On random digraphs and cores

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Abstract

An acyclic homomorphism of a digraph $C$ to a digraph $D$ is a function $\rho: V(C) \to V(D)$ such that for every arc $uv$ of $C$, either $\rho(u) = \rho(v)$, or $\rho(u)\rho(v)$ is an arc of $D$ and for every vertex $v \in V(D)$, the subdigraph of $C$ induced by $\rho^{-1}(v)$ is acyclic. A digraph $D$ is a core if the only acyclic homomorphisms of $D$ to itself are automorphisms. In this paper, we prove that for certain choices of $p(n)$, random digraphs $D \in D(n,p(n))$ are asymptotically almost surely cores. For digraphs, this mirrors a result from [A. Bonato and P. Praatz, Discrete Math. 309 (18) (2009), 5535–5539; MR2567955] concerning random graphs and cores.

1 Introduction

In this paper, we follow [1] and [2] for definitions and terminology. Our digraphs are simple, i.e., loopless and without multiple arcs. However, we allow two vertices $u, v$ to be joined by two oppositely directed arcs, $uv$ and $vu$. By a cycle, we always

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mean a directed cycle in the digraph case. For a natural number \( n \) and \( 0 \leq p \leq 1 \), a digraph \( D \in D(n, p) \) is defined to be a digraph on \( n \) vertices (we use \( V(D) = [n] = \{1, 2, \ldots, n\} \)) where each ordered pair of vertices is joined by an arc with probability \( p \), with the arcs chosen independently. Note that if \( D \) is any particular digraph on \( n \) vertices, then the probability of obtaining \( D \) is \( p^{|A(D)|}(1 - p)^{n(n-1) - |A(D)|} \).

If \( \mathcal{Q} \) is any digraph property (e.g., contains a \( \rightarrow \leftarrow K_3 \), is connected, etc.), we say that \( D \in D(n, p(n)) \) has property \( \mathcal{Q} \) a.a.s. (asymptotically almost surely) if \( P(D \in \mathcal{Q}) \to 1 \) as \( n \to \infty \). We use \( v_C \) and \( a_C \) to denote \( |V(C)| \) and \( |A(C)| \), respectively, for a digraph \( C \). We sometimes use the asymptotic notations \( a_n \ll b_n \) and \( a_n \approx b_n \) to denote \( a_n = o(b_n) \) and \( a_n = \Theta(b_n) \), respectively, for positive sequences \( (a_n) \) and \( (b_n) \).

The maximum density of \( D \) is

\[
m(D) := \max \left\{ \frac{a_C}{v_C} : C \text{ is a subdigraph of } D \text{ and } v_C > 0 \right\}.
\]

Let \( \mathcal{Q} \) be a nontrivial digraph property (a property that is not satisfied by all or no digraphs). We say that \( \mathcal{Q} \) is monotone increasing if \( D \in \mathcal{Q} \) implies that \( C \in \mathcal{Q} \) for every digraph \( C \) on the same set of vertices containing \( D \) as a subdigraph. Let \( \mathcal{Q} \) be a nontrivial monotone increasing digraph property, \( (\hat{p}_n) \) a sequence of probabilities, and \( D \in D(n, p(n)) \). Then \( (\hat{p}_n) \) is a threshold for \( \mathcal{Q} \) if

\[
P(D \in \mathcal{Q}) \to \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } p(n) \ll \hat{p}_n \\ 1 & \text{if } p(n) \gg \hat{p}_n \end{cases}
\]
as \( n \to \infty \).

The following assertion is a digraph analogue of [6, Theorem 3.4] and can be proved following the same technique.

**Theorem 1.1.** For an arbitrary digraph \( C \) with at least one arc,

\[
\lim_{n \to \infty} P(C \subseteq D \in D(n, p(n))) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } p(n) \ll n^{-1/m(C)} \\ 1 & \text{if } p(n) \gg n^{-1/m(C)} \end{cases}.
\]

## 2 Asymptotic properties of random digraphs

We begin with Chernoff’s inequality, which is used extensively in the proof of Lemma 2.3. Here \( X \in B(n, p) \) indicates that \( X \) is a binomial random variable with parameters \( n \) and \( p \), with \( n \) being the number of trials and \( p \) the success probability of each trial.

**Theorem 2.1** (Chernoff’s inequality [3]). If \( X \in B(n, p) \) and \( \lambda = np \), then, with \( \rho(x) = (1 + x) \log(1 + x) - x \) for \( x \geq -1 \) (and \( \rho(x) = \infty \) for \( x < -1 \)), we have

\[
P(X \geq E(X) + t) \leq \exp(-\lambda \rho(t/\lambda)) \leq \exp \left( -\frac{t^2}{2(\lambda + t/3)} \right) \text{ for } t \geq 0,
\]
and
\[ P(X \leq E(X) - t) \leq \exp(-\lambda \rho(-t/\lambda)) \leq \exp\left(-\frac{t^2}{2\lambda}\right) \quad \text{for } t \geq 0. \]

One immediate consequence of Theorem 2.1 is

**Corollary 2.2** ([6]). If \( X \in B(n,p) \) and \( \epsilon > 0 \), then
\[ P(|X - E(X)| \geq \epsilon E(X)) \leq 2 \exp(-\rho(\epsilon)E(X)). \]
In particular, if \( \epsilon \leq 3/2 \), then
\[ P(|X - E(X)| \geq \epsilon E(X) \leq 2 \exp\left(-\frac{\epsilon^2 E(X)}{3}\right). \]

In order to prove the main result of this paper—Theorem 3.1—we need several lemmas, collected together in the following result. This extends Lemma 1 in [3] to random digraphs.

**Lemma 2.3.** If \( n^{-1/9} \log^2 n < p = p(n) < 1 - n^{-1/9} \log^2 n \), then a.a.s. \( D \in D(n,p) \) has the following properties:

(a) the number of neighbours of a vertex of \( D \) is at least \( n(2p - p^2)(1 - o(1)) \) and at most \( n(2p - p^2)(1 + o(1)) \);

(b) every pair of distinct vertices of \( D \) has at least \( np^2(2 - p)^2(1 - o(1)) \) and at most \( np^2(2 - p)^2(1 + o(1)) \) common neighbours;

(c) the largest acyclic subdigraph of \( D \) has fewer than \( n^{1/9} \) vertices;

(d) each set of \( k \) vertices, where \( k \geq k_0 = k_0(n) = n^{1/9} \log^2 n/2 \), induces a subdigraph with at most \( 2p(n)^k(1 + o(1)) \) arcs;

(e) in each set of \( k \) disjoint pairs of vertices \( \{v_i, w_i\} \), for \( i \in [k] \) where \( k \geq k_1 = k_1(n) = n^{1/9} \log^2 n \), there are at least \( 2(1 - (1 - p)^2)(\frac{k}{2})(1 + o(1)) \) pairs \( (i, j) \) such that at least one of \( v_i w_j, v_i w_j, w_i v_j, w_i w_j \) is an arc of \( D \).

**Proof.** (a) Let \( v \) be an arbitrary vertex of \( D \in D(n,p) \). We define the random variable \( X \) as \( X = |N_D(v)| \). We have
\[ E(X) = (n - 1)(1 - (1 - p)^2) = (n - 1)(2p - p^2) = n(2p - p^2) - O(1). \]
Using Corollary 2.2 with \( \epsilon = \log n/\sqrt{n(2p - p^2)} \) we have
\[ P(X \geq n(2p - p^2) + \sqrt{n(2p - p^2) \log n} \text{ or } X \leq n(2p - p^2) - \sqrt{n(2p - p^2) \log n}) \]
So a.a.s. the number of common neighbours of any two distinct vertices lies between \([n(2p-p^2)+\sqrt{n(2p-p^2)}\log n]\) or at most \([n(2p-p^2)-\sqrt{n(2p-p^2)}\log n]\) neighbours. Using Markov’s inequality, we have

\[
P(Y=0) = 1 - P(Y \geq 1) \geq 1 - E(Y) \geq 1 - 2n \exp\left(-\frac{\log^2 n}{3}\right) \to 1 \text{ as } n \to \infty.
\]

So a.a.s. the number of neighbours of every vertex of \(D \in D(n,p)\) lies between \(n(2p-p^2)(1-o(1))\) and \(n(2p-p^2)(1+o(1))\).

(b) Let \(v_1\) and \(v_2\) be two distinct vertices of \(D \in D(n,p)\) and let \(X\) count their common neighbours. Then

\[
E(X) = (n-2)[1-(1-p)^2][1-(1-p)^2] = (n-2)p^2(2-p)^2 = np^2(2-p)^2 - O(1).
\]

Using Corollary 2.2 with \(\epsilon = \log n/\sqrt{np^2(2-p)^2}\), we have

\[
P(X \geq np^2(2-p)^2 + \sqrt{np^2(2-p)^2}\log n \text{ or } X \leq np^2(2-p)^2 - \sqrt{np^2(2-p)^2}\log n ) \leq 2 \exp\left(-\frac{\log^2 n}{3}\right).
\]

Now, suppose that \(Y\) counts all pairs of vertices having at least \(np^2(2-p)^2 + \sqrt{np^2(2-p)^2}\log n\) or at most \(np^2(2-p)^2 - \sqrt{np^2(2-p)^2}\log n\) common neighbours. Then

\[
P(Y=0) = 1 - P(Y \geq 1) \geq 1 - E(Y) \geq 1 - \left(\frac{n}{2}\right) \exp\left(-\frac{\log^2 n}{3}\right)
\]

\[= 1 - O(n^2) \exp\left(-\frac{\log^2 n}{3}\right) \to 1 \text{ as } n \to \infty.
\]

So a.a.s. the number of common neighbours of any two distinct vertices lies between \(np^2(2-p)^2(1-o(1))\) and \(np^2(2-p)^2(1+o(1))\).

(c) It is enough to show that any subdigraph of \(D \in D(n,p)\) on \(n^{1/9}\) vertices a.a.s. contains a cycle. To this end, let \(C\) be such a subdigraph. We can view \(C\) as being sampled from \(D(n^{1/9},p)\). Using Theorem 1.1 we deduce that \(p = n^{-1/9}\) is a threshold for containing a cycle in \(D(n^{1/9},p)\) (because the maximum density of a cycle is 1), so because \(n^{-1/9}\log^2 n \leq p = p(n)\), the subdigraph \(C\) a.a.s. contains a cycle.

(d) For an integer \(k > n^{1/9}\log^2 n/2\) and a set \(S \subseteq V(D)\) with \(|S| = k\), let us enumerate \(S\) as \(\{1, 2, \ldots, k\}\). Let the random variable \(X\) count the number of arcs in the subdigraph induced by \(S\). Then \(X = \sum_{1 \leq i \neq j \leq k} X_{ij}\), where \(X_{ij}\) counts the number of arcs (zero or one) from \(i\) to \(j\). Thus

\[
E(X) = \sum_{1 \leq i \neq j \leq k} E(X_{ij}) = 2 \binom{k}{2} p.
\]
Using Corollary 2.2 with \( \epsilon = 1/\log n \), we have:
\[
P\left( X \geq 2p\left( \frac{k}{2} \right) \left( 1 + 1/\log n \right) \right) \quad \text{or} \quad X \leq 2p\left( \frac{k}{2} \right) \left( 1 - 1/\log n \right)
\]
\[
\leq 2 \exp \left( -\frac{1}{3 \log^2 n} \frac{2}{3} p \right)
\]
\[
\leq 2 \exp \left( -\frac{1}{3 \log^2 n} \frac{k^2 n^{-1/9} \log^2 n}{3} \right)
\]
\[
\leq 2 \exp \left( -\frac{k^2 n^{-1/9}}{3} \right),
\]
the estimate (1) following from the hypothesis \( p \geq n^{-1/9} \log^2 n \). Now, suppose that \( Y_t \) counts all the subsets of \( V(D) \) of fixed size \( t \geq k_0 \) whose induced subdigraphs have at least \( 2p\left( \frac{k}{2} \right) \left( 1 + 1/\log n \right) \) or at most \( 2p\left( \frac{k}{2} \right) \left( 1 - 1/\log n \right) \) arcs. Then \( Y = \sum_{t=k_0}^{n} Y_t \) counts all the subsets \( U \) of size at least \( k_0 \) whose induced subdigraphs have at least \( 2p\left( \frac{|U|}{2} \right) \left( 1 + 1/\log n \right) \) or at most \( 2p\left( \frac{|U|}{2} \right) \left( 1 - 1/\log n \right) \) arcs. We have:
\[
E(Y) = \sum_{t=k_0}^{n} E(Y_t)
\]
\[
\leq \sum_{t=k_0}^{n} 2 \left( \frac{n}{t} \right) \exp \left( -\frac{t^2 n^{-1/9}}{3} \right)
\]
\[
< \sum_{t=k_0}^{n} 2 \left( \frac{ne}{t} \right) t \exp \left( -\frac{t^2 n^{-1/9}}{3} \right)
\]
\[
= \sum_{t=k_0}^{n} 2 \exp \left( -t \log t + t \log n + t - \frac{t^2 n^{-1/9}}{3} \right)
\]
\[
= \sum_{t=k_0}^{n} 2 \exp \left( t \left( \log n + 1 - \log t - \frac{tn^{-1/9}}{3} \right) \right)
\]
\[
< 2 \sum_{t=k_0}^{n} e^{-t}
\]
\[
< 2 \sum_{t=k_0}^{\infty} e^{-t} = \frac{2e^{-k_0}}{1 - e^{-1}} = o(1).
\]
The estimate (3) follows from (2), relation (4) follows from the fact that \( \binom{n}{t} < \left( \frac{ne}{t} \right)^t \), and (5) follows from the bound \( \log n + 1 - \log t - \frac{tn^{-1/9}}{3} < -1 \). Using the bound (6) in Markov’s inequality, we find that
\[
P(Y = 0) = 1 - P(Y \geq 1) \geq 1 - E(Y) \to 1 \text{ as } n \to \infty.
\]
So a.a.s. each set of \( k \geq n^{1/9} \log^2 n / 2 \) vertices induces a subdigraph with at most \( 2p\left( \frac{k}{2} \right) \left( 1 + 1/\log n \right) = 2p\left( \frac{k}{2} \right) (1 + o(1)) \) arcs.
(e) Let \( S \) be a set of \( k \geq k_1 = n^{1/9} \log^2 n \) disjoint pairs of vertices \( \{v_i, w_i\} \), for \( i \in [k] \) of \( D \in D(n, p) \). Let \( S' \) (the ‘contraction’ of \( S \)) be the set obtained from \( S \) by identifying \( w_i \) with its corresponding \( v_i \). For convenience, we enumerate \( S' \) as \( \{1, 2, \ldots, k\} \). Now, suppose that \( X \) counts the number of arcs (excluding loops and multiple arcs) in the subgraph induced by \( S' \). Then \( X = \sum_{1 \leq i \neq j \leq k} X_{ij} \), where \( X_{ij} \) counts the number of arcs (zero or one) from \( i \) to \( j \) in the subdigraph induced by \( S' \) (note that the sum is over ordered pairs). We have

\[
E(X_{ij}) = P(X_{ij} = 1) - P(X_{ij} = 0) = 1 - (1 - p)^4,
\]

so that

\[
E(X) = \sum_{1 \leq i \neq j \leq k} E(X_{ij}) = 2 \binom{k}{2} (1 - (1 - p)^4) [1 - (1 - p)^4].
\]

Using Corollary 2.2 with \( \epsilon = 1/\log n \), we have:

\[
P\left[X \geq 2 \binom{k}{2} (1 - (1 - p)^4) (1 + 1/\log n) \text{ or } X \leq 2 \binom{k}{2} (1 - (1 - p)^4) (1 - 1/\log n)\right]
\]

\[
\leq 2 \exp\left(-\frac{1}{3 \log^2 n} 2 \binom{k}{2} [1 - (1 - p)^4]\right)
\]

\[
\leq 2 \exp\left(-\frac{1}{3 \log^2 n} 2 \binom{k}{2} p\right) \tag{7}
\]

\[
\leq 2 \exp\left(-\frac{1}{3 \log^2 n} k^2 n^{-1/9} \log^2 n\right)
\]

\[
= 2 \exp\left(-\frac{k^2 n^{-1/9}}{3}\right),
\]

where the estimate (7) follows from the fact that \( 1 - (1 - p)^4 \geq p \) for \( 0 < p < 1 \).

Now, suppose that \( Y_k \) counts all the sets with exactly \( k \) disjoint pairs of vertices of \( D \) whose contractions induce subgraphs with at least \( 2 \binom{k}{2} [1 - (1 - p)^4] (1 + 1/\log n) \) or at most \( 2 \binom{k}{2} [1 - (1 - p)^4] (1 - 1/\log n) \) arcs (excluding loops and multiple arcs). Then \( Y = \sum_{k=k_1}^n Y_k \) counts all the sets with at least \( k_1 \) disjoint pairs whose contractions \( U \) induce subgraphs with at least \( 2 \binom{U}{2} [1 - (1 - p)^4] (1 + 1/\log n) \) or at most \( 2 \binom{U}{2} [1 - (1 - p)^4] (1 - 1/\log n) \) arcs. Arguing similarly to our estimates in part (d), we now have:

\[
E(Y) = \sum_{k=k_1}^n E(Y_k)
\]

\[
\leq \sum_{k=k_1}^n 2 \binom{n^2}{k} \exp\left(-\frac{k^2 n^{-1/9}}{3}\right)
\]

\[
< \sum_{k=k_1}^n 2 \frac{n^2 e \cdot k}{k} \exp\left(-\frac{k^2 n^{-1/9}}{3}\right)
\]
is, if $D$ must be mapped by $f$ Lemma 2.3. Suppose for a contradiction that there exists an acyclic homomorphism $f$.

**Proof.** The bounds on $N$ being $\sum_{k=k_1}^{n} 2 \exp \left( -k \log k + 2k \log n + k - \frac{k^2 n^{-1/9}}{3} \right) = \sum_{k=k_1}^{n} 2 \exp \left( k \left( 2 \log n + 1 - \log k - \frac{kn^{-1/9}}{3} \right) \right) < 2 \sum_{k=k_1}^{n} e^{-k} < 2 \sum_{k=k_1}^{\infty} e^{-k} = \frac{2e^{-k_1}}{1-e^{-1}} = o(1).$ (8)

Using the bound (8) in Markov’s inequality, we find that

\[ P(Y = 0) = 1 - P(Y \geq 1) \geq 1 - E(Y) \to 1 \text{ as } n \to \infty. \]

So a.a.s. the contraction of each set $S$ of $k \geq n^{1/9} \log^2 n$ disjoint pairs of vertices of $D$ induces a subdigraph with $2(\binom{k}{2} (1 + 1/\log n))$ arcs (excluding loops and multiple arcs). It follows that in each set of $k$ disjoint pairs of vertices $\{v_i, w_i\}$, for $i \in \{1, 2, \ldots, k\}$ with $k \geq n^{1/9} \log^2 n$, there are $2(1 - (1 - p)^4)\binom{k}{2}(1 + o(1))$ pairs $(i, j)$ such that at least one of $v_i, v_j, v_i w_j, w_i v_j, w_i w_j$ is an arc of $D$. \[ \square \]

### 3 A.a.s. all digraphs are cores

An **acyclic homomorphism** of a digraph $D$ to a digraph $C$, first defined in [2], is a function $\rho: V(D) \to V(C)$ such that:

(i) for every arc $uv \in A(D)$, either $\rho(u) = \rho(v)$, or $\rho(u)\rho(v)$ is an arc of $C$; and

(ii) for every vertex $v \in V(C)$, the subdigraph of $D$ induced by $\rho^{-1}(v)$ is acyclic.

For a more thorough treatment of graph and digraph homomorphisms, the reader is encouraged to consult [5]. We are now ready to state and prove the main result of this paper.

**Theorem 3.1.** If $n^{-1/9} \log^2 n < p < 1 - n^{-1/9} \log^2 n$, and $D, C \in D(n, p)$, then a.a.s. every acyclic homomorphism $f: V(D) \to V(C)$ is injective.

**Proof.** The bounds on $p$ imply that $D$ and $C$ a.a.s. satisfy properties (a)–(e) in Lemma 2.3. Suppose for a contradiction that there exists an acyclic homomorphism $f: V(D) \to V(C)$ that is not injective. Then $f(x) = f(y) = z \in V(C)$ for some distinct vertices $x, y \in V(D)$. Thus the set $A$ of vertices adjacent to either $x$ or $y$ in $D$ must be mapped by $f$ to the set $B$ containing $z$ and vertices adjacent to $z$. That is, if $A = N_D(x) \cup N_D(y)$ and $B = N_C[z]$, then $f(A) \subseteq B$ (our notational convention being $N[z] = \{z\} \cup N(z)$). Using (a) and (b) in Lemma 2.3 a.a.s. we have

\[ |A| \geq 2n(2p - p^2)(1 - o(1)) - np^2(2 - p)^2(1 + o(1)) \]

\[ \asymp (2np(2 - p) - np^2(2 - p)^2)(1 - o(1)) \]
\[
= np(2 - p)(2 - p(2 - p))(1 - o(1)),
\]
and
\[
|f(A)| \leq |B| \leq n(2p - p^2)(1 + o(1)).
\]
Thus a.a.s.
\[
|A| - |f(A)| \geq \left[ np(2 - p)(p^2 - 2p + 2) \right] (1 - o(1)) - np(2 - p)(1 + o(1))
\]
\[
= np(2 - p)(1 - p)^2(1 + o(1))
\]
\[
> \frac{1}{2} np(1 - p)^2(1 + o(1))
\]
\[
\geq \frac{1}{2} n^{2/3} \log^6 n(1 + o(1))
\]
\[
\geq \frac{1}{2} n^{2/3} \log^2 n(1 + o(1)) \quad (9)
\]
where the bound (9) follows from the fact that \( p > n^{-1/9} \log^2 n \) and \( 1 - p > n^{-1/9} \log^2 n \). Because \( f \) is an acyclic homomorphism, for any vertex \( v \in V(C) \), the set \( f^{-1}(v) \) is an acyclic set in \( D \) so \( |f^{-1}(v)| < n^{1/9} \) (part (c) of Lemma 2.3). Using the fact that \( |A| - |f(A)| \geq n^{2/3} \log^2 n/2 \) and \( |f^{-1}(v)| < n^{1/9} \) shows that a.a.s. there are
\[
k > \frac{|A| - |f(A)|}{n^{1/9}} > \frac{1}{2} n^{5/9} \log^2 n > \frac{1}{2} n^{1/3} \log^2 n > n^{1/9} \log^2 n
\]
vertices \( v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_k \in f(A) \) such that \( |f^{-1}(v_i)| \geq 2 \). Using property (e) of Lemma 2.3 we see that a.a.s. there are
\[
2(1 - (1 - p)^4 \binom{k}{2})(1 \pm o(1))
\]
arcs among the vertices in \( \bigcup_{i=1}^{k} f^{-1}(v_i) \subseteq A \) and consequently among the vertices \( v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_k \). But part (d) implies that there are at most \( 2p \binom{k}{2}(1 + o(1)) \) such arcs. This gives our desired contradiction because \( 2(1 - (1 - p)^4 \binom{k}{2})(1 \pm o(1)) > 2p \binom{k}{2}(1 + o(1)) \).

**Corollary 3.2.** If \( n^{-1/9} \log^2 n < p < 1 - n^{-1/9} \log^2 n \), then a.a.s. a random digraph \( D \in D(n, p) \) is a core.

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