

Plurisubharmonic Envelopes and Supersolutions

Joint work with Chinh H. Lu and V. Guedj

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Second Colloque des Mathématiciens Marocains,
Université Cadi Ayad, Faculté des Sciences,
Marrakech, 26-29 Septembre, 2018

Introduction

Envelopes are classical objects in Convex Analysis, Potential Theory were Perron's method (1920) was used to solve the Dirichlet Problem for the Laplace (Poisson) equation. They also appear as solutions to (roof top) obstacle problems and free boundary value problems for second order (degenerate) elliptic PDE's.

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Recently envelopes with obstacle were used successfully in Kähler Geometry by many authors in different contexts: Boucksom-Berman (2008), Berman-Demailly (2009), Roos-Witt-Nystöm (2012), Boucksom-Bermann-Guedj-Zeriahi (2013), Berman (2013), Darvas (2014), Dravas-Rubinstein, etc...

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- explain how to extend **Berman's approximation process** of envelopes with obstacles by solutions to degenerate complex Monge-Ampère equations,
- explain the link between **viscosity** supersolutions and **pluripotential** supersolutions using envelopes,
- solve degenerate complex Monge-Ampère equations using **lower envelopes** of pluripotential supersolutions and give a geometric application to the existence a **singular Kähler-Einstein metric** on certain algebraic varieties with mild singularities.

Quasi-plurisubharmonic functions

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A function $\varphi : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \cup \{-\infty\}$ is said to be ω -plurisubharmonic if it is **quasi-plurisubharmonic** in X and the associated curvature current $\omega_\varphi := \omega + dd^c\varphi \geq 0$ a closed positive currents on X .

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Since we can write locally $\omega = dd^c\rho$, we have $\omega + dd^c\varphi = dd^c u$ where $u := \varphi + \rho$ is then (a local) plurisubharmonic function.

We denote by $PSH(X, \omega)$ the convex set of ω -plurisubharmonic functions in X . Then $PSH(X, \omega) \subset L^1(X)$.

Moreover by the dd^c -lemma we have a canonical isomorphism

$$PSH_0(X, \omega) := \{\varphi \in PSH(X, \omega); \max_X \varphi = 0\} \simeq \mathcal{T}_\omega^+(X),$$

where the right hand side denotes the convex set of closed positive $(1, 1)$ -currents on X that are cohomologous to ω (fixed mass implies compactness of $PSH_0(X, \omega)$).

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Using Bedford and Taylor approach ([BT76,82]), it is possible to define the **complex Monge-Ampère operator** on $PSH(X, \omega) \cap L^\infty(X)$. Given $\varphi \in PSH(X, \omega) \cap L^\infty(X)$ we define locally in a coordinate chart $MA_\omega(\varphi) := (dd^c u)_{BT}^n = (\omega + dd^c \varphi)^n$, where $u := \varphi + \rho$ is a bounded plurisubharmonic function, ρ being a local potential of ω in the given chart.

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Then we can see $MA_\omega(\varphi)$ as positive Borel measure with total mass

$$\int_X MA_\omega(\varphi) = \int_X \omega_\varphi^n = \int_X \omega^n =: Vol(X, \omega).$$

Envelopes

Let $h : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a Borel function which is (upper) bounded, the obstacle function. We define the ω -psh **envelope** of h by the following formula:

$$P_\omega h := (\sup\{u(z); u \in PSH(X, \omega), u \leq h \text{ in } X\})^* .$$

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By Bedford and Taylor ([1982]) we have $P_\omega h \leq h$ **quasi everywhere** (q.e.) in X and then

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To study the regularity of the upper envelope $P_\omega h$ in terms of the regularity of h , R. Berman ([Be13]) introduced a new and original approximation process that allows him to prove that $P_\omega h$ is **almost** $C^{1,1}(X)$ when h is smooth and ω is an entire cohomology class.

Here we are interested in more degenerate situations that arise in applications.

For our purpose we will need to define more general envelopes. Let μ be a non pluripolar positive Borel measure on X i.e. it puts no mass on pluripolar sets in X . The envelope of an (upper) bounded Borel function h on X with respect to μ is defined as

$$P_{\omega, \mu} h := \sup\{\phi; \phi \in PSH(X, \omega), \phi \leq h \text{ } \mu - \text{a.e. in } X\}.$$

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- $P_{\omega, \mu} \psi = \psi$ when $\psi \in PSH(X, \omega)$, hence $P_{\omega, \mu} \circ P_{\omega, \mu} = P_{\omega, \mu}$,
- $\|P_{\omega, \mu} h_1 - P_{\omega, \mu} h_2\|_{L^\infty(X, \mu)} \leq \|h_1 - h_2\|_{L^\infty(X, \mu)}$,

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The main property of the envelope is the following orthogonality property which plays an important role.

Proposition

If h is (quasi) lower semi-continuous in X and $\hat{h} := P_{\omega, \mu} h$, then

$$\int_X (h - \hat{h}) MA(\hat{h}) = 0.$$

In particular $\int_{\{\hat{h} < h\}} MA_{\omega}(\hat{h}) = 0$ and the Monge-Ampère measure of \hat{h} is supported in the contact set $\{\hat{h} = h\}$.

This shows that \hat{h} is a solution of an obstacle problem. The proof is based on a local balayage argument (see [BT82]).

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Let $\theta \geq 0$ be a smooth closed semi-positive $(1, 1)$ -form on X such that $\int_X \theta^n > 0$ and let μ be a degenerate volume form on X which puts no mass on pluripolar subsets of X and such that $\int_X \mu = \int_X \theta^n$ e.g.

$\theta := f^*(\omega_Y)$ and $\mu := f^*(dV_Y)$ where $f : X \rightarrow Y$ is a resolution of a singular Kähler projective variety with mild singularities, ω_Y is a Kähler metric on Y and dV_Y is a smooth non degenerate volume form on Y .

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We need to extend the complex Monge-Ampère operator to a class of singular θ -psh functions. More precisely for a given θ -psh function $\varphi \in PSH(X, \theta)$, we associate the **non pluripolar part** of the Monge-Ampère measure of φ , denoted by $\langle (\theta + dd^c \varphi)^n \rangle$, following an idea of Bedford and Taylor ([BT85]) in the local case.

This is defined by

$$\langle (\theta + dd^c \varphi)^n \rangle := \lim_{k \rightarrow +\infty} \mathbf{1}_{\{\varphi > -k\}} (\theta + dd^c \sup\{\varphi, -k\})^n.$$

By definition this is a positive Borel measure on X which is concentrated on the Borel set $\{\varphi > -\infty\}$ and puts no mass on pluripolar sets of X , whose total mass is $\leq \int_X \theta^n$.

Then we define $\mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ to be the class of functions $\varphi \in PSH(X, \theta)$ with full Monge-Ampère mass i.e. such that $\int_X \langle (\theta + dd^c \varphi)^n \rangle = \int_X \theta^n$.

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This the largest class containing $PSH(X, \theta) \cap L^\infty(X)$ where the complex Monge-Ampère operator is well defined and satisfies the comparison principle.

Let us denote by $MA_\theta(\varphi) := \langle (\theta + dd^c \varphi)^n \rangle = (\theta + dd^c \varphi)^n$ the Monge-Ampère measure of φ .

We will need the following result.

Theorem (GZ07, EGZ09)

Let $\mu \geq 0$ be a non pluripolar positive Borel measure on X with $\mu(X) = \int_X \theta^n$. For any $\alpha \geq 0$, there exists a unique function $\varphi = \varphi_\alpha \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ (normalized when $\alpha = 0$) such that

$$MA_\theta(\varphi) = e^{\alpha\varphi} \mu, \quad (1)$$

weakly in the sense of currents on X .

When $\theta > 0$ is Kähler and $\mu > 0$ is a smooth non degenerate volume form on X , the theorem is well known.

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- If $\alpha > 0$, it was proved independently by T. Aubin [A78] and by S.T. Yau ([Y78]) that the equation (1) has a unique smooth solution.

These theorems answered some of the fundamental problems in Kähler Geometry posed by E. Calabi in the early fifties.

In the degenerate case, when μ is a continuous positive volume form, it was proved in ([EGZ11]) that the solution to the complex Monge-Ampère equation (1) with $\alpha > 0$ can be also expressed as the upper envelope of all (pluripotential = viscosity) subsolutions of the equation (1) .

This follows from the comparison principle for the equation (1).

Proposition

Let $\varphi \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ be a pluripotential subsolution to the equation (1) with $\alpha > 0$, and let $\psi \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ be a pluripotential supersolution of the same equation. Then $\varphi \leq \psi$ in X .

We will now give a generalization of the Berman process of approximation of psh envelopes by solutions to complex Monge-Ampère equations.

Theorem (GLZ17)

Let u be a bounded lower semi-continuous function in X and let (φ_j) be the sequence of functions in $\mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ solving the following equations

$$(\theta + dd^c \varphi_j)^n = e^{j(\varphi_j - u)} \mu, \quad j \in \mathbb{N}. \quad (2)$$

Then the sequence converges in $L^1(X)$ and in capacity to the (θ, μ) -envelope of u defined by

$$P_{\theta, \mu} u := \sup \{ \varphi \in PSH(X, \theta); \varphi \leq u, \mu - \text{a.e. in } X \}.$$

Proof : We first give a lower bound of φ_j . Let $\psi \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ be the unique solution of the following equation $MA_\theta(\psi) = e^\psi \mu$. Set $\hat{u} := P_{\theta, \mu} u$. We claim that for any $j \geq 1$,

$$\varphi_j \geq (1 - 1/j)\hat{u} + (1/j)(\psi - n \log j + \inf_X u).$$

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Indeed let us fix $\varepsilon > 0$ and consider the sets

$$A_j := \{x \in X; \varphi_j(x) - u(x) \geq \varepsilon\}.$$

From the equation (2) we see that for any $j \geq 1$,

$$\mu(A_j) \leq e^{-\varepsilon j} \int_X e^{j(\varphi_j - u)} \mu \leq e^{-\varepsilon j} \int_X MA(\varphi_j) = e^{-\varepsilon j}.$$

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Then

$$\mu(\cup_{k \geq j} A_k) \leq \frac{e^{-\varepsilon j}}{1 - e^{-\varepsilon}}.$$

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$$\mu(A_j) \leq e^{-\varepsilon j} \int_X e^{j(\varphi_j - u)} \mu \leq e^{-\varepsilon j} \int_X M A(\varphi_j) = e^{-\varepsilon j}.$$

Then

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This means that the set $A := \cap_{j \geq 1} (\cup_{k \geq j} A_k)$ satisfies $\mu(A) = 0$ and for any $x \in X \setminus A$, we have

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This shows that $\limsup_{j \rightarrow +\infty} \varphi_j(x) \leq u(x)$, μ -a.e. in X . Hence $(\limsup \varphi_j)^* \leq P_{\theta, \mu}$ in X .

Viscosity concepts

We fix a continuous positive function $f > 0$ in X and consider the following complex Monge-Ampère equation

$$(\theta + dd^c \varphi)^n = e^\varphi f dV. \quad (3)$$

Definition

1. A bounded upper semi-continuous function $u : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is said to be a *viscosity subsolution* to the equation (3) if for any point $a \in X$ and any smooth local *upper test function* $q \geq_a u$ for u at the point a , we have

$$(\theta + dd^c q)^n(a) \geq e^{q(a)} f(a) dV(a).$$

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2. A bounded lower semi-continuous function $v : X_T \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is a **viscosity supersolution** to the equation (3) if for any point $a \in X$ and any smooth local **lower test function** $q \leq_a v$ for v at the point a , we have

$$(\theta(a) + dd^c q(a))_+^n \leq e^{q(a)} f(a) dV(a).$$

The supersolution theorem

It's known that a bounded upper semi-continuous function $u : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is a viscosity subsolution of the equation(3) iff u is a $(\theta$ -psh in X) subsolution of the equation (see [EGZ11]).

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Our second main result concerns supersolutions.

Theorem (GLZ17)

Let $\mu = fdV$ be a volume form with continuous positive density $f > 0$ and let $v : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a bounded lower semi-continuous function in X .

If v is a *viscosity supersolution* of the Monge-Ampère equation (3), then $\varphi := P_\theta v$ is a *pluripotential supersolution* to this equation.

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Sketch of the proof : Apply the approximation theorem and get a sequence (φ_j) of solutions to the following equations

$$(\theta + dd^c \varphi_j)^n = e^{j(\varphi_j - v)} e^{\varphi_j} dV = e^{(j+1)(\varphi_j - v)} e^v fdV.$$

Then we know that $\varphi_j \rightarrow P_{\theta, \mu} v = P_{\theta} v$, where $\mu := e^v fdV$.

Observe that φ_j is a viscosity subsolution to the equation (3). By the viscosity Comparison Principle ([EGZ11], [EGZ17]) we conclude that $\varphi_j \leq v$ on a Zariski open subset of X , hence $\varphi_j \leq P_{\theta} v$ in X and then $(\theta + dd^c \varphi_j)^n \leq e^v fdV$ in the pluripotential sense on X .

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We know by the approximation theorem that actually (φ_j) converges in capacity to $P_{\theta} v$ and we have a uniform minorant in $\mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$.

Therefore we can pass to the limit and get $(\theta + dd^c \varphi_j)^n \rightarrow (\theta + dd^c P_{\theta} v)^n$ in the weak sense of currents on X , which implies that $(\theta + dd^c P_{\theta} v)^n \leq e^v fdV$ in the pluripotential sense on X .

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We can actually prove that (φ_j) is a non decreasing sequence, and the conclusion follows from Bedford-Taylor convergence theorem.

The Minimum Principle

Here we want to consider the following degenerate complex Monge-Ampère equation

$$(\theta + dd^c \varphi)^n = e^\varphi \mu, \quad (4)$$

where μ is a positive non pluripolar Borel measure (volume form) on an open set $\Omega \subset X$ with $\mu(\Omega) = +\infty$. We may assume that $\Omega \subset \text{Amp}(\theta)$.

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We would like to solve the above equation by considering its "minimal supersolution".

Observe that if $u, v \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ are two pluripotential supersolutions of the equation (4) then $\inf(u, v)$ may not be a supersolution since it may not be θ -psh anymore. However we can prove the following fact :

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The Minimum Principle : If $u, v \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ are two pluripotential supersolutions of the equation (4), then the function $w := P_\theta(u, v) = P_\theta(\inf(u, v))$ is a pluripotential subsolution of the equation (4).

When u, v are smooth, this was proved by T. Darvas. Our proof uses the

Solution to degenerate CMA equations

Now we can state our third main result.

Theorem (GLZ17)

Assume that the equation (4) admits a subsolution i.e. there exists $u_0 \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ such that

$$(\theta + dd^c u_0)^n \geq e^{u_0} \mu,$$

in the weak sense of currents on X . Set

$$\varphi := \inf\{\psi; \psi \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta), MA_\theta(\psi) \leq \mathbf{1}_\Omega e^\psi \mu\}.$$

Then $\varphi \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ is the unique solution to the complex Monge-Ampère equation (4) i.e. $MA_\theta(\varphi) = \mathbf{1}_\Omega e^\varphi \mu$.

Proof : 1) We first prove that there is at least one supersolution to the equation (4). Indeed let $K \subset X$ be a compact subset such that $0 < \mu(K) < +\infty$ and let $\phi_K \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$ be a solution of the equation $MA_\theta(\phi_K) = e^{\phi_K} \mu_K$, where $\mu_K := \mathbf{1}_K \mu$ is finite non pluripolar positive Borel measure on X . Then ϕ_K is a pluripotential supersolution to the equation (4).

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By classical arguments, φ is an infimum of a countable sequence of supersolutions $(\psi)_j$. By the minimum principle we can assume that the sequence $(\psi)_j$ is non decreasing and converges to $\varphi \geq u_0$ in X , hence $\varphi \in \mathcal{E}(X, \theta)$.

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3) We need to show that $MA_\theta(\varphi) \leq \mathbf{1}_\Omega e^\varphi \mu$ in the pluripotential sense on X .

This is clear by the convergence theorem on the open set Ω since μ has locally finite mass in Ω . The delicate point is to show that $MA_\theta(\varphi)$ is concentrated in Ω . Here we will use the subsolution u_0 in a crucial way.

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Now we can pass to the limit and get the inequality $e^{u_0} MA_\theta(\varphi) \leq \mathbf{1}_\Omega e^\varphi \mu_0$ in the sense of Radon measures on X , which implies that $MA_\theta(\varphi)$ is concentrated in Ω since $\mu(\{u_0 = -\infty\}) = 0$.

4) The last step is to show that $MA_\theta(\varphi) = \mathbf{1}_\Omega e^\varphi \mu$. This is a local property. Fix a small open set $B \Subset \Omega$. We will prove that $MA_\theta(\varphi) = e^\varphi \mu$ weakly on B . We construct a supersolution ψ smaller than φ which solves the equation on B . Then $\psi = \varphi$ will solve the equation on B .

This is usually done by a balayage process solving a local Dirichlet problem with boundary values φ on a small ball B and gluing the local solution with φ (delicate analysis near the boundary).

We will use a new global balayage method which is simpler. Namely we solve the equation

$$MA(\psi) = \mathbf{1}_{\Omega \setminus B} e^{\psi - \varphi} MA(\varphi) + \mathbf{1}_B e^{\psi} \mu = e^{\psi} \nu, \quad (5)$$

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However we can approximate ν by an increasing sequence of non pluripolar measures of finite masses on X defined by

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We claim that ψ solves the equation (5). Assume this is the case. Then observe that φ is a supersolution of the equation (5) and then by the comparison principle it follows that $\psi \leq \varphi$ in X .

On the other hand ψ is a supersolution to the equation (4) and then $\varphi \leq \psi$ by minimality. Thus $\varphi = \psi$.

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On the other hand ψ is a supersolution to the equation (4) and then $\varphi \leq \psi$ by minimality. Thus $\varphi = \psi$.

It remains to prove that ψ is a solution to the equation (5). The inequality \geq follows from Fatou's lemma and equality follows from the fact that the masses coincide.

Kähler-Einstein metrics

Let us give a geometric situation where this theorem applies.

Let Y be an algebraic variety with mild singularities. We assume that the canonical bundle $K_Y := \wedge^n(T^{1,0}X)^*$ is ample meaning that it has a hermitian metric with positive Ricci curvature i.e. there exists a Kähler metric ω_Y on Y such that $\omega_Y \in c_1(K_Y) = -c_1(Y)$.

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We look for a Kähler-Einstein metric $\tilde{\omega}$ on Y i.e. $\text{Ric}(\tilde{\omega}) = -\tilde{\omega}$.

Let $\pi : X \rightarrow Y$ a smooth resolution of Y and let $\theta := \pi^*(\omega_Y)$. Then the Kähler-Einstein equation $\text{Ric}(\tilde{\omega}) = -\tilde{\omega}$ on Y is equivalent to a complex Monge-Ampère on X

$$MA_\theta(\varphi) = e^\varphi \mu,$$

where $\mu := f dV$, and $f \geq 0$ is a density which is smooth on $X \setminus D := \pi^{-1}(Y_{reg})$ and may vanish or blow up along the divisor $D := \pi^{-1}(Y_{sing})$.

The way how f blows up depends on the type of singularities of Y . The case of klt singularities corresponds to the case when $f \in L^{1+\varepsilon}(X)$ and has been studied in [EGZ09,BBEGZ10].

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The most delicate case is when Y has semi-log canonical singularities i.e. $f \leq C|s_D|^{-2}$, where s_D is a defining holomorphic section for D i.e. $D = \{s_D = 0\}$. This case was recently studied by Guenancia and Berman. Let us see how to apply our theorem to solve the above corresponding equation.

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Here $f \notin L^1(X)$ but we have a subsolution of the equation : take $u_0 := -(-\log|s_D|^{-2})^a$, where $0 < a < 1$ and s_D is appropriately normalized.

Then we can apply our theorem to obtain

Corollary

Let Y be an algebraic variety with semi-log canonical singularities such that K_Y is ample. Then there exists a Kähler metric ω_{KE} on Y_{reg} such that $\text{Ric}\omega_{KE} = -\omega_{KE}$. Moreover the current ω_{KE} extends as a positive closed current on X with finite energy potential on X .

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Thank you for your attention

and

Good luck for SMMER