

A Symmetric TSSOS Hierarchy for Polynomial Optimization

Igor Klep, Victor Magron,
Tobias Metzlaff, Jie Wang



European Conference on Computational Optimization
Session: Combinatorial Optimization

September/October 2025, Klagenfurt

Let A be a graded real $*$ -algebra.

A **sum of squares** (SOS) is an element of the form

$$q = \sum_{t \in T} q_t q_t^*$$

with T a finite index set and $q_t \in A$.

In this talk: Exploit algebraic structures for verification of existence and computation of such representations.

Content

- 1 Historical Motivation and Applications
- 2 Symmetry Reduction
- 3 Sparsity Exploitation

Historical Motivation and Applications

① Hilbert, 1888:

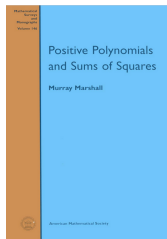
“Given $n, r \in \mathbb{N}$, every nonnegative polynomial $f \in A := \mathbb{R}[X_1, \dots, X_n]$ of degree $2r$ is a sum of squares.”
 $\Leftrightarrow (n, 2r) \in \{(1, 2r), (n, 2), (2, 4)\}$

② Motzkin, 1967:

$f = X_1^4 X_2^2 + X_1^2 X_2^4 + 1 - 3 X_1^2 X_2^2$
is nonnegative but *not* a sum of squares.

③ *Positivstellensatz*:

A theorem that states the existence of an SOS-representation.
Schmüdgen, 1991; Putinar, 1996.



Marshall, 2008:

POSITIVE POLYNOMIALS AND SUMS OF SQUARES.

<https://bookstore.ams.org/surv-146/>

Applications

Let $f, g_1, \dots, g_\ell \in \mathbb{R}[X]$, $K := \{X \in \mathbb{R}^n \mid g_1(X), \dots, g_\ell(X) \geq 0\}$.

$$\begin{aligned} f^* = \min_{X \in K} f(X) &= \max_{\lambda \in \mathbb{R}} \lambda && \text{(POP)} \\ \text{s.t. } &&& f - \lambda \geq 0 \text{ on } K \end{aligned}$$

Truncated Quadratic Module

$$\text{QM}_r(g) := \left\{ q_0 + \sum_{k=1}^{\ell} q_k g_k \mid q_k \text{ is SOS of degree } \leq 2r \right\}$$

Lasserre Hierarchy, 2001

$$\begin{aligned} f^* \geq f_{\text{SOS}}^r := \max_{\lambda \in \mathbb{R}} \lambda \\ \text{s.t. } &&& f - \lambda \in \text{QM}_r(g) \end{aligned}$$

with $f_{\text{SOS}}^r \rightarrow f^*$ for $r \rightarrow \infty$ under certain assumptions (Putinar).

- Korda, Henrion, Jones, 2013:
Computing a maximal positive invariant (MPI) set of a dynamical system $\dot{X}(t) = F(X(t))$.
- Ozawa, 2016:
“A finitely generated group \mathfrak{G} has *Kazhdan's property (T)*”
 $\Leftrightarrow \exists \lambda > 0 : \Delta^2 - \lambda \Delta$ is SOS in $\mathbb{R}[\mathfrak{G}]$ with Laplacian Δ .

To summarize...

- Explicit SOS-certificates give not only an optimal solution, but also an optimizer, in which the solution is attained.
- In practice: converging hierarchy of semidefinite (numerical) lower bounds by restriction of degree.
- Goal: Handle size of computation through exploitation of algebraic structures.

Symmetry Reduction

Symmetry in Nature and Science



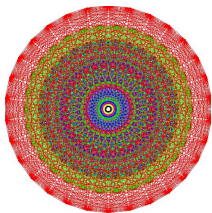
Photo credit: Matteo Fieni

Maryna Viazovska

For the proof that the E_8 lattice provides the densest packing of identical spheres in 8 dimensions, and further contributions to related extremal problems and interpolation problems in Fourier analysis.

[citation](#) | [video](#) | [popular scientific exposition](#) | [CV/publications](#)

[interview](#) | [laudatio](#) | [proceedings](#) | [Plus magazine! article \(intro\)](#)



Source: Wikipedia/AMS

Gosset polytope drawn BY HAND (!) by Peter McMullen, 1960s

Some Representation Theory

Let \mathcal{G} be a finite group.

- 1 Two elements $\sigma, \tilde{\sigma} \in \mathcal{G}$ are called **conjugate**, if $\sigma\tau = \tau\tilde{\sigma}$ for some $\tau \in \mathcal{G}$.
- 2 A **\mathcal{G} -module** W is a vector space together with a group homomorphism $\rho_W : \mathcal{G} \rightarrow \text{GL}(W)$, called **representation**.
- 3 A \mathcal{G} -module W is called **irreducible**, if its only \mathcal{G} -submodules are 0 and W itself.

Fact

$\#$ nonisom. irred. \mathcal{G} -modules = $\#$ conjugacy classes =: h

Graduate Texts
in Mathematics

J.-P. Serre
Linear
Representations
of Finite Groups

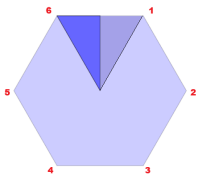
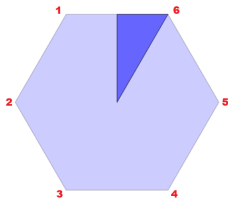
 Springer-Verlag
New York Heidelberg Berlin

Serre, 1977:

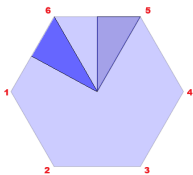
LINEAR REPRESENTATIONS OF FINITE GROUPS.

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4684-9458-7>

Decomposition into irreducibles



$$s = (1, 6)(2, 5)(3, 4)$$



$$r = (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)$$

$$\mathcal{D}_{2,6} = \langle s, r \mid s^2 = r^6 = (sr)^2 = e \rangle \text{ "dihedral group of order 12"}$$



Documentation: <https://docs.julialang.org>

Type "?" for help, "]??" for Pkg help.

Version 1.11.5 (2025-04-14)

Official <https://julialang.org/> release

```
julia> using Oscar
```



Combining ANTiC, GAP, Polymake, Singular

Type "?Oscar" for more information

Manual: <https://docs.oscar-system.org>

Version 1.3.0

```
julia> n=6
```

```
6
```

```
julia> G=dihedral_group(2*n)
```

```
Pc group of order 12
```

```
julia> character_table(G)
```

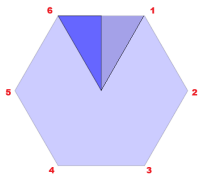
```
Character table of pc group of order 12
```

```
 2  2  2  1  1  2  2  
 3  1  .  1  1  .  1
```

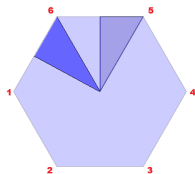
```
 1a 2a 6a 3a 2b 2c  
2P 1a 1a 3a 3a 1a 1a  
3P 1a 2a 2c 1a 2b 2c  
5P 1a 2a 6a 3a 2b 2c
```

```
X_1  1  1  1  1  1  1  
X_2  1 -1 -1  1  1 -1  
X_3  1 -1  1  1 -1  1  
X_4  1  1 -1  1 -1 -1  
X_5  2  .  1 -1  . -2  
X_6  2  . -1 -1  .  2
```

Decomposition into irreducibles



$$s = (1, 6)(2, 5)(3, 4)$$



$$r = (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)$$

Consider the 6-dimensional representation

$$\rho : \mathcal{D}_{2,6} \rightarrow GL(\mathbb{R}^6), \quad s \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} & 1 & & & & \\ & & 1 & & & \\ & & & 1 & & \\ & & & & 1 & \\ & & & & & 1 \\ 1 & & & & & \end{pmatrix}, \quad r \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} & & & & & 1 \\ & & & & 1 & \\ & & & 1 & & \\ & & 1 & & & \\ & 1 & & & & \\ 1 & & & & & \end{pmatrix}.$$

The $\mathcal{D}_{2,6}$ -module \mathbb{R}^6 can be decomposed into irreducibles

$$\mathbb{R}^6 = \left\langle \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \right\rangle \oplus \left\langle \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} \right\rangle \oplus \left\langle \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ -2 \\ -1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \right\rangle, \left\langle \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ -1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} \right\rangle \oplus \left\langle \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -1 \\ -1 \\ 2 \\ -1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} \right\rangle, \left\langle \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} \right\rangle.$$

The induced action on $\mathbb{R}[X_1, \dots, X_6]$ is $f^\sigma(X) := f(\rho(\sigma^{-1}) \cdot X)$.

Setup

Let $A = A_0 \oplus A_1 \oplus A_2 \oplus \dots$ with A_r *finite dimensional* and $\mathcal{G} \subseteq \mathrm{GL}(A)$ be a *finite group* with a linear action

$$\mathcal{G} \times A_r \rightarrow A_r, (\sigma, f) \mapsto f^\sigma.$$

Isotypic Decomposition

$$A_r \otimes_{\mathbb{R}} \mathbb{C} = \bigoplus_{i=1}^h \bigoplus_{j=1}^{m_r^{(i)}} V_j^{(i)}$$

h number of irreducible characters of \mathcal{G} with multiplicities $m_r^{(i)}$ and $V_1^{(i)}, \dots, V_{m_r^{(i)}}^{(i)}$ pairwise isomorphic irreducible \mathcal{G} -modules.

Reynolds Operator

$$\mathcal{R}^{\mathcal{G}}(f) := \frac{1}{|\mathcal{G}|} \sum_{\sigma \in \mathcal{G}} f^\sigma$$

Symmetric SOS

Observation (for fixed degree r)

If S is a basis for A_r and $\mathbf{Q} = (\mathbf{Q}^*)^t \succeq 0$ is a Hermitian psd matrix of size $|S|$ with entries in A_0 , then

$$f = (\mathbf{S}^*)^t \cdot \mathbf{Q} \cdot \mathbf{S} \in A_{2r}$$

is a sum of squares, where \mathbf{S} is the vector of basis elements.

Proposition

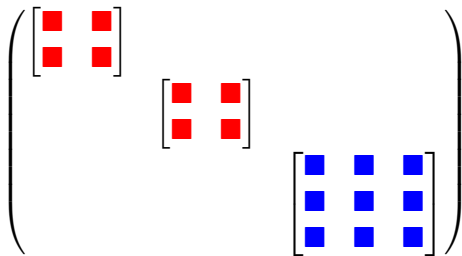
Let $f \in A^{\mathcal{G}} \cap A_{2r}$ and $S^{(i)} \subset A_r$ contain exactly one nonzero element of each $V_j^{(i)}$, with $1 \leq j \leq m_r^{(i)}$. If f is a sum of squares in A , then there exist $\mathbf{Q}^{(i)} = ((\mathbf{Q}^{(i)})^*)^t \succeq 0$ of size $m_r^{(i)}$, such that

$$f = \sum_{i=1}^h \mathcal{R}^{\mathcal{G}} \left(((\mathbf{S}^{(i)})^*)^t \cdot \mathbf{Q}_r^{(i)} \cdot \mathbf{S}^{(i)} \right).$$

Informal Consequence

“The matrix of a symmetric SOS-certificate over A_r has h blocks, each consisting of d_i many identical blocks of size $m_r^{(i)}$.”

$$\dim(A_r) = \sum_{i=1}^h d_i m_r^{(i)} \quad d_i := \dim(V_1^{(i)}) = \dots = \dim(V_{m_r^{(i)}}^{(i)})$$



Remark

Change of basis does not effect the trace. Hence, dense and symmetric relaxations (SDP) have the same theoretical value.

Sparsity Exploitation

What is sparsity and where does it appear?

- Correlative Sparsity:

$$f = X_1 X_2 + X_2 X_3 + \dots + X_{99} X_{100}$$

- Term Sparsity:

$$f = X_1 X_2^{99} + X_1^{99} X_2$$

- Deep learning (robustness, computer vision)
- Power systems (optimal power flow, stability)
- Quantum systems (condensed matter)

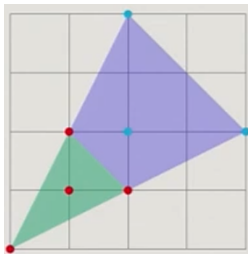


Motzkin is not SOS

Recall: $f_{\text{Motzkin}} = 1 - 3X_1^2 X_2^2 + X_1^4 X_2^2 + X_1^2 X_2^4$
is nonnegative but *not* a sum of squares (Motzkin, 1967).

Reznick, 1978

If $f = \sum_t q_t^2$, then $\text{NewtonPoly}(q_t) \subseteq \frac{1}{2}\text{NewtonPoly}(f)$.



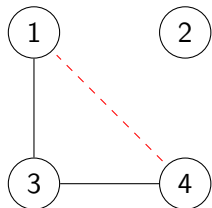
Hence, if f_{Motzkin} was SOS, then

$$f_{\text{Motzkin}} = \sum (a + \underline{bX_1 X_2} + cX_1^2 X_2 + dX_1 X_2^2)^2$$

and thus $-3 = \sum b^2$:(

Encoding and Exploiting Sparsity

$$\mathbf{B} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{with} \quad \bar{\mathbf{B}} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$



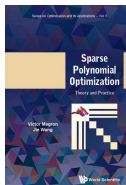
Idea: Instead of sums of squares of the form

$$f = (\mathbf{S})^t \cdot \mathbf{Q} \cdot (\mathbf{S})^*,$$

consider

$$\tilde{f} = (\mathbf{S})^t \cdot (\mathbf{B} \circ \mathbf{Q}) \cdot (\mathbf{S})^*,$$

where \mathbf{S} is a vector of basis elements and \mathbf{B} a binary matrix.



Magron & Wang, 2023:

SPARSE POLYNOMIAL OPTIMIZATION.

<https://www.worldscientific.com/worldscibooks/10.1142/q0382>

Symmetry-adapted TSSOS Hierarchy

$$f^* = \max_{\lambda \in \mathbb{R}} \lambda \quad \geq f_{\text{SOS}}^{r,s} := \max_{\mathbf{Q}_k^{(i)} \in \text{Sym}_{r-d_k}^{(i)}(\mathbf{B}_{r,s,k}^{(i)})} f_1 - \sum_{k,i} \text{tr}(\mathbf{A}_{r,s,k,1}^{(i)} \cdot \mathbf{Q}_k^{(i)})$$

s.t. $f - \lambda \geq 0$
on K

$$\mathbf{Q}_k^{(i)} \succeq 0, \forall j \geq 2 :$$
$$f_j = \sum_{k,i} \text{tr}(\mathbf{A}_{r,s,k,j}^{(i)} \cdot \mathbf{Q}_k^{(i)}),$$

r : degree of approximation

s : level of sparsity

$\mathbf{A}_{r,s,k,j}^{(i)}$: sparse coefficient matrices in the symmetry basis

$\mathbf{B}_{r,s,k}^{(i)}$: binary matrices encoding sparsity

Theorem

For fixed degree $r \geq r_{\min}$, the sequence $(f_{\text{SOS}}^{r,s})_{s \geq 1}$ is monotonously nondecreasing with $f_{\text{SOS}}^{r,*} = f_{\text{SOS}}^r$.

For fixed sparsity order $s \geq 1$, the sequence $(f_{\text{SOS}}^{r,s})_{r \geq r_{\min}}$ is monotonously nondecreasing.

Thank You.

<https://github.com/wangjie212/TSSOS>