

# Channel Shaping Using Reconfigurable Intelligent Surfaces: From Diagonal Model to Beyond

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**Abstract**—This paper investigates how a passive Reconfigurable Intelligent Surface (RIS) can manipulate the Multiple-Input Multiple-Output (MIMO) point-to-point channel in terms of singular values and power gain. We depart from the widely-adopted diagonal phase shift model to a Beyond-Diagonal (BD) architecture, which enables cooperative wave scattering thanks to in-group connections between elements. An efficient and universal BD-RIS design framework is proposed over group-wise geodesic Riemannian Conjugate Gradient (RCG) on the Stiefel manifold, which performs multiplicative rotational (instead of add-then-retract) updates for faster convergence. For the singular value problem, we numerically characterize their Pareto frontiers by geodesic RCG and derive analytical bounds for rank-deficient channels and fully-connected (a.k.a. unitary) RIS. For the power gain problem, we provide a closed-form iterative solution by group-wise Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) that features even faster convergence. Those channel shaping designs have two major implications. First, they demystify the performance gain from off-diagonal entries in terms of subchannel rearrangement and subspace alignment. Second, they inspire a two-stage suboptimal solution that decouples joint active and passive beamforming design. As a side product, we tackle the BD-RIS-aided MIMO rate maximization problem by a local-optimal Alternating Optimization (AO) approach and a two-stage shaping-inspired approach. Simulation results indicate that the rate deficit from the latter diminishes as the RIS evolves from diagonal towards unitary, while the relative gain of BD-RIS increase with MIMO dimensions and decrease with spatial correlation.

**Index Terms**—Reconfigurable intelligent surface, multi-input multi-output, manifold optimization, channel shaping, rate maximization.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Today we are witnessing a paradigm shift from connectivity to intelligence, where the wireless environment is no longer a chaotic medium but a conscious agent that can serve on demand. This is empowered by the recent advances in Reconfigurable Intelligent Surface (RIS), a programmable metasurface that recycles and redistributes ambient electromagnetic waves for improved wireless performance. A typical RIS consists of numerous low-power sub-wavelength non-resonant scattering elements, whose response can be engineered in real-time to manipulate the amplitude, phase, frequency, and polarization of the scattered waves [1]. It not only experiences negligible noise and supports full-duplex transmissions, but also features better

flexibility than reflectarrays, lighter footprint than various relays, and greater scalability than conventional multi-antenna techniques. The most popular RIS application is *joint beamforming* design with transceivers, which has attracted significant attention in wireless communication [2]–[4], sensing [5]–[7], and power transfer literature [8]–[10]. Since coherent scattering can be decomposed as equal-gain combining and transmission, RIS elements usually offer a squared asymptotic performance (e.g., second-order array gain and fourth-order power scaling law [10]) than transceiver antennas. On the other hand, RIS can also be employed for *backscatter modulation* by periodically switching its reflection pattern. This creates a free-ride message stream (similar to index modulation [11]) that can be either integrated into the legacy transmitter for enhanced channel capacity [12]–[14], or exploited by surrounding low-power devices for energy-efficient uplink communications [15]–[17].

Despite the great potentials and fruitful outcomes, one critical unanswered question is the channel shaping capability: *To what extent can a passive RIS reshape Multiple-Input Multiple-Output (MIMO) channels?* The answer depends heavily on the scattering model and hardware architecture. Most existing works assumed that each scattering element is tuned by a dedicated impedance and acts as an *individual* phase shifter [18]. This ideally translates to a diagonal scattering matrix with unit-magnitude entries, which only controls the phase of the scattered waves but cannot redistribute their amplitude. The concept was soon generalized to Beyond-Diagonal (BD)-RIS [19] which physically groups adjacent elements using passive reconfigurable components.<sup>1</sup> This allows *cooperative* scattering — wave impinging on one element can propagate losslessly within the circuit and depart partially from any element in the same group. It can thus control both the amplitude and phase of the scattered wave without power loss, generalizing the scattering matrix to block-diagonal with unitary blocks. Such a powerful model can be realized at reduced hardware complexity using tree- and forest-connected architectures using graph theory [21]. BD-RIS can also function in hybrid transmitting-and-reflecting mode [22] and multi-sector mode [23] for full-space coverage and multi-user support. Many practical design challenges have been addressed including channel estimation [24], mutual coupling [25], and wideband modelling [26]. Its superiority has been studied extensively in Single-Input Single-Output (SISO) and Multiple-Input Single-Output (MISO) systems in terms of single-user Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR) maximization [19],

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<sup>1</sup>Those components can be either symmetric (e.g., capacitors and inductors) or asymmetric (e.g., ring hybrids and branch-line hybrids) [20], resulting in symmetric and asymmetric scattering matrices respectively.

[21], [27], [28] and multi-user Weighted Sum-Rate (WSR) maximization [23], [29]–[31]. When it comes to MIMO, most existing works are limited to very specific scenarios. For example, the authors of [32] investigated the rate-optimal joint beamforming design under the assumption of unitary RIS without direct link. Received power maximization problem is extended to MIMO for continuous-valued [27] and discrete-valued [33] scattering matrices, but they only considered single-stream transmission with given precoder and combiner (which is equivalent to SISO). Transmitter-side BD-RIS design over statistical Channel State Information (CSI) has been introduced to massive MIMO networks for improved spectral efficiency [34], but was again constrained to unitary RIS without direct link. A practical frequency-dependent BD-RIS model has been recently proposed for multi-band multi-cell MIMO networks to facilitate practical deployments [35]. Although the results are insightful, it remains unclear how the off-diagonal entries contribute to channel shaping and whether the relative gain of BD-RIS over diagonal RIS scales with MIMO dimensions.

Channel shaping is different from passive beamforming since the RIS is exploited as a stand-alone device to modify the inherent properties of the channel itself, instead of optimizing for a specific performance metric. This not only allows one to decouple the joint RIS-transceiver design, but also unveils the fundamental limits of wave manipulation and provides an all-in-one tool for various wireless applications. Relevant designs can be classified into two categories:

- *Singular value centric*: Focus on the singular values of the equivalent channel matrix, which are sensitive to minor perturbations but precisely related to the capacity and diversity-multiplexing trade-off. It has been mainly studied in terms of minimum singular value [36], effective rank [36], [37], condition number [38], [39], and degree of freedom [40]–[42].
- *Power centric*: Focus on the second-order characteristics of the equivalent channel matrix, which are useful in SISO and MISO but less informative in MIMO. It has been mainly studied in terms of channel power gain [2], [19], [21], [27], [28] and leakage interference [43].

While the above works offer promising glimpses into the channel shaping potential of passive RIS, they neither suggest the achievable singular value region nor address the most general scenario with direct link and arbitrary group size. On the other hand, BD-RIS has been mainly investigated for beamforming and its channel shaping potential in MIMO has not been fully understood. This paper aims for a comprehensive answer to the channel shaping question through theoretical analysis and numerical optimization. The contributions are summarized below.

First, we demystify the gain from off-diagonal entries of BD-RIS in terms of subchannel rearrangement and subspace alignment. Subchannel rearrangement is a unique feature of cooperative scattering that allows each group to rearrange and recombine the associated forward and backward subchannels. This translates to a higher design flexibility and better shaping capability by exploiting the spatial diversity. On the other hand, phase matching in SISO generalizes to subspace alignment in

MIMO and introduces a trade-off between the multiplicative backward-forward channel combination and the additive direct-indirect channel combination. As the MIMO dimensions expand, we show the benefits of BD-RIS in subchannel rearrangement and the limitations of diagonal RIS in subspace alignment become increasingly apparent. This is the first paper to unveil and interpret the potential of BD-RIS in multi-antenna systems.

Second, we exploit the Riemannian geometry of the Stiefel manifold and propose an efficient BD-RIS design framework based on geodesic<sup>2</sup> Riemannian Conjugate Gradient (RCG). This method modified from [44], [45] not only provides better objective value and faster convergence than general non-geodesic approach [46], [47], but also works for arbitrary group size and any smooth optimization problem. Specifically, group-wise multiplicative rotational updates are performed along the geodesics of the Stiefel manifold and compactly evaluated as the exponential map [48]. By exploiting the inherent structure of unitary matrices, this method avoids retractions from the Euclidean space and improves the computational efficiency and stability. This is the first work to tailor an efficient and universal optimization framework for BD-RIS.

Third, we quantify the capability of a BD-RIS to redistribute the singular values of a point-to-point MIMO channel. The Pareto frontiers are characterized by optimizing the weighted sum of singular values, where the weights can be positive, zero, or negative. This problem is solved by the proposed geodesic RCG algorithm. The resulting achievable singular value region generalizes most relevant metrics and provides an intuitive channel shaping benchmark. We also derive some analytical singular value bounds for rank-deficient MIMO and fully-connected (a.k.a. unitary) RIS. This is the first work to comprehensively answer the channel shaping capability question from a Pareto perspective.

Fourth, we tackle BD-RIS-aided MIMO achievable rate maximization problem with two beamforming solutions: a local-optimal approach via Alternating Optimization (AO) and a low-complexity approach over channel shaping. The former iteratively updates active beamforming by eigenmode transmission and passive beamforming by geodesic RCG until convergence. The latter suboptimally decouples the joint design into a channel power gain maximization subproblem and a conventional MIMO transmission subproblem, then propose a two-stage solution in closed form. Interestingly, the rate deficit from the latter diminishes as the RIS evolves from diagonal to unitary. It suggests that channel shaping offers a promising path towards simplified and practical BD-RIS (and transceiver) designs.

*Notation*: Italic, bold lower-case, and bold upper-case letters indicate scalars, vectors and matrices, respectively.  $j$  denotes the imaginary unit.  $\mathbb{C}$  represents the set of complex numbers.  $\mathbb{H}^{n \times n}$  and  $\mathbb{U}^{n \times n}$  denotes the set of  $n \times n$  Hermitian and unitary matrices, respectively.  $\mathbf{0}$  and  $\mathbf{I}$  are the all-zero and identity matrices with appropriate size, respectively.  $\Re\{\cdot\}$  takes the real part of a complex number.  $\arg(\cdot)$  gives the argument of a complex number.  $\text{tr}(\cdot)$  and  $\det(\cdot)$  evaluates the trace and determinant of a square matrix, respectively.

<sup>2</sup>A geodesic refers to the shortest path between two points in a Riemannian manifold.

$\text{diag}(\cdot)$  constructs a square matrix with arguments on the main diagonal and zeros elsewhere.  $\text{sv}(\cdot)$  returns the singular value vector.  $\sigma_n(\cdot)$  and  $\lambda_n(\cdot)$  is the  $n$ -th largest singular value and eigenvalue, respectively.  $(\cdot)^*$ ,  $(\cdot)^T$ ,  $(\cdot)^H$ ,  $(\cdot)^\dagger$ ,  $(\cdot)^{(r)}$ ,  $(\cdot)^*$  denote the conjugate, transpose, conjugate transpose (Hermitian), Moore-Penrose inverse,  $r$ -th iterated point, and stationary point, respectively.  $(\cdot)_{[x:y]}$  is a shortcut for  $(\cdot)_x, (\cdot)_{x+1}, \dots, (\cdot)_y$ .  $|\cdot|$ ,  $\|\cdot\|$ , and  $\|\cdot\|_F$  denote the absolute value, Euclidean norm, and Frobenius norm, respectively.  $\mathcal{CN}(\mathbf{0}, \Sigma)$  is the multivariate Circularly Symmetric Complex Gaussian (CSCG) distribution with mean  $\mathbf{0}$  and covariance  $\Sigma$ .  $\sim$  means “distributed as”.

## II. BD-RIS MODEL

Consider a BD-RIS aided point-to-point MIMO system with  $N_T$ ,  $N_S$ ,  $N_R$  transmit, scatter, and receive antennas, respectively. This configuration is denoted as  $N_T \times N_S \times N_R$  in the following context. The BD-RIS can be modeled as an  $N_S$ -port network [49] that further divides into  $G$  individual groups, each containing  $L \triangleq N_S/G$  elements interconnected by real-time reconfigurable components [19]. To simplify the analysis and explore the performance limits, we assume a lossless asymmetric network without mutual coupling between scattering elements, as previously considered in [22], [23], [32]. The overall scattering matrix of the BD-RIS is block-unitary

$$\Theta = \text{diag}(\Theta_1, \dots, \Theta_G), \quad (1)$$

where  $\Theta_g \in \mathbb{U}^{L \times L}$  is the  $g$ -th unitary block (i.e.,  $\Theta_g^H \Theta_g = \mathbf{I}$ ) that describes the response of group  $g \in \mathcal{G} \triangleq \{1, \dots, G\}$ . Note that diagonal and unitary RIS can be regarded as its extreme cases with group size  $L=1$  and  $L=N_S$ , respectively. Some potential physical architectures of BD-RIS are illustrated in [19, Fig. 3], [23, Fig. 5], and [21, Fig. 2], where the radiation pattern and circuit topology need to be modelled in the scattering matrix.

Let  $\mathbf{H}_D \in \mathbb{C}^{N_R \times N_T}$ ,  $\mathbf{H}_B \in \mathbb{C}^{N_R \times N_S}$ ,  $\mathbf{H}_F \in \mathbb{C}^{N_S \times N_T}$  denote the direct (transmitter-receiver), backward (RIS-receiver), and forward (transmitter-RIS) channels, respectively. The equivalent channel is a function of the scattering matrix

$$\mathbf{H} = \mathbf{H}_D + \mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{H}_F = \mathbf{H}_D + \sum_g \underbrace{\mathbf{H}_{B,g} \Theta_g \mathbf{H}_{F,g}}_{\triangleq \mathbf{H}_g}, \quad (2)$$

where  $\mathbf{H}_{B,g} \in \mathbb{C}^{N_R \times L}$  and  $\mathbf{H}_{F,g} \in \mathbb{C}^{L \times N_T}$  are the backward and forward subchannels for RIS group  $g$ , corresponding to the  $(g-1)L$  to  $gL$  columns of  $\mathbf{H}_B$  and rows of  $\mathbf{H}_F$ , respectively. Let  $\mathbf{H}_g \triangleq \mathbf{H}_{B,g} \Theta_g \mathbf{H}_{F,g}$  be the indirect channel via BD-RIS group  $g$ . Since unitary matrices constitute an algebraic group with respect to multiplication, the scattering matrix of group  $g$  can be decomposed as

$$\Theta_g = \mathbf{L}_g \mathbf{R}_g^H, \quad (3)$$

where  $\mathbf{L}_g, \mathbf{R}_g \in \mathbb{U}^{L \times L}$  are two unitary factor matrices. Let  $\mathbf{H}_{B,g} = \mathbf{U}_{B,g} \Sigma_{B,g} \mathbf{V}_{B,g}^H$  and  $\mathbf{H}_{F,g} = \mathbf{U}_{F,g} \Sigma_{F,g} \mathbf{V}_{F,g}^H$  be the compact Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) of the backward and forward channels, respectively. The equivalent channel can thus be rewritten as

$$\mathbf{H} = \mathbf{H}_D + \overbrace{\sum_g \mathbf{U}_{B,g} \Sigma_{B,g} \mathbf{V}_{B,g}^H \mathbf{L}_g \mathbf{R}_g^H \mathbf{U}_{F,g} \Sigma_{F,g} \mathbf{V}_{F,g}^H}^{\text{direct-indirect}}. \quad (4)$$

backwards-forward

By analyzing (4), we conclude that the off-diagonal entries of the BD-RIS scattering matrix provide two key potentials for MIMO channel shaping:

- *Subchannel rearrangement*: This unique feature of BD-RIS allows each group to rearrange and recombine the backward and forward subchannels by their strength. In SISO, diagonal RIS with perfect phase matching provides a maximum indirect channel amplitude of  $\sum_{n=1}^{N_S} |h_{B,n}| |h_{F,n}|$ , while BD-RIS can generalize it to  $\sum_{g=1}^G \sum_{l=1}^L |h_{B,\pi_{B,g}(l)}| |h_{F,\pi_{F,g}(l)}|$ , where  $\pi_{B,g}$  and  $\pi_{F,g}$  are permutations of  $\mathcal{L} \triangleq \{1, \dots, L\}$ . Note the first summation is over groups and the second summation is over permuted subchannels. By rearrangement inequality, the maximum is attained by pairing the  $l$ -th strongest backward and forward subchannels within each group. Since the number of subchannels associated with each group is proportional to  $N_T N_R$ , we conclude the advantage of BD-RIS in subchannel rearrangement scales with MIMO dimensions.
- *Subspace alignment*: Each group can align the singular vectors of the associated backward-forward (intra-group, multiplicative) channels and direct-indirect (inter-group, additive) channels. In SISO, subspace alignment boils down to phase matching and the optimal scattering matrix of group  $g$  that maximizes the channel gain is

$$\Theta_g^* = \exp(j \arg(h_D)) \mathbf{V}_{B,g} \mathbf{U}_{F,g}^H, \quad (5)$$

where  $\mathbf{V}_{B,g} = [\mathbf{h}_{B,g}/\|\mathbf{h}_{B,g}\|, \mathbf{N}_{B,g}] \in \mathbb{U}^{L \times L}$ ,  $\mathbf{U}_{F,g} = [\mathbf{h}_{F,g}/\|\mathbf{h}_{F,g}\|, \mathbf{N}_{F,g}] \in \mathbb{U}^{L \times L}$ , and  $\mathbf{N}_{B,g}, \mathbf{N}_{F,g} \in \mathbb{C}^{L \times (L-1)}$  are the orthonormal bases of the null spaces of  $\mathbf{h}_{B,g}$  and  $\mathbf{h}_{F,g}$ , respectively. Diagonal RIS ( $L=1$ , empty null spaces) thus suffices for perfect phase matching in SISO. When it comes to MIMO, each individual scattering element can only apply a common phase shift to the “pinhole” indirect channel  $\mathbf{H}_g \in \mathbb{C}^{N_R \times N_T}$  passing through itself. That is, the disadvantage of diagonal RIS in subspace alignment scales with MIMO dimensions. As will be shown later, even if the BD-RIS is unitary, there still exists a tradeoff between the alignment of direct-indirect and backward-forward subspaces.

## III. GROUP-WISE GEODESIC RCG

In this section, we first provide an overview on signal processing techniques for general BD-RIS design problems, then propose a novel group-wise geodesic RCG method that exploits the properties of unitary group to operate directly on the Stiefel manifold. We will later show that the proposed method not only provides better objective value and faster convergence than other approaches, but also works for arbitrary group size and any smooth optimization problem.

### A. Conventional Techniques

General BD-RIS design techniques can be classified into two categories based on the optimization variable and hardware architecture:

- *Scattering matrix  $\Theta$* : This approach is often exploited for asymmetric architectures where the feasible domain

of each group is a  $L$ -dimensional Stiefel manifold  $\Theta_g \in \mathbb{U}^{L \times L}$ . Due to its non-convexity, relevant problems are usually solved by general non-geodesic manifold optimization [22], [23], [32] or relax-then-project methods [29]. The former will be discussed in the next subsection.

- **Reactance matrix  $\mathbf{X}$ :** This approach is often exploited for symmetric architectures where every pair of elements in the same group are connected by capacitors and inductors. According to network theory [50], it maps to the scattering matrix by  $\Theta_g = (j\mathbf{X}_g + Z_0\mathbf{I})^{-1}(j\mathbf{X}_g - Z_0\mathbf{I})$ , which formulates an unconstrained optimization problem on the upper triangular entries of  $\{\mathbf{X}_g\}_{g \in \mathcal{G}}$  that is solvable by quasi-Newton methods [19].

### B. Geodesic vs Non-Geodesic RCG

We first revisit the general non-geodesic RCG method that is applicable to optimization problems over arbitrary manifolds [46], [47]. The main idea is to perform *additive* updates along the conjugate direction guided by the Riemannian gradient, then project the solution back onto the manifold. For maximization problem with smooth objective  $f$  and block-unitary constraint (1), the steps for BD-RIS group  $g$  at iteration  $r$  are summarized below:

- 1) *Compute the Euclidean gradient [51]:* The gradient of  $f$  with respect to  $\Theta_g^*$  in the Euclidean space is

$$\nabla_{\mathbf{E},g}^{(r)} = \frac{\partial f(\Theta_g^{(r)})}{\partial \Theta_g^*}; \quad (6)$$

- 2) *Translate to the Riemannian gradient [46]:* At point  $\Theta^{(r)}$ , the Riemannian gradient lies in the tangent space of the Stiefel manifold  $\mathcal{T}_{\Theta_g^{(r)}} \mathbb{U}^{L \times L} \triangleq \{\mathbf{M} \mid \mathbf{M}^H \Theta_g^{(r)} + \Theta_g^{(r)H} \mathbf{M} = \mathbf{0}\}$ . It gives the steepest ascent direction of the objective on the manifold can be obtained by projecting the Euclidean gradient onto the tangent space:

$$\nabla_{\mathbf{R},g}^{(r)} = \nabla_{\mathbf{E},g}^{(r)} - \Theta_g^{(r)} \nabla_{\mathbf{E},g}^{(r)H} \Theta_g^{(r)}; \quad (7)$$

- 3) *Determine the conjugate direction [52]:* The conjugate direction is obtained over the Riemannian gradient and previous direction as

$$\mathbf{D}_g^{(r)} = \nabla_{\mathbf{R},g}^{(r)} + \gamma_g^{(r)} \mathbf{D}_g^{(r-1)}, \quad (8)$$

where  $\gamma_g^{(r)}$  is the parameter that deviates the conjugate direction from the tangent space for accelerated convergence. A popular choice is the Polak-Ribière formula

$$\gamma_g^{(r)} = \frac{\text{tr}((\nabla_{\mathbf{R},g}^{(r)} - \nabla_{\mathbf{R},g}^{(r-1)}) \nabla_{\mathbf{R},g}^{(r)H})}{\text{tr}(\nabla_{\mathbf{R},g}^{(r-1)} \nabla_{\mathbf{R},g}^{(r-1)H})}; \quad (9)$$

- 4) *Perform additive update [47]:* The point is updated by moving along a straight path in the conjugate direction

$$\bar{\Theta}_g^{(r+1)} = \Theta_g^{(r)} + \mu \mathbf{D}_g^{(r)}, \quad (10)$$

where  $\gamma$  is the step size refinable by the Armijo rule [53];

- 5) *Retract for feasibility [22], [46]:* The resulting point needs to be projected back onto the Stiefel manifold by

$$\Theta_g^{(r+1)} = \bar{\Theta}_g^{(r+1)} (\bar{\Theta}_g^{(r+1)H} \bar{\Theta}_g^{(r+1)})^{-1/2}. \quad (11)$$

One can also combine the addition (10) and retraction (11) in one step

$$\Theta_g^{(r+1)} = (\Theta_g^{(r)} + \mu \mathbf{D}_g^{(r)}) (\mathbf{I} + \mu^2 \mathbf{D}_g^{(r)H} \mathbf{D}_g^{(r)})^{-1/2}, \quad (12)$$

and determine the step size therein.

A geodesic is a curve representing the shortest path between two points in a Riemannian manifold, whose tangent vectors remain parallel when transported along the curve. The above method is called non-geodesic since the points are updated in the linear embedding spaces of the manifold by addition and retraction, instead of on the Stiefel manifold itself. Next, we revisit some concepts in differential geometry and introduce a group-wise geodesic RCG method on top of [44], [45].

A Lie group is simultaneously a continuous group and a differentiable manifold. Lie algebra refers to the tangent space of the Lie group at the identity element. The exponential map acts as a bridge between the Lie algebra and Lie group, which allows one to recapture the local group structure using linear algebra techniques. Since unitary matrices forms a Lie group that is closed under multiplication and inversion, and the corresponding geodesic emanating from  $\Theta_g$  with a velocity matrix  $\mathbf{S}$  can be described by [48]

$$\mathbf{G}_g = \exp(t\mathbf{S})\Theta_g, \quad (13)$$

Inspired by [44], [45], we propose a group-wise RCG algorithm along the geodesics on the Lie group of unitary matrices  $\mathbb{U}^{L \times L}$ . It leverages the fact that unitary matrices are closed under multiplication. At iteration  $r$ , the gradient is computed in the Euclidean space and translated to the Riemannian manifold [46] on the Stiefel manifold, the geodesic emanating from  $\Theta_g^{(r)}$  with velocity  $\mathbf{D}_g^{(r)}$  and step size  $\mu$  is described compactly by the exponential map [48]

$$\mathbf{G}_g^{(r)}(\mu) = \exp(\mu \mathbf{D}_g^{(r)}) \Theta_g^{(r)}. \quad (14)$$

An appropriate  $\mu^*$  can be obtained by the Armijo rule [53].<sup>3</sup> Finally, the scattering matrix is updated along the geodesic as

$$\Theta_g^{(r+1)} = \mathbf{G}_g^{(r)}(\mu^*). \quad (15)$$

It is worth mentioning that the updates can be performed in parallel for all groups, which is particularly suitable for large-scale BD-RIS optimization problems. One can also avoid group-wise updates by treating the entire scattering matrix as a single optimization variable, but this may lead to higher computational complexity and slower convergence.

Algorithm 1 summarizes the proposed group-wise geodesic RCG method for smooth maximization problems of asymmetric BD-RIS. Convergence to stationary points is guaranteed.

**Remark 1.** Compared with universal manifold optimization [46], [47], Algorithm 1 inherits a trifold benefit from [44], [45]:

- 1) No retraction thanks to rotational update (14), (15);
- 2) Lower computational complexity per iteration;
- 3) Faster convergence thanks to proper parameter space.

<sup>3</sup>To double the step size, one only need to square the rotation matrix instead of recomputing the matrix exponential, i.e.,  $\exp(2\mu \mathbf{D}_g^{(r)}) = \exp^2(\mu \mathbf{D}_g^{(r)})$ .

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**Algorithm 1:** Group-wise geodesic RCG for asymmetric BD-RIS
 

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**Input:**  $f(\Theta)$ ,  $G$ 
**Output:**  $\Theta^*$ 

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1: Initialize  $r \leftarrow 0$ ,  $\Theta^{(0)}$ 
2: Repeat
3:   For  $g \leftarrow 1$  to  $G$ 
4:      $\nabla_{E,g}^{(r)} \leftarrow (6)$ 
5:      $\nabla_{R,g}^{(r)} \leftarrow (7)$ 
6:      $\gamma_g^{(r)} \leftarrow (9)$ 
7:      $\mathbf{D}_g^{(r)} \leftarrow (8)$ 
8:     If  $\Re\{\text{tr}(\mathbf{D}_g^{(r)\text{H}} \nabla_{R,g}^{(r)})\} < 0$   $\triangleright$  not an ascent direction
9:        $\mathbf{D}_g^{(r)} \leftarrow \nabla_{R,g}^{(r)}$ 
10:    End If
11:     $\mu \leftarrow 1$ 
12:     $\mathbf{G}_g^{(r)}(\mu) \leftarrow (14)$ 
13:    While  $f(\mathbf{G}_g^{(r)}(2\mu)) - f(\Theta_g^{(r)}) \geq \mu \cdot \text{tr}(\mathbf{D}_g^{(r)} \mathbf{D}_g^{(r)\text{H}})/2$ 
14:       $\mu \leftarrow 2\mu$ 
15:    End While
16:    While  $f(\mathbf{G}_g^{(r)}(\mu)) - f(\Theta_g^{(r)}) < \mu/2 \cdot \text{tr}(\mathbf{D}_g^{(r)} \mathbf{D}_g^{(r)\text{H}})/2$ 
17:       $\mu \leftarrow \mu/2$ 
18:    End While
19:     $\Theta_g^{(r+1)} \leftarrow (15)$ 
20:  End For
21:   $r \leftarrow r+1$ 
22: Until  $|f(\Theta^{(r)}) - f(\Theta^{(r-1)})|/f(\Theta^{(r-1)}) \leq \epsilon$ 

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#### IV. CHANNEL SINGULAR VALUES REDISTRIBUTION

##### A. Toy Example

We first illustrate the channel shaping capabilities of different RIS architectures by a toy example. Consider a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  setup where the direct link is blocked. The diagonal RIS is modeled by  $\Theta_D = \text{diag}(e^{j\theta_1}, e^{j\theta_2})$  while the unitary BD-RIS has 4 independent angular parameters

$$\Theta_U = e^{j\phi} \begin{bmatrix} e^{j\alpha} \cos\psi & e^{j\beta} \sin\psi \\ -e^{-j\beta} \sin\psi & e^{-j\alpha} \cos\psi \end{bmatrix}. \quad (16)$$

It is worth noting that  $\phi$  has no impact on the singular value because  $\text{sv}(e^{j\phi} \mathbf{A}) = \text{sv}(\mathbf{A})$ . For a fair comparison, we also enforce symmetry  $\Theta_U = \Theta_U^T$  by  $\beta = \pi/2$  such that both architectures have the same number of angular parameters. Fig. 1 shows the channel singular values achieved by an exhaustive grid search over  $(\theta_1, \theta_2)$  for diagonal RIS and  $(\alpha, \psi)$  for symmetric unitary RIS. It is observed that both singular values can be manipulated up to 9% using diagonal RIS and 42% using symmetric BD-RIS, despite both architectures have the same number of scattering elements. A larger performance gap is expected when the symmetric constraint on (16) can be relaxed. This example shows BD-RIS can provide a wider dynamic range of channel singular values and motivates further studies on channel shaping.

##### B. Pareto Frontier Characterization

We then characterize the Pareto frontier of channel singular values by maximizing their weighted sum

$$\max_{\Theta} \sum_n \rho_n \sigma_n(\mathbf{H}) \quad (17a)$$

$$\text{s.t. } \Theta_g^H \Theta_g = \mathbf{I}, \quad \forall g, \quad (17b)$$

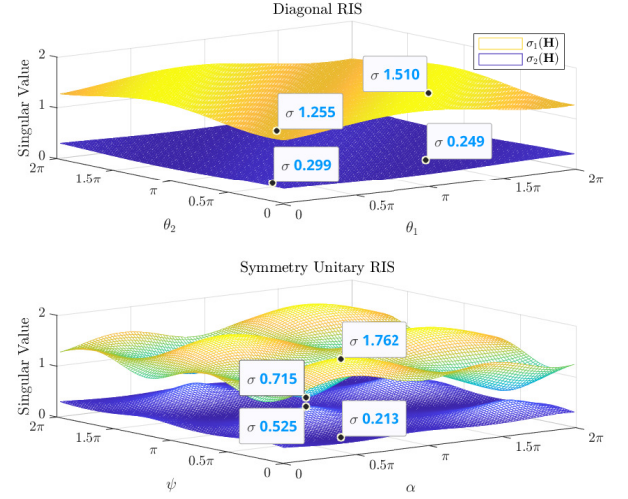


Fig. 1.  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (no direct) channel singular value shaping by diagonal and symmetry unitary RIS.

where  $n \in \mathcal{N} \triangleq \{1, \dots, N\}$ ,  $N \triangleq \min(N_T, N_R)$  is the maximum channel rank, and  $\rho_n$  is the weight of the  $n$ -th singular value that can be positive, zero, or negative. Varying  $\{\rho_n\}_{n \in \mathcal{N}}$  characterizes the Pareto frontier that encloses the entire achievable singular value region. Thus, we claim (17) generalizes most relevant channel shaping problems.

**Lemma 1.** *The Euclidean gradient of (17a) w.r.t. BD-RIS group  $g$  is*

$$\frac{\partial \sum_n \rho_n \sigma_n(\mathbf{H})}{\partial \Theta_g^*} = \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^H \mathbf{U} \text{diag}(\rho_1, \dots, \rho_N) \mathbf{V}^H \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^H, \quad (18)$$

where  $\mathbf{U}$  and  $\mathbf{V}$  are the left and right singular matrices of  $\mathbf{H}$ , respectively.

*Proof.* Please refer to Appendix A.  $\square$

Algorithm 1 can thus be invoked for the Pareto singular value problem (17) where line 4 uses (18) explicitly.

##### C. Some Analytical Bounds

We then discuss some analytical bounds related to channel singular values.

**Proposition 1** (degree of freedom). *In point-to-point MIMO, BD-RIS cannot achieve a higher Degree of Freedom (DoF) than diagonal RIS.*

*Proof.* Please refer to Appendix B.  $\square$

**Proposition 2** (rank-deficient channel). *If the forward or backward channel is rank- $k$ , then regardless of the RIS size and architecture, the  $n$ -th singular value of the equivalent channel is bounded by*

$$\sigma_n(\mathbf{H}) \leq \sigma_{n-k}(\mathbf{T}), \quad \text{if } n > k, \quad (19)$$

$$\sigma_n(\mathbf{H}) \geq \sigma_n(\mathbf{T}), \quad \text{if } n < N - k + 1, \quad (20)$$

where

$$\mathbf{T}\mathbf{T}^H = \begin{cases} \mathbf{H}_D(\mathbf{I} - \mathbf{V}_F\mathbf{V}_F^H)\mathbf{H}_D^H, & \text{if } \text{rank}(\mathbf{H}_F) = k, \\ \mathbf{H}_D^H(\mathbf{I} - \mathbf{U}_B\mathbf{U}_B^H)\mathbf{H}_D, & \text{if } \text{rank}(\mathbf{H}_B) = k, \end{cases} \quad (21)$$

and  $\mathbf{V}_F$  and  $\mathbf{U}_B$  are the right and left compact singular matrices of  $\mathbf{H}_F$  and  $\mathbf{H}_B$ , respectively.

*Proof.* Please refer to Appendix C.  $\square$

**Corollary 2.1** (extreme singular values). *With a sufficiently large RIS, the first  $k$  channel singular values are unbounded above while the last  $k$  channel singular values can be suppressed to zero.*

**Corollary 2.2** (Line-of-Sight (LoS) channel<sup>4</sup>). *If the forward or backward channel is LoS, then a RIS can at most enlarge (resp. suppress) the  $n$ -th ( $n \geq 2$ ) channel singular value to the  $(n-1)$ -th (resp.  $n$ -th) singular value of  $\mathbf{T}$ , that is,*

$$\sigma_1(\mathbf{H}) \geq \sigma_1(\mathbf{T}) \geq \sigma_2(\mathbf{H}) \geq \dots \geq \sigma_{N-1}(\mathbf{T}) \geq \sigma_N(\mathbf{H}) \geq \sigma_N(\mathbf{T}). \quad (22)$$

In Section VI, we will show by simulation that a finite-size BD-RIS can approach those bounds better than diagonal RIS.

**Proposition 3** (unitary RIS without direct link). *If the BD-RIS is unitary and the direct link is absent, then the channel singular values can be manipulated up to*

$$\text{sv}(\mathbf{H}) = \text{sv}(\mathbf{B}\mathbf{F}), \quad (23)$$

where  $\mathbf{B}$  and  $\mathbf{F}$  are arbitrary matrices with the same singular values as  $\mathbf{H}_B$  and  $\mathbf{H}_F$ , respectively,

*Proof.* Please refer to Appendix D.  $\square$

The problem now becomes how the singular values of matrix product are bounded by the singular values of its individual factors. Let  $N' = \max(N_T, N_S, N_R)$  and  $\sigma_n(\mathbf{H}) = \sigma_n(\mathbf{H}_F) = \sigma_n(\mathbf{H}_B) = 0$  for  $N < n \leq N'$ . We have the following corollaries.

**Corollary 3.1** (generic singular value bounds [55]).

$$\prod_{k \in K} \sigma_k(\mathbf{H}) \leq \prod_{i \in I} \sigma_i(\mathbf{H}_B) \prod_{j \in J} \sigma_j(\mathbf{H}_F), \quad (24)$$

for all admissible triples  $(I, J, K) \in T_r^{N'}$  with  $r < N'$ , where

$$\begin{aligned} T_r^{N'} &\triangleq \left\{ (I, J, K) \in U_r^{N'} \mid \forall p < r, (F, G, H) \in T_p^r, \right. \\ &\quad \left. \sum_{f \in F} i_f + \sum_{g \in G} j_g \leq \sum_{h \in H} k_h + p(p+1)/2 \right\}, \\ U_r^{N'} &\triangleq \left\{ (I, J, K) \mid \sum_{i \in I} i + \sum_{j \in J} j = \sum_{k \in K} k + r(r+1)/2 \right\}. \end{aligned}$$

**Corollary 3.2** (upper bound on the largest singular value).

$$\sigma_1(\mathbf{H}) \leq \sigma_1(\mathbf{H}_B) \sigma_1(\mathbf{H}_F). \quad (25)$$

**Corollary 3.3** (upper bound on the product of first  $k$  singular values).

$$\prod_{n=1}^k \sigma_n(\mathbf{H}) \leq \prod_{n=1}^k \sigma_n(\mathbf{H}_B) \prod_{n=1}^k \sigma_n(\mathbf{H}_F). \quad (26)$$

<sup>4</sup>A similar result has been derived for diagonal RIS in [54].

**Corollary 3.4** (upper bound on the sum of first  $k$  singular values to the power of  $p$ ).

$$\sum_{n=1}^k \sigma_n^p(\mathbf{H}) \leq \sum_{n=1}^k \sigma_n^p(\mathbf{H}_B) \sigma_n^p(\mathbf{H}_F), \quad p > 0. \quad (27)$$

When  $k = N'$  and  $p = 2$ , (27) suggests the channel power is upper bounded by the sum of (sorted) element-wise power product of backward and forward subchannels.

Tight bounds are inapplicable when a MIMO direct link is present, as the RIS needs to balance the direct-indirect (additive) and backward-forward (multiplicative) subspace alignments. Such a balance often involves optimization approaches and another example will be discussed in Section V-B.

## V. ACHIEVABLE RATE MAXIMIZATION

The MIMO achievable rate maximization problem is formulated w.r.t. joint active and passive beamforming

$$\max_{\mathbf{W}, \Theta} R = \log \det \left( \mathbf{I} + \frac{\mathbf{W}^H \mathbf{H}^H \mathbf{H} \mathbf{W}}{\eta} \right) \quad (28a)$$

$$\text{s.t.} \quad \|\mathbf{W}\|_F^2 \leq P, \quad (28b)$$

$$\Theta_g^H \Theta_g = \mathbf{I}, \quad \forall g, \quad (28c)$$

where  $\mathbf{W}$  is the transmit precoder,  $R$  is the achievable rate,  $\eta$  is the noise power, and  $P$  is the transmit power budget. Two methods are proposed below to solve problem (28).

### A. Alternating Optimization

Consider an AO approach that updates  $\Theta$  and  $\mathbf{W}$  iteratively. For a given  $\mathbf{W}$ , the passive beamforming subproblem is

$$\max_{\Theta} \log \det \left( \mathbf{I} + \frac{\mathbf{H} \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{H}^H}{\eta} \right) \quad (29a)$$

$$\text{s.t.} \quad \Theta_g^H \Theta_g = \mathbf{I}, \quad \forall g, \quad (29b)$$

where  $\mathbf{Q} \triangleq \mathbf{W} \mathbf{W}^H$  is the transmit covariance matrix.

**Lemma 2.** *The Euclidean gradient of (29a) w.r.t. BD-RIS block  $g$  is*

$$\frac{\partial R}{\partial \Theta_g^*} = \frac{1}{\eta} \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^H \left( \mathbf{I} + \frac{\mathbf{H} \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{H}^H}{\eta} \right)^{-1} \mathbf{H} \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^H. \quad (30)$$

*Proof.* Please refer to Appendix E.  $\square$

Algorithm 1 is then invoked to solve problem (28) where line 4 uses (30) explicitly. Since (29a) is a concave function of  $\Theta$ , convergence to local-optimal points is guaranteed. On the other hand, the global optimal transmit precoder for a fixed  $\Theta$  is given by the eigenmode transmission [56]

$$\mathbf{W}^* = \mathbf{V} \mathbf{S}^{*1/2}, \quad (31)$$

where  $\mathbf{V}$  is the right channel singular matrix and  $\mathbf{S}^*$  is the optimal water-filling power allocation matrix. The overall AO algorithm converges to local-optimal points of problem (28) since each subproblem is solved optimally and the objective is bounded above.



### B. Low-Complexity Solution

We then propose a low-complexity solution to problem (28) based on channel shaping. The passive beamforming subproblem (29) involves transmit covariance matrix  $\mathbf{Q}$  and thus requires iterative RCG update. Instead, we decouple the joint RIS-transceiver design by recasting (29) as channel power maximization

$$\max_{\Theta} \|\mathbf{H}_D + \mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{H}_F\|_F^2 \quad (32a)$$

$$\text{s.t. } \Theta_g^H \Theta_g = \mathbf{I}, \quad \forall g. \quad (32b)$$

**Remark 2.** As mentioned in Section IV-C, the key of solving (32) is to balance the additive and multiplicative subspace alignments. Problem (32) is very similar (in terms of maximizing the inner product of  $\mathbf{H}_D$  and  $\mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{H}_F$ ) to the weighted orthogonal Procrustes problem [57]

$$\min_{\Theta} \|\mathbf{H}_D - \mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{H}_F\|_F^2 \quad (33a)$$

$$\text{s.t. } \Theta^H \Theta = \mathbf{I}, \quad (33b)$$

which has no trivial solution. One lossy transformation, by moving  $\Theta$  to one side [58], formulates standard orthogonal Procrustes problems

$$\min_{\Theta} \|\mathbf{H}_B^\dagger \mathbf{H}_D - \Theta \mathbf{H}_F\|_F^2 \text{ or } \|\mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{H}_F^\dagger - \mathbf{H}_B \Theta\|_F^2 \quad (34a)$$

$$\text{s.t. } \Theta^H \Theta = \mathbf{I}, \quad (34b)$$

which has global optimal solutions

$$\Theta^* = \mathbf{U} \mathbf{V}^H \quad (35)$$

where  $\mathbf{U}$  and  $\mathbf{V}$  are the left and right singular matrices of  $\mathbf{H}_B^\dagger \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{H}_F^\dagger$  or  $\mathbf{H}_B^\dagger \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{H}_F^\dagger$  [59]. This suboptimal solution only applies to unitary BD-RIS.

Inspired by [60], we propose a general solution to problem (32) with arbitrary group size. The idea is to successively approximate the quadratic objective (32a) by local Taylor expansions and solve each step in closed form.

**Proposition 4.** Starting from any  $\Theta^{(0)} \in \mathbb{U}^{N_S \times N_S}$ , the sequence

$$\Theta_g^{(r+1)} = \mathbf{U}_g^{(r)} \mathbf{V}_g^{(r)}, \quad \forall g. \quad (36)$$

converges to a stationary point of (32), where  $\mathbf{U}_g^{(r)}$  and  $\mathbf{V}_g^{(r)}$  are the left and right compact singular matrix of

$$\mathbf{M}_g^{(r)} = \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^H \left( \mathbf{H}_D + \mathbf{H}_B \text{diag}(\Theta_{[1:g-1]}^{(r+1)}, \Theta_{[g:G]}^{(r)}) \mathbf{H}_F \right) \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^H \quad (37)$$

*Proof.* Please refer to Appendix F.  $\square$

Once the channel shaping problem (32) is solved, the transmit precoder can be obtained by (31). This two-stage approach decouples both blocks and is computationally efficient.

## VI. SIMULATION RESULTS

In this section, we provide numerical results to evaluate the proposed BD-RIS designs. Consider a distance-dependent path loss model  $\Lambda(d) = \Lambda_0 d^{-\gamma}$  where  $\Lambda_0$  is the reference path loss at distance 1 m,  $d$  is the propagation distance, and  $\gamma$  is the path loss exponent. The small-scale fading model

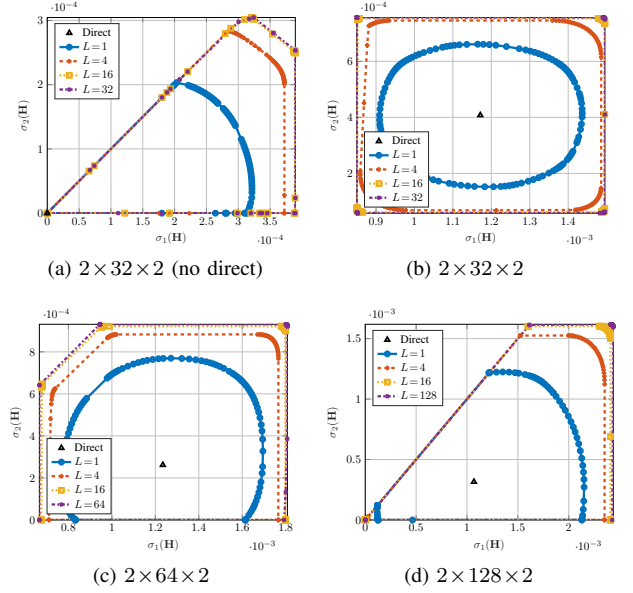


Fig. 2. Pareto frontiers of singular values of a 2T2R channel reshaped by a RIS.

is  $\mathbf{H} = \sqrt{\kappa/(1+\kappa)} \mathbf{H}_{\text{LoS}} + \sqrt{1/(1+\kappa)} \mathbf{H}_{\text{NLoS}}$ , where  $\kappa$  is the Rician  $K$ -factor,  $\mathbf{H}_{\text{LoS}}$  is the deterministic LoS component, and  $\mathbf{H}_{\text{NLoS}} \sim \mathcal{CN}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$  is the Rayleigh component. We set  $\Lambda_0 = -30$  dB,  $d_D = 14.7$  m,  $d_F = 10$  m,  $d_B = 6.3$  m,  $\gamma_D = 3$ ,  $\gamma_F = 2.4$  and  $\gamma_B = 2$  for reference, which corresponds to a typical indoor environment with  $\Lambda_D = -65$  dB,  $\Lambda_F = -54$  dB,  $\Lambda_B = -46$  dB. The indirect path via RIS is thus 35 dB weaker than the direct path.  $\kappa=0$  is assumed for all channels unless otherwise specified.

### A. Channel Singular Values Redistribution

1) *Pareto Frontier:* Fig. 2 shows the Pareto singular values of a 2T2R MIMO reshaped by a RIS. When the direct link is absent, the achievable regions in Fig. 2(a) are shaped like pizza slices. This is because  $\sigma_1(\mathbf{H}) \geq \sigma_2(\mathbf{H}) \geq 0$  and there exists a tradeoff between aligning the two subspaces. We observe that the smallest singular value is enhanced up to  $2 \times 10^{-4}$  by diagonal RIS and  $3 \times 10^{-4}$  by unitary BD-RIS, corresponding to a 50 % gain. When the direct link is present, the shape of the singular value region depends heavily on the relative strength of the indirect link. In Fig. 2(b), a 32-element RIS is insufficient to compensate the 35 dB path loss imbalance and results in a limited singular value region that is symmetric around the direct point. As the group size  $L$  increases, the shape of the region evolves from elliptical to square. This transformation not only provides a better tradeoff in subchannel manipulation but also improves the dynamic range of  $\sigma_1(\mathbf{H})$  and  $\sigma_2(\mathbf{H})$  by 22 % and 38 %, respectively. The achievable singular value region also enlarges as the number of scattering elements  $N_S$  increases. In particular, Fig. 2(d) shows that the equivalent channel can be completely nulled by a 128-element BD-RIS but not by a diagonal one. Those results demonstrate the superior channel shaping capability of BD-RIS for better signal enhancement and interference suppression.

TABLE I  
AVERAGE PERFORMANCE OF BD-RIS DESIGNS

RCG path	$N_S = 16$			$N_S = 256$		
	Objective	Iterations	Time [s]	Objective	Iterations	Time [s]
Geodesic	$4.359 \times 10^{-3}$	11.59	$1.839 \times 10^{-2}$	$1.163 \times 10^{-2}$	25.58	3.461
Non-geodesic	$4.329 \times 10^{-3}$	30.92	$5.743 \times 10^{-2}$	$1.116 \times 10^{-2}$	61.40	13.50

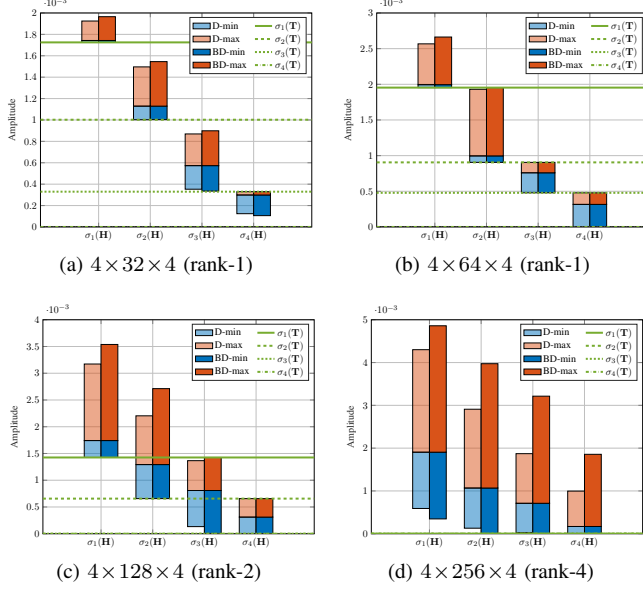


Fig. 3. Achievable channel singular values: analytical bounds (green lines) and numerical optimization results (blue and red bars). ‘D’ means diagonal RIS and ‘BD’ means unitary BD-RIS. ‘rank- $k$ ’ refers to the forward channel.

2) *Analytical Bounds and Numerical Results:* Fig. 3 illustrates the analytical singular value bounds in Proposition 2 and the numerical results obtained by solving problem (17) with  $\rho_n = \pm 1$  and  $\rho_{n'} = 0, \forall n' \neq n$ . Here we assume a rank- $k$  forward channel without loss of generality. When the RIS is in the vicinity of the transmitter, Figs. 3(a) and 3(b) show that the achievable channel singular values indeed satisfy Corollary 2.2, namely  $\sigma_1(\mathbf{H}) \geq \sigma_1(\mathbf{T}), \sigma_2(\mathbf{T}) \leq \sigma_2(\mathbf{H}) \leq \sigma_1(\mathbf{T})$ , etc. It is obvious that BD-RIS can approach those bounds better than diagonal RIS especially for a small  $N_S$ . Another example is given in Fig. 3(c) with rank-2 forward channel. The first two channel singular values are unbounded above and bounded below by the first two singular values of  $\mathbf{T}$ , while the last two singular values can be suppressed to zero and bounded above by the first two singular values of  $\mathbf{T}$ . Those observations align with Proposition 2 and Corollary 2.1. Finally, Fig. 3(d) confirms there are no extra singular value bounds when both forward and backward channels are full-rank. This can be predicted from (21) where the compact singular matrix  $\mathbf{V}_F$  becomes unitary and  $\mathbf{T} = \mathbf{0}$ . The numerical results are consistent with the analytical bounds, and we conclude that the channel shaping advantage of BD-RIS over diagonal RIS scales with forward and backward channel ranks.

Fig. 4 compares the analytical channel power bound in Corollary 3.4 with  $k = N'$ ,  $p = 2$  and the numerical results

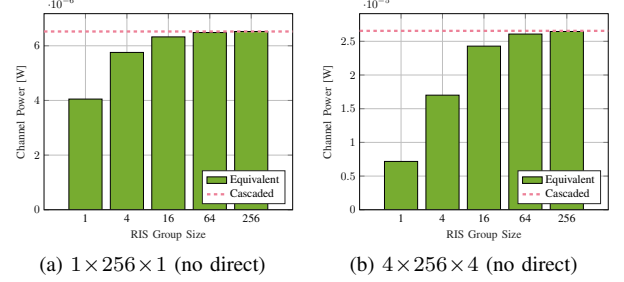


Fig. 4. Average maximum channel power versus BD-RIS group size and MIMO dimensions. ‘Cascaded’ refers to the available power of the cascaded channel, i.e., the sum of (sorted) element-wise power product of backward and forward subchannels.

obtained by solving problem (32) when the direct link is absent. Here, a unitary BD-RIS can attain the upper bound either in closed form (??) or via optimization approach (36). For the SISO case in Fig. 4(a), the maximum channel power is approximately  $4 \times 10^{-6}$  by diagonal RIS and  $6.5 \times 10^{-6}$  by unitary BD-RIS, corresponding to a 62.5 % gain. This aligns with the asymptotic BD-RIS scaling law derived for SISO in [19]. Interestingly, the gain surges to 270 % in 4T4R MIMO as shown in Fig. 4(b). This is because subspace alignment boils down to phase matching in SISO such that both triangular and Cauchy-Schwarz inequalities in [19, (50)] can be simultaneously tight regardless of the group size. That is, diagonal RIS is sufficient for subspace alignment in SISO while the 62.5 % gain from BD-RIS comes purely from subchannel rearrangement (i.e., pairing the forward and backward channels from strongest to weakest). Now consider a diagonal RIS in MIMO. Each element can only apply a common phase shift to the associated rank-1  $N_R \times N_T$  indirect channel. Therefore, perfect subspace alignment of indirect channels through different elements is generally impossible. It means the disadvantage of diagonal RIS in subspace alignment and subchannel rearrangement scales with MIMO dimensions. We thus conclude that the power gain of BD-RIS scales with group size and MIMO dimensions.

### B. Achievable Rate Maximization

We first focus on channel shaping subproblem (46). Fig. 5 shows the achievable channel power under different RIS configurations. An interesting observation is that the relative power gain of BD-RIS over diagonal RIS is even larger with direct link. For example, a 64-element fully BD-RIS can almost provide the same channel power as a 256-element diagonal RIS in Fig. 5b, but not in Fig. 5a. This is because the RIS needs to balance the multiplicative forward-backward



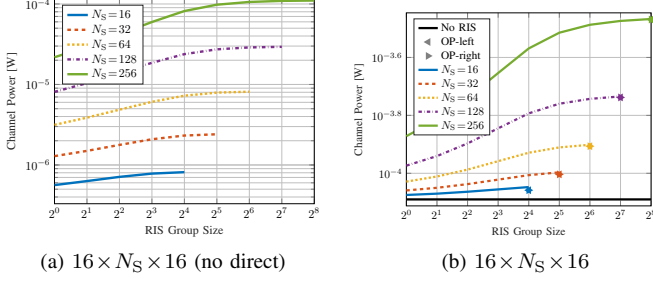


Fig. 5. Average maximum channel power versus RIS configuration. ‘OP-left’ and ‘OP-right’ refer to the suboptimal solutions to problem (32) by lossy transformation (34) where  $\Theta$  is to the left and right of the product, respectively.

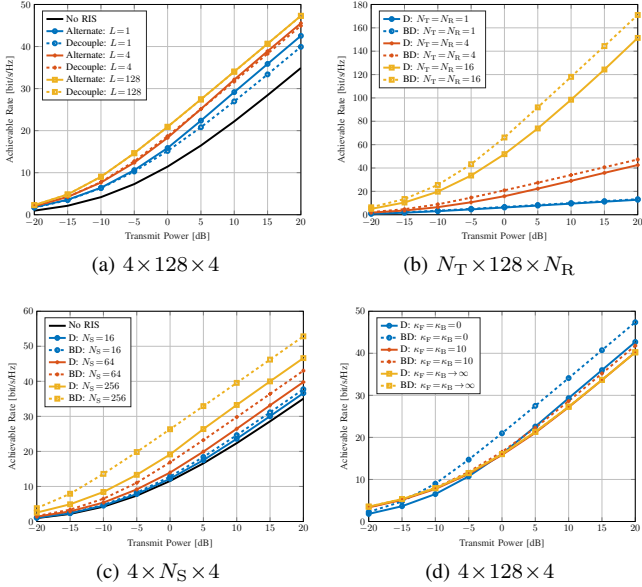


Fig. 6. Average achievable rate versus MIMO and RIS configurations. The noise power is  $\eta = -75$  dB, corresponding to a direct SNR of  $-10$  to  $30$  dB. ‘Alternate’ refers to the alternating optimization and ‘Decouple’ refers to the low-complexity design. ‘D’ means diagonal RIS and ‘BD’ means unitary BD-RIS.

combining and the additive direct-indirect combining, such that the subspace alignment advantage of BD-RIS becomes more pronounced. We also notice that the suboptimal solutions (35) for unitary BD-RIS by lossy transformation (34) are very close to optimal especially for a large  $N_S$ .

Fig. 6 presents the achievable rate under different MIMO and RIS configurations. At a transmit power of  $10$  dB, Fig. 6(a) shows that introducing a  $128$ -element diagonal RIS to  $4T4R$  MIMO can improve the achievable rate from  $22.2$  bps/Hz to  $29.2$  bps/Hz ( $+31.5\%$ ). In contrast, a BD-RIS of group size  $4$  and  $128$  can further improve the rate to  $32.1$  bps/Hz ( $+44.6\%$ ) and  $34$  bps/Hz ( $+53.2\%$ ), respectively. Interestingly, the gap between the optimal AO approach (29)–(31) and the low-complexity solution (36) and (31) narrows as the group size increases, and completely vanishes for a unitary BD-RIS. This implies that the RIS-transceiver design can be completely decoupled via channel shaping with marginal performance loss. Figs. 6(b) and 6(c) also confirm the advantage of BD-RIS grows with the number of transmit, scatter, and receive antennas.

In the low power regime ( $-20$  to  $-10$  dB), the slope of the achievable rate is significantly larger with BD-RIS, suggesting that multiple streams can be activated at a much lower SNR. This is because BD-RIS not only spreads the channel singular values to a wider range, but also provides a better tradeoff between subchannels (c.f. Fig. 2). Finally, Fig. 6(d) shows that the gap between diagonal and BD-RIS narrows as the Rician  $K$ -factor increases and becomes indistinguishable in LoS environment. The observation is expected from previous studies [19], [22], [27] and aligns with Corollary 2.2, which suggests that the BD-RIS should be deployed in rich-scattering environments to exploit its channel shaping potential.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This paper analyzes the channel shaping capability of RIS in terms of singular values redistribution. We consider a general BD architecture that allows elements within the same group to interact, enabling more sophisticated manipulation than diagonal RIS. This translates to a wider dynamic range (with better tradeoff) of singular values and significant power and rate gains, especially in large-scale MIMO systems. We characterize the Pareto frontiers of channel singular values via optimization approach and provide analytical bounds in rank-deficient and unitary scenarios. An efficient RCG algorithm is proposed for smooth BD-RIS optimization problems, which offers better objective value and faster convergence than existing methods. We also present two beamforming designs for rate maximization problem, one based on alternating optimization for optimal performance and the other decouples the RIS-transceiver design for lower complexity. Extensive simulations show that the advantage of BD-RIS stems from its superior subspace alignment and subchannel rearrangement capability, which scales with the number of elements, group size, MIMO dimensions, and channel diversity.

One future direction is introducing BD-RIS to MIMO interference channel for interference alignment or cancellation. Another open issue is to exploit different groups of BD-RIS to enhance the channel response (and possibly ride extra information) at different frequencies. Incorporating a RIS at both transmitter and receiver sides provides even stronger manipulation that potentially align both direct-indirect and forward-backward subspaces simultaneously.

## APPENDIX

### A. Proof of Lemma 1

Let  $\mathbf{H} = \sum_n \mathbf{u}_n \sigma_n \mathbf{v}_n^H$  be the compact SVD of the equivalent channel. Since the singular vectors are orthonormal, the  $n$ -th singular value can be expressed as

$$\sigma_n = \mathbf{u}_n^H \mathbf{H} \mathbf{v}_n = \mathbf{u}_n^T \mathbf{H}^* \mathbf{v}_n^*, \quad (38)$$

whose differential w.r.t.  $\Theta_g^*$  is

$$\begin{aligned}\partial\sigma_n &= \partial\mathbf{u}_n^T \underbrace{\mathbf{H}^* \mathbf{v}_n^*}_{\sum_m \mathbf{u}_m^* \sigma_m \mathbf{v}_m^T \mathbf{v}_n} + \mathbf{u}_n^T \cdot \partial\mathbf{H}^* \cdot \mathbf{v}_n^* + \underbrace{\mathbf{u}_n^T \mathbf{H}^*}_{\mathbf{u}_n^T \sum_m \mathbf{u}_m^* \sigma_m \mathbf{v}_m^T} \partial\mathbf{v}_n^* \\ &= \underbrace{\partial\mathbf{u}_n^T \mathbf{u}_n^*}_{\partial 1=0} \cdot \sigma_n + \mathbf{u}_n^T \cdot \partial\mathbf{H}^* \cdot \mathbf{v}_n^* + \sigma_n \cdot \underbrace{\mathbf{v}_n^T \partial\mathbf{v}_n^*}_{\partial 1=0} \\ &= \mathbf{u}_n^T \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^* \cdot \partial\Theta_g^* \cdot \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^* \mathbf{v}_n^* \\ &= \text{tr}(\mathbf{H}_{F,g}^* \mathbf{v}_n^* \mathbf{u}_n^T \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^* \cdot \partial\Theta_g^*).\end{aligned}$$

According to [51], the corresponding complex derivative is

$$\frac{\partial\sigma_n}{\partial\Theta_g^*} = \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^H \mathbf{u}_n \mathbf{v}_n^H \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^H. \quad (39)$$

A linear combination of (39) yields (18).

### B. Proof of Proposition 1

The scattering matrix of BD-RIS can be decomposed as<sup>5</sup>

$$\Theta = \mathbf{L} \Theta_D \mathbf{R}^H, \quad (40)$$

where  $\Theta_D \in \mathbb{U}^{N_S \times N_S}$  corresponds to diagonal RIS and  $\mathbf{L}, \mathbf{R} \in \mathbb{U}^{N_S \times N_S}$  are block-diagonal matrices of  $L \times L$  unitary blocks. Manipulating  $\mathbf{L}$  and  $\mathbf{R}$  rotates the linear spans of  $\bar{\mathbf{H}}_B \triangleq \mathbf{H}_B \mathbf{L}$  and  $\bar{\mathbf{H}}_F \triangleq \mathbf{R}^H \mathbf{H}_F$  and maintains their rank. On the other hand, there exists a  $\Theta_D$  such that

$$\begin{aligned}\text{rank}(\mathbf{H}_B \Theta_D \mathbf{H}_F) &= \min(\text{rank}(\mathbf{H}_B), \text{rank}(\Theta_D), \text{rank}(\mathbf{H}_F)) \\ &= \min(\text{rank}(\bar{\mathbf{H}}_B), N_S, \text{rank}(\bar{\mathbf{H}}_F)) \\ &= \max_{\Theta} \text{rank}(\mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{H}_F)\end{aligned}$$

The same result holds if the direct link is present.

### C. Proof of Proposition 2

We consider rank- $k$  forward channel and the proof follows similarly for rank- $k$  backward channel. Let  $\mathbf{H}_F = \mathbf{U}_F \Sigma_F \mathbf{V}_F^H$  be the compact SVD of the forward channel. The channel Gram matrix  $\mathbf{G} \triangleq \mathbf{H} \mathbf{H}^H$  can be written as

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{G} &= \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{H}_D^H + \mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{U}_F \Sigma_F \Sigma_F^H \mathbf{U}_F^H \Theta^H \mathbf{H}_B^H \\ &\quad + \mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{U}_F \Sigma_F \mathbf{V}_F^H \mathbf{H}_D^H + \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{V}_F \Sigma_F \mathbf{U}_F^H \Theta^H \mathbf{H}_B^H \\ &= \mathbf{H}_D (\mathbf{I} - \mathbf{V}_F \mathbf{V}_F^H) \mathbf{H}_D^H \\ &\quad + (\mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{U}_F \Sigma_F + \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{V}_F) (\Sigma_F \mathbf{U}_F^H \Theta^H \mathbf{H}_B^H + \mathbf{V}_F^H \mathbf{H}_D^H) \\ &= \mathbf{Y} + \mathbf{Z} \mathbf{Z}^H,\end{aligned}$$

where we define  $\mathbf{Y} \triangleq \mathbf{H}_D (\mathbf{I} - \mathbf{V}_F \mathbf{V}_F^H) \mathbf{H}_D^H \in \mathbb{H}^{N_R \times N_R}$  and  $\mathbf{Z} \triangleq \mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{U}_F \Sigma_F + \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{V}_F \in \mathbb{C}^{N_R \times k}$ . That is to say,  $\mathbf{G}$  can be expressed as a Hermitian matrix plus  $k$  rank-1 perturbations. According to the Cauchy interlacing formula [59], the  $n$ -th eigenvalue of  $\mathbf{G}$  is bounded by

$$\lambda_n(\mathbf{G}) \leq \lambda_{n-k}(\mathbf{Y}), \quad \text{if } n > k, \quad (41)$$

$$\lambda_n(\mathbf{G}) \geq \lambda_n(\mathbf{Y}), \quad \text{if } n < N - k + 1. \quad (42)$$

Since  $\mathbf{Y} = \mathbf{T} \mathbf{T}^H$  is positive semi-definite, taking the square roots of (41) and (42) gives (19) and (20).

<sup>5</sup>This is because (block) unitary matrices are closed under multiplication.

### D. Proof of Proposition 3

Let  $\mathbf{H}_B = \mathbf{U}_B \Sigma_B \mathbf{V}_B^H$  and  $\mathbf{H}_F = \mathbf{U}_F \Sigma_F \mathbf{V}_F^H$  be the SVD of the backward and forward channels, respectively. The scattering matrix of unitary RIS can be decomposed as

$$\Theta = \mathbf{V}_B \mathbf{X} \mathbf{U}_F^H, \quad (43)$$

where  $\mathbf{X} \in \mathbb{U}^{N_S \times N_S}$  is a unitary matrix to be designed. The equivalent channel is thus a function of  $\mathbf{X}$

$$\mathbf{H} = \mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{H}_F = \mathbf{U}_B \Sigma_B \mathbf{X} \Sigma_F \mathbf{V}_F^H. \quad (44)$$

Since  $\text{sv}(\mathbf{U} \mathbf{A} \mathbf{V}^H) = \text{sv}(\mathbf{A})$  for unitary  $\mathbf{U}$  and  $\mathbf{V}$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned}\text{sv}(\mathbf{H}) &= \text{sv}(\mathbf{U}_B \Sigma_B \mathbf{X} \Sigma_F \mathbf{V}_F^H) \\ &= \text{sv}(\Sigma_B \mathbf{X} \Sigma_F) \\ &= \text{sv}(\bar{\mathbf{U}}_B \Sigma_B \bar{\mathbf{V}}_B^H \bar{\mathbf{U}}_F \Sigma_F \bar{\mathbf{V}}_F^H) \\ &= \text{sv}(\mathbf{B} \mathbf{F}),\end{aligned}$$

where  $\bar{\mathbf{U}}_{B/F}$  and  $\bar{\mathbf{V}}_{B/F}$  are arbitrary unitary matrices.

### E. Proof of Lemma 2

The differential of  $R$  w.r.t.  $\Theta_g^*$  is [51]

$$\begin{aligned}\partial R &= \frac{1}{\eta} \text{tr} \left\{ \partial \mathbf{H}^* \cdot \mathbf{Q}^T \mathbf{H}^T \left( \mathbf{I} + \frac{\mathbf{H}^* \mathbf{Q}^T \mathbf{H}^T}{\eta} \right)^{-1} \right\} \\ &= \frac{1}{\eta} \text{tr} \left\{ \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^* \cdot \partial \Theta_g^* \cdot \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^* \mathbf{Q}^T \mathbf{H}^T \left( \mathbf{I} + \frac{\mathbf{H}^* \mathbf{Q}^T \mathbf{H}^T}{\eta} \right)^{-1} \right\} \\ &= \frac{1}{\eta} \text{tr} \left\{ \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^* \mathbf{Q}^T \mathbf{H}^T \left( \mathbf{I} + \frac{\mathbf{H}^* \mathbf{Q}^T \mathbf{H}^T}{\eta} \right)^{-1} \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^* \cdot \partial \Theta_g^* \right\},\end{aligned}$$

and the corresponding complex derivative is (30).

### F. Proof of Proposition 4

The differential of (32a) w.r.t.  $\Theta_g^*$  is

$$\begin{aligned}\partial \|\mathbf{H}\|_F^2 &= \text{tr}(\mathbf{H}_{B,g}^* \cdot \partial \Theta_g^* \cdot \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^* (\mathbf{H}_D^T + \mathbf{H}_F^T \Theta^T \mathbf{H}_B^T)) \\ &= \text{tr}(\mathbf{H}_{F,g}^* (\mathbf{H}_D^T + \mathbf{H}_F^T \Theta^T \mathbf{H}_B^T) \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^* \cdot \partial \Theta_g^*)\end{aligned}$$

and the corresponding complex derivative is

$$\frac{\partial \|\mathbf{H}\|_F^2}{\partial \Theta_g^*} = \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^H (\mathbf{H}_D + \mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{H}_F) \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^H = \mathbf{M}_g. \quad (45)$$

First, we approximate the quadratic objective (32a) by its local Taylor expansion

$$\max_{\Theta} \sum_g 2\Re\{\text{tr}(\Theta_g^H \mathbf{M}_g)\} \quad (46a)$$

$$\text{s.t.} \quad \Theta_g^H \Theta_g = \mathbf{I}, \quad \forall g. \quad (46b)$$

Let  $\mathbf{M}_g = \mathbf{U}_g \Sigma_g \mathbf{V}_g^H$  be the compact SVD of  $\mathbf{M}_g$ . We have

$$\Re\{\text{tr}(\Theta_g^H \mathbf{M}_g)\} = \Re\{\text{tr}(\Sigma_g \mathbf{V}_g^H \Theta_g^H \mathbf{U}_g)\} \leq \text{tr}(\Sigma_g). \quad (47)$$

The upper bound is tight when  $\mathbf{V}_g^H \Theta_g^H \mathbf{U}_g = \mathbf{I}$ , which implies the optimal solution of (46) is  $\tilde{\Theta}_g = \mathbf{U}_g \mathbf{V}_g^H, \forall g$ .

Next, we prove that solving (46) successively does not decrease (32a). Since  $\tilde{\Theta}$  optimal for problem (46), we have  $\sum_g 2\Re\{\text{tr}(\tilde{\Theta}_g^H \mathbf{M}_g)\} \geq \sum_g 2\Re\{\text{tr}(\Theta_g^H \mathbf{M}_g)\}$  which is explicitly expressed by (49). On the other hand, expanding

$$2\Re\left\{\sum_g \text{tr}(\tilde{\Theta}_g^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^H \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^H) + \sum_{g_1, g_2} \text{tr}(\tilde{\Theta}_{g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_2} \Theta_{g_2} \mathbf{H}_{F,g_2}^H \mathbf{H}_{F,g_1}^H)\right\} \geq 2\Re\left\{\sum_g \text{tr}(\Theta_g^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g}^H \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^H) + \sum_{g_1, g_2} \text{tr}(\Theta_{g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_2} \Theta_{g_2} \mathbf{H}_{F,g_2}^H \mathbf{H}_{F,g_1}^H)\right\} \quad (49)$$

$$\sum_{g_1, g_2} \text{tr}(\mathbf{H}_{F,g_1}^H \tilde{\Theta}_{g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_2} \tilde{\Theta}_{g_2} \mathbf{H}_{F,g_2}) - 2\Re\left\{\sum_{g_1, g_2} \text{tr}(\mathbf{H}_{F,g_1}^H \tilde{\Theta}_{g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_2} \Theta_{g_2} \mathbf{H}_{F,g_2})\right\} + \sum_{g_1, g_2} \text{tr}(\mathbf{H}_{F,g_1}^H \Theta_{g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_1}^H \mathbf{H}_{B,g_2} \Theta_{g_2} \mathbf{H}_{F,g_2}) \geq 0 \quad (50)$$

$\|\sum_g \mathbf{H}_{B,g} \tilde{\Theta}_g \mathbf{H}_{F,g} - \sum_g \mathbf{H}_{B,g} \Theta_g \mathbf{H}_{F,g}\|_F^2 \geq 0$  gives (50). Adding (49) and (50), we have

$$2\Re\left\{\text{tr}(\tilde{\Theta}^H \mathbf{H}_B^H \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{H}_F^H)\right\} + \text{tr}(\mathbf{H}_F^H \tilde{\Theta}^H \mathbf{H}_B^H \mathbf{H}_B \tilde{\Theta} \mathbf{H}_F) \geq 2\Re\left\{\text{tr}(\Theta^H \mathbf{H}_B^H \mathbf{H}_D \mathbf{H}_F^H)\right\} + \text{tr}(\mathbf{H}_F^H \Theta^H \mathbf{H}_B^H \mathbf{H}_B \Theta \mathbf{H}_F), \quad (48)$$

which suggests that updating  $\tilde{\Theta}$  does not decrease (32a).

Finally, we prove that the converging point of (46), denoted by  $\tilde{\Theta}^?$ , is a stationary point of (32). The Karush-Kuhn-Tucker (KKT) conditions of (32) and (46) are equivalent in terms of primal/dual feasibility and complementary slackness, while the stationary conditions are respectively,  $\forall g$ ,

$$\mathbf{H}_{B,g}^H (\mathbf{H}_D + \mathbf{H}_B \Theta^* \mathbf{H}_F) \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^H - \Theta_g^* \Lambda_g^H = 0, \quad (51)$$

$$\mathbf{M}_g - \Theta_g^* \Lambda_g^H = 0. \quad (52)$$

On convergence, (52) becomes  $\mathbf{H}_{B,g}^H (\mathbf{H}_D + \mathbf{H}_B \Theta^? \mathbf{H}_F) \mathbf{H}_{F,g}^H - \Theta_g^? \Lambda_g^H = 0$  and reduces to (51). The proof is thus completed.

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