

Graphing the Mermin-Péres Magic Square

Calder Evans

Joint work with Dr. Samuel Harris and Taylor Smith

Northern Arizona University
Department of Mathematics and Statistics

SUnMaRC

13 April 2025



Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Presentation Outline

In this presentation I will:

1. Share our research goals

Presentation Outline

In this presentation I will:

1. Share our research goals
2. Overview Non-local games

Presentation Outline

In this presentation I will:

1. Share our research goals
2. Overview Non-local games
3. Explain the Mermin-Perez Magic Square Game

Presentation Outline

In this presentation I will:

1. Share our research goals
2. Overview Non-local games
3. Explain the Mermin-Perez Magic Square Game
4. Define Graphs and Coloring

Research Goals

Research Goal: Find the smallest graph that can be quantum 3-colored while being not classically 3-colorable. To do this we:

Research Goals

- Research Goal:** Find the smallest graph that can be quantum 3-colored while being not classically 3-colorable. To do this we:
- built a graph based on the game algebra of the Mermin-Péres Magic Square Game

Research Goals

- Research Goal:** Find the smallest graph that can be quantum 3-colored while being not classically 3-colorable. To do this we:
 - built a graph based on the game algebra of the Mermin-Perez Magic Square Game
 - We chose the Mermin-Perez game because it is the smallest synchronous game that has a winning quantum strategy but no classical strategy

Research Goals

Research Goal: Find the smallest graph that can be quantum 3-colored while being not classically 3-colorable. To do this we:

- built a graph based on the game algebra of the Mermin-Perez Magic Square Game
 - We chose the Mermin-Perez game because it is the smallest synchronous game that has a winning quantum strategy but no classical strategy
 - encoded the graph into SageMath and ran a multitude of constructions to identify which vertices could be removed without changing the colorabilities of the graph

Definitions

Games

Games

- A game \mathcal{G} is played by two players, Alice and Bob.

Games

- A game \mathcal{G} is played by two players, Alice and Bob.
- Alice and Bob, are given questions, x, y , by a referee, where $x, y \in \mathcal{I}$. Alice and Bob answer with $a, b \in \mathcal{O}$
 - Where \mathcal{I} and \mathcal{O} are finite sets.

Games

- A game \mathcal{G} is played by two players, Alice and Bob.
- Alice and Bob, are given questions, x, y , by a referee, where $x, y \in \mathcal{I}$. Alice and Bob answer with $a, b \in \mathcal{O}$
 - Where \mathcal{I} and \mathcal{O} are finite sets.
- Winning the game is defined by a rule function $\lambda : \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{I} \times \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$

Games

- A game \mathcal{G} is played by two players, Alice and Bob.
- Alice and Bob, are given questions, x, y , by a referee, where $x, y \in \mathcal{I}$. Alice and Bob answer with $a, b \in \mathcal{O}$
 - Where \mathcal{I} and \mathcal{O} are finite sets.
- Winning the game is defined by a rule function $\lambda : \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{I} \times \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$
 - If $\lambda(a, b, x, y) = 0$, then Alice and Bob lose.

Games

- A game \mathcal{G} is played by two players, Alice and Bob.
- Alice and Bob, are given questions, x, y , by a referee, where $x, y \in \mathcal{I}$. Alice and Bob answer with $a, b \in \mathcal{O}$
 - Where \mathcal{I} and \mathcal{O} are finite sets.
- Winning the game is defined by a rule function $\lambda : \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{I} \times \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$
 - If $\lambda(a, b, x, y) = 0$, then Alice and Bob lose.
 - If $\lambda(a, b, x, y) = 1$, then Alice and Bob win.

Games

- A game \mathcal{G} is played by two players, Alice and Bob.
- Alice and Bob, are given questions, x, y , by a referee, where $x, y \in \mathcal{I}$. Alice and Bob answer with $a, b \in \mathcal{O}$
 - Where \mathcal{I} and \mathcal{O} are finite sets.
- Winning the game is defined by a rule function $\lambda : \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{I} \times \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$
 - If $\lambda(a, b, x, y) = 0$, then Alice and Bob lose.
 - If $\lambda(a, b, x, y) = 1$, then Alice and Bob win.
- We use the following to define \mathcal{G} 's parameters: $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{I}, \lambda)$.

Games

- A game \mathcal{G} is played by two players, Alice and Bob.
- Alice and Bob, are given questions, x, y , by a referee, where $x, y \in \mathcal{I}$. Alice and Bob answer with $a, b \in \mathcal{O}$
 - Where \mathcal{I} and \mathcal{O} are finite sets.
- Winning the game is defined by a rule function $\lambda : \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{I} \times \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$
 - If $\lambda(a, b, x, y) = 0$, then Alice and Bob lose.
 - If $\lambda(a, b, x, y) = 1$, then Alice and Bob win.
- We use the following to define \mathcal{G} 's parameters: $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{I}, \lambda)$.

Non-Local Games

- We say a game $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{I}, \lambda)$ is non-local if Alice and Bob can't communicate while playing, implying Bob's answer doesn't affect Alice's answer and vice-versa.

Games

- A game \mathcal{G} is played by two players, Alice and Bob.
- Alice and Bob, are given questions, x, y , by a referee, where $x, y \in \mathcal{I}$. Alice and Bob answer with $a, b \in \mathcal{O}$
 - Where \mathcal{I} and \mathcal{O} are finite sets.
- Winning the game is defined by a rule function $\lambda : \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{O} \times \mathcal{I} \times \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$
 - If $\lambda(a, b, x, y) = 0$, then Alice and Bob lose.
 - If $\lambda(a, b, x, y) = 1$, then Alice and Bob win.
- We use the following to define \mathcal{G} 's parameters: $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{I}, \lambda)$.

Non-Local Games

- We say a game $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{I}, \lambda)$ is non-local if Alice and Bob can't communicate while playing, implying Bob's answer doesn't affect Alice's answer and vice-versa.

- i.e. $P_A(a|x) = \sum_{b \in \mathcal{O}} P(a, b|x, y)$ is independent of y , and
 $P_B(b|y) = \sum_{a \in \mathcal{O}} P(a, b|x, y)$ is independent of x .

Synchronous Non-local Games

Synchronous Non-Local Games

- A non-local game is synchronous if whenever Alice and Bob are given the same question $x \in \mathcal{I}$ then

Synchronous Non-local Games

Synchronous Non-Local Games

- A non-local game is synchronous if whenever Alice and Bob are given the same question $x \in \mathcal{I}$ then
 - $\lambda(a, b, x, x) = 0$ if $a \neq b$

Synchronous Non-local Games

Synchronous Non-Local Games

- A non-local game is synchronous if whenever Alice and Bob are given the same question $x \in \mathcal{I}$ then
 - $\lambda(a, b, x, x) = 0$ if $a \neq b$
 - i.e. If they give different answers they lose

Mermin-Perez Magic Square Game

Definition

The Mermin-Perez Magic Square Game is a synchronous non-local game. In this game, Alice and Bob will each receive one equation from the following list:

$$x_1 + x_2 + x_3 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_4 + x_5 + x_6 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_7 + x_8 + x_9 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_1 + x_4 + x_7 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_2 + x_5 + x_8 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

Mermin-Perez Magic Square Game

Definition

The Mermin-Perez Magic Square Game is a synchronous non-local game. In this game, Alice and Bob will each receive one equation from the following list:

$$x_1 + x_2 + x_3 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_4 + x_5 + x_6 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_7 + x_8 + x_9 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_1 + x_4 + x_7 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_2 + x_5 + x_8 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

Alice and Bob fill out their assigned equations with 0's and 1's simultaneously without knowing how the other fills theirs out. Their goal is to satisfy each of their own equations while producing the same value for any shared variable.

Magic Square Representation

The Magic Square game can be represented by a 3×3 grid by labeling each cell like so:

$$\begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline x_1 & x_2 & x_3 \\ \hline x_4 & x_5 & x_6 \\ \hline x_7 & x_8 & x_9 \\ \hline \end{array}$$
$$x_1 + x_2 + x_3 = 0$$
$$x_4 + x_5 + x_6 = 0$$
$$x_7 + x_8 + x_9 = 0$$
$$x_1 + x_2 + x_3 = 1$$
$$x_4 + x_5 + x_6 = 0$$
$$x_7 + x_8 + x_9 = 0$$
$$= 0 \quad 0 \quad 1$$

Magic Square Walkthrough

Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
x_7	x_8	x_9

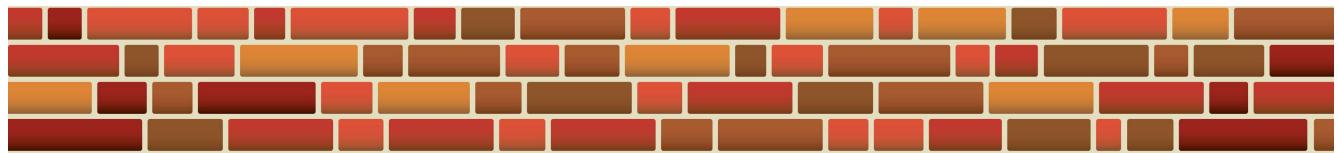
Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
x_7	x_8	x_9

Magic Square Walkthrough

Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
x_7	x_8	x_9



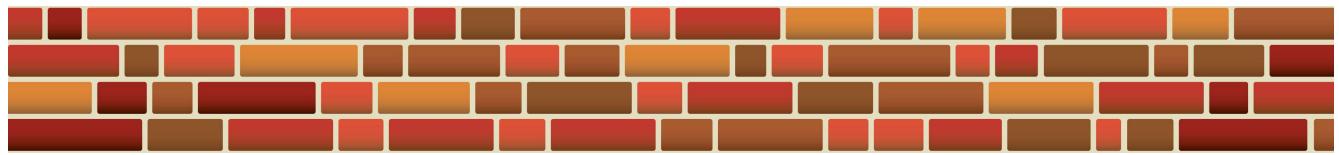
Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
x_7	x_8	x_9

Magic Square Walkthrough

Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6



Alice

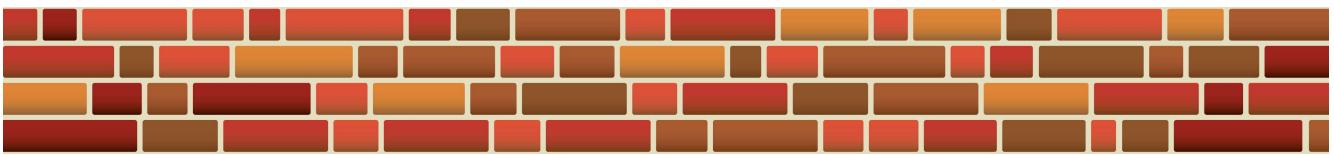
x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6

Magic Square Walkthrough

Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
x_7	x_8	x_9

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$



Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
x_7	x_8	x_9

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$

Magic Square Walkthrough

Bob

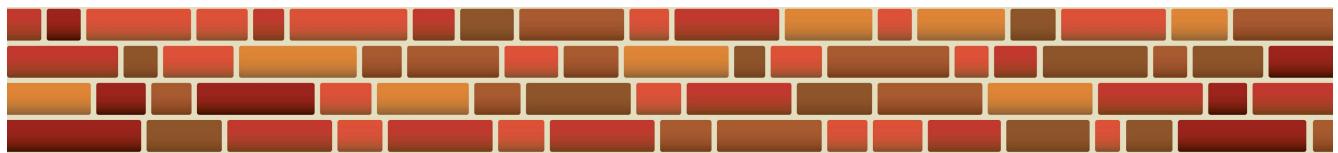
x_1	x_2	x_3
		1
x_4	x_5	x_6

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$

Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
		1
x_4	x_5	x_6

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$

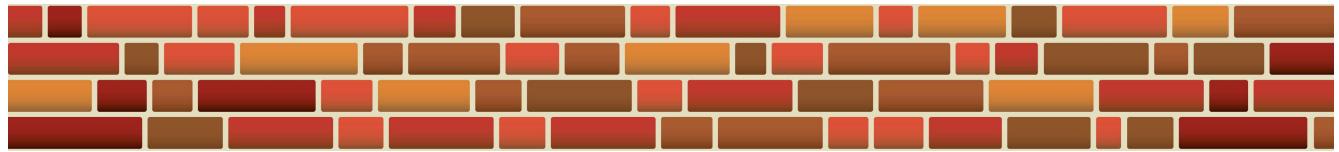


Magic Square Walkthrough

Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
		1
x_4	x_5	x_6

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$



Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$

Magic Square Walkthrough

Bob

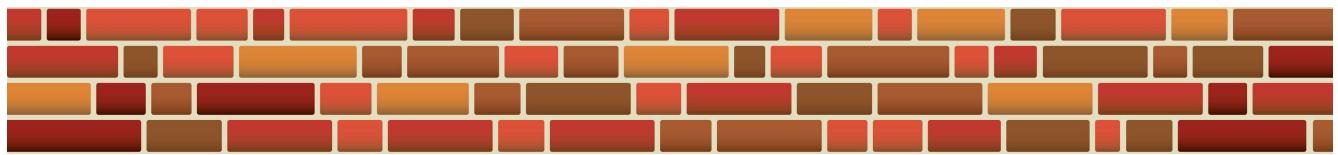
x_1	x_2	x_3
		1
x_4	x_5	x_6
		0

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$

Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
	0	1

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$

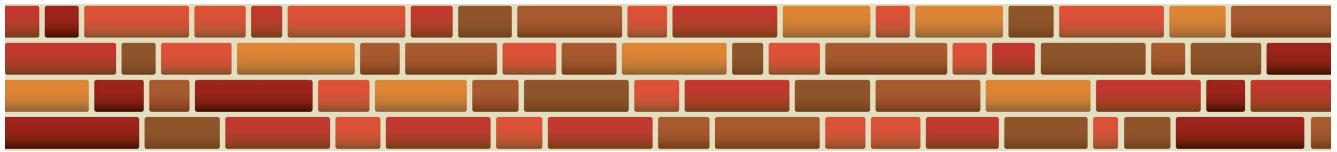


Magic Square Walkthrough

Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
		1
x_4	x_5	x_6
		0

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$
$$1 + 0 + 0 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$



Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
	0	1

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$

$$1 + 0 + 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

Magic Square Walkthrough

Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
1	0	1

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$

✓ $1 + 0 + 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$

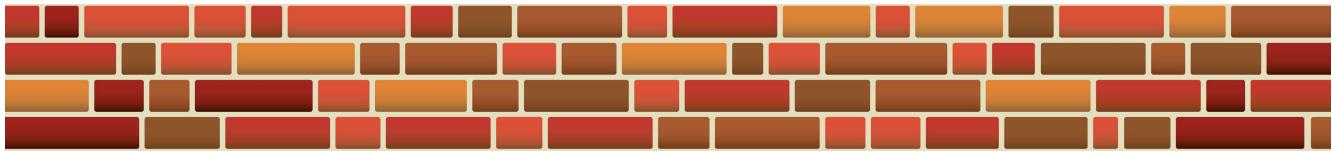
Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
x_7	x_8	x_9

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$



$$1 + 0 + 0 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$



Magic Square Walkthrough

Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
1	0	1

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$

Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
x_7	x_8	x_9

$$\begin{aligned} x_3 &+ x_6 &+ x_9 &= 1 \\ &\checkmark \end{aligned}$$

$$1 + 0 + 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$1 + 0 + 0 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

Magic Square Walkthrough

Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
1	0	1

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$



$$1 + 0 + 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
1	0	0

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$



$$1 + 0 + 0 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

Magic Square Walkthrough

Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
1	0	1

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$

✓

$$1 + 0 + 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
1	0	0

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$

✓

$$1 + 0 + 0 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

Magic Square Walkthrough

Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
1	1	0

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$



Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
		0

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$

✓

$$1 + 1 + 0 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$1 + 0 + 0 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

Magic Square Walkthrough

Alice

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
1	1	0

$$0 = x_4 + x_5 + x_6$$

Bob

x_1	x_2	x_3
x_4	x_5	x_6
		0

$$x_3 + x_6 + x_9 = 1$$



$$1 + 1 + 0 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

$$1 + 0 + 0 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

Classical Strategy for Magic Square Game Strategy

Definition

A classical strategy for a Non-Local Game is represented by a function $f : \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \mathcal{O}$.

For the Magic Square Game, we can define a classical strategy using the grid below. The best strategy has them agree upon a set table of answers, this allows them to win most of the time. It is impossible to create a solution set that satisfies all nine equations at the same time, otherwise they would be able to win every single game.

x_1	x_2	x_3	
1	0	1	$1 + 1 = 0$
x_4	x_5	x_6	$1 + 1 = 0$
1	1	0	
x_7	x_8	x_9	$1 \neq 0$
0	1	0	

Coloring a Graph

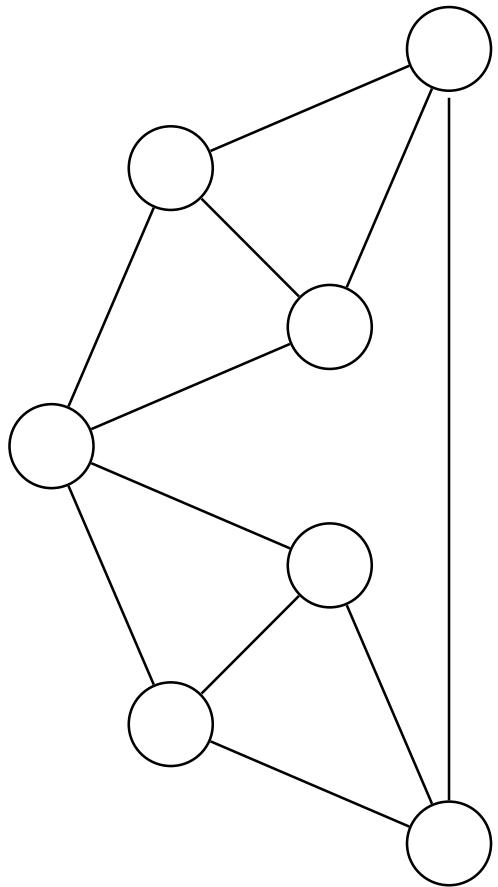
Definitions

- A graph, G , is a collection of vertices, $V(G)$, and a collection of edges, $E(G)$, that connect a possibly empty subset of vertices.

Coloring a Graph

Definitions

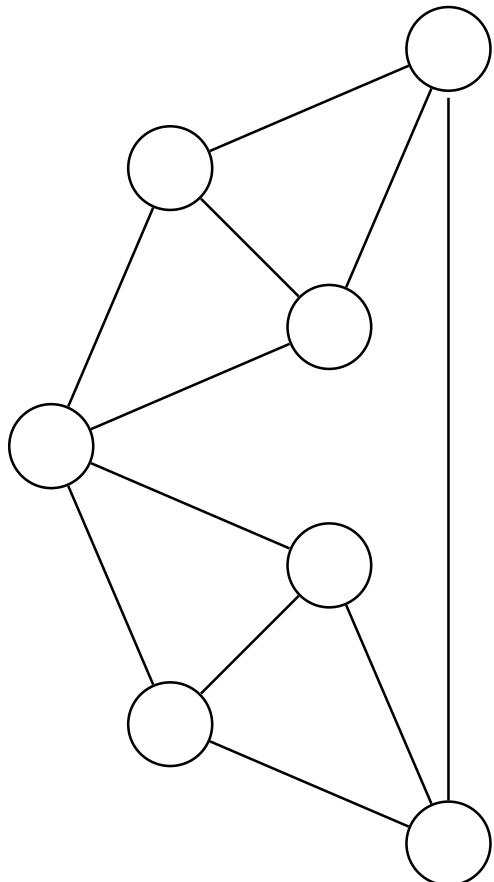
- A graph, G , is a collection of vertices, $V(G)$, and a collection of edges, $E(G)$, that connect a possibly empty subset of vertices.



Coloring a Graph

Definitions

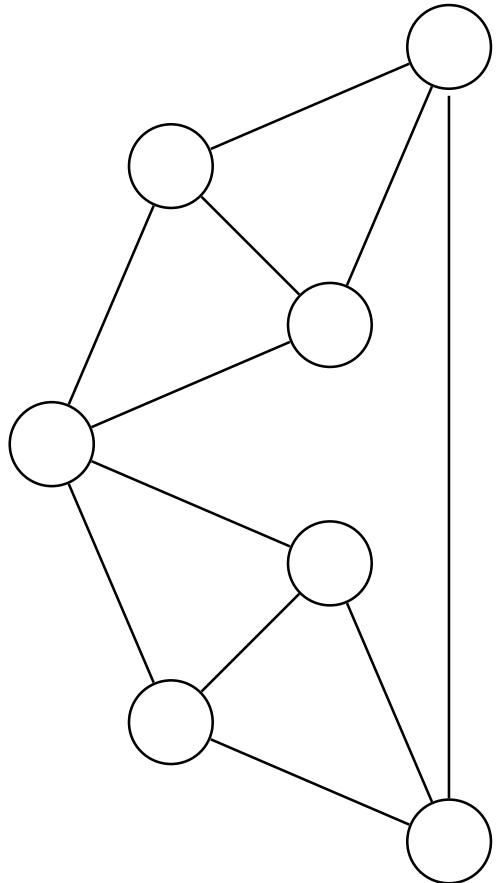
- A graph, G , is a collection of vertices, $V(G)$, and a collection of edges, $E(G)$, that connect a possibly empty subset of vertices.
- If vertices $v_1, v_2 \in V(G)$ have an edge $e \in E(G)$ that connects, v_1 to v_2 we say v_1 and v_2 are adjacent.



Coloring a Graph

Definitions

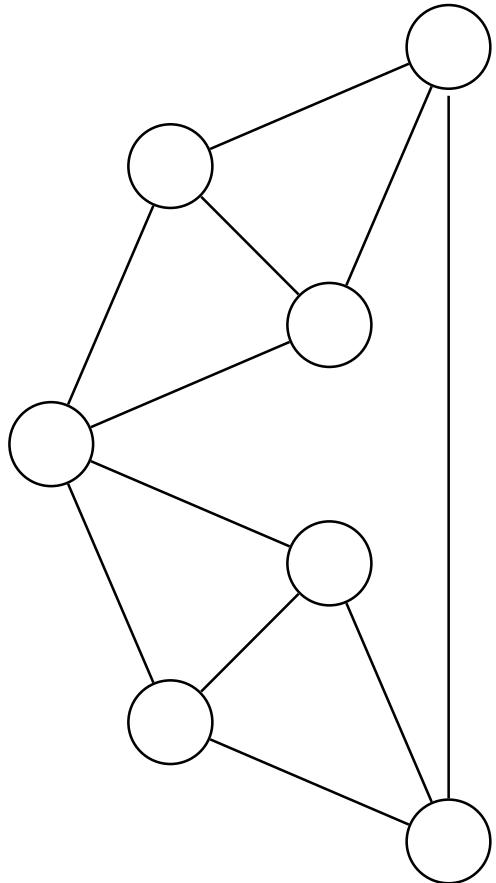
- A graph, G , is a collection of vertices, $V(G)$, and a collection of edges, $E(G)$, that connect a possibly empty subset of vertices.
- If vertices $v_1, v_2 \in V(G)$ have an edge $e \in E(G)$ that connects v_1 to v_2 we say v_1 and v_2 are adjacent.
- To color a graph, we assign colors to each vertex of a graph such that no adjacent vertices share the same color.



Coloring a Graph

Definitions

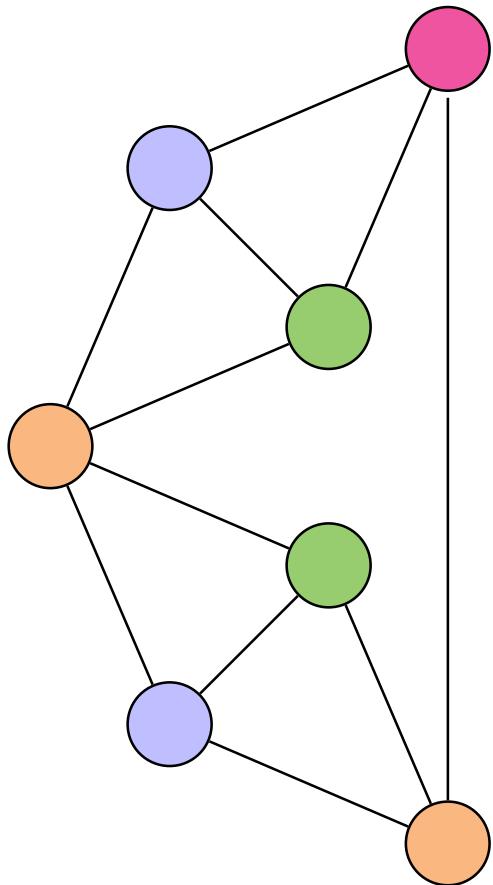
- A graph, G , is a collection of vertices, $V(G)$, and a collection of edges, $E(G)$, that connect a possibly empty subset of vertices.
- If vertices $v_1, v_2 \in V(G)$ have an edge $e \in E(G)$ that connects, v_1 to v_2 we say v_1 and v_2 are adjacent.
- To color a graph, we assign colors to each vertex of a graph such that no adjacent vertices share the same color.
- We say that a graph is k -colorable if the minimum amount of colors needed to color the graph is k .



Coloring a Graph

Definitions

- A graph, G , is a collection of vertices, $V(G)$, and a collection of edges, $E(G)$, that connect a possibly empty subset of vertices.
- If vertices $v_1, v_2 \in V(G)$ have an edge $e \in E(G)$ that connects, v_1 to v_2 we say v_1 and v_2 are adjacent.
- To color a graph, we assign colors to each vertex of a graph such that no adjacent vertices share the same color.
- We say that a graph is k -colorable if the minimum amount of colors needed to color the graph is at most k .



Winning Mermin-Perez in Quantum (abridged)

- Winning Mermin-Perez in quantum, amounts to the existence of the following:

Winning Mermin-Perez in Quantum (abridged)

- Winning Mermin-Perez in quantum, amounts to the existence of the following:
 - Matrices $e_{a,x}$ in $M_d(\mathbb{C})$ (matrices) (for some d), where $1 \leq x \leq 6$ and a ranges over solutions to equation x from Mermin-Perez, such that:

Winning Mermin-Perez in Quantum (abridged)

- Winning Mermin-Perez in quantum, amounts to the existence of the following:
 - Matrices $e_{a,x}$ in $M_d(\mathbb{C})$ (matrices) (for some d), where $1 \leq x \leq 6$ and a ranges over solutions to equation x from Mermin-Perez, such that:
 - $e_{a,x}^2 = e_{a,x} = e_{a,x}^*$ for all a, x ,

Winning Mermin-Perez in Quantum (abridged)

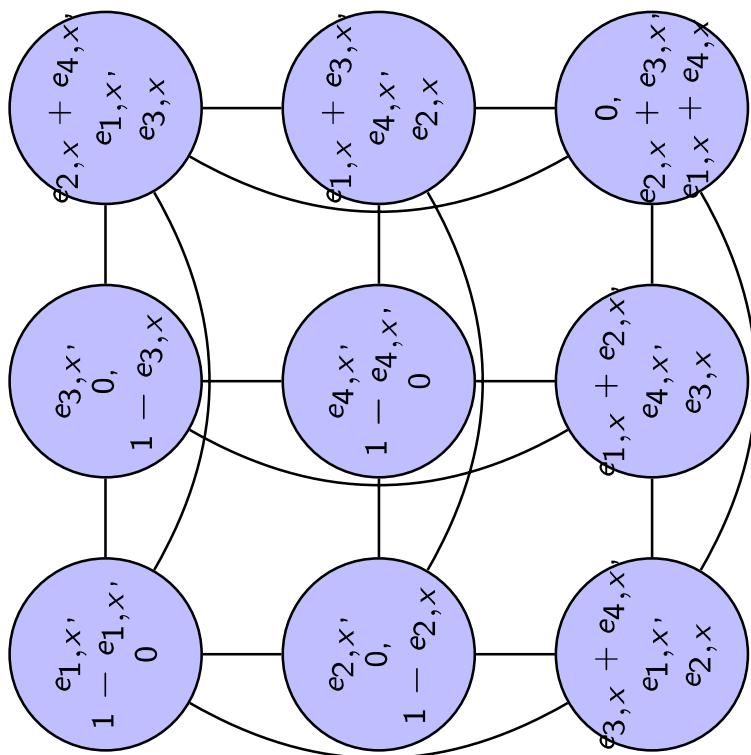
- Winning Mermin-Perez in quantum, amounts to the existence of the following:
 - Matrices $e_{a,x}$ in $M_d(\mathbb{C})$ (matrices) (for some d), where $1 \leq x \leq 6$ and a ranges over solutions to equation x from Mermin-Perez, such that:
 - $e_{a,x}^2 = e_{a,x} = e_{a,x}^*$ for all a, x ,
 - $\sum_a e_{a,x} = I_d$ for all x , and

Winning Mermin-Perez in Quantum (abridged)

- Winning Mermin-Perez in quantum, amounts to the existence of the following:
 - Matrices $e_{a,x}$ in $M_d(\mathbb{C})$ (matrices) (for some d), where $1 \leq x \leq 6$ and a ranges over solutions to equation x from Mermin-Perez, such that:
 - $e_{a,x}^2 = e_{a,x} = e_{a,x}^*$ for all a, x ,
 - $\sum_a e_{a,x} = I_d$ for all x , and
 - If $1 \leq x, y \leq 6$ and a is a solution to equation x , b is a solution to equation y , and a, b are inconsistent, then $e_{a,x} \cdot e_{b,y} = 0$.

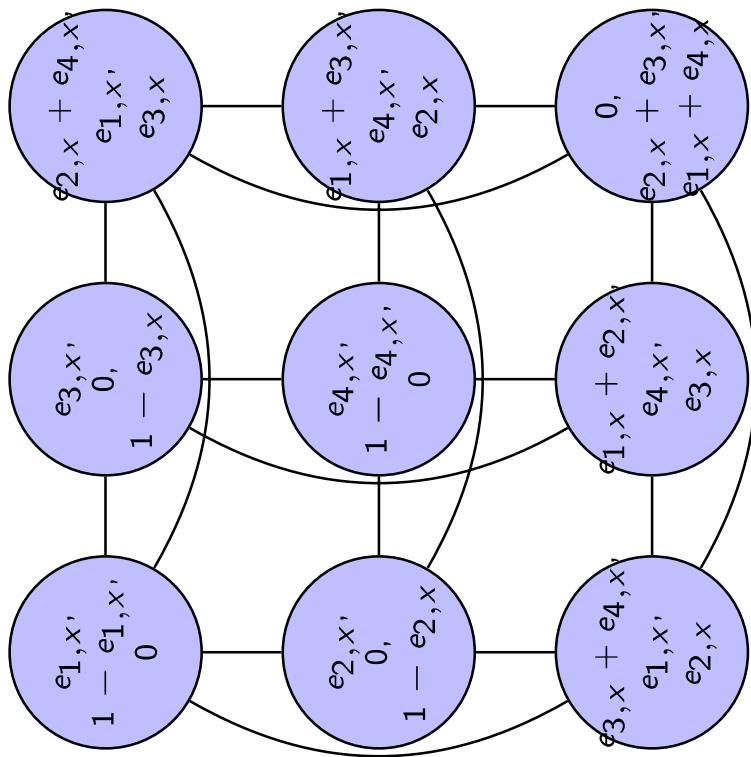
Building a Graph from Mermin-Peres

You can transform any non local synchronous game into a 3 coloring game. We are doing a transformation like this for Mermin-Peres



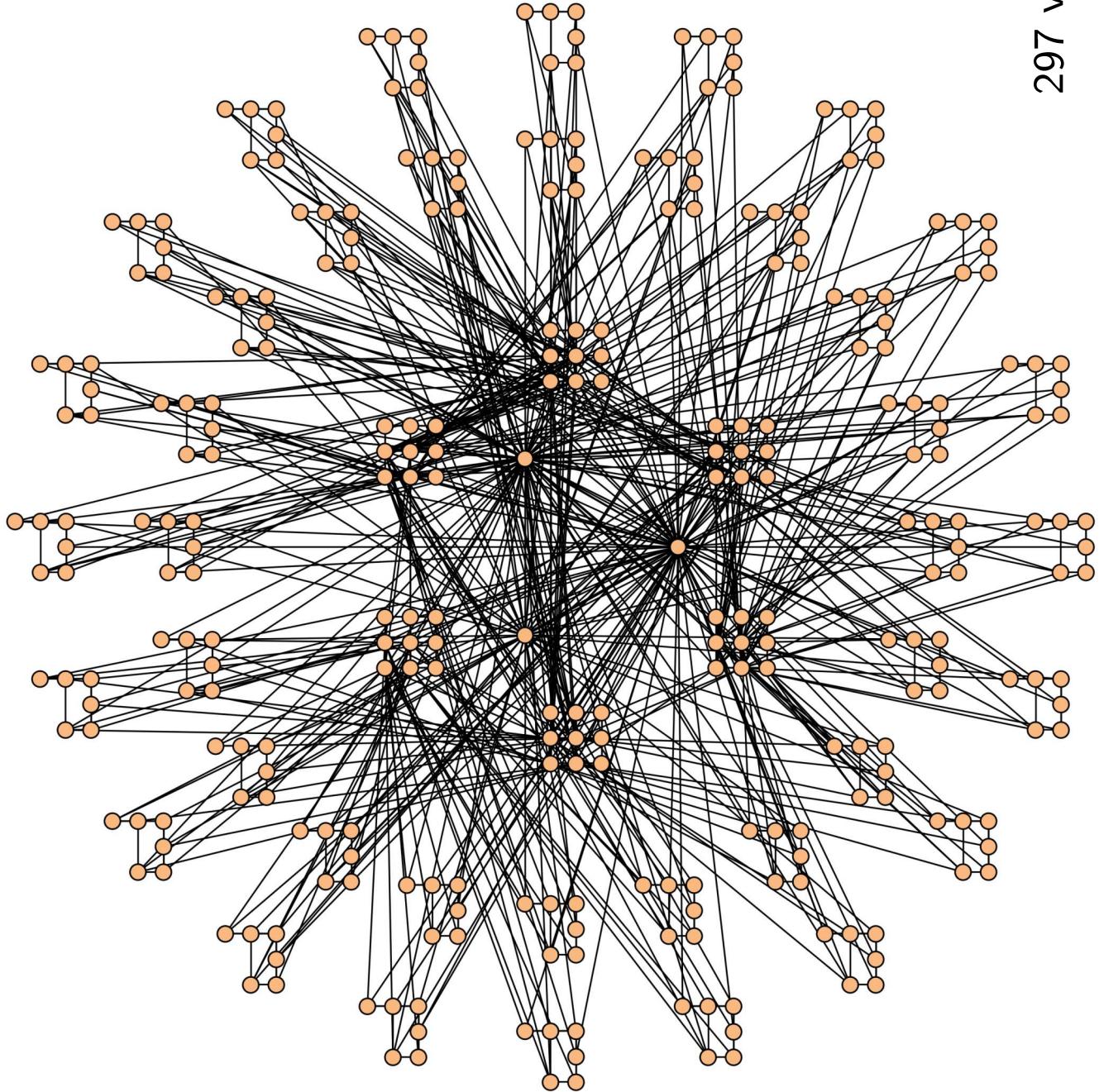
Building a Graph from Mermin-Peres

You can transform any non local synchronous game into a 3 coloring game. We are doing a transformation like this for Mermin-Peres

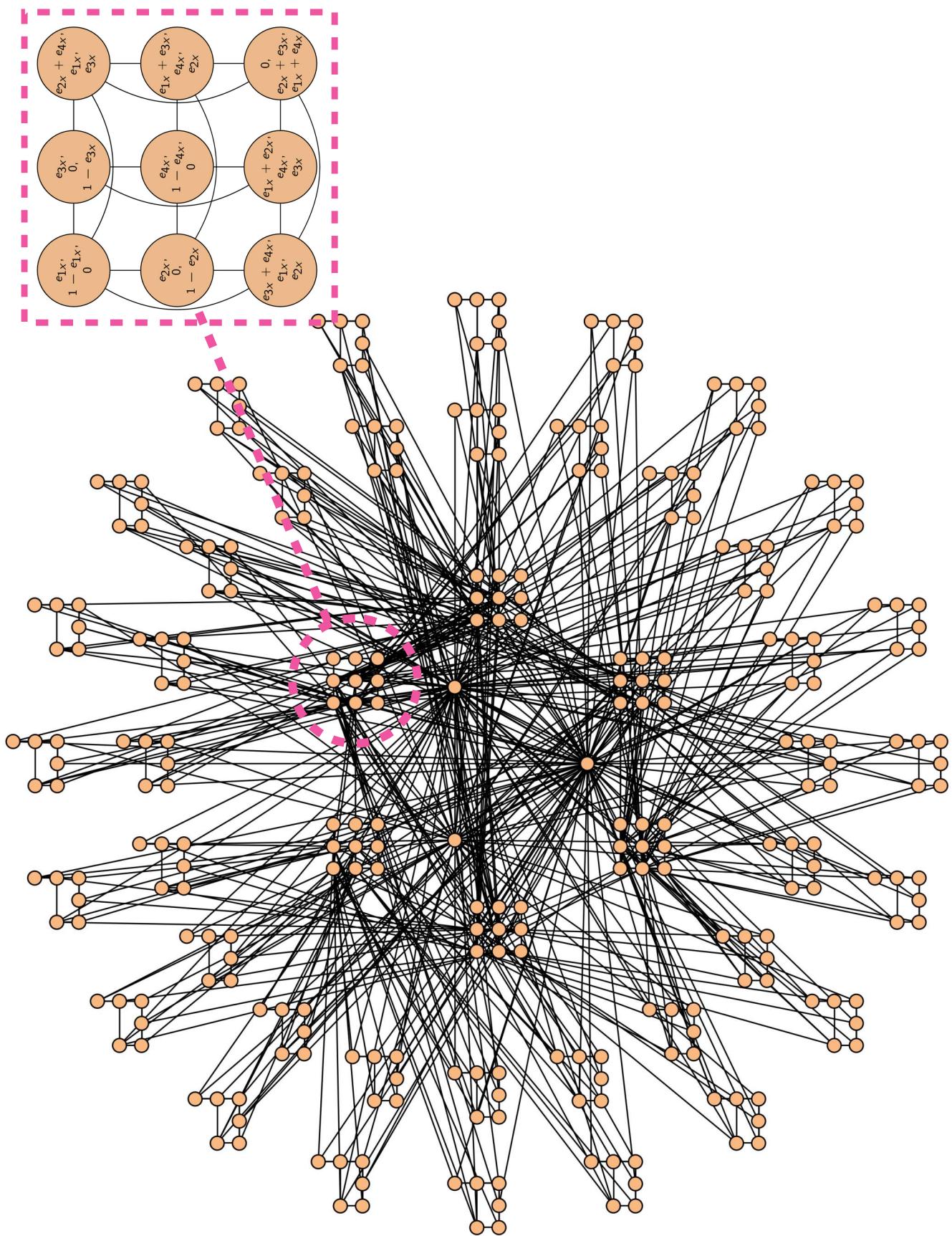


In quantum coloring, each vertex is colored with 3 projections that sum to 1 instead of a single color. These act on a shared entangled state, allowing Alice and Bob to coordinate their responses even when they are separated.

Mermin-Peres Graph



Mermin-Peres Graph



Questions?

Thank you!