

Differential Cohomology Theories
are Sheaves on Manifolds

Idea Include some differential form data into integral cohomology to retain geometric information:

Ω^\bullet_M is a complex of sheaves
and the cohomology of $(\Omega^\bullet(M), d)$ is $H^\bullet(M, \mathbb{R})$.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \hat{H}^\bullet(M) & \xrightarrow{u} & H^\bullet(M, \mathbb{Z}) \\ \downarrow R & & \downarrow \\ \Omega_{cl}^\bullet(M) & \rightarrow & H^\bullet(M, \mathbb{R}) \end{array} \quad \text{"homotopy pullback"}$$

Goals for today and next week

1. Develop abstract framework of differential cohomology as "sheaves of spectra on manifolds"
2. Reproduce the above square in high generality:

The generalized cohomology theory + "form data"

+ "a way to combine them"



differential cohomology theory

3. Rediscover the hexagon diagram

4. The homotopy formula and integration

As time permits:

a) Chern-Simons theory as a differential refinement of Chern-Weil theory

b) Differential K-theory

c) Twisted differential cohomology theories

Today

1. The functor of points and sheaves

2. Prerequisites: ∞ -categories & spectra

3. Differential cohomology theories

4. Homotopy invariant sheaves

1. The functor of points perspective (a.k.a. Yoneda)

$N \in \text{Mfd} \Rightarrow F := C^\infty(-, N): \text{Mfd}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \text{Set}$
functor

$F(\text{pt}) = N^\delta$ underlying set

$F(M) = C^\infty(M, N)$ "probing N with M ", "plots"

Def A smooth set is a sheaf $F: \text{Mfd}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \text{Set}$

(i.e. $\forall M \in \text{Mfd}$, $F|_M$ is a sheaf)

Example 1. A diffeological space is a "concrete" smooth set

2. $A \in \text{Set}$. Then $X \mapsto A$ is not a sheaf.

Its sheafification $F := \text{const } A$ has

$F(X) = \{ X \rightarrow A \text{ locally constant} \}$

Idea \mathcal{C} category, then a smooth object in \mathcal{C} is a sheaf

$$F \in \text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}; \mathcal{C})$$

Very generally, a differential cohomology

theory F could be a 'smooth spectrum'

$$F \in \text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, \mathcal{S}_p) \quad \underbrace{\text{"category" of Spectra}} \approx \text{cohomology theories}$$

Caution have to treat spectra with proper homotopical viewpoint

$$\lim \rightsquigarrow \text{holim}$$

diagram commutes \rightsquigarrow diagram commutes
up to homotopy + coherence data

so if $S_1: M_1 \rightarrow M_2$, $S_2: M_2 \rightarrow M_3$ are smooth maps

$$F(S_2 \circ S_1) \stackrel{H}{\sim} F(S_1) \circ F(S_2)$$

data! \nearrow + higher coherences...

Capture all coherence: \mathcal{S}_p is an ∞ -category

$$\& F \text{ an } \infty\text{-functor } \text{Mfd}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathcal{S}_p$$

2. Recollections of ∞ -categories

For us $(\infty, 1)$ -category = ∞ -category = quasi-category

Def Δ simplex category:

objects: n -simplices $\{0, \dots, n\} \quad \forall n$

morphisms: \leq -preserving maps



A simplicial object in a category \mathcal{C} is a functor

$$\Delta^{op} \rightarrow \mathcal{C}$$

A cosimplicial object in \mathcal{C} is a functor

$$\Delta \rightarrow \mathcal{C}$$

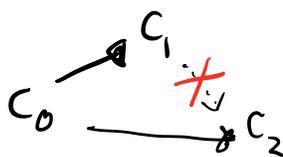
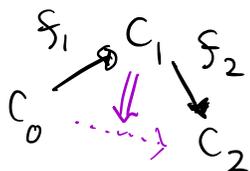
Example If \mathcal{C} is a category, then the nerve

$$N(\mathcal{C})_n := \{ C_0 \xrightarrow{f_1} C_1 \rightarrow \dots \xrightarrow{f_n} C_n \text{ composable} \}$$

is a simplicial set.

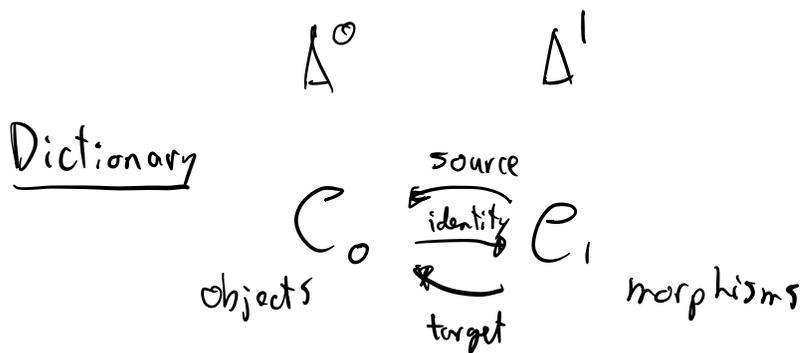
It has the property that every "inner horn"

has a unique filler:



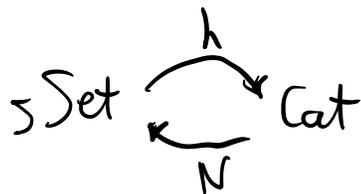
This defines a faithful functor $Cat \rightarrow sSet$
^
fully

Def An ∞ -category (or quasi-category or weak Kan complex) is a simplicial set s.t. every inner horn has a (not necessarily unique) filler.



filler of = choice of composition (not unique!)

Prop \exists left adjoint to the nerve



If C is an ∞ -category,
 we call hC the homotopy category

There is a generalization of the nerve for categories enriched in simplicial sets Cat_Δ

$$N: \text{Cat}_\Delta \rightarrow \text{sSet}$$

called the homotopy-coherent nerve.

For Kan-enriched, get an ∞ -cat.

Topological categories are related to Cat_Δ

by geometric realization & singular complex functors

$\stackrel{\text{CW-complexes}}{\cong}$

Example Spaces has internal homs, so the homotopy-coherent nerve makes it into an ∞ -category.

Def/Prop \mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D} ∞ -categories.

Then $\text{Fun}(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}) := \text{Map}_{\text{sSet}}(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}) \in \text{sSet}$

is the ∞ -category of functors

Note The category of ∞ -categories is enriched over simplicial sets

There is an ∞ -category of (small) ∞ -categories

Def For $x, y \in \mathcal{C}_0$, the simplicial set $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(x, y)$ of morphisms is the pull back

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(x, y) & \rightarrow & \text{Fun}(\Delta', \mathcal{C}) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow (e_{r_0}, e_{r_1}) \\ * & \xrightarrow{(x, y)} & \mathcal{C} \times \mathcal{C} \end{array}$$

Next one can define (co)limits, adjoint functors, ...

Example $y \in \mathcal{C}_0$ is final if $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(x, y)$ is contractible $\forall x \in \mathcal{C}_0$.

Def \mathcal{C} is stable if

1. it admits finite limits & colimits
2. its final object is an initial object (zero object)

3. A diagram $(\Delta' \times \Delta' \rightarrow \mathcal{C})$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} x & \rightarrow & y \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ z & \rightarrow & w \end{array}$$

is a pull back iff it is a pushout

Define suspension and loop space by

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \rightarrow & 0 \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ 0 & \rightarrow & \Sigma X \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ccc} \Omega X & \rightarrow & 0 \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ 0 & \rightarrow & X \end{array}$$

Example $\mathcal{S}p = \lim \left(\dots \xrightarrow{\Omega} \text{Spaces} \xrightarrow{\Omega} \text{Spaces} \right)$

is stable.

\sim Infinite loop spaces $\Omega E_n \xrightarrow{\sim} E_{n-1}$

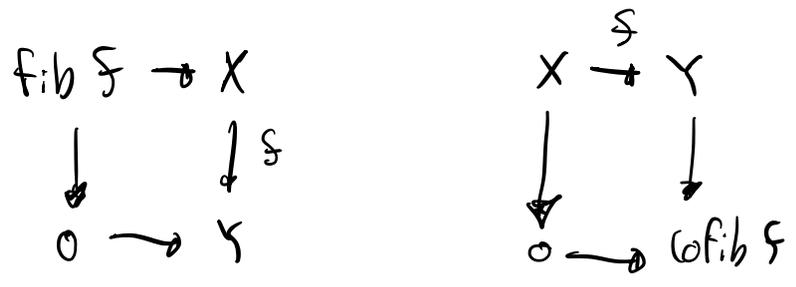
$\Rightarrow H^n(X, E) := \pi_0 \text{Map}(\Sigma^\infty X, \Sigma^n E)$

is a generalized cohomology theory

$X \in \text{Space}$

Th Every generalized cohomology theory comes from a spectrum

Def If $f: X \rightarrow Y$ is a map of spectra, the fiber and cofiber are



Recall The Dold-Kan correspondence gives an equivalence

$DK: Ch_{\geq 0} \xrightarrow{\sim} sAb$
 \nwarrow simplicial abelian groups

For unbounded chain complexes we can do

$DK_n: Ch \xrightarrow{T_{\geq n}} Ch_{\geq n} \xrightarrow{\text{shift}} Ch_{\geq 0} \xrightarrow{DK} sAb \xrightarrow{\text{forget}} sSet$

Up to weak equivalences, $DK_n(A^\bullet) \in \mathcal{S}et$
assemble into a spectrum & we get a functor
of ∞ -categories

$$DK: Ch \rightarrow Sp$$

with the property that the chain complex

$$\dots \rightarrow 0 \rightarrow A[0] \rightarrow 0 \rightarrow \dots$$

is mapped to the Eilenberg-MacLane spectrum HA

3. Differential Cohomology Theories

We can now define differential cohomology theories as functors

$$F: \text{Mfd}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \text{Sp}$$

that satisfy a kind of sheaf condition.

Recall $F: \text{Mfd}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \text{Set}$ Sheaf condition:

$$F(M) \xrightarrow{\sim} \lim_{i_1, i_2} \left(\prod_{i_1, i_2} F(U_{i_1} \cap U_{i_2}) \leftarrow \prod_i F(U_i) \right)$$

for $\{U_i\}$ good open cover.

How do we generalize this to a higher categorical target?

Example For G discrete group,

We want the sheafification of the constant presheaf with value $BG \in \text{Spaces}$ to be

$$\begin{aligned} F(M) &= \text{Maps}(M, BG) \\ &= \{ \text{principal } G\text{-bundles on } M \} \end{aligned}$$

↖ not a set

The ordinary sheaf condition only gives locally constant maps $M \rightarrow \mathcal{P}G$.

Idea: enlarge the diagram to

$$\text{holim} \left(\prod_{i_1, i_2, i_3} F(U_{i_1} \cap U_{i_2} \cap U_{i_3}) \rightrightarrows \prod_{j_1, j_2} F(U_{j_1} \cap U_{j_2}) \rightrightarrows \prod_k F(U_k) \right)$$

(Remark for experts: sheaf \Leftarrow hypercomplete sheaf in this case)

Def $F: \text{Mfd}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathcal{S}p$ is a differential cohomology theory if the following canonical map is an equivalence:

$$F(M) \xrightarrow{\sim} \underset{\Delta}{\text{holim}} \left(\dots \rightrightarrows \prod_{i_1, i_2} F(U_{i_1} \cap U_{i_2}) \rightrightarrows \prod_i F(U_i) \right)$$

$$\left(\begin{array}{l} \check{C}ech \text{ nerve } U_{\bullet} : \Delta^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \text{Mfd} \text{ simplicial manifold} \\ U_n = \coprod_{i_1, \dots, i_n} U_{i_1} \cap \dots \cap U_{i_n} \end{array} \right)$$

$\Rightarrow F(U_{\bullet})$ cosimplicial spectrum

Given F , the differential cohomology of $M \in \text{Mfd}$ is

$$\hat{H}^k(M, F) = \pi_{-k}(F(M))$$

Example If $E \in \mathcal{S}_p$, define the constant sheaf

$$\text{const } E(M) = \text{Map}_{\mathcal{S}_p}(\Sigma^\infty M_+, E) \in \mathcal{S}_p$$

$$\Rightarrow \hat{H}^k(M, \text{const } E) = H^k(M, E)$$

Prop \exists An adjunction $\text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, \mathcal{S}_p) \overset{\text{const}}{\dashv} \mathcal{S}_p$


Example For G compact Lie, $F = \mathcal{B}^\nabla G$ does

$$M \mapsto \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{principal } G\text{-bundles with connection} \\ \uparrow \\ \text{Groupoids} = \text{homotopy 1-types on } M \end{array} \right\} \subseteq \text{Spaces} \xrightarrow{\Sigma^\infty} \mathcal{S}_p$$

Lemma If $A^\bullet: \Delta \rightarrow \text{Ch}$ is a cosimplicial chain complex,

$$\text{then } \text{holim}_\Delta \text{DK}(A^\bullet) = \text{DK}(\text{Tot } A)$$

where the totalization has

$$\text{Tot } A[n] = \prod_{p-q=n} A^p[q]$$

Cor If $A : \text{Mfd} \rightarrow \text{Ch}$ is a complex of sheaves
s.t. for all $k \in \mathbb{Z}$, $A[k]$ is a C^∞ -module,
then $\text{DK} \circ A$ is a differential cohomology theory

Example de Rham forms are a sheaf of chain complexes

$$\Omega^\bullet : \text{Mfd} \rightarrow \text{Ch} \xrightarrow{\text{Dold-Kan}} \text{Sp}$$

Dold-Kan sends quasi-isomorphic chain complexes
to equivalent spectra, so

$$\text{Dold-Kan}(\Omega^\bullet) \simeq \text{const } \mathbb{H}\mathbb{R}$$

By the de Rham theorem

4. Homotopy Invariance & Homotopification

Def A differential cohomology theory F is called homotopy invariant (also \mathbb{R} -invariant or concordance invariant) if the map $F(M) \rightarrow F(M \times \mathbb{R})$ induced by the projection is an equivalence $\forall M \in \text{Mfd}$.

\Rightarrow suspension axiom & homotopy invariance

Th The adjunction

$$\text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, \mathcal{S}p) \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{\text{const}} \\ \xrightarrow{\text{ev}_{pt}} \end{array} \mathcal{S}p$$

restricts to an equivalence on homotopy-invariant sheaves.

Example Recall that

$$\text{Dold-Kan}(\mathcal{Q}^\bullet) \simeq \text{const } H\mathbb{R}$$

which is homotopy invariant

\Rightarrow need to do more than \mathcal{Q}^\bullet to get differential

cohomology theories that contain geometric information.

Example for $k > 0$, let $\Omega^{\geq k}$ be the
"truncation bête"

$$\dots \rightarrow 0 \rightarrow \Omega^k(M) \xrightarrow{d} \Omega^{k+1}(M) \rightarrow \dots$$

It is a sheaf. This is not a Postnikov type truncation, but a "stupid truncation".

The differential cohomology of $M \in \text{Mfd}$
with coefficients in $\text{DK}(\Omega^{\geq k})$ is

$$\hat{H}^n(M, \text{DK}(\Omega^{\geq k})) = \pi_{-n}(\text{DK}(\Omega^{\geq k}(M)))$$

$$= H^n(\Omega^{\geq k}(M)) = \begin{cases} 0 & n < k \\ \Omega_{cl}^k(M) & n = k \\ H^n(M, \mathbb{R}) & n > k \end{cases}$$

- $\text{DK}(\Omega^{\geq k})$ is not homotopy invariant.
- \Rightarrow • $\text{DK}(\Omega^{\geq k})$ contains geometric data similar to Deligne cohomology.

Ex

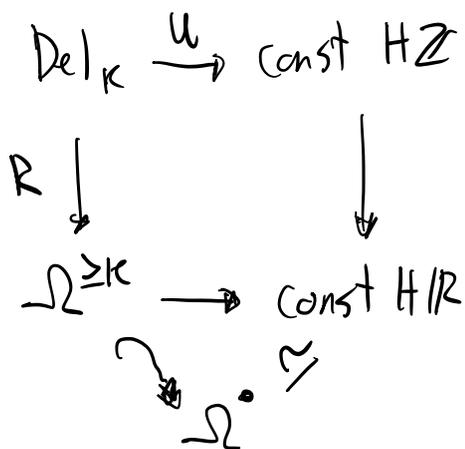
Similarly, the truncation $\Omega^{\leq k}$ has

$$H^n(\Omega^{\leq k}(M)) = \begin{cases} H^n(M, \mathbb{R}) & n < k \\ \frac{\Omega^k(M)}{\text{Im } d} & n = k \\ 0 & n > k \end{cases}$$

"differential deformations"

Def

Deligne cohomology in dimension k is the pull back



Def/Th There is a further left adjoint

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \mathcal{H} & \\ & \curvearrowright & \\ \text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, Sp) & \xleftarrow{\text{const}} & Sp \\ & \curvearrowleft & \\ & \text{ev}_{pt} & \end{array}$$

called homotopification (or \mathbb{R} -localization or concordification). If $F \in \text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, Sp)$ is a differential cohomology theory, then

- $\mathcal{H}(F)$ is called the underlying cohomology theory

We also say F is a differential refinement of $\mathcal{H}(F)$

- $F(pt)$ is the corresponding secondary or flat cohomology theory

Prop Concretely,

$$\mathcal{H}(F) = \text{ho} \text{colim}_{\Delta_{\text{op}}} \overbrace{F(\Delta^\bullet)}^{\text{Simplicial spectrum}}$$

↖ cosimplicial manifold

$$\text{where } \Delta^n = \{ (t_0, \dots, t_n) \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1} : t_0 + \dots + t_n = 1 \}$$

Example Consider $N \in \text{Mfd}$ as a diffeological space
 $F = C^\infty(-, N) : \text{Mfd}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \text{Set} \subseteq \text{Spaces} \xrightarrow{\Sigma^\infty} \text{Sp}$.

The corresponding flat theory is

$$F(\text{pt}) = \Sigma^\infty N_+ \quad \mathcal{B}G^\delta$$

The underlying cohomology theory is

$$\mathcal{H}F = \Sigma^\infty N_+ \quad \mathcal{B}G$$

Example For G cpt lie group

$$F(M) = \{ G\text{-principal bundles over } M \}$$

$$\uparrow$$

$$\text{Groupoids} \subseteq \text{Spaces}_* \xrightarrow{\Sigma^\infty} \text{Sp}$$

Then

$$\text{Flat theory: } F(\text{pt}) = \Sigma^\infty \mathcal{B}G^\delta$$

$$\text{Underlying theory: } \mathcal{H}F = \Sigma^\infty \mathcal{B}G$$

Similar for $F = \mathcal{B}^\nabla G$

Lemma If $A^\bullet: \Delta^{op} \rightarrow Ch$ is a simplicial chain complex,

then $\text{holim}_{\Delta^{op}} DK(A^\bullet) = DK(\text{Tot } A)$

where the totalization has

$$\text{Tot } A[n] = \prod_{p+q=n} A^p[q]$$

Cor Let $A \in Sh(Mfd, Ab)$ be a sheaf of C^∞ -modules.

Then $\mathcal{H}(DK(A[0])) \simeq 0$

Cor Let $A \in Sh(Mfd, Ch)$ sheaf of chain complexes
s.t. $A[k]$ is a C^∞ -module for every k . Then

1. $\mathcal{H}(DK(A^{\geq k})) \simeq \mathcal{H}(DK(A))$

2. $\mathcal{H}(DK(A^{\leq k})) \simeq 0$

Th Deligne cohomology has

$$\mathcal{H}(\text{Del}_k) = H\mathbb{Z}$$

So Deligne cohomology is a differential refinement
of integral cohomology

Note $Del_k(pt) = \sum^{-1} H(\mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z})$ if $k > 0$

since

$$\begin{array}{ccc} Del_k(pt) & \xrightarrow{u} & H\mathbb{Z} \\ R \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \Omega^{\geq k}(pt) & \longrightarrow & H\mathbb{R} \\ \parallel & & \\ 0 & & \end{array}$$

Bonus Invertible Smooth Field Theories

Let N be a smooth set such as a manifold or $B^\nabla G$.

Given a class $\alpha \in \hat{H}^{n+1}(N)$ one can

define a n -dimensional "sigma model with target N " by the "action functional"

$$S(\phi: M^n \rightarrow N) = \int_M \phi^* \alpha \in \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$$

oriented

$$\text{where } \phi^* \alpha \in \hat{H}^{n+1}(M) \cong H^n(M, \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z})$$

\cong
 M n -dim

Th (Freed-Hopkins)

$$\Omega^{2n}(B^\nabla G) = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} G\text{-invariant polynomials} \\ \text{on } \mathfrak{g} \text{ of degree } n \end{array} \right\} \stackrel{\text{Chern-Weyl}}{\cong} H^{2n}(BG, \mathbb{R})$$

and $\Omega^0(B^\nabla G)$ has trivial differential

$\Rightarrow \hat{H}^{2n}(B^\nabla G)$ consists of G -invariant polynomials together with a chosen integer lift of its Chern Weyl representative

\Rightarrow defines the Chern-Simons action in $(2n-1)$ -dimensions.

Outlook : Fracture Square & Recollement

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & & \text{Const } F(\text{pt}) = \text{const } F(\text{pt}) & & \\
 & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
 \mathcal{A}(F) & \xrightarrow{a} & F & \xrightarrow{u} & \text{const } \mathcal{H} F \sim H\mathbb{Z} \\
 \parallel & & \downarrow R & \lrcorner & \downarrow \\
 \mathcal{A}(F) & \xrightarrow{d} & Z(F) & \rightarrow & \text{Const}(\mathcal{H} Z(F)(\text{pt})) \\
 \Omega^{k-1} / \text{Im } d & & \Omega_{cl}^k & & H\mathbb{R}
 \end{array}$$

Def F is purely geometric if $F(\text{pt}) \simeq *$

Idea Purely geometric sheaves are an 'orthogonal complement' of homotopy-invariant sheaves:

F is purely geometric $\Leftrightarrow \forall$ homotopy-invariant F'

$$\text{Map}_{\text{Sh}(\text{Man}, \text{Sp})}(F', F) \simeq *$$

Def The underlying cohomology class natural transformation

$$u: \text{id}_{\text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, S_p)} \rightarrow \text{const} = \mathcal{H}$$

is the unit of the adjunction

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \mathcal{H} & \\ & \curvearrowright & \\ \text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, S_p) & \xrightarrow{\alpha} & S_p \\ & \curvearrowleft & \\ & \text{const} & \end{array}$$

Def The differential deformations $A(F) \in \text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, S_p)$ of a differential cohomology theory F are defined by applying the functor $A: \text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, S_p) \rightarrow \text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, S_p)$ which is the fiber

$$A \rightarrow \text{id}_{\text{Sh}(\text{Mfd}, S_p)} \xrightarrow{u} \text{const } \mathcal{H}$$

More Extra Stuff

Note: Ω_{cl}^k is not a C^∞ -module

in fact $Dk(\Omega_{cl}^k [k]): Mfd \rightarrow Sp$
is not a sheaf.

Its sheafification is $Dk(\Omega^{\geq k})$,
because locally the inclusion

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \dots & \rightarrow & 0 & \rightarrow & \Omega_{cl}^k(U) & \rightarrow & 0 \rightarrow \dots \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \dots & \rightarrow & 0 & \rightarrow & \Omega^k(U) & \rightarrow & \Omega^{k+1}(U) \rightarrow \dots \end{array}$$

is a quasi-iso

Remark There is also a further right adjoint

$$Sh(Mfd, Sp) \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{H}} \\ \xleftarrow{\text{const}} Sp \\ \xrightarrow{\text{evpt}} \\ \xleftarrow{\text{disc}} \end{array} \quad (disc X)(M) = \text{Map}_{Sp}(\Sigma^\infty Mfd, X)$$

called the Godement functor. This is important
for 'cohesion'.