

Counting Irreducible Representations of General Linear Groups and Unitary Groups

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- Introduce the counting method developed by Dan Barbasch, Jia-Jun Ma, Binyong Sun, and Chen-Bo Zhu in their paper: Special unipotent representations of real classical groups: Counting and reduction. J. Eur. Math. Soc. (2025).
- Show it's application in counting the irreducible representations of general linear groups and unitary groups.

Background

- G : connected reductive algebraic group defined over \mathbb{R} ;
- G is a real Lie group together with a Lie group homomorphism $\iota : G \rightarrow G(\mathbb{R})$ with open image and finite kernel;
- $\mathfrak{g}, \mathfrak{g}_0$ are Lie algebras of $G(\mathbb{C}), G$;
- ${}^a\mathfrak{h}$: the abstract Cartan subalgebra of \mathfrak{g} , with root lattice $Q_{\mathfrak{g}}$, weight group $Q^{\mathfrak{g}}$, and analytic weight lattice Q_{ι} ($Q_{\mathfrak{g}} \subseteq Q_{\iota} \subseteq Q^{\mathfrak{g}} \subseteq {}^a\mathfrak{h}^*$);
- W : the abstract Weyl group of \mathfrak{g} act on ${}^a\mathfrak{h}$;
- $\text{Rep}(G)$: the category of Casselman-Wallach representations of G ;
- $\text{Irr}(G)$: set of isomorphism classes of irreducible objects in $\text{Rep}(G)$.

- There is a partition of $\text{Irr}(G)$ with respect to infinitesimal characters:

$$\text{Irr}(G) = \bigsqcup_{\lambda \in \mathcal{W} \setminus \mathfrak{h}^*} \text{Irr}_\lambda(G),$$

according to work of Harish-Chandra, each set $\text{Irr}_\lambda(G)$ is finite;

- According to complex associated variety (or called annihilator variety, which is always the closure of a unique nilpotent orbits by results of [Borho, Brylinski], [Joseph]), there is a further partition of $\text{Irr}_\lambda(G)$:

$$\text{Irr}_\lambda(G) = \bigsqcup_{\mathcal{O} \in G(\mathbb{C}) \setminus \text{Nil}(\mathfrak{g})} \text{Irr}_\lambda(G; \mathcal{O}).$$

Goal: Describe the size of each set $\text{Irr}_\lambda(G; \mathcal{O})$ in terms of combinatorial data.

Theorem (Barbasch, Ma, Sun, Zhu)

$$\#(\mathrm{Irr}_\nu(G; \mathcal{O})) \leq \sum_{\sigma \in \mathrm{Irr}(W(\Lambda); \mathcal{O})} [1_{W_\nu} : \sigma] \cdot [\sigma : \mathrm{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))],$$

where 1_{W_ν} denotes the trivial representation of the stabilizer W_ν of ν in W . The equality holds if the Coxeter group $W(\Lambda)$ has no simple factor of type F_4 , E_6 , E_7 , or E_8 , and G is linear or isomorphic to a real metaplectic group.

In their paper, they use this formula to count the number of special unipotent representations in order to construct them via theta correspondence.

Double Cells, Special Representations

- Springer correspondence: $\sigma \in \text{Irr}(W) \rightsquigarrow (\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{L})$;
- For the Weyl group W , Lusztig define a class of special representations: special nilpotent orbit $\mathcal{O} \in \text{Nil}(\mathfrak{g}) \rightsquigarrow \sigma_{\mathcal{O}}$ (via Springer correspondence).
- Lusztig also defined an equivalence relation on $\text{Irr}(W)$, each equivalence is called a double cell, $\text{Irr}^{sp}(W) \leftrightarrow \{\text{double cells}\}$.
- There is a j -induction (also called the truncated induction) operation: $j_{W(\Lambda)}^W : \{\text{special representations } W(\Lambda)\} \rightarrow \{\text{Springer representations of } W\}$.

Definition

For a nilpotent orbit $\mathcal{O} \in \text{Nil}(\mathfrak{g})$.

- $\text{Irr}^{\text{sp}}(W(\Lambda); \mathcal{O}) = \{\sigma \in \text{Irr}(W(\Lambda)) \mid \sigma \text{ is special, } j_{W(\Lambda)}^W(\sigma) = \sigma_{\mathcal{O}}\};$
- $\text{Irr}(W(\Lambda); \mathcal{O}) = \{\sigma \in \text{Irr}(W(\Lambda)) \mid \text{exist } \sigma_0 \in \text{Irr}^{\text{sp}}(W(\Lambda); \mathcal{O}), \sigma \approx \sigma_0, \}$

$\text{Irr}(W(\Lambda); \mathcal{O})$ is a union of several double cells.

Coherent Continuation Representation

$\mathcal{R}_{\text{hol}}(G(\mathbb{C}))$: Grothendieck ring of finite-dimensional holomorphic representations of $G(\mathbb{C})$.

$\mathcal{K}(G)$: Grothendieck group of $\text{Rep}(G)$ which has a $\mathcal{R}_{\text{hol}}(G(\mathbb{C}))$ module structure via tensor product.

Coherent family

Let $\Lambda = \nu + Q_{\ell} \subseteq {}^a\mathfrak{h}^*$, a Λ -coherent family is a map

$$\Phi : \Lambda \rightarrow \mathcal{K}(G),$$

such that:

- for any $\nu \in \Lambda$, $\Phi(\nu) \in \mathcal{K}_{\nu}(G)$;
- for any $F \in \mathcal{R}_{\text{hol}}(G(\mathbb{C}))$ and $\nu \in \Lambda$,
 $F \cdot (\Phi(\nu)) = \sum_{\mu \in \Delta(F)} \Phi(\nu + \mu)$ (where $\Delta(F)$ is the set of weights of F counted multiplicity).

Let $W(\Lambda) \subseteq W$ denote the integral Weyl group with respect to Λ .

Coherent continuation representation

Let $\text{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))$ denote the complex vector space of all coherent families on Λ . It is a representation of $W(\Lambda)$ under the action

$$(w \cdot \Psi)(\nu) = \Psi(w^{-1}\nu),$$

for any $w \in W(\Lambda)$, $\Psi \in \text{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))$, $\nu \in \Lambda$.

For any $\nu \in \Lambda$ we have the evaluation map

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{ev} : & \text{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G)) & \longrightarrow \mathcal{K}_\nu \\ & \Psi & \longmapsto \Psi(\nu) \end{array}$$

Theorem (Schmid, Zuckerman)

ev is surjective for each $\nu \in \Lambda$, and bijective when ν is regular.

Theorem(Vogan's green book)

Suppose $\nu \in {}^a\mathfrak{h}^*$ dominant, $M \in \mathcal{K}_\nu(G)$ is an irreducible representation. Then there exist a unique coherent family $\overline{\Psi}$ characterised by the following properties:

- $\overline{\Psi}(\nu) = M$;
- If μ is dominant, then $\overline{\Psi}(\mu)$ is irreducible or zero.

There is a basis $\mathcal{B} = \{\overline{\Psi}_i\}$ of $\text{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))$ such that for any regular dominant μ , $\overline{\Psi}_i(\mu)$ is an irreducible representation with infinitesimal character ν .

We call $(\text{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G)), \mathcal{B})$ a **basal representation**.

We can also define basal subrepresentations.

- For any subset \mathcal{S} of $\text{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))$, denote by $\langle \mathcal{S} \rangle$ the minimal basal subrepresentation containing \mathcal{S} .
- Define an equivalence relation on \mathcal{B} by: $\overline{\Psi_i} \approx \overline{\Psi_j}$ if and only if $\langle \overline{\Psi_i} \rangle = \langle \overline{\Psi_j} \rangle$.
- The equivalence classes of \mathcal{B} with respect to this relation are called Harish-Chandra cells.

Cell representations

Let \mathcal{C} be a cell in \mathcal{B} and put $\overline{\mathcal{C}} = \langle \mathcal{C} \rangle \cap \mathcal{B}$. Define the cell representation attached to \mathcal{C} by

$$\text{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))(\mathcal{C}) := \langle \overline{\mathcal{C}} \rangle / \langle \overline{\mathcal{C}} \setminus \mathcal{C} \rangle$$

- There is also a coherent continuation theory ($\text{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(\mathfrak{g}, \mathfrak{b}))$) for highest weight representations of complex Lie algebra \mathfrak{g} , similarly there is a notion of (two-side) Kazhdan-Lusztig cells, which is 1 – 1 correspondence with special representations in $\text{Irr}(W(\Lambda))$.
- Every Harish-Chandra cell corresponds to a Kazhdan-Lusztig cell (via comparing their annihilator ideals), so we have a map $\{\text{Harish} - \text{Chandra cells}\} \rightarrow \text{Irr}^{sp}(W(\Lambda)), \mathcal{C} \mapsto \sigma_{\mathcal{C}}$.
- In fact every representation in a Harish-Chandra cell \mathcal{C} has the complex associated variety $\overline{\mathcal{O}_{\mathcal{C}}}$, here $\mathcal{O}_{\mathcal{C}}$ is the nilpotent orbit corresponds to $j_{W(\Lambda)}^W \sigma_{\mathcal{C}}$.

Hypothesis

The set $\{\sigma \in \text{Irr}(W(\Lambda)) \mid \sigma \text{ occurs in } \text{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))(\mathcal{C})\}$ is contained in the double cell containing the special representation $\sigma_{\mathcal{C}}$.

BMSZ's Proof

BMSZ proved that this hypothesis holds under some technical assumptions ($W(\Lambda)$ has no simple factor of type F_4 , E_6 , E_7 , or E_8 , and G is linear or isomorphic to a real metaplectic group.).

$$\begin{aligned}\sharp(\mathrm{Irr}_\nu(G)) &= \dim \mathcal{K}_\nu(G) \stackrel{\text{Vogan}}{=} \dim \mathrm{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))_{W_\nu} \\ &= [1_{W_\nu} : \mathrm{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))] \\ &= \sum_{\sigma \in \mathrm{Irr}(W(\Lambda))} [1_{W_\nu} : \sigma] \cdot [\sigma : \mathrm{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))],\end{aligned}$$

If S is a Zariski closed $G(\mathbb{C})$ -stable subset of $\mathrm{Nil}(\mathfrak{g})$, then

$$\begin{aligned}\sharp(\mathrm{Irr}_{\nu,S}(G)) &= \sum_{\sigma \in \mathrm{Irr}(W(\Lambda))} [1_{W_\nu} : \sigma] \cdot [\sigma : \mathrm{Coh}_{\Lambda,S}(\mathcal{K}(G))] \\ &\stackrel{\text{Hypothesis}}{=} \sum_{\sigma \in \mathrm{Irr}_S(W(\Lambda))} [1_{W_\nu} : \sigma] \cdot [\sigma : \mathrm{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(G))].\end{aligned}$$

Classical Groups Considered

Label \star	Classical Lie Group G	Complex Lie Group $G(\mathbb{C})$
$A^{\mathbb{R}}$	$GL_n(\mathbb{R})$	$GL_n(\mathbb{C})$
$A^{\mathbb{H}}$	$GL_{\frac{n}{2}}(\mathbb{H})$ (n is even)	$GL_n(\mathbb{C})$
$A^{\mathbb{C}}$	$GL_n(\mathbb{C})$	$GL_n(\mathbb{C}) \times GL_n(\mathbb{C})$
A	$U(p, q)$	$GL_n(\mathbb{C})$ ($n = p + q$)

Identification:

$$a_{\mathfrak{h}^{\star}} = \begin{cases} = \mathbb{C}^n, & \text{if } \star \in \{A^{\mathbb{R}}, A^{\mathbb{H}}, A\}; \\ = \mathbb{C}^n \times \mathbb{C}^n, & \text{if } \star = A^{\mathbb{C}}. \end{cases}$$

Painted Young Diagram (type $A^{\mathbb{R}}$)

A painting on a Young diagram ι of type $A^{\mathbb{R}}$ is a map (we place a symbol in each box)

$$\mathcal{P} : \text{Box}(\iota) \rightarrow \{\bullet, c, d\}$$

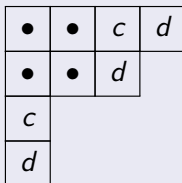
with the following properties

- if we remove the boxes painted with $\{d\}$, $\{c, d\}$, the remainder still constitutes a Young diagram;
- every column of ι has at most one box painted with c , and has at most one box painted with d ;
- every row of ι has an even number of boxes painted with \bullet .

A painted Young diagram is a pair (ι, \mathcal{P}) consisting of a Young diagram ι and a painting \mathcal{P} on ι . Denote by $P_{A^{\mathbb{R}}}(\iota)$ the set of paintings on ι of type $A^{\mathbb{R}}$.

Example

The following represents a painted Young diagram.



Each of the followings does not represent a painted Young diagram.



Assigned Young Diagram

For a Young diagram ι , and a partition $[d_1, \dots, d_k]$ of $|\iota|$. An assignment of type $[d_1, d_2, \dots, d_N]$ on ι is a map

$$Q : \text{Box}(\iota) \rightarrow \{1, 2, \dots, N\}$$

with the following properties

- for each $i \in \{1, 2, \dots, N\}$, the preimage $P^{-1}(i)$ has exactly d_i elements;
- for each $1 \leq n \leq N$, if we remove the boxes assigned with $\{N+1, \dots, |\iota|\}$, the reminder still constitutes a Young diagram;
- each positive integer occurs at most once in each column.

An assigned Young diagram of type $[d_1, d_2, \dots, d_N]$ is a pair (ι, Q) consisting of a Young diagram ι and an assignment Q of type $[d_1, d_2, \dots, d_N]$ on ι . Denote by $A_{[d_1, d_2, \dots, d_N]}(\iota)$ the set of all assignments on ι of type $[d_1, d_2, \dots, d_N]$.

Counting Result for $GL_n(\mathbb{R})$, The Integral Case

$G = GL_n(\mathbb{R})$ ($n \in \mathbb{N}$). \mathcal{O} is a nilpotent orbits in \mathfrak{g} , denote the corresponding Young diagram by $\iota(\mathcal{O})$.

If $\nu \in {}^a\mathfrak{h}^* = \mathbb{C}^n$ is integral, its coordinates can be permuted such that

$$\nu = (\underbrace{\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_1}_{d_1}, \underbrace{\lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_2}_{d_2}, \dots, \underbrace{\lambda_k, \dots, \lambda_k}_{d_k}) \in \mathbb{C}^n,$$

where $[d_1, d_2, \dots, d_k]$ is a partition of n , and the $\lambda_i \in \mathbb{C}$ satisfy the condition $\lambda_i - \lambda_j \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0\}$ for any $i \neq j$.

Theorem

$$\sharp(\text{Irr}_\nu(GL_n(\mathbb{R}); \mathcal{O})) = \sharp(P_{A^\mathbb{R}}(\iota(\mathcal{O}))) \cdot \sharp(A_{[d_1, \dots, d_k]}(\iota(\mathcal{O}))).$$

Sketch of the Calculation

Coherent continuation representations can be explicitly computed via the Hecke algebra module structure described by Lusztig and Vogan.

$$\mathrm{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{R}))) = \bigoplus_{2r+i \leq n} \mathrm{Ind}_{W_r \times S_i \times S_{n-2r-i}}^{S_n} \epsilon \otimes 1 \otimes 1.$$

The computation makes essential use of **Pieri's rule and Frobenius reciprocity**.

$$\begin{aligned} \sharp(\mathrm{Irr}_\nu(\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{R}); \mathcal{O})) &= [1_{W_\nu} : \sigma_{\mathcal{O}}] \cdot [\sigma_{\mathcal{O}} : \mathrm{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{R})))] \\ &= [\sigma_{\mathcal{O}} : \mathrm{Ind}_{W_\nu}^W 1_{W_\nu}] \cdot [\sigma_{\mathcal{O}} : \mathrm{Coh}_\Lambda(\mathcal{K}(\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{R})))] \\ &= \sharp(A_{[d_1, \dots, d_k]}(\iota(\mathcal{O}))) \cdot \sharp(P_{A^\mathbb{R}}(\iota(\mathcal{O}))). \end{aligned}$$

Example: Minimal Representations

Let $\nu \in {}^a\mathfrak{h}^*$ be a regular integral infinitesimal character, and let \mathcal{O}_{\min} denote the minimal nilpotent orbit.

There are $n - 1$ assignments of type $\underbrace{[1, 1, \dots, 1]}_n$ on it, given by

1
2
\vdots
i
$i+2$
\vdots
n

 \quad $i+1$ for $1 \leq i \leq n - 1$.

Since there are 4 distinct paintings on each of the $n - 1$ assignments, we obtain exactly **4(n-1) minimal representations** with the fixed infinitesimal character ν .

Non-integral Case

Theorem

For an arbitrary $\nu \in {}^a\mathfrak{h}^*$, its coordinates can be permuted such that

$$\nu = (\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_r) \in \mathbb{C}^n,$$

$$\lambda_i = (\underbrace{\lambda_{i,1}, \dots, \lambda_{i,1}}_{d_{i,1}}, \dots, \underbrace{\lambda_{i,k_i}, \dots, \lambda_{i,k_i}}_{d_{i,k_i}}) \in \mathbb{C}^{e_i} \quad (e_i \geq 1),$$

where each λ_i is integral but $(\lambda_i, \lambda_j) \in \mathbb{C}^{e_i+e_j}$ is not integral for any $i \neq j$, $[d_{i,1}, \dots, d_{i,k_i}]$ is a partition of e_i , and the condition $\lambda_{i,p} - \lambda_{i,q} \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0\}$ holds for any $p \neq q$. Then

$$\#(\text{Irr}_\nu(G; \mathcal{O})) = \sum_{\substack{(\iota_1, \dots, \iota_r) \in \text{YD}_{e_1} \times \dots \times \text{YD}_{e_r} \\ \iota_1 \sqcup^r \iota_2 \dots \sqcup^r \iota_r = \iota(\mathcal{O})}} \prod_{i=1}^r \#(\text{Irr}_{\lambda_i}(\text{GL}_{e_i}(\mathbb{R}); \mathcal{O}_{\iota_i})).$$

Key Observation

There are natural isomorphism of $W(\Lambda)$ -representations:

$$\mathrm{Coh}_{\Lambda_1}(\mathcal{K}(\mathrm{GL}_{e_1}(\mathbb{R}))) \otimes \cdots \otimes \mathrm{Coh}_{\Lambda_r}(\mathcal{K}(\mathrm{GL}_{e_r}(\mathbb{R}))) \rightarrow \mathrm{Coh}_{\Lambda}(\mathcal{K}(\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{R})))$$
$$\overline{\Psi}_1 \otimes \cdots \otimes \overline{\Psi}_r \mapsto \overline{\Psi}$$

where $\overline{\Psi}(\mu) = \mathrm{Ind}_{\mathcal{P}}^{\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{R})} \overline{\Psi}_1(\mu) \otimes \cdots \otimes \overline{\Psi}_r(\mu)$ is still irreducible for regular dominant $\mu \in {}^a\mathfrak{h}^*$.

Painted Young Diagram (type A)

A painting on a Young diagram ι of type A is a map (we place a symbol in each box)

$$\mathcal{P} : \text{Box}(\iota) \rightarrow \{\bullet, s, r\}$$

with the following properties

- if we remove the boxes painted with $\{s\}, \{s, r\}$, the remainder still constitutes a Young diagram;
- every row of ι has at most one box painted with c , and has at most one box painted with d ;
- every row of ι has an even number of boxes painted with \bullet .

A painted Young diagram is a pair (ι, \mathcal{P}) consisting of a Young diagram ι and a painting \mathcal{P} on ι . Denote by $P_A(\iota)$ the set of paintings on ι of type A.

Let ι be a Young diagram and \mathcal{P} is a painting on ι of type A .
 Define the signature of \mathcal{P} to be the pair of non-negative integers

$$(p_{\mathcal{P}}, q_{\mathcal{P}}) := \left(\frac{\sharp(\mathcal{P}^{-1}(\bullet))}{2} + \sharp(\mathcal{P}^{-1}(s)), \frac{\sharp(\mathcal{P}^{-1}(\bullet))}{2} + \sharp(\mathcal{P}^{-1}(r)) \right),$$

for every $p, q \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $p + q = |\iota|$, we define

$$P_A^{p,q}(\iota) := \{\mathcal{P} \in P_A(\iota) \mid (p_{\mathcal{P}}, q_{\mathcal{P}}) = (p, q)\}.$$

Counting Result for $U(p, q)$, The Integral Case

$G = U(p, q)$ ($p, q \in \mathbb{N}$). \mathcal{O} is a nilpotent orbit in \mathfrak{g} , denote the corresponding Young diagram by $\iota(\mathcal{O})$.

If $\nu \in {}^a\mathfrak{h}^* = \mathbb{C}^n$ ($n = p + q$) is integral, that is, the differences of its coordinates are integral, then its coordinates can be permuted such that

$$\nu = (\underbrace{\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_1}_{d_1}, \underbrace{\lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_2}_{d_2}, \dots, \underbrace{\lambda_k, \dots, \lambda_k}_{d_k}) \in \mathbb{C}^n,$$

where $[d_1, d_2, \dots, d_k]$ is a partition of n , and the $\lambda_i \in \mathbb{C}$ satisfy the condition $\lambda_i - \lambda_j \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0\}$ for any $i \neq j$.

Theorem

If $\lambda_1 \in \frac{n-1}{2} + \mathbb{Z}$, then

$$\sharp(\text{Irr}_\nu(\mathcal{U}(p, q); \mathcal{O})) = \sharp(P_A^{p,q}(\iota(\mathcal{O}))) \cdot \sharp(A_{[d_1, \dots, d_k]}(\iota(\mathcal{O}))) .$$

If $\lambda_1 \in \frac{n}{2} + \mathbb{Z}$, then

$$\sharp(\text{Irr}_\nu(\mathcal{U}(p, q); \mathcal{O})) = \sharp(A_{[d_1, \dots, d_k]}(\iota(\mathcal{O}))) \delta_{p,q} .$$

Otherwise, $\sharp(\text{Irr}_\nu(\mathcal{U}(p, q); \mathcal{O})) = 0$.

Example: Generic Representations

Let $G = \mathrm{U}(n, n)$, and let $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{prin}}$ denote the principal nilpotent orbit.

If the coordinates of ν are all **half-integers**, there is only one assignment on $\iota(\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{prin}})$, and exactly two paintings:



Hence, there are exactly **2 generic representations** with this infinitesimal character.

If the coordinates of ν are all **integers**, then there is only one assignment and only one painting. Therefore, there is exactly **1 generic representation** with this infinitesimal character.

Thank
you