

Locally Sampleable Uniform Symmetric Distributions

Kewen Wu (UC Berkeley)



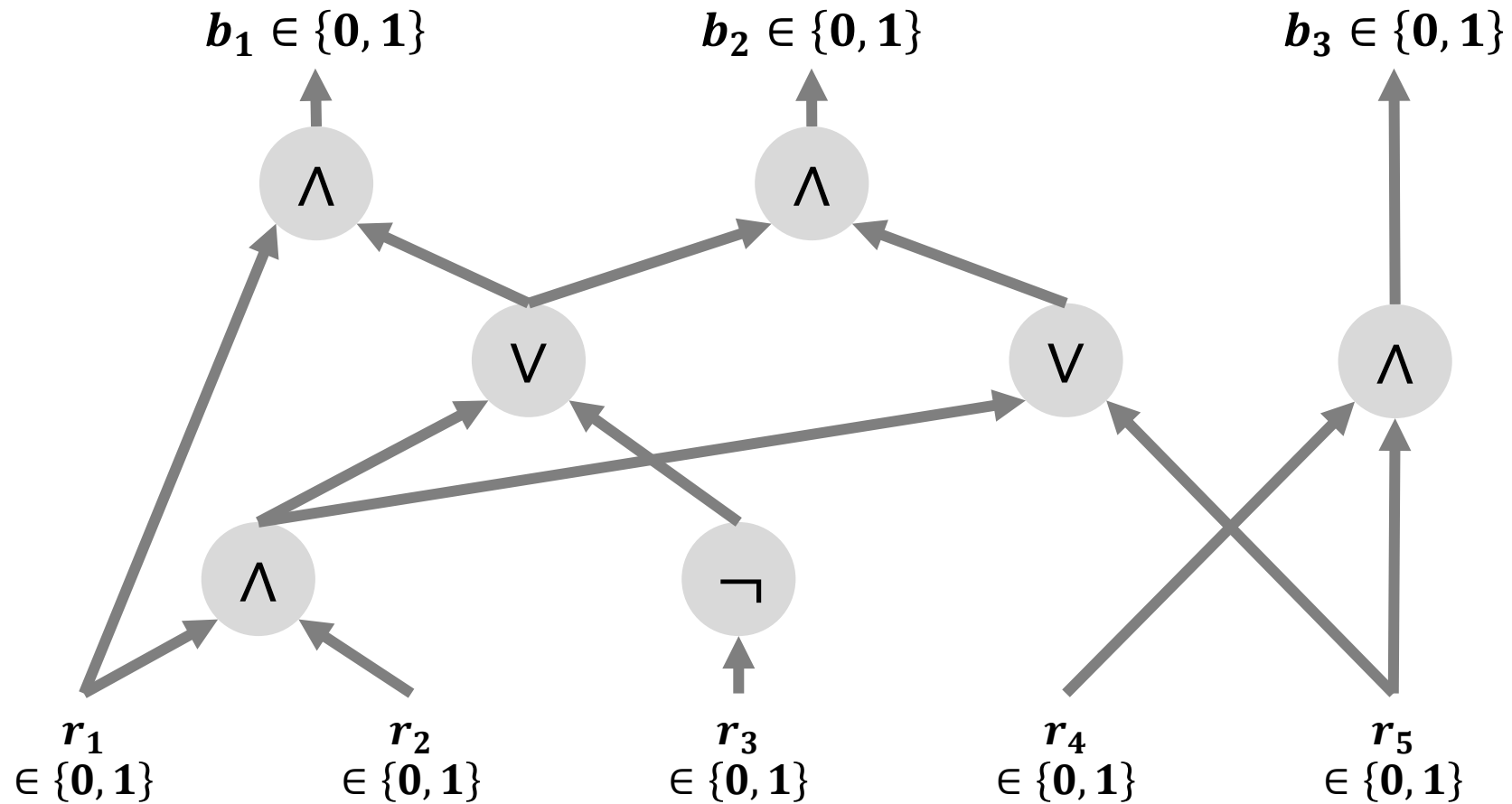
Daniel Kane
UCSD



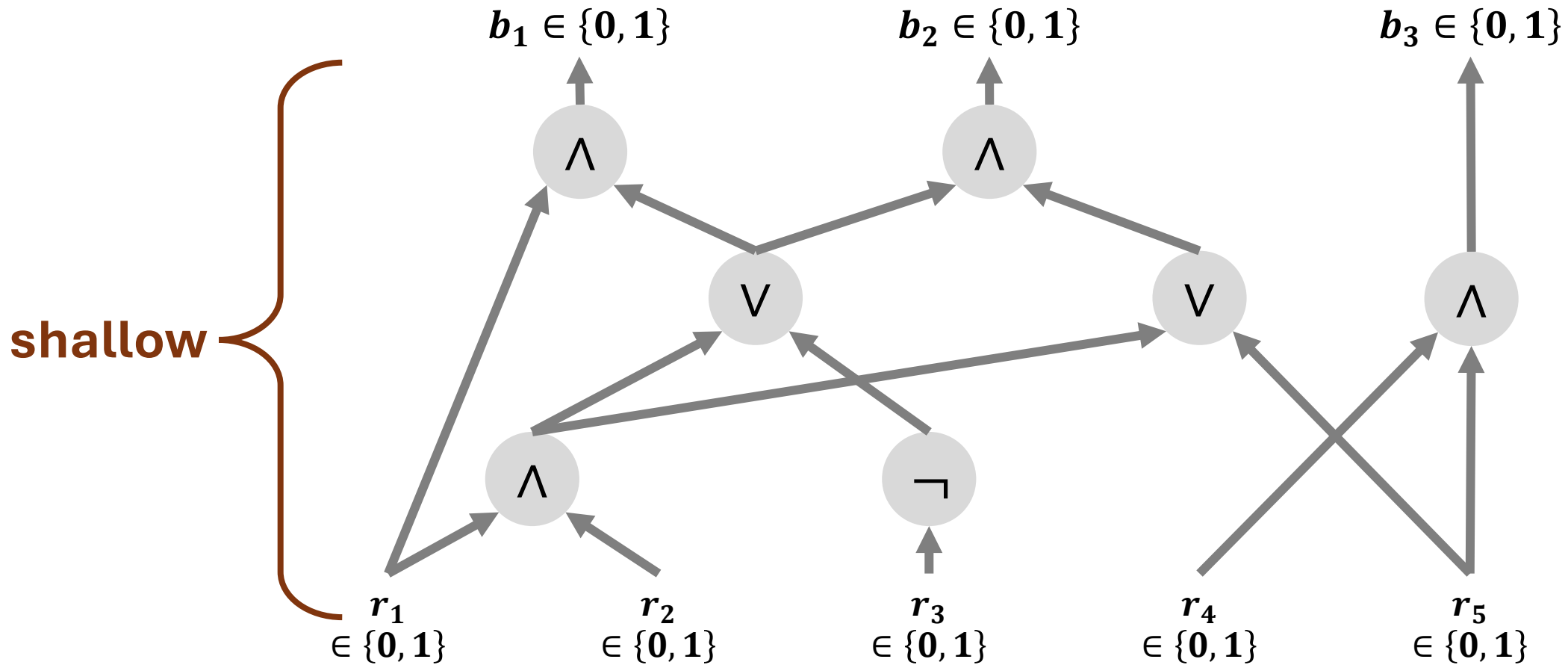
Anthony Ostuni
UCSD

What distributions can a shallow circuit produce?

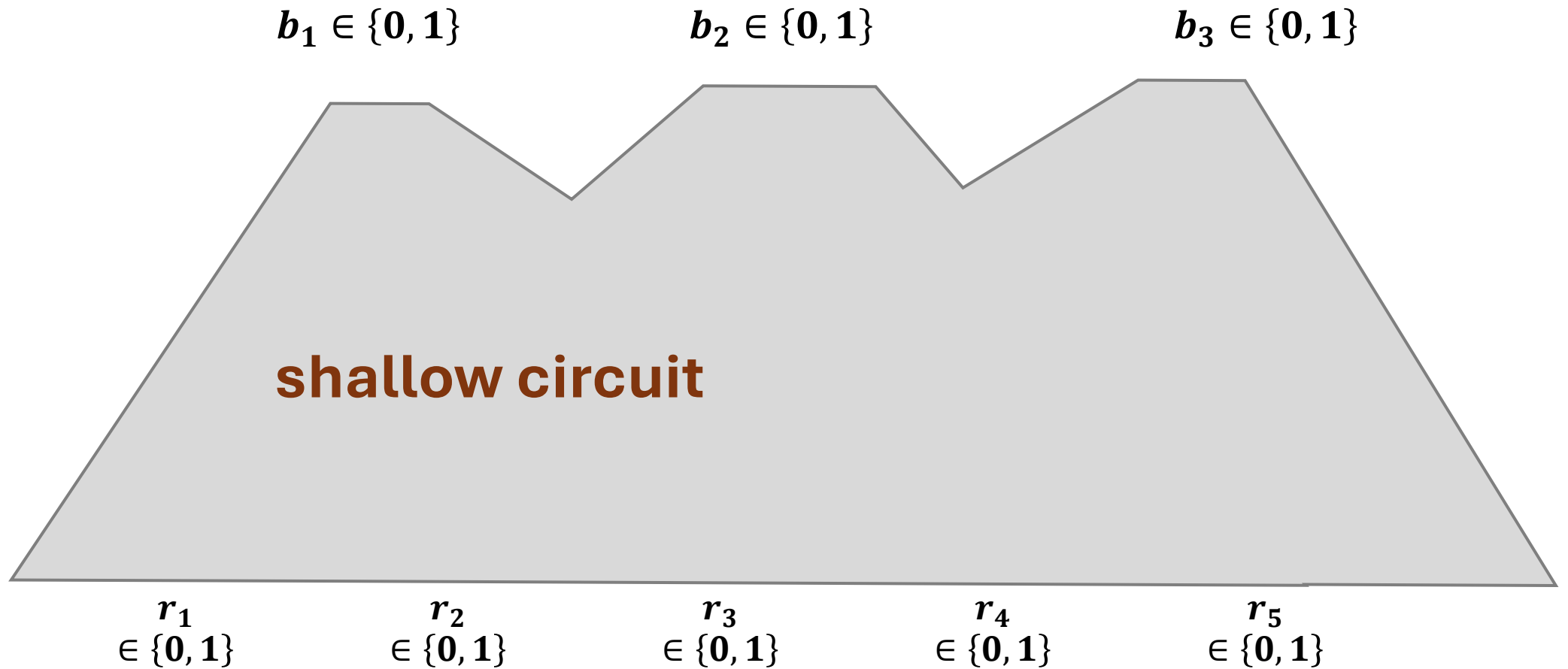
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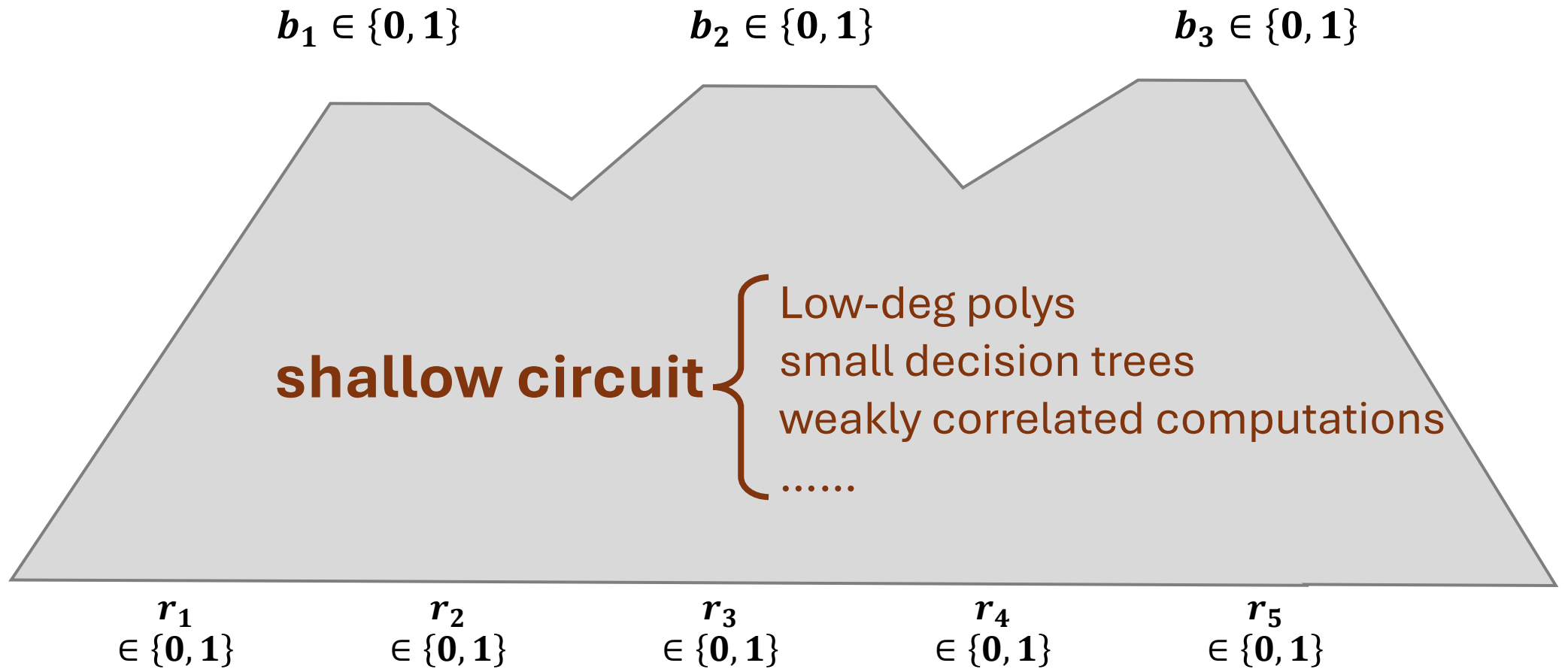
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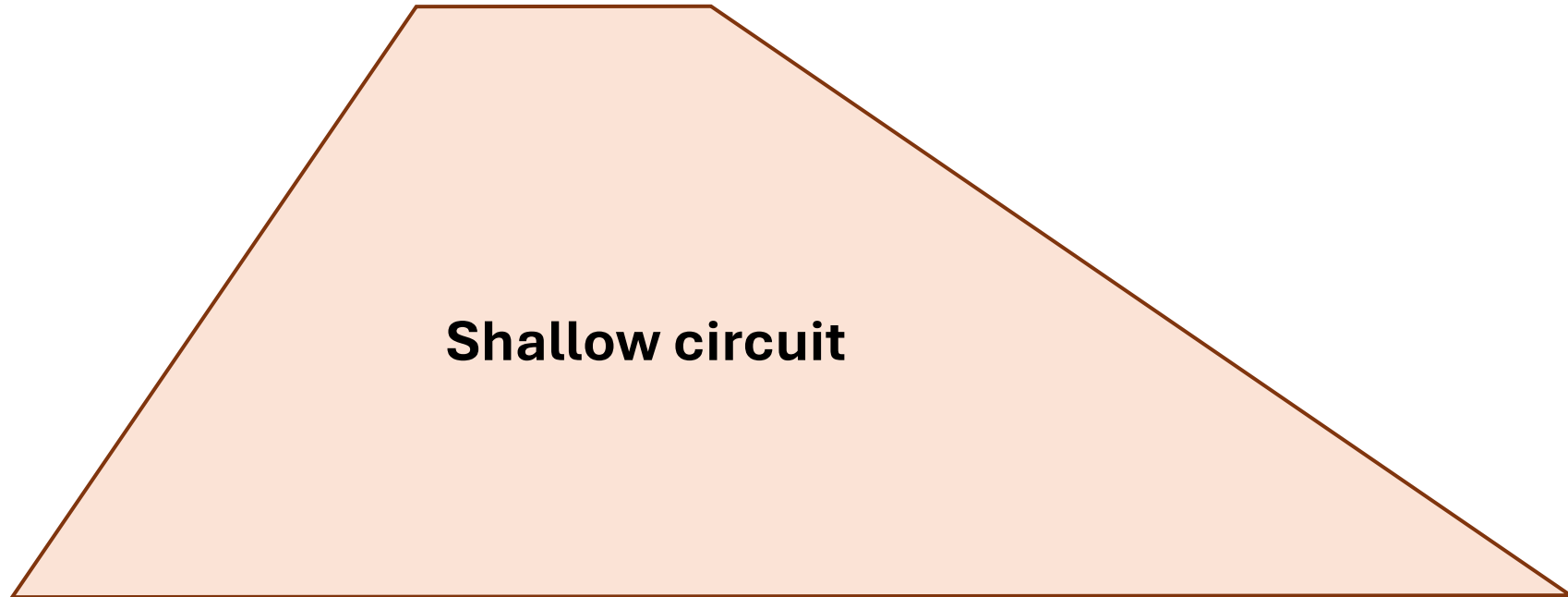


What distributions can a shallow circuit produce?

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Output
distribution

b_1 b_2 b_3 $\dots\dots$ b_n



Random
input bits

r_1 r_2 r_3 r_4 r_5 r_6 $\dots\dots$
 $\sim \{0, 1\}$ $\sim \{0, 1\}$ $\sim \{0, 1\}$ $\sim \{0, 1\}$ $\sim \{0, 1\}$ $\sim \{0, 1\}$

What distributions can a shallow circuit produce?

**Output
distribution** $D = (b_1, b_2, b_3, \dots, b_n)$ over $\{0, 1\}^n$

What distributions can a shallow circuit produce?

uniform symmetric

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Uniform.

D is uniform over its support

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Symmetric.

the support of D is symmetric

x in support iff $\pi(x)$ in support

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Ex / Non-Ex.

Uniform over $\{0, 1\}^n$

1/3-biased distribution

Uniform string of weight $n/2$

Point distribution on 0^n

What distributions can a shallow circuit produce?

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Motivations.

Natural question on its own

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What can shallow circuits do?

What distributions can a shallow circuit produce?

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Computation.

It cannot compute

$$f(x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}) = x_1 \oplus \dots \oplus x_{n-1}$$

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What can shallow circuits do?

Sampling.

$$(x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}, x_1 \oplus \dots \oplus x_{n-1})$$

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What can shallow circuits do?

Sampling.

It *can* sample

$$\begin{aligned} & (x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}, x_1 \oplus \dots \oplus x_{n-1}) \\ & \quad \parallel \\ & (y_1 \oplus y_2, y_2 \oplus y_3, \dots, y_n \oplus y_1) \end{aligned}$$

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Other examples like this?

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Other examples like this? No! [KOW'25+]

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Data structure lower bounds [Vio'12, FLRS'23, KOW'24]

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Dictionary Problem.

Given an n -bit string x of weight 0 modulo 127

Store it as some s -bit string h such that

each x_i can be recovered *easily* from h

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Jan 27

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Store $h = x$

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1 bit of h to decode x_i

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Only $\approx 2^n/127$ possible x
Store h as the index

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$$s = \log(2^n/127) = n - 6$$

Read entire h to decode x_i

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Can we achieve both?

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No! [KOW'24]

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Store it as some s -bit string h such that
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1 bit of h to decode x_i

Min Storage.

$$s = \log(2^n / 127) = n - 6$$

Either read $\omega(1)$ bits of h
Or h has length n

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Data structure lower bounds [Vio'12, FLRS'23, KOW'24]

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Quantum-classical separation [BGK'18, WP'23, KOW'24]

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Quantum-classical separation [BGK'18, WP'23, KOW'24]

Can quantum shallow circuit generate distributions that are classically hard?

What distributions can a shallow circuit produce?

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Natural question on its own

Data structure lower bounds [Vio'12, FLRS'23, KOW'24]

Quantum-classical separation [BGK'18, WP'23, KOW'24]

Can quantum shallow circuit generate distributions that are classically hard? Yes!

Formal Set-Up

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Shallow circuit

Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a **local** function

each output bit depends on **constant** number of input bits

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Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a **local** function

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Define $f(U)$ be the output distribution of f under U

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When is $f(U)$ uniform symmetric?

Example 1

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When is $f(U)$ uniform symmetric?

$$f(U) \equiv 0^n$$

ZEROS

Example 2

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ONES

Example 3

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ZEROS

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ONES

$$f(U) \sim \{0^n, 1^n\}$$

ZEROS-OR-ONES

Example 4

Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a **local** function

each output bit depends on **constant** number of input bits

Define U to be the uniform distribution over $\{0, 1\}^m$

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When is $f(U)$ uniform symmetric?

$$|f(U)| \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

EVEN

Example 4

Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a **local** function

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When is $f(U)$ uniform symmetric?

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$$(r_1 \oplus r_2, r_2 \oplus r_3, r_3 \oplus r_4, \dots, r_n \oplus r_1)$$

EVEN

Example 5

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Define $f(U)$ be the output distribution of f under U

When is $f(U)$ uniform symmetric?

$$|f(U)| \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

odds

$$(r_1 \oplus r_2, r_2 \oplus r_3, r_3 \oplus r_4, \dots, r_n \oplus r_1 \oplus \mathbf{1})$$

Example 6

Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a **local** function

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When is $f(U)$ uniform symmetric?

$$f(U) \sim \{0, 1\}^n$$

evens-or-odds

Examples

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zeros ones zeros-or-ones evens odds evens-or-odds

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zeros

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Uniform over weight ≤ 10 ?

Uniform over weight $n/2$?

Uniform over weight 0 modulo 3 ?

.....

Examples

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Conjecture [Filmus-Leigh-Riazanov-Sokolov'23]. No other examples

n sufficiently large

Our Result

Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a **local** function

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Theorem [KOW'25+]. No other examples

n sufficiently large

Robust and Quantitative

Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a **d -local** function

each output bit depends on d input bits

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Robust and Quantitative

Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a **d -local** function

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If $f(U)$ is ϵ -close to a uniform symmetric distribution

Robust and Quantitative

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Define U to be the uniform distribution over $\{0, 1\}^m$

Define $f(U)$ be the output distribution of f under U

Theorem [KOW'25+].

If $f(U)$ is ϵ -close to a uniform symmetric distribution,
then $f(U)$ is $O_d(\epsilon)$ -close to one of the following six

zeros ones zeros-or-ones evens odds evens-or-odds

n sufficiently large

Takeaway

$$f(U) \equiv 0^n$$

zeros

$$f(U) \equiv 1^n$$

ones

$$f(U) \sim \{0^n, 1^n\}$$

zeros-or-ones

$$|f(U)| \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

evens

$$|f(U)| \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

odds

$$f(U) \sim \{0, 1\}^n$$

evens-or-odds

Takeaway

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0-local

ones

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1-local

zeros-or-ones

$$|f(U)| \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

2-local

evens

$$|f(U)| \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$$

2-local

odds

$$f(U) \sim \{0, 1\}^n$$

1-local

evens-or-odds

Takeaway

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odds

$$f(U) \sim \{0, 1\}^n$$

1-local

evens-or-odds

*For uniform symmetric distributions,
locality of **large constant** is the same as locality of **two***

Proof Overview

zeros

ones

zeros-or-ones

evens

odds

evens-or-odds

Proof Overview

How to rule out

Uniform over weight $n/3$

Uniform over weight $\geq n/2$

zeros ones zeros-or-ones evens odds evens-or-odds

Proof Overview

How to rule out

Uniform over weight $n/3$

Uniform over weight $\geq n/2$

General case

zeros ones zeros-or-ones evens odds evens-or-odds

Weight $n/3$

$f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ is a **local** function

$f(U)$ is the output dist of f under uniform input

Why can't $f(U)$ be uniform over n -bit strings of weight $n/3$?

Weight $n/3$

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Granularity issue!

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Marginal bias should be $1/3$

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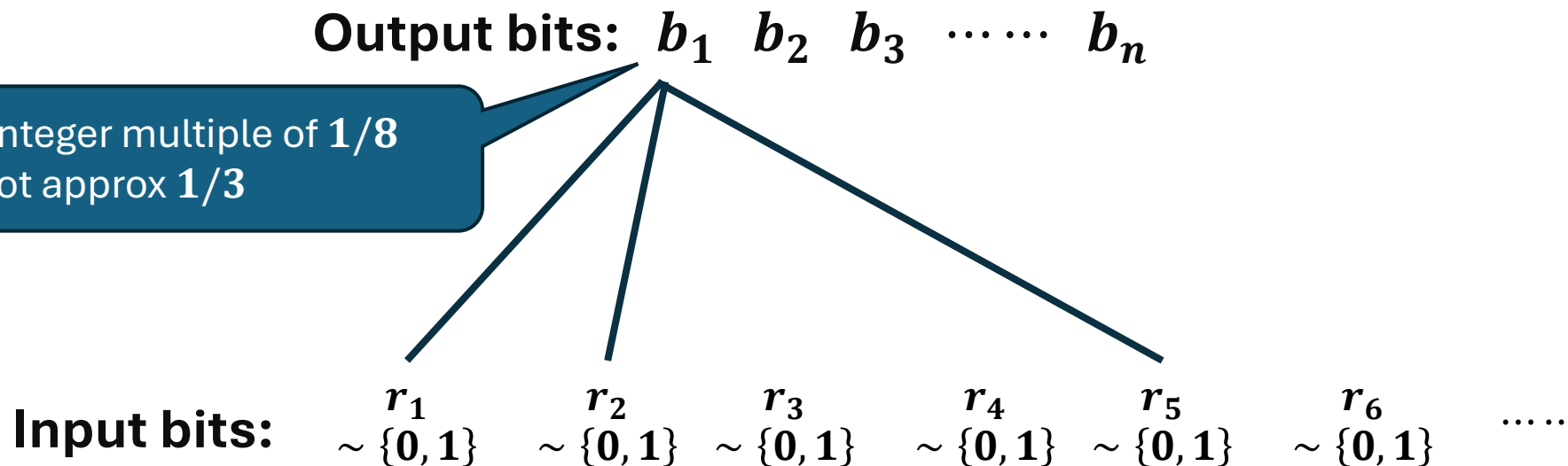
$f(U)$ is the output dist of f under uniform input

Why can't $f(U)$ be uniform over n -bit strings of weight $n/3$?

Granularity issue!

Marginal bias should be $1/3$

Density is an integer multiple of $1/8$
Cannot approx $1/3$



Weight $n/3$

$f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ is a **local** function

$f(U)$ is the output dist of f under uniform input

By granularity, each output bit produces $\Omega(1)$ distance

Weight $n/3$

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By concentration, K independent output bits produce $1 - e^{-\Omega(K)}$ distance

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Structural Lemma.

Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ independent output bits.

Weight $n/3$

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After conditioning, we have $1 - e^{-\Omega(n)}$ distance

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Structural Lemma.

Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ independent output bits.

After conditioning, we have $1 - e^{-\Omega(n)}$ distance

By union bound over $2^{o(n)}$ conditioning, the distance is $1 - 2^{o(n)} \cdot e^{-\Omega(n)} = 1 - e^{-\Omega(n)}$

Weight $\geq n/2$

$f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ is a **local** function

$f(U)$ is the output dist of f under uniform input

Why can't $f(U)$ be uniform over n -bit strings of weight $\geq n/2$?

Weight $\geq n/2$

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Why can't $f(U)$ be uniform over n -bit strings of weight $\geq n/2$?

Granularity argument does not work

Marginal bias should be $1/2$

Weight $\geq n/2$

$f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ is a **local** function

$f(U)$ is the output dist of f under uniform input

Why can't $f(U)$ be uniform over n -bit strings of weight $\geq n/2$?

Sharp cutoff!

$f(U)$ cannot generate strong correlation to produce a sharp cutoff between $< n/2$ and $\geq n/2$

Weight $\geq n/2$

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Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ *independent* output bits.

Sum of independent bits

Weight $\geq n/2$

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$f(U)$ cannot generate strong correlation to produce a sharp cutoff between $< n/2$ and $\geq n/2$

Structural Lemma.

Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ independent output bits.

Sum of independent bits
 \Rightarrow Gaussian distribution
 \Rightarrow No sharp cutoff

Weight $\geq n/2$: Caveat!

Structural Lemma.

Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ *independent* output bits.

Not always correct!

Sum of independent bits
 \Rightarrow Gaussian distribution

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Not always correct!

Sum of independent bits
 \Rightarrow Gaussian distribution

Independent bits do not necessarily imply Gaussian!

Weight $\geq n/2$: Caveat!

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Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ *independent* output bits.

Not always correct!

Sum of independent bits
 \Rightarrow Gaussian distribution

Independent bits do not necessarily imply Gaussian!

Ex.

$$x_1, \neg x_1, x_2, \neg x_2, x_3, \neg x_3, \dots, x_{n/2}, \neg x_{n/2}$$

Weight $\geq n/2$: Caveat!

Structural Lemma.

Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ independent output bits.

Not always correct!

Sum of independent bits
 \Rightarrow Gaussian distribution

Independent bits do not necessarily imply Gaussian!

Ex.

$$x_1, \neg x_1, x_2, \neg x_2, x_3, \neg x_3, \dots, x_{n/2}, \neg x_{n/2}$$

Many independent bits, but total weight is always $n/2$

Weight $\geq n/2$: Caveat!

Structural Lemma.

Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ independent output bits.

Not always correct!

Sum of independent bits
 \Rightarrow Gaussian distribution

Independent bits do not necessarily imply Gaussian!

Ex.

$$\boxed{x_1, \neg x_1} \boxed{x_2, \neg x_2} \boxed{x_3, \neg x_3} \dots \boxed{x_{n/2}, \neg x_{n/2}}$$

Fix.

Weight $\geq n/2$: Caveat!

Structural Lemma.

Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ independent output bits.

Not always correct!

Sum of independent bits
 \Rightarrow Gaussian distribution

Independent bits do not necessarily imply Gaussian!

Ex.

$x_1, \neg x_1, x_2, \neg x_2, x_3, \neg x_3, \dots, x_{n/2}, \neg x_{n/2}$

Fix.

Each *neighborhood* is far from unbiased
But the “weight $\geq n/2$ ” distribution is

Weight $\geq n/2$: full argument

Upgraded Structural Lemma.

Conditioning on $o(n)$ input bits, we can find $\Omega(n)$ independent output neighborhoods.

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Most neighborhoods are not close to unbiased

Each has $\Omega(1)$ distance



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$1 - e^{-\Omega(n)}$ distance
by concentration

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Cannot generate sharp cutoff

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Large distance either way

General Case

To rule out any “weird” uniform symmetric distribution D

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have $0.5n \sim 0.5n + \sqrt{n}$, but not $0.5n - \sqrt{n} \sim 0.5n$

have $n/2$ and $n/2 + 10$, but not $n/2 + 2$

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Design a potential function h to witness the cutoffs

$\mathbf{E}_{x \sim D}[h(|x|)] \approx \mathbf{1}$ for the claimed distribution D

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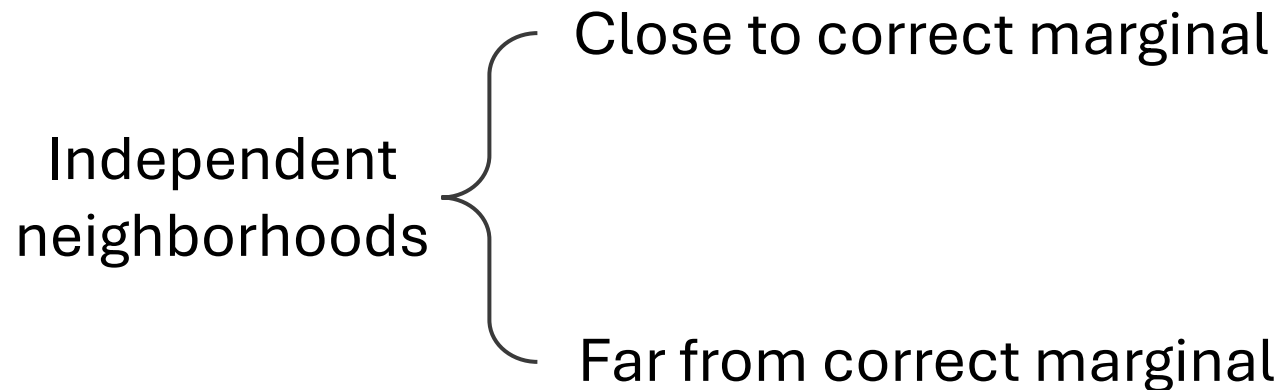
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Close to correct marginal

Far from correct marginal \Rightarrow large distance by concentration

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Close to correct marginal \Rightarrow weight distribution is like Gaussian
 \Rightarrow impossible by potential function h

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have $n/2$ and $n/2 + 10$, but not $n/2 + 2$

Design a potential function h to witness that

$E_{x \sim D}[h(|x|)] \approx 1$ for the claimed distribution

$E_{z \sim G}[h(z)] \ll 1$ for Gaussian distributions G

Periodicity subtlety that allows
evens, odds to be possible

Independent
neighborhoods

Close to correct marginal \Rightarrow weight distribution is like Gaussian
 \Rightarrow impossible by potential function h

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Summary

Locally sampleable uniform symmetric distributions

zeros ones zeros-or-ones evens odds evens-or-odds

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In progress: mixture of evens, odds, and p -biased

p and the mixing weights should be dyadic rational with constant denominator

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Improving quantitative bounds?

Quantitative Bound

Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a **d -local** function

Theorem [KOW'25+]. If $n \geq \mathbf{tower}(d)$ and $f(U)$ is ϵ -close to a uniform symmetric distribution, then $f(U)$ is $(\epsilon \cdot \mathbf{tower}(d))$ -close to one of the following six

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$\mathbf{tower}(d) = 2^{2^{2^{\dots}}}$ of height d

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Should be $\epsilon \cdot \mathcal{O}(1)$
In progress

Quantitative Bound

Let $f: \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ be a d -local function

Necessary for our structural lemma
But should be $\exp(d)$

Theorem [KOW'25+]. If $n \geq \mathbf{tower}(d)$ and $f(U)$ is ϵ -close to a uniform symmetric distribution, then $f(U)$ is $(\epsilon \cdot \mathbf{tower}(d))$ -close to one of the following six

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Thank you!

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<https://shlw.github.io>