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Representation theory / *Théorie des représentations*

# The Horn cone associated with symplectic eigenvalues

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**Abstract.** In this note, we show that the Horn cone associated with symplectic eigenvalues admits the same inequalities as the classical Horn cone, except that the equality corresponding to  $\text{Tr}(C) = \text{Tr}(A) + \text{Tr}(B)$  is replaced by the inequality corresponding to  $\text{Tr}(C) \geq \text{Tr}(A) + \text{Tr}(B)$ .

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## 1. Introduction

We consider  $\mathbb{R}^{2n}$  equipped with its canonical symplectic structure  $\Omega_n = \sum_{k=1}^n dx_k \wedge dx_{k+n}$ . Recall that a family  $(e_k)_{1 \leq k \leq 2n}$  is a symplectic basis of  $\mathbb{R}^{2n}$ , if  $\Omega_n(e_k, e_\ell) = 0$  if  $|k - \ell| \neq n$  and  $\Omega_n(e_k, e_{k+n}) = 1, \forall k$ .

Williamson's theorem [18] says that any positive definite quadratic form  $q : \mathbb{R}^{2n} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  can be written  $q(v) = \sum_{k=1}^n \lambda_k (v_k^2 + v_{k+n}^2)$  where the  $(v_j)$  are the coordinates of the vector  $v \in \mathbb{R}^{2n}$  relatively to a symplectic basis. The positive numbers  $\lambda_k$ , that one chooses so that

$$\lambda(q) := (\lambda_1 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_n),$$

will be referred to as the *symplectic eigenvalues* of the quadratic form  $q$ . They correspond to the frequencies of the normal modes of oscillation for the linear Hamiltonian system generated by  $q$ .

The object of study of this note concerns the symplectic Horn cone, denoted  $\text{Horn}_{\text{sp}}(n)$ , that is defined as the set of triplets  $(\lambda(q_1), \lambda(q_2), \lambda(q_1 + q_2))$  where  $q_1, q_2$  are positive definite quadratic forms on  $\mathbb{R}^{2n}$ .

**Example 1.** In dimension 2, the symplectic eigenvalue  $\lambda(q)$  of a positive definite quadratic form  $q(x_1, x_2) = ax_1^2 + bx_2^2 + cx_1x_2$  is equal to  $\frac{1}{2}\sqrt{4ab - c^2}$ . It is straightforward to show that  $\text{Horn}_{\text{sp}}(1)$  is equal to the set of triplets  $(x, y, z)$  of positive numbers satisfying  $x + y \leq z$ .

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Our main Theorem states that  $\text{Horn}_{\text{sp}}(n)$  is a convex polyhedral set. Before detailing it, let us recall some related results.

In [17], A. Weinstein showed that for non-increasing  $n$ -tuples of positive real numbers  $a$  and  $b$ , the set  $\Delta_{\text{sp}}(a, b) := \{\lambda(q_1 + q_2) \mid \lambda(q_1) = a, \lambda(q_2) = b\}$  is closed, convex and locally polyhedral.

Recently, several authors have realized that some inequalities obtained long ago in the context of eigenvalues of Hermitian matrices still apply to symplectic eigenvalues:

- T. Hiroshima proved in [7] an analogue of Ky Fan inequalities:

$$\sum_{j=1}^k \lambda_j(q_1 + q_2) \geq \sum_{j=1}^k \lambda_j(q_1) + \sum_{j=1}^k \lambda_j(q_2).$$

- In [8], T. Jain and H. Mishra obtained an analogue of Lidskii inequalities:

$$\sum_{j=1}^k \lambda_{i_j}(q_1 + q_2) \geq \sum_{j=1}^k \lambda_{i_j}(q_1) + \sum_{j=1}^k \lambda_j(q_2)$$

for any subset  $\{i_1 < i_2 < \dots < i_k\}$ .

- In [2], R. Bhatia and T. Jain obtained an analogue of the Weyl inequalities:

$$\lambda_{i+j-1}(q_1 + q_2) \geq \lambda_i(q_1) + \lambda_j(q_2).$$

As the previous results suggest, we now explain the strong relationship between  $\text{Horn}_{\text{sp}}(n)$  with the classical Horn cone. If  $A$  is a Hermitian  $n \times n$  matrix, we denote by  $s(A) = (s_1(A) \geq \dots \geq s_n(A))$  its spectrum. The Horn cone  $\text{Horn}(n)$  is defined as the set of triplets  $(s(A), s(B), s(A + B))$  where  $A, B$  are Hermitian  $n \times n$  matrices.

Denote the set of cardinality  $r$ -subsets  $I = \{i_1 < i_2 < \dots < i_r\}$  of  $[n] := \{1, \dots, n\}$  by  $\mathcal{P}_r^n$ . To each  $I \in \mathcal{P}_r^n$  we associate:

- a weakly decreasing sequence of non-negative integers  $\lambda(I) = (\lambda_1 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_r)$  where  $\lambda_a = n - r + a - i_a$  for  $a \in [r]$ .
- the irreducible representation  $V_{\lambda(I)}$  of  $GL_r(\mathbb{C})$  with highest weight  $\lambda(I)$ .

If  $x = (x_1, \dots, x_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n$  and  $I \subset [n]$ , we define  $|x|_I = \sum_{i \in I} x_i$  and  $|x| = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i$ . Let us denote by  $\mathbb{R}_+^n$  the set of weakly decreasing  $n$ -tuples of real numbers.

A. Klyachko [10] has shown that an element  $(x, y, z) \in (\mathbb{R}_+^n)^3$  belongs to the cone  $\text{Horn}(n)$  if and only if it satisfies  $|x| + |y| = |z|$  and

$$|x|_I + |y|_J \leq |z|_K \tag{(\star)_{I,J,K}}$$

for any  $r < n$ , for any  $I, J, K \in \mathcal{P}_r^n$  such that the Littlewood-Richardson coefficient

$$c_{IJ}^K := \dim \left[ V_{\lambda(I)} \otimes V_{\lambda(J)} \otimes V_{\lambda(K)}^* \right]^{GL_r(\mathbb{C})}$$

is non-zero. P. Belkale [1] showed that the inequalities  $(\star)_{I,J,K}$  associated to the condition  $c_{IJ}^K = 1$  are sufficient. Finally A. Knutson, T. Tao, and C. Woodward [11] have proved that this smaller list is actually minimal. We refer the reader to survey articles [3, 5] for details.

The main result of this note is the following Theorem. Let us denote by  $\mathbb{R}_{++}^n$  the set of non-increasing  $n$ -tuples of positive real numbers.

**Theorem 2.** *An element  $(x, y, z) \in (\mathbb{R}_{++}^n)^3$  belongs to  $\text{Horn}_{\text{sp}}(n)$  if and only if it satisfies*

- (1)  $|x| + |y| \leq |z|$ ,
- (2)  $(\star)_{I,J,K}$  for all  $(I, J, K)$  of cardinality  $r < n$  such that  $c_{IJ}^K = 1$ .

**Corollary 3.** *Let  $a, b \in \mathbb{R}_{++}^n$ . An element  $z \in \mathbb{R}_{++}^n$  belongs to  $\Delta_{\text{sp}}(a, b)$  if and only if it satisfies  $|a| + |b| \leq |z|$  and  $|a|_I + |b|_J \leq |z|_K$  for all  $(I, J, K)$  of cardinality  $r < n$  such that  $c_{IJ}^K = 1$ .*

## 2. The causal cone of the symplectic Lie algebra

The  $2n \times 2n$  matrix  $J_n = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -I_n \\ I_n & 0 \end{pmatrix}$  defines a complex structure on  $\mathbb{R}^{2n}$  that is compatible with the symplectic structure  $\Omega_n$ . The symplectic group  $Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  is defined by the relation  ${}^t g J_n g = J_n$ . A matrix  $X$  belongs to the Lie algebra  $\mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  of  $Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  if and only if the matrix  $J_n X$  is symmetric. Moreover,  $J_n X$  is positive if and only if  $\Omega_n(Xv, v) \geq 0, \forall v \in \mathbb{R}^{2n}$ .

We call an invariant convex cone  $C$  in  $\mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  a causal cone if  $C$  is nontrivial, closed, and satisfies  $C \cap -C = \{0\}$ . A classical result [13, 14, 16] asserts that there are exactly two causal cones in  $\mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$ : one, denoted by  $\mathbf{C}(n)$ , containing  $-J_n$  and its opposite  $-\mathbf{C}(n)$ . The causal cone  $\mathbf{C}(n)$  is determined by the following equivalent conditions: for  $X \in \mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$ , we have

$$X \in \mathbf{C}(n) \iff J_n X \text{ is positive} \iff \text{Tr}(XgJ_n g^{-1}) \geq 0, \forall g \in Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n}).$$

Now we explain how is parameterized the interior  $\mathbf{C}(n)^0$  of  $\mathbf{C}(n)$ . From the definition above, we see first that  $X \in \mathbf{C}(n)^0$  if and only if  $J_n X$  is positive definite.

The Lie algebra of the maximal compact subgroup  $K = Sp(2n, \mathbb{R}) \cap O(2n)$  is

$$\mathfrak{k} := \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} A & B \\ -B & A \end{pmatrix}, {}^t A = -A, {}^t B = B \right\}.$$

If  $\mu := (\mu_1, \dots, \mu_n)$ , we write  $\Delta(\mu) = \text{Diag}(\mu_1, \dots, \mu_n)$  and  $X(\mu) = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \Delta(\mu) \\ -\Delta(\mu) & 0 \end{pmatrix}$ . We work with the Cartan subalgebra  $\mathfrak{t} := \{X(\mu), \mu \in \mathbb{R}^n\}$  of  $\mathfrak{k}$  and the corresponding maximal torus  $T \subset K$ . The set of roots  $\mathfrak{R}$  relatively to the action of  $T$  on  $\mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n}) \otimes \mathbb{C}$  are composed by the compact ones  $\mathfrak{R}_c := \{\epsilon_i - \epsilon_j\}$  and the non compact ones  $\mathfrak{R}_n = \{\pm(\epsilon_i + \epsilon_j)\}$ . We work with the subsets of positive roots  $\mathfrak{R}_c^+ := \{\epsilon_i - \epsilon_j, i < j\}$  and  $\mathfrak{R}_n^+ := \{\epsilon_i + \epsilon_j\}$ . The Weyl chamber  $\mathfrak{t}_+ \subset \mathfrak{t}$  is defined by the relations  $\langle \alpha, \mu \rangle \geq 0, \forall \alpha \in \mathfrak{R}_c^+$ , namely  $\mu_1 \geq \dots \geq \mu_n$ . The subchamber  $\mathcal{C}_n \subset \mathfrak{t}_+$  is defined by the conditions  $\langle \beta, \mu \rangle > 0, \forall \beta \in \mathfrak{R}_n^+$ . Thus  $X(\mu) \in \mathcal{C}_n$  if and only if  $\mu \in \mathbb{R}_{++}^n$ .

If  $M \in \mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$ , we denote by  $\mathcal{O}_M := \{gMg^{-1}, g \in Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n})\}$  the corresponding adjoint orbit.

### Lemma 4.

- (1)  $M \in \mathbf{C}(n)^0$  if and only if there exists  $X \in \mathcal{C}_n$  such that  $M \in \mathcal{O}_X$ .
- (2) Let  $\mu \in \mathbb{R}_{++}^n$ , and  $M \in \mathcal{O}_{X(\mu)}$ . The symplectic eigenvalues of the positive definite quadratic form  $q(v) = {}^t v J_n M v = \Omega_n(Mv, v)$  are the numbers  $\mu_1 \geq \dots \geq \mu_n > 0$ .

**Proof.** The first point is a classical fact [14, 16]. If  $M = gX(\mu)g^{-1}$  with  $g \in Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$ , we see that

$$\Omega_n(Mv, v) = \Omega_n(X(\mu)g^{-1}v, g^{-1}v) = \sum_{k=1}^n \mu_k (v_k^2 + v_{k+n}^2)$$

where each  $v_j$  is the  $j^{\text{th}}$  coordinate of the vector  $g^{-1}v$ . □

**Remark 5.** In [15], we call the interior  $\mathbf{C}(n)^0$  of  $\mathbf{C}(n)$  the holomorphic cone, since any coadjoint orbit  $\mathcal{O}_X \subset \mathbf{C}(n)^0$  admits a canonical structure of a Kähler manifold with a holomorphic action of  $K$ . These orbits are closely related to the holomorphic discrete series representations of the symplectic group  $Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$ .

Thanks to the previous Lemma 4, we see that the symplectic Horn cone admits the alternative definition:

$$\text{Horn}_{\text{sp}}(n) = \left\{ (x, y, z) \in (\mathbb{R}_{++}^n)^3 \mid \mathcal{O}_{X(z)} \subset \mathcal{O}_{X(x)} + \mathcal{O}_{X(y)} \right\}.$$

In the next section, we explain the result of [15] concerning the determination of  $\text{Horn}_{\text{sp}}(n)$ .

### 3. Convexity results

The trace on  $\mathfrak{gl}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  provides an identification between  $\mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  and its dual  $\mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})^*$ : to  $X \in \mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  we associate  $\xi_X \in \mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})^*$  defined by  $\langle \xi_X, Y \rangle = -\text{Tr}(XY)$ . Through this identification the causal cone  $\mathbf{C}(n)$  becomes

$$\tilde{\mathbf{C}}(n) := \left\{ \xi \in \mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})^* ; \langle \xi, \text{Ad}(g)z \rangle \geq 0, \forall g \in Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n}) \right\}$$

where  $z = \frac{-1}{2}J_n$ . The identification  $\mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n}) \simeq \mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})^*$  induces several identifications  $\mathfrak{k} \simeq \mathfrak{k}^*$ ,  $\mathfrak{t} \simeq \mathfrak{t}^*$  and  $\mathfrak{t}_+ \simeq \mathfrak{t}_+^*$ . In the latter cases the identifications are done through an invariant scalar product  $(-, -)$  on  $\mathfrak{k}^*$ . The subchamber  $\tilde{\mathcal{C}}_n \subset \mathfrak{t}_+^*$  is defined by the conditions:  $(\alpha, \xi) \geq 0, \forall \alpha \in \mathfrak{A}_c^+$ , and  $(\beta, \xi) > 0, \forall \beta \in \mathfrak{A}_n^+$ .

Through  $\mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n}) \simeq \mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n})^*$ , the symplectic Horn cone becomes

$$\text{Horn}_{\text{hol}}(Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n})) := \left\{ (\xi_1, \xi_2, \xi_3) \in (\tilde{\mathcal{C}}_n)^3 \mid \mathcal{O}_{\xi_3} \subset \mathcal{O}_{\xi_1} + \mathcal{O}_{\xi_2} \right\}.$$

Here we have kept the notations of [15].

We have a Cartan decomposition  $\mathfrak{sp}(\mathbb{R}^{2n}) = \mathfrak{k} \oplus \mathfrak{p}$  with

$$\mathfrak{p} := \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} A & B \\ B & -A \end{pmatrix}, {}^tA = A, {}^tB = B \right\}.$$

We denote by  $\mathfrak{p}^+$  the vector space  $\mathfrak{p}$  equipped with the complex structure  $\text{ad}(z)$  and the compatible symplectic structure  $\Omega_{\mathfrak{p}^+}(Y, Y') := -\text{Tr}(J_n[Y, Y'])$ : here  $\Omega_{\mathfrak{p}^+}(Y, [z, Y]) > 0$  for any  $Y \neq 0$ .

The action of the maximal compact subgroup  $K \subset Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n})$  on  $(\mathfrak{p}^+, \Omega_{\mathfrak{p}^+})$  is Hamiltonian with moment map

$$\Phi_{\mathfrak{p}^+} : \mathfrak{p}^+ \rightarrow \mathfrak{k}^*$$

defined by  $\langle \Phi_{\mathfrak{p}^+}(Y), X \rangle = \frac{1}{2}\Omega_{\mathfrak{p}^+}([X, Y], Y)$ . If  $Y = \begin{pmatrix} A & B \\ B & -A \end{pmatrix}$ , we see that  $\langle \Phi_{\mathfrak{p}^+}(Y), J_n \rangle = \text{Tr}(A^2 + B^2) = \frac{1}{2}\|Y\|^2$ . Hence the moment map  $\Phi_{\mathfrak{p}^+}$  is a proper map.

We consider the following action of the group  $K^3$  on the manifold  $K \times K$ :

$$(k_1, k_2, k_3) \cdot (g, h) = (k_1 g k_3^{-1}, k_2 h k_3^{-1}).$$

The action of  $K^3$  on the cotangent bundle  $N := T^*(K \times K)$  is Hamiltonian with moment map  $\Phi_N : N \rightarrow \mathfrak{k}^* \times \mathfrak{k}^* \times \mathfrak{k}^*$  defined by the relations<sup>1</sup>

$$\Phi_N(g_1, \eta_1; g_2, \eta_2) = (-g_1 \eta_1, -g_2 \eta_2, \eta_1 + \eta_2).$$

Finally we consider the Hamiltonian  $K^3$ -manifold  $N \times \mathfrak{p}^+$ , where  $\mathfrak{p}^+$  is equipped with the symplectic structure  $\Omega_{\mathfrak{p}^+}$ . The action is defined by the relations:  $(k_1, k_2, k_3) \cdot (g, h, X) = (k_1 g k_3^{-1}, k_2 h k_3^{-1}, k_3 X)$ . Let us denote by  $\Phi : N \times \mathfrak{p}^+ \rightarrow \mathfrak{k}^* \times \mathfrak{k}^* \times \mathfrak{k}^*$  the moment map relative to the  $K^3$ -action:

$$\Phi(g_1, \eta_1; g_2, \eta_2, Y) = (-g_1 \eta_1, -g_2 \eta_2, \eta_1 + \eta_2 + \Phi_{\mathfrak{p}^+}(Y)). \tag{1}$$

Since  $\Phi$  is proper map, the Convexity Theorem [9, 12] tell us that

$$\Delta(N \times \mathfrak{p}^+) := \text{Image}(\Phi) \cap \mathfrak{t}_+^* \times \mathfrak{t}_+^* \times \mathfrak{t}_+^*$$

is a closed, convex, and locally polyhedral set.

The map  $\mu \mapsto X(\mu)$  defines an isomorphism of  $\mathbb{R}^n$  with  $\mathfrak{t} \simeq \mathfrak{t}^*$  that induces an identification of  $\mathbb{R}_{++}^n$  with  $\tilde{\mathcal{C}}_n \simeq \tilde{\mathcal{C}}_n^*$ . Recall that on  $\mathfrak{t}^* \simeq \mathbb{R}^n$ , we have a natural involution that sends  $\mu = (\mu_1, \dots, \mu_n)$  to  $\mu^* := (-\mu_n, \dots, -\mu_1)$ . The following result is proved in [15, Theorem B].

**Theorem 6.** *An element  $(x, y, z) \in (\mathbb{R}_{++}^n)^3$  belongs to  $\text{Horn}_{\text{hol}}(Sp(\mathbb{R}^{2n}))$  if and only if*

$$(x, y, z^*) \in \Delta(N \times \mathfrak{p}^+).$$

<sup>1</sup>We use the identification  $T^*K \simeq K \times \mathfrak{k}^*$  given by left translations.

Recall that a Hermitian matrix  $M$  majorizes another Hermitian matrix  $M'$  if  $M - M'$  is positive semidefinite (its eigenvalues are all nonnegative). In this case, we write  $M \geq M'$ .

**Proposition 7.** *Let  $(x, y, z) \in (\mathbb{R}_+^n)^3$ . Then  $(x, y, z^*) \in \Delta(N \times \mathfrak{p}^+)$  if and only if there exist Hermitian matrices  $A, B, C$  such that  $s(A) = x, s(B) = y, s(C) = z$  and  $C \geq A + B$ .*

**Proof.** The map  $\begin{pmatrix} A & -B \\ B & A \end{pmatrix} \mapsto A - iB$  defines an isomorphism between  $K$  and the unitary group  $U(n)$ . Let us denote by  $S^2(\mathbb{C}^n)$  the vector space of complex  $n \times n$  symmetric matrices that is equipped with the following action of  $U(n)$ :  $k \cdot M = kM^t k$ . The map  $\begin{pmatrix} A & B \\ B & -A \end{pmatrix} \mapsto A - iB$  defines an isomorphism between the  $K$ -module  $\mathfrak{p}^+$  and the  $U(n)$ -module  $S^2(\mathbb{C}^n)$ . Through this identifications the moment map  $\Phi_{\mathfrak{p}^+} : \mathfrak{p}^+ \rightarrow \mathfrak{k}^*$  becomes the map  $\Phi_{S^2} : S^2(\mathbb{C}^n) \rightarrow \mathfrak{u}(n)$  defined by the relations

$$\Phi_{S^2}(M) = -2iM\overline{M}.$$

So we know that the moment polytope  $\Delta$  relative to the Hamiltonian action of  $U(n)^3$  on  $T^*U(n) \times T^*U(n) \times S^2(\mathbb{C}^n)$  is equal to  $\Delta(N \times \mathfrak{p}^+)$ . A small computation shows that  $(x, y, z^*) \in \Delta$  if and only if there exist Hermitian matrices  $A, B, C$  and  $M \in S^2(\mathbb{C}^n)$  such that

$$s(A) = x, \quad s(B) = y, \quad s(C) = z \quad \text{and} \quad A + B + 2M\overline{M} = C.$$

The existence of  $M \in S^2(\mathbb{C}^n)$  satisfying the condition  $A + B + 2M\overline{M} = C$  is equivalent to  $C \geq A + B$ . The proof is then completed.  $\square$

S. Friedland [4] considered the following question: *which eigenvalues  $(s(A), s(B), s(C))$  can occur if  $C \geq A + B$* . His solution was in terms of linear inequalities, which includes Klyachko's inequalities, a trace inequality and some additional inequalities. Later, W. Fulton [6] proved the additional inequalities are unnecessary. Let us summarize their result in the following theorem.

**Theorem 8 ([4, 6]).** *A triple  $x, y, z \in \mathbb{R}_+^n$  occurs as the eigenvalues of  $n$  by  $n$  Hermitian matrices  $A, B, C$  with  $C \geq A + B$  if and only it satisfies  $|x| + |y| \leq |z|$  and  $(\star)_{I,J,K}$  for all  $(I, J, K)$  of cardinality  $r < n$  such that  $c_{IJ}^K = 1$ .*

The combination of Theorems 6 and 8 with Proposition 7 completes the proof of Theorem 2.

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