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PAIRED DOMINATION IN CLAW-FREE CUBIC GRAPHS

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Paired domination in claw-free cubic graphs

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Abstract

A set S of vertices in a graph G is a paired dominating set of G if every vertex of G is adjacent to some vertex in S and if the subgraph induced by S contains a perfect matching. The minimum cardinality of a paired dominating set of G is the paired domination number of G, denoted by $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G)$. If G does not contain a graph F as an induced subgraph, then G is said to be F-free. In particular if $F = K_{1,3}$ or $K_4 - e$, then we say that G is claw-free or diamond-free, respectively. Let G be a connected cubic graph of order n. We show that (i) if G is $(K_{1,3}, K_4 - e, C_4)$-free, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le 3n/8$; (ii) if G is claw-free and diamond-free, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le 2n/5$; (iii) if G is claw-free, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le n/2$. In all three cases, the extremal graphs are characterized.

Keywords: bounds, claw-free cubic graphs, paired domination
AMS subject classification: 05C69

Résumé

Un ensemble S dominant de sommets d'un graphe G est dit couplé si le sous-graphe induit par S admet un couplage parfait. Le cardinal minimum d'un ensemble dominant couplé de G est noté $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G)$. Soit G un graphe connexe cubique d'ordre n. Nous montrons les résultats suivants : (i) Si G ne contient pas de $K_{1,3}$, $K_4 - e$, ni C_4 induit alors $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le 3n/8$; (ii) Si G ne contient pas de $K_{1,3}$ ni $K_4 - e$ induit alors $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le 2n/5$; (iii) Si G ne contient pas de $K_{1,3}$ induit alors $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le n/2$. Dans les trois cas nous caractérisons les graphes extrémaux.

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1 Introduction

Domination and its variations in graphs are now well studied. The literature on this subject has been surveyed and detailed in the two books by Haynes, Hedetniemi, and Slater [7, 8]. In this paper we investigate paired domination in cubic claw-free graphs.

A *matching* in a graph G is a set of independent edges in G. The cardinality of a maximum matching in G is denoted by $\beta'(G)$. A *perfect matching* M in G is a matching in G such that every vertex of G is incident to a vertex of M.

Paired domination was introduced by Haynes and Slater [9]. A *paired dominating set*, denoted PDS, of a graph G is a set S of vertices of G such that every vertex is adjacent to some vertex in S and the subgraph induced by S contains a perfect matching. Every graph without isolated vertices has a PDS since the end-vertices of any maximal matching form such a set.

A *total dominating set*, denoted TDS, of a graph G with no isolated vertex is a set S of vertices of G such that every vertex is adjacent to a vertex in S (other than itself). Every graph without isolated vertices has a TDS, since $S = V(G)$ is such a set. The *total domination number* of G, denoted by $\gamma_t(G)$, is the minimum cardinality of a TDS. Clearly, $\gamma_t(G) \le \gamma_{\rm pr}(G)$ for every connected graph of order $n \ge 2$. Total domination in graphs was introduced by Cockayne, Dawes, and Hedetniemi [2].

For notation and graph theory terminology we in general follow [7]. Specifically, let $G = (V, E)$ be a graph with vertex set V of order n and edge set E. For a set $S \subseteq V$, the subgraph induced by S is denoted by $G[S]$. A *cycle* on n vertices is denoted by C_n and a *path* on n vertices by P_n. The minimum degree (resp., maximum degree) among the vertices of G is denoted by $\delta(G)$ (resp., $\Delta(G)$).

We call $K_{1,3}$ a claw and $K_4 - e$ a diamond. If G does not contain a graph F as an induced subgraph, then we say that G is F-free. In particular, we say a graph is *claw-free* if it is $K_{1,3}$-free and *diamond-free* if it is $(K_4 - e)$-free. An excellent survey of claw-free graphs has been written by Faudree, Flandrin, and Ryjáček [4].

In this paper we show that if G is a connected $(K_{1,3}, K_4 - e, C_4)$-free cubic graph of order $n \ge 6$, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le 3n/8$, while if G is a connected claw-free and diamond-free cubic graph of order $n \ge 6$, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le 2n/5$. We show that if G is a connected claw-free cubic graph of order $n \ge 6$ that contains $k \ge 1$ diamonds, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le 2(n + 2k)/5$. Finally, we show that a connected claw-free cubic graph has paired domination number at most one-half its order. In all cases, the extremal graphs attaining the upper bounds are characterized.

2 $(K_{1,3}, K_4 - e, C_4)$-free cubic graphs

To obtain sharp upper bounds on the paired domination number of $(K_{1,3}, K_4 - e, C_4)$-free cubic graphs, we shall need a result due to Hobbs and Schmeichel [11] who established a lower bound on the maximum number $\beta'(G)$ of independent edges in a cubic graph having so-called super-hereditary properties. As a consequence of this result, we have the following lower bound on $\beta'(G)$ when G is a cubic graph.

Theorem 1 ([11]) *If G is a connected cubic graph of order n, then $\beta'(G) \geq 7n/16$ with equality if and only if G is the graph shown in Figure 1.*

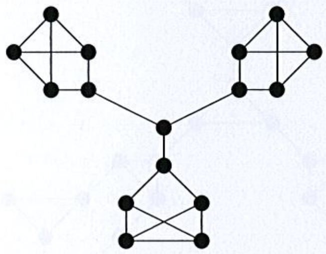


Figure 1: The unique connected cubic graph G with $\beta'(G) = 7n/16$.

Using Theorem 1, we show that the paired domination number of a $(K_{1,3}, K_4 - e, C_4)$-free cubic graph is at most three-eights its order.

Theorem 2 *If G is a connected $(K_{1,3}, K_4 - e, C_4)$-free cubic graph of order $n \geq 6$, then there exists a PDS of G of cardinality at most $3n/8$ that contains at least one vertex from each triangle of G. Furthermore, $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = 3n/8$ if and only if G is the graph shown in Figure 2.*

Proof. Since G is $(K_{1,3}, K_4 - e)$-free and cubic, every vertex of G belongs to a unique triangle of G, and so $n \equiv 0 \pmod 3$. Let G' be the graph of order $n' = n/3$ whose vertices correspond to the triangles in G and where two vertices of G' are adjacent if and only if the corresponding triangles in G are joined by at least one edge. Then, since G is connected and C_4-free, G' is a connected cubic graph. Thus, by Theorem 1, $\beta'(G') \geq 7n'/16$ with equality if and only if G' is the graph shown in Figure 1. Let M' be a maximum matching in G' (of cardinality $\beta'(G')$).

We now construct a PDS S of G as follows: For each edge $u'v' \in M'$, we select an edge uv of G that joins a vertex u in the triangle corresponding to u' and a vertex v in the triangle corresponding to v', and we add the vertices u and v to S, while for each vertex of G' that is not incident with any edge of M', we add two vertices from the corresponding triangle in G. Then S is a PDS of G that contains at least one vertex from each triangle of G. Thus, since $|S| = 2|M'| + 2(n' - 2|M'|) = 2(n' - |M'|)$,

$$\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \leq 2(n' - \beta'(G')) \leq 2\left(n' - \frac{7n'}{16}\right) = \frac{9n'}{8} = \frac{3n}{8}.$$

Furthermore, if we have equality throughout this inequality chain, then $\beta'(G') = 7n'/16$ and G' is the graph shown in Figure 1. But then G must be the graph shown in Figure 2.

Conversely, it can be checked that the graph G of Figure 2 satisfies $n = 48$ and $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = 18$. $\square$

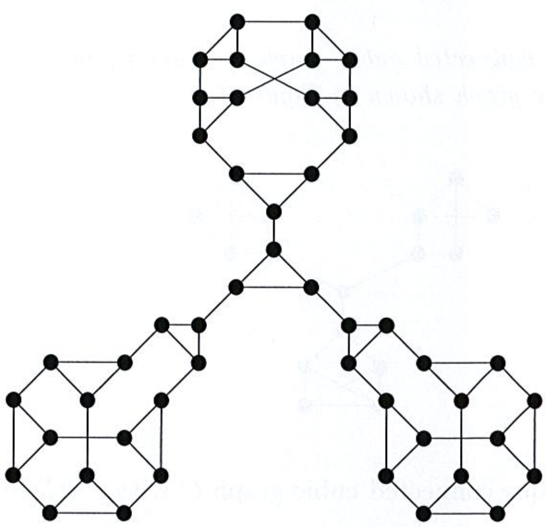


Figure 2: The unique connected cubic $(K_{1,3}, K_4 - e, C_4)$-free graph G with $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = 3n/8$.

3 Claw-free cubic graphs

If we remove the restriction that G is C_4-free in Theorem 2, then we show in this subsection that the upper bound on the paired domination number of G increases from three-eights its order to two-fifths its order. For this purpose we first prove the following result, our proof of which is along similar lines to the proof of Hobbs and Schmeichel in [11].

Theorem 3 *If G is a connected graph of order n with $\delta(G) = 2$ and $\Delta(G) = 3$ such that every vertex of degree 2 belongs to a path with an even number of internal vertices of degree 2 between two not necessarily distinct end-vertices of degree 3, then $\beta'(G) \ge 2n/5$ with equality if and only if G is the graph shown in Figure 3.*

Proof. By a theorem of Berge [1], for any graph G

$$\beta'(G) = \frac{1}{2}\left(n - \max_{S \subseteq V(G)} \{\mathrm{o(G - S) - |S|}\}\right),$$

where $\mathrm{o(G - S)}$ denotes the number of odd components of $G - S$. Thus it suffices to show that for the graph G satisfying the conditions of our theorem,

$$\max_{S \subseteq V(G)} \{\mathrm{o(G - S) - |S|}\} \le \frac{\mathrm{n}}{5}. \tag{1}$$

Let S be a smallest subset of $V(G)$ on which the maximum in (1) is attained. If $S = \emptyset$, then (1) is satisfied. Hence we may assume $|S| \geq 1$. Let $v \in S$ and let $S' = S - \{v\}$. Then, by our choice of S, $\mathrm{o(G - S')} \leq \mathrm{o(G - S)} - 2$, implying that v must be adjacent to three distinct odd components of $G - S$. Thus every vertex of S is adjacent to three distinct odd components of $G - S$. Furthermore, since G is connected and $\Delta(G) = 3$, every component of $G - S$ is odd. In particular, we note that no vertex of degree 2 is in S, and so each (odd) component of $G - S$ contains an odd number of vertices of degree 3 in G, plus possibly an even number of vertices of degree 2 in G. It follows that there are an odd number of edges joining S and any component of $G - S$.

For $k \geq 0$, let c_{2k+1} denote the number of components H of $G - S$ that are joined to S by exactly $2k + 1$ edges. If $k = 0$, then since $\delta(G) = 2$, H has order at least 3. Furthermore, $|V(H)| = 3$ if and only if H is a triangle consisting of two adjacent vertices of degree 2 and their common neighbor of degree 3 in G. If $k \geq 1$, then the sum of the degrees in H of the vertices of H is at least $2(|V(H)| - 1)$ since H is connected. On the other hand, this sum is equal to $3|V(H)| - d_2 - (2k + 1)$ where $d_2 \geq 0$ denotes the number of vertices of H of degree 2 in G. Consequently, $|V(H)| \geq 2k + d_2 - 1 \geq 2k - 1$. Hence,

$$|V(H)| \geq \begin{cases} 3 & \text{if } k = 0 \\ 2k - 1 & \text{if } k \geq 1. \end{cases}$$

Proceeding now exactly as in the proof of Hobbs and Schmeichel in [11] we obtain (1). Furthermore, their proof shows that if we have equality in (1), then each component of $G - S$ that is joined to S by exactly one edge has order exactly 3 (and is therefore a triangle consisting of two adjacent vertices of degree 2 and their common neighbor of degree 3 in G) while $c_{2k+1} = 0$ for $k \geq 1$. Since G is connected, G is therefore the graph shown in Figure 3. □

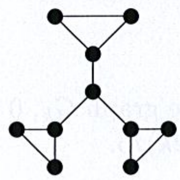


Figure 3: A graph G with $\beta'(G) = 2n/5$.

Using Theorem 3, we present a sharp upper bound on the paired domination number of a claw-free cubic graph.

Theorem 4 *If G is a connected claw-free cubic graph of order $n \geq 6$ that contains $k \geq 0$ diamonds, then there exists a PDS of G of cardinality at most $2(n + 2k)/5$ that contains at least one vertex from each triangle of G. Furthermore, $\gamma_{\mathrm{pr}}(G) = 2(n + 2k)/5$ if and only if $G \in \{G_0, G_1, G_2, G_3\}$ where G_0, G_1, G_2, and G_3 are the four graphs shown in Figure 4.*

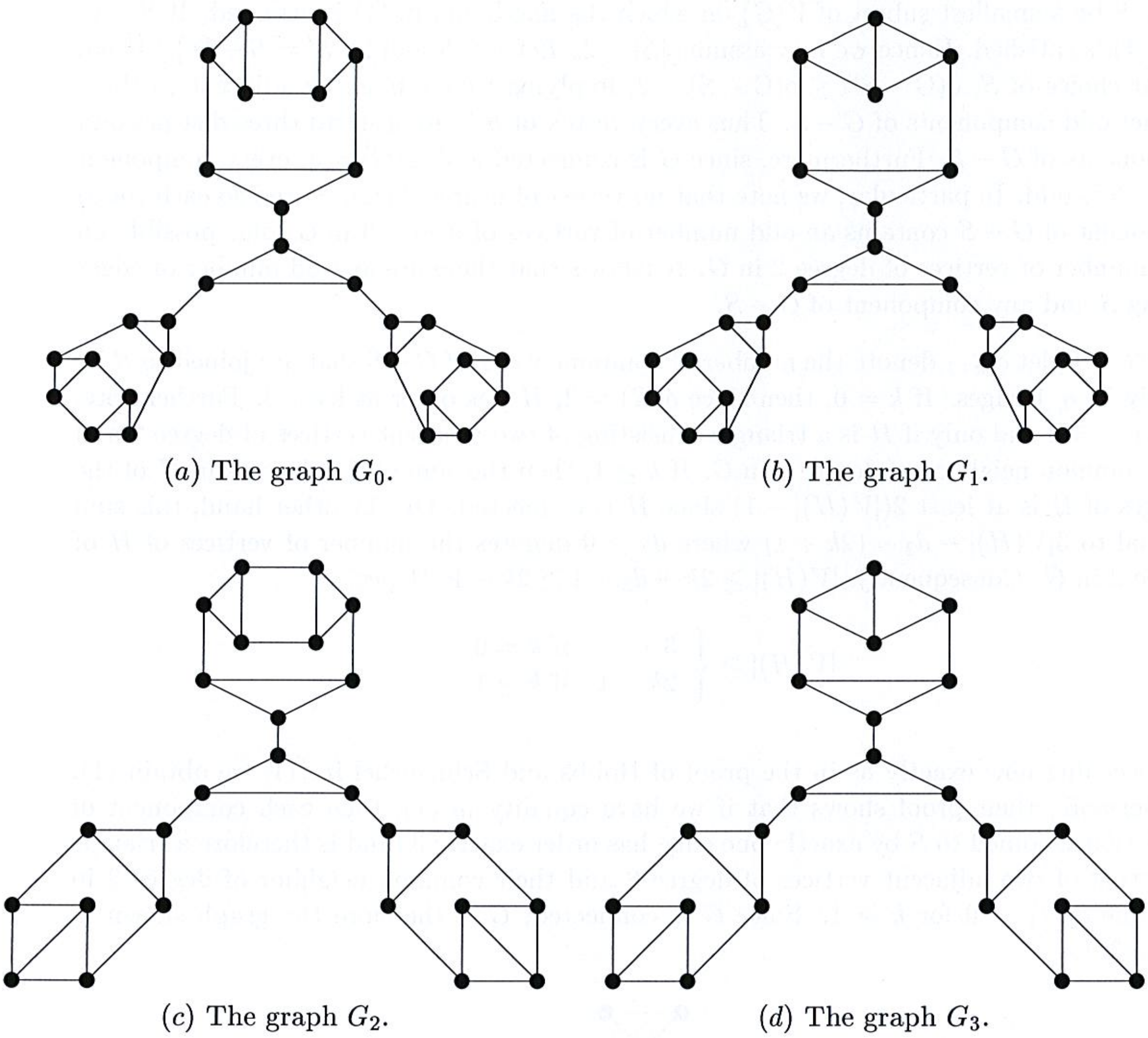


Figure 4: The four connected cubic claw-free graph G_k, $0 \le k \le 3$, with k copies of $K_4 - e$ and with $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G_k) = 2(n+2k)/5$.

Proof. If $n = 6$, then G is the prism $K_3 \times K_2$, $k = 0$, and there exists a PDS of G of cardinality $2 < 12/5$ that contains one vertex from each triangle of G. Hence we may assume that $n \ge 8$.

Since G is a claw-free and cubic, every vertex of G belongs to a unique triangle or to a unique diamond of G. Let G' be the graph of order $n' = (n+2k)/3$ whose vertices correspond to the triangles in G and where two vertices of G' are adjacent if and only if the corresponding triangles in G share a common edge or are joined by at least one edge. Each triangle of G that belongs to no diamond is joined to three other triangles by one edge each or to a triangle by one edge and to another one by two edges. Therefore the triangles of G in no diamond that are joined to only two other triangles can be gathered by pairs forming a subgraph shown in Figure 5(a) (where u and v are distinct but possibly adjacent). Each diamond in G corresponds to two adjacent vertices of degree two in G'. Thus, G' is either an even cycle or satisfies the conditions of Theorem 3 (two vertices of degree 2 in G' belong to a triangle of G' if they correspond in G either to a subgraph shown in Figure 5(a) with $uv \in E(G)$ or to a subgraph shown in Figure 5(b) with $xy \in E(G)$).

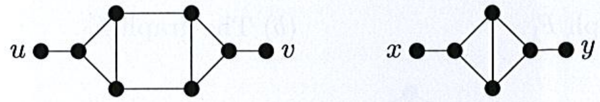


Figure 5: Two subgraphs of G.

In both cases, $\beta'(G) \geq 2n'/5$ with equality if and only if G' is the graph shown in Figure 3. Let M' be a maximum matching in G' (of cardinality $\beta'(G')$) and let S be a PDS of G as constructed in the proof of Theorem 2. Then S is a PDS of G that contains at least one vertex from each triangle of G. Thus, since $|S| = 2(n' - |M'|)$,

$$\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \leq 2(n' - \beta'(G')) \leq 2\left(n' - \frac{2n'}{5}\right) = \frac{6n'}{5} = \frac{2(n+2k)}{5}.$$

Furthermore, if we have equality throughout this inequality chain, then $\beta'(G') = 2n'/5$ and G' is the graph shown in Figure 3. But then $k \leq 3$ and G must be one of the four graphs G_k shown in Figure 4. Conversely, it can be checked that for $k \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ the graph G_k of Figure 4 contains k diamonds and satisfies $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G_k) = 2(n + 2k)/5$. □

As an immediate consequence of Theorem 4, we have the following result.

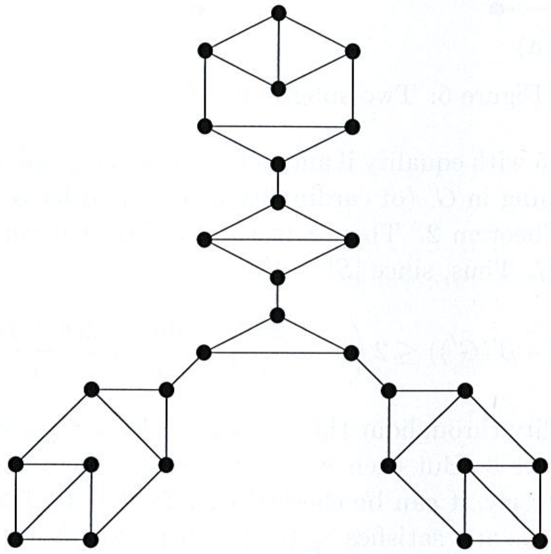
Theorem 5 *If G is a connected claw-free and diamond-free cubic graph of order $n \geq 6$, then there exists a PDS of G of cardinality at most $2n/5$ that contains at least one vertex from each triangle of G. Furthermore, $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = 2n/5$ if and only if $G = G_0$ where G_0 is the graph shown in Figure 4(a).*

Haynes and Slater [9] showed that the paired-dominating set problem if NP-complete. We remark that since the constructions of the graph G' from G and of a maximum matching M' of G' in the proof of Theorems 2 and 4 are polynomial, the proof of Theorems 2 and 4 provides a polynomial algorithm to construct a PDS (and therefore a TDS) of G of order at most $3n/8$ or $2n/5$ or $2(n + 2k)/5$ in the considered classes.

As a further consequence of Theorem 4, we show that the paired domination of a claw-free cubic graph is at most one-half its order and we characterize the extremal graphs. For this purpose, we say that a diamond in a claw-free cubic graph is of **type-1** if the two vertices not in the diamond that are neighbors of the degree two vertices of the diamond are not adjacent, and of **type-2** otherwise. Hence the diamond shown in Figure 5 is of type-1 if $xy \notin E(G)$ and of type-2 if $xy \in E(G)$.

Let F_1, F_2 and F_3 be the three cubic claw-free graphs shown in Figure 6.

(a) The graph F_1. (b) The graph F_2.



(c) The graph F_3.

Figure 6: Three connected cubic claw-free graphs.

Theorem 6 *If G is a connected claw-free cubic graph of order n, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le n/2$ with equality if and only if $G \in \{K_4, F_1, F_2, F_3, G_3\}$ where F_1, F_2 and F_3 are the graphs shown in Figure 6 and G_3 is the graph shown in Figure 4(c).*

Proof. We proceed by induction on the order n of a connected claw-free cubic graph. If $n = 4$, then $G = K_4$ and $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = 2 = n/2$, while if $n = 6$, then $G = K_3 \times K_2$ and $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = 2 < n/2$. This establishes the bases cases. Suppose then that $n \ge 8$ is even and that for every connected claw-free cubic graph G' of order $n' < n$, $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G') \le n'/2$ with equality if and only if $G' \in \{K_4, F_1, F_2, F_3, G_3\}$. Let G be a connected claw-free cubic graph of order n.

If G is diamond-free, then by Theorem 4, $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le 2n/5$. Hence we may assume that G contains at least one diamond. Let F be the subgraph of G shown in Figure 7 where x and y are distinct but possibly adjacent.

Claim 1 *If G has a diamond of type-1, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le n/2$ with equality if and only if $G \in \{F_1, F_2, F_3\}$.*

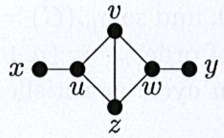


Figure 7: A subgraph F

Proof. We may assume that the diamond $G[\{u,v,w,z\}]$ is of type-1, and so $xy \notin E(G)$. Let G' be the connected claw-free cubic graph of order $n' = n-4$ obtained from G by deleting the vertices u,v,w,z (and their incident edges) and adding the edge xy. By the inductive hypothesis, $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G') \le n'/2$. Let S' be a minimum PDS of G'. If $\{x,y\} \subseteq S'$, let $S = S' \cup \{u,w\}$ if the edge xy belongs to a perfect matching in $G'[S']$, and let $S = S' \cup \{u,v\}$ otherwise. If $x \notin S'$, let $S = S' \cup \{u,v\}$. If $x \in S'$ and $y \notin S'$, let $S = S' \cup \{v,w\}$. In all cases, S is a PDS of G, and so $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le |S| \le n/2$. Furthermore, if $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = n/2$, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G') = n'/2$ and so, by the inductive hypothesis, $G' \in \{K_4, F_1, F_2, F_3, G_3\}$. Unless $G' = K_4$, the edge xy does not belong to a triangle of G' for otherwise G would contain a claw. If $G' \in \{F_2, F_3\}$, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) < n/2$ (irrespective of the choice of the edge xy), a contradiction. Hence either $G' = K_4$, in which case $G = F_1$, or $G' = F_1$ in which case $G = F_2$, or $G' = G_3$, in which case $G = F_3$. □

Claim 2 *If every diamond of G is of type-2, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le n/2$ with equality if and only if $G = G_3$.*

Proof. Note that $xy \in E(G)$. Let a be the common neighbor of x and y, and let b be the remaining neighbor of a. Let $N(b) = \{a,c,d\}$. Since G is claw-free, $G[\{b,c,d\}] = K_3$. Let c' and d' be the neighbors of c and d, respectively, that do not belong to the triangle $G[\{b,c,d\}]$. If $c' = d'$, then G contains a diamond of type-1, contrary to assumption. Hence, $c' \neq d'$. If c' and d' belong to a common diamond, then $n = 14$ and $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = 6$. Hence we may assume that $N(c') \cap N(d') = \emptyset$. Thus the triangle containing c' is vertex-disjoint from that containing d'. Furthermore, these two triangles are not contained in a diamond (for otherwise such a diamond would be of type-1). It follows that the only vertices within distance 3 from b that belong to a diamond are u and w. Hence we can uniquely associate the eight vertices of the set $V(F) \cup \{a,b\}$ with the diamond induced by $\{u,v,w,z\}$. Therefore if G has k diamonds, $k \le n/8$. Thus, by Theorem 4, $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le 2(n+2k)/5 \le n/2$. Furthermore, it follows that in this case $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = n/2$ if and only if $G = G_3$. □

The desired result of Theorem 6 now follows from Claims 1 and 2. □

We show next that the upper bound on the paired domination number of a claw-free cubic graph presented in Theorem 4 can be improved if we add the restriction that the graph is 2-connected.

Theorem 7 *If G is a 2-connected claw-free cubic graph of order $n \ge 6$ that contains $k \ge 0$ diamonds, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \le (n+2k)/3$.*

Proof. If $n = 6$, then $G = K_3 \times K_2$, $k = 0$, and so $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) = 2 = (n+2k)/3$. Hence we may assume that $n \geq 8$. Let G' be the graph of order $n' = (n+2k)/3$ constructed in the proof of Theorem 4. Then, G' is either an even cycle or satisfies the conditions of Theorem 3. Since G is 2-connected, so too is G'.

We show that G' has a perfect matching M'. If G' is an even cycle, this is immediate. Assume then that $\Delta(G') = 3$ and that every vertex of degree 2 belongs to a path with an even number of internal vertices of degree 2 between two not necessarily distinct end-vertices of degree 3 in G'. Hence the subgraph of G' induced by its vertices of degree two contains a perfect matching M^*. We now transform G' into a 2-connected cubic graph G'' by replacing each edge $xy \in M^*$ in G' with a $K_4 - e$ (and so x and y are not adjacent in the resulting $K_4 - e$). Let x' and y' denote the two new vertices of the resulting $K_4 - e$. Since every 2-connected cubic graph has a perfect matching, G'' has a perfect matching M''. We now construct a perfect matching M' of G' from the matching M'' as follows. For each edge $xy \in M^*$, if $x'y' \in M''$, then we remove $x'y'$ from the matching, while if $\{xx', yy'\} \subset M'$ (resp., $\{xy', x'y\} \subset M'$), then we replace the edges xx' and yy' (resp., xy' and $x'y$) with the edge xy. Hence, $\beta'(G') = n'/2$.

Let S be a PDS of G as constructed from M' as in the proof of Theorem 2. Then, $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \leq |S| = 2|M'| = n' = (n+2k)/3$. □

As an immediate consequence of Theorem 7, we have the following result.

Theorem 8 *If G is a 2-connected claw-free and diamond-free cubic graph of order $n \geq 6$, then $\gamma_{\rm pr}(G) \leq n/3$.*

4 Total Domination

Since $\gamma_t(G) \leq \gamma_{\rm pr}(G)$ for all graphs G, and since $\gamma_t(G) = \gamma_{\rm pr}(G)$ for the graph G of Figure 2 and for the graph $G = G_0$ of Figure 4(*a*), we remark that the results of both Theorem 2 and Theorem 5 are still valid for total domination (i.e., in the statement of these theorems we can replace "PDS" by "TDS" and "$\gamma_{\rm pr}(G)$" by "$\gamma_t(G)$"). However if $G \in \{F_2, F_3, G_3\}$ where F_2 and F_3 are the graphs shown in Figure 6 and G_3 is the graph shown in Figure 4(c), then $\gamma_t(G) < \gamma_{\rm pr}(G)$. Hence we have the following immediate consequence of Theorem 6.

Theorem 9 *If G is a connected claw-free cubic graph of order n, then $\gamma_t(G) \leq n/2$ with equality if and only if $G = K_4$ or $G = F_1$ where F_1 is the graph shown in Figure 6.*

The inequality of Theorem 9 was established in [3] but the graphs achieving equality were not characterized. We also remark that the conjecture in [6] that every connected graph with minimum degree at least three has total domination number at most one-half its order is completely proved in several manuscripts. We show in [5] that if G is a connected claw-free cubic graph of order at least ten, then the upper bound of Theorem 9 can be improved.

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RAPPORTS INTERNES AU LRI - ANNEE 2003

N°	Nom	Titre	Nbre de pages	Date parution
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