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A DICHOTOMY CONCERNING UNIFORM BOUNDEDNESS OF RIESZ TRANSFORMS ON RIEMANNIAN MANIFOLDS

ALEX AMENTA AND LEONARDO TOLOMEO

Abstract. Given a sequence of complete Riemannian manifolds \((M_n)\) of the same dimension, we construct a complete Riemannian manifold \(M\) such that for all \(p \in (1, \infty)\) the \(L^p\)-norm of the Riesz transform on \(M\) dominates the \(L^p\)-norm of the Riesz transform on \(M_n\) for all \(n\). Thus we establish the following dichotomy: given \(p\) and \(d\), either there is a uniform \(L^p\) bound on the Riesz transform over all complete \(d\)-dimensional Riemannian manifolds, or there exists a complete Riemannian manifold with Riesz transform unbounded on \(L^p\).

1. Introduction

Given a Riemannian manifold \(M\), one can consider the Riesz transform \(R := \nabla(−\Delta)^{-1/2}\), where \(\nabla\) is the Riemannian gradient and \(\Delta\) is the (negative) Laplace–Beltrami operator. In the Euclidean case \(M = \mathbb{R}^n\), this can be identified with the vector of classical Riesz transforms \((R_1, \ldots, R_n)\), as can be seen by writing \(R\) as a Fourier multiplier (see [12, §5.1.4]).

It is easy to show that \(R\) is bounded from \(L^2(M)\) to \(L^2(M; TM)\), and substantially harder to determine whether \(R\) extends to a bounded map from \(L^p(M)\) to \(L^p(M; TM)\) for \(p \neq 2\). We let

\[ R_p(M) := \sup_{\|f\|_{L^p} \leq 1} \|R(f)\|_{L^p} \]

denote the (possibly infinite) \(L^p\)-norm of the Riesz transform on \(M\). Various conditions, often involving the heat kernel on \(M\) and its gradient, are known to imply finiteness of \(R_p(M)\); see for example [2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14]. These results usually entail finiteness of \(R_p(M)\) for all \(p \in (1, 2)\), or for some range of \(p > 2\). On the other hand, there exist manifolds \(M\) for which \(R_p(M)\) is known to be infinite for some (or all) \(p > 2\): see [1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13].

Remark 1.1. When \(M\) has finite volume we abuse notation and write \(L^p(M)\) to denote the space of \(p\)-integrable functions with mean zero. This modification ensures that \(−\Delta)^{-1/2}\) is densely defined. When \(M\) has infinite volume, \(L^p(M)\) denotes the usual Lebesgue space.

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The Euclidean case is now classical: for all \( p \in (1, \infty) \) there is a constant \( C_p < \infty \) such that \( R_p(\mathbb{R}^n) \leq C_p < \infty \) for all \( n \in \mathbb{N} \) ([16]). This behaviour is expected to persist for all complete Riemannian manifolds, at least for \( p < 2 \). More precisely, in [9] it is conjectured that for all \( p \in (1, 2) \) there exists a constant \( C_p < \infty \) such that \( R_p(M) \leq C_p < \infty \) for all complete Riemannian manifolds \( M \). Such uniform bounds have been proven for all \( p \in (1, \infty) \) under curvature assumptions; rather than provide an overview of the vast literature on this topic we simply point to the recent paper [10] and references therein.

One could weaken the conjecture slightly and guess that \( R_p(M) \) is finite for all \( M \), given \( p \in (1, 2) \). In this article we show that this can only hold if the bound is uniform among all manifolds of a fixed dimension. This observation follows from the following dichotomy.

**Theorem 1.2.** Fix \( d \in \mathbb{N} \) and \( p \in (1, \infty) \). Then the following dichotomy holds: either

- there exists a constant \( C_{p,d} < \infty \) such that \( R_p(M) \leq C_{p,d} \) for all complete \( d \)-dimensional Riemannian manifolds \( M \), or
- there exists a complete \( (d + 1) \)-dimensional Riemannian manifold \( M \) such that \( R_p(M) = \infty \).

This follows from the following proposition, which we prove by an explicit construction.

**Proposition 1.3.** Fix \( d \geq 1 \), and let \( (M_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \) be a sequence of complete \( d \)-dimensional Riemannian manifolds. Then there exists a complete Riemannian manifold \( M \) of dimension \( d + 1 \) such that for all \( p \in (1, \infty) \),

\[
R_p(M) \geq \sup_{n \in \mathbb{N}} R_p(M_n).
\]

The main implication of Theorem 1.2 is as follows: to construct a manifold \( M \) for which \( R_p(M) = \infty \) for some \( p \in (1, 2) \), it suffices to construct a sequence \( (M_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \) of manifolds of equal dimension such that \( R_p(M_n) \to \infty \) as \( n \to \infty \). Thus one is led to consider lower bounds for \( L^p \)-norms of Riesz transforms. These seem not to have been considered in the literature, excluding of course the well-known computation of the \( L^p \)-norm of the Hilbert transform (the Riesz transform on \( \mathbb{R} \)) [15]. We hope that our contribution will provoke further interest in such lower bounds.

### 2. Preliminary lemmas

We begin with some basic lemmas. The first says that the range of the Laplace-Beltrami operator is dense in \( L^p \), and the second relates the Riesz transform on a manifold \( M \) with that on the \( M \)-cylinder \( M \times \mathbb{R} \). These cylinders play a key role in the proof of our main theorem.

**Lemma 2.1.** Let \( M \) be a complete Riemannian manifold. Then the set \( S := \Delta(C_c^\infty(M)) \) is dense in \( L^p(M) \) for all \( p \in (1, \infty) \) (recalling that we write \( L^p(M) \) for the space of \( p \)-integrable mean zero functions when \( M \) has finite volume).

**Proof.** Let \( H \in L^\infty(M) \) be such that \( \langle H, F \rangle = 0 \) for every \( F \in S \). Then \( \langle H, \Delta G \rangle = 0 \) for every test function \( G \), so \( H \) is harmonic. By [17, Theorem 3], it follows that \( H \) is constant, and the result follows. \( \square \)
**Lemma 2.2.** Let $M$ be a complete Riemannian manifold. Then
\[ R_p(M \times \mathbb{R}) \geq R_p(M). \]

**Proof.** Consider the following modification of the Riesz transform on $M \times \mathbb{R}$:
\[ \tilde{R} := \nabla_M (-\Delta_{M \times \mathbb{R}})^{-\frac{1}{2}} = \nabla_M (-\Delta_M - \partial_t^2)^{-\frac{1}{2}}. \]
This is just the projection of $R$ onto the first summand of the tangent bundle $T(M \times \mathbb{R}) = TM \otimes T\mathbb{R}$, so we have that
\[ \| \tilde{R}F \|_{L^p} \leq \| RF \|_{L^p}. \]
Let $F \in C_c^\infty(M \times \mathbb{R})$, and for all $\lambda > 0$ consider the function
\[ F_\lambda(x, t) := \lambda^\frac{1}{2} F(x, \lambda t), \]
which satisfies $\| F_\lambda \|_{L^p(M \times \mathbb{R})} = \| F \|_{L^p(M \times \mathbb{R})}$. Rescaling the operator $\tilde{R}$ in the variable $t$, we define
\[ \tilde{R}_\lambda := \nabla_M (-\Delta_M - \lambda^2 \partial_t^2)^{-\frac{1}{2}}, \]
so that
\[ \| \tilde{R}_\lambda F_\lambda \|_{L^p} = \| \tilde{R}_\lambda F \|_{L^p}. \]
Now take $f \in C_c^\infty(M) \cap D((-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}})$ and $\rho \in C_c^\infty(\mathbb{R})$ such that $\| \rho \|_{L^p(\mathbb{R})} = 1$, and consider the function $F(x, t) = f(x) \rho(t)$. Since $\Delta_M$ and $\partial_t^2$ commute, and the function
\[ G_\lambda(x, y) = \left( \frac{x}{x + \lambda^2 y} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \]
is bounded by 1 for $(x, y) > 0$, and $G_\lambda \to 1$ pointwise as $\lambda \to 0$, we have
\[ \lim_{\lambda \to 0} (-\Delta_M - \lambda^2 \partial_t^2)^{-\frac{1}{2}} F = \lim_{\lambda \to 0} G_\lambda(-\Delta_M, -\partial_t^2)(-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}} f \otimes \rho = (-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}} f \otimes \rho \]
in $L^2$, and thus also as distributions. Therefore $\tilde{R}_\lambda F \to Rf \otimes \rho$ as distributions, and so
\[ \liminf_{\lambda \to 0} \| \tilde{R}_\lambda F \|_{L^p(M \times \mathbb{R})} \geq \| Rf \otimes \rho \|_{L^p(M \times \mathbb{R})} = \| Rf \|_{L^p(M)}. \]
Combining this with (2) and (1), and the fact that $C_c^\infty(M) \cap D((-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}})$ is dense in $L^p(M)$,\(^1\) yields $R_p(M \times \mathbb{R}) \geq R_p(M)$. \( \square \)

### 3. Proof of the main theorem

In this section we carry out the construction that proves Proposition 1.3, which implies Theorem 1.2.

Consider a sequence $(M_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ of complete $d$-dimensional Riemannian manifolds. We will connect the $M_n$-cylinders $(M_n \times \mathbb{R})_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ along a $T^d$-cylinder $T^d \times \mathbb{R}$ as follows.\(^2\) For each $n \in \mathbb{N}$ fix a coordinate chart $U_n \subset M_n \times (-1/2, 1/2)$ and a small ball $B_n \subset U_n$. Similarly, for each $n \in \mathbb{N}$ choose a small coordinate chart $U_n' \subset T^n \times \mathbb{R}$ such that the charts $(U_n')_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ are pairwise disjoint, and a small ball $B_n' \subset U_n'$. For each $n \in \mathbb{N}$, glue the manifold $(M_n \times \mathbb{R}) \setminus B_n$ to $(T^n \times \mathbb{R}) \setminus B_n'$ along the boundaries

\(^1\)This follows from the inclusion $D((-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}}) \supseteq D((-\Delta_M)^{-1}) \supseteq D(M(C_c^\infty(M)))$, which is dense by Lemma 2.1. See also [11, Lemma 2.2]. Again, recall that $L^p(M)$ denotes the corresponding space of mean zero functions when $M$ has finite volume.

\(^2\)Of course, one could connect the $M_n$-cylinders to each other directly, without needing the $T^d$-cylinder. This would work just as well.
of $B_n$ and $B_n'$: this is possible since both these balls are ‘Euclidean’ balls sitting inside coordinate charts. This results in a $C^0$-Riemannian manifold $(M, g')$, which is $C^\infty$ away from the set $\Sigma = \cup_n \partial B_n$ on which we glued the manifolds together. Mollify the metric to get a $C^\infty$-Riemannian manifold $(M, g)$ such that $g = g'$ away from the $\varepsilon$-neighbourhood of $\Sigma$ for some very small $\epsilon$. An artist’s impression of this construction, with $M_n = S^1$ for each $n$, is shown in Figure 1.

For each $n \in \mathbb{N}$ we have an inclusion map

$$i_n: M_n \times (1, \infty) \to M$$

which is an isometry. From here on we fix $n$ and just write $i = i_n$. Functions on $M$ can be pulled back to $M_n \times (1, \infty)$; the pullback map is denoted $i^*$, so that for $f: M \to \mathbb{R}$ the function $i^* f: M_n \times (1, \infty) \to \mathbb{R}$ is defined by

$$i^* f(x, t) = f(i(x, t)).$$

On the other hand, for $g: M_n \times (1, \infty) \to \mathbb{R}$ we can define a pushforward $i_* g: M \to \mathbb{R}$ by setting $i_* g(i(x, t)) := g(x, t)$ on $i(M_n \times (1, \infty))$ and extending by zero to the rest of $M$. For a function $g: M_n \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$ and for $s \in \mathbb{R}$ we let $\tau_s g: M_n \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$ be the translated function $\tau_s g(x, t) := g(x, t - s)$. Similarly if $g: M_n \times (1, \infty) \to \mathbb{R}$ we can define $\tau_s g: M_n \times (1 + s, \infty) \to \mathbb{R}$. These concepts apply equally well to vector fields in place of functions.

We will need the following lemma, which relates the heat flow on $M_n \times \mathbb{R}$ to the one on $M$.

**Lemma 3.1.** Let $F: M_n \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$ be smooth and compactly supported, and fix $\sigma > 0$. Then for every $(x, t) \in M_n \times \mathbb{R},$

$$\lim_{s \to +\infty} \left( e^{\sigma \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}} i_* \tau_s F \right)(i(x, t + s)) = (e^{\sigma \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}} F)(x, t).$$

\[\]
Proof. Let $W_{x,t}(\sigma)$ be a Brownian motion on $M_n \times \mathbb{R}$ at time $\sigma$ starting from the point $(x, t)$. Since the generator $\frac{1}{2} \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}$ satisfies $\frac{1}{2} i_\sigma \circ \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} |_{i(M_n \times (1, +\infty))} = \frac{1}{2} \Delta_M |_{i(M_n \times (1, +\infty))}$, defining the stopping time

$$T(x,t) := \inf \{ s : W_{x,t}(s) \in M_n \times (-\infty, 1) \},$$

we have that $i(W_{x,t}(\sigma))$ is a Brownian motion on $M$ for $\sigma < T(x,t)$. Therefore there exists a Brownian motion $\tilde{W}_{i(x,t)}(\sigma)$ on $M$ such that $\tilde{W}(\sigma) = i(W(\sigma))$ for $\sigma < T$; if $\tilde{W}$ is a Brownian motion on $M$, we take for example

$$\tilde{W}_{i(x,t)}(\sigma) = \begin{cases} i(W_{x,t}(\sigma)) & \text{if } \sigma < T, \\ \tilde{W}_{i(W_{x,t}(T))}(\sigma - T) & \text{if } \sigma \geq T. \end{cases}$$

We have that

$$(e^{\sigma \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}} i_\sigma F)(i(x,t+s))$$

$$= \mathbb{E}(i_\sigma F)(\tilde{W}_{i(x,t+s)}(2\sigma))$$

$$= \mathbb{E}(i_\sigma F)(\tilde{W}_{i(x,t+s)}(2\sigma)) 1_{2\sigma < T} + \mathbb{E}(i_\sigma F)(\tilde{W}_{i(x,t+s)}(2\sigma)) 1_{2\sigma \geq T}$$

$$= \mathbb{E}(i_\sigma F)(\tilde{W}_{i(x,t+s)}(2\sigma)) 1_{2\sigma < T} + \mathbb{E}(i_\sigma F)(\tilde{W}_{i(x,t+s)}(2\sigma)) 1_{2\sigma \geq T}$$

$$= \mathbb{E}(i_\sigma F)(\tilde{W}_{i(x,t+s)}(2\sigma)) 1_{2\sigma < T} + \mathbb{E}(i_\sigma F)(\tilde{W}_{i(x,t+s)}(2\sigma)) 1_{2\sigma \geq T}$$

$$= (e^{\sigma \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}} i_\sigma F)(x,t+s)$$

Therefore

$$|(e^{\sigma \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}} i_\sigma F)(i(x,t+s)) - (e^{\sigma \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}} i_\sigma F)(x,t+s)| \leq 2 \|F\|_{L^\infty} \mathbb{P}(T(x,t+s) \leq 2\sigma).$$

Since $\Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}$ is translation invariant in the $\mathbb{R}$ coordinate, we have that

$$\mathbb{P}(T(x,t+s) \leq 2\sigma) \leq \mathbb{P}(\{W_{x,t+s}(\sigma') \in M_n \times (-\infty, 1) \text{ for some } \sigma' \leq 2\sigma + 1\})$$

$$= \mathbb{P}(\{W_{x,t}(\sigma') \in M_n \times (\infty, 1-s) \text{ for some } \sigma' \leq 2\sigma + 1\})$$

and by continuity of $W_{x,t}(\cdot)$, this tends to 0 as $s \to \infty$. Thus we find that

$$\lim_{s \to +\infty} \left( (e^{\sigma \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}} i_\sigma F)(i(x,t+s)) - (e^{\sigma \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}} i_\sigma F)(x,t+s) \right) = 0.$$

The conclusion follows from translation invariance of $\Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}}$ in $\mathbb{R}$. $\square$

We return to the proof of Proposition 1.3. Fix $\epsilon > 0$, and choose $F = \Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} H$ for some $H \in C_c^\infty(M_n \times \mathbb{R})$ with $\|F\|_{L^p} = 1$ such that

$$\|R_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} F\|_{L^p} \geq (R_p(M_n) - \epsilon) \land \epsilon^{-1}.$$

Such a function exists by Lemmas 2.1 and 2.2. We claim that

$$(3) \lim_{s \to +\infty} \tau_{-s} i^* R_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} (i_\sigma F) = R_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} F$$

as distributions. Assuming (3) for the moment, we have

$$\lim_{s \to +\infty} \sup_{s \to +\infty} \|R_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} (i_\sigma F)\|_{L^p(M_n \times \mathbb{R})} = \lim_{s \to +\infty} \sup_{s \to +\infty} \|i^* R_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} (i_\sigma F)\|_{L^p(M_n \times \mathbb{R})}$$

$$= \lim_{s \to +\infty} \sup_{s \to +\infty} \|\tau_{-s} i^* R_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} (i_\sigma F)\|_{L^p(M_n \times \mathbb{R})}$$

$$\geq \|R_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} F\|_{L^p(M_n \times \mathbb{R})} \geq R_p(M_n) - \epsilon,$$
while for all $s \in \mathbb{R}$
\[
\|i_s \tau_s F\|_{L^p(M)} \leq \|\tau_s F\|_{L^p(M_n \times \mathbb{R})} = \|F\|_{L^p(M_n \times \mathbb{R})} \leq 1.
\]
The result follows, so it remains to prove (3).

For $s$ sufficiently large, we have that
\[
i_s \tau_s F = i_s \tau_s (\Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} H) = i_s (\Delta_{M_n \times \mathbb{R}} R_s H) = \Delta_M i_s \tau_s H,
\]
therefore $i_s \tau_s F \in D(\Delta_M^{-\frac{1}{2}}) \subseteq D((-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}})$, and hence
\[
R(i_s \tau_s F) = \nabla \left( (-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}} i_s \tau_s F \right)
\]
as a distribution. To test the distributional convergence, let $X$ be a smooth compactly supported vector field in $M_n \times \mathbb{R}$. For large $s$ we have that
\[
\left< \tau_s \circ R_M (i_s \tau_s F), X \right> = \left< R_M (i_s \tau_s F), i_s \tau_s X \right>
\]
\[
= \left< (-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}} i_s \tau_s F, \text{div}(i_s \tau_s X) \right>
\]
\[
= \left< (-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}} i_s \tau_s F, i_s \tau_s \text{div}(X) \right>.
\]
Therefore it is enough to show that for every $G \in C^\infty_c(M_n \times \mathbb{R})$,
\[
\lim_{s \to \infty} \left< (-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}} i_s \tau_s F, i_s \tau_s G \right> = \left< (-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}} F, G \right>.
\]
By the well-known formula
\[
(-\Delta_M)^{-\frac{1}{2}} = \pi^{-\frac{1}{2}} \int_0^{+\infty} e^{-\frac{1}{2} \sigma} e^{\sigma \Delta_M} d\sigma,
\]
(4) is equivalent to showing that
\[
\lim_{s \to \infty} \int_0^{+\infty} \sigma^{-\frac{1}{2}} \left< e^{\sigma \Delta_M} i_s \tau_s F, i_s \tau_s G \right> d\sigma = \int_0^{+\infty} \sigma^{-\frac{1}{2}} \left< e^{\sigma \Delta_M \times \mathbb{R}} F, G \right> d\sigma.
\]
Note that
\[
\left| \sigma^{-\frac{1}{2}} \left< e^{\sigma \Delta_M} i_s \tau_s F, i_s \tau_s G \right> \right| \leq \sigma^{-\frac{1}{2}} \|i_s \tau_s F\|_{L^2} \|i_s \tau_s G\|_{L^2} \leq \sigma^{-\frac{1}{2}} \|F\|_{L^2} \|G\|_{L^2}
\]
and
\[
\left| \sigma^{-\frac{1}{2}} \left< e^{\sigma \Delta_M \times \mathbb{R}} F, G \right> \right| = \left| \left< e^{\sigma \Delta_M} \sigma \Delta_M i_s \tau_s H, i_s \tau_s G \right> \right| \lesssim \sigma^{-\frac{1}{2}} \|H\|_{L^2} \|G\|_{L^2}.
\]
Since the function $\min(\sigma^{-\frac{1}{2}}, \sigma^{-\frac{1}{2}})$ is integrable, by dominated convergence (5) will be proved if we show
\[
\lim_{s \to \infty} \left< e^{\sigma \Delta_M} i_s \tau_s F, i_s \tau_s G \right> = \left< e^{\sigma \Delta_M \times \mathbb{R}} F, G \right>
\]
for every $\sigma > 0$. We show (6) by writing
\[
\lim_{s \to \infty} \left< e^{\sigma \Delta_M} i_s \tau_s F, i_s \tau_s G \right> = \lim_{s \to \infty} \left< \tau_{-s}^* e^{\sigma \Delta_M} i_s \tau_s F, G \right>
\]
\[
= \lim_{s \to \infty} \int_{-s}^{+\infty} \int_{M_n} (e^{\sigma \Delta_M} i_s \tau_s F)(i(x, t + s))G(x, t) \, dx \, dt
\]
\[
= \int_{M_n} \int_{\mathbb{R}} (e^{\sigma \Delta_M \times \mathbb{R}} F)(x, t)G(x, t) \, dx \, dt
\]
\[
= \left< e^{\sigma \Delta_M \times \mathbb{R}} F, G \right>.
\]
using Lemma 3.1 and dominated convergence (by $\|F\|_{L^\infty} |G(x,t)|$). This completes the proof of Proposition 1.3, and hence establishes Theorem 1.2.

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