

A Proof by Ideal Elements

Let $G(X, Y)$ be a bipartite graph with parts X, Y . By a 2-to-1 complete matching of X to Y we mean a subgraph in which every $x \in X$ has degree 2 and every $y \in Y$ has degree ≤ 1 . For any vertex v in any graph, $N(v) = \{u \mid uv \in E\}$ and $N(S) = \bigcup_{v \in S} N(v)$.

Theorem. A bipartite graph $G(X, Y)$ has a 2-to-1 complete matching from X to Y iff

$$\forall S \subset X, \quad |N(S)| \geq 2|S|. \quad (1)$$

Proof: We create another bipartite graph $G(\widehat{X}, Y)$ such that G has a complete 2-to-1 matching from X to Y iff \widehat{G} has a complete matching from \widehat{X} to Y . Then we show that Hall's condition on \widehat{G} is equivalent to (1) on G .

First we define \widehat{G} : If $X = \{1, 2, \dots, m\}$, then let

$$\begin{aligned} X^* &= \{1^*, 2^*, \dots, m^*\} \\ \widehat{X} &= X \cup X^*. \end{aligned}$$

$1^*, 2^*, \dots, m^*$ are the *ideal elements*.

Next create edges from X^* to Y to duplicate the edges from X . That is, for all $i \in X$, arrange that $N(i^*) = N(i)$. It is clear that every complete 2-to-1 matching in G from X to Y now corresponds to a complete matching from \widehat{X} in \widehat{G} : for each $i \in X$ just take either edge and move its X end to i^* . Similarly, given a complete matching from \widehat{X} in \widehat{G} , for each edge ending at an i^* , move that end to the corresponding i .

To prove Condition (1), henceforth let S always denote a subset of X and T denote a subset of \widehat{X} . Then for all T define

$$\begin{aligned} \widehat{T} &= \bigcup_{i \text{ or } i^* \in T} \{i, i^*\}, \\ S_T &= \bigcup_{i \text{ or } i^* \in T} \{i\}. \end{aligned}$$

Note that $S_T \subset X$, and for all T there exists S such that $\widehat{S} = \widehat{T}$ (namely, $S = S_T$). Also note that

$$\forall T \subset \widehat{X}, \quad N(T) = N(\widehat{T}) \quad \text{and} \quad |\widehat{T}| \geq |T|. \quad (2)$$

Thus we claim

$$\forall T \subset \widehat{X}, \quad |N(T)| \geq |T| \quad (3)$$

\iff

$$\forall \widehat{T} \subset \widehat{X}, \quad |N(\widehat{T})| \geq |\widehat{T}|. \quad (4)$$

Certainly (3) \implies (4) since the \widehat{T} sets are special cases of T sets; and (4) \implies (3) by (2): for any T ,

$$|N(T)| = |N(\widehat{T})| \stackrel{(4)}{\geq} |\widehat{T}| \geq |T|.$$

Finally, to prove (1), we show that it is equivalent to Hall's condition:

X has a complete 2-to-1 matching in G

$\iff \widehat{X}$ has a complete matching in \widehat{G}

$\iff \forall T \subset \widehat{X}, \quad |N(T)| \geq |T| \quad \text{[Hall's Thm]}$

$\iff \forall \widehat{T} \subset \widehat{X}, \quad |N(\widehat{T})| \geq |\widehat{T}|$

$\iff \forall S \subset X, \quad |N(\widehat{S})| \geq |\widehat{S}| \quad \text{[every } \widehat{T} \text{ is an } \widehat{S}]$

$\iff \forall S \subset X, \quad |N(S)| \geq 2|S|. \quad \blacksquare \quad [|\widehat{S}| = 2|S|]$

Query to check your understanding:

Suppose $U = \widehat{T}$ for some T . Then for how many T is $U = \widehat{T}$?