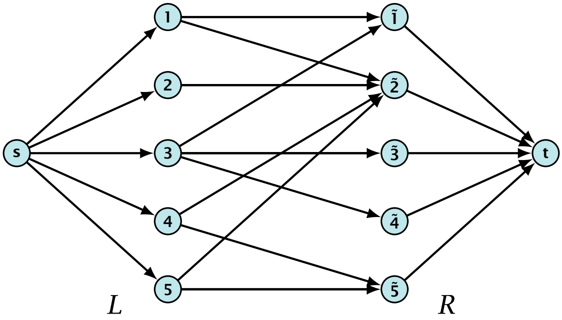
19 Bipartite Matching via Flows

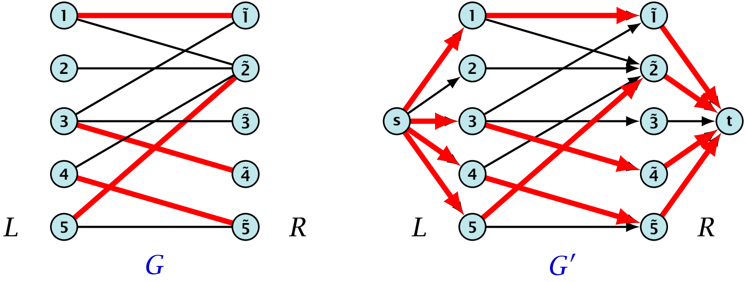
- Input: undirected, bipartite graph $G = (L \uplus R \uplus \{s,t\}, E')$.
- Direct all edges from L to R.
- Add source s and connect it to all nodes on the left.
- Add t and connect all nodes on the right to t.
- All edges have unit capacity.



Proof

Max cardinality matching in $G \leq$ value of maxflow in G'

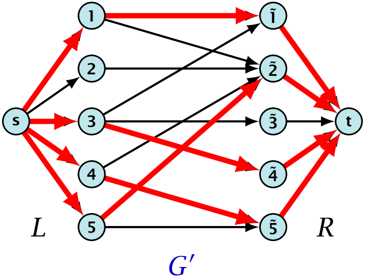
- Given a maximum matching M of cardinality k.
- Consider flow f that sends one unit along each of k paths.
- f is a flow and has cardinality k.

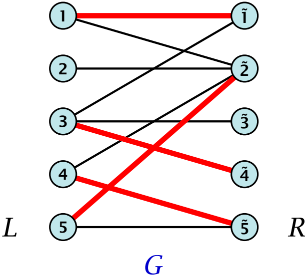


Proof

Max cardinality matching in $G \geq$ value of maxflow in G'

- Let f be a maxflow in G' of value k
- Integrality theorem $\Rightarrow$ k integral; we can assume f is 0/1.
- Consider M= set of edges from L to R with $f(e) = 1$.
- Each node in L and R participates in at most one edge in M.
- $|M| = k$, as the flow must use at least k middle edges.





19 Bipartite Matching via Flows

Which flow algorithm to use?

- Generic augmenting path: $\mathcal{O}(m\,\mathrm{val}(f^*)) = \mathcal{O}(mn)$.
- Capacity scaling: $\mathcal{O}(m^2 \log C) = \mathcal{O}(m^2)$.