A dedicated algorithm for calculating ground states for the triangular random bond Ising model

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Abstract
In the presented article we present an algorithm for the computation of ground state spin configurations for the 2d random bond Ising model on planar triangular lattice graphs. Therefore, it is explained how the respective ground state problem can be mapped to an auxiliary minimum-weight perfect matching problem, solvable in polynomial time. Consequently, the ground state properties as well as minimum-energy domain wall (MEDW) excitations for very large 2d systems, e.g. lattice graphs with up to \( N = 384 \times 384 \) spins, can be analyzed very fast.

Here, we investigate the critical behavior of the corresponding \( T = 0 \) ferromagnet to spin-glass transition, signaled by a breakdown of the magnetization, using finite-size scaling analyses of the magnetization and MEDW excitation energy and we contrast our numerical results with previous simulations and presumably exact results.

Keywords: Random bond Ising model, Negative-weight percolation, Groundstate phase transitions

1. Introduction
Triggered by the exchange of ideas between computer science and theoretical physics in the past decades, it was realized that several basic problems in the context of disordered systems relate to “easy” optimization problems. These are problems where the solution time is polynomial in the size of the problem description. As a result, many disordered systems can now be analyzed numerically exact through computer simulations by using fast combinatorial optimization algorithms \([1, 2, 3]\). E.g., ground state (GS) spin configurations for the random-field Ising magnet (in any dimension \( d \)) can be obtained by computing the maximum flow for an auxiliary network problem \([2]\). Another example is the 2d Ising spin glass (ISG), where the lattice can be embedded in a plane. For this model, the problem of finding a GS spin configuration for a given realization of the nearest neighbor couplings can be mapped to an appropriate minimum-weight perfect-matching (MWPM) problem \([2, 4]\). Finally, the MWPM problem can be solved in polynomial time by means of exact combinatorial optimization algorithms \([5]\). Thus, the planar 2d ISG can be studied directly at zero temperature without equilibration problems and within polynomial time. Hence, very large systems can be considered, giving very precise and reliable estimates for the observables. Actually, there are different approaches that allow for an exact computation of GSs for the planar 2d ISG \([6, 7, 8]\). Albeit all of these approaches rely on the computation of MWPMs on an auxiliary graph, they differ regarding the subtleties of the mapping to the respective auxiliary problem. The most efficient of these approaches (see Ref. \([5]\)) is based on the Kasteleyn treatment of the Ising model \([9]\), which previously was also used to obtain extended ground states for the 2d ISG with fully periodic boundary conditions \([10]\).

Here, we introduce a dedicated algorithm that yields exact GS spin configurations for the 2d random-bond Ising model (RBIM) on planar triangular lattice graphs. As the previous approaches, the algorithm presented here requires to solve an associated MWPM problem. The corresponding mapping uses a relation between perfect matchings and paths on a graph \([11, 12]\). In effect, these paths can be used to partition the graph into domains of up and down spins that comprise a GS spin configuration, see Fig. 1. Consequently, the GS properties as well as minimum-energy domain wall (MEDW) excitations, see Fig. 1, can be analyzed very fast. The presented algorithm enables us to study large systems, while allowing for an appropriate disorder average within a reasonable amount of computing time. In this regard, it requires to compute a MWPM for an auxiliary graph with \( O(N) \) edges only (wherein \( N \) is the number of spins on the lattice). However, note that the algorithm presented here is asymptotically not faster than the algorithm presented in Refs. \([8, 10]\), but it highlights the algorithmic relation between the GS problem for spin glasses and the recently proposed negative-weight percolation (NWP) problem \([13]\).

In the presented article, we investigate the critical behavior of the \( T = 0 \) ferromagnet (FM) to spin-glass (SG) transition for the 2d RBIM, signaled by a breakdown of the magnetization, using finite-size scaling (FSS) analyses of the MEDW excitation energy. In this regard, we obtain a highly precise estimate of the critical point for the triangular lattice geometry and we verify the critical exponents obtained earlier for the RBIM on the planar square lattice \([14, 15]\). Finally, we contrast our nu-
of ferromagnetic bonds \( J = 1 \) in favor of parallel aligned spins. In general, the competitive nature of these interactions gives rise to frustration. A plaquette, i.e. an elementary triangle on the lattice, is said to be frustrated if it is bordered by an odd number of antiferromagnetic bonds. In effect, frustration rules out a GS (i.e. a minimizer \( \sigma_{GS} \) of Eq. 1) in which all the bonds are satisfied. As limiting cases one can identify the Ising ferromagnet at \( p = 0 \) and the canonical \( \pm J \) ISG at \( p = 1/2 \). Hence, as a function of the disorder parameter \( p \) we expect to find a ferromagnetic phase (spin-glass phase) for \( p < p_c \) \( (p > p_c) \), wherein \( p_c \) denotes the critical point at which the \( T = 0 \) FM-SG transition takes place. For the ISG with a bimodal disorder distribution the GS is highly degenerate and the average number of such GSs increases exponentially with \( N \) [17, 18]. Apart from the GSs, we here also aim to characterize the energetic properties of MEDW excitations. A domain wall is an interface that spans the system in the direction with free BCs. Now, the MEDW is such an interface with an excitation energy \( \delta E \) that is minimal among all possible domain walls. Due to the extensive degeneracy of the GSs, the “lattice-path” associated with a MEDW is not unique. I.e., there are many DWs with minimal excitation energy. Albeit the geometric properties of a MEDW are not unique, its excitation energy is unique. MEDWs for three different values of the disorder parameter \( p \) are illustrated in Fig. 1.

We now give a brief description of the algorithm that we use to compute the GSs. Therefore, we first set a reference spin configuration \( \sigma_R \). The most convenient choice is a maximally polarized, i.e. ferromagnetic, configuration \( \sigma_R = (+1, \ldots, +1) \). Then, we construct a weighted dual of the spin lattice as shown in Fig. 2(a). Since the spin lattice considered here has a triangular geometry, the corresponding dual graph possesses a honeycomb geometry. Note, that we introduced 4 \( L \) extra nodes on top and at the bottom of the dual in order to account for the free BCs along that direction and to maintain the honeycomb structure of the respective graph. This means, a triangular spin lattice of size \( L \times L \) is transformed to a honeycomb lattice with an over all number of \((2L) \times (L + 1) \) nodes. Hence, the topological dual graph associated to the triangular spin lattice is modified to some extend. Further note that adjacent extra nodes are connected by edges \( e \) that carry a weight \( \omega(e) = 0 \). All other edges \( e \) on the dual graph get an edge-weight \( \omega(e) \equiv J_{ij}(\sigma_R, \sigma_{R,j}) \). Therein, \( e \) is assumed to cross a bond \( J_{ij} \) on the spin lattice, where \( J_{ij} \) couples the two spins \( \sigma_{R,i,j} \), see Fig. 2(a). Consequently, the edge weight on the weighted dual is positive (negative), if the corresponding bond on the spin lattice is satisfied (broken) with respect to \( \sigma_R \). A pivotal observation is, that there exists an equivalence between clusters of adjacent spins on the spin lattice that might be flipped in order to decrease the configurational energy of \( \sigma_R \) and negative-weighted loops (i.e. closed paths) on the weighted dual graph. In this regard, if a loop with negative weight on the dual is found, the cluster of spins surrounded by this loop can be flipped so as to decrease the configurational energy of \( \sigma_R \). Finally, to obtain a GS spin configuration one needs to find a minimum-weight set of negative-weighted loops on the dual graph (see discussion below). This set of loops comprises the transition graph for the given real-

Figure 1: Samples of a \( \pm J \) random bond Ising spin system on a triangular lattice of side length \( L = 32 \). The samples are taken at three different values of the disorder parameter \( p \). Left (a) \( p = 0.15 \) characterized by a ferromagnetic GS, (b) \( p = 0.2 \) characterized by a GS with SG order and (c) \( p = 0.5 \), i.e. the canonical \( \pm J \) ISG. The figure, periodic BCs are indicated by the dashed vertical lines.

2. Model and Algorithm

In the presented article we perform GS calculations for the 2d RBIM, where the respective model consists of \( N = L \times L \) Ising spins \( \sigma = (\sigma_1, \ldots, \sigma_N) \), where \( \sigma_i = \pm 1 \), located on the sites of a planar triangular lattice graph. Therein, the energy of a given spin configuration is measured by the Edwards-Anderson Hamiltonian

\[
H(\sigma) = - \sum_{(i,j)} J_{ij} \sigma_i \sigma_j,
\]

where the sum runs over all pairs of nearest-neighbor spins (on the triangular lattice) with periodic boundary conditions (BCs) in the \( x \)-direction and free BCs in the \( y \)-direction. In the above energy function, the bonds \( J_{ij} \) are quenched random variables drawn from the disorder distribution

\[
P(J) = \frac{p \delta(J+1) + (1-p) \delta(J-1)}{2}.
\]

Therein, one realization of the disorder consists of a random fraction \( p \) of antiferromagnetic bonds \( J = -1 \) that prefer an antiparallel alignment of the coupled spins, and a fraction \( (1-p) \) of ferromagnetic bonds \( J = 1 \) in favor of parallel aligned spins. In general, the competitive nature of these interactions gives rise to frustration. A plaquette, i.e. an elementary triangle on the lattice, is said to be frustrated if it is bordered by an odd number of antiferromagnetic bonds. In effect, frustration rules out a GS (i.e. a minimizer \( \sigma_{GS} \) of Eq. 1) in which all the bonds are satisfied. As limiting cases one can identify the Ising ferromagnet at \( p = 0 \) and the canonical \( \pm J \) ISG at \( p = 1/2 \). Hence, as a function of the disorder parameter \( p \) we expect to find a ferromagnetic phase (spin-glass phase) for \( p < p_c \) \( (p > p_c) \), wherein \( p_c \) denotes the critical point at which the \( T = 0 \) FM-SG transition takes place. For the ISG with a bimodal disorder distribution the GS is highly degenerate and the average number of such GSs increases exponentially with \( N \) [17, 18]. Apart from the GSs, we here also aim to characterize the energetic properties of MEDW excitations. A domain wall is an interface that spans the system in the direction with free BCs. Now, the MEDW is such an interface with an excitation energy \( \delta E \) that is minimal among all possible domain walls. Due to the extensive degeneracy of the GSs, the “lattice-path” associated with a MEDW is not unique. I.e., there are many DWs with minimal excitation energy. Albeit the geometric properties of a MEDW are not unique, its excitation energy is unique. MEDWs for three different values of the disorder parameter \( p \) are illustrated in Fig. 1.

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Figure 2: Illustration of the computation of the transition graph that allows to determine a GS spin configuration on a planar triangular RBIM. The figure illustrates a sample system of side length $L = 3$ and periodic BCs in the horizontal direction. (a) Mapping of the original lattice $G$ (grey edges, triangular geometry), where a solid (dashed) line indicates a ferromagnetic (antiferromagnetic) bond, to the weighted dual graph $G_D$ (black edges, honeycomb geometry). Note that additional edges (dotted lines) were introduced to account for the open boundary conditions in the respective direction. These edges carry zero weight. (b) Minimum weight set of loops (bold black edges) on $G_D$ as obtained from a mapping to the NWP problem (not shown here, see Ref. [13]). (c) Loop on the dual surrounding a cluster of spins on the spin lattice. If the orientation of the spins is chosen as explained in the text, this procedure yields a GS spin configuration. In the figure, spin orientations are distinguished by grey filled and non-filled circles.

Here, for the 2d RBIM on a planar triangular lattice, where the dual has a honeycomb geometry, the minimum weight set of loops on the weighted dual can be obtained by means of a mapping to the NWP problem, as explained in Ref. [13]. In brief, the NWP statement consists in the task to find a minimum-weight set of nonintersecting negative-weighted loops for a given weighted graph. Therefore, it considers a minimum-weight perfect matching problem on an associated auxiliary graph with $O(N)$ edges (provided that the input graph has $O(N)$ edges, as it is the case here), from which the set of loops can be deduced. Note that the mapping to the NWP problem yields the correct transition graph only for this particular lattice setup, since any two-coloring of the spin lattice (i.e. assignment of up/down spin orientations) can be composed by loops on the dual that do not intersect. That means, each site on the dual is an end-node of either 0 or 2 loop segments, as e.g. in Fig. 2(b). In contrast, two-colorings of the spins on a square lattice might involve loops on the dual that involve figure-8 twists. That means, each site on the dual is end-node of either 0, 2 or 4 loop segments. For the latter problem, a different mapping [8] was used recently to obtain exact GSs for 2d ISGs on a square lattice with free BCs in at least one direction within polynomial time. This mapping was further used to compute “extended” GSs for the 2d ISG with fully periodic BCs [10].

Now, the interpretation of the $T = 0$ FM-SG transition in terms of the NWP problem reads as follows: For small values of $p$, there are only few bonds on the spin lattice that are not satisfied by the reference spin configuration. Accordingly, there are only few small loops that comprise the transition graph. For all nonzero values of $p$, a sufficiently large lattice will feature at least some small loops that surround an elementary plaquette on the dual. These small loops correspond to local “manipulations” of the order parameter (i.e. the magnetization), only. Hence, in the thermodynamic limit, the GS has still ferromagnetic order (see Fig. 1(a)). However, if the value of $p$ increases and exceeds a critical value $p_c$, large loops appear that have a linear extension of the order of the system size and eventually span the system along the direction with the periodic boundary conditions. These loops represent global manipulations of the order parameter, that, in the thermodynamic limit, destroy the ferromagnetic order of the GS (see Figs. 1(b),(c)).

Once we obtained a GS spin configuration in this manner, we compute a MEDW by means of a similar mapping, thoroughly explained in Ref. [19]. In the following we will use the procedure outlined above to obtain GSs and to investigate MEDWs for the RBIM introduced above.

3. Results

As pointed out above, at small values of $p$ there exists an ordered ferromagnetic phase, while for large values of $p$ a spin-glass ordered phase appears. A proper order parameter to characterize the respective FM-SG transition is the magnetization per spin $m_L = |\sum \sigma_i|/L^2$ for a system of linear extend $L$. Below, we perform a finite-size scaling analysis (FSS) in order to locate the critical point $p_c$ and to estimate the critical exponents that describe the scaling behavior of the magnetization in the

| Setup | $\nu$ | $\beta$ | $\phi_1$ | $\psi_1$ |
|-------|-------|--------|---------|--------|
| SQ-a  | 1.49(7) | 0.097(6) | 0.67(3) | 0.17(2) |
| SQ-b  | 1.55(1) | 0.09(1) | 0.75(5) | 0.12(5) |
| TR    | 1.47(6) | 0.086(5) | 0.68(8) | 0.15(2) |
vicinity of the critical point. Therefore, we first consider the Binder parameter \[b_L = \frac{1}{2} \left( 3 - \frac{\langle m_L^4 \rangle}{\langle m_L^2 \rangle^2} \right) \]

associated with the magnetization. It is expected to scale as \(b_L(p) \sim f_1[(p-p_c)L^{1/\nu}]\), wherein \(f_1[\cdot]\) signifies a size-independent scaling function and \(\nu\) denotes the critical exponent that describes the divergence of the correlation length as the critical point is approached. Here, we simulated triangular systems of side length \(L = 24\) through 128 at various values of the disorder parameter \(p\). Observables are averaged over 64 000 samples for the largest systems and we used the data collapse generated by the scaling assumption above to obtain \(p_c = 0.1584(3)\) and \(\nu = 1.47(6)\) with a quality \(S = 0.94\) of the data collapse, see Fig. 3. In general, the above scaling relation holds best near the critical point and one can expect that there are corrections to scaling off criticality. As a remedy, we restricted the latter scaling analysis to the interval \([-0.3, +0.3]\), enclosing the critical point on the rescaled abscissa.

Further, the order parameter of the transition is expected to scale according to the scaling relation \(\langle \delta E \rangle \sim L^{-\beta/\nu} f_2[(p-p_c)L^{1/\nu}]\), where \(f_2[\cdot]\) denotes a size-independent function, and where the order parameter exponent \(\beta\) can be obtained after fixing \(\nu\) and \(p_c\) to the values obtained from the analysis of the Binder parameter. The best data collapse \((S = 1.01)\) was obtained for the choice \(\beta = 0.086(5)\) (not shown).

Moreover, an analysis of the average MEDW excitation energy \(\langle \delta E \rangle\) according to the scaling assumption \(\langle \delta E \rangle \sim L^{-\psi_1} f_3[(p-p_c)L^{1/\nu}]\), see Ref. [23], yields the critical point \(p_c = 0.1586(2)\), in agreement with the above estimate obtained using the Binder parameter. The critical exponents \(\psi_1\) and \(\phi_1\) are listed in Tab. 1. Therein, we restricted the scaling analysis to the interval \([-0.1, +0.1]\) and obtained a best data collapse with \(S = 1.63\).

Right at the critical point \(p_c\) we performed additional simulations for spin lattices of up to 384 \(\times\) 384 spins (and \(3.6 \times 10^4\) samples), i.e. weighted dual graphs of up to 768 \(\times\) 385 nodes. Upon analysis of the data we obtain the estimate \(\beta = 0.097(8)\) from the scaling behavior of the magnetization, see Fig. 5(a). We allowed for small deviations from a pure power-law scaling using a scaling assumption of the form \(\langle m \rangle \sim (L + \Delta L)^{-\beta/\nu}\), wherein \(\Delta L = O(1)\). Considering the scaling of the average MEDW excitation energy \(\langle \delta E \rangle\) and using a similar scaling assumption as above, we found \(\psi_1 = 0.15(1)\), see Fig. 5(b). Both these exponents agree within error bars with those obtained earlier, see Tab. 1. As pointed out above, for the ISG with bimodal disorder, there is a numerous MEDWs that diverges the fractal dimension of the MEDWs at \(p_c\), wherein \(\psi_1 = 3.097(8)\) and \(\phi_1\) = 0.097(8). We obtained \(d_f = 1.222(1)\) and \(\Delta L = O(1)\), which is in agreement with the value \(d_f = 1.222(1)\) found earlier for the \(T = 0\) FM-SG transition for the RBIM on a 2d square lattice, see Ref. [13].

4. Conclusions

In the presented article we have illustrated how GSs for the 2d RBIM on planar triangular lattice graphs can be computed by a mapping to the NWP problem. I.e., the problem of finding a GS spin configuration for a planar 2d triangular RBIM is equivalent to the NWP problem on a properly weighted corre-
Figure 5: Results of the finite-size scaling analysis at the critical point, where the $T=0$ FM-SG transition occurs. (a) Scaling behavior of the magnetization $\langle m \rangle$ and (b) scaling of the average MEDW length $\langle \ell \rangle$ and the MEDW excitation energy $\langle \delta E \rangle$.

Corresponding dual graph that exhibits a honeycomb structure. Using this approach, we have investigated GSs and MEDW excitations for the respective lattice structure. Therein, a disorder parameter could be used to distinguish a ferromagnetic and a spin-glass ordered phase. We characterized the corresponding $T=0$ FM-SG transition by means of a FSS analysis of the magnetization and the MEDW excitation energy. In this regard, we found that the values of the critical exponents obtained here agree within errorbars with those obtained earlier for the 2d RBIM on a planar square lattice by considering a Gaussian bond distribution with ferromagnetic bias [15] or a bimodal bond distribution [14], as listed in Tab. 1.

Hence, the results for the triangular lattice structure obtained here highlights the universality of the $T=0$ FM-SG transition. Further, note that $p_c$ and $\nu$ found here agree well with the values $p_c = 0.1583(6)$ and $\nu = 1.47(9)$ that characterize the negative-weight percolation of loops on 2d lattice graphs with a honeycomb geometry and fully periodic boundary conditions [13]. Finally, the location of the critical point obtained here via FSS analysis is close to the theoretical prediction $p_{c,\text{sr}} = 0.15$, that was obtained for systems with fully periodic boundary conditions using the adjoining problem approach [24, 16].

Acknowledgment

We are grateful to B. Ahrens for a critical reading of the manuscript. OM acknowledges financial support from the VolkswagenStiftung (Germany) within the program “Nachwuchsgruppen an Universitäten”. The simulations were performed at the GOLEM I cluster for scientific computing at the University of Oldenburg (Germany).

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