An Introduction to Algebraic Graph Theory

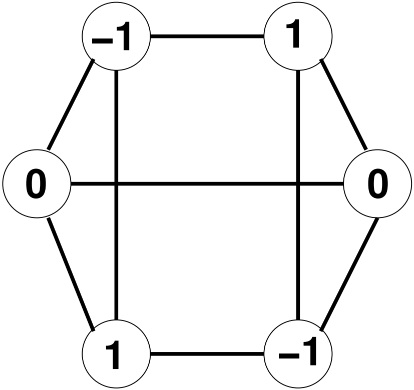
Rob Beezer
beezer@ups.edu

Department of Mathematics and Computer Science
University of Puget Sound

Mathematics Department Colloquium
University of Michigan, Dearborn
March 20, 2018

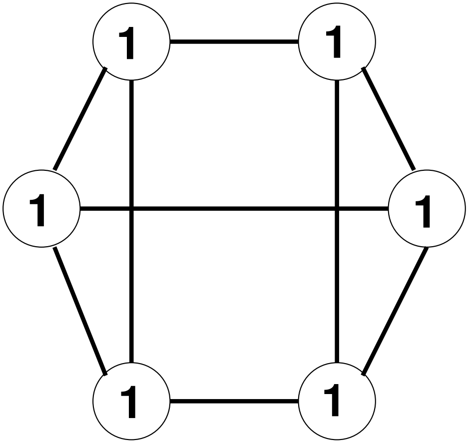
Labeling Puzzles

- Assign a single real number value to each circle.
- For each circle, sum the values of adjacent circles.
- Goal:
  Sum at each circle should be a common multiple of the value at the circle.



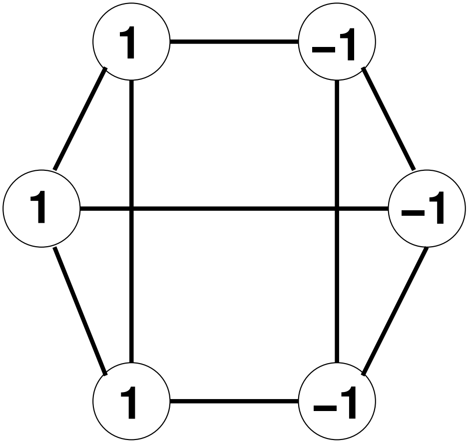
Common multiple: -2

Example Solutions



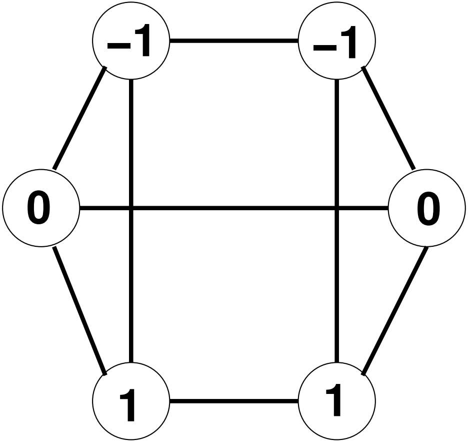
Common multiple: 3

Example Solutions



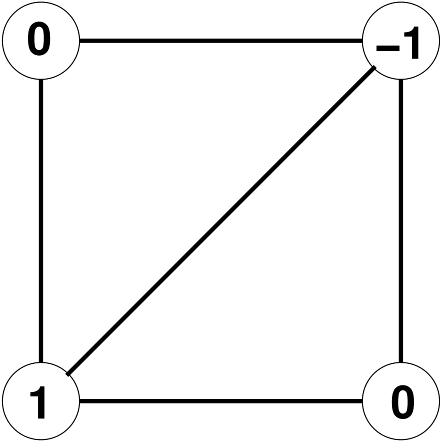
Common multiple: 1

Example Solutions



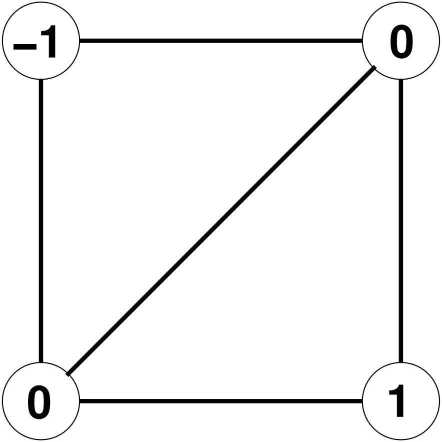
Common multiple: 0

Example Solutions



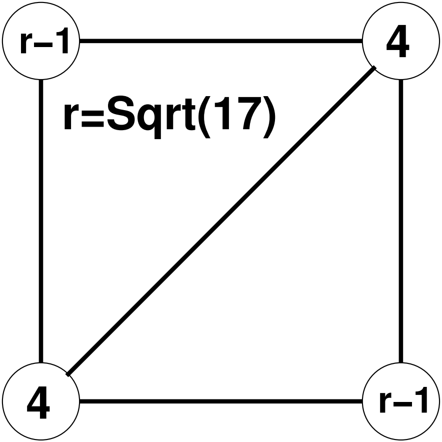
Common multiple: -1

Example Solutions



Common multiple: 0

Example Solutions

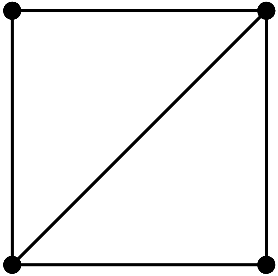


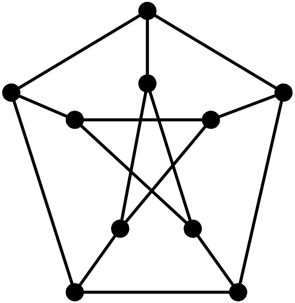
Common multiple: $\frac{1}{2}(r+1) = \frac{1}{2}\left(\sqrt{17}+1\right)$

Graphs

A graph is a collection of vertices (nodes, dots) where some pairs are joined by edges (arcs, lines).

The geometry of the vertex placement, or the contours of the edges are irrelevant. The relationships between vertices *are* important.





Adjacency Matrix

Given a graph, build a matrix of zeros and ones as follows:

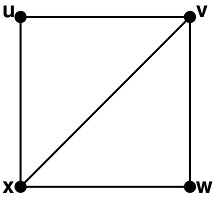
Label rows and columns with vertices, in the same order.

Put a 1 in an entry if the corresponding vertices are connected by an edge.

Otherwise put a 0 in the entry.

Adjacency Matrix

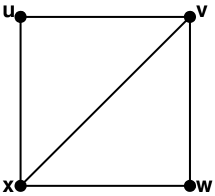
Given a graph, build a matrix of zeros and ones as follows:
Label rows and columns with vertices, in the same order.
Put a 1 in an entry if the corresponding vertices are connected by an edge.
Otherwise put a 0 in the entry.



	u	v	w	x
u	0	1	0	1
v	1	0	1	1
w	0	1	0	1
x	1	1	1	0

Adjacency Matrix

Given a graph, build a matrix of zeros and ones as follows:
Label rows and columns with vertices, in the same order.
Put a 1 in an entry if the corresponding vertices are connected by an edge.
Otherwise put a 0 in the entry.



	u	v	w	x
u	0	1	0	1
v	1	0	1	1
w	0	1	0	1
x	1	1	1	0

- Always a symmetric matrix with zero diagonal.
- Useful for computer representations.
- Entrée to linear algebra, especially eigenvalues and eigenvectors.
- Algebraic Graph Theory also includes symmetry groups of graphs.

Eigenvalues of Graphs

λ is an eigenvalue of a graph
$\Leftrightarrow$ λ is an eigenvalue of the adjacency matrix
$\Leftrightarrow$ $A\vec{x} = \lambda\vec{x}$ for some vector $\vec{x}$

Eigenvalues of Graphs

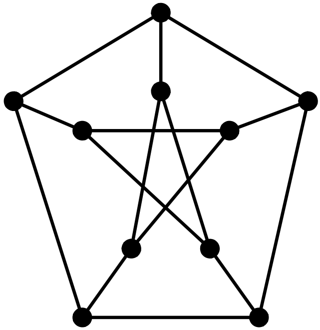
λ is an eigenvalue of a graph
$\Leftrightarrow$ λ is an eigenvalue of the adjacency matrix
$\Leftrightarrow$ $A\vec{x} = \lambda\vec{x}$ for some vector $\vec{x}$

Adjacency matrix is real, symmetric $\Rightarrow$
real eigenvalues, algebraic and geometric multiplicities are equal
minimal polynomial is product of linear factors for distinct eigenvalues

Eigenvalues of Graphs

λ is an eigenvalue of a graph
$\Leftrightarrow \lambda$ is an eigenvalue of the adjacency matrix
$\Leftrightarrow A\vec{x} = \lambda\vec{x}$ for some vector $\vec{x}$

Adjacency matrix is real, symmetric $\Rightarrow$
real eigenvalues, algebraic and geometric multiplicities are equal
minimal polynomial is product of linear factors for distinct eigenvalues

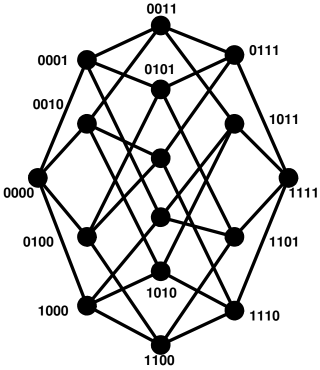


Eigenvalues:

$\lambda = 3$	$m = 1$
$\lambda = 1$	$m = 5$
$\lambda = -2$	$m = 4$

4-Dimensional Cube

- Vertices: Length 4 binary strings
- Join strings with one bit difference
- Generalizes 3-D cube



Eigenvalues:

$\lambda = 4$	$\lambda = 2$	$\lambda = 0$	$\lambda = -2$	$\lambda = -4$
$m = 1$	$m = 4$	$m = 6$	$m = 4$	$m = 1$

Regular Graphs

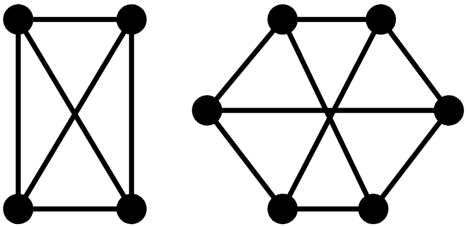
A graph is regular if every vertex has the same number of edges incident. The degree is the common number of incident edges.

Theorem

Suppose G is a regular graph of degree r. Then

- *r is an eigenvalue of G*
- *The multiplicity of r is the number of connected components of G*

Regular of degree 3 with 2 components implies that $\lambda = 3$ will be an eigenvalue of multiplicity 2.



Proof.

- Let $\vec{u}$ be the vector where every entry is 1. Then

$$A\vec{u} = A\begin{bmatrix}1\\1\\\vdots\\1\end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix}r\\r\\\vdots\\r\end{bmatrix} = r\vec{u}$$

- For each component of the graph, form a vector with 1's in entries corresponding to the vertices of the component, and zeros elsewhere.

  These eigenvectors form a basis for the eigenspace of r.
  (Their sum is the vector $\vec{u}$ above.)

$\square$

Labeling Puzzles Explained

The product of a graph's adjacency matrix with a column vector, $A\vec{u}$, forms sums of entries of $\vec{u}$ for all adjacent vertices.

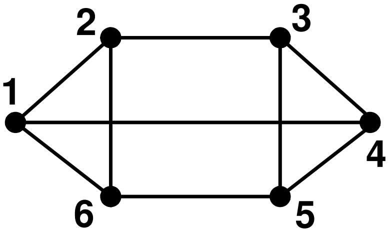
If $\vec{u}$ is an eigenvector, then these sums should equal a common multiple of the numbers assigned to each vertex. This multiple is the eigenvalue.

So the puzzles earlier were simply asking for:

- eigenvectors (assignments of numbers to vertices), and
- eigenvalues (common multiples)

of the adjacency matrix of the graph.

Eigenvalues and Eigenvectors of the Prism

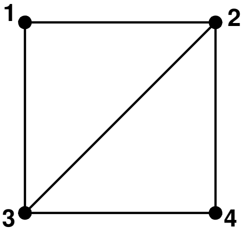


$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

$\lambda = 3$ $\qquad$ $\lambda = 1$ $\qquad$ $\lambda = 0$ $\qquad$ $\lambda = -2$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ -1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ -1 \\ -1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ -1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

Eigenvalues and Eigenvectors



$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\lambda = -1 \qquad \lambda = 0 \qquad \lambda = \frac{1}{2}\left(\sqrt{17}+1\right) \qquad \lambda = \frac{1}{2}\left(-\sqrt{17}+1\right)$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ -1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \begin{bmatrix} \sqrt{17}-1 \\ 4 \\ \sqrt{17}-1 \\ 4 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \begin{bmatrix} \sqrt{17}+1 \\ -4 \\ \sqrt{17}+1 \\ -4 \end{bmatrix}$$

Powers of Adjacency Matrices

Theorem

Suppose A is the adjacency matrix of a graph. Then the number of walks of length ℓ between vertices v_i and v_j is the entry in row i, column j of A^ℓ.

Powers of Adjacency Matrices

Theorem

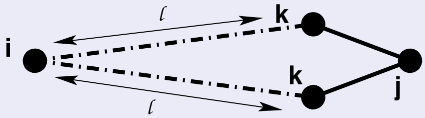
Suppose A is the adjacency matrix of a graph. Then the number of walks of length ℓ between vertices v_i and v_j is the entry in row i, column j of A^ℓ.

Proof.

Base case: $\ell = 1$. Adjacency matrix describes walks of length 1.

$$\left[A^{\ell+1}\right]_{ij} = \left[A^\ell A\right]_{ij} = \sum_{k=1}^{n} \left[A^\ell\right]_{ik} [A]_{kj} = \sum_{k:v_k \text{ adj } v_j} \left[A^\ell\right]_{ik}$$

$= \text{total ways to walk in } \ell \text{ steps from } v_i \text{ to } v_k\text{, a neighbor of } v_j$



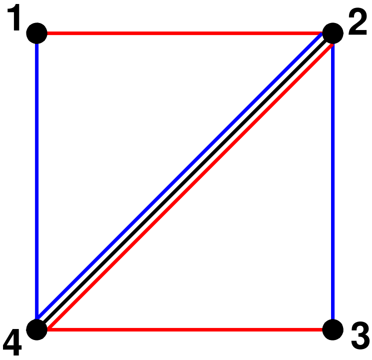
$\square$

Adjacency Matrix Power

Number of walks of length 3 between vertices 1 and 3?

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$A^3 = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 5 & \boxed{2} & 5 \\ 5 & 4 & 5 & 5 \\ 2 & 5 & 2 & 5 \\ 5 & 5 & 5 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$$

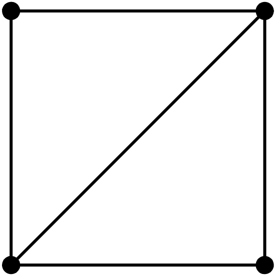


Characteristic Polynomial

Recall the characteristic polynomial of a square matrix A is $\det(\lambda I - A)$. Roots of this polynomial are the eigenvalues of the matrix.

For the adjacency matrix of a graph on n vertices:

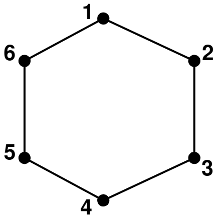
- Coefficient of λ^n is 1
- Coefficient of λ^{n-1} is zero (trace of adjacency matrix)
- Coefficient of $-\lambda^{n-2}$ is number of edges
- Coefficient of $-2\lambda^{n-3}$ is number of triangles



Characteristic polynomial
$\lambda^4 - 5\lambda^2 - 4\lambda + \cdots$

Minimal Polynomial of a Diameter 3 Graph

The diameter of a graph is the longest shortest path (over all vertex pairs).



Distinct Eigenvalues: $\lambda = 2,\ 1,\ -1,\ -2$

Minimal Polynomial:
$(x-2)(x-1)(x-(-1))(x-(-2)) = x^4 - 5x^2 + 4$

Check that $A^4 - 5A^2 + 4 = 0$

A
$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & \boxed{0} & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

A^2
$$\begin{bmatrix} 2 & 0 & 1 & \boxed{0} & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 2 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 2 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$$

A^3
$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 3 & 0 & \boxed{2} & 0 & 3 \\ 3 & 0 & 3 & 0 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 3 & 0 & 3 & 0 & 2 \\ 2 & 0 & 3 & 0 & 3 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 & 0 & 3 & 0 & 3 \\ 3 & 0 & 2 & 0 & 3 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

Diameter and Eigenvalues

This example has the **minimum** possible number of distinct eigenvalues.
(So do many other graphs in this presentation: cubes, circuits, complete.)

Theorem

Suppose G is a graph of diameter d.
Then G has at least $d+1$ distinct eigenvalues.

Proof.

There are zero short walks between vertices that are far apart.

So the first d powers of A are linearly independent.

So A cannot satisfy a polynomial of degree d or less.

Minimal polynomial is product of linear factors, one per distinct eigenvalue.

Thus minimal polynomial has at least $d+1$ factors
hence at least $d+1$ eigenvalues. $\square$

Results Relating Diameters and Eigenvalues

Extensive literature on **second** largest eigenvalue (see Brouwer/Haemers)
Regular graph: n vertices, degree r, diameter d
Then r is largest eigenvalue; let λ be second largest eigenvalue

Results Relating Diameters and Eigenvalues

Extensive literature on **second** largest eigenvalue (see Brouwer/Haemers)
Regular graph: n vertices, degree r, diameter d
Then r is largest eigenvalue; let λ be second largest eigenvalue

- Alon, Milman, 1985

$$d \leq 2\left\lceil \left(\frac{2r}{r-\lambda}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \log_2 n \right\rceil$$

Results Relating Diameters and Eigenvalues

Extensive literature on **second** largest eigenvalue (see Brouwer/Haemers)
Regular graph: n vertices, degree r, diameter d
Then r is largest eigenvalue; let λ be second largest eigenvalue

- Alon, Milman, 1985

$$d \leq 2\left\lceil \left(\frac{2r}{r-\lambda}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \log_2 n \right\rceil$$

- Mohar, 1991

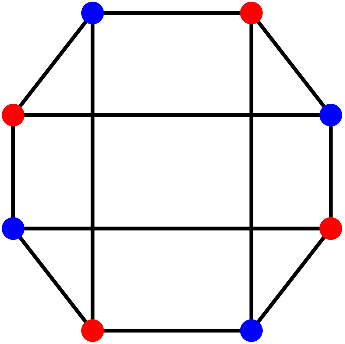
$$d \leq 2\left\lceil \left(\frac{2r-\lambda}{4\,(r-\lambda)}\right) \ln\left(n-1\right) \right\rceil$$

Bipartite Graphs

A graph is bipartite if the vertex set can be split into two parts, so that every edge goes from part to the other. Identical to being "two-colorable."

Theorem

A graph is bipartite if and only if there are no cycles of odd length.



Eigenvalues of Bipartite Graphs

Theorem

Suppose G is a bipartite graph with eigenvalue λ.
Then $-\lambda$ is also an eigenvalue of G.

$$\lambda = 3 \quad \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \lambda = -3 \quad \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \lambda = 1 \quad \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ -1 \\ -1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \lambda = -1 \quad \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ -1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Proof.

Order the vertices according to the two parts. Then

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ B^t & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

For an eigenvector $\vec{u} = \begin{bmatrix} \vec{u}_1 \\ \vec{u}_2 \end{bmatrix}$ of A for λ,

$$\begin{bmatrix} \lambda\vec{u}_1 \\ \lambda\vec{u}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \lambda \begin{bmatrix} \vec{u}_1 \\ \vec{u}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \lambda\vec{u} = A\vec{u} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ B^t & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \vec{u}_1 \\ \vec{u}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} B\vec{u}_2 \\ B^t\vec{u}_1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Now set $\vec{v} = \begin{bmatrix} -\vec{u}_1 \\ \vec{u}_2 \end{bmatrix}$ and compute,

$$A\vec{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ B^t & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} -\vec{u}_1 \\ \vec{u}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} B\vec{u}_2 \\ -B^t\vec{u}_1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \lambda\vec{u}_1 \\ -\lambda\vec{u}_2 \end{bmatrix} = -\lambda \begin{bmatrix} -\vec{u}_1 \\ \vec{u}_2 \end{bmatrix} = -\lambda\vec{v}$$

□

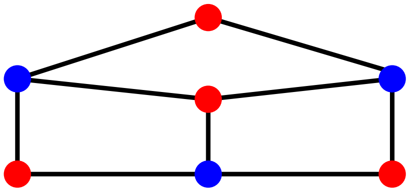
Bipartite Graphs on an Odd Number of Vertices

Theorem

Suppose G is a bipartite graph with an odd number of vertices. Then zero is an eigenvalue of the adjacency matrix of G.

Proof.

Pair each eigenvalue with its negative.
At least one eigenvalue must then equal its negative. □



$\lambda = \sqrt{7}$	$m = 1$
$\lambda = 1$	$m = 2$
$\lambda = 0$	$m = 1$
$\lambda = -1$	$m = 2$
$\lambda = -\sqrt{7}$	$m = 1$

Application: Friendship Theorem

Theorem

Suppose that at a party every pair of guests has exactly one friend in common. Then there are an odd number of guests, and one guest knows everybody.

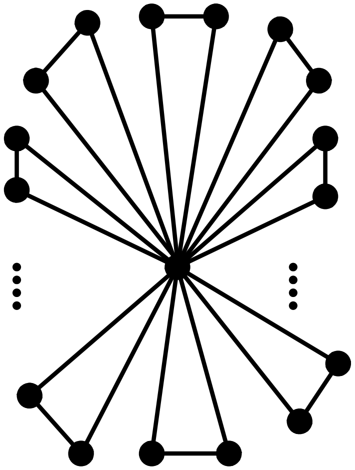
- Model party with a graph
- Vertices are guests, edges are friends
- Two possibilities:

Application: Friendship Theorem

Theorem

Suppose that at a party every pair of guests has exactly one friend in common. Then there are an odd number of guests, and one guest knows everybody.

- Model party with a graph
- Vertices are guests, edges are friends
- Two possibilities:
  1. Graph to the right
  2. Algebraic graph theory say the adjacency matrix has eigenvalues with non-integer multiplicities



Application: Buckministerfullerene

- Molecule composed solely of 60 carbon atoms
- "Carbon-60," "buckyball"
- At each atom two single bonds and one double bond describe a graph that is regular of degree 3
- Graph is the skeleton of a truncated icosahedron, a soccer ball
- 60×60 adjacency matrix
- Eigenvalues of adjacency matrix predict peaks in mass spectrometry
- First created in 1985 (1996 Nobel Prize in Chemistry)

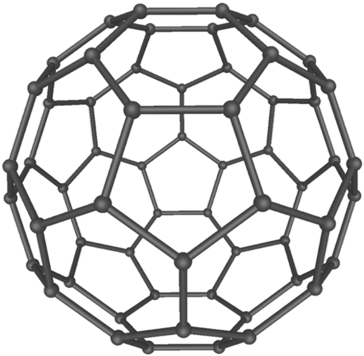


Illustration by Michael Ströck
Wikipedia, GFDL License

Moral of the Story

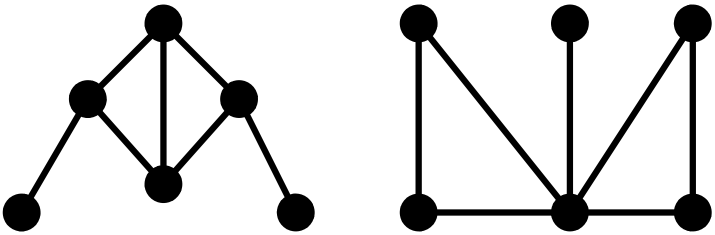
- Graph properties predict linear algebra properties
  (regular of degree $r \Rightarrow r$ is an eigenvalue)

Moral of the Story

- Graph properties predict linear algebra properties
  (regular of degree $r \Rightarrow r$ is an eigenvalue)
- Linear algebra properties predict graph properties
  (functions of two largest eigenvalues bound the diameter)

Moral of the Story

- Graph properties predict linear algebra properties
  (regular of degree $r \Rightarrow r$ is an eigenvalue)
- Linear algebra properties predict graph properties
  (functions of two largest eigenvalues bound the diameter)
- Do eigenvalues characterize graphs? No.



Bibliography

- Norman Biggs, *Algebraic Graph Theory*, Second Edition, Cambridge Mathematical Library, 1974, 1993
- Chris Godsil, Gordon Royle, *Algebraic Graph Theory*, Springer, 2001
- Andries E. Brouwer, Willem H. Haemers, *Spectra of Graphs*, Springer, 2011
- Robert Beezer, *A First Course in Linear Algebra*, `http://linear.ups.edu`, GFDL License

`buzzard.pugetsound.edu/talks.html`