

1 On Theorem by Moore about Vanishing Matrix  
2 Coefficients

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4 **Abstract**

5 In this paper we'll showcase a theorem in ergodic theory by R. Howe and  
6 C. Moore [1], as it is presented in the book by R. Zimmer in his book "*Ergodic*  
7 *Theory and Semisimple Groups*" [6] On the way there, we'll touch many  
8 different fields, from measure theory, over functional analysis, representation  
9 theory and of course ergodic theory.

10	<b>Contents</b>	
11	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
12	question: when is an action ergodic? . . . . .	4
13	from book . . . . .	6
14	Definition . . . . .	6
15	<b>Definitions and Notation</b>	<b>7</b>
16	Measure Spaces . . . . .	7
17	Groups . . . . .	7
18	Group Actions . . . . .	7
19	Representations . . . . .	8
20	“direct difference” notation . . . . .	8
21	Ergodicity . . . . .	8
22	<b>The Direct Integral and Unitary Representations</b>	<b>10</b>
23	The Direct Integral . . . . .	10
24	Unitary Representations . . . . .	12
25	<b>Representation of <math>\mathbb{R}^n</math></b>	<b>12</b>
26	The Connection between Ergodicity and Unitary Representations . . . .	15
27	<b>Proof for <math>SL(2, \mathbb{R})</math></b>	<b>16</b>
28	Theorem for $P$ . . . . .	16
29	Theorem for $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ . . . . .	18
30	<b>Proof for <math>SL(n, \mathbb{R})</math></b>	<b>19</b>
31	<b>Proof for a general <math>G</math></b>	<b>22</b>
32	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>22</b>
33	<b>Auxilliary Statements</b>	<b>24</b>
34	<b>List of Theorems</b>	<b>24</b>
35	<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>24</b>
36	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>24</b>

37 This paper is based on the book “Ergodic Theory and semisimple Lie Groups” by  
38 Robert Zimmer [6], in particular the first two chapters, which contain the theorem  
39 itself (Theorem 2.2.20) and surrounding material concerning ergodic theory.

40 The techniques of the proof show a nice interplay between fields and their different  
41 approaches, while staying relatively simple. We assume the reader to have an  
42 undergraduate level understanding of the prerequisites in algebra and representation  
43 theory, but will state foundational information regardless, and provide references  
44 in all cases. We also take care to clarify notation before use.

45 The theorem, which we will state shortly, is historically at home in the development  
46 of ergodic theory, which in turn is a relatively new field of mathematics. The  
47 original definition of ergodicity was given in 1928 in a paper by P. Smith and G.  
48 Birkhoff on dynamical systems. The concept gained importance in 1931 when  
49 von Neumann and Birkhoff nearly simultaneously proved the mean and pointwise  
50 ergodic theorems. These may be regarded as the starting point of the subject.

51 The theory presented here is almost entirely due to a single mathematical lineage.  
52 The root of this lineage is G.D. Birkhoff, who, on one side was the (biological)  
53 father of G. Birkhoff, which in turn was the advisor of G. Mostow, known for his  
54 rigidity theory which was instrumental to G. Margulis’ rigidity and arithmeticity  
55 theorem. These theorems are a central part of Zimmer’s book, although we will  
56 not cover them. On the other side, G.D. Birkhoff was advisor to M.H. Stone who  
57 was advisor to Mackey, whose work on representations will feature prominently in  
58 the chapter on unitary representations. And Mackey was the advisor of R. Zimmer,  
59 the author of our main reference, as well as C.C. Moore, who, together with his  
60 student R. Howe, worked out the theorem we are talking about in this paper.

61 To give an extremely rough idea of the subject, ergodic theory concerns itself  
62 with (group) actions on some (measure) space describing long-term behavior of  
63 dynamical systems. The classical example comes from thermodynamics. Consider  
64 the motion of particles in an ideal gas. Ergodicity provides a framework for studying  
65 the common-sense notion that the particles would eventually mix completely (i.e.  
66 reach every possible configuration of the space), like smoke in an enclosed room  
67 would eventually fill the entire room completely.

68 The way this behavior is modelled is by a time evolution map  $T : X \rightarrow X$  on some  
69 phase space  $X$ . and ergodicity is expressed in the following way :

70 There is no true subset of  $X$ ,  $\emptyset \subsetneq A \subsetneq X$  that is also invariant with respect to  
71 some measure  $\mu$ . Equivalently, if  $A$  is invariant then either  $\mu(A) = 0$  ( $A$  is a null  
72 set) or  $\mu(A) = \mu(X)$  ( $A$  is dense in  $X$ ).

73 Mathematicians found purely mathematical interest in this behavior and began

74 studying it on its own, dropping the physical notion of configuration space and  
 75 time evolution and substituting the evolution map with group actions  $G : X \rightarrow X$ .  
 76 Notably using topological groups such as Lie groups, as we will do in this paper.

77 The main aim of the book by Zimmer is focused on two theorems by Mostow and  
 78 Margulis. The “arithmeticity theorem” and the “rigidity theorem”, which show  
 79 how Lie groups and lattices in them interact.

80 A lattice  $\Gamma$  in a locally compact topological group  $G$  is a discrete subgroup such  
 81 that the quotient  $G/\Gamma$  has finite measure. For example,  $\mathbb{Z}^n$  in  $\mathbb{R}^n$  is a lattice, as is  
 82  $SL(n, \mathbb{Z})$  in  $SL(n, \mathbb{R})$ . The rigidity and arithmeticity theorems state (very roughly)  
 83 that lattices determine the surrounding group and groups determine lattices. This  
 84 glosses over a tremendous amount of detail, but these theorems are not the focus  
 85 of this paper, so this shall suffice. They serve the purpose of motivating the study  
 86 of lattices in Lie groups.

## 87 Introduction

88 We should, at this point, introduce the theorem we would like to present.

89 In [6] it’s Theorem 2.2.20, originally from [1].

### Theorem 1 (Howe-Moore’s Ergodicity Theorem)

90 Let  $G_i$  be connected non-compact simple Lie groups,  $G = \prod G_i$  and  $\pi$  a unitary  
 91 representation of  $G$ . Then all matrix coefficients  $f(g) = \langle \pi(g)v, w \rangle$  vanish at  
 92 infinity. I.e.  $f(g) \rightarrow 0$  as  $g$  leaves compact subsets of  $G$ .

93 This theorem seems, at first glance, completely unrelated to anything mentioned  
 94 so far. That

95 To clarify some points, note that we have specified non-compact groups. This  
 96 allows us to talk about “infinity” at all. Next, what is an invariant vector? Simply,  
 97 for all  $g \in G$ , and a vector  $v$ , we have that  $\pi(g)v = v$ , or, that  $v$  is preserved by  
 98 any linear map given by the representation.

### 99 question: when is an action ergodic?

100 Instead of verifying ergodicity for any given action, space and measure individually,  
 101 can we find criteria for ergodicity that are easier to evaluate? The Moore’s theorem  
 102 sits in the middle of an argument that answers the following questions.

**Problem (When do closed subgroups act ergodically)**

103 If  $H_1, H_2 \subset G$  are closed subgroups in  $G$ , is the action  $H_1 \curvearrowright G/H_2$  ergodic?

**Problem (When do closed subgroups act ergodically)**

104 Let  $G$  be a semisimple Lie group and  $S$  an ergodic  $G$ -space. If  $H \subset G$  is a closed  
105 subgroup, when is  $H$  ergodic on  $S$ .

106 action, lattices in ss groups, asymptotic behavior in non-compact groups [1] Now  
107 that we have a concrete question, let us try to get our hands dirty on an example.  
108 We'll use the action of fractional linear transforms on the upper half plane, which  
109 is nice, because we can look at hyperbolic geometry and draw meaningful pictures  
110 of the maps and spaces involved. It'll bring intuition about the question and why  
111 one would care to answer the question.

112 I get the first map now. The action, let's name it for now,  $\alpha : SL(2, \mathbb{R}) \curvearrowright \mathbb{H} \rightarrow \mathbb{H}$ ,  
113 which acts by fractional linear transform. ## Lemma 1.  $K := SO(2, \mathbb{R})$  is the  
114 stabilizer of  $i \in \mathbb{H}$ . 2. therefore,  $G/K \cong AN$  with  $KAN \cong G$  being the Iwasawa  
115 decomp.

116 **proof** 1. from [4](Theorem 1.1.3) map to Klein disk; use Schwarz lemma; map  
117 back.

118 How does the second map work? Using the same fractional linear transform but  
119 we take a real value instead of a complex one. It is easy to visualize as a regular  
120 matrix product with  $\begin{pmatrix} x \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$  and projecting it to the projective line.

$$\begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} x \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} ax + b \\ cx + d \end{pmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} \frac{ax+b}{cx+d} \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

121 next we care about the behavior of a lattice  $\Gamma \subset G$ . If  $G$  acts transitively on a space  
122  $X$ , then there is an isomorphism of  $G$ -spaces  $G/G_x \rightarrow X$ , where  $G_x = \text{Stab}_G(x)$   
123 for  $x \in X$ , given by the map  $gG_x \mapsto gx$ . In the case of our example  $G = SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ ,  
124 and, as we've shown in the preceding lemma, we know the stabilizer of  $i$  to be  
125  $SO(2, \mathbb{R})$ . ## where we want to go We want to show that the action of  $\Gamma$  on  $\bar{\mathbb{R}}$  is  
126 ergodic

**Definition 1.1**

Ergodicity For a group  $G$ , a measurable separable space  $S$ , and a  $G$ -invariant measure  $\mu$ . An action is called ergodic if all  $G$ -invariant subsets  $A \subset S$  are either

null or conull. Which means

$$\forall g \in G : gA = A \quad \Rightarrow \quad \mu(A) = 0 \text{ or } \mu(S \setminus A) = 0$$

127 **from book**

128 [unoriginal] To see why ergodicity is relevant, and in fact to say a word about  
 129 what it is, let us consider a classical example. Let  $G = SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ , and let  $X$  be the  
 130 upper half plane,  $X = \{z \in \mathbb{C} | \text{Im}(z) > 0\}$ . As is well known[TODO],  $G$  acts on  $X$   
 131 via fractional linear transformations, i.e.,

$$g \cdot z = \frac{(az + b)}{(cz + d)} \quad \text{where } g = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}$$

132 Suppose now that  $\Gamma \subset G$  is a lattice, which we assume to be torsion free for  
 133 simplicity. Since the action of  $G$  on  $X$  allows an identification of  $X$  with  $G/K$ ,  
 134 where  $K = SO(2)$  (the stabilizer of  $i \in X$ ), and  $K$  is compact, it follows that the  
 135 action of  $\Gamma$  on  $X$  is properly discontinuous, and so  $\Gamma \backslash X$  will be a manifold, in  
 136 fact a finite volume Riemann surface. On the other hand, via the same fractional  
 137 linear formula,  $G$  acts on  $\bar{\mathbb{R}} = \mathbb{R} \cup \{\infty\}$ , and  $\bar{\mathbb{R}}$  can be identified with  $G/P$ , where  
 138  $P$  is the group of upper triangular matrices and the stabilizer of  $\infty \in \bar{\mathbb{R}}$ . Once  
 139 again, we can consider the action of  $\Gamma$  on  $\bar{\mathbb{R}}$ , but now the action will be very far  
 140 from being properly discontinuous. In fact, every  $\Gamma$ -orbit in  $\bar{\mathbb{R}}$  will be a (countable)  
 141 dense set. In particular, if we try taking the quotient  $\Gamma \backslash \bar{\mathbb{R}}$ , we obtain a space with  
 142 the trivial topology. On the other hand,  $\bar{\mathbb{R}}$  provides a natural compactification of  
 143  $X$ , and in fact  $\bar{\mathbb{R}}$  can be identified with asymptotic equivalence classes of geodesics  
 144 in  $X$ , where  $X$  has the essentially unique  $G$ -invariant metric. Thus, it is certainly  
 145 reasonable to expect the action of  $\Gamma$  on  $\bar{\mathbb{R}}$  to yield useful information. However,  
 146 a thorough understanding requires us to come to grips with actions in which the  
 147 orbits are very complicated (e.g. dense) sets. Ergodic theory is (in large part) the  
 148 study of complicated orbit structure in the presence of a measure. Not only are  
 149 there no non-constant  $\Gamma$ -invariant continuous real-valued functions on  $\bar{\mathbb{R}}$ , but the  
 150 same is true for measurable functions. This is embodied in the following definition.

## 151 **Definition**

### **Definition 1.2**

152 Suppose  $G$  acts on a measure space  $(S, \mu)$  so that the action map  $S \times G \rightarrow S$  is  
 153 measurable and  $\mu$  is quasi-invariant, i.e.,  $\mu(A) = 0$  if and only if  $\mu(Ag) = 0$ . The  
 154 action is called ergodic if  $A \subset S$  is measurable and  $G$ -invariant implies  $\mu(A) = 0$   
 155 or  $\mu(S \setminus A) = 0$ .

## Definitions and Notation

Now that we have stated the goal of the paper, let us immediately make a detour. We will state definitions and relevant theorems (without proof) in compact form with ample references so that a reader can catch up if necessary. The advanced reader can skip this section and move straight to the next topic without issue.

## Measure Spaces

A *measurable space* is a pair  $(X, \mathcal{B})$  where  $X$  is a set and  $\mathcal{B}$  is a  $\sigma$ -algebra of subsets of  $X$ . Elements of  $\mathcal{B}$  are called *measurable sets*. A function of measurable spaces  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  is called *measurable* if  $f^{-1}(A)$  is a measurable set in  $X$  for all measurable sets  $A$  of  $Y$ .

A *measure* on a measurable space  $(X, \mathcal{B})$  is a map  $\mu : \mathcal{B} \rightarrow [0, \infty]$  such that -  $\mu(\emptyset) = 0$ , and -  $\mu(\cup_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \mu(A_n)$  for every countable collection  $\{A_n\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$  of pairwise disjoint sets in  $\mathcal{B}$  (countable additivity).

The Borel  $\sigma$ -algebra of a topological space  $X$  is the  $\sigma$ -algebra  $\mathcal{B}$  generated by the open subsets of  $X$ , and the members of  $\mathcal{B}$  are called Borel sets.

A measure  $\mu$  is called *finite* if the whole space has finite measure  $\mu(X) < \infty$ , and  *$\sigma$ -finite* if  $X$  is the countable union of sets with finite measure, meaning, there exist sets  $\{A_i\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$  such that  $\cup_{i=1}^{\infty} A_i = X$  and  $\mu(A_i) < \infty$  for all  $i$ .

## Groups

We are interested in Lie groups. Primarily for its nature as a topological group. A *Lie group* is a group that is also a manifold. A *locally compact* group is locally compact as a topological space. We require groups to be locally compact, so that the Haar measure exists, which is, up to scaling, the unique measure on Borel sets which satisfies the following: For all  $g \in G$   $\mu(gS) = \mu(S)$ ,  $\mu$  is finite on compact sets and is inner and outer regular. Unless otherwise specified, we talk about these types of groups.

A *lattice* is a discrete subgroup  $\Gamma$  of a locally compact group  $G$  such that there exists a finite measure on the quotient space  $G/\Gamma$ .

## Group Actions

By an *action* of the group  $G$  on a set  $X$  we mean a map  $\alpha : G \times X \rightarrow X$  such that, writing the first argument as a subscript,  $\alpha_s(\alpha_t(x)) = \alpha_{st}(x)$  and  $\alpha_e(x) = x$  for all  $x \in X$  and  $s, t \in G$ . Most of the time we will not give this map a name and write

the image of a pair  $(s, x)$  written as  $sx$ . For sets  $A \subset X$  and  $K \subset G$  and an  $s \in G$  we write

$$sA = \{sx : x \in A\}, \quad Kx = \{sx : s \in K\}, \quad KA = \{sx : x \in A \text{ and } s \in K\}.$$

185 The  $G$ -orbit of a point  $x \in X$  is the set  $Gx$ .

## 186 Representations

187 A *representation* is a group-homomorphism from a group into the general linear  
188 group of a vector space,  $\pi : G \rightarrow GL(V)$ . We consistently use lowercase Greek  
189 letters to refer to representations. Most often  $\pi$ . The *dimension* of a representation  
190 is the dimension of the vector space that is being represented onto.

191 A *unitary operator* on a Hilbert space  $\mathcal{H}$  is a bounded linear operator  $U$ , such  
192 that  $U^*U = UU^* = \text{Id}_{\mathcal{H}}$ . A *unitary representation* is a representation into the  
193 unitary group of a vector space  $\pi : G \rightarrow \mathcal{U}(V) \subset GL(V)$ , where the unitary group  
194 consists of all unitary operators on  $\mathcal{H}$ .

For a representation  $\pi$  onto a (complex) Hilbert space  $\mathcal{H}$ ,  $\pi : G \rightarrow GL(\mathcal{H})$  and two vectors  $v, w \in \mathcal{H}$ , a *matrix coefficient* is a map  $f(g) : G \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$  defined by

$$f(g) = \langle \pi(g)v, w \rangle$$

195 In the case of a finite dimensional Hilbert space and, for a given choice of basis,  
196 and two basis vectors  $e_i, e_j$ , the inner product  $\langle e_i \pi(g), e_j \rangle$  works out to be the  
197 coefficient of the matrix associates to  $\pi(g)$ .

## 198 “direct difference” notation

199 Zimmer, and we, use the symbol “ $\ominus$ ” to denote “subtraction” of linear subspaces  
200 of Hilbert spaces. If  $A \subset B$  are linear subspaces of a Hilbert space,  $B \ominus A = \{x \in$   
201  $B : (x, y) = 0 \text{ for all } y \in A\}$ .

202 The specifically we will use it on  $L^2(\mathcal{H}) \ominus \mathbb{C}$ , to denote the square integrable  
203 functions on  $\mathcal{H}$  "minus" the subspace of constant functions.

## 204 Ergodicity

205 We have successfully made our way back to ergodicity. We will try to illuminate  
206 the definition a bit by examples and non-examples.

207 To reiterate



### Definition 1.3

Ergodicity For a group  $G$ , a measurable separable space  $S$ , and a  $G$ -invariant measure  $\mu$ . An action is called ergodic if all  $G$ -invariant subsets  $A \subset S$  are either null or conull. Which means

$$\forall g \in G : gA = A \quad \Rightarrow \quad \mu(A) = 0 \text{ or } \mu(S \setminus A) = 0$$

Let us try to build some intuition for what this means. Notice that orbits are, by definition  $G$ -invariant, so one way to constructively build invariant sets is to consider orbits of actions. Inversely as well, any invariant set can be considered a union of orbits of all its points. Recall from basic group theory that orbits partition the space, so saying that these must be either null or conull means there is no straightforward “divide and conquer” strategy for understanding ergodic actions. In this regard ergodicity resembles a sort of “irreducibility”-property. To put it in Zimmer’s words “Ergodic theory is (in large part) the study of complicated orbit structure in the presence of a measure.”

Note, that the adjective “ergodic” sometimes applied to either the action, the measure or the space. What that means is that, for two out of three given, the third completes the definition. All three are necessary to be ergodic but when, for example, we have a group action on a space, we call a measure ergodic if together with the others they are ergodic.

**Example** Let  $\mathbb{T}$  be the circle group of  $\{z \in \mathbb{C} \mid |z| = 1\}$  and  $A : \mathbb{T} \rightarrow \mathbb{T}$  multiplication by  $e^{i\alpha}$  with  $\alpha/2\pi$  irrational. This induces an action  $\mathbb{Z} \curvearrowright \mathbb{T} \rightarrow \mathbb{T}$  by  $n \cdot z \mapsto e^{in\alpha}z$ . As a measure we take the arc-length measure, which is preserved under the action of  $A$ .

This is an example of an ergodic action.

To prove this, suppose  $S \subset \mathbb{T}$  is  $A$ -invariant. We take  $\chi_S(z) = 1$  for  $z \in S$  and 0 for  $z \notin S$ , the characteristic function of  $S$  and take the  $L^2$ -Fourier expansion  $\sum a_n z^n$ . Then, by invariance,  $\chi_S(z) = \chi_S(e^{i\alpha}z) = \sum a_n e^{in\alpha} z^n$ . Therefore  $a_n e^{in\alpha} = a_n$ . By assumption  $\alpha/2\pi \notin \mathbb{Q}$ , so  $a_n = 0$  for all  $n \neq 0$ . This implies  $\chi_S$  is constant, meaning either constant 0 or constant 1, which implies ergodicity.

definition; explanation of definition; Examples; why the prerequisites come in, like quasi-invariance; clarify edge cases of properly ergodic.

## The Direct Integral and Unitary Representations

Now that we've laid out the prerequisites, we can turn to what we'll actually need in terms of this specific subject. We have to take a detour into unitary representations and define the direct integral to make statements about certain subgroups, in particular  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . It turns out, we can transform questions about ergodicity into questions about representations. Thereby opening up the problems to more tractable linear algebra and matrix groups.

The question about ergodicity, that hangs in the background of the theorem is: "what happens at the boundary?". Boundary means we are interested in the limit behavior of an ergodic action, which explains why our theorem makes an assertion about matrix coefficients at infinity.

The way there will lead us through the direct integral, unitary representations and in particular the representation of  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . To jump ahead of ourselves, we'll later look at the upper diagonal group and its subgroup  $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & x \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ , which is isomorphic to  $\mathbb{R}$  and whose representation we'll care about.

## The Direct Integral

In simple terms, the direct integral is a way to patch together locally defined functions into a function on the whole domain. Let us first consider the simple case where we have global functions on a measure space  $M$ , that takes values in some Hilbert space  $\mathcal{H}$ ,  $f : M \rightarrow \mathcal{H}$ . The 'sensible' space to put these functions into is the space of square integrable functions on  $M$ , denoted  $L^2(M, \mathcal{H})$ . The word 'sensible' here is justified by being again a Hilbert space by integration  $\langle f, g \rangle = \int_M \langle f(x), g(x) \rangle$ .

The next step towards locality is to use two function, by defining  $L^2(M_1 \sqcup M_2, \mathcal{H}_1 \oplus \mathcal{H}_2)$ , where every function is defined separately on each  $M_i$ , and taking values in  $\mathcal{H}_i$ .

Suppose we have a measure space  $M$ , and for each  $x \in M$  a Hilbert space  $\mathcal{H}_x$  such that  $x \mapsto \mathcal{H}_x$  is piecewise constant, that is, we have a disjoint decomposition of  $M$  into  $\cup_{i=1}^\infty M_i$  such that for  $x, y \in M_i$ ,  $\mathcal{H}_x = \mathcal{H}_y$ . Interesting aside: the condition that the assignment  $x \mapsto \mathcal{H}_x$  be piecewise constant is not necessary. We can allow the Hilbert spaces to be arbitrary, and in fact uncountably infinite. Short answer: magic; slightly less short answer: von Neumann. A *section* on  $M$  is an assignment  $x \mapsto f(x)$ , where  $f(x) \in \mathcal{H}_x$ . Since  $\mathcal{H}_x$  is piecewise constant, the notion of measurability carries over in an obvious manner, namely that a measurable function on  $M$  is measurable on each  $M_i$  into the appropriate Hilbert space. Let  $L^2(M, \{\mathcal{H}_x\})$  be the set of square integrable sections  $\int \|f\|^2 < \infty$  where we identify

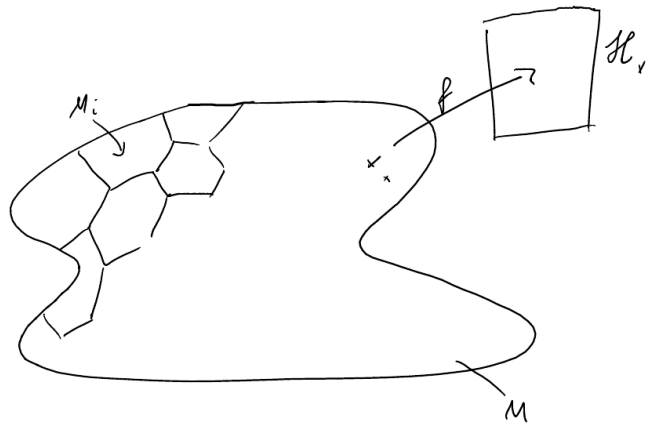


Figure 1: aa

271 two sections if they agree almost everywhere. This set is then also a Hilbert space  
 272 with the inner product  $\langle f|g \rangle = \int_M \langle f(x)|g(x) \rangle$ .

273 Suppose now we have for each  $x \in M$  a unitary representation  $\pi_x$  of a group  $G$  on  
 274  $\mathcal{H}_x$ . We say this is measurable when for  $g \in G$ ,  $\pi_x(g)$  is a measurable function on  
 275 each  $M_i \times G$ .

276 This allows us to define the relevant representation we intermediately care about.

**Remark (On the notation of the direct integral)** The above notation of  $\pi_{\mu, \mathcal{H}}$  is generally fine, but putting an already hard to read typeface in a small font size into the subscript is hard to read. We have introduced it as is to conform with the notation in the literature, but in the next section we will encounter a number of operations that manipulate these subscripts. For that reason we'll write them also in square brackets like so:

$$\pi[\mu, \mathcal{H}]$$

277 meaning the same thing as the subscript notation.

## 278 Unitary Representations

279 irreducible unitary representations to understand the action(s) of  $SL(n, \mathbb{R})$ .

## 280 Representation of $\mathbb{R}^n$

### Theorem 2 (Zimmer 2.3.3)

- 281 • For any unitary representation  $\pi$  of  $\mathbb{R}^n$ , there exist  $\mu, \mathcal{H}_\lambda$ , on  $\hat{\mathbb{R}}^n$  such that  
 282  $\pi \cong \pi_{\mu, \mathcal{H}_\lambda}$ .
- 283 •  $\pi_{\mu, \mathcal{H}_\lambda}$  and  $\pi_{\mu', \mathcal{H}'_\lambda}$  are unitarily equivalent if and only if
  - 284 –  $\mu \sim \mu'$ , i.e., they are in the same measure class
  - 285 – and  $\dim \mathcal{H}_\lambda = \dim \mathcal{H}'_\lambda$  a.e.

286 **proof**

### Theorem 3 (Zimmer 2.3.4)

287 Let  $\pi = \pi_{\mu, \mathcal{H}_\lambda}$ ,  $A \in \text{Aut}(\mathbb{R}^n)$ ,  $\alpha$  the adjoint automorphism of  $\hat{\mathbb{R}}^n$ . Then

- 288 •  $\alpha(\pi)$  is unitarily equivalent to  $\pi[\alpha_*\mu]$

289 **proof**

**Theorem 4 (Zimmer 2.3.5, from Mackey [3])**

290 Suppose  $\mathbb{R}^n \subset G$  is a normal subgroup and  $\pi$  is a unitary representation of  $G$ .  
 291 Write  $\pi|_{\mathbb{R}^n} \cong \pi_{(\mu, \mathcal{H}_\lambda)}$  for some  $(\mu, \mathcal{H}_\lambda)$  by 2.3.3. Then

- 292 •  $\mu$  is quasi-invariant under the action of  $G$  on  $\hat{\mathbb{R}}^n$ .
- 293 • If  $E \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  is measurable, let  $\mathcal{H}_E = L^2(E, \mu, \{\mathcal{H}_\lambda\})$ . Then  $\pi(g)\mathcal{H}_E = \mathcal{H}_{g \cdot E}$
- 294 • If  $\pi$  is irreducible, then  $\mu$  is ergodic and  $\dim \mathcal{H}_\lambda$  is constant on a  $\mu$ -conull set.

295 **proof**

**Theorem 5 (Zimmer 2.3.6)**

296 Let  $\pi$  be a unitary representation of  $P = AN$ .

- 297 • either  $\pi|_N$  has non-trivial invariant vectors or
- 298 • or for  $g \in A$  and any vectors,  $v, w$ , the matrix coefficients  $\langle \pi(g)v, w \rangle \rightarrow 0$  as  
 299  $g \rightarrow \infty$ .

300 **proof** The subgroup  $N$  is isomorphic to  $\mathbb{R}$ , so we can apply theorem Zimmer  
 301 2.3.6 3 to identify  $N$  with  $\hat{N} \cong \hat{\mathbb{R}}$  and the representation  $\pi$  with  $\pi_{\mu, \hat{\mathbb{R}}}$ . To spell it  
 302 out  $\pi|_N \cong \pi_{\mu, \hat{\mathbb{R}}} : N \rightarrow \mathcal{U}(L^2(\hat{\mathbb{R}}, \mu, \mathcal{H}_\lambda))$ .

303 A section of this space can be written as  $f : \lambda \mapsto v_\lambda$  for  $v_\lambda \in \mathcal{H}_\lambda$ . By construction  
 304 of  $\pi_{\mu, \mathcal{H}_\lambda}$  we have an explicit formula  $\lambda(t)f(\lambda)$ , where  $\lambda(t) \in S^1$  and  $f(\lambda)$  in  
 305 some complex Hilbert space. For a representation to be invariant, we need that  
 306  $\lambda(t)f(\lambda) = f(\lambda)$  for all  $t$  and almost all  $\lambda$  ( $\mu$  almost everywhere). The only choice  
 307 for  $\lambda$  is  $\lambda_0(t) := e^{i \cdot 0 \cdot t} = 1$  for all  $t$ . So all of  $\mathcal{H}_0$  will remain invariant. If  $\mu(\{0\}) = 0$ ,  
 308 then all these will be equivalent under the equivalence class on  $L^2(\hat{\mathbb{R}})$  to the trivial  
 309 vector. So for  $v$  to be a non-trivial vector, we need  $\mu(\{0\}) > 0$ .

310 Next, we want to show that for any vectors  $f, g \in L^2(\hat{\mathbb{R}})$  we get  $\lim_{g \rightarrow \infty} \langle \pi(g)f, g \rangle =$   
 311  $0$ . We move the problem to compact sets in  $\hat{\mathbb{R}}$ . Because  $f, g$  are in a square integrable  
 312 function space, we can find compact sets  $E, F \in \hat{\mathbb{R}}$  such that  $|\chi_E f - f| < \varepsilon$  and  
 313  $|\chi_F g - g| < \varepsilon, \forall \varepsilon > 0$ .

314 **Corollary 6** For  $\pi$  a unitary representation of  $P$ , any  $A$ -invariant vector is also  
 315  $P$ -invariant.

316 **proof** If  $\pi$  is a representation on  $\mathcal{H}$ , let  $W = \{v \in \mathcal{H} | v \text{ is } \pi(N)\text{-invariant}\}$ .  
 317 Since  $N$  is normal,  $W$  is a  $P$ -invariant subspace, and so is  $W^\perp$ . Since  $W^\perp$  has  
 318 no  $N$ -invariant vectors, we are in the second case in the above theorem for the  
 319 representation on  $W^\perp$ , and in particular, there are no  $A$ -invariant vectors in  $W^\perp$ .  
 320 Since the projection onto  $W^\perp$  of an  $A$ -invariant vector in  $\mathcal{H}$  is also  $A$ -invariant,  
 321 this shows that all  $A$ -invariant vectors are in  $W$ , and hence that all  $A$ -invariant  
 322 vectors are  $P$ -invariant.

323 All the irreducible unitary representations of  $\mathbb{R}$  are one-dimensional. This is a corol-  
 324 lary of Schur's lemma, which states that every complex irreducible representation  
 325 of an abelian group is one-dimensional.

326 It turns out that the group unitary representations on  $\mathbb{R}^n$  are isomorphic to  $\mathbb{R}^n$ .  
 327 So we define a map from  $\mathbb{R}^n$  to  $\mathcal{U}(\mathbb{C})$  and show that it's in fact bijective. Let  $\theta, t$   
 328 be in  $\mathbb{R}^n$  and let  $\lambda_\theta(t) = e^{i\langle\theta|t\rangle}$ . This is in fact a unitary automorphism on  $\mathbb{C}$  by  
 329 multiplication. To clarify, for every  $\theta \in \mathbb{R}^n$  we have a representation given by

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda_\theta : \mathbb{R}^n &\rightarrow \mathcal{U}(\mathbb{C}) \\ t &\mapsto e^{i\langle\theta|t\rangle}\end{aligned}$$

330 We denote the group of representations by  $\hat{\mathbb{R}}^n$ . It is in fact a group under pointwise  
 331 multiplication.

332 This definition is maybe a bit dense, so here is the assignment formatted in  
 333 pseudo code. This might help some reader more familiar with programming than  
 334 mathematics. The more mathematically inclined may ignore it. It is not relevant  
 335 other than to further the understanding of the above definition. Note here that  
 336 lambda denotes the programming term of a lambda function, an unfortunate  
 337 notation collision. The conceptual problem here is that we have a hidden stack of  
 338 expressions; we give a very concrete definition,  $\lambda(t)f(\lambda)$  for a very abstract object  
 339  $\pi_{\mu, \hat{\mathbb{R}}^n}$ , with the layers in between not being immediately obvious.

```
func   $\pi_{\mu, \mathcal{H}_\lambda}(t : \mathbb{R}^n) \rightarrow \mathcal{U}(L^2(\hat{\mathbb{R}}^n))$  {
  return lambda( $f : L^2(\hat{\mathbb{R}}^n) \rightarrow L^2(\hat{\mathbb{R}}^n)$ ) {
    return lambda( $\lambda : \hat{\mathbb{R}}^n \rightarrow \mathcal{H}_\lambda$ ) {
      return  $\lambda(t)f(\lambda)$ 
    }
  }
}
```

340 This shows that the objects inbetween are defined.

## 341 The Connection between Ergodicity and Unitary Represen- 342 tations

343 approach: - char func - char func in  $L^2(S)$  and non-trivial - if  $A$  invariant then char  
344 func invariant as a vector in  $L^2(S)$  - due diligence: make sure measure works

345 To see why we care about unitary representations at all if we really want ergodicity,  
346 we need to make the following connection. We use the characteristic function of a  
347 set to connect the set to a vector in  $L^2(S)$ . The characteristic function of a subset  
348  $A \subset S$ , is defined as  $\chi_A(x) = 1$  for  $x \in A$  and 0 otherwise.

349 This representation allows us to pass from talking about sets to talking about  
350 vectors (in function spaces), while retaining the properties we care about.

### Theorem 7 (Zimmer 2.2.17)

351 An action  $G \curvearrowright S$ , with *finite* invariant measure is ergodic on  $S$  if and only if the  
352 restriction of the above representation to  $L^2(S) \ominus \mathbb{C}$  has no invariant vectors.

353 Since  $S$  has finite measure, assume  $\mu(S) = 1$ .

354 **proof " $\Leftarrow$ ":** Proof by contrapositive: If  $A \subset S$  is  $G$ -invariant with measure  
355  $0 < \mu(A) < \mu(S) = 1$  then  $\chi_A$  is also  $G$ -invariant in  $L^2(S)$  as well as the projection  
356  $\chi_A - \mu(A) \cdot 1$  in  $L^2(S) \ominus \mathbb{C}$ . Therefore there exists an invariant vector in  $L^2(S) \ominus \mathbb{C}$ .

357 " $\Rightarrow$ ": [2](Prop 2.7) Suppose the action is ergodic and  $f \in L^2(S) \ominus \mathbb{C}$  is  $G$ -invariant.  
358 We can find a measurable set  $D \subset \mathbb{C}$  such that  $0 < \mu(f^{-1}(D)) < 1$  and denote  
359  $\tilde{A} = f^{-1}(D)$ . Now we verify ergodicity. For every  $g \in G$  the symmetric difference  
360  $g\tilde{A} \Delta \tilde{A}$ , for which all points are in the set  $\{x \in X \mid |f(x) - sf(x)| > 0\}$ , which has  
361 measure zero because  $\|f - sf\|_2 = 0$ . Therefore the action fails to be ergodic.

362 The adjective "finite" on the measure is necessary, because for a set  $A$  of infinite  
363 measure the statement is no longer true as  $\chi_A$  will no longer be in  $L^2$ .

364 This is of course fine, because we care about the special case where the space  $S$  in  
365 question is the quotient of a lattice  $G/\Gamma$ , which has finite measure by definition. So  
366 this restriction is not only acceptable but desired.

367 If  $A \subset S$  is  $G$ -invariant then  $\chi_A \in L^2(S)$  will also be  $G$ -invariant. For  $A$  neither  
368 null nor conull then  $\chi_A, f_A \neq 0$ , where  $f_A$  is the projection of  $\chi_A$  onto  $L^2(S) \ominus \mathbb{C}$ .

## 369 **Proof for $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$**

370 We start here because it is an easy example of the theorem and a general group  $G$   
 371 has many subgroups locally isomorphic to  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ . Later we extend the proof,  
 372 first to  $SL(n, \mathbb{R})$  and then to a general  $G$ .

373 To state our intentions: we first show that either the matrix coefficients vanish as  
 374 we want, or there exist invariant vectors. Then we show that there are no invariant  
 375 vectors, completing the statement.

376 We're going to use the following decomposition, which we take for granted The  
 377 so called Iwasawa decomposition of  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$  into three matrices  $K$ ,  $A$ , and  $N$ ,  
 378 defined as

$$K = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta & -\sin \theta \\ \sin \theta & \cos \theta \end{pmatrix} \in SL(2, \mathbb{R}) \mid \theta \in \mathbb{R} \right\} \quad (1)$$

$$A = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} r & 0 \\ 0 & r^{-1} \end{pmatrix} \in SL(2, \mathbb{R}) \mid r > 0 \right\} \quad (2)$$

$$N = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & x \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \in SL(2, \mathbb{R}) \mid x \in \mathbb{R} \right\} \quad (3)$$

$$(4)$$

## 379 **Theorem for $P$**

380 **Lemma 8 (decomposition of  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$  and  $P$ )** 1. The upper triangular  
 381 group  $P$  and  $\bar{P}$  generate  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ .

2. The upper triangular group can be decomposed into the semidirect product:

$$P = AN = \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & a^{-1} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & b \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

382 3.  $N$  is normal in  $P$

383 **proof** We look at the subgroup

$$P \subset SL(2, \mathbb{R}) = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ 0 & a^{-1} \end{pmatrix}$$

384 of upper triangular matrices. Together with the lower diagonal matrices  $\bar{P}$ , they  
 385 generate  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ . To see this, decompose as follows:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ \alpha & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} x & 0 \\ 0 & 1/x \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \beta \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} x & \beta x \\ \alpha x & \alpha \beta x + 1/x \end{pmatrix}$$



For any matrix  $A = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}$  in  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$  with matrix coefficient  $a \neq 0$ , we can solve for  $x, \alpha, \beta$ . In the case of  $a = 0$  we can use the following construction:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ \alpha & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \beta \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ \gamma & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \delta \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 + \beta\gamma & \delta(1 + \beta\gamma) + \beta \\ \alpha(1 + \beta\gamma) + \gamma & \alpha\delta(1 + \beta\gamma) + \alpha\beta + \gamma\delta + 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

If  $1 + \beta\gamma = 0$ , the above product becomes  $\begin{pmatrix} 0 & \beta \\ \gamma & 1 + \alpha\beta + \gamma\delta \end{pmatrix}$  and we can make suitable choices for  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta$  to construct  $A$ .

Note first, that  $N$  is normal in  $P$ . To see this, first calculate that the inverse of a matrix  $\begin{pmatrix} a & x \\ 0 & a^{-1} \end{pmatrix}$  in  $P$  is  $\begin{pmatrix} a^{-1} & -x \\ 0 & a \end{pmatrix}$ . Next note that the result of conjugation with an element in  $P$  is again in  $N$ :  $\begin{pmatrix} a & x \\ 0 & a^{-1} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & y \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a^{-1} & -x \\ 0 & a \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & a^2x \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ . This defines a group action  $P \curvearrowright N \rightarrow N$  by multiplication with  $a^2$ .

Recall the polar decomposition. we'll need it for the next lemma, which will do a lot of heavy lifting. Let  $T \in SL(n, \mathbb{R})$  be a matrix. We can decompose  $T$  as follows:  $T = US$  for some unitary  $U$  and a symmetric positive definite  $S$ .  $S$  can be diagonalized, because it has an orthonormal basis of eigenvectors, into  $U_0AU_0^{-1}$  so we can write  $T = UU_0DU_0^{-1} = U_1AU_2$  for  $U_i \in SO(2, \mathbb{R})$ . Then  $SL(2, \mathbb{R}) = KAK$  for  $K = SO_2$  and  $A$  the diagonal group. This is the Cartan decomposition.

The advantage this decomposition provides us is that we have neatly split the group  $G$  into compact and non-compact parts. Additionally the non-compact part is particularly easy to handle, as diagonal matrices are easy to think about. The lemma we are about to present, shows how useful this distinction is. It states that we only need to verify that matrix coefficients vanish on  $A$ . Intuitively, this tells us that the behavior of matrix coefficients at infinity has nothing to do with compact components.

**Lemma 9** If  $\pi$  is a unitary representation of a Group  $G$  (which is assumed to be second countable) and we can write  $G = KAK$ , with  $K$  compact (and second countable), then it suffices to check that the matrix coefficients vanish on  $A$  as  $g \rightarrow \infty$ .

**proof** We take vectors  $v, w$  and write  $g \in G$  as  $g = k_1ak_2$ . Then the corresponding matrix coefficient can be written as  $\langle \pi(g)v | w \rangle = \langle \pi(a)\pi(k_2)v | \pi(k_1)^{-1}w \rangle$ .

We make a proof via contraposition. If there exists a matrix coefficient that fails to vanish as  $g \rightarrow \infty$  we can find a sequence  $g_n = k_{1,n}g_nk_{2,n} \rightarrow \infty$  as  $n \rightarrow \infty$  with  $|\langle \pi(g_n)v | w \rangle| \geq \varepsilon$  for some  $\varepsilon > 0$ .

416 Because  $G$ , and therefore  $K$  is second countable and compact, it is also sequentially  
 417 compact<sup>1</sup>. So we can suppose  $k_{1,n} \rightarrow k$  and  $k_{2,n}^{-1} \rightarrow k'$ . Then, for  $n$  sufficiently large,  
 418  $|\langle \pi(a_n)\pi(k)v | \pi(k')w \rangle| \geq \varepsilon/2$ . This follows from the following estimation, where we  
 419 ommit the representation  $\pi$  for legibility:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= | \langle a_n k_n v, k'_n w \rangle - \langle a_n k v, k' w \rangle | \\
 &= | \langle a_n k_n v - a_n k v, k'_n w \rangle + \langle a_n k v, k'_n w - k' w \rangle | \\
 &\leq | \langle a_n k_n v - a_n k v, k'_n w \rangle | + | \langle a_n k v, k'_n w - k' w \rangle | \quad \text{Triangle Inequality} \\
 &\leq \|a_n k_n v - a_n k v\| \|k'_n w\| + \|a_n k v\| \|k'_n w - k' w\| \quad \text{Cauchy-Schwarz}
 \end{aligned}$$

420 From here, we can pick an  $n$  large enough to assert the inequality.

421 But since  $K$  is compact and  $g_n \rightarrow \infty$ , we must have  $a_n \rightarrow \infty$ . This shows that the  
 422 must be a matrix coefficient in  $\pi|_A$  that fails to vanish at infinity.

### 423 **Theorem for $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$**

424 If  $\pi$  is a unitary representation of  $G = SL(2, \mathbb{R})$  with no invariant vectors, then all  
 425 matrix coefficients of  $\pi$  vanish at  $\infty$ .

426 We can now start on the statement for  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ . Thanks to the work we did in  
 427 the preceeding chapter, the statement is actually not very difficult to prove. The  
 428 theorem 5 and the preceeding lemma 9 does the bulk of the heavy lifting here.

429 **proof** By assumption,  $G$  has no invariant vectors. By theorem 5, There are two  
 430 possible cases. Either  $N$  has non-zero invariant vectors, or the matrix coefficients  
 431 vanish along  $A$ .

432 Should there be no non-zero invariant vectors, as we'll show, then the matrix  
 433 coefficients vanish along  $A$ , and, by lemma 9, vanishing along  $A$  implies vanishing  
 434 along  $G$ .

435 To see that there are no  $N$ -invariant vectors, we assume towards a contradiction  
 436 that there are  $N$ -invariant vectors and show that these must be  $G$ -invariant as well,  
 437 which contradicts our assumption.

---

<sup>1</sup>A topological space is called *sequentially compact* if every sequence of points has a convergent subsequence.

438 Suppose there is a vector  $v$  that is  $N$ -invariant, meaning  $\pi(n)v = v$  for all  $n \in N$ .  
 439 As a shorthand, define the function  $f(g) = \langle \pi(g)v, v \rangle$ . This defines a continuous  
 440 bi- $N$ -invariant function on  $G$ .

441 This is because  $f(gn) = \langle \pi(gn)v, v \rangle = \langle \pi(g)\pi(n)v, v \rangle = \langle \pi(g)v, v \rangle = f(g)$ , and  
 442  $f(ng) = \langle \pi(n)\pi(g)v, v \rangle \xrightarrow{\text{unitary}} \langle \pi(g)v, \pi(n)^{-1}v \rangle = f(g)$ .

443 Thus  $f$  lifts from a continuous bi- $N$ -invariant function on  $G/N$ .

444  $G$  acts transitively on  $\mathbb{R}^2 \setminus \{0\}$  by matrix multiplication, and, using the fact that  
 445  $N$  is exactly the stabilizer of  $\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ , we get an isomorphism  $G/N \cong \mathbb{R}^2 \setminus \{0\}$ <sup>2</sup>.

446 Calculating the orbits of this action we have  $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & x \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a+bx \\ b \end{pmatrix}$ . So there exist  
 447 two kinds of orbits: for  $b \neq 0$  the orbit is the horizontal line at height  $b$  and  
 448 for  $b = 0$  every individual point  $(a, 0)$  on the  $x$ -axis. (See Figure 2). As  $f$  is  
 449  $N$ -invariant,  $f$  will be constant along these orbits. Because  $f$  is continuous,  $f$  will  
 450 also be constant along the  $x$ -axis.

451 But we can also identify the  $x$ -axis with  $P/N$  by  $\begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ 0 & a^{-1} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} x \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} ax \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ . Therefore  
 452  $f$  is also constant on  $P$ . So it follows that  $v$  is  $P$ -invariant. And as we've seen in  
 453 the introduction, we can identify  $G/P$  with the real projective line and  $P$  has a  
 454 dense orbit in  $G/P$  so  $f$  is constant on  $G$  and therefore  $v$  is actually  $G$ -invariant,  
 455 contradicting our assumption.

## 456 **Proof for $SL(n, \mathbb{R})$**

457 In this section we'll prove the statement for  $G = SL(n, \mathbb{R})$  and later show how the  
 458 proof is extended to a general group  $G$ . We begin just as for  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ , by applying  
 459 lemma 9. Thus it suffices to show that matrix coefficients vanish on  $A \subset G$  to  
 460 imply that they vanish on  $G$ .

461 Let  $A \subset G$  be the subgroup of diagonal matrices. We denote the elements

$$A \ni a := \begin{pmatrix} a_1 & & \\ & \ddots & \\ & & a_n \end{pmatrix}$$

462 by  $(a_1, \dots, a_n)$ .

---

<sup>2</sup>This is due to the fact that for a transitive action  $G \curvearrowright X$  there is an isomorphism  $G/\text{Stab}_G(x) \rightarrow X$  sending  $g \cdot \text{Stab}_G(x) \mapsto gx$ .

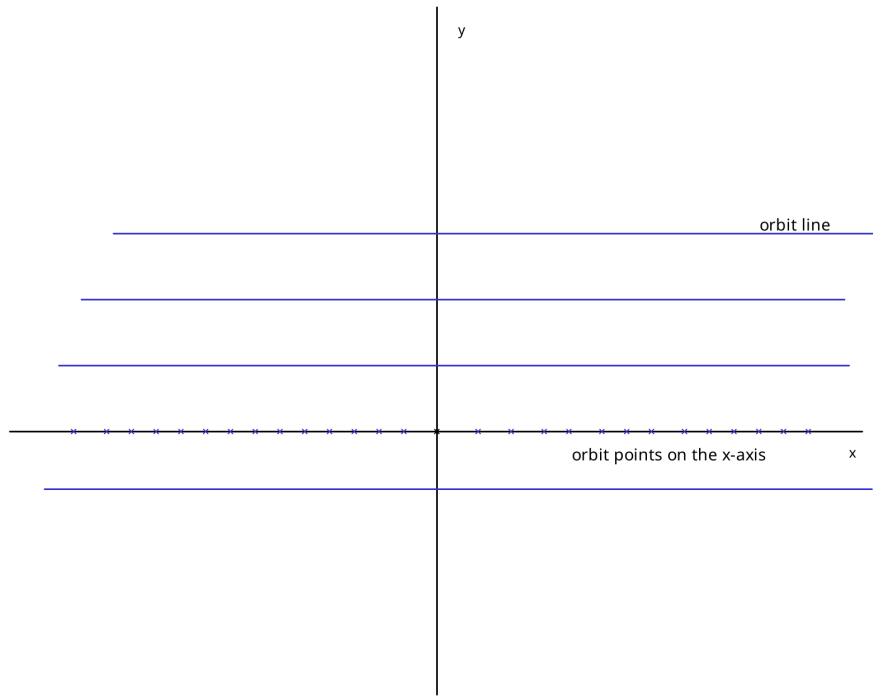


Figure 2: The orbits of  $N$  on  $G/N$  correspond either to the horizontal lines parallel to the x-axis or to the individual points on the x-axis.

463 To get an equivalent to the group  $N$  from the earlier proof, we first define the  
 464 group  $B$ , which has 1 on the diagonal and 0 everywhere but the first row.

$$B \ni b := \begin{pmatrix} 1 & b_{1,2} & \cdots & b_{1,n} \\ 0 & & & \\ \vdots & & \text{Id}_{n-1} & \\ 0 & & & \end{pmatrix}$$

465 and write  $b = (1, b_2, \dots, b_n)$ , specifying only the first row. We now have analogues  
 466 for  $A$ ,  $N$  and we set  $H := AB$ . We will replicate the proof for  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$  on this  
 467 group. In the case of  $n = 2$ , this reduces to  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$  and the above matrix to  $N$   
 468 from the previous proof.

469 Observe  $B \cong \mathbb{R}^n$ . These one-row spaces like  $B$  are actually abelian normal  
 470 subgroups. To see abelianness, decompose the matrix into  $(\text{Id} + b)(\text{Id} + b') =$   
 471  $\text{Id} + \text{Id} \cdot b + \text{Id} \cdot b' + b \cdot b'$ . Note that  $a$  and  $b$  are nilpotent and by choosing the same  
 472 row for our entries they “miss” each other during multiplication and so  $b \cdot b' = 0$ .  
 473 The rest then commutes due to commutativity of matrix addition. Similarly, we  
 474 get that  $A$  normalizes  $B$ :  $aBa^{-1} = a(\text{Id} + b)a^{-1} = \text{Id} + aba^{-1}$ . The last term will  
 475 again be entirely in the first row and therefore the entire expression will be in  $B$ .  
 476 Calculation shows  $aba^{-1} = (1, a_1a_2^{-1}b_2, \dots, a_1a_n^{-1}b_n)$ .

477 The adjoint action on  $\hat{\mathbb{R}}^{n-1}$  will be given by the same expression, replacing  $b_i$  by  
 478 the dual variables  $\lambda_i$ ,  $i = 2, \dots, n$ . Therefore, if  $E, F \subset \hat{\mathbb{R}}^{n-1}$  are compact subsets  
 479 which are disjoint from the union of the hyperplanes  $\lambda_i = 0$ ,  $i = 2, \dots, n$  then for  
 480  $a \in A$  outside a sufficiently large compact set, we have  $a \cdot E \cap F = 0$ .

481 Therefore, as in Theorem 0.5 if  $\mu$  assigns measure 0 to the union of the hyperplanes  
 482  $\lambda_i = 0$  then all matrix coefficients vanish along  $A$ , which proves the theorem.

483 It remains to analyse the case  $\mu(\{\lambda_i = 0\}) > 0$  and show that this is impossible.

484 If  $\mu(\{\lambda_i = 0\}) > 0$ , then the subgroup  $B_i \subset B$ ,  $B_i := \{b \in B \mid b_j = 0 \text{ for } i \neq j\}$   
 485 leaves non-trivial vectors invariant.

486 However  $B_i \subset H_i \subset G$  where  $H_i \cong SL(2, \mathbb{R})$  as follows: the matrices in  $H_i$  are  
 487 those that have ones on the diagonal and zero elsewhere except for the index  
 488 combinations  $(1, 1)$ ,  $(1, i)$ ,  $(i, 1)$ ,  $(i, i)$ .

$$H_i = \begin{pmatrix} c_{11} & & c_{1i} & & \\ & \ddots & & & \\ c_{i1} & & c_{ii} & & \\ & & & \ddots & \end{pmatrix}$$

489 From the proof for  $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$  we know that  $B_i$ -invariant vectors imply  $H_i$  invariant  
 490 vectors. In particular  $A_i = A \cap H_i$  has non-trivial invariant vectors.

491 Let  $W = \{v \in \mathcal{H} | \pi(a)v = v\}$ . We show that  $G$  leaves  $W$  invariant. First, since  
 492  $A_i \subset A$ ,  $A$  abelian,  $A$  leaves  $W$  invariant. Now consider matrices  $B_{kj}$  which have  
 493 1 along the diagonal and 0 elsewhere, except for the coefficient  $(b_{kj})$ . If  $k \neq j$   
 494 and  $j \neq i$  or 1 then  $B_{kj}$  commutes with  $A_i$  and therefore leaves  $W$  invariant. If  
 495  $\{k, j\} \cap \{1, i\} \neq \emptyset$  then  $A_i$  normalizes  $B_{kj}$ . Therefore  $A_i B_{kj}$  is isomorphic to  $P$   
 496 such that  $A_i$  corresponds to the diagonal matrices in  $P$  and  $B_{kj}$  corresponds to  $N$ .  
 497 By Corollary 0.6 this case as well, leaves  $W$  invariant.

498 The proof finishes with the argument that if  $W$  is  $G$ -invariant, then the repre-  
 499 sentation  $\pi_W$  has  $A_i \subset \ker(\pi_W)$ . And because  $G$  is simple this implies that  
 500  $\ker(\pi_W) = G$ , so that  $G$  leaves all vectors in  $W$  fixed, contradicting our assump-  
 501 tions.

502 For the last paragraph, note that if  $G$  is semisimple, the fact that  $\dim(\ker(\pi_W)) >$   
 503 0 contradicts the assumption that no simple factor of  $G$  leaves vectors invariant.

## 504 Proof for a general $G$

## 505 Conclusion

506 Now that we've proven the theorem, it's natural to ask what we do with it now.  
 507 At first glance, the statement about matrix coefficients doesn't seem particularly  
 508 useful, but recall from this section that we have a connection to invariant subsets  
 509 of a possibly ergodic space.

510 We have mentioned in the very beginning where we wanted to go with this, but  
 511 let's recall it here.

512 The problem we posed at the beginning of the paper is the following:

### Problem (When do closed subgroups act ergodically)

513 Let  $G$  be a semisimple Lie group and  $S$  an ergodic  $G$ -space. If  $H \subset G$  is a closed  
 514 subgroup, when is  $H$  ergodic on  $S$ .

**Theorem 10 (Zimmer 2.2.19, originally Moore[5])**

515 Let  $G_i$  be semisimple, non-compact Lie groups and  $G = \prod G_i$  and suppose  $\pi$  is  
516 a unitary representation that has no invariant vectors of  $G$  such that  $\pi$  has no  
517 invariant vectors for each  $\pi|_{G_i}$ . If  $H \subset G$  is a closed subgroup and  $\pi|_H$  has  
518 non-trivial invariant vectors then  $H$  is compact.

519 **proof**

520 invariant vec

**Theorem 11 (Zimmer 2.2.15)**

521 Let  $G = \prod G_i$  be a finite product where each  $G_i$  is a connected non-compact simple  
522 Lie group with finite center. Suppose  $S$  is an irreducible ergodic  $G$ -space with  
523 finite invariant measure. If  $H \subset G$  is a closed non-compact subgroup, then  $H$  is  
524 ergodic on  $S$ .

525 **proof**

**Theorem 12 (Zimmer 2.2.6, Moore's Ergodicity Theorem)**

526 Let  $G = \prod G_i$  be a finite product where each  $G_i$  is a connected non-compact simple  
527 Lie group with finite center. Let  $\Gamma \subset G$  be an irreducible lattice. If  $H \subset G$  is a  
528 closed subgroup and  $H$  is not compact, then  $H$  is ergodic on  $G/\Gamma$ .

529 **proof**

**Corollary 13**

531 Looking back at the initial example, the case becomes clear. applying the theorem]  
532 with  $G = SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ . A lattice  $\Gamma$  in  $G$  acts ergodically on  $\mathbb{R}$ , since  $\mathbb{R} \cong SL(2, \mathbb{R})/P$   
533 and  $P$  is not compact.

## 534 Auxilliary Statements

535 **Proposition 14** In a second countable topological space, compactness and se-  
536 quential compactness are equivalent.

537 **proof** no proof

## 538 List of Theorems

539	Theorem 1	Howe-Moore’s Ergodicity Theorem . . . . .	4
540	Theorem 2	Zimmer 2.3.3 . . . . .	12
541	Theorem 3	Zimmer 2.3.4 . . . . .	12
542	Theorem 4	Zimmer 2.3.5, from Mackey [3] . . . . .	13
543	Theorem 5	Zimmer 2.3.6 . . . . .	13
544	Theorem 7	Zimmer 2.2.17 . . . . .	15
545	Lemma 8	decomposition of $SL(2, \mathbb{R})$ and $P$ . . . . .	16
546	Lemma 9	. . . . .	17
547	Theorem 10	Zimmer 2.2.19, originally Moore[5] . . . . .	23
548	Theorem 11	Zimmer 2.2.15 . . . . .	23
549	Theorem 12	Zimmer 2.2.6, Moore’s Ergodicity Theorem . . . . .	23

## 550 List of Figures

551	1	aa . . . . .	11
552	2	The orbits of $N$ on $G/N$ correspond either to the horizontal lines	
553		parallel to the x-axis or to the individual points on the x-axis. . . .	20

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