

Entrywise positivity preservers in fixed dimension:

II

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(Joint with Alexander Belton, Dominique Guillot, and Mihai Putinar;  
and with Terence Tao)

# The entrywise calculus

## Definitions.

- 1 A real symmetric matrix  $A_{N \times N}$  is *positive semidefinite* if all eigenvalues of  $A$  are  $\geq 0$ . (Equivalently,  $u^T A u \geq 0$  for all  $u \in \mathbb{R}^N$ .)
- 2 Given  $N \geq 1$  and  $I \subset \mathbb{R}$ , let  $\mathbb{P}_N(I)$  denote the  $N \times N$  positive semidefinite matrices, with entries in  $I$ . (Say  $\mathbb{P}_N = \mathbb{P}_N(\mathbb{R})$ .)
- 3 A function  $f : I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  acts *entrywise* on a matrix  $A$  via:  $f[A] := (f(a_{ij}))$ .

# Schoenberg and Rudin's theorems

**Problem:** Given a function  $f : I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ , when is it true that

$$f[A] := (f(a_{ij})) \in \mathbb{P}_N \text{ for all } A \in \mathbb{P}_N(I)?$$

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- Pólya–Szegő (1925 book) via the Schur product theorem (*Crelle* 1911):

*If  $f(x) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} c_k x^k$  is convergent and  $c_k \geq 0$ , then  $f[-]$  preserves positivity on  $\mathbb{P}_N$  in all dimensions.*

- Schoenberg (*Duke* 1942):

*The converse also holds, if  $f$  is continuous.*

- Rudin (*Duke* 1959); resp. Belton–Guillot–K.–Putinar (*JEMS*, accepted):

*The converse holds for any  $f$ , and we only need to assume  $f[-]$  preserves positivity on all Toeplitz (resp. Hankel) matrices of rank  $\leq 3$ .*

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## Preserving positivity for fixed $N$ :

- Natural refinement of original problem of Schoenberg.
- In applications: dimension of the problem is known.  
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- *Loewner's necessary condition / variants:* If  $f$  is any smooth function preserving positivity on  $\mathbb{P}_N((0, \rho))$ , then the first  $N$  nonzero Maclaurin coefficients of  $f$  must be positive. *Can the next one be negative?*

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- **Previous talk:** Belton–Guillot–K.–Putinar, *Adv. Math.* 2016:  
*Yes, if the first  $N$  degrees are consecutive.*

# Outstanding questions: 1. More general polynomials

Analogue of Loewner's necessary condition implies:

Suppose  $c_0, c_2, c_3 \neq 0$  are real,  $M \geq 4$ , and  $c_0 + c_2x^2 + c_3x^3 + c_Mx^M$  entrywise preserves positivity on  $3 \times 3$  correlation matrices.

Then  $c_0, c_2, c_3 > 0$ . **Can  $c_M$  be negative? (Not known.)**

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Reformulation: Multiplying by  $t = |c_M|^{-1}$ , does

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entrywise preserve positivity on  $\mathbb{P}_N((0, \rho))$  **for any  $t > 0$ ? No example known.**

# Main result (for integer powers)

Theorem (K.–Tao, *Amer. J. Math.*, in press)

Fix integers  $N \geq 1$  and  $0 \leq n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1} < M$ , and real scalars  $\rho > 0$  and  $c_{n_0}, \dots, c_{n_{N-1}}$ . For  $t > 0$ , define  $p_t(x) := t \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} c_{n_j} x^{n_j} - x^M$ .



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$$t \geq \mathcal{K}_{\rho, \mathbf{n}, M} := \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} \frac{V(\mathbf{n}_j)^2}{V(\mathbf{n})^2} \frac{\rho^{M-n_j}}{c_{n_j}},$$

where  $\mathbf{n} := (n_0, \dots, n_{N-1})$ , the tuples

$$\mathbf{n}_j := (n_0, \dots, n_{j-1}, \widehat{n_j}, n_{j+1}, \dots, n_{N-1}, M), \quad 0 \leq j \leq N-1,$$

and given a vector  $\mathbf{u} = (u_1, \dots, u_N)$ , its ‘Vandermonde determinant’ is

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# Consequences

- 1 For the 'initial', consecutive powers  $n_j = j$  as in previous talk,

$$\mathcal{K}_{\rho, \mathbf{n}, M} = \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} \binom{M}{j}^2 \binom{M-j-1}{N-j-1}^2 \frac{\rho^{M-j}}{c_j} = \mathcal{K}_{\rho, M}.$$

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- 3 Complete characterization of ‘fewnomials’ with at most  $N + 1$  terms,  
which preserve positivity on  $\mathbb{P}_N$ .
- 4 Surprisingly, the sharp bound on the negative threshold is obtained on  
rank 1 matrices.

# Sketch of the proof

## Theorem (K.-Tao, in press)

Let  $N \geq 1$  and  $0 \leq n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1} < M$  be integers. If  $\rho, t, c_{n_0}, \dots, c_{n_{N-1}} > 0$ , and  $p_t(x) := t \sum_{j < N} c_{n_j} x^{n_j} - x^M$ , TFAE:

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Study the determinants of linear pencils

$$\det p_t[A] = \det \left( t(c_{n_0} A^{\circ n_0} + \dots + c_{n_{N-1}} A^{\circ n_{N-1}}) - A^{\circ M} \right)$$

for rank-one matrices  $A = \mathbf{u}\mathbf{v}^T$ .

# Schur polynomials

Given an increasing  $N$ -tuple of integers  $0 \leq n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1}$ , the corresponding **Schur polynomial** over a field  $\mathbb{F}$  is the unique polynomial extension to  $\mathbb{F}^N$  of

$$s_{\mathbf{n}}(u_1, \dots, u_N) := \frac{\det(u_i^{n_{j-1}})_{i,j=1}^N}{\det(u_i^{j-1})} = \frac{\det(u_i^{n_{j-1}})_{i,j=1}^N}{V(\mathbf{u})}$$

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- Characters of irreducible polynomial representations of  $GL_N(\mathbb{C})$ , usually defined in terms of semi-standard Young tableaux.
- Weyl Character (Dimension) Formula in Type A:

$$s_{\mathbf{n}}(1, \dots, 1) = \prod_{1 \leq i < j \leq N} \frac{n_j - n_i}{j - i} = \frac{V(\mathbf{n})}{V((0, 1, \dots, N-1))}.$$

# Schur polynomials via semi-standard Young tableaux

Schur polynomials are also defined using semi-standard Young tableaux:

**Example 1:** Suppose  $N = 3$  and  $\mathbf{m} := (0, 2, 4)$ . The tableaux are:

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$$\begin{aligned}
 & s_{(0,2,4)}(u_1, u_2, u_3) \\
 &= u_3^2 u_2 + u_3^2 u_1 + u_3 u_2^2 + 2u_3 u_2 u_1 + u_3 u_1^2 + u_2^2 u_1 + u_2 u_1^2 \\
 &= (u_1 + u_2)(u_2 + u_3)(u_3 + u_1).
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 s_{(0,2,4)}(u_1, u_2, u_3) &= u_3^2 u_2 + u_3^2 u_1 + u_3 u_2^2 + 2u_3 u_2 u_1 + u_3 u_1^2 + u_2^2 u_1 + u_2 u_1^2 \\
 &= (u_1 + u_2)(u_2 + u_3)(u_3 + u_1).
 \end{aligned}$$

**Example 2:** Suppose  $N = 3$  and  $\mathbf{n} = (0, 2, 3)$ :

3	3	2
2	1	1

Then  $s_{(0,2,3)}(u_1, u_2, u_3) = u_1 u_2 + u_2 u_3 + u_3 u_1$ .

# Sketch of the proof of the main result (cont.)

Technical result used in the proof: Jacobi–Trudi type identity for  $p_t$ :

**Theorem (K.–Tao, in press)**

Let  $N \geq 1$  and  $0 \leq n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1} < M$  be integers. Suppose  $c_0, \dots, c_{N-1} \in \mathbb{F}^\times$  are non-zero scalars in a field  $\mathbb{F}$ . Define the polynomial

$$p_t(x) := t(c_{n_0}x^{n_0} + \dots + c_{n_{N-1}}x^{n_{N-1}}) - x^M,$$

and the partitions  $\mathbf{n} = (n_0, \dots, n_{N-1})$  and  $\mathbf{n}_j = (n_0, \dots, \widehat{n_j}, \dots, n_{N-1}, M)$  as above.

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$$\det p_t[\mathbf{u}\mathbf{v}^T] = t^{N-1}V(\mathbf{u})V(\mathbf{v})s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u})s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{v}) \prod_{j=0}^{N-1} c_{n_j} \times \left( t - \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} \frac{s_{\mathbf{n}_j}(\mathbf{u})s_{\mathbf{n}_j}(\mathbf{v})}{c_{n_j} s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u})s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{v})} \right).$$

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- Need to take a closer look at (ratios of) Schur polynomials.  
Toy example: use  $\mathbf{n}_j = (0, 2, 4)$  and  $\mathbf{n} = (0, 2, 3)$ , worked out above.

# Schur Monotonicity Lemma

**Example:** The ratio  $s_{\mathbf{n}_j}(\mathbf{u})/s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u})$  for  $\mathbf{n}_j = (0, 2, 4)$ ,  $\mathbf{n} = (0, 2, 3)$  is:

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Note: both numerator and denominator are monomial-positive (in fact *Schur-positive*, obviously) – hence non-decreasing in each coordinate.

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For integer tuples  $0 \leq n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1}$  and  $0 \leq m_0 < \dots < m_{N-1}$  such that  $n_j \leq m_j \forall j$ , the function

$$f : (0, \infty)^N \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, \quad f(\mathbf{u}) := \frac{s_{\mathbf{m}}(\mathbf{u})}{s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u})}$$

is non-decreasing in each coordinate.

## Schur Monotonicity Lemma (cont.)

**Claim:** The ratio  $f(u_1, u_2, u_3) = \frac{(u_1 + u_2)(u_2 + u_3)(u_3 + u_1)}{u_1u_2 + u_2u_3 + u_3u_1}$ ,

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(Why?) Applying the quotient rule of differentiation to  $f$ ,

$$s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u})\partial_{u_3}s_{\mathbf{m}}(\mathbf{u}) - s_{\mathbf{m}}(\mathbf{u})\partial_{u_3}s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u}) = (u_1 + u_2)(u_1u_3 + 2u_1u_2 + u_2u_3)u_3,$$

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Now if we write this as  $\sum_{j \geq 0} p_j(u_1, u_2)u_3^j$ , then each  $p_j$  is Schur-positive, i.e. a sum of Schur polynomials:

$$p_0(u_1, u_2) = 0,$$

$$p_1(u_1, u_2) = 2u_1 u_2^2 + 2u_1^2 u_2 = 2 \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 2 & 2 \\ \hline 1 & \\ \hline \end{array} + 2 \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 2 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & \\ \hline \end{array} = 2s_{(1,3)}(u_1, u_2),$$

$$p_2(u_1, u_2) = (u_1 + u_2)^2 = \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 2 & 2 \\ \hline & \\ \hline \end{array} + \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 2 & 1 \\ \hline & \\ \hline \end{array} + \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 1 & 1 \\ \hline & \\ \hline \end{array} + \begin{array}{|c|} \hline 2 \\ \hline 1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$= s_{(0,3)}(u_1, u_2) + s_{(1,2)}(u_1, u_2).$$

# Proof-sketch of Schur Monotonicity Lemma

The proof for general  $\mathbf{m} \geq \mathbf{n}$  is similar:

By symmetry, and the quotient rule of differentiation, it suffices to show that

$$s_{\mathbf{n}} \cdot \partial_{u_N}(s_{\mathbf{m}}) - s_{\mathbf{m}} \cdot \partial_{u_N}(s_{\mathbf{n}})$$

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**Key ingredient:** Schur-positivity result by Lam–Postnikov–Pylyavskyy (2007). (In turn, this emerged out of Skandera's 2004 results on determinant inequalities for totally non-negative matrices.) □

# Proof-sketch of main result (concl.)

Returning to the proof of the main result:

- If  $p_t[\mathbf{u}\mathbf{u}^T] \in \mathbb{P}_N$  for all  $\mathbf{u} \in (0, \sqrt{\rho})^N$ , and  $t, c_{n_0}, \dots, c_{n_{N-1}} > 0$ , then

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- By the Schur Monotonicity Lemma, this is if and only if

$$t \geq \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} \frac{s_{\mathbf{n}_j}(\sqrt{\rho}, \dots, \sqrt{\rho})^2}{c_{n_j} s_{\mathbf{n}}(\sqrt{\rho}, \dots, \sqrt{\rho})^2} = \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} \frac{V(\mathbf{n}_j)^2}{V(\mathbf{n})^2} \frac{\rho^{M-n_j}}{c_{n_j}} = \mathcal{K}_{\rho, \mathbf{n}, M},$$

by the Weyl Dimension Formula. □

## Outstanding questions: 2. Real powers

Analogue of Loewner's necessary condition implies:

Suppose  $c_0, c_e, c_\pi \neq 0$  are real,  $M \in (\pi, \infty)$ , and

$$c_0 + c_e x^e + c_\pi x^\pi + c_M x^M$$

entrywise preserves positivity on  $\mathbb{P}_3((0, \rho))$ .

Then  $c_0, c_e, c_\pi > 0$ . **Can  $c_M$  be negative? (Not known.)**

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General case:

Fix an integer  $N \geq 3$  and *real powers*  $0 \leq n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1} < M$ .

Also fix positive real scalars  $\rho, c_{n_0}, \dots, c_{n_{N-1}} > 0$ . Suppose

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**Can  $c_M$  be negative? How about a sharp bound, as above?**

(More generally, which coefficients in such a preserver can be negative?)

# Generalized Vandermonde determinants

The technical heart of the proof is similar:

**Theorem (K.–Tao, in press)**

Let  $N \in \mathbb{N}$  and  $0 \leq n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1} < M$  be **real**. Suppose  $c_0, \dots, c_{N-1} \in (0, \infty)$ , and define

$$p_t(x) := t(c_{n_0}x^{n_0} + \dots + c_{n_{N-1}}x^{n_{N-1}}) - x^M.$$

Then for  $\mathbf{u} \in (0, \infty)^N_{\neq}$ ,

$$\det p_t[\mathbf{u}\mathbf{u}^T] = t^{N-1} \det(\mathbf{u}^{\text{on}})^2 \prod_{j=0}^{N-1} c_{n_j} \times \left( t - \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} \frac{\det(\mathbf{u}^{\text{on}j})^2}{\det(\mathbf{u}^{\text{on}})^2} \right),$$

where  $\mathbf{u}^{\text{on}} := (u_i^{n_j-1})_{i,j=1}^N$  is a generalized Vandermonde matrix.

Now need to maximize a ratio of Vandermonde determinants, again with  $\mathbf{n}_j \geq \mathbf{n}$  coordinate-wise.



## Schur–Vandermonde Monotonicity Lemma

Theorem (K.–Tao, in press)

For real tuples  $n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1}$  and  $m_0 < \dots < m_{N-1}$  such that  $n_j \leq m_j \forall j$ ,

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- W.l.o.g.,  $u_1 < \dots < u_N$ . Now if  $m_j, n_j$  are rational, say with common denominator  $K \in \mathbb{N}$ , work with  $y_j = u_j^{1/K}$ :

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This is coordinate-wise non-decreasing in  $\mathbf{y}$  by the Schur Monotonicity Lemma, hence in  $\mathbf{u}$ .

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- Finally, extend to real tuples  $\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{n}$  by rational approximation. □

# Main result (for real powers)

This helps show:

Theorem (K.–Tao, *Amer. J. Math.*, in press)

Fix  $N \in \mathbb{N}$  and real scalars

$$n_0 < \cdots < n_{N-1} < M, \quad \rho > 0, \quad c_{n_0}, \dots, c_{n_{N-1}}.$$

For  $t > 0$ , define  $p_t(x) := t \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} c_{n_j} x^{n_j} - x^M$ . The following are equivalent.

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For  $t > 0$ , define  $p_t(x) := t \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} c_{n_j} x^{n_j} - x^M$ . The following are equivalent.

- 1  $p_t[-]$  preserves positivity on rank-one matrices in  $\mathbb{P}_N((0, \rho))$ .
- 2 All coefficients  $c_{n_j} > 0$ , and

$$t \geq \mathcal{K}_{\rho, \mathbf{n}, M} := \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} \frac{V(\mathbf{n}_j)^2}{V(\mathbf{n})^2} \frac{\rho^{M-n_j}}{c_{n_j}}.$$

- 3  $p_t[-]$  preserves positivity on Hankel rank-one matrices in  $\mathbb{P}_N((0, \rho))$ .

# Main result (for real powers)

This helps show:

Theorem (K.–Tao, *Amer. J. Math.*, in press)

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If all  $n_j \in \mathbb{Z}^{\geq 0} \cup [N-2, \infty)$ , then the rank-constraint in (1) can be removed.

## Extension to power series

The above results say that if  $f(x) := \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} c_{n_j} x^{n_j}$  and  $g(x) := x^M$  for an integer  $M > n_{N-1}$ , then we have the **linear matrix inequality**

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**Question:** Is it possible to upper-bound  $g[A]$  by  $\mathcal{K}_{\rho, \mathbf{n}, g} \cdot f[A]$ , for an *arbitrary* power series that is convergent on  $(0, \rho)$ ?

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**Proposition (K.-Tao)**

Yes.

## Further applications

- ① In fact we work with more general '*Laplace transforms*'

$$g(x) = \int_{n_{N-1} + \varepsilon}^{\infty} x^t d\mu(t), \quad \varepsilon > 0,$$

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- 2 These results lead to (sharp) linear matrix inequalities, for Hadamard powers.
- 3 Application to *spectrahedra and matrix cubes*:  
Upper and lower bounds, which are asymptotically equal.
- 4 Reformulation in terms of *generalized Rayleigh quotients*.

# Weak majorization through Schur polynomials

- Our Schur Monotonicity Lemma implies in particular:

$$\frac{s_{\mathbf{m}}(\mathbf{u})}{s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u})} \geq \frac{s_{\mathbf{m}}(1, \dots, 1)}{s_{\mathbf{n}}(1, \dots, 1)}, \quad \forall \mathbf{u} \in [1, \infty)^N.$$

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We extend this to *real* tuples (generalized Vandermonde determinants):

**Theorem (K.–Tao, *Amer. J. Math.*, in press)**

Given *reals*  $n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1}$  and  $m_0 < \dots < m_{N-1}$ , **TFAE**:

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This problem was studied originally by Skandera and others in the 2010s, for integer powers, and *on the entire positive orthant*  $(0, \infty)^N$ :

# Cuttler–Greene–Skandera conjecture

Theorem (Cuttler–Greene–Skandera and Sra, *Eur. J. Comb.*, 2011, 2016)

Fix integers  $0 \leq n_0 < \dots < n_{N-1}$  and  $0 \leq m_0 < \dots < m_{N-1}$ . Then

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Yes, and Yes:

# Majorization via Vandermonde determinants

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Our preceding result:  $-\mathbf{m} \succ_w -\mathbf{n}$ ; and  $\mathbf{m} \succ_w \mathbf{n} \iff \mathbf{m}$  majorizes  $\mathbf{n}$ .



## Open question: Optimizing over $[-1, 1]^N$ ?

- The previous talk and this talk concerned polynomials/power series that entrywise preserve positive semidefiniteness in a fixed dimension.
- The maximization of  $s_{\mathbf{m}}(\mathbf{u})/s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u})$  over  $(0, 1]^N$  reveals tight bounds on certain polynomial preservers, acting on  $\mathbb{P}_N([0, 1])$ . (By homogeneity and continuity, maximize only over the cube-boundary  $(0, 1]^N \cap \partial(0, 1]^N$ .)

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- What about on *all* correlation matrices? Need to upper-bound  $s_{\mathbf{m}}(\mathbf{u})^2/s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u})^2$  over all of  $[-1, 1]^N \setminus \{0\}$ .
- For this, need to ensure  $s_{\mathbf{n}}(\mathbf{u})$  does not vanish except at 0. **Facts:**
  - (1) The only such  $\mathbf{n} = (0, 1, \dots, N-2, N-1+2r)$  for  $r \in \mathbb{Z}^{\geq 0}$ .
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**Question:** Say  $m_j \geq j$  for  $j = 0, 1, \dots, N-2$ , and  $m_{N-1} \geq N-1+2r$ .

Maximize  $\frac{s_{\mathbf{m}}(\mathbf{u})^2}{h_{2r}(\mathbf{u})^2}$  on  $[-1, 1]^N \setminus \{0\}$  – or just on its cube-boundary.

## Selected publications

A. Belton, D. Guillot, A. Khare, and M. Putinar:

- [1] *Matrix positivity preservers in fixed dimension. I*, Advances in Math., 2016.
  - [2] *Moment-sequence transforms*, J. Eur. Math. Soc., accepted.
  - [3] *A panorama of positivity (survey)*, Shimorin volume + Ransford-60 proc.
- 
- [4] *On the sign patterns of entrywise positivity preservers in fixed dimension*,  
(With T. Tao) Amer. J. Math., in press.
  - [5] *Matrix analysis and preservers of (total) positivity*, 2020+,  
Lecture notes (website); forthcoming book – Cambridge Press + TRIM.

