

Caterpillar Factorizations of Crowns

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Abstract

For positive integers $k \leq n$, the crown $C_{n,k}$ is the graph with vertex set $\{a_0, a_1, \dots, a_{n-1}, b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{n-1}\}$ and edge set $\{a_i b_j : 0 \leq i \leq n-1, j = i+1, i+2, \dots, i+k \pmod{n}\}$. A caterpillar is a tree of order at least three which contains a path such that each vertex not on the path is adjacent to a vertex on the path. Being a connected bipartite graph, a caterpillar is balanced if the two parts of the bipartition of its vertices have equal size; otherwise, it is unbalanced. In this paper we obtain the necessary and sufficient condition for balanced-caterpillar factorization of crowns. The Criterion for unbalanced-caterpillar factorization of crowns is open. We also obtain the necessary and sufficient condition for directed caterpillar factorization of symmetric crowns.

1 Introduction and preliminaries

Suppose that G and H are multigraphs. A G -factor of H is a spanning subgraph of H which is the union of vertex disjoint subgraphs each isomorphic

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to G . A G -factorization of H is a set of G -factors of H which partition the edges of H . For multidigraphs G and H , a G -factor and a G -factorization of H are similarly defined.

Let H be a graph. The *symmetric digraph* H^* is the digraph obtained from H by replacing each edge of H by two arcs with opposite directions. For a positive integer λ , λH is the multigraph obtained from H by replacing each edge of H by λ edges.

A *star factorization* of a graph H is a G -factorization of H where G is a star. Path factorization, tree factorization, directed star factorization and directed path factorization are similarly defined. Star factorizations were investigated for K_n [24], $K_{m,n}$ [4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 21] and graph products [2]. Directed star factorizations were investigated for $K_{m,n}^*$ [15], $\lambda K_{m,n}^*$ [19], $K_{l,m,n}^*$ [16, 17, 18], and $\lambda K_{l,m,n}^*$ [20]. Path factorizations were investigated for λK_n [1], $K_{m,n}$ [8], $\lambda K_{m,n}$ [5], $\lambda K(n, r)$ [23] ($K(n, r)$ is the complete n -partite graph with each part of cardinality r), $K_{l,m,n}$ [10], cubic graphs [3] and product graphs [9]. Directed path factorizations were investigated for λK_n^* [22]. Tree factorizations were investigated for K_n [22, 24].

For positive integers $k \leq n$, the *crown* $C_{n,k}$ is the graph with vertex set $\{a_0, a_1, \dots, a_{n-1}, b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{n-1}\}$ and edge set $\{a_i b_j : 0 \leq i \leq n-1, j = i+1, i+2, \dots, i+k \pmod{n}\}$.

A *caterpillar* is a tree of order at least three which contains a path such that each vertex not on the path is adjacent to a vertex on the path. In this paper, we investigate the caterpillar factorization of $C_{n,k}$ and the directed caterpillar factorization of $C_{n,k}^*$. For the convenience of discussions, a caterpillar can be defined alternatively as follows. For a positive integer d , let S_d denote the star with d edges. For positive integers d_1, d_2, \dots, d_v ($v \geq 1$), $S(d_1, d_2, \dots, d_v)$ denotes the graph obtained from the stars $S_{d_1}, S_{d_2}, \dots, S_{d_v}$ by identifying an endvertex of S_{d_i} with the center of $S_{d_{i+1}}$ for $i = 1, 2, \dots, v-1$. As an illustration, $S(5, 2, 1, 3)$ is exhibited in Fig. 1. It is easy to see that the graph $S(d_1, d_2, \dots, d_v)$ has $1 + d_1 + d_2 + \dots + d_v$ vertices. A caterpillar can be defined as the graph $S(d_1, d_2, \dots, d_v)$ with order ≥ 3 .

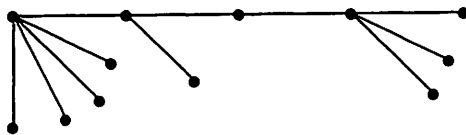


Fig. 1. $S(5, 2, 1, 3)$

Let us begin with some lemmas.

Lemma 1.1 *Suppose that a multigraph G has n_1 vertices, e_1 edges, and a multigraph H has n_2 vertices, e_2 edges. We have the following.*

- (1) If H has a G -factor, then $n_2 \equiv 0 \pmod{n_1}$.
 (2) If H has a G -factorization, then $n_1 e_2 \equiv 0 \pmod{n_2 e_1}$.

Proof. Let t be the number of copies of G in a G -factor of H . Then $n_2 = tn_1$. Thus

(1) $n_2 \equiv 0 \pmod{n_1}$.

(2) A G -factor of H has $te_1 = \frac{n_2}{n_1}e_1$ edges. Let r be the number of G -factors in the G -factorization of H . Then $e_2 = r(\frac{n_2}{n_1}e_1)$, which implies $r = \frac{n_1 e_2}{n_2 e_1}$. Thus $n_1 e_2 \equiv 0 \pmod{n_2 e_1}$. \square

Lemma 1.2 Let T be a tree of order t . If $\lambda C_{n,k}$ has a T -factorization where $\lambda = 1$ or 2 , then $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$.

Proof. By Lemma 1.1(2), $t \cdot \lambda nk \equiv 0 \pmod{2n(t-1)}$. Thus $t\lambda k \equiv 0 \pmod{2(t-1)}$.

Case 1. $\lambda = 1$.

Then $tk \equiv 0 \pmod{2(t-1)}$. Hence $tk \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$, which implies $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$.

Case 2. $\lambda = 2$.

Then $2tk \equiv 0 \pmod{2(t-1)}$. Hence $tk \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$, which implies $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$. \square

A connected bipartite multigraph is *balanced* if it has a bipartition (C, D) with $|C| = |D|$. It is easy to see that $S(d_1, d_2, \dots, d_v)$ is balanced if and only if $d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1} = 1 + d_2 + d_4 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v}{2} \rfloor}$. A connected bipartite multigraph is *unbalanced* if it is not balanced.

Lemma 1.3 Suppose that G is an unbalanced connected bipartite multigraph of order t and H is a balanced connected bipartite multigraph of order $2n$. If H has a G -factor, then $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t}$.

Proof. Let (A, B) be a bipartition of G , and let $a = |A|$, $b = |B|$. Then $a + b = t$, $a \neq b$. Let (C, D) be a bipartition of H with $|C| = |D| = n$. Suppose that in a G -factor of H , there are l copies of G with A -part in C , and m copies of G with B -part in C . Then $la + mb = |C| = n$ and $lb + ma = |D| = n$. Thus $bn - an = m(b^2 - a^2)$. Since $a \neq b$, we have $n = m(b + a)$. Thus $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t}$. \square

Lemma 1.4 Let G be a graph. Suppose that the crown $C_{n,p}$ has a G -factorization. If k is a positive integer with $k \leq n$ and $k \equiv 0 \pmod{p}$, then $C_{n,k}$ has a G -factorization.

Proof. Let $k = pq$ for some positive integer q . It is easy to see that $C_{n,pq}$ can be decomposed into q spanning subgraphs of which each is isomorphic to $C_{n,p}$. Since, by assumption, $C_{n,p}$ has a G -factorization, so does $C_{n,pq}$. \square

The following is the directed version of Lemma 1.4. The proof is similar and hence omitted.

Lemma 1.5 Let G be a digraph. Suppose that the symmetric crown $C_{n,p}^*$ has a G -factorization. If k is a positive integer with $k \leq n$ and $k \equiv 0 \pmod{p}$, then $C_{n,k}^*$ has a G -factorization.

2 Caterpillar factorization of crowns

In this section we investigate the caterpillar factorization of crowns. In the sequel of the paper, a_0, a_1, \dots, a_{n-1} and b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{n-1} are the vertices of $C_{n,k}$ as given in the definition, and the subscripts of a_i and b_j are always taken modulo n . Each edge $a_i b_{i+p}$ ($1 \leq p \leq k$) in $C_{n,k}$ is assigned the label p . For example, in $C_{5,5}$ the edges $a_2 b_3, a_2 b_4, a_2 b_0, a_2 b_1, a_2 b_2$ have labels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 respectively.

Lemma 2.1 Let $G = S(d_1, d_2, \dots, d_v)$ be a caterpillar of order t . Let n be a positive integer with $n \geq t - 1$. Then there exists a subgraph G_1 of the crown $C_{n,t-1}$ such that

(i) $G_1 \cong G$,

(ii) the vertex set of $G_1 = \{a_i : i = 0, -1, -2, \dots, -d_2 - d_4 - d_6 - \dots - d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor}\} \cup \{b_j : j = 1, 2, \dots, d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1}\}$,

(iii) the edges of G_1 have labels $1, 2, 3, \dots, t - 1$.

Proof. Let $G = S(d_1, d_2, \dots, d_v)$ be a caterpillar of order $t = 1 + d_1 + d_2 + \dots + d_v$. Let G_1 be the subgraph of $C_{n,t-1}$ induced by the following edge set

$$\begin{aligned} & \{a_0 b_i : i = 1, 2, \dots, d_1\} \\ \cup & \{a_i b_{d_1} : i = -1, -2, \dots, -d_2\} \\ \cup & \{a_{-d_2} b_i : i = d_1 + 1, d_1 + 2, \dots, d_1 + d_3\} \\ \cup & \{a_i b_{d_1 + d_3} : i = -d_2 - 1, -d_2 - 2, \dots, -d_2 - d_4\} \\ \cup & \{a_{-d_2 - d_4} b_i : i = d_1 + d_3 + 1, d_1 + d_3 + 2, \dots, d_1 + d_3 + d_5\} \\ \cup & \dots \end{aligned}$$

We see that G_1 has the required properties. □

For a subgraph S of $C_{n,k}$ and an integer v , let $S+v$ denote the subgraph of $C_{n,k}$ which is induced by $\{a_{i+v} b_{j+v} : a_i b_j \in E(S)\}$.

Lemma 2.2 Let G be a balanced-caterpillar of order t . Suppose that n is a positive integer $\geq t - 1$ such that $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t/2}$. Then $C_{n,t-1}$ has a G -factorization.

Proof. Let $G = S(d_1, d_2, \dots, d_v)$. Since G is balanced and of order t , $d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1} = 1 + d_2 + d_4 + d_6 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v}{2} \rfloor} = t/2$. Let $n' = \frac{n}{t/2}$. Let G_1 be the subgraph of $C_{n,t-1}$ described in Lemma 2.1.

Note that G_1 has $t/2$ vertices in $A = \{a_0, a_1, \dots, a_{n-1}\}$ and $t/2$ vertices in $B = \{b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{n-1}\}$. Let F be the subgraph of $C_{n,t-1}$ such that

$$F = G_1 \cup (G_1 + \frac{t}{2}) \cup (G_1 + 2 \cdot \frac{t}{2}) \cup \dots \cup (G_1 + (n' - 1) \frac{t}{2}).$$

From Lemma 2.1(i) and (ii), we see that F is a G -factor of $C_{n,t-1}$. From Lemma 2.1 (iii), we see that $C_{n,t-1}$ can be decomposed into $F, F + 1, F + 2, \dots, F + (\frac{t}{2} - 1)$. Hence $C_{n,t-1}$ has a G -factorization. \square

Now we have the necessary and sufficient condition for the balanced-caterpillar factorization of crowns.

Theorem 2.3 *Let G be a balanced-caterpillar of order t . Then $C_{n,k}$ has a G -factorization if and only if $n \geq k$ are positive integers and $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t/2}$, $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$.*

Proof. (*Necessity*) Since G is balanced, t is an even integer. By Lemma 1.1 (1), we obtain $2n \equiv 0 \pmod{t}$, which implies $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t/2}$. By Lemma 1.2 with $\lambda = 1$, we obtain $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$.

(*Sufficiency*) Since $n \geq k \geq t-1$, it follows from Lemma 2.2 that $C_{n,t-1}$ has a G -factorization. Since $n \geq k$ and $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$, it follows from Lemma 1.4 that $C_{n,k}$ has a G -factorization. \square

The necessary and sufficient condition for unbalanced-caterpillar factorization of crowns is open.

3 Directed caterpillar factorization of symmetric crowns

A *directed caterpillar* is the digraph obtained from a caterpillar by orienting each edge arbitrarily. In this section the directed caterpillar factorization of symmetric crowns is investigated. We assign the arc $\overrightarrow{a_i b_j}$ and the arc $\overrightarrow{b_j a_i}$ in $C_{n,k}^*$ with the same label of $a_i b_j$ in $C_{n,k}$, i.e., for $1 \leq t \leq k$, $\overrightarrow{a_i b_{i+t}}$ has label t , and $\overrightarrow{b_{i+t} a_i}$ also has label t .

Suppose that G is a subdigraph of $C_{n,k}^*$ and G has no isolated vertex. The *dual* of G , denoted by $Dual(G)$, is the subdigraph of $C_{n,k}^*$ induced by the arc set $\{\overrightarrow{b_{-i} a_{-j}} : \overrightarrow{a_i b_j} \in E(G)\} \cup \{\overrightarrow{a_{-j} b_{-i}} : \overrightarrow{b_j a_i} \in E(G)\}$. Note that $Dual(G) \cong G$. Note also that the arc $\overrightarrow{a_i b_j}$ in G , which is from A to B , and the corresponding arc $\overrightarrow{b_{-i} a_{-j}}$ in $Dual(G)$, which is from B to A , have the same label. Similarly, the arc $\overrightarrow{b_j a_i}$ in G , which is from B to A , and the corresponding arc $\overrightarrow{a_{-j} b_{-i}}$ in $Dual(G)$, which is from A to B , have the same label.

For a subdigraph S of $C_{n,k}^*$ and an integer v , let $S + v$ denote the subdigraph of $C_{n,k}^*$ which is induced by $\{\overrightarrow{a_{i+v}b_{j+v}} : \overrightarrow{a_i b_j} \in E(S)\} \cup \{\overrightarrow{b_{j+v}a_{i+v}} : \overrightarrow{b_j a_i} \in E(S)\}$.

Lemma 3.1 *Let G be a caterpillar of order t , and the directed caterpillar \hat{G} be a digraph obtained from G by orienting each edge of G arbitrarily. We have the following.*

- (1) *If G is balanced, and n is an integer $\geq t - 1$ such that $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t/2}$, then $C_{n,t-1}^*$ has a \hat{G} -factorization.*
- (2) *If G is unbalanced, and n is a positive integer such that $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t}$, then $C_{n,t-1}^*$ has a \hat{G} -factorization.*

Proof. Let $G = S(d_1, d_2, \dots, d_v)$ be a caterpillar of order t . By Lemma 2.1, there exists a subgraph G_1 of the crown $C_{n,t-1}$ such that

- (i) $G_1 \cong G$,
- (ii) the vertex set of $G_1 = \{a_i : i = 0, -1, -2, \dots, -d_2 - d_4 - d_6 - \dots - d_{2\lfloor \frac{v}{2} \rfloor}\} \cup \{b_j : j = 1, 2, \dots, d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1}\}$,
- (iii) the edges of G_1 have labels $1, 2, 3, \dots, t - 1$.

Since $G_1 \cong G$, we can orient the edges of G_1 so that the resulting digraph, say G_2 , is isomorphic to \hat{G} . Hence G_2 is a subdigraph of $C_{n,t-1}^*$ such that

- (i) $G_2 \cong \hat{G}$,
- (ii) the vertex set of $G_2 = \{a_i : i = 0, -1, -2, \dots, -d_2 - d_4 - d_6 - \dots - d_{2\lfloor \frac{v}{2} \rfloor}\} \cup \{b_j : j = 1, 2, \dots, d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1}\}$,
- (iii) the arcs of G_2 have labels $1, 2, 3, \dots, t - 1$.

Let $G_3 = \text{Dual}(G_2)$. Then

- (i) $G_3 \cong \hat{G}$,
- (ii) the vertex set of G_3 is $\{a_i : i = -1, -2, \dots, -d_1 - d_3 - d_5 - \dots - d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1}\} \cup \{b_j : j = 0, 1, 2, \dots, d_2 + d_4 + d_6 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v}{2} \rfloor}\}$,
- (iii) the arcs of G_3 have labels $1, 2, 3, \dots, t - 1$.

Now we prove (1). Since G is balanced, we have $d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1} = 1 + d_2 + d_4 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v}{2} \rfloor} = t/2$. Let $n' = \frac{n}{t/2}$ and let F_1 and F_2 be subdigraphs of $C_{n,t-1}^*$ such that $F_1 = G_2 \cup (G_2 + \frac{t}{2}) \cup (G_2 + 2 \cdot \frac{t}{2}) \cup (G_2 + 3 \cdot \frac{t}{2}) \cup \dots \cup (G_2 + (n' - 1) \cdot \frac{t}{2})$ and $F_2 = G_3 \cup (G_3 + \frac{t}{2}) \cup (G_3 + 2 \cdot \frac{t}{2}) \cup (G_3 +$

$3 \cdot \frac{t}{2} \cup \dots \cup (G_3 + (n' - 1) \frac{t}{2})$. Then both F_1 and F_2 are \hat{G} -factors of $C_{n,t-1}^*$. We can see that $C_{n,t-1}^*$ can be decomposed into the following \hat{G} -factors: $F_1, F_1 + 1, F_1 + 2, \dots, F_1 + (\frac{t}{2} - 1)$ and $F_2, F_2 + 1, F_2 + 2, \dots, F_2 + (\frac{t}{2} - 1)$. Thus $C_{n,t-1}^*$ has a \hat{G} -factorization.

Next we prove (2). Let $G_4 = G_3 + (1 + d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1})$. Then

- (i) $G_4 \cong \hat{G}$,
- (ii) the vertex set of G_4 is $\{a_i : i = 1, 2, \dots, -1 + d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1}, d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1}\} \cup \{b_j : j = 1 + d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1}, 2 + d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1}, \dots, 1 + d_1 + d_2 + d_3 + d_4 + \dots + d_v = t\}$,
- (iii) the arcs of G_4 have labels $1, 2, 3, \dots, t - 1$.

Let $n' = \frac{n}{t}$ and let G_5 be a subdigraph of $C_{n,k}^*$ such that $G_5 = G_2 \cup G_4$. Note the vertex set of G_5 is $\{a_i : -d_2 - d_4 - d_6 - \dots - d_{2\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor} \leq i \leq d_1 + d_3 + d_5 + \dots + d_{2\lfloor \frac{v-1}{2} \rfloor + 1}\} \cup \{b_j : 1 \leq j \leq 1 + d_1 + d_2 + d_3 + d_4 + \dots + d_v = t\}$. Let F be a subdigraph of $C_{n,k}^*$ such that $F = G_5 \cup (G_5 + t) \cup (G_5 + 2t) \cup \dots \cup (G_5 + (n' - 1)t)$. Then F is a \hat{G} -factor of $C_{n,t-1}^*$, and $C_{n,k}^*$ is decomposed into the following \hat{G} -factors: $F, F + 1, F + 2, \dots, F + (t - 1)$. \square

Now we have the necessary and sufficient condition for the directed caterpillar factorization of symmetric crowns.

Theorem 3.2 *Let G be a caterpillar of order t , and the directed caterpillar \hat{G} be a digraph obtained from G by orienting each edge of G arbitrarily. We have the following.*

(1) *Suppose that G is balanced. Then the following conditions are equivalent.*

- A. $C_{n,k}^*$ has a \hat{G} -factorization.
- B. $2C_{n,k}$ has a G -factorization.
- C. $n \geq k$ are positive integers and $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t/2}$, $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t - 1}$.

(2) *Suppose that G is unbalanced. Then the following conditions are equivalent.*

- A. $C_{n,k}^*$ has a \hat{G} -factorization.
- B. $2C_{n,k}$ has a G -factorization.
- C. $n \geq k$ are positive integers and $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t}$, $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t - 1}$.

Proof. We first prove (1).

(A \Rightarrow B) This is trivial.

(B \Rightarrow C) It is trivial that $n \geq k$. Since G is balanced, t is an even integer. By Lemma 1.1 (1), $2n \equiv 0 \pmod{t}$. Hence $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t/2}$. By Lemma 1.2 with $\lambda = 2$, we have $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t - 1}$.

(C \Rightarrow A) Since $n \geq k \geq t-1$, $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t/2}$, it follows from Lemma 3.1(1) that $C_{n,t-1}^*$ has a \hat{G} -factorization. Since $n \geq k$ and $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$, $C_{n,k}^*$ has a \hat{G} -factorization by Lemma 1.5.

Next we prove (2).

(A \Rightarrow B) This is trivial.

(B \Rightarrow C) Since $2C_{n,k}$ is a balanced connected bipartite multigraph of order $2n$, and the caterpillar G is an unbalanced connected bipartite graph of order t , by Lemma 1.3 the existence of G -factor of $2C_{n,k}$ implies $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t}$. By Lemma 1.2 with $\lambda = 2$, we have $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$.

(C \Rightarrow A) Since G is an unbalanced caterpillar of order t and n is a positive integer with $n \equiv 0 \pmod{t}$, by Lemma 3.1(2) $C_{n,t-1}^*$ has a \hat{G} -factorization. Since $k \equiv 0 \pmod{t-1}$ and $k \leq n$, $C_{n,k}^*$ has a \hat{G} -factorization by Lemma 1.5. \square

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