

The flow space associated to a CAT(0)-space (Lecture IV)

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- We introduce **CAT(0)-spaces** and **CAT(0)-groups** and state their main properties.
- We construct the **flow space $FS(X)$** associated to a CAT(0)-space and collect its main properties.
- We discuss the main **flow estimate**.

Definition (CAT(0)-space)

A **CAT(0)-space** or **Hadamard space** is a geodesic complete metric space (X, d_X) such that any geodesic triangle Δ in X satisfies the CAT(0)-inequality

$$d_X(x, y) \leq d_{\mathbb{R}^2}(\bar{x}, \bar{y})$$

for all $x, y \in \Delta$ and all comparison points \bar{x}, \bar{y} in the comparison triangle $\bar{\Delta} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^2$.

- A metric space X is called **geodesic** if for any two points $x, y \in X$ there exists a geodesic segment joining x and y , i.e., an isometric embedding $c: [0, d_X(x, y)] \rightarrow X$ with $c(0) = x$ and $c(d_X(x, y)) = y$.

- A **geodesic triangle** Δ in X consists of three points p, q, r and a choice of geodesic segments $[p, q]$, $[p, r]$ and $[q, r]$.
- A **comparison triangle** $\bar{\Delta}$ for geodesic triangle Δ is a geodesic triangle $\bar{\Delta} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^2$ given by three points \bar{p}, \bar{q} and \bar{r} such that $d_X(p, q) = d_{\mathbb{R}^2}(\bar{p}, \bar{q})$, $d_X(p, r) = d_{\mathbb{R}^2}(\bar{p}, \bar{r})$, and $d_X(q, r) = d_{\mathbb{R}^2}(\bar{q}, \bar{r})$.
- If x belongs to the segment $[p, q]$, then its **comparison point** \bar{x} is the point on the geodesic $[\bar{p}, \bar{q}]$ uniquely determined by $d_X(p, x) = d_{\mathbb{R}^2}(\bar{p}, \bar{x})$ and $d_X(x, q) = d_{\mathbb{R}^2}(\bar{x}, \bar{q})$.
- A simply connected complete Riemannian manifold with non-positive sectional curvature is a CAT(0)-space.

- There is a unique geodesic segment joining each pairs of points and this geodesic segment varies continuously with its endpoints.
- If X is a CAT(0)-space, then X and every open ball and every closed ball in X are contractible.

Definition (Generalized geodesic)

Let (X, d_X) be a metric space. A continuous map $c: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow X$ is called a **generalized geodesic** if there are $c_-, c_+ \in \overline{\mathbb{R}} := \mathbb{R} \coprod \{-\infty, \infty\}$ satisfying

$$c_- \leq c_+, \quad c_- \neq \infty, \quad c_+ \neq -\infty,$$

such that c is locally constant on the complement of the interval $I_c := (c_-, c_+)$ and restricts to an isometry on I_c .

Definition (Boundary of a metric space)

Let X be a metric space. Two geodesic rays $c, c': [0, \infty) \rightarrow X$ are called **asymptotic** if there exists a constant K with $d_X(c(t), c'(t)) \leq K$ for all $t \in [0, \infty)$. The boundary ∂X of X is the set of asymptotic equivalence classes of rays. Denote by $\bar{X} = X \amalg \partial X$ the disjoint union of X and ∂X .

Lemma

Let X be a CAT(0)-space and $c: [0, \infty) \rightarrow X$ be a geodesic ray. Then for every $x' \in X$ there is a unique geodesic ray $c': [0, \infty) \rightarrow X$ with $c'(0) = x'$ such that c and c' are asymptotic.

- In contrast to hyperbolic spaces it is in general not true for a CAT(0)-space that for two distinct elements $y, z \in \partial X$ there exists a geodesic $c: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow X$ joining y and z .

- A **generalized geodesic ray** is a generalized geodesic c that is either a constant generalized geodesic or a non-constant generalized geodesic with $c_- = 0$.
- Fix a base point $x_0 \in X$ in the CAT(0)-space X . For every $x \in \bar{X}$, there is a unique generalized geodesic ray c_x such that $c(0) = x_0$ and $c(\infty) = x$. Define for $r > 0$ the canonical projection

$$\rho_r = \rho_{r,x_0}: \bar{X} \rightarrow \bar{B}_r(x_0)$$

by $\rho_r(x) := c_x(r)$.

Definition (Cone topology on \bar{X} .)

Let X be a CAT(0)-space. The sets $(\rho_r)^{-1}(V)$ with $r > 0$, V an open subset of $\bar{B}_r(x_0)$ are a basis for the **cone topology on \bar{X}** .

- The cone topology is independent of the choice of base point.
- A map f whose target is \bar{X} is continuous if and only if $\rho_r \circ f$ is continuous for all r .
- \bar{X} is a compact metrizable space.
- $\partial X \subseteq \bar{X}$ is closed and $X \subseteq \bar{X}$ is dense.
- The inclusion $X \rightarrow \bar{X}$ is a homeomorphism onto its image which is an open subset.
- If M is a simply connected complete n -dimensional Riemannian manifold with non-positive sectional curvature, then ∂M is S^{n-1} .
- There are closed topological manifolds M constructed by [Davis-Januszkiewicz\(1991\)](#) such that the universal covering \tilde{M} admits a $\pi_1(M)$ -invariant CAT(0)-metric and $\partial \tilde{M}$ is not homeomorphic to a sphere and \tilde{M} is not homeomorphic to \mathbb{R}^n .

Definition (CAT(0)-group)

A (discrete) group G is called a **CAT(0)-group** if it acts properly cocompactly and isometrically on a CAT(0)-space of finite topological dimension.

A CAT(0)-group G satisfies:

- There exists a finite model $\underline{E}G$.
- There is a model for BG of finite type;
- G is finitely presented;
- There are only finitely many conjugacy classes of finite subgroups;
- Every solvable subgroup is virtually \mathbb{Z}^n ;
- The direct product of two CAT(0)-groups is again a CAT(0)-group;

- Limit groups in the sense of Sela are $CAT(0)$ -groups;
- Coxeter groups are $CAT(0)$ -groups;
- The word-problem and the conjugation-problem are solvable.

Question

Is every hyperbolic group a $CAT(0)$ -group?

The flow space of a metric space

- Throughout this section let (X, d_X) be a metric space.

Definition (Flow space)

- Let $\text{FS} = \text{FS}(X)$ be the set of all generalized geodesics in X ;
- We define a **metric** on $\text{FS}(X)$ by

$$d_{\text{FS}(X)}(c, d) := \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{d_X(c(t), d(t))}{2e^{|t|}} dt.$$

- Define a **flow**

$$\Phi: \text{FS}(X) \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \text{FS}(X)$$

by $\Phi_\tau(c)(t) = c(t + \tau)$ for $\tau \in \mathbb{R}$, $c \in \text{FS}(X)$ and $t \in \mathbb{R}$.

Lemma

The map Φ is a continuous flow and we have for $c, d \in \text{FS}(X)$ and $\tau, \sigma \in \mathbb{R}$

$$d_{\text{FS}(X)}(\Phi_\tau(c), \Phi_\sigma(d)) \leq e^{|\tau|} \cdot d_{\text{FS}(X)}(c, d) + |\sigma - \tau|.$$

Proof:

- We estimate for $c \in \text{FS}(X)$ and $\tau \in \mathbb{R}$:

$$\begin{aligned} d_{\text{FS}(X)}(c, \Phi_\tau(c)) &= \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{d_X(c(t), c(t+\tau))}{2e^{|t|}} dt \\ &\leq \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{|\tau|}{2e^{|t|}} dt \\ &= |\tau| \cdot \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{1}{2e^{|t|}} dt \\ &= |\tau|. \end{aligned}$$

We estimate for $c, d \in \text{FS}(X)$ and $\tau \in \mathbb{R}$

$$\begin{aligned}d_{\text{FS}(X)}(\Phi_\tau(c), \Phi_\tau(d)) &= \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{d_X(c(t+\tau), d(t+\tau))}{2e^{|t|}} dt \\&= \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{d_X(c(t), d(t))}{2e^{|t-\tau|}} dt \\&\leq \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{d_X(c(t), d(t))}{2e^{|t|-|\tau|}} dt \\&= e^{|\tau|} \cdot \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{d_X(c(t), d(t))}{2e^{|t|}} dt \\&= e^{|\tau|} \cdot d_{\text{FS}(X)}(c, d).\end{aligned}$$

The two inequalities above together with the triangle inequality imply for $c, d \in \text{FS}(X)$ and $\tau, \sigma \in \mathbb{R}$

$$\begin{aligned} & d_{\text{FS}(X)}(\Phi_\tau(c), \Phi_\sigma(d)) \\ &= d_{\text{FS}(X)}(\Phi_\tau(c), \Phi_{\sigma-\tau} \circ \Phi_\tau(d)) \\ &\leq d_{\text{FS}(X)}(\Phi_\tau(c), \Phi_\tau(d)) + d_{\text{FS}(X)}(\Phi_\tau(d), \Phi_{\sigma-\tau} \circ \Phi_\tau(d)) \\ &\leq e^{|\tau|} \cdot d_{\text{FS}(X)}(c, d) + |\sigma - \tau|. \end{aligned}$$



Lemma

Let $c, d: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow X$ be generalized geodesics. Consider $t_0 \in \mathbb{R}$.

- $d_X(c(t_0), d(t_0)) \leq e^{|t_0|} \cdot d_{\text{FS}}(c, d) + 2$;
- If $d_{\text{FS}}(c, d) \leq 2e^{-|t_0|-1}$, then

$$d_X(c(t_0), d(t_0)) \leq \sqrt{4e^{|t_0|+1}} \cdot \sqrt{d_{\text{FS}}(c, d)}.$$

In particular, $c \mapsto c(t_0)$ defines a uniform continuous map $\text{FS}(X) \rightarrow X$.

Proof of the first assertion

- We abbreviate $D := d_X(c(t_0), d(t_0))$.
- We get

$$d_X(c(t), d(t)) \geq D - d_X(c(t_0), c(t)) - d_X(d(t_0), d(t)) \geq D - 2 \cdot |t - t_0|.$$

- This implies

$$\begin{aligned}
d_{\text{FS}(X)}(c, d) &= \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \frac{d_X(c(t), d(t))}{2e^{|t|}} dt \\
&\geq \int_{-D/2+t_0}^{D/2+t_0} \frac{D - 2 \cdot |t - t_0|}{2e^{|t|}} dt \\
&= \int_{-D/2}^{D/2} \frac{D - 2 \cdot |t|}{2e^{|t+t_0|}} dt \\
&\geq \int_{-D/2}^{D/2} \frac{D - 2 \cdot |t|}{2e^{|t|+|t_0|}} dt \\
&= e^{-|t_0|} \cdot \int_{-D/2}^{D/2} \frac{D - 2 \cdot |t|}{2e^{|t|}} dt \\
&= e^{-|t_0|} \cdot (2 \cdot e^{-D/2} + D - 2) \\
&\geq e^{-|t_0|} \cdot (D - 2). \quad \square
\end{aligned}$$

Lemma

The maps

$$FS(X) - FS(X)^{\mathbb{R}} \rightarrow \overline{\mathbb{R}}, \quad c \mapsto c_-;$$

$$FS(X) - FS(X)^{\mathbb{R}} \rightarrow \overline{\mathbb{R}}, \quad c \mapsto c_+;$$

are continuous.

Lemma

Let $(c_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ be a sequence in $FS(X)$. Then it converges uniformly on compact subsets to $c \in FS(X)$ if and only if it converges to c with respect to $d_{FS(X)}$.

Lemma

The flow space $FS(X)$ is sequentially closed in the space of all maps $\mathbb{R} \rightarrow X$ with respect to the topology of uniform convergence on compact subsets.

Definition (Proper metric space)

A metric space is called *proper* if every closed ball is compact.

Lemma

If (X, d_X) is a proper metric space, then $(FS(X), d_{FS(X)})$ is a proper metric space.

Proof:

- Let $R > 0$ and $c \in \text{FS}(X)$.
- It suffices to show that the closed ball $\overline{B}_R(c)$ in $\text{FS}(X)$ is sequentially compact.
- Let $(c_n)_n \in \mathbb{N}$ be a sequence in $\overline{B}_R(c)$. There is $R' > 0$ such that $c_n(0) \in \overline{B}_{R'}(c(0))$. By assumption $\overline{B}_{R'}(c(0))$ is compact.
- Now we can apply the **Arzelà-Ascoli Theorem**.
- Thus after passing to a subsequence there is $d: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow X$ such that $c_n \rightarrow d$ uniformly on compact subsets.

Lemma

Let (X, d_X) be a proper metric space and $t_0 \in \mathbb{R}$. Then the evaluation map $\text{FS}(X) \rightarrow X$ defined by $c \mapsto c(t_0)$ is uniformly continuous and proper.

Proof:

- We have already shown that the map is uniformly continuous
- To show that it is also proper, it suffices to show that preimages of closed balls have finite diameter.
- If $d_X(c(t_0), d(t_0)) \leq r$, then $d_X(c(t), d(t)) \leq r + 2|t - t_0|$. Thus

$$d_{\text{FS}}(c, d) \leq \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{r + 2|t - t_0|}{2e^{|t|}} dt,$$

provided $d_X(c(t_0), d(t_0)) \leq r$. □

Lemma

Let G act isometrically, properly and cocompactly on the proper metric space (X, d_X) . Then action of G on $(FS(X), d_{FS})$ is also isometric, proper and cocompact.

Proof:

- The action of G on $FS(X)$ is isometric.
- The map $FS(X) \rightarrow X$ defined by $c \mapsto c(0)$ is G -equivariant, continuous and proper.
- The existence of such a map implies that the G -action on $FS(X)$ is also proper and cocompact. □

Lemma

The subspace $FS(X)^{\mathbb{R}}$ is closed in $FS(X)$.

- Let X be a metric space. For $c \in \text{FS}(X)$ and $T \in [0, \infty]$, define $c|_{[-T, T]} \in \text{FS}(X)$ by

$$c|_{[-T, T]}(t) := \begin{cases} c(-T) & \text{if } t \leq -T; \\ c(t) & \text{if } -T \leq t \leq T; \\ c(T) & \text{if } t \geq T. \end{cases}$$

- We denote by

$$\text{FS}(X)_f := \left\{ c \in \text{FS}(X) - \text{FS}(X)^{\mathbb{R}} \mid c_- > -\infty, c_+ < \infty \right\} \cup \text{FS}(X)^{\mathbb{R}}$$

the subspace of finite geodesics.

Lemma

The map

$$H: \text{FS}(X) \times [0, 1] \rightarrow \text{FS}(X)$$

defined by $H_\tau(c) := c|_{[\ln(\tau), -\ln(\tau)]}$ is continuous and satisfies $H_0 = \text{id}_{\text{FS}(X)}$ and $H_\tau(c) \in \text{FS}(X)_f$ for $\tau > 0$.

The flow space of a CAT(0)-space

Example (Flow space of a manifold of non-positive sectional curvature)

- Let M be a simply connected complete Riemannian manifold of non-positive sectional curvature.
- Recall that M is a CAT(0)-space.
- Put

$$P := \{(a_-, a_+) \in \overline{\mathbb{R}} \times \overline{\mathbb{R}} \mid a_- < \infty, a_+ > -\infty, a_- \leq a_+\};$$
$$\Delta = \{(a, a) \in \overline{\mathbb{R}} \times \overline{\mathbb{R}} \mid -\infty < a < \infty\}.$$

- Define maps

$$f: STM \times P \rightarrow FS(M), \quad (v, a_-, a_+) \mapsto c(v)_{[a_-, a_+]};$$
$$p: STM \times \Delta \rightarrow M, \quad (v, a) \mapsto c_v(a),$$

where $c(v): \mathbb{R} \rightarrow M$ is the geodesic determined by v .

Example (continued)

- The map f is compatible with the obvious flows.
- Then we obtain pushout

$$\begin{array}{ccc} STM \times \Delta & \xrightarrow{i} & STM \times P \\ \downarrow p & & \downarrow f \\ M & \xrightarrow{j} & FS(M) \end{array}$$

where i is the inclusion and $j: M \rightarrow FS(X)$ sends x to const_x .

- In particular f induces a homeomorphism

$$STM \times (P - \Delta) \xrightarrow{\cong} FS(M) - FS(M)^{\mathbb{R}}.$$

Definition (End points of a geodesic)

For $c \in \text{FS}(X)$ we define $c(\infty) \in \bar{X}$ by

$$c(\infty) := \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} c(t) = \begin{cases} c(c_+) & \text{if } c_+ < \infty; \\ [c|_{[0, \infty)}] & \text{if } c_+ = \infty. \end{cases}$$

Define $c(-\infty)$ analogously.

Lemma

The maps

$$\begin{aligned} \text{FS}(X) - \text{FS}(X)^{\mathbb{R}} &\rightarrow \bar{X}, & c &\mapsto c(-\infty); \\ \text{FS}(X) - \text{FS}(X)^{\mathbb{R}} &\rightarrow \bar{X}, & c &\mapsto c(\infty), \end{aligned}$$

are continuous.

- The two maps appearing above cannot be continuously extended to $\text{FS}(X)$ by the following observation.
- Let c be a generalized geodesic with $c_+ < \infty$ and $c_- = \infty$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}
 c(-\infty) &\neq c(\infty); \\
 d_{\text{FS}}(c, \text{const}_{c(\infty)}) &\leq e^{c_+}/2; \\
 \lim_{\tau \rightarrow \infty} \Phi_\tau(c) &= \text{const}_{c(\infty)}; \\
 \left(\lim_{\tau \rightarrow \infty} \Phi_\tau(c) \right)(-\infty) &= c(\infty); \\
 \Phi_\tau(c)(-\infty) &= c(-\infty) \quad \text{for all } \tau > 0; \\
 \lim_{\tau \rightarrow \infty} (\Phi_\tau(c)(-\infty)) &= c(-\infty).
 \end{aligned}$$

Theorem (Embedding the flow space)

If X is proper as a metric space, then the map

$$E: \text{FS}(X) - \text{FS}(X)^{\mathbb{R}} \rightarrow \bar{R} \times \bar{X} \times X \times \bar{X} \times \bar{R}$$

defined by $E(c) := (c_-, c(-\infty), c(0), c(\infty), c_+)$ is injective and continuous. It is a homeomorphism onto its image.

Lemma

If X is proper as a metric space and its covering dimension $\dim X \leq N$, then $\dim \bar{X} \leq N$.

Proof:

- Let $\mathcal{U} = \{U_i \mid i \in I\}$ be an open covering of \bar{X} .
- For every $x \in \bar{X}$ there are $r_x, W_x \subseteq \bar{B}_{r_x}(x_0)$ and $U_x \in \mathcal{U}$ such that $x \in \rho_{r_x}^{-1}(W_x) \subset U_x$.
- Since \bar{X} is compact, a finite number of the sets $\rho_{r_x}^{-1}(W_x)$ cover \bar{X} .
- Note that $\rho_r = \rho_r|_{\bar{B}_{r'}(x_0)} \circ \rho_{r'}$ and hence $\rho_r^{-1}(W) = \rho_{r'}^{-1}(\rho_r|_{\bar{B}_{r'}(x_0)}(W))$ if $r' > r$.

Theorem (Dimension of the flow space)

Assume that X is proper and that $\dim X \leq N$. Then

$$\dim(\text{FS}(X) - \text{FS}(X)^{\mathbb{R}}) \leq 3N + 2.$$

Proof:

- Every compact subset K of $\text{FS}(X) - \text{FS}(X)^{\mathbb{R}}$ is homeomorphic to a compact subset of $\bar{R} \times \bar{X} \times X \times \bar{X} \times \bar{R}$.
- Hence its topological dimension satisfies

$$\begin{aligned} \dim(K) &\leq \dim(\bar{R} \times \bar{X} \times X \times \bar{X} \times \bar{R}) \\ &= 2 \dim(\bar{R}) + 2 \dim(\bar{X}) + \dim(X) \leq 3N + 2. \end{aligned}$$

- One shows that $\text{FS}(X) - \text{FS}(X)^{\mathbb{R}}$ has a countable basis for its topology.
- Now $\dim(\text{FS}(X) - \text{FS}(X)^{\mathbb{R}}) \leq 3N + 2$ follows from standard result of dimension theory.

The homotopy action on $B_r(x_0)$

- The G -action on X induces an G -action on X .
- For technical reasons we will not take the space \bar{X} as the space appearing in the axiomatic approach as we have done it for hyperbolic groups. We will take the closed ball $B_R(x_0)$ for some base point x_0 and some very large real number R .
- The prize to pay is that we do not obtain a G -action on $B_R(x_0)$ but at least the following homotopy G -action.

Definition (The homotopy G -action on $\overline{B}_R(x_0)$)

Define a **homotopy G -action** (φ^R, H^R) on $\overline{B}_R(x)$ as follows.

- For $g \in G$, we define the map

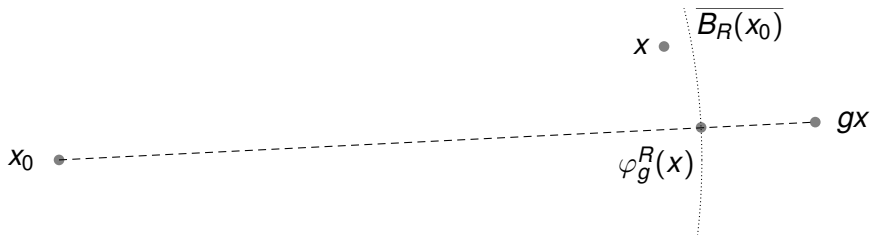
$$\varphi_g^R: \overline{B}_R(x_0) \rightarrow \overline{B}_R(x_0)$$

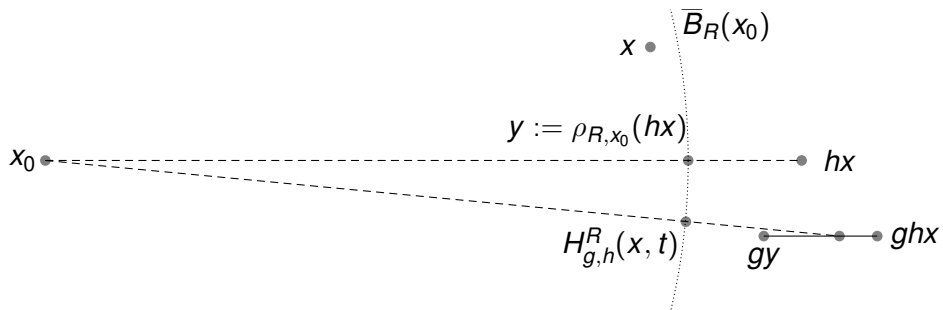
by $\varphi_g^R(x) := \rho_{R,x_0}(gx)$.

- For $g, h \in G$ we define the homotopy

$$H_{g,h}^R: \varphi_g^R \circ \varphi_h^R \simeq \varphi_{gh}^R$$

by $H_{g,h}^R(x, t) := \rho_{R,x_0}(t \cdot (ghx) + (1 - t) \cdot (g \cdot \rho_{R,x_0}(hx)))$.





- It turns out that the more obvious homotopy given by convex combination $(x, t) \mapsto t \cdot \varphi_{gh}^R(x) + (1 - t) \cdot \varphi_g^R \circ \varphi_h^R(x)$ is not appropriate for our purposes.
- Notice that $H_{g,h}^R$ is indeed a homotopy from $\varphi_g^R \circ \varphi_h^R$ to φ_{gh} since

$$\begin{aligned}
 H_{g,h}^R(x, 0) &= \rho_{R,x_0}(0 \cdot (ghx) + 1 \cdot (g \cdot \rho_{R,x_0}(hx))) \\
 &= \rho_{R,x_0}(g \cdot \rho_{R,x_0}(hx)) \\
 &= \varphi_g^R \circ \varphi_h^R(x),
 \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}
 H_{g,h}^R(x, 1) &= \rho_{R,x_0}(1 \cdot (ghx) + 0 \cdot (g \cdot \rho_{R,x_0}(hx))) \\
 &= \rho_{R,x_0}(ghx) \\
 &= \varphi_{gh}^R(x).
 \end{aligned}$$

Definition (The map ι)

Define the map

$$\iota: G \times X \rightarrow \text{FS}(X)$$

by sending $(g, x) \in G \times X$ to the generalized geodesic $c_{gx_0, gx}$ from gx_0 to gx .

The flow estimate

Theorem (The flow estimate)

Let $\beta, L > 0$. For all $\delta > 0$ there are $T, r > 0$ with the following property:
For $x_1, x_2 \in X$ with $d_X(x_1, x_2) \leq \beta$, $x \in \overline{B}_{r+L}(x_1)$ there is $\tau \in [-\beta, \beta]$ such that

$$d_{\text{FS}}(\Phi_T(c_{x_1, \rho_r, x_1}(x)), \Phi_{T+\tau}(c_{x_2, \rho_r, x_2}(x))) \leq \delta.$$

