

# UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

## Union-Find

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## 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  $p \rightsquigarrow r$ .

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- 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  $a \neq b$

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

**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  $\sim_F$  on a forest  $F$  is defined as:

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

**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  $v \in V$ .

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**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  $v \sim_{F'} u$  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  $u \sim_{F'} v$  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  $u \sim_F v$  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  $v$ .