TREE-LIKE GRAPHINGS

ZHAOSHEN ZHAI

Abstract. We present a streamlined exposition of a construction presented in [CPTT23], where it is proven that every locally-finite Borel graph with each component a quasi-tree induces a canonical treeable equivalence relation. Write some more details...

1. Introduction

The purpose of this note is to provide a streamlined proof of a particular case of a construction presented in [CPTT23], in order to better understand the general formalism developed therein. We attempt to make this note self-contained, but nevertheless urge the reader to refer to the original paper for more detailed discussion and generalizations of the results we have selected to include here.

1.1. **Treeings of equivalence relations.** A *countable Borel equivalence relation (CBER)* on a standard Borel space X is a Borel equivalence relation $E \subseteq X^2$ with each class countable. We are interested in special types of *graphings* on a CBER $E \subseteq X^2$, i.e. a Borel graph $G \subseteq X^2$ whose connectedness relation is precisely E. For instance, a graphing of E such that each component is a tree is called a *treeing* of E, and the CBERs that admit a treeing are said to be *treeable*. The main results of [CPTT23] is to provide new sufficient criteria for treeability of CBERs, and in particular, they prove the following

Theorem A ([CPTT23, Theorem 1.1])**.** *If a CBER admits a locally-finite graphing whose components are quasi-trees, then it is treeable.*

Recall that metric spaces X and Y are *quasi-isometric* if they are isometric up to a bounded multiplicative and additive error, and X is a *quasi-tree* if it is quasi-isometric to a simplicial tree; see [Gro93] and [DK18].

1.2. **Outline of the proof.** Roughly speaking, the existence of a quasi-isometry $G|C \to T_C$ to a simplicial tree T_C for each component $C \subseteq X$ induces a collection $\mathcal{H}(C)$ of 'cuts' (subsets $H \subseteq C$ with finite boundary such that both H and $C \setminus H$ are connected), which are 'tree-like' in the sense that

1. $\mathcal{H}(C)$ is *finitely-separating*: each pair $x, y \in C$ are separated by finitely-many $H \in \mathcal{H}(C)$, and
2. $\mathcal{H}(C)$ is *dense towards ends*: each end in $G|C$ has a neighborhood basis in $\mathcal{H}(C)$.

These cuts have the structure of a pocset with non-trivial points isolated, which in turn provide exactly the data to construct a 'median graph' whose vertices are 'ultrafilters'[1] thereof. Condition (2) then ensures that this graph has finite 'hyperplanes', which allows us to apply a Borel 'cycle-cutting' algorithm and obtain a canonical spanning tree thereof. Each step above can be done in a uniform way to each component $C \subseteq G$, giving us the desired treeing of the CBER.

Quasi-tree $\xrightarrow{2.1}$ Dense family of cuts $\xrightarrow{2.2}$ Pocset w/ non-triv. pts. isolated $\xrightarrow{2.3}$ Median graph w/ finite hyperplanes $\xrightarrow{2.4}$ Canonical spanning tree

Remark. We follow [CPTT23, Convention 2.7], where for a family $\mathcal{H} \subseteq 2^X$ of subsets of a fixed set X, we write $\mathcal{H}^* := \mathcal{H} \setminus \{\varnothing, X\}$ for the *non-trivial* elements of $\mathcal{H}$.

2. Detailed Constructions

2.1. **Graphs with dense families of cuts.** Let (X, G) be a locally-finite graph.

Definition 2.1. The *end compactification* of (X, G) is the Stone space $\widehat{X}$ of the Boolean algebra $\mathcal{H}_{\partial<\infty}(X) \subseteq 2^X$ of all sets with finite boundary. The *ends* of (X, G) are the non-principal ultrafilters in $\widehat{X}$.

Date: July 25, 2024.

[1] As in [CPTT23], we call them *orientations* instead; see Definition 2.9.

Thus, a clopen set in $\widehat{X}$ is the set $\widehat{A}$ of all ultrafilters $p \in \widehat{X}$ containing $A \in \mathcal{H}_{\partial<\infty}(X)$. We identify each $x \in X$ with its corresponding principal ultrafilter $p_x \in \widehat{X}$.

Definition 2.2. A subpocset $\mathcal{H} \subseteq \mathcal{H}_{\partial<\infty}(X)$ is *dense towards ends* of (X, G) if $\mathcal{H}$ contains a neighborhood basis for every end.

In other words, $\mathcal{H}$ is dense towards ends if for every $p \in \widehat{X} \setminus X$ and every (clopen) neighborhood $\widehat{A} \ni p$, where $A \in \mathcal{H}_{\partial<\infty}(X)$, there is some $H \in \mathcal{H}$ with $p \in \widehat{H} \subseteq \widehat{A}$.

Lemma 2.3.

Proposition 2.4. *The class of connected locally-finite graphs in which $\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{diam}(\partial)\leq R}$ is dense towards ends for some $R < \infty$ is invariant under coarse equivalence.*

Proof. Let (X, G), (Y, T) be connected locally-finite graphs, $f : X \to Y$ be a coarse equivalence with quasi-inverse $g : Y \to X$, and suppose $\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{diam}(\partial)\leq S}(Y)$ is dense towards ends for some $S < \infty$. By Lemma 2.3, pick some $R < \infty$ so that for any $H \in \mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{diam}(\partial)\leq S}(Y)$, we have $f^{-1}(H) \in \mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{diam}(\partial)\leq R}(X)$.

Fix an end $U \in \widehat{X} \setminus X$ with $U \in \widehat{A}$ for some $A \in \mathcal{H}_{\partial<\infty}(X)$. We need to find some $B \in \mathcal{H}_{\partial<\infty}(Y)$ such that $\widehat{f}(U) \in \widehat{B}$ and $f^{-1}(B) \subseteq A$, for then $\widehat{f}(U) \in \widehat{H}$ for some $B \supseteq H \in \mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{diam}(\partial)\leq S}(Y)$, and hence we have

$$U \in \widehat{f^{-1}(H)} \subseteq \widehat{f^{-1}(B)} \subseteq \widehat{A}$$

with $f^{-1}(H) \in \mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{diam}(\partial)\leq R}(X)$. For convenience, let $D < \infty$ be the uniform distance $d(1_X, g \circ f)$.

To this end, note that $\widehat{f}(U) \in \widehat{B}$ iff $U \in \widehat{f^{-1}(B)}$. Since $U \in \widehat{A}$, the latter can occur if $|A \triangle f^{-1}(B)| < \infty$, and so we need to find such a $B \in \mathcal{H}_{\partial<\infty}(Y)$ with the additional property that $f^{-1}(B) \subseteq A$.

> *Attempt 1.* Set $B := g^{-1}(A) \in \mathcal{H}_{\partial<\infty}(Y)$. Then $f^{-1}(B) \subseteq \mathrm{Ball}_D(A)$ since if $(g \circ f)(x) \in A$, then
> $$d(x, A) \leq d(x, (g \circ f)(x)) \leq d(1_X, g \circ f) = D.$$
> By local-finiteness of G, we see that $A \triangle f^{-1}(B) = A \setminus f^{-1}(B)$ is finite, as desired.

However, it is *not* the case that $f^{-1}(B) \subseteq A$. To remedy this, we 'shrink' A by D to A' so that $\mathrm{Ball}_D(A') \subseteq A$, and take $B := g^{-1}(A')$ instead. Indeed, $A' := \neg\,\mathrm{Ball}_D(\neg A) \subseteq A$ works, since $f^{-1}(B) \subseteq \mathrm{Ball}_D(A')$ as before, so $A' \triangle f^{-1}(B) = A' \setminus f^{-1}(B)$ is finite. Also, $A \triangle A'$ is finite since $x \in A \triangle A'$ iff $x \in A$ and $d(x, \neg A) \leq D$, so $A \triangle f^{-1}(B)$ is finite too. It remains to show that $\mathrm{Ball}_D(A') \subseteq A$, for then $f^{-1}(B) \subseteq A$ as desired.

Indeed, if $y \in \mathrm{Ball}_D(A')$, then by the (reverse) triangle-inequality we have $d(y, \neg A) \geq d(x, \neg A) - d(x, y)$ for all $x \in A'$. But $d(x, \neg A) > D$, strictly, so $d(y, \neg A) > D - D = 0$, and hence $y \in A$. ■

Corollary 2.5. *If (X, G) is a locally-finite quasi-tree, then $\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{diam}(\partial)\leq R}$ is dense towards ends of G for some $R < \infty$.*

Proof. Observe that $\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{diam}(\partial)\leq 2}(T)$ is dense towards ends for any tree T, and invoke Proposition 2.4. ■

2.2. **Pocsets of cuts.** The family $\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{diam}\,\partial\leq R}(X)$ of cuts have the structure of a 'profinite pocset', which we first study abstractly. We then deduce some properties of the pocset induced by a *dense* family of cuts.

2.2.1. *Abstract profinite pocsets.*

Definition 2.6. A *pocset* $(\mathcal{H}, \leq, \neg, 0)$ is a poset $(\mathcal{H}, \leq)$ equipped with an order-reversing involution $\neg : \mathcal{H} \to \mathcal{H}$ and a least element $0 \neq \neg 0$ such that 0 is the only lower-bound of $H, \neg H$ for every $H \in \mathcal{H}$.

A *profinite pocset* is a pocset $\mathcal{H}$ equipped with a compact topology making $\neg$ continuous and is *totally order-disconnected*, in the sense that if $H \not\leq K$, then there is a clopen upward-closed $U \subseteq \mathcal{H}$ with $H \in U \not\ni K$.

Remark 2.7. Such a topology is automatically Hausdorff and zero-dimensional.

We are primarily interested in subpocsets of $(2^X, \subseteq, \neg, \varnothing)$, which is profinite if equipped with the product topology of the discrete space 2. Indeed, 2^X admits a base of *cylinder sets* – which are finite intersections of sets of the form $\pi_x^{-1}(i)$ where $x \in X$, $i \in \{0, 1\}$, and $\pi_x : 2^X \to 2$ is the projection – making $\neg$ continuous since cylinders are clopen. Show that it is totally order-disconnected.

The following proposition gives a sufficient criteria for subpocsets of 2^X to be profinite. We also show in this case that every non-trivial element $H \in \mathcal{H}^*$ is isolated, which will important in Section 2.3.

Proposition 2.8. *Let X be a set and $\mathcal{H} \subseteq 2^X$ be a subpocset. If $\mathcal{H}$ is finitely-separating, then $\mathcal{H} \subseteq 2^X$ is closed and every non-trivial element is isolated.*

Proof. It suffices to show that the limit points of $\mathcal{H}$ are trivial, so let $A \in 2^X \setminus \{\varnothing, X\}$. Fix $x \in A \not\ni y$. Since $\mathcal{H}$ is finitely-separating, there are finitely-many $H \in \mathcal{H}$ with $x \in H \not\ni y$, and for each such $H \in \mathcal{H} \setminus \{A\}$, we have either some $x_H \in A \setminus H$ or $y_H \in H \setminus A$. Let $U \subseteq 2^X$ be the family of all subsets $B \subseteq X$ containing x and each x_H but not y or any y_H.

This is the desired neighborhood isolating $A \in U$. Indeed, it is (cl)open since it is the *finite* intersection of cylinders prescribed by the x_H's and y_H's, and it is disjoint from $\mathcal{H} \setminus \{A\}$ by construction. ∎

2.2.2. *Finiteness conditions on the pocset of a dense family of cuts.*

2.3. **The dual median graph of a pocset.** Let $\mathcal{H} \subseteq 2^X$ be a finitely-separating subpocset, whose elements we call *half-spaces*. By Proposition 2.8, $\mathcal{H}$ is profinite and every non-trivial element thereof is isolated.

2.3.1. *Median graph of orientations.*

Definition 2.9. An *orientation* on $\mathcal{H}$ is an upward-closed subset $U \subseteq \mathcal{H}$ containing exactly one of $H, \neg H$ for each $H \in \mathcal{H}$. We let $\mathcal{U}(\mathcal{H})$ denote the set of all orientations on $\mathcal{H}$ and let $\mathcal{U}^\circ(\mathcal{H})$ denote the clopen ones.

The *clopen* orientations are exactly those which are *finitely-based*, in the sense that there is a $\subseteq$-minimal finite subset $U_0 \subseteq U$ such that $U = \uparrow U_0$, where

$$\uparrow U_0 \coloneqq \bigcup_{H \in U_0} \uparrow H \coloneqq \bigcup_{H \in U_0} \{K \in \mathcal{H} : K \supseteq H\}.$$

Indeed, if U is clopen, then there is a finite subset $A \subseteq X$ such that for all $H \in \mathcal{H}$, we have $H \in U$ iff there is some $K \in U$ with $H \cap A = K \cap A$.

Example 2.10. Every $x \in X$ induces its *principal orientation* $\widehat{x} \coloneqq \{H \in \mathcal{H} : x \in H\} = \mathcal{H} \cap \pi_x^{-1}(1)$, which is clearly clopen in $\mathcal{H}$, and gives us a canonical map $\mathfrak{p} : X \to \mathcal{U}^\circ(\mathcal{H})$. Note, however, that $\mathfrak{p}$ is *not necessarily* injective; we call a fiber $[x]_{\mathcal{H}} \coloneqq \mathfrak{p}^{-1}(\widehat{x}) = \{y \in X : \widehat{x} = \widehat{y}\}$ an $\mathcal{H}$*-block*.

Remark 2.11. Intuitively, an orientation is a 'maximally consistent' choice of half-spaces. To formalize this, let $\sim$ be the equivalence relation on $\mathcal{H}$ given by $H \sim \neg H$, and let $\partial : \mathcal{H} \to \mathcal{H}/\sim$ be the quotient map. Orientations $U \subseteq \mathcal{H}$ then correspond precisely to sections $\varphi : \mathcal{H}/\sim \to \mathcal{H}$ of ∂ such that $\varphi(\partial H) \not\subseteq \neg\varphi(\partial K)$ for every $H, K \in \mathcal{H}$; the latter condition rules out 'orientations' of the form $\leftarrow\!\mid\ \mid\!\rightarrow$.

The goal of this section is to canonically construct a graph whose vertices are clopen orientations on $\mathcal{H}$.

Theorem 2.12. *Let $\mathcal{H} \subseteq 2^X$ be a finitely-separating subpocset. Then ...*

2.3.2. *Finiteness conditions on $\mathcal{U}^\circ(\mathcal{H})$.*

2.4. **Spanning trees of median graphs with finite hyperplanes.**

A. Tree of orientations on a nested pocset of sets

Let $\mathcal{H} \subseteq 2^X$ be a finitely-separating subpocset (see Definition 2.2.1), so every non-trivial element is isolated by Proposition 2.8. As shown in Theorem 2.12, the clopen orientations $\mathcal{U}^\circ(\mathcal{H})$ form the vertices of a median graph, whose edges are given by 'minimal base-flipping'.

We devote this appendix to show that if $\mathcal{H}$ is *nested*, then $\mathcal{U}^\circ(\mathcal{H})$ is in fact a tree, and so we may bypass the Borel cycle-cutting algorithm in Section 2.4 and obtain a treeing directly.

References

[CPTT23] Ruiyuan Chen, Antoine Poulin, Ran Tao, and Anush Tserunyan, *Tree-like graphings, wallings, and median graphings of equivalence relations* (2023), available at https://arxiv.org/abs/2308.13010.

[Gro93] Mikhail Gromov, *Asymptotic invariants of infinite groups*, Geometric Group Theory, vol. 2 (Sussex, 1991), London Mathematical Society Lecture Note Series, vol. 182, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

[DK18] Cornelia Druţu and Michael Kapovich, *Geometric Group Theory*, with appendix by Bogdan Nica, Vol. 63, American Mathematical Society Colloquium Publications, 2018.