

Tree comparison

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Abstract

We introduce a new type of metric comparison which is closely related to the Alexandrov comparison and continuity of optimal transport between regular measures.

1 Introduction

Tree comparison. We will denote by $|a - b|_X$ the distance between points a and b in the metric space X .

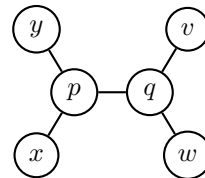
Let (a_1, \dots, a_n) be a point array in a metric space X and T be a tree with the vertexes labeled by $\{a_1, \dots, a_n\}$. We say that (a_1, \dots, a_n) satisfies the *T-tree comparison* if there is a point array $(\tilde{a}_1, \dots, \tilde{a}_n)$ in the Hilbert space \mathbb{H} such that

$$|\tilde{a}_i - \tilde{a}_j|_{\mathbb{H}} \geq |a_i - a_j|_X$$

for any i and j and the equality holds if a_i and a_j are adjacent in T .

We say that a metric space X satisfies the *T-tree comparison* if every n -points arrays in X satisfies the *T-tree comparison*.

Encoding of trees. To encode the labeled tree on the diagram, we will use notation $p/xy(q/vw)$. It means that we choose p as the root; p has two children leafs to x , y and one child q with two children leafs v and w . Taking another root for the same tree, we get different encodings, for example $q/vw(p/xy)$ or $x/(p/y(q/vw))$.



If we do not need the labeling of vertexes, it is sufficient to write the number of leafs in the brackets; this way we can write $2(2)$ instead of $p/xy(q/vw)$ since the root (p) has two leafs (x and y) and yet another child (q) has two leafs (v and w). The same tree can be written as $(1(2))$ meaning that the root x has no leafs, p has one leaf y and one child q with two leafs v and w . Every vertex which is not the root and not a leaf corresponds to a pair of brackets in this notation.

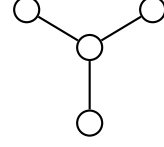
Using the described notation, we could say that a metric space *satisfies the $2(2)$ -tree comparison*, meaning that it satisfies the tree comparison on the diagram. We could also say “*applying the $p/xy(q/vw)$ -tree comparison...*” meaning that we apply the comparison for these 6 points and the tree on the diagram.

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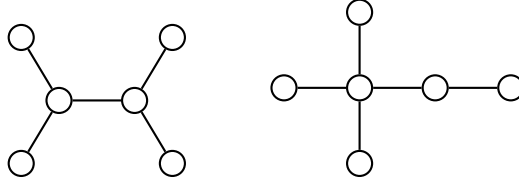
A vertex of a tree of degree at least two will be called *pole*.

Note that *Alexandrov space* is defined as complete length space with curvature bounded below in the sense of Alexandrov; the latter is equivalent to the 3-tree comparison for the tripod-tree on the diagram.

Using the introduced notation, Theorem 4.1. in [1] can be restated the following way: *If length-metric space satisfies 3-tree comparison, then it also satisfies n -tree comparison for every positive integer n .*

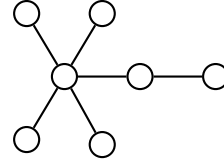


The simplest new cases are 3(1)-tree and 2(2)-tree comparisons. They also follow Alexandrov's comparison; namely the following theorem holds.



1.1. Theorem. *Any Alexandrov space with curvature bounded below satisfies 3(1)-tree and 2(2)-tree comparisons.*

The next simplest case is 4(1)-tree comparison. It turns out to be related to the so called *continuity of transport property*, briefly CTP. A compact Riemannian manifold M is CTP if for any two regular measures with density functions bounded away from zero and infinity, the optimal transport can be described by a continuous map.



A necessary condition for CTP was given by Xi-Nan Ma, Neil Trudinger and Xu-Jia Wang in [7]. A key step in the understanding this condition was made by Grégoire Loeper in [6]. The manifolds satisfying this condition will be called *cost-convex*. We define it in the next section.

1.2. Theorem. *If a Riemannian manifold satisfies 4(1)-tree comparison then it is cost-convex.*

Finally we consider spaces satisfying *all tree comparison*.

Recall that a map $f: W \rightarrow X$ between metric spaces is called *submetry* if for any $w \in W$ and $r \geq 0$, we have

$$f[B(w, r)_W] = B(f(w), r)_X,$$

where $B(w, r)_W$ denotes the ball with center w and radius r in the space W . In other words submetry is a map which is 1-Lipschitz and 1-co-Lipschitz at the same time. Note that any submetry is onto.

1.3. Theorem. *A separable metric space X satisfies all tree comparison if and only if X is isometric to a target space of submetry defined of a subset of the Hilbert space.*

1.4. Proposition. *Suppose G be a compact Lie group with bi-invariant metric, so the action $G \times G \curvearrowright G$ defined by $(h_1, h_2) \cdot g = h_1 \cdot g \cdot h_2^{-1}$ is isometric. Then for any closed subgroup $H < G \times G$, the bi-quotient space $G//H$ satisfies multipolar comparison.*

2 On cost-convex manifolds

In this section we review necessary material from ???.

Cost-convex functions. Let M be a Riemannian manifold. Consider the *cost function* $\text{cost}: M \times M \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ defined by

$$\text{cost}(x, y) = \frac{1}{2} \cdot |x - y|_M^2.$$

A function $f: M \rightarrow (-\infty, \infty]$ is called *cost-convex* if there is a nonempty subset of pairs $\mathcal{I} \subset M \times \mathbb{R}$ such that

$$f(x) = \sup \{ r - \text{cost}(p, x) \mid (p, r) \in \mathcal{I} \}.$$

If M has nonnegative curvature then any cost-convex function f is (-1) -convex, that is, it satisfies the inequality

$$(f \circ \gamma)'' \geq -1 \quad \textbf{1}$$

in the barrier sense for any unit speed geodesic γ . On the other hand, the inequality **1** does not imply that f is cost-convex.

Subgradient. Let $f: M \rightarrow (-\infty, \infty]$ be a semiconvex function defined on Riemannian manifold M . Assume $f(p)$ is finite. In this case the differential

$$d_p f: T_p \rightarrow (-\infty, \infty]$$

is defined; it is a convex positive homogeneous function defined on the tangent space T_p .

A tangent vector $v \in T_p M$ is a *subgradient* of f at p , briefly $v \in \nabla_p f$ if

$$\langle v, w \rangle \leq d_p f(w)$$

for any $w \in T_p$. Note that the set $\nabla_p f$ is a convex subset of T_p .

The subset of tangent vectors $v \in T_p$ such that there is a minimizing geodesic $[p, q]$ in the direction of v with length $|v|$ will be denoted as $\overline{\text{TIL}}_p$. For p, q and v as above, we write $q = \exp_p v$.

2.1. Definition. *A Riemannian manifold will be called cost-convex if for any point p and any cost-convex function f which is finite at p we have $\nabla_p f \subset \overline{\text{TIL}}_p$ and for $q = \exp_p v$ the inequality*

$$\text{cost}(q, p) - \text{cost}(q, x) \geq f(x) - f(p)$$

holds for any $x \in M$.

It is easy to see that any cost-convex manifold is nonnegatively curved. According to ???, if M is CTP then it is cost-convex. The converse is unknown, likely it holds, but there is a slightly stronger version of this condition which implies CTP.

CTIL and MTW. Let us formulat other tow conditions on Riemannian manifolds which are together equivalent to the cost-convexity. These two conditions will be used in the proof.

Let M be a Riemannian manifold. The *tangent injectivity locus* at the point $p \in M$ (briefly TIL_p) is defined as the maximal open subset in the tangent space T_p such that for any $v \in \text{TIL}_p$ the geodesic path $\gamma(t) = \exp_p(v \cdot t)$, $t \in [0, 1]$ is a minimizing. If the tangent injectivity locus at any point $p \in M$ is convex we say that M satisfies *convexity of tangent injectivity locus* or briefly M is CTIL.

Note that $\overline{\text{TIL}}_p$ defiend above is closure of TIL_p in T_p . Therefore, M is CTIL if and only if the set $\overline{\text{TIL}}_p$ is convex for any point $p \in M$.

The second condition is called MTW for Ma–Trudinger–Wang. We will use its reformulation close to the one given by Cédric Villani [8, 2.6]; it can be proved the same way.

Assume $u, v \in T_p$ and $w = \frac{1}{2} \cdot (u + v)$ and $x = \exp_p u$, $y = \exp_p v$ and $q = \exp_p w$. If the three geodesic paths $[p, x]$, $[p, y]$ and $[p, q]$ described by the paths $t \mapsto \exp_p(t \cdot u)$, $t \mapsto \exp_p(t \cdot v)$, $t \mapsto \exp_p(t \cdot w)$ for $t \in [0, 1]$ are minimizing, then $[p, q]$ is called *median* of the hinge $[p_y^x]$. Note that in a CTIL Riemannian manifold, any hinge has a median.

2.2. MTW condition. Assume M be a CTIL Riemannian manifold. Then M is MTW if and only if for a median $[p, q]$ of any hinge $[p_y^x]$ one of the following inequalities

$$\begin{cases} |p - q|_M^2 - |z - q|_M^2 \leq |p - x|_M^2 - |z - x|_M^2, \\ |p - q|_M^2 - |z - q|_M^2 \leq |p - y|_M^2 - |z - y|_M^2. \end{cases}$$

holds for any $z \in M$.

3 On Kirszbraun’s rigidity

In the proof we will use the rigidity case of the generalized Kirszbraun theorem proved by Urs Lang and Viktor Schroeder in [5], see also [1].

3.1. Kirszbraun rigidity theorem. Let A be an Alexandrov space with non-negative curvature.

Assume that for two point arrays $p, x_1, \dots, x_n \in A$ and $\tilde{q}, \tilde{x}_1, \dots, \tilde{x}_n \in \mathbb{H}$ we have that

$$|\tilde{q} - \tilde{x}_i| \geq |p - x_i|$$

for any i ,

$$|\tilde{x}_i - \tilde{x}_j| \leq |x_i - x_j|$$

for any pair (i, j) and \tilde{q} lies in the interior of the convex hull \tilde{K} of $\tilde{x}_1, \dots, \tilde{x}_n$.

Then equalities hold in all the inequalities above. Moreover there is an distance preserving map $f: \tilde{K} \rightarrow A$ such that $f(\tilde{x}_i) = x_i$ and $f(\tilde{q}) = p$.

Proof. By the generalized Kirszbraun theorem, there is a short map $f: A \rightarrow \mathbb{H}$ such that $f(x_i) = \tilde{x}_i$. Set $\tilde{p} = f(p)$. By assumptions

$$|\tilde{q} - \tilde{x}_i| \geq |\tilde{p} - \tilde{x}_i|.$$

Since \tilde{q} lies in the interior of K , $\tilde{q} = \tilde{p}$. It follows that the equality

$$|\tilde{q} - \tilde{x}_i| = |p - x_i|.$$

holds for each i .

???

Consider the tangent vectors $v_i \in T_p$ such that $\exp_p v_i = x_i$ for each i . Note that these vectors are uniquely defined, all the vectors lie in an isometric copy of a Euclidean space and

$$|v_i - v_j|_{T_p} = |x_i - x_j|_A.$$

In particular, the convex hull of $\{v_1, \dots, v_n\}$ in T_p is isometric to \tilde{K} , so we can keep notation \tilde{K} for this convex hull.

Consider the gradient exponent $\text{gexp}_p: T_p \rightarrow A$ see [2]. It is a short map, $\text{gexp}_p 0 = p$ and $\text{gexp}_p v_i = x_i$ for each i . It remains to show that the restriction $\text{gexp}_p|_{\tilde{K}}$ is distance-preserving.

Extend the sequence v_1, \dots, v_n to an infinite sequence of vectors $v_i \in \tilde{K}$ which is dense in \tilde{K} . Set $x_i = \text{gexp}_p v_i$ for each i .

Note that it is sufficient to show that the map $v_i \mapsto x_i$ is distance preserving.

From above,

$$|v_i - v_j|_{T_p} = |x_i - x_j|_A$$

if $i, j \leq n$; it provides a base for induction. Assume

$$|v_i - v_j|_{T_p} = |x_i - x_j|_A$$

for all pairs $i, j \leq k-1$. Since the gradient exponent is short,

$$|v_i - v_k|_{T_p} \geq |x_i - x_k|_A$$

for each $i \leq k$. From the first part of theorem we have

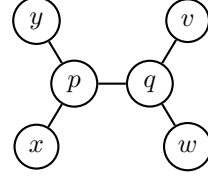
$$|v_i - v_k|_{T_p} = |x_i - x_k|_A.$$

It proves the induction step and hence the second statement follows. \square

4 Pivotal trees.

Let X be a metric space. A point array (a_1, \dots, a_n) in X together with a choice of a graph with n vertexes labeled by (a_1, \dots, a_n) and a choice of geodesic $[a_i, a_j]$ for every adjacent pair (a_i, a_j) is called *geodesic graph*.

For geodesic trees we will use the same notation as for labeled combinatoric tree in square brackets; for example $[p, xy(q, vw)]$ will denote the geodesic tree with with combinatorics as on the diagram.



Fix a geodesic tree $T = [p_1/x_1 \dots x_k(p_2/x_{k+1} \dots x_n)]$; that is, T has two poles p_1, p_2 and each of the remaining vertexes are adjacent either to p_1 or p_2 — the vertexes x_1, \dots, x_k are connected to p_1 and x_{k+1}, \dots, x_n to p_2 .

Assume X is a nonnegatively curved Alexandrov space; in particular the angle is defined for any geodesic hinge.

A geodesic tree $\tilde{T} = [\tilde{p}_1/\tilde{x}_1 \dots \tilde{x}_k(\tilde{p}_2/\tilde{x}_{k+1} \dots \tilde{x}_n)]$ in the Hilbert space \mathbb{H} will be called *pivotal tree* for T if

- (i) $|\tilde{p}_1 - \tilde{p}_2|_{\mathbb{H}} = |p_1 - p_2|_X$,
- (ii) $|\tilde{p}_i - \tilde{x}_j|_{\mathbb{H}} = |p_i - p_j|_X$ for any edge $[p_i, x_j]$ in T and
- (iii) $\angle[\tilde{p}_j \tilde{x}_k]_{\mathbb{H}} = \angle[\tilde{p}_j \tilde{x}_k]_X$ for any hinge $[p_j \tilde{x}_k] = ([p_j, x_k], [p_j, p_i])$ in T .

4.1. Rigidity lemma. *Let X be a nonnegatively curved Alexandrov space and $T = [p_1/x_1 \dots x_k(p_2/x_{k+1} \dots x_n)]$ be geodesic tree in X . Suppose $\tilde{T} = [\tilde{p}_1/\tilde{x}_1 \dots \tilde{x}_k(\tilde{p}_2/\tilde{x}_{k+1} \dots \tilde{x}_n)]$ is a pivotal tree for T . Assume that*

$$|\tilde{x}_i - \tilde{x}_j|_{\mathbb{H}} \leq |x_i - x_j|_X \quad \textbf{2}$$

for any pair (i, j) and the convex hull \tilde{K} of $\{\tilde{x}_1, \dots, \tilde{x}_n\}$ intersects the line thru \tilde{p}_1 and \tilde{p}_2 . Then the equality holds in **2** for each pair (i, j) .

Proof. Let \tilde{z} be a point on the line $(\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2)$. Assume that \tilde{z} lies on the half-line from \tilde{p}_1 to \tilde{p}_2 ; otherwise swap the labels of \tilde{p}_1 and \tilde{p}_2 .

Denote by ζ the direction of geodesic $[p_1, p_2]$ at p_1 . Set

$$z = \text{gexp}_{p_1}(|\tilde{z} - \tilde{p}_1| \cdot \zeta),$$

where gexp_{p_1} denotes the gradient exponent at p_1 ; see [2]. By comparison, we have

$$|x_i - z|_X \leq |\tilde{x}_i - \tilde{z}|_{\mathbb{H}^2}$$

for any i .

It remains to apply Kirszbraun rigidity theorem (3.1). □

Recall that X is a nonnegatively curved Alexandrov space.

Assume $[\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{x}_1 \dots \tilde{x}_k(\tilde{p}_2, \tilde{x}_{k+1} \dots \tilde{x}_n)]$ is a pivotal tree in \mathbb{H} for the geodesic tree $[p_1, x_1 \dots x_k(p_2, x_{k+1} \dots x_n)]$ in X . Note that by angle comparison, for any i and j we have

$$|\tilde{x}_i - \tilde{p}_j|_{\mathbb{H}} \geq |x_i - p_j|_X.$$

It follows that the configuration $\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2, \tilde{x}_1, \dots, \tilde{x}_n \in \mathbb{H}$ satisfies the tree comparison (see Section 1) if

$$|\tilde{x}_i - \tilde{x}_j|_{\mathbb{H}} \geq |x_i - x_j|_X \quad \textbf{3}$$

for all pairs (i, j) .

Denote by ξ_i the direction of the half-plane containing \tilde{x}_i with the boundary line $(\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2)$. The direction $\tilde{\xi}_i$ lies in the unit sphere normal to the line $(\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2)$; we may assume that the dimension of the sphere is $n - 1$.

Note that up to a motion of \mathbb{H} , a pivotal configuration is completely described by the angles $\angle(\tilde{\xi}_i, \tilde{\xi}_j)$. Moreover, the distance $|\tilde{x}_i - \tilde{x}_j|_{\mathbb{H}}$ is determined by $\angle(\tilde{\xi}_i, \tilde{\xi}_j)$ and the function $\angle(\tilde{\xi}_i, \tilde{\xi}_j) \mapsto |\tilde{x}_i - \tilde{x}_j|_{\mathbb{H}}$ is nondecreasing.

Let us denote by $\alpha_{i,j}$ the minimal angle $\angle(\tilde{\xi}_i, \tilde{\xi}_j)$ in a pivotal configuration such that **3** holds. Note that the inequality **3** is equivalent to

$$\angle(\xi_i, \xi_j) \geq \alpha_{i,j}.$$

4.2. Corollary. *For any geodesic dipolar tree in a nonnegatively curved Alexandrov space the following conditions hold:*

(a) *For any pair i and j , we have*

$$\alpha_{i,j} \leq \pi.$$

(b) *For any triple i, j and k , we have*

$$\alpha_{i,j} + \alpha_{j,k} + \alpha_{k,i} \leq 2\pi.$$

In other words, if X is a nonnegatively curved Alexandrov space then

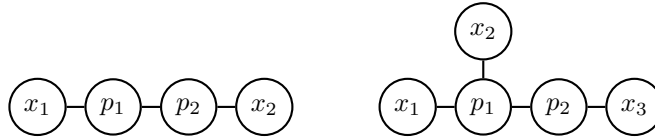
(a) *For any broken geodesic line $[p_1/x_1(p_2/x_2)]$ in X there is a pivotal tree $[\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{x}_1(\tilde{p}_2, \tilde{x}_2)]$ such that*

$$|\tilde{x}_1 - \tilde{x}_2|_{\mathbb{H}} \geq |x_1 - x_2|_X.$$

(b) *For any geodesic tree $[p_1/x_1x_2(p_2/x_3)]$ in X there is a pivotal tree $[\tilde{p}_1/\tilde{x}_1\tilde{x}_2(\tilde{p}_2/\tilde{x}_3)]$ such that*

$$|\tilde{x}_i - \tilde{x}_j|_{\mathbb{H}} \geq |x_i - x_j|_X.$$

for all i and j .



Proof; (a). Consider the pivotal tree $[\tilde{p}_1/\tilde{x}_1(\tilde{p}_2/\tilde{x}_2)]$ (which is a polygonal path) with $\angle(\tilde{\xi}_1, \tilde{\xi}_2) = \pi$. Note that the points $\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{x}_1, \tilde{p}_2, \tilde{x}_2$ are coplanar and the points \tilde{x}_1 and \tilde{x}_2 lie on the opposite sides from the line $(\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2)$. It remains to apply the rigidity lemma.

(b). By (a), we can assume that

$$\alpha_{1,3} + \alpha_{2,3} > \pi. \quad \textbf{4}$$

Consider the pivotal tree $[\tilde{p}_1/\tilde{x}_1\tilde{x}_2(\tilde{p}_2/\tilde{x}_3)]$ which lies in a 3-dimesional sub-space in such a way that the points \tilde{x}_1 and \tilde{x}_2 lie on the opposite sides from the plane containing $\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2, \tilde{x}_3$, and

$$\angle(\tilde{\xi}_1, \tilde{\xi}_3) = \alpha_{1,3}, \quad \angle(\tilde{\xi}_2, \tilde{\xi}_3) = \alpha_{2,3}.$$

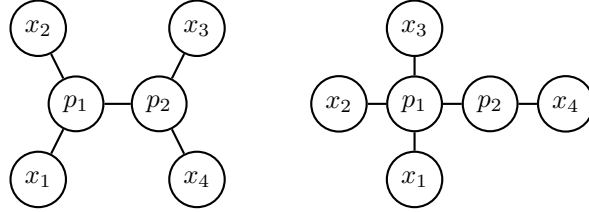
By **4**, the convex hull \tilde{K} of $\{\tilde{x}_1, \tilde{x}_2, \tilde{x}_3\}$. Note that \tilde{K} intersects the line $(\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2)$. It remains to apply the rigidity lemma. \square

Note that (a) and (b) implies that nonnegatively curved Alexandrov space satisfies 1(1)-tree and 2(1)-tree comparisons. However, 1(1)-tree comparison follows directly from the triangle inequality.

5 2(2)-tree and 3(1)-tree comparisons

5.1. Theorem. *Let X be an nonnegatively curved Alexandrov space. Then for any geodesic 2(2)-tree (or 3(1)-tree) there is a pivotal tree satisfying the corresponding tree comparison.*

In particular, any nonnegatively curved Alexandrov space satisfies the 2(2)-tree comparison as well as 3(1)-tree comparison.



The proofs in the two cases are identical.

Proof. Fix a geodesic tree $[p_1/x_1x_2(p_2/x_3x_4)]$ or $[p_1/x_1x_2x_3(p_2/x_4)]$.

Recall that p_1 and p_2 are the poles of the tree and each of remaining vertexes x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 are connected to one of the poles.

Define the values $\{\alpha_{i,j}\}$ for each pair i, j as in the previous section.

Fix a smooth monotonic function $\varphi: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ such that $\varphi(x) = 0$ if $x \geq 0$ and $\varphi(x) > 0$ if $x < 0$. Consider a configuration of 4 points $\tilde{\xi}_1, \tilde{\xi}_2, \tilde{\xi}_3, \tilde{\xi}_4$ in \mathbb{S}^3 which minimize the *energy*

$$E(\tilde{\xi}_1, \tilde{\xi}_2, \tilde{\xi}_3, \tilde{\xi}_4) = \sum_{i < j} \varphi(\angle(\tilde{\xi}_i, \tilde{\xi}_j) - \alpha_{i,j}).$$

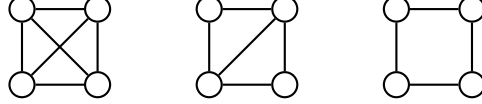
Consider the geodesic graph Γ with 4 vertexes $\tilde{\xi}_1, \tilde{\xi}_2, \tilde{\xi}_3, \tilde{\xi}_4$ in \mathbb{S}^3 , where $\tilde{\xi}_i$ is adjacent to $\tilde{\xi}_j$ if $\angle(\tilde{\xi}_i, \tilde{\xi}_j) < \alpha_{i,j}$. If the comparison does not hold then Γ is not empty.

Note that a vertex of Γ can not lie in an open hemisphere with all its adjacent vertexes. Indeed, if it would be the case then we could move this vertex

increasing the distances to all its adjacent vertexes. Along this move the energy decreases which is not possible.

Note that by Corollary 4.2, degree of any vertex is at least 2. Indeed existence of a vertex of degree 1 contradicts 4.2a and existence of a vertex of degree 0 contradicts 4.2b.

Therefore the graph Γ is isomorphic to one the following three graphs.



The 6-edge case (that is, the complete graph with 4 vertexes) can not appear by the rigidity lemma (see 4.1).

To do the remaining two cases, note that since the energy is minimal, the angle between the edges at every vertex of degree 2 of Γ has to be π . That is, the pair of edges at such vertex forms a geodesic.

Consider the 5-edge graph on the diagram. By the observation above the both triangles in the graph run along one equator. The latter contradicts Corollary 4.2b.

For the 4-edge graph (that is, for 4-cycle) by the same observation we have 4 points lie on the equator; moving the even pair to the north pole will decrease the energy, a contradiction. \square

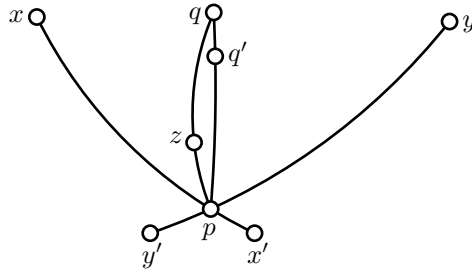
6 4(1)-tree comparison

In this section we will prove Theorem 1.2. Note that according to ???, it is sufficient to show that if a Riemannian manifold M satisfies 4(1)-tree comparison then it is CTIL and MTW. These two conditions will be proved separately.

Proof of CTIL. Assume the contrary; that is, there is $p \in M$ and $u, v \in \text{TIL}_p$ such that $w = \frac{1}{2} \cdot (u + v) \notin \text{TIL}_p$.

Let τ be the maximal value such that the geodesic $\gamma(t) = \exp_p(w \cdot t)$ is a length-minimizing on $[0, \tau]$. Set $w' = \tau \cdot w$. Note that $\tau < 1$ and $w' \in \partial \text{TIL}_p$.

Set $q = \exp_p w'$. By general position argument, we can assume that there are at least two minimizing geodesics connecting p to q ; see [4]. That is, there is $w'' \in \partial \text{TIL}_p$ such that $w'' \neq w'$ and $\exp_p w' = \exp_p w''$.



Fix small positive real numbers δ, ε and ζ . Consider the points

$$\begin{aligned} q' &= q'(\varepsilon) = \exp_p(1 - \varepsilon) \cdot w', & z &= z(\zeta) = \exp_p(\zeta \cdot w''), \\ x &= \exp_p u, & x' &= x'(\delta) = \exp_p(-\delta \cdot u), \\ y &= \exp_p v, & y' &= y'(\delta) = \exp_p(-\delta \cdot v). \end{aligned}$$

We will show that for some choice of δ, ε and ζ the $p/xx'yy'(q'/z)$ -tree comparison does not hold.

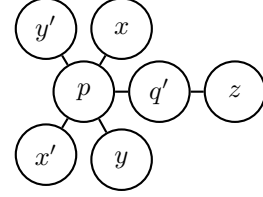
Assume contrary, that is, given any small positive numbers δ, ε and ζ , there is a point array $\tilde{p}, \tilde{x}, \tilde{x}'(\delta), \tilde{y}, \tilde{y}'(\delta), \tilde{q}'(\varepsilon), \tilde{z}(\zeta) \in \mathbb{H}$ as in the definition of T -tree comparison; that is, the distances between the points in this array are at least as big as the distances of corresponding points in M and the equality holds for the pair adjacent in $p/xx'yy'(q'/z)$.

Since δ is small, we can assume that p lies on a necessary unique minimizing geodesic $[x, x']_M$. Hence

$$|x - x'|_M = |x - p|_M + |p - x'|_M.$$

By comparison

$$\begin{aligned} |\tilde{x} - \tilde{x}'|_{\mathbb{H}} &\geq |x - x'|_M, \\ |\tilde{x} - \tilde{p}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |x - p|_M, \\ |\tilde{x}' - \tilde{p}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |x' - p|_M. \end{aligned}$$



By triangle inequality,

$$|\tilde{x} - \tilde{x}'|_{\mathbb{H}} = |\tilde{x} - \tilde{p}|_{\mathbb{H}} + |\tilde{x}' - \tilde{p}|_{\mathbb{H}};$$

that is, $\tilde{p} \in [\tilde{x}, \tilde{x}']_{\mathbb{H}}$. The same way we see that $\tilde{p} \in [\tilde{y}, \tilde{y}']_{\mathbb{H}}$.

Fix ε and ζ . Note that as $\delta \rightarrow 0$ we have

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{x}' &\rightarrow \tilde{p}, & \tilde{y}' &\rightarrow \tilde{p}, \\ \angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{x}'] &\rightarrow \angle[p \tilde{x}'], & \angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{y}'] &\rightarrow \angle[p \tilde{y}'], \\ \angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{q}'] &\rightarrow \angle[p \tilde{q}'], & \angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{q}'] &\rightarrow \angle[p \tilde{q}'], \end{aligned}$$

It follows that

$$\angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{x}] \rightarrow \angle[p \tilde{x}], \quad \angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{q}'] \rightarrow \angle[p \tilde{q}'], \quad \angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{y}] \rightarrow \angle[p \tilde{y}].$$

Therefore, passing to a partial limit as $\delta \rightarrow 0$, we get a configuration of 5 points $\tilde{p}, \tilde{x}, \tilde{y}, \tilde{q}' = \tilde{q}'(\varepsilon), \tilde{z} = \tilde{z}(\zeta)$ such that

$$\angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{x}] = \angle[p \tilde{x}], \quad \angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{y}] = \angle[p \tilde{y}], \quad \angle[\tilde{p} \tilde{q}'] = \angle[p \tilde{q}'].$$

In other words, the map sending 4 points $0, u, v, w' \in T_p$ to $\tilde{p}, \tilde{x}, \tilde{y}, \tilde{q} \in \mathbb{H}$ correspondingly is distance preserving.

Note that $q' \rightarrow q$ as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$. Therefore, in the limit, we get a configuration $\tilde{p}, \tilde{x}, \tilde{y}, \tilde{q}', \tilde{z} = \tilde{z}(\zeta)$ such that in addition we have

$$\begin{aligned} |\tilde{q}' - \tilde{z}| &= |q - z|, & |\tilde{p} - \tilde{z}| &\geq |p - z|, \\ |\tilde{x} - \tilde{z}| &\geq |x - p|, & |\tilde{y} - \tilde{z}| &\geq |y - z| \end{aligned}$$

Since $w'' \neq w'$, for small values ζ the last three inequalities imply

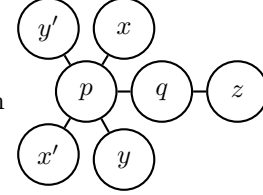
$$|\tilde{q}' - \tilde{z}| > |q - z|,$$

a contradiction.

Proof of MTW. Fix a hinge $[p_y^x]$ in M ; from above M is CTIL. Therefore $[p_y^x]$ has a median; denote it by $[p, q]$. For $\delta > 0$, define $x' = x'(\delta)$ and $y' = y'(\delta)$ as above.

Without loss of generality we can assume that $x, y \in \exp_p(\text{TIL}_p)$. If δ is small, the latter implies that p lies on unique minimizing geodesics $[x, x']$ and $[y, y']$.

Consider the limit case of $p/xx'yy'(q/z)$ -comparison as $\delta \rightarrow 0$. It gives a configuration of 5 points $\tilde{p}, \tilde{q}, \tilde{x}, \tilde{y}$ and \tilde{z} such that



$$\angle[\tilde{p}_{\tilde{y}}^{\tilde{x}}] = \angle[p_y^x],$$

\tilde{q} is the midpoint of $[\tilde{x}, \tilde{y}]$. In particular,

$$\begin{aligned} 2 \cdot |\tilde{z} - \tilde{q}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2 + |\tilde{q} - \tilde{x}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2 + |\tilde{q} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2 &= |\tilde{z} - \tilde{x}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2 + |\tilde{z} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2, \\ 2 \cdot |\tilde{p} - \tilde{q}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2 + |\tilde{q} - \tilde{x}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2 + |\tilde{q} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2 &= |\tilde{p} - \tilde{x}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2 + |\tilde{p} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}}^2, \end{aligned}$$

By the comparison,

$$\begin{aligned} |\tilde{z} - \tilde{x}|_{\mathbb{H}} &\geq |z - x|_M, & |\tilde{z} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}} &\geq |z - y|_M, \\ |\tilde{p} - \tilde{x}|_{\mathbb{H}} &\geq |p - x|_M, & |\tilde{p} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}} &\geq |p - y|_M, \\ |\tilde{q} - \tilde{x}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |q - x|_M, & |\tilde{q} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |q - y|_M, \\ |\tilde{q} - \tilde{z}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |q - z|_M, & |\tilde{q} - \tilde{p}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |q - p|_M, \end{aligned}$$

Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} 2 \cdot |z - q|_M^2 + |q - x|_M^2 + |q - y|_M^2 &\geq |z - x|_M^2 + |z - y|_M^2, \\ 2 \cdot |p - q|_M^2 + |q - x|_M^2 + |q - y|_M^2 &\leq |p - x|_M^2 + |p - y|_M^2. \end{aligned}$$

Hence the condition in 2.2 follows. \square

7 Pull-back convexity

7.1. Proposition. *Let $n \geq 4$ be an integer. A Riemannian manifold M satisfies $n(1)$ -tree comparison if and only if for any points $p, q \in M$ the following two conditions hold:*

- (a) *The set TIL_p is convex in the tangent space T_p .*
- (b) *The restriction*

$$f_{q,p} = \frac{1}{2} \cdot \text{dist}_q^2 \circ \exp_p|_{\text{TIL}_p}$$

is 1-concave.

Proof; “only if” part. It is sufficient to prove in the case $n = 4$. Assume M satisfies 4(1)-tree comparison.

Since 4(1)-tree comparison implies 3-tree comparison, M has nonnegative sectional curvature.

Fix $u, v \in \text{TIL}_p$ and $w \in [u, v]$. It is sufficient to show that if g is the function on $[u, v]$ on the segment which is uniquely defined by conditions: $g'' = 1$, $g(u) = f(u)$ and $g(w) = f(w)$ we will have that $g(v) \geq f(v)$.

Fix small $\varepsilon > 0$ and set

$$\begin{aligned} x &= \exp_p u, & y &= \exp_p v, & z &= \exp_p w, \\ x' &= \exp_p(-\varepsilon \cdot u), & y' &= \exp_p(-\varepsilon \cdot v) \end{aligned}$$

Let us apply $p/xyx'y'(z/q)$ comparison and pass to the limit as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$. We obtain points $\tilde{p}, \tilde{x}, \tilde{y}, \tilde{z}, \tilde{q} \in \mathbb{H}$, satisfying corresponding comparisons and such that

$$\angle[\tilde{p}\tilde{x}\tilde{y}] = \angle[p^x_y], \quad \angle[\tilde{p}\tilde{x}\tilde{z}] = \angle[p^x_z], \quad \angle[\tilde{p}\tilde{z}\tilde{y}] = \angle[p^z_y].$$

In particular, from above and Toponogov comparison, we have

$$\begin{aligned} |\tilde{x} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |u - v|_{T_p}, & |\tilde{z} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |w - v|_{T_p}, & |\tilde{x} - \tilde{z}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |u - w|_{T_p}, \\ |\tilde{q} - \tilde{z}|_{\mathbb{H}} &= |q - z|_M, & |\tilde{q} - \tilde{x}|_{\mathbb{H}} &\geq |q - x|_M, & |\tilde{q} - \tilde{y}|_{\mathbb{H}} &\geq |q - y|_M. \end{aligned}$$

Let $q^* \in \mathbb{H}$ be the point such that

$$|q^* - \tilde{z}| = |q - z|, \quad |q^* - \tilde{x}| = |q - x|$$

Let φ be an isometry between segments in $T_p M$ and \mathbb{H} such that $\varphi(u) = \tilde{x}$, $\varphi(v) = \tilde{y}$ and $\varphi(w) = \tilde{z}$.

Then we can take $g := \text{dist}_{q^*}^2 \circ \varphi$. We have, that $g'' = 1$ and

$$g(u) = |q^* - \tilde{x}|^2 = |q - x|^2 = f(u), \quad g(w) = |q^* - \tilde{z}|^2 = |q - z|^2 = f(w)$$

$$g(v) = |q^* - \tilde{y}|^2 = |q - y|^2 \geq f(v).$$

“If” part. Now assume M satisfies the conditions (a) and (b).

Note that condition (b) implies that $f = \frac{1}{2} \cdot \text{dist}_q^2$ is 1-concave at p . Since p is arbitrary, it follows that f is 1-concave. Further, since q is arbitrary, the manifold M has nonnegative sectional curvature.

Fix a geodesic tree $[p/x_1 \dots x_n(q/w)]$ in M . Set

$$\tilde{p} = 0 = \log_p p, \quad \tilde{q} = \log_p q, \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{x}_i = \log_p x_i$$

for each i .

Further set

$$h = \frac{1}{2} \cdot \text{dist}_w^2 \quad f = h \circ \exp_p|_{\text{TIL}_p}.$$

Since sectional curvature of M is nonnegative, the restriction $\exp_p|_{\text{TIL}_p}$ is short. In particular $|\nabla_{\tilde{q}} f| \leq |\nabla_q h|$. In particular, there is $z \in \mathbb{R}$ such that

$$z^2 + |\nabla_{\tilde{q}} f|^2 = |\nabla_q h|^2$$

Let us identify T_p with the subspace $\text{T}_p \times \{0\}$ in $\text{T}_p \times \mathbb{R}$. Set

$$\tilde{w} = (\tilde{q} - \nabla_{\tilde{q}} f, z) \in \text{T}_p \times \mathbb{R}.$$

By construction

$$|\tilde{w} - \tilde{q}|_{\text{T}_p \times \mathbb{R}} = |w - q|_M.$$

At the point \tilde{q} the functions $\tilde{f} = \frac{1}{2} \cdot \text{dist}_{\tilde{w}}^2$ and f have the same value and gradient. Since $f'' \leq 1$ and $\tilde{f}'' = 1$, we get $\tilde{f} \geq f$. The latter implies

$$|\tilde{w} - \tilde{p}|_{\text{T}_p \times \mathbb{R}} \geq |w - p|_M \quad \text{and} \quad |\tilde{w} - \tilde{x}_i|_{\text{T}_p \times \mathbb{R}} \geq |w - x_i|_M.$$

for any i .

Since $\text{T}_p \times \mathbb{R}$ admits an isometric embedding into the Hilbert space, we get the needed configuration. \square

8 All tree comparison

Proof of Theorem 1.3. The “if” part is left as an exercise; let us prove the “only if” part.

Fix a point array a_1, \dots, a_n in X . Consider the complete graph K_n with $\{1, \dots, n\}$ as the set of vertexes.

Let $\tilde{K}_n \rightarrow K_n$ be the universal covering of the complete graph K_n . Denote by \tilde{V} the set of vertexes of \tilde{K}_n ; given a vertex $\tilde{v} \in \tilde{V}$ denote by v the corresponding vertex of K_n .

Applying the tree comparison for finite subtrees in \tilde{K}_n and passing to a partial limit, we get the following:

(*) There is a map $f: \tilde{V} \rightarrow \mathbb{H}$ such that

$$|f(\tilde{v}) - f(\tilde{w})|_{\mathbb{H}} \geq |a_v - a_w|_X$$

for any two vertexes $\tilde{v}, \tilde{w} \in \tilde{V}$ and the equality holds if (\tilde{v}, \tilde{w}) is an edge in \tilde{K}_n .

This finish the proof if X is finite.

Since X is separable, it contains a countable everywhere dense set $\{a_1, a_2, \dots\}$. Applying the statement above for $X_n = \{a_1, \dots, a_n\}$, we get a submetry from $Y_n = f_n(\tilde{V}_n) \subset \mathbb{H}$ to X_n .

It remains to pass to the ulralimit Y of the subspaces Y_n . Clearly Y admits an isometric embedding into \mathbb{H} and it admits submetry on $Y \rightarrow X$. Hence the statement follows. \square

8.1. Proposition. *Suppose G be a compact Lie group with bi-invariant metric, so the action $G \times G \curvearrowright G$ defined by $(h_1, h_2) \cdot g = h_1 \cdot g \cdot h_2^{-1}$ is isometric. Then for any closed subgroup $H < G \times G$, the bi-quotient space $G//H$ satisfies multipolar comparison.*

As a result we have many examples of spaces satisfying all tree comparison; for example, since $\mathbb{S}^n = \mathrm{SO}(n)/\mathrm{SO}(n-1)$, any round sphere satisfies multipolar comparison.

We present a proof suggested by Alexander Lytchak, it is simplified version of the construction of Chuu-Lian Terng and Gudlaugur Thorbergsson given in [9, Section 4].

Proof of Proposition 1.4. Denote by G^n the direct product of n copies of G . Consider the map $\varphi_n: G^n \rightarrow G//H$ defined by

$$\varphi_n: (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n) \mapsto [\alpha_1 \cdots \alpha_n]_H,$$

where $[x]_H$ denotes the H -orbit of x in G .

Note that φ_n is a quotient map for the action of $H \times G^{n-1}$ on G^n defined by

$$(\beta_0, \dots, \beta_n) \cdot (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n) = (\gamma_1 \cdot \alpha_1 \cdot \beta_1^{-1}, \beta_1 \cdot \alpha_2 \cdot \beta_2^{-1}, \dots, \beta_{n-1} \cdot \alpha_n \cdot \beta_n^{-1}),$$

where $\beta_i \in G$ and $(\beta_0, \beta_n) \in H < G \times G$.

Denote by ρ_n the product metric on G^n rescaled with factor \sqrt{n} . Note that the quotient $(G^n, \rho_n)/(H \times G^{n-1})$ is isometric to $G//H = (G, \rho_1)//H$.

As $n \rightarrow \infty$ the curvature of (G^n, ρ_n) converges to zero and its injectivity radius goes to infinity. Therefore passing to the ultra-limit of G^n as $n \rightarrow \infty$ we get the Hilbert space. It remains to observe that the limit action has the required property. \square

9 Final remarks

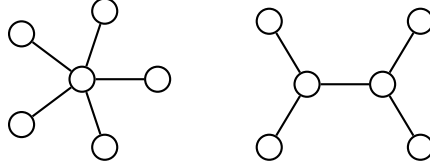
The following problem discussed in [1, 7.1] was one of the original motivations to study the tree comparison.

9.1. Problem. *Which finite metric spaces admit isometric embeddings into Alexandrov spaces with nonnegative curvature.*

The problem is still open. According to [1, 4.1], the $(n - 1)$ -tree comparison provides a necessary condition for the problem n -point metric spaces. This condition is sufficient for the 4-point metric spaces. It might be still sufficient for 5-point metric spaces, but not for 6-point metric spaces.

The corresponding example of 6-point metric space was constructed by Sergei Ivanov, see [1]. Theorem 5.1, provides a source for such examples — any 6-point metric space which satisfy all 5-tree comparisons, but does not satisfy 2(2)-tree comparison provide an example. This class of examples includes the example of Sergei Ivanov — in the notations of [1, 7.1] it does not satisfies the comparison for the tree $y/az(q/xb)$.

We expect that the 5-tree and 2(2)-tree comparisons (these are the comparisons for the trees on the diagram) are sufficient for 6-point metric spaces.



Here an other candidate for a sufficient condition.

9.2. Question. *Assume F is a finite metric space which satisfies all tree comparisons. Is it true that F is isometric to a subset of Alexandrov space with nonpositive curvature?*

Note that even for finite metric space the all tree comparison has to be checked for infinite set of trees since one point of the space may be used as a label for several vertexes in the tree.

There is a chance that for 5-point and 6-point metric spaces, this condition is also necessary. Since there nonnegatively curved Riemannian manifolds which are not cost-convex, Theorem 1.2 implies that this condition can not be necessary for 7-point metric spaces.

For any metric space X with an isometric group action $G \curvearrowright X$ with closed orbits the quotient map $X \rightarrow X/G$ is a submetry. In particular, by Theorem 1.3, if $G \curvearrowright \mathbb{H}$ is an isometric action with closed orbits on the Hilbert space, then the quotient space \mathbb{H}/G satisfies all tree comparisons.

9.3. Question. *Assume X is a metric space satisfying all tree comparisons. Is it always possible to construct an isometric group action with closed orbits on the Hilbert space $G \curvearrowright \mathbb{H}$ such that X is isometric to a subset in \mathbb{H}/G ?*

Assume M is nonnegatively curved Riemannian manifold and $G \curvearrowright M$ is an isometric action with closed orbits. Then the quotient space $A = M/G$ is an Alexandrov space. It is easy to see that all singular points of A form an extremal set.

9.4. Question. *Is it true that the same holds for all Alexandrov spaces which satisfy 4(1)-tree comparison (or all dipolar tree comparisons)?*

In particular, is it true that the space of directions at any isolated singularity in such Alexandrov space has diameter at most $\frac{\pi}{2}$?

If instead of the Hilbert space \mathbb{H} we use infinite dimensional sphere or infinite dimensional hyperbolic space we will arrive to spherical and hyperbolic tree comparisons. Theorem 5.1 admits a straightforward generalization to these analogs of tree comparisons.

The spherical 4(1)-tree comparison implies the strict version of the condition MTW+CTIL and therefore implies CTP.

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