On computing Ollivier-Ricci curvatures of graphs:
fine-grained reductions and local algorithms

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Abstract
Characterizing shapes of high-dimensional objects via Ricci curvatures plays a critical role in many research areas in mathematics and physics. However, even though several discretizations of Ricci curvatures for discrete combinatorial objects such as networks have been proposed and studied by mathematicians, the computational complexity aspects of these discretizations have escaped the attention of theoretical computer scientists to a large extent. In this paper, we study one such discretization, namely the Ollivier-Ricci curvature, from the perspective of efficient computation by fine-grained reductions and local query-based algorithms. Our main contributions are the following.

\begin{itemize}
  \item We relate our curvature computation problem to minimum weight perfect matching problem on complete bipartite graphs via fine-grained reduction.
  \item We formalize the computational aspects of the curvature computation problems in suitable frameworks so that they can be studied by researchers in local algorithms.
  \item We provide the first known lower and upper bounds on queries for query-based algorithms for the curvature computation problems in our local algorithms framework.
\end{itemize}

We believe that our results bring forth an intriguing set of research questions, motivated both in theory and practice, regarding designing efficient
algorithms for curvatures of geometrical objects.

Keywords: Network shape, discrete Ricci curvature, query-based local algorithms

1. Introduction

A suitable notion of “shape” plays a critical role in investigating objects in mathematics, mathematical physics and other research areas. Various kinds of curvatures are very natural measures of shapes of higher dimensional objects in mainstream physics and mathematics [1, 2]. To quantify the shape of a higher-dimensional geometric object, one often fixes shapes of objects with specific properties as the “baseline shape” and then quantifies the shape of a given object with respect to these baseline shapes. For example, consider the case of the two-dimensional metric space. For this space, a baseline could be selected as the standard Euclidean plane in which the three angles of a triangle sum up to exactly 180°, and then one can quantify the shape of the given two-dimensional space by the deviations of the sum of the three angles of triangles in this space from the baseline of 180°. An alternative approach is to avoid selecting baseline shapes explicitly and instead directly quantify the shape of a given geometric object. Quantification of shape is often referred to as the curvature of the corresponding object. Quantification of shapes can be either local or global. A local shape of the object is usually computed for a specific local neighborhood of the object (e.g., the Ricci curvature). In contrast, a global shape of the object is usually computed over the entire object (e.g., the Gromov-hyperbolicity measure). Any attempt to extend notions of curvature measures from non-network domains to networks[1][2] (and other discrete combinatorial structures) need to overcome at least three key challenges, namely that (a) networks are discrete (non-continuous) combinatorial objects, (b) networks may not necessarily have an associated natural geometric embedding, and (c) the extension need to be useful and non-trivial, i.e., a network curvature measure should saliently encode non-trivial higher-order correlations among nodes and edges that cannot be obtained by other popular network measures.

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1In this paper, we will use the two terms “graph” and “network” interchangeably.
1.1. Motivations behind studying shapes of networks

Although studying measures of shapes of networks (and hypergraphs) is mathematically intriguing, it is natural to ask if there are other valid reasons for such studies. Network shape measures can encode non-trivial topological properties that are not expressed by more established network-theoretic measures such as degree distributions, clustering coefficients or betweenness centralities (e.g., see [3, 4]). Moreover, these shape measures can explain many phenomena one frequently encounters in real network-theoretic applications, such as (i) paths mediating up- or down-regulation of a target node starting from the same regulator node in biological regulatory networks often have many small crosstalk paths [3] and (ii) existence of congestions in a node that is not a hub in traffic networks [3, 5], that are not easily explained by other non-shape measures. Recently, shape measures have also found applications in traditional social networks applications such as community finding [6], and in neuroscience applications such as comparing brain networks to study slowly progressing brain diseases such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder [4] and autism spectrum disorder [7, 8].

1.2. Brief history of existing notions of shapes for networks

There are several ways previous researchers have attempted to formulate notions of shapes of networks. Below we discuss three major directions in this regard. For further details and other approaches, the reader is referred to papers and books such as [9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 3, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 4].

One notion of network shapes, first suggested by Gromov in a non-network group theoretic context [24], is via the Gromov-hyperbolicity of networks. First defined for infinite continuous metric space [1], the measure was later adopted for finite graphs. Usually this measure is defined via properties of geodesic triangles or equivalently via 4-node conditions, though Gromov originally defined the measure using Gromov-product nodes in [24]. Informally, any infinite metric space has a finite Gromov-hyperbolicity measure if it behaves metrically in the large scale as a negatively curved Riemannian manifold, and thus the value of this measure can be correlated to the standard scalar curvature of a hyperbolic manifold. For a finite network the measure is related to the properties of the set of exact and approximate geodesics of the network. There is a large body of research works dealing with theoretical and empirical aspects of this measure, e.g., see [14, 15, 17, 16, 18, 25].
for theoretical aspects, and see [3, 5, 26] for applications to real-world networks (such as traffic congestions in a road network). Gromov-hyperbolicity is a \textit{global} measure in the sense that it assigns one scalar value to the entire network.

A second notion of shape of a network can be obtained by extending Forman’s discretization of Ricci curvature for (polyhedral or CW) complexes (the “Forman-Ricci curvature”) [19] to networks. Informally, the Forman-Ricci curvature is applied to networks by \textit{topologically associating} components (sub-networks) of a given network with higher-dimensional objects. The topological association itself can be carried out several ways. Although formulated relatively recently, there are already a number of papers investigating properties of these measures [20, 21, 22, 14, 23, 4].

In contrast to both of the above approaches, the network curvature considered in this paper is obtained via a discretization of curvatures from Riemannian manifolds to the network domain to capture metric properties of the manifold that are different from those captured by the Forman-Ricci curvature. More concretely, the network curvature studied in this paper is Ollivier’s earth-mover’s distances based discretization of Ricci curvature (the “Ollivier-Ricci curvature”) [10, 11, 12, 13]. For some theoretical comparison between Ollivier-Ricci curvature and Forman-Ricci curvature over graphs, see [4].

1.3. Basic definitions and notations

Let $G = (V,E)$ be a given undirected unweighted graph. The following notations related to a graph $G$ will be used subsequently:

- $\text{Nbr}_G(x) = \{ y \mid \{x,y\} \in E \}$ and $\text{deg}_G(x) = |\text{Nbr}_G(x)|$ are the set of neighbors and the degree, respectively, of a node $x$.

- $\text{dist}_G(x,y)$ is the \textit{distance} (i.e., number of edges in a shortest path) between the nodes $x$ and $y$ in $G$.

The following standard notations and terminologies from the field of approximation algorithms are used to facilitate further discussions:

- $\text{OPT}$ is the \textit{value} of the objective of an optimal solution of the problem under discussion.

- A $(\alpha,\varepsilon)$-estimate for a minimization problem under discussion is a polynomial-time algorithm that produces a solution whose objective
value $\beta$ satisfies $\OPT \leq \beta \leq \alpha \OPT + \varepsilon$. A $(1, \varepsilon)$-estimate is also called an additive $\varepsilon$-approximation.

2. Ollivier-Ricci curvatures: intuition, definitions and simple bounds

To define the Ollivier-Ricci curvatures for the components of a graph, we first need to use the following standard definition of the earth mover’s distance (also called the $L_1$ Wasserstein distance) in the specific context of a edge-weighted complete bipartite graph.

**Definition 1 (Earth mover’s distance (EMD) over a edge-weighted complete bipartite graph).** Let $H = (V_L, V_R, w)$ be an edge-weighted complete bipartite graph with $w : V_L \times V_R \mapsto \mathbb{R}^+ \cup \{0\}$ being the edge-weight function, and let $\mathbb{P}_L : V_L \mapsto \mathbb{R}^+$ and $\mathbb{P}_R : V_R \mapsto \mathbb{R}^+$ be two arbitrary distributions over the nodes in $V_L$ and $V_R$, respectively. The earth mover’s distance corresponding to the distributions $\mathbb{P}_L$ and $\mathbb{P}_R$, denoted by $\text{EMD}_H(\mathbb{P}_L, \mathbb{P}_R)$ (or simply $\text{EMD}$), is the value of the objective function of an optimal solution of the following linear program that has a variable $z_{x,y}$ for every pair of nodes $x \in V_L$ and $y \in V_R$:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{minimize} & \quad \sum_{x \in V_L} \sum_{y \in V_R} w(x, y) z_{x,y} \\
\text{subject to} & \quad \sum_{y \in V_R} z_{x,y} = \mathbb{P}_L(x), \text{ for all } x \in V_L \\
& \quad \sum_{x \in V_L} z_{x,y} = \mathbb{P}_R(y), \text{ for all } y \in V_R \\
& \quad z_{x,y} \geq 0, \text{ for all } x \in V_L \text{ and } y \in V_R 
\end{align*}
\]

Let $G = (V, E)$ be an undirected unweighted graph. Consider an edge $e = \{u, v\} \in E$. Define the edge-weighted complete bipartite graph $G_{u,v} = (L^G_{u,v}, R^G_{u,v}, w^G_{u,v})$ as follows:

- $L^G_{u,v} = \{u\} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(u)$,
- $R^G_{u,v} = \{v\} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(v)$, and
- the edge-weight function $w^G_{u,v}$ is given by $w^G_{u,v}(u', v') = \text{dist}_G(u', v')$ for all $u' \in L^G_{u,v}$, $v' \in R^G_{u,v}$.

Let $\mathbb{P}^G_u$ and $\mathbb{P}^G_v$ denote the two uniform distributions over the nodes in $L^G_{u,v}$ and $R^G_{u,v}$, respectively, i.e.,

$$\forall x \in L^G_{u,v} : \mathbb{P}_u^G(x) = \frac{1}{1 + \deg_G(u)}$$
∀ x ∈ R^G_{u,v} : P^G_v(x) = \frac{1}{1 + \deg_G(v)}

We can now state the precise definitions of the curvatures used in this paper.

- The **Ollivier-Ricci curvature of the edge** e = {u, v} of G is defined as \[ C_G(e) \overset{\text{def}}{=} C_G(u, v) = 1 - \text{EMD}_{u,v}(P^G_u, P^G_v) \] (2)

- The **Ollivier-Ricci curvature of a node** v is calculated by taking the average of the Ollivier-Ricci curvatures of all the edges incident on v, i.e.,

  \[ C_G(v) = \frac{1}{\deg_G(v)} \sum_{e = \{u,v\} \in E} C_G(e) \] (3)

- Finally, the **average Ollivier-Ricci curvature of a graph** G is calculated by taking the average of the Ollivier-Ricci curvatures of all the edges in G, i.e.,

  \[ C_{avg}(G) = \frac{1}{|E|} \sum_{e \in E} C_G(e) \] (4)

For easy quick reference, we explicitly write below the version of the linear program in (1) as used in the calculation of \( C_G(u, v) \):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{minimize} & \quad \sum_{x \in \{u \} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(u)} \sum_{y \in \{v\} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(v)} \text{dist}_G(x, y) \ z_{x,y} \\
\text{subject to} & \quad \sum_{y \in \{v\} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(v)} z_{x,y} = \frac{1}{1 + \deg_G(u)} \text{, for all } x \in \{u\} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(u) \\
& \quad \sum_{x \in \{u\} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(u)} z_{x,y} = \frac{1}{1 + \deg_G(v)} \text{, for all } y \in \{v\} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(v) \\
& \quad z_{x,y} \geq 0 \text{, for all } x \in \{v\} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(v) \text{ and } y \in \{u\} \cup \text{Nbr}_G(u)
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{(LP-} C_G)\]

\[\text{For this paper, it is crucial to note that the computation of } C_G(e) \text{ requires only the value of } \text{EMD}_{u,v}(P^G_u, P^G_v) \text{ and does not require an explicit enumeration of the solution (variable values) of the linear program (1). This distinction is important in the context of designing efficient local algorithms. For example, given a graph } G \text{ with } n \text{ nodes in which the maximum degree of any node is } O(1) \text{ and a constant } \varepsilon > 0, \text{ one can compute a number that is an additive } \varepsilon n \text{-approximation of the size of maximum matching of } G \text{ in } O(1) \text{ time in expectation [27], but of course if we were required to output an actual maximum matching we would take at least } \Omega(n) \text{ time.}\]
The linear program in $(\text{LP-CG})$ has $\deg_G(u) \deg_G(v) = O((\deg_G(v))^2)$ variables and $\deg_G(u) + \deg_G(v) \leq 2 \deg_G(v)$ constraints. The best time-complexity for solving the linear program in $(\text{LP-CG})$ can be estimated as follows:

$\triangledown$ Based on the state-of-the-art algorithms for solving linear programs for this situation [28], an exact solution of $(\text{LP-CG})$ can be found in $O((\deg_G(v))^{5/2})$ time.

$\triangledown$ Based on the results in publications such as [29, 30], an additive $\varepsilon$-approximation of $(\text{LP-CG})$ can be obtained in $\tilde{O}(\frac{1}{\varepsilon^2}(\deg_G(u)\deg_G(v))) = \tilde{O}(\frac{1}{\varepsilon^2}(\deg_G(v))^2)$ time.

The following observation is crucial for this paper.

**Observation 1.** The $\text{dist}_G(x, y)$ values in the linear program in $(\text{LP-CG})$ satisfy the property that $\text{dist}_G(x, y) \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$.

It is not difficult to see that Observation 1 implies $0 \leq \text{EMD}_{G_{x,y}}(\mathbb{P}_u, \mathbb{P}_v) \leq 3$ and therefore $-2 \leq \mathcal{C}_G(e) \leq 1$. For computing $\mathcal{C}_G(u, v)$ and related quantities, we assume that $\deg_G(u) \leq \deg_G(v)$ without any loss of generality throughout the rest of the paper.

**2.1. Intuition behind the discretization resulting in definition of $\mathcal{C}_G(e)$**

For an intuitive understanding of the definition of $\mathcal{C}_G(e)$, we recall the notion of Ricci curvature for a smooth Riemannian manifold. The Ricci curvature at a point $x$ in the manifold along a direction can be thought of transporting a small ball centered at $x$ along that direction and measuring the “distortion” of that ball due to the shape of the surface by comparing the distance between the two small balls with the distance between their centers. In the definition of $\mathcal{C}_G(e)$, the role of the direction is captured by the edge $e = \{u, v\}$, the roles of the balls at the two points are played by the two closed neighborhoods $L_{u,v}^G$ and $R_{u,v}^G$, and the role of the distance between the two balls is captured by the earth mover’s distance between the two distributions $\mathbb{P}_u^G$ and $\mathbb{P}_v^G$ over the nodes in $L_{u,v}^G$ and $R_{u,v}^G$ on the metric space of shortest paths in $G$. For further intuition, see publications such as [10]. The Forman-Ricci curvature also assigns a number to each edge of $G$. For an exact solution of $(\text{LP-CG})$ can be found in $O((\deg_G(v))^{5/2})$ time.

The standard $\tilde{O}$ notation in algorithmic analysis hides poly-logarithmic terms, e.g., terms like $\log^{4/3} \deg_G(v)$. 

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the given graph, but the numbers are calculated in quite a different way from that in the Ollivier-Ricci curvature to capture different metric properties of the manifold.

2.2. Equivalent reformulation of linear program \(\text{LP-C}_G\) when \(\deg_G(u) = \deg_G(v)\)

The following claim holds based on results in prior publications such as \([31, 32]\). For the convenience of the reader, we provide a self-contained proof in the appendix.

**Fact 1.** \([31, 32]\) If \(\deg_G(u) = \deg_G(v)\) then the following claims are true regarding some optimal solution of the linear program \(\text{LP-C}_G\):

**(i)** The values of the variables \(z_{u',v'}\) are either 0 or \(\frac{1}{\deg_G(v)}\).

**(ii)** The edges in \(\{u',v'\} : z_{u',v'} = \frac{1}{\deg_G(v)}\) form a minimum-weight perfect matching in \(G_{u,v}\) that uses the zero-weight edges \(\{u',u'\}\) for all \(u' \in \{u,v\} \cup (\text{Nbr}_G(u) \cap \text{Nbr}_G(v))\).

Based on Fact 1 for the case when \(\deg_G(u) = \deg_G(v)\) an optimal solution of the linear program \(\text{LP-C}_G\) can be obtained by finding a minimum-weight perfect matching for a complete edge-weighted bipartite graph \(H = (L,R,w)\) where

- \(L = \text{Nbr}_G(u) \setminus (\text{Nbr}_G(v) \cup \{v\})\),
- \(R = \text{Nbr}_G(v) \setminus (\text{Nbr}_G(u) \cup \{u\})\), and
- the edge-weight function \(w : L \times R \mapsto \{1, 2, 3\}\) is given by \(w(x,y) = \text{dist}_G(x,y)\).

Note that \(|L| = |R| = \deg_G(v) - 1 - |\text{Nbr}_G(u) \cap \text{Nbr}_G(v)|\). Letting \(\mathcal{M}(H) \in \{|R|, |R| + 1, \ldots, 3|R|\}\) denote the total weight of a minimum-weight perfect matching of \(H\), we have

\[
\mathcal{C}_G(e) = 1 - \frac{\mathcal{M}(H)}{1 + \deg_G(v)}
\]

**Proposition 1.** An additive \(\varepsilon|R|\)-approximation of \(\mathcal{M}(H)\) implies an additive \(\varepsilon\)-approximation of \(\mathcal{C}_G(e)\), and vice versa.

**Proof.** This follows from the facts that \(|R| \leq \mathcal{M}(H) \leq 3|R|\) and \(\deg_G(v) > |R|\).
2.3. Some simple bounds for \( \text{EMD}_{G_{uv}}(P_u, P_v) \) and \( C_G(e) \)

We use a calculation similar to the one used in [31]. Extend the distributions \( \mathbb{P}^G_u \) and \( \mathbb{P}^G_v \) to \( \mathbb{P}_G^\prime_u \) and \( \mathbb{P}_G^\prime_v \) over \( L^G_{uv} \cup R^G_{uv} \) by letting \( \mathbb{P}_G^\prime_u(x) = 0 \) for \( x \in R_{uv} \setminus L_{uv} \) and \( \mathbb{P}_G^\prime_v(x) = 0 \) for \( x \in L_{uv} \setminus R_{uv} \). For notational simplicity, let \( k = \text{Nbr}_G(u) \setminus \text{Nbr}_G(v) \), \( \ell = \text{Nbr}_G(u) \cap \text{Nbr}_G(v) \), and \( m = \text{Nbr}_G(v) \setminus \text{Nbr}_G(u) \), thus \( \deg_G(u) = k + \ell \) and \( \deg_G(v) = m + \ell \). By straightforward calculation, the total variation distance (TVD) between \( \mathbb{P}_G^\prime_u \) and \( \mathbb{P}_G^\prime_v \)

\[
||P'_u - P'_v||_{\text{TVD}} = \frac{1}{2} \times \left( \frac{k-1}{k+\ell+1} + \frac{m-1}{m+\ell+1} + (\ell + 2) \times \left( \frac{1}{k+\ell+1} - \frac{1}{m+\ell+1} \right) \right)
\]

\[
= 1 - \frac{\ell + 2}{\deg_G(v) + 1}
\]

Since \( 1 \leq \text{dist}_G(u', v') \leq 3 \) for all \( u', v' \in L^G_{uv} \cup R^G_{uv}, u' \neq v' \), by standard relationships between \( \text{EMD} \) and TVD (e.g., see [33]) it follows that \( ||P'_u - P'_v||_{\text{TVD}} \leq \text{EMD}_{G_{uv}}(P_u, P_v) \leq 3 \times ||P'_u - P'_v||_{\text{TVD}} \), thereby giving

\[
-2 + \frac{3\ell + 6}{\deg_G(v) + 1} \leq C_G(e) \leq \frac{\ell + 2}{\deg_G(v) + 1}
\]

Furthermore, if \( G \) has no cycles of length 5 or less containing \( e \) then \( \text{dist}_G(u', v') = 3 \) for all \( u', v' \in L^G_{uv} \cup R^G_{uv} \) and \( \ell = 0 \) giving \( C_G(e) = \frac{2}{\deg_G(v) + 1} \).

3. Synopsis of our results

The main goal of this paper is to study algorithmic complexities of efficient computation of our network curvature measures. To this effect, our main contributions are threefold:

- We relate various cases of our curvature computation problems via fine-grained reduction.

- We formalize the computational aspects of the curvature computation problems in suitable frameworks so that they can be studied by researchers in local algorithms.

- We provide the first known lower and upper bounds on queries for query-based algorithms for the curvature computation problems in our local algorithms framework.

A summary of our contribution in the rest of this paper is the following.
In Section 4 we relate via Theorem 3 the minimum weight perfect matching problem on complete bipartite graphs with ternary weights to computing $C_G(e)$ via fine-grained reduction.

In Section 5 we present our results for computing $C_G(e)$ in the framework of local algorithms.

- In Sections 5.1–5.2 we provide details of the query models relevant to our case and prior related works on these query models.
- In Sections 5.4–5.5 we provide in Theorem 4 and Theorem 5 query bounds for exact or approximate calculations of the curvature using the query models. The bounds are succinctly summarized in Section 5.3 via Table 1.

In Section 6 Lemma 6 provides our results for computing the Ollivier-Ricci curvature $C_G(v)$ for nodes and for computing the average Ollivier-Ricci curvature $C_{\text{avg}}(G)$ for graphs using “black box” additive approximation algorithms for $C_G(e)$ and neighbor queries.

We conclude in Section 7 with some possible future research problems.

4. Relating minimum weight perfect matching on complete bipartite graphs to computing $C_G(e)$ via fine-grained reduction

Frameworks for characterizing polynomial-time solvable problems via fine-grained reduction have garnered considerable attention in recent years (e.g., see [34] for a survey and [35, 36, 37] for a few well-known results in this direction). Essentially these fine-grained reductions are used to show that, given two problems $A$ and $B$ and two constants $a, b > 0$, if an instance $I_B$ of size $|I_B|$ of problem $B$ can be solved in $O(|I_B|^b)$ time then an instance $I_A$ of size $|I_A|$ of problem $A$ can be solved in $O(|I_A|^a)$ time.

To begin, we first formally state the minimum weight perfect matching problem on complete bipartite graphs with ternary edge weights.

Definition 2 (minimum weight perfect matching on complete bipartite graphs with ternary weights ($\text{MPMCT}$)). Given a a complete edge-weighted bipartite graph $H = (A, B, w)$ where $|A| = |B|$ and $w : A \times B \mapsto \{1, 2, 3\}$ is the edge-weight function, find the value of $\frac{|M|}{|A|}$ where $|M|$ is the value (number of edges) in a minimum-weight perfect matching $M$ of $H$.
For MPMCT, exact solution takes $O(|A|^{5/2})$ time [28], and an $\varepsilon$-additive approximation takes $\tilde{O}\left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon^2} |A|^2\right)$ time. The following theorem related MPMCT to the problem of computing a solution of the linear program in $[\text{LP-\text{C}_G}]$ via a fine-grained reduction.

**Theorem 3.** Suppose that we have an algorithm $\mathfrak{A}$ that provides $(\alpha, \varepsilon)$-estimate for MPMCT in $O(|A|^{2+\mu})$ time for some $\mu \geq 0$ for a given input instance $H = (A, B, w)$.

Then, there exists an algorithm $\mathfrak{A}_\varepsilon$ that provides $(\alpha, \varepsilon + \delta)$-estimate (for $\delta > 0$) for the linear program in $[\text{LP-\text{C}_G}]$ in $O\left(\deg_G(v)^{2+\mu}\right)$ time provided at least one of the following conditions is satisfied:

(a) $\deg_G(u) \leq (\delta/3) \times \deg_G(v)$, or

(b) $\deg_G(u) \geq (1 - (\delta/3)) \times \deg_G(v)$, or

(c) $\deg_G(v) - 1$ is an integral multiple of $\deg_G(u) - 1$.

**Remark 1.** An illustration of the result in Theorem 3 is as follows. Suppose that we can solve MPMCT exactly in $O(|A|^{2.4})$ time (implying $\alpha = \varepsilon = 0$). Then, such an algorithm can be used to obtain a $\deg_G(v)^{-1/2}$-additive approximation of $[\text{LP-\text{C}_G}]$ (i.e., $\delta = \deg_G(v)^{-1/2}$) in $O\left((\deg_G(v))^{2.4}\right)$ time provided at least one of the following conditions hold: (a) $\deg_G(u) \leq \frac{\sqrt{\deg_G(v)}}{3}$, (b) $\deg_G(u) \geq \deg_G(v) - \frac{\sqrt{\deg_G(v)}}{3}$, or (c) $\deg_G(v) - 1$ is an integral multiple of $\deg_G(u) - 1$. Such a result will improve the best possible running time for a $\deg_G(v)^{-1/2}$-additive approximation of $[\text{LP-\text{C}_G}]$.

**Proof.** Let $\text{Nbr}_G(u) \setminus \{v\} = \{x_1, \ldots, x_{\deg_G(u)-1}\}$, $\text{Nbr}_G(v) \setminus \{u\} = \{y_1, \ldots, y_{\deg_G(v)-1}\}$, and $\deg_G(v) - 1 = a (\deg_G(u) - 1) + b$ where $a \geq 1$ and $0 \leq b < \deg_G(u) - 1$.

We locally modify the neighborhood of $G_{u,v}$ to get a new graph $G'_{u,v}$ in the following manner:

- Every node $x_i \in \text{Nbr}_G(u) \setminus \{v\}$ is replaced by $b$ nodes $x_i^1, \ldots, x_i^b$ connected to $u$. Moreover, we connect $b$ additional “special” nodes $r_1, \ldots, r_b$ to $u$. Note that after these modifications the new degree $\deg_{G'_{u,v}}(u)$ of $u$ is precisely $\deg_G(v)$.

- We set the new weights $w_{u,v}^{G'}$ as follows:

$$w_{u,v}^{G'}(x_i^j, y_\ell) = \text{dist}_G(x_i, y_\ell) \text{ for } i \in \{1, \ldots, \deg_G(u) - 1\},$$
From this solution we can create a feasible solution of the linear program discussed in Section 2.2 it follows that \( \text{EMD}_{G_{u,v}}(\mathbb{P}_u^G, \mathbb{P}_v^G) \leq \text{EMD}_{G_{u,v}}(\mathbb{P}_u^{G'_{u,v}}, \mathbb{P}_v^{G'_{u,v}}) \leq \text{EMD}_{G_{u,v}}(\mathbb{P}_u^G, \mathbb{P}_v^G) + \delta \)

The linear program for \( \text{EMD}_{G_{u,v}}(\mathbb{P}_u^{G'_{u,v}}, \mathbb{P}_v^{G'_{u,v}}) \) is a straightforward modified version of \( [1] \) with appropriate change of subscripts of the variables. We will refer to this modified version by \( [1]' \). For notational convenience, let \( y_{\text{deg}(v)} = u \), and \( y_{\text{deg}(v)+1} = v \).

We can show \( \text{EMD}_{G_{u,v}}(\mathbb{P}_u^{G'_{u,v}}, \mathbb{P}_v^{G'_{u,v}}) \leq \text{EMD}_{G_{u,v}}(\mathbb{P}_u^G, \mathbb{P}_v^G) + \delta \) as follows. Consider an optimal solution of the linear program in \( [1] \) of value \( \text{EMD}_{G_{u,v}}(\mathbb{P}_u^G, \mathbb{P}_v^G) \). From this solution we can create a feasible solution of the linear program in \( [1]' \) in the following manner:

\( \text{If for } i = 1, \ldots, \text{deg}_G(u) - 1 \text{ and } j = 1, \ldots, \text{deg}_G(v) + 1, \text{if } z_{x_i,y_j} > 0 \text{ then distribute the value of } z_{x_i,y_j} \text{ among the corresponding variables of } [1]' \) as follows:

- Repeatedly select a variable from \( \{x_1^1, \ldots, x_\alpha^\beta\} \), say \( x_i^\ell \), such that \( x_i^\ell < \frac{1}{1+\text{deg}_G(v)} \). Increase \( x_i^\ell \) to \( \min \left\{ \frac{1}{1+\text{deg}_G(v)}, z_{x_i,y_j} \right\} \), and decrease \( z_{x_i,y_j} \) by the amount by which \( x_i^\ell \) was increased. Note that \( w_{u,v}^{G'}(x_i, y_j) = \text{dist}_G(x_i, y_j) \). Repeat this step until \( z_{x_i,y_j} \) becomes zero or no such variable \( x_i^\ell \) exists.
- If \( z_{x_i,y_j} > 0 \) after the previous step ends then execute the following steps. Repeatedly select a variable from \( \{r_1, \ldots, r_b\} \), say \( r_\ell \), such
that $r_\ell < \frac{1}{1+\deg_G(v)}$. Increase $r_\ell$ to $\min \left\{ \frac{1}{1+\deg_G(v)}, z_{x_i,y_j} \right\}$, and decrease $z_{x_i,y_j}$ by the amount by which $r_\ell$ was increased. Note that $w_{u,v}^G(x_i, y_j) \leq \text{dist}_G(x_i, y_j) + 3$. Repeat this step until $z_{x_i,y_j}$ becomes zero.

◨ For the node $x \in \{u, v\}$ assign the value of the variable $z_{x,y_j}$ in (1) directly to the same variable in (1').

By straightforward calculations, $\text{EMD}_G(u,v)(P_G^u, P_G^v) \leq \text{EMD}_G'(u,v)(P_G'^u, P_G'^v) \leq \text{EMD}_G'(u,v)(P_G^u, P_G^v) + \frac{3b}{\deg_G(v)+1}$. Therefore it suffices if we have $\frac{3b}{\deg_G(v)+1} \leq \delta$. If $\deg_G(u) - 1$ is an integral multiple of $\deg_G(v) - 1$ then $b = 0$ and the inequality holds trivially. Otherwise the inequality is satisfied provided $\deg_G(u) \leq (\delta/3) \times \deg_G(v)$ or $\deg_G(u) \geq (1 - (\delta/3)) \times \deg_G(v)$ since $0 \leq b < \deg_G(u) - 1 \leq \deg_G(v) - 1$. \hfill \qed

5. Computing $\mathcal{C}_G(e)$ in the framework of local algorithms

By now designing local algorithms for efficient solution of graph-theoretic problems has become a well-established research area in theoretical computer science and data mining with a large body of publications (e.g., see [38, 27, 39]). A basic idea behind many of these algorithms is to suitably sample a small “local” neighborhood of the graph to infer the value of some non-local property of a graph. Frameworks for graph-theoretic applications of local algorithms hinges on the following two premises:

◨ We assume that our algorithm has a list of all nodes in the graph in a suitable format that allows for sampling a node based on some distribution.

◨ The edges and their weights are not known to our algorithm a priori. Instead, the algorithm uses a “query” on a node or a pair of nodes to discover an edge and its weight. Different query models for local algorithms arise based on what kind of queries are allowed. Later in Section 5.2 we will provide details of query models that are applicable to our problems.

◨ The performance of the algorithm is measured by the number of queries used.
**Additional notations and conventions**

For the case when $\text{deg}_G(u) = \text{deg}_G(v)$, we will use the reformulations of the linear program (LP-$\mathcal{C}_G$) as discussed in Section 2.2 and the associated notations contained therein. We will use the following additional notations and conventions related to the graph $H = (L, R, w)$ mentioned in Section 2.2:

$\triangledown |L| = |R| = n$, $L = \{u_1, \ldots, u_n\}$ and $R = \{v_1, \ldots, v_n\}$.

For $j \in \{1, 2\}$ $\text{deg}_{H,j}(x)$ denotes the number of edges of weight $j$ incident on node $x$ in a graph $H$.

Note that $H$ has $2n$ nodes. Moreover, for any edge-weighted graph $F = (V, E, w)$ with $w : E \mapsto \mathbb{R}$, $\text{wt-deg}_F(u) = \sum_{v: \{u, v\} \in E} w(u, v)$ denotes the weighted degree of node $u$ in $F$, and $\mathcal{M}(F)$ denotes the total weight of a minimum-weight perfect matching of $F$.

### 5.1. Prior related works

Designing sublinear time and sketching algorithms for the general earth mover’s distance on the shortest path metric for arbitrary graphs have been investigated in prior research papers such as [40, 41]. In particular, for an edge-weighted tree with $W$ being the maximum weight of any edge and for any two unknown probability distributions on the nodes, the authors in [40] show that an estimate of the EMD with $\varepsilon$-additive error can be achieved by using $\tilde{O}\left(\frac{W^2n^2}{\varepsilon^2}\right)$ samples from the two distributions and observes that their algorithm is optimal up to polylog factors. To the best of our knowledge, local algorithms for computing the Ollivier-Ricci curvatures of a graph have not been investigated explicitly before.

### 5.2. Query models for edge-weighted complete bipartite graphs

Two standard query models that appear in the local algorithms literature for unweighted graphs (e.g., see [38]) are as follows: the node-pair query model (the query is a pair of nodes and the answer is whether an edge between them exists or not), and the neighbor query model (the query is a node and the answer is a random not-yet-explored adjacent node if it exists). Since our given graph is an edge-weighted complete bipartite graph $H = (L, R, w)$ via the reformulation described in Section 2.2 natural extensions lead to the following query models for our case:
- **weighted node-pair query model**: the query is a pair of nodes \( x, y \) and the answer is the weight \( w(x, y) \).

- **neighbor query model**: the query is a node \( x \) and the answer is a random “not-yet-explored” node adjacent to \( x \) (if no such node exists then the query returns a special symbol to indicate that). *Note that such a query does not give any useful information (beyond simply picking a node uniformly at random) for the graph \( H \) since it is a complete graph.* We will only use this type of query for the entire given graph \( G \) for computing \( C_G(v) \) and \( C_{\text{avg}}(G) \) in Section 6.

- **weighted neighbor query model**: the query is \( (u, x) \) where \( u \) is a node and \( x \) is a number, and the answer is a random “not-yet-explored” node \( v \) such that \( w(u, v) = x \) (if no such node exists then the query returns a special symbol to indicate that).

### 5.3. Summary of our query bounds on computing \( C_G(e) \)

For the convenience of the reader, we summarize our query bounds for computing \( C_G(e) \) in Table 1. Subsequent sub-sections in this section provides proofs of these bounds.

| query model(s) | additive approx. | expected # of queries | result | additional remark |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------|------------------|
| lower bounds   |                  |                       |        |                  |
| weighted node-pair | exact computation | \( \frac{(\deg_G(v) - 1)^2}{6} \) | Theorem 4(a)-(i) |        |
| weighted neighbor | exact computation | \( \frac{\deg_G(v) - 1}{2} \) | Theorem 4(a)-(ii) |        |
| weighted node-pair | \( 2 - \varepsilon_1 \) | \( \frac{\deg_G(v) - 1}{6} \) | Theorem 4(b) | even if \( \deg_{H,1}(x) \leq 1 \) and \( \deg_{H,2}(x) = 0 \) for every node \( x \) |
| upper bounds    |                  |                       |        |                  |
| weighted neighbor | \( 1 + \varepsilon_2 \) | \( O(1) \)            | Theorem 5(a) | if \( \deg_G(u) = \deg_G(v) \) and \( \deg_{H,1}(x) = O(1) \) for every node \( x \) |
| weighted neighbor | \( \frac{1}{2} + \varepsilon_2 \) | \( O(1) \)            | Theorem 5(b) | if \( \deg_G(u) = \deg_G(v) \), and if both \( \deg_{H,1}(x) = O(1) \) and \( \deg_{H,2}(x) = O(1) \) for every node \( x \) |

Table 1: A summary of query bounds for computing \( C_G(e) \). \( 0 < \varepsilon_1 \leq 2 \) and \( \varepsilon_2 > 0 \) are two arbitrary constants.
5.4. Lower bounds on number of queries for computing $\mathcal{C}_G(e)$

Note that for query lower bounds it suffices to prove the lower bound for complete edge-weighted bipartite graphs reformulation of the problem as discussed in Section 2.2. Any complete bipartite graph $H = (L, R, w)$ used in our lower bound proofs will satisfy $L \cap R = \emptyset$, thereby implying $n = \deg_G(v) - 1$. Since we provide our inputs in the form of such graphs $H$, we first need to show that there exists a graph $G$ with the edge $\{u, v\}$ such that $G_{u,v} = H$ in the notations used in Section 2.2.

Proposition 2. Given any complete edge-weighted bipartite graph $H = (L, R, w)$ where $w : L \times R \mapsto \{1, 2, 3\}$ there exists a graph $G = (V, E)$ such that $G_{u,v} = H$.

Proof. Start with the edge $\{u, v\}$ in $G$, connect the nodes $u_1, \ldots, u_n$ to $u$, and connect the nodes $v_1, \ldots, v_n$ to $v$. For every pair of nodes $(u_i, v_j) \in L \times R$, if $w(u_j, v_j) = 1$ then add the edge $\{u_i, v_j\}$ to $G$. Otherwise if $w(u_j, v_j) = 2$ then add a new node $x_{i,j}$ to $G$ and add the two edges $\{u_i, x_{i,j}\}$ and $\{x_{i,j}, v_j\}$ to $G$.

A common thread in our lower bound proofs is the following easy but crucial observation.

Observation 2. Suppose that we have two separate classes of (complete edge-weighted bipartite, as described in Section 2.2) graphs $\mathcal{G}_1$ and $\mathcal{G}_2$, two numbers $1 \leq \alpha < \beta \leq 3$, and an algorithm $A$ such that the following holds:

- Every graph $H \in \mathcal{G}_1$ satisfies $n \leq M(H) \leq \alpha n$.
- Every graph $H \in \mathcal{G}_2$ satisfies $\beta n \leq M(H) \leq 3n$.
- Given a graph from $\mathcal{G}_1 \cup \mathcal{G}_2$, algorithm $A$ cannot determine in which class the given graph belongs.

Then, using Proposition 1, it follows that algorithm $A$ cannot provide an additive $(\beta - \alpha - \varepsilon)$-approximation for any constant $\varepsilon > 0$.

Our proofs in Theorem 4 for lower bounds on the number of queries will use the well-known Yao’s minimax principle for randomized algorithms [42]. Namely, we will construct two separate classes $\mathcal{G}_1$ and $\mathcal{G}_2$ of graphs and show that any deterministic algorithm picks graphs uniformly at random from these two classes will need at least a certain number of queries, say $q$, to
be able to decide from which class the graph was selected with at least a
certain probability, say $p$. Then, the expected number of queries performed
by any deterministic algorithms on inputs drawn from the aforementioned
distribution is at least $pq$, and thus by the minimax principle the expected
number of queries for any randomized algorithm over all possible inputs is
also at least $pq$. Note that since our input instances are complete bipartite
graphs, two graphs are differentiated based on the assignments of weights to
all possible edges (see [38] for further elaborations on this point).

**Theorem 4.** Let $Q$ be the expected number of queries performed by an algo-
rithm using (possibly randomized) queries that computes $C_G(e)$.

(a) Suppose that we want to compute $C_G(e)$ exactly. Then the following

bounds hold.

(i) $Q > n^2/6$ if the queries used are weighted node-pair queries.

(ii) $Q > n^2/6$ if the queries used are weighted neighbor queries.

(b) For every $0 < \varepsilon < 2$, any randomized algorithm computing an additive

$(2 - \varepsilon)$-approximation of $C_G(e)$ requires $Q > n/6$ weighted node-pair

queries in expectation.

**Proof.**

**Proof of (a)**

Corresponding to every node pair $(u_i, v_j)$ with $u_i \in L$ and $v_j \in R$, the
class $G_1$ contains a graph in which $w(u_i, v_j) = 1$ and all other edges have
weight 3. The class $G_2$ contains just one graph in which all edge weights are
set to 3. Note that the minimum weight of a perfect matching for each graph
in $G_1$ is $3n - 2$, whereas the minimum weight of a perfect matching for the
graph in $G_2$ is $3n$.

**Proof of (a)-(i)**

Suppose that our algorithm has already made $t$ queries (edges) $e_1, \ldots, e_t$
for $t < n^2 - 1$ with $w(e_1) = \cdots = w(e_t) = 3$ and let $e_{t+1}$ be the next
query. Consider a graph $G_1 \in G_1$ that is consistent with the first $t$ queries
with $w(e_{t+1}) = 1$. Note that there is exactly one such graph in $G_1$. Since
there are at least $n^2 - (t + 1)$ node pairs (edges) that have not been queried
after the $(t + 1)^{th}$ query, we have at least $n^2 - (t + 1)$ distinct graphs in $G_1$
with $w(e_{t+1}) = 3$ that is consistent with the first $t$ queries (set the weight of
exactly one of the \( n^2 - (t + 1) \) edges to 1 and the weight of the remaining edges to 3). Since graphs are selected uniformly at random from \( G_1 \) it follows that 

\[
\Pr[w(e_{t+1}) = 1 \mid w(e_1) = \cdots = w(e_t) = 3] \leq \frac{1}{n^2 - (t + 1)}.
\]

Summing over all \( t \), we get

\[
\Pr[ \text{number of queries needed is at least } t + 1 ] \\
= 1 - \Pr[ \text{one of the } t \text{ queries contain an edge of weight 1} ] \\
\geq 1 - \frac{t}{n^2 - (t + 1)}.
\]

Putting \( t = \frac{n^2}{3} \), the probability that “the number of queries is at least \( 1 + \frac{n^2}{3} \)” is at least \( \frac{1}{2} \).

**Proof of (a)-(ii)**

Suppose that our algorithm has already made \( t \) queries (nodes, weights) \((x_1, y_1), \ldots, (x_t, y_t) \in (L \cup R) \times \{1, 2, 3\} \) for \( t < n - 1 \). Let \( e_1 = \{x_1, x'_1\}, \ldots, e_t = \{x_t, x'_t\} \) be the answers (edges) to these queries with \( w(e_1) = \cdots = w(e_t) = 3 \) and let \((x_{t+1}, y_{t+1})\) be the next query that reveals the weight of an edge \( e_{t+1} = \{x_{t+1}, x'_{t+1}\} \). Consider a graph \( G_1 \in G_1 \) that is consistent with the first \( t \) queries with \( w(e_{t+1}) = y_{t+1} = 1 \). Note that there is exactly one such graph in \( G_1 \). Since there are at least \( n - (t + 1) \) nodes in each of \( L \) and \( R \) that have not been queried after the \((t + 1)\)th query, we have at least \( (n - (t + 1))^2 \) distinct graphs in \( G_1 \) with \( w(e_{t+1}) = 3 \) that is consistent with the first \( t \) queries (set the weight of exactly one edge among these nodes to 1 and the weights of all remaining edges to 3). Since graphs are selected uniformly at random from \( G_1 \) it follows that 

\[
\Pr[w(e_{t+1}) = 1 \mid w(e_1) = \cdots = w(e_t) = 3] \leq \frac{1}{(n - (t + 1))^2}.
\]

Summing over all \( t \), we get

\[
\Pr[ \text{number of queries needed is at least } t + 1 ] \\
= 1 - \Pr[ \text{one of the } t \text{ queries contain an edge of weight 1} ] \\
\geq 1 - \frac{t}{(n - (t + 1))^2}.
\]

Putting \( t = \frac{n}{2} \), the probability that “the number of queries is at least \( 1 + \frac{n}{2} \)” is at least \( 1 - \frac{2}{n} \).

**Proof of (b)**

Corresponding to each of the possible \( n! \) perfect matchings, the class \( G_1 \) contains a graph in which the edges in the matching have weight 1 and all other non-matching edges have weight 3. The class \( G_2 \) contains just one
graph in which all edge weights are set to 3. Note that the minimum weight of a perfect matching for each graph in $G_1$ is $n$, whereas the minimum weight of a perfect matching for the graph in $G_2$ is $3n$. Suppose that our algorithm has already made $t$ (edge) queries $e_1, \ldots, e_t$ for $t < n - 1$ with $w(e_1) = \cdots = w(e_t) = 3$ and let $e_{t+1}$ be the next (edge) query.

We first show that as long as $t < n$ there exists at least one graph in $G_1$ that is consistent with the weight assignments of the first $t$ queries. Consider a random perfect matching $M = \{\{u_1, v_{\pi(1)}\}, \ldots, \{u_n, v_{\pi(n)}\}\}$ given by a random permutation $\pi$ of $1, \ldots, n$. The probability of the event $E_j$ that the $j$th query $e_j$ is in $M$ is $\frac{(n-1)!}{n!} = \frac{1}{n}$. It follows that $\Pr[\bigwedge_{j=1}^{t-1} E_j] = 1 - \Pr[\bigvee_{j=1}^{t} E_j] \geq 1 - \sum_{j=1}^{t} \Pr[E_j] \geq 1 - \frac{t}{n} > 0$ and therefore $G_1$ contains at least one such graph.

Assume without loss of generality that $e_{t+1} = (u_n, v_n)$ and let $M$ be a perfect matching of the nodes in $L$ and $R$, say $M = \{\{u_1, v_1\}, \ldots, \{u_n, v_n\}\}$, that is consistent with the first $t$ queries, and includes $e_{t+1}$ as a matched edges (note that $w(u_1, v_1) = \cdots = w(u_n, v_n) = 1$). If such a matching $M$ does not exist then $\Pr[w(u_n, v_n) = 1 \mid w(e_1) = \cdots = w(e_t) = 3] = 0$. Otherwise, note that there are at least $n-t$ nodes in each of $L$ and $R$, say $u_1, \ldots, u_{n-t} \in L$ and $v_1, \ldots, v_{n-t} \in R$, such that the edges $(u_n, v_j)$ and $(u_j, v_n)$ for $j = 1, \ldots, n-t$ have not been queried yet. For every such perfect matching $M$, we can then construct a set $S_M$ of at least $n-t$ distinct perfect matchings with $w(e_{t+1}) = 3$ that is consistent with the first $t$ queries as follows: in the $\ell$th perfect matching set $w(u_\ell, v_\ell) = w(u_n, v_n) = 3$ and set $w(u_n, v_\ell) = w(u_\ell, v_n) = 1$. It is also easy to see that any two matchings from two different sets $S_M$ and $S_{M'}$ differ in at least one edge. Since graphs are selected uniformly at random from $G_1$ it follows that $\Pr[w(u_n, v_n) = 1 \mid w(e_1) = \cdots = w(e_t) = 3] \leq \frac{1}{n-t}$. Summing over all $t$, we get

\[
\Pr[\text{number of queries needed is at least } t+1] = 1 - \Pr[\text{any of the } t \text{ queries contain an edge of weight 1}] > 1 - \frac{t}{n-(t-1)}.
\]

Putting $t = n/3$, the probability that “the number of queries is at least $1 + n/3$” is at least $1/2$. \square
5.5. Upper bounds on number of queries for computing $C_G(e)$ when $\text{deg}(u) = \text{deg}(v)$

The proofs in Theorem 4 do not use any edge of weight 2 and have at most one edge of weight 1 incident on any node with the additional restriction that these edges of weight 1 provide an unique matching for the nodes that are end-points of these edges. In this section we show that if weighted neighbor queries are allowed then $O(1)$ expected number of queries will suffice for a non-trivial additive approximation for a class of weighted complete bipartite graphs that properly includes the instances generated by the proofs in Theorem 4 (note that for the instances (graphs) generated by the proofs in Theorem 4 we have $\text{deg}_{H,1}(x) \leq 1$ and $\text{deg}_{H,2}(x) = 0$ for every node $x$).

**Theorem 5.** Assume that $\text{deg}_G(u) = \text{deg}_G(v)$, and let $d, \varepsilon > 0$ be two fixed constants. Then, using $O(1)$ expected number of weighted neighbor queries\footnote{The constant in $O(1)$ depends on $d$ and $\varepsilon$.} we can obtain the following type of approximations for $C_G(e)$:

(a) an additive $(1 + \varepsilon)$-approximation when $\max_x\{\text{deg}_{H,1}(x)\} \leq d$, and

(b) an additive $(\frac{1}{2} + \varepsilon)$-approximation when $\max_x\{\text{deg}_{H,1}(x)\} \leq d$ and $\max_x\{\text{deg}_{H,2}(x)\} \leq d$.

**Remark 2.** The bounds in Theorem 5 are tight in the sense that no algorithm that knows only estimates of $m_1$ (resp. estimates of $m_1, m_2, m_{12}$) can provide better additive ratios for parts (a) (resp. (b)); see Fig. 1 (a)–(b). The example in Fig. 1 (c) shows that no algorithm can provide better than additive $\frac{2}{3}$-approximation for the case in Theorem 5 (b) if the estimate for $m_{12}$ is not used.

**Proof.** Since $\text{deg}_G(u) = \text{deg}_G(v)$ we can use the reformulations of the linear program (LP-$C_G$) outlined in Section 2.2. Let $\delta > 0$ be a constant to be fixed later. Let $H_1, H_2$ and $H_{12}$ be the subgraphs of $H$ induced by the edges in $H$ of weight 1, edges in $H$ of weight 2, and edges in $H$ of weights 1 and 2, respectively. Fix maximum-cardinality matchings $\mathcal{M}_1, \mathcal{M}_2$ and $\mathcal{M}_{12}$ of $H_1, H_2$ and $H_{12}$ having $m_1 n, m_2 n$ and $m_{12} n$ edges, respectively. Also, fix a minimum-weight perfect matching $\mathcal{M}_{\text{opt}}$ of $H$ of total weight $m_{\text{opt}} n$, and let
Let $n$ be the number of edges of weight $\ell \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ in $M_{\text{opt}}$. The following inequalities will be useful during the rest of the proof:

$$m_{\text{opt},1} \leq m_1, \quad m_{\text{opt},2} \leq m_2, \quad m_{\text{opt},3} \geq 1 - m_{12}, \quad m_{12} \geq \max\{m_1, m_2\};$$

$$m_{\text{opt}} = m_{\text{opt},1} + 2m_{\text{opt},2} + 3(1 - m_{\text{opt},1} - m_{\text{opt},2}) = 3 - 2m_{\text{opt},1} - m_{\text{opt},2} \geq 2 - 2m_{\text{opt},1} \geq 2 - 2m_1$$

Let $\mathcal{M}_s$ be a perfect matching of $H$ generated by taking all the edges (of weight 1) in $\mathcal{M}_1$ and pairing the remaining nodes from $L$ and $R$ arbitrarily. Note that the total weight $m_s n$ of the edges in $\mathcal{M}_s$ satisfies $m_{\text{opt}} \leq m_s$ and $m_s \leq m_1 + 3(1 - m_1) = 3 - 2m_1$; thus it follows that $3 - 2m_1 \geq m_{\text{opt}}$. Similarly, taking $\mathcal{M}_s$ to be a perfect matching of $H$ of total weight $m_s n$ generated by taking all the edges (of weight 2) in $\mathcal{M}_2$ and pairing the remaining nodes from $L$ and $R$ arbitrarily we get $m_{\text{opt}} \leq m_s$ and $m_s \leq 2m_2 + 3(1 - m_2) = 3 - m_2$; thus it follows that $3 - m_2 \geq m_{\text{opt}}$.

Our algorithm proceeds in two main steps. The first common step in our algorithm for both (a) and (b) is to determine the set of nodes in $L$ and $R$ from $\text{Nbr}_G(u)$ and $\text{Nbr}_G(v)$. This can be done by comparing the list of nodes in $\text{Nbr}_G(u)$ and $\text{Nbr}_G(v)$ to identify all nodes in $\text{Nbr}_G(u) \cap \text{Nbr}_G(v)$. 

Figure 1: (a) Example showing tightness of bounds in Theorem 5 when only estimate for $m_1$ is known. (b) Example showing tightness of bounds in Theorem 5 when estimates for $m_1, m_2, m_{12}$ are known; (c) Example showing that better than additive $\frac{3}{2}$-approximation is not possible if only estimates for $m_1$ and $m_2$ are used for the case in Theorem 5(b).
Note that this step does not use any query at all. The remaining parts of our algorithms will only use weighted neighbor queries \((x,1)\) for \(x \in L \cup R\).

**Proof of (a)**

Since \(\max_{v \in L \cup R}\{\deg_H(v)\} \leq d\), then using the results of Yoshida et al. [27] we can compute a number \(\tilde{m}_1\) using \(d^{O(1/\delta^2)} = O(1)\) expected number of queries such that \(m_1 n - \delta n \leq \tilde{m}_1 n \leq m_1 n\). It is straightforward to see that each query in Yoshida et al. [27] can be implemented by a weighted neighbor query \((x,1)\) for some appropriate \(x \in L \cup R\). After using \(O(1)\) expected number of weighted neighbor queries to compute \(\tilde{m}_1 n\) we output the number \(\Delta = (3-2\tilde{m}_1)\) as our estimate for \(m_{\text{opt}}\). Note that \(\Delta \geq (3-2m_1) \geq m_{\text{opt}}\), and \(\Delta - m_{\text{opt}} = (3-2\tilde{m}_1) - m_{\text{opt}} \leq (3-2m_1) + 2\delta - m_{\text{opt}} \leq 1 + 2\delta\).

Our proof is completed by taking \(\delta = \epsilon/2\).

**Proof of (b)**

Since \(\max_{v \in L \cup R}\{\deg_H(v)\} \leq d\) and \(\max_{v \in L \cup R}\{\deg_H'(v)\} \leq d\), using the results of Yoshida et al. [27] we can compute numbers \(\tilde{m}_1, \tilde{m}_2, \) and \(\tilde{m}_{12}\) using \((2d)^{O(1/\delta^2)} = O(1)\) expected number of queries such that \(m_\ell n - \delta n \leq \tilde{m}_\ell n \leq m_\ell n\) for \(\ell \in \{1,2,12\}\). It is straightforward to see that each query in Yoshida et al. [27] can be implemented by a weighted neighbor query \((x,\ell)\) for some appropriate \(x \in L \cup R\) and \(\ell \in \{1,2\}\). We perform the following case analysis to provide our estimate \(\Delta\) of \(m_{\text{opt}}\).

**Case 1:** \(\tilde{m}_1 \leq \frac{1}{4}\). Our estimate for \(m_{\text{opt}}\) is \(\Delta = 3 - \tilde{m}_2\). Note that \(\Delta \geq 3 - m_2 \geq m_{\text{opt}}\). For the additive error estimation, we have

\[
\Delta - m_{\text{opt}} = 3 - \tilde{m}_2 - m_{\text{opt}} \leq (3 - m_2 - 2m_1) + 2m_1 + \delta - m_{\text{opt}}
\leq (3 - m_{\text{opt},2} - 2m_{\text{opt},1}) + 2\left(\frac{1}{4} + \delta\right) + \delta - m_{\text{opt}} = \frac{1}{2} + 3\delta
\]

**Case 2:** \(\tilde{m}_2 \leq \frac{1}{2}\) or \(\tilde{m}_1 \geq \frac{1}{2}\) or \(\tilde{m}_{12} \leq \frac{3}{4}\). Our estimate for \(m_{\text{opt}}\) is \(\Delta = 3 - 2\tilde{m}_1\). Note that \(\Delta \geq 3 - 2m_1 \geq m_{\text{opt}}\). For the additive error bounds, we have the following:

\(\triangleright\) If \(\tilde{m}_2 \leq \frac{1}{2}\) then \(\Delta - m_{\text{opt}} = 3 - 2\tilde{m}_1 - m_{\text{opt}} = (3 - m_2 - 2m_1) + m_2 + 2\delta - m_{\text{opt}} \leq (3 - m_{\text{opt},2} - 2m_{\text{opt},1}) + \frac{1}{2} + 3\delta - m_{\text{opt}} \leq \frac{1}{2} + 3\delta\).

\(\triangleright\) If \(\tilde{m}_1 \geq \frac{1}{2}\) then since the smallest possible total weight that any perfect matching of \(H\) could have is achieved by taking all the \(m_1 n\)
edges of weight 1 and the remaining \((1 - m_1) n\) edges of weight 2. We get \(m_{\text{opt}} \geq m_1 + 2(1 - m_1) = 2 - m_1\). Consequently,

\[
\Delta - m_{\text{opt}} \leq (3 - 2 \tilde{m}_1) - (2 - m_1) \leq 1 - m_1 + 2 \delta \leq \frac{1}{2} + 2 \delta
\]

\(\triangleright\) If \(\tilde{m}_{12} \leq \frac{3}{4}\) then since \(m_{\text{opt},3} \geq 1 - m_{12}\) the smallest possible total weight that any perfect matching of \(H\) could achieve is by taking \(m_1 n\) edges of weight 1, \((1 - m_{12}) n\) edges of weight 3, and the remaining \((m_{12} - m_1) n\) edges of weight 2 we get \(m_{\text{opt}} \geq m_1 + 2(m_{12} - m_1) + 3(1 - m_{12}) = 3 - m_1 - m_{12}\). Consequently,

\[
\Delta - m_{\text{opt}} \leq (3 - 2 \tilde{m}_1) - (3 - m_1 - m_{12}) \leq (m_{12} - m_1) + 2 \delta \\
\leq (\frac{3}{4} + \tilde{\delta} - \frac{1}{4}) + 2 \delta = \frac{1}{2} + 3 \delta
\]

**Case 3: when Cases 1 and Case 2 do not apply.** For this case the following inequalities hold:

\[
\frac{1}{4} < \tilde{m}_1 < \frac{1}{2} \Rightarrow \frac{1}{4} < m_1 < \frac{1}{2} + \delta, \quad \tilde{m}_1 > \frac{1}{2} \Rightarrow m_2 > \frac{1}{2} + \delta \\
\tilde{m}_{12} > \frac{3}{4} \Rightarrow m_{12} > \frac{3}{4}
\]

For this case, we use the following lower bound for \(m_{\text{opt}}\). Since \(m_{\text{opt},3} \geq 1 - m_{12}\) the smallest possible total weight that any perfect matching of \(H\) could have is achieved by taking \(m_1 n\) edges of weight 1, \((1 - m_{12}) n\) edges of weight 3, and the remaining \((m_{12} - m_1) n\) edges of weight 2. This implies \(m_{\text{opt}} \geq m_1 + 2(m_{12} - m_1) + 3(1 - m_{12}) = 3 - m_1 - m_{12}\).

Let \(\alpha = \max\{m_{12} - 2 m_1, 0\}\). Suppose that \(\mathcal{M}_{12}\) contains \(m'_1 \leq m_1\) edges of weight 1. Consider the following process: we start with the edges in \(\mathcal{M}_{12}\), remove \(m'_1\) edges of weight 1 from it, add \(m_1\) edges of weight 1 from \(\mathcal{M}_1\) to it and finally remove (“knock out”) the edges of weight 2 that share an end-point with the edges of \(\mathcal{M}_1\) added to our collection. Since \(m_1\) edges of weight 1 can knock out at most \(2 m_1\) edges of weight 2, it follows that there are at least \(\alpha\) “surviving” edges of weight 2 that do not share any end-point with the edges in \(\mathcal{M}_1\). We now have the following two sub-cases.

**Case 3.1:** \(\tilde{m}_{1,2} \leq 2 \tilde{m}_1 + \delta\). Note that \(\tilde{m}_{1,2} \leq 2 \tilde{m}_1 + \delta\) implies \(m_{1,2} \leq 2 m_1 + 2 \delta\). Our estimate for \(m_{\text{opt}}\) is \(\Delta = 3 - 2 \tilde{m}_1\). Note that \(\Delta \geq 3 - 2 m_1 \geq m_{\text{opt}}\). For the additive error estimation, note that
\[\Delta - m_{opt} \leq (3 - 2\tilde{m}_{1}) - (3 - m_{1} - m_{12}) \leq m_{12} - m_{1} + 2\delta \leq m_{1} + 4\delta < \frac{1}{2} + 5\delta\]

**Case 3.2:** \(\tilde{m}_{1,2} > 2\tilde{m}_{1} + \delta\). Our estimate for \(m_{opt}\) is \(\Delta = 3 - \tilde{m}_{1,2}\). Note that \(\tilde{m}_{1,2} > 2\tilde{m}_{1} + \delta\) implies \(m_{1,2} > 2m_{1} + \delta\). Thus, for this case, \(\alpha = m_{12} - 2m_{1} > \delta > 0\). Let \(M'\) be a perfect matching of \(H\) generated by taking all the edges (of weight 1) in \(M_{1}\), the \(\alpha\) surviving edges of weight 2, and pairing the remaining nodes from \(L\) and \(R\) arbitrarily. Then, the total weight \(m'n\) of the edges in \(M'\) satisfies \(m_{1} + 2(m_{12} - 2m_{1}) + 3(1 - (m_{1} + (m_{12} - 2m_{1}))) = 3 - m_{12} \geq m' \geq m_{opt}\), and it follows that \(\Delta \geq 3 - m_{1,2} \geq m_{opt}\). For the additive error estimation, note that

\[\Delta - m_{opt} \leq (3 - \tilde{m}_{1,2}) - (3 - m_{1} - m_{12}) \leq m_{1} + \delta < \frac{1}{2} + 2\delta\]

In all cases, setting \(\delta = \varepsilon/5\) provides an additive \((\frac{1}{2} + \varepsilon)\)-approximation. \(\square\)

6. Computing \(\mathcal{E}_G(v)\) and \(\mathcal{E}_{avg}(G)\) using “black box” additive approximation algorithms for \(\mathcal{E}_G(e)\)

In this section we provide efficient local algorithms to compute \(\mathcal{E}_G(v)\) and \(\mathcal{E}_{avg}(G)\). The following assumptions are used by our algorithms:

- For a fixed \(r\), we have an efficient local algorithm \(\mathcal{B}\) for an additive \(r\)-approximation, say \(\mathcal{E}_G^r(e)\), of \(\mathcal{E}_G(e)\) for an edge \(e\).

- We have access to the *neighbor query model* mentioned in Section 5.2

**Lemma 6.** With probability at least \(2/3\) the following two claims hold.

(a) We can compute an additive \(2r\)-approximation of \(\mathcal{E}_G(v)\) using \(O(1/r^2)\) neighbor queries and \(O(1/r^2)\) invocations of algorithm \(\mathcal{B}\) on the edges incident on \(v\), and

(b) If the degrees of all the nodes of \(G\) are known then we can compute an additive \(2r\)-approximation of \(\mathcal{E}_{avg}(G)\) using \(O(1/r^2)\) neighbor queries and \(O(1/r^2)\) invocations of algorithm \(\mathcal{B}\) over all edges in \(G\).
Proof.

(a) Let \( k \) be a parameter to be specified later. We use \( k' = \min\{k, \deg_G(v)\} \) neighbor queries to get \( k' \) nodes adjacent to \( v \), say \( u_1, \ldots, u_{k'} \), compute \( \mathcal{C}_G^r(v, u_1), \ldots, \mathcal{C}_G^r(v, u_{k'}) \) using algorithm \( \mathcal{B} \), and return \( \mathcal{C}_G(v) = \frac{1}{k'} \sum_{j=1}^{k'} \mathcal{C}_G^r(v, u_j) \) as our answer.

If \( k > \deg_G(v) \) then \( \mathcal{C}_G(v) = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{j=1}^{k'} \mathcal{C}_G(v, u_j) \) and thus \( \mathcal{C}_G(v) \) is in fact an additive \( r \)-approximation of \( \mathcal{C}_G(v) \). Otherwise, assume that \( k \leq \deg_G(v) \) and therefore \( k' = k \). For any number \( x \), we use the notation \( x \oplus \rho \) to indicate a number \( y \) that satisfies \( x \leq y \leq x + \rho \). Observe that

\[
\mathbb{E} \left[ \mathcal{C}_G(v) \right] = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{j=1}^{k} \mathbb{E} \left[ \mathcal{C}_G^r(v, u_j) \right] = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{j=1}^{k} \sum_{u \in \text{Nbr}_G(u)} (\mathcal{C}_G((u, v)) \oplus r) \propto \frac{1}{\deg_G(v)}
\]

\[
= \frac{1}{k} \sum_{j=1}^{k} (\mathcal{C}_G(v) \oplus r) = \mathcal{C}_G(v) \oplus r
\]

Since the \( \frac{1}{k} \mathcal{C}_G^r(v, u_j) \)'s are mutually independent for \( j = 1, \ldots, k \), and each \( \frac{1}{k} \mathcal{C}_G^r(v, u_j) \) lies in the interval \([-2/k, 1/k]\) (cf. see Section 2.3), applying Hoeffding’s inequality \([43, \text{Theorem 2}]\) we get

\[
\Pr[\mathcal{C}_G(v) > \mathcal{C}_G(v) + 2r] \leq \Pr[\mathcal{C}_G(v) > \mathbb{E}[\mathcal{C}_G(v)] + r] < \exp \left( -\frac{2r^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{k}(2/k-(-1/k))^2} \right) = \exp \left( -\frac{2}{9}k^2r^2 \right)
\]

Setting \( k = \Theta(r^{-2}) \) we get \( \Pr[\mathcal{C}_G(v) > \mathcal{C}_G(v) + 2r] < 1/3 \).

(b) The algorithm and its proof is very similar to those in (a). For this case, we need to randomly sample \( k' = \min\{O(1/r^2), |E|\} \) edges \( e_1, \ldots, e_{k'} \) from \( E \), compute \( \mathcal{C}_G^r(e_1), \ldots, \mathcal{C}_G^r(e_{k'}) \) using algorithm \( \mathcal{B} \), and return \( \frac{1}{k'} \sum_{j=1}^{k'} \mathcal{C}_G^r(e_j) \) as our answer. The only remaining part of the proof is to show how to sample an edge uniformly at random from the set of edges \( E \) of \( G \). Since the degrees of all nodes are known, the following procedure can be used. We first select a node \( x \in V \) with probability \( \frac{\deg_G(x)}{\sum_{z \in V} \deg_G(z)} \), then we select a random neighbor of \( x \), say \( y \), using one neighbor query, and finally we select the edge \( \{x, y\} \). The proof is completed by observing that

\[
\Pr[\{u, v\} \in E \text{ is selected}] = \Pr[x \in V \text{ is selected}] \times \Pr[y \in \text{Nbr}_G(x) \text{ is selected}]
\]

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\[ + \Pr[y \in V \text{ is selected }] \times \Pr[x \in \text{Nbr}_G(y) \text{ is selected } ] \]
\[ = \frac{\deg_G(x)}{\sum_{z \in V} \deg_G(z)} \times \frac{1}{\deg_G(x)} + \frac{\deg_G(y)}{\sum_{z \in V} \deg_G(z)} \times \frac{1}{\deg_G(y)} = \frac{1}{|E|} \]

7. Concluding remarks

We hope that this paper will stimulate further attention from computer scientists concerning the exciting interplay between notions of curvatures from network and non-network domains. An obvious candidate for future research is improvement of the query complexities for local algorithms for computing the Ollivier-Ricci curvature for networks. Another possible future research direction is to investigate computational complexity issues of other discretizations of Ricci curvatures. For example, another discretization of Ricci curvature for networks proposed by Ollivier and Villani [44] is guided by the observation that the infinite-dimensional version of the well-known Brunn-Minkowski inequality over \(\mathbb{R}^n\) [45] can be tightened in the presence of a positive curvature for a smooth Riemannian manifold [46, 47]. To our knowledge, these discretizations have largely escaped computational complexity considerations.

Appendix A. Proof of Fact 1

Let \(\deg_G(u) = \deg_G(v) = \alpha\). Build a directed single-source single-sink flow network \([48]\) \(G_{u,v}^f\) from \(G_{u,v}\) in the following manner: add a new source node \(s\) and a new sink node \(t\), add an arc (directed edge) from \(s\) to every node of \(L_{u,v}^G\) of weight zero and capacity 1, add an arc from every node of \(R_{u,v}^G\) to \(t\) of weight zero and capacity 1, orient every edge \(\{u',v'\}\) of \(G_{u,v}\) from \(u'\) to \(v'\) and set its capacity to 1. Since \(|L_{u,v}^G| = |R_{u,v}^G| = \alpha + 1\), we have \(P_u^G(u') = P_v^G(v') = \frac{1}{\alpha + 1}\) for all \(u' \in \text{Nbr}_G(u) \cup \{u\}\) and \(v' \in \text{Nbr}_G(v) \cup \{v\}\). Thus, since \(G_{u,v}\) is a complete bipartite graph, by a simple scaling it follows that \(\text{EMD}_{G_{u,v}}(P_u^G, P_v^G) = \frac{M}{\alpha + 1}\) where \(M\) is the total weight of a minimum-weight maximum \(s-t\) flow on \(G_{u,v}^f\). Since the node-arc incidence matrix of a directed graph is totally unimodular, the flow value of every arc of any extreme-point optimal solution of the minimum-weight maximum \(s-t\) flow on \(G_{u,v}^f\) is integral and therefore 0 or 1 (see Theorem 13.3 and its corollary in [48]). This integrality of flow values and the fact that \(G_{u,v}\) is a complete
bipartite graph imply $\mathcal{M}$ is also the total weight of a minimum-weight perfect matching of $G_{u,v}$.

We now show that there is such a minimum-weight perfect matching that uses all the zero-weight edges $\{u',u''\}$ for all $u' \in \{u,v\} \cup (\text{Nbr}_G(u) \cap \text{Nbr}_G(v))$. For a contradiction, suppose that the edge $\{u',u''\}$ is not used for some $u' \in \{u,v\} \cup (\text{Nbr}_G(u) \cap \text{Nbr}_G(v))$. Since our solution is a perfect matching, the nodes $u' \in L_{G_{u,v}}$ and $u' \in R_{G_{u,v}}$ must be matched to some other nodes, say to nodes $v'' \in R_{u,v}$ and $u'' \in L_{u,v}$, respectively. Then, if we instead use the edges $\{u',u''\}$ and $\{u'',v''\}$ then using the triangle inequality it follows that the total weight of this modified perfect matching is no more than that of the original perfect matching since:

$$w_{G_{u,v}}(u',u') + w_{G_{u,v}}(u'',v'') = w_{G_{u,v}}(u'',u'') \leq w_{G_{u,v}}(u'',u') + w_{G_{u,v}}(u',u') + w_{G_{u,v}}(u',v'')$$

$$= w_{G_{u,v}}(u'',u') + w_{G_{u,v}}(u',v'')$$

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