
Preface

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

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

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

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

friends, who influenced our view of the subject: V. Arnold, Ya. Brenier, H. Bursztyn, Ya. Eliashberg, P. Etingof, V. Fock, I. Frenkel, D. Fuchs, A. Kirillov, F. Malikov, G. Misiołek, R. Moraru, N. Nekrasov, V. Ovsienko, C. Roger, A. Rosly, V. Rubtsov, A. Schwarz, G. Segal, M. Semenov-Tian-Shansky, A. Shnirelman, P. Slodowy, S. Tabachnikov, A. Todorov, A. Veselov, F. Wagemann, J. Weitsman, I. Zakharevich, and many others. We are particularly grateful to Alexei Rosly, the joint projects with whom inspired a large part, in particular the “application chapter,” of this book, and who made numerous invaluable remarks on the manuscript. We thank the participants of the graduate courses for their stimulating questions and remarks. Our special thanks go to M. Peters and the Springer team for their invariable help and to D. Kramer for careful editing of the text.

We also acknowledge the support of the Max-Planck Institute in Bonn, the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques in Bures-sur-Yvette, the Clay Mathematics Institute, as well as the NSERC research grants. The work on this book was partially conducted during the period the first author was employed by the Clay Mathematics Institute as a Clay Book Fellow.

Finally, we thank our families (kids included!) for their tireless moral support and encouragement throughout the over-stretched work on the manuscript.

The Geometry of Infinite-Dimensional Groups

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2009, XII, 304 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-540-77262-0