

THE REGULAR GROUP C^* -ALGEBRA FOR REAL-RANK ONE GROUPS

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ABSTRACT. Let G be a connected semisimple real-rank one Lie group with finite center and let $C_\rho^*(G)$ denote the regular group C^* -algebra of G . In this paper a complete description of the structure of $C_\rho^*(G)$ is obtained.

1. Introduction. Let G be a connected semisimple real-rank one Lie group with finite center and Lie algebra \mathfrak{g} . If $G_{\mathbb{C}}$ is the simply connected, complex analytic group corresponding to $\mathfrak{g}_{\mathbb{C}}$, we assume, in addition, that G is the real analytic subgroup of $G_{\mathbb{C}}$ corresponding to \mathfrak{g} . Let $C_\rho^*(G)$ denote the regular group C^* -algebra of G , i.e., the completion of $L_1(G)$ with respect to the norm $\|f\|_\rho = \|\rho(f)\|$ where ρ is the left regular representation of G and $\|\rho(f)\|$ denotes the norm of $\rho(f)$ as a left convolution operator on $L_2(G)$. The purpose of this paper is to give a complete description of the structure of $C_\rho^*(G)$ and thus give a partial answer (one for the above G) to a question raised in [6] as to an intrinsic characterization of $C_0(\hat{G})$.

Throughout this paper H will denote a fixed separable infinite-dimensional Hilbert space and $\mathfrak{K}(H)$ will denote the compact operators on H . We assume, in addition, that H has been identified with $H \oplus H$. When T is a locally compact Hausdorff space, we denote by $C^b(T, \mathfrak{K}(H))$ the C^* -algebra of all norm-continuous bounded functions $t \mapsto x(t)$ of T into $\mathfrak{K}(H)$ and by $C^0(T, \mathfrak{K}(H))$ the C^* -algebra of functions in $C^b(T, \mathfrak{K}(H))$ such that $\|x(t)\|$ vanishes at infinity.

The underlying hull-kernel topology on the spectrum of $C_\rho^*(G)$, \hat{G}_r , plays a key role in describing the structure of $C_\rho^*(G) \approx C_0(\hat{G})$. The main difficulty occurs when \hat{G}_r is not Hausdorff. When \hat{G}_r is Hausdorff e.g.,

$$G = \text{Spin}(2n + 1, 1) \quad \text{for } n \geq 1,$$

it follows from [2, 10.9.6] that $C_\rho^*(G)$ is isomorphic to $C^0(\hat{G}_r, \mathfrak{K}(H))$. However, when \hat{G}_r is not Hausdorff the above theorem no longer applies and we show, in §3, that it is possible to use the extension theory of C. Delaroché [1] to determine the structure of $C_\rho^*(G)$. We first show that $C_\rho^*(G)$ is isomorphic to the restricted product of certain C^* -algebras whose structures

Received by the editors December 1, 1975.

AMS (MOS) subject classifications (1970). Primary 22D25, 43A40; Secondary 46L25.

Key words and phrases. Semisimple Lie groups, Cartan subgroups, Weyl group, irreducible unitary representations, left regular representation, principal series, discrete series, reduced dual, hull-kernel topology, C^* -algebras, restricted product.

¹Partially supported by NSF-MPS 75-14490.

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have concrete descriptions given by [1, Theorem VI.3.8]. Letting \mathcal{Q}_P , \hat{G}_P , and \hat{G}_d be as in [8, Volume II], it is then a simple matter to give an alternate description of $C^*_\rho(G)$ as the subalgebra of functions in $C^0(\mathcal{Q}_P \cup \hat{G}_d, \mathcal{K}(H))$ which reduce at the points of $\mathcal{Q}_P - \hat{G}_P$ (i.e., the points “responsible” for the non-Hausdorffness of \hat{G}_r) by $H \oplus H$.

We refer to [2] and [8] for all undefined terms and notation.

2. The topology on \hat{G}_r . In this section we summarize the main results concerning the representation theory of G and the topology on \hat{G}_r which we shall need to describe $C^*_\rho(G)$. For a more detailed account we refer to [8, Volume II, Chapter 7 and Epilogue].

Let $G = KAN$ be an Iwasawa decomposition for G , M the centralizer of A in K , $P = MAN$ (a minimal parabolic subgroup of G), and $W = \{1, w\}$ be the Weyl group of G , where w is the unique nontrivial element of W . We let \hat{G}_r denote the reduced dual of G i.e., the support of ρ in \hat{G} .

Up to conjugacy, either G has a unique noncompact Cartan subgroup or G has two Cartan subgroups—one compact and one noncompact. Each conjugacy class of Cartan subgroups makes its own contribution to \hat{G}_r . The noncompact Cartan subgroup contributes the collection of irreducible principal series representations, \hat{G}_P , together with those irreducibles which arise as summands of reducible principal series representations, \check{G}_P . The compact Cartan subgroup contributes the so-called discrete series of G , \hat{G}_d . Let us briefly recall the parameterizations of these representations given in [8].

If \mathfrak{a} denotes the Lie algebra of A , the irreducible unitary representations of A are given by $\lambda^s(\exp H) = \exp(isH)$, $s \in \mathbf{R}$, $H \in \mathfrak{a}$, and so $\hat{A} = \{\lambda^s : s \in \mathbf{R}\}$. The hull-kernel topology on \hat{A} agrees with the usual topology it inherits as the character group of the abelian group A , i.e., that of \mathbf{R} . If n is the dimension of a maximal torus in the compact group M , then we may view \hat{M} as a countable discrete subset of \mathbf{R}^n and, hence, $\hat{M} \times \hat{A}$ as a subset of \mathbf{R}^{n+1} with the relative topology. The Weyl group W acts on $\hat{M} \times \hat{A}$ as follows: $1 \cdot (\sigma, s) = (\sigma, s)$ and $w \cdot (\sigma, s) = (w \cdot \sigma, -s)$ where $w \cdot \sigma(m) = \sigma(w^{-1}mw)$, $m \in M$. Under the quotient topology, the orbit space $\mathcal{Q}_P = (\hat{M} \times \hat{A})/W$ is locally compact and Hausdorff.

For $\sigma \in \hat{M}$ and $\lambda^s \in \hat{A}$ we form the finite-dimensional irreducible unitary representation $\sigma \times \lambda^s$ of P via $(\sigma \times \lambda^s)(man) = \sigma(m)\lambda^s(a)$ and write

$$\pi(\sigma, s) = \text{Ind}_P^G \sigma \times \lambda^s.$$

The collection of unitary representations $\{\pi(\sigma, s) : \sigma \in \hat{M}, s \in \mathbf{R}\}$ is called the principal series of G . It is known that $\pi(\sigma, s)$ is irreducible unless $w \cdot \sigma = \sigma$ and $s = 0$ and in this case $\pi(\sigma, 0)$ may or may not be irreducible (see [5] or [8, Volume I, p. 462]). When G has a unique Cartan subgroup, the results of Wallach [7] show that every member of the principal series is irreducible. If we let $R = \{\sigma \in \hat{M} : \pi(\sigma, 0) \text{ is reducible}\}$ and $I = \hat{M} - R$, then for $\sigma \in R$ it is known that $\pi(\sigma, 0)$ decomposes into two inequivalent representations of G (see [4]) which we shall denote by π_σ^\pm . It follows from [8,

5.5.3.3] that $\pi(\sigma, s) \simeq \pi(\sigma', t)$ iff there exists a $c \in W$ such that $c \cdot \sigma = \sigma'$ and $c \cdot s = t$, i.e., $\sigma = \sigma'$ and $s = t$ or $w \cdot \sigma = \sigma'$ and $s = -t$. Thus we may identify the collection of principal series representations with \mathcal{Q}_P .

As in [8, Volume II], we let \hat{G}_P denote the subset of \mathcal{Q}_P consisting of irreducible principal series representations. A point $q \in \mathcal{Q}_P - \hat{G}_P$ has coordinates $(\sigma, 0)$ with $\sigma \in R$ and so we may associate to q the pair of representations $\pi_\sigma^\pm = \pi_q^\pm$ in \hat{G}_r (it is this association that makes \hat{G}_r non-Hausdorff). Letting $\check{G}_P = \{\pi_q^\pm : q \in \mathcal{Q}_P - \hat{G}_P\}$ we have that $\hat{G}_P \cap \check{G}_P = \emptyset$.

When G has a compact Cartan subgroup (iff $\text{rank } G \equiv 1 + \text{rank } M = \text{rank } K$), one obtains a family of irreducible, square-integrable, unitary representations of G called the discrete series of G . Denoting this family by \hat{G}_d , we have that $\hat{G}_d \cap (\hat{G}_P \cup \check{G}_P) = \emptyset$ and that it is possible to parameterize \hat{G}_d by a lattice in \mathbf{R}^{n+1} [8, 10.2.4]. Thus we may identify \hat{G}_d with a countable discrete subset of \mathbf{R}^{n+1} which does not intersect $\hat{G}_P \cup \check{G}_P$ and ultimately, \hat{G}_r as a disjoint union of the three subsets \hat{G}_P, \check{G}_P , and \hat{G}_d of \mathbf{R}^{n+1} .

THEOREM (LIPSMAN). *Let \hat{G}_r be the reduced dual of G . Then*

(1) *if G has a unique Cartan subgroup, $\hat{G}_r = \hat{G}_P = \mathcal{Q}_P$ and the hull-kernel topology on \hat{G}_r coincides with the natural (Hausdorff) topology of \mathcal{Q}_P ,*

(2) *if G also has a compact Cartan subgroup, $\hat{G}_r = \hat{G}_P \cup \check{G}_P \cup \hat{G}_d$ (disjoint union) where both \hat{G}_d and $\hat{G}_P \cup \check{G}_P$ are open in \hat{G}_r , the topology on $\check{G}_P \cup \hat{G}_d$ is discrete, and the closure of any subset $S \subseteq \hat{G}_P$ consists precisely of those $\pi \in \hat{G}_P \cup \check{G}_P$ which are associated with the points in the natural closure of S in \mathcal{Q}_P .*

3. The structure of $C^*_\rho(G)$. Since $R = \{\sigma \in \hat{M} : w \cdot \sigma = \sigma\}$ and $I = \hat{M} - R$, we have $\hat{M} \times \hat{A} = (R \times \hat{A}) \cup (I \times \hat{A})$ where both $R \times \hat{A}, I \times \hat{A}$ are W -invariant and, in fact, $(R \times \hat{A})/W = R \times [0, \infty)$. Let $B = [0, \infty)$ and for $\sigma \in R$ write $B_\sigma = \{(\sigma, s) : s > 0\}$, $\bar{B}_\sigma = \{(\sigma, s) : s \geq 0\}$, and $B'_\sigma = B_\sigma \cup \{\pi_\sigma^\pm\}$. Let

$$\mathcal{Q}_R = R \times B = \bigcup_{\sigma \in R} \bar{B}_\sigma, \quad \mathcal{Q}_I = (I \times \hat{A})/W \quad \text{and} \quad B_\theta = \mathcal{Q}_I \cup \hat{G}_d.$$

Then

$$\mathcal{Q}_P = \mathcal{Q}_R \cup \mathcal{Q}_I \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{Q}_P \cup \hat{G}_d = \left(\bigcup_{\sigma \in R} \bar{B}_\sigma \right) \cup B_\theta.$$

According to the results of §2, each of the (Hausdorff) fibres \bar{B}_σ in \mathcal{Q}_R is associated with the (non-Hausdorff) fibre B'_σ in \hat{G}_r where the topology on B'_σ is such that as $s \rightarrow 0$ in the usual sense, (σ, s) approaches both π_σ^\pm as limit points in \hat{G}_r . Thus we may write $\hat{G}_r = (\bigcup_{\sigma \in R} B'_\sigma) \cup B_\theta$.

Let I_θ denote the ideal in $C^*_\rho(G)$ with $\hat{I}_\theta = B_\theta$ and I_σ denote the ideal in $C^*_\rho(G)$ with $\hat{I}_\sigma = B'_\sigma, \sigma \in R$. Let \mathfrak{Q} be as in [8, Volume II, p. 50]. Then \mathfrak{Q} is also a dense selfadjoint subalgebra of $C^*_\rho(G)$ with each element boundedly represented in \hat{G}_r . Since each B_θ and $B'_\sigma, \sigma \in R$, is both open and closed in \hat{G}_r , each $I_\sigma, \sigma \in R \cup \{\theta\}$, is a direct summand of $C^*_\rho(G)$. So for $\sigma \in R \cup$

$\{\theta\}$ we may let \mathcal{Q}_σ denote the canonical image of \mathcal{Q} in I_σ . Then \mathcal{Q}_σ is a dense selfadjoint subalgebra of I_σ having the property that each of its elements is boundedly represented in \hat{I}_σ . We now use the extension theory of Delaroché to give concrete descriptions of these ideals and then prove that $C^*_\rho(G)$ is isomorphic to the restricted product [2, 1.9.14] of these ideals.

PROPOSITION 1. (i) *Let $\sigma \in R$. Then I_σ is isomorphic to the C^* -algebra of pairs*

$$(m, (c_1, c_2)) \in C^b(B_\sigma, \mathfrak{K}(H)) \times (\mathfrak{K}(H) \oplus \mathfrak{K}(H))$$

such that $\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} m(\sigma, t) = 0$ and $\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} m(\sigma, t) = (c_1, c_2)$.

(ii) I_θ is isomorphic to $C^0(B_\theta, \mathfrak{K}(H))$.

PROOFS. (i) For $\sigma \in R$, let J_σ be the ideal of I_σ with $\hat{J}_\sigma = B_\sigma$. From [8, Volume II, p. 50] it follows that J_σ is a C^* -algebra with continuous trace [2, 4.5.2]. Since $H^3(B_\sigma, \mathbf{Z}) = 0$, it follows from [2, 10.9.6] that J_σ is isomorphic to $C^0(B_\sigma, \mathfrak{K}(H))$. Now I_σ is isomorphic to an extension of $C^0(B_\sigma, \mathfrak{K}(H))$ by $\mathfrak{K}(H) \oplus \mathfrak{K}(H)$, in fact, using [1, Theorem VI.3.8], one can concretely describe I_σ as above once the positive integers m and n are determined in the equation

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \text{tr } \pi(\sigma, t)(f) = m \text{tr } \pi_\sigma^+(f) + n \text{tr } \pi_\sigma^-(f), \quad f \in \mathcal{Q}_\sigma.$$

However, the results of [8, Volume II, p. 50] show that $m = n = 1$ and so (i) follows.

(ii) Since \hat{I}_θ is Hausdorff and $H^3(I_\theta, \mathbf{Z}) = 0$, (ii) follows from [2, 10.9.6] since [8, Volume II, pp. 50, 422] shows that I_θ is a C^* -algebra with continuous trace.

PROPOSITION 2. *Let $\sigma \in R$. Then I_σ is isomorphic to the subalgebra D of functions in $C^0(\bar{B}_\sigma, \mathfrak{K}(H))$ which reduce at $(\sigma, 0)$ by $H \oplus H$.*

PROOF. For $f \in D$, the pair $(m, (c_1, c_2))$ where $m(\sigma, t) = f(\sigma, t)$ for $t \in (0, \infty)$ and $(c_1, c_2) = f(\sigma, 0)$ is clearly in I_σ . Since the mapping $f \mapsto (m, (c_1, c_2))$ is an isomorphism of D onto I_σ , the proposition follows.

LEMMA 1. *Let \mathfrak{a} be a C^* -algebra without identity. If $\hat{\mathfrak{a}} = \bigcup_1^\infty X_n$ where the X_n are disjoint nonempty open subsets of $\hat{\mathfrak{a}}$, then \mathfrak{a} is isomorphic to the restricted product B of the ideals I_n , where $\hat{I}_n = X_n$.*

PROOF. Let $C = \bigcup_{k=1}^\infty \bigoplus_{n=1}^k I_n$ and consider the ideal $J = \bar{C}$ of \mathfrak{a} . It is easy to see that for any $\pi \in \hat{\mathfrak{a}}$, $\pi(J) \neq 0$. Thus $J = \mathfrak{a}$ by [2, 3.2.2]. We now map C onto a dense subset of B in the obvious way. Since this mapping is an isometry, it extends to an isomorphism of \mathfrak{a} onto B .

THEOREM 1. $C^*_\rho(G)$ is isomorphic to the restricted product of the C^* -algebras I_σ , $\sigma \in R \cup \{\theta\}$.

PROOF. Since $\widehat{C^*_\rho(G)} = \hat{G}_r = (\bigcup_{\sigma \in R} B'_\sigma) \cup B_\theta$, this is immediate from Lemma 1.

THEOREM 2. $C_p^*(G)$ is isomorphic to the subalgebra of $C^0(\mathcal{Q}_P \cup \hat{G}_d, \mathfrak{K}(H))$ of functions which reduce at the points of $\mathcal{Q}_P - \hat{G}_P$ by $H \oplus H$. In particular, when $\check{G}_P = \emptyset$, $C_p^*(G)$ is isomorphic to $C^0(\hat{G}_r, \mathfrak{K}(H))$.

PROOF. By Theorem 1 we have that $C_p^*(G)$ is isomorphic to the restricted product P of the ideals I_σ , $\sigma \in R \cup \{\theta\}$ whose structures are given by Propositions 1(ii) and 2. For $f = \{f_\sigma\}$ in P we define the function F on $\mathcal{Q}_P \cup \hat{G}_d = (\cup_{\sigma \in R} \bar{B}_\sigma) \cup B_\theta$ by $F(v) = f_\sigma(v)$ if $v \in \bar{B}_\sigma$, $\sigma \in R$, and $F(v) = f_\theta(v)$ if $v \in B_\theta$. Then F is easily seen to be a norm-continuous bounded function on the Hausdorff space $\mathcal{Q}_P \cup \hat{G}_d$ for which $\|F(t)\|$ vanishes at infinity and $F(\sigma, 0) = f_\sigma(0, 0) = (c_1(\sigma), c_2(\sigma))$ for $\sigma \in R$. Theorem 2 now follows since the mapping $f \mapsto F$ is an isomorphism of P onto the above subalgebra.

4. Some examples. A. If $G = \text{Spin}(2n + 1, 1)$ for $n \geq 1$, then $\check{G}_P = \emptyset$ (see [5] or [7]). Since $\hat{G}_d = \emptyset$, we have $\hat{G}_r = \hat{G}_P$ is Hausdorff and

$$C_p^*(G) \approx C^0(\hat{G}_r, \mathfrak{K}(H)).$$

B. For $G = \text{SL}(2, \mathbf{R})$, $M = \{\pm e\}$ and we may take $\hat{M} = \{0, 1\}$ with $R = \{1\}$ and $I = \{0\}$. Thus we may identify \hat{G}_r with the following subset of \mathbf{R}^2 : \hat{G}_P consists of the two fibres $\{(0, s) : s \geq 0\}$ and $\{(1, s) : s > 0\}$; \check{G}_P is a pair of points at $(1, -\frac{1}{2})$; and \hat{G}_d consists of the infinite collection of pairs of points at $(-1, -n)$, $n = 1, \frac{3}{2}, 2, \dots$. The hull-kernel topology on \hat{G}_r is then the relative topology \hat{G}_r obtains as a subset of \mathbf{R}^2 with the one exception that as $(1, s) \rightarrow (1, 0)$ in the usual sense, $(1, s)$ approaches the pair of points at $(1, -\frac{1}{2})$ as limit points. To describe $C_p^*(G)$ we let $X = \{(0, s) : s \geq 0\} \cup \{(1, s) : s > 0\} \cup \hat{G}_d$ with the relative topology of \mathbf{R}^2 . $C_p^*(G)$ is then isomorphic to the subalgebra of $C^0(X, \mathfrak{K}(H))$ consisting of functions which reduce at $(1, 0)$ by $H \oplus H$.

C. For $G = \text{Spin}(4, 1)$, $M = \text{Spin}(3) \approx \text{SU}(2)$ and we may parameterize \hat{M} by nonnegative half-integers with $R = \{\frac{1}{2}, \frac{3}{2}, \dots\}$, $I = \{0, 1, 2, \dots\}$. Using the results of Dixmier [3], we may parameterize \hat{G}_d by pairs of points at $(n, -q)$ where $n = 1, \frac{3}{2}, 2, \dots$ and $q = n, n - 1, \dots, \frac{3}{2}$ or 1. Thus \hat{G}_r can be identified with the following subset of \mathbf{R}^2 : \hat{G}_P is the collection of fibres $\{(n, s) : s \geq 0 \text{ if } n \in I \text{ and } s > 0 \text{ if } n \in R\}$; \check{G}_P is the infinite collection of pairs of points at $(n, -\frac{1}{2})$, $n \in R$; and \hat{G}_d consists of the infinite collection of pairs of points at $(n, -q)$, $n = 1, \frac{3}{2}, \dots$ and $q = n, n - 1, \dots, \frac{3}{2}$ or 1. Since $\check{G}_P \neq \emptyset$, \hat{G}_r is not Hausdorff. To describe $C_p^*(G)$ we let $X = \cup_{n \in R \cup I} \{(n, s) : s \geq 0\} \cup \hat{G}_d$ with the relative topology of \mathbf{R}^2 . Then $C_p^*(G)$ is isomorphic to the subalgebra of $C^0(X, \mathfrak{K}(H))$ consisting of functions which reduce at the points $(n, 0)$, $n \in R$, by $H \oplus H$.

D. Let $G = \text{SO}_e(n, 1)$, $n \geq 2$, and G' be the two-fold covering of G —so $G' = \text{SL}(2, \mathbf{R})$ for $n = 2$ and $G' = \text{Spin}(n, 1)$ for $n \geq 3$. G' then satisfies the hypotheses of this paper. From [5] we know that even though G' may have reducible principal series (iff n is even), G does not. Since $\hat{G}_r \subseteq \hat{G}'_r$ has the relative hull-kernel topology, we see that \hat{G}_r is Hausdorff [for example, if

$n = 2$ and D denotes the subset of \hat{G}_d (in B) consisting of pairs of points at $(-1, -n)$, $n = 1, 2, \dots$, then $\hat{G}_r = \{(0, s): s \geq 0\} \cup D$, while if $n = 4$ and D denotes the subset of \hat{G}_d (in C) of pairs of points at $(n, -q)$, $n \in I$, then $\hat{G}_r = \cup_{n \in I} \{(n, s): s \geq 0\} \cup D$. Thus it follows, as in the proof of Proposition 1(ii), that $C_\rho^*(G) \approx C^0(\hat{G}_r, \mathfrak{K}(H))$.

5. **A remark on $C_0(\hat{G})$.** When G is a locally compact abelian group, it is common to denote the collection of continuous functions on the dual group \hat{G} which vanish at infinity by $C_0(\hat{G})$. In a recent paper [6], R. Lipsman defined an analogue of this space for separable locally compact unimodular type I groups as follows: letting dg denote Haar measure on G ,

$$\mathfrak{F}f(\pi) = \hat{f}(\pi) = \int f(g)\pi(g) dg$$

be the Fourier-transform of $f \in L_1(G)$, $\|\hat{f}(\pi)\|$ the operator norm of $\hat{f}(\pi)$, $\|\hat{f}\|_\infty = \text{ess sup}_{\pi \in \hat{G}} \|\hat{f}(\pi)\|$ (with respect to Plancherel measure on \hat{G}), and $A(\hat{G}) = \mathfrak{F}(L_1(G))$, then $C_0(\hat{G})$ is defined to be the closure of the algebra $A(\hat{G})$ with respect to the norm $\|\cdot\|_\infty$. The question is then raised as to determining an intrinsic characterization of $C_0(\hat{G})$. Since $C_0(\hat{G})$ is easily seen to be isomorphic to $C_\rho^*(G)$ (see [6]), the results of this paper seem to indicate that this will be a difficult problem and that the hull-kernel topology on the spectrum of $C_\rho^*(G)$, \hat{G}_r , will play a key role in determining an intrinsic characterization of $C_0(\hat{G})$. In fact, Theorem 2 shows that when G is as in the introduction of this paper, an intrinsic characterization of $C_0(\hat{G})$ must take the non-Hausdorff nature of \hat{G}_r into consideration.

We also remark that for amenable groups, $C_0(\hat{G}) \approx C_\rho^*(G) \approx C^*(G)$ (the group C^* -algebra of G), and although it is quite easy to describe $C_0(\hat{G})$ for abelian or compact groups, we know of no other separable unimodular type I amenable group for which the structure of $C^*(G)$ has been determined.

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