

Killing vector fields

若向量場 X 滿足 Lie 導數 $L_X g = 0$ ，這表示 X 保持度量張量 g 不變 (preserve the metric)。

換句話說，沿 X 的流 (flow)，流形上的度量結構 (如任意兩點間的距離、角度) 保持不變。這等價於 X 生成等距變換 (isometries)，即 X 對應於流形的一種連續對稱性 (例如，在球面上，繞軸旋轉的向量場就是 Killing 向量場)。

數學表述： $L_X g = 0$ 等價於 $\nabla_\mu X_\nu + \nabla_\nu X_\mu = 0$

$\text{div}(X) = \nabla_i X^i = g_{ij} \nabla_i X^j$ (協變導數的跡)。若 $\text{div}(X) = 0$ 則稱 X 是 divergence-free，表示沿 X 的流，流形的 volume form 保持不變。幾何上就是體積沒有壓縮或擴張。

$L_X g = 0$ 隱含 $\text{div}(X) = 0$ (文末有證明。)

X 定義了一個「剛性運動」：流形在 X 方向上的變換，如同剛體移動，既無形變 (度量保持) 也無體積變化 (無散)。

在物理情境中，這對應於守恆律：例如，在廣義相對論中，時空的 Killing 向量場與能量 (時間平移對稱)、角動量 (旋轉對稱) 等守恆量相關；在流體力學中，無散條件表示質量守恆。

§ 01 Definition and Killing equation

1. $L_X g = 0$

用局部座標表示 $L_X g_{\mu\nu} = \nabla_\mu X^\nu + \nabla_\nu X^\mu = 0$

用 Levi-Civita connection $g(\nabla_Y X, Z) + g(Y, \nabla_Z X) = 0$ for all vectors Y, Z 。

The Lie derivative of the metric along a vector field X with components X^k is given by :

$$(L_X g)_{ij} = X^k \partial_k g_{ij} + g_{ik} \partial_j X^k + g_{jk} \partial_i X^k$$

2. $\text{div}(K) = 0$

In R^3 with metric $ds^2 = dx^2 + dy^2 + dz^2$

$X^\mu = (1, 0, 0), Y^\mu = (0, 1, 0), Z^\mu = (0, 0, 1)$ are Killing vectors。

They represent the three translations。

Take the metric $ds^2 = dr^2 + r^2 d\theta^2 + r^2 \sin^2 \theta d\phi^2$ (球面座標)

Now the metric is independent of ϕ , so $R = \partial\phi$ is a Killing vector。

Transforming back to Cartesian coordinates , this becomes $R = -y\partial_x + x\partial_y$.

The Cartesian components R^μ are therefore $(-y,x,0)$, this represents a rotation about the z-axis .

同理 $S^\mu = (z,0,-x), T^\mu = (0,-z,y)$ 表示對 y 軸 , x 軸的旋轉 .

Some propositions

Proposition 1

Let X, Y be two Killing fields , then $[X, Y]$ is also a Killing field .

Thus the space of Killing fields is a Lie algebra , denoted by $iso(M, g)$.

In particular , we see that the dimension of $iso(M, g)$ is at most $\frac{n(n+1)}{2}$.

Proposition 2

Let K be a Killing field of constant length , then the integral curves of K are geodesics .

i.e. $\nabla_K K = 0$

Exercise

Killing vector field 滿足 $\nabla_i X_j + \nabla_j X_i = 0$

$g^{ij}(\nabla_i X_j + \nabla_j X_i) = 0$, 因為 g^{ij} 是對稱的 , 且 $g^{ij}(\nabla_i X_j) = div(X)$

所以 $2div(X) = 0 \Rightarrow div(X) = 0$