

ON THE POINT-DISTINGUISHING
CHROMATIC INDEX OF $K_{n,n}$

BY

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SUMMARY - Let $\chi_0(G)$ be the point-distinguishing chromatic index of a graph G .

We determine some properties of a point-distinguishing χ_0 -coloring of $K_{n,n}$. In particular we determine the values of n for which $K_{n,n}$ has a point-distinguishing χ_0 -coloring with a vertex whose incident lines are colored with the same color and in such cases we calculate $\chi_0(K_{n,n})$. In the other cases we determine a characterization of a point-distinguishing χ_0 -coloring of $K_{n,n}$.

1. INTRODUCTION

The point-distinguishing (p. d.) chromatic index of a graph $G = (V, E)$, denoted $\chi_0(G)$, is the minimum number of colors assignable to E so that no two distinct points are incident with the same color set of lines.

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In [1] tight bounds on this chromatic index are obtained for $K_{n,n}$.
In fact it is proved that

$$\lceil \log_2 n \rceil + 1 \leq \chi_0(K_{n,n}) \leq \lceil \log_2 n \rceil + 2 \quad (1)$$

This relation implies that, for $2^{k-2} \leq n \leq 2^{k-1}$, it is $\chi_0(K_{n,n}) = k$ or $k+1$.

In [1] the problem of determining $\chi_0(K_{n,n})$ exactly for arbitrary n is posed.

We prove that a point-distinguishing χ -coloring of $K_{n,n}$ corresponds to a matrix of order n with elements belonging to $L = \{1, 2, \dots, \chi\}$, that determines a partition of the 2^χ distinct subsets of L on three particular collections of sets.

We give an algorithm to determine a p.d. coloring of $K_{2n,2n}$, knowing such a coloring of $K_{n,n}$.

We say that in a p.d. coloring of G a vertex is monochromatic if all the lines incident with it have the same color.

A p.d. coloring with a monochromatic vertex is called a p.d. monocoloring.

We prove that in a p.d. χ_0 -coloring of $K_{n,n}$ only one vertex can be monochromatic, with only one exception.

Moreover we determine when $K_{n,n}$ has a p.d. χ_0 -monocoloring and in this case we calculate $\chi_0(K_{n,n})$. In the other cases we give a characterization of a p.d. χ_0 -coloring of $K_{n,n}$.

Denote by J_n the all one matrix of order n .

2. Denote by $V = \{v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n\}$ and $W = \{v_1', v_2', \dots, v_n'\}$ the classes of vertices of $K_{n,n}$.

Consider a p.d. coloring f of the edges of $K_{n,n}$ with χ colors, where $L = \{1, 2, \dots, \chi\}$ is the set of colors.

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If $a_{ij} \in L$ is the color of the edge $v_i v_j$, the matrix of order n

$A = [a_{ij}]$ represents such a coloring.

The i -th row of A determines the color set of the edges incident with v_i , while the j -th column corresponds to the color set of the edges incident with v_j .

Since f is a p.d. coloring, it follows that two distinct lines of A never determine the same color set.

If l is a line of A , we denote by $\{l\}$ the set of colors contained in A and by $\{\bar{l}\}$ the complementary set of $\{l\}$ with respect to L , that is $\{\bar{l}\} = L - \{l\}$.

We say that a set H belongs to A if a line l of A such that $H = \{l\}$ exists.

Finally we say that l corresponds to $\{l\}$.

PROPOSITION 2.1 - A p.d. χ -coloring of $K_{n,n}$ exists iff there exists a matrix of order n with elements belonging to $\{1, 2, \dots, \chi\}$ such that distinct lines correspond to distinct sets.

The proof follows from the preceding considerations. \square

PROPOSITION 2.2 - A p.d. χ -coloring of $K_{n,n}$ implies a partition of distinct subsets of $L = \{1, 2, \dots, \chi\}$ on three collections \mathcal{C} , \mathcal{R} and \mathcal{F} of order n , n , $2^{\chi-2}n$ respectively, such that if $H \in \mathcal{C}$, then \bar{H} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{C} or to \mathcal{F} .

Proof. Let A be the matrix that represents a χ -coloring of $K_{n,n}$. Denote by \mathcal{C} , \mathcal{R} and \mathcal{F} the collections of distinct subsets of colors respectively contained in the columns, rows of A and not belonging to A .

Then, if $H \in \mathcal{C}$, \bar{H} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{C} or to \mathcal{F} .

On the contrary, we have that, denoted by c a column of A , there exists a subset S of $\{\bar{c}\}$ that coincides with $\{r\}$, where r is a row of A .

Then the element common to c and r belongs to $\{c\} \cap \{\bar{c}\}$; a contradiction. \square

REMARK 2.3 - The property given in Prop. 2.2 concerning \mathcal{E} holds also for \mathcal{R} .

Proof. Let $R \in \mathcal{R}$ be. Then \bar{R} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{R} or to \mathcal{F} . In fact if a subset $\{r\}$ of \bar{R} belongs to \mathcal{E} , then R is a subset of $\{r\}$ and it is contained in \mathcal{R} , a contradiction. \square

The condition given in Proposition 2.2 is not sufficient for the existence of a p.d. χ -coloring of $K_{n,n}$.

For example, let $k=5$ be and $L = \{1,2,3,4,5\}$.

We can consider the collections of subsets of L $\mathcal{E} = \{2345, 234, 235, 245, 345, 23, 45, 24, 35\}$, $\mathcal{R} = \{12345, 1345, 1245, 1235, 1234, 25, 134, 34, 125\}$ and $\mathcal{F} = \{\emptyset, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 145, 123, 135, 142\}$.

For every $H \in \mathcal{E}[\mathcal{R}]$, $\bar{H} \in \mathcal{E}[\mathcal{R}]$ or to \mathcal{F} together with all its subsets. However there does not exist a matrix whose lines correspond to the sets of \mathcal{E} and \mathcal{R} .

THEOREM 2.4 - If A represents a p.d. χ -coloring of $K_{n,n}$, then the matrix of order $2n$

$$\begin{bmatrix} A & A \\ A & (\chi+1)J_n \end{bmatrix} \quad (2)$$

represents a p.d. $(\chi+1)$ -coloring of $K_{2n,2n}$.

Proof. We denote type a) the rows r_i and columns c_i of (2) for $1 \leq i \leq n$ and type b) for $n+1 \leq i \leq 2n$.

So two distinct lines of type a) determine the same distinct color sets of the corresponding lines of A .

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A similar situation is for the lines of type b) since they determine the same color set of lines of A with the addition of the new color $\chi+1$. Finally, a line of type a) and a line of type b) determine two distinct color sets because the $(\chi+1)$ -color does not belong to both the lines. \square

For example the matrix

$$A_1 = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 2 & 1 & 2 & 1 \\ 3 & 4 & 4 & 3 & 4 \\ 1 & 1 & 3 & 3 & 1 \\ 2 & 2 & 4 & 4 & 4 \\ 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$$

represents a 4-coloring of $K_{5,5}$. The families considered in Prop. 2.2

are $\mathcal{C} = \{123, 124, 134, 234, 14\}$, $\mathcal{D} = \{12, 34, 13, 24, 1234\}$

and $\mathcal{F} = \{\emptyset, 1, 2, 3, 4, 23\}$.

We remark that the matrix formed by the first q rows and q columns $3 \leq q \leq 5$, determines a p.d. 4-coloring of $K_{q,q}$.

Moreover in

$$A_2 = \begin{bmatrix} A_1 & A_1 \\ A_1 & 5J_5 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 2 & 1 & 2 & 1 & 2 & 2 & 1 & 2 & 1 \\ 3 & 4 & 4 & 3 & 4 & 3 & 4 & 4 & 3 & 4 \\ 1 & 1 & 3 & 3 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 3 & 3 & 1 \\ 2 & 2 & 4 & 4 & 4 & 2 & 2 & 4 & 4 & 4 \\ 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 4 \\ 2 & 2 & 1 & 2 & 1 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 \\ 3 & 4 & 4 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 \\ 1 & 1 & 3 & 3 & 1 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 \\ 2 & 2 & 4 & 4 & 4 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 \\ 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 4 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 \end{bmatrix}$$

the matrix formed with the first $5+q$ rows and columns, $1 \leq q \leq 5$, represents a p.d. 5-coloring of $K_{5+q,5+q}$.

3. PROPOSITION 3.1 - If a matrix A of order n, $2^{k-2} < n \leq 2^{k-1}$, represents a k-coloring of $K_{n,n}$, then at most only one line of A is monochromatic.

Proof. Suppose A contains two monochromatic lines. Then they are parallel, for example like two rows.

Then all the columns contain two fixed colours. Apart from these two colors they determine sets with k-2 colors.

Then at most they can be 2^{k-2} .

Since $n > 2^{k-2}$, we have a contradiction. \square

The value $n = 2^{k-2}$ is excluded. For example for k=4 we have $\chi_o(K_{4,4}) = 4$ and the matrix

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 2 & 2 & 2 & 2 \\ 2 & 2 & 3 & 3 \\ 2 & 4 & 3 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$$

gives a p.d. 4-coloring of $K_{4,4}$ with two monochromatic lines.

COROLLARY 3.2 - Let $k \geq 3$ be a positive integer. For $2^{k-1} - \lfloor \frac{k}{2} \rfloor < n \leq 2^{k-1}$, we have $\chi_o(K_{n,n}) = k+1$.

Proof. If it were $\chi_o(K_{n,n}) = k$, in the matrix that represents a k-coloring of $K_{n,n}$ the lines would be $2n > 2^k - k$.

By Proposition 3.1, in a k-coloring of $K_{n,n}$ at least k-1 monochromatic sets and the empty set ϕ are excluded from the lines of A.

Then there is the relation $2n \leq 2^k - k$; a contradiction. \square

THEOREM 3.3 - If the matrix A of order n, $2^{k-2} \leq n \leq 2^{k-1}$, represents a k-coloring of $K_{n,n}$, then, for $\lfloor \frac{2^k}{3} \rfloor < n \leq 2^{k-1}$, A can not contain a monochromatic line.

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Proof. Suppose A contains a monochromatic line, for example a row. Then the complement of the color set of every column can not obviously be contained in a row and neither in a column, because all the columns contain the fixed color.

Hence the color sets are at least $3n$. So we have $2^k \geq 3n$. \square

THEOREM 3.4 - Let $k \geq 3$ be a positive integer and $\bar{n} = \left\lceil \frac{2^k}{3} \right\rceil$. We have that $\chi_o(K_{\bar{n},\bar{n}}) = k$ and $K_{\bar{n},\bar{n}}$ has a p.d. k -monochroming.

Proof. Let $L = \{1, 2, \dots, k\}$ be. Determine three collections \mathcal{E} , \mathcal{R} and \mathcal{F} of subsets of L of orders \bar{n}, \bar{n} and $\bar{n}+i$, where $3\bar{n}+i = 2^k$ and $i=1$ or $i=2$ respectively for even or odd k , such that, for every $H \in \mathcal{E}$, \bar{H} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{F} .

Consider as elements of \mathcal{F} all the non-empty subsets of $L - \{1\} = \{2, 3, \dots, k\}$ of increasing order $1, 2, \dots, \frac{k-1}{2}$ for odd k and $1, 2, \dots, \frac{k-2}{2}$ for even k with the addition of some arbitrary sets of order $\frac{k+1}{2}$ or $\frac{k}{2}$ respectively, so that the total number is \bar{n} . This is possible because the subsets of $L - \{1\}$, of order $\neq 0, k-1$, are $2^{k-1} - 2$ and it is $\bar{n} \leq 2^{k-1} - 2$.

The elements of \mathcal{E} are the complements of these sets of \mathcal{F} with respect to L .

We add to \mathcal{F} the empty set for $i=1$, the empty set and its complement for $i=2$.

The elements of \mathcal{R} are the remaining sets; we note that \mathcal{R} contains the monochromatic set $\{1\}$.

So, by construction, if $H \in \mathcal{E}$, \bar{H} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{F} .

Hence, if $C \in \mathcal{E}$ and $R \in \mathcal{R}$, it is $C \cap R \neq \emptyset$.

Let $\mathcal{E} = \{C_1, C_2, \dots, C_{\bar{n}}\}$ be and $\mathcal{R} = \{R_1, R_2, \dots, R_{\bar{n}}\}$.

Now we construct a matrix $A = [a_{ij}]$ of order \bar{n} whose lines correspond to the sets of \mathcal{E} and \mathcal{R} .

We can select a_{ij} as an element of $R_i \cap C_j$ so that the i -th row (j -th column) exactly corresponds to R_i (C_j) , $1 \leq i, j \leq n$.

In fact, denoted $R_i = \{ \gamma_1, \gamma_2, \dots, \gamma_s \}$, $s \leq k$, by construction \mathcal{C} contains s sets H_1, H_2, \dots, H_s , among the first k , such that γ_t belongs to H_t , $1 \leq t \leq s$.

When $C_j = H_t$, we write $a_{ij} = \gamma_t$. In this way every row r_i contains all the colors of R_i .

Moreover, by construction \mathcal{R} contains at least $\lfloor \frac{k}{2} \rfloor$ sets and their complements.

So, denoted $C_j = \{ \delta_1, \delta_2, \dots, \delta_v \}$, $v \leq k$, \mathcal{R} contains v sets D_1, D_2, \dots, D_v such that $\delta_u \in D_u$, $1 \leq u \leq v$.

When $C_j = H_t$, an element of C_j , for example δ_1 , coincides with γ_t and we can suppose $D_1 = R_i$.

In this case the element $a_{ij} = \gamma_t \in R_i \cap C_j$ is already determined.

For $\delta_u \neq \gamma_t$ or when $C_j \neq H_t$, in correspondence to the rows $R_i = D_u$ we write $a_{ij} = \delta_u$.

So in every column c_j , $1 \leq j \leq n$, there are all the colors contained in C_j .

Every other undetermined element $a_{ij} \in R_i \cap C_j$ can be arbitrarily taked.

As the lines of this matrix correspond to the sets of \mathcal{C} and \mathcal{R} and these sets are distinct by construction, by Prop. 2.1 the theorem follows. \square

COROLLARY 3.5 - Let $k \geq 3$ be a positive integer and $\bar{n} = \lfloor \frac{2^k}{3} \rfloor$. For every t , $2^{k-2} \leq t \leq \bar{n}$, $\chi_G^{(K_{t,t})} = k$ and $K_{t,t}$ has a p.d. k -monocoloring.

Proof. It suffices take the first t sets of \mathcal{C} and \mathcal{R} considered in Theorem 3.4 and construct the matrix A whose lines correspond to these sets. The construction of A is the same as that followed in Theorem 3.4. \square

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4. Throughout this section we denote $L = \{1, 2, \dots, k\}$ and suppose $k > 3$.

PROPOSITION 4.1 - Let $\mathcal{C} = \{C_1, C_2, \dots, C_n\}$ be, \mathcal{R} and \mathcal{F} three families of subsets of L , with \mathcal{R} and \mathcal{F} of orders $n, 2^k - 2n$ and $\lfloor \frac{2^k}{3} \rfloor < n \leq 2^{k-1}$, such that if $H \in \mathcal{C}$, then \bar{H} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{C} or to \mathcal{F} .

Then $|\bigcup_{i=1}^n C_i| = k$.

Proof. As $n > 2^{k-2}$ and the sets on $k-2$ elements are 2^{k-2} , we have

$|\bigcup_{i=1}^n C_i| \geq k-1$. We prove that it can not be $|\bigcup_{i=1}^n C_i| = k-1$.

In fact, suppose that an element, for example 1, does not belong to $\bigcup_{i=1}^n C_i$. Then, if $H \in \mathcal{C}$, \bar{H} contains 1; hence \bar{H} belongs to \mathcal{F} .

So the order of \mathcal{F} is greater than n and we obtain the impossible relation $2^k = 2n + |\mathcal{F}| > 3n > 2^k$. \square

PROPOSITION 4.2 - Let \mathcal{C} , \mathcal{R} and \mathcal{F} be three families of distinct subsets of L , of orders $n, n, 2^k - 2n$ respectively, where $\lfloor \frac{2^k}{3} \rfloor < n \leq 2^{k-1}$, such that if $H \in \mathcal{C}$, then \bar{H} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{C} or to \mathcal{F} .

Then every element of L belongs to at least two distinct sets of \mathcal{C} .

Proof. By Prop. 4.1 every element of L belongs to at least one set of \mathcal{C} .

Suppose that the element 1 belongs to only one set, for example C_1 .

Then, if $H \in \mathcal{C}$ and $H \neq C_1$, \bar{H} contains 1; so \bar{H} belongs to \mathcal{F} .

There are two cases:

1) $\bar{C}_1 \notin \{C_2, \dots, C_n\}$.

Then \mathcal{F} contains at least the $n-1$ sets $\bar{C}_i, 2 \leq i \leq n$, and the empty set ϕ .

So $|\mathcal{F}| \geq n$ and we have the impossible relation

$$2^k = 2n + |\mathcal{F}| \geq 3n > 2^k. \quad (4)$$

2) $\bar{C}_1 \in \{C_2, \dots, C_n\}$.

Let $C_2 = \bar{C}_1$ be. If n is odd, there is a set $R \in \mathcal{R}$ such that $\bar{R} \in \mathcal{F}$.

So \mathcal{F} contains the $n-2$ sets \bar{C}_i , $3 \leq i \leq n$, \emptyset and \bar{R} ; then $|\mathcal{F}| \geq n$ and (4) holds again.

Let n be even. Remark that $\bar{\emptyset} \notin \mathcal{E}$. So, if $\bar{\emptyset} \in \mathcal{F}$, \mathcal{F} contains the $n-2$ sets \bar{C}_i , $3 \leq i \leq n$, \emptyset and $\bar{\emptyset}$ and we have the preceding situation.

If $\bar{\emptyset} \notin \mathcal{F}$, then $\bar{\emptyset} \in \mathcal{R}$. So there exists a set $R \in \mathcal{R}$, such that $\bar{R} \in \mathcal{F}$ and again $|\mathcal{F}| \geq n$. \square

PROPOSITION 4.3 - Let \mathcal{E} , \mathcal{R} and \mathcal{F} be three families of distinct subsets of L , of orders n , n , $2^k - 2n$ respectively and $\left[\frac{2^k}{3}\right] < n \leq 2^{k-1}$, such that, if $H \in \mathcal{E}$, then \bar{H} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{E} or to \mathcal{F} .

Then there exists a family of k sets of \mathcal{E} that has a transversal.

Proof. Let r be the maximum number of sets of \mathcal{E} with a transversal.

Let $[a_1, a_2, \dots, a_r]$ be ^{such} a transversal.

It can not be $r \leq k-2$. In fact, in this case, all the other sets of \mathcal{E} would have elements belonging to $\{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_r\}$, so their number $n-r$ satisfies the relation $n-r < 2^r \leq 2^{k-2}$. But this is impossible

because $n > \left[\frac{2^k}{3}\right]$ and $r \leq k-2$.

Moreover it cannot be $r=k-1$.

In fact, let H_1, H_2, \dots, H_{k-1} be the sets with the transversal

$[a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{k-1}]$ and $D_1, D_2, \dots, D_{n-k+1}$ the remaining sets.

Then the elements of D_i , $1 \leq i \leq n-k+1$, belong to $L' = \{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{k-1}\}$.

Let a_k be the color that does not belong to L' .

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By Prop. 4.2, there exist at least two sets, for example H_1 and H_2 , that contain a_k apart from a_1 and a_2 respectively.

Moreover there exists a set D_j , $j \in [1, n-k+1]$, that contains a_1 or a_2 .

On the contrary, it holds $|\bigcup_{i=1}^{n-k+1} D_i| = k-3$; but this is impossible because the number of sets D_i , $n-k+1$, is greater than 2^{k-3} .

Suppose that D_j contains a_1 .

Then, the sets $H_1, H_2, \dots, H_{k-1}, D_j$ have the transversal $[a_k, a_2, \dots, a_{k-1}, a_1]$ and $r=k$. \square

The preceding considerations about the elements of \mathcal{E} hold also for the elements of \mathcal{R} .

In fact we have the following

Corollary 4.4 - Let \mathcal{E} , $\mathcal{R} = \{R_1, R_2, \dots, R_n\}$ and \mathcal{F} three families of distinct subsets of L , of orders $n, n, 2^k - 2n$ respectively, where $\lceil \frac{2^k}{3} \rceil < n \leq 2^{k-1}$, such that if $H \in \mathcal{E}$, then \bar{H} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{E} or to \mathcal{F} .

Then the following statements hold:

- 1) $|\bigcup_{i=1}^n R_i| = k$,
- 2) every element of L belongs to at least two distinct sets of \mathcal{R} ,
- 3) there exists a family of k sets of \mathcal{R} that has a transversal.

The proof follows immediately from Remark 2.3 and Prop. 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. \square

THEOREM 4.5 - A p.d. k -coloring of $K_{n,n}$, for $\lceil \frac{2^k}{3} \rceil < n \leq 2^{k-1}$ exists iff there exists a partition of the subsets of L on three families of distinct sets \mathcal{E} , \mathcal{R} and \mathcal{F} , of orders $n, n, 2^k - 2n$, such that, if $H \in \mathcal{E}$, then \bar{H} and all its subsets belong to \mathcal{E} or to \mathcal{F} .

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Proof. The condition is necessary by Prop. 2.2.

We prove that it is also sufficient.

Let $\mathcal{C} = \{C_1, C_2, \dots, C_n\}$ be and $\mathcal{R} = \{R_1, R_2, \dots, R_n\}$.

We construct a matrix $A = [a_{ij}]$ of order n whose lines correspond to the sets of \mathcal{C} and \mathcal{R} .

By Prop. 4.3 (Corollary 4.4) $\mathcal{C}(\mathcal{R})$ contains a family of k sets with a transversal.

Then, denoted $R_i = \{\gamma_1, \gamma_2, \dots, \gamma_s\}$, $s \leq k$, \mathcal{C} contains s sets H_1, H_2, \dots, H_s such that $\gamma_t \in H_t$, $1 \leq t \leq s$.

Moreover, denoted $C_j = \{\delta_1, \delta_2, \dots, \delta_v\}$, $v \leq k$, \mathcal{R} contains v sets D_1, D_2, \dots, D_v such that $\delta_u \in D_u$, $1 \leq u \leq v$.

The procedure for the construction of A is the same as that followed in Theorem 3.5; in this case, by Theorem 3.3 A does not contain a monochromatic line. \square

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