

Introduction to Association Schemes

Part I

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The adjacency matrix of an undirected simple graph $\Gamma = (X, E)$:

$$(A)_{xy} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } \{x, y\} \in E, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

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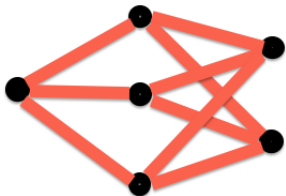
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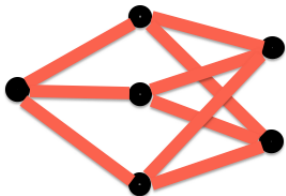
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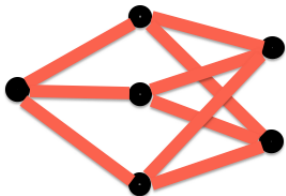
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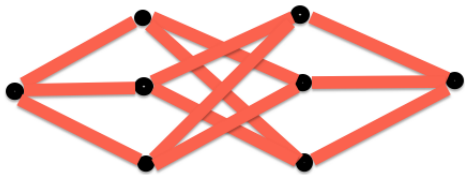
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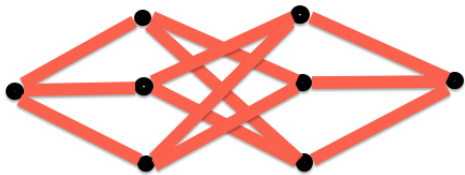


$\forall x, y$ non-adj., $\exists 3$ common neighbors

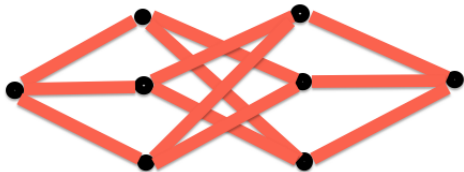
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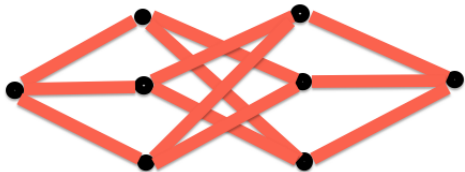
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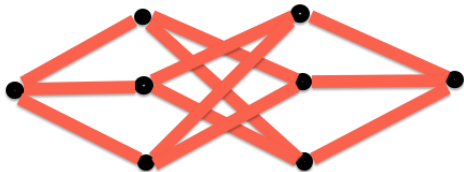
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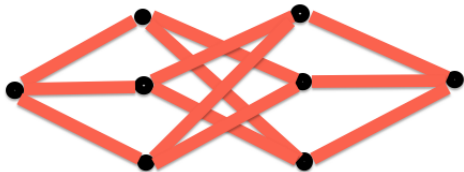
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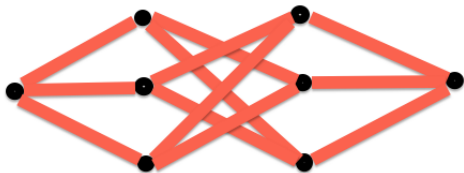
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where $\mathbb{R}[A]$ is the subalgebra of the full matrix algebra $\text{Mat}_X(\mathbb{R})$ generated by A .

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Using Vandermonde's determinant,

$\mathbb{F}^m \supset \mathcal{A} \ni \exists \mathbf{a}, \forall i \neq \forall j, a_i \neq a_j \implies \mathcal{A} = \mathbb{F}^m$.

$$\begin{vmatrix} 1 & \cdots & 1 \\ a_1 & \cdots & a_m \\ \vdots & & \vdots \\ a_1^{m-1} & \cdots & a_m^{m-1} \end{vmatrix} = \prod_{1 \leq i < j \leq m} (a_j - a_i) \neq 0.$$

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More generally

$\mathbb{F}^m \supset \mathcal{A} \ni \mathbf{a}, \forall i \in [m], \sum_{\substack{j \in [m] \\ a_j = a_i}} \mathbf{e}_j \in \mathcal{A}$.

$\mathbf{a} = (a, \dots, a, a', \dots, a', \dots) \in \mathcal{A}$
 $\implies (1, \dots, 1, 0, \dots, 0, \dots) \in \mathcal{A}$

Lemma

Let $\mathcal{A} \subset \mathbb{F}^m$ be a subalgebra. Define

$i \sim j \iff \forall a \in \mathcal{A}, a_i = a_j$, and denote by I_1, \dots, I_d its equivalence classes. Then

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For $\mathbf{b} \in \mathcal{A}$, set $I(\mathbf{b}) = \{i \in [m] \mid b_i = b_1\}$. Then

$$\sum_{i \in I(\mathbf{b})} e_i \in \mathcal{A}.$$

$$\begin{aligned} k \in [m] \setminus I_1 &\iff k \neq 1 \\ &\iff \exists \mathbf{b}^{(k)} \in \mathcal{A}, k \notin I(\mathbf{b}^{(k)}) \end{aligned}$$

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A **coherent configuration** is a pair $(X, \{R_i\}_{i=0}^d)$ where $\{R_i\}_{i=0}^d$ is a partition of $X \times X$ such that

- (i) $\{(x, x) \mid x \in X\}$ is a union of some R_i 's,
- (ii) $\forall i \in \{0, 1, \dots, d\}, \exists i', R_i^\top = R_{i'}$, where

$$R_i^\top = \{(x, y) \in X \times X \mid (y, x) \in R_i\}.$$

(iii) $\forall h, i, j \in \{0, 1, \dots, d\}$,

$$|\{z \in X \mid (x, z) \in R_i, (z, y) \in R_j\}| = \text{constant}$$

independent of $(x, y) \in R_h$. This constant is denoted by p_{ij}^h . These constants are called the **intersection numbers**.

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$$\{(x, x) \mid x \in X\} = \bigcup_{i \in I_0} R_i \iff I = \sum_{i \in I_0} A_i \in \mathcal{A}$$

$$\forall i, \exists i', R_i^\top = R_{i'} \iff \text{closed under } \top$$

$$p_{ij}^h \text{ independent} \iff A_i A_j = \sum_{h=0}^d p_{ij}^h A_h$$

$$\iff \text{closed under multiplication.}$$

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If a coherent configuration $(X, \{R_i\}_{i=0}^d)$ satisfies the additional property

(iv) $R_0 = \{(x, x) \mid x \in X\}$
 \implies **association scheme**.

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(v) $p_{ij}^h = p_{ji}^h$ for all $h, i, j \in \{0, 1, \dots, d\}$,
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E_0, E_1, \dots, E_d are called the **primitive idempotents** of $\mathcal{A} = \langle E_0, E_1, \dots, E_d \rangle$.

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$\exists! i, \frac{1}{n}J = E_i$. We may assume $\frac{1}{n}J = E_0$.

$$A_i \circ A_j = \delta_{ij} A_i,$$

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To be complete, we need

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q_{ij}^h are called **Krein parameters**. It is known that $q_{ij}^h \geq 0$.

\exists nonsingular matrix P :

$$(A_0, A_1, \dots, A_d) = (E_0, E_1, \dots, E_d)P$$

P : first eigenmatrix

$Q = nP^{-1}$: second eigenmatrix

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P_{ij} are eigenvalues of A_j , since $A_j E_i = P_{ij} E_i$.