

## ON THE GENUS OF STRONG TENSOR PRODUCTS OF GRAPHS

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**1. Introduction and definitions.** The genus parameter for graphs has been studied extensively in recent years, with impetus given primarily by the Ringel-Youngs solution to the Heawood Map-coloring Problem [15]. This solution involved the determination of  $\gamma(K_n)$ , the genus of the complete graph  $K_n$ . It has been natural to consider also the genus of graphs closely related to  $K_n$ : the *complete  $n$ -partite graph*  $G = K_{p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n}$  has vertex set  $V(G) = \cup_{i=1}^n V_i$  (a disjoint union of nonempty sets), with edge set  $E(G) = \{v_i v_j | v_i \in V_i, v_j \in V_j, i \neq j\}$ ;  $p_i = |V_i|, 1 \leq i \leq n$ . If  $p_i = m$  for each  $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ , then  $G$  is regular and we write  $G = K_{n(m)}$ . Thus  $K_n = K_{n(1)}$ . Several genus results have been established for these families; see [12]. The existing techniques for imbedding graphs (see, for example, [6; 7; and 23]) are most readily applied for graphs which can be factored as a (possibly iterated) product of some kind (such as  $Q_n$  and related graphs, see [20]) or for graphs which are Cayley graphs for some finite group (such as  $K_{n(m)}$ , see [24]). The situation is particularly nice where triangular imbeddings are produced, as they are necessarily minimal. In this paper we introduce a graphical product which iterates, under the proper conditions, to produce triangular imbeddings of many families of graphs, including some of the families  $K_{n(m)}$ .

The graphical product we introduce is related to both the tensor product and the cartesian product. Let graphs  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  have vertex sets  $V(G_1), V(G_2)$  and edge sets  $E(G_1), E(G_2)$  respectively. The *tensor product*  $G_1 \otimes G_2$  has vertex set  $V(G_1) \times V(G_2)$  and edge set  $E(G_1 \otimes G_2) = \{(u_1, u_2)(v_1, v_2) | u_i v_i \in E(G_i), i = 1, 2\}$ . The *cartesian product*  $G_1 \times G_2$  has vertex set  $V(G_1) \times V(G_2)$  and edge set  $E(G_1 \times G_2) = \{(u_1, u_2)(v_1, v_2) | u_1 = v_1 \text{ and } u_2 v_2 \in E(G_2) \text{ or } u_2 = v_2 \text{ and } u_1 v_1 \in E(G_1)\}$ . For example, the  $n$ -cube  $Q_n$  is defined by:  $Q_1 = K_2$ , and  $Q_n = Q_{n-1} \times K_2, n \geq 2$ . For more information on the tensor and cartesian products, see [10; 17; and 18]. We now define the *strong tensor product*  $G_1 \boxtimes G_2$  to have vertex set  $V(G_1) \times V(G_2)$  and edge set  $E(G_1 \boxtimes G_2) = E(G_1 \otimes G_2) \cup \{(u_1, u_2)(v_1, v_2) | u_1 = v_1 \text{ and } u_2 v_2 \in E(G_2)\}$ . Thus  $G_1 \boxtimes G_2 = G_1 \otimes G_2 + p_1 G_2$ , where  $p_1 = |V(G_1)|$ , “+” denotes the “sum” operation of [2], and  $p_1 G_2$  denotes  $p_1$  disjoint copies of  $G_2$ , as in [9].

If  $G$  has components  $G_1, G_2, \dots, G_n$ , we will write  $G = \cup_{i=1}^n G_i$ , consistent with [9]. If  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  are isomorphic, we will write  $G_1 = G_2$ . As usual,  $\chi(G)$

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will denote the chromatic number of  $G$ . If  $G$  is imbedded in a closed orientable 2-manifold  $S_k$ , we let  $G^*$  denote the dual pseudograph for this imbedding. We say that the imbedding has *bichromatic dual* if  $\chi(G^*) = 2$ . The first Betti number of a connected graph  $G$  is given by  $\beta(G) = q - p + 1$ , where  $q = |E(G)|$  and  $p = |V(G)|$ . The closed orientable 2-manifold of genus  $n$  will be denoted by  $S_n$ ,  $n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$ .

**2. Basic properties of the strong tensor product.** This product has interest in its own right, apart from genus considerations. In support of this contention, as well as for use in subsequent calculations, we offer the following elementary observations. Let  $G, G_1, G_2$  have  $p, p_1, p_2$  vertices and  $q, q_1, q_2$  edges respectively. Let  $d(v_i)$  be the degree of  $v_i$  in  $G_i$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ .

PROPOSITION 1. *The degree of  $(v_1, v_2)$  in  $G_1 \otimes G_2$  is given by  $d(v_1, v_2) = d(v_2)(d(v_1) + 1)$ .*

Using Proposition 1, we obtain

PROPOSITION 2. *For  $G = G_1 \otimes G_2$ ,  $p = p_1 p_2$  and  $q = q_2(p_1 + 2q_1)$ .*

*Proof.* The equality for  $p$  is obvious. For  $q$ , we note that

$$\begin{aligned} 2q &= \sum_{v_i \in V(G_i)} d(v_1, v_2) = \sum_{v_i \in V(G_i)} d(v_2)(d(v_1) + 1) \\ &= \sum_{v_2 \in V(G_2)} d(v_2) \sum_{v_1 \in V(G_1)} (d(v_1) + 1) = 2q_2(2q_1 + p_1) \end{aligned}$$

so that  $q = q_2(p_1 + 2q_1)$ .

PROPOSITION 3. *For  $G \neq K_1$ ,  $G \otimes H$  is connected if and only if  $G$  and  $H$  are both connected with  $H \neq K_1$ . Moreover, if  $G = \cup_{i=1}^m G_i$  and  $H = \cup_{j=1}^n H_j$ , with no  $H_j = K_1$ , then*

$$G \otimes H = \bigcup_{\substack{1 \leq i \leq m \\ 1 \leq j \leq n}} G_i \otimes H_j$$

(where all unions are over components).

PROPOSITION 4.  $\chi(G_1 \otimes G_2) = \chi(G_2)$ .

As a special case of Proposition 4, we have

PROPOSITION 5. *If  $G_2$  is bipartite, then  $G_1 \otimes G_2$  is bipartite.*

Moreover, we have

PROPOSITION 6. *If  $G_1$  is bipartite, then  $G_1 \otimes K_2 = G_1 \times K_2$ .*

Now define  $G_1 = K_2$  and  $G_n = G_{n-1} \otimes K_2$  for  $n \geq 2$ ; using Proposition 6 and an easy induction argument, we have

PROPOSITION 7.  $G_n = Q_n$ .

Consistent with Proposition 4, we have the following:

PROPOSITION 8.  $K_m \otimes K_{p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n} = K_{mp_1, mp_2, \dots, mp_n}$ .

Thus taking  $G_1 = K_m$  in the strong tensor product, with  $G_2$  complete  $n$ -partite, has the effect of multiplying the order of each partite set by  $m$ . In particular,

PROPOSITION 9.  $K_m \otimes K_{n(r)} = K_{n(mr)}$ ; for  $r = 1$ , we have  $K_m \otimes K_n = K_{n(m)}$ .

Propositions 8 and 9 will prove useful in subsequent genus computations. Since  $K_2 = K_{1,1}$ , we can also apply Proposition 8 twice to see that  $K_2 \otimes (K_2 \otimes K_2) = K_{4,4}$ . But, by Proposition 7,  $(K_2 \otimes K_2) \otimes K_2 = Q_3 \neq K_{4,4}$ . Hence

PROPOSITION 10. *The strong tensor product operation is neither associative nor commutative.*

A special case of Proposition 3 gives  $\bar{K}_p \otimes G = pG$  (where  $\bar{K}_p$  is the complement of  $K_p$ ). Taking  $p = 1$ , we have  $K_1 \otimes G = G$ . Thus

PROPOSITION 11. *The strong tensor product operation has  $K_1$  as a left identity.*

Because  $G_1 \otimes G_2$  has  $p_1 p_2$  vertices,  $K_1$  is also the only possible right identity. However, since  $G \otimes K_1 = \bar{K}_p$ , where  $p = V(G)$ , we have

PROPOSITION 12. *The strong tensor product operation has no right identity.*

**3. An imbedding technique.** The strong tensor product is valuable not only for factoring graphs such as  $Q_n$  and  $K_{n(m)}$ ; it is also amenable for the construction of triangular imbeddings of product graphs, given an appropriate triangular imbedding of one of the factors.

THEOREM 1. *Let  $G_2$  have a triangular imbedding in a closed orientable 2-manifold  $S_h$ , with bichromatic dual. Let  $G_1$  be connected and bichromatic, with maximum degree at most two. Then  $G_1 \otimes G_2$  has a triangular imbedding in a closed orientable 2-manifold  $S_k$ , with bichromatic dual.*

*Proof.* We regard  $G_1 \otimes G_2$  as  $p_1 G_2 + G_1 \otimes G_2$ . Let  $M_i = S_h$ ,  $i = 1, 2, \dots, p_1$ , be imbedded in  $R^3$ , with  $M_i$  exterior to  $M_j$  for  $i \neq j$ . Begin with identical imbeddings of  $G_2$  on  $M_1, M_3, M_5, \dots$ , each triangular and with bichromatic dual and (say) clockwise orientation. Now form the same imbeddings, but with counterclockwise orientation, of  $G_2$  on  $M_2, M_4, M_6, \dots$ ; thus these imbeddings are "mirror images" of those previously formed. Let regions  $R_1, R_3, \dots, R_{r_2-1}$  be colored black and regions  $R_2, R_4, \dots, R_{r_2}$  (where  $r_2$  is the number of regions for the imbedding of  $G_2$  on  $S_h$ ) be colored white on each of  $M_1, M_3, M_5, \dots$ , in consonance with  $\chi(G_2^*) = 2$ . (Since the dual is bichromatic, the numbers of regions of the two colors agree—each is  $q_2/3$ , since each edge of  $G_2$  appears in exactly one (triangular) region of each color.)

Let  $R'_i$  be the mirror image of  $R_i$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, r_2$ ) on  $M_2, M_4, M_6, \dots$ . Color regions  $R'_1, R'_3, \dots, R'_{r_2-1}$  with white and regions  $R'_2, R'_4, \dots, R'_{r_2}$  with black on each of  $M_2, M_4, M_6, \dots$ . We must add the tensor product edges to form  $G_1 \otimes G_2$  from  $p_1 G_2$ . This will be accomplished by attaching cylinders among the surfaces  $M_i$  so as to form  $S_k$ , and then triangulating the cylinders with these edges. We will see that the resulting triangular imbedding of  $G_1 \otimes G_2$  also has bichromatic dual.

Consider  $R_1$  in  $M_1$  and  $R'_1$  in  $M_2$ . Excise two open disks,  $D_1$  and  $D'_1$ , from the interiors of  $R_1$  and  $R'_1$  respectively, as indicated in Figure 1. Let simple closed boundary curves  $C_1$  and  $C'_1$  bound  $D_1$  and  $D'_1$  respectively. Let  $T_1$  be a topological cylinder, with simple closed boundary curves  $B_1$  and  $B'_1$ . Identify  $B_1$  with  $C_1$  and  $B'_1$  with  $C'_1$ . The edges  $xy', xz', yz', yx', zx', zy'$  can now be imbedded along  $T_1$ , as shown in Figure 1. Note that six triangular regions are formed along  $T_1$  and that these can be 2-colored consistently with the 2-colorings of  $M_1$  and  $M_2$ . Now repeat this process, joining region  $R_i$  in  $M_1$  with  $R'_i$  in  $M_2$  by cylinder  $T_i, i = 3, 5, \dots, r_2 - 1$ , adding the six required tensor product edges along each cylinder. At this stage we have added precisely  $6(r_2/2) = 6(q_2/3) = 2q_2$  edges and  $K_2 \otimes G_2$  is triangularly imbedded on  $M_1 \cup M_2$  (as altered by cylinder attachment), with bichromatic dual. (Since each edge of  $G_2$  appears in exactly one (triangular) region colored black in  $M_1$ , these  $2q_2$  edges are exactly those needed at this stage.)

We now repeat this process, joining  $M_i$  to  $M_{i+1}, i = 2, 3, \dots, p_1 - 1$ , by attaching cylinders between mirror-image regions of opposite color. (Regions colored black in  $M_i$  are joined to their counterparts colored white in  $M_{i+1}$ .) At each stage we have a triangular imbedding, with bichromatic dual. We now note that the hypotheses on  $G_1$  imply that  $G_1$  is either a path or an even cycle. If  $G_1$  is a path, we are done. If  $G_1$  is an even cycle, then  $M_{p_1}$  is joined also to  $M_1$ , in the same fashion; a triangular imbedding of  $G_1 \otimes G_2$ , with bichromatic dual, again results.

**COROLLARY 1.** *Under the conditions of Theorem 1, where  $h = \gamma(G_2)$ ,  $\gamma(G_1 \otimes G_2) = k = p_1 h + q_1((q_2/3) - 1) + \delta$ , where  $\delta = 0$  if  $G_1$  is a path and  $\delta = 1$  if  $G_1$  is an even cycle.*

*Proof.* Use Proposition 2 and the well-known fact that if  $G$  is triangularly imbedded in  $S_n$ , then  $n = 1 - p/2 + q/6$ . Alternately, we observe that we commenced our construction with  $p_1$  disjoint copies of  $S_n$ , that we constructed  $q_1$  joins—each contributing  $q^2/3 - 1$  to the genus of  $S_k$ , and that  $\beta(G_1) = \delta$ . (See [21].)

We remark that the construction of Theorem 1 fails if any one of the following occurs:

- (i)  $G_1$  has a vertex of degree 3 or more.
- (ii)  $G_1$  is not bichromatic.
- (iii) The imbedding of  $G_2$  is not triangular.
- (iv) The imbedding of  $G_2$  does not have bichromatic dual.

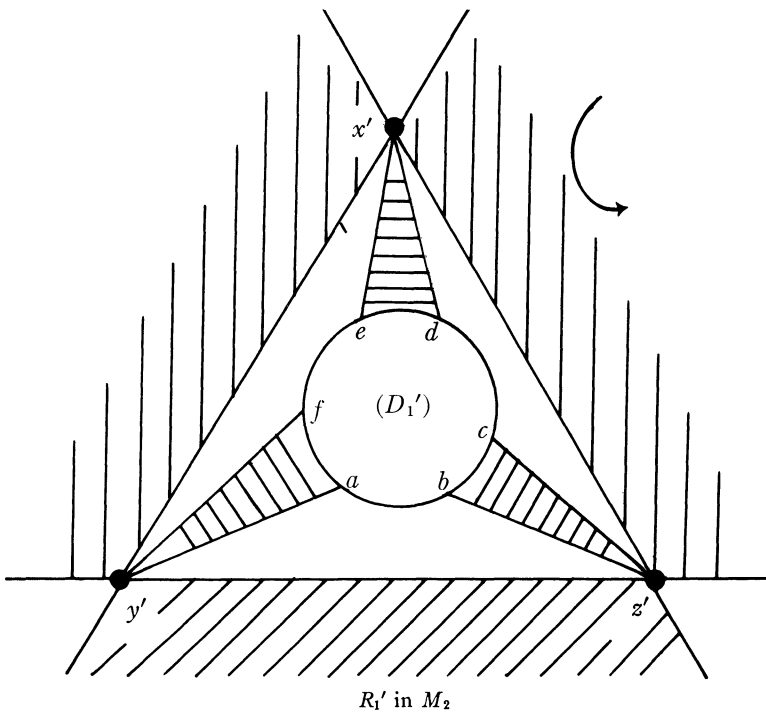
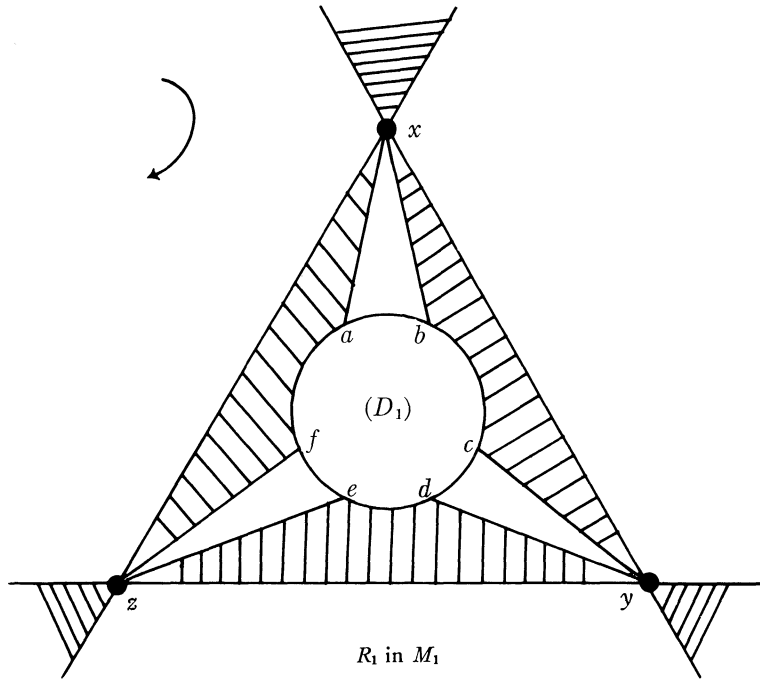


FIGURE 1

Yet the conjunction of the four conditions (in their affirmative forms) occurs sufficiently often, as we will see in Section 5, so as not to detract from the power of the theorem.

**4. The main theorem.** Let  $H_0 = G_2$ , and  $H_n = G_1 \otimes H_{n-1}$ , for  $n \geq 1$ . By Proposition 3 and a result of Battle, Harary, Kodama, and Youngs [1] that the genus parameter is additive over the components of a graph, we take  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  to be connected, without loss of generality.

**THEOREM 2.** *Let  $G_2$  have a triangular imbedding in a closed orientable 2-manifold, with bichromatic dual. Let  $G_1$  be bichromatic with maximum degree at most two. Then*

$$\gamma(H_n) = 1 + \frac{q_2}{6} (p_1 + 2q_1)^n - \frac{p_2}{2} (p_1)^n, \quad n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$$

*Proof.* We apply Theorem 1  $n$  times, to obtain a triangular imbedding of  $H_n$ . Let  $H_n$  have  $p_n$  vertices and  $q_n$  edges; then  $\gamma(H_n) = 1 - p_n/2 + q_n/6$ . But easy induction arguments show that  $p_n = p_1^n p_2$  and (using Proposition 2)  $q_n = q_2(p_1 + 2q_1)^n$ .

**5. Applications to new genus results.** In applying Theorem 2 (or the case  $n = 1$  of Theorem 2, which is Theorem 1), we must choose  $G_1$  as the path  $P_m$  or an even cycle  $C_{2m}$ . As the special case  $G_1 = P_2 = K_2$  allows us to apply Propositions 8 and 9, this choice will often be productive. There are many possible choices for  $G_2$ . Each such choice will lead to a family of genus formulas, via Theorem 2. (We will not state specific formulas explicitly, unless we believe them to be of particular interest.)

It is well-known (see, for example, [25]) that a connected planar graph  $G$  has bichromatic dual if and only if it is eulerian. Moreover, such a graph  $G$  triangulates the sphere if and only if it is maximal planar. Thus:

**THEOREM 3.** *A graph  $G$  triangulates the sphere, with bichromatic dual, if and only if it is maximal planar and eulerian.*

Using the fact that a maximal planar graph  $G$  has  $q = 3p - 6$ , we apply Theorem 1 to find a family of strong tensor products with genus asymptotic to the order of the second factor.

**THEOREM 4.** *If  $G$  is maximal planar eulerian, then  $\gamma(K_2 \otimes G) = p - 3$ .*

Unfortunately, the characterization of Theorem 3 does not extend to surfaces of positive genus. The graph  $G$  of Figure 2 triangulates the torus and is eulerian, yet its dual has chromatic number at least three, as indicated by the 7-cycle running vertically through the middle of the rectangle depicting the torus. It is easy to verify, however, that if  $G$  on  $S_k$  ( $k \geq 0$ ) has  $\chi(G^*) = 2$ , then  $G$  must be eulerian.

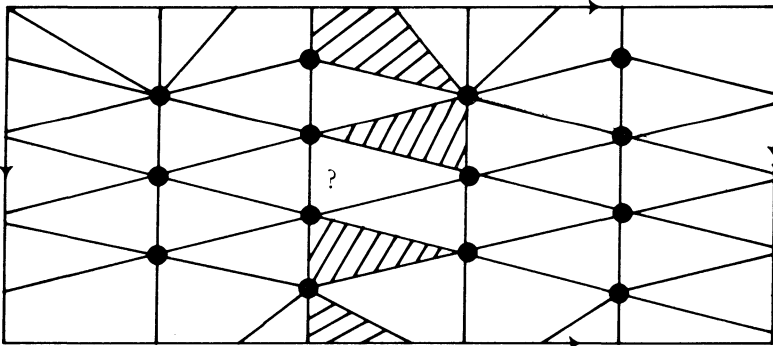


FIGURE 2

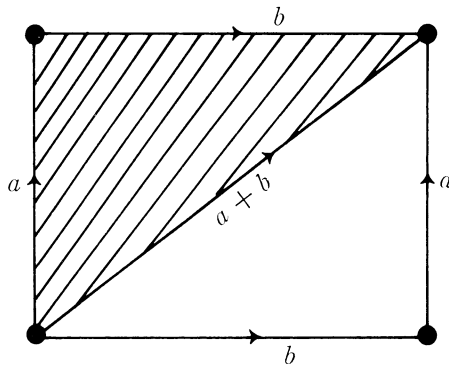


FIGURE 3

We next produce an infinite collection of triangular imbeddings on the torus, each with bichromatic dual. We use the *voltage graph* construction introduced by Gross in [6], to imbed a variety of toroidal *Cayley graphs* (see [24]) as follows. Consider the voltage graph of Figure 3, imbedded in the torus. (Here the “graph” is actually a loop graph  $H$ , but this is allowed by the theory.) Let  $\Gamma$  be any abelian group with generating set  $\Delta = \{a, b, a + b\}$ , where  $\Delta \cap \Delta^{-1} = \phi(\Delta^{-1} = \{\delta^{-1} | \delta \in \Delta\})$ . Then the “Kirchoff Voltage Law” holds around each region boundary, and the theory of voltage graphs guarantees not only that the Cayley graph  $G_\Delta(\Gamma)$  covering  $H$  is triangularly imbedded in  $S_1$  (among the surfaces  $S_k$ , only  $S_1$  can cover  $S_1$ ; see [3]), but also that the dual of  $G_\Delta(\Gamma)$  in  $S_1$  is bichromatic—since the dual of  $H$  in  $S_1$  is bichromatic.

For example, if we take  $a = 1$  and  $b = 2$  in  $\Gamma = Z_n$  ( $n \geq 7$ ), we get an infinite collection of Cayley graphs  $G_\Delta(Z_n)$ , each triangulating the torus with bichromatic dual. The first two cases are of special interest:  $G_\Delta(Z_7) = K_7$ , and  $G_\Delta(Z_8) = K_{4(2)}$ . Or, we can take  $a = (1, 0)$  and  $b = (0, 1)$  for

$\Gamma = Z_m + Z_n$  ( $m, n \geq 3$ ). The simplest case here gives  $G_\Delta(Z_3 + Z_3) = K_{3(3)}$ .

Letting  $G_1 = K_2$  and  $G_2 = K_7$  in Theorem 2, we obtain the following formula for the genus of a class of 7-partite graphs.

**THEOREM 5.**  $\gamma(K_{7(2^k)}) = 1 + 7 \cdot 2^{k-1}(2^k - 1), \quad k \geq 0.$

*Proof.* The case  $k = 0$  is  $\gamma(K_7) = 1$ , since  $K_{7(1)} = K_7$ . For  $k > 0$ , apply Theorem 2 to compute  $\gamma(H_k)$ ; now apply Proposition 8 repeatedly, to see that  $H_k = K_{7(2^k)}$ .

It can in fact be shown that every minimal imbedding of  $K_7$  triangulates  $S_1$  with bichromatic dual, although we do not do so here. We do establish, however, a similar result for  $K_{3(m)}$ . Recall that, for each natural number  $m$ , every minimal imbedding of  $K_{3(m)}$  is a triangulation (see [16] or [19]). The case  $m = 3$  below has been verified independently by Figure 3.

**THEOREM 6.** *Let  $G = K_{3(m)}$  be minimally imbedded; then  $\chi(G^*) = 2$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $V(G) = V_1 \cup V_2 \cup V_3$  be the partite set partition. Then every region is triangular and has an oriented clockwise boundary of exactly one of the two following forms:

- (a)  $v_1, v_2, v_3, v_1$
- (b)  $v_1, v_3, v_2, v_1$ ,

where  $v_i \in V_i, i = 1, 2, 3$ . Color each region of form (a) black, while coloring each of form (b) white. This provides a 2-coloring of the regions, as we can see by considering an arbitrary edge of  $G$ , say  $v_1v_2$ . This edge bounds two regions, colored as indicated in Figure 4.

In [22] it has been shown that  $K_{p_1, p_2, p_3}$  has an orientable triangular imbedding if and only if  $p_1 = p_2 = p_3$ . Thus among complete tripartite graphs, it is exactly those which are regular which can serve as the graph  $G_2$  in Theorem 2. Moreover, these can be taken with arbitrariness large genus.

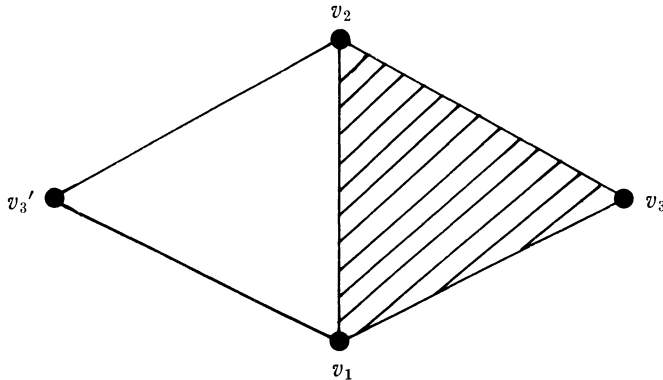


FIGURE 4



We next consider the family  $K_{4(n)}$ . Ringel [13] conjectured in 1969 that  $\gamma(K_{4(n)}) = (n - 1)^2$  for all  $n$ . In 1973, Garman [4] affirmed this conjecture, for  $n \equiv 2 \pmod{4}$ . In 1974 Jungerman [11] affirmed the conjecture, for all  $n \neq 3$ . Both solutions employ *current graphs* (see [7] or [8]), dual to voltage graphs. The current graphs of Garman [5] are bichromatic, and the theory of current graphs guarantees that the imbeddings of  $K_{4(n)}$  ( $n \equiv 2 \pmod{4}$ ) they produce have bichromatic dual. We can now show:

**THEOREM 7.**  $K_{4(n)}$  has a triangular imbedding with bichromatic dual if and only if  $n$  is even.

*Proof.* If  $n$  is odd,  $K_{4(n)}$  is regular of odd degree  $3n$  and hence no dual can be 2-colored. If  $n \equiv 2 \pmod{4}$ , we are done by the remarks preceding the theorem. If  $n \equiv 0 \pmod{4}$ , we write  $n = 2^s \cdot m = 2^{s-1} \cdot 2m$ , where  $s \geq 2$  and  $m$  is odd; thus  $2m \equiv 2 \pmod{4}$ . If  $m = 1$ , we take  $G_2 = K_{4(2)}$  imbedded in  $S_1$  as given by Figure 3 and  $G_1 = K_2$  in Theorem 2 to get a triangular imbedding for  $K_{4(2^s)}$ ; Theorem 1 guarantees that the dual is bichromatic. If  $m \geq 3$ , we take  $G_2 = K_{4(2m)}$  imbedded in the manner described by Garman and  $G_1 = K_2$ ; again Theorems 1 and 2 give the desired result.

Finally, we consider  $G_2 = K_{12r+3} = K_{(12r+3)(1)}$  and its triangular imbeddings as given by Ringel in [14]; these all have bichromatic dual. Taking  $G_1 = K_2$  in Theorem 2, we have the following:

**THEOREM 8.**

$$\gamma(K_{n(m)}) = \frac{(mn - 3)(mn - 4)}{12} - \frac{mn(m - 1)}{12}, \quad \text{for } n \equiv 3 \pmod{12}$$

*and*  $m = 2^k, \quad k \geq 0.$

For other values of  $m$  and  $n$ , the equality of Theorem 8 will hold if and only if  $K_{n(m)}$  has a triangular imbedding in some closed orientable 2-manifold. It is well-known that  $K_n$  has an orientable triangular imbedding if and only if  $n \equiv 0, 3, 4, 7 \pmod{12}$ . For  $n \equiv 0, 4 \pmod{12}$ ,  $K_n$  is not eulerian and hence the duals are not bichromatic.

The case  $n \equiv 3$  is analyzed above. For  $n = 12r + 7, r \geq 1$ , the existing current graphs are *not* bichromatic, so that the construction of Theorem 8 is not yet known to apply.

We give here a summary of the current knowledge about this problem;  $K_{n(m)}$  has an orientable triangular imbedding for

- (1)  $n = 2$ : no values of  $m$  (bipartite graphs have no odd cycles)
- (2)  $n = 3$  and all  $m$  ([16] or [19])
- (3)  $n = 4$  if and only if  $m \neq 3$  ([4] and [11])
- (4)  $n = 7$  and  $m = 2^k (k \geq 0)$  (Theorem 5)
- (5)  $n \equiv 3 \pmod{12}, m = 2^k (k \geq 0)$  (Theorem 8)
- (6)  $m = 1$  if and only if  $n \equiv 0, 3, 4, 7 \pmod{12}$  ([15])
- (7)  $m = 2$  and  $n = 6, 7; n \equiv 4 \pmod{6}$ , or  $n \equiv 3 \pmod{12}$  ([24, Theorem 5 above, 7, Theorem 8 above, respectively]).

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