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## Geometric conditions for fractional Hardy and Hardy-Sobolev inequalities

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**JYU.** Since 1863.

# 1. Fractional Hardy inequalities

# Hardy inequalities

Let  $1 \leq p < \infty$  and let  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  be an open set. The  $p$ -Hardy inequality in  $\Omega$  reads as

$$\int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{\text{dist}(x, \partial\Omega)^p} dx \leq C \int_{\Omega} |\nabla u(x)|^p dx,$$

where (usually)  $u \in C_0^\infty(\Omega)$  (or  $u \in W_0^{1,p}(\Omega)$ ).

(However, in some cases the zero boundary values can be omitted.)

In this talk we discuss fractional variants of Hardy inequalities and their relation to the geometry of  $\Omega$ , and also metric space versions of such inequalities. My contributions are from joint works with Bartłomiej Dyda, Lizaveta Ihnazyeva, Heli Tuominen, and Antti Vähäkangas.

## Fractional Hardy inequalities

Let  $0 < s < 1$  and  $1 \leq p < \infty$ . We say that an open set  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  admits an  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality if there is  $C > 0$  such that

$$\int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{\text{dist}(x, \partial\Omega)^{sp}} dx \leq C \int_{\Omega} \int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{|x - y|^{n+sp}} dy dx$$

holds for every  $u \in C_0(\Omega)$ .

By [Dyda, 2004], a bounded Lipschitz domain  $\Omega$  admits an  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality if and only if  $sp > 1$ . This should be contrasted with the result of [Nečas, 1962]: if  $1 < p < \infty$  and  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  is a bounded Lipschitz domain, there is  $C > 0$  such that the  $p$ -Hardy inequality

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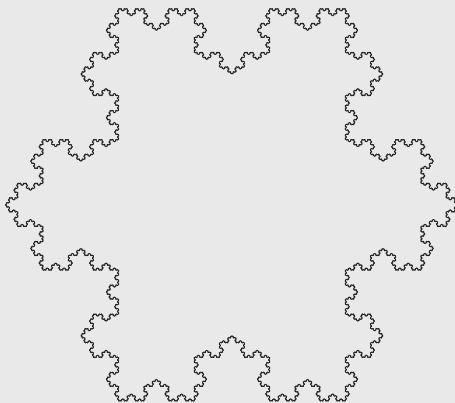
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$$\int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{\text{dist}(x, \partial\Omega)^{p-\beta}} dx \leq C \int_{\Omega} |\nabla u(x)|^p \text{dist}(x, \partial\Omega)^{\beta} dx$$

holds for every  $u \in C_0^{\infty}(\Omega)$  if (and only if)  $p - \beta > 1$ .

## Motivation: snowflake

The situation changes, if instead of a Lipschitz domain (say a ball) we consider e.g. a snowflake domain  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  with  $\dim(\partial\Omega) = \lambda \in ]n - 1, n[$ .



## Motivation: snowflake

For a Lipschitz domain the critical bound for the  $(p, \beta)$ -Hardy inequality is

$$p - \beta > 1 = n - (n - 1) = n - \dim(\partial\Omega)$$

and for the fractional  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality

$$sp > 1 = n - (n - 1) = n - \dim(\partial\Omega).$$

Similarly, it turns out that for a snowflake domain  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  with  $\dim(\partial\Omega) = \lambda \in ]n - 1, n[$ , the bound for the  $(p, \beta)$ -Hardy inequality is

$$p - \beta > n - \lambda = n - \dim(\partial\Omega)$$

(based on [Koskela–L, 2009]). and for the fractional  $(s, p)$ -Hardy

$$sp > n - \lambda = n - \dim(\partial\Omega)$$

(based on [Ihnatsyeva – L – Tuominen – Vähäkangas, 2014] or [Dyda – Vähäkangas, 2014]). Here both "thickness" and "accessibility" of the boundary are needed. More details will be discussed soon.

## 2. Assouad dimensions



## Hausdorff measure and dimension

We need to introduce some notions of dimension. First we recall the usual Hausdorff dimension.

Let  $E \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ ,  $n \geq 1$ , and let  $\lambda \geq 0$  and  $0 < \delta \leq \infty$ .  
The  $\lambda$ -dimensional **Hausdorff** ( $\delta$ -)**content** of  $E$  is

$$\mathcal{H}_\delta^\lambda(E) = \inf \left\{ \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} r_k^\lambda : E \subset \bigcup_{k=1}^{\infty} B(x_k, r_k), 0 < r_k \leq \delta \right\}.$$

The  $\lambda$ -dimensional **Hausdorff measure** of  $E$  is  $\mathcal{H}^\lambda(E) = \lim_{\delta \rightarrow 0} \mathcal{H}_\delta^\lambda(E)$ .

The **Hausdorff dimension** of  $E$  is

$$\begin{aligned} \dim_{\text{H}}(E) &= \inf \{ \lambda \geq 0 : \mathcal{H}^\lambda(E) = 0 \} \\ &= \inf \{ \lambda \geq 0 : \mathcal{H}_\infty^\lambda(E) = 0 \}. \end{aligned}$$

## Assouad dimensions

Let  $E \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  and write  $d(E) = \text{diam}(E)$ .

Consider all exponents  $\lambda \geq 0$  for which there is  $C > 0$  such that  $E \cap B(x, R)$  can be covered by **at most**  $C(\frac{r}{R})^{-\lambda}$  balls of radius  $r$  for all  $0 < r < R (< d(E))$  and all  $x \in E$ .

The infimum of such  $\lambda$  is the **Assouad dimension**  $\dim_A(E)$ .

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The infimum of such  $\lambda$  is the **(upper) Assouad dimension**  $\overline{\dim}_A(E)$ .

Conversely: Consider all  $\lambda \geq 0$  for which there is  $C > 0$  such that if  $0 < r < R < d(E)$ , then for every  $x \in E$  **at least**  $C(\frac{r}{R})^{-\lambda}$  balls of radius  $r$  are needed to cover  $E \cap B(x, R)$ .

The supremum of such  $\lambda$  is the **lower (Assouad) dimension**  $\underline{\dim}_A(E)$ .

It always holds that  $\dim_H(E) \leq \overline{\dim}_A(E)$ .

If  $E$  is closed, then  $\underline{\dim}_A(E) \leq \dim_H(E)$  (this is not immediate), but for instance  $\underline{\dim}_A(\mathbb{Q}) = 1 > 0 = \dim_H(\mathbb{Q})$ .

## Minkowski and Assouad

Recall:

$\overline{\dim}_A(E)$  is the infimum of  $\lambda \geq 0$  s.t.  $E \cap B(x, R)$  can always be covered by at most  $C(\frac{r}{R})^{-\lambda}$  balls of radius  $0 < r < R < d(E)$

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For comparison, the **upper** and **lower Minkowski** (or **box**) **dimensions** of a bounded set  $E \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  can be defined as follows:

$\overline{\dim}_M(E)$  is the infimum of  $\lambda \geq 0$  s.t.  $E$  can always be covered by at most  $Cr^{-\lambda}$  balls of radius  $0 < r < d(E)$

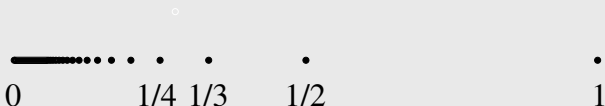
$\underline{\dim}_M(E)$  is the supremum of  $\lambda \geq 0$  s.t. at least  $Cr^{-\lambda}$  balls of radius  $0 < r < d(E)$  are always needed to cover  $E$ .

Thus  $\underline{\dim}_A(E) \leq \underline{\dim}_M(E) \leq \overline{\dim}_M(E) \leq \overline{\dim}_A(E)$ .

## Examples

General idea: Assouad dimensions reflect the extreme behavior of sets and take into account all scales  $0 < r < d(E)$ .

- Let  $E = \{0\} \cup [1, 2] \subset \mathbb{R}$ . Then  $\underline{\dim}_A(E) = 0$  and  $\overline{\dim}_A(E) = 1$  ( $\underline{\dim}_M(E) = \overline{\dim}_M(E) = 1$ ).
- $\underline{\dim}_A(\mathbb{Z}) = 0$  and  $\overline{\dim}_A(\mathbb{Z}) = 1$  (Minkowski not defined).
- Let  $E = \{(\frac{1}{j}, 0, \dots, 0) : j \in \mathbb{N}\} \cup \{(0, 0, \dots, 0)\} \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ .



Then  $\underline{\dim}_A(E) = 0$  and  $\overline{\dim}_A(E) = 1$  ( $\underline{\dim}_M(E) = \overline{\dim}_M(E) = \frac{1}{2}$ ).

Let  $E \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  be a closed set, and let  $0 < \alpha \leq n$ . Then the following conditions are equivalent:

- $\underline{\dim}_A(E) > n - \alpha$ .
- There are  $\lambda > n - \alpha$  and  $C > 0$  such that

$$\mathcal{H}_\infty^\lambda(E \cap B(x, r)) \geq Cr^\lambda$$

for every  $x \in E$  and  $0 < r < \text{diam}(E)$ .

- $E$  satisfies an  $(s, p)$ -capacity density condition (uniform  $(s, p)$ -fatness), for every  $x \in E$  and  $0 < r < \text{diam}(E)$ , whenever  $0 < s < 1$  and  $1 \leq p < \infty$  are such that  $sp = \alpha$ .

### 3. Fractional Hardy inequalities in $\mathbb{R}^n$



## Accessibility

Often the "thickness" of the boundary (given by the previous equivalent conditions) is not alone sufficient for the fractional  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequalities. A possible additional condition is the following "accessibility".

When  $x \in \Omega$ , we write  $B_x = B(x, 2 \operatorname{dist}(x, \partial\Omega))$ . In the accessibility condition we require that for every  $z \in \partial\Omega \cap B_x$  there is an arc-length parameterized curve  $\gamma: [0, \ell] \rightarrow \Omega$  (John curve), such that  $\gamma(0) = z$ ,  $\gamma(\ell) = x$ , and

$$\operatorname{dist}(\gamma(t), \partial\Omega) \geq ct$$

for all  $t \in [0, \ell]$ . Here  $c > 0$  is a uniform constant.

By a recent result in [Azzam, 2018], if  $0 \leq \lambda \leq n - 1$  and

$$\mathcal{H}_\infty^\lambda(\partial\Omega \cap B_x) \geq Cr^\lambda$$

for every  $x \in \Omega$ , then the set of accessible points on  $\partial\Omega \cap B_x$  satisfies the same condition for every  $0 < \lambda' < \lambda$  (the bound  $\lambda \leq n - 1$  is essential).

## Fractional Hardy inequalities, thick case

### Theorem 1 ((essentially) ILTV, 2014).

Let  $0 < s < 1$  and  $1 < p < \infty$  satisfy  $0 < sp < n$ , and let  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  be an open set. Assume that there are  $n - sp < \lambda \leq n$  and  $C > 0$  such that, for every  $x \in \Omega$ ,

$$\mathcal{H}_\infty^\lambda(\partial\Omega \cap B_x) \geq C \operatorname{dist}(x, \partial\Omega)^\lambda$$

and either

- (i)  $\partial\Omega \cap B_x$  is (uniformly) **accessible** from  $x$ , or
- (ii)  $|\Omega^c \cap B_x| = 0$ .

Then  $\Omega$  admits an  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality.

In particular, if  $\underline{\dim}_A(\partial\Omega) > n - sp$  and each  $x \in \Omega$  satisfies one of (i) and (ii), then  $\Omega$  admits an  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality.

The proof of Theorem 1 is based upon a chaining argument along the John-curves and the use of maximal functions.

## A counterexample

The condition  $\underline{\dim}_A(\partial\Omega) > n - sp$  alone is not sufficient for  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality in  $\Omega$  when  $0 < sp \leq 1$ . We state and explain this in the case  $n = 2$ , but similar examples exist in higher dimensions as well.

### Theorem 2.

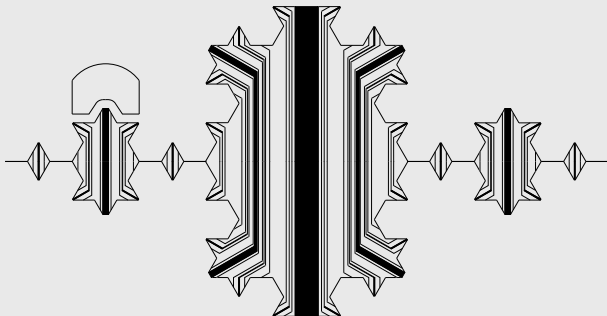
*Let  $1 < p < \infty$  and  $0 < s < 1$  be such that  $0 < sp \leq 1$ . Then there exists a bounded domain  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^2$  such that  $\underline{\dim}_A(\partial\Omega) > 2 - sp$ , but the  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality does not hold in  $\Omega$ .*

The idea is to let  $\Omega_0$  be the domain inside a snowflake curve with  $\underline{\dim}_A(\partial\Omega) = \lambda > 2 - sp$  (for this the  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality holds). In the case  $sp = 1$ , we remove inside the domain a fat Cantor set  $C$  having positive Lebesgue measure. Then  $\underline{\dim}_A(C) = 2$ , and for  $\Omega = \Omega_0 \setminus C$  we have  $\underline{\dim}_A(\partial\Omega) = \lambda > 2 - sp = 1$ .

However, in this case the  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality fails ( $sp = 1$ ). (Based on ideas in [Dyda, 2004])

## Snowflaked counterexample

If we want to break an  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality with  $0 < sp < 1$ , then instead of the Cantor set we remove a “fat snowflake with tunnels”, where the dimension of the snowflake is  $2 - sp$ .



(The support of one test function showing the failure of the  $(s, p)$ -Hardy inequality is also seen in the figure.)

## Modified inequality

For comparison: Combination of results from [Edmunds – Hurri-Syrjänen – Vähäkangas, 2014] and [Ihnatsyeva – Vähäkangas, 2013] shows that if  $\underline{\dim}_A(\partial\Omega) > n - sp$ , without any additional conditions, then inequality

$$\int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{\text{dist}(x, \partial\Omega)^{sp}} dx \leq C \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{|x - y|^{n+sp}} dy dx$$

holds for every  $u \in C_0(\Omega)$ .

Note that on the right-hand side the integrals are over the whole  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . Here we understand that functions in  $C_0(\Omega)$  are extended as 0 outside  $\Omega$ .

(Of course, for the usual Hardy inequalities involving the gradient, this would not make a difference.)

## 4. Metric spaces

## Metric space version of fractional Hardy

More generally, we consider variants of the fractional Hardy–Sobolev inequalities in an open set  $\Omega$  in a metric measure space  $X = (X, d, \mu)$ . One natural form of such an inequality is

$$\int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{d(x, \Omega^c)^{sp}} dx \leq C \int_{\Omega} \int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{d(x, y)^{sp} \mu(B(x, d(x, y)))} dy dx,$$

for functions  $u \in \text{Lip}_0(\Omega)$ . (Here we write  $dx = d\mu(x)$ .)

(Compare to  $\int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{d(x, \partial\Omega)^{sp}} dx \leq C \int_{\Omega} \int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{|x - y|^{n+sp}} dy dx$  when  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ .)

In [Dyda – L – Vähäkangas, ongoing] we are also interested in the validity of a “localized” version

$$\int_{\Omega \cap B(z, r)} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{d(x, \Omega^c)^{sp}} dx \leq C \int_{B(z, 3r)} \int_{B(z, 3r)} \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{d(x, y)^{sp} \mu(B(x, d(x, y)))} dy dx,$$

whenever  $z \in \Omega^c$ ,  $r > 0$ , and  $u \in \text{Lip}_0(\Omega)$ .

## Lower Assouad codimension

When examining dimensional conditions for Hardy inequalities in a metric space  $(X, d, \mu)$ , we also need to take into account the effect of the measure  $\mu$ . Thus we need different variants of the Assouad dimensions.

### Definition 3.

Let  $E \subset X$ . The lower Assouad codimension  $\underline{\text{codim}}_A(E)$  is the supremum of all  $\rho \geq 0$  for which there is  $C > 0$  such that

$$\frac{\mu(E_r \cap B(x, R))}{\mu(B(x, R))} \leq C \left(\frac{r}{R}\right)^\rho$$

for all  $x \in E$  and all  $0 < r < R < 2 \text{diam}(X)$ .

Here  $E_r = \{x \in X : \text{dist}(x, E) < r\}$  is the open  $r$ -neighborhood of  $E \subset X$ .

Note that if  $\underline{\text{codim}}_A(E) > 0$ , then  $\mu(E) = 0$  by the Lebesgue density theorem.



# Upper Assouad codimension

Conversely, we have:

## Definition 4.

Let  $E \subset X$ . The upper Assouad codimension  $\overline{\text{codim}}_A(E)$  is the infimum of all  $\rho \geq 0$  for which there is  $C > 0$  such that

$$\frac{\mu(E_r \cap B(x, R))}{\mu(B(x, R))} \geq C \left(\frac{r}{R}\right)^\rho$$

for all  $x \in E$  and all  $0 < r < R < 2 \text{diam}(X)$ .

## The Ahlfors regular case

The space  $X = (X, d, \mu)$  is **(Ahlfors)  $Q$ -regular**, for  $Q > 0$ , if there is  $C \geq 1$  such that

$$C^{-1}r^Q \leq \mu(B(x, r)) \leq Cr^Q$$

for all  $x \in X$  and all  $0 < r < \text{diam}(X)$ . This can be equivalently required to hold for  $\mu = \mathcal{H}^Q$ , the  $Q$ -dimensional Hausdorff measure.

If  $X$  is  $Q$ -regular, then it is not hard to see that

$$\overline{\dim}_A(E) = Q - \underline{\text{co dim}}_A(E) \quad \text{for all } E \subset X$$

and

$$\underline{\dim}_A(E) = Q - \overline{\text{co dim}}_A(E) \quad \text{for all } E \subset X.$$

On the other hand, if  $E \subset X$  is Ahlfors  $\lambda$ -regular (i.e. a  $\lambda$ -set), for instance a subspace of  $X = \mathbb{R}^n$  or a self-similar fractal, then

$$\overline{\dim}_A(E) = \underline{\dim}_A(E) = \dim_H(E) = \lambda.$$

## Doubling

If the space  $X$  is not Ahlfors regular, we still need to assume the weaker condition that  $\mu$  is **doubling**: there is  $C > 0$  such that

$$\mu(B(x, 2r)) \leq C \mu(B(x, r)) \quad \text{for all } x \in X, r > 0. \quad (1)$$

Iteration of (1) shows that there are  $\sigma > 0$  and  $C > 0$  such that

$$\frac{\mu(B(y, r))}{\mu(B(x, R))} \geq C \left(\frac{r}{R}\right)^\sigma \quad \text{whenever } B(y, r) \subset B(x, R) \subset X.$$

Conversely, we say that  $\mu$  is **reverse doubling**, if there are  $\eta > 0$  and  $C > 0$  such that

$$\frac{\mu(B(y, r))}{\mu(B(x, R))} \leq C \left(\frac{r}{R}\right)^\eta \quad \text{whenever } B(y, r) \subset B(x, R) \subset X. \quad (2)$$

If  $X$  is unbounded and connected and  $\mu$  is doubling, then there is some  $\eta > 0$  such that (2) holds.

## Fractional Poincaré inequalities

Let  $1 \leq p < \infty$ . Fix a ball  $B = B(x_0, r) \subset X$  and a Lipschitz function  $u \in Lip(X)$ . Then a simple calculation using only the doubling condition (and Hölder) yields a fractional  $p$ -Poincaré inequality:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \int_B |u(x) - u_B|^p dx &\leq \int_B \int_B |u(x) - u(y)|^p dy dx \\
 &\leq r^{sp} \int_B \int_B \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{r^{sp} \mu(B)} dy dx \\
 &\leq Cr^{sp} \int_B \int_B \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{d(x, y)^{sp} \mu(4B)} dy dx \\
 &\leq Cr^{sp} \int_B \int_B \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{d(x, y)^{sp} \mu(B(x, d(x, y)))} dy dx.
 \end{aligned}$$

With the help of the quantitative doubling and reverse doubling conditions (1) and (2), this can then be improved into a fractional  $(q, p)$ -Poincaré inequality, with some  $q > p$ , where on the left-hand side we have  $(\int_B |u(x) - u_B|^q dx)^{p/q}$ .

## Localized fractional Hardy inequality

We have the following **localized** fractional Hardy inequalities.

### Theorem 5 (DLV, ongoing).

Let  $0 < s < 1$  and  $1 < p < \infty$ . Assume that  $X$  is unbounded, and that  $\mu$  is doubling and reverse doubling. Let  $\Omega$  be an open set such that  $\Omega^c$  is unbounded and  $\overline{\text{co dim}}_A(\Omega^c) < sp$ . Then there is  $C > 0$  such that

$$\int_{B(z,r) \setminus E} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{d(x,E)^{sp}} dx \leq C \int_{B(z,3r)} \int_{B(z,3r)} \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{d(x,y)^{sp} \mu(B(x,d(x,y)))} dy dx$$

whenever  $z \in E$ ,  $r > 0$ , and  $u \in \text{Lip}_0(\Omega)$ .

This implies that there is also  $C > 0$  such that

$$\int_{\Omega} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{d(x,\Omega^c)^{sp}} dx \leq C \int_X \int_X \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{d(x,y)^{sp} \mu(B(x,d(x,y)))} dy dx,$$

for every  $u \in \text{Lip}_0(\Omega)$ .

## Necessity of the dimensional condition

We can also show that the dimensional condition  $\overline{\text{codim}}_A(\Omega^c) < sp$  in Theorem 5 is (almost) necessary.

### Theorem 6 (DLV, ongoing).

Let  $0 < s < 1$  and  $1 < p < \infty$ . Assume that  $\Omega \subset X$  is an open set and that there is  $C > 0$  such that

$$\int_{B(z,r) \setminus E} \frac{|u(x)|^p}{d(x,E)^{sp}} dx \leq C \int_{B(z,3r)} \int_{B(z,3r)} \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{d(x,y)^{sp} \mu(B(x,d(x,y)))} dy dx$$

whenever  $z \in E$ ,  $r > 0$ , and  $u \in C_0(\Omega)$ .

Then  $\overline{\text{codim}}_A(E) \leq sp$ .

## Global fractional Hardy–Sobolev inequalities

Conversely, we have the following global fractional Hardy–Sobolev inequalities in the metric setting.

### Theorem 7 (DILTV, 2019).

Assume that  $X$  is connected, that the reverse doubling (2) holds with  $\eta = s \in (0, 1)$ , and that there is  $Q > 1$  such that  $\mu(B(x, r)) \geq cr^Q$  for all  $x \in X$  and  $r > 0$ . Let  $E \subset X$  be closed, and let  $1 < p \leq q \leq \frac{Qp}{Q-sp} < \infty$  be such that  $\text{co dim}_A(E) > Q - \frac{q}{p}(Q - sp)$ .

Then there is  $C > 0$  such that for all  $u \in \text{Lip}_0(X)$

$$\left( \int_X |u(x)|^q d(x, E)^{\frac{q}{p}(Q-sp)-Q} dx \right)^{\frac{p}{q}} \leq C \int_X \int_X \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p dy dx}{d(x, y)^{sp} \mu(B(x, d(x, y)))}$$

At least under Ahlfors  $Q$ -regularity, the dimensional condition is also necessary. Note that when  $q = p$ , this condition reduces to  $\text{co dim}_A(E) > sp$ . (More of these things in the talk of Bartek Dyda).

# Global fractional Hardy–Sobolev inequalities in $\mathbb{R}^n$

Finally, in  $\mathbb{R}^n$  the previous Theorem 7 implies the following Hardy–Sobolev inequalities.

Let  $E \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  be closed, and let  $1 < p \leq q \leq \frac{np}{n-sp} < \infty$  be such that  $\overline{\dim}_A(E) < \frac{q}{p}(n-sp)$ .

Then there is  $C > 0$  such that for all  $u \in \text{Lip}_0(\mathbb{R}^n)$

$$\left( \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} |u(x)|^q d(x, E)^{\frac{q}{p}(n-sp)-n} dx \right)^{\frac{p}{q}} \leq C \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \frac{|u(x) - u(y)|^p}{|x - y|^{n+sp}} dy dx.$$



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