.3.58. *This map yields a morphism of simplicial presheaves*

$$\int : \flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \to \flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}}$$

which is a weak equivalence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

Proof. First we check that we have a morphism of simplicial sets over each $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$. Since both objects are abelian simplicial groups we may, by the Dold-Kan correspondence, check the statement for sheaves of normalized chain complexes.

Notice that the chain complex differential on the forms $\omega \in \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(U \times \Delta^k)$ on simplices sends a form to the alternating sum of its restriction to the faces of the simplex. Postcomposed with the integration map this is the operation $\omega \mapsto \int_{\partial \Delta^k} \omega$ of integration over the boundary.

Conversely, first integrating over the simplex and then applying the de Rham differential on U yields

$$\begin{aligned} \omega \mapsto (-1)^{k+1} d_U \int_{\Delta^k} \omega &= -\int_{\Delta^k} d_U \omega \\ &= \int_{\Delta^k} d_{\Delta^k} \omega \quad , \\ &= \int_{\partial \Delta^k} \omega \end{aligned}$$

where we first used that ω is closed, so that $d_{\mathrm{dR}} \omega = (d_U + d_{\Delta^k})\omega = 0$, and then used Stokes' theorem. Therefore we have indeed objectwise a chain map.

By the discussion of the two objects we already know that both present the homotopy type of $\flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}$. Therefore it suffices to show that the integration map is over each $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ an isomorphism on the simplicial homotopy group in degree n.

Clearly the morphism

$$\int_{\Delta^n} : \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,cl}}(U \times \Delta^n) \to C^\infty(U, \mathbb{R})$$

is surjective on degree n homotopy groups: for $f : U \to * \to \mathbb{R}$ constant, a preimage is $f \cdot \mathrm{vol}_{\Delta^n}$, the normalized volume form of the n-simplex times f. Moreover, these preimages clearly span the whole homotopy group $\pi_n(\flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}) \simeq \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{disc}}$ (they are in fact the images of the weak equivalence $\mathrm{const}\Gamma \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \to \flat \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}}$) and the integration map is injective on them. Therefore it is an isomorphism on the homotopy groups in degree n. □

3.3.9.3 de Rham coefficients We now consider the de Rham coefficient object $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \exp(\mathfrak{g})$, 2.3.11, of exponentiated L_∞ algebras $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$, def 3.3.45.

Proposition 3.3.59. *For* $\mathfrak{g} \in L_\infty$ *a representive in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ *of the de Rham coefficient object* $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \exp(\mathfrak{g})$ *is given by the presheaf*

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} : (U, [n]) \mapsto \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^{\bullet \geq 1, \bullet}_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^n)) ,$$

where the notation on the right denotes the dg-algebra of differential forms on $U \times \Delta^n$ *that (apart from having sitting instants on the faces of* Δ^n*) are along* U *of non-vanishing degree.*

Proof. By the prop. 3.3.55 we may present the defining ∞-pullback $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R} := * \times_{\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}} \flat\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}$ in Smooth∞Grpd by the ordinary pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} & \longrightarrow & \flat\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R} \end{array}$$

in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$. □

We have discussed now two different presentations for the de Rham coefficient object $\flat\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}$:

1. $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}}$ – prop. 3.3.42;
2. $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}}$ – prop 3.3.59;

There is an evident degreewise map

$$(-1)^{\bullet+1}\int_{\Delta^\bullet} : \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}}$$

that sends a closed n-form $\omega \in \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(U \times \Delta^k)$ to $(-1)^{k+1}$ times its fiber integration $\int_{\Delta^k}\omega$.

Proposition 3.3.60. *This map yields a morphism of simplicial presheaves*

$$\int : \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}}$$

which is a weak equivalence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

Proof. This morphism is the morphism on pullbacks induced from the weak equivalence of diagrams

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} * & \longrightarrow & \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & \longleftarrow & \flat\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \\ \downarrow{=} & & \simeq\downarrow{\int} & & \simeq\downarrow{\int} \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}} & \longleftarrow & \flat\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{chn}} \end{array} .$$

Since both of these pullbacks are homotopy pullbacks by the above discussion, the induced morphism between the pullbacks is also a weak equivalence. □

3.3.10 Maurer-Cartan forms and curvature characteristic forms

We discuss the universal curvature forms, 2.3.13, in Smooth∞Grpd.

Specifically, we discuss the canonical Maurer-Cartan form on the following special cases of (presentations of) smooth ∞-groups.

- 3.3.10.1 – ordinary Lie groups:
- 3.3.10.2 – circle n-groups $\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)$;
- 3.3.10.3 – simplicial Lie groups.

Notice that, by the discussion in 2.1.6, the case of simplicial Lie groups also subsumes the case of crossed modules of Lie groups, def. 1.3.5, and generally of crossed complexes of Lie groups, def. 1.3.20.

3.3.10.1 Canonical form on an ordinary Lie group

Proposition 3.3.61. *Let G be a Lie group with Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$.*

Under the identification

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G) \simeq \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, \mathfrak{g})$$

from prop. 3.3.41, for $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}$, we have that the canonical morphism

$$\theta : G \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$$

in Smooth∞Grpd *corresponds to the ordinary Maurer-Cartan form on G.*

Proof. We compute the defining double ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G & \longrightarrow & * \\ {\scriptstyle\theta}\downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G & \longrightarrow & \flat\mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

in Smooth∞Grpd as a homotopy pullback in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. In prop. 3.3.41 we already modeled the lower ∞-pullback square by the ordinary pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G_c & \longrightarrow & \flat\mathbf{B}G_c \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G_c \end{array} .$$

A standard fibration replacement of the point inclusion $* \to \flat\mathbf{B}G$ is given by replacing the point by the presheaf that assigns groupoids of the form

$$Q : U \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} & A_0 = 0 & \\ {\scriptstyle g_1}\swarrow & & \searrow{\scriptstyle g_2} \\ A_1 & \xrightarrow{h} & A_2 \end{array} \right\} ,$$

where on the right the commuting triangle is in $(\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G_c)(U)$ and here regarded as a morphism from (g_1, A_1) to (g_2, A_2). And the fibration $Q \to \flat\mathbf{B}G_c$ is given by projecting out the base of these triangles.

The pullback of this along $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G_c \to \flat\mathbf{B}G_c$ is over each U the restriction of the groupoid $Q(U)$ to its set of objects, hence is the sheaf

$$U \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{c} A_0 = 0 \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle g} \\ g^*\theta \end{array} \right\} \simeq C^\infty(U, G) = G(U) ,$$

equipped with the projection

$$t_U : G \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G_c$$

given by

$$t_U : (g : U \to G) \mapsto g^*\theta .$$

Under the Yoneda lemma (over SmoothMfd) this identifies the morphism t with the Maurer-Cartan form $\theta \in \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(G, \mathfrak{g})$. □

3.3.10.2 Canonical form on the circle n-group

Consider now again the circle Lie $(n+1)$-group, def. 3.3.20.

Definition 3.3.62. For $n \in \mathbb{N}$ define the simplicial presheaf

$$\mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{diff,chn}} := \Xi \left(\begin{smallmatrix} C^\infty(-,U(1)) \\ \oplus \Omega^1(-) \end{smallmatrix} \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}} \mp \mathrm{Id}} \begin{smallmatrix} \Omega^1(-) \\ \oplus \Omega^2(-) \end{smallmatrix} \cdots \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}} \pm \mathrm{Id}} \begin{smallmatrix} \Omega^{n-1}(-) \\ \oplus \Omega^n(-) \end{smallmatrix} \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}} + \mathrm{Id}} \Omega^n(-) \right) ,$$

where the de Rham differential acts on both summands, and in degree k the term $(-1)^{k+1}\mathrm{Id}_{\Omega^{n-k+1}}$ is added.

Proposition 3.3.63. *The evident projection*

$$\mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{diff,chn}} \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{chn}}$$

is a weak equivalence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. *Moreover, the universal curvature characteristic, def. 2.3.109,*

$$\mathrm{curv} : \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)$$

in $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *is presented in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ *by a span*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{diff,chn}} & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}_{\mathrm{chn}}} & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)_{\mathrm{chn}} \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ \mathbf{B}^n U(1) & & \end{array} ,$$

where the horizontal morphism is the image under Ξ *of the chain map*

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccc} \begin{smallmatrix} C^\infty(-,U(1)) \\ \oplus \Omega^1(-) \end{smallmatrix} & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}} - \mathrm{Id}} & \begin{smallmatrix} \Omega^1(-) \\ \oplus \Omega^2(-) \end{smallmatrix} & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}} + \mathrm{Id}} & \cdots & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}} \mp \mathrm{Id}} & \begin{smallmatrix} \Omega^{n-1} \\ \oplus \Omega^n(-) \end{smallmatrix} & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}} \pm \mathrm{Id}} & \Omega^n(-) \\ \downarrow{p_2} & & \downarrow{p_2} & & & & \downarrow{p_2} & & \downarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} \\ \Omega^1(-) & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \Omega^2(-) & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \cdots & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \Omega^n(-) & \xrightarrow{d_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \Omega^{n+1}(-) \end{array} .$$

Proof. By prop. 2.1.52 we present the defining ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}^n U(1) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow{\mathrm{curv}} & & \downarrow \\ \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1) & \longrightarrow & \flat \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1) \end{array}$$

by a homotopy pullback in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ We claim that we have a commuting diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} 0 \to \begin{smallmatrix} C^\infty(-,U(1)) \\ \oplus \Omega^1(-) \end{smallmatrix} \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}} - \mathrm{Id}}{\to} \begin{smallmatrix} \Omega^1(-) \\ \oplus \Omega^2(-) \end{smallmatrix} \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}} + \mathrm{Id}}{\to} \cdots \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}} + \mathrm{Id}}{\to} \Omega^n(-) & \longrightarrow & C^\infty(-,U(1)) \overset{\mathrm{Id} + d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \begin{smallmatrix} C^\infty(-,U(1)) \\ \oplus \Omega^1(-) \end{smallmatrix} \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}} - \mathrm{Id}}{\to} \cdots \begin{smallmatrix} \Omega^{n-1}(-) \\ \oplus \Omega^n(-) \end{smallmatrix} \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}} + \mathrm{Id}}{\to} \Omega^n(-) \\ \downarrow{(p_2, p_2, \cdots, d_{\mathrm{dR}})} & & \downarrow{(\mathrm{Id}, p_2, p_2, \cdots, p_2, d_{\mathrm{dR}})} \\ 0 \to \Omega^1(-) \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \Omega^2(-) \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \cdots \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)) & \longrightarrow & (C^\infty(-,U(1)) \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \Omega^1(-) \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \Omega^2(-) \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \cdots \overset{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(-) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ 0 \to 0 \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0 & \longrightarrow & C^\infty(-,U(1)) \to 0 \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0 \end{array}$$

in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Ch}^+]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ where

- the objects are fibrant models for the corresponding objects in the above ∞-pullback diagram;
- the two right vertical morphisms are fibrations;
- the two squares are pullback squares.

This implies that under the right adjoint Ξ we have a homotopy pullback as claimed.

For the lower square this is prop. 3.3.42. For the upper square the same type of reasoning applies. The main point is to find the chain complex in the top right such that it is a resolution of the point and maps by a fibration onto our model for $\flat \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$. This is the mapping cone of the identity on the Deligne complex, as indicated. The vertical morphism out of it is manifestly surjective (by the Poincaré lemma applied to each object $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$) hence this is a fibration. □

In prop. 3.3.59 we had discussed an equivalent presentation of de Rham coefficient objects above. We now formulate the curvature characteristic in this alternative form.

Observation 3.3.64. We may write the simplicial presheaf $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}}$ from prop.3.3.59 equivalently as follows

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} : (U,[k]) \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \longleftarrow & 0 \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R}) \end{array} \right\},$$

where on the right we have the set of commuting diagrams in dgAlg of the given form, with the vertical morphisms being the canonical projections.

Definition 3.3.65. Write $\mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \in \mathrm{dgAlg}$ for the Weil algebra of the line Lie n-algebra, defined to be free commutative dg-algebra on a single generator in degree n, hence the graded commutative algebra on a generator in degree n and a generator in degree $(n+1)$ equipped with the differential that takes the former to the latter.

We write also $\mathrm{inn}(b^{n-1})$ for the L_∞-algebra corresponding to the Weil algebra

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathrm{inn}(b^{n-1})) := \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$$

Observation 3.3.66. We have the following properties of $\mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$

1. There is a canonical natural isomorphism

$$\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgAlg}}(\mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}), \Omega^\bullet(U)) \simeq \Omega^n(U)$$

   between dg-algebra homomorphisms $A : \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \to \Omega^\bullet(X)$ from the Weil algebra of $b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}$ to the de Rham complex and degree-n differential forms, not necessarily closed.

2. There is a canonical dg-algebra homomorphism $\mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \to \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$ and the differential n-form corresponding to A factors through this morphism precisely if the curvature $d_{\mathrm{dR}}A$ of A vanishes.

3. The image under $\exp(-)$

$$\exp(\mathrm{inn}(b^{n-1})\mathbb{R}) \to \exp(b^n\mathbb{R})$$

   of the canonical morphism $\mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R})$ is a fibration in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ that presents the point inclusion $* \to \mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}$ in $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$.

Definition 3.3.67. Let $\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ be the simplicial presheaf defined by

$$\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} : (U,[k]) \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \stackrel{A_{\mathrm{vert}}}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \stackrel{A}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \end{array} \right\},$$

where on the right we have the set of commuting diagrams in dgAlg as indicated.

This means that an element of $\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,smp}}(U)[k]$ is a smooth n-form A (with sitting instants) on $U\times\Delta^k$ such that its curvature $(n+1)$-form dA vanishes when restricted in all arguments to vector fields tangent to Δ^k. We may write this condition as $d_{\mathrm{dR}}A \in \Omega^{\bullet\geq 1,\bullet}_{\mathrm{si}}(U\times\Delta^k)$.

Observation 3.3.68. There are canonical morphisms

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} & \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}_{\mathrm{smp}}}{\longrightarrow} & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} & & \end{array}$$

in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$, where the vertical map is given by remembering only the top horizontal morphism in the above square diagram, and the horizontal morphism is given by forming the pasting composite

$$\mathrm{curv}_{\mathrm{smp}} : \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \stackrel{A_{\mathrm{vert}}}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \stackrel{A}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \end{array} \right\}$$
$$\mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \stackrel{A_{\mathrm{vert}}}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & \longleftarrow & 0 \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \stackrel{A}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R}) \end{array} \right\}.$$

Proposition 3.3.69. *This span is a presentation in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *of the universal curvature characteristics* $\mathrm{curv} : \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R} \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}$*, def. 2.3.109, in* $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$.

Proof. We need to produce a fibration resolution of the point inclusion $* \to \flat\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}}$ in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ and then show that the above is the ordinary pullback of this along $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \to \flat\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}}$.

We claim that this is achieved by the morphism

$$(U,[k]) : \{\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U\times\Delta^k) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})\} \mapsto \{\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U\times\Delta^k) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R})\}\,.$$

Here the simplicial presheaf on the left is that which assigns the set of arbitrary n-forms (with sitting instants but not necessarily closed) on $U\times\Delta^k$ and the map is simply given by sending such an n-form A to the $(n+1)$-form $d_{\mathrm{dR}}A$.

It is evident that the simplicial presheaf on the left resolves the point: since there is no condition on the forms every form on $U\times\Delta^k$ is in the image of the map of the normalized chain complex of a form on $U\times\Delta^{k+1}$: such is given by any form that is, up to a sign, equal to the given form on one n-face and 0 on all the other faces. Clearly such forms exist.

Moreover, this morphism is a fibration in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, for instanxce because its image under the normalized chains complex functor is a degreewise surjection, by the Poincar'e lemma.

Now we observe that we have over each $(U, [k])$ a double pullback diagram in Set

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
\left\{
\begin{array}{ccc}
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \stackrel{A_{\mathrm{vert}}}{\leftarrow} & \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \stackrel{A}{\leftarrow} & W(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})
\end{array}
\right\}
& \to &
\left\{
\begin{array}{ccc}
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow^{\mathrm{id}} \\
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})
\end{array}
\right\}
\\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
\left\{
\begin{array}{ccc}
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & 0 \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R})
\end{array}
\right\}
& \to &
\left\{
\begin{array}{ccc}
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow^{\mathrm{id}} \\
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R})
\end{array}
\right\}
\\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
\left\{
\begin{array}{ccc}
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & 0 \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & 0
\end{array}
\right\}
& \to &
\left\{
\begin{array}{ccc}
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & 0
\end{array}
\right\}
\end{array}
,
$$

hence a corresponding pullback diagram of simplicial presheaves, that we claim is a presentation for the defining double ∞-pullback for curv.

The bottom square is the one we already discussed for the de Rham coefficients. Since the top right vertical morphism is a fibration, also the top square is a homotopy pullback and hence exhibits the defining ∞-pullback for curv. □

Corollary 3.3.70. *The degreewise map*

$$
(-1)^{\bullet+1} \int_{\Delta^\bullet} : \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} \to \mathbf{B}^n \mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,chn}}
$$

that sends an n-form $A \in \Omega^n(U \times \Delta^k)$ and its curvature dA to $(-1)^{k+1}$ times its fiber integration $(\int_{\Delta^k} A, \int_{\Delta^k} dA)$ is a weak equivalence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

Proof. Since under homotopy pullbacks a weak equivalence of diagrams is sent to a weak equivalence. See the analagous argument in the proof of prop. 3.3.60. □

3.3.10.3 Canonical form on simplicial Lie group.

Above we discussed the canonical differential form on smooth ∞-groups G for the special cases where G is a Lie group and where G is a circle Lie n-group. These are both in turn special cases of the situation where G is a *simplicial Lie group*. This we discuss now.

Proposition 3.3.71. *For G a simplicial Lie group the flat de Rham coefficient object $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$ is presented by the simplicial presheaf which in degree k is given by $\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-, \mathfrak{g}_k)$, where $\mathfrak{g}_k = \mathrm{Lie}(G_k)$ is the Lie algebra of G_k.*

Proof. Let

$$\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet)//G_\bullet = \left(\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet)\times C^\infty(-,G_\bullet) \rightrightarrows \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet)\right)$$

be the presheaf of simplicial groupoids which in degree k is the groupoid of Lie-algebra valued forms with values in G_k from theorem. 1.3.36. As in the proof of prop. 3.3.41 we have that under the degreewise nerve this is a degreewise fibrant resolution of presheaves of bisimplicial sets

$$N\left(\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet)//G_\bullet\right) \to N*//G_\bullet = NB(G_{\mathrm{disc}})_\bullet$$

of the standard presentation of the delooping of the discrete group underlying G. By basic properties of bisimplicial sets [GoJa99] we know that under taking the diagonal

$$\mathrm{diag} : \mathrm{sSet}^\Delta \to \mathrm{sSet}$$

the object on the right is a presentation for $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$, because (see the discussion of simplicial groups around prop. 2.3.20)

$$\mathrm{diag}NB(G_{disc})_\bullet \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \bar W(G_{\mathrm{disc}}) \simeq \flat\mathbf{B}G\,.$$

Now observe that the morphism

$$\mathrm{diag}(N\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet)//G_\bullet) \to \mathrm{diag}N*//G_{\mathrm{disc}}$$

is a fibration in the global model structure. This is in fact true for every morphism of the form

$$\mathrm{diag}N(S_\bullet//G_\bullet) \to \mathrm{diag}*//G_\bullet$$

for $S_\bullet//G_\bullet \to *//G_\bullet$ a simlicial action groupoid projection with G a simplicial group acting on a Kan complex S: we have that

$$(\mathrm{diag}N(S//G))_k = S_k \times (G_k)^{\times_k}\,.$$

On the second factor the horn filling condition is simply that of the identity map $\mathrm{diag}NBG \to \mathrm{diag}NBG$ which is evidently solvable, whereas on the first factor it amounts to $S \to *$ being a Kan fibration, hence to S being Kan fibrant.

But the simplicial presheaf $\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet)$ is indeed Kan fibrant: for a given $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ we may use parallel transport to (non-canonically) identify

$$\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(U,\mathfrak{g}_k) \simeq \mathrm{SmoothMfd}_*(U,G_k)\,,$$

where on the right we have smooth functions that send the origin of U to the neutral element. But since $G_\bullet$ is Kan fibrant and has smooth global fillers also $\mathrm{SmoothMfd}_*(U,G_\bullet)$ is Kan fibrant.

In summary this means that the defining homotopy pullback

$$\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G := \flat\mathbf{B}G \times_{\mathbf{B}G} *$$

is presented by the ordinary pullback of simplicial presheaves

$$\mathrm{diag}N\Omega^1_{flat}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet) \times \mathrm{diag}NBG_\bullet * = \Omega^1(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet)\,.$$

□

Proposition 3.3.72. *For G a simplicial Lie group the canonical differential form, def. 2.3.108,*

$$\theta : G \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$$

is presented in terms of the above presentation for $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}G$ by the morphism of simplicial presheaves

$$\theta_\bullet : G_\bullet \to \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet)$$

which is in degree k the presheaf-incarnation of the Maurer-Cartan form of the ordinary Lie group G_k as in prop. 3.3.61.

Proof. Continuing with the strategy of the previous proof we find a fibration resolution of the point inclusion $* \to \flat \mathbf{B}G$ by applying the construction of the proof of prop. 3.3.61 degreewise and then applying $\mathrm{diag} \circ N$.

The defining homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} & \longrightarrow & \flat \mathbf{B}G \end{array}$$

for θ is this way presented by the ordinary pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G_\bullet & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{diag}N(\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet))_{\mathrm{triv}}//G_\bullet) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet) & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{diag}N(\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_\bullet)//G_\bullet) \end{array}$$

of simplicial presheaves, where $\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-,\mathfrak{g}_k)$ is the set of flat $\mathfrak{g}$-valued forms A equipped with a gauge transformation $0 \stackrel{g}{\to} A$. As in the above proof one finds that the right vertical morphism is a fibration, hence indeed a resolution of the point inclusion. The pullback is degreewise that from the case of ordinary Lie groups and thus the result follows. □

We can now give a simplicial description of the canonical curvature form $\theta : \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \to \flat_{dR} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)$ that above in prop. 3.3.63 we obtained by a chain complex model:

Example 3.3.73. The canonical form on the circle Lie n-group

$$\theta : \mathbf{B}^{n-1} U(1) \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$$

is presented by the simplicial map

$$\Xi(U(1)[n-1]) \to \Xi(\Omega^1_{cl}(-)[n-1])$$

which is simply the Maurer-Cartan form on $U(1)$ in degree n.

The equivalence to the model we obtained before is given by noticing the equivalence in hypercohomology of chain complexes of abelian sheaves

$$\Omega^1_{\mathrm{cl}}(-)[n] \simeq (\Omega^1(-) \stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \cdots \stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(-))$$

on CartSp.

3.3.11 Differential cohomology

We discuss the intrinsic differential cohomology, 2.3.14, in Sooth∞Grpd, with coefficients in the circle Lie $(n+1)$-group $\mathbf{B}^n U(1)$, def. 3.3.20.

First we observe that intrinsic differential cohomology in Smooth∞Grpd has the abstract properties of traditional ordinary differential cohomology, [HoSi05], then we establish that both notions indeed coincide.

By def. 2.3.110 we are to consider the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) & \longrightarrow & H_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)) \end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical morphism picks one point in each connected component. Moreover, following remark 2.3.52 and remark 2.3.115, in the particular presentation of Smooth∞Grpd by the model structure on simplicial presheaves on CartSp and using the model for $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1)$ of prop. 3.3.42 we are entitled to the following bigger object

Definition 3.3.74. Consider the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{H}'_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) & \xrightarrow{F} & \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) \\ \downarrow^{\mathbf{c}} & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1)) \end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical morphism is induced from the canonical morphism of simplicial presheaves $\Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(-) \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1)$ (where on the left we have the simplicially constant sheaf of closed forms).

We call $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1))$ and its primed version the cocycle ∞-groupoid for *ordinary smooth differential cohomology* in degree n .

Proposition 3.3.75. *For $n \geq 1$ and $X \in$ SmoothMfd, the abelian group ${H'}^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X)$ sits in the following short exact sequences of abelian groups*

- *the* curvature exact sequence

$$0 \to H^n(X, U(1)_{\mathrm{disc}}) \to {H'}^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, U(1)) \xrightarrow{F} \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl,int}}(X) \to 0$$

- *the* characteristic class exact sequence

$$0 \to \Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}/\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl,int}}(X) \to {H'}^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, U(1)) \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}} H^{n+1}(X, \mathbb{Z}) \to 0\,.$$

Here $\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl,int}}$ denotes closed forms with integral periods.

Proof. For the curvature exact sequence we invoke prop. 2.3.113 which yields (for H_{diff} as for H'_{diff})

$$0 \to H^n_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, U(1)) \to {H'}^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, U(1)) \xrightarrow{F} \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl,int}}(X) \to 0\,.$$

The claim then follows by using prop. 3.3.38 to get $H^n_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, U(1)) \simeq H^n(X, U(1)_{\mathrm{disc}})$.

For the characteristic class exact sequence, we have with 2.3.114 for the smaller group H^n_{diff} (the fiber over the vanishing curvature $(n+1)$-form $F = 0$) the sequence

$$0 \to H^n_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)/\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl,int}}(X) \to {H'}^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, U(1)) \xrightarrow{c} H^{n+1}(X, \mathbb{Z}) \to 0$$

where we used prop. 3.3.43 to identify the de Rham cohomology on the left, and the fact that X is paracompact to identify the integral cohomology on the right. Since $\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl,int}}(X)$ contains the exact forms (with all periods being $0 \in \mathbb{Z}$), the leftmost term is equivalently $\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)//\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl,int}}(X)$. As we pass from H_{diff} to the bigger H'_{diff}, we get a copy of a torsor over this group, for each closed form F, trivial in de Rham cohomology, to a total of

$$\coprod_{F \in \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)} \{\omega | d\omega = F\}/\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl,int}} \simeq \Omega^n(X)/\Omega^n_{\mathrm{cl,int}}(X)\,.$$

This yields the curvature exact sequence as claimed. □

If we invoke standard facts about Deligne cohomology, then prop. 3.3.75 is also implied by the following proposition, which asserts that in Smooth∞Grpd the groups ${H'}^\bullet_{\mathrm{diff}}$ not only share the above abstract properties of ordinary differential cohomology, but indeed coincide with it.

Proposition 3.3.76. *For $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ a paracompact smooth manifold we have that the connected components of the object $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1))$ are given by*

$$H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, U(1)) \simeq (\ \ H(X, \mathbb{Z}(n+1)^\infty_D)\ \ ) \times_{\Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)} H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR,int}}(X)\,.$$

Here on the right we have the subset of Deligne cocycles that picks for each integral de Rham cohomology class of X only one curvature form representative.

For the connected components of $\mathbf{H}'_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1))$ we get the complete ordinary Deligne cohomology of X in degree $n+1$:

$$H'^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, U(1)) \simeq \ \ H(X, \mathbb{Z}(n+1)^\infty_D)$$

Proof. Choose a differentiably good open cover, def. 3.3.2, $\{U_i \to X\}$ and let $C(\{U_i\}) \to X$ in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ be the corresponding Čech nerve projection, a cofibrant resolution of X.

Since the presentation of prop. 3.3.63 for the universal curvature class $\mathrm{curv}_{\mathrm{chn}} : \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{diff,chn}} \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1} U(1)_{\mathrm{chn}}$ is a global fibration and $C(\{U_i\})$ is cofibrant, also

$$[\mathrm{Cartp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}^n_{\mathrm{diff}} U(1)) \to [\mathrm{Cartp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1))$$

is a Kan fibration by the fact that $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ is an $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$-enriched model category. Therefore the homotopy pullback in question is computed as the ordinary pullback of this morphism.

By prop. 3.3.42 we have that we can assume that the morphism $H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1})$ picks only cocycles represented by globally defined closed differential forms $F \in \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)$. We see that the elements in the fiber over such a globally defined $(n+1)$-form F are precisely the cocycles with values only in the upper row complex of $\mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{diff,chn}}$

$$C^\infty(-, U(1)) \stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \Omega^1(-) \stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \cdots \stackrel{d_{\mathrm{dR}}}{\to} \Omega^n(-)\,,$$

such that F is the de Rham differential of the last term.

This is the complex of sheaves that defines Deligne cohomology in degree $(n+1)$. □

3.3.11.1 Orientifold circle n-bundles with connection

We discuss the notion of circle n-bundles with connection over double covering spaces with *orientifold* structure (see [SSW05] and [DiFrMo11] for the notion of orientifolds).

Proposition 3.3.77. *The smooth automorphism 2-group of the circle group $U(1)$ is that corresponding to the smooth crossed module (as discussed in 2.1.6)*

$$\mathrm{AUT}(U(1)) \simeq [U(1) \to \mathbb{Z}_2]\,,$$

where the differential $U(1) \to \mathbb{Z}_2$ is trivial and where the action of $\mathbb{Z}_2$ on $U(1)$ is given under the identification of $U(1)$ with the unit circle in the plane by reversal of the sign of the angle.

This is an extension of smooth ∞-groups, def. 2.3.43, of $\mathbb{Z}_2$ by the circle 2-group $\mathbf{B}U(1)$:

$$\mathbf{B}U(1) \to \mathrm{AUT}(U(1)) \to \mathbb{Z}_2\,.$$

Proof. The nature of $\mathrm{AUT}(U(1))$ is clear by definition. Let $\mathbf{B}U(1) \to \mathrm{AUT}(U(1))$ be the evident inclusion. We have to show that its delooping is the homotopy fiber of $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{AUT}(U(1)) \to \mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}_2$.

Passing to the presentation of $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ by the model structure on simplicial presheaves $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ and using prop. 2.1.52, it is sufficient to show that the simplicial presheaf $\mathbf{B}^2 U(1)_c$ from 3.3.2 is equivalent to the ordinary pullback of simplicial presheaves $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{AUT}(U(1))_c \times_{\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}_2} \mathbf{E}\mathbb{Z}_2$ of the $\mathbb{Z}_2$-universal principal bundle, as discussed in 1.3.1.

This pullback is the 2-groupoid whose

- objects are elements of $\mathbb{Z}_2$;
- morphisms $\sigma_1 \to \sigma_2$ are labeled by $\sigma \in \mathbb{Z}_2$ such that $\sigma_2 = \sigma\sigma_1$;
- all 2-morphisms are endomorphisms, labeled by $c \in U(1)$;
- vertical composition of 2-morphisms is given by the group operation in $U(1)$,
- horizontal composition of 1-morphisms with 1-morphisms is given by the group operation in $\mathbb{Z}_2$
- horizontal composition of 1-morphisms with 2-morphisms (*whiskering*) is given by the action of $\mathbb{Z}_2$ on $U(1)$.

Over each $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ this 2-groupoid has vanishing π_1, and $\pi_2 = U(1)$. The inclusion of $\mathbf{B}^2U(1)$ into this pullback is given by the evident inclusion of elements in $U(1)$ as endomorphisms of the neutral element in $\mathbb{Z}_2$. This is manifestly an isomorphism on π_2 and trivially an isomorphism on all other homotopy groups. Therefore it is a weak equivalenc. □

Observation 3.3.78. A $U(1)$-gerbe in the full sense Giraud (see [LuHTT], section 7.2.2) as opposed to a $U(1)$-bundle gerbe / circle 2-bundle is equivalent to an $\mathrm{AUT}(U(1))$-principal 2-bundle, not in general to a circle 2-bundle, which is only a special case.

More generally we have:

Proposition 3.3.79. *For every $n \in \mathbb{N}$ the automorphism $(n+1)$-group of $\mathbf{B}^nU(1)$ is given by the crossed complex (as discussed in 2.1.6)*

$$\mathrm{AUT}(\mathbf{B}^nU(1)) \simeq [U(1) \to 0 \to \cdots \to 0 \to \mathbb{Z}_2]$$

with $U(1)$ in degree $n+1$ and $\mathbb{Z}_2$ acting by automorphisms. This is an extension of cohesive ∞-groups

$$\mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1) \to \mathrm{AUT}(\mathbf{B}^nU(1)) \to \mathbb{Z}_2\,.$$

Definition 3.3.80. For $X \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$, a *double cover* $\hat{X} \to X$ is a $\mathbb{Z}_2$-principal bundle.

For $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $n \geq 1$, an *orientifold circle n-bundle (with connection)* is an $\mathrm{AUT}(\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1))$-principal ∞-bundle (with ∞-connection) on X that extends $\hat{X} \to X$ (by def. 2.3.43) with respect to the extension of $\mathbb{Z}^2$ by $\mathrm{AUT}(\mathbf{B}^nU(1))$, prop. 3.3.79.

This means that relative to a cocycle $g : X \to \mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}^2$ for a double cover $\hat{X}$, the structure of an orientifold circle n-bundle is a factorization of this cocycle as

$$g : X \stackrel{\hat{g}}{\to} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{AUT}(\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)) \to \mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}^2$$

where $\hat{g}$ is the cocycle for the corresponding $\mathrm{AUT}(\mathbf{B}^nU(1))$-principal ∞-bundle.

Proposition 3.3.81. *Every orientifold circle n-bundle (with connection) on X induces an ordinary circle n-bundle (with connection) $\hat{P} \to \hat{X}$ on the given double cover $\hat{X}$ such that restricted to any fiber of $\hat{X}$ this is equivalent to* $\mathrm{AUT}(\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)) \to \mathbb{Z}_2$.

Proof. By prop. 2.3.44. □

Proposition 3.3.82. *Orientifold circle 2-bundles over a smooth manifold are equivalent to the* Jandl gerbes *introduced in [SSW05].*

Proof. By prop. 3.2.28 we have that $[U(1) \to \mathbb{Z}_2]$-principal ∞-bundles on X are given by Čech cocycles relative to any good open cover of X with coefficients in the sheaf of 2-groupoids $\mathbf{B}[U(1) \to \mathbb{Z}_2]$. Writing this out in components it is straightforward to check that this coincides with the data of a Jandl gerbe (with connection) over this cover. □

Remark 3.3.83. Orientifold circle n-bundles are not $\mathbb{Z}_2$-equivariant circle n-bundles: in the latter case the orientation reversal acts by an equivalence between the bundle and its pullback along the orientation reversal, whereas for an orientifold circle n-bundle the orientation reversal acts by an equivalence to the *dual* of the pulled-back bundle.

Proposition 3.3.84. *The geometric realization, def. 2.3.77,*

$$\tilde{R} := |\mathbf{B}[U(1) \to \mathbb{Z}_2]|$$

of $\mathbf{B}[U(1) \to \mathbb{Z}]$ *is the homotopy 3-type with homotopy groups*

$$\pi_0(\tilde{R}) = 0\,;$$

$$\pi_1(\tilde{R}) = \mathbb{Z}_2\,;$$

$$\pi_2(\tilde{R}) = 0\,;$$

$$\pi_3(R') = \mathbb{Z}$$

and nontrivial action of π_1 *on* π_3*.*

Proof. By prop. 3.3.22 and the results of 3.2.4 we have

1. specifically
   (a) $|\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}_2| \simeq B\mathbb{Z}_2$;
   (b) $|\mathbf{B}^2 U(1)| \simeq B^2 U(1) \simeq K(\mathbb{Z}; 3)$;

   where on the right we have the ordinary classifying spaces going by these names;

2. generally geometric realization preserves fiber sequences of nice enough objects, such as those under consideration, so that we have a fiber sequence

   $$K(\mathbb{Z}, 3) \to \tilde{R} \to B\mathbb{Z}_2$$

   in Top.

Since $\pi_3(K(\mathbb{Z}), 3) \simeq \mathbb{Z}$ and $\pi_1(B\mathbb{Z}_2) \simeq \mathbb{Z}_2$ and all other homotopy groups of these two spaces are trivial, the homotopy groups of $\tilde{R}$ follow by the long exact sequence of homotopy groups associated to our fiber sequence.

Finally, since the action of $\mathbb{Z}_2$ in the crossed module is nontrivial, $\pi_1(\tilde{R})$ must act notriviall on $\pi_3(\mathbb{Z})$. It can only act nontrivial in a single way, up to homotopy. □

The space

$$R := \mathbb{Z}_2 \times \tilde{R}$$

is taken to be the coefficient object for orientifold (differential) cohomology as appearing in string theory in [DiFrMo11].

3.3.12 ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism

We discuss the general abstract notion of Chern-Weil homomorphism, 2.3.15, realized in Smooth∞Grpd.

Recall that for $A \in$ Smooth∞Grpd a smooth ∞-groupoid regarded as a coefficient object for cohomology, for instance the delooping $A = \mathbf{B}G$ of an ∞-group G we have general abstractly that

- a characteristic class on A with coefficients in the circle Lie n-group, 3.3.20, is represented by a morphism
$$\mathbf{c} : A \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)\,;$$
- the (unrefined) Chern-Weil homomorphism induced from this is the differential characteristic class given by the composite
$$\mathbf{c}_{\mathrm{dR}} : A \stackrel{\mathbf{c}}{\to} \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}}{\to} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}$$
with the universal curvature characteristic, 2.3.13, on $\mathbf{B}^n U(1)$, or rather: is the morphism on cohomology
$$H^1_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X, G) := \pi_0 \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}G) \stackrel{\pi_0((\mathbf{c}_{\mathrm{dR}})_*)}{\to} \pi_0 \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}) \simeq H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)$$
induced by this.

By prop. 3.3.68 we have a presentation of the universal curvature class $\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R} \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}$ by a span

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} & \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}_{\mathrm{smp}}}{\longrightarrow} & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & \\ \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} & & \end{array}$$

in the model structure on simplicial presheaves $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, given by maps of smooth families of differential forms. We now insert this in the above general abstract definition of the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism to deduce a presentation of that in terms of smooth families L_∞-algebra valued differential forms.

The main step is the construction of a well-suited composite of two spans of morphisms of simplicial presheaves (of two ∞-anafunctors): we consider presentations of characteristic classes $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ in the image of the $\exp(-)$ map, def. 3.3.45, and presented by trunactions and quotients of morphisms of simplicial presheaves of the form
$$\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \stackrel{\exp(\mu)}{\to} \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})\,.$$
Then, using the above, the composite differential characteristic class $\mathbf{c}_{\mathrm{dR}}$ is presented by the zig-zag

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} & & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} & \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}_{\mathrm{smp}}}{\longrightarrow} & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \\ & & \downarrow^{\simeq} & & \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g}) & \stackrel{\exp(\mu)}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} & & \end{array}$$

of simplicial presheaves. In order to efficiently compute which morphism in Smooth∞Grpd this presents we need to construct, preferably naturally in the L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$, a simplicial presheaf $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}}$ that fills this diagram as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \stackrel{\exp(\mu,\mathrm{cs})}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} & \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}_{\mathrm{smp}}}{\longrightarrow} & \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & \downarrow^{\simeq} & & \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g}) & \stackrel{\exp(\mu)}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} & & \end{array} .$$

Given this, $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff,smp}}$ serves as a new resolution of $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ for which the composite differential characteristic class is presented by the ordinary composite of morphisms of simplicial presheaves $\mathrm{curv}_{\mathrm{smp}} \circ \exp(\mu, cs)$.

This object $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}}$ we shall see may be interpreted as the coefficient for *pseudo*-∞-connections with values in $\mathfrak{g}$.

There is however still room to adjust this presentation such as to yield in each cohomology class special nice cocycle representatives. This we will achieve by finding naturally a subobject $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}} \hookrightarrow \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}}$ whose inclusion is an isomorphism on connected components and restricted to which the morphism $\mathrm{curv}_{\mathrm{smp}} \circ \exp(\mu, cs)$ yields nice representatives in the de Rham hypercohomology encoded by $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}}$, namely globally defined differential forms. On this object the differential characteristic classes we will show factors naturally through the refinements to differential cohomology, and hence $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}}$ is finally identified as a presentation for the the coefficient object for ∞-connections with values in $\mathfrak{g}$.

Let $\mathfrak{g} \in L_\infty \overset{\mathrm{CE}}{\hookrightarrow} \mathrm{dgAlg}^{\mathrm{op}}$ be an L_∞-algebra, def. 1.3.72.

Definition 3.3.85. A L_∞-algebra cocycle on $\mathfrak{g}$ in degree n is a morphism

$$\mu : \mathfrak{g} \to b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}$$

to the line Lie n-algebra.

Observation 3.3.86. Dually this is equivalently a morphism of dg-algebras

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) : \mu \,,$$

which we denote by the same letter, by slight abuse of notation. Such a morphism is naturally identified with its image of the single generator of $\mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$, which is a closed element

$$\mu \in \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$$

in degree n, that we also denote by the same letter. Therefore L_∞-algebra cocycles are precisely the ordinary cocycles of the corresponding Chevalley-Eilenberg algebras.

Remark 3.3.87. After the injection of smooth ∞-groupoids into synthetic differential ∞-groupoids, discussed below in 3.4, there is an intrinsic abstract notion of cohomology of ∞-Lie algebras. Proposition 3.4.31 below asserts that the above definition is indeed a presentation of that abstract cohomological notion.

Definition 3.3.88. For $\mu : \mathfrak{g} \to b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}$ an L_∞-algebra cocycle with $n \geq 2$, write $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$ for the L_∞-algebra whose Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra is generated from the generators of $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ and one single further generator b in degree $(n-1)$, with differential defined by

$$d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}_\mu)}|_{\mathfrak{g}^*} = d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})} \,,$$

and

$$d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}_\mu)} : b \mapsto \mu \,,$$

where on the right we regard μ as an element of $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$, hence of $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}_\mu)$, by observation 3.3.86.

Definition 3.3.89. For $\mathfrak{g} \in L_\infty\mathrm{Alg}$ an L_∞-algebra, its *Weil algebra* $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \in \mathrm{dgAlg}$ is the unique representative of the free dg-algebra on the dual cochain complex underlying $\mathfrak{g}$ such that the canonical projection $\mathfrak{g}^*_\bullet[1] \oplus \mathfrak{g}^*_\bullet[2] \to \mathfrak{g}^*_\bullet[1]$ extends to a dg-algebra homomorphism

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \,.$$

Since $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ is itself in $L_\infty\mathrm{Alg}^{\mathrm{op}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{dgAlg}$ we can idenntify it with the Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra of an L_∞-algebra. That we write $\mathrm{inn}(\mathfrak{g})$ or $e\mathfrak{g}$:

$$\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) :=: \mathrm{CE}(e\mathfrak{g}) \,.$$

In terms of this the above canonical morphism reads

$$\mathfrak{g} \to e\mathfrak{g} \,.$$

Remark 3.3.90. This notation reflects the fact that $e\mathfrak{g}$ may be regarded as the infinitesimal groupal model of the universal $\mathfrak{g}$-principal ∞-bundle.

Proposition 3.3.91. *For $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $n \geq 2$ we have a pullback in $L_\infty\mathrm{Alg}$*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} b^{n-1}\mathbb{R} & \longrightarrow & eb^{n-1}\mathbb{R} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & bb^{n-1}\mathbb{R} \end{array} .$$

Proof. Dually this is the pushout diagram of dg-algebras that is free on the short exact sequence of cochain complexes concentrated in degrees n and $n+1$ as follows:

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} 0_{n+1} \\ {\scriptstyle d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{b}^{n-1}\mathbb{R})}} \uparrow \\ \langle c \rangle_n \end{array} \right) \leftarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} \langle d \rangle_{n+1} \\ {\scriptstyle d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{b}^{n-1}\mathbb{R})}} \uparrow \simeq \\ \langle c \rangle_n \end{array} \right) \leftarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} \langle d \rangle_{n+1} \\ {\scriptstyle d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{b}\mathfrak{b}^{n-1}\mathbb{R})}} \uparrow \\ 0_n \end{array} \right) .$$

□

Proposition 3.3.92. *The L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$ from def. 3.3.88 fits into a pullback diagram in $L_\infty\mathrm{Alg}$*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathfrak{g}_\mu & \longrightarrow & eb^{n-2}\mathbb{R} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathfrak{g} & \xrightarrow{\mu} & bb^{n-2}\mathbb{R} \end{array} .$$

Proposition 3.3.93. *Let $\mu : \mathfrak{g} \to b^n\mathbb{R}$ be a degree-n cocycle on an L_∞-algebra and $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$ the L_∞-algebra from def. 3.3.88.*

We have that $\exp(\mathfrak{g}_\mu) \to \exp(\mathfrak{g})$ presents the homotopy fiber of $\exp(\mu) : \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \to \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$ in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$.

Since $\exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \simeq \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}$ by prop. 3.3.53, this means that $\exp(\mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ is the $\mathbf{B}^{n-1}\mathbb{R}$-principal ∞-bundle classified by $\exp(\mu)$ in that we have an ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \exp(\mathfrak{g}_\mu) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g}) & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu)} & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R} \end{array}$$

in Smooth∞Grpd.

Proof. Since $\exp : L_\infty\mathrm{Alg} \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ preserves pullbacks (being given componentwise by a hom-functor) it follows from 3.3.92 that we have a pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \exp(\mathfrak{g}_\mu) & \longrightarrow & \exp(eb^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g}) & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu)} & \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \end{array} .$$

The right vertical morphism is a fibration resolution of the point inclusion $* \to \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$. Hence this is a homotopy pullback in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ and the claim follows with prop. 2.1.52. □

We now come to the definition of differential refinements of exponentiated L_∞-algebras.

Definition 3.3.94. For $\mathfrak{g} \in L_\infty$ define the simplicial presheaf $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ by

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} : (U,[k]) \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) & \leftarrow & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \end{array} \right\},$$

where on the left we have the set of commuting diagrams in dgAlg as indicated, with the vertical morphisms being the canonical projections.

Proposition 3.3.95. *The canonical projection*

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} \to \exp(\mathfrak{g})$$

is a weak equivalence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

Moreover, for every L_∞-algebra cocycle it fits into a commuting diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu)_{\mathrm{diff}}} & \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{diff}} & = & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \downarrow \simeq & & \downarrow \simeq \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g}) & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu)} & \exp(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & = & \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \end{array}$$

for some morphism $\exp(\mu)_{\mathrm{diff}}$.

Proof. Use the contractibility of the Weil algebra. □

Definition 3.3.96. Let $G \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ be a smooth n-group given by Lie integration, 3.3.9, of an L_∞ algebra $\mathfrak{g}$, in that the delooping object $\mathbf{B}G$ is presented by the $(n+1)$-coskeleton simplicial presheaf $\mathbf{cosk}_{n+1}\exp(\mathfrak{g})$.

Then for $X \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ any object and $\hat{X}$ a cofibrant resolution, we say that

$$[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](\hat{X}, \mathbf{cosk}_{n+1}\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}})$$

is the Kan complex of *pseudo-n-connections* on G-principal n-bundles.

We discuss now subobjects that pick out genuine ∞-connections.

Definition 3.3.97. An *invariant polynomial* on an L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ is an element $\langle - \rangle \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ in the Weil algebra, such that

1. $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}\langle -,- \rangle = 0$;
2. $\langle - \rangle \in \wedge^\bullet \mathfrak{g}^*[1] \hookrightarrow W(\mathfrak{g})$;

hence such that it is a closed element built only from shifted generators of $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$.

Proposition 3.3.98. *For $\mathfrak{g}$ an ordinary Lie algebra, this definition of invariant polynomial is equivalent to the traditional one (for instance [AzIz95]).*

Proof. Let $\{t^a\}$ be a basis of $\mathfrak{g}^*$ and $\{r^a\}$ the corresponding basis of $\mathfrak{g}^*[1]$. Write $\{C^a{}_{bc}\}$ for the structure constants of the Lie bracket in this basis.

Then for $P = P_{(a_1,\cdots,a_k)} r^{a_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge r^{a_k} \in \wedge^r \mathfrak{g}^*[1]$ an element in the shifted generators, the condition that its image under $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}$ is in the shifted copy is equivalent to

$$C^b_{c(a_1} P_{b,\cdots,a_k)} t^c \wedge r^{a_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge r^{a_k} = 0\,,$$

where the parentheses around indices denotes symmetrization, so that this is equivalent to

$$\sum_i C^b_{c(a_i} P_{a_1 \cdots a_{i-1} b a_{i+1} \cdots , a_k)} = 0$$

for all choice of indices. This is the component-version of the defining invariance statement

$$\sum_i P(t_1, \cdots, t_{i-1}, [t_c, t_i], t_{i+1}, \cdots, t_k) = 0$$

for all $t_\bullet \in \mathfrak{g}$. $\square$

Observation 3.3.99. For the line Lie n-algeba we have

$$\mathrm{inv}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \simeq \mathrm{CE}(b^n \mathbb{R}) \,.$$

This allows us to identify an invariant polynomial $\langle - \rangle$ of degree $n+1$ with a morphism

$$\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) \stackrel{\langle - \rangle}{\leftarrow} \mathrm{inv}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$$

in dgAlg.

Remark 3.3.100. Write $\iota : \mathfrak{g} \to \mathrm{Der}_\bullet(\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}))$ for the identification of elements of $\mathfrak{g}$ with inner graded derivations of the Weil-algebra, induced by contraction. For $v \in \mathfrak{g}$ write

$$\mathcal{L}_x := [d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}, \iota_v] \in \mathrm{der}_\bullet(\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}))$$

for the induced Lie derivative. Then the fist condition on an invariant polynomial $\langle - \rangle$ in def. 3.3.97 is equivalent to

$$\iota_v \langle - \rangle = 0 \quad \forall v \in \mathfrak{g}$$

and the second condition implies that

$$\mathcal{L}_v \langle - \rangle = 0 \quad \forall v \in \mathfrak{g} \,.$$

In Cartan calculus [Cart50a][Cart50b] elements satisfying these two conditions are called *basic elements* or *basic forms*. By prop. 3.3.98 on an ordinary Lie algebra the basic forms are precisely the invariant polynomials. But on a general L_∞-algebra there can be non-closed basic forms. Our definition of invariant polynomials hence picks the *closed basic forms* on an L_∞-algebra.

Definition 3.3.101. We say that an invariant polynomial $\langle - \rangle$ on $\mathfrak{g}$ is *in transgression* with an L_∞-algebra cocycle $\mu : \mathfrak{g} \to b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}$ if there is a morphism $\mathrm{cs} : \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) \to \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ such that we have a commuting diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) & \stackrel{\mu}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{CE}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) & \stackrel{\mathrm{cs}}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & & \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) & \stackrel{\langle - \rangle}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{inv}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}) & = & \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R}) \end{array}$$

hence such that

1. $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}\mathrm{cs} = \langle - \rangle$;
2. $\mathrm{cs}|_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})} = \mu$.

We say that cs is a *Chern-Simons element* exhibiting the transgression between μ and $\langle - \rangle$.

We say that an L_∞-algebra cocycle is *transgressive* if it is in transgression with some invariant polynomial.

Observation 3.3.102. We have

1. There is a transgressive cocycle for every invariant polynomial.
2. Any two L_∞-algebra cocycles in transgression with the same invariant polynomial are cohomologous.
3. Every decomposable invariant polynomial (the wedge product of two non-vanishing invariant polynomials) transgresses to a cocycle cohomologous to 0.

Proof.

1. By the fact that the Weil algebra is free, its cochain cohomology vanishes and hence the definition property $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}\langle - \rangle = 0$ implies that there is some element $\mathrm{cs} \in W(\mathfrak{g})$ such that $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}\mathrm{cs} = \langle - \rangle$. Then the image of cs along the canonical dg-algebra homomorphism $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ is $d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})}$-closed hence is a cocycle on $\mathfrak{g}$. This is by construction in transgression with $\langle - \rangle$.
2. Let cs_1 and cs_2 be Chern-Simons elements for the to given L_∞-algebra cocycles. Then by assumption $d_{(\mathfrak{g})}(\mathrm{cs}_1 - \mathrm{cs}_2) = 0$. By the acyclicity of $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ there is then $\lambda \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ such that $\mathrm{cs}_1 = \mathrm{cs}_2 + d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}\lambda$. Since $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ is a dg-algebra homomorphism this implies that also $\mu_1 = \mu_2 + d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})}\lambda|_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})}$.
3. Given two nontrivial invariant polynomials $\langle - \rangle_1$ and $\langle - \rangle_2$ let $\mathrm{cs}_1 \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ be any element such that $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}\mathrm{cs}_1 = \langle - \rangle_1$. Then $\mathrm{cs}_{1,2} := \mathrm{cs}_1 \wedge \langle - \rangle_2$ satisfies $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}\mathrm{cs}_{1,2} = \langle - \rangle_1 \wedge \langle - \rangle_2$. By the first observation the restriction of $\mathrm{cs}_{1,2}$ to $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ is therefore a cocycle in transgression with $\langle - \rangle_1 \wedge \langle - \rangle_2$. But by the definition of invariant polynomials the restriction of $\langle - \rangle_2$ vanishes, and hence so does that of $\mathrm{cs}_{1,2}$. The claim the follows with the second point above.

□

The following notion captures the equivalence relation induced by lifts of cocycles to Chern-Simons elements on invariant polynomials.

Definition 3.3.103. We say two invariant polynomials $\langle - \rangle_1, \langle - \rangle_2 \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ are *horizontally equivalent* if there exists $\omega \in \ker(\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}))$ such that

$$\langle - \rangle_1 = \langle - \rangle_2 + d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}\omega \,.$$

Observation 3.3.104. Every decomposable invariant polynomial is horizontally equivalent to 0.

Proof. By the argument of prop. 3.3.102, item iii): for $\langle - \rangle = \langle - \rangle_1 \wedge \langle - \rangle_2$ let cs_1 be a Chern-Simons element for $\langle - \rangle_1$. Then $\mathrm{cs}_1 \wedge \langle - \rangle_2$ exhibits a horizontal equivalence $\langle - \rangle \sim 0$. □

Proposition 3.3.105. *For $\mathfrak{g}$ an L_∞-algebra, $\mu : \mathfrak{g} \to b^n\mathbb{R}$ a cocycle in transgression to an invariant polynomial $\langle \rangle$ on $\mathfrak{g}$ and $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$ the corresponding shifted central extension, 3.3.88, we have that*

1. *$\langle - \rangle$ defines an invariant polynomial also on $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$, by the defining identification of generators;*
2. *but on $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$ the invariant polynomial $\langle - \rangle$ is horizontally trivial.*

Proof. □

Definition 3.3.106. For $\mathfrak{g}$ an L_∞-algebra we write $\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g})$ for the free graded algebra on horizontal equivalence classes of invariant polynomials. We regard this as a dg-algebra with trivial differential This comes with an inclusion of dg-algebras

$$\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) \to W(\mathfrak{g})$$

given by a choice of representative for each class.

Observation 3.3.107. The algebra $\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g})$ is generated from indecomposable invariant polynomials.

Proof. By observation 3.3.104. □

Definition 3.3.108. Define the simplicial presheaf $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{ChW}} \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ by the assignment

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{ChW}} : (U,[k]) \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \xleftarrow{A_{\mathrm{vert}}} & \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \\ \uparrow && \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \xleftarrow{A} & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \\ \uparrow && \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet(U) & \xleftarrow{\langle F_A\rangle} & \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}) \end{array} \right\},$$

where on the right we have the set of horizontal morphisms in dgAlg making commuting diagrams with the canonical vertical morphisms as indicated.

We call $\langle F_A \rangle$ the *curvature characteristic forms* of A.

Let

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \xrightarrow{(\exp(\mu_i,\mathrm{cs}_i))_i} & \prod_i \exp(b^{n_i-1}\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \xrightarrow{((\mathrm{curv}_i)_{\mathrm{smp}})} & \prod_i \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n_i}_{\mathrm{smp}} \\ \downarrow{\simeq} &&&& \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g}) &&&& \end{array}$$

be the presentation, as above, of the product of all differental refinements of characteristic classes on $\exp(\mathfrak{g})$ induced from Lie integration of transgressive L_∞-algebra cocycles.

Proposition 3.3.109. *We have that* $\exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{ChW}}$ *is the pullback in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *of the globally defined closed forms along the curvature characteristics induced by all transgressive* L_∞*-algebra cocycles:*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{ChW}} & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu,cs)} & \prod_{n_i} \Omega^{n_i+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(-) \\ \downarrow && \downarrow \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} & \xrightarrow{(\mathrm{curv}_i)_i} & \prod_i \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n_i+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}} \\ \downarrow{\simeq} && \\ \exp(\mathfrak{g}) && \end{array} .$$

Proof. By prop. 3.3.69 we have that the bottom horizontal morphims sends over each $(U,[k])$ and for each i an element

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \xleftarrow{A_{\mathrm{vert}}} & \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \\ \uparrow && \uparrow \\ \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U\times\Delta^k) & \xleftarrow{A} & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \end{array}$$

of $\exp(\mathfrak{g})(U)_k$ to the composite

$$\left(\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U\times\Delta^k) \xleftarrow{A} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \xleftarrow{\mathrm{cs}_i} \mathrm{W}(b^{n_i-1}\mathbb{R}) \leftarrow \mathrm{inv}(b^{n_i}\mathbb{R}) = \mathrm{CE}(b^{n_i}\mathbb{R}) \right)$$

$$= \left(\Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k) \stackrel{\langle F_A \rangle_i}{\leftarrow} \mathrm{CE}(b^{n_i}\mathbb{R}) \right)$$

regarded as an element in $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n_i+1}_{\mathrm{smp}}(U)_k$. The right vertical morphism $\Omega^{n_i+1}(U) \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n_i+1}\mathbb{R}_{\mathrm{smp}}(U)$ from the constant simplicial set of closed (n_i+1)-forms on U picks precisely those of these elements for which $\langle F_A \rangle$ is a basic form on the $U \times \Delta^k$-bundle in that it is in the image of the pullback $\Omega^\bullet(U) \to \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times \Delta^k)$. □

This way the abstract differential refinement recovers the notion of ∞-connections from Lie integration discussed before in 1.3.5.6.

3.3.13 Higher holonomy and ∞-Chern-Simons functional

We discuss the intrinsic notion of higher holonomy and ∞-Chern-Simons functionals, 2.3.17, realized in Smooth∞Grpd.

Theorem 3.3.110. *If* $\Sigma \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *is a closed manifold of dimension* $\dim\Sigma \leq n$ *then the intrinsic integration by truncation, def. 2.3.121, takes values in*

$$\tau_{\leq n-\dim\Sigma}\mathbf{H}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}) \simeq B^{n-\dim\Sigma}U(1) \simeq K(U(1), n-\dim(\Sigma)) \qquad \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}\,.$$

Moreover, in the case $\dim\Sigma = n$*, then the morphism*

$$\exp(iS_{\mathbf{c}}(-)) : \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, A_{\mathrm{conn}}) \to U(1)$$

is obtaind from the Lagrangian $\exp(iL_{\mathbf{c}}(-))$ *by forming the volume holonomy of circle* n*-bundles with connection (fiber integration in Deligne cohomology)*

$$S_{\mathbf{c}}(-) = \int_\Sigma L_{\mathbf{c}}(-)\,.$$

This is due to [FRS11b].

Proof. Since $\dim\Sigma \leq n$ we have by prop. 3.3.43 that $H(\Sigma, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R}) \simeq H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(\Sigma) \simeq *$. It then follows by prop. 2.3.112 that we have an equivalence

$$\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \simeq \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) =: \mathbf{H}(\mathbf{\Pi}(\Sigma), \mathbf{B}^n U(1))$$

with the flat differential cohomology on Σ, and by the $(\Pi \dashv \mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma)$-adjunction it follows that this is equivalently

$$\begin{aligned} \cdots &\simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Pi(\Sigma), \Gamma\mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \\ &\simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Pi(\Sigma), B^n U(1)_{\mathrm{disc}}) \end{aligned},$$

where $B^n U(1)_{\mathrm{disc}}$ is an Eilenberg-MacLane space $\cdots \simeq K(U(1), n)$. By prop. 3.3.22 we have under $|-| : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \simeq \mathrm{Top}$ a weak homotopy equivalence $|\Pi(\Sigma)| \simeq \Sigma$. Therefore the cocycle ∞-groupoid is that of ordinary cohomology

$$\cdots \simeq C^n(\Sigma, U(1))\,.$$

By general abstract reasoning it follows that we have for the homotopy groups an isomorphism

$$\pi_i \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} H^{n-i}(\Sigma, U(1))\,.$$

Now we invoke the universal coefficient theorem. This asserts that the morphism

$$\int_{(-)} (-) : H^{n-i}(\Sigma, U(1)) \to \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Ab}}(H_{n-i}(\Sigma, \mathbb{Z}), U(1))$$

which sends a cocycle ω in singular cohomology with coefficients in $U(1)$ to the pairing map

$$[c] \mapsto \int_{[c]} \omega$$

sits inside an exact sequence

$$0 \to \mathrm{Ext}^1(H_{n-i-1}(\Sigma, \mathbb{Z}), U(1)) \to H^{n-i}(\Sigma, U(1)) \to Hom_{Ab}(H_{n-i}(\Sigma, \mathbb{Z}), U(1)) \to 0\,,$$

But since $U(1)$ is an injective $\mathbb{Z}$-module we have

$$\mathrm{Ext}^1(-, U(1)) = 0\,.$$

This means that the integration/pairing map $\int_{(-)}(-)$ is an isomorphism

$$\int_{(-)}(-) : H^{n-i}(\Sigma, U(1)) \simeq \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Ab}}(H_{n-i}(\Sigma, \mathbb{Z}), U(1))\,.$$

For $i < (n - \dim\Sigma)$, the right hand is zero, so that

$$\pi_i \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) = 0 \quad fori < (n - \dim\Sigma)\,.$$

For $i = (n - \dim\Sigma)$, instead, $H_{n-i}(\Sigma, \mathbb{Z}) \simeq \mathbb{Z}$, since Σ is a closed $\dim\Sigma$-manifold and so

$$\pi_{(n-\dim\Sigma)} \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \simeq U(1)\,.$$

□

Remark 3.3.111. This proof also shows that for $\dim\Sigma = n$ and $\exp(iL) : A_{conn} \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ a Lagrangian, we may think of the composite

$$\exp(iS) : \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, A_{\mathrm{conn}}) \stackrel{\exp(iL)}{\to} \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{conn}) \stackrel{\int_{[\Sigma]}(-)}{\to} U(1)$$

as being indeed given by integrating the Lagrangian over Σ in order to obtain the action

$$S(-) = \int_\Sigma L(-)\,.$$

We consider precise versions of this statement in 4.6.

3.4 Synthetic differential ∞-groupoids

We discuss ∞-groupoids equipped with *synthetic differential cohesion*, a version of smooth cohesion in which an explicit notion of smooth *infinitesimal* spaces exists.

Notice that the category $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$, def. 3.3.4, is (the syntactic category of) a finitary algebraic theory: a *Lawvere theory* (see chapter 3, volume 2 of [Borc94]).

Definition 3.4.1. Write

$$\mathrm{SmoothAlg} := \mathrm{Alg}(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}})$$

for the category of algebras over the algebraic theory $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$: the category of product-preserving functors $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \to \mathrm{Set}$.

These algebras are traditionally known as *C^∞-rings* or *C^∞-algebras* [KaKrMi87].

Proposition 3.4.2. *The map that sends a smooth manifold X to the product-preserving functor*

$$C^\infty(X) : \mathbb{R}^k \mapsto \mathrm{SmoothMfd}(X, \mathbb{R}^k)$$

extends to a full and faithful embedding

$$\mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\mathrm{op}} .$$

Proposition 3.4.3. *Let A be an ordinary (associative) $\mathbb{R}$-algebra that as an $\mathbb{R}$-vector space splits as $\mathbb{R} \oplus V$ with V finite dimensional as an $\mathbb{R}$-vector space and nilpotent with respect to the algebra structure: $(v \in V \hookrightarrow A) \Rightarrow (v^2 = 0)$.*

There is a unique lift of A through the forgetful functor $\mathrm{SmoothAlg} \to \mathrm{Alg}_{\mathbb{R}}$.

Proof. Use Hadamard's lemma. □

Definition 3.4.4. Write

$$\mathrm{InfSmoothLoc} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\mathrm{op}}$$

for the full subcategory of the opposite of smooth algebras on those of the form of prop. 3.4.3. We call this the category of *infinitesimal smooth loci*.

Write

$$\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}} := \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \ltimes \mathrm{InfSmoothLoc} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\mathrm{op}}$$

for the full subcategory of the opposite of smooth algebras on those that are products

$$X \simeq U \times D$$

in $\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\mathrm{op}}$ of an object U in the image of $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\mathrm{op}}$ and an object D in the image of $\mathrm{InfSmoothLoc} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\mathrm{op}}$.

Define a coverage on $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ whose covering families are precisely those of the form $\{U_i \times D \stackrel{(f_i, \mathrm{id})}{\to} U \times D\}$ for $\{U_i \stackrel{f_i}{\to} U\}$ a covering family in $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$.

This definition appears in [Kock86], following [Dubu79b]. The sheaf topos $\mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}})$ over this site is equivalent to the *Cahiers topos* [Dubu79b] which is a model of some set of axioms of *synthetic differential geometry* (see [Lawv97] for the abstract idea, where also the relation to the axiomatics of cohesion is vaguely indicated). Therefore the following definition may be thought of as describing the ∞-*Cahiers topos* providing a higher geometry version of this model of synthetic differential smooth geometry.

Definition 3.4.5. The ∞-topos of *synthetic differential smooth ∞-groupoids* is

$$\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} := \mathrm{Sh}_{(\infty,1)}(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}) .$$

Proposition 3.4.6. SynthDiff∞Grpd *is a cohesive* ∞*-topos.*

Proof. Using that the covering families of $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ do by definition not depend on the infinitesimal smooth loci D and that these each have a single point, one finds that $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ is an ∞-cohesive site, def. 2.2.10, by reducing to the argument as for $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{top}}$, prop. 3.2.2. The claim then follows with prop. 2.2.11. □

Definition 3.4.7. Write FSmoothMfd for the category of *formal smooth manifolds* – manifolds modeled on $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$, equipped with the induced site structure.

Proposition 3.4.8. *We have an equivalence of* ∞*-categoris*

$$\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \simeq \hat{\mathrm{Sh}}_{(\infty,1)}(\mathrm{FSmoothMfd})$$

with the hypercomplete ∞*-topos over formal smooth manifolds.*

Proof. By definition $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ is a dense sub-site of FSmoothMfd. The statement then follows as in prop. 3.2.7. □

Write $i : \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ for the canonical embedding.

Proposition 3.4.9. *The functor* i^* *given by restriction along* i *exhibits* SynthDiff∞Grpd *as an infinitesimal cohesive neighbourhood, def. 2.4.1, of* Smooth∞Grpd*, in that we have a quadruple of adjoint* ∞*-functors*

$$(i_! \dashv i^* \dashv i_* \dashv i^!) : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}\,,$$

such that $i_!$ *is full and faithful and preserves the terminal object.*

Proof. We observe that $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ is an infinitesimal neighbourhood of sites, according to def. 2.4.4. The claim then follows with prop. 2.4.5. □

We now discuss the general abstract structures in cohesive ∞-toposes, 2.3 and 2.4, realized in SynthDiff∞Grpd

- 3.4.1 – ∞-Lie algebroids
- 3.4.2 – Cohomology
- 3.4.3 – Paths and geometric Postnikov towers
- 3.4.4 – Chern-Weil theory

3.4.1 ∞-Lie algebroids

We discuss explicit presentations for first order formal cohsive ∞-groupoids, 2.4.3, realized in SynthDiff∞Grpd: ∞-Lie algebroids.

We consider presentations of the general abstract definition 2.4.21 of ∞-Lie algebroids by constructing in the standard presentation of SynthDiff∞Grpd by simplicial presheaves on FSmoothMfd certain classes of simplicial presheaves in the image semi-free differential graded algebras under the monoidal Dold-Kan correspondence [CaCo04]. This amounts to identifying the traditional description of Lie algebras, Lie algebroids and L_∞-algebras by their Chevalley-Eilenberg algebras, def. 1.3.72, as a convenient characterization of the corresponding cosimplicial algebras whose formal dual simplicial presheaves are manifest presentations of infinitesimal smooth ∞-groupoids.

Recall the characterization of L_∞-algebra structures in terms of dg-algebras from prop. 1.3.74.

Definition 3.4.10. Let

$$L_\infty \mathrm{Algd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{cdgAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}^{\mathrm{op}}$$

be the full subcategory on the opposite category of cochain dg-algebras over $\mathbb{R}$ on those dg-algebras that are

- graded-commutative;
- concentrated in non-negative degree (the differential being of degree $+1$);
- in degree 0 of the form $C^\infty(X)$ for $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}$;
- semifree: their underlying graded algebra is isomorphic to an exterior algebra on a $\mathbb{N}$-graded locally free projective $C^\infty(X)$-module;
- of finite rank;

We call this the category of *L_∞-algebroids* over smooth manifolds.

More in detail, an object $\mathfrak{a} \in L_\infty\mathrm{Algd}$ may be identified (non-canonically) with a pair $(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}), X)$, where

- $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd}$ is a smooth manifold – called the *base space* of the L_∞-algebroid ;
- $\mathfrak{a}$ is the module of smooth sections of an $\mathbb{N}$-graded vector bundle of degreewise finite rank;
- $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}) = (\wedge^\bullet_{C^\infty(X)} \mathfrak{a}^*, d_{\mathfrak{a}})$ is a semifree dg-algebra on $\mathfrak{a}^*$ – a Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra – where

  $$\wedge^\bullet_{C^\infty(X)} \mathfrak{a}^* = C^\infty(X) \;\oplus\; \mathfrak{a}_0^* \;\oplus\; (\mathfrak{a}_0^* \wedge_{C^\infty(X)} \mathfrak{a}_0^* \oplus \mathfrak{a}_1^*) \;\oplus\; \cdots$$

  with the kth summand on the right being in degree k.

Definition 3.4.11. An L_∞-algebroid with base space $X = *$ the point is an L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$, def. 1.3.72, or rather is the delooping of an L_∞-algebra. We write $b\mathfrak{g}$ for L_∞-algebroids over the point. They form the full subcategory

$$L_\infty \mathrm{Alg} \hookrightarrow L_\infty \mathrm{Algd}\,.$$

We now construct an embedding of $L_\infty\mathrm{Algd}$ into $\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$. The functor

$$\Xi : \mathrm{Ch}^\bullet_+(\mathbb{R}) \to \mathrm{Vect}^\Delta_{\mathbb{R}}$$

of the Dold-Kan correspondence from non-negatively graded cochain complexes of vector spaces to cosimplicial vector spaces is a lax monoidal functor and hence induces a functor (which we shall denote by the same symbol)

$$\Xi : \mathrm{dgAlg}^+_{\mathbb{R}} \to \mathrm{Alg}^\Delta_{\mathbb{R}}$$

from non-negatively graded cochain dg-algebras to cosimplicial associative algebras (over $\mathbb{R}$).

Definition 3.4.12. Write

$$\Xi : L_\infty\mathrm{Algd} \to (\mathrm{CAlg}^\Delta_{\mathbb{R}})^{\mathrm{op}}$$

for the restriction of the above Ξ along the inclusion $L_\infty\mathrm{Algd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{dgAlg}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathbb{R}}$:

for $\mathfrak{a} \in L_\infty\mathrm{Algd}$ the underlying cosimplicial vector space of $\Xi\mathfrak{a}$ is given by

$$\Xi\mathfrak{a} : [n] \mapsto \bigoplus_{i=0}^{n} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a})_i \otimes \wedge^i \mathbb{R}^n$$

and the product of the $\mathbb{R}$-algebra structure on the right is given on homogeneous elements $(\omega, x), (\lambda, y) \in \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a})_i \otimes \wedge^i\mathbb{R}^n$ in the tensor product by

$$(\omega, x) \cdot (\lambda, y) = (\omega \wedge \lambda, x \wedge y)\,.$$

(Notice that $\Xi\mathfrak{a}$ is indeed a *commutative* cosimplicial algebra, since ω and x in (ω, x) are by definition in the same degree.)

To define the cosimplicial structure, let $\{e_j\}_{j=0}^n$ be the canonical basis for $\mathbb{R}^n$ and consider also the basis $\{v_j\}_{j=0}^n$ given by

$$v_j := e_j - e_0\,.$$

Then for $\alpha : [k] \to [l]$ a morphism in the simplex category, set

$$\alpha v_j := v_{\alpha(j)} - v_{\alpha(0)}$$

and extend this skew-multilinearly to a map $\alpha : \wedge^\bullet \mathbb{R}^k \to \wedge^\bullet \mathbb{R}^l$. In terms of all this the action of α on homogeneous elements (ω, x) in the cosimplicial algebra is defined by

$$\alpha : (\omega, x) \mapsto (\omega, \alpha x) + (d_{\mathfrak{a}}\omega, v_{\alpha(0)} \wedge \alpha(x))$$

This explicit description of the dual monoidal Dold-Kan correspondence is given in [CaCo04]. We shall refine the image of Ξ to cosimplicial smooth algebras, def. 3.4.1. Notice that there is a canonical forgetful functor

$$U : \mathrm{SmoothAlg} \to \mathrm{CAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}$$

to the category of comutative associative algebras over the real numbers.

Proposition 3.4.13. *There is a unique factorization of the functor* $\Xi : L_\infty\mathrm{Algd} \to (\mathrm{CAlg}^\Delta_{\mathbb{R}})^{\mathrm{op}}$ *from def. 3.4.12 through the forgetful functor* $(\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^\Delta_{\mathbb{R}})^{\mathrm{op}} \to (\mathrm{CAlg}^\Delta_{\mathbb{R}})^{\mathrm{op}}$ *such that for any* $\mathfrak{a}$ *over base space* X *the degree-0 algebra of smooth functions* $C^\infty(X)$ *lifts to its canonical structure as a smooth algebra*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & (\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^\Delta)^{\mathrm{op}} \\ & \overset{\Xi}{\nearrow} & \downarrow{\scriptstyle U} \\ L_\infty\mathrm{Algd} & \longrightarrow & (\mathrm{CAlg}^\Delta_{\mathbb{R}})^{\mathrm{op}} \end{array}\,.$$

Proof. Observe that for each n the algebra $(\Xi\mathfrak{a})_n$ is a finite nilpotent extension of $C^\infty(X)$. The claim then follows with the fact that $C^\infty : \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \to \mathrm{CAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}^{\mathrm{op}}$ is faithful and using Hadamard's lemma for the nilpotent part. $\square$

Definition 3.4.14. Write $i : L_\infty\mathrm{Algd} \to \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ for the composite ∞-functor

$$L_\infty\mathrm{Algd} \stackrel{\Xi}{\to} (\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta})^{\mathrm{op}} \stackrel{j}{\to} [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}] \stackrel{PQ}{\to} ([\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{loc}})^\circ \simeq \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}\,,$$

where the first morphism is the monoidal Dold-Kan correspondence as in prop. 3.4.13, the second is the external degreewise Yoneda embedding and PQ is any fibrant-cofibrant resolution functor in the local model structure on simplicial presheaves.

Proposition 3.4.15. *The full subcategory $L_\infty\mathrm{Alg} \hookrightarrow L_\infty\mathrm{Algd}$ from def. 3.4.10 is equivalent to the traditional definition of the category of L_∞-algebras and "weak morphisms" / "sh-maps" between them.*

The full subcategory $\mathrm{LieAlgd} \hookrightarrow L_\infty\mathrm{Algd}$ on the 1-truncated objects is equivalent to the traditional category of Lie algebroids (over smooth manifolds).

In particular the joint intersection $\mathrm{LieAlg} \hookrightarrow L_\infty\mathrm{Alg}$ on the 1-truncated L_∞-algebras is equivalent to the category of ordinary Lie algebras.

We discuss now that $L_\infty\mathrm{Algd}$ is indeed a presentation for objects in $\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ satisfying the abstract axioms from 2.4.3.

Lemma 3.4.16. *For $\mathfrak{a} \in L_\infty\mathrm{Algd}$ and $i(\mathfrak{a}) \in [\mathrm{FSmoothMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ its image in the presentation for $\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$, we have that*

$$\left(\int^{[k]\in\Delta} \mathbf{\Delta}[k] \cdot i(\mathfrak{a})_k\right) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} i(\mathfrak{a})$$

is a cofibrant resolution, where $\mathbf{\Delta} : \Delta \to sSet$ is the fat simplex.

Proof. The coend over the tensoring

$$\int^{[k]\in\Delta} (-)\cdot(-) : [\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \times [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [\mathrm{FSmoothMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}]_{\mathrm{inj}} \to [\mathrm{FSmoothMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$$

for the projective and injective global model structure on functors on the simplex category and its opposite is a Quillen bifunctor. We have moreover

1. The fat simplex is cofibrant in $[\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.
2. Because every representable $\mathrm{FSmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow [\mathrm{FSmoothMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ is cofibrant, the object $i(\mathfrak{a})_\bullet \in [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [\mathrm{FSmoothMfd}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}]_{\mathrm{inj}}$ is cofibrant;

$\square$

Proposition 3.4.17. *Let $\mathfrak{g}$ be an L_∞-algebra, regarded as an L_∞-algebroid $b\mathfrak{g} \in L_\infty\mathrm{Algd}$ over the point by the embedding of def. 3.4.10. Then $i(b\mathfrak{g}) \in \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is an infinitesimal object, def. 2.4.21, in that it is geometrically contractible*

$$\Pi b\mathfrak{g} \simeq *$$

and has as underlying discrete ∞-groupoid the point

$$\Gamma b\mathfrak{g} \simeq *\,.$$

Proof. We present now SynthDiff∞Grpd by $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$. Since $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ is an ∞-cohesive site by prop. 3.4.6, we have by the proof of prop. 2.2.11 that Π is presented by the left derived functor $\mathbb{L}\lim \to$ of the degreewise colimit and Γ is presented by the left derived functor of evaluation on the point.

With lemma 3.4.16 we can evaluate

$$\begin{aligned}(\mathbb{L}\lim_{\to})i(b\mathfrak{g}) &\simeq \lim_{\to} \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \mathbf{\Delta}[k]\cdot(b\mathfrak{g})_k \\ &\simeq \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \mathbf{\Delta}[k]\cdot \lim_{\to}(b\mathfrak{g})_k \ , \\ &= \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \mathbf{\Delta}[k]\cdot *\end{aligned}$$

because each $(b\mathfrak{g})_n \in \mathrm{InfPoint} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ is an infinitesimally thickened point, hence representable and hence sent to the point by the colimit functor.

That this is equivalent to the point follows from the fact that $\emptyset \to \mathbf{\Delta}$ is an acylic cofibration in $[\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, and that

$$\int^{[k]\in\Delta} (-)\times(-) : [\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \times [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Qillen}}]_{\mathrm{inj}} \to \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$$

is a Quillen bifunctor, using that $* \in [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{inj}}$ is cofibrant.

Similarly, we have degreewise that

$$\mathrm{Hom}(*, (b\mathfrak{g})_n) = *$$

by the fact that an infinitesimally thickened point has a single gllobal point. Therefore the claim for Γ follows analogously. □

We now characterize ordinary Lie algebroids $E \to TX$ as precisely those synthetic differential ∞-groupoids that under the presentation of def 3.4.14 are locally on any chart $U \to X$ of their base space given by simplicial smooth loci of the form

$$\cdots \qquad U \times \tilde{D}(\mathrm{rank}E, 2) \rightrightarrows U \times \tilde{D}(\mathrm{rank}E, 1) \rightrightarrows U$$

where $\tilde{D}(k,n)$ is the smooth locus of infinitesimal k-simplices based at the origin in $\mathbb{R}^n$ (section 1.2 of [Kock10]):

Proposition 3.4.18. *Let* $(\mathfrak{a} \to TX) \in L_\infty Algd \hookrightarrow [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ *be an* L_∞*-algebroid, def. 3.4.10, over a smooth manifold* X*, regarded as a simplicial presheaf and hence as a presentation for an object in* SynthDiff∞Grpd *according to def. 3.4.14.*

We have an equivalence

$$\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(\mathfrak{a}) \simeq \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)\,.$$

Proof. Let first $X = U \in \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ be a representable. Then according to prop. 3.4.16 we have that

$$\hat{\mathfrak{a}} := \left(\int^{k\in\Delta} \mathbf{\Delta}[k]\cdot \mathfrak{a}_k\right) \simeq \mathfrak{a}$$

is cofibrant in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{op}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. Therefore by prop. 2.4.5 we compute the derived functor

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(\mathfrak{a}) &\simeq i_* i^* \mathfrak{a} \\ &\simeq \mathbb{L}((-)\circ p)\mathbb{L}((-)\circ i)\mathfrak{a} \\ &\simeq ((-)\circ ip)\hat{\mathfrak{a}}\end{aligned}$$

with the notation as used there. In view of def. 3.4.12 we have for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$ that $\mathfrak{a}_k = X \times D$ where D is an infinitesimally thickened point. Therefore $((-)\circ ip)\mathfrak{a}_k = ((-)\circ ip)X$ for all k and hence $((-)\circ ip)\hat{\mathfrak{a}} \simeq \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$.

For general X choose first a cofibrant resolution by a split hypercover that is degreewise a coproduct of representables (which always exists, by the cofibrant replacement theorem of [Dugg01]), then pull back the above discussion to these covers. □

Corollary 3.4.19. *Every L_∞-algebroid in the sense of def. 3.4.10 under the embedding of def. 3.4.14 is indeed a formal cohesive ∞-groupoid in the sense of def. 2.4.21.*

We now give a detailed explicit analysis of the incarnation of ordinary Lie algebroids (1-Lie algebroids) as simplicial objects, according to def. 3.4.14.

The following definition may be either taken as an informal but instructive definition – in which case the next definition 3.4.21 is to be taken as the precise one – or in fact it may be already itself be taken as the fully formal and precise definition if one reads it in the internal logic of any smooth topos with line object R – which for the present purpose is the Cahiers topos [Dubu79b] with line object $\mathbb{R}$.

Definition 3.4.20. For $k, n \in \mathbb{N}$, an *infinitesimal k-simplex* in R^n based at the origin is a collection $(\vec{\epsilon}_a \in R^n)_{a=1}^k$ of points in R^n, such that each is an infinitesimal neighbour of the origin

$$\forall a : \;\; \vec{\epsilon}_a \sim 0$$

and such that all are infinitesimal neighbours of each other

$$\forall a, a' : \;\; (\vec{\epsilon}_a - \vec{\epsilon}_{a'}) \sim 0 \,.$$

Write $\tilde{D}(k,n) \subset R^{k \cdot n}$ for the space of all such infinitesimal k-simplices in R^n.

Equivalently:

Definition 3.4.21. For $k, n \in \mathbb{N}$, the smooth algebra

$$C^\infty(\tilde{D}(k,n)) \in \mathrm{SmoothAlg}$$

is the unique lift through the forgetful functor $U : \mathrm{SmoothAlg} \to \mathrm{CAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}$ of the commutative $\mathbb{R}$-algebra generated from $k \times n$ many generators

$$(\epsilon_a^j)_{1 \leq j \leq n, 1 \leq a \leq k}$$

subject to the relations

$$\forall a, j, j' : \;\; \epsilon_a^j \epsilon_a^{j'} = 0$$

and

$$\forall a, a', j, j' : \;\; (\epsilon_a^j - \epsilon_{a'}^j)(\epsilon_a^{j'} - \epsilon_{a'}^{j'}) = 0 \,.$$

In the above form these relations are the manifest analogs of the conditions $\vec{\epsilon}_a \sim 0$ and $(\vec{\epsilon}_a - \vec{\epsilon}_{a'}) \sim 0$. But by multiplying out the latter set of relations and using the former, we find that jointly they are equivalent to the single set of relations

$$\forall a, a', j, j' : \;\; \epsilon_a^j \epsilon_{a'}^{j'} + \epsilon_{a'}^j \epsilon_a^{j'} = 0 \,.$$

In this expression the roles of the two sets of indices is manifestly symmetric. Hence another equivalent way to state the relations is to say

$$\forall a, a', j : \;\; \epsilon_a^j \epsilon_{a'}^j = 0$$

and

$$\forall a, a', j, j : \;\; (\epsilon_a^j - \epsilon_a^{j'})(\epsilon_{a'}^j - \epsilon_{a'}^{j'}) = 0$$

This appears arorund (1.2.1) in [Kock10].

Proposition 3.4.22. *For all $k, n \in \mathbb{N}$ we have a natural isomorphism of real commutative and hence of smooth algebras*

$$\phi : C^\infty(\tilde{D}(k,n)) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \oplus_{i=0}^n (\wedge^i \mathbb{R}^k) \otimes (\wedge^i \mathbb{R}^n)\,,$$

where on the right we have the algebras that appear degreewise in def. 3.4.12, where the product is given on homogeneous elements by

$$(\omega, x) \cdot (\lambda, y) = (\omega \wedge \lambda, x \wedge y)\,.$$

Proof. Let $\{t_a\}$ be the canonical basis for $\mathbb{R}^k$ and $\{e^i\}$ the canonical basis for $\mathbb{R}^n$. We claim that an isomorphism is given by the assignment

$$\phi : \epsilon^i_a \mapsto (t_a, e^i)\,.$$

To see that this defines indeed an algebra homomorphism we need to check that it respects the relations on the generators. For this compute:

$$\begin{aligned}\phi(\epsilon^i_a \epsilon^{i'}_{a'}) &= (t_a \wedge t_{a'}, e^i \wedge e^{i'}) \\ &= -(t_{a'} \wedge t_a, e^i \wedge e^{i'})\,. \\ &= -\phi(\epsilon^i_{a'} \epsilon^{i'}_a)\end{aligned}$$

□

Proposition 3.4.23. *For $\mathfrak{a} \in L_\infty\mathrm{Alg}$ a 1-truncated object, hence an ordinary Lie algebroid of rank k over a base manifold X, its image under the map $i : L_\infty\mathrm{Alg} \to (SmoothAlg^\Delta)^{op}$, def. 3.4.14, is such that its restriction to any chart $U \to X$ is, up to isomorphism, of the form*

$$i(\mathfrak{a})|_U : [n] \mapsto U \times \tilde{D}(k,n)\,.$$

Proof. Apply prop. 3.4.22 in def. 3.4.12, using that by definition $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a})$ is given by the exterior algebra on locally free $C^\infty(X)$ modules, so that

$$\begin{aligned}\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}|_U) &\simeq (\wedge^\bullet_{C^\infty(U)} \Gamma(U \times \mathbb{R}^k)^*, d_{\mathfrak{a}|_U}) \\ &\simeq (C^\infty(U) \otimes \wedge^\bullet \mathbb{R}^k, d_{\mathfrak{a}|_U})\end{aligned}\,.$$

□

Remark 3.4.24. In particular this recovers the presentation of the tangent Lie algebroid TX by the simplicial complex of infinitesimal simplices $\{(x_0, \cdots, x_n) \in X^n | \forall i, j : x_i \sim x_j\}$ in X, whose normalized cosimplicial function algebra is called the algebra of *combinatorial differential forms* in [Kock10]. More details on this are in [Stel10].

Notice that accordingly for $\mathfrak{g}$ any L_∞-algebra, flat $\mathfrak{g}$-valued differential forms are equivalently morphisms of dg-algebras

$$\Omega^\bullet(X) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) : A$$

as well as ("synthetically") morphisms

$$TX \to \mathfrak{g}$$

of simplicial objects in the Cahiers topos $\mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}})$.

3.4.2 Cohomology

We discuss the intrinsic cohomology, 2.3.3, in SynthDiff∞Grpd.

3.4.2.1 Cohomology localization

Observation 3.4.25. The canonical line object of the Lawvere theory $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ (the free algebra on the singleton) is the real line

$$\mathbb{A}^1_{\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}} = \mathbb{R} .$$

We shall write $\mathbb{R}$ also for the underlying additive group

$$\mathbb{G}_a = \mathbb{R}$$

regarded canonically as an abelian ∞-group object in SynthDiff∞Grpd. For $n \in \mathbb{N}$ write $\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R} \in \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ for its n-fold delooping. For $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $X \in \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ write

$$H^n_{\mathrm{shdiff}}(X, \mathbb{R}) := \pi_0 \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R})$$

for the cohomology group of X with coefficients in the canonical line object in degree n.

Definition 3.4.26. Write

$$\mathbf{L}_{\mathrm{sdiff}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

for the cohomology localization of SynthDiff∞Grpd at $\mathbb{R}$-cohomology: the full sub-∞-category on the W-local objects with respect to the class W of morphisms that induce isomorphisms in all $\mathbb{R}$-cohomology groups.

Proposition 3.4.27. *Let $\mathrm{Ab}^{\Delta}_{\mathrm{proj}}$ be the model structure on cosimplicial abelian groups, whose fibrations are the degreewise surjections and whose weak equivalences the quasi-isomorphisms under the normalized cochain functor.*

The transferred model structure along the forgetful functor

$$U : \mathrm{SmothAlg}^{\Delta} \to \mathrm{Ab}^{\Delta}$$

exists and yields a cofibrantly generated simplicial model category structure on cosimplicial smooth algebras (cosimplicial C^∞-rings).

See [Stel10] for an account.

Proposition 3.4.28. *Let $j : (\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta})^{\mathrm{op}} \to [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ be the prolonged external Yoneda embedding.*

1. *This constitutes the right adjoint of a simplicial Quillen adjunction*

$$(\mathcal{O} \dashv j) : \ (\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta})^{\mathrm{op}} \underset{j}{\overset{\mathcal{O}}{\rightleftarrows}} [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}} \ ,$$

   where the left adjoint $\mathcal{O}(-) = C^\infty(-, \mathbb{R})$ degreewise forms the algebra of functions obtained by homming presheaves into the line object $\mathbb{R}$.

2. *Restricted to simplicial formal smooth manifolds of finite truncation along*

$$\mathrm{FSmoothMfd}^{\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}}_{\mathrm{fintr}} \hookrightarrow (\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta})^{\mathrm{op}}$$

   the right derived functor of j is a full and faithful ∞-functor that factors through the cohomology localization and thus identifies a full reflective sub-∞-category

$$(\mathrm{FSmoothMfd}^{\Delta^{op}})^{\circ}_{\mathrm{fintr}} \hookrightarrow \mathbf{L}_{\mathrm{sdiff}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} .$$

3. *The intrinsic* $\mathbb{R}$*-cohomology of any object* $X \in \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *is computed by the ordinary cochain cohomology of the Moore cochain complex underlying the cosimplicial abelian group of the image of the left derived functor* $(\mathbb{L}\mathcal{O})(X)$ *under the Dold-Kan correspondence:*

$$H^n_{\mathrm{SynthDiff}}(X, \mathbb{R}) \simeq H^n_{\mathrm{cochain}}(N^\bullet(\mathbb{L}\mathcal{O})(X)) .$$

ci

Proof. By prop. 3.4.8 we may equivalently work over the site FSmoothMfd. The proof there is given in [Stel10], following [Toën06]. □

3.4.2.2 Lie group cohomology

Proposition 3.4.29. *Let* $G \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *be a Lie group.*

Then the intrinsic group cohomology in $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *and in* $\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *of* G *with coefficients in*

1. *discrete abelian groups* A*;*
2. *the additive Lie group* $A = \mathbb{R}$

coincides with Segal's refined Lie group cohomology [Sega70], [Bryl00].

$$H^n_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(\mathbf{B}G, A) \simeq H^n_{\mathrm{SynthDiff}}(\mathbf{B}G, A) \simeq H^n_{\mathrm{Segal}}(G, A) .$$

Proof. For discrete coefficients this is shown in theorem 3.3.28 for H_{Smooth}, which by the full and faithful embedding then also holds in $\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$.

Here we demonstrate the equivalence for $A = \mathbb{R}$ by obtaining a presentation for $H^n_{\mathrm{SynthDiff}}(\mathbf{B}G, \mathbb{R})$ that coincides explicitly with a formula for Segal's cohomology observed in [Bryl00].

Let therefore $\mathbf{B}G_c \in [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{Set}\mathfrak{S}$ be the standard presentation of $\mathbf{B}G \in \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ by the nerve of the Lie groupoid $(G \overset{\rightarrow}{\rightarrow} *)$ as discussed in 3.3.2. We may write this as

$$\mathbf{B}G_c = \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot G^{\times_k} .$$

By prop. 3.4.28 the intrinsic $\mathbb{R}$-cohomology of $\mathbf{B}G$ is computed by the cochain cohomology of the cochain complex of the underlying simplicial abelian group of the value $(\mathbb{L}\mathcal{O})\mathbf{B}G_c$ of the left derived functor of $\mathcal{O}$.

In order to compute this we shall build and compare various resolutions, moving back and forth through the Quillen equivalences

$$[\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, D]_{\mathrm{inj}} \underset{\mathrm{id}}{\overset{\mathrm{id}}{\rightleftarrows}} [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, D]_{\mathrm{Reedy}} \underset{\mathrm{id}}{\overset{\mathrm{id}}{\rightleftarrows}} [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, D]_{\mathrm{proj}}$$

between injective, projective and Reedy model structures on functors with values in a combinatorial model category D, with D either $\mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}$ or with D itself the injective or projective model structure on simplicial presheaves over $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$.

To begin with, let $(Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_\bullet \xrightarrow{\simeq} (G^{\times \bullet}) \in [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}}$ be a Reedy-cofibrant resolution of the simplicial presheaf $\mathbf{B}G_c$ with respect to the projective model structure. This is in particular degreewise a weak equivalence of simplicial presheaves, hence

$$\int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot (Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_k \overset{\simeq}{\rightarrow} \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot G^{\times_k} = \mathbf{B}G_c$$

exists and is a weak equivalence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj}}$, hence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, hence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$, because

1. $\Delta \in [\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}}$ is cofibrant in the Reedy model structure;
2. every simplicial presheaf X is Reedy cofibrant when regarded as an object $X_\bullet \in [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj}}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}}$;
3. the coend over the tensoring

$$\int^{\Delta} : [\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}} \times [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj}}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}} \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{inj}}$$

is a left Quillen bifunctor ([LuHTT], prop. A.2.9.26), hence in particular a left Quillen functor in one argument when the other argument is fixed on a cofibrant object, hence preserves weak equivalences between cofibrant objects in that case.

To make this a projective cofibrant resolution we further pull back along the Bousfield-Kan fat simplex projection $\mathbf{\Delta} \to \Delta$ with $\mathbf{\Delta} := N(\Delta/(-))$ to obtain

$$\int^{[k]\in\Delta} \mathbf{\Delta}[k] \cdot (Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_k \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot (Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_k \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}G_c \,,$$

which is a weak equivalence again due to the left Quillen bifunctor property of $\int^{\Delta}(-)\cdot(-)$, now applied with the second argument fixed, and the fact that $\mathbf{\Delta} \to \Delta$ is a weak equivalence between cofibrant objects in $[\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}}$. (This is the *Bousfield-Kan map*). Finally, that this is indeed cofibrant in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ follows from

1. the fact that the Reedy cofibrant $(Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_\bullet$ is also cofibrant in $[\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}]_{\mathrm{inj}}$
2. the left Quillen bifunctor property of

$$\int^{\Delta} : [\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}_{\mathrm{Quillen}}]_{\mathrm{proj}} \times [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}]_{\mathrm{inj}} \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$$

3. the fact that the fat simplex is cofibrant in $[\Delta, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

The central point so far is that in order to obtain a projective cofibrant resolution of $\mathbf{B}G_c$ we may form a compatible degreewise projective cofibrant resolution but then need to form not just the naive diagonal $\int^{\Delta} \Delta[-]\cdot(-)$ but the fattened diagonal $\int^{\Delta} \mathbf{\Delta}[-]\cdot(-)$. In the remainder of the proof we observe that for computing the left derived functor of $\mathcal{O}$, the fattened diagonal is not necessary after all.

For that observe that the functor

$$[\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathcal{O}] : [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}] \to [\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, (\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta})^{\mathrm{op}}]$$

preserves Reedy cofibrant objects, because the left Quillen functor $\mathcal{O}$ preserves colimits and cofibrations and hence the property that the morphisms $L_k X \to X_k$ out of latching objects $\lim\limits_{\to s \stackrel{+}{\to} k} X_s$ are cofibrations. Therefore we may again apply the Bousfield-Kan map after application of $\mathcal{O}$ to find that there is a weak equivalence

$$(\mathbb{L}\mathcal{O})(\mathbf{B}G_c) \simeq \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \mathbf{\Delta}[k] \cdot \mathcal{O}((Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_k) \simeq \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot \mathcal{O}((Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_k)$$

in $(\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta})^{\mathrm{op}}$ to the object where the fat simplex is replaced back with the ordinary simplex. Therefore by prop. 3.4.28 the $\mathbb{R}$-cohomology that we are after is equivalently computed as the cochain cohomology of the image under the left adjoint

$$(N^\bullet)^{\mathrm{op}} U^{\mathrm{op}} : (\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta})^{\mathrm{op}} \to (\mathrm{Ch}^\bullet)^{\mathrm{op}}$$

(where $U : \mathrm{SmoothAlg}^\Delta \to \mathrm{Ab}^\Delta$ is the forgetful functor) of

$$\int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k]\cdot \mathcal{O}(Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_k \in (\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^\Delta)^{\mathrm{op}}\,,$$

which is

$$(N^\bullet)^{\mathrm{op}} \int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k]\cdot U^{\mathrm{op}}\mathcal{O}((Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_k) \in (\mathrm{Ch}^\bullet)^{\mathrm{op}}\,,$$

Notice that

1. for $S_{\bullet,\bullet}$ a bisimplicial abelian group we have that the coend $\int^{[k]\in\Delta}\Delta[k]\cdot S_{\bullet,k} \in (\mathrm{Ab}^\Delta)^{\mathrm{op}}$ is isomorphic to the diagonal simplicial abelian group and that forming diagonals of bisimplicial abelian groups sends degreewise weak equivalences to weak equivalences;

2. the Eilenberg-Zilber theorem asserts that the cochain complex of the diagonal is the total complex of the cochain bicomplex: $N^\bullet \mathrm{diag} S_{\bullet,\bullet} \simeq \mathrm{tot} C^\bullet(S_{\bullet,\bullet})$;

3. the complex $N^\bullet\mathcal{O}(Q\mathbf{B}G_c)_k)$ – being the correct derived hom-space between $G^{\times_k}$ and $\mathbb{R}$ – is related by a zig-zag of weak equivalences to $\Gamma(G^{\times_k}, I_{(k)})$, where $I_{(k)}$ is an injective resolution of the sheaf of abelian groups $\mathbb{R}$

Therefore finally we have

$$H^n_{\mathrm{SynthDiff}}(G,\mathbb{R}) \simeq H^n_{\mathrm{cochain}} \mathrm{Tot}\Gamma(G^{\times_\bullet}, I^\bullet_\bullet)\,.$$

On the right this is manifestly $H^n_{\mathrm{Segal}}(G,\mathbb{R})$, as observed in [Bryl00]. □

Corollary 3.4.30. *For G a compact Lie group we have for $n \geq 1$ that*

$$H^n_{\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}}(G,U(1)) \simeq H^n_{\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}}(G,U(1)) \simeq H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{Top}}(BG,\mathbb{Z})\,.$$

Proof. For G compact we have, by [Blan85], that $H^n_{\mathrm{Segal}}(G,\mathbb{R}) \simeq 0$. The claim then follows with prop. 3.4.29 and theorem 3.3.28 applied to the long exact sequence in cohomology induced by the short exact sequence $\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z} = U(1)$. □

3.4.2.3 ∞-Lie algebroid cohomology We discuss now the intrinsic cohomology of ∞-Lie algebroids, 3.4.1, in SynthDiff∞Grpd.

Proposition 3.4.31. *Let $\mathfrak{a} \in L_\infty\mathrm{Algd}$ be an L_∞-algebroid. Then its intrinsic real cohomoloogy in* SynthDiff∞Grpd

$$H^n(\mathfrak{a},\mathbb{R}) := \pi_0 \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathfrak{a},\mathbf{B}^n\mathbb{R})$$

coincides with its ordinary L_∞-algebroid cohomology: the cochain cohomology of its Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra

$$H^n(\mathfrak{a},\mathbb{R}) \simeq H^n(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}))\,.$$

Proof. By prop. 3.4.28 we have that

$$H^n(\mathfrak{a},\mathbb{R}) \simeq H^n N^\bullet(\mathbb{L}\mathcal{O})(i(\mathfrak{a}))\,.$$

By lemma 3.4.16 this is

$$\cdots \simeq H^n N^\bullet\left(\int^{[k]\in\Delta} \mathbf{\Delta}[k]\cdot\mathcal{O}(i(\mathfrak{a})_k)\right)\,.$$

Observe that $\mathcal{O}(\mathfrak{a})_\bullet$ is cofibrant in the Reedy model structure $[\Delta^{\mathrm{op}}, (\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta}_{\mathrm{proj}})^{\mathrm{op}}]_{\mathrm{Reedy}}$ relative to the opposite of the projective model structure on cosimplicial algebras: the map from the latching object in degree n in $\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta})^{\mathrm{op}}$ is dually in $\mathrm{SmoothAlg} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta}$ the projection

$$\oplus_{i=0}^{n}\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a})_i \otimes \wedge^i \mathbb{R}^n \to \oplus_{i=0}^{n-1}\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a})_i \otimes \wedge^i \mathbb{R}^n$$

hence is a surjection, hence a fibration in $\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta}_{\mathrm{proj}}$ and therefore indeed a cofibration in $(\mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\Delta}_{\mathrm{proj}})^{\mathrm{op}}$.

Therefore using the Quillen bifunctor property of the coend over the tensoring in reverse to lemma 3.4.16 the above is equivalent to

$$\cdots \simeq H^n N^\bullet \left(\int^{[k]\in\Delta} \Delta[k] \cdot \mathcal{O}(i(\mathfrak{a})_k) \right)$$

with the fat simplex replaced again by the ordinary simplex. But in brackets this is now by definition the image under the monoidal Dold-Kan correspondence of the Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra

$$\cdots \simeq H^n(N^\bullet \Xi \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}))\,.$$

By the Dold-Kan correspondence we have hence

$$\cdots \simeq H^n(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}))\,.$$

□

It follows that an intrinsically defined degree-n $\mathbb{R}$-cocycle on $\mathfrak{a}$ is indeed presented by a morphism in $L_\infty Algd$

$$\mu : \mathfrak{a} \to b^n \mathbb{R}\,,$$

as in def. 3.3.85. Notice that if $\mathfrak{a} = b\mathfrak{g}$ is the delooping of an L_∞- algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ this is equivalently a morphism of L_∞-algebras

$$\mu : \mathfrak{g} \to b^{n-1}\mathbb{R}\,.$$

3.4.3 Paths and geometric Postnikov towers

We discuss the intrinsic notion of infinitesimal geometric paths in objects in a ∞-topos of infinitesimal cohesion, 2.4.1, realized in SynthDiff∞Grpd.

Observation 3.4.32. For $U \times D \in \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \ltimes \mathrm{InfinSmoothLoc} = \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ we have that

$$\mathbf{Red}(U \times D) \simeq U$$

is the *reduced smooth locus*: the formal dual of the smooth algebra obtained by quotienting out all nilpotent elements in the smooth algebra $C^\infty(K \times D) \simeq C^\infty(K) \otimes C^\infty(D)$.

Proof. By the model category presentation of $\mathbf{Red} = \mathbb{L}\mathrm{Lan}_i \circ \mathbb{R}i^*$ of the proof of prop. 3.4.9 and using that every representable is cofibrant and fibrant in the local projective model structure on simplicial presheaves we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{Red}(U \times D) &\simeq (\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Lan}_i)(\mathbb{R}i^*)(U \times D) \\ &\simeq (\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Lan}_i)i^*(U \times D) \\ &\simeq (\mathbb{L}\mathrm{Lan}_i)U \\ &\simeq \mathrm{Lan}_i U \\ &\simeq U \end{aligned},$$

where we are using again that i is a full and faithful functor. □

Corollary 3.4.33. *For* $X \in \mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *a smooth locus, we have that* $\mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)$ *is the corresponding* de Rham space*, the object characterized by*

$$\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(U \times D, \mathbf{\Pi}_{inf}(X)) \simeq \mathrm{SmoothAlg}^{\mathrm{op}}(U, X)\,.$$

Proof. By the $(\mathbf{Red} \dashv \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}})$-adjunction relation we have

$$\begin{aligned} &\mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(U \times D, \mathbf{\Pi}_{\mathrm{inf}}(X)) \\ &\qquad \simeq \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{Red}(U \times D), X) \\ &\qquad \simeq \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(U, X) \end{aligned}\,.$$

□

Proposition 3.4.34. *Regard* Smooth∞Grpd*, 3.3, as being equipped with infinitesimal cohesion exhibited by the canonical inclusion* $i : Smooth\infty Grpd \to \mathrm{SynthDiff}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *given by prop. 3.4.9.*

Then a smooth function $f : X \to Y$ *in* $\mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *between smooth manifolds is a formally étale morphism according to the intrinsic def. 2.4.12 precisely if it is a local diffeomorphism in the traditional sense.*

Proof. We need to to show that

$$\begin{array}{ccc} i_! X & \xrightarrow{i_! f} & i_! Y \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ i_* X & \xrightarrow{i_* f} & i_* Y \end{array}$$

is a pullback in $\mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}})$ precisely if f is a local diffeomorphism. This is a pullback precisely if for all $U \times D \in \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \ltimes InfSmoothLoc \simeq \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$ the diagram of sets of plots

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{Hom}(U \times D, i_! X) & \xrightarrow{i_! f} & \mathrm{Hom}(U \times D, i_! Y) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{Hom}(U \times D, i_* X) & \xrightarrow{i_* f} & \mathrm{Hom}(U \times D, i_* Y) \end{array}$$

is a pullback. Using that $i_!$ preserves colimits and restricts, by prop. 2.4.5, on representables to $i : \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{synthdiff}}$, and using that $i^*(U \times D) = U$, this is equivalently the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{Hom}(U \times D, X) & \xrightarrow{f_*} & \mathrm{Hom}(U \times D, Y) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{Hom}(U, X) & \xrightarrow{f_*} & \mathrm{Hom}(U, Y) \end{array}\,,$$

where the vertical morphisms are given by restriction along the inclusion $(\mathrm{id}_U, *) : U \to U \times D$.

For one direction of the claim it is sufficient to consider this situation for $U = *$ the point and D the first order infinitesimal interval. Then $\mathrm{Hom}(*, X)$ is the underlying set of points of the manifold X and $\mathrm{Hom}(D, X)$ is the set of tangent vectors, the set of points of the tangent bundle TX. The pullback $\mathrm{Hom}(*, X) \times_{\mathrm{Hom}(*,Y)} \mathrm{Hom}(D, Y)$ is therefore the set of pairs consisting of a point $x \in X$ and a tangent vector $v \in T_{f(x)}Y$. This set is in fiberwise bijection with $\mathrm{Hom}(D, X) = TX$ precisely if for each $x \in X$ there is a bijection $T_x X \simeq T_{f(x)} Y$, hence precisely if f is a local diffeomorphism. Therefore f being a local diffeomorphissm is necessary for f being formally étale with respect to the given notion of infinitesimal cohesion.

To see that this is also sufficient notice that this is evident for the case that f is in fact a monomorphism, and that since smooth functions are characterized locally, we can reduce the general case to that case. □

3.4.4 Chern-Weil theory

We discuss the notion of ∞-connections, 3.3.12, in the context SynthDiff∞Grpd.

3.4.4.1 ∞-Cartan connections

A *Cartan connection* on a smooth manifold is a principal connection subject to an extra constraint that identifies a component of the connection at each point with the tangent space of the base manifold at that point. The archetypical application of this notion is to the formulation of the field theory of *gravity*, 4.3.1.

We indicate a notion of Cartan ∞-connections.

The following notion is classical, see for instance section 5.1 of [Sha97].

Definition 3.4.35. Let $(H \hookrightarrow G)$ be an inclusion of Lie groups with Lie algebras $(\mathfrak{h} \hookrightarrow \mathfrak{g})$. A $(H \to G)$-*Cartan connection* on a smooth manifold X is

1. a G-principal bundle $P \to X$ equipped with a connection ∇;
2. such that
   (a) the structure group of P reduces to H, hence the classifying morphism factors as $X \to \mathbf{B}H \to \mathbf{B}G$;
   (b) for each point $x \in X$ and any local trivialization of (P, ∇) in some neighbourhood of X, the canonical linear map
   $$T_x X \xrightarrow{\nabla} \mathfrak{g} \longrightarrow \mathfrak{g}/\mathfrak{h}$$
   is an isomorphism,

Here $(\mathfrak{h} \to \mathfrak{g})$ are the Lie algebras of the given Lie groups and $\mathfrak{g}/\mathfrak{h}$ is the quotient of the underlying vector spaces.

3.5 Super ∞-groupoids

We discuss ∞-groupoids equipped with *super cohesion* and with *smooth super cohesion* (where *super* is in the sense of *superalgebra* and *supergeometry*).

Definition 3.5.1. Let $\mathrm{GrAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}$ be the category whose objects are finite dimensional free $\mathbb{Z}_2$-graded commutative $\mathbb{R}$-algebras (Grassmann algebras). Write

$$\mathrm{SuperPoint} := \mathrm{GrAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}^{\mathrm{op}}$$

for its opposite category. For $q \in \mathbb{N}$ we write $\mathbb{R}^{0|q} \in \mathrm{SuperPoint}$ for the object corresponding to the free $\mathbb{Z}_2$-graded commutative algebra on q generators and speak of the *superpoint* of order q.

We think of SuperPoint as a site by equipping it with the trivial coverage.

Definition 3.5.2. Write

$$\mathrm{SuperSet} := \mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{SuperPoint}) \simeq \mathrm{PSh}(\mathrm{SuperPoint})$$

for the topos of presheaves over SuperPoint.

Definition 3.5.3. Write

$$\mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} := \mathrm{Sh}_{\infty}(\mathrm{SuperPoint}) \simeq \mathrm{PSh}_{\infty}(\mathrm{SuperPoint})$$

for the ∞-topos of ∞-sheaves over SuperPoint. We say an object $X \in \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is a *super ∞-groupoid.*

We shall conceive of higher superalgebra and higher supergeometry as being the higher algebra and geometry *over the base ∞-topos* ([John03], chapter B3) Super∞Grpd instead of over the canonical base ∞-topos ∞Grpd. Except for the topos-theoretic rephrasing, this perspective has originally been suggested in [Schw84] and [Molo84].

Proposition 3.5.4. *The ∞-topos* Super∞Grpd *is cohesive, def. 2.2.3.*

$$\mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \underset{\mathrm{coDisc}}{\overset{\Pi}{\underset{\xleftarrow{\quad}}{\overset{\xrightarrow{\quad}}{\underset{\xrightarrow{\;\Gamma\;}}{\xleftarrow{\mathrm{Disc}}}}}}} \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \,.$$

Proof. The site SuperPoint is ∞-cohesive, according to def. 2.2.10. Hence the claim follows by prop. 2.2.11. $\square$

Proposition 3.5.5. *The inclusion* $\mathrm{Disc} : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *exhibits the collection of super ∞-groupoids as forming an infinitesimal cohesive neighbourhood, def. 2.4.1, of the discrete ∞-groupoids, 3.1.*

Proof. Observe that the point inclusion $i : \mathrm{Point} := * \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SuperPoint}$ is both left and right adjoint to the unique projection $p : \mathrm{SuperPoint} \to \mathrm{Point}$. Therefore we have even a periodic sequence of adjunctions

$$(\cdots \dashv i^* \dashv p^* \dashv i^* \dashv p^* \dashv \cdots) : \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd}\,,$$

and $p^* \simeq \mathrm{Disc} \simeq \mathrm{coDisc}$ is full and faithful. $\square$

Definition 3.5.6. Write $\mathbb{R} \in \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ for the presheaf $\mathrm{SuperPoint}^{\mathrm{op}} \to \mathrm{Set} \hookrightarrow \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ given by

$$\mathbb{R} : \mathbb{R}^{0|q} \mapsto C^{\infty}(\mathbb{R}^{0|q}) := \Lambda_q\,,$$

which sends the order-q superpoint to the underlying set of the Grassmann algebra on q generators.

Observation 3.5.7. The object $\mathbb{R} \in \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ is canonically equipped with the structure of an internal ring object. Morever, under both Π and Γ it maps to the ordinary real line $\mathbb{R} \in \mathrm{Set} \hookrightarrow \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ while respecting the ring structures on both sides.

When regarding Smooth∞Grpd as equipped with infinitsimal cohesion by prop. 3.5.5 we have that this is a non-reduced (def. 2.4.7) super-cohesive structure on $\mathbb{R}$:

$$\mathbf{Red}_{\mathrm{Super}}(\mathbb{R} \in \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}) \simeq \mathrm{Disc}_{\mathrm{Super}}\mathbb{R} \neq (\mathbb{R} \in \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd})\,.$$

Proposition 3.5.8. *The theory of ordinary (linear) $\mathbb{R}$-algebra internal to the 1-topos* $\mathrm{SuperSet} = \mathrm{Super0Grpd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *is equivalent to the theory of $\mathbb{R}$-superalgebra in* Set*.*

This is due to [Molo84].

In view prop. 3.5.8 we may define *smooth* super ∞-groupoids exactly as we defined ordinary smooth ∞-groupoids in 3.3, but working over the base ∞-topos Super∞Grpd instead of over the canonical base ∞-topos ∞Grpd.

Definition 3.5.9. Write $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{super}}$ for the internal site ([John03], section C2.4) in $\mathrm{SuperSet} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$, whose objects are the natural numbers, whose morphisms are smooth morphisms $\mathbb{R}^k \to \mathbb{R}^l$ in SuperSet, and whose covers ar given by differentiably good open covers.

According to prop. C2.5.4 of [John03] for every internal site there i an external site such that the internal sheaves on the former are equivalen to the external sheavs on the latter.

Proposition 3.5.10. *The external site corresponding to def. 3.5.9 is the cartesian product site* $\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \times \mathrm{SuperPoint}$ *(the first factor from def. 3.3.4, the second from def. 3.5.1).*

Definition 3.5.11. Write

$$\mathrm{SmoothSuper}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} := \mathrm{Sh}_\infty(\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \times \mathrm{SuperPoint})\,.$$

An object in this ∞-topos we call a *smooth super ∞-groupoid*.

Proposition 3.5.12. *We have a commuting diagram of cohesive ∞-toposes*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{SmoothSuper}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} & \underoverset{\underset{\mathrm{coDisc}_{\mathrm{super}}}{\longleftarrow}}{\overset{\Pi_{\mathrm{super}}}{\longrightarrow}}{\overset{\overset{\mathrm{Disc}_{\mathrm{super}}}{\longleftarrow}}{\underset{\Gamma_{\mathrm{super}}}{\longrightarrow}}} & \mathrm{Super}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \\ \downarrow\uparrow & & \downarrow\uparrow \\ \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} & \underoverset{\underset{\mathrm{coDisc}}{\longleftarrow}}{\overset{\Pi}{\longrightarrow}}{\overset{\overset{\mathrm{Disc}}{\longleftarrow}}{\underset{\Gamma}{\longrightarrow}}} & \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \end{array}\,.$$

For emphasis we shall refer to the objects of Super∞Grp as *discrete super ∞-groupoids*: these refine discrete ∞-groupoids, 3.1 with super-cohesion and are themselves further refined by smooth super ∞-groupoids with smooth cohesion.

We now discuss the various general abstract structures in a cohesive ∞-topos, 2.3, realized in Super∞Grpd and SmoothSuper∞Grpd.

- 3.5.1 – Exponentiated ∞-Lie algebras

3.5.1 Exponentiated ∞-Lie algebras

According to prop. 3.5.8 the following definition is justified.

Definition 3.5.13. A *super L_∞-algebra* is an L_∞-algebra, def. 1.3.72, internal to the topos SuperSet, def. 3.5.2, over the ring object $\mathbb{R}$ from def. 3.5.6.

Observation 3.5.14. The Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$, def. 1.3.75, of a super L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ is externally

- a graded-commutative algebra over $\mathbb{R}$ on generators of bigree in $(\mathbb{N}_+, \mathbb{Z}_2)$ – the *homotopical degree* $\deg_h$ and the *super degree* $\deg_s$;
- such that for any two generators a, b the product satisfies

$$ab = (-1)^{\mathrm{def}_h(a)\deg_h(b) + \mathrm{def}_s(a)\deg_s(b)}\, ba\,;$$

- and equipped with a differential d_{CE} of bidegree $(1, \mathrm{even})$ such that $d_{\mathrm{CE}}^2 = 0$.

Examples 3.5.15.

- Every ordinary L_∞-algebra is canonically a super L_∞-algebra where all element are of even superdegree.
- Ordinary super Lie algebras are canonically identified with precisely the super Lie 1-algebras.
- For every $n \in \mathbb{N}$ there is the *super line super Lie $(n+1)$-algebra* $b^n\mathbb{R}^{0|1}$ characterized by the fact that its Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra has trivial differential and a single generator in bidegree (n, odd).
- For $\mathfrak{g}$ any super L_∞-algebra and $\mu : \mathfrak{g} \to b^n\mathbb{R}$ a cocycle, its homotopy fiber is the super L_∞-algebra extension of $\mathfrak{g}$, as in def. 3.3.88.

  Below in 4.3.2 we discuss in detail a class of super L_∞-algebras that arise by higher extensions from a super Poincaré Lie algebra.

Observation 3.5.16. The Lie integration

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g}) \in [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \times \mathrm{SuperPoint}, \mathrm{sSet}] = [\mathrm{SuperPoint}, [\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}$$

of a super L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ according to 3.3.9 is a system of Lie integrated ordinary L_∞-algebras

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g}) : \mathbb{R}^{0|q} \mapsto \exp((\mathfrak{g} \otimes_{\mathbb{R}} \Lambda_q)_{\mathrm{even}})\,,$$

where $\Lambda_q = C^\infty(\mathbb{R}^{0|q})$ is the Grassmann algebra on q generators.

Over each $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ this is the discrete super ∞-groupoid given by

$$\exp(\mathfrak{g})_U : \mathbb{R}^{0|q} \mapsto \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgsAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g} \otimes \Lambda_q)_{\mathrm{even}}, \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \mathbb{R}^{0|q} \times \Delta^\bullet))\,,$$

where on the right we have super differential forms vertical with respect to the projection $U \times \mathbb{R}^{0|q} \times \Delta^n \to U \times \mathbb{R}^{0|q}$ of supermanifolds.

Proof. The first statement holds by the proof of prop. 3.5.8. The second statement is an example of a stadard mechanism in superalgebra: Using that the category sVect of finite-dimensional super vector space is a compact closed category, we compute

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgsAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \mathbb{R}^{0|q} \times \Delta^n)) &\simeq \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgsAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), C^\infty(\mathbb{R}^{0|q}) \otimes \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^n)) \\
&\simeq \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgsAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}), \Lambda_q \otimes \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^n)) \\
&\subset \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Ch}^\bullet(\mathrm{sVect})}(\mathfrak{g}^*[1], \Lambda_q \otimes \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^n)) \\
&\simeq \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Ch}^\bullet(\mathrm{sVect})}(\mathfrak{g}^*[1] \otimes (\Lambda^q)^*, \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^n)) \\
&\simeq \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Ch}^\bullet(\mathrm{sVect})}((\mathfrak{g} \otimes \Lambda_q)^*[1], \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(\Delta^n)) \\
&\simeq \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Ch}^\bullet(\mathrm{sVect})}((\mathfrak{g} \otimes \Lambda_q)^*[1]_{\mathrm{even}}, \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^n)) \\
&\supset \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{dgsAlg}}(\mathrm{CE}((\mathfrak{g} \otimes_k \Lambda_q)_{\mathrm{even}}), \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^n))
\end{aligned} \quad .$$

Here in the third step we used that the underlying dg-super-algebra of $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ is free to find the space of morphisms of dg-algebras inside that of super-vector spaces (of generators) as indicated. Since the differential on both sides is Λ_q-linear, the claim follows. □

4 Applications

We study aspects of the realization of the general abstract Chern-Weil theory in a cohesive ∞-topos, 2.3.15, in the model Smooth∞Grpd, 3.3. The generalization of ordinary Chern-Weil theory in ordinary differential geometry obtained this way comes from two directions:

1. The ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism applies to G-principal ∞-bundles for G more general than a Lie group.

    - In the simplest case G may be a higher connected cover of a Lie group, realized as a smooth n-group for some $n > 1$. Applied to these, the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism sees fractional refinements of the ordinary differential characteristic classes as seen by the ordinary Chern-Weil homomorphism. This we discuss in 4.1.
    - More generally, G may be any mooth ∞-groupoid, for instance obtained from a general ∞-Lie algebra or ∞-Lie algebroid by Lie integration. In 4.5 we observe that symplectic forms in *higher symplectic geometry* may be understood as examples of ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphisms. In 4.6 we discuss a list of examples for which the higher parallel transport of the circle n-bundles with connection in the image of the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism reproduces action functionals of various σ-model/Chern-Simons-like field theories.

2. The ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism is not just a function on cohomology sets, but an ∞-functor on the full cocycle ∞-groupoids. This allows to access the homotopy fibers of this ∞-functor. Over the trivial cocycle these encode the differential refinement of the obstruction theory associated to the underlying bare cocycle. Over nontrivial cocycles they encode the corresponding twisted cohomology. We formalize this in terms of *twisted differential* $\mathbf{c}$*-structures* in 4.4. A central class of examples are *higher differential Spin structures*, 4.4.4, induced from the Whitehead tower of the orthogonal group. These appear in various guises in string background gauge fields. But also *differential T-duality pairs* are an example, as we discuss in 4.4.6.

Finally, we observe that the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism may be understood as providing the Lagrangian of higher analogs of Chern-Simons theory, in that its intrinsic integration, 2.3.17, yields a functional on the ∞-groupoid of ∞-connections that generalizes the action functional of Chern-Simons theory from ordinary semisimple Lie algebras and their Killing form to arbitrary ∞-Lie algebroids and arbitrary invariant polynomials on them. We conclude in 4.6 by a discussion of a list of field theories obtained this way.

4.1 Higher Spin-structures

For any $n \in \mathbb{N}$, the Lie group $\mathrm{Spin}(n)$ is the universal simply connected cover of the special orthogonal group $\mathrm{SO}(n)$. Since $\pi_1 \mathrm{SO}(n) \simeq \mathbb{Z}_2$, it is an extension of Lie groups of the form

$$\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{Spin}(n) \to \mathrm{SO}(n)\,.$$

The lift of an $\mathrm{SO}(n)$-principal bundle through this extension to a $\mathrm{Spin}(n)$-principal bundle is a called a choice of *spin structure*. A classical textbook on the geometry of spin structures is [LaMi89].

We discuss now how this construction is only one case within a whole tower of analogous constructions involving smooth n-groups for various n. These are higher smooth analogs of the Spin-group and define higher analogs of smooth spin structures.

The Spin-group carries its name due to the central role that it plays in the description of the physics of quantum *spinning particles*. Below in 4.4 we discuss how the higher smooth spin structures play an analogous role in the description of the physics of higher dimensional quantum spinning objects, such as the quantum spinning string and the quantum spinning fivebrane. For this reason we speak about *string structures* and *fivebrane structures*.

4.1.1 Orienation structure

Before going to higher degree beyond the Spin-group, it is instructive to first consider a *lower* degree. The special orthogonal Lie group itself is a kind of extension of the orthogonal Lie group. To see this clearly, consider the smooth delooping $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n) \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ according to 3.3.2.

Proposition 4.1.1. *The canonical morphism* $\mathrm{SO}(n) \hookrightarrow \mathrm{O}(n)$ *induces a long fiber sequence in* $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *of the form*

$$\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n) \to \mathbf{B}O(n) \xrightarrow{\mathbf{w}_1} \mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}_2\,,$$

where $\mathbf{w}_1$ *is the universal smooth first Stiefel-Whitney class from example 1.3.67.*

Proof. It is sufficient to show that the homotopy fiber of $\mathbf{w}_1$ is $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n)$. This implies the rest of the statement by prop. 2.3.27.

To see this, notice that by the discussion in 2.3.3 we are to compute the $\mathbb{Z}_2$-principal bundle over the Lie groupoid $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n)$ that is classified by the above injection. By observation 2.3.42 this is accomplished by forming a 1-categorical pullback of Lie groupoids

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbb{Z}_2//\mathrm{O}(n) & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{Z}_2//\mathbb{Z}_2 \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ *//\mathrm{O}(n) & \longrightarrow & *//\mathbb{Z}_2 \end{array}\,.$$

One sees that the canonical projection

$$\mathbb{Z}_2//\mathrm{O}(n) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} *//\mathrm{SO}(n)$$

is a weak equivalence (it is an essentially surjective and full and faithful functor of groupoids). □

Definition 4.1.2. For $X \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ any object equipped with a morphism $r_X : X \to \mathbf{B}O(n)$, we say a lift o_X of r through the above extension

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n) \\ & \nearrow^{o_X} & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{r} & \mathbf{B}O(n) \end{array}$$

is an *orientation structure* on (X, r_X).

4.1.2 Spin structure

Proposition 4.1.3. *The classical sequence of Lie groups* $\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{Spin} \to \mathrm{SO}$ *induces a long fiber sequence in* $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *of the form*

$$\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{Spin} \to \mathrm{SO} \to \mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO} \stackrel{\mathbf{w}_2}{\to} \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 \,,$$

where $\mathbf{w}_2$ *is the universal smooth second Stiefel-Whitney class from example 1.3.68.*

Proof. It is sufficient to show that the homotopy fiber of $\mathbf{w}_2$ is $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}(n)$. This implies the rest of the statement by prop. 2.3.27.

To see this notice that the top morphism in the stanard anafunctor that presents $\mathbf{w}_2$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{O}(n))_{\mathrm{ch}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to 1)_{\mathrm{ch}} & & \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 \\ \downarrow{\simeq} \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n) \end{array}$$

is a fibration in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. By proposition 2.1.52 this means that the homotopy fiber is given by the 1-categorical pullback of simplicial presheaves

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{O}(n))_{\mathrm{ch}} & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{O}(n))_{\mathrm{ch}} & \stackrel{\mathbf{w}_2}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to 1)_{\mathrm{ch}} \end{array} \,.$$

The canonical projection

$$\mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{O}(n))_{\mathrm{ch}} \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n)_{\mathrm{ch}}$$

is seen to be a weak equivalence. □

Definition 4.1.4. For $X \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ an object equipped with orientation structure $o_X : X \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n)$, def. 4.1.2, we say a choice of lift $\hat{o}_X$ in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \\ & {}^{\hat{o}_X}\nearrow & \downarrow \\ X & \stackrel{o_X}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n) \end{array}$$

equips (X, o_X) with *spin structure.*

4.1.3 Smooth string structure and the String-2-group

The sequence of Lie groupoids

$$\cdots \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}(n) \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}(n) \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{O}(n)$$

discussed in 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 is a smooth refinement of the first two steps of the *Whitehead tower* of $BO(n)$. We discuss now the next step. This is no longer presented by Lie groupoids, but by smooth 2-groupoids.

Write $\mathfrak{so}(n)$ for the special orthogonal Lie algebra in dimension n. We shall in the following notationally suppress the dimension and just write $\mathfrak{so}$. The simply connected Lie group integrating $\mathfrak{so}$ is the Spin-group .

Proposition 4.1.5. *Pulled back to* $B\mathrm{Spin}$ *the universal first Pontryagin class* $p_1 : BO \to B^4\mathbb{Z}$ *is 2 times a generator* $\frac{1}{2}p_1$ *of* $H^4(B\mathrm{Spin}, \mathbb{Z})$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B\mathrm{Spin} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}p_1} & B^4\mathbb{Z} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\cdot 2} \\ BO & \xrightarrow{p_1} & B^4\mathbb{Z} \end{array} .$$

We call $\frac{1}{2}p_1$ *the* first fractional Pontryagin class .

This is due to [Bott58]. See [SSS09b] for a review.

Definition 4.1.6. Write $B\mathrm{String}$ for the homotopy fiber in Top $\simeq \infty$Grpd of the first fractional Pontryagin class

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B\mathrm{String} & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ B\mathrm{Spin} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}p_1} & B^4\mathbb{Z} \end{array} .$$

Its loop space is the *string group*

$$\mathrm{String} := O\langle 7 \rangle := \Omega B\mathrm{String} .$$

This is defined up to equivalence as an ∞-group object, but standard methods give a presentation by a genuine topological group and often the term *string group* is implicitly reserved for such a topological group model. See also the review in [Scho10].

We now discuss smooth refinements of $\frac{1}{2}p_1$ and of String as lifts through the intrinsic geometric realization, def. 2.3.77, Π : Smooth∞Grpd $\to \infty$Grpd in Smooth∞Grpd, 3.3.

Proposition 4.1.7. *We have a weak equivalence*

$$\mathbf{cosk}_3(\exp(\mathfrak{so})) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_c$$

in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, *between the Lie integration, 3.3.9, of* $\mathfrak{so}$ *and the standard presentation, 3.3.2, of* $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}$.

Proof. By prop. 3.3.49. □

Corollary 4.1.8. *The image of* $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \in$ Smooth∞Grpd *under the fundamental* ∞*-groupoid/geometric realization functor* Π, *3.2.2, is the classifying space* $B\mathrm{Spin}$ *of the topological* Spin*-group*

$$|\Pi \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}| \simeq B\mathrm{Spin} .$$

Proof. By prop. 3.2.23 applied to prop. 3.3.19. □

Theorem 4.1.9. *The image under Lie integration, 3.3.9, of the canonical Lie algebra 3-cocycle*

$$\mu = \langle -, [-,-] \rangle : \mathfrak{so} \to b^2\mathbb{R}$$

on the semisimple Lie algebra $\mathfrak{so}$ *of the* Spin *group is a morphism in* Smooth∞Grpd *of the form*

$$\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1 := \exp(\mu) : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)$$

whose image under the the fundamental ∞*-groupoid* ∞*-functor/ geometric realization, 3.2.2,* Π : Smooth∞Grpd $\to$ ∞Grpd *is the ordinary fractional Pontryagin class* $\frac{1}{2}p_1 : B\mathrm{Spin} \to B^4\mathbb{Z}$ *in* Top, *and up to equivalence* $\exp(\mu)$

is the unique lift of $\frac{1}{2}p_1$ *from* Top *to* Smooth∞Grpd *with codomain* $\mathbf{B}^3U(1)$. *We write* $\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1 := \exp(\mu)$ *and call it the* smooth first fractional Pontryagin class.

Moreover, the corresponding refined differential characteristic class, 3.3.12,

$$\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1 : \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(-, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(-, \mathbf{B}^3U(1))\,,$$

wich we call the differential first fractional Pontryagin class, *is in cohomology the corresponding ordinary refined Chern-Weil homomorphism [HoSi05]*

$$[\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1] : H^1_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X, \mathrm{Spin}) \to H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X)$$

with values in ordinary differential cohomology that corresponds to the Killing form invariant polynomial $\langle -, - \rangle$ *on* $\mathfrak{so}$.

Proof. This is shown in [FSS10].

Using corollary. 4.1.7 and unwinding all the definitions and using the characterization of smooth de Rham coefficient objects, 3.3.8, and smooth differential coefficient objects, 3.3.11, one finds that the postcomposition with $\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs})_{\mathrm{diff}}$ induces on Čech cocycles precisely the operation considered in [BrMc96b], and hence the conclusion follows essentially as by the reasoning there: one reads off the 4-curvature of the circle 3-bundle assigned to a Spin bundle with connection ∇ to be $\propto \langle F_\nabla \wedge F_\nabla \rangle$, with the normalization such that this is the image in de Rham cohomology of the generator of $H^4(B\mathrm{Spin}) \simeq \mathbb{Z} \simeq \langle \frac{1}{2}p_1 \rangle$.

Finally that $\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1$ is the unique smooth lift of $\frac{1}{2}p_1$ follows from theorem 3.3.28. □

By the unique smooth refinement of the first fractional Pontryagin class, 4.1.9, we obtain a smooth refinement of the String-group, def. 4.1.6.

Definition 4.1.10. Write $\mathbf{B}$String for the homotopy fiber in Smooth∞Grpd of the smooth refinement of the first fractional Pontryagin class from prop. 4.1.9:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String} & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1} & \mathbf{B}^3U(1) \end{array} .$$

We say its loop space object is the *smooth string 2-group*

$$\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{smooth}} := \Omega\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}\,.$$

We speak of a smooth *2-group* because $\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{smooth}}$ is a categorical homotopy 1-type in Smooth∞Grpd, being an extension

$$\mathbf{B}U(1) \to \mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{smooth}} \to \mathrm{Spin}$$

of the categorical 0-type Spin by the categorical 1-type $\mathbf{B}U(1)$ in Smooth∞Grp.

Proposition 4.1.11. *The categorical homotopy groups of the smooth String 2-group,* $\pi_n(\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \in \mathrm{Sh}(\mathrm{CartSp})$, *are*

$$\pi_1(\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \simeq \mathrm{Spin}$$

and

$$\pi_2(\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \simeq U(1)\,.$$

All other categorical homotopy groups are trivial.

Proof. Notice that by construction the non-trivial categorical homotopy groups of $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}$ and $\mathbf{B}^3U(1)$ are $\pi_1\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} = \mathrm{Spin}$ and $\pi_3\mathbf{B}^3U(1) = U(1)$, respectively. Using the long exact sequence of homotopy sheaves (use [LuHTT] remark 6.5.1.5,with $X = *$ the base point) applied to def. 4.1.10, we obtain the long exact sequence of pointed objects in Sh(CartSp)

$$\cdots \to \pi_{n+1}(\mathbf{B}^3U(1)) \to \pi_n(\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \to \pi_n(\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}) \to \pi_n(\mathbf{B}^3U(1)) \to \pi_{n-1}(\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \to \cdots$$

this yields for $n = 0$

$$0 \to \pi_1(\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \to \mathrm{Spin} \to 0$$

and for $n = 2$

$$0 \to U(1) \to \pi_2(\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \to 0$$

and for $n \geq 3$

$$0 \to \pi_n(\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \to 0\,.$$

□

However the *geometric* homotopy type, 2.3.7, of $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}$ is not bounded, in fact it coincides with that of the topological string group:

Proposition 4.1.12. *Under intrinsic geometric realization, 3.3.3,* $|-| : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \stackrel{\Pi}{\to} \infty\mathrm{Grp} \stackrel{|-|}{\to} \mathrm{Top}$ *the smooth string 2-group maps to the topological string group*

$$|\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{smooth}}| \simeq \mathrm{String}\,.$$

Proof. Since $\mathbf{B}^3U(1)$ has a presentation by a simplicial object in SmoothMfd, prop. 3.3.24 asserts that

$$|\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{smooth}}| \simeq \mathrm{hofib}|\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1|\,.$$

The claim then follows with prop. 4.1.9

$$\cdots \simeq \mathrm{hofib}\frac{1}{2}p_1$$

and def. 4.1.6

$$\cdots \simeq \mathrm{String}\,.$$

□

Notice the following important subtlety:

Proposition 4.1.13. *There exists an infinite-dimensional Lie group* $\mathrm{String}_{1\mathrm{smooth}}$ *whose underlying topological group is a model for the String group in* Top*, def. 4.1.6.*

This is due to [NSW11], by a refinement of a construction in [Stol96].

Remark 4.1.14. However, $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{1\mathrm{smooth}}$ itself is not a model for def. 4.1.10, because it is an internal 1-type in Smooth∞Grpd, hence because $\pi_2\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{1\mathrm{smooth}} = 0$. In [NSW11] a smooth 2-group with the correct internal homotopy groups based on $\mathrm{String}_{1\mathrm{smooth}}$ is given, but it is not clear yet whether or not this is a model for def. 4.1.10.

We proceed by discussing concrete presentations of the smooth string 2-group.

Definition 4.1.15. Write

$$\mathfrak{string} := \mathfrak{so}_\mu$$

for the L_∞-algebra extension of $\mathfrak{so}$ induced by μ according to def 3.3.88.

We call this the *string Lie 2-algebra*

Observation 4.1.16. The indecomposable invariant polynomials on $\mathfrak{string}$ are those of $\mathfrak{so}$ except for the Killing form:

$$\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{string}) = \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{so})/(\langle -, - \rangle) .$$

Proof. As a special case of prop. 3.3.105. □

Proposition 4.1.17. *The smooth ∞-groupoid that is the Lie integration of* $\mathfrak{so}_\mu$ *is a model for the smooth string 2-group*

$$\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String} \simeq \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{so}_\mu) .$$

Notice that this statement is similar to, but different from, the statement about the untruncated exponentiated L_∞-algebras in prop. 3.3.93.

Proof. By prop. 4.1.9 an explicit presentation for $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}$ is given by the pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_c & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{E}\mathbf{B}^2 U(1)_c \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{so}) & \xrightarrow{\int_{\Delta^\bullet} \exp(\mu)} & \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_c \end{array}$$

in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$, where $\mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_c$ is the simplicial presheaf whose 3-cells form the space $U(1)$, and where $\mathbf{E}B^2 U(1)$ is the simplicial presheaf whose 2-cells form $U(1)$ and whose 3-cells form the space of arbitrary quadruples of elements in $U(1)$. The right vertical morphism forms the oriented sum of these quadruples.

Since all objects are 3-truncated, it is sufficient to consider the pullback of the simplices in degrees 0 to 3. In degrees 0 to 1 the morphism $\mathbf{E}\mathbf{B}^2 U(1) \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_c$ is the identity, hence in these degrees $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_c$ coincides with $\mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{so})$. In degree 2 the pullback is the product of $\mathbf{cosk}_3(\mathfrak{so})_2$ with $U(1)$, hence the 2-cells of $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_c$ are pairs (f, c) consisting of a smooth map $f : \Delta^2 \to \mathrm{Spin}$ (with sitting instants) and an elemement $c \in U(1)$. Finally a 3-cell in $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_c$ is a pair $(\sigma, \{c_i\})$ of a smooth map $\sigma : \Delta^3 \to \mathrm{Spin}$ and four labels $c_i \in U(1)$, subject to the condition that the sum of the labels is the integral of the cocycle μ over σ:

$$c_4 c_2 c_1^{-1} c_3^{-1} = \int_{\Delta^3} \sigma^* \mu(\theta) \bmod \mathbb{Z} ,$$

(with θ the Maurer-Cartan form on Spin).

The description of the cells in $\mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ is similar: a 2-cells is a pair (f, B) consisting of a smooth function $f : \Delta^2 \to \mathrm{Spin}$ and a smooth 2-form $B \in \Omega^2(\Delta^2)$ (both with sitting instants), and a 3-cell is a pair consisting of a smooth function $\sigma : \Delta^3 \to \mathrm{Spin}$ and a 2-form $\hat{B} \in \Omega^2(\Delta^3)$ such that $d\hat{B} = \sigma^* \mu(\theta)$.

There is an evident morphism

$$p : \int_{\Delta^\bullet} : \mathbf{cosk}_3(\mathfrak{so}_\mu) \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_c$$

that is the identity on the smooth maps from simplices into the Spin-group and which sends the 2-form labels to their integral over the 2-faces

$$p_2 : (f, B) \mapsto (f, (\int_{\Delta^2} B) \mathrm{mod} \mathbb{Z}) .$$

We claim that this is a weak equivalence. The first simplicial homotopy group on both sides is Spin itself (meaning: the presheaf on CartSp represented by Spin). The nontrivial simplicial homotopy group to check is the second. Since $\pi_2(\mathrm{Spin}) = 0$ every pair (f, B) on $\partial \Delta^3$ is homotopic to one where f is constant. It follows from prop. 3.3.53 that the homotopy classes of such pairs where also the homotopy involves a constant map $\partial \Delta^3 \times \Delta^1 \to \mathrm{Spin}$ are given by $\mathbb{R}$, being the integral of the 2-forms. But then moreover there are the non-constant homotopies in Spin from the constant 2-sphere to itself. Since $\pi_3(\mathrm{Spin}) = \mathbb{Z}$ and $\mu(\theta)$ is an integral form, this reduces the homotopy classes to $U(1) = \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$. This are the same as in $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_c$ and the integration map that sends the 2-forms to elements in $U(1)$ is an isomorphism on these homotopy classes. □

Remark 4.1.18. Propositions 4.1.17 and 4.1.12 together imply that the geometric realization $|\mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{so}_\mu)|$ is a model for BString in Top

$$|\exp(\mathfrak{so}_\mu)| \simeq B\mathrm{String}.$$

With slight differences in the technical realization of $\exp(\mathfrak{g}_m u)$ this was originally shown in [Henr08], theorem 8.4. For the following discussion however the above perspective, realizing $\mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{so}_\mu)$ as a presentation of the homotopy fiber of the smooth first fractional Pontryagin class, def 4.1.10, is crucial.

We now discuss three equivalent but different models of the smooth String 2-group by diffeological *strict* 2-groups, hence by crossed modules of diffeological groups. See [BCSS07] for the general notion of strict Fréchet-Lie 2-groups and for discussion of one of the following models.

Definition 4.1.19. For $(G_1 \to G_0)$ a crossed module of diffeological groups (groups of concrete sheaves on CartSp) write

$$\Xi(G_1 \to G_0) \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$$

for the corresponding presheaf of simplicial groups.

There is an evident strictification of $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_c$ from the proof of prop 4.1.17 given by the following definition. For the notion of thin homotopy classes of paths and disks see [ScWaII].

Definition 4.1.20. Write

$$\hat{\Omega}_{\mathrm{th}}\mathrm{Spin} \to P_{\mathrm{th}}\mathrm{Spin}\,,$$

for the crossed module where

- P_{th}Spin is the group whose elements are *thin-homotopy* classes of based smooth paths in G and whose composition is obtained by rigidly translating one path so that its basepoint matches the other path's endpoint and then concatenating;
- Ω_{th}Spin is the group whose elements are equivalence classes of pairs (d, x) consisting of *thin homotopy* classes of disks $d : D^2 \to G$ in G with sitting instant at a chosen point on the boundary which is sent to the neutral element, and consisting of an element $x \in \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$. Two such pairs are taken to be equivalent if the boundary of the disks has the same thin homotopy classes and if the labels x and x' differ, in $\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$, by the integral $\int_{D^3} f^*\mu(\theta)$ over any 3-ball $f : D^3 \to G$ cobounding the two disks. Composition is by *gluing* of disks at the basepoint, such that their boundary paths are being concatenated.

Proposition 4.1.21. *Let*

$$\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_c \to \mathbf{B}\Xi(\hat{\Omega}_{\mathrm{th}}\mathrm{Spin} \to P_{\mathrm{th}}\mathrm{Spin})$$

be the morphism that sends maps to Spin *to their thin-homotopy class. This is a weak equivalence in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

We produce now two equivalent crossed modules that are both obtained as central extensions of path groups. This is joint with Danny Stevenson, based on results in [MuSt03].

The following proposition is standard.

Proposition 4.1.22. *Let $H \subset G$ be a normal subgroup of some group G and lat $\hat{H} \to H$ be a central extension of groups such that the conjugation action of G on H lifts to an automorphism action $\alpha : G \to \mathrm{Aut}(\hat{H})$ on the central extension. Then $(\hat{H} \to G)$ with this α is a crossed module.*

We construct classes of examples of this type from central extensions of path groups.

Proposition 4.1.23. *Let $G \subset \Gamma$ be a simply connected normal Lie subgroup of a Lie group Γ. Write PG for the based path group of G whose elements are smooth maps $[0,1] \to G$ starting at the neutral element and whose product is given by the pointwise product in G. Consider the complex with differential $d \pm \delta$ of simplicial forms on $\mathbf{B}G_c$. Let (F, a, β) be a triple where*
i. $a \in \Omega^1(G \times G)$ such that $\delta a = 0$;
ii. F is a closed integral 2-form on G such that $\delta F = da$;
iii. $\beta : \Gamma \to \Omega^1(G)$ such that, for all $\gamma, \gamma_1, \gamma_2 \in \Gamma$,

- $\gamma^* F = F + d\beta_\gamma$;
- $(\gamma_1)^*\beta_{\gamma_2} - \beta_{\gamma_1\gamma_2} + \beta_{\gamma_1} = 0$;
- $a = \gamma^* a + \delta(\beta_\gamma)$;
- *for all based paths* $f : [0,1] \to G$, $f^*\beta_\gamma = (f, \gamma^{-1})^* a + (\gamma, f\gamma^{-1})^* a$.

1. *Then the map* $c : PG \times PG \to U(1)$ *given by* $c : (f,g) \mapsto c_{f,g} := \exp\left(2\pi i \int\limits_{0,1} (f,g)^* a\right)$ *is a group 2-cocycle leading to a central extension* $\widehat{P}G = PG \ltimes U(1)$ *with product* $(\gamma_1, x_1) \cdot (\gamma_2, x_2) = (\gamma_1 \cdot \gamma_2, x_1 x_2 c_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2})$.
2. *Since* G *is simply connected every loop in* G *bounds a disk* D. *There is a normal subgroup* $N \subset \widehat{P}G$ *consisting of pairs* (γ, x) *with* $\gamma(1) = e$ *and* $x = \exp(2\pi i \int_D F)$ *for any disk* D *in* G *such that* $\partial D = \gamma$.
3. *Finally,* $\tilde{G} := \widehat{PG}/N$ *is a central extension of* G *by* $U(1)$ *and the conjugation action of* Γ *on* G *lifts to* $\tilde{G}$ *by setting* $\alpha(\gamma)(f,x) := (\alpha(\gamma)(f),\ x\exp(\in_f \beta_\gamma))$ *such that* $\mathrm{Cent}(G, \Gamma, F, a, \beta) := (\tilde{G} \to \Gamma)$ *is a Lie crossed module and hence a strict Lie 2-group of the type in prop. 4.1.22.*

Proof. All statements about the central extension $\hat{G}$ can be found in [MuSt03]. It remains to check that the action $\alpha : \Gamma \to \mathrm{Aut}(\tilde{G})$ satisfies the required axioms of a crossed module, in particular the condition $\alpha(t(h))(h') = hh'h^{-1}$. For this we have to show that

$$\alpha(h(1))([f,z]) = [h,1][f,z]\left[h^{-1}, \exp(-\int_{(h,h^{-1})} a)\right] ,$$

where h denotes a based path in $P\mathcal{G}$, so that $[h,1]$ represents an element of $\tilde{\mathcal{G}}$. By definition of the product in $\tilde{\mathcal{G}}$, the right hand side is equal to

$$\left[hfh^{-1}, z\exp\left(\int_{(h,f)} a + \int_{(hf,h^{-1})} a - \int_{(h,h^{-1})} a\right)\right] .$$

This is not exactly in the form we want, since the left hand side is equal to $\left[h(1)fh(1)^{-1}, z\exp(\int_f \beta_h)\right]$. Therefore, we want to replace hfh^{-1} with the homotopic path $h(1)fh(1)^{-1}$. An explicit homotopy between these two paths is given by $H(s,t) = h((1-s)t+s)f(t)h((1-s)t+s)^{-1}$. Therefore, we have the equality

$$\begin{aligned}&\left[hfh^{-1}, z\exp\left(\int_{(h,f)} a + \int_{(hf,h^{-1})} a - \int_{(h,h^{-1})} a\right)\right]\\ &\qquad = \left[h(1)fh(1)^{-1}, z\exp\left(\int_{(h,f)} a + \int_{(hf,h^{-1})} a - \int_{(h,h^{-1})} a + \int H^*F\right)\right] .\end{aligned}$$

Using the relation $\delta(F) = da$ and the fact that the pullback of F along the maps $[0,1] \times [0,1] \to G$, $(s,t) \mapsto h((1-s)t+s)$ vanish, we see that

$$\int H^*F = \int_{(f,h(1)^{-1})} a - \int_{(f,h^{-1})} a + \int_{(h,h^{-1})} a + \int_{(h(1),fh(1)^{-1})} a - \int_{(h,fh^{-1})} a .$$

Therefore the sum of integrals

$$\int_{(h,f)} a + \int_{(hf,h^{-1})} a - \int_{(h,h^{-1})} a + \int H^*F$$

can be written as

$$\int_{(h,f)} a + \int_{(hf,h^{-1})} a - \int_{(h,h^{-1})} a + \int_{(f,h(1)^{-1})} a - \int_{(f,h^{-1})} a + \int_{(h,h^{-1})} a + \int_{(h(1),fh(1)^{-1})} a - \int_{(h,fh^{-1})} a .$$

Using the condition $\delta(a) = 0$, we see that this simplifies down to $\int_{(f,h(1)^{-1})} a + \int_{(h(1),fh(1)^{-1})} a$. Therefore, a sufficient condition to have a crossed module is the equation $f^*\beta_h = (f, h(1))^* a + (h(1), fh(1)^{-1})^* a$. □

Proposition 4.1.24. *Given triples (F, a, β) and (F', a', β') as above and given $b \in \Omega^1(G)$ such that*

$$F' = F + db\,, \tag{4.1}$$

$$a' = a + \delta(b) \tag{4.2}$$

and for all $\gamma \in \Gamma$

$$\beta_\gamma + \gamma^* b = b + \beta'_\gamma\ , \tag{4.3}$$

then there is an isomorphism $\mathrm{Cent}(G, \Gamma, F, a, \beta) \simeq \mathrm{Cent}(G, \Gamma, F', a', \beta')$.

In [BCSS07] the following special case of this general construction was considered.

Definition 4.1.25. Let G be a compact, simple and simply-connected Lie group with Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$. Let $\langle\cdot,\cdot\rangle$ be the Killing form invariant polynomial on $\mathfrak{g}$, normalized such that the Lie algebra 3-cocycle $\mu := \langle\cdot,[\cdot,\cdot]\rangle$ extends left invariantly to a 3-form on G which is the image in deRham cohomology of one of the two generators of $H^3(G,\mathbb{Z}) = \mathbb{Z}$. Let ΩG be the based loop group of G whose elements are smooth maps $\gamma : [0,1] \to G$ with $\gamma(0) = \gamma(1) = e$ and whose product is by pointwise multiplication of such maps. Define $F \in \Omega^2(\Omega G)$, $a \in \Omega^1(\Omega G \times \Omega G)$ and $\beta : \Gamma \to \Omega^1(\Omega G)$

$$\begin{aligned} F(\gamma, X, Y) &:= \int_0^{2\pi} \langle X, Y'\rangle dt \\ a(\gamma_1, \gamma_2, X_1, X_2) &:= \int_0^{2\pi} \langle X_1, \dot\gamma_2\gamma_2^{-1}\rangle dt \\ \beta(p)(\gamma, X) &:= \int_0^{2\pi} \langle p^{-1}\dot p, X\rangle dt \end{aligned}$$

This satisfies the axioms of prop. 4.1.23 and we write

$$\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{BCSS}}(G) := \Xi\mathrm{Cent}(\Omega G, PG, F, \alpha, \beta)$$

for the corresponding diffeological strict 2-group. If $G = \mathrm{Spin}$ we write just $\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{BCS}}$ for this.

There is a variant of this example, using another cocycle on loop groups that was given in [Mick87].

Definition 4.1.26. With all assumptions as in definition 4.1.25 define now

$$\begin{aligned} F(\gamma, X, Y) &:= \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi} \langle \gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma, [X, Y]\rangle dt \\ a(\gamma_1, \gamma_2, X_1, X_2) &:= \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi} \left(\langle X_1, \dot\gamma_2\gamma_2^{-1}\rangle - \langle \gamma_1^{-1}\dot\gamma_1, \gamma_2 X_2 \gamma_2^{-1}\rangle\right) dt \\ \beta(p)(\gamma, X) &:= \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi} \langle \gamma^{-1}p^{-1}\dot p\gamma + p^{-1}\dot p, X\rangle dt \end{aligned}$$

This satisfies the axioms of proposition 4.1.23 and we write

$$\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{Mick}}(G) := \Xi\mathrm{Cent}(\Omega G, PG, F, \alpha, \beta)$$

for the corresponding 2-group. If $G = \mathrm{Spin}$ we write just $\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{Mick}}$ for this.

Proposition 4.1.27. *There is an isomorphism of 2-groups* $\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{BCSS}}(G) \xrightarrow{\simeq} \mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{Mick}}(G)$.

Proof. We show that $b \in \Omega^1(\Omega G)$ defined by $b(\gamma, X) := \frac{1}{4\pi}\int_0^{2\pi}\langle\gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma, X\rangle dt$ satisfies the conditions of prop. 4.1.24 and hence defines the desired isomorphism.

- Proof of equation 4.1: We calculate the exterior derivative db. To do this we first calculate the derivative $Xb(y)$: if $\gamma_t = \gamma e^{tX}$ then to first order in t, $\gamma_t^{-1}\dot\gamma_t$ is equal to $\gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma + t[\gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma, X] + tX'$. Therefore

$$Xb(Y) = \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\big(\langle\gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma, [X,Y]\rangle + \langle X', Y\rangle\big)\,dt\,.$$

Hence db is equal to

$$\frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\big(\langle\gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma, [X,Y]\rangle + \langle X', Y\rangle + \langle\gamma^{-1}\dot c, [X,Y]\rangle - \langle Y', X\rangle - \langle\gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma, [X,Y]\rangle\big)\ ,$$

which is easily seen to simplify down to

$$-\int_0^{2\pi}\langle X, Y\rangle dt + \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\langle\gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma, [X,Y]\rangle dt\,.$$

- Proof of equation 4.2: We get

$$\frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\big\{\langle\gamma_2\dot\gamma_2^{-1}, X_2\rangle - \langle\gamma_2^{-1}\gamma_1^{-1}\dot\gamma_1\gamma_2, \gamma_2^{-1}X_1\gamma_2\rangle - \langle\gamma_2^{-1}\gamma_1^{-1}\dot\gamma_1\gamma_2, X_2\rangle$$
$$-\langle\gamma_2^{-1}\dot\gamma_2, \gamma_2^{-1}X_1\gamma_2\rangle - \langle\gamma_2^{-1}\dot\gamma_2, X_2\rangle + \langle\gamma_1^{-1}\dot\gamma_1, X_1\rangle\big\}\,dt\ ,$$

which is equal to

$$\frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\big\{-\langle\gamma_1^{-1}\dot\gamma_1, \gamma_2X_2\gamma_2^{-1}\rangle - \langle\dot\gamma_2\gamma_2^{-1}, X_1\rangle\big\}\,dt\ ,$$

which in turn equals

$$\frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\big\{\langle X_1, \dot\gamma_2\gamma_2^{-1}\rangle - \langle\gamma_1^{-1}\dot\gamma_1, \gamma_2X_2\gamma_2^{-1}\rangle\big\}\,dt - \frac{1}{2\pi}\int_0^{2\pi}\langle X_1, \dot\gamma_2\gamma_2^{-1}\rangle dt\ .$$

- Proof of equation 4.3: we get

$$\begin{aligned}
p^*b(\gamma;\gamma X) &= b(p\gamma p^{-1}; p\gamma p^{-1}(pXp^{-1})) \\
&= \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\langle p\gamma p^{-1}(\dot p\gamma p^{-1} + p\dot\gamma p^{-1} - p\gamma p^{-1}\dot p p^{-1}, pXp^{-1}\rangle dt \\
&= \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\langle p\gamma^{-1}p^{-1}\dot p\gamma p^{-1} + p\gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma p^{-1} - \dot p p^{-1}, pXp^{-1}\rangle dt \\
&= \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\langle\gamma^{-1}p^{-1}\dot p\gamma + \gamma^{-1}\dot\gamma - p^{-1}\dot p, X\rangle dt \\
&= b(\gamma, \gamma X) + \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\langle\gamma^{-1}p^{-1}\dot p\gamma - p^{-1}\dot p, X\rangle dt \\
&= b(\gamma, \gamma X) + \frac{1}{2}\int_0^{2\pi}\langle\gamma^{-1}p^{-1}\dot p\gamma + p^{-1}\dot p, X\rangle dt - \frac{1}{2\pi}\int_0^{2\pi}\langle p^{-1}\dot p, X\rangle dt
\end{aligned}$$

The three conditions in proposition 4.1.24 are satisfied and, therefore, the desired isomorphism is established.
□

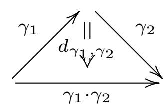
Proposition 4.1.28. *The strict 2-group* $\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{Mick}}$ *from definition 4.1.26 is equivalent to the model* $\Xi(\hat{\Omega}_{\mathrm{th}}\mathrm{Spin} \to P_{\mathrm{th}})\mathrm{Spin}$ *from def. 4.1.20.*

Proof. We define a morphism $F : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{Mick}} \to \mathbf{B}\Xi(\hat{\Omega}_{\mathrm{th}}\mathrm{Spin} \to P_{\mathrm{th}})\mathrm{Spin}$. Its action on 1- and 2-morphisms is obvious: it sends parameterized paths $\gamma : [0,1] \to G = \mathrm{Spin}$. to their thin-homotopy equivalence class

$$F : \gamma \mapsto [\gamma]$$

and similarly for parameterized disks. On the $\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$-labels of these disks it acts as the identity.

The subtle part is the compositor measuring the coherent failure of this assignment to respect composition: Define the components of this compositor for any two parameterized based paths $\gamma_1, \gamma_2 : [0,1] \to G$ with pointwise product $(\gamma_1 \cdot \gamma_2) : [0,1] \to G$ and images $[\gamma_1], [\gamma_2], [\gamma_1 \cdot \gamma_2]$ in thin homotopy classes to be represented by a parameterized disk in G



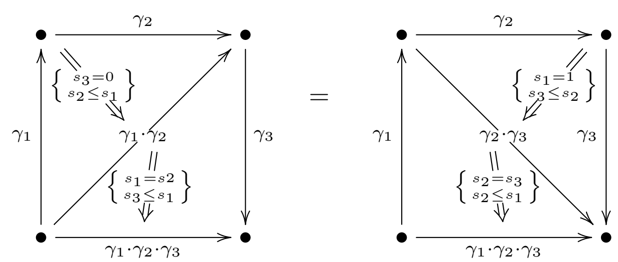
equipped with a label $x_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2} \in \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ to be determined. Notice that this triangle is a diagram in $\Xi(\hat{\Omega}_{\mathrm{th}}\mathrm{Spin} \to P_{\mathrm{th}})\mathrm{Spin}$, so that composition of 1-morphisms is concatenation $\gamma_1 \circ \gamma_2$ of paths. A suitable disk in G is obtained via the map

$$D^2 \xrightarrow{a} [0,1]^2 \xrightarrow{(s_1,s_2)\mapsto \gamma_1(s_1)\cdot\gamma_2(s_2)} G \ ,$$

where a is a smooth surjection onto the triangle $\{(s_1,s_2)|s_2 \leq s_1\} \subset [0,1]^2$ such that the lower semi-circle of $\partial D^2 = S^1$ maps to the hypotenuse of this triangle. The coherence law for this compositor for all triples of parameterized paths $\gamma_1, \gamma_2, \gamma_3 : [0,1] \to G$ amounts to the following: consider the map

$$D^3 \xrightarrow{a} [0,1]^3 \xrightarrow{(s_1,s_2,s_3)\mapsto \gamma_1(s_1)\cdot\gamma_2(s_2)\cdot\gamma_3(s_3)} G \ ,$$

where the map a is a smooth surjection onto the tetrahedron $\{(s_3 \leq s_2 \leq s_1)\} \subset [0,1]^3$. Then the coherence condition



requires that the integral of the canonical 3-form on G pulled back to the 3-ball along these maps accounts for the difference in the chosen labels of the disks involved:

$$\int_{D^3} (b \circ a)^*\mu = \int_{s_3 \leq s_2 \leq s_1} (\gamma_1 \cdot \gamma_2 \cdot \gamma_3)^*\mu = x_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2} + x_{\gamma_1\cdot\gamma_2,\gamma_3} - x_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2\cdot\gamma_3} - x_{\gamma_2,\gamma_3} \quad \in \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}\,.$$

(Notice that there is no further twist on the right hand side because whiskering in $\mathbf{B}\Xi(\hat{\Omega}_{\mathrm{th}}G \to P_{\mathrm{th}}G)$ does not affect the labels of the disks.) To solve this condition, we need a 2-form to integrate over the triangles. This is provided by the degree 2 component of the simplicial realization $(\mu,\nu) \in \Omega^3(G) \times \Omega^2(G \times G)$ of the first Pontryagin form as a simplicial form on $\mathbf{B}G_c$:

for $\mathfrak{g}$ a semisimple Lie algebra, the image of the normalized invariant bilinear polynomial $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$ under the Chern-Weil map is $(\mu,\nu) \in \Omega^3(G) \times \Omega^2(G \times G)$ with

$$\mu := \langle \theta \wedge [\theta \wedge \theta] \rangle$$

and

$$\nu := \langle \theta_1 \wedge \bar{\theta}_2 \rangle\,,$$

where θ is the left-invariant canonical $\mathfrak{g}$-valued 1-form on G and $\bar{\theta}$ the right-invariant one.

So, define the label assigned by our compositor to the disks considered above by

$$x_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2} := \int_{s_2 \leq s_1} (\gamma_1, \gamma_2)^* \nu\,.$$

To show that this assignment satisfies the above condition, use the closedness of (μ, ν) in the complex of simplicial forms on $\mathbf{B}G_c$: $\delta\mu = d\nu$ and $\delta\nu = 0$. From this one obtains

$$(\gamma_1 \cdot \gamma_2 \cdot \gamma_3)^* \mu = -d(\gamma_1 \cdot \gamma_2, \gamma_3)^* \nu = -d(\gamma_1, \gamma_2 \cdot \gamma_3)^* \nu$$

and

$$(\gamma_1, \gamma_2 \cdot \gamma_3)^* \nu = (\gamma_1 \cdot \gamma_2, \gamma_3)^* \nu + (\gamma_1, \gamma_2)^* \nu - (\gamma_2, \gamma_3)^* \nu\,.$$

Now we compute as follows: Stokes' theorem gives

$$\int_{s_3 \leq s_2 \leq s1} (\gamma_1 \cdot \gamma_2 \cdot \gamma_3)^* \mu = \left(\int_{s_3 = 0, s_2 \leq s_1} + \int_{s_1 = s_2, s_3 \leq s_1} - \int_{s_1 = 1, s_3 \leq s_2} - \int_{s_2 = s_3, s_2 \leq s_1} \right) (\gamma_1, \gamma_2 \cdot \gamma_3)^* \nu\,.$$

The first integral is manifestly equal to x_{γ_1,γ_2}. The last integral is manifestly equal to $-x_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2\cdot\gamma_3}$. For the remaining two integrals we rewrite

$$\cdots = x_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2} - x_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2\cdot\gamma_3} + \left(\int_{s_1 = s_2, s_3 \leq s_1} - \int_{s_1 = 1, s_3 \leq s_2} \right) \left((\gamma_1 \cdot \gamma_2, \gamma_3)^* \nu + (\gamma_1, \gamma_2)^* \nu - (\gamma_2, \gamma_3)^* \nu \right)\,.$$

The first term in the integrand now manifestly yields $x_{\gamma_1\cdot\gamma_2,\gamma_3} - x_{\gamma_2,\gamma_3}$. The second integrand vanishes on the integration domain. The third integrand, finally, gives the same contribution under both integrals and thus drops out due to the relative sign. So in total what remains is indeed

$$\cdots = x_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2} - x_{\gamma_1,\gamma_2\cdot\gamma_3} + x_{\gamma_1\cdot\gamma_2,\gamma_3} - x_{\gamma_2,\gamma_3}\,.$$

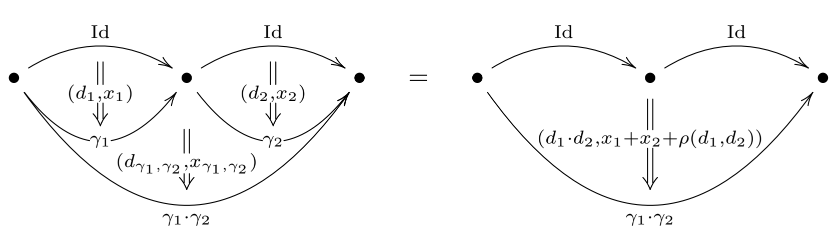
This establishes the coherence condition for the compositor.

Finally we need to show that the compositor is compatible with the horizontal composition of 2-morphisms. We consider this in two steps, first for the horizontal composition of two 2-morphisms both starting at the identity 1-morphism in $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{Mick}}(G)$ – this is the product in the loop group $\hat{\Omega}G$ centrally extended using Mickelsson's cocycle – then for the horizontal composition of an identity 2-morphism in $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{Mick}}(G)$ with a 2-morphism starting at the identity 1-morphisms – this is the action of PG on $\hat{\Omega}G$. These two cases then imply the general case.

- Let (d_1, x_1) and (d_2, x_2) represent two 2-morphisms in $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{Mick}}$ starting at the identity 1-morphisms. So

  $$d_i : [0,1] \to \Omega G$$

  is a based path in loops in G and $x_i \in U(1)$. We need to show that

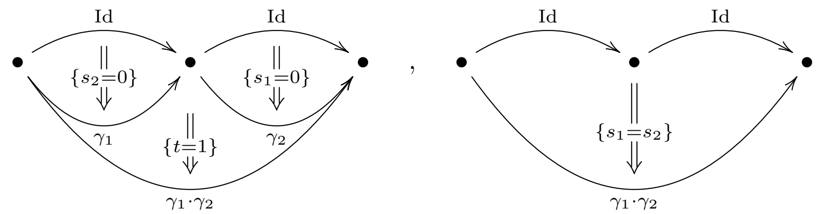


as a pasting diagram equation in $\mathbf{B}\Xi(\hat{\Omega}_{\mathrm{th}}G \to P_{\mathrm{th}}G)$. Here on the left we have gluing of disks in G along their boundaries and addition of their labels, while on the right we have the pointwise product from definition 4.1.26 of labeled disks as representing the product of elements $\hat{\Omega}G$.

There is an obvious 3-ball interpolating between the disk on the left and on the right of the above equation:

$$(\{s_2 \leq s_1\} \subset [0,1]^3) \to G$$

$$(s_1, s_2, t) \mapsto (d_1(t, s_1) \cdot d_2(t, s_2))$$



The compositor property demands that the integral of the canonical 3-form over this ball accounts for the difference between x_{γ_1,γ_2} and $\rho(\gamma_1, \gamma_2)$

$$\rho(d_1, d_2) = \int\limits_{\substack{s_2 \leq s_1 \\ 0 \leq t \leq 1}} (d_1 \cdot d_2)^* \mu + \int\limits_{s_2 \leq s_1} (\gamma_1, \gamma_2)^* \nu \,.$$

Now use again the relation between μ and $d\nu$ to rewrite this as

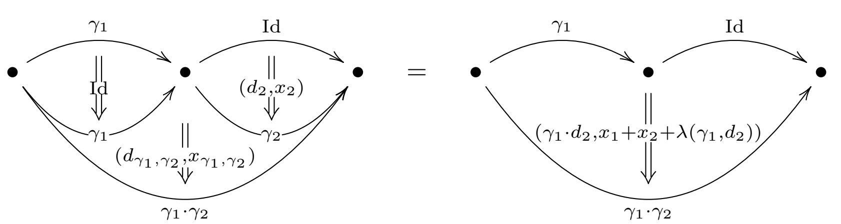
$$\cdots = \int\limits_{\substack{s_2 \leq s_1 \\ 0 \leq t \leq 1}} ((d_1)^* \mu + (d_2)^* \mu - d(d_1, d_2)^* \nu) + \int\limits_{s_2 \leq s_1} (\gamma_1, \gamma_2)^* \nu \,.$$

The first two integrands vanish. The third one leads to boundary integrals

$$\cdots = -\left(\int\limits_{s_2=0} + \int\limits_{s_1=0} \right) (d_1, d_2)^* \nu - \int\limits_{\substack{t=1 \\ s_2 \leq s_1}} (d_1, d_2)^* \nu + \int\limits_{s_2 \leq s_1} (\gamma_1, \gamma_2)^* \nu + \int\limits_{\substack{0 \leq t \leq 1 \\ s_1 = s_2}} (d_1, d_2)^* \nu \,.$$

The first two integrands vanish on their integration domain. The third integral cancels with the fourth one. The remaining fifth one is indeed the 2-cocycle on $P\Omega G$ from definition 4.1.26.

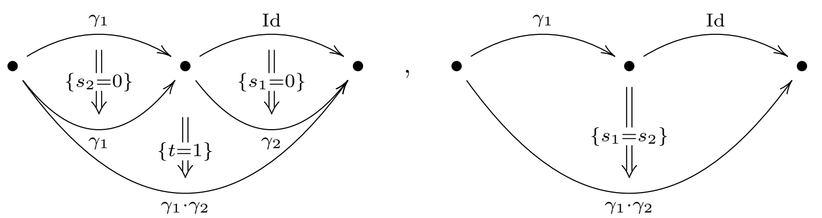
- The second case is entirely analogous: for γ_1 a path and (d_2, x_2) a centrally extended loop we need to show that



There is an obvious 3-ball interpolating between the disk on the left and on the right of the above equation:

$$(\{s_2 \leq s_1\} \subset [0,1]^3) \to G$$

$$(s_1, s_2, t) \mapsto (\gamma_1(s_1) \cdot d_2(t, s_2))$$



The compositor property demands that the integral of the canonical 3-form over this ball accounts for the difference between x_{γ_1,γ_2} and $\lambda(\gamma_1,\gamma_2)$

$$\lambda(\gamma_1, d_2) = \int\limits_{\substack{s_2\leq s_1\\ 0\leq t\leq 1}} (d_1\cdot d_2)^*\mu + \int\limits_{s_2\leq s_1} (\gamma_1,\gamma_2)^*\nu\,.$$

This is essentially the same computation as before, so that the result is

$$\cdots = \int\limits_{\substack{0\leq t\leq 1\\ s_1=s_2}} (\gamma_1, d_2)^*\nu\,.$$

This is indeed the quantity from definition 4.1.26.

□

Applied to the case G = Spin in summary this shows that all these strict smooth 2-groups are indeed presentations of the abstractly defined smooth String 2-group from def. 4.1.10.

Theorem 4.1.29. *We have equivalences of smooth 2-groups*

$$\mathrm{String} \simeq \Omega\mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{so}_\mu) \simeq \mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{BCSS}} \simeq \mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{Mick}}\,.$$

Notice that all the models on the right are degreewise diffeological and in fact Fréchet, but not degreewise finite dimensional. This means that neither of these models is a differentiable stack or Lie groupoid in the traditional sense, even though they are perfectly good models for objects in Smooth∞Grpd. Some authors found this to be a deficiency. Motivated by this it has been shown in [Scho10] that there exist finite dimensional models of the smooth String-group. Observe however the following:

1. If one allows arbitrary disjoint unions of finite dimensional manifolds, then by remark 3.3.11 *every* object in Smooth∞Grpd has a presentation by a simplicial object that is degreewise of this form, even a presentation which is degreewise a union of just Cartesian spaces.

2. Contrary to what one might expect, it is not the degreewise finite dimensional models that seem to lend themselves most directly to differential refinements and differential geometric computations with objects in Smooth∞Grpd, but the models of the form $\mathbf{cosk}_n \exp(\mathfrak{g})$. See also the discussion in 4.4.4 below.

4.1.4 Smooth fivebrane structure and the Fivebrane-6-group

We now climb up one more step in the smooth Whitehead tower of the orthogonal group, to find a smooth and differential refinement of the *Fivebrane group.*

Proposition 4.1.30. *Pulled back along $B\mathrm{String} \to BO$ the second Pontryagin class is 6 times a generator $\frac{1}{6}p_2$ of $H^8(B\mathrm{String},\mathbb{Z}) \simeq \mathbb{Z}$:*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B\mathrm{String} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{6}p_2} & B^8\mathbb{Z} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow{\cdot 6} \\ B\mathrm{Spin} & \xrightarrow{p_2} & B^8\mathbb{Z} \end{array}\,.$$

This is due to [Bott58]. We call $\frac{1}{6}p_2$ the *second fractional Pontryagin class* .

Definition 4.1.31. Write BFivebrane for the homotopy fiber of the second fractional Pontryagin class in Top $\simeq \infty$Grpd

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B\mathrm{Fivebrane} & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ B\mathrm{String} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{6}p_2} & B^8\mathbb{Z} \end{array} .$$

Write

$$\mathrm{Fivebrane} := \Omega B\mathrm{Fivebrane}$$

for its loop space, the topological *fivebrane* ∞*-group*.

This is the next step in the topological Whitehead tower of O after String, often denoted $O\langle 7\rangle$. For a discussion of its role in the physics of super-Fivebranes that gives it its name here in analogy to String $= O\langle 3\rangle$ see [SSS09b]. See also [DoHeHi10], around remark 2.8. We now construct smooth and then differential refinements of this object.

Theorem 4.1.32. *The image under Lie integration, 3.3.9, of the canonical Lie algebra 7-cocycle*

$$\mu_7 = \langle -, [-,-], [-,-], [-,-]\rangle : \mathfrak{so}_{\mu_3} \to b^6\mathbb{R}$$

on the string Lie 2-algebra $\mathfrak{so}_{\mu_3}$*, def. 4.1.15, is a morphism in* Smooth∞Grpd *of the form*

$$\frac{1}{6}\mathbf{p}_2 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String} \to \mathbf{B}^7 U(1)$$

whose image under the the fundamental ∞*-groupoid* ∞*-functor/ geometric realization, 3.2.2,* Π : Smooth∞Grpd $\to$ ∞Grpd *is the ordinary second fractional Pontryagin class* $\frac{1}{6}p_2 : B\mathrm{String} \to B^8\mathbb{Z}$ *in* Top*. We call* $\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2 := \exp(\mu_7)$ *the* second smooth fractional Pontryagin class

Moreover, the corresponding refined differential characteristic cocycle, 3.3.12,

$$\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2 : \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(-, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}) \to \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(-, \mathbf{B}^7 U(1))\,,$$

induces in cohomology the ordinary refined Chern-Weil homomorphism [HoSi05]

$$[\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2] : H^1_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X, \mathrm{String}) \to H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X)$$

of $\langle -,-,-,-\rangle$ *restricted to those* Spin*-principal bundles* P *that have* String*-lifts*

$$[P] \in H^1_{\mathrm{smooth}}(X, \mathrm{String}) \hookrightarrow H^1_{\mathrm{smooth}}(X, \mathrm{Spin})\,.$$

Proof. This is shown in [FSS10]. The proof is analogous to that of prop. 4.1.9. □

Definition 4.1.33. Write $\mathbf{B}$Fivebrane for the homotopy fiber in Smooth∞Grpd of the smooth refinement of the second fractional Pontryagin class, prop. 4.1.32:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Fivebrane} & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{6}\mathbf{p}_2} & \mathbf{B}^7 U(1) \end{array} .$$

We say its loop space object is the *smooth fivebrane 6-group*

$$\mathrm{Fivebrane}_{\mathrm{smooth}} := \Omega\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Fivebrane}\,.$$

This has been considered in [SSS09c]. Similar discussion as for the smooth String 2-group applies.

4.2 Higher Spin^c-structures

In 4.1 we saw that the classical extension

$$\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{Spin}(n) \to \mathrm{SO}(n)$$

is only the first step in a tower of *smooth* higher spin groups.

There is another classical extension of $\mathrm{SO}(n)$, not by $\mathbb{Z}_2$ but by the circle group [LaMi89]:

$$U(1) \to \mathrm{Spin}^c(n) \to \mathrm{SO}(n)\,.$$

Here we discuss higher smooth analogs of this construction.

This section draws form [FiSaScIII].

We find below that Spin^c is a special case of the following simple general notion, that turns out to be useful to identify and equip with a name.

Definition 4.2.1. Let $\mathbf{H}$ be an ∞-topos, $G \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$ an ∞-group object, let A be an abelian group object and let

$$\mathbf{p} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A$$

be a characteristic map. Write $\hat{G} \to G$ for the extension classified by $\mathbf{p}$, exhibited by a fiber sequence

$$\mathbf{B}^n A \to \hat{G} \to G$$

in $\mathbf{H}$. Then for $H \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$ any other ∞-group with characteristic map of the same form

$$\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}H \to \mathbf{B}^{n+1}A$$

we write

$$\hat{G}^{\mathbf{c}} := \Omega\left(\mathbf{B}G_{\mathbf{p}} \times_{\mathbf{c}} \mathbf{B}H\right) \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathbf{H})$$

for the loop space object of the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\hat{G}^{\mathbf{c}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}H \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\mathbf{c}} \\ \mathbf{B}G & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{p}} & \mathbf{B}^n A \end{array} \,.$$

4.2.1 Spin^c as a homotopy fiber product in $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$

A classical definition of Spin^c is the following (for instance [LaMi89]).

Definition 4.2.2. For each $n \in \mathbb{N}$ the Lie group $\mathrm{Spin}^c(n)$ is the fiber product of Lie groups

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{Spin}^c(n) &:= \mathrm{Spin}(n) \times_{\mathbb{Z}_2} U(1) \\ &= (\mathrm{Spin}(n) \times U(1))/\mathbb{Z}_2\,, \end{aligned}$$

where the quotient is by the canonical subgroup embeddings.

We observe now that in the context of $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ this Lie group has the following intrinsic characterization.

Proposition 4.2.3. *In* $\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *we have an* ∞*-pullback diagram of the form*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}^c & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}U(1) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\mathbf{c}_1 \mathrm{mod} 2} \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO} & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{w}_2} & \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 \end{array} \,,$$

where the right morphism is the smooth universal first Chern class, example 1.3.64, composed with the mod-2 reduction $\mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbf{B}\mathbb{Z}_2$*, and where* $\mathbf{w}_2$ *is the smooth universal second Stiefel-Whiteney class, example 1.3.68.*

Proof. By the discussion at these examples, these universal smooth classes are represented by spans of simplicial presheaves

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{ch}} & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}_1} & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to 1)_{\mathrm{ch}} & = & \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z} \\ \downarrow \simeq & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{ch}} & & & & \end{array}$$

and

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{Spin})_{\mathrm{ch}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to 1)_{\mathrm{ch}} & = & \mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z}_2)_{\mathrm{ch}} \\ \downarrow \simeq & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}_{\mathrm{ch}} & & & & \end{array} .$$

Here both horizontal morphism are fibrations in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. Therefore by prop. 2.1.52 the ∞-pullback in question is given by the ordinary fiber product of these two morphisms. This is

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathrm{Spin} \times \mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{ch}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{ch}} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \stackrel{\mathrm{mod}2}{\to} \mathrm{Spin})_{\mathrm{ch}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to 1)_{\mathrm{ch}} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{Spin})_{\mathrm{ch}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to 1)_{\mathrm{ch}} \end{array} ,$$

where the crossed module $(\mathbb{Z} \stackrel{\partial}{\to} \mathrm{Spin} \times \mathbb{R})$ is given by

$$\partial : n \mapsto (n \bmod 2, n) .$$

Since this is a monomorphism, including (over the neutral element) the fiber of a locally trivial bundle we have an equivalence

$$\mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z} \to \mathrm{Spin} \times \mathbb{R}) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}(\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathrm{Spin} \times U(1)) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{B}(\mathrm{Spin} \times_{\mathbb{Z}_2} U(1))$$

in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. On the right is, by def. 4.2.2, the delooping of Spin^c. □

Remark 4.2.4. Therefore by def. 4.2.1 we have

$$\mathrm{Spin}^c \simeq \mathrm{Spin}^{\mathbf{c}_1 \mathrm{mod} 2} ,$$

which is the very motivation for the notation in that definition.

4.2.2 Smooth $\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{c}_2}$

We consider smooth 2-groups of the form $\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{c}}$, according to def. 4.2.1, where $\mathbf{B}U(1) \to \mathrm{String} \to \mathrm{Spin}$ in Smooth∞Grpd is the smooth String-2-group extension of the Spin-group from def. 4.1.10.

In [Sa10b] the following notion is introduced.

Definition 4.2.5. Let

$$p_1^c : B\mathrm{Spin}^c \to B\mathrm{Spin} \stackrel{\frac{1}{2}p_1}{\to} K(\mathbb{Z}, 4)$$

in $\mathrm{Top} \simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$, where the first map is induced on classifying spaces by the defining projection, def. 4.2.2, and where the second represents the fractional Pontryagin class from prop. 4.1.5.

Then write String^c for the topological group, well defined up to weak homotopy equivalence, that models the loop space of the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B\mathrm{String}^c & \longrightarrow & (BU(1)) \times (BU(1)) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{c_1 \cup c_1} \\ B\mathrm{Spin}^c & \xrightarrow{p_1^c} & K(\mathbb{Z}, 4) \end{array}$$

in Top.

This construction, and the role it plays in [Sa10b], is evidently an example of general structure of def. 4.2.1, the notation of which is motivated from this example. We consider now smooth and differential refinements of such objects.

To that end, recall from theorem. 4.1.9 the smooth refinement of the first fractional Pontryagin class

$$\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)$$

and from def. 4.1.10 the defining fiber sequence

$$\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String} \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \stackrel{\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1}{\to} \mathbf{B}^3 U(1) \,.$$

The proof of theorem 4.1.9 rests only on the fact that Spin is a compact and simply connected simple Lie group. The same is true for SU and the exceptional Lie group E_8.

Proposition 4.2.6. *The first two non-vanishing homotopy groups of E_8 are*

$$\pi_3(E_8) \simeq \mathbb{Z}$$

and

$$\pi_{15}(E_8) \simeq \mathbb{Z} \,.$$

This is a classical fact[BoSa58]. It follows with the Hurewicz theorem that

$$H^4(BE_8, \mathbb{Z}) \simeq \mathbb{Z} \,.$$

Therefore the generator of this group is, up to sign, a canonical characteristic class, which we write

$$[a] \in H^4(BE_8, \mathbb{Z})$$

corresponding to a characeristic map $a : BE_8 \to K(\mathbb{Z}, 4)$. Therefore we obtain analogously the following statements.

Corollary 4.2.7. *The second Chern-class*

$$c_2 : B\mathrm{SU} \to \mathbb{K}(\mathbb{Z}, 4)$$

has an essentially unique lift through $\Pi : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \simeq \mathrm{Top}$ *to a morphism of the form*

$$\mathbf{c}_2 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SU} \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)$$

and a representative is provided by the Lie integration $\exp(\mu_3^{\mathfrak{su}})$ *of the canonical Lie algebra 3-cocycle* $\mu_3^{\mathfrak{su}} : \mathfrak{su} \to b^2\mathbb{R}$

$$\mathbf{c}_2 \simeq \exp(\mu_3^{\mathfrak{su}}) \,.$$

Similarly the characteristic map

$$a : BE_8 \to \mathbb{K}(\mathbb{Z}, 4)$$

has an essentially unique lift through $\Pi : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \simeq \mathrm{Top}$ *to a morphism of the form*

$$\mathbf{a} : \mathbf{B}E_8 \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)$$

and a representative is provided by the Lie integration $\exp(\mu_3^{\mathfrak{e}_8})$ *of the canonical Lie algebra 3-cocycle* $\mu_3^{\mathfrak{e}_8} : \mathfrak{e}_8 \to b^2\mathbb{R}$

$$\mathbf{a} \simeq \exp(\mu_3^{\mathfrak{e}_8})\,.$$

Therefore we are entitled to the following special case of def. 4.2.1.

Definition 4.2.8. The smooth 2-group

$$\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{c}_2} \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd})$$

is the loop space object of the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{c}_2} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SU} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\mathbf{c}_2} \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1} & \mathbf{B}^3 U(1) \end{array} .$$

Analogously, the smooth 2-group

$$\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{a}} \in \infty\mathrm{Grp}(\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd})$$

is the loop space object of the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{a}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}E_8 \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\mathbf{a}} \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1} & \mathbf{B}^3 U(1) \end{array} .$$

We consider now a presentation of $\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{a}}$ by Lie integration,

Definition 4.2.9. Let

$$(\mathfrak{so} \otimes \mathfrak{e}_8)_{\mu_3^{\mathfrak{so}} - \mu_3^{\mathfrak{e}_8}} \in L_\infty\mathrm{Alg}$$

be the L_∞-algebra extension, according to def. 3.3.88, of the product Lie algebra $\mathfrak{so} \otimes \mathfrak{e}_8$ by the difference of the canonical 3-cocycles on the two factors.

Proposition 4.2.10. *The Lie integration, def. 3.3.45, of The Lie 2-algebra* $\mathfrak{so} \otimes \mathfrak{e}_8)_{\mu_3^{\mathfrak{so}} - \mu_3^{\mathfrak{e}_8}}$ *is a presentation of* $\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{a}}$*:*

$$\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{a}} \simeq \tau_2 \exp\left(\mathfrak{so} \otimes \mathfrak{e}_8)_{\mu_3^{\mathfrak{so}} - \mu_3^{\mathfrak{e}_8}}\right)$$

Proof. This is directly analogous to prop. 4.1.17. ∎

Remark 4.2.11. Therefore a 2-connection on a $\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{a}}$-principal 2-bundle is locally given by

- an $\mathfrak{so}$-valued 1-form ω;
- an $\mathfrak{e}_8$-valued 1-form A;
- a 2-form B

such that the 3-form curvature of B is, locally,

$$H_3 = dB + \mathrm{cs}(\omega) - \mathrm{cs}(A)\,.$$

We discuss the role of such 2-connections in string theory below in 4.4.4.2.

4.3 Classical supergravity

Action functionals of *supergravity* are extensions to super-geometry, 3.5, of the *Einstein-Hilbert action functional* that models the physics of *gravity*. While these action functionals are not themselves, generally, of higher Chern-Simons type, 2.3.17, or of higher Wess-Zumino-Witten type, 2.3.18, some of them are low-energy effective actions of *super string field theory* action functionals, that are of this type, as we discuss below in 4.6.5. Accordingly, supergravity action functionals typically exhibit rich Chern-Simons-like substructures.

A traditional introduction to the general topic can be found in [DM99]. A textbook that aims for a more systematic formalization is [CaDAFr91]. Below in 4.3.3 we observe that the discussion of supergravity there is secretly in terms of ∞-connections, 1.3.5.6, with values in super L_∞-algebras, 3.5.1.

- 4.3.1 – First-order/gauge theory formulation of gravity
- 4.3.2 – Higher extensions of the super Poincaré Lie algebra;
- 4.3.3 – Supergravity fields are super L_∞-connections

4.3.1 First-order/gauge theory formulation of gravity

The field theory of gravity ("general relativity") has a natural *first order formulation* where a field configuration over a given $(d+1)$-dimensional manifold X is given by a $\mathfrak{iso}(d,1)$-valued Cartan connection, def. 3.4.35. The following statements briefly review this and related facts (see for instance also the review in the introduction of [Zane05]).

Definition 4.3.1. For $d \in \mathbb{N}$, the *Poincaré group* $\mathrm{ISO}(d,1)$ is the group of auto-isometries of the Minkowski space $\mathbb{R}^{d,1}$ equipped with its canonical pseudo-Riemannian metric η.

This is naturally a Lie group. Its Lie algebra is the *Poincaré Lie algebra* $\mathfrak{iso}(d,1)$.

We recall some standard facts about the Poincaré group.

Observation 4.3.2. The Poncaré group is the semidirect product

$$\mathrm{ISO}(d,1) \simeq \mathrm{O}(d,1) \ltimes \mathbb{R}^{d+1}$$

of the *Lorentz group* $\mathrm{O}(d,1)$ of *linear* auto-isometries of $\mathbb{R}^{d,1}$, and the abelian translation group in $(d+1)$ dimensions, with respect to the defining action of $\mathrm{O}(d,1)$ on $\mathbb{R}^{d,1}$. Accordingly there is a canonical embedding of Lie groups

$$O(d,1) \hookrightarrow \mathrm{ISO}(d,1)$$

and the corresponding coset space is Minkowski space

$$\mathrm{ISO}(d,1)/\mathrm{O}(d,1) \simeq \mathbb{R}^{d,1} .,$$

Analogously the Poincaré Lie algebra is the semidirect product

$$\mathfrak{iso}(d,1) \simeq \mathfrak{so}(d,1) \ltimes \mathbb{R}^{d,1} ,$$

Accordingly there is a canonical embedding of Lie algebras

$$\mathfrak{so}(d,1) \hookrightarrow \mathfrak{iso}(d,1)$$

and the corresponding quotient of vector spaces is Minkowski space

$$\mathfrak{iso}(d,1)/\mathfrak{so}(d,1) \simeq \mathbb{R}^{d,1} .$$

Minkowski space $\mathbb{R}^{d,1}$ is the local model for *Lorentzian manifolds*.

Definition 4.3.3. A *Lorentzian manifold* is a pseudo-Riemannian manifold (X, g) such that each tangent space $(T_x X, g_x)$ for any $x \in X$ is isometric to a Minkowski space $(\mathbb{R}^{d,1}, \eta)$.

Proposition 4.3.4. *Equivalence classes of* $(O(d,1) \hookrightarrow \mathrm{ISO}(d,1))$*-valued Cartan connections, def. 3.4.35, on a smooth manifold* X *are in canonical bijection with Lorentzian manifold structures on* X*.*

This follows from the following observations.

Observation 4.3.5. Locally over a patch $U \to X$ a $\mathfrak{iso}(d,1)$ connection is given by a 1-form

$$A = (E, \Omega) \in \Omega^1(U, \mathfrak{iso}(d,1))$$

with a component

$$E \in \Omega^1(U, \mathbb{R}^{d+1})$$

and a component

$$\Omega \in \Omega^1(U, \mathfrak{so}(d,1)) \,.$$

If this comes from a $(\mathrm{O}(d,1) \to \mathrm{ISO}(d,1))$-*Cartan connection* then E is non-degenerate in that for all $x \in X$ the induced linear map

$$E : T_x X \to \mathbb{R}^{d+1}$$

is a linear isomorphism. In this case X is equipped with the Lorentzian metric

$$g := E^* \eta$$

and Ω is naturally identified with a compatible metric connection on TX. Then curvature 2-form of the connection

$$F_A = (F_\Omega, F_E) \in \Omega^2(U, \mathfrak{iso}(d,1))$$

has as components the *Riemann curvature*

$$F_\Omega = d\Omega + \frac{1}{2}[\Omega \wedge \Omega] \in \Omega^2(U, \mathfrak{so}(d,1))$$

of the metric connection, as well as the *torsion*

$$F_E = dE + [\Omega \wedge E] \in \Omega^2(U, \mathbb{R}^{d,1}) \,.$$

Therefore precisely if in addition the torsion vanishes is Ω uniquely fixed to be the Levi-Civita connection on (X, g).

Therefore the configuration space of gravity on a smooth manifold X may be identified with the moduli space of $\mathfrak{iso}(d,1)$-valued Cartan connections on X. The field content of *supergravity* is obtained from this by passing from the to Poincaré Lie algebra to one of its *super Lie algeba extensions*, a *super Poincaré* Lie algebra.

There are different such extensions. All involve some spinor representation of the Lorentz Lie algebra $\mathfrak{so}(d,1)$ as odd-degree elements in the super Lie algebra The choice of number N of irreps in this representation. But there are in general more choices, given by certain exceptional *polyvector extensions* of such super-Poincaré-Lie algebras which contain also new even-graded elements.

Below we show that these Lie superalgebra polyvector extensions , in turn, are induced from canonical *super* L_∞*-algebra extensions* given by exceptional super Lie algebra cocycles, and that the configuration spaces of higher dimensional supergravity may be identified with moduli spaces of ∞-connections, 1.3.5, withvalues in a super L_∞-algebra, def. 3.5.13. that arise as higher central extensions, def. 3.3.88, of a super Poincaré Lie algebra.

4.3.2 L_∞-extensions of the super Poincaré Lie algebra

4.3.2.1 The super Poincaré Lie algebra

Definition 4.3.6. For $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and S a spinor representation of $\mathfrak{so}(n,1)$, the corresponding *super Poincar'e Lie algebra* $\mathfrak{sIso}(n,1)$ is the super Lie algebra whose Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{sIso}(10,1)$ is generated from

1. generators $\{\omega^{ab}\}$ in degree $(1, \mathrm{even})$ dual to the standard basis of $\mathfrak{so}(n,1)$,
2. generators $\{e^a\}$ in degree $(1, \mathrm{even})$
3. and generators $\{\psi^\alpha\}$ in degree $(1, \mathrm{odd})$, dual to the spinor representation S

with differential defined by

$$d_{\mathrm{CE}}\omega^a{}_b = \omega^a{}_c \wedge \omega^c{}_d$$

$$d_{\mathrm{CE}}e^a = \omega^a{}_b \wedge e^b + \frac{i}{2}\bar{\psi} \wedge \Gamma^a \psi$$

$$d_{\mathrm{CE}}\psi = \frac{1}{4}\omega^{ab}\Gamma_{ab}\psi \,,$$

where $\{\Gamma^a\}$ is the corresponding representation of the Clifford algebra $\mathrm{Cl}_{n,1}$ on S, and here and in the following $\Gamma^{a_1 \cdots a_k}$ is shorthand for the skew-symmetrization of the matrix product $\Gamma^{a_1} \cdot \cdots \cdot \Gamma^{a_k}$ in the k indices.

4.3.2.2 11d SuGra Lie 3-algebra and the M-theory Lie algebra We discuss an exceptional extension of the super Poincaré Lie algebra in 11-dimensions by a super Lie 3-algebra and further by super Lie 6-algebra. We show that the corresponding automorphism L_∞-algebra contains the polyvector extension called the *M-theory super Lie algebra*.

Proposition 4.3.7. *For $(n,1) = (10,1)$ and S the canonical spinor representation, we have an exceptional super Lie algebra cohomology class in degree 4*

$$[\mu_4] \in H^{2,2}(\mathfrak{siso}(10,1))$$

with a representative is given by

$$\mu_4 := \frac{1}{2}\bar{\psi} \wedge \Gamma^{ab}\psi \wedge e_a \wedge e_b \,.$$

This is due to [DAFr82].

Definition 4.3.8. The *11d-supergravity super Lie 3-algebra* $\mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1)$ is the $b\mathbb{R}$-extension of $\mathfrak{siso}(10,1)$ classified by μ_4, according to prop. 3.3.92

$$b^2\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1) \to \mathfrak{siso}(10,1) \,.$$

In terms of its Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra this extension was first considered in [DAFr82].

Definition 4.3.9. The *polyvector extension* [ACDP03] of $\mathfrak{siso}(10,1)$ is the super Lie algebra obtained by adjoining generators $\{Q_\alpha, Z^{ab}\}$ with brackets

$$[Q_\alpha, Q_\beta] = i(C\Gamma^a)_{\alpha\beta}P_a + (C\Gamma_{ab})Z^{ab}$$

$$[Q_\alpha, Z^{ab}] = 2i(C\Gamma^{[a})_{\alpha\beta}Q^{b]\beta} \,.$$

Proposition 4.3.10. *The automorphism super L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{der}(\mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1))$, def. 1.3.78, contains the polyvector extension of the 11d-super Poinceré algebra, def. 4.3.9 precisely as its graded Lie algebra of exact elements.*

Proof. This is secretly what [Ca95] shows. □

Proposition 4.3.11. *There is a nontrivial degree-7 class* $[\mu_7] \in H^{5,2}(\mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1))$ *in the super-*L_∞*-algebra cohomology of the supergravity Lie 3-algebra, a cocycle representative of which is*

$$\mu_7 := -\frac{1}{2}\bar{\psi} \wedge \Gamma^{a_1 \cdots a_5}\psi \wedge e_{a_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge e_{a_5} - \frac{13}{2}\bar{\psi} \wedge \Gamma^{a_1 a_2}\psi \wedge e_{a_1} \wedge e_{s_2} \wedge c_3 \,,$$

where c_3 *is the extra generator of degree 3 in* $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1))$.

This is due to [DAFr82].

Definition 4.3.12. The *supergravity Lie 6-algebra* $\mathfrak{sugra}_6(10,1)$ is the $b^5\mathbb{R}$-extension of $\mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1)$ classified by μ_7, according to prop. 3.3.92

$$b^5\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{sugra}_6(10,1) \to \mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1)\,.$$

4.3.3 Supergravity fields are super L_∞-connections

Among the varied literature in theoretical physics on the topic of *supergravity* the book [CaDAFr91] and the research program that it summarizes, starting with [DAFr82], stands out as an attempt to identify and make use of a systematic mathematical structure controlling the general theory. By careful comparison one can see that the notions considered in that book may be translated into notions considered here under the following dictionary

- "FDA": the Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$ of a super L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ (def. 3.5.13), def. 3.4.10;
- "soft group manifold": the Weil algebra $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ of $\mathfrak{g}$, def. 3.3.89
- "field configuration": $\mathfrak{g}$-valued ∞-connection, def. 1.3.5.6
- "field strength": curvature of $\mathfrak{g}$-valued ∞-connection, def. 1.3.98
- "horizontality condition": second ∞-Ehresmann condition, remark 1.3.107
- "cosmo-cocycle condition": characterization of $\mathfrak{g}$-Chern-Simons elements, def. 3.3.101, to first order in the curvatures;

All the super L_∞-algebras $\mathfrak{g}$ appearing in [CaDAFr91] are higher shifted central extensions, in the sense of prop. 3.3.92, of the super-Poincaré Lie algebra.

4.3.3.1 The graviton and the gravitino

Example 4.3.13. For X a supermanifold and $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{s}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{so}(n,1)$ the super Poincaré Lie algebra from def. 4.3.6, $\mathfrak{g}$-valued differential form data

$$A : TX \to \mathfrak{siso}(n,1)$$

consists of

1. an $\mathbb{R}^{n+1}$-valued even 1-form $E \in \Omega^1(X, \mathbb{R}^{n+1})$ – the *vielbein*, identified as the propagating part of the *graviton* field;
2. an $\mathfrak{so}(n,1)$-valued even 1-form $\Omega \in \Omega^1(X, \mathfrak{so}(n,1))$ – the *spin connection*, identified as the non-propagating auxiliary part of the graviton field;
3. a spin-representaton -valued odd 1-form $\Psi \in \Omega^1(X, S)$ – identified as the *gravitino field*.

4.3.3.2 The 11d supergravity C_3-field

Example 4.3.14. For $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1)$ the 11d-supergravity super Lie 3-algebra from def. 4.3.8, a $\mathfrak{g}$-valued form

$$A : TX \to \mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1)$$

consists in addition to the field content of a $\mathfrak{siso}(10,1)$-connection from example 4.3.13 of

- a 3-form $C_3 \in \Omega^3(X)$.

This 3-form field is the local incarnation of what is called the *supergravity C_3-field*. The global nature of this field is discussed in 4.4.5.

4.3.3.3 The magnetic dual 11d supergravity C_6-field

Example 4.3.15. For $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{sugra}_6(10,1)$ the 11d-supergravity Lie 6-algebra, def. 4.3.12, a $\mathfrak{g}$-valued form

$$A : TX \to \mathfrak{sugra}_6(10,1)$$

consists in addition to the field content of a $\mathfrak{sugra}_3(10,1)$-connection given in remark 4.3.14 of

- a 6-form $C_6 \in \Omega^3(X)$ – the dual *supergravity C-field*.

The identification of this field content is also due to the analysis of [DAFr82].

4.4 Twisted differential c-structures

The definition of differential cohomology, 2.3.14, is a special case of the definition of twisted cohomology, 2.3.5. It is natural to iterate these constructions and consider twists by differential cohomology classes. Following [SSS09c], we shall speak of *twisted differential* $\mathbf{c}$*-structures*.

These appear in various guises in string theory, which we discuss in

- 4.4.1 – Twisted topological c-structures in String theory.

Below we discuss the following differential refinements and applications.

- 4.4.2 – Twisted differential $\mathbf{c}_1$-structures
- 4.4.3 – Twisted differential spin^c-structures
- 4.4.4 – Higher differential spin structures: string and fivebrane structures
- 4.4.4.1 – L_∞-Čech cocycles for differential string structures
- 4.4.4.2 – The Green-Schwarz mechanism in heterotic supergravity
- 4.4.5 – The supergravity C-field
- 4.4.6 – Differential T-duality

The discussion in this section draws from [FiSaScI].

Recall the general situation of *twisted cohomology* from 2.3.5. Here we shall use the following terminology, to connect to usage in the literature for the classes of examples to follow.

Definition 4.4.1. For $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^n A$ a characteristic map in a cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$, define for any $X \in \mathbf{H}$ the ∞-groupoid $\mathbf{c}\mathrm{Struc}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X)$ to be the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{c}\mathrm{Struc}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tw}} & H^n(X, A) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G) & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n A) \end{array} ,$$

where the vertical morphism on the right is the essentially unique effective epimorphism that picks on point in every connected component.

Let now $\mathbf{H}$ be a cohesive ∞-topos that canonically contains the circle group $A = U(1)$, such as Smooth∞Grpd and its variants. Then by 3.3.11 the intrinsic differential cohomology with $U(1)$-coefficients reproduces traditional ordinary differential cohomology and by 3.3.12 we have models for the ∞-connection coefficients $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$. Using this we consider the differential refinement of def. 4.4.1 as follows.

Definition 4.4.2. For $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ a characteristic map as above, and for $\hat{\mathbf{c}} : \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ a differential refinement, we write $\hat{\mathbf{c}}\mathrm{Struc}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X)$ for the corresponding twisted cohomology, def. 2.3.45,

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \hat{\mathbf{c}}\mathrm{Struc}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tw}} & H^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, U(1)) \\ \downarrow{\scriptstyle \chi} & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}) & \xrightarrow{\hat{\mathbf{c}}} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}) \end{array} ,$$

We say $\hat{\mathbf{c}}\mathrm{Struc}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X)$ is the ∞-groupoid of *twisted differential* $\mathbf{c}$*-structures* on X.

4.4.1 Twisted topological c-structures in String theory

We discuss here cohomological conditions arising from anomaly cancellation in String theory, for various σ-models. In each case we introduce a corresponding notion of topological *twisted structures* and interpret the anomaly cancellation condition in terms of these. This prepares the ground for the material in the following sections, where the differential refinement of these twisted structures is considered and the *differential* anomaly-free field configurations are derived from these.

- 4.4.1.1 – The type II superstring and twisted Spin^c-structures;
- 4.4.1.2 – The heterotic/type I superstring and twisted String-structures;
- 4.4.1.3 – The M2-brane and twisted String^{2a}-structures;
- 4.4.1.4 – The NS-5-brane and twisted Fivebrane-structures;
- 4.4.1.5 – The M5-brane and twisted $\mathrm{Fivebrane}^{2a\cup 2a}$-structures

The content of this section is taken from [SSS09c].

The physics of all the cases we consider involves a manifold X – the *target space* – or a submanifold $Q \hookrightarrow X$ thereof– a *D-brane* –, equipped with

- two principal bundles with their canonically associated vector bundles:
  - a Spin-principal bundle underlying the tangent bundle TX (and we will write TX also to denote that Spin-principal bundle),
  - and a complex vector bundle $E \to X$ – the "gauge bundle" – associated to a $SU(n)$-principal bundle or to an E_8-principal bundle with respect to a unitary representation of E_8;
- and an n-gerbe / circle $(n+1)$-bundle with class $H^{n+2}(X, \mathbb{Z})$ – the higher background gauge field – denoted $[H_3]$ or $[G_4]$ or similar in the following.

All these structures are equipped with a suitable notion of *connetions*, locally given by some differential-form data. The connection on the Spin-bundle encodes the field of gravity, that on the gauge bundle a Yang-Mills field and that on the n-gerbe a higher analog of the electromagnetic field.

The σ-model quantum field theory of a super-brane propagating in such a background (for instance the superstring, or the super 5-brane) has an effective action functional on its bosonic worldvolume fields that takes values, in general, in the fibers of the Pfaffian line bundle of a worldvolume Dirac operator, tensored with a line bundle that remembers the electric and magnetic charges of the higher gauge field. Only if this tensor product *anomaly line bundle* is trivializable is the effective bosonic action a well-defined starting point for quantization of the σ-model. Therefore the Chern-class of this line bundle over the bosonic configuration space is called the *global anomaly* of the system. Conditions on the background gauge fields that ensure that this class vanishes are called *global anomaly cancellation conditions*. These turn out to be conditions on cohomology classes that are characteristic of the above background fields. This is what we discuss now.

But moreover, the anomaly line bundle is canonicaly equipped with a *connection*, induced from the connections of the background gauge fields, hence induced from their *differential cohomology* data. The curvature 2-form of this connection over the bosonic configuration space is called the *local anomaly* of the σ-model. Conditions on the differential data of the background gauge field that canonically induce a trivialization of this 2-fom are called *local anomaly cancellation conditions*. These we consider below in section 4.4.4.

The phenomenon of anomaly line bundles of σ-models induced from background field differential cohomology is classical in the physics literature, if only in broad terms. A clear exposition is in [Free00]. Only recently the special case of the heterotic string σ-model for trivial background gauge bundle has been made fully precise in [Bunk09], using a certain model [Wald09] for the differential string structures that we discuss in section 4.4.4.

4.4.1.1 The type II superstring and twisted Spin^c**-structures** The open type II string propagating on a Spin-manifold X in the presence of a background B-field with class $[H_3] \in H^3(X, \mathbb{Z})$ and with endpoints fixed on a D-brane given by an oriented submanifold $Q \hookrightarrow X$, has a global worldsheet anomaly that vanishes if [FrWi] and only if [EvSa06] the condition

$$[W_3(Q)] + [H_3]|_Q = 0 \quad \in H^3(Q; \mathbb{Z}) \,, \tag{4.4}$$

holds. Here $[W_3(Q)]$ is the third integral Stiefel-Whitney class of the tangent bundle TQ of the brane and $[H_3]_Q$ denotes the restriction of $[H_3]$ to Q.

Notice that $[W_3(Q)]$ is the obstruction to lifting the orientation structure on Q to a Spin^c-structure. More precisely, in terms of homotopy theory this is formulated as follows, 4.2.1. There is a homotopy pullback diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B\mathrm{Spin}^c & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ B\mathrm{SO} & \xrightarrow{W_3} & B^2U(1) \end{array} \tag{4.5}$$

of topological spaces, where $B\mathrm{SO}$ is the classifying space of the special orthogonal group, where $B^2U(1) \simeq K(\mathbb{Z}, 3)$ is homotopy equivalent to the Eilenberg-MacLane space that classifies degree-3 integral cohomology, and where the continuous map denoted W_3 is a representative of the universal class $[W_3]$ under this classification. This homotopy pullback exhibits the classifying space of the group Spin^c as the homotopy fiber of W_3. The universal property of the homotopy pullback says that the space of continuous maps $Q \to B\mathrm{Spin}^c$ is the same (is homotopy equivalent to) the space of maps $o_Q : Q \to B\mathrm{SO}$ that are equipped with a homotopy from the composite $Q \xrightarrow{o_Q} B\mathrm{SO}W_3 \longrightarrow B^3U(1)$ to the trivial cocycle $Q \to * \to B^3U(1)$. In other words, for every choice of homotopy filling the outer diagram of

$$\begin{array}{cccc} Q & & & \\ & \searrow^{\text{(dashed)}} & & \searrow \\ & & B\mathrm{Spin}^c & \longrightarrow & * \\ & {\scriptstyle o_Q}\searrow & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ & & B\mathrm{SO} & \xrightarrow{W_3} & B^2U(1) \end{array}$$

there is a contractible space of choices for the dashed arrow such that everything commutes up to homotopy. Since a choice of map $o_Q : Q \to B\mathrm{SO}$ is an *orienation structure* on Q, and a choice of map $Q \to B\mathrm{Spin}^c$ is a Spin^c-*structure*, this implies that $[W_3(o_Q)]$ is the obstruction to the existence of a Spin^cstructure on Q (equipped with o_Q.

Moreover, since Q is a manifold, the functor $\mathrm{Maps}(Q, -)$ that forms mapping spaces out of Q preserves homotopy pullbacks. Since $\mathrm{Maps}(Q, B\mathrm{SO})$ is the *space* of orientation structures, we can refine the discussion so far by noticing that the *space of* Spin^c*-structures on* Q, $\mathrm{Maps}(Q, B\mathrm{Spin}^c)$, is itself the homotopy pullback in the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{Maps}(Q, B\mathrm{Spin}^c) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{Maps}(Q, B\mathrm{SO}) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Maps}(Q, W_3)} & \mathrm{Maps}(Q, B^2U(1)) \end{array} \quad . \tag{4.6}$$

A variant of this characterization will be crucial for the definition of (spaces of) *twisted* such structures below.

These kinds of arguments, even though elementary in homotopy theory, are of importance for the interpretation of anomaly cancellation conditions that we consider here. Variants of these arguments (first for other topological structures, then with twists, then refined to smooth and differential structures) will appear over and over again in our discussion

So in the case that the class of the B-field vanishes on the D-brane, $[H_3]|_Q = 0$, hence that its representative $H_3 : Q \to K(\mathbb{Z}, 3)$ factors through the point, up to homotopy, condition (4.4) states that the oriented D-brane Q must admit a Spin^c-structure, namely a choice of null-homotopy η in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} Q & \xrightarrow{o_Q} & B\mathrm{SO} \\ & {}_{H_3|_Q \simeq *}\searrow \;\; \swarrow_{\eta} & \downarrow{\scriptstyle W_3} \\ & & K(\mathbb{Z},3) \end{array} \quad . \tag{4.7}$$

(Beware that there are such homotopies filling *all* our diagrams, but only in some cases, such as here, do we want to make them explicit and given them a name.) If, generally, $[H_3]_Q$ does not necessarily vanish, then condition (4.4) still is equivalent to the existence of a homotopy η in a diagram of the above form:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} Q & \xrightarrow{o_Q} & B\mathrm{SO} \\ & {}_{H_3|_Q}\searrow \;\; \swarrow_{\eta} & \downarrow{\scriptstyle W_3} \\ & & K(\mathbb{Z},3) \end{array} \quad . \tag{4.8}$$

We may think of this as saying that η still "trivializes" $W_3(o_Q)$, but not with respect to the canonical trivial cocycle, but with respect to the given reference background cocycle $H_3|_Q$ of the B-field. Accordingly, following [Wa08], we may say that such an η exhibits not a Spin^c-structure on Q, but an $[H_3]_Q$-*twisted* Spin^c-*structure*.

For this notion to be useful, we need to say what what an equivalence or homotopy between two twisted Spin^c-structures is, what a homotopy between such homotopies is, etc., hence what the *space* of twisted Spin^c-structures is. But by generalization of (4.6) we naturally have such a space.

Definition 4.4.3. For X a manifold and $[c] \in H^3(X, \mathbb{Z})$ a degree-3 cohomology class, we say that the space $W_3\mathrm{Struc}(Q)_{[c]}$ defined as the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} W_3\mathrm{Struc}(Q)_{[H_3]|_Q} & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle c} \\ \mathrm{Maps}(Q, B\mathrm{SO}) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Maps}(Q, W_3)} & \mathrm{Maps}(Q, B^2U(1)) \end{array} \quad , \tag{4.9}$$

is the *space of* $[c]$-*twisted* Spin^c-*structures* on X, where the right vertical morphism picks any representative $c : X \to B^2U(1) \simeq K(\mathbb{Z}, 3)$ of $[c]$.

In terms of this notion, the anomaly cancellation condition (4.4) is now read as being a requirement of *existence of structure*:

Observation 4.4.4. On an oriented manifold Q, condition (4.4) implies the existence of $[H_3]|_Q$-*twisted* W_3-*structure*, provided by a lift of the orientation structure o_Q on TQ through the left vertical morphism in def. 4.9.

This makes good sense, because that extra structure is the extra structure of the background field of the σ-model background, subjected to the condition of anomaly freedom. This we will see in more detail in the following examples, and then in section 4.4.4.

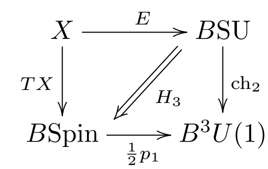
4.4.1.2 The heterotic/type I superstring and twisted String**-structures** The heterotic/type I string, propagating on a Spin-manifold X and coupled to a gauge field given by a Hermitean complex vector bundle $E \to X$, has a global anomaly that vanishes if the *Green-Schwarz anomaly cancellation condition* [GrSc]

$$\frac{1}{2}p_1(TX) - \mathrm{ch}_2(E) = 0 \quad \in H^4(X;\mathbb{Z}) \,. \tag{4.10}$$

holds. Here $\frac{1}{2}p_1(TX)$ is the *first fractional Pontryagin class* of the Spin-bundle, and $\mathrm{ch}_2(E)$ is the second Chern-class of E.

As before, this means that at the level of cocycles a certain homotopy exists. Here it is this homotopy which is the representative of the B-field that the string couples to.

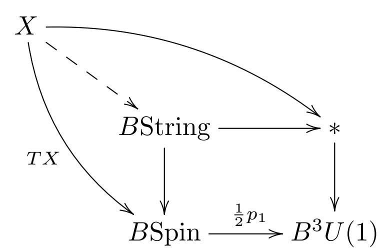
In detail, write $\frac{1}{2}p_1 : B\mathrm{Spin} \to B^3U(1)$ for a representative of the universal first fractional Pontryagin class, prop. 4.1.5, and similarly $\mathrm{ch}_2 : B\mathrm{SU} \to B^3U(1)$ for a representative of the universal second Chern class, where now $B^3U(1) \simeq K(\mathbb{Z}, 4)$ is equivalent to the Eilenberg-MacLane space that classifies degree-4 integral cohomology. Then if $TX : X \to B\mathrm{Spin}$ is a classifying map of the Spin-bundle and $E : X \to B\mathrm{SU}$ one of the gauge bundle, the anomaly cancellation condition above says that there is a homotopy, denoted H_3, in the diagram



. (4.11)

Notice that if both $\frac{1}{2}p_1(TX)$ as well as $\mathrm{ch}_2(E)$ happen to be trivial, such a homotopy is equivalently a map $H_3 : X \to \Omega B^3U(1) \simeq B^2U(1)$. So in this special case the B-field in the background of the heterotic string is a $U(1)$-gerbe, a circle 2-bundle, as in the previous case of the type II string in section 4.4.1.1. Generally, the homotopy H_3 in the above diagram exhibits the B-field as a *twisted* gerbe, whose twist is the difference class $[\frac{1}{2}p_1(TX)] - [\mathrm{ch}_2(E)]$. This is essentially the perspective adopted in [Free00].

For the general discussion of interest here it is useful to slightly shift the perspective on the twist. Recall that a *String structure*, 4.1.3, on the Spin bundle $TX : X \to B\mathrm{Spin}$ is a homotopy filling the outer square of



,

or, which is equivalent by the universal property of homotopy pullbacks, a choice of dashed morphism filling the interior of this square, as indicated.

Therefore, now by analogy with (4.8), we say that a $[\mathrm{ch}_2(E)]$-*twisted string structure* is a choice of homotopy H_3 filling the diagram (4.11).

This notion of twisted string structures was originally suggested in [Wa08]. For it to be useful, we need to say what homotopies of twisted String-structures are, homotopies between these, etc. Hence we need to say what the *space* of twisted String-structures is. This is what the following definition provides, analogous to 4.9.

Definition 4.4.5. For X a manifold, and for $[c] \in H^4(X, \mathbb{Z})$ a degree-4 cohomology class, we say that the space of *c-twisted* String-*structures* on X is the homotopy pullback $\frac{1}{2}p_1\mathrm{Struc}_{[c]}(X)$ in

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \frac{1}{2}p_1\mathrm{Struc}_{[c]}(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{c} \\ \mathrm{Maps}(X, B\mathrm{Spin}) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Maps}(X, \frac{1}{2}p_1)} & \mathrm{Maps}(X, B^3U(1)) \end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical morphism picks a representative c of $[c]$.

In terms of this then, we find

Observation 4.4.6. The anomaly cancellation condition (4.10) is, for a fixed gauge bundle E, precisely the condition that ensures a lift of the given Spin-structure to a $[\mathrm{ch}_2(E)]$-twisted String-structure on X, through the left vertical morphism of def. 4.4.5.

Of course the full background field content involves more than just this topological data, it also consists of local differential form data, such as a 1-form connection on the bundles E and on TX and a connection 2-form on the 2-bundle H_3. Below in section 4.4.4 we identify this *differential* anomaly-free field content with a *differential* twisted String-structure.

4.4.1.3 The M2-brane and twisted String^{2a}**-structures** The string theory backgrounds discussed above have lifts to 11-dimensional supergravity/M-theory, where the bosonic background field content consists of just the Spin-bundle TX as well as the C-field, which has underlying it a 2-gerbe – or *circle 3-bundle* – with class $[G_4] \in H^4(X, \mathbb{Z})$. The M2-brane that couples to these background fields has an anomaly that vanishes [Wi97a] if

$$2[G_4] = [\frac{1}{2}p_1(TX)] - 2[a(E)] \quad \in H^4(X, \mathbb{Z}) , \tag{4.12}$$

where $E \to X$ is an auxiliary E_8-principal bundle, whose class is defined by this condition.

Since E_8 is 15-coskeletal, this condition is equivalent to demanding that $[\frac{1}{2}p_1(TX)] \in H^4(X, \mathbb{Z})$ is further divisible by 2. In the absence of smooth or differential structure, one could therefore replace the E_8-bundle here by a circle 2-gerbe, hence by a $B^2U(1)$-principal bundle, and replace condition (4.12) by

$$2[G_4] = [\frac{1}{2}p_1(TX)] - 2[\mathrm{DD}_2] ,$$

where $[\mathrm{DD}_2]$ is the canonical 4-class of this 2-gerbe (the "second Dixmier-Douady class"). While topologically this condition is equivalent, over an 11-dimensional X, to (4.12), the spaces of solutions of smooth refinements of these two conditions will differ, because the space of smooth gauge transformations between E_8 bundles is quite different from that of smooth gauge transformations between circle 2-bundles. In the Hořava-Witten reduction [HoWi96] of the 11-dimensional theory down to the heterotic string in 10 dimensions, this difference is supposed to be relevant, since the heterotic string in 10 dimensions sees the smooth E_3-bundle with connection.

In either case, we can understand the situation as a refinement of that described by (twisted) String-structures via a higher analogue of the passage from Spin-structures to Spin^c-structures. To that end recall prop. 4.2.3, which provides an alternative perspective on (4.5).

Due to the universal property of the homotopy pullback, this says, in particular, that a lift from an orientation structure to a Spin^c-structure is a cancelling by a Chern-class of the class obstructing a Spin-structure. In this way lifts from orientation structures to Spin^c-structures are analogous to the divisibility condition (4.12), since in both cases the obstruction to a further lift through the Whitehead tower of the orthogonal group is absorbed by a universal "unitary" class.

In order to formalize this we make the following definition.

Definition 4.4.7. For G some topological group, and $c : BG \to K(\mathbb{Z}, 4)$ a universal 4-class, we say that String^c is the loop group of the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B\mathrm{String}^c & \longrightarrow & BG \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{c} \\ B\mathrm{Spin} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}p_1} & B^3U(1) \end{array}$$

of c along the first fractional Pontryagin class.

For instance for $c = \mathrm{DD}_2$ we have that a Spin-structure lifts to a $\mathrm{String}^{2\mathrm{DD}_2}$-structure precisely if $\frac{1}{2}p_1$ is further divisible by 2. Similarly, with $a : BE_8 \to B^3U(1)$ the canonical universal 4-class on E_8-bundles and X a manifold of dimension $\dim X \leq 14$ we have that a Spin-structure on X lifts to a String^{2a}-structure precisely if $\frac{1}{2}p_1$ is further divisible by 2.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} & \nearrow & B\mathrm{String}^{2a} & \longrightarrow & BE_8 \\ & & \downarrow & \searrow^{\frac{1}{4}p_1} & \downarrow^{2a} \\ X & \longrightarrow & B\mathrm{Spin} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}p_1} & B^3U(1) \end{array} \quad . \tag{4.13}$$

Using this we can now reformulate the anomaly cancellation condition (4.12) as follows.

Definition 4.4.8. For X a manifold and for $[c] \in H^4(X, \mathbb{Z})$ a cohomology class, the space $(\frac{1}{2}p_1 - 2a)\mathrm{Struc}_{[c]}(X)$ of $[c]$-*twisted* String^{2a}-*structures* on X is the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} (\frac{1}{2}p_1 - 2a)\mathrm{Struc}_{[c]}(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{c} \\ \mathrm{Maps}(X, B\mathrm{Spin} \times E_8) & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}p_1 - 2a} & \mathrm{Maps}(X, B^3U(1)) \end{array} \quad ,$$

where the right vertical map picks a cocycle c representing the class $[c]$.

In terms of this definition, we have

Observation 4.4.9. Condition (4.12) is precisely the conditon guaranteeing a lift of the given Spin- and the given E_8-principal bundle to a $[G_4]$-*twisted* String^{2a}-*structure* along the left vertical map from def. 4.4.8.

There is a further variation of this situation, that is of interest. In the Hořava-Witten reduction of this situation in 11 dimensions down to the sitation of the heterotic string in 10 dimensions, X has a boundary, $Q := \partial X \hookrightarrow X$, and there is a boundary condition on the C-field, saying that the restriction of its 4-class to the boundary has to vanish,

$$[G_4]|_Q = 0 \, .$$

This implies that over Q the anomaly-cancellation conditon (4.12) becomes

$$[\frac{1}{2}p_1(TX)]|_Q = 2[a(E)]|_Q \quad \in H^4(Q, \mathbb{Z}) \, .$$

This means that over the boundary Q the structure of an anomaly-free field configuration of a background for the M2-brane precisely guarantees a lift of the given Spin-structure not to a String-structure, but to a String^{2a}-structure. Equivalently, from the previous perspective, these are the $[2a]$-twisted String-structures of the Green-Schwarz-anomaly cancellation of section 4.4.1.2. To make this relation precise, notice the following.

Proposition 4.4.10. *For $E \to X$ a fixed E_8-bundle, we have an equivalence*

$$\mathrm{Maps}(X, B\mathrm{String}^{2a})|_E \simeq (\frac{1}{2}p_1)\mathrm{Struc}(X)_{[2a(E)]}$$

between, on the right, the space of $[2a(E)]$-twisted String*-structures from def. 4.4.5, and, on the left, the space of* String^{2a}*-structures with fixed class $2a$, hence the homotopy pullback* $\mathrm{Maps}(X, B\mathrm{String}^{2a}) \times_{\mathrm{Maps}(X, BE_8)} \{E\}$.

Proof. Consider the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
\mathrm{Maps}(X, \mathrm{String}^{2a})|_E & \longrightarrow & * \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow^{E} \\
\mathrm{Maps}(X, \mathrm{String}^{2a}) & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{Maps}(X, BE_8) \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow^{\mathrm{Maps}(X,2a)} \\
\mathrm{Maps}(X, B\mathrm{Spin}) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Maps}(X, \frac{1}{2}p_1)} & \mathrm{Maps}(X, B^3U(1))
\end{array}$$

The top square is a homotopy pullback by definition. Since $\mathrm{Maps}(X, -)$ preserves homotopy pullbacks (for X a manifold, hence a CW-complex), the bottom square is a homotopy pullback by definition 4.4.7. Therefore, by the pasting law, also the total rectangle is a homotopy pullback. With def. 4.4.5 this implies the claim. □

4.4.1.4 The NS-5-brane and twisted Fivebrane-structures

The magnetic dual of the (heterotic) string is the NS-5-brane. Where the string is electrically charged under the B_2-field with class $[H_3] \in H^3(X, \mathbb{Z})$, the NS-5-brane is electrically charged under the B_6-field with class $[H_7] \in H^7(X, \mathbb{Z})$ [1]. In the presence of a String-structure, hence when $[\frac{1}{2}p_1(TX)] = 0$, the anomaly of the 5-brane σ-model vanishes [SaSe85] [GaNi85] if the background fields satisfy

$$[\frac{1}{6}p_2(TX)] = 8[\mathrm{ch}_4(E)] \quad \in H^8(X, \mathbb{Z}), \tag{4.14}$$

where $\frac{1}{6}p_2(TX)$ is the second fractional Pontryagin class of the String-bundle TX.

It is clear now that a discussion entirely analogous to that of section 4.4.1.2 applies. For the untwisted case the following terminology was introduced in [SSS09b].

Definition 4.4.11. Write Fivebrane for the loop group of the homotopy fiber BFivebrane of a representative $\frac{1}{6}p_2$ of the universal second fractional Pontryagin class

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
B\mathrm{Fivebrane} & \longrightarrow & * \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
B\mathrm{String} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{6}p_2} & B^7U(1)
\end{array} .$$

In direct analogy with def. 4.4.5 we therefore have the following notion.

Definition 4.4.12. For X a manifold and $[c] \in H^8(X, \mathbb{Z})$ a class, we say that the *space of $[c]$-twisted* Fivebrane*-structures* on X, denoted $(\frac{1}{6}p_2)\mathrm{Struc}_{[c]}(X)$, is the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
(\frac{1}{6}p_2)\mathrm{Struc}_{[c]}(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow^{c} \\
\mathrm{Maps}(X, B\mathrm{String}) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{Maps}(X, \frac{1}{6}p_2)} & \mathrm{Maps}(X, B^7U(1))
\end{array} ,$$

In terms of this we have

Observation 4.4.13. For X a manifold with String-structure and with a background gauge bundle $E \to X$ fixed, condition (4.14) is precisely the condition for the existence of $[8\,\mathrm{ch}(E)]$-*twisted* Fivebrane-*structure* on X.

4.4.1.5 The M5-brane and twisted Fivebrane$^{2a\cup 2a}$-structures

The magnetic dual of the M2-brane is the M5-brane. Where the M2-brane is electrically charged under the C_3-field with class $[G_4] \in H^4(X,\mathbb{Z})$, the M5-brane is electrically charged under the dual C_6-field with class $[G_8] \in H^8(X,\mathbb{Z})$.

If X admits a String-structure, then one finds a relation for the background fields analogous to (4.12) which reads

$$8[G_8] = 4[a(E)] \cup [a(E)] - [\frac{1}{6}p_2(TX)]\,. \tag{4.15}$$

The Fivebrane-analog of Spin^c is then the following.

Definition 4.4.14. For G a topological group and $[c] \in H^8(X,\mathbb{Z})$ a universal 8-class, we say that $\mathrm{Fivebrane}^c$ is the loop group of the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B\mathrm{Fivebrane}^c & \longrightarrow & BG \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{c} \\ B\mathrm{String} & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{6}p_2} & B^3U(1) \end{array} .$$

In analogy with def. 4.4.8 we have a notion of twisted $\mathrm{Fivebrane}^c$-structures.

Definition 4.4.15. For X a manifold and for $[c] \in H^8(X,\mathbb{Z})$ a cohomology class, the space $(\frac{1}{6}p_2 - 2a \cup 2a)\mathrm{Struc}_{[c]}(X)$ of $[c]$-*twisted* Fivebrane$^{2a\cup 2a}$-*structures* on X is the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} (\frac{1}{6}p_2 - 2a\cup 2a)\mathrm{Struc}_{[c]}(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{c} \\ \mathrm{Maps}(X, B\mathrm{String} \times E_8) & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{6}p_2 - 2a\cup 2a} & \mathrm{Maps}(X, B^7U(1)) \end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical map picks a cocycle c representing the class $[c]$.

In terms of these notions we thus see that

Observation 4.4.16. Over a manifold X with String-structure and with a fixed gauge bundle E, condition (4.15) is precisely the condition that guarantees existence of a lift to $[8G_8]$-*twisted* Fivebrane$^{2a\cup 2a}$-*structure* through the left vertical morphism in def. 4.4.15.

4.4.2 Twisted differential $\mathbf{c}_1$-structures

We discuss the differential refinement $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1$ of the universal first Chern class, indicated before in 1.3.6.1. The corresponding $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1$-structures are simply $\mathrm{SU}(n)$-principal connections, but the derivation of this fact may be an instructive warmup for the examples to follow.

For any $n \in \mathbb{N}$, let $\mathbf{c}_1 : \mathbf{B}U(n) \to \mathbf{B}U(1)$ in $\mathbf{H} = \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ be the canonical representative of the universal smooth first Chern class, described in 1.3.64. In terms of the standard presentations $\mathbf{B}U(n)_{\mathrm{ch}}$, $\mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{ch}} \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ of its domain and codomain from prop. 3.3.19 this is given by the determinant function, which over any $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ sends

$$\det : C^\infty(U, U(n)) \to C^\infty(U, U(1))\,.$$

Write $\mathbf{B}U(n)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ for the differential refinement from prop. 1.3.36. Over a test space $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ the set of objects is the set of $\mathfrak{u}(n)$-valued differential forms

$$\mathbf{B}U(n)_{\mathrm{conn}}(U)_0 = \Omega^1(U, \mathfrak{u}(n))$$

and the set of morphisms is that of smooth $U(n)$-valued differential forms, acting by gauge transformations on the $\mathfrak{u}(n)$-valued 1-forms

$$\mathbf{B}U(n)_{\mathrm{conn}}(U)_1 = \Omega^1(U, \mathfrak{u}(n)) \times C^\infty(U, U(n))\,.$$

Proposition 4.4.17. *The smooth universal first Chern class has a differential refinement*

$$\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1 : \mathbf{B}U(n)_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

given on $\mathfrak{u}(n)$*-valued 1-forms by taking the trace*

$$\mathrm{tr} : \mathfrak{u}(n) \to \mathfrak{u}(1)\,.$$

The existence of this refinement allows us to consider differential and twisted differential $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1$-structures.

Lemma 4.4.18. *There is an ∞-pullback diagram*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SU}(n)_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}U(n)_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \end{array}$$

in Smooth∞Grpd.

Proof. We use the factorization lemma, 1.3.31, to resolve the right vertical morphism by a fibration

$$\mathbf{E}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. This gives that an object in $\mathbf{E}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ over some test space U is a morphism of the form $0 \xrightarrow{g} g^{-1} d_U g$ for $g \in C^\infty(U, U(1))$, and a morphism in $\mathbf{E}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ is given by a commuting diagram

$$\mathbf{E}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} = \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} & 0 & \\ {}^{g_1}\swarrow & & \searrow^{g_2} \\ g_1^{-1} d_U g_1 & \xrightarrow{h} & g_2^{-1} d_U g_2 \end{array} \right\},$$

where on the right we have $h \in C^\infty(U, U(1))$ such that $h g_1 = g_2$. The morphism to $\mathbf{B}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ is given by the evident projection onto the lower horizontal part of these triangles.

Then the ordinary 1-categorical pullback of $\mathbf{E}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ along $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1$ yields the smooth groupoid $\hat{\mathbf{c}_1}^* \mathbf{E}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ given over any test space U as follows.

- objects are pairs consisting of a $\mathfrak{u}(n)$-valued 1-form $A \in \Omega^1(U, \mathfrak{u}(n))$ and a smooth function $\rho \in C^\infty(U, U(1))$ such that
$$\mathrm{tr} A = \rho^{-1} d\rho\,;$$
- morphisms $g : (A_1, \rho_1) \to (A_2, \rho_2)$ are labeled by a smooth function $g \in C^\infty(U, U(n))$ such that $A_2 = g^{-1}(A_1 + d_U) g$.

Therefore there is a canonical functor

$$\mathbf{B}\mathrm{SU}(n)_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \hat{\mathbf{c}}_1{}^* \mathbf{E}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

induced from the defining inclusion $\mathrm{SU}(n) \to \mathrm{U}(n)$, which hits precisely the objects for which ρ is the constant function on $1 \in \mathrm{U}(1)$ and which is a bijection to the morphisms between these objects, hence is full and faithful. The functor is also essentially surjective, since every 1-form of the form $h^{-1}dh$ is gauge equivalent to the identically vanishing 1-form. Therefore it is a weak equivalence in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. By prop. 2.1.52 this proves the claim. □

Proposition 4.4.19. *For X a smooth manifold, we have an ∞-pullback of smooth groupoids*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{SU}(n)\mathrm{Bund}_\nabla(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{U}(n)\mathrm{Bund}_\nabla(X) & \xrightarrow{\hat{\mathbf{c}}_1} & \mathrm{U}(1)\mathrm{Bund}_\nabla(X) \end{array} .$$

Proof. This follows from lemma 4.4.18 and the facts that for a Lie group G we have $\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}) \simeq G\mathrm{Bund}_\nabla(X)$ and that the hom-functor $\mathbf{H}(X, -)$ preserves ∞-pullbacks. □

4.4.3 Twisted differential spin^c-structures

As opposed to the Spin-group, which is a $\mathbb{Z}_2$-extension of the special orthogonal group, the Spin^c-group, def. 4.2.2, is a $U(1)$-extension of SO. This means that twisted Spin^c-structures have interesting smooth refinements. These we discuss here.

Two standard properties of Spin^c are the following (see [LaMi89]).

Observation 4.4.20. There is a short exact sequence

$$U(1) \to \mathrm{Spin}^c \to \mathrm{SO}$$

of Lie groups, where the first morphism is the canonical inclusion.

Proposition 4.4.21. *There is a fiber sequence*

$$B\mathrm{Spin}^c(n) \to B\mathrm{SO}(n) \stackrel{W_3}{\to} K(\mathbb{Z}, 3)$$

of classifying spaces in Top*, where W_3 is a representative of the universal third integral Stiefel-Whitney class.*

Here W_3 is a classical definition, but, as we will show below, the reader can think of it as being defined as the geometric realization of the smooth characteristic class $\mathbf{W}_3$ from example 1.3.70. Before turning to that, we record the notion of twisted structure induced by this fact:

Definition 4.4.22. For X an oriented manifold of dimension n, a Spin^c-*structure* on X is a trivialization

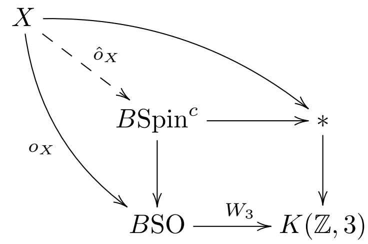
$$\eta : * \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} W_3(o_X)\,,$$

where $o_X : X \to B\mathrm{SO}$ is the given orientation structure.

Observation 4.4.23. This is equivalently a lift $\hat{o}_X$ of o_X:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & B\mathrm{Spin}^c \\ & \overset{\hat{o}_X}{\nearrow} & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{o_X} & B\mathrm{SO} \end{array} .$$

Proof. By prop. 4.4.21 and the univsersal property of the homotopy pullback:



.

□

From the general reasoning of twisted cohomology, def. 2.3.45, in the language of twisted **c**-structures, def. 4.4.1, we are therefore led to consider the following.

Definition 4.4.24. The ∞-groupoid of *twisted* spin^c*-structures* on X is $W_3\mathrm{Struc}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X)$.

Remark 4.4.25. It follows from the definition that twisted spin^c-structures over an orientation structure o_X, def. 4.1.2, are naturally identified with equivalences (homotopies)

$$\eta : c \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} W_3(o_X)\,,$$

where $c \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, B^2U(1))$ is a given twisting cocycle.

In this form twisted spin^c-structures have been considered in [Do06] and in [Wa08]. We now establish a smooth refinement of this situation.

Observation 4.4.26. There is an essentially unique lift in Smooth∞Grpd of W_3 through the geometric realization

$$|-| : \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \stackrel{\Pi}{\to} \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{Top}$$

(discussed in 3.3.3) of the form

$$\mathbf{W}_3 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO} \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)\,,$$

where $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}$ is the delooping of the Lie group SO in Smooth∞Grpd and $\mathbf{B}^2U(1)$ that of the smooth circle 2-group, as in 3.3.2.

Proof. This is a special case of theorem 3.3.28. □

Theorem 4.4.27. *In* Smooth∞Grpd *we have a fiber sequence of the form*

$$\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}^c \to \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO} \stackrel{\mathbf{W}_3}{\to} \mathbf{B}^2U(1)\,,$$

which refines the sequence of prop. 4.4.21.

We consider first a lemma.

Lemma 4.4.28. *A presentation of the essentially unique smooth lift of W_3 from observation 4.4.26, is given by the morphism of simplicial presheaves*

$$\mathbf{W}_3 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}_{\mathrm{ch}} \stackrel{\mathrm{w}_2}{\to} \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 \stackrel{\boldsymbol{\beta}_2}{\to} \mathbf{B}^2U(1)_{\mathrm{ch}}\,,$$

where the first morphism is that of example 1.3.68 and where the second morphism is the one induced from the canonical subgroup embedding.

Proof. The bare Bockstein homomorphism is presented, by example 1.3.69, by the ∞-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \stackrel{\cdot 2}{\to} \mathbb{Z}) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \to 1) & = & \mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{Z} \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & & & \\ \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 & & & & \end{array} .$$

Accordingly we need to consider the lift of the the morphism

$$\boldsymbol{\beta}_2 : \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$$

induced form subgroup inclusion to to a comparable ∞-anafunctor. This is accomplished by

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \stackrel{\cdot 2}{\to} \mathbb{Z}) & \stackrel{\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}}_2}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \stackrel{\cdot 2}{\to} \mathbb{R}) \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & \downarrow^{\simeq} \\ \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 & \stackrel{\boldsymbol{\beta}_2}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}^2U(1) \end{array} .$$

Since $\mathbb{R}$ is contractible, we have indeed under geometric realization, 3.2.2, an equivalence

$$\begin{array}{ccc} |\mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \stackrel{\cdot 2}{\to} \mathbb{Z})| & \stackrel{|\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}}_2|}{\longrightarrow} & |\mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \stackrel{\cdot 2}{\to} \mathbb{R})| \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & \downarrow^{\simeq} \\ |\mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \stackrel{\cdot 2}{\to} \mathbb{Z})| & \longrightarrow & |\mathbf{B}^2(\mathbb{Z} \to 1)| \\ \downarrow^{\simeq} & & \downarrow^{\simeq} \\ |\mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2| & \stackrel{|\beta_2|}{\longrightarrow} & |\mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{Z}| \end{array} ,$$

where $|\beta_2|$ is the geometric realization of β_2, according to definition 3.2.17. □

Proof of theorem 4.4.27. Consider the pasting diagram in Smooth∞Grpd

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}^c & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}U(1) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow^{\mathbf{c}_1 \bmod 2} & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} & \stackrel{\mathbf{w}_2}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}^2\mathbb{Z}_2 & \stackrel{\boldsymbol{\beta}_2}{\longrightarrow} & \mathbf{B}^2U(1) \end{array} .$$

The square on the right is an ∞-pullback by prop. 3.3.33. The square on the left is an ∞-pullback by proposition 4.2.3. Therefore by the pasting law 2.1.26 the total outer rectanle is an ∞-pullback. By lemma 4.4.28 the composite bottom morphism is indeed the smooth lift $\mathbf{W}_3$ from observation 4.4.26. □
Therefore we are entitled to the following smooth refinement of def. 4.4.24.

Remark 4.4.29. $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}^c$ is the moduli stack of Spin^c structures, or Spin^c bundles.

Definition 4.4.30. For any $X \in$ Smooth∞Grpd, the 1-groupoid of smooth *twisted* spin^c*-structures* $\mathbf{W}_3\mathrm{Struc}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X)$ is the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{W}_3\mathrm{Struc}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X) & \longrightarrow & H^3(X,\mathbb{Z}) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{SO}) & \stackrel{\mathbf{W}_3}{\longrightarrow} & \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}^2U(1)) \end{array} .$$

We briefly discuss an application of smooth twisted spin^c-structures in physics.

Remark 4.4.31. The action functional of the σ-model of the open type II superstring on a 10-dimensional target X has in general an anomaly, in that it is not a function, but just a section of a possibly non-trivial line bundle over the bosonic configuration space. In [FrWi] it was shown that in the case that the D-branes $Q \hookrightarrow X$ that the open string ends on carry a rank-1 Chan-Paton bundle, this anomaly vanishes precisely if this Chan-Paton bundle is a twisted line bundle exhibiting an equivalence $\mathbf{W}_3(\mathbf{o}_Q) \simeq H|_Q$ between the lifting gerbe of the spin^c-structure and the restriction of the background Kalb-Ramond 2-bundle to Q. By the above discussion we see that this is precisely the datum of a smooth twisted spin^c-structure on Q, where the Kalb-Ramond field serves as the twist. Below in 4.4.4.2 we shall see that the quantum anomaly cancellation for the closed *heterotic* superstring is analogously given by twisted string-structures, which follow the same general pattern of twisted $\mathbf{c}$-structures, but in one degree higher.

But in general this quantum anomaly cancellation involves twists mediated by a higher rank twisted bundle. This situation we turn to now.

Definition 4.4.32. For X equipped with orientation structure o_X, def. 4.1.2, and $c \in \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^2U(1))$ a twisting circle 2-bundle, we say that the 2-groupoid of *weakly c-twisted* spin^c*-structures* on X is $(W_3(o_X) - c)$-twisted cohomology with respect to the morphism $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}PU \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$ discussed in 3.3.6.

Remark 4.4.33. By the discussion in 3.3.6 in weakly twisted spin^c-structure the two cocycles $W_3(o_X)$ and c are not equivalent, but their difference is an *n-torsion* class (for some n) in $H^3(X, \mathbb{Z})$ which twists a unitary rank-n vector bundle on X

By a refinement of the discussion of [FrWi] in [Ka99] this structure is precisely what removes the quantum anomaly from the action functional of the type II superstring on oriented D-branes that carry a rank n Chan-Paton bundle. A review is in [La09].

4.4.4 Twisted differential string structures

We consider now the obstruction theory for lifts through the smooth and differential refinement, from 4.1, of the Whitehead tower of O.

Definition 4.4.34. For X a Riemannian manifold, equipping it with

1. orientation
2. topological spin structure
3. topological string structure
4. topological fivebrane structure

means equipping it with choices of (homotopy classes of) lifts of the classifying map $TX : X \to BO$ of its tangent bundle through the respective steps of the Whitehead tower of BO

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
 & B\mathrm{Fivebrane} & \text{fivebrane structure} \\
 & \downarrow & \\
 & B\mathrm{String} & \text{string structure} \\
 & \downarrow & \\
 & B\mathrm{Spin} & \text{spin structure} \\
 & \downarrow & \\
 & B\mathrm{SO} & \text{orientation} \\
 & \downarrow & \\
X & \xrightarrow{TX} B\mathrm{O} & \text{Riemannian structure}
\end{array} .
$$

More in detail:

1. The set (homotopy 0-type) of orientations of a Riemannian manifold is the homotopy fiber of the first Stiefel-Whitney class
$$(w_1)_* : \mathrm{Top}(X, B\mathrm{O}) \to \mathrm{Top}(X, B\mathbb{Z}_2) .$$

2. The groupoid (homotopy 1-type) of topological spin structures of an oriented manifold is the homotopy fiber of the second Stiefel-Whitney class
$$(w_2)_* : \mathrm{Top}(X, B\mathrm{SO}) \to \mathrm{Top}(X, B^2\mathbb{Z}_2) .$$

3. The 3-groupoid (homotopy 3-type) of topological string structures of a spin manifold is the homotopy fiber of the first fractional Pontryagin class
$$(\frac{1}{2}p_1)_* : \mathrm{Top}(X, B\mathrm{Spin}) \to \mathrm{Top}(X, B^4\mathbb{Z}) ,$$

4. The 7-groupoid (homotopy 7-type) of topological fivebrane structures of a string manifold is the homotopy fiber of the second fractional Pontryagin class
$$(\frac{1}{6}p_2)_* : \mathrm{Top}(X, B\mathrm{String}) \to \mathrm{Top}(X, B^8\mathbb{Z}) ,$$

See [SSS09b] for background and the notion of fivebrane structure. Using the results of 4.1 we may lift this setup from discrete ∞-groupoids to smooth ∞-groupoids and discuss the twisted cohomology, 2.3.5, relative to the smooth fractional Pontryagin classes $\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1$ and $\frac{1}{6}\mathbf{p}_2$ and their differential refinements $\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1$ and $\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2$

Definition 4.4.35. Let $X \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ be any object.

1. The 2-groupoid of *smooth string structures* on X is the homotopy fiber of the lift of the first fractional Pontryagin class $\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1$ to Smooth∞Grpd, prop. 4.1.9:
$$\mathbf{String}(X) \to \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}) \stackrel{(\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1)}{\to} \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}^3U(1)) .$$

2. The 6-groupoid of *smooth fivebrane stuctures* on X is the homotopy fiber of the lift of the second fractional Pontryagin class $\frac{1}{6}\mathbf{p}_2$ to Smooth∞Grpd, prop. 4.1.32:
$$\mathbf{Fivebrane}(X) \to \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}) \stackrel{(\frac{1}{6}\mathbf{p}_2)}{\to} \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}^7U(1)) .$$

More generally,

1. The 2-groupoid of *smooth twisted string sructures* on X is the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{String}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tw}} & H^3_{\mathrm{smooth}}(X, U(1)) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin})[r] & \xrightarrow{(\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1)} & \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) \end{array}$$

   in ∞Grpd.

2. The 6-groupoid of *smooth twisted fivebrane stuctures* on X is the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{Fivebrane}_{\mathrm{tw}}(X) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tw}} & H^7_{\mathrm{smooth}}(X, U(1)) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String})[r] & \xrightarrow{(\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2)} & \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}^7 U(1)) \end{array}$$

   in ∞Grpd.

Finally, with $\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}_1}$ and $\frac{1}{4}\hat{\mathbf{p}_2}$ the differential characteristic classes, 2.3.15, we set

1. The 2-groupoid of *smooth twisted differential string sructures* on X is the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{String}_{\mathrm{tw,diff}}(X) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tw}} & H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{conn})[r] & \xrightarrow{(\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1)} & \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{conn}) \end{array}$$

   in ∞Grpd.

2. The 6-groupoid of *smooth twisted differential fivebrane stuctures* on X is the ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{Fivebrane}_{\mathrm{tw,diff}}(X) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tw}} & H^8_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}}) & \xrightarrow{(\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2)} & \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}^7 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}) \end{array}$$

   in ∞Grpd.

The image of a twisted (differential) String/Fivebrane structure under tw is its *twist*. The restriction to twists whose underlying class vanishes we also call *geometric string structures* and *geometric fivebrane structures*.

Observation 4.4.36.

1. These ∞-pullbacks are, up to equivalence, independent of the choise of the right vertical morphism, as long as this hits precisely one cocycle in each cohomology class.
2. The restriction of the n-groupoids of twisted structures to vanishing twist reproduces the untwisted structures.

The local L_∞-algebra valued form data of differential twisted string- and fivebrane structures has been considered in [SSS09c], as we explain in 4.4.4.1. Differential string structures for twists with underlying trivial class (*geometric string structures*) have been considered in [Wald09] modeled on bundle 2-gerbes.

We have the following immediate consequences of the definition:

Observation 4.4.37. The spaces of choices of string structures extending a given spin structure S are as follows

- if $[\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1(S)] \neq 0$ it is empty: $\mathrm{String}_S(X) \simeq \emptyset$;
- if $[\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1(S)] = 0$ it is $\mathrm{String}_S(X) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^2 U(1))$.

In particular the set of equivalence classes of string structures lifting S is the cohomology set

$$\pi_0 \mathrm{String}_S(X) \simeq H^2_{\mathrm{Smooth}}(X, \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)) \,.$$

If X is a smooth manifold, then this is $\simeq H^3(X, \mathbb{Z})$.

Proof. Apply the pasting law for ∞-pullbacks, prop. 2.1.26 on the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathrm{String}_S(X) & \longrightarrow & \mathrm{String}(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \xrightarrow{S} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}(n)) & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) \end{array} .$$

The outer diagram defines the loop space object of $\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1))$. Since $\mathbf{H}(X, -)$ commutes with forming loop space objects we have

$$\mathrm{String}_S(X) \simeq \Omega \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)) \,.$$

□

Sometimes it is useful to express string structures on X in terms of circle 2-bundles/bundle gerbes on the total space of the given spin bundle $P \to X$ [Redd06]:

Proposition 4.4.38. *A smooth string structure on X over a smooth* Spin*-principal bundle $P \to X$ induces a circle 2-bundle $\hat{P}$ on P which restricted to any fiber $P_x \simeq \mathrm{Spin}$ is equivalent to the String 2-group extensin* String $\to$ Spin.

Proof. By prop. 2.3.44. □

4.4.4.1 L_∞-Čech cocycles for differential string structures

We use the presentation of the ∞-topos Smooth∞Grpd by the local model structure on simplicial presheaves $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$ to give an explicit construction of twisted differential string structures in terms of Čech-cocycles with coefficients in L_∞-algebra valued differential forms. We will find a twisted version of the $\mathfrak{string}$-2-connections discussed above in 1.3.5.7.2.

We need the following fact from [FSS10].

Proposition 4.4.39. *The differential fractional Pontryagin class $\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1$ is presented in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ *by the top morphism of simplicial presheaves in*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{so})_{\mathrm{ChW,smp}} & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs})} & \mathbf{B}^3 \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}_{\mathrm{ChW,smp}} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{so})_{\mathrm{diff,smp}} & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs})} & \mathbf{B}^3 \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}_{\mathrm{smp}} \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_c & & \end{array} .$$

Here the middle morphism is the direct Lie integration of the L_∞-algebra cocycle, 3.3.9, while the top morphisms is its restriction to coefficients for ∞-connections, 3.3.12.

In order to compute the homotopy fibers of $\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1$ we now find a resolution of this morphism $\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs})$ by a fibration in $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$. By the fact that this is a simplicial model category then also the hom of any cofibrant object into this morphism, computing the cocycle ∞-groupoids, is a fibration, and therefore, by the general natur of homotopy pullbacks, we obtain the homotopy fibers as the ordinary fibers of this fibration.

We start by considering such a factorization before differential refinement, on the underlying characteristic class $\exp(\mu)$. To that end, we replace the Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{so}$ by an equivalent but bigger Lie 3-algebra (following [SSS09c]). We need the following notation:

- $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{so}$, the special orthogonal Lie algebra (the Lie algebra of the spin group);
- $b^2\mathbb{R}$, the line Lie 3-algebra, def. 3.3.50, the single generator in degee 3 of its Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra we denote $c \in CE(b^2\mathbb{R})$, $dc = 0$.
- $\langle -, - \rangle \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ is the Killing form invariant polynomial, regarded as an element of the Weil algebra of $\mathfrak{so}$;
- $\mu := \langle -, [-, -] \rangle \in \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})$, the degree 3 Lie algebra cocycle, identified with a morphism

  $$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \leftarrow \mathrm{CE}(b^2\mathbb{R}) : \mu$$

  of Chevalley-Eilenberg algebras; and normalized such that its continuation to a 3-form on Spin is the image in de Rham cohomology of Spin of a generator of $H^3(\mathrm{Spin}, \mathbb{Z}) \simeq \mathbb{Z}$;
- $\mathrm{cs} \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ is a Chern-Simons element, def. 3.3.101, interpolating between the two;
- $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$, the string Lie 2-algebra, def. 4.1.15.

Definition 4.4.40. Let $(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ denote the L_∞-algebra whose Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra is

$$\mathrm{CE}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu) = (\wedge^\bullet(\mathfrak{g}^* \oplus \langle b \rangle \oplus \langle c \rangle), d)\,,$$

with b a generator in degree 2, and c a generator in degree 3, and with differential defined on generators by

$$\begin{aligned} d|_{\mathfrak{g}^*} &= [-,-]^* \\ db &= -\mu + c\,. \\ dc &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

Observation 4.4.41. The 3-cocycle $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \stackrel{\mu}{\leftarrow} \mathrm{CE}(b^2\mathbb{R})$ factors as

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \xleftarrow{(c \mapsto \mu, b \mapsto 0)} \mathrm{CE}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}) \leftarrow \xleftarrow{(c \mapsto c)} \mathrm{CE}(CE(b^2\mathbb{R})\ \ : \mu\,,$$

where the morphism on the left (which is the identity when restricted to $\mathfrak{g}^*$ and acts on the new generators as indicated) is a quasi-isomorphism.

Proof. To see that we have a quasi-isomorphism, notice that the dg-algebra is somorphic to the one with generators $\{t^a, b, c'\}$ and differentials

$$\begin{aligned} d|_{\mathfrak{g}^*} &= [-,-]^* \\ db &= c' \qquad , \\ dc' &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

where the isomorphism is given by the identity on the t^as and on b and by

$$c \mapsto c' + \mu\,.$$

The primed dg-algebra is the tensor product $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g}) \otimes \mathrm{CE}(inn(b\mathbb{R}))$, where the second factor is manifestly cohomologically trivial. □

The point of introducing the resolution $(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ in the above way is that it naturally supports the obstruction theory of lifts from $\mathfrak{g}$-connections to string Lie 2-algebra 2-connections

Observation 4.4.42. The defining projection $\mathfrak{g}_\mu \to \mathfrak{g}$ factors through the above quasi-isomorphism $(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu) \to \mathfrak{g}$ by the canonical inclusion

$$\mathfrak{g}_\mu \to (b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)\,,$$

which dually on CE-algebras is given by

$$\begin{aligned} t^a &\mapsto t^a \\ b &\mapsto -b \\ c &\mapsto 0\,. \end{aligned}$$

In total we are looking at a convenient presentation of the long fiber sequence of the string Lie 2-algebra extension:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} & & (b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu) & \longrightarrow & b^2\mathbb{R}\;. \\ & \nearrow & \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ b\mathbb{R} \longrightarrow \mathfrak{g}_\mu & \longrightarrow & \mathfrak{g} & & \end{array}$$

(The signs appearing here are just unimportant convention made in order for some of the formulas below to come out nice.)

Proposition 4.4.43. *The image under Lie integration of the above factorization is*

$$\exp(\mu) : \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{g}) \to \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu) \to \mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}_c$$

where the first morphism is a weak equivalence followed by a fibration in the model structure on simplicial presheaves $[\mathrm{CartSp}_{\mathrm{smooth}}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$.

Proof. To see that the left morphism is objectwise a weak homotopy equivalence, notice that a $[k]$-cell of $\exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ is identified with a pair consisting of a based smooth function $f : \Delta^k \to \mathrm{Spin}$ and a vertical 2-form $B \in \Omega^2_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^k)$, (both suitably with sitting instants perpendicular to the boundary of the simplex). Since there is no further condition on the 2-form, it can always be extended from the boundary of the k-simplex to the interior (for instance simply by radially rescaling it smoothly to 0). Accordingly the simplicial homotopy groups of $\exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)(U)$ are the same as those of $\exp(\mathfrak{g})(U)$. The morphism between them is the identity in f and picks $B = 0$ and is hence clearly an isomorphism on homotopy groups.

We turn now to discussing that the second morphism is a fibration. The nontrivial degrees of the lifting problem

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Lambda[k]_i & \longrightarrow & \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)(U) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \Delta[k] & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}_c(U) \end{array}$$

are $k = 3$ and $k = 4$.

Notice that a 3-cell of $\mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}_c(U)$ is a smooth function $c : U \to \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ and that the morphism $\exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu) \to \mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}_c$ sends the pair (f, B) to the fiber integration $\int_{\Delta^3}(f^*\langle\theta \wedge [\theta \wedge \theta]\rangle + dB)$.

Given our lifting problem in degree 3, we have given a function $c : U \to \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ and a smooth function (with sitting instants at the subfaces) $U \times \Lambda^3_i \to \mathrm{Spin}$ together with a 2-form B on the horn $U \times \Lambda^3_i$.

By pullback along the standard continuous retract $\Delta^3 \to \Lambda^3_i$ which is non-smooth only where f has sitting instants, we can always extend f to a smooth function $f' : U \times \Delta^3 \to \mathrm{Spin}$ with the property that $\int_{\Delta^3}(f')^*\langle\theta \wedge [\theta \wedge \theta]\rangle = 0$. (Following the general discussion at Lie integration.)

In order to find a horn filler for the 2-form component, consider any smooth 2-form with sitting instants and non-vanishing integeral on Δ^2, regarded as the missing face of the horn. By multiplying it with a suitable smooth function on U we can obtain an extension $\tilde{B} \in \Omega^3_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \partial\Delta^3)$ of B to all of $U \times \partial\Delta^3$ with the property that its integral over $\partial\Delta^3$ is the given c. By Stokes' theorem it remains to extend $\tilde{B}$ to the interior of Δ^3 in any way, as long as it is smooth and has sitting instants.

To that end, we can find in a similar fashion a smooth U-parameterized family of closed 3-forms C with sitting instants on Δ^3, whose integral over Δ^3 equals c. Since by sitting instants this 3-form vanishes in a neighbourhood of the boundary, the standard formula for the Poincare lemma applied to it produces a 2-form $B' \in \Omega^2_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^3)$ with $dB' = C$ that itself is radially constant at the boundary. By construction the difference $\tilde{B} - B'|_{\partial\Delta^3}$ has vanishing surface integral. By the argument in the proof of prop. 3.3.53 it follows that the difference extends smoothly and with sitting instants to a closed 2-form $\hat{B} \in \Omega^2_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^3)$. Therefore the sum $B' + \hat{B} \in \Omega^2_{\mathrm{si,vert}}(U \times \Delta^3)$ equals B when restricted to Λ^k_i and has the property that its integral over Δ^3 equals c. Together with our extension f', this constitutes a pair that solves the lifting problem.

The extension problem in degree 4 amounts to a similar construction: by coskeletalness the condition is that for a given $c : U \to \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ and a given vertical 2-form on $U \times \partial\Delta^3$ such that its integral equals c, as well as a function $f : U \times \partial\Delta^3 \to Spin$, we can extend the 2-form and the functionalong $U \times \partial\Delta^3 \to U \times \Delta^3$. The latter follows from the fact that $\pi_2 \mathrm{Spin} = 0$ which guarantees a continuous filler (with sitting instants), and using the Steenrod-Wockel approximation theorem [Wock09] to make this smooth. We are left with the problem of extending the 2-form, which is the same problem we discussed above after the choice of $\tilde{B}$. □

We now proceed to extend this factorization to the exponentiated differential coefficients, 3.3.12. The direct idea would be to use the evident factorization of differential L_∞-cocycles of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{so}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b^2\mathbb{R}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{so}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{W}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{W}(b^2\mathbb{R}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{so}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{inv}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{inv}(b^2\mathbb{R})
\end{array} .$$

For computations we shall find it convenient to consider this after a change of basis.

Observation 4.4.44. The Weil algebra $\mathrm{W}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ of $(b^2\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g})$ is given on the extra shifted generators $\{r^a = \sigma t^a, h = \sigma b, g = \sigma c\}$ by

$$\begin{aligned}
dt^a &= C^a{}_{bc} t^b \wedge t^c + r^a \\
dr^a &= -C^a{}_{bc} t^b \wedge r^a \\
db &= -\mu + c + h \\
dh &= \sigma\mu - g \\
dc &= g
\end{aligned}$$

(where σ is the shift operator extended as a graded derivation).

Definition 4.4.45. Define $\tilde{\mathrm{W}}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ to be the dg-algebra with the same underlying graded algebra as $\mathrm{W}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ but with the differential modified as follows

$$\begin{aligned}
dt^a &= C^a{}_{bc} t^b \wedge t^c + r^a \\
dr^a &= -C^a{}_{bc} t^b \wedge r^a \\
db &= -\mathrm{cs} + c + h \\
dh &= \langle -, - \rangle - g \\
dc &= g
\end{aligned} .$$

Moreover, define $\tilde{\mathrm{inv}}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string})$ to be the dg-algebra

$$\tilde{\mathrm{inv}}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) := (\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{so}) \otimes \langle g, h \rangle)/(dh = \langle -,- \rangle - g)\,.$$

Observation 4.4.46. We have a commutative diagram of dg-algebras

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{so}) & \underset{\simeq}{\longleftarrow} & \mathrm{CE}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{CE}(b^2\mathbb{R}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{so}) & \underset{\simeq}{\longleftarrow} & \tilde{\mathrm{W}}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{W}(b^2\mathbb{R}) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow \\
\mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{so}) & \underset{\simeq}{\longleftarrow} & \tilde{\mathrm{inv}}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) & \longleftarrow & \mathrm{inv}(b^2\mathbb{R})
\end{array}$$

where $\tilde{W}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) \to W(\mathfrak{so})$ acts as

$$\begin{aligned}
t^a &\mapsto t^a \\
r^a &\mapsto r^a \\
b &\mapsto 0 \\
c &\mapsto \mathrm{cs} \\
h &\mapsto 0 \\
g &\mapsto \langle -,- \rangle
\end{aligned}$$

and we identify $W(b^2\mathbb{R}) = (\wedge^\bullet \langle c, g \rangle, dc = g)$. The left horizontal morphisms are quasi-isomorphisms, as indicated.

Definition 4.4.47. We write $\exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string})_{\tilde{\mathrm{ChW}}}$ for the simplicial presheaf defined as $\exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string})_{\mathrm{ChW}}$, but using $\mathrm{CE}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) \leftarrow \tilde{\mathrm{W}}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string}) \leftarrow \tilde{\mathrm{inv}}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{string})$ instead of the untwiddled version of these algebras.

Proposition 4.4.48. *Under differential Lie integration the above factorization, observation 4.4.46, maps to a factorization*

$$\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs}) : \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{ChW}} \overset{\simeq}{\to} \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp((b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu))_{\tilde{\mathrm{ChW}}} \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{ChW,ch}}$$

of $\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs})$ *in* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$, *where the first morphism is a weak equivalence and the second a fibration.*

Proof. We discuss that the first morphism is an equivalence. Clearly it is injective on homotopy groups: if a sphere of A-data cannot be filled, then also adding the (B, C)-data does not yield a filler. So we need to check that it is also surjective on homotopy groups: any two choices of (B, C)-data on a sphere are homotopic: we may interpolate B in any smooth way and then solve the equation $dB = -\mathrm{cs}(A) + C + H$ for the interpolation of C.

We now check that the second morphism is a fibration. It is itself the composite

$$\mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)_{\mathrm{ChW}} \to \exp(b^2\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{ChW}}/\mathbb{Z} \overset{\int_{\Delta^\bullet}}{\to} \mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}_{\mathrm{ChW,ch}}\,.$$

Here the second morphism is a degreewise surjection of simplicial abelian groups, hence a degreewise surjection under the normalized chain complex functor, hence is itself already a projective fibration. Therefore it is sufficient to show that the first morphism here is a fibration.

In degree $k = 0$ to $k = 3$ the lifting problems

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
\Lambda[k]_i & \longrightarrow & \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)_{\tilde{\mathrm{ChW}}}(U) \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
\Delta[k] & \longrightarrow & \exp(b^2\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{ChW}}/\mathbb{Z}(U)
\end{array}$$

may all be equivalently reformulated as lifting against a cylinder $D^k \hookrightarrow D^k \times [0,1]$ by using the sitting instants of all forms.

We have then a 3-form $H \in \Omega^3_{\mathrm{si}}(U \times D^{k-1} \times [0,1])$ and differential form data (A, B, C) on $U \times D^{k-1}$ given. We may always extend A along the cylinder direction $[0,1]$ (its vertical part is equivalently a based smooth function to Spin which we may extend constantly). H has to be horizontal so is already constantly extended along the cylinder.

We can then use the kind of formula that proves the Poincaré lemma to extend B. Let $\Psi : (D^k \times [0,1]) \times [0,1] \to (D^k \times [0,1])$ be a smooth contraction. Then while $d(H - \mathrm{CS}(A) - C)$ may be non-vanishing, by horizonatlity of their curvature characteristic forms we still have that $\iota_{\partial_t} \Psi_t^* d(H - CS(A) - C)$ vanishes (since the contraction vanishes).

Therefore the 2-form

$$\tilde{B} := \int_{[0,1]} \iota_{\partial_t} \Psi_t^* (H - \mathrm{CS}(A) - C)$$

satisfies $d\tilde{B} = (H - CS(A) - C)$. It may however not coincide with our given B at $t = 0$. But the difference $B - \tilde{B}_{t=0}$ is a closed form on the left boundary of the cylinder. We may find some closed 2-form on the other boundary such that the integral around the boundary vanishes. Then the argument from the proof of the Lie integration of the line Lie n-algebra applies and we find an extension λ to a closed 2-form on the interior. The sum

$$\hat{B} := \tilde{B} + \lambda$$

then still satisfies $d\hat{B} = H - CS(A) - C$ and it coincides with B on the left boundary.

Notice that here $\tilde{B}$ indeed has sitting instants: since H, $\mathrm{CS}(A)$ and C have sitting instants they are constant on their value at the boundary in a neighbourhood perpendicular to the boundary, which means for these 3-forms in the degrees ≤ 3 that they *vanish* in a neighbourhood of the boundary, hence that the above integral is towards the boundary over a vanishing integrand.

In degree 4 the nature of the lifting problem

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Lambda[4]_i & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)(U) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \Delta[4] & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}_{\mathrm{ChW,ch}} \end{array}$$

starts out differently, due to the presence of $\mathbf{cosk}_3$, but it then ends up amounting to the same kind of argument:

We have four functions $U \to \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ which we may realize as the fiber integration of a 3-form H on $U \times (\partial\Delta[4] \setminus \delta_i \Delta[3])$, and we have a lift to (A, B, C, H)-data on $U \times (\partial\Delta[4] \setminus \delta_i(\Delta[3]))$ (the boundary of the 4-simplex minus one of its 3-simplex faces).

We observe that we can

- always extend C smoothly to the remaining 3-face such that its fiber integration there reproduces the signed difference of the four given functions corresponding to the other faces (choose any smooth 3-form with sitting instants and with non-vanishing integral and rescale smoothly);
- fill the A-data horizonatlly due to the fact that $\pi_2(\mathrm{Spin}) = 0$.
- the C-form is already horizontal, hence already filled.

Moreover, by the fact that the 2-form B already is defined on all of $\partial\Delta[4] \setminus \delta_i(\Delta[3])$ its fiber integral over the boundary $\partial\Delta[3]$ coincides with the fiber integral of $H - \mathrm{cs}(A) - C$ over $\partial\Delta[4] \setminus \delta_i(\Delta[3])$). But by the fact that we have lifted C and the fact that $\mu(A_{\mathrm{vert}}) = \mathrm{cs}(A)|_{\Delta^3}$ is an integral cocycle, it follows that this equals the fiber integral of $C - \mathrm{cs}(A)$ over the remaining face.

Use then as above the vertical Poincaré lemma-formula to find $\tilde{B}$ on $U \times \Delta^3$ with sitting instants that satisfies the equation $dB = H - \mathrm{cs}(A) - C$ there. Then extend the closed difference $B - \tilde{B}|_0$ to a closed smooth 2-form on Δ^3. As before, the difference

$$\hat{B} := \tilde{B} + \lambda$$

is an extension of B that constitutes a lift. □

Corollary 4.4.49. *For any $X \in \mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$, for any choice of differentiaby good open cover with corresponding cofibrant presentation $\hat{X} = C(\{C_i\}) \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ we have that the 2-groupoids of twisted differential string structures are presented by the ordinary fibers of the morphism of Kan complexes*

$$[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](\hat{X}, \exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs}))$$

$$[\mathrm{CartSp}^{op}, \mathrm{sSet}](\hat{X}, \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)_{\mathrm{ChW}}) \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](\hat{X}, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{ChW}})\,.$$

over any basepoints in the connected components of the Kan complex on the right, which correspond to the elements $[\hat{\mathbf{C}}_3] \in H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X)$ in the ordinary differential cohomology of X.

Proof. Since $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}_{\mathrm{smooth}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ is a simplicial model category the morphism $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](\hat{X}, \exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs}))$ is a fibration because $\exp(\mu, \mathrm{cs})$ is and $\hat{X}$ is cofibrant.

It follows from the general theory of homotopy pullbacks that the ordinary pullback of simplicial presheaves

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{String}_{\mathrm{diff,tw}}(X) & \longrightarrow & H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](\hat{X}, \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)_{\mathrm{ChW}}) & \longrightarrow & [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](\hat{X}, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{ChW}}) \end{array}$$

is a presentation for the defining ∞-pullback for $\mathbf{String}_{\mathrm{diff,tw}}(X)$. □

We unwind the explicit expression for a twisted differential string structure under this equivalence. Any twisting cocycle is in the above presentation given by a Čech-Deligne-cocycle, as discussed at 3.3.11.

$$\hat{\mathbf{H}}_3 = ((H_3)_i, \cdots)$$

with local connection 3-form $(H_3)_i \in \Omega^3(U_i)$ and globally defined curvature 4-form $\mathcal{G}_4 \in \Omega^4(X)$.

Observation 4.4.50. A twisted differential string structure on X, twisted by this cocycle, is on patches U_i a morphism

$$\Omega^\bullet(U_i) \leftarrow \tilde{\mathrm{W}}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$$

in dgAlg, subject to some horizontality constraints. The components of this are over each U_i a collection of differential forms of the following structure

$$\left(\begin{array}{ll} F_\omega = & d\omega + \frac{1}{2}[\omega \wedge \omega] \\ H_3 = & \nabla B := dB + CS(\omega) - C_3 \\ \mathcal{G}_4 = & dC_3 \\ dF_\omega = & -[\omega \wedge F_\omega] \\ dH_3 = & \mathcal{G}_4 - \langle F_\omega \wedge F_\omega \rangle \\ d\mathcal{G}_4 = & 0 \end{array}\right)_i \xleftarrow{\begin{array}{ll} t^a & \mapsto \omega^a \\ r^a & \mapsto F^a_\omega \\ b & \mapsto B \\ c & \mapsto C_3 \\ h & \mapsto H_3 \\ g & \mapsto \mathcal{G}_4 \end{array}} \left(\begin{array}{ll} r^a = & dt^a + \frac{1}{2} C^a{}_{bc} t^b \wedge t^c \\ h = & db + \mathrm{cs} - c \\ g = & dc \\ dr^a = & -C^a{}_{bc} t^b \wedge r^a \\ dh = & \langle -, - \rangle - g \\ dg = & 0 \end{array}\right).$$

Here we are indicating on the right the generators and their relation in $\tilde{W}(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ and on the left their images and the images of the relations in $\Omega^\bullet(U_i)$. This are first the definitions of the curvatures themselves and then the Bianchi identities satisfied by these.

By prop. 3.3.109 we have that for $\mathfrak{g}$ an L_∞-algebra and

$$\mathbf{B}G := \mathbf{cosk}_{n+1} \exp(\mathfrak{g})$$

the delooping of the smooth Lie n-group obtained from it by Lie integration, def. 3.3.45 the coefficient for ∞-connections on G-principal ∞-bundles is

$$\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} := \mathbf{cosk}_{n+1} \exp(\mathfrak{g})_{\mathrm{conn}} .$$

Proposition 4.4.51. *The 2-groupoid of entirely untwisted differential string structures, def. 4.4.35, on X (the twist being $0 \in H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X)$) is equivalent to that of principal 2-bundles with 2-connection over the string 2-group, def. 4.1.10, as discussed in 1.3.5.7.2:*

$$\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{diff},\mathrm{tw}=0}(X) \simeq \mathrm{String2Bund}_\nabla(X) .$$

Proof. By 4.4.4.1 we compute $\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{diff},\mathrm{tw}=0}(X)$ as the ordinary fiber of the morphism of simplicial presheaves

$$[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)) \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(\{U_i\}), \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{diff}})$$

over the identically vanishing cocycle.

In terms of the component formulas of observation 4.4.50, this amounts to restricting to those cocyles for which over each $U \times \Delta^k$ the equations

$$C = 0$$
$$G = 0$$

hold. Comparing this to the explicit formulas for $\exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$ and $\exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ in 4.4.4.1 we see that these cocycles are exactly those that factor through the canonical inclusion

$$\mathfrak{g}_\mu \to (b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)$$

from observation 4.4.42. □

4.4.4.2 The Green-Schwarz mechanism in heterotic supergravity Local differential form data as in observation 4.4.50 is known in theoretical physics in the context of the Green-Schwarz mechanism for 10-dimensional supergravity. We conclude with some comments on the meaning and application of this result (for background and references on the physics story see for instance [SSS09b]).

The standard action functionals of higher dimensional supergravity theories are generically *anomalous* in that instead of being functions on the space of field configurations, they are just sections of a line bundle over these spaces. In order to get a well defined action principle as input for a path-integral quantization to obtain the corresponding quantum field theories, one needs to prescribe in addition the data of a *quantum integrand*. This is a choice of trivialization of these line bundles, together with a choice of flat connection. For this to be possible the line bundle has to be trivializable and flat in the first place. Its failure to be tivializable – its Chern class – is called the *global anomaly*, and its failure to be flat – its curvature 2-form – is called its local anomaly.

But moreover, the line bundle in question is the tensor product of two different line bundles with connection. One is a Pfaffian line bundle induced from the fermionic degrees of freedom of the theory, the other is a line bundle induced from the higher form fields of the theory in the presence of higher *electric and magnetic charge*. The Pfaffian line bundle is fixed by the requirement of supersymmetry, but there is freedom in choosing the background higher electric and magnetic charge. Choosing these appropriately such as to ensure that the tensor product of the two anomaly line bundles produces a flat trivializable line bundle is called an *anomaly cancellation* by a *Green-Schwarz mechanism*.

Concretely, the higher gauge background field of 10-dimensional heterotic supergravity is the Kalb-Ramond field, which in the absence of *fivebrane magnetic charge* is modeled by a circle 2-bundle (bundle gerbe) with connection and curvature 3-form $H_3 \in \Omega^3_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)$, satisfying the higher *Maxwell equation*

$$dH_3 = 0\,.$$

Notice that we may think of a circle 2-bundle as a homotopy from the trivial circle 3-bundle to itself.

In order to cancel the relevant quantum anomaly it turns out that a magnetic background charge density is to be added to the system whose differential form representative is the difference $j_{\mathrm{mag}} := \langle F_{\nabla_{\mathrm{SU}}} \wedge F_{\nabla_{\mathrm{SU}}} \rangle - \langle F_{\nabla_{\mathrm{Spin}}} \wedge F_{\nabla_{\mathrm{Spin}}} \rangle$ between the Pontryagin forms of the Spin-tangent bundle and a given SU-gauge bundle. This modifies the above Maxwell equation locally, on a patch $U_i \subset X$ to

$$dH_i = \langle F_{A_i} \wedge F_{A_i} \rangle - \langle F_{\omega_i} \wedge F_{\omega_i} \rangle\,.$$

Comparing with prop. 4.4.50 and identifying the curvature of the twist with $\mathcal{G}_4 = \langle F_{A_i} \wedge F_{A_i} \rangle$ we see that, while such H_i can no longer be the curvature 3-form of a circle 2-bundle, it can be the local 3-form component of a *twisted* circle 3-bundle that is part of the data of a twisted differential string-structure. The above differential form equation exhibits a de Rham homotopy between the two Pontryagin forms. This is the local differential aspect of the very defnition of a twisted differential string-structure: a homotopy from the Chern-Simons circle 3-bundle of the Spin-tangent bundle to a given twisting circle 3-bundle.

For many years the anomaly cancellation for the heterotic superstring was known at the level of precision used in the physics community, based on a seminal article by Killingback. Recently [Bunk09] has given a rigorous proof in the special case that underlying topological class of the twisting gauge bundle is trivial. This proof used the model of twisted differential string structures with topologically tivial twist given in [Wald09]. This model is explicitly constructed in terms of bundle 2-gerbes and doees not exhibit the homotopy pullback property of def. 4.4 explicitly. However, the author shows that his model satisfies the abstract properties following from the universal property of the homotopy pullback.

When we take into account also gauge transformations of the gauge bundle, we should replace the homotopy pullback defining twisted differential string structurs this by the full homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{GSBackground}(X) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}U) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow{\scriptstyle \hat{\mathbf{c}}_2} \\ \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}) & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) \end{array} \quad .$$

The look of this diagram makes manifest how in this situation we are looking at the structures that homotopically cancel the differential classes $\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}$ and $\hat{\mathbf{c}}_2$ against each other.

Since $\mathbf{H}_{dR}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1))$ is abelian, we may also consider the corresponding Mayer-Vietoris sequence by realizing $\mathrm{GSBackground}(X)$ equivalently as the homotopy fiber of the difference of differential cocycles $\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1 - \hat{\mathbf{c}}_2$.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{GSBackground}(X) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \times \mathbf{B}U) & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1 - \hat{\mathbf{c}}_2} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X, \mathbf{B}^4 U(1)) \end{array} \quad .$$

4.4.5 The supergravity C-field

We consider a slight variant of twisted differential **c**-structures, where instead of having the twist directly in differential cohomology, it is instead first considered just in de Rham cohomology but then supplemented by a lift of the structure ∞-group.

We observe that when such a twist is by the sum of the first fractional Pontryagin class with the second Chern class, and when the second of these two steps is considered over the boundary of the base manifold, then the differental structures obtained this way exhibit some properties that a differential cohomological description of the C_3*-field* in *11-dimensional supergravity*, 4.3.3.2, is expected to have.

This section is taken from [FiSaScII].

4.4.5.1 Introduction. From general lore about string theory, it is clear that the construction of twisted differential string structures, 4.4.4.2, in 10-dimensional heterotic supergravity should have a higher degree analog in 11-dimensional supergravity. In particular, *Hořava-Witten theory* [HoWi95], indicates that these structures are boundary restrictions of a related structure involving the *supergravity C-field* whose gauge transformations are tied to gauge transformations of an E_8-principal bundle on the 11-dimensional spacetime. We should therefore expect a natural moduli 3-stack of supergravity C-field configurations that involves certain nonabelian E_8-gauge transformations. In the following we observe that within the theory of nonabelian differential cohomology there is a canonical candidate for this 3-stack. We study its properties and find that it satisfies the requirements of the physical situation to be described, to the extent that these are well understood.

In particular, we show that the *1-truncation* of this 3-stack to just a 1-stack, by qotienting out the higher order gauge transformations, essentially reproduces a groupoid that was proposed in [FrMo06] to be the groupoid of C-field configurations. Apart from the restriction to degre-1 in the latter model, there are, however, two further slight differences. First, the proposal in [FrMo06] does not take E_8-gauge transformations into account. Instead, the E_8-principal bundle there serves mainly as as a cohomological structure that in 11-dimensions is equivalent to a *circle 3-bundle* or *bundle 2-gerbe*; the structure that *twists* the C-field. But while the moduli stack of E_8-bundles in 11-dimensions has the same π_0 as the moduli 3-stack of circle 3-bundles, the π_1s are very different. Accordingly, the π_1 of the 3-stack that we discuss is to some extent much richer. But, second, we find that when restricted to trivial E_8-gauge transformations, the canonical construction that we invoke produces slightly fewer gauge transformations than the proposal of [FrMo06]; the restricted π_1 group does not contain certain torsion elements (if these are present in the first place).

We will explain how this slight difference originates in the fact that the E_8-bundle in 11-dimensions is not equipped with a connection – it *admits* a connection, but its gauge transformations are not required to respect any *fixed* connections. This implies that the Chern-Weil homomorphism which produces the *twist* of the C-field, as in [FSS10], has to be the unrefined version with values in de Rham cohomology, instead of the refined version, with values in full differential cohomology.

We then show that a variant of this phenomenon plays a key role in the restriction of the construction to the 10-dimensional spacetime boundary. Thinking of this as a 9-brane to which a bulk field is restricted, we consider, following a remark in [FrMo06], the condition that the C-field itself trivializes over the boundary. We show that in our model this condition forces the gauge transformations to become connection-preserving, thus making genuine E_8-connections appear in the 10-dimensional boundary theory. This is a crucial property of the model to qualify as a formalization of the Hořava-Witten mechanism.

Finally, using the general theory, it is clear how to pass the entire discussion of the moduli 3-stack of the C-field to that of the *moduli 6-stack* of the magnetic dual C_6-field.

4.4.5.2 The moduli 3-stack of the C-field We invoke the homotopy-theoretic lift of classical Chern-Weil theory, discussed in 3.3.12, to exhibit a certain moduli 3-stack of 3-form fields.

Consider the smooth universal characteristic morphism

$$\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^3U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

from theorem 4.1.9; and the smooth universal characteristic morphism

$$\mathbf{a}_{\mathrm{dR}} : \mathbf{B}E_8 \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^4U(1)\,.$$

from corollary 4.2.7.

Definition 4.4.52. For Y a smooth manifold, write $C\mathrm{Field}(X) \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ for the 3-stack which is the homotopy pullback in the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C\mathrm{Field}(X) & \longrightarrow & \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, (\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{\mathrm{conn}}) \times (\mathbf{B}E_8)) & \xrightarrow{(\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1 + 2\mathbf{a})_{\mathrm{dR}}} & \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^4U(1)) \end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical morphism is the canonical effective epimorphism as in 3.3.11.

Remark 4.4.53. By def. 2.3.116 a de Rham differential characteristic class such as $\mathbf{a}_{\mathrm{dR}}$ is the composite

$$\mathbf{a}_{\mathrm{dR}} : \mathbf{B}E_8 \stackrel{\mathbf{a}}{\to} \mathbf{B}^3U(1) \stackrel{\mathrm{curv}}{\to} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^4U(1)$$

of the bare smooth class $\mathbf{a}$ with the universal curvature form, def. 2.3.13, on $\mathbf{B}^3U(1)$. Similarly for $(\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_2)_{\mathrm{dR}}$. Therefore we may either compute the ∞-pullback in def. 4.4.52 directly, or, by the pasting law prop. 2.1.26, in two consecutive steps. Both methods lead to insights.

In the first of these two computations connections on the E_8-principal bundles never appear explicitly. In the second approach they appear as *pseudo-connections*, def. 1.3.52. This means that these connections are purely auxiliary data that serve to present the required homotopies but do not survive in cohomology.

Writing out def. 4.4.52 as two consecutive homotopy pullbacks yields

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} C\mathrm{Field}(X) & \xrightarrow{\hat{G}_4} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^3U(1)) & \xrightarrow{\mathcal{G}_4} & \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) \\ \downarrow & \swarrow_{\simeq}^{H_3} & \downarrow^{G_4} & \swarrow_{\simeq} & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, (\mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{\mathrm{conn}}) \times (\mathbf{B}E_8)) & \xrightarrow[\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_2 + 2\mathbf{a}]{} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^3U(1)) & \xrightarrow[\mathrm{curv}]{} & \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^4U(1)) \end{array} ,$$

where for emphasis we indicate the 2-morphisms filling these squares. Here on the right we find the defining homotopy pullback, def. 2.3.110, for (the cocycle 3-groupoid of) ordinary differential cohomology, exhibiting in the middle $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^3U(1))$ as the 3-groupoid of circle 3-bundles (2-gerbes) with connection on X.

From the homotopy pullback on the left we read off that a C-field configuration has

1. an underlying 3-connection, denoted $\hat{G}_4$, with 4-form curvature $\mathcal{G}_4 \in \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)$ and with underlying circle 3-bundle (2-gerbe) denoted G_4;

2. an underlying spin connection ∇_{so} on an underlying $\mathrm{Spin} \times E_8$-principal bundle, which induces a characteristic circle 3-bundle $\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1 + 2\mathbf{a}$;

3. equipped with a gauge transformation of circle 3-bundles

$$G_4 \xrightarrow[\simeq]{H_3} \tfrac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1 + 2\mathbf{a}\ .$$

In cohomology the last condition reads

$$[G_4] = [\frac{1}{2}p_1] + [2a] \quad \in H^4(X, \mathbb{Z})\,.$$

This is the flux quantization condition for (twice) the C-field discussed in [Wi97a].

4.4.5.2.1 The homotopy type of the moduli stack We determine the homotopy type of the moduli 3-stack $C\mathrm{Field}(X)$ from def. 4.4.52 for a fixed Spin-connection $\nabla_{\mathfrak{so}}$ on a Spin-bundle P_{Spin} for which $\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1$ vanishes. This is the special case that can be compared to [FrMo06].

Definition 4.4.54. Write $C\mathrm{Field}(X)_{P_{\mathrm{Spin}}}$ for the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C\mathrm{Field}(X)_{P_{\mathrm{Spin}}} & \longrightarrow & C\mathrm{Field}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * \times \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}E_8) & \xrightarrow{(\nabla_{\mathfrak{so}}, \mathrm{id})} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{\mathrm{conn}} \times \mathbf{B}E_8) \end{array} .$$

Theorem 4.4.55. *1. The connected components of $C\mathrm{Field}(X)_{P_{\mathrm{Spin}}}$ (the gauge equivalence classes of the C-field) fit into the short exact sequence (of pointed sets)*

$$* \to H^3(X, U(1)) \to \pi_0 C\mathrm{Field}_{P_{\mathrm{Spin}}}(X) \to \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl},\mathbb{Z}}(X) \to * .$$

2. The first homotopy group of $C\mathrm{Field}(X)_{P_{\mathrm{Spin}}}$ (the group of auto-gauge transformations of the trivial configuration modulo gauge-of-gauge transformations) is

$$\pi_1 C\mathrm{Field}(X)_{P_{\mathrm{Spin}}} \simeq H^0_{\mathrm{smooth}}(X, E_8) \times H^2_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) ,$$

hence the group of smooth E_8-valued functions on X, times the second de Rham cohomology of X.

Proof. Notice that we have the pasting diagram of homotopy pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} C\mathrm{Field}_{P_{\mathrm{Spin}}, \mathcal{G}_4 = 0}(X) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, \flat \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow^{0} \\ C\mathrm{Field}(X)_{P_{\mathrm{Spin}}} & \xrightarrow{\hat{G}_4} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) & \xrightarrow{\mathcal{G}_4} & \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}E_8) & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{2a}} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}} & \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^4 U(1)) \end{array} ,$$

where the top right square is by prop. 2.3.112. By prop. 3.3.27 we have that

$$\pi_0 \mathbf{H}(X, \flat \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) \simeq H^3(X, U(1)) ,$$

where on the right we get ordinary cohomology (for instance realized as singular cohomology). Finally observe that $\pi_0 \mathbf{H}(Y, \mathbf{E}_8) \simeq \pi_0 \mathbf{H}(Y, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1))$, by prop. 4.2.6. Therefore after passing to connected components by applying $\pi_0(-)$ we get on cohomology

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} H^3(X, U(1)) & \xrightarrow{\cdot 2} & H^3(X, U(1)) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow^{0} \\ \pi_0 C\mathrm{Field}(X) & \xrightarrow{\hat{G}_4} & H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) & \xrightarrow{\mathcal{G}_4} & \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ H^1(X, E_8) & \xrightarrow{\cdot 2} & H^4(X, \mathbb{Z}) & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}} & H^4_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) \end{array} .$$

In parallel to the familiar short exact sequence for ordinary differential cohomology, prop. 2.3.114,

$$* \to H^3(X, U(1)) \to H^4_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) \to \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl},\mathbb{Z}}(X) \to * .$$

this implies the short exact sequence

$$* \to H^3(X, U(1)) \to \pi_0 C\mathrm{Field} \to \Omega^4_{\mathrm{cl},\mathbb{Z}}(X) \to * \,.$$

Next we redo the entire discussion after applying the loop space object-construction to everything. Using that

$$\Omega \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}Q) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \Omega \mathbf{B}Q) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, Q)$$

on general grounds and that also

$$\Omega(\flat \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \simeq \flat \mathbf{B}^{n-1} U(1)$$

and

$$\Omega(\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \simeq \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n-1} U(1)$$

(since $\flat$ and $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}}$ are right adjoint ∞-functors and hence commute with the ∞-pullback that defines Ω), we have then the looped pasting diagram of ∞-pullbacks

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \Omega C\mathrm{Field}(X)_{P_{\mathrm{Spin}}} & \xrightarrow{\Omega \hat{G}_4} & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{flat}}(X, \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)) & \xrightarrow{\mathcal{G}_4} & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{H}(X, E_8) & \xrightarrow{2\Omega \mathbf{a}} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^2 U(1))\mathrm{curv} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) \end{array} .$$

Observe that E_8 here is a smooth but 0-truncated object: so that

$$\mathbf{H}(X, E_8) \simeq H^0(X, E_8) = C^\infty(X, E_8)$$

is the set of smooth functions $X \to E_8$ (to be thought of as the the set of gauge transformations from the trivial E_8-principal bundle on Y to itself). This implies that the loop space object of $C\mathrm{Field}(X)$ is over each such function the homotopy fiber of $* \to \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^3 U(1))$ over $\mathrm{curv}(2\Omega \mathbf{a})$. But each of these is equivalent to the loop space object

$$\Omega \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)) \,.$$

Therefore

$$\Omega C\mathrm{Field}(X) \simeq C^\infty(X, E_8) \times \mathbf{H}(X, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)) \,.$$

The connected components of this are

$$\pi_0 \Omega C\mathrm{Field}(X) \simeq \pi_1 C\mathrm{Field}(X) \simeq C^\infty(X, E_8) \times H^2_{\mathrm{dR}}(X) \,.$$

□

4.4.5.2.2 An explicit presentation We give an explicit desctiption of the moduli stack of the C-field in terms of Lie integration of L_∞-algebraic form data [FSS10][SSS09a].

By theorem 4.1.9 and corollary 4.2.7 the morphism $\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1 + 2\mathbf{a}$ is presented by the correspondence of simplicial presheaves

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{cosk}_3(\exp(\mathfrak{e}_8 \times \mathfrak{so})) & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu_{\mathfrak{so}} + 2\mu_{\mathfrak{e}_8})} & \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{ch}} \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \\ \mathbf{B}G & & \end{array}$$

and its differential refinement by a truncation of

$$\exp(\mathfrak{so})_{\mathrm{conn}} \times \exp(\mathfrak{e}_8)_{\mathrm{diff}} \xrightarrow{\exp(\mu_{\mathfrak{so}} + 2\mu_{\mathfrak{e}_8})} \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^4 \mathbb{R}$$

By prop. 4.4.48 we have that this is a fibration in $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj}}$ (there it is shown that the analogous morphism out of $\mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{e}_8)_{\mathrm{ChW}}$ is a fibration, but then so is this one, because the components on the left are the same but with fewer conditions on them, so that the lifts that existed before still exist here).

Over some $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ and $[k] \in \Delta$ we have that $\exp(b^{\mathbb{R}} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu)_{\mathrm{diff}}$ is given by differential form data

$$\begin{pmatrix} F_A = & dA + \frac{1}{2}[A \wedge A] \\ H_3 = & \nabla B := dB + \mathrm{CS}(A) - C_3 \\ \mathcal{G}_4 = & dC_3 \\ dF_A = & -[A \wedge F_A] \\ dH_3 = & \langle F_A \wedge F_A \rangle - \mathcal{G}_4 \\ d\mathcal{G}_4 = & 0 \end{pmatrix}_i \xleftarrow{\begin{array}{ll} t^a & \mapsto A^a \\ r^a & \mapsto F_A^a \\ b & \mapsto B \\ c & \mapsto C_3 \\ h & \mapsto H_3 \\ g & \mapsto \mathcal{G}_4 \end{array}} \begin{pmatrix} r^a = & dt^a + \frac{1}{2} C^a{}_{bc} t^b \wedge t^c + \\ h = & db + cs - c \\ g = & dc \\ dr^a = & -C^a{}_{bc} t^b \wedge r^a \\ dh = & \langle -, - \rangle - g \\ dg = & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

on $U \times \Delta^k$. Here, recall, A takes values in $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{e}_8 \times \mathfrak{e}_8 \times \mathfrak{so}(10, 1)$, so that for instance the $\mathcal{G}_4$-curvature is in detail given by

$$\mathcal{G}_4 = dC_3 = \langle F_{A^L_{\mathfrak{e}_8}} \wedge F_{A^L_{\mathfrak{e}_8}} \rangle + \langle F_{A^R_{\mathfrak{e}_8}} \wedge F_{A^R_{\mathfrak{e}_8}} \rangle - \langle F_\omega \wedge F_\omega \rangle - dH_3 \,,$$

where ω denotes the spin connection.

Let $\{U_i \to X\}$ be a differentiably good open cover, def. 3.3.2. We hit all connected components of $\mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}G)$ by considering in

$$[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}](C(U_i), \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{g}_\mu))_{\mathrm{diff}}$$

those cocycles that

- involve genuine G-connections (as opposed to the more general pseudo-connections that are also contained);
- have a globally defined C_3-form.

Write therefore (P, ∇, C_3) for such a cocycle.

For gauge transformations between two such pairs, parameterized by the above form data patchwise on $U \times \Delta^1$, the fact that $\mathcal{G}_4$ vanishes on Δ^1 implies the infinitesmal gauge transformation law, 1.3.104

$$\frac{d}{dt} C = d_U \omega_t + \iota_t \langle F_{\hat{A}} \wedge F_{\hat{A}} \rangle \,,$$

where $\hat{A} \in \Omega^1(U \times \Delta^1, \mathfrak{e}_8)$ is the shift of the 1-forms. This integrates to

$$C_2 = C_1 + d\omega + \mathrm{CS}(\nabla_1, \nabla_2) \,,$$

where

- $\omega := \int_{\Delta^1} \omega_t$
- $\mathrm{CS}(\nabla_1, \nabla_2) = \int_{\Delta^1} \langle F_{\hat{\nabla}} \wedge F_{\hat{\nabla}} \rangle$ is the relative Chern-Simons form corresponding to the shift of G-connection.

4.4.5.3 Restriction to the boundary

Let now X be a neighbourhood of a boundary. The boundary condition for the C-field is supposed to be that the class of the underlying circle 3-bundle vanishes

$$[G_4] = 0 \,.$$

Definition 4.4.56. Write $C\mathrm{Field}^{\mathrm{bdr}}(X)$ for the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C\mathrm{Field}^{\mathrm{bdr}}(X) & \longrightarrow & \Omega^3(X) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ C\mathrm{Field}(X) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) \end{array} ,$$

where the right vertical morphism regards globally defined 3-forms as 3-connections on the trivial circle 3-bundle.

We describe this object in a little more detail.

Definition 4.4.57. Write $\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{2a}}_{\mathrm{conn}_{\mathrm{Spin}}}$ for the homotopy pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{2a}}_{\mathrm{conn}_{\mathrm{Spin}}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{2a}} \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{\mathrm{conn}} \times \mathbf{B}E_8 & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \times \mathbf{B}E_8 \end{array} .$$

We call this the *moduli 2-stack of* $\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{2a}}$*-principal 2-bundles equipped with* Spin*-connection.*

Observation 4.4.58. We have an equivalence

$$C\mathrm{Field}^{\mathrm{bdr}}(X) \simeq \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{2a}}_{\mathrm{conn}_{\mathrm{Spin}}}) \times \Omega^3(X) \,.$$

Proof. Since we have a commuting square

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Omega^3(-) & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}^3 U(1) \end{array}$$

the defininig homotopy pullback for the moduli stack of boundary C-fields is the total rectangle of

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{2a}}_{\mathrm{conn}_{\mathrm{Spin}}}) \times \Omega^3(X) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{2a}}) \times \Omega^3(X) & \longrightarrow & \Omega^3(X) & \searrow & \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{2a}}_{\mathrm{conn}_{\mathrm{Spin}}}) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}^{\mathbf{2a}}) & \longrightarrow & * & & \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & \swarrow & \\ \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin}_{\mathrm{conn}} \times \mathbf{B}E_8) & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{Spin} \times \mathbf{B}E_8) & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{p}_1 + 2\mathbf{a}} & \mathbf{H}(X, \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)) & & \end{array}$$

□

4.4.6 Differential T-duality

In [KaVa10] (see also the review in section 7.4 of [BuSc10]) a formalization of the differential refinement of topological T-duality is given. We discuss here how this is naturally an example of the twisted differential **c**-structures, 4.4.

(...)

4.5 Symplectic higher geometry

The notion of *symplectic manifold* formalizes in physics the concept of a *classical mechanical system*. The notion of *geometric quantization* of a symplectic manifold is one formalization of the general concept in physics of *quantization* of such a system to a *quantum mechanical system*.

Or rather, the notion of symplectic manifold does not quite capture the most general systems of classical mechanics. One generalization requires passage to *Poisson manifolds*. The original methods of geometric quantization become meaningless on a Poisson manifold that is not symplectic. However, a Poisson structure on a manifold X is equivalent to the structure of a Poisson Lie algebroid $\mathfrak{P}$ over X. This is noteworthy, because the latter *is* again symplectic, as a Lie algebroid, even if the underlying Poisson manifold is not symplectic: it is a *symplectic Lie 1-algebroid*, prop. 4.5.16.

Based on related observations it was suggested, [Wei89] that a notion of *symplectic groupoid* should naturally replace that of *symplectic manifold* for the purposes of geometric quantization to yield a notion of *geometric quantization of symplectic groupoids*. Since a symplectic manifold can be regarded as a symplectic Lie 0-algebroid, prop. 4.5.16, and also as a symplectic smooth 0-groupoid this step amounts to a kind of categorification of symplectic geometry.

More or less implicitly, there has been evidence that this shift in perspective is substantial: the *deformation quantization* of a Poisson manifold famously turns out [Kon03] to be constructible in terms of correlators of the 2-dimensional TQFT called the *Poisson σ-model*, 4.6.6.4, associated with the corresponding Poisson Lie algebroid. The fact that this is 2-dimensional and not 1-dimensional, as the quantum mechanical system that it thus encodes, is a direct reflection of this categorification shift of degree.

On general abstract grounds this already suggests that it makes sense to pass via higher categorification further to symplectic Lie n-algebroids, def. 4.5.14, as well as to symplectic 2-groupoids, symplectic 3-groupoids, etc. up to symplectic ∞-groupoids, def. 4.5.21.

Formal hints for such a generalization had been noted in [Sev01] (in particular in its concluding table). More indirect – but all the more noteworthy – hints came from quantum field theory, where it was observed that a generalization of symplectic geometry to *multisymplectic geometry* [Hél11] of degree n more naturally captures the description of n-dimensional QFT (notice that quantum mechanics may be understood as $(0+1)$-dimensional QFT). For, observe that the symplectic form on a symplectic Lie n-algebroid is, while always "binary", nevertheless a representative of de Rham cohomology in degree $n+2$.

There is a natural formalization of these higher symplectic structures in the context of any cohesive ∞-topos. Moreover, by 4.5.2 symplectic forms on L_∞-algebroids have a natural interpretation in ∞-Lie theory: they are L_∞-invariant polynomials. This means that the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism applies to them.

Observation 4.5.1. From the perspective of ∞-Lie theory, a smooth manifold Σ equipped with a symplectic form ω is equivalently a Lie 0-algebroid equipped with a quadratic and non-degenerate *L_∞-invariant polynomial* (def. 3.3.97).

This observation implies

1. a direct ∞-Lie theoretic analog of symplectic manifolds: *symplectic Lie n-algebroids* and their Lie integration to *symplectic smooth ∞-groupoids*
2. the existence of a canonical ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism for every symplectic Lie n-algebroid.

This is spelled out below in 4.5.1, 4.5.2, 4.5.3, which is taken from [FRS11a]. The ∞-group extensions, def. 2.3.43, that are induced by the unrefined ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism, 2.3.15, on a symplectic ∞-groupoid are their *prequantum circle $(n+1)$-bundles*, the higher analogs of prequantum line bundles in the geometric quantization of symplectic manifolds. This we discuss in 4.8.1.1. Further below in 4.6.6 we show that the *refined* ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism, 2.3.17, on a symplectic ∞-groupoid constitutes the action functional of the corresponding *AKSZ σ-model* (discussed below in 4.6.6).

- 4.5.1 – Symplectic dg-geometry;

- 4.5.2– Symplectic L_∞-algebroids;
- 4.5.3 – Symplectic smooth ∞-groupoids;

The parts 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 are taken from [FRS11a].

4.5.1 Symplectic dg-geometry

In 3.4 we considered a general abstract notion of infinitesimal thickenings in higher differential geometry and showed how from the point of view of ∞-Lie theory this leads to the notion of L_∞-algebroids, def. 3.4.10. As is evident from that definition, these can also be regarded as objects in *dg-geometry* [ToVe05]. We make explicit now some basic aspects of this identification.

The following definitions formulate a simple notion of *affine smooth graded manifolds* and *affine smooth dg-manifolds*. Despite their simplicity these definitions capture in a precise sense all the relevant structure: namely the *local* smooth structure. Globalizations of these definitions can be obtained, if desired, by general abstract constructions.

Definition 4.5.2. The category of *affine smooth* $\mathbb{N}$*-graded manifolds* – here called *smooth graded manifolds* for short – is the full subcategory

$$\mathrm{SmoothGrMfd} \subset \mathrm{GrAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}^{\mathrm{op}}$$

of the opposite category of $\mathbb{N}$-graded-commutative $\mathbb{R}$-algebras on those isomorphic to Grassmann algebras of the form

$$\wedge^\bullet_{C^\infty(X_0)}\Gamma(V^*)\,,$$

where X_0 is an ordinary smooth manifold, $V \to X_0$ is an $\mathbb{N}$-graded smooth vector bundle over X_0 degreewise of finite rank, and $\Gamma(V^*)$ is the graded $C^\infty(X)$-module of smooth sections of the dual bundle.

For a smooth graded manifold $X \in \mathrm{SmoothGrMfd}$, we write $C^\infty(X) \in \mathrm{cdgAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}$ for its corresponding dg-algebra *of functions*.

Remarks.

- The full subcategory of these objects is equivalent to that of all objects isomorphic to one of this form. We may therefore use both points of view interchangeably.
- Much of the theory works just as well when V is allowed to be $\mathbb{Z}$-graded. This is the case that genuinely corresponds to *derived* (instead of just higher) differential geometry. An important class of examples for this case are BV-BRST complexes which motivate much of the literature. For the purpose of this short note, we shall be content with the $\mathbb{N}$-graded case.
- For an $\mathbb{N}$-graded $C^\infty(X_0)$-module $\Gamma(V^*)$ we have

  $$\wedge^\bullet_{C^\infty}\Gamma(V^*) = C^\infty(X_0) \oplus \Gamma(V_0^*) \oplus \left(\Gamma(V_0^*) \wedge_{C^\infty(X_0)} \Gamma(V_0^*) \oplus \Gamma(V_1^*)\right) \oplus \cdots\,,$$

  with the leftmost summand in degree 0, the next one in degree 1, and so on.
- There is a canonical functor

  $$\mathrm{SmoothMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{SmthGrMfd}$$

  which identifies an ordinary smooth manifold X with the smooth graded manifold whose function algebra is the ordinary algebra of smooth functions $C^\infty(X_0) := C^\infty(X)$ regarded as a graded algebra concentrated in degree 0. This functor is full and faithful and hence exhibits a full subcategory.

All the standard notions of differental geometry apply to differential graded geometry. For instance for $X \in \mathrm{SmoothGrMfd}$, there is the graded vector space $\Gamma(TX)$ of vector fields on X, where a vector field is identified with a graded *derivation* $v : C^\infty(X) \to C^\infty(X)$. This is naturally a graded (super) Lie algebra with super Lie bracket the graded commutator of derivations. Notice that for $v \in \Gamma(TX)$ of odd degree we have $[v, v] = v \circ v + v \circ v = 2v^2 : C^\infty(X) \to C^\infty(X)$.

Definition 4.5.3. The category of (affine, $\mathbb{N}$-graded) *smooth differential-graded manifolds* is the full sub-category

$$\mathrm{SmoothDgMfd} \subset \mathrm{cdgAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}^{\mathrm{op}}$$

of the opposite of differential graded-commutative $\mathbb{R}$-algebras on those objects whose underlying graded algebra comes from SmoothGrMfd.

This is equivalently the category whose objects are pairs (X, v) consisting of a smooth graded manifold $X \in \mathrm{SmoothGrMfd}$ and a grade 1 vector field $v \in \Gamma(TX)$, such that $[v, v] = 0$, and whose morphisms $(X_1, v_1) \to (X_2, v_2)$ are morphisms $f : X_1 \to X_2$ such that $v_1 \circ f^* = f^* \circ v_2$.

Remark 4.5.4. The dg-algebras appearing here are special in that their degree-0 algebra is naturally not just an $\mathbb{R}$-algebra, but a *smooth algebra* (a "C^∞-ring", see [Stel10] for review and discussion).

Definition 4.5.5. The *de Rham complex functor*

$$\Omega^\bullet(-) : \mathrm{SmoothGrMfd} \to \mathrm{cdgAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}^{\mathrm{op}}$$

sends a dg-manifold X with $C^\infty(X) \simeq \wedge^\bullet_{C^\infty(X_0)} \Gamma(V^*)$ to the Grassmann algebra over $C^\infty(X_0)$ on the graded $C^\infty(X_0)$-module

$$\Gamma(T^*X) \oplus \Gamma(V^*) \oplus \Gamma(V^*[-1]) \,,$$

where $\Gamma(T^*X)$ denotes the ordinary smooth 1-form fields on X_0 and where $V^*[-1]$ is V^* with the grades *increased* by one. This is equipped with the differential $\mathbf{d}$ defined on generators as follows:

- $\mathbf{d}|_{C^\infty(X_0)} = d_{\mathrm{dR}}$ is the ordinary de Rham differential with values in $\Gamma(T^*X)$;
- $\mathbf{d}|_{\Gamma(V^*)} \to \Gamma(V^*[-1])$ is the degree-shift isomorphism
- and $\mathbf{d}$ vanishes on all remaining generators.

Definition 4.5.6. Observe that $\Omega^\bullet(-)$ evidently factors through the defining inclusion $\mathrm{SmoothDgMfd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{cdgAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}$. Write

$$\mathfrak{T}(-) : \mathrm{SmoothGrMfd} \to \mathrm{SmoothDgMfd}$$

for this factorization.

The dg-space $\mathfrak{T}X$ is often called the *shifted tangent bundle* of X and denoted $T[1]X$.

Observation 4.5.7. For Σ an ordinary smooth manifold and for X a graded manifold corresponding to a vector bundle $V \to X_0$, there is a natural bijection

$$\mathrm{SmoothGrMfd}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, X) \simeq \Omega^\bullet(\Sigma, V)$$

where on the right we have the set of V-valued smooth differential forms on Σ: tuples consisting of a smooth function $\phi_0 : \Sigma \to X_0$, and for each $n > 1$ an ordinary differential n-form $\phi_n \in \Omega^n(\Sigma, \phi_0^* V_{n-1})$ with values in the pullback bundle of V_{n-1} along ϕ_0.

The standard Cartan calculus of differential geometry generalizes directly to graded smooth manifolds. For instance, given a vector field $v \in \Gamma(TX)$ on $X \in \mathrm{SmoothGrMfd}$, there is the *contraction derivation*

$$\iota_v : \Omega^\bullet(X) \to \Omega^\bullet(X)$$

on the de Rham complex of X, and hence the *Lie derivative*

$$\mathcal{L}_v := [\iota_v, \mathbf{d}] : \Omega^\bullet(X) \to \Omega^\bullet(X) \,.$$

Definition 4.5.8. For $X \in$ SmoothGrMfd the *Euler vector field* $\epsilon \in \Gamma(TX)$ is defined over any coordinate patch $U \to X$ to be given by the formula

$$\epsilon|_U := \sum_a \deg(x^a) x^a \frac{\partial}{\partial x^a} \,,$$

where $\{x^a\}$ is a basis of generators and $\deg(x^a)$ the degree of a generator. The *grade* of a homogeneous element α in $\Omega^\bullet(X)$ is the unique natural number $n \in \mathbb{N}$ with

$$\mathcal{L}_\epsilon \alpha = n\alpha \,.$$

Remarks.

- This implies that for x^i an element of grade n on U, the 1-form $\mathbf{d}x^i$ is also of grade n. This is why we speak of *grade* (as in "graded manifold") instead of *degree* here.
- Since coordinate transformations on a graded manifold are grading-preserving, the Euler vector field is indeed well-defined. Note that the degree-0 coordinates do not appear in the Euler vector field.

The existence of ϵ implies the following useful statement (amplified in [Royt02]), which is a trivial variant of what in grade 0 would be the standard Poincaré lemma.

Observation 4.5.9. On a graded manifold, every closed differential form ω of positive grade n is exact: the form

$$\lambda := \frac{1}{n} \iota_\epsilon \omega$$

satisfies

$$\mathbf{d}\lambda = \omega \,.$$

Definition 4.5.10. A *symplectic dg-manifold* of grade $n \in \mathbb{N}$ is a dg-manifold (X, v) equipped with 2-form $\omega \in \Omega^2(X)$ which is

- non-degenerate;
- closed;

as usual for symplectic forms, and in addition

- of grade n;
- v-invariant: $\mathcal{L}_v \omega = 0$.

In a local chart U with coordinates $\{x^a\}$ we may find functions $\{\omega_{ab} \in C^\infty(U)\}$ such that

$$\omega|_U = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{d}x^a \, \omega_{ab} \wedge \mathbf{d}x^b \,,$$

where summation of repeated indices is implied. We say that U is a *Darboux chart* for (X, ω) if the ω_{ab} are constant.

Observation 4.5.11. The function algebra of a symplectic dg-manifold (X, ω) of grade n is naturally equipped with a Poisson bracket

$$\{-,-\} : C^\infty(X) \otimes C^\infty(X) \to C^\infty(X)$$

which decreases grade by n. On a local coordinate patch $\{x^a\}$ this is given by

$$\{f, g\} = \frac{f6}{x^a 6} \omega^{ab} \frac{\partial g}{\partial x^b} \,,$$

where $\{\omega^{ab}\}$ is the inverse matrix to $\{\omega_{ab}\}$, and where the graded differentiation in the left factor is to be taken from the right, as indicated.

Definition 4.5.12. For $\pi \in C^\infty(X)$ and $v \in \Gamma(TX)$, we say that π *is a Hamiltonian for* v, or equivalently, that v *is the Hamiltonian vector field of* π if

$$\mathbf{d}\pi = \iota_v \omega\,.$$

Note that the convention $(-1)^{n+1}\mathbf{d}\pi = \iota_v\omega$ is also frequently used for defining Hamiltonians in the context of graded geometry.

Remark 4.5.13. In a local coordinate chart $\{x^a\}$ the defining equation $\mathbf{d}\pi = \iota_v\omega$ becomes

$$\mathbf{d}x^a \frac{\partial \pi}{\partial x^a} = \omega_{ab} v^a \wedge \mathbf{d}x^b = \omega_{ab}\mathbf{d}x^a \wedge v^b\,,$$

implying that

$$\omega_{ab} v^b = \frac{\partial \pi}{\partial x^a}\,.$$

4.5.2 Symplectic L_∞-algebroids

Here we discuss L_∞-algebroids, def. 3.4.10, equipped with *symplectic structure*, which we conceive of as: equipped with de Rham cocycles that are *invariant polynomials*, def. 3.3.97.

Definition 4.5.14. A *symplectic Lie n-algebroid* $(\mathfrak{P}, \omega)$ is a Lie n-algebroid $\mathfrak{P}$ equipped with a quadratic non-degenerate invariant polynomial $\omega \in W(\mathfrak{P})$ of degree $n+2$.

This means that

- on each chart $U \to X$ of the base manifold X of $\mathfrak{P}$, there is a basis $\{x^a\}$ for $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}|_U)$ such that

  $$\omega = \frac{1}{2}\mathbf{d}x^a\,\omega_{ab} \wedge \mathbf{d}x^b$$

  with $\{\omega_{ab} \in \mathbb{R} \hookrightarrow C^\infty(X)\}$ and $\deg(x^a) + \deg(x^b) = n$;
- the coefficient matrix $\{\omega_{ab}\}$ has an inverse;
- we have

  $$d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P})}\omega = d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{P})}\omega + \mathbf{d}\omega = 0\,.$$

The following observation essentially goes back to [Sev01] and [Royt02].

Proposition 4.5.15. *There is a full and faithful embedding of symplectic dg-manifolds of grade n into symplectic Lie n-algebroids.*

Proof. The dg-manifold itself is identified with an L_∞-algebroid by def. 3.4.10. For $\omega \in \Omega^2(X)$ a symplectic form, the conditions $\mathbf{d}\omega = 0$ and $\mathcal{L}_v\omega = 0$ imply $(\mathbf{d} + \mathcal{L}v)\omega = 0$ and hence that under the identification $\Omega^\bullet(X) \simeq \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a})$ this is an invariant polynomial on $\mathfrak{a}$.

It remains to observe that the L_∞-algebroid $\mathfrak{a}$ is in fact a Lie n-algebroid. This is implied by the fact that ω is of grade n and non-degenerate: the former condition implies that it has no components in elements of grade $> n$ and the latter then implies that all such elements vanish. □

The following characterization may be taken as a definition of Poisson Lie algebroids and Courant Lie 2-algebroids.

Proposition 4.5.16. *Symplectic Lie n-algebroids are equivalently:*

- *for $n = 0$: ordinary symplectic manifolds;*
- *for $n = 1$: Poisson Lie algebroids;*

- *for $n = 2$: Courant Lie 2-algebroids.*

See [Royt02, Sev01] for more discussion.

Proposition 4.5.17. *Let $(\mathfrak{P}, \omega)$ be a symplectic Lie n-algebroid for positive n in the image of the embedding of proposition 4.5.15. Then it carries the canonical L_∞-algebroid cocycle*

$$\pi := \frac{1}{n+1}\iota_\epsilon \iota_v \omega \in \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{P})$$

which moreover is the Hamiltonian, according to definition 4.5.12, of $d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{P})}$.

Proof. Since $\mathbf{d}\omega = \mathcal{L}_v\omega = 0$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbf{d}\iota_\epsilon\iota_v\omega &= \mathbf{d}\iota_v\iota_\epsilon\omega \\
&= (\iota_v\mathbf{d} - \mathcal{L}_v)\iota_\epsilon\omega \\
&= \iota_v\mathcal{L}_\epsilon\omega - [\mathcal{L}_v, \iota_\epsilon]\omega \\
&= n\iota_v\omega - \iota_{[v,\epsilon]}\omega \\
&= (n+1)\iota_v\omega,
\end{aligned}$$

where Cartan's formula $[\mathcal{L}_v, \iota_\epsilon] = \iota_{[v,\epsilon]}$ and the identity $[v, \epsilon] = -[\epsilon, v] = -v$ have been used. Therefore $\pi := \frac{1}{n+1}\iota_\epsilon\iota_v\omega$ satisfies the defining equation $\mathbf{d}\pi = \iota_v\omega$ from definition 4.5.12. □

Remark 4.5.18. On a local chart with coordinates $\{x^a\}$ we have

$$\pi\big|_U = \frac{1}{n+1}\omega_{ab}\ \deg(x^a)x^a \wedge v^b\,.$$

Our central observation now is the following.

Proposition 4.5.19. *The cocycle $\frac{1}{n}\pi$ from prop. 4.5.17 is in transgression with the invariant polynomial ω. A Chern-Simons element witnessing the transgression according to def. 3.3.101 is*

$$\mathrm{cs} = \frac{1}{n}\left(\iota_\epsilon\omega + \pi\right)\,.$$

Proof. It is clear that $i^*\mathrm{cs} = \frac{1}{n}\pi$. So it remains to check that $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P})}\mathrm{cs} = \omega$. As in the proof of proposition 4.5.17, we use $\mathbf{d}\omega = \mathcal{L}_v\omega = 0$ and Cartan's identity $[\mathcal{L}_v, \iota_\epsilon] = \iota_{[v,\epsilon]} = -\iota_v$. By these, the first summand in $d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P})}(\iota_\epsilon\omega + \pi)$ is

$$\begin{aligned}
d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P})}\iota_\epsilon\omega &= (\mathbf{d} + \mathcal{L}_v)\iota_\epsilon\omega \\
&= [\mathbf{d} + \mathcal{L}_v, \iota_\epsilon]\omega \\
&= n\omega - \iota_v\omega \\
&= n\omega - \mathbf{d}\pi
\end{aligned}\,.$$

The second summand is simply

$$d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P})}\pi = \mathbf{d}\pi$$

since π is a cocycle. □

Remark 4.5.20. In a coordinate patch $\{x^a\}$ the Chern-Simons element is

$$\mathrm{cs}\big|_U = \frac{1}{n}\left(\omega_{ab}\deg(x^a)x^a \wedge \mathbf{d}x^b + \pi\right)\,.$$

In this formula one can substitute $\mathbf{d} = d_{\mathrm{W}} - d_{\mathrm{CE}}$, and this kind of substitution will be crucial for the proof our main statement in proposition 4.6.27 below. Since $d_{\mathrm{CE}} x^i = v^i$ and using remark 4.5.18 we find

$$\sum_a \omega_{ab} \deg(x^a) x^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{CE}} x^b = (n+1)\pi \,,$$

and hence

$$\mathrm{cs}\big|_U = \frac{1}{n} \left(\deg(x^a)\, \omega_{ab} x^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P})} x^b - n\pi \right) \,.$$

In the section 4.6.6 we show that this transgression element cs *is* the AKSZ-Lagrangian.

4.5.3 Symplectic smooth ∞-groupoids

We define *symplectic smooth ∞-groupoids* in terms of their underlying symplectic L_∞-algebroids.

Recall that for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$, a *symplectic Lie n-algebroid* $(\mathfrak{P}, \omega)$ is (def. 4.5.14) an L_∞-algebroid $\mathfrak{P}$ that is equipped with a quadratic and non-degenerate L_∞-invariant polynomial. Under Lie integration, def. 3.3.45, $\mathfrak{P}$ integrates to a smooth n-groupoid $\tau_n \exp(\mathfrak{P}) \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$. Under the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism, 3.3.12, the invariant polynomial induces a differential form on the smooth ∞-groupoid, 2.3.11:

$$\omega : \tau_n \exp(\mathfrak{P}) \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+2}\mathbb{R}$$

representing a class $[\omega] \in H^{n+2}_{dR}(\tau_n \exp(\mathfrak{P}))$.

Definition 4.5.21. Write

$$\mathrm{SymplSmooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd} \hookrightarrow \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}/(\coprod_n \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+2}\mathbb{R})$$

for the full sub-∞-category of the over-∞-topos of Smooth∞Grpd over the de Rham coefficient objects on those objects in the image of this construction.

We say an object on SymplSmooth∞Grpd is a *symplectic smooth ∞-groupoid*.

Remark 4.5.22. There are evident variations of this for the ambient Smooth∞Grpd replaced by some variant, such as SynthDiffInfGrpd∞Grpd, or SmoothSuper∞Grpd, 3.5).

We now spell this out for $n = 1$. The following notion was introduced in [Wei89] in the study of geometric quantization.

Definition 4.5.23. A *symplectic groupoid* is a Lie groupoid $\mathcal{G}$ equipped with a differential 2-form $\omega_1 \in \Omega^2(\mathcal{G}_1)$ which is

1. a symplectic 2-form on $\mathcal{G}_1$;
2. closed as a simplicial form:

$$\delta\omega_1 = \partial_0^*\omega_1 - \partial_1^*\omega_1 + \partial_2^*\omega_1 = 0 \,,$$

where $\partial_i : \mathcal{G}_2 \to \mathcal{G}_1$ are the face maps in the nerve of $\mathcal{G}$.

Example 4.5.24. Let (X, ω) be an ordinary symplectic manifold. Then its fundamental groupoid $\Pi_1(X)$ canonically is a symplectic groupoid with $\omega_1 := \partial_1^*\omega - \partial_0^*\omega$.

Proposition 4.5.25. *Let $\mathfrak{P}$ be the symplectic Lie 1-algebroid (Poisson Lie algebroid), def. 4.5.14, induced by the Poisson manifold structure corresponding to (X, ω). Write*

$$\omega : \mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{P} \to \mathfrak{T}b^3\mathbb{R}$$

for the canonical invariant polynomial.

Then the corresponding ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism according to 3.3.12

$$\exp(\omega) : \exp(\mathfrak{P})_{\mathrm{diff}} \to \mathbf{B}^3_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbb{R}$$

exhibits the symplectic groupoid from example 4.5.24.

Proof. We start with the simple situation where (X, ω) has a global Darboux coordinate chart $\{x^i\}$. Write $\{\omega_{ij}\}$ for the components of the symplectic form in these coordinates, and $\{\omega^{ij}\}$ for the components of the inverse.

Then the Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra $\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{P})$ is generated from $\{x^i\}$ in degree 0 and $\{\partial_i\}$ in degree 1, with differential given by

$$d_{\mathrm{CE}} x^i = -\omega^{ij}\partial_j$$

$$d_{\mathrm{CE}}\partial_i = \frac{\partial \pi^{jk}}{\partial x^i}\partial_j \wedge \partial_k = 0\,.$$

The differential in the corresponding Weil algebra is hence

$$d_{\mathrm{W}} x^i = -\omega^{ij}\partial_j + \mathbf{d}x^i$$

$$d_{\mathrm{W}}\partial_i = \mathbf{d}\partial_i\,.$$

By prop. 4.5.16, the symplectic invariant polynomial is

$$\omega = \mathbf{d}x^i \wedge \mathbf{d}\partial_i \in W(\mathfrak{P})\,.$$

Clearly it is useful to introduce a new basis of generators with

$$\partial^i := -\omega^{ij}\partial_j\,.$$

In this new basis we have a manifest isomorphism

$$\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{P}) = \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{T}X)$$

with the Chevalley-Eilenberg algebra of the tangent Lie algebroid of X.

Therefore the Lie integration of $\mathfrak{P}$ is the fundamental groupoid of X, which, since we have assumed global Darboux oordinates and hence contractible X, is just the pair groupoid:

$$\tau_1 \exp(\mathfrak{P}) = \Pi_1(X) = (\; X \times X \rightrightarrows X \;)\,.$$

It remains to show that the symplectic form on $\mathfrak{P}$ makes this a symplectic groupoid.

Notice that in the new basis the invariant polynomial reads

$$\begin{aligned} \omega &= -\omega_{ij}\mathbf{d}x^i \wedge \mathbf{d}\partial^j \\ &= \mathbf{d}(\omega_{ij}\partial^i \wedge \mathbf{d}x^j) \end{aligned}.$$

The corresponding ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism, 3.3.12, that we need to compute is given by the ∞-anafunctor

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \exp(\mathfrak{P})_{\mathrm{diff}} & \xrightarrow{\exp(\omega)} & \exp(b^3\mathbb{R})_{\mathrm{dR}} & \xrightarrow{\int_{\Delta^\bullet}} & \flat_{dR}\mathbf{B}^3\mathbb{R} \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ \exp(\mathfrak{P}) & & & & \end{array}.$$

Over a test space $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ and in degree 1 an element in $\exp(\mathfrak{P})_{\mathrm{diff}}$ is a pair (X^i, η^i)

$$X^i \in C^\infty(U \times \Delta^1)$$

$$\eta^i \in \Omega^1_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^1)$$

subject to the constraint that along Δ^1 we have

$$d_{\Delta^1}X^i + \eta^i_{\Delta^1} = 0\,.$$

The vertical morphism $\exp(\mathfrak{P})_{\text{diff}} \to \exp(\mathfrak{P})$ has in fact a section whose image is given by those pairs for which η^i has no leg along U. We therefore find the desired form on $\exp(\mathfrak{P})$ by evaluating the top morphism on pairs of this form.

Such a pair is taken by the top morphism to

$$\begin{aligned}(X^i, \eta^j) &\mapsto \int_{\Delta^1} \omega_{ij} F_{X^i} \wedge F_{\partial^j} \\ &= \int_{\Delta^1} \omega_{ij} (d_{dR} X^i + \eta^i) \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}} \eta^j \in \Omega^3(U)\end{aligned} .$$

Using the above constraint and the condition that η^i has no leg along U, this becomes

$$\cdots = \int_{\Delta^1} \omega_{ij} d_U X^i \wedge d_U d_{\Delta^1} X^j \,.$$

By the Stokes theorem the integration over Δ^1 yields

$$\begin{aligned}\cdots &= \omega_{ij} d_{\mathrm{dR}} X^i \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}} X^j|_0 - \omega_{ij} d_{\mathrm{dR}} X^i \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}} X^j|_1 \\ &= \partial_1^* \omega - \partial_0^* \omega\end{aligned} .$$

□

4.6 ∞-Chern-Simons functionals

We consider the realization of the general abstract ∞-*Chern-Simons functionals* from 2.3.17 in the context of smooth, synthetic-differential and super-cohesion. We discuss general aspects of the class of quantum field theories defined this way and then identify a list of special cases of interest. This section builds on [FRS11a] and [FRS11b].

- 4.6.1 – ∞-Chern-Simons field theory
- Examples
  - 4.6.2.1 – Ordinary Chern-Simons theory
  - 4.6.4.2 – Nonabelian 7-dimenional Chern-Simons theory
  - 4.6.2.2 – Dijkgraaf-Witten theory
  - 4.6.3.1 – BF theory and topological Yang-Mills theory
  - 4.6.5 – Action of closed string field theory type
  - 4.6.6 – AKSZ σ-models
    - 4.6.6.3 – Ordinary Chern-Simons as AKSZ theory
    - 4.6.6.4 – Poisson σ-model
    - 4.6.6.5 – Courant σ-model
    - 4.6.6.6 – Higher abelian Chern-Simons theory in dimension $4k + 3$

4.6.1 ∞-Chern-Simons field theory

By prop. 4.1.9 the action functional of ordinary Chern-Simons theory [Fre] for a simple Lie group G may be understood as being the volume holonomy, 3.3.13, of the Chern-Simons circle 3-bundle with connection that the refined Chern-Weil homomorphism assigns to any connection on a G-principal bundle.

We may observe that all the ingredients of this statement have their general abstract analogs in any cohesive ∞-topos $\mathbf{H}$: for any cohesive ∞-group G and any representatative $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^n A$ of a characteristic class for G there is canonically the induced ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism, 2.3.15

$$L_{\mathbf{c}} : \mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{conn}}(-, \mathbf{B}G) \to \mathbf{H}^n_{\mathrm{diff}}(-)$$

that sends intrinsic G-connections to cocycles in intrinsic differential cohomology with coefficients in A. This may be thought of as the *Lagrangian* of the ∞-Chern-Simons theory induced by $\mathbf{c}$.

In the cohesive ∞-topos Smooth∞Grpd of smooth ∞-groupoids, 3.3, we deduced in 3.3.13 a natural general abstract procedure for integration of $L_{\mathbf{c}}$ over an n-dimensional parameter space $\Sigma \in \mathbf{H}$ by a realization of the general abstract construction described in 2.3.17. The resulting smooth function

$$\exp(S_{\mathbf{c}}) : [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}] \to U(1)$$

is the exponentiated action functional of ∞-Chern-Simons theory on the smooth ∞-groupoid of field configurations. It may be regarded itself as a degree-0 characteristic class on the space of field configurations. As such, its differential refinement $d\exp(S_{\mathbf{c}}) : [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}] \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}U(1)$ is the Euler-Lagrange equation of the theory.

We show that this construction subsumes the action functional of ordinary Chern-Simons theory, of Dijkgraaf-Witten theory, of BF-theory coupled to topological Yang-Mills theory, of all versions of AKSZ theory including the Poisson sigma-model and the Courant sigma model in lowest degree, as well as Chern-Simons supergravity.

This section draws from [FRS11a].

Recall for the following the construction of the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism by Lie integration of Chern-Simons elements, 3.3.12, for L_∞-algebroids, 3.4.1.

A Chern-Simons element cs witnessing the transgression from an invariant polynomial $\langle - \rangle$ to a cocycle μ is equivalently a commuting diagram of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}) & \xleftarrow{\mu} & \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R}) & & \text{cocycle} \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a}) & \xleftarrow{cs} & \mathrm{W}(b^n\mathbb{R}) & & \text{Chern-Simons element} \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{a}) & \xleftarrow{\langle - \rangle} & \mathrm{inv}(b^n\mathbb{R}) & & \text{invariant polynomial} \end{array}$$

in $\mathrm{dgAlg}_{\mathbb{R}}$. On the other hand, an n-connection with values in a Lie n-algebroid $\mathfrak{a}$ is a span of simplicial presheaves

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \hat{\Sigma} & \xrightarrow{\nabla} & \mathbf{cosk}\exp(\mathfrak{a})_{\mathrm{conn}} \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ \Sigma & & \end{array}$$

with coefficients in the simplicial presheaf $\mathbf{cosk}_{n+1}\exp(\mathfrak{a})_{conn}$, def. 3.3.108, that sends $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ to the

$(n+1)$-coskeleton of the simplicial set, which in degree k is the set of commuting diagrams

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \xleftarrow{A_{\mathrm{vert}}} & \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}) & & \text{transition function} \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) & \xleftarrow{A} & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a}) & & \text{connection forms} \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \Omega^\bullet(U) & \xleftarrow{\langle F_A \rangle} & \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{a}) & & \text{curvature characteristic forms} \end{array} ,$$

such that the curvature forms F_A of the ∞-Lie algebroid valued differential forms A on $U \times \Delta^k$ with values in $\mathfrak{a}$ in the middle are horizontal.

If μ is an ∞-Lie algebroid cocycle of degree n, then the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism operates by sending an ∞-connection given by a Čech cocycle with values in simplicial sets of such commuting diagrams to the obvious pasting composite

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \Omega^\bullet_{\mathrm{vert}}(U \times \Delta^k) & \xleftarrow{A_{\mathrm{vert}}} & \mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{a}) & \xleftarrow{\mu} & \mathrm{CE}(b^n\mathbb{R}) & : \mu(A_{\mathrm{vert}}) & \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \Omega^\bullet(U \times \Delta^k) & \xleftarrow{A} & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a}) & \xleftarrow{cs} & \mathrm{W}(b^n\mathbb{R}) & : \mathrm{cs}(A) & \text{Chern-Simons form} \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \Omega^\bullet(U) & \xleftarrow{\langle F_A \rangle} & \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{a}) & \xleftarrow{\langle - \rangle} & \mathrm{inv}(b^n\mathbb{R}) & : \langle F_A \rangle & \text{curvature} \end{array} .$$

Under the map to the coskeleton the group of such cocycles for line n-bundle with connection is quotiented by the discrete group Γ of periods of μ, such that the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism is given by sending the ∞-connection ∇ to

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \hat{\Sigma} & \xrightarrow{\nabla} & \mathbf{cosk}_n \exp(\mathfrak{a})_{\mathrm{conn}} & \xrightarrow{\exp(\mathrm{cs})} & \mathbf{B}^n(\mathbb{R}/\Gamma)_{\mathrm{conn}} \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & & & \\ \Sigma & & & & \end{array} .$$

This presents a circle n-bundle with connection, 3.3.11, whose connection n-form is locally given by the Chern-Simons form $\mathrm{cs}(A)$. This is the Lagrangian of the ∞-Chern-Simons theory defined by $(\mathfrak{a}, \langle - \rangle)$ and evaluated on the given ∞-connection. If Σ is a smooth manifold of dimension n, then the higher holonomy, 3.3.13, of this circle n-bundle over Σ is the value of the Chern-Simons action. After a suitable gauge transformation this is given by the integral

$$\exp(iS(A)) = \exp(i \int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}(A)) ,$$

the value of the ∞-Chern-Simons action functional on the ∞-connection A.

Proposition 4.6.1. *Let $\mathfrak{g}$ be an L_∞-algebra and $\langle -, \cdots, - \rangle$ an invariant polynomial on $\mathfrak{g}$. Then the ∞-connections A with values in $\mathfrak{g}$ that satisfy the equations of motion of the corresponding ∞-Chern-Simons theory are precisely those for which*

$$\langle -, F_A \wedge F_A \wedge \cdots F_A \rangle = 0 ,$$

as a morphism $\mathfrak{g} \to \Omega^\bullet(\Sigma)$, where F_A denotes the (in general inhomogeneous) curvature form of A.

In particular for binary and non-degenerate invariant polynomials the equations of motion are

$$F_A = 0 .$$

Proof. Let $A \in \Omega(\Sigma \times I, \mathfrak{g})$ be a 1-parameter variation of $A(t=0)$, that vanishes on the boundary $\partial\Sigma$. Here we write $t : [0,1] \to \mathbb{R}$ for the canonical coordinate on the interval.

$A(0)$ is critical if

$$\left(\frac{d}{dt}\int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}(A)\right)_{t=0} = 0$$

for all extensions A of $A(0)$. Using Cartan's magic formula and the Stokes theorem the left hand expression is

$$\begin{aligned}
\left(\frac{d}{dt}\int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}(A)\right)_{t=0} &= \left(\int_\Sigma \frac{d}{dt}\mathrm{cs}(A)\right)_{t=0} \\
&= \left(\int_\Sigma d\iota_{\partial t}\mathrm{cs}(A) + \int_\Sigma \iota_{\partial_t} d\mathrm{cs}(A)\right)_{t=0} \\
&= \left(\int_\Sigma d_\Sigma(\iota_{\partial t}\mathrm{cs}(A)) + \int_\Sigma \iota_{\partial_t}\langle F_A \wedge \cdots F_A\rangle\right)_{t=0} . \\
&= \left(\int_{\partial\Sigma} \iota_{\partial t}\mathrm{cs}(A) + n\int_\Sigma \langle(\frac{d}{dt}A) \wedge \cdots F_A\rangle\right)_{t=0} \\
&= \left(n\int_\Sigma \langle(\frac{d}{dt}A) \wedge \cdots F_A\rangle\right)_{t=0}
\end{aligned}$$

Here we used that $\iota_{\partial_t} F_A = \frac{d}{dt}A$ and that by assumption this vanishes on $\partial\Sigma$. Since $\frac{d}{dt}A$ can have arbitrary values, the claim follows. □

4.6.2 3d Chern-Simons functionals

We discuss examples of the intrinsic notion of ∞-Chern-Simons action functionals, 3.3.13, over 3-dimensional base spaces. This includes the archetypical example of ordinary 3-dimensional Chern-Simons theory, but also its discrete analog, Dijkgraaf-Witten theory.

- 4.6.2.1 – Ordinary Chern-Simons theory;
- 4.6.2.2 – Ordinary Dijkgraaf-Witten theory.

4.6.2.1 Ordinary Chern-Simons theory We discuss the action functional of ordinary 3-dimensional Chern-Simons theory (see [Fre] for a survey) from the point of view of intrinsic Chern-Simons action functionals in Smooth∞Grpd.

Theorem 4.6.2. *Let G be a simply connected compact simple Lie group. For*

$$[c] \in H^4(BG, \mathbb{Z}) \simeq \mathbb{Z}$$

a universal characteristic class that generates the degree-4 integral cohomology of the classifying space BG, there is an essentially unique smooth lift $\mathbf{c}$ of the characteristic map c of the form

$$\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^3U(1) \qquad \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

on the smooth moduli stack $\mathbf{B}G$ of smooth G-principal bundles with values in the smooth moduli 3-stack of smooth circle 3-bundles. The differential refinement

$$\hat{\mathbf{c}} : \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^3U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \qquad \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$$

to the moduli stacks of the corresponding n-bundles with n-connections induces over any any compact 3-dimensional smooth manifold Σ a smooth functional

$$\exp(iS_{\mathrm{CS}}(-)) : \ [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\hat{\mathbf{c}}} [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^3U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\int_\Sigma} U(1)$$

on the moduli stack of G-principal connections on Σ, which on objects $A \in \Omega^1(\Sigma, \mathfrak{g})$ is the exponentiated Chern-Simons action functional

$$\exp(iS_{\mathrm{CS}}(A)) = \exp(i\int_\Sigma \langle A \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}} A\rangle + \frac{1}{6}\langle A \wedge [A \wedge A]\rangle)\,.$$

Proof. This is theorem 4.1.9 combined with 3.3.110. □
For more computational details that go into this see also 4.6.6.3 below

4.6.2.2 Ordinary Dijkgraaf-Witten theory Dijkgraaf-Witten theory (see [FrQu93] for a survey) is commonly understood as the analog of Chern-Simons theory for discrete structure groups. We show that this becomes a precise and systematic statement in Smooth∞Grpd: the Dijkgraaf-Witten action functional is that induced from applying the ∞-Chern-Simons homomorphism to a characteristic class of the form $\mathrm{Disc}BG \to \mathbf{B}^3U(1)$, for $\mathrm{Disc} : \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \to \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ the canonical embeedding of discrete ∞-groupoids, 3.1, into all smooth ∞-groupoids.

Let $G \in \mathrm{Grp} \to \infty\mathrm{Grpd} \stackrel{\mathrm{Disc}}{\to} \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ be a discrete group regarded as an ∞-group object in discrete ∞-groupoids and hence as a smooth ∞-groupoid with discrete smooth cohesion. Write $BG = K(G,1) \in \infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ for its delooping in ∞Grpd and $\mathbf{B}G = \mathrm{Disc}BG$ for its delooping in Smooth∞Grpd.

We also write $\Gamma\mathbf{B}^nU(1) \simeq K(U(1), n)$. Notice that this is different from $B^nU(1) \simeq \Pi\mathbf{B}U(1)$, reflecting the fact that $U(1)$ has non-discrete smooth structure.

Proposition 4.6.3. *For G a discrete group, morphisms $\mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^nU(1)$ correspond precisely to cocycles in the ordinary group cohomology of G with coefficients in the discrete group underlying the circle group*

$$\pi_0\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{B}G, \mathbf{B}^nU(1)) \simeq H^n_{\mathrm{Grp}}(G, U(1))\,.$$

Proof. By the $(\mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma)$-adjunction we have

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{B}G, \mathbf{B}^nU(1)) \simeq \infty\mathrm{Grpd}(BG, K(U(1), n))\,.$$

□

Proposition 4.6.4. *For G discrete*

- *the intrinsic de Rham cohomology of $\mathbf{B}G$ is trivial*

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\mathbf{B}G, \flat_{\mathrm{dR}}\mathbf{B}^nU((1)) \simeq *;$$

- *all G-principal bundles have a unique flat connection*

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(X, \mathbf{B}G) \simeq \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Pi(X), \mathbf{B}G)\,.$$

Proof. By the $(\mathrm{Disc} \dashv \Gamma)$-adjunction and using that $\Gamma \circ \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} K \simeq *$ for all K. □
It follows that for G discrete

- any characteristic class $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^nU(1)$ is a group cocycle;
- the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism coincides with postcomposition with this class

$$\mathbf{H}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}G) \to \mathbf{H}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^nU(1))\,.$$

Proposition 4.6.5. *For G discrete and $\mathbf{c} : \mathbf{B}G \to \mathbf{B}^3U(1)$ any group 3-cocycle, the ∞-Chern-Simons theory action functional on a 3-dimensional manifold Σ*

$$\mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}(\Sigma, \mathbf{B}G) \to U(1)$$

is the action functional of Dijkgraaf-Witten theory.

Proof. By proposition 3.3.110 the morphism is given by evaluation of the pullback of the cocycle $\alpha : BG \to B^3U(1)$ along a given $\nabla : \Pi(\Sigma) \to BG$, on the fundamental homology class of Σ. This is the definition of the Dijkgraaf-Witten action (for instance equation (1.2) in [FrQu93]).

□

4.6.3 4d Chern-Simons functionals

4.6.3.1 BF theory and topological Yang-Mills theory We discuss how the action functional of (nonabelian) *BF-theory* [Hor89] in 4-dimensions is a special case of higher Chern-Simons theory if the coefficient of the "cosmological constant" term has a special value and if the action functional of topological Yang-Mills theory is added with a certain coefficient.

Let $\mathfrak{g} = (\mathfrak{g}_2 \xrightarrow{\partial} \mathfrak{g})_1$ be a strict Lie 2-algebra, coming from a differential crossed module, def. 1.3.6, as indicated.

The following observation is due to [SSS09a].

Proposition 4.6.6. *We have*

1. *every invariant polynomial $\langle - \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} \in \mathrm{inv}(\mathfrak{g}_1)$ on $\mathfrak{g}_1$ is a Chern-Simons element on $\mathfrak{g}$, exhibiting a transgression to a trivial L_∞-algebra cocycle;*
2. *for $\mathfrak{g}_1$ a semisimple Lie algebra and $\langle - \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1}$ the Killing form, the corresponding Chern-Simons action functional on ∞-Lie algebra valued forms*

$$\Omega^\bullet(X) \xleftarrow{(A,B)} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}_2 \to \mathfrak{g}_1) \xleftarrow{(\langle - \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1}, d_W \langle - \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1})} \mathrm{W}(b^{n-1}\mathbb{R})$$

is the sum of the action functionals of topological Yang-Mills theory with BF-theory with cosmological constant:

$$\mathrm{cs}_{\langle - \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1}}(A,B) = \langle F_A \wedge F_A \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} - 2\langle F_A \wedge \partial B \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} + 2\langle \partial B \wedge \partial B \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} ,$$

where F_A is the ordinary curvature 2-form of A.

Proof. For $\{t_a\}$ a basis of $\mathfrak{g}_1$ and $\{b_i\}$ a basis of $\mathfrak{g}_2$ we have

$$d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})} : \mathbf{d}t^a \mapsto d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}_1)} + \partial^a{}_i \mathbf{d}b^i .$$

Therefore with $\langle - \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} = P_{a_1 \cdots a_n} \mathbf{d}r^{a_1} \wedge \cdots \mathbf{d}t^{a_n}$ we have

$$d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})} \langle - \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} = n P_{a_1 \cdots a_n} \partial^{a_1}{}_i \mathbf{d}b^i \wedge \cdots \mathbf{d}t^{a_n} .$$

The right hand is a polynomial in the shifted generators of $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$, and hence an invariant polynomial on $\mathfrak{g}$. Therefore $\langle - \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1}$ is a Chern-Simons element for it.

Now for $(A,B) \in \Omega^1(U \times \Delta^k, \mathfrak{g})$ an L_∞-algebra-valued form, we have that the 2-form curvature is

$$F^1_{(A,B)} = F_A - \partial B .$$

Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{cs}_{\langle - \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1}}(A,B) &= \langle F^1_{(A,B)} \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} \\ &= \langle F_A \wedge F_A \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} - 2\langle F_A \wedge \partial B \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} + 2\langle \partial B \wedge \partial B \rangle_{\mathfrak{g}_1} \end{aligned} .$$

□

4.6.4 7d Chern-Simons functionals

We discuss some higher Chern-Simons functionals over 7-dimensional parameter spaces.

- 4.6.4.1 – The cup product of a 3d CS theory with itself;
- 4.6.4.2 – 7d CS theory on string 2-connection fields;
- 4.6.4.3 – 7d CS theory in 11d supergravity on AdS_7.

This section draws from [FiSaScIII].

4.6.4.1 The cup product of a 3d CS theory with itself Let G be a compact and simply connected simple Lie group and consider from 4.6.2.1 the canonical differential characteristic map for the induced 3d Chern-Simons theory

$$\hat{\mathbf{c}} : \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} .$$

We consider the *cup product* of this differential characteristic map with itself.

Proposition 4.6.7. *The cup product in integral cohomology*

$$(-) \cup (-) : H^{k+1}(-, \mathbb{Z}) \times H^{l+1}(-, \mathbb{Z}) \to H^{k+l+2}(-, \mathbb{Z})$$

has a smooth and differential refinement to the moduli ∞-stacks of differential cocycles

$$(-) \hat{\cup} (-) : \mathbf{B}^k U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \times \mathbf{B}^l U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^{k+l+1} U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

in Smooth∞Grpd*.*

Proof. By the discussion in 3.3.11 we have that $\mathbf{B}^k U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$ is presented by the simplicial presheaf

$$\Xi \mathbb{Z}_D^\infty[k+1] \in [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]. ,$$

which is the image of the Deligne-Beilinson complex, def. 1.3.60, under the Dold-Kan correspondence, prop. 2.1.6. A lift of the cup product to the Deligne complex is given by the *Deligne-Beilinson cup product* [Del71][Bel85]. Since the Dold-Kan functor $\Xi : [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{Ch}_\bullet] \to [\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]$ is right adjoint, it preserves products and hence this cup product. □

Corollary 4.6.8. *The topological degree-8 class*

$$c \cup c : \; BG \xrightarrow{(c,c)} K(\mathbb{Z}, 4) \times K(\mathbb{Z}, 4) \xrightarrow{\cup} K(\mathbb{Z}, 8)$$

has a smooth and differential refinement of the form

$$\hat{\mathbf{c}} \hat{\cup} \hat{\mathbf{c}} : \; \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \longrightarrow \hat{\mathbf{B}}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \times \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \xrightarrow{\hat{\cup}} \mathbf{B}^7 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \; .$$

Definition 4.6.9. Let Σ be a compact smooth manifold of dimension 7. The higher Chern-Simons functional

$$\exp(i S_{\mathrm{CS}}(-)) : \; [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\hat{\mathbf{c}} \hat{\cup} \hat{\mathbf{c}}} [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^7 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\int_\Sigma} U(1)$$

defines the *cup product Chern-Simons theory* induced by $\mathbf{c}$.

Remark 4.6.10. For ordinary Chern-Simons theory, 4.6.2.1, the assumption that G is simply connected implies that BG is 3-connected, hence that every G-principal bundle on a 3-dimensional Σ is trivializable, so that G-principal connections on Σ can be identified with $\mathfrak{g}$-valued differential forms on Σ. This is no longer in general the case over a 7-dimensional Σ.

Proposition 4.6.11. *If a field configuration $A \in [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}]$ happens to have trivial underlying bundle, then the value of the cup product CS theory action function is given by*

$$\exp(iS_{\mathrm{CS}}(A)) = \int_\Sigma \mathrm{CS}(A) \wedge \langle F_A \wedge F_A \rangle \,,$$

where $\mathrm{CS}(-)$ *is the Lagrangian of ordinary Chern-Simons theory, 4.6.2.1.*

4.6.4.2 7d CS theory on string 2-connection fields By theorem 4.1.32 we have a canonical differential characteristic map

$$\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2 : \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^7 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

from the smooth moduli 2-stack of String-2-connections, 1.3.5.7.2, with values in the smooth moduli 7-stack of circle 7-bundles (bundle 6-gerbes) with connection. This induces a 7-dimensional Chern-Simons theory.

Definition 4.6.12. For Σ a compact 7-dimensional smooth manifold, define $\exp(iS_{\frac{1}{6}p_2}(-))$ to be the Chern-Simons action functional induced by the universal differential second fractional Pontryagin class, theorem 4.1.32,

$$\exp(iS_{\frac{1}{6}p_2}(-)) : \ [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2} [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^7 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\int_\Sigma} U(1) \ .$$

Recall from 1.3.5.7.2 the different incarnations of the local differential form data for string 2-connections.

Proposition 4.6.13. *Over a 7-dimensional Σ every field configuration $(A, B) \in [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}}]$ is a string 2-connection whose underlying* String*-principal 2-bundle is trivial.*

- *In terms of the strict $\mathfrak{string}$ Lie 2-algebra from def. 1.3.111 this is presented by a pair of nonabelian differential forms $A \in \Omega^1(\Sigma, P_*\mathfrak{so})$, $B \in \Omega^2(\Sigma, \hat{\Omega}_*\mathfrak{so})$. The above action functional takes this to*

$$\begin{aligned}
\exp(iS_{\frac{1}{6}p_2}(A, B)) &= \int_\Sigma \mathrm{CS}_7(A(1)) \\
&= \int_\Sigma (\langle A_e \wedge dA_e \wedge dA_e \wedge dA_e \rangle + k_1 \langle A_e \wedge [A_e \wedge A_e] \wedge dA_e \wedge dA_e \rangle \\
&\quad + k_2 \langle A_e \wedge [A_e \wedge A_e] \wedge [A_e \wedge A_e] \wedge dA_e \rangle + k_3 \langle A_e \wedge [A_e \wedge A_e] \wedge [A_e \wedge A_e] \wedge [A_e \wedge A_e] \rangle)
\end{aligned} ,$$

  where $A_e \in \Omega^1(\Sigma, \mathfrak{so})$ is the 1-form of endpoint values of A in the path Lie algebra, and where the integrand is the degree-7 Chern-Simons element of the quaternary invariant polynomial on $\mathfrak{so}$.

- *In terms of the skeletal $\mathfrak{string}$ Lie 2-algebra from def. 1.3.110 this is presented by a pair of differential forms $A \in \Omega^1(\Sigma, \mathfrak{so})$, $B \in \Omega^2(\Sigma, \mathbb{R})$. The above action functional takes this to*

$$\exp(iS_{\frac{1}{6}p_2}(A, B)) = \int_\Sigma \mathrm{CS}_7(A) \,.$$

4.6.4.3 7d CS theory in 11d supergravity on AdS_7 The two 7-dimensional Chern-Simons theories from 4.6.4.1 and 4.6.4.2 can be merged to a 7d theory defined on field configurations that are 2-connections with values in the String-2-group from def. 4.2.8. We define and dicuss this higher Chern-Simons theory below in 4.6.4.3.2. In 4.6.4.3.1 we argue that this 7d Chern-Simons theory plays a role in $\mathrm{AdS}_7/\mathrm{CFT}_6$-duality [AGMOO].

4.6.4.3.1 Motivation from $\mathrm{AdS}_7/\mathrm{CFT}_6$-holography We give here an argument that the 7-dimensional nonabelian gauge theory discussed in section 4.6.4.3.2 is the Chern-Simons part of 11-dimensional supergravity on $\mathrm{AdS}_7 \times S^4$ with 4-form flux on the S^4-factor and with quantum anomaly cancellation conditions taken into account. We moreover argue that this implies that the states of this 7-dimensional CS theory over a 7-dimensional manifold encode the conformal blocks of the 6-dimensional worldvolume theory of coincident M5-branes. The argument is based on the available but incomplete knowledge about AdS/CFT-duality, such as reviewed in [AGMOO], and cohomological effects in M-theory as reviewed and discussed in [Sa10a].

There are two, seemingly different, realizations of the *holographic principle* in quantum field theory. On the one hand, Chern-Simons theories in dimension $4k+3$ have spaces of states that can be identified with spaces of correlators of $(4k+2)$-dimensional conformal field theories (spaces of "conformal blocks") on their boundary. For the case $k=0$ this was discussed in [Wi89], for the case $k=1$ in [Wi96]. On the other hand, AdS/CFT duality (see [AGMOO] for a review) identifies correlators of d-dimensional CFTs with states of compatifications of string theory, or M-theory, on asymptotically anti-de Sitter spacetimes of dimension $d+1$ (see [Wi98a]).

In [Wi98b] it was pointed out that these two mechanisms are in fact closely related. A detailed analysis of the $\mathrm{AdS}_5/\mathrm{SYM}_4$-duality shows that the spaces of correlators of the 4-dimensional theory can be identified with the spaces of states obtained by geometric quantization just of the Chern-Simons term in the effective action of type II string theory on AdS_5, which locally reads

$$(B_{\mathrm{NS}}, B_{\mathrm{RR}}) \mapsto N \int_{\mathrm{AdS}_5} B_{\mathrm{NS}} \wedge dB_{\mathrm{RR}}\,,$$

where B_{NS} is the local Neveu-Schwarz 2-form field, B_{RR} is the local RR 2-form field, and where N is the RR 5-form flux picked up from integration over the S^5 factor.

As briefly indicated there, the similar form of the Chern-Simons term of 11-dimensional supergravity (M-theory) on AdS_7 suggests that an analogous argument shows that under $\mathrm{AdS}_7/\mathrm{CFT}_6$-duality the conformal blocks of the $(2,0)$-superconformal theory are identified with the geometric quantization of a 7-dimensional Chern-Simons theory. In [Wi98b] that Chern-Simons action is taken, locally on AdS_7, to be

$$C_3 \mapsto \int_{\mathrm{AdS}_7 \times S^4} C_3 \wedge G_4 \wedge G_4 \quad = N \int_{\mathrm{AdS}_7} C_3 \wedge dC_3\,,$$

where now C_3 is the local incarnation of the supergravity C-field, 4.3.3.2, where G_4 is its curvature 4-form locally equal to dC_3, and where

$$N := \int_{S^4} G_4$$

is the C-field flux on the 4-spehere factor.

This is the $(4 \cdot 1 + 3 = 7)$-dimensional abelian Chern-Simons theory, 4.6.6.6, shown in [Wi96] to induce on its 6-dimensional boundary the self-dual 2-form – in the *abelian* case.

We may notice, however, that there is a term missing in the above Lagrangian. The quantum anomaly cancellation in 11-dimensional supergravity is known [DLM95](3.14) to require instead a Lagrangian whose Chern-Simons term locally reads

$$(\omega, C_3) \mapsto \int_{\mathrm{AdS}_7 \times S^4} C_3 \wedge \left(\frac{1}{6} G_4 \wedge G_4 - I_8^{\mathrm{dR}}(\omega)\right)\,,$$

where ω is the spin connection form, locally, and where $48 I_8^{\mathrm{dR}}(\omega)$ is a de Rham representative of the integral cohomology class

$$48 I_8 = p_2 - (\frac{1}{2}p_1) \cup (\frac{1}{2}p_1)\,, \tag{4.16}$$

with p_1 and p_2 the first and second (fractional) Pontrjagin classes, prop. 4.1.5, prop. 4.1.30 respectively, of the given Spin bundle over 11-dimensional spacetime X.

This means that after passing to the effective theory on AdS_7, this corrected Lagrangian picks up another 7-dimensional Chern-Simons term, now one depending on *nonablian* fields. Locally this reads

$$S_{7d\mathrm{CS}} : (\omega, C_3) \mapsto \frac{N}{6}\int_{\mathrm{AdS}_7} C_3 \wedge dC_3 - N\int_{\mathrm{Ads}_7} \mathrm{CS}_{I_8}(\omega) \quad . \tag{4.17}$$

where $\mathrm{CS}_{I_8}(\omega)$ is some Chern-Simons form for $I_8^{\mathrm{dR}}(\omega)$, defined locally by

$$d\mathrm{CS}_{I_8}(\omega) = I_8^{\mathrm{dR}}(\omega)\,.$$

But this action functional, which is locally a functional of a 3-form and a Spin-connection, cannot globally be of this form, already because the field that looks locally like a Spin connection cannot globally be a Spin connection. To see this, notice from the discussion of the C-field in 4.4.5, that there is a quantization condition on the supergravity fields on the 11-dimensional X [Wi97a], which in cohomology requires the identity

$$2[G_4] = \frac{1}{2}p_1 + 2a \quad \in H^4(X, \mathbb{Z})\,,$$

where on the right we have the canonical characteristic 4-class a, prop. 4.2.6, of an 'auxiliary' E_8 bundle on 11-dimensional spacetime. Moreover, we expect that when restricted to the vicinity of the asymptotic boundary of AdS_7, the class of G_4 should have to vanish in analogy to what happens at the boundary for the Hořava-Witten compactification of the 11-dimensional theory [HoWi95], as discussed in 4.4.5.3. Since, moreover, the states of the topological TFT that we are after are obtained already from geometric quantization, 4.8, of the theory in the vicinity $\Sigma \times I$ of a boundary Σ, we find the field configurations of the 7-dimensional theory are to satisfy the constraint in cohomology

$$\frac{1}{2}p_1 + 2a = 0\,. \tag{4.18}$$

Imposing the condition (4.18) has two effects.

1. The first is that, according to 4.4, what locally looks like a spin-connection is globally instead a *twisted differential String structure*, 4.4.4, or equivalently a *2-connection on a twisted* String*-principal 2-bundle*, where the twist is given by the class $2a$. By 1.3.1.3 the total space of such a principal 2-bundle may be identified with a (twisted) *nonabelian bundle gerbe*. Therefore the configuration space of fields of the effective 7-dimensional nonabelian Chern-Simons action above should not involve just Spin connection forms, but String-*2-connection* form data. By 1.3.5.7.2 there is a gauge in which this is locally given by nonabelian 2-form field data with values in the loop group of Spin.

2. The second effect is that on the space of twisted String-2-connections, the differential 4-form $\mathrm{tr}(F_\omega \wedge F_\omega)$, that under the Chern-Weil homomorphism represents the image of $\frac{1}{2}p_1$ in de Rha, cohomology, according to 4.4.4.1, locally satisfies

   $$dH_3 = \mathrm{tr}(F_\omega \wedge F_\omega) - 2\mathrm{tr}(F_A \wedge F_A)\,,$$

   where H_3 is the 3-form curvature component of the String-2-connection, and where F_A is the curvature of any connection on the E_8 bundle, locally given by an $\mathfrak{e}_8$-valued 1-form A. Therefore with the quantization condition of the C field taken into account, the 7-dimensional Chern-Simons action from above becomes

   $$S_{7d\mathrm{CS}} = N\int_{\mathrm{AdS}_7}\left(\frac{1}{6}C_3 \wedge dC_3 - \frac{1}{48}H_3 \wedge dH_3 - \frac{1}{12}(H_3 + \mathrm{CS}_a(A) \wedge \mathrm{tr}(F_A \wedge F_A) + \mathrm{CS}_{\frac{1}{8}\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2}(\omega)\right)\,. \tag{4.19}$$

   Here the first two terms are 7-dimensional abelian Chern-Simons actions as before, for fields that are both locally abelian three forms (but have very different global nature). The second two terms, however, are action functionals for *nonabelian* Chern-Simons theories. The third term involves the familiar Chern-Simons 3-form of the E_8-connection familiar from 3-dimensional Chern-Simons theory

$$\mathrm{CS}_a(A) = \mathrm{tr}(A \wedge dA) + \frac{2}{3}\mathrm{tr}(A \wedge A \wedge A)\,.$$

Finally the Lagrangian in the fourth term is the Chern-Simons 7-form that is locally induced, under the Chern-Weil homomorphism, from the quartic invariant polynomial $\langle -,-,-,-\rangle : \mathfrak{so}^{\otimes 4} \to \mathbb{R}$ on the special orthogonal Lie algebra $\mathfrak{so}$, in direct analogy to how standard 3-dimensional Chern-Simons theory is induced under Chern-Weil theory from the quadratic invariant polynomial (the Killing form) $\langle -,-\rangle : \mathfrak{so} \otimes \mathfrak{so} \to \mathbb{R}$:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathrm{CS}_7(\omega) =& \langle \omega \wedge d\omega \wedge d\omega \wedge d\omega\rangle + k_1 \langle \omega \wedge [\omega \wedge \omega] \wedge d\omega \wedge d\omega\rangle \\ &+ k_2 \langle \omega \wedge [\omega \wedge \omega] \wedge [\omega \wedge \omega] \wedge d\omega\rangle + k_3 \langle \omega \wedge [\omega \wedge \omega] \wedge [\omega \wedge \omega] \wedge [\omega \wedge \omega]\rangle\end{aligned}.$$

This line of arguments suggests that the Chern-Simons term that governs 11-dimensional supergravity on $\mathrm{AdS}_7 \times S^4$ is an action functional on fields that are twisted String-2-connections such that the action functional is locally given by (4.19). In 4.6.4.3.2 we show that a Chern-Simons theory satisfying these properties naturally arises from the differential characteristic maps discussed above in 4.6.4.1 and 4.6.4.2.

4.6.4.3.2 Definition and properties We discuss now a twisted combination of the two 7-dimensional Chern-Simons action functionals from 4.6.4.1 and 4.6.4.2 which naturally lives on the moduli 2-stack $C\mathrm{Field}(-)^{\mathrm{bdr}}$ of boundary C-field configurations from 4.4.56. We show that on ∞-connection field configurations whose underlying ∞-bundles are trivial this functional reduces to that given in equation (4.19).

It is instructive to first consider a slightly simplified special case.

Definition 4.6.14. Write $48\hat{\mathbf{I}}_8$ for the smooth universal differential characteristic cocycle

$$48\hat{\mathbf{I}}_8 : \ \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}} \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{8}(\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1) - (\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1 \hat{\cup} \frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1)} \mathbf{B}^7 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \ ,$$

where $\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_6$ is the differential second fractional Pontryagin class from theorem 4.1.32 and where $\frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1 \hat{\cup} \frac{1}{2}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_1$ is the differential cup product class from corollary 4.6.8.

Definition 4.6.15. For Σ a compact smooth manifold of dimension 7, define the action functional $\exp(iS_{48 I_8}(-))$ on the moduli 2-stack of String-2-connections as the composite

$$\exp(iS_{48 I_8}(-)) : \ [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{84\hat{8}\mathbf{I}_8} [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^7 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\int_\Sigma} U(1) \ .$$

We give now an explicit description of the field configurations in $[\Sigma, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}}]$ and of the value of $\exp(iS_{8 I_8}(-))$ on these in terms of differential form data.

Proposition 4.6.16. *A field configuration in* $[\Sigma, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}}] \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ *is presented in the model category* $[\mathrm{CartSp}^{\mathrm{op}}, \mathrm{sSet}]_{\mathrm{proj,loc}}$*, 3.3, by a correspondence*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} C(\{U_i\}) & \xrightarrow{\phi} & \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to \mathfrak{so}_\mu)_{\tilde{\mathrm{conn}}} \ , \\ \downarrow{\simeq} & & \\ \Sigma & & \end{array}$$

where $\mathfrak{so}_\mu$ *is the skeletal String Lie 2-algebra, def. 1.3.110, where on the right we have the adapted differential coefficient object from prop. 4.4.48; such that the projection*

$$C(\{U_i\}) \xrightarrow{\phi} \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(b\mathbb{R}\mathfrak{so}_\mu)_{\tilde{\mathrm{conn}}} \longrightarrow \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

has a trivial underlying class in $H^4(\Sigma, \mathbb{Z})$.

The underlying nonabelian cohomology class of such a cocycle is that of a String*-principal 2-bundle.*

The local connection and curvature differential form data over a patch U_i is

$$\begin{array}{ll} F_\omega = & d\omega + \frac{1}{2}[\omega \wedge \omega] \\ H_3 = & \nabla B := dB + \mathrm{CS}(\omega) \\ dF_\omega = & -[\omega \wedge F_\omega] \\ dH_3 = & \langle F_\omega \wedge F_\omega \rangle \end{array}$$

Proof. Without the constraint on the C-field this is the description of twisted String-2-connections of observation 4.4.50 where the twist is the C-field. The condition above picks out the untwisted case, where the C-field is trivialized. What remains is an untwisted String-principal 2-bundle.

The local differential form data is found from the modified Weil algebra of $(b\mathbb{R} \to (\mathfrak{so})_{\mu_{\mathfrak{so}}})$ indicated on the right of the following diagram

$$\left(\begin{array}{ll} F_\omega = & d\omega + \frac{1}{2}[\omega \wedge \omega] \\ H_3 = & \nabla B := dB + CS(\omega) - C_3 \\ \mathcal{G}_4 = & dC_3 \\ dF_\omega = & -[\omega \wedge F_\omega] \\ dH_3 = & \langle F_\omega \wedge F_\omega \rangle - \mathcal{G}_4 \\ d\mathcal{G}_4 = & 0 \end{array} \right)_i \xleftarrow{\begin{array}{ll} t^a_{\mathfrak{so}} & \mapsto \omega^a \\ r^a_{\mathfrak{so}} & \mapsto F_\omega \\ b & \mapsto B \\ c & \mapsto C_3 \\ h & \mapsto H_3 \\ g & \mapsto \mathcal{G}_4 \end{array}} \left(\begin{array}{ll} r^a_{\mathfrak{so}} = & dt^a_{\mathfrak{so}} + \frac{1}{2} C^a_{\mathfrak{so}\,bc} t^b_{\mathfrak{so}} \wedge t^c_{\mathfrak{so}} \\ h = & db + \mathrm{cs}_{\mathfrak{so}} - c \\ g = & dc \\ dr^a_{\mathfrak{so}} = & -C^a{}_{bc} t^b_{\mathfrak{so}} \wedge r^a_{\mathfrak{so}} \\ dh = & \langle -, - \rangle - g \\ dg = & 0 \end{array} \right).$$

Remark 4.6.17. While the 2-form B in the presentation used in the above proof is abelian, the total collection of forms is still connection data with coefficients in the nonabelian Lie 2-algebra $\mathfrak{string}$. We explained in remark 1.3.114, that there is a choice of local gauge in which the nonabelianness of the 2-form becomes manifest. For the discussion of the above proposition, however, this gauge is not the most convenient one, and it is more direct to exhibit the local cocycle data in the above form, which corresponds to the second gauge of remark 1.3.114.

This is an example of a general principle in higher gerbe theory. Due to the higher gauge invariances, the local component presentation of a given structure does not usually manifestly exhibit the gauge-invariant information in an obvious way.

Proposition 4.6.18. *Let $\phi \in [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}\mathrm{String}_{\mathrm{conn}}]$ be a field configuration which, in the presentation of prop. 4.6.16, is defined over a single patch $U = \Sigma$.*

Then the action functional of def. 4.6.15 sends this to

$$\exp(iS_{48I_8}(\omega, H_3)) = \exp\left(i \int_\Sigma \left(-H_3 \wedge dH_3 + 6\mathrm{CS}_{\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2}(\omega) \right) \right).$$

Proof. The first term is that of the cup product theory, 4.6.4.1, after using the identity $\mathrm{tr}(F_\omega \wedge F_\omega) = dH_3$ which holds on the configuration space of String-2-connections by prop. 4.6.16. The second term is that of the $\frac{1}{6}p_2$-Chern-Simons theory from 4.6.4.2. □

Remark 4.6.19. Therefore comparison with equation (4.19) shows that the action functional S_{48I_8} has all the properties that in 4.6.4.3.1 we argued that the effective 7-dimensional Chern-Simons theory inside 11-dimensional supergravity compactified on S^4 should have, in the following special case:

- the C-field flux on S^4 is $N = 48$;

and

- the E_8-field is trivial;
- the C-field on Σ is trivial.

We discuss now natural refinements of $S_{48 I_8}$ that generalize away from the last two of these special conditions to obtain the full form of (4.19).

Recall from def. 4.4.56 the moduli stack $C\mathrm{Field}^{\mathrm{bdr}}(\Sigma)$ of supergravity C-field configurations over a Hořava-Witten-like boundary.

Definition 4.6.20. Write $\hat{\mathbf{I}_8}$ for the smooth universal characteristic map given by the composite

$$C\mathrm{Field}^{\mathrm{bdr}}(\Sigma) \longrightarrow \exp(b\mathbb{R} \to (\mathfrak{so} + \mathfrak{e}_8))^{\mathrm{tw}}_{\mathrm{conn}} \xrightarrow{\exp(\mathrm{cs}_{\frac{1}{6}p_1} - \mathrm{cs}_{\frac{1}{2}p_1 \cup \frac{1}{2}p_1})} [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^7(\mathbb{R}/K)_{\mathrm{conn}}] \ ,$$

where the first morphism is the one induced by def. 4.4.56 into all twisted differential String(Spin $\times$ E_8)-structures as given in the presentation of 4.4.4.1, and where the second morphism is the ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism of I_8, according to 3.3.12, with $K \subset \mathbb{R}$ the given sublattice of periods.

Write

$$\exp(i S_{I_8}(-)) : \ C\mathrm{Field}^{\mathrm{bdr}} \xrightarrow{\hat{\mathbf{I}}_8} [\Sigma, \mathbf{B}^7(\mathbb{R}/K)_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\int_\Sigma} \mathbb{R}/K$$

for the corresponding action functional.

Proposition 4.6.21. *Let $\phi \in C\mathrm{Field}^{\mathrm{bdr}}(\Sigma)$ be a field configuration which, in the presentation of prop. 4.6.16, is defined over a single patch $U = \Sigma$.*

Then the action functional of def. 4.6.20 sends this to

$$\exp(i S_{I_8}(\omega, A, H_3)) = \int_\Sigma \left(C_3 \wedge dC_3 - \frac{1}{48} H_3 \wedge dH_3 - \frac{1}{12}(H_3 + \mathrm{CS}_a(A) \wedge \mathrm{tr}(F_A \wedge F_A) + \mathrm{CS}_{\frac{1}{8}\frac{1}{6}\hat{\mathbf{p}}_2}(\omega) \right) \ \mathrm{mod} K \, .$$

4.6.5 Action of closed string field theory type

We discuss the form of ∞-Chern-Simons Lagrangians, 4.6.1, on general L_∞-algebras equipped with a quadratic invariant polynomial. The resulting action functionals have the form of that of closed string field theory.

Proposition 4.6.22. *Let $\mathfrak{g}$ be any L_∞-algebra equipped with a quadratic invariant polynomial $\langle -, - \rangle$.*

The ∞-Chern-Simons functional associated with this data is

$$S : A \mapsto \int_\Sigma \left(\langle A \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}} A \rangle + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{(k+1)!} \langle A \wedge [A \wedge \cdots A]_k \rangle \right) \, ,$$

where

$$[-, \cdots, -] : \mathfrak{g}^{\otimes k} \to \mathfrak{g}$$

is the k-ary bracket of $\mathfrak{g}$ (prop. 1.3.74).

Proof. There is a canonical contracting homotopy operator

$$\tau : \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \to \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$$

such that $[d_{\mathrm{W}}, \tau] = \mathrm{Id}_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})}$. Accordingly a Chern-Simons element, def. 3.3.101, for $\langle -, - \rangle$ is given by

$$\mathrm{cs} := \tau \langle -, - \rangle \, .$$

We claim that this is indeed the Lagrangian for the above action functional.

To see this, first choose a basis $\{t_a\}$ and write

$$P_{ab} := \langle t_a, t_b \rangle$$

for the components of the invariant polynomial in that basis and

$$C^a_{a_1, \cdots, a_k} := [t_{a_1}, \cdots, t_{a_k}]^a_k$$

as well as

$$C_{a_0, a_1, \cdots, a_k} := P_{a_0 a} C^a_{a_1, \cdots, a_k}$$

for the structure constant of the k-ary brackets.

In terms of this we need to show that

$$\mathrm{cs} = P_{ab} t^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{W}} t^b + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{(k+1)!} C_{a_0, \cdots, a_k} t^{a_0} \wedge \cdots \wedge t^{a_k} \,.$$

The computation is best understood via the free dg-algebra $F(\mathfrak{g})$ on the graded vector space $\mathfrak{g}^*$, which in the above basis we may take to be generated by elements $\{t^a, \mathbf{d} t^a\}$. There is a dg-algebra isomorphism

$$F(\mathfrak{g}) \stackrel{\simeq}{\to} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$$

given by sending $t^a \mapsto t^a$ and $\mathbf{d} t^a \mapsto d_{\mathrm{CE}(\mathfrak{g})} + r^a$.

On $F(\mathfrak{g})$ the contracting homotopy is evidently given by the map $\frac{1}{L} h$, where L is the word length operator in the above basis and h the graded derivation which sends $t^a \mapsto 0$ and $\mathbf{d} t^a \mapsto t^a$. Therefore τ is given by

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) & \xrightarrow{\tau} & \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g}) \\ \downarrow \simeq & & \uparrow \simeq \\ F(\mathfrak{g}) & \xrightarrow{\frac{1}{L} h} & F(\mathfrak{g}) \end{array} \,.$$

With this we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{cs} &:= \tau \langle -, - \rangle \\ &= \tau P_{ab} \left(d_{\mathrm{W}} t^a + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} C^a_{a_1, \cdots, a_k} t^{a_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge t^{a_k} \right) \wedge \left(d_{\mathrm{W}} t^b + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} C^b_{b_1, \cdots, b_k} t^{b_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge t^{b_k} \right) \\ &= P_{ab} t^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{W}} t^b + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{k!(k+1)} P_{ab} C^b{}_{b_1, \cdots, b_k} t^a \wedge t^{b_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge t^{b_k} \end{aligned} .$$

□

Remark 4.6.23. If here Σ is a completely odd-graded dg-manifold, such as $\Sigma = \mathbb{R}^{0|3}$, then this is the kind of action functional that appears in closed string field theory [Zw93][KaSt08]. In this case the underlying space of the (super-)L_∞-algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ is the BRST complex of the closed (super-)string and $[-, \cdots, -]_k$ is the string's tree-level $(k+1)$-point function.

4.6.6 AKSZ theory

We now consider *symplectic Lie n-algebroids* $\mathfrak{P}$. These carry canonical invariant polynomials ω. We show that the ∞-Chern-Simons action functional associated to such ω is the action functional of the *AKSZ σ-model quantum field theory* with target space $\mathfrak{P}$ (due to [AKSZ], usefully reviewed in [Royt06]).

This section is based on [FRS11a].

- AKSZ σ-models – 4.6.6.1;
- 4.6.6.2 – The AKSZ action as a Chern-Simons functional ;
- 4.6.6.3 – Ordinary Chern-Simons theory;
- 4.6.6.4 – Poisson σ-model;
- 4.6.6.5 – Courant σ-model;
- 4.6.6.6 – Higher abelian Chern-Simons theory.

4.6.6.1 AKSZ σ-Models The class of topological field theories known as *AKSZ σ-models*[AKSZ] contains in dimension 3 ordinary Chern-Simons theory (see [Fre] for a comprehensive review) as well as its Lie algebroid generalization (the *Courant σ-model* [Ike03]), and in dimension 2 the Poisson σ-model (see [CaFe00] for a review). It is therefore clear that the AKSZ construction is *some* sort of generalized Chern-Simons theory. Here we demonstrate that this statement is true also in a useful precise sense.

Our discussion proceeds from the observation that the standard Chern-Simons action functional has a systematic origin in Chern-Weil theory (see for instance [GHV] for a classical textbook treatment and [HoSi05] for the refinement to differential cohomology that we need here):

The refined Chern-Weil homomorphism assigns to any invariant polynomial $\langle - \rangle : \mathfrak{g}^{\otimes n} \to \mathbb{R}$ on a Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ of compact type a map that sends $\mathfrak{g}$-connections ∇ on a smooth manifold X to cocycles $[\hat{\mathbf{p}}_{\langle - \rangle}(\nabla)] \in H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X)$ in *ordinary differential cohomology*. These differential cocycles refine the *curvature characteristic class* $[\langle F_\nabla \rangle] \in H^{n+1}_{dR}(X)$ in de Rham cohomology to a fully fledged *line n-bundle with connection*, also known as a *bundle $(n-1)$-gerbe with connection*. And just as an ordinary line bundle (a “line 1-bundle”) with connection assigns holonomy to curves, so a line n-bundle with connection assigns holonomy $\mathrm{hol}_{\hat{\mathbf{p}}}(\Sigma)$ to n-dimensional trajectories $\Sigma \to X$. For the special case where $\langle - \rangle$ is the Killing form polynomial and $X = \Sigma$ with $\dim \Sigma = 3$ one finds that this volume holonomy map $\nabla \mapsto \mathrm{hol}_{\hat{\mathbf{p}}_{\langle - \rangle}(\nabla)}(\Sigma)$ is precisely the standard Chern-Simons action functional. Similarly, for $\langle - \rangle$ any higher invariant polynomial this holonomy action functional has as Lagrangian the corresponding higher Chern-Simons form. In summary, this means that Chern-Simons-type action functionals on Lie algebra-valued connections are the images of the refined Chern-Weil homomorphism.

In 2.3.15 a generalization of the Chern-Weil homomorphism to *higher* (“derived”) differential geometry has been established. In this context smooth manifolds are generalized first to orbifolds, then to general Lie groupoids, to Lie 2-groupoids and finally to smooth ∞-groupoids (smooth ∞-stacks), while Lie algebras are generalized to Lie 2-algebras etc., up to L_∞-algebras and more generally to Lie n-algebroids and finally to L_∞-algebroids.

In this context one has for $\mathfrak{a}$ any L_∞-algebroid a natural notion of $\mathfrak{a}$-valued ∞-connections on $\exp(\mathfrak{a})$-principal smooth ∞-bundles (where $\exp(\mathfrak{a})$ is a smooth ∞-groupoid obtained by Lie integration from $\mathfrak{a}$). By analyzing the abstractly defined higher Chern-Weil homomorphism in this context one finds a direct higher analog of the above situation: there is a notion of invariant polynomials $\langle - \rangle$ on an L_∞-algebroid $\mathfrak{a}$ and these induce maps from $\mathfrak{a}$-valued ∞-connections to line n-bundles with connections as before .

This construction drastically simplifies when one restricts attention to *trivial* ∞-bundles with (nontrivial) $\mathfrak{a}$-connections. Over a smooth manifold Σ these are simply given by dg-algebra homomorphisms

$$A : \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a}) \to \Omega^\bullet(\Sigma) ,$$

where $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a})$ is the *Weil algebra* of the L_∞-algebroid $\mathfrak{a}$ [SSS09a], and $\Omega^\bullet(\Sigma)$ is the de Rham algebra of Σ (which is indeed the Weil algebra of Σ thought of as an L_∞-algebroid concentrated in degree 0). Then for $\langle - \rangle \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a})$ an invariant polynomial, the corresponding ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism is presented by a choice of “Chern-Simons element” $\mathrm{cs} \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a})$, which exhibits the *transgression* of $\langle - \rangle$ to an L_∞-cocycle (the higher analog of a cocycle in Lie algebra cohomology): the dg-morphism A naturally maps the Chern-Simons element cs of A to a differential form $\mathrm{cs}(A) \in \Omega^\bullet(\Sigma)$ and its integral is the corresponding ∞-Chern-Simons action functional $S_{\langle - \rangle}$

$$S_{\langle - \rangle} : A \mapsto \mathrm{hol}_{\mathbf{p}_{\hat{\langle - \rangle}}}(\Sigma) = \int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}_{\langle - \rangle}(A)\,.$$

Even though trivial ∞-bundles with $\mathfrak{a}$-connections are a very particular subcase of the general ∞-Chern-Weil theory, they are rich enough to contain AKSZ theory. Namely, here we show that a symplectic dg-manifold of grade n – which is the geometrical datum of the target space defining an AKSZ σ-model – is naturally equivalently an L_∞-algebroid $\mathfrak{P}$ endowed with a quadratic and non-degenerate invariant polynomial ω of grade n. Moreover, under this identification the canonical Hamiltonian π on the symplectic target dg-manifold is identified as an L_∞-cocycle on $\mathfrak{P}$. Finally, the invariant polynomial ω is naturally in transgression with the cocycle π via a Chern-Simons element cs_ω that turns out to be the Lagrangian of the AKSZ σ-model:

$$\int_\Sigma L_{\mathrm{AKSZ}}(-) = \int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}_\omega(-)\,.$$

(An explicit description of L_{AKSZ} is given below in def. 4.6.25)

In summary this means that we find the following dictionary of concepts:

Chern-Weil theory		**AKSZ theory**
cocycle	π	Hamiltonian
transgression element	cs	Lagrangian
invariant polynomial	ω	symplectic structure

More precisely, we (explain and then) prove here the following theorem:

Theorem 4.6.24. *For $(\mathfrak{P}, \omega)$ an L_∞-algebroid with a quadratic non-degenerate invariant polynomial, the corresponding ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism*

$$\nabla \mapsto \mathrm{hol}_{\hat{\mathbf{p}_\omega}}(\Sigma)$$

sends $\mathfrak{P}$-valued ∞-connections ∇ to their corresponding exponentiated AKSZ action

$$\cdots = \exp(i \int_\Sigma L_{\mathrm{AKSZ}}(\nabla))\,.$$

.

The local differential form data involved in this statement is at the focus of attention in this section here and contained in prop. 4.6.27 below.

We consider, in definition 4.6.25 below, for any symplectic dg-manifold (X, ω) a functional S_{AKSZ} on spaces of maps $\mathfrak{T}\Sigma \to X$ of smooth graded manifolds. While only this precise definition is referred to in the remainder of the section, we begin by indicating informally the original motivation of S_{AKSZ}. The reader uncomfortable with these somewhat vague considerations can take note of def. 4.6.25 and then skip to the next section.

Generally, a *σ-model field theory* is, roughly, one

1. whose fields over a space Σ are maps $\phi : \Sigma \to X$ to some space X;
2. whose action functional is, apart from a kinetic term, the transgression of some kind of cocycle on X to the mapping space $\mathrm{Map}(\Sigma, X)$.

Here the terms "space", "maps" and "cocycles" are to be made precise in a suitable context. One says that Σ is the *worldvolume*, X is the *target space* and the cocycle is the *background gauge field*.

For instance, an ordinary charged particle (such as an electron) is described by a σ-model where $\Sigma = (0,t) \subset \mathbb{R}$ is the abstract *worldline*, where X is a (pseudo-)Riemannian smooth manifold (for instance our spacetime), and where the background cocycle is a line bundle with connection on X (a degree-2 cocycle in ordinary differential cohomology of X, representing a background *electromagnetic field*). Up to a kinetic term, the action functional is the holonomy of the connection over a given curve $\phi : \Sigma \to X$. A textbook discussion of these standard kinds of σ-models is, for instance, in [DM99].

The σ-models which we consider here are *higher* generalizations of this example, where the background gauge field is a cocycle of higher degree (a higher bundle with connection) and where the worldvolume is accordingly higher dimensional. In addition, X is allowed to be not just a manifold, but an approximation to a *higher orbifold* (a smooth ∞-groupoid).

More precisely, here we take the category of spaces to be SmoothDgMfd from def. 4.5.3. We take target space to be a symplectic dg-manifold (X, ω) and the worldvolume to be the shifted tangent bundle $\mathfrak{T}\Sigma$ of a compact smooth manifold Σ. Following [AKSZ], one may imagine that we can form a smooth $\mathbb{Z}$-graded mapping space $\mathrm{Maps}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, X)$ of smooth graded manifolds. On this space the canonical vector fields v_Σ and v_X naturally have commuting actions from the left and from the right, respectively, so that their sum $v_\Sigma + v_X$ equips $\mathrm{Maps}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, X)$ itself with the structure of a differential graded smooth manifold.

Next we take the "cocycle" on X (to be made precise in the next section) to be the Hamiltonian π (def. 4.5.12) of v_X with respect to the symplectic structure ω, according to def. 4.5.10. One wants to assume that there is a kind of Riemannian structure on $\mathfrak{T}\Sigma$ that allows to form the transgression

$$\int_{\mathfrak{T}\Sigma} \mathrm{ev}^* \omega := p_! \mathrm{ev}^* \omega$$

by pull-push through the canonical correspondence

$$\mathrm{Maps}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, X) \xleftarrow{\;p\;} \mathrm{Maps}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, X) \times \mathfrak{T}\Sigma \xrightarrow{\;\mathrm{ev}\;} X \; .$$

When one succeeds in making this precise, one expects to find that $\int_{\mathfrak{T}\Sigma} \mathrm{ev}^*\omega$ is in turn a symplectic structure on the mapping space.

This implies that the vector field $v_\Sigma + v_X$ on mapping space has a Hamiltonian

$$\mathbf{S} \in C^\infty(\mathrm{Maps}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, X)) \,, \;\; \text{s.t. } \mathbf{dS} = \iota_{v_\Sigma + v_x} \int_{\mathfrak{T}\Sigma} \mathrm{ev}^* \omega \,.$$

The grade-0 component

$$S_{\mathrm{AKSZ}} := \mathbf{S}|_{\mathrm{Maps}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, X)_0}$$

constitutes a functional on the space of morphisms of graded manifolds $\phi : \mathfrak{T}\Sigma \to X$. This is the *AKSZ action functional* defining the AKSZ σ-model with target space X and background field/cocycle ω.

In [AKSZ], this procedure is indicated only somewhat vaguely. The focus of attention there is on a discussion, from this perspective, of the action functionals of the 2-dimensional σ-models called the *A-model* and the *B-model*. In [Royt06] a more detailed discussion of the general construction is given, including an explicit formula for $\mathbf{S}$, and hence for S_{AKSZ}. That formula is the following:

Definition 4.6.25. For (X, ω) a symplectic dg-manifold of grade n with global Darboux coordinates $\{x^a\}$, Σ a smooth compact manifold of dimension $(n+1)$ and $k \in \mathbb{R}$, the *AKSZ action functional*

$$S_{\mathrm{AKSZ}} : \mathrm{SmoothGrMfd}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, X) \to \mathbb{R}$$

is

$$S_{\mathrm{AKSZ}} : \phi \mapsto \int_{\mathfrak{T}\Sigma} \left(\frac{1}{2} \omega_{ab} \phi^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}} \phi^b - \phi^* \pi \right) \,,$$

where π is the Hamiltonian for v_X with respect to ω and where on the right we are interpreting fields as forms on Σ according to prop. 4.5.7.

This formula hence defines an infinite class of σ-models depending on the target space structure (X, ω). (One can also consider arbitrary relative factors between the first and the second term, but below we shall find that the above choice is singled out). In [AKSZ], it was already noticed that ordinary Chern-Simons theory is a special case of this for ω of grade 2, as is the Poisson σ-model for ω of grade 1 (and hence, as shown there, also the A-model and the B-model). The main example in [Royt06] spells out the general case for ω of grade 2, which is called the *Courant σ-model* there. (We review and re-derive all these examples in detail below.)

One nice aspect of this construction is that it follows immediately that the full Hamiltonian $\mathbf{S}$ on the mapping space satisfies $\{\mathbf{S}, \mathbf{S}\} = 0$. Moreover, using the standard formula for the internal hom of chain complexes, one finds that the cohomology of $(\mathrm{Maps}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, X), v_\Sigma + v_X)$ in degree 0 is the space of functions on those fields that satisfy the Euler-Lagrange equations of S_{AKSZ}. Taken together, these facts imply that $\mathbf{S}$ is a solution of the "master equation" of a BV-BRST complex for the quantum field theory defined by S_{AKSZ}. This is a crucial ingredient for the quantization of the model, and this is what the AKSZ construction is mostly used for in the literature (for instance [CaFe00]).

Here we want to focus on another nice aspect of the AKSZ-construction: it hints at a deeper reason for *why* the σ-models of this type are special. It is indeed one of the very few proposals for what a general abstract mechanism might be that picks out among the vast space of all possible local action functionals those that seem to be of relevance "in nature".

We now proceed to show that the class of action functionals S_{AKSZ} are precisely those that higher Chern-Weil theory canonically associates to target data (X, ω). Since higher Chern-Weil theory in turn is canonically given on very general abstract grounds, this in a sense amounts to a derivation of S_{AKSZ} from "first principles", and it shows that a wealth of very general theory applies to these systems.

4.6.6.2 The AKSZ action as an ∞-Chern-Simons functional We now show how an L_∞-algebroid $\mathfrak{a}$ endowed with a triple $(\pi, \mathrm{cs}, \omega)$ consisting of a Chern-Simons element transgressing an invariant polynomial ω to a cocycle π defines an AKSZ-type σ-model action. The starting point is to take as target space the tangent Lie ∞-algebroid $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{a}$, i.e., to consider as *space of fields* of the theory the space of maps $\mathrm{Maps}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, \mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{a})$ from the worldsheet Σ to $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{a}$. Dually, this is the space of morphisms of dgcas from $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a})$ to $\Omega^\bullet(\Sigma)$, i.e., the space of degree 1 $\mathfrak{a}$-valued differential forms on Σ from definition 1.3.98.

Remark 4.6.26. As we noticed in the introduction, in the context of the AKSZ σ-model a degree 1 $\mathfrak{a}$-valued differential form on Σ should be thought of as the datum of a (notrivial) $\mathfrak{a}$-valued connection on a trivial principal ∞-bundle on Σ.

Now that we have defined the space of fields, we have to define the action. We have seen in definition 1.3.100 that a degree 1 $\mathfrak{a}$-valued differential form A on Σ maps the Chern-Simons element $\mathrm{cs} \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{a})$ to a differential form $\mathrm{cs}(A)$ on Σ. Integrating this differential form on Σ will therefore give an AKSZ-type action which is naturally interpreted as an higher Chern-Simons action functional:

$$\mathrm{Maps}(\mathfrak{T}\Sigma, \mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{a}) \to \mathbb{R}$$
$$A \mapsto \int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}(A).$$

Theorem 4.6.24 then reduces to showing that, when $\{\mathfrak{a}, (\pi, \mathrm{cs}, \omega)\}$ is the set of L_∞-algebroid data arising from a symplectic Lie n-algebroid $(\mathfrak{P}, \omega)$, the AKSZ-type action dscribed above is precisely the AKSZ action for $(\mathfrak{P}, \omega)$. More precisely, this is stated as follows.

Proposition 4.6.27. *For $(\mathfrak{P}, \omega)$ a symplectic Lie n-algebroid coming by proposition 4.5.15 from a symplectic dg-manifold of positive grade n with global Darboux chart, the action functional induced by the canonical Chern-Simons element*

$$\mathrm{cs} \in \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P})$$

from proposition 4.5.19 is the AKSZ action from definition 4.6.25:

$$\int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs} = \int_\Sigma L_{\mathrm{AKSZ}}\,.$$

In fact the two Lagrangians differ at most by an exact term

$$\mathrm{cs} \sim L_{\mathrm{AKSZ}} .$$

Proof. We have seen in remark 4.5.20 that in Darboux coordinates $\{x^a\}$ where

$$\omega = \frac{1}{2}\omega_{ab}\mathbf{d}x^a \wedge \mathbf{d}x^b$$

the Chern-Simons element from proposition 4.5.19 is given by

$$\mathrm{cs} = \frac{1}{n}\left(\deg(x^a)\,\omega_{ab}x^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P})}x^b - n\pi\right) .$$

This means that for Σ an $(n+1)$-dimensional manifold and

$$\Omega^\bullet(\Sigma) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P}) : \phi$$

a (degree 1) $\mathfrak{P}$-valued differential form on Σ we have

$$\int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}(\phi) = \frac{1}{n}\int_\Sigma \left(\sum_{a,b}\deg(x^a)\,\omega_{ab}\phi^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^b - n\pi(\phi)\right) \quad ,$$

where we used $\phi(d_{\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P})}x^b) = d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^b$, as in remark 1.3.99. Here the asymmetry in the coefficients of the first term is only apparent. Using integration by parts on a closed Σ we have

$$\begin{aligned}\int_\Sigma \sum_{a,b}\deg(x^a)\,\omega_{ab}\phi^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^b &= \int_\Sigma \sum_{a,b}(-1)^{1+\deg(x^a)}\deg(x^a)\,\omega_{ab}(d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^a)\wedge\phi^b \\ &= \int_\Sigma \sum_{a,b}(-1)^{(1+\deg(x^a))(1+\deg(x^b))}\deg(x^a)\,\omega_{ab}\phi^b \wedge (d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^a)\,, \\ &= \int_\Sigma \sum_{a,b}\deg(x^b)\,\omega_{ab}\phi^a \wedge (d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^b)\end{aligned}$$

where in the last step we switched the indices on ω and used that $\omega_{ab} = (-1)^{(1+\deg(x^a))(1+\deg(x^b))}\omega_{ba}$. Therefore

$$\begin{aligned}\int_\Sigma \sum_{a,b}\deg(x^a)\,\omega_{ab}\phi^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^b &= \frac{1}{2}\int_\Sigma \sum_{a,b}\deg(x^a)\,\omega_{ab}\phi^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^b + \frac{1}{2}\int_\Sigma \sum_{a,b}\deg(x^b)\,\omega_{ab}\phi^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^b \\ &= \frac{n}{2}\int_\Sigma \omega_{ab}\phi^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^b\,.\end{aligned} .$$

Using this in the above expression for the action yields

$$\int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}(\phi) = \int_\Sigma \left(\frac{1}{2}\omega_{ab}\phi^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}}\phi^b - \pi(\phi)\right) ,$$

which is the formula for the action functional from definition 4.6.25. □

We now unwind the general statement of proposition 4.6.27 and its ingredients in the central examples of interest, from proposition 4.5.16: the ordinary Chern-Simons action functional, the Poisson σ-model Lagrangian, and the Courant σ-model Lagrangian. (The ordinary Chern-Simons model is the special case of the Courant σ-model for $\mathfrak{P}$ having as base manifold the point. But since it is the archetype of all models considered here, it deserves its own discussion.)

By the very content of proposition 4.6.27 there are no surprises here and the following essentially amounts to a review of the standard formulas for these examples. But it may be helpful to see our general ∞-Lie theoretic derivation of these formulas spelled out in concrete cases, if only to carefully track the various signs and prefactors.

4.6.6.3 Ordinary Chern-Simons theory Let $\mathfrak{P} = b\mathfrak{g}$ be a semisimple Lie algebra regarded as an L_∞-algebroid with base space the point and let $\omega := \langle -, - \rangle \in \mathrm{W}(b\mathfrak{g})$ be its Killing form invariant polynomial. Then $(b\mathfrak{g}, \langle -, - \rangle)$ is a symplectic Lie 2-algebroid.

For $\{t^a\}$ a dual basis for $\mathfrak{g}$, being generators of grade 1 in $\mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{g})$ we have

$$d_{\mathrm{W}} t^a = -\frac{1}{2} C^a{}_{bc} t^a \wedge t^b + \mathbf{d} t^a$$

where $C^a{}_{bc} := t^a([t_b, t_c])$ and

$$\omega = \frac{1}{2} P_{ab} \mathbf{d} t^a \wedge \mathbf{d} t^b ,$$

where $P_{ab} := \langle t_a, t_b \rangle$. The Hamiltonian cocycle π from prop. 4.5.17 is

$$\begin{aligned} \pi &= \frac{1}{2+1} \iota_v \iota_\epsilon \omega \\ &= \frac{1}{3} \iota_v P_{ab} t^a \wedge \mathbf{d} t^b \\ &= -\frac{1}{6} P_{ab} C^b_{cd} t^a \wedge t^c \wedge t^d \\ &=: -\frac{1}{6} C_{abc} t^a \wedge t^b \wedge t^c . \end{aligned}$$

Therefore the Chern-Simons element from prop. 4.5.19 is found to be

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{cs} &= \frac{1}{2} \left(P_{ab} t^a \wedge \mathbf{d} t^b - \frac{1}{6} C_{abc} t^a \wedge t^b \wedge t^c \right) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \left(P_{ab} t^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{W}} t^b + \frac{1}{3} C_{abc} t^a \wedge t^b \wedge t^c \right) . \end{aligned}$$

This is indeed, up to an overall factor 1/2, the familiar standard choice of Chern-Simons element on a Lie algebra. To see this more explicitly, notice that evaluated on a $\mathfrak{g}$-valued connection form

$$\Omega^\bullet(\Sigma) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(b\mathfrak{g}) : A$$

this is

$$2\mathrm{cs}(A) = \langle A \wedge F_A \rangle - \frac{1}{6} \langle A \wedge [A, A] \rangle = \langle A \wedge d_{dR} A \rangle + \frac{1}{3} \langle A \wedge [A, A] \rangle .$$

If $\mathfrak{g}$ is a matrix Lie algebra then the Killing form is proportional to the trace of the matrix product: $\langle t_a, t_b \rangle = \mathrm{tr}(t_a t_b)$. In this case we have

$$\begin{aligned} \langle A \wedge [A, A] \rangle &= A^a \wedge A^b \wedge A^c \, \mathrm{tr}(t_a (t_b t_c - t_c t_b)) \\ &= 2 A^a \wedge A^b \wedge A^c \, \mathrm{tr}(t_a t_b t_c) \\ &= 2 \, \mathrm{tr}(A \wedge A \wedge A) \end{aligned}$$

and hence

$$2\mathrm{cs}(A) = \mathrm{tr} \left(A \wedge F_A - \frac{1}{3} A \wedge A \wedge A \right) = \mathrm{tr} \left(A \wedge d_{dR} A + \frac{2}{3} A \wedge A \wedge A \right) .$$

4.6.6.4 Poisson σ-model Let $(M, \{-, -\})$ be a Poisson manifold and let $\mathfrak{P}$ be the corresponding Poisson Lie algebroid. This is a symplectic Lie 1-algebroid. Over a chart for the shifted cotangent bundle $T^*[-1]X$ with coordinates $\{x^i\}$ of degree 0 and $\{\partial_i\}$ of degree 1, respectively, we have

$$d_{\mathrm{W}} x^i = -\pi^{ij} \partial_j + \mathbf{d} x^i ;$$

where $\pi^{ij} := \{x^i, x^j\}$ and

$$\omega = \mathbf{d}x^i \wedge \mathbf{d}\partial_i \,.$$

The Hamiltonian cocycle from prop. 4.5.17 is

$$\pi = \frac{1}{2}\iota_v \iota_\epsilon \omega = -\frac{1}{2}\pi^{ij}\partial_i \wedge \partial_j$$

and the Chern-Simons element from prop. 4.5.19 is

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{cs} &= \iota_\epsilon \omega + \pi \\ &= \partial_i \wedge \mathbf{d}x^i - \frac{1}{2}\pi^{ij}\partial_i \wedge \partial_j \end{aligned} .$$

In terms of d_{W} instead of $\mathbf{d}$ this is

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{cs} &= \partial_i \wedge d_{\mathrm{W}} x^i - \pi \\ &= \partial_i \wedge d_{\mathrm{W}} x^i + \frac{1}{2}\pi^{ij}\partial_i \partial_j \,. \end{aligned}$$

So for Σ a 2-manifold and

$$\Omega^\bullet(\Sigma) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P}) : (X, \eta)$$

a Poisson-Lie algebroid valued differential form on Σ – which in components is a function $X : \Sigma \to M$ and a 1-form $\eta \in \Omega^1(\Sigma, X^* T^* M)$ – the corresponding AKSZ action is

$$\int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}(X, \eta) = \int_\Sigma \eta \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}} X + \frac{1}{2}\pi^{ij}(X)\eta_i \wedge \eta_j \,.$$

This is the Lagrangian of the Poisson σ-model [CaFe00].

4.6.6.5 Courant σ-model A Courant algebroid is a symplectic Lie 2-algebroid. By the previous example this is a higher analog of a Poisson manifold. Expressed in components in the language of ordinary differential geometry, a Courant algebroid is a vector bundle E over a manifold M_0, equipped with: a non-degenerate bilinear form $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$ on the fibers, a bilinear bracket $[\cdot, \cdot]$ on sections $\Gamma(E)$, and a bundle map (called the anchor) $\rho\colon E \to TM$, satisfying several compatibility conditions. The bracket $[\cdot, \cdot]$ may be required to be skew-symmetric (Def. 2.3.2 in [Royt02]), in which case it gives rise to a Lie 2-algebra structure, or, alternatively, it may be required to satisfy a Jacobi-like identity (Def. 2.6.1 in [Royt02]), in which case it gives a Leibniz algebra structure.

It was shown in [Royt02] that Courant algebroids $E \to M_0$ in this component form are in 1-1 correspondance with (non-negatively graded) grade 2 symplectic dg-manifolds (M, v). Via this correspondance, M is obtained as a particular symplectic submanifold of $T^*[2]E[1]$ equipped with its canonical symplectic structure.

Let (M, v) be a Courant algebroid as above. In Darboux coordinates, the symplectic structure is

$$\omega = \mathbf{d}p_i \wedge \mathbf{d}q^i + \frac{1}{2} g_{ab} \mathbf{d}\xi^a \wedge \mathbf{d}\xi^b,$$

with

$$\deg q^i = 0, \;\; \deg \xi^a = 1, \;\; \deg p_i = 2,$$

and g_{ab} are constants. The Chevalley-Eilenberg differential corresponds to the vector field:

$$v = P^i_a \xi^a \frac{\partial}{\partial q^i} + g^{ab}\big(P^i_b p_i - \frac{1}{2} T_{bcd}\xi^c \xi^d\big)\frac{\partial}{\partial \xi^a} + \left(-\frac{\partial P^j_a}{\partial q^i}\xi^a p_j + \frac{1}{6}\frac{\partial T_{abc}}{\partial q^i}\xi^a \xi^b \xi^c\right)\frac{\partial}{\partial p_i}.$$

Here $P^i_a = P^i_a(q)$ and $T_{abc} = T_{abc}(q)$ are particular degree zero functions encoding the Courant algebroid structure. Hence, the differential on the Weil algebra is:

$$\begin{aligned}
d_W q^i &= P^i_a \xi^a + \mathbf{d} q^i \\
d_W \xi^a &= g^{ab}\big(P^i_b p_i - \frac{1}{2} T_{bcd} \xi^c \xi^d\big) + \mathbf{d}\xi^a \\
d_W p_i &= -\frac{\partial P^j_a}{\partial q^i} \xi^a p_j + \frac{1}{6} \frac{\partial T_{abc}}{\partial q^i} \xi^a \xi^b \xi^c + \mathbf{d} p_i .
\end{aligned}$$

Following remark. 4.5.18, we construct the corresponding Hamiltonian cocycle from prop. 4.5.17:

$$\begin{aligned}
\pi &= \frac{1}{n+1} \omega_{ab} \deg(x^a) x^a \wedge v^b \\
&= \frac{1}{3}\big(2 p_i \wedge v(q^i) + g_{ab} \xi^a \wedge v(\xi^b)\big) \\
&= \frac{1}{3}\big(2 p_i P^i_a \xi^a + \xi^a P^i_a p_i - \frac{1}{2} T_{abc} \xi^a \xi^b \xi^c\big) \\
&= P^i_a \xi^a p_i - \frac{1}{6} T_{abc} \xi^a \xi^b \xi^c .
\end{aligned}$$

The Chern-Simons element from prop. 4.5.19 is:

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathrm{cs} &= \frac{1}{2}\left(\sum_{ab} \deg(x^a)\, \omega_{ab} x^a \wedge d_W x^b - 2\pi\right) \\
&= p_i d_W q^i + \frac{1}{2} g_{ab} \xi^a d_W \xi^b - \pi \\
&= p_i d_W q^i + \frac{1}{2} g_{ab} \xi^a d_W \xi^b - P^i_a \xi^a p_i + \frac{1}{6} T_{abc} \xi^a \xi^b \xi^c .
\end{aligned}$$

So for a map

$$\Omega^\bullet(\Sigma) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(\mathfrak{P}) : (X, A, F)$$

where Σ is a closed 3-manifold, we have

$$\int_\Sigma \mathrm{cs}(X, A, F) = \int_\Sigma F_i \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}} X^i + \frac{1}{2} g_{ab} A^a \wedge d_{\mathrm{dR}} A^b - P^i_a A^a \wedge F_i + \frac{1}{6} T_{abc} A^a \wedge A^b \wedge A^c .$$

This is the AKSZ action for the Courant algebroid σ-model from [Ike03] [Royt02][Royt06].

4.6.6.6 Higher abelian Chern-Simons theory in $d = 4k+3$ For $k \in \mathbb{N}$, let $\mathfrak{a}$ be the delooping of the line Lie $2k$-algebra, def. 3.3.50: $\mathfrak{a} = b^{2k+1}\mathbb{R}$. By observation 3.3.99 there is, up to scale, a unique binary invariant polynomial on $b^{2k+1}\mathbb{R}$, and this is the wedge product of the unique generating unary invariant polynomial γ in degree $2k+2$ with itself:

$$\omega := \gamma \wedge \gamma \in \mathrm{W}(b^{4k+4}\mathbb{R}) .$$

This invariant polynomial is clearly non-degenerate: for c the canonical generator of $\mathrm{CE}(b^{2k+1}\mathbb{R})$ we have

$$\omega = \mathbf{d}c \wedge \mathbf{d}c .$$

Therefore $(b^{2k+1}\mathbb{R}, \omega)$ induces an ∞-Chern-Simons theory of AKSZ σ-model type in dimension $n+1 = 4k+3$. (On the other hand, on $b^{2k}\mathbb{R}$ there is only the 0 binary invariant polynomial, so that no AKSZ-σ-models are induced from $b^{2k}\mathbb{R}$.)

The Hamiltonian cocycle from prop. 4.5.17 vanishes

$$\pi = 0$$

because the differential $d_{\mathrm{CE}(b^{2k+1}\mathbb{R})}$ is trivial. The Chern-Simons element from prop. 4.5.19 is

$$\mathrm{cs} = c \wedge \mathbf{d}c\,.$$

A field configuration, def. 1.3.98, of this σ-model over a $(2k+3)$-dimensional manifold

$$\Omega^\bullet(\Sigma) \leftarrow \mathrm{W}(b^{2k+1}) : C$$

is simply a $(2k+1)$-form. The AKSZ action functional in this case is

$$S_{AKSZ} : C \mapsto \int_\Sigma C \wedge d_{dR} C\,.$$

The simplicity of this discussion is deceptive. It results from the fact that here we are looking at ∞-Chern-Simons theory for universal Lie integrations and for topologically trivial ∞-bundles. More generally the ∞-Chern-Simons theory for $\mathfrak{a} = b^{2k+1}\mathbb{R}$ is nontrivial and rich. Its configuration space is that of *circle* $(2k+1)$-*bundles with connection* (3.3.11) on Σ, classified by ordinary differential cohomology in degree $2k+2$, and the action functional is given by the fiber integration in differential cohomology to the point over the Beilinson-Deligne cup product, which is locally given by the above formula, but contains global twists. This is discussed in depth in [HoSi05].

Once globalized this way, the above action functional is the action functional of higher $U(1)$-Chern-Simons theory in dimention $4k+3$. In dimension 3 ($k = 0$) this is discussed for instance in [GuTh08] (notice that $U(1)$ is not simply connected). In dimension 7 ($k = 1$) this higher Chern-Simons theory is the system whose holographic boundary theory encodes the self-dual 2-form gauge theory on the fivebrane [Wi97b]. Generally, for every k the $(4k+3)$-dimensional abelian Chern-Simons theory induces a self-dual higher gauge theory holographically on its boundary, see [BeMo06].

4.7 ∞-WZW functionals

We discuss examples of higher WZW functionals, def. 2.3.18.

4.7.1 Ordinary WZW functional – 2d σ-model on a Lie group

Proposition 4.7.1. *Let G be a simple compact Lie group and let*

$$\hat{\mathbf{c}} : \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^3 U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

be the Chern-Simons functional, from 4.6.2.1. Then the induced WZW-2-bundle if a circle 2-bundle with curvature 3-form given by

$$(g : \Sigma_3 \to G) \mapsto \langle g^*\theta \wedge [g^*\theta \wedge g^*\theta] \rangle ,$$

where θ is the Maurer-Cartan form on G, prop 3.3.61.

Proof. First we notice that we have indeed an ∞-pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G & \longrightarrow & \flat \mathbf{B}G \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ * & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \end{array} .$$

To see this we use the standard presentation of $\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}$ from observation 1.3.40, and the standard resolution of the bottom horizontal point inclusion, by prop. 1.3.31, which is the groupoid depicted by

$$\mathbf{E}G_{\mathrm{conn}} : U \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} & 0 & \\ {}^{g_1}\swarrow & & \searrow^{g_2} \\ g_1^{-1} dg_1 & \xrightarrow{g_2 g_1^{-1}} & g_2^{-1} dg_2 \end{array} \right\}$$

that over $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ has as objects the flat $\mathfrak{g}$-valued forms A equipped with an identification $A = g^*\theta$ for $g \in C^\infty(U, G)$, and whose morphisms are gauge transformations that are compatible with these identifications. Then the ordinary pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G & \longrightarrow & \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-, \mathfrak{g}) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{E}G_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \end{array} ,$$

where in the bottom right we have the groupoid of $\mathfrak{g}$-valued forms, exhibits G as the claimed homotopy pullback.

Moreover, we claim that that the codomain of the WZW morphism is the full sub-2-groupoid of circle 2-bundles on those whose curvature 3-form is of the form $\langle g^*\theta \wedge g^*\theta \wedge g^*\theta \rangle$ for some G-valued function g. This follows from observing that $\flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}G$ is, by prop. 3.3.61, the 0-groupoid $\Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-, \mathfrak{g})$ and then using the discussion in 3.3.11.

Finally, by the discussion in 4.1.3 we have that the homotopy fiber of $\mathbf{c}$ is presented by $\mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{g}_\mu)$. Accordingly, the WZW functional is given by a diagram of ordinary pullbacks of simplicial presheaves of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} G & \xrightarrow{\mathrm{WZW}(\hat{\mathbf{c}})} & \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{g}_\mu)_{\mathrm{conn}} \times_{\mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}} \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-, \mathfrak{g}) & \longrightarrow & \Omega^1_{\mathrm{flat}}(-, \mathfrak{g}) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathbf{E}G_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{cosk}_3 \exp(\mathfrak{g}_\mu)_{\mathrm{conn}} & \longrightarrow & \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \end{array} ,$$

where the top morphism sends over any $U \in \mathrm{CartSp}$ a function $g \in C^\infty(U, G)$ to the pair $(A = g^*\theta, B = 0)$. By the Weil algebra of $\mathfrak{g}_\mu$ its curvature 3-form is

$$H_3 = dB + \langle A \wedge [A \wedge A] \rangle \,.$$

So here we have

$$\cdots = \langle g^*\theta \wedge [g^*\theta \wedge g^*\theta] \rangle \,.$$

□

4.8 Higher geometric prequantization

- General theory
  - 4.8.1.1 – Prequantum circle n-bundles
  - 4.8.1.2 – Hamiltonian vector field;
  - 4.8.1.3 – Geometric prequantization of observables.
- Examples
  - $n = 1$ – Prequantum mechanics
  - $n = 2$ – Prequantuam 2d field theory
  - $n = 3$ – Prequantum Chern-Simons theory

This material is taken from [RoSc11].

4.8.1 General theory

4.8.1.1 Prequantum circle n-bundles What is called *(geometric) prequantization* is the refinement of symplectic 2-forms to curvature 2-forms on line bundles with connection. Formally, for

$$H^2_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}} \Omega^2_{\mathrm{int}}(X) \hookrightarrow \Omega^2_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)$$

the morphism that sends a class in degree-2 differential cohomology over a smooth manifold X to its curvature 2-form, geometric prequantization of some $\omega \in \Omega^2_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)$ is a choice of lift $\hat{\omega} \in H^2_{\mathrm{diff}}(X)$ through this morphism. One says that $\hat{\omega}$ is (the class of) a *prequantum line bundle* or *quantization line bundle* with connection for ω. See for instance [WeXu91].

By the curvature exact sequence for differential cohomology, prop. 3.3.75, a lift $\hat{\omega}$ exists precisely if ω is an *integral* differential 2-form. This is called the *quantization condition* on ω. If it is fulfilled, the group of possible choices of lifts is the topological (for instance singular) cohomology group $H^1(X, U(1))$. Notice that the extra non-degeneracy condition that makes a closed 2-form a symplectic form does not appear in this setup yet. It plays a role for the dicussion of Hamiltonian vector fields below in 4.8.1.2.

The concept of geometric prequantization has an evident generalization to closed forms of degree $n+1$ for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$. For $\omega \in \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(X)$ a closed differential $(n+1)$-form on a manifold X, a geometric prequantization is a lift of ω through the canonical morphism

$$H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X) \xrightarrow{\mathrm{curv}} \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{int}}(X) \hookrightarrow \Omega^{n+1}_{\mathrm{cl}}(X) \ .$$

Since the elements of the higher differential cohomology group $H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X)$ are classes of *circle n-bundles with connection* (equivalently *circle bundle $(n-1)$-gerbes with connection*) on X, we may speak of such a lift as a *prequantum circle n-bundle*. Again, the lift exists precisely if ω is integral and the group of possible choices is $H^n(X, U(1))$. Higher geometric prequantization for $n = 2$ has been considered in [Rog11]. By the discussion in 3.3.11 we may consider circle n-bundles with connection not just over smooth manifolds, but over any smooth ∞-groupoid (smooth ∞-stack).

Notice, by the discussion in 4.5, that the symplectic form on a symplectic n-groupoid may be regarded as the image of an invariant polynomial under the unrefined ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism, 3.3.12,

$$\omega : X \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^{n+1}\mathbb{R} \, .$$

Therefore the passage to the prequantum n-bundle with connection on X corresponds to passing to the *refined* ∞-Chern-Weil homomorphism

$$\hat{\omega} : X \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}} \, .$$

Definition 4.8.1. Let (X, ω) be a symplectic ∞-groupoid, def. 4.5.3. Then ω represents a class

$$[\omega] \in H^{n+2}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)\,.$$

We say this form is *integral* if it is in the image of the curvature-projection,

$$\mathrm{curv} : H_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^n U(1)) \to H^{n+1}_{\mathrm{dR}}(X)$$

from the ordinary differential cohomology, 3.3.11, of X

In this case we say a *prequantum circle n-bundle with connection* for (X, ω) is a lift of ω to $\mathbf{H}_{\mathrm{diff}}(X, \mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1))$.

Write $\hat{X} \to X$ for the underlying circle $(n+1)$-group-principal ∞-bundle.

Proposition 4.8.2. *If (X, ω) indeed comes from the Lie integration of a symplectic Lie n-algebroid $(\mathfrak{P}, \omega)$ such that the periods of the L_∞-cocycle π that ω transgresses to are integral, then $\hat{X}$ is the Lie integration of the L_∞-extension, def. 3.3.88,*

$$b^n \mathbb{R} \to \hat{\mathfrak{P}} \to \mathfrak{P}$$

classified by π:

$$\hat{X} \simeq \tau_{n+1} \exp(\hat{\mathfrak{P}})\,.$$

Example 4.8.3. For $n = 1$ this reduces to the discussion in [WeXu91].

Example 4.8.4. For $\mathfrak{g}$ a semisimple Lie algebra with quadratic invariant polynomial ω, the pair $(b\mathfrak{g}, \omega)$ is a symplectic Lie 2-algebroid (Courant Lie 2-algebroid) over the point.

In this case the infinitesimal prequantum line 2-bundle is the delooping of the string Lie 2-algebra, def. 4.1.15

$$\widehat{b\mathfrak{g}} \simeq b\mathfrak{string}$$

and the prequantum circle 2-group-principal 2-bundle is the delooping of the smooth string 2-group, def. 4.1.10

$$(\hat{X} \to X) = (\mathbf{B}\mathrm{String} \to \mathbf{B}G)\,.$$

4.8.1.2 Hamiltonian vector fields

A Hamiltonian vector field on an ordinary symplectic manifold is a vector field v whose contraction with the symplectic form yields an exact form

$$\iota_v \omega = d\alpha\,.$$

We observe below that this condition is equivalent to the fact that the flow $\exp(v) : X \to X$ of v preserves the connection on any prequantum line bundle, up to homotopy (up to gauge transformation). In this form the definition has an immediate generalization to symplectic n-groupoids.

Definition 4.8.5. Let $\omega : X \to \flat_{dR} \mathbf{B}^{n+2} U(1)$ be a symplectic $(n-1)$-groupoid and let

$$\hat{\omega} : X \to \mathbf{B}^{n+2} U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

be a prequantization circle n-bundle with connection, according to 4.8.1.1.

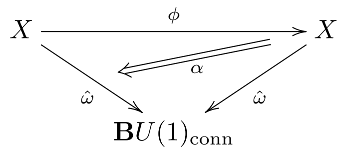
Regard it as an object in the over-∞-topos $\mathbf{H}/\mathbf{B}^{n+2}U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$. Then the internal automorphism ∞-group

$$\underline{\mathrm{Aut}}_{\mathbf{H}/\mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1)_{conn}}(X) \in \mathbf{H}$$

of auto-equivalences that respect the ∞-connection that refines ω we call the ∞-group of *Hamiltonian diffeomorphisms* of X. Its ∞-Lie algebra we call that of *Hamiltonian vector fields* on X.

Proposition 4.8.6. *For $\omega : X \to \flat_{\mathrm{dR}} \mathbf{B}^2 U(1)$ an ordinary symplectic manifold, regarded as a symplectic 0-groupoid, the general definition 4.8.5 reproduces the standard notion of Hamiltonian vector fields.*

Proof. A Hamiltonian diffeomorphism is given by a diagram



in Smooth∞Grpd, where ϕ is an ordinary diffeomorphism. To compute the Lie algebra of this, we need to consider smooth 1-parameter families of such and differentiate them.

Assume first that the connection 1-form in $\hat{\omega}$ is globally defined $A \in \Omega^1(X)$ with $dA = \omega$. Then the existence of the above diagram is equivalent to the condition

$$(\phi(t)^* A - A) = d\alpha(t)\,,$$

where $\alpha(t) \in C^\infty(X)$. Differentiating this at 0 yields the Lie derivative

$$\mathcal{L}_v A = d\alpha'\,,$$

where v is the vector field of which $t \mapsto \phi(t)$ is the flow. By Cartan calculus this is

$$d\iota_v A + \iota_v d_{dR} A = d\alpha'$$

hence

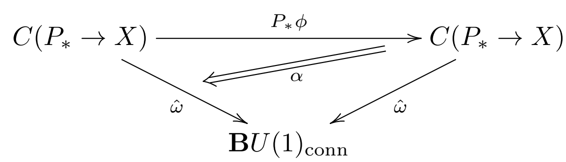
$$\iota_v \omega = d(\alpha' - \iota_v A)\,.$$

This says that for v to be Hamiltonian, its contraction with ω must be exact. This is precisely the definition of Hamiltonian vector fields. The corresponding Hamiltonian here is $\alpha' - \iota_v A$.

In the general case that the prequantum bundle is not trivial, we can present it by a Čech cocycle on the Čech nerve $C(P_* X \to X)$ of the based path space surjective submersion (regarding $P_* X$ as a diffeological space and choosing one base point per connected component, or else assuming without restriction that X is connected).

Any diffeomorphism $\phi = \exp(v) : X \to X$ lifts to a diffeomorphism $P_*\phi : P_* X \to P_* X$ by setting $P_*\phi(\gamma) : (t \in [0,1]) \mapsto \exp(tv)(\gamma(t))$.

So we get a diagram



of simplicial presheaves. Now the same argument as above applies for $P_* X$. □

4.8.1.3 Geometric prequantization of observables We discuss the higher generalization of the geometric quantization of Hamiltonian vector fields or equivalently of their Hamiltonian observables.

Choose a fiber sequence

$$V \to V//\mathbf{B}n - 1U(1) \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$$

in $\mathbf{H}$. We say that $V//\mathbf{B}n - 1U(1)$ is the *action* ∞*-groupoid* of a representation of the circle n-group.

Definition 4.8.7. For a given prequantum circle n-bundle $P \to$ classified by $\mathbf{c} : X \to \mathbf{B}^n U(1)$ write

$$\Gamma(X, P \times_{\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)} V) := \mathbf{H}_{/\mathbf{B}^n U(1)}(X, V//\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1))\,.$$

We call this the ∞*-groupoid of sections* of the associated ∞-bundle $P \times_{\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)} V$.

Remark 4.8.8. A section $\sigma \in \Gamma(X, P \times_{\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)} V)$ is a diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & V//\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1) \\ & \overset{\sigma}{\nearrow} & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{\mathbf{c}} & \mathbf{B}^n U(1) \end{array}$$

in $\mathbf{H}$.

Observation 4.8.9. There is a canonical action of the ∞-group of Hamiltonian diffeomorphisms, def. 4.8.5, on the space of sections from, the left

$$\underline{\mathrm{Aut}}_{\mathbf{H}/\mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1)_{conn}}(X) \times \Gamma(X, P \times_{\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)} V) \to \Gamma(X, P \times_{\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)} V)\,.$$

Definition 4.8.10. The image of a Hamiltonian diffeomorphism (ϕ, α) under

$$\underline{\mathrm{Aut}}_{\mathbf{H}/\mathbf{B}^{n+1}U(1)_{conn}}(X) \to \underline{\mathrm{End}}(\Gamma(X, P \times_{\mathbf{B}^{n-1}U(1)} V))$$

we call the *prequantum operator* of (ϕ, α).

In the following we discuss examples.

4.8.2 Examples

4.8.2.1 $n = 1$ – **prequantum mechanics** Let $V = \mathbb{C}$ be the 0-groupoid of complex numbers and $V//U(1)$ the action groupoid with respect to the standard action.

Proposition 4.8.11. *For $P \to X$ a principal $U(1)$-bundle, we have that $\Gamma(X, P \times_{U(1)} \mathbb{C})$ is the ordinary space of smooth sections of the associated line bundle.*

Corollary 4.8.12. *For $n = 1$ the definition of prequantum operators in def. 4.8.10 is the traditional one.*

4.8.2.2 $n = 2$ – **prequantum 2d field theory** Let $V = \mathrm{Core}(\mathrm{Vect}(-)) \in \mathrm{Smooth}\infty\mathrm{Grpd}$ be the maximal groupoid-valued stack inside the stack of smooth vector bundles of finite rank. Let $V//\mathbf{B}U(1) \to \mathbf{B}^2U(1)$ be the canonical action.

Proposition 4.8.13. *For given circle 2-bundle $P \to X$, the groupoid $\Gamma(X, P \times_{\mathbf{B}U(1)} V)$ is the groupoid of P-twisted vector bundles on X, discussed in 3.3.6.*

4.8.2.3 $n = 3$ – **prequantum Chern-Simons theory** Let G be a simply connected semisimple Lie group. The Lagrangian for G-Chern-Simons theory is refined to the moduli stack of G-connections

$$\hat{\mathbf{c}} : \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \to \mathbf{B}^3U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}\,.$$

Proposition 4.8.14. *Let Σ_3 be a compact smooth manifold of dimension 3. Then the composite*

$$\exp(iS(-)) : \; [\Sigma_3, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\hat{\mathbf{c}}} [\Sigma_3, \mathbf{B}^3U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}] \xrightarrow{\int_\Sigma} U(1)$$

is the action functional of Chern-Simons theory.

Proof. By theorem 4.1.9. □

Proposition 4.8.15. *Let Σ_2 be a smooth manifold of dimension 2. Then the curvature 4-form of the circle 3-bundle with connection given by the the composite*

$$\Sigma_2 \times [\Sigma_2, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}] \to \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}} \xrightarrow{\hat{\mathbf{c}}} \mathbf{B}^3U(1)_{\mathrm{conn}}$$

is the canonical symplectic current plus terms whose fiber integral over Σ_2 vanishes.

It follows that the transgression of the Chern-Simons circle 3-bundle $\hat{\mathbf{c}}$ to the phase space $[\Sigma_2, \mathbf{B}G_{\mathrm{conn}}]$ is the prequantum circle bundle with connection for ordinary Chern-Simons theory.

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