The Complexity of Power Graphs Associated With Finite Groups

S. Kirkland\textsuperscript{1}, A. R. Moghaddamfar\textsuperscript{2,3}, S. Navid Salehy\textsuperscript{4},
S. Nima Salehy\textsuperscript{4} and M. Zohourattar\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1}Department of Mathematics, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, Canada.
Stephen.Kirkland@umanitoba.ca

\textsuperscript{2}Faculty of Mathematics, K. N. Toosi University of Technology, P. O. Box 16315–1618, Tehran, Iran,
moghadam@kntu.ac.ir, and amoghadd@kent.edu

\textsuperscript{3}Department of Mathematical Sciences, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44242, USA
moghadam@kntu.ac.ir, and amoghadd@kent.edu

\textsuperscript{4}Department of Mathematics, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306, USA.
navidsalehy@math.fsu.edu, and nimasalehy@math.fsu.edu

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Abstract

The power graph $\mathcal{P}(G)$ of a finite group $G$ is the graph whose vertex set is $G$, and two elements in $G$ are adjacent if one of them is a power of the other. The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, we find the complexity of a clique-replaced graph and study some applications. Second, we derive some explicit formulas concerning the complexity $\kappa(\mathcal{P}(G))$ for various groups $G$ such as the cyclic group of order $n$, the simple groups $L_2(q)$, the extra-special $p$-groups of order $p^3$, the Frobenius groups, etc.

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1 Introduction

All graphs considered here are simple connected graphs. A spanning tree of a connected graph is a subgraph that contains all the vertices and is a tree. Counting the number of spanning trees in a connected graph is a problem of long-standing interest in various fields of science. For a graph $\Gamma$, the number of spanning trees of $\Gamma$, denoted by $\kappa(\Gamma)$, is known as the complexity of $\Gamma$.

In this paper, we consider some graphs arising from finite groups. One well-known graph is the power graph, as defined more precisely below.

**Definition 1.1** Let $G$ be a finite group and $X$ a nonempty subset of $G$. The power graph $P(G, X)$, has $X$ as its vertex set and two vertices $x$ and $y$ in $X$ are joined by an edge if $\langle x \rangle \subseteq \langle y \rangle$ or $\langle y \rangle \subseteq \langle x \rangle$.

The term power graph was introduced in [11], and after that power graphs have been investigated by many authors, see for instance [1, 5, 15]. The investigation of power graphs associated with algebraic structures is important, because these graphs have valuable applications (see the survey article [12]) and are related to automata theory (see the book [10]).

In the case $X = G$, we will simply write $P(G)$ instead of $P(G, G)$. Clearly, when $1 \in X$, the power graph is connected, and we can talk about the complexity of this graph. For convenience, we put $\kappa_G(X) = \kappa(P(G, X))$ and $\kappa(G) = \kappa(P(G))$. A well known result due to Cayley [6] says that the complexity of the complete graph on $n$ vertices is $n^{n-2}$. In [2] it was shown that a finite group has a complete power graph if and only if it is a cyclic $p$–group, where $p$ is a prime number. Thus, as an immediate consequence of Cayley’s result, we derive $\kappa(\mathbb{Z}_{p^n}) = p^n(p^{n-2})$. Recently, the authors of [16] obtained a formula to compute the complexity $\kappa(\mathbb{Z}_n)$ for any $n$ (see Corollary 4.3 below). To obtain Corollary 4.3, we will define a class of graphs more general than the power graphs of cyclic groups. Specifically, we start with a graph $\Gamma$ on vertices $v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_n$. To construct a new graph, we replace each $v_i$ by a complete graph $K_{x_i}$ on $x_i$ vertices, and if there is an edge between $v_i$ and $v_j$ in $\Gamma$, then we connect each vertex of $K_{x_i}$ with each vertex of $K_{x_j}$. The new graph will be denoted by $\Gamma_{[x_1, \ldots, x_n]}$. We will derive explicit formulas for the complexity $\kappa(\Gamma_{[x_1, \ldots, x_n]})$ (see Theorem 4.1 and Remark 4.2). Then we will obtain a formula for the complexity $\kappa(\mathbb{Z}_n)$ by choosing a certain graph $\Gamma$ on $k$ vertices and positive integers $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_k$ (Corollary 4.3). Finally, the complexities $\kappa(G)$ for certain groups $G$ are presented.

The outline of the paper is as follows. In the next section, we recall some basic definitions and notation and give several auxiliary results to be used later. The main result of Section 4 is Theorem 4.1 and we include some of its applications. In Section 5, we compute $\kappa(G)$ for certain groups $G$. 


2 Terminology and Previous Results

We first establish some notation which will be used repeatedly in the sequel. Given a graph $\Gamma$, we denote by $A_{\Gamma}$ and $D_{\Gamma}$ the adjacency matrix and the diagonal matrix of vertex degrees of $\Gamma$, respectively. The Laplacian matrix of $G$ is defined as $L_{\Gamma} = D_{\Gamma} - A_{\Gamma}$. Clearly, $L_\Gamma$ is a real symmetric matrix and its eigenvalues are nonnegative real numbers. The Laplacian spectrum of $\Gamma$ is

$$\text{Spec}(L_{\Gamma}) = (\mu_1(\Gamma), \mu_2(\Gamma), \ldots, \mu_n(\Gamma)),$$

where $\mu_1(\Gamma) \geq \mu_2(\Gamma) \geq \cdots \geq \mu_n(\Gamma)$, are the eigenvalues of $L_{\Gamma}$ arranged in weakly decreasing order, and $n = |V(\Gamma)|$. Note that $\mu_n(\Gamma) = 0$, because each row sum of $L_{\Gamma}$ is 0. Instead of $A_{\Gamma}, L_{\Gamma}$, and $\mu_i(\Gamma)$ we simply write $A, L$, and $\mu_i$ if it does not lead to confusion.

For a subset $\Lambda$ of the vertex set of a graph, we let $A(\Lambda)$ denote the principal submatrix of $A$ corresponding to the vertices in $\Lambda$.

For a graph with $n$ vertices and Laplacian spectrum $\mu_1 \geq \mu_2 \geq \cdots \geq \mu_n = 0$ it has been proved [3, Corollary 6.5] that:

$$\kappa(\Gamma) = \frac{\mu_1(\Gamma) \mu_2(\Gamma) \cdots \mu_{n-1}(\Gamma)}{n}. \quad (1)$$

The vertex–disjoint union of the graphs $\Gamma_1$ and $\Gamma_2$ is denoted by $\Gamma_1 \oplus \Gamma_2$. Define the join of $\Gamma_1$ and $\Gamma_2$ to be $\Gamma_1 \vee \Gamma_2 = (\Gamma_1^c \oplus \Gamma_2^c)^c$. Evidently this is the graph formed from the vertex–disjoint union of the two graphs $\Gamma_1, \Gamma_2$, by adding edges joining every vertex of $\Gamma_1$ to every vertex of $\Gamma_2$. Now, one may easily prove the following (see also [14]).

**Lemma 2.1** Let $\Gamma_1$ and $\Gamma_2$ be two graphs on disjoint sets with $m$ and $n$ vertices, respectively. If

$$\text{Spec}(L_{\Gamma_1}) = (\mu_1(\Gamma_1), \mu_2(\Gamma_1), \ldots, \mu_m(\Gamma_1)),$$

and

$$\text{Spec}(L_{\Gamma_2}) = (\mu_1(\Gamma_2), \mu_2(\Gamma_2), \ldots, \mu_n(\Gamma_2)),$$

then, the following hold:

1. the eigenvalues of Laplacian matrix $L_{\Gamma_1 \oplus \Gamma_2}$ are:

   $$\mu_1(\Gamma_1), \ldots, \mu_m(\Gamma_1), \mu_1(\Gamma_2), \ldots, \mu_n(\Gamma_2).$$

2. the eigenvalues of Laplacian matrix $L_{\Gamma_1 \vee \Gamma_2}$ are:

   $$m+n, \mu_1(\Gamma_1)+n, \ldots, \mu_{m-1}(\Gamma_1)+n, \mu_1(\Gamma_2)+m, \ldots, \mu_{n-1}(\Gamma_2)+m, 0.$$

A universal vertex is a vertex of a graph that is adjacent to all other vertices of the graph. Now, we restrict our attention to information about the set of universal vertices of the power graph of a group $G$. As already mentioned, the identity element of $G$ is a universal vertex in $P(G)$, and also $P(G)$ is complete if and only if $G$ is cyclic of prime power order, and in this case $G$ is the set of all universal vertices. However, the following lemma [5, Proposition 4] determines the set of universal vertices of the power graph of $G$, in the general case.

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Lemma 2.2 Let $G$ be a finite group and $S$ the set of universal vertices of the power graph $P(G)$. Suppose that $|S| > 1$. Then one of the following occurs:

(a) $G$ is cyclic of prime power order, and $S = G$;

(b) $G$ is cyclic of non–prime–power order $n$, and $S$ consists of the identity and the generators of $G$, so that $|S| = 1 + \phi(n)$, where $\phi$ is Euler’s $\phi$–function;

(c) $G$ is generalized quaternion, and $S$ contains the identity and the unique involution in $G$, so that $|S| = 2$.

We conclude this section with notation and definitions to be used in the paper. All the groups considered here are finite. We denote by $[G, G]$ the commutator subgroup, for any group $G$. If $g \in G$, then $o(g)$ denotes the order of the element $g$. We refer to any element in $G$ of order 2, as an involution. An elementary abelian $p$–group of order $p^n$, denoted by $E_{p^n}$, is isomorphic to a direct product of $n$ copies of the cyclic group $\mathbb{Z}_p$. The complement of a graph $\Gamma$ is denoted by $\Gamma^c$. The neighborhood of a vertex $v$ in the graph $\Gamma$ is denoted by $N_{\Gamma}(v)$. Let $K_n$ denote the complete graph (clique) with $n$ vertices. Throughout we use the standard notation and terminology introduced in [3, 9] for graph theory and group theory.

3 Auxiliary Results

Lemma 3.1 Let $\Gamma$ be any graph on $n$ vertices with Laplacian spectrum

$$\mu_1 \geq \mu_2 \geq \cdots \geq \mu_n.$$ 

If $m$ is an integer, then the following product

$$(\mu_1 + m)(\mu_2 + m) \cdots (\mu_{n-1} + m),$$

is also an integer.

Proof. Consider the characteristic polynomial of the Laplacian matrix $L$:

$$\sigma(\Gamma; \mu) = \det(\mu I - L) = \mu^n + c_1 \mu^{n-1} + \cdots + c_{n-1} \mu + c_n.$$ 

First, we observe that the coefficients $c_i$ are integers [3, Theorem 7.5], and in particular, $c_n = 0$. This forces $\sigma(\Gamma; -m)$ to be an integer, which is divisible by $m$. Moreover, we have

$$\sigma(\Gamma; \mu) = (\mu - \mu_1)(\mu - \mu_2) \cdots (\mu - \mu_n),$$

and since $\mu_n = 0$, we obtain

$$\sigma(\Gamma; -m) = (-1)^n m(\mu_1 + m)(\mu_2 + m) \cdots (\mu_{n-1} + m).$$

The result now follows. □
Lemma 3.2 Let a graph $\Gamma$ with $n$ vertices contain $m < n$ universal vertices. Then $k(\Gamma)$ is divisible by $n^{m-1}$.

Proof. Let $W$ be the set of universal vertices, $\Gamma_0 = \Gamma - W$ and $t = n - m$. Clearly, we have $\Gamma = K_m \vee \Gamma_0$. Let $\mu_1 \geq \mu_2 \geq \cdots \geq \mu_t = 0$, be the eigenvalues of $L_{\Gamma_0}$. Since the Laplacian matrix for the complete graph $K_m$ has eigenvalue 0 with multiplicity 1 and eigenvalue $m$ with multiplicity $m - 1$, it follows by Lemma 2.1 that the eigenvalues of the Laplacian matrix $L_{\Gamma}$ are:

\[ n, n, n, \ldots, n, \mu_1 + m, \mu_2 + m, \ldots, \mu_{t-1} + m, 0. \]

We find immediately using Eq. (1) that

\[ \kappa(\Gamma) = n^{m-1}(\mu_1 + m)(\mu_2 + m) \cdots (\mu_{t-1} + m). \]

Finally, since $(\mu_1 + m)(\mu_2 + m) \cdots (\mu_{t-1} + m)$ is an integer by Lemma 3.1 we obtain the result. $\square$

Let $Q_{2^n}$ $(n \geq 3)$ denote the generalized quaternion group of order $2^n$, which can be presented by

\[ Q_{2^n} = \langle x, y \mid x^{2^{n-1}} = 1, y^2 = x^{2^{n-2}}, x^y = x^{-1} \rangle. \]

Moreover, the power graph $P(Q_{2^n})$ has the following form:

\[ P(Q_{2^n}) = K_2 \vee \left( K_{2^{n-1}-2} \oplus K_2 \oplus K_2 \oplus \cdots \oplus K_2 \right)^{2^n-2\text{-times}}. \]

Using Lemma 2.1 and Eq. (1), we have the following corollary [16, Theorem 5.2]:

Corollary 3.3 Let $n \geq 3$ be an integer. Then, $\kappa(Q_{2^n}) = 2(2^{n-2}-1)(2^{n+1}+4)$.

A finite group $G$ is called an element prime order group (EPO–group) if every nonidentity element of $G$ has prime order. We can consider the power graph of an EPO–group $G$ as follows:

\[ P(G) = K_1 \vee \left( \bigoplus_{p \in \pi(G)} c_p K_{p-1} \right), \]

where $c_p$ signifies the number of cyclic subgroups of order $p$ in $G$. Again, using Lemma 2.1 and Eq. (1), we have the following corollary [16, Corollary 3.4]:

Corollary 3.4 Let $G$ be an EPO–group. Then we have:

\[ \kappa(G) = \prod_{p \in \pi(G)} p^{(p-2)c_p}. \]

In particular, we have

\[ \kappa(E_{p^n}) = p^{(p-2)(p^n-1)/(p-1)}. \]
4 Clique–Replaced Graphs

Let $\Gamma$ be a connected graph with vertices $v_1, \ldots, v_k$. Given positive integers $x_1, \ldots, x_k$, we construct the new graph $\Gamma_{[x_1,\ldots,x_k]}$ as follows: Replace vertex $v_i$ in $\Gamma$ by the complete graph (clique) $K_{x_i}$, $i = 1, \ldots, k$, and label the vertex set of $K_{x_i}$ for each $i$ as: $u_{i1}, u_{i2}, \ldots, u_{ix_i}$. Now, if $v_i$ is adjacent to $v_j$ in $\Gamma$, then connect all vertices $u_{i1}, u_{i2}, \ldots, u_{ix_i}$ with all vertices $u_{j1}, u_{j2}, \ldots, u_{jx_j}$. We call the resulting graph $\Gamma_{[x_1,\ldots,x_k]}$ the clique–replaced graph. It is clear that for a fixed $i$, all vertices $u_{i1}, u_{i2}, \ldots, u_{ix_i}$ have the same degree which is equal to

$$n_i = x_i - 1 + \sum_{v_j \in N_r(v_i)} x_j.$$ 

Put $m_i = n_i + 1 = x_i + \sum_{v_j \in N_r(v_i)} x_j$, $\lambda_i = \frac{m_i}{x_i}$, $i = 1, \ldots, k$, and $\Psi = \prod_{i=1}^{k} \lambda_i$.

**Theorem 4.1** With the notation as explained above, we have

$$\kappa(\Gamma_{[x_1,\ldots,x_k]}) = \prod_{i=1}^{k} m_i^{x_i} \left( \Psi + \sum_{\Lambda} \det A_{\Gamma^c}(\Lambda) \lambda_1^{t_1} \lambda_2^{t_2} \cdots \lambda_k^{t_k} \right) / (\Psi n^2),$$

where $t_i \in \{0, 1\}$, $i = 1, \ldots, k$, and the summation is over all induced subgraphs $\Lambda$ of $\Gamma^c$ whose vertex set $\{v_1, \ldots, v_i\}$ corresponds to $\{ij | t_i = 0\}$.

**Proof.** Let $\Gamma^* = \Gamma_{[x_1,\ldots,x_k]}$. It is easy to check that the matrix $J + L_{\Gamma^*}$ associated with $\Gamma^*$ has the following block–matrix structure:

$$J + L_{\Gamma^*} = (D_{ij})_{1 \leq i, j \leq k},$$

where $D_{ij}$ is a matrix of size $x_i \times x_j$ with

$$D_{ij} = \begin{cases} m_i I & \text{if } i = j, \\ 0 & \text{if } i \neq j, v_i \sim v_j \text{ in } \Gamma, \\ J & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

We need only to evaluate $\det(J + L_{\Gamma^*})$, because $\kappa(\Gamma^*) = \det(J + L_{\Gamma^*})/n^2$. In what follows, $D$ denotes the determinant of the matrix on the right–hand side of Eq. (3). In order to compute this determinant, we apply the following row and column operations: We subtract column $j$ from column $j + r$:

$$\begin{cases} j = 1 + \sum_{l=1}^{h} x_l, & h = 0, 1, 2, \ldots, k - 1, \\ r = 1, 2, \ldots, x_{h+1} - 1. \end{cases}$$

1The idea of this proof is borrowed from [10] Theorem 4.1.
Then, we add row \( i + s \) to row \( i \):
\[
\begin{cases}
    i = 1 + \sum_{l=1}^{h} x_l, \ h = 0, 1, 2, \ldots, k - 1, \\
    s = 1, 2, \ldots, x_{h+1} - 1.
\end{cases}
\]
(Note that, when \( m > n \), we adopt the convention that \( \sum_{i=m}^{n} x_i = 0 \).) Using the above operations, it is easy to see that
\[
D = \det (M_{ij})_{1 \leq i, j \leq k},
\]
where \( M_{ij} \) is a matrix of size \( x_i \times x_j \) with
\[
M_{ij} = \begin{cases} 
    m_i I & \text{if } i = j, \\
    0 & \text{if } i \neq j, \ v_i \sim v_j \text{ in } \Gamma, \\
    x_i E_{1,1} + E_{2,1} + \cdots + E_{x_i,1} & \text{otherwise},
\end{cases}
\]
where \( I \) is the identity matrix and \( E_{i,j} \) denotes the square matrix having 1 in the \((i, j)\) position and 0 elsewhere.

Therefore, taking out the common factors and developing the determinant along the columns \( j, j \neq 1 + \sum_{l=1}^{h} x_l, h = 0, 1, 2, \ldots, k - 1 \), one gets
\[
D = \Phi^{-1} \prod_{i=1}^{k} m_i x_i \cdot \det (c_{ij})_{1 \leq i, j \leq k}, \tag{4}
\]
where
\[
c_{ij} = \begin{cases} 
    \lambda_i & \text{if } i = j, \\
    0 & \text{if } i \neq j, \ v_i \sim v_j \text{ in } \Gamma, \\
    1 & \text{otherwise}.
\end{cases}
\]

As the reader might have noticed, the matrix \((c_{ij})_{1 \leq i, j \leq k} - \text{diag}(\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \ldots, \lambda_k)\) is exactly the adjacency matrix of the graph \( \Gamma^c \). Consequently, we get
\[
\det \left( \begin{bmatrix} 
\lambda_1 & c_{12} & \cdots & c_{1k} \\
\vdots & \ddots & \vdots & \vdots \\
c_{21} & \lambda_2 & \cdots & c_{2k} \\
c_{k1} & c_{k2} & \cdots & \lambda_k
\end{bmatrix} \right) = \Psi + \sum_{\Lambda} \det A_{\Gamma^c(\Lambda)} \lambda_{1}^{t_1} \lambda_{2}^{t_2} \cdots \lambda_{k}^{t_k},
\]
where \( t_i \in \{0, 1\}, \ i = 1, 2, \ldots, k \), and the summation is over all induced subgraphs \( \Lambda \) of \( \Gamma^c \) whose vertex set \( \{v_i, \ldots, v_s\} \) corresponds to \( \{i_j | t_i = 0\} \). This is substituted in Eq. (4):
\[
D = \Phi^{-1} \prod_{i=1}^{k} m_i x_i \cdot \left( \Psi + \sum_{\Lambda} \det A_{\Gamma^c(\Lambda)} \lambda_{1}^{t_1} \lambda_{2}^{t_2} \cdots \lambda_{k}^{t_k} \right).
\]
\( \square \)
Remark 4.2 In this remark, we describe an alternate approach to the computation of \( \kappa(\Gamma^*) \). Note that \( L_{\Gamma^*} \) can be written as a \( k \times k \) block matrix, where, for distinct \( i, j = 1, \ldots, k \), the \((i, j)\) off–diagonal block is either \(-J\) or 0 according as \( v_i \) is adjacent to \( v_j \), or not, and where the \( j\)–th diagonal block is \( m_j I - J, j = 1, \ldots, k \). From this block structure, and applying the technique of equitable partitions (see [4]), it follows readily that the product of the nonzero eigenvalues of \( L_{\Gamma^*} \) is equal to \( \alpha_2 \cdots \alpha_k \left( \prod_{j=1}^{k} (m_j)^{x_j-1} \right) \), where \( 0, \alpha_2, \alpha_3, \ldots, \alpha_k \) are the eigenvalues of the \( k \times k \) matrix \( S \) whose entries are given by

\[
s_{pq} = \begin{cases} 
0 & \text{if } v_p \neq v_q \text{ and } v_p \text{ is not adjacent to } v_q \text{ in } \Gamma, \\
-x_q & \text{if } p < q \text{ and } v_p \text{ is adjacent to } v_q \text{ in } \Gamma, \\
-x_p & \text{if } p > q \text{ and } v_p \text{ is adjacent to } v_q \text{ in } \Gamma, \\
-\sum_{j \neq p} s_{pj} & \text{if } p = q.
\end{cases}
\]

(Observe that \( S \) is singular since every row sums to 0.) In order to complete the computation of the complexity of \( L_{\Gamma^*} \), we need to find the product \( \alpha_2 \cdots \alpha_k \).

For each \( j = 1, \ldots, k \), let \( S(j) \) denote the principal sub–matrix of \( S \) formed by deleting row \( j \) and column \( j \). Then \( \alpha_2 \cdots \alpha_k = \sum_{j=1}^{k} \det(S(j)) \).

To compute the quantities \( \det(S(j)), j = 1, \ldots, k \), we consider a weighted directed graph \( W \) on vertices \( 1, \ldots, k \), whose construction we now describe. Begin with the graph \( \Gamma \) on vertices \( v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_k \). For each edge \( \{v_i, v_j\} \) of \( \Gamma \), \( W \) contains the arcs \( i \rightarrow j \) and \( j \rightarrow i \); if \( i < j \), the weight of the arc \( i \rightarrow j \) in \( W \) is \( w(i, j) = x_j \), and the weight of the arc \( j \rightarrow i \) is \( w(j, i) = x_j \); if there is no edge between \( v_i \) and \( v_j \) in \( \Gamma \), then \( W \) contains neither an arc from \( i \) to \( j \) nor an arc from \( j \) to \( i \). Fix an index \( j \) with \( 1 \leq j \leq k \). We can find \( \det(S(j)) \) from a generalization of the matrix tree theorem as follows (see [7]). Let \( \tau_j \) be the set of all spanning directed subgraphs of \( W \) such that:

(a) the underlying spanning subgraph is a tree; and
(b) in the spanning directed subgraph of \( W \), for each vertex \( i \neq j \), there is a directed path from \( i \) to \( j \).

For each directed graph \( \tau \in \tau_j \), let the weight of \( \tau \), \( \sigma(\tau) \), be the product of the weights of the arcs in \( \tau \) (these arc weights are inherited from \( W \)). Then \( \det(S(j)) = \sum_{\tau \in \tau_j} \sigma(\tau) \). So, we have \( \alpha_2 \cdots \alpha_k = \sum_{j=1}^{k} \sum_{\tau \in \tau_j} \sigma(\tau) \). Consequently, we obtain the following formula for \( \kappa(\Gamma^*) \):

\[
\kappa(\Gamma^*) = \left[ \prod_{j=1}^{k} (m_j)^{x_j-1} \right] \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{k} \sum_{\tau \in \tau_j} \sigma(\tau)}{n}.
\]

Next, we present some applications of the preceding results.

Application 1, clique–replaced paths: Now we consider a particular graph, the path on \( k \) vertices \( \Gamma = P_k \), where \( k \geq 3 \) is an integer. For this special case, we apply the technique of Remark [4,2] in order to obtain the complexity of the graph \( \Gamma_{[x_1, \ldots, x_k]} \). For \( \Gamma = P_k \), the directed graph \( W \) of Remark [4,2] is given as follows.
Observe that \( \tau_1 \) contains one directed graph of weight \( x_1 x_2 x_3 \ldots x_{n-1} \), while \( \tau_n \) contains one directed graph of weight \( x_2 x_3 \ldots x_n \). Further, for each \( j = 2, \ldots, n-1 \), we find that \( \tau_j \) contains one directed graph of weight \( (x_2 \ldots x_j)(x_j \ldots x_{n-1}) \).

Consequently for the matrix \( S \) of Remark 4.2, we have
\[
\sum_{j=1}^{k} \det(S_{(j)}) = x_1 \ldots x_{n-1} + \sum_{j=2}^{n-1} x_j (x_2 \ldots x_{n-1}) + x_2 \ldots x_n = (x_2 \ldots x_{n-1}) \sum_{j=1}^{n} x_j.
\]

It now follows that
\[
\kappa(\Gamma_{[x_1,\ldots,x_t]}) = (x_1 + x_2)^{x_1-1} \prod_{j=2}^{n-1} (x_{j-1} + x_j + x_{j+1})^{x_j-1} (x_{n-1} + x_n)^{x_{n-1} - 1} (x_2 \ldots x_{n-1}) \sum_{j=1}^{n} x_j.
\]

**Application 2, Cayley’s theorem:** In the case when \( \Gamma = K_t \) and \( x_1 = \cdots = x_t = x \), we have \( \Gamma_{[x_1,\ldots,x_t]} = K_{tx} \). Moreover, in the situation of Theorem 4.1, we have: \( n_t = \cdots = n_t = tx - 1 \), \( m_t = \cdots = m_t = tx \), \( \lambda_t = \cdots = \lambda_t = t \) and \( \Psi = t^t \).

Substitution into Eq. (2) yields
\[
\kappa(K_{tx}) = \left( \prod_{i=1}^{t} (tx)^i \right) \left( t^t + 0 \right) / (t^t (tx)^2) = (tx)^{tx-2},
\]
which is equivalent to Cayley’s result.

**Application 3, complexity of \( P(Z_n) \):** Given a natural number \( n \), the divisor graph \( D(n) \) of \( n \) is the graph with vertex set \( \pi_d(n) = \{d_1, \ldots, d_k\} \), the set of all divisors of \( n \), in which two distinct divisors \( d_i \) and \( d_j \) are adjacent if and only if \( d_i \mid d_j \) or \( d_j \mid d_i \). Let \( d_1 > d_2 > \cdots > d_k \) (evidently \( d_1 = n \) and \( d_k = 1 \)). This shows that (see also [13, Theorem 2.2]):
\[
P(Z_n) = D(n)_{[\phi(d_1), \ldots, \phi(d_k)]}.
\]

(5)

In what follows, we put \( \Gamma = D(n) \), \( n_i = \phi(d_i) - 1 + \sum_{d_j \in N_\Gamma(d_i)} \phi(d_j) \), \( m_i = n_i + 1 \), \( \lambda_i = \frac{n_i}{\phi(d_i)}, i = 1, \ldots, k \), and \( \Phi = \prod_{i=2}^{k} \lambda_i \), \( \Psi = \prod_{i=1}^{k} \lambda_i \). By using Theorem 4.1, we have the following alternate proof of a result in [16].

**Corollary 4.3** [16, Theorem 4.1] Let \( d_1 > d_2 > \cdots > d_k \) be the divisors of a positive integer \( n \). With the notation as above, we have
\[
\kappa(Z_n) = \prod_{i=1}^{k} m_i \phi(d_i) \left( \Phi + \sum_{\Lambda} \det A_{\Gamma^\Lambda}(\Lambda) \lambda_2^\Lambda \lambda_3^\Lambda \cdots \lambda_{k-1}^\Lambda \right) / (\Phi n^2),
\]

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where \( t_i \in \{0, 1\}, 2 \leq i \leq k-1 \), and the summation is over all induced subgraphs \( \Lambda \) of \( \Gamma^c \setminus \{d_1, d_k\} \) whose vertex set \( \{d_1, \ldots, d_s\} \) corresponds to \( \{i_j|t_{i_j} = 0\} \).

**Proof.** Using Eq. (3) and Theorem 11 we obtain

\[
\kappa(\mathbb{Z}_n) = \prod_{i=1}^{k} m_i^{\phi(d_i)} \left( \sum_{\Lambda'} \det A_{\Gamma^c}(\Lambda') \lambda_1^{t_1} \lambda_2^{t_2} \cdots \lambda_k^{t_k} \right) / (\Psi n^2),
\]

where \( t_i \in \{0, 1\}, i = 1, \ldots, k \), and the summation is over all induced subgraphs \( \Lambda' \) of \( \Gamma^c \) whose vertex set \( \{d_1, \ldots, d_s\} \) corresponds to \( \{i_j|t_{i_j} = 0\} \).

Since \( \deg_{\Gamma}(d_1) = \deg_{\Gamma}(d_k) = k - 1 \), we obtain \( \deg_{\Gamma^c}(d_1) = \deg_{\Gamma^c}(d_k) = 0 \). Thus, if an induced subgraph \( \Lambda' \) of \( \Gamma^c \) contains \( d_1 \) or \( d_k \), then \( \det A_{\Gamma^c}(\Lambda') = 0 \), while if it does not contain \( d_1 \) and \( d_k \), then the sum \( \sum_{\Lambda'} \det A_{\Gamma^c}(\Lambda) \lambda_1^{t_1} \lambda_2^{t_2} \cdots \lambda_k^{t_k} \) is divisible by \( \lambda_1 \lambda_k \). Hence, we can write

\[
\sum_{\Lambda'} \det A_{\Gamma^c}(\Lambda) \lambda_1^{t_1} \lambda_2^{t_2} \cdots \lambda_k^{t_k} = \lambda_1 \lambda_k \sum_{\Lambda} \det A_{\Gamma^c}(\Lambda) \lambda_2^{t_2} \cdots \lambda_k^{t_k-1}
\]

where the \( \Lambda \) run over all induced subgraphs of \( \Gamma^c \setminus \{d_1, d_k\} \) whose vertex set \( \{d_1, \ldots, d_s\} \) corresponds to \( \{i_j|t_{i_j} = 0\} \). Substituting this in Eq. (6) and simplifying now yields the result. \( \square \)

### 5 Computing the Complexity \( \kappa(G) \)

In this section we consider the problem of finding the complexity of power graphs associated with certain finite groups.

#### 5.1 The simple groups \( L_2(q) \)

Let \( q = p^n \geq 4 \) for a prime \( p \) and some \( n \in \mathbb{N} \). We are going to find an explicit formula for \( \kappa(L_2(q)) \). Before we start, we need some well known facts about the simple groups \( G = L_2(q), q \geq 4 \), which are proven in [8]:

(a) \( |G| = q(q-1)(q+1)/k \) and \( \mu(G) = \{p, (q-1)/k, (q+1)/k\} \), where \( k = \gcd(q-1, 2) \).

(b) Let \( P \) be a Sylow \( p \)-subgroup of \( G \). Then \( P \) is an elementary abelian \( p \)-group of order \( q \), which is a TI-subgroup, and \( |N_G(P)| = q(q-1)/k \).

(c) Let \( A \subset G \) be a cyclic subgroup of order \( (q-1)/k \). Then \( A \) is a TI-subgroup and the normalizer \( N_G(A) \) is a dihedral group of order \( 2(q-1)/k \).

(d) Let \( B \subset G \) be a cyclic subgroup of order \( (q+1)/k \). Then \( B \) is a TI-subgroup and the normalizer \( N_G(B) \) is a dihedral group of order \( 2(q+1)/k \).

We recall that a subgroup \( H \leq G \) is a TI-subgroup (trivial intersection subgroup) if for every \( g \in G \), either \( H^g = H \) or \( H \cap H^g = \{1\} \).
Applying Theorem 3.4 (b) in [16] to Eq. (7), we obtain

\[ \kappa(G) = p^{(q^2-1)(p-2)/p-1} \cdot \kappa \left( \mathbb{Z}_{q-1} \right)^{q(q+1)/2} \cdot \kappa \left( \mathbb{Z}_{q+1} \right)^{q(q-1)/2}, \]

where \( k = \gcd(q - 1, 2) \), except exactly in the cases \((p,n) = (2,1), (3,1)\). In particular, we have

1. \( A_5 \cong L_2(5) \cong L_2(4) \) and \( \kappa(A_5) = 3^{10} \cdot 5^{18} \) (see [16]).
2. \( L_3(2) \cong L_2(7) \) and \( \kappa(L_3(2)) = 2^{84} \cdot 3^{28} \cdot 7^{40} \).
3. \( A_6 \cong L_2(9) \) and \( \kappa(A_6) = 2^{180} \cdot 3^{40} \cdot 5^{108} \).

**Proof.** Let \( q = p^n \), with \( p \) prime and \( n \in \mathbb{N} \), and \((p,n) \neq (2,1), (3,1)\). As already mentioned, \( G \) contains abelian subgroups \( P, A \) and \( B \), of orders \( q, (q-1)/k \) and \((q+1)/k \), respectively, every distinct pair of their conjugates intersects trivially, and every element of \( G \) is a conjugate of an element in \( P \cup A \cup B \). Let

\[ G = N_P u_1 \cup \cdots \cup N_P u_r = N_A v_1 \cup \cdots \cup N_A v_s = N_B w_1 \cup \cdots \cup N_B w_t, \]

be coset decompositions of \( G \) by \( N_P = N_G(P), N_A = N_G(A) \) and \( N_B = N_G(B) \), where \( r = [G : N_P] = q + 1, s = [G : N_A] = q(q + 1)/2 \) and \( t = [G : N_B] = (q - 1)/2 \). Then, we have

\[ G = P^{u_1} \cup \cdots \cup P^{u_r} \cup A^{v_1} \cup \cdots \cup A^{v_s} \cup B^{w_1} \cup \cdots \cup B^{w_t}. \]

Applying Theorem 3.4 (b) in [16] to Eq. (7), we obtain

\[ \kappa(G) = \kappa(G(P))^{r} \cdot \kappa(G(A))^{s} \cdot \kappa(G(B))^{t} = \kappa \left( \mathbb{Z}_{q+1} \right)^{s} \cdot \kappa \left( \mathbb{Z}_{q-1} \right)^{t}, \]

and so by Corollary 3.4 we get \( \kappa(G) = \left( p^{(q^2-1)(p-2)/p-1} \right)^{r} \cdot \kappa \left( \mathbb{Z}_{q-1} \right)^{s} \cdot \kappa \left( \mathbb{Z}_{q+1} \right)^{t} \).

The result follows. \( \square \)

### 5.2 Extra–special \( p \)–groups of order \( p^3 \)

In the sequel, \( P \) will be a \( p \)–group, with \( p \) prime. We recall below some facts about extra–special groups and other necessary information. We begin with the definition of the extra special groups. A \( p \)–group \( P \) is called extra–special if \( Z(P) = [P, P] = \Phi(P) \cong \mathbb{Z}_p \), where \( \Phi(P) \) is the Frattini subgroup of \( P \). If \( P \) is an extra–special \( p \)–group, then the order of \( P \) is \( p^{2n+1} \) for some positive integer \( n \). The smallest nonabelian extra–special groups are of order \( p^3 \). When \( p = 2 \), there are, up to isomorphism, two extra–special \( 2 \)–group of order 8, namely, \( D_8 \) and \( Q_8 \). The exponent of both of these groups is \( p^2 = 4 \). Furthermore, from [16] Table 1, we have \( \kappa(D_8) = 2^4 \) and \( \kappa(Q_8) = 2^{11} \).

For each odd prime \( p \), up to isomorphism, there are just two non–isomorphic extra–special \( p \)–groups of order \( p^3 \). The first one has exponent \( p \), which is called
the Heisenberg group and denoted by $H_p$. In fact, $H_p$ as a subgroup of $GL(3, p)$ can be presented in the following way:

$$H_p = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ x & 1 & 0 \\ z & y & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mid x, y, z \in GF(p) \right\}.$$  

The other one has exponent $p^2$, which is denoted by $A_p$, and contains transformations $x \mapsto ax + b$ from $\mathbb{Z}_{p^2}$ to $\mathbb{Z}_{p^2}$, where $a \equiv 1 \pmod{p}$ and $b \in \mathbb{Z}_{p^2}$.

The groups $H_p$ and $A_p$ are usually presented as:

$$H_p = \langle x, y, z \mid x^p = y^p = z^p = 1, [x, y] = z, [x, z] = [y, z] = 1 \rangle,$$  

and

$$A_p = \langle x, y \mid x^p = y^{p^2} = 1, y^p = y^{p+1} \rangle.$$  

**Theorem 5.2** Let $p$ be an odd prime. Then, we have:

(a) $\kappa(H_p) = p^{(p-2)(p^2+p+1)}$.

(b) $\kappa(A_p) = p^{2p^3-p-5}$.

**Proof.** (a) Clearly, we have

$$H_p = \bigcup_{j=1}^{p^2+p+1} C_j,$$

where $C_j \subset H_p$ is a subgroup of order $p$, and $C_i \cap C_j = 1$ for $i \neq j$. Now, by Theorem 3.4 (b) in [16], we obtain

$$\kappa(H_p) = \prod_{j=1}^{p^2+p+1} \kappa(C_j) = \prod_{j=1}^{p^2+p+1} p^{p-2} = p^{(p-2)(p^2+p+1)},$$

as desired.

(b) In this case, we have

$$A_p = \bigcup_{j=1}^{p+1} B_j,$$

where $B_j \subset A_p$ is a subgroup of order $p^2$, and $B_i \cap B_j = Z(A_p)$ for $i \neq j$. Therefore, the power graph of $A_p$ has the following form

$$\mathcal{P}(A_p) = K_p \lor [(p+1)K_{p^2-p}] .$$

It follows by Lemma [2.1] that the eigenvalues of Laplacian matrix $L_{\mathcal{P}(A_p)}$ are:

$$p^3, p^2, p^2, \ldots, p^2, p^2, p^2, \ldots, p^2, p, p, \ldots, p, 0.$$  

Using Eq. (1), we get $\kappa(A_p) = p^{2p^3-p-4}$, as required. □
5.3 Frobenius groups

Suppose \( 1 \subset H \subset G \) and \( H \cap H^g = 1 \) whenever \( g \in G \setminus H \). Then \( H \) is a Frobenius complement in \( G \). A group which contains a Frobenius complement is called a Frobenius group. A famous theorem of Frobenius asserts that in a Frobenius group \( G \) with a Frobenius complement \( H \), the set

\[
F = (G \setminus \bigcup_{g \in G} H^g) \cup \{1\},
\]

is a normal subgroup of \( G \) and \( G = FH, F \cap H = 1 \). We call \( F \) the Frobenius kernel of \( G \).

**Theorem 5.3** Let \( G \) be a Frobenius group, \( H \) a Frobenius complement and \( F \) the Frobenius kernel corresponding with \( H \). Then, we have:

\[
\kappa(G) = \kappa_G(F)\kappa_G(H)^{|F|}.
\]

In particular, if \( G \) is a nonabelian group of order \( pq \), where \( p < q \) are primes, then \( \kappa(G) = q^{q-2}p^{(p-2)q} \).

**Proof.** Let \( G \) be a Frobenius group, let \( H \) be its Frobenius complement and \( F \) its Frobenius kernel. Then \( G \) can be written as the union of its subgroups:

\[
G = F \cup \bigcup_{g \in F} H^g.
\]

Again, it follows from Theorem 3.4 (b) in [16] that

\[
\kappa(G) = \kappa_G(F) \prod_{g \in F} \kappa_G(H^g) = \kappa_G(F)\kappa_G(H)^{|F|},
\]

as required. \( \square \)

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