

Hölder maps to the Heisenberg group and self-similar solutions to extension problems

Robert Young
New York University
(joint with Stefan Wenger)

September 2019

This work was supported by NSF grant DMS 1612061

Self-similar solutions to extension problems

Problems that don't have smooth solutions can sometimes have “wild” solutions.

- ▶ (Kaufman) Surjective rank-1 maps from the cube to the square

Self-similar solutions to extension problems

Problems that don't have smooth solutions can sometimes have “wild” solutions.

- ▶ (Kaufman) Surjective rank-1 maps from the cube to the square
- ▶ (joint w/ Wenger, Guth) Topologically nontrivial low-rank maps

Self-similar solutions to extension problems

Problems that don't have smooth solutions can sometimes have “wild” solutions.

- ▶ (Kaufman) Surjective rank-1 maps from the cube to the square
- ▶ (joint w/ Wenger, Guth) Topologically nontrivial low-rank maps
- ▶ (joint w/ Guth) Hölder signed-area preserving maps

Self-similar solutions to extension problems

Problems that don't have smooth solutions can sometimes have “wild” solutions.

- ▶ (Kaufman) Surjective rank-1 maps from the cube to the square
- ▶ (joint w/ Wenger, Guth) Topologically nontrivial low-rank maps
- ▶ (joint w/ Guth) Hölder signed-area preserving maps
- ▶ (joint w/ Wenger) Hölder maps to the Heisenberg group

Self-similar solutions to extension problems

Problems that don't have smooth solutions can sometimes have “wild” solutions.

- ▶ (Kaufman) Surjective rank-1 maps from the cube to the square
- ▶ (joint w/ Wenger, Guth) Topologically nontrivial low-rank maps
- ▶ (joint w/ Guth) Hölder signed-area preserving maps
- ▶ (joint w/ Wenger) Hölder maps to the Heisenberg group
- ▶ What else?

Kaufman's construction

Theorem (Kaufman)

There is a Lipschitz map $f : [0, 1]^3 \rightarrow [0, 1]^2$ which is surjective and satisfies $\text{rank } Df \leq 1$ almost everywhere.

Kaufman's construction

Theorem (Kaufman)

There is a Lipschitz map $f : [0, 1]^3 \rightarrow [0, 1]^2$ which is surjective and satisfies $\text{rank } Df \leq 1$ almost everywhere.

By Sard's Theorem, if f is smooth and $\text{rank } Df \leq 1$ everywhere, then $f([0, 1]^3)$ has measure zero, so there is no smooth map satisfying the theorem.

Kaufman's construction

Theorem (Kaufman)

There is a Lipschitz map $f : [0, 1]^3 \rightarrow [0, 1]^2$ which is surjective and satisfies $\text{rank } Df \leq 1$ almost everywhere.

By Sard's Theorem, if f is smooth and $\text{rank } Df \leq 1$ everywhere, then $f([0, 1]^3)$ has measure zero, so there is no smooth map satisfying the theorem.

But there is a self-similar map!

The Heisenberg group

Let H be the 3-dimensional nilpotent Lie group

$$H = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & x & z \\ 0 & 1 & y \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mid x, y, z \in \mathbb{R} \right\}.$$

The Heisenberg group

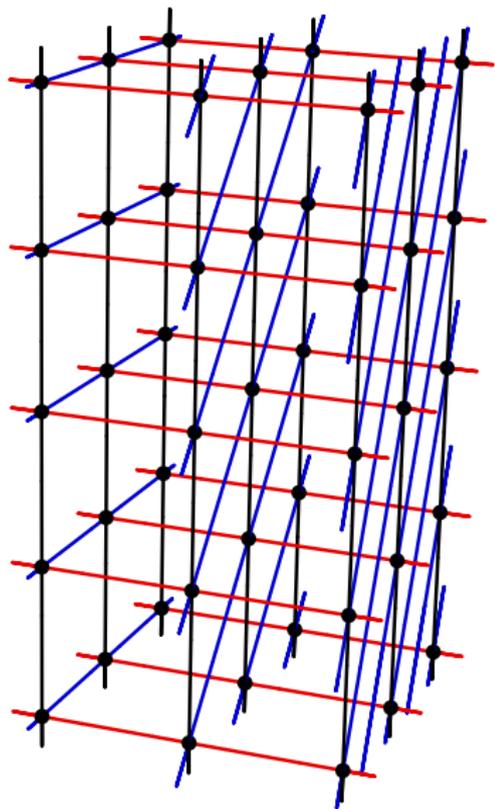
Let H be the 3-dimensional nilpotent Lie group

$$H = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & x & z \\ 0 & 1 & y \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mid x, y, z \in \mathbb{R} \right\}.$$

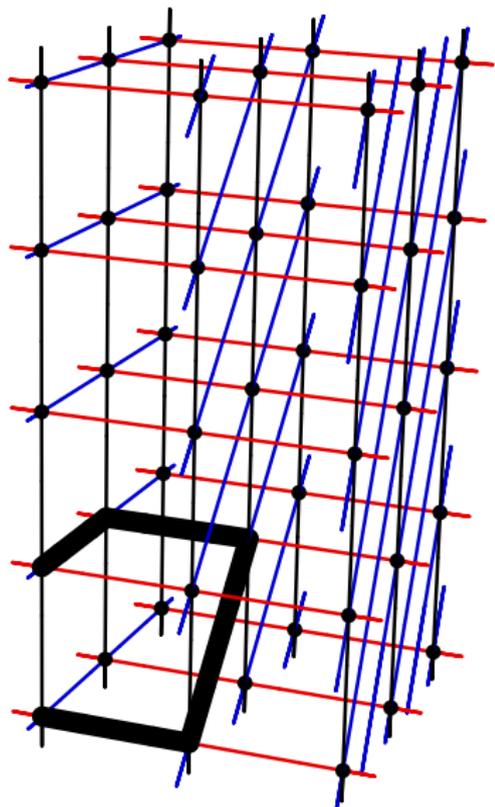
This contains a lattice

$$H^{\mathbb{Z}} = \langle X, Y, Z \mid [X, Y] = Z, \text{ all other pairs commute} \rangle.$$

A lattice in H^3

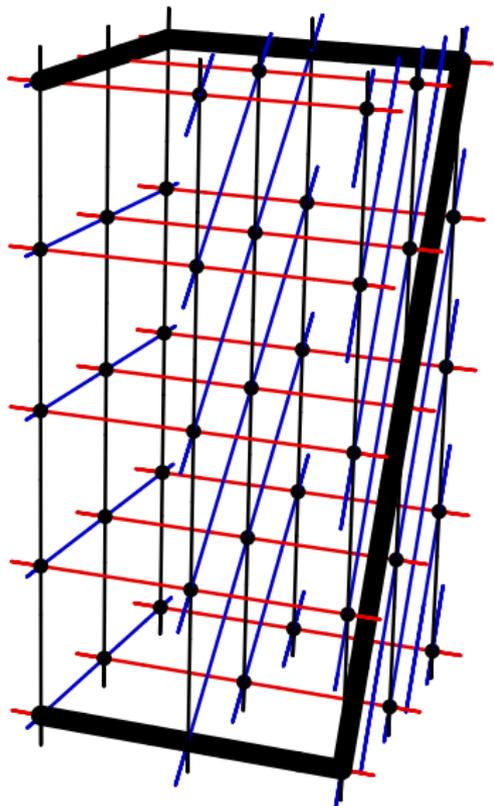


A lattice in H^3



$$z = xyx^{-1}y^{-1}$$

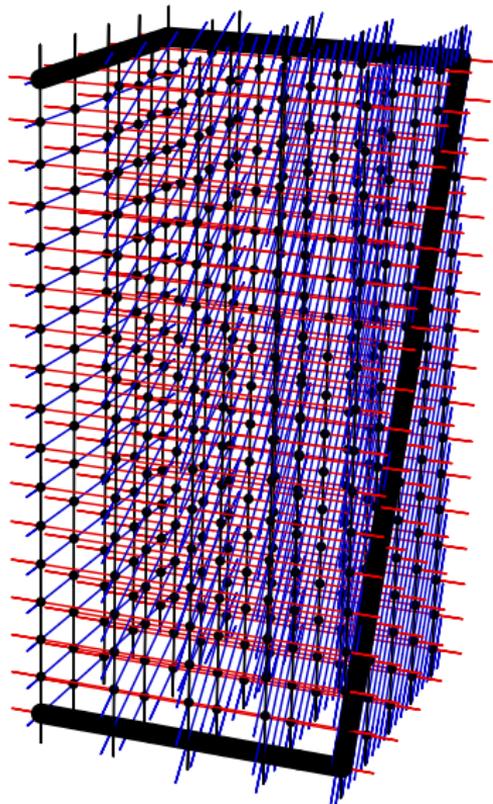
A lattice in H^3



$$z = xyx^{-1}y^{-1}$$

$$z^4 = x^2y^2x^{-2}y^{-2}$$

A lattice in H^3

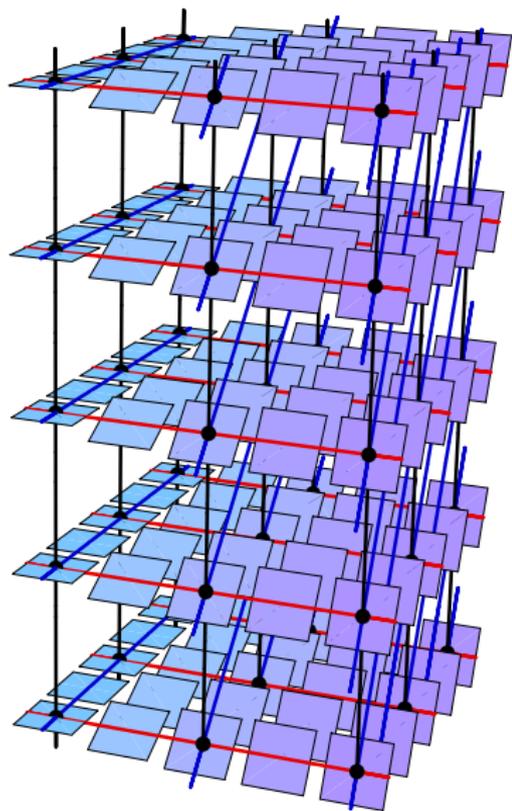


$$z = xyx^{-1}y^{-1}$$

$$z^4 = x^2y^2x^{-2}y^{-2}$$

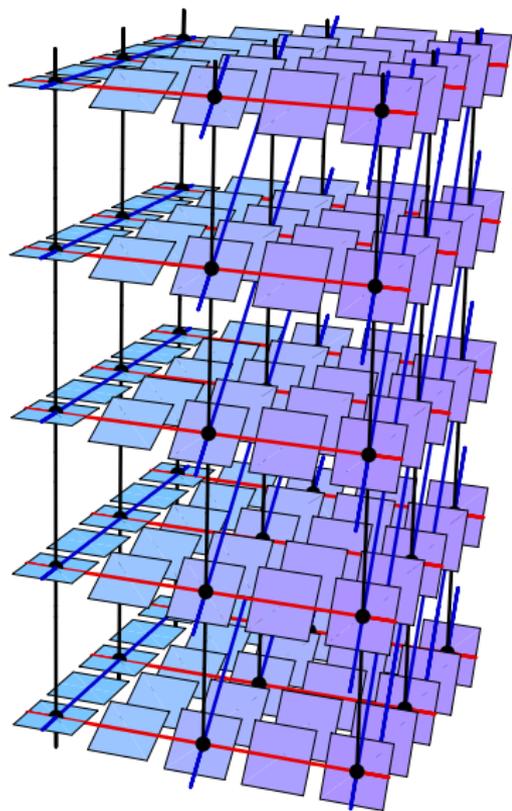
$$z^{n^2} = x^n y^n x^{-n} y^{-n}$$

From Cayley graph to sub-riemannian metric



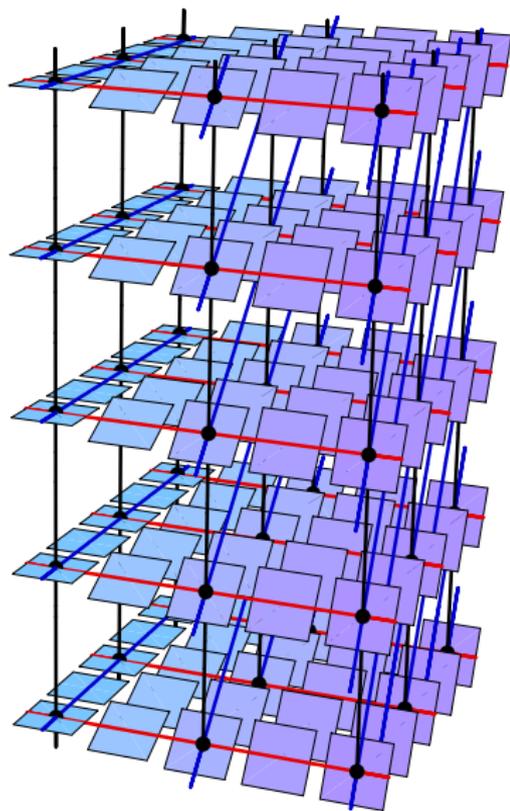
- ▶ There is a distribution of *horizontal* planes spanned by red and blue edges.

From Cayley graph to sub-riemannian metric



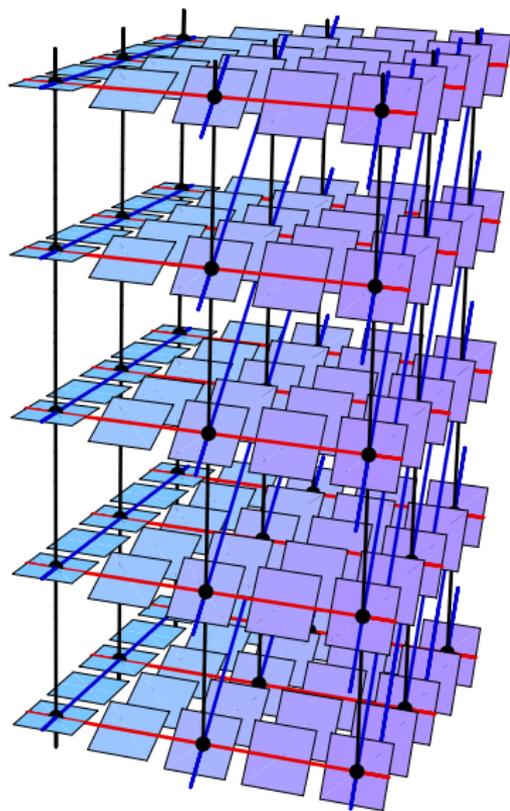
- ▶ There is a distribution of *horizontal* planes spanned by red and blue edges.
- ▶ $d(u, v) = \inf\{\ell(\gamma) \mid \gamma \text{ is a horizontal curve from } u \text{ to } v\}$

From Cayley graph to sub-riemannian metric



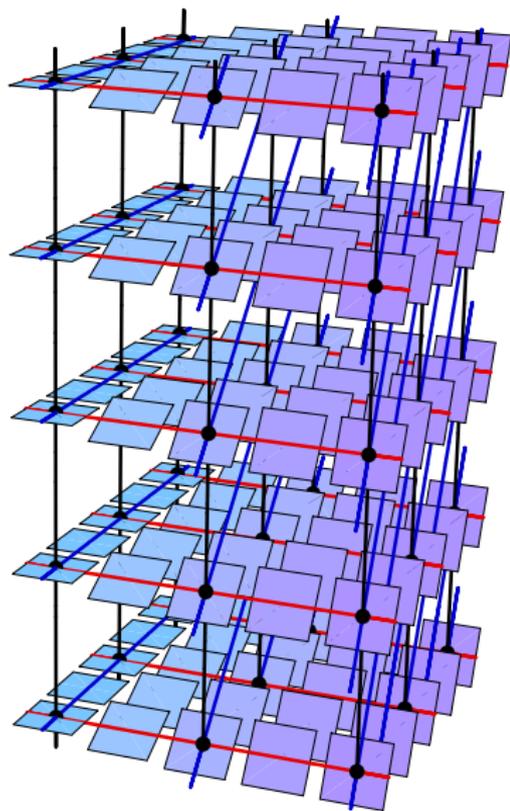
- ▶ There is a distribution of *horizontal* planes spanned by red and blue edges.
- ▶ $d(u, v) = \inf\{\ell(\gamma) \mid \gamma \text{ is a horizontal curve from } u \text{ to } v\}$
- ▶ $s_t(x, y, z) = (tx, ty, t^2z)$ scales the metric by t

From Cayley graph to sub-riemannian metric



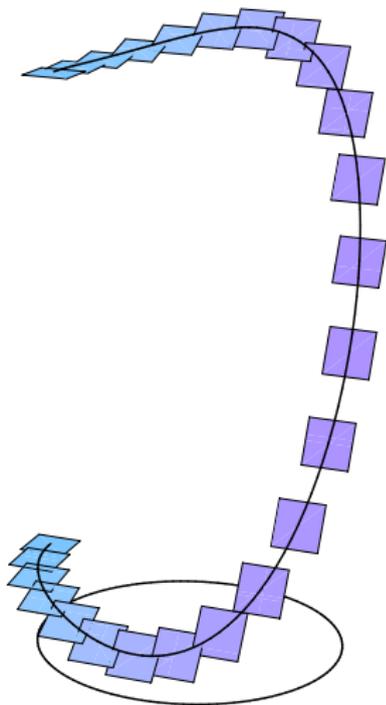
- ▶ There is a distribution of *horizontal* planes spanned by red and blue edges.
- ▶ $d(u, v) = \inf\{\ell(\gamma) \mid \gamma \text{ is a horizontal curve from } u \text{ to } v\}$
- ▶ $s_t(x, y, z) = (tx, ty, t^2z)$ scales the metric by t
- ▶ The ball of radius ϵ is roughly an $\epsilon \times \epsilon \times \epsilon^2$ box.

From Cayley graph to sub-riemannian metric



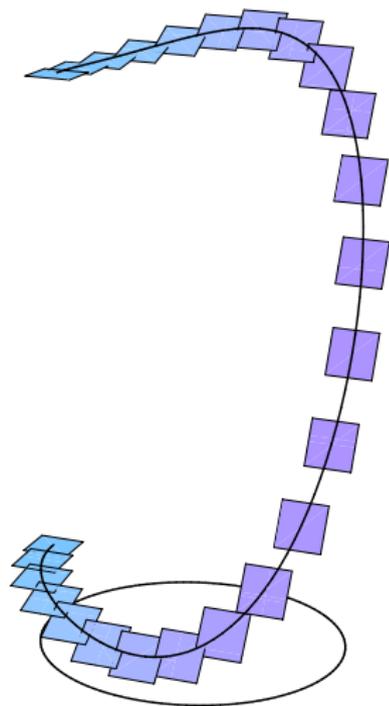
- ▶ There is a distribution of *horizontal* planes spanned by red and blue edges.
- ▶ $d(u, v) = \inf\{\ell(\gamma) \mid \gamma \text{ is a horizontal curve from } u \text{ to } v\}$
- ▶ $s_t(x, y, z) = (tx, ty, t^2z)$ scales the metric by t
- ▶ The ball of radius ϵ is roughly an $\epsilon \times \epsilon \times \epsilon^2$ box.
- ▶ Non-horizontal curves have Hausdorff dimension 2.

A geodesic in H



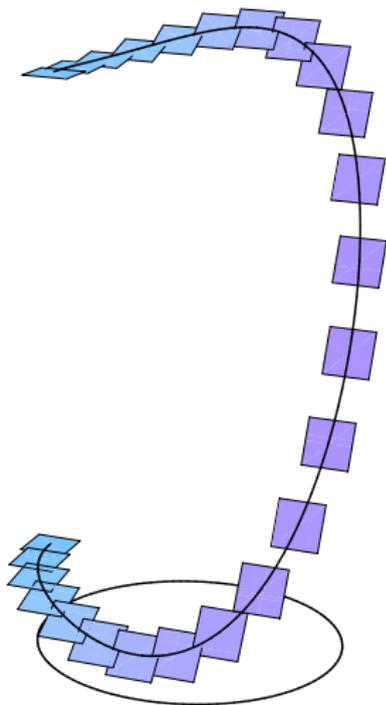
- ▶ Every horizontal curve is the lift of a curve in the plane.

A geodesic in H



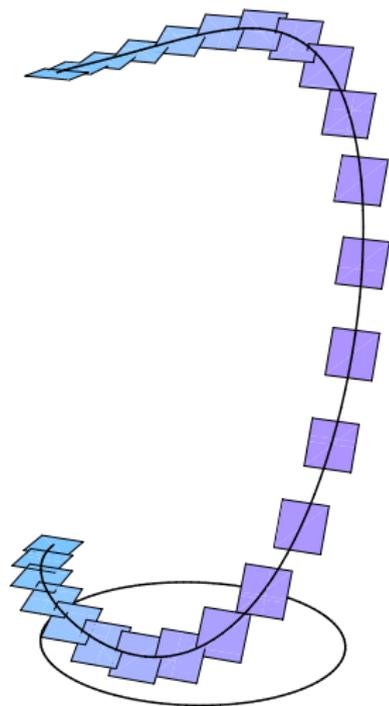
- ▶ Every horizontal curve is the lift of a curve in the plane.
- ▶ The length of the lift is the length of the original curve.

A geodesic in H



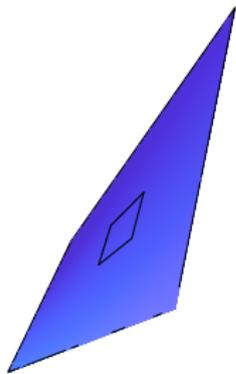
- ▶ Every horizontal curve is the lift of a curve in the plane.
- ▶ The length of the lift is the length of the original curve.
- ▶ The change in height along the lift of a closed curve is the signed area of the curve.

A geodesic in H

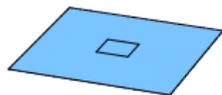


- ▶ Every horizontal curve is the lift of a curve in the plane.
- ▶ The length of the lift is the length of the original curve.
- ▶ The change in height along the lift of a closed curve is the signed area of the curve.
- ▶ By the isoperimetric inequality, geodesics are lifts of circular arcs.

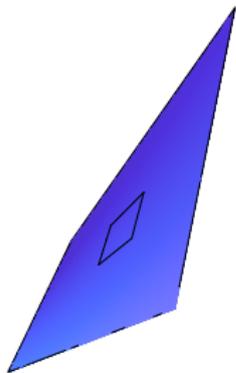
A surface in H



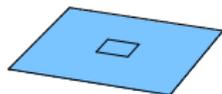
- ▶ No C_2 surface can be horizontal.



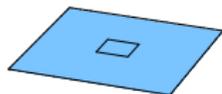
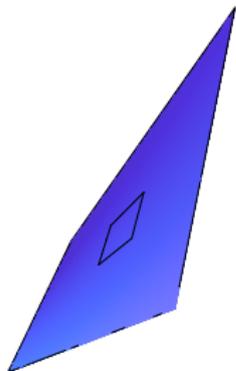
A surface in H



- ▶ No C_2 surface can be horizontal.
- ▶ (Gromov, Pansu) In fact, any surface in H has Hausdorff dimension at least 3.



A surface in H



- ▶ No C_2 surface can be horizontal.
- ▶ (Gromov, Pansu) In fact, any surface in H has Hausdorff dimension at least 3.
- ▶ **What's the shape of a surface in H ?**

What's the shape of a surface in H ?

Let $0 < \alpha \leq 1$. A map $f : X \rightarrow Y$ is α -Hölder if there is some $L > 0$ such that for all $x_1, x_2 \in X$,

$$d_Y(f(x_1), f(x_2)) \leq Ld_X(x_1, x_2)^\alpha.$$

What's the shape of a surface in H ?

Let $0 < \alpha \leq 1$. A map $f : X \rightarrow Y$ is α -Hölder if there is some $L > 0$ such that for all $x_1, x_2 \in X$,

$$d_Y(f(x_1), f(x_2)) \leq Ld_X(x_1, x_2)^\alpha.$$

Question (Gromov)

Let $0 < \alpha \leq 1$. What are the α -Hölder maps from D^2 or D^3 to H ?

Hölder maps to H

- ▶ For $\alpha \leq \frac{1}{2}$, any smooth map to H is $\frac{1}{2}$ -Hölder.

Hölder maps to H

- ▶ For $\alpha \leq \frac{1}{2}$, any smooth map to H is $\frac{1}{2}$ -Hölder.

If f is α -Hölder, then $\dim_{\text{Haus}} f(X) \leq \alpha^{-1} \dim_{\text{Haus}} X$. So...

Hölder maps to H

- ▶ For $\alpha \leq \frac{1}{2}$, any smooth map to H is $\frac{1}{2}$ -Hölder.

If f is α -Hölder, then $\dim_{\text{Haus}} f(X) \leq \alpha^{-1} \dim_{\text{Haus}} X$. So...

- ▶ (Gromov) For $\alpha > \frac{2}{3}$, there is no α -Hölder embedding of D^2 in H .

Hölder maps to H

- ▶ For $\alpha \leq \frac{1}{2}$, any smooth map to H is $\frac{1}{2}$ -Hölder.

If f is α -Hölder, then $\dim_{\text{Haus}} f(X) \leq \alpha^{-1} \dim_{\text{Haus}} X$. So...

- ▶ (Gromov) For $\alpha > \frac{2}{3}$, there is no α -Hölder embedding of D^2 in H .
- ▶ (Züst) For $\alpha > \frac{2}{3}$, any α -Hölder map from D^n to H factors through a tree.

Hölder maps to H

- ▶ For $\alpha \leq \frac{1}{2}$, any smooth map to H is $\frac{1}{2}$ -Hölder.

If f is α -Hölder, then $\dim_{\text{Haus}} f(X) \leq \alpha^{-1} \dim_{\text{Haus}} X$. So...

- ▶ (Gromov) For $\alpha > \frac{2}{3}$, there is no α -Hölder embedding of D^2 in H .
- ▶ (Züst) For $\alpha > \frac{2}{3}$, any α -Hölder map from D^n to H factors through a tree.

What happens when $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$?

Hölder maps to H

Theorem (Wenger–Y.)

When $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$, the set of α -Hölder maps is dense in $C_0(D^n, H)$.

Hölder maps to H

Theorem (Wenger–Y.)

When $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$, the set of α -Hölder maps is dense in $C_0(D^n, H)$.

Lemma

Let $\gamma : S^1 \rightarrow H$ be a Lipschitz closed curve in H and let $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$. Then γ extends to a map $\beta : D^2 \rightarrow H$ which is α -Hölder.

Hölder maps to H

Theorem (Wenger–Y.)

When $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$, the set of α -Hölder maps is dense in $C_0(D^n, H)$.

Lemma

Let $\gamma : S^1 \rightarrow H$ be a Lipschitz closed curve in H and let $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$. Then γ extends to a map $\beta : D^2 \rightarrow H$ which is α -Hölder.

We need the following result:

Theorem

There is a $c > 0$ such that for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$, a horizontal closed curve $\gamma : S^1 \rightarrow H$ of length L can be subdivided into cn^3 horizontal closed curves of length at most $\frac{L}{n}$.

Maps with signed area zero

For a closed curve γ , let $\sigma(\gamma)$ be the *signed area* of γ (the integral of the winding number of γ). This is defined when γ is α -Hölder with $\alpha > \frac{1}{2}$.

Maps with signed area zero

For a closed curve γ , let $\sigma(\gamma)$ be the *signed area* of γ (the integral of the winding number of γ). This is defined when γ is α -Hölder with $\alpha > \frac{1}{2}$. A map $f : D^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$ has *null signed area* if every Lipschitz closed curve λ in D^2 satisfies $\sigma(f \circ \lambda) = 0$.

Maps with signed area zero

For a closed curve γ , let $\sigma(\gamma)$ be the *signed area* of γ (the integral of the winding number of γ). This is defined when γ is α -Hölder with $\alpha > \frac{1}{2}$. A map $f : D^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$ has *null signed area* if every Lipschitz closed curve λ in D^2 satisfies $\sigma(f \circ \lambda) = 0$.

Corollary

Let $\gamma : S^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$ be a Lipschitz closed curve with $\sigma(\gamma) = 0$ and let $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$. Then γ extends to a map $\beta : D^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$ which is α -Hölder and has null signed area.

Signed-area preserving maps

- ▶ A map $f : D^2 \rightarrow D^2$ is *signed-area preserving* if for every Lipschitz closed curve γ , $\sigma(\gamma) = \sigma(f \circ \gamma)$.

Signed-area preserving maps

- ▶ A map $f : D^2 \rightarrow D^2$ is *signed-area preserving* if for every Lipschitz closed curve γ , $\sigma(\gamma) = \sigma(f \circ \gamma)$.
- ▶ A smooth signed-area preserving map must preserve orientation; in fact, the Jacobian must equal 1.

Signed-area preserving maps

- ▶ A map $f : D^2 \rightarrow D^2$ is *signed-area preserving* if for every Lipschitz closed curve γ , $\sigma(\gamma) = \sigma(f \circ \gamma)$.
- ▶ A smooth signed-area preserving map must preserve orientation; in fact, the Jacobian must equal 1.
- ▶ (De Lellis–Hirsch–Inauen) When $\alpha > \frac{2}{3}$, an α -Hölder signed-area preserving map must preserve orientation. (The image of a positively-oriented simple closed curve has nonnegative winding number around any point.)

Signed-area preserving maps

- ▶ A map $f : D^2 \rightarrow D^2$ is *signed-area preserving* if for every Lipschitz closed curve γ , $\sigma(\gamma) = \sigma(f \circ \gamma)$.
- ▶ A smooth signed-area preserving map must preserve orientation; in fact, the Jacobian must equal 1.
- ▶ (De Lellis–Hirsch–Inauen) When $\alpha > \frac{2}{3}$, an α -Hölder signed-area preserving map must preserve orientation. (The image of a positively-oriented simple closed curve has nonnegative winding number around any point.)
- ▶ (Guth–Y.) When $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$, the α -Hölder signed-area preserving maps from D^2 to \mathbb{R}^2 are dense in $C_0(D^2, \mathbb{R}^2)$.

Signed-area preserving maps

- ▶ A map $f : D^2 \rightarrow D^2$ is *signed-area preserving* if for every Lipschitz closed curve γ , $\sigma(\gamma) = \sigma(f \circ \gamma)$.
- ▶ A smooth signed-area preserving map must preserve orientation; in fact, the Jacobian must equal 1.
- ▶ (De Lellis–Hirsch–Inauen) When $\alpha > \frac{2}{3}$, an α -Hölder signed-area preserving map must preserve orientation. (The image of a positively-oriented simple closed curve has nonnegative winding number around any point.)
- ▶ (Guth–Y.) When $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$, the α -Hölder signed-area preserving maps from D^2 to \mathbb{R}^2 are dense in $C_0(D^2, \mathbb{R}^2)$.
- ▶ Based on lemma: There is a $c > 0$ such that for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$, a curve $\gamma : S^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$ of length L can be subdivided into $\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_{cn^3}$ such that $\ell(\gamma_i) \leq \frac{L}{n}$ and $\sigma(\gamma_i) = \frac{\sigma(\gamma)}{cn^3}$.

Open questions

- ▶ What else can this be used for?

Hölder maps from \mathbb{R}^3 to H

Theorem (Wenger–Y.)

When $\frac{1}{2} < \alpha < \frac{2}{3}$, the set of α -Hölder maps is dense in $C_0(D^n, H)$.