

ON CONSTANTS IN MAXWELL INEQUALITIES FOR BOUNDED AND CONVEX DOMAINS

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It is shown that for a bounded and convex domain $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^3$, the Maxwell constants are bounded from below and above by the Friedrichs and Poincaré constants of Ω , respectively. Bibliography: 14 titles.

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout this paper, we fix a bounded and convex domain $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^3$. Let us recall the well-known Poincaré¹ inequalities

$$\exists c_{p,0} > 0 \quad \forall u \in \mathring{H}^1 \quad |u| \leq c_{p,0} |\nabla u|, \quad (1)$$

$$\exists c_p > 0 \quad \forall u \in H^1 \cap \mathbb{R}^\perp \quad |u| \leq c_p |\nabla u|, \quad (2)$$

which can be deduced from, e.g., Rellich's selection theorem by standard indirect arguments. We assume that these constants are best possible, i.e., that

$$\frac{1}{c_{p,0}} := \inf_{0 \neq u \in \mathring{H}^1} \frac{|\nabla u|}{|u|}, \quad \frac{1}{c_p} := \inf_{0 \neq u \in H^1 \cap \mathbb{R}^\perp} \frac{|\nabla u|}{|u|}.$$

Then $c_{p,0}$ and c_p are the well-known Friedrichs and Poincaré constants, respectively, which satisfy the relations

$$0 < c_{p,0}^2 = \frac{1}{\lambda_1} < \frac{1}{\mu_2} = c_p^2,$$

where λ_1 and μ_2 are the first Dirichlet and the second Neumann eigenvalues of the Laplacian, respectively. By $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$ and $|\cdot|$, we denote the standard inner product and the induced norm in L^2 ; the usual L^2 -Sobolev spaces are denoted by H^1 and \mathring{H}^1 . The latter is defined to be the closure in H^1 of smooth and compactly supported test functions. All spaces and norms are defined on Ω . Moreover, we introduce the standard Sobolev spaces R for the rotation and D for the divergence by

$$R := \{E \in L^2 : \operatorname{rot} E \in L^2\}, \quad D := \{E \in L^2 : \operatorname{div} E \in L^2\},$$

where $\operatorname{rot} = \operatorname{curl}$ and div should be understood in the usual distributional or weak sense. As before, we denote the closures of the test vector fields in the respective graph norms by \mathring{R} and \mathring{D} . The subscript zero in this notation indicates a vanishing derivative, e.g.,

$$R_0 := \{E \in R : \operatorname{rot} E = 0\}, \quad \mathring{D}_0 := \{E \in \mathring{D} : \operatorname{div} E = 0\}.$$

Since Ω is convex, it is especially simply connected and its boundary is connected. Hence, the Neumann and Dirichlet fields of Ω vanish, i.e.,

$$\mathcal{H}_N := R_0 \cap \mathring{D}_0 = \{0\} = \mathring{R}_0 \cap D_0 =: \mathcal{H}_D.$$

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¹The estimate (1) is often called the Friedrichs–Steklov inequality as well.

By the Maxwell compactness properties (see [5–7, 12–14]), i.e., by the compactness of the two embeddings

$$\mathring{R} \cap D \hookrightarrow L^2, \quad R \cap \mathring{D} \hookrightarrow L^2,$$

and again by a standard indirect argument, the Maxwell inequalities hold:

$$\exists c_{m,t} > 0 \quad \forall E \in \mathring{R} \cap D \quad |E| \leq c_{m,t} (|\operatorname{rot} E|^2 + |\operatorname{div} E|^2)^{1/2}, \quad (3)$$

$$\exists c_{m,n} > 0 \quad \forall H \in R \cap \mathring{D} \quad |H| \leq c_{m,n} (|\operatorname{rot} H|^2 + |\operatorname{div} H|^2)^{1/2}. \quad (4)$$

Again, we assume that the constants are best possible, i.e.,

$$\frac{1}{c_{m,t}^2} := \inf_{0 \neq E \in \mathring{R} \cap D} \frac{|\operatorname{rot} E|^2 + |\operatorname{div} E|^2}{|E|^2},$$

$$\frac{1}{c_{m,n}^2} := \inf_{0 \neq H \in R \cap \mathring{D}} \frac{|\operatorname{rot} H|^2 + |\operatorname{div} H|^2}{|H|^2}.$$

The notation $c_{m,t}$ and $c_{m,n}$ should indicate the homogeneous tangential and normal boundary condition, respectively. To the best of the author's knowledge, there are no general bounds for the Maxwell constants $c_{m,t}$ and $c_{m,n}$. On the other hand, estimates for $c_{m,t}$ and $c_{m,n}$, at least from above, are very important for applications such as preconditioning or a priori and a posteriori error estimation for numerical methods (see, e.g., [8, 10]).

In the present paper, we will prove that

$$c_{p,0} \leq c_{m,t} \leq c_{m,n} = c_p \leq \frac{\operatorname{diam}(\Omega)}{\pi}. \quad (5)$$

We note that (5) has already been well known in two dimensions, where even the inequalities

$$c_{p,0} < c_{m,t} = c_{m,n} = c_p \leq \frac{\operatorname{diam}(\Omega)}{\pi}$$

hold,² see the Appendix. However, (5) is new in three dimensions. Furthermore, the last inequality in (5) has been proved in the famous paper of Payne and Weinberger [9], where the optimality of this estimate was also shown.

2. RESULTS AND PROOFS

We start with an inequality for irrotational fields.

Lemma 1. *For all $E \in \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \cap D$ and all $H \in \nabla H^1 \cap \mathring{D}$, we have*

$$|E| \leq c_{p,0} |\operatorname{div} E|, \quad |H| \leq c_p |\operatorname{div} H|.$$

Proof. Let $\varphi \in \mathring{H}^1$ with $E = \nabla \varphi$. By (1), we get

$$|E|^2 = \langle E, \nabla \varphi \rangle = -\langle \operatorname{div} E, \varphi \rangle \leq |\operatorname{div} E| |\varphi| \leq c_{p,0} |\operatorname{div} E| |\nabla \varphi| = c_{p,0} |\operatorname{div} E| |E|.$$

Let $\varphi \in H^1$ with $H = \nabla \varphi$ and $\varphi \perp \mathbb{R}$. Since $H \in \mathring{D}$, by (2), we obtain

$$|H|^2 = \langle H, \nabla \varphi \rangle = -\langle \operatorname{div} H, \varphi \rangle \leq |\operatorname{div} H| |\varphi| \leq c_p |\operatorname{div} H| |\nabla \varphi| = c_p |\operatorname{div} H| |H|. \quad \square$$

Remark 2. Lemma 1 extends to arbitrary Lipschitz domains $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N$, $N \in \mathbb{N}$.

²In 2D, the equality $c_{m,t} = c_{m,n} = c_p$ holds even for general Lipschitz domains, see the Appendix.

As usual in the theory of Maxwell's equations, we need another crucial tool, the Helmholtz decompositions of vector fields into irrotational and solenoidal vector fields. For convex domains, these decompositions are very simple. We have

$$\mathbf{L}^2 = \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \oplus \text{rot } \mathbf{R}, \quad \mathbf{L}^2 = \nabla \mathbf{H}^1 \oplus \text{rot } \mathring{\mathbf{R}}, \quad (6)$$

where \oplus denotes the orthogonal sum in \mathbf{L}^2 . We note that

$$\mathring{\mathbf{R}}_0 = \nabla \mathring{H}^1, \quad \mathbf{R}_0 = \nabla \mathbf{H}^1, \quad \mathbf{D}_0 = \text{rot } \mathbf{R}, \quad \mathring{\mathbf{D}}_0 = \text{rot } \mathring{\mathbf{R}}.$$

Moreover, setting

$$\mathring{\mathcal{R}} := \mathring{\mathbf{R}} \cap \text{rot } \mathbf{R}, \quad \mathcal{R} := \mathbf{R} \cap \text{rot } \mathring{\mathbf{R}},$$

we have

$$\mathring{\mathbf{R}} = \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \oplus \mathring{\mathcal{R}}, \quad \mathbf{R} = \nabla \mathbf{H}^1 \oplus \mathcal{R} \quad (7)$$

and see that

$$\text{rot } \mathring{\mathbf{R}} = \text{rot } \mathring{\mathcal{R}}, \quad \text{rot } \mathbf{R} = \text{rot } \mathcal{R}.$$

We note that all occurring spaces of range type are closed subspaces of \mathbf{L}^2 : this immediately follows by the estimates (1)-(4). More details about the Helmholtz decompositions can be found, e.g., in [5].

To get similar inequalities for solenoidal vector fields as in Lemma 1, we need a crucial lemma from [1, Theorem 2.17] (see also [2-4, 11] for related partial results).

Lemma 3. *Let E belong to $\mathring{\mathbf{R}} \cap \mathbf{D}$ or $\mathbf{R} \cap \mathring{\mathbf{D}}$. Then $E \in \mathbf{H}^1$ and*

$$|\nabla E|^2 \leq |\text{rot } E|^2 + |\text{div } E|^2. \quad (8)$$

We emphasize that for $E \in \mathring{H}^1$ and any domain $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^3$,

$$|\nabla E|^2 = |\text{rot } E|^2 + |\text{div } E|^2 \quad (9)$$

holds since $-\Delta = \text{rot rot} - \nabla \text{div}$. This formula is no longer valid if E satisfies just the tangential or normal boundary condition. However, for convex domains the inequality (8) remains true.

Lemma 4. *For all vector fields E in $\mathring{\mathbf{R}} \cap \text{rot } \mathbf{R}$ or $\mathbf{R} \cap \text{rot } \mathring{\mathbf{R}}$, we have*

$$|E| \leq c_p |\text{rot } E|.$$

Proof. Let $E \in \text{rot } \mathbf{R} = \text{rot } \mathcal{R}$, and let $\Phi \in \mathcal{R}$ with $\text{rot } \Phi = E$. Then $\Phi \in \mathbf{H}^1$ by Lemma 3 since $\mathcal{R} = \mathbf{R} \cap \mathring{\mathbf{D}}_0$. Moreover, $\Phi = \text{rot } \Psi$ can be represented by some $\Psi \in \mathring{\mathbf{R}}$. Hence, for any constant vector $a \in \mathbb{R}^3$ we have $\langle \Phi, a \rangle = 0$. Thus, Φ belongs to $\mathbf{H}^1 \cap (\mathbb{R}^3)^\perp$. Then, by Lemma 3, for $E \in \mathring{\mathbf{R}} \cap \text{rot } \mathbf{R}$ we get

$$|E|^2 = \langle E, \text{rot } \Phi \rangle = \langle \text{rot } E, \Phi \rangle \leq |\text{rot } E| |\Phi| \leq c_p |\text{rot } E| |\nabla \Phi| \leq c_p |\text{rot } E| \underbrace{|\text{rot } \Phi|}_{=E}.$$

If $E \in \mathbf{R} \cap \text{rot } \mathring{\mathbf{R}}$, then there exists $\Phi \in \mathring{\mathbf{R}}$ with $\text{rot } \Phi = E$. As before, by Lemma 3, we see that $E \in \mathbf{H}^1 \cap (\mathbb{R}^3)^\perp$ and $|E| \leq c_p |\nabla E| \leq c_p |\text{rot } E|$, which completes the proof. \square

Theorem 5. *For all vector fields $E \in \mathring{\mathbf{R}} \cap \mathbf{D}$ and $H \in \mathbf{R} \cap \mathring{\mathbf{D}}$, the inequalities*

$$|E|^2 \leq c_{p,0}^2 |\text{div } E|^2 + c_p^2 |\text{rot } E|^2, \quad |H|^2 \leq c_p^2 |\text{div } H|^2 + c_p^2 |\text{rot } H|^2$$

hold, i.e., $c_{m,t}, c_{m,n} \leq c_p$. Moreover, $c_{p,0} \leq c_{m,t} \leq c_{m,n} = c_p \leq \text{diam}(\Omega)/\pi$.

Proof. By the Helmholtz decomposition (6), we have

$$\mathring{R} \cap \mathring{D} \ni E = E_{\nabla} + E_{\text{rot}} \in \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \oplus \text{rot } \mathring{R}$$

with $E_{\nabla} \in \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathring{D}$, $E_{\text{rot}} \in \mathring{R} \cap \text{rot } \mathring{R}$, and $\text{div } E_{\nabla} = \text{div } E$, as well as $\text{rot } E_{\text{rot}} = \text{rot } E$. By Lemma 1, Lemma 4, and the orthogonality, we obtain

$$|E|^2 = |E_{\nabla}|^2 + |E_{\text{rot}}|^2 \leq c_{\text{p},0}^2 |\text{div } E|^2 + c_{\text{p}}^2 |\text{rot } E|^2.$$

Similarly, we have

$$\mathring{R} \cap \mathring{D} \ni H = H_{\nabla} + H_{\text{rot}} \in \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \oplus \text{rot } \mathring{R}$$

with $H_{\nabla} \in \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathring{D}$, $H_{\text{rot}} \in \mathring{R} \cap \text{rot } \mathring{R}$, $\text{div } H_{\nabla} = \text{div } H$, and $\text{rot } H_{\text{rot}} = \text{rot } H$. As before,

$$|H|^2 = |H_{\nabla}|^2 + |H_{\text{rot}}|^2 \leq c_{\text{p}}^2 |\text{div } H|^2 + c_{\text{p}}^2 |\text{rot } H|^2.$$

This proves the upper bounds. For the lower bounds, let λ_1 be the first Dirichlet eigenvalue of the negative Laplacian $-\Delta$, i.e.,

$$\frac{1}{c_{\text{p},0}^2} = \lambda_1 = \inf_{0 \neq \varphi \in \mathring{H}^1} \frac{|\nabla \varphi|^2}{|\varphi|^2},$$

and let $u \in \mathring{H}^1$ be an eigenfunction to λ_1 . Note that u satisfies the relation

$$\forall \varphi \in \mathring{H}^1 \quad \langle \nabla u, \nabla \varphi \rangle = \lambda_1 \langle u, \varphi \rangle.$$

Then $0 \neq E := \nabla u \in \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathring{D} = \mathring{R}_0 \cap \mathring{D}$ and $-\text{div } E = -\text{div } \nabla u = \lambda_1 u$. By (3) and (1), we have

$$|E| \leq c_{\text{m,t}} |\text{div } E| = c_{\text{m,t}} \lambda_1 |u| \leq c_{\text{m,t}} \lambda_1 c_{\text{p},0} |\nabla u| = \frac{c_{\text{m,t}}}{c_{\text{p},0}} |E|,$$

yielding $c_{\text{p},0} \leq c_{\text{m,t}}$. Now, let μ_2 be the second Neumann eigenvalue of the negative Laplacian $-\Delta$, i.e.,

$$\frac{1}{c_{\text{p}}^2} = \mu_2 = \inf_{0 \neq \varphi \in \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathbb{R}^{\perp}} \frac{|\nabla \varphi|^2}{|\varphi|^2},$$

and let $u \in \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathbb{R}^{\perp}$ be an eigenfunction to μ_2 . Note that u satisfies the relation

$$\forall \varphi \in \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathbb{R}^{\perp} \quad \langle \nabla u, \nabla \varphi \rangle = \mu_2 \langle u, \varphi \rangle,$$

which holds even for all $\varphi \in \mathring{H}^1$. Then $0 \neq H := \nabla u$ belongs to $\nabla \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathring{D} = \mathring{R}_0 \cap \mathring{D}$ and $-\text{div } H = -\text{div } \nabla u = \mu_2 u$. By (4) and (2), we have

$$|H| \leq c_{\text{m,n}} |\text{div } H| = c_{\text{m,n}} \mu_2 |u| \leq c_{\text{m,n}} \mu_2 c_{\text{p}} |\nabla u| = \frac{c_{\text{m,n}}}{c_{\text{p}}} |H|,$$

yielding $c_{\text{p}} \leq c_{\text{m,n}}$, which completes the proof. \square

Remark 6. It follows from the proof that the lower bounds $c_{\text{p},0} \leq c_{\text{m,t}}$, as well as $c_{\text{p}} \leq c_{\text{m,n}}$, remain true in a more general situation, i.e., for bounded Lipschitz³ domains $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N$.

³The Lipschitz assumption can also be weakened. It is sufficient to assume that Ω admits the Maxwell compactness properties.

APPENDIX A. THE 2D CASE

In 2D, there are scalar- and vector-valued rotations: $\text{rot} = \text{div } R$ and $\vec{\text{rot}} = \nabla^\perp = R\nabla$. The scalar-valued rotation is just the divergence div after a 90° -rotation

$$R := \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{bmatrix},$$

and the vector-valued one is actually the gradient ∇ followed by the same rotation R . Hence, applying the Poincaré estimates to the potentials generated by the Helmholtz decompositions, we immediately get the desired estimates. Of course, this special trick works only in 2D.

More precisely, let $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ be a Lipschitz domain. Then Lemma 1 holds by Remark 2. Moreover, even a stronger version of Lemma 4 is true.

Lemma 7. *For all vector fields $E \in \mathring{R} \cap \vec{\text{rot}} \mathring{H}^1$ and $H \in R \cap \vec{\text{rot}} \mathring{H}^1$, we have*

$$|E| \leq c_p |\text{rot } E|, \quad |H| \leq c_{p,0} |\text{rot } H|.$$

This follows immediately from Lemma 1 by the arguments below.

Proof. Let $E \in \mathring{R} \cap \vec{\text{rot}} \mathring{H}^1 = \mathring{R} \cap R\nabla \mathring{H}^1$. Then $H := RE \in \mathring{D} \cap \nabla \mathring{H}^1$. By Lemma 1, we get

$$|E| = |H| \leq c_p |\text{div } H| = c_p |\text{rot } E|.$$

If $H \in R \cap \vec{\text{rot}} \mathring{H}^1 = R \cap R\nabla \mathring{H}^1$, then $E := RH \in \mathring{D} \cap \nabla \mathring{H}^1$. By Lemma 1, we obtain

$$|H| = |E| \leq c_{p,0} |\text{div } E| = c_{p,0} |\text{rot } H|. \quad \square$$

We note that in 2D, the Helmholtz decompositions read as follows:

$$\mathbb{L}^2 = \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \oplus \mathcal{H}_D \oplus \vec{\text{rot}} \mathring{H}^1, \quad \mathbb{L}^2 = \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \oplus \mathcal{H}_N \oplus \vec{\text{rot}} \mathring{H}^1,$$

where owing to the possibly nontrivial topology (we do not assume Ω to be convex), nonvanishing Dirichlet or Neumann fields may exist.

Theorem 8. *For all vector fields $E \in \mathring{R} \cap \mathring{D} \cap \mathcal{H}_D^\perp$ and $H \in R \cap \mathring{D} \cap \mathcal{H}_N^\perp$, we have*

$$|E|^2 \leq c_{p,0}^2 |\text{div } E|^2 + c_p^2 |\text{rot } E|^2, \quad |H|^2 \leq c_p^2 |\text{div } H|^2 + c_{p,0}^2 |\text{rot } H|^2,$$

i.e., $c_{m,t}, c_{m,n} \leq c_p$. Moreover, even $c_{p,0} < c_{m,t} = c_{m,n} = c_p$.

Proof. Following the proof of Theorem 5, we use the Helmholtz decomposition to show that for $E \in \mathring{R} \cap \mathring{D} \cap \mathcal{H}_D^\perp$,

$$E = E_\nabla + E_{\text{rot}} \in \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \oplus \vec{\text{rot}} \mathring{H}^1$$

with $E_\nabla \in \nabla \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathring{D}$, $E_{\text{rot}} \in \mathring{R} \cap \vec{\text{rot}} \mathring{H}^1$, $\text{div } E_\nabla = \text{div } E$, and $\text{rot } E_{\text{rot}} = \text{rot } E$. Hence, by Lemma 1, Lemma 7, and orthogonality, we obtain

$$|E|^2 = |E_\nabla|^2 + |E_{\text{rot}}|^2 \leq c_{p,0}^2 |\text{div } E|^2 + c_p^2 |\text{rot } E|^2,$$

and the estimate for H follows analogously. For the lower bounds, we look again at the second Neumann eigenvalue $\mu_2 = 1/c_p^2$ of $-\Delta$ and the corresponding eigenfunction $u \in \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathbb{R}^\perp$ with $\nabla u \in \mathring{D}$ and $-\Delta u = \mu_2 u$. Then, as before, $0 \neq H := \nabla u$ belongs to $\nabla \mathring{H}^1 \cap \mathring{D} = R_0 \cap \mathring{D} \cap \mathcal{H}_N^\perp$ with $-\text{div } H = -\text{div } \nabla u = \mu_2 u$. By the definition of $c_{m,n}$ and relation (2) (for nonconvex Ω), we have

$$|H| \leq c_{m,n} |\text{div } H| = c_{m,n} \mu_2 |u| \leq c_{m,n} \mu_2 c_p |\nabla u| = \frac{c_{m,n}}{c_p} |H|,$$

yielding $c_p \leq c_{m,n}$. On the other hand, $E := RH \in D_0 \cap \overset{\circ}{R} \cap \mathcal{H}_D^\perp$ and

$$|E| \leq c_{m,t} |\operatorname{rot} E| = c_{m,t} |\operatorname{div} H| = c_{m,t} \mu_2 |u| \leq c_{m,t} \mu_2 c_p |\nabla u| = \frac{c_{m,t}}{c_p} |E|,$$

showing $c_p \leq c_{m,t}$. □

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