

The Choquet boundary of an operator system

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Operator systems and completely positive maps

Definition

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For a non-self-adjoint subalgebra (or subspace) \mathcal{M} contained in a unital C^* -algebra, can consider corresponding operator system $\mathcal{S} = \mathcal{M} + \mathcal{M}^* + \mathbb{C}1$.

Definition

For operator systems $\mathcal{S}_1, \mathcal{S}_2 \in \mathfrak{S}$, a map $\phi : \mathcal{S}_1 \rightarrow \mathcal{S}_2$ induces maps $\phi_n : \mathcal{M}_n(\mathcal{S}_1) \rightarrow \mathcal{M}_n(\mathcal{S}_2)$ by

$$\phi_n([s_{ij}]) = [\phi(s_{ij})].$$

We say ϕ is **completely positive** if each ϕ_n is positive.

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The collection of operator systems forms a category, **the category of operator systems** \mathfrak{S} . The morphisms between operator systems are the completely positive maps. The isomorphisms are the unital completely positive maps with unital completely positive inverse.

Stinespring (1955) introduces the notion of a completely positive map.

W.F. Stinespring, Positive functions on C^ -algebras, Proceedings of the AMS 6 (1955), No 6, 211–216.*

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Arveson (1969/1972) uses completely positive maps as the basis of his work on non-commutative dilation theory and non-self-adjoint operator algebras.

W.B. Arveson, Subalgebras of C^ -algebras, Acta Math. 123 (1969), 141–224.*

W.B. Arveson, Subalgebras of C^ -algebras II, Acta Math. 128 (1972), 271–308.*



Figure: Stinespring's paper and Arveson's series of papers each now have over 1,000 citations. (To put this in perspective, Einstein's paper on Brownian motion has about 800.)

A **dilation** of a UCP (unital completely positive) map $\phi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ is a UCP map $\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(K)$, where $K = H \oplus K'$ and

$$\psi(s) = \begin{pmatrix} \phi(s) & * \\ * & * \end{pmatrix}, \quad \forall s \in \mathcal{S}.$$

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Theorem (Stinespring's dilation theorem)

Every UCP map $\phi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ dilates to a $*$ -representation of $C^*(\mathcal{S})$.

Arveson's extension theorem is the operator system analogue of the Hahn-Banach theorem.

Theorem (Arveson's Extension Theorem)

If $\phi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ is CP (completely positive) and $\mathcal{S} \subseteq \mathcal{T}$, then there is a CP map $\psi : \mathcal{T} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ extending ϕ , i.e.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{S} & \xrightarrow{\phi} & \mathcal{B}(H) \\ \downarrow & \nearrow \exists \psi & \\ \mathcal{T} & & \end{array}$$

Boundary representations and the C^* -envelope

Arveson's Philosophy

- 1 View an operator system as a subspace of a canonically determined C^* -algebra, but
- 2 Decouple the structure of the operator system from any particular representation as operators.

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- 2 Decouple the structure of the operator system from any particular representation as operators.

Somewhat analogous to the theory of concrete vs abstract C^* -algebras, and concrete von Neumann algebras vs W^* -algebras.

If $\phi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}$ is an operator system isomorphism on \mathcal{S} , then $\phi(\mathcal{S})$ is an isomorphic copy of \mathcal{S} . The C^* -envelope of \mathcal{S} is the “smallest” C^* -algebra generated by an isomorphic copy of \mathcal{S} .

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Definition

The **C^* -envelope** $C_e^*(\mathcal{S})$ is the C^* -algebra generated by an isomorphic copy $\iota(\mathcal{S})$ of \mathcal{S} with the following universal property: For every isomorphic copy $\phi(\mathcal{S})$ of \mathcal{S} , there is a surjective $*$ -homomorphism

$$\pi : C^*(\phi(\mathcal{S})) \rightarrow C_e^*(\mathcal{S})$$

such that $\pi \circ j = \iota$, i.e.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{S} & \xrightarrow{\iota} & C_e^*(\mathcal{S}) \\ & \searrow \phi & \uparrow \pi \\ & & C^*(\phi(\mathcal{S})) \end{array}$$

Example

Let $\mathbb{D} = \{z \in \mathbb{C} \mid |z| < 1\}$. The disk algebra is $A(\mathbb{D}) = H^\infty(\mathbb{D}) \cap C(\overline{\mathbb{D}})$. By the maximum modulus principle, the norm on $A(\mathbb{D})$ is completely determined on $\partial\mathbb{D}$. So the restriction map $A(\mathbb{D}) \rightarrow C(\partial\mathbb{D})$ is completely isometric. But no smaller space suffices to norm $A(\mathbb{D})$. Hence $C_e^*(A(\mathbb{D})) = C(\partial\mathbb{D})$.

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Boundary representations give irreducible representations of $C_e^*(\mathcal{S})$.

Let $\sigma : C^*(\mathcal{S}) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ be a boundary representation. By the universal property of $C_e^*(\mathcal{S})$ there is an operator system isomorphism $\iota : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow C_e^*(\mathcal{S})$ and a surjective $*$ -homomorphism $\pi : C^*(\mathcal{S}) \rightarrow C_e^*(\mathcal{S})$.

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We can extend $\sigma \circ \iota|_{\mathcal{S}}$ to a UCP map $\rho : C_e^*(\mathcal{S}) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$. Then $\rho \circ \pi = \sigma$ on \mathcal{S} . By the unique extension property, $\rho \circ \pi = \sigma$ on all of $C^*(\mathcal{S})$. Hence ρ is an irreducible $*$ -representation of $C_e^*(\mathcal{S})$.

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$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 \mathcal{S} & \xrightarrow{\iota} & C_e^*(\mathcal{S}) & & \\
 & \searrow \phi & \uparrow \pi & \searrow \rho & \\
 & & C^*(\mathcal{S}) & \xrightarrow{\sigma} & \mathcal{B}(H)
 \end{array}$$

If there are enough boundary representations, then we can use them to construct $C_e^*(\mathcal{S})$ from \mathcal{S} .

Theorem (Arveson)

If there are sufficiently many boundary representations $\{\sigma_\lambda\}$ to completely norm \mathcal{S} , then letting $\sigma = \bigoplus \sigma_\lambda$,

$$C_e^*(\mathcal{S}) = C^*(\sigma(\mathcal{S})).$$

Example

Let $\mathcal{A} \subseteq C(X)$ be a function system. The irreducible representations of $C(X)$ are the point evaluations δ_x for $x \in X$, which are given by representing measures μ on \mathcal{A} ,

$$f(x) = \int_X f \, d\mu, \quad \forall f \in \mathcal{A}.$$

Thus δ_x is a boundary representation for \mathcal{A} if and only if x has a unique representing measure on \mathcal{A} . The set of such points is precisely the classical **Choquet boundary** of X with respect to \mathcal{A} .

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Arveson calls the set of boundary representations of an operator system \mathcal{S} the **(non-commutative) Choquet boundary**.

Two big problems

Although Arveson was able to construct boundary representations, and hence the C^* -envelope, in some special cases, he was unable to do so in general. The following questions were left unanswered.

Questions

- 1 Does every operator system have sufficiently many boundary representations?
- 2 Does every operator system have a C^* -envelope?

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Every operator system has a C^ -envelope.*

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Very difficult to “get your hands on” this construction. Does not give boundary representations.

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Say a UCP map $\phi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ is **maximal** if, whenever ψ is a UCP dilation of ϕ , $\psi = \phi \oplus \psi'$. A UCP map is maximal if and only if it has the unique extension property.

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Theorem (Dritschel-McCullough (2005))

There are maximal representations $\{\sigma_\lambda\}$ such that letting $\sigma = \bigoplus \sigma_\lambda$,

$$C_e^*(\mathcal{S}) = C^*(\sigma(\mathcal{S})).$$

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Theorem (Arveson)

Every separable operator system has sufficiently many boundary representations.

Our results

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Proof is dilation-theoretic and works in complete generality. Very much in the style of Arveson's original work.

A completely positive map ϕ is **pure** if whenever $0 \leq \psi \leq \phi$ implies $\psi = \lambda\phi$.

Lemma (Arveson (1969))

If $\phi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ is pure and maximal, then it extends to a boundary representation.

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Lemma (Arveson (1969))

If $\phi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ is pure and maximal, then it extends to a boundary representation.

Our strategy is to extend a pure UCP map in small steps, taking care to preserve purity, until we attain maximality.

Say a UCP map $\phi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ is **maximal** at $(s, x) \in \mathcal{S} \times H$ if, whenever $\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(K)$ dilates ϕ , $\|\psi(s)x\| = \|\phi(s)x\|$.

Key Lemma

If $\phi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H)$ is a pure UCP map and $(s, x) \in \mathcal{S} \times H$, then there is a *pure* UCP map $\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H \oplus \mathbb{C})$ dilating ϕ that is maximal at (s, x) .

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- For a UCP map $\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H \oplus K)$, the compression to $\text{span}\{H, \psi(s)x\}$ has the same norm at (s, x) .

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- For a UCP map $\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H \oplus K)$, the compression to $\text{span}\{H, \psi(s)x\}$ has the same norm at (s, x) .
- The set $\{\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(K) \mid \psi \text{ dilates } \phi\}$ is point-weak* compact, so can find at least one dilation $\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H \oplus K)$ that is maximal at (s, x) , say $\psi(s)x = \phi(x) \oplus \eta$.

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- The set $\{\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(K) \mid \psi \text{ dilates } \phi\}$ is point-weak* compact, so can find at least one dilation $\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H \oplus K)$ that is maximal at (s, x) , say $\psi(s)x = \phi(s)x \oplus \eta$.
- Take an extreme point of the set $\{\psi : \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(H \oplus \mathbb{C}) \mid \psi \text{ dilates } \phi, \psi(s)x = \phi(s)x \oplus \eta\}$.
Delicate argument proves purity.

Theorem

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Easy transfinite induction argument on the key lemma obtains dilation that is maximal at each pair $(s, x) \in \mathcal{S} \times H$.

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If \mathcal{S} is separable and $\dim H < \infty$, then can work entirely with finite rank maps.

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There are sufficiently many boundary representations to completely norm \mathcal{S} .

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First proof uses C^* -convexity of matrix states, and the Krein-Milman type theorem of Webster-Winkler (1999) for C^* -convex sets. A result of Farenick (2000) shows the C^* -extreme points of the matrix states coincide with the pure matrix states. (More recently, Farenick gave a very nice direct proof of this result that avoids the Webster-Winkler theorem.)

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Shorter second proof suggested by Kleski. Easy to obtain that the boundary representations of $\mathcal{M}_n(\mathcal{S})$ norm $\mathcal{M}_n(\mathcal{S})$. A result of Hopenwasser implies boundary representations of $\mathcal{M}_n(\mathcal{S})$ correspond to boundary representations of \mathcal{S} .

The future

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In recent years, a great deal of evidence has been compiled showing that noncommutative techniques are needed even in the classical commutative setting. For example, the Drury-Arveson multiplier algebra H_d^∞ has been much more tractable than $H^\infty(\mathbb{B}_d)$. One explanation is that $C_e^*(H_d^\infty)$ is noncommutative, while $C_e^*(H^\infty(\mathbb{B}_d))$ is commutative. Classical notions of measure and boundary may not suffice for $d \geq 2$ variables.

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All restrictions have now been removed on the use of Arveson's ideas from 1969. Perhaps we can now realize his vision.

Thanks!

