

An Introduction to Semidefinite Programming for Combinatorial Optimization (Lecture 1)

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IPCO Summer School
May 20-21, 2019

Outline

1. Definitions
2. Optimization
3. Algorithms
4. "Classic" Applications

Definitions

- \mathbb{R}^p = real column vectors of length p
- $\mathbb{R}^{p \times q}$ = real matrices of size $p \times q$
- $\mathbb{S}^p \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{p \times p}$ denotes symmetry, ensures real eigenvalues

- *Trace inner product* defined on $\mathbb{R}^{p \times q}$:

$$M \bullet N := \sum_{i=1}^p \sum_{j=1}^q M_{ij} N_{ij} = \text{trace}(M^T N)$$

- Induced *Frobenius norm*:

$$\|M\|_F := \sqrt{M \bullet M}$$

A matrix $X \in \mathbb{S}^p$ is *positive semidefinite* iff:

- $v^T X v \geq 0$ for all $v \in \mathbb{R}^p$
- $\lambda_{\min}[X] \geq 0$
- $X = VV^T$ for some $V \in \mathbb{R}^{p \times r}$ (note: $\text{rank}(X) \leq r$)
- every principal submatrix of X has determinant ≥ 0

We write:

- $X \succeq 0$ or "X is PSD"
- $\mathbb{S}_+^p =$ set of $p \times p$ PSD matrices

Important properties of \mathbb{S}_+^p :

- *Proper*, i.e., closed, convex, pointed, full-dimensional
- *Self-dual*, i.e., $\{S \in \mathbb{S}^p : S \bullet X \geq 0 \ \forall X \succeq 0\} = \mathbb{S}_+^p$
- In particular, $X, S \succeq 0 \Rightarrow X \bullet S \geq 0$

What is the dimension of \mathbb{S}_+^p ?

- Ambient dimension is p^2
- But symmetry takes away $\binom{p}{2}$ degrees of freedom
- So dimension is $\binom{p+1}{2}$

When is the following matrix PSD?

$$D := \begin{pmatrix} D_{11} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & D_{22} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & D_{33} \end{pmatrix}$$

- D is a diagonal matrix
- Its eigenvalues are D_{11}, D_{22}, D_{33}
- So $D \succeq 0$ iff $\text{diag}(D) \geq 0$

Is this matrix PSD?

$$\begin{pmatrix} 4 & -2 & 6 \\ -2 & 1 & -3 \\ 6 & -3 & 9 \end{pmatrix}$$

- Yes, because it equals vv^T where $v = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -1 \\ 3 \end{pmatrix}$

Theorem (spectral decomposition). $X \succeq 0$ iff \exists orthogonal $V \in \mathbb{R}^{p \times p}$ and nonnegative, diagonal $D \in \mathbb{S}^p$ s.t. $X = VDV^T$

- Specifically, $\text{diag}(D)$ contains the eigenvalues of X , and the columns of V are its eigenvectors

Optimization

Given:

- Dimensions n and m
- $C, A_1, \dots, A_m \in \mathbb{S}^n$
- $b \in \mathbb{R}^m$

Let $X \in \mathbb{S}^n$ denote our variable

Primal SDP problem (P):

$$\begin{aligned} p^* := \inf \quad & C \bullet X \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & A_i \bullet X = b_i \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, m \\ & X \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

Specify the data for this problem:

$$\begin{aligned} & \inf \quad X_{12} \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & X_{11} + X_{22} = 1 \\ & \begin{pmatrix} X_{11} & X_{12} \\ X_{12} & X_{22} \end{pmatrix} \succcurlyeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

- $n = 2$ and $m = 1$
- $C = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$, $A_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$
- $b_1 = 1$

Now optimize it:

$$\begin{aligned} \inf \quad & X_{12} \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & X_{11} + X_{22} = 1 \\ & \begin{pmatrix} X_{11} & X_{12} \\ X_{12} & X_{22} \end{pmatrix} \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \inf \quad X_{12} \\ \text{s.t. } & \quad X_{11} + X_{22} = 1 \\ & \quad X_{11} \geq 0, X_{22} \geq 0 \\ & \quad X_{12}^2 \leq X_{11}X_{22} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \inf \quad X_{12} \\ \text{s.t. } & \quad 0 \leq X_{11} \leq 1 \\ & \quad X_{12}^2 \leq X_{11}(1 - X_{11}) \end{aligned}$$

$$p^* = -\frac{1}{2} \quad \text{and} \quad X^* = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

LP is a special case of SDP

$$\begin{aligned} \min \quad & c^T x \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & a_i^T x = b_i \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, m \\ & x \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$



$$\begin{aligned} \min \quad & \text{Diag}(c) \bullet X \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & \text{Diag}(a_i) \bullet X = b_i \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, m \\ & X \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

SOCPr is a special case of SDP

$$\|x\| \leq t \iff \begin{pmatrix} t & x^T \\ x & tI \end{pmatrix} \succeq 0$$

Dual SDP problem (D):

$$\begin{aligned} d^* := \sup & \quad b^T y \\ \text{s.t.} & \quad C - \sum_{i=1}^m y_i A_i \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

or

$$\begin{aligned} d^* := \sup & \quad b^T y \\ \text{s.t.} & \quad \sum_{i=1}^m y_i A_i + S = C \\ & \quad S \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

What is the dual?

$$\begin{aligned} \inf \quad & X_{12} \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & X_{11} + X_{22} = 1 \\ & \begin{pmatrix} X_{11} & X_{12} \\ X_{12} & X_{22} \end{pmatrix} \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \sup \quad y_1 \\ \text{s.t. } & \begin{pmatrix} -y_1 & 1/2 \\ 1/2 & -y_1 \end{pmatrix} \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\cdot \quad d^* = -\frac{1}{2}$$

$$\cdot \quad y_1^* = -\frac{1}{2}, \quad S^* = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

Theorem (weak duality). If (X, y, S) is primal-dual feasible, then

$$C \bullet X - b^T y = X \bullet S \geq 0$$

Proof.

$$\begin{aligned} C \bullet X - b^T y &= (\sum_{i=1}^m y_i A_i + S) \bullet X - b^T y \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^m y_i A_i \bullet X + S \bullet X - b^T y \\ &= S \bullet X \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$

Corollary. If (X, y, S) is primal-dual feasible and $C \bullet X = b^T y$, then (X, y, S) is primal-dual optimal. Moreover, $X \bullet S = 0 \Leftrightarrow XS = 0$

Corollary. $p^* \geq d^*$

In our previous example:

$$X^* = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad S^* = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$X^* S^* = \frac{1}{4} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

Strong Duality? Does $p^* = d^*$?

Strong duality counterexample:

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &= \inf X_{33} \\ \text{s.t. } &X_{11} = 0 \\ &X_{12} + X_{21} + 2X_{33} = 2 \\ &X \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= \sup 2y_2 \\ \text{s.t. } &\begin{pmatrix} -y_1 & -y_2 & 0 \\ -y_2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 - 2y_2 \end{pmatrix} \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

A matrix $X \in \mathbb{S}^p$ is *positive definite* iff:

- $v^T X v > 0$ for all $v \in \mathbb{R}^p \setminus \{0\}$
- $\lambda_{\min}[X] > 0$
- $X = VV^T$ for some invertible $V \in \mathbb{R}^{p \times p}$
- every principal submatrix of X has determinant > 0

We write:

- $X \succ 0$ or "X is PD"
- $\mathbb{S}_{++}^p = \text{set of } p \times p \text{ PD matrices}$

In fact, $\mathbb{S}_{++}^p = \text{interior}(\mathbb{S}_+^p)$

Theorem (strong duality). Suppose (P) and (D) are both feasible.

- If \exists primal feasible X with $X \succ 0$, then $p^* = d^*$ and d^* is attained
- If \exists dual feasible (y, S) with $S \succ 0$, then $p^* = d^*$ and p^* is attained
- If both regularity conditions hold, then \exists primal-dual optimal solution (X^*, y^*, S^*) such that $p^* = C \bullet X^* = b^T y^* = d^*$ and $X^* S^* = 0$

Remark. Algorithmic papers and results often assume both (P) and (D) have interior. But...in any given application, make sure to double check!

Algorithms

Observation. Relying on rational or floating-point arithmetic, we cannot expect to optimize SDPs exactly

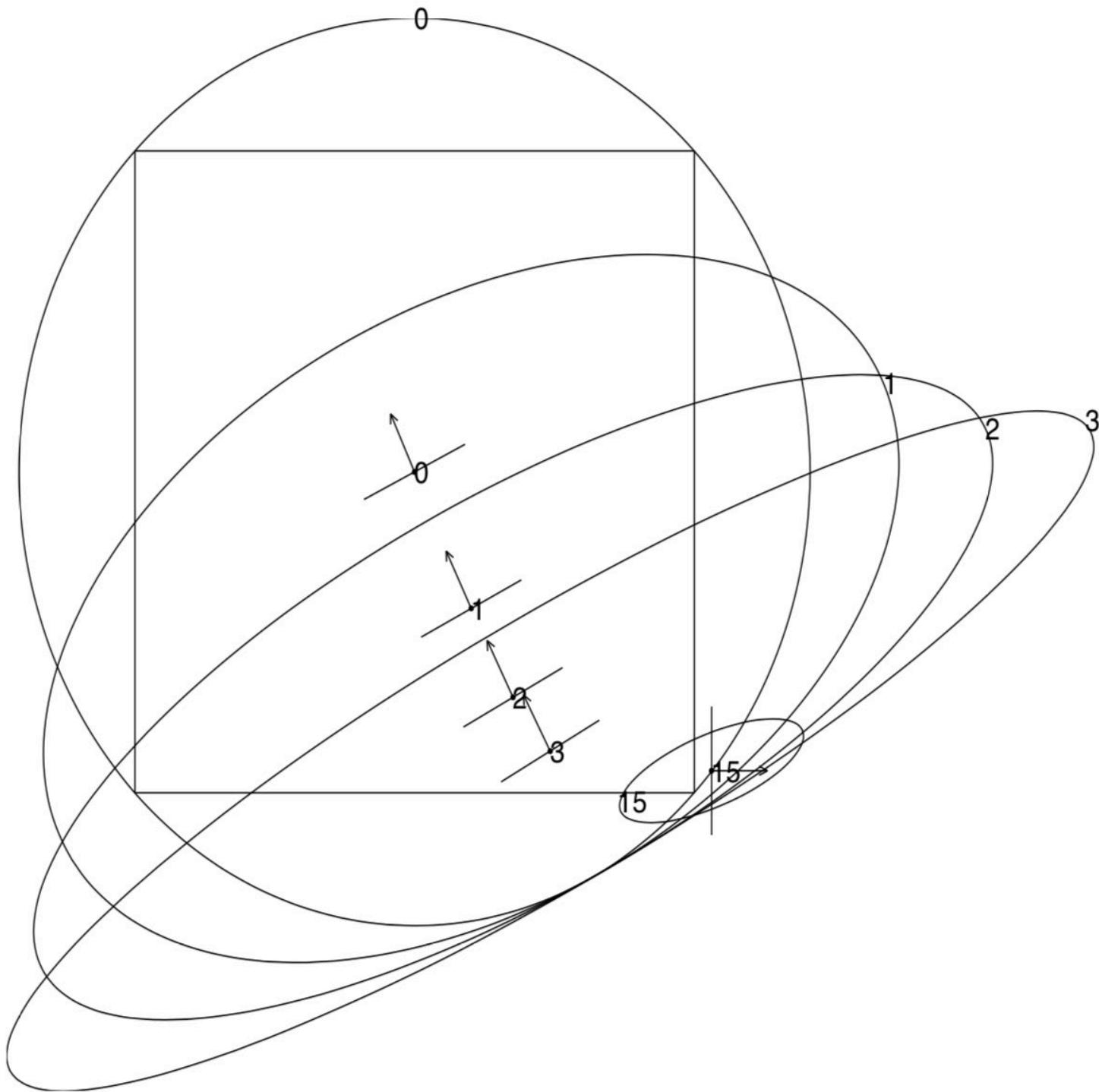
Irrational, despite rational data:

$$\begin{aligned} -\sqrt{5} &= \min \quad \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 2 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \bullet X \\ \text{s.t.} \quad \text{trace}(X) &= 1 \\ X &\succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

Hence, for a user-specified $\epsilon > 0$, a reasonable goal is to find an ϵ -optimal (dual) solution y^ϵ , i.e., one satisfying:

- $C - \sum_{i=1}^m y_i^\epsilon A_i + \epsilon I \succeq 0$
- $b^T y^\epsilon \geq d^* - \epsilon$

Ellipsoid Method



The setup:

- $\epsilon > 0$
- $v = \text{vector encoding } (n, m, C, A_1, \dots, A_m)$
- $\sigma = \text{length of } v$
- $\Sigma := \sigma + \|v\|_1$

$$\begin{aligned} d^* := \max \quad & b^T y \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & C - \sum_{i=1}^m y_i A_i \succeq 0 \\ & \|y\|_2 \leq \Sigma^\sigma \end{aligned}$$

Introduce relaxation (D_ϵ) , whose optimal value is within ϵ of d^* :

$$\begin{aligned} \max \quad & b^T y \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & C - \sum_{i=1}^m y_i A_i + \epsilon I \succeq 0 \\ & \|y\|_2 \leq \Sigma^\sigma \end{aligned}$$

Key parameter:

$$\theta := \frac{\epsilon}{(\sigma + \sqrt{m}\Sigma^\sigma)^\sigma + \epsilon} \in (0, 1)$$

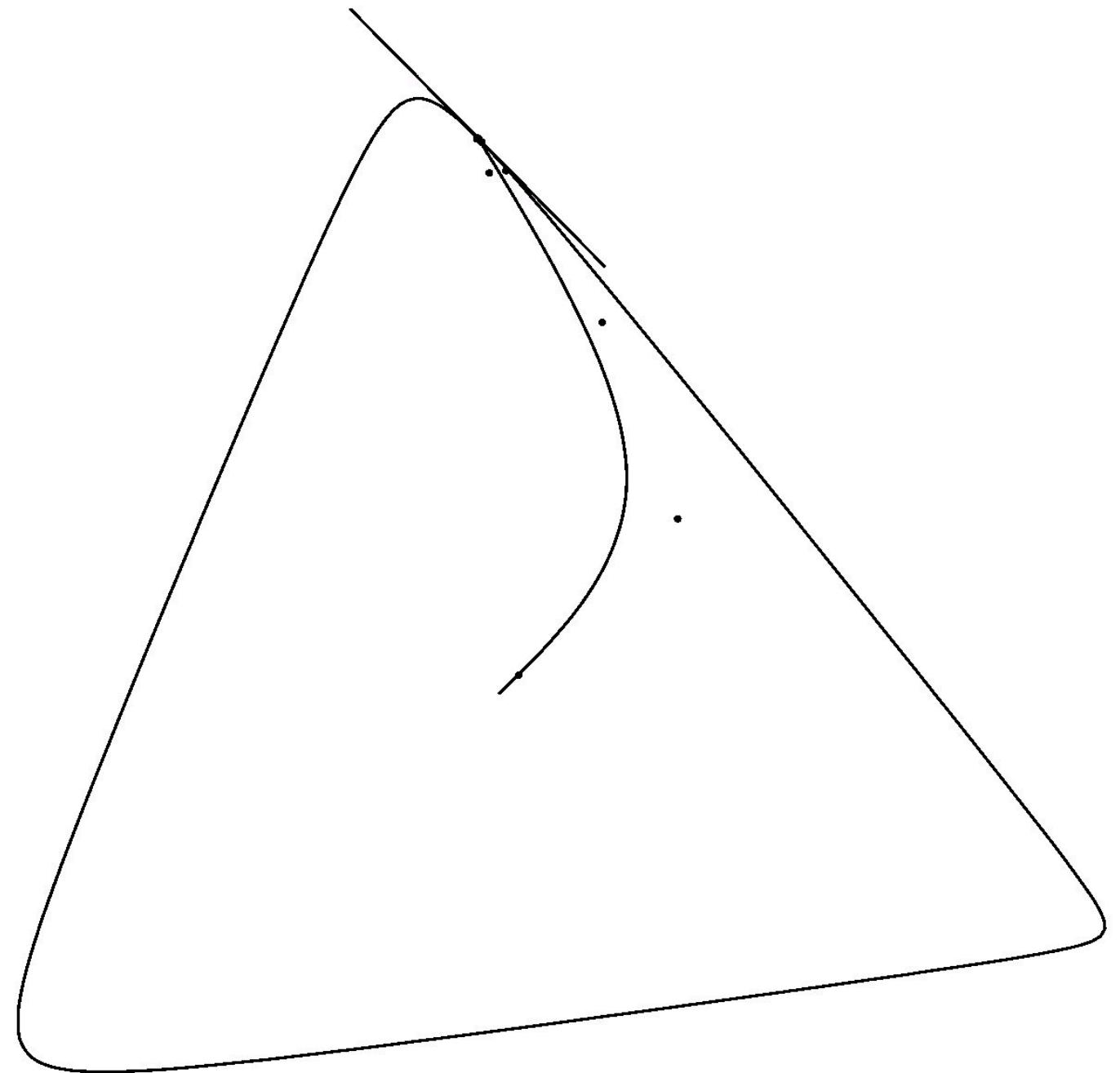
Note $\theta \rightarrow 0$ as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$

Lemma. If problem (D) is feasible, then feasible set of (D_ϵ) contains a Euclidean ball of radius $\theta \Sigma^\sigma$

Theorem. The ellipsoid method requires $O(m^2 \log(1/\theta))$ iterations to return an ϵ -optimal solution to (D) . In addition, each iteration requires $O(m^2 + mn^2 + n^3)$ floating point operations

Note: $\log(1/\theta) \approx \log(1/\epsilon)$, but θ takes into account σ and Σ

Interior-Point Methods



The setup:

- $\epsilon > 0$
- σ and Σ as before
- Both (P) and (D) interior feasible, which implies:
 - Strong duality holds
 - Central path exists
- Initial (X^0, y^0, S^0) interior primal-dual solution

Key parameter:

$$\rho := \frac{\epsilon}{\sigma + \Sigma + \epsilon^2}$$

Note $\rho \rightarrow 0$ as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$

Theorem. The primal-dual short-step path-following method requires $O(\sqrt{m} \log(1/\rho))$ iterations to return an ϵ -optimal primal-dual solution. In addition, each iteration requires $O(m^2 + mn^2 + n^3)$ floating point operations

Note: $\log(1/\rho) \approx \log(1/\epsilon)$, but
 ρ takes into account σ and Σ

Mosek is one of the leading software packages for SDP:

The interior-point optimizer [in Mosek] is an implementation of the so-called homogeneous and self-dual algorithm... A solution to the homogeneous model can be computed using a primal-dual interior-point algorithm.¹

¹ <https://docs.mosek.com/8.1/capi/solving-conic.html>

Other Methods

- Interior-point methods effectively deliver high accuracy for small- to medium-scale problems
- But they slow down for large instances
 - Definition of "large"? When the algorithm slows down 😊
 - Even if the instance is sparse, the linear algebra operations can be dense
- Many methods to address this, often by exploiting problem structure

Theorem (Pataki, Barvinok, Shapiro, Deza-Laurent, 1990's). For problem (P) , there exists an optimal solution X^* with $r^* := \text{rank}(X^*)$ satisfying $r^* \leq \lceil \sqrt{2m} \rceil$

Idea (B-Monteiro, 2003). Solve (P) as an NLP by replacing X with VV^T , where the number of columns p of V is at least $\lceil \sqrt{2m} \rceil$

Observation. Despite being "dumb," this idea works well for finding a global (!) optimal X^* in practice. In 2003, we had a limited theory to explain why

Theorem (Boumal-Voroninski-Bandeira, 2018). Under a regularity condition, for almost all cost matrices C , choosing $p > \lceil \sqrt{2m} \rceil$ guarantees that the first- and second-order KKT conditions in V are sufficient for global (!) optimality

"Classic" Applications



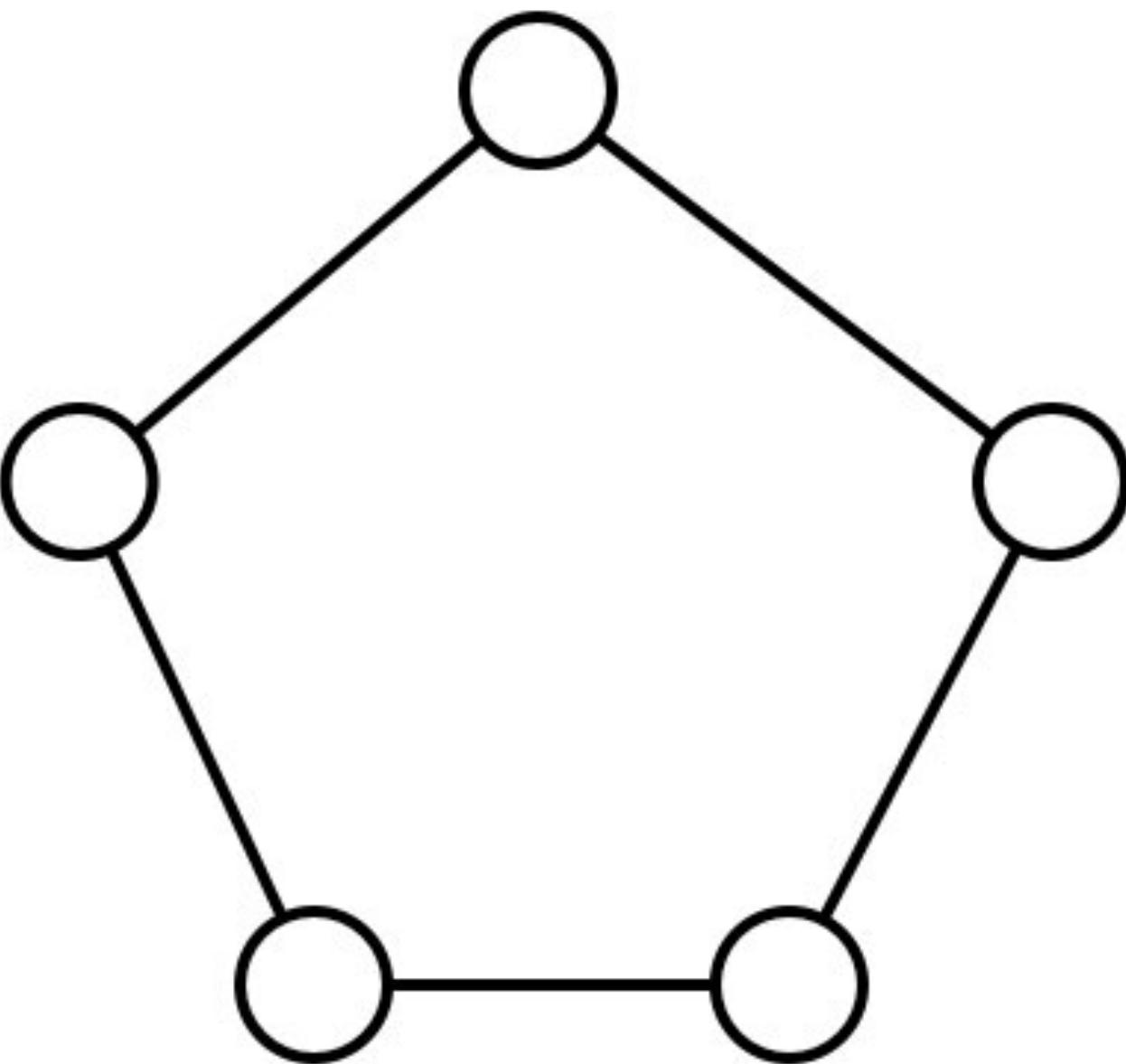
$$\begin{aligned} \min \quad & x^T C x + 2 c^T x \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & x^T A_i x + 2 a_i^T x \leq b_i \quad \forall i \end{aligned}$$

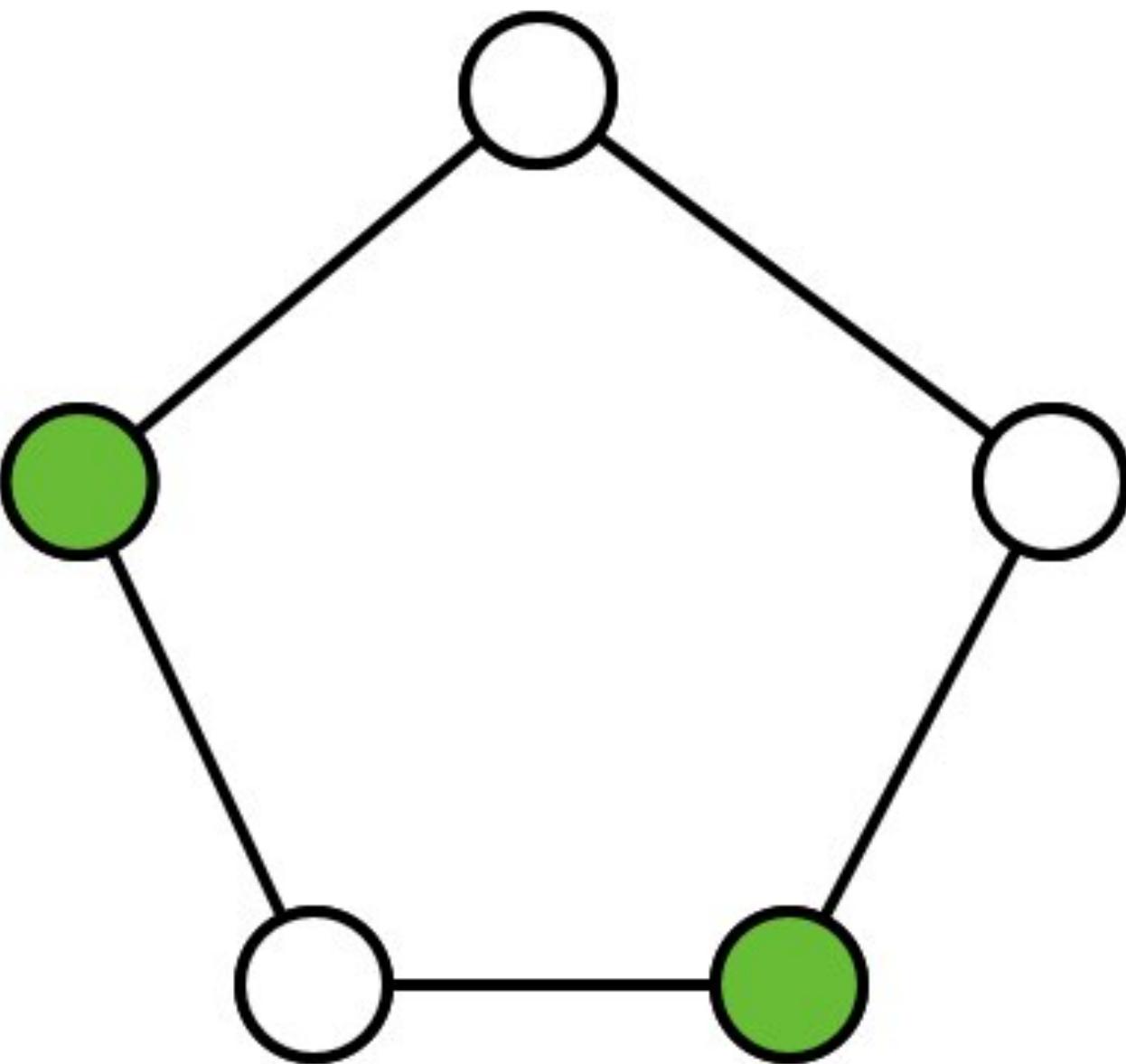


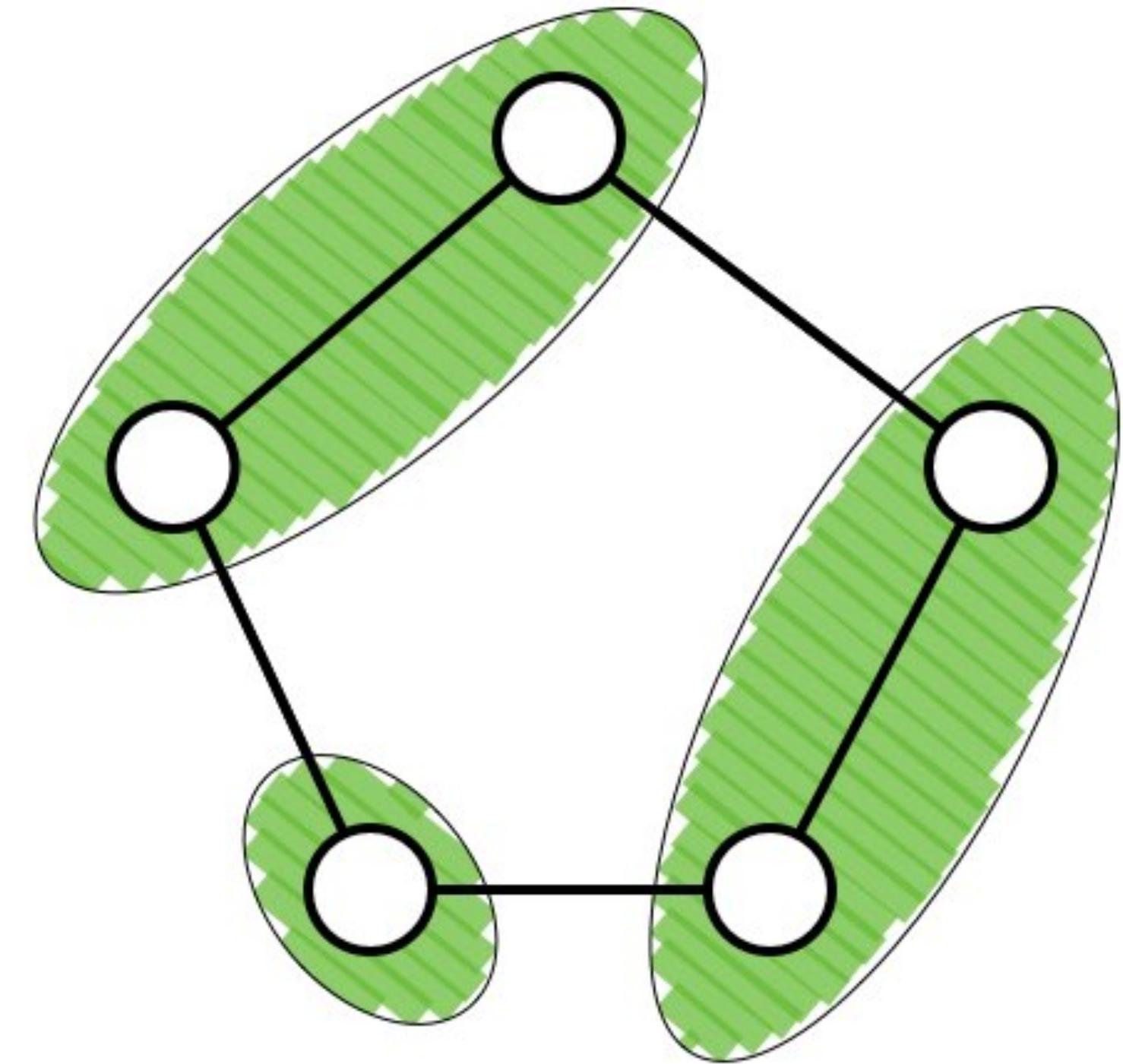
$$\begin{aligned} \min \quad & C \bullet X + 2 c^T x \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & A_i \bullet X + 2 a_i^T x \leq b_i \quad \forall i \\ X \succeq x x^T \iff & \begin{pmatrix} 1 & x^T \\ x & X \end{pmatrix} \succeq 0 \end{aligned}$$

Maximum Stable Set

- $G = (V, E)$ undirected graph
- $\alpha = \max$ size of stable set in G (NP-hard)
- $\bar{\chi} = \min$ size of clique cover of G (NP-hard)
- $\alpha \leq \bar{\chi}$







$$\begin{aligned}
\alpha := \max \quad & e^T x \\
\text{s.t.} \quad & x_i + x_j \leq 1 \quad \forall (i, j) \in E \\
& x_j \in \{0, 1\} \quad \forall i \in V
\end{aligned}$$



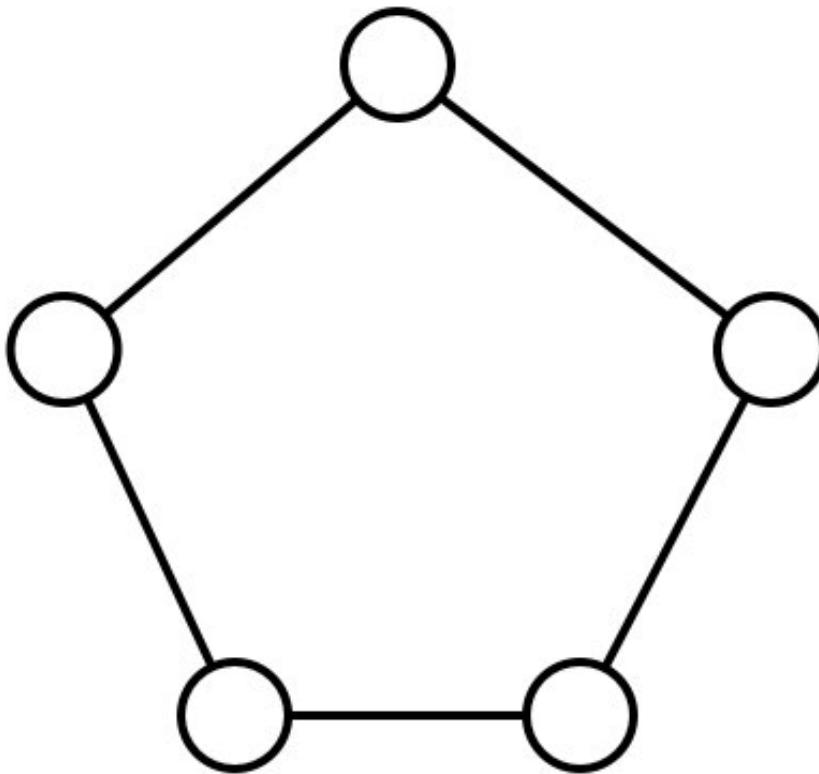
$$\begin{aligned}
\alpha = \max \quad & x^T x \\
\text{s.t.} \quad & x_i x_j = 0 \quad \forall (i, j) \in E \\
& x_j^2 = x_j \quad \forall i \in V
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\vartheta := \max \quad & \text{trace}(X) \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & X_{ij} = 0 \quad \forall (i, j) \in E \\ & x = \text{diag}(X) \\ & X \succeq xx^T\end{aligned}$$

Theorem (Grötschel-Lovász-Schrijver, 1981). $\alpha \leq \vartheta \leq \bar{\chi}$

Definition. G is *perfect* when $\alpha(G') = \bar{\chi}(G')$ for all induced subgraphs G'

Corollary. α and $\bar{\chi}$ are polynomial-time computable for perfect graphs



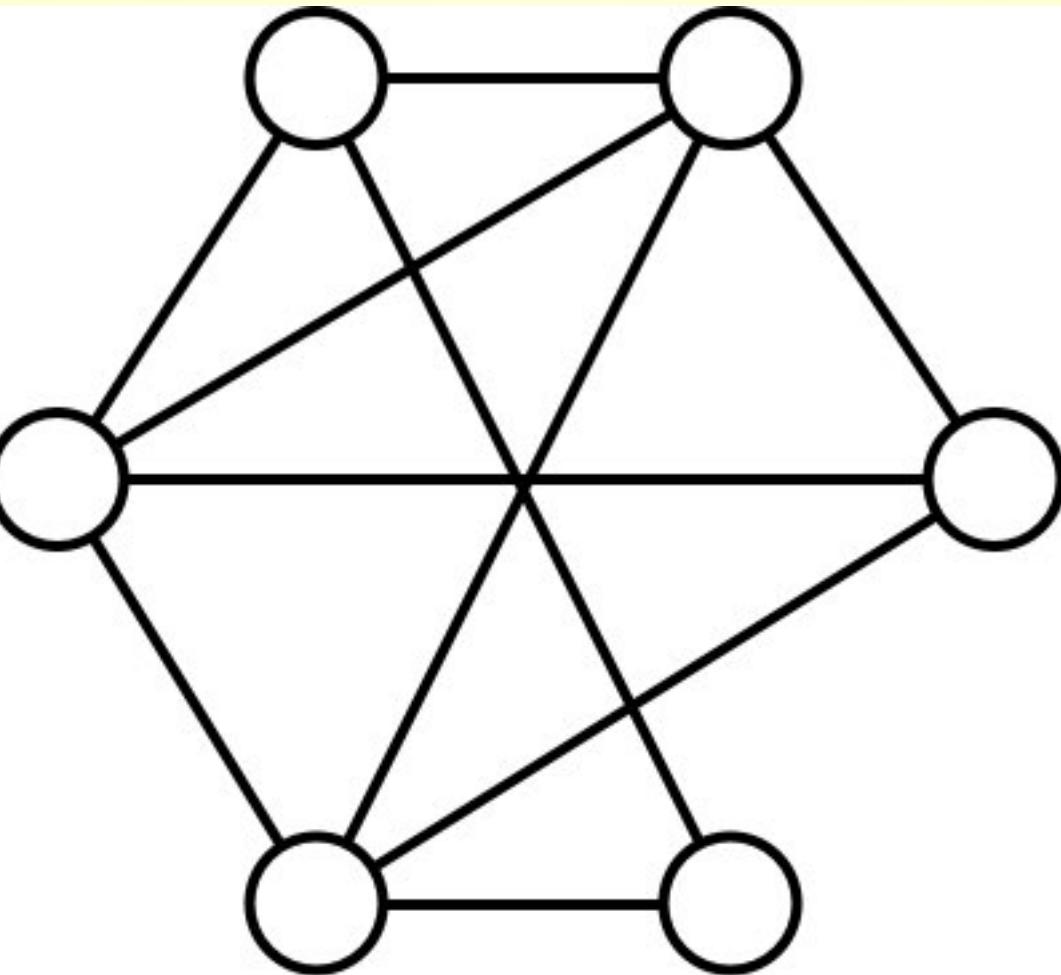
$$\alpha = 2$$

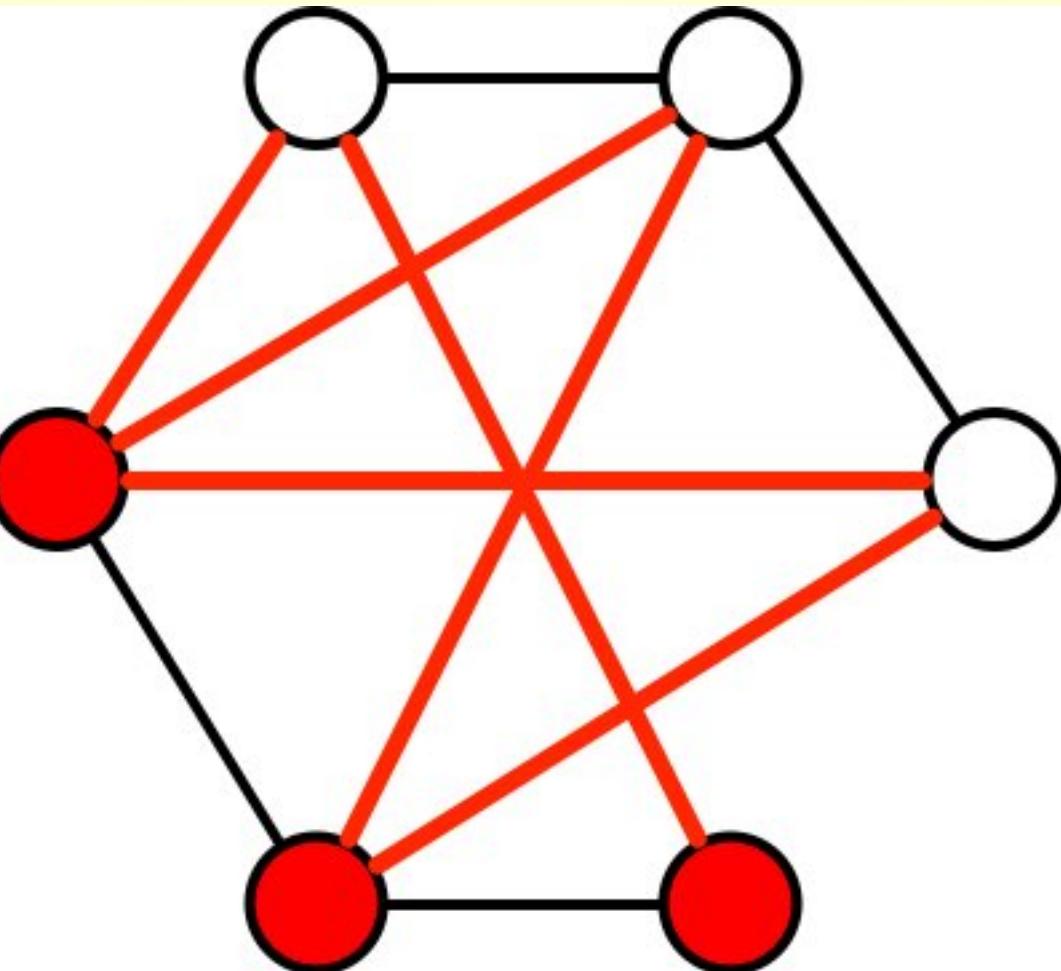
$$\vartheta = \sqrt{5}$$

$$\bar{\chi} = 3$$

MaxCut

- $G = (V, E)$ undirected graph
- $U \subseteq V$
- $\text{cut}(U) = \# \text{ of edges from } U \text{ to } V \setminus U$
- Which U maximizes $\text{cut}(U)$?
- This is NP-hard





$\text{cut} = 6$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{MaxCut} := \max \quad & \sum_{ij \in E} \frac{1}{2}(1 - x_i x_j) \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & x_j \in \{-1, 1\} \quad \forall i \in V\end{aligned}$$



$$\begin{aligned}\text{MaxCut} = \max \quad & \sum_{ij \in E} \frac{1}{2}(1 - x_i x_j) \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & x_j^2 = 1 \quad \forall i \in V\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\max \quad & \sum_{ij \in E} \frac{1}{2}(1 - X_{ij}) \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & \text{diag}(X) = e \\ & X \succeq xx^T\end{aligned}$$



$$\begin{aligned}\max \quad & \sum_{ij \in E} \frac{1}{2}(1 - X_{ij}) \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & \text{diag}(X) = e \\ & X \succeq 0\end{aligned}$$

YALMIP code (in Matlab)

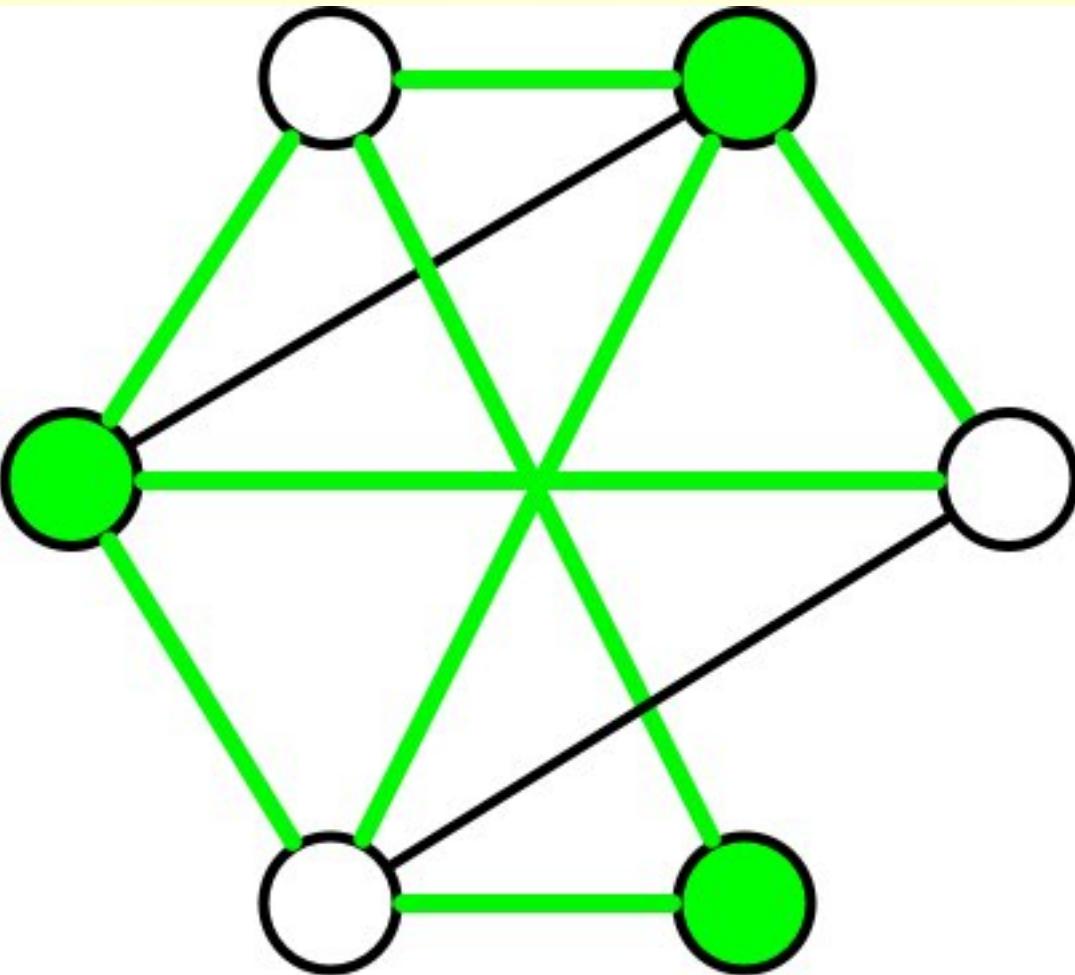
```
n = 6; m = 10;
E = [1, 2; 1, 4; 1, 5; 1, 6; 2, 4; 2, 5; 3, 4; 3, 6; 4, 5; 5, 6];

A = full(sparse(E(:, 1), E(:, 2), ones(m, 1), n, n));
A = A + A';

C = 0.25 * (diag(sum(A)) - A);
X = sdpvar(n);
con = [diag(X) == 1; X >= 0];
obj = C(:)' * X(:);
solvesdp(con, -obj);
```

relaxation opt val = 8

$$X^* = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$



$\text{cut} = 8$

Theorem (Goemans-Williams, 1995). The following (randomized) algorithm is an 0.87856-approximation algorithm for MaxCut:

1. Solve the SDP relaxation to obtain X^*
2. Compute a factorization $X^* = R^* (R^*)^T$
3. Randomly generate a vector $u \in \mathbb{R}^{|V|}$ uniform on the unit sphere
4. Define $U := \{i \in V : [(R^*)^T u]_i \geq 0\}$

Lift and Project

$$P := \{x \in \mathbb{R}^n : Ax \leq b\} \subseteq [0, 1]^n$$

$$P^{01} := \text{conv}(P \cap \{0, 1\}^n)$$

What we can determine about P^{01} ?

Homogenization of P :

$$H := \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} x_0 \\ x \end{pmatrix} \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1} : \begin{array}{l} x_0 \geq 0 \\ Ax \leq x_0 b \end{array} \right\}$$

Observation. $x \in P$ implies $\begin{pmatrix} x_j \\ x_j x \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 1 - x_j \\ x - x_j x \end{pmatrix} \in H$

Idea. Linearize $x_j x$ by introducing a new variable y

Lift

$$\widehat{\text{BCC}}(P, j) := \left\{ (x, y) \in \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}^n : \begin{array}{l} x_j = y_j \\ \binom{x_j}{y}, \binom{1-x_j}{x-y} \in H \end{array} \right\}$$

Project

$$\text{BCC}(P, j) := \text{proj}_x(\widehat{\text{BCC}}(P, j))$$

Proposition. $\text{BCC}(P, j)$ is a polytope and $P^{01} \subseteq \text{BCC}(P, j) \subseteq P$.

Proof.

1. Projection of a polytope is a polytope
2. As mentioned $x \in P$ implies $(x_j; y), (1 - x_j; x - y) \in H$ when $y = x_j x$. Also, $x_j = y_j$ is valid when $y = x_j x$ and x is binary
3. Summing $(x_j; y)$ and $(1 - x_j; x - y)$, we see $(1; x) \in H$, as desired

"Rinse and Repeat"

- $\text{BCC}^0(P) := \text{BCC}(P, 0) := P$
- $\text{BCC}^k(P) := \text{BCC}(\text{BCC}^{k-1}(P), k)$

Get $P^{01} \subseteq \text{BCC}^n(P) \subseteq \dots \subseteq \text{BCC}^1(P) \subseteq P$

Theorem (Balas-Ceria-Cornuejols, 1993). $\text{BCC}^n(P) = P^{01}$

Observation. In fact, the iterative BCC procedure depends on the order of variables in the liftings

Idea. Define $N_0(P) := \cap_{j=1}^n \text{BCC}(P, j)$ and apply iteratively

This idea works, but unfortunately, still need n steps in general.
Can it be strengthened further?

$$\widehat{N}_0(P) = \left\{ \left(x, y^{(1)}, \dots, y^{(n)} \right) : \begin{array}{l} x_j = y_j^{(j)} \quad \forall j \\ \binom{x_j}{y^{(j)}}, \binom{1-x_j}{x-y^{(j)}} \in H \quad \forall j \end{array} \right\}$$

$$X := \left(y^{(1)}, \dots, y^{(n)} \right)$$

$$\widehat{N_0}(P) = \left\{ (x,X) : \begin{array}{l} x = \text{diag}(X) \\ \left(\begin{smallmatrix} x_j \\ X_{\cdot j} \end{smallmatrix}\right), \left(\begin{smallmatrix} 1-x_j \\ x-X_{\cdot j} \end{smallmatrix}\right) \in H \; \forall j \end{array} \right\}$$

Observation (Lovász-Schrijver, 1991). With respect to $\widehat{N}_0(P)$, the constraints $X = X^T$ and $X \succeq xx^T$ are valid for P^{01}

$$N(P) := \text{proj}_x \left(\widehat{N}_0(P) \cap \{X = X^T\} \right)$$

$$N_+(P) := \text{proj}_x \left(\widehat{N}_0(P) \cap \{X = X^T, X \succeq xx^T\} \right)$$

Observation. $N_+(P)$ can also be gotten by constructing the SDP relaxation of the following (redundant) description of $P \cap \{0, 1\}^n$:

$$x_j(b - Ax) \geq 0 \quad \forall j$$

$$(1 - x_j)(b - Ax) \geq 0 \quad \forall j$$

$$x_j^2 = x_j \quad \forall j$$

$$N^1(P) := N(P), \quad N^k(P) := N(N^{k-1}(P))$$

$$N_+^1(P) := N_+(P), \quad N_+^k(P) := N_+(N_+^{k-1}(P))$$

Corollary. As $k \rightarrow n$, $N^k(P)$ and $N_+^k(P)$ converge monotonically to P^{01} . Moreover, $N_+^k(P)$ converges at least as fast as $N^k(P)$

Theorem. For fixed k , can optimize over $N^k(P)$ and $N_+^k(P)$ in polynomial-time

Theorem (Lovász-Schrijver, 1991). For a given graph G , let P be the stable-set LP relaxation. Then $N_+(P)$ implies the

- all inequalities implied by the SDP relaxation defining ϑ
- odd-cycle, odd-anti-hole, odd-wheel, and clique inequalities

For any $\epsilon \in (0, 1)$, define

$$P := \{x \in [0, 1]^n : x_1 + \cdots + x_n \leq n - \epsilon\}$$

Theorem (see Tuncel, 2010). $P^{01} \subsetneq N_+^{n-1}(P)$

Until Next Time...