Colouring complete multipartite and Kneser-type digraphs

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Abstract

The dichromatic number of a digraph $D$ is the smallest $k$ such that $D$ can be partitioned into $k$ acyclic subdigraphs, and the dichromatic number of an undirected graph is the maximum dichromatic number over all its orientations. Extending a well-known result of Lovász, we show that the dichromatic number of the Kneser graph $KG(n,k)$ is $\Theta(n - 2k + 2)$ and that the dichromatic number of the Borsuk graph $BG(n + 1, a)$ is $n + 2$ if $a$ is large enough. We then study the list version of the dichromatic number. We show that, for any $\varepsilon > 0$ and $2 \leq k \leq n^{1-\varepsilon}$, the list dichromatic number of $KG(n,k)$ is $\Theta(n \ln n)$. This extends a recent result of Bulankina and Kupavskii [4] on the list chromatic number of $KG(n,k)$, where the same behaviour was observed. We also show that for any $\rho > 3$, $r \geq 2$ and $m \geq \ln^\rho r$, the list dichromatic number of the complete $r$-partite graph with $m$ vertices in each part is $\Theta(r \ln m)$, extending a classical result of Alon [1]. Finally, we give a directed analogue of Sabidussi’s theorem on the chromatic number of graph products.

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1 Introduction

We consider graphs/digraphs without loops or multiple edges/arcsc. They are all finite unless otherwise specified. A proper $k$-colouring of an undirected graph $G = (V,E)$ is a mapping $f : V \to [k] = \{1,...,k\}$ such that $f^{-1}(i)$ is an independent set for every $i \in [k]$. The chromatic number of $G$, denoted by $\chi(G)$, is the minimum $k$ for which $G$ has a proper $k$-colouring. A proper $k$-colouring of a digraph $D = (V,A)$ is a mapping $f : V \to [k]$ such that $f^{-1}(i)$ is acyclic (i.e. the subdigraph induced by $f^{-1}(i)$ has no directed cycles) for every $i \in [k]$, and the dichromatic number of $D$, denoted by $\overrightarrow{\chi}(D)$, is the minimum $k$ for which $D$ has a proper $k$-colouring. Note that this definition generalizes the usual colouring, in the sense that the chromatic number of a graph is equal to the dichromatic number of its corresponding bidirected digraph. The notion was introduced

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by Neumann-Lara in 1982 [22] and it was later rediscovered by Mohar [19]. Since then, it has been shown that many classical results hold also in this setting [3, 13, 14, 15]. However, some fundamental questions remain unanswered. The dichromatic number of an undirected graph $G$, denoted by $\vec{\chi}(G)$, is the maximum dichromatic number over all its orientations. Erdős and Neumann-Lara conjectured the following.

**Conjecture 1.1.** [5] For every integer $k$ there exists an integer $r(k)$ such that $\vec{\chi}(G) \geq k$ for any undirected graph $G$ satisfying $\chi(G) \geq r(k)$.

For instance, $r(1) = 1$ and $r(2) = 3$. But it is already unknown whether $r(3)$ exists. Mohar and Wu [20] managed to prove the fractional analogue of Conjecture 1.1. Providing further evidence for the conjecture, they showed that Kneser graphs with large chromatic number have large dichromatic number. Improving their bound, we show that the dichromatic number of Kneser graphs is of the order of their chromatic number.

In the 1970s Erdős, Rubin and Taylor [8], and, independently, Vizing [24], introduced the list variant of the colouring problem, which can be carried over to the directed setting as well. A $k$-list assignment to a graph $G$ (or a digraph $D$) with vertex set $V$ is a mapping $L : V \to (\mathbb{Z}_+^k) = \{X \subseteq \mathbb{Z}_+ | |X| = k\}$. A colouring (a mapping) $f : V \to \mathbb{Z}_+$ is said to be accepted by $L$ if $f(v) \in L(v)$ for every $v \in V$ (or just to be acceptable if the list assignment is understood). $G$ (resp. $D$) is $k$-list colourable if every $k$-list assignment accepts a proper colouring. The list chromatic number (or the choice number) of $G$ (resp. the list dichromatic number of $D$), denoted by $\chi_l(G)$ (resp. $\vec{\chi}_l(D)$), is the minimum $k$ such that $G$ (resp. $D$) is $k$-list colourable. Similarly, the list dichromatic number of $G$, denoted by $\vec{\chi}_l(G)$, is the maximum list dichromatic number over all its orientations. Bensmail, Harutyunyan and Le [2] gave a sample of instances where the list dichromatic number of digraphs behaves as its undirected counterpart. Recently, Bulankina and Kupavskii [4] determined up to a constant factor the list chromatic number of a significant fraction of Kneser graphs. We show that their list dichromatic number is of the same order as the list chromatic number.

The paper is organised as follows. In Section 2, we prove that Kneser graphs have large dichromatic number (at least a multiplicative constant of their chromatic number) and we show that the general lower bound for the chromatic number of Borsuk graphs is also a general lower bound for their dichromatic number. In Section 3, we study the list dichromatic number of the complete multipartite graph $K_{m,r}$, determining its asymptotics by extending a classical result of Alon [1]. Then we extend Bulankina and Kupavskii’s result on the list chromatic number of Kneser graphs to the list dichromatic number. Finally, in Section 4, we prove a directed analogue of Sabidussi’s theorem on the chromatic number of Cartesian products of graphs.

## 2 The dichromatic number of Kneser graphs and Borsuk graphs

The *Kneser graph* with parameters $n, k$, denoted by $KG(n, k)$, is the undirected graph with vertex set $\binom{[n]}{k}$ where two vertices $u, v$ are adjacent if and only if $u \cap v = \emptyset$. It is well-known [10, 17, 18] that $\chi(KG(n, k)) = n - 2k + 2$ for $1 \leq k \leq \frac{n}{2}$, as conjectured by Kneser [16, 27].

Mohar and Wu showed that, if $k$ is not too close to $\frac{n}{2}$, the dichromatic number of
$KG(n,k)$ is unbounded as well. More precisely, they proved the following.

**Theorem 2.1.** [20] For any positive integers $n, k$ with $1 \leq k \leq \frac{n}{2}$ we have

$$\chi(KG(n,k)) \geq \left\lfloor \frac{n - 2k + 2}{8 \log_2 \frac{n}{k}} \right\rfloor.$$

Note that, since $\tilde{\chi}(G) \leq \chi(G)$ for any graph $G$, the estimate in Theorem 2.1 is sharp up to a constant factor when $k$ is a constant fraction of $n$. Theorem 2.5 improves this bound for slower growth rates of $k$. Note that it cannot be extended to $k = 1$ due to the following result on tournaments.

**Theorem 2.2.** [6, 7, 11] Let $T$ be a tournament of order $n$. Then $\tilde{\chi}(T) \leq \frac{n}{\log_2 n} (1 + o(1))$.

For the proof of Theorem 2.5 we shall adapt Greene’s proof of Kneser’s conjecture [10]. The following version of Lusternik–Schnirelmann–Borsuk theorem plays a key role.

**Lemma 2.3.** [10] If the sphere $S^n$ is covered with $n + 1$ sets, each of which is either open or closed, then one of the sets contains a pair of antipodal points.

From now on, by $S^n$ we will denote the embedded unit sphere $S(0,1) = \{ x \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1} \mid \| x \| = 1 \} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$ centered at the origin. The following probabilistic lemma will also be of help.

**Lemma 2.4.** Let $G$ be a graph of order $n \geq 2$ and $D$ the random orientation of $G$ obtained by orienting every edge independently with probability $\frac{1}{2}$. Let $E_\ell$ be the event that there exists a subgraph of $G$ isomorphic to $K_{\ell,\ell}$ which is acyclic in $D$. If $5 \log_2 n \leq \ell$ then $\mathbb{P}(E_\ell) < \frac{1}{2}$.

**Proof.** Each acyclic orientation of $K_{\ell,\ell}$ can be extended to a transitive tournament on the same vertex set, and different orientations always extend to different tournaments. Therefore, among the $2^\ell$ possible orientations of $K_{\ell,\ell}$, at most $(2\ell)! \leq (2\ell)^{2\ell} \leq n^{2\ell}$ are acyclic. Since $G$ has at most $\left(\frac{\ell}{2}\right)! \leq n^{2\ell}$ copies of $K_{\ell,\ell}$, we have that $\mathbb{P}(E_\ell) \leq n^{4\ell} 2^{-\ell^2} \leq 2^{-\ell^2/5} \leq 2^{-5}$.

**Theorem 2.5.** There exist a positive integer $n_0$ such that, for all $n \geq n_0$ and $2 \leq k \leq \frac{n}{2}$, we have $\tilde{\chi}(KG(n,k)) \geq \left\lfloor \frac{1}{16} \chi(KG(n,k)) \right\rfloor$.

**Proof.** Let $0 < c < \frac{1}{2}$ be a constant and set $t = \frac{1}{8 \log_2 c}$; we will show that $\tilde{\chi}(KG(n,k)) \geq \lfloor t \chi(KG(n,k)) \rfloor$ if $c$ is smaller than a certain quantity. Picking $c = \frac{1}{4}$ will suffice, although there is some margin to choose larger values. If $cn \leq k \leq \frac{n}{2}$, then the result is implied by Theorem 2.1.

Now suppose that $2 \leq k \leq cn$. We assume for a contradiction that, for any given orientation of $KG(n,k)$, we can find a partition of its vertex set into $d = \lfloor t(n - 2k + 2) \rfloor - 1$ acyclic subsets $A_1, \ldots, A_d$. Let $X \subseteq S^d \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{d+1}$ be a set of $n$ points on the unit sphere centered at the origin. We assume that these points together with the origin are in general position. In particular, there are no $d + 1$ points of $X$ in a common hyperplane through the origin. The set of vertices of $KG(n,k)$ is assumed to be $\binom{X}{k}$.

Let $s = tk + (1 - t) \left( \frac{n}{2} + 1 \right)$ and $\ell = \left\lfloor \frac{1}{4} \ell \right\rfloor$ (note that $d \geq 1$; otherwise, the result is immediate). We define $U_i$ as the set of points $x \in S^d$ for which there exist $\ell$ different
vertices $A_1, ..., A_\ell \in \mathcal{A}_i$ such that $x \cdot y > 0$ for every $y \in A_1 \cup \ldots \cup A_\ell$. That is, $U_i$ is the set of poles of the open hemispheres containing all the points of $\ell$ vertices of $\mathcal{A}_i$. It is clear that $U_i$ is an open set of $S^d$. Additionally, we define $F = S^d \setminus U_1 \setminus \ldots \setminus U_d$. By Lemma 2.3, one of the sets $U_1, ..., U_d, F$ contains two antipodal points.

Suppose that $U_i$ contains two antipodal points $x, -x$. Then the hemispheres with pole $x, -x$ each contain the points of $\ell$ vertices of $\mathcal{A}_i$. Therefore $KG(n,k)[\mathcal{A}_i]$ has a subgraph isomorphic to $K_{\ell,\ell}$. By Lemma 2.4, $\ell \leq 5 \log_2 \binom{n}{k} \leq 5k \log_2 n$. On the other hand,

$$\ell \geq \frac{\binom{s}{k}}{d} \geq \frac{1}{n} \frac{|s|(|s| - 1) \ldots (|s| - k + 1)}{k!} \geq \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{|s|}{k} \right)^k \geq \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{s - 1}{k} \right)^k \geq \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{(1 - t)n}{2k} \right)^k.$$ 

We distinguish two cases.

**Case 1.** $2 \leq k \leq n^{1/4}$.

In this case

$$\ell \geq \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{(1 - t)n}{2k} \right)^k \geq \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{(1 - t)n^{1/2}}{2} \right)^k \geq \frac{1}{n^{1/2}} \left( \frac{(1 - t)n^{1/2}}{2} \right)^k,$$

contradicting, when $n$ is large, that $\ell \leq 5k \log_2 n \leq 5cn \log_2 n$.

**Case 2.** $n^{1/2} \leq k \leq cn$.

In this case

$$\ell \geq \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{(1 - t)n}{2k} \right)^k \geq \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{1 - t}{2c} \right) n^{1/2}.$$

Provided that $1 - t - 2c > 0$, this contradicts that $\ell \leq 5k \log_2 n \leq 5cn \log_2 n$ when $n$ is large. Note that by picking $c = \frac{1}{4}$ we have $1 - t - 2c = 1 - \frac{1}{16} - \frac{1}{2} > 0$.

In conclusion, $F$ must contain two antipodal points $x, -x$. But then the hemispheres with pole $x, -x$ each contain at most $|s| - 1$ points of $X$. Indeed, if one of them contained $|s|$ points, it would contain the points of $\binom{|s|}{k} > \left( \frac{1}{2} \right)^{|s|} d = (\ell - 1)d$ vertices, so at least $\ell$ vertices of the same colour would be involved. Hence, there are at least $n - 2(|s| - 1) \geq n - 2s + 2 = t(n - 2k + 2) \geq d + 1$ points of $X$ on the hyperplane separating the two hemispheres, contradicting the general position of $X \cup \{0\}$. □

Kneser’s conjecture remained open for more than two decades [16, 27]. The famous resolution by Lóvasz [17] was inspired by the analogy between Kneser graphs and Borsuk graphs. Let $n$ be a natural number and $a \in (0,2)$ a real number. The Borsuk graph with parameters $n + 1$ and $a$, denoted by $BG(n + 1, a)$, is the undirected graph with vertex set $S^n = \{ x \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1} \mid \| x \| = 1 \}$ where two vertices $x, y$ are adjacent if and only if $\| y - x \| \geq a$. The study of the chromatic number of Borsuk graphs can be linked with geometric packing/covering problems. If $a$ is large enough, an $(n + 2)$-colouring of $BG(n + 1, a)$ can be obtained by projecting the faces of an inscribed $(n + 1)$-dimensional simplex. It turns out that this cannot be improved, no matter how close $a$ is to 2. Indeed, it is known that $\chi(BG(n + 1, a)) \geq n + 2$ for every $a \in (0, 2)$, which is in fact equivalent to the Borsuk–Ulam theorem. The rest of the present section is devoted to prove that the dichromatic number of Borsuk graphs admits the same general lower bound.

**Theorem 2.6.** $\bar{\chi}(BG(n + 1, a)) \geq n + 2$ for any $n \geq 1$ and any $a \in (0, 2)$.  

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Proof. Let us denote by $B(x, r)$ the open ball $\{y \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1} \mid \|y - x\| < r\}$. Let $\delta \in (0, 2)$ such that every point in $B(x, \delta) \cap S^n$ is adjacent to every point in $B(-x, \delta) \cap S^n$ for any $x \in S^n$. Let $\ell$ be an integer that for now remains unspecified, but that is assumed to be as large as desired. We define $m = \left\lceil \frac{\sqrt{\ell - 1}(n + 1)}{2} \right\rceil + 1 \leq 2^{\frac{\sqrt{\ell - 1}(n + 1)}{2}}$ and $c = \frac{\delta}{m \sqrt{n + 1}}$.

An open hypercube of $\mathbb{R}^{n+1}$ is the image by a rigid transformation of a product of intervals $(0, \lambda)^{n+1} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$, where $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}^+$. The length of its side is $\lambda$ and the length of its longest diagonal is its diameter (i.e. $\lambda \sqrt{n + 1}$). Let $Q_c$ be the set of open hypercubes of the form $(ck_1, ck_1 + c) \times \ldots \times (ck_{n+1}, ck_{n+1} + c)$ with $(k_1, \ldots, k_{n+1}) \in \mathbb{Z}^{n+1}$. We will make use of the following easy observations about $Q_c$.

Observation 1. For every $x \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$, $B(x, \delta)$ contains at least $m^{n+1}$ hypercubes of $Q_c$.

Proof. Consider an open hypercube $Q$ of longest diagonal $\delta$ with $x \in Q$. Clearly $Q \subseteq B(x, \delta)$ and the side of $Q$ is $\frac{\delta}{\sqrt{n + 1}}$. This implies the claim. \qed

Observation 2. $B(0, 1 + 2\delta)$ is contained in any open hypercube $Q$ of side $2c \left\lceil \frac{1+2\delta}{c} \right\rceil$ centered at the origin. Moreover, one (in fact exactly one) such $Q$ can be obtained as the interior of the closure of the union of $(2 \left\lceil \frac{1+2\delta}{c} \right\rceil)^{n+1}$ hypercubes of $Q_c$.

Let $Q'_c \subseteq Q_c$ be the set of $(2 \left\lceil \frac{1+2\delta}{c} \right\rceil)^{n+1}$ hypercubes from Observation 2. For each $Q \in Q'_c$ choose a point $x_Q \in Q$. Let $y_Q$ be the point where the open ray starting at the origin and passing through $x_Q$ intersects $S^n$. Since $n \geq 1$ we can assume that the points $x_Q$ have been chosen so that $y_Q \neq y_{Q'}$ if $Q \neq Q'$. Let $Y = \{y_Q \mid Q \in Q'_c\}$. Note that

$$|Y| = |Q'_c| = \left(2 \left\lceil \frac{(1 + 2\delta)m\sqrt{n + 1}}{\delta} \right\rceil \right)^{n+1} \leq \left(\frac{8(1 + 2\delta)\sqrt{n + 1}}{\delta} \right)^{n+1}(\ell - 1)(n + 1).$$

Observation 3. For every $x \in S^n$, $B(x, \delta)$ contains at least $m^{n+1}$ points of $Y$.

Proof. Since $B((1 + \delta)x, \delta) \subseteq B(0, 1 + 2\delta)$, all hypercubes of $Q_c$ intersecting $B((1 + \delta)x, \delta)$ are in $Q'_c$. Hence, by Observation 1, $B((1 + \delta)x, \delta)$ contains $m^{n+1}$ hypercubes of $Q'_c$. The points in $Y$ corresponding to these hypercubes all lie in $B(x, \delta)$. \qed

We now consider the finite induced subgraph $H = BG(n + 1, a)|Y|$ of $BG(n + 1, a)$. It will be enough to show that $\overline{\chi}(H) \geq n + 2$. Let us assume for a contradiction that each orientation of $H$ admits a partition of $Y$ into $n + 1$ acyclic subsets $Y_1, \ldots, Y_{n+1}$. For $i \in [n + 1]$ let $U_i = \{x \in S^n \mid |B(x, \delta) \cap Y_i| \geq \ell\}$. Clearly, $U_i$ is an open set of $S^n$. Moreover, $S^n = U_1 \cup \ldots \cup U_{n+1}$. Indeed, otherwise $B(x, \delta)$ would contain at most $(\ell - 1)(n + 1) < m^{n+1}$ points of $Y$ for some $x \in S^n$, contradicting Observation 3. Therefore, by Lemma 2.3, $U_i$ contains two antipodal points $x$ and $-x$ for some $i \in [n + 1]$.

By the choice of $\delta$, we know that in $H$ there is a copy of $K_{\ell, \ell}$ of colour $i$. Now, $5 \log_2 |Y| \leq \ell$ if $\ell$ is large enough. By Lemma 2.4 there is an orientation of $H$ such that every copy of $K_{\ell, \ell}$ in $H$ has a directed cycle, a contradiction. \qed
3 The list dichromatic number of Kneser graphs and complete multipartite graphs

The goal of this section is to study the list dichromatic number of complete multipartite graphs and Kneser graphs. In the first subsection, we study the list dichromatic number of complete multipartite graphs, obtaining tight upper and lower bounds (up to a multiplicative factor). Following this, in the second subsection, we consider Kneser graphs.

3.1 List dichromatic number of complete multipartite graphs

We denote by \( K_{m}^{r} \) the complete \( r \)-partite graph with \( m \) vertices on each part. Answering a question of Erdős, Rubin and Taylor [8], Alon determined, up to a constant factor, the list chromatic number of \( K_{m}^{r} \).

**Theorem 3.1.** [1] There exist two positive constants \( c_1 \) and \( c_2 \) such that for every \( m \geq 2 \) and for every \( r \geq 2 \)
\[ c_1 r \ln m \leq \chi_{\ell}(K_{m}^{r}) \leq c_2 r \ln m. \]

More precise results were obtained in [9]. Adapting Alon’s proof, we find an analogous bound for the list dichromatic number of \( K_{m}^{r} \) when \( r \geq 2 \) and \( m \geq \ln^\rho r \), for any \( \rho > 3 \) (Theorem 3.4). We remark that it is known that \( \vec{\chi}(K_{m}^{r}) = r \), when \( m \) is sufficiently large (see [12]).

**Theorem 3.2.** (Simple Concentration Bound, [21]) Let \( X \) be a random variable determined by \( n \) independent trials, and satisfying the property that changing the outcome of any single trial can affect \( X \) by at most \( c \). Then
\[ \mathbb{P}(|X - \mathbb{E}X| > t) \leq 2e^{-t^2 / 2cn}. \]

We will also invoke the following elementary fact.

**Remark 3.3.** Let \( a \in \mathbb{R}^+ \). The function \( f : (a, \infty) \to \mathbb{R} \) defined by \( f(x) = (1 - \frac{a}{x})^x \) is increasing.

**Proof.**
\[ f'(x) = f(x) \left( \ln \left(1 - \frac{a}{x}\right) + \frac{a}{x-a} \right) \geq f(x) \left( \ln \frac{x-a}{x} + \ln \frac{x-a}{x-a} \right) = 0. \]

**Theorem 3.4.** For every \( \rho > 3 \) there exist constants \( c_1, c_2 \in \mathbb{R}^+ \) such that if \( r \geq 2 \) and \( m \geq \ln^\rho r \) then
\[ c_1 r \ln m \leq \vec{\chi}_{\ell}(K_{m}^{r}) \leq c_2 r \ln m. \]

**Proof.** We may assume that \( m \) is large enough. Let \( V_1, \ldots, V_r \) be the parts of \( K_{m}^{r} \). The upper bound is implied by Theorem 3.1.

**Claim.** There is a constant \( c \) and an orientation \( D \) of \( K_{m}^{r} \) such that, if \( \ell \geq c \ln(rm) \), each subgraph of \( K_{m}^{r} \) isomorphic to \( K_\ell \) or to \( K_{\ell, \ell} \) has a directed cycle in \( D \).

**Proof.** We orient the edges of \( K_{m}^{r} \) at random, independently and with probability \( \frac{1}{2} \). Let \( E \) (resp. \( E' \)) be the event that each subgraph of \( K_{m}^{r} \) isomorphic to \( K_\ell \) (resp. \( K_{\ell, \ell} \)) has a directed cycle. By Lemma 2.4 \( \mathbb{P}(E), \mathbb{P}(E') > \frac{1}{2} \) if \( c \) is sufficiently large. Hence \( \mathbb{P}(E \cap E') > 0. \)
Let $k = \lfloor Cr \ln m \rfloor$, where $0 < C \leq 1$ is a constant for now unspecified. We start by showing that there exists an assignment of $k$-lists from a palette $\mathcal{C}$ of $\lceil r \ln m \rceil$ colours such that, for any given set $A \subseteq \mathcal{C}$ of at most $\frac{1}{3} \ln m$ colours, each part has at least $\frac{1}{2} m^{1-\delta}$ vertices that avoid the colours from $A$ on their lists, where $\delta = 2C \ln 5$.

We assign to each vertex $v$ of $D$ a random $k$-list $L(v)$ chosen independently and uniformly among the $\binom{|\mathcal{C}| - |A|}{k}$ possible $k$-lists. Given $i \in [r]$ and $A \subseteq \mathcal{C}$, consider the random variable $X_{i,A} = |\{v \in V_i \mid L(v) \cap A = \emptyset\}|$. Note that there are exactly $\binom{|\mathcal{C}| - |A|}{k}$ $k$-lists avoiding the colours in $A$. Devoting ourselves to the case $|A| = \lfloor \frac{4}{3} \ln m \rfloor$, we have that

$$EX_{i,A} = m \binom{|\mathcal{C}| - |A|}{k} \geq m \left( \frac{|\mathcal{C}| - |A| - k}{|\mathcal{C}| - k} \right)^k = m \left( 1 - \frac{|A|}{|\mathcal{C}| - k} \right)^k,$$

$$\geq m \left( 1 - \frac{\frac{4}{3} \ln m}{(1 - C)r \ln m - 1} \right)^{Cr \ln m} \geq m \left( 1 - \frac{4}{5} \right)^{2C \ln m} = m^{1-\delta}$$

if $m$ is large enough and $C$ is not too large, using Remark 3.3. By the Simple Concentration Bound (Theorem 3.2),

$$\mathbb{P}(X_{i,A} < \frac{1}{2} m^{1-\delta}) \leq \mathbb{P}(\{X_{i,A} - EX_{i,A}| > \frac{1}{2} m^{1-\delta} \}) \leq 2e^{-\frac{1}{8} m^{1-2\delta}}.$$

Let $E$ be the event that $X_{i,A} < \frac{1}{2} m^{1-\delta}$ for some $i \in [n]$ and $A \subseteq \mathcal{C}$ with $|A| \leq \frac{4}{3} \ln m$. We have that

$$\mathbb{P}(E) \leq r \left( \frac{|\mathcal{C}|}{\left( \frac{3}{4} \ln m \right)^2} \right) 2e^{-\frac{1}{8} m^{1-2\delta}} \leq (r \ln m)^{\frac{1}{4} \ln m + 1} 2e^{-\frac{1}{8} m^{1-2\delta}}$$

$$\leq 2e^m \left( m^{\frac{3}{4}} + \ln m \right) \left( \frac{\ln m + 1}{\ln m} \right)^{\frac{1}{2} m^{1-2\delta}} \leq 2e^{2m^{\frac{3}{8}} \ln m - \frac{1}{8} m^{1-2\delta}}$$

if $m$ is large enough. Consequently, if $\delta < \frac{1}{2} \left( 1 - \frac{1}{\rho} \right)$ and $m$ is large enough, there exists a list assignment $L'$ satisfying the desired property. This is the assignment that we are going to use.

Now let $f$ be a proper colouring of $D$. We claim that there exists a set of indices $I \subseteq [r]$ of size at least $\frac{3}{7} r$ such that $|f(V_i)| \leq 4c \ln^2 (rm)$ for each $i \in I$. Indeed, if more than $\frac{3}{7}$ parts are coloured with more than $4c \ln^2 (rm) \ln m$ colours each, then one of the colours appears on more than $\frac{cr \ln^2 (rm)}{|\mathcal{C}|} \geq c \frac{\ln^2 (rm)}{\ln m} \geq c \ln (rm)$ parts. By the choice of $D$, $f$ is not proper, a contradiction.

For each $i \in [r]$ define the set $A_i = \{ \gamma \in \mathcal{C} \mid |V_i \cap f^{-1}(\gamma)| \geq c \ln (rm) \}$. We claim that if $f$ is acceptable then $|A_i| > \frac{4}{3} \ln m$ for every $i \in I$. Indeed, otherwise, by the choice of the lists, at least $\frac{4}{3} m^{1-\delta}$ vertices of $V_i$ have been coloured with colours not from $A_i$. Thus one of these colours is used at least

$$\frac{1}{4} m^{1-\delta} \leq c \ln (rm)$$

times on $V_i$. If $m$ is large enough, this implies that

$$m^{1-\delta} \leq 8c^2 \ln^3 (rm) \leq 8c^2 (m^{\frac{3}{2}} + \ln m)^3 \leq 9c^2 m^{\frac{3}{2}}.$$
Now, by the choice of $D$, the sets $A_1, \ldots, A_r$ are mutually disjoint. But then

$$|C| \geq \sum_{i=1}^{r} |A_i| \geq \sum_{i \in I} |A_i| > \frac{4}{3} |I| \ln m \geq r \ln m \geq |C|.$$ 

This contradiction shows that there is no acceptable proper colouring for the $k$-list assignment $L'$.

We do not know what happens for other values of $m, r$. What is clear is that Theorem 3.4 is not valid in general. Indeed, if $m \leq \ln r$ then the following theorem implies that $\chi(K_{m,r}) \leq \chi'(K_{m,r}) \leq cr$ for some constant $c$.

**Theorem 3.5.** [2] Let $T$ be a tournament of order $n$. Then $\chi'_\ell(T) \leq \frac{n}{\log_2 n}(1 + o(1))$.

### 3.2 List dichromatic number of Kneser graphs

Here we investigate the list dichromatic number of Kneser graphs. The list chromatic number of Kneser graphs was recently studied by Bulankina and Kupavskii. They proved the following two results.

**Theorem 3.6.** [4] For any positive integers $n, k$ with $1 \leq k \leq n^2$ we have $\chi_\ell(KG(n, k)) \leq n \ln \frac{n}{k} + n$.

**Theorem 3.7.** [4] For every $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists a constant $c_\varepsilon > 0$ such that $\chi_\ell(KG(n, k)) \geq c_\varepsilon n \ln n$ for all $n, k$ with $2 \leq k \leq n^{2-\varepsilon}$.

However, good lower bounds for larger values of $k$ are still unknown. Clearly, the upper bound of Theorem 3.6 trivially generalises to the dichromatic number. The rest of the subsection is devoted to the proof of the directed analogue of Theorem 3.7; that is, we show that the lower bound can be strengthened to digraphs. The proof is achieved by a sequence of lemmas, which involve the argument of Bulankina and Kupavskii, as well as ideas from Mohar and Wu [20]. As in Theorem 3.7, we do not know if the bound on $k$ can be extended to $2 \leq k \leq n^{1-\varepsilon}$ for an arbitrarily small $\varepsilon > 0$.

**Theorem 3.8.** For every $\varepsilon > 0$ there exists a constant $c_\varepsilon > 0$ such that $\chi'_\ell(KG(n, k)) \geq c_\varepsilon n \ln n$ for all $n, k$ with $2 \leq k \leq n^{2-\varepsilon}$.

Let $G = (V, E)$ be a graph, $\mathcal{C}$ a collection of subsets of $V$ and $s, t$ positive integers. We say that $\mathcal{C}$ is an $(s, t)$-collection of $V$ if

(i) $|\mathcal{C}| \leq s$;

(ii) $\forall C \in \mathcal{C}$ $|C| \leq t$.

Given a list assignment $L$, we denote by $U = \cup_{v \in V(G)} L(v)$ the total set of colours, referred to as the palette, and we set $u = |U|$. The partitions $P$ of $V$ considered in the sequel will always have $u$ (not necessarily non-empty) parts (we always implicitly or explicitly assume that the partitions are acyclic, i.e., that each part of $P$ induces an acyclic digraph). It will be convenient to regard as distinct any two partitions arising from different colourings. Thus, partitions will be thought as indexed by $U$ (but for simplicity we will continue calling them just “partitions”).

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We say that a partition $P$ of $V$ is covered by an $(s, t)$-collection $C$ (or that $C$ is an $(s, t)$-cover of $P$) if each part determined by $P$ is contained in some $C \in C$. Let $P = (P_1, ..., P_n)$ be a partition. We say that a list assignment $L$ of $G$ accepts $P$ if, for every $i \in [u]$ and every $v \in P_i$, $i \in L(v)$. Otherwise, we say that $L$ rejects $P$.

In what follows, $\ell_1$ and $\ell_2$ are integers. Define the function $g(\ell_1, \ell_2, n, s, t, u) := s^n e^{- \frac{2^{4t_1u t_2}}{t_1 t_2}}$.

**Lemma 3.9.** Let $G = (V, E)$ be an undirected graph of order $n$, $C$ an $(s, t)$-collection of $V$ and $\mathcal{P}$ the family of partitions of $V$ covered by $C$. Let $L_1$ be an $\ell_1$-list assignment for $G$ from a palette of $u$ colours and $L_2$ a random $\ell_2$-list assignment for $G$ where, for every $v \in V$, $L_2(v)$ is chosen independently and equiprobably among $\binom{L_1(v)}{\ell_2}$. If $4tu \leq (\ell_1 - \ell_2)n$, then

$$\mathbb{P}(L_2 \text{ accepts some } P \in \mathcal{P}) < g(\ell_1, \ell_2, n, s, t, u) = s^n e^{- \frac{2^{4t_1u t_2}}{(\ell_1 - \ell_2)n^2}}.$$

**Proof.** Let $C = (C_1, ..., C_u) \in C^u$ be any $u$-tuple of elements of $C$. For every $v \in V$, let $r_C(v)$ be the number of indices $i \in [u]$ such that $v \in C_i$. Consider the subset of vertices $W_C = \{v \in V \mid r_C(v) \leq \frac{2tu}{n} \}$. We claim that $|W_C| > \frac{1}{2}n$. Indeed, otherwise

$$tu \geq \sum_{i=1}^{u} |C_i| = \sum_{v \in V} r_C(v) \geq \sum_{v \in V \setminus W_C} r_C(v) > tu.$$

Moreover, for any $v \in W_C$ the probability $p_C(v)$ that $v \notin \bigcup_{i \in L_2(v)} C_i$ is at least

$$\frac{(\ell_1 - r_C(v)) \ell_2}{\ell_1} = \frac{\ell_2}{\ell_1 - \ell_2 + k} \geq \left(1 - \frac{r_C(v)}{\ell_1 - \ell_2}\right)^{\ell_2} \geq \left(1 - \frac{2tu}{(\ell_1 - \ell_2)n}\right)^{\ell_2} \geq \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{\frac{4t_1u t_2}{(\ell_1 - \ell_2)n^2}} =: p,$$

using Remark 3.3 and the inequality $4tu \leq (\ell_1 - \ell_2)n$. Therefore, the probability that there is some $u$-tuple $C = (C_1, ..., C_u)$ of elements of $C$ such that $v \in \bigcup_{i \in L_2(v)} C_i$ for every $v \in V$ is at most

$$\sum_{C \in C^u} \prod_{v \in W_C} (1 - p_C(v)) < s^n (1 - p)^{\frac{1}{2}n} \leq s^n e^{- \frac{1}{2}np}.$$

Since every $P \in \mathcal{P}$ is covered by $C$, each of the $u$ parts of any such $P$ is contained in some $C \in C$, so the result follows.

Let $G, H$ be graphs. The tensor product $G \times H$ of $G$ and $H$ is the graph with vertex set $V(G) \times V(H)$ where two vertices $(v, x)$ and $(w, y)$ are adjacent if and only if $v, w$ are adjacent in $G$ and $x, y$ are adjacent in $H$. The tensor product of complete graphs $K_n \times K_n$ is going to play an auxiliary role; we denote it by $G_n$. Given $S \subseteq V(G_n)$, we call $\pi_1(S)$ and $\pi_2(S)$ the projection of $S$ to the first and second coordinate, respectively. The rows (resp. columns) of $S$ are the subsets of $S$ of the form $S \cap \{i\}$ (resp. $S \cap \{[n] \times \{i\}\}$), where $i \in [n]$. Now we give some properties of $G_n$.

**Lemma 3.10.** For any $n \geq 2$, there is an orientation $D_n$ of $G_n$ (resp. of $K_2 \times G_n$) such that, for every $S, T \subseteq V(G_n)$ satisfying
\begin{itemize}
\item[i)] $|S|, |T| \geq 30 \ln n$ and
\item[ii)] $\pi_i(S) \cap \pi_i(T) = \emptyset$ for $i \in \{1, 2\}$,
\end{itemize}
the subdigraph of $D_n$ induced by $S \cup T$ \textup{(}resp. by $(\{1\} \times S) \cup (\{2\} \times T)$\textup{)} has a directed cycle.

\textbf{Proof.} Since in $G_n[S \cup T]$ \textup{(}resp. in $(K_2 \times G_n)[(\{1\} \times S) \cup (\{2\} \times T)]$\textup{)} all edges between $S$ and $T$ \textup{(}resp. between $\{1\} \times S$ and $\{2\} \times T$\textup{)} are present, the conclusion follows from Lemma 2.4. 

We define an $(s_n, t_n)$-collection $C_{G_n}$ of $V(G_n)$ as follows. Let $L_{G_n} = \{(i) \times [n] \mid i \in [n]\} \cup \{[n] \times (i) \mid i \in [n]\}$ be the set of rows and columns of $V(G_n)$ and \[
Q_{G_n} = \begin{cases}
\{ A \times B \mid A, B \in ([n]) \} & \text{if } 1 \leq 124 \ln n \leq n \\
\{ V(G_n) \} & \text{otherwise.}
\end{cases}
\]

We set $C_{G_n} = \{ L \cup Q \mid L \in L_{G_n}, Q \in Q_{G_n} \}$. Note that $|C_{G_n}| \leq s_n := \max\{1, 2n(124 \ln n)^2\}$ and $|C| \leq t_n := n + [124 \ln n]^2$ for any $C \in C_{G_n}$.

\textbf{Lemma 3.11.} There is an orientation $D_n$ of $G_n$ such that $C_{G_n}$ covers all acyclic partitions of $D_n$.

\textbf{Proof.} It can be assumed that $1 \leq 124 \ln n \leq n$. Let $D_n$ be the orientation from Lemma 3.10 and let $S$ be an acyclic set of $D_n$. Assume for a contradiction that $S$ is not contained in any $C \in C_{G_n}$. Let $L$ be the largest row of $S$, or its largest column if it is larger than its largest row, and let $S' = S \setminus L$. Then $S'$ is not contained in any $Q \in Q_{G_n}$, so $|\pi_i(S')| > 124 \ln n > 90 \ln n + 2$ for some $i \in \{1, 2\}$. Assume that $i = 1$ (if $i = 2$, the argument below is repeated with rows instead of columns). Let $L'$ be the largest column of $S'$. We distinguish three cases. We will show that, in each case, we can find two sets in $S$ satisfying the hypotheses of Lemma 3.10. This will yield a contradiction since $S$ is acyclic.

\textbf{Case 1.} $|L'| > 60 \ln n + 2$.

Recall that $|L| \geq |L'|$. Therefore we can find a subset of $L$ and a subset of $L'$ satisfying the hypotheses of Lemma 3.10.

\textbf{Case 2.} $60 \ln n + 2 \geq |L'| \geq 30 \ln n$.

Since $|\pi_i(S')| > 90 \ln n + 2$, we can find a subset $T$ of $S'$ such that $T$ and $L'$ satisfy the hypotheses of Lemma 3.10.

\textbf{Case 3.} $|L'| \leq 30 \ln n$.

Let $T_1, \ldots, T_k$ be a minimal set of columns of $S'$ satisfying $|\pi_i(\bigcup_{j=1}^k T_j)| \geq 30 \ln n$. By minimality, $|\pi_i(\bigcup_{j=1}^k T_j)| \leq 60 \ln n$. Hence, as in Case 2, we can find a subset $T$ of $S'$ such that $T$ and $\bigcup_{j=1}^k T_j$ satisfy the hypotheses of of Lemma 3.10.

In any case, Lemma 3.10 yields a cycle in $S$, the desired contradiction. 

We are now in position to determine the order of $\widetilde{\chi}_{\ell}(KG(n, k))$ when $k$ is bounded by a constant.
Lemma 3.12. There is a constant $c \in \mathbb{R}^+$ such that $\chi_{\ell}(KG(n,k)) \geq c n^2 \ln \frac{n}{k}$ for every $2 \leq k \leq \frac{n}{12}$.

Proof. First note that $G_{\{\frac{n}{k}\}}$ is isomorphic to a subgraph of $KG(n,k)$. Indeed, if we take $|\frac{n}{k}| + 1$ pairwise disjoint subsets $I, J_1, \ldots, J_{\frac{n}{k}} \subseteq [n]$ with $|I| = \lfloor \frac{n}{k} \rfloor$ and $|J_1| = \ldots = |J_{\frac{n}{k}}| = k - 1$, then the set of vertices $S = \{i \cup J_j \mid i \in I, 1 \leq j \leq \lfloor \frac{n}{k} \rfloor\} \subseteq \binom{n}{k}$ induces a copy of $G_{\{\frac{n}{k}\}}$.

Thus it suffices to show that $\chi_{\ell}(G_{\frac{n}{k}}) \geq c n \ln \frac{n}{k}$ for some $c > 0$. Assume that $n$ is large enough. Given $G_{\frac{n}{k}}$, consider the orientation $D_n$ from Lemma 3.11. We know that $C_{G_{\frac{n}{k}}}$ covers all acyclic partitions of $D_n$. Let $u_{\frac{n}{k}} = \ell_{1,\frac{n}{k}} = \lfloor \frac{n}{k} \ln \frac{n}{k} \rfloor$ and $\ell_{2,\frac{n}{k}} = \lfloor cu_{\frac{n}{k}} \rfloor$, where $c < 1$ is a positive constant to be defined later. Let $L_{1,\frac{n}{k}}$ be the canonical $\ell_{1,\frac{n}{k}}$-list assignment to $D_n$ (i.e. $L_{1,\frac{n}{k}}(v) = [u_{\frac{n}{k}}]$ for every $v \in V(D_n)$). It is clear that $4\ell_{2,\frac{n}{k}}u_{\frac{n}{k}} \leq (\ell_{1,\frac{n}{k}} - \ell_{2,\frac{n}{k}})\ln^2 n$ and

$$\ln g(\ell_{1,\frac{n}{k}}, \ell_{2,\frac{n}{k}}, \ln n, s_{\frac{n}{k}}, t_{\frac{n}{k}}, u_{\frac{n}{k}}) \leq 330n \ln^3 n - \frac{n}{2} \frac{ln^2}{(1-c) \log^2 e} < 0$$

if $\frac{n}{k}$ is large enough and $c$ has been chosen so that $\frac{8c}{(1-c) \log^2 e} < 1$. Now, by Lemma 3.9

$$\chi_{\ell}(D_n) > \ell_{2,\frac{n}{k}}.$$

The previous lemma handles the case when $k$ is small. For larger values of $k$, we need to modify the definition of a cover. Let $H = (V,E)$ be a graph, $C$ an $(s,t)$-collection of $V$ and $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}^+$. Consider the graph $K_2 \times H$ and one of its orientations $D$. We say that an acyclic partition $P$ of $V(D)$ is semicovered by the pair $(C,\lambda)$ (or that $(C,\lambda)$ is an $(s,t)$-semicover of $P$) if for every acyclic set $S = \{(1) \times S_1\} \cup \{(2) \times S_2\} \subseteq P$ such that every $S_i \subseteq \{1\} \times C_1$ and $S_2 \subseteq \{2\} \times C_2$ for some $C_1, C_2 \in C$, or $S_i \subseteq \{i\} \times C$ and $|S_i| < \lambda$ for some $i \in \{1,2\}$ and some $C \in \mathcal{C}$. Theorem 3.13. Let $G, H$ be graphs. Let $m_G$ be the size of $G$ and $m_H$ the order of $H$. Let $D$ be an orientation of $K_2 \times H$ and $(C,\lambda)$ an $(s,t)$-semicover of all acyclic partitions of $D$. Let $\ell_1, \ell_2$ be positive integers such that $8t\ell_1 \leq (\ell_1 - \ell_2)n_H$, $m_G g^2(\ell_1, \ell_2, n_H, s, t, 2\ell_1) \leq 1$ and $\lambda \ell_1 \leq n_H$. If $\chi_{\ell}(G) > \ell_1$, then $\chi_{\ell}(G \times H) > \ell_2$.

Proof. Suppose that $\chi_{\ell}(G \times H) \leq \ell_2$. Let $L_1$ be any $\ell_1$-list assignment for $G$. Consider a random $\ell_2$-list assignment $L_2$ for $G \times H$, where for each $v \in V(G)$ and each $x \in \{v\} \times V(H)$, $L_2(x)$ is chosen independently and equiprobably among $\binom{L_1(v)}{\ell_2}$. For each edge $\{v,w\}$ of $G$, let $C_{\{v,w\}} = \{(v) \times C_1\} \cup \{(w) \times C_2\}$, for $C_1, C_2 \in \mathcal{C}$. We orient the subgraph induced by $\{v,w\} \times V(H)$ according to $D$ (in any of the two possible ways). This results in an orientation of $G \times H$ that we will call $\overline{G \times H}$. By applying Lemma 3.9 to $(G \times H)[\{v,w\} \times V(H)]$ with a palette of size $u = 2\ell_1$, we see that the probability that $L_2|_{\{v,w\} \times V(H)}$ accepts some partition covered by $C_{\{v,w\}}$ is smaller than $g(\ell_1, \ell_2, 2n_H, \ell_1, \ell_2, 2\ell_1) = g^2(\ell_1, \ell_2, n_H, s, t, 2\ell_1)$. Therefore, the probability that this happens for some edge $\{v,w\}$ of $G$ is less than $m_G g^2(\ell_1, \ell_2, n_H, s, t, 2\ell_1) < 1$. Thus we can find a $\ell_2$-list assignment $L_2'$ for $G \times H$ such that, for every $\{v,w\} \in E(G)$, $L_2'|_{\{v,w\} \times V(H)}$ rejects all partitions of $\{v,w\} \times V(H)$ covered by $C_{\{v,w\}}$.

Since $\chi_{\ell}(G \times H) \leq \ell_2$, $\overline{G \times H}$ has a colouring $f_2'$ which is accepted by $L_2'$ and produces no monochromatic cycles. Let us define a colouring $f_1$ for $G$ as

$$f_1(v) = \begin{cases} \gamma_v & \text{if } \exists \gamma C \in C (f_2')^{-1}(\gamma) \cap (\{v\} \times V(H)) \subseteq \{v\} \times C, \text{ where } \gamma_v \text{ is any such } \gamma \\ \gamma_v^+ & \text{otherwise, where } \gamma_v^+ \text{ is any } \gamma \text{ maximizing } |(f_2')^{-1}(\gamma) \cap (\{v\} \times V(H))| \end{cases}$$
Note that \( f_1(v) \in L_1(v) \), for each \( v \in V(G) \). We will show that \( f_1(v) \) is a proper colouring of \( G \), and this contradiction will finish the proof.

Let \( \{v, w\} \) be an edge of \( G \), and suppose for a contradiction that \( f_1(v) = f_1(w) \). Since \( L'_2([v, w] \times V(H)) \) rejects all partitions of \( \{v, w\} \times V(H) \) covered by \( C_{\{v, w\}} \), either \( f_1(v) = \gamma_v \) or \( f_1(w) = \gamma_w \). Without loss of generality, we can assume that \( f_1(w) = \gamma_w \). Since \( f'_2 \) produces no monochromatic cycles, if \( f_1(v) = \gamma_v \) then \((C, \lambda)\) does not semicover all acyclic partitions of \( D \), a contradiction. On the other hand, if \( f_1(v) = \gamma_v^+ \) then \(|(f'_2)^{-1}(\gamma_v^+) \cap (\{v\} \times V(H))| \geq \frac{n_v}{n} \geq \lambda \), also contradicting that \((C, \lambda)\) semicovers all acyclic partitions of \( D \).

Therefore, we have found a proper colouring \( f_1 \) accepted by the \( \ell_1 \)-list assignment \( L_1 \). Since \( L_1 \) was arbitrary we conclude that \( \chi_{\ell}(G) \leq \ell_1 \), ending the proof. \( \square \)

**Lemma 3.14.** For every \( n \) there is an orientation \( D_n \) of \( K_2 \times G_n \) such that all acyclic partitions of \( D_n \) are semicovered by \((C_{G_n}, 2^{13} \ln^2 n)\).

**Proof.** The proof is similar to that of Lemma 3.11. Let \( D_n \) be the orientation of \( K_2 \times G_n \) from Lemma 3.10. Assume that \( 1 \leq |124 \ln n| \leq n \); otherwise the lemma is trivial. Let \( S = (\{1\} \times S_1) \cup (\{2\} \times S_2) \) be an acyclic set in \( D_n \). Assume that \( S_1 \) is not contained in any \( C \in C_{G_n} \). As in the proof of Lemma 3.11 we can find in \( S_1 \) two sets \( L_1, L'_1 \subseteq S_1 \) satisfying the hypotheses of Lemma 3.10. We can assume that \( |L_1| = |L'_1| = |30 \ln n| \).

We argue by contradiction. Suppose that \( |S_2| \geq 2^{13} \ln^2 n \) or that \( S_2 \) is not contained in any \( C \in C_{G_n} \). Let \( T = \{(j_1, j_2) \in S_2 \mid j_1 \notin \pi_1(L_1 \cup L'_1) \text{ or } j_2 \notin \pi_2(L_1 \cup L'_1)\} \). We claim that \( |T| \geq 60 \ln n \). Let us consider two cases.

**Case 1.** \( |S_2| \geq 2^{13} \ln^2 n \).

We have that \( |\pi_1(L_1 \cup L'_1)|, |\pi_2(L_1 \cup L'_1)| \leq 2 |30 \ln n| \leq 64 \ln n \). Therefore \( |T| \geq |S_2| - 64^2 \ln^2 n \geq 60 \ln n \).

**Case 2.** \( S_2 \not\subseteq C \) for any \( C \in C_{G_n} \).

In this case, \( S_2 \not\subseteq Q \) for any \( Q \in Q_{G_n} \). Therefore, \( |\pi_i(S_2)| > 124 \ln n \) for some \( i \in \{1, 2\} \). Since \( |\pi_i(L_1 \cup L'_1)| \leq 2 |30 \ln n| \), we have that \( |T| \geq 124 \ln n - 2 |30 \ln n| \geq 60 \ln n \).

Hence \( |T| \geq 60 \ln n \) in any case. Let \( T_1 = \{(j_1, j_2) \in T \mid j_1 \notin \pi_1(L_1), j_2 \notin \pi_2(L_1)\} \) and \( T'_1 = T \setminus T_1 \). Note that \( T'_1 = \{(j_1, j_2) \in T \mid j_1 \notin \pi_1(L'_1), j_2 \notin \pi_2(L'_1)\} \) by the definition of \( T \). Applying Lemma 3.10 yields the desired contradiction. Indeed, if \( |T_1| \geq 30 \ln n \), then \( (\{1\} \times L_1) \cup (\{2\} \times T'_1) \) has a directed cycle, and if otherwise \( |T'_1| \geq 30 \ln n \), then \( (\{1\} \times L'_1) \cup (\{2\} \times T'_1) \) has a directed cycle. \( \square \)

**Proof of Theorem 3.8** We fix \( \varepsilon \) and assume that \( n \) is large enough. If \( k \) is bounded by a constant, then Lemma 3.12 does the job. Therefore we can assume that \( k \geq 4 \). Note that \( KG([\frac{n}{2}], k-2) \times G_{[\frac{n}{2}]} \) is a subgraph of \( KG(n, k) \). Indeed, consider, for any positive integers \( n_1, n_2, k_1, k_2 \) satisfying \( 2k_1 \leq n_1, 2k_2 \leq n_2, n_1 + n_2 \leq n \) and \( k_1 + k_2 = k \), the set of vertices in \( KG(n, k) \) of the form

\[
S = \left\{ \{i_1, \ldots, i_{k_1}, j_1, \ldots, j_{k_2}\} \mid \{i_1, \ldots, i_{k_1}\} \in \left[\begin{array}{c} [n_1] \\ k_1 \end{array}\right], \quad \{j_1, \ldots, j_{k_2}\} \in \left[\begin{array}{c} n_1 + [n_2] \\ k_2 \end{array}\right] \right\};
\]

the subgraph induced by \( S \) is isomorphic to \( KG(n_1, k_1) \times KG(n_2, k_2) \). By the proof of Lemma 3.12 if \( k_2 \geq 2 \) then \( G_{[\frac{n}{2}]} \) is isomorphic to a subgraph of \( KG(n_2, k_2) \), so we can just take \( n_1 = [\frac{n}{2}], n_2 = [\frac{n}{2}], k_1 = k - 2 \) and \( k_2 = 2 \).
Note that $KG([\frac{n}{2}], k - 2)$ has $m_n = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{3}{2}\right)^{\frac{n}{2} - k + 2}$ edges. Provided that $n$ is sufficiently large, we can find an $\varepsilon' \in (0, 1)$ such that $n^{\frac{3}{2} - \varepsilon} \leq \left[\frac{n}{2}\right]^{rac{3}{2} - \varepsilon'}$. Let $c_{\varepsilon'}$ be the corresponding constant from Theorem 3.7, let $c_{\varepsilon'} = (0, 1)$ be a constant for now unspecified, $\ell_{1,n} = \left[\frac{c_{\varepsilon'} \log \left(\frac{n}{2}\right)}{1 + c_{\varepsilon'}^2} \right] - 1$ and $\ell_{2,n} = \left[\frac{c_{\varepsilon'} \log \left(\frac{n}{2}\right)}{1 + c_{\varepsilon'}^2} \right]$. We apply Lemma 3.13 with the $(s_{\frac{n}{2}}, \ell_{1,n})$-semicover $(C_{G_{\frac{n}{2}}}, 2^{13} \ln^2 \left(\frac{n}{4}\right)$) of the family of acyclic partitions of $D_{\frac{n}{2}}$, the orientation of $K_2 \times G_{\frac{n}{2}}$ from Lemma 3.14. Clearly
\[
8\ell_{\frac{n}{2}} \ell_{1,n} \leq (\ell_{1,n} - \ell_{2,n}) \left[\frac{n}{4}\right]^2,
\]
\[
2^{13} \ln^2 \left[\frac{n}{4}\right] \ell_{1,n} \leq \left[\frac{n}{4}\right]^2
\]
and $\ln m_n + \ln g(\ell_{1,n}, \ell_{2,n}, \left[\frac{n}{4}\right]^2, s_{\frac{n}{2}}, \ell_{1,n}, 2\ell_{1,n}) \leq 2k \ln n + 660c_{\varepsilon'} n \ln^3 n - \frac{1}{25} n^{2 - \frac{50c_{\varepsilon'} c'_{\varepsilon}}{(1 - c_{\varepsilon}') \log_2 c}} < 0$
if $n$ is large enough and $c_{\varepsilon'}$ has been chosen so that $\frac{50c_{\varepsilon'} c'_{\varepsilon}}{(1 - c_{\varepsilon}') \log_2 c} < 1$. Thus Lemma 3.13 and Theorem 3.7 imply that $\chi_i(KG([\frac{n}{2}], k - 2) \times G_{\frac{n}{2}}) > \ell_{2,n}$ if $n$ is large enough. \qed

4 Sabidussi’s theorem

Tensor products are one of the leitmotifs of Section 3. Let us now take a look at another type of graph product. Let $G, H$ be graphs (resp. digraphs). The Cartesian product of $G$ and $H$ is the graph (resp. digraph) $G \square H$ with vertex set $V(G) \times V(H)$ where there is an edge between $(u, x)$ and $(v, y)$ (resp. an arc from $(u, x)$ to $(v, y)$) if and only if either $u = v$ and $(x, y) \in E(H)$ (resp. and $(x, y) \in A(H)$), or $x = y$ and $(u, v) \in E(G)$ (resp. and $(u, v) \in A(G)$). A well-known theorem of Sabidussi [23] states that for any two graphs $G$ and $H$ the chromatic number of its Cartesian product is $\chi(G \square H) = \max\{\chi(G), \chi(H)\}$. His proof can be adapted to show an analogous result for digraphs.

Theorem 4.1. Let $G$ and $H$ be digraphs. Then $\chi(G \square H) = \max\{\chi(G), \chi(H)\}$.

Proof. Let $N = \max\{\chi(G), \chi(H)\}$. Note that both $G$ and $H$ are isomorphic to a subdiagram of $G \square H$. Therefore, $\chi(G \square H) \geq N$.

Now, let $f_G, f_H$ be $N$-colourings of $G, H$. Let $f : V(G \square H) \rightarrow [N]$ be the $N$-colouring of $G \square H$ defined by $f(g, h) \equiv f_G(g) + f_H(h) \mod N$. We claim that $f$ is a proper colouring of $G \square H$. We argue by contradiction. Let $(g_1, h_1), \ldots, (g_1, h_{s_1}), (g_2, h_{s_1 + 1}), \ldots, (g_2, h_{s_2}), \ldots, (g_r, h_{s_{r-1} + 1}), \ldots, (g_r, h_{s_r})$ be the successive vertices of a monochromatic cycle, where $g_i \neq g_i$ and $h_{s_i} = h_{s_i + 1}$ for $i \in [r - 1]$, and $g_r \neq g_1$ and $h_{s_r} = h_1$. The fact that $f$ is constant on these vertices implies that $f_H(h_1) = \ldots = f_H(h_{s_1}) = f_H(h_{s_1 + 1}) = \ldots = f_H(h_{s_r})$. If not all of $h_1, \ldots, h_{s_r}$ are identical, we have found a monochromatic cycle in $H$. If they are all identical, then $r \geq 2$, and we can similarly see that $f_G(g_1) = \ldots = f_G(g_r)$, yielding a monochromatic cycle in $G$. Therefore, $\chi(G \square H) \leq N$. \qed

Hedetniemi’s conjecture proposes a similar statement for tensor products: given any two graphs $G$ and $H$, the chromatic number of its tensor product is (conjectured to be) $\chi(G \times H) = \min\{\chi(G), \chi(H)\}$. That was refuted by Shitov [24]; at the time, the conjecture had been standing for more than five decades. Before the first counterexamples were known, its directed version was formulated. Given two digraphs $G$ and $H$, its tensor
product $G \times H$ is defined to be the digraph with vertex set $V(G) \times V(H)$ where there is an arc from $(g_1, h_1)$ to $(g_2, h_2)$ if and only if $(g_1, g_2)$ is an arc of $G$ and $(h_1, h_2)$ is an arc of $H$.

**Conjecture 4.2.** Let $G$ and $H$ be digraphs. Then $\vec{\chi}(G \times H) = \min\{\vec{\chi}(G), \vec{\chi}(H)\}$.

Note that counterexamples to Conjecture 4.2 can be obtained by taking any counterexample to Hedetniemi’s conjecture and replacing all its edges with bidirected arcs. But what happens if $G, H$ are oriented graphs? In [11] it was proved that Conjecture 4.2 holds when $\min\{\vec{\chi}(G), \vec{\chi}(H)\} \leq 2$.

On the positive side, Zhu proved the fractional version of Hedetniemi’s conjecture [26]. We wonder if this result can be generalized to the dichromatic number of digraphs, if the fractional dichromatic number of a digraph is defined in the natural way.

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**References**


