Recent Advances in Matrix Partitioning for Parallel Computing on Heterogeneous Platforms

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***Abstract*—The problem of partitioning a matrix into a set of sub-matrices has received increased attention recently and is crucial when considering dense linear algebra and kernels with similar communication patterns on heterogeneous platforms. The problem of load balancing and minimizing communication is traditionally reducible to an optimization problem that involves partitioning a square into rectangles. This problem has been proven to be NP-Complete for an arbitrary number of partitions.**

In this paper, we present recent approaches that relax the restriction that all partitions be rectangles. The first approach uses an original mathematical technique to find the exact optimal partitioning. Due to the complexity of the technique, it has been developed for a small number of partitions only. However, even at a small scale, the optimal partitions found by this approach are often non-rectangular and sometimes non-intuitive.

The second approach is the study of approximate partitioning methods by recursive partitioning algorithms. In particular we use the work on optimal partitioning to improve pre-existing algorithms. In this paper we discuss the different perspectives it opens and present two algorithms, SNRPP which is a $\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$ approximation, and NRPP which is a $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$ approximation. While sub-optimal, this approach works for an arbitrary number of partitions. We use the first exact approach to analyse how close to the known optimal solutions the NRRP algorithm is for small numbers of partitions.

I. Introduction

THE problem of partitioning a matrix into a set of sub-matrices has received increased attention in the last few years. This operation is indeed crucial when considering dense linear algebra kernels and other applications with similar communication patterns on heterogeneous platforms. Let us for instance consider dense matrix multiplication based on an algorithm similar to Cannon's, restricted for the sake of simplicity to the multiplication $C = AB$ of two square $n \times n$ matrices A and B. Let us further assume that the matrices are partitioned into blocks, whose (common) size is chosen so that they are well adapted to all types of resources (typically CPUs and GPUs). In this case, at step k of the algorithm, the outer product of the k-th column of blocks of A and the k-th row of blocks of B is computed. Let us assume that processor P holds a set of s blocks whose projections along the different axes have respective sizes h and w. Then, the volume of computation for P is proportional to s and the volume of communication required for P to complete its computation is proportional to $h + w$. In order to balance the computing load, each processor should receive a number of blocks proportional to its relative speed. In turn, the overall volume of communication is proportional to the sum of the projections of the areas owned by the different processors along the axes. Therefore, in order to minimize the processing time while also minimizing the overall volume of communication, the optimization problem is amenable to the problem of partitioning a square into a set of zones of prescribed area (in order to balance the load) such that the sum of the projections along the two axes is minimized (in order to minimize the communications).

This paper contrasts results of two approaches to this optimization problem when partitioning among small numbers of heterogeneous resources. The first approach is that of Becker and Lastovetsky who proposed that non-rectangular partitionings can be optimal for partitioning between two heterogeneous resources [1]. This was later extended to three resources [2], and proven to be optimal among all possible partitionings for two resources (for certain power ratios) by DeFlumere, Lastovetsky and Becker [3], and proven for three resources (again for certain power ratios) in [4]. The second approach is based on recursive approximation algorithms. Recently, Beaumont, Eyraud-Dubois and Lambert improved the best-known approximation ratio to $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} \approx 1.15$ [5] by mixing notably the work on optimal partitionings for small numbers of partitions and approximation algorithms for rectangle partitioning proposed by Nagamochi et al. [6], [7] and Fügenschuh [8].

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II. General Context

A. Related Works

This optimization problem was first introduced by Lastovetsky and Kalinov in [9]. In [10], it was proven that the problem is NP-Complete, and a first approximation algorithm with a bounded ratio of 1.75 was proposed. The assumption of rectangular partitions was relaxed in [1] for partitioning between two resources. This non-rectangular partitioning has perfect load balance and a lower overall volume of communication compared to all rectangular partitionings provided the power ratio between the two resources exceeds $3:1$. This was extended to three resources in [2] where a non-rectangular partitioning based on the two partition case was proposed which again has perfect load balancing, and a lower overall volume of communication, again subject to certain

power ratio and topology requirements. It is important to note that these partitioning algorithms are not modifications of homogeneous ones; they are designed for heterogeneous scenarios [11]. These algorithms have been shown to benefit real-world applications [12]. It has also been demonstrated that optimizing the partitioning for non-square matrices is not achievable with straight-forward scaling of the square cases, at least for specific applications such as matrix multiplication [11].

In [3] it was proven that in the case of two resources, the optimal partitioning for any power ratio and topology combination is of one of two forms, one rectangular and one non-rectangular. The technique used to prove the optimality of the two resource case was applied to three resources in [13]. The optimality of the three resource case on a fully-connected topology was proven in [14], and for the star topology in [4].

Independently, recursive partitioning algorithms for this optimization problem have been recently proposed. In these, the set of processors is split into two parts at each step, converging on an approximation of the optimal partitioning. Sophisticated proof techniques enabled Nagamochi and Abe [6] to improve the approximation ratio down to 1.25. Recently, Fügenschuh et al. [8] improved this result to 1.15, but under the assumption that if we consider processors in decreasing order of their processing speeds, there is no abrupt change in the performance between any two successive processors. Unfortunately, such an abrupt decrease typically happens when considering more heterogeneous nodes such as those consisting of CPUs and GPUs, therefore restricting Fügenschuh's algorithm to the case of loosely heterogeneous platforms.

Beaumont, Eyraud-Dubois and Lambert sought to keep the best of both worlds by adapting the idea of non rectangular partitionings proposed by Becker and Lastovetsky and extending it to an arbitrary number of processors by adapting the recursive partitioning algorithm proposed by Nagamochi, which facilitates approximation ratio proofs. These two ingredients led to an improvement of the approximation ratio down to $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} \approx 1.15$. This non-rectangular recursive partitioning algorithm (NRRP), does not require any specific assumption on the relative speed of resources and is therefore applicable to nodes consisting of both regular cores and accelerators.

This partitioning problem can be used as a building block for many dense linear algebra kernels. For instance, it has been extended to LU factorization and other dense linear algebra kernels in [15], [16]. In this case, a block cyclic principle is combined with the initial partitioning in order to obtain 2D cyclic ScaLAPACK solutions [17], where the load is balanced throughout the whole computation. These partitionings have also been adapted to distributed hierarchical and highly heterogeneous platforms in [18], where the partitioning is applied at two levels (intra-node and inter-node), based on sophisticated performance models. The same partitioning has also been extended to finite-difference time-domain (FDTD) method to obtain numerical solutions of Maxwell's equations in [19]. The extension to more dynamic settings has also been considered in [20]. In this case, the partitioning problem can be used in order to provide an initial static partitioning algorithm that can be modified in order to dynamically maintaining load balancing. Recently, in order to cope with resource heterogeneity and the difficulty in building optimal schedules, the use of dynamic runtime schedulers have been proposed, such as StarPU [21], StarSs [22], QUARK [23] or PaRSEC [24]. At runtime, the scheduler takes the scheduling and allocation decisions based on the set of ready tasks (tasks whose all data and control dependences have been solved), on the availability of the resources (estimated using expecting processing and communication times), and on the actual location of input data. The comparison between static scheduling strategies (such as the one proposed in this paper) and runtime scheduling strategies has been recently considered in [25], where the analysis of the behavior of static, dynamic, and hybrid strategies highlights the benefits of introducing more static knowledge and allocation decisions in runtime libraries.

All these papers are based on the partitioning problem considered in this paper and can therefore directly benefit from an improvement in the performance and approximation ratio.

B. Notations and Problem Statement

In this section, we define the notations that will be used in the rest of this paper and we present the formal version of the optimization problem that corresponds to enforcing a perfect load balancing while minimizing the amount of communications.

The problem comes into several flavors depending on the constraints imposed to the partition. In this paper, in order to have a solution that is independent of the matrix size (but only dependent on the relative speeds of the resources), we will consider the continuous version of the problem, where the goal is to split the unit square $[0,1] \times [0,1]$. In general, such a solution has to be rounded for a given matrix size. How to perform these roundings optimally has been considered in [25] and we rely on these results. Another possible restriction is related to the shape of the area Z_l allocated to processor P_l. In many of the above mentioned works, it has been assumed that Z_l had to be shaped as a rectangle [10], [7], [8] because this was considered as a requirement for a simple and efficient implementation. Recent task-based implementations allow this constraint to be relaxed, and it is thus possible to search for general (non-rectangular) partitionings. Such partitionings have been proposed in [14], [2], and it has been proven that it is possible to derive significantly better partitionings when removing the rectangular constraint. Therefore, in this paper, we do not impose that the areas allocated to the processors be shaped as rectangles.

We thus consider the unit square $S = [0,1] \times [0,1]$. Let Z denote a zone (a subset of S) included in the unit square. We denote by $s(Z)$ its area (formally $\iint_Z dxdy$) and by $R(Z)$ its covering rectangle, *i.e.* the Cartesian product of the projections of Z along both dimensions. If $R(Z) = [x_1, x_2] \times [y_1, y_2]$, then we define the height of Z by $h(Z) = x_2 - x_1$ and the width of Z by $w(Z) = y_2 - y_1$. Finally, let us define $p(Z) = h(Z) + w(Z)$, the half-perimeter of $R(Z)$ and

$\rho(Z) = \dfrac{\max(h(Z), w(Z))}{\min(h(Z), w(Z))}$ its aspect ratio.

We consider the following problem :

Problem 1 (PERI-SUM)**.** *Given a set of n positive rational numbers $\{s_1, \ldots, s_n\}$ such that $\sum s_k = 1$, and the square $S = [0,1] \times [0,1]$, find for each s_k a zone $Z_k \in S$ such that the area of Z_k is s_k, $\bigcup Z_k = S$, and such that $\sum p(Z_k)$ is minimized.*

In the following, we denote $\sum p(Z_k)$ as $c(Z_1, \ldots, Z_n)$ and its optimal value as c_{opt}. A lower bound has been proposed by Ballard et al. in [26], that comes from an application of the Loomis-Whitney inequality. This lower bound simply states that the perimeter of a zone Z_k of given area $s(Z_k)$ is minimal when the zone is shaped as a square.

$$c(Z_k) \geq 2\sqrt{s(Z_k)} \tag{1}$$

This provides a lower bound on the total cost for any instance, $c_{opt} \geq 2\sum_k \sqrt{s_k}$. This bound is reached only when all zones are squares, which may not be feasible depending on the instance (consider for instance the case of two identical zones of area $1/2$), and hence this lower bound is in general optimistic.

C. Complexity Results

A variant of the decision problem associated to this optimization problem has been proved to be NP-Complete. More specifically, it has been proven in [10] that deciding whether $S = [0,1] \times [0,1]$ can be partitioned into squares of respective areas $\{s_1, \ldots, s_p\}$ is NP-Complete.

Since squares are the best possible shapes for the zones irrespective to any additional constraint, this complexity result automatically translates to PERI-SUM, which is thus an NP-Complete problem. For this reason, the rest of the paper is devoted to finding algorithms in two directions: either exact algorithms for a small number of processors, or approximation algorithms for the general case.

III. Optimal Partitionings

Traditionally many applications such as matrix multiplication (which is generalizable to many other applications of interest) are performed in parallel by dividing matrices into rectangular partitionings. We challenge this approach. In this section we study the optimality of partition shapes for a small number of partitions. Traditionally the problem of finding the optimal shape is reduced to PERI-SUM, the problem of finding the optimal partitioning that minimizes the sum of half perimeters (SHP), which, as discussed in Section II, is equivalent to the projections of the areas owned by the different processors along the axes. This is the simplest mathematical formulation of this problem. Our motivation is that when we balance the load (which is normally trivial) and minimize the SHP, we minimize the amount of data moved between partitions, and thus the required communication for a given application.

For small numbers of heterogeneous processors, the optimal partitioning can be determined mathematically using a method called the Push Technique first proposed in [3]. This method allows us to generate a small number of potentially optimal partition shapes, which can then be analyzed to find the optimal one.

A. Push Technique

This novel method alters a matrix data partition, reassigning elements among processors, to lower the total volume of communication of the partition shape. The goal of using this technique is to prove that a given arrangement of elements is not the optimal shape. Instead, it allows the consideration of a few discrete partition shapes which are superior to all other data partitions (by virtue of the fact that no Push operation can be performed on them).

The Push Technique works as follows:

- Choose one processor, X, to be Pushed (must not be the most powerful processor)
- Choose the direction of Push, i.e. Up ($\uparrow$), Down ($\downarrow$), Back ($\leftarrow$), Over ($\rightarrow$)
- Determine the appropriate row or column k, the edge of the enclosing rectangle of X ($\uparrow$ acts on x_{bottom}, $\downarrow$ acts on x_{top}, $\leftarrow$ acts on x_{right}, and $\rightarrow$ acts on x_{left})
- For each element x assigned to Processor X in row or column k:
  - (i) Assign to processor X an element, z, within its enclosing rectangle
  - (ii) Assign element x to the processor that was assigned z previously
- A valid Push may not increase the volume of communication, so select all z such that:
  - (i) Processor X is introduced to no more than one new row OR column
  - (ii) No processor is assigned an element in k if k is outside that processor's enclosing rectangle
  - (iii) A processor cannot be assigned an element in k if it did not already own an element in k, unless doing so would also remove that processor from some other row or column

The Push Technique is designed to condense an arbitrary partition shape without increasing its communication cost, as illustrated in Figure 1 for one particular Push operation.

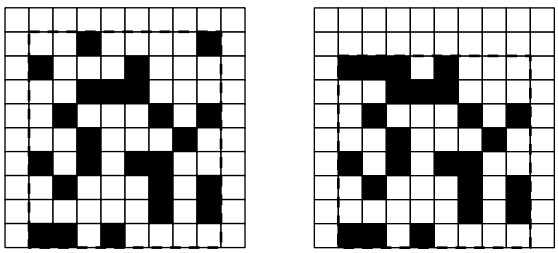


Figure 1: On the left, a grid representing a random partitioning of matrix elements. Each element is assigned to one of two processors - denoted by the colors black and white. On the right, the same partitioning after one call to Push $\downarrow$. The elements from the top row have been Pushed to the row below.

In the following, we denote by P the fastest processor, by Q the second fastest, and when applicable, by R the slowest one ($s_P \geq s_Q \geq s_R$).

B. Two Heterogeneous Processors

The Push Technique generates two candidate partition shapes for consideration to be the optimal two processor partitioning shown in Figure 2.

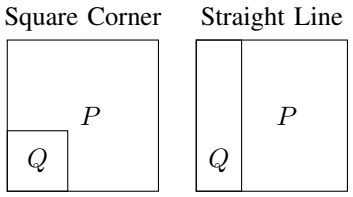


Figure 2: The candidate data partitions for optimality with two processors.

Theorem 1. *For two heterogeneous processors, the data partitioning with the optimal total volume of communication will be the Square Corner when the ratio of computational power between the two processors is greater than three.*

Proof. The fact that the two partitions of Figure 2 are dominant is a corollary of Theorem 2, proven below. We can compute the cost of each partition:

- **Square Corner** The cost for P is 2, and the cost for Q is $2\sqrt{s_{\mathrm{Q}}}$, for a total cost of $c_{\mathrm{SC}} = 2 + 2\sqrt{s_{\mathrm{Q}}}$.
- **Straight Line** The cost for P is $1 + s_{\mathrm{P}}$, and the cost for Q is $1 + s_{\mathrm{Q}}$, with $s_{\mathrm{P}} + s_{\mathrm{Q}} = 1$, for a total cost of $c_{\mathrm{SL}} = 3$. Alternatively, we can see that one dimension is sent to both processors P and Q, while the other is shared among them, hence the cost of 3.

It is clear that $c_{\mathrm{SC}} < c_{\mathrm{SL}}$ if and only if $\sqrt{s_{\mathrm{Q}}} < \frac{1}{2}$, which is equivalent to $s_{\mathrm{Q}} < \frac{1}{4}$. □

C. Three Heterogeneous Processors

The Push Technique generates six candidate partition shapes for consideration to be the optimal three processor partitioning, including the four shapes shown on Figure 3. In this section, we prove that three of them - the Square Corner, the Square Rectangle, and the Block Rectangle, are sufficient to minimize the sum of half-perimeters of a square. In Theorem 2, we actually prove a more general result: we identify the optimal solutions for the case of splitting a rectangle.

Theorem 2. *The optimal data partition shape to split a rectangle between three processors is always one of the four shapes of Figure 3: the Square Corner, the Square Rectangle, the Block Rectangle, or the Straight Line.*

Proof. Without loss of generality, we assume that the rectangle to partition has dimension $a \times b$, with $a \leq b$, and a is the size of the vertical axis. We first compute the cost of each solution (note that the first two might not be feasible):

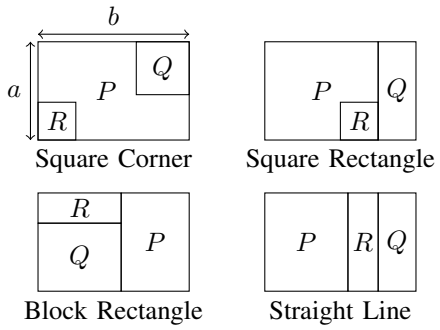


Figure 3: The optimal data partitions for a rectangle with three processors.

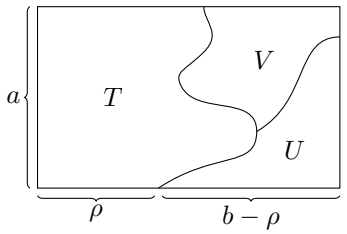


Figure 4: Notation for the case where one processor holds a complete side

Square Corner	$c_{\mathrm{SC}} = a + b + 2(\sqrt{s_{\mathrm{Q}}} + \sqrt{s_{\mathrm{R}}})$
Square Rectangle	$c_{\mathrm{SR}} = 2a + b + 2\sqrt{s_{\mathrm{R}}}$
Block Rectangle	$c_{\mathrm{BR}} = 2a + 2b - \frac{s_{\mathrm{P}}}{a}$
Straight Line	$c_{\mathrm{SL}} = 3a + b$

To prove Theorem 2, we consider any valid partition $\mathcal{S}$, and we prove that the cost C of $\mathcal{S}$ is at least as much as the cost of one of the proposed shapes. The proof is split into 5 different cases, depending on the number of resources that hold a complete row or column in $\mathcal{S}$. In the following, we say that a processor holds a complete row (resp. column) if the projection of its allocated area on the horizontal (resp. vertical) axis is equal to the complete side of the rectangle.

(i) No processor holds a complete side in $\mathcal{S}$.
In this case, each data is sent to at least 2 resources, so that the overall size of the projections is at least $2a+2b$. Since the Straight Line position in Figure 3 is always feasible and has cost $3a + b \leq 2a + 2b$, $\mathcal{S}$ is dominated.

(ii) Exactly one processor T holds a complete side in $\mathcal{S}$, but not both sides.
Let us first assume that processor T holds a complete column, and let us denote by ρ the length of the part of the horizontal axis on which only the area allocated to T is projected (*i.e.*, the amount of horizontal data that is sent only to T, see Figure 4). Then, the other $b - \rho$ columns are sent to at least 2 resources (otherwise another resource would hold a complete side), and each row is sent to at least 2 resources as well (T and at least another one) so that the cost of $\mathcal{S}$ is at least $2a+\rho+2*(b-\rho) = 2b+2a-\rho$. By construction $\rho \leq \frac{s_T}{a}$, and the cost of the Block Rectangle solution is $2b+2a-\frac{s_P}{a}$, with $s_P \geq s_T$. Hence $\mathcal{S}$ is dominated. Similarly, if T holds a complete

row, the cost of $\mathcal{S}$ is at least $2a+2b-\rho$, with $\rho \leq \frac{s_T}{b}$, and is thus also dominated by Block Rectangle since $a \leq b$.

(iii) Exactly one processor T holds a complete row and a complete column in $\mathcal{S}$.
In this case, T contributes for at least $a+b$ to the cost of $\mathcal{S}$, and therefore $C \geq a+b+2\sqrt{s_U}+2\sqrt{s_V}$, where U and V are the two other processors.
- If $\sqrt{s_U}+\sqrt{s_V} > a$, then $C > 3a+b$ and $\mathcal{S}$ is again dominated.
- If $\sqrt{s_U}+\sqrt{s_V} < a$, then the Square Corner solution of Figure 3 is feasible, and has cost exactly $a+b+2\sqrt{s_Q}+2\sqrt{s_R}$. Since Q and R are the two smallest size values, this solution dominates $\mathcal{S}$.

(iv) Exactly 2 resources T and U hold a complete side in $\mathcal{S}$. For example, let us assume that they both hold a complete column. Since the remaining resource V does not hold a complete column, each data on the horizontal axis is sent at least to either T or U. Then, the contribution of T and U to C is at least $2a+b$ and therefore $C \geq 2a+b+2\sqrt{s_V}$. If both resources hold a complete row instead, we obtain similarly that $C \geq 2b+a+2\sqrt{s_V} \geq 2a+b+2\sqrt{s_V}$.
- If $\sqrt{s_V} > a$, then $C > 4a+b$. Since the Straight Line solution has cost $3a+b$, this implies that $\mathcal{S}$ is dominated (by Straight Line solution).
- If $\sqrt{s_V} < a$, then solution Square Rectangle from Figure 3 is feasible, and has cost $2a+b+2\sqrt{s_R}$. Since $s_V \geq s_S$, $\mathcal{S}$ is dominated.

(v) All 3 resources hold a complete side in $\mathcal{S}$. If they hold a complete column, then $C \geq 3a+b$, otherwise $C \geq 3b+a \geq 3a+b$. Then, $\mathcal{S}$ is dominated by the Straight Line solution.

□

It is interesting to note that the Straight Line solution is never optimal when partitioning a square (*i.e.*, when $a = b$), since it is always dominated by Block Rectangle. Of the remaining three, the first two are non-rectangular, but non-rectangular in different ways which make each suited to a different type of heterogeneous distribution of computational power. In general, these results show that, for a square partitioning (see Figure 14 in Section V):

- Square Corner is the optimal shape for heterogeneous systems with a single fast processor, and two relatively slow processors.
- Square Rectangle is the optimal shape for heterogeneous systems with two fast processors, and a single relatively slow processor.
- Block Rectangle is the optimal shape for heterogeneous systems with a fast, medium, and slow processor, as well as relatively homogeneous systems.

IV. Non-Rectangular Recursive Partitioning (NRRP)

Extending the Push Technique introduced in Section III-A to an arbitrary number of partitions is not trivial, and the challenge increases significantly for each additional partition (the three partition case was much more challenging than the two partition case). Similarly, an exhaustive approach like in the proof of Theorem 2 implies the same issues with combinatorial explosion of cases. This creates a demand for approximation algorithms for arbitrary numbers of partitions. We are inspired by the recursive results of Nagamochi and Abe [6] whose recursive algorithm reduced the approximation ratio to 1.25 without significantly restricting the problem. We develop a recursive algorithm that guarantees not to be more than $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$ from optimal. Our motivation is to be able to compute fast a partitioning that is known to be within a small factor from the optimal for any arbitrary number of partitions.

This section is devoted to approximation algorithms for PERI-SUM. We present several increasingly complex algorithms, to finish with NRRP (Non-Rectangular Recursive Partitioning), whose approximation ratio is below $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$.

A. Rectangular Recursive Partitioning

Algorithm 1: RRP$(R, \{s_1, \ldots, s_n\})$

Input: A rectangle R, a set of positive values $\{s_1, \ldots, s_n\}$ such that $\sum s_i = s(R)$ and $s_1 \leq s_2 \leq \ldots \leq s_n$

Output: For each $1 \leq i \leq n$, a rectangle R_i such that $s(R_i) = s_i$ and $\bigcup R_i = R$

```
if n = 1 then
    return R
else
    ρ = ρ(R) ;
    k = the smallest k such that Σ_{i=1}^{k} s_i ≥ s/3 ;
    s' = Σ_{i=1}^{k} s_i ;
    Cut R in R_1, R_2 according to its greatest dimension
    and with s(R_1) = s' ;
    return
    RRP(R_1, {s_1, ..., s_k}) + RRP(R_2, {s_{k+1}, ..., s_n})
```

The first algorithm is called RRP (Rectangular Recursive Partitioning, see Algorithm 1) and is inspired by the seminal work of Nagamochi et al. [6]. The basic idea is to use the divide and conquer paradigm by splitting the current rectangle in two sub-rectangles at each step of the algorithm, and assign to each part a sublist of the list of processors. The cut is made so as to have, if possible, at least a third of the total area on each part. For this purpose, the areas are sorted in increasing order and aggregated one by one until one third of the total is reached. Lemma 3 shows that if at least one item remains, then the split is valid.

Lemma 3. *Let $\{s_1, \ldots, s_n\}$ be a set of positive values such that $s_1 \leq \ldots \leq s_n$ and k be the smallest k such that $\sum_{i=1}^{k} s_i \geq \frac{s}{3}$. Then, if $k < n$, $\sum_{i=k+1}^{n} s_i \geq \frac{s}{3}$.*

Proof. By definition of k, $\sum_{i=1}^{k-1} s_i < \frac{s}{3}$. Let us assume that $\sum_{k+1}^{n} s_i < \frac{s}{3}$ for the search of a contradiction. In this case we obtain that $s_k \geq \frac{s}{3}$. As $s_{k+1} \leq \sum_{i=k+1}^{n} s_i < \frac{s}{3}$, we have $s_k > s_{k+1}$ which is a contradiction with the hypothesis $s_1 \leq \ldots \leq s_n$. □

Otherwise, this means that $\sum_{i=1}^{n-1} s_i < \frac{s}{3}$, and hence s_n is significantly greater than the other values. This is actually the pathological case on which the following algorithms improve. If we disregard this case for a moment, then the algorithm is quite effective and simply using Lemma 4 leads directly to an approximation ratio of $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$, as Fügenschuh et al point out [8]. Note that the proof of Lemma 4 relies on the lower bound from (1) and does not compare directly to the true optimal value.

Lemma 4. *Let R be a rectangle. Then:*

$$\frac{p(R)}{2\sqrt{s(R)}} = \frac{1+\rho(R)}{2\sqrt{\rho(R)}}.$$

In particular, if $\rho(R) \leq 3$ then:

$$\frac{p(R)}{2\sqrt{s(R)}} \leq \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}.$$

Proof. Let us assume without loss of generality that $h = h(R) \leq w = w(R)$ and denote $\rho = \rho(R) = \frac{w}{h}$. Then $p(R) = h+w = h(1+\rho)$. In addition $s = s(R) = hw = \rho h^2$. Therefore

$$\frac{w+h}{2\sqrt{s}} = \frac{h(1+\rho)}{2\sqrt{\rho h^2}} = \frac{1+\rho}{2\sqrt{\rho}}.$$

Furthermore, one can prove that $x \mapsto \frac{1+x}{2\sqrt{x}}$ is an increasing function on $[1,3]$ and then, for $\rho \leq 3$:

$$\frac{w+h}{2\sqrt{s}} \leq \frac{1+3}{2\sqrt{3}} = \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}.$$

□

However, the pathological cases imply that the actual approximation ratio of RRP is at least $\frac{3}{2}$. Indeed, let us consider an instance with two values ϵ and $1-\epsilon$. The optimal partitioning is depicted on the left of Figure 5, the communication cost is $2\sqrt{\epsilon}$ for the zone of area ϵ and 2 for the other zone, which yields a total of $2(1+\sqrt{\epsilon})$. The partitioning returned by RRP is shown on the right of Figure 5. In this case, the communication cost is $1+\epsilon$ for the smaller zone and $2-\epsilon$ for the larger one, which gives a total communication cost of 3. It results that $\frac{Cost(RRP)}{C_{opt}} = \frac{3}{2(1+\epsilon)} \underset{\epsilon \to 0}{\longrightarrow} \frac{3}{2}$. In their work, Nagamochi et al. prove that RRP is actually a $\frac{5}{4}$-approximation algorithm for the variant of the problem where all the zones have to be rectangles (and indeed in this case the partitioning on the right of Figure 5 is the only possible partitioning and therefore also the optimal one).

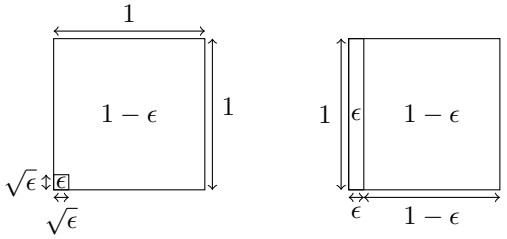


Figure 5: Two partitions of a square with the instance $\{\epsilon, 1-\epsilon\}$.

B. Simple Non-Rectangular Recursive Partitioning

As a first step to improve RRP, we use the insight from Section III: whenever a value is significantly bigger than the others, it is best to avoid splitting into two rectangles. We thus slightly adapt the algorithm and obtain two subroutines.

Guillotine: The first one is the Guillotine routine, depicted in Figure 6. It is the main ingredient of RRP. Given a composed zone R and a rational number $\alpha \in [0,1]$, $Guillotine(R,\alpha)$ splits R along the largest dimension into two rectangles of respective areas $\alpha s(R)$ and $(1-\alpha)s(R)$.

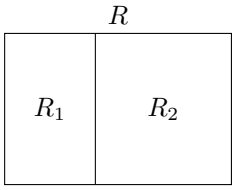


Figure 6: An illustration of the Guillotine routine.

Square: The second routine is the Square routine, depicted in Figure 7. Given a rectangle R and a rational number $\alpha \in [0,1]$, $Square(R,\alpha)$ returns a square R_1 of area $\alpha s(R)$ and a zone Z_2 which corresponds to the initial rectangle R punched by square R_1. The covering rectangle of Z_2 is R and Z_2 will always be used to host a simple zone.

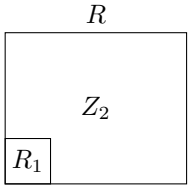


Figure 7: An illustration of the Square routine.

With these two subroutines we propose an improved algorithm: SNRRP (Simple Non-Rectangular Recursive Partitioning), given in Algorithm 2. The basic idea is the following: according to an appropriate condition, the current rectangle is either split into two well-shaped rectangles (lines 7-9), or into a square and its complement, the latter being assigned to a single processor (lines 10-12).

This algorithm can be proven to be a $\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$-approximation ($\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}} \simeq 1.22$) and thus be seen as a significant improvement of RRP. The proof relies on one major invariant (that also ensures the correctness of the algorithm): each rectangle on which the function is called has an aspect ratio below 3, as is depicted on Theorem 5.

Theorem 5 (Correctness)**.** *When executing SNRRP$(R, \{s_1, \ldots, s_n\})$ with $\rho(R) \leq 3$, all the recursive calls to SNRRP$(R', \{s'_1, \ldots, s'_k\})$ are performed on a rectangle area R' such that $\rho(R') \leq 3$.*

Proof. Recursive calls to SNRRP are made on two kinds of rectangles, those produced by Guillotine (line 8) and the square produced by Square (line 11). In the second case the aspect ratio is trivially below 3. In the first case, let s

Algorithm 2: SNRRP($R, \{s_1, \ldots, s_n\}$)

Input: A rectangle R, a set of values $\{s_1, \ldots, s_n\}$ such that $\sum s_i = s(R)$ and $s_1 \leq s_2 \leq \ldots \leq s_n$
Output: For each $1 \leq i \leq n$, a zone Z_i such that $s(Z_i) = s_i$ and $\bigcup Z_i = R$

1 **if** $n = 1$ **then**
2 **return** R
3 **else**
4 $\rho = \rho(R)$;
5 $k =$ the smallest k such that $\sum_{i=1}^{k} s_i \geq \frac{s}{3\rho}$;
6 $s' = \sum_{i=1}^{k} s_i$;
7 **if** $k < n$ **then**
8 $R_1, R_2 = \texttt{Guillotine}(R, s'/s)$;
9 **return** $\texttt{SNRRP}(R_1, \{s_1, \ldots, s_k\}) +$ $\texttt{SNRRP}(R_2, \{s_{k+1}, \ldots, s_n\})$
10 **else**
11 $R_1, Z_2 = \texttt{Square}(R, (s - s_n)/s)$;
12 $\texttt{SNRRP}(R_1, \{s_1, \ldots, s_{n-1}\}) + Z_2$

and s' be as described in Algorithm 2, $\alpha = s'/s$ and let $R_1, R_2 = Guillotine(R, \alpha)$. We have to prove that $\rho(R_1) \leq 3$ and $\rho(R_2) \leq 3$. By hypothesis we know that $\alpha \geq \frac{1}{3\rho(R)}$.

Let us assume without loss of generality that $h = h(R) \leq w = w(R)$ and denote $\rho = \rho(R) = \frac{w}{h}$. By definition $h(R_1) = h(R)$ and $w(R_1) = \alpha w$. Therefore $\rho(R_1) = \max(\frac{\alpha w}{h}, \frac{h}{\alpha w})$. We have $\frac{\alpha w}{h} \leq \frac{w}{h} = \rho \leq 3$. In addition, since $\alpha \geq \frac{1}{3\rho}$, $\frac{h}{\alpha w} \leq \frac{3\rho h}{w} = 3$. Hence, if $\alpha \geq \frac{1}{3\rho(R)}$ then $\rho(R_1) \leq 3$.

To prove that $\rho(R_2) \leq 3$ we can slightly adapt Lemma 3 and show that $1 - \alpha \geq \frac{1}{3\rho(R)}$. Then, similar arguments prove that $\rho(R_2) \leq 3$ and yield the proof of the Theorem. □

To achieve the approximation proof, let us first note that the zones returned by the algorithm are produced line 2 and 12. In the first case, the zone is a rectangle with an aspect ratio below 3 (Theorem 5) and Lemma 4 proves that its half-perimeter is below $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$ times the lower-bound (and $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} \leq \sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$). In the case of line 12, the resulting zone is no longer rectangular and an additional lemma is required.

Lemma 6. *Let R be a rectangle such that $\rho(R) \leq 3$, $\alpha \in [0, 1]$ and $R', Z = Square(R, \alpha)$. If $\alpha \leq \frac{1}{3\rho(R)}$ then $\frac{p(Z)}{2\sqrt{s(Z)}} \leq \sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$.*

Proof. Let us denote $\rho(Z) = \rho$ and $s(Z) = s$ and let us suppose that $h = h(R) \leq w = w(R)$ without loss of generality. Note that the covering rectangle of Z is R and therefore $w = w(Z)$ and $h = h(Z)$. In this case $w = \rho h$, which implies $p(Z) = (1 + \rho)h$. By definition of Square, $s = (1 - \alpha)s(R)$ and $s(R) = hw = \rho h^2$. Therefore $s = (1 - \alpha)\rho h^2 \geq (1 - \frac{1}{3\rho(Z)})\rho h^2$ and hence

$$\frac{p(Z)}{2\sqrt{S(Z)}} \leq \frac{(1+\rho)h}{2\sqrt{(1-1/3\rho)\rho h^2}} \leq \frac{\sqrt{3}(1+\rho)}{2\sqrt{(3\rho-1)}}.$$

One can prove that the function $x \longmapsto \frac{\sqrt{3}(1+x)}{2\sqrt{3x-1}}$ reaches its maximum on $[1, 3]$ for $x = 1$ or $x = 3$ and this maximum is $\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$. Thus, $\frac{p(Z)}{2\sqrt{S(Z)}} \leq \sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$. □

Lemma 6 covers the second case of zone creation. Indeed, the hypothesis of the lemma on the aspect ratio of R is ensured by Theorem 5 and the hypothesis on α comes from the fact that, in line 11 of Algorithm 2, $s - s_n = \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} s_i = \sum_{i=1}^{k-1} s_i < \frac{s}{3\rho(R)}$ by definition of k in line 5.

All of the above proves that if $\{Z_1, \ldots, Z_n\} = SNRRP(R, \{s_1, \ldots, s_n\})$, then for all $i \in [1, n]$, $\frac{p(Z_i)}{2\sqrt{s_i}} \leq \sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$. Therefore, $\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} p(Z_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} 2\sqrt{s_i}} \leq \sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$. Since $\sum_{i=1}^{n} 2\sqrt{s_i}$ is the lower bound from (1), this achieves the proof Theorem 7.

Theorem 7. *SNRRP is a $\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$-approximation for PERI-SUM.*

Note that there are cases where Algorithm 2 returns a partition such that the ratio between the sum of perimeters and the lower bound based on Equation 1 is indeed $\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$. Let us define for $1 < k \leq n$, $s_k = 2/3^{n-k+1}$ and $s_1 = 1/3^{n-1}$. One can notice that $s_k = \frac{2}{3}\sum_{i=1}^{k} s_i$. Hence each step of $SNRRP([0, 1]^2, \{s_1, \ldots, s_n\})$ corresponds to the case of line 11-12 and therefore the Square routine is called. In addition, this corresponds the extremal position of the case of line 11-12 and we can notice in the proof of Lemma 6 that in this case the bound is tight. Hence, if $Z_1, \ldots, Z_n = NRRP([0, 1]^2, \{s_1, \ldots, s_n\})$, $p(Z_1) = 2\sqrt{s(Z_1)}$ and for $k > 1$, $p(Z_k) = 2\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}\sqrt{s(Z_k)}$. Thus,

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} p(Z_i)}{2\sum_{i=1}^{n} \sqrt{s(Z_i)}} = \sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$$

An illustration of this case is depicted in Figure 8.

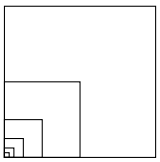


Figure 8: Worst case scenario for SNRRP.

C. Non-Rectangular Recursive Partitioning

Further improvements over SNRRP and its approximation ratio can be obtained by changing the invariant. In both RRP and SNRRP, the aim is to obtain a rectangle with an aspect ratio below 3. This can be generalized by aiming for a rectangle with an aspect ratio below μ where μ is a parameter whose value will be determined later. The objective is to use values of $\mu < 3$, so that the zones produced are as close to squares as possible; the algorithm NRRP that we propose uses $\mu = \frac{5}{2}$. With values of μ different from 3, above proofs are changed at two places.

1) Aspect ratio guarantees: First note that Lemma 3 is still valid for $\mu \geq 3$ and can be rewritten as Lemma 8.

Lemma 8. *For $\mu \geq 3$, let $\{s_1, \ldots, s_n\}$ be a set of positive values such that $s_1 \leq \ldots \leq s_n$ and k be the smallest k such that $\sum_{i=1}^{k} s_i \geq \frac{s}{\mu}$. Then, if $k < n$, $\sum_{i=k+1}^{n} s_i \geq \frac{s}{\mu}$.*

However, in the case $\mu < 3$, the lemma has to be significantly weakened, as expressed in Lemma 9.

Lemma 9. *Let $p > 1$ be an integer and let μ be in $[\frac{2p+1}{p}, \frac{2p-1}{p-1}[$. Let $\{s_1, \ldots, s_n\}$ be a set of positive values such that $s_1 \leq \ldots \leq s_n$ and k be the smallest k such that $\sum_{i=1}^{k} s_i \geq \frac{s}{\mu}$. Then, if $k \leq n-p$, $\sum_{i=k+1}^{n} s_i \geq \frac{s}{\mu}$.*

Proof. By definition of k, $\sum_{i=1}^{k-1} s_i < \frac{s}{\mu}$. Let us assume $\sum_{i=k+1}^{n} s_i < \frac{s}{\mu}$ for the search of a contradiction. In this case we obtain that $s_k \geq \frac{\mu-2}{\mu} s$. In addition $\sum_{i=k+1}^{n} s_i \geq \sum_{i=k+1}^{n} s_{k+1} = (n-k)s_{k+1}$. Therefore, $s_{k+1} < \frac{s}{(n-k)\mu}$. From the assumption $k \leq n-p$ we get that $s_{k+1} < \frac{s}{p\mu}$. Furthermore, $\mu - 2 \geq \frac{2p+1}{p} - 2 \geq \frac{1}{p}$. Hence $s_k \geq \frac{s}{p\mu} > s_{k+1}$, what is a contradiction with $s_1 \leq \ldots \leq s_n$. □

Both lemmas provide a sufficient condition for the possibility to split the list of values such that each part sums to a fraction of at least $\frac{1}{\mu}$ of the total, allowing to perform a recursive call on each sublist. When the condition is not met, the implication in the case $\mu \geq 3$ is that there exists a single large value $s_n \geq s(1 - \frac{1}{\mu})$, for which a large zone can be accommodated with low communication cost by the Square routine. When $\mu < 3$ however, this guarantee is weakened to the existence of at most $p = \left\lfloor \frac{1}{\mu - 2} \right\rfloor$ values whose sum is at least $s(1 - \frac{1}{\mu})$. It is thus necessary to design routines that can accommodate all p zones with low communication cost. In the case where $\mu = \frac{5}{2}$ (and thus $p = 2$) we propose the routine Tripartition, which is a first step towards NRRP.

Tripartition : The routine $Tripartition(R, \alpha, \beta)$ returns three rectangles R_1, Z_2 and Z_3 of respective areas $\alpha s(R)$, $\beta s(R)$ and $(1 - \alpha - \beta)s(R)$ as depicted on Figure 9. Note that Lemma 9 ensures that this case is used only when Z_2 and Z_3 are used as terminal zones. In NRRP, the recursive call is thus only made on R_1 and we only need to prove $\rho(R_1) \leq \frac{5}{2}$ as an invariant on the aspect ratios of rectangles.

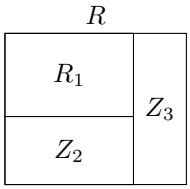


Figure 9: An illustration of the Tripartition routine.

The conclusion is that using lower values for μ require to consider additional cases when it is not possible to obtain two parts that contain more than $\frac{1}{\mu}$ of the total. The number of terminal zones to accommodate is $p = \left\lfloor \frac{1}{\mu - 2} \right\rfloor$, and the complexity of designing the corresponding partitioning increases (a lot) with p. In NRRP, we choose $p = 2$; this leaves open the possibility to obtain better approximation ratios with lower values of μ. This possible refinement very likely requires to consider many additional sub-cases, and is beyond the scope of this paper.

2) Approximation ratios: Changing the value of μ has also an effect on the approximation ratios for the individual zones returned by the algorithm. For the case where the algorithm returns a rectangle, the generalized version of Lemma 4 is stated in Lemma 10, with an identical proof.

Lemma 10. *Let R be a rectangle. If $\rho(R) \leq \mu$ then:*

$$\frac{p(R)}{2\sqrt{s(R)}} \leq \frac{\mu + 1}{2\sqrt{\mu}}.$$

This function is increasing for the interesting values of μ, and thus decreasing μ improves the approximation ratio in the case where all the produced zones are shaped as rectangles. However, as shown above, this is not the limiting worst-case; indeed, $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$ ($\frac{\mu+1}{2\sqrt{\mu}}$ for $\mu = 3$) is smaller than $\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$. Hence one could expect that slightly increasing this part of the bound with a larger value of μ would allow to lower the approximation ratios obtained for zones returned as complements of a square, given in Lemma 6. However the generalized version, Lemma 11, does not allow this.

Lemma 11. *Let R be a rectangle such that $\rho(R) \leq \mu$, $\alpha \in [0, 1]$ and $R', Z = Square(R, \alpha)$. If $\alpha \leq \frac{1}{\mu\rho(R)}$ then $\frac{p(Z)}{2\sqrt{s(Z)}} \leq \max(\sqrt{\frac{\mu}{\mu-1}}, \frac{\sqrt{\mu(\mu+1)}}{2\sqrt{\mu-1}})$.*

Proof. Let us denote $\rho(Z) = \rho$ and $s(Z) = s$ and let us suppose that $h = h(R) \leq w = w(R)$ without loss of generality. Note that the covering rectangle of Z is R and therefore $w = w(Z)$ and $h = h(Z)$. In this case $w = \rho h$, what implies $p(Z) = (1 + \rho)h$. By definition of Square, $s = (1 - \alpha)s(R)$ and $s(R) = hw = \rho h^2$. Therefore $s = (1 - \alpha)\rho h^2 \geq (1 - \frac{1}{\mu\rho(Z)})\rho h^2$ and hence

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{p(Z)}{2\sqrt{S(Z)}} &\leq \frac{(1+\rho)h}{2\sqrt{(1 - 1/\mu\rho)\rho h^2}} \\ &\leq \frac{\sqrt{\mu}(1+\rho)}{2\sqrt{(\mu\rho - 1)}}. \end{aligned}$$

One can prove that the function $x \longmapsto \frac{\sqrt{\mu}(1+x)}{2\sqrt{\mu x - 1}}$ is decreasing on $[1, 1 + \frac{2}{\mu}]$ and increasing on $[1 + \frac{2}{\mu}, \mu]$ and then $\frac{\sqrt{\mu}(1+x)}{2\sqrt{\mu x-1}} \leq \max(\sqrt{\frac{\mu}{\mu-1}}, \frac{\sqrt{\mu(\mu+1)}}{2\sqrt{\mu-1}})$. Then $\frac{p(Z)}{2\sqrt{S(Z)}} \leq \max(\sqrt{\frac{\mu}{\mu-1}}, \frac{\sqrt{\mu(\mu+1)}}{2\sqrt{\mu-1}})$. □

If $\mu < 3$, then $\max(\sqrt{\frac{\mu}{\mu-1}}, \frac{\sqrt{\mu(\mu+1)}}{2\sqrt{\mu-1}}) = \sqrt{\frac{\mu}{\mu-1}}$. With such a value of μ, the dominant worst case is when the rectangle R is a perfect square (see Figure 10(a)) and the low value of μ implies the possibility for the square to take a large portion of the rectangle. If $\mu > 3$, then $\max(\sqrt{\frac{\mu}{\mu-1}}, \frac{\sqrt{\mu(\mu+1)}}{2\sqrt{\mu-1}}) = \frac{\sqrt{\mu(\mu+1)}}{2\sqrt{\mu-1}}$. With such a value of μ, the dominant worst case is when the rectangle R has an aspect ratio of μ (see Figure

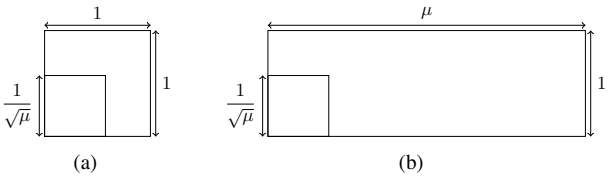


Figure 10: Dominant worst case depending on μ for the Square operation.

10(b)) and the large value of μ implies a huge deformation of the rectangle what increases the approximation ratio.

In summary, $x \mapsto \sqrt{\frac{x}{x-1}}$ is decreasing on $]1,3]$ and $\frac{\sqrt{x(x+1)}}{2\sqrt{x-1}}$ is increasing on $[3,+\infty[$, therefore, with this proof technique and without a change in $SNRRP$, the value $\mu = 3$ yields to the best possible approximation ratio. It is thus necessary to include additional cases to improve over $SNRRP$.

3) Description of NRRP: Intuitively, choosing a larger value of μ appears to be counter productive (since it tends to produce taller and skinnier rectangles), and we thus work with $\mu = \frac{5}{2}$, which is the lowest value of μ such that $p = 2$ in Lemma 9, allowing to use the Tripartition routine. The actual $NRRP$ generates 10 sub-cases (see Figure 11), all of which are fully detailed in [5]. In the following we present two of them.

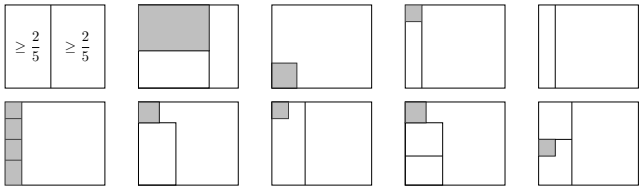


Figure 11: All the cases in NRRP. In each case, the gray rectangle is the one on which the recursive call is made, the white ones are returned zones.

a) Superposition : The Superposition routine, $Superposition(R, \alpha, \epsilon)$, returns three zones, R_1, Z_2 and Z_3 of respective areas $\epsilon s(R)$, $(\alpha - \epsilon)s(R)$ and $(1-\alpha)s(R)$. R_1 is a square that can be placed in the upper left corner, Z_2 a rectangle which is placed under R_1 in the bottom left corner and Z_3 is the remaining zone, *i.e.* R punched by both R_1 and Z_2, see Figure 12 for an illustration. In practice, Z_2 and Z_3 will always be used to host simple zones. Hence, only the aspect ratio $\rho(R_1)$ has to be smaller than $5/2$, what is always the case since R_1 is a square.

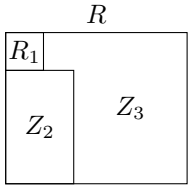


Figure 12: An illustration of the Superposition routine.

b) Inclusion : The Inclusion routine, $Inclusion(R, \alpha, \epsilon)$, returns three zones, R_1, Z_2 and Z_3 of respective areas $\epsilon s(R)$, $(\alpha - \epsilon)s(R)$ and $(1-\alpha)s(R)$. Z_2 is a rectangle which is placed on the left side, R_1 a rectangle included in Z_2 and Z_3 is the remaining zone, *i.e.* a rectangle placed on the right side, see Figure 13 for an illustration. Note that Inclusion is simply the execution of a Guillotine routine followed by a Square routine. As in the Superposition case, Z_2 and Z_3 will always be used to host simple zones. Hence, only the aspect ratio $\rho(R_1)$ needs to be smaller than $5/2$, what is always the case since R_1 is a square.

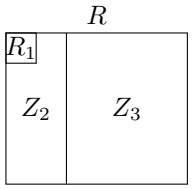


Figure 13: An illustration of the Inclusion routine.

The other sub-cases are variations on the different routines (Guillotine, Square, Tripartition, Superposition and Inclusion). In [5] two theorems are proven: Theorem 12 (from [5]) states the invariant on the aspect ratios of rectangles and is the adaptation of Theorem 5 with a maximal aspect ratio equal to $\frac{5}{2}$. Theorem 13 (from [5]) states the resulting approximation ratio.

Theorem 12 (Correctness, from [5])**.** *When executing NRRP$(R, \{s_1, \ldots, s_n\})$ with $\rho(R) \leq \frac{5}{2}$, all the recursive calls to NRRP$(R', \{s'_1, \ldots, s'_k\})$ are performed on a rectangle area R' such that $\rho(R') \leq \frac{5}{2}$.*

Theorem 13 (from [5])**.** *NRRP is a $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$-approximation for PERI-SUM.*

The proof of Theorem 13 relies mainly on the invariant of Theorem 12 and the following lemma which proves that the approximation ratio holds locally if we group the terminal zones produced during a call of NRRP.

Lemma 14. *At each call of NRRP, if $\{Z_1, \ldots, Z_k\}$ is the set of the terminal zones produced during this call then*

$$\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} p(Z_i)}{2\sum_{i=1}^{k} \sqrt{S(Z_i)}} \leq \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}.$$

V. Comparison of NRRP and Optimal for 2 and 3 partitions

In this section, we compare the results returned by NRRP and the known optimal partitioning for a large number of ratios under two restrictions. First, we are concerned with the sum of half perimeters (SHP) only, which for convex rectilinear partitions is equivalent to the sum to the projections of partition areas along the axes, as described in Section II. Second, we compare NRRP to the optimal partitionings for two and three partition arrangements only. The first restriction is justified for several reasons. First, both NRRP and

the known optimal partitionings deliver perfect load balance, leaving communication the only parameter to be optimized. Second, the SHP is the most simple yet useful metric for comparing the communication volume of two load-balanced partitionings. Finally, SHP can be used for any number of partitionings and thus is not limited to our second restriction. The second restriction is justified since it is only for two and three partition arrangements that the optimal partitionings are known for all ratios.

In order to carry out this comparison we implemented simulations that compute the SHP of partitionings returned by NRRP and the SHP of the corresponding optimal partitioning for the same ratios. This is done for the two and three partition cases separately. Due to the complexity of the NRRP algoritm, two implementations were used, and their results checked for agreement. The two implementations were written in Python and Java by separate team members who did not communicate until results were compared and any inconsistencies resolved.

A. Two Partitions

For two partitions there are only two optimal partitionings: the Straight-Line partitioning, achieved with the Guillotine subroutine of NRRP described in Section IV-B, and the Square-Corner partitioning, achieved with the *Square* subroutine of NRRP described in section IV-B. For ratios $x : y$ where $x \leq y$, normalized so that $x + y = 1$, the Square-Corner partitoning is optimal when $x \leq 0.25$. The simulation analyzed ratios ranging from the only homogeneous case of $x = y = 0.5$, to the most heterogeneous case of $0.005 : 0.995$ in steps of 5.0×10^{-3}. As NRRP can achieve both optimal partitionings in one step, calling subroutines that return known optimal shapes, it is not surprising that our simulations did not find any ratio where NRRP was more than a rounding error of 2.0×10^{-6} from optimal.

B. Three Partitions

The three partition case is more complicated than the two partition case. There are three optimal partitionings as determined in Section III-C, but determining which one is optimal for a given ratio is not as straightforward as in the two processors case. Figure 14 shows the possible values of x and y for ratios $x : y : z$ where $x \leq y \leq z$, normalized so that $x + y + z = 1$. This space is dominated by a large region where the Block-Rectangle partitioning is optimal, flanked by two regions along the $y-$axis ($x <\approx 0.086$) where the Square-Corner partitioning is optimal for values of $y \leq 0.25$, and the Square-Rectangle partitioning is optimal for values of $y \geq 0.25$. At $y = 0.25$ both are optimal provided $x <\approx 0.018$. These x values are presented as approximate but the exact values are known; they are the solutions of the quadratic expressions that define the various regions.

For three partitions, our simulation analyzed 867 ratios ranging from the only homogeneous case of $x = y = z = 0.333333$ towards the most heterogeneous case of $0.003333 : 0.003333 : 0.993333$, in increments of 5.0×10^{-3}. For a given ratio, if the difference between the SHP returned by NRRP and the optimal SHP was greater than a rounding error of 2.0×10^{-6}, then NRRP was considered to be non-optimal. Under these conditions NRRP was non-optimal for a total of 276 ratios, just under 1/3 of all ratios. Although non-optimal for these ratios, NRRP was not far from optimal. For the non-optimal ratios, NRRP was an average of 1.94% above optimal, with a maximum difference of 7.49%, below the bound of $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$ established by Theorem 18 by a factor of over 2.

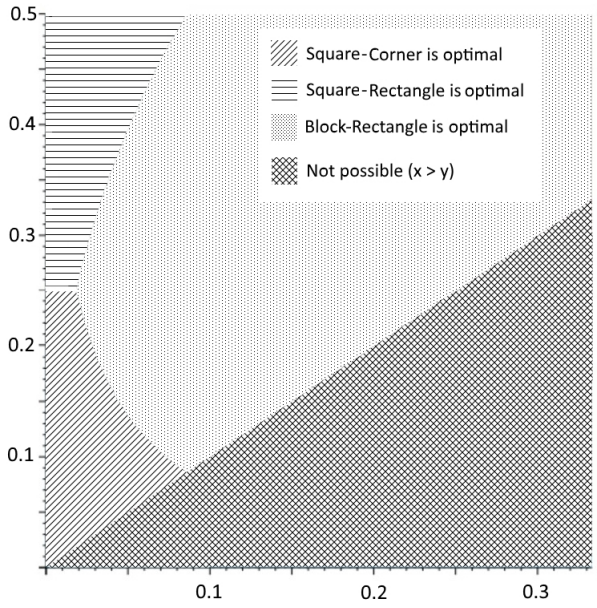


Figure 14: Regions where Square-Corner, Square-Rectangle, and Block-Rectangle partitionings are optimal for three partitions.

For the 276 ratios where NRRP was not optimal, the optimal partitioning is Block-Rectangle for 95 ratios ($\approx 59.4\%$), Square-Corner for 112, and Square-Rectangle for 69. The Square-Corner Partitioning is optimal most often in the case of extremely heterogeneous ratios ($x <\approx 0.086$ and $y \leq 0.25$). For all of these ratios, $z >\approx 0.732$. There are 196 such ratios in our simulation, and NRRP was within error of optimal for 84 of these. Furthermore, the largest difference between NRRP and the optimal occurs when Square-Corner is the optimal partitioning: For these 112 ratios, NRRP has a SHP larger than optimal by an average of 3.54%, and the maximum difference of 7.49% also occurs at these ratios. This contrasts with ratios where NRRP is not optimal and Block-Rectangle is: For these 95 ratios, NRRP has a SHP greater than optimal by an average of 1.77%, with a maximum difference of 3.40%. Finally, where NRRP is not optimal and Square-Rectangle is, NRRP has a greater SHP by a margin of less than four times the rounding error of 2.0×10^{-6}, indicating very nearly optimal partitionings.

C. More Than 3 Partitions

We do not investigate cases of 4 (or more) partitions as it is not known how many optimal partitioning shapes there are, what they are, and for what ratios they are optimal. In our experience the three partition case is much more complex than the two partition case. We have no reason to believe that the

four partition case will be any different, and thus it is beyond the scope of this work. Additionally, it is difficult to speculate as to how NRRP will perform in this case, but it is possible that NRRP performance decreases with increasing partitioning complexity as for two partitions we saw that NRRP is optimal for all ratios, but for three partitions we saw that NRRP was not optimal for approximately 1/3 of ratios. Nonetheless, all NRRP partitionings will be within $2/\sqrt{3}$ of the optimal. This is one of the most important strengths of the NRRP algorithm - even where the optimal partitionings are not known (which currently is all partitionings with more than three partitions), NRRP returns a partitioning which is no more than a factor of $2/\sqrt{3}$ of the optimal.

However, in [5], some simulations with numbers of processors greater than 3 has been performed (up to 64 processors). In this set of experiments, three kind of processors have been considered, each with different speed (one representing CPU, another GPU and the last accelerators) and for each value of n (number of processor), different repartition of CPUs/GPUs/accelerators have been tested. As stated previously, for such numbers of processors, optimal solutions are not known and the comparison relies on the lower bound in (1). With such settings, NRRP returns, on average, solutions whose SHP is within 5% of the lower bound. The maximum ratio between a solution returned by NRRP is 1.106. Note that solutions of RRP have also been considered, with behavior similar that the one of NRRP , except that the worst case scenario is significantly worse (around 1.3).

VI. Comparison of NRRP and Optimal for 3 partitions, including network topology, bandwidth and problem size

A. Network Topology and Bandwidth

While the SHP of the NRRP partitioning is optimal or nearly optimal for most heterogeneous ratios, recall that SHP, however useful, is just one metric corresponding to the overall communication volume. In practical systems, we presume SHP is a reasonable proxy for communication time of real problems, but other system factors will affect the communication time. For two processors, network topology is not a factor, but for three or more it may have a significant impact on the choice of partition shape. Take for instance a three-processor heterogeneous network topology in which a link between any two processors may be slowed or non-existent. This may affect the the communication time (and thereby the execution time) more profoundly than SHP alone would suggest.

Overall execution time is generally taken to be the sum of the communication time and the computation time. Note that the additional complicating factor of overlapping both is explored in [11], [3] and is typically achieved in runtime systems [24], [21]. Considering either a serial or parallel communication, the time taken for the communication will be determined by the volume of data sent and the bandwidth of the link(s) used to send that data. Assuming serial communication, most generally the total communication time in the case of three processors i, j, and k, is described by Formula 2 where $V_{x\to y}$ is the volume of data which must be sent from processor x to processor y, and $\beta_{x,y}$ is the bandwidth of the link between processors x and y.

$$T_{comm} = \frac{V_{i\to j} + V_{j\to i}}{\beta_{i,j}} + \frac{V_{i\to k} + V_{k\to i}}{\beta_{i,k}} + \frac{V_{j\to k} + V_{k\to j}}{\beta_{j,k}} \tag{2}$$

Assuming that the most beneficial communication route will always be chosen, situations where $\frac{1}{\beta_{i,j}} + \frac{1}{\beta_{i,k}} < \frac{1}{\beta_{j,k}}$ are equivalent to the link between j and k not existing at all. Recalling that if we label the three processors P, R, and S, and the area assigned to P is larger than or equal to the area assigned to R, which is in turn larger than or equal to the area assigned to S, there are three possible star topologies, depending on which processor pair is affected by the non-profitable/non-existent communication link. These topologies are shown in Figure 15, and the total communication time is given by Formula 3.

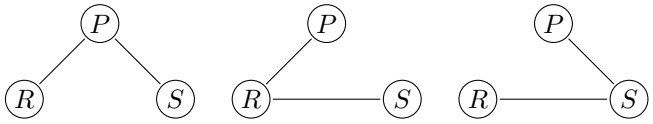


Figure 15: Three possible configurations of the star topology for three processors. Processors are shown as labelled circles, with communication pathways shown as lines between them. Processors without a direct connection either have no such direct connection, or that connection is always slower than routing communication through the other processor.

$$T_{comm} = \frac{V_{i\to j} + V_{j\to i}}{\beta_{i,j}} + \frac{V_{i\to k} + V_{k\to i}}{\beta_{i,k}} + \frac{V_{j\to k} + V_{k\to j}}{\beta_{i,j}} + \frac{V_{j\to k} + V_{k\to j}}{\beta_{i,k}} \tag{3}$$

In this case there are now only two viable communication links. The most simplistic model of this situation would be where $\beta_{i,j} = \beta_{i,k} = \beta$, and Formula 3 reduces to Formula 4.

$$T_{comm} = \frac{V_{i\to j} + V_{j\to i} + V_{i\to k} + V_{k\to i} + 2(V_{j\to k} + V_{k\to j})}{\beta} \tag{4}$$

We utilized this simplest possible model to study the effect of network topology and bandwidth on the optimal data partition shapes. To explore this, we identified optimal partition shapes which would minimize T_{comm} from Formula 4 in a similar way as we found optimal partition shapes minimizing T_{comm} given by Formula 5 which is valid in the case of three processors connected with a homogeneous network.

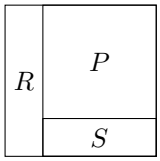
$$T_{comm} = \frac{V_{i\to j} + V_{j\to i} + V_{i\to k} + V_{k\to i} + V_{j\to k} + V_{k\to j}}{\beta} \tag{5}$$

To do this we designed a new metric, the minimization of which would minimize the T_{comm} as given in Formula 4,

similar to the way that the minimization of the SHP metric would minimize T_{comm} in Formula 5.

The optimal data partition shape for the first star network topology in Figure 15 (P at centre, no link between R and S) is often non-rectangular. The Square Corner shape particularly has the advantage of not requiring any data to be forwarded through Processor P. The Block Rectangle shape with processors P and R swapped, which was discarded as inferior when considering the fully connected network topology, emerges as optimal for relatively homogeneous systems.

Moreover, for variant two of the star network topology (with R at the centre of the star), the optimal partition shape is often the L Rectangle shape, shown in Figure 16, even for relatively homogeneous ratios. The L Rectangle is one of the six candidate partition shapes identified in [14] (along with the four shapes in Figure 3 and one other). This is an interesting observation since before accounting for topology, the non-intuitive partition shapes tended to be optimal only for relatively heterogeneous ratios. This indicates that the non-intuitive partition shapes may be optimal in other more complex situations where previously it was thought that the optimal shape was the straight-line partition shape.



L Rectangle

Figure 16: The L Rectangle shape is one of the six candidate partition shapes identified in [14], along with the four shapes in Figure 3. Until network topology was considered, the L Rectangle shape was not in the space of optimal shapes.

For star topologies with S at the center of the star the optimal data partition shape is one of three shapes, depending on processor speed ratios and algorithm.

Thus, when considering data partitioning shapes of three heterogeneous processors, including network topology and bandwidth, the novel non-rectangular partitionings can be advantageous, especially as heterogeneity increases.

This gives some insight into what happens when the complexity of the model increases. For several configurations, the optimal partition shape changed in this model as compared to the SHP only model. This is likely to hold true in the case of larger number of processors, where the optimal partition shape has yet to be determined. For real-life cases, the SHP based approximation may not be entirely sufficient. Rather than favoring traditional 2D decomposition, new candidates began to vie for optimality. This should only reinforce the contention that a single blanket partition shape is not adequate when considering the wide variability in system parameters in real life heterogeneous systems.

B. Problem Size

Considering even those partition shapes that did not change under the enhanced model, we also see that the size of the matrix, which we previously normalized, plays an important role. A small difference, even $\approx 1\%$, between the expected performance of the optimal model and the approximate model is significant when considering the force multiplier effect of the problem size and the network topology. In one example, at a computational power ratio where the optimal partition shape outperforms the NRRP partition by only 1.86% in SHP, the optimal shape outperforms the NRRP partition by 23.63% in communication time, considering a problem size of $N = 10,000$, a communication bandwidth of $1MB/s$, and the star network topology. Thus, sometimes a near optimal solution in terms of SHP can turn out to be far from the optimal in terms of the execution time.

Further, when network topology is taken into account, the non-intuitive, non-rectangular partition shapes are more and more dominant in the space of optimal partitionings. These factors, combined with the fact that these non-intuitive shapes are also dominant as heterogeneity increases, provide strong motivation to continue work on methods and algorithms that would find exact optimal solutions for different (small) numbers of partitions, different network topologies and performances, problem sizes, and specific parallel algorithms.

VII. Conclusion

The problem of partitioning a matrix into a set of submatrices to address simultaneously the problems of load balancing and communication minimization for data parallel applications on heterogeneous platforms has been shown to be NP-Complete. In this paper, we present recent approaches that relax the restriction that all partitions should be shaped as rectangles when approaching this problem. The first approach uses an original mathematical technique (called the Push Technique) to find the exact optimal partitioning. This is important as in our experience there is an appetite for exact solutions. Due to the complexity of the technique, it has been developed for a small number (up to 3) of partitions only. However, even at a small scale, the optimal partitions found by this approach are often non-rectangular and sometimes non-intuitive. This is a result of the fact that this technique is designed specifically for heterogeneous partitionings.

The second approach is to improve over preexisting approximation algorithms. We propose two algorithms, SNRPP, which is a $\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}$ approximation, and NRPP, which is a $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$ approximation. While sub-optimal, these algorithms return results for arbitrary numbers of partitions, an advantage for problems with larger number of partitions where calculating the exact solution is an open problem. We used the first exact approach to analyze how close to the known optimal solutions the NRRP algorithm is for small numbers of partitions. We show that this approximation algorithm can yield to partitionings that are often very close to optimal. However we also show that the small differences between these approximate results and the optimal solution can be magnified for real-life data parallel applications such as matrix multiplication.

Given the appetite for exact solutions the optimal approach is preferred and can be used for small number of partitions. In cases where the number of partitions is large and calculating

the optimal partitioning is complex, the approximate algorithms can be used, yielding to solutions that are guaranteed to be within $\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$ of the optimal.

Future work includes expanding the first exact approach to greater number of partitions, improving the approximation ratio of the second approximate approach, and extending these approaches to other metrics where the actual topology of the platform is taken into account.

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