

Higher regularity of high-codimensional disk-type surfaces minimising a Finsler area

Part I

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Advisor: Heiko von der Mosel

1st Geometric Analysis Festival
Organised by Hojoo Lee

February 2021



1. Setting

- Finsler manifolds
- Busemann–Hausdorff area functional \mathcal{A}_F
- Plateau problem for \mathcal{A}_F

2. Existence of Busemann–Hausdorff area minimisers

- Hildebrandt/von der Mosel framework for Cartan functionals
- How does \mathcal{A}_F fit into the Cartan theory?

Let M^m and N^n be smooth manifolds, $u: M \rightarrow N$ an immersion or embedding.

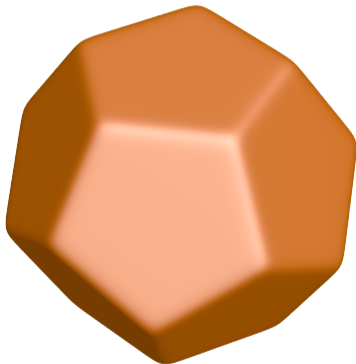
	M	N
Riem. or Finsler metrics	\bar{g}, \bar{F}	g, F
points	p or x	q or y
local coordinates	(x^1, \dots, x^m)	

In the final results always choose

- $m = 2$,
- $M = D \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ unit disk,
- $N = \mathbb{R}^n$.

Morally speaking:

Finsler metric = smooth family of smooth norms on tangent bundle.



This smoothed dodecahedron generates a Finsler metric on \mathbb{R}^3 .

A **Finsler metric** on N is a function $F: TN \rightarrow [0, \infty)$ s.t.:

(F1) *Regularity*: $F \in C^k(TN \setminus \{0\}) \cap C^0(TN)$, $k \in \{2, 3, \dots, +\infty\}$.

(F2) *Positive 1-homogeneity*: $F(q, tv) = tF(q, v)$ for all $t > 0$, $(q, v) \in TN$.

(F3) *Ellipticity*: For any $(q, u) \in TN \setminus \{0\}$ the “first fundamental form”

$$g_{q,u}^F(v, w) = \left. \frac{d^2}{dt ds} \right|_{t,s=0} \frac{1}{2} F(q, u + tv + sw)^2$$

describes a scalar product (which depends on (q, u) !).

A Finsler metric is **reversible** if $F(q, v) = F(q, -v)$ for all $(q, v) \in TN$.


Busemann–Hausdorff area functional

Suppose g is an auxiliary Riemannian metric **on the target** N .

Define the **Riemannian volume** of N by

$$\text{Vol}(N) = \int_N \mu_g.$$

Riemannian volume density



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$$\text{Vol}_F(N) = \int_N w_{F,g} \mu_g$$

Riemannian volume density

where $w_{F,g}$ is the weight function defined by

$$w_{F,g}(q) = \frac{\mathcal{L}_{g_q}^n(\text{ball})}{\mathcal{L}_{g_q}^n(\text{polytope})}$$

= Ω_m for all g !

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Define the **Busemann–Hausdorff area** of $u: M \rightarrow N$ by

$$\mathcal{A}_F(u) = \text{Vol}_{u^*F}(M).$$

Lemma: Vol_F (and thus \mathcal{A}_F) is independent of the choice of g !

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Sketch of proof:

Given Riemannian metrics $g, h \in \Sigma^2(T'N)$ there is a smooth bundle isomorphism $E: TN \rightarrow TN$ such that for all vector fields $X, Y \in \mathfrak{X}(N)$

$$g(X, Y) = h(EX, EY).$$

Lemma: \mathcal{A}_F is independent of the choice of g !

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The induced volume densities and Lebesgue measures transform via

$$\begin{aligned}\mu_g &= \det(E) \mu_h \\ \mathcal{L}_g^n &= \det(E) \mathcal{L}_h^n.\end{aligned}$$

Thus,

$$\int_N \frac{\Omega_n}{\mathcal{L}_g^n(B_F)} \mu_g = \int_N \frac{\Omega_n}{\mathcal{L}_h^n(B_F)} \mu_h.$$

A representation formula for \mathcal{A}_F

Let $\bar{F} = u^\# F$ and $\bar{g} = u^\# g$. Then

$$\mathcal{A}_F(u) = \int_M \frac{\Omega_m}{\mathcal{L}_{\bar{g}_p}^m(B_{\bar{F}_p})} \mu_{\bar{g}}|_p.$$

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In local coordinates (x^1, \dots, x^m) around $p \in M$:

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{\Omega_m}{\mathcal{L}_{\bar{g}_p}^m(B_{\bar{F}_p})} \mu_{\bar{g}}|_p \\ & \xrightarrow{\text{isometric}} \frac{\Omega_m}{\mathcal{H}_{g_{u(p)}}^m(B_{F_{u(p)}} \cap du_p(T_p M))} \mu_{\bar{g}}|_p \end{aligned}$$

$(M, \bar{g}) \xrightarrow{u} (u(M), g)$ isometric
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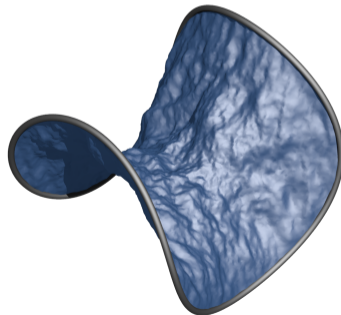
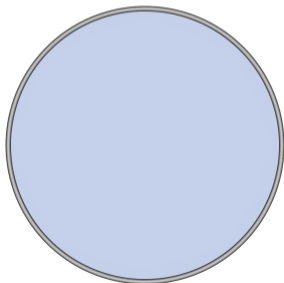
Plateau problem

Given a Jordan curve $\Gamma \subset \mathbb{R}^n$, is there a disk-type surface $u: D \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^n$ such that

$$\mathcal{A}_F(u) = \inf_{S(\Gamma)} \mathcal{A}_F$$

in the class of competing surfaces

$$S(\Gamma) = \left\{ u \in W^{1,2}(D; \mathbb{R}^n) : u|_{\partial D} \text{ parametrises } \Gamma \text{ weakly monotonically} \right\}?$$



Existence of Busemann–Hausdorff area minimisers

Let $M = D$, F a Finsler and g a Riemannian metric on $N = \mathbb{R}^n$ s.t.

$$c_F |v|_{g_q} \leq F(q, v) \leq C_F |v|_{g_q} \quad \text{for all } (q, v) \in T\mathbb{R}^n$$

and suppose F satisfies a certain symmetrisation assumption \dagger .

- Then any given rectifiable Jordan curve $\Gamma \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ bounds a *g -conformally parametrised* surface $u \in \mathcal{S}(\Gamma)$ which *minimises* \mathcal{A}_F of *lower regularity*

$$C^0(\bar{D}; \mathbb{R}^n) \cap C^{0,\alpha}(D; \mathbb{R}^n) \cap W_{\text{loc}}^{1,q}(D; \mathbb{R}^n)$$

for $\alpha := (c_F/C_F)^2 \in (0, 1]$ and some $q > 2$.

$\dagger F_{\text{sym}}(q, v) = (1/2(F(q, v)^{-2} + F(q, -v)^{-2}))^{-1/2}$ is also a Finsler metric

Suppose $u: M = D \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^n = N$. A **Cartan functional** is of the form

$$\mathcal{E}(u) = \int_D E\left(u, \frac{\partial u}{\partial x^1} \wedge \frac{\partial u}{\partial x^2}\right) dx^1 dx^2$$

where the **Cartan density** $E \in C^0(\mathbb{R}^n \times \wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n)$ is

- positively 1-homogeneous,
- convex
- and of linear growth: $m_1 |\sigma|_{\wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n} \leq E(q, \sigma) \leq m_2 |\sigma|_{\wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n}$

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- Convexity and linear growth of $E \Rightarrow$ weak lower semicontinuity of \mathcal{E} in $W^{1,2}$
 - Indeed:
 E convex $\Rightarrow e(u, du) = E\left(u, \frac{\partial u}{\partial x^1} \wedge \frac{\partial u}{\partial x^2}\right)$ polyconvex (and thus, quasiconvex)

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- The three above conditions on E guarantee existence of \mathcal{E} -minimisers.

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- The three above conditions on E guarantee existence of \mathcal{E} -minimisers.
- Further conditions yield higher interior regularity and also regularity at the boundary.
- Cartan functionals were investigated by Hildebrandt and von der Mosel ['99-'09].

\mathcal{A}_F as a Cartan functional

For some auxiliary Riemannian metric g **on the target** N , consider the function

$A_{F,g}: \bigwedge_s^m TN \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ defined by

$$A_{F,g}(q, \sigma) = \frac{\Omega_m}{\mathcal{H}_{g_q}^m(B_{F_q} \cap \langle \sigma \rangle)} |\sigma|_{g_q, \bigwedge^m T_q N}$$

This is the Euclidean
area integrand

where $\langle \sigma \rangle = \{v \in T_q N : \sigma \wedge v = 0\}$ is the m -dimensional subspace of $T_q N$ spanned by σ .

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By the representation formula for \mathcal{A}_F in local coordinates at p ,

$$\mathcal{A}_F(u) = \int_M A_{F,g}\left(u(p), \frac{\partial u}{\partial x^1} \Big|_p \wedge \dots \wedge \frac{\partial u}{\partial x^m} \Big|_p\right) dx^1 \dots dx^m.$$

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The integrand $A_{F,g}: \wedge_s^m TN \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is

- absolutely 1-homogeneous
- convexly extendible to $\wedge^m TN$
 - for $n = m + 1$ due to [Busemann '49]
 - for $m = 2, n \in \mathbb{N}$ due to [Burago, Ivanov '12]

in the second argument.

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 S. Hildebrandt, H. von der Mosel
On two-dimensional parametric variational problems.
Calc. Var. 9 (1999), 249–267

 S. Hildebrandt, H. von der Mosel
Dominance functions for parametric Lagrangians.
Geometric analysis and nonlinear partial differential equations, Springer 2002, 297–326.

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Plateau's problem for parametric double integrals. I. Existence and regularity in the interior.
Comm. Pure Appl. Math. 56 (2003), 926–955

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J. reine angew. Math. 565 (2003), 207–233



A. Lytchak, S. Wenger

Energy and area minimizers in metric spaces.

Adv. Calc. Var. 10 (2017), 407-421



A. Lytchak, S. Wenger

Area minimizing discs in metric spaces.

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P. Creutz

Plateau's problem for singular curves.

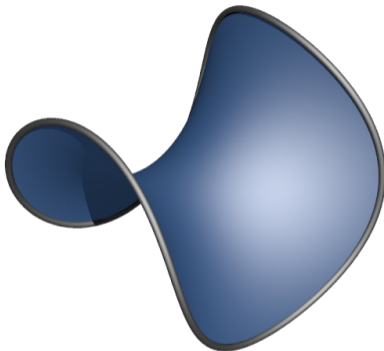
Comm. Anal. Geom., to appear



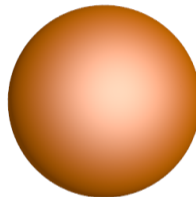
P. Creutz, M. Fitzi

The Plateau-Douglas problem for singular configurations and in general metric spaces.

Preprint (arXiv:2008.08922)

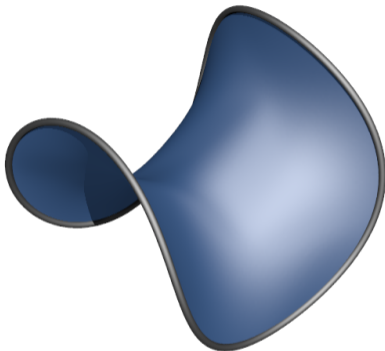


Minimising surface



Finsler unit ball

Numerical framework due to Henrik Schumacher
Created with WOLFRAM MATHEMATICA 11
Rendered with POV-Ray 3.7

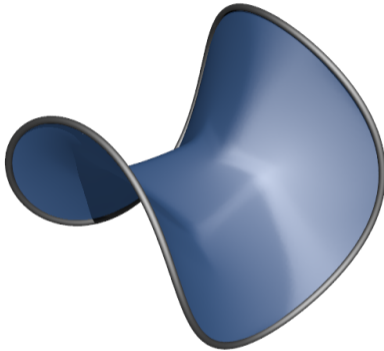


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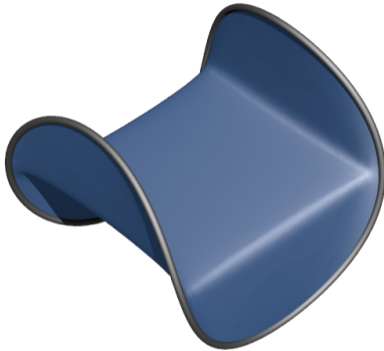


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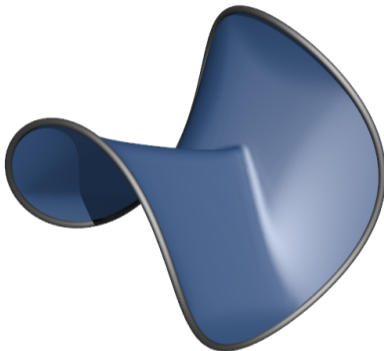


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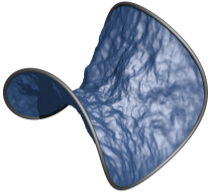


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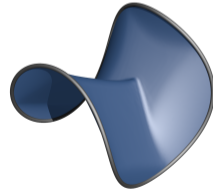
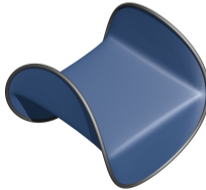
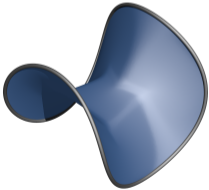


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See you in part II of the lecture series!



Higher regularity of high-codimensional disk-type surfaces minimising a Finsler area

Part II

Sven Pistre

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- 1. Higher regularity via the framework for Cartan functionals**
- 2. Ingredient: Perfect dominance functions**
- 3. Ingredient: Radon transform**

Higher regularity via the framework for Cartan functionals

Theorem [Overath, von der Mosel '13]

In codimension 1:

Let $M = D$, F a Finsler metric on $N = \mathbb{R}^3$ and $g = \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_{\mathbb{R}^3}$.

There is a constant $c > 0$ s.t.

■ If

$$\sup_{q \in \mathbb{R}^3} \left\| F(q, \cdot) - |\cdot|_{\mathbb{R}^3} \right\|_{C^2(\mathbb{S}^2)} < c,$$

then every conformal minimiser u of \mathcal{A}_F in $\mathcal{S}(\Gamma)$ is of class

$$W_{\text{loc}}^{2,2}(D; \mathbb{R}^3) \cap C^{1,\mu}(D; \mathbb{R}^3)$$

for some $\mu \in (0, 1)$.

In arbitrary codimension:

Let $M = D$, F a Finsler metric on $N = \mathbb{R}^n$ and g a Riemannian metric.

There is a constant $c = c(g, N) > 0$ s.t.

■ If

$$\sup_{q \in \mathbb{R}^n} \llbracket F(q, \cdot) - |\cdot|_{g_q} \rrbracket_{C^2(\mathbb{S}_{g_q}^{n-1})} < c,$$

then every g -conformal minimiser u of \mathcal{A}_F in $\mathcal{S}(\Gamma)$ is of class

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Theorem ?

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$$\|F - |\cdot|_g\|_{C^2(\mathcal{S}(TN))} < c,$$

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Ingredient: Perfect dominance functions

Theorem [Hildebrandt, von der Mosel '03]

Suppose \mathcal{E} is a Cartan functional with Cartan density E ,
i.e. $E \in C^0(\mathbb{R}^n \times \wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n)$ is

- positively 1-homogeneous,
- convex,
- and of linear growth.

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Suppose \mathcal{E} is a Cartan functional with Cartan density E ,
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- convex,
- and of linear growth.

Then every conformal minimiser u of \mathcal{E} in $\mathcal{S}(\Gamma)$ is of class

$$W_{\text{loc}}^{2,2}(D; \mathbb{R}^n) \cap C^{1,\mu}(D; \mathbb{R}^n)$$

for some $\mu \in (0, 1)$, **if the Cartan density E**

- is of class $C^2(\mathbb{R}^n \times (\wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{0\}))$
- **and it possesses a *perfect dominance function*.**

Definition: Dominance functions

A function $D \in C^0(\mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}^{n \times 2})$ is a **dominance function** for an Cartan density $E \in C^0(\mathbb{R}^n \times \wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n)$ if

- $E(q, P_1 \wedge P_2) \leq D(q, P)$ for all $q \in \mathbb{R}^n$ and $P = (P_1, P_2) \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times 2}$,
- $E(q, P_1 \wedge P_2) = D(q, (P_1, P_2))$ if and only if $|P_1|_{\mathbb{R}^n}^2 = |P_2|_{\mathbb{R}^n}^2$ and $\langle P_1, P_2 \rangle_{\mathbb{R}^n} = 0$,

and in the second argument the dominance function D is

- positively 2-homogeneous,
- and of **quadratic** growth: $\mu_1 |P|_{\mathbb{R}^{n \times 2}}^2 \leq D(q, P) \leq \mu_2 |P|_{\mathbb{R}^{n \times 2}}^2$.

Definition: Dominance functions

A function $D \in C^0(\mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}^{n \times 2})$ is a **dominance function** for an Cartan density $E \in C^0(\mathbb{R}^n \times \wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n)$ if

- $E(q, P_1 \wedge P_2) \leq D(q, P)$ for all $q \in \mathbb{R}^n$ and $P = (P_1, P_2) \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times 2}$,
- $E(q, P_1 \wedge P_2) = D(q, (P_1, P_2))$ if and only if $|P_1|_{\mathbb{R}^n}^2 = |P_2|_{\mathbb{R}^n}^2$ and $\langle P_1, P_2 \rangle_{\mathbb{R}^n} = 0$,

and in the second argument the dominance function D is

- positively 2-homogeneous,
- and of **quadratic** growth: $\mu_1 |P|_{\mathbb{R}^{n \times 2}}^2 \leq D(q, P) \leq \mu_2 |P|_{\mathbb{R}^{n \times 2}}^2$.

A dominance function D is called **perfect** if

- $D \in C^2(\mathbb{R}^n \times (\mathbb{R}^{n \times 2} \setminus \{0\}))$ and
- for $R > 0$ there is $\lambda(R) > 0$ s.t. for all $|q|_{\mathbb{R}^n} < R$ the function

$$P \mapsto D(q, P) - \lambda(R) \frac{1}{2} |P|_{\mathbb{R}^{n \times 2}}^2$$

is convex (i.e. $D(q, \cdot)$ is $\lambda(R)$ -convex).

Theorem [Hildebrandt, von der Mosel '03]

Suppose $E \in C^2(\mathbb{R}^n \times (\wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{0\}))$ is positively 1-homogeneous, of linear growth (with constants m_1 and m_2) and **uniformly elliptic**, i.e. there is $\lambda > 0$ s.t. for all $q \in \mathbb{R}^n$ the function

$$\sigma \mapsto E(q, \sigma) - \lambda |\sigma|_{\wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n}$$

is convex.

Then for every $k > k_0(m_1, m_2, \lambda)$ † the **new** integrand

$$(q, \sigma) \mapsto E(q, \sigma) + k |\sigma|_{\wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n}$$

possesses a perfect dominance function.

This is the Euclidean area integrand

† $k_0(m_1, m_2, \lambda) = 2m_2 - \min(2\lambda, m_1)$

Corollary [Overath, von der Mosel '13]

Suppose E is as before and

$$\sup_{q \in \mathbb{R}^n} \llbracket E(q, \cdot) - |\cdot|_{\wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^n} \rrbracket_{C^2(\mathbb{S}^{\binom{n}{2}-1})} < \frac{1}{5}$$

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then E **itself** possesses a perfect dominance function.

Ingredient: Radon transform

Goal

For $m = 2$ and $N = \mathbb{R}^n$:

Show that the integrand $A_{F,g}: \wedge_s^2 T\mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ of \mathcal{A}_F satisfies

- (i) $A_{F,g} \in C^2(\wedge_s^2 T\mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{0\})$,
- (ii) $A_{F,g}$ is uniformly elliptic
- (iii) and $\sup_{q \in \mathbb{R}^n} \llbracket A_{F,g}(q, \cdot) - |\cdot|_{g_q, \wedge^2 T_q \mathbb{R}^n} \rrbracket_{C^2(\mathbb{S}_{g_q}^{(n)-1})} < \frac{1}{5}$.

Compare condition (iii) to the smallness condition on

$$\sup_{q \in \mathbb{R}^n} \llbracket F(q, \cdot) - |\cdot|_{g_q} \rrbracket_{C^2(\mathbb{S}_{g_q}^{n-1})}$$

in the main theorem.

These three goals can be achieved by using functional analytic properties of the so-called **Radon transform**.

Motivation: An easy calculation

Recall from earlier for $\sigma \in \wedge_s^m T_q N$:

$$A_{F,g}(q, \sigma) = \frac{\Omega_m}{\mathcal{H}_{g_q}^m(B_{F_q} \cap \langle \sigma \rangle)} |\sigma|_{g_q, \wedge^m T_q N}.$$

Using spherical coordinates in the m -dim. Hilbert space $(\langle \sigma \rangle, g_q|_{\langle \sigma \rangle})$:

$$\mathcal{H}_{g_q}^m(B_{F_q} \cap \langle \sigma \rangle) = \int_{\mathbb{S}_{g_q|_{\langle \sigma \rangle}}^{m-1}} \int_0^\infty \chi_{B_{F_q} \cap \langle \sigma \rangle}(s\theta) s^{m-1} ds d\mathcal{H}_{g_q}^{m-1}(\theta).$$

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$$\frac{\mathcal{H}_{g_q}^m(B_{F_q} \cap \langle \sigma \rangle)}{\Omega_m} = \frac{1}{m\Omega_m} \int_{\mathbb{S}_{g_q|_{\langle \sigma \rangle}}^{m-1}} F(q, \cdot)^{-m} d\mathcal{H}_{g_q}^{m-1}$$

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$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\mathcal{H}_{g_q}^m(B_{F_q} \cap \langle \sigma \rangle)}{\Omega_m} &= \frac{1}{m\Omega_m} \int_{\mathbb{S}_{g_q|_{\langle \sigma \rangle}}^{m-1}} F(q, \cdot)^{-m} d\mathcal{H}_{g_q}^{m-1} \\ &\stackrel{(\langle \sigma \rangle, g_q|_{\langle \sigma \rangle}) \hookrightarrow (T_q M, g_q) \text{ isometry}}{=} \frac{1}{\omega_{m-1}} \int_{\mathbb{S}_{g_q}^{m-1} \cap \langle \sigma \rangle} F(q, \cdot)^{-m} d\mathcal{H}_{g_q}^{m-1}. \end{aligned}$$

The Radon transform: Definition

Let Gr_m^n denote the Grassmannian, the set of m -dimensional subspaces of \mathbb{R}^n .

The linear operator $\mathcal{R}: C^0(\mathbb{S}^{n-1}) \rightarrow C^0(\text{Gr}_m^n)$ defined by

$$\mathcal{R}[f](E) = \frac{1}{\omega_{m-1}} \int_{\mathbb{S}^{n-1} \cap E} f \, d\mathcal{H}^{m-1}$$

is called the **Radon transform** on \mathbb{R}^n .

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Corollary

The area integrand $A_{F,g}$ satisfies

$$A_{F,g}(q, \sigma) = \frac{1}{\mathcal{R}_g[F(q, \cdot)^{-m}](\langle \sigma \rangle)} |\sigma|_{gq, \wedge^m T_q N}.$$

- Downside to using $A_{F,g}$:
In high codimension the base space $\wedge_s^m TN$ is a bundle of cones and difficult to handle.
- Benefits of the Radon transform:
Base spaces \mathbb{S}^{n-1} and Gr_m^n are homogeneous $O(n)$ -spaces with a lot of algebraic and geometric structure.
- By the Plücker embedding both base spaces are related via

$$\text{Gr}_m^n \cong \left(\mathbb{S}(\wedge^m \mathbb{R}^n) \cap \wedge_s^m \mathbb{R}^n \right) / \mathbb{Z}_2.$$

The Radon transform: Properties

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Lemma ($O(n)$ -Equivariance)

For any $f \in C^0(\mathbb{S}^{n-1})$ and $Q \in O(n)$:

$$\mathcal{R}[f] \circ Q = \mathcal{R}[f \circ Q].$$

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Taking derivative at $Q = \text{Id}_{\mathbb{R}^n}$ leads to:

Theorem (Differentiability)

Suppose $f \in C^1(\mathbb{S}^{n-1})$. Then $\mathcal{R}[f] \in C^1(\text{Gr}_m(\mathbb{R}^n))$ and for all $X \in \mathfrak{o}(n)$:

$$d(\mathcal{R}[f])(\mathcal{K}_X) = \mathcal{R}[df(\mathcal{K}_X)].$$


 Fundamental vector fields generated by $O(n)$ -actions

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Theorem (Higher differentiability)

For any $k \geq 0$ the Radon transform

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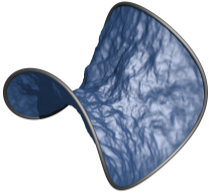
Theorem (Invertibility, [Helgason, '90])

The Radon transform (restricted to *even* functions on the sphere) is an invertible[†] operator.

[†]Helgason gives an explicit inversion formula

- We needed to prove three properties for the area integrand $A_{F,g}$ to apply the theorems of Hildebrandt/von der Mosel:
 - (i) $A_{F,g} \in C^2(\wedge_s^2 T\mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{0\})$,
→ Use higher differentiability of \mathcal{R}
 - (ii) $A_{F,g}$ is uniformly elliptic
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 - (iii) and $\sup_{q \in \mathbb{R}^n} \left\| [A_{F,g}(q, \cdot) - |\cdot|_{g_q, \wedge^2 T_q \mathbb{R}^n}] \right\|_{C^2(\mathbb{S}_{g_q}^{\binom{n}{2}-1})} < \frac{1}{5}$.
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- The main difficulty in high codimension is that $\wedge_s^m TN$ is not a **vector** bundle!
- Use the Radon transform and exploit the nice algebraic structure of the base spaces!



Thank you for your attention!

