

The regularity method and blow-up lemmas for sparse graphs

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Course outline

1. **Lecture I.** Introduction to the regularity method
2. **Lecture II.** The blow-up lemma
3. **Lecture III.** The sparse case: small subgraphs
4. **Lecture IV.** The sparse case: large subgraphs

Lecture IV. The sparse case (large subgraphs)

Aim of talk

- ▷ Shall only give some idea (shan't be ambitious)
- ▷ **Joint work with**
 - P. Allen (London),
 - J. Böttcher (London),
 - H. Hàn (Santiago),
 - Y. Person (Frankfurt).
- ▷ Preprint available on the [school's webpage](#)

Outline of talk

1. (Lecture I & II) The regularity method; the blow-up lemma
2. (Lecture III) The regularity method in the sparse setting
3. Applications of the blow-up lemmas in the sparse setting
4. Inheritance of regularity
5. Statement of the sparse blow-up lemmas

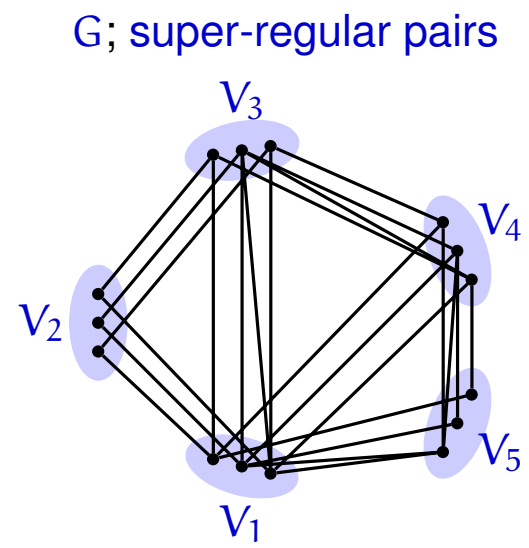
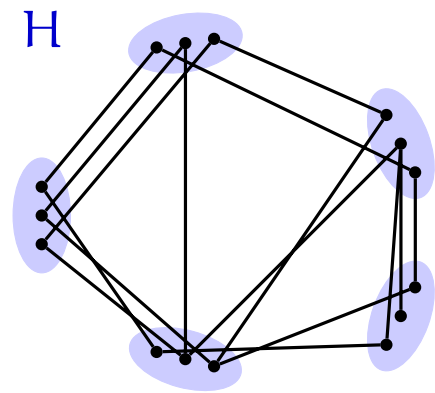
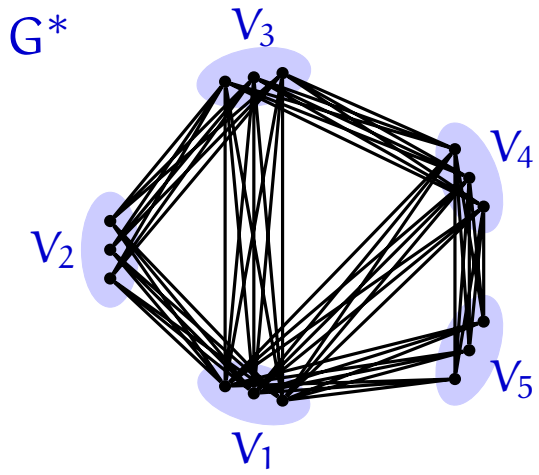
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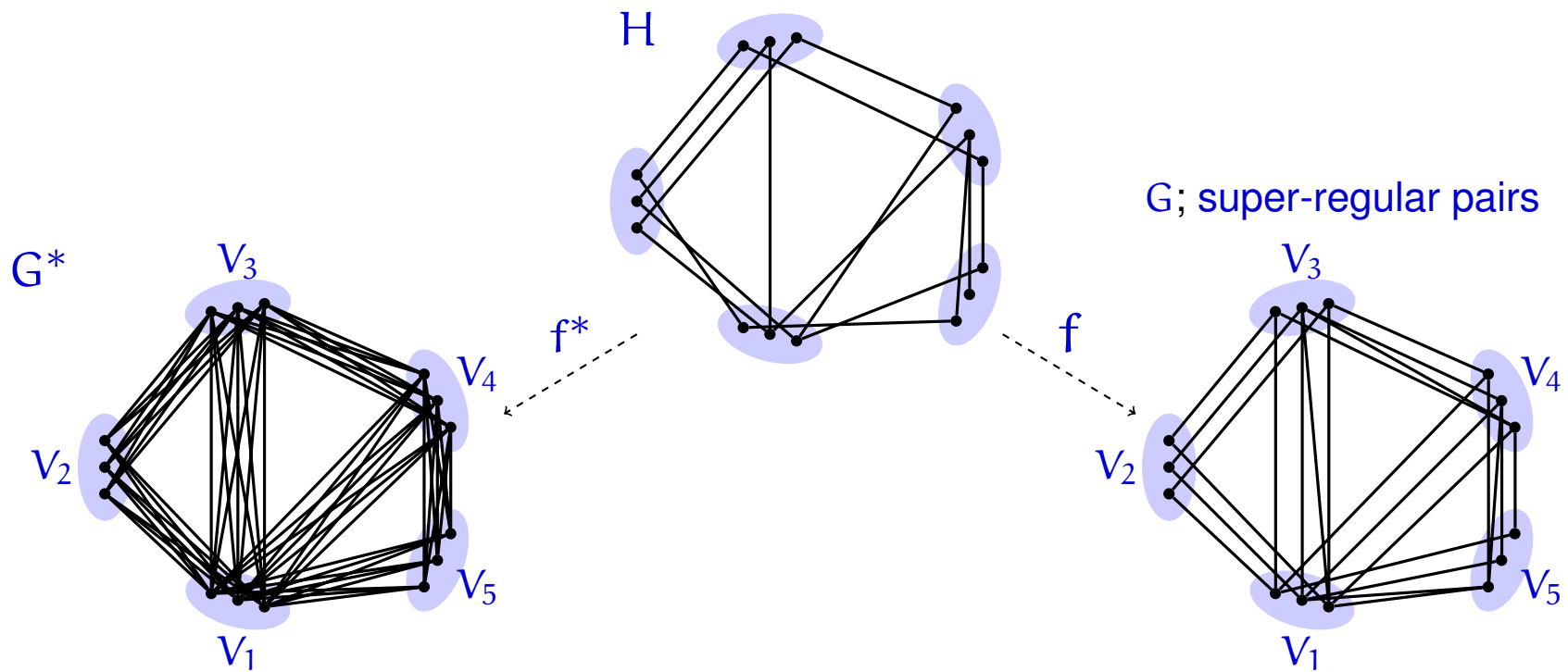
The Blow-up Lemma

Theorem 1 (The Blow-up Lemma (Komlós, Sárközy & Szemerédi '97)).
For every $\delta > 0$, $\Delta, r \in \mathbb{N}$ there is $\varepsilon > 0$ such that the following holds. Let $G^ = (V_1, \dots, V_r; E^*)$ and $G = (V_1, \dots, V_r; E)$ be two graphs and let $R \subset \binom{[r]}{2}$ be such that (V_i, V_j) is a complete bipartite graph in G^* and (V_i, V_j) is an (ε, δ) -super-regular graph in G whenever $ij \in R$. If H with $\Delta(H) \leq \Delta$ can be embedded into G^* then it can also be embedded into G .*

The Blow-up Lemma



The Blow-up Lemma

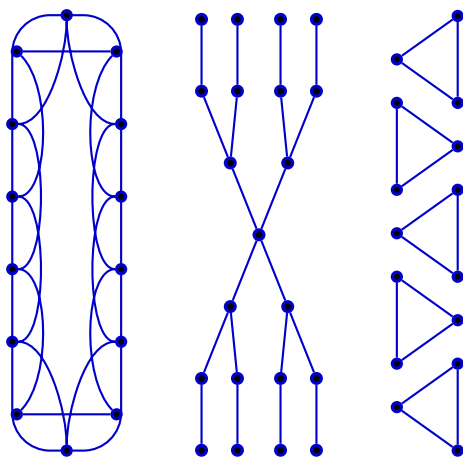


If f^* exists, the f exists.

Applications of the Blow-up Lemma

Do graphs with sufficiently high minimum degree contain ...

- ▷ Pósa & Seymour '74: r -th powers of Hamiltonian cycles?
- ▷ Alon & Yuster '96: F -factors (for F fixed)?



Answer: Yes!

- ▷ Invented by Komlós, Sárközy & Szemerédi

Spanning subgraphs with constant maximum degree

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The sparse setting

- ▷ So far: we have been concerned with dense graphs, i.e., graphs $G = G^n$ with $\Omega(n^2)$ edges.
- ▷ *Sparse*: graphs with $o(n^2)$ edges.
- ▷ Densities $d(U, U') = e(U, U')/|U||U'|$ in such sparse graphs vanish as $n \rightarrow \infty$. Therefore, the regularity condition

$$\forall U' \subset U, W' \subset W \text{ with } |U'|/|U|, |W'|/|W| \geq \varepsilon$$

we have $|d(U', W') - d(U, W)| \leq \varepsilon$

becomes trivial.

- ▷ Easy fix: normalize the density by dividing by $p = p(n) = e(G) \binom{n}{2}^{-1}$.

Szemerédi's regularity lemma, sparse version

Definition 2. $B = (U, W; E)$ is $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -regular if for all $U' \subset U$ and $W' \subset W$ with $|U'|/|U|, |W'|/|W| \geq \varepsilon$, we have $|d_p(U', W') - d| \leq \varepsilon$, where

$$d_p(U', W') = \frac{e(U', W')}{p|U'||W'|}.$$

Typical applications: B is a **subgraph** of the random graph $G(n, p)$ or of a pseudorandom graph of some density p , with $p \rightarrow 0$.

Ambient graph: we shall usually have a **sparse, ambient graph** Γ .

Szemerédi's regularity lemma, sparse version

Any graph with no 'dense patches' admits a Szemerédi partition with the above notion of ε -regularity.

Definition 3. Let us say $G = (V, E)$ is *locally* (η, b) -bounded if for all $U \subset V$ with $|U| \geq \eta|V|$, we have

$$\#\{\text{edges within } U\} \leq b|E| \binom{|U|}{2} \binom{|V|}{2}^{-1}.$$

Szemerédi's regularity lemma, sparse version

Theorem 4 (The regularity lemma). *For any $\varepsilon > 0$, $t_0 \geq 1$, and b , there exist $\eta > 0$ and T_0 such that any *locally* (η, b) -bounded graph $G = G^n$ admits a partition $V = V_1 \cup \dots \cup V_t$ such that*

$$\triangleright t_0 \leq t \leq T_0,$$

$$\triangleright |V_1| \leq \dots \leq |V_t| \leq |V_1| + 1,$$

$\triangleright (V_i, V_j)$ is $(\varepsilon; p)$ -regular for at least $(1 - \varepsilon) \binom{t}{2}$ pairs $ij \in \binom{t}{2}$, where

$$p = e(G) \binom{n}{2}^{-1}.$$

- A structure theorem for locally bounded sparse graphs

Embedding lemma; sparse setting

- ▷ Thanks to the work of several researchers, we now know how to use the regularity lemma in the sparse setting.

Contributors: Balogh, Conlon, Fox, Gerke, Gowers, K., Łuczak, Morris, Rödl, Samotij, Saxton, Schacht, Steger, Thomason, Zhao, among others.

- ▷ Typical applications: when $G \subset \Gamma$, and $\Gamma = G(n, p)$ or Γ is a strongly pseudorandom graph.
- ▷ More precisely: we know suitable embedding lemmas for graphs $H = H^h$ with $h = O(1)$.
- ▷ How about *large* H ? E.g., $h = n$?

Sparse blow-up lemmas

- ▷ **Main result:** suitable blow-up lemmas exist in the sparse setting.
- ▷ **Statements are technical:** we'll discuss some applications first.

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Sparse blow-up applications

1. **Universality** results for random and pseudorandom graphs
2. **Partition-universality** results for random and pseudorandom graphs
3. Resilience and robustness of **low-bandwidth** graphs
4. **Maker-Breaker** games

Universality

- ▷ \mathcal{H} : a set of graphs
- ▷ A graph G is \mathcal{H} -universal if $H \subset G$ for each $H \in \mathcal{H}$.

A universality result (random graphs)

$\mathcal{H}(n, d, \Delta)$: class of graphs $H = H^n$ with $\Delta(H) = \Delta$ and degeneracy d

Theorem 5. For every d and $\Delta \in \mathbb{N}$ there is C such that if

$$p \geq C \left(\frac{\log n}{n} \right)^{1/(2d+1)},$$

then the r.g. $G(n, p)$ is a.a.s. $\mathcal{H}(n, d, \Delta)$ -universal.

Theorem 6. For every $d, \Delta \in \mathbb{N}$ and $\gamma > 0$ there is C such that if

$$p \geq C \left(\frac{\log n}{n} \right)^{1/2d},$$

then the r.g. $G((1 + \gamma)n, p)$ is a.a.s. $\mathcal{H}(n, d, \Delta)$ -universal.

Remarks

- ▶ Strengthen results of Dellamonica, K., Rödl and Ruciński (2015) and Kim and Lee (2013+), Ferber, Nenadov and Peter (2013+). [For $d = 1$, Montgomery can do $p = \tilde{O}(1/n)$.]
- ▶ One of the forms of the blow-up lemma is tailored to handle graphs with low degeneracy.

A universality result (pseudorandom graphs)

Pseudorandom concept we shall use: G is (p, β) -*bi-jumbled* if, for all $U, W \subset V(G)$, we have

$$|e(U, W) - p|U||W|| \leq \beta \sqrt{|U||W|}.$$

Thomason (1987): (p, β) -jumbled graphs

Remarks:

- (i) graph discrepancy results imply that if $G = G^n$ is (p, β) -bi-jumbled, then $\beta \geq \sqrt{np(1-p)}/80$ as long as $p(1-p) \geq 1/n$.
- (ii) (n, d, λ) -graphs are $(d/n, \lambda)$ -bi-jumbled.
- (iii) Shall just say *jumbled* for *bi-jumbled*.

A universality result (pseudorandom graphs)

$\mathcal{H}(n, \Delta)$: class of graphs $H = H^n$ with $\Delta(H) = \Delta$

Theorem 7. *For every $\Delta \geq 2$ there is $c > 0$ such that, for any $p > 0$, if $\beta \leq cp^{3\Delta/2+1/2}$, then any n -vertex (p, β) -jumbled graph G with $\delta(G) \geq \frac{1}{2}pn$ is $\mathcal{H}(n, \Delta)$ -universal.*

A partition-universality result (random graphs)

G is *r -partition universal for \mathcal{H}* if in any r -colouring of $E(G)$ there is a colour class which is \mathcal{H} -universal.

$\mathcal{H}(n, d, \Delta)$: class of graphs $H = H^n$ with $\Delta(H) = \Delta$ and degeneracy d

Theorem 8. For every r, d , and $\Delta \in \mathbb{N}$, there is C such that if

$$p \geq C \left(\frac{\log n}{n} \right)^{1/2d},$$

then a.a.s. $G(Cn, p)$ is *r -partition universal for $\mathcal{H}(n, d, \Delta)$* .

- ▷ Strengthens a result of K., Rödl, Schacht and Szemerédi (2011).

A partition-universality result (pseudorandom graphs)

$\mathcal{H}(n, \Delta)$: class of graphs $H = H^n$ with $\Delta(H) = \Delta$

Theorem 9. *For every r and $\Delta \in \mathbb{N}$ there is $c > 0$ such that if $p > 0$ and G is an n/c -vertex graph that is $(p, p^{3\Delta/2+1/2}n)$ -jumbled, then G is r -partition universal for $\mathcal{H}(n, \Delta)$.*

- ▷ Answers a question of K., Rödl, Schacht and Szemerédi (2011).

The bandwidth of a graph

$H = H^n$ has bandwidth $\text{bw}(H)$ at most b if there is an ordering x_1, \dots, x_n of the vertices of H such that every edge $x_i x_j$ of H is such that $|j - i| \leq b$.

Naturally,

$$\text{bw}(H) = \min b,$$

with b as above.

The bandwidth theorem

Theorem 10 (Böttcher, Schacht and Taraz (2009)). *For every $\gamma > 0$ and Δ there is $\beta > 0$ such that for all sufficiently large n the following holds. If $H = H^n$ has $\Delta(H) \leq \Delta$ and $\text{bw}(H) \leq \beta n$, and $G = G^n$ is such that*

$$\delta(G) \geq \left(1 - \frac{1}{\chi(H)} + \gamma\right) n,$$

then $H \subset G$.

- ▷ Conjectured by Bollobás and Komlós.
- ▷ Generalizes, up to a small error term, several results dealing with spanning graphs in extremal graph theory.

Resilience of low-bandwidth graphs (approximate form)

Theorem 11. *For every $\gamma > 0$ and Δ there is $\beta > 0$ and C such that if*

$$p \geq C \left(\frac{\log n}{n} \right)^{1/\Delta},$$

then a.a.s. $\Gamma = G(n, p)$ has the following property. If H is any $(1 - \gamma)n$ -vertex graph with $\Delta(H) \leq \Delta$ and $\text{bw}(H) \leq \beta n$, and $G = G^n \subset \Gamma$ is such that

$$\delta(G) \geq \left(1 - \frac{1}{\chi(H)} + \gamma \right) pn,$$

then $H \subset G$.

Remarks

- ▶ Forthcoming result of Allen, Böttcher, Ehrenmüller and Taraz: the case in which $|V(H)| = n - Cp^{-2}$ if $p \leq 1/\log n$ (which is optimal) and even $H = H^n$ for some H .
- ▶ Previous results by Böttcher, K. and Taraz (2013) and Huang, Lee and Sudakov (2012).

Robustness of the Bandwidth Theorem

- ▷ **Robustness:** proposed by Krivelevich, Lee and Sudakov (2014), who proved that Pósa's result on the Hamiltonicity of $G(n, p)$ with $p = C(\log n)/n$ is very *robust*, in the sense that random subgraphs $G_p = G_p^n$ of *Dirac graphs* are a.a.s. Hamiltonian for $p = C'(\log n)/n$. [Dirac graph: $G = G^n$ with $\delta(G) \geq n/2$].

Robustness of the Bandwidth Theorem

If G is a graph and $0 \leq p \leq 1$, then G_p is random spanning subgraph of G in which each $e \in E(G)$ is included in G_p with probability p , independently of all other edges.

Theorem 12. *For every $\gamma > 0$ and $\Delta \geq 2$ there are $\beta > 0$ and C such that if $p \geq C \left(\frac{\log n}{n}\right)^{1/\Delta}$, then the following holds. If $H = H^n$ is a graph with $\Delta(H) \leq \Delta$ and $\text{bw}(H) \leq \beta n$, and G is any n -vertex graph with*

$$\delta(G) \geq \left(1 - \frac{1}{\chi(H)} + \gamma\right) n,$$

then a.a.s. $H \subset G_p$.

Make-Breaker games

Maker-Breaker H -game on K^n with bias b : **Maker** and **Breaker** take turns to colour the edges of K^n **red** and **blue**. In each turn, **Maker** colours one edge, while **Breaker** colours b edges (and edges may not be recoloured). **Maker's** aim: create a **red** copy of H ; **Breaker's** aim: prevent Maker from doing so.

\mathcal{H} -universality game: **Maker's graph** contains simultaneously each $H \in \mathcal{H}$.

Make-Breaker games

Theorem 13. *For every $d, \Delta \in \mathbb{N}$ and $\delta > 0$ there is $c > 0$ with the following properties.*

- (i) *If $b \leq c \left(\frac{n}{\log n} \right)^{1/\Delta}$ then Maker wins the $\mathcal{H}(n, \Delta)$ -universality game on $K^{(1+\delta)n}$ with bias b .*
- (ii) *If $b \leq c \left(\frac{n}{\log n} \right)^{1/2d}$ then Maker wins the $\mathcal{H}(n, d, \Delta)$ -universality game on $K^{(1+\delta)n}$ with bias b .*

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An ingredient: inheritance of density and regularity

- ▷ Immediate inheritance
- ▷ Inheritance by very small sets

Immediate inheritance; dense case

- ▷ Suppose have an ε -regular triple $G = (X, U, W; E)$, with all pairs with density d .

Fact 14. *Suppose $d \gg \varepsilon$. Then typical vertices $x \in X$ are such that*

$$(N_G(x) \cap U, N_G(x) \cap W) \tag{1}$$

has density $d(U, W) \pm \varepsilon$. Moreover, the pair is, say, $2\varepsilon/d$ -regular.

In particular, (1) induces an edge, and hence $K^3 \subset G$. Even have many such edges, and hence many such K^3 . The regularity of pairs of the form (1) is useful in inductive arguments.

Inheritance

Question 15. Suppose $B = (U, W; E)$ is an ε -regular pair of density $d = |E|/|U||W|$. Suppose $W' \subset W$ and $U' \subset U$. What can we say about the density and the regularity of $B[U', W']$?

- **Inheritance:** positive results in this direction.
- Immediate if can take

$$\varepsilon \ll |U'|/|U|, |W'|/|W|. \quad (2)$$

- In several applications, can take (2).
- What if $|U'| \ll \varepsilon|U|$ or $|W'| \ll \varepsilon|W|$?
- ▷ Often, U' and W' are neighbourhoods (or intersections of neighbourhoods). If the graphs are **sparse**, then certainly (2) fails.

Inheritance results

Even in the case $|U'|/|U|, |W'|/|W| \ll \varepsilon$,

- ▷ there are inheritance results for subgraphs of r.gs: $B = (U, W; E) \subset \Gamma = G(n, p)$, and
- ▷ there are inheritance results for subgraphs of (p, β) -jumbled graphs Γ : $B = (U, W; E) \subset \Gamma$,

as long as one considers U' and W' that are neighbourhoods or joint neighbourhoods of vertices in Γ .

Random case

- ▷ **Dense/classical case:** overwhelming majority of pairs (U', W') induce ε' -regular bipartite graphs $B[U', W']$, with $\varepsilon' \rightarrow 0$ as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$, as long as $|U'|, |W'| \geq C/d$, where $C = C(\varepsilon')$.
- ▷ Statement above is true even if $d \rightarrow 0$ (as long as we replace ε' -regularity by ε' -lower-regularity) [Gerke, K., Rödl, Steger 2007]

Definition 16. $B = (U, W; E)$ is $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -lower-regular if for all $U' \subset U$ and $W' \subset W$ with $|U'|/|U|, |W'|/|W| \geq \varepsilon$, we have

$$d_p(U', W') = \frac{e(U', W')}{p|U'||W'|} \geq d - \varepsilon.$$

Inheritance for subgraphs of $G(n, p)$ **[SKIP]**

Set-up 17. $J = J^{3m}$ is a graph with vertex classes X , U , and W , all of cardinality m ; the graphs $J[X, U]$, $J[X, W]$, and $J[U, W]$ are $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -lower-regular, and $J = J[X, U] \cup J[X, W] \cup J[U, W]$.

Definition 18. J is ε' -good if $\exists X' \subset X$ with $|X'| \geq (1 - \varepsilon')m$ such that $\forall x' \in X'$ we have that $J[\mathcal{N}(x') \cap U, \mathcal{N}(x') \cap W]$ is $(\varepsilon', d; p)$ -regular.

Inheritance for subgraphs of $G(n, p)$

Theorem 19 (Gerke, K., Rödl, Steger 2007). *For all ε' and $d > 0$, there is $\varepsilon > 0$ such that if $p^2 m \gg 1$ and $pm \gg \log n$, then*

$$\mathbb{P}(\exists J^{3m} \subset G(n, p) \text{ } \varepsilon'\text{-bad}) = o(1).$$

- ▷ Similar statement holds for the setting in which we are concerned with $J^{4m} = J[X, U] \cup J[U, W] \cup J[W, Y]$ and pairs $(x, y) \in X \times Y$.

Inheritance for subgraphs of (p, β) -jumbled graphs

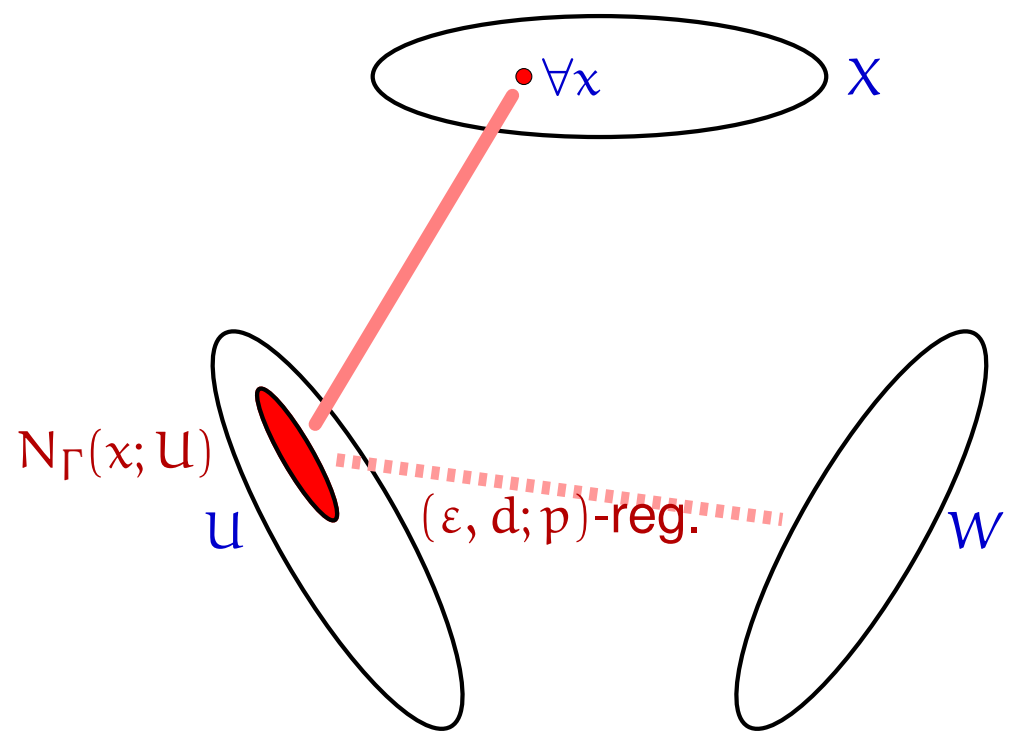
- (i) Recall Set-up 17.
- (ii) Suppose $J = J^{3m} \subset \Gamma$, with Γ $(p, \gamma p^d n)$ -jumbled, for some $d \geq 1$.
- (iii) Furthermore, suppose $m = \Omega(p^f n)$ and $d \geq f + 3$.
- (iv) (Recall) J is ε' -good if $\exists X' \subset X$ with $|X'| \geq (1 - \varepsilon')m$ such that $\forall x' \in X'$ we have that $J[N(x') \cap U, N(x') \cap W]$ is $(\varepsilon', d; p)$ -regular.

Theorem 20 (K., Rödl, Schacht & Skokan (2010)). *For all ε' and $d > 0$, there are ε and $\gamma > 0$ such that if (ii) and (iii) hold, then J is ε' -good.*

One-sided inheritance in Γ [RESUME]

Definition 21. Let (X, U, W) be a triple of pairwise disjoint vertex sets in $G \subset \Gamma$. We say that (X, U, W) has *one-sided* $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -inheritance if for each $x \in X$ the pair $(N_\Gamma(x; U), W)$ is $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -regular in G .

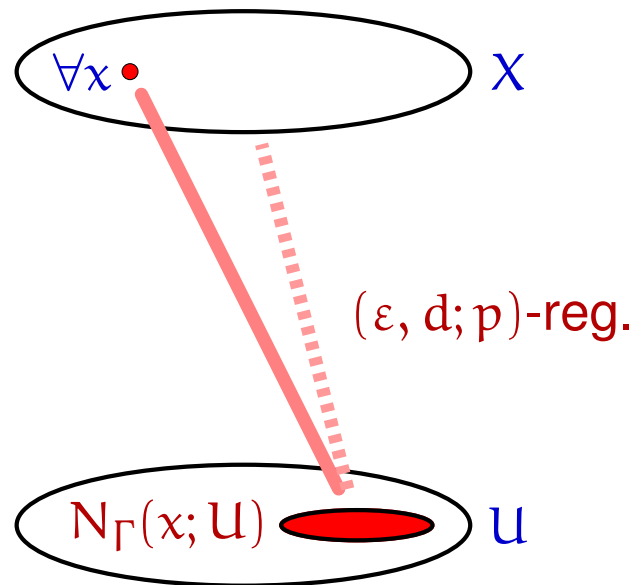
One-sided inheritance in Γ



One-sided inheritance in Γ

Definition 22. Let (X, U) be a pair of vertex sets in $G \subset \Gamma$, with X and U disjoint. We say that (X, U) has *one-sided* $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -inheritance if for each $x \in X$ the pair $(N_\Gamma(x; U), X)$ is $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -regular in G .

One-sided inheritance in Γ

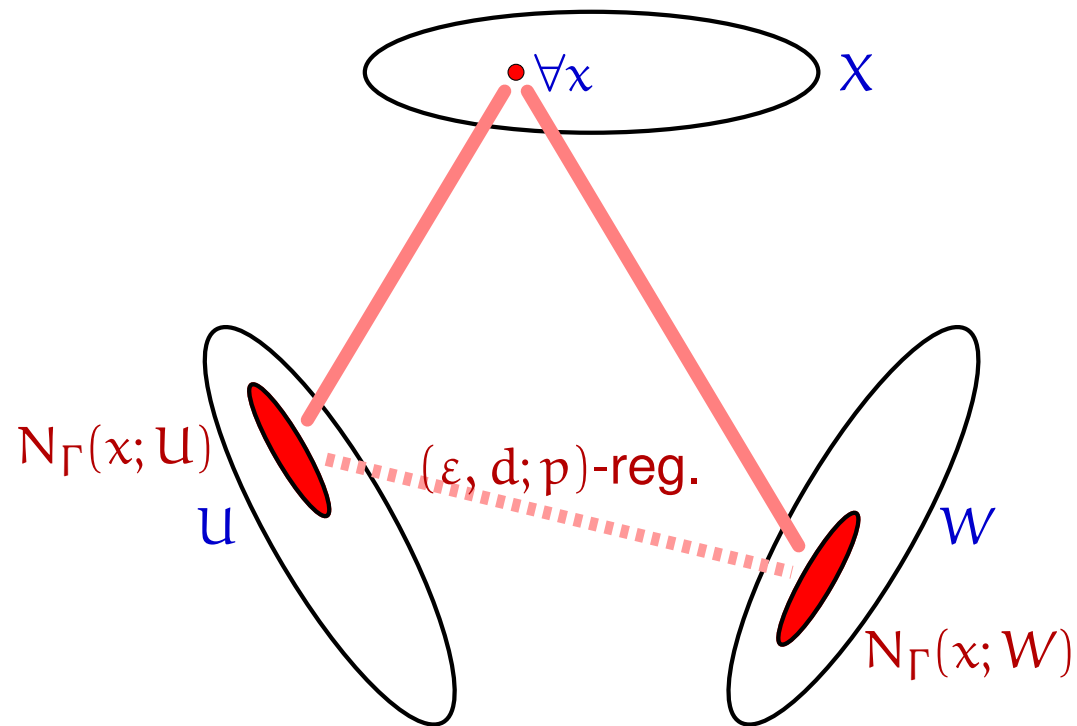


- ▶ To talk about one-sided inheritance for (X, U, W) and (X, U) at the same time, we allow the triple (X, U, X) .

Two-sided inheritance in Γ

Definition 23. Let (X, U, W) be a triple of pairwise disjoint vertex sets in $G \subset \Gamma$. We say that (X, U, W) has *two-sided* $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -inheritance if for each $x \in X$ the pair $(N_\Gamma(x; U), N_\Gamma(x; W))$ is $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -regular in G .

Two-sided inheritance in Γ



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Sparse super-regularity

Recall: $B = (U, W; E)$ is $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -**lower-regular** if for all $U' \subset U$ and $W' \subset W$ with $|U'|/|U|, |W'|/|W| \geq \varepsilon$, we have $d_p(U', W') \geq d - \varepsilon$, where $d_p(U', W') = e(U', W')/p|U'||W'|$.

Definition 24 (sparse super-regularity in random graphs). A pair (U, W) in $G \subset \Gamma$ is called $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -**super-regular** in G if it is $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -lower-regular and, for every $u \in U$ and $w \in W$, we have

$$\deg_G(u; W) > (d - \varepsilon) \max\{p|W|, \deg_\Gamma(u; W)/2\}.$$

$$\deg_G(w; U) > (d - \varepsilon) \max\{p|U|, \deg_\Gamma(w; U)/2\}.$$

A simplified blow-up lemma for random graphs

The objects:

- ▷ $\Gamma = G(n, p)$, where $p \geq C(\log n/n)^{1/\Delta}$,
- ▷ $G = G^n \subset \Gamma$ and $H = H^n$ with $\Delta(H) \leq \Delta$,
- ▷ H is r -partite, with r -partition $V(H) = X_1 \cup \dots \cup X_r$. Moreover, $V(G) = V_1 \cup \dots \cup V_r$ is an equitable partition with $|V_i| \geq |X_i|$ for all $i \in [r]$.

A simplified blow-up lemma for random graphs

Furthermore, we suppose that the following conditions hold:

- (i) (V_i, V_j) is $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -super-regular in G for each $i, j \in [r]$ with $i \neq j$.
- (ii) (V_i, V_j, V_k) has one-sided $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -inheritance for each $i, j, k \in [r]$ with $i \neq j$ and $j \neq k$.
- (iii) (V_i, V_j, V_k) has two-sided $(\varepsilon, d; p)$ -inheritance for each $i, j, k \in [r]$ with i, j and k all distinct.

Conclusion: Then H is a subgraph of G .

Theorem 25. *For all $\Delta, r \in \mathbb{N}$ and $d > 0$ there exist $\varepsilon > 0$ and C such that if $p \geq C(\log n/n)^{1/\Delta}$, then the random graph $\Gamma = G(n, p)$ asymptotically almost surely satisfies the above.*

Full blow-up lemma for random graphs

Features include:

- (i) Partition of $V(G)$ is allowed to be just approximately balanced.
- (ii) Have two ‘reduced graphs’ R and R' to encode regular and super-regular pairs ($R' \subset R$).
- (iii) Require two-sided regularity inheritance only where triangles of H need to be embedded.
- (iv) The required regularity, i.e., the value of ε , does not depend on r (number of parts in the partitions of H and G), but only on $\Delta(R')$. (New for $p = 1$ also)
- (v) Image restrictions are permitted.

Full blow-up lemma for random graphs, cont.

We have a specific version for embedding *degenerate* graphs H :

- ▷ E.g., for embedding $H = H^n$ with $\Delta(H) = \Delta$ and degeneracy D into suitably compatible $G = G^n \subset G(n, p)$ with

$$p \geq C_{\Delta} \left(\frac{\log n}{n} \right)^{2D+1} .$$

Full blow-up lemma for pseudorandom graphs

Rough statement:

- ▶ We are able to embed $H = H^n$ with $\Delta(H) = \Delta$ into suitably compatible $G^n \subset \Gamma$, when $\Gamma = \Gamma^n$ is a $(p, o(p^{(3\Delta+1)/2n}))$ -jumbled graph.