Exact results on traces of sets

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This work is joint with Mingze Li and Jie Ma.



Trace and arrow relation

Definition of trace

For a subset T of V define the **trace** of $\mathcal{F} \subseteq 2^V$ on T by

$$\mathcal{F}_{|T} = \{ F \cap T : F \in \mathcal{F} \}.$$

Definition of arrow relation

For integers n, m, a, and b, we say (n, m) arrows (a, b) and write

$$(n,m) \to (a,b)$$

if for every family $\mathcal{F} \subseteq 2^V$ with $|\mathcal{F}| \geqslant m$ and |V| = n, there is an a-element set $T \subseteq V$ such that $|\mathcal{F}_{|T}| \geqslant b$.



fixed (a, b) type results

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- Sauer-Shelah lemma (1972): $(n,m) \rightarrow (s,2^s)$ for $m \geqslant 1 + \sum_{i=0}^{s-1} \binom{n}{i}$.
- Frankl (1983): $(n,m) \to (3,7)$ for $m > \lfloor \frac{n^2}{4} \rfloor + n + 1$.
- Bollobás and Radcliffe (1995): $n \geqslant 4$ and $n \neq 6$ then $(n,m) \rightarrow (4,12)$ for $m > \binom{n}{2} + n + 1$.
- Frankl and Wang (2024): $n\geqslant 25$ then $(n,m)\to (4,13)$ for $m\geqslant 1+\Pi_{i=0}^2\lfloor \frac{n+3+i}{3}\rfloor.$



Some early results

Definition of arrow relation

For integers n, m, a, and b, we say (n, m) arrows (a, b) and write

$$(n,m) \to (a,b)$$

if for every family $\mathcal{F}\subseteq 2^V$ with $|\mathcal{F}|\geqslant m$ and |V|=n, there is an a-element set $T\subseteq V$ such that $|\mathcal{F}_{|T}|\geqslant b$.

- Bondy: $(n,m) \to (n-1,m)$ for all $m \leqslant n$.
- Bollobás: $(n,m) \to (n-1,m-1)$ for all $m \leqslant \frac{3}{2}n$.
- Frankl: $(n,m) \to (n-1,m-2)$ for all $m \leqslant 2n$. $(n,m) \to (n-1,m-3)$ for all $m \leqslant \frac{7}{2}n$.



Some early results

For arrow relation, it suffices to consider **hereditary families** \mathcal{F} :

For any $F' \subseteq F \in \mathcal{F}$, we have $F' \in \mathcal{F}$.

Frankl (1983)

The following are equivalent:

- \bullet $(n,m) \to (a,b)$,
- For every **hereditary family** $\mathcal{F} \subseteq 2^{[n]}$ with $|\mathcal{F}| = m$, there exists $T \subseteq [n]$ with |T| = a such that $|\mathcal{F}_{|T}| \geqslant b$.

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- \bullet $(n,m) \rightarrow (a,b)$,
- For every **hereditary family** $\mathcal{F} \subseteq 2^{[n]}$ with $|\mathcal{F}| = m$, there exists $T \subseteq [n]$ with |T| = a such that $|\mathcal{F}_{|T}| \geqslant b$.

Using this, Frankl proved:

• For $s=2^{d-1}-1$, $(n,m)\to (n-1,m-s)$ for all $m\leqslant \frac{2^d-1}{d}n$.



Problem

Füredi / Frankl and Watanabe proposed the following problem.

Definition of m(n, s)

For n and s, what is the maximum value $\mathbf{m}(\mathbf{n},\mathbf{s})$ such that for every $m\leqslant m(n,s)$ we have

$$(n,m) \rightarrow (n-1,m-s).$$

Frankl and Watanabe proved the following limit exists.

Definition of m(s)

$$m(s) = \lim_{n \to +\infty} \frac{m(n,s)}{n}$$
.



х	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
m(x)	1	$\frac{3}{2}$	2	$\frac{7}{3}$				$\frac{15}{4}$								$\frac{31}{5}$	

- From previous developments, m(0) = 1, $m(1) = \frac{3}{2}$, m(2) = 2.
- Frankl (1983) proved $m(2^{d-1}-1)=\frac{2^d-1}{d}$ for $d\geqslant 1$. Therefore $m(3)=\frac{7}{3}$, $m(7)=\frac{15}{4}$ and $m(15)=\frac{31}{5}$.

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m(x)	1	$\frac{3}{2}$	2	$\frac{7}{3}$	$\frac{17}{6}$	$\frac{13}{4}$	$\frac{7}{2}$	$\frac{15}{4}$	$\frac{17}{4}$	$\frac{65}{14}$	5	?	?	$\frac{29}{5}$	6	$\frac{31}{5}$	$\frac{67}{10}$

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- Watanabe (1995) proved m(10) = 5 and $m(13) = \frac{29}{5}$.
- Frankl and Watanabe (1994) conjectured m(11) = 5.3 and m(12) = 5.6.



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m(x)	1	$\frac{3}{2}$	2	$\frac{7}{3}$	$\frac{17}{6}$	$\frac{13}{4}$	$\frac{7}{2}$	$\frac{15}{4}$	$\frac{17}{4}$	$\frac{65}{14}$	5	?	$\frac{28}{5}$	$\frac{29}{5}$	6	$\frac{31}{5}$	$\frac{67}{10}$

In 2021, Piga and Schülke proved the following theorem.

Theorem (Piga and Schülke 2021)

- $m(2^{d-1}-3)=\frac{2^d-3}{d}$ for $d\geqslant 4$.
- $m(2^{d-1}-4) = \frac{2^d-4}{d}$ for $d \geqslant 5$. $\Longrightarrow m(12) = 5.6$.

They also proved the following general bound.

Theorem (Piga and Schülke 2021)

•
$$m(2^{d-1}-c)=\frac{2^d-c}{d}$$
 for all $1\leqslant c\leqslant \frac{d}{4}$.



In their article, Piga and Schülke ask the following question.

Question (Piga and Schülke)

For any positive integer d, determining the maximum integer $c_0(d)$ such that for any $c\leqslant c_0(d)$,

$$m(2^{d-1}-c) = \frac{2^d-c}{d}$$
.



Our results

×	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
m(x)	1	$\frac{3}{2}$	2	$\frac{7}{3}$	$\frac{17}{6}$	$\frac{13}{4}$	$\frac{7}{2}$	$\frac{15}{4}$	$\frac{17}{4}$	$\frac{65}{14}$	5	$\frac{53}{10}$	$\frac{28}{5}$	$\frac{29}{5}$	6	$\frac{31}{5}$	$\frac{67}{10}$

Theorem (Li-Ma-R., 2024+)

$$m(11) = m(2^{5-1} - 5) = \frac{2^5 - 5 - 0.5}{5} = 5.3.$$

• This solves the last open conjecture of Frankl and Watanabe in 1994.



Our results

Theorem (Li-Ma-R., 2024+)

Let $d \geqslant 50$. For $1 \leqslant c \leqslant d$, we have

$$m(2^{d-1} - c) = \mathfrak{B}_c,$$

where

$$\mathfrak{B}_c = \begin{cases} \frac{2^d-c}{d} & \text{ for } 1\leqslant c\leqslant d-1, \\ \frac{2^d-d-\frac{1}{2}}{d} & \text{ for } c=d. \end{cases}$$

 This answers the previous question of Piga-Schülke, showing that

$$c_0(d) = d - 1$$
 for $d \geqslant 50$.

Our results

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 This answers the previous question of Piga-Schülke, showing that

$$c_0(d) = d - 1 \text{ for } d \geqslant 50.$$

That is, the maximum c is d-1 for which the following holds

$$m(2^{d-1} - c) = \frac{2^d - c}{d}.$$



Notion

- Let n be a positive integers and $\mathcal{F} \subseteq 2^{[n]}$ be a hereditary family.

Notation

- For any $x \in [n]$, we write $d_{\mathcal{F}}(x) = |\{F \in \mathcal{F} : x \in F\}|$ for the degree of x in \mathcal{F} .
- For any $x \in [n]$, we write $\mathcal{F}(x)$ for the **link** of x in \mathcal{F} . That is, $\mathcal{F}(x) = \{F \setminus \{x\} : x \in F \in \mathcal{F}\}.$
- Let $\delta(\mathcal{F}) = \min_{x \in [n]} d_{\mathcal{F}}(x)$ be the **minimal degree** of \mathcal{F} .

About arrow relation

Since for any hereditary family $\mathcal{F}\subseteq 2^V$ and $x\in V$, we have $|\mathcal{F}_{|V\setminus\{x\}}|=|\mathcal{F}|-d_{\mathcal{F}}(x)$. It is easy to get the following corollary.

Corollary

Let n, m and s be positive integers. The following are equivalent.

- $\bullet (n,m) \to (n-1,m-s).$
- $m(n,s) \geqslant m$.
- For any hereditary family $\mathcal{F} \subseteq 2^{[n]}$ with $|\mathcal{F}| \leqslant m$, there exists $x \in [n]$ such that $d_{\mathcal{F}}(x) \leqslant s$.
- For any hereditary family $\mathcal{F} \subseteq 2^{[n]}$ with $\delta(\mathcal{F}) \geqslant s+1$, we have $|\mathcal{F}| \geqslant m+1$.



Constructions

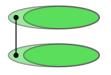
This construction shows $m(n, 2^{d-1} - d) \leqslant \frac{2^d - d - \frac{1}{2}}{d} n$ for $2d \mid n$.

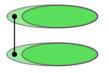
Construction (Piga and Schülke 2021)

Let $U_1,...,U_{2k}$ be a partition of [n] into sets of size d. $x_i \in U_i.$

- $\mathcal{G} = \{S \subseteq V \colon \text{there is an } i \text{ such that } S \subseteq U_i \text{ and } |S| \leqslant d-2\}.$
- $\mathcal{H} = \{U_i \setminus \{x_i\}: \text{ for } i \in \{1, 2, ..., 2k\}\}.$
- $\mathcal{I} = \{\{x_i, x_{i+1}\}: \text{ for } i \in \{1, 3, 5, ..., 2k-1\}\}.$

Let $\mathcal{F}=\mathcal{G}\cup\mathcal{H}\cup\mathcal{I}$, then it is easy to see that $|\mathcal{F}|=\frac{2^d-d-\frac{1}{2}}{d}n+1$ and $\delta(\mathcal{F})\geqslant 2^{d-1}-d+1$.







Constructions

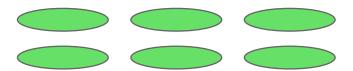
This construction shows $m(n, 2^{d-1} - c) \leqslant \frac{2^d - c}{d} n$ for $d \mid n, c \leqslant d$.

Construction

Let $U_1,...,U_k$ be a partition of V into sets of size d. Let $\mathcal{G}_i\subseteq 2^{U_i}$, $|\mathcal{G}_i|=c-1$.

•
$$\mathcal{F} = \{ F \subseteq V : F \in 2^{U_i} \setminus \mathcal{G}_i \text{ for some } i \in [k] \}.$$

It is easy to check that $|\mathcal{F}| = \frac{n}{d}(2^d - c) + 1$ and $\delta(\mathcal{F}) \geqslant 2^{d-1} - c + 1$.



Colexicographic order

Colexicographic order

For two finite sets $A, B \subseteq \mathbb{Z}_{>0}$, we say that $A \prec_{col} B$ or A precedes B in the **colexicographic** (colex for short) order if $\max(A \triangle B) \in B$.

- Let m be a positive integer, we define $\mathcal{R}(m)$ to be the family containing the first m finite subsets of $\mathbb{Z}_{>0}$ according to the colex order.
- If $m=2^k+t$, where k and t are non-negative integers with $t<2^k$, then we have

$$\mathcal{R}(m) = 2^{[k]} \cup \{F \cup \{k+1\} : F \in \mathcal{R}(t)\}.$$

- For example, $\mathcal{R}(7) = \{\emptyset, \{1\}, \{2\}, \{1,2\}, \{3\}, \{1,3\}, \{2,3\}\}.$



A result of Katona

The following theorem due to Katona is a generalisation of the well-known Kruskal-Katona theorem.

Theorem (G. Katona 1978)

Let $f: \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{R}$ be a monotone non-increasing function and let \mathcal{F} be a hereditary family with $|\mathcal{F}| = m$. Then

$$\sum_{F \in \mathcal{F}} f(|F|) \geqslant \sum_{R \in \mathcal{R}(m)} f(|R|).$$

- In the proof, we often choose \mathcal{F} as the link of some vertex and $f(k)=\frac{1}{k+1}$. For convenience, we set

$$W(m) = \sum_{R \in \mathcal{R}(m)} \frac{1}{|R| + 1}$$

Properties on W-function

- Let d be a positive integer. We have

$$W(2^{d-1}) = \sum_{R \subseteq [d-1]} \frac{1}{|R|+1} = \sum_{i=0}^{d-1} \frac{\binom{d-1}{i}}{i+1} = \sum_{i=0}^{d-1} \frac{\binom{d}{i+1}}{d} = \frac{2^d-1}{d}.$$

- For any positive integer $c<2^{d-2}$, since $A\bigtriangleup B=A^c\bigtriangleup B^c$ for any sets A and B, we have

$$2^{[d-1]} \setminus \mathcal{R}(2^{d-1} - c) = \{ [d-1] \setminus H : H \in \mathcal{R}(c) \}.$$

- Thus we can conclude that

$$W(2^{d-1} - c) = \frac{2^d - 1}{d} - \sum_{R \in \mathcal{R}(c)} \frac{1}{d - |R|} \geqslant \frac{2^d - 1}{d} - \frac{c}{d - \log c}.$$



Frankl's proof on $m(n, 2^{d-1} - 1)$

- We only need to show that $m(n, 2^{d-1} 1) \geqslant \frac{2^d 1}{d} n$, which is equivalent to show that for any hereditary family $\mathcal{F} \subseteq 2^{[n]}$ with $\delta(\mathcal{F}) \geqslant 2^{d-1}$, then $|\mathcal{F}| \geqslant \frac{2^d 1}{d} n + 1$.
- By Katona's theorem, for any $x \in [n]$,

$$\sum_{H \in \mathcal{F}(x)} \frac{1}{|H|+1} \geqslant W(2^{d-1}) = \frac{2^d - 1}{d}.$$

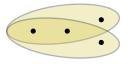
- Then it follows:

$$|\mathcal{F}| - 1 = |\mathcal{F} \setminus \{\emptyset\}| = \sum_{x \in [n]} \sum_{H \in \mathcal{F}(x)} \frac{1}{|H| + 1} \geqslant \frac{2^d - 1}{d} n \quad \Box$$



Proof sketch: our first theorem on m(11)

- Let $\mathcal{F}\subseteq 2^{[n]}$ be a hereditary family with $\delta(\mathcal{F})\geqslant 12$, we want to show that $|\mathcal{F}|\geqslant 5.3n+1$.
- For the uniform weight $\omega(x) = \sum_{H \in \mathcal{F}(x)} \frac{1}{|H|+1}$, $\omega(x) < 5.3$ if and only if $\mathcal{F}(x)$ is isomorphic with $\mathcal{R}(12)$ or $\binom{[4]}{\leq 2} \cup \{\{1,2,3\}\}$



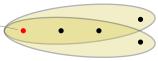


- We use a non-uniform weight u(x), which is slightly different from $\omega(w)$.
- Then we have: u(x) < 5.3 if and only if $\mathcal{F}(x) \cong \mathcal{R}(12)$. We call these vertices **mini-weight**.

Proof sketch: our first theorem on m(11)

- Note that $u(x) = 5.3 - \frac{2}{15}$ if x is mini-weight.

 \boldsymbol{x} is mini-weight



- We define the following "perturbation" $\varepsilon(x)$.

$$\varepsilon(x) = \begin{cases} -\frac{2}{15}, & x \text{ is mini-weight,} \\ \sum_{Q \in \mathcal{Q}(x)} \frac{\frac{1}{15}c(Q)}{4-c(Q)}, & x \text{ is not mini-weight.} \end{cases}$$

- This ε transforms the "loss" of mini-weight vertices to others, and we can show that $u(x)-\varepsilon(x)\geqslant 5.3$ for any $x\in[n]$.

- Let $\mathcal{F}\subseteq 2^{[n]}$ be a hereditary family with $\delta(\mathcal{F})\geqslant 2^{d-1}-c+1$ and $c\in [d].$
- As in Frankl's proof, for any $x \in [n]$ we use the uniform **weight** $\omega(x)$ defined as following

$$\omega(x) = \sum_{x \in F \in \mathcal{F}} \frac{1}{|F|} = \sum_{H \in \mathcal{F}(x)} \frac{1}{|H| + 1}.$$

This weight satisfies the following property.

$$\sum_{x \in [n]} \omega(x) = |\mathcal{F} \setminus \{\emptyset\}| = |\mathcal{F}| - 1.$$



- Since $\delta(\mathcal{F})\geqslant 2^{d-1}-c+1>2^{d-2}$, we can show that $|N(x)|\geqslant d$ for any $x\in [n].$

Definition (good/bad vertex)

For any $x \in [n]$,

- we call x bad if |N(x)| = d;
- we call x good if |N(x)| > d.

Definition (Pile)

Let $P \subseteq [n]$ and |P| = d. We call P a **pile**, if

- For any $y \in P$, we have $P \subseteq N(y)$.
- There exists $z \in P$, such that P = N(z).
- Note that for $d \ge 6$, every bad vertex x is in exactly one pile, which is N(x). This is the reason why we have to distinguish between the proofs of two results (they cannot be unified).

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Definition (Different types of piles)

A pile is an **intersecting pile** if it intersects another pile. Otherwise, we call the pile **non-intersecting pile**.

Proof sketch: $m(2^{d-1}-c)$, $1 \le c \le d$

We consider the following partition of piles,

$$\mathcal{P}_1 = \{ \text{non-intersecting piles } P \},$$

 $\mathcal{P}_2 = \{ \text{intersecting piles } P \}.$

Then we have the following partition of [n],

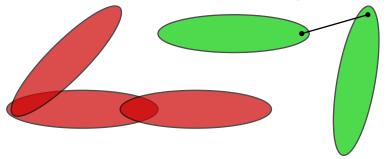
$$[n] = J \cup \left(\bigcup_{P \in \mathcal{P}_1} P\right) \cup \left(\bigcup_{P \in \mathcal{P}_2} P\right).$$

Note that every $x \in J$ is a good vertex.

Proof sketch: $m(2^{d-1}-c)$, $1 \leqslant c \leqslant d$

We will partition the vertex set [n] into three parts and prove the average weight in each part is at least \mathfrak{B}_c .

- Vertices that are not in any pile. (shown in white)
- Vertices that are in intersecting piles. (shown in red)
- Vertices that are in non-intersecting piles. (shown in green)



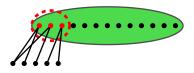
Proof sketch: $m(2^{d-1}-c)$, $1 \le c \le d$

- Out of piles. We know that every vertex not contained in any piles is good, hence their weight is at least \mathfrak{B}_c .
- Intersecting piles. The "gain" of the intersection of piles (shown in blue) is enough to share with others (shown in red).



Proof sketch: $m(2^{d-1}-c)$, $1 \le c \le d$

• Non-intersecting piles. Assume the average weight is less than \mathfrak{B}_c . By calculating the weights there are at most 7 good vertices. By this the structure is almost fixed and we know the average weight is at least \mathfrak{B}_c (will see soon).



Technical lemmas

Now we give more details for the proof of $m(2^{d-1}-c)=\mathfrak{B}_c$.

Lemma

Given two positive integers n and d with $d \geqslant 50$, $\mathcal{F} \subseteq 2^{[n]}$ is a hereditary family. Let $x \in [n]$ be a vertex with $d_{\mathcal{F}}(x) \geqslant 2^{d-1} - c + 1$, where $c \in [d]$. Then

$$\label{eq:linear_eq} \ \ \, \textbf{if} \ |N(x)| = d \text{, we have} \ \omega(x) > \mathfrak{B}_c - \tfrac{1}{18}.$$

② if
$$|N(x)| > d$$
, we have $\omega(x) > \mathfrak{B}_c - \frac{1}{18} + \frac{|N(x)| - d}{6} > \mathfrak{B}_c$.

- By the above lemma, we know that the weight of any vertex is at least $\mathfrak{B}_c \frac{1}{18}$.
- In particular, the weight of good vertex is at least \mathfrak{B}_c .



Technical lemmas

For any pile P, let θ_P be the number of vertices in P which only belong to one pile.

Lemma 1 (for intersecting piles)

If the family $\mathcal{P}(\boldsymbol{x})$ consisting all piles containing \boldsymbol{x} has size at least 2, then we have

$$\omega(x) > \mathfrak{B}_c + \frac{1}{18} \sum_{P \in \mathcal{P}(x)} \frac{\theta_P}{d - \theta_P}$$



Technical lemmas

Let n, d and c be positive integers with $d \geqslant 50$ and $1 \leqslant c \leqslant d$.

Lemma 2 (for non-intersecting piles)

For any hereditary family $\mathcal{F}\subseteq 2^{[n]}$ with $\delta(\mathcal{F})\geqslant 2^{d-1}-c+1$. If $P\subseteq [n]$ is a non-intersecting pile, then

$$\sum_{x \in P} \omega(x) \geqslant \mathfrak{B}_c d.$$

This lemma is the most technical part of the proof.

Let $\mathcal{F}\subseteq 2^{[n]}$ be a hereditary family with $\delta(\mathcal{F})\geqslant 2^{d-1}-c+1$, where $d\geqslant 50$ and $c\in [d]$. Adapting the uniform weight $\omega(x)$, we only need to show that $\sum_{x\in [n]}\omega(x)\geqslant \mathfrak{B}_c n$. Since we have the partition $[n]=J\cup (\bigcup_{P\in \mathcal{P}_2}P)\cup (\bigcup_{P\in \mathcal{P}_1}P)$, we only need to show that the average weight in each part is at least \mathfrak{B}_c .

For any $x \in J$, we know that x is good and $\omega(x) \geqslant \mathfrak{B}_c$.

As for the part $K=\bigcup_{P\in\mathcal{P}_2}P$, we set $K_1=\{x\in K:|\mathcal{P}(x)|=1\}$ and $K_2=K\setminus K_1.$

By Lemma 1, we can get

$$\begin{split} \sum_{x \in K_2} \omega(x) \geqslant \sum_{x \in K_2} \left(\mathfrak{B}_c + \frac{1}{18} \sum_{P \in \mathcal{P}(x)} \frac{\theta_P}{d - \theta_P} \right) \\ &= \mathfrak{B}_c |K_2| + \frac{1}{18} \sum_{P \in \mathcal{P}_2} \theta_P \\ &\sum_{x \in K_1} \omega(x) \geqslant \sum_{x \in K_1} (\mathfrak{B}_c - \frac{1}{18}) = \mathfrak{B}_c |K_1| - \frac{1}{18} \sum_{P \in \mathcal{P}_2} \theta_P. \end{split}$$

Thus we have

$$\sum_{x \in K} \omega(x) = \sum_{x \in K_1} \omega(x) + \sum_{x \in K_2} \omega(x) \geqslant \mathfrak{B}_c(|K_1| + |K_2|) = \mathfrak{B}_c|K|.$$

For any $P \in \mathcal{P}_1$, by Lemma 2, we can get

$$\sum_{x \in P} \omega(x) \geqslant \mathfrak{B}_c d.$$

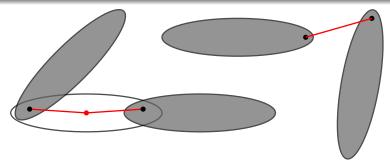
Now combine all results above, we conclude that

$$|\mathcal{F}| - 1 = \sum_{x \in [n]} \omega(x) = \sum_{x \in J} \omega(x) + \sum_{x \in K} \omega(x) + \sum_{P \in \mathcal{P}_1} \sum_{x \in P} \omega(x)$$
$$\geqslant \mathfrak{B}_c(|J| + |K| + d|\mathcal{P}_1|) = \mathfrak{B}_c n.$$

So we conclude that $|\mathcal{F}| \geqslant \mathfrak{B}_c n + 1$ and we finish the proof.



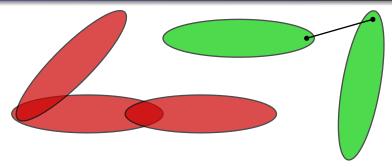
Difference between our proof and Piga-Schülke proof



- They choose a maximum collection of disjoint piles and call them **clusters**.
- There could be bad vertices (shown in red) outside of all the clusters. For these bad vertices to have enough weight, they send $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{c-1}{d-c}\geqslant\frac{1}{6}$ weight for every vertex outside of a cluster (shown in red) which have connection with some vertices in the cluster.
- This is why they need $c \leqslant \frac{d}{4}$.



Difference between Our proof and Piga-Schülke proof



- There are no bad vertex outside of piles.
- We have more understanding in the edge structure of a pile, where they just used a simple inequality (works well for $c\leqslant \frac{d}{4}$).
- In order to achieve the range $1\leqslant c\leqslant d$, we need $d\geqslant 50$ to make certain weight inequalities holds. Weight inequalities though out the proof are far from tight. So there is hope to improve this bound.

Open problems

- The general question: $m(2^{d-1}-c)$ for all possible c?
- What about $m(2^{d-1} + 1)$?



Thank you!

Thanks a lot for your attention!