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a-Numbers of curves in Artin-Schreier covers

Jeremy Booher
University of Arizona

Abstract: Let $f : Y \rightarrow X$ be a branched $\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$ -cover of smooth, projective, geometrically connected curves over a perfect field of characteristic $p \neq 0$. We investigate the relationship between the a -numbers of Y and X and the ramification of the map f . This is analogous to the relationship between the genus (respectively p -rank) of Y and X given the Riemann-Hurwitz (respectively Deuring-Shafarevich) formula. Except in special situations, the a -number of Y is not determined by the a -number of X and the ramification of the cover, so we instead give bounds on the a -number of Y . We provide examples showing our bounds are sharp. The bounds come from a detailed analysis of the kernel of the Cartier operator. This is joint work with Bryden Cais.

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MATHEMATICS
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