Theta-3 is connected*

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Abstract

In this paper, we show that the θ-graph with three cones is connected. We also provide an alternative proof of the connectivity of the Yao graph with three cones.

1 Introduction

Introduced independently by Clarkson [7] in 1987 and Keil [10] in 1988, the θ-graph of a set P of points in the plane is constructed as follows. We consider each point $p \in P$ and partition the plane into $m \geq 2$ cones (regions in the plane between two rays originating from the same point) with apex p, each defined by two rays at consecutive multiples of $2\pi/m$ radians from the negative y-axis; see Figure 1 for an illustration. We label the cones C_0 through C_{m-1}, in clockwise order around p, starting from the cone whose angular bisector aligns with the positive y-axis from p if m is odd, or having this axis as its left boundary if m is even. If the apex is not clear from the context, we use C_i^p to denote the cone C_i with apex p. We sometimes refer to C_i^p as the *i-cone* of p. To build the θ-graph, we consider each point p and connect it by an edge with the *closest* point in each of its cones. However, instead of using the Euclidean distance, we measure distance by orthogonally projecting each point onto the angle-bisector of that cone. The *closest* point to p in its i-cone is then the point in C_i^p whose projection has the smallest Euclidean distance to p.

We use this definition of distance in the remainder of the paper, except for Section 4, which deals with Yao graphs. For simplicity, we assume that no two points of P lie on a line parallel to the boundary of a cone or perpendicular to the angular bisector of a cone, guaranteeing that each point connects to at most one point in each cone. We call the θ-graph with m cones the θ_m-graph.

For θ-graphs with an even number of cones, proving connectedness is easy. As the first $m/2$ cones cover exactly the right half-plane, each point will have an edge to a point to its right, if such a point exists. Thus, we can find a path from any point to the rightmost point and, by concatenating

*A preliminary version of this paper appeared in the proceedings of the 25th Canadian Conference on Computational Geometry (CCCG 2013) [1]

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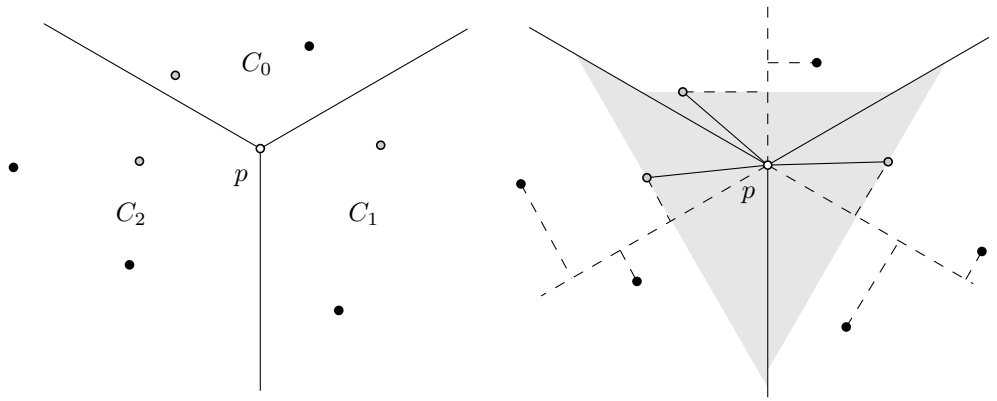

Figure 1: Left: A point p and its three cones in the θ_3-graph. Right: Point p adds an edge to the closest point in each of its cones, where distance is measured by projecting points onto the bisector of the cone.

these, a path between every pair of points. Unfortunately, if m is odd this property does not hold, as no set of cones covers *exactly* the right half-plane. Therefore, a point is not guaranteed to have an edge to a point to its right, even if such a point exists.

The fact that θ-graphs with more than 6 cones are connected has been known for a long time. In fact, they even guarantee the existence of a *short* path between every pair of points. The length of this path is bounded by a constant times the straight-line Euclidean distance between the two points [4, 6, 7, 10, 12]. Graphs that have this property are called *geometric spanners*. For more information on geometric spanners, see the book by Narasimhan and Smid [11].

For a long time, very little was known about θ-graphs with fewer than 7 cones. Bonichon *et al.* [3] broke ground in this area in 2010, by showing that the θ_6-graph is a geometric spanner. Subsequently, both the θ_4- and θ_5-graphs have been shown to be geometric spanners [2, 5]. El Molla [9] already showed that the θ_2- and θ_3-graphs are not geometric spanners. It is straightforward to verify that the θ_2-graph is connected which leaves the θ_3-graph as the only θ-graph for which connectedness has not been proven. In this paper, we settle this question by showing that the θ_3-graph is always connected.

The question of connectedness about the θ_3-graph is interesting because the θ_3-graph has some unique properties that cause standard proof techniques for θ-graphs to fail. As such, we hope that the techniques we develop here will lead to more insight into the structure of other θ-graphs. As an example, most proofs for a larger number of cones show that the θ-routing algorithm (always follow the edge to the closest vertex in the cone that contains the destination) returns a short path between any two points. But in the θ_3-graph, θ-routing is not guaranteed to ever reach the destination. The smallest point set that exhibits this behavior has three points, such that for each point, both other points lie in the same cone; see Figure 2. In fact, this example shows not only that this exact routing strategy fails; it shows that if we consider the edges to be directed (from the point that added them, to the closest point in its cone), the graph is not strongly connected. Therefore, our proof requires more global methods than previous proofs on θ-graphs.

Most proofs for a larger number of cones use induction on the distance between points or on the size of the empty triangle between a point and its closest point. In the θ_3-graph however, both of these measures can increase when we follow an edge. Thus, applying induction on these distances seems a difficult task. An induction on the number of points similarly fails, as inserting a new point

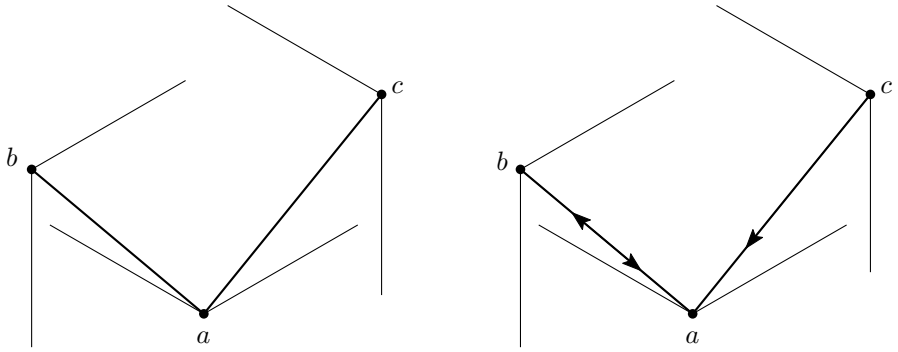

Figure 2: Left: A point set for which θ-routing does not find a path from a to c, as it keeps cycling between a and b. Right: The directed version of the graph is not strongly connected, as there is no path from either a or b to c.

may remove edges that were present before, and it is not obvious that the endpoints of those edges are still connected in the new graph.

The θ_3-graph is strongly related to the Y_3-graph, where each point also connects to the closest point in each cone, but the distance measure is the standard Euclidean distance. This graph was shown to be connected by Damian and Kumbhar [8]. Their proof uses induction on a rhomboid distance-measure that was tailored specifically for the Y_3-graph. Since the 'closest' point for the θ_3-graph can be much further away than in the Y_3-graph, this method of induction does not translate to the θ_3-graph, either. Conversely, we show that our proof extends to the Y_3-graph, providing an alternative proof for its connectivity.

2 Properties of the θ_3-graph

For $i \in \{0, 1, 2\}$, the edge connecting a point with its closest point in cone C_i is called an *i-edge*. Note that an edge can have one or two roles depending on the position of its endpoints. An example is depicted in Figure 2, where edge ab is both the 0-edge of a and the 1-edge of b.

Lemma 1. *For all $i \in \{0, 1, 2\}$, no two i-edges of the θ_3-graph can cross.*

Proof. We consider only 0-edges of P; the proof is analogous for 1- and 2-edges. For a contradiction, assume that there are two 0-edges that cross at a point s. Call these edges u_1v_1 and u_2v_2, such that v_1 is in the 0-cone of u_1 and v_2 in the 0-cone of u_2. Assume without loss of generality that the y-coordinate of v_1 is smaller than that of v_2; see Figure 3 for an illustration. Because s lies on segments u_1v_1 and u_2v_2, s lies in the 0-cones of both u_1 and u_2. Therefore, the 0-cone of s is contained in the intersection of the 0-cones of u_1 and u_2. As v_1 lies in cone C_0 of s, point v_1 lies in cone C_0 of u_2 as well. Because we assumed that the y-coordinate of v_1 is less than that of v_2, we conclude that v_1 is closer to u_2 than v_2. Thus, the edge u_2v_2 is not a 0-edge, yielding a contradiction. □

We say that a cone is *empty* if it contains no point of P in its interior. A point having an empty i-cone is called an *i-sink* .

Given a point p of P, the *i-path from p* is defined recursively as follows: If the i-cone of p is empty, the i-path from p consists of the single point p. Otherwise, let q be the closest point to p in its i-cone. The i-path from p is defined as the union of edge pq with the i-path from q.

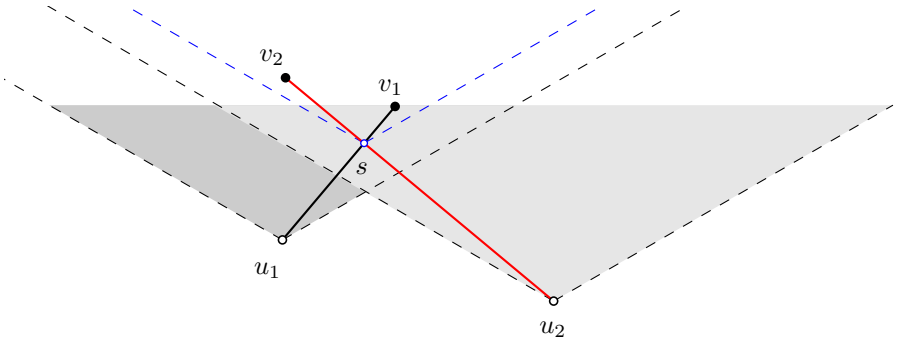

Figure 3: Two 0-edges u_1v_1 and u_2v_2 such that $v_1 \in C_0^{u_1}$ and $v_2 \in v_1 \in C_0^{u_2}$ cannot cross because the lowest point among v_1 and v_2 will be adjacent to both u_1 and u_2.

Lemma 2. *Every i-path of the θ_3-graph is well-defined and has an i-sink at one of its endpoints.*

Proof. We consider only 0-paths; the proof is analogous for the other paths. A 0-path from a point p is well defined because the closest point in the 0-cone of p always lies above p. Therefore, the y-coordinates of the points in the 0-path from p form a monotonically increasing sequence. As P is a finite set, the recursion must end at a point having an empty 0-cone. □

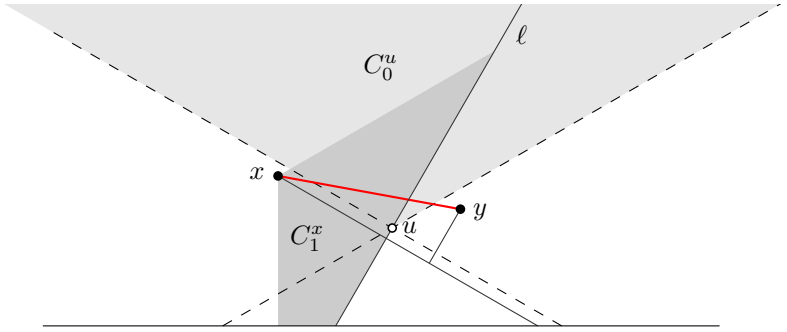

Figure 4: Empty cones cannot be crossed by edges of the θ_3-graph.

Lemma 3. *If a cone of a point is empty, then no edge of the θ_3-graph can cross this cone.*

Proof. We consider only 0-cones for this proof; analogous arguments hold for the other cones. Let u be a point of P with an empty 0-cone. For a contradiction, assume that there exists an edge xy that crosses C_0^u. For this to happen, x and y have to lie in opposite sectors of the double wedge obtained by extending the boundary segments of C_0^u; see Figure 4. Assume without loss of generality that x lies in the left wedge. Then x lies in C_2^u while y lies in C_1^u. In particular, this implies that both u and y lie in C_1^x.

Let ℓ be the line through u perpendicular to the bisector of C_1^x. For the edge xy to exist, the projection of y on the bisector of C_1^x must be closer to x than the projection of u. In other words, y must lie to the left of ℓ. However, all points lying to the left of ℓ are contained in $C_0^u \cup C_2^u$, yielding a contradiction as $y \in C_1^u$. □

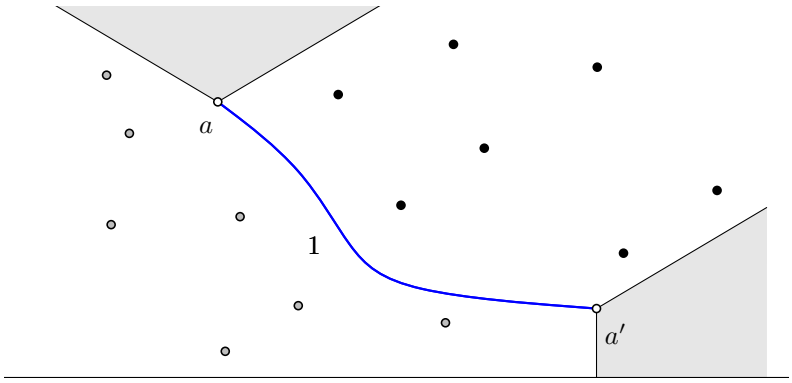

Figure 5: A 1-barrier, defined by the 1-path joining a with a', splits the remaining points into two sets such that no two points in different sets can be joined by a 1-path.

As a consequence of Lemmas 1 and 3, two sinks connected by an i-path partition the remaining points into two sets such that no i-path can connect a point in one set to a point in the other set, as any such path would cross either the i-path between the sinks, or the empty cone of one of the sinks. Such a construction is called an *i-barrier*; see Figure 5 for an illustration.

3 Proving connectedness

In this section we prove that the θ_3-graph of any given point set is connected. We start by proving that three given 0-sinks in a specific configuration are always connected. We then prove that if the θ_3-graph has at least two disjoint connected components, there exist three 0-sinks that are in this configuration and are not all in the same component, leading to a contradiction.

Although the edges of the θ_3-graph are not directed, by Lemma 2 we can think of an i-path as oriented towards the i-sink it reaches. An i-path from a that ends at an i-sink b is denoted by $a \to b$. The following lemma is depicted in Figure 6.

Lemma 4. *Let a, b, and c be three 0-sinks such that (i) a lies to the left of b and b lies to the left of c, and (ii) the 1-path from a ends at a 1-sink a' whose 0-path ends at c (a' may be equal to c). Then, a, b, and c belong to the same connected component.*

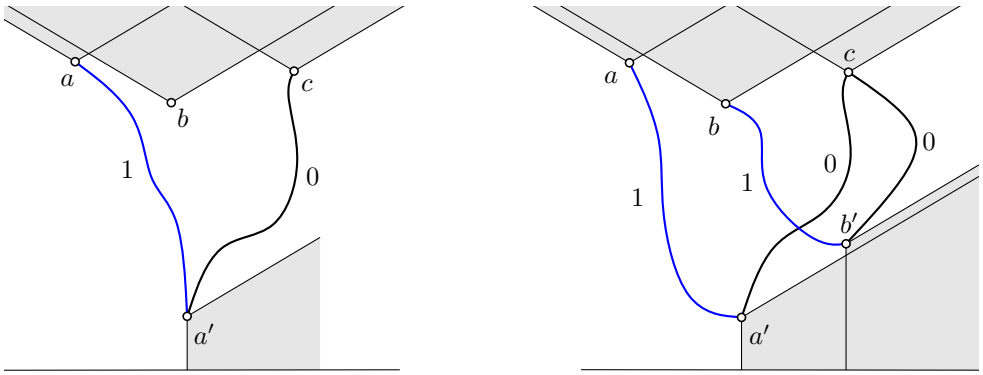

Figure 6: Left: The configuration of points described in Lemma 4. Right: The configuration in the base case of the induction where no 0-sink lies to the right of c.

Proof. Because there is a path from a to c via a', a and c must be in the same component. We show that b belongs to this same connected component.

The proof proceeds by induction on the number of 0-sinks to the right of c. In the base case, there are no 0-sinks to the right of c. Consider the 1-sink b' at the end of the 1-path from b; see Figure 6 (right). Because the 1-path $a \to a'$ forms a 1-barrier, b' cannot lie to the left of a'.

If $a' = c$, then a' is both a 1-sink and a 0-sink. This means that there can be no points to the right of a'. Therefore b' must also be equal to a'. But then b is in the same connected component as a and we are done. So assume that this is not the case, that is, $a' \neq c$ and b' lies to the right of a'.

Then the 1-path $b \to b'$ also has to cross the 0-path $a' \to c$, as otherwise $a' \to c$ crosses the empty cone of b', which is impossible by Lemma 3, or b' lies on $a' \to c$ and we are done. Moreover, because $a' \to c$ forms a 0-barrier, the 0-path from b' cannot end to the left of c. However, since there are no 0-sinks to the right of c, the 0-path from b' must end at c. Thus, there is a path connecting b and c, which proves the lemma in the base case.

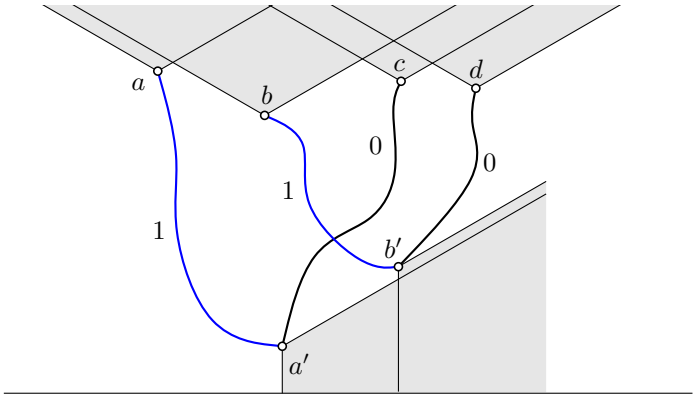

Figure 7: The configuration of the inductive step where the induction hypothesis can be applied on 0-sinks b, c and d.

For the inductive step, let k be the number of 0-sinks to the right of c and assume that the lemma holds for any triple of 0-sinks with fewer than k 0-sinks to their right. By the same argument as in the base case, we have a 1-path from b to a 1-sink b' that lies to the right of a'. Now consider the 0-sink d at the end of the 0-path from b'; see Figure 7. Note that b' and d could be the same vertex.

Since the 0-path $a' \to c$ forms a 0-barrier, d cannot lie to the left of c. If d and c are the same point, we have a path connecting b and c as in the base case, so assume that this is not the case. Thus d lies to the right of c. Now b, c, and d form a triple of 0-sinks that satisfy criteria (i) and (ii). And since d is a 0-sink to the right of c, there are fewer than k 0-sinks to the right of d. Thus, by induction, we have that b is in the same connected component as c, which proves the lemma. □

Theorem 5. *The θ_3-graph is connected.*

Proof. Assume for a contradiction that there exists a point set P whose θ_3-graph G is not connected. From each point, we can follow its 0-path to a 0-sink. Therefore, G must contain at least one 0-sink for each connected component. Let a be the leftmost 0-sink, and let A be the connected component of G that contains a. Now let b be the leftmost 0-sink that does not belong to A.

We use Lemma 4 to show that, in fact, b must belong to A as well. Before we can do this, we need to define two barriers. The first barrier is formed by the 2-path from b, ending at a 2-sink

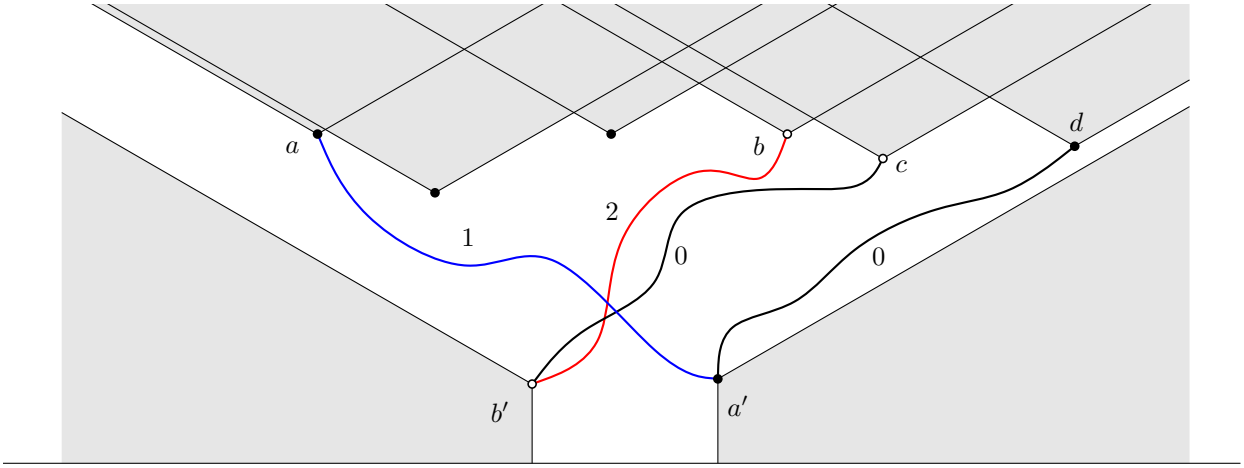

Figure 8: Two 0-sinks a and b are assumed to lie in different components such that both a and b are the leftmost 0-sinks in their component. The 1-path from a ends at a 1-sink a' whose 0-path ends at a 0-sink d lying to the right of b. The 0-sinks a, b and d jointly satisfy the criteria of Lemma 4.

b'. Because a lies in C_2^b, point b does not have an empty 2-cone and hence, b' differs from b. The second barrier is formed by the 0-path from b', which ends at a 0-sink c; see Figure 8. Since b is the leftmost 0-sink that does not belong to A, either c and b are the same point, or c lies to the right of b.

Now consider the 1-sink a' at the end of the 1-path from a. This point has to lie to the right of both barriers $b \to b'$ and $b' \to c$, as otherwise these paths would cross the empty cone C_1 of a', which is not allowed by Lemma 3. Because the path $a \to a'$ is a 1-path and the barriers in question consist of 0- and 2-edges, these crossings are possible. Now let d be the 0-sink at the end of the 0-path from a'. Since this path cannot cross the 0-barrier $b' \to c$, d cannot lie to the left of c.

Because d belongs to component A, if c and d are the same point, c belongs to component A. Otherwise, if c and d are distinct points, then a, b, and d jointly satisfy the criteria of Lemma 4, which gives us that b belongs to component A as well—a contradiction since b is the leftmost 0-sink that does not belong to A. This contradiction comes from our assumption that G is not connected. Therefore, the θ_3-graph of any point set is connected. □

4 The Y_3-graph

The construction of the Y_3-graph is very similar to that of the θ_3-graph. The only difference is the way distance is measured: the θ-graph uses the length of the projection onto the bisector, whereas the Yao graph uses the Euclidean distance. Therefore, in every cone a point is connected to its closest Euclidean neighbor. We denote by $|pq|$ the Euclidean distance between two points p and q.

We show that, like the θ_3-graph, the Y_3-graph is connected. To this end, we re-introduce the three basic lemmas we had for the θ_3-graph and show that the same properties hold for the Y_3-graph. We first prove a geometric auxiliary lemma depicted in Figure 9.

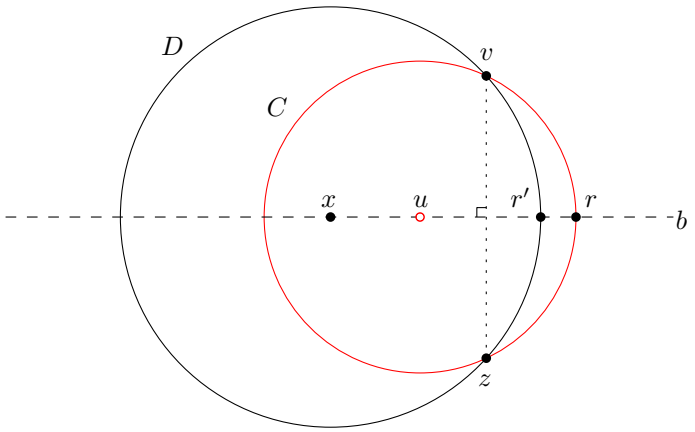

Figure 9: Point x lies to the left of point u and the arcs vr' and $r'z$ are enclosed by circle C centered at u, having radius $|uv|$.

Lemma 6. *Given a non-vertical line b and a circle C centered at a point u on b, let v and z be two points on C such that b bisects the segment vz. Let x be a point on b and let D be the circle centered at x with radius $|xv|$. If x lies to the left of u, then the right-side arc of D between v and z is enclosed by C; otherwise, the left-side arc of D between v and z is enclosed by C.*

Proof. Assume that x lies to the left of u; the proof of the other case is analogous. Let r and r' be the respective right intersections of C and D with line b; see Figure 9. Hence, arcs vr' and $r'z$ lie either entirely inside C or entirely outside C. Therefore, it suffices to show that r' lies inside C, i.e., $|ur'| \leq |ur|$. Since x lies to the left of u, we can rewrite $|ur'|$ as $|xr'| - |xu|$. Since $|xr'| = |xv|$ and $|ur| = |uv|$, we thus need to show that $|xv| \leq |xu| + |uv|$. This follows from the triangle inequality. □

The proof of the following lemma is similar to that of Lemma 1.

Lemma 7. *For all $i \in \{0, 1, 2\}$, no two i-edges of the* Y_3*-graph can cross.*

Proof. We look at the 0-edges. The cases for the other edges are analogous. Let uv be a 0-edge such that $v \in C_0^u$ and assume without loss of generality that v lies to the right of u. We prove the lemma by contradiction, so assume that some 0-edge xy crosses uv and let $y \in C_0^x$. Note that for xy to cross uv, C_0^x must contain some part of uv. Hence v lies in C_0^x.

Let k be the line through the right boundary of C_0^u and let l be the line through u, perpendicular to k. We consider four cases, depending on the location of x with respect to u; see Figure 10 (left): (a) $x \in C_0^u$ to the left of the line uv, (b) $x \in C_2^u$ above k, (c) $x \in C_2^u$ below k or $x \in C_1^u$ below l, (d) $x \in C_1^u$ above l or $x \in C_0^u$ to the right of the line uv.

Case (a): $x \in C_0^u$ to the left of the line uv. Since v lies inside C_0^x and v lies to the right of u, x lies in the circle centered at u having radius $|uv|$. Thus, x lies closer to u than v, contradicting the existence of edge uv.

Case (b): $x \in C_2^u$ above k. We apply Lemma 6 as follows, see Figure 10 (right): Let C be the circle centered at u having radius $|uv|$. Let b be the line through u and x, and let z be the reflection of v in b. Note that this implies that z lies outside C_0^u. Let D be the circle centered at x having radius $|xv|$. Since x lies to the left of u, Lemma 6 gives us that the right arc vz of circle

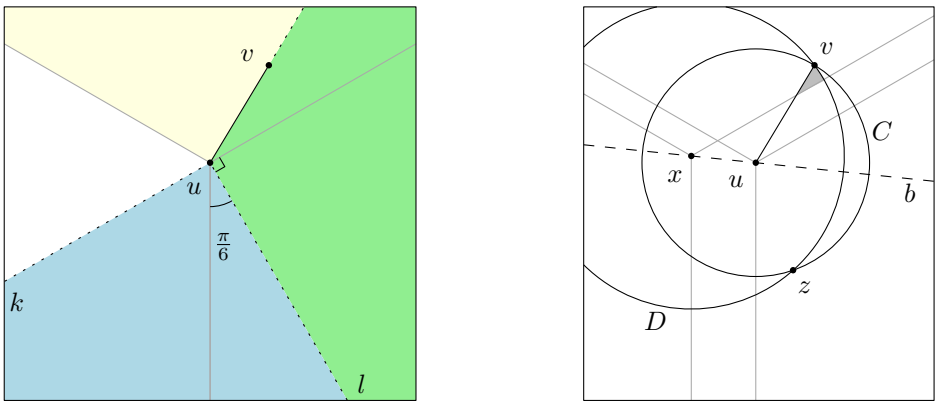

Figure 10: Left: The four cases. Right: The case when x lies in C_2^u and above k.

D is enclosed by circle C. Since the area in which y must lie for xy to cross uv is bounded by the right boundary of C_0^x, edge uv, and the right arc vz of circle D, it is enclosed by C. Therefore, any such point would lie in C_0^u and be closer to u than v, contradicting the existence of edge uv.

Case (c): $x \in C_2^u$ below k or $x \in C_1^u$ below l; see Figure 11 (left). Since u lies in C_0^x, y needs to be closer to x than u for edge xy to exist. Hence it must lie inside the circle C centered at x with radius $|xu|$. Look at the lower half-plane defined by the line tangent to C at u and note that C is contained in this half-plane. However, the half-plane does not intersect C_0^u to the right of u and hence no point y inside the half-plane can be used to form an edge xy that crosses uv.

Case (d): $x \in C_1^u$ above l or $x \in C_0^u$ to the right of the line uv. We apply Lemma 6 as follows, see Figure 11 (right): Let C be the circle centered at u having radius $|uv|$. Let b be the line through u and x, and let z be the reflection of v in b. Note that z lies outside C_0^x. Let D be the circle centered at x having radius $|xv|$. Since x lies to the right of u, Lemma 6 gives us that the left arc vz of circle D is enclosed by circle C. Since the area in which y must lie for xy to cross uv is bounded by edge uv, the left arc vz of circle D, and either the left boundary of C_0^x (if $u \notin C_0^x$) or the line ux (if $u \in C_0^x$), it is enclosed by C. Therefore, there does not exist a point $y \in C_0^x$ such that xy intersects uv. □

Lemma 8. *Every i-path of the Y_3-graph is well-defined and has an i-sink as one of its endpoints.*

Proof. The proof of this lemma is analogous to Lemma 2 for the θ_3-graph. □

Lemma 9. *If a cone of a point is empty, then no edge in the Y_3-graph can cross this cone.*

Proof. We assume without loss of generality that C_0^u does not contain any points. We prove the lemma by contradiction, so assume that there exists an edge xy that crosses C_0^u. Since no edge between two points in the same cone can cross another cone, let $x \in C_2^u$ and $y \in C_1^u$.

Point y cannot lie in C_0^x, since either C_0^x does not intersect C_1^u (if $u \notin C_0^x$) or the line segment between x and y does not intersect C_0^u (if $u \in C_0^x$). Hence y must lie in C_1^x.

If $u \in C_0^x$, C_1^x does not intersect C_0^u and thus the line segment between x and y cannot intersect C_0^u either. Therefore both u and y lie in C_1^x. Let C be the circle centered at x with radius $|xu|$. For the edge xy to exist, y must be closer to x than u, which means that y must lie in C. Note that C is contained in the half-plane to the left of the tangent to C at u.

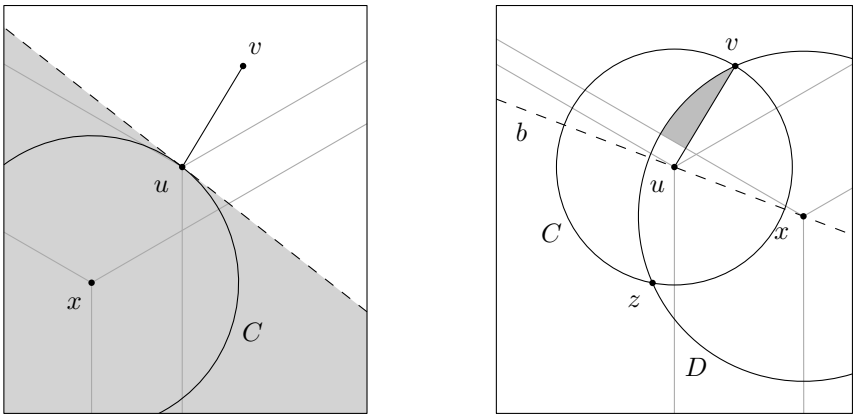

Figure 11: Left: The case when $x \in C_2^u$ below k or $x \in C_1^u$ below l. Right: The case when $x \in C_1^u$ above l or $x \in C_0^u$ to the right of the line uv.

If x lies on or above the horizontal line through u, the half-plane does not intersect C_1^u. If x lies below the horizontal line through u, the half-plane does not intersect C_1^u above u and thus xy would not cross C_0^u. Since y is enclosed by C, C is contained in the half-plane, and there is no point p in the half-plane such that $p \in C_1^u$ and px crosses C_0^u, xy cannot cross C_0^u either. □

Using Lemmas 7, 8 and 9, the proof of Theorem 5 translates directly to the Y_3-graph yielding the following result.

Theorem 10. *The* Y_3*-graph is connected.*

Acknowledgments. This problem was introduced during the 2012 Fields Workshop on Discrete and Computational Geometry held at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. The research of Oswin Aichholzer was partially supported by the ESF EUROCORES programme EuroGIGA - CRP 'ComPoSe', Austrian Science Fund (FWF): I648-N18. Work by Sang Won Bae was supported by the Contents Convergence Software Research Center funded by the GRRC Program of Gyeonggi Province, South Korea. The research of Luis Barba, Prosenjit Bose, André van Renssen, and Sander Verdonschot was supported in part by NSERC. Matias Korman received support from the Secretary for Universities and Research of the Ministry of Economy and Knowledge of the Government of Catalonia, the European Union, and projects MINECO MTM2012-30951, Gen. Cat. DGR2009SGR1040, ESF EUROCORES programme EuroGIGA – CRP 'ComPoSe': MICINN Project EUI-EURC-2011-4306.

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