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Backbone colouring: tree backbones with small diameter in planar graphs

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Abstract: Given a graph G and a spanning subgraph T of G , a *backbone k -colouring* for (G, T) is a mapping $c : V(G) \rightarrow \{1, \dots, k\}$ such that $|c(u) - c(v)| \geq 2$ for every edge $uv \in E(T)$ and $|c(u) - c(v)| \geq 1$ for every edge $uv \in E(G) \setminus E(T)$. The *backbone chromatic number* $BBC(G, T)$ is the smallest integer k such that there exists a backbone k -colouring of (G, T) . In 2007, Broersma et al. [2] conjectured that $BBC(G, T) \leq 6$ for every planar graph G and every spanning tree T of G . In this paper, we prove this conjecture when T has diameter at most four.

Key-words: backbone colouring, planar graph, spanning tree

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Coloration dorsale : arbres dorsaux de petit diamètre dans les graphes planaires

Résumé : Pour un graphe G et un sous-graphe T de G , une k -coloration dorsale de (G, T) est une application $c : V(G) \rightarrow \{1, \dots, k\}$ telle que $|c(u) - c(v)| \geq 2$ pour toute arête $uv \in E(T)$ et $|c(u) - c(v)| \geq 1$ pour toute arête $uv \in E(G) \setminus E(T)$. Le nombre chromatique dorsal $BBC(G, T)$ est le plus petit entier k tel qu'il existe une k -coloration dorsale de (G, T) . En 2007, Broersma et al. [2] ont conjecturé que $BBC(G, T) \leq 6$ pour tout graphe planaire G et tout arbre couvrant T de G . Dans ce rapport, nous montrons cette conjecture lorsque T est de diamètre au plus 4.

Mots-clés : coloration dorsale, graphe planaire, arbre couvrant

1 Introduction

All the graphs considered in this paper are simple. Let $G = (V, E)$ be a graph, and let $H = (V, E(H))$ be a spanning subgraph of G . A k -colouring of G is a mapping $f : V \rightarrow \{1, 2, \dots, k\}$. Let f be a k -colouring of G . It is a *proper colouring* if $|f(u) - f(v)| \geq 1$. It is a *backbone colouring* for (G, H) if f is a proper colouring of G and $|f(u) - f(v)| \geq 2$ for all edges $uv \in E(H)$. The *chromatic number* $\chi(G)$ is the smallest integer k for which there exists a proper k -colouring of G . The *backbone colouring number* $BBC(G, H)$ is the smallest integer l for which there exists a backbone k -colouring of (G, H) .

If f is a proper k -colouring of G , then g defined by $g(v) = 2f(v) - 1$ is a backbone $(2k - 1)$ -colouring of (G, H) for any spanning subgraph H of G . Hence, $BBC(G, H) \leq 2\chi(G) - 1$. In [1, 2], Broersma et al. showed that for any integer k there is a graph G with a spanning tree T such that $BBC(G, T) = 2k - 1$.

The above inequality and the Four Colour Theorem implies that for any planar graph G and spanning subgraph H then $BBC(G, H) \leq 7$. However Broersma et al. [2] conjectured that this is not best possible if T is a tree.

Conjecture 1. *If G is a planar graph and T a spanning tree of G , then $BBC(G, T) \leq 6$.*

If true this conjecture would be best possible. Broersma et al. [2] gave an example of a graph G^* with a spanning tree T^* such that $BBC(G, T) = 6$. See Figure 1.

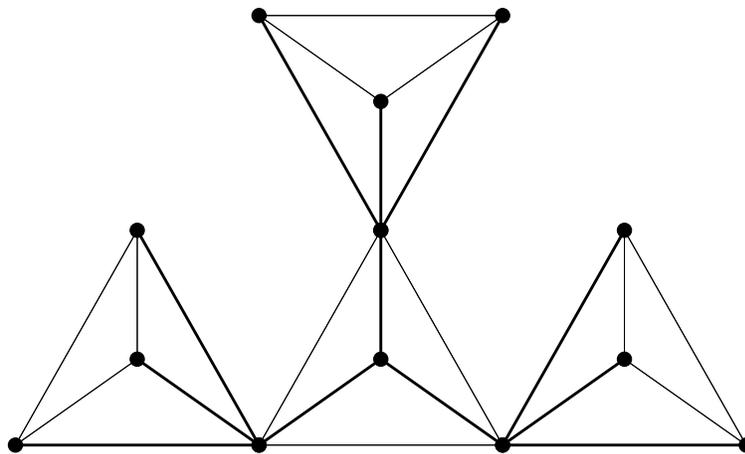


Figure 1: A planar graph G^* with a spanning tree T^* (bold edges) such that $BBC(G^*, T^*) = 6$.

Bu and Zhang [5] proved that, if G is a connected non-bipartite C_4 -free planar graph, then there exists a spanning tree T of G such that $BBC(G, T) = 4$. On the other hand, Bu and Li [4] proved that, if G is a connected planar graph that is C_6 -free or C_7 -free and without adjacent triangles, then there exists a spanning tree T of G such that $BBC(G, T) \leq 4$. In [6], Wang et al. investigated backbone colouring for special graph classes such as Halin graphs, complete graphs, wheels, graphs with small maximum average degree and graphs with maximum degree 3.

The *diameter* of a graph is the maximum distance between two vertices in this graph. If T has diameter 2, then it is a *star*, that is a tree in which a vertex v , called the *center*, is adjacent to every other. If G has a spanning star T , with center v , then $G - v$ is an outerplanar graph which can be properly 3-coloured with $\{1, 2, 3\}$. Thus assigning the colour 5 to v , we obtain a backbone 5-colouring of (G, T) . This result may be extended if G has a spanning tree with diameter at most 3.

Proposition 2. *Let G be a planar graph with a spanning tree T . If T has diameter at most three, then $BBC(G, T) \leq 5$.*

Proof. Free to add some edges, we may assume that G is triangulated. If T has diameter at most 3, then there exists two adjacent vertices x and y such that all edges of T are incident to x or y . Let z_1, \dots, z_p be the common neighbours of x and y , ordered in clockwise order around x (and so in anti-clockwise order around y). We consider an embedding of G with outer face xyz_1 .

For $1 \leq i \leq p-1$, let G_i be the graph induced by the vertices in the cycle $xz_i z_{i+1} y$ and inside, and let $H_i = G_i \setminus \{x, y\}$. Since G is triangulated, all the vertices are in at least one G_i . Furthermore, every H_i is outerplanar, and every vertex in $V(H_i) \setminus \{z_i, z_{i+1}\}$ is adjacent to exactly one of x, y .

We shall now define a backbone 5-colouring c of (G, T) .

First, we set $c(x) = 1$, $c(y) = 5$ and $c(z_1) = 3$. Next, we extend this colouring to the H_i one after another. Since H_i is outerplanar, it is 3-colourable. Let c_i be a proper 3-colouring of H_i in $\{2, 3, 4\}$ such that $c_i(z_i) = c(z_i)$ and $c_i(z_{i+1}) \in \{3, 4\}$ if $z_{i+1}x \in E(T)$ and $c_i(z_{i+1}) \in \{2, 3\}$ if $z_{i+1}y \in E(T)$. We set $c(z_{i+1}) = c_i(z_{i+1})$, and for every vertex v of $V(H_i) \setminus \{z_i, z_{i+1}\}$, we define

- $c(v) = c_i(v)$, if $c_i(v) = 3$, or $c_i(v) = 2$ and $vy \in E(T)$, or $c_i(v) = 4$ and $vx \in E(T)$;
- $c(v) = 5$, if $c_i(v) = 2$ and $vx \in E(T)$;
- $c(v) = 1$, if $c_i(v) = 4$ and $vy \in E(T)$.

It is easy to check that c is a backbone 5-colouring of (G, T) . □

Remark 3. Proposition 2 is best possible, because when G is a complete graph on four vertices and T a spanning star of G , $BBC(G, T) = 5$.

In this paper, we settle Conjecture 1 for tree with diameter at most 4.

Theorem 4. *Let G be a planar graph with a spanning tree T . If T has diameter at most 4, then $BBC(G, T) \leq 6$.*

Note that this result is best possible as the tree T^* in the above example has diameter 4.

In the next section, we outline the proof of Theorem 4 whose details are postponed to Section 3.

2 The proof

We denote by Z_6 the set $\{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6\}$ and, for any integer $a \in Z_6$, we denote by $[a]$ the set $\{a-1, a, a+1\} \cap Z_6$.

Let $G = (V, E)$ be a planar graph and T a spanning tree of G with diameter at most 4. T has a vertex r such that every vertex is at distance two from it in T . We call such a vertex the *root* of T . A vertex of $V \setminus \{r\}$, is a *twig* if it is adjacent to r in T and a *leaf* otherwise.

We shall prove a slightly stronger result than the one of Theorem 4.

Theorem 5. *(G, T) admits a backbone colouring in Z_6 such that the root is assigned 1.*

Proof. In the remaining, by (G, T) -colouring, one should understand a backbone 6-colouring of (G, T) such that r is assigned 1.

We will prove it by considering a minimum counterexample (G, T) with respect to its number of vertices. An edge of $E \setminus E(T)$ is said to be *thin*. Free to add some more thin edges, we may assume that G is triangulated.

If T has a unique twig, then it has diameter 2, and we have the result by the proof of Proposition 2. (The root corresponds to x_1 and the twig to x_2 .) Hence T has at least two twigs. We consider an embedding of G in the plane such that the outer face contains r and a minimum number of thin edges.

The *interior* (resp. *exterior*) of a cycle C , denoted C^{int} (resp. C^{ext}) is the subgraph of G induced by C and the vertices inside C (resp. outside C).

Let e be a thin edge. The graph $T \cup \{e\}$ has a unique cycle C_e (which contains e). The edge e is *overstepping* if there is a vertex inside C_e . In other words, $V(C_e^{int}) \neq V(C_e)$. Let O be the set of overstepping edges. There is a partial order \leq on O defined as follows: $e_1 \leq e_2$ if $e_1 = e_2$ or e_1 is inside C_{e_2} . Observe that the Hasse diagram of such a partial order is a set of at most two disjoint trees, each one rooted at an overstepping thin edge in the outer face. Indeed, it is easy to see that every overstepping edge e that is not maximal has a unique *successor* for \leq (i.e. overstepping edge f such that if $e \leq e' \leq f$ then $e' \in \{e, f\}$). This successor is one of the two edges of the face containing e contained in C_e^{ext} . Furthermore, every edge e has at most two *predecessors* for \leq : the two other edges of the face containing e contained in C_e^{int} .

The idea of the proof is to find a “good” overstepping edge e , such that a backbone 6-colouring of the graph induced by $V(C_e^{ext})$ (which exists by minimality of (G, T)) can be extended to $V(C_e^{int})$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring. This will be a contradiction.

Natural candidates for such a good edge are overstepping edges e which are *minimal* for \leq (i.e. such that $e' \leq e$ implies $e' = e$) or their predecessors. However we will need to consider a more precise partial ordering. If there are two overstepping edges $e_3 = rv_1$ and $e_4 = v_1v_2$ such that v_1 and v_2 are leaves and $e_4 \not\leq e_3$, (i.e. e_4 is not inside e_3), then we would like to have e_3 smaller than e_4 in the ordering. This leads to the following partial order \preceq : $e_1 \preceq e_2$ if $e_1 \leq e_2$ or there exist two edges $e_3 = rv_1$ and $e_4 = v_1v_2$ such that v_1 and v_2 are leaves, $e_4 \not\leq e_3$, $e_1 \leq e_3$ and $e_4 \leq e_2$.

In the remainder of the paper, we will only consider the partial order \preceq . Hence the terms minimal, predecessor, successor, and so on refer to \preceq .

We first show some properties of minimal overstepping edges and deduce in Lemma 13 that if e is a minimal overstepping edge, then C_e^{int} is isomorphic to one of the graphs A_1 , A_2 and A_3 , depicted in Figure 2. In addition, if

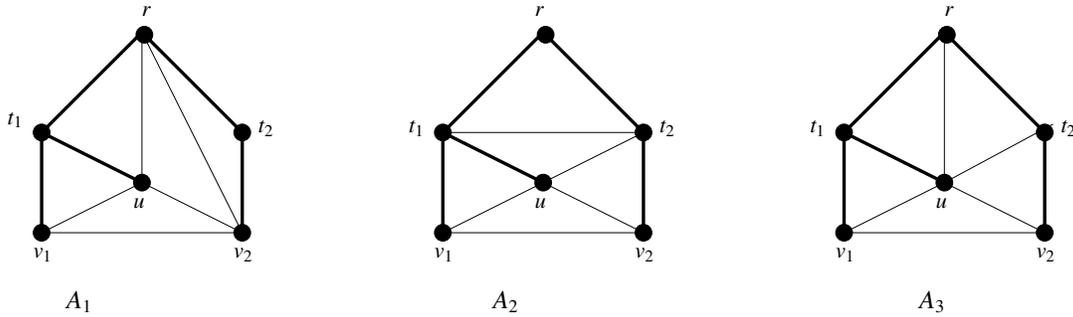


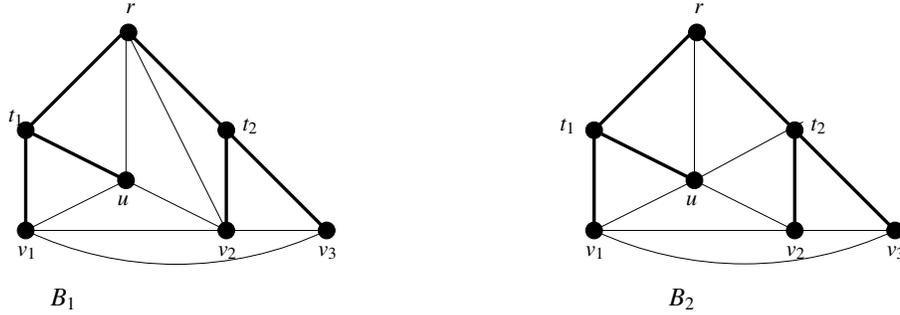
Figure 2: Configurations A_1 , A_2 and A_3

$C_e^{int} = A_1$, then $rv_1 \in E(G)$.

As any ordering, \preceq may be decomposed into levels. The first level L_1 the *maximal* edges for \preceq (i.e. such that $e \preceq e'$ implies $e' = e$). This level contains at most two edges, depending on the number of thin overstepping edges in the outer face. Then, for every $j \geq 1$, the level L_{j+1} is the set of predecessors of elements of L_j . The *depth* of \preceq , denoted D , is the maximum j such that L_j is not empty. An overstepping edge of L_D is said to be *ultimate*. An edge of L_{D-1} having at least one (ultimate) predecessor is said to be *penultimate*. An edge of L_{D-2} having at least one penultimate predecessor is said to be *antepenultimate*.

If f is a penultimate edge, then it has one or two predecessors. Furthermore each of this predecessors e is ultimate and so minimal. Thus C_e^{int} is isomorphic to A_1 , A_2 or A_3 . Analyzing all possible cases, we show (Corollary 16) that, if f is a penultimate edge, then C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 or B_2 , and that moreover $rv_1 \in E(G)$ and $rv_3 \notin E(G)$.

Now if g is an antepenultimate edge, then it has one or two predecessors. Furthermore at least one of its predecessors f is penultimate (and so C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 or B_2), and the other predecessor f' (if it exists) is

Figure 3: Configurations B_1 and B_2

either penultimate (so $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to B_1 or B_2) or ultimate (so $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_1, A_2 or A_3). Analyzing all the possible cases again, we show that there are no antepenultimate edges (Corollary 23).

Now, suppose that G contains at least one overstepping edge. If e is a minimal edge, then C_e^{int} is isomorphic to some configuration A_i . In any of these cases, there is at least one face containing the root and only one thin edge. Therefore, the partial order considered contains a unique maximal overstepping edge e_0 . Furthermore, since e_0 is not antepenultimate, $C_{e_0}^{int}$ must be isomorphic to one of the A_i or B_j configurations. We get a contradiction as the outer face contains r and the endpoints of e_0 and e_0 is the unique thin edge in this configuration and T would not be a tree.

We proved that G contains no overstepping edge. If the outer face of G contains only one thin edge, then G contains three vertices and the diameter of G is 2. If the outer face contains two thin edges e_1 and e_2 , then one thin edge (say e_1) is adjacent to r , since r is on the outer face, and the other (say e_2) is adjacent to a twig t while both are incident to a vertex v in the outer face. Now, both r and v have a twig v' as a common neighbour through edges of T as T is a spanning tree. Since neither e_1 nor e_2 are overstepping, then $V(G) = \{r, t, v, v'\}$ and G has diameter 3. Both of these cases are solved using Proposition 2 and both can give colour 1 to the root, a contradiction. \square

3 The details

Lemma 6. *Let x be a vertex of G . If $d_T(x) = 1$, then $d_G(x) \geq 4$.*

Proof. Suppose for a contradiction that $d_T(x) = 1$ and $d_G(x) \leq 3$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G-x, T-x)$ -colouring c . At x , at most 3 colours are forbidden by its neighbour in T and at most 2 colours are forbidden by its two other neighbours. So one colour of Z_6 is still available to colour the vertex x . Hence one can extend c to (G, T) , a contradiction. \square

3.1 Minimal overstepping edges

Lemma 7. *Let $e = uv$ be a minimal overstepping edge. Then there are at most two vertices inside C_e . Moreover if there are two, then they are adjacent in T and one of them is a twig and the other is a leaf.*

Proof. Since G is triangulated, uv is incident to two triangular faces, one of which, say F , is included in C_e^{int} . Let w be the third vertex incident to F . Let P be the path joining u to v in T and Q be the path joining w to P in T . Since T has diameter 4 and r is on the outer face, then Q has length at most 2.

Then C_e^{int} is divided into at most three regions: F , C_{uw}^{int} and C_{vw}^{int} (the region C_{uw}^{int} or C_{vw}^{int} may not exist if $uw \in E(T)$ or $vw \in E(T)$ respectively). As F is a face, its interior is empty, and there are no vertices inside C_{uw}^{int}

and C_{vw}^{int} because uw and vw are not overstepping since e is minimal. Hence the only possible vertices inside C_e are those of Q . Therefore there are at most two vertices inside C_e as Q has length at most 2.

Furthermore, if there are two vertices inside C_e , they must be adjacent as they are in Q . In addition, since r is on the outer face, none of these vertices is the root and thus one of them is a twig and the other is a leaf. \square

Lemma 8. *No minimal overstepping edge joins two leaves adjacent to a same twig.*

Proof. Suppose for a contradiction that an edge $e = uv$ joins two leaves adjacent to a same twig t . Then $C_e = tuvt$. The root r is not in C_e^{int} as it is on the outer face. So by Lemma 7 and because G is triangulated, C_e^{int} is a K_4 and there is a unique vertex x inside C_e . Hence, x contradicts Lemma 6. \square

Lemma 9. *No minimal overstepping edge joins two twigs.*

Proof. Suppose for a contradiction that two twigs s and t are joined by a minimal edge e . Then $C_e = rstr$. If there is a unique vertex u inside C_e^{int} , then u contradicts Lemma 6. So by Lemma 7, we may assume that the interior of C_e contains two adjacent vertices u_1 and u_2 and that u_1 is a twig and u_2 a leaf. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c . Set $c(u_2) = 2$ and choose $c(u_1)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, 3, c(s), c(t)\}$. This yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. \square

Lemma 10. *No minimal overstepping edge joins the root and a leaf.*

Proof. Suppose for a contradiction that a minimal edge e joins the root r and a leaf v . Let t be the twig adjacent to v .

Suppose there is a unique vertex u inside C_e . Then this vertex has only 3 neighbours, and $d_T(u) = 1$. This contradicts Lemma 6. Hence by Lemma 7, we may assume that there are two adjacent vertices u_1 and u_2 inside C_e . Without loss of generality, u_2 is a leaf and u_1 is a twig. By Lemma 6, $d_G(u_2) \geq 4$, so $N_G(u_2) = \{u_1, r, v, t\}$. By minimality of G , there is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c . Let $c(u_2)$ be a colour in $\{2, 3\} \setminus \{c(v), c(t)\}$. (Such a colour exists because $|c(v) - c(t)| \geq 2$.) Now by planarity, u_1 has at most one neighbour x in $\{v, t\}$ as ru_2 is an edge. The set of forbidden colours in u_1 is $I = [1] \cup [c(u_2)] \cup \{c(x)\}$ which has cardinality at most 5 by the choice of $c(u_2)$. Hence assigning to u_1 a colour $c(u_1)$ in $Z_6 \setminus I$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. \square

Lemma 11. *No minimal overstepping edge joins a leaf and a twig.*

Proof. Suppose for a contradiction that a minimal overstepping edge $e = sv$ joins a twig s and a leaf v . Then $C_e = svtrs$. By Lemma 7 there are at most two vertices inside C_e .

Suppose that there is a unique vertex u inside C_e . As $d_T(u) = 1$, by Lemma 6, $d_G(u) \geq 4$. So $N_G(u) = \{r, s, t, v\}$. Note that rv or st is not an edge, by planarity. Then, removing u and contracting rv or st , we find by the minimality of G a $(G - u, T - u)$ -coloring c such that $c(v) = 1$ or $c(s) = c(t)$. Since the set of forbidden colours for u has at most 5 colours, one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Hence by Lemma 7, inside C_e there are a twig u_1 and leaf u_2 which are adjacent in T . As $d_T(u_2) = 1$, $d_G(u_2) \geq 4$ by Lemma 6.

- Suppose first that r is not adjacent to u_2 . By Lemma 6, $d_G(u_2) \geq 4$. So $N_G(u_2) = \{u_1, s, t, v\}$.

Hence u_1 is not adjacent to v by planarity. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c . Assign to u_2 a colour $c(u_2)$ in $\{1, 2\} \setminus \{c(v)\}$. Observe that it is valid since s and t are not coloured in $\{1, 2\}$. Then the set of forbidden colours in u_1 is included in $\{1, 2, 3, c(s), c(t)\}$ and so has cardinality at most 5. Hence one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring a contradiction.

- Suppose now that r is adjacent to u_2 .

By planarity, u_1 is adjacent to at most one vertex w in $\{s, t\}$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c .

If $c(v) \neq 2$, then set $c(u_2) = 2$. This is valid since s and t are not coloured 2. Then the set of forbidden colours in u_1 is included in $\{1, 2, 3, c(v), c(w)\}$ and so has cardinality at most 5. Hence one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring a contradiction. Hence we may assume that $c(v) = 2$.

If no neighbour of u_2 is coloured 6, then set $c(u_2) = 6$. The set of forbidden colours in u_1 is then $\{1, 2, 5, 6, c(w)\}$ and so one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring a contradiction. Hence we may assume that a neighbour y of u_2 is coloured 6.

If no neighbour of u_2 is coloured 3, then set $c(u_2) = 3$. The set of forbidden colours in u_1 is then $\{1, 2, 3, 4, c(w)\}$ and so one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring a contradiction. Hence we may assume that a neighbour y of u_2 is coloured 3. But this neighbour cannot be t since $c(v) = 2$. Thus $c(s) = 3$ and $c(t) = 6$.

If $w = s$, that is if u_1 is not adjacent to t , then setting $c(u_1) = 6$ and $c(u_2) = 4$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

If $w = t$, then setting $c(u_1) = 3$ and $c(u_2) = 5$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

□

Lemma 12. *If e is a minimal overstepping edge joining two leaves, then there is one vertex inside C_e .*

Proof. Let $e = v_1v_2$ and for $i = 1, 2$, let t_i be the twig adjacent to v_i . By Lemma 8, $t_1 \neq t_2$. Since e is minimal and G is triangulated, $u_2v_1, u_2v_1 \in E(G)$.

Suppose for a contradiction that more than one vertex is inside C_e . Then, by Lemma 7, inside C_e , there are a twig u_1 and a leaf u_2 which are adjacent in T . Moreover, by Lemma 6, $d_G(u_2) \geq 4$ and so $d_G(u_1) \leq 5$.

Let us first suppose that ru_2 is not an edge. By symmetry, we may assume that u_1v_1 is not an edge. Set $G' = (G - \{u_1, u_2\}) \cup \{rv_1, rv_2\}$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G', T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring, which is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_1) \neq 1$ and $c(v_2) \neq 1$. Then setting $c(u_2) = 1$ and colouring u_1 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t_1), c(t_2), c(v_2)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence we may assume that $ru_2 \in E(G)$. Then, since e is minimal, u_1v_1 is not an edge. By symmetry, we may assume that ru_2 is inside the cycle $rt_1v_1u_2u_1r$. Thus $N(u_1) \subset \{r, t_2, v_2, u_2\}$.

Assume now that rv_1 is not an edge. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ by identifying r and v_1 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_1) = c(r) = 1$. If $c(v_2) \neq 2$, then setting $c(u_2) = 2$ and colouring u_1 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, 3, c(t_2), c(v_2)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. If $c(v_2) = 2$, then $c(t_2) \geq 4$. If $c(t_1) \neq 3$, then colour u_2 with 3 and u_1 with some colour in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_2)\}$; otherwise, colour u_1 with 3 and u_2 with a colour in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_2)\}$. In both cases, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence we may assume that $rv_1 \in E(G)$.

Assume that rv_2 is not an edge. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ by identifying r and v_2 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_2) = c(r) = 1$. If there is a colour $\alpha \in \{2, 3, 6\}$ which does not appear on the neighbourhood of u_2 , then setting $c(u_2) = \alpha$ and colouring u_1 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, 2, c(t_2)\} \cup [\alpha])$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So all the colours of $\{2, 3, 6\}$ appear on the neighbourhood of u_2 . Necessarily, in this case, u_2 is adjacent to v_1, t_1 and t_2 and $c(v_1) = 2, c(t_1) = 6$ and $c(t_2) = 3$. Then setting $c(u_2) = 4$ and $c(u_1) = 6$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence we may assume that $rv_2 \in E(G)$.

We now distinguish several cases depending on the position of rv_1 and rv_2 regarding C_e .

1. Assume first that rv_1 and rv_2 are in C_e^{ext} . Then t_1t_2 is not an edge by planarity.

Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ by identifying t_1 and t_2 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(t_1) = c(t_2) = \alpha$. If $2 \notin \{c(v_1), c(v_2)\}$, then setting $c(u_2) = 2$ and colouring u_1 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, 3, \alpha, c(v_2)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $2 \in \{c(v_1), c(v_2)\}$, so $\alpha \geq 4$.

If $\{c(v_1), c(v_2)\} \neq \{2, 3\}$, then setting $c(u_2) = 3$ and colouring u_1 with a colour in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{\alpha, c(v_2)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $\{c(v_1), c(v_2)\} = \{2, 3\}$, so $\alpha \geq 5$.

If $c(v_2) \neq 3$ or $u_1v_2 \notin E(G)$, then setting $c(u_1) = 3$ and colouring u_2 with a colour in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{\alpha\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $c(v_2) = 3$ and $u_1v_2 \in E(G)$. By planarity, this implies that u_2t_2 is not an edge.

Observe that at least one of the two edges rv_1 and rv_2 is not overstepping otherwise one of them would be smaller than e in the order \preceq .

If rv_1 is not overstepping, then the interior of rt_1v_1 is empty. Hence $N_G(t_1) = \{r, v_1, u_2\}$. Setting $c(u_1) = 4$, $c(u_2) = 6$ and recolouring t_1 with 5, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

If rv_2 is not overstepping, then the interior of rt_2v_2 is empty. Hence $N_G(t_2) = \{r, u_1, v_2\}$. Setting $c(u_1) = 6$, $c(u_2) = 4$ and recolouring t_2 with 5, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

2. Assume that rv_1 and rv_2 are in C_e^{int} . Then $N_G(u_1) = \{r, u_2, v_2\}$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c . Colour u_2 with a colour $c(u_2)$ in $\{2, 3, 6\} \setminus \{c(v_1), c(v_2)\}$. Then the set of forbidden colours in u_1 is $\{1, 2, c(v_2)\} \cup [c(u_2)]$ which has cardinality at most 5 because $\{1, 2\} \cup [c(u_2)]$ has cardinality at most 4. Hence one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
3. Assume that rv_1 is in C_e^{int} and rv_2 is in C_e^{ext} .

Assume that $d_G(u_2) = 5$, so $N_G(u_2) = \{r, u_1, v_1, v_2, t_2\}$ and $N_G(u_1) = \{r, t_2, u_2\}$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c . If one can colour u_2 with a colour in $\{2, 3, 6\}$, then $\{1, 2\} \cup [c(u_2)]$ has cardinality at most 4 and so at most 5 colours are forbidden for u_1 . Hence one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So we may assume $\{c(t_2), c(v_1), c(v_2)\} = \{2, 3, 6\}$. If $c(t_2) = 6$, then setting $c(u_1) = 3$ and $c(u_2) = 5$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. If $c(t_2) \neq 6$, then setting $c(u_1) = 6$ and $c(u_2) = 4$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Henceforth we may assume that $d_G(u_2) = 4$, so $N_G(u_2) = \{r, u_1, v_1, v_2\}$ and $N_G(u_1) = \{r, t_2, v_2, u_2\}$.

If $\{c(v_1), c(v_2)\} \neq \{2, 3\}$, then one can colour u_2 with a colour in $\{2, 3\}$ and u_1 with a colour in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_2), c(v_2)\}$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

If $\{c(v_1), c(v_2)\} = \{2, 3\}$, then colouring u_1 with a colour $c(u_1)$ in $\{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_2)\}$ and u_2 with the colour in $\{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(u_1)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

4. Assume rv_2 is in C_e^{int} and rv_1 is in C_e^{ext} . Then $N_G(u_1) = \{r, u_2, v_2\}$ and $N_G(u_2) = \{r, u_1, t_1, v_1, v_2\}$. By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a $(G - \{u_1, u_2\}, T - \{u_1, u_2\})$ -colouring c .

If $c(v_2) = 2$, then colouring u_2 with a colour $c(u_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t_1), c(v_1)\}$ and u_1 with a colour in $\{3, 4, 5, 6\} \setminus [c(u_2)]$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So we may assume that $c(v_2) \neq 2$.

If one can colour u_2 with a colour in $\{2, 3, 6\}$, then $\{1, 2\} \cup [c(u_2)]$ has cardinality at most 4 and so at most 5 colours are forbidden in u_1 . Hence one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

So we may assume $\{c(t_1), c(v_1), c(v_2)\} = \{2, 3, 6\}$. Necessarily, $c(v_1) = 2$, $c(v_2) = 3$ and $c(t_1) = 6$. Setting $c(u_1) = 6$ and $c(u_2) = 4$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

□

Lemma 13. *If e is a minimal overstepping edge, then C_e^{int} is one of the graphs depicted in Figure 2. In addition, if $C_e^{int} = A_1$, then $rv_1 \in E(G)$.*

Proof. Let e be a minimal edge. According to the previous lemmas, it has to join two leaves v_1 and v_2 and there is a unique vertex u inside C_e . For $i = 1, 2$, let t_i be the twig adjacent to v_i . By Lemma 8, $t_1 \neq t_2$.

- Assume first that u is a twig.

If $d_G(u) \leq 4$, then consider a $(G - u, T - u)$ -colouring c , which exists by minimality of (G, T) . In u , there are at most 5 colours forbidden as r is coloured 1, and thus forbids only two colours. Hence, one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

So we may assume that $d_G(u) \geq 5$, and thus $N_G(u) = \{r, t_1, t_2, v_1, v_2\}$.

If rv_1 is not an edge, then let (G', T') be the pair obtained from $(G - u, T - u)$ by identifying r and v_1 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring, which is a $(G - u, T - u)$ -colouring such that $c(v_1) = c(r) = 1$. Then the set of forbidden colours in u is included in $\{1, 2, c(t_1), c(t_2), c(v_2)\}$ and so has cardinality at most 5. Hence one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Hence we may assume that rv_1 is an edge. This edge must be in C_e^{ext} by planarity of G . Thus $t_1 t_2$ is not an edge of G . Let (G', T') be the pair obtained from $(G - u, T - u)$ by identifying t_1 and t_2 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring c which is a $(G - u, T - u)$ -colouring such that $c(t_1) = c(t_2)$. Then the set of forbidden colours in u is included in $\{1, 2, c(t_1), c(v_1), c(v_2)\}$ and so has cardinality at most 5. Hence one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- Assume now that u is a leaf. By symmetry, we may assume that u is adjacent to t_1 . By Lemma 6 and since G is triangulated, C_e^{int} is one of the graphs A_1, A_2 or A_3 .

Assume now that $C_e^{int} = A_1$ and $rv_1 \notin E(G)$. Let (G', T') be the pair obtained from $(G - u, T - u)$ by identifying r and v_1 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - u, T - u)$ -colouring c such that $c(v_1) = c(r) = 1$. Then the set of forbidden colours in u is included in $\{1, c(v_2)\} \cup [c(t_1)]$ and so has cardinality at most 5. Hence one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. \square

3.2 Penultimate edges

Lemma 14. *Let f be an edge which is the successor of a minimal edge e . If e is the unique predecessor of f , then C_f^{int} is one of the graphs depicted in Figure 3, and $rv_1 \in E(G)$. Moreover, if $C_f^{int} = B_2$, $rv_3 \notin E(G)$.*

Proof. Let e' be the third edge of the triangle bounded by f and e in C_f^{int} . Suppose, by way of contradiction, that e is the unique predecessor of f . Then e' is not overstepping. So all the vertices inside C_f are in C_e^{int} . By Lemma 13, C_e^{int} is one of the graphs A_1, A_2 or A_3 .

One of the endvertices of f must be v_1 and v_2 (as defined for A_i). We now distinguish many cases depending on C_e^{int} and the possible endvertices of f .

1. Assume that C_e^{int} is A_1 .
 - 1.1. Assume $f = rv_1$. Then the 4-cycle $rt_2v_2v_1$ has no chord, because rv_2 is in C_e^{int} and v_1t_2 is not an edge since f is the successor of e . This contradicts the fact that G is triangulated.
 - 1.2 Observe that $f = t_1v_2$ is impossible since rv_1 is an edge. Assume that $f = t_2v_1$. Let $G' = (G - \{u, v_2\}) \cup t_1t_2$. By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a $(G', T - \{u, v_2\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, v_2\}, T - \{u, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(t_1) \neq c(t_2)$. If $c(t_1) = 6$, then one can greedily extend c to v_2 and then u to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. If $c(t_1) \neq 6$, then colouring v_2 with a colour in $\{c(t_1) -$

- $1, c(t_1) + 1\} \setminus [c(t_2)]$ and u with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v_1)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$ we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 1.3. Assume that $f = v_1 t_3$ with t_3 a twig distinct from t_2 . Since rv_1 is an edge, $t_1 t_3$ is not an edge. Let G' be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{t_2, v_2\}, T - \{t_2, v_2\})$. If one can colour v_2 with a colour $c(v_2)$ in $\{2, 3, 6\}$, then $\{1, 2\} \cup [c(v_2)]$ has cardinality at most 4 and so at most 5 colours are forbidden in t_2 . Hence one can extend c into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So we may assume that $\{c(u), c(v_1), c(t_3)\} = \{2, 3, 6\}$. If $c(t_3) = 3$, set $c(v_2) = 4$ and $c(t_2) = 6$. If $c(t_3) = 6$, set $c(v_2) = 5$ and $c(t_2) = 3$. In both cases, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 1.4. Assume that $f = v_2 t_3$ with t_3 a twig distinct from t_1 . By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring c . Setting $c(t_1) = 6$ and choosing $c(v_1)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(t_3), c(v_2)\}$ and $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(v_1), c(v_2)\}$, we get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 1.5. f cannot be $v_2 v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent to t_1 because rv_1 is an edge.
- 1.6. Assume that $f = v_1 v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent to t_2 . Then $C_e^{int} = B_1$. By Lemma 13, $rv_1 \in E(G)$.
- 1.7. Assume $f = v_2 v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent in T to a twig t_3 not in $\{t_1, t_2\}$. Then $v_1 v_3 \in E(G)$ and either $rv_3 \in E(G)$ or $t_3 v_1 \in E(G)$. Since rv_1 is an edge, we have that $N(t_1) = \{r, u, v_1\}$. By minimality of G , there exists a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring c .
- If $\{c(t_3), c(v_3), c(v_2)\} \neq \{2, 3, 4\}$, then setting $c(t_1) = 6$ and choosing $c(v_1)$ in $\{2, 3, 4\} \setminus \{c(t_3), c(v_3), c(v_2)\}$ and $c(u)$ in $\{2, 3, 4\} \setminus \{c(v_1), c(v_2)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $\{c(t_3), c(v_3), c(v_2)\} = \{2, 3, 4\}$, and so $c(t_3) = 4$, $c(v_3) = 2$ and $c(v_2) = 3$. Then setting $c(t_1) = 3$, $c(u) = 5$ and $c(v_1) = 6$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 1.8. Assume $f = v_1 v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent in T to a twig t_3 not in $\{t_1, t_2\}$. Since $rv_1 \in E(G)$, then $t_1 t_3 \notin E(G)$.
- Assume first that $rv_3 \in C_f^{int}$. By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a $(G - \{t_2, v_2\}, T - \{t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c . One can choose a colour $c(v_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(u), c(v_1), c(v_3)\}$ such that $I = [c(v_2)] \cup \{1, 2, c(v_3)\} \neq Z_6$. Then choosing $c(t_2) \in Z_6 \setminus I$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- Hence we may assume that rv_3 is not in C_f^{int} . Let (G', T') be the graph obtained from $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ by identifying t_1 and t_3 . By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(t_1) = c(t_3)$. If $c(t_1) \neq 6$, then one can choose a colour $c(v_2) \in \{c(t_1) - 1, c(t_1) + 1\}$ such that $I = [c(v_2)] \cup \{1, 2, c(v_3)\} \neq Z_6$. Then choosing $c(t_2) \in Z_6 \setminus I$ and $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus ([c(t_1)] \cup \{1, c(v_1)\})$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence we may suppose that $c(t_1) = 6$. If $v_2 t_3 \notin E(G)$, then setting $c(v_2) = 6$ and choosing $c(t_2) \in \{3, 4\} \setminus c(v_3)$ and $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(v_1)\}$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. If $v_2 t_3 \in E(G)$, then setting $c(v_2) = 5$, $c(t_2) = 3$ and choosing $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(v_1)\}$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
2. Assume that C_e^{int} is A_2 .
- 2.1. Assume $f = rv_1$. Since f is the successor of e , then $v_1 t_2$ is not an edge and so $rv_2 \in E(G)$ because G is triangulated. By minimality of G , there exists a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c . Setting $c(u) = 1$, one can then extend c greedily to t_2 and v_2 to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 2.2. Assume that $f = rv_2$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring. Setting $c(u) = 1$, one can then extend c greedily to t_1 and v_1 to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 2.3. Assume that $f = t_1 v_2$. Since f is the successor of e , the cycle $t_1 v_1 v_2$ is empty, and so v_1 contradicts Lemma 6. Similarly, if $f = t_2 v_1$, then v_2 contradicts Lemma 6.

- 2.4. Assume that $f = v_1t_3$ with t_3 a twig distinct from t_2 . Since f is the successor of e , t_2v_1 is not an edge. Then either rv_2 is an edge or t_2t_3 is an edge. Set $G' = (G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}) \cup rv_1$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G', T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_1) \neq c(r) = 1$. Set $c(u) = 1$.
- If $c(v_1) \neq 2$, then setting $c(v_2) = 2$ and colouring t_2 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, 3, c(t_1), c(t_3)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So $c(v_1) = 2$ and thus $c(t_1) \geq 4$.
- If $c(t_3) \neq 3$, then setting $c(t_2) = 3$ and choosing $c(v_2)$ in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_3)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So $c(t_3) = 3$.
- Choosing $c(t_2)$ in $\{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_1)\}$ and $c(v_2)$ in $\{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_2)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 2.5. Assume that $f = v_2t_3$ with t_3 a twig distinct from t_1 . Then either rv_1 is an edge or t_1t_3 is an edge. Set $G' = (G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}) \cup rv_2$. By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a $(G', T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_2) \neq c(r) = 1$. Set $c(u) = 1$.
- If $c(v_2) \neq 2$, then setting $c(v_1) = 2$ and colouring t_1 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, 3, c(t_2), c(t_3)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So $c(v_2) = 2$ and thus $c(t_2) \geq 4$.
- If $c(t_3) \neq 3$, then setting $c(t_1) = 3$ and choosing $c(v_1)$ in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_3)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So $c(t_3) = 3$.
- Choosing $c(t_1)$ in $\{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_2)\}$ and $c(v_1)$ in $\{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_1)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 2.6. Assume that $f = v_2v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent to t_1 . Since f is the successor of e , then t_1v_2 is not inside $v_3t_1v_1v_2$ and so $v_1v_3 \in E(G)$. Set $G' = (G - \{u, v_1\}) \cup t_2v_3$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G', T - \{u, v_1\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, v_1\}, T - \{u, v_1\})$ -colouring c such that $c(t_2) \neq c(v_3)$. Setting $c(u) = c(v_3)$ and colouring v_1 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{c(u), c(v_2)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 2.7. Assume that $f = v_1v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent to t_2 . Since f is the successor of e , then t_2v_1 is not inside $v_2t_2v_3v_1$ and so $v_2v_3 \in E(G)$. Set $G' = (G - \{u, v_2\}) \cup t_1v_3$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G', T - \{u, v_2\})$ -colouring, which is a $(G - \{u, v_2\}, T - \{u, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(t_1) \neq c(v_3)$. If $c(t_2) \in [c(t_1)]$, then one can also extend c greedily to v_2 and then u to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $|c(t_1) - c(t_2)| \geq 2$. Thus one can colour v_2 with $c(t_1)$ and then colour u with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus ([c(t_1)] \cup \{c(t_2), c(v_1)\})$. This yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- 2.8. Assume $f = v_2v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent in T to a twig t_3 not in $\{t_1, t_2\}$.
- Suppose first that $rv_1 \notin E(G)$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\} \cup \{rv_3, rv_2\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_2) \neq 1$ and $c(v_3) \neq 1$. Colour v_1 with 1 and let $L(t_1) \supseteq Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(v_3), c(t_3), c(t_2)\}$ and $L(u) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(t_2), c(v_2)\}$ be the list of colours available for t_1 and u , respectively. Note that there is at most one colour α in Z_6 such that $L(u) \setminus \{\alpha\} = \emptyset$. Thus, if there exists β in $L(t_1) \setminus \{\alpha\}$ if such α exists, or in $L(t_1)$ otherwise, then we can colour t_1 with β and u with a colour in $L(u) \setminus \{\beta\}$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So we may assume that no such β exists, that is $L(t_1) = \{\alpha\}$ and $L(u) \setminus \{\alpha\} = \emptyset$. Since $|c(v_2) - c(t_2)| \geq 2$, necessarily $\alpha = 4$, $L(t_1) = \{4\}$, $c(t_2) = 6$, $c(v_2) = 2$, $\{c(v_3), c(t_3)\} = \{3, 5\}$ and $v_3, t_3 \in N(t_1)$. Then, recolouring v_1 with 6 and colouring t_1 with 4 and u with 1 yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- Suppose now that $rv_1 \in E(G)$. Then there is no vertex inside rt_1v_1r . By minimality of (G, T) , there is $(G - u, T - u)$ -colouring c . If $c(v_2) \neq 1$, then we can colour u with 1; so, suppose otherwise. If there is no colour available for u to extend c , then $F_c = \{1, c(t_2), c(v_1)\} \cup [c(t_1)]$ is equal to Z_6 ; thus, $c(t_1) \in \{3, 4, 5\}$. If $c(t_1) = 3$, then $\{c(v_1), c(t_2)\} = \{5, 6\}$. If $c(t_1) = 4$, then $\{c(v_1), c(t_2)\} = \{2, 6\}$. If

$c(t_1) = 5$, then $\{c(v_1), c(t_2)\} = \{2, 3\}$. If the colour of t_1 can be changed, we obtain a $(G - u, T - u)$ -colouring c' such that $F_{c'} \neq Z_6$ which can be extended in a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence, $c(t_1) = i$ is the sole colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, 2, c(t_2)\} \cup [c(v_1)])$. Thus, $c(v_1) \neq 2$ and $(c(v_1), c(t_2)) \neq (6, 5)$. Then, necessarily (*) $c(v_1) = 5$, $c(t_1) = 3$ and $c(t_2) = 6$. If $c(t_3), c(v_3) \neq 3$, then recolour t_1 with 5 and v_1 with 3. Otherwise, if $c(t_3), c(v_3) \neq 6$, then recolour v_1 with 6. Otherwise (i.e., $\{c(t_3), c(v_3)\} = \{3, 6\}$), recolour v_1 with 2. In any case, the resulting colouring c_1 does not satisfy (*). Hence, either $F_{c_1} \neq Z_6$ or t_1 can be recoloured to get a colouring c'_1 such that $F_{c'_1} \neq Z_6$. Hence one of c_1, c'_1 can be extended in a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

2.9. Assume $f = v_1 v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent in T to a twig t_3 not in $\{t_1, t_2\}$.

Suppose first that $rv_2 \in E(G)$. Set $G' = (G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}) \cup \{t_1 t_3, t_1 v_3\}$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G', T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring, which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(t_1) \neq c(t_3)$ and $c(t_1) \neq c(v_3)$. Set $c(v_2) = c(t_1)$. Then choosing $c(t_2)$ in $\{3, 4, 5, 6\} \setminus [c(t_1)]$ and $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus ([c(t_1)] \cup \{c(t_2), c(v_1)\})$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $rv_2 \notin E(G)$.

Suppose now that $rv_3 \notin E(G)$. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ by identifying v_3 and r . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring, which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_3) = 1$. Set $c(u) = c(v_3)$. For t_2 , there at least two possible colours, namely the ones not in $\{1, 2, c(t_1), c(t_3)\}$. One of them, say α , is such that $I = [\alpha] \cup \{1, c(v_1), c(t_3)\}$ is not equal to Z_6 . Thus, setting $c(t_2) = \alpha$ and choosing $c(v_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus I$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $rv_3 \in E(G)$.

Assume that rv_3 is inside C_f . Then $t_2 t_3 \notin E(G)$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}) \cup rv_1, T \setminus \{u, t_2, v_2\}$ -colouring, which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_1) \neq 1$. If $c(v_1) \neq 2$, then setting $c(u) = 2$ and $c(v_2) = 1$, and choosing $c(t_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t_1), c(v_3)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So we may assume that $c(v_1) = 2$, and so $c(t_1) \geq 4$. If $c(v_3) \neq 3$, then setting $c(u) = 1$, $c(t_2) = 3$ and choosing $c(v_2)$ in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(v_3)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. If $c(v_3) = 3$, then setting $c(u) = 1$, and choosing $c(t_2)$ in $\{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_1)\}$ and $c(v_2)$ in $\{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_2)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence we may assume that rv_3 is outside C_f .

So, by planarity, $t_1 t_3 \notin E(G)$. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ by identifying t_1 and t_3 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring, which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(t_1) = c(t_3)$. Set $c(u) = c(v_3)$. Let α be a colour of $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t_1), c(v_3)\}$ such that $I = [\alpha] \cup \{c(v_1), c(v_3), c(t_3)\}$ is not Z_6 . Then setting $c(t_2) = \alpha$ and choosing $c(v_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus I$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

3. Assume that C_e^{int} is A_3 .

3.1. Assume $f = rv_1$. Then rv_2 is an edge. By minimality of G , there exists a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c . Colour u with a colour $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus (\{c(r), c(v_1)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$. Set $c(t_2) = 6$ if $c(u) \neq 6$ and $c(t_2) = 5$ otherwise. In both cases, at most five colours are forbidden for v_2 , and one can extend greedily the colouring into a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

3.2. Assume that $f = rv_2$. By minimality of G , there exists a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring c . Set $c(t_1) = 6$, then colour u with any colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(t_2), c(v_2)\}$ and v_1 with any colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(v_2), c(u)\}$. This yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

3.3 Assume that $f = t_1 v_2$. Then the cycle $t_1 v_1 v_2$ is empty, an so v_1 contradicts Lemma 6. Similarly, if $f = t_2 v_1$, then v_2 contradicts Lemma 6.

3.4. Assume that $f = v_1t_3$ with t_3 a twig distinct from t_2 .

Assume first that $t_2t_3 \in E(G)$. Set $G' = (G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}) \cup rv_1$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G', T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_1) \neq c(r) = 1$. Setting $c(v_2) = 1$ and choosing $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v_1)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$ and $c(t_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(u), c(t_3)\}$, we get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So $t_2t_3 \notin E(G)$ and thus $rv_2 \in E(G)$.

By minimality of G , there exists a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c .

Assume that $c(v_1) \neq 2$. If $c(t_1) = 3$, then setting $c(v_2) = 2$ and choosing $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, 3, 4, c(v_1)\}$ and $c(t_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, 3, c(u)\}$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. If $c(t_1) \geq 4$, then setting $c(u) = 2$ and choosing $c(v_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(v_1), c(t_3)\}$ and $c(t_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, 2\} \cup [c(v_2)])$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $c(v_1) = 2$.

If $c(t_1) \neq 4$, then colouring v_2 with $c(v_2) \in \{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_3)\}$, t_2 with $c(t_2) \in \{4, 6\} \setminus \{c(v_2)\}$ and u with $c(u)$ in $\{3, 5\} \setminus [c(t_1)]$, we get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So $c(t_1) = 4$.

Colouring u with 6, v_2 with $c(v_2) \in \{3, 5\} \setminus \{c(t_3)\}$ and t_2 with $c(t_2)$ in $\{3, 5\} \setminus [c(v_2)]$, we get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

3.5. Assume that $f = v_2t_3$ with t_3 a twig distinct from t_1 .

Assume first that t_1t_3 is an edge. Set $G' = (G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}) \cup rv_2$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G', T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_2) \neq c(r) = 1$. Set $c(v_1) = 1$. If $c(v_2) \neq 2$, then setting $c(u) = 2$ and assigning to t_1 a colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, 3, c(t_3)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So $c(v_2) = 2$ and $c(t_2) \geq 4$. Setting $c(u) = 3$ and assigning to t_1 a colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, 3, 4, c(t_3)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence t_1t_3 is not an edge.

So rv_1 is an edge. Let G' be the graph from $G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}$ by adding the edge t_2t_3 if it does not exist. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G', T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring c such that $c(t_2) \neq c(t_3)$. Set $c(t_1) = 6$. If $c(t_2) \notin \{5, 6\}$, then set $c(v_1) = c(t_2)$ (this is possible because $c(t_3) \neq c(t_2)$), otherwise colour v_1 with any colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(t_3), c(v_2)\}$. Then colouring u with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(v_1), c(v_2)\}$, we get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

3.6. Assume that $f = v_2v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent to t_1 . Set $G' = (G - \{u, v_1\}) \cup \{t_2v_3, rv_3\}$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G', T - \{u, v_1\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, v_1\}, T - \{u, v_1\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_3) \notin \{c(r), c(t_2)\}$. Setting $c(u) = c(v_3)$ and colouring v_1 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{c(u), c(v_2)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

3.7. Assume that $f = v_1v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent to t_2 . Then $C_f^{int} = B_2$.

Assume first that $rv_1 \notin E(G)$. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - u, T - u)$ by identifying v_1 and r . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring, which yields a $(G - u, T - u)$ -colouring such that $c(v_1) = c(r) = 1$. Then choosing $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v_2)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $rv_1 \in E(G)$.

Assume now that $rv_3 \in E(G)$. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - u, T - u)$ by identifying t_1 and t_2 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring, which yields a $(G - u, T - u)$ -colouring such that $c(t_1) = c(t_2)$. Then setting $c(u) = c(v_3)$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

3.8. Assume $f = v_2v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent in T to a twig t_3 not in $\{t_1, t_2\}$.

Assume first that rv_1 is not an edge. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}) \cup \{rv_2, rv_3\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_1, v_1\}, T - \{u, t_1, v_1\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_2) \neq 1$ and $c(v_3) \neq 1$. Colour v_1 with 1. Colour t_1 with a colour α in $A = Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t_3), c(v_3)\}$ such that $[\alpha] \neq Z_6 \setminus$

$\{1, c(t_2), c(v_2)\}$. This is possible since $|A| \geq 2$. Then colouring u with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(t_2), c(v_2)\} \cup [\alpha])$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Suppose now that rv_1 is an edge. Then, since e is minimal, rv_1 is not overstepping and so there is no vertex inside rv_1t_1r . Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - u, T - u)$ by identifying t_1 and t_2 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring, which yields a $(G - u, T - u)$ -colouring such that $c(t_1) = c(t_2)$. Set $c(u) = 1$ if $c(v_2) \neq 1$, and choose $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v_1), c(v_2)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$ otherwise. This gives a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

3.9. Assume $f = v_1v_3$ with v_3 a leaf adjacent in T to a twig t_3 not in $\{t_1, t_2\}$.

Suppose first that $rv_2 \notin E(G)$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{t_2, v_2\} \cup \{rv_1, rv_3\}, T - \{t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{t_2, v_2\}, T - \{t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_1) \neq 1$ and $c(v_3) \neq 1$. Setting $c(v_2) = 1$ and choosing $c(t_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(u), c(t_3), c(v_3)\}$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $rv_2 \in E(G)$.

Assume that $v_2t_3 \notin E(G)$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{t_2, v_2\}, T - \{t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring. We can choose $c(v_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(u), c(v_1), c(v_3)\}$ such that $I = [c(v_2)] \cup \{1, 2, c(u)\} \neq Z_6$ and $c(t_2) \in Z_6 \setminus I$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $v_2t_3 \in E(G)$.

By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\} \cup \{t_1v_3\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(t_1) \neq c(v_3)$. Set $c(u) = c(v_3)$. We can choose $c(v_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(t_3), c(v_1), c(v_3)\}$ such that $I = [c(v_2)] \cup \{1, 2, c(u)\} \neq Z_6$ and $c(t_2) \in Z_6 \setminus I$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. □

Lemma 15. *Every penultimate edge has a unique predecessor.*

Proof. By contradiction. Suppose that a penultimate edge f has two predecessors e and e' . Then e and e' are ultimate and so minimal. According to Lemma 13, C_e^{int} and $C_{e'}^{int}$ are isomorphic to some of A_1, A_2 and A_3 . Let us denote the vertices of C_e^{int} by their names in Figure 2 and the vertices of $C_{e'}^{int}$ by their names in Figure 2 augmented with a prime.

Since f, e and e' are bounding the face incident to f in C_f^{int} , the edge f is $v_1v'_2, v_1v'_1, v_2v'_2$ or $v_2v'_1$. If $f = v_2v'_1$, then swapping the names of e and e' , we are left with $f = v_1v'_2$. Hence we may assume that $f \in \{v_1v'_2, v_1v'_1, v_2v'_2\}$. Note that if $f = v_1v'_2$, then $t_2 = t'_1$ and $v_2 = v'_1$, if $f = v_1v'_1$, then $t_2 = t'_2$ and $v_2 = v'_2$, and if $f = v_2v'_2$, then $t_1 = t'_1$ and $v_1 = v'_1$.

Observe that if C_e^{int} is isomorphic to A_1 , then f cannot be $v_2v'_2$ because rv_1 must be an edge that would cross f . Moreover if C_e^{int} and $C_{e'}^{int}$ are both isomorphic to A_1 , then f cannot be $v_1v'_1$ since G has no multiple edges. Hence must be in one of the following cases:

- C_e^{int} and $C_{e'}^{int}$ are isomorphic to A_1 and $f = v_1v'_2$.

By minimality of G , there is a $(G - \{u', t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c . Let $L(v_2) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(u), c(v_1), c(v'_2)\}$ be the colours available for v_2 and $L(u') = Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(v'_2)\}$ be the colours available for u' . Observe that $|L(v_2)| \geq 2$ and at least one colour in $L(v_2)$, say α , is such that one integer $\beta \in \{\alpha - 1, \alpha + 1\}$ is in $L(u')$.

If $\{\alpha, \beta\} \neq \{4, 5\}$, then $\{1, 2\} \cup [\alpha] \cup [\beta] \neq Z_6$. Hence colouring v_2 with α , u' with β and t_2 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, 2\} \cup [\alpha] \cup [\beta])$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

If $\alpha = 4$ and $\beta = 5$, then $c(v'_2) = 3$ for otherwise we could have chosen $\beta = 3$ and got a contradiction as above. Then setting $c(v_2) = 4$, $c(u') = 2$ and $c(t_2) = 6$, we get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

If $\alpha = 5$ and $\beta = 4$, then $c(v'_2) = 6$ for otherwise we could have chosen $\beta = 6$ and got a contradiction as above. Then setting $c(v_2) = 5$, $c(u') = 3$ and $c(t_2) = 6$, we get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- C_e^{int} is isomorphic to A_1 , $C_{e'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_2 and $f = v_1v'_i$ for $i \in \{1, 2\}$.

By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{t_2, v_2, u'\} \cup rv'_i, T - \{t_2, v_2, u'\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{t_2, v_2, u'\}, T - \{t_2, v_2, u'\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v'_i) \neq 1$. Colour u' with 1. If $\{c(v_1), c(u), c(v'_i)\} \setminus \{2, 3, 6\}$, then assign to v_2 an element $c(v_2)$ of this set. Otherwise assign to $c(v_2)$ a colour in $\{4, 5\} \cap [c(t'_i)]$. Then one can choose $c(t_2)$ in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, 2, c(t'_i)\} \cup [c(v_2)])$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- C_e^{int} is isomorphic to A_1 , $C_{e'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_3 and $f = v_1v'_i$ for $i \in \{1, 2\}$.

Suppose first that rv'_i is not an edge. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{t_2, v_2, u'\}, T - \{t_2, v_2, u'\})$ by identifying v'_i and r . By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{t_2, v_2, u'\}, T - \{t_2, v_2, u'\})$ -colouring such that $c(v'_i) = 1$. We can choose $c(v_2)$ in $\{3, 4, 6\} \setminus \{c(u), c(v_1)\}$ and $c(t_2)$ in $\{4, 5, 6\} \setminus [\alpha]$. If $i = 2$ or $c(t'_2) \neq 3$, then setting $c(u') = 1$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. If $i = 1$ and $c(t'_2) = 3$, then choosing $c(u')$ in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_2), c(v_2)\}$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Hence rv'_i is an edge. The two edges rv_1 and rv'_i cannot cross. Thus, for at least one edge $e^* \in \{rv_1, rv'_i\}$, $v_1v'_i$ is not inside $C_{e^*}^{int}$. Hence e^* is not overstepping for otherwise $e^* \preceq e$ or $e^* \preceq e'$ contradicting the minimality of e . Hence at least one of the two edges rv_1 and rv'_i is not overstepping. We analyze the two possible cases.

- rv_1 is not overstepping. In this case, there is no vertex inside C_{rv_1} and thus the only neighbours of t_1 are r, v_1 and u .

Let us first prove (\star) : *there is no $(G - \{u\}, T - \{u\})$ -colouring such that $c(v_2) \notin \{5, 6\}$* . Indeed suppose there is such a colouring c . The set of colours forbidden for u is $F = \{1, c(v_1), c(v_2)\} \cup [c(t_1)]$. Then $F = Z_6$, for otherwise colouring u with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus F$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Thus because $c(v_2) \leq 4$, the colour triple $(c(t_1), c(v_1), c(v_2))$ is either $(4, 6, 2)$, or $(5, 3, 2)$, or $(5, 2, 3)$. In the last two cases, recolouring t_1 with 6 and colouring u with 4 we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. In the first case, recolouring t_1 with 3 and colouring u with 5 we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. This proves (\star) .

Suppose that $i = 2$, that is $t_2 = t'_1$ and $v_2 = v'_1$. By minimality of G , there is a $(G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c . Choose $c(u')$ in $\{2, 3\} \setminus \{c(t'_2), c(v'_2)\}$. If there exists $\alpha \in \{2, 3, 4\} \setminus \{c(u'), c(v_1), c(v'_2)\}$, then setting $c(t_2) = 6$ and $c(v_2) = \alpha$, we get a contradiction to (\star) . Hence $\{c(u'), c(v_1), c(v'_2)\} = \{2, 3, 4\}$. Observe that we can suppose that $c(v_1) = 4$, for otherwise we could have chosen $c(u')$ to be equal to $c(v_1)$. Thus $c(t_1) = 6$. Then recolour u' with some colour in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(t'_2)\}$, colour v_2 with the colour in $\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(u')\}$, t_2 with 3 and u with 2. This gives a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Suppose now that $i = 1$, that is $t_2 = t'_2$ and $v_2 = v'_2$. By minimality of G , there is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c .

- * Assume first that $c(u') = 6$, then $(c(t'_1), c(v'_1))$ is either $(4, 2)$ or $(3, 5)$. If $c(v_1) \neq 3$, then setting $c(v_2) = 3$ and $c(t_2) = 5$, we get a $(G - \{u\}, T - \{u\})$ -colouring contradicting (\star) . So $c(v_1) = 3$ and thus $c(t_1) \geq 5$.

If $(c(t'_1), c(v'_1)) = (3, 5)$, then setting $c(v_2) = 2$ and $c(t_2) = 4$, we also obtain a $(G - \{u\}, T - \{u\})$ -colouring contradicting (\star) .

Hence $(c(t'_1), c(v'_1)) = (4, 2)$. Setting $c(v_2) = 5$, $c(t_2) = 3$ and $c(u) = 2$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- * Suppose now that $c(u') \neq 6$. If there exists $\alpha \in \{2, 3, 4\} \setminus \{c(u'), c(v_1), c(v'_1)\}$, then colouring v_2 with α and t_2 with 6, we obtain a $(G - \{u\}, T - \{u\})$ -colouring contradicting (\star) . If not, then one can recolour t_1 with 6. Then colouring v_2 with 6, t_2 with some colour in $\{3, 4\} \setminus \{c(u')\}$ and u with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(v_1)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- rv'_i is not overstepping. In this case, there is no vertex inside $C_{rv'_i}$ and thus the only neighbours of t'_i are r , v'_i and u' .

Suppose first that $i = 2$. By minimality of G , there is a $(G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c . Colour u with a colour $c(u)$ in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v_1)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$ such that $\{c(u), c(v_1)\} \neq \{3, 4\}$. (This is possible since if $\{c(u), c(v_1)\} = \{3, 4\}$, then $c(t_1) = 6$ and so u can be recoloured 2.) if $c(v'_2) \leq 4$, then recolour t'_2 with 6, colour v_2 with 6, u' with 5 and t_2 with 3. If $c(v'_2) \in \{5, 6\}$, then colour v_2 with some colour in $\{3, 4\} \setminus \{c(u), c(v_1)\}$, u' with 2 and t_2 with 6. In both cases, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Suppose now that $i = 1$, that is $t_2 = t'_2$ and $v_2 = v'_2$. By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a $(G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\} \cup \{t_1 v'_1\}, T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c which is a $(G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring such that $c(t_1) \neq c(v'_1)$. Colour u with some colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v_1)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$ and u' with some colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v'_1)\} \cup [c(t'_1)])$. Let $L(v_2) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(v_1), c(v'_1), c(u), c(u')\}$ be the set of colours available for v_2 . If there exists $\alpha \in L(v_2)$ such that $L(t_2) = Z_6 \setminus (\{1, 2, c(u')\} \cap [\alpha]) \neq \emptyset$, then we can colour v_2 with α and t_2 with a colour in $L(t_2)$ to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence either (a) $c(u') = 3$ and $L(v_2) = \{5\}$ or (b) $c(u') = 6$ and $L(v_2) = \{4\}$. Note that $\{3, 6\} \not\subseteq Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v'_1)\} \cup [c(t'_1)])$; hence, if we can recolour of u' , neither (a) nor (b) occurs anymore. So, we may assume that u' cannot be recoloured. If (a) occurs, this implies that $c(v'_1) = 2$ and $c(t'_1) = 5$. But then, we recolour t'_1 with 6 and u' with 4; clearly, neither (a) nor (b) occurs anymore and we get a contradiction as above. If (b) occurs, then either $c(v'_1) = 2$ and $c(t'_1) = 4$, or $c(v'_1) = 5$ and $c(t'_1) = 3$. In the former case, we recolour t'_1 with 6 and u' with 4; clearly, neither (a) nor (b) occurs anymore and we get a contradiction as above. If the later case occurs, since $L(v_2) = \{4\}$, necessarily $\{c(v_1), c(u)\} = \{2, 3\}$. If it is possible to recolour u , then $L(v_2)$ would have more than one colour and, consequently, neither (a) nor (b) would occur yielding a contradiction. Hence $\{c(v_1), c(u), 1\} = Z_6 \setminus [c(t_1)]$, so $c(t_1) = 5 = c(v'_1)$ which is impossible by our choice of c .

- C_e^{int} is isomorphic to A_2 or A_3 , $C_{e'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_2 or A_3 and $f = v_1 v'_1$.

By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\} \cup \{rv_1, rv'_1\}, T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c which is a $(G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_1), c(v'_1) \neq 1$. Colour u with some colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v_1)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$ and u' with some colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v'_1)\} \cup [c(t'_1)])$. Then, colour v_2 with 1. If either t_2 is adjacent to at most one of t_1 and t'_1 or $\{c(t_1), c(u), c(t'_1), c(u')\} \neq \{3, 4, 5, 6\}$, then we can assign to t_2 a colour in $\{3, 4, 5, 6\}$ not assigned to any of its neighbours to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

So t_2 is adjacent to t_1 and t'_1 and $\{c(t_1), c(u), c(t'_1), c(u')\} = \{3, 4, 5, 6\}$. By symmetry, we may assume that $c(t_1) \neq 3$. If $c(v_1) \neq 2$, then we can recolour u with 2 and colour t_2 with the colour in $\{3, 4, 5, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_1), c(t'_1), c(u')\}$ to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $c(v_1) = 2$ and so $c(t_1) \geq 4$. If $c(v'_1) = 3$, then setting $c(t_2) = 3$ and $c(v_2) = 6$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $c(v'_1) \geq 4$, so $c(t'_1) \in \{3, 6\}$. If $c(t'_1) = 3$, then we set $c(v_2) = 3$ and choose $c(t_2)$ in $\{5, 6\} \setminus c(t_1)$. If $c(t'_1) = 6$, then $c(v'_1) = 4$, so we set $c(v_2) = 5$ and $c(t_2) = 3$. In both cases, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- C_e^{int} is isomorphic to A_2 or A_3 , $C_{e'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_2 or A_3 and $f = v_2 v'_2$.

By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\} \cup \{rv_2, rv'_2\}, T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring c such that $c(v_1), c(v'_1) \neq 1$. Choose $c(u)$ in $\{2, 3\} \setminus \{c(v_2), c(t_2)\}$ and $c(u')$ in $\{2, 3\} \setminus \{c(v'_2), c(t'_2)\}$ and set $c(v_1) = 1$. If t_1 has at most one neighbour in $\{t_2, t'_2\}$ or $\{c(t_2), c(t'_2)\} \neq \{5, 6\}$, then we can colour t_1 with a colour in $\{5, 6\}$ not appearing on any of its neighbours to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence t_1 is adjacent to t_2 and t'_2 (that is C_e^{int} and $C_{e'}^{int}$) are isomorphic to A_2 and $\{c(t_2), c(t'_2)\} = \{5, 6\}$. Recolouring u with $c(t'_2)$ and u' with $c(t_2)$ and colouring t_1 with 3, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- C_e^{int} is isomorphic to A_2 or A_3 , $C_{e'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_2 or A_3 and $f = v_1 v_2'$.

By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a $G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\} \cup \{rv_1, rv_2'\}$, $T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\}$ -colouring c which is a $(G - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\}, T - \{u, u', t_2, v_2\})$ -colouring such that $c(v_1) \neq 1$ and $c(v_2') \neq 1$. Colour u with some colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v_1)\} \cup [c(t_1)])$, u' with some colour in $\{2, 3\} \setminus \{c(t_2'), c(v_2')\}$ and set $c(v_2) = 1$. Note that the set F of forbidden colours for t_2 is the union of $\{1, 2, c(u)\} \cup [c(u')]$ and the set of colours of the neighbours of t_2 in $\{t_1, t_2'\}$. Moreover $F = Z_6$ for otherwise we could colour t_2 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus F$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

If $c(u') = 2$, then, as $|F| = 6$, $\{t_1, t_2'\} \subseteq N_G(t_2)$ and $\{c(u), c(t_1), c(t_2')\} = \{4, 5, 6\}$. Since $|c(u) - c(t_1)| \geq 2$, necessarily $\{c(t_1), c(u)\} = \{4, 6\}$ and $c(t_2') = 5$. If $c(t_1) = 6$, then recolouring u with a colour in $\{2, 3\} \setminus c(v_1)$ and assigning 4 to t_2 , we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $c(t_1) = 4$ and $c(u) = 6$. So $c(v_1) = 2$, and thus $c(v_2') = 3$. Then recolour u and u' with 1 and v_2 with 4 and colour t_2 with 6 to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Now, suppose that $c(u') = 3$. Then, as $|F| = 6$, $\{c(u), c(N(t_2) \cap \{t_1, t_2'\})\} \supseteq \{5, 6\}$. Assume that $c(u) \notin \{5, 6\}$, then $\{t_1, t_2'\} \subseteq N(t_2)$ and $\{c(t_1), c(t_2')\} = \{5, 6\}$. Note that, in this case, $c(v_1) \leq 4$ and $c(v_2') \leq 4$. Recolour u and u' with 1, v_2 with 6 and colour t_2 with 3 to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $c(u) \in \{5, 6\}$. Thus $c(t_1) \leq 4$ and so $c(t_2') \in \{5, 6\}$ and $c(v_2') \leq 4$. Thus, $t_2' \in N(t_2)$ and $c(t_2') \in (\{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(u)\})$. Recolour u' with $c(u)$. If $t_1 \notin N(t_2)$ or $c(t_1) \neq 3$, colouring t_2 with 3 yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So $t_1 \in N(t_2)$ and $c(t_1) = 3$. Then, recolour u and u' with 3 (note that $c(v_1) \geq 5$ and $c(v_2') \neq 3$ as u' was coloured 3) and t_2 with $i \in \{5, 6\} \setminus \{c(t_2')\}$. This gives a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. □

Lemmas 14 and 15 immediately imply the following.

Corollary 16. *If f is a penultimate edge, then C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 or B_2 . Moreover $rv_1 \in E(G)$ and $rv_3 \notin E(G)$.*

3.3 Antepenultimate edges

To deal with antepenultimate edges, we need the following two auxiliary results.

Lemma 17. *Suppose that (G, T) contains a configuration isomorphic to B_1 (see Figure 3). If there is a $(G - \{u, v_2\}, T - \{u, v_2\})$ -colouring c satisfying one of the following conditions :*

- (a) $c(t_2) = 6$ and $(c(t_1), c(v_3)) \neq (5, 4)$;
- (b) $c(v_3) = 1$ and $c(t_1) \neq c(t_2)$;

Then there is a (G, T) -colouring.

Proof. Let $L(u) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, [c(t_1)], c(v_1)\}$ and $L(v_2) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, [c(t_2)], c(v_1), c(v_3)\}$ be the set of colours available for u and v_2 respectively. Clearly $L(u) \neq \emptyset$. Observe that the conditions (a) and (b) also imply that $L(v_2) \neq \emptyset$. So, if $|L(u)| \geq 2$, $|L(v_2)| \geq 2$ or $L(u) \neq L(v_2)$, one can choose distinct colours $c(u) \in L(u)$ and $c(v_2) \in L(v_2)$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring.

It is simple matter to check that in both cases, this condition is fulfilled. □

Lemma 18. *There is no antepenultimate edge g with only one penultimate predecessor f such that C_f^{int} is B_2 .*

In order to prove Lemma 18, we first prove an auxiliary result.

Lemma 19. *Suppose that (G, T) contains a configuration isomorphic to B_2 (see Figure 3). If there is a $(G - \{u, v_2\}, T - \{u, v_2\})$ -colouring c satisfying one of the following conditions :*

- (a) $c(t_1) = c(t_2)$ and $c(v_3) \neq 1$;
- (b) $c(t_1) \neq c(t_2)$ and
- (b1) $c(t_1) = 6$; or
- (b2) $c(v_1) = c(t_2)$; or
- (b3) $c(t_2) \in [c(t_1)]$.

Then G has a (G, T) -colouring.

Proof. Let $L(u) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, [c(t_1)], c(t_2), c(v_1)\}$ and $L(v_2) = Z_6 \setminus \{[c(t_2)], c(v_1), c(v_3)\}$ be the set of colours available for u and v_2 respectively. Clearly $L(v_2) \neq \emptyset$. Observe that the conditions (a), (b1), (b2) and (b3) also imply that $L(u) \neq \emptyset$. So, if $|L(u)| \geq 2$, $|L(v_2)| \geq 2$ or $L(u) \neq L(v_2)$, one can choose distinct colours $c(u) \in L(u)$ and $c(v_2) \in L(v_2)$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring.

It is simple matter to check that in each case, this condition is fulfilled. \square

Lemma 20. *Every antepenultimate edge has a unique penultimate predecessor.*

Proof. By contradiction. Suppose that an antepenultimate edge g has two penultimate predecessors f and f' .

According to Corollary 16, C_f^{int} and $C_{f'}^{int}$ are isomorphic to one of the graphs B_1 and B_2 . Let us denote the vertices of C_f^{int} by their names in Figure 3 and the vertices of $C_{f'}^{int}$ by their names in Figure 3 augmented with a prime.

Since g , f and f' are bounding the face incident to g in C_g^{int} , the edge g is $v_1v'_1$, $v_1v'_3$, $v_3v'_3$ or $v_3v'_1$. Since rv_1 and rv'_1 are edges, then $g = v_1v'_1$, for otherwise rv_1 would cross g .

First, suppose that $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to B_1 , i.e., $rv'_2 \in E$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $((G - \{v_2, v_3\}) \cup \{v'_2u, v'_2v_1\}, T - \{v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring, which is a $(G - \{v_2, v_3\}, T - \{v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(v'_2) \notin \{c(u), c(v_1)\}$. Setting $c(v_2) = c(v'_2)$ and $c(v_3) = 1$ gives a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

The case C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 is symmetric, so we may assume that both are C_e^{int} and $C_{e'}^{int}$ are isomorphic to B_2 . By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a $(G - \{v_2, v'_2, v_3, t_2\}, T - \{v_2, v'_2, v_3, t_2\})$ -colouring. Set $c(v_2) = c(v'_2) = 1$. Then, one can choose $c(t_2)$ in $L = Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(u), c(u')\}$ such that $I = [c(t_2)] \cup \{1, c(v_1), c(v'_1)\} \neq Z_6$ because $|L| \geq 2$. Hence colouring v_3 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus I$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. \square

Lemma 21. *Every antepenultimate edge has a unique predecessor.*

Proof. By contradiction. Suppose that an antepenultimate edge g has two predecessors f and f' . By Lemma 20, one of those is not penultimate. So, without loss of generality, f is penultimate, and f' is not. Hence f' is minimal.

According to Corollary 16, C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 or B_2 , and according to Lemma 13, $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to some of A_1 , A_2 and A_3 . Let us denote the vertices of C_f^{int} by their names in Figure 3 and the vertices of $C_{f'}^{int}$ by their names in Figure 2 augmented with a prime.

Since g , f and f' are bounding the face incident to g in C_g^{int} , the edge g is $v_1v'_1$, $v_1v'_2$, $v_3v'_1$ or $v_3v'_2$. Moreover, since rv_1 is an edge, rv_3 is not an edge if C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 , and rv'_1 is an edge if $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_1 , we must be in one of the following cases:

- C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 , $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_2 or A_3 and $g = v_1v'_2$.

By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $(G - \{v_2, t_2, u', v_3\} \cup \{v'_2r\}, T - \{v_2, t_2, u', v_3\})$ -colouring c which is a $(G - \{v_2, t_2, u', v_3\}, T - \{v_2, t_2, u', v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(v'_2) \neq 1$. Set $c(v_3) = 1$. Let $L(t_2) \supseteq Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t'_2)\}$, $L(v_2) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(u), c(v_1)\}$ and $L(u') = Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(t'_2), c(v'_2)\}$. Clearly, there exists at most one $i \in Z_6$ such that $L(u') = [i]$ and at most one $j \in Z_6$ such that $L(v_2) = [j]$. Thus, as $|L(t_2)| \geq 3$, there exists $k \in L(t_2)$ such that $L(u') \setminus [k] \neq \emptyset$ and $L(v_2) \setminus [k] \neq \emptyset$. Setting $c(t_2) = k$ and colouring u' and v_2 by colours in $L(u') \setminus [k]$ and $L(v_2) \setminus [k]$, respectively, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_2 , $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_2 or A_3 and $g = v_1v_2'$.

By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $((G - \{v_2, t_2, v_3, u'\}) \cup \{t_2' u, t_2' v_1\}, T - \{v_2, t_2, v_3, u'\})$ -colouring c which is a $(G - \{v_2, t_2, v_3, u'\}, T - \{v_2, t_2, v_3, u'\})$ -colouring such that $c(t_2') \notin \{c(u), c(v_1)\}$.

Suppose that $t_2t_2' \in E$. If we can colour t_2 with $\beta \in [c(v_1)] \cup \{6\}$, then we can colour u' with some colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{c(t_2'), c(v_2')\} \cup [\beta])$, v_3 with some colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{c(u'), c(v_2'), c(v_1)\} \cup [\beta])$ and v_2 with some colour in $Z_6 \setminus (\{c(v_3), c(u), c(v_1)\} \cup [\beta])$, a contradiction. So, there is no available colour in $[c(v_1)] \cup \{6\}$ for t_2 ; that is, $[c(v_1)] \cup \{6\} \subseteq \{1, 2, c(u), c(t_2')\}$. Since $c(v_1) \notin \{1, c(u), c(t_2')\}$, we must have $c(v_1) = 2$ and $\{c(u), c(t_2')\} = \{3, 6\}$. colour u' with 2 (since $v_2' \in N(v_1)$ we know that $c(v_2') \neq c(v_1)$), v_2 with 1 and v_3 with $c(t_2')$. Colour t_2 with 4 if $c(u) = 3$ and with 5 otherwise. This gives a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Now, suppose that $ru' \in E$. If $c(u) \neq 6$, then we can colour t_2 with 6 and u' , v_3 and v_2 can be greedily coloured in this order, a contradiction; thus, $c(u) = 6$. Let $L(u') = Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(t_2'), c(v_2')\}$ be the colours available for u' ; note that if $L(u') = [i]$ for some $i \in Z_6$ then $c(t_2') = 6$ and $c(v_2') = 2$, a contradiction since $c(t_2') \neq c(u)$. Clearly, there exists $\beta \in [c(v_1)] \setminus \{1, 2\}$ so we can colour t_2 with β , u' with any colour in $L(u') \setminus [\beta]$ (recall that $L(u') \neq [i]$ for all $i \in Z_6$). Then colour v_3 and v_2 greedily gives a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 or B_2 , $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_2 or A_3 and $g = v_1v_1'$.

By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $((G - \{t_2, v_2, v_3\}) \cup \{uv_1', ru', rv_1'\}, T - \{t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring, which is a $(G - \{t_2, v_2, v_3\}, T - \{t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(v_1'), c(u') \neq 1$ and $c(v_1') \neq c(u)$.

Suppose that we can colour t_2 with $\beta \in [c(v_1)] \cup \{6\}$. We know that there is at least one colour $i \in Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(u), c(v_1)\} \cup [\beta])$ available for v_2 and at least one colour $j \in Z_6 \setminus (\{c(v_1'), c(u'), c(v_1)\} \cup [\beta])$ available for v_3 . Since $c(v_1') \notin \{1, c(u)\}$, then $i \neq j$ and we can colour v_2 with i and v_3 with j to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

So, suppose that the colours of $[c(v_1)] \cup \{6\}$ all appear in $N(t_2)\{v_2, v_3\}$; since $|([c(v_1)] \cup \{6\}) \setminus \{1, 2\}| \geq 2$, t_2 must be adjacent to at least one of u and t_1' .

Assume first $t_2t_1' \in E$. Then recolour u' with 1. If $ut_2 \notin E$ or $[c(v_1)] \cup \{6\} \not\subseteq \{1, 2, c(u), c(t_1')\}$, note that we can apply the same argument as before since it holds even if $c(u') = 1$; so suppose otherwise. In this case we must have: either (a) $c(v_1) = 6$, $c(u) = 5$ and $c(t_1') = 6$; or (b) $c(v_1) = 2$ and $\{c(u), c(t_1')\} = \{3, 6\}$. colour v_2 with 1. If (a) occurs, then colour t_2 with 3 and v_3 with 5; if (b) occurs and $c(t_1') = 6$, then colour t_2 with 4 and v_3 6; if (b) occurs and $c(t_1') = 3$, then colour t_2 with 5 and v_3 with 3.

Hence $t_2t_1' \notin E$, and so $t_2u \in E$. The possible situations are: (c) $c(v_1) = 6$, $c(u) = 5$ and $c(u') = 6$; or (d) $c(v_1) = 2$ and $\{c(u), c(u')\} = \{3, 6\}$. If (c) occurs, then colour v_3 with $\{2, 5\} \setminus \{c(v_1')\}$ and t_2 with $\{3, 4\} \setminus [c(v_3)]$. If (d) occurs, then colour v_3 with $c(u)$ (recall that $c(v_1') \neq c(u)$) and t_2 with $\{4, 5\} \setminus [c(v_3)]$. In both cases we get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 , $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_1 and $g = v_1v_1'$.

Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{u, v_2, t_2, v_3, u'\}, T - \{u, v_2, t_2, v_3, u'\})$ by identifying t_1 and t_1' . By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, v_2, t_2, v_3, u'\}, T - \{u, v_2, t_2, v_3, u'\})$ -colouring such that $c(t_1) = c(t_1')$. Set $c(t_2) = 6$ and $c(u') = c(v_1)$. Let $L = \{2, 3, 4\} \setminus \{c(v_1), c(v_1')\}$.

If $c(t_1) \neq 5$, then choosing $c(v_3) \in L$, and applying Lemma 17, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $c(t_1) = c(t_1') = 5$.

If $L \neq \{4\}$, then we can choose $c(v_3) \in L \setminus \{4\}$, and apply Lemma 17 to get a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Hence $\{c(v_1), c(v_1')\} = \{2, 3\}$.

Now setting $c(v_3) = 5$, $c(v_2) = 6$, $c(u) = c(v'_1)$ and recolouring t_2 with 3, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_1 , $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_1 and $g = v_3v'_1$.

Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{v_1, v_2, u, t_1, u'\}, T - \{v_1, v_2, u, t_1, u'\})$ by identifying t_2 and t'_1 . By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{v_1, v_2, u, t_1, u'\}, T - \{v_1, v_2, u, t_1, u'\})$ -colouring such that $c(t_2) = c(t'_1)$. Set $c(t_1) = 6$.

If $c(t_2) = c(t'_1) = 6$, then set $c(u) = c(v_3)$. One can then greedily extend the colouring to v_1, v_2 and u' in this order, a contradiction.

If $c(t_2) \neq 6$, then one can choose $c(v_1) \in [c(t_2)] \setminus \{5, 6\}$. This is valid since $c(v_3)$ and $c(v'_1)$ are not in $[c(t_2)]$. One can then greedily extend the colouring to v_2, u and u' in this order, a contradiction.

- C_f^{int} is isomorphic to B_2 , $C_{f'}^{int}$ is isomorphic to A_1 and $g = v_3v'_1$.

By minimality of (G, T) , there exists a $(G - \{t_1, u, v_1, v_2\} \cup \{rv_3\}, T - \{t_1, u, v_1, v_2\})$ -colouring c . Set $c(v_2) = 1$ and let $L(v_1) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, c(v_3), c(u'), c(v'_1)\}$ be the colours available for v_1 .

If $L(v_1) \neq \{5, 6\}$, then colouring t_1 with 6, v_1 with some colour in $L(v_1) \setminus \{5, 6\}$ and u with some colour in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 5, 6, c(v_1), c(t_2)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

If $L(v_1) = \{5, 6\}$, then $c(u'), c(v'_1) \in \{2, 3, 4\}$ and consequently $c(t'_1) \in \{5, 6\}$. We can suppose that $c(t'_1) = 5$ and $c(v_3) = 4$ for otherwise we can recolour u' with $c(v_3)$ and fall in the case $L(v_1) \neq \{5, 6\}$. So, $\{c(u'), c(v'_1)\} = \{2, 3\}$ and $c(t_2) \geq 6$. Setting $c(t_1) = 3$, $c(u) = 5$ and $c(v_1) = 6$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. □

Lemma 22. *There is no antepenultimate edge g with only one penultimate predecessor f such that C_f^{int} is B_1 .*

Proof. One of the endvertices of g must be v_1 or v_3 (see Figure 3). We now distinguish some cases depending on the possible endvertices of g .

- Assume $g = v'v_3$ with v' a leaf with twig t' . Since $rv_1 \in E(G)$, by planarity, $t' \neq t_1$. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{t_1, v_1, u, v_2\}, T - \{t_1, v_1, u, v_2\})$ by identifying t' and t_2 . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{t_1, v_1, u, v_2\}, T - \{t_1, v_1, u, v_2\})$ -colouring such that $c(t') = c(t_2)$. Set $c(v_2) = c(v')$ and $c(t_1) = 6$.

If $c(t') \in \{5, 6\}$, then setting $c(u) = c(v_3)$ and choosing $c(v_1)$ in $\{2, 3, 4\} \setminus \{c(v'), c(v_3)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

If $c(t') \in \{3, 4\}$, then setting $c(v_1) = c(t') - 1$ and choosing $c(u)$ in $\{2, 3, 4\} \setminus \{c(v_1), c(v_2)\}$, we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- Assume $g = t'v_3$ with t' a twig. We can apply an argument similar to (a) choosing $c(v_2) \in Z_6 \setminus (\{1, c(v_3)\} \cup [c(t_2)])$.
- Assume $g = v_1r$. Since G is triangulated, the edge v_1t_2 must exist. This is a contradiction, since f is the successor of e .
- Assume $g = v_1t_2$. Then v_3 is a leaf of degree at most 3, a contradiction from Lemma 6.
- Assume $g = v_1v'$ with v' a leaf with twig t_2 . Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{v_3\}, T - \{v_3\})$ by identifying v_2 and v' . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{v_3\}, T - \{v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(v_2) = c(v')$. Hence one can colour v_3 with a colour from $Z_6 \setminus \{[c(t_2)], c(v_2), c(v_1)\}$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- (f) Assume $g = v_1 t'$ with $t' \neq t_2$ a twig. Since g is the successor of f , $v_1 t_2$ is not an edge and $v_1 r$ is not inside C_g , so $v_3 t' \in E$.

Assume first that $rv_3 \notin E$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $((G - \{u, v_2, v_3\}) \cup t_1 t_2, T - \{u, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, v_2, v_3\}, T - \{u, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(t_1) \neq c(t_2)$. Since $c(t'), c(v_1) \neq 1$, we can colour v_3 with 1. Then, by Lemma 17 (b), there is a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Assume now that $rv_3 \in E$. Then $t' t_2 \notin E$ by planarity. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ by identifying t_1 and t' . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring, which is a $((G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}), T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(t_1) = c(t')$. Set $c(t_2) = 6$. One can choose $c(v_3) \in \{2, 3\} \setminus \{c(t'), c(v_1)\}$ because $|c(v_1) - c(t')| \geq 2$. Then by Lemma 17 (a), there is a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- (g) Assume $g = v_1 v'$ with v' a leaf with twig $t' \neq t_2$. Since g is the successor of f , $v_1 t_2$ is not an edge and $v_1 r$ and $v_1 t'$ are not inside C_g , so $v_3 t' \in E$.

Assume first that $rv_3 \notin E$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $((G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}) \cup rv', T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(v') \neq 1$. Since $c(t'), c(v'), c(v_1) \neq 1$, we can colour v_3 with 1. Then, colouring t_2 with a colour from $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t'), c(v'), c(t_1)\}$ and using Lemma 17 (b), we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Assume now that $rv_3 \in E$. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ by identifying t_1 and t' . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring, which is a $((G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}), T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(t_1) = c(t')$. If $\{c(v_1), c(v')\} \neq \{2, 3\}$, then one can choose $c(v_3)$ in $\{2, 3\} \setminus \{c(t'), c(v'), c(v_1)\}$. Then setting $c(t_2) = 6$ and applying Lemma 17 (a), we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Thus $\{c(v_1), c(v')\} = \{2, 3\}$, and so $c(t_1) \geq 5$. Setting $c(u) = c(v')$, $c(t_2) = 3$ and choosing $c(v_3)$ in $\{5, 6\} \setminus c(t')$ and $c(v_2)$ in $\{5, 6\} \setminus c(v_3)$ yields a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. □

Proof. One of the endvertices of g must be v_1 or v_3 (see Figure 3). We now distinguish some cases depending on the possible endvertices of g .

- (a) Assume $g = v' v_3$ with v' a leaf with twig t' . Since $rv_1 \in E(G)$, by planarity, $t' \neq t_1$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $((G - \{t_1, v_1, u\}) \cup \{t_2 v', t_2 t'\}, T - \{t_1, v_1, u\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{t_1, v_1, u\}, T - \{t_1, v_1, u\})$ -colouring such that $c(v') \neq c(t_2)$ and $c(t') \neq c(t_2)$. Hence one can colour v_1 with $c(t_2)$ and colour t_1 with a colour in $Z_6 \setminus ([c(t_2)] \cup \{1, 2\})$. From Lemma 19 (b2), we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- (b) Assume $g = t' v_3$ with t' a twig. We can apply an argument similar to (a).
- (c) Assume $g = v_1 r$. Since G is triangulated, the edge $v_1 t_2$ must exist. This is a contradiction, since f is the successor of e .
- (d) Assume $g = v_1 t_2$. Then v_3 is a leaf of degree at most 3, a contradiction from Lemma 6.
- (e) Assume $g = v_1 v'$ with v' a leaf adjacent to t_2 in T . Since f is the successor of $v_1 v_3$, $v_1 t_2 \notin E(G)$ and so $v_2 v_3 \in E(G)$ because G is triangulated. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{v_3\}, T - \{v_3\})$ by identifying v_2 and v' . By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{v_3\}, T - \{v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(v_2) = c(v')$. Hence one can colour v_3 with a colour from $Z_6 \setminus \{c(t_2), c(v_2), c(v_1)\}$ to obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

- (f) Assume $g = v_1 t'$ with $t' \neq t_2$ a twig. Let (G', T') be the graph pair obtained from $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ by identifying t_1 and t' . This is possible since $t_1 t'$ is not an edge by planarity. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a (G', T') -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(t') = c(t_1)$. Let $L(t_2) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t')\}$. If $c(t_1) = 6$, then, colouring v_3 with 1 and t_2 with a colour from $L(t_2) \setminus \{6\}$, and using Lemma 19 (b1), we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So $c(t_1) \neq 6$, that is $c(t_1) \in \{3, 4, 5\}$. We can colour t_2 with a colour from $[c(t_1)] \setminus \{c(t'), c(t_1)\} \subseteq L(v_2)$. By Lemma 19 (b3), there is a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.
- (g) Assume $g = v_1 v'$ with v' a leaf with twig $t' \neq t_2$. By minimality of (G, T) , there is a $((G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}) \cup \{v_1 t'\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring which is a $(G - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\}, T - \{u, t_2, v_2, v_3\})$ -colouring such that $c(v_1) \neq c(t')$. If $c(v_1) \neq 2$, we can colour t_2 with $c(v_1)$, since $c(t'), c(v') \neq c(v_1)$. Then, colouring v_3 with a colour from $Z_6 \setminus \{[c(v_1)], c(t'), c(v')\}$, and applying Lemma 19 (b2), we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. So, $c(v_1) = 2$.

Suppose that $c(v') \neq 1$. Since $c(t'), c(v') \notin \{1, 2\}$, then $\{c(t'), c(v')\} \in \{\{3, 5\}, \{3, 6\}, \{4, 6\}\}$. Let $L(v_3) = Z_6 \setminus \{2, c(t'), c(v')\}$ and let $L(t_2) = Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t'), c(v')\}$. If $L(v_2) \cap ([c(t_1)] \setminus \{c(t_1)\}) \neq \emptyset$, then choosing $c(t_2)$ in $[c(t_1)] \setminus \{c(t_1)\}$ and $c(v_3)$ in $L(v_3) \setminus [c(t_2)]$ (observe that $|[c(t_2)] \cap L(v_3)| \leq 2$, since $L(v_3)$ has no three consecutive integers), and using Lemma 19 (b3), we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. Then $L(v_2) \cap ([c(t_1)] \setminus \{c(t_1)\}) = \emptyset$. If $c(t_1) = 3$, then $\{c(t'), c(v')\} = \{4, 6\}$. In this case, colouring t_2 with 3, v_3 and u with 5 and v_2 with 6, we can obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. If $c(t_1) = 4$, then $\{c(t'), c(v')\} = \{3, 5\}$, and if $c(t_1) = 5$, then $\{c(t'), c(v')\} = \{4, 6\}$. In both cases, setting $c(t_2) = c(t_1)$, choosing $c(v_3)$ in $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, [c(t_1)]\}$ and using Lemma 19 (a), we obtain a (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction.

Hence $c(v') = 1$. If $c(t_1) \in \{3, 4\}$, colour t_2 with 3 (if $c(t') \neq 3$) or 4 (otherwise). If $c(t_1) = 5$, colour t_2 with 6 (if $c(t') \neq 6$) or 5 (otherwise). These cases satisfy the conditions $c(t_2) \in [c(t_1)]$ and $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t'), [c(t_2)]\} \neq \emptyset$. Then, colouring v_3 with a colour from $Z_6 \setminus \{1, 2, c(t'), [c(t_2)]\}$, and using Lemma 19 ((a) or (b3)), we obtain (G, T) -colouring, a contradiction. □

Lemmas 20, 21, 22 and 18 directly imply the following.

Corollary 23. (G, T) has no antepenultimate edges.

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