

Heat kernels on ultra-metric spaces

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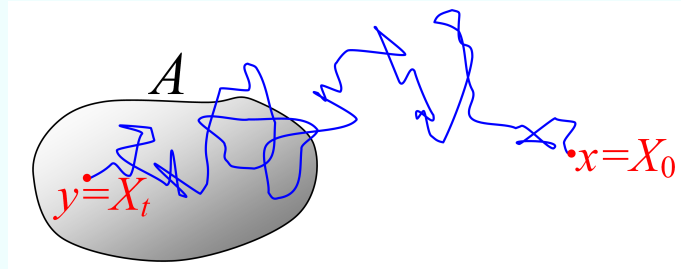
The heat equation $\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} = \Delta u$ in \mathbb{R}^n has the following *heat kernel*

$$p_t(x, y) = \frac{1}{(4\pi t)^{n/2}} \exp\left(-\frac{|x - y|^2}{4t}\right) \quad (1)$$

It coincides with the transition density of Brownian motion $\{X_t\}_{t \geq 0}$ in \mathbb{R}^n :

$$\mathbb{P}_x(X_t \in A) = \int_A p_t(x, y) dy$$

for any Borel set $A \subset \mathbb{R}^n$.



The operator $-\Delta$ can be extended to a self-adjoint non-negative definite operator in $L^2(\mathbb{R}^n)$, which allows to define the *heat semigroup* $\{e^{t\Delta}\}_{t \geq 0}$. The operator $e^{t\Delta}$ for $t > 0$ is an integral operator with the integral kernel $p_t(x, y)$.

For any $\beta \in (0, 2)$ the operator $(-\Delta)^{\beta/2}$ is also a self-adjoint non-negative definite operator, and the associated the heat semigroup $\{e^{-t(-\Delta)^{\beta/2}}\}_{t \geq 0}$ has a non-negative integral kernel $p_t^{(\beta)}(x, y)$ that coincides with the transition density of a *symmetric stable Levy process* of index β in \mathbb{R}^n .

It is known that in the case $\beta = 1$

$$p_t^{(1)}(x, y) = \frac{c_n t}{(t^2 + |x - y|^2)^{\frac{n+1}{2}}} \quad (2)$$

that is, $p_t^{(1)}(x, y)$ is the density of the Cauchy distribution with the parameter t .

For any $\beta \in (0, 2)$, the heat kernel of $(-\Delta)^{\beta/2}$ satisfies the estimate

$$p_t^{(\beta)}(x, y) \simeq \frac{t}{(t^{1/\beta} + |x - y|)^{n+\beta}} = \frac{1}{t^{n/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{|x - y|}{t^{1/\beta}}\right)^{-(n+\beta)}. \quad (3)$$

The sign \simeq means that the ratio of two sides is bounded between two positive constants. The formulas (2) and (3) are obtained from the heat kernel (1) of Δ by using subordination techniques (=integral transform of the heat kernel of Δ).

Dirichlet forms of jump type

Let (M, d) be a locally compact separable metric space and μ be a Radon measure on M with full support. The theory of Dirichlet forms of M.Fukushima provides the following method of construction of Markov jump processes on M . Fix a non-negative symmetric function $J(x, y)$ on $M \times M$ and consider in $L^2(M, \mu)$ the following quadratic form

$$\mathcal{E}(f, f) = \iint_{M \times M} (f(x) - f(y))^2 J(x, y) d\mu(x) d\mu(y).$$

Assume that \mathcal{E} extends to a regular Dirichlet form with a domain $\mathcal{F} \subset L^2(M, \mu)$. The associated generator

$$\mathcal{L}f(x) = \int_M (f(y) - f(x)) J(x, y) d\mu(y)$$

is a self-adjoint non-positive definite operator in L^2 . The *heat kernel* $p_t(x, y)$ of $(\mathcal{E}, \mathcal{F})$ is the integral density of the heat semigroup:

$$e^{t\mathcal{L}}f(x) = \int_M p_t(x, y) f(y) d\mu(y) \quad \text{for all } f \in L^2,$$

and at the same time the transition density of the associated Markov process.

For example, in \mathbb{R}^n the operator $-(-\Delta)^{\beta/2}$ is the generator of a Dirichlet form with the jump kernel

$$J(x, y) = c_{n, \beta} |x - y|^{-(n+\beta)}$$

provided $0 < \beta < 2$. If $\beta \geq 2$ then \mathcal{E} with this jump kernel does not extend to a Dirichlet form.

Question: Under what conditions on a metric measure space (M, d, μ) and a jump kernel J , the heat kernel of the associated Dirichlet form exists and satisfies for all $x, y \in M$ and $t > 0$ a *stable-like estimate*

$$p_t(x, y) \simeq \frac{1}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(\alpha+\beta)} \quad (4)$$

with some positive parameters α, β ? This question is motivated by the following theorem.

Theorem 1 (AG and T.Kumagai 2008). *Assume that the heat kernel of a conservative jump type Dirichlet form satisfies the estimate*

$$p_t(x, y) \simeq \frac{1}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \Phi \left(\frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)$$

for some function Φ and for all $x, y \in M$ and $t > 0$. Then it has to be (4).

The following *necessary* conditions for (4) are known:

- the α -regularity: for any metric ball $B_r(x)$, we have

$$\mu(B_r(x)) \simeq r^\alpha \tag{V}$$

(consequently, $\alpha = \dim_H M$ and $\mu \simeq \mathcal{H}_\alpha$).

- the jump kernel estimate: for all $x, y \in M$,

$$J(x, y) \simeq d(x, y)^{-(\alpha+\beta)}. \tag{J}$$

In general, (V) and (J) are not enough for (4) – one needs in addition a *generalized capacity condition* (AG, E.Hu, J.Hu, Adv. Math. 2018 and Z.Q.Chen, T.Kumagai, J.Wang, to appear in Memoirs AMS).

However, if (M, d) is an *ultra-metric* space then the situation is better.

Ultra-metric spaces

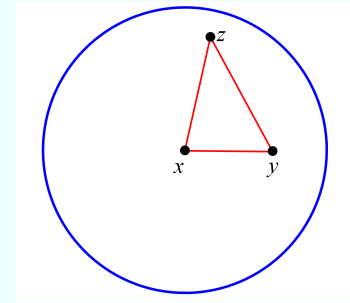
Let (M, d) be a metric space. The metric d is called an *ultra-metric* and (M, d) is called an ultra-metric space if, for all $x, y, z \in M$,

$$d(x, y) \leq \max\{d(x, z), d(z, y)\}. \tag{5}$$

Consider the metric balls $B_r(x) = \{y \in M : d(x, y) \leq r\}$. The ultra-metric property (5) implies that *any two metric balls of the same radius are either disjoint or identical*.

Indeed, let two balls $B_r(x)$ and $B_r(y)$ have a non-empty intersection, say $z \in B_r(x) \cap B_r(y)$. Then $d(x, z) \leq r$ and $d(y, z) \leq r$ whence it follows $d(x, y) \leq r$.

For any point $z \in B_r(x)$ we have $d(x, z) \leq r$, which together with $d(x, y) \leq r$ implies $d(y, z) \leq r$ so that $z \in B_r(y)$. Therefore, $B_r(x) \subset B_r(y)$ and, similarly, $B_r(y) \subset B_r(x)$ whence $B_r(x) = B_r(y)$.



Consequently, the collection of all distinct balls of the same radius r forms a partition of M .

Another consequence: *every point inside a ball is its center*.

Indeed, if $y \in B_r(x)$ then the balls $B_r(y)$ and $B_r(x)$ have a non-empty intersection whence $B_r(x) = B_r(y)$.

Therefore, all balls are closed and open sets, and M is totally disconnected. In particular, an ultra-metric space cannot carry a non-trivial diffusion process.

An example of ultra-metric: p -adic numbers

Consider in \mathbb{Q} the p -adic norm: if $x = p^n \frac{a}{b}$, where a, b are integers not divisible by p , then

$$\|x\|_p := p^{-n}.$$

If $x = 0$ then $\|x\|_p := 0$. The p -adic norm satisfies the ultra-metric inequality: if $y = p^m \frac{c}{d}$ and $m \leq n$ then

$$x + y = p^m \left(\frac{p^{n-m}a}{b} + \frac{c}{d} \right) = p^m \frac{A}{B},$$

where B is not divisible by p , whence

$$\|x + y\|_p \leq p^{-m} = \max \left\{ \|x\|_p, \|y\|_p \right\}.$$

Hence, \mathbb{Q} with the metric $\|x - y\|_p$ is an ultra-metric space. Its completion \mathbb{Q}_p is the field of p -adic numbers as well as an ultra-metric space.

Every p -adic number $x \in \mathbb{Q}_p$ has the form

$$x = \sum_{k=-N}^{\infty} a_k p^k = \dots a_k \dots a_2 a_1 a_0 . a_{-1} a_{-2} \dots a_{-N}$$

where $N \in \mathbb{N}$ and each $a_k \in \{0, 1, \dots, p-1\}$. Then $\|x\|_p = p^{-m}$, where

$$m = \min \{k \in \mathbb{Z} : a_k \neq 0\}.$$

It follows that the ball $B_r(x)$ of radius $r = p^{-m}$ (where $m \in \mathbb{Z}$) consists of all numbers

$$y = \sum_{k=-N}^{\infty} b_k p^k = \dots b_k \dots b_2 b_1 b_0 \cdot b_{-1} b_{-2} \dots b_{-N}$$

such that $b_k = a_k$ for $k < m$ and b_k are arbitrary for $k \geq m$; that is,

$$y = \dots b_{m+1} b_m a_{m-1} a_{m-2} \dots$$

Consequently, any ball $B_r(x)$ of radius $r = p^{-m}$ consists of p disjoint balls of radii $p^{-(m+1)}$ that are determined by the value of b_m .

Let μ be the Haar measure on \mathbb{Q}_p with the normalization condition

$$\mu(B_1(x)) = 1.$$

Then we obtain that

$$\mu(B_{p^{-m}}(x)) = p^{-m}.$$

If $p^{-m} \leq r < p^{-(m-1)}$ then $B_r(x) = B_{p^{-m}}(x)$ which implies

$$\mu(B_r(x)) = p^{-m} \simeq r.$$

Taibleson operator in \mathbb{Q}_p^n

The Fourier transform of functions $f : \mathbb{Q}_p^n \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ is defined by

$$\widehat{f}(\xi) = \int_{\mathbb{Q}_p^n} e^{2\pi i \langle x, \xi \rangle} f(x) d\mu(x),$$

where μ is the Haar measure on \mathbb{Q}_p^n , $\xi \in \mathbb{Q}_p^n$ and

$$\langle x, \xi \rangle = \sum_{k=1}^n \{x_k \xi_k\}.$$

Define the operator \mathcal{T}^β for any $\beta > 0$ by means of its Fourier transform:

$$\widehat{\mathcal{T}^\beta f}(\xi) = \|\xi\|_p^\beta \widehat{f}(\xi). \quad (6)$$

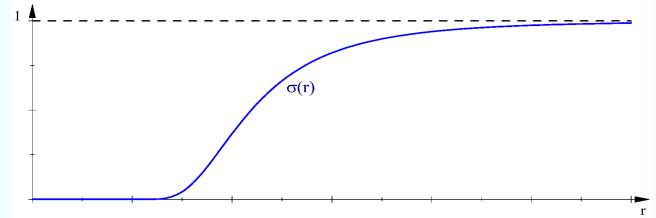
This operator was introduced by Taibleson in 1975 as an analogue of $(-\Delta)^{\beta/2}$ in \mathbb{R}^n . Up to 2014 there were no tools for understanding the heat kernel of \mathcal{T}^β (in particular, because of absence of a diffusion process on \mathbb{Q}_p^n).

Operator \mathcal{T}^β is self-adjoint and non-negative definite in L^2 , and $T^\beta = (T^1)^\beta$.

Isotropic Dirichlet forms

Let (M, d) be an ultra-metric space where all balls are compact, and μ be a Radon measure on M with full support.

Let $\sigma(r)$ be a cumulative probability distribution function on $(0, \infty)$ that is strictly monotone increasing.



Consider on M a jump kernel

$$J(x, y) = \int_{d(x,y)}^{\infty} \frac{d \log \sigma(r)}{\mu(B_r(x))}. \quad (7)$$

Theorem 2 (A.Bendikov, AG, Ch.Pittet, W.Woess, Uspechi, 2014) *This jump kernel determines a regular Dirichlet form and its heat kernel is*

$$p_t(x, y) = \int_{d(x,y)}^{\infty} \frac{d\sigma^t(r)}{\mu(B_r(x))} \quad (8)$$

The Dirichlet form with the jump kernel (7) is called an *isotropic Dirichlet form*.

For example, consider $M = \mathbb{Q}_p^n$ with the ultra-metric

$$d(x, y) = \max_{1 \leq i \leq n} \|x_i - y_i\|_p.$$

Let μ be the Haar measure on \mathbb{Q}_p^n . If $p^{-m} \leq r < p^{-(m-1)}$ then $\mu(B_r(x)) = p^{-nm}$. Fix any $\beta > 0$ and consider the distribution function

$$\sigma(r) = \exp\left(-\left(\frac{p}{r}\right)^\beta\right) \quad (9)$$

(Fréchet distribution). Substituting (9) into (7), we obtain

$$J(x, y) = c_{p,n,\beta} d(x, y)^{-(n+\beta)}, \quad (10)$$

which coincides with the jump kernel of the Taibleson operator \mathcal{T}^β from (6). Hence, the generator \mathcal{L} of the above Dirichlet form is equal to \mathcal{T}^β . Substituting (9) into (8), we obtain that the heat kernel of \mathcal{T}^β satisfies stable like estimate (4) with $\alpha = n$:

$$p_t(x, y) \simeq \frac{1}{t^{n/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}}\right)^{-(n+\beta)}.$$

Let us emphasize that \mathcal{T}^β generates a Markov jump process for all $\beta > 0$ unlike the case of \mathbb{R}^n where $(-\Delta)^{\beta/2}$ generates such a process only if $\beta \in (0, 2)$.

Jump kernels on α -regular ultra-metric spaces

Let an ultra-metric space (M, d, μ) satisfy (V) for some $\alpha > 0$: $\mu(B_r(x)) \simeq r^\alpha$ for all $x \in M$ and $r > 0$. Consider a jump kernel on M such that, for some $\beta > 0$,

$$J(x, y) \simeq d(x, y)^{-(\alpha+\beta)}. \quad (J)$$

The associated Dirichlet form is not necessarily isotropic, and the above method does not work. The results below were proved by A. Bendikov, AG, E. Hu, J. Hu (to appear in Ann. Scuola Norm. Sup. Pisa).

Theorem 3 *Assume that (V) and (J) are satisfied. Then the quadratic form*

$$\mathcal{E}(f, f) = \iint_{M \times M} (f(x) - f(y))^2 J(x, y) d\mu(x) d\mu(y)$$

determines a regular Dirichlet form in $L^2(M, \mu)$. Its heat kernel $p_t(x, y)$ exists, is continuous in (t, x, y) , Hölder continuous in (x, y) and satisfies the stable-like estimate (4), that is, for all $x, y \in M$ and $t > 0$,

$$p_t(x, y) \simeq \frac{1}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}}\right)^{-(\alpha+\beta)} \quad (11)$$

Consequently, (V)+(J) \Leftrightarrow (11).

Next, let us relax the pointwise upper and lower estimates of $J(x, y)$ in (J).

Definition. We say that J satisfies the β -Poincaré inequality if, for any ball $B = B_r(x_0)$ and any function $f \in L^2(B, \mu)$,

$$\int_B |f - \bar{f}|^2 d\mu \leq Cr^\beta \iint_{B \times B} (f(x) - f(y))^2 J(x, y) d\mu(x) d\mu(y) \quad (PI)$$

where $\bar{f} = \int_B f d\mu$ and the constant C is the same for all balls B and all f 's.

Definition. We say that J satisfies the β -tail condition if, for any ball $B_r(x)$,

$$\int_{M \setminus B_r(x)} J(x, y) d\mu(y) \leq Cr^{-\beta}. \quad (TJ)$$

It is easy to verify that $J(x, y) \geq cd(x, y)^{-(\alpha+\beta)} \Rightarrow (PI)$ and

$$J(x, y) \leq Cd(x, y)^{-(\alpha+\beta)} \Rightarrow (TJ),$$

so that (PI) and (TJ) can be regarded as relaxed (integral) versions of the lower resp. upper bounds of $J(x, y)$.

In fact, both (PI) and (TJ) can be stated for *jump measures* $J(x, dy)$.

Theorem 4 *If (TJ) and (PI) are satisfied then the heat kernel $p_t(x, y)$ exists, is continuous in (t, x, y) , Hölder continuous in (x, y) and satisfies the following weak upper bound*

$$p_t(x, y) \leq \frac{C}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-\beta} \quad (WUE)$$

and the near-diagonal lower bound

$$p_t(x, y) \geq \frac{c}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \mathbf{1}_{\{d(x, y) \leq t^{1/\beta}\}}. \quad (NLE)$$

Moreover, under the standing assumption (TJ), we have

$$(PI) \Leftrightarrow (WUE) + (NLE).$$

Note that the exponent $-\beta$ in (WUE) does not match the exponent $-(\alpha + \beta)$ in the optimal heat kernel bound (11).

However, under the hypotheses (TJ) and (PI) alone, the estimates (WUE) and (NLE) cannot be essentially improved, as will be shown in examples below.

Product spaces

Consider a sequence $\{(M_i, d_i, \mu_i)\}_{i=1}^n$ of ultra-metric measure spaces such that M_i is α_i -regular. Consider on M_i the jump kernel

$$J_i(x, y) = d_i(x, y)^{-(\alpha_i + \beta)}$$

where $\beta > 0$ is the same for all i . By Theorem 3, the heat kernel $p_t^{(i)}(x, y)$ on M_i satisfies the estimate

$$p_t^{(i)}(x, y) \simeq \frac{1}{t^{\alpha_i/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d_i(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(\alpha_i + \beta)}.$$

Consider the product space $M = M_1 \times \dots \times M_n$ with the ultra-metric

$$d(x, y) = \max_{1 \leq i \leq n} d_i(x_i, y_i)$$

and with the product measure $\mu = \mu_1 \times \dots \times \mu_n$. Then M is α -regular with $\alpha = \alpha_1 + \dots + \alpha_n$. Consider on M the operator

$$\mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}_1 + \dots + \mathcal{L}_n$$

where \mathcal{L}_i is the generator in M_i acting on the coordinate x_i .

Then \mathcal{L} generates a Dirichlet form on M with the jump measure (not kernel!):

$$J(x, dy) = \sum_{i=1}^n \delta_{x_1}(y_1) \times \dots \times \delta_{x_{i-1}}(y_{i-1}) \times J_i(x_i, y_i) d\mu_i(y_i) \times \delta_{x_{i+1}}(y_{i+1}) \dots \times \delta_{x_n}(y_n),$$

The heat kernel of \mathcal{L} is given by

$$p_t(x, y) = \prod_{i=1}^n p_t^{(i)}(x_i, y_i) \simeq \frac{1}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \prod_{i=1}^n \left(1 + \frac{d_i(x_i, y_i)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(\alpha_i + \beta)}. \quad (12)$$

It is easy to show that J satisfies (TJ) and that $p_t(x, y)$ satisfies both (WUE) and (NLE) with parameters α and β . By extension of Theorem 4 to jump measures, the Poincaré inequality (PI) is also satisfied.

For example, (12) holds for the *Vladimirov operator* \mathcal{V}^β in \mathbb{Q}_p^n given by

$$\mathcal{V}^\beta = \sum_{i=1}^n \mathcal{T}_{x_i}^\beta,$$

where $\mathcal{T}_{x_i}^\beta$ is the Taibleson operator in \mathbb{Q}_p acting on the coordinate x_i . In this case $\alpha_i = 1$, $\alpha = n$, and we obtain

$$p_t(x, y) \simeq \frac{1}{t^{n/\beta}} \prod_{i=1}^n \left(1 + \frac{\|x_i - y_i\|_p}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(1+\beta)}.$$

Integrating this in t and assuming $(n - 1) / 2 < \beta < n$ we obtain that the Green function $g(x, y)$ of \mathcal{V}^β exists and satisfies $g(x, y) \simeq \|x - y\|_p^{-(n-\beta)}$.

Sharpness of (WUE) and (NLE)

We use the heat kernel (12) on the product space M in order to show the sharpness of the estimates (WUE) and (NLE) under the hypotheses (PI) and (TJ).

Consider the range of x, y such that

$$d_1(x_1, y_1) > t^{1/\beta} \quad \text{and} \quad d_i(x_i, y_i) \leq t^{1/\beta} \quad \text{for } i = 2, \dots, n.$$

Then (12) yields

$$p_t(x, y) \simeq \frac{1}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d_1(x_1, y_1)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(\alpha_1 + \beta)} = \frac{1}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(\alpha_1 + \beta)}.$$

Since α_1 can be chosen arbitrarily small while keeping the same α, β , we see that (WUE) is optimal.

Similarly, consider the range of x, y such that

$$d_i(x_i, y_i) \simeq d_j(x_j, y_j) \quad \text{for all } i, j.$$

Then $d(x, y) \simeq d_i(x_i, y_i)$ and

$$\begin{aligned} p_t(x, y) &\simeq \frac{1}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \prod_{i=1}^n \left(1 + \frac{d_i(x_i, y_i)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(\alpha_i + \beta)} \\ &\simeq \frac{1}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(\alpha + n\beta)}. \end{aligned}$$

Since n can be chosen arbitrarily large, while α and β are fixed, we see that no lower bound of the form

$$p_t(x, y) \geq \frac{c}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-N}$$

can be guaranteed.

Semi-bounded kernels

In the above setting of an α -regular ultra-metric space (M, d, μ) , consider separately upper and lower bounds of J :

$$J(x, y) \leq Cd(x, y)^{-(\alpha+\beta)} \quad (J_{\leq})$$

$$J(x, y) \geq cd(x, y)^{-(\alpha+\beta)}. \quad (J_{\geq})$$

Theorem 5 *If (J_{\leq}) and (PI) are satisfied then the heat kernel satisfies for all $x, y \in M$ and $t > 0$ the optimal upper bound*

$$p_t(x, y) \leq \frac{C}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(\alpha+\beta)} \quad (UE)$$

and the near-diagonal lower bound

$$p_t(x, y) \geq \frac{c}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \quad \forall x, y \in M \quad \text{and} \quad \forall t > d(x, y)^\beta. \quad (NLE)$$

In fact, we have

$$(J_{\leq}) + (PI) \Leftrightarrow (UE) + (NLE).$$

Theorem 6 *If (J_{\geq}) and (TJ) are satisfied then the heat kernel satisfies for all $x, y \in M$ and $t > 0$ the optimal lower bound*

$$p_t(x, y) \geq \frac{c}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-(\alpha+\beta)} \quad (LE)$$

and the weak upper bound

$$p_t(x, y) \leq \frac{C}{t^{\alpha/\beta}} \left(1 + \frac{d(x, y)}{t^{1/\beta}} \right)^{-\beta}. \quad (WUE)$$

Moreover, under the standing assumption (TJ) , we have

$$(J_{\geq}) \Leftrightarrow (WUE) + (LE).$$

Clearly, Theorems 5 and 6 imply that

$$(J) \Leftrightarrow (UE) + (LE),$$

which is equivalent to Theorem 3.

Walk dimension

We say that a metric space (M, d) is regular if the Hausdorff measure \mathcal{H}_α with $\alpha = \dim_H M$ is α -regular. On a regular space, consider for any $\beta > 0$ a quadratic functional

$$\mathcal{E}_\beta(f, f) = \iint_{M \times M} \frac{(f(x) - f(y))^2}{d(x, y)^{\alpha + \beta}} d\mu(x) d\mu(y)$$

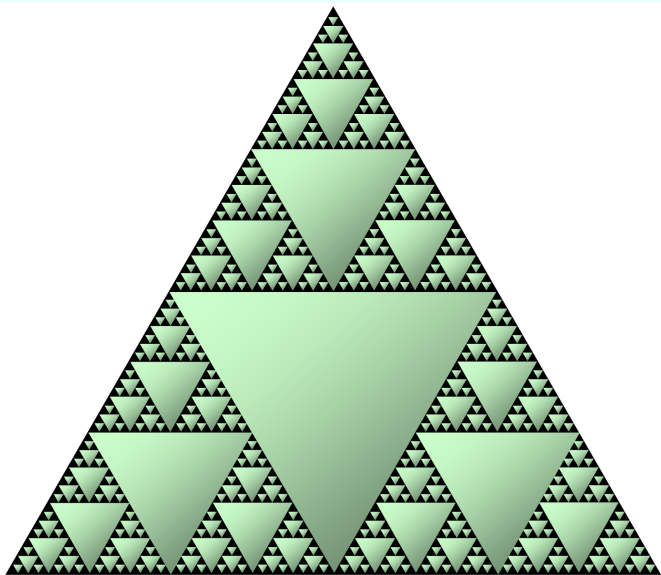
where $\mu = \mathcal{H}_\alpha$, and define the *walk dimension* β^* of (M, d) by

$$\beta^* = \sup \{ \beta > 0 : \mathcal{E}_\beta \text{ is a regular Dirichlet form in } L^2(M, \mu) \}.$$

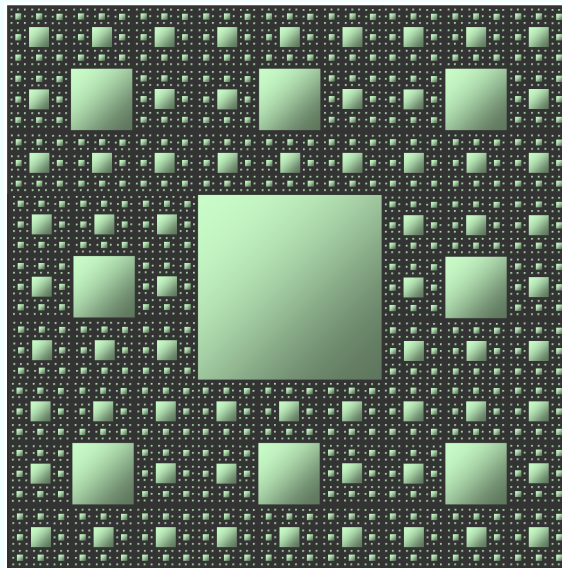
It is easy to show that always $\beta^* \geq 2$ (because $Lip_0(M) \subset \text{dom}(\mathcal{E}_\beta)$).

For example:

- in \mathbb{R}^n we have $\beta^* = 2$;
- on ultra-metric spaces $\beta^* = \infty$ (by Theorem 3);
- on typical fractal spaces $2 < \beta^* < \infty$.



Sierpinski gasket (SG)



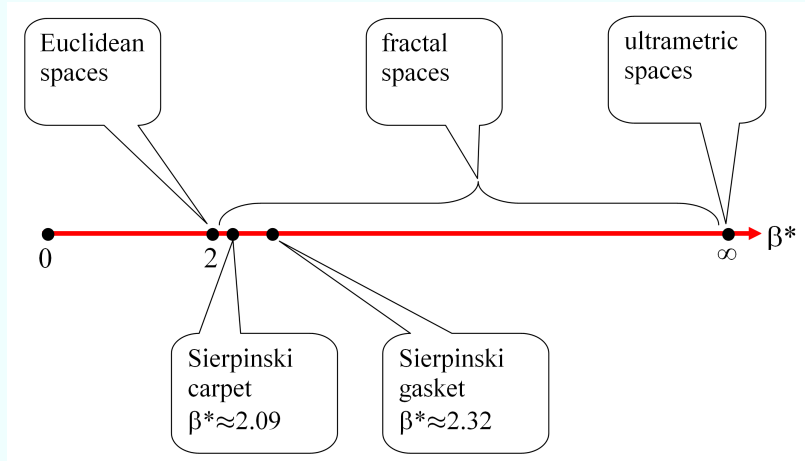
Sierpinski carpet (SC)

On many fractal spaces including SG and SC, there exist local Dirichlet forms (and associated diffusions) whose heat kernels satisfy *sub-Gaussian* estimate

$$p_t(x, y) \asymp \frac{C}{t^{\alpha/\beta^*}} \exp\left(-c \left(\frac{d^{\beta^*}(x, y)}{t}\right)^{\frac{1}{\beta^*-1}}\right)$$

(Barlow, Bass, Kigami, Kusuoka, et al.)

The walk dimension β^* is the second (after α) invariant of regular metric spaces. Any pair (α, β^*) with $\alpha > 0$ and $\beta^* \in [2, \infty]$ can be realized (M.Barlow).



Parameter α is responsible for *integration* on M as it determines measure, while β^* is responsible for *differentiation* on M as in many cases it determines the generator \mathcal{L} of a local Dirichlet form that can be viewed as a natural Laplace operator on M .

Open problem: construction of local Dirichlet forms on spaces with $\beta^* < \infty$.