

Supramenable groups and their actions on locally compact Hausdorff spaces

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*(Joint with Julian Kellerhals and Nicolas Monod
—and joint work in progress with Hiroki Matui)*

Outline

- 1 Dynamical systems and crossed product C^* -algebras
- 2 Paradoxical sets - Tarski's theorem
- 3 Supramenable groups
- 4 Universal Γ -spaces

X = compact or locally compact Hausdorff space,

Γ = (countable) discrete group which acts on X .

- $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is **nuclear**
 $\iff \Gamma \curvearrowright X$ *amenable* [Anantharaman-Delaroche]
- **Tracial states** on $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$
 $\leftrightarrow \Gamma$ -invariant probability measures on X
- $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is **simple** $\iff \Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is *topologically free* and *minimal*. [Archbold-Spielberg]

Definition

$\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is *topologically free* if

$$\forall t \in \Gamma \setminus \{e\}: \{x \in X \mid t.x \neq x\} \text{ is dense in } X.$$

Note: $C_{\text{red}}^*(\mathbb{F}_n)$ is simple, but $\mathbb{F}_n \curvearrowright \{\text{pt}\}$ is not topologically free (or free).

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Definition (Anantharaman-Delaroche)

An action of a countable discrete group Γ on a locally compact space X is said to be *amenable* if there is a net of continuous maps $m_i: X \rightarrow \text{Prob}(\Gamma)$ (written $x \mapsto m_i^x$) such that

$$\|t.m_i^x - m_i^{t \cdot x}\|_1 \rightarrow 0$$

uniformly on all compact subsets of X and for all $t \in \Gamma$.

- If Γ is amenable, then we can choose the m_i 's above being constant. Hence any action of an amenable group is amenable.
- If $X = \{\text{pt}\}$, then Γ acts amenably on X iff Γ is amenable.
- Any *proper* action is amenable.
- If X has an invariant probability measure, then $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is amenable if and only if Γ is amenable.

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Definition: $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is *regular* if $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{full}} \Gamma = C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$.

Anantharaman-Delaroche proved the following:

- $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ amenable $\implies \Gamma \curvearrowright X$ *regular*.
- $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ amenable $\iff C_0(X) \rtimes \Gamma$ is nuclear.

Jean-Louis Tu proved:

- $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ amenable $\implies C_0(X) \rtimes \Gamma$ is in the UCT class.

Example (The Roe algebra)

The Roe algebra associated with a discrete group Γ is the crossed product:

$$\ell^\infty(\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma = C(\beta\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$$

where Γ acts on $\ell^\infty(\Gamma)$ by left translation. The left multiplication action $\Gamma \curvearrowright \Gamma$ extends (uniquely) to an action $\Gamma \curvearrowright \beta\Gamma$.

- $\Gamma \curvearrowright \beta\Gamma$ is amenable $\iff \Gamma$ is exact. [Ozawa]
- $\Gamma \curvearrowright \beta\Gamma$ is free for all Γ .
- $\Gamma \curvearrowright \beta\Gamma$ is not minimal (unless Γ is finite).

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Recall:

- $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is *regular* if $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{full}} \Gamma = C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$,
- $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ amenable $\implies \Gamma \curvearrowright X$ regular.
- $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ amenable $\iff C_0(X) \rtimes \Gamma$ is nuclear.

Proposition (Archbold-Spielberg, 1993)

$C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{full}} \Gamma$ is simple $\iff \Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is minimal, topologically free and regular.

Corollary (Anantharaman-Delaroche + Archbold-Spielberg)

$C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is simple and nuclear
 $\iff \Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is minimal, topologically free and amenable.

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X = metrizable, locally compact, totally disconnected space,
 Γ = countable discrete group, and $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$.

Proposition (Archbold-Spielberg, Laca-Spielberg)

Suppose that

- $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ minimal and topologically free,
- every non-zero projection in $C_0(X)$ is properly infinite in $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$.

Then $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is simple and purely infinite.

Corollary

$C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is a *Kirchberg algebra* in the UCT class if and only if

- $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is minimal, topologically free, and amenable,
- every non-zero projection in $C_0(X)$ is properly infinite in $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$.

Def: Kirchberg algebra = simple, nuclear, separable, *purely infinite* C^* -algebra.

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Def: Kirchberg algebra = simple, nuclear, separable, *purely infinite* C^* -algebra.

Definition

$\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ and X totally disconnected. Let $E \subseteq X$ be compact-open. Then E is (X, Γ) -paradoxical if \exists compact-open pairwise disjoint subsets E_1, E_2, \dots, E_{n+m} of E and $t_1, t_2, \dots, t_{n+m} \in \Gamma$ st

$$E \subseteq \bigcup_{j=1}^n t_j.E_j, \quad E \subseteq \bigcup_{j=n+1}^{n+m} t_j.E_j.$$

► We say that $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is *purely infinite* if all non-empty compact-open subsets of X are (X, Γ) -paradoxical.

► Being purely infinite is the opposite extreme from having a non-zero invariant Radon measure on X .

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Definition (Paradoxical sets)

Let Γ be a discrete group acting on a (discrete) set X . A set $E \subseteq X$ is said to be *paradoxical* if there are pairwise disjoint subsets $V_1, V_2, \dots, V_{n+m} \subseteq E$ and $t_1, t_2, \dots, t_{n+m} \in \Gamma$ st

$$\bigcup_{j=1}^n t_j \cdot V_j = \bigcup_{j=n+1}^{n+m} t_j \cdot V_j = E.$$

Suppose $X = \Gamma$, consider $\Gamma \curvearrowright \Gamma$, and let $E \subseteq \Gamma$.

► An **injective map** $\sigma: E \rightarrow \Gamma$ is said to be a *piecewise translation* there is a finite set $S \subseteq \Gamma$ such that $\sigma(t)t^{-1} \in S$ for all $t \in E$.

- $\forall A \subseteq E: \sigma(A) \sim_{\Gamma} A$, when $\sigma: E \rightarrow \Gamma$ is a piecewise translation.
- $E \subseteq \Gamma$ is paradoxical iff there exist piecewise translations $\sigma^{\pm}: E \rightarrow E$ such that $\sigma^+(E) \cap \sigma^-(E) = \emptyset$.

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Theorem (Tarski)

Let Γ be a discrete group acting on a set X , and let $E \subseteq X$. Then there exists a Γ -invariant finitely additive measure μ on $P(X)$ such that $0 < \mu(E) < \infty$ if and only if E is not Γ -paradoxical.

Theorem (R.-Sierakowski)

Let Γ be a countable discrete group acting on a set X (eg. X could be Γ itself). The following are equivalent for every $E \subseteq X$:

- (i) E is Γ -paradoxical.*
- (ii) 1_E is properly infinite in $\ell^\infty(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$.*
- (iii) There is no lower semicontinuous tracial weight τ on $\ell^\infty(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ for which $0 < \tau(1_E) < \infty$.*

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Definition (Rosenblatt, 1974)

A group Γ is *supramenable* if for all $A \subseteq \Gamma$ there exists a Γ -invariant finitely additive measure on Γ such that $\mu(A) = 1$. Equivalently, Γ is supramenable if Γ contains no paradoxical subsets.

Rosenblatt proved the following:

- All abelian groups are supramenable.
- Every group of subexponential growth (in particular, of polynomial growth) is supramenable.
- Any group that contains a free semigroup with two (or more) generators is not supramenable.
- In general: bad permanence properties. Not known if Γ, Λ supramenable $\implies \Gamma \times \Lambda$ supramenable.

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Theorem (Rosenblatt)

Let Γ be a *solvable group*. TFAE:

- 1 Γ is supramenable,
- 2 Γ has sub-exponential growth,
- 3 Γ does not contain a free semigroup (of two or more generators),
- 4 Γ is essentially nilpotent.

► A group Γ is *amenable* if and only if whenever it acts on a compact Hausdorff space X , then X has a Γ -invariant probability measure.

Proposition (Characterization of supramenability, I)

A group Γ is *supramenable* if and only if whenever it acts co-compactly on a locally compact Hausdorff space X , then X has a *non-zero Γ -invariant Radon measure*.

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Example (Groups that are non-supramenable)

- The $ax + b$ group (over \mathbb{Q}) is solvable (hence amenable), but non-supramenable.
- The Thompson group F is non-supramenable. It is not known if F is amenable or not.
- $BS(1, m) = \langle a, b \mid bab^{-1} = a^m \rangle$ (with $m \neq \pm 1$) is solvable, finitely generated, and non-supramenable (it contains a free semigroup: $\langle b^2, b^2a \rangle$).

Supramenability and the Roe algebra

► $E \subseteq \Gamma$ is paradoxical iff 1_E is a properly infinite projection in $\ell^\infty(\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$. One can use this to prove:

Proposition (Characterization of supramenability, II)

Let Γ be a discrete group. Then Γ is *supramenable* if and only if the Roe algebra $\ell^\infty(\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ contains *no properly infinite projections*.

- Γ is non-amenable $\iff \Gamma$ is paradoxical
 $\iff \ell^\infty(\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is properly infinite.
- Γ non-supramenable $\implies \ell^\infty(\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is infinite.
- If Γ contains an element of infinite order, then $\ell^\infty(\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is infinite.
- If Γ is locally finite $\implies \ell^\infty(\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is finite.

Question: $\ell^\infty(\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is finite $\overset{??}{\iff} \Gamma$ locally finite?

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Purely infinite actions

\mathbf{K} = usual compact Cantor set.

\mathbf{K}^* = non-compact locally compact Cantor set.

Theorem

Let Γ be a countable exact group. Then the following are equivalent:

- (1) Γ is not supramenable.*
- (2) Γ admits a free, minimal, amenable, purely infinite action on \mathbf{K}^* .*

If $\Gamma \curvearrowright \mathbf{K}^$ is as in (2), then $C_0(\mathbf{K}^*) \rtimes \Gamma$ is a stable Kirchberg algebra in the UCT class.*

Note: $\Gamma \curvearrowright \mathbf{K}^*$ amenable $\not\Rightarrow \Gamma$ exact.

Construction of actions of groups on locally compact spaces

Begin with $\Gamma \curvearrowright \beta\Gamma$. Recall that this action is free; and amenable if Γ is exact.

Take $A \subseteq \Gamma$ and put $K_A = \bar{A} \subseteq \beta\Gamma$. Note that K_A is compact-open in $\beta\Gamma$. Put

$$X_A = \bigcup_{t \in \Gamma} t.K_A \subseteq \beta\Gamma.$$

► X_A is open (hence locally compact), $\Gamma \curvearrowright X_A$, and the action is co-compact.

► X_A admits a non-zero Γ -invariant Radon measure iff A is non-paradoxical.

↔ If all co-compact actions of Γ on any locally compact Hausdorff space admit a non-zero invariant Radon measure, then Γ must be supramenable.

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Construction of actions of groups on locally compact spaces, ctd.

$A \subseteq \Gamma \rightsquigarrow \Gamma \curvearrowright X_A$. The action is free and co-compact. It is amenable if Γ is exact.

Since $X_A = \bigcup_{t \in \Gamma} t.K_A$, where $K_A = \bar{A}$, and K_A is compact, it follows that X_A has a maximal proper Γ -invariant open subset, and hence a minimal (non-empty) Γ -invariant closed subset Z .

- Z is locally compact and totally disconnected.
- Z is (typically) **not** 2nd countable.
- $\Gamma \curvearrowright Z$ is free and minimal (and amenable if Γ is exact).
- If A is paradoxical, then $\Gamma \curvearrowright Z$ is purely infinite.

▶ The desired action of Γ on \mathbf{K}^* can be obtained from this provided that Z is non-compact and non-discrete.

▶ As $\Gamma \curvearrowright Z$ is purely infinite, Z cannot be discrete.

▶ We shall later give criterions on A that will ensure that Z is non-compact.

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▶ As $\Gamma \curvearrowright Z$ is purely infinite, Z cannot be discrete.

▶ We shall later give criterions on A that will ensure that Z is non-compact.

Construction of actions of groups on locally compact spaces, ctd.

$A \subseteq \Gamma \curvearrowright \Gamma \curvearrowright X_A$. The action is free and co-compact. It is amenable if Γ is exact.

Since $X_A = \bigcup_{t \in \Gamma} t.K_A$, where $K_A = \bar{A}$, and K_A is compact, it follows that X_A has a maximal proper Γ -invariant open subset, and hence a **minimal (non-empty) Γ -invariant closed subset Z** .

- Z is locally compact and totally disconnected.
 - Z is (typically) **not** 2nd countable.
 - $\Gamma \curvearrowright Z$ is free and minimal (and amenable if Γ is exact).
 - If A is paradoxical, then $\Gamma \curvearrowright Z$ is purely infinite.
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Definition

Let Γ and Λ be discrete groups. A map $f: \Lambda \rightarrow \Gamma$ is said to be *Lipschitz* if: \forall finite $F \subseteq \Lambda \quad \exists$ finite $F' \subseteq \Gamma$ st

$$\forall s, t \in \Lambda : st^{-1} \in F \implies f(s)f(t)^{-1} \in F'.$$

f is said to be a *quasi-isometric embedding* if it is Lipschitz and satisfies: \forall finite $F' \subseteq \Gamma \quad \exists$ finite $F \subseteq \Lambda$ st

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- Any group homomorphism is Lipschitz.
- Any group hom with finite kernel is a quasi-isometric embedding.

Recall:

- A **piecewise translation** is an injective map $\sigma: A \subseteq \Gamma \rightarrow \Gamma$ for which there is a finite $S \subseteq \Gamma$ st $\sigma(t)t^{-1} \in S$ for all $t \in A$.
- $A \subseteq \Gamma$ is paradoxical iff there are piecewise translation $\sigma^\pm: A \rightarrow A$ such that $\sigma^+(A) \cap \sigma^-(A) = \emptyset$.

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$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 A & \xrightarrow{f} & f(A) \\
 \sigma \downarrow & & \downarrow \tau \\
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- Any injective Lipschitz function maps paradoxical sets to paradoxical sets.

Proposition (Characterization of supramenability, III)

Γ is non-supramenable $\iff \exists$ injective Lipschitz map $f: \mathbb{F}_2 \rightarrow \Gamma$.

Proof: " \Leftarrow ": $f(\mathbb{F}_2)$ is a paradoxical set in Γ .

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Theorem (Benjamini-Schramm, 1997)

Γ is non-amenable $\implies \exists$ injective quasi-isometric embedding $f: \mathbb{F}_2 \rightarrow \Gamma$.

(The existence of a paradoxical $A \subseteq \Gamma$ st minimal closed invariant subsets of X_A are non-compact for every non-amenable Γ follows from this theorem of Benjamini and Schramm.)

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \{\text{groups of sub-exponential growth}\} \\
 \subseteq & \{\text{supramenable groups}\} \\
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It is not known if the two " \subseteq " are strict.

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Outline

- 1 Dynamical systems and crossed product C^* -algebras
- 2 Paradoxical sets - Tarski's theorem
- 3 Supramenable groups
- 4 Universal Γ -spaces**

We consider locally compact Γ -spaces with a dense orbit:

Proposition

Let Γ be a countable group acting on a locally compact Hausdorff space X . Consider the following properties:

- (i) $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$ is prime,
- (ii) $\Gamma \curvearrowright X$ is topologically transitive:
 $\forall \emptyset \neq U, V \subseteq X$ open $\exists g \in \Gamma : g.U \cap V \neq \emptyset$,
- (iii) \exists dense Γ -orbit in X ,
- (iv) $\Gamma.x$ is dense in X for all x in a dense G_δ subset of X .

Then

$$(i) \stackrel{(*)}{\iff} (ii) \stackrel{(**)}{\iff} (iii) \stackrel{(**)}{\iff} (iv).$$

(*) holds if $C_0(X)$ separates ideals in $C_0(X) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma$. This happens if Γ is exact and Γ acts residually topologically freely on X (Sierakowski).

(**) holds if X is second countable.

- ▶ The Γ -space $\beta\Gamma$ is **universal** for all compact Γ -spaces with a dense orbit: If X is a compact Γ -space with a dense orbit, then there is a continuous surjective Γ -map $\beta\Gamma \rightarrow X$.
- ▶ Every *minimal* closed invariant subset of $\beta\Gamma$ is universal for all minimal compact Γ -spaces.

Thm (Ellis, Gutman–Li): Any two minimal closed invariant subsets of $\beta\Gamma$ are isomorphic.

They show that any such Γ -space X is *coalescent*, i.e., any surjective continuous Γ -map $X \rightarrow X$ is injective.

Questions:

- ▶ Do the locally compact Γ -spaces X_A , $A \subseteq \Gamma$, have a similar universal property for *locally compact* Γ -spaces?
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- ▶ What does A say about the Γ -space X_A and its minimal invariant subsets?

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Universal property of the Γ -space X_A

Definition

Let Γ be a group and let A be a non-empty subset of Γ . Let $\mathcal{C}_\Gamma(A)$ be the class of locally compact Hausdorff free Γ -spaces X with a base point $x_0 \in X$ such that

- (a) $\Gamma.x_0$ is dense in X ,
- (b) $K := \overline{A.x_0}$ is a compact subset of X ,
- (c) $\bigcup_{g \in \Gamma} g.K^\circ = X$, where K° denote the interior of K ,
- (d) $\{g \in \Gamma : g.x_0 \in K\}$ is A -bounded.

▶ $(X_A, 1)$ is *universal* for $\mathcal{C}_\Gamma(A)$: If $(X, x_0) \in \mathcal{C}_\Gamma(A)$, then $\exists! f : X_A \rightarrow X$ continuous proper surjective Γ -map st $f(1) = x_0$.

▶ If X is a locally cpt Hausdorff free co-compact Γ -space with dense orbit $\Gamma.x_0$, then $(X, x_0) \in \mathcal{C}_\Gamma(A)$ for some $A \subseteq \Gamma$.

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Absorbing sets

- A subset $A \subseteq \Gamma$ is *absorbing* if $\bigcap_{g \in F} gA \neq \emptyset$ for all finite $F \subseteq \Gamma$.
- ▶ Equivalently, A is absorbing iff \forall finite $F \subseteq \Gamma \exists g \in \Gamma : Fg \subseteq A$.
- **Def:** $A \approx B$ if A is B -bounded and B is A -bounded, i.e., $A \subseteq FB$ and $B \subseteq F'A$ for some finite $F, F' \subseteq \Gamma$.

Proposition

Let $A \subseteq \Gamma$. Then some minimal closed invariant subset Z of X_A is compact iff $A \approx B$ for some absorbing set $B \subseteq \Gamma$.

Example

$A = \mathbb{N} \subseteq \mathbb{Z} = \Gamma$ is absorbing, but $\mathbb{N} \not\approx \mathbb{Z}$, so $X_{\mathbb{N}}$ is non-compact (and $X_{\mathbb{N}} \neq \beta\mathbb{Z}$).

$X_{\mathbb{N}}$ has at least one minimal closed invariant subset which is compact.

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- ▶ Let $A \subseteq \Gamma$. The corner $1_A(\ell^\infty(\Gamma) \rtimes_{\text{red}} \Gamma)1_A$ has a character $\iff \nexists A', A'' \subseteq A$ st $A' \cap A'' = \emptyset$ and $A' \approx A'' \approx A$.
- ▶ There are several infinite sets $A \subseteq \Gamma$ satisfying the above conditions! Eg. $\Gamma = \mathbb{Z}$ and $A = \{k^2 : k \in \mathbb{N}\}$.
 - A subset $A \subseteq \Gamma$ is *infinitely divisible* if there exists a sequence $\{A_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ of pairwise disjoint subsets of A st $A_n \approx A$ for all n (i.e., A is A_n -bounded for all n)
 - ▶ Equivalently, A is infinitely divisible if for each n there exist pairwise disjoint subsets A_1, \dots, A_n of A st $A_k \approx A$ for $k = 1, 2, \dots, n$.

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If $A \subseteq \Gamma$ is absorbing and not infinitely divisible, then X_A contains minimal closed invariant subsets Z_1 and Z_2 where Z_1 is discrete (i.e., isomorphic to Γ) and Z_2 is compact. In particular, Z_1 and Z_2 are not isomorphic.

Example: $\Gamma = \mathbb{Z}$ and $A = -\mathbb{N} \cup \{k^2 : k \in \mathbb{N}\}$.

Note: $(\ell^\infty(\mathbb{Z}) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}) / (c_0(\mathbb{Z}) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}) \cong \mathcal{A}_1 \oplus \mathcal{A}_2$ (its center is isomorphic to $\mathbb{C} \oplus \mathbb{C}$).

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Theorem: Every countable infinite group contains a subset which is infinitely divisible and not equivalent to an absorbing set.

► In every countable infinite group G there is $A \subseteq \Gamma$ st every minimal closed invariant subset of X_A is non-compact and non-discrete.

Theorem: Every countable infinite group Γ admits a free minimal action on the non-compact locally compact Cantor set. If Γ is exact, then the action can be chosen to be amenable.

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Remarks on possible applications to general actions

Suppose that X is a locally compact Hausdorff space Γ is a countable group acting freely and co-compactly on X . Then $(X, x_0) \in \mathcal{C}_\Gamma(A)$ for some $A \subseteq \Gamma$.

Hence $\exists f: X_A \rightarrow X$ continuous proper surjective Γ -map.

- ▶ If A is **non-paradoxical**, then there is a **non-zero invariant Radon measure** on X .
- ▶ If A is **equivalent to an absorbing set**, then X contains a minimal closed invariant subset, which is **compact**.
- ▶ If A is **not infinitely divisible**, then X contains a minimal closed invariant subset, which is **discrete**.
- ▶ If A is **infinitely divisible and not equivalent to an absorbing set**, then all minimal closed invariant subsets of X are **non-compact and non-discrete**.

Theorem

Let Γ be a countable group.

- (i) If Γ contains an infinite exact subgroup, then Γ admits a free minimal amenable action on \mathbf{K}^* .
- (ii) If Γ contains an element of infinite order, or if Γ contains an infinite amenable subgroup of infinite index, then Γ admits a free minimal amenable action on \mathbf{K}^* such that \mathbf{K}^* admits an invariant non-zero Radon measure.
- (iii) If Γ contains an exact non-supramenable subgroup, then Γ admits a free minimal amenable purely infinite action on \mathbf{K}^* .

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- Do all countable infinite groups admit a free minimal amenable action on \mathbf{K}^* such that \mathbf{K}^* admits an invariant non-zero Radon measure?
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