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# Cliques and extended triangles. A necessary condition for planar clique graphs

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**Abstract**

By generalizing the idea of extended triangle of a graph, we succeed in obtaining a common framework for the result of Roberts and Spencer about clique graphs and the one of Szwarcfiter about Helly graphs. We characterize Helly and 3-Helly planar graphs using extended triangles. We prove that if a planar graph $G$ is a clique graph, then every extended triangle of $G$ must be a clique graph. Finally, we show the extended triangles of a planar graph which are clique graphs. Any one of the obtained characterizations are tested in $O(n^2)$ time.
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*Keywords:* Clique graphs; Helly graphs; Extended triangles; Planar graphs

## 1. Introduction and basic definitions

We consider simple, finite and undirected graphs. Given a graph $G$, $V(G)$ denotes its vertex set and $n = |V(G)|$. A *complete* of $G$ is a subset of $V(G)$ inducing a complete subgraph. A *clique* is a maximal complete. We also use the terms complete and clique to refer to the corresponding subgraphs. A complete $C$ *covers* the edge $uv$ if the end vertices, $u$ and $v$, belong to $C$. A *complete edge cover* of $G$ is a family of completes covering all its edges.

Given $\mathscr{F} = (F_i)_{i\in I}$ a family of nonempty sets, the sets $F_i$ are called *members* of the family. $\mathscr{F}$ is *pairwise intersecting* if the intersection of any two members is not the

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empty set. The *intersection* or *total intersection* of $\mathscr{F}$ is the set $\bigcap \mathscr{F} = \bigcap_{i \in I} F_i$. $\mathscr{F}$ obeys the *Helly* (*k-Helly*) *property* if the total intersection of any pairwise intersecting subfamily (with at most $k$ members) is nonempty.

Let $\mathscr{C}(G)$ be the family of cliques of $G$. The *clique graph of* $G$, $K(G)$, is the intersection graph of $\mathscr{C}(G)$. $G$ *is a clique graph* if there exists a graph $H$ such that $G = K(H)$. The only general characterization for clique graphs so far known is the one given by the following theorem. Recognizing clique graphs through this characterization is in general difficult; it is an open problem determining the time complexity of clique graphs recognition [5].

**Theorem 1** (Roberts and Spencer [3]). *A graph $G$ is a clique graph if and only if there exists a complete edge cover of $G$ satisfying the Helly property.*

A special family of completes of $G$ that covers its edges is the family $\mathscr{C}(G)$. $G$ is a *Helly* (*k-Helly*) *graph* if $\mathscr{C}(G)$ obeys the Helly ($k$-Helly) property ([2], it contains some related topics). It follows that Helly graphs are always clique graphs. Helly graphs can be recognized in polynomial time using the following characterization.

**Theorem 2** (Szwarcfiter [4]). *A graph $G$ is a Helly graph if and only if every extended triangle of $G$ has a universal vertex.*

Since Helly graphs are clique graphs, and they have been characterized looking at its triangles, what can we say about the triangles of clique graphs? Is there a more general result than Theorem 2 about the triangles of clique graphs? In Section 2 we show an affirmative answer to this question. We present a generalized notion of extended triangle which allows a blending of the techniques of Roberts–Spencer and Szwarcfiter.

In Section 3 we obtain a characterization of Helly planar graphs and 3-Helly planar graphs by describing a simple family of admissible extended triangles. Section 4 contains our advance in the recognition of planar clique graphs; the main result provides a necessary condition for planar clique graphs: that any extended triangle must be a clique graph. The planar extended triangles which are clique graphs are totally characterized in Section 5.

## 2. Extended triangles generalization

A *triangle* $T$ of a graph $G$ is a complete containing exactly three vertices. The set of triangles of $G$ is symbolized by $T(G)$. The *extended triangle of $G$ relative to* the triangle $T$ is defined in [4] as the subgraph induced in $G$ by the vertices adjacent to at least two vertices of $T$ and it is denoted by $T'$. It is easy to prove that the following definition is equivalent: $T'$ is the subgraph induced in $G$ by the vertices of the cliques of $G$ containing at least two vertices of $T$. It follows the way we generalize the idea of extended triangle:

**Definition 3.** Let $\mathscr{F}$ be a complete edge cover of a graph $G$ and $T \in T(G)$. The subfamily of $\mathscr{F}$ formed by the members containing at least two vertices of $T$ is denoted by $\mathscr{F}_T$.

The extension—according to the family $\mathscr{F}$—of the triangle $T$ is the subgraph $T_{\mathscr{F}}$ induced in $G$ by the vertices belonging to the members of $\mathscr{F}_T$.

The extension—according to the family $\mathscr{C}(G)$—of $T$ is called the extended triangle of $G$ relative to $T$ and it is simply denoted by $T'$ instead of $T_{\mathscr{C}(G)}$.

Notice that given $\mathscr{F}$, any complete edge cover of $G$, $T_{\mathscr{F}}$ is an induced subgraph of the extended triangle $T'$.

The following lemmas give a useful relation between $\mathscr{F}_T$ and $T_{\mathscr{F}}$. They generalize previous works in [3,4].

**Lemma 4.** *Let $\mathscr{F}$ be a complete edge cover of $G$. The following conditions are equivalent*:

(i) *$\mathscr{F}$ has the Helly property.*
(ii) *For every $T \in T(G)$, the subfamily $\mathscr{F}_T$ has the Helly property.*
(iii) *For every $T \in T(G)$, the subfamily $\mathscr{F}_T$ has nonempty intersection.*

**Proof.** If $\mathscr{F}$ has the Helly property, then any subfamily has the Helly property, in particular $\mathscr{F}_T$ has the Helly property. On the other hand, if $\mathscr{F}_T$ has the Helly property, since $\mathscr{F}_T$ is pairwise intersecting, then it has no empty intersection. Now suppose the third condition is true but $\mathscr{F}$ has not the Helly property, then there must be a subfamily $\mathscr{F}' = (F_i)_{i \in I'}$ pairwise intersecting with empty intersection. We can consider it a minimal one, then for every $i_0 \in I'$, $\bigcap_{i \in I' - \{i_0\}} F_i \neq \emptyset$. Let $v_{i_0}$ be a vertex belonging to that intersection. Since the total intersection of the subfamily is empty, then $i_0, i_1 \in I'$, $i_0 \neq i_1$ implies $v_{i_0} \neq v_{i_1}$.

Since $\mathscr{F}'$ has at least three members, we can consider three different vertices $v_{i_0}$, $v_{i_1}$ and $v_{i_2}$ in such conditions. These vertices form a triangle $T$ of $G$. Clearly $\mathscr{F}'$ is a subfamily of $\mathscr{F}_T$, and by hypothesis $\mathscr{F}_T$ has no empty intersection, thus $\mathscr{F}'$ has no empty intersection. Contradiction. □

**Lemma 5.** *Let $\mathscr{F}$ be a family of completes of $G$ and $T \in T(G)$. If the subfamily $\mathscr{F}_T$ has nonempty intersection then the subgraph $T_{\mathscr{F}}$ has a universal vertex. The converse is true if $\mathscr{F}$ is the family $\mathscr{C}(G)$ of cliques of $G$.*

**Proof.** Let $u \in \bigcap \mathscr{F}_T$. We claim that $u$ is a universal vertex of $T_{\mathscr{F}}$, indeed: let $v \neq u$ and $v \in V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$. There exists $F \in \mathscr{F}_T$ such that $v \in F$. Thus $u$ and $v$ belong to the complete $F$, then $u$ is adjacent to $v$.

The other assumption says that if the subgraph $T_{\mathscr{C}(G)} = T'$ has a universal vertex then the subfamily $\mathscr{C}(G)_T$ has no empty intersection. Let $u$ be a universal vertex of $T'$. Let $C \in \mathscr{C}(G)_T$ and $v \in C$, $v \neq u$. Since $v \in V(T')$, then $u$ is adjacent to $v$. Since $C$ is a clique, then $u \in C$. It follows that $u \in \bigcap \mathscr{C}(G)_T$. □

We obtain Theorem 2 from these lemmas:

**Theorem 6** (Theorem 2 generalization). *The following conditions are equivalent*:

(i) *$G$ is a Helly graph.*
(ii) *The family $\mathscr{C}(G)$ has the Helly property.*
(iii) *For every $T \in T(G)$, the family $\mathscr{C}(G)_T$ has the Helly property.*
(iv) *For every $T \in T(G)$, the family $\mathscr{C}(G)_T$ has no empty intersection.*
(v) *For every $T \in T(G)$, the subgraph $T_{\mathscr{C}(G)} = T'$ has a universal vertex.*
(vi) *For every $T \in T(G)$, the subgraph $T_{\mathscr{C}(G)} = T'$ is a Helly graph.*

Using the previous lemmas we also can re-state Theorem 1 and relate it with Theorem 2.

**Theorem 7** (Theorem 1 generalization). *The following conditions are equivalent*:

(i) *$G$ is a Clique graph.*
(ii) *There exists a complete edge cover of $G$ satisfying the Helly property.*
(iii) *There exists $\mathscr{F}$, a complete edge cover of $G$, such that for every $T \in T(G)$, the subfamily $\mathscr{F}_T$ has the Helly property.*
(iv) *There exists $\mathscr{F}$, a complete edge cover of $G$, such that for every $T \in T(G)$, the subfamily $\mathscr{F}_T$ has no empty intersection.*
(v) *There exists $\mathscr{F}$, a complete edge cover of $G$, such that for every $T \in T(G)$, the subgraph $T_{\mathscr{F}}$ has a universal vertex and this vertex belongs to every member of the subfamily $\mathscr{F}_T$.*

## 3. Helly and 3-Helly planar graphs

The well-known planar graphs (see [1]) are those admitting a representation on the plane such that two edges do not intersect except at common end vertex. Kuratowsky's theorem shows that a graph is planar if and only if it does not contains a subdivision of $K_5$ or $K_{3,3}$.

A planar graph $G$ is a Helly graph if and only if it is a 4-Helly graph because its largest clique contains at most 4 vertices [3, Lemma 2]. Any 4-Helly graph is a 3-Helly graph but the converse is not true. Thus we can define the following subsets of planar graphs: planar Helly graphs = planar 4-Helly graphs $\subset$ planar 3-Helly graphs $\subset$ planar graphs. We will characterize them using the extended triangles.

Let $G$ be any graph and $v, v' \in V(G)$. We write $v \sim v'$ to mean that $v$ and $v'$ are adjacent, otherwise we write $v \nsim v'$.

For a given triangle $T = \{x, y, z\}$ of $G$, we call:

$$V_{xy} = \{v \in V(G) \colon\ v \sim x,\ v \sim y,\ v \nsim z\},$$

$$V_{xz} = \{v \in V(G) \colon\ v \sim x,\ v \sim z,\ v \nsim y\},$$

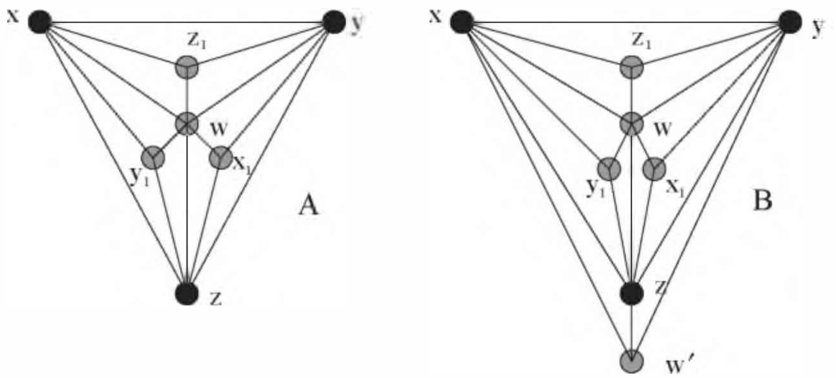


Fig. 1. Extended triangles of type 2 and 3.

$$V_{yz} = \{v \in V(G):\ v \sim y,\ v \sim z,\ v \nsim x\},$$

$$V_{xyz} = \{v \in V(G):\ v \sim x,\ v \sim y,\ v \sim z\}.$$

**Definition 8.** Let $G$ be a graph and $T'$ the extended triangle of $G$ relative to the triangle $T = \{x, y, z\}$. Say that:

$T'$ is of type 1 if at least one of the sets $V_{xy}$, $V_{xz}$ or $V_{yz}$ is empty.

$T'$ is of type 2 if $V_{xy} = \{z_1\}$, $V_{xz} = \{y_1\}$, $V_{yz} = \{x_1\}$, $V_{xyz} = \{w\}$, $x_1 \sim w$, $y_1 \sim w$ and $z_1 \sim w$.

$T'$ is of type 3 if $V_{xy} = \{z_1\}$, $V_{xz} = \{y_1\}$, $V_{yz} = \{x_1\}$, $V_{xyz} = \{w, w'\}$, $x_1 \sim w$, $y_1 \sim w$ and $z_1 \sim w$.

Notice that if $T'$ is an extended triangle of type 2 (type 3) of a planar graph, then $T'$ is isomorphic to the graph $A$ (to the graph $B$) of Fig. 1, thus each class contains a unique planar graph. This is easy to prove since graphs $A$ and $B$ are maximal planar. On the other hand, there is an infinite number of planar extended triangles of type 1.

**Lemma 9.** *Let $T = \{x, y, z\}$ be a triangle of a planar graph $G$.*

(1) *If $w \in V_{xyz}$, $z_1, z_2 \in V_{xy}$ and $w \sim z_1$ then $w \nsim z_2$.*
(2) *If $w \in V_{xyz}$, $z_1 \in V_{xy}$, $y_1 \in V_{xz}$, $w \sim z_1$ and $w \sim y_1$ then $z_1 \nsim y_1$.*
(3) *If $w, w' \in V_{xyz}$ then $w \nsim w'$.*
(4) *If $w, w' \in V_{xyz}$, $z_1 \in V_{xy}$ and $z_1 \sim w$ then $z_1 \nsim w'$.*
(5) *If $u_T$ is a universal vertex of the extended triangle of $G$ relative to $T$, then $u_T \in T$ or $u_T \in V_{xyz}$. Moreover, if $u_T \in T$ then one of the sets $V_{xy}$, $V_{xz}$ or $V_{yz}$ is empty.*

**Proof.** (1) If $w \sim z_2$ then the vertices $w, x, y$ and the vertices $z, z_1, z_2$ form a $K_{3,3}$, which is a contradiction because $G$ is a planar graph. (2) The vertices $w, x, y$ and $z$

form a $K_4$; if $z_1 \sim y_1$ then there is a subdivision of a $K_5$ considering $y_1$ the fifth vertex. (3) If $w \sim w'$ then the vertices $w, w', x, y$ and $z$ conform a $K_5$. (4) The vertices $w, x, y$ and $z$ form a $K_4$; if $w' \sim z_1$ then there is a subdivision of a $K_5$, considering $w'$ or $z_1$ the fifth vertex. (5) It is clear because of the definition of the sets. □

Now, we give the characterization:

**Theorem 10.** *Let G be a planar graph.*

(1) *G is a Helly graph if and only if every extended triangle of G is of type* 1 *or type* 2.
(2) *G is a* 3*-Helly graph if and only if every extended triangle of G is of type* 1, *type* 2 *or type* 3.

**Proof.** If $F \subseteq V(G)$, $F \supseteq \{u, /v, \ldots\}$ means that the vertex $u$ belongs to the set $F$ and that the vertex $v$ does not belong to it.

(1) If $G$ is a Helly graph and $T'$ is an extended triangle of $G$, by Theorem 2, there exists $u_T$, a universal vertex of $T'$. Suppose there is a triangle $T = \{x, y, z\}$ which is not type 1, then $V_{xy}$, $V_{xz}$ and $V_{yz}$ are not empty, so, by Lemma 9, item 5, $u_T \in V_{xyz}$. Since $u_T$ must be adjacent to every vertex belonging to the subsets $V_{xy}$, $V_{xz}$, or $V_{yz}$ and to any other vertex in $V_{xyz}$, then, by Lemma 9, items 1 and 3, every one of these sets contains at most one vertex, thus every one of them contains exactly one vertex; it follows that $T'$ is a type 2 extended triangle.

It is clear that any extended triangle of type 1 or type 2 has a universal vertex, then the converse is true by Theorem 2.

(2) Let $G$ be a 3-Helly planar graph and suppose there exists a triangle $T = \{x, y, z\}$ of $G$, such that the extended triangle $T'$ is not type 1; then there are different vertices $z_1 \in V_{xy}$, $y_1 \in V_{xz}$ and $x_1 \in V_{yz}$. Thus, there are cliques $C_1 \supseteq \{x, y, z_1, /z, /x_1, /y_1\}$, $C_2 \supseteq \{x, y_1, z, /y, /x_1, /z_1\}$, $C_3 \supseteq \{x_1, y, z, /x, /y_1, /z_1\}$. Since $G$ is 3-Helly and these three cliques are pairwise intersecting, then there exists $w$, a common vertex. It is clear that $w \notin \{x, y, z, x_1, y_1, z_1\}$. If $T'$ has no more vertices, then $T'$ is of type 2.

Now, assume there exists $w'$, another vertex of $T'$; we claim that $w' \in V_{xyz}$ and so $T'$ is of type 3, indeed: if $w' \in V_{xy}$, since the cliques $C_1$, $C_2$ and $C_3$ already contain four vertices, there must be another clique $C_4 \supseteq \{x, y, w', /z, /w\}$. Notice that $z \nsim w'$ because $w' \in V_{xy}$; and $w \nsim w'$ because of Lemma 9, item 1. Now $C_2 = \{x, y_1, z, w\}$, $C_3 = \{x_1, y, z, w\}$ and $C_4$ are pairwise intersecting and they have not a common vertex, contradiction. We conclude $w' \notin V_{xy}$ and by symmetry $w' \notin V_{xz}$ and $w' \notin V_{yz}$, thus $w' \in V_{xyz}$, as we claimed.

To prove the converse suppose $G$ is a planar, not 3-Helly graph. Then there must be three cliques $C_1$, $C_2$ and $C_3$ pairwise intersecting with empty total intersection. Let the vertices belonging to the respective intersections be named $x$, $y$ and $z$; and let $T$ be the triangle that they form. Since these cliques must contain at least three vertices and they have not a common vertex, it follows that there exists $z_1 \nsim z$ and $C_1 \supseteq \{x, y, z_1, /z\}$; $y_1 \nsim y$ and $C_2 \supseteq \{x, y_1, z, /y\}$; $x_1 \nsim x$ and $C_3 \supseteq \{x_1, y, z, /x\}$. Now it is easy to see that the extended triangle relative to $T$ is not type 1, not type 2 and not type 3. Contradiction. □

These characterizations lead to $O(n^2)$ recognition algorithms for Helly and 3-Helly planar graphs. Remember that the triangles of a planar graph can be listed in linear time [1].

## 4. Planar clique graphs

The following theorem shows a way to obtain from a Helly complete edge cover of a planar graph $G$, a Helly complete edge cover of every extended triangle of $G$. Thus if $G$ is a planar clique graph, then every extended triangle of $G$ is a clique graph.

**Theorem 11.** *Let $\mathscr{F} = (F_i)_{i \in I}$ be a Helly complete edge cover of a planar graph $G$, and $T'$ an extended triangle of $G$. The family $\mathscr{F}' = (F_i \cap V(T'))_{i \in I'}$ where $I' = \{i \in I: |F_i \cap V(T')| \geqslant 3\}$ is a Helly complete edge cover of $T'$.*

**Proof.** For every $i \in I$, $F_i' = F_i \cap V(T')$ is a complete of $T'$ because $F_i$ is a complete of $G$ and $T'$ is an induced subgraph of $G$. Suppose there is an edge $uv$ of $T'$ which is covered by no member of $\mathscr{F}'$, thus for every $i \in I'$ if $u \in F_i'$ then $v \notin F_i'$; so for every $i \in I$ such that $|F_i \cap V(T')| \geqslant 3$ if $u \in F_i \cap V(T')$ then $v \notin F_i \cap V(T')$; so for every $i \in I$, if $u$ and $v \in F_i$ then $|F_i \cap V(T')| < 3$; this means that

$$F_i \in \mathscr{F} \text{ and } u, v \in F_i \text{ implies } F_i \cap V(T') = \{u, v\}. \tag{1}$$

We will see that this is not possible. Let $T = \{x, y, z\}$.

*Case* 1: $u, v \in T$. In this case any vertex in a complete containing $u$ and $v$ belongs to $V(T')$, then by implication 1 any member of $\mathscr{F}$ containing $u$ and $v$ does not contain more vertices, then it is a $K_2$. This is not possible since $\mathscr{F}$ has the Helly property.

*Case* 2: $u \in T$ and $v \notin T$. Since $v \in V(T')$ we can assume $v \sim x$ and $u \neq x$. By implication 1, the triangle $\{u, v, x\}$ cannot be included in a member of $\mathscr{F}$ so there must be different members covering the edges: $xv$, $vy$ and $yx$. These members are pairwise intersecting then they must contain a common vertex. Clearly, the common vertex belongs to $V(T')$. This contradicts implication 1.

*Case* 3: $u, v \notin T$. We will consider two subcases: when both vertices are adjacent to a same pair of vertices of $T$, and when they are adjacent to different pairs.

*Subcase* 3.1: $u$ and $v$ are adjacent to $x$ and $y$ (Fig. 2a). Again, by implication 1, the triangle $\{u, v, x\}$ cannot be included in any member of $\mathscr{F}$, so there must be completes $F_1 \supseteq \{u, v, /x, /y, /z\}$, $F_2 \supseteq \{u, x, /v\}$, and $F_3 \supseteq \{x, v, /u\}$. Since they are pairwise intersecting, they must contain a common vertex, say $w$. Notice that $w \notin \{x, y, z, v, u\}$, and that $w \notin V(T')$, then $w$ is adjacent neither to $y$ nor to $z$ (Fig. 2b). Now, consider the triangle $\{u, v, y\}$, by the same reason there must be completes $F_4 \supseteq \{u, y, /v, /w\}$ and $F_5 \supseteq \{v, y, /u, /w\}$. Since $F_1$, $F_4$ and $F_5$ are pairwise intersecting, they must contain a common vertex $w' \notin \{x, y, z, v, w, u\}$ (Fig. 2c). Clearly $\{u, v, w, w'\}$ conform a $K_4$, so considering $x$ or $y$ as the fifth vertex there is a subdivision of a $K_5$. Contradiction.

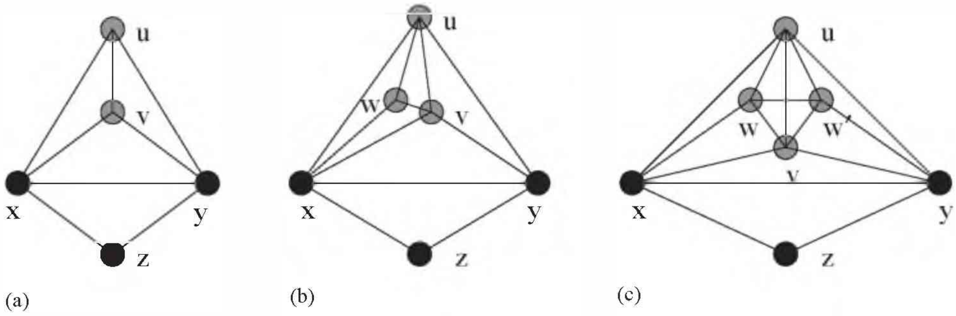


Fig. 2.

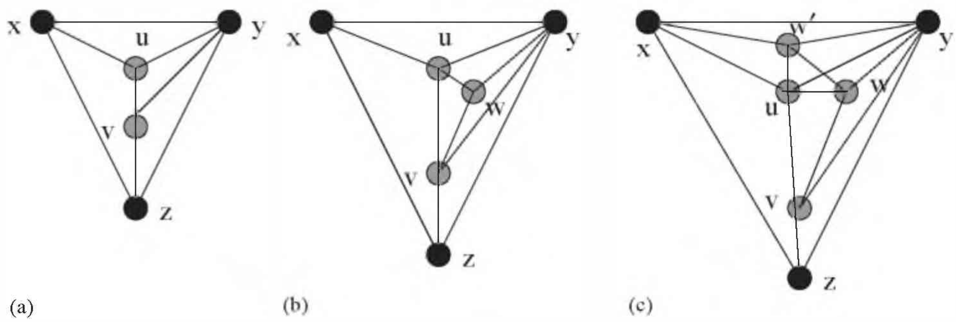


Fig. 3.

*Subcase* 3.2: $u$ is adjacent to $x$ and $y$, and $v$ is adjacent to $y$ and $z$ (Fig. 3a). As in the previous subcase, because of implication 1, the triangle $\{u,v,y\}$ is not included in any member of $\mathscr{F}$; then there must exist completes of $\mathscr{F}$ $F_1 \supseteq \{u,v,w,/x,/y,/z\}$, $F_2 \supseteq \{u,y,w,/x,/z,/v\}$, and $F_3 \supseteq \{v,y,w,/x,/z,/u\}$, furthermore $w \notin V(T')$ (Fig. 3b). Now, suppose there exists $F \in \mathscr{F}$ such that $\{x,y,u\} \subseteq F$. Again, there must exist $w' \in F \cap F_1 \cap F_3$. Clearly $w' \notin \{x,y,z,u,v,w\}$ and $w' \in V(T')$, this contradicts implication 1 since $\{u,v,w'\} \subseteq F_1$. We get that the triangle $\{x,y,u\}$ is not included in any member of $\mathscr{F}$, then there must be members $F_4 \supseteq \{x,y,/u,/w\}$ and $F_5 \supseteq \{x,u,/y,/w\}$. Since they and $F_2$ are pairwise intersecting, they must contain a common vertex, say $w'$, which clearly does not belong to $\{x,y,z,u,v,w\}$ (Fig. 3c). Notice that $\{u,y,w,w'\}$ conform a $K_4$, so there is a subdivision of a $K_5$ considering $x$ or $v$ as the fifth vertex. Contradiction. We have proved that $\mathscr{F}' = (F_i')_{i \in I'}$ is a complete edge cover of $T'$, suppose it has not the Helly property, then there is a subfamily pairwise intersecting without a common vertex, let $(F_i')_{i \in J}$, $J \subset I'$ be a minimal one. Notice that $|J| \leqslant 4$ because the completes have at most four vertices. Since $\bigcap_{i \in J} F_i \neq \emptyset$, $\bigcap_{i \in J} F_i' = \emptyset$, and $3 \leqslant |F_i'| \leqslant 4$ then for each $i \in J$, $F_i = F_i' \cup \{h\}$ where $h \in V(G)$ and $h \notin V(T')$. Assume $|J|=4$. Since the subfamily is minimal, any three members contain a common

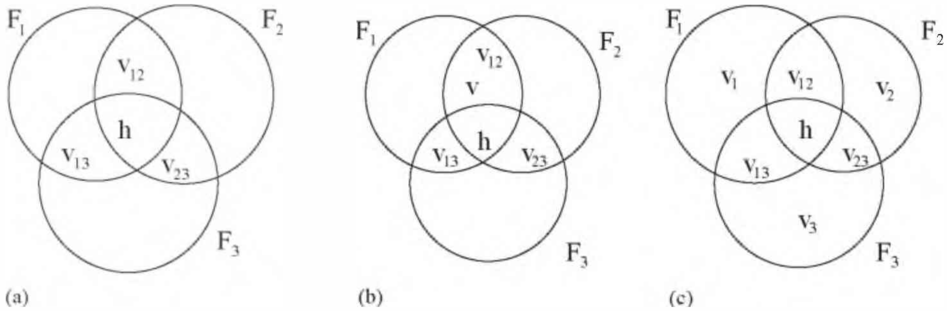


Fig. 4.

vertex, then there are four vertices mutually adjacent; these vertices with the vertex $h$ conform a $K_5$, which is a contradiction.

If $|J|=3$, say $J=\{1,2,3\}$, call $v_{ij}=v_{ji}$ a vertex belonging to the intersection of $F_i'$ and $F_j'$, then we have $F_1 \supseteq \{v_{12}, v_{13}, h\}$; $F_2 \supseteq \{v_{12}, v_{23}, h\}$ $F_3 \supseteq \{v_{13}, v_{23}, h\}$ (Fig. 4a). Since $h \notin V(T')$ and every set must contain at least three vertices of $T'$, then every one of these sets must contain another vertex of $T'$, and it cannot be the same vertex for the three sets. Then there are two possibilities: (a) One of the three fourth vertices belongs to one intersection, for instance suppose there is another vertex $v \in F_1 \cap F_2$ (Fig. 4b), then $v_{12}, v_{13}, v_{23}, v, h$ conform a $K_5$, which contradicts planarity. (b) None of the three fourth vertices is in one intersection, then they are different vertices: $v_1$, $v_2$ and $v_3$, and the situation is $F_1=\{v_1, v_{12}, v_{13}, h\}$, $F_2=\{v_2, v_{12}, v_{23}, h\}$, and $F_3=\{v_3, v_{13}, v_{23}, h\}$ (Fig. 4c).

Since the vertex $h$ is not in $T'$, at most one of the vertices $v_1, v_2, v_3, v_{12}, v_{13}, v_{23}$ is a vertex of the triangle $T$. The remaining vertices are adjacent to at least two vertices of the triangle $T$, then it is easy to see that there is a subdivision of a $K_5$. Contradiction. □

**Corollary 12.** *Let G be a planar graph. If G is a clique graph then every extended triangle of G is a clique graph.*

## 5. Planar extended triangles which are clique graphs

We have obtained, for a given planar graph, a necessary condition to be a clique graph: that every extended triangle of the given graph must be a clique graph. Then it is natural to ask: is it easy to know if an extended triangle of a planar graph is a clique graph? The answer is yes. In Theorem 14 we present a total characterization of the extended triangles of a planar graph which are clique graphs. This characterization leads to an $O(n^2)$ algorithm to decide if a planar extended triangle is a clique graph.

Before enunciating the theorem we will prove the following useful lemma about Helly complete edge covers of an extended triangle of a planar graph.

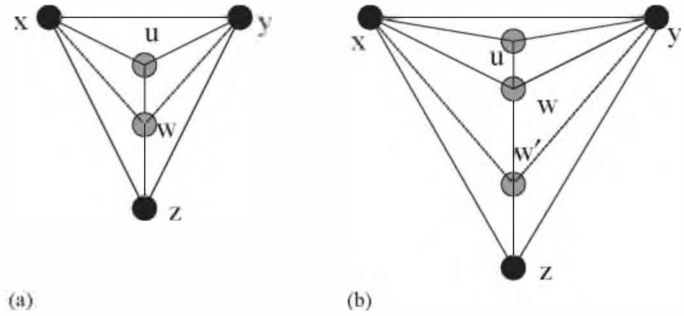


Fig. 5. Item of Lemma 13

**Lemma 13.** *Let G be a planar graph and $T'$ the extended triangle of G relative to the triangle $T=\{x,y,z\}$. Let $\mathscr{F}$ be a Helly complete edge cover of $T'$ and $u_T \in \bigcap \mathscr{F}_T$, then*:

(1) *If $u \in V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$ and $u \neq u_T$, then $u \sim u_T$.*
(2) *Either $u_T \in T$ or $u_T \in V_{xyz}$.*
(3) *If $w \in V_{xyz}$ then $w \in V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$.*
(4) *If $|V_{xyz}| = 2$ then $u_T \in T$.*
(5) *If $u \in V_{xy}$ and $u \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$, then either*
  (i) *$V_{xy} = \{u\}$, and there exists $w \in V_{xyz}$ such that $u \sim w$* (Fig. 5a), *or*
  (ii) *there exists w such that $V_{xy} = \{u, w\}$, and $w' \in V_{xyz}$ such that $u \sim w \sim w'$. Furthermore, $w \in V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$ and $w' = u_T$ (Fig. 5b).*
(6) *If $|V_{xy}| > 2$ then either $u_T = x$ or $u_T = y$.*

*Notice that we can obtain results analogous to items* 5 and 6, *beginning from $V_{xz}$ or $V_{yz}$ instead of $V_{xy}$.*

**Proof.** (1) It is clear since $V(T_{\mathscr{F}}) = \bigcup \mathscr{F}_T$ and $u_T$ belongs to every member of $\mathscr{F}_T$, which are completes.

(2) By definition the members of $\mathscr{F}$ covering the edges of $T$ are members of $\mathscr{F}_T$, then $x, y, z \in V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$, thus if $u_T \notin T$, it follows from the previous item that $u_T$ is adjacent to $x$, $y$ and $z$, then $u_T \in V_{xyz}$.

(3) Suppose $w \in V_{xyz}$ and $w \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$. Then there must be members of $\mathscr{F}$ satisfying: $F_1 \supseteq \{w, x, /y, /z\}$, $F_2 \supseteq \{w, y, /x, /z\}$, $F_3 \supseteq \{w, z, /x, /y\}$. There are two possibilities: (a) there exists a member of $\mathscr{F}$ containing the triangle $\{x, y, z\}$: let it be $F_4 \supseteq \{x, y, z, /w\}$ (notices that $w \notin F_4$ because $w \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$). Since the four completes are pairwise intersecting, they must contain a common vertex: $h \notin \{x, y, z, w\}$. Then there is a $K_5$. Contradiction.

(b) There is not a member of $\mathscr{F}$ containing the triangle $\{x, y, z\}$, so there must be different completes covering its edges: $F_4 \supseteq \{x, y, /z, /w\}$, $F_5 \supseteq \{x, z, /y, /w\}$, $F_6 \supseteq \{y, z, /x, /w\}$. It is easy to see that these completes cannot be the previous ones, and, since every one of them contains two vertices of $T$, then they must contain $u_T$. It follows that $u_T$ cannot be $x$, $y$, $z$ or $w$, then we have to add to $F_4$, $F_5$ and $F_6$ the vertex $u_T \in V_{xyz}$. On the other hand, $F_1$, $F_2$ and $F_4$ are pairwise intersecting, then they must contain a common vertex $h \notin \{x, y, z, w\}$. By Lemma 9, item 3, $u_T \nsim w$, then $h \neq u_T$. Thus $h$ is adjacent to $x$, $y$, $w$ and $u_T$; again we contradict planarity.

(4) Let $w, w' \in V_{xyz}$. By Lemma 9, item 3, they are not adjacent. In accordance with the previous item $w' \in V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$, and since $w' \nsim w$, then $u_T \neq w$. Analogously, $u_T \neq w'$. We conclude that $u_T \notin V_{xyz}$. It follows from the second item that $u_T \in T$.

(5) Let $u \in V_{xy}$ and suppose that $u \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$, i.e. $u$ does not belong to any member of $\mathscr{F}$ containing at least two vertices of $T$. Since every edge is covered by a member of the family $\mathscr{F}$, there are completes $F_1 \supseteq \{u, x, /y, /z\}$, $F_2 \supseteq \{u, y, /x, /z\}$, $F_3 \supseteq \{x, y, /u\}$. Since they are pairwise intersecting and $\mathscr{F}$ has the Helly property, they contain a common vertex $w$ which is not $x, y, z$, or $u$; actually these completes satisfy:

$$F_1 \supseteq \{w, u, x, /y, /z\}, \quad F_2 \supseteq \{w, u, y, /x, /z\}, \quad F_3 \supseteq \{w, x, y, /u\}.$$

Let us see that in this conditions,

$$F \in \mathscr{F}, \quad x, y \in F \quad \text{implies } w \in F, \tag{2}$$

we will use it later. Suppose $F \in \mathscr{F}$ and $F \supseteq \{x, y, /w\}$, clearly $F$ is not $F_1$, nor $F_2$ and nor $F_3$. The four completes $F$, $F_1$, $F_2$ and $F_3$ are pairwise intersecting so they contain a common vertex which is not $x, y, z, u$ or $w$, then the common vertex must be a vertex $h$ which is adjacent to $x, y, u$ and $w$, so there exists a $K_5$. This contradicts planarity. We have proved implication 2.

Now, let us consider two cases: when the vertex $w$ is adjacent to $z$ and when it is not. (i) Assume $w \sim z$, then $w \in V_{xyz}$. We only need to prove that $V_{xy} = \{u\}$. Suppose there exists $u' \in V_{xy}$. By Lemma 9, item 1, $u' \nsim w$, then by implication 2, $u'$ does not belong to any member of $\mathscr{F}$ containing $x$ and $y$, thus $u' \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$. It follows that there must be completes $F_4 \supseteq \{x, u', /y, /z, /w\}$ and $F_5 \supseteq \{y, u', /x, /z, /w\}$. Again, these completes and $F_3 \supseteq \{x, y, w, /u, /u'\}$, must contain a common vertex, say $h$. Clearly $h \notin \{x, y, z, w, u, u'\}$ and $h$ is adjacent to $x$, $y$ and $w$. Notice that $u$ and $z$ are also adjacent to these three vertices, then there is a $K_{3,3}$. Contradiction. We have proved that $V_{xy} = \{u\}$ and $u \sim w \in V_{xyz}$.

(ii) If $w \nsim z$, then, by implication 2, $z$ does not belong to any member of $\mathscr{F}$ containing $x$ and $y$, then there must be completes $F_4 \supseteq \{x, z, /y, /w\}$ and $F_5 \supseteq \{y, z, /x, /w\}$. These completes and $F_3 \supseteq \{x, y, w, /u, /z\}$ are pairwise intersecting, then there exists $w' \in F_3 \cap F_4 \cap F_5$. Clearly $w' \notin \{x, y, z, u, w\}$. Notice that $w' \in V_{xyz}$, $w \in V_{xy}$ and $u \sim w \sim w'$. On the other hand, by Lemma 9, item 1, $w' \nsim u$, then actually the completes satisfy $F_1 \supseteq \{w, u, x, /y, /z, /w'\}$, $F_2 \supseteq \{w, u, y, /x, /z, /w'\}$, $F_3 = \{w', w, x, y\}$, $F_4 \supseteq \{w', x, z, /y, /w, /u\}$ and $F_5 \supseteq \{w', y, z, /x, /w, /u\}$. Since $F_3 = \{w', w, x, y\}$ then $w \in V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$, as we wanted to prove. Since the completes $F_3 = \{w', w, x, y\}$, $F_4 \supseteq \{w', x, z, /y, /w, /u\}$ and $F_5 \supseteq \{w', y, z, /x, /w, /u\}$ are members of $\mathscr{F}_T$ (every one of them has two vertices of $T$), then each one must contain the vertex $u_T$, it follows that $u_T = w'$.

Finally, we have to prove that $V_{xy} = \{u, w\}$. Suppose there exists other vertex $u' \in V_{xy}$. We claim that $u' \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$. Indeed, in the opposite case, there exist $F \in \mathscr{F}_T$ such that $\{x, y, u'\} \subseteq F$, then, by implication 2, $w \in F$ and so $w \sim u$. This contradicts planarity.

Now, since $u' \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$, there must be completes $F_6 \supseteq \{x, u', /y, /z, /w, /w'\}$ and $F_7 \supseteq \{y, u', /x, /z, /w, /w'\}$ (it is easy to see that these completes cannot be the preceding ones, and that $u' \nsim w'$). Again these completes and $F_3 = \{x, y, w, w'\}$ must contain a common vertex which clearly does not belong to $\{x, y, w, w'\}$. Contradiction: $F_3$ cannot be a $K_5$.

(6) If $|V_{xy}| > 2$, since the previous item, every vertex in $V_{xy}$ must belong to $V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$, then by item 1 every vertex in $V_{xy}$ must be adjacent to $u_T$. It follows that $u_T \neq z$. By Lemma 9, item 1, at most one vertex of $V_{xy}$ could be adjacent to a vertex of $V_{xyz}$, then in the present case $u_T \notin V_{xyz}$. We conclude, because of item 2, that $u_T$ must be $x$ or $y$, as we wanted to prove. □

**Theorem 14.** *Let G be a planar graph and $T'$ the extended triangle relative to the triangle $T = \{x, y, z\}$ of G. $T'$ is a clique graph if and only if at least one of the following conditions is satisfied*:

(1) $V_{xy} = \emptyset$ *or* $V_{xz} = \emptyset$ *or* $V_{yz} = \emptyset$.

(2) $V_{xy} = \{z_1\}$ *and* $z_1 \sim w \in V_{xyz}$, *or*
$V_{xz} = \{y_1\}$ *and* $y_1 \sim w \in V_{xyz}$, *or*
$V_{yz} = \{x_1\}$ *and* $x_1 \sim w \in V_{xyz}$.

(3) $V_{xy} = \{z_1, z_2\}$, $V_{xz} = \{y_1, y_2\}$, $V_{yz} = \{x_1, x_2\}$, $V_{xyz} = \{w\}$, *and*
$w \sim z_1 \sim z_2$, $w \sim y_1 \sim y_2$, $w \sim x_1 \sim x_2$.

**Proof.** Suppose that $T'$, the extended triangle relative to the triangle $T = \{x, y, z\}$ of the planar graph $G$, is a clique graph, and that $T'$ satisfies neither condition 1 (*Remark* 1: the subset $V_{xy}$, $V_{xz}$ and $V_{yz}$ are nonempty) nor condition 2 (*Remark* 2: if $V_{xy}$, $V_{xz}$ or $V_{yz}$ contains exactly one vertex, then the vertex is adjacent to non vertex of $V_{xyz}$), we are going to show that $T'$ satisfies condition 3.

Since $T'$ is a clique graph, there is a Helly complete edge cover $\mathscr{F}$ of $T'$, then we can consider $\mathscr{F}_T$, $T_{\mathscr{F}}$, and $u_T$ as in the previous lemma. Item 2 of that lemma says that $u_T \in T$ or $u_T \in V_{xyz}$, let us show that in the actually conditions $u_T \notin T$. Suppose $u_T \in T$, for instance $u_T = z$. By Remark 1, there exists $z_1 \in V_{xy}$. Since $z_1 \nsim z = u_T$ then $z_1 \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$. Because of item 5 of Lemma 13 there are two possibilities: (i) $V_{xy} = \{z_1\}$ and there exists $w \in V_{xyz}$ such that $z_1 \sim w$. This is not possible because of Remark 2; or (ii) there exists $w' \in V_{xyz}$ such that $u_T = w'$. This is not possible since we have supposed $u_T \in T$.

We conclude that $u_T \notin T$, then $u_T \in V_{xyz}$. By Lemma 13, items 3 and 1, and by Lemma 9, item 3, $V_{xyz} = \{u_T\}$. On the other hand, it follows from item 6 of the previous lemma, that every one of the sets $V_{xy}$, $V_{xz}$ and $V_{yz}$ contains at most two vertices. Let us see that none of them contains exactly one vertex. Suppose $V_{xy} = \{z_1\}$. By Remark 2, $z_1$ cannot be adjacent to $u_T$, then $z_1 \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$. Actually we have $V_{xy} = \{z_1\}$ and $z_1 \notin V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$, then item 5(i) of the previous lemma must be true, but this contradicts Remark 2.

We conclude that every one of the sets $V_{xy}$, $V_{xy}$ and $V_{yz}$ contains exactly two vertices. Both vertices cannot be vertices of $T_{\mathscr{F}}$ since they ought to be adjacent to $u_T$ and this contradicts Lemma 9, item 1, then in each case at least one of them is not in $V(T_{\mathscr{F}})$. It follows from 5(ii) of Lemma 13, that condition 3 must be true, as we wanted to prove.

The converse says that $T'$ must be a clique graph if it satisfies 1, 2 or 3.

Assume first that $T'$ satisfies condition 1, say $V_{xy}=\emptyset$. Then $z$ is a universal vertex of $T'$, so $T'$ is a Helly graph and hence $T'$ is a clique graph. A special case will be important in what follows: Assume that $V_{xy}=\emptyset$ and that $w\in V_{xyz}$ has degree 3 in $T'$. Then $F_w=\{x,y,z,w\}$ is the only clique of $T'$ containing $w$. There are at most two cliques of $T'$ containing both $x$ and $y$: one is certainly $F_w$ and the other is $F_{w'}=\{x,y,z,w'\}$ if $V_{xyz}=\{w,w'\}$: indeed, the common vertex neighbours of $x$ and $y$ are $w\sim z\sim w'$ and this is an induced path (henceforth, every reference to $w'$ and objects related to it must be disregarded if $V_{xyz}=\{w\}$). Let $\mathscr{F}=(\mathscr{C}(T')-F_{w'})\cup\{F_4,F_5\}$ where $F_4=\{x,z,w'\}$ and $F_5=\{y,z,w'\}$. Thus $\mathscr{F}$ is a complete edge cover of $T'$ and satisfies Helly property since $z\in\bigcap\mathscr{F}$. Notice that $F_w$ is the only member of $\mathscr{F}$ containing the vertex $w$ or the edge $xy$.

Assume now that $T'$ satisfies condition 2, say $V_{xy}=\{z_1\}$ and $z_1\sim w\in V_{xyz}$. By Lemma 9, items 1 and 3, besides $z_1$ there are at most two neighbours of $w$ in $T'-T$, say $x_1\in V_{yz}$ and $y_1\in V_{xz}$ (again, references to them will be conditioned to their existence). Let $T''=(T'-z_1)-\{wx_1,wy_1\}$. Then $T''$ falls within the special case discussed above, so consider its Helly complete edge cover $\mathscr{F}=(\mathscr{C}(T'')-F_{w'})\cup\{F_4,F_5\}$. Define $F_0=\{x,w,z_1\}$, $F_1=\{y,w,z_1\}$, $F_2=\{x,w,y_1\}$ and $F_3=\{y,w,x_1\}$. Therefore, $\mathscr{F}_1=\mathscr{F}\cup\{F_0,F_1,F_2,F_3\}$ is a complete edge cover of $T'$. Note that $F_0$ and $F_1$ are the only member of $\mathscr{F}_1$ containing $z_1$, and that $w$ is only in $F_w,F_0,F_1,F_2$ and $F_3$. We still have that $x,y\in F\in\mathscr{F}_1$ implies $F=F_w$.

We will show that $\mathscr{F}_1$ has the Helly property. Let $\mathscr{F}_1'$ be a pairwise intersecting subfamily of $\mathscr{F}$. We can assume that $\mathscr{F}_1'$ is not a subfamily of $\mathscr{F}$, and by symmetry we need to consider only the following two cases:

*Case* 1: $F_0\in\mathscr{F}_1'$. There are two subcases:

(A) $F_1\in\mathscr{F}_1'$. Suppose there is an $F\in\mathscr{F}_1'$ such that $w\notin F$. Then $F\in\mathscr{F}$, $F\cap F_0=\{x\}$ and $F\cap F_1=\{y\}$, so $x,y\in F$ and then $w\in F$ after all. Contradiction.

(B) $F_1\notin\mathscr{F}_1'$, so $F\cap F_0\subseteq\{x,w\}$ for all $F\in\mathscr{F}_1'$, $F\neq F_0$. If $\bigcap\mathscr{F}_1'=\emptyset$, there exist $F,G\in\mathscr{F}_1'$ such that $F\cap F_0=\{x\}$ and $G\cap F_0=\{w\}$. Then $G=F_3$, and $w\notin F$ implies $F\cap G\subseteq\{y,x_1\}$. Since $x\in F$, then $x_1\notin F$ and $F\cap G=\{y\}$, but so $x,y\in F$ implies $F=F_w$, a contradiction.

*Case* 2: $F_2\in\mathscr{F}_1'$, but $F_0,F_1\notin\mathscr{F}_1'$. Again, two subcases:

(A) $F_3\in\mathscr{F}_1'$. Assuming that there is an $F\in\mathscr{F}_1'$ such that $w\notin F$, we get $F\cap F_2\subseteq\{x,y_1\}$, and $F\cap F_3\subseteq\{y,x_1\}$. But then $x,y\in F$, $F=F_w$ and $w\in F$. Contradiction.

(B) $F_3\notin\mathscr{F}_1'$. Suppose that there is an $F\in\mathscr{F}_1'$ such that $x\notin F$. It follows that $F\notin\{F_w,F_0,F_1,F_2,F_3,F_4,F_5\}$, so $F\in\mathscr{C}(T'')$ and $w\notin F$. In particular, $F\cap F_2=\{y_1\}$. By Lemma 9, items 2 and 4 the neighbours in $T'$ of $y_1$ are in $V_{xz}\cup\{x,z,w\}$. Hence, the neigbours in $T''$ of $y_1$ are in $V_{xz}\cup\{x,z\}$. Thus, $F\in\mathscr{C}(T'')$ and $y_1\in F$ imply $x\in F$, a contradiction. We conclude that $x\in\bigcap\mathscr{F}_1'$, in this subcase.

Finally consider that $T'$ satisfies condition 3. It is easy to see that in this case the family depicts in following is a Helly complete edge cover of $T'$, thus it is a clique graph:

$$\{x,z_1,z_2\}, \quad \{y,z_1,z_2\}, \quad \{x,y,z_1,w\},$$
$$\{x,y_1,y_2\}, \quad \{z,y_1,y_2\}, \quad \{x,z,y_1,w\},$$
$$\{y,x_1,x_2\}, \quad \{z,x_1,x_2\}, \quad \{y,z,x_1,w\}.$$

**Corollary 15.** *Let $T'$ be an extended triangle of a planar graph $G$. If $T'$ is of type* 1, 2 *or* 3 *then $T'$ is a clique graph.*

## 6. Remarks

It is known that a graph $G$ is a clique graph (Helly graph, $k$-Helly graph) if and only if the graph obtained from $G$ by removing the edges which are cliques of $G$, is a clique graph (Helly graph, $k$-Helly graph), therefrom, the results presented in this work hold for a class of graphs wider than planar.

We have proved that if a planar graph is a clique graph, then its extended triangles are clique graphs. We have found counterexamples that show that the converse is not true, i.e. there exists a planar graph such that every one of its extended triangles is clique graph but the whole graph is not a clique graph. However, Theorem 11 says that if a planar graph $G$ is a clique graph then every extended triangle of $G$ admits a Helly complete edge cover coming from a same Helly complete edge cover of the entirely graph $G$, this means that every extended triangle of $G$ must be a clique graph and every extended triangle *must admit a Helly complete edge cover "compatible" with the one of the other extended triangle*. Then we think that the existence or not of a Helly complete edge cover of a planar graph $G$ could be determined knowing the different possible Helly complete edge covers of each extended triangle of $G$.

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