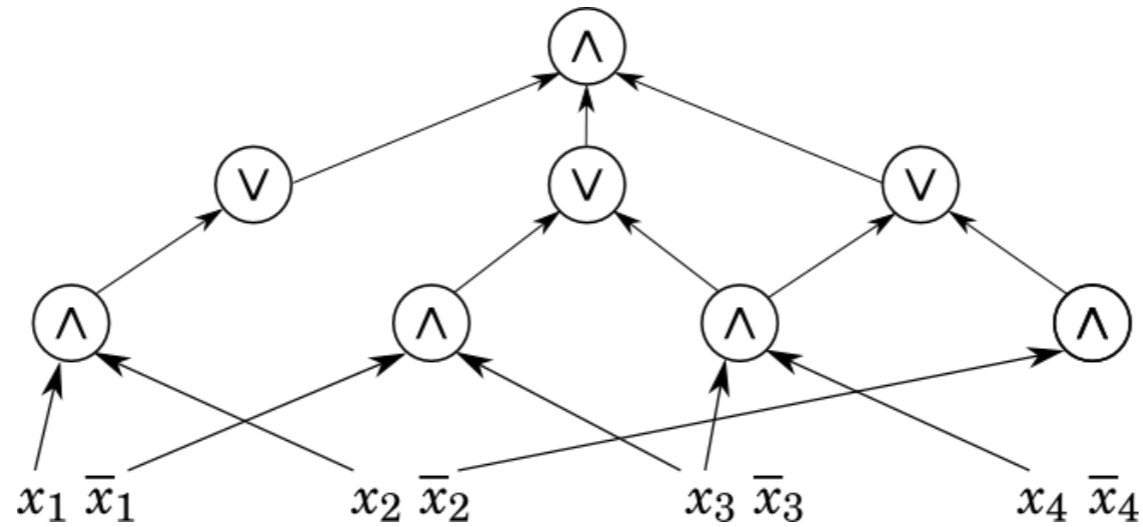


Settling the Threshold Degree and Sign Rank of AC^0

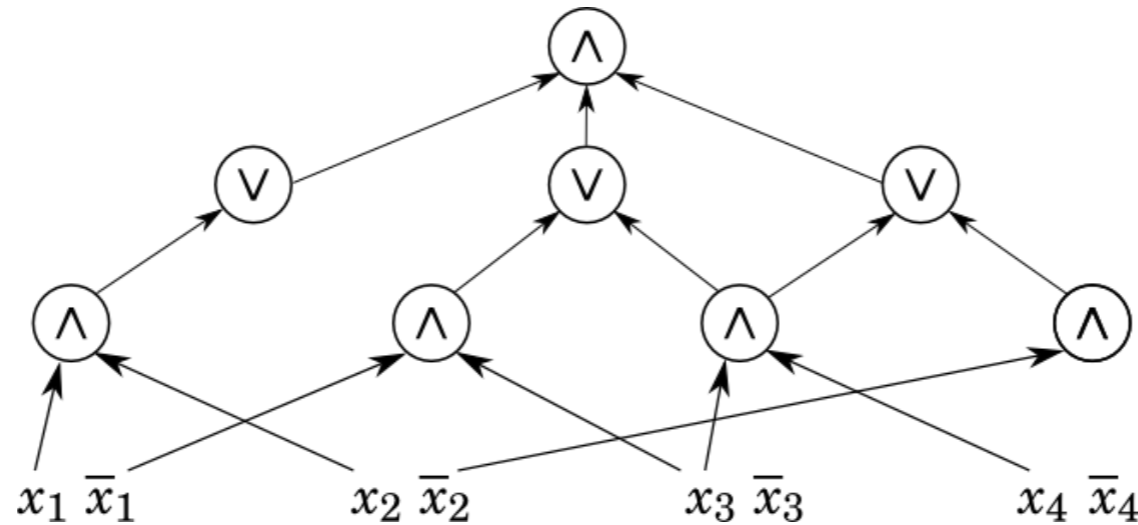
Alexander Sherstov, Pei Wu
UCLA

Constant depth circuits (AC^0)



constant depth, polynomial #gates (\wedge, \vee, \neg)

Constant depth circuits (AC^0)

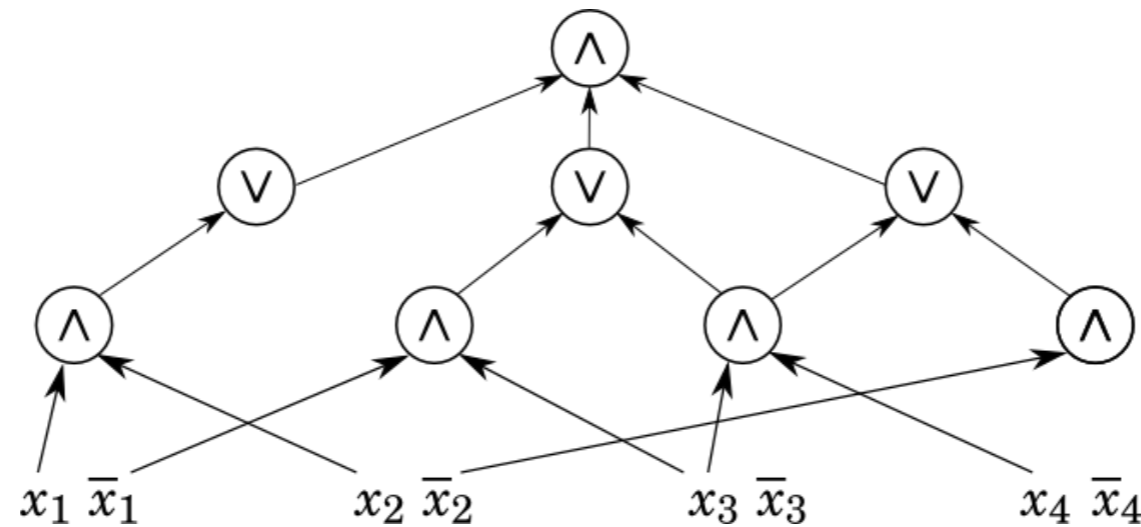


constant depth, polynomial #gates (\wedge, \vee, \neg)

Why study AC^0 ?

Simple, natural computational model,
has some of the most impressive results

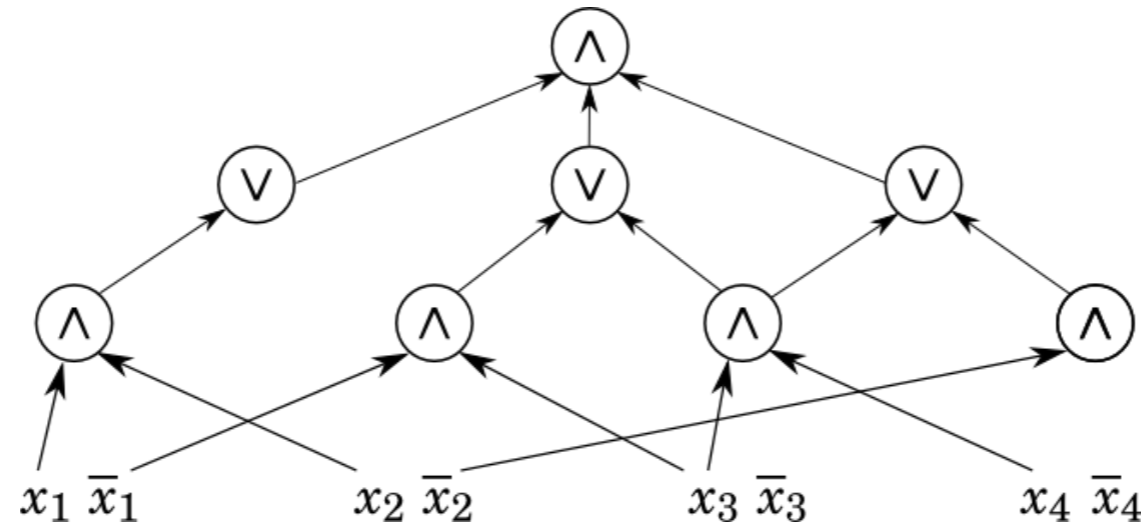
Constant depth circuits (AC^0)



Circuits
lower bound
“P vs NP”

[FSS84, Ajt83, Yao85, Has86, Aar10, RS10, LV11, BIL12, IMP12, Has14, AA15, LRR17, Ros18, Vio18]

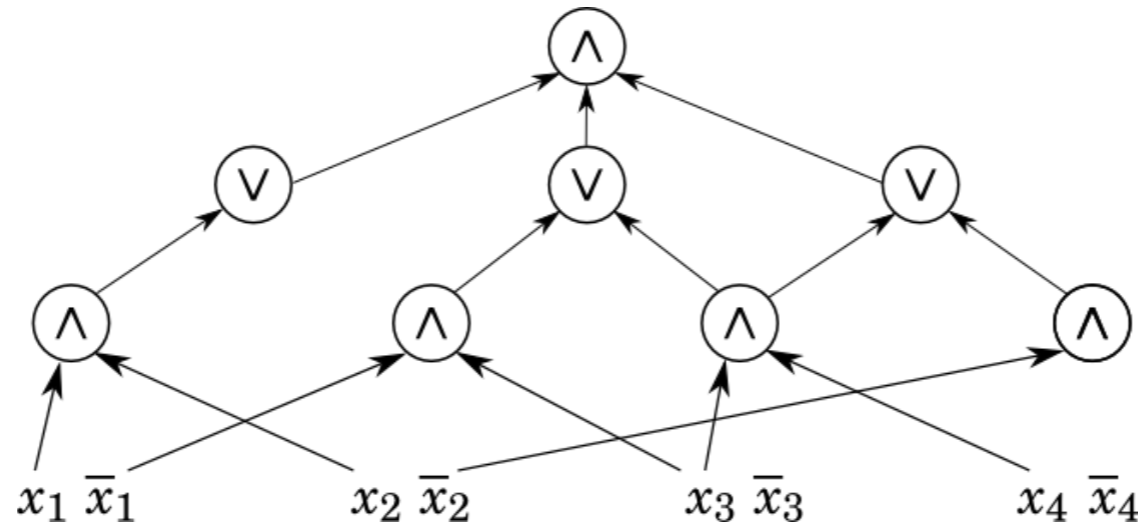
Constant depth circuits (AC^0)



Communication
complexity

[AFR85, PS86, KS92, Raz92, FKLMS01,
F02, CA08, RS08, S09, BH12, S14]

Constant depth circuits (AC^0)



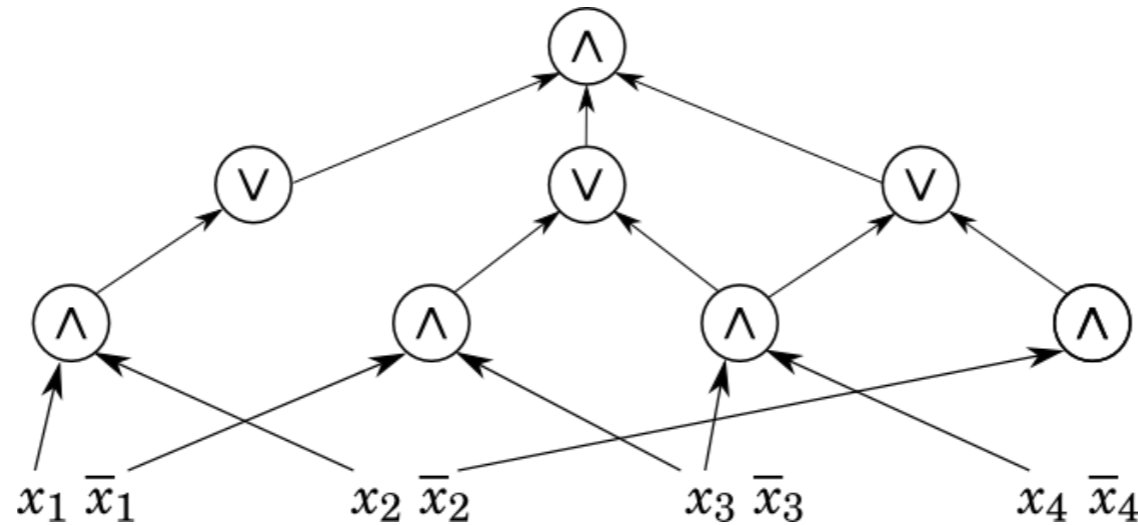
Communication complexity

[AFR85, PS86, KS92, Raz92, FKLMS01, F02, CA08, RS08, S09, BH12, S14]

“P vs BPP”

[LN90, Nis91, Baz07, Raz08, Bra09, ETT10, GMRI3, TXI3, Tal14, CSV15, HS16, Tal17, ST18, DHH18,]

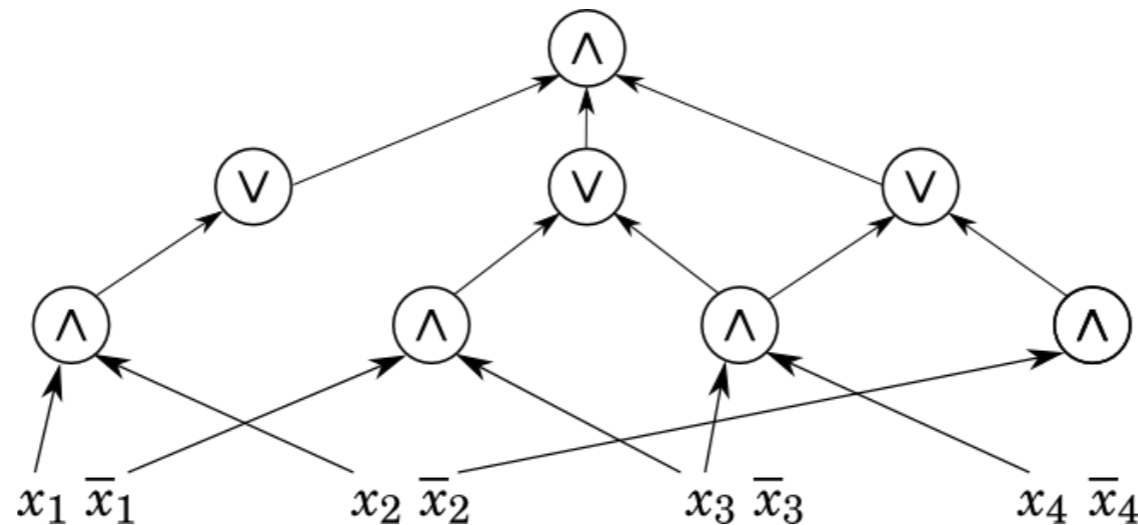
Constant depth circuits (AC^0)



Quantum
supremacy?

[AS04, Amb07, ACR+10, BM10,
Rei10, Bell2, BS13, RT19]

Constant depth circuits (AC^0)



Quantum
supremacy?

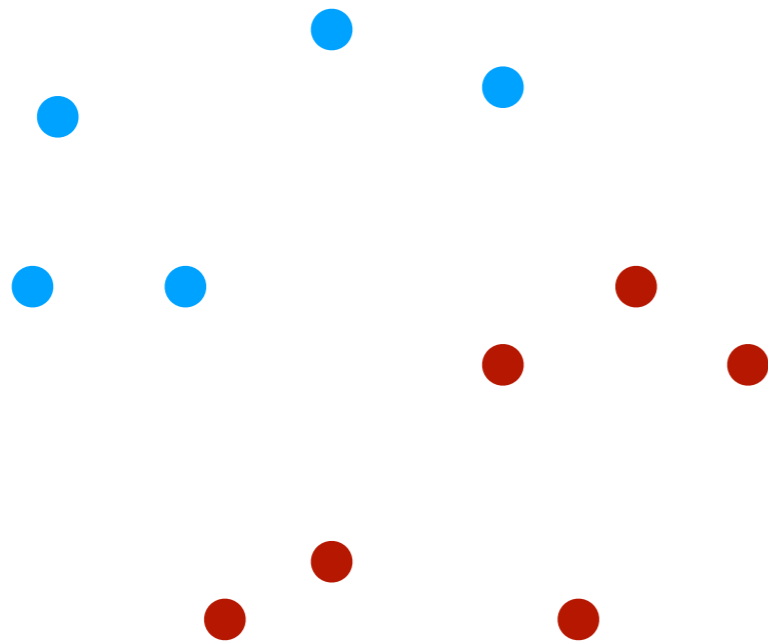
[AS04, Amb07, ACR+10, BM10,
Rei10, Bell2, BS13, RT19]

Learning

[LMN93, Jac02, BES03, OS03,
KOS04, KS04, LMSS07, AMY16,
DRG17]

.....

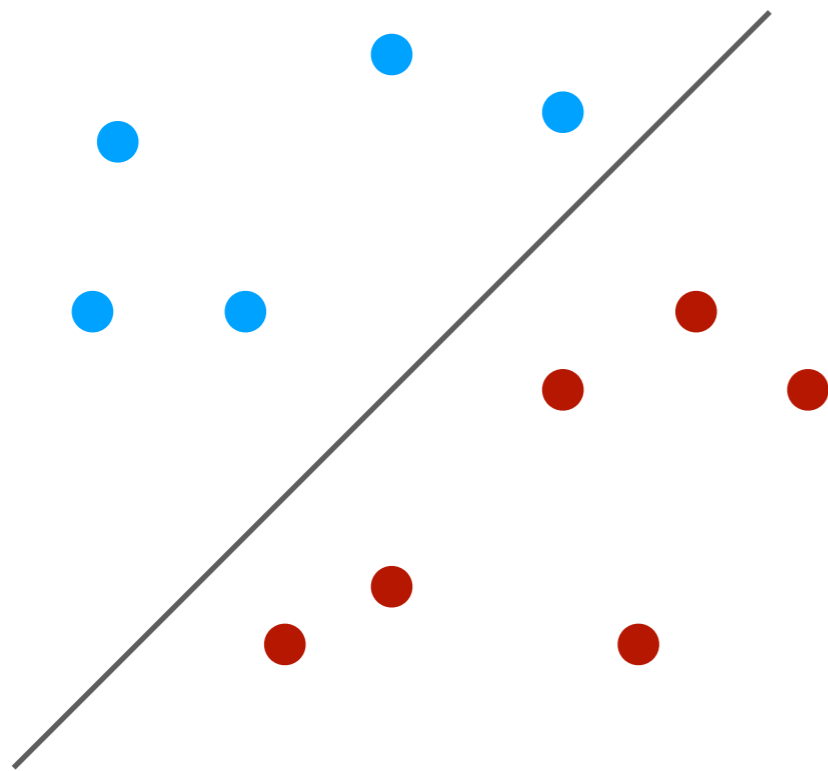
Why study sign representations? Learning halfspace



$$a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + a_3x_3 + a_0 \geq 0$$

learn the coefficients a

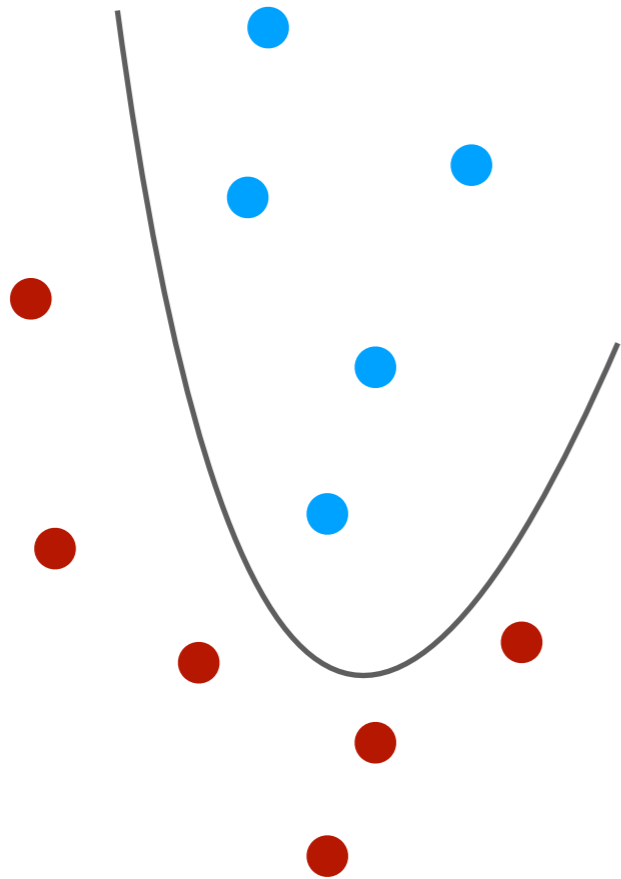
Why study sign representations? Learning halfspace



$$a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + a_3x_3 + a_0 \geq 0$$

learn the coefficients a

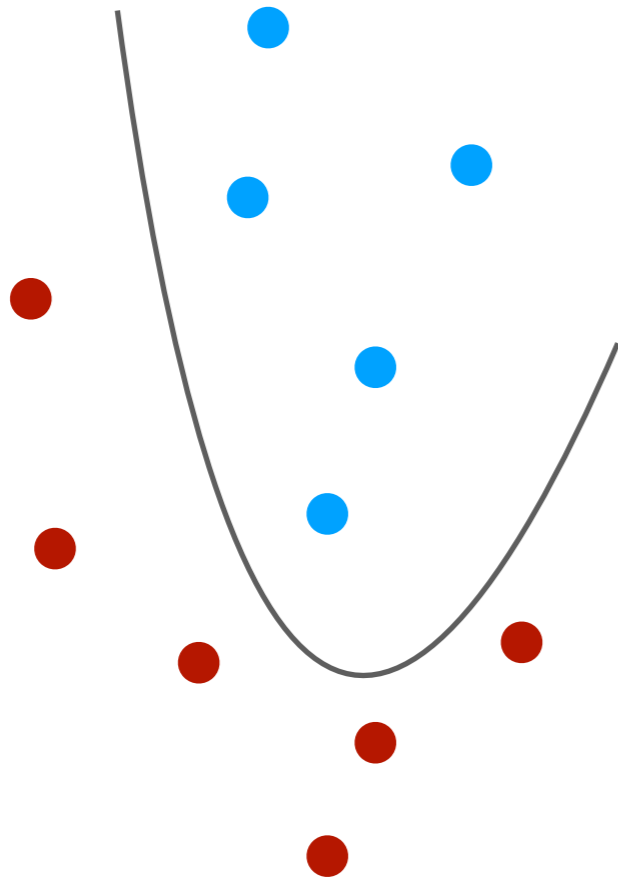
Learning low degree polynomials



$$a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + a_3x_3 + a_{12} \cdot x_1x_2 +$$
$$a_{13} \cdot x_1x_3 + a_{23} \cdot x_2x_3 \geq 0$$

learn the coefficients a

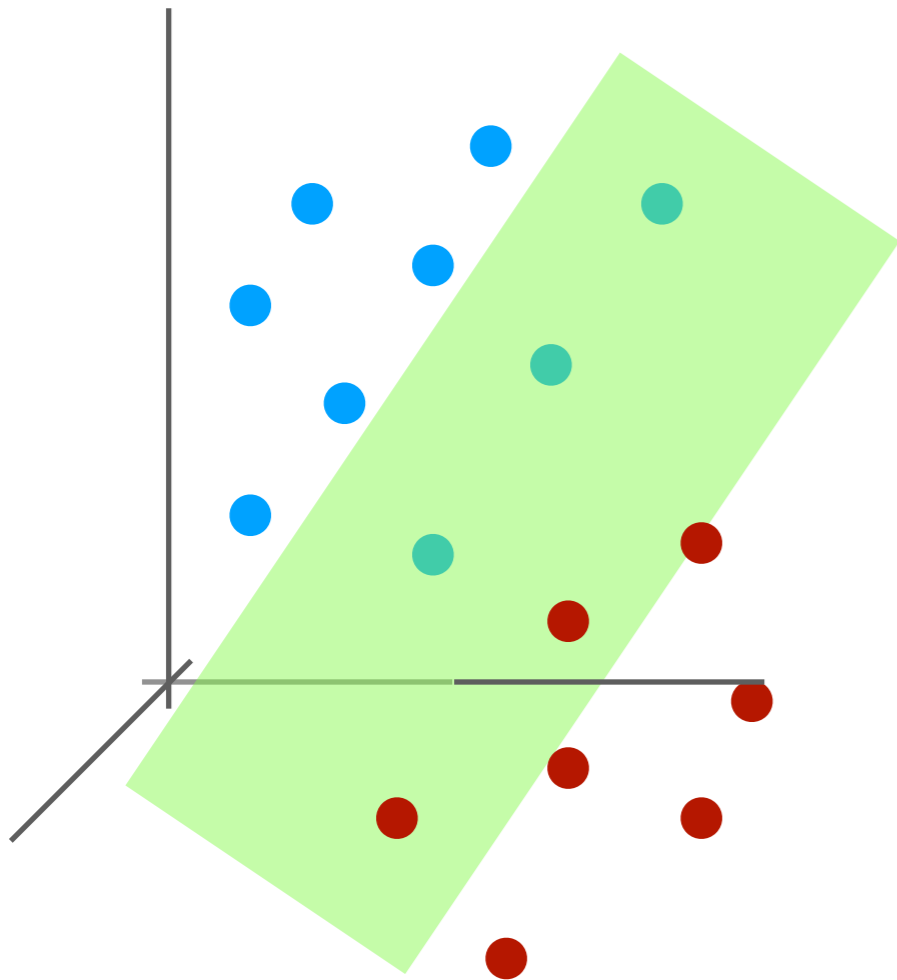
Learning low degree polynomials



$$a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + a_3x_3 + a_{12} \cdot \cancel{x_1x_2}^{y_{12}} + a_{13} \cdot \cancel{x_1x_3}^{y_{13}} + a_{23} \cdot \cancel{x_2x_3}^{y_{23}} \geq 0$$

learn the coefficients a

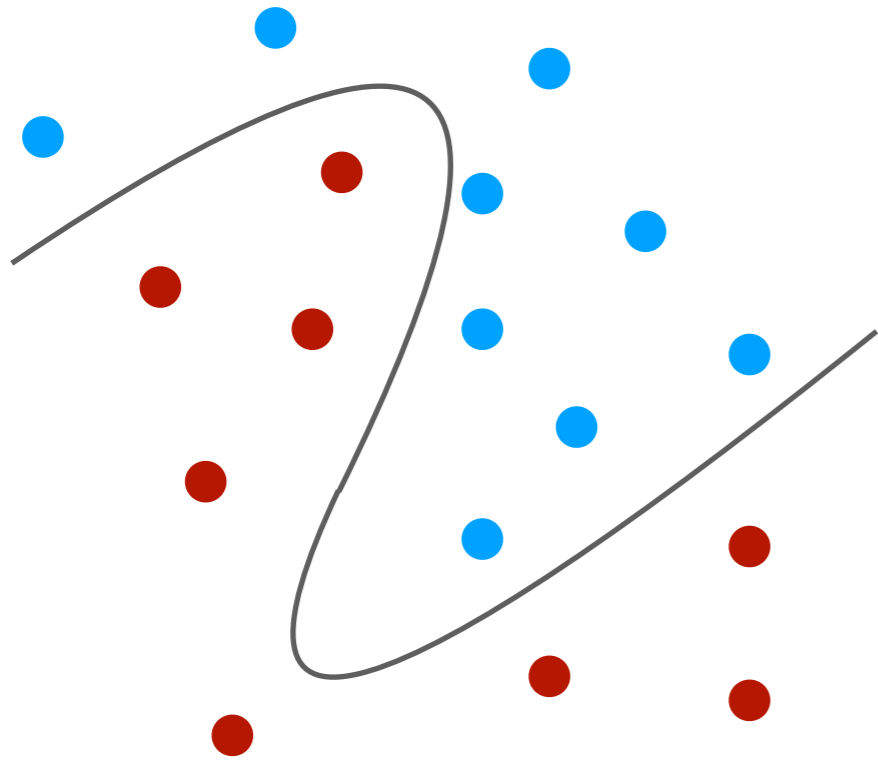
Learning low degree polynomials



$$a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + a_3x_3 + a_{12} \cdot \cancel{x_1x_2}^{y_{12}} + a_{13} \cdot \cancel{x_1x_3}^{y_{13}} + a_{23} \cdot \cancel{x_2x_3}^{y_{23}} \geq 0$$

learn the coefficients a

Learning low degree polynomials

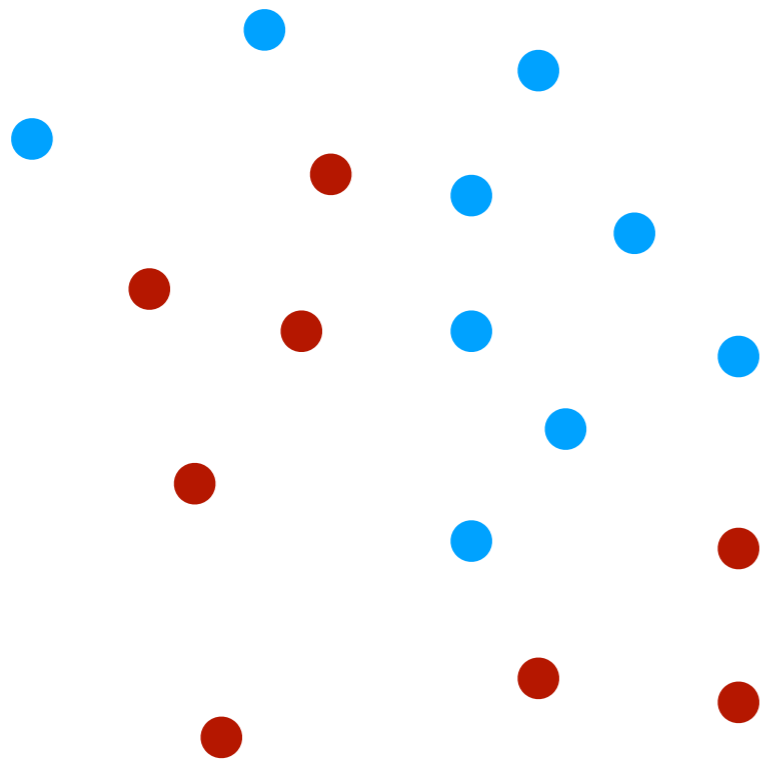


$$\sum_{|S| \leq 100} a_S \prod_{i \in S} x_i \geq 0$$

learn the coefficients a

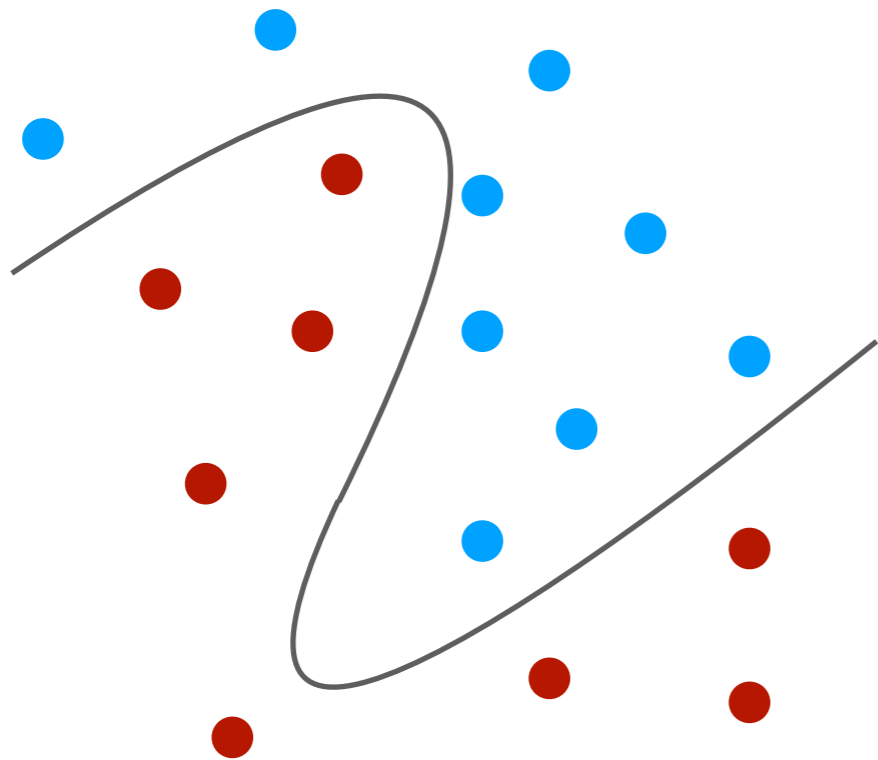
Threshold degree

$$f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$



Threshold degree

$$f : X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$

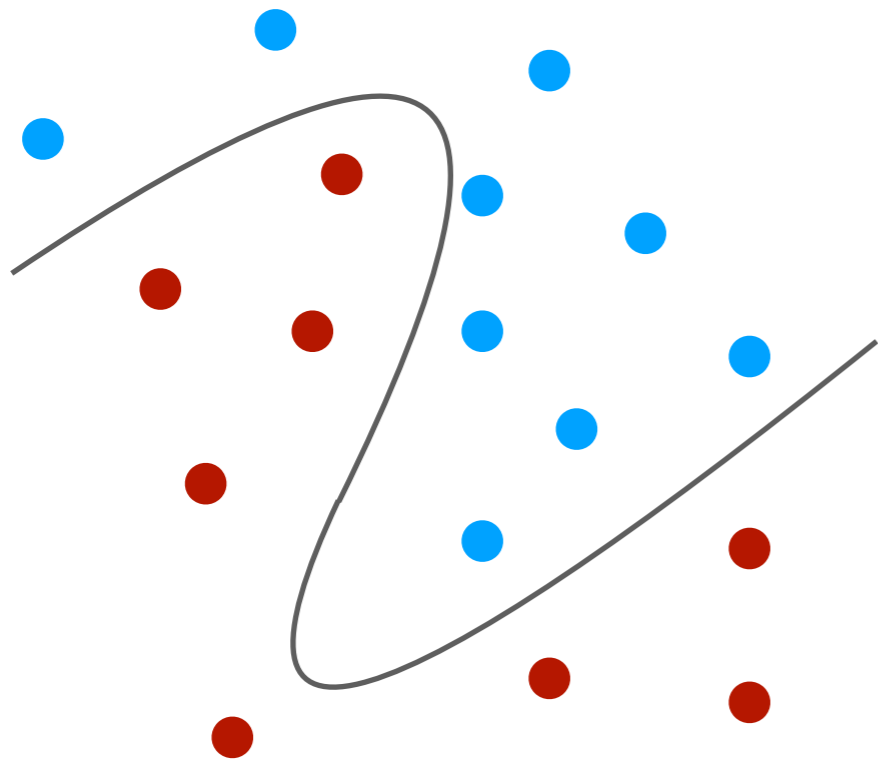


$$P(x) : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R},$$

$$P(x) = \sum_{|S| \leq 100} a_S \prod_{i \in S} x_i.$$

Threshold degree

$$f : X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$



$$P(x) : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R},$$

$$P(x) = \sum_{|S| \leq 100} a_S \prod_{i \in S} x_i.$$

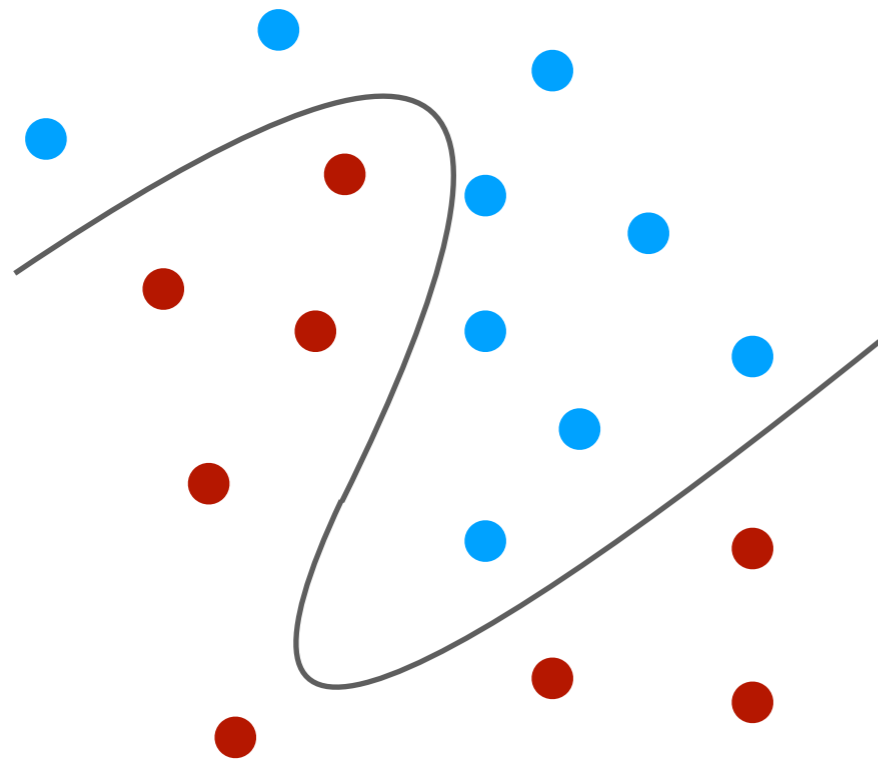
P “sign represents” f

$$f(x) = 1 \iff P(x) < 0,$$

$$f(x) = 0 \iff P(x) > 0.$$

Threshold degree

$$f : X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$



$$P(x) : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R},$$

$$P(x) = \sum_{|S| \leq 100} a_S \prod_{i \in S} x_i.$$

P “sign represents” f

$$f(x) = 1 \iff P(x) < 0,$$

$$f(x) = 0 \iff P(x) > 0.$$

Or, simply

$$(-1)^{f(x)} P(x) > 0.$$

Threshold degree

$$f : X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$

Definition.

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) = \min\{\deg p :$$

$$p(x) \cdot (-1)^{f(x)} > 0 \text{ for all } x \in X\} .$$

Threshold degree

Threshold degree

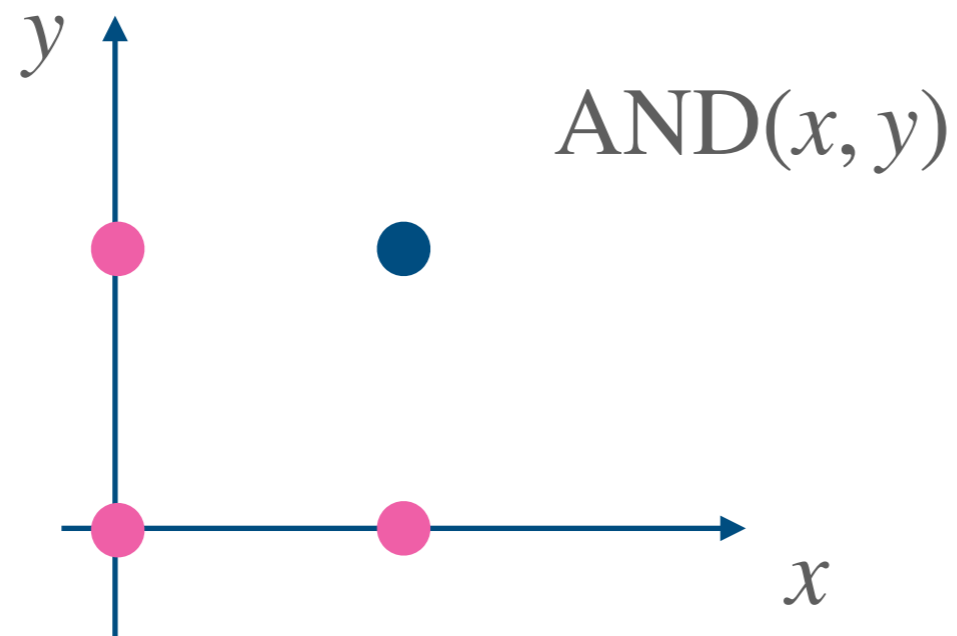
Example: the AND function

$$\text{AND}(11111) = 1, \text{AND}(11011) = 0,$$

Threshold degree

Example: the AND function

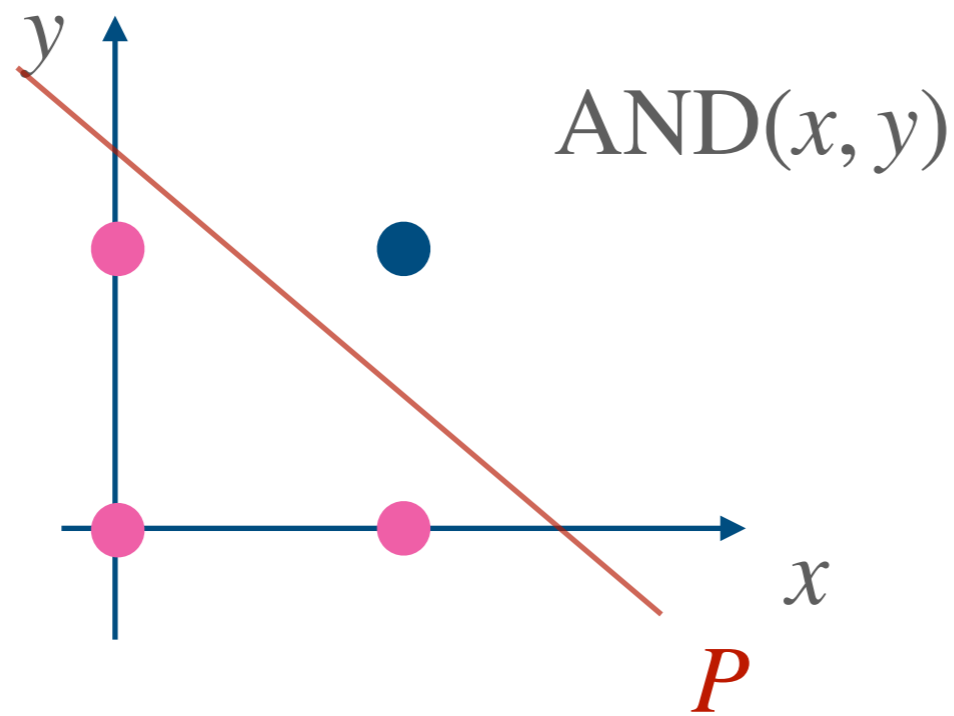
$$\text{AND}(1111) = 1, \text{AND}(1101) = 0,$$



Threshold degree

Example: the AND function

$$\text{AND}(1111) = 1, \text{AND}(1101) = 0,$$

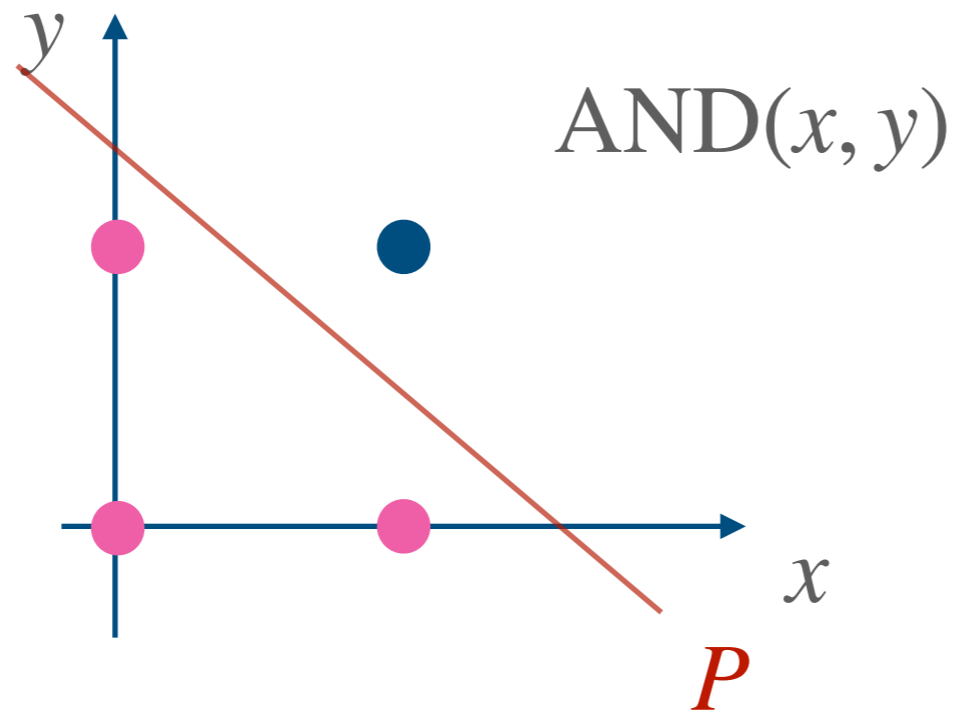


$$(n - 1/2 - x_1 - x_2 - \dots - x_n)$$

Threshold degree

Example: the AND function

$$\text{AND}(1111) = 1, \text{AND}(1101) = 0,$$

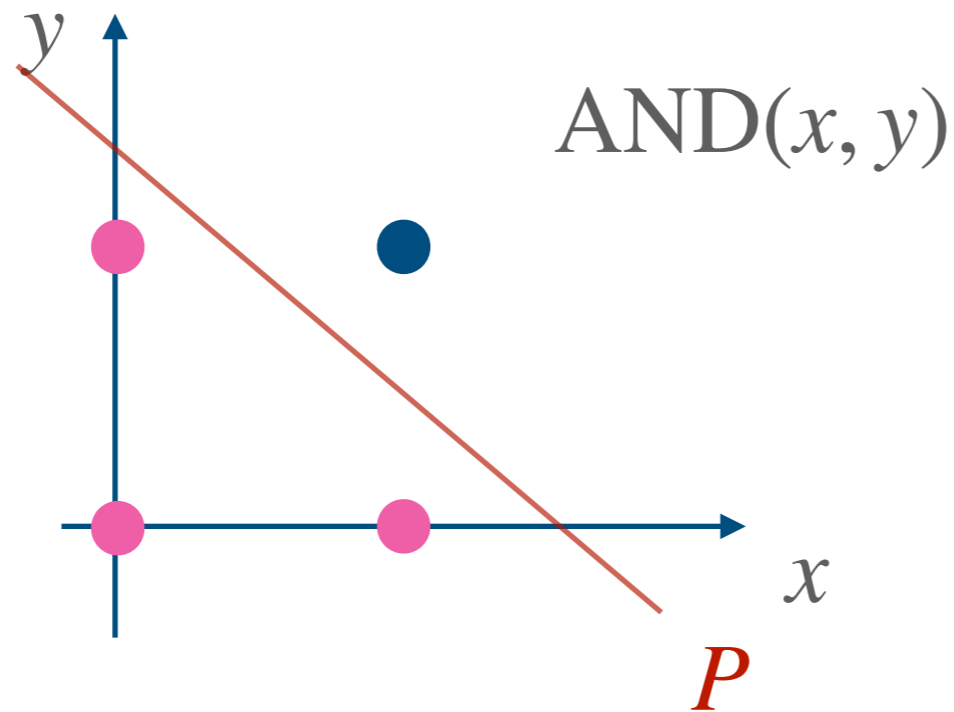


$$(-1)^{\text{AND}(x)} \cdot (n - 1/2 - x_1 - x_2 - \dots - x_n) > 0$$

Threshold degree

Example: the AND function

$$\text{AND}(11111) = 1, \text{AND}(11011) = 0,$$



$$(-1)^{\text{AND}(x)} \cdot (n - 1/2 - x_1 - x_2 - \dots - x_n) > 0$$

$$\text{deg}_{\pm}(\text{AND}(x)) = 1.$$

Threshold degree

Example: the MAJORITY function

$\text{MAJ}(x) = 1$ if there are more 1s in x than 0s

e.g. $\text{MAJ}(11100) = 1,$
 $\text{MAJ}(10100) = 0$

Threshold degree

Example: the MAJORITY function

$\text{MAJ}(x) = 1$ if there are more 1s in x than 0s

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{MAJ}(11100) = 1, \\ \text{e.g. MAJ}(10100) = 0 \end{array}$$

$$\text{deg}_{\pm}(\text{MAJ}) = 1,$$

$$(-1)^{\text{MAJ}(x)} \cdot \left(\frac{n}{2} - \sum_i x_i \right) > 0.$$

Threshold degree

Example: the XOR function

$\text{XOR}(x) = 1$ if there are odd 1s in x

e.g. $\text{XOR}(11100) = 1,$
 $\text{XOR}(10100) = 0$

Threshold degree

Example: the XOR function

XOR(x) = 1 if there are odd 1s in x

e.g. XOR(11100) = 1,
XOR(10100) = 0

$$(-1)^{\text{XOR}(x)} = \prod_{i=1}^n (1 - 2x_i).$$

Threshold degree

Example: the XOR function

$\text{XOR}(x) = 1$ if there are odd 1s in x

e.g. $\text{XOR}(11100) = 1,$
 $\text{XOR}(10100) = 0$

$$(-1)^{\text{XOR}(x)} = \prod_{i=1}^n (1 - 2x_i).$$

$$\begin{array}{l} 1 - 2x_i : \\ 1 \mapsto -1 \\ 0 \mapsto 1 \end{array}$$

Threshold degree

Example: the XOR function

$\text{XOR}(x) = 1$ if there are odd 1s in x

e.g. $\text{XOR}(11100) = 1,$
 $\text{XOR}(10100) = 0$

$$(-1)^{\text{XOR}(x)} = \prod_{i=1}^n (1 - 2x_i).$$

$$\begin{array}{l} 1 - 2x_i : \\ 1 \mapsto -1 \\ 0 \mapsto 1 \end{array}$$

Fact.

$$\deg_{\pm}(\text{XOR}_n) = n.$$

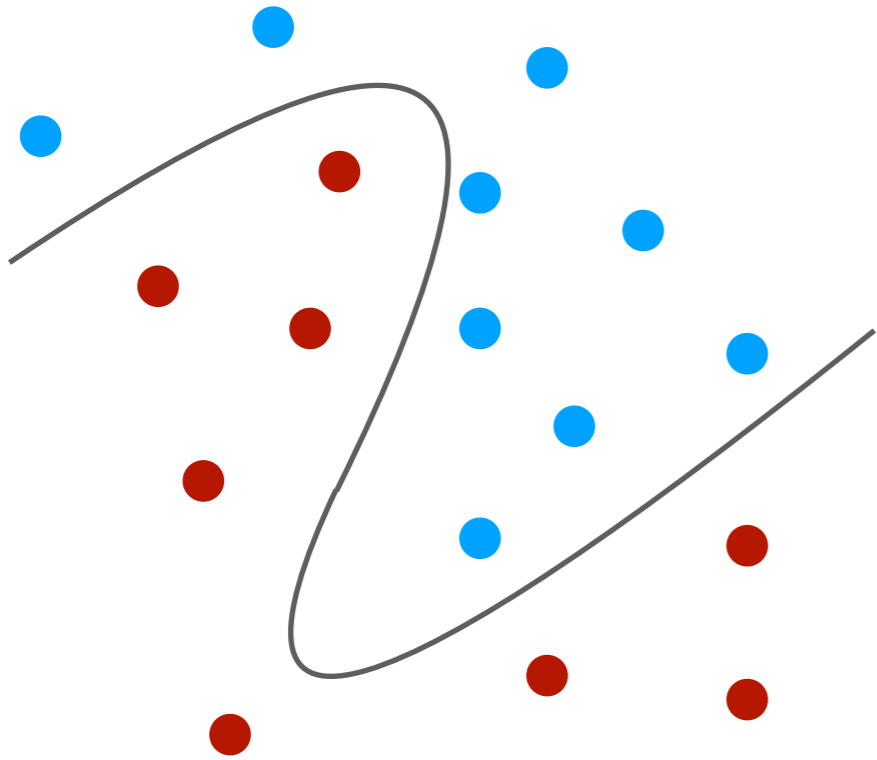
Threshold degree

$$f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$

Fact.

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) \leq n.$$

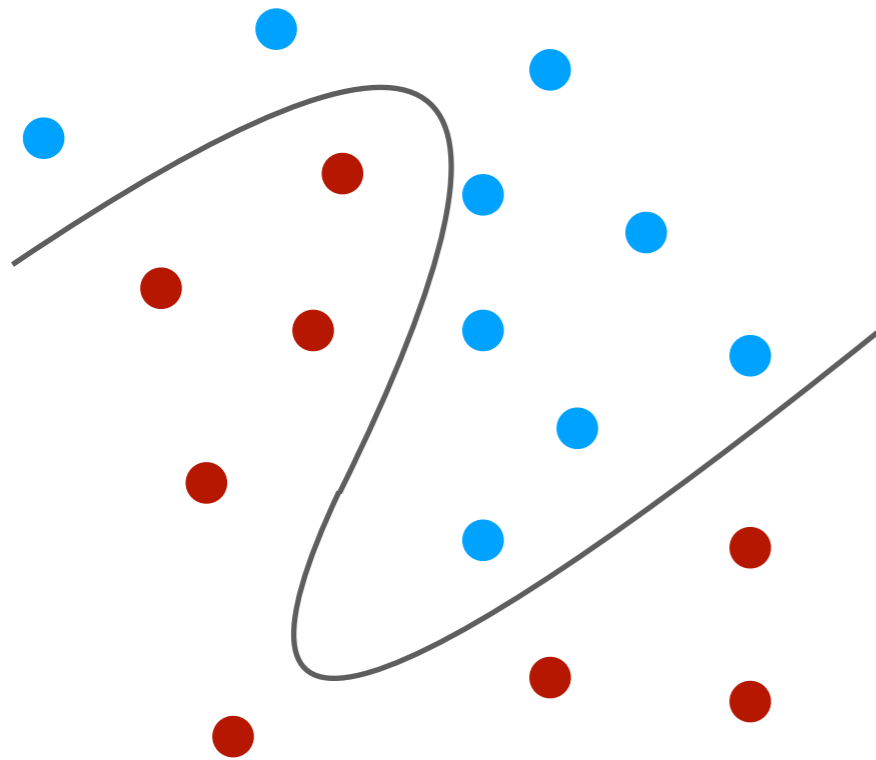
Learning sparse polynomial



$$\sum_{|S| \geq n-100} a_S \prod_{i \in S} x_i \geq 0$$

learn the coefficients a

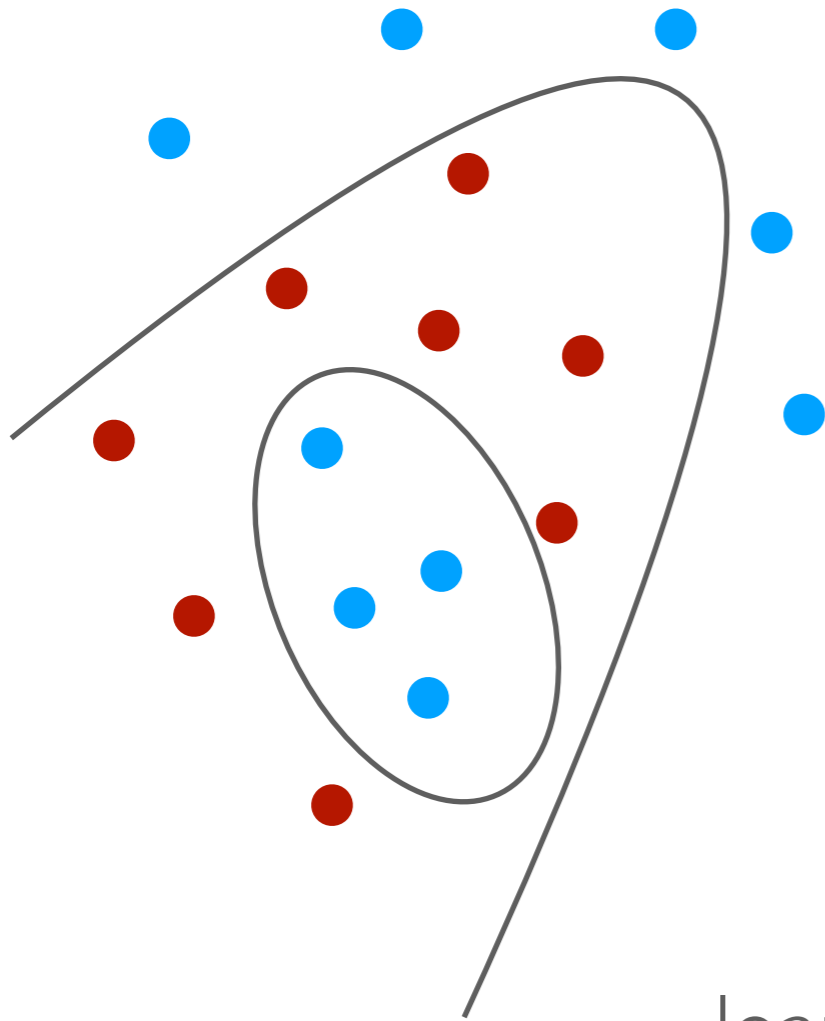
Learning sparse polynomial



$$\sum_{|S| \geq n-100} a_S \prod_{i \in S} x_i \geq 0$$

learn the coefficients a

Learning more complicated function



$$\sum_i a_i \cdot f_i(x) \geq 0$$

learn the coefficients a

Sign rank

$$f : X \times Y \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$

Definition.

$$\text{rk}_{\pm}(f) = \min\{\text{rk}M : M(x, y) \cdot (-1)^{f(x,y)} > 0 \\ \text{for all } (x, y) \in X \times Y\} .$$

Sign rank

$$f : X \times Y \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$

Definition.

$$\text{rk}_{\pm}(f) = \min\{\text{rk}M : M(x, y) \cdot (-1)^{f(x,y)} > 0 \\ \text{for all } (x, y) \in X \times Y\} .$$

Fact: $1 \leq \text{rk}_{\pm}(f) \leq 2^n .$

Sign rank

Example:

$$M_4 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad M'_4 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 4 & 8 \\ 2 & 4 & 8 & 16 \\ 4 & 8 & 16 & 32 \\ 8 & 16 & 32 & 64 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \end{pmatrix}$$

Sign rank

Example:

$$M_4 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad M'_4 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 4 & 8 \\ 2 & 4 & 8 & 16 \\ 4 & 8 & 16 & 32 \\ 8 & 16 & 32 & 64 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\text{rk}(M'_4) = 2,$$

Sign rank

Example:

$$M_4 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$M'_4 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 4 & 8 \\ 2 & 4 & 8 & 16 \\ 4 & 8 & 16 & 32 \\ 8 & 16 & 32 & 64 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\text{rk}(M_4) = 4,$$

$$\text{rk}(M'_4) = 2,$$

Sign rank

Example:

$$M_4 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$M'_4 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 4 & 8 \\ 2 & 4 & 8 & 16 \\ 4 & 8 & 16 & 32 \\ 8 & 16 & 32 & 64 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$M'_4 = \begin{pmatrix} - & - & - & - \\ - & - & - & + \\ - & - & + & + \\ - & + & + & + \end{pmatrix}$$

Sign rank

More generally,

$$M_k = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & \cdots & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & \cdots & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & & \vdots & \vdots \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \text{rk}(M_k) = k.$$

$$M'_k = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ \vdots \\ 2^{k-1} \end{pmatrix} \times (1 \ 2 \ \cdots \ 2^{k-1}) - (2^{k-1} + 1)J, \quad \text{rk}(M'_k) \leq 2.$$

Classic problem 1

Problem.

Is there $f \in AC^0$ such that $\deg_{\pm}(f) = \Omega(n)$?

Classic problem 1

Problem.

Is there $f \in \text{AC}^0$ such that $\deg_{\pm}(f) = \Omega(n)$?

reference	threshold degree	depth
Minsky-Papert 69	$\Omega(n^{1/3})$	2
O'Donnell-Servedio 03	$\Omega(n^{1/3} \log^{\frac{2(k-2)}{3}} n)$	k
Sherstov 14	$\Omega(n^{\frac{k-1}{2k-1}})$	k
Sherstov 15	$\Omega(\sqrt{n})$	4
Bun-Thaler 18	$\tilde{\Omega}(\sqrt{n})$	3

Classic problem 1

Problem.

Is there $f \in \text{AC}^0$ such that $\deg_{\pm}(f) = \Omega(n)$?

reference	threshold degree	depth
Minsky-Papert 69	$\Omega(n^{1/3})$	2
O'Donnell-Servedio 03	$\Omega(n^{1/3} \log^{\frac{2(k-2)}{3}} n)$	k
Sherstov 14	$\Omega(n^{\frac{k-1}{2k-1}})$	k
Sherstov 15	$\Omega(\sqrt{n})$	4
Bun-Thaler 18	$\tilde{\Omega}(\sqrt{n})$	3
This work	$\tilde{\Omega}(n^{1-\frac{2}{k+1}})$	k

Classic problem 1

Problem.

Is there $f \in \text{AC}^0$ such that $\text{deg}_{\pm}(f) = \Omega(n)$?

reference	threshold degree	depth
Minsky-Papert 69	$\Omega(n^{1/3})$	2
O'Donnell-Servedio 03	$\Omega(n^{1/3} \log^{\frac{2(k-2)}{3}} n)$	k
Sherstov 14	$\Omega(n^{\frac{k-1}{2k-1}})$	k
Sherstov 15	$\Omega(\sqrt{n})$	4
Bun-Thaler 18	$\tilde{\Omega}(\sqrt{n})$	3
This work	$\tilde{\Omega}(n^{1-\frac{2}{k+1}})$	k

Optimal

Classic problem II

Problem.

Is there $F \in AC^0$ such that $\text{rk}_{\pm}(F) = \exp(\Omega(n))$?

Classic problem II

Problem.

Is there $F \in \text{AC}^0$ such that $\text{rk}_{\pm}(F) = \exp(\Omega(n))$?

reference	sign rank	depth
Razborov-Sherstov 08	$\exp(\Omega(n^{1/3}))$	3
Bun-Thaler 16	$\exp(\Omega(n^{2/5}))$	3
Bun-Thaler 18	$\exp(\tilde{\Omega}(\sqrt{n}))$	7

Classic problem II

Problem.

Is there $F \in \text{AC}^0$ such that $\text{rk}_{\pm}(F) = \exp(\Omega(n))$?

reference	sign rank	depth
Razborov-Sherstov 08	$\exp(\Omega(n^{1/3}))$	3
Bun-Thaler 16	$\exp(\Omega(n^{2/5}))$	3
Bun-Thaler 18	$\exp(\tilde{\Omega}(\sqrt{n}))$	7
This work	$\exp(\tilde{\Omega}(n^{1-\frac{1}{k+1}}))$	3k
This work	$\exp(\tilde{\Omega}(n^{1-\frac{1}{k+1.5}}))$	3k+1

Classic problem 11

Problem.

Is there $F \in \text{AC}^0$ such that $\text{rk}_{\pm}(F) = \exp(\Omega(n))$?

reference	sign rank	depth
Razborov-Sherstov 08	$\exp(\Omega(n^{1/3}))$	3
Bun-Thaler 16	$\exp(\Omega(n^{2/5}))$	3
Bun-Thaler 18	$\exp(\tilde{\Omega}(\sqrt{n}))$	7
This work	$\exp(\tilde{\Omega}(n^{1-\frac{1}{k+1}}))$	3k
This work	$\exp(\tilde{\Omega}(n^{1-\frac{1}{k+1.5}}))$	3k+1

Optimal

Our result

I. AC^0 has the maximal complexity!

Our result

1. AC^0 has the maximal complexity!
2. Rule out learning AC^0 via all known approaches.

Our result

1. AC^0 has the maximal complexity!
2. Rule out learning AC^0 via all known approaches.
3. Strongest communication lower bound in AC^0 .

Our result

1. AC^0 has the maximal complexity!
2. Rule out learning AC^0 via all known approaches.
3. Strongest communication lower bound in AC^0 .

[Paturi, Simon 86]

$$UPP(F) = \log_2(\text{rk}_{\pm}(F)) \pm 1.$$

Our result

1. AC^0 has the maximal complexity!
2. Rule out learning AC^0 via all known approaches.
3. Strongest communication lower bound in AC^0 .

[Paturi, Simon 86]

$$UPP(F) = \log_2(\text{rk}_{\pm}(F)) \pm 1.$$

Corollary.

$$UPP(AC^0) = \Omega(n^{0.99}).$$

Part I.
Threshold Degree

Part I.
Threshold Degree

- a. Hardness amplification
- b. Compressing inputs
- c. Transferring mass

Part I.
Threshold Degree

- a. Hardness amplification**
- b. Compressing inputs
- c. Transferring mass

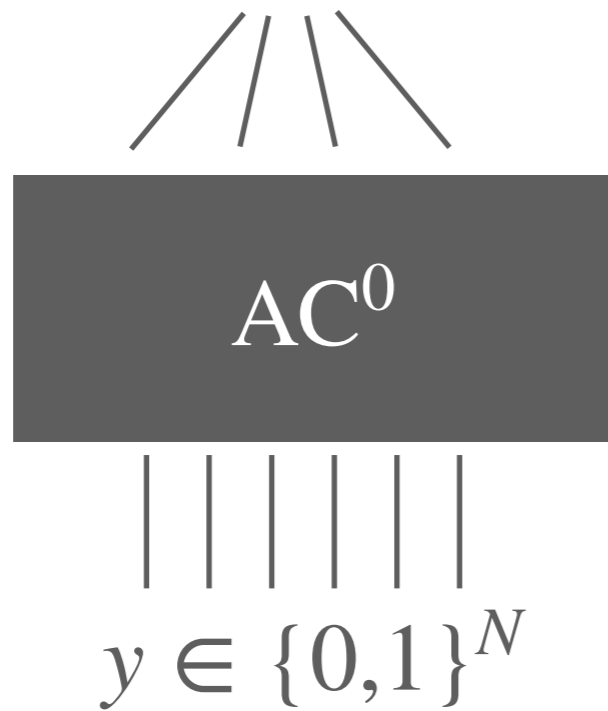
Hardness amplification

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$, $\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$

Hardness amplification

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$, $\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$

Then $F = f$ $\deg_{\pm}(F) = N^{1-\frac{\epsilon}{\epsilon+1}}$



Hardness amplification

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$,

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$$

Then $F = f$



$$y \in \{0,1\}^N$$

$$\deg_{\pm}(F) = N^{1-\frac{\epsilon}{\epsilon+1}}$$

Theorem (Sherstov)

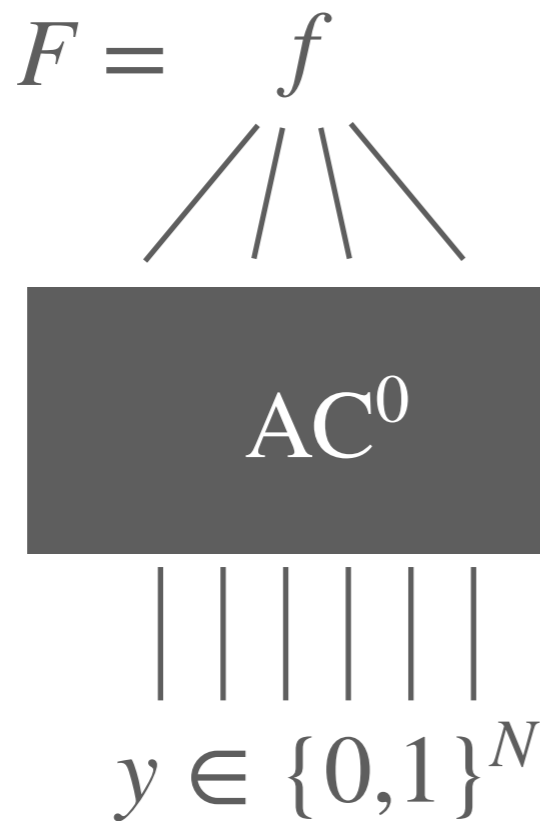
$$\deg_{\pm}(f \circ g) \geq \deg_{\pm}(f)\deg_{\pm}(g).$$

Hardness amplification

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$,

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$$

Then



$$\deg_{\pm}(F) = N^{1-\frac{\epsilon}{\epsilon+1}}$$

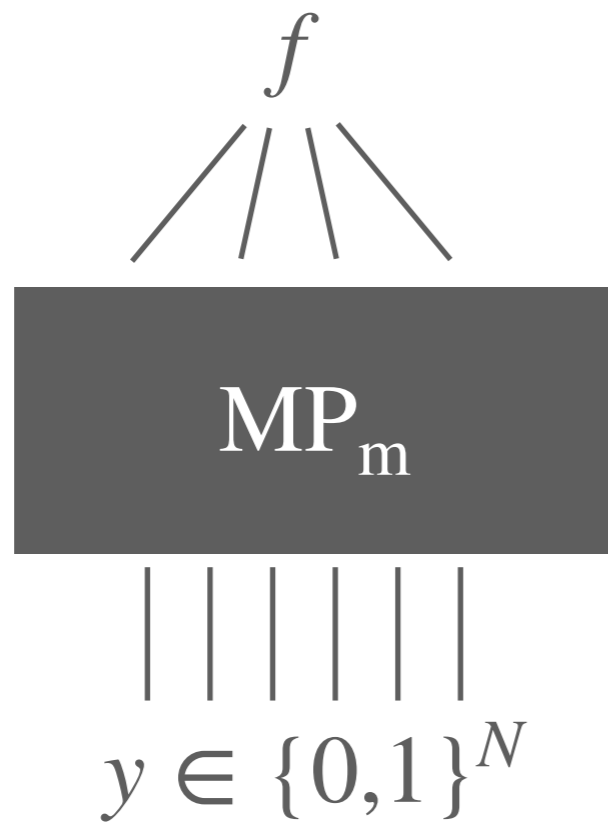
Theorem (Sherstov)

$$\deg_{\pm}(f \circ g) \geq \deg_{\pm}(f)\deg_{\pm}(g).$$

$$f \circ g(x) := f(g(x_1), g(x_2), \dots, g(x_n))$$

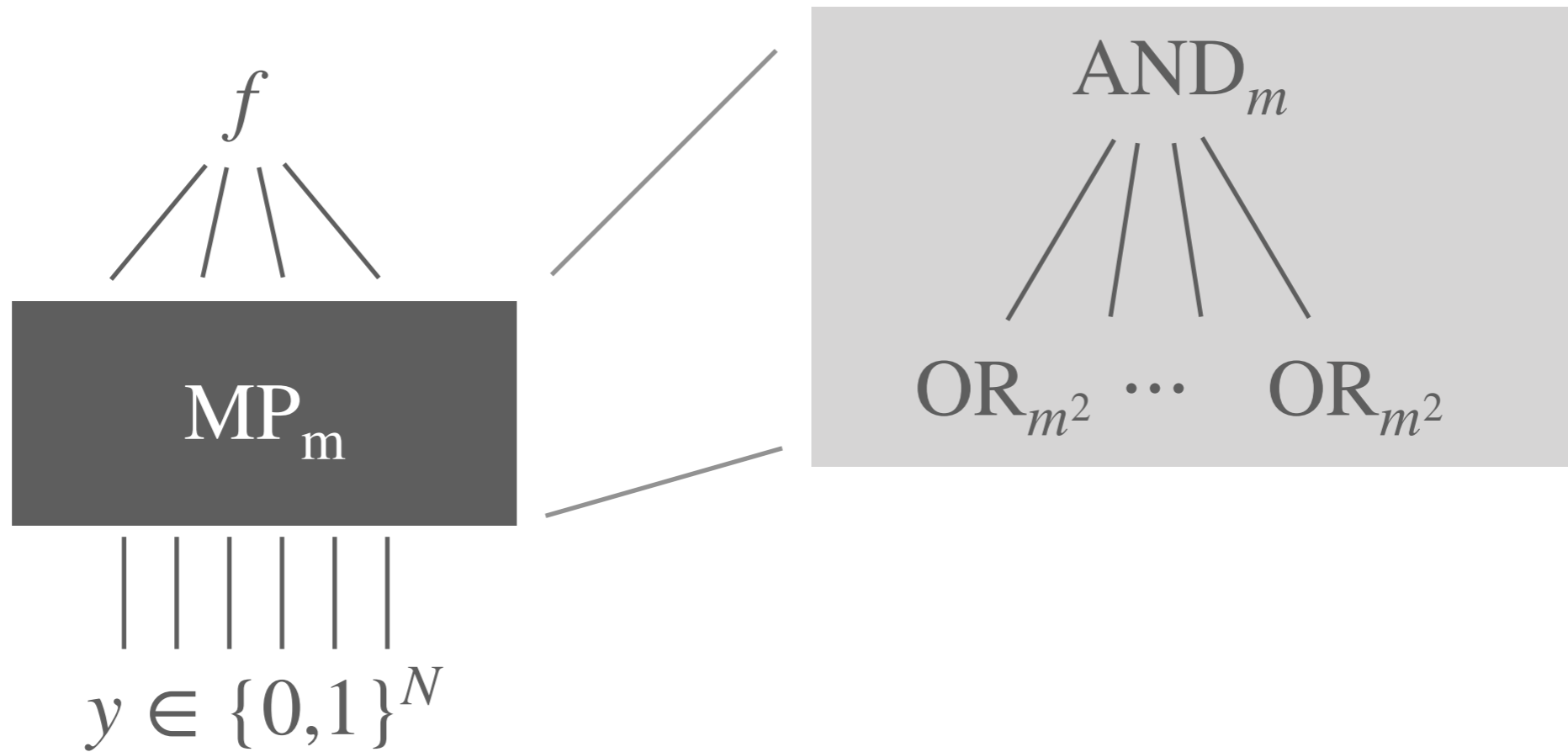
What to compose?

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$, $\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$



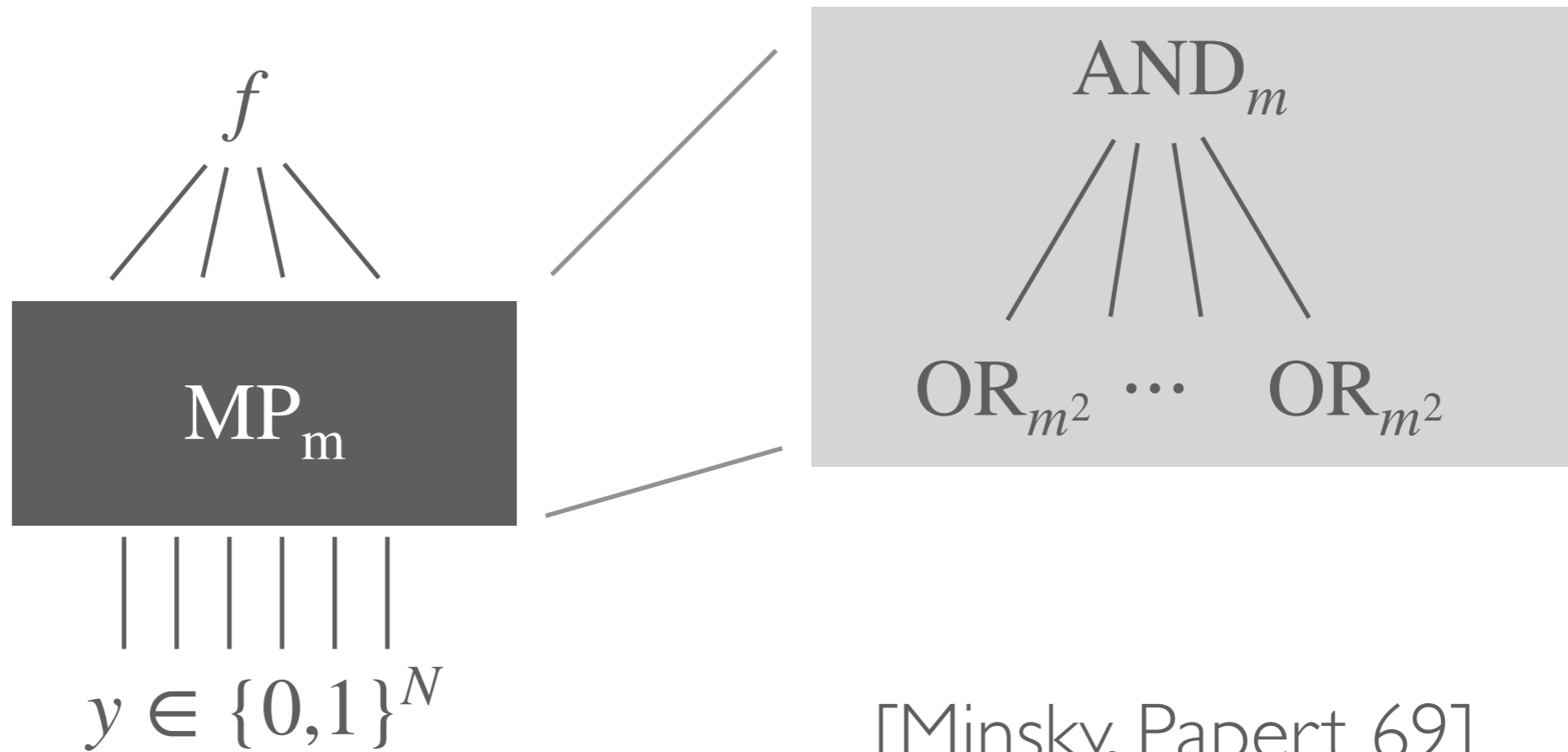
What to compose?

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$, $\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$



What to compose?

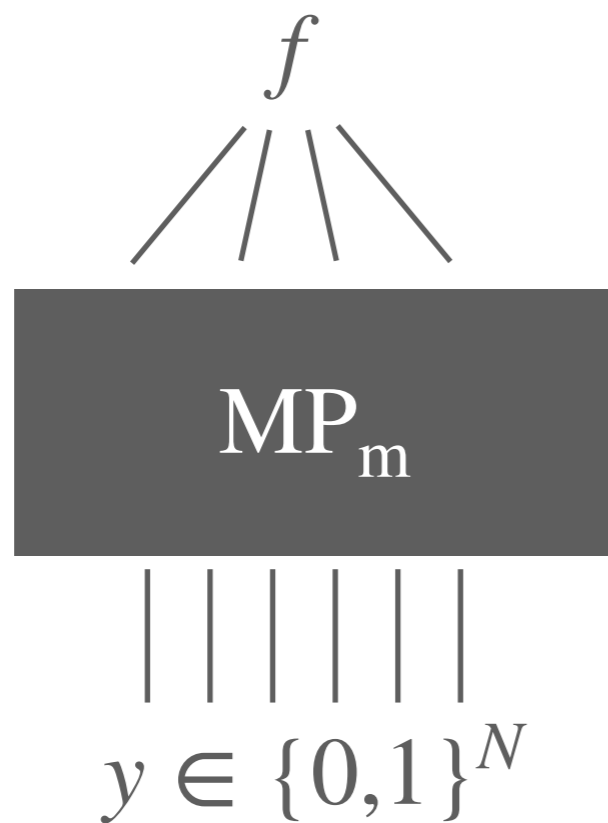
Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$, $\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$



[Minsky, Papert 69]
 $\deg_{\pm}(MP_m) \geq m$.

Threshold degree of compose function

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$, $\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$

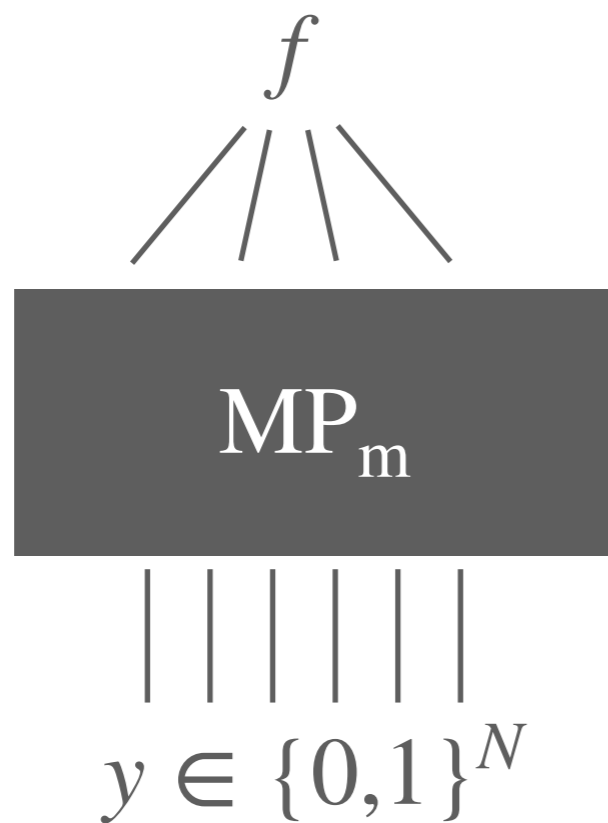


$$\deg_{\pm}(f \circ \text{MP}_m) \geq n^{1-\epsilon} \cdot m$$

Threshold degree of compose function

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$,

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$$



$$\deg_{\pm}(f \circ \text{MP}_m) \geq n^{1-\epsilon} \cdot m$$

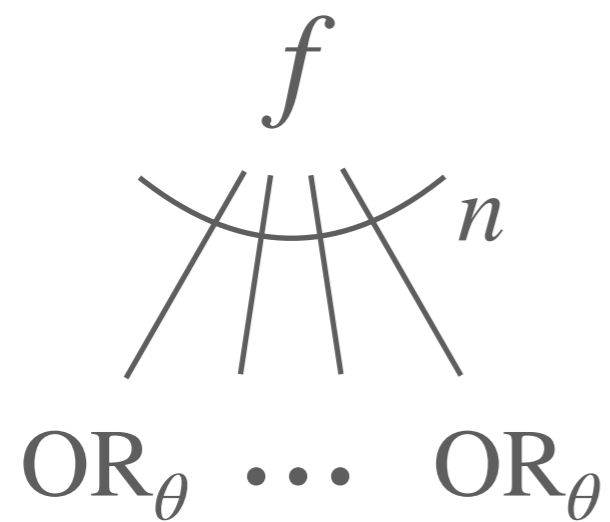
But...

$$N = n \cdot m^3$$

Part I.
Threshold Degree

- a. Hardness amplification
- b. Compressing inputs**
- c. Transferring mass

Compression: input transformation

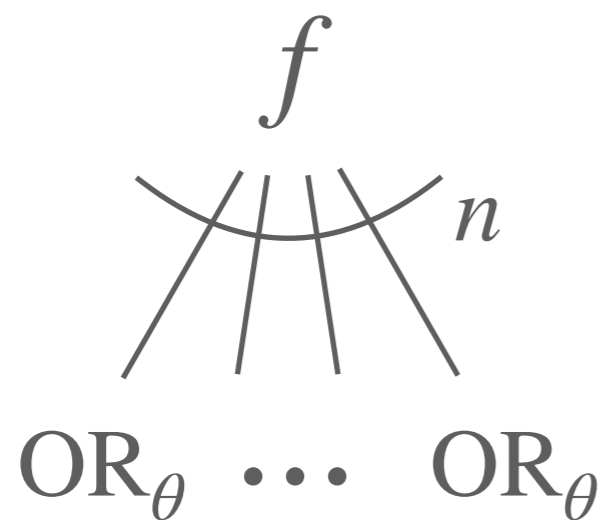


θ

0	1	1	0	0	1	1
0	0	1	1	0	1	0
1	0	1	0	1	0	1
0	1	0	1	1	0	0
0	0	1	0	0	1	1
1	1	0	0	0	1	0
1	1	0	1	1	0	0
0	0	1	1	0	0	1

n

Compression: input transformation



θ

0	1	1	0	0	1	1
0	0	1	1	0	1	0
1	0	1	0	1	0	1
0	1	0	1	1	0	0
0	0	1	0	0	1	1
1	1	0	0	0	1	0
1	1	0	1	1	0	0
0	0	1	1	0	0	1

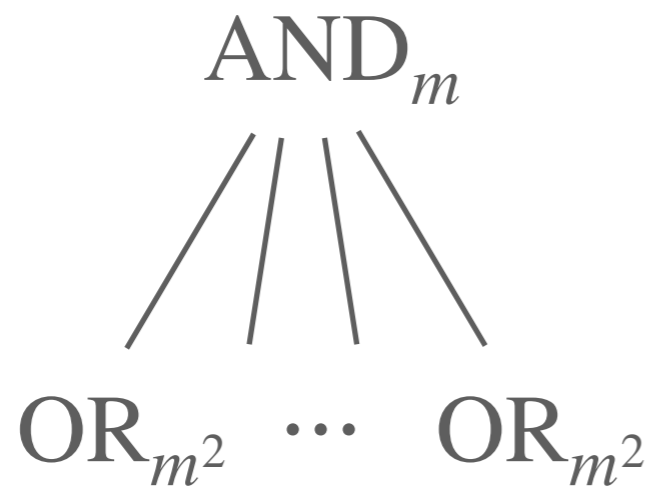
n

Restrict

$\{0,1\}^{\theta \times n} \mid \leq \theta$

0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	0	0	0
0	0	1	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	1	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	1	0
0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Block composition followed by compression



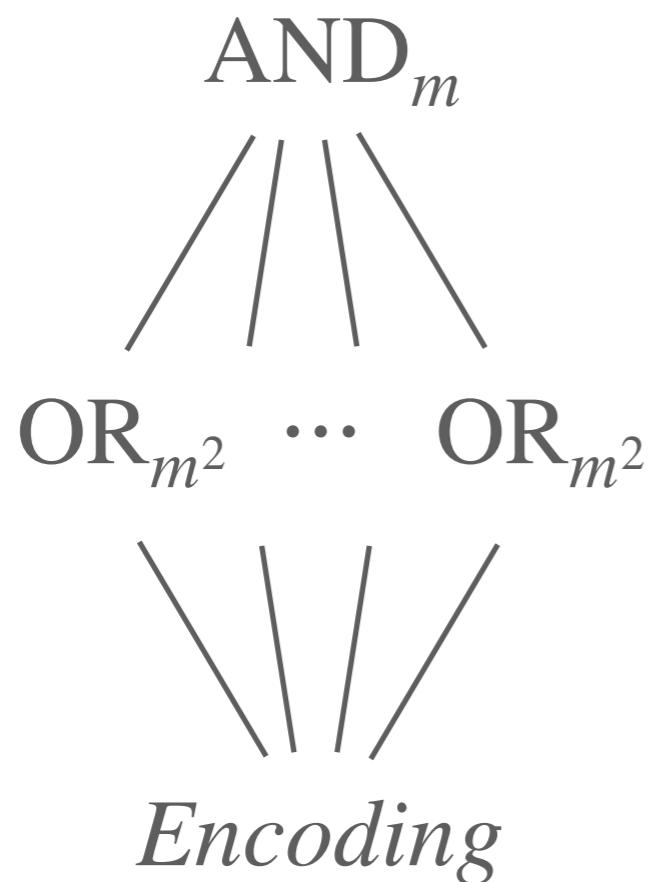
[Minsky-Papert 69]

$$\deg_{\pm}(\text{MP}_m) = \Omega(m).$$

[Bun-Thaler 18]

$$\deg_{\pm}(\text{MP}_m |_{\leq m^2}) = \tilde{\Omega}(m).$$

Block composition followed by compression



[Minsky-Papert 69]

$$\deg_{\pm}(\text{MP}_m) = \Omega(m).$$

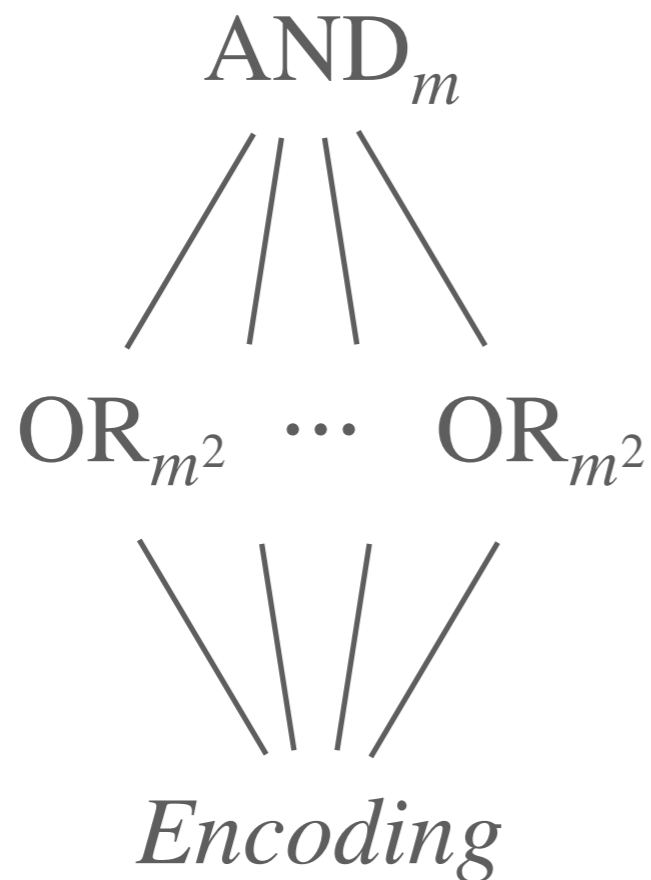
[Bun-Thaler 18]

$$\deg_{\pm}(\text{MP}_m |_{\leq m^2}) = \tilde{\Omega}(m).$$

After compression

$$\deg_{\pm}(F) = \tilde{\Omega}(m).$$

Block composition followed by compression



[Minsky-Papert 69]

$$\deg_{\pm}(\text{MP}_m) = \Omega(m).$$

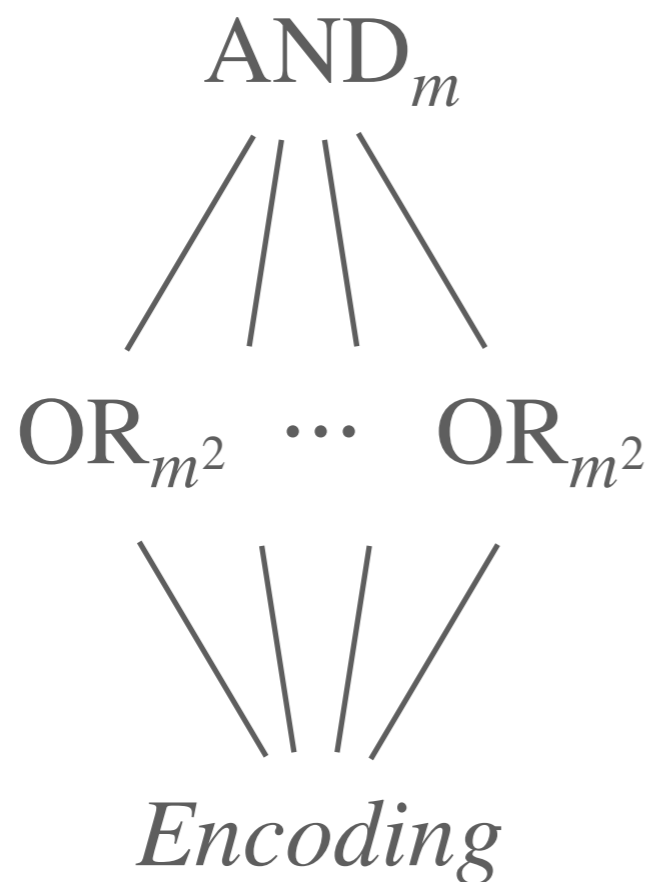
[Bun-Thaler 18]

$$\deg_{\pm}(\text{MP}_m |_{\leq m^2}) = \tilde{\Omega}(m).$$

After compression $\tilde{\Omega}(n^{1/2})$

$$\deg_{\pm}(F) = \tilde{\Omega}(m).$$

Block composition followed by compression



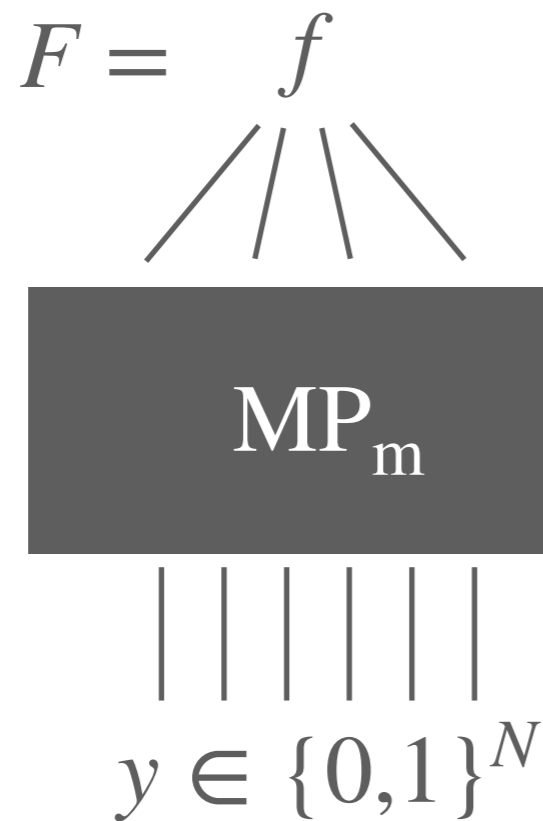
[Minsky-Papert 69] $\Omega(n^{1/3})$
 $\deg_{\pm}(\text{MP}_m) = \Omega(m)$.

[Bun-Thaler 18]
 $\deg_{\pm}(\text{MP}_m |_{\leq m^2}) = \tilde{\Omega}(m)$.

After compression $\tilde{\Omega}(n^{1/2})$
 $\deg_{\pm}(F) = \tilde{\Omega}(m)$.

Threshold degree of compose function

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$, $\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$

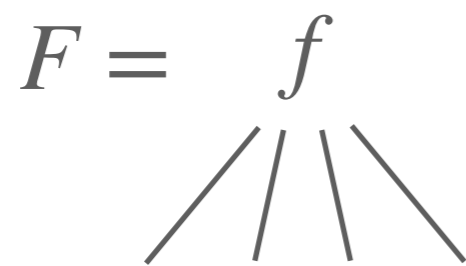


$$\deg_{\pm}(f \circ \text{MP}_m) \geq n^{1-\epsilon} \cdot m$$

Threshold degree of compose function

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$,

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$$

$$F = f$$




$$y \in \{0,1\}^N$$

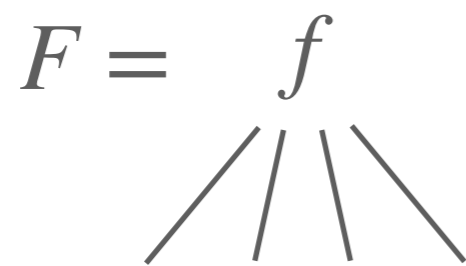
$$\deg_{\pm}(f \circ \text{MP}_m) \geq n^{1-\epsilon} \cdot m$$

~~$(f \circ \text{MP}_m) |_{\leq \theta}$~~

Threshold degree of compose function

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$,

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$$



~~$(f \circ \text{MP}_m) |_{\leq \theta}$~~

$$\deg_{\pm}(f \circ \text{MP}_m) \geq n^{1-\epsilon} \cdot m$$

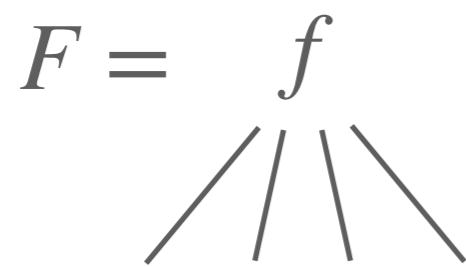
Now,

$$N = \tilde{O}(\theta)$$

Threshold degree of compose function

Given $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$,

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) = n^{1-\epsilon}$$

$$F = f$$


$$\text{MP}_m |_{\leq \theta}$$


$$y \in \{0,1\}^N$$

$$\deg_{\pm}(f \circ \text{MP}_m |_{\leq \theta}) \geq n^{1-\epsilon} \cdot m$$

$$N = \tilde{O}(\theta)$$

“Should this hold?”

Part I.
Threshold Degree

- a. Hardness amplification
- b. Compressing inputs
- c. Transferring mass**

Dual characterization

$$f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) \geq d \iff$$

Exists some “witness” ψ with domain X

Dual characterization

$$f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) \geq d \iff$$

Exists some “witness” ψ with domain X

1. ψ has the same sign as $(-1)^f$
(if polynomial p sign represents f , it sign represents ψ as well.)

Dual characterization

$$f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$

$$\text{deg}_{\pm}(f) \geq d \iff$$

Exists some “witness” ψ with domain X

1. ψ has the same sign as $(-1)^f$
(if polynomial p sign represents f , it
sign represents ψ as well.)

2. ψ has no low degree components
(e.g. $\psi = x_1x_2 \cdots x_d + x_2x_3 \cdots x_{d+1}$)

Dual characterization

$$f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$$

$$\deg_{\pm}(f) \geq d \iff$$

L.P.

Exists some “witness” ψ with domain X

1. ψ has the same sign as $(-1)^f$
(if polynomial p sign represents f , it sign represents ψ as well.)

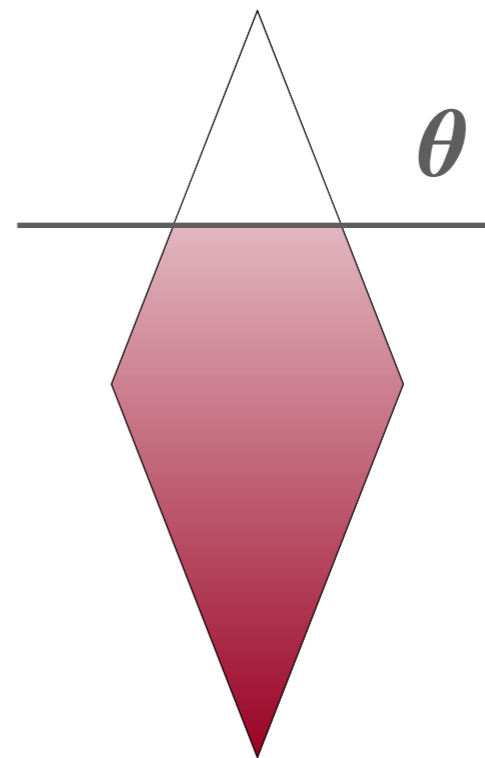
2. ψ has no low degree components
(e.g. $\psi = x_1 x_2 \cdots x_d$)

Transferring mass

$$f \circ \text{MP}_m \mid_{\leq \theta}$$

Transferring mass

$$f \circ \text{MP}_m \mid_{\leq \theta}$$

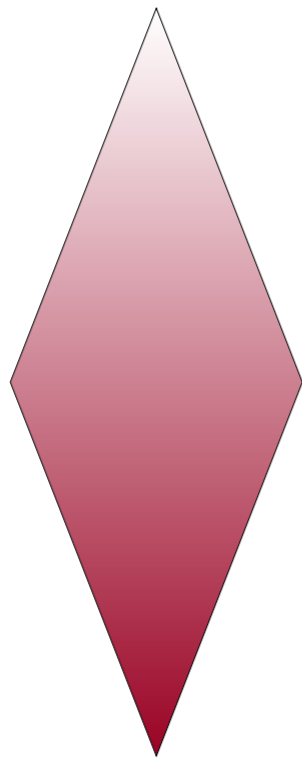


$\tilde{\Lambda}$

$$\{0,1\}^{nm^3} \mid_{\leq \theta}$$

Transferring mass

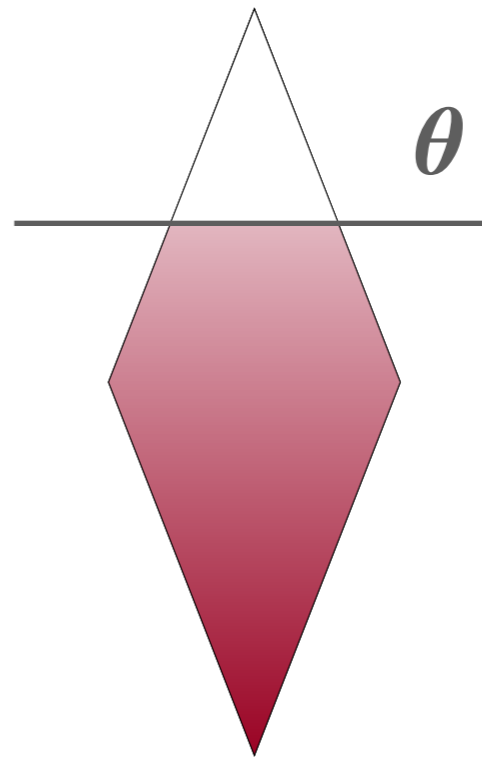
$f \circ \text{MP}$



Λ

$\{0,1\}^{nm^3}$

$f \circ \text{MP}_m \mid_{\leq \theta}$

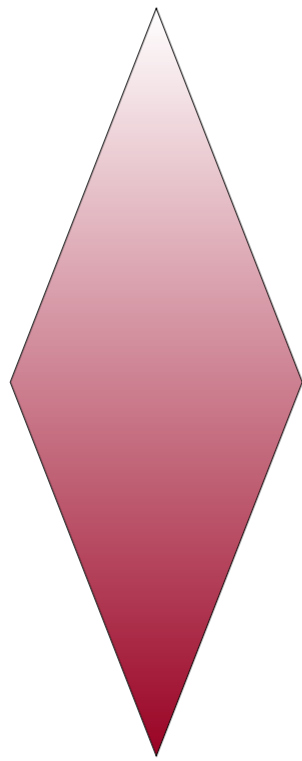


$\tilde{\Lambda}$

$\{0,1\}^{nm^3} \mid_{\leq \theta}$

Transferring mass

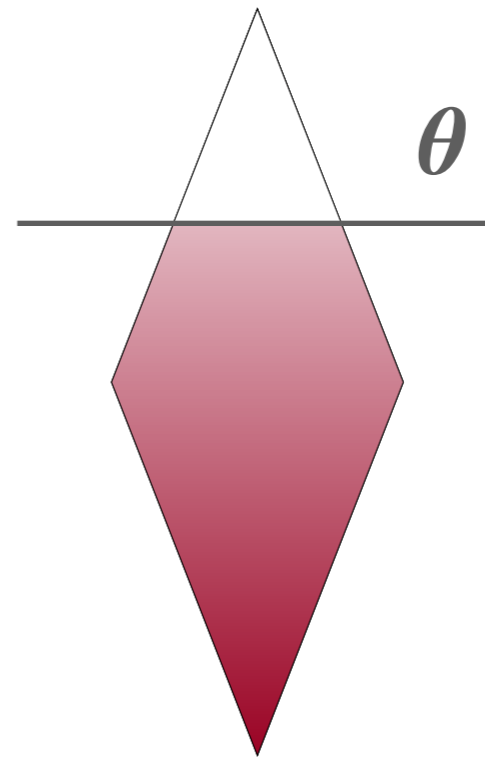
$f \circ \text{MP}$



Λ

$\{0,1\}^{nm^3}$

$f \circ \text{MP}_m \mid_{\leq \theta}$



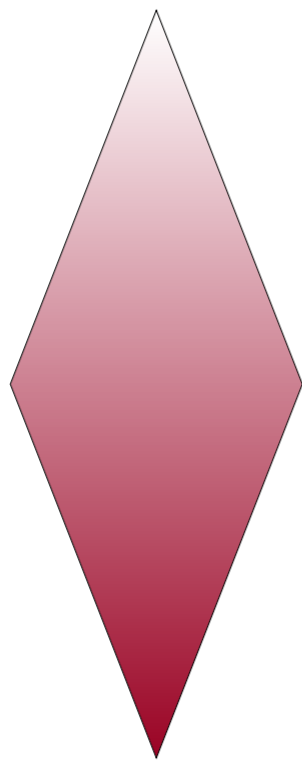
$\tilde{\Lambda}$

$\{0,1\}^{nm^3} \mid_{\leq \theta}$

Transfer mass
→

Transferring mass

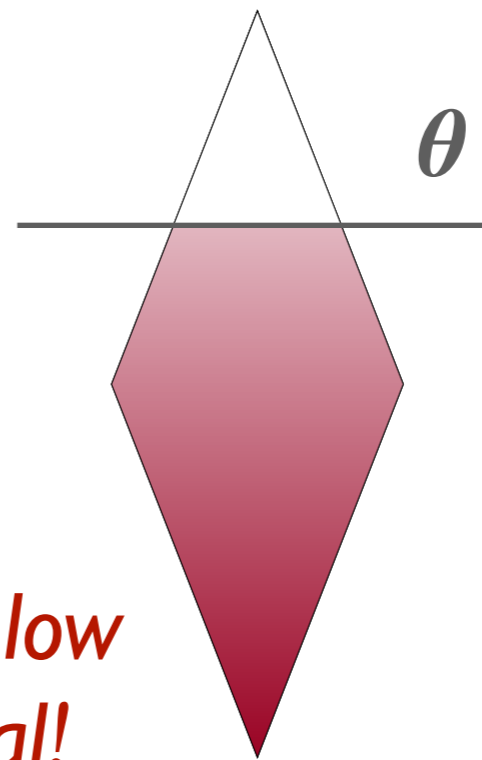
$f \circ \text{MP}$



Λ

$\{0,1\}^{nm^3}$

$f \circ \text{MP}_m \mid_{\leq \theta}$



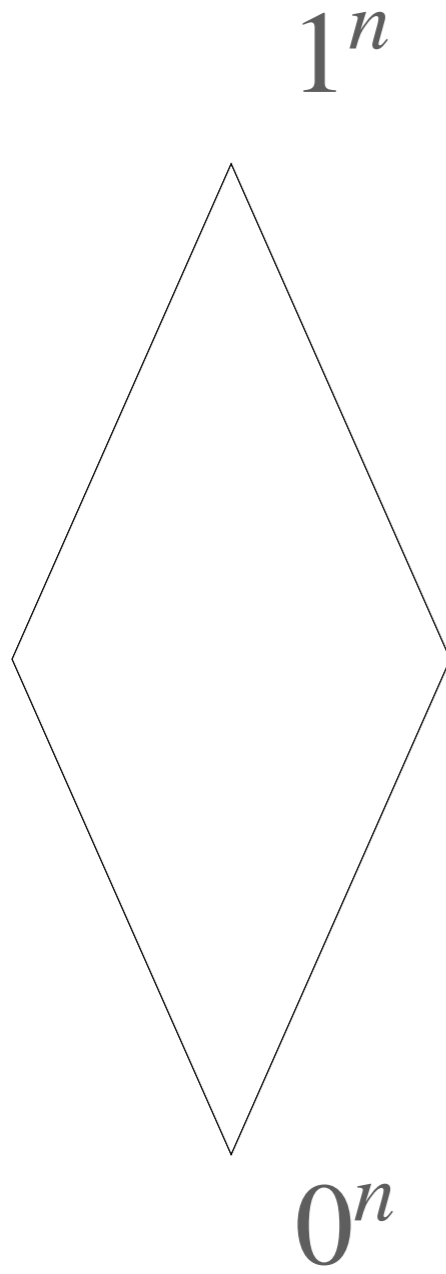
$\tilde{\Lambda}$

$\{0,1\}^{nm^3} \mid_{\leq \theta}$

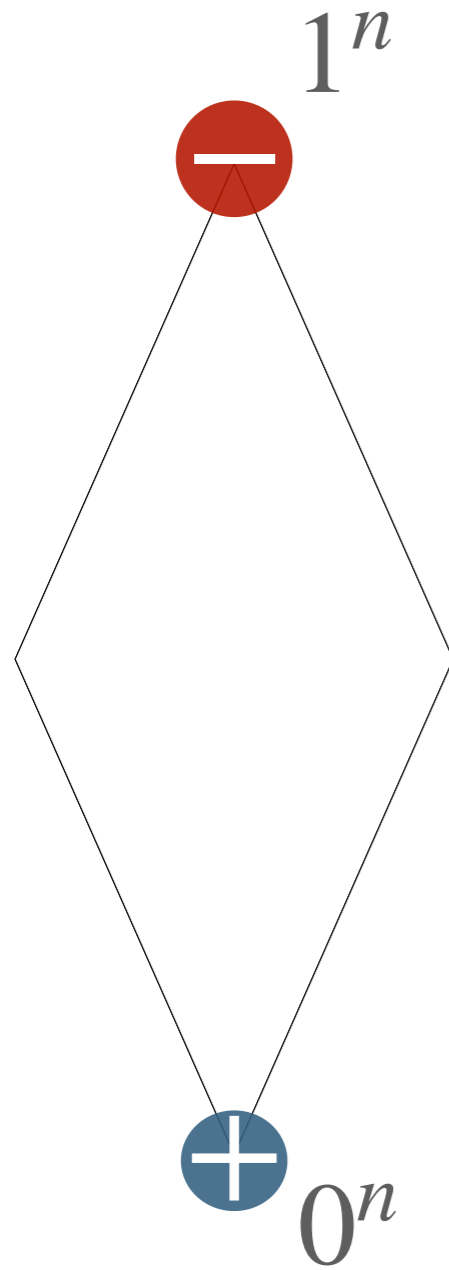
Transfer mass
→

Undetectable by low degree polynomial!

How do we transfer mass: Corrector function

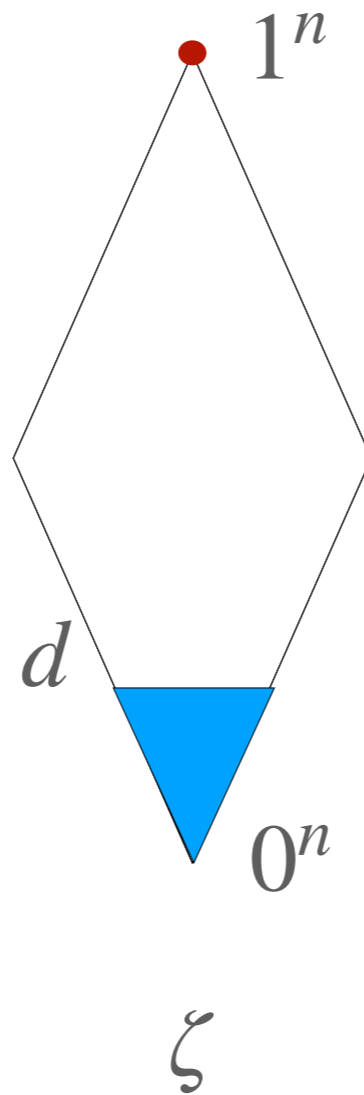
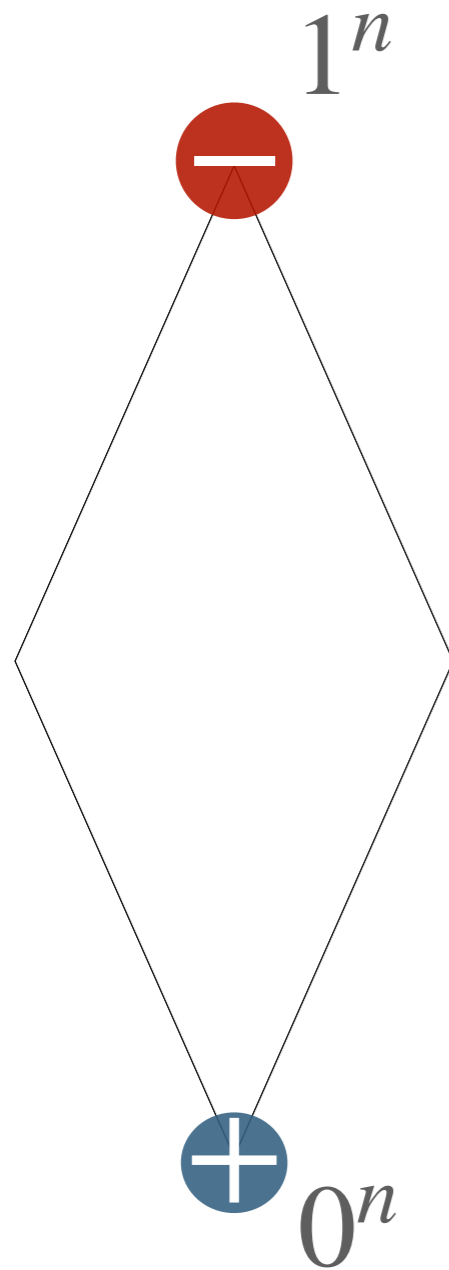


How do we transfer mass: Corrector function



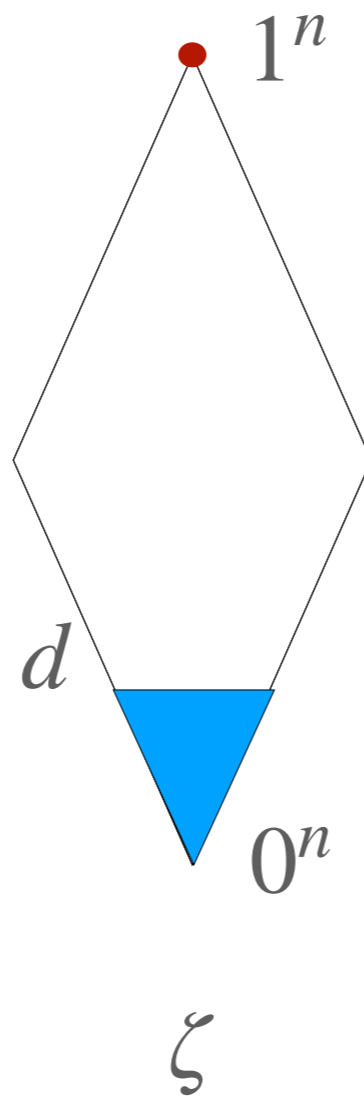
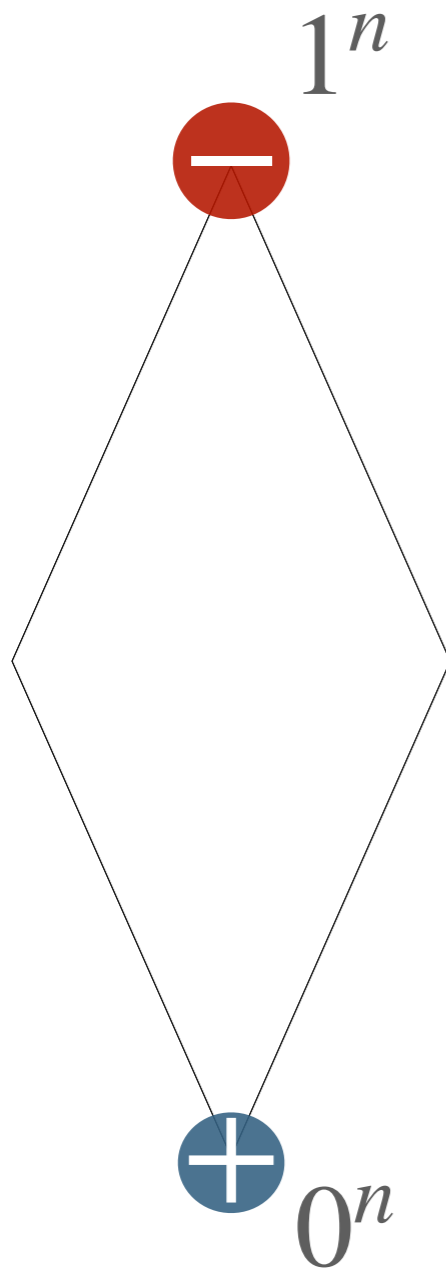
How do we transfer mass: Corrector function

[Razborov, Sherstov 07]



How do we transfer mass: Corrector function

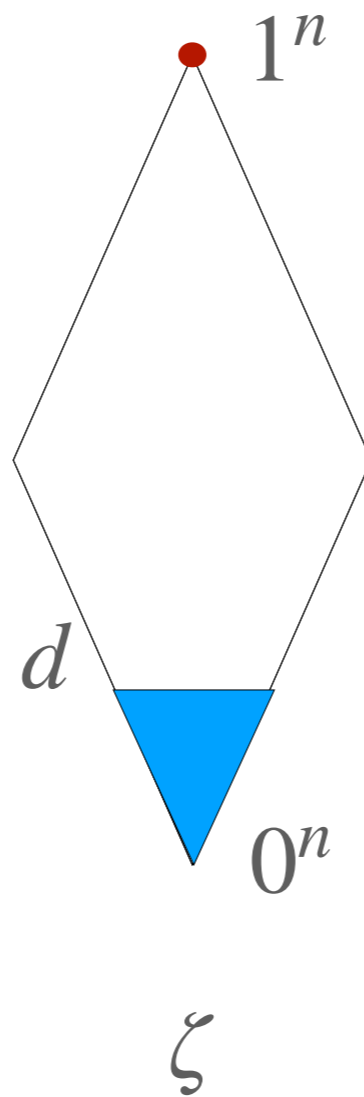
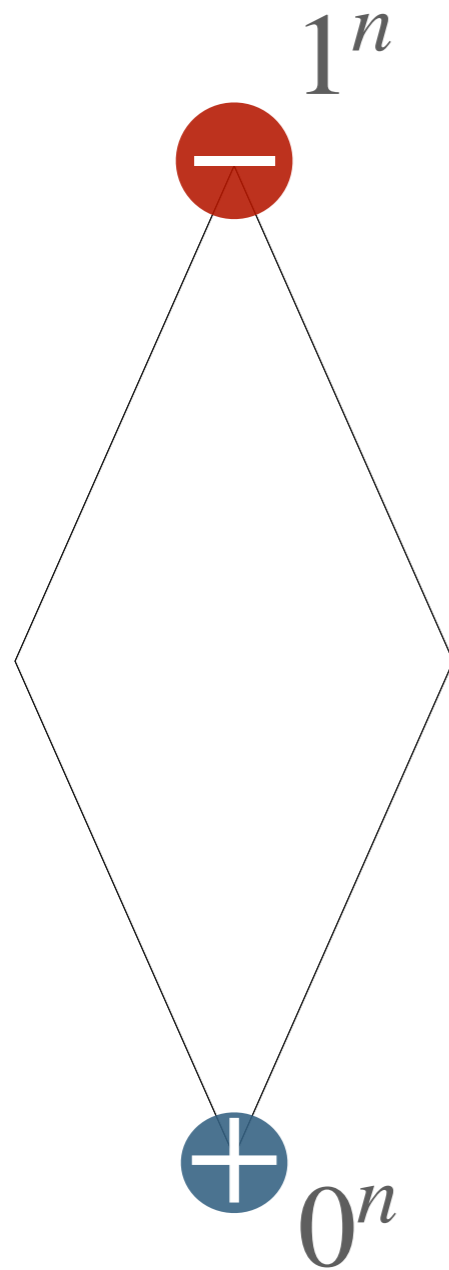
[Razborov, Sherstov 07]



l. vanishes in the middle.

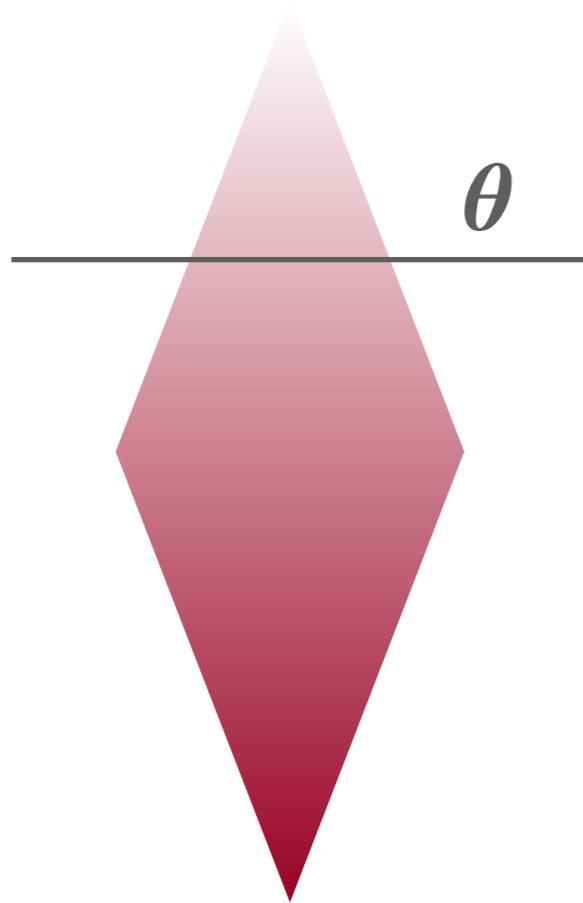
How do we transfer mass: Corrector function

[Razborov, Sherstov 07]



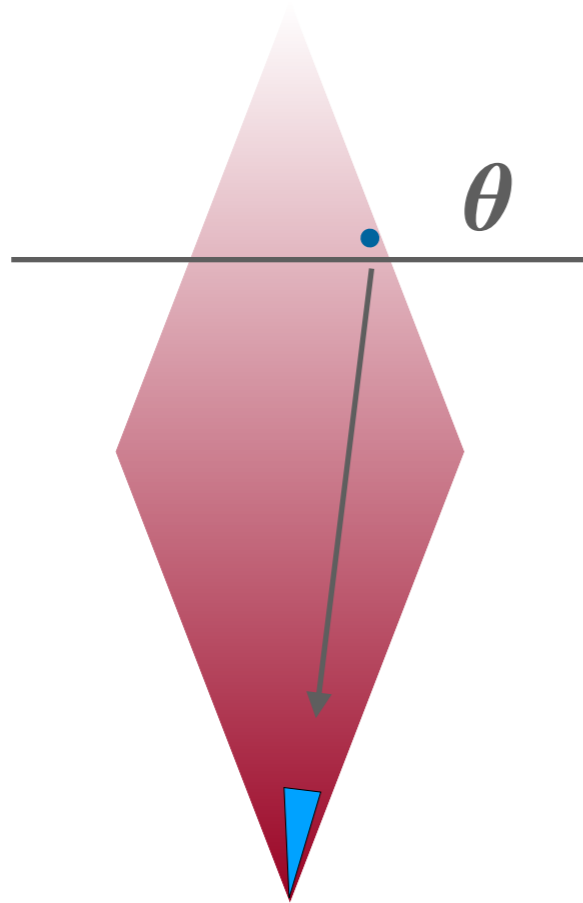
1. vanishes in the middle.
2. has no components of degree $\leq d$.

*Previous work [BT 17]:
Transfer mass to the origin*



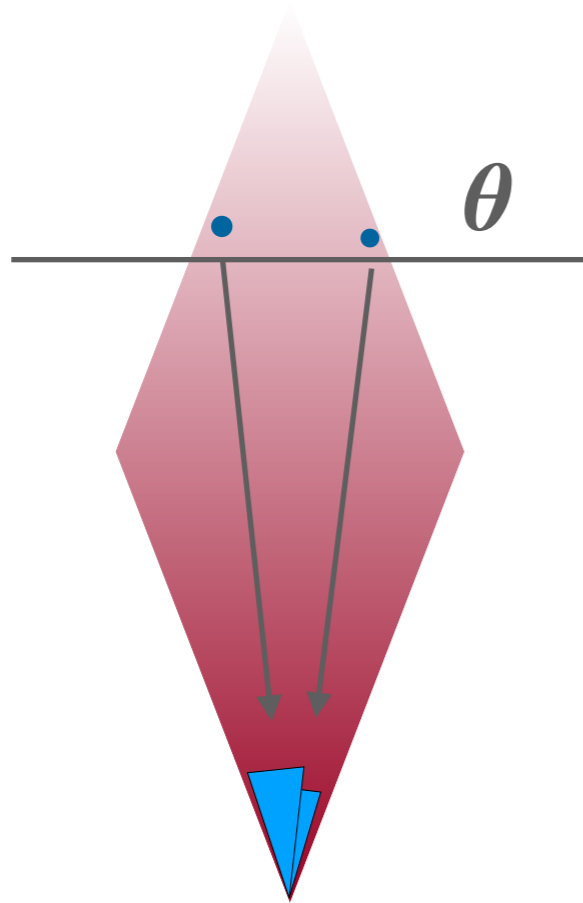
Origin

*Previous work [BT 17]:
Transfer mass to the origin*



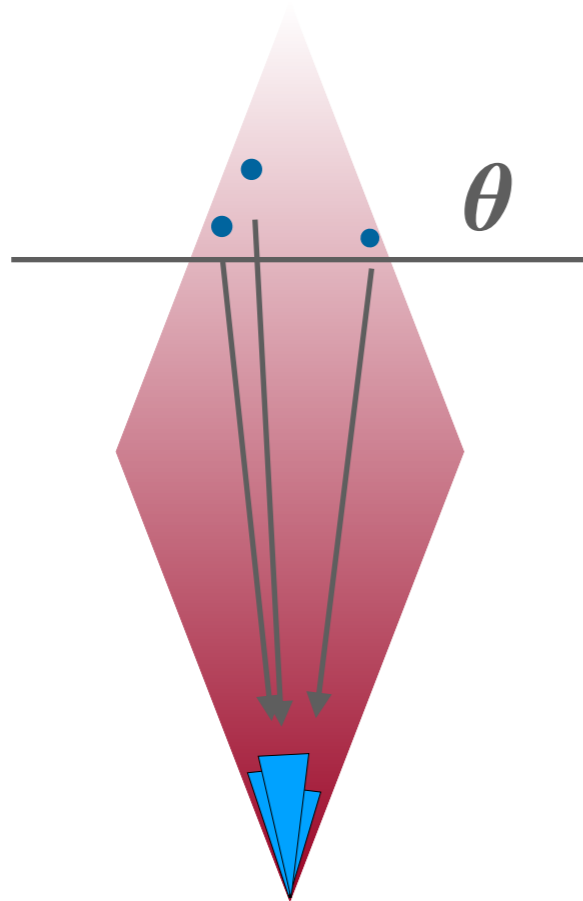
Origin :)

*Previous work [BT 17]:
Transfer mass to the origin*



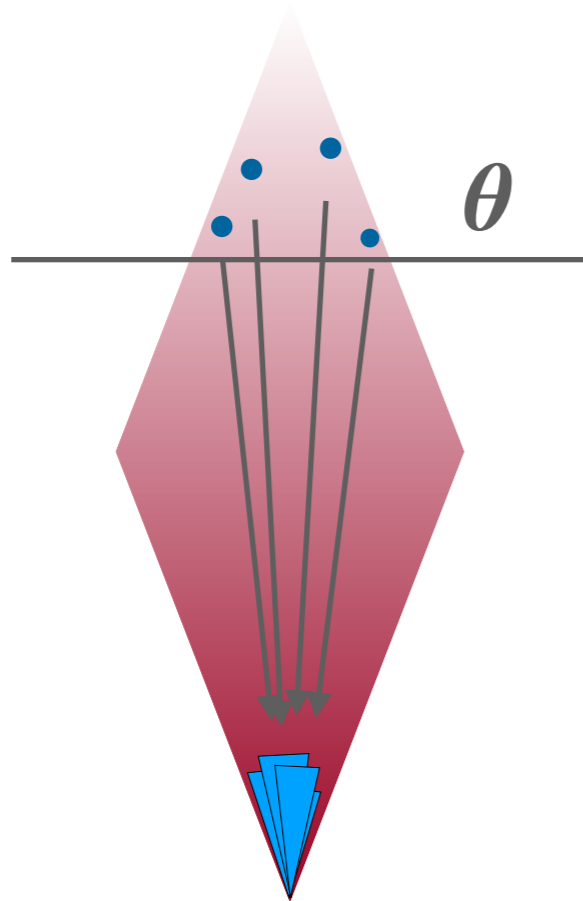
Origin :)

*Previous work [BT 17]:
Transfer mass to the origin*



Origin :|

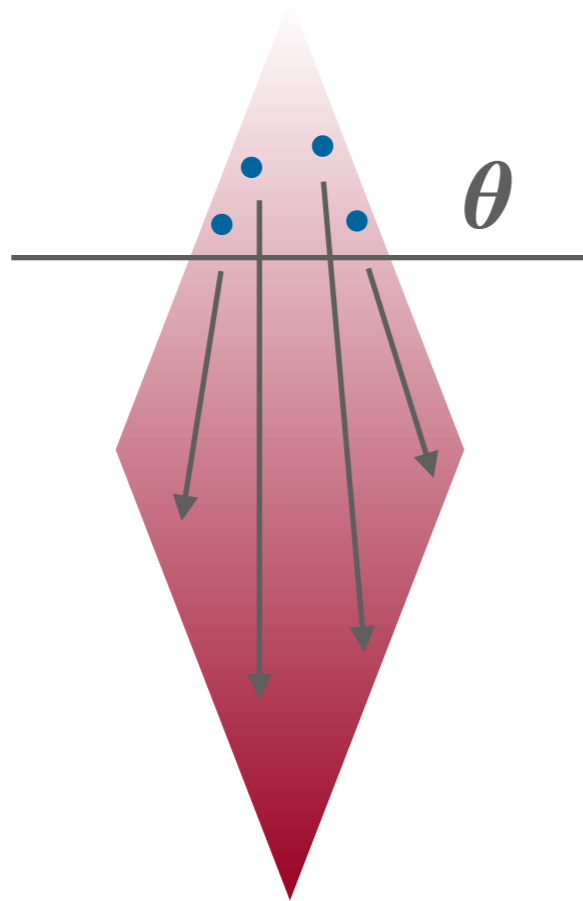
*Previous work [BT 17]:
Transfer mass to the origin*



Overwhelms the origin!

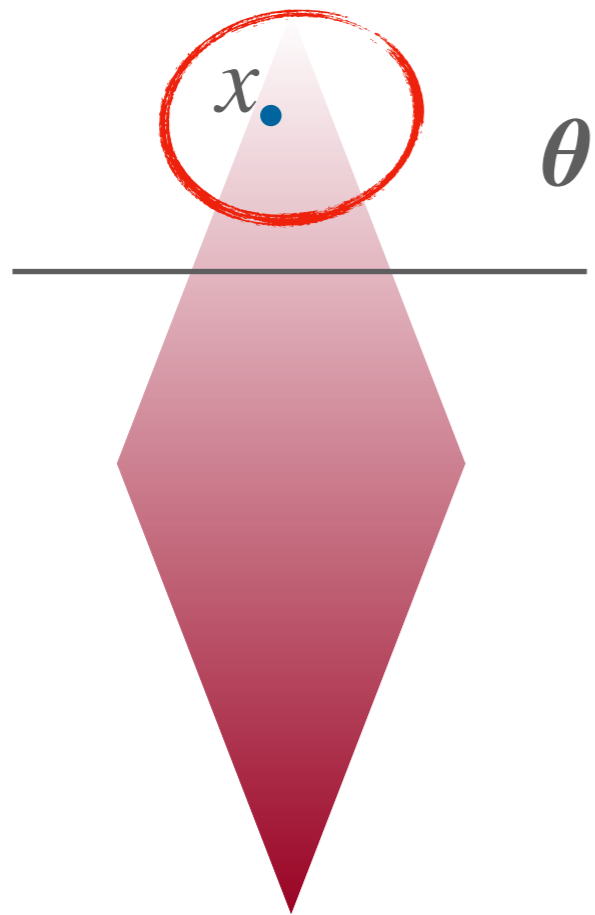
Origin : (

The idea

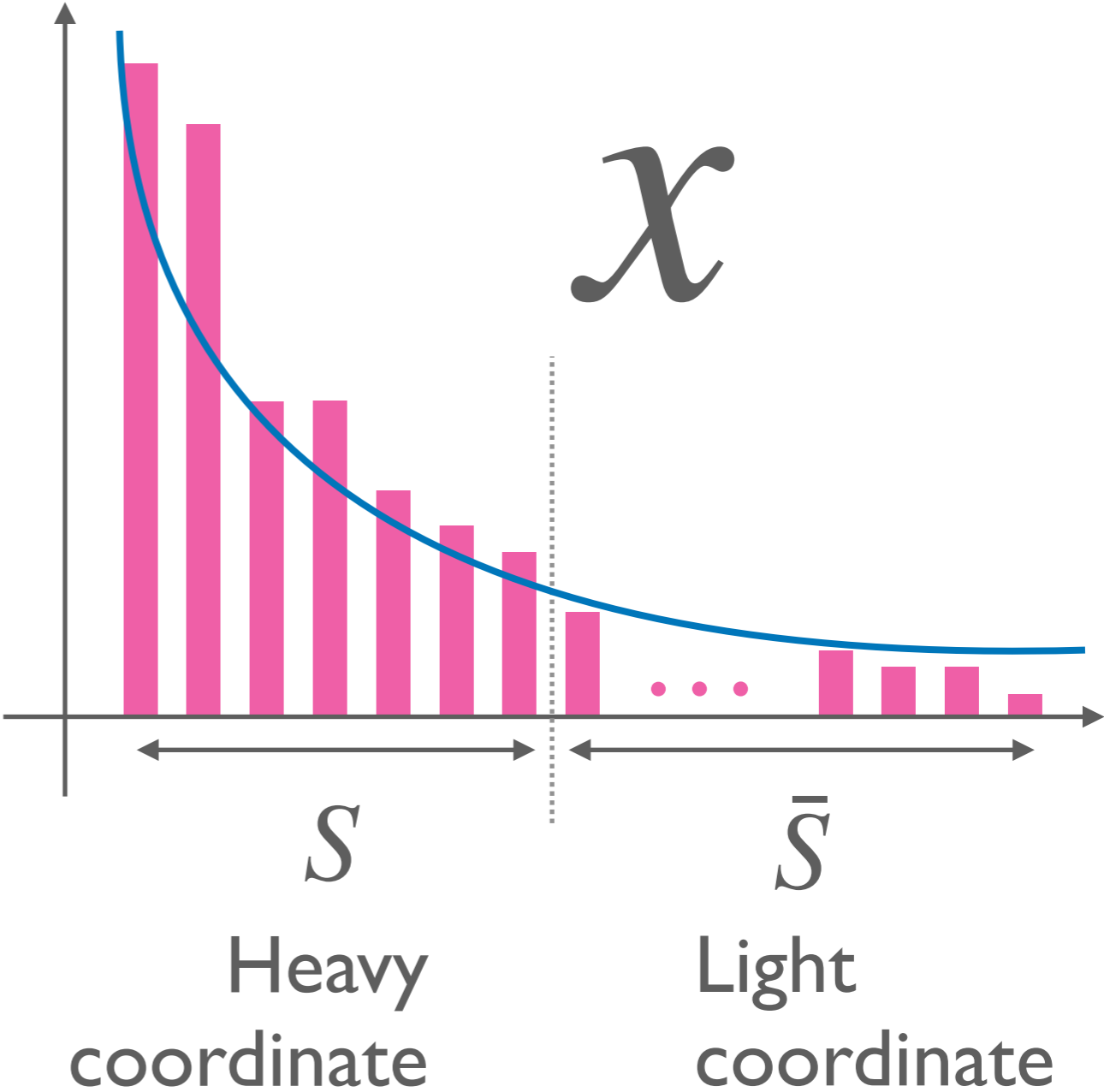
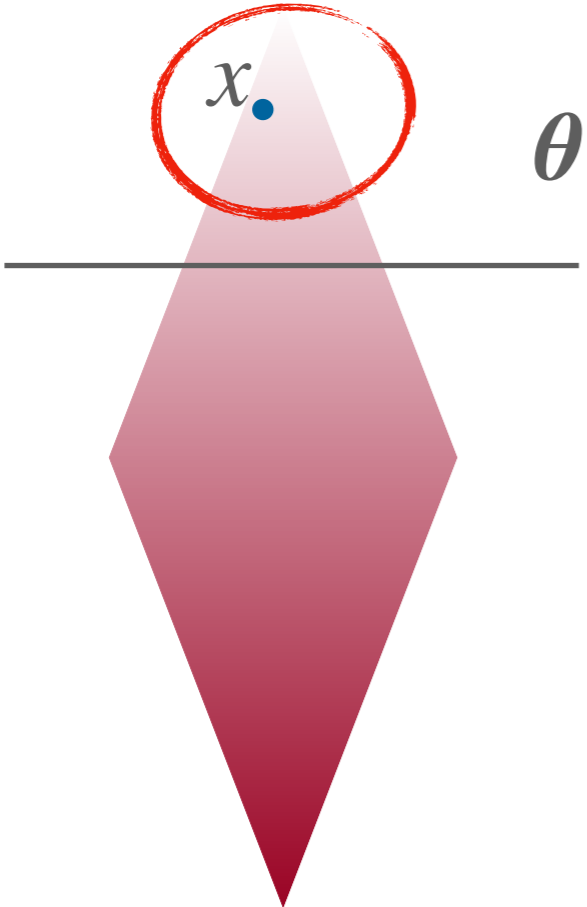


Spread the mass to different points

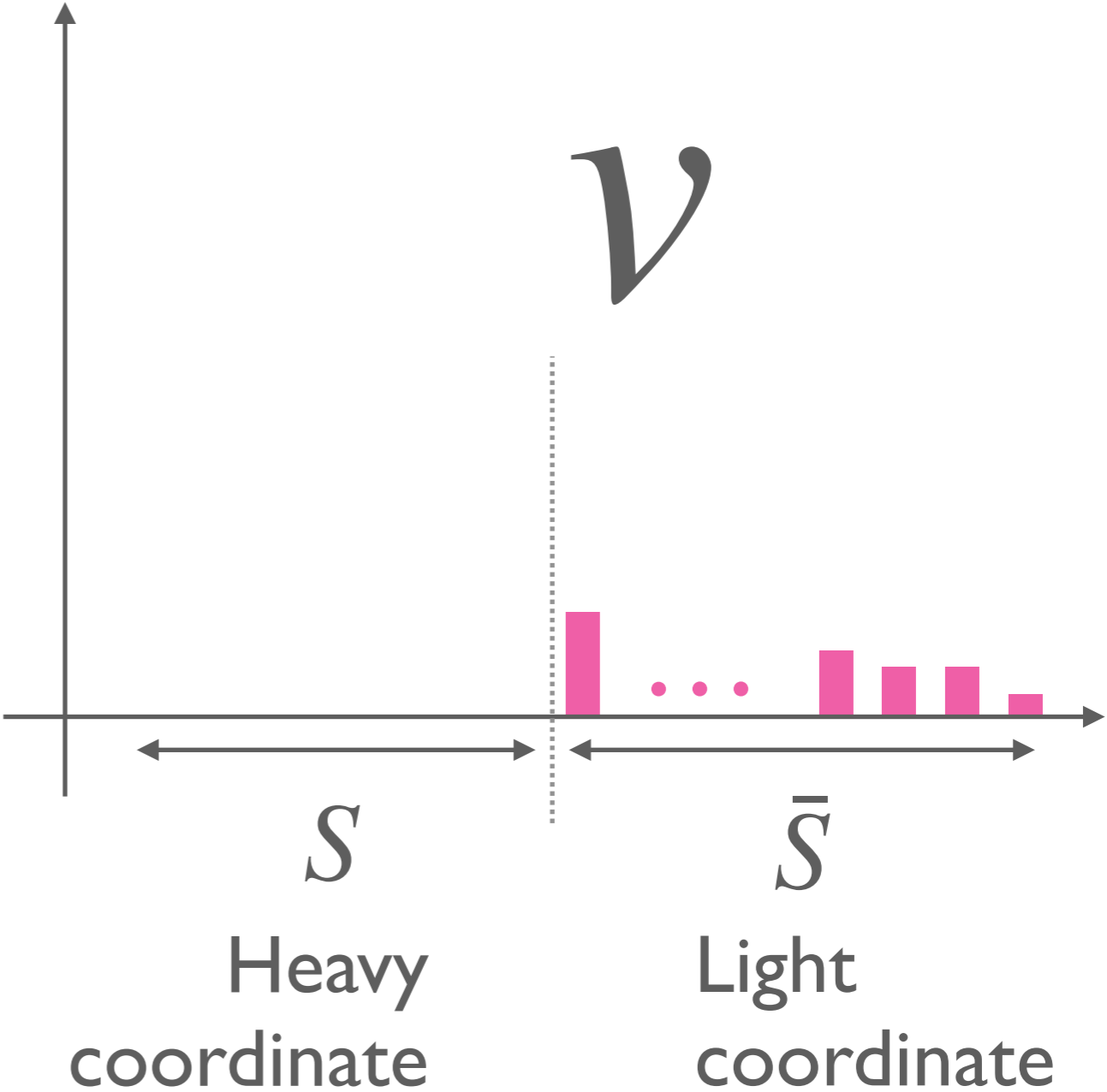
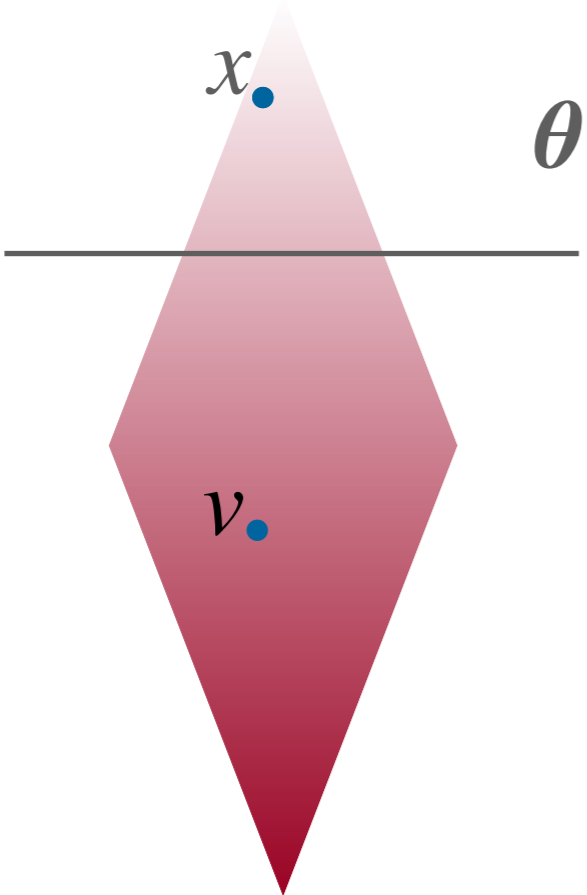
The idea



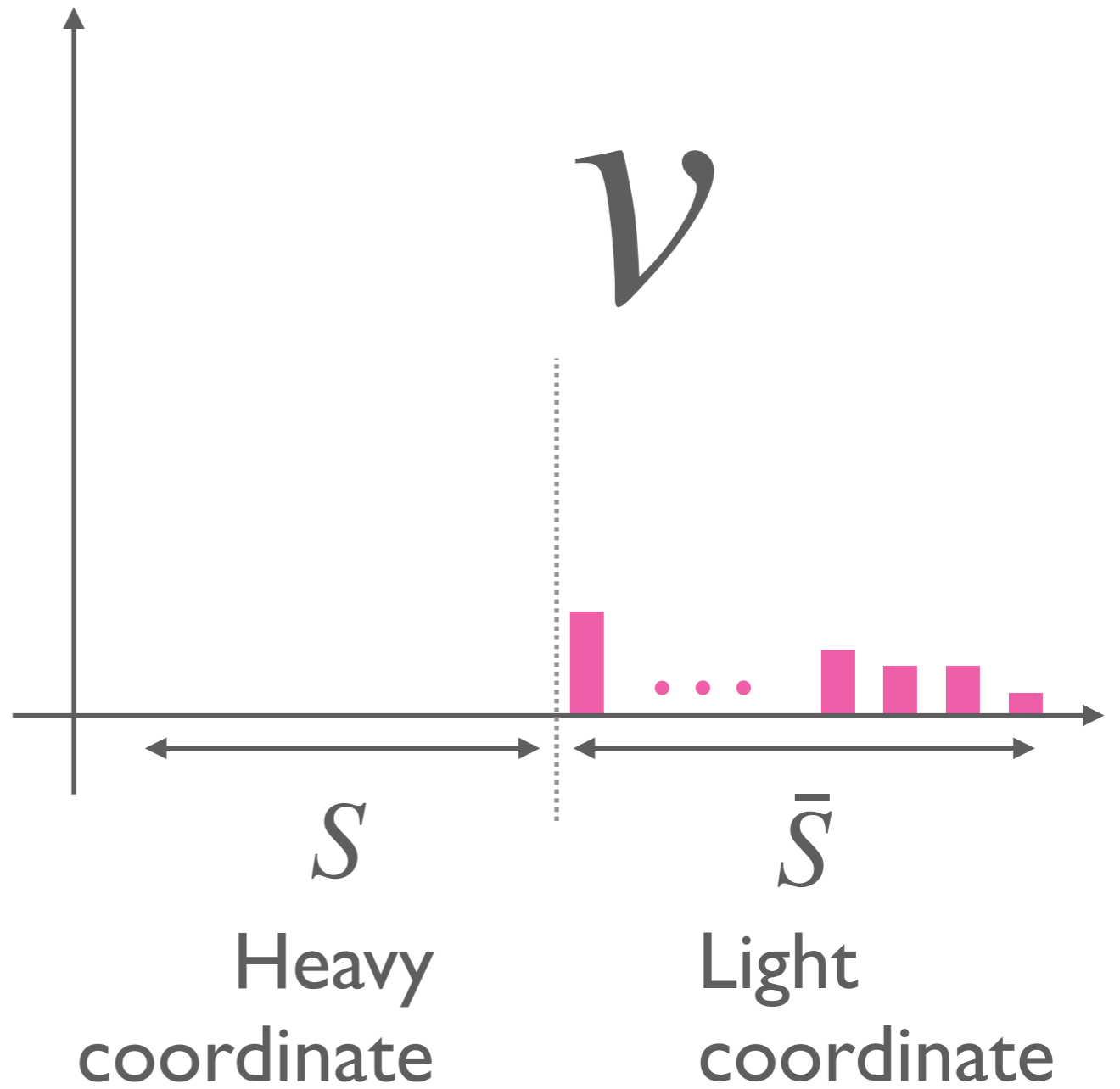
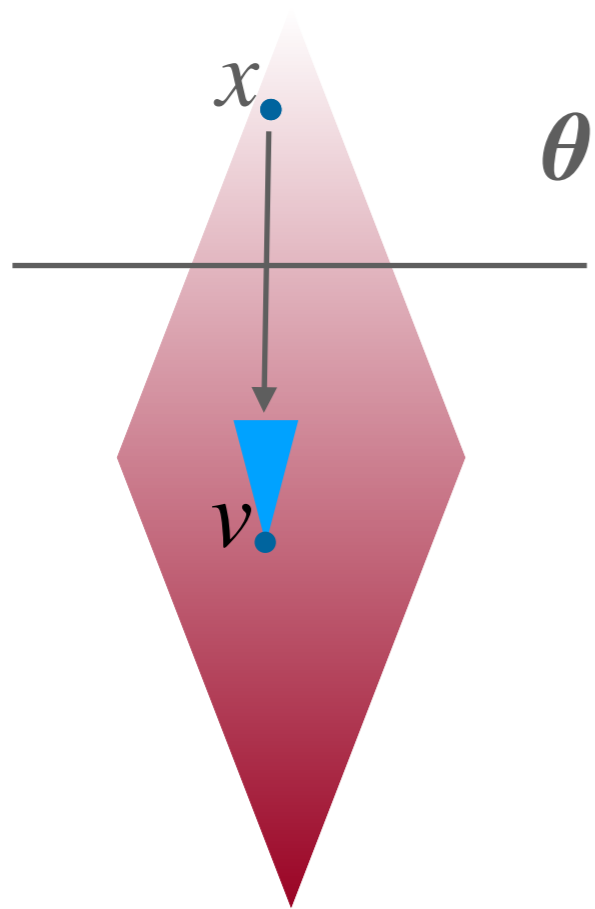
The idea



The idea



The idea



Part 2.
Sign Rank

Lift threshold degree to sign rank

threshold degree



Sign rank

Fact. ([Forster 01] + [Sherstov 08])

Given $\deg_{\pm}(f, 2^{-O(d)}) = d$,

Then, there is F that has $\text{rk}_{\pm}(F) = \exp(\Omega(d))$.

Lift threshold degree to sign rank

“Smooth”

threshold degree



Sign rank

Fact. ([Forster 01] + [Sherstov 08])

Given $\deg_{\pm}(f, 2^{-O(d)}) = d$,

Then, there is F that has $\text{rk}_{\pm}(F) = \exp(\Omega(d))$.

Smooth threshold degree

$$f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}, \quad X = \{0,1\}^n$$

Definition.

$$\text{deg}_{\pm}(f, \gamma) =$$

$$\max \left\{ \text{orth}(\mu \cdot (-1)^f) : \mu(x) \geq \frac{\gamma}{|X|} \right\}.$$

Smooth threshold degree

$$f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}, \quad X = \{0,1\}^n$$

Definition.

$$\deg_{\pm}(f, \gamma) =$$

$$\max \left\{ \text{orth}(\mu \cdot (-1)^f) : \mu(x) \geq \frac{\gamma}{|X|} \right\}.$$

γ -smooth dual object

Smooth threshold degree

$$f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}, \quad X = \{0,1\}^n$$

Definition.

$$\text{deg}_{\pm}(f, \gamma) =$$

$$\max \left\{ \text{orth}(\mu \cdot (-1)^f) : \mu(x) \geq \frac{\gamma}{|X|} \right\}.$$

γ -smooth dual object

Fact. For any non constant $f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$,

$$\text{deg}_{\pm}(f, 1/2) \geq 1.$$

Hardness ampl. of smooth threshold degree

Given $f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$, $\deg_{\pm}(f, \gamma) = n^{1-\epsilon}$.

Then $F = f$ $\deg_{\pm}(F, \gamma \exp(-\tilde{O}(N^{1-\frac{\epsilon}{1+\epsilon}}))) = \tilde{\Omega}(N^{1-\frac{\epsilon}{1+\epsilon}})$

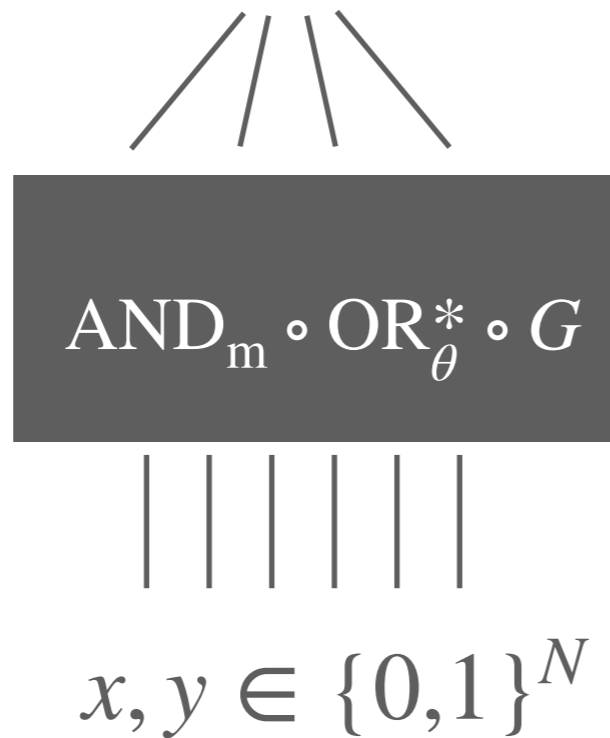


$x, y \in \{0,1\}^N$

Hardness ampl. of smooth threshold degree

Given $f: X \rightarrow \{0,1\}$, $\deg_{\pm}(f, \gamma) = n^{1-\epsilon}$.

Then $F = f$ $\deg_{\pm}(F, \gamma \exp(-\tilde{O}(N^{1-\frac{\epsilon}{1+\epsilon}}))) = \tilde{\Omega}(N^{1-\frac{\epsilon}{1+\epsilon}})$



Why we are not done?

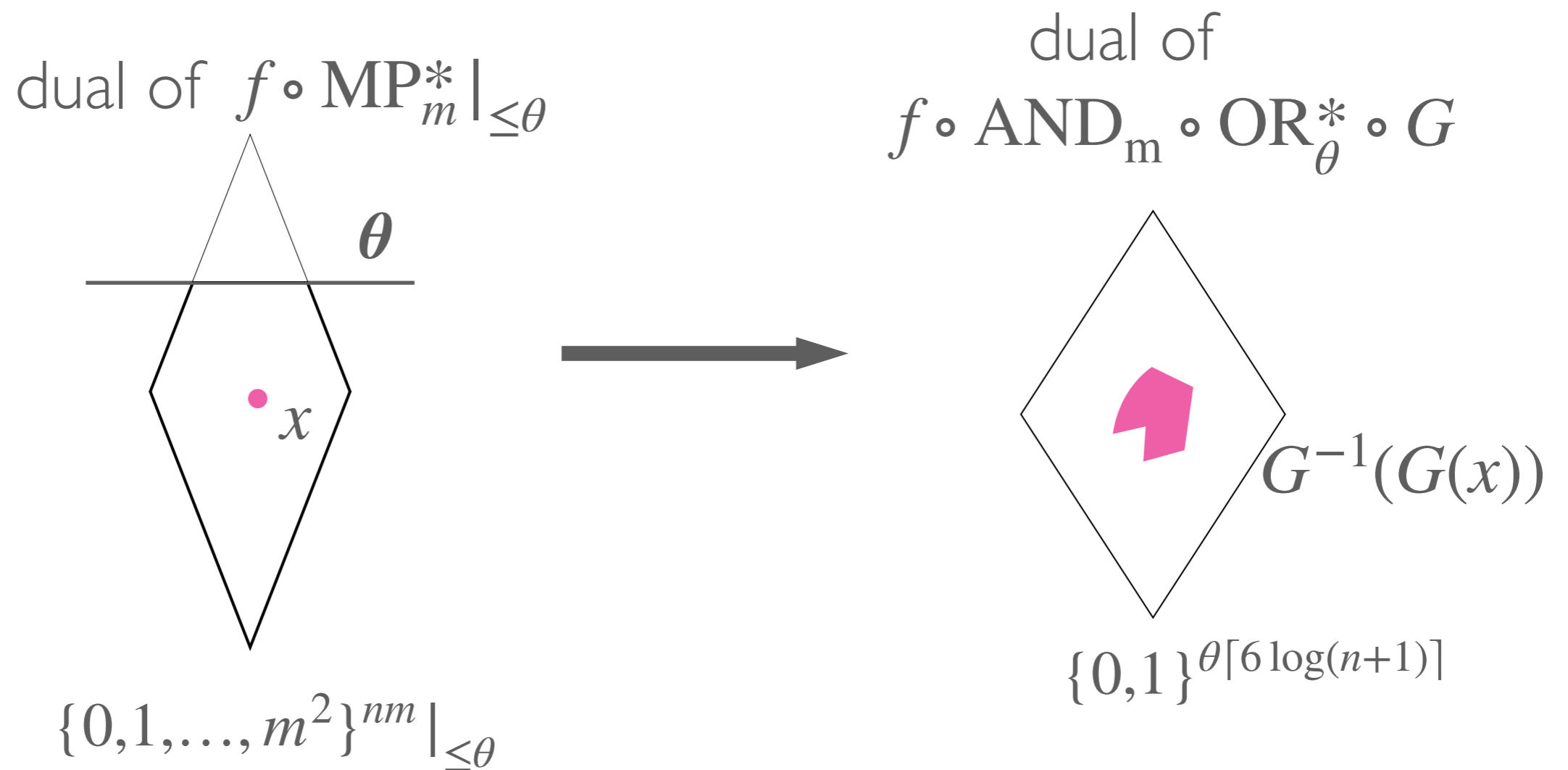
Our dual is not for $\deg_{\pm}(f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_{\theta}^* \circ G)$;

Highly non-smooth

Why we are not done?

Our dual is not for $\deg_{\pm}(f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_{\theta}^* \circ G)$;

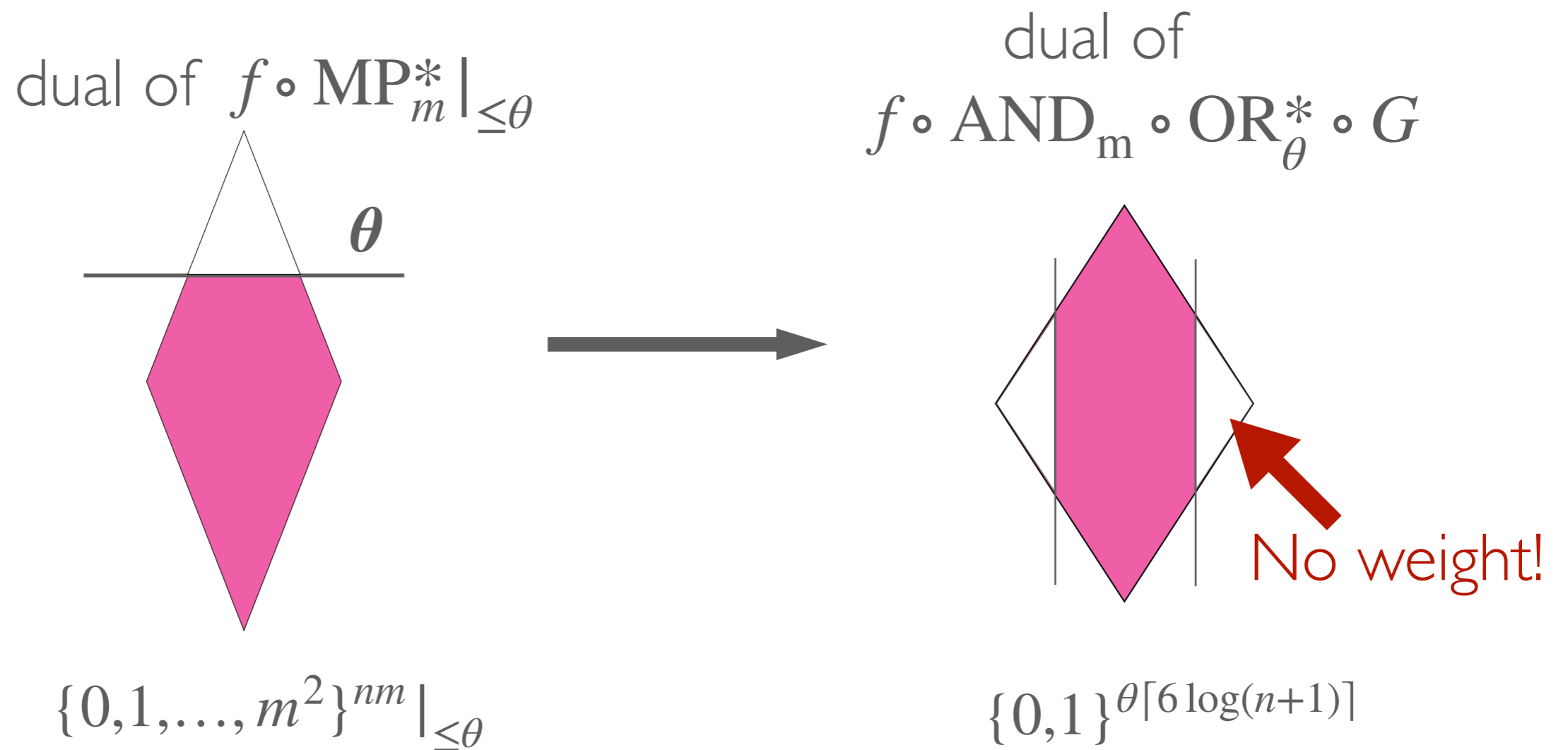
Highly non-smooth



Why we are not done?

Our dual is not for $\deg_{\pm}(f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_{\theta}^* \circ G)$;

Highly non-smooth



Our approach: local smoothness

$$\psi : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R},$$

Definition.

ψ is K -locally-smooth if

$$\left| \frac{\psi(x)}{\psi(y)} \right| \leq K^{\|x-y\|_1}$$

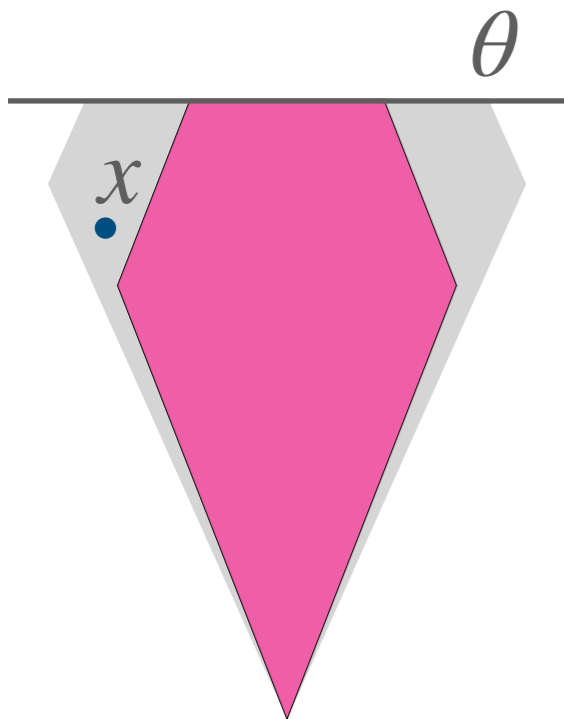
for any $x, y \in \text{supp}(\psi)$.

Local smoothness is powerful

$\psi : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, locally-smooth,

$$X = \{0, 1, \dots, M\}^N \mid_{\leq \theta}$$

$$x \in \mathbb{N}^N \mid_{\leq \theta}$$



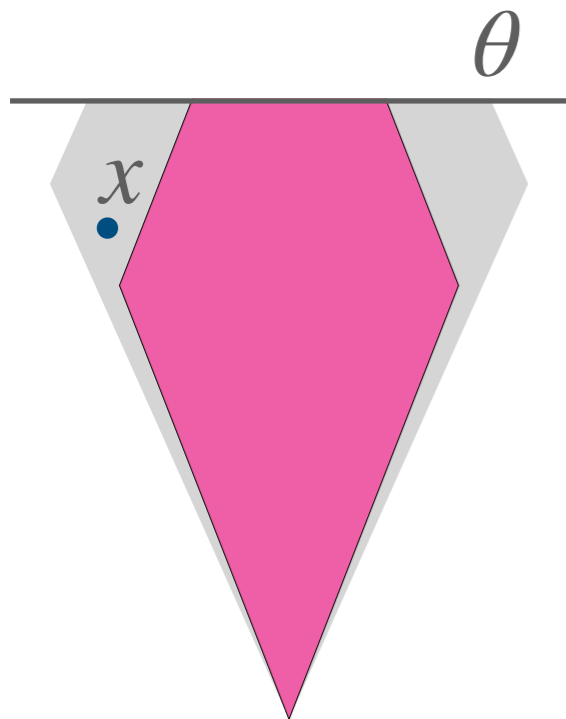
Local smoothness is powerful

A dual object of $f : \mathbb{N}^N |_{\leq \theta} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

$\psi : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, locally-smooth,

$$X = \{0, 1, \dots, M\}^N |_{\leq \theta}$$

$$x \in \mathbb{N}^N |_{\leq \theta}$$

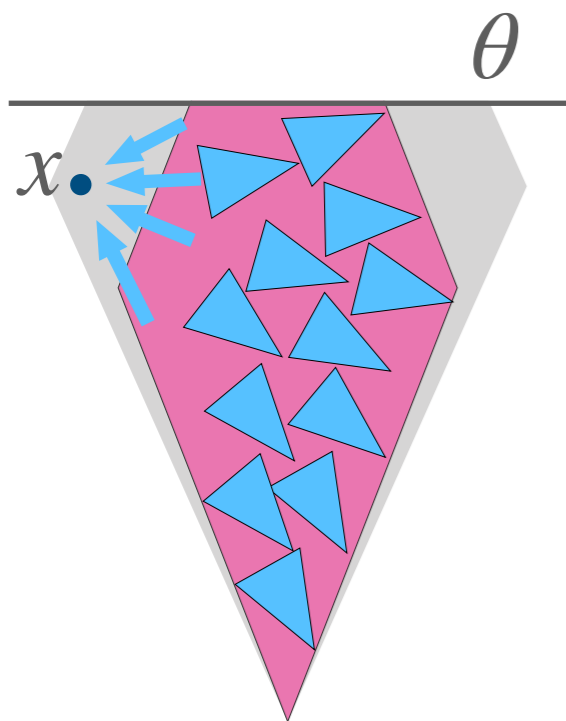


Local smoothness is powerful

$\psi : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, locally-smooth,

$$X = \{0, 1, \dots, M\}^N \mid_{\leq \theta}$$

$$x \in \mathbb{N}^N \mid_{\leq \theta}$$



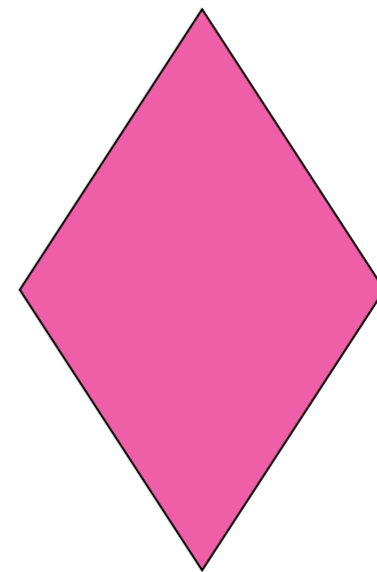
Pack X with balls of radius $O(d)$

\mathcal{B} = collection of “correctors”
 ζ_v labeled by the lightest point.

$$\tilde{\psi}_x = \psi + (-1)^{f(x)} \sum_{\zeta_v \in \mathcal{B}} \frac{|\psi(v)|}{\|\zeta_v\|_1} \zeta_v.$$

The ideal dual object

ideal dual of
 $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^* \circ G$

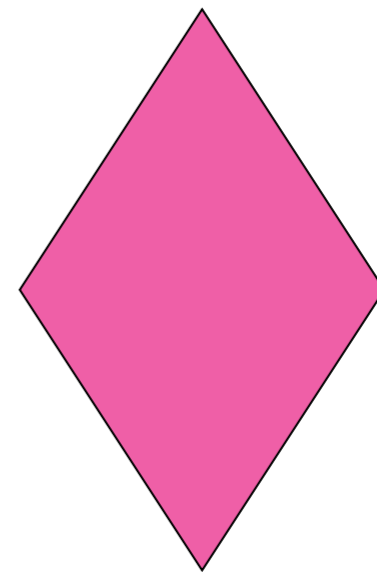


$\{0,1\}^{\theta \lceil 6 \log(n+1) \rceil}$

uniform

The ideal dual object

ideal dual of
 $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^* \circ G$



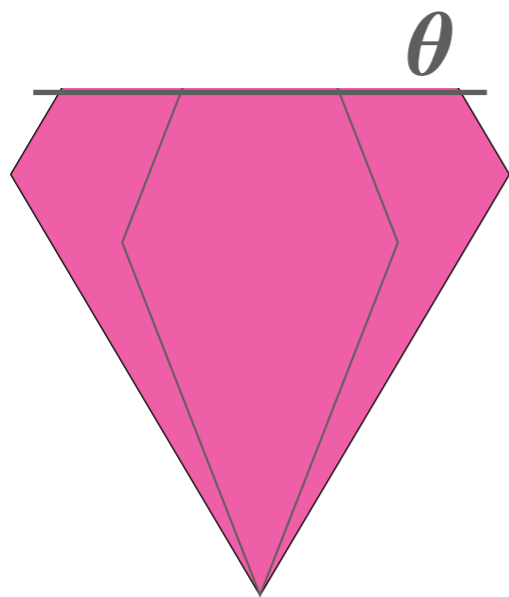
$\{0,1\}^{\theta[6 \log(n+1)]}$

uniform

unrealistic

The ideal dual object

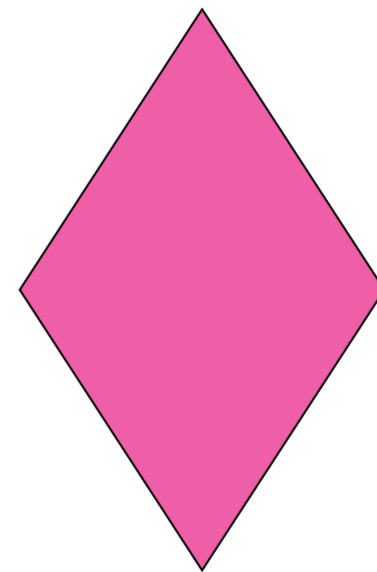
ideal dual of
 $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^*$



$$\mathbb{N}^{nm} \mid_{\leq \theta}$$

Λ^*

ideal dual of
 $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^* \circ G$



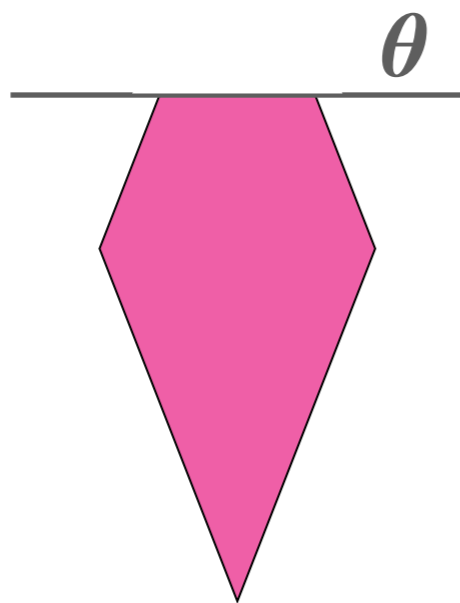
$$\{0,1\}^{\theta \lceil 6 \log(n+1) \rceil}$$

uniform

unrealistic

Toward the ideal dual object

dual of $f \circ \text{MP}_m^* |_{\leq \theta}$



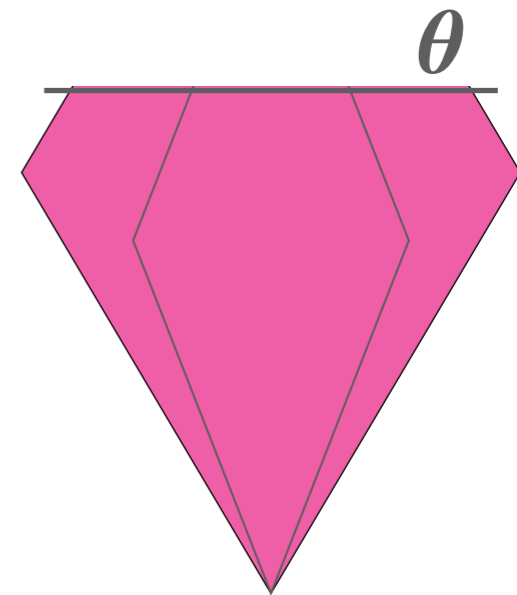
$\{0, 1, \dots, m^2\}^{nm} |_{\leq \theta}$

Ψ



Shift weight

ideal dual of
 $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^*$

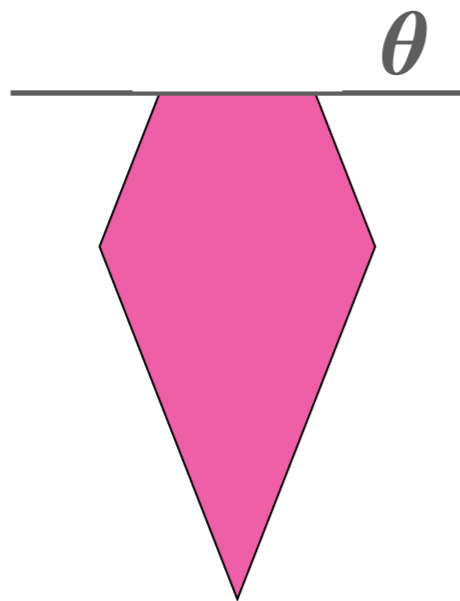


$\mathbb{N}^{nm} |_{\leq \theta}$

Λ^*

Toward the ideal dual object

dual of $f \circ \mathbf{MP}_m^* |_{\leq \theta}$



$\{0, 1, \dots, m^2\}^{nm} |_{\leq \theta}$

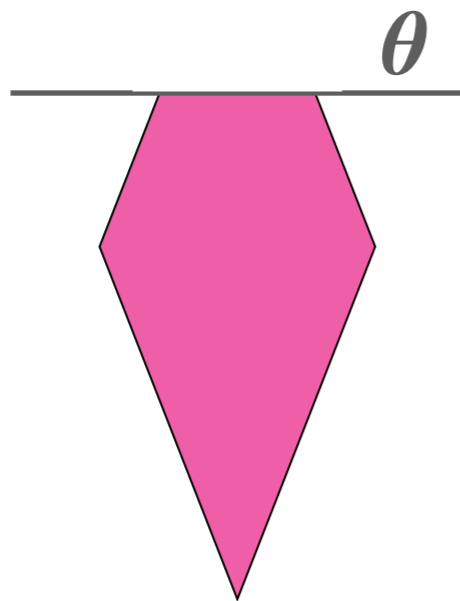
Ψ

ψ γ -smooth dual object of f

$$\begin{aligned} \Psi &= \sum \psi(z) \tilde{\Lambda}_z \\ &= \sum (\psi(z) - \gamma(-1)^{f(z)}) \tilde{\Lambda}_z \\ &\quad + \gamma \sum (-1)^{f(z)} \tilde{\Lambda}_z \end{aligned}$$

Toward the ideal dual object

dual of $f \circ \mathbf{MP}_m^* |_{\leq \theta}$



$\{0, 1, \dots, m^2\}^{nm} |_{\leq \theta}$

Ψ

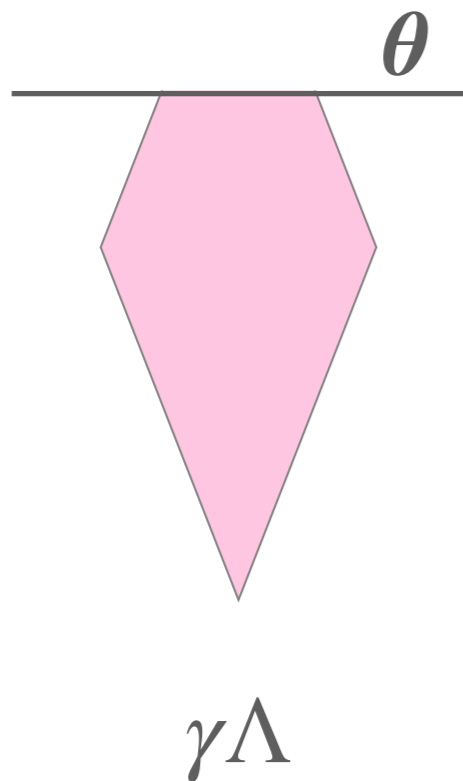
ψ γ -smooth dual object of f

$$\begin{aligned} \Psi &= \sum \psi(z) \tilde{\Lambda}_z \\ &= \sum (\psi(z) - \gamma(-1)^{f(z)}) \tilde{\Lambda}_z \\ &\quad + \gamma \sum (-1)^{f(z)} \tilde{\Lambda}_z \end{aligned}$$

Λ

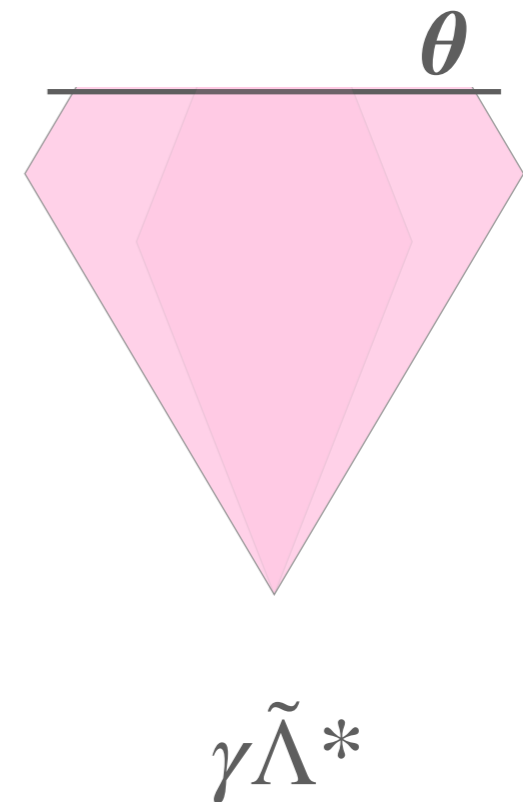
locally smooth

Toward the ideal dual object



1. Apply Theorem 2 at each point in $\mathbb{N}^{nm} |_{\leq \theta}$,

2. Take the convex combination



$$\tilde{\Lambda}^* = \sum_{x \in \mathbb{N}^{nm} |_{\leq \theta}} \Lambda^*(x) \cdot \tilde{\Lambda}_x$$

$$\text{orth}(\tilde{\Lambda}^* - \Lambda) \geq d,$$

$$\tilde{\Lambda}^* \cdot (-1)^F \geq 0,$$

$$|\tilde{\Lambda}^*| \geq (nmK)^{-O(d)} |\Lambda^*|,$$

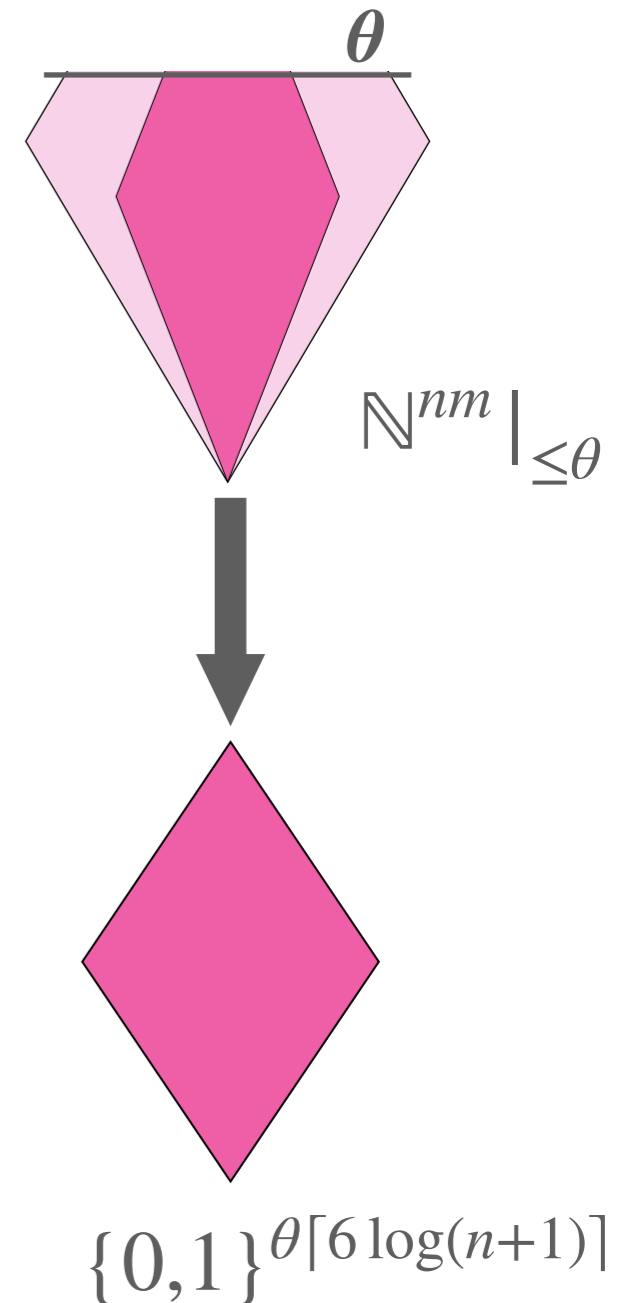
$$\|\tilde{\Lambda}^*\|_1 \leq 2\|\Lambda\|_1.$$

Finishing the proof on hardness ampl.

$$\Psi = \text{whatever} + \gamma\Lambda, \quad \text{dual of } f \circ \text{MP}_m^* |_{\leq \theta}$$

I. Construct $\gamma(nmK)^{-O(d)}$ -smooth dual of $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^*$ w.r.t. Λ^*

$$\tilde{\Psi} = \text{whatever} + \gamma \sum_{x \in \mathbb{N}^{nm} |_{\leq \theta}} \Lambda^*(x) \cdot \tilde{\Lambda}_x.$$



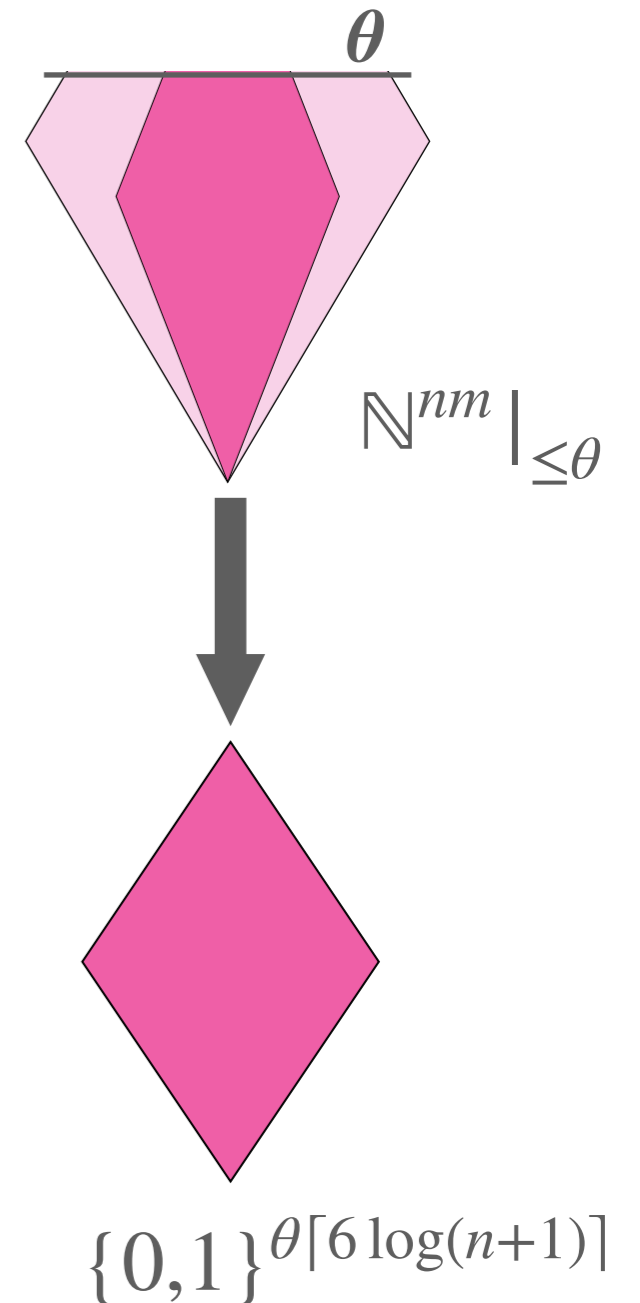
Finishing the proof on hardness ampl.

$$\Psi = \text{whatever} + \gamma\Lambda, \quad \text{dual of } f \circ \text{MP}_m^* |_{\leq \theta}$$

1. Construct $\gamma(nmK)^{-O(d)}$ -smooth dual of $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^*$ w.r.t. Λ^*

$$\tilde{\Psi} = \text{whatever} + \gamma \sum_{x \in \mathbb{N}^{nm} |_{\leq \theta}} \Lambda^*(x) \cdot \tilde{\Lambda}_x.$$

2. Convert $\tilde{\Psi}$ to a $\gamma(nmK)^{-O(d)}$ -smooth dual of $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^* \circ G$.



Finishing the proof on hardness ampl.

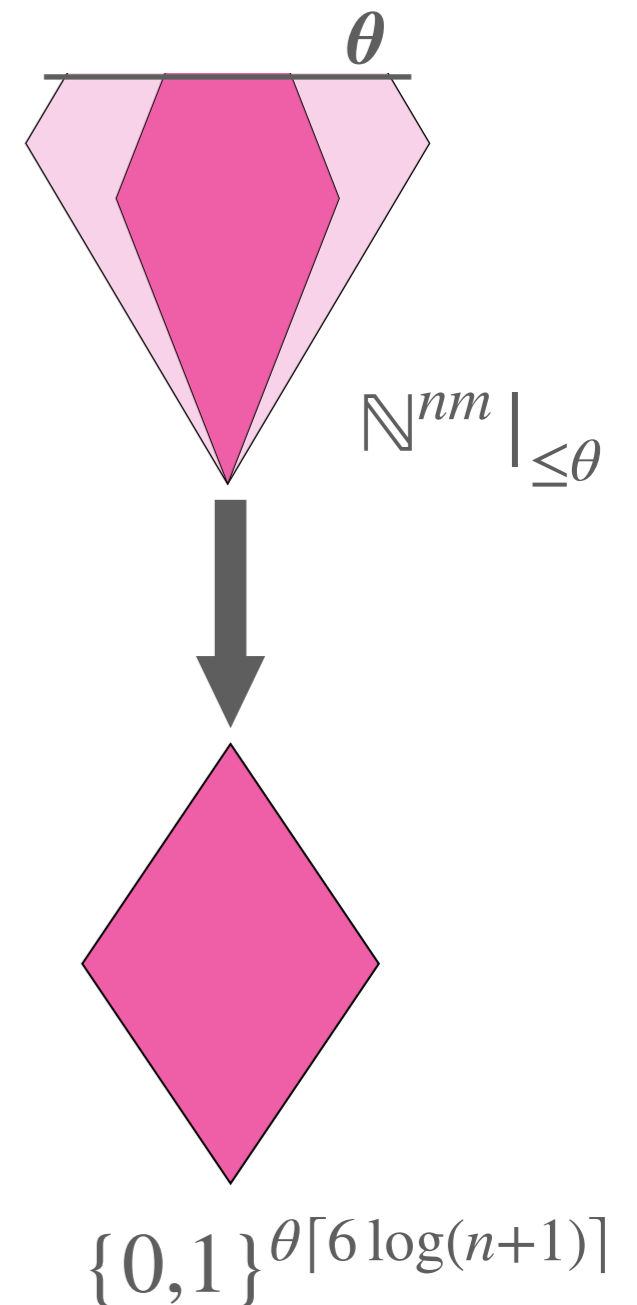
$\Psi = \text{whatever} + \gamma\Lambda$, dual of $f \circ \text{MP}_m^* |_{\leq \theta}$

1. Construct $\gamma(nmK)^{-O(d)}$ -smooth dual of $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^*$ w.r.t. Λ^*

$$\tilde{\Psi} = \text{whatever} + \gamma \sum_{x \in \mathbb{N}^{nm} |_{\leq \theta}} \Lambda^*(x) \cdot \tilde{\Lambda}_x.$$

2. Convert $\tilde{\Psi}$ to a $\gamma(nmK)^{-O(d)}$ -smooth dual of $f \circ \text{AND}_m \circ \text{OR}_\theta^* \circ G$.

3.* Construct locally-smooth dual object of MP_m^* .



Open problems

Problem 1.

$$\deg_{\pm}(AC^0) \geq \frac{n}{2020}?$$

Problem 2.

$$\text{rk}_{\pm}(AC^0) \geq \exp\left(\frac{n}{2020}\right)?$$

Problem 3.

$$\deg_{1/3}(AC^0) \geq \frac{n}{2020}?$$

Thank you!