

What is the Limit of a Sequence of Graphs?

Vilas Winstein

June 22, 2021

Why is...?

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Generally, we know that it is nice to be able to embed a space you care about into a complete space, in a way that preserves some structure.

A brief (and vague) history

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(2010s-Present) Details of both theories (and others) are worked out. There is still many questions to answer in both theories (perhaps more in the bounded-degree case). And there is still no theory which unifies the above theories, although some researchers think such a theory is possible.

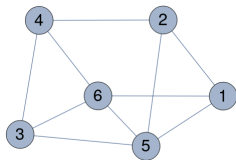
Graphons

Graphons

One way to represent a graph is with an adjacency matrix:

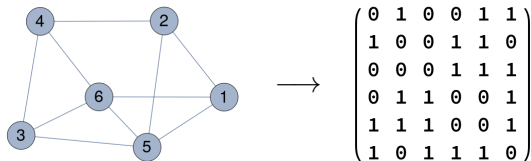
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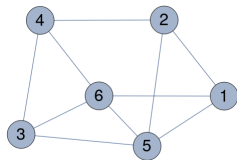
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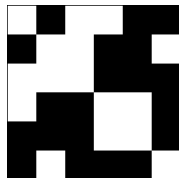


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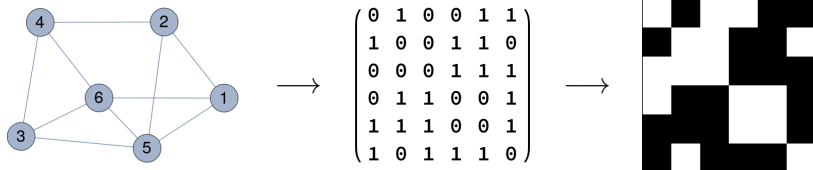


$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$



Graphons

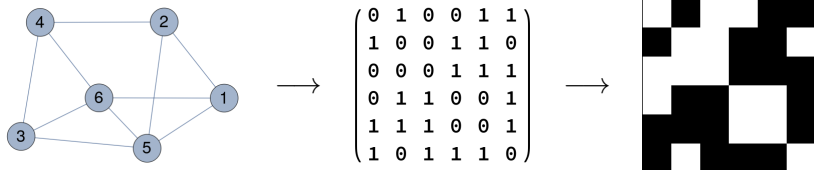
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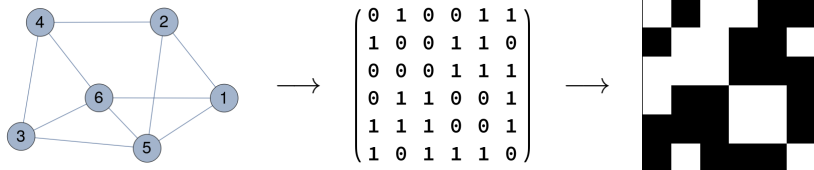
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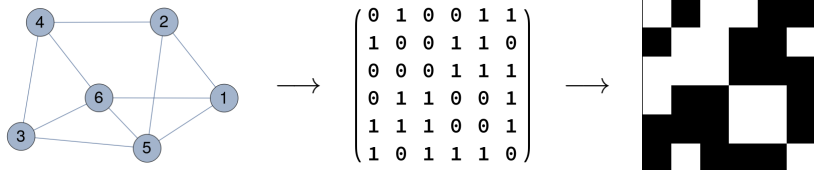
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This last picture can now be thought of as a function $[0, 1]^2 \rightarrow [0, 1]$ (of course, it only takes values in $\{0, 1\}$). With this interpretation, the y -axis goes *down* instead of up, to agree with the convention of matrix indices. So the set of graphs is embedded in a set of functions $[0, 1]^2 \rightarrow [0, 1]$.

Graphons

Let's look at some examples.

Graphons

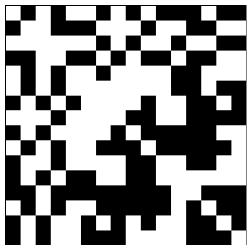
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with 32 vertices

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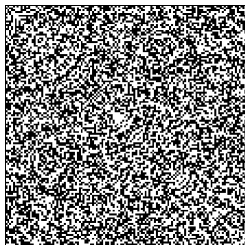
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with 64 vertices

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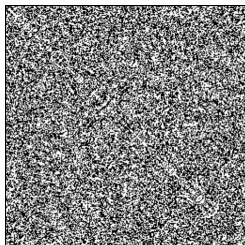
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with 128 vertices

Graphons

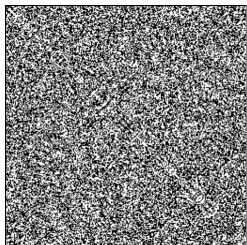
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with n vertices

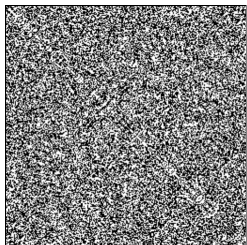
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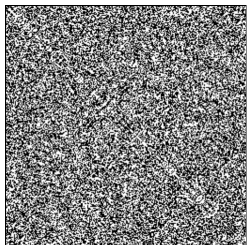


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The limit object is a function $[0, 1]^2 \rightarrow [0, 1]$ which does not come from any finite graph,

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The limit object is a function $[0, 1]^2 \rightarrow [0, 1]$ which does not come from any finite graph, since it takes values outside of $\{0, 1\}$.

Graphons

Here's a more complicated example.

Graphons

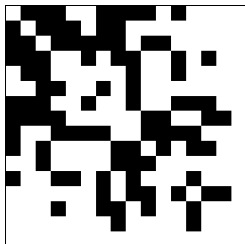
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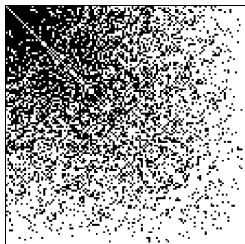
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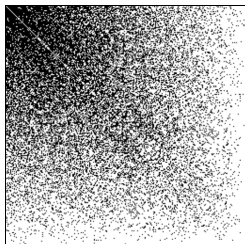
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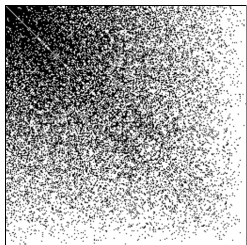
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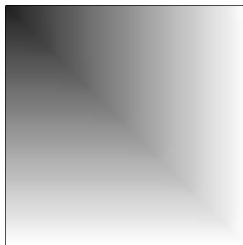
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after n steps

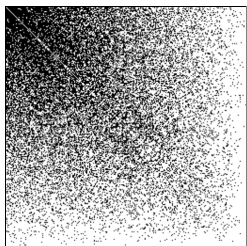
\longrightarrow
 $n \rightarrow \infty$



$$f(x,y) = 1 - \max(x,y)$$

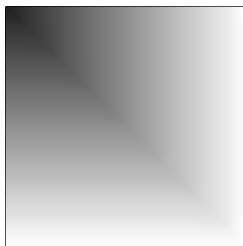
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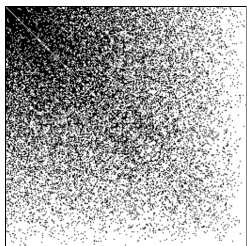


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The notion of convergence used here is defined by the *cut norm*.

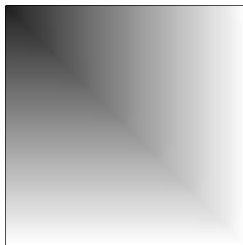
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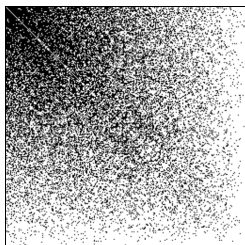


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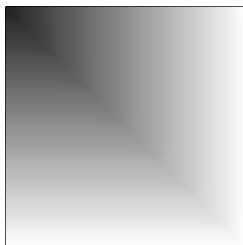
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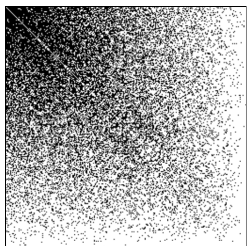


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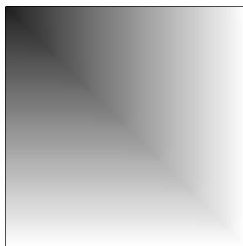
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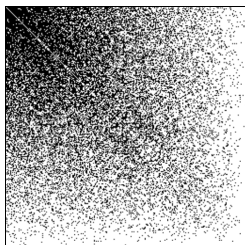


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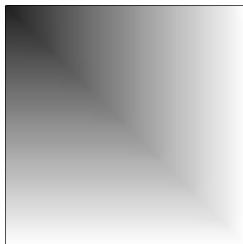
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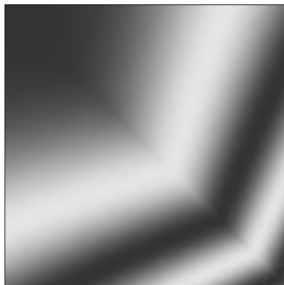


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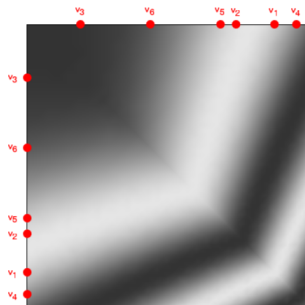
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We can also sample a finite graph (with n vertices) from a graphon.



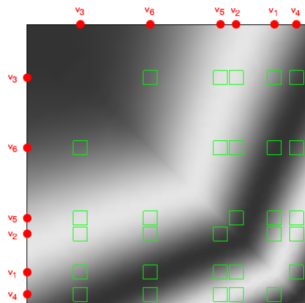
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We can also sample a finite graph (with n vertices) from a graphon. First, pick n points uniformly at random in $[0, 1]$, to be the vertices of the graph.



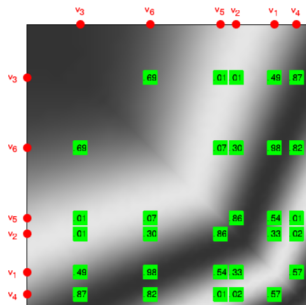
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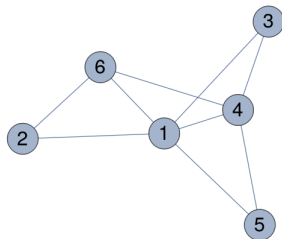
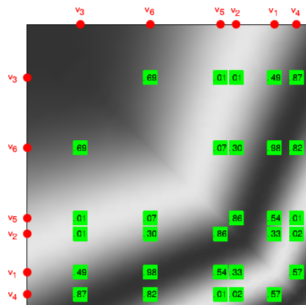
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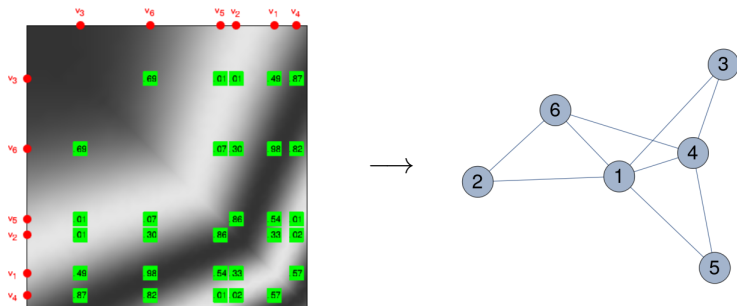
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As $n \rightarrow \infty$, the sequence of sampled graphs will (almost surely) converge (in the cut norm topology) to the graphon we started with.

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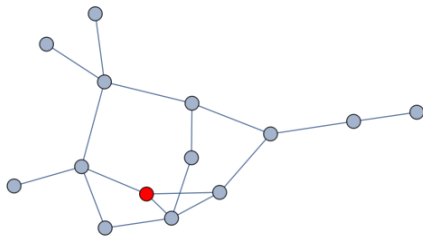
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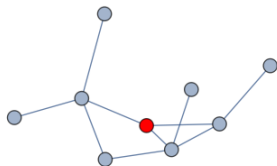


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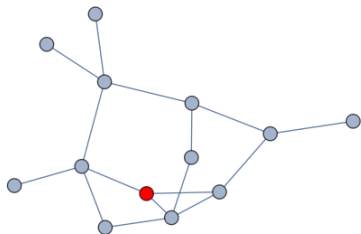


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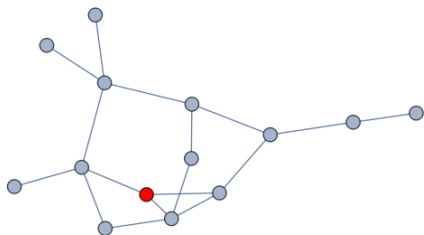


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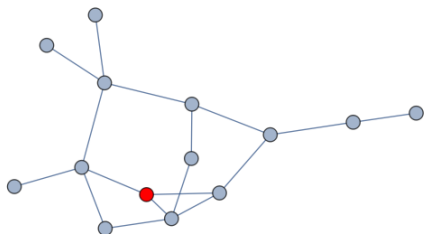


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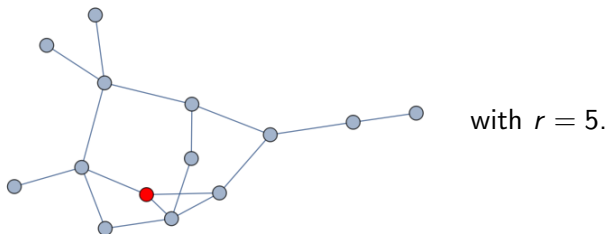


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Note that we still keep track of the original root in the r -balls.

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$$d_{\text{local}} \left(\left(\begin{array}{c} \bullet \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \bullet \quad \bullet \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \bullet \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \bullet \quad \bullet \end{array} \right), \left(\begin{array}{c} \bullet \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \bullet \quad \bullet \end{array}, \begin{array}{c} \bullet \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \bullet \quad \bullet \end{array} \right) \right) = \frac{1}{2},$$

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each have diameter $\frac{1}{2^{r+1}}$. Actually, the collection $\{C_i^r : r \geq 1, i \leq k_r\}$ of such cylindrical sets forms a clopen basis for the local topology.

Examples of rooted graph limits

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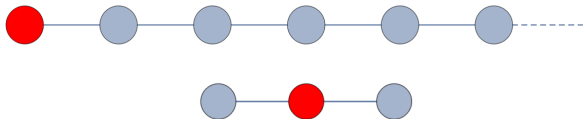
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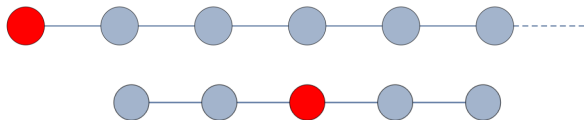
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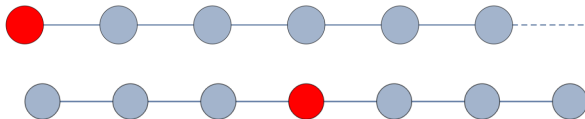
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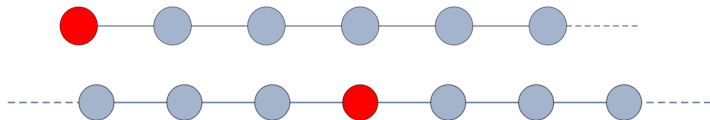
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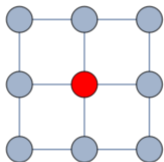
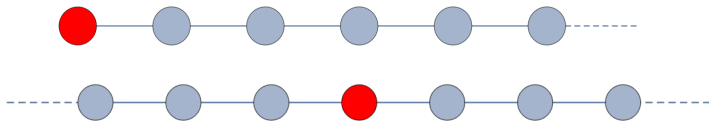
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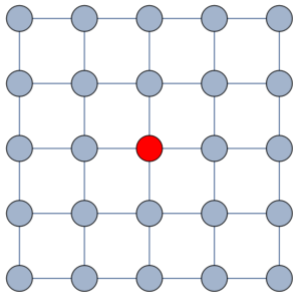
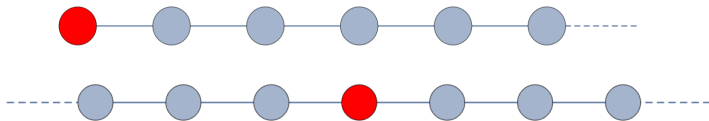
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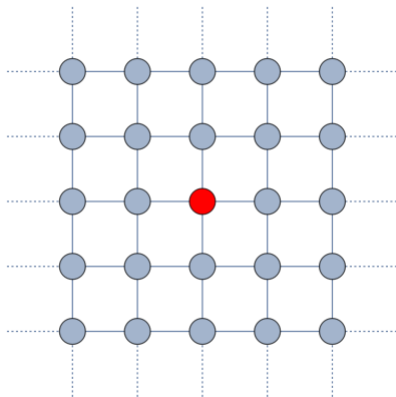
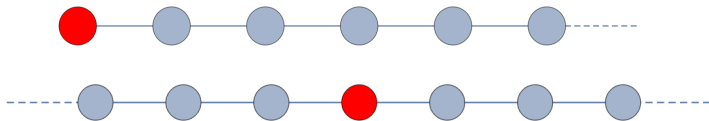
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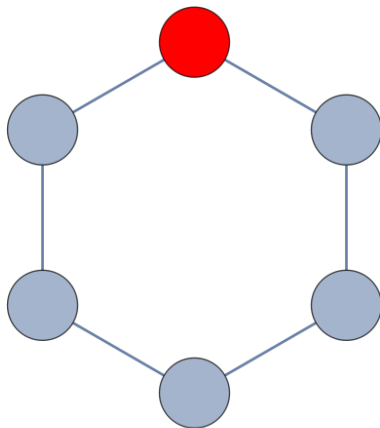


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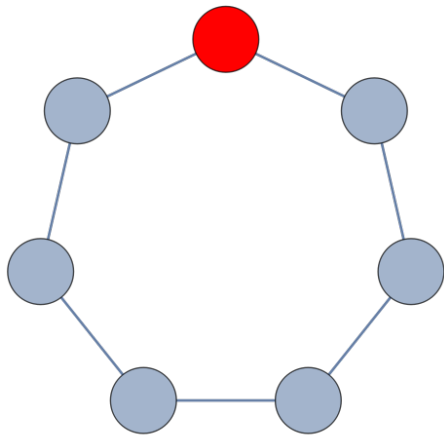


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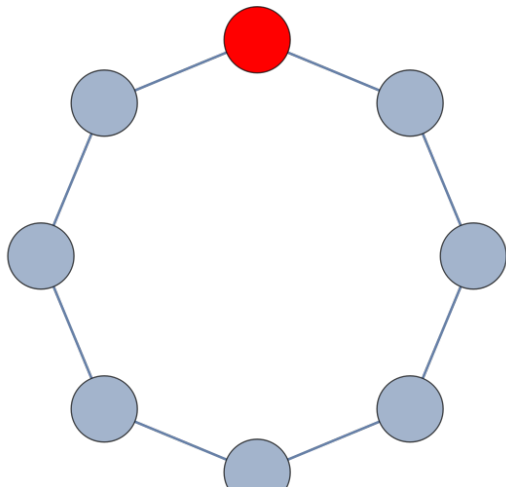
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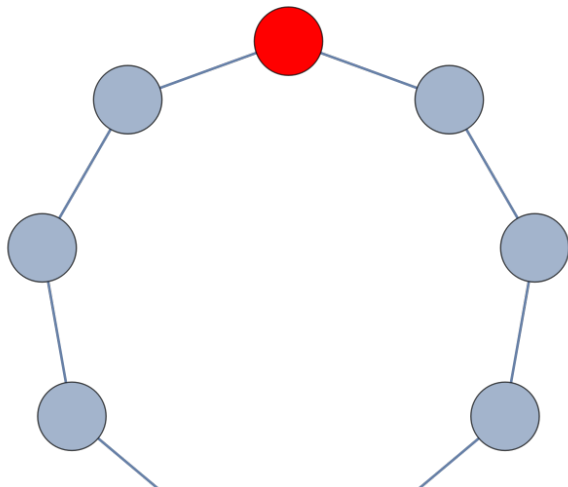
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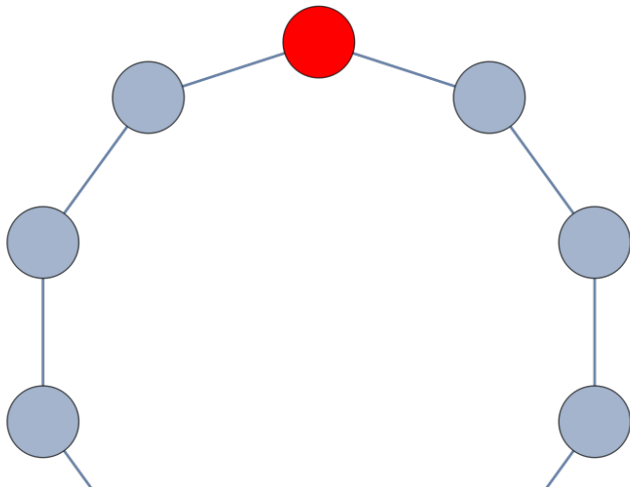
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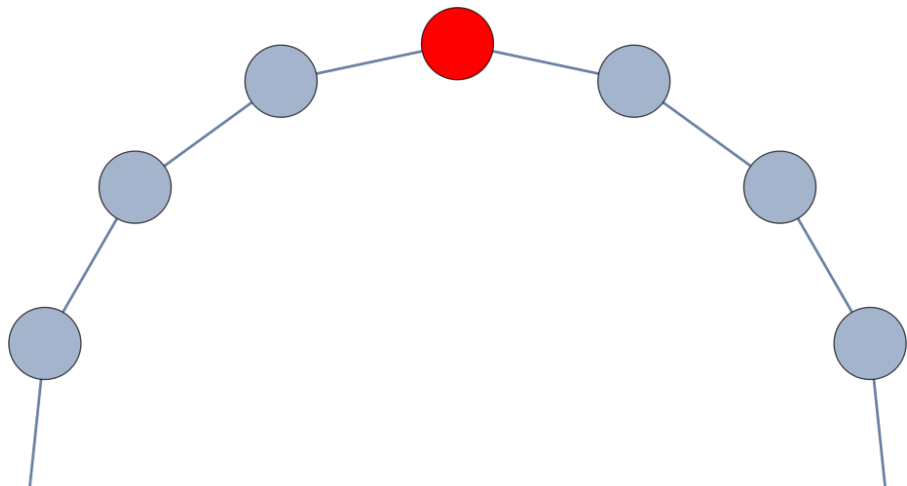
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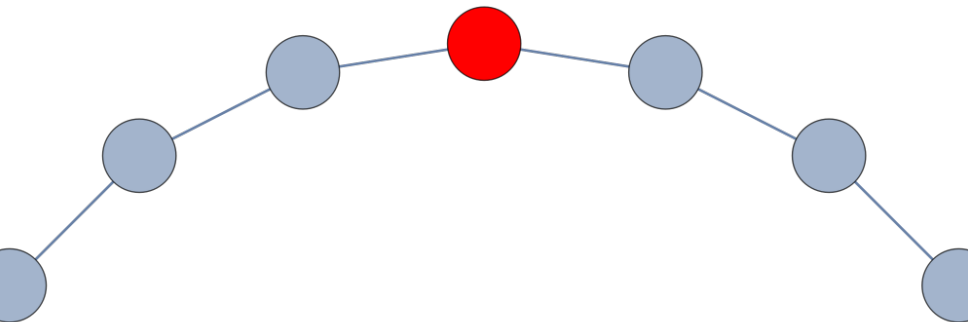
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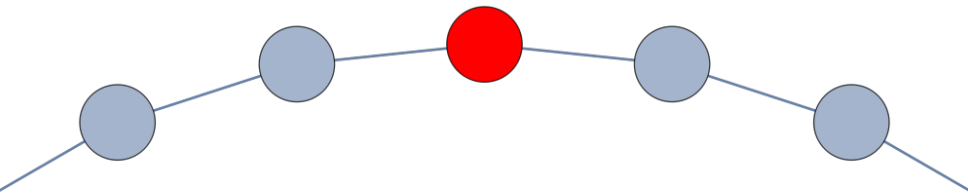
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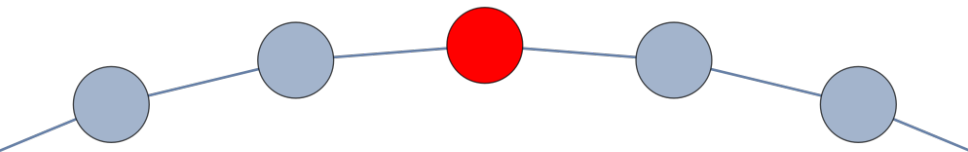
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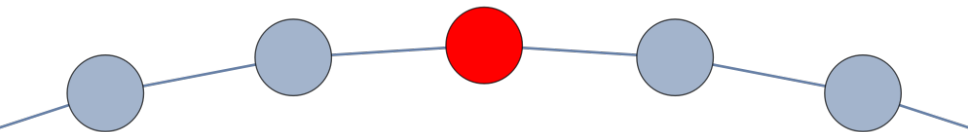
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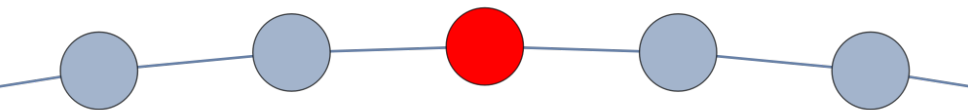


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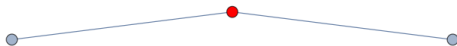
Examples of rooted graph limits

Bi-infinite path (again)

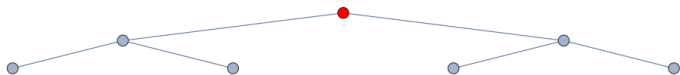


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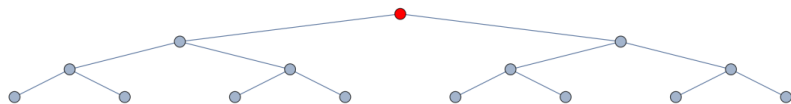
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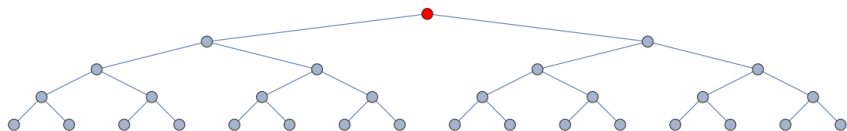
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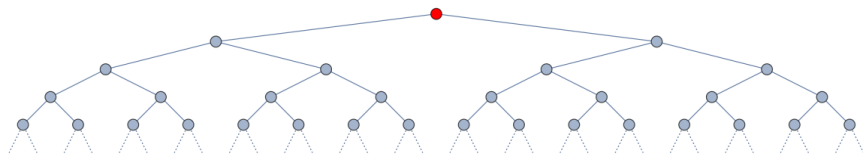
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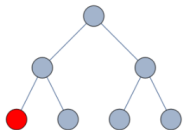
Infinite Binary Tree

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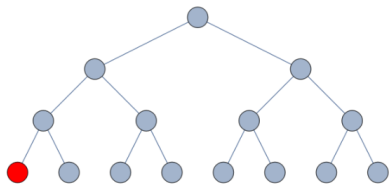
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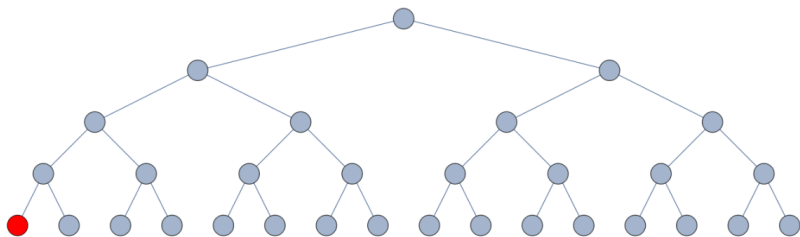
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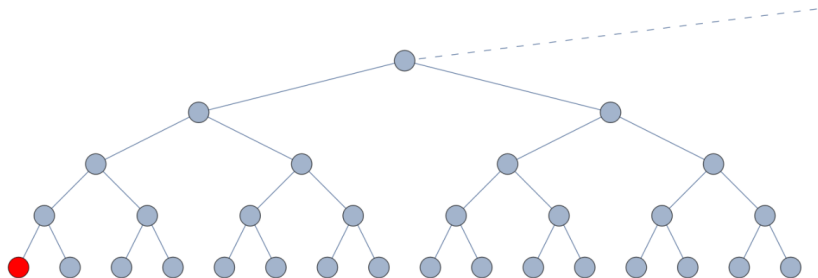
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Sierpiński Tree

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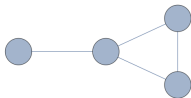
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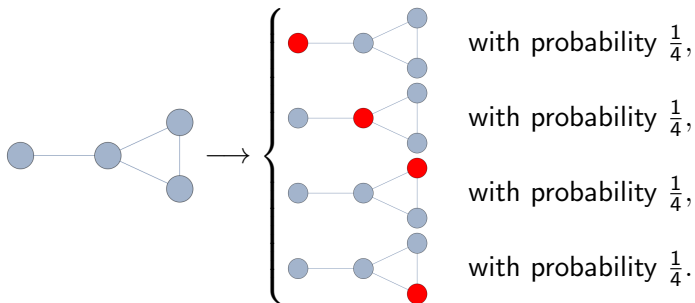
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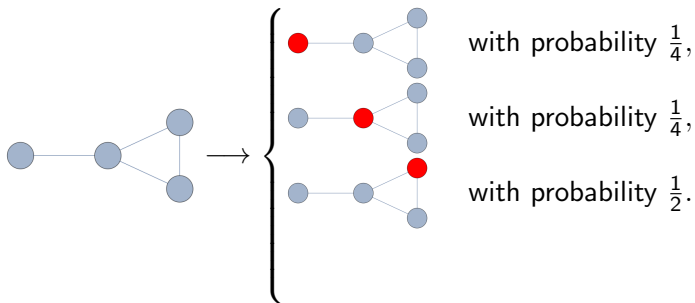
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This relies on the fact that these cylinder sets form a *clopen* basis for \mathcal{G}_D^\bullet . If you're curious about weak convergence of probability measures on other spaces, look up the portmanteau theorem.

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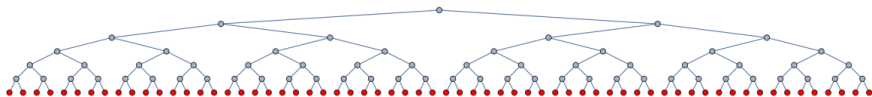
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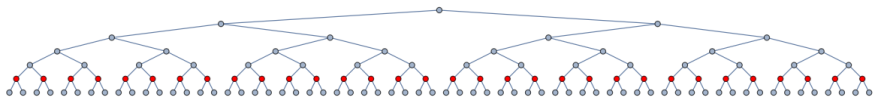
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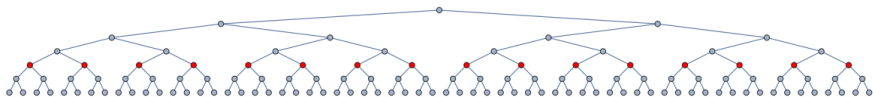
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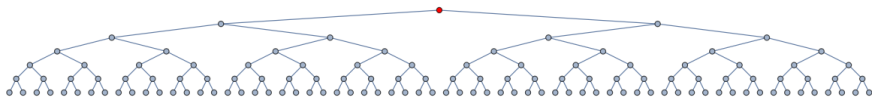
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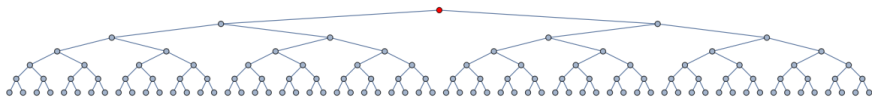
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And the probability of the root being at the very top of the graph is $\frac{1}{2^n - 1}$, which tends to 0. Similarly, the probability of being anywhere near the top tends to 0. So the limiting tree will almost never be any finite distance from the "top" (which is the degree-2 node).

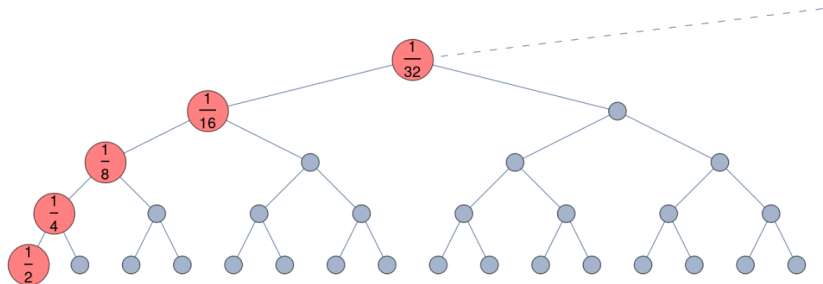


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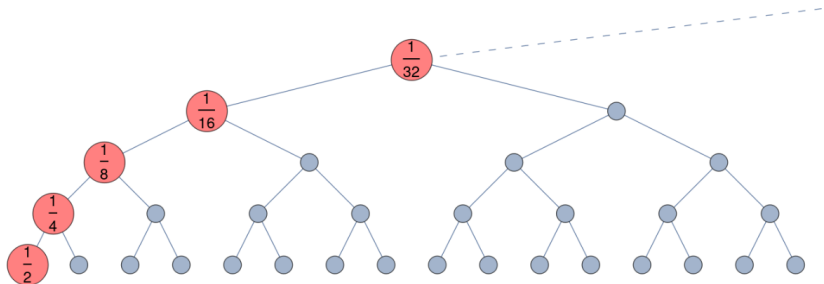
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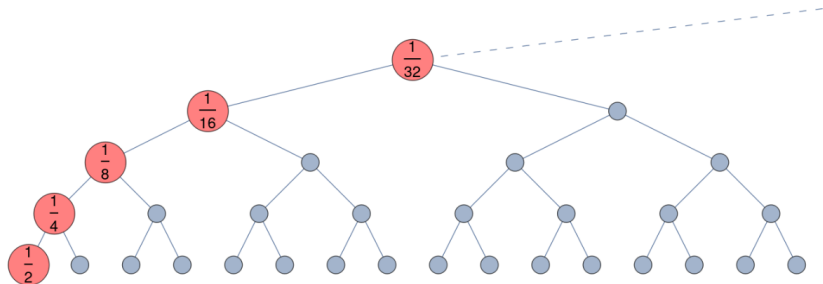
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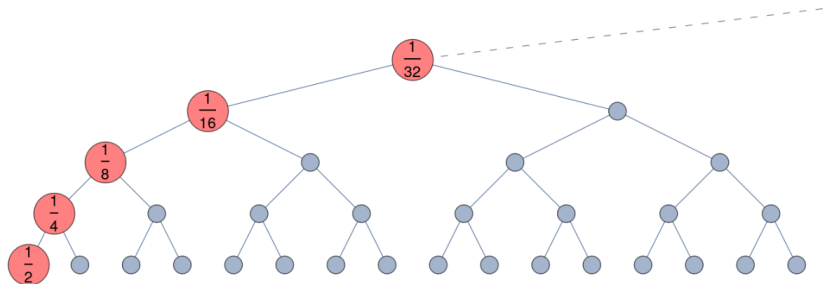
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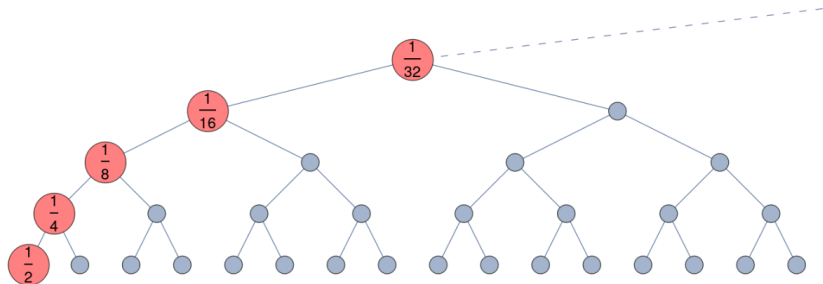
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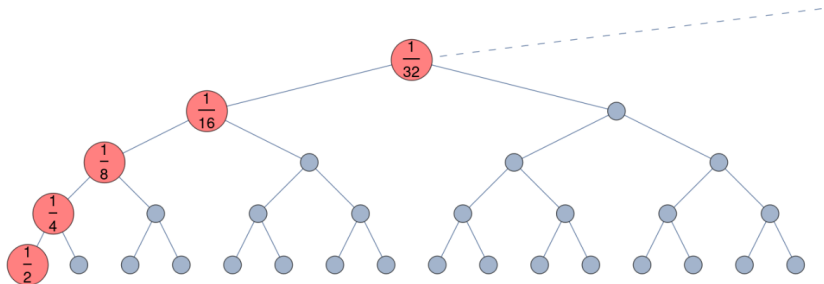
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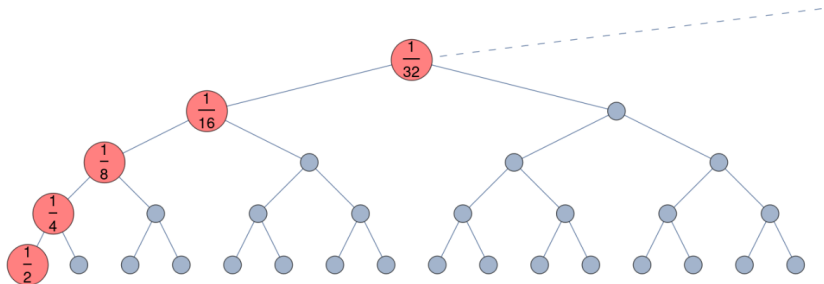
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The left-hand side is the expected amount of “mass” sent by the (random) root ρ . And the right-hand side is the expected amount received by ρ .

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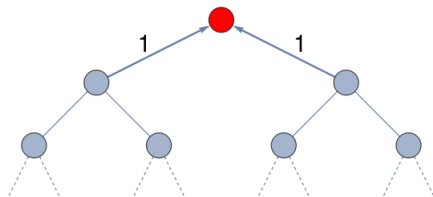
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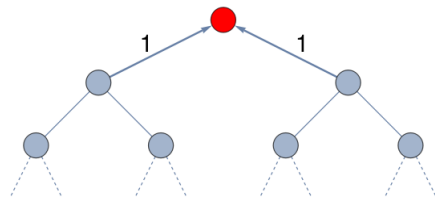
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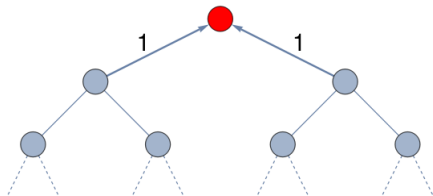


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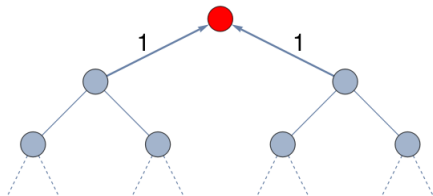


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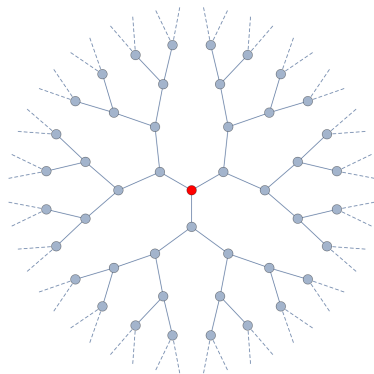
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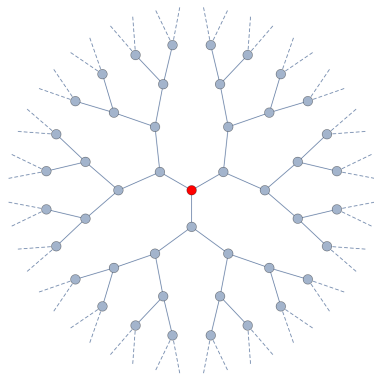
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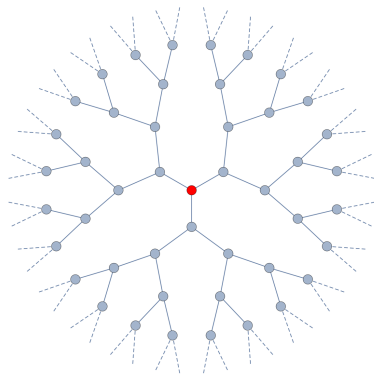


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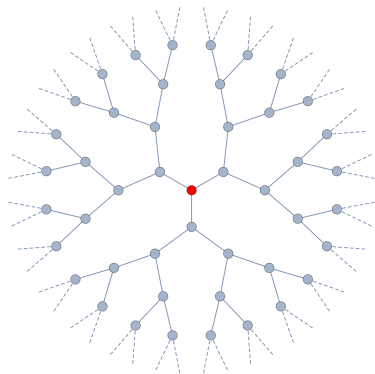


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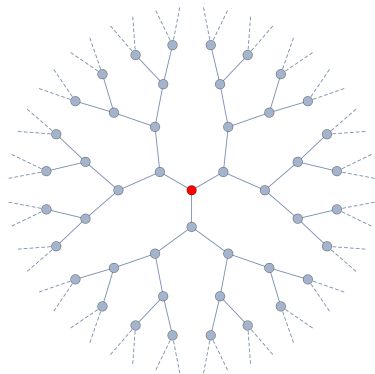
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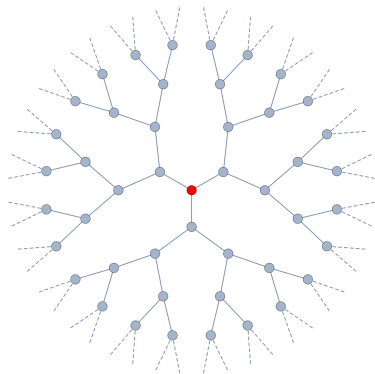
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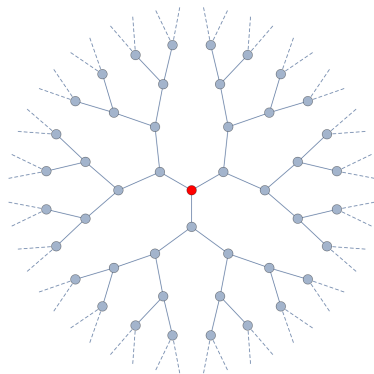
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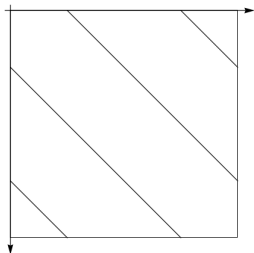
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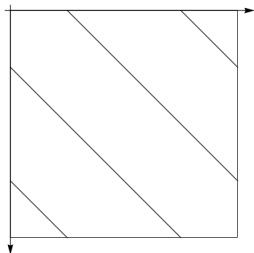


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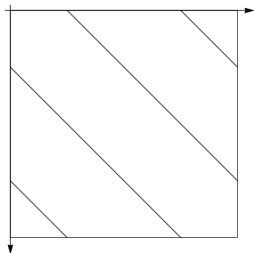
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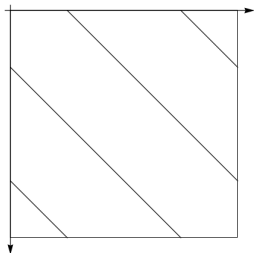
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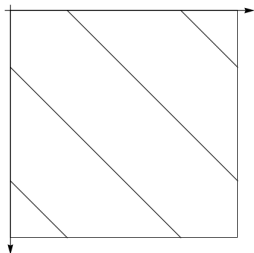
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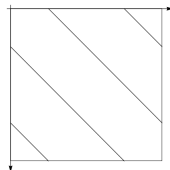
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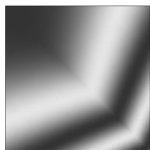
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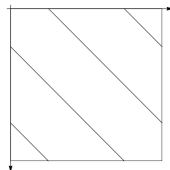
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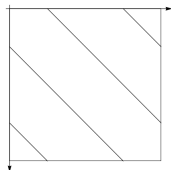
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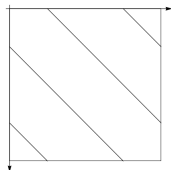
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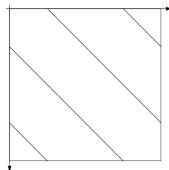
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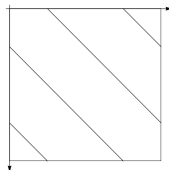
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- [2]** Benjamini, Itai, and Oded Schramm. "Recurrence of distributional limits of finite planar graphs." *Selected Works of Oded Schramm*. Springer, New York, NY, 2011. 533-545.
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