

Connected Odd Factors of Graphs

Nastaran Haghparast¹ *, Mikio Kano² †, Shunichi Maezawa³ ‡
and Kenta Ozeki³ §

¹ Amirkabir University of Technology, Tehran, Iran,

² Ibaraki University, Hitachi, Ibaraki, Japan,

³ Yokohama National University, Yokohama, Japan

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Abstract

An odd factor of a graph is its spanning subgraph in which every vertex has odd degree. Catlin proved that every 4-edge-connected graph of even order has a connected odd factor. In this paper we consider graphs of odd order, and show that for every 4-edge-connected graph G of odd order, there exists a vertex w such that $G - w$ has a connected odd factor. Moreover, we show that the condition on 4-edge-connectedness in the above theorem is best possible.

1 Introduction

In this paper we mainly deal with *multigraphs*, which may have multiple edges but have no loops. A graph without multiple edges or loops is called a *simple graph*. Let G be a multigraph with vertex set $V(G)$ and edge set $E(G)$. The number of vertices in G is called its *order* and denoted by $|G|$, and the number of edges in G is called its *size* and denoted by $e(G)$. The degree of a vertex v in G is denoted by $\deg_G(v)$.

*nhaghparast@aut.ac.ir

†mikio.kano.math@vc.ibaraki.ac.jp, This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 16K05248

‡maezawa-shunichi-bg@ynu.jp

§ozeki-kenta-xr@ynu.ac.jp, This work was partially supported by JST ERATO Grant Number JPMJER1201, Japan, and JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 18K03391.

An *odd subgraph* (resp. *even subgraph*) of G is its subgraph in which every vertex has odd degree (resp. positive even degree). A spanning odd subgraph of G is called its *odd factor*, and a spanning even subgraph of G is called its *even factor*. It follows immediately from the handshaking lemma that a connected multigraph containing an odd factor has even order. This condition is also sufficient as shown in Theorem 1 and Proposition 7. For a graph G , let $odd(G)$ denote the number of odd components (i.e., components of odd order) of G , and for a set \mathbb{S} of integers, an \mathbb{S} -*factor* of G is its spanning subgraph F satisfying $\deg_F(v) \in \mathbb{S}$ for all $v \in V(F)$.

Theorem 1 (Amahashi [1]). *Let n be a positive odd integer. Then a multigraph G has a $\{1, 3, \dots, n\}$ -factor if and only if*

$$odd(G - S) \leq n|S| \quad \text{for all } S \subset V(G).$$

In particular, every connected multigraph of even order has an odd factor (i.e., a $\{1, 3, 5, \dots\}$ -factor).

The following theorem gives a sufficient condition for a graph to have a connected even factor, which was shown by using a well-known result on two edge-disjoint spanning trees [11, 13]. A graph having a connected even factor is called a *supereulerian (multi)graph*. A survey on superueulerian (multi)graphs is found in Catlin [3] and Kouider and Vestergaard [9].

Theorem 2 (Jaeger [8]). *Every 4-edge-connected multigraph has a connected even factor.*

There are infinitely many 3-edge-connected cubic graphs (i.e., 3-regular graphs) which have no Hamiltonian cycles. Since a connected even factor of a cubic graph is a Hamiltonian cycle, the above fact says that there exist infinitely many 3-edge-connected simple graphs which have no connected even factors.

Analogously, we focus on a connected odd factor in this paper. Catlin [2] proved the following. (In fact, he proved a stronger statement in terms of *collapsible* subgraphs.)

Theorem 3. (Catlin [2, Theorem 2]) *Every 4-edge-connected multigraph of even order has a connected odd factor.*

As pointed out in several papers (e.g. [5]), if a graph is contracted to the Petersen graph, then it is not collapsible. We show that we cannot lower the edge-connectivity condition in Theorem 3 as follows.

Proposition 4. *There exist infinitely many 3-edge-connected simple graphs of even order which have no connected odd factors.*

By the handshaking lemma, it is clear that every connected graph of odd order has no odd factor. So when we deal with a connected graph G of odd order, we might consider an odd factor in $G - w$ for some vertex w . This motivates us to show our main theorems.

Theorem 5. *For every 4-edge-connected multigraph G of odd order, there exists a vertex w such that $G - w$ has a connected odd factor.*

Theorem 6. *There exist infinitely many 3-edge-connected simple graphs G of odd order such that for every vertex v of G , $G - v$ has no connected odd factor.*

2 Proofs of Theorems

We begin with some other notations. Let G be a multigraph. Then let $V_{\text{even}}(G)$ and $V_{\text{odd}}(G)$ denote the set of vertices of even degree and that of odd degree, respectively. For a vertex set X of G , the subgraph of G induced by X is denoted by $\langle X \rangle_G$. For two disjoint vertex sets X and Y of G , the set of edges of G joining X to Y is denoted by $E_G(X, Y)$, and the number of edges of G joining X to Y is denoted by $e_G(X, Y)$. Thus $e_G(X, Y) = |E_G(X, Y)|$.

For a positive integer k , a spanning k -regular subgraph of G is called a k -regular factor or briefly a k -factor. For a vertex set T of G , a subgraph J of G is called a T -join if $V_{\text{odd}}(J) = T$.

Proposition 7 ([7]). *Let G be a connected multigraph and $T \subseteq V(G)$. Then there exists a T -join in G if and only if $|T|$ is even.*

We prove Proposition 4. It is known that Petersen graph of order 10, denoted by PG_{10} , is a 3-edge-connected simple graph and does not have a Hamiltonian cycle (see (1) of Figure 1). Let M be a simple graph of even order which has the following property: M has three specified vertices v_1, v_2 and v_3 such that the new graph $M + u$ obtained from M by adding a new vertex u together with three new edges uv_1, uv_2 and uv_3 is 3-edge-connected. Two examples of graphs M are shown in (2) of Figure 1. For every vertex x of Petersen graph PG_{10} , we replace x with a graph M , that is, we delete x and add a graph M keeping the edges incident to x in PG_{10} with new ends v_1, v_2 and v_3 . Note that such a graph M is denoted by M_x since we can choose a graph M depending on x as shown in (3) of Figure 1. We denote the resulting graph by G^* . Then G^* has even order since every M_x has even order, and G^* is 3-edge-connected since $M_x + u$ is 3-edge-connected and PG_{10} is 3-edge-connected. Moreover, it is obvious that there are infinitely many such graphs G^* since there are infinitely many choices for graphs M .

Proof of Proposition 4. We now show that G^* has no connected odd factors. Suppose that G^* has a connected odd factor F . Then for every vertex x of PG_{10} , we have

$$\sum_{v \in V(M_x)} \deg_F(v) = e_F(V(M_x), V(G^*) - V(M_x)) + 2e(\langle V(M_x) \rangle_F).$$

Since F is an odd factor of G^* and M_x has even order, it follows from the above equality that $\eta := e_F(V(M_x), V(G^*) - V(M_x))$ is even. Since F is a connected factor, η is positive. Hence $\eta = 2$ since PG_{10} is a cubic graph. It is immediate that every edge of F joining $V(M_x)$ to $V(G^*) - V(M_x)$ corresponds to an edge of the basis Petersen graph PG_{10} . Thus the set of edges of F joining $V(M_x)$ to $V(G^*) - V(M_x)$ for all $x \in V(PG_{10})$ forms a connected 2-factor of PG_{10} , which is a Hamiltonian cycle of PG_{10} . But this contradicts the fact that PG_{10} has no Hamiltonian cycle. Consequently Proposition 4 is proved. \square

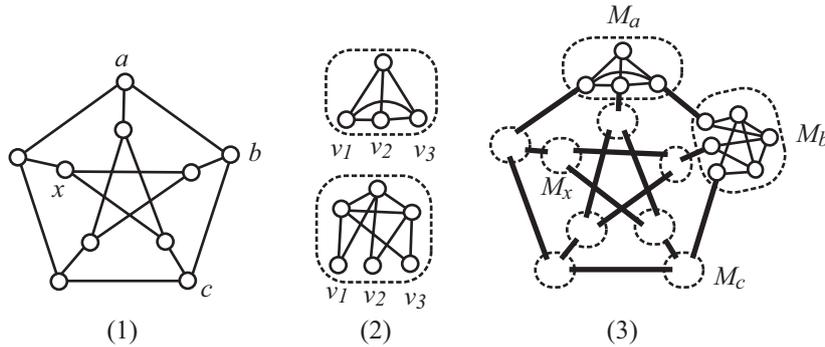


Figure 1: (1) The Petersen graph PG_{10} of order 10. (2) Two examples of graphs M . (3) A graph G^* , which is obtained from PG_{10} by replacing each vertex x by a graph M_x .

In order to prove Theorem 5, we use the following two theorems. The first theorem was shown by using the result on two edge-disjoint spanning trees [11, 13].

Theorem 8 (Catlin [4], see [6]). *Let $k \geq 1$ be an integer and let G be a multigraph. Then G is $2k$ -edge-connected if and only if for all $X \subseteq E(G)$ with $|X| \leq k$, $G - X$ has k edge-disjoint spanning trees.*

A k -edge-connected multigraph G is said to be *minimally k -edge-connected* if for every edge e of G , $G - e$ is not k -edge-connected. Then the following holds.

Theorem 9 (Mader [10], Problem 49 of §6 in [12]). *Let $k \geq 1$ be an integer. Then every minimally k -edge-connected graph has a vertex of degree k . In particular, every k -edge-connected multigraph G has a k -edge-connected spanning subgraph H such that H has a vertex of degree k in H .*

We prove Theorem 5 by the similar arguments to those of Theorems 2 and 3, using Theorems 8 and 9 efficiently.

Proof of Theorem 5. By Theorem 9, G has a 4-edge-connected spanning subgraph H such that H has a vertex w of degree 4 in H . Let X be the set of two edges incident with w . By Theorem 8, $H - X$ has 2 edge-disjoint spanning trees T'_1 and T'_2 . Since w has degree two in $H - X$, w is a leaf in both T'_1 and T'_2 . Thus, $T_1 = T'_1 - w$ and $T_2 = T'_2 - w$ are edge-disjoint spanning trees in $H - w$.

Let $V_{\text{even}}(T_1) = \{v_1, v_2, \dots, v_t\}$. Then t is even since $|T_1| = |H - w|$ and $|V_{\text{odd}}(T_1)| = |T_1| - |V_{\text{even}}(T_1)|$ are both even. By Proposition 7, T_2 has a subgraph J such that $\deg_J(v_i)$ is odd for all $1 \leq i \leq t$ and $\deg_J(x)$ is even for every $x \in V(J) - \{v_1, v_2, \dots, v_t\}$. Then $T_1 \cup J$ is a connected odd factor of $H - w$, which is obviously the desired connected odd factor of $G - w$. \square

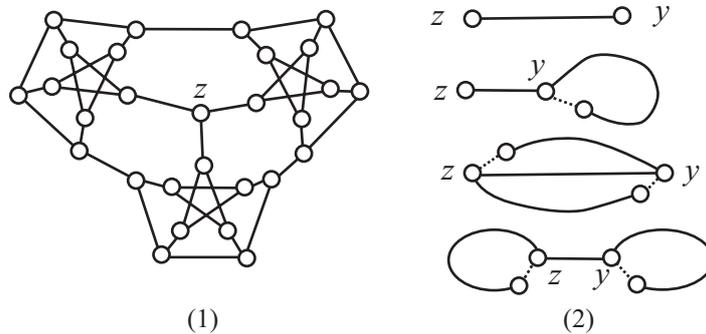


Figure 2: (1) A 3-edge-connected cubic graph G_{28} of order 28 with a specified vertex z , which has no Hamiltonian path. (2) A connected spanning subgraph F of G^* such that $\deg_F(z), \deg_F(y) \in \{1, 3\}$ and $\deg_F(x) = 2$ for all $x \in V(G_{28}) - \{y, z\}$.

We next prove Theorem 6, whose proof is similar to that of Proposition 4. Let G_{28} be the 3-edge-connected cubic graph of order 28 shown in Figure 2. Then G_{28} has no Hamiltonian path.

Let M be a graph of even order defined in the proof of Proposition 4 (see (2) of Figure 1). Let z be the central vertex of G_{28} shown in Figure 2. For

every vertex x of G_{28} with $x \neq z$, we replace x by a graph M , that is, we delete x and add a graph M keeping the edges incident to x in G_{28} with new ends v_1, v_2 and v_3 . Note that such a graph M is denoted by M_x since we can choose a graph M depending on x (see (3) of Figure 1). We denote the resulting graph by G^* . Then G^* has odd order since every M_x has even order, and G^* is 3-edge-connected. It is obvious that there are infinitely many such graphs G^* .

Proof of Theorem 6. We now show that for every vertex w of G^* , $G^* - w$ has no connected odd factor. Suppose that $G^* - w$ has a connected odd factor F for some vertex w . We first assume that w is contained in some M_y , $y \in V(G_{28}) - \{z\}$. For every $x \in V(G_{28}) - \{y, z\}$, we have

$$\sum_{v \in V(M_x)} \deg_F(v) = e_F(V(M_x), V(G^*) - V(M_x)) + 2e(\langle V(M_x) \rangle_F).$$

Since every vertex of M_x has odd degree in F and M_x has even order, it follows from the above equality that $\eta_x := e_F(V(M_x), V(G^*) - V(M_x))$ is even. Since F is a connected factor, η_x is positive. Thus $\eta_x = 2$ since G_{28} is a cubic graph. Note that $\deg_F(z) = 1$ or 3 . For M_y with $w \in V(M_y)$, we have

$$\sum_{v \in V(M_y) - \{w\}} \deg_F(v) = e_F(V(M_y), V(G^*) - V(M_y)) + 2e(\langle V(M_y) \rangle_F).$$

Since every vertex of $M_y - w$ has odd degree in F , and $M_y - w$ has odd order, it follows from the above equality that $\eta_y := e_F(V(M_y), V(G^*) - V(M_y))$ is odd. Thus η_y is 1 or 3.

It is immediate that each edge of F joining $V(M_x)$ to $V(G^*) - V(M_x)$ for $x \in V(G_{28}) - \{z\}$ or joining z to $V(G^*) - \{z\}$ corresponds to an edge of G_{28} . Thus, the set of edges of F joining $V(M_x)$ to $V(G^*) - V(M_x)$ for $x \in V(G_{28}) - \{z\}$, and joining z to $V(G^*) - \{z\}$ forms a connected spanning subgraph \tilde{F} of G_{28} such that $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(z), \deg_{\tilde{F}}(y) \in \{1, 3\}$ and $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(x) = 2$ for all $x \in V(G_{28}) - \{y, z\}$.

If $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(z) = 1$ and $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(y) = 1$, then \tilde{F} must be a Hamiltonian path of G_{28} , which contradicts the fact that G_{28} has no Hamiltonian path. If $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(z) = 1$ and $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(y) = 3$, then by removing one edge of \tilde{F} incident with y , we obtain a Hamiltonian path of G_{28} , a contradiction (see the upper middle of Figure 2 (2)). The same situation occurs when $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(z) = 3$ and $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(y) = 1$. Suppose that $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(z) = 3$ and $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(y) = 3$. Then \tilde{F} is either a spanning subgraph consisting of three edge disjoint paths connecting z and y , or consisting of two disjoint cycles and a path internally disjoint from

the cycles, such that one cycle contains z , the other contains y and the path connects z and y . In either case, by removing one suitable edge incident with z and one suitable edge incident with y from \tilde{F} , we obtain a Hamiltonian path of G_{28} , a contradiction (see the lower middle and the bottom of Figure 2 (2)).

We next assume that $w = z$. In this case, by the same argument given above, we obtain a Hamiltonian cycle \tilde{F} of $G_{28} - z$ by $\deg_{\tilde{F}}(x) = 2$ for all $x \in V(G_{28} - z)$. This implies that G_{28} has a Hamiltonian path starting at z . This is a contradiction. Consequently Theorem 6 is proved. \square

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