
Optimization of Polynomial Roots, Eigenvalues and Pseudospectra

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Globally Optimizing
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with
V. Blondel (Louvain)
M. Gürbüzbalaban
(NYU)
A. Megretski (MIT)

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Globally Optimizing the Roots of a Monic Polynomial subject to One Affine Constraint with

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The Root Radius and the Root Abscissa

Let ρ denote the *root radius* of a polynomial:

$$\rho(p) = \max \{ |z| : p(z) = 0, z \in \mathbf{C} \}.$$

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Let ρ denote the *root radius* of a polynomial:

$$\rho(p) = \max \{ |z| : p(z) = 0, z \in \mathbf{C} \}.$$

We say p is Schur stable if $\rho(p) < 1$.



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Let α denote the *root abscissa*:

$$\alpha(p) = \max \{ \operatorname{Re}(z) : p(z) = 0, z \in \mathbf{C} \}.$$

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Let α denote the *root abscissa*:

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We say p is Hurwitz stable if $\alpha(p) < 0$.

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As functions of the polynomial coefficients, the radius ρ and abscissa α are



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As functions of the polynomial coefficients, the radius ρ and abscissa α are

- not convex



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As functions of the polynomial coefficients, the radius ρ and abscissa α are

- not convex
- not Lipschitz near polynomials with a multiple root



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As functions of the polynomial coefficients, the radius ρ and abscissa α are

- not convex
- not Lipschitz near polynomials with a multiple root

So, in general, global minimization of the radius or abscissa over an affine family of monic polynomials, pushing the roots as far as possible towards the origin or left in the complex plane, seems hard.



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So, in general, global minimization of the radius or abscissa over an affine family of monic polynomials, pushing the roots as far as possible towards the origin or left in the complex plane, seems hard.

Indeed, variations on the question of whether a polynomial family contains one that is stable (has roots inside the unit circle or in the left-half plane) have been studied for decades.



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Indeed, variations on the question of whether a polynomial family contains one that is stable (has roots inside the unit circle or in the left-half plane) have been studied for decades.

But if an affine family of monic polynomials of degree n has $n - 1$ free parameters, this question can be answered efficiently.



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So, in general, global minimization of the radius or abscissa over an affine family of monic polynomials, pushing the roots as far as possible towards the origin or left in the complex plane, seems hard.

Indeed, variations on the question of whether a polynomial family contains one that is stable (has roots inside the unit circle or in the left-half plane) have been studied for decades.

But if an affine family of monic polynomials of degree n has $n - 1$ free parameters, this question can be answered efficiently.

Equivalently, there is *just one affine constraint* on the coefficients.



Optimizing the Root Radius, Real Case

Theorem RRR. *Let B_0, B_1, \dots, B_n be real scalars (with B_1, \dots, B_n not all zero) and consider the affine family*

$$P = \left\{ z^n + a_1 z^{n-1} + \dots + a_{n-1} z + a_n : B_0 + \sum_{j=1}^n B_j a_j = 0, a_i \in \mathbf{R} \right\}.$$

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The optimization problem

$$\rho^* := \inf_{p \in P} \rho(p)$$

has a globally optimal solution of the form

$$p^*(z) = (z - \gamma)^{n-k} (z + \gamma)^k \in P$$

for some integer k with $0 \leq k \leq n$, where $\gamma = \rho^$.*

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Proof: uses implicit function theorem.

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Optimizing the Root Radius, Real Case

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for some integer k with $0 \leq k \leq n$, where $\gamma = \rho^$.*

Proof: uses implicit function theorem.

Algorithm: for each $k = 0, \dots, n$, substitute coefficients of $(z - \gamma)^{n-k} (z + \gamma)^k$ into the constraint to give a polynomial with n roots that are candidates for γ . Choose smallest such $|\gamma|$.

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Optimizing the Root Radius: Complex Case

Theorem RRC. *Let B_0, B_1, \dots, B_n be complex scalars (with B_1, \dots, B_n not all zero) and consider the affine family*

$$P = \left\{ z^n + a_1 z^{n-1} + \dots + a_{n-1} z + a_n : B_0 + \sum_{j=1}^n B_j a_j = 0, a_i \in \mathbf{C} \right\}.$$

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Optimizing the Root Radius: Complex Case

Theorem RRC. *Let B_0, B_1, \dots, B_n be complex scalars (with B_1, \dots, B_n not all zero) and consider the affine family*

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The optimization problem

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$$p^*(z) = (z - \gamma)^n \in P$$

with $-\gamma$ given by a root of smallest magnitude of the polynomial

$$h(z) = B_n z^n + B_{n-1} \binom{n}{n-1} z^{n-1} + \dots + B_1 \binom{n}{1} z + B_0.$$

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Optimizing the Root Radius: Complex Case

Theorem RRC. *Let B_0, B_1, \dots, B_n be complex scalars (with B_1, \dots, B_n not all zero) and consider the affine family*

$$P = \left\{ z^n + a_1 z^{n-1} + \dots + a_{n-1} z + a_n : B_0 + \sum_{j=1}^n B_j a_j = 0, a_i \in \mathbf{C} \right\}.$$

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Proof: A complicated inductive argument.

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Optimizing the Root Abscissa: Real Case

Theorem RAR. *Let B_0, B_1, \dots, B_n be real scalars (with B_1, \dots, B_n not all zero) and consider the affine family*

$$P = \left\{ z^n + a_1 z^{n-1} + \dots + a_{n-1} z + a_n : B_0 + \sum_{j=1}^n B_j a_j = 0, a_i \in \mathbf{R} \right\}.$$

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Optimizing the Root Abscissa: Real Case

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Let $k = \max\{j : B_j \neq 0\}$ and define the polynomial of degree k

$$h(z) = B_n z^n + B_{n-1} \binom{n}{n-1} z^{n-1} + \dots + B_1 \binom{n}{1} z + B_0.$$

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The optimization problem

$$\alpha^* := \inf_{p \in P} \alpha(p).$$

has the infimal value

$$\alpha^* = \min \left\{ \beta \in \mathbf{R} : h^{(i)}(-\beta) = 0 \text{ for some } i \in \{0, \dots, k-1\} \right\},$$

where $h^{(i)}$ is the i -th derivative of h .

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Root Abscissa, Real Case, Continued

Furthermore, the optimal value α^* is attained by a minimizing polynomial p^* if and only if $-\alpha^*$ is a root of h (as opposed to one of its derivatives), and in this case we can take

$$p^*(z) = (z - \gamma)^n \in P$$

with $\gamma = \alpha^*$.

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$$p^*(z) = (z - \gamma)^n \in P$$

with $\gamma = \alpha^*$.

When the optimal abscissa is not attained, for all $\epsilon > 0$ can find an approximately optimal polynomial

$$p_\epsilon(z) := (z - M_\epsilon)^\ell (z - (\alpha^* + \epsilon))^{n-\ell} \in P$$

with $0 < \ell \leq n$ and $M_\epsilon \rightarrow -\infty$ as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$.

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Thus, as in the real radius case, two roots play a role, but only one is finite.

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We observed that, in the real case, the optimal value is not attained when one of the *derivatives of h* has a real root to the right of the *rightmost real root of h* .



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We observed that, in the real case, the optimal value is not attained when one of the *derivatives of h* has a real root to the right of the *rightmost real root of h* .

However, it is not possible that a derivative of h has a complex root to the right of the *rightmost complex root of h* . This follows immediately from the Gauss-Lucas theorem.



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This suggests the optimal abscissa value might always be attained in the complex case.



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This suggests the optimal abscissa value might always be attained in the complex case.

Indeed, this is the case...



Optimizing the Root Abscissa: Complex Case

Theorem RAC. *Let B_0, B_1, \dots, B_n be complex scalars (with B_1, \dots, B_n not all zero) and consider the affine family*

$$P = \left\{ z^n + a_1 z^{n-1} + \dots + a_{n-1} z + a_n : B_0 + \sum_{j=1}^n B_j a_j = 0, a_i \in \mathbf{C} \right\}.$$

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The optimization problem

$$\alpha^* := \inf_{p \in P} \alpha(p)$$

has an optimal solution of the form

$$p^*(z) = (z - \gamma)^n \in P$$

with $-\gamma$ given by a root with largest real part of the polynomial

$$h(z) = B_n z^n + B_{n-1} \binom{n}{n-1} z^{n-1} + \dots + B_1 \binom{n}{1} z + B_0.$$

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Example: Static Output Feedback Stabilization

Given the dynamical system with input and output:

$$\dot{x} = Fx + Gu, \quad y = Hx$$

where $F \in \mathbf{R}^{n \times n}$, $G \in \mathbf{R}^{n \times \ell}$, $H \in \mathbf{R}^{m \times n}$.

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SOF: find a controller $K \in \mathbf{R}^{\ell \times m}$ so that, setting $u = Ky$

$$\dot{x} = (F + GKH)x$$

is stable, that is all eigenvalues of $F + GKH$ are in the left half-plane, or prove that this is not possible.

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A major open problem in control.

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But, if $p = 1$ and $m = n - 1$ (one input and $n - 1$ outputs)

$$\det(\lambda I - F - GKH) = \det(\lambda I - F) + KH \operatorname{adj}(\lambda I - F)G.$$

This is a monic polynomial with affine dependence on the $n - 1$ entries of $K \in \mathbf{R}^{1 \times (n-1)}$ so the SOF problem can be solved explicitly using Theorem RAR.

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Example: Frequency Domain Stabilization

Another set of classical problems in control that, in a certain case, can be solved using the theorems given above.

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An example: stabilizing the two-mass-spring dynamical system by a second-order controller.

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An example: stabilizing the two-mass-spring dynamical system by a second-order controller.

Then, maximizing the closed-loop asymptotic decay rate is equivalent to solving the optimization problem

$$\min_{p \in P} \max_{z \in \mathbf{C}} \{ \operatorname{Re} z : p(z) = 0 \}$$

where

$$P = \{ (z^4 + 2z^2)(x_0 + x_1z + z^2) + y_0 + y_1z + y_2z^2 : x_0, x_1, y_0, y_1, y_2 \in \mathbf{R} \}$$

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We can minimize the root abscissa explicitly using Theorem RAR as P is a set of monic polynomials with degree 6 whose coefficients depend affinely on 5 real parameters.



Caveats

Multiple roots are very sensitive to perturbation!

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Multiple roots are very sensitive to perturbation!

A random perturbation of size ϵ to the coefficients of a polynomial with a root that has multiplicity k moves the roots by $O(\epsilon^{1/k})$.



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Nonetheless, the optimal *value* can be computed accurately even if n is fairly large.



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In practice, might want to locally optimize a more robust measure of stability: see Part III.

Independently of this, the monomial basis is a poor choice numerically unless the polynomial has very small degree.

Nonetheless, the optimal *value* can be computed accurately even if n is fairly large.

AFFPOLYMIN: publicly available **MATLAB** code implementing the algorithms implicit in Theorems RRR, RRC, RAR, RAC.



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A publicly available `MATLAB` code implementing the
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www.cs.nyu.edu/overton/software/affpoly/



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The Spectral Radius and the Spectral Abscissa

Now let $\rho : \mathbf{C}^{n \times n} \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$ denote *spectral radius*:

$$\rho(A) = \max \{ |z| : \det(A - zI) = 0, z \in \mathbf{C} \}.$$

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$\rho(A) < 1$ is the stability condition for the discrete-time dynamical system $\xi_{k+1} = A\xi_k$.

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The spectral functions ρ and α are not convex and are not Lipschitz near a matrix with an active multiple eigenvalue.

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The spectral radius and abscissa are the radius and abscissa of the characteristic polynomial of a matrix, but the results of Part I do not extend to the more general case of an affine family of $n \times n$ matrices depending on $n - 1$ parameters.

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For example, consider the matrix family

$$A(x) = \begin{bmatrix} x & 1 \\ -1 & x \end{bmatrix}.$$

This matrix depends affinely on a single parameter x , but its characteristic polynomial, a monic polynomial of degree 2, does not, so the results of Part I do not apply.

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The minimal spectral radius of $A(x)$ is attained by $x = 0$, for which the eigenvalues are $\pm i$.

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The Reduced Spectral Radius

The rate of convergence is determined by

$$\tilde{\rho}(A(x)) = \max \{ |z| : \det(A(x) - zI) = 0, z \in \mathbf{C}, z \neq 1 \}.$$

It is easy to prove that this is minimized over $x \in [0, 1]$ by

$$x_{\text{opt}} = \frac{\sin(\pi/n)}{1 + \sin(\pi/n)} > \frac{1}{n}.$$

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For $x = x_{\text{opt}}$, one conjugate pair has coalesced to a double real eigenvalue (corresponding to a 2×2 Jordan block).

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For $x > x_{\text{opt}}$, this splits into two real eigenvalues, increasing $\tilde{\rho}$ by $O(|x - x_{\text{opt}}|^{1/2})$.

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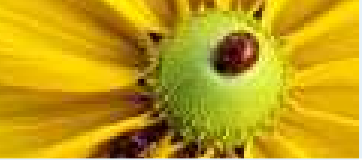
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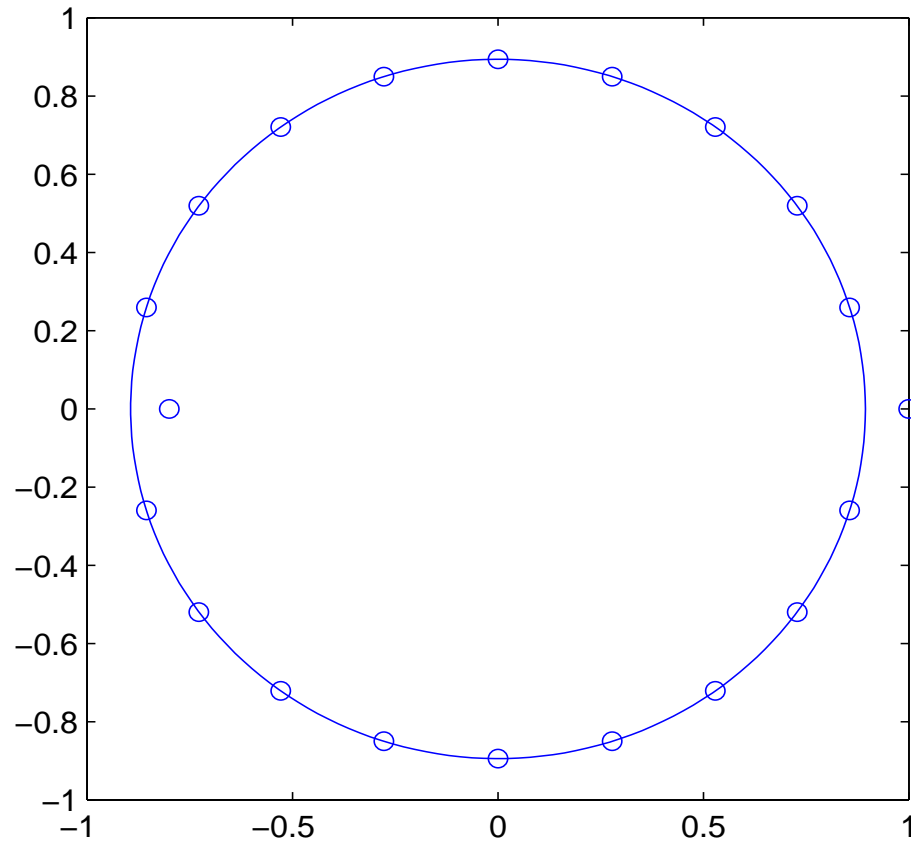
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■ Blue: eigenvalues when $x = 1/n$ (all complex)



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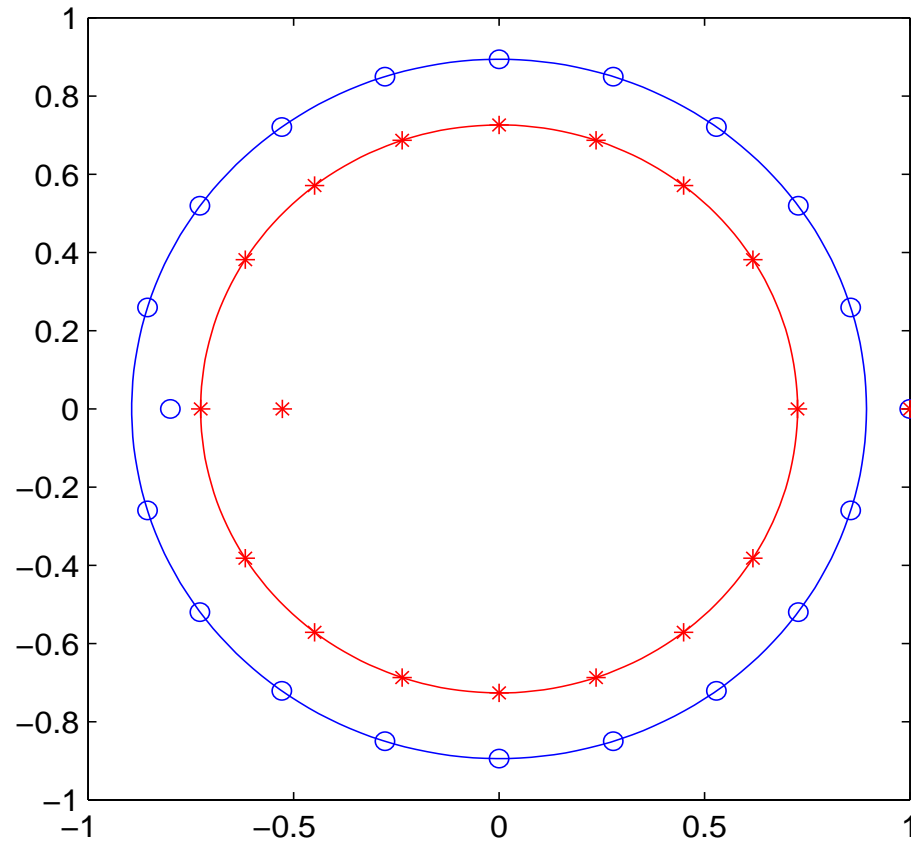
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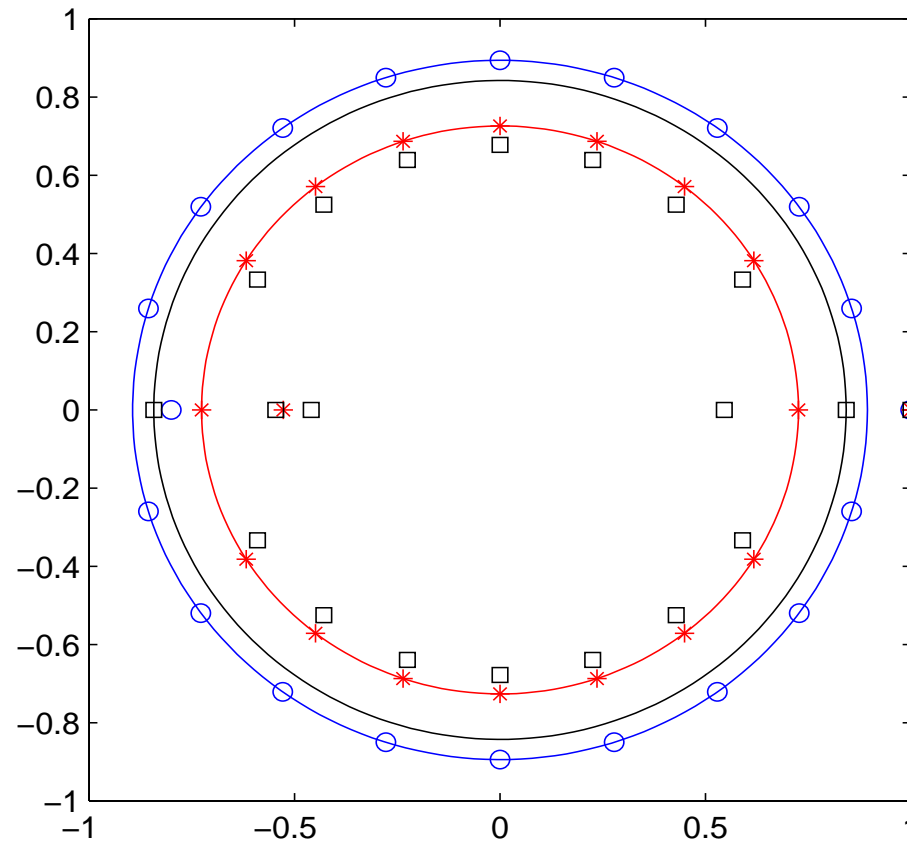
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- Red: eigenvalues when $x = x_{\text{opt}}$ (one double real eigenvalue)
- Black: eigenvalues when $x > x_{\text{opt}}$ ($\tilde{\rho}$ increases rapidly)

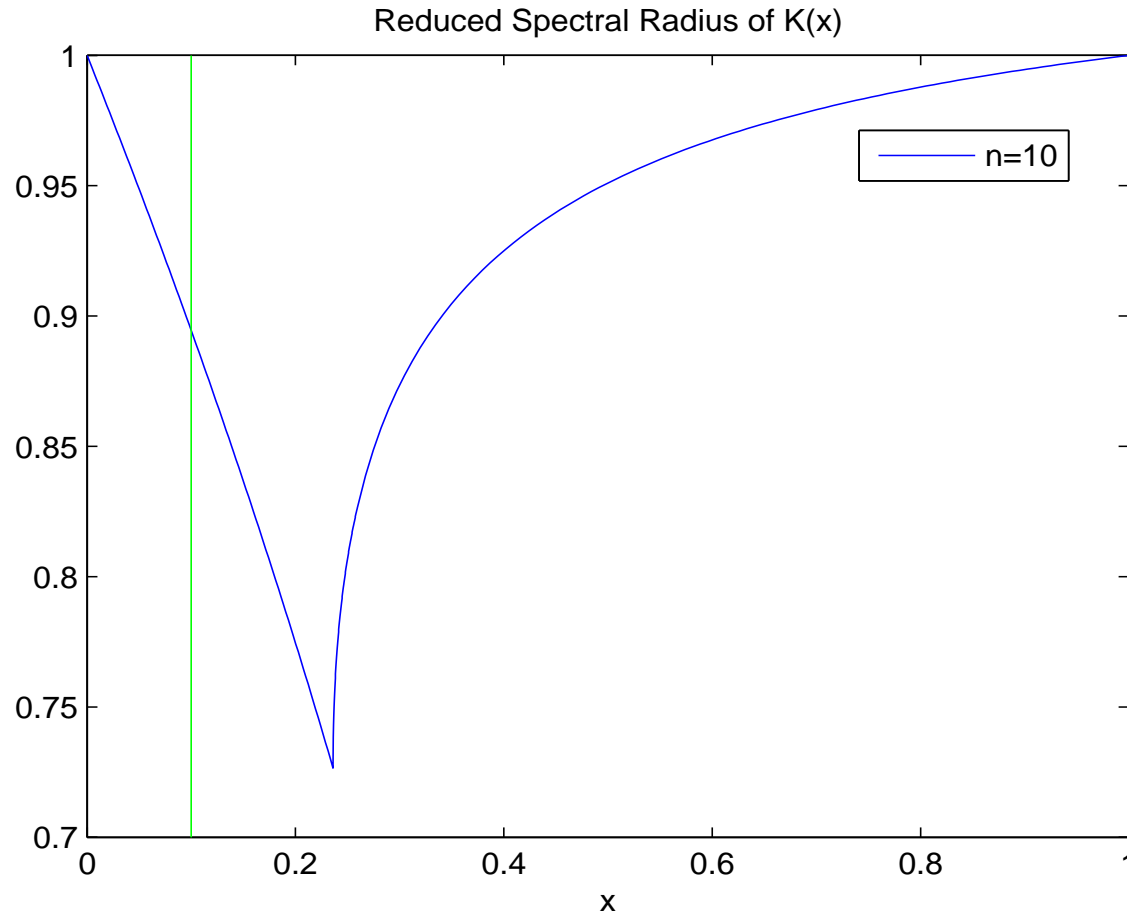


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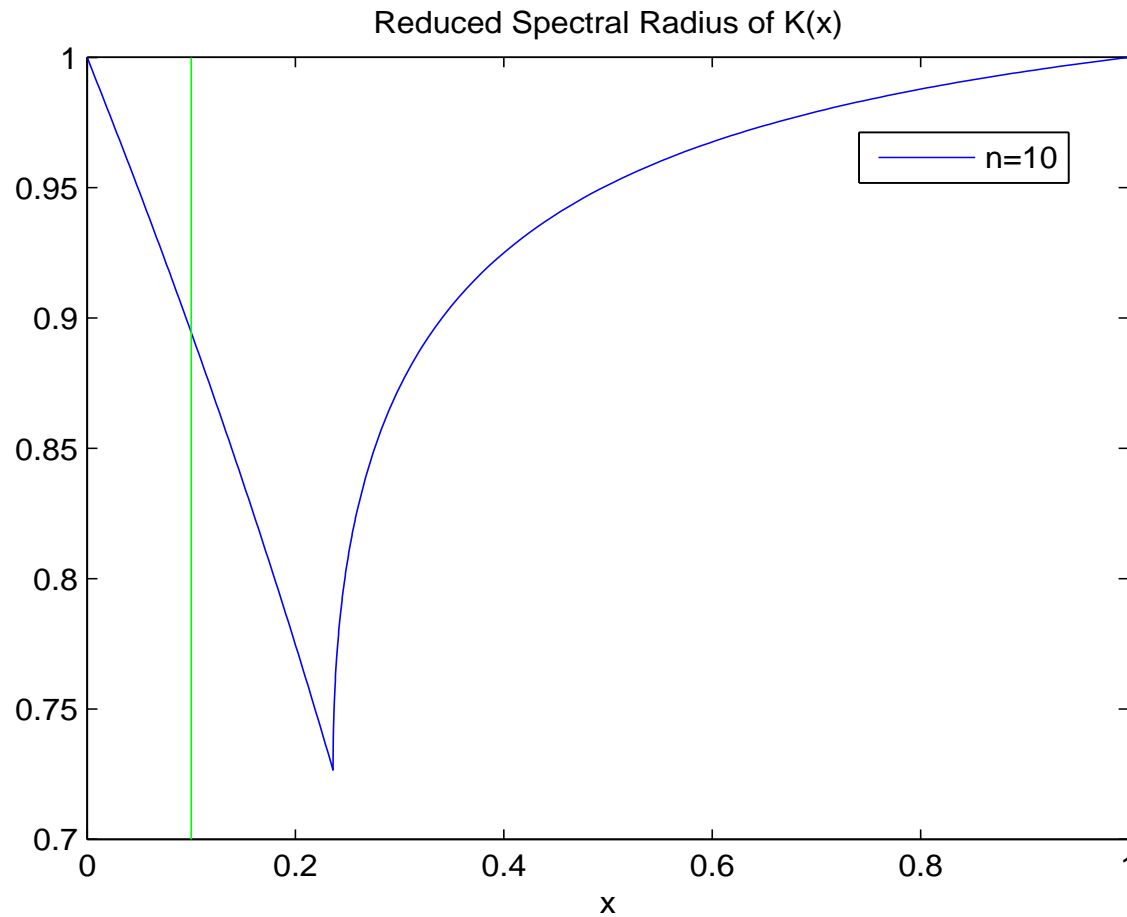


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Note the big improvement changing x from $1/n$ to x_{opt} .

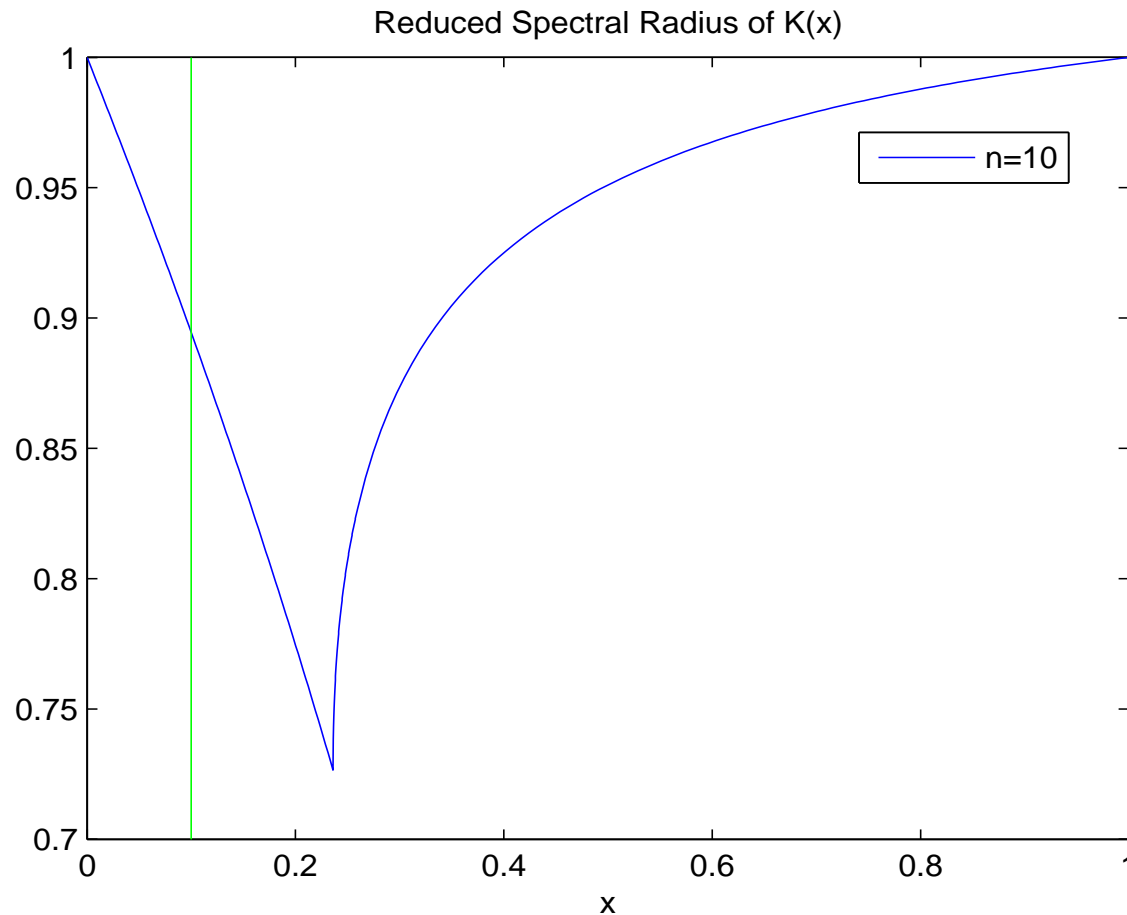


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Much better to underestimate x_{opt} than overestimate. Similar plots apply to optimal damping for one-dimensional wave equation, optimal choice of parameter for SOR (successive over-relaxation), etc etc.

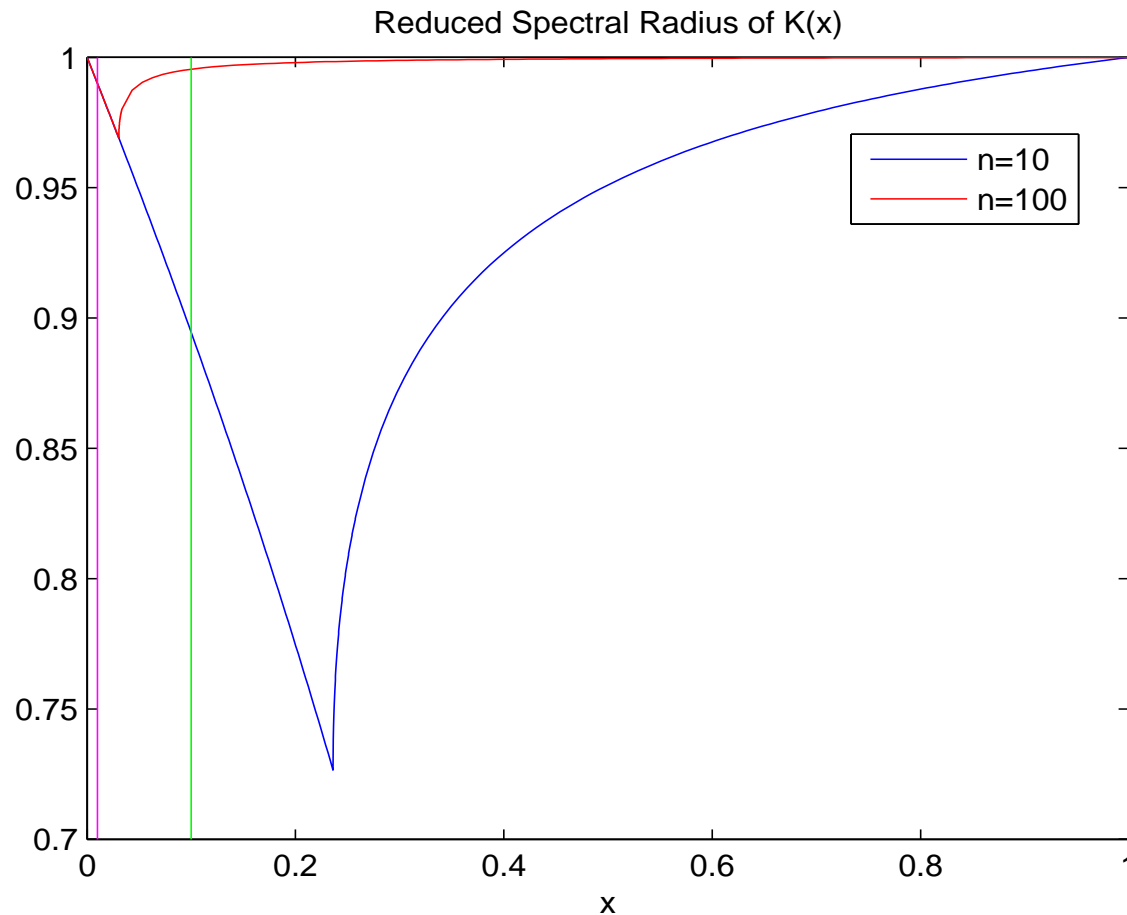


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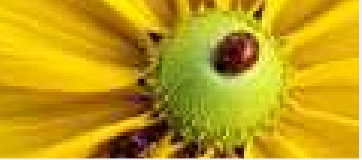
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Convergence rate deteriorates as n increases.



Adding More Parameters

Not surprising that with one free parameter, we can only make one pair of eigenvalues coalesce.

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Numerically: by running an optimization method suitable for nonsmooth objectives at randomly generated points near \mathbf{x}_{opt} . We repeatedly obtained convergence to \mathbf{x}_{opt} .

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- if we remove some redundancy by setting $x_j = x_{n-1-j}$ for $j = 1, 2, \dots, \lfloor \frac{n-1}{2} \rfloor$ and $x_{n-1} = x_n$, we find \mathbf{x}_{opt} satisfies a *sufficient* condition for local optimality.

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Essential to the analysis: each active eigenvalue corresponds to a single Jordan block, in this case with sizes $2, 1, \dots, 1$.

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Too complicated to explain in talk, but see references for more information.

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Surface Approximation By Subdivision

An example from surface approximation by subdivision: several fixed eigenvalues, want to reduce modulus of others to optimize the smoothness of the surface: after much numerical computation, found that all can be reduced nearly to zero

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- triangular mesh case: optimal multiple zero eigenvalue verified analytically, with multiple Jordan blocks of order 2, 1, 1, 1.



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- quadrilateral mesh case: numerically reduced moduli of eigenvalues to about 10^{-4} and estimated that the apparently optimal multiple zero eigenvalue has multiple Jordan blocks of order 5, 3, 2, 2.

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In both cases, the active eigenvalue zero has not only algebraic multiplicity > 1 but also geometric multiplicity > 1 . The latter results from special structure and will not occur generically.

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Numerical Optimization of Nonsmooth, Nonconvex f

Ordinary gradient method with line search: fails, typically converges to some arbitrary point where f is not differentiable.

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$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x_k} \alpha(A(x)) = \left\langle \frac{\partial A}{\partial x_k}(x), \frac{1}{v^* u} v u^* \right\rangle = \operatorname{Re} \frac{u^* \frac{\partial A}{\partial x_k}(x) v}{u^* v}$$

where v and u are *right and left eigenvectors for the rightmost eigenvalue λ* .

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HANSO (Hybrid Algorithm for Nonsmooth Optimization): publicly available MATLAB software.

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The Spectral Radius
and the Spectral
Abcissa

No Extension of
Part I

The Diaconis-
Holmes-Neal
Sampler

The Reduced
Spectral Radius
Eigenvalues of the
Transition Matrix,
 $n = 10$

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J.V. Burke and M.L. Overton, Math. Programming (2001)

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*Eigenvalue Optimization in C^2 Subdivision and Boundary
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and M.L. Overton, to appear in *Math. Programming*.



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Pseudospectra
Orr-Sommerfeld
Matrix ($n = 99$,
 $\epsilon =$

Part III

Optimization of Pseudospectra with

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Pseudospectra

The area swept out in the complex plane by the eigenvalues under perturbation.

$$\sigma_\epsilon(A) = \{z \in \mathbf{C} : \det(A + E - zI) = 0 \text{ for some } E \text{ with } \|E\| \leq \epsilon\}$$

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A more robust measure of system behaviour than eigenvalues.

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For $\|\cdot\| = \|\cdot\|_2$,

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where s_n denotes smallest singular value:

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Let $f(x, y) = s_n(A - (x + iy)I)$. Then pseudospectra are lower level sets of f .

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Orr-Sommerfeld Matrix ($n = 99, \epsilon = 10^{-4}, 10^{-3}, 10^{-2}$)

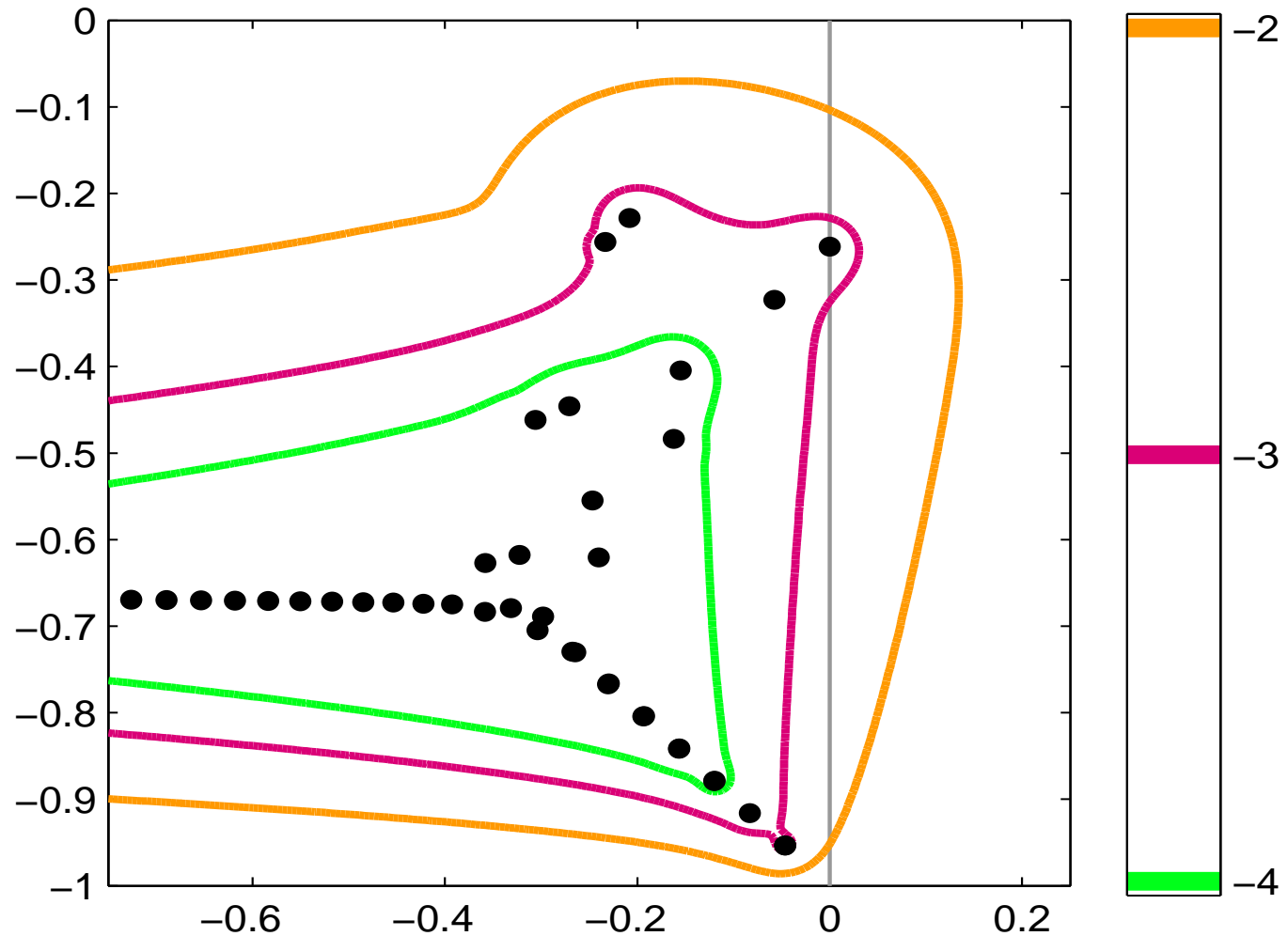
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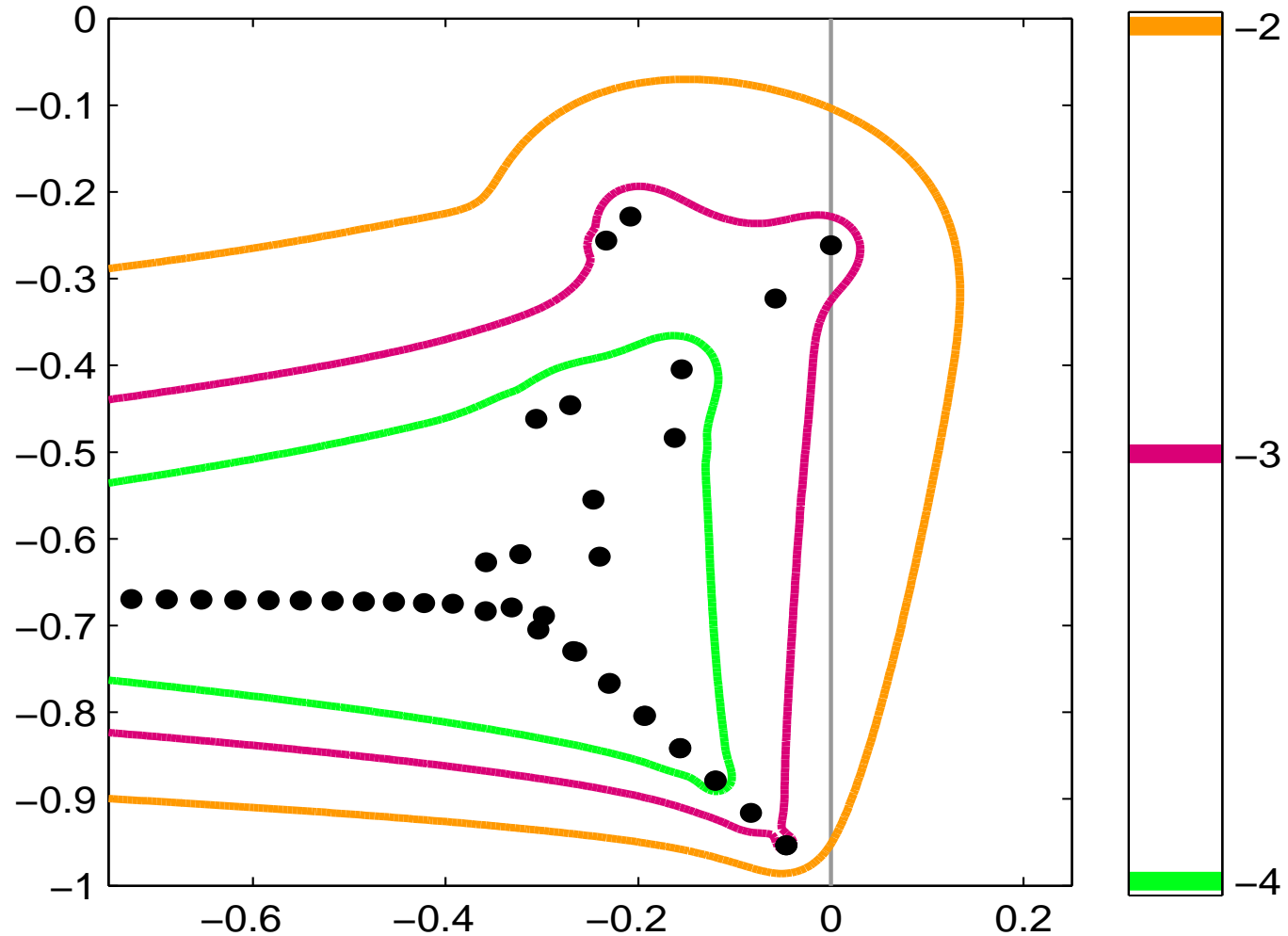
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Black dots are eigenvalues and colored curves are pseudospectral boundaries. Note the pseudospectra are not convex.



Constructing E given $z \in \partial\sigma_\epsilon(A)$

Let

$$A - zI = U \operatorname{diag}(s) V^* = \sum_{j=1}^n s_j u_j v_j^*, \quad s_n = \epsilon$$

with $U^*U = V^*V = I$.

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Then if we set $u = u_n$, $v = v_n$, $E = -\epsilon uv^*$ we have

$$\det(A - zI + E) = 0$$

so z is an eigenvalue of $A + E$.

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Key point: can choose E to have rank one.

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so z is an eigenvalue of $A + E$.

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$$(A - zI)v = \epsilon u, \quad u^*(A - zI) = \epsilon v^*$$

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$$(A - zI)v = \epsilon u, \quad u^*(A - zI) = \epsilon v^*$$

SO

$$(A - zI + E)v = 0, \quad u^*(A - zI + E) = 0.$$

Thus the right and left singular vectors of $A - zI$ for the singular value ϵ are also right and left eigenvectors of $A + E$ for the eigenvalue z .

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Pseudospectral Radius and Abscissa

Pseudospectral radius: modulus of outermost point in $\sigma_\epsilon(A)$

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Criss-cross algorithm for computing the pseudospectral abscissa $\alpha_\epsilon(A)$: based on repeatedly computing eigenvalues of $2n \times 2n$ Hamiltonian matrices and checking whether any are imaginary, and computing SVDs for each imaginary eigenvalue.



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Too expensive if n large.



Approximating the Pseudospectral Abscissa if n is Big

We want a rightmost point z of $\sigma_\epsilon(A)$, so $s_n(A - zI) = \epsilon$. Let v and u be corresponding right and left singular vectors. We know that z is an eigenvalue of $B = A - \epsilon uv^*$ with right and left eigenvectors v and u .

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Let us generate a sequence

$$B^{(k)} = A - \epsilon u^{(k)} \left(v^{(k)} \right)^*$$

with $\|u^{(k)}\| = \|v^{(k)}\| = 1$. We want $u^{(k)} \rightarrow u$, $v^{(k)} \rightarrow v$.

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Part III
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Pseudospectra
Orr-Sommerfeld
Matrix ($n = 99$,
 $\epsilon =$



Approximating the Pseudospectral Abscissa if n is Big

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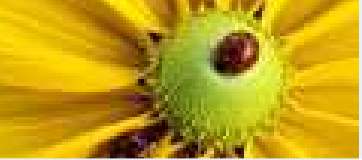
We want a rightmost point z of $\sigma_\epsilon(A)$, so $s_n(A - zI) = \epsilon$. Let v and u be corresponding right and left singular vectors. We know that z is an eigenvalue of $B = A - \epsilon uv^*$ with right and left eigenvectors v and u .

Let us generate a sequence

$$B^{(k)} = A - \epsilon u^{(k)} \left(v^{(k)} \right)^*$$

with $\|u^{(k)}\| = \|v^{(k)}\| = 1$. We want $u^{(k)} \rightarrow u$, $v^{(k)} \rightarrow v$.

No Hamiltonian eigenvalue decompositions or SVDs allowed.
The only matrix operations are the computation of eigenvalues with largest real part and their corresponding right and left eigenvectors, which can be done efficiently using the implicitly restarted Arnoldi method (ARPACK).



RP-Compatible Right and Left Eigenvectors

A pair of right and left eigenvectors p and q for a simple eigenvalue λ is called *RP-compatible* if $\|p\| = \|q\| = 1$ and p^*q is real and positive, and therefore in the interval $(0, 1]$.

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This defines right and left eigenvectors uniquely up to $p \leftarrow e^{i\theta}p$, $q \leftarrow e^{i\theta}q$.

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New Algorithm to Approximate $\alpha_\epsilon(A)$

1. Let $z^{(0)}$ be a rightmost eigenvalue of A , with RP-compatible right and left eigenvectors $v^{(0)}$ and $u^{(0)}$. Set $B^{(0)} = A - \epsilon u^{(0)} (v^{(0)})^*$.

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Almost always: $z^{(k)} \rightarrow z$, a locally rightmost point of $\sigma_\epsilon(A)$, and $v^{(k)}$ and $u^{(k)}$ converge to right and left singular vectors v and u corresponding to smallest singular value of $A - zI$.



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Often, but not always, z is a globally rightmost point so $\text{Re } z = \alpha_\epsilon(A)$.



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We have theorems characterizing fixed points of the algorithm and proving local convergence at a geometric rate for ϵ small.



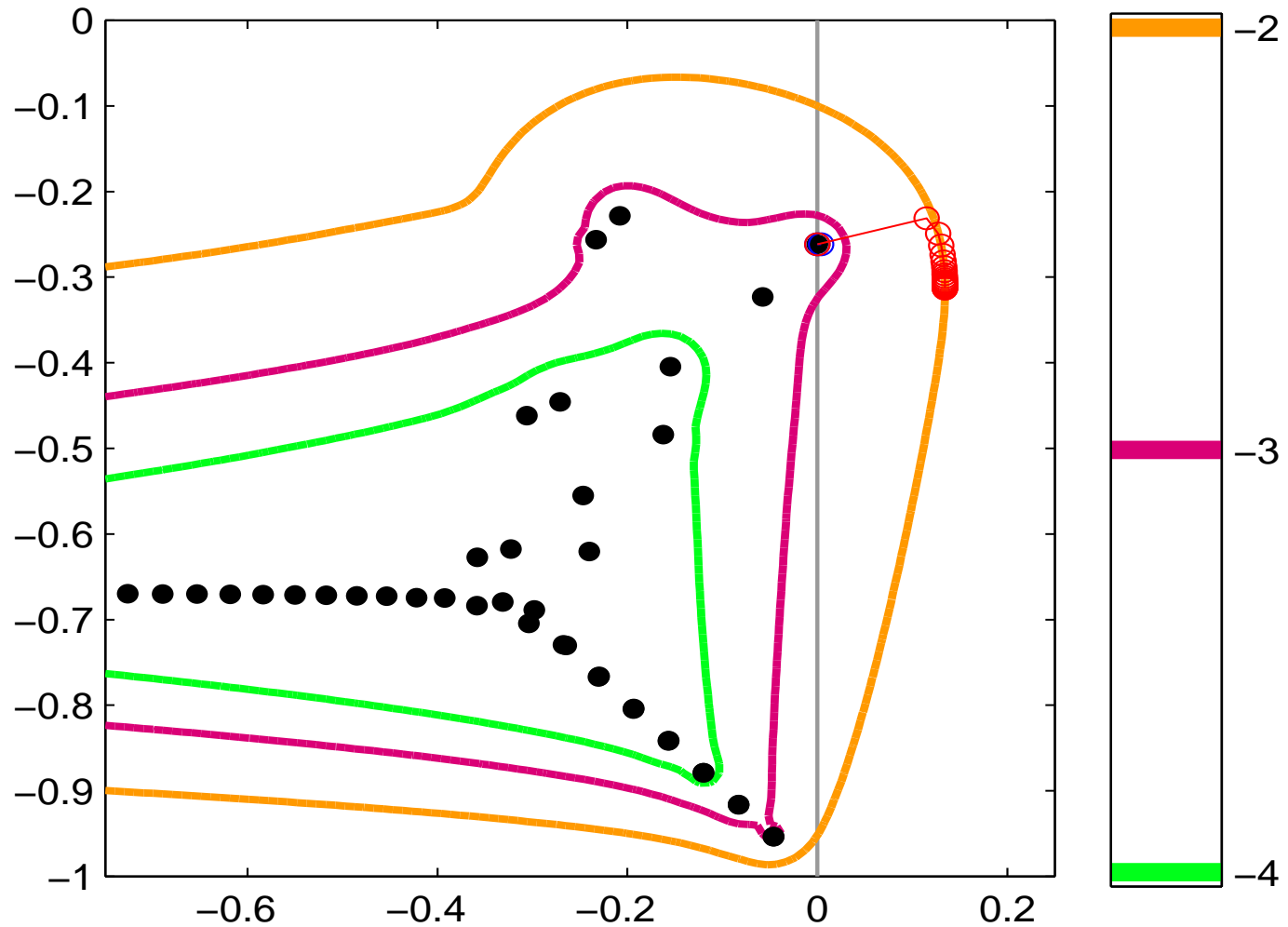
Orr-Sommerfeld Matrix ($n = 99, \epsilon = 10^{-4}, 10^{-2}$)

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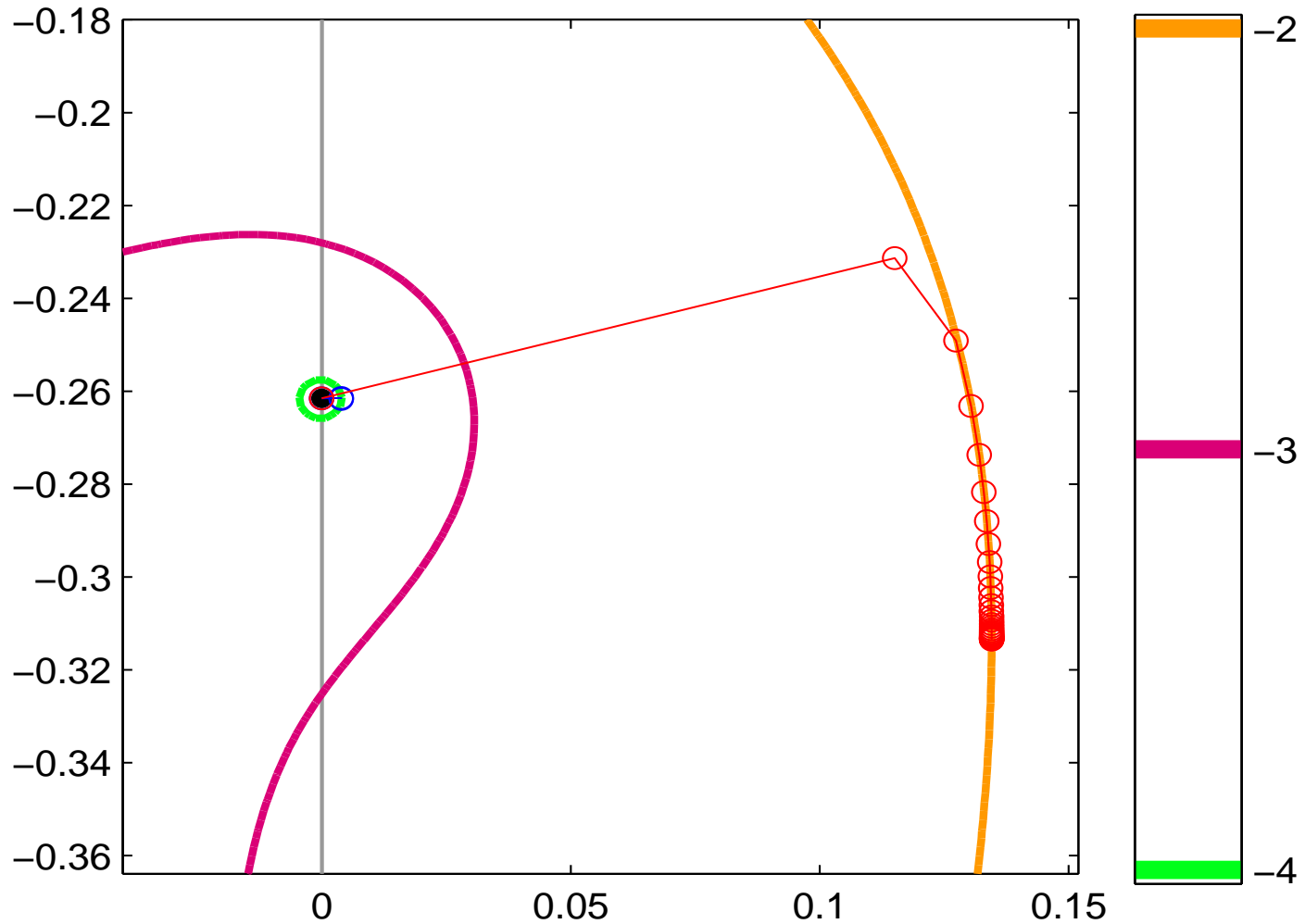
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Minimizing $\alpha_\epsilon(A(x))$ over Parametrized Matrix $A(x)$

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Derivatives:

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x_k} \alpha_\epsilon(A(x)) = \left\langle \frac{\partial A}{\partial x_k}(x), \frac{1}{v^*u} v u^* \right\rangle = \operatorname{Re} \frac{u^* \frac{\partial A}{\partial x_k}(x) v}{u^* v}$$

where v and u are right and left singular vectors for the singular value ϵ of $A - zI$ with z the rightmost point of $\sigma_\epsilon(A)$, equivalently RP-compatible right and left eigenvectors for the eigenvalue z of $A - \epsilon uv^*$.

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As earlier, use Gradient Sampling or BFGS.

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Example: $A(x) = F + GKH$ with $x = \operatorname{vec}(K)$, a static output feedback control design problem for a turbo generator with $n = 10$, $\ell = m = 2$, so controller $K \in \mathbf{R}^{2 \times 2}$.

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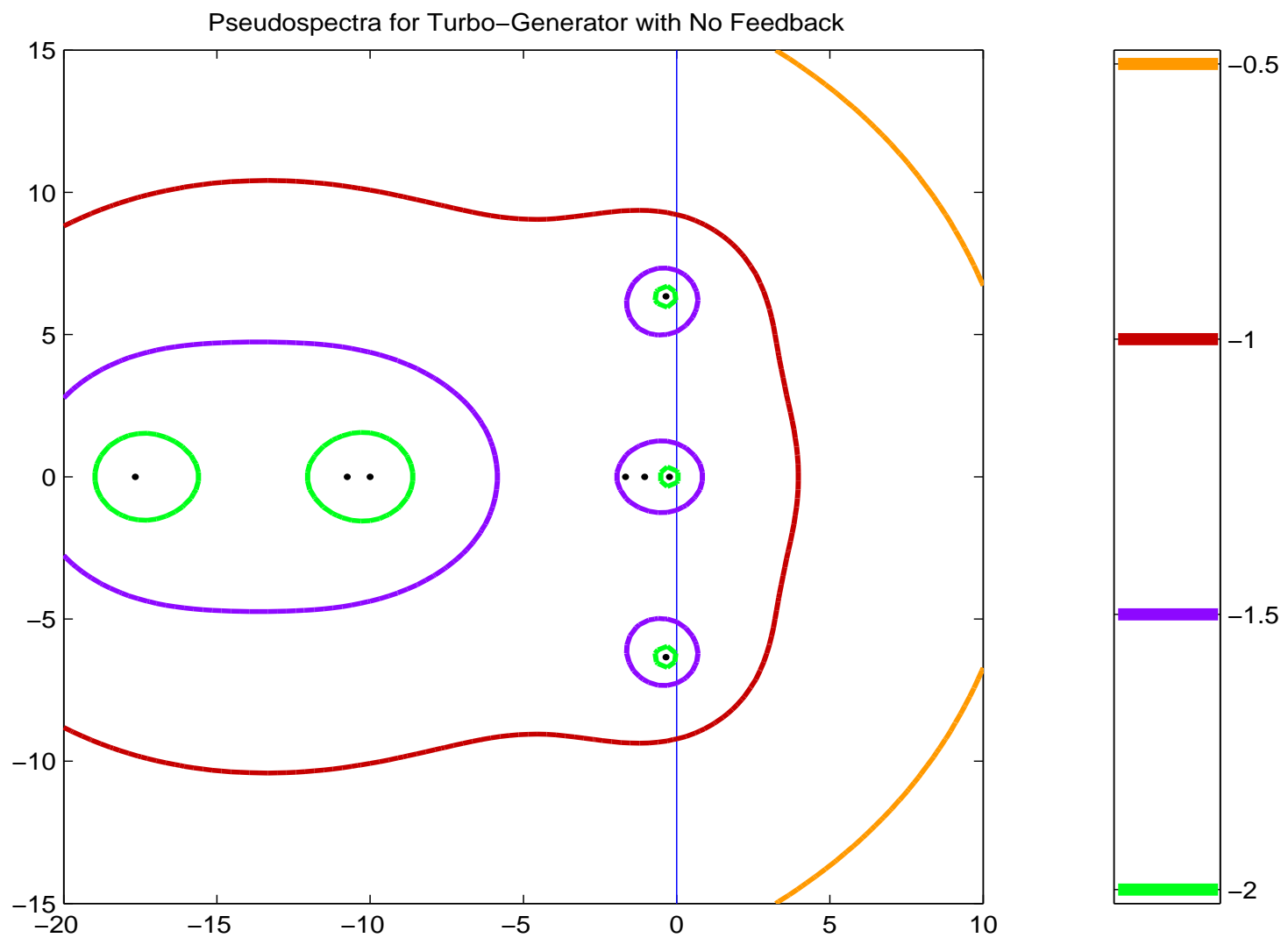
A Turbo Generator Control Problem

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Pseudospectra for open-loop turbo generator plant with no feedback.



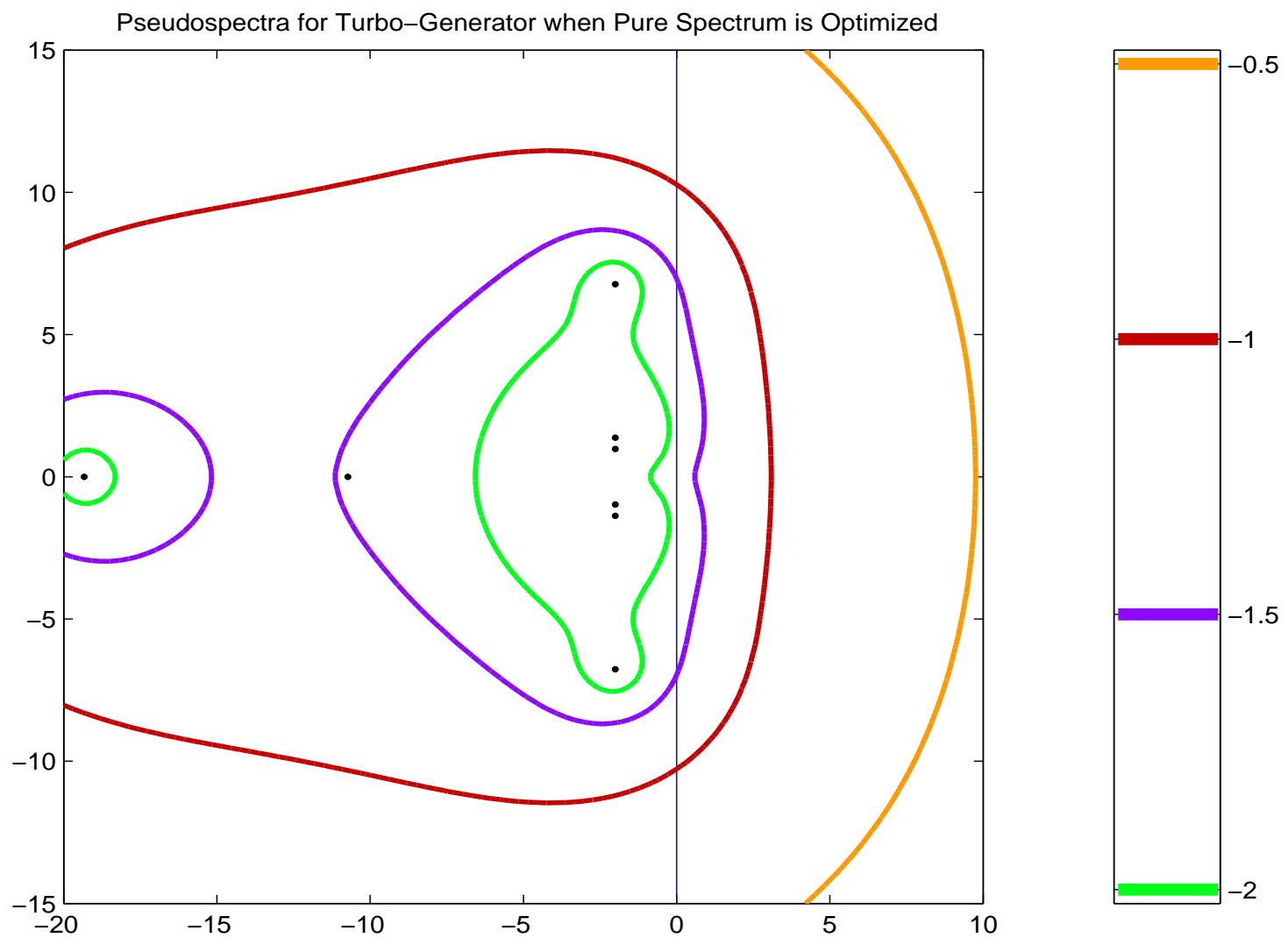
Turbo Generator with Optimized Eigenvalues

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Pseudospectra for turbo generator plant with feedback computed by minimizing the spectral abscissa α



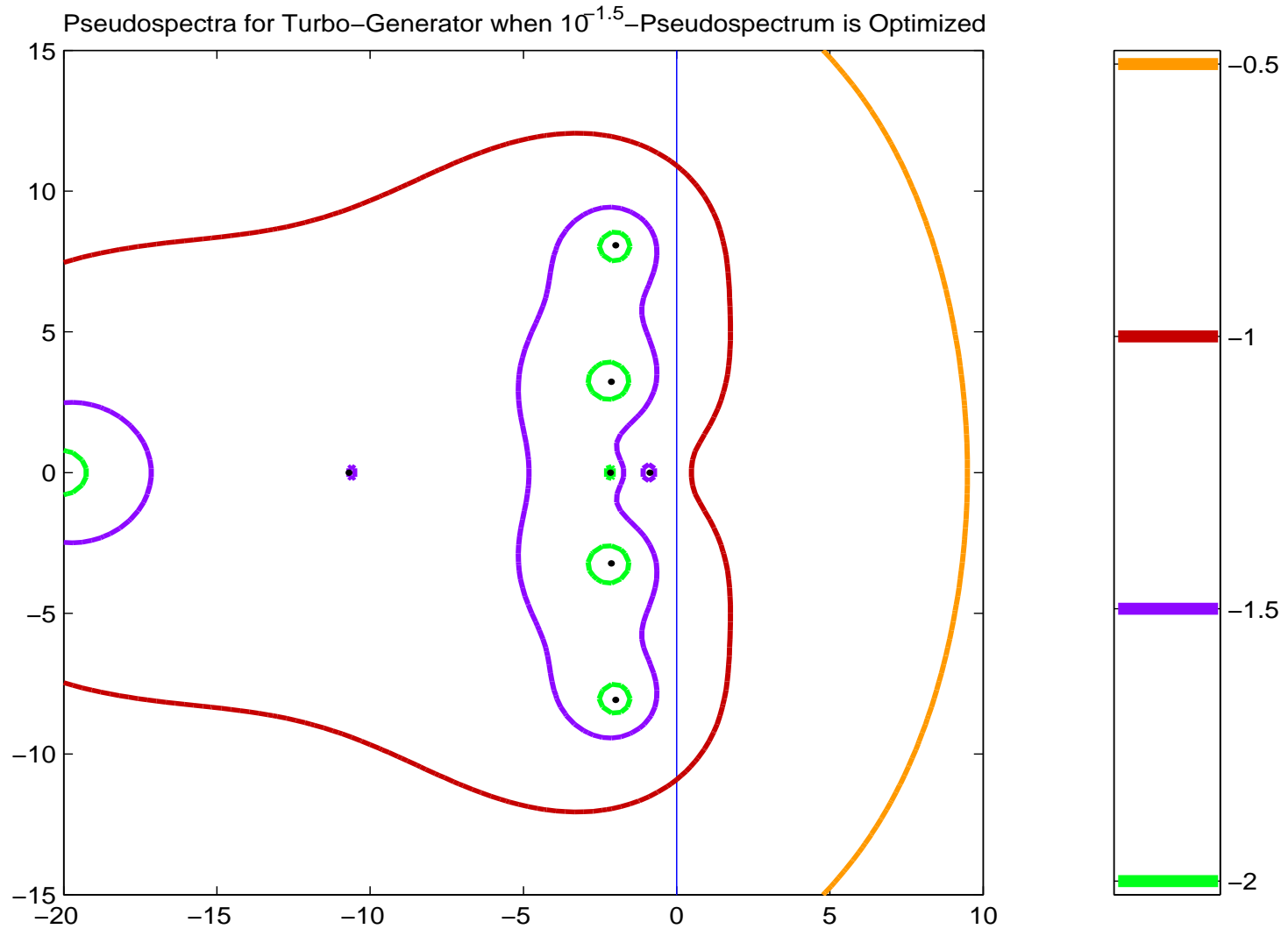
Turbo Generator with Optimized ϵ -Pseudospectrum

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Pseudospectra for turbo generator plant with feedback computed by minimizing the pseudospectral abscissa α_ϵ with $\epsilon = 10^{-1.5}$



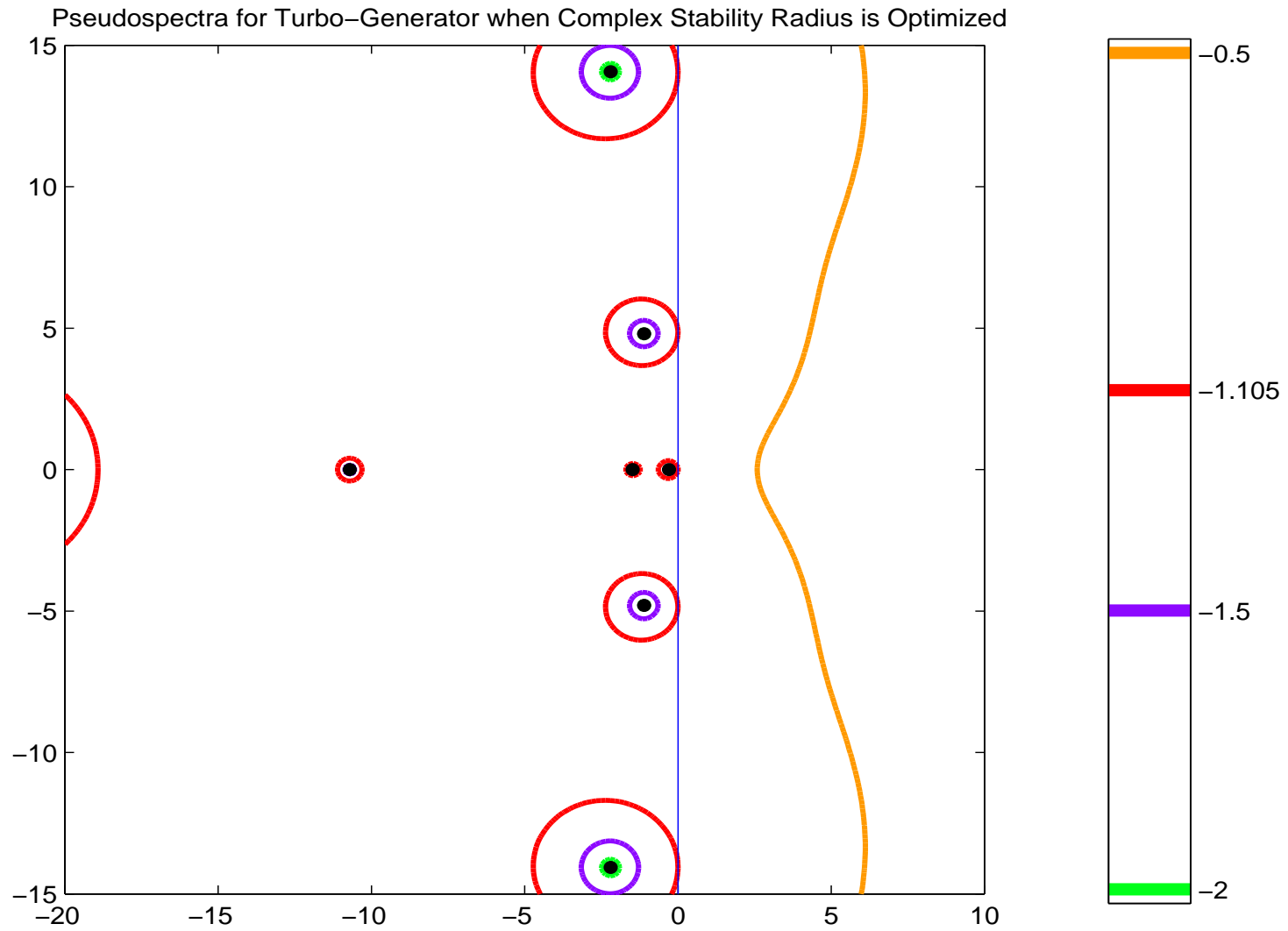
Turbo Generator with Optimized Dist. to Instability

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 M. Gürbüzbalaban (NYU)
 A. Megretski (MIT)

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 K.K. Gade (NYU)
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Part III
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 A.S. Lewis (Cornell)

Pseudospectra
 Orr-Sommerfeld Matrix ($n = 99$,
 $\epsilon =$



Pseudospectra for turbo generator plant with feedback computed by maximizing the *distance to instability*: largest ϵ so that $\alpha_\epsilon(A(x)) \leq 0$.



References for Part III

Origins of Pseudospectra in 1980s:

Landau, Varah, Godunov, Demmel, Wilkinson, Trefethen, ?.

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(2003).

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Robust Control Design, Milan (2003).

Fast algorithms for the approximation of the pseudospectral abscissa

and pseudospectral radius of a matrix, N. Guglielmi and M.L. Overton,

SIAM J. Matrix Anal. Appl. (2011)

Some Regularity Results for the Pseudospectral Abscissa and

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Overton, SIAM J. Optimization (2012)

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Plots: EigTool (T. Wright and L.N. Trefethen, 2004).

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