# Constraint Satisfaction Problems (CSP)

(Where we postpone making difficult decisions until they become easy to make)

R&N: Chap. 5

### What we will try to do ...

- Search techniques make choices in an often arbitrary order. Often little information is available to make each of them
- In many problems, the same states can be reached independent of the order in which choices are made ("commutative" actions)
- Can we solve such problems more efficiently by picking the order appropriately? Can we even avoid making any choice?

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### **Constraint Propagation**



- Place a queen in a square
- Remove the attacked squares from future consideration

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### Constraint Propagation



- Count the number of non-attacked squares in every row and column
- Place a queen in a row or column with minimum number
- Remove the attacked squares from future consideration

### Constraint Propagation

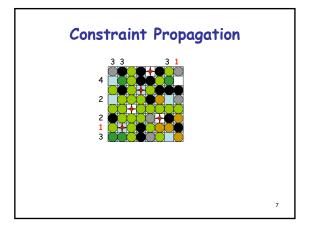


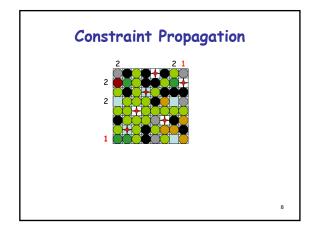
Repeat

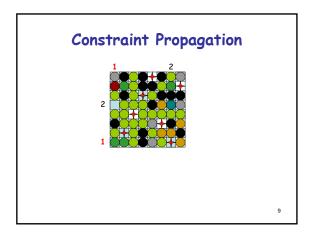
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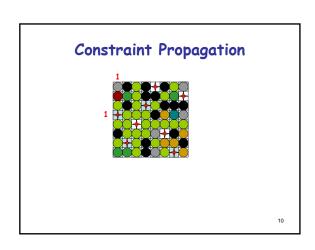
### Constraint Propagation

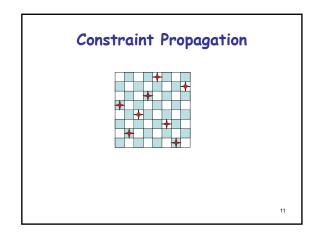












# What do we need? ■ More than just a successor function and a goal test ■ We also need: • A means to propagate the constraints imposed by one queen's position on the positions of the other queens • An early failure test → Explicit representation of constraints

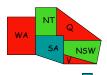
→ Constraint propagation algorithms

### Constraint Satisfaction Problem (CSP)

- Set of variables {X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub>, ..., X<sub>n</sub>}
- Each variable X<sub>i</sub> has a domain D<sub>i</sub> of possible values. Usually, Di is finite
- Set of constraints  $\{C_1, C_2, ..., C_p\}$
- Each constraint relates a subset of variables by specifying the valid combinations of their values
- Goal: Assign a value to every variable such that all constraints are satisfied

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### Map Coloring



- 7 variables {WA,NT,SA,Q,NSW,V,T}
- Each variable has the same domain: {red, green, blue}
- No two adjacent variables have the same value: WA≠NT, WA≠SA, NT≠SA, NT≠Q, SA≠Q, SA≠NSW, SA≠V, Q≠NSW, NSW≠V

8-Queen Problem

- 8 variables X<sub>i</sub>, i = 1 to 8
- The domain of each variable is: {1,2,...,8}
- Constraints are of the forms:
  - ·X;=k→X;≠k forallj=1 to 8,j≠i
  - Similar constraints for diagonals

All constraints are binary

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 $\forall i,j \in [1,5], i \neq j, N_i \neq N_j$ 

 $\forall i,j \in [1,5], i \neq j, C_i \neq C_i$ 

### Street Puzzle









- N<sub>i</sub> = (English, Spaniard, Japanese, Italian, Norwegian)
  C<sub>i</sub> = (Red, Green, White, Yellow, Blue)
  D<sub>i</sub> = (Tea, Coffee, Milk, Fruit-juice, Water)
  J<sub>i</sub> = (Painter, Sculptor, Diplomat, Violinist, Doctor)
  A<sub>i</sub> = (Dog, Snails, Fox, Horse, Zebra)

The Englishman lives in the Red house
The Spaniard has a Dog
The Japanese is a Painter
The Italian drinks Tea
The Norwegian lives in the first house on the left
The owner of the Green house drinks Coffee
The Green house is on the right of the White house
The Scultotor breeds Snails

The Green house is on the right or the White no The Sculptor breeds Snails The Diplomat lives in the Vellow house The owner of the middle house drinks Milk The Norwegian lives next door to the Blue house The Violinist drinks Fruit juice The Fox is in the house next to the Doctor's The Horse is next to the Diplomat's

Who owns the Zebra?

Who drinks Water?

### Street Puzzle









N<sub>i</sub> = (English, Spaniard, Japanese, Italian, Norwegian)

C<sub>i</sub> = (Red, Green, White, Yellow, Blue)

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J<sub>i</sub> = (Painter, Sculptor, Diplomat, Violinist, Doctor)

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V<sub>i,j</sub> ∈

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The Norwegian lives next door to the Blue house
The Violinist drinks Fruit juice

The Fox is in the house next to the Doctor's The Horse is next to the Diplomat's

### Street Puzzle







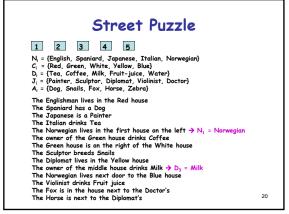


N<sub>i</sub> = (English, Spaniard, Japanese, Italian, Norwegian)
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A<sub>i</sub> = (Dog, Snails, Fox, Horse, Zebra)

 $A_i = \{\text{Dog, Snails, Fox, Horse, Zebra}\}$   $\text{The Englishnan lives in the Red house} \cdots \cdots (N_i = \text{English}) \Leftrightarrow (C_i = \text{Red})$  The Spaniard has a Dog  $\text{The Japanese is a Painter} \cdots \cdots (N_i = \text{Japanese}) \Leftrightarrow (J_i = \text{Painter})$  The Talian drinks Tea  $\text{The Norwegian lives in the first house on the left} \cdots \cdots (N_i = \text{Norwegian})$  The owner of the Green house drinks Coffee The Green house is on the right of the White house The Sculptor breeds Snails The Diplomat lives in the Yellow house The owner of the middle house drinks Milk The Norwegian lives next door to the Blue house The Violinist drinks Fruit juice The Fox is in the house next to the Doctor's left as an exercise

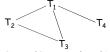
The Fox is in the house next to the Doctor's
The Horse is next to the Diplomat's

# Street Puzzle 1 2 3 4 5 $N_i = \{English_i, Spaniard_i, Japanese_i, Italian_i, Norwegian_i\}$ $C_i = \{Red_i, Green_i, White_i, Vellow_i, Blue_i\}$ $D_i = \{Tea_i, Coffee_i, Milk_i, Fruit_juice_i, Water_i\}$ $J_i = \{Painter_i, Sculptor_i, Diplomat_i, Violinist_i, Doctor_i\}$ $A_i = \{Dog_i, Snalls_i, Fox_i, Horse_i, Zebra_i\}$ The Englishman lives in the Red house $\dots \dots (N_i = English) \Leftrightarrow (C_i = Red_i)$ The Spaniard has a Dog The Japanese is a Painter $\dots \dots (N_i = Inglish_i) \Leftrightarrow (C_i = Red_i)$ The Tralian drinks Tea The Norwegian lives in the first house on the left $\dots \dots (N_i = Inglish_i) \Leftrightarrow (N_i = Inglish_i)$ The owner of the Green house drinks Coffee The Green house is on the right of the White house The Sculptor breeds Snalls The Diplomat lives in the Yellow house The sowner of the middle house drinks Milk The Norwegian lives next door to the Blue house $(C_i \neq Mhite)$ The Violinist drinks Fruit juice The Fox is in the house next to the Doctor's The Horse is next to the Diplomat's



# Street Puzzle 1 2 3 4 5 N, = (English, Spaniard, Japanese, Italian, Norwegian) C, = (Red, Green, White, Yellow, Blue) D, = (Tea, Coffee, Milk, Fruit-juice, Water) J, = (Painter, Sculptor, Diplomatr, Violinist, Doctor) A, = (Dog, Snails, Fox, Horse, Zebra) The Englishman lives in the Red house $\Rightarrow$ C, $\neq$ Red The Spaniard has a Dog $\Rightarrow$ A, $\neq$ Dog The Japanese is a Painter The Italian drinks Tea The Norwegian lives in the first house on the left $\Rightarrow$ N, = Norwegian The cowner of the Green house drinks Coffee The Green house is on the right of the White house The Sculptor breeds Snails The Diplomat lives in the Yellow house The owner of the middle house drinks Milk $\Rightarrow$ D, = Milk The Norwegian lives next door to the Blue house The Violinist drinks Fruit juice $\Rightarrow$ J, $\Rightarrow$ Violinist The Fox is in the house next to the Doctor's The Horse is next to the Diplomat's

### Task Scheduling



Four tasks  $T_1,\,T_2,\,T_3,\,$  and  $T_4$  are related by time constraints:

- · T1 must be done during T3
- $\cdot$   $T_2$  must be achieved before  $T_1$  starts
- T<sub>2</sub> must overlap with T<sub>3</sub>
- $\cdot$  T<sub>4</sub> must start after T<sub>1</sub> is complete
- Are the constraints compatible?
- What are the possible time relations between two tasks?
- What if the tasks use resources in limited supply?

How to formulate this problem as a CSP?

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### 3-SAT

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- n Boolean variables u₁, ..., un
- p constraints of the form
   u<sub>i</sub>\* ∨ u<sub>j</sub>\* ∨ u<sub>k</sub>\*= 1

   where u\* stands for either u or ¬u
- Known to be NP-complete

### Finite vs. Infinite CSP

- Finite CSP: each variable has a finite domain of values
- Infinite CSP: some or all variables have an infinite domain

E.g., linear programming problems over the reals:

for i = 1, 2, ..., p: 
$$a_{i,1}x_1+a_{i,2}x_2+...+a_{i,n}x_n = a_{i,0}$$
  
for j = 1, 2, ..., q:  $b_{i,1}x_1+b_{i,2}x_2+...+b_{i,n}x_n \le b_{i,0}$ 

We will only consider finite CSP

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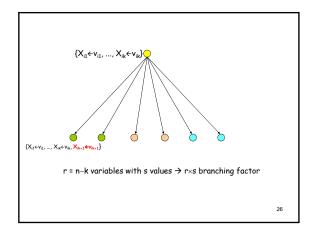
### CSP as a Search Problem

- n variables X<sub>1</sub>, ..., X<sub>n</sub>
- Valid assignment:  $\{X_{i1} \in v_{i1}, ..., X_{ik} \in v_{ik}\}$ ,  $0 \le k \le n$ , such that the values  $v_{i1}, ..., v_{ik}$  satisfy all constraints relating the variables  $X_{i1}, ..., X_{ik}$
- Complete assignment: one where k = n
  [if all variable domains have size d, there are O(d<sup>n</sup>)
  complete assignments]
- States: valid assignments
- Initial state: empty assignment {}, i.e. k = 0
- Successor of a state:

 $\{X_{i1}{\leftarrow}v_{i1},...,X_{ik}{\leftarrow}v_{ik}\} \rightarrow \{X_{i1}{\leftarrow}v_{i1},...,X_{ik}{\leftarrow}v_{ik}, \textcolor{red}{\textbf{X}_{ik+1}{\leftarrow}\textbf{v}_{ik+1}}\}$ 

• Goal test: k = n

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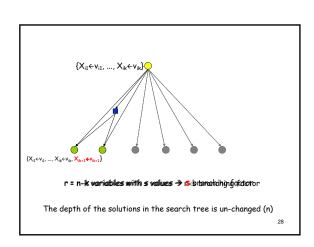
### A Key property of CSP: Commutativity

The order in which variables are assigned values has no impact on the reachable complete valid assignments

### Hence:

 One can expand a node N by first selecting one variable X not in the assignment A associated with N and then assigning every value v in the domain of X [→ big reduction in branching factor]

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### 4 variables X<sub>1</sub>, ..., X<sub>4</sub>

- Let the valid assignment of N be:  $A = \{X_1 \in V_1, X_3 \in V_3\}$
- For example pick variable X4
- Let the domain of  $X_4$  be  $\{v_{4,1}, v_{4,2}, v_{4,3}\}$
- The successors of A are all the valid assignments among:

$$\begin{aligned} & \{X_1 \in v_1, \ X_3 \in v_3 \ , \ X_4 \in v_{4,1} \} \\ & \{X_1 \in v_1, \ X_3 \in v_3 \ , \ X_4 \in v_{4,2} \} \\ & \{X_1 \in v_1, \ X_3 \in v_3 \ , \ X_4 \in v_{4,2} \} \end{aligned}$$

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### A Key property of CSP: Commutativity

The order in which variables are assigned values has no impact on the reachable complete valid assignments

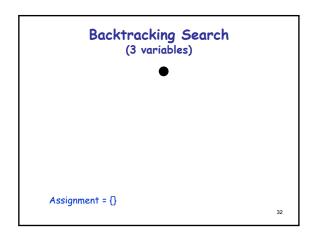
### Hence:

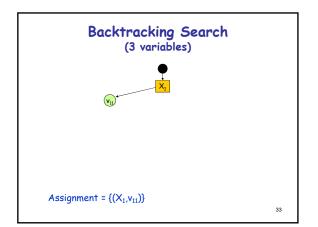
- One can expand a node N by first selecting one variable X not in the assignment A associated with N and then assigning every value v in the domain of X [→ big reduction in branching factor]
- 2) One need not store the path to a node

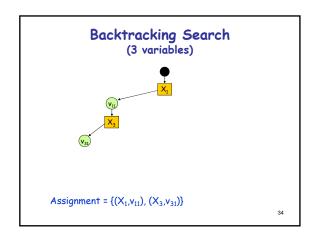
→ Backtracking search algorithm

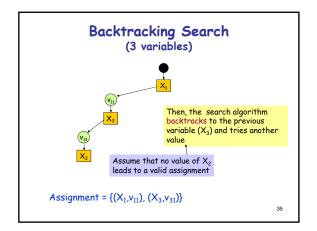
### **Backtracking Search**

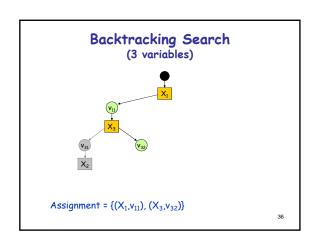
Essentially a simplified depth-first algorithm using recursion

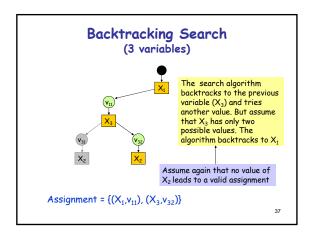


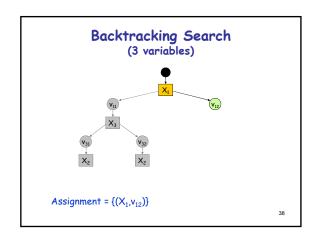


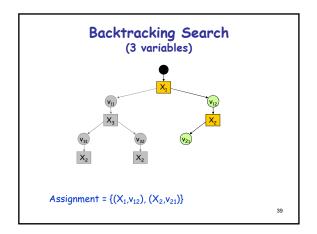


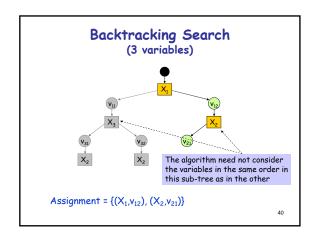


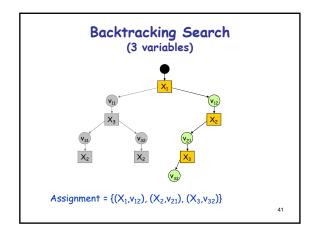


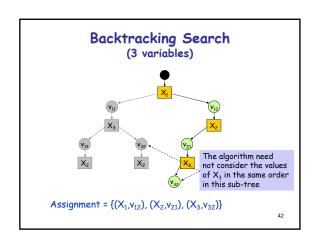


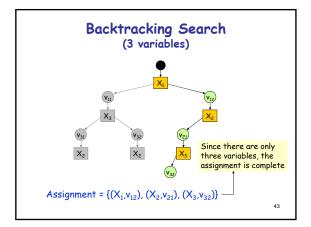












### **Backtracking Algorithm**

### CSP-BACKTRACKING(A)

- 1. If assignment A is complete then return A
- X ← select a variable not in A
- 3. D ← select an ordering on the domain of X
- 4. For each value v in D do
  - a. Add (X←v) to Ab. If A is valid ther
    - result  $\leftarrow$  CSP-BACKTRACKING(A)
  - ii. If result ≠ failure then return result
  - c. Remove (X←v) from A
- 5. Return failure

### Call CSP-BACKTRACKING({})

[This recursive algorithm keeps too much data in memory. An iterative version could save memory (left as an exercise)]

### Critical Questions for the Efficiency of CSP-Backtracking

### CSP-BACKTRACKING(A)

- If assignment A is complete then return A
- 2. X ← select a variable not in A
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### Critical Questions for the Efficiency of CSP-Backtracking

- 1) Which variable X should be assigned a value next?
- 2) In which order should X's values be assigned?

### Critical Questions for the Efficiency of CSP-Backtracking

1) Which variable X should be assigned a value next?

The current assignment may not lead to any solution, but the algorithm does not know it yet. Selecting the right variable X may help discover the contradiction

2) In which order should X's values be assigned?

Efficiency of CSP-Backtracking

1) Which variable X should be assigned a value next?

Critical Questions for the

The current assignment may not lead to any solution, but the algorithm does not know it yet. Selecting the right variable X may help discover the contradiction more quickly

2) In which order should X's values be assigned?

The current assignment may be part of a solution. Selecting the right value to assign to X may help discover this solution more quickly

## Critical Questions for the Efficiency of CSP-Backtracking

1) Which variable X should be assigned a value next?

The current assignment may not lead to any solution, but the algorithm does not know it yet. Selecting the right variable X may help discover the contradiction more quickly

2) In which order should X's values be assigned?

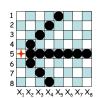
The current assignment may be part of a solution. Selecting the right value to assign to X may help discover this solution more quickly

More on these questions very soon ...

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### Forward Checking

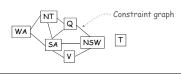
A simple constraint-propagation technique:



Assigning the value 5 to  $X_1$  leads to removing values from the domains of  $X_2, X_3, ..., X_8$ 

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### Forward Checking in Map Coloring



WA	NT	Q	NSW	V	SA	Т
RGB						

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### Forward Checking in Map Coloring



WA	NT	Q	NSW	٧	SA	Т
RGB						
R	KGB	RGB	RGB	RGB	KGB	RGB

Forward checking removes the value Red of NT and of SA

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### Forward Checking in Map Coloring



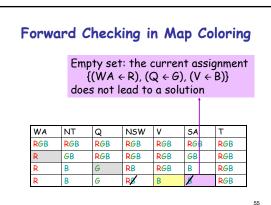
WA	NT	Q	NSW	٧	SA	Т
RGB	RGB	RGB	RGB	RGB	RGB	RGB
R	GB	RGB	RGB	RGB	GB	RGB
D	<b>d</b> □	G	DdD	DCD	αR	DCD

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### Forward Checking in Map Coloring



WA	NT	Q	NSW	V	SA	Т
RGB						
R	GB	RGB	RGB	RGB	GB	RGB
R	В	G	RB	RGB	В	RGB
R	В	G	RØ	В	Ø	RGB



### Forward Checking (General Form)

Whenever a pair  $(X \leftarrow v)$  is added to assignment A do:

For each variable Y not in A do:

For every constraint C relating Y to the variables in A do:

> Remove all values from Y's domain that do not satisfy C

> > 56

### Modified Backtracking Algorithm

CSP-BACKTRACKING(A, var-domains)

- 1. If assignment A is complete then return A
- 2. X ← select a variable not in A
- 3. D  $\leftarrow$  select an ordering on the domain of X
- 4. For each value v in D do
  - a. Add (X←v) to A
  - var-domains ← forward checking(var-domains, X, v, A) If no variable has an empty domain then
    (i) result ← CSP-BACKTRACKING(A, var-domains)
    - (ii) If result ≠ failure then return result
  - d. Remove (X←v) from A
- 5. Return failure

### Modified Backtracking Algorithm

CSP-BACKTRACKING(A, var-domains)

- 1. If assignment A is complete then return A
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- 3. D  $\leftarrow$  select an ordering on the domain of X
- 4. For each value v in D do No need any more to
  - a. Add  $(X \leftarrow v)$  to A verify that A is valid b. var-domains  $\leftarrow$  forward checking (var-domains, X, v, A)
  - If no variable has an empty domain then
    (i) result  $\leftarrow$  CSP-BACKTRACKING(A, var-domains)
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### Modified Backtracking Algorithm

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- 5. Return failure

Need to pass down the updated variable domains

### Modified Backtracking Algorithm

### CSP-BACKTRACKING(A, var-domains)

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- 4. For each value v in D do
  - a. Add (X←v) to A

5. Return failure

- b. var-domains ← forward checking(var-domains, X, v, A)
- If no variable has an empty domain then
  (i) result ← CSP-BACKTRACKING(A, var-domains)
  (ii) If result ≠ failure then return result
- d. Remove (X←v) from A

- Which variable X<sub>i</sub> should be assigned a value next?
  - → Most-constrained-variable heuristic
  - → Most-constraining-variable heuristic
- 2) In which order should its values be assigned?
  - → Least-constraining-value heuristic

These heuristics can be quite confusing

Keep in mind that all variables must eventually get a value, while only one value from a domain must be assigned to each variable

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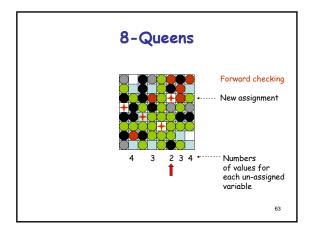
## Most-Constrained-Variable Heuristic

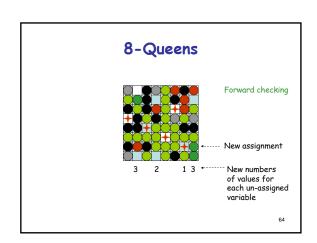
 Which variable X<sub>i</sub> should be assigned a value next?

Select the variable with the smallest remaining domain

[Rationale: Minimize the branching factor]

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# Map Coloring NT Q SA NSW T

- SA's remaining domain has size 1 (value Blue remaining)
- Q's remaining domain has size 2
- NSW's, V's, and T's remaining domains have size 3
- → Select SA

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## Most-Constraining-Variable Heuristic

Which variable X<sub>i</sub> should be assigned a value next?

Among the variables with the smallest remaining domains (ties with respect to the most-constrained-variable heuristic), select the one that appears in the largest number of constraints on variables not in the current assignment

[Rationale: Increase future elimination of values, to reduce future branching factors]  $_{66}$ 

### Map Coloring



- Before any value has been assigned, all variables have a domain of size 3, but SA is involved in more constraints (5) than any other variable
- → Select SA and assign a value to it (e.g., Blue)

### Least-Constraining-Value Heuristic

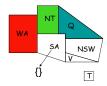
2) In which order should X's values be assigned?

Select the value of X that removes the smallest number of values from the domains of those variables which are not in the current assignment

[Rationale: Since only one value will eventually be assigned to X, pick the least-constraining value first, since it is the most likely not to lead to an invalid assignment]

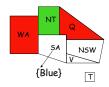
[Note: Using this heuristic requires performing a forward-checking step for every value, not just for 68 the selected value]

### Map Coloring



- Q's domain has two remaining values: Blue and Red
- Assigning Blue to Q would leave 0 value for SA, while assigning Red would leave 1 value

### Map Coloring



- Q's domain has two remaining values: Blue and Red
- Assigning Blue to Q would leave 0 value for SA, while assigning Red would leave 1 value
- → So, assign Red to Q

### Modified Backtracking Algorithm

CSP-BACKTRACKING(A, var-domains)

- LR I KACKLING(A, var-domains)

  If assignment A is complete then return A

  X 

  Select a variable not in A

  D 

  Add (X-v) to A

  b 

  or-domains 

  The variable has an empty domain then

  If no variable has an empty domain then

  (ii) If result a failure then return result

  A 

  Remove (X-v) from A

  Return failure
- 1) Most-constrained-variable heuristic 2) Most-constraining-variable heuristic

3) Least-constraining-value heuristic 5. Return failure

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### Applications of CSP

- CSP techniques are widely used
- Applications include:
  - Crew assignments to flights
  - · Management of transportation fleet
  - · Flight/rail schedules
  - Job shop scheduling
  - Task scheduling in port operations
  - Design, including spatial layout design
  - Radiosurgical procedures

