



Research paper



On the uniqueness of solutions to the isotropic L_p dual Minkowski problem

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ABSTRACT

We prove that the unit sphere is the only smooth, strictly convex solution to the isotropic L_p dual Minkowski problem $h^{p-1}|Dh|^{n+1-q}\mathcal{K} = 1$, provided $(p, q) \in (-n-1, -1] \times (n, n+1)$.

1. Introduction

An important question in convex geometry is the uniqueness or non-uniqueness of origin-centered spheres as solutions to the isotropic L_p dual Minkowski problem:

$$h^{p-1}|Dh|^{n+1-q}\mathcal{K} = c, \quad c \in (0, \infty). \quad (1.1)$$

The L_p dual Minkowski problem was first introduced by Lutwak, Yang, and Zhang [34], acting as a bridge that connects the L_p -Minkowski problem to the dual Minkowski problem. The former, the L_p -Minkowski problem, was introduced by Lutwak in his influential paper [31] three decades ago and has since been extensively investigated; see, e.g., [3,6,7,9,11,16,17,22,24–26,32,33,35,38–40,43]. The latter, the dual Minkowski problem, was proposed recently by Huang et al. in [20] and further studied in [5,13,18,19,28,41,42]. There has been significant progress on the L_p dual Minkowski problem after the paper [34], such as [4,12,14,21,27]; however, the complete answer to the uniqueness and non-uniqueness question, as stated above, has been elusive in the most interesting case: without the *origin-symmetry* assumption.

Here are the known uniqueness and non-uniqueness results for the isotropic L_p dual Minkowski problem:

- [8], uniqueness of solutions for $-(n+1) \leq p < 1$ and $q = n+1$ (see also [1,2,37]);
- [21], uniqueness of solutions for $p > q$;
- [12], uniqueness of origin-symmetric solutions for

$$-(n+1) \leq p < q \leq \min\{n+1, n+1+p\};$$

- [14], uniqueness of solutions for $1 < p < q \leq n+1$, or $-(n+1) \leq p < q < -1$, or the uniqueness of solutions up to rescaling for $p = q$;
- [30], complete classification for $n = 1$;
- [10], non-uniqueness of solutions under any of the following assumptions:

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- (i) $q - 2(n + 1) > p \geq 0$;
- (ii) $q > 0$ and $-q^* < p < \min\{0, q - 2n - 2\}$, where

$$q^* := \begin{cases} \frac{q}{q-n}, & \text{if } q \geq n+1 \\ \frac{nq}{q-1}, & \text{if } 1 < q < n+1 \\ +\infty, & \text{if } 0 < q \leq 1; \end{cases}$$

- (iii) $p + 2(n + 1) < q \leq 0$.

In the recent work [23], employing the local Brunn–Minkowski inequality, the following uniqueness was proved.

Theorem. *Let $n \geq 2$ and assume $-(n + 1) \leq p$ and $q \leq n + 1$, with at least one being strict. Suppose \mathcal{M}^n is a smooth, strictly convex, origin-centered hypersurface such that $h^{p-1}|Dh|^{n+1-q}\mathcal{K} = c$ with $c > 0$. Then \mathcal{M}^n is an origin-centered sphere.*

Here, we also employ the local Brunn–Minkowski inequality as our main tool to establish the following uniqueness result.

Theorem 1.1. *Let $n \geq 2$. Suppose \mathcal{M}^n is a smooth, strictly convex hypersurface with $h > 0$, such that $h^{p-1}|Dh|^{n+1-q}\mathcal{K} = 1$. Suppose either*

1. $-(n + 1) < p \leq -1$ and $n \leq q \leq n + 1$,
2. or $-(n + 1) \leq p \leq -n$ and $1 \leq q < n + 1$.

Then \mathcal{M}^n is the unit sphere.

2. Background

2.1. Convex geometry

Let $(\mathbb{R}^{n+1}, \delta := \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle, D)$ denote the Euclidean space with its standard inner product and flat connection, and let $(\mathbb{S}^n, \bar{g}, \bar{\nabla})$ denote the unit sphere equipped with its standard round metric and Levi-Civita connection.

Suppose K is a smooth, strictly convex body in \mathbb{R}^{n+1} with the origin in its interior. Write $\mathcal{M} = \mathcal{M}^n = \partial K$ for the boundary of K . The Gauss map of \mathcal{M} , denoted by ν , takes the point $p \in \mathcal{M}$ to its unique unit outward normal $x = \nu(p) \in \mathbb{S}^n$. The support function of K is defined by

$$h(x) := \max\{\langle x, y \rangle : y \in K\}, \quad x \in \mathbb{S}^n.$$

The inverse Gauss map $X = \nu^{-1} : \mathbb{S}^n \rightarrow \mathcal{M}$ is given by

$$X(x) = Dh(x) = \bar{\nabla}h(x) + h(x)x, \quad x \in \mathbb{S}^n.$$

The support function can also be expressed as $h(x) = \langle X(x), x \rangle = \langle \nu^{-1}(x), x \rangle$, for $x \in \mathbb{S}^n$. The radial function of K is defined by

$$r(x) := |X(x)| = (|\bar{\nabla}h(x)|^2 + h^2(x))^{\frac{1}{2}}.$$

Moreover, the Gauss curvature of \mathcal{M} is defined as

$$\frac{1}{\mathcal{K}(x)} := \frac{\det(\bar{\nabla}^2h + \bar{g}h)}{\det(\bar{g})} \Big|_x, \quad x \in \mathbb{S}^n.$$

Note that the matrix $A[h] := \bar{\nabla}^2h + h\bar{g} = D^2h|_{T\mathbb{S}^n}$ is positive-definite. The eigenvalues of the matrix $A[h]|_x$ with respect to the metric $\bar{g}|_x$, denoted by $\{\lambda_i\}_{i=1}^n$ are the principal radii of curvature at the point $X(x) \in \mathcal{M}$. Then $\sigma_n = \mathcal{K}^{-1} = \prod_i \lambda_i$. The curvature equation (1.1) can be reformulated as the following Monge–Ampère equation:

$$h^{1-p}|Dh|^{q-n-1} \det(\bar{\nabla}^2h + \bar{g}h) = c.$$

The polar body of K is defined by

$$K^* := \{y \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1} : \langle x, y \rangle \leq 1 \quad \forall x \in K\}.$$

It is well-known that K^* is also a smooth, strictly convex body in \mathbb{R}^{n+1} with the origin in its interior. Moreover, the following identity holds

$$\frac{h^{n+2}(x)(h^*(x^*))^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}(x)\mathcal{K}^*(x^*)} = 1. \tag{2.1}$$

Here h^* and \mathcal{K}^* denote respectively the support function and Gauss curvature of K^* , and $x^* := X(x)/|X(x)|$.

Finally, let us introduce the measure $dV := h\sigma_n d\mu = (h/\mathcal{K})d\mu$, where μ is the spherical Lebesgue measure of the unit sphere \mathbb{S}^n . Then the measure $\sigma_n d\mu$ is the surface-area measure of K , and V is a constant multiple of the cone-volume measure of K . We refer to [38] for additional background.

2.2. Centro-affine geometry

In this section, we recall some basics from centro-affine geometry. For the related concepts, we refer the reader to [29,36] and, in particular, to the excellent paper by Milman [35].

Let $X : \mathbb{S}^n \rightarrow \mathcal{M}$ be a smooth embedding of \mathcal{M} (which we consider it to be Dh as in the previous section), and consider the transversal normal field $\xi(x) := X(x)$ (the centro-affine normal). The transversal vector ξ induces the volume form V (as in the previous section),

$$V(e_1, \dots, e_n) = \det(dX(e_1), \dots, dX(e_n), \xi), \quad e_i \in T\mathbb{S}^n,$$

a connection ∇ , as well as a metric g^ξ on \mathbb{S}^n as follows:

$$D_u dX(v) = dX(\nabla_u v) - g^\xi(u, v)\xi, \quad u, v \in T\mathbb{S}^n. \tag{2.2}$$

Note that g^ξ is symmetric and positive-definite. Moreover, while ∇ is not the Levi-Civita connection of g^ξ , it is torsion-free and

$$\nabla V \equiv 0. \tag{2.3}$$

The conormal field $\xi^* : \mathbb{S}^n \rightarrow (\mathbb{R}^{n+1})^* \sim \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$ is the unique smooth vector field to the dual space of \mathbb{R}^{n+1} , such that $\langle \xi^*, dX \rangle = 0$ and $\langle \xi, \xi^* \rangle = 1$. Moreover, ξ^* is an immersion and transversal to its image, and it induces a bilinear form g^{ξ^*} and a torsion-free connection ∇^* on \mathbb{S}^n ,

$$D_u d\xi^*(v) = d\xi^*(\nabla_u^* v) - g^{\xi^*}(u, v)\xi^*, \quad u, v \in T\mathbb{S}^n.$$

We furnish all geometric quantities associated with ξ^* with $*$.

It is known that $g^\xi = g^{\xi^*}$ and that the two connections ∇^* and ∇ are conjugate with respect to g^ξ :

$$u g^\xi(v_1, v_2) = g^\xi(\nabla_u v_1, v_2) + g^\xi(v_1, \nabla_u^* v_2), \quad u, v_1, v_2 \in T\mathbb{S}^n.$$

Moreover, by [35, Proposition 4.2] (or taking the inner product of (2.2) with v), we find

$$g^\xi = g^{\xi^*} = \frac{A[h]}{h} =: g.$$

For a smooth function $f : \mathbb{S}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, the Hessian and Laplacian with respect to (∇, g) are defined as

$$\text{Hess } f(u, v) = \nabla d f(u, v) = v(uf) - d f(\nabla_v u)$$

and $\Delta f = \text{div}_g(\nabla f) = \sum_i g(\nabla_{e_i} \nabla f, e_i)$, where $\{e_i\}_{i=1}^n$ is a local g -orthonormal frame of $T\mathbb{S}^n$. We write Hess^* and Δ^* respectively for the Hessian and Laplacian with respect to (∇^*, g) . Since ∇, ∇^* are conjugate, we have

$$v(uf) = v g(\nabla f, u) = g(\nabla_v \nabla f, u) + d f(\nabla_v^* u).$$

Therefore, we obtain

$$\Delta f = \text{tr}_g \text{Hess}^* f, \quad \Delta^* f = \text{tr}_g \text{Hess } f.$$

By [35, Proposition 4.2], we have

$$\text{Hess}^* f + g f = \frac{1}{h} (\bar{\nabla}^2(hf) + \bar{g}hf) = \frac{A[hf]}{h}.$$

Let us define $Q(u, v) = \nabla_u^* v - \nabla_u v$ for all $u, v \in T\mathbb{S}^n$. Then by [29, (6.2)],

$$\text{tr}_g Q = -\nabla \log \left(\frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}} \right).$$

In particular, we have

$$(\Delta - \Delta^*)f = - \sum_i Q(e_i, e_i)f = d \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}}(\nabla f). \tag{2.4}$$

We conclude this section by recalling the local Brunn–Minkowski inequality, reformulated in the language of centro-affine geometry (cf. [35]): Let $f \in C^1(\mathbb{S}^n)$. Then

$$n \int f^2 dV \leq \int |\nabla f|_g^2 dV + n \frac{(\int f dV)^2}{\int dV}. \tag{2.5}$$

The equality holds if and only if for some $w \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$,

$$f(x) = \langle \frac{x}{h(x)}, w \rangle, \quad \forall x \in \mathbb{S}^n.$$

Moreover, by [35, (5.9)] we also have

$$n \int |\nabla f|_g^2 dV \leq \int (\Delta f)^2 dV, \quad \forall f \in C^2(\mathbb{S}^n).$$

3. Uniqueness

The following identity is at the heart of our approach to employing the local Brunn–Minkowski inequality.

Theorem 3.1. *There holds*

$$\Delta X + nX = h \bar{\nabla} \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}}. \tag{3.1}$$

In particular,

$$n \int X dV = \int h \bar{\nabla} \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}} dV.$$

Proof. Let $w \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$ be a fixed vector. By the centro-affine Gauss equation for $\xi = X$ (cf. (2.2) and [35, Section 3.8]), we have

$$\Delta^* \langle X, w \rangle + n \langle X, w \rangle = 0.$$

Now let $\{v_i\}_{i=1}^n$ be a local \bar{g} -orthonormal frame of $T\mathbb{S}^n$ that diagonalizes $A[h]$ at x_0 and $A[h]|_{x_0}(v_i, v_j) = \delta_{ij} \lambda_i$. Define $e_i = \sqrt{\frac{h}{\lambda_i}} v_i$, $i = 1, \dots, n$. Then we have $g|_{x_0}(e_i, e_j) = \delta_{ij}$. Hence, using $e_i X|_{x_0} = \lambda_i e_i$ (cf. [15, (4.15)] and (2.4), at x_0 we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \langle X, w \rangle + n \langle X, w \rangle &= (\Delta - \Delta^*) \langle X, w \rangle \\ &= g(\nabla \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}}, \nabla \langle X, w \rangle) \\ &= \sum_i g(\nabla \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}}, \lambda_i \langle e_i, w \rangle e_i) \\ &= \sum_i \lambda_i \langle e_i, w \rangle d \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}}(e_i) \\ &= \sum_i \langle \bar{\nabla} \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}}, h w \rangle. \end{aligned}$$

The second identity follows from integrating (3.1) against dV . \square

Lemma 3.2. *Let $0 < f \in C^2(\mathbb{S}^n)$. Then*

$$\int f^2 \left(\langle \bar{\nabla} \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}}, hX \rangle - |X|^2 |\nabla \log f|_g^2 \right) dV \leq n \frac{|\int f X dV|^2}{\int dV}.$$

Proof. Let $\{E_k\}_{k=1}^{n+1}$ be an orthonormal basis of \mathbb{R}^{n+1} . We define

$$f_k = f \langle X, E_k \rangle, \quad k = 1, \dots, n+1.$$

In view of Theorem 3.1, we have

$$\Delta f_k + n f_k = f \langle \bar{\nabla} \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}}, h E_k \rangle + \langle X, E_k \rangle \Delta f + 2g(\nabla f, \nabla \langle X, E_k \rangle).$$

Therefore,

$$\sum_k f_k (\Delta f_k + n f_k) = f^2 \langle \bar{\nabla} \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}}, hX \rangle + f |X|^2 \Delta f + f g(\nabla f, \nabla |X|^2). \tag{3.2}$$

Moreover, by integration by parts (cf. (2.3)), there holds

$$\int |X|^2 f \Delta f + f g(\nabla f, \nabla |X|^2) dV = - \int |X|^2 |\nabla f|_g^2 dV. \tag{3.3}$$

By the local Brunn–Minkowski inequality (see (2.5)), we have

$$\sum_k \int f_k(\Delta f_k + n f_k) dV \leq n \sum_k \frac{\langle \int f X dV, E_k \rangle^2}{\int dV}.$$

Thus the claim follows from (3.2) and (3.3). \square

Lemma 3.3. Suppose $\varphi : (0, \infty) \rightarrow (0, \infty)$ is C^1 -smooth and $f = \varphi(r)$. Then we have

$$\int f^2 \langle \bar{\nabla} \log \frac{h^{n+2}}{\mathcal{K}} - (r(\log \varphi)')^2 \bar{\nabla} \log r, hX \rangle dV \leq n \frac{|\int f X dV|^2}{\int dV}.$$

Proof. Let $\{v_i\}_{i=1}^n$ and $\{e_i\}_{i=1}^n$ be as in the proof of Theorem 3.1. We calculate

$$e_i(\log f) = (\log \varphi)' e_i r = \frac{(\log \varphi)'}{r} \lambda_i \langle e_i, X \rangle = \frac{(\log \varphi)'}{r} \sqrt{h \lambda_i} \langle v_i, X \rangle,$$

and

$$r^2 |\bar{\nabla} \log f|_g^2 = \sum_i ((\log \varphi)')^2 h \lambda_i (dh(v_i))^2 = \sum_i (r(\log \varphi)')^2 \langle \bar{\nabla} \log r, hX \rangle.$$

Now the inequality follows from Lemma 3.2. \square

Proof of Theorem 1.1. Let $\alpha = q - n - 1$. Due to Lemma 3.3 with $\varphi(r) = r^{q-n-1}$, our assumption $h^{n+2} \mathcal{K}^{-1} = h^{n+1+p} r^{n+1-q}$, we obtain

$$(n + 1 + p) \int r^{2\alpha} |\bar{\nabla} h|^2 dV \leq \alpha(\alpha + 1) \int r^{2\alpha} \langle \bar{\nabla} \log r, h\bar{\nabla} h \rangle dV + n \frac{|\int r^\alpha X dV|^2}{\int dV}.$$

Assuming $\alpha^2 + \alpha \leq 0$ (i.e. $n \leq q \leq n + 1$) we obtain

$$(n + 1 + p) \int r^{2\alpha} |\bar{\nabla} h|^2 dV \leq n \frac{|\int r^\alpha X dV|^2}{\int dV}. \tag{3.4}$$

Using the identity $\bar{\Delta} x + nx = 0$ and integration by parts, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \int h^p X d\mu &= \int h^{p+1} x + h^p \bar{\nabla} h d\mu \\ &= \int -\frac{h^{p+1}}{n} \bar{\Delta} x + h^p \bar{\nabla} h d\mu \\ &= \frac{n + p + 1}{n} \int h^p \bar{\nabla} h d\mu. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, due to $r^\alpha dV = r^\alpha \frac{h}{\mathcal{K}} d\mu = h^p d\mu$, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \int r^\alpha X dV &= \int h^p X d\mu = \frac{n + 1 + p}{n} \int h^p \bar{\nabla} h d\mu \\ &= \frac{n + 1 + p}{n} \int r^\alpha \bar{\nabla} h dV. \end{aligned}$$

Since $n + 1 + p > 0$, inequality (3.4) yields

$$\int r^{2\alpha} |\bar{\nabla} h|^2 dV \leq \frac{n + 1 + p}{n} \frac{|\int r^\alpha \bar{\nabla} h dV|^2}{\int dV}.$$

We may rewrite this inequality as

$$\int \left| r^\alpha \bar{\nabla} h - \frac{\int r^\alpha \bar{\nabla} h dV}{\int dV} \right|^2 dV \leq \frac{p + 1}{n} \frac{|\int r^\alpha \bar{\nabla} h dV|^2}{\int dV}.$$

Thus h is constant, provided $-(n + 1) < p \leq -1$ and $n \leq q \leq n + 1$.

In view of (2.1), the polar body K^* satisfies the following isotropic L_{-q} dual Minkowski problem:

$$(h^*)^{-1-q} |Dh^*|^{n+1+p} \mathcal{K}^* = 1.$$

Hence, the uniqueness result also holds when $n \leq -p \leq (n + 1)$ and $-(n + 1) < -q \leq -1$. \square

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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