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Proceedings
of the Third International
Workshop **SMARTY'22**

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Stochastic
Modeling &
Applied
Research of
Technology

Third International
Workshop
Petrozavodsk, Karelia
August 21-25, 2022

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*Stochastic Modeling and Applied Research of
Technology, Vol. 3, Pp. 36-44.*
DOI: [10.57753/SMARTY.2023.10.52.005](https://doi.org/10.57753/SMARTY.2023.10.52.005)

Citation: Garimella Ramamurthy (2023). Necessary conditions for graph isomorphism problem: polynomial time algorithms. *Stochastic Modeling and Applied Research of Technology*, 3, 36-44.
<https://doi.org/10.57753/SMARTY.2023.10.52.005>

Necessary conditions for graph isomorphism problem: polynomial time algorithms

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Abstract. In this research paper, it is proved that two arbitrary graphs are isomorphic only if the quadratic forms associated with the two adjacency matrices are same (upto reordering the monomials). Based on the proof, a polynomial time algorithm is designed for testing necessary condition for isomorphism of graph (i.e. effectively deciding whether two graphs are isomorphic). The algorithm requires $O(N^3)$ comparison operations. Also, a polynomial time algorithm for checking necessary condition on whether two graphs are isomorphic is designed under the condition that the associated adjacency matrices are non-singular and are related through a symmetric permutation matrix. The algorithms are essentially based on linear algebraic concepts related to graphs. Also, some new results in spectral graph theory are discussed.

Keywords: Graph Theory · Edge connectivity · Spectral Graph Theory · Symmetric matrix · Isomorphism.

1 Introduction

Directed/undirected, weighted/unweighted graphs naturally arise in various applications. Such graphs are associated with matrices such as weight matrix, incidence matrix, adjacency matrix, Laplacian etc. Such matrices implicitly specify the number of vertices/ edges, adjacency information of vertices (with edge connectivity) and other related information (such as edge weights). In recent years, there is explosive interest in capturing networks arising in applications such as social networks, transportation networks, bio-informatics related networks (e.g. gene regulatory networks) using suitable graphs. Thus, network science led to important problems such as community extraction, frequent sub-graph mining etc. In many applications the problem of deciding whether two given graphs are isomorphic (i.e. the two graphs are essentially same upto relabeling the vertices) naturally arises. This research paper provides one possible solution to such a problem. This research paper is organized in the following manner. In Section 2, relevant research literature is briefly reviewed. In Section 3, one polynomial time algorithm, to test if two graphs are isomorphic is discussed. In Section 4, necessary and sufficient condition for two arbitrary graphs to be isomorphic is proved and a polynomial time algorithm is proposed. The research paper concludes in Section 5.

2 Related Research Literature

L. Babai [1,2] recently claimed quasi-polynomial time algorithm for determining if two graphs are isomorphic [1]. This is the most recent contribution to the graph isomorphism problem. Specifically, research in [2] showed that graph isomorphism problem can be solved in $\exp(\log n)^{o(1)}$ time [2]. For the problem, the previous known best bound was $\exp(o(\sqrt{n \log n}))$ where n is the number of vertices. There are other research efforts which provide approximate solutions to the problem (i.e. approximate algorithms were designed) [3–6,8,11–13]. Also, the problem of solving Graph Isomorphism has been attempted using the quadratic non-negative matrix factorization problem [14].

3 Polynomial Time Algorithm for Graph Isomorphism Problem (Under Some Conditions)

We now briefly review relevant results from spectral graph theory.

3.1 Spectral Graph Theory

Spectral graph theory deals with the study of properties of a graph in relationship to the characteristic polynomial, eigenvalues and eigenvectors of matrices associated with the graph, such as its adjacency matrix or Laplacian matrix.

An undirected graph has a symmetric adjacency matrix A and hence all its eigenvalues are real. Furthermore, the eigenvectors are orthonormal. We have the following definition.

Definition 1. *An undirected graph's "spectrum" is the multiset of real eigenvalues of its adjacency matrix, A . Graphs whose spectrum is same are called co-spectral.*

Remark 1. It is well known that isomorphic graphs are co-spectral. But co-spectral graphs need not be isomorphic. Thus spectrum being same is only a necessary condition for graphs to be isomorphic (but not sufficient) [12,13]. Thus, it is clear that the eigenvectors of adjacency matrices of isomorphic graphs must be constrained in a suitable manner (orthonormal basis of eigenvectors of the symmetric adjacency matrices are somehow related for isomorphic graphs) [9].

3.2 Polynomial Time Algorithm to determine co-spectral Graphs

Lemma 1. *The problem of determining if two graphs are co-spectral is in P (i.e. a polynomial time algorithm exists).*

Proof. Since the elements of adjacency matrix are 0's and 1's, the characteristic polynomial of it is a polynomial with integer coefficients. Thus, there exists a polynomial time algorithm (PTA algorithm) [7] to compute the zeroes of such polynomial i.e. spectrum of associated graph. Thus the problem of determining if two graphs are co-spectral is in P (class of polynomial time algorithms). \square

Note 1. By Perron-Frobenius theorem, the spectral radius of an irreducible adjacency matrix (non-negative matrix) is real, positive and simple [10]. Thus, to check for the necessary condition on isomorphic graphs, a first step is to determine if the spectral radii of two graphs are exactly same.

Definition 2. *Two graphs are isomorphic, if the vertices of one graph are obtained by relabeling the vertices of another graph.*

3.3 Necessary Conditions: Isomorphism of Graphs

The following necessary conditions for isomorphism of graphs with adjacency matrices A, B can be checked before applying the following algorithm. Check if $\text{Tr}(A) = \text{Tr}(B)$ and if $\text{Det}(A) = \text{Det}(B)$. Check if spectral radius of A, B are same. This can be done using the Jacobi's algorithm for computing the largest zero of a polynomial. Since the coefficients of characteristic polynomial are integers, we expect the computational complexity of this task to be small. If this step fails, all other zeroes need not be computed [9].

We now formulate the problem of determining the isomorphism of graphs in two equivalent ways. Let the symmetric matrices A and B be the adjacency matrices of two graphs.

- Quadratic Non-Negative Matrix Factorization [12, 14]:

The problem of determining isomorphism of two graphs boils down to determining if a permutation matrix P exists such that

$$B = PAP^T. \quad (1)$$

Such a problem is already being attempted using the approach based on Quadratic Non-Negative Matrix Factorization [14]. The results proposed for such a problem readily apply for determining isomorphism of two graphs.

- Algebraic Riccati Equation: Symmetric Permutation Matrix P :

The quadratic matrix equation in (1) (non-linear) has resemblance to the Symmetric Algebraic Riccati Equation of the following form

$$XCX - AX - XA^T + B = 0$$

(with compatible matrices X, C, A, B), where the matrices B and C are symmetric and X is the unknown matrix. As can be readily seen the matrix equation (1) is a structured symmetric algebraic Riccati equation with P being a symmetric unknown matrix. The known algorithms for solving such a Riccati equation may readily apply for testing isomorphism of two graphs for which P is a symmetric permutation matrix. Specifically, there are efforts to determine the non-negative matrix solutions of Riccati equation [15, 16]. It should be kept in mind that the solution of algebraic Riccati equation that is of interest to us is a structured $\{0, 1\}$ matrix.

Explicit Solution when the Adjacency Matrices of the graphs are non-singular and are related through Symmetric Permutation Matrix:

Lemma 2. *Under the above assumptions, two graphs with adjacency matrices $\{B, C\}$ (whose eigenvalues need NOT be distinct) are isomorphic only if*

$$X = [\text{Matrix Square Root}(BC)]C^{-1} \quad (2)$$

is a symmetric permutation matrix.

Proof. Suppose the graphs with adjacency matrices $\{B, C\}$ are isomorphic and are related through a symmetric permutation matrix, P . Then we have that

$$PCP = B.$$

Hence multiplying on both sides by C , we have that

$$(PC)PC = BC = (PC)^2.$$

Thus, using well known result from linear algebra BC is positive definite and hence has a unique positive definite matrix square root. Thus, we have that $PC = \text{Matrix Square Root}(BC)$.

Since C is non-singular, we have that

$$P = [\text{Matrix Square Root}(BC)]C^{-1},$$

which is necessarily a permutation matrix. Thus the above condition is necessary. Thus, if the graphs are isomorphic, the test declares the correct result. \square

Note 2. The above condition need not be sufficient, if the matrix square root is not unique. However, since \bar{C} is symmetric, C^{-1} is also symmetric. Further, it follows from (2) that since X is symmetric, any row of $\text{Matrix Square Root}(BC)$ is orthogonal to all columns of C^{-1} , except one. It is conceivable that the condition in Lemma 2 is also sufficient. We were unable to find a counterexample.

Note 3. Unique positive definite Matrix square root of a positive definite matrix can easily be computed in polynomial time using well known results in linear algebra. Duplication of details is avoided for brevity.

From well known facts from linear algebra, the condition in the above lemma can be checked using a polynomial time algorithm (if graphs are isomorphic, the algorithm declares them correctly).

Algorithm: It follows from (2), that testing the necessary condition involves the following steps:

- i) Multiplication of symmetric matrices B, C .
- ii) Computation of Matrix Square root of BC .
- iii) Inversion of symmetric matrix C .
- iv) Multiplication of $[\text{Matrix Square Root}(BC)]$ and C^{-1} as in (2).
- v) Checking if X is a permutation matrix.

Note 4. The research efforts based on Strassen's algorithm for matrix multiplication readily apply in this case.

From well known complexity of linear algebraic algorithms, the steps (i), (ii), (iii) take $O(N^3)$ operations (multiplication, addition). If BC is positive definite and diagonalizable, its unique matrix square root takes $O(N^3)$ operations.

Also, if BC is a positive definite diagonalizable matrix i.e.

$$BC = VDV^{-1},$$

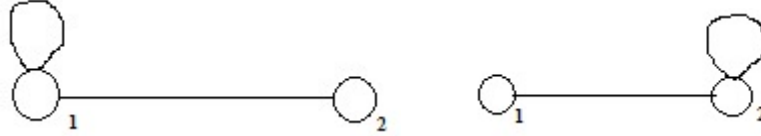
where D is a diagonal matrix of positive eigenvalues. The unique positive definite matrix square root of BC is given by $VD^{1/2}V^{-1}$, where $D^{1/2}$ is the diagonal matrix of positive square roots of eigenvalues of BC .

From linear algebra, a polynomial time algorithm is readily available for the above computation of positive definite square root of BC . Detailed description of the algorithm is avoided for brevity.

Note 5. In the case of matrix equation, $XCX = B$, if BC is a positive definite matrix, unique solution which is positive definite can be determined using approach similar to Lemma 2.

Remark 2. In view of the above two equivalent problems, the results available for solution of one problem can be utilized in the solution of other problems.

Example 1. Consider the following two graphs with two vertices.



Let their symmetric adjacency matrices be given by

$$B = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad C = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Both the matrices $\{B, C\}$ are nonsingular and isomorphic. We have that, with

$$P = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = P^T,$$

it readily follows that (as expected)

$$PCP^T = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = B.$$

We now check the test in Lemma 2. We have that

$$C^{-1} = \begin{bmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

We would like to determine the matrix square root of BC .

We have that

$$BC = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Let the square root of BC be the matrix

$$G = \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}.$$

We have that

$$G^2 = \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Solving the equations we have that $c = 0$, $b = 1$ and $a = d = \pm 1$. Thus, we get at least two solutions for G i.e.

$$G = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}, -G = \begin{bmatrix} -1 & -1 \\ 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$$

But the only positive definite square root of BC (a positive definite matrix with eigenvalues 1, 1) is

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

It follows that

$$[\text{Matrix Square Root}(BC)]C^{-1} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix},$$

which is a permutation matrix.

Now we give another necessary condition for checking if two adjacency matrices, A and B , are isomorphic, that is, (1) holds good for some permutation matrix P which is not necessary symmetric. Since P is always an orthogonal matrix, (1) can be rewritten as

$$PA - BP \equiv 0. \quad (3)$$

We are interested finding Diophantine solution P ($\{0, 1\}$ -matrix) of (3) which is a permutation matrix. Note that (3) can be rewritten as the system of linear equations

$$C \text{vec}(P) \equiv 0, \quad (4)$$

where vec is vectorization of a matrix, the $\{0, 1, -1\}$ matrix C is defined as

$$C = A^T \otimes I - I \otimes B^T, \quad (5)$$

and \otimes is the Kronecker product. Since A and B are necessarily co-spectral, the matrix C is necessarily singular. This result can be formulated as a lemma.

Lemma 3. *The matrices A and B are isomorphic if and only if (3) has a solution P which is a permutation matrix. If A and B are isomorphic, then C defined in (5) is singular.*

4 Spectral Graph Theory: Polynomial time algorithm for testing necessary condition for isomorphism of arbitrary graphs

Fact: While the adjacency matrix depends on the vertex labeling, its spectrum is graph invariant i.e. suppose adjacency matrix B is obtained by relabeling the vertices of a graph with adjacency matrix A (i.e. edge connectivity in A is preserved in B). Then A, B have the same set of eigenvalues.

Note 6. We use the terminology that graphs are co-spectral/isomorphic if their adjacency matrices A, B are co-spectral/isomorphic.

We now provide an interesting proof of the above fact. In fact, the Corollary 1 of Theorem 1 is a much stronger result. We need the following well known theorem.

Theorem (Rayleigh). *The local optima of the quadratic form associated with a symmetric matrix A on the unit Euclidean hypersphere $\{X : X^T X = 1\}$ occur at the eigenvectors with the corresponding value of the quadratic form being the eigenvalue.*

Theorem 1. *i) Eigenvalues of the adjacency matrix of an undirected graph, A , are invariant (remain the same) under relabeling of the vertices i.e. adjacency matrices A, B are co-spectral (with B being the adjacency matrix of graph obtained by relabeling the vertices of graph A).*

ii) Furthermore, graphs with adjacency matrices A, B are isomorphic only if (i.e. necessary condition) the quadratic forms associated with A, B are same (upto reordering the monomials).

Proof. In Rayleigh's theorem, eigenvalues of A, B are the local optimum of associated quadratic forms evaluated on the unit hyper sphere respectively. Thus, to prove that graphs A, B (i.e. graphs with adjacency matrices A, B) are co-spectral, it is sufficient to reason that the quadratic form remains invariant under relabeling of the vertices.

Proof of part(i): We have that

$$\begin{aligned} X^T A X &= \sum_{i=1}^N \sum_{j=1}^N a_{ij} x_i x_j \\ &= x_1(x_{i_1} + x_{i_2} + \dots + x_{i_N}) + x_2(x_{j_1} + x_{j_2} + \dots + x_{j_N}) + \dots + \\ &\quad x_N(x_{N_1} + x_{N_2} + \dots + x_{N_N}) \end{aligned}$$

where, for instance, i_1, i_2, \dots, i_N are the vertices connected to the vertex 1 (one) (and similarly other vertices).

Now, under relabeling of vertices, the monomials are just reordered in the quadratic form expression i.e. $X^T A X$. Hence, from the above expression, it is clear that the quadratic form remains invariant under relabeling of the vertices.

Thus by Rayleigh's theorem, eigenvalues of A remain invariant under relabeling of vertices.

Summarizing, it is clear that the quadratic form remains invariant under relabeling of the vertices. Specifically, relabeling just reorders the expressions. Thus, the eigenvalues of A remain invariant under relabeling of vertices.

If A and B are isomorphic, by definition there exists a permutation matrix P such that $B = PAP^T$. Then

$$X^T BX = X^T PAP^T X = (P^T X)^T A (P^T X) = \bar{X}^T A \bar{X}.$$

Thus, the quadratic form remains the same, with the variables relabeled as $\bar{X} = P^T X$.

Proof of part(ii): From part (i) above, if two graphs with adjacent matrices A, B are isomorphic, it is necessary that the quadratic forms associated with A, B are same (upon reordering of the monomials). \square

Note 7. Showing that $X^T AX = X^T BX$, is much stronger than ensuring that A, B are co-spectral.

Corollary 1. *Since the quadratic form remains invariant under relabeling of the vertices, the local optima of the quadratic form over various constraint sets remain invariant. For instance, the stable values (i.e. local optima of quadratic form associated with a symmetric matrix over the unit hypercube) remain same under relabeling of the vertices of graph.*

Corollary 2. *Isomorphism of Graphs: From the above proof, it is clear that if two graphs (with associated adjacency matrices A, B) are isomorphic, the associated quadratic form being same is a necessary condition.*

Note 8. Consider a Homogeneous multi-variate polynomial associated with, say, a Fully Symmetric Tensor. The local optima of such a homogeneous form over various constraint sets such as Euclidean Unit Hypersphere, multi-dimensional hypercube remain invariant under relabeling of nodes of a non-planar graph. Effectively relabeling of vertices, reorders the monomials (terms in multivariate polynomial).

5 Conclusion

In this research paper, results in spectral graph theory of structured graphs are discussed. Polynomial time algorithms for testing if two graphs are isomorphic are discussed.

Acknowledgment

The author thanks Prof. L. Lovasz and Prof. Sanjeev Arora for providing some references. The author also thanks Prof. Dario Bini for discussion related to structured algebraic Riccati equation. The author dedicates the algorithms to god for enabling their publication in my 60th year (research done in 2015).

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