Introduction to Singular Foliations

(And mainly to its Geometry)

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Schedule :

1. Tuesday : What are singular foliations ?
2. Wednesday : What structures do they hide ?
3. Thursday : exercises, symmetries of a subset.
4. Friday : More (higher) structures they hide + open questions.

There is a (not totally finished) handout on-line.

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Too many definitions ?

What is a singular foliation ? A first attempt

A first attempt to define singular foliations on M :

Definition

A *partitionifold* of M is a partition of M into connected immersed submanifolds [a], called <u>leaves</u>.

a. From now on, "submanifold" means by default "immersed submanifolds".

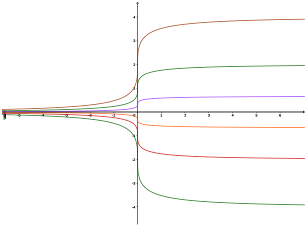
Notation $L_\bullet : m \mapsto L_m$.

Question

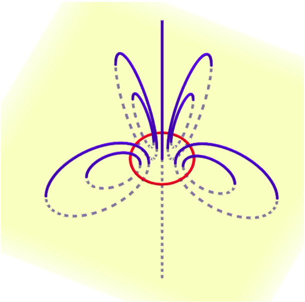
Should we take it as a definition of singular foliation ?

Annoying examples

Pinch



Magnetic



One has to make a choice

A choice has to be made, What do we wish to study?	
Isolated lasagna in a spaghetti dish?	Isolated spaghetti in a lasagna dish?
No	Yes
Defined with forms	Defined with tangent vector

Other problems : magnetic or pinch partitionifolds have little interesting geometry : we need one more assumption!

A second attempt : smooth partitionifolds

Definition

A partitionifold $L_\bullet$ is said to be smooth if for every $\ell \in M$ and every tangent vector $u \in T_\ell L_\ell$, there exists a vector field X through u which is tangent to all leaves.

This forbids isolated lasagnas, magnetic or pinch-partitioniolds. It is better.

Question

Should we take it as a definition of singular foliation ?

Smooth partitionifolds are fine (I)

The flow of a vector field tangent to all leaves preserves $L_\bullet$.

Proposition

Let $L_\bullet$ be a smooth partitionifold.

1. *Travelling along a leaf is boring*
2. *Every leaf has a transverse structure*
3. *Which is unique*
4. *And there is a Weinstein-splitting-like theorem.*

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3. *And any two such transverse smooth partitionifolds have isomorphic germs.*
4. *And near any point m, $L_\bullet$ is a isomorphic to the direct product of the leaf by any representative of the transverse structure*

Smooth partitionifolds are fine (II)

For any smooth partitionifold $L_\bullet$:

1. The singular distribution :

$$m \mapsto T_m L_m$$

   is involutive, integrable, any of its section has a flow that preserves it.
2. has a upper-semi-continuous dimension,
3. and on the open dense subset where this rank is locally maximum, we obtain a "good old" regular foliation.

(So there is a dense open subset where it is a regular foliation + some singularities where leaves are strictly smaller in dimension.)

Question

So, is it a good definition of a singular foliation ?

Yes, but it has lost

Here is the consensus definition of what a singular foliation is.

Definition

A singular foliation on a smooth manifold M is a subspace $\mathcal{F} \subset \mathfrak{X}_c(M)$ which

(α) is involutive,

(β) is a $\mathcal{C}^\infty(M)$-module

(γ) is locally finitely generated.

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(β) For all $F \in \mathcal{C}^\infty(M)$, $X\mathcal{F} \implies FX \in \mathcal{F}$.

(γ) For every point $m \in M$ there exists $X_1, \dots, X_r \in \mathcal{F}$ and an open neighborhood $\mathcal{U}$ of m such that every for every $X \in \mathcal{F}$ there exists $f_1, \dots, f_r \in C^\infty(M)$ such that $X - \sum_{i=1}^r f_i X_i$ is zero on $\mathcal{U}_m$.

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Complain

Come on ! How do you dare to call foliation something which has no leaves !

The holomophic setting, and a bit of algebraic geometry

If you hate compactly supported, and like sheaves, here is an equivalent definition on a smooth manifold M :

Definition

A singular foliation on a smooth manifold M is a subsheaf

$$\mathcal{F}_\bullet : \mathcal{U} \mapsto \mathcal{F}_\mathcal{U}$$

of the sheaf $\mathfrak{X}_\bullet$ of vector fields on M such that

(α) $\mathcal{F}_\bullet$ is involutive,

(β) is a sub-sheaf of $\mathcal{C}^\infty_\bullet$-modules ,

(γ) is locally finitely generated.

The holomophic setting, and a bit of algebraic geometry

If you hate compactly supported, and like sheaves, here is the definition for a complex manifold M with holomorphic functions $\mathcal{O}_\bullet$.

Definition

A singular foliation on a ~~smooth~~ complex manifold M is a subsheaf

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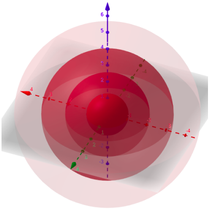
- (α) $\mathcal{F}_\bullet$ is involutive,
- (β) is a sub-sheaf of ~~$\mathcal{C}^\infty_\bullet$-modules~~ $\mathcal{O}_\bullet$-modules,
- (γ) ~~is locally finitely generated~~ - forget (γ), germs of holomorphic functions are Noetherian anyway

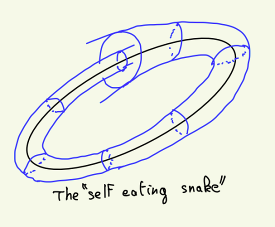
Examples

1. Image through anchor map of a Lie algebroids :
   1. Symplectic leaves of a Poisson structure,
   2. Infinitesimal actions of Lie group actions.
2. Vector fields tangent to a (reasonable) subset, or that "kill" prescribed functions.
3. Vector fields vanishing at prescribed order at prescribed points.
4. Representations.



Some natural operations

1. Direct product,
2. Pull-back through a transverse map. Includes :
    1. Pull-back through submersions.
    2. Restriction to a transverse submanifold Σ (i.e. $T\Sigma + T\mathcal{F} = TM$).
3. Push-forward (sometimes).
4. Suspension through a symmetry.
5. Blow-up along a leaf.



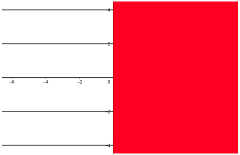
What are leaves ? And why finitely generated

Definition

Let $\mathcal{F}$ be a singular foliation on M. Choose $m \in M$

1. the R-leaf through m is the set of points reachable from m by following finitely many flows of vector fields in $\mathcal{F}$.
2. We call T-leaf a submanifold L :
   1. containing m
   2. such that $T_x L = T_x \mathcal{F}$ for all $x \in M$
   3. and maximal among those.

A problem, the infinite comb.



Structure of the proof.

Proposition

The flow of a vector field in $\mathcal{F}$ is a symmetry of $\mathcal{F}$.

Démonstration.

☠ This is not easy. Better proof tomorrow. □

Theorem

Near a point m, a singular foliation is the direct product of :

1. *the singular foliation of all vector fields on $\mathbb{R}^a$, with $a = \dim(T_m\mathcal{F})$.*
2. *some singular foliation on $\mathbb{R}^b$ made of vector fields that vanish at 0.*

Corollary

T-leaves = R-leaves form a smooth partitionifold.

Consequences for leaves.

Proposition

Let $\mathcal{F}$ be a singular foliation.

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   (Hermann, Nagoya, Cerveau, Dazord, Androulidakis-Skandalis, Garmendia-Villatoro).