

Foundations of Artificial Intelligence

D1. Constraint Satisfaction Problems: Introduction and Examples

Malte Helmert

University of Basel

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D1.1 Introduction

D1.2 Examples

D1.3 Summary

Constraint Satisfaction Problems: Overview

Chapter overview: constraint satisfaction problems

- ▶ D1–D2. Introduction
 - ▶ D1. Introduction and Examples
 - ▶ D2. Constraint Networks
- ▶ D3–D6. Basic Algorithms
- ▶ D7–D8. Problem Structure

Classification

classification:

Constraint Satisfaction Problems

environment:

- ▶ static vs. dynamic
- ▶ deterministic vs. nondeterministic vs. stochastic
- ▶ fully observable vs. partially observable
- ▶ discrete vs. continuous
- ▶ single-agent vs. multi-agent

problem solving method:

- ▶ problem-specific vs. general vs. learning

Special case of a **pure search** combinatorial optimization problem

D1.1 Introduction

Constraints

What is a Constraint?

a condition that every solution to a problem must satisfy

German: Einschränkung, Nebenbedingung (math.)

Examples: where do constraints occur?

- ▶ **mathematics:** requirements on solutions of optimization problems (e.g., equations, inequalities)
- ▶ **software testing:** specification of invariants to check data consistency (e.g., assertions)
- ▶ **databases:** integrity constraints

Constraint Satisfaction Problems: Informally

Given:

- ▶ set of **variables** with corresponding domains
- ▶ set of **constraints** that the variables must satisfy
 - ▶ most commonly **binary**, i.e., every constraint refers to **two** variables

Solution:

- ▶ **assignment** to the variables that satisfies all constraints

German: Variablen, Constraints, binär, Belegung

D1.2 Examples

Examples

Examples

- ▶ 8 queens problem
- ▶ Latin squares
- ▶ Sudoku
- ▶ graph coloring
- ▶ satisfiability in propositional logic

German: 8-Damen-Problem, lateinische Quadrate, Sudoku, Graphfärbung, Erfüllbarkeitsproblem der Aussagenlogik

more complex examples:

- ▶ systems of equations and inequalities
- ▶ database queries

Example: 8 Queens Problem (Reminder)

(reminder from previous two chapters)

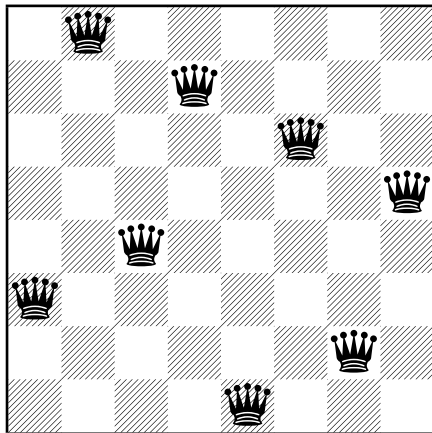
8 Queens Problem

How can we

- ▶ place 8 queens on a chess board
 - ▶ such that no two queens threaten each other?
-
- ▶ originally proposed in 1848
 - ▶ variants: board size; other pieces; higher dimension

There are 92 solutions, or 12 solutions if we do not count symmetric solutions (under rotation or reflection) as distinct.

8 Queens Problem: Example Solution



example solution for the 8 queens problem

Example: Latin Squares

Latin Squares

How can we

- ▶ build an $n \times n$ matrix with n symbols
- ▶ such that every symbol occurs exactly once in every row and every column?

$$\begin{array}{c}
 [1] \\
 \left[\begin{array}{cc} 1 & 2 \\ 2 & 1 \end{array} \right] \\
 \left[\begin{array}{ccc} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 2 & 3 & 1 \\ 3 & 1 & 2 \end{array} \right] \\
 \left[\begin{array}{cccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 \\ 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 \\ 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 \end{array} \right]
 \end{array}$$

There exist 12 different Latin squares of size 3,
 576 of size 4, 161 280 of size 5, . . . ,
 5 524 751 496 156 892 842 531 225 600 of size 9.

Example: Sudoku

Sudoku

How can we

- ▶ completely fill an already partially filled 9×9 matrix with numbers between 1–9
- ▶ such that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3×3 blocks contains every number exactly once?

2	5			3		9		1
	1				4			
4		7				2		8
		5	2					
				9	8	1		
	4				3			
			3	6			7	2
	7							3
9		3				6		4

relationship to Latin squares?

Sudoku: Trivia

- ▶ well-formed Sudokus have **exactly one** solution
- ▶ to achieve well-formedness, ≥ 17 cells must be filled already (McGuire et al., 2012)
- ▶ 6 670 903 752 021 072 936 960 solutions
- ▶ only 5 472 730 538 “non-symmetrical” solutions

Example: Graph Coloring

Graph Coloring

How can we

- ▶ color the vertices of a given graph using k colors
- ▶ such that two neighboring vertices never have the same color?

(The graph and k are problem parameters.)

NP-complete problem

- ▶ even for the special case of planar graphs and $k = 3$
- ▶ easy for $k = 2$ (also for general graphs)

Relationship to Sudoku?

Four Color Problem

famous problem in mathematics: **Four Color Problem**

- ▶ Is it always possible to color a **planar** graph with 4 colors?
- ▶ conjectured by Francis Guthrie (1852)
- ▶ 1890 first proof that 5 colors suffice
- ▶ several wrong proofs surviving for over 10 years
- ▶ solved by Appel and Haken in 1976: 4 colors suffice
- ▶ Appel and Haken reduced the problem to 1936 cases, which were then checked by computers
- ▶ first famous mathematical problem solved (partially) by computers
 - ↪ led to controversy: is this a mathematical proof?

Numberphile video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgBK43jB4rQ>

Satisfiability in Propositional Logic

Satisfiability in Propositional Logic

How can we

- ▶ assign **truth values** (true/false) to a set of propositional variables
- ▶ such that a given set of **clauses** (formulas of the form $X \vee \neg Y \vee Z$) is satisfied (true)?

remarks:

- ▶ NP-complete (Cook 1971; Levin 1973)
- ▶ requiring clause form (instead of arbitrary propositional formulas) is no restriction
- ▶ clause length bounded by 3 would not be a restriction

relationship to previous problems (e.g., Sudoku)?

Practical Applications

- ▶ There are **thousands** of practical applications of constraint satisfaction problems.
- ▶ This statement is true already for the satisfiability problem of propositional logic.

some examples:

- ▶ verification of hardware and software
- ▶ timetabling (e.g., generating time schedules, room assignments for university courses)
- ▶ assignment of frequency spectra (e.g., broadcasting, mobile phones)

Running Example

Small Math Puzzle (informal description)

- ▶ assign a value from $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ to the variables w and y
- ▶ and from $\{1, 2, 3\}$ to x and z
- ▶ such that
 - ▶ $w = 2x$,
 - ▶ $w < z$ and
 - ▶ $y > z$.

We will use this example to explain definitions and algorithms in the next chapters.

D1.3 Summary

Summary

- ▶ **constraint satisfaction:**
 - ▶ find **assignment** for a set of **variables**
 - ▶ with given **variable domains**
 - ▶ that satisfies a given set of **constraints**.
- ▶ **examples:**
 - ▶ 8 queens problem
 - ▶ Latin squares
 - ▶ Sudoku
 - ▶ graph coloring
 - ▶ satisfiability in propositional logic
 - ▶ many practical applications