

Introduction
Type of Rigidity
Vertex transitive
Example
Random graphs
More general
Modeling molecules
Molecular
Realization in the
Combinatorial
Open problems
Home Page
Title Page
→ →
Page 1 of 64
Go Back
Full Screen
Close
Quit

# Combinatorial Rigidity and the Molecular Conjecture

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Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive... Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the... Combinatorial...

Open problems





Page 2 of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 1. Introduction

Generic rigidity in the plane is a graph theoretic property:

**Theorem 1** (Laman - 1970)[7] A graph is generically rigid in the plane if and only if it has a subset |E| of edges with

$$|E| = 2|V(E)| - 3$$

and, for every subset  $F \subseteq E$ ,

 $|F| \le 2|V(F)| - 3.$ 



Close





Quit

Introduction	
Type of Rigidity	
Vertex transitive	
Example	
Random graphs	
More general	
Modeling molecules	
Molecular	
Realization in the	
Combinatorial	
Open problems	
Home Page Title Page	
44         >>           4         >>	Infinitesimally RigidGenerically RigidRigidRigid
Page 4 of 64	
	Rigidity
Go Back	Non rigid graphs have a motion
Full Screen	
Close	

●First ●Prev ●Next ●Last ●Go Back ●Full Screen ●Close ●Qui





Full Screen

Close



Close





- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems



### Close

Quit

# 2. Type of Rigidity

We will use the term *framework* (in *m*-space) to denote a triple  $(V, E, \overrightarrow{p})$ , where (V, E) is a graph and  $\overrightarrow{p}$  is an embedding (injection) of V into real *m*-space.



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems
- - Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

We say that a framework is globally rigid (in m-space) if all solutions to the system of quadratic equations obtained from requiring all edge lengths to be fixed, with the coordinates of the vertices as variables, correspond to congruent frameworks; we say that a framework is rigid (in m-space) if all solutions to the corresponding system in some neighborhood of the original solution (as a point in mn-space) come from congruent frameworks.

DON'T CLICK HERE!



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . .

Combinatorial

```
Open problems
```

Home Page
Title Page

Page 9 of 64

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

We say that a given framework  $(V, E, \overrightarrow{p})$  is generic if all frameworks corresponding to points in a neighborhood of  $P = \overrightarrow{p}(V)$ in  $\mathbb{R}^{nm}$  are rigid or not rigid as is  $(V, E, \overrightarrow{p})$ . A set of points Pin *m*-space is said to be generic if each framework  $(V, E, \overrightarrow{p})$ with  $\overrightarrow{p}(V) = P$  is generic.



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems



Close

Quit

If G(V, E) is not rigid, we call the maximal rigid subgraphs of G the *rigid components* and note that rigid components partition E. Then  $\mathcal{M}(G)$  is the direct sum over its restrictions on the rigid components.

The following theorem is equivalent to Laman's Theorem 1, it uses the rank function of  $\mathcal{M}$  rather than independence to characterize rigidity.



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . .
- Open problems





Page **11** of **64** 

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

**Theorem 2** [9] Let G = (V, E) be a graph. Then G is rigid if and only if for all families of induced subgraphs  $\{G_i = (V_i, E_i)\}_{i=1}^m$  such that  $E = \bigcup_{i=1}^m E_i$  we have  $\sum_{i=1}^m (2|V_i| - 3) \ge 2|V| - 3$ .



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems
- Home Page Title Page



Page 12 of 64

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

G(V, E) is called *redundantly rigid* if G(V, E - e) is rigid for all  $e \in E$ , i.e. the removal of a single edge e from the rigid graph G does not destroy rigidity. Redundant rigidity is a key to characterize global rigidity.

**Theorem 3** [5] Let G be a graph. Then G is globally rigid if and only if G is a complete graph on at most three vertices, or G is both 3-connected and redundantly rigid.



### Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive.... Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the... Combinatorial... Open problems Home Page



Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 3. Vertex transitive graphs

**Theorem 4** A four-regular vertex transitive graph is generically rigid in the plane if and only if it contains no subgraph isomorphic to  $K_4$ , or is  $K_5$  or one of the graphs in the following figure.



Quit

Introduction	
Type of Rigidity	
Vertex transitive	
Example	
Random graphs	
More general	
Modeling molecules	
Molecular	_
Realization in the	
Combinatorial	
Open problems	
Home Page Title Page	a) Vertex transitive ri
Page 14 of 64	
Go Back	
Full Screen	
Close	



tex transitive rigid graphs containing  $K_4$ .



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems
- Home Page
  Title Page
- Page **15** of <mark>64</mark>
- Go Back

Full Screen

Close

- **Theorem 5** Let G be a connected k-regular vertex transitive graph on n vertices. Then G is not rigid if and only if either:
  - (a) k = 2 and  $n \ge 4$ .
  - (b)  $k = 3 \text{ and } n \ge 8.$
  - (c) k = 4 and G has a factor consisting of s disjoint copies of  $K_4$  where  $s \ge 4$
- (d) k = 5 and G has a factor consisting of t disjoint copies of  $K_5$  where  $t \ge 8$ .



- Introduction
- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . .
- Open problems
  - Home Page





Page **16** of **64** 



Full Screen

Close





Two embeddings which are rigid, but neither infinitesimally rigid nor globally rigid.





- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . .
- Open problems
- Home Page Title Page







Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Two embeddings which are rigid, but not globally rigid.



Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive... Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the..

C	h :	t ant	~1	
Com	DIIIa	LOFI	11	 

Open problems

Home	Page

Title Page



Page <b>18</b> of <b>64</b>
-----------------------------

Go Back

Full Screen

Close







Type of Rigidity

- Vertex transitive ....
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .

Modeling molecules

- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial . .

Open problems

Home P	age
--------	-----

Title	Page



Page	19	of	64

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial ...

Open problems

Home Page Title Page



Page <mark>20</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial ...

Open problems

Home Page
Title Page

• •

Page **21** of **64** 

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial ...

Open problems

Home Page

•

Page 22 of 64

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial ...

Open problems

Home Page
Title Page

Page <mark>23</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial . . .

Open problems

Home Page Title Page



Page <mark>24</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial . . .

Open problems

Home Page

Title Page

 ••

 •

Page <mark>25</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial . . .

Open problems

Home Page Title Page

 ++

 +

Page <mark>26</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial . . .

Open problems

Home Page Title Page



Page <mark>27</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial ...

Open problems

Home Page Title Page



Page <mark>28</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial ...

Open problems

Home Page

• •

Page <mark>29</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

```
Realization in the . .
```

Combinatorial . . .

```
Open problems
```

Home Page



Page <mark>30</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

However, Lovász and Yemini [9] note that their proof technique will show that  $G - \{e_1, e_2, e_3\}$  is rigid for all  $e_1, e_2, e_3 \in E$ , and hence that G is redundantly rigid. This result was combined with Theorem 3 in [5] to deduce

**Theorem 6** Every 6-connected graph is globally rigid.



Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive... Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the.. Combinatorial... Open problems



Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 5. Random graphs

Let  $G_{n,d}$  denote the probability space of all *d*-regular graphs on n vertices with the uniform probability distribution. A sequence of graph properties  $A_n$  holds asymptotically almost surely, or a.a.s. for short, in  $G_{n,d}$  if  $\lim_{n\to\infty} \Pr_{G_{n,d}}(A_n) = 1$ . Graphs in  $G_{n,d}$  are known to be a.a.s. highly connected. It was shown by Bollobás [1] and Wormald [12] that if  $G \in G_{n,d}$  for any fixed  $d \geq 3$ , then G is a.a.s. *d*-connected. This result was extended to all  $3 \leq d \leq n - 4$  by Cooper et al. [3] and Krivelevich et al. [6]. Stronger results hold if we discount 'trivial' cutsets. In [13], Wormald shows that if  $G \in G_{n,d}$  for any fixed  $d \geq 3$ , then G is a.a.s. cyclically (3d - 6)-edge-connected.



### Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive ... Example Random graphs More general . . . Modeling molecules Molecular . . . Realization in the ...

Combinatorial . . . Open problems

Home Page

Title Page



Page 32 of 64

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

**Theorem 7** If  $G \in G_{n,4}$  then G is a.a.s. globally rigid. In fact this result holds for all  $d \ge 4$ .

**Theorem 8** If  $G \in G_{n,d}$  and  $d \ge 4$  then G is a.a.s. globally rigid.



Introduction
Type of Rigidity
Vertex transitive
Example
Random graphs
More general
Modeling molecule
Molecular
Realization in the .

Combinatorial . .

Open problems



Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

Let G(n, p) denote the probability space of all graphs on n vertices in which each edge is chosen independently with probability p. In the following we will assume that all logarithms are natural. We will need the following results on G(n, p).

**Lemma 1** Let  $G \in G(n, p)$ , where  $p = (\log n + k \log \log n + w(n))/n$ ,  $k \ge 2$  is an integer and  $\lim_{n\to\infty} w(n) = \infty$ . For each fixed integer t, let  $S_t$  be the set of vertices of G of degree at most t. Then, a.a.s.

(a)  $S_{k-1}$  is empty,

(b) no two vertices of  $S_t$  are joined by a path of length at most two in G,

(c) 
$$G - S_{t-1}$$
 is non-empty and t-connected.

**PROOF:** Facts (a) and (b) are well known, see for example [2]. Fact (c) follows from (a), (b) and [10, Theorem 4]  $\Box$ 



### Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive... Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the.. Combinatorial

Open problems



Full Screen

Close

Quit

**Theorem 9** Let  $G \in G(n, p)$ , where  $p = (\log n + k \log \log n + w(n))/n$ , and  $\lim_{n\to\infty} w(n) = \infty$ . (a) If k = 2 then G is a.a.s. rigid. (b) If k = 3 then G is a.a.s. globally rigid.

**PROOF:** (a) We adopt the notation of Lemma 1. It follows from Lemma 1 that a.a.s.  $S_1 = \emptyset$  and  $G - S_5$  is a.a.s. 6-connected. Hence  $G - S_5$  is a.a.s. (globally) rigid by Theorem 6. Since adding a new vertex joined by at least two new edges to a rigid graph preserves rigidity, it follows that G is a.a.s. rigid. (b) This follows in similar way to (a), using the facts that  $S_2 = \emptyset$ and that adding a new vertex joined by at least three new edges to a globally rigid graph preserves global rigidity.  $\Box$ 



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems



Page 35 of 64

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

|2|.

# The bounds on p given in Theorem 9 are best possible since if $G \in G(n, p)$ and $p = (\log n + k \log \log n + c)/n$ for any constant c, then G does not a.a.s. have minimum degree at least k, see



Example

Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive....

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules Molecular...

Realization in the . . .

Home Page

Title Page

Page **36** of **64** 

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

44

◀

••

Combinatorial.. Open problems

### The Kagome Lattice





- Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive... Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the... Combinatorial... Open problems
- Home Page
  Title Page

Full Screen

Close

Quit

Let Geom(n, r) denote the probability space of all graphs on n vertices in which the vertices are distributed uniformly at random in the unit square and each pair of vertices of distance at most r are joined by an edge. Suppose  $G \in Geom(n, r)$ . Li, Wan and Wang [8] have shown that if  $n\pi r^2 = \log n + (2k - 1)$ 3)  $\log \log n + w(n)$  for  $k \ge 2$  a fixed integer and  $\lim_{n \to \infty} w(n) =$  $\infty$ , then G is a.a.s. k-connected. As noted by Eren et al. [4], this result can be combined with Theorem 6 to deduce that if  $n\pi r^2 = \log n + 9\log\log n + w(n)$  then G is a.a.s. globally rigid. On the other hand, it is also shown in [8] that if  $n\pi r^2 =$  $\log n + (k-1) \log \log n + c$  for any constant c, then G is not a.a.s. k-connected. It is still conceivable, however, that if  $n\pi r^2 =$  $\log n + \log \log n + w(n)$  then G is a.a.s. rigid, and that if  $n\pi r^2 =$  $\log n + 2 \log \log n + w(n)$  then G is a.a.s. globally rigid.



### Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive... Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the..

Combinatorial . .

Open problems

Home Page

Title Page



Page <mark>38</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 6. More general structures

# Bar and joint frameworks

rigid bars (edges), universal joints (vertices)

# Body and hinge frameworks

rigid bodies (vertices), hinges (edges)



Introduction	
Type of Rigidity	
Vertex transitive	
Example	
Random graphs	
More general	
Modeling molecules	
Molecular	
Realization in the	
Combinatorial	
Open problems	
Home Page	
Title Page	
<b>44 &gt;&gt;</b>	
Page <b>39</b> of <b>64</b>	
Go Back	
5 4 6	
Full Screen	
Close	
Quit	

# **n-space: Generic Body and Hinge Frameworks** Solved

## Body and Hinge Frameworks in 3-space:

Each rigid body has 6 degrees of freedom. If two bodies are joined along a linear hinge the resulting structure has one internal degree of freedom. Each hinge removes 5 degrees of freedom.





- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive...
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general...
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . .
- Open problems







Page <mark>40</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

Graph G = (B, H)B: vertices for abstract bodies, H: for pairs of bodies sharing a hinge. Necessary condition for independence:

$$5|H'| \le 6|B'| - 6$$

**Theorem 10 (Tay and Whiteley** – **1984)** *The necessary condition is also sufficient for generic independence.* 



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

### Algorithms:

$$6|B'| - 6 = 6(|B'| - 1)$$

or

6 spanning trees in 5G(B, H), which is the multi-graph obtained from G(B, H), by replacing each edge by a set of 5 parallel edges.



Introduction
Type of Rigidity
Vertex transitive
Example
Random graphs
More general
Modeling molecules
Molecular
Realization in the
Combinatorial
Open problems
Home Page
Title Page
<b>44 &gt;&gt;</b>
Page 42 of 64
Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 7. Modeling molecules

(special graphs) - can we predict rigidity?

## Single atom and associated bonds



 $|V| = 5 \qquad |E| = 10$ 

|E| = 3|V| - 5 overbraced



milouletion	
Type of Rigidity	
Vertex transitive	
Example	
Random graphs	
More general	
Modeling molecules	
Molecular	
Realization in the	
Combinatorial	
Open problems	
(	
Home Page	
Title Page	
44 <b>&gt;&gt;</b>	
Page <mark>43</mark> of <mark>64</mark>	
Go Back	
Full Screen	
Close	

Quit

# Adjacent atom clusters

Flexible



$$|B| = 2, |H| = 1, 5|H| = 6|B| - 7, |V| = 4, |E| = 5, |E| = 3|V| - 7$$



Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive...

Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the.. Combinatorial... Open problems

# **Rings of atoms:**

Ring of 6 atoms and bonds







Page 44 of 64

Home Page

Title Page

>>

Go Back

Bar and Joint:

|V| = 6, |E| = 12, |E| = 3|V| - 6

Full Screen

Close

Quit

Body and hinge: |B| = 6, |H| = 6, 5|H| = 6|B| - 6Just the right number to be rigid - generically.

●First ●Prev ●Next ●Last ●Go Back ●Full Screen ●Close ●Qui



### Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive... Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the.. Combinatorial... Open problems Home Page

ппе	Page
••	••
•	<b>→</b>
Page 4	5 of 64

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

Graph G of atoms and covalent bonds Can we use the body and hinge model to predict rigidity? Problem: Some hinges are concurrent Special geometry may lower rank!



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems



Title Page

Page **46** of **64** 

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

Graph G of atoms and covalent bonds To utilize the bar and joint model, form  $G^2$ : The new edges model second neighbor bond bending pairs. Count as

$$3|V| - 6$$

priority system on bond edges. Problem: for general graphs G the rank may be lower. (May work for  $G^2$ ?)



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems
- Home Page
  Title Page
- Page <mark>47</mark> of <mark>64</mark>
- Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# Lots of experimental evidence Proofs of correctness for special classes of graphs Plausibility arguments related to other conjectures on 3-space rigidity Sketched proof of equivalence of the two conjectures.

Conjectures embedded in implemented algorithms: FIRST on the web (Arizona State University)



- Introduction
- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general...
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems

Home Page	
Title Page	
•• ••	
• •	
Page <b>48</b> of <b>64</b>	
Go Back	

Close

Quit

Full Screen

# 8. Molecular Conjecture in the Plane

Given: Simple graph G = (V, E).

• Regard G as a body and pin graph of a structure in the plane:

Vertices are bodies.

Edges denote pins.

- Note: Each pin connects just two bodies. Otherwise we would need a hyper-graph.
- Realizations:
  - Amorphous bodies. Embedding specifies the location of the pins.
  - Line bodies. Embedding may specify either lines or pins.
  - Question: Does the line realization always exist?



1805
Introduction
Type of Rigidity
Vertex transitive
Example
Random graphs
More general
Modeling molecules
Molecular
Realization in the
Combinatorial
Open problems
Home Page
Title Page
•• ••
•
Page <b>49</b> of <b>64</b>
Go Back
Full Screen
Close

Quit

# 9. Realization in the Plane.

**Theorem 11** If G = (V, E) is simple, then a pin collinear structure exists.

Take any generic embedding of the structure graph G = (V, E)in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ . Form the polar of that embedding.





Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive...

Example Random graphs

More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the...

Combinatorial.. Open problems

Home Page

Title Page

Page 50 of 64

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

••

## Question:

Is the polar generic as a line-pin structure?

### Question:

Does it have the same rank as a generic body-pin structure?





- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems
  - Home Page
- Title Page



Page <mark>51</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Example

Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive....

Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the... Combinatorial... Open problems

Home Page

Title Page

••

# A general body-pin structure:



Full Screen

Page 52 of 64

Go Back

Close

Quit

The incidence structure is a hyper-graph. Does it have a pin collinear realization?



Type of Rigidity

Vertex transitive . . .

Example

Random graphs

More general . . .

Modeling molecules

Molecular . . .

Realization in the . . .

Combinatorial . . .

Open problems

Home Page

Title Page



Page <mark>53</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . .
- Open problems





Page 54 of 64

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

**Theorem 12** A multigraph G can be realized as an infinitesimally rigid body and hinge framework in  $\mathbb{R}^d$  if and only if  $\binom{d+1}{2} - 1$ G has  $\binom{d+1}{2}$  edge-disjoint spanning trees. (Tay and Whiteley, 1984)



Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive... Example Random graphs More general... Modeling molecules Molecular... Realization in the... Combinatorial...



Full Screen

Close

Quit

Recent Advances in the Generic Rigidity of Structures, Tiong-Seng Tay and Walter Whiteley Structural Topology # 9, 1984 Many body and hinge structures are built under additional constraints. For example in architecture flat panels may be used in which all hinges are coplanar. In molecular chemistry, we can model molecules by rigid atoms hinged along the bond lines so that all hinges to an atom are concurrent. This is the natural projective dual for the architectural condition.

Conjecture: A multigraph is generically rigid for hinged structures in n-space iff it is generically rigid for hinged structures in n-space with all hinges of body  $v_i$  in a hyperplane  $H_i$  of the space.



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . .
- Combinatorial . .
- Open problems



Full Screen

Close

Quit

Jackson and Jordan show that the body-and-pin and rod-andpin 2-polymatroids of a graph are identical. As a solution to the molecular conjecture they formulate

**Theorem 13** Let G(V, E) be a multigraph. Then the following statements are equivalent:

(a) G has a realization as an infinitesimally rigid body and hinge framework in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ .

(b) G has a realization as an infinitesimally rigid body-andhinge framework (G,q) in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  with each of the sets of points  $\{q(e) : e \in E_G(v)\}, v \in V$ , collinear.

(c)2G contains 3 edge disjoint spanning trees.



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems





Page <mark>57</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close





Introduction			
Type of Rigidity	V	$X_{2}$	$X_2$
Vertex transitive	Г.		2
Example			
Random graphs			$r_{2}$
More general		22	• 2
Modeling molecules		$T_3$	
Molecular		-x	x
Realization in the			m
Combinatorial			-x
Open problems			
Home Page			
Title Page	$-p_1$		
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• •	$ ^{-p_3}$	$p_3$	
Page <mark>58</mark> of <mark>64</mark>			
Go Back	L		
Full Screen			
Close			
Quit			

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●First ●Prev ●Next ●Last ●Go Back ●Full Screen ●Close ●Quit



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Open problems			00	00		
Home Page					-y	ĺ
Title Page	-n			n		
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Page 59 of 64					$q_1$	
						0
Go Back						1
	L					
Full Screen						
CI						
Close						
Quit						

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W



Introduction
Type of Rigidity
Vertex transitive
Example
Random graphs
More general
Modeling molecules
Molecular
Realization in the
Combinatorial
Open problems
Home Page
Title Page
•• ••
Page 60 of 64
Go Back
Full Screen
Close
Quit

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					12	$q_3$	$-q_{3}$
						10	10 -

●First ●Prev ●Next ●Last ●Go Back ●Full Screen ●Close ●Qui



### Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive . . . Example Random graphs More general . . . Modeling molecules Molecular . . . Realization in the . . . Combinatorial ... Open problems Home Page Title Page •• 44 ◀ Page <mark>61</mark> of <mark>64</mark> Go Back

### Full Screen Close

Quit

# **10.** Combinatorial Allostery









### Introduction Type of Rigidity Vertex transitive.. Example Random graphs

wore general	More	general	
--------------	------	---------	--

mouching molecules	Modeling	molecules	
--------------------	----------	-----------	--

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Real	lizatio	n in	the.	•

```
Combinatorial . . .
```

```
Open problems
```

Home Page				
Title Page				
•• ••				
• •				
Page 62 of 64				
Go Back				

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 11. Open problems

- Is the solution of the molecular conjecture useful for computational biology?
- Translate combinatorial allostery to molecules.
- Are random 6-regular graphs rigid in 3-space?
- Generalizations to tensegrities?
- Can sparse random graphs be realized as unit distance graphs?



- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems

Home	Page

Title	Page	



Page <mark>63</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

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- Introduction
- Type of Rigidity
- Vertex transitive . . .
- Example
- Random graphs
- More general . . .
- Modeling molecules
- Molecular . . .
- Realization in the . . .
- Combinatorial . . .
- Open problems
  - Home Page







Page <mark>64</mark> of <mark>64</mark>

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

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