

We shall derive the conformal Killing condition

$$g_{\mu\sigma}\partial_\rho\xi^\mu + g_{\rho\nu}\partial_\sigma\xi^\nu + \xi^\lambda\partial_\lambda g_{\rho\sigma} + \kappa g_{\rho\sigma} = 0$$

from the following relations

$$g'_{\rho\sigma}(x') = g_{\mu\nu}(x) \frac{\partial x^\mu}{\partial x'^\rho} \frac{\partial x^\nu}{\partial x'^\sigma} \quad (1)$$

$$g'_{\rho\sigma}(x') = \Omega^2(x') g_{\rho\sigma}(x') = [1 + \epsilon\kappa(x)] g_{\rho\sigma}(x') \quad (2)$$

$$x'^\mu = x^\mu + \epsilon\xi^\mu(x) \quad (3)$$

First for (2), by expanding  $g_{\rho\sigma}(x')$  around  $x$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} g'_{\rho\sigma}(x') &= [1 + \epsilon\kappa(x)] g_{\rho\sigma}(x') = [1 + \epsilon\kappa(x)] \left[ g_{\rho\sigma}(x) + \frac{\partial g_{\rho\sigma}}{\partial x^\lambda} \cdot (x'^\lambda - x^\lambda) \right] \\ &= [1 + \epsilon\kappa] [g_{\rho\sigma} + \epsilon\xi^\lambda \partial_\lambda g_{\rho\sigma}] \\ &\approx g_{\rho\sigma} + \epsilon\kappa g_{\rho\sigma} + \epsilon\xi^\lambda \partial_\lambda g_{\rho\sigma} \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

To see what (1) gives, we need to evaluate  $\partial x^\mu / \partial x'^\rho$ .

From (3), we have

$$\frac{\partial x^\mu}{\partial x'^\rho} = \frac{\partial x'^\mu}{\partial x'^\rho} - \epsilon \frac{\partial \xi^\mu(x)}{\partial x'^\rho} = \delta_\rho^\mu - \epsilon \frac{\partial \xi^\mu}{\partial x^\sigma} \frac{\partial x^\sigma}{\partial x'^\rho}$$

Now if we view  $\partial x^\mu / \partial x'^\rho$  as element  $X^\mu_\rho$  of unknown matrix  $X$ , and view  $\partial \xi^\mu / \partial x^\sigma$  as element  $\Xi^\mu_\sigma$  of a known matrix  $\Xi$ , the above is expressing a linear relation

$$\begin{aligned} X^\mu_\rho &= I^\mu_\rho - \epsilon \Xi^\mu_\sigma X^\sigma_\rho \quad \text{or equivalently} \\ X &= I - \epsilon \Xi X \end{aligned}$$

which can be solved as

$$\begin{aligned} X &= (I + \epsilon \Xi)^{-1} \approx I - \epsilon \Xi \quad \text{or equivalently} \\ X^\mu_\rho &= I^\mu_\rho - \epsilon \Xi^\mu_\rho \quad \text{or} \\ \frac{\partial x^\mu}{\partial x'^\rho} &= \delta_\rho^\mu - \epsilon \partial_\rho \xi^\mu \end{aligned}$$

Now with this plugged into (1), we have

$$\begin{aligned} g'_{\rho\sigma}(x') &= g_{\mu\nu}(x) \frac{\partial x^\mu}{\partial x'^\rho} \frac{\partial x^\nu}{\partial x'^\sigma} \\ &= g_{\mu\nu} (\delta_\rho^\mu - \epsilon \partial_\rho \xi^\mu) (\delta_\sigma^\nu - \epsilon \partial_\sigma \xi^\nu) \\ &\approx g_{\rho\sigma} - \epsilon g_{\rho\nu} \partial_\sigma \xi^\nu - \epsilon g_{\mu\sigma} \partial_\rho \xi^\mu \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

The desired Killing condition is obtained by equalizing (4) and (5).

Next we show that the inversion

$$\xi^\mu = a_\lambda (\eta^{\mu\lambda} x^2 - 2x^\mu x^\lambda)$$

satisfies the Killing condition for conformally flat spacetime

$$\partial_\rho \xi_\sigma + \partial_\sigma \xi_\rho = \frac{2}{d} \eta_{\rho\sigma} \partial \cdot \xi \quad (6)$$

To see this, note that

$$\partial_\rho \xi^\mu = \overbrace{a_\lambda \partial_\rho (\eta^{\mu\lambda} x^2)}^A - \overbrace{\partial_\rho (2a_\lambda x^\mu x^\lambda)}^B$$

where in  $A$ ,  $\partial_\rho x^2 = 2x_\rho$  (this can be seen by observing  $x^2 = (x^0)^2 - (x^i)^2$ , so  $\partial_0 x^2 = 2x^0 = 2x_0$ ,  $\partial_i x^2 = -2x^i = 2x_i$ ), so

$$A = 2a_\lambda \eta^{\mu\lambda} x_\rho$$

Differentiating by part in  $B$ ,

$$B = 2a_\rho x^\mu + 2\delta_\rho^\mu a_\lambda x^\lambda$$

Therefore

$$\partial_\rho \xi^\mu = 2a_\lambda \eta^{\mu\lambda} x_\rho - 2(a_\rho x^\mu + \delta_\rho^\mu a_\lambda x^\lambda) \quad (7)$$

where  $\lambda$  is to be summed over.

Now the RHS of (6) becomes (making explicit sum signs to emphasize which index are to be summed over)

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{2}{d} \eta_{\rho\sigma} \partial_\mu \xi^\mu &= \frac{2}{d} \eta_{\rho\sigma} \left( \sum_{\mu,\lambda} 2a_\lambda \eta^{\mu\lambda} x_\mu - \sum_\mu 2a_\mu x^\mu - \sum_{\mu,\lambda} 2a_\lambda x^\lambda \right) \\ &= \frac{2}{d} \eta_{\rho\sigma} \left( \sum_\lambda 2a_\lambda x^\lambda - \sum_\mu 2a_\mu x^\mu - \sum_{\mu,\lambda} 2a_\lambda x^\lambda \right) \\ &= \frac{2}{d} \eta_{\rho\sigma} (-2d) a_\lambda x^\lambda \\ &= -4\eta_{\rho\sigma} a_\lambda x^\lambda \end{aligned}$$

In the mean time, on the LHS of (6),

$$\begin{aligned} \partial_\rho \xi_\sigma &= \partial_\rho (\eta_{\mu\sigma} \xi^\mu) \\ &= \eta_{\mu\sigma} [2a_\lambda \eta^{\mu\lambda} x_\rho - 2(a_\rho x^\mu + \delta_\rho^\mu a_\lambda x^\lambda)] \\ &= 2a_\lambda x_\rho \delta_\sigma^\lambda - 2\eta_{\mu\sigma} a_\rho x^\mu - 2\eta_{\rho\sigma} a_\lambda x^\lambda \\ &= 2a_\sigma x_\rho - 2a_\rho x_\sigma - 2\eta_{\rho\sigma} a_\lambda x^\lambda \end{aligned}$$

With the first two terms cancel those from  $\partial_\sigma \xi_\rho$ , it's clear the LHS of (6) is also equal to  $-4\eta_{\rho\sigma} a_\lambda x^\lambda$ .

Now we proceed to the (very tedious) proof of the following non-trivial commutator relations of the conformal algebra

$$[J^{\mu\nu}, K^\lambda] = -\eta^{\mu\lambda} K^\nu + \eta^{\nu\lambda} K^\mu \quad (8)$$

$$\begin{aligned} [K^\mu, P^\lambda] &= -2(\eta^{\mu\nu} x^\lambda - \eta^{\lambda\mu} x^\nu - x^\mu \eta^{\lambda\nu}) \partial_\nu \\ &= 2(J^{\mu\lambda} + \eta^{\lambda\mu} D) \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

$$[K^\mu, K^\nu] = 0 \quad (10)$$

where

$$K^\lambda = (\eta^{\lambda\tau} x^2 - 2x^\lambda x^\tau) \partial_\tau$$

First, we take note that since  $(\partial_\mu x^\nu)(f) = \delta_\mu^\nu \cdot f + x^\nu \partial_\mu f$ , as differential operator,

$$\partial_\mu x^\nu = \delta_\mu^\nu + x^\nu \partial_\mu \implies \quad (11)$$

$$\partial_\mu x_\nu = \eta_{\nu\rho} \partial_\mu x^\rho = \eta_{\nu\rho} (\delta_\mu^\rho + x^\rho \partial_\mu) = \eta_{\mu\nu} + x_\nu \partial_\mu \quad (12)$$

or in commutator form

$$[\partial_\mu, x^\nu] = \delta_\mu^\nu \quad (13)$$

$$[\partial_\mu, x_\nu] = \eta_{\mu\nu} \quad (14)$$

Also note the important commutators

$$\begin{aligned} [\partial_\mu, x^2] &= [\partial_\mu, x_\lambda] x^\lambda + x_\lambda [\partial_\mu, x^\lambda] \\ &= \eta_{\mu\lambda} x^\lambda + x_\lambda \delta_\mu^\lambda = 2x_\mu \end{aligned} \quad (15)$$

$$\begin{aligned} [\partial_\rho, x^\mu x^\nu] &= [\partial_\rho, x^\mu] x^\nu + x^\mu [\partial_\rho, x^\nu] \\ &= \delta_\rho^\mu x^\nu + \delta_\rho^\nu x^\mu \end{aligned} \quad (16)$$

To see (8), we first establish the following

$$\begin{aligned} [J_{\mu\nu}, x^\lambda] &= [x_\mu \partial_\nu - x_\nu \partial_\mu, x^\lambda] = x_\mu [\partial_\nu, x^\lambda] - x_\nu [\partial_\mu, x^\lambda] \\ &= \delta_\nu^\lambda x_\mu - \delta_\mu^\lambda x_\nu \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

$$\begin{aligned} [J_{\mu\nu}, \partial_\tau] &= [x_\mu \partial_\nu - x_\nu \partial_\mu, \partial_\tau] = [x_\mu, \partial_\tau] \partial_\nu - [x_\nu, \partial_\tau] \partial_\mu \\ &= -\eta_{\mu\tau} \partial_\nu + \eta_{\nu\tau} \partial_\mu \end{aligned} \quad (18)$$

Then raising  $J$ 's indices, we get

$$\begin{aligned} [J^{\mu\nu}, x^\lambda] &= \eta^{\mu\rho} \eta^{\nu\sigma} [J_{\rho\sigma}, x^\lambda] = \eta^{\mu\rho} \eta^{\nu\sigma} (\delta_\sigma^\lambda x_\rho - \delta_\rho^\lambda x_\sigma) \\ &= x^\mu \eta^{\nu\lambda} - x^\nu \eta^{\mu\lambda} \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

$$\begin{aligned} [J^{\mu\nu}, \partial_\tau] &= \eta^{\mu\rho} \eta^{\nu\sigma} [J_{\rho\sigma}, \partial_\tau] = \eta^{\mu\rho} \eta^{\nu\sigma} [-\eta_{\rho\tau} \partial_\sigma + \eta_{\sigma\tau} \partial_\rho] \\ &= -\delta_\tau^\mu \partial^\nu + \delta_\tau^\nu \partial^\mu \end{aligned} \quad (20)$$

Subsequently

$$\begin{aligned} [J^{\mu\nu}, x^2] &= [J^{\mu\nu}, x_\lambda x^\lambda] = [J^{\mu\nu}, x_\lambda] x^\lambda + x_\lambda [J^{\mu\nu}, x^\lambda] \\ &= \eta_{\lambda\tau} [J^{\mu\nu}, x^\tau] x^\lambda + x_\lambda [J^{\mu\nu}, x^\lambda] \\ &= \eta_{\lambda\tau} (x^\mu \eta^{\nu\tau} - x^\nu \eta^{\mu\tau}) x^\lambda + x_\lambda (x^\mu \eta^{\nu\lambda} - x^\nu \eta^{\mu\lambda}) \\ &= \delta_\lambda^\nu x^\mu x^\lambda - \delta_\lambda^\mu x^\nu x^\lambda + x^\nu x^\mu - x^\mu x^\nu \\ &= 0 \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

Finally, towards (8)

$$[J^{\mu\nu}, K^\lambda] = [J^{\mu\nu}, (\eta^{\lambda\tau} x^2 - 2x^\lambda x^\tau) \partial_\tau] = \overbrace{\eta^{\lambda\tau} [J^{\mu\nu}, x^2 \partial_\tau]}^A - 2 \overbrace{[J^{\mu\nu}, x^\lambda x^\tau \partial_\tau]}^B$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} A &= \eta^{\lambda\tau} [J^{\mu\nu}, x^2 \partial_\tau] = \eta^{\lambda\tau} ([J^{\mu\nu}, x^2] \partial_\tau + x^2 [J^{\mu\nu}, \partial_\tau]) = \eta^{\lambda\tau} x^2 (-\delta_\tau^\mu \partial^\nu + \delta_\tau^\nu \partial^\mu) \\ &= x^2 (-\eta^{\lambda\mu} \partial^\nu + \eta^{\lambda\nu} \partial^\mu) \end{aligned} \quad (22)$$

$$\begin{aligned} B &= [J^{\mu\nu}, x^\lambda x^\tau \partial_\tau] = [J^{\mu\nu}, x^\lambda] x^\tau \partial_\tau + x^\lambda [J^{\mu\nu}, x^\tau] \partial_\tau + x^\lambda x^\tau [J^{\mu\nu}, \partial_\tau] \\ &= (x^\mu \eta^{\nu\lambda} - x^\nu \eta^{\mu\lambda}) x^\tau \partial_\tau + x^\lambda (x^\mu \eta^{\nu\tau} - x^\nu \eta^{\mu\tau}) \partial_\tau + x^\lambda x^\tau (-\delta_\tau^\mu \partial^\nu + \delta_\tau^\nu \partial^\mu) \\ &= (x^\mu \eta^{\nu\lambda} - x^\nu \eta^{\mu\lambda}) x^\tau \partial_\tau + 0 \end{aligned} \quad (23)$$

Finally

$$\begin{aligned} [J^{\mu\nu}, K^\lambda] &= A - 2B = x^2 (-\eta^{\lambda\mu} \partial^\nu + \eta^{\lambda\nu} \partial^\mu) - 2(x^\mu \eta^{\nu\lambda} - x^\nu \eta^{\mu\lambda}) x^\tau \partial_\tau \\ &= -\eta^{\mu\lambda} (x^2 \eta^{\nu\tau} - 2x^\nu x^\tau) \partial_\tau + \eta^{\nu\lambda} (x^2 \eta^{\mu\tau} - 2x^\mu x^\tau) \partial_\tau \\ &= -\eta^{\mu\lambda} K^\nu + \eta^{\nu\lambda} K^\mu \end{aligned}$$

Coming to (9),

$$\begin{aligned} [K^\mu, P^\lambda] &= \eta^{\lambda\tau} [(\eta^{\mu\nu} x^2 - 2x^\mu x^\nu) \partial_\nu, \partial_\tau] \\ &= \eta^{\lambda\tau} \left( \overbrace{\eta^{\mu\nu} [x^2 \partial_\nu, \partial_\tau]}^A - 2 \overbrace{[x^\mu x^\nu \partial_\nu, \partial_\tau]}^B \right) \end{aligned} \quad (24)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} A &= \eta^{\mu\nu} [x^2, \partial_\tau] \partial_\nu + \eta^{\mu\nu} x^2 [\partial_\nu, \partial_\tau] \\ &= -2\eta^{\mu\nu} x_\tau \partial_\nu \end{aligned} \quad (25)$$

$$\begin{aligned} B &= [x^\mu x^\nu, \partial_\tau] \partial_\nu \\ &= -\delta_\tau^\mu x^\nu \partial_\nu - x^\mu \delta_\tau^\nu \partial_\nu \\ &= -\delta_\tau^\mu x^\nu \partial_\nu - x^\mu \partial_\tau \end{aligned} \quad (26)$$

Therefore

$$\begin{aligned}
[K^\mu, P^\lambda] &= \eta^{\lambda\tau}(A - 2B) \\
&= \eta^{\lambda\tau}(-2\eta^{\mu\nu}x_\tau\partial_\nu + 2\delta_\tau^\mu x^\nu\partial_\nu + 2x^\mu\partial_\tau) \\
&= -2(x^\lambda\eta^{\mu\nu}\partial_\nu - \eta^{\mu\lambda}x^\nu\partial_\nu - x^\mu\eta^{\lambda\tau}\partial_\tau)
\end{aligned}$$

which is exactly (9) with dummy index exchange  $\tau \rightarrow \nu$ .

Now coming to (10), we have

$$\begin{aligned}
[K^\mu, K^\nu] &= [(\eta^{\mu\rho}x^2 - 2x^\mu x^\rho)\partial_\rho, (\eta^{\nu\sigma}x^2 - 2x^\nu x^\sigma)\partial_\sigma] \\
&= \overbrace{\eta^{\mu\rho}\eta^{\nu\sigma}[x^2\partial_\rho, x^2\partial_\sigma]}^A - \overbrace{2\eta^{\nu\sigma}[x^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho, x^2\partial_\sigma]}^B \\
&\quad - \overbrace{2\eta^{\mu\rho}[x^2\partial_\rho, x^\nu x^\sigma\partial_\sigma]}^C + \overbrace{4[x^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho, x^\nu x^\sigma\partial_\sigma]}^D
\end{aligned} \tag{27}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned}
A &= \eta^{\mu\rho}\eta^{\nu\sigma}[x^2\partial_\rho, x^2\partial_\sigma] \\
&= \eta^{\mu\rho}\eta^{\nu\sigma}([x^2\partial_\rho, x^2]\partial_\sigma + x^2[x^2\partial_\rho, \partial_\sigma]) \\
&= \eta^{\mu\rho}\eta^{\nu\sigma}(x^2[\partial_\rho, x^2]\partial_\sigma + x^2[x^2, \partial_\sigma]\partial_\rho) \\
&= 2\eta^{\mu\rho}\eta^{\nu\sigma}x^2(x_\rho\partial_\sigma - x_\sigma\partial_\rho) \\
&= 2x^2(x^\mu\partial^\nu - x^\nu\partial^\mu)
\end{aligned} \tag{28}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
B &= 2\eta^{\nu\sigma}[x^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho, x^2\partial_\sigma] \\
&= 2\eta^{\nu\sigma}([x^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho, x^2]\partial_\sigma + x^2[x^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho, \partial_\sigma]) \\
&= 2\eta^{\nu\sigma}(x^\mu x^\rho[\partial_\rho, x^2]\partial_\sigma + x^2[x^\mu x^\rho, \partial_\sigma]\partial_\rho) \\
&= 2\eta^{\nu\sigma}(x^\mu x^\rho 2x_\rho\partial_\sigma - x^2(\delta_\sigma^\mu x^\rho + \delta_\sigma^\rho x^\mu)\partial_\rho) \\
&= 2\eta^{\nu\sigma}(2x^2x^\mu\partial_\sigma - x^2\delta_\sigma^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho - x^2x^\mu\partial_\rho) \\
&= 2x^2(x^\mu\partial^\nu - \eta^{\mu\nu}x^\rho\partial_\rho)
\end{aligned} \tag{29}$$

$$C = -2x^2(x^\nu\partial^\mu - \eta^{\mu\nu}x^\sigma\partial_\sigma) \tag{30}$$

where  $C$  is obtained from  $B$  by  $\rho \leftrightarrow \sigma, \mu \leftrightarrow \nu$  and flipping the sign.

We can already see that  $A - B - C = 0$ , it remains to show  $D = 0$ .

Indeed

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{D}{4} &= [x^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho, x^\nu x^\sigma\partial_\sigma] \\
&= [x^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho, x^\nu x^\sigma]\partial_\sigma + x^\nu x^\sigma[x^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho, \partial_\sigma] \\
&= x^\mu x^\rho[\partial_\rho, x^\nu x^\sigma]\partial_\sigma + x^\nu x^\sigma[x^\mu x^\rho, \partial_\sigma]\partial_\rho \\
&= x^\mu x^\rho(\delta_\rho^\nu x^\sigma + \delta_\rho^\sigma x^\nu)\partial_\sigma - x^\nu x^\sigma(\delta_\sigma^\mu x^\rho + \delta_\sigma^\rho x^\mu)\partial_\rho \\
&= x^\mu x^\nu x^\sigma\partial_\sigma + x^\mu x^\sigma x^\nu\partial_\sigma - x^\nu x^\mu x^\rho\partial_\rho - x^\nu x^\rho x^\mu\partial_\rho \\
&= 0
\end{aligned} \tag{31}$$