Intro to Whitney towers II:
Twisted Whitney towers in the 4-ball

Rob Schneiderman – (with Jim Conant & Peter Teichner)

Lehman College CUNY – (AoPS Academy & MPIM)

Winterbraids X Feb 2020

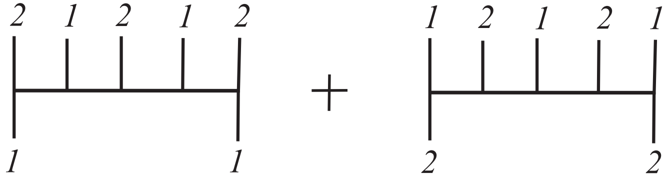
Outline of this talk

- Twisted Whitney towers and their trees
- Boundary twists and interior twists on Whitney disks
- Intersection invariants for order n twisted Whitney towers
- Classification of order n twisted Whitney towers in B^4
- The Higher-order Arf invariant Conjecture

Preview

Key case of the <u>Higher-order Arf invariant Conjecture</u>
in the setting of 'finite type' invariants:

The following sum of trees represents a non-trivial finite type concordance invariant of 2-component links
(first-non-vanishing, $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$-coefficients):

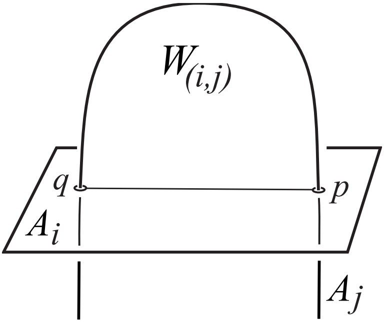


This invariant is finite type *degree* $6 =$ *order* 5.

J-B. Meilhan and A. Yasuhara have characterized all finite type concordance invariants of string links in degrees ≤ 5.

Surface sheets A_i and A_j in $B^4 = B^3 \times I$.

Whitney disk $W_{(i,j)}$ pairing $\{q, p\} = A_i \pitchfork A_j$:



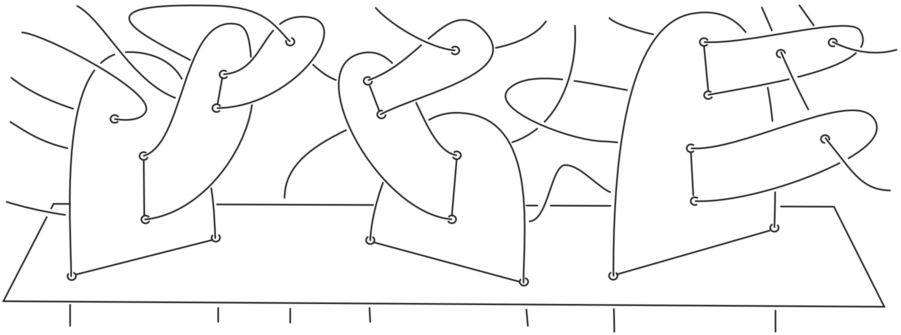
$A_i \cup W_{(i,j)} \subset B^3 \times$'present', while A_j extends into 'past and future'.

In general, a Whitney disk may have transverse interior self-intersections, and intersections with other surfaces.

Definition:

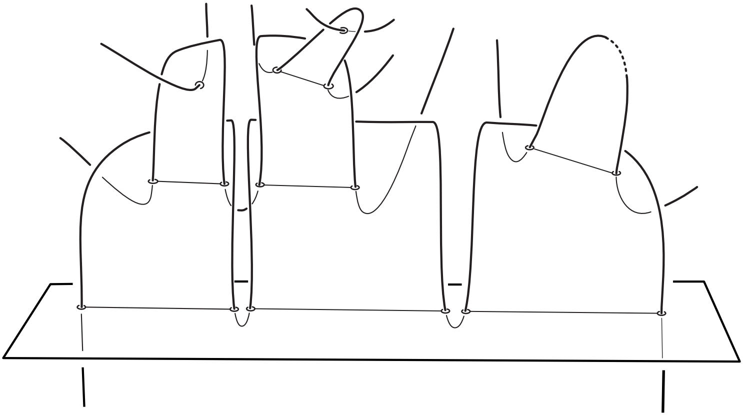
A *Whitney tower* on $A^2 \looparrowright X^4$ is defined by:

1. A itself is a Whitney tower.
2. If $\mathcal{W}$ is a Whitney tower and W is a Whitney disk pairing intersections in $\mathcal{W}$, then the union $\mathcal{W} \cup W$ is a Whitney tower.



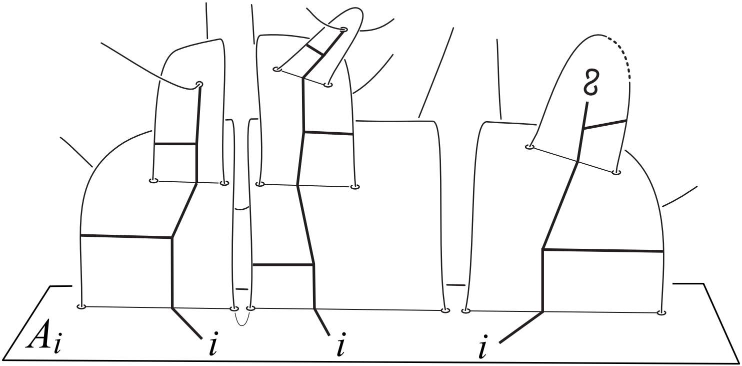
Goal: Study $\mathcal{W}$ to get info about A...

So a Whitney tower $\mathcal{W} \subset X^4$ on a properly immersed surface $A^2 \looparrowright X^4$ is the union of $A = \cup_i A_i$ and 'layers' of Whitney disks.



The *intersection forest* multiset $t(\mathcal{W})$ of a Whitney tower $\mathcal{W}$

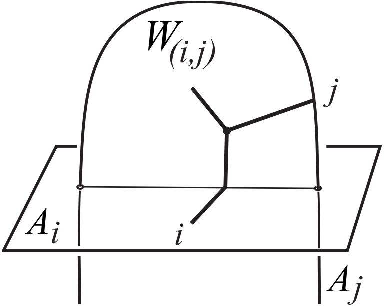
$$\mathcal{W} \mapsto t(\mathcal{W}) = \sum \epsilon_p \cdot t_p + \sum \omega(W_J) \cdot J^\infty$$



'framed tree' $t_p \leftarrow\!\!\dashv p$ unpaired intersection with sign $\epsilon_p = \pm 1$,
'twisted tree' $J^\infty := J$ —∞ $\leftarrow\!\!\dashv W_J$ with twisting $\omega(W_J) \neq 0 \in \mathbb{Z}$.

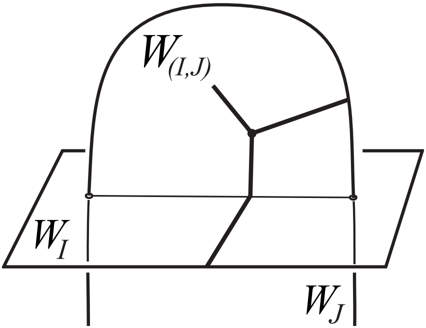
Paired intersections $\longrightarrow$ rooted trees

$W_{(i,j)}$ pairing $A_i \pitchfork A_j \quad \longmapsto \quad$ rooted tree $\prec^{j}_{i} = (i, j)$



Paired intersections $\to$ rooted trees

Recursively: $W_{(I,J)}$ pairing $W_I \pitchfork W_J \quad \longmapsto \quad -\!\!<^{J}_{I} = (I, J)$

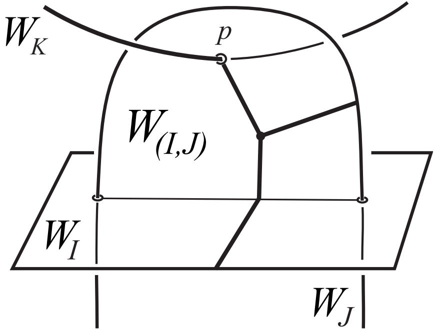


Rooted trees I, J = non-associative bracketings from $\{1, 2, 3, \ldots, m\}$
Notation convention: Singleton subscript W_i denotes component A_i.

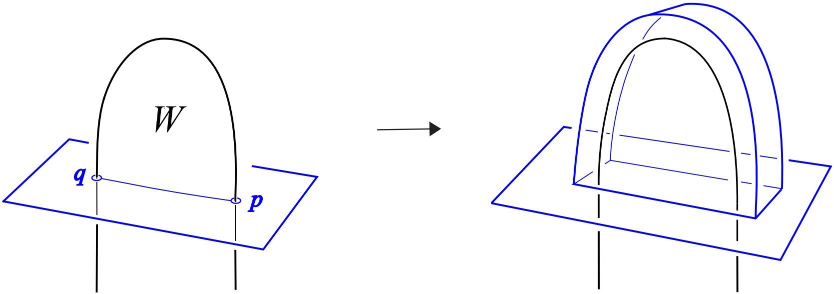
Un-paired intersections → un-rooted trees

Inner product 'fuses' rooted edges into single edge:

$$p \in W_{(I,J)} \pitchfork W_k \quad \longmapsto \quad t_p = \langle (I,J), K \rangle = {}^{I}_{J}{>}\!\!- K$$

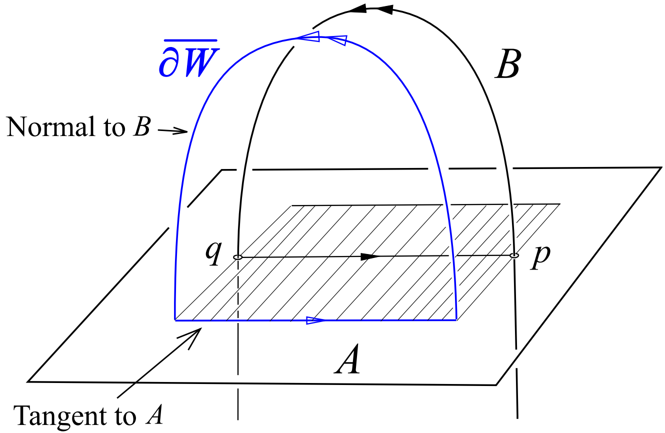


Recall: Whitney move uses two parallel copies of W:



∞-trees for twisted Whitney disks

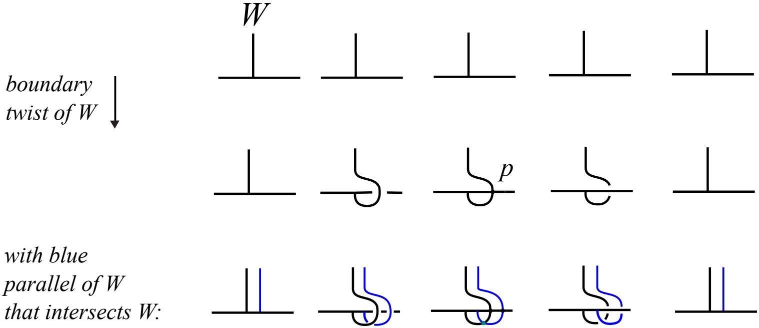
The *twisting* $\omega(W) \in \mathbb{Z}$ of W is the relative Euler number of a normal section $\overline{\partial W}$ over ∂W determined by the sheets:



$$W_J \quad \mapsto \quad J^{\infty} := J \text{—} \infty \quad \text{if } \omega(W_J) \neq 0.$$

***Boundary twist* on W changes $\omega(W)$ by ± 1, creates intersection p between W and a sheet paired by W**

'Side view' near a point in ∂W:

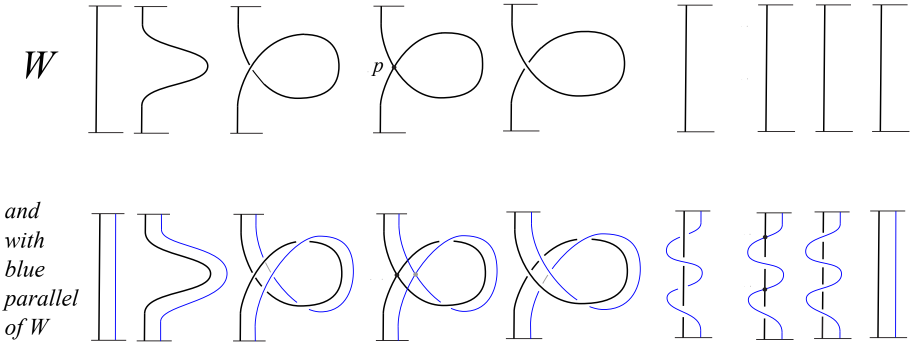


Can create any clean $W_{(I,J)}$ by finger moves,
then boundary twist into J-sheet changes $t(\mathcal{W})$ by:

$$I \!-\!\!\!<^{J}_{J} \quad \pm \quad I \!-\!\!\!<^{J}_{\infty}$$

$\pm$-*interior twist* on W changes $\omega(W)$ by ∓ 2 and creates $p \in W \pitchfork W$

After the interior twist,
near an arc in W that runs between the two sheets:



Can create any clean W_J by finger moves,
then $\pm$-interior twist changes $t(\mathcal{W})$ by:

$$\pm\langle J, J\rangle \quad \mp \quad 2 \cdot J^{\infty}$$

- Ultimate goal: For $A \subset \mathcal{W} \subset X^4$, want to define invariants from $t(\mathcal{W})$ that only depend on the homotopy class of A, and give obstructions to A being homotopic to an embedding.

- This talk describes the attainment of this goal for Whitney towers $\mathcal{W} \subset B^4$ on collections A of immersed disks bounded by a link $L \subset S^3 = \partial B^4$.

Obstruction theory for links bounding twisted Whitney towers

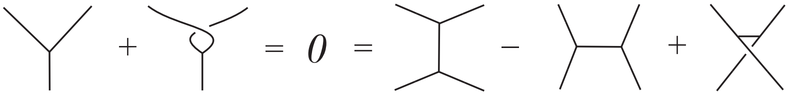
- $\mathcal{W}$ is an *order n twisted Whitney tower* if $t(\mathcal{W})$ contains only framed trees of order $\geq n$ and twisted trees of order $\geq n/2$, where *order* := number of trivalent vertices.

- Will define abelian groups $\mathcal{T}_n^\infty$ and intersection invariants $\tau_n^\infty(\mathcal{W}) := [t(\mathcal{W})] \in \mathcal{T}_n^\infty$ such that:
  L bounds an order n twisted $\mathcal{W}$ with $\tau_n^\infty(L) := \tau_n^\infty(\mathcal{W}) = 0$
  if and only if L bounds an order $n+1$ twisted Whitney tower.

- $\tau_n^\infty(L) \longleftrightarrow$ Milnor invariants and higher-order Arf invariants

Towards intersection invariants $\tau_n^\infty(\mathcal{W}) \in \mathcal{T}_n^\infty$ for order n twisted Whitney towers $\mathcal{W} \subset B^4$ bounded by $L \subset S^3$

$\mathcal{T}_n :=$ free abelian group on order n framed trees modulo local *antisymmetry* (AS) and *Jacobi* (IHX) relations:



AS relations $\Rightarrow$ signs of the framed trees in $t(\mathcal{W})$ only depend on the orientation of $L = \cup_i \partial D^2 \subset \cup_i D^2 \overset{A_i}{\looparrowright} B^4$ after mapping to $\mathcal{T}_n$.

Talk I $\Rightarrow$ any $t(\mathcal{W})$ can be changed by creating IHX trees.

The odd order target groups $\mathcal{T}^{\infty}_{2j-1}$

Obstructions to raising twisted order from $2j-1$ to $2j$:

Definition:
$\mathcal{T}^{\infty}_{2j-1}$ is the quotient of $\mathcal{T}_{2j-1}$ by *boundary-twist relations:*

$$i -\!\!\!< ^{J}_{J} = 0$$

where J ranges over all order $j-1$ subtrees.

Since via boundary-twisting:

$$i -\!\!\!< ^{J}_{J} \;\mapsto\; i -\!\!\!< ^{J}_{\infty} + \text{trees of order } \geq 2j$$

and the trees on the right are allowed in order $2j$ twisted $\mathcal{W}$.

The even order target groups $\mathcal{T}_{2j}^{\infty}$

Obstructions to raising twisted order from $2j$ to $2j+1$:

Definition:
$\mathcal{T}_{2j}^{\infty}$ is the quotient of the free abelian group on
framed trees of order $2j$ and ∞-trees of order j
by the following relations:

1. AS and IHX relations on order $2j$ framed trees
2. *symmetry* relations: $(-J)^{\infty} = J^{\infty}$
3. *twisted IHX* relations: $I^{\infty} = H^{\infty} + X^{\infty} - \langle H, X \rangle$
4. *interior-twist* relations: $2 \cdot J^{\infty} = \langle J, J \rangle$

Remark: $\infty \!-\!\!<^{J}_{J}$ generate the torsion subgroup of $\mathcal{T}^{\infty} := \oplus \mathcal{T}_n^{\infty}$.

Intersection/obstruction theory for order n twisted Whitney towers

Definition:
For an order n twisted Whitney tower $\mathcal{W}$ define

$$\tau_n^{\infty}(\mathcal{W}) := [t(\mathcal{W})] \in \mathcal{T}_n^{\infty}$$

Theorem:
If $L \subset S^3$ bounds an order n twisted $\mathcal{W} \subset B^4$ with $\tau_n^{\infty}(\mathcal{W}) = 0 \in \mathcal{T}_n^{\infty}$, then L bounds an order $n+1$ twisted Whitney tower.

Idea of proof: Realize relations by geometric constructions to turn 'algebraic cancellation' in $\mathcal{T}_n^{\infty}$ into 'geometric cancellation' by new layer of Whitney disks.

Quick review of Milnor invariants

For $L = L_1 \cup L_2 \cup \cdots \cup L_m \subset S^3$ and $G = \pi_1(S^3 \setminus L)$:

$$[L_i] \in G_{n+1} \text{ \textit{(n+1)th lower central subroup} } \Longrightarrow \frac{G_{n+1}}{G_{n+2}} \cong \mathcal{L}_{n+1}$$

$\mathcal{L} = \oplus_n \mathcal{L}_n$ the free $\mathbb{Z}$-Lie algebra on $\{X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_m\}$.

Define the *order n Milnor invariant* $\mu_n(L)$:

$$\mu_n(L) := \sum_{i=1}^{m} X_i \otimes \ell_i \in \mathcal{L}_1 \otimes \mathcal{L}_{n+1}$$

where ℓ_i is the image in $\mathcal{L}_{n+1}$ of the i-th longitude $[L_i] \in \frac{G_{n+1}}{G_{n+2}}$.

Turns out: $\mu_n(L) \in \mathcal{D}_n := \ker\{\mathcal{L}_1 \otimes \mathcal{L}_{n+1} \xrightarrow{\text{bracket}} \mathcal{L}_{n+2}\}$.

Summation maps η_n 'connect' $\tau_n^\infty(\mathcal{W})$ and $\mu_n(L)$

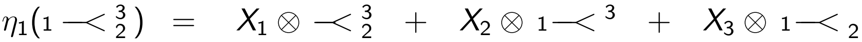
Definition:

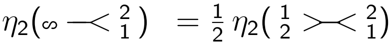
The map $\eta_n : \mathcal{T}_n^\infty \to \mathcal{L}_1 \otimes \mathcal{L}_{n+1}$ is defined on generators by

$$\eta_n(t) := \sum_{v \in t} X_{\text{label}(v)} \otimes \text{Bracket}_v(t) \qquad \eta_n(J^\infty) := \frac{1}{2}\,\eta_n(\langle J, J\rangle)$$

Here J is a rooted tree of order j for $n = 2j$.

Examples of η_n for $n = 1, 2$





The summation maps η_n 'connect' $\tau_n^\infty(\mathcal{W})$ and $\mu_n(L)$

The image of η_n is equal to the bracket kernel $\mathcal{D}_n < \mathcal{L}_1 \otimes \mathcal{L}_{n+1}$.

Theorem:
If L bounds a twisted Whitney tower $\mathcal{W}$ of order n, then the order q Milnor invariants $\mu_q(L)$ vanish for $q < n$, and

$$\mu_n(L) = \eta_n \circ \tau_n^\infty(\mathcal{W}) \in \mathcal{D}_n$$

Proof idea: *Gropes* in $B^4 \setminus \mathcal{W}$ display longitudes of L as iterated commutators exactly according to $\eta_n \circ \tau_n^\infty(\mathcal{W})$...

The order n twisted Whitney tower filtration on links

$$\mathsf{W}_n^\infty := \frac{\{\text{links in } S^3 \text{ bounding order } n \text{ twisted Whitney towers in } B^4\}}{\text{order } n{+}1 \text{ twisted Whitney tower concordance}}$$

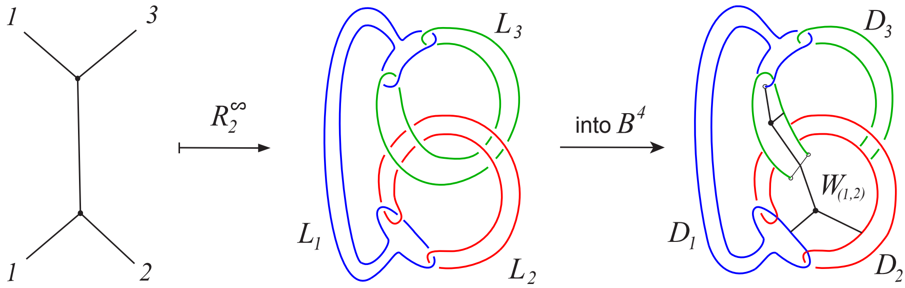
Obstruction theory $\Longrightarrow$ W_n^∞ is a finitely generated abelian group

Via Cochran's Bing-doubling techniques get epimorphisms

$$R_n^\infty : \mathcal{T}_n^\infty \twoheadrightarrow \mathsf{W}_n^\infty$$

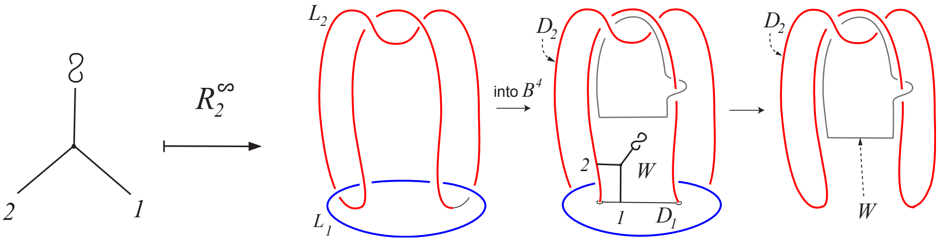
which send $g \in \mathcal{T}_n^\infty$ to the equivalence class of links bounding an order n twisted Whitney tower $\mathcal{W}$ with $\tau_n^\infty(\mathcal{W}) = g$.

Example of $R_n^{\infty} : \mathcal{T}_n^{\infty} \twoheadrightarrow \mathrm{W}_n^{\infty}$ for $n = 2$



L bounds $\mathcal{W}$ with $\tau_2^{\infty}(\mathcal{W}) = {}^{1}_{2} \!>\!\!-\!\!-\!\!<\! {}^{1}_{3}$

Example of $R_n^\infty : \mathcal{T}_n^\infty \twoheadrightarrow \mathsf{W}_n^\infty$ for $n = 2$



L bounds $\mathcal{W}$ with $\tau_2^\infty(\mathcal{W}) = {}^{2}_{1}\!\!>\!\!\!-\!\!\!-\, \infty$

Computation of W_n^∞ for $n \equiv 0, 1, 3 \mod 4$

Have commutative triangle diagram of epimorphisms:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{T}_n^\infty & \xrightarrow{R_n^\infty} & \mathrm{W}_n^\infty \\ & {\scriptstyle \eta_n} \searrow & \downarrow {\scriptstyle \mu_n} \\ & & \mathcal{D}_n \end{array}$$

Theorem:

The maps $\eta_n : \mathcal{T}_n^\infty \to \mathcal{D}_n$ are isomorphisms for $n \equiv 0, 1, 3 \mod 4$.

Corollary:

For $n \equiv 0, 1, 3 \mod 4$:

- $\mu_n : \mathrm{W}_n^\infty \to \mathcal{D}_n$ *and* $R_n^\infty : \mathcal{T}_n^\infty \to \mathrm{W}_n^\infty$ *are isomorphisms.*
- $\tau_n^\infty(\mathcal{W}) \in \mathcal{T}_n^\infty$ *only depends on* $L = \partial\mathcal{W}$.

Towards computation of W_n^∞ for remaining cases $n \equiv 2 \mod 4$

$\mathcal{D}_n$ is a free abelian group of known rank for all n, so have a complete computation of $\mathsf{W}_n^\infty \cong \mathcal{D}_n \cong \mathcal{T}_n^\infty$ in three quarters of the cases.

Towards understanding the remaining cases $n \equiv 2 \mod 4$:

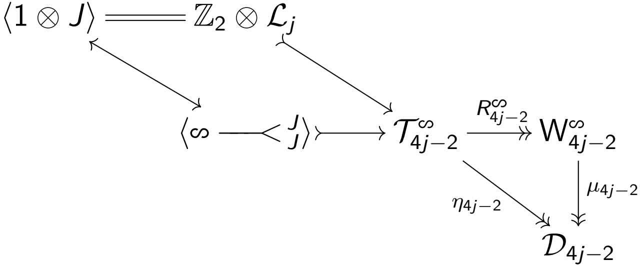
Proposition:

The map $1 \otimes J \mapsto \infty \!-\!\!\!-\!\!\!< ^{J}_{J} \in \mathcal{T}_{4j-2}^\infty$ *induces an isomorphism:*

$$\mathbb{Z}_2 \otimes \mathcal{L}_j \cong \mathrm{Ker}(\eta_{4j-2} : \mathcal{T}_{4j-2}^\infty \to \mathcal{D}_{4j-2})$$

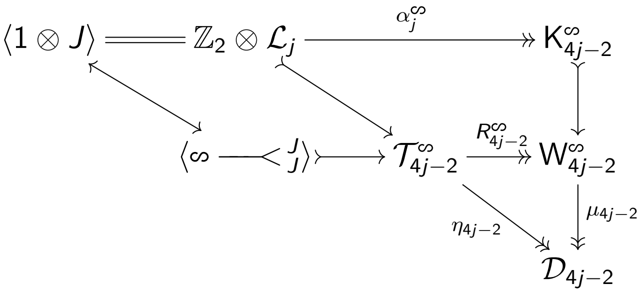
Towards computation of W_n^∞ for remaining cases $n \equiv 2 \mod 4$

Extending the algebraic side of the triangle:



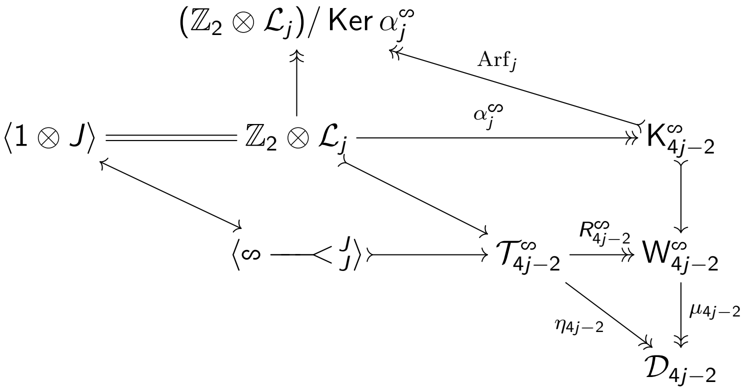
Towards defining higher-order Arf invariants

$$R^{\infty}_{4j-2} \text{ induces } \alpha^{\infty}_{j} : \mathbb{Z}_2 \otimes \mathcal{L}_j \twoheadrightarrow \mathsf{K}^{\infty}_{4j-2} := \ker\{\mu_{4j-2} : \mathsf{W}^{\infty}_{4j-2} \twoheadrightarrow \mathcal{D}_{4j-2}\}$$



Higher-order Arf invariant diagram

Also extending the topological side of the triangle:



$$\mathrm{Arf}_j := \mathsf{K}^{\infty}_{4j-2} \to (\mathbb{Z}_2 \otimes \mathsf{L}_j)/\operatorname{Ker}\alpha_j^{\infty}$$

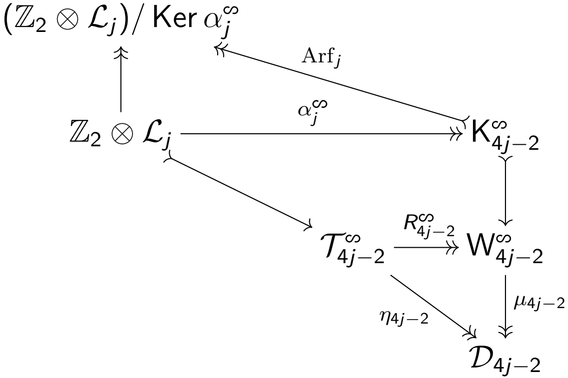
Higher-order Arf invariants and computation of W_n^∞ for all n

Corollary:

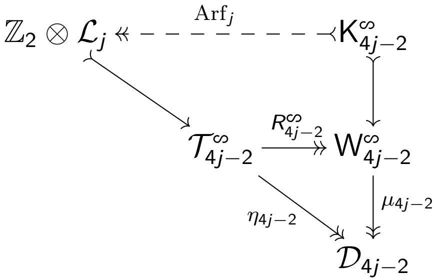
The groups W_n^∞ are classified by Milnor invariants μ_n and, in addition, higher-order Arf invariants Arf_j for $n = 4j - 2$.

In particular, a link bounds an order $n + 1$ twisted $\mathcal{W}$ if and only if its Milnor invariants and higher-order Arf invariants vanish up to order n.

Higher-order Arf invariant diagram



Conjectured higher-order Arf invariant diagram



Conjecture: (Higher-order Arf invariant conjecture)

$\mathrm{Arf}_j : \mathsf{K}^{\infty}_{4j-2} \to \mathbb{Z}_2 \otimes \mathsf{L}_j$ *are isomorphisms for all* j.

This conjecture would imply $\mathsf{W}^{\infty}_n \xrightarrow{\tau^{\infty}_n} \mathcal{T}^{\infty}_n$ is an isomorphism for all n.

Determining the image of $2 \leq \mathrm{Arf}_j \leq \mathbb{Z}_2 \otimes \mathcal{L}_j$?

- Arf_1 corresponds to classical Arf invariants of the link components. Are the Arf_j for $j > 1$ also determined by finite type isotopy invariants?

- The links $R^{\infty}_{4j-2}(\infty \!-\!\!< {}^{J}_{J})$ realizing the image of Arf_j are known not to be *slice* by work of J.C. Cha.

- <u>Fundamental first open test case:</u> Does the Bing double of the Figure-8 knot $R^{\infty}_{6}(\infty \!-\!\!< {}^{(1,2)}_{(1,2)}) \in \mathsf{W}^{\infty}_{6}$ bound an order 7 twisted Whitney tower?

- *If* the Bing double of the Figure-8 knot *does* bound an order 7 twisted Whitney tower, then Arf_j are trivial for all $j \geq 2$.

Re-formulations of the higher-order Arf invariant Conjecture

- There does not exist $A : S^2 \cup S^2 \looparrowright B^4$ supporting $\mathcal{W}$ with

$$t(\mathcal{W}) = \infty \!-\!\!<^{(1,2)}_{(1,2)}$$

(possibly + higher-order trees).

- The Bing double of any knot with non-trivial classical Arf invariant does not bound an order 6 *framed* Whitney tower.

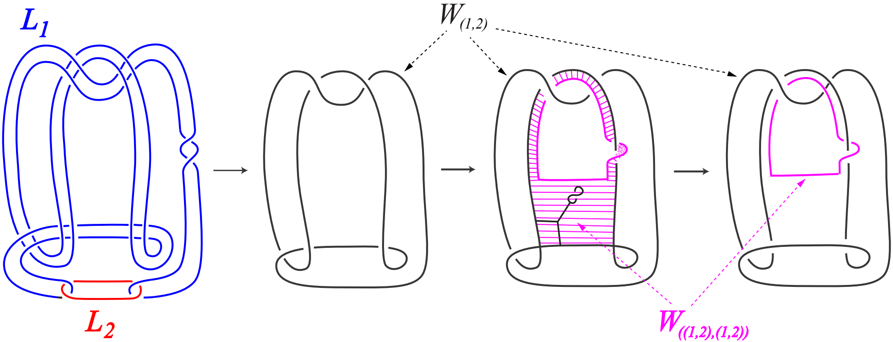
- There does not exist $A : S^2 \cup S^2 \looparrowright B^4$ supporting $\mathcal{W}$ with

$$t(\mathcal{W}) = \langle(((((((1,2),1),2),1),2),1)\rangle + \langle(((((((1,2),2),1),2),1),2)\rangle$$

(possibly + higher-order trees).

Bing(Fig8) bounds $\mathcal{W}$ with $t(\mathcal{W}) = ((1,2),(1,2))^\infty$

$$\mathcal{W} = D_1 \cup D_2 \cup W_{(1,2)} \cup W_{(1,2),(1,2))}$$



More questions/problems

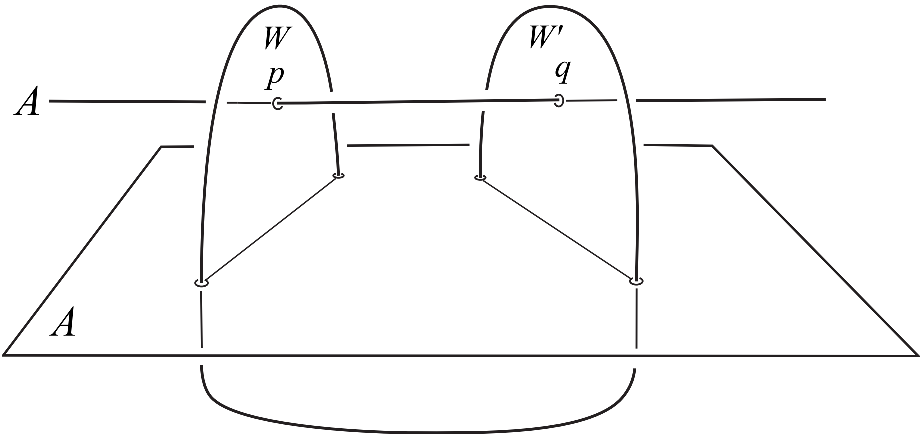
- Equivariant Milnor and Arf invariant correspondence with π_1-decorated tree-valued intersection invariants for order n Whitney towers bounded by links in non-simply-connected 3-manifolds?

- Use $t(\mathcal{W})$ to efficiently formulate indeterminacies in Milnor invariants?

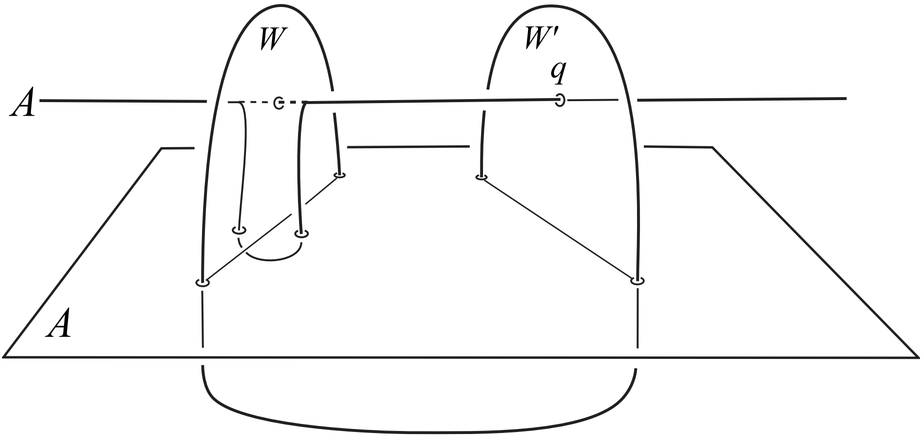
- Higher-order Arf invariants for 2-spheres supporting Whitney towers in 4-manifolds?

From proof of ‘order raising’ obstruction theory

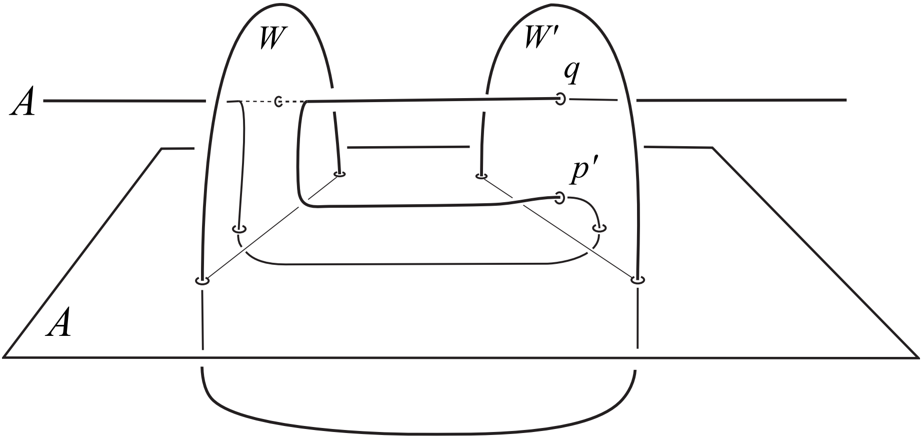
Key step in ‘algebraic cancellation’ ⇒ ‘geometric cancelation’:
Will ‘transfer’ p from W to $p' \in W'$ to pair with q.



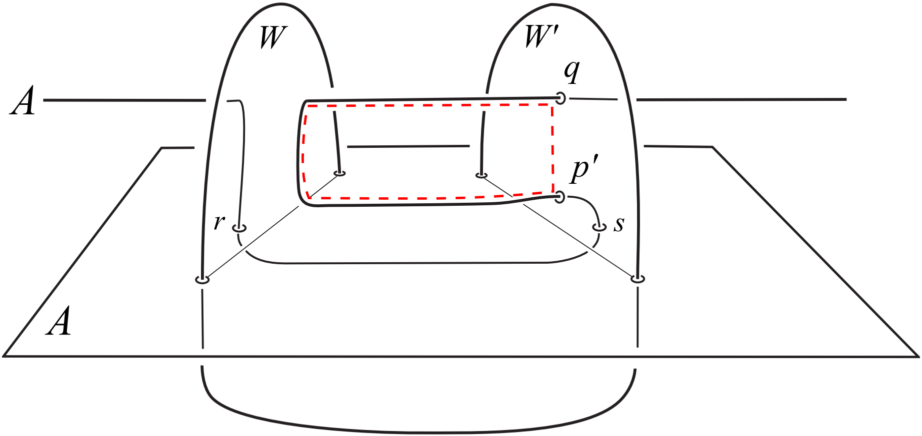
Finger move pushing down along W into A:



Finger move pushing along A:

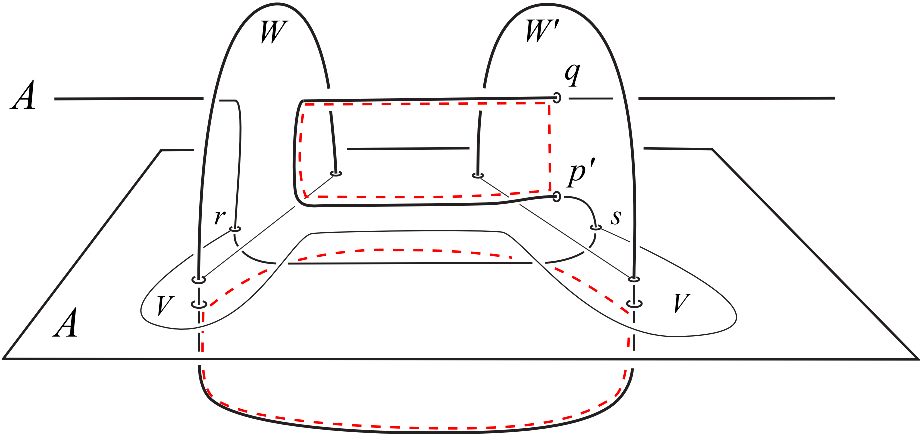


Have $p', q \in W' \pitchfork A$ paired by (uncontrolled) order 2 Whitney disk.



Need to pair $r, s \in A \pitchfork A$.

Can pair $r, s \in A \pitchfork A$ by local order 1 Whitney disk V ('under' horizontal sheet).



Can pair $V \pitchfork A$ by (uncontrolled) order 2 Whitney disk.