

# An alternative approach to the Five Line Conjecture

Jelena Sedlar

University of Split, Croatia

(joint work with Riste Škrekovski)

5th Pythagorean conference,

Kalamata, Greece

1-6 june 2025.

# Introduction

A **(proper)  $k$ -edge-coloring** of a graph  $G = (V, E)$  is any mapping  $\sigma : E \rightarrow \{1, \dots, k\}$  such that any two adjacent edges have distinct colors.

# Introduction

A **(proper)  $k$ -edge-coloring** of a graph  $G = (V, E)$  is any mapping  $\sigma : E \rightarrow \{1, \dots, k\}$  such that any two adjacent edges have distinct colors.

A **cubic graph**  $G$  is a graph in which every vertex has degree 3.

# Introduction

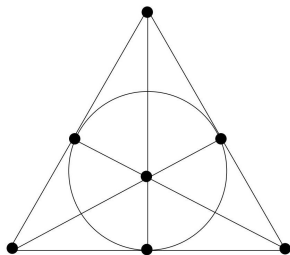
A **Fano plane edge-coloring** of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors being points of the Fano plane;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  belong to a same line of Fano plane.

# Introduction

A **Fano plane edge-coloring** of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors being points of the Fano plane;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  belong to a same line of Fano plane.



# Introduction

A **Fano plane edge-coloring** of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors are points of the Fano plane;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  belong to a same line of Fano plane.

A  **$k$ -line Fano plane coloring** of  $G$  is a coloring which uses only  $k$ -lines.

# Introduction

A **Fano plane edge-coloring** of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors are points of the Fano plane;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  belong to a same line of Fano plane.

A  **$k$ -line Fano plane coloring** of  $G$  is a coloring which uses only  $k$ -lines.

It is known that:

- every bridgeless cubic graph has a 6-line coloring;

# Introduction

A **Fano plane edge-coloring** of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors are points of the Fano plane;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  belong to a same line of Fano plane.

A  **$k$ -line Fano plane coloring** of  $G$  is a coloring which uses only  $k$ -lines.

It is known that:

- every bridgeless cubic graph has a 6-line coloring;
- 4-line coloring is a theoretical minimum.



# Introduction

**Four-line conjecture.** Every bridgeless cubic graph has a four-line coloring.

# Introduction

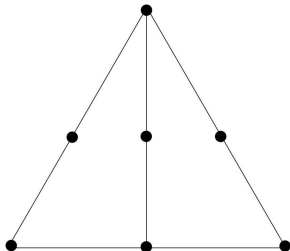
**Four-line conjecture.** Every bridgeless cubic graph has a four-line coloring.

**Five-line conjecture.** Every bridgeless cubic graph has a five-line coloring.

# Introduction

**Four-line conjecture.** Every bridgeless cubic graph has a four-line coloring.

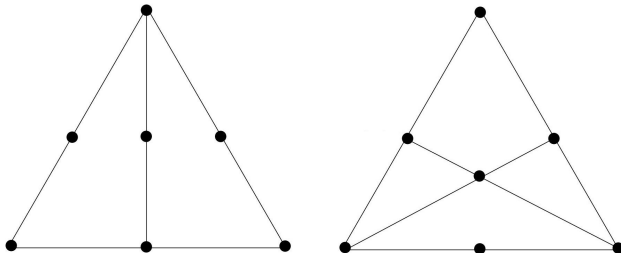
**Five-line conjecture.** Every bridgeless cubic graph has a five-line coloring.



# Introduction

**Four-line conjecture.** Every bridgeless cubic graph has a four-line coloring.

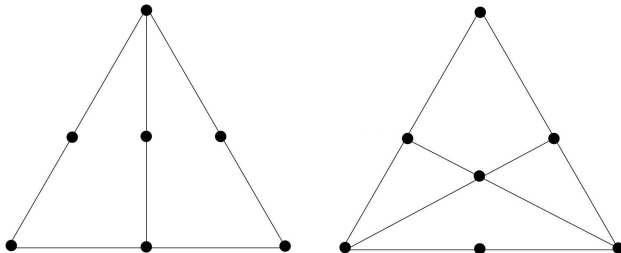
**Five-line conjecture.** Every bridgeless cubic graph has a five-line coloring.



# Introduction

**Four-line conjecture.** Every bridgeless cubic graph has a four-line coloring.

**Five-line conjecture.** Every bridgeless cubic graph has a five-line coloring.



**Remark.** Five-line conjecture can be restated in terms of proper abelian colorings.

# Introduction

A **(proper) abelian edge-coloring** (or  **$A$ -coloring**) of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors being non-zero elements of a finite abelian group  $A$ ;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  have zero sum.

# Introduction

A **(proper) abelian edge-coloring** (or  **$A$ -coloring**) of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors being non-zero elements of a finite abelian group  $A$ ;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  have zero sum.

It is known that every bridgeless cubic graph:

- has an  $A$ -coloring for  $A$  of order  $\geq 12$ ;

# Introduction

A **(proper) abelian edge-coloring** (or  **$A$ -coloring**) of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors being non-zero elements of a finite abelian group  $A$ ;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  have zero sum.

It is known that every bridgeless cubic graph:

- has an  $A$ -coloring for  $A$  of order  $\geq 12$ ;
- does not have an  $A$ -coloring for cyclic groups of order  $< 10$ ;



# Introduction

A **(proper) abelian edge-coloring** (or  **$A$ -coloring**) of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors being non-zero elements of a finite abelian group  $A$ ;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  have zero sum.

It is known that every bridgeless cubic graph:

- has an  $A$ -coloring for  $A$  of order  $\geq 12$ ;
- does not have an  $A$ -coloring for cyclic groups of order  $< 10$ ;
- the existence of a coloring by the remaining **four exceptional groups**  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ ,  $\mathbb{Z}_3 \times \mathbb{Z}_3$ ,  $\mathbb{Z}_{10}$  and  $\mathbb{Z}_{11}$  is an open problem;

# Introduction

A **(proper) abelian edge-coloring** (or  **$A$ -coloring**) of a cubic graph  $G$  is any proper edge-coloring with:

- edge colors being non-zero elements of a finite abelian group  $A$ ;
- three colors meeting at any vertex of  $G$  have zero sum.

It is known that every bridgeless cubic graph:

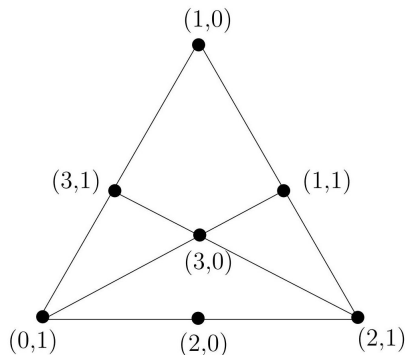
- has an  $A$ -coloring for  $A$  of order  $\geq 12$ ;
- does not have an  $A$ -coloring for cyclic groups of order  $< 10$ ;
- the existence of a coloring by the remaining **four exceptional groups**  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ ,  $\mathbb{Z}_3 \times \mathbb{Z}_3$ ,  $\mathbb{Z}_{10}$  and  $\mathbb{Z}_{11}$  is an open problem;
- the existence of  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring implies the existence of coloring by all three remaining exceptional groups.

# Introduction

**Observation.** Five-line Fano coloring is equivalent to a  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring of a bridgeless cubic graph  $G$ .

# Introduction

**Observation.** Five-line Fano coloring is equivalent to a  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring of a bridgeless cubic graph  $G$ .



# Main results

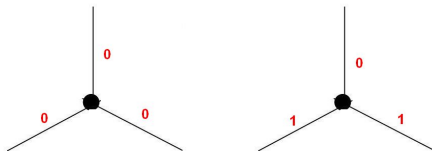
# Main results

**Lemma.** The second coordinate of  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring induces a perfect matching and a 2-factor in  $G$ .

# Main results

**Lemma.** The second coordinate of  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring induces a perfect matching and a 2-factor in  $G$ .

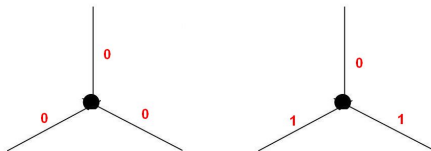
Second coordinate zero sums:



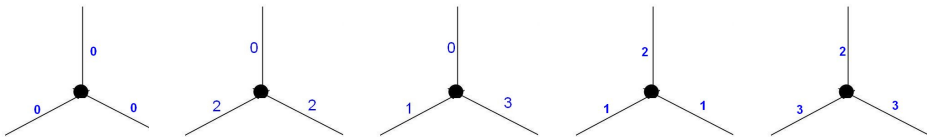
# Main results

**Lemma.** The second coordinate of  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring induces a perfect matching and a 2-factor in  $G$ .

Second coordinate zero sums:



First coordinate zero sums:



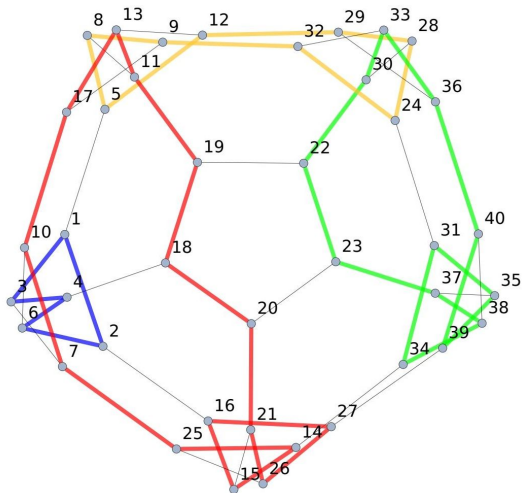


# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?

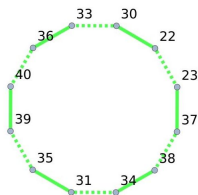
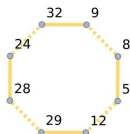
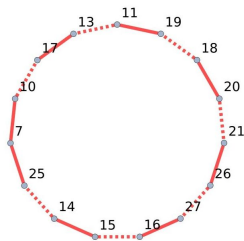
# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?



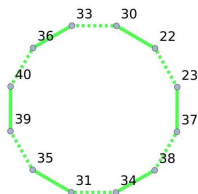
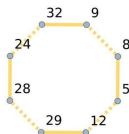
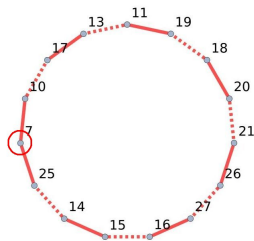
# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?



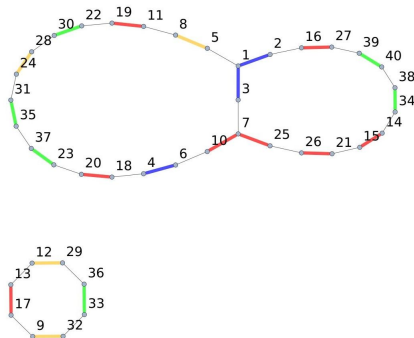
# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?



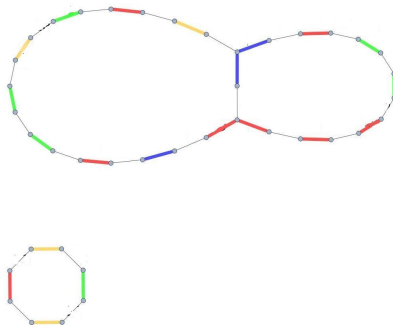
# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?



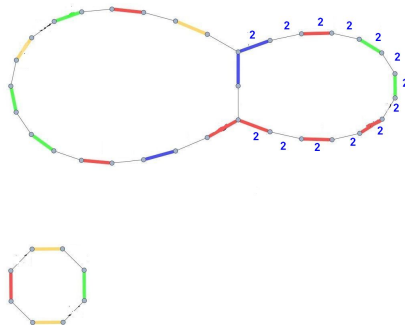
# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?



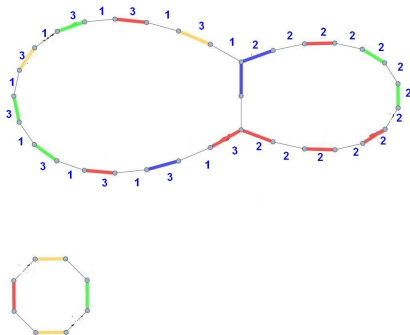
# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?



# Main results

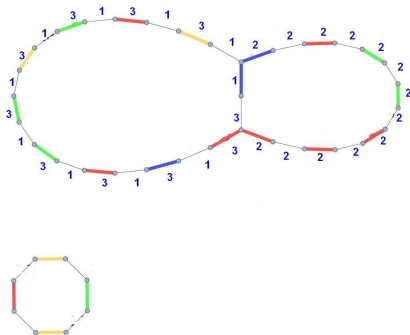
**Question.** What about the first coordinate?





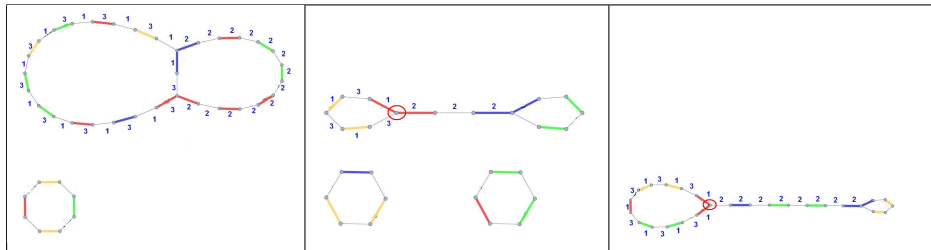
# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?



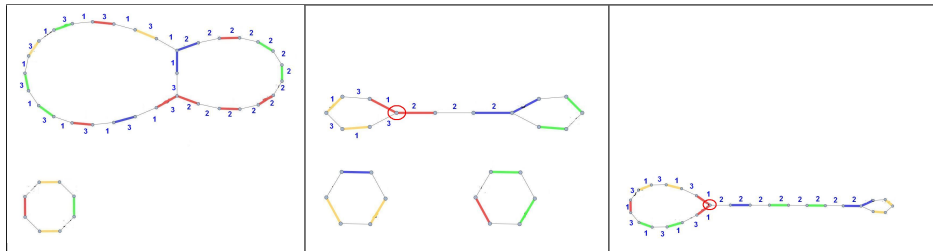
# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?



# Main results

**Question.** What about the first coordinate?



**Theorem.** A cubic graph  $G$  has a proper  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring if and only if there exists a 2-factor  $F$  in  $G$  and a matching  $M$  in  $F$  such that:

- $H = G - M$  has an  $F$ -matching
- whose  $F$ -complement is 3-even.

# Main results

**Corollary.** Oddness two snarks have a  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring.

# Main results

**Corollary.** Oddness two snarks have a  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring.

We give a **sufficient** condition under which:

- snarks have a first property;

# Main results

**Corollary.** Oddness two snarks have a  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring.

We give a **sufficient** condition under which:

- snarks have a first property;
- snarks have a second property.

# Main results

**Corollary.** Oddness two snarks have a  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring.

We give a **sufficient** condition under which:

- snarks have a first property;
- snarks have a second property.

**Problem 1.** In a snark  $G$  find a 2-factor  $F$  and a matching  $M$  in  $F$  so that the **first property** is satisfied.

# Main results

**Corollary.** Oddness two snarks have a  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring.

We give a **sufficient** condition under which:

- snarks have a first property;
- snarks have a second property.

**Problem 1.** In a snark  $G$  find a 2-factor  $F$  and a matching  $M$  in  $F$  so that the **first property** is satisfied.

**Problem 2.** In a snark  $G$  find a 2-factor  $F$  and a matching  $M$  in  $F$  so that the **second property** is satisfied.



# Main results

**Corollary.** Oddness two snarks have a  $\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ -coloring.

We give a **sufficient** condition under which:

- snarks have a first property;
- snarks have a second property.

**Problem 1.** In a snark  $G$  find a 2-factor  $F$  and a matching  $M$  in  $F$  so that the **first property** is satisfied. **SOLVED!**

**Problem 2.** In a snark  $G$  find a 2-factor  $F$  and a matching  $M$  in  $F$  so that the **second property** is satisfied.

# Conclusion

# Conclusion

So... the Five line conjecture reduces to Problem 2.

# Conclusion

So... the Five line conjecture reduces to Problem 2.

Thank you for the attention!