Simple reductions to circuit minimization

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Outline

1. Introduction
2. Hardness for MCSP
3. Adaptivity in reductions
A Boolean circuit is composed of logic gates and wires, and computes a Boolean function $f : \{0, 1\}^k \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$.

$C(S)$ denotes the size or complexity of a circuit $S$, and is usually defined to be the number of gates in $S$.

The circuit depth is the length of the longest path from an input to an output gate.
Circuit complexity classes

Definition

- **AC^0** corresponds to the set of problems solvable by constant-depth, unbounded fan-in, polynomial-sized family of circuits with AND, OR, and NOT gates.

- **NC^0** is defined similarly to **AC^0**, with the exception that the AND and OR gates have a fan-in of two, and thus each output gate depends on a constant number of input gates.

- **Projections** are functions computed by **NC^0** circuits, where each output bit is a constant 0/1, or, same as or negation of an input bit.
## Uniformity

Circuits are non-uniform model of computation, inputs of different lengths are computed by different circuits. A family of circuits \( \{C_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \) (where \( C_n \) is applicable for inputs of length \( n \)) is uniform if the description of \( C_n \), can be generated in some resource bound manner, given \( n \).

### Example

A family of circuits is \( \text{DLOGTIME} \)-uniform, if description of \( C_n \), can be generated in \( \mathcal{O}(\log n) \) time, give \( n \).
Many-one reduction

Given two languages $L_1$ and $L_2$, and a complexity class $C$, $L_1$ is \textbf{many-one} reducible to $L_2$, $L_1 \leq^C_m L_2$, if $\exists$ a $C$-computable function $f$, such that $x \in L_1 \iff f(x) \in L_2$.

Example

$L_1 = \{\text{binary strings with odd number of 1}\}$
$L_2 = \{\text{binary strings with even number of 1}\}$
$L_1 \leq^P_m L_2$.

Turing reduction

Given two languages $L_1$ and $L_2$, and a complexity class $C$, $L_1$ is \textbf{Turing} reducible to $L_2$, $L_1 \leq^C_T L_2$, if $L_1$ is $C$-computable, given access to an oracle $O$ for $L_2$. 

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Adaptive vs Non-Adaptive Turing reduction

In a non-adaptive Turing reduction, a query asked to the oracle $O$ does not depend on the result of a previously asked query (whereas in an adaptive reduction it does). A non-adaptive reduction can be thought of as presenting $O$ with a single list of queries.

Definition

A language $L$ is hard under reduction $\mathcal{R}$, for some complexity class $\mathcal{C}$, if all languages in $\mathcal{C}$ are reducible to $L$ under $\mathcal{R}$.
Minimum Circuit Size Problem

**MCSP**

Let $T(S)$ denote the binary string of length $N = 2^n$, representing the truth table of the Boolean function computed by circuit $S$, with $n$ input bits. Then for $x \in \{0, 1\}^*$, $\theta \in \mathbb{N}$

$$\text{MCSP} = \{(x, \theta) \mid \exists \text{ circuit } S \text{ s.t. } C(S) \leq \theta \text{ and } T(S) = x\}$$

**AC$^0_d$-MFSP (Minimum formula size problem)**

AC$^0_d$-MFSP is defined similarly to MCSP, except that $S$ is an AC$^0$ circuits of constant depth $d$. And $C(S)$ is measured as the number of leaf nodes in $S$. 
Majority Problem

**Definition**
Majority (Maj) is the Boolean function that evaluates to false when half or more inputs are false and true otherwise.

**Example**
Maj(110) = 1 and Maj(100) = 0.

**Known lower bound**
Maj \( \not\in \mathsf{AC}^0 \).
**Coin Problem**

**Definition**

(p, q)-coin problem is to distinguish a p-biased N-bit string from a q-biased N-bit string with high probability, where a p-biased N-bit string is sampled so that each bit is independently set to 1 with probability p.
Limitations on \textbf{NP}-hardness for MCSP/MKTP

Results of [MW17]:

- MCSP/MKTP \textit{unconditionally} cannot be hard for NP under \textit{very simple} reductions
- If MCSP/MKTP are hard for NP under \textit{any} deterministic polynomial-time many-one reductions, $\text{EXP} \neq \text{ZPP}$
Recent results [AH17, ABM20, AGHR21]: MKTP is hard for \textsc{DET} and even \textsc{coNISZK}_L under non-uniform projections.

Results exploit properties of MKTP which are lacking in MCSP, specifically, bounds on hardness of tightest function.
Result of [GII+19]: MCSP does not have small $\text{AC}^0[p]$ circuits

- Replicates result of [AH17] for MKTP, using different techniques
- Exploits difference in circuit complexity of random biased functions

- Constructs reduction from coin problem to MCSP
- Combines with [SV10] reduction from Maj to coin problem
Our first result

- Crucial observation of [SV10]: Given $x \in \{0, 1\}^N$, sampling an $M$-bit string of random bits of $x$ is equiv. to sampling a $\text{wt}(x)/N$-biased string
- We make assumption on monotonicity of expected complexity of biased functions, and build on [GII+19] and [SV10] to prove:

**Theorem**

\((Assuming\ assumption\ above,)\ there\ exists\ a\ non-uniform\ projection\ from\ \text{Maj}\ to\ \text{MCSP}.)
How important is adaptivity?

- $\text{AC}^0_d$-MFSP is $\text{NP}$-complete under quasipolynomial, randomized, *adaptive* reductions [Ila20]
- MCSP cannot be $\text{ZPP}$-complete under polynomial-time, deterministic, *non-adaptive* reductions, unless $\text{ZPP} = \text{EXP}$ [Fu20]
We show:

**Theorem**

*If MCSP is ZPP-complete under quasipolynomial-time, deterministic, non-adaptive reductions, then ZPP $\neq$ EXP.*

Same seems to hold for MFSP. We also give a slightly cleaner exposition than [Fu20].
Analyzing the reduction of [Ila20]

We give evidence that the reduction of [Ila20] can be implemented in $\text{AC}^0$. [Ila20]’s reduction occurs in three stages...

- Reducing depth-$d$ formula minimization to $O(1)$-approximating depth-$d$ $\lor$-top formula minimization
- Reducing $O(1)$-approximating depth-$d$ $\lor$-top formula minimization to $O(1)$-approximating depth-$(d - 1)$ $\lor$-top formula minimization
- Invoking pre-existing hardness reductions for DNF minimization ($= \text{depth-2} \lor$-top formula minimization)
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