

## $M$ -IDEALS IN $B(l_p)$

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**This paper is concerned with the  $M$ -ideal structure of the algebras  $B(l_p)$  of bounded operators on the sequence spaces  $l_p$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$ . The  $M$ -summands are completely determined, but the  $M$ -ideals are only partially characterized. However evidence is presented to support the conjecture that the only nontrivial  $M$ -ideal is the ideal  $C(l_p)$  of compact operators on  $l_p$ .**

1. Introduction. It has been observed by several authors that various structure theorems for  $B(H)$ ,  $H$  a separable Hilbert space, can be extended to the spaces  $B(l_p)$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$ . For instance, it is known that the ideal  $C(l_p)$  of compact operators in  $B(l_p)$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$  is the only closed nontrivial two sided ideal [9], and Cac [5] has shown that the second dual of this space is isometrically isomorphic with  $B(l_p)$ . In another direction Hennefeld [10] proved that  $C(l_p)$  is an  $M$ -ideal in  $B(l_p)$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$ . The notion of an  $M$ -ideal generalizes the two sided ideals in a  $C^*$ -algebra; due to the geometric characterization of the ideals in these special algebras the  $M$ -ideals have been identified with the two sided ideals [13].

The present work arose from an attempt to extend the latter result on  $M$ -ideals to  $B(l_p)$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$ . Although the  $M$ -ideals in  $B(l_p)$  are not yet completely characterized, certain positive results are obtained. For instance, in  $B(l_p)$  the  $M$ -summands, a special subclass of  $M$ -ideals, are described. Moreover, it is shown that  $C(l_p)$  is a minimal  $M$ -ideal in  $B(l_p)$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$ , in the sense that every nontrivial  $M$ -ideal in  $B(l_p)$  contains the ideal of compact operators. The techniques developed herein yield a new proof that the  $M$ -ideals must be two sided ideals in a  $C^*$ -algebra. In addition, certain structure theorems on the state space of  $B(l_p)$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$  and on the hermitian elements of  $B(l_p)^{**}$  are derived.

2. Preliminaries. A closed subspace  $N$  of a Banach space  $X$  is said to be an  $L$ -ideal if there exists a closed subspace  $N'$  such that  $X = N \oplus N'$  and  $\|n + n'\| = \|n\| + \|n'\|$  for all  $n \in N$  and  $n' \in N'$ . A closed subspace  $J$  is said to be an  $M$ -ideal if the annihilator  $J^\perp$  is an  $L$ -ideal in  $X^*$ . A closely related concept is that of an  $M$ -summand which is defined to be an  $M$ -ideal  $J$  with a complementary closed subspace  $J'$  such that  $\|j + j'\| = \max\{\|j\|, \|j'\|\}$  for all  $j \in J$  and  $j' \in J'$ . It should be noted that  $M$ -ideals need not be  $M$ -summands. The detailed properties of these objects have been studied in [2],

and in particular the annihilator of an  $L$ -ideal is an  $M$ -summand, while the dual statement is true for the annihilator of an  $M$ -summand.

The  $M$ -ideal structure of Banach algebras was investigated in [13] and the results relevant to this paper are summarized below. Let  $A$  be a Banach algebra with identity  $e$  and let  $J$  be an  $M$ -ideal in  $A$ . Denote by  $S$  the state space of  $A$  defined to be  $\{\phi \in A^*: \|\phi\| = \phi(e) = 1\}$ . Then  $J^\perp$  and its complementary  $L$ -ideal, when intersected with  $S$ , yield a pair of complementary split faces  $F$  and  $F'$  respectively of  $S$  [13].  $J^{\perp\perp}$  is an  $M$ -summand in  $A^{**}$  with complementary  $M$ -summand  $J^{\perp\perp'}$  and  $Pe = z$  is an hermitian projection in  $A^{**}$ , where  $P$  is the projection of  $A^{**}$  onto  $J^{\perp\perp}$ . If  $z$  is regarded as a real valued affine function on  $S$  then  $z|_F = 0$  and  $z|_{F'} = 1$ . In general  $z$  is not the identity on the algebra  $J^{\perp\perp}$  although if  $A$  is commutative then this is the case [12]. However the following relations hold.

**THEOREM 2.1.** *For an  $M$ -ideal  $J$ ,  $zA^{**}z \subset J^{\perp\perp}$  and  $(e-z)A^{**}(e-z) \subset J^{\perp\perp'}$ .*

If  $z$  is not the identity on  $J^{\perp\perp}$  then  $z$  does not commute with every element of  $A^{**}$ . However there is a class of elements for which  $z$  is central, and this will be useful for later work.

**LEMMA 2.2.** *Let  $J$  be an  $M$ -ideal in  $A$  with associated projection  $z \in A^{**}$ . Then  $z$  commutes with every hermitian element of  $A^{**}$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $\phi$  be a state in  $F'$  so that  $z(\phi) = 1$ , and define a linear functional  $\phi_z \in A^*$  by

$$\phi_z(a) = \phi(za)$$

for all  $a \in A$ . Since  $\phi_z(e) = 1$  it is clear that  $\phi_z \in S$ . If  $h$  is any hermitian element of  $A^{**}$  then  $\phi_z(h) \in \mathbf{R}$  and so

$$\phi_z(zh) = \phi_z(h) \in \mathbf{R}.$$

For a state  $\psi \in F$ ,  $\psi_{(e-z)} \in S$  and thus

$$\psi(zh) = \psi(h) - \psi((e-z)h) \in \mathbf{R}.$$

The element  $zh$  is seen to take real values on  $F$  and  $F'$  and it follows then  $zh$  is hermitian since  $S = \text{conv}(F \cup F')$ . Similar arguments imply that  $hz$  is also hermitian and so  $hz - zh$  is hermitian. However  $i(hz - zh)$  is hermitian by [4, p. 47] and the only way to reconcile these statements is to conclude that  $hz = zh$ .

In [13] it was shown that if  $A$  is a  $C^*$ -algebra then the  $M$ -ideals are closed algebraic ideals. It is interesting to note that this is an easy consequence of the preceding lemma.

**COROLLARY 2.3.** *The  $M$ -ideals in a  $C^*$ -algebra  $A$  are closed algebraic ideals.*

*Proof.* The hermitian elements span  $A$  and so  $z$  is central in  $A^{**}$ , by Lemma 2.2. The result follows from Theorem 2.1.

3.  $M$ -summands in  $B(l_p)$ . Henceforth the study of  $M$ -ideals will be concentrated on the classical Banach spaces of bounded operators on the sequence spaces  $l_p$ . The restrictions will be made that  $1 < p < \infty$  and that  $p \neq 2$ . For  $p = 2$ ,  $B(l_2)$  is a  $C^*$ -algebra and so the results to be obtained in the general case are trivial consequences of [13, §5] for this space. The spaces with indices 1 and  $\infty$  differ markedly from those considered here, and some indication of this will be given in a later section.

The first results concern  $M$ -summands in  $B(l_p)$  and for these a theorem due to Tam will be needed.

**THEOREM 3.1** (Tam [15]). *The hermitian operators in  $B(l_p)$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$ ,  $p \neq 2$ , are precisely the diagonal operators with respect to the canonical basis  $\{e_i\}_{i=1}^{\infty}$  possessing real entries.*

**THEOREM 3.2.** *There are no nontrivial  $M$ -summands in  $B(l_p)$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$ .*

*Proof.* The case  $p = 2$  will be considered later and so suppose that  $p \neq 2$ . Let  $J$  and  $J'$  be complementary  $M$ -summands in  $B(l_p)$ , let  $z \in B(l_p)$  be the hermitian projection associated with  $J$ , and denote by  $F$  and  $F'$  the pair of split faces in the state space of  $B(l_p)$  obtained from  $J$  and  $J'$ . The projection  $z$  takes the values 1 on  $F'$  and 0 on  $F$ . The object is to show that  $z$  is the identity for  $J$ .

Consider  $\phi \in F'$ , and suppose that  $\phi_{(e-z)} \neq 0$ . Then there exists an operator  $A \in B(l_p)$  of norm less than or equal to one and there exists  $\delta \in (0, 1)$  such that  $\phi_{(e-z)}(A) = \delta$ . For each integer  $n$  define

$$X_n = z + \delta^n(e - z)A.$$

From Theorem 3.1 the matrix of  $z$  consists only of zeros and ones on the diagonal and so for any  $y \in l_p$  the vectors  $zy$  and  $\delta^n(e - z)Ay$  possess disjoint supporting sets from the canonical basis. Thus

$$\begin{aligned} \|X_n y\| &= (\|xy\|^p + \|\delta^n(e - z)Ay\|^p)^{1/p} \\ &\leq (1 + \delta^{np})^{1/p} \|y\|. \end{aligned}$$

Hence

$$\|X_n\| \leq (1 + \delta^{np})^{1/p}$$

and, since  $\|\phi\| = 1$ , this leads to the inequalities

$$(1 + \delta^{np})^{1/p} \geq \|X_n\| \geq |\phi(X_n)| = 1 + \delta^{n+1}.$$

From the binomial expansion

$$1 + \delta^{n+1} \leq (1 + \delta^{np})^{1/p} \leq 1 + \delta^{np}/p,$$

which is equivalent to

$$p \leq \delta^{n(p-1)-1},$$

since  $\delta > 0$ . However this inequality holds for all  $n$ . As  $n$  tends to infinity  $\delta^{n(p-1)-1}$  tends to zero, since  $p > 1$ , and this gives a contradiction. Thus  $\phi_{(e-z)} = 0$ .

This relation implies that, for  $\phi \in F'$  and  $A \in B(l_p)$ ,

$$\phi(zA) = \phi(A),$$

while similar reasoning shows that, for  $\psi \in F$ ,

$$\psi((e - z)A) = \psi(A).$$

Now consider  $j \in J$ . If  $\phi \in F'$  then

$$\phi(zj) = \phi(j),$$

while if  $\psi \in F$  then both

$$\psi(j) = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \psi(zj) = \psi((e - z)zj) = 0.$$

Thus  $j = zj$  and so  $J \subset zB(l_p)$ . Similarly  $J' \subset (e - z)B(l_p)$  and, since  $B(l_p) = J \oplus J'$ , it is clear that equality holds in these inclusions. Thus  $J$  and  $J'$  are right sided ideals in  $B(l_p)$ .

The adjoint is an isometric isomorphism between  $B(l_p)$  and  $B(l_q)$  where  $1/p + 1/q = 1$ , and so the image of  $J$  in  $B(l_q)$  is an  $M$ -summand and thus a right sided ideal in  $B(l_q)$ . However the adjoint reverses multiplication and so  $J$  and  $J'$  are also left sided ideals. This shows that any  $M$ -summand in  $B(l_p)$  is a two sided ideal. Now the only two sided ideals in  $B(l_p)$  are  $0$ ,  $B(l_p)$  and  $C(l_p)$  [9] and in order that the condition  $B(l_p) = J \oplus J'$  be satisfied it is clear that  $J = 0$  or  $J = B(l_p)$ . This completes the proof.

REMARK 1. The above result is strict in the sense that there

are many  $M$ -summands in  $B(l_1)$ . The subspace of matrices in  $B(l_1)$  which have a prescribed set of column vectors identically zero is a nontrivial  $M$ -summand.

REMARK 2. The proof of Theorem 3.2 was motivated by some work of Prosser [11] who characterized the one sided ideals of a  $C^*$ -algebra.

REMARK 3. For  $p = 2$  Theorem 3.1 fails and so the proof in Theorem 3.2 is no longer valid. However the  $M$ -ideals in a  $C^*$ -algebra are the closed two sided ideals [13] and the argument of the last paragraph is still true.

The ideal  $C(l_p)$  of compact operators in  $B(l_p)$  is known to be an  $M$ -ideal [10] and a natural conjecture is that this is the only nontrivial  $M$ -ideal, by analogy with the case  $p = 2$ . It has not proved possible to obtain this result, but this ideal can at least be shown to be contained in any nontrivial  $M$ -ideal.

LEMMA 3.3. *Let  $J$  be an  $M$ -ideal in  $B(l_p)$ . Then either  $J \cap C(l_p) = 0$  or  $J \cap C(l_p) = C(l_p)$ .*

*Proof.* Suppose that the conclusion is false. Then there exists an  $M$ -ideal  $J$  such that  $J \cap C(l_p)$  is a nontrivial  $M$ -ideal in  $C(l_p)$ . The second dual  $C(l_p)^{**}$  is isometrically isomorphic to  $B(l_p)$  [5], and  $J \cap C(l_p)$  induces a pair of nontrivial complementary  $M$ -summands in  $B(l_p)$ . This contradicts Theorem 3.2.

THEOREM 3.4. *Let  $J$  be a nonzero  $M$ -ideal in  $B(l_p)$ . Then  $J$  contains  $C(l_p)$ .*

*Proof.* From Lemma 3.3,  $J \cap C(l_p)$  is either 0 or  $C(l_p)$ . In the second case the theorem is proved, and so assume that  $J \cap C(l_p) = 0$ .

Let  $z$  be the hermitian projection associated with  $J$ , and for each  $n$  let  $P_n$  be the projection onto the span of the first  $n$  elements of the canonical basis. Consider a net  $(e_\alpha)_{\alpha \in A}$  from  $B(l_p)$  which converges in the  $w^*$ -topology of  $B(l_p)^{**}$  to  $z$ . For each  $n$  it is clear that

$$\lim_{\alpha} P_n e_\alpha P_n = P_n z P_n$$

in the  $w^*$ -topology, while elements of the net  $(P_n e_\alpha P_n)_{\alpha \in A}$  are compact and all lie in a finite dimensional subspace of  $C(l_p)$ . Thus convergence

takes place in the norm topology, and it follows that  $P_n z P_n \in C(l_p)$  for all  $n$ .

From Lemma 2.2,  $P_n$  and  $z$  commute, and so

$$z P_n z = z P_n = P_n z = P_n z P_n \in C(l_p).$$

However  $z P_n z \in J^{\perp\perp}$ , by Theorem 2.1, and thus  $z P_n z \in J \cap C(l_p)$ . By hypothesis

$$z P_n = P_n z = z P_n z = 0$$

for all  $n$ . Let  $K$  be a compact operator. Given  $\varepsilon > 0$  there exists  $n$  such that  $\|P_n K P_n - K\| < \varepsilon$ , and the inequalities

$$\|Kz\| = \|Kz - P_n K P_n z\| \leq \|K - P_n K P_n\| \|z\| < \varepsilon$$

and

$$\|zK\| = \|zK - z P_n K P_n\| \leq \|K - P_n K P_n\| \|z\| < \varepsilon$$

show that

$$zK = Kz = 0.$$

For every  $K \in C(l_p)$ ,

$$(e - z)K(e - z) = K,$$

and thus

$$C(l_p) = (e - z)C(l_p)(e - z) \subset (e - z)B(l_p)^{**}(e - z) \subset J^{\perp\perp}$$

by Theorem 2.1. Now it is clear that  $J$  and  $C(l_p)$  lie in complementary  $M$ -summands in  $B(l_p)^{**}$  and so, for  $K \in C(l_p)$  and  $A \in J$ ,

$$\|K + A\| = \max\{\|K\|, \|A\|\}.$$

Choose a nonzero element  $A \in J$  of unit norm. After multiplication by a suitable constant it may be assumed that the matrix of  $A$  has a strictly positive entry  $\delta$  occurring in some position  $(i, j)$ . Let  $K$  be the compact operator whose matrix has 1 in the  $(i, j)$  position and zeros elsewhere. Then

$$\|A\| = 1, \quad \|K\| = 1 \quad \text{and} \quad \|K + A\| \geq 1 + \delta,$$

which contradicts the defining equation for  $M$ -summands. The original assumption is seen to be incorrect, and this forces the conclusion that  $J$  contains  $C(l_p)$ .

REMARK. The behavior of  $C(l_p)$  in the last theorem is uncharacteristic of that of  $M$ -ideals in general. For example the  $C^*$ -

algebra  $C[0, 3]$  of continuous function on  $[0, 3]$  possesses no nontrivial minimal  $M$ -ideals. In this example the ideals of functions which vanish on  $[0, 2]$  and  $[1, 3]$  respectively are nontrivial  $M$ -ideals which have trivial intersection.

4. Some structure theorems. In this section, a result on singular states of  $B(l_p)$  is derived which is reminiscent of some work of Glimm [8]. This points out the similarity of the respective state spaces of  $B(l_p)$  and  $B(H)$ . In addition, the hermitian elements of the second dual of  $B(l_p)$  are partially characterized. The fact that the hermitian projections of  $B(l_p)$  are exactly the diagonal operators with only zero and one entries was central to the arguments used in Theorem 3.2. Since determining the  $M$ -ideals of a space is equivalent to characterizing the  $M$ -summands of its second dual it is natural to investigate the hermitian elements of  $B(l_p)^{**}$ . By the Goldstine density theorem  $H$  is an hermitian element of a dual space  $X^{**}$  if and only if  $H$  is real valued on the state space of  $X$ . This fact coupled with Theorem 3.2 reformulates the problem to that of determining the  $M$ -ideal structure of  $B(l_p)/C(l_p) \equiv A(l_p)$  and the corresponding state space of  $A(l_p)$ . A useful result along these lines is Proposition 4.3 which generalizes a lemma of Glimm [8].

In the sequel  $\bar{Q}$  will denote the closure of a set  $Q$ ,  $\overline{\text{conv}} Q$  will be the closed, convex hull of  $Q$  and  $\partial_e K$  will designate the extreme boundary of  $K$ .

LEMMA 4.1. *Let  $K$  be a compact convex set and let  $Q$  be a subset satisfying  $\overline{\text{conv}} Q = K$ . Then  $\bar{Q}$  contains  $\partial_e K$ .*

*Proof.* Suppose that the conclusion is false. Then there exists  $x \in \partial_e K/\bar{Q}$ . Let  $f$  be a continuous function such that

$$f(x) = 1, \quad f|_{\bar{Q}} = 0$$

and consider the lower envelope  $\check{f}$  of  $f$  defined, for  $y \in K$ , by

$$\check{f}(y) = \sup \{a(y) : a \in A(K) \text{ and } a \leq f\}.$$

Clearly  $\check{f}|_Q \leq 0$ , and  $\check{f}(x) = f(x) = 1$  since  $x$  is an extreme point [1, I.4.1]. Hence there exists  $a \in A(K)$  such that  $a|_{\bar{Q}} \leq 0, a(x) \geq 1/2$ , and  $a^{-1}((-\infty, 0])$  is a closed convex set containing  $Q$  but not containing  $x$ . It follows that  $x \notin \overline{\text{conv}} Q$ , which is a contradiction.

The above lemma is relevant in light of the following.

LEMMA 4.2 (*Stampfli, Williams* [14]). *Let  $B(X)$  denote the set*

of bounded linear operators on the Banach space  $X$ . Then the convex hull of the set of vector states is  $w^*$ -dense in the state space of  $B(X)$ .

PROPOSITION 4.3. Let  $f$  be a state on  $A(l_p)$ . Then  $f$  is a  $w^*$ -limit of vector states on  $B(l_p)$ .

*Proof.* By the Krein-Milman theorem  $f$  is the  $w^*$ -limit of convex combinations of pure states of  $A(l_p)^*$ . Therefore  $f$  is the  $w^*$ -limit of states of the form  $\lambda_1 f_1 + \dots + \lambda_n f_n$  where  $\lambda_i \geq 0$ ,  $\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i = 1$  and where  $f_1, \dots, f_n$  are pure states of  $A(l_p)$  which are regarded as lying in  $B(l_p)^*$ . So it suffices to study the case where  $f$  has the form  $\lambda_1 f_1 + \dots + \lambda_n f_n$  with the preceding properties. Let  $x_1, \dots, x_s$  be elements of  $A(l_p)$  and construct unit vectors  $\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n$  in  $l_p$  having finite support so that  $\langle x_i \xi_j, \xi_k \rangle < \varepsilon$  for  $1 \leq j, k \leq n$  and  $|f_j(x_i) - w_{\xi_j}(x_i)| < 1$  for all  $i$  and  $j$ . Suppose that the  $\xi_j$ 's have been constructed for  $j < m$ . If  $E_M = \text{sp}\{e_1, \dots, e_m\}$ , pick  $E_M^\perp$  so that for any unit vector  $v$  in  $E_M^\perp$ ,

$$(4.3) \quad \begin{aligned} \langle x_i \xi_j, v \rangle &\leq \varepsilon/2 \\ \langle \xi_j, x_i v \rangle &\leq \varepsilon/2, \quad 1 \leq i, j \leq m - 1. \end{aligned}$$

Let  $P'_M$  denote the projection onto  $E_M^\perp$  and  $f_{m'}$  the singular state given by

$$f_{m'}(T) = f_m(P'_M T P'_M).$$

An easy argument shows that  $f_{m'}$  remains a singular pure state. Since  $f_{m'}$  may be viewed as a pure state on the space  $P'_M B(l_p) P'_M$ , Lemmas 4.1 and 4.2 apply and one concludes that  $f_{m'}$  is the  $w^*$ -limit of functionals  $w_{\xi_\alpha}$  where the  $\xi_\alpha$  are unit vectors  $E_M^\perp$ . One thus can find  $\xi_m \in E_M^\perp$  of finite support such that

$$|f_m(x_i) - w_{\xi_m}(x_i)| < 1 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq s.$$

In addition,  $\xi_m$  must satisfy condition (4.3). This construction of the  $\xi_j$  can thus proceed by induction. This completed, set

$$\xi = \lambda_1^{1/p} \xi_1 + \dots + \lambda_n^{1/p} \xi_n.$$

Since the  $\xi_i$  have disjoint supports,  $\xi$  is a unit vector. Since conditions (4.3) hold for  $1 \leq j, k \leq n$ , then

$$\begin{aligned} \left| \sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j f_j(x_i) - w_\xi(x_i) \right| &= \left| \sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j f_j(x_i) - \sum_{j,k=1}^n (x_i \lambda_j^{1/p} \xi_j, \lambda_k^{1-1/p} \xi_k) \right| \\ &\leq \left| \sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j f_j(x_j) - \sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j (x_i \xi_j, \xi_j) \right| + n^2 \varepsilon. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $n$  is fixed,  $\varepsilon$  may be chosen so that the latter expression is less than one. This proves that  $\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j f_j$  is the  $w^*$ -limit of vector states which in turn completes the proof.

It can be shown that if the set of hermitian elements of  $B(l_p)$  is  $w^*$ -dense in the set of hermitian elements of  $B(l_p)^{**}$  then the  $M$ -ideals in  $B(l_p)$  are necessarily two sided ideals. This, in turn, would imply that  $C(l_p)$  is the only nontrivial  $M$ -ideal in  $B(l_p)$ . This appears to be a difficult question. For instance, in a  $C^*$ -algebra the set of hermitian elements is  $w^*$ -dense in the set of hermitian elements of the second dual space. The result is also true, rather trivially, for  $C(l_p)$  and its second dual space  $B(l_p)$ . On the other hand, the assertion is false for the disk algebra  $A(D)$ . The hermitian elements of  $A(D)$  are just the real multiples of the constant function 1 [6], whereas  $A(D)^{**}$  contains all the hermitian projections associated with  $M$ -ideals of  $A(D)$  (cf. [7] and [12]). The following two propositions lend evidence that the assertion is indeed true for  $B(l_p)$ .

In the sequel,  $P$  will denote any projection whose range is spanned by some subset of the canonical basis vectors.

**PROPOSITION 4.4.** *If  $H$  is hermitian in  $B(l_p)^{**}$ , then  $PHP$  is also hermitian.*

*Proof.* Let  $\omega$  be a vector state and consider the functional  $\omega_P$  defined by

$$\omega_P(T) = \omega(PTP) = (PTP x, x') = (TPx, (Px)') .$$

Clearly  $\omega_P$  is a real multiple of a state. Since this reasoning remains true for convex combinations of vector states, it also holds for any state  $\phi$ . Thus there exists  $\lambda \in \mathbf{R}$ ,  $s \in S(B(l_p))$  so that  $\phi_P = \lambda s$ . Thus

$$\phi(PHP) = \phi_P(H) = \lambda s(H) \in \mathbf{R}$$

so  $PHP$  is hermitian. This concludes the proof.

If the hermitian elements in  $B(l_p)$  are dense in those of the second dual, then these sets can be identified with the self-adjoint parts of the  $C^*$ -algebras  $l_\infty$  and  $l_\infty^{**}$  respectively. In this case the hermitian elements form a commutative algebra, and thus the following two results point positively in this direction.

**PROPOSITION 4.5.** *Let  $H \in B(l_p)^{**}$  be hermitian and let  $P$  be an hermitian projection in  $B(l_p)$ . Then  $P^\perp HP = 0$  on vector states.*

*Proof.* This follows immediately from Lemma 1 of [3].

**COROLLARY 4.6.** *If  $P$  is a finite dimensional projection then  $P^\perp HP = 0$  for all hermitian elements of  $B(l_p)^{**}$ .*

*Proof.* It suffices to consider the case where  $P$  is the projection onto the span of the first  $n$  basis elements. Consider the vector subspace  $V$  of  $B(l_p)^*$  spanned by functionals of the form

$$T \longmapsto (Te_i, y'_i)$$

for  $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ , and each  $y_i$  in the closed span of  $\{e_{n+1}, e_{n+2}, \dots\}$ . It is easy to check that  $V$  is  $w^*$ -closed.

For any state  $\phi$  define a linear functional  $\phi^*$  by

$$\phi^*(T) = \phi(P^\perp TP)$$

for all  $T \in B(l_p)$ . In the particular case of a vector state  $\omega$  defined by a unit vector  $x \in l_p$ ,

$$\omega^*(T) = (P^\perp TPx, x') = (TPx, P^\perp x').$$

From the nature of  $P$  it is clear that  $\omega^* \in V$ . This conclusion applies equally to any combination of vector states, and the  $w^*$ -continuity of this operation together with Theorem 4.2 implies that  $\phi^* \in V$  for every state  $\phi$ . Hence there exist vectors

$$y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n \in \overline{\text{span}} \{e_{n+1}, e_{n+2}, \dots\}$$

such that

$$\phi^*(T) = \sum_{i=1}^n (Te_i, y'_i).$$

For each  $i$ ,  $e_i$ , and  $y_i$  have disjoint supports, and so from these two vectors a unit vector  $x_i$  may be constructed so that

$$(Te_i, y'_i) = \alpha_i (TPx_i, P^\perp x'_i),$$

where  $\alpha_i$  is a constant. If  $\omega_i$  is the vector state associated with  $x_i$  then

$$\phi^* = \sum_{i=1}^n \alpha_i \omega_i^*.$$

If  $H$  is an hermitian element of  $B(l_p)^{**}$  then  $w_i^*(H) = 0$ , by the preceding proposition, and so

$$\phi^*(H) = \phi(P^\perp HP) = 0$$

for all states  $\phi$ . Thus  $P^\perp HP = 0$ .

PROPOSITION 4.7. *Each hermitian element in  $B(l_p)^{**}$  commutes with every compact diagonal operator.*

*Proof.* If  $P$  is a finite dimensional projection and  $H$  is hermitian then, from above,  $P^\perp HP = 0$ . Similar techniques yield  $PHP^\perp = 0$  and thus

$$PH = HP.$$

The result is now clear.

*Added in proof.* The authors have established that  $C(l_p)$  is the only nontrivial  $M$ -ideal in  $B(l_p)$ . This result will appear elsewhere.

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