

# Graphs without $K_4$ -minors

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**Abstract.** In [Discrete Math. 75 (1989) 69 - 99], Bondy conjectured that if  $G$  is a 2-edge-connected simple graph with  $n$  vertices, then  $G$  admits a double cycle cover with at most  $n-1$  cycles. In this note we prove this conjecture for graph without subdivision of  $K_4$  and characterize all the extremal graphs.

## Introduction

Graphs in this note are finite and loopless. For all undefined terms, see Bondy and Murty [BM]. Let  $G$  be a graph and  $e \in E(G)$ . The *contraction*  $G/e$  is the graph obtained from  $G$  by identifying the two ends of  $e$  and deleting the resulting loops. A *subdivision* of a graph  $H$  is a graph obtained from  $H$  by subdividing some edges of  $H$ , and will be denoted by  $TH$ . As in [BM],  $\kappa(G)$  and  $\kappa'(G)$  denote the connectivity and the edge-connectivity of  $G$ , respectively. In 1952, Dirac showed the following:

**Theorem A (Dirac [D]).** If  $G$  is a nontrivial simple graph without  $TK_4$ , then  $G$  has a vertex of degree at most 2. ▀

An *arc* of  $G$  is an  $(x, y)$ -path  $P$  of  $G$  with  $x, y \in V(G)$ , such that all the internal vertices of  $P$  have degree 2 in  $G$ . A *maximal arc* is one that cannot be extended in  $G$ . The *length* of an arc  $P$  is  $|E(P)|$ . We regard  $K_1$  as an arc of length 0 (with identical ends) and  $K_2$  as an arc of length 1. Let  $k$  be a nonnegative integer. Given graphs  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ , if for  $i \in \{0, 1, 2\}$ ,  $G_i$  has an arc  $P_i$  with  $|E(P_i)| = k$  and with the ends of  $P_i$  being  $x_i, y_i \in V(G_i)$ , then one can define the  *$k$ -arc-sum* of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  to be the graph obtained from the vertex disjoint union of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  by deleting all the internal vertices of  $P_2$  and identifying  $x_1$  with  $x_2$  and  $y_1$  with  $y_2$ . Thus the  $k$ -arc-sum of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  contains  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  as subgraphs. If  $G$  is a  $k$ -arc-sum of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  with

$$|E(G_i)| < |E(G)|, \quad (1 \leq i \leq 2), \tag{1}$$

then  $G$  is called a *proper  $k$ -arc-sum* of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ .

**Remark.** The definition of the  $k$ -arc-sums here is motivated by and similar to the  $(k + 1)$ -sums of Bondy [B], but is different from the  $k$ -sums of Seymour [S].

Let  $G$  be a simple graph. An edge  $e \in E(G)$  is called a *sum-edge* of  $G$ , if  $G$  is a proper 1-arc-sum of two subgraphs  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  with  $E(G_1) \cap E(G_2) = \{e\}$ . For each integer  $i \geq 3$ , define  $\mathcal{K}(i)$  to be the family of simple graphs  $G$  such that either  $G$  is a cycle of length at most  $i$ , or  $G$  is a 0-arc-sum or a 1-arc-sum of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  for some  $G_1, G_2 \in \mathcal{K}(i)$ , such that every  $k$ -cycle of  $G$ ,  $3 \leq k \leq i$ , has at most two sum-edges of  $G$ , and such that if a  $k$ -cycle  $C$  has exactly two sum-edges in  $G$ ,  $3 \leq k \leq i$ , then these two sum-edges are adjacent in  $C$ .

Define  $\mathcal{K} = \cup_{i \geq 3} \mathcal{K}(i)$ . By definition of the  $k$ -arc-sum, the following Proposition is immediate.

**Proposition 1.** Suppose that  $G$  is a  $k$ -arc-sum of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ . If each of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  has no  $TK_4$ , then  $G$  has no  $TK_4$ . In particular, every graph in  $\mathcal{K}$  has no  $TK_4$ .

## Main Results

**Theorem 1** Let  $G$  be a nontrivial 2-edge-connected graph. If  $G$  contains no  $TK_4$ , then either  $G$  is a cycle or  $G$  is a proper  $k$ -arc-sum of some graphs  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ , for some  $k \geq 0$ , with  $\kappa'(G_i) \geq 2$ , ( $1 \leq i \leq 2$ ). Moreover, if  $G$  is simple and not a cycle, then  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  are simple graphs.

Let  $sc(G)$  denote the minimum number of cycles of  $G$  that are needed to cover  $E(G)$  exactly twice. In [B], Bondy conjectured that any 2-edge-connected simple graph with  $n$  vertices satisfies  $sc(G) \leq n - 1$ , where equality holds if and only if  $G$  has a spanning tree  $T$  such that for every edge  $e \in E(G) - E(T)$ ,  $T + e$  has a 3-cycle, (such a tree  $T$  is called a *tritree* of  $G$ , and such a graph  $G$  is called a *trigraph*).

**Theorem B.** (Bondy [B]) Let  $G$  be a graph with  $n$  vertices.

- (i) If  $G$  is a trigraph, then  $sc(G) \geq n - 1$ .
- (ii) If  $G$  is a 0-arc-sum of two trigraphs, then  $G$  is a trigraph.
- (iii) Suppose that  $G$  is a 1-arc-sum of trigraphs  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  and that  $e$  is the sum edge shared by  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ . If each of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  has a tritree that uses  $e$ , then  $G$  is also a trigraph. ■

**Proposition 2.** If  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ , then  $G$  is a trigraph.

**Proof:** We argue by induction on  $|V(G)|$ . By (ii) of Theorem B, we may assume that  $G$  is not a 3-cycle nor a 0-arc-sum of some graphs in  $\mathcal{K}(3)$ . Thus by definition of  $\mathcal{K}(3)$ ,  $G$  is a 1-arc-sum of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ , for some  $G_1, G_2 \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ . Choose  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  so that  $|E(G_2)|$  is minimized. We claim that  $G_2$  is a 3-cycle.

Let  $e$  denote the edge shared by  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ . If  $G_2$  is not a 3-cycle, then since  $G_2 \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ ,  $G_2$  is a 1-arc-sum of some  $G'_2, G''_2 \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ . If  $e \in E(G'_2) \cap E(G''_2)$ , then let  $G'_1 = G_1 \cup G''_2$ , and so the minimality of  $G_2$  is violated, since  $G'_2$  is a proper subgraph of  $G_2$  and since  $G$  is a 1-arc-sum of  $G'_1$  and  $G'_2$ . Hence we may assume that  $e \in E(G'_2) - E(G''_2)$ . Let  $G''_1 = G_1 \cup G'_1$ , then the minimality of  $G_2$  is violated again, since  $G''_2$  is a proper subgraph of  $G_2$  and  $G$  is a 1-arc-sum of  $G''_1$  and  $G''_2$ . Hence  $G_2$  must be a 3-cycle.

By induction hypothesis,  $G_1$  is a trigraph. Let  $C_1$  be a 3-cycle of  $G_1$  that contains  $e$ . Since  $C_1$  has at most two sum-edges, and since  $e$  is a sum-edge of  $G$ ,  $C_1$  contains an edge  $e_1 \in E(C_1) - \{e\}$  that is not a sum-edge of  $G$ . Let  $T_1$  be a tritree of  $G_1$ . If  $e \notin E(T_1)$ , then since  $C_1$  is a 3-cycle,  $e_1 \in E(T_1)$ . Let  $T'_1 = T_1 + e - e_1$ . Since  $e_1$  is not a sum-edge of  $G$ , and since  $|E(C_1)| = 3$ ,  $T'_1$  is a tritree of  $G_1$ . It follows that  $G_1$  has a tritree that uses  $e$ , and so by (iii) of Theorem B,  $G$  is a trigraph. ■

Let  $\mathcal{A}(G)$  denote the collection of all maximal arcs  $A$  of  $G$  with  $|E(A)| \geq 2$ . For any  $A \in \mathcal{A}(G)$ ,  $A$  is called a *cyclic arc* if there is an arc  $A'$  with  $E(A') \subseteq E(G) - E(A)$  such that  $G[E(A) \cup E(A')]$  is a cycle of  $G$ , or if  $A$  itself is a cycle; and  $A$  is an *acyclic arc*, otherwise. For each  $A \in \mathcal{A}(G)$ , define  $b(A)$  as follows:

$$b(A) = \begin{cases} |E(A)| - 3 & \text{if } A \text{ is a cycle} \\ |E(A)| - 2 & \text{if } A \text{ is cyclic but not a cycle} \\ |E(A)| - 1 & \text{if } A \text{ is acyclic.} \end{cases}$$

Note that by Theorem A, if  $G$  is simple and has no  $TK_4$ , then  $\mathcal{A}(G) \neq \emptyset$ . Define

$$b(G) = \sum_{A \in \mathcal{A}(G)} b_G(A).$$

As examples,  $b(K_{2,t}) = 0$  if  $t \geq 2$ ; and if  $G$  is a subdivision of the Petersen graph, then  $b(G)$  is equal to the number of vertices of degree 2.

**Proposition 3.** *Let  $G \in \mathcal{K}$ . Then  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$  if and only if  $b(G) = 0$ .*

**Proof:** Suppose that  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ . Then every arc  $A \in \mathcal{A}(G)$  is in a 3-cycle and so  $b(G) = 0$ . Suppose then that  $G \in \mathcal{K} - \mathcal{K}(3)$ . Then  $G$  has a cycle  $C$  of length at least 4. Since  $C$  has at most 2 sum-edges, and since when  $|E(C)| = 4$  and  $C$  has exactly two sum-edges, these two sum-edges must be adjacent,  $C$  contains an arc  $A \in \mathcal{A}(G)$  such that either  $A$  is a cycle of length at least 4, or a cyclic arc of length at least 3 that is not a cycle, or an acyclic arc of length at least 2. Thus  $b(G) > 0$ . ■

**Theorem 2.** *Let  $G$  be a simple graph with  $n$  vertices. If  $G$  has no  $TK_4$ ,*

$$sc(G) \leq n - 1 - b(G), \quad (2)$$

where equality holds if and only if  $G \in \mathcal{K}$ . Moreover, if  $b(G) = 0$ , then equality holds in (2) if and only if  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ .

**Corollary 1.** Let  $G$  be a 2-edge-connected simple graph with  $n$  vertices. If  $G$  has no  $TK_4$ , then  $sc(G) \leq |V(G)| - 1$ , where equality holds if and only if  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ .

**Corollary 2.** A 2-edge-connected simple graph  $G$  is a trigraph without a  $TK_4$  if and only if  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ .

Proof of Corollaries 1 and 2: Corollary 1 follows from Theorem 2. Corollary 2 follows from Theorem 2, from Corollary 1 and from (i) of Theorem B. ■

### The Proofs

Let  $H$  be a subgraph of  $G$ . The set of all vertices in  $V(H)$  that are incident with at least one edge in  $E(G) - E(H)$ , denoted by  $A_G(H)$ , is called the *vertices of attachment* of  $H$  in  $G$ .

**Lemma 1.** Let  $G$  be a graph without  $TK_4$  and let  $H$  be a subgraph of  $G$  with  $\kappa'(H) \geq 2$  such that  $A_G(H) = \{x_1, x_2\}$ , ( $x_1 \neq x_2$ ) and such that  $G$  has an  $(x_1, x_2)$ -path  $P$  using no edges in  $E(H)$ . If for some  $k \geq 1$ ,  $H$  is a proper  $k$ -arc-sum of some 2-edge-connected graphs  $H_1$  and  $H_2$ , then  $G$  is a proper  $k$ -arc-sum of some graphs  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  with  $\kappa'(G_i) \geq 2$ .

Proof: Since  $H$  is a proper  $k$ -arc-sum of  $H_1$  and  $H_2$ , both  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  are subgraphs of  $H$ , and so of  $G$ .

Case 1:  $x_1, x_2 \in V(H_2)$ .

Let  $G_1 = H_1$  and  $G_2 = G[E(H_2) \cup E(G - E(H))]$ , then  $G$  is a proper  $k$ -arc-sum of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ . When  $x_1, x_2 \in V(H_1)$ , the proof is the same.

Case 2:  $x_1 \in V(H_i)$ , ( $1 \leq i \leq 2$ ).

Since  $k \geq 1$ , there is an edge  $e$  (say) shared by  $H_1$  and  $H_2$ . Since both  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  are 2-edge-connected, there is a cycle  $C_i$  in  $H_i$  such that  $e \in E(C_i)$ , ( $1 \leq i \leq 2$ ). Let  $P_i$  denote a path in  $H_i$  that joins  $x_1$  to exactly one vertex  $y_i$  (say) in  $C_i$ .

If  $y_1, y_2 \notin V(P)$ , then  $C_1, C_2, P_1, P_2$  and  $P$  form a  $TK_4$  in  $G$ , a contradiction. Hence we may assume that  $y_1 \in V(P)$  and that any path from  $x_1$  to  $C_1$  in  $H$  must use  $y_1$ . Let  $P^1, P^2, \dots, P^m$  be all the  $(x_1, y_1)$ -paths in  $H$ . It follows that that subgraph

$$H' = H - (\cup_{i=1}^m V(P^i) - \{y_1\})$$

is a 2-edge-connected subgraph of  $G$  with  $A_G(H) = \{x_2, y_1\}$ , and so we are back to Case 1. ■

Proof of Theorem 1: If  $G$  has 2 edges  $e_1, e_2$  with the same ends, (that is,  $e_1, e_2$  are parallel edges in  $G$ ) then let  $G_1 = G - e_1$  and  $G_2 = G[e_1, e_2]$  and we are done.

The theorem will also be trivial if  $G$  has a cut-vertex. Hence we shall assume that  $G$  is simple and 2-connected.

We prove the general case by induction on the number of vertices of  $G$  and so we assume that  $G$  is not a cycle and Theorem 1 holds for graphs with order smaller than  $|V(G)|$ .

By Theorem A,  $G$  has a vertex  $v$  of degree 2. Since  $G$  is not a cycle,  $G$  has a maximal arc  $P$  of length at least 2, where the ends  $x$  and  $y$  of  $P$  have degree at least 3 in  $G$ . Since  $G$  is 2-connected,  $x \neq y$ . We shall show first that  $G$  has a 2-edge-connected proper subgraph  $H$  such that

$$|A_G(H)| = 2, \quad (3)$$

and, (assuming  $A_G(H) = \{u, v\}$ ), such that

$$G - E(H) \text{ has an } (u, v) \text{ - path.} \quad (4)$$

Let  $G' = G - (V(P) - \{x, y\})$ . If  $\kappa'(G') \geq 2$ , then  $G'$  is a subgraph satisfying (3) and (4). Hence by  $\kappa'(G) \geq 2$ , we may assume that  $\kappa'(G) = 1$ . Thus  $G'$  has an edge such that  $G' - e$  has two components  $G''$  and  $G'''$  with  $x \in V(G'')$  and with  $|V(G'')|$  being minimized. If  $y \in V(G'')$ , then  $e$  is a cut-edge of  $G$ , contrary to the assumption that  $\kappa'(G) \geq 2$ . Thus  $y \in V(G''')$ . Let  $z \in V(G'')$  be the vertex incident with  $e$ . Since  $G$  is 2-connected,  $x \neq z$ . Clearly  $G$  has an  $(x, z)$ -path using no edges in  $E(G'')$  and  $A_G(G'') = \{x, z\}$ . By the minimality of  $|V(G'')|$ ,  $\kappa'(G'') \geq 2$ . Thus  $G''$  is a 2-edge-connected proper subgraph of  $G$  satisfying (3) and (4).

Choose a minimal 2-edge-connected proper subgraph  $H$  of  $G$  satisfying (3) and (4), and assume that  $A_G(H) = \{x_1, x_2\}$ . By induction,  $H$  is a proper  $k$ -arc-sum of two sub-graphs  $H_1$  and  $H_2$ . Suppose first that  $k = 0$ . Since  $G$  is 2-connected, we may assume that  $x_i \in V(H_i)$ ,  $(1 \leq i \leq 2)$ . But then  $H$  may contain a smaller 2-edge-connected subgraph satisfying (3) and (4), contrary to the minimality of  $H$ . Hence we must have  $k \geq 1$  and so Theorem 1 follows from Lemma 1. ■

**Lemma 2.** *Let  $G$  be a 2-edge-connected graph. If  $G$  has an arc  $A$  with  $|E(A)| \geq 2$ , then for each  $e \in E(A)$ ,*

$$sc(G/e) = sc(G). \quad (5)$$

**Proof:** The proof is routine and straightforward. ■

**Lemma 3.** *If  $G$  is a 1-arc-sum of  $H$  and a  $k$ -cycle  $H'$ , where  $k \geq 3$ , then  $sc(G) \leq sc(H) + 1$ .*

**Proof:** Let  $C' = \{C'_1, \dots, C'_m\}$  be a double cycle cover of  $H$  with  $m = sc(H)$ .

Let  $e$  be the edge commonly shared by  $H$  and  $H'$ . We may assume that  $e \in E(C'_1)$ . Thus let  $C_1 = G[E(C'_1) \cup E(H') - e]$ ,  $C_2 = C'_2, \dots, C_m = C'_m$  and  $C_{m+1} = H'$ . Then  $\{C_1, C_2, \dots, C_{m+1}\}$  is a double cycle cover of  $G$ , and so we have  $sc(G) \leq m + 1$ . ■

**Lemma 4.** *Let  $G$  be a simple graph of  $n$  vertices. Each of the following holds.*

- (i) *If  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ , then  $sc(G) = n - 1$ .*
- (ii) *If  $G \in \mathcal{K}$ , then  $sc(G) = n - 1 - b(G)$ .*
- (iii) *Suppose that  $G$  is a 2-arc-sum of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  where  $G_1, G_2 \in \mathcal{K}$ . If the common arc  $P$  shared by  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  is not in a  $K_3$  of  $G$ , then*

$$sc(G) \leq n - 2 - b(G). \quad (6)$$

**Proof:** Both (i) and (ii) of Lemma 4 hold if  $G$  is a cycle. So we suppose that  $G$  is not a cycle. Assume first that  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ . Then by definition of  $\mathcal{K}(3)$ ,  $G$  is a  $k$ -arc-sum of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ , for some  $G_1, G_2 \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ , where  $0 \leq k \leq 1$ . If  $k = 0$ , then (i) follows easily by induction. Hence we assume that  $k = 1$ . Choose  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  so that  $|E(G_2)|$  is minimized. Then by the definition of  $\mathcal{K}(3)$  and since  $k = 1$ ,  $G_2$  must be a  $K_3$ . Thus by Lemma 3 and by induction,

$$sc(G) \leq sc(G_1) + 1 = (n - 2) + 1 = n - 1. \quad (7)$$

Hence (i) of Lemma 4 follows by (i) of Theorem B and by (7).

By Proposition 3, if  $G \in \mathcal{K} - \mathcal{K}(3)$ , then  $b(G) > 0$  and so  $G$  has an arc  $A \in \mathcal{A}(G)$  such that  $b_G(A) > 0$ . Pick  $e \in E(A)$ . Then  $G' = G/e$  is simple and  $G/e$  is in  $\mathcal{K}$ . By induction, we have  $sc(G/e) = (n - 1) - 1 - b(G/e)$ . But since  $b_G(A) > 0$ , we have  $b(G) = b(G/e) + 1$  and so (ii) of Lemma 4 follows by induction.

Let  $G, G_1, G_2, P$  satisfy the hypothesis of (iii) of Lemma 4. We argue by induction on  $n$  and so we may assume that  $G$  is 2-connected. If  $G_1$  is not a cycle, then since  $\kappa(G) \geq 2$ ,  $G_1$  is a 1-arc-sum of  $H_1$  and  $H_2$ , for some  $H_1, H_2 \in \mathcal{K}$ . Since  $P$  is an arc, either  $E(P) \subseteq E(H_1)$  or  $E(P) \subseteq E(H_2)$ . We may assume that  $E(P) \subseteq E(H_1)$ . Choose  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  so that  $|E(H_2)|$  is minimized. Hence  $H_2$  is a  $k$ -cycle, for some  $k \geq 3$ . Note that  $P$  is shared by  $G_2$  and  $H_1$ . Let  $G'$  denote the 2-arc-sum of  $G_2$  and  $H_1$ . By induction,

$$sc(G') \leq |V(G')| - 2 - b(G') = (n - k + 2) - 2 - b(G'). \quad (8)$$

Since  $H_2$  is a  $k$ -cycle,  $H_2$  contributes  $k - 3$  to  $b(G)$ . Hence by Lemma 3 and by (8),

$$sc(G) \leq sc(G') + 1 \leq n - k + 1 - b(G') + (k - 3) \leq n - 2 - b(G),$$

and so (iii) follows by induction, when  $G_1$  is not a cycle.

Hence we may assume that  $G_1$  is a  $k$ -cycle and that  $G_2$  is a  $k'$ -cycle. Thus  $n = k + k' - 3$  and  $b(G) = (k - 4) + (k' - 4)$ . Since it is clear that  $sc(G) = 3$ , we have  $sc(G) = n - 2 - b(G)$ , and so (iii) of Lemma 4 follows by induction.

■

Proof of Theorem 2: We proceed by induction on  $n = |V(G)|$ . If  $G$  is a cycle, then Theorem 2 holds trivially. So we assume that  $G$  is not a cycle and that  $|V(G)| \geq 4$ . Since Theorem 2 follows easily by induction if  $G$  has a cut-vertex, we assume that  $G$  is 2-connected. It follows that  $G$  has no arc  $A$  such that  $A$  itself is a cycle.

If  $b(G) > 0$ , then  $G$  has an arc  $A$  and an edge  $e \in E(A)$  such that  $G/e$  is simple and such that  $A$  is either acyclic with  $|E(A)| \geq 2$ , or  $A$  is cyclic with  $|E(A)| \geq 3$  and is not a cycle. It follows by the definition of  $b(G)$  that

$$b(G) - 1 = b(G/e). \quad (9)$$

By induction,  $sc(G/e) \leq (n-1) - 1 - b(G/e)$  and so by (9) and by Lemma 2,  $sc(G) \leq n-1 - b(G)$ . Furthermore, if  $sc(G) = n-1 - b(G)$ , then we must have  $sc(G/e) = (n-1) - 1 - b(G/e)$ . Thus by induction,  $G/e \in \mathcal{K}$ . To show that  $G \in \mathcal{K}$ , it remains to show that when  $|E(A)| = 2$ ,  $G$  is not a proper 2-arc-sum of some subgraphs that share  $A$ . But this follows by (iii) of Lemm 4 and by  $sc(G) = n-1 - b(G)$ .

Hence we may assume that  $b(G) = 0$ . We argue further that  $G$  has no  $A$  with  $|E(A)| \geq 2$  such that  $A$  has an edge  $e$  with  $G/e$  simple. Suppose, to the contrary, that  $G$  has such an arc  $A$  and such an edge  $e \in E(A)$  with  $G/e$  simple. Since  $b(G) = 0$ , we have  $b(G/e) = 0$  also. Thus by induction and by (5),

$$sc(G) = sc(G/e) \leq (n-1) - 1 - b(G/e) = (n-2) - b(G),$$

and so (2) holds by induction.

Since  $G$  is not a cycle, by Theorem 1,  $G$  is a proper  $k$ -arc-sum of two 2-edge-connected subgraphs  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ . Since  $G$  has no arc  $A$  of length at least 2 such that  $A$  has an edge  $e$  with  $G/e$  simple, and since  $G$  is 2-connected, we have

$$1 \leq k \leq 2, \text{ and every arc of length 2 is in a } K_3 \text{ of } G. \quad (10)$$

Denote  $n_i = |V(G_i)|$ , ( $1 \leq i \leq 2$ ). Note that since  $G$  is simple,  $n_i < n$ , ( $1 \leq i \leq 2$ ). For convenience, let  $b_i(A) = b_{G_i}(A)$ , ( $1 \leq i \leq 2$ ). Let  $P$  be the common arc shared by both  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  with  $k = |E(P)|$ . Then we have

$$n_1 + n_2 = n + k + 1. \quad (11)$$

By induction, there are double cycle covers  $\mathcal{C}_1$  and  $\mathcal{C}_2$  for  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ , respectively, such that

$$sc(G_i) = |\mathcal{C}_i| \leq n_i - 1 - b(G_i), \quad (1 \leq i \leq 2). \quad (12)$$

Denote  $\mathcal{C}_i = \{C_1^i, C_2^i, \dots, C_{m(i)}^i\}$ , ( $1 \leq i \leq 2$ ), where  $m(i) = |\mathcal{C}_i|$ . Since  $P$  is an arc, any cycle in  $\mathcal{C}_i$  containing an edge of  $P$  will contain all edges of  $P$ . Thus we may assume that

$$E(P) \subseteq E(C_1^1) \cap E(C_1^2). \quad (13)$$

Let  $\mathcal{C} = (\mathcal{C}_1 \cup \mathcal{C}_2 - \{C_1^1, C_1^2\}) \cup \{G[(E(C_1^1) \cup E(C_1^2)) - E(P)]\}$ . Then  $\mathcal{C}$  is a double cycle cover of  $G$  with

$$|\mathcal{C}| = |\mathcal{C}_1| + |\mathcal{C}_2| - 1.$$

It follows that

$$sc(G) \leq sc(G_1) + sc(G_2) - 1. \quad (14)$$

Suppose first that  $k = 1$ . Then we have

$$b(G_1) + b(G_2) \leq b(G) = 0, \quad (15)$$

since in this case,  $\mathcal{A}(G) \subseteq \mathcal{A}(G_1) \cup \mathcal{A}(G_2)$ . Thus by (12), (14) and (15), we have

$$sc(G) \leq n - 1.$$

Suppose further that  $sc(G) = n - 1$ , then by (14), equality must hold in (12), and so both  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  are in  $\mathcal{K}(3)$ , by induction. We must show that  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ .

Since  $G_1 \in \mathcal{K}(3)$  and since  $\kappa(G) \geq 2$ , either  $G_1$  is a 3-cycle or  $G_1$  is a 1-arc-sum of a 3-cycle and some other subgraph.

Suppose first that  $G_1$  has a 3-cycle  $G_1''$ , such that  $G_1$  is the 1-arc-sum of  $G_1'$  and  $G_1''$ , for some subgraph  $G_1'$  of  $G_1$  and such that  $e \notin E(G_1'')$ . Let  $e'$  be the common edge shared by  $G_1'$  and  $G_1''$ . Then  $G$  is the 1-arc-sum of  $G_1''$  and  $H = G[E(G) - (E(G_1'') - \{e'\})]$ . Thus by induction,  $H \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ . Since  $e \notin E(G_1'')$ , and since  $H \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ , every 3-cycle in  $G$  containing  $e$  has at most two sum-edges. Since  $G_1''$  is a subgraph of  $G_1 \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ , and since  $e \notin E(G_1'')$ , every 3-cycle in  $G$  containing  $e'$  has at most two sum-edges. It follows that  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ , by definition.

Thus we may assume that every 3-cycle in  $G_1$  contains  $e$ , and so  $G_1 - e = K_{2,t}$  for some  $t \geq 1$ . Similarly, we may assume that  $G_2 - e = K_{2,s}$  for some  $s \geq 1$ . It follows that  $G - e = K_{2,s+t}$  and so  $G \in \mathcal{K}(3)$ . Hence Theorem 2 follows by induction when  $k = 1$ .

Suppose then that  $k = 2$ . Recall that  $P$  is shared by  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ . Let  $x, y \in V(G)$  be the two ends of  $P$ . By (7),  $xy \in E(G)$ . Without loss of generality, we may assume that  $x, y \in E(G_1)$ . Let  $G_1^1 = G[E(G_1) \cup E(P)]$  and  $G_2^2 = G[E(G_2) - E(P)] + xy$ . Then  $G$  is a 1-arc-sum of  $G_1^1$  and  $G_2^2$ , and so we are back to the case when  $k = 1$ . This proves Theorem 2. ■

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