

Stable Matching Problem

Goal. Given n men and n women, find a "suitable" matching.

- Participants rate members of opposite sex.
- Each man lists women in order of preference from best to worst.
- Each woman lists men in order of preference from best to worst.

	favorite ↓ 1 st		least favorite ↓ 3 rd
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Xavier	Amy	Bertha	Clare
Yancey	Bertha	Amy	Clare
Zeus	Amy	Bertha	Clare

Men's Preference Profile

	favorite ↓ 1 st		least favorite ↓ 3 rd
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Amy	Yancey	Xavier	Zeus
Bertha	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus
Clare	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus

Women's Preference Profile

Stable Matching Problem

Perfect matching: everyone is matched monogamously.

- Each man gets exactly one woman.
- Each woman gets exactly one man.

Stability: no incentive for some pair of participants to undermine assignment by joint action.

- In matching M , an unmatched pair m - w is **unstable** if man m and woman w prefer each other to current partners.
- Unstable pair m - w could each improve by eloping.

Stable matching: perfect matching with no unstable pairs.

Stable matching problem. Given the preference lists of n men and n women, find a stable matching if one exists.

Stable Matching Problem

Q. Is assignment X-C, Y-B, Z-A stable?

	favorite ↓ 1 st		least favorite ↓ 3 rd
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Xavier	Amy	Bertha	Clare
Yancey	Bertha	Amy	Clare
Zeus	Amy	Bertha	Clare

Men's Preference Profile

	favorite ↓ 1 st		least favorite ↓ 3 rd
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Amy	Yancey	Xavier	Zeus
Bertha	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus
Clare	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus

Women's Preference Profile

Stable Matching Problem

Q. Is assignment X-C, Y-B, Z-A stable?

A. No. Bertha and Xavier will defect.

	favorite ↓		least favorite ↓
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Xavier	Amy	Bertha	Clare
Yancey	Bertha	Amy	Clare
Zeus	Amy	Bertha	Clare

Men's Preference Profile

	favorite ↓		least favorite ↓
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Amy	Yancey	Xavier	Zeus
Bertha	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus
Clare	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus

Women's Preference Profile

Stable Matching Problem

Q. Is assignment X-A, Y-B, Z-C stable?

A. Yes.

	favorite ↓ 1 st		least favorite ↓ 3 rd
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Xavier	Amy	Bertha	Clare
Yancey	Bertha	Amy	Clare
Zeus	Amy	Bertha	Clare

Men's Preference Profile

	favorite ↓ 1 st		least favorite ↓ 3 rd
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Clare	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus

Women's Preference Profile

Stable Roommate Problem

Q. Do stable matchings always exist?

A. Not obvious a priori.

Stable roommate problem.

- $2n$ people; each person ranks others from 1 to $2n-1$.
- Assign roommate pairs so that no unstable pairs.

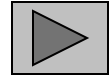
	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>
<i>A</i>	B	C	D
<i>B</i>	C	A	D
<i>C</i>	A	B	D
<i>D</i>	A	B	C

$A-B, C-D \Rightarrow B-C$ unstable
 $A-C, B-D \Rightarrow A-B$ unstable
 $A-D, B-C \Rightarrow A-C$ unstable

Observation. Stable matchings do not always exist for stable roommate problem.

Propose-And-Reject Algorithm

Propose-and-reject algorithm. [Gale-Shapley 1962] Intuitive method that guarantees to find a stable matching.



```
Initialize each person to be free.
while (some man is free and hasn't proposed to every woman) {
    Choose such a man m
    w = 1st woman on m's list to whom m has not yet proposed
    if (w is free)
        assign m and w to be engaged
    else if (w prefers m to her fiancé m')
        assign m and w to be engaged, and m' to be free
    else
        w rejects m
}
```

Proof of Correctness: Termination

Observation 1. Men propose to women in decreasing order of preference.

Observation 2. Once a woman is matched, she never becomes unmatched; she only "trades up."

Claim. Algorithm terminates after at most n^2 iterations of while loop.

Pf. Each time through the while loop a man proposes to a new woman.

There are only n^2 possible proposals. •

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
Victor	A	B	C	D	E
Wyatt	B	C	D	A	E
Xavier	C	D	A	B	E
Yancey	D	A	B	C	E
Zeus	A	B	C	D	E

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
Amy	W	X	Y	Z	V
Bertha	X	Y	Z	V	W
Clare	Y	Z	V	W	X
Diane	Z	V	W	X	Y
Erika	V	W	X	Y	Z

$n(n-1) + 1$ proposals required

Proof of Correctness: Perfection

Claim. All men and women get matched.

Pf. (by contradiction)

- Suppose, for sake of contradiction, that Zeus is not matched upon termination of algorithm.
- Then some woman, say Amy, is not matched upon termination.
- By Observation 2, Amy was never proposed to.
- But, Zeus proposes to everyone, since he ends up unmatched. ▪

Proof of Correctness: Stability

Claim. No unstable pairs.

Pf. (by contradiction)

- Suppose A - Z is an unstable pair: each prefers each other to partner in Gale-Shapley matching S^* .

- Case 1: Z never proposed to A .
 - $\Rightarrow Z$ prefers his GS partner to A .
 - $\Rightarrow A$ - Z is stable.

men propose in decreasing
order of preference

S^*

Amy-Yancey

Bertha-Zeus

...

- Case 2: Z proposed to A .
 - $\Rightarrow A$ rejected Z (right away or later)
 - $\Rightarrow A$ prefers her GS partner to Z .
 - $\Rightarrow A$ - Z is stable.

← women only trade up

- In either case A - Z is stable, a contradiction. ▪