

# An illustration of Wang's Theorem

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## Abstract

Wang's Theorem characterises the set of invariant connections on a principal fibre bundle. Here the point of the theorem is illustrated via an example.

## 1. Setup

Let us define the ingredients for the example we use to illustrate Wang's Theorem.

**1.1. The frame bundle of  $\mathbb{R}^n$ .** We consider the principal bundle  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$ , the frame bundle of  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . Thus a point in  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  is a basis  $\{\mathbf{X}_1, \dots, \mathbf{X}_n\}$  for the tangent space  $\mathbb{T}_{\mathbf{x}}\mathbb{R}^n$  at some  $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . We use the natural identification of  $\mathbb{T}_{\mathbf{x}}\mathbb{R}^n$  with  $\mathbb{R}^n$  so that we think of  $\mathbf{X}_1, \dots, \mathbf{X}_n \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . We use this same identification to allow us to write  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  as a product:  $L(\mathbb{R}^n) = \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathrm{GL}(n; \mathbb{R})$ . Let us recall how this is done, explicitly. If  $\{\mathbf{X}_1, \dots, \mathbf{X}_n\}$  is a basis for  $\mathbb{T}_{\mathbf{x}}\mathbb{R}^n$  then we write

$$\mathbf{X}_j = \sum_{k=1}^n a_j^k \frac{\partial}{\partial x^k}, \quad j \in \{1, \dots, n\},$$

defining some unique matrix  $\mathbf{a} \in \mathrm{GL}(n; \mathbb{R}^n)$  by  $\mathbf{a}(j, k) = a_k^j$ ,  $j, k \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ . We then make the identification

$$L(\mathbb{R}^n) \ni \{\mathbf{X}_1, \dots, \mathbf{X}_n\} \simeq (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) \in \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathrm{GL}(n; \mathbb{R}).$$

The principal  $\mathrm{GL}(n; \mathbb{R})$ -bundle structure of  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  is then defined as follows. For  $(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) \in L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  and for  $\mathbf{b} \in \mathrm{GL}(n; \mathbb{R})$  define

$$(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a})\mathbf{b} = (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}\mathbf{b}).$$

Summarising, in the language of Kobayashi and Nomizu [1963], we have a principal fibre bundle  $P(M, G)$  with  $P = L(\mathbb{R}^n)$ ,  $M = \mathbb{R}^n$ , and  $G = \mathrm{GL}(n; \mathbb{R})$ .

**1.2. The canonical flat connection on  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$ .** Let us define a  $\mathfrak{gl}(n; \mathbb{R})$ -valued one-form on  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$ . First let us represent points in  $T(L(\mathbb{R}^n))$  in a convenient way, using the identifications above. We have

$$\begin{aligned} L(\mathbb{R}^n) &\simeq \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathrm{GL}(n; \mathbb{R}) \\ \implies T(L(\mathbb{R}^n)) &\simeq (\mathbb{R}^n \times \mathrm{GL}(n; \mathbb{R})) \times (\mathbb{R}^n \oplus L(\mathbb{R}^n; \mathbb{R}^n)). \end{aligned}$$

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We therefore write a typical point in  $\mathsf{T}(L(\mathbb{R}^n))$  as  $((\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}), (\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A}))$ . We then take  $\omega \in \mathsf{T}^*(L(\mathbb{R}^n)) \otimes \mathfrak{gl}(n; \mathbb{R})$  to be given by

$$\omega(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) \cdot (\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A}) = \mathbf{a}^{-1} \mathbf{A}.$$

Note that this has the properties of a connection. Indeed, note that the action of  $\mathsf{GL}(n; \mathbb{R}^n)$  on  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  given by

$$(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a})\mathbf{b} = (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{ab})$$

induces by differentiation the action on  $\mathsf{T}(L(\mathbb{R}^n))$  given by

$$(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}, \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A})\mathbf{b} = (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{ab}, \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{Ab}).$$

Thus

$$\omega(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{ab}) \cdot (\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{Ab}) = \mathbf{b}^{-1} \mathbf{a}^{-1} \mathbf{Ab} = \mathsf{Ad}_{\mathbf{b}^{-1}}(\omega(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) \cdot (\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A})),$$

giving the desired equivariance. Also,

$$\omega(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) \cdot (\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{A}) = \mathbf{a}^{-1} \mathbf{A},$$

and notice that  $(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{A})$  is the infinitesimal generator at  $(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a})$  associated with the Lie algebra element  $\mathbf{a}^{-1} \mathbf{A}$ .

**1.3. A group of transformations of  $\mathbb{R}^n$ .** We let  $\mathsf{K}$  be the group of affine transformations of  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . Thus, an element of  $\phi \in \mathsf{K}$  assumes the following form:

$$\phi(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r},$$

where  $\mathbf{m} \in \mathsf{GL}(n; \mathbb{R})$  and  $\mathbf{r} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . We wish to use this group of transformations to induce a group of automorphisms of the frame bundle  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$ . We do this by observing that the transformation  $\phi \in \mathsf{K}$  induces a transformation of  $\mathsf{T}\mathbb{R}^n$  in the obvious way:  $T\phi: \mathsf{T}\mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathsf{T}\mathbb{R}^n$ . Explicitly,

$$\phi(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r} \implies T\phi(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{v}) = (\mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{m}\mathbf{v}).$$

In terms of frames,  $\phi \in \mathsf{K}$  gives rise to the automorphism  $L\phi$  of  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  defined by

$$L\phi(\{\mathbf{X}_1, \dots, \mathbf{X}_n\}) = \{T\phi(\mathbf{X}_1), \dots, T\phi(\mathbf{X}_n)\}.$$

Let us compute this transformation in terms of the identification of  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  with  $\mathbb{R}^n \times \mathsf{GL}(n; \mathbb{R})$ .

**1.1 Lemma:** *If  $\phi(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}$  then  $L\phi(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) = (\mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{ma})$ .*

**Proof:** Let  $\{\mathbf{X}_1, \dots, \mathbf{X}_n\}$  be the frame associated with  $(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a})$  so that

$$\mathbf{X}_j = \sum_{k=1}^n \mathbf{a}(k, j) \frac{\partial}{\partial x^k}, \quad j \in \{1, \dots, n\}.$$

Then, thinking of  $\mathbf{X}_j$  as being a vector in  $\mathbb{R}^n$  with components  $(\mathbf{a}(1, j), \dots, \mathbf{a}(n, j))$  we have

$$T\phi(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{X}_j) = (\mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{m}\mathbf{X}_j).$$

Note that the  $k$ th component of  $\mathbf{m}X_j$  is  $\sum_{l=1}^n \mathbf{m}(k, l)\mathbf{a}(l, j) = (\mathbf{ma})(k, j)$ . That is,

$$\mathbf{m}X_j = \sum_{k=1}^n (\mathbf{ma})(k, j) \frac{\partial}{\partial x^k},$$

giving the result. ■

In summary, we have  $\mathbf{K}$  acting as a group of automorphisms of  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  with

$$\phi(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r} \implies \phi(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) = (\mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{ma}),$$

where we introduce our abuse of notation by now writing  $\phi$  in place of  $L\phi$ .

**1.4. The infinitesimal group action.** We shall need the infinitesimal generators for the group of affine transformations. In order to do this, I suppose we need a convenient representation of the group  $\mathbf{K}$  so we can describe its Lie algebra appropriately. If  $\phi \in \mathbf{K}$  is given by  $\phi(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}$  let us define an  $(n+1) \times (n+1)$  matrix

$$\mathbf{A}(\phi) = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{m} & \mathbf{r} \\ \mathbf{0} & 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

This matrix is evidently invertible. Note that

$$\mathbf{A}(\phi) \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{x} \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r} \\ 1 \end{bmatrix},$$

so the matrix  $\mathbf{A}(\phi)$  captures the action of  $\mathbf{K}$  on  $\mathbb{R}^n$  in some way. Moreover, this realises  $\mathbf{K}$  as a subgroup of  $\mathrm{GL}(n+1; \mathbb{R})$ , and so allows us to use matrices to represent the Lie algebra. An element in the Lie algebra of  $\mathbf{K}$  is represented in the form

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{v} \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \tag{1.1}$$

for  $\mathbf{A} \in \mathfrak{gl}(n; \mathbb{R})$  and  $\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{R}_{<0}$ . We may verify that

$$\exp \left( \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{v} \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) = \begin{bmatrix} \exp(\mathbf{A}) & \mathbf{B}_{\mathbf{A}}\mathbf{v} \\ \mathbf{0} & 1 \end{bmatrix},$$

where

$$\mathbf{B}_{\mathbf{A}} = \mathbf{I}_n + \frac{\mathbf{A}}{2!} + \frac{\mathbf{A}^2}{3!} + \cdots.$$

This allows us to compute the infinitesimal generator on  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  associated to the Lie algebra element (1.1):

$$\begin{aligned} \left. \frac{d}{dt} \right|_{t=0} \exp \left( \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A}t & \mathbf{v}t \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) &= \left. \frac{d}{dt} \right|_{t=0} (\exp(\mathbf{A}t)\mathbf{x} + t\mathbf{B}_{\mathbf{A}}\mathbf{v}, \exp(\mathbf{A}t)\mathbf{a}) \\ &= (\mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A}\mathbf{a}). \end{aligned}$$

## 2. Wang's Theorem in general and in particular

Here we recall Wang's Theorem (see [Wang 1958]) which describes the set of  $K$ -invariant connections on a principal bundle  $P(M, G)$  is the case when  $K$  acts transitively on  $M$ . We do this in general first, and then apply the constructions to the frame bundle example in the preceding section.

**2.1. Wang's Theorem in general.** Let  $P(M, G)$  be a principal fibre bundle and let  $u_0 \in P$  with  $x_0 = \pi(u_0) \in M$ . Let  $K$  be a Lie group of automorphisms of  $P$ . Denote by

$$J = \{\phi \in K \mid \phi(\pi^{-1}(x_0)) = \pi^{-1}(x_0)\}$$

the isotropy group of  $x_0$ . (We follow Kobayashi and Nomizu by not hanging a  $u_0$  on  $J$  as would be appropriate.) Define a homomorphism  $\lambda: J \rightarrow G$  by asking that  $\phi(u_0) = u_0\lambda(\phi)$ .

The theorem of interest is the following.

**2.1 Theorem: (Wang's Theorem)** *Let  $P(M, G)$  be a principal fibre bundle and let  $K$  be a Lie group of automorphisms of  $P$  having the property that, if  $x_1, x_2 \in M$ , then there exists  $\phi \in K$  such that  $\phi(\pi^{-1}(x_1)) = \pi^{-1}(x_2)$ . Denote by  $J$  the isotropy group of  $x_0$  and let  $\lambda: J \rightarrow G$  be the homomorphism defined above. Then there is a 1-1 correspondence between the following sets of objects:*

- (i) *the connections on  $P$  that are invariant under  $\phi$  for every  $\phi \in K$ ;*
- (ii) *the linear maps  $\Lambda: \mathfrak{k} \rightarrow \mathfrak{g}$  for which*
  - (a)  $\Lambda(\text{Ad}_j(\xi)) = \text{Ad}_{\lambda(j)}(\Lambda(\xi))$  *for every  $j \in J$  and  $\xi \in \mathfrak{k}$  and*
  - (b)  $\Lambda|_{\mathfrak{j}} = T_e\lambda$ .

*Explicitly, if  $\omega$  is the connection form for an object from (i) then the corresponding object from (ii) is given by  $\Lambda(\xi) = \omega(\frac{d}{dt}|_{t=0} \exp(t\xi)(u_0))$ . Conversely, if  $\Lambda$  is an object from (ii) then the connection form for the corresponding object from (i) is given by*

$$\omega(X_{u_0}) = \Lambda(\xi) - A$$

*where  $\xi \in \mathfrak{k}$  and  $A \in \mathfrak{g}$  are chosen so that*

$$\begin{aligned} T_{u_0}\pi\left(\frac{d}{dt}\Big|_{t=0} \exp(t\xi)(u_0)\right) &= T_{u_0}\pi(X_{u_0}), \\ \frac{d}{dt}\Big|_{t=0} u_0 \exp(At) &= \frac{d}{dt}\Big|_{t=0} \exp(t\xi)(u_0) - X_{u_0}. \end{aligned}$$

Wang's Theorem is not so easy to interpret in the beginning. So let us offer some comments that we hope will be helpful.

1. Note that the action of  $K$  on  $P$  induces a linear map from  $\mathfrak{k}$  to  $T_{u_0}P$  sending a Lie algebra element to the value of its infinitesimal generator at  $u_0$ . The image of  $\mathfrak{k}$  under this action is the tangent space to the  $K$ -orbit through  $u_0$ . One might expect this tangent space to have a vertical component saying what  $K$  does in the fibre direction and a horizontal component saying what  $K$  does in the horizontal direction. Of course, one needs a connection to be unambiguous about this. To wit...
2. A connection in  $P$  gives a splitting  $T_{u_0}P = H_{u_0}P \oplus V_{u_0}P \simeq T_{x_0}M \oplus \mathfrak{g}$ . This decomposition then combines with the map from  $\mathfrak{k}$  to  $T_{u_0}P$  to give a map from  $\mathfrak{k}$  to  $\mathfrak{g}$ . This is the map  $\Lambda$ . This can thus be thought of as the vertical projection of the infinitesimal action of  $\mathfrak{k}$  on  $P$ .

3. Let us examine the conditions satisfied by  $\Lambda$ .

- (a) The equivariance condition for  $J \subset K$  is exactly that induced by the  $G$ -invariance resulting from the principal bundle structure, and via the homomorphism  $\lambda: J \rightarrow G$ . This is rather analogous to the equivariance condition a connection must satisfy.
- (b) The condition that  $\Lambda$  agrees with  $T_e\lambda$  on  $j$  reflects the fact that the vertical component of the infinitesimal group action is prescribed by the principal bundle structure via the homomorphism  $\lambda$ . This is rather analogous to the condition on a connection that, when evaluated on a vertical vector, it must return the Lie algebra element whose infinitesimal generator gives the vertical vector.

**2.2. Wang's Theorem in particular.** We consider the constructions of the preceding section with  $P = L(\mathbb{R}^n)$ ,  $M = \mathbb{R}^n$ ,  $G = GL(n; \mathbb{R})$ , and  $K$  the affine transformation group of  $\mathbb{R}^n$  acting on  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$ . Let  $\mathbf{x}_0 \in \mathbb{R}^n$  and suppose that  $\phi \in K$  is given by  $\phi(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}$ . Then  $\phi \in J$  (using reference point  $(\mathbf{x}_0, \mathbf{a}_0)$ ) if and only if

$$\mathbf{m}\mathbf{x}_0 + \mathbf{r} = \mathbf{x}_0 \iff \mathbf{r} = (\mathbf{I}_n - \mathbf{m})\mathbf{x}_0.$$

Thus, if  $\phi \in J$  is given by  $\phi(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}$  then

$$\phi(\mathbf{x}_0, \mathbf{a}_0) = (\mathbf{x}_0, \mathbf{m}\mathbf{a}_0) = (\mathbf{x}_0, \mathbf{a}_0\mathbf{a}_0^{-1}\mathbf{m}\mathbf{a}_0) \implies \lambda(\phi) = \mathbf{a}_0^{-1}\mathbf{m}\mathbf{a}_0.$$

Let us keep things simple and consider  $\mathbf{x}_0 = \mathbf{0}$  and  $\mathbf{a}_0 = \mathbf{I}_n$  whence

$$J = \{\phi \in K \mid \phi(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{m} \in GL(n; \mathbb{R})\}$$

and  $\lambda(\phi) = \mathbf{m}$  if  $\phi(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x}$ .

One may verify that the canonical flat connection on  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  is  $K$ -invariant.

**2.2 Lemma: (K-invariance of the canonical flat connection)** *The connection of Section 1.2 is invariant under the automorphism group of automorphisms of  $L(\mathbb{R}^n)$  defined in Section 1.3.*

**Proof:** We need only show that the connection form is  $K$ -invariant. Let  $\phi \in K$  and write

$$\phi(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) = (\mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{m}\mathbf{a}).$$

Thus

$$T_{(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a})}\phi(\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A}) = (\mathbf{m}\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{m}\mathbf{A}).$$

Therefore,

$$\begin{aligned} \phi^*\omega(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) \cdot (\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A}) &= \omega(T_{(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a})}\phi(\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A})) \\ &= \omega(\mathbf{m}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{m}\mathbf{a}) \cdot (\mathbf{m}\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{m}\mathbf{A}) \\ &= (\mathbf{m}\mathbf{a})^{-1}\mathbf{m}\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{a}^{-1}\mathbf{A} = \omega(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{a}) \cdot (\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A}), \end{aligned}$$

as desired. ■

Thus, according to Wang's Theorem, the connection  $\omega$  defines a linear map  $\Lambda: \mathfrak{k} \rightarrow \mathfrak{gl}(n; \mathbb{R})$  having a couple of properties. Wang tells us how to determine  $\Lambda$ . Indeed, our computations of Section 1.4 give

$$\begin{aligned} \Lambda \left( \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{v} \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) &= \omega \left( \frac{d}{dt} \Big|_{t=0} \exp \left( \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A}t & \mathbf{v}t \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) (\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I}_n) \right) \\ &= \omega(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I}_n) \cdot (\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{A}) = \mathbf{A}. \end{aligned}$$

Thus  $\Lambda$  returns the “obvious” vertical part of  $\mathfrak{k}$ . Had we chosen a more interesting  $\mathbf{K}$ -invariant connection, we would get a more interesting map  $\Lambda$ .

For fun, let us verify that  $\Lambda$  has the two properties asserted in Wang's Theorem. First the equivariance property. Let  $j \in \mathbf{J}$  so that  $j(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{m}\mathbf{x}$  for some  $\mathbf{m}$  and so that  $\lambda(j) = \mathbf{m}$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} \Lambda \left( \text{Ad}_j \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{v} \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) &= \Lambda \left( \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{m} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{v} \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{m}^{-1} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & 1 \end{bmatrix} \right) = \Lambda \left( \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{m}\mathbf{A}\mathbf{m}^{-1} & \mathbf{m}\mathbf{v} \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) \\ &= \mathbf{m}\mathbf{A}\mathbf{m}^{-1} = \text{Ad}_{\lambda(j)} \Lambda \left( \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{v} \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right), \end{aligned}$$

as desired. Now we check the restriction condition. The elements of  $\mathbf{j}$  have the form

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix},$$

and so it is immediate that

$$\Lambda \left( \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) = \mathbf{A} = T_{\mathbf{I}_n} \lambda(\mathbf{A})$$

since  $\lambda$  is simply the identity map.

## References

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