

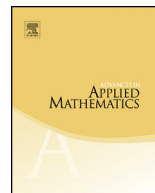


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On the complexity of generalized chromatic polynomials

A. Goodall^{a,1}, M. Hermann^{b,2}, T. Kotek^{c,3}, J.A. Makowsky^{d,*,2},
S.D. Noble^{e,1}

^a IUUK, MFF, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

^b LIX (CNRS, UMR 7161), École Polytechnique, 91128 Palaiseau, France

^c Technische Universität Wien, Institut für Informationssysteme, 1040 Wien, Austria

^d Department of Computer Science, Technion–IIT, 32000 Haifa, Israel

^e Department of Economics, Mathematics and Statistics, Birkbeck, University of London, London, United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

J. Makowsky and B. Zilber (2004) showed that many variations of graph colorings, called \mathbf{CP} -colorings in the sequel, give rise to graph polynomials. This is true in particular for harmonious colorings, convex colorings, mcc_t -colorings, and rainbow colorings, and many more. N. Linial (1986) showed that the chromatic polynomial $\chi(G; X)$ is $\#\mathbf{P}$ -hard to evaluate for all but three values $X = 0, 1, 2$, where evaluation is in \mathbf{P} . This dichotomy includes evaluation at real or complex values, and has the further property that the set of points for which evaluation is in \mathbf{P} is finite. We investigate how the complexity of evaluating univariate graph polynomials that arise

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: andrew@iuuk.mff.cuni.cz (A. Goodall), Miki.Hermann@lix.polytechnique.fr (M. Hermann), kotek@forsyte.at (T. Kotek), janos@cs.technion.ac.il (J.A. Makowsky), s.noble@bbk.ac.uk (S.D. Noble).

URLs: <http://kam.mff.cuni.cz/~andrew> (A. Goodall), <http://www.lix.polytechnique.fr/Labo/Miki.Hermann> (M. Hermann), <http://forsyte.at/~kotek/> (T. Kotek), <http://www.cs.technion.ac.il/~janos> (J.A. Makowsky), <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ems/faculty/steven-noble> (S.D. Noble).

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from **CP**-colorings varies for different evaluation points. We show that for some **CP**-colorings (harmonious, convex) the complexity of evaluation follows a similar pattern to the chromatic polynomial. However, in other cases (proper edge colorings, mcc_t -colorings, H -free colorings) we could only obtain a dichotomy for evaluations at non-negative integer points. We also discuss some **CP**-colorings where we only have very partial results.

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1. Introduction

By a classical result of R. Ladner, and its generalization by K. Ambos-Spies, [40,5], there are infinitely many degrees (via polynomial time reducibility) between **P** and **NP**, and between **P** and $\#\mathbf{P}$, provided $\mathbf{P} \neq \mathbf{NP}$. In contrast to this, the complexity of evaluating partition functions or counting graph homomorphisms satisfies a dichotomy theorem: either evaluation is in **P** or it is $\#\mathbf{P}$ -complete, [21,12,13]. For the definition of the complexity class $\#\mathbf{P}$, see [26] or [49].

In accordance with the literature in graph theory a finite graph $G = (V(G), E(G))$ with $n(G) = |V(G)|$ and $e(G) = |E(G)|$ has *order* $n(G)$ and *size* $e(G)$. Otherwise, the *size of a finite set* is its cardinality.

In this paper we study the *complexity of the evaluation* of generalized univariate chromatic polynomials, as introduced in [45] and further studied in [38,39]. They will be called in the sequel **CP**-colorings (for **C**ounting **P**olynomials). Among these we find:

Examples 1.1.

- (i) Trivial (unrestricted) vertex colorings using at most k colors are just functions $V(G) \rightarrow [k]$. We denote by $\chi_{trivial}(G; k)$ the number of trivial colorings of G , hence $\chi_{trivial}(G; k) = k^{|V(G)|} \in \mathbb{Z}[k]$.
- (ii) Proper vertex colorings using at most k colors, where two neighboring vertices receive different colors, are counted by $\chi(G; k)$, the classical chromatic polynomial.
- (iii) Proper edge colorings using at most k colors, where two edges with a common vertex receive different colors, are counted by $\chi_{edge}(G; k)$, the edge chromatic polynomial. We note that they are exactly the proper vertex colorings of the line graph $L(G)$ of G .
- (iv) Convex colorings using at most k colors are vertex colorings, which are not necessarily proper, but where each color class induces a connected subgraph. They are counted by $\chi_{convex}(G; k)$. Convex colorings are first introduced in [48].
- (v) Harmonious colorings using at most k colors are proper vertex colorings such that no two edges have end-vertices receiving the same pair of colors. They were

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