

# On the algebraic structure of midpoint operations in $C^*$ -algebras

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Algebra Colloquium

April 23, 2024

Charles University (Prague)

# Outline

- 1 Positive definite matrices
- 2 Midpoints, reflections and translations
- 3 The algebraic structure of the midpoint operations
- 4 Series expansion of midpoint operations

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# Symmetric (self-adjoint) matrices

## Notation

- $x^T, A^T$  transpose of a (column) vector or matrix
- $x^*, A^*$  conjugate transpose of a (complex) vector or matrix
- symmetric matrix:  $A^T = A$
- self-adjoint (Hermitian) matrix:  $A^* = A$
- orthogonal matrix:  $A^T = A^{-1}$
- unitary matrix:  $A^* = A^{-1}$

## Spectral Decomposition Theorem

Let  $A$  be a real symmetric (complex self-adjoint) matrix.

- The eigenvalues are real.
- The eigenvectors are orthogonal.
- $A = Q\Lambda Q^T$  with  $Q$  orthogonal. ( $A = U\Lambda U^*$  with  $U$  unitary.)

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## Theorem

A matrix is positive semi-definite (positive definite) if and only if

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# Operations on general matrices

## Unary operations on general matrices

- $\exp(A)$
- $\log(A)$  for  $\|A\| < 1$
- $\exp(A + B) = \exp(A) \exp(B)$  if  $A, B$  commute
- $\exp(A)$  positive definite if and only if  $A$  is symmetric

## Binary operations on general matrices

- $A + B, AB$
- $\exp(A + B) = \exp(A) \exp(B)$  if  $A, B$  commute
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## Real functions on symmetric matrices

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$$f(A) = Q \begin{bmatrix} f(\lambda_1) & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & f(\lambda_n) \end{bmatrix} Q^T.$$

## Unary operations on p.s.d. matrices

- $\log(A)$  is well defined if  $A$  is positive definite
- $A^t$  for  $t \geq 0$
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- $ABA$
- $(1-t)A + tB$  for  $0 \leq t \leq 1$

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- $A^{\frac{1}{2}}$

## Binary operations on p.s.d. matrices

- $ABA$
- $(1 - t)A + tB$  for  $0 \leq t \leq 1$

# Matrix norms

## Definition

$$\text{2-norm } \|A\| = \sup_{x \neq 0} \frac{\|Ax\|}{\|x\|}$$

$$\text{Frobenius norm } \|A\|_F = \sqrt{\text{Tr}(AA^*)}$$

For p.s.d. matrices:

- $\|A\| = \lambda_{\max}$
- $\|A\|_F = \sqrt{\lambda_1^2 + \dots + \lambda_n^2}$
- $\|A\| \leq \|A\|_F$

## Frobenius inner product

$$\langle A, B \rangle_F = \text{Tr}(AB^*) = \sum_{i,j} a_{ij} \bar{b}_{ij}$$

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# C\*-algebras

## Definition

Associative algebra  $\mathcal{A}$  over  $\mathbb{C}$  with norm  $\|x\|$  such that

- $\|xy\| \leq \|x\| \|y\|$
- $\mathcal{A}$  is complete in the metric induced by  $\|\cdot\|$

and an involution  $x^*$  such that

- $(x + y)^* = x^* + y^*$ ,  $(\lambda x)^* = \bar{\lambda}x^*$
- $(xy)^* = y^*x^*$ ,  $(x^{-1})^* = (x^*)^{-1}$  if  $x$  is invertible
- $\|xx^*\| = \|x\|^2$

Example: commutative C\*-algebras

$C(X)$  for a compact Hausdorff space  $X$ .

Fact

Self-adjoint, positive properties,  $\exp(x)$ ,  $\log(x)$ ,  $x^{\frac{1}{2}}$ , etc. can be defined.

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# Outline

- 1 Positive definite matrices
- 2 Midpoints, reflections and translations**
- 3 The algebraic structure of the midpoint operations
- 4 Series expansion of midpoint operations

# Riemann and Wasserstein metrics

## Definition

- The Riemann metric of positive definite matrices  $A, B$  is

$$d_R(A, B) = \|\log(A^{-\frac{1}{2}}BA^{-\frac{1}{2}})\|$$

- The Wasserstein metric of p.s.d. matrices  $A, B$  is

$$d_W(A, B) = \frac{1}{2} \operatorname{Tr} \left( A + B - 2(A^{\frac{1}{2}}BA^{\frac{1}{2}})^{\frac{1}{2}} \right)$$

- Wasserstein = Leonid Vaseršteĭn
- The Wasserstein metric pops up naturally in the theory of optimal transport
- “earth mover’s distance”
- and also in quantum information theory.

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# Least square means and midpoints

## Definition

Let  $(X, d)$  be a metric space, and  $p_1, \dots, p_m$  points in  $X$ .

- The **least square mean** is the point  $x \in X$  which minimizes

$$d(x, p_1)^2 + \dots + d(x, p_m)^2.$$

- The **weighted mean** with weights  $0 \leq w_1, \dots, w_m$  minimizes

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- The **midpoint** of two points  $p, q$  is the least square mean of  $p, q$ .
- The **segment**  $pq$  consist of the weighted means of  $p, q$  with weights  $1 - t, t, 0 \leq t \leq 1$ .

## Example

In the Euclidean space, the (weighted) least square mean is the (weighted) arithmetic mean.

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# The Riemannian geometric mean

$$\text{midpoint: } x \# y = x^{\frac{1}{2}} \left( x^{-\frac{1}{2}} y x^{-\frac{1}{2}} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} x^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

$$\text{weighted midpoint: } x \#_t y = x^{\frac{1}{2}} \left( x^{-\frac{1}{2}} y x^{-\frac{1}{2}} \right)^t x^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

- **Central reflection** of  $x$  on  $z$ : solve  $x \# y = z$  for  $y$ :

$$x^{\frac{1}{2}} \left( x^{-\frac{1}{2}} y x^{-\frac{1}{2}} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} x^{\frac{1}{2}} = z$$

$$x^{-\frac{1}{2}} y x^{-\frac{1}{2}} = \left( x^{-\frac{1}{2}} z x^{-\frac{1}{2}} \right)^2 = x^{-\frac{1}{2}} z x^{-1} z x^{-\frac{1}{2}}$$

$$y = z x^{-1} z$$

- No square root is needed!
- **Translation** = product of two central reflections:  $x^{\frac{1}{2}} y x^{\frac{1}{2}}$ .

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$$x \diamond y = \frac{1}{4} x^{-\frac{1}{2}} \left( x + \sqrt{x^{\frac{1}{2}} y x^{\frac{1}{2}}} \right)^2 x^{-\frac{1}{2}}$$

- Straightforward computations [Bhatia, Jain, Lim 2019] give that

$$x \diamond y = \frac{1}{4} \left( x + y + x(x^{-1} \# y) + (x^{-1} \# y)x \right).$$

- and

$$(x(x^{-1} \# y))^2 = xy, \quad ((x^{-1} \# y)x)^2 = yx.$$

- With some cheating, we have

$$x \diamond y = \frac{1}{4} \left( x + y + (xy)^{\frac{1}{2}} + (yx)^{\frac{1}{2}} \right).$$

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# Outline

- 1 Positive definite matrices
- 2 Midpoints, reflections and translations
- 3 The algebraic structure of the midpoint operations**
- 4 Series expansion of midpoint operations

# Molnár's results

Using heavy  $C^*$ -algebra machinery, Lajos Molnár (Szeged) proved:

## Theorem (Molnár 2023)

Let  $\mathcal{A}$  be a  $C^*$ -algebra and  $\mathcal{A}^{++}$  the set of positive definite elements. The bijective map  $\phi : \mathcal{A}^{++} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}^{++}$  preserves the Wasserstein mean if and only if there is

- a Jordan  $*$ -automorphism  $J : \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}$
- and a central element  $c \in \mathcal{A}$

such that

$$\phi(x) = cJ(x), \quad x \in \mathcal{A}^{++}.$$

## Theorem (Molnár 2023)

The binary operation  $4(x \diamond y)$  is left alternative, right alternative and flexible. Moreover, it is a semigroup (i.e. associative) if and only if the algebra  $\mathcal{A}$  is commutative.

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# The algebraization project

- Define algebraic structures in which the Riemannian geometric mean and the Wasserstein mean can be defined.

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# The success story: Twisted subgroups and Bol loops

## Definition (Aschbacher)

Let  $G$  be a group. The subset  $S \subseteq G$  is a **twisted subgroup** of  $G$  is

- $1 \in S$ ,
- $a^{-1} \in S$  for all  $a \in S$ ,
- $aba \in S$  for all  $a, b \in S$ .

## Examples

Let  $\alpha$  be an involutorial automorphism of  $G$ .

- The set  $S = \{x \in G \mid \alpha(x) = x^{-1}\}$  of anti-fixed elements.
- The set  $T = \{x^{-1}\alpha(x) \mid x \in G\}$  of “commutators”.
- **Homework:** Construct the set of positive definite matrices as set of commutators.

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# Bol loops, Bruck loops and the $Z^*$ -theorem

## Theorem [Glauberman 1968 (and Kiechle, and Ungar, and ...)]

- The reflection

$$xy^{-1}x$$

is well-defined in any twisted subgroup  $S$ .

- It is a left quasigroup.
- Moreover, it is a quasigroup if and only if  $S$  is 2-divisible.
- In the latter case, its loop isotopy is given by the operation  $x^{\frac{1}{2}}yx^{\frac{1}{2}}$ .

## (A version of) Glauberman's $Z^*$ -theorem

If  $S$  is a finite twisted subgroup of odd order, then  $\langle S \rangle$  has odd order. In particular, the loop  $x^{\frac{1}{2}}yx^{\frac{1}{2}}$  is solvable.

Interesting objects (Aschbacher 2006, GN 2007, Baumeister, Stein, Stroth ~2010)

Finite twisted subgroups (Bol loops) of exponent two.

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# Unipotent matrices

## (Upper) unipotent matrix

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & * & \cdots & * \\ 0 & 1 & \cdots & * \\ \vdots & & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \cdots & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

## Observations

- Convex combination of unipotent matrices are unipotent.
- $A^n = 1$  for  $n \times n$  unipotent  $A$ .
- Inverse and square root are well-defined for unipotent matrices.
- So is the Wasserstein mean

$$x \diamond y = \frac{1}{4} x^{-\frac{1}{2}} \left( x + \sqrt{x^{\frac{1}{2}} y x^{\frac{1}{2}}} \right)^2 x^{-\frac{1}{2}}.$$

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# Split $C^*$ -by-nilpotent algebras

## Definition: Split $C^*$ -by-nilpotent algebra

Let  $B$  be a unitary associative algebra over  $\mathbb{C}$ . We say that  $B$  is a **split  $C^*$ -by-nilpotent** algebra, if the following conditions hold:

- 1  $B$  has a unitary subalgebra  $\mathcal{A}$  that is a  $C^*$ -algebra and the unit of  $\mathcal{A}$  coincides with the unit of  $B$ ;
- 2  $B$  has an ideal  $N$  which consists of nilpotent elements;
- 3  $B = \mathcal{A} + N$ ;
- 4 The elements of  $\mathcal{A}$  and  $N$  commute.

## Lemma

The geometric and Wasserstein means, and  $4(x \diamond y)$  is well-defined on

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The geometric and Wasserstein means, and  $4(x \diamond y)$  is well-defined on

$$B^{++} = \{a + n \mid a \in \mathcal{A}^{++}, n \in N\}.$$

# Split $C^*$ -by-nilpotent algebras

## Definition: Split $C^*$ -by-nilpotent algebra

Let  $B$  be a unitary associative algebra over  $\mathbb{C}$ . We say that  $B$  is a **split  $C^*$ -by-nilpotent** algebra, if the following conditions hold:

- 1  $B$  has a unitary subalgebra  $\mathcal{A}$  that is a  $C^*$ -algebra and the unit of  $\mathcal{A}$  coincides with the unit of  $B$ ;
- 2  $B$  has an ideal  $N$  which consists of nilpotent elements;
- 3  $B = \mathcal{A} + N$ ;
- 4 The elements of  $\mathcal{A}$  and  $N$  commute.

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# Associativity of $4(x \diamond y)$

## Theorem (La Rosa, Mancini, GN 2024)

Let  $B = \mathcal{A} \oplus N$  be a split  $C^*$ -by-nilpotent algebra. The operation  $4(x \diamond y)$  is well-defined and commutative on  $B^{++}$ . Moreover, it is associative if and only if  $[[x, y], z] = 0$  holds for all  $x, y, z \in B$ .

- $[[x, y], z] = 0$  holds if  $N$  is 2-step nilpotent.
- This gives non-commutative split  $C^*$ -by-nilpotent algebra with associative  $4(x \diamond y)$ .
- In a  $C^*$ -algebra,  $[[x, y], z] = 0$  implies  $[x, y] = 0$ , hence commutativity.
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# Outline

- 1 Positive definite matrices
- 2 Midpoints, reflections and translations
- 3 The algebraic structure of the midpoint operations
- 4 Series expansion of midpoint operations**

# Lie triple systems

- Lie triple systems are ternary operations  $[x, y, z]$  motivated by the double Lie bracket

$$[[x, y], z].$$

- In a Lie group, twisted subgroups correspond to Lie triple subsystems of the tangent Lie algebra.
- If  $(L, \bullet)$  is a real analytic Bruck loop, then its tangent space is an (abstract) Lie triple system.
- Baker-Campbell-Hausdorff formula (GN 2002): Near the identity, the Bruck loop operation can be expressed as an infinite series of L.t.s. terms:

$$\log(\exp(x) \bullet \exp(y)) = x + y + \frac{1}{3}[y, x, x] - \frac{1}{6}[x, y, y] + \dots$$

- This implies BCH formula for the geometric mean.

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# BCH formula for the Wasserstein mean

## Problem

- Is there a BCH formula for the Wasserstein mean in terms of the Jordan product?
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- Recently, Choi, Kim et al. proved binomial expansion formulae for the geometric mean and the Wasserstein mean using the Taylor expansion for the analytic power map.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
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