

Indistinguishability Obfuscation from DDH-like Assumptions on Constant-Degree Graded Encodings

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Abstract—All constructions of general purpose indistinguishability obfuscation (IO) rely on either meta-assumptions that encapsulate an exponential family of assumptions (e.g., Pass, Seth and Telang, CRYPTO 2014 and Lin, EUROCRYPT 2016), or polynomial families of assumptions on graded encoding schemes with a high polynomial degree/multilinearity (e.g., Gentry, Lewko, Sahai and Waters, FOCS 2014).

We present a new construction of IO, with a security reduction based on two assumptions: (a) a *DDH-like* assumption — called the *joint-SXDH assumption* — on constant degree graded encodings, and (b) the existence of polynomial-stretch pseudorandom generators (PRG) in NC^0 . Our assumption on graded encodings is simple, has constant size, and does not require handling composite-order rings. This narrows the gap between the mathematical objects that exist (bilinear maps, from elliptic curve groups) and ones that suffice to construct general purpose indistinguishability obfuscation.

Index Terms—Cryptography; Program Obfuscation; Graded Encodings.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indistinguishability obfuscation (IO) is a probabilistic polynomial-time algorithm \mathcal{O} that takes as input a circuit C and outputs an (obfuscated) circuit $C' = \mathcal{O}(C)$ satisfying two properties:

- (a) *functionality*: C and C' compute the same function; and
- (b) *security*: for any two circuits C_1 and C_2 that compute the same function (and have the same size), $\mathcal{O}(C_1)$ and $\mathcal{O}(C_2)$ are computationally indistinguishable.

IO is a surprisingly powerful cryptographic notion. Defined first in the seminal work of Barak, Goldreich, Impagliazzo, Rudich, Sahai, Vadhan and Yang [15], it was largely unnoticed (with the singular exception of [37]) until the recent work of Garg, Gentry, Halevi, Raykova, Sahai and Waters [31] who demonstrated a *candidate* construction of indistinguishability obfuscation, and the work of Sahai and Waters [50] who showed that despite appearing somewhat useless to an untrained

eye, IO has enormous power, so much so that it is virtually “crypto-complete”. Starting from [50], we now know that IO gives us a treasure-chest of cryptographic constructions, solutions to a number of open problems (see, e.g., [50], [31], [30], [25], [17] and many more) and even has implications in complexity theory [18], [39].

In the tradition of theoretical cryptography, one *defines* a useful cryptographic object (a definition involves a notion of functionality and one of security), demonstrates a *construction* of this object using mathematics, and finally, *proves its security* from computational hardness assumptions (such as the hardness of factoring, discrete logarithms, or learning with errors). Garg et al. [31] showed a construction of IO using ideal lattices (which they abstracted into a framework called cryptographic multilinear maps [29]) but the construction came *as-is* with *no* security proof. There have since been a series of attempts at security proofs for IO under assumptions of varying complexity (which we will review in detail in the sequel). This state of affairs motivates one of the most important questions in cryptography today:

Does indistinguishability obfuscation exist, and under which cryptographic assumptions?

Let us cut to the chase: in this work, we show a construction of IO from the *joint SXDH* assumption on prime-order multilinear maps with *constant multilinearity*. This narrows the gap between the mathematical objects that exist (bilinear maps) and ones that suffice for IO ($O(1)$ -linear maps). We now describe what each of these terms mean through the lens of existing IO constructions.

Constructions and Proofs of Indistinguishability Obfuscation Over the last three years, there has been a great deal of work trying to construct IO schemes and prove their security. The mathematics underlying all IO constructions, broadly speaking, arises from the geometry of numbers (or the theory of integer lattices), but this has been abstracted out into the framework of *graded encoding schemes* (also called *cryptographic*

multilinear maps) [21], [29].¹

In a nutshell, a graded encoding scheme for a ring \mathcal{R} provides us with a (potentially exponentially large) collection of groups (written multiplicatively) of order q together with a relation *pairable* on them such that for any two groups G_i and G_j such that $\text{pairable}(G_i, G_j) = G_k$, we have $g_i^\alpha \otimes g_j^\beta = g_k^{\alpha\beta}$ where \otimes is a pairing function and $\alpha, \beta \in \mathbb{Z}_q$ are scalars. If $\text{pairable}(G_i, G_j) = \perp$, then we say that G_i and G_j are *not pairable*, and otherwise they are *pairable*. (In the literature, such graded encoding schemes are referred to as *clean* graded encodings, and can be generalized to *noisy* graded encodings. For most part of this introduction, we will use the interface of clean graded encodings; see Section I-C for a discussion on noisy graded encodings towards the end of the introduction.)

We can use these groups to compute multivariate polynomials in the exponent. That is, given a sequence of elements $g_j^{\alpha_j}$, compute $g_k^{p(\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)}$ where p is an n -variate polynomial and g_k is an element in the appropriate group, provided that p can be computed using a sequence of group operations in the same group and pairing operations over different groups as specified by *pairable*. The maximum degree of a multivariate polynomial that can be computed in the exponent is called the *multilinearity* of the collection. We call the number of groups in the collection the *universe size* (which could be constant, polynomial or exponential in the security parameter). The order of the group is q , and we will differentiate between prime-order and composite-order groups. In this language, the well-known bilinear maps have multilinearity 2 and universe size 2 (or 3 in the case of asymmetric pairing groups).

- **Proofs in Ideal Models:** Several works [31], [24], [22], [14], [9], [51] showed proofs of security for obfuscation in the so-called *ideal multilinear group* model. Roughly speaking, these models postulate that the only way an adversary can operate on group elements is through the legal group interface (namely, group operations between two elements in the same group and the pairing operation between two elements in pairable groups). Restricting the power of the adversary in such a way is unrealistic, and is underscored by the fact that in this model, one can actually get virtual black-box obfuscation (which by [15] does not exist for general programs).
- **Concrete Assumptions on Graded Encodings (GES):** Pass, Seth and Telang [48] postulated an *uber-assumption* on multilinear maps which, roughly speaking, say that any attack on a collec-

tion of group elements can be translated into an attack in the *ideal multilinear group model*. Gentry, Lewko, Sahai and Waters [36], following the work of Gentry, Lewko and Waters [35], took the first step in simplifying the assumption and came up with a construction under the *multilinear subgroup elimination* assumption on *composite-order groups*. Bitansky and Vaikuntanathan [19] and Ananth and Jain [5], showed how to convert any functional encryption scheme into an IO scheme. Together with the FE construction of Garg, Gentry, Halevi and Zhandry [32], this gives us an IO scheme based on similar assumptions on composite-order groups. The main deficiency of all these constructions is that they require graded encoding schemes with large multilinearity – either $\text{poly}(|C|, n, \lambda)$ stand-alone, or at least $\text{poly}(n, \lambda)$ after applying the bootstrapping theorem of Canetti, Lin, Tessaro and Vaikuntanathan [23].² In addition, they all either rely on a very complicated uber-assumption, or rely on composite-order graded encodings. Furthermore, the universe size in all these cases is at least $\text{poly}(n, \lambda)$.

- **Towards Constant Multilinearity:** The closest in spirit to this work is the recent result of Lin [42] who showed that constant-degree multilinear maps suffice for IO. (This is in spite of recent implausibility results [49], [43], [19], [44] showing that construction of IO in the *ideal constant-degree multilinear map* model, implies construction of IO in the plain model; in other words, constant-degree multilinear map does not “help” black-box construction of IO. [42] circumvents this by making non-black-box use of the graded encodings.) Unfortunately, her work has the following drawbacks: First, the concrete complexity assumption was a complicated über-assumption (borrowed from [48]); and secondly, her graded encoding collection has composite order and large, polynomial, universe size, namely $\text{poly}(n, \lambda)$.

See Figure I for a summary.

In short, all assumptions used in the construction of IO are either a complicated uber-assumption that encodes the computation in the assumption itself, or an assumption on composite order graded encodings (GES) with polynomial universe size. The gap between bilinear maps and these objects is rather large. Even the construction of Lin [42] requires a collection of $\text{poly}(n, \lambda)$ groups with a complex interaction between

¹In reality, we do not have any instantiations of graded encoding schemes, but rather only *noisy* graded encodings which turn out to suffice for functionality.

²There are other IO bootstrapping theorems in the literature, notably that of [31]. However, they do not appear to help in reducing the multilinearity.

	Assumption	Multilinearity	Universe	Composite Order?
[22] [14], [7] [9], [51]	ideal multilinear model	$\text{poly}(n, \lambda)^\ddagger$	$\text{poly}(n, \lambda)^\ddagger$	no
[48]	über-multilinear	$\text{poly}(n, \lambda)^\ddagger$	$\text{poly}(n, \lambda)^\ddagger$	no
[36]	multilinear subgroup elimination	$\text{poly}(n, \lambda)^\ddagger$	$\text{poly}(n, \lambda)^\ddagger$	yes
[19], [5], [6] +[32]	similar to multilinear subgroup elimination	$\text{poly}(n, \lambda)$	$\text{poly}(n, \lambda)$	yes
[42]	über-multilinear	$O(1)$	$\text{poly}(\lambda)$	yes
This Work	Joint SXDH	$O(1)$	$O(1)$	no

Fig. 1. A Summary of Known IO Constructions. ‡ denotes the fact that the complexity (multilinearity or universe size) was originally $\text{poly}(|C|, n, \lambda)$ but can be brought down to $\text{poly}(n, \lambda)$ using bootstrapping.

them (through the uber-assumption), even though the multilinearity is constant.

With the aim of narrowing the gap between the mathematical objects that exist (bilinear maps) and ones that suffice for IO, we seek to:

Construct IO from a simple assumption on prime-order GES with $O(1)$ multilinearity and universe size.

A. Our Results

Joint-SXDH Assumption on Graded Encodings. Our joint-SXDH assumption on graded encodings is a natural generalization of the standard symmetric external Diffie-Hellman (SXDH) assumption on (asymmetric) bilinear pairing groups. In short, SXDH states that the decisional Diffie-Hellman assumption holds in every source group. That is, let G_0 and G_1 be a pair of source groups, whose elements can be paired to produce elements in a target group G_T .

SXDH over bilinear maps:

$$\forall l \in \{0, 1\}, \{g_0, g_1, g_T, g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^{ab}\} \approx \{g_0, g_1, g_T, g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^r\}$$

where g_i is the generator for group G_i and a, b, r are random exponents. Note that SXDH possibly holds in asymmetric bilinear groups because elements in the same source group do not pair; otherwise, one can easily distinguish the above distributions by checking the equality $e(g_l^a, g_l^b) \approx e(g_l^{ab}, g_l)$.

The SXDH assumption naturally generalizes to graded encodings with a collection of groups $\{G_l\}_l$: It postulates that the distribution of g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^{ab} in any group l should be indistinguishable to that of g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^r , provided that elements in G_l cannot be paired with themselves. Here, because graded encodings allow for

a richer computation structure, it is not only necessary that elements cannot be paired directly (*i.e.* $\text{pairable}(G_l, G_l) = \perp$), but they also do not pair “indirectly”, via a sequence of pairings with elements in other groups. This leads to the notion of the closure of the **pairable** function, denoted as **pairable***, which roughly speaking indicates whether two groups G_{l_1}, G_{l_2} can ever be paired via any sequence of pairing. More precisely, $\text{pairable}^*(G_{l_1}, G_{l_2}) = 1$ if there are groups G_{l_3} and G_{l_4} such that $\text{pairable}^*(G_{l_1}, G_{l_3}) = 1$, $\text{pairable}^*(G_{l_2}, G_{l_4}) = 1$, and $\text{pairable}(G_{l_3}, G_{l_4}) \neq \perp$; otherwise, $\text{pairable}^*(G_{l_1}, G_{l_2}) = 0$. Then,

SXDH over Graded Encodings:

$$\forall l \text{ s.t. } \text{pairable}^*(G_l, G_l) = 0, \{ \{g_i\}, g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^{ab} \} \approx \{ \{g_i\}, g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^r \}$$

where $\{g_i\}$ is the set of generators of all groups.

Finally, joint-SXDH further generalizes SXDH. It considers the joint distribution of elements $(g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^{ab})_{l \in S}$ in a set S of groups, with the *same* exponents a, b, ab . By the same argument above, if any two groups G_{l_1}, G_{l_2} in the set are pairable, directly or indirectly, one can distinguish the joint distribution from the distribution of $(g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^r)_{l \in S}$ with random exponents a, b, r . Otherwise, in the same spirit as SXDH, the distributions are possibly indistinguishable — this is exactly our joint-SXDH assumption.

Joint-SXDH over Graded Encodings: For all Set S that satisfies $\forall l_1, l_2 \in S, \text{pairable}^*(G_{l_1}, G_{l_2}) = 0$:

$$\{ \{g_i\}, \{g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^{ab}\}_{l \in S} \} \approx \{ \{g_i\}, \{g_l^a, g_l^b, g_l^r\}_{l \in S} \}$$

Furthermore, the subexponential joint-SXDH assumption requires the above distributions to have subexponen-

tially small distinguishing gap to all polynomial time distinguishers.

IO from joint-SXDH on Constant-Degree Graded Encodings. We are now ready to state our main theorem.

Theorem 1 (Main Theorem, Informal). *Assume the existence of a sub-exponentially secure $n^{1+\alpha}$ -stretch pseudorandom generator (PRG) in NC^0 for any positive constant $\alpha > 0$. Then, IO for P/poly is implied by the sub-exponential joint-SXDH assumption on a constant-degree graded encoding scheme, with prime order and constant universe size.*

Tree-GES: The graded encoding scheme that our main theorem relies on has a specific pairable function that allows computing arithmetic circuits of layers of additions and multiplications; we refer to such a scheme a *tree-structured* graded encoding scheme, or *tree-GES* for short. Roughly speaking, a tree-GES consists of a set of groups arranged at the nodes of a 4-ary tree, together with a pairable function defined in the following way. If $G_{l_0}, G_{l_1}, G_{l_2}$ and G_{l_3} are the (groups in the) four children of a node G_l , then $\text{pairable}(G_{l_0}, G_{l_1}) = \text{pairable}(G_{l_2}, G_{l_3}) = G_l$, whereas all other combinations are not pairable (e.g., $\text{pairable}(G_{l_0}, G_{l_2}) = \perp$, and so on). Naturally, given $g_i^{a_i}$ for $i \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$, one can compute $g_l^{a_0 a_1 + a_2 a_3}$ (one layer of multiplications followed by additions), and cannot compute (via the honest interface) any quadratic polynomial containing monomials $a_i a_j$ for $i = j$ or $i \leq 1 < j$.

One of the nice features of this general interface is that it captures directly the computation structure we need from GES, and it can be instantiated from both set-based and graph-based (prime- as well as composite-order) multilinear maps, which gives it a great deal of flexibility. For example, while none of the previous abstract constructions [48], [36], [32], [42] can be instantiated based on the graph-based multilinear maps of [34], our IO scheme will admit such an instantiation.

In the language of tree-GES, our IO construction relies on the joint-SXDH assumption on tree-GES with a tree of constant depth. Carrying this over to the set-multilinear map setting, this translates to constant multilinearity and constant universe size. Our main theorem also relies on a sub-exponentially secure polynomial stretch PRG. See Section I-D for a discussion on this assumption.

Our Approach via Bootstrapping FE for NC^0 to IO: Our approach towards constructing IO from constant-depth tree-GES is through a bootstrapping step showing that assuming the existence of polynomial-stretch pseudorandom generators (PPRG) in NC^0 , a (collusion-resistant) Functional Encryption (FE) scheme for NC^0 implies indistinguishability obfuscation for all of P; the

FE scheme for NC^0 needs to have linear efficiency, in the sense that, encryption time depends linearly in the message length. Then, we use constant-depth tree-GES to implement a such FE scheme.

We invite the reader to pause for a moment and note that while common sense would dictate that obfuscation is more powerful than functional encryption, obfuscation for NC^0 circuits is completely trivial (namely, for each output bit of the circuit, publish the truth table of the circuit that generates it, and the constant number of input bits that the output bit depends on) and yet, FE for NC^0 is far from trivial. Indeed, the theorem below says that FE for NC^0 is powerful enough to imply indistinguishability obfuscation for all of P.

Theorem 2 (Informal, following [19], [6], [42]). *Assume the existence of a sub-exponentially secure $n^{1+\alpha}$ -stretch pseudorandom generator in NC^0 for any positive constant $\alpha > 0$. Then, IO for P/poly is implied by FE schemes for NC^0 with encryption time linear in the input length.*

The theorem follows from combining observations in previous works [19], [6], [42], in particular, combining randomized encoding in NC^0 and PRG in NC^0 to transform any NC^1 computation into an NC^0 computation.

Constructing FE for NC^0 from Constant-Degree GES: Our main technical contribution is the construction of an FE scheme for NC^0 with linear efficiency under the joint-SXDH assumption on tree-GES for constant-depth trees.

Theorem 3 (Informal). *Assuming the existence of a prime-order tree-GES for depth- $O(1)$ trees with the joint-SXDH assumption, there is a (collusion-resistant) FE scheme for all NC^0 circuits, with encryption time linear in message length.*

Thus, put together, we get IO for P/poly, assuming joint-SXDH and the existence of polynomial-stretch PRGs in NC^0 . We now proceed to describe the techniques behind the FE construction.

B. Technical Overview

Since Theorem 2 follows from observations in previous works, we focus on the question:

How does one construct a collusion-resistant functional encryption scheme for NC^0 , with linear efficiency?

The State-of-the-Art of Collusion Resistant FE. In the literature, the only constructions of collusion-resistant FE from standard assumptions are for computing inner products, referred to as Inner Product Encryption (IPE). Roughly speaking, a (public key or secret key) IPE scheme allows to encode vectors y and x in a ring \mathcal{R} ,

in a function key sk_y and ciphertext ct_x respectively, and decryption computes the inner product $\langle y, x \rangle \in \mathcal{R}$. Abdalla, Bourse, De Caro and Pointcheval (ABCP) [2], [1] came up with a public key IPE scheme based on one of a variety of assumptions, such as the decisional Diffie-Hellman assumption, the Paillier assumption and the learning with errors assumption. Following that, Bishop, Jain and Kowalczyk [16] (BJK) constructed a secret-key scheme based on the SXDH assumption over asymmetric bilinear maps; their scheme achieves the stronger security property of *weak function-hiding* (explained below). Both the ABCP and BJK schemes do not compute the inner product $\langle y, x \rangle$ in the clear, but computes it in the exponent $g^{\langle y, x \rangle}$; the BJK scheme in fact computes the inner product $\theta \langle y, x \rangle$ masked by a scalar θ in the exponent; see more discussion later.³

Given IPE schemes, it is trivial to implement FE for quadratic polynomials: Simply write a quadratic function f as a linear function over quadratic monomials $f(x) = \sum_{i,j} c_{i,j} x_i x_j = \langle c, x \otimes x \rangle$, where \otimes is tensor product. Then, use an IPE scheme to generate a ciphertext $ct_{x \otimes x}$ and a function key sk_c , which produce $f(x)$. However, the ciphertext size scales *quadratically* in $n = |x|$. This idea easily generalizes and gives a FE scheme for NC^0 with encryption time n^d , where d is the degree of the computation. Unfortunately, improving these FE schemes to have encryption time linear in the input length under standard assumptions (e.g. bilinear maps) has proved elusive.

Coming from the “other side”, Garg, Gentry, Halevi and Zhandry (GGHZ) [32] proposed a general-purpose FE scheme from polynomial-degree GES (with composite-order). A natural next attempt would be to try to specialize their FE scheme to NC^0 circuits, in the hope that we can pull off the construction using only constant-degree GES. This wishful thinking runs into trouble. Very roughly speaking, the GGHZ construction works with a universal branching program and requires GES with multilinearity that is $O(\ell)$ where ℓ is the length of the branching program. Now, even if we only want to handle NC^0 circuits that take n bits of input, converting them into a universal branching program results in a program of size $\Omega(n)$.

One might hope to get around this problem by representing the NC^0 circuit for each output bit as a constant-

³There has been a long line of work on “inner product testing functional encryption” or “zero-testing IPE” (see, e.g., [40], [41] and many others) which is different from what we need here. In IPE, we require that function key sk_y and ciphertext ct_x produce the inner product in \mathcal{R} in the exponent. In contrast, in zero-testing IPE, one can only compute whether $\langle x, y \rangle \stackrel{?}{=} 0$ in \mathcal{R} . In particular, they do not produce the inner product in the exponent, in a way that allows for further computation. Hence, they are insufficient for our construction of FE for NC^0 .

sized branching program; however, in this case, it is not clear how each function key can “index” the right input bits in the n -bit input to compute on. This “indexing problem” prevents us from tweaking the construction to support NC^0 circuits with constant multilinearity.

In this work, we come up with a completely different FE construction that not only gives us constant multilinearity, but also relies on GES with prime order and constant universe size, and the simple joint-SXDH assumption.

Overview Towards constructing FE for NC^0 with linear efficiency from constant-degree GES, our first observation is that functionality is easy to achieve, since NC^0 circuits f can be represented as constant-degree arithmetic circuits or polynomials, and constant-degree GES supports evaluating constant-degree polynomials in the exponent. Once the output $y = f(x)$ is computed in the exponent g^y , it can be extracted as it is Boolean. Thus, the main challenge lies in achieving security, ensuring that the input and all intermediate computation results are hidden.

To hide the input and computation, the first tool that comes in mind is Randomized Encodings (RE). An RE scheme allows one to use randomness to encode a function f and an input x , $\Pi \stackrel{\$}{\leftarrow} \mathbf{RE}(f, x; r)$, so that:

- 1) The encoding algorithm is simple: Each element of Π is of the form $x_{\pi(i)} \cdot p_i(r) + q_i(r)$, where π is an input-mapping function, and p_i, q_i are polynomial functions of the randomness r . That is, a linear function of a single input bit (and a polynomial function of the randomness r);
- 2) The encoding Π reveals the output $z = f(x)$ of the computation and nothing more.

The key difference of RE from FE is that RE cannot be reused, whereas the ciphertexts (respectively, function keys) of a FE scheme can be reused across an unbounded number of function keys (respectively, ciphertexts).

The First Idea and Challenges. Our first and foremost idea is to combine the re-usability of IPE schemes with the capability of hiding inputs and computations of RE schemes, by designing techniques to use an IPE scheme to compute randomized encodings. More specifically,

Outline of Our FE scheme

- *Key Generation:* To create a key sk_f for $f \in NC^0$, first encode f in a set of vectors $\{u_k\}$, and then publish IPE function keys $sk_f = \{sk_{u_k}^k\}$ for these vectors, using independently sampled master keys.
- *Encryption:* Similarly, to encrypt an input $x \in \{0, 1\}^n$, encode x in a set of vectors $\{v_k\}$, and encrypt them in IPE ciphertexts $ct_x = \{ct_{v_k}^k\}$ with corresponding master keys.

The vectors u_k and v_k are set up in a way so that their inner products $\langle u_k, v_k \rangle = \Pi_k$ produce exactly the k^{th}

element Π_k in the randomized encoding for f, x . Thus, the IPE scheme ensures that evaluating $\text{sk}_{\mathbf{u}_k}^k$ and $\text{ct}_{\mathbf{v}_k}^k$ produces Π_k in the exponent $g_{l_k}^{\Pi_k}$ in some group G_{l_k} .

In the literature, the idea of using FE for a weak function class, to compute the randomized encodings of a stronger function class has been used in bootstrapping FE for NC^1 to FE for P/poly [4]. In some sense, our construction can be viewed as bootstrapping FE for inner products to FE for NC^0 . Here, unique challenges arise due to the fact that we can only compute inner products.

- **Challenge 1:** *How to generate randomized encodings using only inner products?*

To do so, we crucially rely on *affine* randomized encodings, where each element Π_k in the encoding of a computation f, x depends *linearly* on each bit in x . The idea is then to represent each element Π_k as the inner product between some coefficient vectors (depending on f) and input vectors (depending on x), so that, Π_k can be computed using IPE.

In particular, we will use the arithmetic randomized encodings for NC^1 of Applebaum, Ishai and Kushilevitz [12], which is affine and has many other useful properties.

- **Challenge 2:** *How to generate the randomness for randomized encodings?*

Consider a scenario where our FE for NC^0 scheme is used to publish m function keys $\{\text{sk}_{f_j}\}$ and m ciphertexts $\{\text{ct}_{x_i}\}$. Every pair of key and ciphertext $\text{sk}_{f_j}, \text{ct}_{x_i}$ computes a randomized encoding $\Pi_{j,i} \in \mathbf{RE}(f_j, x_i)$ (in the exponent), which requires using fresh (at least, “computationally fresh”) randomness r_{ji} . Note that we need in total m^2 “pieces” of randomness, but has only m function keys and ciphertexts — r_{ji} ’s can only be pseudorandom.

In the case of bootstrapping FE for NC^1 to FE for P/poly , this problem is easily resolved using Pseudo Random Functions (PRFs): One can simply encrypt a PRF seed s together with the input x , and the function keys evaluate the PRF on s to expand pseudorandomness for computing the randomized encoding. However, in our case, the functionality of IPE does not support PRF evaluation. Not even extremely strong local PRGs can help here, since any quadratic-stretch PRGs (from $O(m)$ bits to m^2 bits) has at least degree 3.

We resolve this problem by, instead, relying on built-in pseudorandomness assumption, namely *joint-SXDH*, in GES. Indeed, the SXDH assumption w.r.t. a group G_l guarantees that given a set of $2m$ random elements in the exponent $\{g_l^{s_j}, g_l^{t_i}\}_{j,i \in [m]}$, the set of m^2 products in the exponent $\{g_l^{s_j t_i}\}$ are indistinguishable to elements $\{g_l^{r_{ji}}\}$ with truly random exponents. The r_{ji} ’s in the exponent will

be the randomness for generating RE. They can be computed from short, length- $2m$, seeds $\{s_j, t_i\}$ in degree 2; just that they must reside in the exponent.

Before going into details on how to resolve the above two challenges, we first complete the construction outline.

Achieving Functionality. Given that we can use IPE to compute randomized encodings in the exponent $\{g_{l_k}^{\Pi_k}\}$, it is tempting to think that one can simply extract Π if the encodings are binary, and compute the output y in the clear. If this could be done, we would have obtained FE for NC^0 from only bilinear maps, and thus IO from bilinear maps. The catch is that we have to use arithmetic randomized encodings (where the elements that compose the randomized encoding, namely Π_k , live in a large field) and cannot use binary randomized encodings. Roughly speaking, the culprit is our solution to Challenge 2. As mentioned above, the elements of the randomized encodings are generated pseudo-randomly. The randomness used for generating the randomized encoding lives in the exponent ring \mathcal{R} , and can only produce pseudorandomness *in the exponent* through the joint-SXDH assumption. In turn, as a result of this, we need to use *arithmetic* randomized encodings (in particular, [12]), which cannot be extracted from the exponent, unless discrete logarithm is easy. In fact, extracting these arithmetic randomized encodings would lead to attacks on the joint-SXDH assumption.

Therefore, we rely on constant-degree GES to achieve *functionality*, by evaluating the arithmetic randomized encoding Π in the exponent. Evaluation produces the output y in the exponent, which can be extracted since it is binary. More specifically, recall that we use a tree-structured GES that supports evaluating arithmetic circuits with a constant number of layers of multiplications and additions, in particular, the RE evaluation circuit for NC^0 computation. We will carefully instantiate different IPE instances $(\text{sk}_{\mathbf{u}_k}^k, \text{ct}_{\mathbf{v}_k}^k)$ using different groups in the tree-GES so that IPE evaluation produces the randomized encoding $g_{l_k}^{\Pi_k}$ in appropriate groups l_k , on which RE evaluation can be performed.

With these insights, let’s now circle back and resolve challenges 1 and 2.

Resolving Challenge 1. Our key tool is the *affine* AIK arithmetic randomized encodings (ARE) [12], which depends linearly in the input. More specifically, the AIK arithmetic randomized encoding for an (arithmetic) NC^1 function f and input $\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{R}^n$ is computed using a set of $m = \text{poly}(n)$ *fixed* linear functions L_k as follows:

$$\left\{ \Pi_k = L_k(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{r}) = p_k(\mathbf{r})x_{\pi(k)} + q_k(\mathbf{r}); \pi : [m] \rightarrow [n] \right\}$$

Here, each randomized encoding element Π_k depends on a single input bit $x_{\pi(k)}$, determined by an input mapping

function π . The coefficients of the linear functions $p_k(\mathbf{r})$ and $q_k(\mathbf{r})$ are *fixed* multi-linear polynomials that act on the randomness \mathbf{r} . The only part that depends on the function f is the input mapping function.

To use IPE to compute such arithmetic randomized encodings, the idea is that the FE key generation algorithm encodes the coefficients $p_k(\mathbf{r}), q_k(\mathbf{r})$ and the input mapping function π , and the FE encryptor encrypts x ; they together compute the affine functions $L_k(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{r})$. More precisely,

Our FE scheme, version 1

- *Key Generation:* To generate a key sk_f for f , sample randomness \mathbf{r} , and publish IPE keys $\text{sk}_f = \{\text{sk}_{\mathbf{u}_k}^k\}$ for vectors $\mathbf{u}_k = (p_k(\mathbf{r}) || q_k(\mathbf{r})) \otimes \mathbf{e}_{\pi(k)}$ (using independently sampled master keys).
- *Encryption:* To encrypt x , publish IPE ciphertexts $\text{ct}_x = \{\text{ct}_{\mathbf{v}_k}^k\}$ for vectors $\mathbf{v}_k = (x_i || 1)_{i \in [n]}$ (using corresponding master keys).

It is easy to verify that $\langle \mathbf{u}_k, \mathbf{v}_k \rangle = \Pi_k$. In other words, we achieve the goal of computing AIK arithmetic randomized encodings using IPE. The above scheme is, however, insecure: In particular, the randomness \mathbf{r} for generating randomized encodings is hardcoded in the secret key, meaning that the randomized encodings for the same function f and different inputs x_1, x_2, \dots share the same randomness, which renders them insecure. This leads us back to resolving the second challenge of generating the randomness for randomized encodings.

Resolving Challenge 2. We rely on joint-SXDH to generate randomness. What we need is that for every pair of key and ciphertext, the randomized encoding should use fresh (at least, “computationally fresh”) randomness. We accomplish this by (re-)writing the affine functions as

$$\left\{ \Pi_k = L_k(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{s}) = p_k(\mathbf{r}\mathbf{s})x_{\pi(k)} + q_k(\mathbf{r}\mathbf{s}) \right\}$$

The randomness in use is the coordinate-wise multiplication of \mathbf{r} and \mathbf{s} . We will put one multiplicative “share” \mathbf{r} in the key, and the other \mathbf{s} in the ciphertext. To see how to compute such a thing, note that if

$$p_k(\mathbf{r}) = \sum_j M_{kj}(\mathbf{r}) \text{ and } q_k(\mathbf{r}) = \sum_j M'_{kj}(\mathbf{r})$$

where the M_{kj} and M'_{kj} are monomials, then

$$p_k(\mathbf{r}\mathbf{s}) = \sum_j M_{kj}(\mathbf{r})M_{kj}(\mathbf{s})$$

and similarly for q_k . We modify our FE scheme as below:

Our FE scheme, version 2

- *Key Generation:* To generate sk_f for f , sample \mathbf{r} and publish IPE keys $\text{sk}_f = \{\text{sk}_{\mathbf{u}_k}^k\}$ for vectors

$$\mathbf{u}_k = \left(M_{kj}(\mathbf{r}), M'_{kj}(\mathbf{r}) \right)_j \otimes \mathbf{e}_{\pi(k)} \quad (1)$$

- *Encryption:* To encrypt $x \in \{0, 1\}^n$, sample \mathbf{s} and publish IPE ciphertexts $\text{ct}_x = \{\text{ct}_{\mathbf{v}_k}^k\}$ for vectors

$$\mathbf{v}_k = \left(M_{kj}(\mathbf{s})x_i, M'_{kj}(\mathbf{s}) \right)_{i,j} \quad (2)$$

Now, the inner product $\langle \mathbf{u}_k, \mathbf{v}_k \rangle$ is the randomized encoding element Π_k generated using randomness $\mathbf{r}\mathbf{s}$. Moreover, the AIK randomized encoding has the property that the total number of monomials M_{kj}, M'_{kj} is bounded by $2^{O(d)}$, where d is the depth of the arithmetic circuit computing f . Thus for NC^0 computations, the vectors $\mathbf{u}_k, \mathbf{v}_k$ are of length $O(n)$, linear in the input length, giving us the desired linear efficiency property.

Overview of Security Proof FE security states that the ciphertexts ct_{x^0} and ct_{x^1} of inputs x^0 and x^1 should be indistinguishable, even in the presence of keys $\{\text{sk}_{f_j}\}$ as long as they satisfy that $f_j(x^0) = f_j(x^1)$ for every j . We want to reduce this indistinguishability to the security of randomized encodings — that encodings $\{\Pi_j^0\}$ for f_j, x^0 , and encodings $\{\Pi_j^1\}$ for f_j, x^1 are indistinguishable. But, before invoking RE security, we must first argue that the input x^b is hidden, and the randomness $\{\mathbf{r}_j\mathbf{s}\}$ for generating Π_j^b is jointly pseudorandom. This is certainly not the case w.r.t. honestly generated keys and ciphertexts: First x^b is embedded in the ciphertext, and second it seems impossible to argue that the products $\{\mathbf{r}_j\mathbf{s}\}$ are pseudorandom, when \mathbf{r}_j and \mathbf{s} reside respectively in IPE keys and ciphertexts that can be paired together.

To resolve this conundrum, our idea is leveraging the function hiding property of a secret-key IPE scheme, in order to “move” the input x^b and \mathbf{s} into the function keys in security hybrids. Let us explain. The function hiding property guarantees that IPE keys and ciphertexts for two sets of vectors $\{\mathbf{a}_i, \mathbf{b}_i\}$ and $\{\mathbf{a}'_i, \mathbf{b}'_i\}$ are indistinguishable if they produce identical inner products $\langle \mathbf{a}_i, \mathbf{b}_i \rangle = \langle \mathbf{a}'_i, \mathbf{b}'_i \rangle$. We now further modify the FE scheme to encode vectors with some trailing zeros.

Our FE scheme, version 3

- *Key Generation:* To generate sk_f for f , sample \mathbf{r} and publish IPE keys $\text{sk}_f = \{\text{sk}_{\mathbf{u}'_k}^k\}$ for vectors $\mathbf{u}'_k = \mathbf{u}_k || \mathbf{0}$, where \mathbf{u}_k is described in Equation (1).
- *Encryption:* To encrypt $x \in \{0, 1\}^n$, sample \mathbf{s} and publish IPE ciphertexts $\text{ct}_x = \{\text{ct}_{\mathbf{v}'_k}^k\}$ for vectors $\mathbf{v}'_k = \mathbf{v}_k || \mathbf{0}$, where \mathbf{v}_k is described in Equation (2).

The trailing zeros do not affect the functionality. But, in the security proof, they provide the crucial “space” for hardwiring the randomized encoding Π^b in the function key sk_f , without computing it. More specifically, in the proof, we move to a hybrid, encoding vectors of form $\mathbf{u}''_k = \mathbf{u}_k || \Pi_k$, and $\mathbf{v}''_k = \mathbf{0} || 1$. Since $\langle \mathbf{u}''_k, \mathbf{v}''_k \rangle = \langle \mathbf{u}'_k, \mathbf{v}'_k \rangle = \langle \mathbf{u}_k, \mathbf{v}_k \rangle$, by function hiding of IPE, this hybrid is indistinguishable to the honest

execution. Notice that in this hybrid, the ciphertext contains no information of the input x^b , and the key for a function f_j has the corresponding randomized encoding Π_j^b (for f_j, x^b) hardwired in. Furthermore, the fact that the randomness share s disappears eventually allows us to argue that $\{r_j s\}$ used for generating $\{\Pi_j^b\}$ are pseudorandom. Then, we can finally invoke the RE security, that $\{\Pi_j^0\}$ and $\{\Pi_j^1\}$ are indistinguishable, to argue that FE security holds.

The proof strategy of using computational assumptions to reduce the FE security to RE security resembles that of many FE and IO schemes in the literature in a high level (e.g., [36]), but the details of how we make this approach go through are very different.

Additional Challenges Additional challenges must be addressed in order to make the above security proof overview go through. First, applying joint-SXDH to argue the pseudorandomness of $\{rs\}$ is tricky. This is because we (have to) compute elements Π_k in a randomized encoding Π in different groups $g_k^{\Pi_k}$ in order to further evaluate Π in the exponent. But, the collection of elements $\{\Pi_k\}$ are correlated through shared randomness rs . An attacker can potentially leverage this correlation, and through computation over different groups, distinguish Π_k generated from rs and that from true randomness. It turns out that the structure of the tree-GES, together with the join-SXDH assumption is exactly what we need to prevent all attacks that arise out of such correlations.

Second, the above proof relies on a secret key IPE that is fully function hiding. Looking back into the literature, we see that the BJK secret key IPE [16] is only weak function hiding. A followup work [28] constructed fully function hiding secret-key IPE. In this work, we show how to generically transform any weak function hiding IPE to full function hiding IPE; our transformation is black-box, extremely simple and of independent interest.

A further issue is that these function hiding secret-key IPE schemes do not produce the inner product in the exponent directly $g^{\langle u, v \rangle}$, but produce the inner product masked by a scalar $(g^{\langle u, v \rangle \theta}, g^\theta)$, where the scalar θ is determined by the randomness used in key generation and encryption. This creates the problem that randomized encoding elements computed using different IPE instances are masked by distinct scalars $(g_k^{\Pi_k \theta_k}, g^{\theta_k})$, preventing RE evaluation in the exponent. To resolve this, in our FE scheme, the secret-key IPE instances $\{sk_{u_k}^k, ct_{v_k}^k\}$ are generated using different master secret keys, but the *same randomness*. Thus, they produce randomized encoding elements masked by the same scalar $(g_k^{\Pi_k \theta}, g^\theta)$ and then evaluation can be done as before. As a result, we need function hiding secret-key IPE that allows sharing randomness among instances

generated using different master secret keys. It turns out that our function hiding secret-key IPE derived from the BJK scheme has this property.

Stitching all pieces together, we obtain a secret-key FE for NC^0 with linear efficiency, from constant-depth tree-GES.

Slotted IPE and Public-key FE. We have to go one step further to construct a public-key FE for NC^0 with linear efficiency. The natural first idea is to use, instead of a secret-key function-hiding IPE scheme, a public-key function-hiding IPE. However, a moment's reflection tells us that such an object cannot possibly exist: that is, the properties of function-hiding and being public-key do not play well with each other.

Our solution to this issue is to construct a “hybrid” encryption scheme that we call a *slotted inner product encryption* (or slotted IPE) scheme. Roughly speaking, a slotted IPE scheme generates keys for vectors $y_{pub} || y_{priv}$, encrypts vectors $x_{pub} || x_{priv}$, and given the functional secret key, computes an inner product between them. Crucially, a slotted IPE scheme has the following seemingly contradictory properties:

- *Public Key for the first Slot:* Anyone can encrypt vectors of the form $x_{pub} || 0$. (However, it is computationally hard to encrypt any vector with a non-zero component in the second slot.) The usual notion of semantic security holds, that is, encryption of $x_{pub} || x_{priv}$ and $x'_{pub} || x'_{priv}$ are indistinguishable if all published function keys do not separate them.
- *Function Hiding for the second Slot:* We require hiding for the second component of the vector in the secret key. That is, the following two worlds are indistinguishable: In the first world, one gets the secret key for $y_{pub} || y_{priv}$ and the ciphertext for $0 || x_{priv}$, and in the second world, one gets the secret key for $y_{pub} || y'_{priv}$ and the ciphertext for $0 || x'_{priv}$ such that $\langle x_{priv}, y_{priv} \rangle = \langle x'_{priv}, y'_{priv} \rangle$.

It turns out that this notion is the right combination of public-key and function-hiding FE which is both achievable and useful. Slotted IPE is similar in spirit to objects defined in [40] and also similar to (but simpler than) the slotted FE definition of [32]. Replacing the secret-key IPE with a slotted IPE in our construction yields a public-key FE for NC^0 with linear efficiency.

Constructing Slotted IPE from Joint SXDH. The final piece of the puzzle is to construct a slotted IPE scheme. We do this by combining our secret key function hiding IPE scheme, derived from the BJK scheme [16], and the public-key IPE scheme of Abdalla et al. [2].

C. Noisy Graded Encodings

So far, we described our constructions and security proof in the language of *clean* graded encodings, however all the instantiations [29], [27], [34] are for *noisy* graded encodings. Our constructions of FE for NC^0 and IO can be instantiated with noisy graded encodings. However, the security reduction to the joint-SXDH assumption does not go through, as the reduction performs scalar multiplication in order to “re-purpose” elements in the joint-SXDH assumption, to elements in the security experiments of FE for NC^0 . Known noisy instantiations, when modified to support scalar multiplication, succumb to attacks. Nevertheless, our FE for NC^0 scheme when instantiated with *ideal* noisy graded encodings is secure. We leave it as an interesting open question whether our construction of FE or IO is secure (or can be made secure) in the recently proposed *weakly ideal* multilinear model [45], [46], [33] which seems to capture all known attacks against noisy graded encodings.

D. Local PRGs

We briefly survey constructions of low depth PRGs. See Applebaum’s book [8] for more references and discussions. Applebaum, Ishai, and Kushilevitz [10] showed that any PRG in NC^1 can be efficiently “compiled” into a PRG in NC^0 using randomized encodings, but with only *sub-linear* stretch. Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, there is no construction of PRG in NC^0 with super-linear stretch from well-known assumptions. But, there are candidate constructions.

The authors of [10] constructed a *linear-stretch* PRG in NC^0 under a specific intractability assumption related to the hardness of decoding “sparsely generated” linear codes [11], previously conjectured by Alekhnovich [3]. Goldreich’s one-way functions $f : \{0, 1\}^n \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^m$ where each bit of output is a fixed predicate P of a constant number d of input bits chosen at random, is also a candidate PRG when $m > n$. Several works investigated the (in)security of Goldreich’s OWFs and PRGs: So far, there are no successful attacks when the choice of the predicate P avoids certain degenerate cases [26], [20], [47], [13].

We refer the reader to the full version of this paper for detailed constructions and proofs.

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