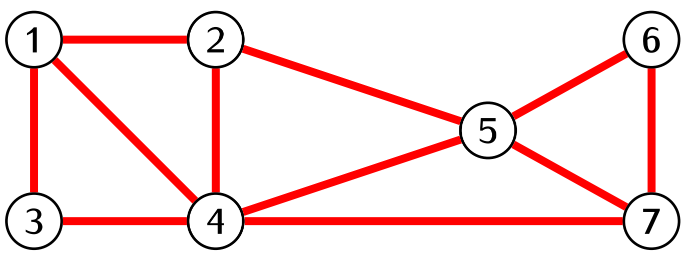
Notation. If S is a finite set then

$$|S| := (\text{the number of elements of } S)$$

Definition

Let G be a graph with the set of vertices V. Let $S \subseteq V$ and let $\overline{S} = V \setminus S$. Then

$$E(S, \overline{S}) = \begin{pmatrix} \text{the set of edges of } G \\ \text{with one end in } S \\ \text{and the other end is } \overline{S} \end{pmatrix}$$



Partitioning problem. For a given connected graph with the set of vertices $V = 1, \dots, N$ and a given number $1 \leq k \leq N$ find $S \subseteq V$ such that $|S| = k$ and that $E(S, \overline{S})$ is as small as possible.

Definition

Let G be a graph with vertices $V = \{1, \ldots, N\}$, and let $S \subseteq V$. The *selector vector* of S is the vector $\mathbf{v}_S \in \mathbb{R}^N$ given by

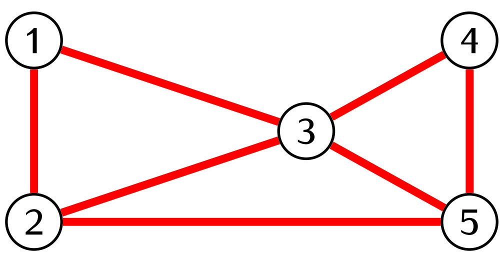
$$\mathbf{v}_S = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ \vdots \\ x_N \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{where} \quad x_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } i \in S \\ -1 & \text{if } i \in \overline{S} \end{cases}$$

Proposition

Let G be a graph with vertices $V = \{1, \ldots, N\}$, and let L be the Laplacian of G. For $S \subseteq V$ we have:

$$|E(S, \overline{S})| = \frac{1}{4} \cdot \mathbf{v}_S^T L \mathbf{v}_S$$

Example.



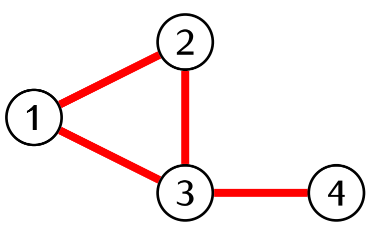
Notation. If i, j are vertices in a graph then we will write $i \sim j$ if there is an edge joining i and j.

Lemma

Let G be a graph with vertices $V = \{1, \ldots, N\}$, and let L be the Laplacian of G. For any vector $\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ \vdots \\ x_N \end{bmatrix}$ we have

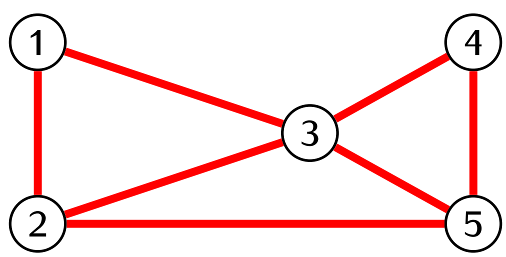
$$\mathbf{v}^T L \mathbf{v} = \sum_{\substack{i<j \\ i\sim j}} (x_i - x_j)^2$$

Example.



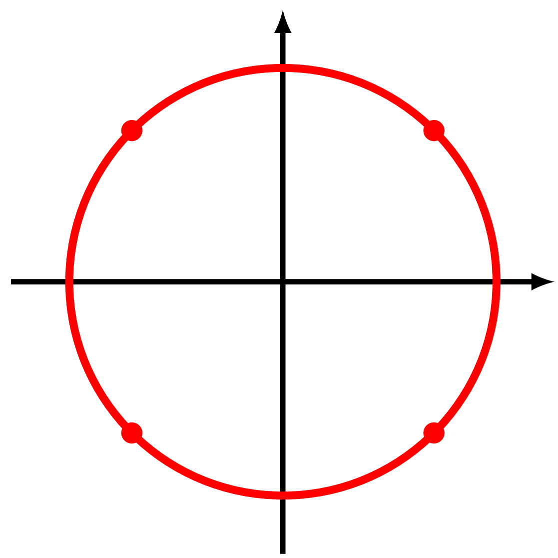
Proof of Lemma.

Proof of Proposition (by example).



Partitioning problem restated:

Relaxation:



Preparation: Eigenvectors of the Laplacian of a graph

Let G be a connected graph with N vertices and L be the Laplacian of G.

1) Since L is a symmetric matrix, it has N orthonormal eigenvectors $\mathbf{u}_1, \ldots, \mathbf{u}_N$.

Let

$$\begin{aligned}
\lambda_1 &= \text{eigenvalue corresponding to } \mathbf{u}_1 \\
\lambda_2 &= \text{eigenvalue corresponding to } \mathbf{u}_2 \\
\ldots & \quad \ldots \quad \ldots \quad \ldots \quad \ldots \quad \ldots \quad \ldots \\
\lambda_N &= \text{eigenvalue corresponding to } \mathbf{u}_N
\end{aligned}$$

We can assume that $\lambda_1 \leq \lambda_2 \leq \cdots \leq \lambda_N$.

2) $\lambda_i \geq 0$ for $i = 1, \ldots, N$ (since L can be written in the form BB^T for some matrix B).

3) Since G connected, we have $\lambda_1 = 0$ and $\lambda_i > 0$ for $i = 2, \ldots, N$.

4) We can take

$$\mathbf{u}_1 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ \vdots \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Solution of the relaxed problem

solution of the relaxed problem continued...

Theorem

Let G be a graph with N vertices, and let λ_2 be the second smallest eigenvalue of the Laplacian of G. Then for any set S of vertices of G we have

$$|E(S, \bar{S})| \geq \frac{|S| \cdot |\bar{S}|}{N} \cdot \lambda_2$$

Definition

Let G be a graph. The second smallest eigenvalue λ_2 of the Laplacian of G is called the *algebraic connectivity* of G.

Back to the partitioning problem

Recall: Given a connected graph with the set of vertices $V = \{1, 2, \dots, N\}$ and $0 < k < N$ we want to find $S \subseteq V$ such that $|S| = k$ and $|E(S, \overline{S})|$ is as small as possible (equivalently: $\mathbf{v}_S^T L \mathbf{v}_S$ is as small as possible).

Approximated solution:

The spectral partitioning algorithm

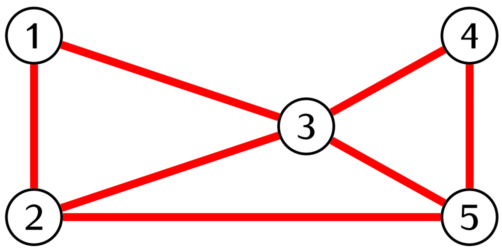
Recall: Given a connected graph with the set of vertices $V = \{1, 2, \ldots, N\}$ and $0 < k < N$ we want to find $S \subseteq V$ such that $|E(S, \overline{S})|$ is as small as possible.

Approximated solution:

1. Compute the Laplacian L of the graph.
2. Compute the eigenvector of L corresponding to the second smallest eigenvalue λ_2:
$$\mathbf{u}_2 = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ \vdots \\ x_N \end{bmatrix}$$
3. Let
$$S_+ = \{i_1, \ldots, i_k\} \subseteq V$$
$$S_- = \{j_1, \ldots, j_k\} \subseteq V$$
such that
   - $x_{i_1}, \ldots, x_{i_k}$ are the largest entries of $\mathbf{u}_2$
   - $x_{j_1}, \ldots, x_{j_k}$ are the smallest entries of $\mathbf{u}_2$.

   If $x_{i_1} + \cdots + x_{i_k} \geq -(x_{j_1} + \cdots + x_{j_k})$ take $S = S_+$. Otherwise take $S = S_-$.

Example.



$$L = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 3 & -1 & 0 & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & 4 & -1 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 & 2 & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & -1 & -1 & 3 \end{bmatrix}$$

Definition

Let G be a graph with the set of vertices V. The *Cheeger constant* of G is the number

$$h(G) = \min \left\{ \frac{|E(S,\overline{S})|}{|S|} \;\middle|\; S \subseteq V,\ 1 \leq |S| \leq \frac{|V|}{2} \right\}$$

Corollary

If λ_2 is the algebraic connectivity a graph G then

$$h(G) \geq \frac{1}{2}\lambda_2$$

Theorem (Cheeger inequality)

If λ_2 is the algebraic connectivity of a graph G then

$$\sqrt{2\lambda_2 d_{\mathrm{max}}} \geq h(G)$$

where d_{max} is the maximal degree of a vertex of G.