

# Combinatorics

## Existence Problems

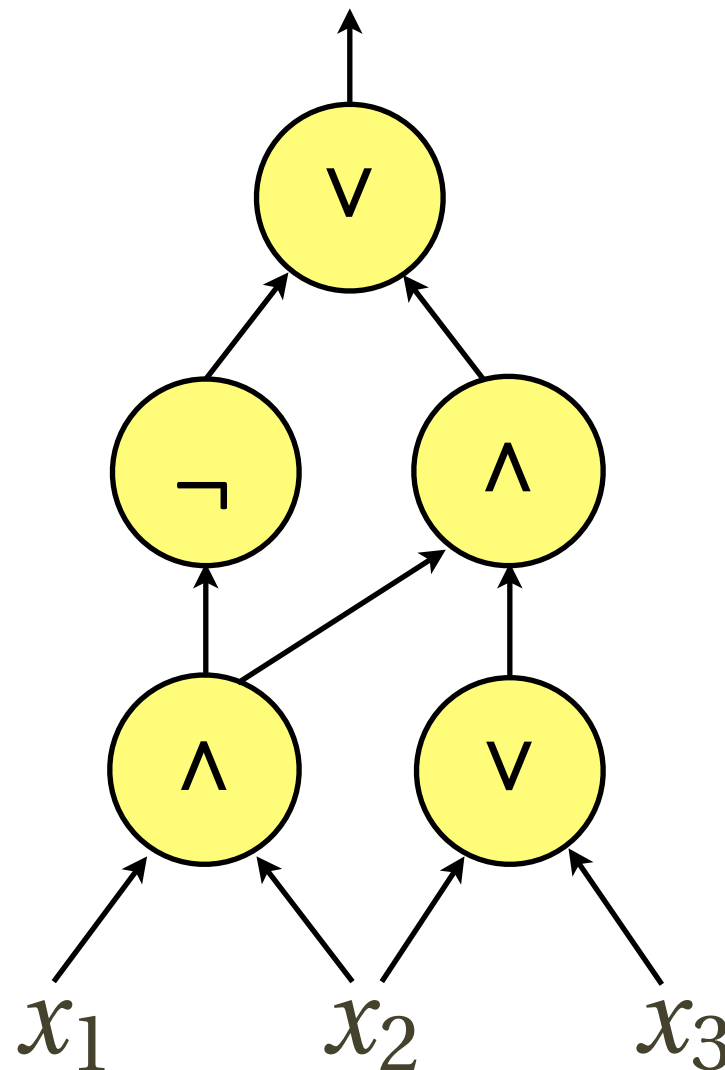
尹一通 Nanjing University, 2025 Spring

# Counting Argument

# Circuit Complexity

Boolean function  $f : \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$

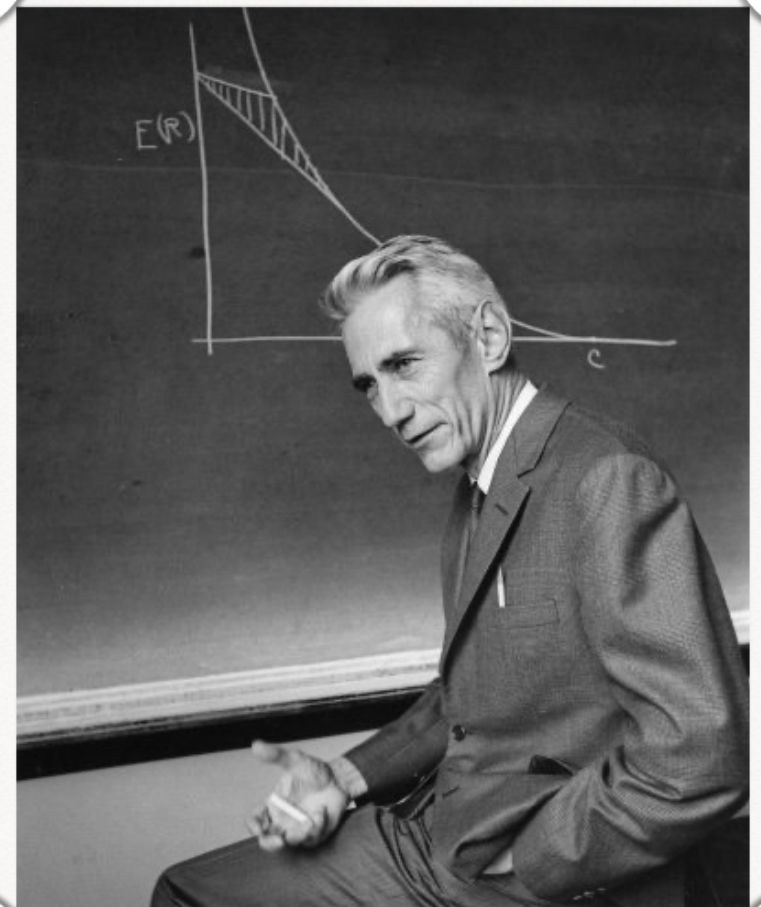
Boolean  
circuit



- **DAG**  
(directed acyclic graph)
- Nodes:
  - inputs:  $x_1, \dots, x_n$
  - gates:  $\wedge \vee \neg$
- Complexity: #gates

## **Theorem** (Shannon 1949)

There is a boolean function  $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$  which cannot be computed by any circuit with  $\frac{2^n}{3n}$  gates.



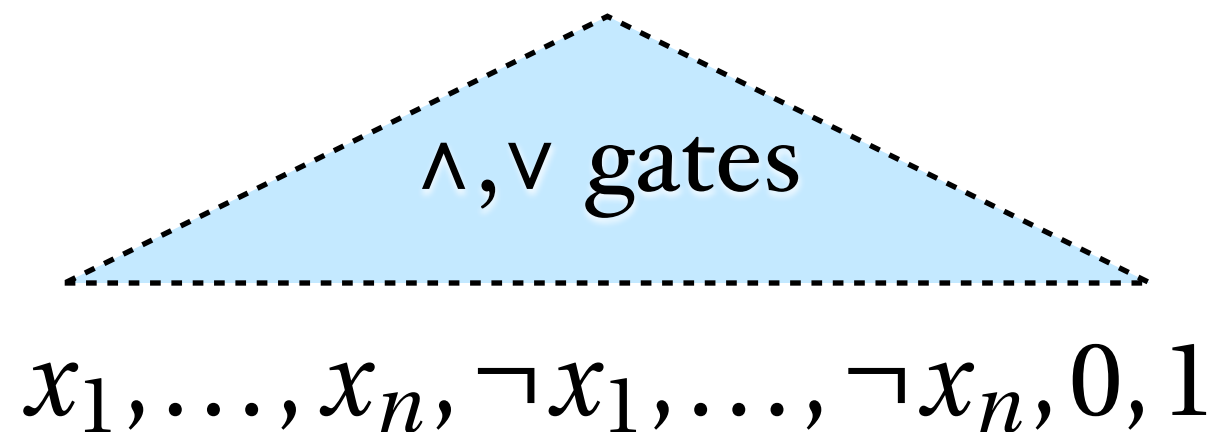
**Claude Shannon**  
(1916–2001)

# of  $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$

$$|\{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}| = 2^{2^n}$$

# of circuits with  $t$  gates:

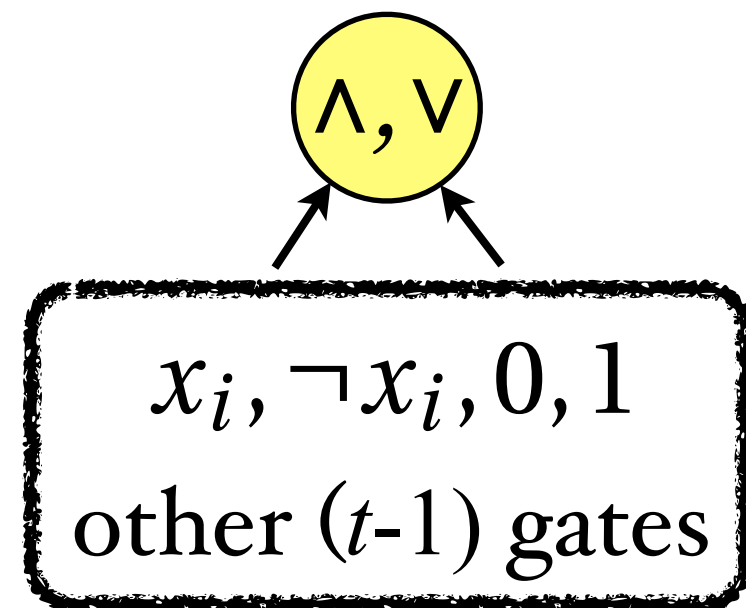
$$< 2^t(2n + t + 1)^{2t}$$



De Morgan's law:

$$\neg(A \vee B) = \neg A \wedge \neg B$$

$$\neg(A \wedge B) = \neg A \vee \neg B$$



## Theorem (Shannon 1949)

Almost all

~~There is a~~ boolean function  $f: \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}$   
which cannot be computed by any circuit  
with  $\frac{2^n}{3n}$  gates.

one circuit computes one function

# $f$  computable by  $t$  gates  $\leq$

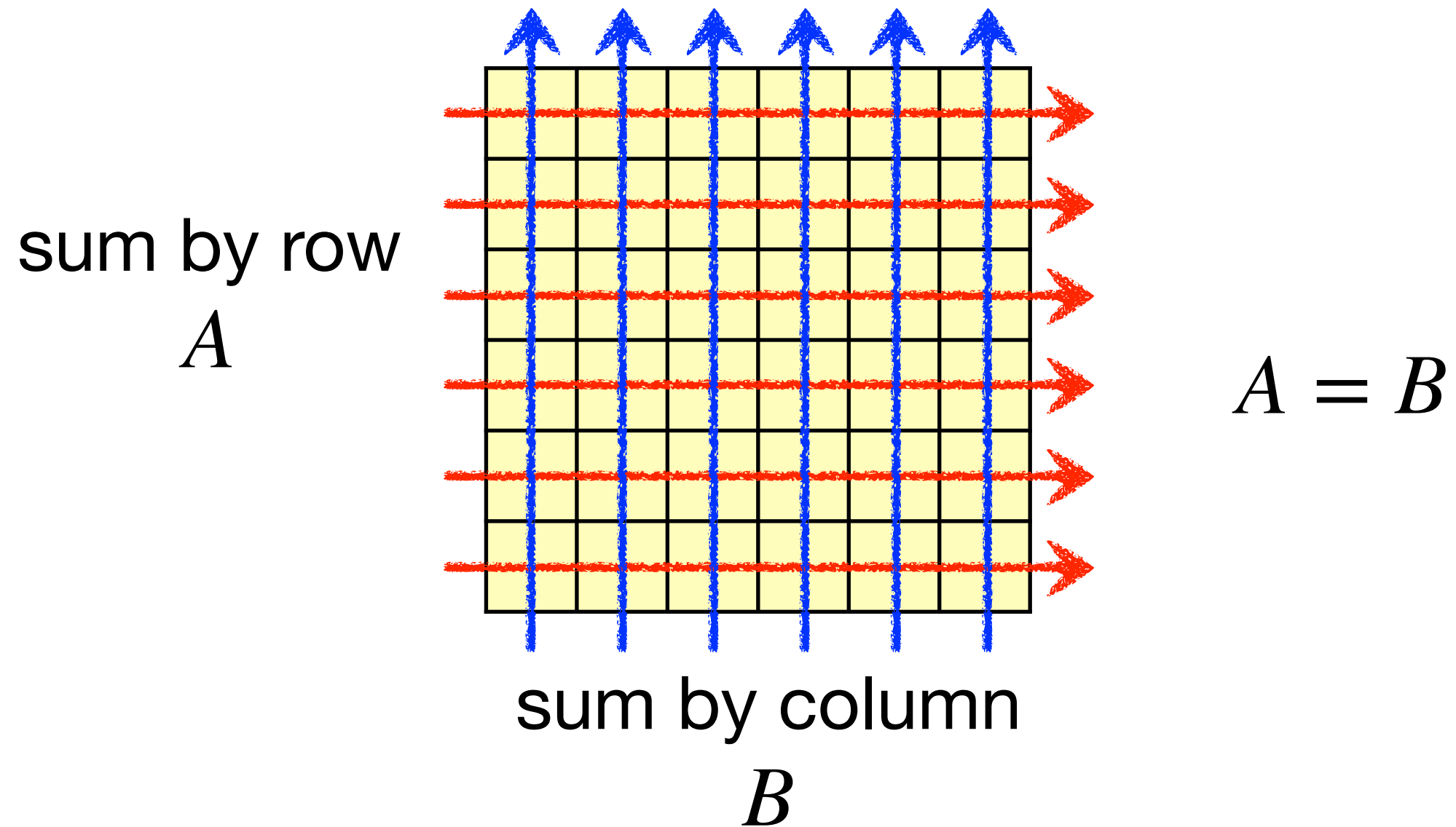
#circuits with  $t$  gates  $\leq$

$$< 2^t(2n + t + 1)^{2t} \ll 2^{2^n} = \#f$$

$$\text{for } t \leq \frac{2^n}{3n}$$

# Double Counting

*“Count the same thing twice.  
The result will be the same.”*



# Handshaking Lemma

A party of  $n$  guests.

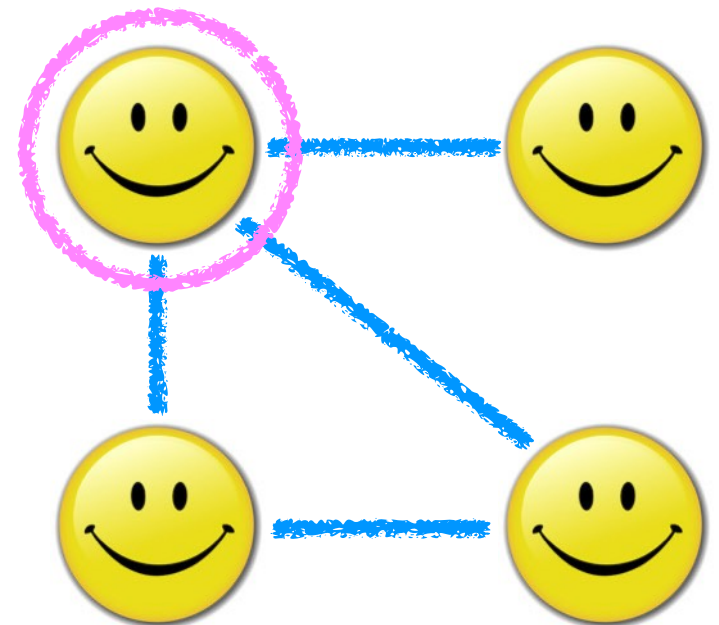
**Handshaking Lemma:** The number of people who shake an odd number of other people's hands is even.

Represented by graph:

$n$  guests  $\Leftrightarrow n$  vertices

handshaking  $\Leftrightarrow$  edge

# of handshaking  $\Leftrightarrow$  degree



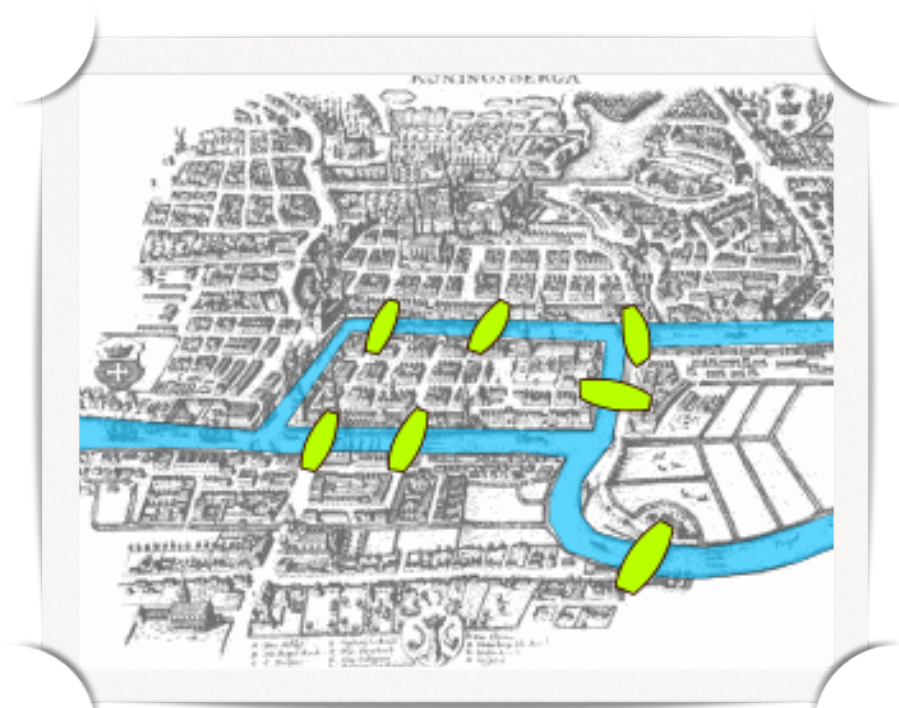


# Handshaking Lemma (Euler 1736)

$$\sum_{v \in V} d(v) = 2|E|$$



Leonhard Euler



In the 1736 paper of  
*Seven Bridges of  
Königsberg*

# Handshaking Lemma (Euler 1736)

$$\sum_{v \in V} d(v) = 2|E|$$

Count the # of edge *orientations*:

$$(u, v) : \{u, v\} \in E$$

Count by vertex:

$$\forall v \in V$$

$d$  directed edges

$$(v, u_1) \cdots (v, u_d)$$

=

Count by edge:

$$\forall \{u, v\} \in E$$

2 orientations

$$(u, v) \text{ and } (v, u)$$

## **Handshaking Lemma** (Euler 1736)

$$\sum_{v \in V} d(v) = 2|E|$$

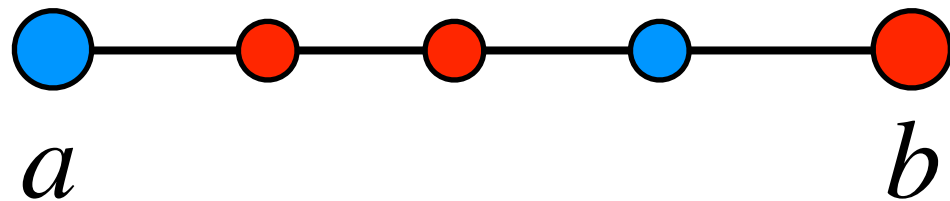
### **Corollary**

# of odd-degree vertices is even.

# Sperner's Lemma

line segment:  $ab$  divided into small segments

each endpoint: red or blue



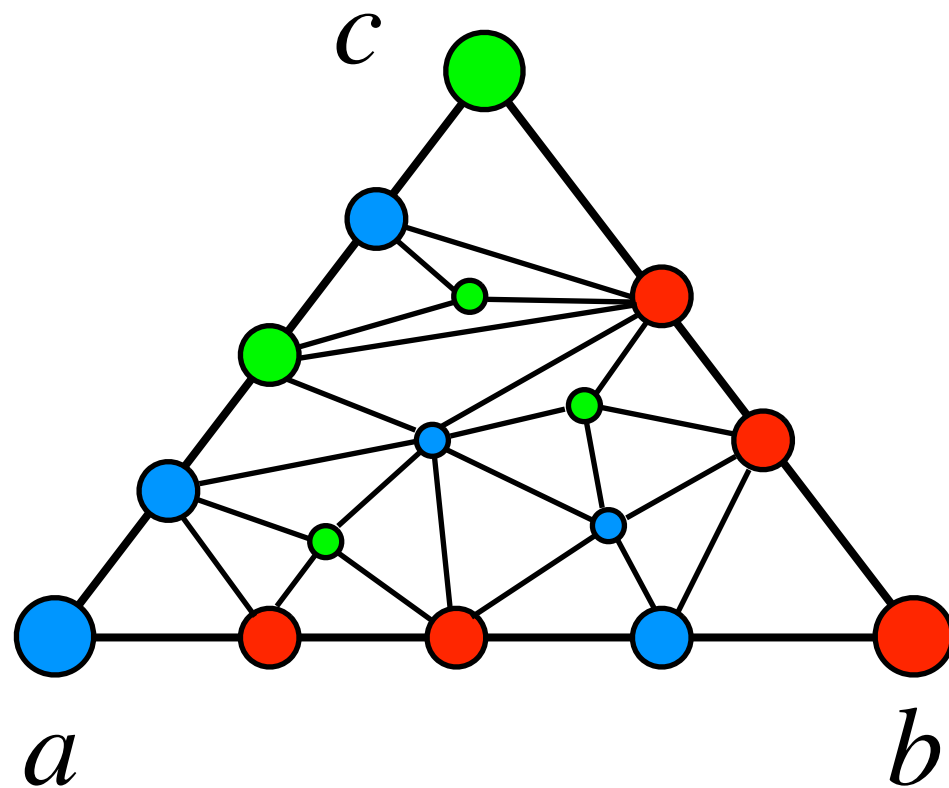
$ab$  are colored differently

$\exists$  small segment 



Emanuel Sperner  
(1905–1980)

# Sperner's Lemma



triangle:  $abc$

triangulation

*proper* coloring:

3 colors red, blue, green

$abc$  is tricolored

lines  $ab, bc, ac$  are 2-colored

## Sperner's Lemma (1928)

$\forall$  properly colored triangulation of a triangle,  
 $\exists$  a properly colored small triangle.

# Sperner's Lemma (1928)

$\forall$  properly colored triangulation of a triangle,  
 $\exists$  a properly colored small triangle.

partial dual graph:

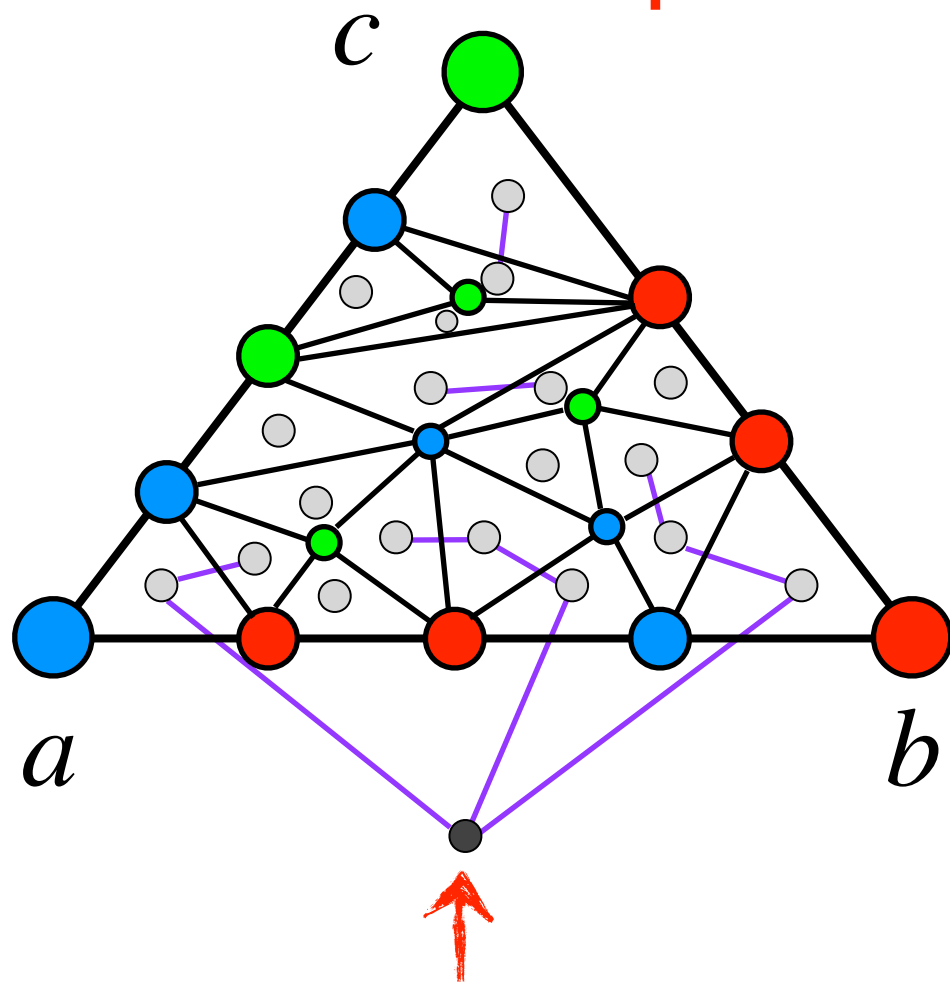
each  $\triangle$  is a vertex  
the outer-space is a vertex

add an edge if 2  $\triangle$   
share a  $\bullet\text{---}\bullet$  edge

degree of  $\triangle$  node: 1

degree of  $\triangle$  or  $\triangle$  node: 2

other cases: 0 degree

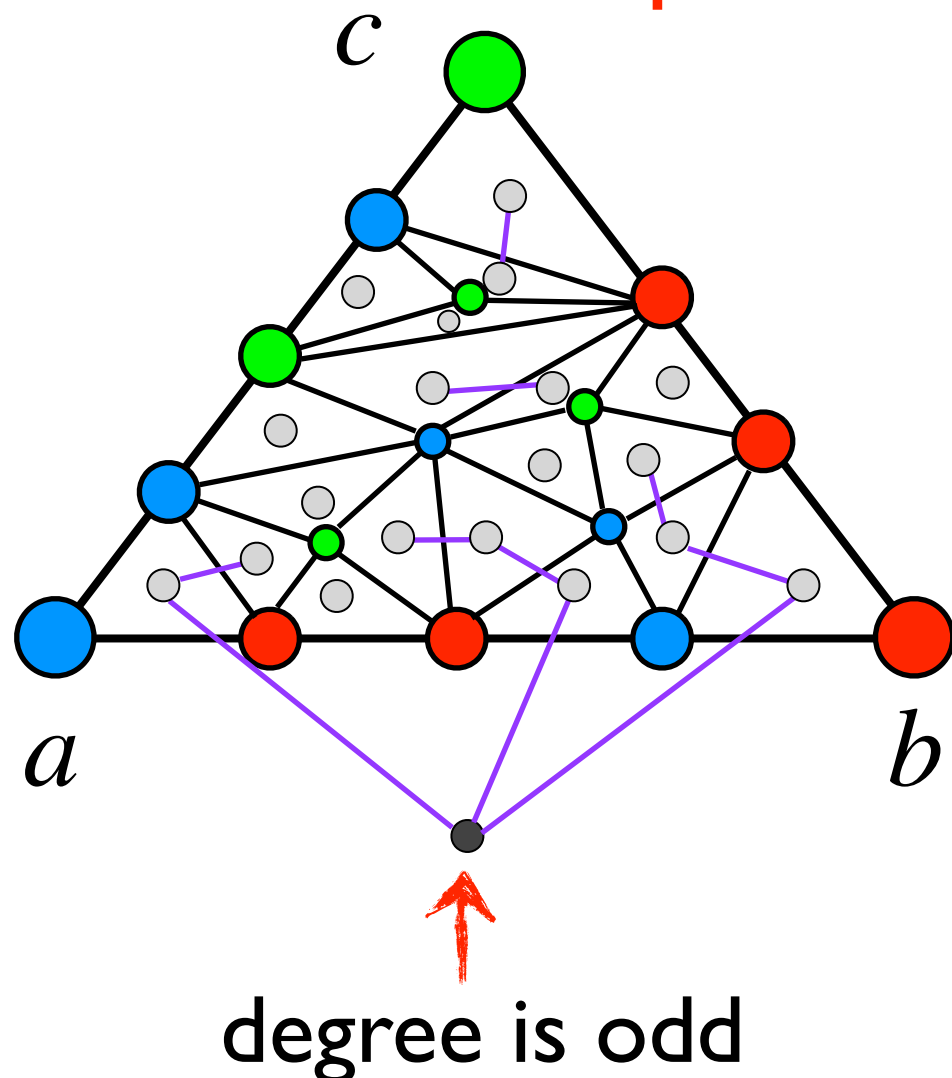


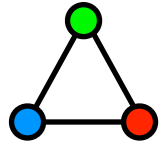
degree is odd

# Sperner's Lemma (1928)

$\forall$  properly colored triangulation of a triangle,  
 $\exists$  a properly colored small triangle.

partial dual graph:

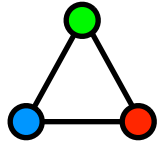


degree of  node: 1

degree of other  : even

handshaking lemma:

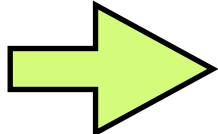
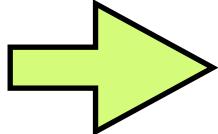
# of odd-degree vertices is even.

# of  : odd  $\neq 0$



## **Sperner's Lemma (1928)**

$\forall$  properly colored triangulation of a triangle,  
 $\exists$  a properly colored small triangle.

high-dimension: triangle  simplex  
triangulation  simplicial  
subdivision

## **Brouwer's fixed point theorem (1911)**

$\forall$  continuous function  $f : B \rightarrow B$  of an  
 $n$ -dimensional ball  $B$ ,  $\exists$  a fixed point  $x = f(x)$ .



# Averaging Principle

# Pigeonhole Principle

“ $n + 1$  pigeons cannot sit in  $n$  holes so that every pigeon is alone in its hole.”



# Pigeonhole Principle

If  $> mn$  objects are partitioned into  $n$  classes, then some class receives  $> m$  objects.



# ***Schubfachprinzip***

***“drawer principle”***

**Dirichlet Principle**



Johann Peter Gustav Lejeune Dirichlet  
(1805 – 1859)

# Dirichlet's approximation

Approximate any **irrational**  $x$   
by a **rational** with **bounded denominator**.

## Theorem (Dirichlet 1879)

$\forall$  irrational  $x$  and natural number  $n$ ,  $\exists$  a rational  $\frac{p}{q}$   
such that  $1 \leq q \leq n$  and

$$\left| x - \frac{p}{q} \right| < \frac{1}{nq}$$

## Theorem (Dirichlet 1879)

$\forall$  irrational  $x$  and natural number  $n$ ,  $\exists$  a rational  $\frac{p}{q}$  such that  $1 \leq q \leq n$  and

$$\left| x - \frac{p}{q} \right| < \frac{1}{nq} \iff |qx - p| < \frac{1}{n}$$

fractional part:  $\{x\} = x - \lfloor x \rfloor$

$(n + 1)$  pigeons:  $\{kx\}$  for  $k = 1, 2, \dots, n + 1$

$n$  holes:  $\left(0, \frac{1}{n}\right), \left(\frac{1}{n}, \frac{2}{n}\right), \dots, \left(\frac{n-1}{n}, 1\right)$



fractional part:  $\{x\} = x - \lfloor x \rfloor$

$(n + 1)$  pigeons:  $\{kx\}$  for  $k = 1, 2, \dots, n + 1$

$n$  holes:  $\left(0, \frac{1}{n}\right), \left(\frac{1}{n}, \frac{2}{n}\right), \dots, \left(\frac{n-1}{n}, 1\right)$

$\exists 1 \leq b < a \leq n + 1$   $\{ax\}, \{bx\}$  in the same hole

$$|(a - b)x - (\lfloor ax \rfloor - \lfloor bx \rfloor)| = |\{ax\} - \{bx\}| < \frac{1}{n}$$

integers:  $q \leq n$   $p$

$$|qx - p| < \frac{1}{n} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \left| x - \frac{p}{q} \right| < \frac{1}{nq}.$$

# ***An initiation* question to Mathematics**

$$\forall S \subseteq \{1, 2, \dots, 2n\} \text{ that } |S| > n$$
$$\exists a, b \in S \text{ such that } a \mid b$$

$$\forall a \in \{1, 2, \dots, 2n\}$$

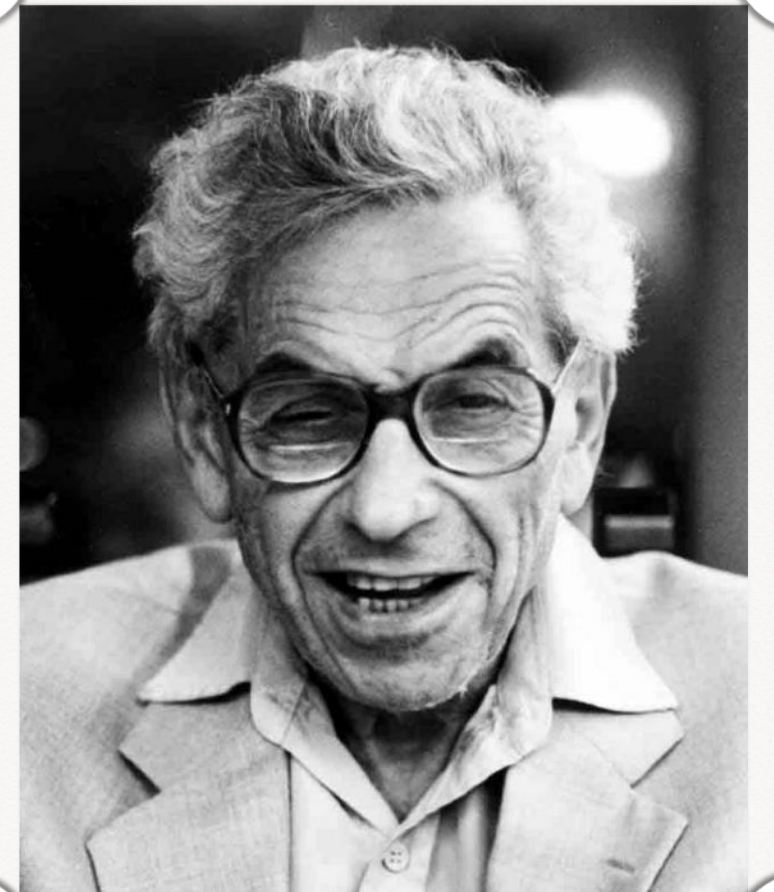
$$a = 2^k m \text{ for an odd } m$$

$$C_m = \{2^k m \mid k \geq 0, 2^k m \leq 2n\}$$

$>n$  **pigeons:**  $S$

$n$  **pigeonholes:**  $C_1, C_3, C_5, \dots, C_{2n-1}$

$$a < b \quad a, b \in C_m \quad \longrightarrow \quad a \mid b$$



Paul Erdős  
(1913—1996)



# Monotonic subsequences

sequence:  $(a_1, \dots, a_n)$  of  $n$  different numbers

$$1 \leq i_1 < i_2 < \dots < i_k \leq n$$

subsequence:

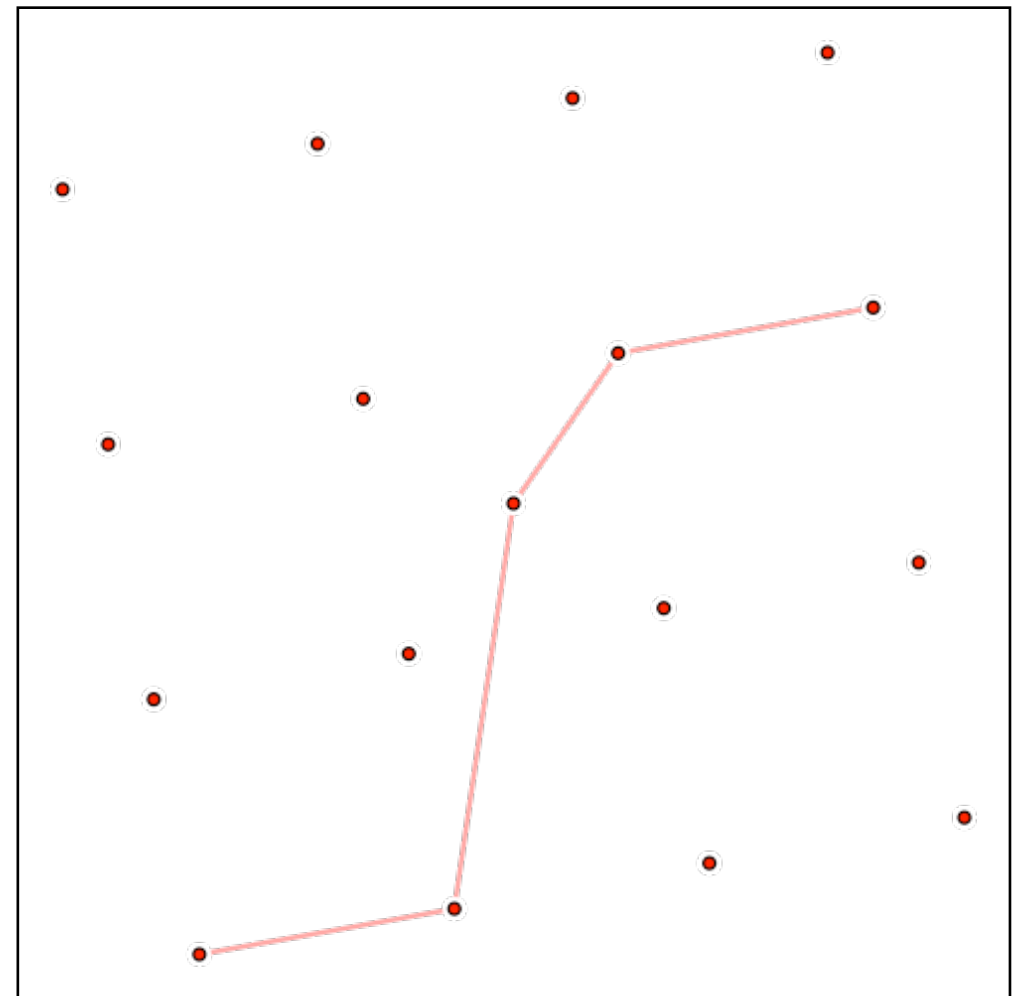
$$(a_{i_1}, a_{i_2}, \dots, a_{i_k})$$

increasing:

$$a_{i_1} < a_{i_2} < \dots < a_{i_k}$$

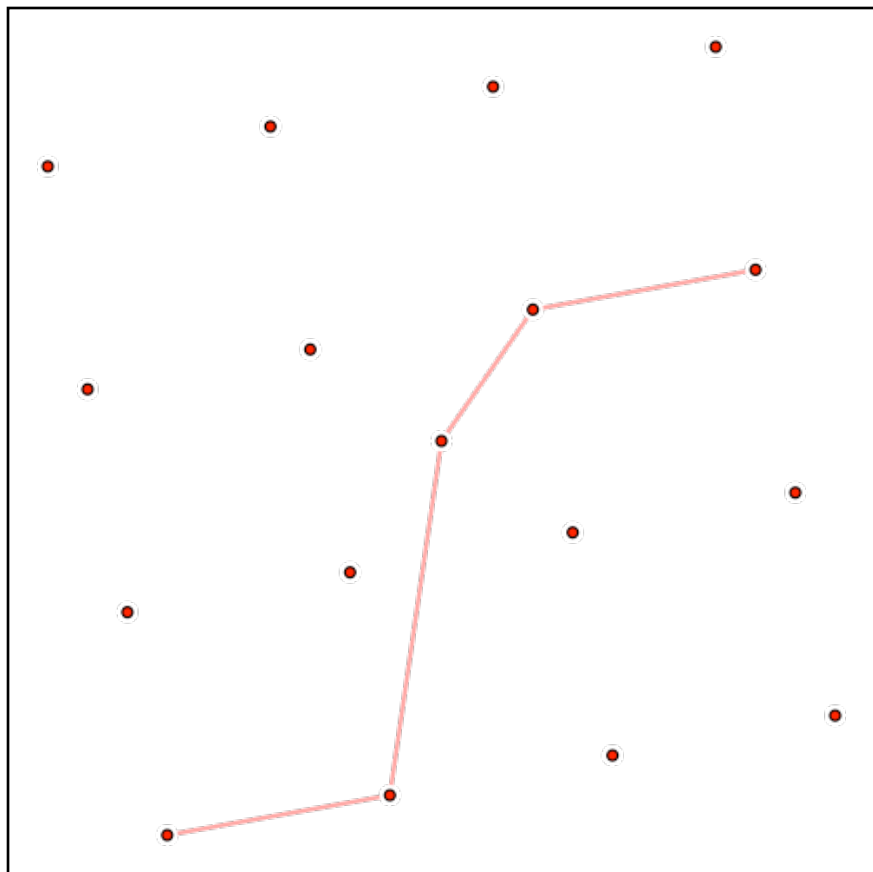
decreasing:

$$a_{i_1} > a_{i_2} > \dots > a_{i_k}$$



# Theorem (Erdős-Szekeres 1935)

A sequence of  $> mn$  different numbers must contain either an increasing subsequence of length  $m + 1$ , or a decreasing subsequence of length  $n + 1$ .



$(a_1, \dots, a_N)$  of  $N$  different numbers  $N > mn$

associate each  $a_i$  with  $(x_i, y_i)$

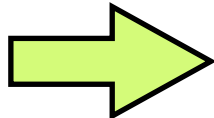
$x_i$  : length of longest *increasing*  
subsequence *ending* at  $a_i$

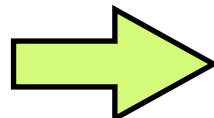
$y_i$  : length of longest *decreasing*  
subsequence *starting* at  $a_i$

$$\forall i \neq j, \quad (x_i, y_i) \neq (x_j, y_j)$$

assume

$i < j$

**Cases.1:**  $a_i < a_j$    $x_i < x_j$

**Cases.2:**  $a_i > a_j$    $y_i > y_j$

$(a_1, \dots, a_N)$  of  $N$  different numbers  $N > mn$

$x_i$  : length of longest *increasing*  
subsequence *ending* at  $a_i$

$y_i$  : length of longest *decreasing*  
subsequence *starting* at  $a_i$

$$\forall i \neq j, \quad (x_i, y_i) \neq (x_j, y_j)$$

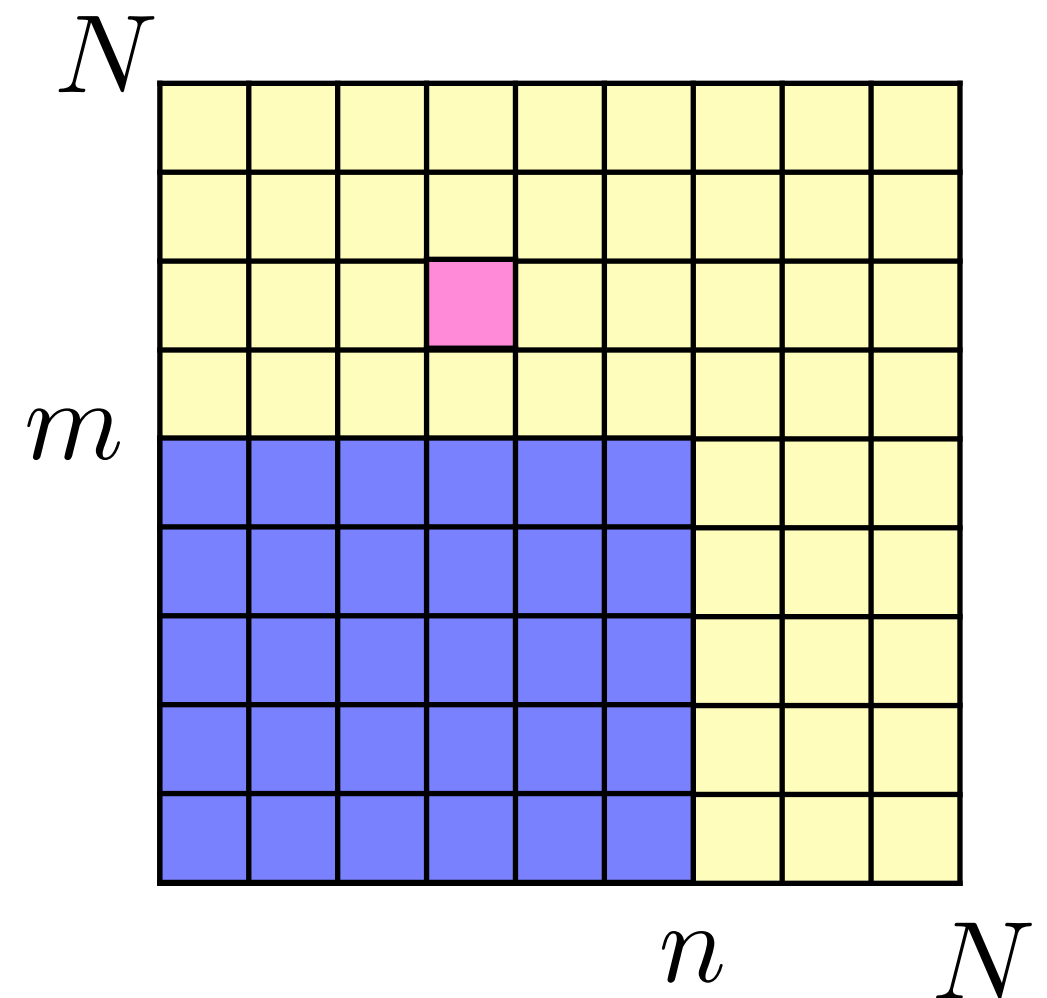


*“One pigeon per each hole.”*

No way to put  $N$  pigeons  
into  $mn$  holes.

“ $N$  pigeons”  $(a_1, \dots, a_N)$

$a_i$  is in hole  $(x_i, y_i)$



# Theorem (Erdős-Szekeres 1935)

A sequence of  $> mn$  different numbers must contain either an increasing subsequence of length  $m + 1$ , or a decreasing subsequence of length  $n + 1$ .

$$(a_1, \dots, a_N) \quad N > mn$$

$x_i$  : length of longest *increasing* subsequence *ending* at  $a_i$

$y_i$  : length of longest *decreasing* subsequence *starting* at  $a_i$

