

## Proper Colorings and p-Partite Structures of the Zero Divisor Graph

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### Recommended Citation

Duane, Anna (2006) "Proper Colorings and p-Partite Structures of the Zero Divisor Graph," *Rose-Hulman Undergraduate Mathematics Journal*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 2 , Article 16.  
Available at: <https://scholar.rose-hulman.edu/rhumj/vol7/iss2/16>

# PROPER COLORINGS AND $p$ -PARTITE STRUCTURES OF THE ZERO DIVISOR GRAPH

ANNA DUANE

ABSTRACT. Let  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$  be the zero divisor graph of the ring  $\mathbb{Z}_m$ . In this paper we explore the  $p$ -partite structures of  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$ , as well as determine a complete classification of the chromatic number of  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$ . In particular, we explore how these concepts are related to the prime factorization of  $m$ .

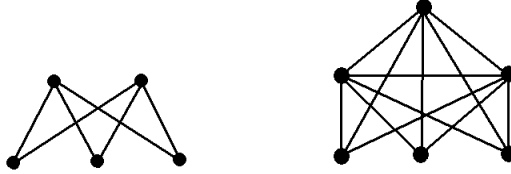
## 1. INTRODUCTION

The *zero divisor graph* of a commutative ring  $R$  is defined as the graph containing one vertex for each nonzero element in the set of zero divisors,  $Z(R)$ , with two vertices  $u$  and  $v$  connected by an edge if and only if  $uv = 0$  in  $R$ . It was shown by Anderson and Livingston in [1] that the zero divisor graph, denoted  $\Gamma(R)$ , is always connected. By convention,  $\Gamma(R)$  does not contain *loops*, i.e., edges that go from a vertex to itself, or multiple copies of the same edge, known as *multiple edges*. Thus we see that  $\Gamma(R)$  is always a simple connected graph, which allows us to explore a large variety of graph theoretic concepts with regard to the zero divisor graph. In [3], Cordova et. al. have already explored diameter and girth limitations, Eulerian and Hamiltonian circuits, and the relationship between clique number and chromatic number in  $\Gamma(R)$  in some detail.

Here, we will continue the explorations begun by Cordova et. al. into the chromatic number  $\chi$  of the zero divisor graph. Specifically, we will focus on  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$  and the relationship between  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m))$  and  $m$  itself. We also investigate the various  $p$ -partite structures in  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$  and their relationship to the prime factorization of  $m$ . Before presenting our results, we begin with some preliminary definitions of graph theoretic terms in the following section.

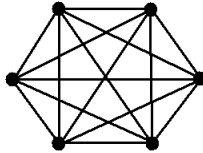
## 2. PRELIMINARIES AND DEFINITIONS

Let  $G$  be a graph with vertex set  $V(G)$  and edge set  $E(G)$ .  $G$  is said to be *complete  $p$ -partite* if  $V(G)$  can be partitioned into  $p$  disjoint sets  $V_1, V_2, \dots, V_p$  such that no two vertices within any  $V_i$  are adjacent, but for every  $v \in V_i, u \in V_j$ ,  $u$  and  $v$  are adjacent. An example of a complete 2-partite (bipartite) and a complete 4-partite graph are given below.



A complete bipartite graph (left) and a complete 4-partite graph (right).

Let  $K_n$  denote the *complete graph* on  $n$  vertices. Recall that a complete graph  $G$  is a simple graph with  $E(G)$  containing every possible edge between the vertices in the set  $V(G)$ . As an example,  $K_6$  is shown below.



$K_6$ , the complete graph on six vertices.

A *subgraph of  $G$  induced by  $V'(G)$* , where  $V'(G) \subseteq V(G)$ , is the graph  $H$  such that  $V(H) = V'(G)$ , and  $e \in E(H)$  if and only if  $e \in E(G)$ . A *clique* is an induced subgraph  $H$  such that  $H = K_n$  for some  $n$ . If  $H$  is the clique in  $G$  with the largest number of vertices, the *clique number* of  $G$  is said to be  $n$ .

A *proper coloring* of a graph  $G$  is a function that assigns a color to each vertex such that no two adjacent vertices have the same color. Throughout this paper, we will assign colors using the set  $K = \{k_1, k_2, \dots\}$ . The *chromatic number* of  $G$ , denoted  $\chi(G)$ , is the smallest number of colors necessary to produce a proper coloring.

Finally, we note that throughout this paper, we will be working extensively with the prime factorization of  $m$  and its relationship to  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$ . In this vein we will write  $m = p_1^{a_1} p_2^{a_2} \dots p_l^{a_l}$  to mean the unique prime factorization of the integer  $m$ , where each  $p_i$  is unique and each  $a_i$  is nonzero.

### 3. $p$ -PARTITE STRUCTURES

In previous studies of  $Z(R)$ , complete bipartite structures have proven to be useful in realizing many interesting algebraic aspects of  $R$ . Axtell et. al. began the exploration of complete bipartite structures in [2], their primary finding being that if a complete bipartite subgraph can be obtained by removing only edges, then the zero divisors form an ideal. In [4], Martinez and Skalak continued the work on this topic. These findings suggest that extending this idea to the more general graph theoretic concept of complete  $p$ -partite graphs may be worthwhile. Thus we begin by looking at the  $p$ -partite algebraically simple rings, namely  $\mathbb{Z}_m$ , focusing on the

prime factorization of  $m$ . Our first result examines the values of  $m$  for which  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$  is a complete graph.

**Theorem 3.1.** *The zero divisor graph of  $\mathbb{Z}_{p^2}$  is  $K_{p-1}$ .*

*Proof.* If  $a \in Z(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2})$ , then  $p|a$ . Thus for any two zero divisors  $a, b$ ,  $p^2|ab$ , so  $ab = 0$ . Giving that, in  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2})$ , each vertex is adjacent to every other vertex. Furthermore, there are  $p-1$  nonzero elements that are divisible by  $p$ , so  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2})$  has  $p-1$  vertices. Therefore,  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2})$  is  $K_{p-1}$ .  $\square$

Complete graphs are a very specific type of  $p$ -partite graph in which each of the  $p$  sets of vertices contains a single vertex. Although these graphs are undoubtedly interesting in their own right, we want a more general classification. In the following result, we see that for all primes  $p$ , there is at least one complete  $p$ -partite graph which is realizable as a zero divisor graph. the relationship between  $p$  and  $m$  in the ring  $\mathbb{Z}_m$ .

**Theorem 3.2.** *The graph  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^3})$  is complete  $p$ -partite, where  $p$  is prime.*

*Proof.* If  $a \in Z(\mathbb{Z}_{p^3})$ , then  $p|a$ . In order for  $ab = 0$ ,  $a, b \neq 0$ ,  $p^2|a$  or  $b$  or both. Furthermore, if  $p^2|a$ , then  $ab = 0$  for all  $b \in Z(\mathbb{Z}_{p^3})$ . Thus in  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^3})$ ,  $a$  is adjacent to all other vertices. In  $\mathbb{Z}_{p^3}$ , there are  $p-1$  nonzero elements divisible by  $p^2$ . Of the remaining zero divisors, no two annihilate each other and thus in  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^3})$ , there are no edges other than those between elements divisible by  $p^2$  and all others. Thus we can split  $V(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^3}))$  into  $p$  independent sets  $V_1, V_2, \dots, V_p$ . Each of  $V_1, \dots, V_{p-1}$  will contain exactly one vertex, divisible by  $p^2$ , and  $V_p$  will contain those zero divisors not divisible by  $p^2$ . Thus  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^3})$  is  $p$ -partite. Since each  $a \in V_1, \dots, V_{p-1}$  annihilates all other elements, all possible edges between these sets exist, so  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^3})$  is complete  $p$ -partite.  $\square$

As the reader can see in the previously mentioned research, complete bipartite structures are not only interesting when they comprise the entire graph, but also when they are merely a piece of the whole. In the following two results, we look at the underlying  $p$ -partite structures in  $\mathbb{Z}_m$  for certain values of  $m$ .

**Theorem 3.3.** *The graph  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^5})$ , where  $p$  is prime, has an induced complete  $p$ -partite subgraph.*

*Proof.* In  $Z(\mathbb{Z}_{p^5})$ , there are exactly  $p-1$  elements divisible by  $p^4$ . As in the proof above, those elements annihilate all other  $a \in Z(\mathbb{Z}_{p^5})$ . Thus, they are adjacent to all other vertices in  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^5})$ . Specifically, the elements divisible by  $p^4$  annihilate all elements divisible by  $p$  but not  $p^2$ . None of the latter set can annihilate each other, so in  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^5})$ , no edges exist between their vertices. Let  $V' = \{v \in V(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^5})) : p^4|v, \text{ or } p|v \text{ and } p^2 \nmid v\}$ . We can divide  $V'$  into  $p$  independent sets,  $V'_1, V'_2, \dots, V'_p$ , where  $V'_i = \{a_i p^4\}$  for some unique vertex  $a_i p^4 \in V'$  where  $1 \leq i < p$ , and  $V'_p = \{v : p|v \text{ and } p^2 \nmid v\}$ . Clearly  $V'_1 \cup V'_2 \cup \dots \cup V'_p = V'$ , and  $V'_1 \cap V'_2 \cap \dots \cap V'_p = \emptyset$ . Without removing any edges from within the vertices of  $V'$ , we can see that for any given  $V'_i$ , no edges exist within its vertices, and for any  $V'_j$ , all possible edges exist between the vertices of  $V'_i$  and  $V'_j$ . Therefore,  $V'$  forms a complete  $p$ -partite induced subgraph of  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^5})$ .  $\square$

**Theorem 3.4.** *The graph  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^q})$ , where  $p$  and  $q$  are prime and  $q$  is odd, has  $(q-1)/2$  induced complete  $p$ -partite subgraphs.*

*Proof.* In  $Z(\mathbb{Z}_{p^q})$ , there are exactly  $p-1$  elements divisible by  $p^{q-1}$ . These elements annihilate all others. For any  $i \leq (q-1)/2$ , there is a distinct set  $A \subset Z(\mathbb{Z}_{p^q})$  such that for all  $a \in A$ ,  $p^i|a$  but  $p^{i+1} \nmid a$ . Since  $i \leq (q-1)/2$ , there exist no  $a, b \in A$  such that  $ab = 0$ . Thus we can use an argument identical to the one of Theorem 3.3 to show that the vertices corresponding to the elements of  $A$  form an induced complete  $p$ -partite subgraph with the elements divisible by  $p^{q-1}$ . There are exactly  $(q-1)/2$  such subsets, so  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^q})$  has  $(q-1)/2$  induced complete  $p$ -partite subgraphs of this type.  $\square$

One limitation of Theorems 3.3 and 3.4 is that they deal with induced subgraphs. In order to form any nontrivial induced subgraph, vertices must be removed from the original graph. In the context of the zero divisor graph, the removal of a vertex is tantamount to removing a zero divisor within the ring. Therefore, the algebraic repercussions of these results in and of themselves might be minimal. One direction for further research could be to extend the above results to deal with subgraphs in which only edges are removed, as these graphical structures have proved much more useful in finding algebraic connections than the induced subgraphs used above.

#### 4. PROPER COLORINGS OF $\mathbb{Z}_m$

One of the most interesting concepts in graph theory is that of a proper coloring. Thus far, little research has been done on proper colorings of the zero divisor graph, and so we start as we did before with algebraically simple structures in order to obtain more complex graph theoretical results. Throughout this section, we will discover that the prime factorization of  $m$  is intricately tied to the chromatic number of  $\mathbb{Z}_m$ . Here we give a complete classification of the chromatic number for each such  $m$ , but our first three results give preliminary proofs for the least complex  $\mathbb{Z}_m$ .

**Theorem 4.1.**  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})$  is  $q$ -colorable, where  $p$  and  $q$  are distinct primes.

*Proof.* If  $a$  and  $b$  are zero divisors in  $\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2}$  such that  $pq|a$  and  $pq|b$  where  $a \neq b$ , then  $a$  and  $b$  are adjacent in the zero divisor graph of  $\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2}$ . Thus all such zero divisors form a clique in  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})$ . There are

$$\frac{pq^2}{pq} - 1 = q - 1$$

such zero divisors. So the clique contains  $q-1$  vertices and can be colored on  $k_1, k_2, \dots, k_{q-1}$ . Now, if  $c$  is any other zero divisor, either  $p \nmid c$  or  $q \nmid c$ , because otherwise  $c$  would be in the clique. If  $q \nmid c$ , then  $c$  is not adjacent to any vertex in the clique, so we can color it with  $k_1$ . If  $q|c$ , then  $c$  is adjacent to every member of the clique, so we must color it with  $k_q$ . We can color all such zero divisors with  $k_q$ , because if we have  $c$  and  $d$  not in the clique and  $q|c$  and  $q|d$  where  $c \neq d$ , then  $p \nmid c, d$ , by the fact that  $c$  and  $d$  are outside the clique. Thus  $c$  and  $d$  cannot be adjacent, and so can be colored with the same color. Thus we have a proper coloring of  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})$  on exactly  $q$  colors.  $\square$

**Corollary 4.2.** For  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})$ , we have  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})) = q$ .

*Proof.* From the previous proof, we know that  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})$  has a clique of size  $q-1$ , so clearly we must have  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})) \geq q-1$ . Also from Theorem 4.1, we see that since  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})$  is  $q$ -colorable,  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})) \leq q$ . Suppose  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})) = q-1$ . Then we can color every vertex with a color used in the clique consisting of elements divisible

by  $pq$ . Suppose  $a$  is a member of the clique. Then  $pq^2|qa$ , so  $q$  is adjacent to all such  $a$ . Thus there is no color in the clique with which we can color  $q$ , so we have a contradiction. Thus  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{pq^2})) = q$ .  $\square$

**Theorem 4.3.** *The graph  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2})$  is  $(pq-1)$ -colorable, where  $p$  and  $q$  are distinct primes.*

*Proof.* As in Theorem 4.1, we observe that for all zero divisors  $a, b$  such that  $pq|a$  and  $pq|b$  where  $a \neq b$ ,  $a$  and  $b$  are adjacent in the zero divisor graph of  $\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2}$ . These vertices form a clique on

$$\frac{p^2q^2}{pq} - 1 = pq - 1$$

vertices. Thus we can color these zero divisors with  $k_1, k_2, \dots, k_{pq-1}$ . For every other zero divisor  $c$ , we see that either  $p \nmid c$  or  $q \nmid c$ . Regardless which case we have, we see that  $c$  is not adjacent to the zero divisor  $pq$ . In the former case, we would see that  $p^2 \nmid pqc$ , and in the latter,  $q^2 \nmid pqc$ . Either way,  $p^2q^2 \nmid pqc$ , so  $c$  and  $pq$  are not adjacent in  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2})$ . Thus we can use the color already assigned to the vertex  $pq$  to color all other vertices in the zero divisor graph, and we have a proper coloring  $pq - 1$  colors.  $\square$

**Corollary 4.4.** *For  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2})$ , we have  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2})) = pq - 1$ .*

*Proof.* In Theorem 4.3, we saw that  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2})$  has a clique of size  $pq-1$ , so  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2})) \geq pq-1$ . Since  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2})$  is  $pq-1$ -colorable,  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2})) \leq pq-1$ . Thus  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^2q^2})) = pq - 1$ .  $\square$

**Theorem 4.5.**  *$\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p_1p_2p_3p_4})$  is 4-colorable, where  $p_1, p_2, p_3, p_4$  are distinct primes.*

*Proof.* Define  $K$  as in Section 2. For every zero divisor  $a$ , we must have that at least one of  $p_1, p_2, p_3$  or  $p_4$  does not divide  $a$ , since if all of these primes divide  $a$ ,  $a = p_1p_2p_3p_4 = 0$ . Thus if  $p_i \nmid a$  where  $i$  is minimal, we color  $a$  with  $k_i$ . Using this scheme, if  $a$  and  $b$  have the same color, say  $k_j$ , then  $j \nmid a$  or  $b$ , so  $j \nmid ab$ , and thus  $ab \neq 0$ . Thus  $a$  and  $b$  cannot be adjacent. Therefore, we have a proper coloring on four colors.  $\square$

**Corollary 4.6.** *For  $\mathbb{Z}_{p_1p_2p_3p_4}$ , we have  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p_1p_2p_3p_4})) = 4$ .*

*Proof.* From Theorem 4.5, we know  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p_1p_2p_3p_4})$  is 4-colorable, so  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p_1p_2p_3p_4})) \leq 4$ . Furthermore, we have that the elements  $p_1p_2p_3$ ,  $p_2p_3p_4$ ,  $p_1p_3p_4$ , and  $p_1p_2p_4$  form a clique on four vertices. Thus  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p_1p_2p_3p_4})) \geq 4$ , so it must be that  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p_1p_2p_3p_4})) = 4$ .  $\square$

The following three theorems give a complete classification of the chromatic number of  $\mathbb{Z}_m$ . The previous three cases are contained within the following three, but we have retained the preliminary results for the purposes of illustrating the proof techniques that will be used in the general case.

**Theorem 4.7.**  *$\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^n})$  is  $p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor}$ -colorable, where  $p$  is prime and  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ .*

*Proof.* Define our set of colors  $K$  as always. If we have two zero divisors,  $u$  and  $v$ , such that  $p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor} | u$  and  $p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor} | v$  where  $u \neq v$ , then  $u$  and  $v$  must be adjacent. There are  $(p^n)/(p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor}) - 1 = p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor} - 1$  such zero divisors, thus we have a clique on those vertices on which we can use the colors  $k_1, k_2, \dots, k_{p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor} - 1}$ . If  $n$  is odd, all

multiples of  $p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor}$  less than  $p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor + 1}$  will not be included in the clique since they will not be adjacent to each other, but they will be adjacent to every vertex in the clique. Because none of these vertices can be adjacent to one another, so we can color all of them with  $k_{p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor}}$ . If  $a$  is any vertex not colored thus far, we know that  $ap^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor} \neq 0$ . So we can use the color for  $p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor}$  to color all such  $a$ . Thus we have a proper coloring on  $p^{\lfloor n/2 \rfloor}$  colors.  $\square$

**Corollary 4.8.** *If  $n$  is odd,  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^n})) = p^{(n-1)/2}$ . Otherwise,  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^n})) = p^{n/2} - 1$ .*

*Proof.* If  $n$  is odd, the result follows clearly from the previous theorem. If  $n$  is even, no vertex outside of the clique defined above can be attached to  $p^{n/2}$ , so we can use the color for this vertex to color everything else. Thus in the latter case we only require  $p^{n/2} - 1$  colors for a proper coloring. Therefore  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_{p^n})) = p^{n/2} - 1$ .  $\square$

**Theorem 4.9.** *Suppose  $m = p_1 p_2 \cdots p_n$ , where each  $p_i$  is a distinct prime. Then  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$  is  $n$ -colorable.*

*Proof.* Define our set of colors  $K$  as usual. For every  $a \in Z(\mathbb{Z}_m)$ , there must exist some  $i$  such that  $p_i \nmid a$ . For each vertex  $v$ , take the smallest such  $i$  and color  $v$  with  $k_i$ . To show that this coloring is proper, suppose two vertices,  $v_1$  and  $v_2$ , are both colored  $k_i$ . Then  $p_i \nmid v_1$  or  $v_2$ , so  $p_i \nmid v_1 v_2$ . Therefore,  $v_1 v_2 \neq 0$  so these two vertices are not adjacent. Thus we have a proper coloring on  $n$  colors.  $\square$

**Theorem 4.10.** *Suppose  $m = p_1^{a_1} p_2^{a_2} \cdots p_n^{a_n}$ , where each  $p_i$  is a distinct prime,  $n \geq 2$ ,  $a_i > 0$  for all  $i$ , and  $a_i > 1$  for some  $i$ . Let  $s = p_1^{\lfloor a_1/2 \rfloor} p_2^{\lfloor a_2/2 \rfloor} \cdots p_n^{\lfloor a_n/2 \rfloor}$ . Then  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$  is  $s$ -colorable.*

*Proof.* Define  $K$  as usual. Every zero divisor  $v$  such that  $v = p_1^{l_1} p_2^{l_2} \cdots p_n^{l_n}$  where  $l_i \geq \lfloor a_i/2 \rfloor$  for all  $i$  is adjacent to every other zero divisor of this form. Each such  $v$  is a multiple of  $p_1^{\lfloor a_1/2 \rfloor} p_2^{\lfloor a_2/2 \rfloor} \cdots p_n^{\lfloor a_n/2 \rfloor}$ . Thus there are

$$\frac{p_1^{a_1} p_2^{a_2} \cdots p_n^{a_n}}{p_1^{\lfloor a_1/2 \rfloor} p_2^{\lfloor a_2/2 \rfloor} \cdots p_n^{\lfloor a_n/2 \rfloor}} - 1 = p_1^{\lfloor a_1/2 \rfloor} p_2^{\lfloor a_2/2 \rfloor} \cdots p_n^{\lfloor a_n/2 \rfloor} - 1 = s$$

such nonzero zero divisors in  $\mathbb{Z}_m$ . These vertices form a clique and can be colored on  $k_1, k_2, \dots, k_{s-1}$ . If any  $a_i$  is odd, then all multiples of  $s$  less than  $p_1^{\lfloor a_1/2 \rfloor} p_2^{\lfloor a_2/2 \rfloor} \cdots p_n^{\lfloor a_n/2 \rfloor}$  will be outside the previously defined clique, but all such elements will be adjacent to all the elements in the clique. We can color these vertices with  $k_s$ . For every other zero divisor  $u$ , there must exist an  $i$  such that  $p_i^{\lfloor a_i/2 \rfloor} \nmid u$ . We see that  $u$  cannot be adjacent to  $p_1^{a_1} p_2^{a_2} \cdots p_i^{\lfloor a_i/2 \rfloor} \cdots p_n^{a_n}$  or to any other vertex  $w$  such that  $p_i^{\lfloor a_i/2 \rfloor} \nmid w$ , so for every such  $u$ , we can take the smallest such  $i$ , and color  $u$  with  $k_t$ , where the vertex  $w = p_1^{a_1} p_2^{a_2} \cdots p_i^{\lfloor a_i/2 \rfloor} \cdots p_n^{a_n}$  is colored on  $k_t$ . Thus we have a proper coloring on  $s$  colors.  $\square$

**Corollary 4.11.** *If  $m$  and  $s$  are defined as in the previous theorem, then  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)) = s$  if at least one  $a_i$  is odd. Otherwise,  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)) = s - 1$ .*

*Proof.* We saw in the previous theorem that for all such  $m$ ,  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$  has a clique of size  $s - 1$ . Thus  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)) \geq s - 1$ . We also saw from this result that  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)) \leq s$  for all  $m$ . Define the vertex  $v = s$ . In the case that some  $a_i$  is odd, we see that  $s \neq p_1^{\lfloor a_1/2 \rfloor} p_2^{\lfloor a_2/2 \rfloor} \cdots p_n^{\lfloor a_n/2 \rfloor}$ , but  $sp_1^{\lfloor a_1/2 \rfloor} p_2^{\lfloor a_2/2 \rfloor} \cdots p_n^{\lfloor a_n/2 \rfloor} = 0$ , so  $v$  is attached to all the vertices in the clique. Therefore, we are forced to use another

color and we have  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)) = s$ . If no  $a_i$  is odd,  $\lfloor a_i/2 \rfloor = \lceil a_i/2 \rceil$  for all  $i$ . So for each vertex  $u$ ,  $p_j^{\lfloor a_j/2 \rfloor} \nmid u$  for some  $j \leq n$ , and we can color all vertices outside the clique using the same process we did in the previous theorem. Thus in this case,  $\chi(\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)) = s - 1$ .  $\square$

## 5. CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To finish, we would like to pose some suggestions for further research in this area. As previously mentioned, a more useful  $p$ -partite structure in the zero divisor graph would be one obtained by only removing edges. One open question is how these structures can be realized in  $\Gamma(\mathbb{Z}_m)$ . With regard to colorability, little research has yet been done on the chromatic numbers of zero divisor graphs of more complex rings. Using the methods and findings of this paper, it may be possible to extend the results to, for example, polynomial rings, power series rings, and other interesting algebraic structures.

Finally, the author would like to personally thank her research advisor, Professor Mike Axtell of Wabash College, for his support, patience and sense of humor throughout the research process. We also thank Wabash College for hosting the REU at which this research was performed, and the National Science Foundation for the financial support that made this research possible.

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