

# Open Problems in Quantum Information Theory

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## Abstract

Some open questions in quantum information theory (QIT) are described. Most of them were presented in Banff during the BIRS workshop on Operator Structures in QIT 11-16 February 2007. New material has been added in view of the recent counter-examples to p-norm multiplicativity.

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# 1 Extreme points of CPT maps

In QIT, a channel is represented by a completely-positive trace-preserving (CPT) map  $\Phi : M_{d_1} \mapsto M_{d_2}$ , which is often written in the Choi-Kraus form

$$\Phi(\rho) = \sum_k A_k \rho A_k^\dagger \quad \text{with} \quad \sum_k A_k^\dagger A_k = I_{d_1}. \quad (1)$$

The state representative or Choi matrix of  $\Phi$  is

$$\Phi(|\beta\rangle\langle\beta|) = \frac{1}{d} \sum_{jk} |e_j\rangle\langle e_k| \Phi(|e_j\rangle\langle e_k|) \quad (2)$$

where  $|\beta\rangle$  is a maximally entangled Bell state. Choi [8] showed that the  $A_k$  can be obtained from the eigenvectors of  $\Phi(|\beta\rangle\langle\beta|)$  with non-zero eigenvalues. The operators  $A_k$  in (1) are known to be defined only up to a partial isometry and are often called Kraus operators. When a minimal set is obtained from Choi’s prescription using eigenvectors of (2), they are defined up to mixing of those from degenerate eigenvalues and we will refer to them as Choi-Kraus operators. Choi showed that  $\Phi$  is an extreme point of the set of CPT maps  $\Phi : M_{d_1} \mapsto M_{d_2}$  if and only if the set  $\{A_j^\dagger A_k\}$  is linearly independent in  $M_{d_1}$ . This implies that the Choi matrix of an extreme CPT map has rank at most  $d_1$ . We will refer to the rank of (2) as the *Choi rank* of  $\Phi$ . (Note that this is *not* the same as the rank of  $\Phi$  as a linear operator from  $M_{d_1}$  to  $M_{d_2}$ .)

It is often useful to consider the set of all CPT maps with Choi rank  $\leq d_1$ . In [44] these were called “generalized extreme points” and shown to be equivalent to the closure of the set of extreme points for qubit maps. This is true in general. Let  $\mathcal{E}(d_1, d_2)$  denote the extreme points of the convex set of CPT maps from  $M_{d_1}$  to  $M_{d_2}$ .

**Theorem 1.** *The closure  $\overline{\mathcal{E}(d_1, d_2)}$  of the set of extreme points of CPT maps  $\Phi : M_{d_1} \mapsto M_{d_2}$  is precisely the set of such maps with Choi rank at most  $d_1$ .*

**Proof:** Let  $A_k$  be the Choi-Kraus operators for a map  $\Phi : M_{d_1} \mapsto M_{d_2}$  with Choi rank  $r \leq d_1$  which is not extreme, and let  $B_k$  be the Choi-Kraus operators for a true extreme point with Choi-rank  $d_1$ . When  $r < d_1$  extend  $A_k$  by letting  $A_m = 0$  for  $m = r+1, r+2, \dots, d_1$  and define  $C_k(\epsilon) = A_k + \epsilon B_k$ . There is a number  $\epsilon_*$  such that the  $d_1^2$  matrices  $C_j^\dagger(\epsilon)C_k(\epsilon)$  are linear independent for  $0 < \epsilon < \epsilon_*$ . To see this, for each  $C_j^\dagger(\epsilon)C_k(\epsilon)$  “stack” the columns to give a vector of length  $d_1^2$  and let  $M(\epsilon)$  denote the  $d_1^2 \times d_1^2$  matrix formed with these vectors as columns. Then  $\det M(\epsilon)$  is a polynomial of degree  $d_1^4$ , which has at most  $d_1^4$  distinct roots. Since the matrices  $A_j^\dagger A_k$  were assumed to be linearly dependent, one of these roots is 0; it suffices to take  $\epsilon_*$  the next largest root (or +1 if no roots are positive). Thus, the operators  $C_j^\dagger(\epsilon)C_k(\epsilon)$  are linearly independent for  $\epsilon \in (0, \epsilon_*)$ . The map  $\rho \mapsto \sum_k C_k(\epsilon)\rho C_k^\dagger(\epsilon)$  is CP, with

$$\sum_k C_k^\dagger(\epsilon)C_k = (1 + \epsilon^2)I + \epsilon(A_k^\dagger B_k + B_k^\dagger A_k) \equiv S(\epsilon).$$

For sufficiently small  $\epsilon$  the operator  $S(\epsilon)$  is positive semi-definite and invertible, and the map  $\Phi_\epsilon(\rho) = C_k(\epsilon)S(\epsilon)^{-1/2}\rho S(\epsilon)^{-1/2}C_k^\dagger(\epsilon)$  is a CPT map with Kraus operators  $C_k(\epsilon)S(\epsilon)^{-1/2}$ . Thus, one can find  $\epsilon_c$  such that  $\epsilon \in (0, \epsilon_c)$  implies that  $\Phi_\epsilon \in \mathcal{E}(d_1, d_2)$ . It then follows from  $\lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0^+} \Phi_\epsilon = \Phi$  that  $\Phi \in \overline{\mathcal{E}(d_1, d_2)}$ . **QED**

When  $d_1 = 2$ , one can use the singular value decomposition (SVD) to show that that the Kraus operators of CPT maps with Choi rank at most two can be written in the form

$$A_1 = \sum_{j=1,2} \alpha_j |v_j\rangle\langle u_j| \quad A_2 = \sum_{j=1,2} \sqrt{1 - \alpha_j^2} |w_j\rangle\langle u_j| \quad (3)$$

where  $0 \leq \alpha_j \leq 1$ ,  $|u_j\rangle$  is pair of orthonormal vectors in  $\mathbf{C}_2$ , and  $|v_j\rangle, |w_j\rangle$  are two pairs of orthonormal vectors in  $\mathbf{C}_{d_2}$ . This gives all CPT maps in  $\mathcal{E}(2, d_2)$ . Although it may seem artificial from a physical point of view to consider  $d_1 \neq d_2$ , several reduction results in quantum Shannon theory require consideration of maps with  $d_1 \neq d_2$ .

**Problem 1.** Characterize, classify and/or parameterize the closure  $\overline{\mathcal{E}(d_1, d_2)}$  of the set of extreme points of CPT maps  $\Phi : M_{d_1} \mapsto M_{d_2}$  for  $d_1 > 2$  and  $d_2$  arbitrary.

Although this problem is of some interest in its own right, we will give additional motivation in Section 5.5 where we observe that certain conjectures for CPT maps with  $d_1 = d_2$  can be reduced to case of the channels in the closure of extreme points with  $d_1 \geq d_2$ .

## 2 Convex decompositions of CPT maps or A block matrix generalization of Horn's lemma

Based on joint work with K. Audenaert

Since the set of CPT map  $\Phi : M_{d_1} \mapsto M_{d_2}$  is convex, it can be written as a convex combination of extreme maps, and one expects that  $\frac{d_1^2(d_2^2 - 1)}{d_2}$  will suffice. For maps on qubits, it was shown in [44] that if all maps in  $\mathcal{E}(d_1, d_2)$  are permitted, then only two are needed and they can be chosen so that the weights are even. This result generalizes to any CPT map with qubit output, i.e., for  $\Phi : M_d \mapsto M_2$  one can write

$$\Phi = \frac{1}{2}(\Phi_1 + \Phi_2) \quad (4)$$

where  $\Phi_1$  and  $\Phi_2$  have Choi rank  $\leq d$ . We conjecture that this result extends to arbitrary CPT maps.

**Conjecture 2.** (Audenaert-Ruskai) *Let  $\Phi : M_{d_1} \mapsto M_{d_2}$  be a CPT map. One can find  $d_2$  CPT maps  $\Phi_m$  with Choi rank at most  $d_2$  such that*

$$\Phi = \sum_{m=1}^{d_2} \frac{1}{d_2} \Phi_m. \quad (5)$$

The adjoint or dual of a CPT map is a unital CP map and it is useful to restate the conjecture in this form.

**Conjecture 3.** *Let  $\Phi : M_{d_2} \mapsto M_{d_1}$  be a CP map with  $\Phi(I_2) = I_1$ . One can find  $d_2$  unital CP maps  $\Phi_m$  with Choi rank at most  $d_1$  such that*

$$\Phi = \sum_{m=1}^{d_2} \frac{1}{d_2} \Phi_m. \quad (6)$$

In this form, the conjecture can be viewed as a statement about block matrices, and it is useful to restate it explicitly in that form.

**Conjecture 4.** *Let  $\mathbf{A}$  be a  $d_1 d_2$  positive semi-definite matrix consisting of  $d_2 \times d_2$  blocks  $A_{jk}$  each of size  $d_1 \times d_1$ , with  $\sum_j A_{jj} = M$ . Then one can find  $d_2$  block matrices  $\mathbf{B}_m$ , each of rank at most  $d_1$ , such that  $\sum_j B_{jj} = M$ , and*

$$\mathbf{A} = \sum_{m=1}^{d_2} \frac{1}{d_2} \mathbf{B}_m \quad (7)$$

If Conjecture 4 holds, then Conjecture 3 (and hence Conjecture 2) follows immediately. One need only let  $\mathbf{A} = \Phi(|\beta\rangle\langle\beta|)$  be the Choi matrix of  $\Phi$  for which  $M = \frac{1}{d_2}I_{d_2}$ . It would suffice to prove Conjecture 5 for the case  $M = I_{d_2}$ . The general case then follows by multiplying on the right and left by the matrix  $\frac{1}{\sqrt{d_2}}\sqrt{M} \otimes I_{d_2}$ . (May be some subtleties if  $M$  is non-singular.)

For  $d_1 = 1$ , Conjecture 4 is a consequence of Horn's Lemma<sup>1</sup> [23, 24] which says that a necessary and sufficient condition for the existence of a positive semi-definite matrix with eigenvalues  $\lambda_k$  and diagonal elements  $a_{kk}$  is that  $\lambda_k$  majorizes  $a_{kk}$ .

**Corollary 2.** *Let  $A$  be a  $d \times d$  positive semi-definite matrix with  $\text{Tr } A = 1$ . Then there are  $d$  normalized vectors  $\mathbf{x}_m$  such that*

$$A = \sum_{m=1}^d \frac{1}{d} \mathbf{x}_m \mathbf{x}_m^\dagger \quad (8)$$

**Proof:** Note that any set of non-negative eigenvalues  $\lambda_k$  with  $\sum_k \lambda_k = 1$  majorizes the vector  $(\frac{1}{d}, \frac{1}{d}, \dots, \frac{1}{d})$ . Therefore, by Horn's lemma, one can find a unitary  $U$  and a self-adjoint matrix  $B$  such that  $A = UB^2U^\dagger$  and the diagonal elements of  $B^2$  are all  $\frac{1}{d}$ . (In fact,  $U, B$  can be chosen to have real elements.) Write  $U = \sum_k \mathbf{u}_k \mathbf{e}_k^\dagger$  where  $\mathbf{u}_k$  denotes the  $k$ -th column of  $U$  and  $\mathbf{e}_k$  the standards basis. Let  $\mathbf{x}_m = \sqrt{d} \sum_j \mathbf{u}_j b_{jm}$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} A &= \sum_{jk} \mathbf{u}_j \langle \mathbf{e}_j B^2 \mathbf{e}_k \rangle \mathbf{u}_k^\dagger \\ &= \sum_{jk} \sum_m \mathbf{u}_j \langle \mathbf{e}_j B \mathbf{e}_m \rangle \langle \mathbf{e}_m, B \mathbf{e}_k \rangle \mathbf{u}_k^\dagger \\ &= \sum_m \frac{1}{d} \mathbf{x}_m \mathbf{x}_m^\dagger \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

and, since the columns of a unitary matrix are orthonormal,

$$\begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{x}_m\|^2 &= d \sum_{jk} \mathbf{u}_j^\dagger \bar{b}_{jm} b_{km} \mathbf{u}_k = d \sum_{jk} \bar{b}_{jm} b_{km} \mathbf{u}_j^\dagger \mathbf{u}_k \\ &= \sum_{jk} \delta_{jk} \bar{b}_{jm} b_{km} = d(B^2)_{mm} = d \frac{1}{d} = 1. \end{aligned} \quad \text{QED} \quad (10)$$

This suggests that we restate the conjecture (7) using vectors of block matrices of the form  $\mathbf{X}_m^\dagger = (X_{1m}^\dagger \quad X_{2m}^\dagger \quad \dots \quad X_{d_2m}^\dagger)$  with each block  $d_1 \times d_1$ .

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<sup>1</sup>See Theorem 4.3.32 of [24]. Note that [23] is by Alfred Horn, but that [24] is co-authored by Roger A. Horn.

**Conjecture 5.** Let  $\mathbf{A}$  be a  $d_1 d_2$  positive semi-definite matrix consisting of  $d_2 \times d_2$  blocks  $A_{jk}$  each of size  $d_1 \times d_1$ , with  $\sum_j A_{jj} = M$ . Then one can find  $d_2$  vectors  $\mathbf{X}_m$  composed of  $d_2$  blocks  $X_{jm}$  of size  $d_1 \times d_1$  such that

$$\mathbf{A} = \sum_{m=1}^{d_2} \frac{1}{d_2} \mathbf{X}_m \mathbf{X}_m^\dagger, \quad \text{and} \quad (11)$$

$$\sum_k X_{km} X_{km}^\dagger = M \quad \forall m \quad (12)$$

There is no loss of generality in replacing  $B_m$  by  $\mathbf{X}_m \mathbf{X}_m^\dagger$  with  $\mathbf{X}_m$  of the above form. If  $X$  is  $d_1 d_2 \times d_1 d_2$  with rank  $d_1$ , then by the SVD it can be written as  $X = U D V^\dagger$  with  $U, V$  unitary and  $D$  diagonal with  $d_{jj} = 0$  for  $j > d$ . If  $\tilde{D}$  retains only the first  $d_1$  columns of  $D$ , then  $\tilde{X} = U \tilde{D}$  has the desired form and  $\tilde{X} \tilde{X}^\dagger = X X^\dagger$ . thus, Conjecture 5 is clearly a generalization of Horn's lemma to block matrices.

When  $d_2 = 2$ , the argument in [44] (due to S. Szarek) is easily extended to give a proof of Conjecture 4 . Then  $\mathbf{A} > 0$  is equivalent to

$$\mathbf{A} = \begin{pmatrix} \sqrt{A_{11}} & 0 \\ 0 & \sqrt{A_{22}} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} I & W \\ W^\dagger & I \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \sqrt{A_{11}} & 0 \\ 0 & \sqrt{A_{22}} \end{pmatrix} \quad (13)$$

with  $W$  a contraction. Write the SVD of  $W$  as

$$\begin{aligned} W &= U \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta_1 & 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & \cos \theta_2 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & 0 & \ddots & & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & \cos \theta_d \end{pmatrix} V^\dagger \\ &= \frac{1}{2} U \begin{pmatrix} e^{i\theta_1} & 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & e^{i\theta_2} & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & 0 & \ddots & & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & e^{i\theta_d} \end{pmatrix} V^\dagger + \frac{1}{2} U \begin{pmatrix} e^{-i\theta_1} & 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & e^{-i\theta_2} & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & 0 & \ddots & & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & e^{-i\theta_d} \end{pmatrix} V^\dagger \\ &= \frac{1}{2} (W_1 + W_2) \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

with  $W_1$  and  $W_2$  unitary. When  $W$  is a  $d_1 \times d_1$  unitary,  $\begin{pmatrix} I & W \\ W^\dagger & I \end{pmatrix}$  has rank  $d_1$ . Therefore, substituting (14) into (13) shows that  $\mathbf{A}$  is the midpoint of two matrices with rank at most  $d_1$  and the same blocks on the diagonal as  $\mathbf{A}$ .

This argument suggests that one might strengthen the conjecture to require that each  $\mathbf{B}_m$  have the same diagonal blocks as  $\mathbf{A}$ . However, this does not appear to hold

in the limiting case  $d_1 = 1$  with  $d_2 > 2$ . In the proof of Corollary 2, it is tempting to replace  $B$  by  $C = BV$  with  $V$  unitary. However, in (10) we would obtain  $(C^\dagger C)_{mm}$  which, unlike  $CC^\dagger$  need not have diagonal elements  $\frac{1}{d}$ .

The original proof of Horn's lemma used a complicated induction argument based on the properties of augmenting a matrix by a row and column. Since we know that (11) holds when  $d_2 = 2$  or  $d_1 = 1$ , we have the starting points for a (probably non-trivial) double induction argument. Although Audenaert has found extensive numerical evidence for the validity of Conjectures 2-5, a proof seems to be elusive.

### 3 Generalized depolarized channels

#### 3.1 Depolarized Werner-Holevo channels

The Werner-Holevo channel  $\mathcal{W}(\rho) = \frac{1}{d-1}((\text{Tr } \rho) I - \rho^T)$  has been extensively studied, especially in connection with the conjectured multiplicativity of the maximal output  $p$ -norm, defined as  $\nu_p(\Phi) = \sup_\rho \|\Phi(\rho)\|_p$ . For  $d = 3$ , the maximal output  $p$ -norm is not multiplicative for  $p > 4.79$ . However, it is known that  $\nu_p(\mathcal{W} \otimes (\mathcal{W})) = [\nu_p(\mathcal{W})]^2$  for  $1 \leq p \leq 2$ . For larger  $d$  one obtains a counter-example to multiplicativity only for correspondingly large  $p$ . In fact, it has been argued [19] that for  $d > 2^p$  the WH channel is multiplicative.

$\mathcal{W}$  maps any pure state  $|\psi\rangle\langle\psi|$  to  $\frac{1}{d-1}E$  with  $E = I - |\psi\rangle\langle\psi|$ . Therefore, when  $d$  is large,  $\mathcal{W}$  behaves much like the completely noisy map (although it is never EB). It is natural to consider channels of the form

$$\Phi_x = x\mathcal{I} + (1-x)\mathcal{W} \tag{15}$$

and ask if they also satisfy the multiplicativity conjecture (24) for  $1 \leq p \leq 2$ . Channels of the form (15) were considered by Ritter [42] in a different context.

**Problem 6.** *Show that the channel  $\Phi_x = x\mathcal{I} + (1-x)\mathcal{W}$  satisfies the multiplicativity property  $\nu_p(\Phi_x) \otimes (\Phi_x) = [\nu_p(\Phi_x)]^2$  for  $1 \leq p \leq 2$ .*

When  $d = 3$  and  $x = \frac{1}{3}$ , the channel (15) becomes

$$\Phi_{1/3}(\rho) = \frac{1}{3}(I + \rho - \rho^T) \tag{16}$$

which has many interesting properties. It seems to have been first considered by Fuchs, Shor and Smolin, who published only an oblique remark at the end of [16]. They wrote it in a very different form, which is also given in [28]. Let  $|1\rangle, |2\rangle, |3\rangle$  be

an orthonormal basis for  $\mathbf{C}_3$  and define

$$\begin{aligned} |\psi_0\rangle &= 3^{-1/2}(|1\rangle + |2\rangle + |3\rangle) \\ |\psi_1\rangle &= 3^{-1/2}(|1\rangle - |2\rangle - |3\rangle) \\ |\psi_2\rangle &= 3^{-1/2}(|1\rangle - |2\rangle + |3\rangle) \\ |\psi_3\rangle &= 3^{-1/2}(|1\rangle + |2\rangle - |3\rangle). \end{aligned}$$

Now let  $\Psi$  be the channel whose Kraus operators are  $\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}|\psi_k\rangle\langle\psi_k|$  for  $k = 0, 1, 2, 3$ . This channel has the following properties:

1.  $\Psi = \Phi_{1/3} = \frac{1}{3}\mathcal{I} + \frac{2}{3}\mathcal{W}$ . Although this is not obvious, it is easily verified and implies (16). Thus,  $\Psi$  maps every real density matrix to the maximally mixed state.
2.  $\Psi$  is unital and the Holevo capacity satisfies

$$C_{\text{Hv}}(\Phi) = \log 3 - S_{\min}(\Phi) \tag{17}$$

but requires 6 (non-orthogonal) input states to achieve this capacity. It is not hard to see that  $S_{\min}(\Phi)$  is achieved on inputs which are permutations of  $(1, \pm i, 0)^T$ .

3.  $\Psi$  is an extreme point of the EB channels which is neither CQ nor an extreme point of the CPT maps [28].

A solution of Problem 6 in the case  $p = 2$  was recently reported by Michalakis [40].

## 3.2 Further generalizations of depolarization

In [51] channels  $\mathcal{M}_\epsilon$  which whose output is always close to a maximally mixed state in the sense  $\|\Phi(\rho) - \frac{1}{d}I\| < \epsilon$  play an important role. It seems natural to define a polarization of such channels

$$\Phi_{x,\epsilon} = x\mathcal{I} + (1-x)\mathcal{M}_\epsilon \tag{18}$$

For  $x$  close to 1, one expects multiplicativity to hold, and it is natural to ask several questions.

**Problem 7.** *Does  $\Phi_{x,\epsilon}$  satisfy (24) for  $1 \leq p \leq 2$ ? For sufficiently small  $\epsilon$ ? If not, for what values of  $x$  and/or  $p$  does (24) hold and how do they depend on  $\epsilon$ ?*

## 4 Random sub-unitary channels

We now introduce a class of extreme points motivated by the WH channel.

The Kraus operators for the WH channels with  $d = 3$  can be written as

$$A_k = \frac{1}{2}X^k \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad k = 0, 1, 2 \quad (19)$$

where  $X$  is the shift operator  $X|e_j\rangle = |e_{j+1}\rangle$ . This suggests a natural generalization to channels with Kraus operators

$$A_k = \frac{1}{2}X^k \begin{pmatrix} u_{11} & u_{12} & 0 \\ u_{21} & u_{22} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{2}X^k \begin{pmatrix} U & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad k = 0, 1, 2 \quad (20)$$

with  $u_{jk}$  the elements of a  $2 \times 2$  unitary  $U$ . The choice  $U = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$  does not give a counterexample to (24), although the effect of a tensor product on a maximally entangled state is the same as the WH channel. This is because changing  $-1$  to  $+1$  allows a “purer” optimal output for a single use of the channel; to be precise, for  $+1$  the input  $\frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}(1, 1, 1)$  yields an output with eigenvalues  $\frac{2}{3}, \frac{1}{6}, \frac{1}{6}$  as compared to eigenvalues  $\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, 0$  for  $-1$ .

By contrast, the standard generalization of the WH channel to  $d > 3$  involves  $\binom{d}{2}$  choices of  $\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$  as the only non-zero block of a  $d \times d$  matrix. It would seem natural to study channels with  $d$  Kraus operators of the form

$$\frac{1}{d-1}X^k \begin{pmatrix} U & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad k = 0, 1, \dots, d-1. \quad (21)$$

where  $U$  is a  $d-1 \times d-1$  unitary matrix. Such channels are generically extreme and always in the closure  $\overline{\mathcal{E}(d, d)}$ . Limited attempts to find new counter-examples of this type have found similar behavior to changing  $+1$  to  $-1$ ; they have outputs which are “too pure” for a single use of the channel.

Nevertheless, channels with Kraus operators of the form (21) have interesting properties that makes them worth further study. Moreover, it is not necessary to use the same  $U$  in every Kraus operator. One can choose

$$A_k = \frac{1}{d-1}X^k \begin{pmatrix} U_k & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad k = 0, 1, \dots, d-1. \quad (22)$$

with  $U_k$  any set of unitaries in  $M_{d-1}$ . With a few exceptions, channels whose Kraus operators have the form (22) are extreme points of the CPT maps on  $M_d$ , and are always in  $\overline{\mathcal{E}}(d, d)$ .

The WH channel gives a counter-example to multiplicativity for large  $p$  because maximally entangled states have outputs whose  $p$ -norms are relative maxima of  $\|(\mathcal{W} \otimes \mathcal{W})(\rho)\|_p$ , Nathanson [41] has shown analytically that for any  $p$  the output of any maximally entangled state gives a critical point, but Shor has found numerical evidence [49] that this is a relative maximum only for  $p \geq 3$ . This suggests that one look at other random sub-unitary channels.

**Problem 8.** *Let  $\Phi$  be a channel with Kraus operators of the form (22). Does the set of relative maxima of  $\|(\Phi \otimes \Phi)(\rho)\|_p$  always include outputs whose input is maximally entangled? If not, for what  $p$  and under what circumstances do maximally entangled inputs yield outputs which are relative maxima?*

Despite the failure of Ruskai's very limited attempt to find new counter-examples of this type for  $d = 4, 5$ , more extensive numerical investigations, perhaps with different, randomly chosen,  $U_k$ , could be worthwhile. Further suggestions about numerical searches are given in Section 5.3. Even a negative result could provide some insight.

**Problem 9.** *Search for new counterexamples to (24) with  $\Phi$  a channel with Kraus operators of the form (22).*

In addition to looking at the optimal output purity of these channels, one can also ask about their coherent information and quantum capacity.

**Problem 10.** *What are the properties of the coherent information of random sub-unitary channels? When are they degradable? When is their coherent information additive?*

**Remark:** (added 11 August 2007). There has been recent interest in the question of multiplicativity of minimal output rank [22, 10]. For  $d = 4$ , the sub-unitary channel  $\Phi$  with  $3 \times 3$  unitary operators corresponding to the permutations (123), (134), (142), (243) has minimal output rank 3. The channel  $\Phi \otimes \Phi$  acting on a maximally entangled state has output rank 10, which does not give a violation. However, the behavior of this channel suggests that numerical investigations of similar examples for somewhat higher  $d$  might be worth investigating for counter-examples to the multiplicativity question for  $p < 1$  as discussed further in Section 5.6.

# 5 Additivity and multiplicativity conjectures

## 5.1 Prelude

Soon after the 14 June 2007 version of this manuscript was posted on the BIRS web site, counter-examples were found to the multiplicativity conjectures for all  $p > 1$  [51, 21]. Nevertheless, the additivity conjectures and many related questions remain open. Therefore, I have made only minor changes to most of this section and discuss the recent developments and new questions they raise in Section 5.6. Moreover, these existence of counter-examples also raises new questions. Thus, there may still be value in some of the old material, such as Theorem 3.

## 5.2 The conjectures

One of the outstanding open problems in quantum information is the additivity of minimal output entropy, i.e.,

$$S_{\min}(\Phi \otimes \Omega) = S_{\min}(\Phi) + S_{\min}(\Omega) \quad (23)$$

where  $S_{\min}(\Phi) = \inf_{\gamma} S[\Phi(\gamma)]$  where the infimum is taken over the set of density matrices  $\gamma$  so that  $\gamma > 0$  and  $\text{Tr} \gamma = 1$ . This conjecture has considerable importance because Shor [48] has shown that it is globally equivalent to the conjectured additivity of Holevo capacity and several conjectures about entanglement of formation. Shirokov [45, 46] has even shown that additivity in all finite dimensions would have implications for certain infinite dimensional channels. Fukuda [17] and Wolf [18] have given some additional reductions.

Amosov, Holevo and Werner [4] realized that (23) would follow if the following conjecture holds for  $p \in (1, 1 + \epsilon)$  with  $\epsilon > 0$ .

$$\nu_p(\Phi \otimes \Omega) = \nu_p(\Phi)\nu_p(\Omega) \quad (24)$$

where  $\nu_p(\Phi) = \inf_{\gamma} \|\Phi(\gamma)\|_p$ . Although, Werner and Holevo [50] found a counter-example to (24) for large  $p$ , it seems reasonable to conjecture that (24) holds for  $1 \leq p \leq 2$ . This conjecture can be rewritten [1, 21] using the Renyi entropy, which is essentially the difference quotient at  $p = 1$  of  $p \log \|\gamma\|_p$ , i.e.,

$$S^p(\gamma) \equiv \frac{1}{p-1} \log \text{Tr} \gamma^p. \quad (25)$$

This expression is meaningful for any  $p \geq 0$  with the understanding that  $S^0(\gamma) = \log \text{rank}(\gamma)$  and  $S^1(\gamma)$  the usual von Neumann entropy. Then (24) can be rewritten as

$$S_{\min}^p(\Phi \otimes \Omega) = S_{\min}^p(\Phi) + S_{\min}^p(\Omega) \quad (26)$$

with  $S_{\min}^p(\Phi) = \inf_{\gamma} S^p[\Phi(\gamma)]$ .

### 5.3 Finding counter-examples

It is surprising that no counter-example to (24) is known other than the WH channel [50] and very small perturbations of it. Moreover, one has no counter-example for  $p < 4.79$ . Some authors [36] have conjectured that (24) holds for  $1 \leq p \leq 2$ . If so, one would expect to have a family of counter-examples for  $p > 2$ . More generally, if the conjecture holds for  $1 < p < p_c$ , one would expect to find counter-examples for  $p > p_c$  arbitrarily close to  $p_c$ .

**Problem 11.** *Find more counter-examples to (24). Do they suggest that the conjecture holds for  $1 \leq p \leq 2$ ?*

One strategy for finding new counter-examples, is to first search numerically for additional counter-examples for very *large*  $p$  using Theorem 3 below. For any new examples found, study the critical points numerically and determine the values of  $p$  for which one ceases to have a counter-example and for which one ceases to even have a relative maximum for entangled inputs. Perhaps this will give some insight into the nature of counter-examples that will allow one to find some in the range  $2 < p < 4.79$ . The reason for starting with large  $p$  is that the algorithm for finding relative maxima using Theorem 3 is faster and more robust for large  $p$ .

The following extension of Shor's algorithm for finding relative minima of the minimal output entropy (see Appendix of [12]) was proved by C. King using Hölder's inequality in the case  $p > 1$ . We present a different proof, valid for all  $p > 0$ . We first note that Shor's argument uses the positivity of relative entropy, which is based on Klein's inequality, using the more general form in Ruelle [43] for convex functions

$$\text{Tr } f(A) - \text{Tr } f(B) \geq \text{Tr } (A - B)f'(B) \quad (27)$$

where  $A, B$  are positive semi-definite matrices. Since the function  $f(x) = x^p$  with  $p > 1$  is convex, this gives

$$\text{Tr } A^p - \text{Tr } B^p \geq p(A - B)B^{p-1}. \quad (28)$$

**Theorem 3.** *Let  $p > 0$  and  $\Omega$  a CPT map with  $\widehat{\Omega}$  its adjoint with respect to the Hilbert-Schmidt inner product. For fixed  $\gamma = |\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|$  and  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} p < 1 \\ p > 1 \end{array} \right\}$ , let  $\psi_1$  be the eigenvector corresponding to the  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{smallest} \\ \text{largest} \end{array} \right\}$  eigenvalue of  $\widehat{\Omega}[\Omega(\gamma)]^{p-1}$ . Then*

$$\|\Omega(|\psi_1\rangle\langle\psi_1|)\|_p \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \leq \\ \geq \end{array} \right\} \|\Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|)\|_p$$

**Proof:** First consider  $p > 1$ . The max min principle implies that

$$\langle\psi_1\widehat{\Omega}[\Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|)]^{p-1}\psi\rangle \geq \langle\psi_0\widehat{\Omega}[\Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|)]^{p-1}\psi_0\rangle. \quad (29)$$

which can be rewritten as

$$\mathrm{Tr} \Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|) [\Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|)]^{p-1} \geq \mathrm{Tr} [\Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|)]^p \quad (30)$$

Then using (28) with  $A = \Omega(|\psi_1\rangle\langle\psi_1|)$ ,  $B = \Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|)$  gives

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathrm{Tr} [\Omega(|\psi_1\rangle\langle\psi_1|)]^p - \mathrm{Tr} [\Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|)]^p \\ & \geq p \left( \mathrm{Tr} \Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|) [\Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|)]^{p-1} - \mathrm{Tr} [\Omega(|\psi_0\rangle\langle\psi_0|)]^p \right) \geq 0. \end{aligned}$$

where the last inequality follows from (30). Taking  $p$ -th roots gives the desired result.

For  $0 < p < 1$ , the function  $f(x) = x^p$  is concave and the same argument goes through with all inequalities reversed. **QED**

Using this result repeatedly with  $\psi_{k+1}$  the eigenvector corresponding to the largest eigenvalue of  $\hat{\Omega}[\Omega(|\psi_k\rangle\langle\psi_k|)]^{p-1}$ , gives a sequence converging to a relative maximum of  $\|\Phi(\gamma)\|_p$ .

## 5.4 Specific multiplicativity problems

Proving multiplicativity of the depolarized WH channel was already mentioned in Section 3.1. Recently, Michalakakis reported [40] a proof for  $p = 2$ . In view of the fact that some depolarized WH channels do *not* satisfy the very unappealing conditions based on positive entries used in [36, 35], the approach in [40] may be useful in investigating other classes of channels.

**Problem 12.** *For what classes of channels can (24) be proved for  $p = 2$ .*

In [41], a class of channels is defined using mutually unbiased bases, with each basis defining an “axis”. These channels can be described by “multipliers” in a manner similar to unital qubits channels, and when all multipliers are non-negative they seem very similar. However, even for a single use of a channel some questions are open. See Conjecture 9 of [41]. If this conjecture is true, then additivity and multiplicativity can be reduced to the case of “maximally squashed” channels which are generalizations of the two-Pauli qubit channel.

**Problem 13.** *Find a proof of multiplicativity for the two-Pauli qubit channel, which does not use unitary equivalence to channels with negative multipliers.*

Since most recent investigations of additivity (23) have approached the problem through the multiplicativity conjecture, it is worth noting that Amosov has obtained some results [2, 3] in special cases by a very different approach using the monotonicity of relative entropy. Also recall that Shor’s proof [47] of additivity for entanglement breaking channels used entropy arguments based on strong subadditivity. Although these basic properties of entropy are unlikely to suffice for more general channels, they do demonstrate that multiplicativity is not the only route to additivity.

## 5.5 Reduction to extreme points

Although the set of CPT maps  $\Phi : M_{d_A} \mapsto M_{d_B}$  is convex, one can not use convexity to reduce additivity or multiplicativity to that of the extreme channels. One can, however, use the notion of complementary channels to obtain a kind of global reduction to extreme channels.

The notion of complementary channel was first used in quantum information theory in a paper of Devetak and Shor [15] and then studied in detail in [25, 34]. This concept is equivalent to one obtained much earlier in a more general context by Arveson [6] in the section on lifting commutants. (See the appendix to [11] for details.)

If  $\Phi : M_{d_A} \mapsto M_{d_B}$ , its complement is a CPT map  $\Phi^C : M_{d_A} \mapsto M_{d_E}$  with Choi rank  $d_B$ . Whenever  $d_B \leq d_A$ , the complement belongs to the class of generalized extreme points. Therefore, the results in [25, 34] imply that if we can prove additivity for all maps in  $\overline{\mathcal{E}(d_1, d_2)}$ , it will hold for all CPT maps with  $d_B \leq d_A$ . Moreover, Shor's channel extensions [48] used to establish the equivalence of various additivity results increase only  $d_A$ . Hence, additivity for tensor products of all extreme maps with  $d_A \geq d_B$  would imply it for all maps with  $d_A = d_B$ .

**Problem 14.** *Identify new classes of extreme CPT maps for which additivity and/or multiplicativity can be proved.*

**Problem 15.** *Can one prove (24) for random sub-unitary channels, at least for  $p = 2$ . If not, do these channels provide additional counter-example?*

## 5.6 New counter-examples and their implications

Very recently (July, 2007), Winter [51] solved Problem 11 by showing the existence of counter-examples for all  $p > 2$ . Moreover, his approach failed at  $p = 2$ , which seemed to provide support for the validity of multiplicativity in the range  $1 < p \leq 2$ . But soon after, Hayden [21] showed that there exist counter-examples for  $1 < p < 2$  and this was extended to  $p = 2$  by Winter.

Hayden [21] also provided an analysis of his examples that indicates that (23) still holds for these channels and suggested that one try to establish additivity by proving (26) for  $p < 1$ . King [32] announced that his arguments for multiplicativity of entanglement breaking channels [31] extend to  $0 < p < 1$ . He also observed that the proofs of (24) for unital qubit channels [29] and depolarizing channels, [30] were based on the following inequality of Lieb-Thirring [38]

$$\mathrm{Tr} (AB)^p \leq \mathrm{Tr} A^p B^p \quad (31)$$

for  $p \geq 1$  and  $A, B$  positive semi-definite. Since Araki [5] has shown that the reverse inequality is valid for  $0 \leq p < 1$ , his results for unital qubit and for general depolarizing channels should also readily extend to  $0 < p < 1$ .

However, hopes for validity of (26) for  $0 \leq p < 1$  were shattered when Harrow, Leung and Winter [22] announced counter-examples for  $p = 0$ . These examples differ from those for  $p > 1$ . But they are also based on the results and methods introduced in [22] on the prevalence of nearly maximally entangled states in large dimension. It seems only a matter of time until counter-examples are shown to exist for any  $p \in (0, 1)$ .

Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that none of the counter-examples are uniform in  $p$ , i.e., as  $p$  approaches 1 the counter-example fails and a new one must be found with dimension increasing to infinity as  $p \mapsto 1$ . Thus, the following much weaker forms of (24) and (26) are not excluded. The validity of any one of the four conjectures which follow would imply that (23) and all the equivalent additivity conjectures hold.

**Conjecture 16.** *For any fixed pair of channels  $\Phi, \Omega$ , there is a  $p^* > 0$  such that either*

- (i)  $p^* < 1$  and (26) holds for all  $p \in (p^*, 1)$ , or
- (ii)  $p^* > 1$  and (26) holds for all  $p \in (1, p^*)$ .

**Conjecture 17.** *For any fixed integer  $d$  there is a  $p_d > 0$  such that either*

- (i)  $p_d < 1$  and (26) holds whenever  $\Phi : M_{d'} \mapsto M_{d'}$ ,  $d' \leq d$  and  $p_d < p < 1$ , or
- (ii)  $p_d > 1$  and (26) holds whenever  $\Phi : M_{d'} \mapsto M_{d'}$ ,  $d' \leq d$  and  $1 < p < p_d$

For brevity we stated the conjectures above in pairs, but in each case the form (i) or (ii) is a separate conjecture.

If the additivity conjectures are true, proving either of the above conjectures seems less likely than proving (23) directly. Moreover, Shor's channel extension methods give global equivalences which require consideration of CPT maps  $\Phi : M_d \mapsto M_{d'}$  with  $d \geq d'$ . Thus one should extend the above conjectures to include the case  $d > d'$ . However, we preferred to state them in the simpler form.

Although based on similar techniques, the actual form of the channels giving counter-examples for  $p > 1$  and  $p < 1$  seems to be different. This leads to

**Problem 18.** *Does there exist a channel or pair of channels that violates (26) for both some  $p_1 > 1$  and some  $p_2$  with  $0 < p_2 < 1$ ?*

If the answer is negative, then (23) holds because one can always approach  $p = 1$  from either above or below. This seems a rather unlikely approach to proving (23), but thinking about it might provide some insight about this additivity conjecture.

The need for large dimensions to find counter-examples raises the question of whether channels for smaller dimensions might satisfy (26) for two copies, but not for a large number.

**Problem 19.** *Find an example of a channel  $\Phi$ , an integer  $m$  and a  $p > 0$  such that  $S_{\min}^p(\Phi^{\otimes n}) = nS_{\min}^p(\Phi)$  for  $n < m$  but  $S_{\min}^p(\Phi^{\otimes m}) < mS_{\min}^p(\Phi)$ .*

Current results do not even exclude the possibility that a non-unital qubit channel violates additivity for  $\Phi^{\otimes m}$ . Curiously, (24) has only been proved [33] for non-unital qubit maps when  $p = 2$  or  $p \geq 4$ .

All of the counter-example results obtained thus far are given as existence theorems. It would be useful to have explicit counter-examples.

**Problem 20.** *Find explicit examples of channels which violate (24) for  $p \neq 1$ .*

In the case of Winter's examples [51] for  $p > 2$ , one can show that the so-called CB entropy [14] is positive and the coherent information is negative. (When the coherent information is achieved with a maximally entangled state, the CB entropy and coherent information differ only by a sign change.) Thus, although these channels are not entanglement breaking (EB), they preserve very little entanglement – not even enough to allow one to recover a single EPR pair in the sense of Horodecki, Oppenheim and Winter [27, ?]. The WH counter-examples also have positive CB entropy except for  $d = 3$  when it is exactly zero. Thus, for  $p > 2$ , the known counter-examples suggest that entanglement does not enhance the optimal output purity until the channel is very close to EB. One can ask if this holds for other examples, particularly those for  $p < 2$ .

**Problem 21.** *Do all counter-examples to multiplicativity (24) have non-negative CB entropy and/or zero coherent information?*

Finally, one can ask whether or not additivity itself holds. It is worth recalling that the equivalent capacity conjecture was stated in [7] in a form that seemed to favor superadditivity. Thus, the ultimate open question is still.

**Problem 22.** *Prove (23) or find a counter-example.*

## 6 Coherent information and degradability

In [11] on degradability several questions were raised of which we mention one.

**Problem 23.** *Find pairs of channels  $\mathcal{M}, \mathcal{N}$  that are mutually degradable in the sense that there exist channels  $\mathcal{X}, \mathcal{Y}$  such that*

$$\mathcal{X} \circ \mathcal{M} = \mathcal{N}^C \quad \mathcal{Y} \circ \mathcal{N} = \mathcal{M}^C. \quad (32)$$

At present, the only examples known have  $\mathcal{M} = \mathcal{I}$  which is universal in the sense that  $\mathcal{N}$  is arbitrary. This works because  $\mathcal{I}$  is universally degradable and its complement  $\text{Tr}$  is a universal degrador. Can other examples be found? It may be that when  $\mathcal{N}$  has Choi rank  $d^2$ , one must have  $\mathcal{M} = \mathcal{I}$ . Therefore, it seems worth looking for examples in which both have lower Choi-rank. It would be particularly interesting to find pairs in which both have Choi-rank  $d$ , but are not individually degradable.

## 7 Local invariants for $N$ -representability

In the 1960's a variant of the quantum marginal problem known as  $N$ -representability attracted considerable interest. The question is to find necessary and sufficient conditions on a  $p$ -particle reduced density matrix  $\rho_{1,2,\dots,t}$  in order that there exists an anti-symmetric (or symmetric for bosons)  $N$ -particle density matrix  $\rho = \rho_{1,2,\dots,N}$  such that  $\text{Tr}_{t+1,t+2,\dots,N} \rho_{1,2,\dots,N} = \rho_{1,2,\dots,t}$ . The pure  $N$ -representability problem, for which one requires that the preimage  $\rho_{1,2,\dots,N} = |\Psi\rangle\langle\Psi|$  come from an anti-symmetric (or symmetric) pure state  $|\Psi\rangle$  is also of interest.

A full solution was found only to the mixed state problem for the one-particle density matrix, for which it is necessary and sufficient that the eigenvalues of  $\rho_1$  are  $\leq \frac{1}{N}$  when  $\text{Tr} \rho_1 = 1$ . Other results were obtained for a few very special situations, and some reformulations were found. For the two-particle reduced density matrix, a collection of necessary inequalities were obtained, but little else was known. For over 30 years, there was very little progress until two recent breakthroughs. Klyachko [37] solved the pure state 1-representability problems. Liu, Christandl and Verstraete [39] showed that some version are QMA complete.

Although many open questions remain, we consider only one which may be amenable to quantum information theorists. As Coleman pointed out,  $N$ -representability must be independent of the 1-particle basis used to write the density matrix, i.e., the solution can be expressed in terms of what one might call local invariants. These are parameters which are invariant under transformations of the form  $U \otimes U \otimes \dots \otimes U = U^{\otimes p}$ . For the 1-matrix, these are just unitary invariants, which are known to be the eigenvalues. For  $p = 2$  the set of local invariants includes the eigenvalues, but must contain other parameters as well. Surprisingly, no complete set of local invariants in which  $N$ -representability conditions for the 2-matrix can be expressed is known.

**Problem 24.** *Find a minimal complete set of local invariants for an anti-symmetric (or symmetric) 2-particle density matrix.*

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