

LARGE TIME BEHAVIOR OF DIRICHLET HEAT KERNELS ON UNBOUNDED DOMAINS ABOVE THE GRAPH OF A BOUNDED LIPSCHITZ FUNCTION

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ABSTRACT. Let $D \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$, $d \geq 2$ be the unbounded domain above the graph of a bounded Lipschitz function. We study the asymptotic behavior of the transition density $p^D(t, x, y)$ of killed Brownian motions in D and show that $\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} t^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^D(t, x, y) = C_1 u(x)u(y)$, where u is a minimal harmonic function corresponding to the Martin point at infinity and C_1 is a positive constant.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article is concerned with the large time asymptotic behavior of the Dirichlet heat kernel $p^D(t, x, y)$ on the unbounded domain D above the graph of a bounded Lipschitz function f . Here and in the sequel, by a domain in \mathbb{R}^d , $d \geq 2$, we mean an open connected subset of \mathbb{R}^d . The Dirichlet heat kernel is the transition density of the Brownian motion killed upon leaving the domain D . This work was inspired by the results of Pierre Collet, Servet Martínez and Jaime San Martín [2]. Those authors obtained the asymptotic behavior of the Dirichlet heat kernel on an exterior domain, i.e., an unbounded domain which is the complement of a compact nonpolar subset of \mathbb{R}^d . More specifically, they proved that for x, y in the planar exterior domain D ,

$$(1.1) \quad \lim_{t \uparrow \infty} t(\log t)^2 p^D(t, x, y) = \frac{2}{\pi} u_1(x)u_1(y),$$

where $u_1(x) = \pi \lim_{|y| \rightarrow \infty} G^D(x, y)$ and $G^D(x, y) = \int_0^\infty p^D(t, x, y) dt$. Those authors also obtained the result in higher dimensions, namely, for $d \geq 3$, and

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$x, y \in D$,

$$(1.2) \quad \lim_{t \uparrow \infty} t^{\frac{d}{2}} p^D(t, x, y) = (2\pi)^{-\frac{d}{2}} u_2(x) u_2(y),$$

where $u_2(x) = \lim_{t \uparrow \infty} P_x(\tau_D > t)$ and τ_D is the first exit time of the exterior domain D . We adapt the techniques used by Collet, Martínez and San Martín to obtain the asymptotic behavior of the Dirichlet heat kernel in the case of the unbounded domain D above the graph of a bounded Lipschitz function. Our main result on the asymptotic behavior of the Dirichlet heat kernel $p^D(t, x, y)$ on the unbounded domain above the graph of a bounded Lipschitz function is the following (see Theorem 2.5 for more details). Let $D \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$ be the domain above the graph of a bounded Lipschitz function f . Then, for any $x, y \in D$, we have

$$\lim_{t \uparrow \infty} t^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^D(t, x, y) = H u(x) u(y),$$

for some positive constant H and positive harmonic function u vanishing on the boundary ∂D of D .

2. MAIN RESULTS

In this section, we are going to establish our main results. We fix a bounded real-valued Lipschitz function $f: \mathbb{R}^{d-1} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$. Recall that a Lipschitz function f on \mathbb{R}^{d-1} means that there exists a positive constant C such that

$$(2.1) \quad |f(\tilde{x}_1) - f(\tilde{x}_2)| \leq C |\tilde{x}_1 - \tilde{x}_2|,$$

for all $\tilde{x}_1, \tilde{x}_2 \in \mathbb{R}^{d-1}$. We also fix a domain $D \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$ as follows:

$$(2.2) \quad D = \{x = (\tilde{x}, x_d) \in \mathbb{R}^{d-1} \times \mathbb{R} = \mathbb{R}^d: x_d > f(\tilde{x})\}.$$

The unbounded domain D above is called the *domain above the graph of a bounded Lipschitz function*. Since f is bounded, there exist constants a and b such that

$$a \leq f(\tilde{x}) \leq b,$$

for each $\tilde{x} \in \mathbb{R}^{d-1}$. Define

$$\mathcal{H} = \left\{ h: h \text{ is nonnegative and harmonic in } D \text{ and } \lim_{D \ni x \rightarrow y} h(x) = 0, \text{ for all } y \in \partial D \right\}.$$

Notice that $\partial D = \{x = (\tilde{x}, x_d) \in \mathbb{R}^d: x_d = f(\tilde{x})\}$.

THEOREM 2.1. *There is only one point corresponding to infinity on the Martin boundary of D and this Martin point is minimal. In particular, this means that \mathcal{H} defined above is one dimensional.*

PROOF. Fix a point $z_0 = (\tilde{z}_0, a - 2) \in \mathbb{R}^d$ and consider the inversion with respect to the sphere $S_1(z_0) := \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d : |x - z_0| = 1\}$. The image D^* of D under this inversion is a bounded Lipschitz domain with z_0 being the image of infinity. Notice that z_0 is on the boundary of D^* . By Theorem 1.5 on page 337 in [5], the Martin boundary, the minimal Martin boundary and the Euclidean boundary of D^* coincide. This means that each boundary point z of D^* corresponds to a minimal harmonic function v_z . Define a function $u_z(x) = |x^* - z_0|^{d-2}v_z(x^*)$, for $x \in D$ and $x^* = z_0 + \frac{1}{|x - z_0|^2}(x - z_0)$. Then, the Laplacian of u_z vanishes on D (see [1]) and therefore, \mathcal{H} is one dimensional. Moreover, there is only one point corresponding to infinity on the Martin boundary of D and this Martin point is minimal. \square

REMARK 2.2. From now on we will use u to denote a positive harmonic function in D corresponding to the Martin point at infinity.

We will obtain some property of the function u after the following observation.

Let us recall the Green function G_H for the half space $H := \{x = (\tilde{x}, x_d) \in \mathbb{R}^d : x_d > 0\}$. For $x, y \in H$ with $x \neq y$,

$$G_H(x, y) = k(x, y) - k(x, y'),$$

where

$$k(x, y) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{\pi} \ln \left(\frac{1}{|x - y|} \right) & \text{if } d = 2; \\ |x - y|^{2-d} & \text{if } d \geq 3, \end{cases}$$

and $y' = (y_1, y_2, \dots, y_{d-1}, -y_d)$ (see page 113 in [6]). Then, for $d = 2$,

$$G_H(x, y) = \frac{1}{\pi} \ln \left(\frac{|x - y'|}{|x - y|} \right).$$

Notice that

$$\begin{aligned} |x - y'|^2 &= |x - y|^2 + 4x_d y_d \\ &= |x - y|^2(1 + \beta), \end{aligned}$$

where $\beta = \frac{4x_d y_d}{|x - y|^2} > 0$. Therefore,

$$\begin{aligned} (2.3) \quad G_H(x, y) &= \frac{1}{\pi} \ln \left(\frac{|x - y|\sqrt{1 + \beta}}{|x - y|} \right) \\ &= \frac{1}{2\pi} \ln \left(1 + \frac{4x_d y_d}{|x - y|^2} \right). \end{aligned}$$

The above equation will be used in the proof of the next theorem. The notation $f_1 \approx f_2$ means that there exists a positive constant C such that $\frac{1}{C}f_2 \leq f_1 \leq Cf_2$.

THEOREM 2.3. *For sufficiently large x_d , we have*

$$u(\tilde{x}, x_d) \approx x_d.$$

PROOF. Let $x_0 = (\tilde{0}, b + 100) \in D$ and $y_n = (\tilde{0}, b + n) \in D$. Then, Theorem 1.5 on page 337 in [5] implies that for any $x \in D$,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{G_D(x, y_n)}{G_D(x_0, y_n)} = u(x).$$

Define

$$D_a = \{x = (\tilde{x}, x_d) : x_d > a\}, \quad D_b = \{x = (\tilde{x}, x_d) : x_d > b\}.$$

Then, for any $x \in D_b$, we have

$$G_{D_b}(x, y_n) \leq G_D(x, y_n) \leq G_{D_a}(x, y_n).$$

Thus, for any $x \in D_b$,

$$(2.4) \quad \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{G_{D_b}(x, y_n)}{G_{D_a}(x_0, y_n)} \leq u(x) \leq \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{G_{D_a}(x, y_n)}{G_{D_b}(x_0, y_n)}.$$

From the explicit formulae for G_{D_a} and G_{D_b} , it can be shown that for $d \geq 3$,

$$G_{D_a}(x, y) \approx |x - y|^{2-d} \min \left\{ 1, \frac{(x_d - a)(y_d - a)}{|x - y|^2} \right\},$$

$$G_{D_b}(x, y) \approx |x - y|^{2-d} \min \left\{ 1, \frac{(x_d - b)(y_d - b)}{|x - y|^2} \right\}.$$

Thus, for any $x \in D_b$,

$$u(x) \leq C \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\frac{(x_d - a)(y_d^{(n)} - a)}{|x - y_n|^2} \wedge 1}{\frac{(x_d^{(0)} - b)(y_d^{(n)} - b)}{|x_0 - y_n|^2} \wedge 1}} = C \frac{x_d - a}{100},$$

where $x_d^{(0)}$ and $y_d^{(n)}$ are the d -th component of x_0 and y_n , respectively. Also,

$$u(x) \geq C \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\frac{(x_d - b)(y_d^{(n)} - b)}{|x - y_n|^2} \wedge 1}{\frac{(x_d^{(0)} - a)(y_d^{(n)} - a)}{|x_0 - y_n|^2} \wedge 1}}$$

$$= C \frac{x_d - b}{x_d^{(0)} - a} = C \frac{x_d - b}{b + 100 - a}.$$

For $d = 2$, it follows from (2.3) that the Green functions G_{D_a} and G_{D_b} for D_a and D_b respectively are given by

$$G_{D_a}(x, y) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \ln \left(1 + \frac{4(x_d - a)(y_d - a)}{|x - y|^2} \right) \text{ and}$$

$$G_{D_b}(x, y) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \ln \left(1 + \frac{4(x_d - b)(y_d - b)}{|x - y|^2} \right).$$

Recall the fact that $\ln(1+x) \approx x$ as $x \rightarrow 0$. By (2.4),

$$\begin{aligned} u(x) &\leq \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\ln \left(1 + \frac{4(x_d - a)(y_d^{(n)} - a)}{|x - y_n|^2} \right)}{\ln \left(1 + \frac{4(x_d^{(0)} - b)(y_d^{(n)} - b)}{|x_0 - y_n|^2} \right)} \\ &= \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\ln \left(1 + \frac{4(x_d - a)(b + n - a)}{|x - y_n|^2} \right)}{\ln \left(1 + \frac{4(100)(b + n - b)}{|x_0 - y_n|^2} \right)} \leq Cx_d, \end{aligned}$$

for some positive constant C , since both $\frac{4(x_d - a)(b + n - a)}{|x - y_n|^2}$ and $\frac{4(100)(b + n - b)}{|x_0 - y_n|^2}$ converge to 0 as $n \rightarrow \infty$.

Similarly,

$$\begin{aligned} u(x) &\geq \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\ln \left(1 + \frac{4(x_d - b)(y_d^{(n)} - b)}{|x - y_n|^2} \right)}{\ln \left(1 + \frac{4(x_d^{(0)} - a)(y_d^{(0)} - a)}{|x_0 - y_n|^2} \right)} \\ &= \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\ln \left(1 + \frac{4(x_d - b)(n)}{|x - y_n|^2} \right)}{\ln \left(1 + \frac{4(b + 100 - a)(b + n - a)}{|x_0 - y_n|^2} \right)} = Cx_d, \end{aligned}$$

for some positive constant C . □

THEOREM 2.4. *The function u defined above is invariant, i.e.,*

$$u(x) = \int_D p^D(t, x, y) u(y) dy$$

for all $t > 0$ and $x \in D$.

PROOF. To show that u is invariant, it suffices to show (see pages 728 and 669 in [3]) that for some $x \in D$,

$$\lim_{t \uparrow \infty} \int_D p^D(t, x, y) u(y) dy > 0.$$

In other words, the condition above means that the function u is not purely excessive. By Theorem 2.3, take $M > b$ so large that

$$u(y) \approx y_d \quad \text{for } y_d > M$$

and put $x = (\tilde{0}, 1 + M) \in D$. Then, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \int_D p^D(t, x, y)u(y) dy &\geq \int_{D_b} p^D(t, x, y)u(y) dy \\ &\geq \int_{D_b} p^{D_b}(t, x, y)u(y) dy \\ &\geq C \int_{\{y: y_d > M\}} p^{D_M}(t, x, y)y_d dy. \end{aligned}$$

By the explicit formula of

$$p^{D_M}(t, x, y) = C \left(\frac{x_d - M}{\sqrt{t}} \wedge 1 \right) \left(\frac{y_d - M}{\sqrt{t}} \wedge 1 \right) t^{-\frac{d}{2}} \exp\left(-\frac{|x - y|^2}{2t}\right)$$

and for t so large that $1 - \frac{1}{\sqrt{t}} > \frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{\sqrt{t}} \wedge 1 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{t}}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} &\int_{\{y: y_d > M\}} p^{D_M}(t, x, y)y_d dy \\ &\geq C \int_{\{y: y_d > M\}} \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{t}} \wedge 1 \right) \left(\frac{y_d - M}{\sqrt{t}} \wedge 1 \right) t^{-\frac{d}{2}} \exp\left(-\frac{|x - y|^2}{2t}\right) (y_d - M) dy \\ &= C \frac{1}{\sqrt{t}} \int_{\{y: y_d > M\}} \left(\frac{y_d - M}{\sqrt{t}} \wedge 1 \right) (y_d - M) t^{-\frac{d}{2}} \exp\left(-\frac{|x - y|^2}{2t}\right) dy \\ &= C \frac{1}{\sqrt{t}} \int_M^\infty \left(\frac{y_d - M}{\sqrt{t}} \wedge 1 \right) (y_d - M) t^{-\frac{1}{2}} \exp\left(-\frac{|y_d - M - 1|^2}{2t}\right) dy_d \\ &\geq C \frac{1}{t} \int_M^{M+\sqrt{t}} (y_d - M)^2 t^{-\frac{1}{2}} \exp\left(-\frac{|y_d - M - 1|^2}{2t}\right) dy_d \\ &\geq C \frac{1}{t} \int_M^{M+\sqrt{t}} (y_d - M - 1)^2 t^{-\frac{1}{2}} \exp\left(-\frac{|y_d - M - 1|^2}{2t}\right) dy_d \\ &= C \frac{1}{t} \int_{-1}^{\sqrt{t}-1} v^2 t^{-\frac{1}{2}} \exp\left(-\frac{v^2}{2t}\right) dv \\ &= C \int_{-\frac{1}{\sqrt{t}}}^{1-\frac{1}{\sqrt{t}}} u^2 \exp\left(-\frac{u^2}{2}\right) du \\ &> C \int_0^{\frac{1}{2}} u^2 \exp\left(-\frac{u^2}{2}\right) du > 0. \end{aligned}$$

□

Let $d(x)$ be the Euclidean distance from x to the boundary ∂D of D and recall that the function u is the Martin kernel corresponding to the point at infinity and $x_0 = (\tilde{0}, b + 100) \in D$. Now, we are ready to establish the main result.

THEOREM 2.5. *Let $D \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d, d \geq 2$, be the domain above the graph of f . For any $x, y \in D$, we have*

$$\lim_{t \uparrow \infty} t^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^D(t, x, y) = Cu(x)u(y),$$

where u is the function introduced in Remark 2.2 and C is a positive constant. The convergence is uniform on compact subsets of $D \times D$.

PROOF. Let $x, y \in D$ and fix $x_0 = (\tilde{0}, b + 100) \in D \cap D_b = D_b$. It is easy to see from the explicit formula of the Dirichlet heat kernel on the half space D_a that $p^{D_a}(t, x_0, x_0) \geq p^{D_a}(t, x, y)$. Therefore,

$$(2.5) \quad \frac{p^D(t, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t, x_0, x_0)} \leq \frac{p^D(t, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t, x, y)} \leq 1.$$

Let K be a compact subset of D . Then, there exists $k \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $K \subseteq D_k$, where

$$D_k = \left\{ x \in D : d(x) > \frac{1}{k}, |\tilde{x}| \leq k \text{ and } x_d \leq b + 100 + k \right\}.$$

Therefore, the parabolic Harnack inequality (see Theorem 1 in [4]) implies the existence of a positive constant C such that for $x, y \in K$ and $t > t_0$, for some positive t_0 ,

$$\begin{aligned} p^D(t, x, y) &\geq Cp^D(t - \varepsilon, x_0, y) \\ &\geq Cp^D(t - \varepsilon, x_0, x_0) \\ &\geq Cp^{D_b}(t - \varepsilon, x_0, x_0), \end{aligned}$$

for some $\varepsilon > 0$. Notice that we can assume that $t_0 > \varepsilon$.

So, we have as $t \uparrow \infty$,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{p^D(t, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t, x_0, x_0)} &\geq C \frac{p^{D_b}(t - \varepsilon, x_0, x_0)}{p^{D_a}(t, x_0, x_0)} \\ &\longrightarrow C \frac{(x_d^{(0)} - b)^2}{(x_d^{(0)} - a)^2} > 0, \end{aligned}$$

where $x_d^{(0)}$ is the d -th component of x_0 . Thus, the family of functions $\left\{ \frac{p^D(t, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t, x_0, x_0)} : t > t_0 \right\}$ is bounded on compact subsets of $D \times D$. Next, we claim that

$$\sup_{t \geq t_0, |s| \leq 2} \frac{p^{D_a}(t, x_0, x_0)}{p^{D_a}(t + s, x_0, x_0)} < \infty.$$

To see this, for sufficiently large $t > t_0$ and $|s| \leq 2$,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{p^{D_a}(t, x_0, x_0)}{p^{D_a}(t+s, x_0, x_0)} &= \frac{\frac{2}{(2\pi)^{d/2}}(b+100-a)^2 t^{-\frac{d+2}{2}}}{\frac{2}{(2\pi)^{d/2}}(b+100-a)^2 (t+s)^{-\frac{d+2}{2}}} \\ &= \left(\frac{t+s}{t}\right)^{\frac{d+2}{2}} = \left(1 + \frac{s}{t}\right)^{\frac{d+2}{2}} < \infty. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the family of functions $\left\{\frac{p^D(t, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t, x_0, x_0)} : t > t_0\right\}$ is equicontinuous on compact subsets of $D \times D$ by Lemma 2.1 in [2]. Therefore, Arzela-Ascoli theorem implies that any sequence converging to infinity contains a subsequence $t_n \uparrow \infty$ such that

$$\lim_{t_n \uparrow \infty} \frac{p^D(t_n, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t_n, x_0, x_0)} = V(x, y)$$

for some continuous function $V(\cdot, y)$, where the convergence is uniform on compact subsets of D . Note that $V(x, y) \geq C \frac{10^4}{(b+100-a)^2} > 0$ and therefore $V(x, y)$ is nontrivial.

From the semigroup property, we get that for any $s > 0$,

$$\frac{p^D(t_n + s, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t_n, x_0, x_0)} = \int_D \frac{p^D(t_n, x, \xi)}{p^{D_a}(t_n, x_0, x_0)} \cdot p^D(s, \xi, y) d\xi.$$

Recall from (2.5) that $\frac{p^D(t, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t, x_0, x_0)} \leq 1$ for all $t > 0$; $x, y \in D$ and $x_0 \in D_b$. Using this inequality, the Gaussian bound for p^D and the dominated convergence theorem, we obtain

$$V(x, y) = \int_D V(x, \xi) p^D(s, \xi, y) d\xi.$$

Therefore, $V(\cdot, y)$ is a nontrivial positive harmonic function vanishing at the boundary ∂D of D . Since \mathcal{H} is one dimensional by Theorem 2.1, $V(\cdot, y) = a(y)u(\cdot)$ for some function $a = a(y)$. By the symmetry of the problem, we have

$$V(x, y) = C_1 u(x)u(y)$$

for some positive constant C_1 , which may depend on the subsequence. So,

$$\lim_{t_n \uparrow \infty} \frac{p^D(t_n, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t_n, x_0, x_0)} = C_1 u(x)u(y).$$

On the other hand, by the explicit formula of p^{D_a} , we obtain

$$\lim_{t_n \uparrow \infty} \frac{p^D(t_n, x, y)}{p^{D_a}(t_n, x_0, x_0)} = \lim_{t_n \uparrow \infty} \frac{t_n^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^D(t_n, x, y)}{\frac{2}{(2\pi)^{d/2}}(b+100-a)^2}.$$

So,

$$\lim_{t_n \uparrow \infty} \frac{t_n^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^D(t_n, x, y)}{\frac{2}{(2\pi)^{d/2}} (b+100-a)^2} = C_1 u(x) u(y).$$

Hence,

$$\lim_{t_n \uparrow \infty} t_n^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^D(t_n, x, y) = C u(x) u(y),$$

where $C = \frac{2C_1}{(2\pi)^{d/2}} (b+100-a)^2$. Notice that

$$t_n^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^{D_b}(t_n, y, y) \leq t_n^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^D(t_n, y, y) \leq t_n^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^{D_a}(t_n, y, y).$$

Taking $t_n \uparrow \infty$ and y_d being sufficiently large give us

$$\frac{2}{(2\pi)^{d/2}} (y_d - b)^2 \leq C (u(y))^2 \leq \frac{2}{(2\pi)^{d/2}} (y_d - a)^2.$$

Since $u(y)$ behaves asymptotically as y_d by Theorem 2.3, we see that the limit of $t_n^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^D(t_n, y, y)$ as $t \uparrow \infty$ does not depend on the subsequence t_n , and we conclude that

$$\lim_{t \uparrow \infty} t^{\frac{d+2}{2}} p^D(t, x, y) = C u(x) u(y).$$

The convergence is uniform on compact subsets of $D \times D$. \square

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