LUSTERNIK–SCHNIRELMANN THEORY FOR FIXED POINTS OF MAPS

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Abstract. We use the ideas of Lusternik–Schnirelmann theory to describe the set of fixed points of certain homotopy equivalences of a general space. In fact, we extend Lusternik–Schnirelmann theory to pairs (φ, f), where φ is a homotopy equivalence of a topological space X and where $f\colon X \to \mathbb{R}$ is a continuous function satisfying $f(\varphi(x)) < f(x)$ unless $\varphi(x) = x$; in addition, the pair (φ, f) is supposed to satisfy a discrete analogue of the Palais–Smale condition. In order to estimate the number of fixed points of φ in a subset of X, we consider different relative categories. Moreover, the theory is carried out in an equivariant setting.

1. Introduction

The Lusternik–Schnirelmann category $\operatorname{cat}_X A$ of a subset A of a topological space X is the minimal number of open and in X contractible sets which cover A. If some category $\operatorname{cat}_X A$ is not finite, i.e., infinite or indefinite, we write $\operatorname{cat}_X A = \infty$. For notational convenience we agree that $\infty \geq \infty$, $\infty + \infty \geq \infty$ and $\infty + n \geq \infty$, $\infty \geq n$ for every $n \in \mathbb{Z}$. Given a family a_λ, $\lambda \in \Lambda$, of elements of $\{0, 1, 2, \dots\} \cup \{\infty\}$ we define

$$\sum_{\lambda \in \Lambda} a_\lambda \;=\; \sup_F \sum_{\lambda \in F} a_\lambda \;\leq\; \infty$$

where F runs over all finite subsets of Λ.

We set $\operatorname{cat} X = \operatorname{cat}_X X$. The basic Lusternik–Schnirelmann theorem is:

> The number of critical points of any smooth function on a closed manifold M is at least $\operatorname{cat} M$.

This result is a consequence of the estimate

$$\text{(a)} \qquad \sum_{d \in \mathbb{R}} \operatorname{cat}_M \left(K \cap f^{-1}(d)\right) \;\geq\; \operatorname{cat} M$$

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valid for any smooth function f on M and its set of critical points K. Somewhat stronger consequences of (a) are

(b) K is infinite or f has at least $\operatorname{cat} M$ critical levels

provided that M is connected, and, as we will prove,

(c) $$\operatorname{cat} K \geq \operatorname{cat} M$$

provided that $f(K)$ is a discrete subset of $\mathbb{R}$.

A version of the estimate (a) is already contained in the fundamental work [15]. Indeed, Lusternik and Schnirelmann considered the invariant $\overline{\operatorname{cat}}_X A$ which is defined as the minimal number of *closed* and in X contractible sets which cover A, and proved (a) in terms of this invariant. As we shall see in Proposition 4.3, $\overline{\operatorname{cat}}_M A = \operatorname{cat}_M A$ for any closed subset A of a manifold M, and so (a) follows. The invariant $\operatorname{cat}_X A$ was first considered by Fox [10]; its use is now common practice, cf. [4, 6, 9, 11, 24]. In order to obtain the most general results of this paper, we need to work with $\operatorname{cat}_X A$.

The estimates (a) and (b) have been generalized to a class of Banach manifolds M and functions $f \colon M \to \mathbb{R}$ which satisfy the Palais–Smale condition [20], and more recently, versions for continuous functions on certain metric spaces have been found [4]. The estimates (a), (b) and (c) generalize into yet another direction: Notice that a smooth function on a closed manifold endowed with any Riemannian metric decreases along the trajectories of its negative gradient flow. Generalizing this situation, one says that a flow $\{\varphi_t\}$ on a topological space X is *gradient-like* if there exists a continuous function $f \colon X \to \mathbb{R}$ such that $f(\varphi_t(x)) < f(\varphi_s(x))$ whenever $t > s$ and x is not a rest point of $\{\varphi_t\}$. Since the critical points of a smooth function on a closed manifold are precisely the rest points of any of its negative gradient flows, the basic Lusternik–Schnirelmann theorem is a consequence of the following result (cf., e.g., [17]).

> The number of rest points of any gradient-like flow on a compact topological space X with $\operatorname{cat} X$ finite is at least $\operatorname{cat} X$.

As we shall see, also (a), (b) and (c) follow from their versions for the set of rest points of a gradient-like flow on a compact space.

In this paper, Lusternik–Schnirelmann theory is extended to a more general situation. Starting from the observation that the rest points of a gradient-like flow $\{\varphi_t\}$ are precisely the fixed points of each of its maps φ_t, $t \neq 0$, we develop a variant of Lusternik–Schnirelmann theory for fixed points of maps. Consider a topological space X and a continuous map $\varphi\colon X \to X$. Following [1] we call a continuous function $f\colon X \to \mathbb{R}$ a *Lyapunov function* for φ if $f(\varphi(x)) \le f(x)$ for all $x \in X$.

1.1. **Definition** (Condition (D))**.** Consider a topological space X and a continuous map $\varphi\colon X \to X$. Assume that f is a Lyapunov function for φ. We say that the pair (φ, f) satisfies condition (D) on the subspace $Y \subset X$ if the following two conditions hold.

- (D_1) For all $y \in Y$ we have $f(\varphi(y)) < f(y)$ unless $\varphi(y) = y$.
- (D_2) If A is a subset of Y on which f is bounded but on which $f(y) - f(\varphi(y))$ is not bounded away from zero, then there is a fixed point of φ in the closure of A.

1.2. **Remarks. 1.** If the closure of Y is compact or if the restriction of f to the closure of Y is a proper function, then the pair (φ, f) satisfies condition (D_2) whenever it satisfies condition (D_1).

2. In [1] a function as in (D_1) is called a *strict Lyapunov function* for φ on Y. A necessary condition for the existence of such a function for a map φ on X is that all its non-wandering points are fixed points. If φ is a homeomorphism of a compact metric space, then this condition is nearly sufficient, see [1, p. 33] as well as [7, 4.4].

3. Condition (D_2) is a discrete analogue of the Palais–Smale condition for C^1 functions on Banach manifolds. Indeed, we will show in Proposition 9.1 that in the case of a Hilbert manifold, condition (D) generalizes the Palais–Smale condition. ◇

A topological space X is called *weakly locally contractible* if each point of X has a neighborhood which is contractible in X. Observe that this property is equivalent to $\operatorname{cat} X$ being definite. A space X is called *binormal* if $X \times [0,1]$ (and hence X) is normal. In particular, every metric space and every compact space is binormal. A space X is called an *absolute neighborhood retract* (ANR) if for each closed subset Z of a normal space Y every continuous map $\rho\colon Z \to X$ admits an extension to a neighborhood of Z. CW-complexes and topological manifolds are ANR's. Every binormal ANR is weakly locally contractible (see Lemma 4.2 below).

Given a real valued function f on a space X, we set

$$f^a = \{x \in X \mid f(x) \le a\}.$$

A rough version of our main result is

1.3. **Theorem.** *Consider a Hausdorff space X and a homotopy equivalence φ of X. Let F be the set of fixed points of φ. Assume that there exists a Lyapunov function f for φ which is bounded below and is such that the pair (φ, f) satisfies condition* (D) *on f^b for some $b \in \mathbb{R}$.*

(a) *We always have*

$$\sum_{d \leq b} \operatorname{cat}_X \left(F \cap f^{-1}(d)\right) \geq \operatorname{cat}_X f^b.$$

(b) *If X is connected and weakly locally contractible, then $F \cap f^b$ is infinite or $f(F) \cap]-\infty, b]$ contains at least $\operatorname{cat}_X f^b$ elements.*

(c) *If X is a binormal ANR and $f(F)$ is discrete, then*

$$\operatorname{cat}\left(F \cap f^b\right) \geq \operatorname{cat}_X f^b.$$

If φ is homotopic to the identity map, then these estimates also hold for $b = \infty$ (in which case $f^b = X$).

Our main results refine Theorem 1.3 in two ways. Firstly, we overcome the assumption of f being bounded below: Given $-\infty < a < b < \infty$, Theorem 6.1 provides a lower bound for the number and the category of the rest points of a homotopy equivalence φ in the slice $\{x \in X \mid a < f(x) \leq b\}$, and in Theorem 7.1 we show that if φ is homotopic to the identity, then the categorical estimates in Theorem 6.1 can be replaced by various finer ones, which also hold for $b = \infty$. Secondly, all results readily extend to equivariant situations where a compact Lie group acts on X.

Finally, we observe in Section 8 that if φ is a homeomorphism, then some of the previously established estimates can be improved by using different invariants of Lusternik–Schnirelmann type.

Notice that even if φ is homotopic to the identity, we in general do not require that there exists a homotopy H_t between the identity and φ such that for each x the function $f(H_t(x))$ is decreasing in t. Therefore, our theory should also prove useful in understanding the fixed point sets of other than gradient-like systems such as those arising in simulated annealing.

The usefulness of extending Lusternik–Schnirelmann theory to spaces more general than manifolds was demonstrated by various proofs of the Arnold conjecture about the number of fixed points of Hamiltonian symplectomorphisms [11, 12, 21]. In these proofs different variants of the Lusternik–Schnirelmann category were considered. We thus develop an axiomatically defined version of Lusternik–Schnirelmann theory (Theorem 2.3) and derive Theorem 6.1 and Theorem 7.1 from

Theorem 2.3. In [22] this axiomatic approach will be used to develop a Lusternik–Schnirelmann theory for certain symplectic manifolds.

All spaces are assumed to be Hausdorff, and all maps and functions are assumed to be continuous.

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2. An axiomatic version of LS-theory

2.1. **Definition** (cf. [15, 5, 6]). An *index function* on a topological space X is a function $\nu\colon 2^X \times 2^X \to \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$ satisfying the following axioms:

(monotonicity) If $A \subset B$, then $\nu(A, Y) \le \nu(B, Y)$ for all $Y \subset X$;

(continuity) For every closed subset $A \subset X$ there exists a neighborhood U of A such that $\nu(A, Y) = \nu(U, Y)$ for all $Y \subset X$;

(mixed subadditivity) For all $A, B, Y \subset X$,

$$\nu(A \cup B, Y) \ \le\ \nu(A, Y) + \nu(B, \emptyset).$$

Given a map $\varphi : X \to X$ and a subset Z of X, an index function ν is (φ, Z)-*supervariant* if

((φ, Z)-supervariance) $\nu(\varphi(A), Z) \ge \nu(A, Z)$ for all $A \subset X$.

Below we write $\nu(A)$ instead of $\nu(A, \emptyset)$.

2.2. **Lemma** (cf. [15]). *Consider a self-map $\varphi\colon X \to X$ of the space X. Denote the set of fixed points of φ by F. Assume that there exist a Lyapunov function f for φ and real numbers $a < b$ such that the pair (φ, f) satisfies condition* (D) *on $f^{-1}[a, b]$. Then the following assertions hold.*

(i) *Suppose that $f^{-1}[a, b[\cap F$ is empty. Then, given any neighborhood U of $f^{-1}(b) \cap F$, there exists $n \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $\varphi^n(f^b \setminus U) \subset f^a$. In particular, $\nu(f^b \setminus U, Z) \le \nu(f^a, Z)$ for every (φ, Z)-supervariant index function ν, and hence $\nu(f^b \setminus U, Z) = \nu(f^a, Z)$ whenever $f^a \cap U = \emptyset$.*

(ii) *Suppose that there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that $f^{-1}]a, a + \varepsilon[\cap F$ is empty. Then, given any neighborhood U of f^a, there exists $\delta > 0$ such that $\varphi(f^{a+\delta}) \subset U$. In particular, for every (φ, Z)-supervariant index function ν, there exists $\delta > 0$ such that $\nu(f^{a+\delta}, Z) = \nu(f^a, Z)$.*

Proof. (i) Since (φ, f) satisfies condition (D) on $f^{-1}[a,b]$ and since φ has no fixed point on the closed set $f^{-1}[a,b] \setminus U$, there exists $\delta_1 > 0$ such that

$$f(x) - f(\varphi(x)) \geq \delta_1 \quad \text{for every } x \in f^{-1}[a,b] \setminus U.$$

If $b - \delta_1 \leq a$, we are done. Otherwise, let $\delta_2 > 0$ be such that

$$f(x) - f(\varphi(x)) \geq \delta_2 \quad \text{for every } x \in f^{-1}[a, b-\delta_1].$$

Choose $n \in \mathbb{N}$ so large that $(n-1)\delta_2 \geq b - \delta_1 - a$. Then $\varphi^n(f^b \setminus U) \subset f^a$. Indeed, assume that $f(\varphi^n(x)) > a$ for some $x \in f^b \setminus U$. Then $\varphi^k(x) \in f^{-1}[a, b-\delta_1]$ for $k = 1, \dots, n$. Hence,

$$\begin{aligned} f(\varphi^n(x)) &= f(\varphi^1(x)) + \sum_{k=1}^{n-1} f(\varphi^{k+1}(x)) - f(\varphi^k(x)) \\ &\leq b - \delta_1 - (n-1)\delta_2 \leq a, \end{aligned}$$

a contradiction.

Assume that ν is a (φ, Z)-supervariant index function. Choose n such that $\varphi^n(f^b \setminus U) \subset f^a$. Then, by (φ, Z)-supervariance and monotonicity,

$$\nu(f^b \setminus U, Z) \leq \nu(\varphi^n(f^b \setminus U), Z) \leq \nu(f^a, Z).$$

(ii) We may assume that $a + \varepsilon \leq b$. Fix a neighborhood U of f^a and choose a sequence of real numbers

$$a + \varepsilon > a_1 > a_2 > \cdots > a_n > \cdots$$

which converges to a. We claim that $\varphi(f^{a_n}) \subset U$ for some n. Arguing by contradiction, suppose that $A_n = f^{a_n} \setminus \varphi^{-1}(U) \neq \emptyset$ for all n. Then $f(x) - f(\varphi(x)) \leq a_n - a$ for all $x \in A_n$, and so $\inf\{f(x) - f(\varphi(x)) \mid x \in A_1\} = 0$. Since A_1 is a closed subset of $f^{-1}[a,b]$, condition (D_2) implies that $A_1 \cap F \neq \emptyset$. This contradicts $f^{-1}]a, a+\varepsilon[\cap F = \emptyset$. So $\varphi(f^{a_n}) \subset U$ for some n. Set $\delta = a_n - a$.

Assume that ν is a (φ, Z)-supervariant index function. By continuity, there exists a neighborhood U of f^a such that $\nu(f^a, Z) = \nu(U, Z)$. According to what we said above, there exists $\delta > 0$ such that $\varphi(f^{a+\delta}) \subset U$. Then

$$\nu(f^a, Z) = \nu(U, Z) \geq \nu(\varphi(f^{a+\delta}), Z) \geq \nu(f^{a+\delta}, Z) \geq \nu(f^a, Z)$$

and so $\nu(f^{a+\delta}, Z) = \nu(f^a, Z)$. □

The Lusternik–Schnirelmann Theorem, from the modern standpoint, is

2.3. **Theorem.** *Consider a self-map* $\varphi\colon X \to X$ *on the topological space* X. *Let* F *be the set of fixed points of* φ. *Assume that there exist a Lyapunov function* f *for* φ *and real numbers* $a < b$ *such that the pair* (φ, f) *satisfies condition* (D) *on* $f^{-1}[a, b]$. *Suppose that* $f(F) \cap]a, b] = \{d_1, \ldots, d_m\}$ *is a finite set. Then*

$$\nu(f^a, f^a) + \sum_{i=1}^{m} \nu\left(F \cap f^{-1}(d_i)\right) \geq \nu(f^b, f^a).$$

for any (φ, f^a)*-supervariant index function* ν.

Proof. Denote $\nu(A, f^a)$ by $\mu(A)$. If $\mu(f^b) = \mu(f^a)$, there is nothing to prove. So assume that $\mu(f^a) < \mu(f^b)$. Set

$$c_k = \inf\{c \in \mathbb{R} \mid \mu(f^c) \geq k\}, \qquad k = \mu(f^a) + 1, \ldots, \mu(f^b).$$

By monotonicity of μ,

$$a \leq c_{\mu(f^a)+1} \leq \cdots \leq c_{\mu(f^b)} \leq b. \tag{2.1}$$

2.4. **Claim.** *For all* $k = \mu(f^a) + 1, \ldots, \mu(f^b)$,

$$\mu(f^{c_k - \varepsilon}) < k \quad \text{for all } \varepsilon > 0, \tag{2.2}$$

$$\mu(f^{c_k}) \geq k. \tag{2.3}$$

Proof. Inequality (2.2) follows from the definition of c_k.

We prove (2.3). By (2.1), $c_k \leq b$. Suppose first that $c_k < b$. Since $f(F) \cap]a, b]$ is finite, we find $\varepsilon > 0$ such that $f(F) \cap]c_k, c_k + \varepsilon[= \emptyset$, i.e., $f^{-1}]c_k, c_k + \varepsilon[\cap F = \emptyset$. By Lemma 2.2 (ii) there exists $\delta > 0$ such that $\mu(f^{c_k+\delta}) = \mu(f^{c_k})$. But, by monotonicity, $\mu(f^{c_k+\delta}) \geq k$, and so $\mu(f^{c_k}) \geq k$. Suppose now $c_k = b$. Then $\mu(f^{c_k}) = \mu(f^b) \geq k$ as well. ◇

Plugging $k = \mu(f^a) + 1$ into (2.3), we find $\mu(f^{c_{\mu(f^a)+1}}) \geq \mu(f^a) + 1$. Hence,

$$a < c_{\mu(f^a)+1}. \tag{2.4}$$

2.5. **Claim.** $f^{-1}(c_k)$ *contains at least one point of* F.

Proof. Suppose the contrary. In view of (2.1), (2.4) and the finiteness of $f(F) \cap]a, b]$, we then find $\varepsilon > 0$ such that $c_k - \varepsilon \geq a$ and $f^{-1}[c_k - \varepsilon, c_k]$ does not contain points of F. By Lemma 2.2 (i) there exists n such that $\varphi^n(f^{c_k}) \subset f^{c_k - \varepsilon}$. Hence, by (φ, f^a)-supervariance, monotonicity and (2.2),

$$\mu(f^{c_k}) \leq \mu(\varphi^n(f^{c_k})) \leq \mu(f^{c_k - \varepsilon}) < k.$$

This contradicts (2.3). ◇

2.6. **Lemma** (cf. [15, II, §4], [8, Lemma 19.12]). *If* $c_k = c_{k+1} = \cdots = c_{k+r}$*, then*

$$\nu(F \cap f^{-1}(c_k)) \geq r + 1.$$

Proof. Set $A = F \cap f^{-1}(c_k)$. By continuity, there is a neighborhood U of A with $\nu(U) = \nu(A)$. Arguing as above we find $\varepsilon > 0$ such that $c_k - \varepsilon \geq a$ and $f^{-1}[c_k - \varepsilon, c_k[\, \cap F$ is empty. By Lemma 2.2 (i) there exists n such that $\varphi^n(f^{c_k} \setminus U) \subset f^{c_k - \varepsilon}$. So, by (φ, f^a)-supervariance, monotonicity and (2.2), $\mu(f^{c_k} \setminus U) < k$. Now, by monotonicity, subadditivity and (2.3),

$$\begin{aligned}
\mu(f^{c_k} \setminus U) + \nu(U) &= \mu(f^{c_{k+r}} \setminus U) + \nu(U) \\
&\geq \mu(f^{c_{k+r}} \setminus U) + \nu(f^{c_{k+r}} \cap U) \\
&\geq \mu(f^{c_{k+r}}) \\
&\geq k + r,
\end{aligned}$$

and so $\nu(U) > r$. Thus, $\nu(A) \geq r + 1$. ◇

We continue the proof of the theorem. We have

$$\begin{aligned}
c_{\mu(f^a)+1} = \cdots = c_{i_1} &< c_{i_1+1} = \cdots = c_{i_2} \\
&< \cdots < c_{i_n+1} = \cdots = c_{i_{n+1}} = c_{\mu(f^b)}.
\end{aligned}$$

Set $F_k = F \cap f^{-1}(c_{i_k})$ and $i_0 = \mu(f^a)$. Then, by Lemma 2.6, $\nu(F_k) \geq i_k - i_{k-1}$. Thus

$$\sum_{k=1}^{n+1} \nu(F_k) \geq i_{n+1} - i_0 = \mu(f^b) - \mu(f^a).$$

In view of (2.4) and Claim 2.5, $\{c_{\mu(f^a)+1}, \dots, c_{\mu(f^b)}\} \subset \{d_1, \dots, d_m\}$, and so Theorem 2.3 follows. □

3. Relative equivariant category

Let G be a compact Lie group. A *G-space* is a space X together with a continuous action $G \times X \to X$, $(g, x) \mapsto gx$. A *subspace* of a G-space X is a G-invariant subspace. If X_1 and X_2 are G-spaces, then a *G-map* $\varphi\colon X_1 \to X_2$ is an equivariant map, i.e., $\varphi(gx) = g\varphi(x)$ for all $g \in G$ and $x \in X_1$, and a *G-homotopy* $H_t\colon X_1 \to X_2$ is a map $H\colon X_1 \times I \to X_2$ such that $H_t\colon X_1 \to X_2$ is a G-map for each t.

Let W, Y be subspaces of a G-space X. We say that W *is G-deformable to* Y if there is a G-homotopy $H_t\colon W \to X$ which starts with the inclusion and is such that $H_1(W) \subset Y$. If in addition $H_t(W \cap Y) \subset Y$ for all t, we say that W *is G-deformable to* $Y \bmod Y$.

Fix a class $\mathcal{G}$ of homogeneous G-spaces,

$$\mathcal{G} \subset \{G/H \mid H \subset G \text{ is a closed subgroup}\}.$$

A subspace A of a G-space X is called *$\mathcal{G}$-categorical* if there exist G-maps $\alpha\colon A \to G/H$ and $\beta\colon G/H \to X$ with $G/H \in \mathcal{G}$ such that the inclusion $A \hookrightarrow X$ is G-homotopic to the composition $\beta\alpha$.

3.1. **Definition** (cf. [9, 6]). Fix a subspace Y of the G-space X. If A is another subspace of X, we set $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(A, Y) = k$ if A can be covered by $k+1$ *open* subspaces $A_0, A_1, \dots, A_k$ of X such that

(i) A_0 is G-deformable to Y

(ii) $A_1, \dots, A_k$ are $\mathcal{G}$-categorical

and if k is minimal with this property. If there is no such number k, we set $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(A, Y) = \infty$.

The invariant $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(A \operatorname{mod} Y)$ is defined by replacing (i) by

(i mod) A_0 is G-deformable to $Y \operatorname{mod} Y$, and $A_0 \supset A \cap Y$.

We set $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X A = \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(A, \emptyset)$ and $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, X = \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X X$.

3.2. **Remarks. 1.** If G acts trivially on X and $\mathcal{G}$ contains the point G/G, then A is $\mathcal{G}$-categorical iff it is contractible in X. Therefore, in this case $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X A$ equals the open Lusternik–Schnirelmann category $\text{cat}_X A$.

2. If $\mathcal{G}_1 \subset \mathcal{G}_2$, then $\mathcal{G}_1\text{- cat}_X(A, Y) \geq \mathcal{G}_2\text{- cat}_X(A, Y)$. If G has a fixed point x and $\mathcal{G}$ does not contain G/G, then $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X A = \infty$ whenever $x \in A$.

3. If G acts freely on X and $\mathcal{G}$ is the full class of homogeneous G-spaces, then $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X A = \text{cat}_{X/G} A/G$. In general, however, $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X A \geq \text{cat}_{X/G} A/G$. E.g., if $\mathbb{Z}_2$ acts on $S^1 = \{z \in \mathbb{C} \mid |z| = 1\}$ by complex conjugation, then $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, S^1 \geq 2 > 1 = \text{cat}\, S^1/\mathbb{Z}_2$.

4. Agreeing that $\infty \geq \infty - \infty$ and $0 \geq n - \infty$ for every $n \in \mathbb{Z}$, we always have

$$\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(A \operatorname{mod} Y) \;\geq\; \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(A, Y) \;\geq\; \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X A - \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X Y.$$

If $X = \{(x, y) \in S^1 \mid y \geq 0\}$ and $Y = X \cap \{y = 0\}$, then

$$\text{cat}_X(X \operatorname{mod} Y) = 1 > 0 = \text{cat}_X(X, Y);$$

and if X is the union of the unit circle S centered at $(0, -1)$ and its translate centered at $(0, 1)$, then $\text{cat}_X(X, S) = 1 > 2 - 2 = \text{cat}_X X - \text{cat}_X S$.

4. Some general topology

If A is a subspace of the G-space X, we set $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}}_X A = k$ if A can be covered by k *closed* categorical subspaces $A_1, \dots, A_k$ of X and if k is minimal with this property. If there is no such k, we set $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}}_X A = \infty$. We also set $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}} X = \mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}}_X X$. If G acts trivially and $\mathcal{G}$ contains G/G, then $\overline{\text{cat}}_X A = \mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}}_X A$.

4.1**. Lemma.** *Let A be a closed subspace of a normal G-space X. Then*

$$\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, A \;\geq\; \mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}}_X A.$$

Proof. We may assume that $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, A$ is finite. Let $A \subset U_1 \cup \dots \cup U_k$ where each U_i is open and $\mathcal{G}$-categorical. Then $\{X \setminus A, U_1, \dots, U_k\}$ is an open covering of X. According to [2, § 2, Proposition 20] there is an open covering $\{V_0, V_1, \dots, V_k\}$ of X such that $\overline{V_0} \subset X \setminus A$ and $\overline{V_i} \subset U_i$, $i = 1, \dots, k$. Hence, $A \subset \overline{V_1} \cup \dots \cup \overline{V_k}$. By Proposition 1.1.1 of [18], every set $G\overline{V_i} = \{gv \mid g \in G,\ v \in \overline{V_i}\,\}$ is closed. The inclusions $\overline{V_i} \subset G\overline{V_i} \subset GU_i \subset U_i$ imply that $A \subset \cup G\overline{V_i}$ and that each $G\overline{V_i}$ is a closed $\mathcal{G}$-categorical subspace. Thus, $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}}_X A \leq k$. □

A G-space X is called a *G-ANR* if for each closed subspace Z of a normal G-space Y every G-map $\rho\colon Z \to X$ admits an equivariant extension to a G-invariant neighborhood of Z. Notice that G/H is a G-ANR for every closed subgroup H of G [18, Corollary 1.6.7].

4.2**. Lemma.** *Let A be a closed $\mathcal{G}$-categorical subset of a binormal G-ANR X. Then A is contained in an open $\mathcal{G}$-categorical subset of X.*

Proof (cf. [13, IV, Proposition 3.4] and [5, Appendix B]). Consider $\alpha\colon A \to G/H$ and $\beta\colon G/H \to X$ as in Definition 3.1 and let $H\colon A \times I \to X$ be a G-homotopy between $i\colon A \hookrightarrow X$ and $\beta\alpha$. Since G/H is a G-ANR, there exists a G-map $\gamma\colon W \to G/H$ where W is a G-neighborhood of A and $\gamma|_A = \alpha$. Since X is normal, we find a G-neighborhood V of A with $\overline{V} \subset W$. We convert $X \times I$ to a G-space by setting $g(x,t) = (g(x), t)$. Set

$$P \;=\; X \times \{0\} \,\cup\, A \times I \,\cup\, \overline{V} \times \{1\} \;\subset\; X \times I$$

and define $\varphi\colon P \to X$ by

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi(x,0) &= x \ \text{ for } x \in X, \\ \varphi(a,t) &= H(a,t) \ \text{ for } (a,t) \in A \times I, \\ \varphi(v,1) &= \beta(\gamma(v)) \ \text{ for } v \in \overline{V}. \end{aligned}$$

Then φ is well-defined and equivariant, and since $X \times \{0\}$, $A \times I$ and $\overline{V} \times \{1\}$ are closed subsets of $X \times I$, φ is continuous. Since X is a

G-ANR and P is a closed subspace of the normal G-space $X \times I$, there exists a G-neighborhood Q of P in $X \times I$ and an equivariant extension $\psi\colon Q \to X$ of φ. For each $a \in A$ the set $\{a\} \times I$ is compact, and so there is a G-neighborhood U_a of a with $U_a \times I \subset Q$. Set $U = \bigcup_a U_a \cap W$. Clearly, U is a G-neighborhood of A with $U \subset W$ and $U \times I \subset Q$.

Now, $\psi|_{U\times I}\colon U \times I \to X$ yields a G-homotopy between the inclusion $U \hookrightarrow X$ and $\beta\gamma|_U$. □

4.3. **Proposition.** *If A is a closed subspace of a binormal G-ANR X, then*

$$\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, A \;\geq\; \mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}} A \;\geq\; \mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}}_X A \;=\; \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, A.$$

Proof. The first inequality follows from the simple fact that a closed subset of a normal space is normal and from Lemma 4.1, the second inequality is clear since A is closed, and the equality follows from Lemmata 4.1 and 4.2. □

4.4. **Remarks. 1.** The closedness condition on A in Lemma 4.1 is essential: If X is a circle, x is a point in X and $A = X \setminus \{x\}$, then $2 = \overline{\text{cat}}_X A > \text{cat}_X A = 1$.

2. If X fails to be an ANR, Proposition 4.3 might not hold: If

$$X = \bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \left\{ (x, y) \in \mathbb{R}^2 \;\middle|\; \left(x - \tfrac{1}{n}\right)^2 + y^2 = \tfrac{1}{n^2} \right\}$$

and $A = (0, 0)$, then $\text{cat}\, A = 1$ while $\text{cat}_X\, A = \infty$.

5. Equivariant categories as index functions

A G-map $\varphi\colon X_1 \to X_2$ between G-spaces is a *G-homotopy equivalence* if there exists a G-map $\psi\colon X_2 \to X_1$ such that $\psi\varphi$ and $\varphi\psi$ are G-homotopic to the identities.

5.1. **Lemma.** *Let $\varphi\colon X \to X$ be a G-homotopy equivalence. If U is an open categorical subspace of X, then so is $\varphi^{-1}(U)$.*

Proof. Consider the commutative square

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \varphi^{-1}(U) & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & U \\ {\scriptstyle i}\big\downarrow & & \big\downarrow{\scriptstyle j} \\ X & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & X \end{array}$$

where i and j are the inclusions. Let $\psi\colon X \to X$ be a G-homotopy inverse of φ. If the composition

$$U \xrightarrow{\ \alpha\ } G/H \xrightarrow{\ \beta\ } X$$

is G-homotopic to $j\colon U \to X$, then the composition

$$\varphi^{-1}(U) \xrightarrow{\ \alpha\varphi\ } G/H \xrightarrow{\ \psi\beta\ } X$$

is G-homotopic to i, because $\psi\beta\alpha\varphi \simeq_G \psi j\varphi = \psi\varphi i \simeq_G i$. □

For any subset A of a G-space X we set $GA = \{\, ga \mid g \in G,\, a \in A\,\}$.

5.2. **Lemma.** *Let X be a G-space and let $\varphi\colon X \to X$ be a G-map. Then, for every $N \in \mathbb{N}$, each of the functions $2^X \times 2^X \to \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$,*

$$\begin{aligned}
\nu_N^1(A,Y) &= \min\{\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, GA, N\},\\
\nu_N^2(A,Y) &= \min\{\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(GA, GY), N\},\\
\nu_N^3(A,Y) &= \min\{\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(GA \bmod GY), N\}
\end{aligned}$$

is an index function. Furthermore, the following holds.

(i) *If φ is a G-homotopy equivalence, then ν_N^1 is (φ, Z)-supervariant for every $Z \subset X$.*

(ii) *If φ is G-homotopic to the identity, then ν_N^2 is (φ, Z)-supervariant for every $Z \subset X$.*

(iii) *If there is a G-homotopy Φ_t between the identity and φ with $\Phi_t(Z) \subset Z$ for all t, then ν_N^3 is (φ, Z)-supervariant.*

Proof. The first claim is readily verified.

(i) Let $\{A_1, \dots, A_k\}$ be a covering of $G\varphi(A)$ by open categorical subspaces. By Lemma 5.1, $\{\varphi^{-1}(A_1), \dots, \varphi^{-1}(A_k)\}$ is then a covering of $\varphi^{-1}(G\varphi(A))$ by open categorical subspaces. But $\varphi^{-1}(G\varphi(A)) \supset GA$.

(ii) Assume that $G\varphi(A) \subset A_0 \cup A_1 \cup \dots \cup A_k$ where $A_1, \dots, A_k$ are open $\mathcal{G}$-categorical subspaces and A_0 is an open subspace which is G-deformable to GZ. Since φ is G-homotopic to the identity, $\varphi^{-1}(A_0)$ is G-deformable to A_0 and hence to GZ. We conclude now as in (i).

(iii) Assume that $G\varphi(A) \subset A_0 \cup A_1 \cup \dots \cup A_k$ where $A_1, \dots, A_k$ are open $\mathcal{G}$-categorical subspaces and A_0 is an open subspace which contains $G\varphi(A) \cap GZ$ and is G-deformable to $GZ \bmod GZ$. Set $A_i' = \varphi^{-1}(A_i)$. Then $GA \subset A_0' \cup A_1' \cup \dots \cup A_k'$, and $A_1', \dots, A_k'$ are open $\mathcal{G}$-categorical subspaces. Let Φ_t be a G-homotopy between the identity and φ with $\Phi_t(Z) \subset Z$. Then $GZ \subset \varphi^{-1}(GZ)$, and so A_0' is an open subspace containing $GA \cap GZ$. Moreover, the composition of Φ_t with a G-homotopy deforming A_0 to $GZ \bmod GZ$ yields a G-homotopy deforming A_0' to $GZ \bmod GZ$. □

6. LS theory for homotopy equivalences

The *orbit type* of an orbit $Gx = G\{x\}$ is its G-homeomorphism type. Given a G-invariant function $f\colon X \to \mathbb{R}$, we say that two orbits in X are *equivalent* if f has the same value on them and if they have the same orbit type and are G-deformable into each other [5, 2.9]. If x is a fixed point of the G-map $\varphi\colon X \to X$, then the whole orbit Gx is fixed by φ.

Recall that $\infty \geq \infty$ and $\infty \geq n$ for every $n \in \mathbb{Z}$. We also agree that $\infty \geq \infty - n$ for every $n \in \mathbb{Z}$.

6.1. **Theorem.** *Consider a G-space X and a class $\mathcal{G}$ of homogeneous G-spaces. Let φ be a G-homotopy equivalence of X, and let F be the set of fixed points of φ. Assume that there exist a G-invariant Lyapunov function f for φ and real numbers $-\infty < a < b < \infty$ such that the pair (φ, f) satisfies condition* (D) *on $f^{-1}[a,b]$ and such that $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^a$ is finite. Set $F_d = F \cap f^{-1}(d)$.*

(a) *We always have*

$$\sum_{d \in \,]a,b]} \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X F_d \;\geq\; \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^b - \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^a.$$

(b) *If X is a binormal G-ANR and $\mathcal{G}$ contains the orbit types of all orbits in $F \cap f^{-1}]a,b]$, then $F \cap f^{-1}]a,b]$ contains infinitely many G-orbits, or the number of equivalence classes of G-orbits in $F \cap f^{-1}]a,b]$ is at least $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^b - \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^a$.*

(c) *If X is a binormal G-ANR and $f(F) \cap \,]a,b]$ is discrete, then*

$$\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\left(F \cap f^{-1}]a,b]\right) \;\geq\; \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^b - \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^a.$$

Proof. If $f(F) \cap \,]a,b]$ is infinite, there is nothing to prove. Suppose therefore that $f(F) \cap \,]a,b] = \{d_1, \dots, d_m\}$ is finite.

(a) If $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^b$ is finite, Lemma 5.2 (i) shows that

$$\nu(A, Y) := \min\{\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X GA, \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^b\}$$

is a (φ, f^a)-supervariant index function. Since $\nu(A,Y) = \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X GA$ for every $A \subset f^b$, the claim then follows from Theorem 2.3. If $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X f^b = \infty$, we have to show that

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X F_{d_i} = \infty. \tag{6.1}$$

Fix $N \geq \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, f^a$. By Lemma 5.2 (i), $\nu_N(A,Y) = \min\{\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X GA, N\}$ is a (φ, f^a)-supervariant index function. We have $\nu_N(f^b, f^a) = N$ and $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X A \geq \nu_N(A)$ for every $A \subset X$. In view of Theorem 2.3 we therefore conclude that

$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{i=1}^m \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, F_{d_i} \;&\geq\; \sum_{i=1}^m \nu_N(F_{d_i}) \\ &\geq\; \nu_N(f^b, f^a) - \nu_N(f^a, f^a) \;=\; N - \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, f^a.\end{aligned}$$

Since $N \geq \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, f^a$ was arbitrary, (6.1) follows.

(b) Assume that all the sets F_{d_i} contain only finitely many orbits. Let $E_1, \dots, E_{e_i}$ be the equivalence classes of orbits in F_{d_i}. By assumption, all orbits in E_j are G-deformable to one of its elements, and $\mathcal{G}$ contains this element. Lemma 4.2 thus implies that $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, E_j = 1$ for $j = 1, \dots, e_i$. Therefore, $e_i = \sum_{j=1}^{e_i} \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, E_j \geq \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, F_{d_i}$.

(c) By Proposition 4.3,

$$\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\left(F \cap f^{-1}]a,b]\right) \;=\; \sum_{i=1}^m \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, F_{d_i} \;\geq\; \sum_{i=1}^m \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X\, F_{d_i}.$$

□

6.2. **Corollary** (cf. [5, 2.5] and [6, 3.8 (1)]). *Suppose that under the assumptions of Theorem* 6.1 (b) *the set $f(F) \cap]a,b]$ contains less than $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, f^b - \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, f^a$ elements. Then one of the sets F_d in $f^{-1}]a,b]$ is not G-deformable to a G-orbit in $f^{-1}]a,b]$.* □

6.3. **Remarks. 1.** Proposition 4.3 implies that for a binormal G-ANR, Theorem 6.1 holds with $\mathcal{G}$-cat replaced by $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}}$.

2. We discuss the assumptions in Theorem 6.1. In each of the examples below, only one assumption in Theorem 6.1 is not met.

(i) The condition that φ is a G-homotopy equivalence cannot be omitted: If $X = S^1 = \{x^2 + y^2 = 1\}$, $\varphi(X) = (0, -1)$ and $f(x,y) = y$ is the height function, then $\sum_{d \in \mathbb{R}} \text{cat}_X\, F_d = 1 < 2 = \text{cat}\, X$.

(ii) It is not enough to assume that f is a Lyapunov function for φ on $f^{-1}[a,b]$ only: If $X = S^1$, $\varphi(x,y) = (-x,-y)$ is the antipode and $f(x,y) = y$, then $\sum_{d \in]\frac12, 1]} \text{cat}_X\, F_d = 0 < 1 = \text{cat}_X\, f^1 - \text{cat}_X\, f^{\frac12}$.

(iii) Neither condition (D_1) nor condition (D_2) can be omitted: If $X = S^1$, $\varphi(x,y) = (-x,-y)$ and $f(x,y) = 0$ for all $(x,y) \in X$, then $\sum_{d \in \mathbb{R}} \text{cat}_X\, F_d = 0 < 2 = \text{cat}_X\, f^1 - \text{cat}_X\, f^{-1}$. Moreover, if $X =]0,1[$, $\varphi(x) = \frac{x}{2}$ and $f(x) = x$, then $F = \emptyset$ but $\text{cat}\, X = 1$.

(iv) The condition that b is finite cannot be omitted: Define X to be the telescope (homotopy direct limit) of the sequence

$$\cdots \xrightarrow{d} S^1 \xrightarrow{d} S^1 \xrightarrow{d} S^1 \xrightarrow{d} \cdots, \quad \deg d = 2.$$

In greater detail, X is the quotient space of the disjoint union

$$Y = \coprod_{k=-\infty}^{\infty} S^1 \times [k, k+1]$$

under the following equivalence relation: $(z, k) \in S^1 \times [k-1, k]$ is equivalent to $(z^2, k) \in S^1 \times [k, k+1]$.

We denote by $[z, k] \in X$ the image of $(z, k) \in S^1 \times [k-1, k]$ and by $[z, t] \in X$ the image of $(z, t) \in Y$ for $t \notin \mathbb{Z}$. The map

$$\varphi \colon X \to X, \quad \varphi[z, t] = [z, t-1]$$

is a homotopy equivalence. This can be seen directly or by observing that X is the Eilenberg–Mac Lane space $K(\mathbb{Z}[1/2], 1)$ and that φ induces an isomorphism of fundamental groups. The fixed point set F of φ is empty. The function $f \colon X \to \mathbb{R}$, $f[z,t] = t$ is a Lyapunov function for φ, and the pair (φ, f) satisfies condition (D) on X.

Notice that f^0 is homotopy equivalent to S^1, and so $\operatorname{cat}_X f^0 = 2$. On the other hand, $\operatorname{cat} X > 2$; indeed, $\pi_1(X) = \mathbb{Z}[1/2]$ is not a free group, and it is well known that the fundamental group of a space whose category is at most 2 is free [10]. Therefore, $0 = \sum_{d \in [0,\infty[} \operatorname{cat}_X F_d < \operatorname{cat} X - \operatorname{cat}_X f^0$.

(v) The discreteness condition on $f(F) \cap]a, b]$ in (c) cannot be omitted: If $X = S^1$ and $\varphi \colon X \to X$, $(x, y) \mapsto (\varphi_1(x, y), \varphi_2(x, y))$ is such that $\varphi(x, y) = (x, y)$ for $x \geq 0$ and $\varphi_2(x, y) < y$ for $x < 0$, then φ is homotopic to the identity, and $f(x, y) = y$ is a Lyapunov function for φ which is such that (φ, f) satisfies condition (D) on X. But $F = \{(x, y) \in X \mid x \geq 0\}$, and so $\operatorname{cat} F = 1 < 2 = \operatorname{cat} X$.

7. LS theory for maps homotopic to the identity

In this section we show that for maps homotopic to the identity, the estimates in Theorem 6.1 can often be strengthened, and that all estimates also hold for $b = \infty$.

7.1. Theorem. *Consider a G-space X and a class $\mathcal{G}$ of homogeneous G-spaces. Let $\varphi \colon X \to X$ be a G-map which is G-homotopic to the identity, and let F be the set of fixed points of φ. Assume that there exist a G-invariant Lyapunov function f for φ and $-\infty < a < b \leq \infty$ such that the pair (φ, f) satisfies condition* (D) *on $f^{-1}[a, b]$. Set $F_d = F \cap f^{-1}(d)$.*

(I) *If* $\mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X f^a$ *is finite, then the statements* (a), (b), (c) *in Theorem 6.1 also hold for* $b = \infty$.

(II) *In case that* $a \in f(F)$ *and* a *is an isolated point in* $f(F) \cap [a, b[$, *assume that a* G*-neighborhood of* f^a *is* G*-deformable to* f^a*. Then* (a), (b), (c) *in Theorem 6.1 hold with* $\mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X f^b - \mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X f^a$ *replaced by* $\mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X(f^b, f^a)$.

(III) *If, in addition to the assumption in* (II)*, there exists a* G*-homotopy* Φ_t *between the identity and* φ *with* $\Phi_t(f^a) \subset f^a$ *for all* t*, then* (a), (b), (c) *in Theorem 6.1 hold with* $\mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X f^b - \mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X f^a$ *replaced by* $\mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X(f^b \operatorname{mod} f^a)$.

Proof. We may again assume that $f(F) \cap]a, b] = \{d_1, \dots, d_m\}$.

7.2. **Claim.** *For any* $c > d_m$ *the space* X *is* G*-deformable to* f^c.

Proof. Choose a G-homotopy $\Phi\colon X \times [0, 1] \to X$ between the identity and φ. For $x \in X$ and $t \geq 0$ set

$$\widetilde{\Phi}(x, t) = \varphi^{[t]}\left(\Phi(x, t - [t])\right)$$

where $[t] = \max\{n \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\} \mid n \leq t\}$. By Lemma 2.2 (i), for each $k \in \mathbb{Z}$ the number

$$n_k = \min\{n \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\} \mid \varphi^n(f^k) \subset f^c\}$$

is well-defined. Choose a non-decreasing continuous function $u\colon \mathbb{R} \to [0, \infty[$ such that $u(k) = n_{k+1}$ for all $k \in \mathbb{Z}$. Thus,

$$\varphi^{[u(r)]}(f^r) \subset f^c \tag{7.1}$$

for every $r \in \mathbb{R}$. Define a G-invariant function $h\colon X \to \mathbb{R}_+$ by

$$h(x) = \max_{0 \leq t \leq 1} f(\Phi(x, t))$$

and define $\Psi\colon X \times [0, 1] \to X$ by $\Psi(x, t) = \widetilde{\Phi}(x, u(h(x))\, t)$. Then Ψ is a G-homotopy between the identity and $\widetilde{\Phi}(x, u(h(x)))$. We verify that $\widetilde{\Phi}(x, u(h(x))) \in f^c$ for each $x \in X$: Set $y = \Phi(x, u(h(x)) - [u(h(x))])$. Then $y \in f^{h(x)}$. Therefore, by (7.1), $\widetilde{\Phi}(x, u(h(x))) = \varphi^{[u(h(x))]}(y) \in f^c$. ◇

Claim 7.2 implies that $\mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat} X = \mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X f^c$ and $\mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X(X, f^a) = \mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X(f^c, f^a)$. Moreover, if the homotopy Ψ above is constructed from a G-homotopy Φ_t with $\Phi_t(f^a) \subset f^a$, then $\Psi(f^a, t) \subset f^a$ for all t, and so X is G-deformable to $f^c \operatorname{mod} f^a$, whence $\mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X(X \operatorname{mod} f^a) = \mathcal{G}$-$\operatorname{cat}_X(f^c \operatorname{mod} f^a)$. We may therefore assume that b is finite, and so, by the proof of Theorem 6.1, we are left with showing (a) in (II) and (III) for b finite.

(II)(a) If $a \in f(F)$, a G-neighborhood of f^a is G-deformable to f^a by assumption, and if $a \notin f(F)$, we conclude this by applying Lemma 2.2 (i) to some $b \in]a, d_1[$ and to $U = \emptyset$. So, $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(f^a, f^a) = 0$. If $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(f^b, f^a)$ is finite, we set

$$\nu(A, Y) = \min\left\{\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(GA, GY), \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(f^b, f^a)\right\}$$

and conclude from Lemma 5.2 (ii) and Theorem 2.3 that

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X F_{d_i} \;\geq\; \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(f^b, f^a).$$

If $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(f^b, f^a) = \infty$, we fix $N \in \mathbb{N}$, set

$$\nu_N(A, Y) = \min\{\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(GA, GY), N\}$$

and conclude from Lemma 5.2 (ii) and Theorem 2.3 that

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X F_{d_i} \geq N.$$

(III)(a) We use Lemma 5.2 (iii) to argue as for (II)(a). □

7.3. **Remarks. 1.** (a) and (c) of Theorem 6.1 and Theorem 7.1 (I) imply (a) and (c) of Theorem 1.3; and since a connected and weakly locally contractible space is path-connected, Theorem 1.3 (b) follows from Theorem 1.3 (a).

2. For a compact metric space X, Theorem 1.3 (a) with cat_X replaced by $\overline{\text{cat}}_X$ and φ homotopic to the identity was stated by Mañé [16, Chapter II, Theorem 4.1].

Proposition 4.3 implies that for a binormal G-ANR, Theorem 7.1 (I) holds with $\mathcal{G}$-cat replaced by $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\overline{\text{cat}}$.

3. We discuss the assumptions in Theorem 7.1.

(i) Even if b is finite, (II) in general does not hold for homotopy equivalences: Let $S(k)$ be the unit circle in $\mathbb{R}^2$ centred at $(0, 2k)$ and set $X = \bigcup_{k \in \mathbb{Z}} S(k)$. Define $\varphi\colon X \to X$ by $\varphi(x, y) = (x, y - 2)$ and set $f(x, y) = y$. Then $F = \emptyset$ but $\text{cat}_X(f^2, f^0) = 1$.

(ii) The assumptions in (II) and (III) cannot be omitted: Let

$$X = \{(x, 0) \mid -1 \leq x \leq 1\} \cup \left\{\left(\sin \tfrac{1}{y}, y\right) \,\middle|\, 0 < y \leq 1\right\} \subset \mathbb{R}^2,$$

$\varphi\left(\sin\frac{1}{y}, y\right) = \left(\sin\frac{1+2\pi y}{y}, \frac{y}{1+2\pi y}\right)$ and $\varphi(x,0) = (x,0)$, and $f(x,y) = y$. Then $F \cap f^{-1}]0,1] = \emptyset$ but $\operatorname{cat}_X(f^1, f^0) = \infty$. Moreover, if

$$X = \left\{(x,y) \in S^1 \,\middle|\, x \geq -\tfrac{\sqrt{3}}{2},\ y \geq 0\right\},$$

$\varphi(X) = (1,0)$ and $f(x,y) = y$, then $F \cap f^{-1}]\frac{1}{2},1] = \emptyset$ but

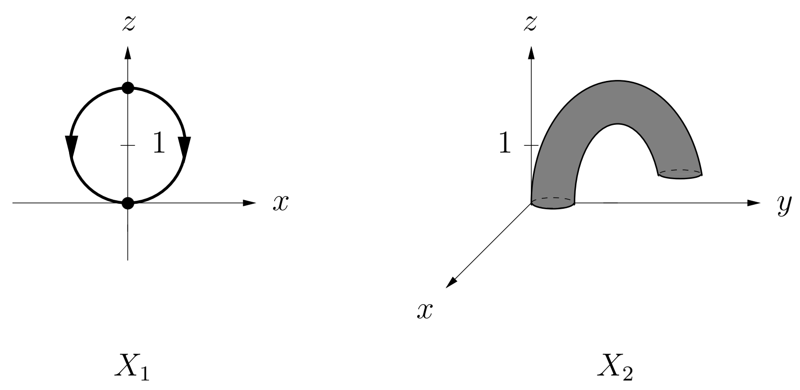
$$\operatorname{cat}_X\left(X \bmod f^{\frac{1}{2}}\right) = 1.$$

4. Replacing (i) in Definition 3.1 by

A_0 is G-deformable to Y, and $A_0 \supset A \cap Y$

we obtain a relative category $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\operatorname{cat}_X(A;Y)$ which is at least as large as $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\operatorname{cat}_X(A,Y)$. Since $\varphi(f^a) \subset f^a$, the proof of Theorem 7.1 (II) shows that if b is finite, then the lower bound $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\operatorname{cat}_X(f^b, f^a)$ in (II) can be replaced by $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\operatorname{cat}_X(f^b; f^a)$.

5. (II) is not covered by (I) and (III): Let $X \subset \mathbb{R}^3$ be the space obtained by gluing the circle X_1 and the cylinder X_2 depicted below in the origin. If f is the height function and φ restricts on X_1 to the time-1-map of the negative gradient flow of f and retracts X_2 onto its bottom circle, then $\operatorname{cat}_X(X, f^1) = 1 > 2-2 = \operatorname{cat} X - \operatorname{cat}_X f^1$, and (III) does not apply – indeed, $\sum_{d \in]1,2]} \operatorname{cat}_X F_d = 1 < 2 = \operatorname{cat}_X(X \bmod f^1)$.



(III) is not covered by (II): If $X = \{(x,y) \in S^1 \mid y \geq 0\}$, $\varphi\colon X \to X$, $(x,y) \mapsto (\varphi_1(x,y), \varphi_2(x,y))$ is given by $\varphi_2(x,y) = y^2$ and $x\,\varphi_1(x,y) \geq 0$, and f is the height function, then $\operatorname{cat}_X(X \bmod f^0) = 1 > 0 = \operatorname{cat}_X(X, f^0)$.

6. The main difficulty with (equivariant) categories is in their computation. A lower bound for $\mathcal{G}\text{-}\operatorname{cat}_X(f^b \bmod f^a)$ is given by an equivariant relative version of the cup-length, $(\mathcal{G}, h^*)$-cup-length$_X\left(f^b, f^a\right)$, which depends on a choice of a G-equivariant cohomology theory h^* [3].

Indeed, the sets $A_0, A_1, \ldots, A_k$ used in the definition of $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_{(X,f^a)} f^b$ in [6] are required to be *relative open subsets* of f^b, whence

$$\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X \left(f^b \operatorname{mod} f^a\right) \geq \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_{(X,f^a)} f^b,$$

and the argument given in [3, p. 58] shows that

$$\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_{(X,f^a)} f^b \geq (\mathcal{G}, h^*)\text{-cup-length}_X \left(f^b, f^a\right).$$

A rougher but effectively computable lower bound for the category $\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X(f^b \operatorname{mod} f^a)$ is the $(\mathcal{G}, h^*)\text{-length}_X \left(f^b, f^a\right)$ [6, 3].

7.4. **Definition.** A *G-semiflow* on a G-space X is a family $\Phi = \{\varphi_t\}$, $t \geq 0$, of G-maps $\varphi_t \colon X \to X$ such that $\varphi_0 = id_X$ and $\varphi_s \circ \varphi_t = \varphi_{s+t}$ for all $s, t \geq 0$. Moreover, the map $X \times [0, \infty[\to X$, $(x, t) \mapsto \varphi_t(x)$ is required to be continuous.

A point $x \in X$ is called a *rest point* of Φ if $\varphi_t(x) = x$ for all $t \geq 0$. The G-orbit of a rest point of Φ consists of rest points of Φ.

A *Lyapunov function* for a G-semiflow $\Phi = \{\varphi_t\}$ is a continuous G-invariant function $f \colon X \to \mathbb{R}$ such that $f(\varphi_t(x)) \leq f(x)$ for all $t \geq 0$ and $x \in X$. A Lyapunov function f for Φ is called a *strict Lyapunov function* for Φ on the subspace $Y \subset X$ if $f(\varphi_t(y)) < f(y)$ whenever $t > 0$ and y is not a rest point of Φ.

7.5. **Corollary.** *Let R be the set of rest points of a G-semiflow $\Phi = \{\varphi_t\}$ on a G-space X. Assume that there exist a strict Lyapunov function f for Φ on X which is bounded below and is such that for some $\tau > 0$ the pair (φ_τ, f) satisfies condition* (D$_2$) *on X.*

(a) *We always have*

$$\sum_{d \in \mathbb{R}} \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_X \left(R \cap f^{-1}(d)\right) \geq \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, X.$$

(b) *If X is a binormal G-ANR and $\mathcal{G}$ contains the orbit types of all orbits in R, then R contains infinitely many G-orbits, or the number of equivalence classes of G-orbits in R is at least $\mathcal{G}$-cat X.*

(c) *If X is a binormal G-ANR and $f(R)$ is discrete, then*

$$\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, R \geq \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, X.$$

Proof. By the definition of a G-semiflow, φ_τ is G-homotopic to the identity. Denote the set of fixed points of φ_τ by F.

7.6. **Claim.** *$F = R$.*

Proof. The inclusion $R \subset F$ is obvious. Conversely, for $x \in F$ and $t \geq 0$, write $t = m\tau + r$ with $m \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$ and $r \in [0, \tau[$. Then $\varphi_{m\tau}(x) = \varphi_\tau^m(x) = x$, and since Φ admits a strict Lyapunov function on X, we have $\varphi_r(x) = x$. Thus, $\varphi_t(x) = \varphi_r(\varphi_{m\tau}(x)) = \varphi_r(x) = x$. $\diamond$

The corollary now follows from applying Theorem 7.1 (I) to (φ_τ, f). $\square$

7.7. **Remarks. 1.** The assumption in Corollary 7.5 that f is a strict Lyapunov function for Φ on X cannot be replaced by the weaker assumption that f is a Lyapunov function for Φ and that the pair (φ_τ, f) satisfies condition (D_1) on X: If $X = S^1$ and $\varphi_t(e^{i\theta}) = e^{i(\theta+t)}$, then any constant function f on X is a Lyapunov function for $\{\varphi_t\}$ and $(\varphi_{2\pi}, f)$ satisfies condition (D_1) on X, but R is empty and $\operatorname{cat} X = 2$.

2. In order to verify the last of the basic assumptions in Corollary 7.5 one should look at large values of τ. Indeed, the proof of Claim 7.6 shows that if $\{\varphi_t\}$ admits a strict Lyapunov function f on X, then the fixed point set of the map φ_t does not depend on $t > 0$. It follows that with (φ_τ, f) any pair (φ_σ, f) with $\sigma > \tau$ satisfies condition (D_2) on X. On the other hand, it is easy to find semiflows and strict Lyapunov functions on X for which (φ_t, f) satisfies condition (D_2) on X only for $t \geq 1$. $\diamond$

We leave it to the reader to derive relative versions of Corollary 7.5 from (I) and (III) in Theorem 7.1.

8. LS theory for homeomorphisms and flows

8.1. **Definition.** Fix a class $\mathcal{B}$ of G-spaces. Given a subset A of a G-space X, we set $\mathcal{B}_X A = k$ if A can be covered by k *open* subspaces $A_1, \dots, A_k$ of X such that every A_i is *G-homeomorphic* to a space from $\mathcal{B}$, and if k is minimal with this property. If there is no such number k, we set $\mathcal{B}_X A = \infty$.

8.2. **Theorem.** *Consider a G-space X and a class $\mathcal{B}$ of G-spaces. Let φ be a G-homeomorphism of X, and let F be the set of fixed points of φ. Assume that there exist a G-invariant Lyapunov function f for φ and real numbers $-\infty < a < b < \infty$ such that the pair (φ, f) satisfies condition* (D) *on $f^{-1}[a, b]$ and such that $\mathcal{B}_X f^a$ is finite. Then*

$$\sum_{d \in]a,b]} \mathcal{B}_X \left(F \cap f^{-1}(d)\right) \geq \mathcal{B}_X f^b - \mathcal{B}_X f^a.$$

Proof. It is easy to see that for every $N \in \mathbb{N}$ the function

$$2^X \times 2^X \to \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}, \quad (A, Z) \mapsto \min\{\mathcal{B}_X GA, N\}$$

is an index function which is (φ, Z)-supervariant for every $Z \subset X$. The proof can now be completed as the one of Theorem 6.1 (a). □

8.3. **Definition.** A G-semiflow $\{\varphi_t\}$ on a G-space X is called a *G-flow* if each map φ_t is a G-homeomorphism.

8.4. **Corollary.** *Let R be the set of rest points of a G-flow $\Phi = \{\varphi_t\}$ on a G-space X. Assume that there exist a Lyapunov function f for Φ and real numbers $-\infty < a < b < \infty$ such that f is a strict Lyapunov function for Φ on $f^{-1}[a, b]$ and such that for some $\tau > 0$ the pair (φ_τ, f) satisfies condition* (D_2) *on $f^{-1}[a, b]$. Also assume that $\mathcal{B}_X f^a$ is finite. Then*

$$\sum_{d \in\,]a,b]} \mathcal{B}_X \left(R \cap f^{-1}(d)\right) \;\geq\; \mathcal{B}_X f^b - \mathcal{B}_X f^a.$$

Proof. The corollary can be deduced from Theorem 8.2 in the same way as Corollary 7.5 (a) was deduced from Theorem 7.1 (I). □

8.5. **Remark.** Contrary to Corollary 7.5, the condition that b is finite cannot be omitted in Corollary 8.4: If $\mathcal{B}$ is the class consisting of the annulus $\{(x, y) \in \mathbb{R}^2 \mid 1 < x^2 + y^2 < 4\}$, and if $X = \mathbb{R}^2$ and Φ is the negative gradient flow of $f(x, y) = x^2+y^2$, then $\sum_{d \in\,]1,\infty]} \mathcal{B}_X \left(R \cap f^{-1}(d)\right) = 0 < 2 - 1 = \mathcal{B}_X X - \mathcal{B}_X f^1$. ◇

We can play a similar game in the category of smooth n-dimensional manifolds. We then consider a class $\mathcal{B}$ of diffeomorphism types. For example, let B be the class consisting of Euclidean space $\mathbb{R}^n$. Then $B_M A$ is the minimal number of smoothly embedded open balls necessary to cover $A \subset M$. Of course, $B_M A \geq \operatorname{cat}_M A$. We set $B(M) = B_M M$, and denote the minimal number of critical points of a smooth function on M by $\operatorname{Crit} M$.

8.6. **Corollary.** *Let K be the set of critical points of a smooth function f on a closed smooth manifold M. Then*

$$\sum_{d \in\,]a,b]} B_M \left(K \cap f^{-1}(d)\right) \;\geq\; B_M f^b - B_M f^a.$$

In particular, $\operatorname{Crit} M \geq B(M)$.

Proof. Denote by ∇f the gradient vector field of f with respect to some Riemannian metric on M. Then K coincides with the set of fixed points of the time-1-map φ of the flow generated by $-\nabla f$. Since f is a Lyapunov function for φ and (φ, f) satisfies condition (D) on M, the corollary can be proved in the same way as Theorem 8.2. □

We leave it to the reader to define relative invariants $\mathcal{B}_X(A \bmod Y)$ and $B_M(A \bmod Y)$ which can be used to refine Corollaries 8.4 and 8.6.

8.7. **Remark.** Singhof [24] proved that $B(M) = \operatorname{cat} M$ for every closed smooth p-connected manifold M with

$$\operatorname{cat} M \;\geq\; \frac{n+p+4}{2(p+1)}$$

provided $\operatorname{cat} M \geq 3$ and $\dim M \geq 4$. Moreover, it is easy to see that if $B(M) = \operatorname{cat} M$, then $\operatorname{cat}(M \setminus \{x\}) = \operatorname{cat} M - 1$ for every $x \in M$ [24, p. 29]. On the other hand, there is an example of a closed manifold Q with $\operatorname{cat}(Q \setminus \{x\}) = \operatorname{cat} Q$ [14]. In particular, $B(Q) > \operatorname{cat} Q$. It is, however, still unknown whether there are closed manifolds M with $\operatorname{Crit} M > B(M)$.

9. The Palais–Smale condition (C) and condition (D)

Consider a connected and complete Riemannian manifold M without boundary modelled on a separable Hilbert space. For $m \in M$ we denote by $\langle\ ,\ \rangle_m$ the inner product on T_mM and by $\|\ \|_m$ the norm induced by $\langle\ ,\ \rangle_m$. We say that a map is $C^{r,1}$, $r \geq 0$, if all its derivatives up to order r exist and are locally Lipschitz continuous. We assume that M is of class $C^{1,1}$ and that the Riemannian metric is $C^{0,1}$. Let $f\colon M \to \mathbb{R}$ be a $C^{1,1}$ function and let $Df(m)$ be its derivative at m. The $C^{0,1}$ vector field ∇f, defined at m by

$$Df(m)(v) = \langle \nabla f(m), v\rangle_m \quad \text{for all } v \in T_mM,$$

is called the gradient vector field of f. A point $m \in M$ is called a critical point of f if $\nabla f(m)$ vanishes. The function f is said to satisfy the Palais–Smale condition (C) on M if the following holds:

> If A is a subset of M on which f is bounded but on which $\|\nabla f\|$ is not bounded away from zero, then there is a critical point of f in the closure of A.

Choose a smooth, monotone function $g\colon \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$ such that

$$g(x) = 1 \text{ for } x \leq 1, \quad g(x) \leq x \text{ for } 1 \leq x \leq 2, \quad g(x) = x \text{ for } x \geq 2$$

and set $h(m) = 1/g(\|\nabla f(m)\|)$, $m \in M$. Then $V = -h\,\nabla f$ is $C^{0,1}$ and bounded, and so, M being complete, V integrates to a flow $\{\varphi_t\}$, $t \in \mathbb{R}$, on M.

9.1. **Proposition.** *Let M, f and φ_τ, $\tau > 0$, be as above. If f satisfies the Palais–Smale condition* (C) *on M, then the pair (φ_τ, f) satisfies condition* (D) *on M.*

Proof. Clearly, f is a Lyapunov function for φ_τ, and the pair (φ_τ, f) satisfies condition (D_1) on M. In order to verify condition (D_2) on M, let $A \subset M$ and assume that $|f(a)| \le c < \infty$ for all $a \in A$ and that $\inf_{a\in A}\{f(a) - f(\varphi_\tau(a))\} = 0$. We compute that for each $m \in M$,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{dt} f\left(\varphi_t(m)\right) &= Df\left(\varphi_t(m)\right)\left(\frac{d}{dt}\varphi_t(m)\right) \\ &= Df\left(\varphi_t(m)\right)\left(V\left(\varphi_t(m)\right)\right) \\ &= -h(\varphi_t(m))\left\langle \nabla f\left(\varphi_t(m)\right), \nabla f\left(\varphi_t(m)\right)\right\rangle, \end{aligned}$$

and so

$$\begin{aligned} f(m) - f(\varphi_\tau(m)) &= -\int_0^\tau \frac{d}{dt} f\left(\varphi_t(m)\right)\, dt \\ &= \int_0^\tau h(\varphi_t(m))\left\|\nabla f\left(\varphi_t(m)\right)\right\|^2 dt. \end{aligned} \tag{9.1}$$

By assumption, there is a sequence $(a_n)_{n\ge 1} \subset A$ such that

$$f(a_n) - f(\varphi_\tau(a_n)) < \frac{\tau}{n}. \tag{9.2}$$

Observe that $h(\varphi_t(m))\left\|\nabla f\left(\varphi_t(m)\right)\right\|^2 < 1$ only if $\left\|\nabla f\left(\varphi_t(m)\right)\right\| < 1$. Therefore, (9.1) and (9.2) imply that there exists a sequence $(t_n)_{n\ge1} \subset [0, \tau]$ such that

$$\left\|\nabla f\left(\varphi_{t_n}(a_n)\right)\right\|^2 < \frac{1}{n}. \tag{9.3}$$

Set $b_n = \varphi_{t_n}(a_n)$ and $B = \{b_n\}_{n\ge1}$. Then, by assumption and (9.2),

$$\begin{aligned} |f(b_n)| &\le |f(a_n)| + |f(b_n) - f(a_n)| \\ &\le c + |f(\varphi_{t_n}(a_n)) - f(a_n)| \;<\; c + \tfrac{\tau}{n} \;\le\; c + \tau. \end{aligned} \tag{9.4}$$

In view of (9.3), (9.4) and condition (C), we conclude that there exists $b^* \in \overline{B}$ with $\varphi_\tau(b^*) = b^*$. After passing to a subsequence, if necessary, we may assume that $b^* = \lim_{n\to\infty} b_n$. It remains to show that $b^* \in \overline{A}$.

For any C^1 path $\sigma\colon [a, b] \to M$ the length of σ is defined by

$$\int_a^b \left\|\frac{d}{dt}\sigma(t)\right\| dt.$$

For $m, m' \in M$ let $d(m, m')$ be the infimum of the length of all C^1 paths joining m and m'. The function d thus defined is a metric on M which is consistent with the topology of M [19, §9]. For each $n \ge 1$ the path $[0,t_n] \to M$, $t \mapsto \varphi_t(a_n)$ is of class C^1. Therefore, by Schwartz's inequality, (9.1) and (9.2),

$$\begin{aligned}
d(b_n,a_n) = d(\varphi_{t_n}(a_n),a_n) &\le \int_0^{t_n} \left\| \frac{d}{dt}\varphi_t(a_n) \right\| dt \\
&\le \int_0^{\tau} \left\| \frac{d}{dt}\varphi_t(a_n) \right\| dt \\
&= \int_0^{\tau} h(\varphi_t(a_n)) \, \|\nabla f(\varphi_t(a_n))\| \, dt \\
&\le \tau^{\frac12} \left(\int_0^{\tau} h(\varphi_t(a_n))^2 \, \|\nabla f\,(\varphi_t(a_n))\|^2 \, dt \right)^{\frac12} \\
&\le \tau^{\frac12} \left(\int_0^{\tau} h(\varphi_t(a_n)) \, \|\nabla f\,(\varphi_t(a_n))\|^2 \, dt \right)^{\frac12} \\
&\le \frac{\tau}{\sqrt{n}}.
\end{aligned}$$

We conclude that

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} d(b^*,a_n) \le \lim_{n\to\infty} d(b^*,b_n) + \lim_{n\to\infty} d(b_n,a_n) = 0,$$

i.e., $b^* \in \overline{A}$. Since $A \subset M$ was arbitrary, it follows that the pair (φ_τ, f) also satisfies condition (D_2) on M. This completes the proof of Proposition 9.1. □

A metric G-space X is called a *metric G-ANR* if for each closed G-subspace Z of a *metric* G-space Y every G-map $\rho\colon Z \to X$ admits an equivariant extension to a G-neighborhood of Z.

9.2. **Corollary.** *Let M be a Riemannian Hilbert manifold as above. Suppose that M is a G-space and that the Riemannian metric on M is G-invariant. Let K be the set of critical points of a $C^{1,1}$ G-invariant function $f\colon M \to \mathbb{R}$ which satisfies condition* (C) *on M and is bounded below.*

(a) *We always have*

$$\sum_{d\in\mathbb{R}} \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}_M\, K \cap f^{-1}(d) \;\ge\; \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, M.$$

(b) *If M is a metric G-ANR and $\mathcal{G}$ contains the orbit types of all orbits in K, then f has at least $\mathcal{G}$-cat M critical orbits.*

(c) *If M is a metric G-ANR and $f(K)$ is discrete, then*

$$\mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, K \;\ge\; \mathcal{G}\text{-cat}\, M.$$

Proof. Going once more through Section 4, we see that Proposition 4.3 holds for metric G-ANR's X. Therefore, Corollary 7.5 holds for metric G-ANR's. Since the Riemannian metric on M is G-invariant, the vector fields ∇f and V are G-equivariant, and so is the flow φ_t, $t \in \mathbb{R}$. Moreover, the critical points of f are the rest points of φ_1. The corollary now follows in view of Proposition 9.1. □

Localizing Proposition 9.1 and applying the relative version of Corollary 7.5, we obtain a relative version of the above corollary.

9.3. **Remarks. 1.** Let M be as in the basic assumptions of Corollary 9.2. Since M is metrizable, it is paracompact. Appendix B of [6] thus provides sufficient conditions for M being a metric G-ANR. They are, e.g., fulfilled if G acts trivially, or if M and the action $G \times M \to M$ are $C^{2,1}$.

2. By the preceding remark, Corollary 9.2 (b) recovers the basic Lusternik–Schnirelmann theorem for Hilbert manifolds first obtained in [23].

3. Versions of (a) and (b) in Corollary 9.2 have been proved for $C^{1,1}$ functions on complete $C^{1,1}$ Finsler manifolds ([20, Theorems 7.1 and 7.2] and [6, § 3]) and for continuous functions on weakly locally contractible complete metric spaces (see [4]). We notice that in these situations also the analogues of (c) hold.

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