

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Union-Find

Author: William Henrich Due

1 Theory

Definition 1.1 (Reachability). A node v is *reachable* from a node u in a directed graph $G = (V, E)$ if there exists a sequence of directed edges $e_1, e_2, \dots, e_m \in E$ where $m \geq 1$ and $e_i = (v_{i-1}, v_i)$ for $1 \leq i \leq m$, such that $v_0 = u$ and $v_m = v$. We denote this by $u \rightsquigarrow v$.

Definition 1.2 (Cycle). A cycle in a directed graph $G = (V, E)$ has a cycle if there exists $v \in V$ such that $v \rightsquigarrow v$.

Definition 1.3 (Forest). A forest is a directed graph $F = (V, E)$ where V is a set of vertices and $E \subseteq V \times V$ is a set of directed edges such that:

1. There are no cycles $v \not\rightsquigarrow v$ for all $v \in V$, and
2. each node has at most one parent i.e. for all $(u, v_1), (u, v_2) \in E$ it holds that $v_1 = v_2$.

Definition 1.4 (Root). A node $v \in V$ in a forest $F = (V, E)$ is a root if it has no parent. This is defined as the predicate:

$$\mathcal{R}_F(v) : v \not\rightsquigarrow u \text{ for all } u \in V$$

Definition 1.5 (Tree). A tree is a forest $T = (V, E)$ where there exists a unique root $r \in V$ such that $v \rightsquigarrow r$ for all $v \in V \setminus \{r\}$.

Proposition 1.1 (Forest Root Count). A forest $F = (V, E)$ where $|V| = n$ and $|E| = n - k$ has k roots.

Proof. Let $F = (V, E)$ be a forest where $|V| = n$ and $|E| = n - k$. By the second property of a forest then $n - k$ vertices must have a parent. Since there are n vertices in total it follows that there are exactly k vertices $r_1, r_2, \dots, r_k \in V$ that has no parent. Hence there are exactly k roots in F . \square

Proposition 1.2 (Roots Path Exist). In a forest $F = (V, E)$ for each element $v \in V$ there exists at least one root $r \in V$ such that $\mathcal{R}_F(r)$ and either $v \rightsquigarrow r$ or $v = r$.

Proof. Let $F = (V, E)$ be a forest and let $v \in V$ be an arbitrary element in V . By proposition 1.1 there exists at least one root $r \in V$ such that $\mathcal{R}_F(r)$. This can be shown by structural induction on a vertex $v \in V$ that any $p \in V$ such that $v \rightsquigarrow p$ has a path $p \rightsquigarrow r$.

-
- If v is a root then we are done.
 - By induction hypothesis v has a path to a root $r \in V$ such that $\mathcal{R}_F(r)$. Since v is not a root it must have a parent $p \in V$ such that $(v, p) \in E$. Since $v \rightsquigarrow r$, $v \rightsquigarrow p$ and v only has one parent it follows that $p \rightsquigarrow r$. Hence $p \rightsquigarrow r$ for some root $r \in V$ such that $\mathcal{R}_F(r)$.

□

Proposition 1.3 (Forest Edge Limit). A forest $F = (V, E)$ where $|V| = n$ and $|E| > n - 1$ is not a forest.

Proof. Let $F = (V, E)$ be a forest where $|V| = n$ and $|E| > n - 1$. By proposition 1.1 a forest with $n - 1$ has exactly one root, so it is a tree. By adding one more edge to the tree it must make one vertex have two parents. Or since every vertex $v \in V$ has a path to the root $r \in V$ it must create a cycle $v \rightsquigarrow v$ for some $v \in V$. In both cases it contradicts the properties of a forest. □

Definition 1.6 (Representative). The representative of an element $v \in V$ in a forest $F = (V, E)$ is the root $r \in V$ such that there is a path from v to r . This is defined as the function:

$$\rho_F(v) := r \text{ where } r \in V \wedge \mathcal{R}_F(r) \wedge (v \rightsquigarrow r \vee v = r)$$

Proposition 1.4 (Unique Representative). In a forest $F = (V, E)$ each element $v \in V$ has a unique representative $\rho_F(v)$.

Proof. Let $U = (V, E)$ be a union-find structure and let $v \in V$ be an arbitrary element in V . By proposition 1.2 there exists at least one root $r \in V$ such that $\mathcal{R}_U(r)$ and $v \rightsquigarrow r$. Now assume that there exists another root $r' \in V$ such that $\mathcal{R}_U(r')$ and $v \rightsquigarrow r'$. Since U is a forest it follows by the second property of a forest that $r = r'$ hence the representative is unique. □

Definition 1.7 (Tree Set). The set of vertices of the same tree $\mathcal{E}_F(v)$ in a forest $F = (V, E)$ is defined as:

$$\mathcal{E}_F(v) := \{u : u \in V \wedge \rho_F(u) = \rho_F(v)\}$$

Definition 1.8 (Partition). The set $P \subseteq \mathbb{P}(S)$ is a partition of a set S if:

1. $a \neq \emptyset$ for all $a \in P$
2. $a \cap b = \emptyset$ for all $a, b \in P$ where $a \neq b$

$$3. \bigcup_{a \in P} a = S$$

Proposition 1.5 (Forest Partition). A forest $F = (V, E)$ is a partition of V for the following set:

$$\{\mathcal{E}_F(v) : v \in V\}$$

Proof. Let $F = (V, E)$ be a forest. We will show that the set in the proposition is a partition of V by showing that it satisfies the three properties in definition 1.8.

1. By definition of $\mathcal{E}_F(v)$ it can not be empty since for $\mathcal{E}_F(v)$ then $\rho_F(v) = \rho_F(v)$. Hence $\mathcal{E}_F(v) \neq \emptyset$ for all $v \in V$.
2. Let a and b be two arbitrary elements in the set such that $a \neq b$. By definition of a and b there exists $v_1, v_2 \in V$ such that $a = \{u : u \in V \wedge \rho_F(u) = \rho_F(v_1)\}$ and $b = \{u : u \in V \wedge \rho_F(u) = \rho_F(v_2)\}$. Since $a \neq b$ it follows that $\rho_F(v_1) \neq \rho_F(v_2)$ since otherwise $a = b$, hence $a \cap b = \emptyset$.
3. Let v be an arbitrary element in V . By proposition 1.2 there exists a root $r \in V$ such that $\mathcal{R}_F(r)$ and $v \rightsquigarrow r$. By definition of the representative it follows that $\rho_F(v) = r$. Now let $a = \{u : u \in V \wedge \rho_F(u) = \rho_F(v)\}$. By definition of a it follows that $v \in a$. Since v was arbitrary it follows that $\bigcup_{a \in P} a = V$.

□

Definition 1.9 (Same Tree Relation). The relation \sim on a forest F is defined as:

$$u \sim v : \iff u \in \mathcal{E}_F(v)$$

Corollary 1.1 (Same Tree Relation is an Equivalence Relation). The relation \sim on a forest F is an equivalence relation due to $\{\mathcal{E}_F(v) : v \in V\}$ being a partition of V . by proposition 1.5.

Definition 1.10 (Forests with Equivalent Tree Sets). Two forests $F = (V, E)$ and $F' = (V', E')$ have equivalent tree sets $F \cong F'$ if $V = V'$ and

- Vertices are the same $V = V'$.
- The tree sets are equivalent $\mathcal{E}_F(v) = \mathcal{E}'_{F'}(v)$ for all $v \in V$.

Definition 1.11 (Change Parent). The function for changing a parent of an element i to p in a forest $F = (V, E)$ is defined as:

$$\mathcal{S}_F(i, p) := \begin{cases} (V, (E \setminus \{(i, p')\}) \cup \{(i, p)\}) & \text{if } (i, p') \in E \\ (V, E \cup \{(i, p)\}) & \text{if } (i, p') \notin E \end{cases}$$

Definition 1.12 (Tree Union). The tree union of two elements v and u for a forest $F = (V, E)$ is such that $v \sim u$ in a new forest $F' = (V', E')$ and F' satisfy the following properties:

1. $\mathcal{E}_{F'}(v) = \mathcal{E}_{F'}(u) = \mathcal{E}_F(v) \cup \mathcal{E}_F(u)$ and
2. $\mathcal{E}_{F'}(w) = \mathcal{E}_F(w)$ for all $w \in V \setminus (\mathcal{E}_F(v) \cup \mathcal{E}_F(u))$.

Proposition 1.6 (Tree Union by Parent). Let forest $F = (V, E)$, $p = \rho_F(u)$ be the representative of u and let $q = \rho_F(v)$ be the representative of v . Then defined F' as:

$$F' := \begin{cases} F & \text{if } p = q \\ \mathcal{S}_F(q, p) & \text{if } p \neq q \end{cases}$$

Then $u \sim v$ in F' and F' will satisfy the properties of a tree union.

Proof. Let $F = (V, E)$, $p = \rho_F(u)$ be the representative of u and let $q = \rho_F(v)$ be the representative of v .

- If $p = q$ hence we already have $u \sim v$ in F and since the tree sets are equivalent $F' \cong F$ then the properties are satisfied.
- If $p \neq q$ then by definition of changing parent then q will have parent p in F' and since q is a root it has no parent and $F' = (V, E \cup \{(q, p)\})$. Now for all $w \in \mathcal{E}_F(q)$ it holds that $w \rightsquigarrow q$ or $q = w$ and since $q \rightsquigarrow p$ it follows that $w \rightsquigarrow p$. Hence $w \in \mathcal{E}_{F'}(p)$ for all $w \in \mathcal{E}_F(q)$ and trivially $w \in \mathcal{E}_{F'}(p)$ for all $w \in \mathcal{E}_F(p)$ so it follows that $\mathcal{E}_{F'}(v) = \mathcal{E}_{F'}(u) = \mathcal{E}_F(v) \cup \mathcal{E}_F(u)$. Now let $w \in V \setminus (\mathcal{E}_F(v) \cup \mathcal{E}_F(u))$ be an arbitrary element. Since $w \not\rightsquigarrow p$ and $w \not\rightsquigarrow q$ it follows that w has the same representative in F' as in F hence $\mathcal{E}_{F'}(w) = \mathcal{E}_F(w)$.

□

Definition 1.13 (Union-Find Structure). The union-find structure U is a forest $U = (V, E)$ where the vertices $V = S$ for some set of elements S . The edges $E \subseteq V \times V$ represent parent relations between elements in S such that $(u, v) \in E$ means that u has parent v .