

A finitely-presented solvable group with a small quasi-isometry group

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Abstract

We exhibit a family of infinite, finitely-presented, nilpotent-by-abelian groups. Each member of this family is a solvable S -arithmetic group that is related to Baumslag-Solitar groups and has a quasi-isometry group that is virtually a product of a solvable real Lie group and a solvable p -adic Lie group.

In addition, we propose a candidate for a polycyclic group whose quasi-isometry group is a solvable real Lie group, and we introduce a candidate for a quasi-isometrically rigid solvable group that is not finitely presented. We also record some conjectures on the large-scale geometry of lamplighter groups.

Let \mathbf{B}_n be the upper-triangular subgroup of \mathbf{SL}_n , and let $\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n) \leq \mathbf{PGL}_n$ be the image of \mathbf{B}_n under the map $\mathbf{Ad} : \mathbf{SL}_n \rightarrow \mathbf{PGL}_n$.

If p is a prime number, then the group $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ is finitely presented for all $n \geq 2$. In particular it is finitely generated, so we can form its quasi-isometry group—denoted $\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p]))$. In this paper we will prove

Theorem 1. *If $n \geq 3$ then*

$$\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])) \cong \left(\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p) \right) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$$

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The $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ -action defining the semi-direct product above is given by a \mathbb{Q} -automorphism of \mathbf{PGL}_n which stabilizes $\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)$. The order 2 automorphism acts simultaneously on each factor.

For the proof of Theorem 1, the reader may advance directly to Section 1. The proof continues in Sections 2 and 3.

0.1 What's new about this example

The group $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ is solvable, and when $n \geq 3$, its quasi-isometry group is “small” in two senses: it is virtually a product of finite-dimensional Lie groups (real and p -adic), and it is solvable.

The *quasi-isometry group* of a finitely-generated group Γ is the group of all quasi-isometries of Γ modulo those that have finite distance in the sup-norm to the identity.

We don't know too much about which groups can be realized as quasi-isometry groups, but the examples we do have suggest this collection could be quite diverse. A fair amount of variety is displayed even in the extremely restricted class of finitely-generated groups that appear as lattices in semi-simple groups. These quasi-isometry groups include the \mathbb{Q} , \mathbb{R} , or \mathbb{Q}_p -points of simple algebraic groups; discrete groups that are finite extensions of lattices; and infinite-dimensional groups (for a complete list of references to these results see e.g. [Fa] and [Wo].)

However, the same variety is not presently visible in the class of quasi-isometry groups for infinite, finitely-generated, amenable groups. In fact, the quasi-isometry groups of all previously studied amenable groups contain infinite-dimensional subgroups. Examples include infinite, finitely-generated, abelian groups (see e.g. 3.3.B [G-P]) along with many other groups from the abundant class of abelian-by-cyclic groups.

Indeed, using the geometric models from [Fa-M 3], the quasi-isometry groups of finitely-presented, nonpolycyclic, abelian-by-cyclic groups can be seen to contain infinite-dimensional subgroups of automorphism groups of trees. This generalizes the fact that $\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_m)$ is contained in the quasi-isometry group of the Baumslag-Solitar group $\langle a, b \mid aba^{-1} = b^m \rangle$ where $\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_m)$ denotes the group of all bilipschitz homeomorphisms of \mathbb{Q}_m . See Theorem 2 below.

For easy-to-describe polycyclic examples of abelian-by-cyclic groups, take any group of the form $\Gamma = \mathbb{Z}^m \rtimes_D \mathbb{Z}$ where $D \in \mathbf{SL}_m(\mathbb{Z})$ has a real eigenvalue

$\lambda > 1$. The discrete group Γ is a cocompact subgroup of the Lie group $M = \mathbb{R}^m \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{R}$ where $\varphi(t) = D^t$. If $L_{\lambda} \leq \mathbb{R}^m$ is a k -dimensional eigenspace of D corresponding to λ , then the cosets of $L_{\lambda} \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{R}$ in M are the leaves of a foliation of M by totally-geodesic hyperbolic spaces. Any bilipschitz map of L_{λ} gives a quasi-isometry of each leaf and a quasi-isometry of M . Since M is quasi-isometric to Γ , $\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{R}^k)$ is a subgroup of $\mathcal{QI}(\Gamma)$. This example generalizes the well-known fact that the quasi-isometry group of the 3-dimensional Lie group Sol contains $\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{R}) \times \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{R})$.

The evidence led Farb-Mosher to a “flexibility conjecture”: that any infinite, finitely-generated, solvable group has an infinite-dimensional quasi-isometry group; see #3 on page 124 of [Fa-M 4].

Theorem 1 shows that this conjecture is false.

In addition, $\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p]))$ is, to the best of my knowledge, the first known example of a quasi-isometry group of any infinite, finitely-generated group that does not contain a nonabelian free group.

0.2 Quasi-isometries of S-arithmetic Baumslag-Solitar groups

The proof of Theorem 1 is motivated by the proof of the following

Theorem 2. (Farb-Mosher)

$$\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])) \cong \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{R}) \times \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_p)$$

Notice that the Baumslag-Solitar group $\text{BS}(1, p^2)$ is an index 2 subgroup of $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$. (For those checking details, $\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_p) = \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_{p^2})$.)

The above theorem is proved by studying the geometry of a space that is essentially a “horosphere” in a product of a hyperbolic plane and a regular $(p + 1)$ -valent tree, $\mathbb{H}^2 \times T_p$ [Fa-M 1]. Here’s a brief account of the Farb-Mosher proof:

The group $\mathbf{SL}_2(\mathbb{R})$ acts by isometries on \mathbb{H}^2 , and $\mathbf{SL}_2(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ acts by isometries on T_p . Since the diagonal homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}[1/p]) &\rightarrow \mathbf{SL}_2(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{SL}_2(\mathbb{Q}_p) \\ M &\mapsto (M, M) \end{aligned}$$

has a discrete image, $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ acts properly on $\mathbb{H}^2 \times T_p$. One can show that a $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ -orbit is a finite Hausdorff distance from a quasi-isometrically embedded horosphere $\mathcal{H}_p \subseteq \mathbb{H}^2 \times T_p$. Hence, finding the quasi-isometries of $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ amounts to finding the quasi-isometries of \mathcal{H}_p .

Farb-Mosher show that any quasi-isometry of \mathcal{H}_p is the restriction of a product of a quasi-isometry of \mathbb{H}^2 that preserves a foliation by horocycles, with a quasi-isometry of T_p that preserves an analogous “foliation by horocycles”. The group of all such products can be identified with $\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{R}) \times \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_p)$.

Note that Theorem 2 can be rephrased as stating that any quasi-isometry of the horosphere $\mathcal{H}_p \subseteq \mathbb{H}^2 \times T_p$ is the restriction of a quasi-isometry of $\mathbb{H}^2 \times T_p$ that stabilizes \mathcal{H}_p .

0.3 Relationship between Theorems 1 and 2

In the case of Theorem 1, that is when $n \geq 3$, the geometry of $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ is similar to the picture drawn by Farb-Mosher except that the rank one spaces, \mathbb{H}^2 and T_p , are replaced by higher rank analogues. In this case, $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ is quasi-isometric to the intersection of $n - 1$ distinct horospheres in the product of a higher rank symmetric space and a higher rank Euclidean building. In comparison to the $n = 2$ case, any quasi-isometry of this intersection is the restriction of a quasi-isometry of the entire product.

The contrast between Theorem 1 and Theorem 2 is produced by the theorem of Kleiner-Leeb that any quasi-isometry of a product of a higher rank symmetric space and a Euclidean building is a bounded distance in the sup-norm from an isometry [K-L]. The group of all isometries that preserve such an intersection of horospheres up to finite Hausdorff distance is precisely

$$\left(\text{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \times \text{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p) \right) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$$

0.4 Adding places to S-arithmetic Baumslag-Solitar groups

Although the theme of our proof is modelled on the theme of the Farb-Mosher proof, many of the individual techniques are different. For example, we apply a theorem of Whyte on quasi-isometries of coarse fibrations [Wh] which tells us that any quasi-isometry of our model space for $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ preserves what can be seen of the product decomposition between real and p -adic factors.

Whyte’s theorem was used in [T-Wh] for the proof of the following generalization of Theorem 2.

Theorem 3. (Taback-Whyte) *If m is composite, then*

$$\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}[1/m])) \cong \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{R}) \times \prod_{p|m} \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_p)$$

0.5 Generalizing theorems above to conjectures below

In what remains of this introduction, we state some conjectures for groups similar to those from Theorems 1, 2, and 3. Two of these conjectures are new (4 and 6), one is well-known (5), and the rest (7, 8, and 9) do not seem to be in the literature, although they are growing in popularity amongst those who have recognized the geometric connection between Baumslag-Solitar groups and lamplighter groups.

All of these conjectures pertain to the large-scale geometry of intersected horospheres in either a product of symmetric spaces, or a product of Euclidean buildings. Whyte’s theorem can not be used in these cases to distinguish factors. This is an obstruction to verifying the conjectures.

0.6 Polycyclic groups

While Theorem 1 gives an example of an infinite solvable group with a “small” quasi-isometry group, the question remains of whether a similar example exists within the class of polycyclic groups.

However, Theorem 1 – along with its proof – provides evidence that such an example may exist. Indeed, although $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ is not polycyclic, its geometry resembles the geometry of the polycyclic group $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{2}])$. The key is to note that if σ is the natural map derived from the nontrivial element of the Galois group of $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{2})/\mathbb{Q}$, then the map

$$\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{2}]) \rightarrow \mathbf{SL}_n(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$$

defined by

$$M \mapsto (M, \sigma(M))$$

is an injective homomorphism with discrete image.

The polycyclic group above is quasi-isometric to an intersection of $n - 1$ horospheres in the symmetric space for $\mathbf{SL}_n(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$. Asking that every quasi-isometry of the intersection be the restriction of a quasi-isometry of the symmetric space is the content of

Conjecture 4. *If $n \geq 3$, then*

$$\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{2}])) \cong \left(\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \right) \rtimes \left(\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \right)$$

Note that Theorem 1 is to Theorem 2 as Conjecture 4 is to the well-known

Conjecture 5.¹

$$\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{2}])) \cong \left(\mathbf{Bilip}(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{Bilip}(\mathbb{R}) \right) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$$

The above is better-known as a conjecture about the 3-dimensional real Lie group Sol—the geometry associated with a 3-manifold that fibers over a circle with torus fibers and Anosov monodromy. Indeed, $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}(\sqrt{2}))$ is a discrete cocompact subgroup of Sol. (See [Fa-M 4] for remarks concerning Conjecture 5.)

There is almost nothing known about quasi-isometry types of polycyclic (and not virtually nilpotent) finitely-generated groups, and Conjecture 5 stands as one of the more important open questions in geometric group theory in part because it is seen as a first step towards understanding the large-scale geometry of polycyclic groups.

0.7 Geometric comparisons between rank one amenable groups

Note that Sol is quasi-isometric to a horosphere in $\mathbb{H}^2 \times \mathbb{H}^2$, and Conjecture 5 asserts that any quasi-isometry of Sol extends to a product of quasi-isometries of \mathbb{H}^2 . Each of the quasi-isometries of \mathbb{H}^2 would preserve a foliation by horocycles, and the supremum of all Hausdorff distances between horocycles and their images would be finite.

¹Since the writing of this paper, Conjecture 5 was proved by Eskin-Fisher-Whyte. See Theorem 2.1 of [E-F-W].

This is in analogy with the known large-scale geometry of solvable Baumslag-Solitar groups described above, and in analogy with a conjectural picture of lamplighter groups that is discussed below. Each of these three examples of groups are rank one amenable groups.

0.8 Function-field-arithmetic groups

Theorems 1, 2, and 3 are statements about S -arithmetic groups, while Conjectures 4 and 5 concern arithmetic groups. The geometry of these groups extends easily to the geometry of function-field-arithmetic groups.

Specifically, let $\mathbb{F}_q((t))$ be a field of Laurent series with coefficients in a finite field \mathbb{F}_q , and let $\mathbb{F}_q[t, t^{-1}]$ be the ring of Laurent polynomials. Expanding on Theorem 1 and Conjecture 4 we have the following

Conjecture 6. *If $n \geq 3$, then*

$$\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{F}_q[t, t^{-1}])) \cong \left(\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{F}_q((t))) \times \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{F}_q((t))) \right) \rtimes \left(\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \right)$$

Bux showed that the group $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{F}_q[t, t^{-1}])$ is finitely generated but not finitely presented [Bu]. This group acts on a product of higher rank buildings.

Turning our attention to the case $n = 2$, the group $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{F}_q[t, t^{-1}])$ acts on a horosphere in a product of $(q + 1)$ -valent trees. Theorem 2 and Conjecture 5 lead to

Conjecture 7.²

$$\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{F}_q[t, t^{-1}])) \cong \left(\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{F}_q((t))) \times \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{F}_q((t))) \right) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$$

The groups $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{F}_q[t, t^{-1}])$ are also finitely generated and not finitely presented.

²Since the writing of this paper, this Conjecture 7 was proved by Eskin-Fisher-Whyte. See Theorem 2.3 of [E-F-W].

0.9 Lamplighter groups

Conjecture 7 is closely related to the study of quasi-isometry types of lamplighter groups.

Recall that if G is a finite group, then the wreath product

$$G \wr \mathbb{Z} = \left(\bigoplus_{\mathbb{Z}} G \right) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}$$

is called a *lamplighter group*.

Note that the group $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{F}_2[t, t^{-1}])$ is isomorphic to the wreath product $\mathbb{F}_2^2 \wr \mathbb{Z}$. This example reveals how the natural geometry of the function-field-arithmetic groups from Conjecture 7 can be formally generalized – in the same way that Baumslag-Solitar groups can be viewed as a formal generalization of the S -arithmetic groups $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ – to act on a horosphere in a product of trees. These horospheres are examples of *Diestel-Leader graphs*.

In Section 4, we will briefly trace through a description of the geometric action of lamplighters on a horosphere in a product of trees. The analogy with solvable Baumslag-Solitar groups and with Sol leads to the following two conjectures.

Conjecture 8. ³ *For any nontrivial finite group G ,*

$$\mathcal{QI}(G \wr \mathbb{Z}) \cong \left(\text{Bilip}(G((t))) \times \text{Bilip}(G((t))) \right) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$$

Conjecture 9. ⁴ *Let G and H be finite groups. Then $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ is quasi-isometric to $H \wr \mathbb{Z}$ if and only if $|G|^k = |H|^j$ for some $k, j \in \mathbb{N}$.*

The question of when two lamplighter groups are quasi-isometric was asked by de la Harpe; see IV.B.44 [Ha]. The “if” implication in the above conjecture is well-known (and easily seen) to be true, but there does not exist a single known case of the “only if” implication. For example, it is unknown even if $(\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}) \wr \mathbb{Z}$ is quasi-isometric to $(\mathbb{Z}/3\mathbb{Z}) \wr \mathbb{Z}$.

Note the similarity between the above conjecture and

³Since the writing of this paper, Conjecture 8 was proved by Eskin-Fisher-Whyte. See Theorem 2.3 of [E-F-W].

⁴Since the writing of this paper, Conjecture 9 was proved by Eskin-Fisher-Whyte. See Theorem 1.7 of [E-F-W].

Theorem 10. (Farb-Mosher) *If $\text{BS}(1, m)$ denotes the Baumslag-Solitar group $\langle a, b \mid aba^{-1} = b^m \rangle$, then $\text{BS}(1, m)$ is quasi-isometric to $\text{BS}(1, r)$ if and only if $m^k = r^j$ for some $k, j \in \mathbb{N}$.*

See Theorem 7.1 of [Fa-M 1].

0.10 Lattices in solvable groups

With the exception of the general lamplighter groups $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ and the general Baumslag-Solitar groups $\text{BS}(1, m)$, all of the finitely-generated groups mentioned above are discrete cocompact subgroups of solvable Lie groups over locally-compact, nondiscrete fields. This follows from reduction theory.

0.11 Realizing quasi-isometry groups

As mentioned above, a motivation for writing this paper was to add to the list of examples of groups that are known to be realized as quasi-isometry groups of finitely-generated groups. It would be nice to know more examples.

0.12 Notation

In the remainder of this paper we let

$$G_p = \left(\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p) \right) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$$

0.13 Outline of paper

Our proof of Theorem 1 begins in Section 1 where we describe a geometric model for $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$. We use the model in Section 2 to show that G_p is included in the quasi-isometry group of $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$, and we use the model in Section 3 to show that every quasi-isometry of $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ is given by an element of G_p .

Section 1 does not use the assumption that $n \geq 3$, and Section 2 may also be read assuming that $n = 2$ as long as one replaces G_p with its obvious index 2 subgroup. Even Section 3 only invokes the $n \geq 3$ assumption in efficient and isolated applications of Kleiner-Leeb's theorem. We point all of this out because the reader may find it helpful to fall back on the case

$n = 2$ at times. Indeed, it's important to have a solid understanding of the model space while reading the first three sections, and it is possible to draw and easiest to visualize the model space when $n = 2$. For descriptions of the model space when $n = 2$, see e.g. 7.4 of [Ep et al.] or [Fa-M 1]. The definitions of the model space in these references are different than the one we will give, but they are easily seen to be equivalent.

Section 4 contains a sketch of the geometry of lamplighters that hints at Conjectures 8 and 9.

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1 The model space for $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$

Throughout, we fix $n \geq 3$. Our goal in this section is to define a metric space X that is quasi-isometric to $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$. Then $\mathcal{QI}(X) \cong \mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p]))$. In Sections 2 and 3, we will determine $\mathcal{QI}(X)$.

As alluded to in the introduction, X will essentially be an intersection of $n-1$ horospheres in a product of a symmetric space and a Euclidean building, but we will define it differently to simplify some points of our proof.

Although we are assuming $n \geq 3$ in Theorem 1, the entire contents of this section hold with the weaker assumption that $n \geq 2$.

1.1 Quasi-isometries

For constants $K \geq 1$ and $C \geq 0$, a (K, C) *quasi-isometric embedding* of a metric space Y into a metric space Z is a function $\phi : Y \rightarrow Z$ such that for any $y_1, y_2 \in Y$:

$$\frac{1}{K}d(y_1, y_2) - C \leq d(\phi(y_1), \phi(y_2)) \leq Kd(y_1, y_2) + C$$

We call ϕ a (K, C) *quasi-isometry* if ϕ is a (K, C) quasi-isometric embedding and there is a number $D \geq 0$ such that every point in Z is within distance D of some point in the image of Y .

1.2 Quasi-isometry groups

For a metric space Y , we define the relation \sim on the set of functions $Y \rightarrow Y$ by $\phi \sim \psi$ if

$$\sup_{y \in Y} d(\phi(y), \psi(y)) < \infty$$

We denote the quotient space of all quasi-isometries of Y modulo \sim by $\mathcal{QI}(Y)$. We call $\mathcal{QI}(Y)$ the *quasi-isometry group* of Y as it has a natural group structure arising from function composition.

If Γ is a finitely-generated group, we use its left-invariant word metric to form the quasi-isometry group $\mathcal{QI}(\Gamma)$.

1.3 Description of the model space

The finitely-presented group $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ is a discrete subgroup of $\mathbf{SL}_n(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{SL}_n(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ and, therefore, acts on a product of nonpositively curved spaces.

1.4 Symmetric space and Euclidean building

We let X_∞ be the symmetric space for $\mathbf{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$, and X_p be the Euclidean building for $\mathbf{SL}_n(\mathbb{Q}_p)$. All of the facts we will use about X_∞ and X_p are standard and can be found, for example, in [B-G-S] or [Br].

1.5 Topological description of \mathbf{X}

We let \mathbf{U}_n be the subgroup of \mathbf{B}_n consisting of matrices whose diagonal entries are all equal to 1. We define X to be the topological space $X_p \times \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$ and we let $\pi : X \rightarrow X_p$ be the projection map.

1.6 A symmetric space in \mathbf{X}

Denote the diagonal subgroup of \mathbf{B}_n by \mathbf{A}_n . We let $\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A} \subseteq X_p$ be the apartment corresponding to $\mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ and $F_\mathbf{A} \subseteq X_\infty$ be the flat corresponding to $\mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{R})$. Recall that with the metric restricted from X_p and X_∞ respectively, $\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}$ and $F_\mathbf{A}$ are each isometric to $(n-1)$ -dimensional Euclidean space.

The group of diagonal matrices $\mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ acts on the Euclidean spaces $\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}$ and $F_\mathbf{A}$ as a discrete group of translations. These two isometric actions are related:

Lemma 1. *After possibly scaling the metric on X_p , there exists an $\mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ -equivariant isometry*

$$f : \mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A} \rightarrow F_\mathbf{A}$$

Proof. Choose a sector $\mathfrak{S}_\mathbf{B} \subseteq \mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}$ that is fixed up to finite Hausdorff distance by the action of $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ on X_p , and let $\mathfrak{C}_\mathbf{B} \subseteq F_\mathbf{A}$ be a Weyl chamber that is fixed up to finite Hausdorff distance by the action of $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{R})$ on X_∞ .

We denote the collection of roots of \mathbf{SL}_n with respect to \mathbf{A}_n that are positive in \mathbf{B}_n as $\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \dots, \alpha_{n-1}$. Each α_i corresponds to a wall of $\mathfrak{S}_\mathbf{B}$ (respectively $\mathfrak{C}_\mathbf{B}$) which we denote by $L_{p,i}$ (respectively $L_{\infty,i}$) for all i , so there is a unique isometry that maps $\mathfrak{S}_\mathbf{B}$ onto $\mathfrak{C}_\mathbf{B}$ and $L_{p,i}$ onto $L_{\infty,i}$ for each i . We name this isometry $f' : \mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A} \rightarrow F_\mathbf{A}$.

We denote the inverse transpose automorphism of \mathbf{SL}_n by φ^{tt} , and let φ_∞^{tt} be the isometry of X_∞ induced by φ^{tt} . Notice that $\varphi_\infty^{tt}(F_\mathbf{A}) = F_\mathbf{A}$, so the composition $\varphi_\infty^{tt} \circ f'$ defines an isometry $f : \mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A} \rightarrow F_\mathbf{A}$.

For $1 \leq i \leq n-1$, we define the diagonal matrix $a_i \in \mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ as

$$(a_i)_{\ell,k} = \begin{cases} p, & \text{if } \ell = k = i; \\ 1/p, & \text{if } \ell = k = i+1; \\ \delta_{\ell,k}, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Let β be any root of \mathbf{SL}_n with respect to \mathbf{A}_n , and let $\mathbf{U}_\beta \leq \mathbf{SL}_n$ be the corresponding root group. If a_i acts as an expanding automorphism on

$\mathbf{U}_\beta(\mathbb{Q}_p)$, then it acts as a contracting automorphism on $\mathbf{U}_\beta(\mathbb{R})$ since the p -adic norm of p is less than 1. Thus, if a_i translates $\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}$ towards the chamber at infinity corresponding to \mathbf{U}_β , then a_i translates $F_\mathbf{A}$ towards the chamber at infinity corresponding to $\mathbf{U}_{-\beta} = \varphi^{it}(\mathbf{U}_\beta)$. Therefore, after rescaling X_p so that the translation lengths of each of the a_i are the same on $\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}$ as they are on $F_\mathbf{A}$, we have that f is $\langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{n-1} \rangle$ -equivariant.

Our lemma follows since the $\mathbf{A}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ -actions factor through the group $\langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{n-1} \rangle$. □

We write the connected component of the identity in $\mathbf{A}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})$ as $\mathbf{A}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})^\circ$, and recall that it acts transitively on $F_\mathbf{A}$ without fixed points. Thus, there is a natural bijection between $F_\mathbf{A}$ and $\mathbf{A}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})^\circ$.

With the Weyl chamber $\mathfrak{C}_\mathbf{B} \subseteq F_\mathbf{A}$ as in the proof of Lemma 1 we have:

- (i) every point in X_∞ is an element of a maximal flat whose R -neighborhoods contain $\mathfrak{C}_\mathbf{B}$ when $R \gg 0$;
- (ii) the group $\mathbf{U}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})$ acts transitively on the set of all maximal flats as in (i);
- (iii) $F_\mathbf{A}$ is a flat as in (i); and
- (iv) $\mathbf{A}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})^\circ$ acts transitively on $F_\mathbf{A}$.

Therefore, the group $\mathbf{A}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})^\circ \mathbf{U}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})$ acts transitively on X_∞ . It is also easy to see that this action is without fixed points. Thus, there is an isometry (up to scale) between X_∞ and the Lie group $\mathbf{B}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})^\circ = \mathbf{A}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})^\circ \mathbf{U}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})$ endowed with a left-invariant metric. This allows us to identify X_∞ with $F_\mathbf{A} \times \mathbf{U}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})$.

Note that $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}) = \mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A} \times \mathbf{U}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})$, so we define the diffeomorphism

$$\widehat{f} : \pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}) \rightarrow X_\infty$$

by

$$\widehat{f}(a, u) = (f(a), u)$$

for all $a \in \mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}$ and all $u \in \mathbf{U}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{R})$.

If ω is the metric on X_∞ , we endow $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A})$ with the pull-back metric $\widehat{f}^*(\omega)$.

1.7 A family of symmetric spaces in \mathbf{X}

Recall from the proof of Lemma 1 that we chose a sector $\mathfrak{S}_\mathbf{B} \subseteq \mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}$ that is fixed up to finite Hausdorff distance by the action of $\mathbf{B}_\mathbf{n}(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ on X_p . We call

any apartment in X_p that contains a subsector of \mathfrak{S}_B a *symmetric apartment*. If $\mathcal{A} \subseteq X_p$ is a symmetric apartment, then we call $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A})$ a *symmetric pre-image*.

Denote the building retraction corresponding to the pair $(\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B)$ by

$$\varrho_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B} : X_p \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_A$$

We extend $\varrho_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B}$ to a retraction of the entire space X by defining

$$\widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B} : X \rightarrow \pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$$

as

$$\widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B}(x, u) = (\varrho_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B}(x), u)$$

for all $x \in X_p$ and $u \in \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$.

Since $\varrho_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B}$ maps symmetric apartments isometrically onto \mathcal{A}_A , the map $\widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B}$ defines a diffeomorphism of any symmetric pre-image onto $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$. We endow each symmetric pre-image with the pull-back metric $(f \circ \widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B})^*(\omega)$.

With the metric $(f \circ \widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B})^*(\omega)$, each symmetric pre-image is isometric to the symmetric space X_∞ . Also note that the metrics on any pair of symmetric pre-images agree on their intersection.

1.8 A metric on X

Recall that any point in X_p is contained in a symmetric apartment. Therefore, every point in X is contained in a symmetric pre-image. This allows us to endow X with the path metric.

The two following lemmas illustrate how the metric space X reflects the geometry of the Euclidean building and the symmetric pre-images that defined it.

Lemma 2. *The restricted metric from X and the metric $(f \circ \widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B})^*(\omega)$ are equal on any symmetric pre-image.*

Proof. If γ is a path in X , then $\widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B}(\gamma)$ is a path in X that is no longer than γ . This shows that $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$ is isometric to X_∞ , and a similar argument applies to any other symmetric pre-image. □

Let $\sigma : X_p \rightarrow X$ be the section of $\pi : X \rightarrow X_p$ defined by $\sigma(x) = (x, 1)$.

Lemma 3. *The section $\sigma : X_p \rightarrow X$ is an isometric inclusion.*

Before proving Lemma 3, we will examine a metric property of π .

1.9 The projection π is distance nonincreasing

For any symmetric apartment \mathcal{A} , we let $\pi_{\mathcal{A}}$ be the restriction of π to $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A})$.

Notice that if $\pi_{\mathcal{A}}$ is distance nonincreasing for all \mathcal{A} , then π is distance nonincreasing since any path in X can be written as a finite union of paths contained in a symmetric pre-image.

Furthermore, if $\pi_{\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}}}$ is distance nonincreasing, then every $\pi_{\mathcal{A}}$ is distance nonincreasing since

$$\pi_{\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}}} \circ \widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}}, \mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}} = \widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}}, \mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}} \circ \pi_{\mathcal{A}}$$

So to check that π is distance nonincreasing, we only need to check that $\pi_{\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}}}$ is. In other words, we want to show that the map

$$\begin{aligned} q : \mathbf{B}_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbb{R})^{\circ} &\rightarrow \mathbf{A}_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbb{R})^{\circ} \\ q(au) &= a \end{aligned}$$

is distance nonincreasing.

We proceed by letting v be a tangent vector to $\mathbf{B}_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbb{R})^{\circ}$ at a point $au \in \mathbf{B}_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbb{R})^{\circ}$. We let $u' = au^{-1}a^{-1}$, we denote the derivative of a map g by g_* , and we denote the Riemannian norm of a vector by $\|\cdot\|$. Then,

$$\|v\|_{au} = \|u'_*v\|_a \geq \|q_*u'_*v\|_a$$

It is easy to check that $q_*u'_*v = q_*v$ since $u' \in \mathbf{U}_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbb{R})$. Therefore,

$$\|v\|_{au} \geq \|q_*v\|_a$$

It follows that q , and hence π , is distance nonincreasing.

We are ready to return to the Proof of Lemma 3:

Proof. Clearly σ is distance nonincreasing, so we only need to show that if $x, y \in X_p$, then

$$d(x, y) \leq d(\sigma(x), \sigma(y))$$

But if $\gamma \subseteq X$ is a path between $\sigma(x)$ and $\sigma(y)$, then $\pi(\gamma)$ is a path between x and y and thus

$$d(x, y) \leq \text{length}(\pi(\gamma)) \leq \text{length}(\gamma)$$

□

1.10 X is a model space

We will use the Milnor-Švarc lemma to show that $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ and X are quasi-isometric. The next three lemmas are meant to verify the hypothesis of that lemma.

Lemma 4. *There is an isometric $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ -action on X .*

Proof. For any $x \in X_p$, we let $a_x \in \mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{R})^\circ$ be the group element that is identified with $f \circ \varrho_{\mathcal{A}_A, \mathfrak{S}_B}(x) \in F_A$ via the action of $\mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{R})^\circ$ on F_A .

For $b \in \mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$, we let $a_b \in \mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ and $u_b \in \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ be such that $b = a_b u_b$.

Since $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{R})$ acts by isometries on X_∞ , the group $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ acts by isometries on $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$. With our identifications made earlier, this action is given by

$$b * (x, u) = (a_b x, a_x^{-1} u_b a_x u)$$

for all $x \in \mathcal{A}_A$ and all $u \in \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$.

The above action is not proper, and it is of no use to us aside from motivating our desired action of $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ on X that is defined by

$$b(x, u) = (bx, a_x^{-1} u_b a_x u)$$

for all $(x, u) \in X_p \times \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$.

Any $b \in \mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ restricts to an isometry $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}) \rightarrow \pi^{-1}(b\mathcal{A})$ for each symmetric pre-image \mathcal{A} . It follows that $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ acts by isometries on X as any path in X can be written as a finite union of paths that are each contained in a symmetric pre-image. □

Lemma 5. *The $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ -action on X is proper.*

Proof. From the description of the metric space X , it is clear that if $\{b_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ is a sequence of elements in $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ that converges to 1 in $\text{Isom}(X)$, then $b_n \rightarrow 1$ in $\text{Isom}(X_p)$ and in $\text{Isom}(X_\infty)$. Thus, $b_n \in \{\pm \text{Id}\}$ for all $n \gg 0$. □

Lemma 6. *The $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ -action on X is cocompact.*

Proof. Let the vertex $v \in \mathcal{A}_A$ be the unique point in X_p that is fixed by the action of $\mathbf{SL}_n(\mathbb{Z}_p)$, and let $\mathfrak{S}_v \subseteq \mathcal{A}_A$ be the unique sector that contains v as

its cone-point and such that $\mathfrak{S}_v \cap \mathfrak{S}_B$ contains a sector. Note that $\mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{Z})$ fixes every point in \mathfrak{S}_v .

Since $\mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ acts cocompactly on \mathcal{A}_A , there is a compact subset $C_p \subseteq \mathfrak{S}_v$ such that $\mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])C_p = \mathcal{A}_A$.

Because $\mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ is a dense subgroup of $\mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{Q}_p)$, and since the latter group acts transitively on the set of symmetric apartments, we have that

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])C_p &= \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])\mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])C_p \\ &= \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])\mathcal{A}_A \\ &= X_p \end{aligned}$$

It is well-known that the $\mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{Z})$ -action on $\mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$ has a compact fundamental domain which we name C_∞ . We use C_∞ to define a compact subset of X :

$$C = \bigcup_{x \in C_p} \left(\{x\} \times a_x^{-1}C_\infty a_x \right)$$

Now

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])C &= \mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])\mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{Z})C \\ &= \mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p]) \bigcup_{x \in C_p} \left(\{x\} \times a_x^{-1}\mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{Z})a_x a_x^{-1}C_\infty a_x \right) \\ &= \mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p]) \bigcup_{x \in C_p} \left(\{x\} \times \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R}) \right) \\ &= X \end{aligned}$$

□

Combining the three lemmas above yields

Lemma 7. *There is an isomorphism of groups*

$$\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])) \cong \mathcal{QI}(X)$$

Proof. Apply the Milnor-Švarc lemma.

□

1.11 Aside on finiteness properties

Since X is contractible, $\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])$ is of type F_∞ .

2 Some quasi-isometries of the model space

Recall that we let G_p be the group

$$\left(\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p) \right) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$$

The goal of this section is to show that $G_p \leq \mathcal{QI}(X)$.

In the case when $n = 2$, one can replace all occurrences of the map φ^* below with the identity to prove that the obvious index 2 subgroup of G_p is contained in $\mathcal{QI}(X)$.

2.1 A non-inner automorphism of \mathbf{PGL}_n

Because $n \geq 3$, there is an order 2 automorphism of \mathbf{PGL}_n that is defined over \mathbb{Q} , stabilizes $\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)$, and is not type preserving on the spherical building for $\mathbf{PGL}_n(\mathbb{Q})$. Name this automorphism φ^* .

2.2 Isometries introduced from the p-adic base

The group of isometries of X_p is identified with $\mathbf{PGL}_n(\mathbb{Q}_p) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$. The subgroup of isometries that map a subsector of $\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}$ to another subsector of $\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}$ is identified with $\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$.

For any $\alpha \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p)$, we define

$$H_p(\alpha) : X \rightarrow X$$

by $H_p(\alpha)(x, u) = (\alpha(x), u)$. We claim that $H_p(\alpha)$ is an isometry.

Indeed, if $\ell \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ fixes a subsector of $\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}$ pointwise, then $H_p(\ell)$ simply permutes the symmetric pre-images via diffeomorphisms that preserve the metrics on the symmetric pre-images as can easily be seen from the definition of the metrics.

Alternatively, if $\tau \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ restricts to a translation of $\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}}$, then it follows from our identification of $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}})$ with $\mathbf{A}_n(\mathbb{R}) \circ \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$ that $H_p(\tau)|_{\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}})}$ is an isometry. Therefore, $H_p(\tau)$ is also an isometry when restricted to any other symmetric pre-image $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A})$ since

$$H_p(\tau)|_{\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A})} = H_p(\tau\ell^{-1}\tau^{-1}) \circ H_p(\tau)|_{\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}})} \circ H_p(\ell)|_{\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A})}$$

where $\ell \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ is as in the above paragraph with $\ell\mathcal{A} = \mathcal{A}_A$. (We used here that $\tau\ell^{-1}\tau^{-1}$ fixes a subsector of \mathfrak{S}_B pointwise.) It follows that $H_p(\tau)$ is an isometry.

Our claim is substantiated since any $\alpha \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ is a composition of some ℓ and τ as above. Thus, we have defined a homomorphism

$$H_p : \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p) \rightarrow \mathcal{QI}(X)$$

2.3 Bilipschitz maps introduced from the symmetric pre-images

The isometry group of $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$ (and of any symmetric pre-image) is identified with $\mathbf{PGL}_n(\mathbb{R}) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$.

Let $\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}} \subseteq \mathcal{A}_A$ be a sector opposite to \mathfrak{S}_B . Then $\sigma(\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}})$ is a Weyl chamber in $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$, and with our definition of f from Lemma 1, $\sigma(\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}})$ equals $\widehat{f}^{-1}(\mathfrak{C}_B)$ up to a translation of $\sigma(\mathcal{A}_A)$. Hence, the subgroup of those isometries in $\mathbf{PGL}_n(\mathbb{R}) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$ that stabilizes $\sigma(\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}})$ up to a finite Hausdorff distance is precisely $\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$.

Any isometry $\beta \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R})$ of $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$ is a composition $\tau\ell$ of isometries of $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$ where τ acts on $\sigma(\mathcal{A}_A)$ by translations and $\ell \in \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$. We fix τ and ℓ in the four paragraphs below and define two bilipschitz maps $X \rightarrow X$: $H_\infty(\tau)$ and $H_\infty(\ell)$. Then we will compose these two functions to define a bilipschitz map $H_\infty(\beta) : X \rightarrow X$.

Right multiplication in a Lie group with a left-invariant metric is bilipschitz and a finite distance in the sup-norm from the identity. Therefore, for $u \in \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$ and x in a given symmetric apartment \mathcal{A} , the map $(x, u) \mapsto (\tau^{-1}x, \tau u \tau^{-1})$ defines a bilipschitz map $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}) \rightarrow \pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A})$ that is a bounded distance from the identity; it is precisely right multiplication by τ^{-1} . Thus, we can compose with the isometry τ to obtain the bilipschitz map $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}) \rightarrow \pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A})$ given by $(x, n) \mapsto (x, \tau n \tau^{-1})$. This map is a finite distance in the sup-norm from τ .

Now we define $H_\infty(\tau) : X \rightarrow X$ as the map

$$H_\infty(\tau)(x, n) = (x, \tau n \tau^{-1})$$

From the above paragraph we know that $H_\infty(\tau)$ restricts to a bilipschitz map on any symmetric pre-image. It follows from the fact that any path in X is a union of paths in symmetric pre-images that $H_\infty(\tau)$ is bilipschitz.

It is easier to define $H_\infty(\ell) : X \rightarrow X$ as a bilipschitz map. Just let

$$H_\infty(\ell)(x, n) = (x, a_x^{-1} \ell a_x n)$$

Then $H_\infty(\ell)$ restricts to an isometry of every symmetric pre-image and, hence, is an isometry of X .

We define $H_\infty(\beta) = H_\infty(\tau) \circ H_\infty(\ell)$ where $\beta = \tau\ell$ as above. Note that $H_\infty(\beta)$ stabilizes each symmetric pre-image, and when restricted to any symmetric pre-image, it is a finite distance in the sup-norm from the isometry β . This is enough to check that we have defined a homomorphism

$$H_\infty : \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \rightarrow \mathcal{QI}(X)$$

2.4 Coupling real and p -adic maps

Define the group homomorphism

$$H : \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \times \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p) \longrightarrow \mathcal{QI}(X)$$

as $H_\infty \times H_p$.

Lemma 8. *The group G_p is a subgroup of $\mathcal{QI}(X)$.*

Proof. First we show that the kernel of H is trivial.

Any distinct pair of symmetric pre-images have infinite Hausdorff distance. Therefore, if $H(\beta, \alpha)$ is a finite distance in the sup-norm from the identity, then $H(\beta, \alpha)$ stabilizes every symmetric pre-image. Hence, α stabilizes every symmetric apartment in X_p , and the only element in $\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p)$ of this sort is the identity.

Assuming now that $\alpha = 1$, we have that $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A})$ is stabilized by $H(\beta, \alpha)$, and thus β acts as a bilipschitz map that is equivalent to the identity. It follows that $\beta = 1$ and H is an injective homomorphism.

The lemma follows by noting that if φ_p^* and φ_∞^* are the geometric realizations of φ^* on X_p and $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A})$ respectively, then φ_p^* permutes symmetric apartments, and we may assume both that φ_p^* stabilizes $\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}$ and that $\varphi_p^*(x) = \varphi_\infty^*(\sigma(x))$ for all $x \in \mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A}$. Thus, we can simultaneously apply φ_p^* to the X_p -factor of X and φ_∞^* to the symmetric pre-images to obtain an order 2 isometry $\varphi_X^* : X \rightarrow X$. This isometry is not type preserving on the boundary of X_p (or on the boundary of $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_\mathbf{A})$), so it is an infinite distance in the sup-norm from any $H(\beta, \alpha)$. □

3 All quasi-isometries of the model space

In Section 2 we proved $G_p \leq \mathcal{QI}(X)$. In this section we will prove $\mathcal{QI}(X) \leq G_p$. We will immediately have a proof of Theorem 1 since we showed in Section 1 that

$$\mathcal{QI}(\mathbf{B}_n(\mathbb{Z}[1/p])) \cong \mathcal{QI}(X)$$

To begin, we let $\phi : X \rightarrow X$ be a (K, C) quasi-isometry. Our goal is to show that ϕ is a finite distance in the sup-norm from a quasi-isometry of the form $H(\beta, \alpha)(\varphi_X^*)^k$ where $\beta \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R})$, $\alpha \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p)$, and $k \in \{0, 1\}$.

3.1 An isometry of the base building

Let Hd denote the Hausdorff distance between subsets of X . The following lemma identifies the distance between points in the base of X as the distance between their fibers.

Lemma 9. *If $x, y \in X_p$, then*

$$d(x, y) = \text{Hd}(\pi^{-1}(x), \pi^{-1}(y))$$

Proof. Let $u \in \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$ be given, and let $u' = a_x u a_x^{-1} \in \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$. As explained in the previous section, $H_\infty(u') : X \rightarrow X$ is an isometry.

By Lemma 3 there is a geodesic $\gamma \subseteq X$ from $(x, 1)$ to $(y, 1)$ with length $d(x, y)$. Therefore, $H_\infty(u')\gamma$ is a geodesic from (x, u) to $(y, a_y^{-1}u'a_y) \in \pi^{-1}(y)$. Consequently,

$$d(x, y) \geq \text{Hd}(\pi^{-1}(x), \pi^{-1}(y))$$

For the opposite inequality, we show that the closest point in $\pi^{-1}(y)$ to $(x, 1)$ is $(y, 1)$; the lemma will follow from Lemma 3. Indeed, recall from Section 1 that π is distance nonincreasing, so for any $u \in \mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$

$$d((x, 1), (y, u)) \geq d((x, 1), (y, 1)) = d(x, y)$$

□

Lemma 10. *The quasi-isometry ϕ induces an isometry $\phi_\pi : X_p \rightarrow X_p$.*

Proof. Define $\phi_\pi : X_p \rightarrow X_p$ by

$$\phi_\pi = \pi \circ \phi \circ \sigma(x)$$

Recall that π is distance nonincreasing and that σ is an isometric inclusion. Hence, for any pair $x_1, x_2 \in X_p$ we have:

$$d(\phi_\pi(x_1), \phi_\pi(x_2)) \leq Kd(x_1, x_2) + C$$

Now we work for the other inequality to show that ϕ_π is a quasi-isometry.

Recall that X is a fiber bundle, and that each of the spaces X , $\mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$, and X_p are uniformly locally finite and uniformly contractible. Furthermore, $\mathbf{U}_n(\mathbb{R})$ is a manifold, and the system of apartments in X_p coarsely separates points in X_p . These are all the conditions we need to apply Whyte's theorem [Wh] which tells us that there are points $y_1, y_2 \in X_p$ such that

$$\text{Hd}\left(\phi(\pi^{-1}(x_i)), \pi^{-1}(y_i)\right) \leq A$$

for some constant $A = A(K, C)$.

Because π is distance nonincreasing,

$$d(\phi_\pi(x_i), y_i) \leq A$$

Using Lemma 9 and the two preceding inequalities, we have

$$\begin{aligned} d(x_1, x_2) &= \text{Hd}\left(\pi^{-1}(x_1), \pi^{-1}(x_2)\right) \\ &\leq K\text{Hd}\left(\phi(\pi^{-1}(x_1)), \phi(\pi^{-1}(x_2))\right) + KC \\ &\leq K\text{Hd}\left(\pi^{-1}(y_1), \pi^{-1}(y_2)\right) + 2KA + KC \\ &= Kd(y_1, y_2) + 2KA + KC \\ &\leq Kd(\phi_\pi(x_1), \phi_\pi(x_2)) + 4KA + KC \end{aligned}$$

We have shown that ϕ_π is a quasi-isometry. We may further assume that ϕ_π is an isometry by Theorem 1.1.3 of Kleiner-Leeb [K-L]. Indeed, Kleiner-Leeb show that any quasi-isometry of a higher rank Euclidean building is a bounded distance from an isometry. □

As the isometry group of X_p is $\mathbf{PGL}_n(\mathbb{Q}_p) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$, the map ϕ_π is identified with an element of $\mathbf{PGL}_n(\mathbb{Q}_p) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$.

3.2 The base isometry preserves $\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}$

The following lemma will show that ϕ_π is identified with an element of $\mathrm{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$.

Lemma 11. *The sectors $\phi_\pi(\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}})$ and $\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}$ contain a common subsector.*

Proof. Up to finite Hausdorff distance, we may assume that $\phi_\pi(\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}})$ is contained in a symmetric apartment.

After possibly replacing ϕ with an equivalent quasi-isometry, ϕ restricts to a quasi-isometry of subspaces of symmetric pre-images

$$\pi^{-1}(\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}) \rightarrow \pi^{-1}(\phi_\pi(\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}))$$

Applying Theorem 1.1.3 of [K-L], we may further assume that this map is an isometry.

Now note that a sector \mathfrak{S} of a symmetric apartment has a pre-image $\pi^{-1}(\mathfrak{S})$ containing a comull subset of the Furstenberg boundary if and only if \mathfrak{S} contains a subsector of $\mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}$. □

3.3 An isometry of symmetric pre-images

Let \mathcal{A} be a symmetric apartment. By Lemma 11, the map $\widehat{\varrho}_{\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}}, \mathfrak{S}_{\mathbf{B}}} \circ \phi$ restricts to a quasi-isometry $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}) \rightarrow \pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}})$. Then by Theorem 1.1.3 of [K-L], this restriction is a bounded distance in the sup-norm from an isometry which we name $\phi_{\mathcal{A}}$.

In fact, all symmetric apartments determine the same element of $\mathbf{PGL}_n(\mathbb{R}) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$:

Lemma 12. *For any symmetric apartment $\mathcal{A} \subseteq X_p$, we have*

$$\phi_{\mathcal{A}} = \phi_{\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}}}$$

Proof. The lemma follows from that fact that $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_{\mathbf{A}})$ and $\pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A})$ intersect in an unbounded set, and that isometries of X_∞ are completely determined by their restriction to any open subset of X_∞ . □

3.4 The symmetric pre-image isometry preserves \mathfrak{C}_B

Denote a sector in \mathcal{A}_A that is opposite to \mathfrak{S}_B by $\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}}$. Note that $\sigma(\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}}) \subseteq \pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$ is the unique Weyl chamber in $\pi^{-1}(\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}})$ up to finite Hausdorff distance, as is $\widehat{f}^{-1}(\mathfrak{C}_B)$.

Our final lemma identifies $\phi_{\mathcal{A}_A}$ as an element of $\mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R}) \rtimes \langle \varphi^* \rangle$.

Lemma 13. *The isometry $\phi_{\mathcal{A}_A} : \pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A) \rightarrow \pi^{-1}(\mathcal{A}_A)$ fixes the Hausdorff equivalence class of the Weyl chamber $\widehat{f}^{-1}(\mathfrak{C}_B)$.*

Proof. The isometry $\phi_{\mathcal{A}_A}$ fixes $\pi^{-1}(\mathfrak{S}_B)$ up to finite Hausdorff distance by Lemma 11. Thus, $\phi_{\mathcal{A}_A}$ fixes $\pi^{-1}(\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}})$ up to finite Hausdorff distance as well.

The lemma follows since $\sigma(\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}})$ is the only Weyl chamber in $\pi^{-1}(\mathfrak{S}_B^{\text{op}})$ up to finite Hausdorff distance. □

3.5 Proof of Theorem 1

By considering whether or not they preserve types in the boundary, it is clear that $\phi_{\mathcal{A}_A} \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{R})$ if and only if $\phi_\pi \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p)$. Therefore, ϕ is a finite distance in the sup-norm from $H(\phi_{\mathcal{A}_A}, \phi_\pi)(\varphi_X^*)^k$ where $k \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$ if and only if $\phi_\pi \in \mathbf{Ad}(\mathbf{B}_n)(\mathbb{Q}_p)$.

4 Remarks on the large-scale geometry of lamplighter groups

In this section we will describe a geometric model for lamplighter groups. The model is known as a special case of a Diestel-Leader graph. We will race through its definition, leaving some small claims as exercises.

Using this model we will explain how one can arrive at Conjectures 8 and 9.

The connection between Diestel-Leader graphs and lamplighter groups is well-known and has played a key role in several results; see e.g. [Bt-W], [Br-W 1], [Br-W 2], and [W].

4.1 Generalizing solvable function-field-arithmetic groups

Throughout this section we are motivated by virtual lamplighter groups of the form $\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{F}_q[t, t^{-1}])$. They are discrete subgroups of the group

$$\mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{F}_q((t))) \times \mathbf{B}_2(\mathbb{F}_q((t))) \leq \mathbf{SL}_2(\mathbb{F}_q((t))) \times \mathbf{SL}_2(\mathbb{F}_q((t)))$$

4.2 Laurent series with group coefficients

Let G be a finite group. The group of formal Laurent series in a variable t with coefficients in G is defined as a group of infinite formal sums:

$$G((t)) = \left\{ \sum_{i \in \mathbb{Z}} g_i t^i \mid g_i \in G \text{ for all } i \text{ and } g_i = 1 \text{ for } i \ll 0 \right\}$$

Multiplication in $G((t))$ is given by components, so that

$$\left(\sum g_i t^i \right) \left(\sum h_i t^i \right) = \sum g_i h_i t^i$$

4.3 Laurent polynomials with group coefficients

The group of Laurent series contains the subgroup of Laurent polynomials

$$G[t, t^{-1}] = G((t)) \cap G((t^{-1}))$$

Notice that the group $\bigoplus_{\mathbb{Z}} G$ is isomorphic to $G[t, t^{-1}]$.

The search for a space that the lamplighter group $\bigoplus_{\mathbb{Z}} G \rtimes \mathbb{Z}$ acts on geometrically begins by finding a space for the group $G((t)) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}$ to act on.

4.4 The metric for Laurent series

A bi-invariant ultrametric metric on $G((t))$ is given by the norm

$$\left| \sum g_i t^i \right| = e^{-N}$$

where N is the least integer with $g_N \neq 1$. Thus, the distance between the two group elements $a, b \in G((t))$ is $|a^{-1}b|$.

4.5 The regular tree T_G

We will now construct a regular $(|G|+1)$ -valent tree, T_G , that $G((t)) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}$ acts on. The group of Laurent series will act as “unipotents” and the integers will act through hyperbolic isometries.

We pick a line ℓ_a for every $a \in G((t))$ along with a homeomorphism $\rho_a : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \ell_a$, and we define the quotient

$$T_G = \left(\bigcup_{a \in G((t))} \ell_a \right) / \sim$$

where $\rho_a(t) \sim \rho_b(t)$ if $t \geq \log|a^{-1}b|$. Notice that T_G naturally has the structure of a simplicial tree with a unique end at infinity corresponding to each element of the set $G((t)) \cup \{\infty\}$. We transform T_G into a metric space by assigning each edge length 1.

4.6 Height function on T_G

There is a well-defined “height function” $h_G : T_G \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ given by $h_G(\rho_a(t)) = t$ for all $a \in G((t))$ and $t \in \mathbb{R}$.

4.7 Action of $G((t)) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}$ on T_G

By defining $a \cdot \rho_b(t) = \rho_{ab}(t)$, the group $G((t))$ acts by simplicial automorphisms on T_G that fix the end corresponding to ∞ . The height function is invariant under this action.

The group \mathbb{Z} acts on $G((t))$ by $n \cdot \sum g_i t^i = \sum g_i t^{i-n}$. Therefore, any $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ acts on T_G by $n \cdot \rho_a(t) = \rho_{n \cdot a}(t+n)$. Note that a positive integer $n > 0$ expands $G((t))$ and acts as a hyperbolic isometry that translates its axis, ℓ_1 , towards the boundary point ∞ .

Combined, the actions above yield a cocompact but non-proper action of $G((t)) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}$ on T_G by $(a, n) \cdot x = a \cdot (n \cdot x)$ for all $x \in T_G$.

4.8 Action of $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ on $T_G \times T_G$

There is an automorphism, σ , of the lamplighter group $G \wr \mathbb{Z} \cong G[t, t^{-1}] \rtimes \mathbb{Z}$ that is defined by

$$\sigma\left(\sum g_i t^i, m\right) = \left(\sum g_i t^{-i}, -m\right)$$

The automorphism σ is used to include $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ as a subgroup of $(G((t)) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}) \times (G((t)) \rtimes \mathbb{Z})$ by

$$c \mapsto (c, \sigma(c))$$

This inclusion describes a proper action of $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ on $T_G \times T_G$.

4.9 The horosphere of interest

We define the horosphere

$$\mathcal{H}_G = \{ (x, y) \in T_G \times T_G \mid h_G(x) + h_G(y) = 0 \}$$

It is easy to check that \mathcal{H}_G is a locally-finite, connected graph whose path metric is quasi-isometric to the metric restricted from $T_G \times T_G$. This graph is a *Diestel-Leader graph*.

The action of $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ on $T_G \times T_G$ stabilizes \mathcal{H}_G , yielding an action of $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ on \mathcal{H}_G . The latter action is proper and cocompact. Therefore, $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ is quasi-isometric to \mathcal{H}_G .

4.10 Wreathing infinite groups with \mathbb{Z}

The definition of \mathcal{H}_G and of the action of $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ on \mathcal{H}_G does not require G to be finite. Our assumption that G is finite is necessary, however, for the graph \mathcal{H}_G to be locally-finite, and thus for $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ to be quasi-isometric to \mathcal{H}_G .

4.11 Aside on finiteness properties

It is easy to see that \mathcal{H}_G contains loops of unbounded diameter. Thus, the topology of \mathcal{H}_G reflects that $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ is finitely generated but not finitely presented. The former result is trivial; the latter was originally proved in much greater generality by Baumslag using combinatorial methods [Ba].

4.12 Explaining Conjecture 8

The table below refers to three basic examples of rank one amenable groups. The first column denotes the group. Each of these groups, Γ , acts properly on a product of negatively-curved rank one spaces, denoted X_Γ . The second column lists these metric spaces. (Below, T_m is an $m + 1$ -valent tree.)

The third column lists certain subgroups of $\mathcal{QI}(X_\Gamma)$. Specifically, each group Γ is quasi-isometric to a horosphere $\mathcal{H} \subseteq X_\Gamma$, and $\mathcal{QI}(X_\Gamma)_\mathcal{H}$ denotes the subgroup of $\mathcal{QI}(X_\Gamma)$ consisting of classes of quasi-isometries that preserve \mathcal{H} up to finite Hausdorff distance.

Γ	X_Γ	$\mathcal{QI}(X_\Gamma)_\mathcal{H}$
$\text{BS}(1, m)$	$\mathbb{H}^2 \times T_m$	$\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{R}) \times \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_m)$
Sol	$\mathbb{H}^2 \times \mathbb{H}^2$	$[\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{R}) \times \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{R})] \rtimes \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$
$G \wr \mathbb{Z}$	$T_G \times T_G$	$[\text{Bilip}(G((t))) \times \text{Bilip}(G((t)))] \rtimes \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$

The groups of bilipschitz homeomorphisms that appear in the right-hand column of the table act on the boundary of a factor of X_Γ . Any map on the boundary of one of these rank one spaces that fixes a distinguished point at infinity, and restricts to the rest of the boundary points— \mathbb{R} in the case of \mathbb{H}^2 and the m -adic numbers in the case of a $m + 1$ -valent tree—as a bilipschitz homeomorphism, can easily be seen to extend to a quasi-isometry of the interior of the space. (Note that $G((t))$ is isometric to the $|G|$ -adic numbers $\mathbb{Q}_{|G|}$.)

It is easy to see in all three cases for Γ , that $\mathcal{QI}(X_\Gamma)_\mathcal{H} \leq \mathcal{QI}(\Gamma)$. Theorem 2 states that the only quasi-isometries of $\Gamma = \text{BS}(1, m)$ are those accounted for in $\mathcal{QI}(X_\Gamma)_\mathcal{H}$. That is, that the inclusion above is an equality for the solvable Baumslag-Solitar groups. Conjectures 5 and 8 ask that the same equality hold for the groups Sol and $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ respectively.

4.13 Explaining Conjecture 9

It is well-known and easy to see that if G and H are finite groups, and if $|G|^k = |H|^j$ for some $k, j \in \mathbb{N}$, then $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ is quasi-isometric to $H \wr \mathbb{Z}$. Geometrically, there is a quasi-isometry $T_G \rightarrow T_{G^k}$ defined by collapsing to a point any path in T_G that bijects under the height function onto an interval of the form $[(\ell - 1)k, \ell k - 1]$ for $\ell \in \mathbb{Z}$. Applying the above quasi-isometry

to each factor defines a quasi-isometry $T_G \times T_G \rightarrow T_{G^k} \times T_{G^k}$ that maps \mathcal{H}_G within a finite Hausdorff distance of \mathcal{H}_{G^k} . Similarly, \mathcal{H}_H and \mathcal{H}_{H^j} are quasi-isometric. It follows that $|G|^k = |H|^j$ for some $k, j \in \mathbb{N}$ implies $G \wr \mathbb{Z}$ is quasi-isometric to $H \wr \mathbb{Z}$ since \mathcal{H}_{G^k} and \mathcal{H}_{H^j} are isometric given the hypothesis.

There aren't any known examples of a pair of lamplighter groups that are quasi-isometric but do not meet the hypothesis from the above paragraph. Given the analogy between lamplighter groups and solvable Baumslag-Solitar groups, it is possible that such nonelementary examples do not exist.

Indeed, Farb-Mosher showed that any quasi-isometry between two solvable Baumslag-Solitar groups – say $BS(1, m)$ and $BS(1, r)$ – induce a bilipschitz homeomorphism between the “upper boundaries” of the respective groups—in concrete terms, a bilipschitz homeomorphism between \mathbb{Q}_m and \mathbb{Q}_r (Theorem 6.1 [Fa-M 1]). Cooper showed that such a bilipschitz map can only exist when $m^k = r^j$ for some $k, j \in \mathbb{N}$ (Corollary 10.11 [Fa-M 1]). If a full analogue held for lamplighter groups, then a quasi-isometry $G \wr \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow H \wr \mathbb{Z}$ would induce a bilipschitz homeomorphism $G(\langle t \rangle) \rightarrow H(\langle t \rangle)$ which would imply that $|G|^k = |H|^j$ for some $k, j \in \mathbb{N}$.

4.14 A conjecture of Diestel-Leader

Let \mathbb{F}_2 and \mathbb{F}_3 be fields with exactly 2 and 3 elements respectively. We define the graph

$$\mathcal{H}_{2,3} = \{ (x, y) \in T_{\mathbb{F}_2} \times T_{\mathbb{F}_3} \mid h_{\mathbb{F}_2}(x) + h_{\mathbb{F}_3}(y) = 0 \}$$

This graph is connected, transitive, and locally-finite.

In response to a question of Woess, Diestel-Leader conjectured that $\mathcal{H}_{2,3}$ is a connected, transitive, and locally-finite graph that is not quasi-isometric to a finitely-generated group [D-L].⁵

Following the reasoning above, the quasi-isometry group of $\mathcal{H}_{2,3}$ might be $\text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_2) \times \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_3)$. Assuming this was the case, if a finitely-generated group Γ was quasi-isometric to $\mathcal{H}_{2,3}$, then Γ would quasi-act on $\mathcal{H}_{2,3}$, defining a representation

$$\Gamma \rightarrow \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_2) \times \text{Bilip}(\mathbb{Q}_3)$$

⁵Since the writing of this paper, this conjecture was proved by Eskin-Fisher-Whyte. See Theorem 1.9 of [E-F-W].

This would make the Diestel-Leader conjecture susceptible to some algebraic techniques. Perhaps techniques similar to those in [Fa-M 2] could show that no such Γ exists.

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