

# On the Shannon Capacity of a Graph

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*Abstract*—It is proved that the Shannon zero-error capacity of the pentagon is  $\sqrt{5}$ . The method is then generalized to obtain upper bounds on the capacity of an arbitrary graph. A well-characterized, and in a sense easily computable, function is introduced which bounds the capacity from above and equals the capacity in a large number of cases. Several results are obtained on the capacity of special graphs; for example, the Petersen graph has capacity four and a self-complementary graph with  $n$  points and with a vertex-transitive automorphism group has capacity  $\sqrt{n}$ .

## I. INTRODUCTION

LET THERE BE a graph  $G$ , whose vertices are letters in an alphabet and in which adjacency means that the letters can be confused. Then the maximum number of one-letter messages which can be sent without danger of confusion is clearly  $\alpha(G)$ , the maximum number of independent points in the graph  $G$ . Denote by  $\alpha(G^k)$  the maximum number of  $k$ -letter messages which can be sent without danger of confusion (two  $k$ -letter words are confoundable if for each  $1 \leq i \leq k$ , their  $i$ th letters are confoundable or equal). It is clear that there are at least  $\alpha(G)^k$  such words (formed from a maximum set of nonconfoundable letters), but one may be able to do better. For example, if  $C_5$  is a pentagon, then  $\alpha(C_5^2) = 5$ . In fact, if  $v_1, \dots, v_5$  are the vertices of the pentagon (in this cyclic order), then the words  $v_1v_1, v_2v_3, v_3v_5, v_4v_2,$  and  $v_5v_4$  are nonconfoundable.

It is easily seen that

$$\Theta(G) = \sup_k \sqrt[k]{\alpha(G^k)} = \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \sqrt[k]{\alpha(G^k)}.$$

This number was introduced by Shannon [6] and is called the *Shannon capacity* of the graph  $G$ . The previous consideration shows that  $\Theta(G) \geq \alpha(G)$  and that, in general, equality does not hold.

The determination of the Shannon capacity is a very difficult problem even for very simple small graphs. Shannon proved that  $\alpha(G) = \Theta(G)$  for those graphs which can be covered by  $\alpha(G)$  cliques (the best known such graphs are the so-called perfect graphs; see [1]). However, even for the simplest graph not covered by this result—the pentagon—the Shannon capacity was previously unknown.

A general upper bound on  $\Theta(G)$  was also given in [6] (this bound was discussed in detail by Rosenfeld [5]). We assign nonnegative weights  $w(x)$  to the vertices  $x$  of  $G$  such that

$$\sum_{x \in C} w(x) \leq 1$$

for every complete subgraph  $C$  in  $G$ ; such an assignment is called a *fractional vertex packing*. The maximum of  $\sum_x w(x)$ , taken over all fractional vertex packings, is denoted by  $\alpha^*(G)$ . It follows easily from the duality theorem of linear programming that  $\alpha^*(G)$  can be defined dually as follows: we assign nonnegative weights  $q(C)$  to the cliques  $C$  of  $G$  such that

$$\sum_{C \ni x} q(C) \geq 1$$

for each point  $x$  of  $G$  and minimize  $\sum_C q(C)$ .

With this notation Shannon's theorem states

$$\Theta(G) \leq \alpha^*(G).$$

For the case of the pentagon, this result and the remark above yield the bounds

$$\sqrt{5} \leq \Theta(C_5) \leq 5/2.$$

We shall prove that the lower bound is the precise value. This will be achieved by deriving a general upper bound on  $\Theta(G)$ . This upper bound is well characterized and in a sense easily computable. Our methods will enable us to determine or estimate the capacity of other graphs as well. For example, the Petersen graph has capacity four.

## II. THE CAPACITY OF THE PENTAGON

Let  $G$  be a finite undirected graph without loops. We say that two vertices of  $G$  are *adjacent* if they are either connected by an edge or are equal.

The set of points of the graph  $G$  is denoted by  $V(G)$ . The *complementary graph* of  $G$  is defined as the graph  $\bar{G}$  with  $V(\bar{G}) = V(G)$  and in which two points are connected by an edge iff they are not connected in  $G$ . A *k-coloration* of  $G$  is a partition of  $V(G)$  into  $k$  sets independent in  $G$ . Note that this corresponds to a covering of the points of the complementary graph by  $k$  cliques. The least  $k$  for which  $G$  admits a  $k$ -coloration is called its *chromatic number*.

A permutation of  $V(G)$  is an *automorphism* if it preserves adjacency of the points. The automorphisms of  $G$

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form a permutation group called the *automorphism group* of  $G$ . If for each pair of points  $x, y \in V(G)$  there exists an automorphism mapping  $x$  onto  $y$ , then the automorphism group is called *vertex transitive*. *Edge transitivity* is defined in an analog manner. A graph is called *regular* of degree  $d$  if each point is incident with  $d$  edges. Note that graphs whose automorphism groups are vertex transitive are regular. This does not necessarily hold for edge transitivity (as, for example, in the case of a star).

If  $G$  and  $H$  are two graphs, then their *strong product*  $G \cdot H$  is defined as the graph with  $V(G \cdot H) = V(G) \times V(H)$ , in which  $(x, y)$  is adjacent to  $(x', y')$  iff  $x$  is adjacent to  $x'$  in  $G$  and  $y$  is adjacent to  $y'$  in  $H$ . If we denote by  $G^k$  the strong product of  $k$  copies of  $G$ , then  $\alpha(G^k)$  is indeed the maximum number of independent points in  $G^k$ .

We shall use linear algebra extensively. For various properties of (mostly semidefinite) matrices, see, for example, [4]. All vectors will be column vectors. We shall denote by  $I$  the identity matrix, by  $J$  the square matrix all of whose entries are ones, and by  $j$  the vector whose entries are ones (the dimension of these matrices and vectors will be clear from the context).

Besides the inner product of vectors  $v, w$  (denoted by  $c^T w$ , where  $T$  denotes transpose), we shall use the *tensor product*, defined as follows. If  $v = (v_1, \dots, v_n)$  and  $w = (w_1, \dots, w_m)$ , then we denote by  $v \circ w$  the vector  $(v_1 w_1, \dots, v_1 w_m, v_2 w_1, \dots, v_n w_m)^T$  of length  $nm$ . A simple computation shows that the two kinds of vector multiplication are connected by

$$(x \circ y)^T (v \circ w) = (x^T v)(y^T w). \quad (1)$$

Let  $G$  be a graph. For simplicity we shall always assume that its vertices are  $1, \dots, n$ . An *orthonormal representation* of  $G$  is a system  $(v_1, \dots, v_n)$  of unit vectors in a Euclidean space such that if  $i$  and  $j$  are nonadjacent vertices, then  $v_i$  and  $v_j$  are orthogonal. Clearly, every graph has an orthonormal representation, for example, by pairwise orthogonal vectors.

*Lemma 1:* Let  $(u_1, \dots, u_n)$  and  $(v_1, \dots, v_m)$  be orthonormal representations of  $G$  and  $H$ , respectively. Then the vectors  $u_i \circ v_j$  form an orthonormal representation of  $G \cdot H$ .

The proof is immediate from (1).

Define the *value* of an orthonormal representation  $(u_1, \dots, u_n)$  to be

$$\min_c \max_{1 < i < n} \frac{1}{(c^T u_i)^2}$$

where  $c$  ranges over all unit vectors. The vector  $c$  yielding the minimum is called the *handle* of the representation. Let  $\vartheta(G)$  denote the minimum value over all representations of  $G$ . It is easy to see that this minimum is attained. Call a representation *optimal* if it achieves this minimum value.

*Lemma 2:*  $\vartheta(G \cdot H) \leq \vartheta(G)\vartheta(H)$ .

*Proof:* Let  $(u_1, \dots, u_n)$  and  $(v_1, \dots, v_m)$  be optimal orthonormal representations of  $G$  and  $H$ , with handles  $c$  and  $d$ , respectively. Then  $c \circ d$  is a unit vector by (1), and

hence

$$\begin{aligned} \vartheta(G \circ H) &\leq \max_{i,j} \frac{1}{((c \circ d)^T (u_i \circ v_j))^2} = \max_{i,j} \frac{1}{(c^T u_i)^2} \\ &= \vartheta(G)\vartheta(H). \end{aligned}$$

*Remark:* We shall see later that equality holds in Lemma 2.

*Lemma 3:*  $\alpha(G) \leq \vartheta(G)$ .

*Proof:* Let  $(u_1, \dots, u_n)$  be an optimal orthonormal representation of  $G$  with handle  $c$ . Let  $\{1, \dots, \alpha(G)\}$  be a maximum independent set in  $G$ . For example, be a maximum independent set in  $G$ .  $u_1, \dots, u_k$  are pairwise orthogonal, and so

$$1 = c^2 \geq \sum_{i=1}^k (c^T u_i)^2 \geq \alpha(G) / \vartheta(G).$$

*Theorem 1:*  $\Theta(G) \leq \vartheta(G)$ .

*Proof:* By Lemmas 1 and 2,  $\alpha(G^k) \leq \vartheta(G^k) \leq$

*Theorem 2:*  $\Theta(C_5) = \sqrt{5}$ .

*Proof:* Consider an umbrella whose handle  $c$  and ribs have unit length. Open the umbrella to the position where the maximum angle between the ribs is  $\pi/2$ . Let  $u_1, u_2, u_3, u_4, u_5$  be the ribs and  $c$  be the handle, as oriented away from their common point. Then  $u_1, \dots, u_5$  is an orthonormal representation of  $C_5$ . Moreover, it is easy to compute from the spherical cosine theorem that  $c^T u_i = 5^{-1/4}$ , and hence

$$\Theta(C_5) \leq \vartheta(C_5) \leq \max_i \frac{1}{(c^T u_i)^2} = \sqrt{5}.$$

The opposite inequality is known, and hence the theorem follows.

### III. FORMULAS FOR $\vartheta(G)$

To be able to apply Theorem 1 to estimate or compute the Shannon capacity of other graphs we must investigate the number  $\vartheta(G)$  in greater detail.

*Theorem 3:* Let  $G$  be a graph on vertices  $\{1, \dots, n\}$ . Then  $\vartheta(G)$  is the minimum of the largest eigenvalue of any symmetric matrix  $(a_{ij})_{i,j=1}^n$  such that

$$a_{ij} = 1, \quad \text{if } i = j \text{ or if } i \text{ and } j \text{ are nonadjacent}$$

*Proof:*

1) Let  $(u_1, \dots, u_n)$  be an optimal orthonormal representation of  $G$  with handle  $c$ . Define

$$a_{ij} = 1 - \frac{u_i^T u_j}{(c^T u_i)(c^T u_j)}, \quad i \neq j,$$

$$a_{ii} = 1,$$

and

$$A = (a_{ij})_{i,j=1}^n.$$

Then (2) is satisfied. Moreover,

$$-a_{ij} = \left( c - \frac{u_i}{(c^T u_i)} \right)^T \left( c - \frac{u_j}{(c^T u_j)} \right), \quad i \neq j,$$

and

$$\vartheta(G) - a_{ii} = \left( c - \frac{u_i}{c^T u_i} \right)^2 + \left( \vartheta(G) - \frac{1}{(c^T u_i)^2} \right).$$

These equations imply that  $\vartheta(G)I - A$  is positive semidefinite, and hence the largest eigenvalue of  $A$  is at most  $\vartheta(G)$ .

2) Conversely, let  $A = (a_{ij})$  be any matrix satisfying (2), and let  $\lambda$  be its largest eigenvalue. Then  $\lambda I - A$  is positive semidefinite, and hence there exist vectors  $x_1, \dots, x_n$  such that

$$\lambda \delta_{ij} - a_{ij} = x_i^T x_j.$$

Let  $c$  be a unit vector perpendicular to  $x_1, \dots, x_n$ , and set

$$u_i = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\lambda}} (c + x_i).$$

Then

$$u_i^2 = \frac{1}{\lambda} (1 + x_i^2) = 1, \quad i = 1, \dots, n,$$

and for nonadjacent  $i$  and  $j$ ,

$$u_i^T u_j = \frac{1}{\lambda} (1 + x_i^T x_j) = 0.$$

So  $(u_1, \dots, u_n)$  is an orthonormal representation of  $G$ . Moreover,

$$\frac{1}{(c^T u_i)^2} = \lambda, \quad i = 1, \dots, n,$$

and hence  $\vartheta(G) \leq \lambda$ . This completes the proof of the theorem.

Note that it also follows that among the optimal representations there is one such that

$$\vartheta(G) = \frac{1}{(c^T u_1)^2} = \dots = \frac{1}{(c^T u_n)^2}.$$

The next theorem gives a good characterization of the value  $\vartheta(G)$ .

**Theorem 4:** Let  $G$  be a graph on the set of vertices  $\{1, \dots, n\}$ , and let  $B = (b_{ij})_{i,j=1}^n$  range over all positive semidefinite symmetric matrices such that

$$b_{ij} = 0 \tag{3}$$

or every pair  $(i, j)$  of distinct adjacent vertices and

$$\text{Tr } B = 1. \tag{4}$$

Then

$$\vartheta(G) = \max_B \text{Tr } BJ.$$

Note that  $\text{Tr } BJ$  is the sum of the entries in  $B$ .

*Proof:*

1) Let  $A = (a_{ij})_{i,j=1}^n$  be a matrix satisfying (2) with largest eigenvalue  $\vartheta(G)$ , and let  $B$  be any symmetric

matrix satisfying (3) and (4). Then using (2) and (3),

$$\text{Tr } BJ = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^n b_{ij} = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij} b_{ij} = \text{Tr } AB,$$

and so

$$\vartheta(G) - \text{Tr } BJ = \text{Tr } (\vartheta(G)I - A)B.$$

Here both  $\vartheta(G)I - A$  and  $B$  are positive semidefinite. Let  $e_1, \dots, e_n$  be a set of mutually orthogonal eigenvectors of  $B$ , with corresponding eigenvalues  $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n \geq 0$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Tr } (\vartheta(G)I - A)B &= \sum_{i=1}^n e_i^T (\vartheta(G)I - A) B e_i \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i e_i^T (\vartheta(G)I - A) e_i \geq 0. \end{aligned}$$

2) We have to construct a matrix  $B$  which satisfies the previous inequality with equality. For this purpose let  $(i_1, j_1), \dots, (i_m, j_m) (i_k < j_k)$  be the edges of  $G$ . Consider the  $(m+1)$ -dimensional vectors

$$\hat{h} = (h_1, h_2, \dots, h_m, h_m, (\sum h_i)^2)^T$$

where  $h = (h_1, \dots, h_m)$  ranges through all unit vectors and  $z = (0, 0, \dots, 0, \vartheta(G))^T$ .

*Claim:*  $z$  is in the convex hull of the vectors  $\hat{h}$ . Suppose this is not the case. Since the vectors  $\hat{h}$  form a compact set, there exists a hyperplane separating  $z$  from all the  $\hat{h}$ , i.e., there exists a vector  $a$  and a real number  $\alpha$  such that  $a^T \hat{h} \leq \alpha$  for all unit vectors  $h$  but  $a^T z > \alpha$ .

Set

$$a = (a_1, \dots, a_m, y)^T.$$

Then in particular  $a^T \hat{h} \leq \alpha$ , for  $h = (1, 0, \dots, 0)$ ; whence  $y \leq \alpha$ . On the other hand,  $a^T z > \alpha$  implies  $\vartheta(G)y > \alpha$ . Hence  $y > 0$ , and  $\alpha > 0$ . We may suppose that  $y = 1$ , and so  $\alpha < \vartheta(G)$ .

Now define

$$a_{ij} = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2} a_k + 1, & \text{if } \{i, j\} = \{i_k, j_k\} \\ 1, & \text{otherwise;} \end{cases}$$

then  $a^T \hat{h} \leq \alpha$  can be written as

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij} h_i h_j \leq \alpha.$$

Since the largest eigenvalue of  $A = (a_{ij})$  is equal to

$$\max \{ x^T A x : |x| = 1 \},$$

this implies that the largest eigenvalue of  $(a_{ij})$  is at most  $\alpha$ . Since  $(a_{ij})$  satisfies (2), this implies  $\vartheta(G) \leq \alpha$ , a contradiction. This proves the claim.

By the claim, there exist a finite number of unit vectors  $h_1, \dots, h_N$  and nonnegative reals  $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_N$  such that

$$\alpha_1 + \dots + \alpha_N = 1 \tag{5}$$

$$\alpha_1 \hat{h}_1 + \dots + \alpha_N \hat{h}_N = z. \tag{6}$$

Set

$$\begin{aligned} h_p &= (h_{p,1}, \dots, h_{p,n})^T \\ b_{ij} &= \sum_{p=1}^N \alpha_p h_{pi} h_{pj} \\ B &= (b_{ij}). \end{aligned}$$

The matrix  $B$  is clearly symmetric and positive semidefinite. Further, (6) implies

$$b_{i,j_k} = 0, \quad k=1, \dots, m$$

and

$$\text{Tr } BJ = \vartheta(G)$$

while (5) implies

$$\text{Tr } B = 1.$$

This completes the proof.

**Lemma 4:** Let  $(u_1, \dots, u_n)$  be an orthonormal representation of  $G$  and  $(v_1, \dots, v_n)$  be an orthonormal representation of the complementary graph  $\bar{G}$ . Moreover, let  $c$  and  $d$  be any vectors. Then

$$\sum_{i=1}^n (u_i^T c)^2 (v_i^T d)^2 \leq c^2 d^2.$$

*Proof:* By (1), the vectors  $u_i \circ v_i$  satisfy

$$(u_i \circ v_i)(u_j \circ v_j) = (u_i^T u_j)(v_i^T v_j) = \delta_{ij}.$$

Thus they form an orthonormal system, and we have

$$(c \circ d)^2 \geq \sum_{i=1}^n ((c \circ d)^T (u_i \circ v_i))^2$$

which is just the inequality in Lemma 4.

**Corollary 1:** If  $(v_1, \dots, v_n)$  is an orthonormal representation of  $\bar{G}$  and  $d$  is any unit vector, then

$$\vartheta(G) \geq \sum_{i=1}^n (v_i^T d)^2.$$

**Corollary 2:**  $\vartheta(G)\vartheta(\bar{G}) \geq n$ .

We give now another minimax formula for the value  $\vartheta(G)$ , which shows a very surprising duality between  $G$  and its complementary graph  $\bar{G}$ .

**Theorem 5:** Let  $(v_1, \dots, v_m)$  range over all orthonormal representations of  $\bar{G}$  and  $d$  over all unit vectors. Then

$$\vartheta(G) = \max \sum_{i=1}^n (d^T v_i)^2.$$

*Proof:* By Corollary 1 we already know that the inequality  $\geq$  holds. We construct now a representation of  $\bar{G}$  and a unit vector  $d$  with equality. Let  $B = (b_{ij})$  be a positive semidefinite symmetric matrix satisfying (3) and (4) such that  $\text{Tr } BJ = \vartheta(G)$ . Since  $B$  is positive semidefinite, we have vectors  $w_1, \dots, w_n$  such that

$$b_{ij} = w_i^T w_j. \quad (7)$$

Note that

$$\sum_{i=1}^n w_i^2 = 1, \quad \left( \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \right)^2 = \vartheta(G).$$

Set

$$v_i = w_i / |w_i| \quad d = \left( \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \right) / \left| \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \right|.$$

Then the vectors  $v_i$  form an orthonormal representation of  $\bar{G}$  by (7) and (3). Moreover, using the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality we get

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i=1}^n (d^T v_i)^2 &= \left( \sum_{i=1}^n w_i^2 \right) \left( \sum_{i=1}^n (d^T v_i)^2 \right) \\ &\geq \left( \sum_{i=1}^n |w_i| (d^T v_i) \right)^2 = \left( \sum_{i=1}^n d^T w_i \right)^2 \\ &= \left( d^T \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \right)^2 = \left( \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \right)^2 = \vartheta(G) \end{aligned}$$

This completes the proof.

Note that since we have equality in the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality, it also follows that

$$(d v_i)^2 = \vartheta(G) w_i^2 = \vartheta(G) b_{ii}.$$

**Theorem 6:** Let  $A$  range over all matrices such that  $a_{ij} = 0$  if  $i, j$  are adjacent in  $G$ , and let  $\lambda_1(A) \geq \dots \geq \lambda_n(A)$  denote the eigenvalues of  $A$ . Then

$$\vartheta(G) = \max_A \left\{ 1 - \frac{\lambda_1(A)}{\lambda_n(A)} \right\}.$$

*Proof:*

1) Let  $A$  be any matrix such that  $a_{ij} = 0$  if  $i, j$  are adjacent. Let  $f = (f_1, \dots, f_n)^T$  be an eigenvector corresponding to  $\lambda_1(A)$  such that  $f^2 = -1/\lambda_n(A)$  (note that  $\lambda_n(A) < 0$ , the least eigenvalue of  $A$  is negative). Consider the matrices  $F = \text{diag}(f_1, \dots, f_n)$  and

$$B = F(A - \lambda_n(A)I)F.$$

Obviously  $B$  is positive semidefinite. Moreover,  $b_i$  and  $b_j$  are distinct adjacent points, and

$$\text{Tr } B = -\lambda_n(A) \text{Tr } F^2 = 1.$$

So by Theorem 4,

$$\begin{aligned} \vartheta(G) &\geq \text{Tr } BJ = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij} f_i f_j - \lambda_n(A) \sum_{i=1}^n f_i^2 \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n \{ \lambda_1(A) f_i^2 - \lambda_n(A) f_i^2 \} = 1 - \frac{\lambda_1(A)}{\lambda_n(A)} \end{aligned}$$

2) The fact that equality is attained here follows from a more or less straightforward inversion of this argument and is omitted.

**Corollary 3:** (See Hoffman [3].) Let  $\lambda_1 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_n$  be the eigenvalues of the adjacency matrix of a graph  $G$ . Then the chromatic number of  $G$  is at least

$$1 - \frac{\lambda_1}{\lambda_n}.$$

*Proof:* The chromatic number of  $G$  is at least  $k$  if and only if there is no orthonormal representation of  $G$  with  $k$  vectors. In fact, if  $(u_1, \dots, u_n)$  is an orthonormal representation

$c$  is any unit vector, and  $J_1, \dots, J_k$  are the color classes in any  $k$ -coloration of  $G$ , then

$$\sum_{i=1}^n (c^T u_i)^2 = \sum_{m=1}^k \sum_{i \in J_m} (c^T u_i)^2 \leq \sum_{m=1}^k 1 = k$$

from which the assertion follows by Theorem 5. Now the adjacency matrix of  $G$  satisfies the condition in the theorem (with  $\bar{G}$  instead of  $G$ ), which implies the inequality in the corollary.

#### IV. SOME FURTHER PROPERTIES OF $\vartheta(G)$

The results in the previous section make the value  $\vartheta(G)$  quite easy to handle. Let us derive some consequences.

*Theorem 7:*  $\vartheta(G \cdot H) = \vartheta(G)\vartheta(H)$ .

*Proof:* We already know that

$$\vartheta(G \cdot H) \leq \vartheta(G)\vartheta(H).$$

To show the opposite inequality, let  $(v_1, \dots, v_n)$  be an orthonormal representation of  $\bar{G}$ ,  $(w_1, \dots, w_m)$  be an orthonormal representation of  $\bar{H}$ , and  $c, d$  be unit vectors such that

$$\sum_{i=1}^n (v_i^T c)^2 = \vartheta(G) \quad \sum_{i=1}^m (w_i^T d)^2 = \vartheta(H).$$

Then  $v_i \circ w_j$  is an orthonormal representation of  $\overline{G \cdot H}$  (this follows since it is an orthonormal representation of  $\bar{G} \cdot \bar{H}$  and  $\overline{G \cdot H} \supseteq \bar{G} \cdot \bar{H}$ ). Moreover,  $c \circ d$  is a unit vector. So

$$\begin{aligned} \vartheta(G \cdot H) &\geq \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m ((v_i \circ w_j)^T (c \circ d))^2 \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m (v_i^T c)^2 (w_j^T d)^2 \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n (v_i^T c)^2 \sum_{j=1}^m (w_j^T d)^2 = \vartheta(G)\vartheta(H). \end{aligned}$$

*Theorem 8:* If  $G$  has a vertex-transitive automorphism group, then

$$\vartheta(G)\vartheta(\bar{G}) = n.$$

*Corollary 4:* If  $G$  has a vertex-transitive automorphism group, then

$$\Theta(G)\Theta(\bar{G}) \leq n.$$

Note that Theorem 8 and its corollary do not hold for all graphs because there are graphs with  $\alpha(G)\alpha(\bar{G}) > n$  (for example, a star).

*Proof:* Let  $\Gamma$  be the automorphism group of  $G$ . We may consider the elements of  $\Gamma$  as  $n \times n$  permutation matrices. Let  $B = (b_{ij})$  be a matrix satisfying (3) and (4) such that  $\text{Tr } BJ = \vartheta(G)$ . Consider

$$\bar{B} = (\bar{b}_{ij}) = \frac{1}{|\Gamma|} \left( \sum_{P \in \Gamma} P^{-1} B P \right).$$

Then trivially,  $\bar{B}$  also satisfies (3), and

$$\text{Tr } \bar{B} = 1 \quad \text{Tr } \bar{B} J = \vartheta(G)$$

(using  $PJ = JP = J$ ). Also trivially,  $\bar{B}$  is symmetric and positive semidefinite and satisfies  $P^{-1} \bar{B} P = \bar{B}$ , for all  $P \in \Gamma$ . Since  $\Gamma$  is transitive on the vertices, this implies  $\bar{b}_{ii} = 1/n$ , for all  $i$ . Constructing the orthonormal representation  $(v_1, \dots, v_n)$  and the unit vector  $d$  as in the proof of Theorem 5, we have

$$(d^T v_i)^2 = \frac{\vartheta(G)}{n}$$

by (8). So from the definition of  $\vartheta(\bar{G})$ ,

$$\vartheta(\bar{G}) \leq \max_{1 \leq i \leq n} \frac{1}{(d^T v_i)^2} = \frac{n}{\vartheta(G)},$$

and hence

$$\vartheta(G)\vartheta(\bar{G}) \leq n.$$

Since we already know that the opposite inequality holds (Corollary 2), Theorem 8 is proved.

*Theorem 9:* Let  $G$  be a regular graph, and let  $\lambda_1 \geq \lambda_2 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_n$  be the eigenvalues of its adjacency matrix  $A$ . Then

$$\vartheta(G) \leq \frac{-n\lambda_n}{\lambda_1 - \lambda_n}.$$

Equality holds if the automorphism group of  $G$  is transitive on the edges.

*Corollary 5:* For odd  $n$ ,

$$\vartheta(C_n) = \frac{n \cos(\pi/n)}{1 + \cos(\pi/n)}.$$

*Proof:* Consider the matrix  $J - xA$ , where  $x$  will be chosen later. This satisfies condition (2) in Theorem 3, and hence its largest eigenvalue is at least  $\vartheta(G)$ . Let  $v_i$  denote the eigenvector of  $A$  belonging to  $\lambda_i$ . Then since  $A$  is regular,  $v_1 = j$ , and therefore,  $j, v_2, \dots, v_n$  are also eigenvectors of  $J$ . So the eigenvalues of  $J - xA$  are  $n - x\lambda_1, -x\lambda_2, \dots, -x\lambda_n$ . The largest of these is either the first or the last, and the optimal choice of  $x$  is  $x = n/(\lambda_1 - \lambda_n)$  when they are both equal to  $-n\lambda_n/(\lambda_1 - \lambda_n)$ . This proves the first assertion.

Assume now that the automorphism group  $\Gamma$  of  $G$  is transitive on the edges. Let  $C = (c_{ij})$  be a symmetric matrix such that  $c_{ij} = 1$  if  $i$  and  $j$  are equal or nonadjacent and having largest eigenvalue  $\vartheta(G)$ . As in the proof of Theorem 8, consider

$$\bar{C} = \frac{1}{|\Gamma|} \sum_{P \in \Gamma} P^{-1} C P.$$

Then  $\bar{C}$  also satisfies (2), and moreover, its largest eigenvalue is at most  $\vartheta(G)$ . By Theorem 3, it is equal to  $\vartheta(G)$ . Moreover,  $\bar{C}$  is clearly of the form  $J - xA$ . Hence the second assertion follows.

V. COMPARISON WITH OTHER BOUNDS ON CAPACITY

Theorem 10:  $\vartheta(G) \leq \alpha^*(G)$ .

Proof: We use Theorem 4. Let  $(u_i)$  be an orthonormal representation of  $\bar{G}$  and  $c$  be a unit vector such that

$$\vartheta(G) = \sum_{i=1}^n (c^T u_i)^2.$$

Let  $C$  be any clique in  $G$ . Then  $\{u_i : i \in C\}$  is an orthonormal set of vectors, and hence

$$\sum_{i \in C} (c^T u_i)^2 \leq c^2 = 1.$$

Hence the weights  $(c^T u_i)^2$  form a fractional vertex packing, and so

$$\vartheta(G) = \sum_{i=1}^n (c^T u_i)^2 \leq \alpha^*(G).$$

A very simple upper bound on  $\Theta(G)$  is the dimension of an orthonormal representation of  $G$ .

Theorem 11: Assume that  $G$  admits an orthonormal representation in dimension  $d$ . Then

$$\vartheta(G) \leq d.$$

Proof: Let  $(u_1, \dots, u_n)$  be an orthonormal representation of  $G$  in  $d$ -dimensional space. Then  $(u_1 \circ u_1, u_2 \circ u_2, \dots, u_n \circ u_n)$  is another orthonormal representation of  $G$ . Let  $(e_1, \dots, e_d)$  be an orthonormal basis and

$$b = \frac{1}{\sqrt{d}} (e_1 \circ e_1 + e_2 \circ e_2 + \dots + e_d \circ e_d).$$

Then  $b^2 = 1$ , and

$$\begin{aligned} (u_i \circ u_i)^T b &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{d}} \sum_{k=1}^d (e_k \circ e_k)^T (u_i \circ u_i) \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{d}} \sum_{k=1}^d (e_k^T u_i)^2 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{d}}. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore  $\vartheta(G) \leq d$ .

VI. APPLICATIONS

We can use our methods to calculate the Shannon capacity of graphs other than the pentagon. We of course deal only with graphs  $G$  such that  $\alpha(G) < \alpha^*(G)$ , since if  $\alpha(G) = \alpha^*(G)$ , then  $\Theta(G) = \alpha(G)$  by Shannon's theorem.

Theorem 12: If  $G$  has a vertex-transitive automorphism group, then  $\Theta(G \cdot \bar{G}) = |V(G)|$ . If, in addition,  $G$  is self-complementary, then  $\Theta(G) = \sqrt{|V(G)|}$ .

Proof: The "diagonal" in  $G \cdot \bar{G}$  is independent; hence

$$\Theta(G \cdot \bar{G}) \geq \alpha(G \cdot \bar{G}) \geq |V(G)|.$$

On the other hand, we have by Theorems 1, 6, and 7 that

$$\Theta(G \cdot \bar{G}) \leq \vartheta(G \cdot \bar{G}) = \vartheta(G) \vartheta(\bar{G}) = |V(G)|.$$

If  $G$  is self-complementary, then

$$\Theta(G \cdot \bar{G}) = \Theta(G^2) = \Theta(G)^2.$$

This proves the theorem. The proof also shows these cases  $\Theta = \vartheta$ .

Theorem 13: Let  $n \geq 2r$ , and let the graph  $K(n, r)$  defined as the graph whose vertices are the  $r$ -subsets of an  $n$ -element set  $S$ , two subsets being adjacent iff their intersection is disjoint. Then

$$\Theta(K(n, r)) = \binom{n-1}{r-1}.$$

Corollary 6: The Petersen graph, which is isomorphic to  $K(5, 2)$ , has capacity four.

Corollary 7: (See Erdős, Ko, and Rado [2].)

$$\alpha(K(n, r)) = \binom{n-1}{r-1}.$$

Note that

$$\alpha^*(K(n, r)) = \binom{n}{r} / \left\lfloor \frac{n}{r} \right\rfloor$$

which is larger than  $\binom{n-1}{r-1}$  unless  $r$  is a divisor of  $n$ .

Proof of Theorem 13: The  $r$  subsets containing a specified element of  $S$  form an independent set of size  $\binom{n-1}{r-1}$  in  $K(n, r)$ ; hence

$$\Theta(K(n, r)) \geq \alpha(K(n, r)) \geq \binom{n-1}{r-1}.$$

On the other hand, we calculate  $\vartheta(K(n, r))$ . Since the automorphism group of  $K(n, r)$  is clearly transitive on vertices and edges, we may use Theorem 9. So let us calculate the eigenvalues of  $K(n, r)$ . Clearly  $j$  is an eigenvector with eigenvalue  $\binom{n-r}{r}$ .

Let  $1 \leq t \leq r$ . For each  $T \subset S$  such that  $|T| = t$ , let  $x_T$  be a real number such that for every  $U \subset S$  with  $|U| = t$

$$\sum_{T \subset U} x_T = 0.$$

There are  $\binom{n}{t} - \binom{n}{t-1}$  linearly independent vectors of this type. For each such vector, define

$$\bar{x}_A = \sum_{\substack{T \subset A \\ |T|=t}} x_T$$

for every  $A \subset S$ ,  $|A| = r$ . It is not difficult to see, or actually well-known, that the numbers  $x_T$  can be calculated from the numbers  $\bar{x}_A$ , whence there

$\binom{n}{t} - \binom{n}{t-1}$  linearly independent vectors of type  $(\bar{x}_A)$ .

Claim: Every  $(\bar{x}_A)$  is an eigenvector of the adjacency matrix of  $K(n, r)$  with eigenvalue  $(-1)^{r-t} \binom{n-r-t}{r-t}$ . In fact, for any  $A_0 \subset S$  such that  $|A_0| = r$ , we have

$$\sum_{A \cap A_0 = \emptyset} \bar{x}_A = \sum_{T \cap A_0 = \emptyset} \binom{n-r-t}{r-t} x_T = \binom{n-r-t}{r-t} \beta_{0^c}.$$

To determine this value we set

$$\beta_i = \sum_{|T \cap A_0| = i} x_T.$$

Then summing (9) for every  $U \subset S$  such that  $|U|=t-1$  and  $|U \cap A_0|=i$ , we get

$$(i+1)\beta_{i+1} + (t-i)\beta_i = 0.$$

This may be considered as a recurrence relation for the  $\beta_i$  and yields

$$\beta_i = (-1)^i \binom{t}{i} \beta_0$$

whence

$$\beta_0 = (-1)^t \beta_t = (-1)^t \bar{x}_{A_0}$$

which proves the claim.

By this construction we have found

$$1 + \sum_{i=1}^r \left( \binom{n}{i} - \binom{n}{i-1} \right) = \binom{n}{r}$$

linearly independent eigenvectors (there is no problem with the eigenvectors belonging to different values of  $t$  since they belong to different eigenvalues). Therefore, we have all eigenvectors, and it follows that the eigenvalues of  $K(n,r)$  are the numbers

$$(-1)^t \binom{n-r-t}{r-t}, \quad t=0, 1, \dots, r.$$

So the largest and smallest eigenvalues are  $\binom{n-r}{r}$  and  $\binom{n-r-1}{r-1}$ , respectively, and Theorem 9 yields

$$\vartheta(K(n,r)) = \frac{\binom{n-r-1}{r-1} \binom{n}{r}}{\binom{n-r}{r} + \binom{n-r-1}{r-1}} = \binom{n-1}{r-1}.$$

### VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of introducing  $\vartheta(G)$  has been to estimate  $\Theta(G)$ . So the obvious question is as follows.

*Problem 1:* Is  $\vartheta = \Theta$ ? More modestly, find further graphs with  $\vartheta(G) = \Theta(G)$ . In particular, do odd circuits satisfy  $\vartheta(G) = \Theta(G)$ ?

This last question pinpoints a difficulty which seems to be crucial. In all cases known to the author where  $\Theta(G)$  is precisely determined, there is some  $k$  ( $k=1$  or  $2$ , in fact) such that  $\alpha(G^k) = \Theta(G)^k$ . But if  $\Theta(G) = \vartheta(G)$  for the even-circuit, for example, then no such  $k$  can exist, since no power of  $\vartheta(C_7)$  is an integer.

Various properties of  $\vartheta(G)$  established in this paper suggest further problems which would be solved by an affirmative answer to Problem 1.

*Problem 2:* Is  $\Theta(G \cdot H) = \Theta(G)\Theta(H)$ ? (Note that  $\Theta(G \cdot H) \geq \Theta(G)\Theta(H)$  is obvious.)

*Problem 3:* Is it true that  $\Theta(G) \cdot \Theta(\bar{G}) \geq |V(G)|$ ?

Note that an affirmative answer to Problem 2 would imply an affirmative answer to Problem 3:

$$\Theta(G)\Theta(\bar{G}) = \Theta(G \cdot \bar{G}) \geq \alpha(G \cdot \bar{G}) \geq |V(G)|.$$

This, in turn, would imply an affirmative answer to the last question of Problem 1:

$$n \leq \Theta(C_n)\Theta(\bar{C}_n) \leq \vartheta(C_n)\vartheta(\bar{C}_n) = n;$$

hence  $\Theta(C_n) = \vartheta(C_n)$  and  $\Theta(\bar{C}_n) = \vartheta(\bar{C}_n)$ .

Corollary 7 shows an example where the calculation of  $\vartheta(G)$  helps to determine  $\alpha(G)$  in a nontrivial way. Are there any further examples?

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