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# Separator Algebra for State Estimation

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## 1 Introduction

Consider the following state estimation problem [Jau15]

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(i)} \quad & \dot{\mathbf{x}}(t) = \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}(t)), t \in \mathbb{R} \\ \text{(ii)} \quad & \mathbf{g}(t_k) \in \mathbb{Y}(k), k \in \mathbb{N} \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Our objective is to find an inner and an outer approximation of the set  $\mathbb{X}(t)$  of all state vectors that are consistent with (1) at time  $t$ . If we define by flow map  $\varphi_{t_1, t_2}$  as follows:

$$(\mathbf{x}(t_1) = \mathbf{x}_1 \text{ and } \dot{\mathbf{x}}(t) = \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}(t)) \Rightarrow \mathbf{x}_2 = \varphi_{t_1, t_2}(\mathbf{x}_1)). \quad (2)$$

The set of all *causal feasible states* at time  $t$  is defined by

$$\mathbb{X}(t) = \bigcap_{t_k \leq t} \varphi_{t_k, t} \circ \mathbf{g}^{-1}(\mathbb{Y}(k)). \quad (3)$$

In this paper, we show how it is possible to find both an inner and an outer approximations for  $\mathbb{X}(t)$ . Some existing methods are able to find an outer approximation [KJWM99] [GRMA13], but, to my knowledge, none of them is able to get an inner approximation. The main idea is to copy a classical contractor approach [CJ09] for state estimation, but to use separators [JD14] instead of contractors.

## 2 Separators

In this section, we present separators and show how they can be used by a paver in order to bracket the solution sets. An *interval* of  $\mathbb{R}$  is a closed connected set of  $\mathbb{R}$ . A box  $[\mathbf{x}]$  of  $\mathbb{R}^n$  is the Cartesian product of  $n$  intervals. The set of all boxes of  $\mathbb{R}^n$  is denoted by  $\mathbb{I}\mathbb{R}^n$ . A *contractor*  $\mathcal{C}$  is an operator  $\mathbb{I}\mathbb{R}^n \mapsto \mathbb{I}\mathbb{R}^n$  such that  $\mathcal{C}([\mathbf{x}]) \subset [\mathbf{x}]$  and  $[\mathbf{x}] \subset [\mathbf{y}] \Rightarrow \mathcal{C}([\mathbf{x}]) \subset \mathcal{C}([\mathbf{y}])$ . A set  $\mathbb{S}$  is *consistent* with the contractor  $\mathcal{C}$  (we will write  $\mathbb{S} \sim \mathcal{C}$ ) if for all  $[\mathbf{x}]$ , we have  $\mathcal{C}([\mathbf{x}]) \cap \mathbb{S} = [\mathbf{x}] \cap \mathbb{S}$ . A *separator*  $\mathcal{S}$  is pair of contractors  $\{\mathcal{S}^{\text{in}}, \mathcal{S}^{\text{out}}\}$  such that, for all  $[\mathbf{x}] \in \mathbb{I}\mathbb{R}^n$ , we have  $\mathcal{S}^{\text{in}}([\mathbf{x}]) \cup \mathcal{S}^{\text{out}}([\mathbf{x}]) = [\mathbf{x}]$ . A set  $\mathbb{S}$  is *consistent* with the separator  $\mathcal{S}$  (we write  $\mathbb{S} \sim \mathcal{S}$ ), if  $\mathbb{S} \sim \mathcal{S}^{\text{out}}$  and  $\overline{\mathbb{S}} \sim \mathcal{S}^{\text{in}}$ , where  $\overline{\mathbb{S}} = \{\mathbf{x} \mid \mathbf{x} \notin \mathbb{S}\}$ . Using a separator inside a *paver* we can easily to classify part of the search space that are inside or outside a solution set  $\mathbb{S}$  associated with  $\mathcal{S}$ .

The algebra for separators is a direct extension of contractor algebra [CJ09]. If  $\mathcal{S}_i = \{\mathcal{S}_i^{\text{in}}, \mathcal{S}_i^{\text{out}}\}$ ,  $i \in \{1, 2\}$  are separators, we define

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{S}_1 \cap \mathcal{S}_2 &= \{\mathcal{S}_1^{\text{in}} \cup \mathcal{S}_2^{\text{in}}, \mathcal{S}_1^{\text{out}} \cap \mathcal{S}_2^{\text{out}}\} && \text{(intersection)} \\ \mathcal{S}_1 \cup \mathcal{S}_2 &= \{\mathcal{S}_1^{\text{in}} \cap \mathcal{S}_2^{\text{in}}, \mathcal{S}_1^{\text{out}} \cup \mathcal{S}_2^{\text{out}}\} && \text{(union)} \\ \mathbf{f}^{-1}(\mathcal{S}_1) &= \{\mathbf{f}^{-1}(\mathcal{S}_1^{\text{in}}), \mathbf{f}^{-1}(\mathcal{S}_1^{\text{out}})\} && \text{(inverse)} \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

If  $\mathcal{S}_i$  are sets of  $\mathbb{R}^n$ , we have [JSD14]

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(i)} \quad & \mathcal{S}_1 \cap \mathcal{S}_2 \sim \mathcal{S}_1 \cap \mathcal{S}_2 \\ \text{(ii)} \quad & \mathcal{S}_1 \cup \mathcal{S}_2 \sim \mathcal{S}_1 \cup \mathcal{S}_2 \\ \text{(iii)} \quad & \mathbf{f}^{-1}(\mathcal{S}_1) \sim \mathbf{f}^{-1}(\mathcal{S}_1). \end{aligned} \tag{5}$$

Interval analysis [Moo66] [KK96] combined with contractors [CJ09] has been shown to be able to give an outer approximation of set. For the inner subpaving, the *De Morgan* rules make it possible to express the complementary set  $\overline{\mathbb{X}}$  of  $\mathbb{X}$ . Then, basic contractor techniques can be used to get an inner characterization  $\mathbb{X}^-$ . Now, the task is not so easy and the role of *separators* is to make it automatic.

### 3 Transformation of separators

A transformation is an invertible function  $\mathbf{f}$  such as an analytical expression if known for both  $\mathbf{f}$  and  $\mathbf{f}^{-1}$ . The set of transformation from  $\mathbb{R}^n$  to  $\mathbb{R}^n$  is a group with respect to the composition  $\circ$ . Symmetries, translations, homotheties, rotations, ... are linear transformations.

**Theorem.** Consider a set  $\mathbb{X}$  and a transformation  $\mathbf{f}$ . Denote by  $[\mathbf{f}]$  and  $[\mathbf{f}^{-1}]$  two inclusion functions for  $\mathbf{f}$  and  $\mathbf{f}^{-1}$ . If  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}$  is a separator for  $\mathbb{X}$  then a separator  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}$  for  $\mathbb{Y} = \mathbf{f}(\mathbb{X})$  is

$$[\mathbf{y}] \rightarrow \{([\mathbf{f}] \circ \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}^{\text{in}} \circ [\mathbf{f}^{-1}])([\mathbf{y}]) \cap [\mathbf{y}], ([\mathbf{f}] \circ \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}^{\text{out}} \circ [\mathbf{f}^{-1}])([\mathbf{y}]) \cap [\mathbf{y}]\} \tag{6}$$

or equivalently

$$\mathbf{f}(\mathbb{X}) \sim \{[\mathbf{f}] \circ \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}^{\text{in}} \circ [\mathbf{f}^{-1}] \cap \text{Id}, [\mathbf{f}] \circ \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}^{\text{out}} \circ [\mathbf{f}^{-1}] \cap \text{Id}\} \tag{7}$$

where *Id* is the identity contractor.

**Remark.** The separator defined by (6) corresponds to what we call the *transformation* of a separator by  $\mathbf{f}$  and we write  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}} = \mathbf{f}(\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}})$ . As a consequence, thanks to the theorem, we can add to (5) the property

$$\text{(iv)} \quad \mathbf{f}(\mathbb{X}) \sim \mathbf{f}(\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}).$$

which will be used later for our state estimation problem.

**Proof.** The separator  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}$  is equivalent to  $\mathbb{Y} = \mathbf{f}(\mathbb{X})$  if

$$\begin{cases} \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}^{\text{out}}([\mathbf{y}]) \cap \mathbb{Y} = [\mathbf{y}] \cap \mathbb{Y} \\ \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}^{\text{in}}([\mathbf{y}]) \cap \overline{\mathbb{Y}} = [\mathbf{y}] \cap \overline{\mathbb{Y}}. \end{cases} \tag{8}$$

Since  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}^{\text{out}}([\mathbf{y}]) \subset [\mathbf{y}]$  and  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}^{\text{in}}([\mathbf{y}]) \subset [\mathbf{y}]$ , it suffices to prove that

$$\begin{cases} \text{(i)} \quad \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}^{\text{out}}([\mathbf{y}]) \supset [\mathbf{y}] \cap \mathbb{Y} \\ \text{(ii)} \quad \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}^{\text{in}}([\mathbf{y}]) \supset [\mathbf{y}] \cap \overline{\mathbb{Y}}. \end{cases} \tag{9}$$

Let us first prove (i). We have

$$\begin{aligned} [\mathbf{y}] \cap \mathbb{Y} &= \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{f}^{-1}([\mathbf{y}]) \cap \mathbf{f}^{-1}(\mathbb{Y})) & \mathbf{f} \text{ is bijective} \\ &= \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{f}^{-1}([\mathbf{y}]) \cap \mathbb{X}) & \mathbb{X} = \mathbf{f}^{-1}(\mathbb{Y}) \\ &\subset \mathbf{f}([\mathbf{f}^{-1}([\mathbf{y}]) \cap \mathbb{X}) & [\mathbf{f}^{-1}] \text{ is an inclusion function for } \mathbf{f}^{-1} \\ &\subset \mathbf{f}(\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}^{\text{out}}([\mathbf{f}^{-1}([\mathbf{y}])])) & \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}^{\text{out}} \text{ is a contractor for } \mathbb{X} \\ &\subset [\mathbf{f}] \circ \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}^{\text{out}} \circ [\mathbf{f}^{-1}]([\mathbf{y}]) & [\mathbf{f}] \text{ is an inclusion function for } \mathbf{f} \end{aligned} \tag{10}$$

Thus  $[\mathbf{y}] \cap \mathbb{Y} \subset ([\mathbf{f}] \circ \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}^{\text{out}} \circ [\mathbf{f}^{-1}]([\mathbf{y}]) \cap [\mathbf{y}]) = \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}^{\text{out}}([\mathbf{y}])$ . Let us now prove (ii). We have

$$\begin{aligned} [\mathbf{y}] \cap \overline{\mathbb{Y}} &= \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{f}^{-1}([\mathbf{y}]) \cap \mathbf{f}^{-1}(\overline{\mathbb{Y}})) & \mathbf{f} \text{ is bijective} \\ &= \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{f}^{-1}([\mathbf{y}]) \cap \overline{\mathbb{X}}) & \overline{\mathbb{X}} = \mathbf{f}^{-1}(\overline{\mathbb{Y}}) \\ &\subset \mathbf{f}([\mathbf{f}^{-1}]([\mathbf{y}]) \cap \overline{\mathbb{X}}) & [\mathbf{f}^{-1}] \text{ is an inclusion function for } \mathbf{f}^{-1} \\ &\subset \mathbf{f}(\mathcal{S}_{\overline{\mathbb{X}}}^{\text{in}}([\mathbf{f}^{-1}]([\mathbf{y}])) & \mathcal{S}_{\overline{\mathbb{X}}}^{\text{in}} \text{ is a contractor for } \overline{\mathbb{X}} \\ &\subset [\mathbf{f}] \circ \mathcal{S}_{\overline{\mathbb{X}}}^{\text{in}} \circ [\mathbf{f}^{-1}]([\mathbf{y}]) & [\mathbf{f}] \text{ is an inclusion function for } \mathbf{f} \end{aligned} \quad (11)$$

Thus  $[\mathbf{y}] \cap \mathbb{Y} \subset ([\mathbf{f}] \circ \mathcal{S}_{\overline{\mathbb{X}}}^{\text{out}} \circ [\mathbf{f}^{-1}]([\mathbf{y}]) \cap [\mathbf{y}]) \cap \mathbb{Y} = \mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}^{\text{in}}([\mathbf{y}])$  which terminates the proof. ■

**Example.** Consider the constraint

$$\left\| \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \cos \alpha & \sin \alpha \\ -\sin \alpha & \cos \alpha \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} y_1 - 1 \\ y_2 - 2 \end{pmatrix} \right\| \in [1, 3]. \quad (12)$$

If we apply an efficient forward-backward contractor in a paver, we get the contractions illustrated by the paving of Figure 1, left. Now, if we take

$$\begin{pmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \cos \alpha & \sin \alpha \\ -\sin \alpha & \cos \alpha \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} y_1 - 1 \\ y_2 - 2 \end{pmatrix} = \mathbf{f}^{-1}(\mathbf{y}) \quad (13)$$

or equivalently

$$\begin{pmatrix} y_1 \\ y_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \alpha & -\sin \alpha \\ \sin \alpha & \cos \alpha \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{2} & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} = \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}), \quad (14)$$

we get

$$\mathbf{y} = \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}), \text{ and } \|\mathbf{x}\| \in [1, 3]. \quad (15)$$

An optimal separator  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}}$  can be built for  $\mathbf{x}$  and the separator transform provides us a separator  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}$  for  $\mathbb{Y}$ . As illustrated by Figure 1, right, the resulting separator  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}}$  is more efficient than the classical one based on forward-backward contractors. Note that in case we are not able to have an inner approximation for  $\mathbf{f}^{-1}$ , the problem of finding an inner approximation of the image of a set  $\mathbf{f}(\mathbb{X})$  becomes much more difficult. See, *e.g.*, [VJVS05] [GJ10].

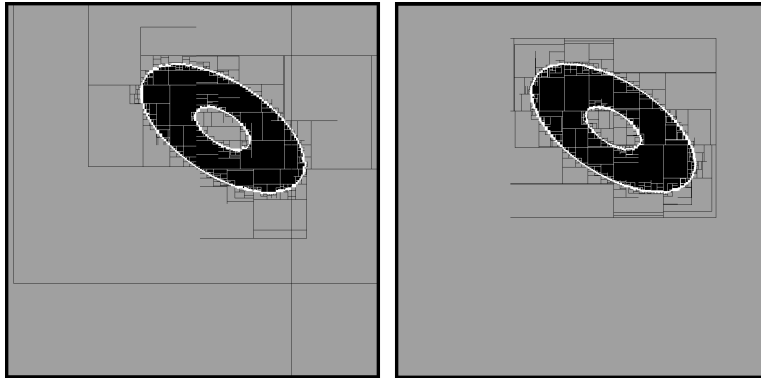
## 4 State estimation

If  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}(0)}$  is a separator for  $\mathbb{X}(0)$  and if  $\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}(k)}$  are separators for  $\mathbb{Y}(k)$ , then a separator for the set  $\mathbb{X}(t)$  defined by (3) is

$$\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{X}(t)} = \bigcap_{t_k \leq t} \varphi_{t_k, t} \circ \mathbf{g}^{-1}(\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}(k)}). \quad (16)$$

In this formula,  $\mathbf{g}^{-1}(\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}(k)})$  is a separator. Due to the fact that  $\varphi_{t_k, t}$  is bijective and that we are able to find an inclusion function for  $\varphi_{t_k, t}$  and  $\varphi_{t_k, t}^{-1}$  [RN11], the separator  $\varphi_{t_k, t} \circ \mathbf{g}^{-1}(\mathcal{S}_{\mathbb{Y}(k)})$  is clearly defined using the separator transform. To illustrate the method, let us consider a robot described by

$$\begin{cases} \dot{\mathbf{x}}(t) = \begin{pmatrix} v(t) \cos \theta(t) \\ v(t) \sin \theta(t) \end{pmatrix} & \text{(evolution)} \\ \|\mathbf{x}(t_k)\| \in y(t_k) + [-0.3, 0.3], t_k = 0.1 \cdot k, k \in \mathbb{N} & \text{(observation)} \end{cases} \quad (17)$$



**Fig. 1.** Left. Contractions obtained using a classical forward-backward propagation; Right. Contractions obtained using the separator transform. The frame corresponds to the box  $[-6, 6]^2$ .

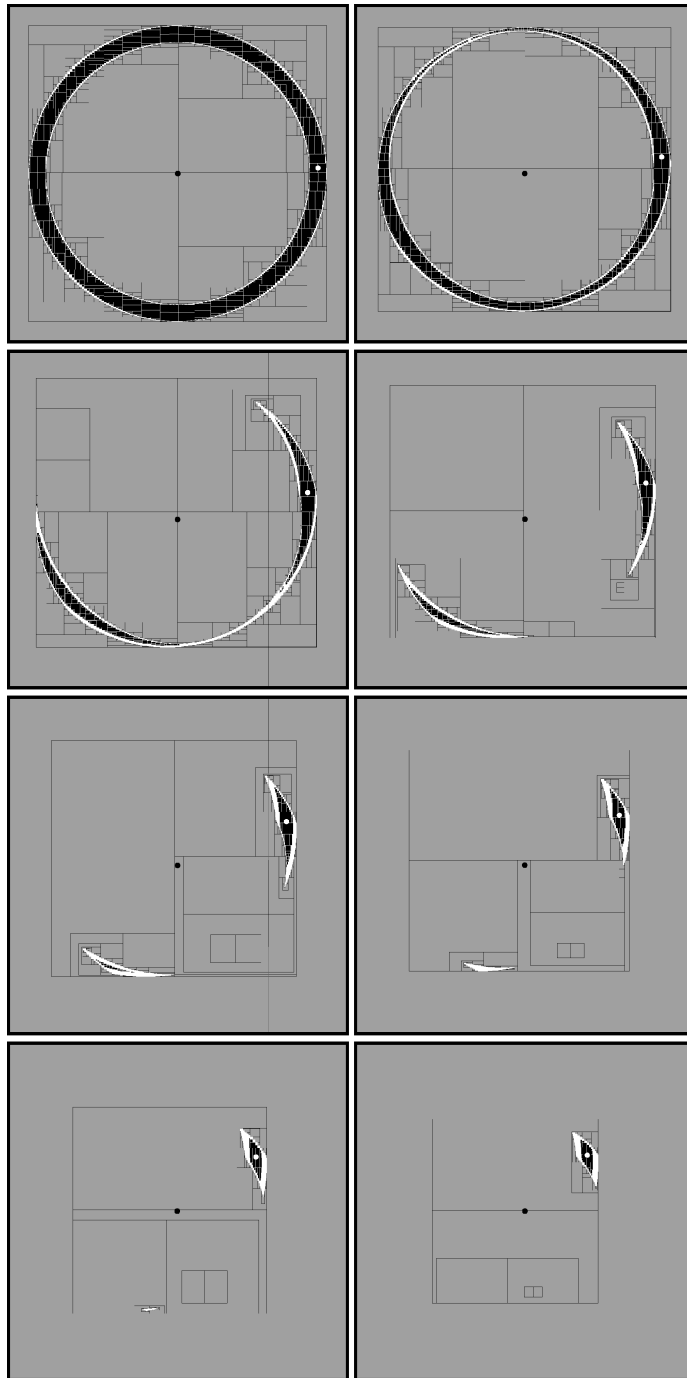
where  $v(t)$  and  $\theta(t)$  are measured with an accuracy of  $\pm 0.03$ . The observation equation is due to the fact that the robot measures every 0.1 sec its distance to the origin with an accuracy of  $\pm 0.3$ . The actual (but unknown) trajectory for the robot is

$$\mathbf{x}(t) = \begin{pmatrix} 2 + 3 \cos t \\ 2 \sin t \end{pmatrix}. \quad (18)$$

For  $t \in 0.2 * k$ ,  $k = 0, \dots, 7$ , the sets  $\mathbb{X}(t)$  obtained by our observer are represented on Figure 2. Black boxes are inside  $\mathbb{X}(t)$ , grey boxes are outside and the white boxes cover the boundary. For  $t = 0$ ,  $\mathbb{X}(t)$  is a ring which becomes a small set for  $t = 1.4$  once the robot has moved sufficiently. The fact that the white area covering the boundary becomes thick is mainly due to the state errors inside the evolution equation.

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**Fig. 2.** Inner and outer approximations of the set of all feasible state vectors  $\mathbb{X}(t)$ , for  $t \in 0, 0.2, \dots, 1.4$ . The frame boxes are  $[-6, 6]^2$ .

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