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 mathematical sciences publishers

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(Communicated by Vadim Ponomarenko)

We determine rank numbers for the prism graph $P_2 \times C_n$ (P_2 being the connected two-node graph and C_n a cycle of length n) and for the square of an even cycle.

1. Introduction

A k -ranking of a graph is a vertex labeling using integers between 1 and k inclusive such that any path between two vertices of the same rank contains a vertex of strictly larger rank. When the value of k is unimportant, we will refer to a k -ranking simply as a ranking. A ranking f is minimal if the reduction of any label violates the ranking property [Ghoshal et al. 1996]. Another definition of a minimal ranking is obtained by replacing the reduction of a label by the reduction of labels for any nonempty set of vertices. It was shown in [Jamison 2003] and [Isaak et al. 2009] that these two definitions of minimal rankings are equivalent. The *rank number* of a graph G , denoted $\chi_r(G)$ is the smallest k such that G has a minimal k -ranking.

Recall that a vertex coloring of a graph is a vertex labeling in which no two adjacent vertices have the same label. Hence a k -ranking is a restricted vertex coloring. Then the rank number is similar to the chromatic number. The *arank number of a graph G* , denoted $\psi_r(G)$, is the largest k such that G has a minimal k -ranking.

The study of the rank number was motivated by applications including the design of very large scale integration (VLSI) layout and Cholesky factorizations associated with parallel processing [de la Torre et al. 1992; Ghoshal et al. 1996; 1999;

MSC2000: primary 05C15, 05C78; secondary 05C69, 05C35.

Keywords: k -rankings, vertex coloring, prism graphs.

This research started on a National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates Program at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) during the summer of 2007, which was cofunded by Department of Defense. The project was continued as part of a capstone project for Juan Ortiz at California Lutheran University under the direction of Hala King, and as an undergraduate research project at RIT by Andrew Zemke under the direction of Darren Narayan. The work of Mirko Hornák was supported by the Science and Technology Assistance Agency under contract no. APVV-0007-07, by grant VEGA 1/0428/10 and by the Agency of the Slovak Ministry of Education for the Structural Funds of the EU under the project ITMS:26220120007.

[Leiserson 1980; Laskar and Pillone 2001; 2000; Sen et al. 1992]. Numerous related papers have since followed [Bodlaender et al. 1998; Hsieh 2002; Jamison 2003; Dereniowski 2006; 2004; Dereniowski and Nadolski 2006; Kostyuk and Narayan \geq 2010; Kostyuk et al. 2006; Isaak et al. 2009; Novotny et al. 2009a]. Ghoshal, Laskar, and Pillone were the first to investigate minimal k -rankings [Ghoshal et al. 1999; 1996; Laskar and Pillone 2001; 2000]. The determination of the rank number and the arank number was shown to be NP-complete [Laskar and Pillone 2000]. The rank number was explored in [Bodlaender et al. 1998] where the authors showed that $\chi_r(P_n) = \lfloor \log_2 n \rfloor + 1$. Rank numbers are known for a few other graph families such as cycles, wheels, complete bipartite graphs, and split graphs [Ghoshal et al. 1996; Dereniowski 2004]. The rank number for ladder graphs $P_2 \times P_n$ and the square of a path P_n^2 were determined in [Novotny et al. 2009b].

Throughout the paper P_n will denote the path on n vertices. We use $G \times H$ to denote the *Cartesian product* of G and H . The k -th power of a path, P_n^k , has vertices v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n and edges (v_i, v_j) for all i, j satisfying $|i - j| \leq k$. The k -th power of a cycle, C_n^k , is defined similarly.

In this paper we determine rank numbers for the prism graph $P_2 \times C_n$ and the square of an even cycle.

We begin by restating two elementary results from [Ghoshal et al. 1996].

Lemma 1. *In any minimal ranking of a connected graph G the highest label must be unique.*

Proof. Suppose there exist two vertices u and v that both have the highest label k . Then any path between u and v will not contain a vertex with a higher label. This is a contradiction. \square

The following lemma gives a monotonicity result involving the rank number.

Lemma 2. *Let H be a subgraph of a graph G . Then $\chi_r(H) \leq \chi_r(G)$.*

Proof. The proof is straightforward. Suppose $\chi_r(H) > \chi_r(G)$. Then we could relabel the vertices of H using the corresponding labels used in the ranking of G . This produces a ranking with fewer labels, and hence a contradiction. \square

1.1. The ladder graph L_n . We next describe a family of graphs built using the *Cartesian product*.

Definition 3. The *Cartesian product* of G and H written $G \times H$ is the graph with vertex set $V(G) \times V(H)$ specified by putting $\{u, v\}$ adjacent to (u', v') if and only if $u = u'$ and $(v, v') \in E(H)$ or $v = v'$ and $(u, u') \in E(G)$.

An example is the ladder graph $L_n = P_2 \times P_n$, shown in Figure 1.

In this paper we investigate the family of prism graphs $P_2 \times C_n$. We will start with a ladder $P_2 \times P_n$ with n even, and insert either a $P_2 \times P_1$ or $P_2 \times P_2$ and



Figure 1. The ladder graph $L_n = P_2 \times P_n$.

“wrap” the ends to form a prism graph $P_2 \times C_{n+1}$ or $P_2 \times C_{n+2}$. In order for this construction to work, it is essential that in the labeling of the vertices labeled 1 of the ladder satisfies an “alternating 1’s property”: for each vertex v , either v is labeled 1 or all of its neighbors are labeled 1 (Figure 2). That is, the vertices labeled 1 form a particular dominating set of the graph. It was shown in [Novotny et al. 2009b] that in a minimal ranking of a ladder the 1’s can be made to alternate.

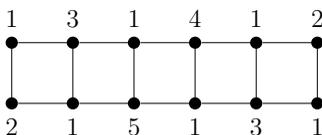


Figure 2. A graph with the alternating 1s property.

We can insert in $P_2 \times P_n$ either a 1-bridge (Figure 3, left) or a 2-bridge (Figure 3, right). In general, the bridges will contain the labels k and $k + 1$ where $k - 1$ is the rank of the original ladder. Our example shows the extension where $k = 6$.

In each case we insert four edges to connect the bridge to each end of the ladder. When n is even the wrapping of the ladder L_n creates a prism graph where the 1’s alternate. When n is odd the 1’s alternate except in one place where there are two vertices labeled 1 that are distance 3 apart (Figure 4).

Novotny et al. [2009b] determined the rank number of a ladder graph. This result is stated in our next lemma.

Lemma 4. $\chi_r(L_n) = \lfloor \log_2(n + 1) \rfloor + \lfloor \log_2(n + 1 - 2^{\lfloor \log_2 n \rfloor - 1}) \rfloor + 1$ for $n \geq 1$.

Applying our construction immediately gives an upper bound for the rank number of the prism graph $P_2 \times C_n$, as stated in our next theorem.

Theorem 5. For $k \geq 2$, both $\chi_r(P_2 \times C_{2k-1})$ and $\chi_r(P_2 \times C_{2k})$ are bounded from above by $r(2k-2) + 2$.

We will show later that this bound is tight.

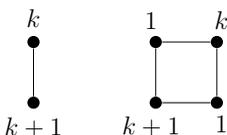


Figure 3. A 1-bridge (left) and 2-bridge (right).

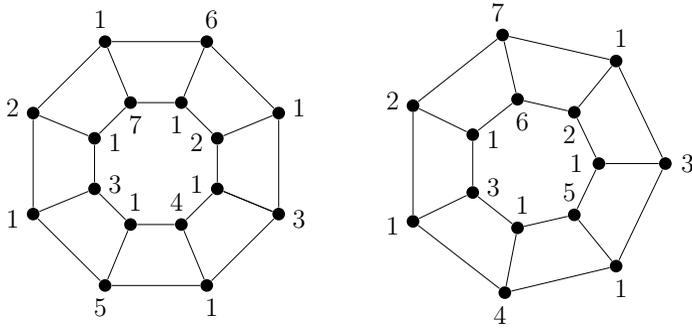


Figure 4. Prism graphs for n even (left) and n odd (even).

2. Main results

Theorem 6. *Let $l = \chi_r(P_2 \times C_n)$ where $n \geq 3$. If f is a minimal l -ranking of $P_2 \times C_n$, then $l \geq 5$ and the largest four labels of f appear exactly once.*

Proof. In the minimal ranking $f : V(P_2 \times C_n) \rightarrow \{1, 2, \dots, l\}$ every label appears at least once. Since $G = P_2 \times C_n$ is (vertex) 3-connected, any two distinct vertices of G are joined by three internally vertex disjoint paths. Hence each of the largest three labels appears exactly once in f .

Assume that $l - 3$ appears at least twice with $f(x) = f(y) = l - 3$, where $x \neq y$. We have $l \geq 5$ because the independence number of G is $2\lfloor n/2 \rfloor$ and $2\lfloor n/2 \rfloor + 3 < 2n = |V(G)|$.

Let S be a minimum-sized x, y vertex separating set. It is clear that $|V(S)| = 3$. It is well known that every 3-element separating set \tilde{S} is a prism graph P is a neighborhood of a single vertex $\tilde{z} \in V(P)$ and the nontrivial component of $P - \tilde{S}$ is induced by $V(P) - (\tilde{S} \cup \{\tilde{z}\})$. Thus, there exists $z \in \{x, y\}$ such that S is the neighborhood of z . However if z has its neighbors labeled $l - 2, l - 1$, and l , then $f(x)$ can be reduced to 1, contradicting the minimality of f . □

For a positive integer n let

$$r(n) = \lfloor \log_2(n + 1) \rfloor + \lfloor \log_2(n + 1 - (2^{\lfloor \log_2 n \rfloor - 1})) \rfloor + 1. \tag{1}$$

Then [Lemma 4](#) states that $\chi_r(L_n) = \chi_r(P_2 \times P_n) = r(n)$ for $n \geq 1$.

Theorem 7. *For $k \geq 2$, we have*

$$\chi_r(P_2 \times C_{2k-1}) = \chi_r(P_2 \times C_{2k}) = \chi_r(P_2 \times P_{2k-2}) + 2 = r(2k - 2) + 2.$$

Proof. By [Theorem 5](#), both $\chi_r(P_2 \times C_{2k-1})$ and $\chi_r(P_2 \times C_{2k})$ are bounded from above by $r(2k - 2) + 2$. In other words, if $m = 2k - 1$ or $2k$, then

$$\chi_r(P_2 \times C_m) \leq \chi_r(P_2 \times P_{2\lceil m/2 \rceil - 2}) + 2 = r(2\lceil m/2 \rceil - 2) + 2.$$

To prove the theorem we will show that this last inequality is in fact equality. If $k = 2$ and $m = 2k - 1$ or $2k$, then $r(2\lceil m/2 \rceil - 2) + 2 = 5$. So by [Theorem 6](#), $\chi_r(P_2 \times C_m) = 5$.

Now assume that $m = 2k - 1$ or $2k$, $k \geq 3$, and

$$\chi_r(P_2 \times C_m) = l \leq r\left(2\left\lceil \frac{m}{2} \right\rceil - 2\right) + 1. \tag{2}$$

Let f be an l -minimal ranking of $G = P_2 \times C_m$. If $k = 3$, then $5 \leq l = r(4) + 1 \leq 5$, $l = 5$, and by [Theorem 6](#), the label 1 appears $2m - 4$ times in f . However the independence number of G equals $2\lceil m/2 \rceil \leq m < 2m - 4$, which is a contradiction.

Let $k \geq 4$. This implies $m \geq 7$. Let i be the maximum label used at least twice. Since $r(2\lceil m/2 \rceil - 2) + 1 \leq r(m - 1) + 1 < 2m = |V(G)|$, such a label does exist, and $i \leq l - 4$ by [Theorem 6](#). Consider vertices $x_1, x_2 \in V(G)$ with $f(x_1) = i = f(x_2)$, and let y_j be the neighbor of x_j that is not on the “ring” containing x_j . We will refer to this vertex as the special neighbor of x_j for $j = 1, 2$. There are two distinct subgraphs G_1, G_2 of G that are ladders with corners x_1, x_2, y_1, y_2 . The restriction $f|_{V(G_j)}$ is a ranking of G_j ; hence there is a minimal separating set $S_j \subseteq V(G_j)$ such that $\min f(S_j) > i$ and x_1, x_2 are in distinct components of $G_j - S_j$, $j = 1, 2$. It is easy to see that any minimal separating set that separates two “distant” corners of a ladder on at least six vertices has two vertices and is of one of the two types shown in [Figure 3](#) (consisting of the vertices labeled k and $k + 1$). As all labels in $\{i + 1, \dots, l\}$ are used by f exactly once, any permutation of those labels yields a ranking of G . Therefore, we may suppose without loss of generality that $f(S_1) \cup f(S_2) = \{l - 3, l - 2, l - 1, l\}$. Further, let \bar{S}_j be the set consisting of the vertices of S_j together with their special neighbors (so that $|\bar{S}_j|$ is 2 or 4). The graph $G - (\bar{S}_1 \cup \bar{S}_2)$ is a union of two vertex disjoint ladders H_1 and H_2 . Clearly if $|V(H_1)| \geq |V(H_2)|$, then $H_1 = P_2 \times P_q$, where $q \geq \lceil (m - 4)/2 \rceil$. Now $f|_{V(H_1)}$ uses only labels from the set $\{1, \dots, l - 4\}$; hence, by [\(2\)](#),

$$\chi_r(H_1) \leq l - 4 \leq r\left(2\left\lceil \frac{m}{2} \right\rceil - 2\right) - 3. \tag{3}$$

On the other hand if s, t are positive integers with $s \leq t$, then $P_2 \times P_s$ is a subgraph of $P_2 \times P_t$. Then by [Lemma 2](#) we have $r(s) = \chi_r(P_2 \times P_s) \leq \chi_r(P_2 \times P_t) = r(t)$. Consequently,

$$\chi_r(H_1) = \chi_r(P_2 \times P_q) = r(q) \geq r\left(\left\lceil \frac{m-4}{2} \right\rceil\right). \tag{4}$$

If m is even, then it follows from Equations [\(3\)](#) and [\(4\)](#) that

$$r(m - 2) = r\left(2 \cdot \frac{m-4}{2} + 2\right) \geq r\left(\frac{m-4}{2}\right) + 3.$$

If m is odd we have

$$r(m-1) = r\left(2 \cdot \frac{m-3}{2} + 2\right) \geq r\left(\frac{m-3}{2}\right) + 3.$$

However both cases lead to a contradiction. From (1) it is easy to see that

$$r(2n+2) - r(n) = 2$$

for any positive integer n . □

Since $r(2k-3) = r(2k-2)$ for $n \geq 3$, we obtain from [Theorem 7](#):

Theorem 8. $\chi_r(P_2 \times C_n) = \chi_r(L_{n-2}) + 2$ for $n \geq 4$.

3. Rankings for other classes of graphs

We now show that the rank number of a prism graph can be used to give the rank number of the square of an even cycle. We recall some earlier facts:

Definition 9 [[Ghoshal et al. 1996](#)]. For a graph G and a set $S \subseteq V(G)$ the *reduction* of G , denoted by $G_{S_1}^b$, is a subgraph of G induced by $V - S$ with an edge uv in $E(G_{S_1}^b)$ if and only if there exists a $u - v$ path in G with all internal vertices belonging to S .

Lemma 10 [[Ghoshal et al. 1996](#)]. Let G be a graph and let f be a minimal k -ranking of G . If

$$S_1 = \{x \in V(G) : f(x) = 1\} \quad \text{and} \quad f^b : V(G_{S_1}^b) \rightarrow \{1, \dots, k-1\}$$

is defined by $f^b(x) = f(x) - 1$, then f^b is a minimal $(k-1)$ -ranking of $G_{S_1}^b$.

3.1. The square of a cycle. Next we reduce even prism graphs to squares of cycles.

Theorem 11. $\chi_r(C_{2n}^2) = \chi_r(P_2 \times C_n)$ for even $n \geq 4$.

Proof. (Illustrated in [Figure 5](#).) If $n = 2$, the result follows from [Theorem 7](#) which states that $\chi_r(P_2 \times C_4) = 5$ and from the fact that $\chi_r(C_4^2) = \chi_r(K_4) = 4$.

Henceforth suppose that $n \geq 3$. Let $k = \chi_r(P_2 \times C_{2n})$ and let $l = \chi_r(C_{2n}^2)$. Let f be a k -ranking of $P_2 \times C_{2n}$ in which the 1's alternate. It is straightforward to see that then $(P_2 \times C_{2n})_{S_1}^b$ is isomorphic to C_{2n}^2 . Therefore, by [Lemma 10](#) $\chi_r(C_{2n}^2) \leq k - 1$.

Now let g be an l -ranking of C_{2n}^2 . One can easily see that C_{2n}^2 is isomorphic to an n -sided antiprism A_n . Pick a new vertex inside each of the $2n$ triangles of A_n , join it to all three vertices of "its" triangle and delete all edges of A_n . The result is a graph G_n that is isomorphic to $P_2 \times C_{2n}$. Consider the mapping $\tilde{g} : V(G_n) \rightarrow \{1, \dots, l+1\}$ defined as follows: $\tilde{g}(x) = g(x) + 1$ if $x \in V(C_{2n}^2)$ and $\tilde{g}(x) = 1$ if $x \in V(G_n) - V(C_{2n}^2)$. Since \tilde{g} is a ranking of G_n (a simple exercise left to the reader), we have $\chi_r(P_2 \times C_{2n}) \leq l + 1$.

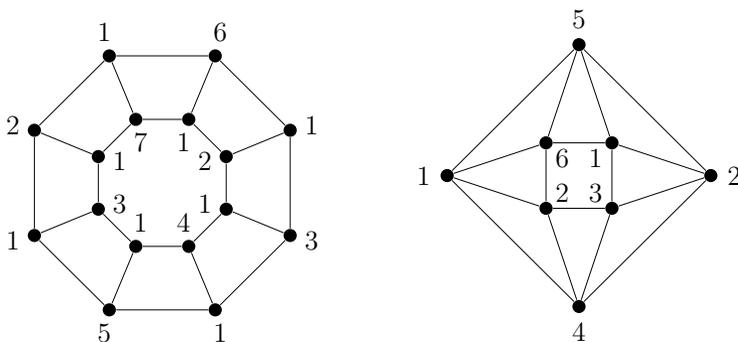


Figure 5. A minimal 7-ranking of $P_2 \times C_8$ (left) and a minimal 6-ranking of A_4 (right).

Thus $l = \chi_r(C_{2n}^2) \leq k - 1 = \chi_r(P_2 \times C_{2n}) - 1 \leq (l + 1) - 1 = l$, and since both inequalities turn into equalities, we are done. \square

Combining Theorems 8 and 11 gives:

Corollary 12. *Let $n \geq 4$ be even. Then*

$$\chi_r(C_n^2) = \chi_r(P_2 \times C_n) - 1 = \lfloor \log_2(n - 1) \rfloor + \lfloor \log_2(n - 1 - (2^{\lfloor \log_2(n-2) \rfloor - 1})) \rfloor + 2.$$

4. Conclusion

We conclude by posing some problems for future research. In this paper we determined the rank number of $P_2 \times C_n$ using known results for the rank number of $P_2 \times P_n$. It would be interesting to determine the rank numbers for grid graphs $P_m \times P_n$ and cylinders $P_m \times C_n$. We found out recently that [Alpert \geq 2010] gives rank numbers for $P_3 \times P_n$, among other results including an alternate proof of our Theorem 7.

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Received: 2009-03-25

Revised: 2010-04-15

Accepted: 2010-04-15

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Cover design: ©2008 Alex Scorpan

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The subscription price for 2010 is US \$100/year for the electronic version, and \$120/year (+\$20 shipping outside the US) for print and electronic. Subscriptions, requests for back issues from the last three years and changes of subscribers address should be sent to Mathematical Sciences Publishers, Department of Mathematics, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94704-3840, USA.

Involve (ISSN 1944-4184 electronic, 1944-4176 printed) at Mathematical Sciences Publishers, Department of Mathematics, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-3840 is published continuously online. Periodical rate postage paid at Berkeley, CA 94704, and additional mailing offices.

Involve peer review and production are managed by EditFLOW™ from Mathematical Sciences Publishers.

PUBLISHED BY

 **mathematical sciences publishers**
<http://www.mathscipub.org>

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Typeset in L^AT_EX

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involve

2010

vol. 3

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