REDUCTION OF A MATRIX DEPENDING ON PARAMETERS TO A DIAGONAL FORM BY ADDITION OPERATIONS

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Abstract. It is shown that any \( n \times n \) matrix with determinant 1 whose entries are real or complex continuous functions on a finite dimensional normal topological space can be reduced to a diagonal form by addition operations if and only if the corresponding homotopy class is trivial, provided that \( n \geq 2 \) for real-valued functions; moreover, if this is the case, the number of operations can be bounded by a constant depending only on \( n \) and the dimension of the space. For real functions and \( n = 2 \), we describe all spaces such that every invertible matrix with trivial homotopy class can be reduced to a diagonal form by addition operations as well as all spaces such that the number of operations is bounded.

Introduction. Let \( X \) be a topological space \( \mathbf{R}^X \) the ring of all continuous functions \( X \to \mathbf{R} \) (the reals), \( \mathbf{R}_0^X \) the subring of bounded functions. For any natural number \( n \) and a ring \( A \), \( M_nA \) denotes the ring of all \( n \times n \) matrices over \( A \).

A matrix \( \alpha \) in \( M_n\mathbf{R}^X \) can be regarded as a real matrix depending continuously on a parameter which ranges over \( X \), or as a continuous map \( X \to M_n\mathbf{R} \).

Assume now that \( \det(\alpha) = 1 \), i.e. \( \alpha \in \text{SL}_n\mathbf{R}^X \). We want to reduce \( \alpha \) to the identity matrix \( 1_n \) by addition operations, i.e. represent \( \alpha \) as a product of elementary matrices \( a_{ij} \), where \( a \in A = \mathbf{R}^X \), \( 1 \leq i \neq j \leq n \). Since the subgroup \( E_nA \) of \( \text{SL}_nA \) generated by all elementary matrices is normal \cite{6}, it does not matter whether we use row or column addition operations, or both. Note that, by the Whitehead lemma, every diagonal matrix in \( \text{SL}_nA \) is a product of \( 4(n - 1) \) elementary matrices (for any commutative ring \( A \)), so a matrix \( \alpha \) in \( \text{SL}_nA \) can be reduced to \( 1_n \) if and only if it can be reduced to a diagonal form.

When \( X \) is a point, so \( A = \mathbf{R}^X = \mathbf{R} \), it is well known that this can be done. Moreover \cite[Remark 10 with sr(\( \mathbf{R} \)) = \( m = 1 \)}, this can be done using at most \((n - 1)(3n/2 + 1)\) addition operations.

For an arbitrary \( X \), a homotopy obstruction may exist which prevents the reduction. Namely, the addition operations do not change the homotopy class \( \pi(\alpha) \) of the corresponding map \( X \to \text{SL}_n\mathbf{R} \). So if this class is not trivial, the reduction is impossible.

Assume now that the homotopy class \( \pi(\alpha) \) is trivial (for example, this is always the case when \( X \) is contractible). Is it possible to reduce \( \alpha \) to \( 1_n \) by addition operations, i.e. does \( \alpha \) belong to the subgroup \( E_n\mathbf{R}^X \) of \( \text{SL}_n\mathbf{R}^X \) generated by elementary matrices)? If yes, how many operations are needed?

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In this paper, we give an answer to both questions. It turns out that the answer in case \( n = 2 \) is different from that in the case \( n \neq 2 \). The reason is that the fundamental group \( \pi_1(\text{SL}_n\mathbb{R}) \) is infinite when \( n = 2 \) (namely, it is infinite cyclic) and it is finite otherwise (it is of order 2 when \( n \geq 3 \)).

More precisely, for any \( \alpha \) in \( \text{SL}_n\mathbb{A} \) (where \( \mathbb{A} \) is a commutative ring with 1 such as \( \mathbb{A} = \mathbb{R}^X \) or \( \mathbb{R}_0^X \)), denote by \( l_\alpha(\alpha) \) the least \( k \) such that \( \alpha \) is a product of \( k \) elementary matrices over \( \mathbb{A} \). If no such \( k \) exists, i.e. \( \alpha \) is outside \( E_n\mathbb{A} \), we set \( l_\alpha(\alpha) = \infty \). As in [3], \( e_n(A) \) denotes the supremum of \( l_\alpha(\alpha) \), where \( \alpha \) ranges over \( E_n\mathbb{A} \).

**THEOREM 1.** Let \( X \) be a topological space, \( A = \mathbb{R}^X \) or \( \mathbb{R}_0^X \) as above. Then
(a) \( e_2(A) < \infty \) if and only if \( R^Y = R \) for every connected component \( Y \) of \( X \); (b) \( l_\alpha(\alpha) < \infty \) for all \( \alpha \) in \( \text{SL}_2\mathbb{A} \) with \( \pi(\alpha) = 0 \) if and only if \( X \) is pseudocompact, i.e. \( \mathbb{R}^X = \mathbb{R}_0^X \).

Now we consider the case \( n \geq 3 \).

**THEOREM 2.** For any integers \( n \geq 3 \) and \( d \geq 0 \) there is a natural number \( z \) such that \( l_\alpha(\alpha) \leq z \) for \( A = \mathbb{R}^X \) or \( \mathbb{R}_0^X \) with any normal topological space \( X \) of dimension \( d \) and any \( \alpha \) in \( \text{SL}_n\mathbb{A} \) with \( \pi(\alpha) = 0 \). In particular, \( e_n(A) \leq z \).

As a consequence of Theorem 2 (which is extracted here from results of [1, 2]) we obtain that \( \text{SL}_n\mathbb{A}/E_n\mathbb{A} \) is a homotopy type invariant of \( X \) for finite dimensional spaces \( X \) if \( n \geq 3 \). This was proved in [6] for \( X = \mathbb{R} \) and in [4] for \( X = \mathbb{R}^3 \) by different methods.

It is easy to extend Theorems 1 and 2 to subrings \( \mathbb{A} \) of \( \mathbb{R}^X \) different from \( \mathbb{R}^X \) and \( \mathbb{R}_0^X \), compare with [6]. This is because of the following fact.

**PROPOSITION 3.** Let \( \mathbb{A} \) be as in Theorem 1 and \( B \) is a subring with 1 of \( \mathbb{A} \) such that \( B \) is dense in \( \mathbb{A} \) and \( GL_1B \) is open in \( B \), both in the topology of uniform convergence. Then \( |e_n(B) - e_n(A)| \leq (n + 3)(n - 1) \) for every \( n \).

Note that the condition that \( GL_1B \) is open in \( B \), i.e. \( fB = B \) for every function \( f \) in \( B \) sufficiently close to 1, cannot be dropped. The following example shows this. Let \( X \) be the unit interval \( 0 \leq x \leq 1 \) and \( B = \mathbb{R}[x] \), the polynomial ring. In this example, \( \text{SL}_n\mathbb{B}/E_n\mathbb{B} \) for all \( n \), but \( e_n(B) = \infty \) for each \( n \geq 2 \) [5]. At the same time, \( B \) is dense in \( A = \mathbb{R}^X = \mathbb{R}_0^X \) and \( e_n(A) < \infty \) for \( n \geq 3 \) by Theorem 1.

Next we consider the ring \( \mathbb{C}^X \) of all continuous functions \( X \to \mathbb{C} \), the complex numbers, and its subring \( \mathbb{C}_0^X \) of bounded functions.

**THEOREM 4.** For any natural number \( n \) and an integer \( d \geq 0 \) there is a natural number \( z' \) such that \( l_\alpha(\alpha) \leq z' \) for any normal topological space \( X \) of dimension \( d \) and any matrix \( \alpha \) in \( \text{SL}_n\mathbb{A} \) with \( \pi(\alpha) = 0 \), where \( A = \mathbb{C}^X \) or \( \mathbb{C}_0^X \). In particular, \( e_n(A) \leq z' < \infty \) for all \( n \).

**COROLLARY 5.** For each natural number \( n \) and an integer \( d \geq 0 \) there is a natural number \( z'' \) such that \( e_n(B) \leq z'' < \infty \) for any dense subring \( B \) with 1 of \( \mathbb{A} \) with \( GL_1B \) open in \( B \), where \( \mathbb{A} \) is as in Theorem 4.

Note that \( \mathbb{C}^X \) is endowed with the topology of the uniform convergence, and that the constant \( z'' \) depends only on \( n \) and the dimension of \( X \). We do not give any
explicit bounds in this paper, although the proofs in [1, 2] seem to be constructive enough to yield some explicit bounds.

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PROOF OF THEOREM 1. Let X be a topological space, A = RX or R0X as in Theorem 1. For any f ∈ RX we set

\[ \rho f = \begin{pmatrix} \cos(f) & \sin(f) \\ -\sin(f) & \cos(f) \end{pmatrix} \in SO2RX = SO2R0X ⊂ SL2RX. \]

For any f ∈ CX, let ||f|| = sup |f(x)|, where x ranges over X.

LEMMA 6. Let α be a product of k elementary matrices in SL2A with k ≥ 1. Then α has the form δε(ρf), where ε is an elementary matrix, δ is a diagonal matrix, f ∈ RX and ||f|| ≤ (k - 1)π/2.

PROOF. We proceed by induction on k. When k = 1, we can take δ = 12, f = 0. Assume now that k ≥ 2 and α = ε1 · · · εk with elementary matrices εi. By the induction hypothesis, ε2 · · · εk = δε′(ρ(f′)) with an elementary ε′, diagonal δ′, and ||f′|| ≤ (k - 2)π/2. If the elementary matrices ε1 and ε′ are of the same type, i.e. ε1ε′ is an elementary matrix, then α = δ′(δ′−1ε1δε′)(ρ(f′)) is the required representation, i.e. we can take δ = δ′, ε = δ−1ε1δε′, f = f′. Assume now that ε′, ε1 are not of the same type, that is either ε1 ∈ A1,2 and ε′ ∈ A2,1, or ε1 ∈ A2,1 and ε′ ∈ A1,2. Consider the first case (the second one is similar).

Then δ′−1ε1δε′ = b1,2c2,1 with b and c in A. Applying the Gram-Schmidt process to the rows of this matrix, we obtain

\[ \begin{pmatrix} 1 + bc & b \\ c & 1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1/e & 0 \\ 0 & e \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} e(1 + bc) & eb \\ c/e & 1/e \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1/e & -c/e \\ c/e & 1/e \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} b + c + cbc & 1/e \\ 0 & c/e \end{pmatrix} \]

with (c/e, 1/e) = (−sin(f′′), cos(f′′)) and ||f′′|| < π/2.

Thus, α = ε1 · · · εk = ε1δε′(ρ(f′′)) = δ′(δ′−1ε1δε′)(ρ(f′)) = δ′(b1,2c2,1)ρf′ = δερf, where

\[ \delta = \delta′ \begin{pmatrix} 1/e & 0 \\ 0 & e \end{pmatrix} \]

is a diagonal matrix, ε = (b + c + cbc)1,2 is an elementary matrix, and f = f′ + f′′ with ||f|| ≤ ||f′|| + ||f′′|| ≤ (k - 2)π/2 + π/2 = (k - 1)π/2.

Lemma 6 is proved.

COROLLARY 7. If X is connected, then for any g ∈ A we have

\[ l_A(ρg) ≥ (\sup(g) - \inf(g))/π + 1. \]

PROOF. Suppose that ρg is a product of k elementary matrices. Then by Lemma 6, ρg = δερf with diagonal δ, elementary ε, and ||f|| ≤ (k - 1)π/2. It
follows that $\varepsilon = 1_2$, and $\delta = 1_2$ or $-1_2$, hence $f - g = 2\pi m$ or $\pi + 2\pi m$ with a continuous function $m$: $X \to \mathbb{Z}$ (the integers). Since $X$ is connected, $m$ is a constant. Therefore, $\sup(g) - \inf(g) = \sup(f) - \inf(f) \leq 2||f|| \leq (k - 1)\pi$. Thus, $k \geq 1 + (\sup(f) - \inf(f))/\pi = (\sup(g) - \inf(g))/\pi + 1$. The corollary is proved.

**PROPOSITION 8.** For any $f$ in $A$, we have $l_A(\rho f) \leq 2(\sup(f) - \inf(f))/\pi + 6$.

**PROOF.** If $f$ is not bounded, there is nothing to prove. So we can assume that $f$ is bounded, i.e. $f \in \mathbb{R}_0^X$, i.e. $r = \sup(f) - \inf(f) < \infty$. Set $t = (\sup(f) + \inf(f))/2$ and write $f = t + (f - t)$, where $t$ means a constant function and $|f - t| \leq r/2$ everywhere on $X$. We have to write $\rho f$ as a product of $k \leq 2r/\pi + 6$ elementary matrices over $A$. Set $s = [r/\pi + 1]$.

We have $\rho f = \rho t(\rho((f - t)/s))s$. Note that $|(f - t)/s| \leq r/2s = r/(r/\pi + 1) < \pi/2$. So $\cos((f - t)/s) \in \text{GL}_2A$. Therefore $\rho((f - t)/s)$ is a product of two elementary matrices and a diagonal matrix, hence $\rho f$ is a product of $\rho(t)$, a diagonal matrix, and $2s$ elementary matrices. The product of the constant matrix $\rho t$ and the diagonal matrix has an invertible entry in the first column, so it is the product of at most 4 elementary matrices. Thus, $\rho f$ is the product of $2s + 4 \leq 2r/\pi + 2 + 4 = 2r/\pi + 6$ elementary matrices. This proves the proposition.

Now we are prepared to prove Theorem 1. The case of empty $X$ is trivial, so let $X$ be nonempty.

To prove part (a) of Theorem 1, suppose first that $\mathbb{R}^Y = \mathbb{R}$ for every connected component $Y$ of $X$. Then $\mathbb{R}^X = \mathbb{R}^{X'}$ and $\mathbb{R}_0^X = \mathbb{R}_0^{X'}$, where $X'$ is the discrete set of connected components of $X$. So $e_2(A) = e_2(\mathbb{R}) = 4 < \infty$.

Suppose now that $\mathbb{R}^Y \neq \mathbb{R}$ (or, equivalently $\mathbb{R}_0^Y \neq \mathbb{R}$), for some connected component $Y$ of $X$. We will show that then $e_2(B) = \infty$ for $B = \mathbb{R}^Y$ and for $B = \mathbb{R}_0^Y$. This will imply that $e_2(A) = \infty$.

Pick a nonconstant function $f$ in $\mathbb{R}^Y$. By Corollary 7 applied to $Y$ instead of $X$, $l_B(\rho(fm)) \geq m(\sup(f) - \inf(f))/\pi + 1$ for any natural number $m$. Taking large $m$, we conclude that $e_2(B) = \infty$.

To prove Theorem 1(b), consider the exact sequence [6] (see also [1, 2])

$$0 \to \mathbb{R}^X/\mathbb{R}_0^X \to \text{SL}_2A/\text{E}_2A \to \pi^1(X) \to 0.$$ 

The sequence says that $X$ is pseudocompact, if and only if $\text{SL}_2A/\text{E}_2A = \pi^1(X)$, i.e. if and only if $\alpha \in E_A$ for every $\alpha$ in $\text{SL}_2A$ with $\pi(\alpha) = 0$.

**PROOF OF THEOREM 2.** If the theorem is wrong, then for some $n \geq 3$ and $d \geq 0$ there is a sequence $X(i)$ of normal topological spaces of dimension $d$ and $\alpha(i) \in \text{SL}_nA(i)$, where $A(i) = \mathbb{R}^{X(i)}$ or $\mathbb{R}_0^{X(i)}$ depending on whether $A = \mathbb{R}^X$ or $\mathbb{R}_0^X$ in the theorem, such that $\pi(\alpha(i)) = 0$ for all $i$ and $l_A(i)(\alpha(i)) \to \infty$. In the case $A = \mathbb{R}_0^X$, we can bring each $\alpha(i)$ to $\text{SO}_nA(i)$ by $(n + 6)(n - 1)/2$ addition operations [6, Lemma 21], so we can assume that $\alpha(i) \in \text{SO}_nA(i)$.

We define $X$ to be the disjoint union of all $X(i)$. The matrices $\alpha(i) \in \text{SL}_nA(i)$ give a matrix $\alpha$ in $\text{SL}_nA$ whose restriction to $X(i)$ is $\alpha(i)$. We have $\pi(\alpha) = 0$, i.e. the corresponding map $X \to \text{SL}_n\mathbb{R}$ is homotopic to the trivial map $X \to 1_{\mathbb{R}}$. Now we invoke results of [1, 2] to conclude that the map $X \to \text{SL}_n\mathbb{R}$ is uniformly homotopic to the trivial map.

First of all, Gram-Schmidt's process [6] reduces the matrix $\alpha$ in $\text{SL}_nA$ (as well as its homotopy to the trivial map) to a matrix $f$: $X \to \text{SO}_n\mathbb{R}$ in the special
ORTHOGONAL GROUP (OF THE SUM OF N SQUARES) $SO_nA$ BY ADDITION OPERATIONS (RESP.
TO A HOMOTOPY OF $f$ TO THE TRIVIAL MAP INTO THIS SUBGROUP). SINCE $n \geq 3$, THE
FUNDAMENTAL GROUP $\pi_1 SO_nR = Z/2Z$ IS FINITE. SINCE $X$ IS FINITE DIMENSIONAL AND
PROOF) GIVES THE DESIRED CONCLUSION.

Thus, $f$ is uniformly homotopic to the trivial map in $SO_nR$, i.e. the cor-
responding matrix in $SO_nA$ belongs to the connected component of $1_n$, hence $\alpha$ belongs to
the connected component of $1_n$ in $SL_nA$, where $SL_nA$ is endowed with the topology
induced by the uniform convergence topology on $A$.

It is known (see, for example, [6, Theorem 2]) that this component coincides
with $E_nA$. So $\alpha$ is a product of (finitely many) elementary matrices. Restriction
to $X(i)$ yields that each $\alpha(i)$ is the product of a bounded (uniformly in $i$) num-
ber of elementary matrices over $A(i)$. This contradicts to our choice of $\alpha(i)$ with
$l_{A(i)}(\alpha(i)) \to \infty$. So Theorem 2 is proved.

REMARK. The condition that $X$ is normal can be easily dropped; for arbitrary
$X$, the dimension should be understood in the sense of [7], i.e. it is $sr(A) - 1$. It is
not clear how $z$ depends on $d$ or whether a uniform upper bound exists. Obviously,
$z$ cannot be taken less than $n^2 - 1$, the dimension of $SL_nR$.

PROOF OF PROPOSITION 3.

LEMMA 9. Let $B$ be a commutative topological ring with 1 such that $GL_1B$ is
open in $B$. Then $l_B(\alpha) \leq (n + 3)(n - 1)$ for any $n$ and any matrix $\alpha$ in $SL_nB$
sufficiently close to $1_n$.

PROOF. It is clear that every $\alpha$ sufficiently close to $1_n$ has the form $\beta \gamma$ with
a lower triangular $\beta$ with ones along the main diagonal and an upper triangular
matrix $\gamma$. We have $l_B(\beta) \leq n(n - 1)/2$, and $l_B(\gamma) \leq (n + 6)(n - 1)/2$ by [6, Lemma
21]. So $l_B(\alpha) \leq l_B(\beta) + (n + 6)(n - 1)/2 = (n + 3)(n - 1)$.

Let us prove now Proposition 3. Let $\alpha \in E_nB$. We can write $\alpha$ as a product of
$k = l_A(\alpha)$ elementary matrices over $A$. Using that $B$ is dense in $A$ we can write
$\alpha$ as a product of $k$ elementary matrices over $B$ and a matrix $\alpha'$ arbitrarily close
to $1_n$. By Lemma 9, $\alpha'$ is a product of $(n + 3)(n - 1)$ elementary matrices. So
$l_A(\alpha) \leq l_B(\alpha) \leq l_A(\alpha) + (n + 3)(n - 1)$ for any $\alpha$ in $E_nB$. Therefore, $e_n(B) \leq$
e_n(A) + (n + 3)(n - 1).

Let now $\alpha \in E_nA$. Since $B$ is dense in $A$, we can write $\alpha = \beta \gamma$ with $\beta \in E_nB$
and $\gamma$ arbitrarily close to $1_n$. So $l_A(\alpha) \leq l_A(\beta) + (n + 3)(n - 1)$, by Lemma 9
applied to $A$ instead of $B$. So, $e_n(A) \leq e_n(B) + (n + 3)(n - 1)$.

Proposition 3 is proved.

PROOF OF THEOREM 4. If the theorem is wrong, then for some $n \geq 2$ there is
a sequence $X(i)$ of normal topological spaces of dimension $d$ and $\alpha(i) \in SL_nA(i)$,
where $A(i) = C^X(i)$ or $C_0^X(i)$ depending on whether $A = C^X$ or $C_0^X$ in the theorem,
such that $\pi(\alpha(i)) = 0$ for all $i$ and $l_{A(i)}(\alpha(i)) \to \infty$. In the case $A = C_0^X$, we can
bring each $\alpha(i)$ to $SU_nA(i)$ by $(n + 6)(n - 1)/2$ addition operations [6, Lemma 21],
so we can assume that $\alpha(i) \in SU_nA(i)$.

We define $X$ to be the disjoint union of all $X(i)$. The matrices $\alpha(i) \in SL_nA(i)$
give a matrix $\alpha$ in $SL_nA$ whose restriction to $X(i)$ is $\alpha(i)$. We have $\pi(\alpha) = 0$. By
[1, 2], $\alpha$ belongs to the connected component of $1_n$, where $SL_nA$ is endowed with
the topology induced by the uniform convergence topology on $A$ (here we used that \( \pi_1(\text{SL}_n \mathbb{R}) \) is trivial).

It is known that this component coincides with $E_n A$. So $\alpha$ is a product of (finitely many) elementary matrices. Restriction to $X(i)$ yields that each $\alpha(i)$ is the product of a bounded (uniformly in $i$) number of elementary matrices over $A(i)$. This contradicts our choice of $\alpha(i)$ with $l_{A(i)}(\alpha(i)) \to \infty$.

So Theorem 4 is proved.

**Proof of Corollary 5.** In the case $A = \mathbb{C}^X$, we argue as in the proof of Proposition 3 to conclude that $l_A(\alpha) \leq l_B(\alpha) \leq l_A(\alpha) + (n+3)(n-1)$ for each $\alpha$ in $\text{SL}_n B$, hence $e_n(B) \leq e_n(A) + (n+3)(n-1)$, and that $e_n(A) \leq e_n(B) + (n+3)(n-1)$.

Thus, $|e_n(B) - e_n(A)| \leq (n+3)(n-1)$, so we can take $z'' = z' + (n+3)(n-1)$.

**References**


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