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EXISTENCE OF QUASI-ARCS

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Abstract. We show that doubling, linearly connected metric spaces are quasi-arc connected. This gives a new and short proof of a theorem of Tukia.

1. Introduction

It is a standard topological fact that a complete metric space which is locally connected, connected and locally compact is arc-wise connected. Tukia [6] showed that an analogous geometric statement is true: if a complete metric space is linearly connected and doubling, then it is connected by quasi-arcs, quantitatively. In fact, he proved a stronger result: any arc in such a space may be approximated by a local quasi-arc in a uniform way. In this paper we give a new and more direct proof of this fact.

This result is of interest in studying the quasi-symmetric geometry of metric spaces. Such geometry arises in the study of the boundaries of hyperbolic groups; Tukia's result was used in this context by Bonk and Kleiner [1], and also by the author [5]. (Bonk and Kleiner used Assouad's embedding theorem to translate Tukia's result from its original context of subsets of $\mathbb{R}^n$ into our setting of doubling and linearly connected metric spaces.)

Before stating the theorem precisely, we recall some definitions. A metric space (X, d) is said to be *doubling* if there exists a constant N such that every ball can be covered by at most N balls of half the radius. Note that any complete, doubling metric space is proper: all closed balls are compact.

We say (X, d) is *L-linearly connected* for some $L \geq 1$ if for all x, $y \in X$ there exists a compact, connected set $J \ni x$, y of diameter less than or equal to $Ld(x, y)$. (This is also known as bounded turning or LLC(1).) We can actually assume that J is an arc at the cost of increasing L by an arbitrarily small amount. To see this, note that X is locally connected, and so the connected components of an open set are open. Thus, for any open neighborhood U of J, the connected component of U that contains J is an open set. We can replace J inside U by an arc with the same endpoints, since any open, connected subset of a locally compact, locally connected metric space is arc-wise connected [3, Corollary 32.36].

For any x and y in an embedded arc A, we denote by $A[x, y]$ the closed, possibly trivial, subarc of A that lies between them. We say that an arc A in a doubling

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and complete metric space is an *ϵ-local λ-quasi-arc* if $\operatorname{diam}(A[x,y]) \leq \lambda d(x,y)$ for all x, $y \in A$ such that $d(x,y) \leq \epsilon$. (This terminology is explained by Tukia and Väisälä's characterization of quasi-symmetric images of the unit interval as those metric arcs that are doubling and bounded turning [7].)

One non-standard definition will be useful in our exposition. We say that an arc B *ϵ-follows* an arc A if there exists a coarse map $p : B \to A$, sending endpoints to endpoints, such that for all x, $y \in B$, $B[x,y]$ is in the ϵ-neighborhood of $A[p(x), p(y)]$; in particular, p displaces points at most ϵ. (We call the map p *coarse* to emphasize that it is not necessarily continuous.)

The condition that B ϵ-follows A is stronger than the condition that B is contained in the ϵ-neighborhood of A. It says that, coarsely, the arc B can be obtained from the arc A by cutting out 'loops.' (Of course, A contains no actual loops, but it may have subarcs of a large diameter whose endpoints are 2ϵ-close.)

We can now state the stronger version of Tukia's theorem precisely, and as an immediate corollary our initial statement [6, Theorem 1B, Theorem 1A]:

Theorem 1.1 (Tukia)**.** *Suppose (X,d) is an L-linearly connected, N-doubling, complete metric space. For every arc A in X and every $\epsilon > 0$, there is an arc J that ϵ-follows A, has the same endpoints as A, and is an $\alpha\epsilon$-local λ-quasi-arc, where $\lambda = \lambda(L,N) \geq 1$ and $\alpha = \alpha(L,N) > 0$.*

Corollary 1.2 (Tukia)**.** *Every pair of points in an L-linearly connected, N-doubling, complete metric space is connected by a λ-quasi-arc, where $\lambda = \lambda(L,N) \geq 1$.*

Our strategy for proving Theorem 1.1 is straightforward: find a method of straightening an arc on a given scale (Proposition 2.1), then apply this result on a geometrically decreasing sequence of scales to get the desired local quasi-arc as a limiting object. The statement of this proposition and the resulting proof of the theorem essentially follow Tukia [6], but the proof of the proposition is new and much shorter. We include a complete proof for the convenience of the reader.

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2. Main results

Given any arc A and $\iota > 0$, the following proposition allows us to straighten A on a scale ι inside the ι-neighborhood of A.

Proposition 2.1. *Given a complete metric space X that is L-linearly connected and N-doubling, there exist constants $s = s(L,N) > 0$ and $S = S(L,N) > 0$ with the following property: for each $\iota > 0$ and each arc $A \subset X$, there exists an arc J that ι-follows A, has the same endpoints as A, and satisfies*

$$(*) \qquad \forall x, y \in J,\ d(x,y) < s\iota \implies \operatorname{diam}(J[x,y]) < S\iota.$$

We will apply this proposition on a decreasing sequence of scales to get a local quasi-arc in the limit. The key step in proving this is given by the following lemma.

Lemma 2.2. *Suppose (X,d) is an L-linearly connected, N-doubling, complete metric space, and let s, S, ϵ and δ be fixed positive constants satisfying $\delta \leq \min\{\frac{s}{4+2S}, \frac{1}{10}\}$. Now, if we have a sequence of arcs $J_1, J_2, \ldots, J_n, \ldots$ in X, such that for every $n \geq 1$*

- *J_{n+1} $\epsilon\delta^n$-follows J_n, and*

- *J_{n+1} satisfies $(*)$ with $\iota = \epsilon\delta^n$ and s, S as fixed above,*

then the Hausdorff limit $J = \lim_{\mathcal{H}} J_n$ exists and is an $\epsilon\delta^2$-local $\frac{4S+3\delta}{\delta^2}$-quasi-arc.

Moreover, the endpoints of J_n converge to the endpoints of J, and J ϵ-follows J_1.

We shall need some standard definitions. The (infimal) distance between two subsets U, $V \subset X$ is defined as $d(U,V) = \inf\{d(u,v) : u \in U, v \in V\}$. If $U = \{u\}$, then we set $d(u,V) = d(U,V)$.

The r-neighborhood of U is the set $N(U,r) = \{x : d(x,U) < r\}$, and the Hausdorff distance between U and V, $d_{\mathcal{H}}(U,V)$, is defined to be the infimal r such that $U \subset N(V,r)$ and $V \subset N(U,r)$. For more information, see [2, Chapter 7].

We will now prove Theorem 1.1.

Proof of Theorem 1.1. Let s and S be given by Proposition 2.1, and set $\delta = \min\{\frac{s}{4+2S}, \frac{1}{10}\}$.

Let $J_1 = A$ and apply Proposition 2.1 to J_1 and $\iota = \epsilon\delta$ to get an arc J_2 that $\epsilon\delta$-follows J_1. Repeat, applying the lemma to J_n and $\iota = \epsilon\delta^n$, to get a sequence of arcs J_n, where each J_{n+1} $\epsilon\delta^n$-follows J_n and satisfies $(*)$ with $\iota = \epsilon\delta^n$.

We can now apply Lemma 2.2 to find an $\alpha\epsilon$-local λ-quasi-arc J that ϵ-follows A, where $\alpha = \delta^2$ and $\lambda = \frac{4S+3\delta}{\delta^2}$. Every J_n has the same endpoints as A, so J will also have the same endpoints. □

The proof of Lemma 2.2 relies on some fairly straightforward estimates and a classical characterization of an arc.

Proof of Lemma 2.2. For every $n \geq 1$, J_{n+1} $\epsilon\delta^n$-follows J_n. We denote the associated coarse map by $p_{n+1} : J_{n+1} \to J_n$.

In the following, we will make frequent use of the inequality $\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \delta^n < \frac{11}{9}$.

We begin by showing that the Hausdorff limit $J = \lim_{\mathcal{H}} J_n$ exists. The collection of all compact subsets of a compact metric space, given the Hausdorff metric, is itself a compact metric space [2, Theorem 7.3.8]. Since $\{J_n\}$ is a sequence of compact sets in a bounded region of a proper metric space, to show that the sequence converges with respect to the Hausdorff metric, it suffices to show that the sequence is Cauchy.

One bound follows by construction: $J_{n+m} \subset N(J_n, \frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n)$ for all $m \geq 0$. For the second bound, take J_{n+m} and split it into subarcs of diameter at most $\epsilon\delta^n$, and write this as $J_{n+m} = J_{n+m}[z_0, z_1] \cup \cdots \cup J_{n+m}[z_{k-1}, z_k]$ for some $z_0, \ldots, z_k$ and some $k > 0$. Our coarse maps compose to give $p : J_{n+m} \to J_n$, showing that J_{n+m} $\frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n$-follows J_n. Furthermore, since $d(z_i, z_{i+1}) \leq \epsilon\delta^n$, we have $d(p(z_i), p(z_{i+1})) \leq 4\epsilon\delta^n \leq s\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$. Combining this with the fact that p maps endpoints to endpoints, for $n \geq 2$ we have

$$\begin{aligned} J_n &= J_n[p(z_0), p(z_1)] \cup \cdots \cup J_n[p(z_{k-1}), p(z_k)] \subset N(\{p(z_0), \ldots, p(z_k)\}, S\epsilon\delta^{n-1}) \\ &\subset N\left(J_{n+m}, \frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n + S\epsilon\delta^{n-1}\right). \end{aligned}$$

Taken together, these bounds give $d_{\mathcal{H}}(J_n, J_{n+m}) \leq \frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n + S\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$, so $\{J_n\}$ is Cauchy and the limit $J = \lim_{\mathcal{H}} J_n$ exists. Moreover, J is compact (by definition) and connected (because each J_n is connected).

Now we let a_n, b_n denote the endpoints of J_n. Since $p_n(a_n) = a_{n-1}$, and p_n displaces points at most $\epsilon\delta^n$, the sequence $\{a_n\}$ is Cauchy and hence converges to some point $a \in J$. Similarly, $\{b_n\}$ converges to a point $b \in J$.

There are two cases to consider. If $a = b$, then $d(a_n, b_n) \leq 2\frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n \leq s\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$. Consequently, $\operatorname{diam}(J_n) \leq S\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$, $J = \lim_{\mathcal{H}} J_n$ has diameter zero, and thus $J = \{a\}$. Otherwise, $a \neq b$ and so J is non-trivial. We claim that in this case J is a local quasi-arc.

To show J is an arc with endpoints a and b it suffices to demonstrate that every point $x \in J \setminus \{a, b\}$ is a cut point [4, Theorems 2-18 and 2-27]. The topology of J_n induces an order on J_n with least element a_n and greatest element b_n. Given $x \in J$, we define three points $h_n(x)$, x_n and $t_n(x)$ that satisfy $a_n < h_n(x) < x_n < t_n(x) < b_n$, where x_n is chosen such that $d(x, x_n) \leq \frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n$, and $h_n(x)$ and $t_n(x)$ are the first and last elements of J_n at distance $(S+1)\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$ from x. As long as x is not equal to a or b, for n greater than some n_0 these points will exist and this definition will be valid.

We shall denote the $\frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n$-neighborhoods of $J_n[a_n, h_n(x)]$ and $J_n[t_n(x), b_n]$ by $H_n(x)$ and $T_n(x)$, respectively, and define $H(x) = \bigcup\{H_n(x) : n \geq n_0\}$ (the Head) and $T(x) = \bigcup\{T_n(x) : n \geq n_0\}$ (the Tail). By definition, $H(x)$ and $T(x)$ are open. We claim that, in addition, they are disjoint and cover $J \setminus \{x\}$, and so x is a cut point.

Fix $y \in J$, and suppose $y \notin H(x) \cup T(x)$. We want to show that $y = x$. To this end, we bound the diameter of $J_n[h_n(x), t_n(x)]$ using J_{n-1}. Because $d(p_n(h_n(x)), p_n(t_n(x))) \leq 2\epsilon\delta^{n-1} + 2(S+1)\epsilon\delta^{n-1} \leq s\epsilon\delta^{n-2}$, we know that the diameter of $J_{n-1}[p_n(h_n(x)), p_n(t_n(x))]$ must be less than $S\epsilon\delta^{n-2}$. Thus the diameter of $J_n[h_n(x), t_n(x)]$ is less than $S\epsilon\delta^{n-2} + 2\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$, as J_n $\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$-follows J_{n-1}.

For every $n \geq n_0$, y is $\frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n$ close to some $y_n \in J_n$. Since $y \notin H(x) \cup T(x)$, y_n must lie in $J_n[h_n(x), t_n(x)]$, so

$$\begin{aligned} d(x, y) &\leq d(x, J_n[h_n(x), t_n(x)]) + \operatorname{diam}(J_n[h_n(x), t_n(x)]) + d(y_n, y) \\ &\leq 2\frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n + (S + 2\delta)\epsilon\delta^{n-2} = \left(2\frac{11}{9}\delta^2 + S + 2\delta\right)\epsilon\delta^{n-2}; \end{aligned}$$

therefore $d(x, y) = 0$ and $J \setminus (H(x) \cup T(x)) = \{x\}$.

We now show that $H(x)$ and $T(x)$ are disjoint. If not, then $H_n(x) \cap T_m(x) \neq \emptyset$ for some n and m. It suffices to assume $n \leq m$. Now $T_m(x) \subset N(J_m[x_m, b_m], \frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^m)$ by definition. We send J_m to J_n using $f = p_{n+1} \circ \cdots \circ p_m : J_m \to J_n$, to get that $T_m(x) \subset N(J_n[f(x_m), b_n], 3\epsilon\delta^n)$. Since

$$d(f(x_m), x_n) \leq d(f(x_m), x_m) + d(x_m, x) + d(x, x_n) < 4\epsilon\delta^n < s\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$$

we have, even for $n = m$,

$$T_m(x) \subset N(J_n[x_n, b_n], 3\epsilon\delta^n) \cup B(x_n, (S + 3\delta)\epsilon\delta^{n-1}).$$

Since $(S + 3\delta)\epsilon\delta^{n-1} + \frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta^n < (S + \frac{1}{2})\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$, $H_n(x)$ cannot meet $T_m(x)$ in the ball $B(x_n, (S+3\delta)\epsilon\delta^{n-1})$. Thus $H_n(x) \cap T_m(x) \neq \emptyset$ implies that there exist points p and q in J_n such that $a_n \leq p \leq h_n(x) < x_n \leq q \leq b_n$ and $d(p, q) < 3\epsilon\delta^n < s\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$. But then we know that $J_n[p, q]$ has diameter less than $S\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$, while containing both $h_n(x)$ and x_n. This contradicts the definition of $h_n(x)$, so $H(x) \cap T(x) = \emptyset$.

We have shown that J is an arc with endpoints a and b; it remains to show that J is a local quasi-arc with the required constants.

Say we are given x and y in J, with x_n and y_n as before. Our argument shows that the segments $J_n[x_n, y_n]$ converge to some arc $\tilde{J}[x, y]$, because $J_{n+1}[x_{n+1}, y_{n+1}]$ $(\epsilon\delta^n + S\epsilon\delta^{n-1})$-follows $J_n[x_n, y_n]$ for all $n \geq 2$. This arc $\tilde{J}[x, y]$ must lie in J; therefore $\tilde{J}[x, y]$ must equal $J[x, y]$. Now, suppose that $d(x, y) \in (\epsilon\delta^{n+1}, \epsilon\delta^n]$ holds

for some $n \geq 2$. Then $d(x_n, y_n) \leq 3\epsilon\delta^n + \epsilon\delta^n < s\epsilon\delta^{n-1}$, and so the subarc $J[x, y]$, which lies in $N(J_n[x_n, y_n], \frac{11}{9}\epsilon(\delta^n + S\delta^{n-1}))$, has diameter less than

$$S\epsilon\delta^{n-1} + 3\epsilon(\delta^n + S\delta^{n-1}) \leq \frac{4S + 3\delta}{\delta^2} d(x, y),$$

as desired.

Furthermore, this same argument gives that, for all $n \geq 2$, J $\frac{11}{9}\epsilon(\delta^n + S\delta^{n-1})$-follows J_n, which itself $\frac{11}{9}\epsilon\delta$-follows $J_1 = A$. Taking n sufficiently large, we have that J ϵ-follows A. □

3. Discrete paths and the proof of Proposition 2.1

The proof of Proposition 2.1 is based on a quantitative version of a simple geometric result. Before we state this result, recall that a maximal r-separated set $\mathcal{N}$ is a subset of X such that for all distinct x, $y \in \mathcal{N}$ we have $d(x, y) \geq r$, and for all $z \in X$ there exists some $x \in \mathcal{N}$ with $d(z, x) < r$.

Now suppose that we are given a maximal r-separated set $\mathcal{N}$ in an L-linearly connected, N-doubling, complete metric space X. Then we can find a collection of sets $\{V_x\}_{x \in \mathcal{N}}$ so that each V_x is a connected union of finitely many arcs in X, and for all x, $y \in \mathcal{N}$:

(1) $d(x, y) \leq 2r \implies y \in V_x$.
(2) $\operatorname{diam}(V_x) \leq 5Lr$.
(3) $V_x \cap V_y = \emptyset \implies d(V_x, V_y) > 0$.

For $x \in \mathcal{N}$, we can construct each V_x by defining it to be the union of finitely many arcs joining x to each $y \in \mathcal{N}$ with $d(x, y) \leq 2r$. By linear connectedness, we can ensure that $\operatorname{diam}(V_x) \leq 4Lr$. Condition (3) is trivially satisfied for compact subsets of a metric space, but we will strengthen it to the following:

(3′) $V_x \cap V_y = \emptyset \implies d(V_x, V_y) > \delta r$.

Lemma 3.1. *We can construct the sets V_x satisfying* (1), (2) *and* (3′) *for $\delta = \delta(L, N)$.*

Proof. Without loss of generality, we can rescale the metric to set $r = 1$.

Since X is doubling, the maximum number of 1-separated points in a $20L$-ball is bounded by a constant $M = M(20L, N)$. We can label every point of $\mathcal{N}$ with an integer between 1 and M, such that no two points have the same label if they are separated by a distance less than $20L$.

To find this labelling, consider the collection of all such labellings on subsets of $\mathcal{N}$ under the natural partial order. A Zorn's Lemma argument gives the existence of a maximal element: our desired labelling. So $\mathcal{N}$ is the disjoint union of $20L$-separated sets $\mathcal{N}_1, \ldots, \mathcal{N}_M$.

Now let $\mathcal{N}_{\leq n} = \bigcup_{k=1}^{n} \mathcal{N}_k$, and consider the following:

Claim $\Delta(n)$. We can find V_x for all $x \in \mathcal{N}_{\leq n}$, such that for all $x, y \in \mathcal{N}_{\leq n}$ (1), (2) and (3′) are satisfied with $\delta = \frac{1}{2}(5L)^{-n}$.

$\Delta(0)$ holds trivially, and Lemma 3.1 immediately follows from $\Delta(M)$, with $\delta = \delta(L, N) = \frac{1}{2}(5L)^{-M}$. So we are done, modulo the statement that $\Delta(n) \implies \Delta(n+1)$ for $n < M$. □

Proof that $\Delta(n) \implies \Delta(n+1)$*, for* $n < M$*.* By $\Delta(n)$, we have sets V_x for all x in $\mathcal{N}_{\leq n}$.

As $\mathcal{N}_{n+1}$ is $20L$-separated, we can treat the constructions of V_x for each $x \in \mathcal{N}_{n+1}$ independently. We begin by creating a set $V_x^{(0)}$ that is the union of finitely many arcs joining x to its 2-neighbors in $\mathcal{N}$. We can ensure that $\operatorname{diam}(V_x^{(0)}) \leq 4L$.

Now construct $V_x^{(i)}$ inductively, for $1 \leq i \leq n$. $V_x^{(i-1)}$ can be $5L$-close to at most one $y \in \mathcal{N}_i$. If $d(V_x^{(i-1)}, V_y) \in (0, \frac{1}{2}(5L)^{-i})$, then define $V_x^{(i)}$ by adding to $V_x^{(i-1)}$ an arc of diameter at most $L(5L)^{-i}$ joining $V_x^{(i)}$ to V_y. Otherwise, let $V_x^{(i)} = V_x^{(i-1)}$. Continue until $i = n$ and set $V_x = V_x^{(n)}$.

Note that V_x satisfies (1) and (2) by construction. The only non-trivial case we need to check for (3′) is whether $d(V_x, V_y) \in (0, \frac{1}{2}(5L)^{-n})$ for some $y \in \mathcal{N}_i$, $i < n$. (The $i = n$ case follows from the last step of the construction.) Then, since $V_x = V_x^{(n)} \supset V_x^{(i)}$, $V_x^{(i)} \cap V_y \neq \emptyset$, and $d(V_x^{(i)}, V_y) \geq \frac{1}{2}(5L)^{-i}$. The construction then implies that

$$\begin{aligned} d(V_x, V_y) &\geq \frac{1}{2}(5L)^{-i}(1 - (2L)(5L)^{-1} - (2L)(5L)^{-2} - \cdots - (2L)(5L)^{-(n-i)}) \\ &> \frac{1}{2}(5L)^{-n}(5L)\left(1 - \frac{2/5}{1 - (1/(5L))}\right) \geq \frac{5}{2}\left(\frac{1}{2}(5L)^{-n}\right), \end{aligned}$$

contradicting our assumption, so $\Delta(n+1)$ holds. □

We now finish by using this construction to prove our proposition.

Proof of Proposition 2.1. By rescaling the metric, we may assume that $\iota = 20L$. If $d(a, b) \leq 20 = \frac{\iota}{L}$, then join a to b by an arc of diameter less than ι. This arc will, trivially, satisfy our conclusion for any $S \geq 1$.

Otherwise, $d(a, b) > 20$. In the hypotheses for Lemma 3.1, let $r = 1$ and let $\mathcal{N}$ be a maximal 1-separated set in X that contains both a and b. Now apply Lemma 3.1 to get $\{V_x\}_{x \in \mathcal{N}}$ satisfying (1), (2) and (3′) for $\delta = \delta(L, N) > 0$.

We want to 'discretize' A by finding a corresponding sequence of points in $\mathcal{N}$. Now, every open ball in X meets the arc A in a collection of disjoint, relatively open intervals. Since $\mathcal{N}$ is a maximal 1-separated set, the collection of open balls $\{B(x, 1) : x \in \mathcal{N}\}$ covers X; in particular, it covers A. By the compactness of A, we can find a finite cover of A by connected, relatively open intervals, each lying in some $B(x, 1)$, $x \in \mathcal{N}$.

Using this finite cover, we can find points $x_i \in \mathcal{N}$ and $y_i \in A$ for $0 \leq i \leq n$, such that $a = y_0 < \cdots < y_n = b$ in the order on A, and $A[y_i, y_{i+1}] \subset B(x_i, 1)$ for each $0 \leq i < n$. Since $a, b \in \mathcal{N}$, we have that $x_0 = a$ and $x_n = b$. The sequence $(x_0, \ldots, x_n)$ is a discrete path in $\mathcal{N}$ that corresponds naturally to A.

We now find a subsequence (x_{r_j}) of (x_i) such that the corresponding sequence of sets $(V_{x_{r_j}})$ forms a 'path' without repeats. Let $r_0 = 0$, and for $j \in \mathbb{N}^+$ define r_j inductively as $r_j = \max\{k : V_{x_k} \cap V_{x_{r_{j-1}}} \neq \emptyset\}$, until $r_m = n$ for some $m \leq n$. The integer r_j is well defined since $d(y_{(r_{j-1}+1)}, x_k) \leq 1$ for $k = r_{j-1}$ and $k = r_{j-1} + 1$, so $V_{x_{(r_{j-1}+1)}} \cap V_{x_{r_{j-1}}} \neq \emptyset$. Note that if $i + 2 \leq j$, then $V_{x_{r_i}} \cap V_{x_{r_j}} = \emptyset$, and thus $d(V_{x_{r_i}}, V_{x_{r_j}}) > \delta$.

Let us construct our arc J in segments. First, let $z_0 = x_{r_0}$. Second, for each i from 0 to $m - 1$, let $J_i = J_i[z_i, z_{i+1}]$ be an arc in $V_{x_{r_i}}$ that joins $z_i \in V_{x_{r_i}}$ to

some $z_{i+1} \in V_{x_{r_{i+1}}}$, where z_{i+1} is the first point of J_i to meet $V_{x_{r_{i+1}}}$. (In the case $i = m-1$, join z_{m-1} to $x_{r_m} = z_m$.) Set $J = J_0 \cup \cdots \cup J_m$.

This path J is an arc since each $J_i \subset V_{x_{r_i}}$ is an arc, and if there exists a point $p \in J_i \cap J_j$ for some $i < j$, then $j = i+1$ and $p = z_{i+1} = z_j$. This is true because $V_{x_{r_i}} \cap V_{x_{r_j}} \neq \emptyset$ implies that $j = i+1$, and the definition of z_{i+1} implies that $J_i \cap V_{x_{r_{i+1}}} = \{z_{i+1}\}$. Any finite sequence of arcs that meet only at consecutive endpoints is also an arc, so we have that J is an arc.

In fact, J satisfies $(*)$. For any y, $y' \in J$, $y < y'$, we can find $i \leq j$ such that $z_i \leq y < z_{i+1}$, $z_j \leq y' < z_{j+1}$. (If $y = z_m$, set $i = m$; likewise for y'.) If $d(y, y') \leq \delta$, then, because $y \in V_{x_{r_i}}$ and $y' \in V_{x_{r_j}}$, we have $d(V_{x_{r_i}}, V_{x_{r_j}}) \leq \delta$, so either $j = i$ or $j = i+1$. This gives that $J[y, y'] \subset V_{x_{r_i}} \cup V_{x_{r_j}}$, and so $\operatorname{diam}(J[y, y'])$ is bounded above by $10L$.

Furthermore, J ι-follows A. There is a coarse map $f : J \to A$ defined by the following composition: first map J to $\mathcal{N}$ by sending $y \in J[z_i, z_{i+1}) \subset J$ to $x_{r_i} \in \mathcal{N}$, and sending x_{r_m} to itself. Second, map each x_{r_i} to the corresponding y_{r_i} in A. Taking arbitrary $y < y'$ in J as before, we see that

$$\begin{aligned} J[y, y'] &\subset J[z_i, z_{j+1}] \subset N(\{x_{r_i}, \ldots, x_{r_j}\}, 5L) \subset N(\{y_{r_i}, \ldots, y_{r_j}\}, 5L+1) \\ &\subset N(A[y_{r_i}, y_{r_j}], 5L+1) \subset N(A[f(y), f(y')], \iota). \end{aligned}$$

We let $s = \frac{1}{20L}\delta$ and $S = \frac{1}{20L}10L$, and have proven the proposition. □

Remark. This method of proof allows one to explicitly estimate the constants given in the statements of Theorem 1.1 and Corollary 1.2, but for most applications this is not necessary.

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