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# Subgraphs with large minimum $\ell$-degree in hypergraphs where almost all $\ell$-degrees are large 

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#### Abstract

Let $G$ be an $r$-uniform hypergraph on $n$ vertices such that all but at most $\varepsilon\binom{n}{\ell}$ $\ell$-subsets of vertices have degree at least $p\binom{n-\ell}{r-\ell}$. We show that $G$ contains a large subgraph with high minimum $\ell$-degree.


Keywords: $r$-uniform hypergraphs, $\ell$-degree, extremal hypergraph theory
Mathematics Subject Classifications: 05C65, 05D99

## 1 Introduction

Given $r \in \mathbb{N}$ and a set $A$, we write $A^{(r)}$ for the collection of all $r$-subsets of $A$ and $[n]$ for the set $\{1,2, \ldots n\}$. An $r$-graph, or $r$-uniform hypergraph, is a pair $G=(V, E)$, where $V=V(G)$ is a set of vertices and $E=E(G) \subseteq V^{(r)}$ is a collection of $r$-subsets, which constitute the edges of $G$. We say $G$ is nonempty if it contains at least one edge and set $v(G)=|V(G)|$ and $e(G)=|E(G)|$. A subgraph of $G$ is an $r$-graph $H$ with $V(H) \subseteq V(G)$ and $E(H) \subseteq E(G)$. The subgraph of $G$ induced by a set $X \subseteq V(G)$ is $G[X]=\left(X, E(G) \cap X^{(r)}\right)$.

Let $\mathcal{F}$ be a family of nonempty $r$-graphs. If $G$ does not contain a copy of a member of $\mathcal{F}$ as a subgraph, we say that $G$ is $\mathcal{F}$-free. The Turán number $\operatorname{ex}(n, \mathcal{F})$ of a family $\mathcal{F}$ is the maximum number of edges in an $\mathcal{F}$-free $r$-graph on $n$ vertices, and its Turán density is the limit $\pi(\mathcal{F})=\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \operatorname{ex}(n, \mathcal{F}) /\binom{n}{r}$ (this is easily shown to exist). Let $K_{t}^{(r)}=\left([t],[t]^{(r)}\right)$ denote the complete $r$-graph on $t$ vertices. Determining $\pi\left(K_{t}^{(r)}\right)$ for any $t>r \geqslant 3$ is a

[^0]major problem in extremal combinatorics. Turán [19] famously conjectured in 1941 that $\pi\left(K_{4}^{(3)}\right)=5 / 9$, and despite much research effort this remains open [8]. In this paper we shall be interested in some variants of Turán density.

The neighbourhood $N(S)$ of an $\ell$-subset $S \in V(G)^{(\ell)}$ is the collection of $(r-\ell)$-subsets $T \in V(G)^{(r-\ell)}$ such that $S \cup T$ is an edge of $G$. The degree of $S$ is the number $\operatorname{deg}(S)$ of edges of $G$ containing $S$, that is, $\operatorname{deg}(S)=|N(S)|$. The minimum $\ell$-degree of $G$, $\delta_{\ell}(G)$, is defined to be the minimum of $\operatorname{deg}(S)$ over all $\ell$-subsets $S \in V(G)^{(\ell)}$. The Turán $\ell$-degree threshold $\operatorname{ex}_{\ell}(n, \mathcal{F})$ of a family $\mathcal{F}$ of $r$-graphs is the maximum of $\delta_{\ell}(G)$ over all $\mathcal{F}$-free $r$-graphs $G$ on $n$ vertices. It can be shown [11, 9] that the limit $\pi_{\ell}(\mathcal{F})=$ $\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \operatorname{ex}_{\ell}(n, \mathcal{F}) /\binom{n-\ell}{r-\ell}$ exists; this quantity is known as the Turán $\ell$-degree density of $\mathcal{F}$. A simple averaging argument shows that

$$
0 \leqslant \pi_{r-1}(\mathcal{F}) \leqslant \ldots \leqslant \pi_{2}(\mathcal{F}) \leqslant \pi_{1}(\mathcal{F})=\pi(\mathcal{F}) \leqslant 1
$$

and it is known that $\pi_{\ell}(\mathcal{F}) \neq \pi(\mathcal{F})$ in general (for $\ell \notin\{0,1\}$ ). In the special case where $(r, \ell)=(r, r-1), \pi_{r-1}(\mathcal{F})$ is known as the codegree density of $\mathcal{F}$.

There has been much research on Turán $\ell$-degree threshold for $r$-graphs when $(r, \ell)=$ (3,2). In the late 1990s, Nagle [12] and Nagle and Czygrinow [2] conjectured that $\pi_{2}\left(K_{4}^{(3)-}\right)=1 / 4$ and $\pi_{2}\left(K_{4}^{(3)}\right)=1 / 2$, respectively. Here $K_{4}^{(3)-}$ denotes the 3 -graph obtained by removing one edge from $K_{4}^{(3)}$. Falgas-Ravry, Pikhurko, Vaughan and Volec [6, 7] recently proved $\pi_{2}\left(K_{4}^{(3)-}\right)=1 / 4$, settling the conjecture of Nagle, and showed all nearextremal constructions are close (in edit distance) to a set of quasirandom tournament constructions of Erdős and Hajnal [3]. The lower bound $\pi_{2}\left(K_{4}^{(3)}\right) \geqslant 1 / 2$ also comes from a quasirandom construction, which is due to Rödl [17]. For $t>r \geqslant 3$, the codegree density $\pi_{r-1}\left(K_{t}^{(r)}\right)$ has been studied by Falgas-Ravry [4], Lo and Markström [9] and Sidorenko [18]. Recently, Lo and Zhao [10] showed that $1-\pi_{r-1}\left(K_{t}^{(r)}\right)=\Theta\left(\ln t / t^{r-1}\right)$ for $r \geqslant 3$.

One variant of $\ell$-degree Turán density is to study $r$-graphs in which almost all $\ell$-subsets have large degree. To be precise, given $\varepsilon>0$, let $\delta_{\ell}^{\varepsilon}(G)$ be the largest integer $d$ such that all but at most $\varepsilon\binom{v(G)}{\ell}$ of the $\ell$-subsets $S \in V(G)^{(\ell)}$ satisfy $\operatorname{deg}(S) \geqslant d$. Note that $r$-graphs with large $\delta_{\ell}^{\varepsilon}(G)$ but with small $\delta_{\ell}(G)$ arise naturally. For instance, the reduced graphs $R$ obtained from $r$-graphs with large minimum $\ell$-degree after an application of hypergraph regularity lemma have large $\delta_{\ell}^{\varepsilon}(R)$.

Definition $1((r, \ell)$-sequence $)$. Let $1 \leqslant \ell<r$. We say that a sequence $\mathbf{G}=\left(G_{n}\right)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ of $r$-graphs is an $(r, \ell)$-sequence if
(i) $v\left(G_{n}\right) \rightarrow \infty$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$ and
(ii) there is a constant $p \in[0,1]$ and a sequence of nonnegative reals $\varepsilon_{n} \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$ such that $\delta_{\ell}^{\varepsilon_{n}}\left(G_{n}\right) \geqslant p\binom{v\left(G_{n}\right)-\ell}{r-\ell}$ for each $n$.

We refer to the supremum of all $p \geqslant 0$ for which (ii) is satisfied as the density of the sequence $\mathbf{G}$ and denote it by $\rho(\mathbf{G})$.

We can define the analogue of Turán density for $(r, \ell)$-sequences.

Definition 2. Let $1 \leqslant \ell<r$. Let $\mathcal{F}$ be a family of nonempty $r$-graphs. Define

$$
\pi_{\ell}^{\star}(\mathcal{F}):=\sup \{\rho(\mathbf{G}): \mathbf{G} \text { is an }(r, \ell) \text {-sequence of } \mathcal{F} \text {-free } r \text {-graphs }\} \text {. }
$$

Our main result show that every large $r$-graph $G$ contains a 'somewhat large' subgraph $H$ with minimum $\ell$-degree satisfying $\delta_{\ell}(H) /\binom{v(H)-\ell}{r-\ell} \approx \delta_{\ell}^{\varepsilon}(G) /\binom{v(G)-\ell}{r-\ell}$. Here 'somewhat large' means $v(H)=\Omega\left(\varepsilon^{1 / \ell}\right)$.

Theorem 3. Let $1 \leqslant \ell<r$. For any fixed $\delta>0$, there exists $m_{0}>0$ such that any $r$-graph $G$ on $n \geqslant m \geqslant m_{0}$ vertices with $\delta_{\ell}^{\varepsilon}(G) \geqslant p\binom{n-\ell}{r-\ell}$ for some $\varepsilon \leqslant m^{-\ell} / 2$ contains an induced subgraph $H$ on $m$ vertices with

$$
\delta_{\ell}(H) \geqslant(p-\delta)\binom{m-\ell}{r-\ell} .
$$

This immediate implies the $\pi_{\ell}^{\star}(\mathcal{F})=\pi_{\ell}(\mathcal{F})$ for all families $\mathcal{F}$ of $r$-graphs.
Corollary 4. For any $1 \leqslant \ell<r$ and any family $\mathcal{F}$ of nonempty $r$-graphs, $\pi_{\ell}^{\star}(\mathcal{F})=\pi_{\ell}(\mathcal{F})$.
We note that the (tight) upper bounds for codegree densities $\pi_{2}(F)$ for 3-graphs $F$ obtained by flag algebraic methods in [5, 6, 7] actually relied on giving upper bounds for $\pi_{\ell}^{\star}(F)$. Corollary 4 provides theoretical justification for why this strategy could give optimal bounds.

### 1.1 Quasirandomness in 3-graphs

One of the main motivations for this note comes from recent work of Reiher, Rödl and Schacht $[13,14,15,16]$ on extremal questions for quasirandom hypergraphs. These authors studied the following notion of quasirandomness for 3 -graphs.

Definition 5 ((1,2)-quasirandomness). A 3 -graph $G$ is $(p, \varepsilon,(1,2)$ )-quasirandom if for every set of vertices $X \subseteq V$ and every set of pairs of vertices $P \subseteq V^{(2)}$, the number $e_{1,2}(X, P)$ of pairs $(x, u v) \in X \times P$ such that $\{x\} \cup\{u v\} \in E(G)$ satisfies:

$$
\left|e_{1,2}(X, P)-p\right| X|\cdot| P\left|\mid \leqslant \varepsilon v(G)^{3} .\right.
$$

We define a (1,2)-quasirandom sequence and the corresponding extremal density, denoted by $\pi_{(1,2)-q r}(\mathcal{F})$, analogously to the way we defined $(r, \ell)$-sequences and $\pi_{\ell}^{\star}(\mathcal{F})$ in Definitions 1 and 2. It is not difficult to see that $\pi_{(1,2)-q r}(\mathcal{F}) \leqslant \pi(\mathcal{F})$ for all families $\mathcal{F}$ of 3graphs. Moreover, a $(p, \varepsilon,(1,2))$-quasirandom 3-graph $G$ satisfies $\delta_{2}^{\sqrt{\varepsilon}}(G) \geqslant(p-4 \sqrt{\varepsilon}) v(G)$. Hence, Theorem 3 and Corollary 6 imply the following.

Corollary 6. For any family of nonempty 3-graphs $\mathcal{F}$, $\pi_{(1,2)-q r}(\mathcal{F}) \leqslant \pi_{2}(\mathcal{F})$.

Consider a $(p, \varepsilon,(1,2)$ )-quasirandom 3 -graph $G$ for some $p>4 \sqrt{\varepsilon}>0$. As noted above, $\delta_{2}^{\sqrt{\varepsilon}}(G) \geqslant(p-4 \sqrt{\varepsilon}) v(G)$. Thus provided $v(G)$ is sufficiently large, Theorem 3 tells us we can find a subgraph $H$ of $G$ on $m=\Omega\left(\varepsilon^{-1 / 4}\right)$ vertices with strictly positive minimum codegree (at least $(p-4 \sqrt{\varepsilon}) m$ ).

However, as we show below, we cannot guarantee the existence of any subgraph with strictly positive codegree on more than $2 / \varepsilon+1$ vertices: our lower bound on $m$ above in terms of an inverse power of the error parameter $\varepsilon$ is thus sharp up to the value of the exponent.

Proposition 7. For every $p \in(0,1)$ and every $\varepsilon>0$, there exists $n_{0}$ such that for all $n \geqslant n_{0}$ there exist $(p, 2 \varepsilon,(1,2))$-quasirandom 3 -graphs in which every subgraph on $m \geqslant\left\lfloor\varepsilon^{-1}\right\rfloor+1$ vertices has minimum codegree equal to zero.

Proof. Let $G=(V, E)$ be a $(p, \varepsilon,(1,2))$-quasirandom 3 -graph on $n$ vertices. Such a 3graph can be obtained for example by taking a typical instance of an Erdős-Rényi random 3 -graph with edge probability $p$. Consider a balanced partition of $V$ into $N=\left\lfloor\varepsilon^{-1}\right\rfloor$ sets $V=\bigcup_{i=1}^{N} V_{i}$ with $\lfloor n / N\rfloor \leqslant\left|V_{1}\right| \leqslant\left|V_{2}\right| \leqslant \ldots \leqslant\left|V_{N}\right| \leqslant\lceil n / N\rceil$. Now let $G^{\prime}$ be the 3-graph obtained from $G$ by deleting all triples that meet some $V_{i}$ in at least two vertices for some $i: 1 \leqslant i \leqslant N$.

By construction, every set of $N+1$ vertices in $G^{\prime}$ must contain at least two vertices from the same $V_{i}$, and thus must induce a subgraph of $G^{\prime}$ with minimum codegree zero. Note that $e(G)-e\left(G^{\prime}\right) \leqslant N n\binom{[n / N\rceil}{ 2} \leqslant n^{3} / N \leqslant \varepsilon n^{3}$. Since $G$ is $(p, \varepsilon,(1,2))$-quasirandom, it follows that $G^{\prime}$ is $(p, 2 \varepsilon,(1,2))$-quasirandom.

## 2 Finding high minimum $\ell$-degree subgraphs in $r$-graphs with large $\delta_{\ell}^{\varepsilon}$

In this section we show how we can extract arbitrarily large subgraphs with high minimum $\ell$-degree from sufficiently large $r$-graphs with sufficiently small error $\varepsilon$. To do so, we will need Azuma's inequality (see e.g. [1]).

Lemma 8 (Azuma's inequality). Let $\left\{X_{i}: i=0,1, \ldots\right\}$ be a martingale with $\left|X_{i}-X_{i-1}\right| \leqslant$ $c_{i}$ for all $i$. Then for all positive integers $N$ and $\lambda>0$,

$$
\mathbb{P}\left(X_{N} \leqslant X_{0}-\lambda\right) \leqslant \exp \left(\frac{-\lambda^{2}}{2 \sum_{i=1}^{N} c_{i}^{2}}\right)
$$

Proof of Theorem 3. We may assume without loss of generality that $\delta>0$ is small enough to ensure $\delta^{-1} \geqslant 26 \ell(r-\ell)^{2} \log (1 / \delta)$ and $\ell \log (1 / \delta) \geqslant \log 2$ as this only makes our task harder. Set $m_{0}=\left\lceil 26 \ell(r-\ell)^{2} \delta^{-2} \log (1 / \delta)\right\rceil$. Note that this implies that

$$
\begin{equation*}
2 \ell \log m_{0} \leqslant 4 \ell \log \left(26 \ell(r-\ell)^{2} \delta^{-2} \log (1 / \delta)\right) \leqslant 12 \ell \log (1 / \delta) \tag{1}
\end{equation*}
$$

Fix $m \geqslant m_{0}$. Let $n \geqslant m \geqslant m_{0}$ and $\varepsilon=m^{-\ell} / 2$.

Suppose $G=(V, E)$ is an $r$-graph on $n$ vertices with $\delta_{\ell}^{\varepsilon}(G) \geqslant p\binom{n-\ell}{r-\ell}$. We claim that it contains an induced subgraph on $m$ vertices with minimum $\ell$-degree at least $(p-\delta)\binom{m-\ell}{r-\ell}$. For $p \leqslant \delta$, we have nothing to prove, so we may assume that $1 \geqslant p>\delta$.

Call an $\ell$-subset $S \in V^{(\ell)}$ poor if $\operatorname{deg}(S)<p\binom{n-\ell}{r-\ell}$, and rich otherwise. Let $\mathcal{P}$ be the collection of all poor $\ell$-subsets. By our assumption on $\delta_{\ell}^{\varepsilon}(G),|\mathcal{P}| \leqslant \varepsilon\binom{n}{\ell}$. As each poor $\ell$-subset is contained in $\binom{n-\ell}{m-\ell} m$-subsets, it follows that there are at least

$$
\begin{equation*}
\binom{n}{m}-|\mathcal{P}|\binom{n-\ell}{m-\ell}>\left(1-\varepsilon m^{\ell}\right)\binom{n}{m}=\frac{1}{2}\binom{n}{m} \tag{2}
\end{equation*}
$$

$m$-subsets of vertices which do not contain any poor $\ell$-subsets.
Given an $\ell$-subset $S \in V^{(\ell)} \backslash \mathcal{P}$, we call an $m$-subset $T$ of $V$ bad for $S$ if $S \subseteq T$ and $\left|N(S) \cap T^{(r-\ell)}\right| \leqslant(p-\delta)\binom{m-\ell}{r-\ell}$. Let $\phi_{S}$ be the number of bad $m$-subsets for $S$. We claim that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\phi_{S} \leqslant\binom{ n-\ell}{m-\ell} \exp \left(-\frac{\delta^{2} m}{2(r-\ell)^{2}}\right) . \tag{3}
\end{equation*}
$$

Observe that

$$
\phi_{S}=\left|\left\{T \in(V \backslash S)^{(m-\ell)}:\left|N(S) \cap T^{(r-\ell)}\right| \leqslant(p-\delta)\binom{m-\ell}{r-\ell}\right\}\right| .
$$

Let $X$ be the random variable $\left|N(S) \cap T^{(r-\ell)}\right|$, where $T$ is an $(m-\ell)$-subset of $V \backslash S$ picked uniformly at random. We consider the vertex exposure martingale on $T$. Let $Z_{i}$ be the $i$ th exposed vertex in $T$. Define $X_{i}=\mathbb{E}\left(X \mid Z_{1}, \ldots, Z_{i}\right)$. Note that $\left\{X_{i}: i=0,1, \ldots, m-\ell\right\}$ is a martingale and $X_{0} \geqslant p\binom{m-\ell}{r-\ell}$. Moreover, $\left|X_{i}-X_{i-1}\right| \leqslant\binom{ m-\ell-1}{r-\ell-1}<\binom{m-1}{r-\ell-1}$. Thus, by Lemma 8 applied with $\lambda=\delta\binom{m}{r-\ell}$ and $c_{i}=\binom{m-1}{r-\ell-1}$, we have

$$
\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{P}\left(X_{m} \leqslant(p-\delta)\binom{m-\ell}{r-\ell}\right) & \leqslant \mathbb{P}\left(X_{m} \leqslant X_{0}-\lambda\right) \leqslant \exp \left(\frac{-\delta^{2}\binom{m}{r-\ell}^{2}}{2 m\binom{m-1}{r-\ell-1}^{2}}\right)=\left(\frac{-\delta^{2}\binom{m}{r-\ell}}{2(r-\ell)}\right) \\
& \leqslant \exp \left(-\frac{\delta^{2} m}{2(r-\ell)^{2}}\right) .
\end{aligned}
$$

Hence (3) holds.
An $m$-subset $T$ of $V$ is called bad if it is bad for some $S \in V^{(\ell)} \backslash \mathcal{P}$. The number of bad $m$-subsets is at most

$$
\begin{aligned}
\sum_{S \in V^{(\ell)} \backslash \mathcal{P}} \phi_{S} & \leqslant\binom{ n}{\ell}\binom{n-\ell}{m-\ell} \exp \left(-\frac{\delta^{2} m}{2(r-\ell)^{2}}\right)=\binom{n}{m}\binom{m}{\ell} \exp \left(-\frac{\delta^{2} m}{2(r-\ell)^{2}}\right) \\
& \leqslant\binom{ n}{m} m_{0}^{\ell} \exp \left(-\frac{\delta^{2} m_{0}}{2(r-\ell)^{2}}\right) \leqslant\binom{ n}{m} \exp \left(2 \ell \log m_{0}-13 \ell \log (1 / \delta)\right) \\
& \leqslant\binom{ n}{m} \exp (-\ell \log (1 / \delta)) \leqslant \frac{1}{2}\binom{n}{m},
\end{aligned}
$$

where the last three inequalities hold by our choice of $m_{0}$, by inequality (1), and by our assumption on $\delta$, respectively. Together with (2), this shows there exists an $m$-subset inside which there is no poor $\ell$-subsets and in which every rich $\ell$-subset has degree at least $(p-\delta)\binom{m-\ell}{r-\ell}$. Such a set clearly gives us an induced subgraph of $G$ on $m$ vertices with minimum $\ell$-degree at least $(p-\delta)\binom{m-\ell}{r-\ell}$.

## 3 Concluding remarks

A 3-graph $G$ is $(p, \varepsilon,(1,1,1))$-quasirandom if for every triple of sets of vertices $X, Y$ and $Z \subseteq V$, the number $e_{1,1,1}(X, Y, Z)$ of triples $(x, y, z) \in X \times Y \times Z$ such that $x y z \in E(G)$ satisfies $\left|e_{1,1,1}(X, Y, Z)-p\right| X|\cdot| Y|\cdot| Z\left|\mid \leqslant \varepsilon v(G)^{3}\right.$. Define $\pi_{(1,1,1)-q r}(\mathcal{F})$ analogously to $\pi_{(1,2)-q r}(\mathcal{F})$. Note that $\pi_{(1,2)-q r}(\mathcal{F}) \leqslant \pi_{(1,1,1)-q r}(\mathcal{F}) \leqslant \pi(\mathcal{F})$ for all 3-graph families $\mathcal{F}$. An obvious open question is whether we have

$$
\pi_{(1,1,1)-q r}(\mathcal{F}) \leqslant \pi_{2}(\mathcal{F})
$$

Even more: can one always extract subgraphs with large minimum codegree from ( $1,1,1$ )quasirandom graphs? Even obtaining large subgraphs with non-zero minimum codegree remains an open problem for this weaker notion of quasirandomness.

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