

# DELTA, EXTENDED ODD HOLES AND THEIR BLOCKERS

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ABSTRACT. Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$  where no element is contained in every member. We prove that if there is a  $w \in \mathbb{R}_+^V$  such that every member has weight greater than half the capacity, then there must be a delta or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor. The proof of this result relies on a tool developed for finding delta or extended odd hole minors.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

All sets considered in this paper are finite unless stated otherwise. Let  $V$  be a set of *elements*, and let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a family of subsets of  $V$ , called *members*. We say that  $\mathcal{C}$  is a *clutter* over *ground set*  $V$  if no member is contained in another [6]. A *cover* is a subset  $B \subseteq V$  such that for all  $C \in \mathcal{C}$ ,  $B \cap C \neq \emptyset$ . A cover is *minimal* if it does not contain another cover. The *blocker* of  $\mathcal{C}$ , denoted  $b(\mathcal{C})$ , is the clutter over ground set  $V$  whose members are the minimal covers of  $\mathcal{C}$ . It is well-known that  $b(b(\mathcal{C})) = \mathcal{C}$  [8, 6]. Given disjoint subsets  $I, J \subseteq V$ , the *minor* of  $\mathcal{C}$  obtained after *deleting*  $I$  and *contracting*  $J$  is the clutter over ground set  $V - (I \cup J)$  whose members are

$$\mathcal{C} \setminus I/J := \text{the minimal sets of } \{C - J : C \in \mathcal{C}, C \cap I = \emptyset\}.$$

It can be readily checked that  $b(\mathcal{C} \setminus I/J) = b(\mathcal{C})/I \setminus J$  [13]. We say that  $\mathcal{C}$  is *ideal* if the polyhedron

$$\{x \in \mathbb{R}_+^V : x(C) \geq 1 \forall C \in \mathcal{C}\}$$

is integral [3]. (Here and throughout the paper,  $x(C)$  denotes  $\sum_{e \in C} x_e$ .) If a clutter is ideal, then so is every minor of it essentially because in terms of the polyhedron, deleting  $e$  corresponds to projecting away  $x_e$  and contracting  $e$  corresponds to restricting  $x_e$  to 0 [14]. Alfred Lehman proved the following *width-length* characterization of ideal clutters:

**Theorem 1** ([10], see also [7]). *Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$ . Then  $\mathcal{C}$  is ideal if, and only if, for all  $w, \ell \in \mathbb{R}_+^V$ ,*

$$\min\{w(C) : C \in \mathcal{C}\} \cdot \min\{\ell(B) : B \in b(\mathcal{C})\} \leq w^\top \ell.$$

*In particular, a clutter is ideal if, and only if, its blocker is ideal.*

Given a graph  $G = (V, E)$  and distinct vertices  $s, t \in V$ , Moore and Shannon proved that the clutter over ground set  $E$  of  $st$ -paths satisfies the width-length inequality for unit widths and unit lengths [11], and Duffin generalized this by proving the width-length inequality for all non-negative widths and non-negative lengths [5].

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*Date:* August 17, 2018.

Supported by ONR grant 00014-15-12082 and an NSERC CGS D3 grant.

Theorem 1 therefore implies that the clutter of  $st$ -paths of a graph is ideal. As the reader may expect, not every clutter is ideal. Lehman found three infinite classes of non-ideal clutters, an identically self-blocking class corresponding to the lines of a degenerate projective plane, a class corresponding to the edges of an odd hole, as well as the blocker of the latter [10]. Let us elaborate.

Two clutters  $\mathcal{C}_1, \mathcal{C}_2$  are *isomorphic*, denoted  $\mathcal{C}_1 \cong \mathcal{C}_2$ , if  $\mathcal{C}_1$  may be obtained from  $\mathcal{C}_2$  after relabeling its ground set. Take an integer  $n \geq 3$ . A *delta of dimension  $n$*  is any clutter isomorphic to the clutter over ground set  $\{1, \dots, n\}$  whose members are

$$\Delta_n := \{\{1, 2\}, \{1, 3\}, \dots, \{1, n\}, \{2, 3, \dots, n\}\}.$$

As the reader can easily check,  $b(\Delta_n) = \Delta_n$ . Observe that  $\Delta_n$  violates the width-length inequality for widths  $w := (n-2, 1, \dots, 1)$  and lengths  $\ell := (1, 1, \dots, 1)$ :

$$\min\{w(C) : C \in \Delta_n\} \cdot \min\{\ell(B) : B \in b(\Delta_n)\} = (n-1) \cdot 2 > (n-2) + (n-1) = w^\top \ell,$$

so  $\Delta_n$  is non-ideal by Theorem 1. If  $n$  is odd and at least 5, an *extended odd hole of dimension  $n$*  is any clutter isomorphic to a clutter over ground set  $\{1, \dots, n\}$  whose *minimum cardinality* members are

$$\{1, 2\}, \{2, 3\}, \{3, 4\}, \dots, \{n-1, n\}, \{n, 1\}.$$

Observe that every member has cardinality at least 2, and since  $n$  is odd, every minimal cover has cardinality at least  $\frac{n+1}{2}$ . As a result, an extended odd hole violates the width-length inequality for widths  $w := (1, 1, \dots, 1)$  and lengths  $\ell := (1, 1, \dots, 1)$ :

$$\min\{w(C) : C \text{ a member}\} \cdot \min\{\ell(B) : B \text{ a minimal cover}\} = 2 \cdot \left(\frac{n+1}{2}\right) > n = w^\top \ell,$$

so by Theorem 1, extended odd holes and their blockers are non-ideal.<sup>1</sup> The following immediate consequence of Theorem 1 is the common thread for deltas and the *blockers* of extended odd holes being non-ideal:

**Corollary 2.** *Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$  without a cover of cardinality one. If there is a  $w \in \mathbb{R}_+^V$  such that  $\min\{w(C) : C \in \mathcal{C}\} > \frac{\mathbf{1}^\top w}{2}$ , then  $\mathcal{C}$  is non-ideal.*

We will prove the following strengthening of this consequence:

**Theorem 3.** *Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$  without a cover of cardinality one. If there is a  $w \in \mathbb{R}_+^V$  such that  $\min\{w(C) : C \in \mathcal{C}\} > \frac{\mathbf{1}^\top w}{2}$ , then  $\mathcal{C}$  has a delta or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor.*

Let us discuss an application of Theorem 3. A clutter is *binary* if the symmetric difference of any odd number of members contains a member [9]. For instance, given a graph  $G = (V, E)$  and distinct vertices  $s, t \in V$ , the clutter over ground set  $E$  of  $st$ -paths of  $G$  is binary. However, a delta is not binary as  $\{1, 2\} \triangle \{1, 3\} \triangle \{2, \dots, n\}$  does not contain a member, and neither is an extended odd hole because  $\{1, 2\} \triangle \{2, 3\} \triangle \{3, 4\} = \{1, 4\}$  does not contain a member. It is well-known that if a clutter is binary, then so is its blocker [9] and any minor of it [13]. Thus, an immediate consequence of Theorem 3 is the following:

<sup>1</sup>Extended odd holes are an extension of Lehman's original infinite class corresponding to odd holes.

**Corollary 4.** *Take an integer  $n \geq 2$  and a binary clutter over  $n$  elements without a cover of cardinality one. Then the clutter has a member of cardinality at most  $\frac{n}{2}$ .*

(This corollary can be proved directly with a probabilistic argument.) In §2, we develop a tool for finding delta or extended odd hole minors, which is interesting in its own right. Using this tool, we prove Theorem 3 in §3. Finally, we discuss the computational complexity of our results in §4.

## 2. EXTENDED ODD HOLE MINORS

We will need the following tool for finding delta minors:

**Theorem 5** ([1]). *Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$ . If there exist distinct elements  $u, v, w$  and members of the form  $\{u, v\}, \{u, w\}, C$  such that  $C \cap \{u, v, w\} = \{v, w\}$ , then  $\mathcal{C}$  has a delta minor.*

*Proof.* Let us proceed by induction on  $|V| \geq 3$ . For the base case  $|V| = 3$ , notice that  $\mathcal{C} \cong \Delta_3$ . For the induction step assume that  $|V| \geq 4$ . Let  $I := V - (C \cup \{u\})$ .

**Claim 1.** *If  $I \neq \emptyset$ , then  $\mathcal{C} \setminus I$  has a delta minor.*

*Proof of Claim.* Notice that  $\{u, v\}, \{u, w\}, C$  are still members of  $\mathcal{C} \setminus I$ , and as  $I \neq \emptyset$  it follows from the induction hypothesis that  $\mathcal{C} \setminus I$  has a delta minor, as required.  $\diamond$

We may therefore assume that  $I = \emptyset$ , that is,  $C \cup \{u\} = V$ . Let  $X := \{x \in C : \{u, x\} \in \mathcal{C}\}$ . Notice that  $\{v, w\} \subseteq X$ .

**Claim 2.** *If  $y \in C - X$ , then  $\mathcal{C}/y$  has a delta minor.*

*Proof of Claim.* Let  $C' := C - \{y\}$ . Clearly  $C'$  is a member of  $\mathcal{C}/y$ . As  $y \notin X$ ,  $\{u, v\}$  and  $\{u, w\}$  are still members of  $\mathcal{C}/y$ . Thus by the induction hypothesis,  $\mathcal{C}/y$  has a delta minor, as required.  $\diamond$

We may therefore assume that  $X = C$ . In summary,  $\mathcal{C}$  is a clutter over ground set  $C \cup \{u\}$  such that

$$\mathcal{C} \supseteq \{\{u, x\} : x \in C\} \cup \{C\}.$$

Since  $\mathcal{C}$  is a clutter, equality must hold above, implying in turn that  $\mathcal{C}$  must be a delta, thereby completing the induction step.  $\square$

Given a simple graph, we will treat each edge as a vertex subset of cardinality two, and each circuit as a vertex subset. We will need the following remark:

**Remark 6.** *Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$  where*

$$\min \{|C| : C \in \mathcal{C}\} = 2$$

*and the minimum cardinality members correspond to the edges of a graph  $G = (V, E)$ . If  $G$  is not bipartite, then  $\mathcal{C}$  has a  $\Delta_3$  or an extended odd hole minor.*

*Proof.* Suppose that  $G$  is not bipartite. Let  $C$  be a minimal odd circuit. Our minimality assumption implies that  $C$  has no chords. If  $|C| = 3$ , then  $C \setminus (V - C) \cong \Delta_3$ . Otherwise,  $|C| \geq 5$  and  $C \setminus (V - C)$  is an extended odd hole, as required.  $\square$

Let  $G = (V, E)$  be a connected graph. A *block* is a maximal vertex-induced subgraph of  $G$  that is 2-(vertex)-connected. The *block graph* of  $G$  is the graph  $X$  constructed as follows:

- $X$  is a bipartite graph,
- the cut-vertices of  $G$  form one color class of  $X$ ,
- the blocks of  $G$  form the other color class of  $X$ , and
- cut-vertex  $u$  and block  $B$  are adjacent in  $X$  if  $u \in V(B)$ .

It is well-known that  $X$  is a tree (see [4], Lemma 3.1.4). Observe that every cut-vertex of  $G$  has degree at least 2 in  $X$ , so the leaf vertices of  $X$  correspond to blocks of  $G$ , and we will refer to those blocks as *leaf blocks*. For each block of  $G$ , we will refer to its cut-vertices as *boundary* vertices and its other vertices as *interior* vertices. We are now ready for the main result of this section:

**Theorem 7.** *Let  $V$  be a set of cardinality at least 4. Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$  where*

$$\min \{|C| : C \in \mathcal{C}\} = 2$$

*and the minimum cardinality members correspond to the edges of a connected bipartite graph  $G$  over vertex set  $V$  whose color classes are  $R, B$ . If  $R$  contains a member, then  $\mathcal{C}$  has a delta or an extended odd hole minor.*

*Proof.* Let us proceed by induction on  $|V| \geq 4$ . For the base case  $|V| = 4$ , it can be readily checked that  $\mathcal{C}$  has one of  $\Delta_3, \Delta_4$  as a minor. For the induction step assume that  $|V| \geq 5$ . Let  $C \subseteq V$  be a member of  $\mathcal{C}$  contained in the color class  $R$ . As  $R$  is a stable set of  $G$ , it follows from definition that  $|C| \geq 3$ . Let us refer to the vertices of  $G$  in  $C$  as *terminals*, and to the other vertices as *non-terminals*. So the terminals form a stable set.

**Claim 1.** *Let  $u$  be a non-terminal vertex of  $G$ . If the terminals of  $G$  belong to the same component of  $G \setminus u$ , then  $C \setminus u$  has a delta or an extended odd hole minor.*

*Proof of Claim.* Let  $W$  be the set of vertices of  $G \setminus u$  that do not belong to the component containing the terminals. Consider the clutter  $\mathcal{C} \setminus u \setminus W$ ; its minimum cardinality members correspond to the edges of the connected bipartite graph  $G \setminus u \setminus W$ . As  $G \setminus u \setminus W$  has at least 4 vertices, and the member  $C \in \mathcal{C} \setminus u \setminus W$  is still a subset of one of the color classes of  $G \setminus u \setminus W$ , the induction hypothesis implies that  $\mathcal{C} \setminus u \setminus W$  has a delta or an extended odd hole minor, as claimed.  $\diamond$

We may therefore assume that every non-terminal vertex of  $G$  is a cut-vertex separating the terminals. (Notice that a terminal may also be a cut-vertex.) In particular,  $G$  is not 2-connected. Let us then consider the blocks of  $G$ . Since every non-terminal is a cut-vertex, the interior vertices of each block are terminals. Let  $X$  be the block graph of  $G$ ; recall that  $X$  is a tree.

**Claim 2.** *Every leaf block of  $G$  consists of precisely two vertices and an edge between them, where one vertex belongs to the boundary and is a non-terminal, and the other vertex belongs to the interior, is a terminal and has degree one in  $G$ .*

*Proof of Claim.* By definition, the leaf blocks are precisely those blocks with exactly one boundary vertex. Consider a leaf block  $B$ , viewed as a vertex-induced subgraph of  $G$ . Then  $B$  has a unique boundary vertex, and as each block has at least two vertices,  $B$  has at least one interior vertex. As the interior vertices are terminals and therefore form a stable set,  $B$  must have exactly one interior vertex and therefore exactly one edge, implying in turn that its boundary vertex is a non-terminal vertex. This also implies that the interior vertex has degree one in  $G$ .  $\diamond$

**Claim 3.** *If a non-terminal vertex is adjacent to at least two terminals, then  $\mathcal{C}$  has a delta minor.*

*Proof of Claim.* Suppose that a non-terminal vertex  $u$  is adjacent to two terminals  $v$  and  $w$ . Then both  $\{u, v\}$  and  $\{u, w\}$  are members of  $\mathcal{C}$ , and  $\{v, w\} \subseteq C$ . Since  $u$  is not a terminal,  $u$  is not contained in  $C$ . It therefore follows from Theorem 5 that  $\mathcal{C}$  has a delta minor.  $\diamond$

We may therefore assume that every non-terminal vertex is adjacent to at most one terminal. In particular, by Claim 2,

**Claim 4.** *Every non-terminal vertex belongs to at most one leaf block. That is,  $X$  does not have leaf edges that share a vertex.*

Using this, we prove the following:

**Claim 5.** *There exists a leaf block with boundary vertex  $u$  such that  $G \setminus u$  has exactly two components. That is,  $X$  has a vertex  $u$  of degree two that is incident with a leaf edge.*

*Proof of Claim.* Pick a leaf vertex  $B$  of  $X$ , and among all the other leaf vertices, pick one  $B'$  that is farthest from  $B$ . Let  $u$  be the vertex of  $X$  adjacent to  $B'$ . Clearly  $u$  has degree at least two, as it lies the path joining  $B, B'$ . Notice that by Claim 4, the edge  $uB'$  is the unique leaf edge incident with  $u$ . This fact, together with our maximal choice of  $B'$ , implies that  $u$  has degree exactly two, as required.  $\diamond$

Let  $B$  be the leaf block from Claim 5, let  $u$  be the boundary vertex, and let  $v$  be the interior vertex. Recall that  $u$  is a non-terminal,  $v$  is a terminal, and that  $v$  has degree one in  $G$ . Moreover, by Claim 5,  $G \setminus u \setminus v$  is a connected bipartite graph. Since there are at least two terminals in  $G \setminus u \setminus v$ , and the terminals form a stable set, it follows that  $G \setminus u \setminus v$  has at least 3 vertices.

**Claim 6.**  *$\mathcal{C} \setminus u/v$  has a delta or extended odd hole minor.*

*Proof of Claim.* Let  $\mathcal{C}' := \mathcal{C} \setminus u/v$ . Observe that  $C' := C - \{v\} \in \mathcal{C}'$ . Since  $v$  has degree one in  $G$ , and  $u$  is its neighbor, it follows that  $\min \{|D| : D \in \mathcal{C}'\} \geq 2$ . Therefore, each edge of  $G \setminus u \setminus v$  corresponds to a minimum cardinality member of  $\mathcal{C}'$ . In particular,

$$\min \{|D| : D \in \mathcal{C}'\} = 2.$$

If  $|V - \{u, v\}| = 3$ , then  $\mathcal{C} \setminus u/v = \Delta_3$ , so we are done. We may therefore assume that  $|V - \{u, v\}| \geq 4$ . Let  $G'$  be the graph over vertex set  $V - \{u, v\}$  corresponding to the minimum cardinality members of  $\mathcal{C}'$ . Notice that  $E(G \setminus u \setminus v) \subseteq E(G')$ . In particular,  $G'$  is connected. If  $G'$  is not bipartite, then by Remark 6,  $\mathcal{C}'$  has a  $\Delta_3$  or an extended odd hole minor, so we are done. Otherwise,  $G'$  is bipartite. Since  $\mathcal{C}'$  is contained in one of the color classes of  $G \setminus u \setminus v$ , it must also be contained in one of the color classes of  $G'$ . It therefore follows from the induction hypothesis that  $\mathcal{C}'$  has a delta or an extended odd hole minor, as required.  $\diamond$

This claim completes the induction step, thereby finishing the proof.<sup>2</sup>  $\square$

### 3. PROOF OF THEOREM 3

Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$ . Denote by  $\tau(\mathcal{C})$  the minimum cardinality of a cover. Here we prove Theorem 3, stating that if  $\tau(\mathcal{C}) \geq 2$  and there is a  $w \in \mathbb{R}_+^V$  such that  $\min\{w(C) : C \in \mathcal{C}\} > \frac{1}{2}w(V)$ , then  $\mathcal{C}$  has a delta or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor.

*Proof of Theorem 3.* Observe that  $|V| \geq 3$ . We will proceed by induction on  $|V|$ . For the base case  $|V| = 3$ , observe that  $\mathcal{C} \cong \Delta_3$ . For the induction step assume that  $|V| \geq 4$ .

**Claim 1.** *If an element  $v$  does not appear in a cover of cardinality two, then  $\mathcal{C} \setminus v$  has a delta or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor.*

*Proof of Claim.* Assume that  $v$  does not appear in a cover of cardinality two. Then  $\tau(\mathcal{C} \setminus v) \geq 2$ . As every member of  $\mathcal{C} \setminus v$  has weight greater than  $\frac{1}{2}w(V) \geq \frac{1}{2}w(V - v)$ , the induction hypothesis implies that  $\mathcal{C} \setminus v$  has a delta or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor, as required.  $\diamond$

We may therefore assume that  $\tau(\mathcal{C}) = 2$  and that every element appears in a minimum cover. Let  $G = (V, E)$  be the graph whose edges correspond to the minimum covers of  $\mathcal{C}$ .

**Claim 2.** *If  $G$  is not bipartite, then  $\mathcal{C}$  has a  $\Delta_3$  or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor.*

*Proof of Claim.* It follows from Remark 6 that  $b(\mathcal{C})$  has a  $\Delta_3$  or an extended odd hole minor, as required.  $\diamond$

We may therefore assume that  $G$  is a bipartite graph. Take a component  $H$  of  $G$  where  $V(H)$  is partitioned into color classes  $U_1, U_2$  such that  $w(U_2) \geq w(U_1)$ .

**Claim 3.** *If  $\tau(\mathcal{C} \setminus U_2/U_1) \geq 2$ , then  $\mathcal{C} \setminus U_2/U_1$  has a delta or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor.*

*Proof of Claim.* Suppose that  $\tau(\mathcal{C} \setminus U_2/U_1) \geq 2$ . Observe that every member of  $\mathcal{C} \setminus U_2/U_1$  has weight greater than

$$\frac{w(V)}{2} - w(U_1) \geq \frac{1}{2}(w(V) - w(U_1) - w(U_2)) = \frac{1}{2}w(V - (U_1 \cup U_2)).$$

It therefore follows from the induction hypothesis that  $\mathcal{C} \setminus U_2/U_1$  has a delta or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor, as required.  $\diamond$

<sup>2</sup>The careful reader will have noticed the resemblance between this proof and Berge's proof that a balanced hypergraph is 2-colorable [2].

We may therefore assume that  $\tau(\mathcal{C} \setminus U_2/U_1) \leq 1$ .

- If  $H = G$ , then  $U_1 \cup U_2 = V$ . Then  $w(U_2) \geq \frac{w(V)}{2}$  because  $w(U_2) \geq w(U_1)$ . Since every member has weight greater than  $\frac{w(V)}{2}$ ,  $U_2$  is a cover of  $\mathcal{C}$ .
- Otherwise,  $H$  is a proper component of  $G$ , so  $b(\mathcal{C}) \setminus U_1/U_2$  has a member of cardinality at most 1.

Either way, there is a member  $B$  of  $b(\mathcal{C})$  such that  $B \cap U_1 = \emptyset$  and  $|B - U_2| \leq 1$ . Observe that as  $H$  is a component of  $G$ , the graph  $G$  has no edge with exactly one end in  $U_1 \cup U_2$ . In particular,  $|B| \geq 3$ ,  $|B \cap U_2| \geq 2$  and  $|U_1 \cup U_2| \geq 3$ .

**Claim 4.**  $b(\mathcal{C})$  has a delta or an extended odd hole minor.

*Proof of Claim.* Let  $b(\mathcal{C}')$  be the minor obtained from  $b(\mathcal{C})$  after deleting  $V - (U_1 \cup U_2 \cup B)$  and contracting  $B - U_2$ ; so  $b(\mathcal{C}')$  has ground set  $U_1 \cup U_2$ . Notice that  $B' := B \cap U_2$  is a member of  $b(\mathcal{C}')$ . Since  $G$  has no edge with exactly one end in  $U_1 \cup U_2$ , each edge of  $H$  is still a minimum cardinality member of  $b(\mathcal{C}')$ . Let  $G'$  be the graph over vertex set  $U_1 \cup U_2$  whose edges are the minimum cardinality members of  $b(\mathcal{C}')$ . As  $E(H) \subseteq E(G')$ ,  $G'$  is a connected graph. If  $G'$  is not bipartite, it then follows from Remark 6 that  $b(\mathcal{C}')$  has a  $\Delta_3$  or an extended odd hole minor, so we are done. Otherwise,  $G'$  is bipartite. Observe that the color classes of  $G'$  are inevitably  $U_1$  and  $U_2$ , so  $|B'| \geq 3$  and  $|U_1 \cup U_2| \geq 4$ . Since  $B' \subseteq U_2$ , it follows from Theorem 7 that  $b(\mathcal{C}')$  has a delta or an extended odd hole minor, as claimed.  $\diamond$

Thus,  $\mathcal{C}$  has a delta or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor, thereby completing the induction step.  $\square$

#### 4. COMPUTATIONAL COMPLEXITY

Let us discuss the computational complexity of the results proved in this paper. To keep our results as general as possible we assume that our clutter is inputted via an oracle. To be precise, let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$ . The input for our clutter consists of  $V$  and an oracle which, given any set  $X \subseteq V$ , decides in unit time whether or not  $X$  contains a member. Following Seymour [12], we call this a *filter oracle* for  $\mathcal{C}$ .

**Remark 8** ([12]). *Given a filter oracle for a clutter  $\mathcal{C}$  over ground set  $V$ , and given disjoint  $I, J \subseteq V$ , one has a filter oracle for  $\mathcal{C} \setminus I/J$ .*

*Proof.* Given  $X \subseteq V - (I \cup J)$ ,  $X$  contains a member of  $\mathcal{C} \setminus I/J$  if and only if  $X \cup J$  contains a member of  $\mathcal{C}$ , so we can test in constant time whether or not  $X$  contains a member of  $\mathcal{C} \setminus I/J$ .  $\square$

**Remark 9.** *Given a filter oracle for a clutter  $\mathcal{C}$  over ground set  $V$ , one can produce*

- (1) *all members of cardinality one in time  $O(|V|)$ ,*
- (2) *all members of cardinality two containing a fixed element in time  $O(|V|)$ ,*
- (3) *all members of cardinality two in time  $O(|V|^2)$ .*

*Proof.* (1) This is done by querying the oracle for each set in  $\{X \subseteq V : |X| \leq 1\}$ . (2) and (3) are similar.  $\square$

Using Remarks 8 and 9, it can be readily checked that the proofs of Theorem 5, Remark 6 and Theorem 7 give the following complexity:

**Theorem 5** (complexity). Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$  inputted via a filter oracle. Given distinct elements  $u, v, w$  and members of the form  $\{u, v\}, \{u, w\}, C$  such that  $C \cap \{u, v, w\} = \{v, w\}$ , one can find a delta minor in  $\mathcal{C}$  in time  $O(|V|^2)$ .

**Remark 6** (complexity). Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$  inputted via a filter oracle. Assume that

$$\min \{|C| : C \in \mathcal{C}\} = 2$$

and the minimum cardinality members correspond to the edges of a non-bipartite graph over vertex set  $V$ . Then one can find a  $\Delta_3$  or an extended odd hole minor in  $\mathcal{C}$  in time  $O(|V|^2)$ .

**Theorem 7** (complexity). Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over a ground set  $V$  of cardinality at least 4, inputted via a filter oracle. Assume that

$$\min \{|C| : C \in \mathcal{C}\} = 2,$$

the minimum cardinality members correspond to the edges of a connected bipartite graph over vertex set  $V$  whose color classes are  $R, B$ , and  $R$  contains a member of  $\mathcal{C}$ . Then one can find a delta or an extended odd hole minor in  $\mathcal{C}$  in time  $O(|V|^4)$ .

To analyze the computational complexity of Theorem 3, notice that we applied Theorem 5, Remark 6 and Theorem 7 all to the blocker and not the clutter itself. However,

**Remark 10** ([12]). *Given a filter oracle for a clutter  $\mathcal{C}$  over ground set  $V$ , one has a filter oracle for  $b(\mathcal{C})$ .*

*Proof.* Given  $X \subseteq V$ ,  $X$  contains a member of  $b(\mathcal{C})$  if and only if  $V - X$  does not contain a member of  $\mathcal{C}$ , so we can test in constant time whether or not  $X$  contains a member of  $b(\mathcal{C})$ .  $\square$

Using Remarks 8, 9 and 10, as well as the three complexity consequences discussed above, it can be readily checked that the proof of Theorem 3 yields the following:

**Theorem 3** (complexity). Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a clutter over ground set  $V$  inputted via a filter oracle. Assume that there is no cover of cardinality one. Given  $w \in \mathbb{R}_+^V$  with the promise that  $\min \{w(C) : C \in \mathcal{C}\} > \frac{1^\top w}{2}$ , one can find a delta or the blocker of an extended odd hole minor in  $\mathcal{C}$  in time  $O(|V|^4)$ .

(Notice that the algorithm given by the proof is indeed strongly polynomial, as the numbers occurring in the proof are in the set  $\{w(U) : U \subseteq V\}$  and therefore polynomially bounded in the input size.)

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Gérard Cornuéjols and Bertrand Guenin for helpful discussions.

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