

VLSI Physical Design: From Graph Partitioning to Timing Closure

Second Edition

Chapter 2 – Netlist and System Partitioning



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2.1 Introduction







Cut c_a : four external connections



Cut $c_{\rm b}$: two external connections



Collection of cut edges Cut set: (1,3), (2,3), (5,6),

- Given a graph G(V, E) with |V| nodes and |E| edges where each node $v \in V$ and each edge $e \in E$.
- Each node has area s(v) and each edge has cost or weight w(e).
- The objective is to divide the graph *G* into *k* disjoint subgraphs such that all optimization goals are achieved and all original edge relations are respected.

- In detail, what are the optimization goals?
 - Number of connections between partitions is minimized
 - Each partition meets all design constraints (size, number of external connections..)
 - Balance every partition as well as possible
- How can we meet these goals?
 - Unfortunately, this problem is NP-hard
 - Efficient heuristics are developed in the 1970s and 1980s.
 They are high quality and in low-order polynomial time.

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Given: A graph with 2*n* nodes where each node has the same weight.

Goal: A partition (division) of the graph into two disjoint subsets A and B with minimum cut cost and |A| = |B| = n.



Cost D(v) of moving a node v

$$D(v) = |E_{\rm c}(v)| - |E_{\rm nc}(v)|$$
,

where

 $E_{\rm c}(v)$ is the set of *v*'s incident edges that are cut by the cut line, and

 $E_{\rm nc}(v)$ is the set of v's incident edges that are not cut by the cut line.

High costs (D > 0) indicate that the node should move, while low costs (D < 0) indicate that the node should stay within the same partition.



Gain of swapping a pair of nodes a und b

$$\Delta g = D(a) + D(b) - 2 \cdot c(a,b),$$

where

- D(a), D(b) are the respective costs of nodes a, b
- c(a,b) is the connection weight between a and b:
 If an edge exists between a and b,
 then c(a,b) = edge weight (here 1),
 otherwise, c(a,b) = 0.

The gain Δg indicates how useful the swap between two nodes will be

The larger Δg , the more the total cut cost will be reduced



2.4.1 Kernighan-Lin (KL) Algorithm – Terminology

Gain of swapping a pair of nodes *a* und *b*

$$\Delta g = D(a) + D(b) - 2 \cdot c(a,b),$$

where

- *D*(*a*), *D*(*b*) are the respective costs of nodes *a*, *b*
- c(a,b) is the connection weight between a and b: If an edge exists between a and b, then c(a,b) = edge weight (here 1), otherwise, c(a,b) = 0.

 $\Delta g(3,7) = D(3) + D(7) - 2 \cdot c(a,b) = 2 + 1 - 2 = 1$

=> Swapping nodes 3 and 7 would reduce the cut size by 1



2.4.1 Kernighan-Lin (KL) Algorithm – Terminology

Gain of swapping a pair of nodes *a* und *b*

$$\Delta g = D(a) + D(b) - 2 \cdot c(a,b),$$

where

- *D*(*a*), *D*(*b*) are the respective costs of nodes *a*, *b*
- c(a,b) is the connection weight between a and b: If an edge exists between a and b, then c(a,b) = edge weight (here 1), otherwise, c(a,b) = 0.

 $\Delta g (3,5) = D(3) + D(5) - 2 \cdot c(a,b) = 2 + 1 - 0 = 3$

=> Swapping nodes 3 and 5 would reduce the cut size by 3



Gain of swapping a pair of nodes *a* und *b*

The goal is to find a pair of nodes *a* and *b* to exchange such that Δg is maximized and swap them.

Maximum positive gain G_m of a pass

The maximum positive gain G_m corresponds to the best prefix of *m* swaps within the swap sequence of a given pass.

These *m* swaps lead to the partition with the minimum cut cost encountered during the pass.

 G_m is computed as the sum of Δg values over the first *m* swaps of the pass, with *m* chosen such that G_m is maximized.

$$G_m = \sum_{i=1}^m \Delta g_i$$

2.4.1 Kernighan-Lin (KL) Algorithm – One pass

Step 0:

– V = 2n nodes

{A, B} is an initial arbitrary partitioning

Step 1:

- *i* = 1
- Compute D(v) for all nodes $v \in V$

Step 2:

- Choose a_i and b_i such that $\Delta g_i = D(a_i) + D(b_i) 2 \cdot c(a_i b_i)$ is maximized
- Swap and fix a_i and b_i

Step 3:

- If all nodes are fixed, go to Step 4. Otherwise
- Compute and update D values for all nodes that are connected to a_i and b_i and are not fixed.
- *i* = *i* + 1
- Go to Step 2

Step 4:

- Find the move sequence 1...m (1 ≤ m ≤ i), such that $G_m = \sum_{i=1}^m \Delta g_i$ is maximized
- If $G_m > 0$, go to Step 5. Otherwise, END

Step 5:

- Execute *m* swaps, reset remaining nodes
- Go to Step 1



Cut cost: 9 Not fixed: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8



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Costs D(v) of each node:

D(1) = 1 D(5) = 1D(2) = 1 D(6) = 2D(3) = 2 D(7) = 1D(4) = 1 D(8) = 1

Nodes that lead to maximum gain



Cut cost: 9 Not fixed: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8

Costs D(v) of each node: $D(1) = 1 \qquad D(5) = 1$ $D(2) = 1 \qquad D(6) = 2$ $D(3) = 2 \leftarrow D(7) = 1$ $D(4) = 1 \qquad D(8) = 1$ Ag₁ = 2+1-0 = 3 \leftarrow Gain after node swapping Swap (3,5) G₁ = $\Delta g_1 = 3$ Gain in the current pass



















Maximum positive gain $G_m = 8$ with m = 2.



Maximum positive gain $G_m = 8$ with m = 2.

Since $G_m > 0$, the first m = 2 swaps (3,5) and (4,6) are executed.

Since $G_m > 0$, more passes are needed until $G_m \leq 0$.



Unequal partition sizes

- Apply the KL algorithm with only min(|A|, |B|) pairs swapped
- Unequal node weights
 - Try to rescale weights to integers, e.g., as multiples of *the greatest common divisor* of all node weights
 - Maintain area balance or allow a *one-move deviation* from balance
- *k*-way partitioning (generating *k* partitions)
 - Apply the KL two-way partitioning algorithm to all possible pairs of partitions
 - Recursive partitioning (convenient when k is a power of two)
 - Direct k-way extensions exist

- Single cells are moved independently instead of swapping pairs of cells --- cannot and do not need to maintain exact partition balance
 - The area of each individual cell is taken into account
 - Applicable to partitions of unequal size and in the presence of initially fixed cells
- Cut costs are extended to include hypergraphs
 - nets with 2+ pins
- While the KL algorithm aims to minimize cut costs based on edges, the FM algorithm minimizes cut costs based on nets
- Nodes and subgraphs are referred to as *cells* and *blocks*, respectively

Given: a hypergraph G(V,H) with nodes and *weighted* hyperedges partition size constraints

Goal: to assign all nodes to disjoint partitions, so as to minimize the total cost (weight) of all cut nets while satisfying *partition size constraints*

Gain $\Delta g(c)$ for cell c

$$\Delta g(c) = FS(c) - TE(c) ,$$

where

the "moving force" FS(c) is the number of nets connected to *c* but not connected to any other cells within *c*'s partition, i.e., cut nets that connect only to *c*, and

the "retention force" TE(c) is the number of *uncut* nets connected to *c*.





Gain $\Delta g(c)$ for cell c

$$\Delta g(c) = FS(c) - TE(c) ,$$

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the "moving force" FS(c) is the number of nets connected to *c* but not connected to any other cells within *c*'s partition, i.e., cut nets that connect only to *c*, and

the "retention force" TE(c) is the number of *uncut* nets connected to *c*.

Cell 1:	<i>FS</i> (1) = 2	<i>TE</i> (1) = 1	$\Delta g(1) = 1$
Cell 2:	FS(2) = 0	<i>TE</i> (2) = 1	$\Delta g(2) = -1$
Cell 3:	<i>FS</i> (3) = 1	<i>TE</i> (3) = 1	$\Delta g(3) = 0$
Cell 4:	<i>FS</i> (4) = 1	<i>TE</i> (4) = 1	$\Delta g(4) = 0$
Cell 5:	<i>FS</i> (5) = 1	<i>TE</i> (5) = 0	∆ <i>g</i> (5) = 1



Maximum positive gain G_m of a pass

The maximum positive gain G_m is the cumulative cell gain of m moves that produce a minimum cut cost.

 G_m is determined by the maximum sum of cell gains Δg over a prefix of *m* moves in a pass

$$G_m = \sum_{i=1}^m \Delta g_i$$

Ratio factor

The *ratio factor* is the relative balance between the two partitions with respect to cell area

It is used to prevent all cells from clustering into one partition.

The ratio factor *r* is defined as
$$r = \frac{area(A)}{area(A) + area(B)}$$

where *area*(*A*) and *area*(*B*) are the total respective areas of partitions *A* and *B*

Balance criterion

The balance criterion enforces the ratio factor.

To ensure feasibility, the maximum cell area $area_{max}(V)$ must be taken into account.

A partitioning of V into two partitions A and B is said to be balanced if

$$[r \cdot area(V) - area_{max}(V)] \le area(A) \le [r \cdot area(V) + area_{max}(V)]$$

Base cell

A base cell is a cell *c* that has the greatest cell gain $\Delta g(c)$ among all free cells, and whose move does not violate the balance criterion.



Step 0: Compute the balance criterion

Step 1: Compute the cell gain Δg_1 of each cell

Step 2: *i* = 1

- Choose base cell c_1 that has maximal gain Δg_1 , move this cell

Step 3:

- Fix the base cell c_i
- Update all cells' gains that are connected to critical nets via the base cell c_i

Step 4:

- If all cells are fixed, go to Step 5. If not:
- Choose next base cell c_i with maximal gain Δg_i and move this cell
- *i* = *i* + 1, go to Step 3

Step 5:

- Determine the best move sequence $c_1, c_2, ..., c_m$ ($1 \le m \le i$), so that $G_m = \sum_{i=1}^m \Delta g_i$ is maximized
- If $G_m > 0$, go to Step 6. Otherwise, END

Step 6:



Given: Ratio factor r = 0,375 $area(Cell_1) = 2$ $area(Cell_2) = 4$ $area(Cell_3) = 1$ $area(Cell_4) = 4$ $area(Cell_5) = 5.$

Step 0: Compute the balance criterion

$$[r \cdot area(V) - area_{max}(V)] \le area(A) \le [r \cdot area(V) + area_{max}(V)]$$

 $0,375 * 16 - 5 = 1 \le area(A) \le 11 = 0,375 * 16 + 5.$



Step 1: Compute the gains of each cell

<i>FS</i> (Cell_1) = 2	<i>TE</i> (Cell_1) = 1	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_1) = 1$
<i>FS</i> (Cell_2) = 0	<i>TE</i> (Cell_2) = 1	<i>∆g</i> (Cell_2) = -1
<i>FS</i> (Cell_3) = 1	<i>TE</i> (Cell_3) = 1	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_3) = 0$
<i>FS</i> (Cell_4) = 1	<i>TE</i> (Cell_4) = 1	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_4) = 0$
<i>FS</i> (Cell_5) = 1	<i>TE</i> (Cell_5) = 0	∆ <i>g</i> (Cell_5) = 1
	$FS(Cell_1) = 2$ $FS(Cell_2) = 0$ $FS(Cell_3) = 1$ $FS(Cell_4) = 1$ $FS(Cell_5) = 1$	$FS(Cell_1) = 2$ $TE(Cell_1) = 1$ $FS(Cell_2) = 0$ $TE(Cell_2) = 1$ $FS(Cell_3) = 1$ $TE(Cell_3) = 1$ $FS(Cell_4) = 1$ $TE(Cell_4) = 1$ $FS(Cell_5) = 1$ $TE(Cell_5) = 0$



Cell1:	$FS(Cell_1) = 2$	$TE(Cell_1) = 1$	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_1) = 1$
Cell 2:	$FS(Cell_2) = 0$	$TE(Cell_2) = 1$	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_2) = -1$
Cell 3:	$FS(Cell_3) = 1$	$TE(Cell_3) = 1$	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_3) = 0$
Cell 4:	$FS(Cell_4) = 1$	$TE(Cell_4) = 1$	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_4) = 0$
Cell 5:	$FS(Cell_5) = 1$	$TE(Cell_5) = 0$	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_5) = 1$
Cell 5:	$FS(Cell_5) = 1$	<i>TE</i> (Cell_5) = 0	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_5) = 1$

Step 2: Select the base cell

Possible base cells are Cell 1 and Cell 5 Balance criterion after moving Cell 1: $area(A) = area(Cell_2) = 4$ Balance criterion after moving Cell 5: $area(A) = area(Cell_1) + area(Cell_2) + area(Cell_5) = 11$ Both moves respect the balance criterion, but Cell 1 is selected, moved, and fixed as a result of the tie-breaking criterion.



Step 3: Fix base cell, update Δg values

Cell 2:	<i>F</i> S(Cell_2) = 2	<i>TE</i> (Cell_2) = 0	<i>∆g</i> (Cell_2) = 2
Cell 3:	<i>FS</i> (Cell_3) = 0	<i>TE</i> (Cell_3) = 1	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_3) = -1$
Cell 4:	$FS(Cell_4) = 0$	<i>TE</i> (Cell_4) = 2	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_4) = -2$
Cell 5:	<i>FS</i> (Cell_5) = 0	<i>TE</i> (Cell_5) = 1	<i>∆g</i> (Cell_5) = -1

After Iteration *i* = 1: Partition $A_1 = \{2\}$, Partition $B_1 = \{1,3,4,5\}$, with fixed cell $\{1\}$.



Iteration i = 1

Cell 2:	<i>FS</i> (Cell_2) = 2	<i>TE</i> (Cell_2) = 0	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_2) = 2$
Cell 3:	<i>FS</i> (Cell_3) = 0	<i>TE</i> (Cell_3) = 1	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_3) = -1$
Cell 4:	<i>FS</i> (Cell_4) = 0	<i>TE</i> (Cell_4) = 2	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_4) = -2$
Cell 5:	<i>FS</i> (Cell_5) = 0	<i>TE</i> (Cell_5) = 1	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_5) = -1$

Iteration i = 2

Cell 2 has maximum gain $\Delta g_2 = 2$, *area*(*A*) = 0, balance criterion is violated. Cell 3 has next maximum gain $\Delta g_2 = -1$, *area*(*A*) = 5, balance criterion is met. Cell 5 has next maximum gain $\Delta g_2 = -1$, *area*(*A*) = 9, balance criterion is met.

Move cell 3, updated partitions: $A_2 = \{2,3\}, B_2 = \{1,4,5\}$, with fixed cells $\{1,3\}$



Iteration i = 2

Cell 2:	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_2) = 1$
Cell 4:	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_4) = 0$
Cell 5:	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_5) = -1$

Iteration i = 3

Cell 2 has maximum gain $\Delta g_3 = 1$, area(A) = 1, balance criterion is met.

Move cell 2, updated partitions: $A_3 = \{3\}$, $B_3 = \{1, 2, 4, 5\}$, with fixed cells $\{1, 2, 3\}$



Iteration i = 3

Cell 4:	$\Delta g(\text{Cell}_4) = 0$
Cell 5:	Δg (Cell 5) = -1

Iteration i = 4

Cell 4 has maximum gain $\Delta g_4 = 0$, *area*(*A*) = 5, balance criterion is met.

Move cell 4, updated partitions: $A_4 = \{3,4\}, B_3 = \{1,2,5\}$, with fixed cells $\{1,2,3,4\}$



Iteration i = 4

Cell 5: $\Delta g(Cell_5) = -1$

Iteration i = 5

Cell 5 has maximum gain $\Delta g_5 = -1$, *area*(*A*) = 10, balance criterion is met.

Move cell 5, updated partitions: $A_4 = \{3,4,5\}, B_3 = \{1,2\}, all cells \{1,2,3,4,5\}$ fixed.

Step 5: Find best move sequence $c_1 \dots c_m$ $G_1 = \Delta g_1 = 1$ $G_2 = \Delta g_1 + \Delta g_2 = 0$ $G_3 = \Delta g_1 + \Delta g_2 + \Delta g_3 = 1$ $G_4 = \Delta g_1 + \Delta g_2 + \Delta g_3 + \Delta g_4 = 1$ $G_5 = \Delta g_1 + \Delta g_2 + \Delta g_3 + \Delta g_4 + \Delta g_5 = 0.$



Maximum positive cumulative gain $G_m = \sum_{i=1}^m \Delta g_i = 1$

found in iterations 1, 3 and 4.

The move prefix m = 4 is selected due to the better balance ratio (area(A) = 5); the four cells 1, 2, 3 and 4 are then moved.

Result of Pass 1: Current partitions: $A = \{3,4\}, B = \{1,2,5\}, cut cost reduced from 3 to 2.$

- Runtime of partitioning algorithms
 - KL is sensitive to the number of nodes and edges
 - FM is sensitive to the number of nodes and nets (hyperedges)
- Asymptotic complexity of partitioning algorithms
 - KL has cubic time complexity *per pass*
 - FM has linear time complexity *per pass*

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2.5.1 Clustering

- To simplify the problem, groups of tightly-connected nodes can be clustered, absorbing connections between these nodes
- Size of each cluster is often limited so as to prevent degenerate clustering, i.e. a single large cluster dominates other clusters
- Refinement should satisfy balance criteria

2.5.1 Clustering



Initital graph

Possible clustering hierarchies of the graph

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2.5.2 Multilevel Partitioning







Reconfigurable system with multiple FPGA and FPIC devices Mapping of a typical system architecture onto multiple FPGAs

Summary of Chapter 2

- Circuit netlists can be represented by graphs
- Partitioning a graph means assigning nodes to disjoint partitions
 - Total size of each partition (number/area of nodes) is limited
 - Objective: minimize the number connections between partitions
- Basic partitioning algorithms
 - Move-based, move are organized into passes
 - KL swaps pairs of nodes from different partitions
 - FM re-assigns one node at a time
 - FM is faster, usually more successful
- Multilevel partitioning
 - Clustering
 - FM partitioning
 - Refinement (also uses FM partitioning)
- Application: system partitioning into FPGAs
 - Each FPGA is represented by a partition