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## ON STRONG DIGRAPHS WITH A PRESCRIBED ULTRACENTER

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*Summary.* The (directed) distance from a vertex  $u$  to a vertex  $v$  in a strong digraph  $D$  is the length of a shortest  $u$ - $v$  (directed) path in  $D$ . The eccentricity of a vertex  $v$  of  $D$  is the distance from  $v$  to a vertex furthest from  $v$  in  $D$ . The radius  $\text{rad}D$  is the minimum eccentricity among the vertices of  $D$  and the diameter  $\text{diam}D$  is the maximum eccentricity. A central vertex is a vertex with eccentricity  $\text{rad}D$  and the subdigraph induced by the central vertices is the center  $C(D)$ . For a central vertex  $v$  in a strong digraph  $D$  with  $\text{rad}D < \text{diam}D$ , the central distance  $c(v)$  of  $v$  is the greatest nonnegative integer  $n$  such that whenever  $d(v, x) \leq n$ , then  $x$  is in  $C(D)$ . The maximum central distance among the central vertices of  $D$  is the ultraradius  $\text{urad}D$  and the subdigraph induced by the central vertices with central distance  $\text{urad}D$  is the ultracenter  $UC(D)$ . For a given digraph  $D$ , the problem of determining a strong digraph  $H$  with  $UC(H) = D$  and  $C(H) \neq D$  is studied. This problem is also considered for digraphs that are asymmetric.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The distance  $d(u, v)$  between two vertices  $u$  and  $v$  in a connected graph  $G$  is the length of a shortest  $u$ - $v$  path. The eccentricity  $e(v)$  of a vertex  $v$  of  $G$  is the distance between  $v$  and a vertex furthest from  $v$ . The minimum eccentricity among the vertices of  $G$  is the radius  $\text{rad}G$  of  $G$ , and the maximum eccentricity is the diameter  $\text{diam}G$ . A vertex whose eccentricity is  $\text{rad}G$  is called a *central vertex*. The subgraph of  $G$  induced by its central vertices is the *center*  $C(G)$  of  $G$ . The center of a connected graph has been the subject of much study. In [4], Winters introduced a subgraph of  $C(G)$  which is, in a certain sense, more central than the center itself.

For a central vertex  $v$  in a connected graph  $G$  with  $\text{rad}G < \text{diam}G$  the *central distance*  $c(v)$  is the greatest nonnegative integer  $n$  such that whenever  $d(v, x) \leq n$

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for a vertex  $x$  of  $G$ , then  $x$  is a central vertex. The maximum central distance among the central vertices of  $G$  is the *ultraradius*  $\text{urad}G$  of  $G$ , and the subgraph of  $C(G)$  induced by those central vertices  $v$  with  $c(v) = \text{urad}G$  is the *ultracenter*  $UC(G)$  of  $G$ . Chartrand, Novotny and Winters studied the ultracenter further in [1]. Among the results presented is that for every graph  $G$ , there exists a connected graph  $H$  such that  $UC(H) = G$  and  $C(H) \neq G$ . Furthermore, the minimum order of such a graph  $H$  is 4 more than the order of  $G$ . It is the object of this paper to study the analogous concepts for digraphs.

The (directed) *distance*  $d(u, v)$  from a vertex  $u$  to a vertex  $v$  in a strong digraph  $D$  is the length of a shortest  $u$ - $v$  (directed) path in  $D$ . The *eccentricity*  $e(v)$  of a vertex  $v$  of  $D$  is the distance from  $v$  to a vertex furthest from  $v$ . The minimum eccentricity among the vertices of  $D$  is called the *radius*  $\text{rad}D$  of  $D$  and the maximum eccentricity is the *diameter*  $\text{diam}D$ . A vertex  $v$  in a strong digraph  $D$  is called a *central vertex* if  $e(v) = \text{rad}D$ . The subdigraph induced by the central vertices of  $D$  is called the *center*  $C(D)$  of  $D$ . Two vertices  $u$  and  $v$  are *adjacent* in a digraph  $D$  if  $D$  contains at least one of the arcs  $(u, v)$  and  $(v, u)$ . If  $(u, v)$  is an arc of  $D$ , then  $u$  is *adjacent to*  $v$ , and  $v$  is *adjacent from*  $u$ . A digraph  $D$  is *asymmetric* if whenever  $u$  and  $v$  are adjacent in  $D$ , then exactly one of the arcs  $(u, v)$  and  $(v, u)$  is present in  $D$ . Chartrand, Johns, and Tian [2] showed for every asymmetric digraph  $D$ , there exists a strong asymmetric digraph  $H$  with  $C(H) = D$ . In [3], Shaikh showed for every (not necessarily asymmetric) digraph  $D$ , there exists a strong digraph  $H$  such that  $C(H) = D$ .

Let  $v$  be a central vertex of a strong digraph  $D$  with  $\text{rad}D < \text{diam}D$ . The *central distance*  $c(v)$  of  $v$  is the largest nonnegative integer  $n$  such that whenever  $d(v, x) \leq n$  the vertex  $x$  is in the center of  $D$ . Let  $m = \max\{c(v)\}$ , where the maximum is taken over all central vertices  $v$  of  $D$ . The subdigraph of  $C(D)$  induced by those vertices  $v$  with  $c(v) = m$  is called the *ultracenter* of  $D$ , which we denote by  $UC(D)$ . The number  $m$  is referred to as the *ultraradius* of  $D$  and is denoted by  $\text{urad}D$ .

For example, each vertex of the digraph  $D$  of Figure 1 is labeled with its eccentricity. Thus,  $\text{rad}D = 6$  and  $\text{diam}D = 9$ . Furthermore, each central vertex of  $D$  is labeled with its central distance and so  $\text{urad}D = 3$ .

Let  $D$  be a strong digraph with  $\text{rad}D < \text{diam}D$ . If  $v$  is a vertex with central distance  $k$  then there is a path  $P: v = v_0, v_1, v_2, v_3, \dots, v_{k+1}$  of length  $k + 1$  from  $v$  to a vertex  $v_{k+1}$  not in the center of  $D$ . Thus,  $c(v_i) = k - i$  for  $0 \leq i \leq k$ . The following theorem is a consequence of this observation.

**Theorem 1.** *Let  $D$  be a strong digraph with  $\text{rad}D < \text{diam}D$  and  $\text{urad}D = m$ . For each integer  $i$  ( $0 \leq i \leq m$ ), there exists a central vertex  $u_i$  with  $c(u_i) = i$ .*



For example, consider  $D \cong 2K_1$ , where  $V(D) = \{u, v\}$ . The strong digraph  $H$  of Figure 2 has the property that  $UC(H) = D$  but  $C(H) \neq D$ . In fact,  $C(H)$  contains the vertices  $x$  and  $y$  as well. Thus,  $ua(D) \leq 3$ . If  $ua(D) = 2$ , then there is a unique central vertex of a minimum ultracentral superdigraph  $H$  that is not in the ultracenter of  $H$ . So by Theorem 2  $UC(H)$  is connected, producing a contradiction. Therefore,  $ua(D) \geq 3$ , which gives  $ua(D) = 3$ .

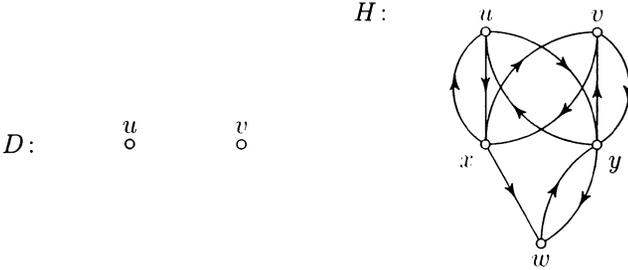


Figure 2. A digraph ultracentral appendage number 3

We now show that every digraph has ultracentral appendage number 2 or 3.

**Theorem 3.** *The ultracentral appendage number of every digraph  $D$  is well-defined and  $2 \leq ua(D) \leq 3$ .*

**Proof.** Let  $D$  be a digraph and let  $H$  be the strong digraph obtained from  $D$  by adding the vertices  $x_1, x_2,$  and  $y$  and the arcs indicated in Figure 3. Thus,  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  are adjacent to and from every vertex of  $D$ . Observe that all vertices of  $D$  and  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  are central vertices, while  $y$  is not. Also  $UC(H) = D$ . Thus  $ua(D)$  is well-defined and  $ua(D) \leq 3$ . We have previously noted that  $ua(D) \geq 2$  for every digraph  $D$  and thus  $2 \leq ua(D) \leq 3$ .  $\square$

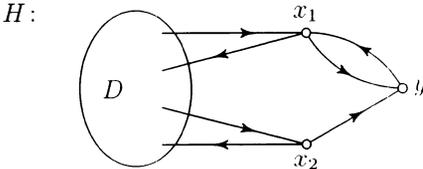


Figure 3

Now we show that the bounds presented in Theorem 3 are sharp.

**Theorem 4.** *If  $D$  is a nontrivial digraph containing a vertex  $v$  such that  $d_D(u, v) \leq 2$  for all vertices  $u$  in  $D$ , then  $ua(D) = 2$ .*

**Proof.** By Theorem 3,  $ua(D) \geq 2$ . Let  $D' = D - v$ . The strong digraph  $H$  shown in Figure 4 is an ultracentral superdigraph for  $D$ . The vertex  $x$  is then adjacent to and from every vertex of  $D'$ . Thus,  $ua(D) \leq 2$ .  $\square$

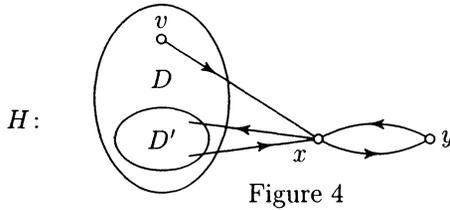


Figure 4

We have already seen that if  $D \cong 2K_1$ , then  $ua(D) = 3$ . We next show the existence of an infinite class of digraphs with ultracentral appendage number 3.

**Theorem 5.** *If  $D$  is a digraph containing no vertex that is reachable from all other vertices of  $D$ , then  $ua(D) = 3$ .*

**Proof.** Assume, to the contrary, that  $ua(D) = 2$ . Let  $H$  be a minimum ultracentral superdigraph for  $D$ , where  $x$  is the central vertex of  $H$  that is not in  $D$  and  $y$  is the noncentral vertex of  $H$ . Let  $w$  be a vertex of  $H$  such that  $d(x, w) = e(x)$ . Since  $x$  must be adjacent to  $y$  and  $e(x) > 1$ , we must have  $w \in V(D)$ . Let  $u$  be a vertex of  $D$  different from  $w$ . If some shortest  $u - w$  path contains  $x$ , then  $d(u, w) \geq 1 + e(x)$ , which gives  $e(u) > e(x)$ , producing a contradiction. Therefore, there exists a  $u - w$  path in  $D$  for every vertex  $u$  of  $D$ , giving the desired result.  $\square$

**Corollary 6.** *If  $D$  is a disconnected digraph, then  $ua(D) = 3$ .*

### 3. THE ASYMMETRIC ULTRACENTRAL APPENDAGE NUMBER OF ASYMMETRIC DIGRAPHS

In this section we consider only asymmetric digraphs. For an asymmetric digraph  $D$ , we define the (*asymmetric*) *ultracentral appendage number*  $ua^*(D)$  of  $D$  as the minimum number of vertices to be added to  $D$  to produce an asymmetric digraph  $H$  with  $UC(H) = D$  and  $C(H) \neq D$ . The (asymmetric) central appendage number  $A^*(D)$  was studied by Chartrand, Johns, and Tian [2], who showed that  $0 \leq A^*(D) \leq 4$  for all digraphs  $D$ .

**Theorem 7.** *For every asymmetric digraph  $D$ ,  $ua^*(D)$  exists and  $3 \leq ua^*(D) \leq 5$ .*

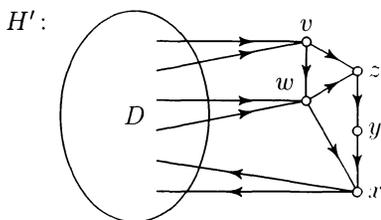


Figure 5

**Proof.** Let  $D$  be an asymmetric digraph. The digraph  $H'$  of Figure 5 is obtained by adding the vertices  $v, w, x, y, z$  and all those arcs so that every vertex of  $D$  is adjacent to both  $v$  and  $w$ , and adjacent from  $x$ . Therefore,  $H'$  is strong and asymmetric with  $UC(H') = D$  and  $C(H') \neq D$ . Thus  $ua^*(D)$  exists and  $ua^*(D) \leq 5$ .

Since every ultracentral superdigraph of  $D$  contains a central vertex that is not in  $D$  and a noncentral vertex,  $ua^*(D) \geq 2$ . Suppose, to the contrary, that  $ua^*(D) = 2$ . Then there is a minimum ultracentral superdigraph  $H$  of  $D$  containing two vertices that are not in  $D$ . Let  $x$  be the central vertex that is not in  $D$  and let  $y$  be the noncentral vertex of  $H$ . Necessarily  $x$  is adjacent to  $y$ , and every vertex of  $D$  is adjacent to  $x$ . Let  $z \in V(H)$  such that  $e(x) = d(x, z)$ .

Since  $e(x) > 1$ , we have that  $z \in V(D)$ . Consequently,  $d(x, z) = d(y, z) + 1$ . Certainly,

$$\max_{w \in V(D)} d(y, w) = d(y, z).$$

Since  $e(y) > e(x)$ , it follows that  $e(y) = d(y, x)$ . Since  $d(y, x) = 2$ , it follows that  $e(y) = 2$ , which implies that  $y$  belongs to  $UC(H)$ , producing a contradiction.  $\square$

Next, we show that the lower bound given in Theorem 7 for  $ua^*(D)$  cannot be improved in general. For example, consider  $D \cong K_1$ , and let  $V(D) = \{u\}$ . The asymmetric digraph  $H'$  in Figure 6 has the property that  $UC(H') = D$  but  $C(H') \neq D$ . Thus  $ua^*(D) = 3$ . However,  $A^*(D) = 0$  in this case.

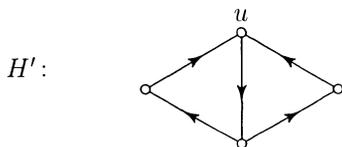


Figure 6.  $ua^*(K_1) = 3$

If  $D$  is an asymmetric disconnected digraph, then we can improve the upper bound presented in Theorem 7.

**Theorem 8.** For every disconnected digraph  $D$ ,  $3 \leq ua^*(D) \leq 4$ .

**Proof.** Assume that  $D$  is an asymmetric disconnected digraph, where  $D_1$  is one component of  $D$  and  $D_2$  is the union of the remaining components. By Theorem 7,  $ua^*(D) \geq 3$ . The digraph  $H$  in Figure 7 is obtained by adding to  $D$  the four vertices  $u, v, x, y$  and the arcs  $(u, v), (u, y), (v, x), (v, y)$ , as well as all those arcs such that  $x$  is adjacent to every vertex of  $D_1, y$  is adjacent to every vertex of  $D_2,$  and  $u$  and  $v$  are adjacent from every vertex of  $D$ . Since  $UC(H) = D$  and  $C(H) \neq D$ , it follows that  $ua^*(D) \leq 4$ .  $\square$

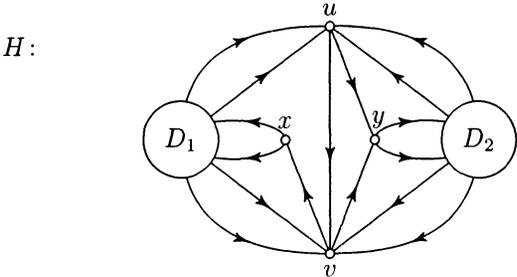


Figure 7

We have seen that there exists an asymmetric digraph  $D$  with  $ua^*(D) = 3$ . We now show that an asymmetric digraph exists with ultracentral appendage number 4.

**Theorem 9.** *There exists an asymmetric digraph  $D$  with  $ua^*(D) = 4$ .*

**Proof.** Let  $D \cong 2K_1$ . By Theorem 8, either  $ua^*(D) = 3$  or  $ua^*(D) = 4$ . Suppose, to the contrary, that  $ua^*(D) = 3$ . Let  $H$  be a minimum ultracentral superdigraph (necessarily of order 5) such that  $UC(H) = D$  and  $C(H) \neq D$ . Let  $V(H) = \{u, v, w, x, y\}$  and suppose that  $UC(H) = \{\{u, v\}\}$ . By Theorem 2, there must be two central vertices of  $H$  that are not in the ultracenter of  $H$ . Suppose that  $w$  and  $x$  are these vertices. We consider two cases.

*Case 1.* Suppose that  $urad H = 2$ . Then  $c(u) = c(v) = 2$ . Also, exactly one of  $w$  and  $x$  must have central distance 1, say  $c(w) = 1$  and so  $c(x) = 0$ . This situation is illustrated in Figure 8.

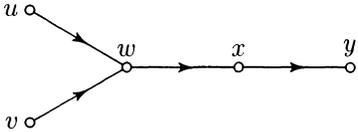


Figure 8. A subdigraph of  $H$

No further arcs from  $u$  or  $v$  can be present in  $H$  since  $c(u) = c(v) = 2$ . Thus,  $d(u, v) \geq 3$  and so  $\text{rad } H \geq 3$ . Since  $e(x) < e(y)$ , at least one of the arcs  $(x, u)$  and  $(x, v)$  must be present in  $H$ , say  $(x, u)$ . Since  $e(x) \geq 3$ , neither  $(x, v)$  nor  $(y, v)$  is present in  $H$ . This, however, implies that  $H$  is not strong, producing a contradiction.

*Case 2.* Suppose that  $\text{urad } H = 1$ . Thus, both  $w$  and  $x$  are adjacent to  $y$ . Also, since  $H$  is strong,  $y$  must be adjacent to at least one of  $u$  and  $v$ , say  $u$ . Furthermore, each of  $u$  and  $v$  is adjacent to at least one vertex of  $C(H)$ . We consider two subcases according to the number of vertices of  $C(H)$  to which  $u$  and  $v$  are adjacent.

*Subcase 2.1.* Suppose that each of  $u$  and  $v$  is adjacent to exactly one vertex of  $C(H)$ . First, suppose that  $u$  and  $v$  are adjacent to the same vertex, say  $w$ . Since  $H$  is strong, every vertex of  $H$  is adjacent from at least one vertex. Consequently,  $x$  is adjacent from  $w$ . Thus far we have the digraph shown in Figure 9.

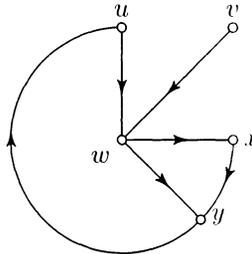


Figure 9. A subdigraph of  $H$

The vertex  $v$  is adjacent from at least one vertex as well. Necessarily, at least one of  $x$  and  $y$  is adjacent to  $v$ . In either case,  $e(w) = 2$ , which implies that  $e(u) = e(v) = 2$ . However, then,  $h$  contains a  $u$ - $v$  path of length 2, which is impossible.

Therefore  $u$  and  $v$  are adjacent to distinct vertices, say  $u$  is adjacent to  $w$ , and  $v$  is adjacent to  $x$ . Now either  $y$  or  $w$  is adjacent to  $v$ . If  $y$  is adjacent to  $v$ , then  $e(y) = 2$ , which is impossible. Thus,  $w$  is adjacent to  $v$ , so  $e(w) = 2$ . Thus,  $e(u) = e(v) = 2$  and  $x$  is adjacent to  $u$  (see Figure 10).

Since  $d(x, v) = 2$ , the arc  $(x, w)$  belongs to  $H$ . At present, however,  $d(u, x) = 3$ , and no further arcs can be added. This contradicts that fact that  $e(u) = 2$ .

*Subcase 2.2.* Suppose that at least one of  $u$  and  $v$  is adjacent to two vertices of  $C(H)$ . In this case,  $y$  is not adjacent to  $v$ , for otherwise  $e(y) = 2$ . This implies that not both  $u$  and  $v$  are adjacent to both  $w$  and  $x$ . Since  $v$  is adjacent from some vertex, it follows that  $u$  is adjacent to  $w$  and  $x$ ; while  $v$  is adjacent to one of  $w$  and  $x$ , and adjacent from the other. Suppose that  $v$  is adjacent to  $w$  (see Figure 11).

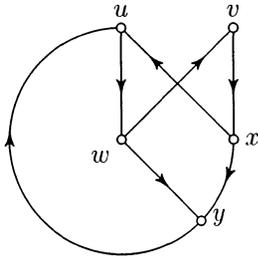


Figure 10. A subdigraph of  $H$

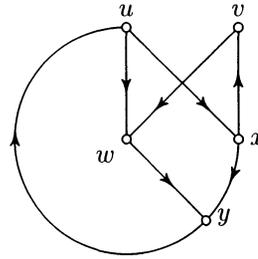


Figure 11. A subdigraph of  $H$

Then  $e(x) = 2$  and  $e(u) = e(v) = 2$ . This, however, implies that  $d(v, u) = 2$ , which is not the case. If  $v$  is adjacent to  $x$ , then  $e(w) = 2$ ; so  $e(u) = e(v) = 2$ . However, then,  $d(v, u) = 2$ , and again this is not the case.  $\square$

Thus,  $ua^*(2K_1) = 4$  while  $ua(2K_1) = 3$ . We next describe a sufficient condition for a disconnected asymmetric digraph to have ultracentral appendage number 3.

**Theorem 10.** *Let  $D \cong D_1 \cup D_2$ , where  $D_1$  and  $D_2$  are strong asymmetric digraphs such that  $\text{diam } D_1 \leq 3$ ,  $\text{diam } D_2 \leq 3$ , and  $D_1 \not\cong K_1$ . Then  $ua^*(D) = 3$ .*

*Proof.* By Theorem 8,  $ua^*(D) \geq 3$ . The digraph  $H$  of Figure 12 obtained by adding the vertices  $x, y$ , and  $z$  and all those arcs such that  $x$  is adjacent from and  $y$  is adjacent to every vertex of  $D_1$ ,  $y$  is adjacent from and  $x$  is adjacent to every vertex of  $D_2$ , and  $z$  is adjacent to a single vertex of  $D_1$ . Then each vertex of  $H$  has eccentricity 3, except  $z$ , in which case  $e(z) = 4$ . Thus,  $H$  has the desired properties and  $ua^*(D) \leq 3$ . So  $ua^*(D) = 3$ .  $\square$

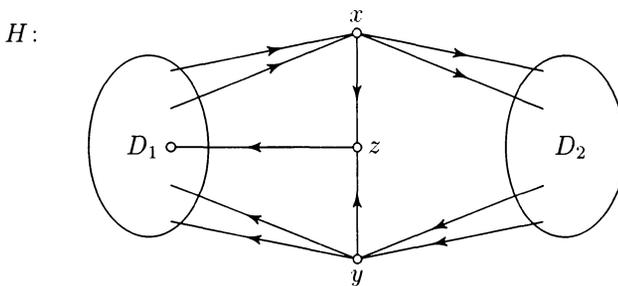


Figure 12

We now turn our attention to connected asymmetric digraphs.

**Theorem 11.** *If  $D$  is a strong asymmetric digraph with  $\text{diam } D = 2$ , then  $ua^*(D) = 3$ .*

Proof. We construct the strong digraph  $H$  of Figure 13 by adding three vertices  $x, y$  and  $z$  and all those arcs such that  $y$  and  $z$  are adjacent to every vertex of  $D$ , and  $x$  is adjacent from every vertex of  $D$ . Since  $UC(H) = D$  and  $C(H) = \langle V(D) \cup \{x, z\} \rangle$ , it follows that  $ua^*(D) = 3$ .  $\square$

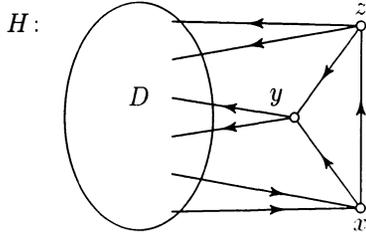


Figure 13

We now show that there is a connected asymmetric digraph having ultracentral appendage number 4.

**Theorem 12.** *There exists a connected asymmetric digraph  $D$  with  $ua^*(D) = 4$ .*

Proof. Let  $D$  be the digraph shown in Figure 14. We show that  $ua^*(D) = 4$ . We now construct the asymmetric digraph  $F$  of Figure 14 by adding the vertices  $t, x, y,$  and  $z$  to  $D$  together with the indicated arcs. Then the central vertices of  $F$  are  $u, v, w, x,$  and  $y$ , and the ultracentral vertices are  $u, v,$  and  $w$ . Thus  $UC(F) = D$ ; so  $ua^*(D) \leq 4$ . Consequently, it remains only to show that  $ua^*(D) \neq 3$ .

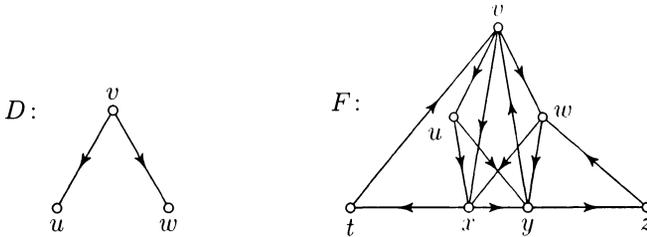


Figure 14

Assume, to the contrary, that  $ua^*(D) = 3$ . Let  $H$  be a minimum ultracentral superdigraph for  $D$  with  $V(H) = \{u, v, w, x, y, z\}$ . We consider three cases.

*Case 1.* Assume that there are exactly two vertices not in the center of  $H$ , say  $y$  and  $z$ . Thus, all vertices of  $D$  are adjacent to  $x$  and, without loss of generality,  $(x, y) \in E(H)$  (see Figure 15). Since  $u$  is in  $UC(H)$  and  $y$  and  $z$  are not central

vertices, neither  $(u, y)$  nor  $(u, z)$  is present in  $H$ . Thus,  $d_H(u, w) > 2$  and  $\text{rad } H > 2$ . Since  $v$  is adjacent to  $u, w$ , and  $x$  and  $e(v) > 2$ , it follows that  $(x, z) \notin E(H)$ . Since  $H$  is strong,  $(y, z) \in E(H)$  and at least one of  $(y, v)$  and  $(z, v)$  is an arc of  $H$ . If  $(y, v) \in E(H)$ , then  $e(y) = 2$ , producing a contradiction; while if  $(z, v) \in E(H)$ , then  $e(z) = 3$  and  $z$  is a central vertex of  $H$ , also producing a contradiction.

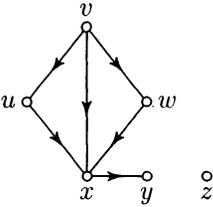


Figure 15

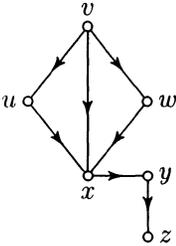


Figure 16

*Case 2.* Assume that there is exactly one vertex, say  $z$ , not in the center of  $H$  and  $\text{urad } H = 2$ . Then there is a vertex, say  $y$ , such that  $c(y) = 0$  and a vertex, say  $x$ , with  $c(x) = 1$ . Therefore, all vertices of  $D$  are adjacent to  $x$  and  $(x, y)$  and  $(y, z)$  are present in  $H$  (see Figure 16), while  $(u, y)$ ,  $(u, z)$ , and  $(x, z)$  cannot be present in  $H$ . Thus,  $\text{rad } H > 2$  because  $d(u, w) > 2$ . Since  $H$  is strong, at least one of  $(y, v)$  and  $(z, v)$  is in  $H$ . If  $(y, v) \in E(H)$ , then  $e(y) = 2$ , producing a contradiction. If  $(z, v) \in E(H)$ , then  $e(z) = 3$  and  $z$  is a central vertex of  $H$ , again producing a contradiction.

*Case 3.* Assume that  $\text{urad } H = 1$  and that there is exactly one vertex, say  $z$ , not in the center of  $H$ . Consequently,  $(x, z)$  and  $(y, z)$  are in  $H$ . Suppose that  $\text{rad } H = 2$ . Then  $d(u, w) = 2$ . Thus, without loss of generality, the arcs  $(u, x)$  and  $(x, w)$  are present in  $H$ . Similarly,  $(w, y)$  and  $(y, u)$  are present in  $H$ , giving  $d(w, u) = 2$ . Also, since  $d(u, v) = 2$ , it follows that  $(x, v) \in E(H)$ . Similarly,  $(y, v) \in E(H)$  since  $d(w, v) = 2$ . This produces the subdigraph in Figure 17. Now there are no arcs that can be added to allow  $d(v, z)$  to be less than 3, producing a contradiction. Thus,  $\text{rad } H \geq 3$ . Since each of  $u, v$ , and  $w$  must be adjacent to one of  $x$  and  $y$ , it follows that  $x$  or  $y$ , say  $x$ , must be adjacent from at least two of  $u, v$ , and  $w$ . We consider three subcases.

*Subcase 3.1.* Assume that all three vertices  $u, v$ , and  $w$  are adjacent to  $x$ . Since  $\text{rad } H \geq 3$ , it follows that  $e(v) \geq 3$ . Thus,  $d(v, y) = 3$  (see Figure 18). However, this is impossible.

*Subcase 3.2.* Assume that only  $u$  and  $v$  are adjacent to  $x$ . Since  $H$  is strong,  $w$  is adjacent to  $y$ . Thus,  $e(v) = 2$ , producing a contradiction.

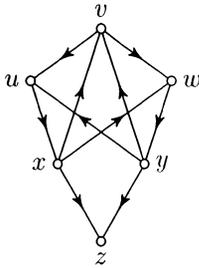


Figure 17

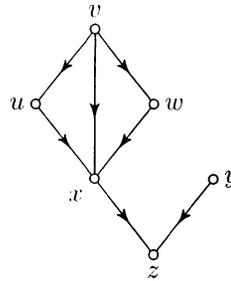


Figure 18

*Subcase 3.3.* Assume that only  $u$  and  $w$  are adjacent to  $x$ . Since  $H$  is strong  $(v, y) \in E(H)$ . Thus,  $e(v) = 2$ , again producing a contradiction.  $\square$

We close with one lingering question: Does there exist an asymmetric digraph  $D$  with  $ua^*(D) = 5$ ? If such a digraph  $D$  exists, it must surely be connected. Indeed, if  $D$  is strong, then  $\text{diam } D \geq 3$ .

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