

08. Maximum Flow Formulations

CPSC 535

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Big Idea: Problem Reduction

problem A reduces to problem B = can use an algorithm for B to do all the hard work of solving problem A
= A is easier than B (or tied)

Sometimes A, B are closely related
e.g. A = sorting bounded integers, B = general sorting

More interesting: problems seem completely unrelated (e.g. SAT, CLIQUE; max-flow, bipartite matching)

Reduction Algorithm Pseudocode

problem A reduces to problem B = can use an algorithm for *B* to do all the hard work of solving problem *A*

```
1: function SOLVE-A(input-for-A)
2:   input-for-B = pre-process input-for-A
3:   solution-for-B = solve-B(input-for-B)
4:   solution-for-A = post-process solution-for-B
5:   return solution-for-A
6: end function
```

In spirit

- ▶ the **solve-B** part is complex and the bottleneck
- ▶ the **overhead** (pre-process and post-process parts) is simple and fast

Reducing to Max-Flow

maximum flow problem

input: a flow network G

output: a flow f of maximum value $|f|$

- 1: **function** SOLVE-A(input-for-A)
- 2: $G' =$ flow network based on input-for-A
- 3: $f =$ SOLVE-MAX-FLOW(G')
- 4: solution-for-A = post-process f
- 5: **return** solution-for-A
- 6: **end function**

(use G' because sometimes input-for-A is already a graph G)

The fastest max-flow alg. in CLRS takes $O(|V|^3)$ time; overhead usually takes linear time; so SOLVE-MAX-FLOW is usually the bottleneck.

Formulation in General

To formulate A as a B instance, need to explain

- ▶ how to map input-for- A to input-for- B
- ▶ how to map solution-for- B to solution-for- A
- ▶ how all the “rules” of A are enforced...
- ▶ ...by the B problem itself, and/or how we create input-for- B
- ▶ “rules:” constraints on the output

This is a valuable problem-solving skill!

Max-Flow Formulation

Max-Flow Formulation: details of how an algorithm for problem A

- ▶ maps an input into a flow network G'
- ▶ recovers a solution from the flow f

Also: analyze these steps to determine whether

- ▶ overhead is $O(|V|^3) \implies$ SOLVE-MAX-FLOW is the bottleneck in SOLVE-A (usually yes)
- ▶ or, overhead is $\Omega(|V|^3)$ and is the bottleneck

Usually we only discuss these parts, and don't write out the SOLVE-A pseudocode explicitly.

Max-Flow Formulation

“Rules” of problem A must be implemented by the “rules” built into the max-flow problem and/or the edges and weights we introduce

- ▶ directed graph $G = (V, E)$, source $s \in V$, sink $t \in V$
- ▶ none of: self-loop, antiparallel edge, unreachable vertex
- ▶ non-negative capacity on every edge
- ▶ flow is function $f(u, v)$ over vertices u, v
- ▶ **nonexistent edges**: if $(u, v) \notin E$ then $f(u, v) = 0$
- ▶ **capacity constraint**: $0 \leq f(u, v) \leq c(u, v)$
- ▶ **flow conservation**: (flow-in) = (flow-out), except for source and sink; formally, $\forall u \in V - \{s, t\}$,

$$\sum_{v \in V} f(v, u) = \sum_{v \in V} f(u, v)$$

- ▶ *value* $|f|$ = net flow into sink

A Straightforward Formulation: Evacuation

Suppose we are working with safety authorities to determine how quickly CSUF could be evacuated in a natural disaster such as a wildfire.

evacuation rate problem

input: directed graph G representing a road map of Fullerton, each edge weighted with the number of autos/hour that may travel on that road

output: the maximum number of autos/hour that could travel from CSUF to a 57 or 91 freeway onramp

(Straightforward because this is clearly about flow in a directed graph.)

A Straightforward Formulation: Evacuation

For a clear formulation, need to specify

- ▶ how to convert road map into flow network G' ; needs
 - ▶ to be a directed graph
 - ▶ source s and sink t
 - ▶ non-negative capacity on each edge
 - ▶ no self-loops, antiparallel edges, or disconnected vertices
- ▶ how to decode flow f into a solution for our problem (# autos/hour evacuated)
- ▶ overhead time efficiency

A Straightforward Formulation: Evacuation

- ▶ suppose for sake of discussion, road map G has none of the taboo components (self-loops etc.)
- ▶ start with $G' = G$
- ▶ define source s in G' as the Gymnasium-Campus intersection on campus
- ▶ create new sink t in G' that represents “on either freeway;” create edges from highway onramps to t , each with capacity ∞
- ▶ after finding max-flow in G' , examine flow function f to compute evacuation rate as

$$\sum_{\text{onramp vertex } o} f(o, t)$$

- ▶ overhead is $O(|V| + |E|)$, not bottleneck

Robust Max-Flow

Goal: eliminate some of the pesky constraints of the classical max-flow problem

robust maximum flow problem

input: a flow network $G = (V, E)$, which may contain unreachable vertices, antiparallel edges, a set $S \subseteq V$ of sources, and a set $T \subseteq V$ of sinks

output: a flow f of maximum value $|f|$

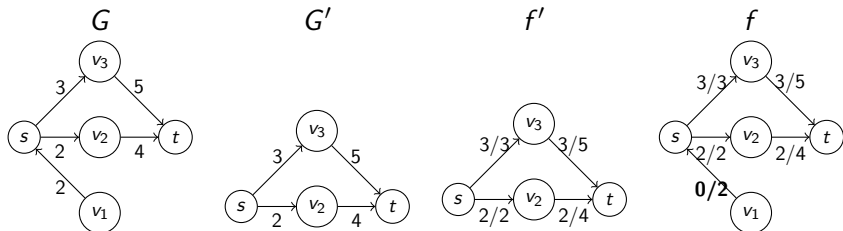
- ▶ unreachable vertices are allowed
- ▶ antiparallel edges are allowed
- ▶ **set** of sources/sinks instead of just one vertex each

Reformulating to Eliminate Unreachable Vertices

given flow network G that may contain unreachable vertices,

- ▶ use BFS (or DFS) to mark every vertex that is reachable from s
- ▶ use BFS again, following edges backwards, to mark every vertex that is reachable from t
- ▶ if a vertex was not marked both times, it is redundant
- ▶ $G' =$ induced subgraph of G with all redundant vertices removed
- ▶ compute flow f' in G'
- ▶ to convert f' to flow f in G , set flow along all redundant edges to 0
- ▶ overhead is $2 \times \text{BFS} = O(|V| + |E|)$, not bottleneck

Reformulating to Eliminate Unreachable Vertices

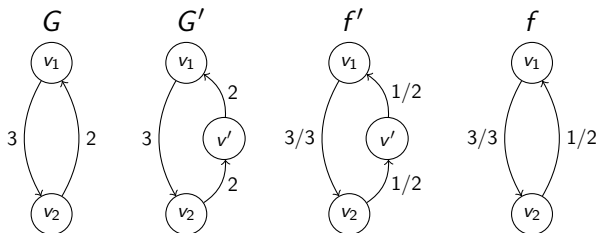


Reformulating to Eliminate Antiparallel Edges

given a flow network G that may contain antiparallel edges,

- ▶ initially $G' = G$
- ▶ identify all antiparallel edges
- ▶ when \exists antiparallel edges between vertices v_1, v_2 ,
 - ▶ create new vertex v' in G' between v_1, v_2
 - ▶ replace edge (v_1, v_2) with edges (v_1, v') and (v', v_2)
 - ▶ set $c(v_1, v') = c(v', v_2) = c(v_1, v_2)$
- ▶ observe that flow between v_1, v_2 is identical but antiparallel edge is eliminated
- ▶ to convert flow f' in G' to equiv. flow in G : for each v' introduced above, set $f(v_1, v_2) = f'(v_1, v')$
- ▶ overhead is $O(|E|)$, $|E'| < 2|E| \in \Theta(|E|)$, not bottleneck

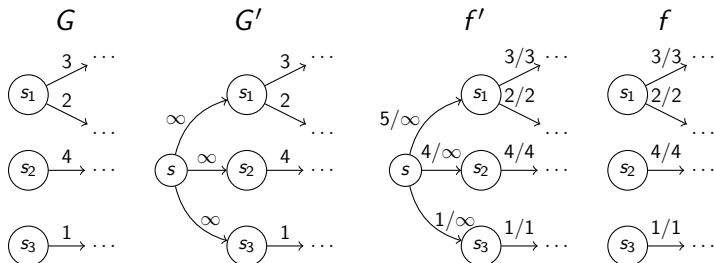
Reformulating to Eliminate Antiparallel Edges



Reformulating to Accommodate Multiple Sinks or Sources

- ▶ initially $G' = G$
- ▶ create in G' a *super-source* vertex s and *super-sink* t
- ▶ for each source $s_i \in G$, create an edge (s, s_i) in G' with capacity $c(s, s_i) = \infty$
- ▶ for each sink $t_i \in G$, create an edge (t_i, t) in G' with capacity $c(t_i, t) = \infty$
- ▶ to convert flow f' in G' to equiv. flow f in G : delete flow info. along any of the new edges
- ▶ overhead is $O(|V|)$, $|V'| = |V| + 2 \in \Theta(|V|)$, $|E'| \leq |V| + |E|$, not bottleneck

Reformulating to Accommodate Multiple Sinks or Sources



Formulations for Robust Max-Flow

From now on, we have the option of formulating problems as instances of the more robust max-flow problem:

robust maximum flow problem

input: a flow network $G = (V, E)$, which may contain unreachable vertices, antiparallel edges, a set $S \subseteq V$ of sources, and a set $T \subseteq V$ of sinks

output: a flow f of maximum value $|f|$