# The Choquet boundary of an operator system

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Operator systems and completely positive maps

# An **operator system** is a unital self-adjoint subspace of a unital $\mathrm{C}^*\text{-}\mathsf{algebra}.$

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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  $\mathcal{S} = \mathcal{M} + \mathcal{M}^* + \mathbb{C}1$ .

For operator systems  $S_1, S_2 \in \mathfrak{S}$ , a map  $\phi : S_1 \to S_2$  induces maps  $\phi_n : \mathcal{M}_n(S_1) \to \mathcal{M}_n(S_2)$  by

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

We say  $\phi$  is **completely positive** if each  $\phi_n$  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. **Stinespring (1955)** introduces the notion of a completely positive map.

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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  $\phi : S \to \mathcal{B}(H)$ is a UCP map  $\psi : S \to \mathcal{B}(K)$ , where  $K = H \oplus K'$  and

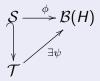
$$\psi(s) = \begin{pmatrix} \phi(s) & * \\ * & * \end{pmatrix}, \quad \forall s \in \mathcal{S}.$$

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Theorem (Stinespring's dilation theorem) Every UCP map  $\phi : S \to B(H)$  dilates to a \*-representation of C\*(S). Arveson's extension theorem is the operator system analogue of the Hahn-Banach theorem.

Theorem (Arveson's Extension Theorem) If  $\phi : S \to \mathcal{B}(H)$  is CP (completely positive) and  $S \subseteq \mathcal{T}$ , then there is a CP map  $\psi : \mathcal{T} \to \mathcal{B}(H)$  extending  $\phi$ , i.e.



Boundary representations and the C\*-envelope

#### Arveson's Philosophy

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

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

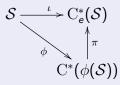
If  $\phi : S \to B$  is an operator system isomorphism on S, then  $\phi(S)$  is an isomorphic copy of S. The C\*-envelope of S is the "smallest" C\*-algebra generated by an isomorphic copy of S. If  $\phi : S \to B$  is an operator system isomorphism on S, then  $\phi(S)$  is an isomorphic copy of S. The C\*-envelope of S is the "smallest" C\*-algebra generated by an isomorphic copy of S.

## Definition

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

$$\pi: \mathrm{C}^*(\phi(\mathcal{S})) \to \mathrm{C}^*_{e}(\mathcal{S})$$

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



#### 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  $A(\mathbb{D}) \to C(\partial \mathbb{D})$  is completely isometric. But no smaller space suffices to norm  $A(\mathbb{D})$ . Hence  $C^*_e(A(\mathbb{D})) = C(\partial \mathbb{D})$ . We need to be able to construct the C\*-envelope  $C_e^*(S)$  using only knowledge of S.

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## Definition

An irreducible representation  $\sigma : C^*(S) \to \mathcal{B}(H)$  is a **boundary** representation for S if the restriction  $\sigma |_S$  of  $\sigma$  to S has a *unique* UCP extension. We need to be able to construct the C\*-envelope  $C_e^*(S)$  using only knowledge of S.

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

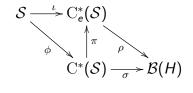
Let  $\sigma : C^*(\mathcal{S}) \to \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$  be a boundary representation. By the universal property of  $C^*_e(\mathcal{S})$  there is an operator system isomorphism  $\iota : \mathcal{S} \to C^*_e(\mathcal{S})$  and a surjective \*-homomorphism  $\pi : C^*(\mathcal{S}) \to C^*_e(\mathcal{S})$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

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

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

## Theorem (Arveson)

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

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

#### Example

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

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

Thus  $\delta_x$  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 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

- Does every operator system have sufficiently many boundary representations?
- Ooes every operator system have a C\*-envelope?

# Theorem (Hamana (1979))

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

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Theorem (Dritschel-McCullough (2005)) There are maximal representations  $\{\sigma_{\lambda}\}$  such that letting  $\sigma = \oplus \sigma_{\lambda}$ ,  $C_{e}^{*}(S) = C^{*}(\sigma(S)).$ 

W.B. Arveson, Subalgebras of C\*-algebras III: Multivariable operator theory, Acta Math. 181 (1998), 159–228.

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#### Theorem (Arveson)

*Every separable operator system has sufficiently many boundary representations.* 

## Our results

### Theorem (Davidson-K (2013))

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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  $\phi$  is **pure** if whenever  $0 \le \psi \le \phi$  implies  $\psi = \lambda \phi$ .

Lemma (Arveson (1969))

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

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Lemma (Arveson (1969))

If  $\phi : S \to B(H)$  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.

#### Key Lemma

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

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For a UCP map ψ : S → B(H ⊕ K), the compression to span{H, ψ(s)x} has the same norm at (s, x).

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- For a UCP map ψ : S → B(H ⊕ K), the compression to span{H, ψ(s)x} has the same norm at (s, x).
- The set {ψ : S → B(K) | ψ dilates φ} is point-weak\* compact, so can find at least one dilation ψ : S → B(H ⊕ K) that is maximal at (s, x), say ψ(s)x = φ(x) ⊕ η.

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- Take an extreme point of the set
   {ψ : S → B(H ⊕ C) | ψ dilates φ, ψ(s)x = φ(s)x ⊕ η}.
   Delicate argument proves purity.

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

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Easy transfinite induction argument on the key lemma obtains dilation that is maximal at each pair  $(s, x) \in S \times H$ . If S is separable and dim  $H < \infty$ , then can work entirely with finite rank maps.

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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  $H_d^{\infty}$  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!

