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Complex analysis and geometry / *Analyse et géométrie complexes*

A note on Demailly's approach towards a conjecture of Griffiths

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Abstract. We prove that a “cushioned” Hermitian–Einstein-type equation proposed by Demailly in an approach towards a conjecture of Griffiths on the existence of a Griffiths positively curved metric on a Hartshorne ample vector bundle, has an essentially unique solution when the bundle is stable. This result indicates that the proposed approach must be modified in order to attack the aforementioned conjecture of Griffiths.

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1. Introduction

The notion of ampleness/positivity is paramount in algebraic geometry. For a holomorphic line bundle, there is only one notion of differentio-geometric positivity, i.e., there is a smooth Hermitian metric whose curvature form is a Kähler form. By the Kodaira embedding theorem, it coincides with algebro-geometric ampleness. A holomorphic vector bundle E is said to be Hartshorne ample if $\mathcal{O}_{E^*}(1)$ is an ample line bundle over $\mathbb{P}(E^*)$. There is no unique differentio-geometric notion of positivity of curvature Θ of a smooth Hermitian metric h . There are several competing inequivalent notions. The most natural of these notions are *Griffiths positivity* ($\langle v, \sqrt{-1}\Theta v \rangle$ is a Kähler form for all $v \neq 0$), *Nakano positivity* (the bilinear form defined by $\sqrt{-1}\Theta$ on $T^{1,0}M \otimes E$ is positive-definite), and *dual-Nakano positivity* (the Hermitian holomorphic bundle (E^*, h^*) is Nakano *negative*). Nakano positivity and dual-Nakano positivity imply Griffiths positivity and all three of them imply Hartshorne ampleness. A famous conjecture of Griffiths [5] asks whether Hartshorne ample vector bundles admit Griffiths positively curved metrics. This conjecture is still open. However, a considerable amount of work has been done to provide evidence in its favour [1–3, 6, 8–10, 13].

Relatively recently, Demailly [3] proposed a programme to prove the aforementioned conjecture of Griffiths for a holomorphic rank- r vector bundle E on a compact Kähler manifold (X, ω_0) . In fact, if Demailly's method works, it will end up proving a stronger conjecture: Do Hartshorne-ample bundles admit dual-Nakano positively curved metrics? Demailly's approach involves solving a family (depending on a parameter $0 \leq t \leq 1$) of vector bundle Monge–Ampère equations

(distinct from the one introduced in [11]) in conjunction with “cushioned” Hermitian–Einstein-type equations (see [3, Theorem 2.17]):

$$\det_{TX \otimes E^*} \left(\Theta_{h_t}^T + (1-t)\alpha\omega_0 \otimes I_{E^*} \right)^{1/r} = f_t \frac{(\det h_0)^\lambda}{(\det h_t)^\lambda} \omega_0^n, \tag{1}$$

$$\left(\sqrt{-1}F_{h_t} - \frac{\sqrt{-1}}{r} \operatorname{tr} F_{h_t} \right) \omega_0^{n-1} = -\epsilon \frac{(\det h_0)^\mu}{(\det h)^\mu} \ln \left(\frac{h h_0^{-1}}{\det(h h_0^{-1})^{1/r}} \right) \omega_0^n, \tag{2}$$

where h_0 is a smooth background Hermitian metric, $\mu, \lambda \geq 0$ are fixed constants, $\alpha > 0$ is a large enough constant so that $\Theta_{h_0} + \alpha\omega$ is dual-Nakano positively curved, and $f_t > 0$ are smooth positive functions. We focus on the cushioned Hermitian–Einstein-type equation in the following theorem.

Theorem 1. *Let E be an ω_0 -stable rank- r holomorphic bundle on X . Let H_0 be a Hermitian–Einstein metric on E with respect to ω_0 , that is, $\sqrt{-1}F_{H_0}\omega_0^{n-1} = \lambda\omega_0^n$. Let h be a smooth metric on E solving the following cushioned Hermitian–Einstein equation for given parameters $\epsilon \geq 0, \mu \geq 0$.*

$$\left(\sqrt{-1}F_h - \frac{\sqrt{-1}}{r} \operatorname{tr} F_h \right) \omega_0^{n-1} = -\epsilon \frac{(\det H_0)^\mu}{(\det h)^\mu} \ln \left(\frac{h H_0^{-1}}{\det(h H_0^{-1})^{1/r}} \right) \omega_0^n, \tag{3}$$

where h, H_0 are matrices (any holomorphic trivialisation will do). Then $h = H_0 e^{-f}$ for some smooth function f .

As a result, if we consider the system of the vector bundle Monge–Ampère equation and the cushioned Hermitian–Einstein-type equation on an ω_0 -stable ample E , and if solutions exist all the way till $t = 1$, the final $t = 1$ solution, by virtue of the fact that it satisfies the cushioned Hermitian–Einstein-type equation, has to be of the form $H_0 e^f$. This condition might be a strong restriction (which is unlikely to be met owing to [7, 12] without a restriction on the second Chern character). On the other hand, if we replace ω_0 by say $(1-t)\omega_0 + t\sqrt{-1}\operatorname{tr}(F_{h_t})$ (or the choice in [3, Section 2.19] for instance), the above argument will not be applicable and there might be some hope for the approach to yield an affirmative solution to the Griffiths Conjecture.

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2. Proof of uniqueness

In a holomorphic trivialisation, our conventions are: $\langle v, w \rangle_H = v^T H \bar{w}$, if g is an endomorphism then $g \cdot s = [g]^T \bar{s}$, $\nabla s = ds + A^T s$, $A = \partial H H^{-1}$, $F = dA - A \wedge A = \bar{\partial} A$, and $\nabla g = dg + [g, A]$.

The proof is motivated by a similar one by Donaldson for Riemann surfaces [4]. In general, $h = qH_0$ where q is some smooth H_0 -Hermitian positive-definite endomorphism of E . We decompose q further as $q = e^{-f} g$ where $\det(g) = 1$ and f is a smooth function. Thus, $F_h = F_{H_0} + \partial\bar{\partial}f + \bar{\partial}(\partial_0 g g^{-1})$. The trace-free part of the curvature is $F_h^\circ = F_0^\circ + \bar{\partial}(\partial_0 g g^{-1})$. Substituting these expressions in 3 and using the fact that H_0 is Hermitian–Einstein with respect to ω_0 , we get

$$\sqrt{-1}\bar{\partial}(\partial_0 g g^{-1})\omega_0^{n-1} = -\epsilon e^{r\mu f} \ln g \omega_0^n. \tag{4}$$

Now we compute

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{-1}\bar{\partial}\partial \operatorname{tr}(g^2)\omega_0^{n-1} &= \sqrt{-1}\bar{\partial}\operatorname{tr}(g\partial_0 g)\omega_0^{n-1} = \sqrt{-1}\operatorname{tr}(\bar{\partial}g\partial_0 g)\omega_0^{n-1} + \sqrt{-1}\operatorname{tr}(g\bar{\partial}\partial_0 g)\omega_0^{n-1} \\ &= \sqrt{-1}\operatorname{tr}(\bar{\partial}g\partial_0 g)\omega_0^{n-1} - \epsilon e^{r\mu f} \operatorname{tr}(g^2 \ln g)\omega_0^n - \sqrt{-1}\operatorname{tr}(g\partial_0 g g^{-1}\bar{\partial}g)\omega_0^{n-1} \\ &\leq -\epsilon e^{r\mu f} \operatorname{tr}(g^2 \ln g)\omega_0^n. \end{aligned} \tag{5}$$

Note that $\text{tr}(g^2 \ln g) = \sum_i \lambda_i^2 \ln(\lambda_i)$ where $\lambda_i > 0$ are the eigenvalues of g such that $\lambda_1 \leq \lambda_2 \dots$. The product of the λ_i is 1. Thus,

$$\sum_{i \mid \lambda_i < 1} |\ln(\lambda_i)| = \sum_{i \mid \lambda_i > 1} \ln(\lambda_i)$$

which implies that

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{1 \leq i \leq p \mid \lambda_p \leq 1, \lambda_{p+1} > 1} \lambda_i^2 |\ln(\lambda_i)| &\leq \sum_{1 \leq i \leq p \mid \lambda_p \leq 1, \lambda_{p+1} > 1} \lambda_p^2 |\ln(\lambda_i)| = \lambda_p^2 \sum_{i=p+1}^n \ln(\lambda_i) \\ &\leq \sum_{i=p+1}^n \lambda_i^2 \ln(\lambda_i). \end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

Therefore, $\text{tr}(g^2 \ln g) \geq 0$ and hence

$$\frac{1}{2} \sqrt{-1} \bar{\partial} \partial \text{tr}(g^2) \omega_0^{n-1} \leq 0. \tag{7}$$

The strong maximum principle then implies that actually

$$\frac{1}{2} \sqrt{-1} \bar{\partial} \partial \text{tr}(g^2) \omega_0^{n-1} = 0, \tag{8}$$

and hence $g = I$. □

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