

CORRIGENDUM TO “DIVERGENCE IN LATTICES IN SEMISIMPLE LIE GROUPS AND GRAPHS OF GROUPS”

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ABSTRACT. The authors correct an error in Proposition 3.24 of their work *Divergence in lattices in semisimple Lie groups and graphs of groups*, Trans. Amer. Math. Soc. **362** (2010), no. 5, 2451–2505.

The goal of this corrigendum is to correct [DMS, Proposition 3.24] and the proofs of [DMS, Theorems 4.4 and 4.9], relying on that proposition. We thank the authors of [ADT], who kindly pointed out the mistake in [DMS, Proposition 3.24] to us.

In what follows we assume that we work in a fixed metric space (X, dist) .

We call a *quasi-geodesic segment in X* a quasi-isometric embedding $\mathfrak{q} : [a, b] \rightarrow X$, where $a < b$ are two finite real numbers. We call a *bi-infinite quasi-geodesic in X* (or simply a *quasi-geodesic in X*) a quasi-isometric embedding $\mathfrak{q} : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow X$. Given a bi-infinite quasi-geodesic \mathfrak{q} , its restriction to an interval (finite or infinite) is called a *sub-quasi-geodesic of \mathfrak{q}* .

A quasi-geodesic (segment) is *Morse* if for every $L \geq 1$ and $C \geq 0$, every (L, C) -quasi-geodesic \mathfrak{p} with endpoints on the image of \mathfrak{q} is contained in the M -tubular neighborhood of \mathfrak{q} , where M depends only on L, C .

The corrected version of [DMS, Proposition 3.24] is given below. The first four equivalent conditions there are taken verbatim from [DMS]. In particular the concepts of quasi-path and quasi-length are defined in [DMS] (we do not need these in this corrigendum, so we skip the definitions).

Proposition 1. *Let X be a metric space and for every pair of points $a, b \in X$ let $L(a, b)$ be a fixed set of (λ, κ) -quasi-geodesics (for some constants $\lambda \geq 1$ and $\kappa \geq 0$) with endpoints a and b . Let $L = \bigcup_{a, b \in X} L(a, b)$.*

Let \mathfrak{q} be a bi-infinite quasi-geodesic in X , and for every two points x, y on \mathfrak{q} denote by \mathfrak{q}_{xy} the maximal sub-quasi-geodesic of \mathfrak{q} with endpoints x and y .

The following conditions are equivalent:

- (1) *In every asymptotic cone of X , the ultralimit of \mathfrak{q} is either empty or contained in a transversal tree for some tree-graded structure.*
- (2) *\mathfrak{q} is a Morse quasi-geodesic.*
- (3) *For every $C \geq 1$ there exists $D \geq 0$ such that every path of length $\leq Cn$ connecting two points a, b on \mathfrak{q} at distance $\geq n$ crosses the D -neighborhood of the middle third of \mathfrak{q}_{ab} .*

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- (4) For every $C \geq 1$ and natural $k > 0$ there exists $D \geq 0$ such that every k -piecewise L quasi-path \mathfrak{p} that:
 - connects two points $a, b \in \mathfrak{q}$,
 - has quasi-length $\leq C \text{dist}(a, b)$,
 crosses the D -neighborhood of the middle third of \mathfrak{q}_{ab} .
- (5) For every $C \geq 1$ and every $\epsilon > 0$ there exists $D \geq 0$ such that for every $a, b \in \mathfrak{q}$ with $\text{dist}(a, b) \geq D$, and every path \mathfrak{p} connecting a, b of length $\leq C \text{dist}(a, b)$, the sub-quasi-geodesic \mathfrak{q}_{ab} is contained in the $(\epsilon \text{dist}(a, b))$ -neighborhood of \mathfrak{p} .

Remarks 2.

- (1) Properties (1)–(4) are as in [DMS, Proposition 3.24]; property (5) is modified. The initial version of (5) stated that, given an arbitrary $C \geq 1$, for every $a, b \in \mathfrak{q}$, and every path \mathfrak{p} with endpoints a, b and of length $\leq C \text{dist}(a, b)$, the sub-quasi-geodesic \mathfrak{q}_{ab} would be contained in the D -neighborhood of \mathfrak{p} , with D a constant depending only on C . This property is however strictly stronger than the property of being a Morse quasi-geodesic. Indeed, an example of a Morse geodesic that does not satisfy the property above, provided in [ADT], is an arbitrary bi-infinite geodesic $\mathfrak{q} : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{H}^2$ in the hyperbolic plane \mathbb{H}^2 : for an arbitrarily large integer n , the path \mathfrak{p}_n joining $\mathfrak{q}(-n)$ to $\mathfrak{q}(n)$ obtained as the concatenation of \mathfrak{q} restricted to the interval $[-n, -\log n]$, with half of the hyperbolic circle centered in $\mathfrak{q}(0)$ and of radius $\log n$, and with \mathfrak{q} restricted to the interval $[\log n, n]$, has length at most Cn , for some fixed constant C independent of n , yet $\mathfrak{q}(0)$ is between the endpoints of \mathfrak{p}_n on \mathfrak{q} , and at distance $\log n$ of \mathfrak{p}_n .

The mistake is in the proof of the implication (1) \rightarrow (5) (see [DMS, Proposition 3.24]), where it is assumed that for a sequence of paths \mathfrak{p}_n connecting pairs of points a_n, b_n on the bi-infinite quasi-geodesic \mathfrak{q} , the ω -limit of \mathfrak{p}_n in any asymptotic cone is a rectifiable path. This is not true in general: in the example above, for observation points x_n coinciding with the midpoints of the half-circle, the ω -limit of \mathfrak{p}_n in the asymptotic cone $\text{Con}^\omega(\mathbb{H}^2, (x_n), (\log n))$ is not rectifiable.

If, on the other hand, one considers sequences of paths \mathfrak{p}_n of lengths $\ell_n \rightarrow \infty$ and their ω -limits only in asymptotic cones with scaling sequence $\lambda_n = \ell_n$, then these ω -limits, when non-empty, are rectifiable paths.

- (2) The first paper to provide a correct proof of the equivalence (2) \leftrightarrow (3) in Proposition 1 is thus [ADT], since our initial proof of this implication relied on the wrong version of (5).

Proposition 1 contains all known characterizations of Morse quasi-geodesics, with one exception that we explain below, to complete the list. Moreover, this characterization plays a central part in the proof of (2) \leftrightarrow (3) in [ADT]. We begin with some terminology.

Definition 3. Let \mathfrak{q} be a quasi-geodesic in a metric space X , and let $\eta > 0$. The η -nearest point projection of a point $x \in X$ on \mathfrak{q} , denoted by $\text{proj}_{\mathfrak{q}}^\eta(x)$, is the set of points $x' \in \mathfrak{q}$ such that $\text{dist}(x, x') \leq \text{dist}(x, \mathfrak{q}) + \eta$.

Definition 4 (Sub-linear contraction [ACGH]). We say that a quasi-geodesic \mathfrak{q} in a geodesic metric space X is *uniformly sub-linearly contracting* if there exists some constant $\eta > 0$ such that for every sub-quasi-geodesic \mathfrak{q}' of \mathfrak{q} , the projection

$\text{proj}_{\mathfrak{q}'}^\eta$ is uniformly sub-linearly contracting: for every $\epsilon > 0$ there exists $D = D(\epsilon)$ (independent of the specific sub-quasi-geodesic \mathfrak{q}' of \mathfrak{q}) such that for every $D' \geq D$ and every $x \in X$ with $\text{dist}(x, \mathfrak{q}') \geq 2D'$, the union of all nearest point projections $\text{proj}_{\mathfrak{q}'}^\eta(y)$ of points y in the ball $B(x, D')$ has diameter at most $\epsilon D'$.

In what follows, in all arguments using uniform sub-linearly contracting properties, we drop the parameter η from the notation.

Theorem 5 (Theorem 1.4, [ACGH]). *Let X be a geodesic metric space, and let \mathfrak{q} be a quasi-geodesic in it. The following are equivalent:*

- (1) \mathfrak{q} is Morse.
- (2) \mathfrak{q} is uniformly sub-linearly contracting.

Remark 6. If X is δ -hyperbolic, then every bi-infinite geodesic \mathfrak{g} of X is uniformly sub-linearly contracting, and an even stronger property holds: there exist constants $P = P(\delta)$ and $M = M(\delta)$ such that for every \mathfrak{g} -geodesic (segment, infinite or bi-infinite), every $D > 0$, and every $x \in X$ with $\text{dist}(x, \mathfrak{g}) > D + M$, the union of nearest point projections $\text{proj}_{\mathfrak{g}}$ of points y of the ball $B(x, D)$ to \mathfrak{g} has diameter at most P ([Gro87], [CDP, Proposition 2.1 in Chapter 10]).

This clearly extends to (λ, κ) -quasi-geodesics, modulo increasing the constants M and P with additive constants depending on (L, C) .

Proof of Proposition 1. The equivalence of the five properties follows from the implications (2) \rightarrow (3) \rightarrow (4) \rightarrow (1) \rightarrow (2) and the equivalence (1) \leftrightarrow (5).

For (2) \rightarrow (3) we refer to [ADT].

(3) \rightarrow (4) is obvious. The proof of (4) \rightarrow (1) is correct.

(1) \rightarrow (2). Suppose that there exist $\mu \geq 1, \nu \geq 0$ such that for every $k > 1$ there exists a (μ, ν) -quasi-geodesic \mathfrak{p}_k joining two points on \mathfrak{q} and there exists $x_k \in \mathfrak{p}_k$ at distance $d_k > k$ from \mathfrak{q} . We can assume that d_k is the maximal distance from a point of \mathfrak{p}_k to \mathfrak{q} . For any ultrafilter ω , in the asymptotic cone $\text{Con}^\omega(X, (x_k), (d_k))$, the ω -limit \mathfrak{q}_ω of \mathfrak{q} is a transversal geodesic, by (1), and the ω -limit \mathfrak{p}_ω of the sequence (\mathfrak{p}_k) is either a μ -bi-Lipschitz path with endpoints on \mathfrak{q}_ω , or a μ -bi-Lipschitz ray with origin on \mathfrak{q}_ω , or a μ -bi-Lipschitz bi-infinite path. In all three cases \mathfrak{p}_ω stays 1-close to \mathfrak{q}_ω , and has one point $x^\omega = (x_k)^\omega$ at distance 1 from \mathfrak{q}_ω . In the latter two cases, we can obtain a simple path with endpoints on \mathfrak{q}_ω by choosing a point x on the ray far enough from the origin (respectively two points x, y far enough from each other), joining them by a geodesic $[x, x']$ (respectively by two geodesics $[x, x']$ and $[y, y']$) to nearest points on \mathfrak{q}_ω , and by replacing x (respectively x, y) with the farthest from them intersection point between a geodesic and \mathfrak{p}_ω . We then get a contradiction as in the end of the proof of (1) \rightarrow (5) of Proposition 1.

(1) \rightarrow (5). Suppose there exist constants $C > 1$ and $c > 0$, and a sequence of paths \mathfrak{p}_k connecting pairs of points a_k, b_k on \mathfrak{q} with $d_k = \text{dist}(a_k, b_k) \rightarrow \infty$ such that the length of each \mathfrak{p}_k is at most $C \text{dist}(a_k, b_k)$ and $\mathfrak{q}_{a_k b_k}$ is not in the cd_k -neighborhood of \mathfrak{p}_k . Let x_k be a point on $\mathfrak{q}_{a_k b_k}$ such that $\text{dist}(x_k, \mathfrak{p}_k)$ is within distance 1 of the maximal possible value, and consider the asymptotic cone $\mathcal{C} = \text{Con}^\omega(X, (x_k), (d_k))$. Then the point (x_k) in \mathcal{C} is at distance $\geq c$ from the ω -limit \mathfrak{p}_ω of the sequence (\mathfrak{p}_n) . The ω -limit \mathfrak{p}_ω is a path of length at most C , in particular, it is rectifiable (see the end of Remark 2(1)). Therefore the end of the proof of (1) \rightarrow (5) of Proposition 1 works and we get a contradiction.

(5) \rightarrow (1). Suppose that (5) is true, but that the ω -limit \mathfrak{q}_ω of \mathfrak{q} in some asymptotic cone

$$\mathcal{C} = \text{Con}^\omega(X, (x_k), (d_k))$$

is not a transverse geodesic. Hence there exists a path \mathfrak{p}_ω connecting two distinct points $a_\omega = (a_k), b_\omega = (b_k)$ on \mathfrak{q}_ω and having no other common points with \mathfrak{q}_ω . By approximating \mathfrak{p}_ω well enough with piecewise geodesics (where the geodesic pieces are ultralimits of geodesics), and by eventually replacing a_ω and b_ω with two points that are nearer to each other, we can assume that \mathfrak{p}_ω is itself an ω -limit of a sequence (\mathfrak{p}_k) of piecewise geodesics, with a uniformly bounded number of geodesic pieces, \mathfrak{p}_k with endpoints a_k and b_k on \mathfrak{q} . Moreover, the hypothesis that \mathfrak{p}_ω intersects \mathfrak{q}_ω only in its distinct endpoints implies that there exists a point $x_\omega = (x_k)^\omega$ on \mathfrak{q}_ω situated between a_ω and b_ω , and with $c = \text{dist}(x_\omega, \mathfrak{p}_\omega) > 0$. We have that the lengths of the paths \mathfrak{p}_k are at most $C \text{dist}(a_k, b_k)$ ω -almost surely, for some $C > 1$, and that $\text{dist}(x_k, \mathfrak{p}_k) \geq \frac{c}{2} d_k$ ω -almost surely. This contradicts property (5). \square

As mentioned before, property (5) from [DMS, Proposition 3.24] is used in the proofs of [DMS, Theorems 4.4 and 4.9]. In the proof of [DMS, Theorem 4.9], property (5) is used only in the following paragraph:

Since \mathfrak{q} is a k -piecewise hierarchy path, by property (T2) it is shadowed by a k -piecewise tight geodesic $\text{proj}(\mathfrak{q})$ in \mathcal{G} of length $\leq K_1 n$ (for some constant K_1) connecting $g^{-3n} \cdot o$ and $g^{3n} \cdot o$. The fact that geodesics in a hyperbolic graph are Morse and part (5) of [DMS, Proposition 3.24] imply that the sub-arc $[g^{-3n} \cdot o, g^{3n} \cdot o]$ in \mathfrak{g} is contained in the D -tubular neighborhood of $\text{proj}(\mathfrak{q})$ for some constant D . In particular $[g^{-n} \cdot o, g^n \cdot o]$ has a sub-arc \mathfrak{g}' of length $\geq K_2 n$ (for some constant K_2) contained in the D -tubular neighborhood of one of the tight geodesic sub-paths \mathfrak{t} of $\text{proj}(\mathfrak{q})$. Notice that the length $|\mathfrak{t}|$ is $\geq K_2 n - 2D \geq K_3 n$ for some constant K_3 (since $n \gg 1$).

It is easy to see that “ D -neighborhood” can be replaced by “ $o(n)$ -neighborhood”. Thus the new property (5) suffices to prove [DMS, Theorem 4.9].

The proof of [DMS, Theorem 4.4] requires more modifications. Here is its formulation.

Theorem 7 (See Theorem 4.4 in [DMS]). *Let G be an infinite finitely generated group acting on an infinite hyperbolic uniformly locally finite connected graph X . Suppose that for some $\ell > 0$ the stabilizer of any pair of points $x, y \in X$ with $\text{dist}(x, y) \geq \ell$ is finite of uniformly bounded size. Let g be a loxodromic element of G . Then the sequence $(g^n)_{n \in \mathbb{Z}}$ is a Morse quasi-geodesic in G . In particular, every asymptotic cone of G has cut-points.*

Proof. In what follows n is a large enough natural number.

As in the proof of [DMS, Theorem 4.4], we can assume that g stabilizes a geodesic \mathfrak{p} in X and acts on \mathfrak{p} with translation length $\tau > 0$. Rescaling the metric in X if necessary, we can assume that $\tau = 1$.

Let us fix a point o in \mathfrak{p} . Let λ be the maximal distance between o and $a \cdot o$, where a is any of the generators in a finite generating set of G . Consider the map π from G to X defined by $\pi(h) = h \cdot o$.

Take a path \mathfrak{g} from g^{-3n} to g^{3n} in the Cayley graph of G such that the length of \mathfrak{g} is at most Cn for some $C \geq 1$. We need to show (by property (3) of Proposition 1) that \mathfrak{g} passes boundedly close to one of g^i where $-n \leq i \leq n$.

Consider the image $\pi(\mathfrak{g})$ of \mathfrak{g} in X . By connecting consecutive points on $\pi(\mathfrak{g})$ with geodesics we turn it into a path in X which we shall denote by \mathfrak{g}' . This path connects two points on \mathfrak{p} , $a_n = \pi(g^{-3n})$ and $b_n = \pi(g^{3n})$. The length of \mathfrak{g}' is at most $Cn\lambda$.

By Remark 6, there exist constants c, D_0 such that for all $D > D_0$ if a path \mathfrak{h} in X connecting x and x' is of length $\leq \frac{D}{2}$ and the distance $\text{dist}(x, \mathfrak{p})$ is greater than D , then the diameter of $\text{proj}_{\mathfrak{p}}(\mathfrak{h})$ is at most c . Let k be any integer greater than 200. We can also assume that $\frac{c}{D_0} < \frac{1}{kC\lambda}$ and $D_0 > 2l, D_0 > 2\lambda$.

Take the $4D_0$ -neighborhood N_1 of the axis \mathfrak{p} . If $\mathfrak{g}' \subset N_1$, then we are done. So suppose that $\mathfrak{g}' \setminus N_1$ is not empty. Then $\mathfrak{g}' \setminus N_1$ is a union of sub-paths \mathfrak{h}_i connecting points t_i, t'_i of \mathfrak{g}' such that $\text{dist}(t_i, \mathfrak{p}) = 4D_0 = \text{dist}(t'_i, \mathfrak{p})$. Dividing each \mathfrak{h}_i into sub-paths of lengths between D_0 and $2D_0$, we conclude that the diameter of $\text{proj}_{\mathfrak{p}}(\mathfrak{h}_i)$ is at most $\frac{c}{D_0}|\mathfrak{h}_i|$ provided $|\mathfrak{h}_i| \geq 2D_0$. Let H be the set of those sub-paths \mathfrak{h}_i whose lengths are at least $2D_0$. Then the projection of the union of the paths $\mathfrak{h} \in H$ is covered by a union Z of intervals of total length at most

$$(1) \quad \frac{c}{D_0} \sum_{\mathfrak{h} \in H} |\mathfrak{h}| \leq \frac{c}{D_0} |\mathfrak{g}'| \leq \frac{1}{k\lambda C} Cn\lambda = \frac{n}{k\tau}.$$

Now let N_2 be the $5D_0$ -neighborhood of \mathfrak{p} and consider the set of maximal sub-paths \mathfrak{h}'_i of $\mathfrak{g}' \setminus N_2$. Note that each \mathfrak{h}'_i is inside some \mathfrak{h}_j ; moreover this \mathfrak{h}_j must have length at least $2D_0$, so it belongs to H . Therefore the set $\text{proj}_{\mathfrak{p}}(\bigcup \mathfrak{h}'_i)$ is covered by Z .

Note that the length of the piece p' of the axis \mathfrak{p} between $a_n = \pi(g^{-3n})$ and $b_n = \pi(g^{3n})$ is $6n + 1$.

Let $m = \lfloor 20D_0 \rfloor + 1$. Consider the arithmetic progression $P = -n, -n + m, -n + 2m, \dots$ of numbers between $-n$ and n . The distance between any two points $\pi(g^j), \pi(g^k), k \neq j \in P$, is $m|k - j| \geq m$. The size of the set P is $> \frac{n}{m}$.

For every $i \in P$ such that $\pi(g^i) \in Z$ let \mathfrak{z}_i be the maximal sub-geodesic of \mathfrak{p} containing $\pi(g^i)$, not containing any other $\pi(g^j), j \in P$, and contained in Z . Note that paths \mathfrak{z}_i may overlap. So the sum of lengths of all \mathfrak{z}_i is at most twice the measure of Z . If $i \in P$ is such that $\pi(g^i) \notin Z$, then let \mathfrak{z}_i be just the point $\pi(g^i)$. Let u_i be the length of \mathfrak{z}_i . Then by (1)

$$(2) \quad \sum u_i \leq \frac{2n}{k}.$$

Take any positive $\alpha < 1 - \frac{100}{k}$ (note that $1 - \frac{100}{k} > 0$ since $k > 200$). If there are fewer than $\alpha|P|$ consecutive pairs $i, i + m \in P$ such that $u_i, u_{i+m} \leq D_0$, then there are at least $\frac{1}{2}|P|(1 - \alpha)$ numbers u_i which are bigger than D_0 , hence $\sum_{i \in P} u_i > \frac{n}{2m}(1 - \alpha)D_0 > \frac{n}{2\lfloor 20D_0 \rfloor} \frac{100}{k} D_0 > \frac{2n}{k}$, a contradiction with (2). Hence there are at least $\alpha \frac{n}{m}$ pairs of consecutive numbers $i, j = i + m \in P$ such that $u_i, u_j \leq D_0$. Let M be the set of these pairs of numbers and $(i, i + m) \in M$. For $s = i, i + m$ let $B_s = B(\pi(g^s), 6D_0)$ be the ball in X of radius $6D_0$ around $\pi(g^s)$. Let U_i, U_{i+m} be π -preimages of B_i, B_{i+m} , respectively. The path \mathfrak{g}' must visit each of the balls B_i, B_{i+m} . Hence the path \mathfrak{g} must intersect both sets U_i, U_{i+m} at points w_i, w_{i+m} , respectively.

Note that the distance between any point from B_i to any point in B_{i+m} is greater than l since $D_0 > 2l$.

Since the sum of distances $\sum_{(i,j) \in M} \text{dist}(w_i, w_j)$ does not exceed Cn we have that at least one of the distances $\text{dist}(w_i, w_j)$, $(i, j) \in M$, must be smaller than $R = \frac{Cn}{\alpha \frac{n}{m}} = \frac{Cm}{\alpha}$ which does not depend on n . Note that R is not smaller than m , the distance between $g^i \cdot o$ and $g^{i+m} \cdot o$, because $\alpha \leq 1$ and $C \geq 1$.

We need to show that $\text{dist}(w_i, g^i) = |g^{-i}w_i|$ is bounded by a constant not depending on n . We have that $g^{-i}w_i \cdot o \in B = B(o, 6D_0)$ and there exists $v \in G$ of length at most R such that $g^{-i}w_i v \cdot o \in B' = B(g^m \cdot o, 6D_0)$.

Let V be the set of all $h \in G$ such that $h \cdot o \in B$ and for some v , $|v| \leq R$, $hv \cdot o \in B'$. Note that V does not depend on n , so it is enough to show that V is a finite set.

Recall that in [DMS, Lemma 4.2] we defined the sets $V_{a,b}$, $a, b \in G \cdot o$, as

$$V_{a,b} = \{h \in G \mid h \cdot o = a, \exists v \in G, |v| \leq R, hv \cdot o = b\}.$$

The proof of [DMS, Lemma 4.2] applies for every metric space X (not only a tree) with l -acylindrical action of a group G . It shows that if $\text{dist}(a, b) > l$, then $V_{a,b}$ has uniformly bounded diameter (depending only on R).

If we denote $a_h = h \cdot o$ and $b_h = hv \cdot o$, then $h \in V_{a_h, b_h}$. Since $a_h \in B, b_h \in B'$, $\text{dist}(a_h, b_h) > l$. Hence V_{a_h, b_h} is a finite set. The number of possible such pairs (a_h, b_h) does not exceed the size of the direct product $B \times B'$ which is a finite set because X is a locally finite graph. Hence V is finite as required. \square

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