

The structural rigidity of exponential Lie groups and algebras makes it impossible to extend I. Browns ideas to prove Kirillov's conjecture from the nilpotent to the exponential case. Embedding the class of exponential groups into the much more flexible class of variable exponential Lie groups allows to prove the conjecture for this larger class.

The definitions of variable groups and more generally of variable structures are given and some of their fundamental properties are discussed.

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