

Quasiconvexity in Relatively Hyperbolic Groups

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November 5, 2012

1. Introduction

This is joint work with **Victor Gerasimov**
(Belo Horizonté, Brazil)

Let G be a discrete group acting by homeomorphisms on a compact Hausdorff space (compactum) X .

We say that the action $G \curvearrowright X$ is **convergence** (or **3-discontinuous**) if the induced action on the space of distinct triples $\Theta^3 X = \left\{ \{x_1, x_2, x_3\} \mid x_i \in X \right\}$ is discontinuous.

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The limit set $T = \Lambda G$ is the set of accumulation points of a G -orbit.

$\Lambda(G) = \emptyset$ if G is finite, $\Lambda(G)$ is one or two points if the action is *parabolic* or *loxodromic*; or $\Lambda(G)$ is uncountable if the action is *non-elementary*.

The set of all parabolic points we denote by Par .

The set $\Omega G = X \setminus T$ is the set of discontinuity which we denote by A .

We always suppose that G is infinite, so up to adding a discrete G -orbit we always have that $A \neq \emptyset$ and $|X| > 2$.

Furthermore A will be always a discrete and G -finite set (i.e. $|A/G| < \infty$) which we identify with with the vertex set Γ^0 of a G -graph Γ .

We also assume that $|\Gamma^1/G| < \infty$, i.e. Γ is *cofinite* and connected graph where $\Gamma^1 \subset \Theta^2 A = \{\{a_1, a_2\} \mid a_i \in A\}$.

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If G is finitely generated then w.l.o.g. Γ is the Cayley graph, if not we consider a graph of entourages on X for which all these properties are true too ([Gerasimov-P., Geometry, Groups, Dynamics], to appear).

The action $G \curvearrowright X$ is said **2-cocompact** if $\Theta^2 X/G$ is compact where $\Theta^2 X = \{\{x_1, x_2\} \mid x_i \in X\}$ is the space of distinct pairs.

Definition (RH₃₂). A group G is said **relatively hyperbolic** (RH or RHG) if it admits a 3-discontinuous and 2-cocompact action (RH₃₂-action) on a compactum X .

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Advantages of the RH_{32} Definition:

- a) Works in the case of non-metrizable spaces and uncountable groups;*
- b) All previously known other definitions of RHG (due to M. Gromov, B. Farb, B. Bowditch and P. Tukia) are equivalent to it if X is metrizable or G is countable.*
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One says that G is relatively hyperbolic with respect to the maximal finite set \mathcal{P} of the non-conjugate stabilizers of the parabolic points.

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2. Quasiconvexity. Part I : Equivalence of different notions.

Convention. In this section we will assume that G is a finitely generated RHG.

A. α -quasiconvexity.

Let $\alpha : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ be a non-decreasing function s.t. $\alpha(n) = \alpha_n \geq n$.
A curve $\gamma : I \rightarrow \Gamma$ is called α -distorted geodesic (α -geodesic) if $\text{diam}(J) \leq \alpha(\text{diam}(\gamma(\partial J)))$ for every finite $J \subset I$.

Examples. $\alpha \equiv \text{id} \iff \gamma$ is a geodesic;
 $\alpha(n) = C \cdot n \iff \gamma$ is Lipschitz;
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Definition. For a set $F \subset \Gamma^0$ the set

$H_\alpha(F) = \{\text{Im}\gamma \mid \gamma : I \rightarrow \Gamma \text{ is } \alpha\text{-geodesic in } \Gamma : \partial\gamma \subset F\}$ is called α -hull.

Important partial case:

$H_\alpha(p) = \{\gamma : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \Gamma - \alpha\text{-geodesic} : \lim_{n \rightarrow \pm\infty} \gamma(n) = p \in T\}$ is α -horosphere at p and γ is an α -horocycle.

Property. *Horospheres and horocycles can only exist at parabolic points.*

Pf Follows from the facts that the boundary of the (α) -convex hull of a set coincides with the boundary of the set if the action has convergence property. QED.

NB Do not compare this situation with \mathbb{H}^n as in our case the horospheres are defined on a discrete set.

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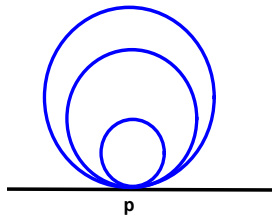


Figure: Horocycles at the parabolic point p .

Definition. A set $F \subset \Gamma^0$ is α -quasiconvex if $H_\alpha(F) \subset N_r(F)$ where $N_r(\cdot)$ is an r -neighborhood in Γ .

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B. Relative quasiconvexity.

Definition

A relative graph Δ is obtained from Γ by adding an edge between every pair of distinct points of each horosphere S_p ($p \in \text{Par}$).

Since $\Gamma^0 = \Delta^0$ define for $F \subset \Gamma^0$ its relative convex hull as

$$H_{\text{rel}}(F) = \left\{ \text{Im}(\delta) \mid \delta \text{ is a geodesic in } \Delta \wedge \partial\delta \subset F \right\}.$$

Put

$$H_{\alpha, \varepsilon}(F) = \left\{ \gamma(i) \mid \gamma \text{ is } \alpha\text{-geodesic} : \partial\gamma \subset F \wedge \text{depth}_{\alpha}(\gamma(i)) \leq \varepsilon \right\}$$

where $\text{depth}_{\alpha}(i, \gamma)$ is the maximal $\varepsilon > 0$ such that $\gamma(\]i - \varepsilon, i + \varepsilon[)$ belongs to an α -horosphere.

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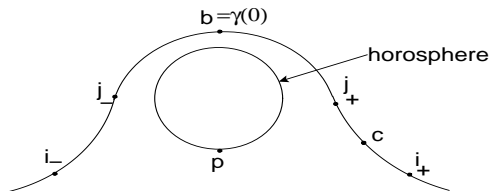
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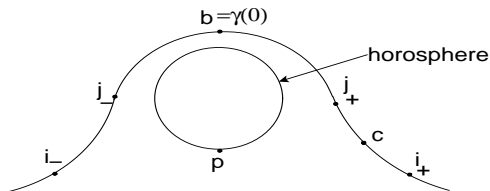
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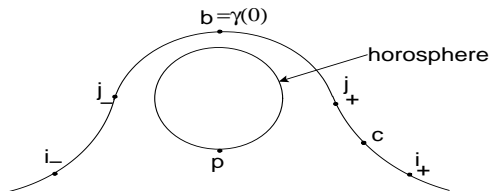
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Let $G \curvearrowright X$ be a 3-discontinuous and 2-cocompact action. Then there exists a quadratic polynomial α such that any lift γ of any geodesic δ in the relative graph is α -distorted in Γ . Moreover, $\text{depth}_\alpha(v, \gamma)$ is uniformly bounded for every $v \in \text{Im}\delta$.

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C. Visible quasiconvexity.

We use the following construction due to W. Floyd in the case of geometrically finite Kleinian groups (Inventiones, 1980).

Let $f : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{>0}$ be a positive scalar function satisfying:

- 1 $\exists \lambda > 0 \forall n : \lambda \leq f_n/f_{n+1} \leq 1,$
- 2 $\sum_n f_n < \infty$

For a fixed $v \in \Gamma^0$ define a new metric $\delta_{v,f} = \delta_v$ on Γ as the path metric obtained by the rescaling of the length of every edge $e \in \Gamma^1$ to be $f(d(v, e))$.

Let $\bar{\Gamma}_v$ be the Cauchy completion of the space (Γ, δ_v) called Floyd completion.

The set $\partial_v \Gamma = \bar{\Gamma}_v \setminus \Gamma$ is called Floyd boundary.

C. Visible quasiconvexity.

We use the following construction due to W. Floyd in the case of geometrically finite Kleinian groups (Inventiones, 1980).

Let $f : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{>0}$ be a positive scalar function satisfying:

- 1 $\exists \lambda > 0 \forall n : \lambda \leq f_n/f_{n+1} \leq 1,$
- 2 $\sum_n f_n < \infty$

For a fixed $v \in \Gamma^0$ define a new metric $\delta_{v,f} = \delta_v$ on Γ as the path metric obtained by the rescaling of the length of every edge $e \in \Gamma^1$ to be $f(d(v, e))$.

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Known fact: If G is RH then there exists an equivariant map $F : \bar{\Gamma}_v \rightarrow X$ ([Gerasimov, GAFA, 2012]).

Furthermore F is injective on conical points and $F^{-1}(p) = \partial_v(\text{St}_G p)$ is the Floyd boundary of the stabilizer of $p \in \text{Par}$ ([Gerasimov-P, to appear in JEMS]; [Gerasimov-P, to appear in GGD]). □

Using the map F we transfer the metric δ_v to a metric on X which we call shortcut metric and denote it by $\bar{\delta}_w$.

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For $F \subset X$ and $\varepsilon > 0$ the set

$$\text{Vis}_\varepsilon(F) = \{v \in \Gamma^0 \mid \text{diam}_{\bar{\delta}_w}(F) \geq \varepsilon\}$$

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Quasiconvex visibility $F \subset \Gamma^0$ is visibly quasiconvex if

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The following property clarifies this notion (originally due to A. Karlsson for the case of geodesics in a Cayley graph):

Property of $\bar{\delta}_w$ (Karlsson Lemma). Suppose $\sum_n \alpha_{2n+1} f_n < \infty$ then

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The following is one of the main results :

Theorem A. *Let a finitely generated discrete group G act 3-discontinuously and 2-cocompactly on a compactum X . The following properties of a subset F of the discontinuity domain of the action are equivalent:*

- F is relatively quasiconvex;
- F is visibly quasiconvex;
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To formulate a corollary introduce one more type quasiconvexity (due to B. Bowditch)

Definition

A subgroup H of G is **dynamically quasiconvex** if for any two closed disjoint subsets K and L of $T = \Lambda(G)$ the set $\{g \in G : g(\Lambda(H)) \cap K \neq \emptyset \wedge g(\Lambda(H)) \cap L \neq \emptyset\}$ is at most finite.

The following is a Corollary from Theorem A:

Corollary

If $H < G$ and $F \subset \Gamma^0$ is H -invariant and H -finite ($|F/H| < \infty$) then the quasiconvex visibility of F is equivalent to the dynamical quasiconvexity of H .

In particular a finitely generated subgroup H of the relatively hyperbolic group G is relatively quasiconvex if and only if it is dynamically quasiconvex. □

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3. Quasiconvexity. Part 2 : Hierarchy of subgroup "goodness" properties (decreasing order).

Different subgroups of a fixed relatively hyperbolic (or even convergence) group can be ordered according to their undistortedness in the ambient group. We provide a short hierarchy of these properties starting with the strongest one (absolute quasiconvexity) and finishing by so called dynamical boundness (definition follows).

First Level (Cocompactness outside the limit set). A subgroup H of a RHG G is weakly α -quasiconvex if every two points of an H -orbit can be joined by an α -geodesic belonging to a fixed bounded neighborhood of H -orbit.

If the word "weakly" is omitted then this is true for any α -geodesic and so this is the (absolute) α -quasiconvexity.

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The following result characterizes the Level 1 of the quasiconvexity:

Theorem B. *Let a finitely generated group G act 3-discontinuously and 2-cocompactly on a compactum X . Then there exists a constant $\lambda_0 \in]1, +\infty[$ such that the following properties of a subgroup H of G are equivalent:*

- 1 H is weakly α -quasiconvex for some distortion function α for which $\alpha(n) \leq \lambda_0^n$ ($n \in \mathbb{N}$), and for every $p \in \text{Par}$ the subgroup $H \cap \text{St}_{Gp}$ is either finite or has finite index in St_{Gp} ;
- 2 the space $(X \setminus \mathbf{L}H)/H$ is compact;
- 3 for every distortion function α bounded by λ_0^n ($n \in \mathbb{N}$), every H -invariant H -finite set $E \subset A$ is α -quasiconvex and for every $p \in \text{Par}$ the subgroup $H \cap \text{St}_{Gp}$ is either finite or has finite index in St_{Gp} .



Corollary 1. *Cocompactness outside the limit set is equivalent to the strongest quasiconvexity such that the subgroup either avoid a parabolic subgroup of the ambient group or intersects it in a finite index.*

Moreover the "weak" and absolute quasiconvexities are equivalent.

Corollary 2 (of the method). *Suppose that $G \curvearrowright X$ is RH_{32} -action. Let H be a subgroup of G acting cocompactly on $X \setminus \Lambda H$ then if G is finitely presented then H is finitely presented too.*

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A subgroup H of G is called dynamically bounded if every infinite set of elements $S \subset G$ contains an infinite subset S_0 such that $\Lambda G \setminus \bigcup_{s \in S_0} s(\Lambda H)$ has a non-empty interior.

The following implications show the hierarchy between different types of subgroup properties:

Cocompactness on $X \setminus \Lambda H$ \implies
Strong absolute Quasiconvexity of H \implies
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We finish this section by some questions and speculations.

Remark 1. In the case $G = \text{Isom}\mathbb{H}^3$ C. McMullen showed that the most of the points of the limit set of any known geometrically infinite Kleinian group $H < G$ do not satisfy dynamical boundedness condition.

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Suppose G is a RHG and $H < G$ is a finitely generated subgroup such that $\Lambda H \subsetneq \Lambda G$. Is H dynamically bounded ?

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4. Applications.

We provide several applications for infinitely generated (and not in general countable) **RHG**.

Anti-Convention. In this Section we do not assume an **RH** group to be countable.

Recall that due to B. Bowditch a cofinite graph Γ (i.e. $|\Gamma^1/G| < \infty$) is called *fine* if for every $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and for every edge e the set of simple loops in Γ passing through e of length n is finite.

We prove the following:

Proposition. *Let $G \curvearrowright X$ be a \mathbf{RH}_{32} -action. Then there exists a hyperbolic, G -cofinite graph Γ whose vertex stabilizers are all finite except the vertices corresponding to the parabolic points for the action $G \curvearrowright X$. Furthermore the graph Γ is fine.*

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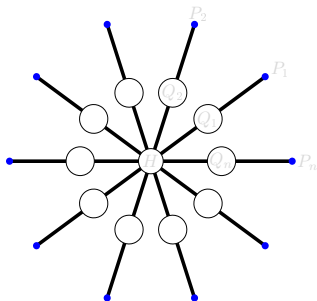
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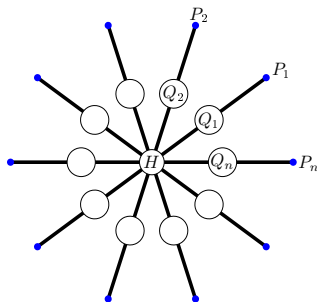
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The proof for infinitely generated groups is based on our Theorem [Gerasimov-P, GGD, to appear] claiming that any RH group G admits a star-graph of groups decomposition whose central vertex group is a finitely generated **RH** group H and all other vertex groups are maximal parabolic subgroups P_i ($i = 1, \dots, n$).



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One can show that the converse statement is also true: the above graph of groups gives an example of RH group G with respect to uncountable parabolic subgroups P_i .

Another application. Using our methods we have

Theorem C. *Let G be a group admitting non-elementary RH_{32} -actions on compacta X and Y such that every parabolic subgroup for the action on X is parabolic for the action on Y . Then there exists a G -equivariant map $F : X \rightarrow Y$. Furthermore there exists a compactum Z with a RH_{32} -action of G and two G -equivariant maps $F_1 : Z \rightarrow X$ and $F_2 : Z \rightarrow Y$. \square*

Remarks. 1. *In case when G is countable and X and Y are metrizable spaces the Theorem above is due to Y. Matsuda, A. Oguni and S. Yamagata (preprint, 2012)*

We provide an independent and self-contained argument valid for non-metrizable spaces and uncountable groups.

2. *The existence of such universal space Z for any two RH_{32} -actions was open so called "pullback problem" (formulated first in [Gerasimov, GAFA, 2009]). It is true if G is finitely generated and follows from the existence of the Floyd map. However we provide a counter-example for the existence of such a space if G is infinitely generated (in fact a countable free group).*

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