

Monodromy and Rigidity

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1 Some group theoretic considerations

The references here are [Borel] and [Sat].

Let k be a field of characteristic zero, not necessarily closed, and let K be an algebraic closure. An algebraic k -group T is an m -torus if $T(K)$ is isomorphic to a direct product of m copies of the multiplicative group K^* . There is a finite Galois extension L/k so that $T(L)$ is already isomorphic to m copies of L^* . One says that T is *split over* L . A torus is *anisotropic* if it has no non-trivial characters defined over k , i.e. no homomorphisms $T(k) \rightarrow k^*$ besides $t \mapsto 1$. Any torus splits as a semi-direct product $T(k) = T_a T_s$ of a maximal split sub-torus T_s and an anisotropic torus T_a .

Let G be a connected linear algebraic k -group, i.e. it has a faithful representation as a matrix group such that the group is defined by polynomial equations with coefficients in k . By [Borel, §11.3] all maximal tori in G are conjugate. The centralizer of a maximal torus T is called a Cartan subgroup $C(T)$. By [Borel, §12.1] a Cartan subgroup is a maximal connected nilpotent subgroup of G . One can also speak of split Cartan subgroups: by definition these have a decomposition series with successive quotients k^* or k . Equivalently, it is trigonalizable over k .

All Cartan subgroups are conjugate [Borel, §12.1]. The common dimension is called the *rank* of G . There are always maximal tori $T(k)$ and Cartan subgroups $C(k)$ defined over k , and these are conjugate [Borel, Theorem 12.1]. Hence there is a maximal split torus $T_s(k)$ over k and a maximal split connected nilpotent subgroup $C_s(k)$ of k , the k -Cartan group. By [Borel, Theorem 15.9] these are all k -conjugate. The dimension of $C_s(k)$ is called the k -rank of G . If it is zero G not only has no split k -tori, it does not contain any non-trivial connected nilpotent k -group. The following result is needed later on:

Lemma 1.1. *Let G be a connected linear algebraic k -group of k -rank 0. Then G has no non-trivial unipotent elements.*

Proof: The Zariski-closure of a non-trivial unipotent element in $G(k)$ is isomorphic to the additive group k (see [Borel, remark in § 7.3]). This is a connected nilpotent split subgroup of G and so the k -rank of G is positive.

- Examples 1.2.** 1. Let $k = \mathbb{R}$. Then a 1-torus is either \mathbb{R}^* with trivial Galois action, or S^1 , with Galois action $\theta \mapsto -\theta$. In the first case the torus is split and the rank is 1; in the second case the torus is anisotropic and the \mathbb{R} -Cartan group is 1 so that \mathbb{R} -rank is 0.
2. Let k be a finite extension of \mathbb{Q} and G a k -group such that for some embedding $k \hookrightarrow \mathbb{C}$ the resulting group $G(\mathbb{C})$ is compact. Then the k -rank is 0. Indeed, if C is a k -Cartan subgroup of G , the successive quotients from a decomposition series being k^* or k imply that either G contains k^* or k and hence $G(\mathbb{C})$ contains \mathbb{C}^* or \mathbb{C} which is impossible for a compact group.

Next, let me recall the construction of the Weil restriction. Let K/k be a finite Galois extension of a field k of degree d and with Galois group

$$\text{Gal}(K/k) = \{\sigma_i, i = 1, \dots, d\}.$$

Viewing K as a k -algebra, we get the regular representation $\rho : K \rightarrow M_d(k)$. Then for all positive integers m from the representation ρ one gets a new one, $\rho(m) : M_K(m) \rightarrow M_k(md)$, defined by $\rho(m)(A_{ij}) = (\rho(A_{ij}))$. Suppose now that G is a K -matrix group $G \subset \text{GL}_K(N)$, then the *Weil restriction* $R_{K/k}G$ is the k -group $\rho(N)(G)$. If $\dim_K G = n$, then $\dim_k R_{K/k}G = nd$. By construction, its group of K -points is a product

$$R_{K/k}G(K) = \prod_1^d G^{(i)}, \quad G^{(i)} := \{g^{\sigma_i} \mid g \in G\}.$$

Example 1.3. Let $k = \mathbb{R}$, $K = \mathbb{C}$, $G = \mathbb{C}^*$. The Galois group of \mathbb{C}/\mathbb{R} consists of the identity and the complex conjugation σ . The map $\rho : \mathbb{C} \rightarrow M_2(\mathbb{R})$ is just the map sending $z = x + iy$ to the matrix $\begin{pmatrix} x & -y \\ y & x \end{pmatrix}$ and $\rho(\mathbb{C}^*)$ is just the product of the unit circle S^1 and the half line \mathbb{R}^* . The conjugation preserves both factors. It acts as $-\text{id}$ on the first factor and as id on the second. Hence $S := R_{\mathbb{C}/\mathbb{R}}(\mathbb{C}^*)$ is just \mathbb{C}^* with the standard Galois-action and standard real structure. With the standard embedding $\mathbb{R} \hookrightarrow \mathbb{C}$ one can identify $S(\mathbb{C})$ with the pairs (u, v) with $u^2 \neq -v^2$, i.e. with the pairs $(u + iv, u - iv) \in \mathbb{C}^* \times \mathbb{C}^*$. So $S(\mathbb{C}) = \mathbb{C}^* \times \mathbb{C}^*$ with Galois action interchanging the two factors.

From example 1.2 ii) one gets the following obvious but useful result.

Lemma 1.4. *Let H be an algebraic group defined over a number field K and let $G = R_{K/\mathbb{Q}}H$ be its Weil-restriction. Suppose that $G(\mathbb{R})$ decomposes as a direct product of real groups $G = \prod_i G_i$. Then the \mathbb{Q} -rank of G is at most $\max_i(\mathbb{R}\text{-rank } G_i)$. In particular, if some G_i is compact, the \mathbb{Q} -rank of G is zero.*

Let me now discuss some classical examples. Fix a field k and a division algebra D over k with center F . The opposite division algebra is denoted D^0 . Let V be a k -vector space with right D -action, or, equivalently, a left D^0 -action. The algebra of D -transformations of V is isomorphic to the matrix algebra $M_n(D)$ where n is the rank of V over D . The invertible matrices form the group $\mathrm{GL}_D(V)$. The determinant of an invertible matrix belongs to the units D^\times of D and using the norm map $N : D^\times \rightarrow F$ the special linear group $\mathrm{SL}_D(V)$ consists of invertible elements $A \in M_n(D)$ with $N(\det(A)) = 1$.

Suppose that D admits a (generalized) *involution*, i.e. an anti-automorphism $a \mapsto a^\sigma$ of order 1 or two. Denote the resulting involution on D^0 also by σ . Let $\epsilon = \pm 1$. A D -valued k -bilinear form on V is called ϵ -*hermitian with respect to D* , if

$$\left. \begin{aligned} h(v, v'a) &= h(v, v')a, \\ h(v', v) &= \epsilon h(v, v')^\sigma \end{aligned} \right\} \quad v, v' \in V, a \in D. \quad (1)$$

One says that h is *non-degenerate*, if in some D -basis for V the corresponding matrix for h is invertible. By definition, for such h the associated *unitary group* and *special unitary group* are

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{U}(V, h) &= \{g \in \mathrm{GL}_D(V) \mid h(gv, gv') = h(v, v'), \quad \forall v, v' \in V\} \\ \mathrm{SU}(V, h) &= \mathrm{U}(V, h) \cap \mathrm{SL}_D(V). \end{aligned}$$

Example 1.5. Let $k = \mathbb{R}$. Then \mathbb{R} , \mathbb{C} and the quaternions \mathbb{H} are the only non-trivial division algebras over \mathbb{R} with $F = \mathbb{R}, \mathbb{C}, \mathbb{R}$ respectively. Take for σ the identity, the complex conjugation, the standard involution $a + bi + cj + dk \mapsto a - bi - cj - dk$. For $\epsilon = 1$ one can assume that h is of the form $(\vec{x}, \vec{y}) \mapsto \mathrm{Tr} \vec{x}^\sigma \vec{x}$ and one gets the real compact groups $\mathrm{SO}(n)$, $\mathrm{SU}(n)$, respectively $\mathrm{SU}(n, \mathbb{H})$. These have \mathbb{R} -rank 0.

For $\epsilon = -1$ the situation is more complicated. For $B = \mathbb{R}$ one can take for h the standard symplectic group, and so $n = 2m$ and one gets m . Its \mathbb{R} -rank is m . For $B = \mathbb{C}$ one can take for h the diagonal matrix $(-i\mathbf{1}_p, i\mathbf{1}_q)$, $p + q = n$. The resulting group is $\mathrm{SU}(p, q)$ whose \mathbb{R} -rank is $r = \min(p, q)$. It is only compact for $r = 0$ since isomorphic to $\mathrm{SU}(n)$. Finally, if $B = \mathbb{H}$, one can take $j\mathbf{1}_n$ and the resulting group is usually denoted $\mathrm{SU}(n, \mathbb{H})^-$. It has \mathbb{R} -rank $\lfloor n/2 \rfloor$. For $n = 1$ it is the group S^1 which is compact. The \mathbb{R} -rank follows since it is equal to the dimension of a maximal isotropic subspace.

Lemma 1.6. *Let G be any of the classical groups m , $\mathrm{SU}(p, q, \mathbb{C})$ or $\mathrm{SU}(n, \mathbb{H})^-$ and let $g \in G$ be unipotent. Then $(g - \mathbf{1})^\ell = 0$, where ℓ is the \mathbb{R} -rank of G .*

Proof:

2 Two Groups Associated to Monodromy Representations

A local system \underline{H}_S of k -vector spaces on any topological space S can be considered as a left Γ -module H , where Γ is the image of $\pi_1(S, s_0)$ in the group $\text{Aut}(H)$, where H is the fiber of \underline{H}_S at s_0 . If H comes equipped with a non-degenerate k -bilinear form Q , preserved by the monodromy action, one has $\Gamma \subset \text{Aut}(H, Q)$. The form Q is supposed to be ϵ -hermitian with respect to the trivial involution on k . This just means that for $\epsilon = 1$, respectively -1 the form Q is symmetric, respectively skew-symmetric.

We assume now that the *representation is completely reducible* so that one can group together all the irreducible constituents which are isomorphic. More generally, let Γ be any group with a finite-dimensional representation in $\text{Aut}(H, Q)$, and assume that the representation is *isotypical*, i.e. there is an *irreducible* Γ -module V such that H is a direct sum of copies of V . Put

$$\begin{aligned} D &:= \text{End}_\Gamma(V) & E &:= \text{End}_\Gamma(H), \\ F &:= \text{Center}(D) & U &:= \text{Hom}_\Gamma(V, H). \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Then D is a k -division algebra (this is just Schur's Lemma), and so F is a finite extension field over k . By construction we have :

Lemma 2.1. *The algebra D is central and simple over F and hence for some integer r we have $\dim_F D = r^2$.*

Now D acts on the left on V and on the right on U (by composition) and

$$H = U \otimes_D V, \quad (3)$$

where the tensor product is $U \otimes_F V$ modulo the subspace generated by $(u\alpha \otimes v) - (u \otimes \alpha v)$, $\alpha \in D$, $u \in U$, $v \in V$.

Lemma 2.2 ([Sat, Ch. IV, Lemma 1.1]). *Suppose that as a D -module U has rank a and V has rank b . Then*

$$\dim_k H = abr^2[F : k] \quad (4)$$

and the number of irreducible constituents isomorphic to V in H is equal to a .

The form Q induces an involution $a \mapsto a^*$ on E by setting

$$Q(x, ay) = Q(a^*x, y), \quad \forall x, y \in H.$$

On the other hand, Q makes H and hence V self-dual and so, by [Sat, IV, Lemma 2.2] there is an involution $b \mapsto b^\sigma$ on D preserving the center F such that σ coincides with $*$ on F . Moreover, by [Sat, IV, Theorem 2.3]:

Proposition 2.3. *There is a non-degenerate $\tilde{\epsilon}$ -hermitian form h_V on V with respect to the opposite involution σ on D^0 (remember that V has a left D -action, hence a right D^0 -action), and a $(-\epsilon\tilde{\epsilon})$ -hermitian form h_U on U such that*

$$Q(u \otimes_D v, u' \otimes_D v') = {}^\top_{D/F}(h_U(u, u')[h_V(v, v')]^0).$$

As to signs, one needs to distinguish how $*$ acts on F . If $*$ = id one calls $*$ (and also σ) of the *first kind*, and of the *second kind* otherwise. Introduce:

$$G_U := R_{F/\mathbb{Q}} \mathrm{SU}(U, h_U) \quad (\text{monodromy deformation group}) \quad (5)$$

$$G_V := R_{F/\mathbb{Q}} \mathrm{SU}(V, h_V) \quad (\text{algebraic monodromy group}). \quad (6)$$

Then we have:

- Lemma 2.4.**
1. *The Lie algebra of the group $G_U(\mathbb{R})$ is equal to $\mathrm{End}(H, Q) \otimes \mathbb{R}$.*
 2. *The monodromy representation factors over the natural representation $G_V \rightarrow \mathrm{Aut}(H, Q)$.*

3 Variations of Hodge Structure

Suppose next that $k = \mathbb{Q}$ and that \underline{H}_S admits a \mathbb{Z} -structure which underlies a Q -polarized variation of Hodge structures. Let me briefly recall the definition.

Definition 3.1. *A variation of Hodge structure on S of weight n is a local system \underline{H}_S of free \mathbb{Z} -modules of finite rank on S such that each fiber over $t \in S$ of the complexification admits a Hodge structure of weight n and such that*

- the associated Hodge flag F_t^\bullet depends holomorphically on t (this is the holomorphicity of the period map)
- the flat connection ∇ satisfies *Griffiths' horizontality condition*:

$$\nabla_\xi F_t^q \subset F_t^{q-1}, \quad \xi \text{ a germ of a holomorphic tangent field at } t.$$

(this last condition is the horizontality of the period map).

The Hodge structure is *polarized* by a flat bilinear integral form Q if Q induces a polarization on the Hodge structures on each fibres of \underline{H}_S .

For any variation of Hodge structures the monodromy representation is complete reducible:

Theorem 3.2 ([Del71, 4.2.6]). *A polarized variation of Hodge structures over a quasi-projective manifold is direct sum of irreducible ones.*

This implies that we can apply the considerations of 2. As in [S-Zu, Thm. 2.4.1] one shows:

Lemma 3.3. *Suppose that $k = \mathbb{Q}$ and that \underline{H}_S underlies a Q -polarized variation of Hodge structures. Assume that the local system is isotypical and let D be the algebra of Q -endomorphisms of \underline{H}_S . One has two possibilities for the center F of D :*

- (R) F is either a totally real number field and $*$ is of the first kind,
- (C) F is a quadratic extension of a totally real number field F_0 and $*$ is the complex conjugation on F .

Proposition 3.4 ([,]). *Suppose that (H, Q) underlies a variation of Hodge structure. Then $\text{End}(H, Q)$ inherits a weight 0 Hodge structure and (H, Q) is rigid as a variation of Hodge structure if $\text{End}^{-1,1}(H, Q) = 0$. This is in particular the case if G_U is 0-dimensional.*

We next consider what happens when we extend to \mathbb{R} . From Lemma 2.1 we know that D is a central simple algebra over F and that $\dim_F D = r^2$. Let $[F_0 : \mathbb{Q}] = t$, let $\sigma_i : F_0 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, $i = 1, \dots, t$ be the distinct real embeddings. Our variation of Hodge structure on \underline{H}_S splits over the reals as

$$(H, Q) \otimes \mathbb{R} \simeq \bigoplus_i^t (H, Q)^{(i)},$$

and this gives the following restriction:

Lemma 3.5. *For an absolutely irreducible representation we must have $F = F_0 = \mathbb{Q}$.*

In any case, we have:

Lemma 3.6. $D^{(i)} := D \otimes_{\sigma_i} \mathbb{R}$ is a matrix algebra over one of the three simple real division algebras \mathbb{R}, \mathbb{H} or \mathbb{C} :

Case R1 $F \otimes_{\sigma_i} \mathbb{R} = \mathbb{R}$, $D^{(i)} = M_r(\mathbb{R})$

Case R2 $F \otimes_{\sigma_i} \mathbb{R} = \mathbb{R}$, r is even and $D^{(i)} = M_{r/2}(\mathbb{H})$,

Case C $F \otimes_{\sigma_i} \mathbb{R} = \mathbb{C}$ and $D^{(i)} = M_r(\mathbb{C})$.

Lemma 3.7. *Put*

$$(V, Q)^{(i)} := (V, Q) \otimes_{\sigma_i} \mathbb{R}, \quad U^{(i)} := U \otimes_{\sigma_i} \mathbb{R}, \quad H^{(i)} := U^{(i)} \otimes_{D^{(i)}} V^{(i)}.$$

Recall that $\dim_D U = a$ and that $\dim_D V = b$ we have

Case R1 $U^{(i)} = \mathbb{R}^{ar}$, $V^{(i)} = \mathbb{R}^{br}$,

Case R2 $U^{(i)} = \mathbb{H}^{ar/2}$, $V^{(i)} = \mathbb{H}^{br/2}$,

Case C $U^{(i)} = \mathbb{C}^{ar}$, $V^{(i)} = \mathbb{C}^{br}$.

Recall (Prop. 2.3) that if the induced hermitian form on $U^{(i)}$ has sign ϵ_i then the induced form on $V^{(i)}$ has sign $-\epsilon\epsilon_i$. In this way, one thus obtains:

Lemma 3.8. *Let $\sigma_i : F_0 \hookrightarrow \mathbb{R}$, $i = 1, \dots, t$ be the real embeddings of F_0 , as before and let $R1^\pm$, $R2^\pm$, respectively C^\pm be the numbers of embeddings σ_i of type (R1, sign $\epsilon_i = \pm 1$), (R2, sign $\epsilon_i = \pm 1$), (C, sign $\epsilon_i = \pm 1$) respectively. For each of (C, sign $\epsilon_i = -1$), let (c_i, d_i) , $i = 1, \dots, C^-$, respectively (c'_i, d'_i) , $i = 1, \dots, C^+$ be the signatures of the corresponding hermitian forms on $U^{(i)}$, respectively $V^{(i)}$. Then with the notation (5), and (6) one has*

$$G_U(\mathbb{R}) = \prod_{R1^+} \mathrm{SO}_{ar} \times \prod_{R1^-} \mathrm{Sp}_{ar/2} \times \prod_{R2^+} \mathrm{SU}_{ar/2}(\mathbb{H}) \times \prod_{R2^-} \mathrm{SU}_{ar/2}(\mathbb{H})^- \times \prod_{C^+} \mathrm{SU}_{ar} \times \prod_{i=1}^{C^-} \mathrm{SU}(b_i, c_i),$$

$$(c_i + d_i = ar),$$

and if $\epsilon = 1$, respectively $\epsilon = -1$, one then has correspondingly

$$G_V(\mathbb{R}) = \prod_{i=1}^{R1^+} \mathrm{SO}_{br} \times \prod_{i=1}^{R1^-} \mathrm{Sp}_{br/2} \times \prod_{R2^+} \mathrm{SU}_{br/2}(\mathbb{H}) \times \prod_{R2^-} \mathrm{SU}_{br/2}(\mathbb{H})^- \times \prod_{C^+} \mathrm{SU}_{br} \times \prod_{i=1}^{C^-} \mathrm{SU}(c'_i, d'_i),$$

$$G_V(\mathbb{R}) = \prod_{i=1}^{R1^-} \mathrm{SO}_{br} \times \prod_{i=1}^{R1^+} \mathrm{Sp}_{br/2} \times \prod_{R2^-} \mathrm{SU}_{br/2}(\mathbb{H}) \times \prod_{R2^+} \mathrm{SU}_{br/2}(\mathbb{H})^- \times \prod_{C^-} \mathrm{SU}_{br} \times \prod_{i=1}^{C^+} \mathrm{SU}(c'_i, d'_i),$$

$$(c'_i + d'_i = br).$$

respectively.

Corollary 3.9. *Suppose that $a = r = 1$. Then $G_U(\mathbb{R})$ is compact abelian, hence its Lie-algebra is of pure type (0,0). The variation is in particular rigid.*

There are two (?) important examples:

Examples 3.10. 1. The monodromy representation is irreducible (so that $a = 1$) and $\dim_{\mathbb{Q}} H$ is square free. Since by (4) we have $\dim_{\mathbb{Q}} H = abtr^2$, we then must have $r = 1$ also. Hence the variation is rigid.

Corollary 3.11. *Let $\gamma \in \Gamma$ be a non-trivial unipotent of order ℓ . Then if $\epsilon = 1$, respectively -1 , one has $R1^+ = R2^+ = C^+ = 1$, $R1^- = R2^- = C^- = 1$, respectively, and $\ell \leq br/2$, $\ell \leq \min(c'_i, d'_i)$.*

Up to now, very little use has been made of the fact that Suppose now that the weight of the variation of k and that the Hodge numbers $h^{p,q}$ are zero for $p < 0$. Then all the above modules inherit Hodge structures: E , D get Hodge structures of weight 0 with Hodge numbers $h^{p,-p}$ non-zero if $|p| > k$, and V and U get weight k Hodge structures. This can be shown to have serious restriction on the possible signs $\epsilon, \epsilon_Q, \epsilon_i$ that occur.

Examples 3.12. 1. Let $k = 1$ and suppose that the variation is irreducible, i.e. $m = 1$ and that $\dim_{\mathbb{Q}}(V) = 2g$. Then, by [Sat, IV, § 6] only the following possibilities may occur

- $G_U(\mathbb{R}) = \prod^{N_3} \mathrm{Sp}_g$, $G_V(\mathbb{R}) = \mathrm{id}$,
- g is even, say $g = 2h$, $G_U(\mathbb{R}) = \prod^{N_3} \mathrm{Sp}_g \times \prod^{M_1} \mathrm{SU}_h(\mathbb{H})$, $G_V(\mathbb{R}) = \prod^{N_3} \mathrm{SO}_2 \times \prod^{M_1} S^1$,
- $g = 2h$ is even, and $G_U(\mathbb{R}) = \prod^{N_1} \mathrm{SO}_h \times \prod^{N_4} \mathrm{SU}_g(\mathbb{H})^-$, $G_V(\mathbb{R}) = \prod^{M_1} \mathrm{SO}_2 \times \prod^{N_3} S^1$,
- For some factor r of $2g$ and some (c_i, d_i) , (c'_i, d'_i) with $c_i + d_i = 2g$, $c'_i + d'_i = r$, one has $G_U(\mathbb{R}) = \prod^{M_1} \mathrm{SU}_{2g} \times \prod_{i=1}^{M_2} \mathrm{SU}(p_i, q_i)$, $G_V(\mathbb{R}) = \prod_{i=1}^{M_2} \mathrm{SU}(p_i, q_i) \times \prod^{M_1} \mathrm{SU}_r$.

From this, one can deduce [Sa, Theorem 8.1] that the variation is non-isotrivial and non-rigid there must be at least two factors and in both groups there must be compact and non-compact factors. This is only possible in the last case and then one must also have $r \geq 2$. One deduces that the \mathbb{Q} -rank of G_V is zero and hence, there can't be any non-trivial unipotent element in the monodromy group.

2. $k = 2$, $h^{2,0} = 1$. In the irreducible situation, one [S-Zu, Theorem 5.2.3] deduces that $G_U(\mathbb{R}) = \mathrm{SL}_2 \times \prod_i^{M_1} \mathrm{SU}_2$, $G_V(\mathbb{R}) = \mathrm{SL}_2 \times \prod_i^{M_1} \mathrm{SU}_2$. From this it also follows that the variation is rigid if there is a unipotent element in the monodromy group of order of nilpotency ≥ 3 .

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