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(Circular) backbone colouring: forest backbones in planar graphs

Frédéric Havet* Andrew D. King† Mathieu Liedloff‡ Ioan Todinca‡

February 21, 2014

Abstract

Consider an undirected graph G and a subgraph H of G , on the same vertex set. The q -backbone chromatic number $\text{BBC}_q(G, H)$ is the minimum k such that G can be properly coloured with colours from $\{1, \dots, k\}$, and moreover for each edge of H , the colours of its ends differ by at least q . In this paper we focus on the case when G is planar and H is a forest. We give a series of NP-hardness results as well as upper bounds for $\text{BBC}_q(G, H)$, depending on the type of the forest (matching, galaxy, spanning tree). Eventually, we discuss a circular version of the problem.

1 Introduction

All the graphs considered in this paper are simple. Let $G = (V, E)$ be a graph, and let $H = (V, E(H))$ be a spanning subgraph of G , called the *backbone*. A k -colouring of G is a mapping $f : V \rightarrow \{1, 2, \dots, k\}$. Let f be a k -colouring of G . It is a *proper colouring* if $|f(u) - f(v)| \geq 1$ for all edges $uv \in E(G)$. It is a q -backbone colouring for (G, H) if f is a proper colouring of G and $|f(u) - f(v)| \geq q$ for all edges $uv \in E(H)$. The *chromatic number* $\chi(G)$ is the smallest integer k for which there exists a proper k -colouring of G . The q -backbone chromatic number $\text{BBC}_q(G, H)$ is the smallest integer k for which there exists a q -backbone k -colouring of (G, H) .

If f is a proper k -colouring of G , then g defined by $g(v) = q \cdot f(v) - q + 1$ is a q -backbone colouring of (G, H) for any spanning subgraph H of G . Moreover it is well-known that if $G = H$, this q -backbone colouring of (G, H) is optimal. Therefore, since $\text{BBC}_q(H, H) \leq \text{BBC}_q(G, H) \leq \text{BBC}_q(G, G)$, we have

$$q \cdot \chi(H) - q + 1 \leq \text{BBC}_q(G, H) \leq q \cdot \chi(G) - q + 1. \quad (1)$$

If H is empty (i.e. $E(H) = \emptyset$), then $\text{BBC}_q(G, H) = \chi(G)$. Hence for any $k \geq 3$, deciding if $\text{BBC}_q(G, H) \leq k$ is NP-complete because deciding if a graph is k -colourable is NP-complete (See [7]). However, when we impose G or H to belong to certain graph classes, the problem sometimes become polynomial-time solvable. A trivial example is when we consider H with chromatic number at least $r > (k + q - 1)/q$. Then $\text{BBC}_q(G, H) \geq rq - q + 1$, and so deciding if $\text{BBC}_q(G, H) \leq k$

*Projet Coati, I3S (CNRS, UNSA) and INRIA Sophia Antipolis and Simon Fraser University, PIMS, UMI 3069, CNRS. Partly supported by ANR Blanc International GRATEL and ANR Blanc AGAPE. E-mail: Frederic.Havet@inria.fr

†Departments of Mathematics and Computing Science, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada. Supported by a PIMS Postdoctoral Fellowship and the NSERC Discovery Grants of Pavol Hell and Bojan Mohar.

‡Laboratoire d'Informatique Fondamentale d'Orléans, Université d'Orléans. Partly supported by ANR Blanc AGAPE.

can be done instantly by always returning ‘no’. A less trivial example is when we impose H to have minimum degree 1. For such an H , deciding if $BBC_q(G, H) \leq q + 1$ is also polynomial-time solvable, because $BBC_q(G, H) = q + 1$ if and only if G is bipartite. This simple observation was already made by Broersma et al. [5] when H is a 1-factor (a spanning subgraph in which every vertex has degree exactly 1). Furthermore, if we also impose H to be connected, we show in Theorem 17 that deciding if $BBC_q(G, H) \leq q + 2$ can be done in polynomial time. In contrast, if the condition of H being connected is removed, then it is NP-complete (Theorem 18).

In this paper, we will focus on the particular case when G is a planar graph and H is a forest (i.e. an acyclic graph). Inequality (1) and the Four-Colour Theorem imply that for any planar graph G and spanning subgraph H , $BBC_q(G, H) \leq 3q + 1$. However, for $q = 2$, Broersma et al. [4] conjectured that this is not best possible if the backbone is a forest.

Conjecture 1. *If G is a planar graph and F a forest in G , then $BBC_2(G, F) \leq 6$.*

If true, Conjecture 1 would be best possible. Broersma et al. [4] gave an example of a graph \hat{G} with a forest \hat{F} such that $BBC_2(\hat{G}, \hat{F}) = 6$. See Figure 1. It is then natural to ask how large $BBC_q(G, F)$

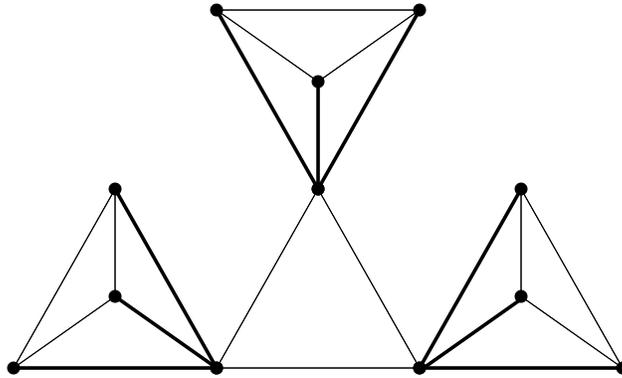


Figure 1: A planar graph \hat{G} with a forest \hat{F} (bold edges) such that $BBC_q(\hat{G}, \hat{F}) = q + 4$.

could be when G is planar and F is a forest for larger values of q . We prove the following.

Theorem 2. *If G is a planar graph and F a forest in G , then $BBC_q(G, F) \leq q + 6$.*

In fact, we prove a more general result in Proposition 13 : for any pair (G, H) with H a subgraph of G ,

$$BBC_q(G, H) \leq (\chi(G) + q - 2)\chi(H) - q + 2.$$

For $q \geq 4$, Theorem 2 is best possible. Indeed, we show a planar graph G^* together with a spanning tree T^* such that $BBC_q(G^*, T^*) = q + 6$ for all $q \geq 4$. See Figure 2 and Proposition 15.

Furthermore, we show in Theorem 31, that for any fixed $q \geq 4$, given a planar graph G and a spanning tree T of G , it is NP-complete to decide if $BBC_q(G, T) \leq q + 5$.

On the other hand, we believe that if $q = 3$, Theorem 2 is not best possible.

Conjecture 3. *If G is a planar graph and F a forest in G , then $BBC_3(G, F) \leq 8$.*

If true, Conjecture 3 would be tight. The pair (G^*, F^*) of Figure 2 satisfies $BBC_3(G^*, F^*) = 8$. We show in Proposition 16 that Conjecture 1 implies Conjecture 3.

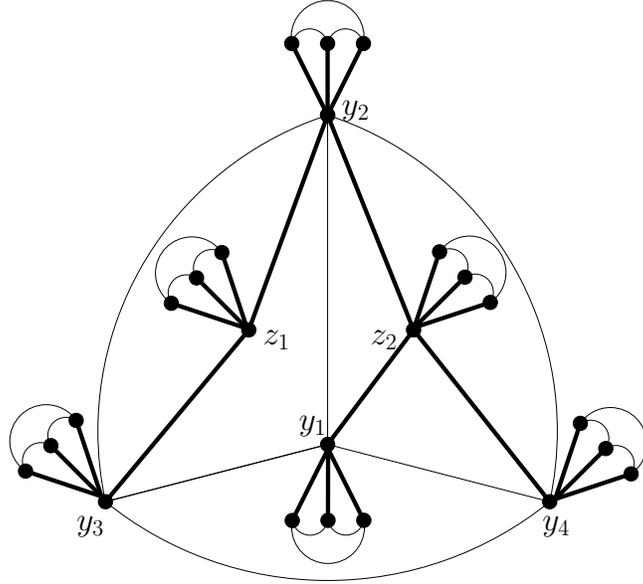


Figure 2: A planar graph G^* and a tree T^* (bold edges) such that $\text{BBC}_q(G^*, T^*) = q + 6$ for $q \geq 4$.

A *star* is a tree in which a vertex v , called the *center* is adjacent to every other. A *galaxy* is a forest of stars. As evidence in support of Conjectures 1 and 3, Broersma et al. [5] showed that if F is a galaxy in a planar graph G , then $\text{BBC}_q(G, F) \leq q + 4$. This result is best possible even if F has maximum degree 3 as shown by the example of Figure 1. Furthermore, we show in Theorems 21 and 28 that, for any $q \geq 2$, it is NP-complete to decide if $\text{BBC}_q(G, F) \leq q + 3$ given a planar graph G and a galaxy of maximum degree 3.

However, if the backbone is a *matching*, i.e. a galaxy with maximum degree 1, then fewer colours are needed. Indeed, Broersma et al. [5] showed that if M is a matching in a planar graph G , then for any $q \geq 3$, $\text{BBC}_q(G, M) \leq q + 3$. They conjectured that the same holds for $q = 2$.

Conjecture 4 (Broersma et al. [5]). *If G is a planar graph G and M a matching in G , then $\text{BBC}_2(G, M) \leq 5$.*

It is natural to ask the same question for galaxies with maximum degree at least 2. When $q = 2$, we answer in the negative by showing that there are pairs of planar graphs and spanning forests of maximum degree 2 whose 2-backbone chromatic number is 6. Furthermore, we show that given a planar graph G and a spanning forest F of maximum degree 2, it is NP-complete to decide whether $\text{BBC}_2(G, F) \leq 5$ (Theorem 22). We also show that given a planar graph G with a hamiltonian path P , it is NP-complete to decide whether $\text{BBC}_2(G, F) \leq 5$. This result refines a result of Broersma et al. [3, 4] who proved it for a general graph G .

For $q = 3$, the problem remains open.

Problem 5. *If G is a planar graph G and F a galaxy of maximum degree 2, is it true that $\text{BBC}_q(G, F) \leq q + 3$, for all $q \geq 3$?*

Broersma et al. [5] proved that deciding if $\text{BBC}_q(G, M) \leq q + 2$ for a given graph G and matching M is NP-complete. We prove in Subection 2.2 that it remains NP-complete even if we impose G to be

	G planar			
	H forest	H spanning tree	H 1-factor	H Hamilton path
$BBC_q(G, H) \leq q + 1?$	NP-C	poly	poly	poly
$BBC_q(G, H) \leq q + 2?$	NP-C	poly	NP-C	poly
$BBC_q(G, H) \leq q + 3?$	NP-C	NP-C	$q \geq 3$: Yes $q = 2$: ?Yes?	$q = 2$: NP-C
$BBC_q(G, H) \leq q + 5?$	$q \geq 4$: NP-C $q = 3$: ?Yes? $q = 2$: Yes			
$BBC_q(G, H) \leq q + 6?$	Yes			

Table 1: Complexity of deciding if $BBC_q(G, H) \leq q + k$ for $k \in \{1, \dots, 6\}$, when G is a planar graph and H a forest of some prescribed classes. NP-C:= NP-Complete; poly:= polynomial-time decidable; Yes: always true; ?Yes? conjectured to be always true.

planar. In contrast, we prove that deciding if $BBC_q(G, T) \leq q + 2$ for a given graph G and spanning tree T is polynomial-time solvable.

Many of the complexity results on backbone colouring of planar graphs with a forest backbone are summarized in Table 1.

One can generalize the notion of backbone colouring by allowing a more complicated structure of the frequency space. The most natural one is to consider a circular metric. A *circular k -colouring* of G or \mathbb{Z}_k -*colouring* is a mapping $f : V \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_k$. The notions of *circular q -backbone colouring* and *circular q -backbone chromatic number* are defined similarly to those of *q -backbone colouring* and *q -backbone chromatic number* by replacing colouring by circular colouring. The circular q -backbone chromatic number of a graph pair (G, H) is denoted $CBC_q(G, H)$.

If f is a circular q -backbone k -colouring, then the mapping f^* defined by $f^*(v) = f(v) + 1$ for all vertex v is trivially a q -backbone k -colouring. On the other hand, a q -backbone k -colouring yields a circular q -backbone $(k + q - 1)$ -colouring. Hence for every graph pair (G, H) , where H is a spanning subgraph of G , we have

$$BBC_q(G, H) \leq CBC_q(G, H) \leq BBC_q(G, H) + q - 1. \quad (2)$$

Also,

$$q \cdot \chi(H) \leq CBC_q(G, H) \leq q \cdot \chi(G). \quad (3)$$

Observe that if G is bipartite and H is non-empty, Equation (3) implies that $CBC_q(G, H) = 2q$. More generally, if $\chi(G) = \chi(H)$, then $CBC_q(G, H) = q \cdot \chi(G)$. However if $2 \leq \chi(H) < \chi(G)$, one can improve the upper bound. We show in Proposition 32 that, for any pair (G, H) with H a subgraph of G ,

$$CBC_q(G, H) \leq (\chi(G) + q - 2)\chi(H). \quad (4)$$

Since $CBC_q(G, H) = \chi(G)$ when H is empty and k -COLOURABILITY is NP-complete, for any fixed $k \geq 3$, given a graph G and a subgraph H it is NP-complete to decide if $CBC_q(G, H) \leq k$. But if insist that H is not empty, then $CBC_q(G, H) \geq 2q$ by Proposition 3. Hence deciding if $CBC_q(G, H)$ is at most k with $k \leq 2q - 1$ can be done instantly by always returning ‘no’. Less

trivially, Proposition 35 shows that if H is a connected spanning subgraph of G , then $\text{CBC}_q(G, H) = 2q$ if and only if G is bipartite. Hence deciding if $\text{CBC}_q(G, H) = 2q$ can be done in polynomial time.

Inequality (4) implies that $\text{CBC}_q(G, F) \leq 2q + 4$ for any planar graph G and forest F in G . We believe that this upper bound can be reduced by at least one.

Conjecture 6. *If G is a planar graph and F a spanning forest of G , then $\text{CBC}_q(G, F) \leq 2q + 3$.*

A natural question is to ask whether this conjecture would be best possible.

Problem 7. *For any $q \geq 2$, does there exist a planar graph G_q and a spanning forest F_q of G_q such that $\text{CBC}_q(G_q, F_q) = 2q + 3$?*

Conjecture 6 holds if the backbone F is a galaxy. It follows directly from (2) and the fact that $\text{BBC}_q(G, F) \leq q + 4$ in such a case, as mentioned earlier. We believe however that one can use one colour less.

Conjecture 8. *Let G be a planar graph and F a galaxy in G , then $\text{CBC}_q(G, F) \leq 2q + 2$.*

If true, this conjecture would be tight, since the circular q -backbone chromatic number of a K_4 with backbone $K_{1,3}$ is $2q + 2$. As evidence in support of Conjecture 8, Broersma et al. [5] deduced from the Four-Colour Theorem that if G is a planar graph and M a matching in G then $\text{CBC}_q(G, M) \leq 2q + 2$.

Broersma et al. also give an example of a planar graph G and a matching M such that (G, M) has no 2-backbone \mathbb{Z}_5 -colouring. We show in Theorems 36 and 40 that for any fixed $k \in \{4, 5\}$, it is NP-complete to decide if $\text{BBC}_2(G, M) \leq k$ for given planar graph G and matching M . For larger values of q , the following questions are still open.

Problem 9. *Let G be a planar graph and let M be a matching M in G . For any $q \geq 3$, is it true that $\text{CBC}_q(G, M) \leq 2q + 1$?*

Problem 10. *Is it NP-complete to decide if $\text{CBC}_2(G, F) \leq 6$ for a planar graph G and spanning forest F ?*

Problem 11. *For any $g \geq 5$, is it NP-complete to decide if $\text{CBC}_2(G, M) \leq 4$ for a planar graph G of girth at least g and matching M ?*

We prove in Theorem 33 that if G has girth at least 5, then $\text{CBC}_q(G, M) \leq 2q + 1$. We wonder if the same holds for planar graph of girth 4.

Problem 12. *Let G be a planar graph of girth 4 and let M be a matching in G . Is it true that $\text{CBC}_q(G, M) \leq 2q + 1$?*

Many of the complexity results on circular backbone colouring of planar graphs with a forest backbone are summarized in Table 2.

2 Backbone colouring

2.1 About Conjectures 1 and 3

Proposition 13. *Let G be a graph and let H be a subgraph of G . Then $\text{BBC}_q(G, H) \leq (\chi(G) + q - 2)\chi(H) - q + 2$.*

	G planar			
	H forest	H spanning tree	H 1-factor	H Hamilton path
$CBC_q(G, H) \leq 2q?$	q=2: NP-C	poly	q=2: NP-C	poly
$CBC_q(G, H) \leq 2q + 1?$	NP-C	poly	q=2: NP-C	q=2: NP-C
$CBC_q(G, H) \leq 2q + 2?$				
$CBC_q(G, H) \leq 2q + 3?$?Yes?			
$CBC_q(G, H) \leq 2q + 4?$	Yes			

Table 2: Complexity of deciding if $CBC_q(G, H) \leq 2q + k$ for $k \in \{0, \dots, 4\}$, when G is a planar graph and H a forest of some prescribed classes. NP-C:= NP-Complete; poly:= polynomial-time decidable; Yes: always true; ?Yes? conjectured to be always true.

Proof. Let g be a proper $\chi(G)$ -colouring of G and h a proper $\chi(H)$ -colouring of H . Let f be the colouring defined by:

$$f(v) = \begin{cases} (h(v) - 1)(q - 2 + \chi(G)) + g(v), & \text{if } h(v) \text{ is odd,} \\ (h(v) - 1)(q - 2 + \chi(G)) + \chi(G) + 1 - g(v) & \text{if } h(v) \text{ is even.} \end{cases}$$

Let us check that f is a q -backbone $((\chi(G) + q - 2)\chi(H) - q + 2)$ -colouring of (G, H) .

Let $uv \in E(G)$. Without loss of generality, $h(u) \geq h(v)$. If $h(u) = h(v)$, then $uv \notin E(H)$ and $|f(u) - f(v)| = |g(u) - g(v)| \neq 0$.

Assume now that $h(u) > h(v)$. If $h(u)$ and $h(v)$ are both odd or both even, then $f(u) - f(v) \geq 2(q - 2 + \chi(G)) - |(g(u) - g(v))| \geq q$. If $h(u)$ is odd and $h(v)$ is even, then $f(u) - f(v) \geq q - 3 + g(u) + g(v)$, which is at least q because $g(u) + g(v) \geq 3$ for $g(u) \neq g(v)$. If $h(u)$ is even and $h(v)$ is odd, then $f(u) - f(v) \geq q - 2 + 2\chi(G) + 1 - g(u) - g(v)$, which is at least q because $g(u) + g(v) \leq 2\chi(G) - 1$ for $g(u) \neq g(v)$. \square

A *parachute on v* or a *parachute with harness v* is a complete graph on four vertices whose three edges incident to v are in the backbone.

Proposition 14. (i) For $q \geq 2$, in a q -backbone $(q + 3)$ -colouring of a parachute, the harness is coloured in $\{1, q + 3\}$.

(ii) For $q \geq 3$, in a q -backbone $(q + 4)$ -colouring of a parachute, the harness is coloured in $\{1, 2, q + 3, q + 4\}$.

(iii) For $q \geq 4$, in a q -backbone $(q + 5)$ -colouring of a parachute, the harness is coloured in $\{1, 2, 3, q + 3, q + 4, q + 5\}$.

Proof. Let y be the harness.

(ii) If $3 \leq \phi(y) \leq q + 2$, then at most two colours can appear on its neighbours. Because those three vertices form a clique, they have three different colours and so $\phi(y) \in \{1, 2, q + 3, q + 4\}$.

(iii) If $4 \leq \phi(y) \leq q + 2$, then at most two colours can appear on its neighbours. Because those three vertices form a clique, they have three different colours and so $\phi(y) \in \{1, 2, 3, q + 3, q + 4, q + 5\}$. \square

Proposition 15. Let G^* and T^* be the graph and its spanning tree depicted in Figure 2. For any $q \geq 4$, $BBC_q(G^*, T^*) \geq q + 6$.

Proof. Assume for a contradiction that there is a q -backbone $(q + 5)$ -colouring ϕ of (G^*, T^*) . By Proposition 14-(iii), the vertices $y_1, y_2, y_3, y_4, z_1, z_2$ are coloured in $\{1, 2, 3, q + 3, q + 4, q + 5\}$. Without loss of generality, we may assume that $\phi(y_2) \in \{1, 2, 3\}$. But then $\phi(z_1)$ and $\phi(z_2)$ must be in $\{q + 3, q + 4, q + 5\}$, because $y_2 z_1$ and $y_2 z_2$ are in $E(T^*)$. And $\phi(y_1), \phi(y_2)$ and $\phi(y_3)$ are in $\{1, 2, 3\}$ because $y_3 z_1$ and $y_1 z_2$ and $y_4 z_2$ are in $E(T^*)$. But $\{y_1, y_2, y_3, y_4\}$ is a clique in G^* , so they must all get different colours, a contradiction. \square

Proposition 16. *Conjecture 1 implies Conjecture 3.*

Proof. Assume that Conjecture 1 holds. Let G be a planar graph and F a forest in G . Then (G, F) admits a 2-backbone 6-colouring ϕ . Let ψ be defined by $\psi(v) = \phi(v)$ if $\phi(v) \in \{1, 2\}$, $\psi(v) = \phi(v) + 1$ if $\phi(v) \in \{3, 4\}$, and $\psi(v) = \phi(v) + 2$ if $\phi(v) \in \{5, 6\}$. One easily check that ψ is a 3-backbone 8-colouring of (G, F) . \square

2.2 q -backbone $(q + 2)$ -colouring

Theorem 17. *Given a connected graph G and a spanning connected subgraph H , one can decide in polynomial time if $\text{BBC}_q(G, H) \leq q + 2$.*

Proof. Observe first that if H is not bipartite, then $\text{BBC}(H, H) \geq 2q + 1$ by (1), and so $\text{BBC}_q(G, H) \geq q + 3$. So we first check if H is bipartite. If not, we return ‘no’. If it is, we get a bipartition (A, B) of H .

Observe that if (G, H) has a q -backbone $(q + 2)$ -colouring, then (free to rename A and B) all the vertices of A are coloured in $\{1, 2\}$ and all the vertices of B in $\{q + 1, q + 2\}$, because H is connected. We then can transform our instance into an instance $I(G, H)$ of 2SAT as follows. For each vertex v , we create a variable x_v . Intuitively, for a vertex $x \in A$ (resp. $x \in B$), the variable x_v will be true if and only if v is coloured 1 (resp. $q + 2$) and false if and only if v is coloured 2 (resp. $q + 1$). Now for each edge uv , we create the following clauses.

- If u and v are both in A or both in B , we create the clauses $x_u \vee x_v$ and $\bar{x}_u \vee \bar{x}_v$;
- if $u \in A$ and $v \in B$, we create the clause $x_u \vee x_v$.

It is easy to check that (G, H) has a q -backbone $(q + 2)$ -colouring if and only if $I(G, H)$ is satisfiable.

Since 2SAT is well-known to be polynomial-time solvable, we can decide in polynomial time if $\text{BBC}_q(G, H) \leq q + 2$. \square

Theorem 18. *For any $q \geq 2$, the following problem is NP-complete.*

Input: A planar graph G and a 1-factor F of G .

Question: $\text{BBC}_q(G, F) \leq q + 2$?

Proof. The problem is trivially in NP since a q -backbone $(q + 2)$ -colouring of (G, F) is clearly a certificate.

Reduction from NOT-ALL-EQUAL 3SAT, which is defined as follows:

Input: A set of clauses each having three literals.

Question: Does there exists a *suitable* truth assignment, that is such that each clause has at least one true and at least one false literal?

This problem was shown NP-complete by Schaefer [11].

Let $\mathcal{C} = \{C_1, \dots, C_n\}$ be a collection of clauses of size three over a set U of variables. We will construct a graph pair (G, F) such that F is a 1-factor of G . Since $V(F) = V(G)$, we only precise which edges are in $E(F)$.

The following gadget will be useful. A *forcing gadget at v* or a *forcing gadget with head v* is the graph depicted in Figure 3.

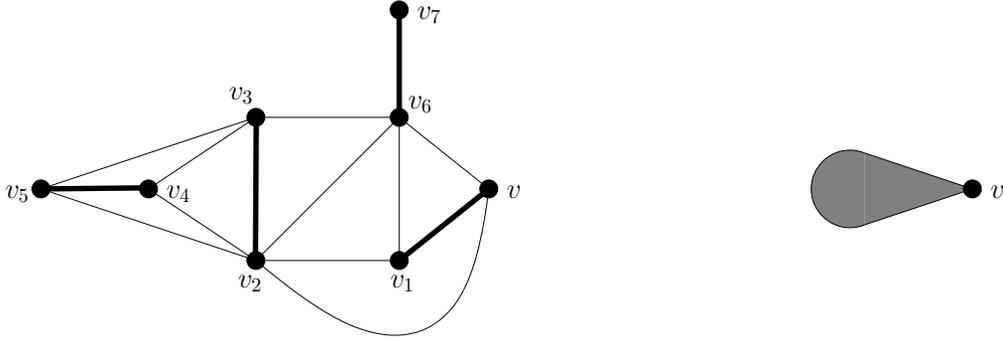


Figure 3: A forcing gadget with head v (left) and its symbol (right) (Edges of $E(F)$ are in bold.)

A key point in the reduction will be the following claim.

Claim 19. *In any q -backbone $(q+2)$ -colouring of a forcing gadget, its head is coloured in $\{1, q+2\}$.*

Proof. Consider a forcing gadget, whose vertices are named as in Figure 3, and ϕ a q -backbone $(q+2)$ -colouring of it. Since all the vertices are matched in F , there all must be coloured in $\{1, 2, q+1, q+2\}$.

Assume for a contradiction that $\phi(v) = 2$. Then $\phi(v_1) = q+2$. Thus $\phi(v_2) \in \{1, q+1\}$. Now if $\phi(v_2) = q+1$, then necessarily $\phi(v_3) = 1$. Therefore, whatever the colouring may be, v_4 and v_5 are both adjacent to a vertex coloured 1. Hence $\{\phi(v_4), \phi(v_5)\} = \{2, q+2\}$. Therefore $\{\phi(v_2), \phi(v_3)\} = \{1, q+1\}$. But then v_6 cannot be coloured.

Similarly, we get a contradiction if $\phi(v) = q+1$. □

For every variable $u \in U$, create a *variable subgraph* P_u which is obtained from the path $(a_1(u), b_1(u), a_2(u), b_2(u), \dots, a_n(u), b_n(u))$ by adding a forcing gadget on each of its vertex.

For every clause $C_i = \ell_1 \vee \ell_2 \vee \ell_3$, create a clause gadget D_i as shown Figure 4.

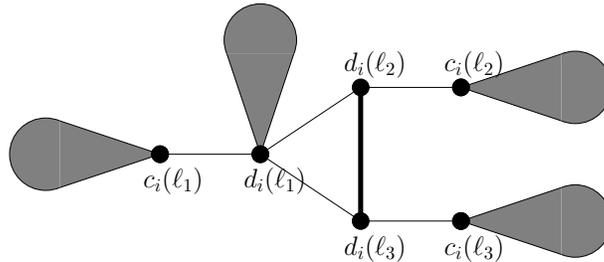


Figure 4: The clause D_i . (Edges of $E(F)$ are in bold, forcing gadgets are represented by their symbols.)

Then for each clause C_i and each literal ℓ of C_i , we add a path of length three $(c_i(\ell), c'_i(\ell), c''_i(\ell), a_i(u))$ if ℓ is the non-negated variable u , and $(c_i(\ell), c'_i(\ell), c''_i(\ell), b_i(u))$ if ℓ is the negated variable \bar{u} . We also add two forcing gadgets with heads $c'_i(\ell)$ and $c''_i(\ell)$.

It is easy to see that the resulting graph G' may be drawn in the plane such that the crossed edges are those of type $c'_i(\ell)c''_i(\ell)$ for some literal ℓ . In particular, the two endvertices of a crossed edge are heads of forcing gadgets.

As long as there is a crossing C between two edges $t(C)u(C)$ and $v(C)w(C)$, we replace these two edges by the crossing gadget $CG(C)$ depicted in Figure 5, so that the only edges that are possibly crossed (if there were several crossings on tu or uv) are $t(C)t'(C)$, $u(C)u'(C)$, $v(C)v'(C)$ and $w(C)w'(C)$. After this process, there is no more crossing so the resulting graph G is planar.

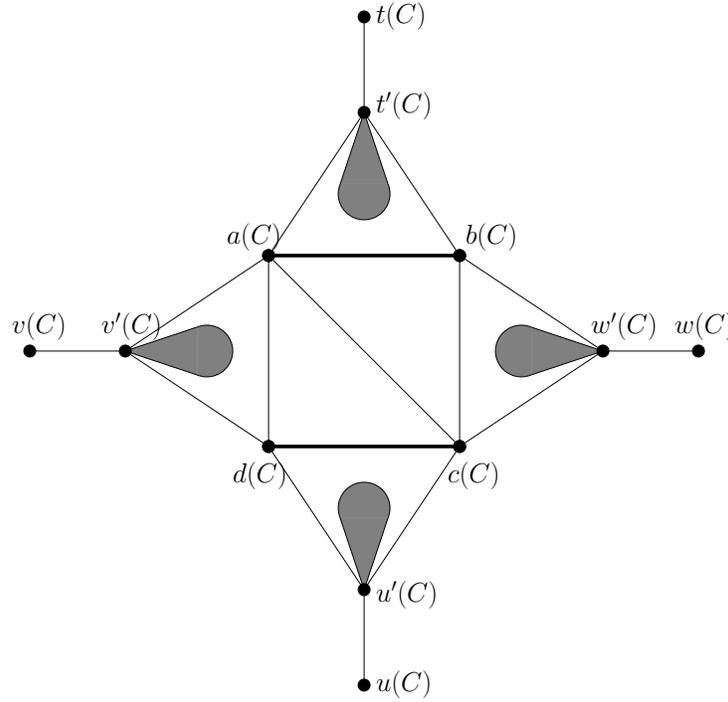


Figure 5: The crossing gadget $CG(C)$. (Edges of $E(F)$ are in bold, forcing gadgets are represented by their symbols.)

Claim 20. *Let ϕ be a q -backbone $(q+2)$ -colouring of (G, F) . For every crossing C in G' , we have $\{\phi(t(C)), \phi(u(C))\} = \{1, q+2\}$ and $\{\phi(v(C)), \phi(w(C))\} = \{1, q+2\}$.*

Subproof. By induction on the reverse order of creation of the crossing gadget.

By construction, $t(C)$, $u(C)$, $v(C)$, $w(C)$, $t'(C)$, $u'(C)$, $v'(C)$, and $w'(C)$ are heads of forcing gadgets. So, by Claim 19, they are coloured 1 or $q+2$. Without loss of generality, we may assume that $\phi(t(C)) = 1$.

If the edge $t(C)t'(C)$ was crossed and then replaced by a series of crossing gadget, by induction, $\phi(t'(C)) = q+2$. It is also trivially the case if $t(C)t'(C)$ still exists. Hence $\{\phi(a(C)), \phi(b(C))\} = \{1, q+1\}$.

Assume for a contradiction that $\phi(u(C)) \neq q+2$. Then, as above, $\{\phi(c(C)), \phi(d(C))\} = \{1, q+1\}$. This is a contradiction, because $a(C)c(C)$ and $a(C)d(C)$ are edges. Hence $\phi(u(C)) = q+2$,

and so $\phi(u'(C)) = 1$ and $\{\phi(c(C)), \phi(d(C))\} = \{2, q+2\}$.

In particular, one vertex of $\{a(C), b(C), c(C), d(C)\}$ is coloured 1 and another is coloured $q+2$. Now assume for a contradiction that $\{\phi(v(C)), \phi(w(C))\} \neq \{1, q+2\}$. Then $v(C)$ and $w(C)$ are both coloured 1 or both coloured $q+2$, and so $v'(C)$ and $w'(C)$ are both coloured $q+2$ or both coloured 1, respectively. This is a contradiction, as all vertices of $\{a(C), b(C), c(C), d(C)\}$ are adjacent to some vertex in $\{v'(C), w'(C)\}$. \diamond

Let us now prove that (G, F) admits a q -backbone $(q+2)$ -colouring if and only if \mathcal{C} has a suitable truth assignment.

Assume first that (G, F) admits a q -backbone $(q+2)$ -colouring ϕ . Let u be a variable. Since there are heads of forcing gadgets, by Claim 19, all the $a_i(u)$ and $b_i(u)$ are coloured in $\{1, q+2\}$. Moreover, since they form a path, all the $a_i(u)$ are coloured with the same colour and all the $b_i(u)$ are coloured with the other. Hence one can define the truth assignment ψ by $\psi(u) = \text{true}$ if $\phi(a_i(u)) = 1$ for $1 \leq i \leq n$, and $\psi(u) = \text{false}$ if $\phi(a_i(u)) = q+2$ for $1 \leq i \leq n$.

We shall prove that ψ is suitable.

Let $C_i = \ell_1 \vee \ell_2 \vee \ell_3$ be a clause. Claim 20 implies that for $j \in \{1, 2, 3\}$, $\phi(c_i(\ell_j)) = 1$ if $\psi(\ell_j) = \text{false}$ and $\phi(c_i(\ell_j)) = q+2$ if $\psi(\ell_j) = \text{true}$. Now the three $c_i(\ell_j)$, $1 \leq j \leq 3$, cannot be all coloured 1 (resp. $q+2$), for otherwise $\{\phi(d_i(\ell_2)), \phi(d_i(\ell_3))\}$ must be $\{2, q+2\}$ (resp. $\{1, q+1\}$) and so $d_i(\ell_1)$ cannot be coloured, because it must be coloured in $\{1, q+2\}$ as head of a forcing gadget. Thus at least one of the $c_i(\ell_j)$ is coloured 1 and at least one is coloured $q+2$, and so C_i has at least one true and at least one false literal.

Hence ψ is suitable.

Reciprocally, assume that \mathcal{C} has a suitable truth assignment ψ . For all $u \in U$ and all $1 \leq i \leq n$, let us define $\phi(a_i(u)) = 1$ and $\phi(b_i(u)) = q+2$ if $\psi(u) = \text{true}$, and $\phi(a_i(u)) = q+2$ and $\phi(b_i(u)) = 1$ if $\psi(u) = \text{false}$. Similarly, for every literal ℓ , we set $\phi(c_i(\ell)) = 1$, $\phi(c'_i(\ell)) = q+2$, $\phi(c''_i(\ell)) = 1$, if ℓ is false, and $\phi(c_i(\ell)) = q+2$, $\phi(c'_i(\ell)) = 1$, $\phi(c''_i(\ell)) = q+2$, if ℓ is true.

One can extend ϕ into a q -backbone $(q+2)$ -colouring of (G, F) . Indeed, it is sufficient to show that we can extend it to forcing, clause and crossing gadgets.

If v is the head of a forcing gadget and $\phi(v) = 1$, we can set $\phi(v_1) = q+2$, $\phi(v_2) = q+1$, $\phi(v_3) = 1$, $\phi(v_4) = q+2$, $\phi(v_5) = 2$, $\phi(v_6) = 2$, and $\phi(v_7) = q+2$. Similarly, we can extend the colouring to the forcing gadget if $\phi(v) = q+2$.

Consider a clause gadget D_i . Since C_i has at least one true and at least one false literal, at least one vertex of $c_i(\ell_1), c_i(\ell_2), c_i(\ell_3)$ is coloured 1 and at least one is coloured $q+2$. If $c_i(\ell_1)$ is coloured $q+2$, and $c_i(\ell_2)$ and $c_i(\ell_3)$ are assigned 1, then we can set $\phi(d_i(\ell_1)) = 1$, $\phi(d_i(\ell_2)) = 2$, and $\phi(d_i(\ell_3)) = q+2$. If $c_i(\ell_1)$ and $c_i(\ell_2)$ are coloured 1, and $c_i(\ell_3)$ is assigned $q+2$, then we can set $\phi(d_i(\ell_1)) = q+2$, $\phi(d_i(\ell_2)) = q+1$, and $\phi(d_i(\ell_3)) = 1$.

Finally consider a crossing gadget such that $\{\phi(t(C)), \phi(u(C))\} = \{\phi(v(C)), \phi(w(C))\} = \{1, q+2\}$. By symmetry, we may assume that $\phi(t(C)) = \phi(v(C)) = 1$ and $\phi(u(C)) = \phi(w(C)) = q+2$. Then we can set $\phi(t'(C)) = \phi(v'(C)) = q+2$, $\phi(u'(C)) = \phi(w'(C)) = 2$, $\phi(a(C)) = 1$, $\phi(b(C)) = q+1$, $\phi(c(C)) = q+2$, and $\phi(d(C)) = 2$. \square

2.3 2-backbone 5-colouring

2.3.1 Galaxy backbone

Theorem 21. *The following problem is NP-complete.*

Input: A planar graph G and a galaxy F in G with maximum degree 3.

Question: Is $\text{BBC}_2(G, F) \leq 5$?

Proof. Reduction from PLANAR 3-COLOURABILITY, which consists of deciding if a given connected planar graph is 3-colourable. This problem was shown to be NP-complete by Stockmeyer [13]. Clearly, it remains NP-complete when restricted to 2-connected planar graphs.

Let H be a 2-connected planar graph. We shall construct a planar graph G and a galaxy F with maximum degree 3 in G such that $\text{BBC}_2(G, F) \leq 5$ if and only if H is 3-colourable.

As a forcing gadget at v , we will use the parachute with harness v . It is easy to see that in a 2-backbone 5-colouring of a parachute, its harness is coloured in $\{1, 5\}$.

We consider any embedding of H . For each face $(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_k, x_1)$ of H , we put a cycle $(z_1, z_2, \dots, z_{2k}, z_1)$, inside which we put parachutes on every vertex z_i for every $1 \leq i \leq 2k$. We then add the edges $x_i z_{2i} x_i z_{2i+1}$ for all $1 \leq i \leq k$.

Assume that (G, F) has a 2-backbone 5-colouring ϕ , then, because of the parachutes, all the vertices in the cycles added inside faces must be coloured in $\{1, 5\}$. Moreover consecutive vertices on one such cycles get different colours, so one is coloured 1 and the other is coloured 5. Hence all the vertices in H are coloured in $\{2, 3, 4\}$. Hence ϕ induces a proper 3-colouring on H with colours $\{2, 3, 4\}$.

Reciprocally, assume that H is 3-colourable. Then there exists a proper 3-colouring c of H into $\{2, 3, 4\}$. One can then colour all the cycles inside faces with 1 and 5. The colouring can then easily be extended into a 2-backbone 5-colouring of (G, F) . \square

Theorem 22. *The following problem is NP-complete.*

Input: A planar graph G and a galaxy F in G with maximum degree 2.

Question: Is $\text{BBC}_2(G, F) \leq 5$?

Proof. The proof is identical to the one of Theorem 21. The only difference comes from the forcing gadget, which is more complicated because it cannot contains stars of degree 3 in F .

To construct the forcing gadget, we need an auxiliary gadget, called *no-3-gadget*. It is depicted in Figure 6.

Claim 23. *In any 2-backbone 5-colouring of a no-3-gadget, its roof is not coloured in 3.*

Proof. We will denote the vertices of the no-3-gadget by their names in Figure 6. Assume for a contradiction that there is a 2-backbone 5-colouring ϕ of a no-3-gadget such that $\phi(x) = 3$.

Assume first that $\phi(a) \in \{4, 5\}$, then $\phi(b) \in \{1, 2\}$ and $\{\phi(a), \phi(c)\} = \{4, 5\}$. Hence $\phi(d) \in \{1, 2\}$ and so $\{\phi(f), \phi(c)\} = \{4, 5\}$. Therefore $\phi(e) = 3$ and so $\phi(d) = 1$. Similarly, if $\phi(a) \in \{1, 2\}$, we obtain that $\phi(d) = 5$. Hence, $\phi(d) \in \{1, 5\}$.

Similarly, $\phi(d') \in \{1, 5\}$. Free to consider $6 - \phi$ instead of ϕ , we may assume that $\phi(d) = 1$ and $\phi(d') = 5$. Thus $\phi(f') = 2$.

Now $\phi(g) \in \{3, 4\}$. If $\phi(g) = 3$, then $\{\phi(i), \phi(h)\} = \{1, 5\}$, and if $\phi(g) = 4$, then $\{\phi(i), \phi(h)\} = \{1, 2\}$. In both cases, one of h and i is coloured 1, which is impossible because $\phi(d) = 1$. \square

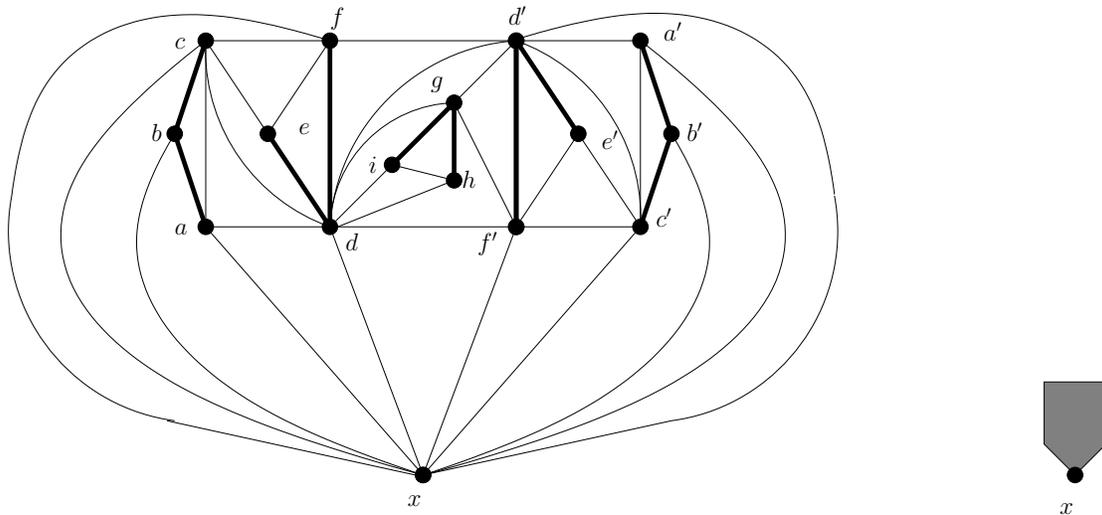


Figure 6: The no-3-gadget with roof x and its symbol.

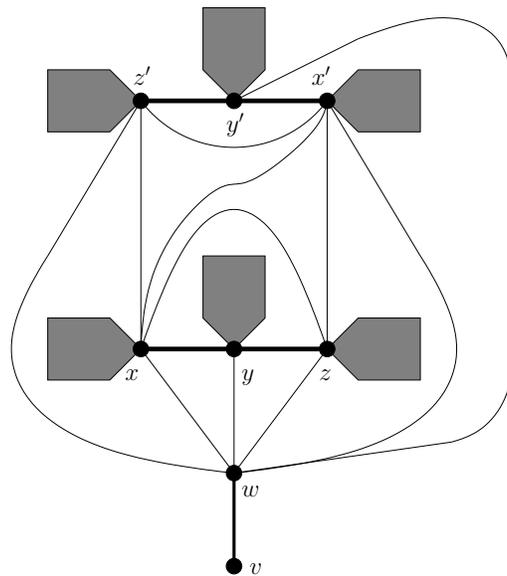


Figure 7: The forcing gadget with head v . (Edges of $E(F)$ are in bold, no-3-gadgets are represented by their symbols.)

The forcing gadget is the one depicted in Figure 7.

Claim 24. *In any 2-backbone 5-colouring of a forcing gadget, its head is coloured in $\{1, 5\}$.*

Proof. Consider a forcing gadget, whose vertices are named as in Figure 7, and ϕ a 2-backbone 5-colouring of it.

Let us prove that $\phi(w) = 3$ and so that $\phi(v) \in \{1, 5\}$. Assume for a contradiction that $\phi(w) \neq 3$. Without loss of generality, we may assume that $\phi(w) \in \{1, 2\}$.

Observe that the vertices x, y, z, x', y', z' are not assigned 3 because they are roofs of no-3-gadgets.

If $\phi(w) = 1$, then $(\phi(x), \phi(y), \phi(z))$ and $(\phi(x'), \phi(y'), \phi(z'))$ is either $(4, 2, 5)$ or $(5, 2, 4)$. Hence the vertices x, x' and z are all coloured in $\{4, 5\}$, which is impossible, since they form a triangle.

If $\phi(w) = 2$, then $(\phi(x), \phi(y), \phi(z))$ and $(\phi(x'), \phi(y'), \phi(z'))$ is either $(4, 1, 5)$ or $(5, 1, 4)$. Hence the vertices x, x' and z are all coloured in $\{4, 5\}$, which is impossible, since they form a triangle. \square

To get the equivalence between the 3-colourability of the original graph H and the existence of a 2-backbone 5-colouring of (G, F) , it remains to prove that for any $\alpha \in \{1, 5\}$, there is a 2-backbone 5-colouring of the forcing gadget such that the head is coloured α .

We denote the vertices by their names in Figure 7. Set $\phi(w) = 3, \phi(x) = \phi(y') = 1, \phi(y) = \phi(z') = 5, \phi(z) = 2$ and $\phi(x') = 4$.

Observe that no vertex in $\{x, y, z, x', y', z'\}$ has been coloured 3. Hence, it remains to prove that for any $\beta \in \{1, 2, 4, 5\}$, there is a 2-backbone 5-colouring of the forcing gadget such that the head is coloured β . By the symmetry $\phi \rightarrow 6 - \phi$, it suffices to prove that one exists for $\beta \in \{1, 2\}$. We denote the vertices by their names in Figure 6. Let us denote by $\bar{\beta}$ the colour of $\{1, 2\} \setminus \{\beta\}$.

$\phi(a) = 3, \phi(b) = \bar{\beta}, \phi(c) = 5, \phi(d) = 4, \phi(e) = \beta, \phi(f) = \bar{\beta}, \phi(a') = 3, \phi(b') = 5, \phi(c') = \bar{\beta}, \phi(d') = 5, \phi(e') = \beta, \phi(f') = 3, \phi(g) = 1, \phi(h) = 5, \phi(i) = 3.$ \square

2.3.2 Hamiltonian-path backbone

Theorem 25. *The following problem is NP-complete.*

Input: A planar graph G with a hamiltonian path P .

Question: $\text{BBC}_2(G, P) \leq 5$?

To prove this theorem, we shall use a reduction similar to the one of Theorem 21. However, we do not reduce directly from PLANAR 3-COLOURABILITY but use an intermediate problem whose NP-completeness is proven by reducing PLANAR 3-COLOURABILITY to it.

This intermediate problem is the following:

TRACEABLE PLANAR 3-COLOURABILITY

Input: A planar graph G with a hamiltonian path P .

Question: Is G 3-colourable?

Lemma 26. TRACEABLE PLANAR 3-COLOURABILITY is NP-complete.

Proof. Reduction from PLANAR 3-COLOURABILITY. Let H be a connected planar graph. We will construct a planar graph G having a hamiltonian path P such that $\chi(G) \leq 3$ if and only if $\chi(H) \leq 3$.

To do so, we shall construct a sequence of pairs (G_i, P_i) for $1 \leq i \leq |V(H)|$ such that P_i is a path in the planar connected graph G_i , $|V(P_i)| = |V(G_i)| - |V(H)| + i$, and $\chi(G_i) \leq 3$ if and only if $\chi(H) \leq 3$. Then the path $P := P_{V(H)}$ will be a hamiltonian path of $G := G_{V(H)}$ and $\chi(G) \leq 3$ if and only if $\chi(H) \leq 3$.

Let x be a vertex of H . We set $G_1 := H$ and $P_1 := (x)$. Trivially, (G_1, P_1) verifies the above property.

Assume now that $i \geq 1$ and let us construct (G_{i+1}, P_{i+1}) from (G_i, P_i) . Let $P_i = (v_1, v_2, \dots, v_\ell)$ be a path. Since G_i is connected, there exists j such that v_j is adjacent to a vertex y in $V(G_i) \setminus V(P_i)$. If $j = 1$, then let $P_{i+1} := (y, v_1, v_2, \dots, v_\ell)$, and $G_{i+1} := G_i$; if $j = p$, then let $P_{i+1} := (v_1, v_2, \dots, v_\ell, y)$, and $G_{i+1} := G_i$; if y is also incident to v_{j+1} , let $P_{i+1} := (v_1, \dots, v_j, y, v_{j+1}, \dots, v_\ell)$. In those three cases, (G_{i+1}, P_{i+1}) has trivially the desired property.

So we may assume that $1 < j < \ell$ and y is not adjacent to v_{j+1} . Let y_1, y_2, \dots, y_r be the neighbours of v_j in their order around it such that $v_{j+1} = y_r, y_k = y$ and $v_{j-1} = y_q$ for $q < r$.

Let G_{i+1} be the graph obtained from G_i as follows. For all $1 \leq s \leq k-1$, remove the edge $v_j y_s$, add three vertices a_s, b_s, c_s and the edges $a_s b_s, b_s c_s, c_s a_s, v_j a_s, v_j b_s, b_s y_s$; Add the edges $c_s a_{s+1}$ for all $1 \leq s \leq k-2$, and $v_{j+1} a_1$. Finally add a vertex y' and the edges yy' and $y'c_{k-1}$. Let P_{i+1} be the path obtained from P_i by replacing the edge $v_j v_{j+1}$ by the subpath $(v_j, y, c_{k-1}, b_{k-1}, a_{k-1}, \dots, c_1, b_1, a_1, v_{j+1})$. See Figure 8, which illustrates the construction when $k = 5$.

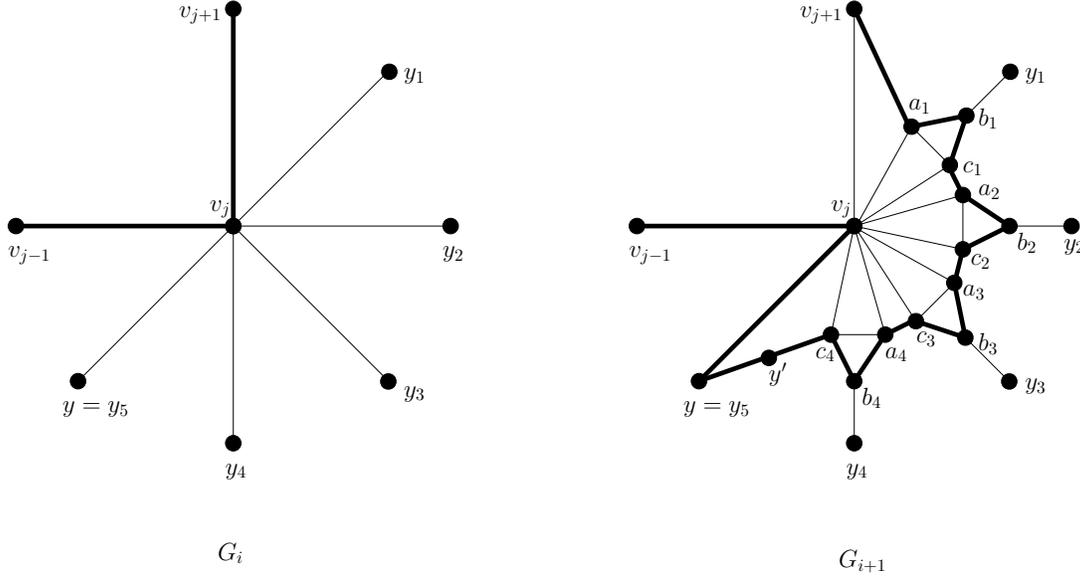


Figure 8: Constructing (G_{i+1}, P_{i+1}) from (G_i, P_i) (Edges of the paths are in bold.)

Clearly, the number of vertices not covered by P_{i+1} in G_{i+1} is one less than the number of vertices not covered by P_i in G_i . So, since $|V(P_i)| = |V(G_i)| - |V(H)| + i$, we have $|V(P_{i+1})| = |V(G_{i+1})| - |V(H)| + i + 1$.

It remains to prove that G_{i+1} is 3-colourable if and only if G_i is.

Assume first that G_{i+1} admits a proper 3-colouring ϕ in $\{1, 2, 3\}$. We claim that it also induces a proper 3-colouring of G_i . Indeed, without loss of generality, we may assume that $\phi(v_j) = 1$ and $\phi(v_{j+1}) = 2$. Then for all $1 \leq s \leq k-1$, $\phi(a_s) = 3$ and $\phi(c_s) = 2$, so $\phi(b_s) = 1$. Hence $\phi(y_s) \neq 1$. Therefore, for all $1 \leq s \leq k-1$, $\phi(y_s) \neq \phi(v_j)$. Since the $v_j y_s$, $1 \leq s \leq k-1$, are the only edges of G_i which are not in G_{i+1} , ϕ is a proper 3-colouring of G_i .

Conversely, assume that G_i admits a 3-colouring ϕ in $\{1, 2, 3\}$. It induces a partial proper 3-colouring of G , such that $\phi(v_j) \neq \phi(y_s)$ for all $1 \leq s \leq k-1$. Let us extend it. Without loss of generality, $\phi(v_j) = 1$ and $\phi(v_{j+1}) = 2$. For all $1 \leq s \leq k-1$, set $\phi(a_s) = 3$, $\phi(b_s) = 1$, and

$\phi(c_s) = 2$. Finally, colour y' with the colour in $\{1, 2, 3\} \setminus \{\phi(y), \phi(c_{k-1})\}$. This gives a proper 3-colouring of G_{i+1} . \square

Proof of Theorem 25. Reduction from TRACEABLE PLANAR 3-COLOURABILITY. Let (H, Q) be an instance of this problem. We shall construct a graph G and a hamiltonian path P of G such that $\text{BBC}_2(G, P) \leq 5$ if and only if $\chi(H) \leq 3$. To do so we start from H and for each edge xy of Q , we will plug in an edge gadget $E(xy)$ containing a hamiltonian path $P(xy)$ from x to y . The union of all the $P(xy)$, $xy \in E(Q)$, will then be a hamiltonian path P of the resulting graph G .

To construct the edge gadget, we use an auxiliary forcing gadget depicted in Figure 9. The *head* of such a gadget is the vertex denoted by v in the figure. Its *fringes* are the vertices denoted by a and e .

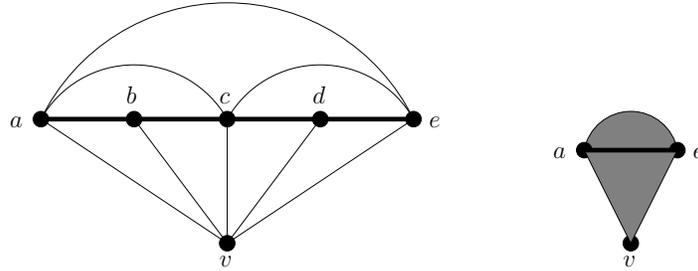


Figure 9: The forcing gadget with head v and fringes a and e (left) and its symbol (right)

Claim 27. *In any 2-backbone 5-colouring of a forcing gadget, the head is coloured in $\{2, 4\}$.*

Proof. We denote the vertices by their names in Figure 9. Suppose for a contradiction that there is a 2-backbone 5-colouring ϕ such that $\phi(v) \notin \{2, 4\}$. By the symmetry $\phi \rightarrow 6 - \phi$, we may assume that $\phi(v) \in \{1, 3\}$.

If $\phi(v) = 3$, then all the vertices a, b, c, d, e are coloured in $\{1, 2, 4, 5\}$. On the path (a, b, c, d, e) , vertices coloured $\{1, 2\}$ alternate with vertices coloured $\{4, 5\}$. Hence a, c , and e are all coloured in $\{1, 2\}$, or all coloured in $\{4, 5\}$, which is a contradiction as they form a clique.

If $\phi(v) = 1$, then all the vertices a, b, c, d, e are coloured in $\{2, 3, 4, 5\}$. Now $\phi(b)$ is at distance 2 from the two distinct colours $\phi(a)$ and $\phi(c)$, hence $\phi(b) \in \{2, 5\}$. Similarly, $\phi(d) \in \{2, 5\}$. But $\phi(c)$ is at distance 2 from $\phi(b)$ and $\phi(d)$, so $\phi(b) = \phi(d)$. Then the three vertices a, c , and e are all coloured in $\{2, 3, 4, 5\} \setminus \{\phi(b) - 1, \phi(b), \phi(b) + 1\}$, which has cardinality 2. This is a contradiction as those three vertices form a clique. \square

Now the edge gadget is the one depicted in Figure 10.

Let us now prove that $\text{BBC}_2(G, P) \leq 5$ if and only if $\chi(H) \leq 3$.

Assume first that (G, P) admits a 2-backbone 5-colouring ϕ . Since H is a subgraph of G , ϕ induces a proper colouring on H . We shall prove that every vertex of H is coloured in $\{1, 3, 5\}$, thus proving that this proper colouring uses (at most) 3 colours.

Every vertex v of H is contained in an edge xy of Q , so it is contained in the edge gadget $E(xy)$ in G . So it is adjacent to two vertices (namely v_1 and v_2 if $v = x$, and v_2 and v_3 if $v = y$), which are heads of forcing gadgets and adjacent. Hence by Claim 27, one of these vertices is coloured 2 and the other is coloured 4. Hence v must be coloured in $\{1, 3, 5\}$.

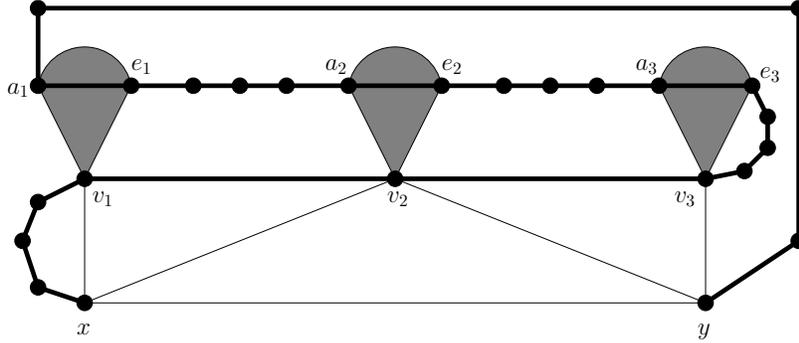


Figure 10: The edge gadget $E(xy)$ and its hamiltonian path $P(xy)$ in bold (Forcing gadgets are represented by their symbols.)

Let us now assume that H is 3-colourable. Then there exists a proper colouring ϕ of H with $\{1, 3, 5\}$. Let us now extend into a 2-backbone 5-colouring of (G, P) . It is sufficient to prove that we can extend it to every edge-gadget.

To extend it to the edge-gadget $E(xy)$ (we use the names of Figure 10), set $\phi(v_1) = \phi(v_3) = 2$ and $\phi(v_2) = 4$. Now, since for any pair $(\alpha, \beta) \in \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}^2$, there is a 2-backbone 5-colouring of the path of length 4 such that the first vertex is coloured α and the last vertex is coloured β , it suffices to prove that we can extend ϕ to the forcing gadget.

Consider such a forcing gadget (with vertex names as in Figure 9). Then $\phi(v) \in \{2, 4\}$. By the symmetry $\phi \rightarrow 6 - \phi$, we may assume that $\phi(v) = 2$. Then setting $\phi(a) = 4$, $\phi(b) = \phi(d) = 1$, $\phi(c) = 3$ and $\phi(e) = 5$, we obtain the desired extension.

Hence, $\text{BBC}_2(G, P) \leq 5$. □

2.4 q -backbone $(q + 3)$ -colouring for $q \geq 3$

Theorem 28. *For any $q \geq 3$, the following problem is NP-complete.*

Input: A planar graph G and a galaxy F in G with maximum degree 3.

Question: Is $\text{BBC}_q(G, F) \leq q + 3$?

Proof. Reduction from PLANAR 3-COLOURABILITY.

We shall need the graph, which we call a *kite*, depicted in Figure 11. The vertex named t in the figure is the *tip* of the kite, and the one named u is its *corner*.

Claim 29. *If ϕ is a q -backbone $(q + 3)$ -colouring of a kite such that $\phi(t) \in \{1, 2, 3, q + 1, q + 2, q + 3\}$, then either $\phi(t) \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ and $\phi(u) = q + 3$, or $\phi(t) \in \{q + 1, q + 2, q + 3\}$ and $\phi(u) = 1$.*

Proof. Observe that the vertices v, z_1, z_2, z_3 are harnesses of parachutes. Thus, by Proposition 14-(i), they must be assigned 1 or $q + 3$.

Assume that $\phi(v) = 1$, then $\phi(z_1) = \phi(z_2) = \phi(z_3) = q + 3$. Thus $\{\phi(s_1), \phi(s_2)\} = \{q + 1, q + 2\}$ and so $\phi(u) = q + 3$ and $\phi(t) \in \{1, 2, 3\}$.

Similarly if $\phi(v) = q + 3$, we obtain $\phi(u) = 1$ and $\phi(t) \in \{q + 1, q + 2, q + 3\}$. □

Let H be a planar graph. Let (G, F) be the graph pair obtained from H as follows. Firstly, for each face f of H , we create a parachute P_f with harness v_f , and for each vertex x incident to f , we

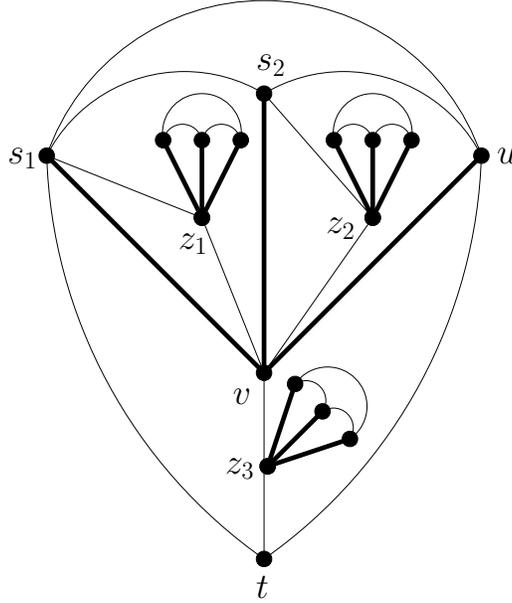


Figure 11: The kite

create a kite $K_f(x)$ with tip x and corner $u_f(x)$. We then link the vertex v_f to all the $u_f(x)$. Secondly, for every vertex $x \in V(H)$, we add a vertex y_x and the edge xy_x in the backbone.

Clearly, the resulting graph G is planar and the resulting backbone F is a galaxy with maximum degree 3.

Let us now prove that $BBC_q(G, F) \leq q + 3$ if and only if H is 3-colourable.

Assume first that (G, F) admits a q -backbone $(q + 3)$ -colouring ϕ . Observe that each vertex x in $V(H)$ is coloured in $\{1, 2, 3, q + 1, q + 2, q + 3\}$, because it is adjacent to y_x in F .

Let x be a vertex in $V(H)$. Free to consider $q + 4 - \phi$, we may assume that $\phi(x) \in \{1, 2, 3\}$. Consider a face f incident to x in H . By Claim 29, the kite $K_f(x)$ has its corner coloured $q + 3$. Together with Proposition 14-(i), this implies that $\phi(v_f) = 1$. Thus, the corner of the kites in f in H are all coloured in $\{1, 2, 3\}$. Applying this reasoning to each face of H , we obtain that all vertices of H are coloured in $\{1, 2, 3\}$. Hence, ϕ induces a proper 3-colouring on H .

Conversely, assume that H admits a proper 3-colouring c . One can extend it into a q -backbone $(q + 3)$ -colouring of (G, F) as follows. For every $x \in V(H)$, we colour y_x with $q + 3$; for every face f , we colour the vertex v_f with 1 and the corners of the kites by $q + 3$. One can then extend the colouring to each kite (as in the proof of Claim 29) to obtain a q -backbone $(q + 3)$ -colouring of (G, F) . \square

The reduction above can be modified to have a spanning tree T for the backbone in place of the galaxy F . It suffices consider a spanning tree U of H and do the following: add a path of length two in the backbone along each edge of the tree U ; for each kite, add tz_3 and vz_3 in the backbone and add paths of length two in the backbone along edges z_1v and z_2v . This will prove the following statement.

Theorem 30. *The following problem is NP-complete.*

Input: A planar graph G and a spanning tree T of G .

Question: Is $\text{BBC}_q(G, T) \leq q + 3$?

2.5 q -backbone $(q + 5)$ -colouring

Theorem 31. For any $q \geq 4$, the following problem is NP-complete.

Input: A planar graph G and a spanning tree T of G .

Question: Is $\text{BBC}_q(G, T) \leq q + 5$?

Proof. Reduction from PLANAR 3-COLOURABILITY.

Let H be a planar graph. We shall construct a planar graph G together with a spanning tree T such that H is 3-colourable if and only if $\text{BBC}_q(G, T) \leq q + 5$. Take U be a spanning tree of H .

We first construct a graph G' from H by adding for every edge $e = uv$ of U a vertex x_e linked to u and v . We let T' be the spanning tree of G' induced by the new edges. The pair (G, T) is then obtained from (G', T') by adding a parachute on every vertex. Clearly G is planar as for each edge $e = uv$ the path $ux_e v$ can be drawn along the edge uv .

Suppose that (G, T) admits a q -backbone $(q + 5)$ -colouring. Then by Proposition 14-(iii), every vertex in G' is coloured in $\{1, 2, 3, q + 3, q + 4, q + 5\}$. Note that the vertices of H form one of the part of the bipartition of T' . Hence, the colours of the vertices of H are either all in $\{1, 2, 3\}$ or all in $\{q + 3, q + 4, q + 5\}$. In both cases, ϕ induces a proper 3-colouring on H .

Conversely, it is straightforward to extend a proper 3-colouring of H into a q -backbone $(q + 5)$ -colouring of (G, T) . \square

3 Circular backbone colouring

The following Proposition is an analogue to Proposition 13 and its proof is similar.

Proposition 32. Let G be a graph and let H be a subgraph of G such that $2 \leq \chi(H) < \chi(G)$. Then $\text{CBC}_q(G, H) \leq (\chi(G) + q - 2)\chi(H)$.

Proof. Let g be a proper $\chi(G)$ -colouring of G and h a proper $\chi(H)$ -colouring of H .

Assume first that $\chi(H)$ is even. Let f be the colouring defined by:

$$f(v) = \begin{cases} (h(v) - 1)(q - 2 + \chi(G)) + g(v), & \text{if } h(v) \text{ is odd,} \\ (h(v) - 1)(q - 2 + \chi(G)) + \chi(G) + 1 - g(v) & \text{if } h(v) \text{ is even.} \end{cases}$$

Let us check that f is a circular q -backbone $((\chi(G) + q - 2)\chi(H))$ -colouring of (G, H) . For $1 \leq i \leq \chi(H)$, let $I_i = \{(i - 1)(q - 2 + \chi(G)) + 1, \dots, (i - 1)(q - 2 + \chi(G)) + \chi(G)\}$. Observe that if $h(v) = i$, then $f(v) \in I_i$. The I_i form intervals of $\mathbb{Z}_{(\chi(G) + q - 2)\chi(H)}$. These intervals do not intersect and two consecutive intervals are separated by $q - 2$ elements. In particular, if $h(u) \neq h(v)$, then $|f(u) - f(v)| \geq q - 1$. Moreover $|f(u) - f(v)| = q - 1$ only if $g(u) = g(v)$.

Consider an edge $uv \in E(G)$. By the previous remark, if $h(u) \neq h(v)$, then $f(u) \neq f(v)$. If $h(u) = h(v)$, then $|f(u) - f(v)| = |g(u) - g(v)| \neq 0$, because g is proper.

Consider now an edge $uv \in E(H)$. Then $h(u) \neq h(v)$, so $f(u)$ and $f(v)$ are in different I_i . If they are in non-consecutive I_i (modulo $\chi(H)$), then $|f(u) - f(v)| \geq 2q - 2 + \chi(G) \geq q$. Assume now that they are in consecutive intervals, then $|f(u) - f(v)| \geq q$ because $g(u) \neq g(v)$.

Assume now that $\chi(H)$ is odd. Let f be the colouring defined by:

$$f(v) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } h(v) = 1 \text{ and } g(v) = \chi(G), \\ g(v) + 1, & \text{if } h(v) = 1 \text{ and } g(v) < \chi(G), \\ \chi(G) + q - 1, & \text{if } h(v) = 2 \text{ and } g(v) = \chi(G) - 1, \\ \chi(G) + q, & \text{if } h(v) = 2 \text{ and } g(v) = \chi(G), \\ 2\chi(G) + q - 1 - g(v), & \text{if } h(v) = 2 \text{ and } g(v) < \chi(G) - 1, \\ (h(v) - 1)(q - 2 + \chi(G)) + g(v), & \text{if } h(v) \text{ is odd and } h(v) > 2, \\ (h(v) - 1)(q - 2 + \chi(G)) + \chi(G) + 1 - g(v) & \text{if } h(v) \text{ is even and } h(v) > 2. \end{cases}$$

Similarly to the even case, one can check that f is a circular q -backbone $((\chi(G) + q - 2)\chi(H))$ -colouring of (G, H) . \square

3.1 Planar graphs of girth at least 5

Theorem 33. *Let G be a planar graph of girth at least 5 and M a matching in G . Then $\text{CBC}_q(G, M) \leq 2q + 1$.*

Proof. Our proof is based on a structural result of Borodin and Glebov [1]. See also [9].

Theorem 34 (Borodin and Glebov [1]). *The vertex set of every planar graph of girth at least 5 can be partitioned into an independent set and a set which induces a forest.*

Let (S, F) be a partition of $V(G)$ such that S is stable and F induces a forest. Let us colour every vertex of S with 1. Now since F is a forest, it has an ordering v_1, \dots, v_p such that for every i , v_i has at most one neighbour in $\{v_1, \dots, v_{i-1}\}$. We colour the vertices of F according to this ordering as follows. If v_i has no neighbour in $\{v_1, \dots, v_{i-1}\}$, then colour it with $q + 1$. If v_i has a neighbour u in $\{v_1, \dots, v_{i-1}\}$ and $uv_i \notin E(M)$, then colour it with a colour of $\{q + 1, q + 2\}$ not assigned to u . If v_i has a neighbour u in $\{v_1, \dots, v_{i-1}\}$ and $uv_i \in E(M)$, then assign $2q + 1$ (resp. 2 to v_i) if u is coloured $q + 1$ (resp. $q + 2$). It is easy to check that the obtained colouring is a q -backbone \mathbb{Z}_{2q+1} -colouring of (G, M) . \square

3.2 Circular q -backbone $2q$ -colouring

Proposition 35. *Let G be a graph and H a spanning connected subgraph of G . Then $\text{CBC}_q(G, H) = 2q$ if and only if G is bipartite.*

Proof. If G is bipartite, then $\chi(G) = \chi(H) = 2$. Thus, by Equation (3), $\text{CBC}_q(G, H) = 2q$.

Assume now that (G, H) admits a circular q -backbone $2q$ -colouring f . Let v be a vertex of G . Without loss of generality, we may assume that $f(v) = 1$. Then all the neighbours of v in H must be coloured $q + 1$. And so on, by induction, all the vertices at even distance from v in H are coloured 1 and all the vertices at odd distance from v in H are coloured $q + 1$. Since H is connected and spans G , it follows that all vertices are coloured 1 or $q + 1$, so G is bipartite. \square

Proposition 35 implies that given a graph G and a spanning connected subgraph H , deciding if $\text{CBC}_q(G, H) = 2q$ can be done in polynomial time. In contrast, if the condition of G be connected is removed, when $q = 2$, the problem becomes NP-complete, as shown by the following theorem.

Theorem 36. *The following problem is NP-complete.*

Input: A planar graph G and a matching M in G .

Question: Is $\text{CBC}_2(G, M) \leq 4$?

Proof. The problem is trivially in NP since a circular 2-backbone 4-colouring of (G, F) is clearly a certificate.

To prove it is NP-complete, we give a reduction from NOT-ALL-EQUAL 3SAT.

Let $\mathcal{C} = \{C_1, \dots, C_n\}$ be a collection of clauses of size three over a set U of variables. We will construct a graph pair (G, M) such that M is a matching in G .

To do so we need some definitions and gadgets.

Colours 1 and 3 are said to be *twins* and so do the colours 2 and 4. Trivially two vertices joined by an edge of M receives distinct twin colours. Two colours are *siblings* if they are equal or twins.

A *link* with ends u and v and central edge w_1w_2 is a subgraph with vertex set $\{u, v, w_1, w_2\}$ and edge set $\{uw_1, uw_2, vw_1, vw_2, w_1w_2\}$ with $w_1w_2 \in M$. Two ends of a link are said to be *linked*.

Claim 37. *In a circular 2-backbone 4-colouring c , the colours of the ends of a link are siblings.*

Proof. The two vertices w_1 and w_2 are joined by an edge of M , so $\{c(w_1), c(w_2)\} \in \{\{1, 3\}; \{2, 4\}\}$. Hence if u is coloured in $\{1, 3\}$ (resp. $\{2, 4\}$), then $\{c(w_1), c(w_2)\}$ is $\{2, 4\}$ (resp. $\{1, 3\}$), and so v is coloured in $\{1, 3\}$ (resp. $\{2, 4\}$). \square

For each variable $u \in U$, we create a *variable gadget* G^u which is obtained from the distinct vertices $a_1^u, a_2^u, \dots, a_n^u$ by linking, from $1 \leq i \leq n - 1$, the vertices a_i^u and a_{i+1}^u by an link with central edge $b_i^u c_i^u$.

Claim 37 (and its proof) immediately implies the following.

Claim 38. *In a circular 2-backbone 4-colouring of G^u , all the a_u^i are coloured with two sibling colours and all the b_u^i with the two other colours (which are also siblings).*

For each clause $C_i = \ell_1^i \vee \ell_2^i \vee \ell_3^i$, we create a triangle $z_1^i z_2^i z_3^i$. Now for $j = 1, 2, 3$, if ℓ_j^i is the nonnegated literal u , we join z_j^i with a_u^u , and if ℓ_j^i is the negated literal \bar{u} , we join z_j^i with b_u^u . Such edges are said to be red. So far, the obtained graph H is not planar, but we can clearly draw it such that only red edges cross. We can now subdivide every red edge into a red path such that every edge is crossed at most once. We then replace the red edges which are not crossed by a link (with the same end) and two red edges uv and xy that cross each other by the crossing gadget depicted in Figure 12. The resulting graph G is planar and it comes with a matching M .

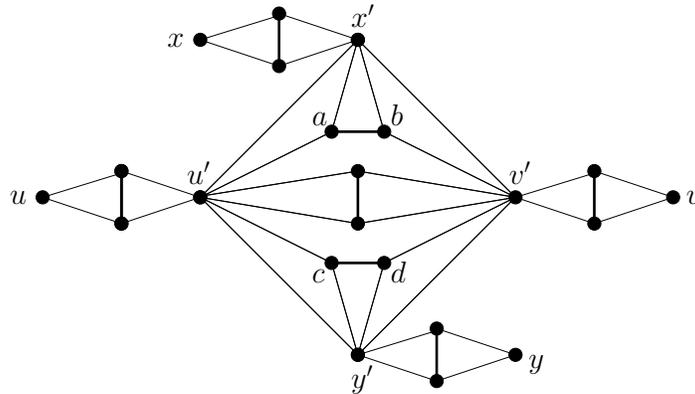


Figure 12: The crossing gadget

Claim 39. *In a circular 2-backbone 4-colouring of the crossing gadget, the colours of u and v are siblings and the colours of x and y are siblings. In addition, for any 4-tuple $\{c_u, c_v, c_x, c_y\}$ such that c_u and c_v are siblings and c_x and c_y are siblings, there is a circular 2-backbone 4-colouring c of the crossing gadget such that $c(u) = c_u$, $c(v) = c_v$, $c(x) = c_x$, and $c(y) = c_y$.*

Proof. Consider first a circular 2-backbone 4-colouring of the crossing gadget. u is linked to u' , which is linked to v' , which in turn is linked to v . Hence, by Claim 37, the colours of u and v are siblings.

Assume that x is coloured in $\{1, 3\}$, then x' is also coloured in $\{1, 3\}$, say 1. The vertices a and b are assigned twin colours, so one is coloured 2 and the other 4. We now distinguish two cases depending on the colour of u' .

1. Assume u' is coloured 3. Then v' must also be coloured 3. The vertices c and d are assigned twin colours, so one is coloured 2 and the other 4. Hence y' is coloured 1.
2. Assume u' is coloured in $\{2, 4\}$. Without loss of generality, we may assume it is coloured 2. Then a is coloured 4 and b is coloured 2, so v' is coloured 4. Hence y' is coloured in $\{1, 3\}$.

In both cases the colour of x and y' are siblings, and so, by Claim 37, the colours of x and y are siblings.

For any 4-tuple $\{c_u, c_v, c_x, c_y\}$ such that c_u and c_v are siblings and c_x and c_y are siblings, finding the desired circular 2-backbone 4-colouring is straightforward and left to the reader. \square

We shall now prove that \mathcal{C} admits a suitable truth assignment if and only if $\text{CBC}_2(G, M) \leq 4$.

Assume first that (G, M) admits a circular 2-backbone 4-colouring. Let ϕ be the truth assignment defined by $\phi(u) = \text{true}$ if all the a_u^i are coloured in $\{1, 3\}$, and $\phi(u) = \text{false}$ if all the a_u^i are coloured in $\{2, 4\}$. Note that is well defined by Claim 38. Now by Claims 37 and 39, for each clause $C_i = \ell_1^i \vee \ell_2^i \vee \ell_3^i$, the vertex z_j^i is coloured in $\{1, 3\}$ if and only if the literal ℓ_j^i is true. But since $z_1^i z_2^i z_3^i$ is a triangle, at least three colours must appear on these vertices, and so at least one from $\{1, 3\}$ and at least one from $\{2, 4\}$. Hence, at least one of the literals of C_i is true and at least one is false. Thus ϕ is suitable.

Reciprocally, assume that \mathcal{C} admits a suitable truth assignment ϕ . If $\phi(u) = \text{true}$, then colour all the a_u^i with 1, all the b_u^i with 2 and all the c_u^i with 4. And if $\phi(u) = \text{false}$, then colour all the a_u^i with 2, all the b_u^i with 1 and all the c_u^i with 3. Now, for each clause $C_i = \ell_1^i \vee \ell_2^i \vee \ell_3^i$, some literal, say ℓ_1^i , is true and some literal, say ℓ_3^i , is false. Then assign 1 to z_1^i , 2 to z_3^i , and colour z_2^i with 3 if ℓ_2^i is true and 4 otherwise. By Claims 37 and 39, this partial colouring may be extended into a circular 2-backbone 4-colouring of (G, M) . \square

Theorem 40. *The following problem is NP-complete.*

Input: A planar graph G and a matching M in G .

Question: Is $\text{CBC}_2(G, M) \leq 5$?

Proof. The reduction is from PLANAR C_5 -COLOURING which is defined as follows:

Input: A planar graph G .

Question: Does G have a homomorphism onto C_5 , the cycle of length 5?

This was proved to be NP-complete by MacGillivray and Siggers [10].

To make the reduction we need an *edge gadget*. This gadget is built from the planar graph $H_1(u, v)$ together with the matching $M_1(u, v)$ depicted in Figure 13.

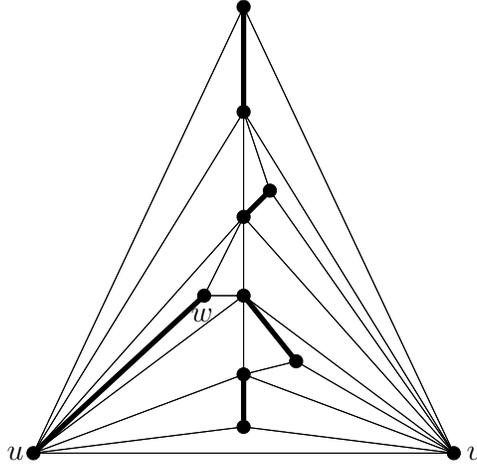


Figure 13: Graph $H_1(u, v)$ with matching $M_1(u, v)$ (in bold)

The graph $H_2(u, v)$ is obtained from $H_1(u, v)$ by replacing the edge uw by $H_1(w, u)$. The matching $M_2(u, v)$ is then the union of $M_1(u, v) \setminus \{uw\}$ and $M_1(w, u)$. Observe that u and v are incident to no edges of $M_2(u, v)$. The pair $(H_2(u, v), M_2(u, v))$ is the edge gadget.

Broersma et al. [5] proved that in any circular 2-backbone 5-colouring of $(H_1(u, v), M_1(u, v))$, vertices u and v receive colours which are cyclically 2 apart. In addition, it is straightforward to see that any precolouring of u and v with colours that are cyclically 2 apart can be extended into a circular 2-backbone 5-colouring of $(H_1(u, v), M_1(u, v))$. These two facts imply the following claim.

Claim 41.

- (i) *In any circular 2-backbone 5-colouring of $(H_2(u, v), M_2(u, v))$, vertices u and v receive colours which are cyclically 2 apart.*
- (ii) *Any precolouring of u and v with colours that are cyclically 2 apart can be extended into a circular 2-backbone 5-colouring of $(H_2(u, v), M_2(u, v))$.*

Let H be an instance of PLANAR C_5 -COLOURING. Replace each edge $uv \in E(G)$ by an edge gadget $(H_2(u, v), M_2(u, v))$ to obtain a planar graph G and a matching M (the union of the $M_2(u, v)$). By Claim 41-(i), every circular 2-backbone 5-colouring of (G, M) induces a C_5 -colouring of H (the vertices of the C_5 are the colours $(1, 3, 5, 2, 4)$). Conversely, by Claim 41-(ii), any C_5 -colouring of H can be extended into a circular 2-backbone 5-colouring of (G, M) . Hence H admits a C_5 -colouring if and only if (G, M) admits a circular 2-backbone 5-colouring. \square

Adding long paths along existing edges to transform the matching into a spanning tree, one derives the following:

Theorem 42. *The following problem is NP-complete.*

Input: A planar graph G and a spanning tree T of G .

Question: Is $\text{CBC}_2(G, T) \leq 5$?

4 Further research

Campos et al. [6] proved that if G is planar and T has diameter at most 3, then $\text{BBC}_2(G, T) \leq 5$. Hence one can find the 2-backbone chromatic number of such a pair in polynomial time. One can ask of the complexity for larger diameter.

Problem 43. *For a fixed $d \geq 4$, what is the complexity of finding the 2-backbone chromatic number of (G, T) , when G is planar and T a spanning tree of diameter d ?*

Since, for any fixed $k \leq 4$, deciding if the 2-backbone chromatic number of (G, T) is at most k can be done in polynomial time, if Conjecture 1 holds, Problem 43 is equivalent to finding the complexity of deciding if $\text{BBC}_2(G, T) \leq 5$.

If G is a triangle-free planar graph, then, by Grötzsch's Theorem [8], it is 3-colourable, and so $\text{BBC}_q(G, H) \leq 2q + 1$ and $\text{CBC}_q(G, H) \leq 3q$ for any subgraph H of G . Hence Conjecture 1 and Conjecture 6 for $q = 2$, hold when G is triangle-free. A natural next step would be to prove Conjecture 6 for values of q larger than 2 when G is triangle-free.

Steinberg's Conjecture (1976) states that every planar graph without 4- and 5-cycles is 3-colourable. Towards this, Erdős (1991) proposed the following relaxation of Steinberg's Conjecture: Determine the smallest value of k , such that every planar graph without cycles of length from 4 to k is 3-colourable. The best known bound for such a k is 7 which was proved by Borodin, Glebov, Raspaud and Salavatipour [2]. Hence, an evidence to both Conjecture 6 and Steinberg's Conjecture would be to prove the following:

Conjecture 44. *If G is a planar graph without 4- and 5-cycles and F a spanning forest of G , then $\text{CBC}_2(G, F) \leq 7$.*

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