



Probabilistic Methods in Combinatorics Lecture 1

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November 16, 2011 – December 30, 2011





Course information



Textbook: The probabilistic method (3rd edition) by Noga Alon and Joel H. Spencer, publisher: Wiley, 2008.





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Location: Conference room 3, floor 2.



History



Paul Erdős: 1913–1996
1525 papers
511 coauthors



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Main contributions:

- Ramsey theory
- Probabilistic method
- Extremal combinatorics
- Additive number theory

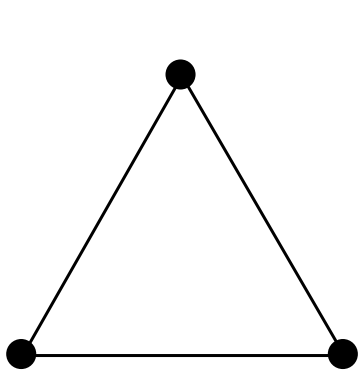


Notation

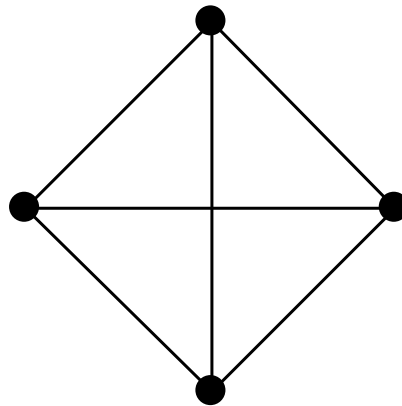
A **graph** G consists of two sets V and E .

- V is the set of vertices (or nodes).
- E is the set of edges, where each edge is a pair of vertices.

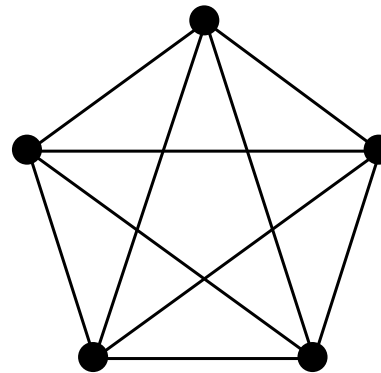
Complete graphs K_n :



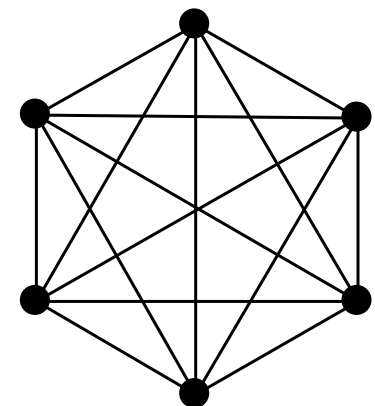
K_3



K_4



K_5



K_6



Ramsey number $R(k, k)$

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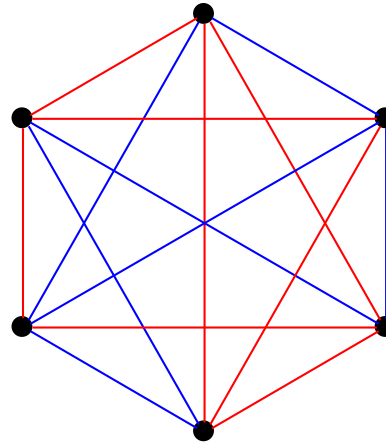
Proposition (by Erdős): If $\binom{n}{2} 2^{1-\binom{k}{2}} < 1$, then $R(k, k) > n$. Thus

$$R(k, k) > \frac{k}{e\sqrt{2}} 2^{k/2}.$$



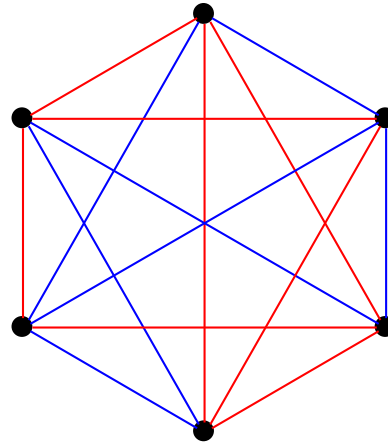
Ramsey number $R(3, 3) = 6$

- If edges of K_6 are 2-colored then there exists a monochromatic triangle.

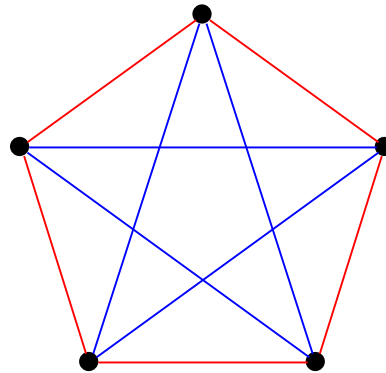


Ramsey number $R(3, 3) = 6$

- If edges of K_6 are 2-colored then there exists a monochromatic triangle.



- There exists a 2-coloring of edges of K_5 with no monochromatic triangle.



Erdős' idea

To prove $R(k, k) > n$, we need construct a 2-coloring of K_n so that it contains no red K_k or blue K_n .



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To prove $R(k, k) > n$, we need construct a 2-coloring of K_n so that it contains no red K_k or blue K_n .

Make the set of all 2-colorings of K_n into a probability space, then show the event “no red K_k or blue K_n ” with positive probability.



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Finite probability space (Ω, P) :

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- An event A : a subset of Ω .
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- Two events A and B are independent if

$$\Pr(AB) = \Pr(A)\Pr(B).$$



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Color every edge of K_n independently either red or blue, where each color is equally likely.



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Hence $\Pr(\bigwedge_R \bar{A}_R) = 1 - \Pr(\bigvee_R A_R) > 0$.



Estimation of n

Since $\binom{n}{k} \leq \frac{1}{e} \left(\frac{en}{k}\right)^k$ for all $n \geq k \geq 1$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \binom{n}{k} 2^{1-\binom{k}{2}} &\leq \frac{1}{e} \left(\frac{en}{k}\right)^k 2^{1-\binom{k}{2}} \\ &\leq \frac{2}{e} \left(\frac{en}{k2^{(k-1)/2}}\right)^k \\ &< 1 \end{aligned}$$

provided $n \leq \frac{k}{e\sqrt{2}} 2^{k/2}$.



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Hence,

$$R(k, k) > \frac{k}{e\sqrt{2}} 2^{k/2}. \quad \square$$



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Spencer [1975] (using Lovasz Local Lemma)

$$R(k, k) > (1 + o(1)) \frac{\sqrt{2}}{e} k 2^{k/2}.$$



Upper bound of $R(k, k)$

A trivial bound:

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Colon [2009]:

$$R(k, k) \leq k^{-C \frac{\log k}{\log \log k}} \binom{2k-2}{k-1}.$$



Diagonal Ramsey Problem

Erdős problems:

- \$100 for proving the limit $\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} R(k, k)^{1/k}$ exists.



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If $\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} R(k, k)^{1/k}$ exists, then it is between $\sqrt{2}$ to 4.



Tournament

- V : a set of n players.



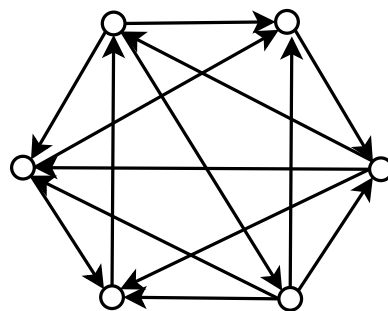
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Tournament

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- **Tournament on V** : an orientation $T = (V, E)$ of complete graphs on V . For each pair of plays x and y , either (x, y) or (y, x) is in E .



We say T has **property** S_k if for every set of k players there is one beats all.



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$$\Pr(A_K) = (1 - 2^{-k})^{n-k}.$$



Proof continues

$$\begin{aligned}\Pr\left(\bigvee_{K \in \binom{V}{k}} A_K\right) &\leq \sum_{K \in \binom{V}{k}} \Pr(A_K) \\ &= \binom{n}{k} (1 - 2^{-k})^{n-k} < 1.\end{aligned}$$

Therefore, with positive probability, no event A_K occurs; that is, there is a tournament on n vertices that has the property S_k .



Estimation of n

Let $f(k)$ denote the minimum possible number of vertices of a tournament that has the property S_k .

On one hand, since $\binom{n}{k} < (en/k)^k$ and $(1 - 2^{-k})^{n-k} < 2^{(n-k)/2^k}$, we have

$$f(k) \leq (1 + o(1)) \ln 2 \cdot k^2 \cdot 2^k.$$

On the other hand, **Szekeres** proved

$$f(k) \geq c_1 k 2^k.$$



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Linearity of expectation:

$$E(X + Y) = E(X) + E(Y).$$



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Theorem: Let $G = (V, E)$ be a graph on n vertices, with minimum degree $\delta > 1$. Then G has a dominating set of at most $\frac{1 + \ln(\delta + 1)}{\delta + 1} n$.



Proof

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$$\mathbb{E}(|X|) = \sum_v \Pr(v \in X) = np.$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}(|Y|) &= \sum_v \Pr(v \in Y) \\ &\leq n(1 - p)^{\delta+1}. \end{aligned}$$



continue

Let $U = X \cup Y_X$. The set U is clearly a dominating set.



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Let $U = X \cup Y_X$. The set U is clearly a dominating set. We have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}(|U|) &= \mathbb{E}(X) + \mathbb{E}(Y) \\ &\leq np + n(1-p)^{\delta+1} \\ &\leq n(p + e^{-p(\delta+1)}). \end{aligned}$$

Choose $p = \frac{\ln(\delta+1)}{\delta+1}$ to minimize the upper bound. There is a dominating set of size at most

$$\frac{1 + \ln(\delta + 1)}{\delta + 1} n.$$



Hypergraphs

$H = (V, E)$ is an r -uniform hypergraph (r -graph, for short).

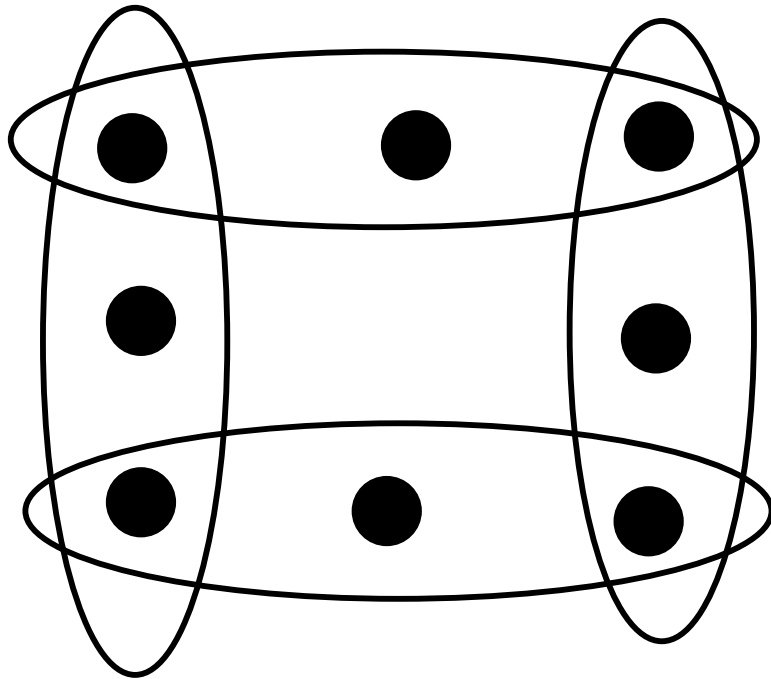
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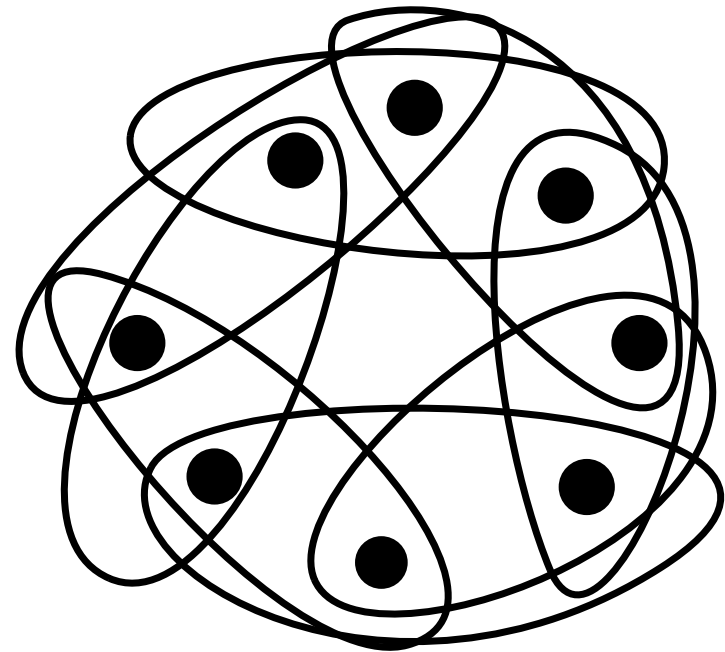
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A 3-uniform loose cycle



A 3-uniform tight cycle



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Proposition [Erdős (1963)] Every r -uniform hypergraph with less than 2^{r-1} edges has property B. Therefore $m(r) \geq 2^{r-1}$.



Proof

Let H be an r -uniform hypergraph with less than 2^{r-1} edges. Color V randomly by two colors. For each edge $e \in E$, let A_e be the event that e is monochromatic.

$$\Pr(A_e) = 2^{1-r}.$$



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Therefore,

$$\Pr(\bigvee_{e \in E} A_e) \leq \sum_{e \in E} \Pr(A_e) < 1.$$

There is a two-coloring without monochromatic edges. \square



Upper bound

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$$\Pr(S \text{ is monochromatic under } \chi) = \frac{\binom{a}{r} + \binom{b}{r}}{\binom{n}{r}}.$$

Assume $n = 2k$ is even. Then $\binom{a}{r} + \binom{b}{r}$ reaches the minimum when $a = b = k$. Thus

$$\Pr(S \text{ is monochromatic under } \chi) \geq \frac{2 \binom{k}{r}}{\binom{n}{r}}.$$



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$$\Pr(\bigvee_\chi A_\chi) \leq \sum_\chi \Pr(A_\chi) \leq 2^n (1 - p)^m.$$



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$$m(r) \leq \lceil \frac{n \ln 2}{p} \rceil.$$

$$\begin{aligned} p &= \frac{2^{\binom{k}{r}}}{\binom{n}{r}} \\ &= 2^{1-r} \prod_{i=0}^{r-1} \frac{n-2i}{n-i} \\ &\approx 2^{1-r} e^{-r^2/2n}. \end{aligned}$$



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Hence $m(r) < (1 + o(1)) \frac{e \ln 2}{4} r^2 2^r$. □



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Radhakrishnan-Srinivasan [2000]: (best lower bound)

$$m(r) \geq \Omega \left(\left(\frac{r}{\ln r} \right)^{1/2} 2^r \right).$$



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$$m(2) = 3, m(3) = 7, 20 \leq m(4) \leq 23.$$