

Finding Partite Hypergraphs Efficiently

Ferran Espuña Bertomeu

June 2025

Abstract

TODO

1 Introduction

Hypergraph Turán problems study how many edges a k -uniform hypergraph $H = (V, E)$ with n vertices can have without containing a specific subgraph G . The maximal such number is known as the *Turán number* $\text{ex}(n, G)$. It is known [3] that $\text{ex}(n, G) = o\left(\binom{n}{k}\right)$ if and only if G is k -partite, i.e., if its vertex set can be partitioned into k disjoint sets such that each edge contains exactly one vertex from each part. Kővári, Sós, and Turán [4] (for $k = 2$) and Erdős [2] (for any $k \geq 2$) established that

$$\text{ex}(n, K(t, \cdot^k, t)) = \mathcal{O}\left(n^{k - \frac{1}{t^{k-1}}}\right),$$

where $K(t, \cdot^k, t)$ is the complete balanced k -partite k -graph with k parts of size t . Furthermore, if H is a k -graph with at least $d\binom{n}{k}$ edges for some constant $d > 0$, then it contains a $K(t, \cdot^k, t)$ with $t = c_d \log(n)^{1/(k-1)}$.

This result is non-constructive, meaning it guarantees the existence of such a subgraph but does not provide an efficient way to find it. Note that a simple brute-force search for a $K(t, \cdot^k, t)$ would involve checking all $\binom{n}{kt}$ vertex subsets, which is superpolynomial in n for $t = \Theta((\log n)^{1/(k-1)})$. Mubayi and Turán [5] developed a polynomial-time algorithm for the case $k = 2$, which reaches the stated order of magnitude for the subgraph part size. This paper extends their approach to the general case of k -uniform hypergraphs, reaching analogous results for $k \geq 3$. More concretely, we prove the following.

Theorem 1. *There is a deterministic algorithm that, given a k -graph H with n vertices and $m = d\binom{n}{k}$ edges, finds a complete balanced k -partite subgraph $K(t, \cdot^k, t)$ in polynomial time, where*

$$t = t(n, d, k) = \left\lfloor \left(\frac{\log n}{\log(16/d)} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-1}} \right\rfloor$$

This value of t matches the order of magnitude from existence proofs. In fact, a probabilistic argument shows that it is the best possible up to a constant factor.

2 The algorithm

We present a recursive algorithm, **FindPartite**, that finds a $K(t, \cdot^k, t)$ in a given k -graph H . The core idea is to reduce the uniformity of the problem from k to $k - 1$ in each recursive step. The algorithm takes a k -graph H with n vertices and m edges as input. It first defines the target part size t , a small set size w , and a threshold edge count s for the recursive call, based on the input graph's parameters:

$$t = t(n, d, k) = \left\lfloor \left(\frac{\log n}{\log(16/d)} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-1}} \right\rfloor,$$

$$w = w(n, d, k) = \left\lceil \frac{4t}{d} \right\rceil, \text{ and}$$

$$s = s(n, d, k) = \left\lceil \left(\frac{d}{4} \right)^t \binom{n}{k-1} \right\rceil,$$

where $d = \frac{m}{\binom{n}{k}}$ is the edge density of H . The main steps are:

1. **Base Case ($k = 1$):** The edge set of a 1-graph is just a collection of vertices. Return the set of all vertices that are “edges”.
2. **Select High-Degree Vertices:** Choose a set $W \subset V$ of w vertices with the highest degrees in H .
3. **Find a Dense Link Graph:** Iterate through all t -subsets $T \subset W$. For each T , consider the set S of all $(k-1)$ -subsets of V that form a hyperedge with *every* vertex in T .
4. **Recurse:** As we prove further along using the Kővári–Sós–Turán theorem, for at least one choice of T , the resulting set S will be large ($|S| \geq s$). We form a new $(k-1)$ -graph $H' = (V, S)$ and make a recursive call: **FindPartite**(H' , $k-1$).
5. **Construct Solution:** The recursive call returns $k-1$ parts V_1, \dots, V_{k-1} of size at least t . By construction, every choice of vertices from these parts forms an edge in H' with every vertex of T . Thus, (T_1, \dots, T_{k-1}, T) form the desired $K(t, \dots, t)$ in the original graph H .

The pseudocode is given in Algorithm 1.

Algorithm 1 Finding a balanced partite k -graph

```

1: function FINDPARTITE( $H, k$ )
2:   if  $k = 1$  then
3:     return ( $\{x: \{x\} \in E(H)\}$ )
4:   end if
5:    $n \leftarrow |V(H)|, m \leftarrow |E(H)|, d \leftarrow \frac{m}{\binom{n}{k}}$ 
6:    $t \leftarrow t(n, d, k), w \leftarrow w(n, d, k), s \leftarrow s(n, d, k)$ 
7:   assert  $t \geq 2$ 
8:    $W \leftarrow$  a set of  $w$  vertices with highest degree in  $H$ 
9:   for all  $T \in \binom{W}{t}$  do
10:     $S \leftarrow \{y \in \binom{V}{k-1} : \forall x \in T, \{x\} \cup y \in E(H)\}$ 
11:    if  $|S| \geq s$  then
12:       $H' \leftarrow (V, S)$   $\triangleright H'$  is a  $(k-1)$ -graph
13:       $(V_1, \dots, V_{k-1}) \leftarrow \text{FINDPARTITE}(H', k-1)$ 
14:      return  $(V_1, \dots, V_{k-1}, T)$ 
15:    end if
16:  end for
17: end function

```

3 Analysis

We now present the proof of correctness and polynomial runtime for our algorithm. We assume $t \geq 2$ for our estimates to be easier. If $t < 2$, we may just return the vertices of any single edge in H .

3.1 Correctness

First, we will prove that in step 3 of the algorithm we indeed find a set $T \in \binom{W}{t}$ such that the associated set $S \subset \binom{V}{k-1}$ has size at least s . For this, consider the bipartite graph B with parts $\binom{V}{k-1}$ and W with edge set

$$\left\{ (x, y) \in \binom{V}{k-1} \times W \mid x \cup \{y\} \in E \right\}.$$

The edges of B correspond to the edges containing each vertex in W , so there are

$$z = \sum_{y \in W} d_H(y) \geq k \cdot m \cdot \frac{w}{n} = \frac{k \cdot w \cdot d \cdot \binom{n}{k}}{n} = w \cdot d \cdot \binom{n-1}{k-1}$$

of them, where the inequality follows from the fact that we have picked a set of w vertices with highest degree in H . The existence of a set $T \subset W$ as desired is equivalent to there being $T \subset W$ of size t and a set $S \subset \binom{V}{k-1}$ of size s such that the induced bipartite subgraph $B[S, T]$ is complete. To prove that this is the case, we use a version the Kővári–Sós–Turán theorem [4], which we state and prove here for completeness.

Lemma 2. *Let u, w, s, t be positive integers with $u \geq s$, $w \geq t$, and let B be a bipartite graph with parts W and U such that $|U| = u$, $|W| = w$. If B has more than*

$$(s-1)^{1/t}(w-t+1)u^{1-1/t} + (t-1)u$$

edges, then there are $T \subset W$ of size t and $S \subset U$ of size s such that the induced bipartite subgraph $B[T, S]$ is complete.

We apply this lemma with $u = \binom{n}{k-1}$. It can be checked that our parameter satisfy the requirements $u \geq s$ and $w \geq t$. Furthermore, $w \leq n$ so the set W is well-defined. Suppose, by way of contradiction, that

$$w \cdot d \cdot \binom{n-1}{k-1} \leq (s-1)^{1/t}(w-t+1) \binom{n}{k-1}^{1-1/t} + (t-1) \binom{n}{k-1}.$$

Algebraic manipulation then shows that

$$\frac{1}{2} \cdot w \cdot d \leq w \cdot d \cdot \left(1 - \frac{k}{n}\right) \leq w \left(\frac{s-1}{\binom{n}{k-1}}\right)^{1/t} + (t-1),$$

where the first inequality follows from $n \geq 2k$, which follows from $t \geq 2$. Finally, since $t \leq \frac{w \cdot d}{4}$ by the definition of w , we obtain

$$\left(\frac{d}{4}\right)^t \binom{n}{k-1} < s-1,$$

against the definition of s . We are now ready to prove that the algorithm returns a $K(t, \dots, t)$. More precisely, we show the following.

Theorem 3. *For $k \geq 2$, if $t \geq 2$, Algorithm 1 returns a tuple (V_1, \dots, V_k) of disjoint sets $V_i \subset V(H)$ such that $|V_i| \geq t$ and $H[V_1, \dots, V_k]$ is complete.*

Proof. We proceed by induction on k . For $k = 2$, the recursive call returns the common neighborhood V_1 of the vertices in T , which is obviously disjoint from T , so it only remains to check that $|V_1| \geq t$. Now, since by construction $|V_1| = |S| \geq s$, it is enough that

$$s = \left\lceil \left(\frac{d}{4} \right)^t n \right\rceil \geq \left(\frac{d}{4} \right)^{\frac{\log n}{\log(16/d)}} n = \frac{1}{n} \cdot 4^{\frac{\log n}{\log(16/d)}} \cdot n \geq 4^t > t.$$

For $k \geq 3$, we assume the inductive hypothesis holds for $k - 1$. If d' is the edge density of the $(k - 1)$ -graph H' and $t' = t(n, d', k - 1)$, as long as $t' \geq 2$, the recursive call returns a tuple (V_1, \dots, V_{k-1}) of disjoint sets $V_i \subset V(H)$ such that $|V_i| \geq t'$ and $H'[V_1, \dots, V_{k-1}]$ is complete.

We claim that $t' \geq t$. This implies that $t' \geq 2$ so we get to apply the inductive hypothesis to H' . Furthermore, the sets V_i are at least as large as desired. By construction of H' , for all $(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, y) \in V_1 \times \dots \times V_{k-1} \times T$, we have that $\{x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, y\} \in E(H)$. In particular, because all V_i are nonempty, this implies that T is disjoint from each of them. Finally, $H[V_1, \dots, V_{k-1}, T]$ is complete, finishing the proof.

Let us now prove the claim that $t' \geq t$. By the definition of s , we have $d' \geq \left(\frac{d}{4}\right)^t$. Therefore,

$$t' \geq \left\lfloor \left(\frac{\log n}{\log \left(\frac{16}{(d/4)^t} \right)} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-2}} \right\rfloor \geq \left\lfloor \left(\frac{\log n}{\log 16 - t \log(d/4)} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-2}} \right\rfloor.$$

Then, we substitute the definition of t , where removing the floor function maintains the inequality because the right hand side is decreasing in t (recall $d \leq 1$):

$$t' \geq \left\lfloor \left(\frac{\log n}{\log 16 - \left(\frac{\log n}{\log(16/d)} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-1}} \log(d/4)} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-2}} \right\rfloor = \left\lfloor \left(\frac{(\log n)^{(1-\frac{1}{k-1})}}{\frac{\log 16}{(\log n)^{\frac{1}{k-1}}} - \frac{\log(d/4)}{\log(16/d)^{\frac{1}{k-1}}}} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-2}} \right\rfloor.$$

If we bound the denominator by showing that

$$\frac{\log 16}{(\log n)^{\frac{1}{k-1}}} - \frac{\log(d/4)}{\log(16/d)^{\frac{1}{k-1}}} \leq (\log(16/d))^{(1-\frac{1}{k-1})}, \quad (1)$$

then the expression simplifies to

$$t' \geq \left\lfloor \left(\frac{(\log n)^{(1-\frac{1}{k-1})}}{(\log(16/d))^{(1-\frac{1}{k-1})}} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-2}} \right\rfloor = \left\lfloor \left(\frac{\log n}{\log(16/d)} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-2}(1-\frac{1}{k-1})} \right\rfloor = \left\lfloor \left(\frac{\log n}{\log(16/d)} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-1}} \right\rfloor = t,$$

as desired. Suppose, by way of contradiction, that (1) does not hold. We can rewrite

$$(\log(16/d))^{(1-\frac{1}{k-1})} = \frac{\log(16/d)}{\log(16/d)^{\frac{1}{k-1}}}$$

and rearrange the inequality to obtain

$$\frac{\log 16}{(\log n)^{\frac{1}{k-1}}} > \frac{\log(16/d) + \log(d/4)}{\log(16/d)^{\frac{1}{k-1}}} = \frac{\log 4}{(\log(16/d))^{\frac{1}{k-1}}}.$$

This implies that

$$t \leq \left(\frac{\log n}{\log(16/d)} \right)^{\frac{1}{k-1}} < \frac{\log 16}{\log 4} = 2,$$

which contradicts the assumption that $t \geq 2$. □

3.2 Complexity

TODO re-evaluate the complexity analysis.

4 Conclusion and Future Work

We have presented a deterministic, polynomial-time algorithm to find a large complete balanced k -partite subgraph in any sufficiently dense k -uniform hypergraph. This provides a constructive counterpart to a classical existence result by Erdős in extremal hypergraph theory.

Several avenues for future research remain open.

- **General Blow-ups:** Our algorithm finds a blow-up of a single edge, $K(t, \dots, t)$. Can this framework be adapted to find a t_n -blowup of an arbitrary fixed k -graph G ? Existence theorems guarantee such structures, but efficient algorithms are lacking.
- **Unbalanced Partite Graphs:** The algorithm could be modified to search for unbalanced complete partite graphs $K(t_1, \dots, t_k)$, where the part sizes may grow at different rates.
- **Optimality:** The bounds on t are asymptotically tight, but the constants can likely be improved with a more refined analysis. For $k = 2$, it is known that in dense graphs one can find a $t = \Theta(\log n)$ blow-up of any bipartite graph. It is an open question if a constructive proof for this stronger result exists for $k \geq 2$.

References

- [1] B. Bollobás and P. Erdős. On the structure of edge graphs. *Bulletin of the London Mathematical Society*, 5(3):317–321, 1973.
- [2] P. Erdős. On extremal problems of graphs and generalized graphs. *Israel Journal of Mathematics*, 2:183–190, 1964.
- [3] P. Keevash. Hypergraph Turán problems. In *Surveys in combinatorics 2011*, volume 392 of *London Mathematical Society Lecture Note Series*, pages 83–139. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- [4] T. Kővári, V. T. Sós, and P. Turán. On a problem of K. Zarankiewicz. *Colloquium Mathematicum*, 3:50–57, 1954.
- [5] D. Mubayi and G. Turán. Finding bipartite subgraphs efficiently. *arXiv preprint arXiv:0905.2527*, 2009.