Colouring relatives of intervals on the plane, II: intervals and rays in two directions

A. V. Kostochka *

Institute of Mathematics,

630090, Novosibirsk, Russia

J. Nešetřil†

Dept. of Appl. Math., Charles University,

Prague, Czech Republic

Abstract

We give exact upper bounds on the chromatic number for the intersection graphs of intervals and rays in two directions on the plane in terms of clique number.

1 Introduction

This paper is a continuation of our work [3]. The topic of bounds on chromatic number of intersection graphs of intervals and their relatives on the plane was initiated by Asplund and Grünbaum [1] and Gyárfás and Lehel [2]. A number of these problems can be stated in the following framework. For a class $\mathcal{G}$ of intersection graphs and for a positive integer k, $k \geq 2$ find or bound

(i) $f(\mathcal{G}, k)$, the maximum chromatic number of a graph in $\mathcal{G}$ with clique number at most k;

(ii) $g(\mathcal{G}, k)$, the maximum chromatic number of a graph in $\mathcal{G}$ with girth at least k (here we assume $k \geq 4$).

Note that $f(\mathcal{G}, 2) = g(\mathcal{G}, 4)$. In [3] we obtained bounds on $g(\mathcal{G}, k)$ for the following families:

$\mathcal{I}$ — intersection graphs of intervals on the plane;

$\mathcal{R}$ — intersection graphs of rays on the plane;

$\mathcal{S}$ — intersection graphs of families of strings on the plane such that the intersection of any two strings is a connected subset of the plane;

$\mathcal{I}_m$ — intersection graphs of intervals on the plane parallel to some m lines;

$\mathcal{R}_m$ — intersection graphs of rays on the plane parallel to some m lines.

*This work was partially supported by the grants 99-01-00581 and 97-01-01075 of the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research

†A part of this research was supported by GAČR Grant 0242 and GAUK Grant 158

In particular, we have proved that for every integer $k \geq 6$, $g(\mathcal{R}, k) = 3$ and that $g(\mathcal{R}_2, 5) = 3$. Let us remark that the finitness of $g(\mathcal{I}, 4) = f(\mathcal{I}, 2)$, $g(\mathcal{S}, 4) = f(\mathcal{S}, 2)$ is an open problem.

In the present paper we are concerned with $\mathcal{I}_2$ and $\mathcal{R}_2$. Obviously, $\mathcal{R}_2 \subseteq \mathcal{I}_2$ and thus $f(\mathcal{R}_2, k) \leq f(\mathcal{I}_2, k)$ for every k. The main result of this paper says that they are the same.

Theorem 1 *Let $k \geq 2$ be an integer. Then*

$$f(\mathcal{R}_2, k) = f(\mathcal{I}_2, k) = \begin{cases} 2k, & \text{if } k \text{ is even;} \\ 2k - 1, & \text{if } k \text{ is odd.} \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

Recall that intersection graphs of line segments are perfect (which in our terminology is equivalent to $f(\mathcal{I}_1, k) = k$).

In the next section we introduce some notation. In Section 3 we give the upper bound on $f(\mathcal{I}_2, k)$ and in the final section we present a modification of the Asplund–Grünbaum construction [1] to obtain the lower bound on $f(\mathcal{R}_2, k)$. That completes the proof of Theorem 1.

2 Notation

Say that a family F of intervals, rays or lines is an *m-direction family* if there are m (straight) lines $l_1, \ldots, l_m$ such that any member of F is parallel to some l_i, $1 \leq i \leq m$.

For a family F of subsets of P, its *intersection graph* $G = G_F$ is the undirected graph with the vertex set F such that for $r, p \in V(G)$,

$$(r, p) \in E(G) \longleftrightarrow r \cap p \neq \emptyset.$$

Certainly, for a graph G, there could be different families F' and F'' such that $G = G_{F'} = G_{F''}$. Any such a family is called a *representation* of G. The maximal size of a clique in the graph G_F will be also called *clique number of F*

For a family F of intervals in a line l and a real $c \in l$, let $F^+(c)$ denote the subfamily of intervals in F whose left end is greater than c. Similarly, $F^-(c)$ denotes the subfamily of intervals in F whose right end is less than c and $F^0(c)$ denotes the set of intervals in F containing c.

3 The upper bound

An interval $I \in F$ is called *k-covered* (by F) if every its point belongs to at least $k/2$ intervals in F (including I), and *k-uncovered* otherwise.

Lemma 1 *For every family F of intervals in a line with clique number k, there exists a k-colouring of G_F such that the colour k is used only for colouring of vertices corresponding to k-covered intervals.*

PROOF. By induction on $|F|$. Let F be a smallest family contradicting the lemma.

CASE 1. There exists $c \in l$ such that $|F^0(c)| < k/2$, $F^-(c) \neq \emptyset$ and $F^+(c) \neq \emptyset$. By the minimality of F, there are required k-colourings f^- and f^+ of $F^-(c) \cup F^0(c)$ and $F^+(c) \cup F^0(c)$, respectively. Note that $|f^-(F^0(c))| = |f^+(F^0(c))| = |F^0(c)|$ and the colour k is not in $f^-(F^0(c)) \cup f^+(F^0(c))$. Hence we can rename some colours in f^+ (not touching k) so that $f^-(I) = f^+(I)$ for every $I \in F^0(c)$. Then $f^- \cup f^+$ is a required colouring for F, a contradiction.

CASE 2. For every $c \in l$, if $|F^0(c)| < k/2$, then either $F^-(c) = \emptyset$ or $F^+(c) = \emptyset$. This means that there are at most $k-1$ k-uncovered intervals. We take any proper k-colouring of F and rename the colours so that none of the at most $k-1$ k-uncovered intervals gets colour k. This proves the lemma. □

Lemma 2 *For every 2-direction family F of intervals with clique number k, there exists a $2k$-colouring of G_F. Moreover, if k is odd, then there exists a $(2k-1)$-colouring of G_F.*

PROOF. The first statement is trivial: we simply colour with first k colours all the intervals in the first direction, and colour with colours $k+1, \ldots, 2k$ all the intervals in the second direction.

Let k be odd. By Lemma 1, we can colour all the intervals in the first direction with colours $1, \ldots, k$ so that colour k will be used only for some k-covered intervals. Similarly, we can colour with colours $k, \ldots, 2k-1$ all the intervals in the second direction so that colour k also will be used only for some k-covered intervals. Since no k-covered interval in the first direction meets any k-covered interval in the second direction, we obtain a proper $(2k-1)$-colouring of G_F. □

4 Construction

We modify the construction of Asplund and Grünbaum [1]. The two directions in question will be horizontal and vertical.

4.1 Building blocks

A horizontal *k-bunch* with *centre a* is a set of k horizontal rays with a common origin O having x-coordinate a, such that $\lceil k/2 \rceil$ of these rays are oriented to the right and the remaining $\lfloor k/2 \rfloor$ rays are oriented to the left. The rays oriented to the right are called *the right part* of the bunch, and the rest is *the left part* of the bunch.

A horizontal (k,l)-*bundle* is a set of 2^l disjoint horizontal k-bunches with different centres. Similarly, we can define vertical bunches and bundles (where the role of the "right" plays "up"). A *k-bundle* is a (k,l)-bundle with $l = l(k) = \lfloor \log_2 k \rfloor$.

Given a horizontal (k,l)-bundle B with centres $a_1,\dots,a_{2^l}$ (where $a_1 < a_2 < \dots < a_{2^l}$), the 2^l-*zone* is the open half-plane to the right of the line $y = a_{2^l}$ and for $i = 1,\dots,2^l-1$, the i-*zone* is the open vertical strip whose left boundary is the line $y = a_i$ and right boundary is the line $y = a_i$. Let B^i denote the set of rays in B intersecting the i-zone. Since no i-zone contains a centre, for every i the clique number of the intersection graph of B^i is at most $\lceil k/2 \rceil$.

Lemma 3 *let B be a horizontal (k,l)-bundle with centres $a_1,\dots,a_{2^l}$, where $a_1 < a_2 < \dots < a_{2^l}$. For every proper colouring of G_B, there exists an i such that on the rays in B^i at least $k - \frac{k}{2^{l+1}}$ colours are present.*

PROOF. Let $l = 0$. Then B consists of $2^0 = 1$ k-bunch and B^1 comprises the right part R of this bunch. For any proper colouring of G_B, exactly $\lceil k/2 \rceil$ are used on R.

Suppose that the lemma is true for every $l' < l$. Let f be a proper colouring of G_B. Consider the $(k,l-1)$-bundle B_1 with centres $a_1,a_3,a_5,\dots,a_{2^l-1}$. By the induction assumption, there is an i such that on B_1^i at least $k - \frac{k}{2^l}$ colours are present. Suppose that the set of colours present on B_1^i is S and $|S| = s$. The x-borders of the i-zone in B_1^i are a_{2i-1} and a_{2i+1}. Then at least $k-s$ colours not in S are present on the k-bunch with the centre a_{2i}. Therefore, either B^{2i-1} or B^{2i+1} meets at least $s + 0.5(k-s)$ colours. This proves the lemma. □

Corollary 1 *Let B be a horizontal k-bundle with centres $a_1,\dots,a_{2^{l(k)}}$, where $a_1 < a_2 < \dots < a_{2^{l(k)}}$. For every proper colouring of the intersection graph of B, there exists an i such that on the rays in B^i at least k colours are present.*

PROOF. By Lemma 3, on the rays in some B^i at least $k - \frac{k}{2^{l(k)+1}} = k - \frac{k}{2^{\lfloor \log_2 k \rfloor + 1}} > k-1$ colours are present. □

For a k-bundle B and a colouring f of G_B, we say that an i-zone is f-*bad*, if f uses at least k colours on B^i. Then Corollary 1 simply says that for every k-bundle B and every proper colouring f of G_B, there is an f-bad i-zone.

4.2 The idea and an example

The construction (for an even k) consists of a family U of horizontal k-bundles and a family T of vertical k-bunches such that for every proper colouring f of the whole family, we can choose $l(k)$ vertical k-bunches forming a k-bundle B_0 and $l(k)$ horizontal k-bundles such that every i-zone of B_0 intersects an f-bad zone of some k-bundle in U. Then an f-bad zone of B_0 (which exists by Corollary 1), intersects an f-bad zone of some k-bundle in U. This implies that we need at least $2k$ colours. Since each of the left and right parts of every k-bunch contains exactly $k/2$ rays, the clique number of $G_{U\cup T}$ will be k.

Example. Let $k = 2$. Then $l(k) = 2$. The family U consists of three 2-bundles B_1, B_2 and B_3. The bundle B_i consists of two 2-bunches: $B_{i,1}$ with the centre at

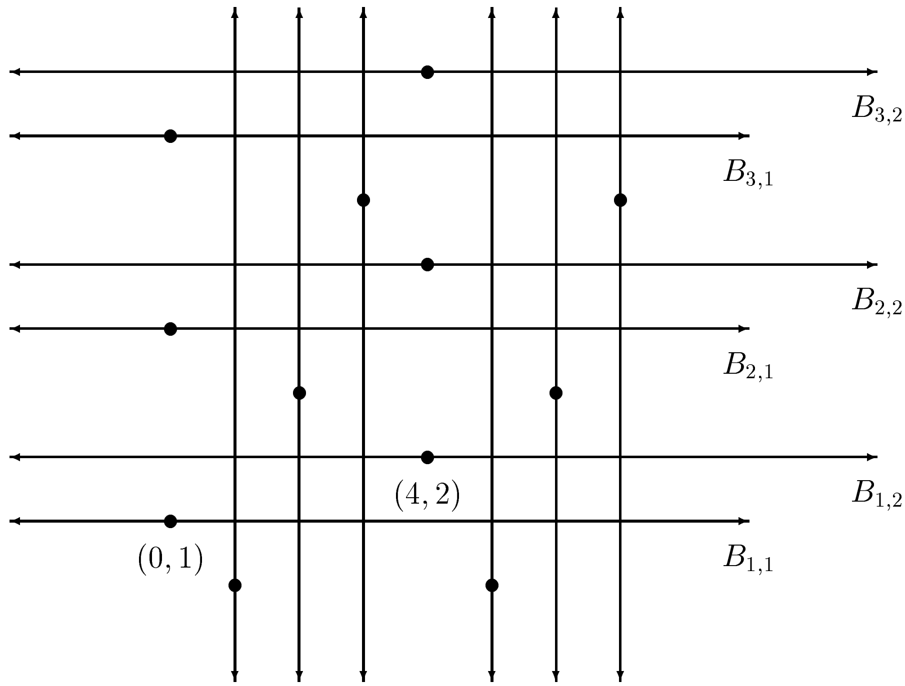

Figure 1: A 4-chromatic ray family

point $a_{i,1} = (0, 3i-2)$ and $B_{i,2}$ with the centre at point $a_{i,2} = (4, 3i-1)$. Note that j-zones ($j = 1, 2$) are the same for all three 2-bundles.

The family T consists of six vertical 2-bunches $W_{i,j}$ ($i \in \{1, 2, 3\}$, $j \in \{1, 2\}$), where the centre of $W_{i,j}$ is located at $w_{i,j} = (3(j-1) + i, 3(i-1))$ (See Fig.1).

Assume that there exists a 3-colouring f of $G_{U \cup T}$. By Corollary 1, either 1-zone or 2-zone is f-bad for at least two 2-bundles among B_1, B_2 and B_3. Let, for definiteness, 1-zone be f-bad for 2-bundles B_1 and B_3. Consider the 2-bundle W formed by the 2-bunches $W_{1,1}$ and $W_{3,1}$ (here index j was chosen to be 1, since 1-zone is f-bad, and the index i was chosen to be 1 and 3 since the zone is f-bad for B_1 and B_3). Now, the 1-zone for W crosses an f-bad zone for B_1 and the 2-zone for W crosses an f-bad zone for B_3. Thus in one of these spots, we need at least $2 + 2 = 4$ different colours, a contradiction.

4.3 The construction for even k

Let $k \geq 2$ be even and $l = l(k) = \lfloor \log_2 k \rfloor$. The family U of horizontal rays in the construction consists of $l(l-1)+1$ k-bundles $B_1, \ldots, B_{l(l-1)+1}$. The bundle B_i consists of l k-bunches $B_{i,j}$, where the centre of $B_{i,j}$ is at point $a_{i,j} = ((j-1)l^2, (l+1)(i-1)+j)$. Note that j-zones ($j = 1, \ldots, 2^l$) are the same for all k-bundles in U.

The family T of vertical rays in the construction consists of k-bunches $W_{i,j}$ ($i \in \{1, \ldots, l(l-1)+1\}$, $j \in \{1, \ldots, l\}$), where the centre of $W_{i,j}$ is located at $w_{i,j} =$

$(l^2(j-1)+i,(l+1)(i-1))$.

Assume that there exists a proper $(2k-1)$-colouring f of $G_{U\cup T}$. By Corollary 1, every of B_i, $i=1,\ldots,l(l-1)+1$, contains an f-bad $j(i)$-zone for some $j(i)\in\{1,\ldots,l\}$. Then there exists a j_0 such that j_0-zone is f-bad for at least l B_i-s, say, for $i_1,\ldots,i_l$. Denote by W the k-bundle formed by k-bunches $W_{i_1,j_0},\ldots,W_{i_l,j_0}$. By Corollary 1, for some s, s-zone of W is f-bad. Let R denote the rectangle $[l^2(j-1),l^2j]\times[(l+1)(i_s-1),(l+1)i_s]$. By the above, the interior of R is crossed by horizontal rays of at least k colours and by vertical rays of at least k colours. This contradicts the choice of f.

4.4 The case of odd k

If we simply repeat the construction from the previous subsection, then the resulting graph will have clique number $k+1$, since the right parts of horizontal k-bunches and up parts of vertical k-bunches have $(k+1)/2$ rays each. To avoid this, consider the construction $(U\cup T)_{k-1}$ for $k-1$ and replace every $(k-1)$-bunch in U by a k-bunch. Since for an odd k, $l(k)=l(k-1)$, every former $(k-1)$-bundle B_i becomes a k-bundle. Now, the clique number of $G_{U\cup T}$ is k, and repeating the argument of the previous subsection, we see that at some spot, vertical rays of at least $k-1$ colours cross horizontal rays of at least k colours. Therefore, for every odd k we get a $(2k-1)$-chromatic construction.

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