CSC304 Lecture 19

Voting 4: Impartial selection

Recap

- The Gibbard-Satterthwaite theorem says that we cannot design strategyproof voting rules that are also nondictatorial and onto.

- Restricted settings (e.g., facility location on a line)
  - There exist strategyproof, nondictatorial, and onto rules.
  - They can be used to (perfectly or approximately) optimize the societal goal

- Today, we will study another interesting setting called *impartial selection*

Impartial Selection

- "How can we select k people out of n people?"
  - Applications: electing a student representation committee, selecting k out of n grant applications to fund using peer review, …

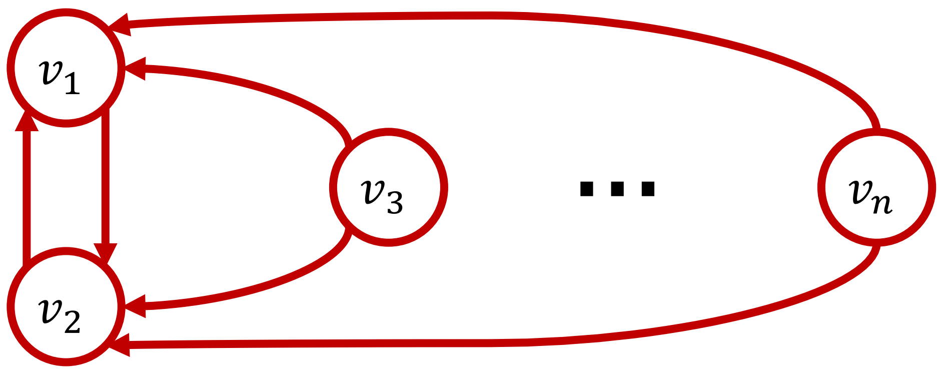
- Model
  - Input: a *directed* graph $G = (V, E)$
  - Nodes $V = \{v_1, \dots, v_n\}$ are the n people
  - Edge $e = (v_i, v_j) \in E$: v_i supports/approves of v_j
    - We do not allow or ignore self-edges (v_i, v_i)
  - Output: a subset $V' \subseteq V$ with $|V'| = k$
  - $k \in \{1, \dots, n-1\}$ is given

Impartial Selection

- Impartiality: A k-selection rule f is *impartial* if $v_i \in f(G)$ does not depend on the outgoing edges of v_i
  - v_i cannot manipulate his outgoing edges to get selected
  - Q: But the definition says v_i can neither go from $v_i \notin f(G)$ to $v_i \in f(G)$, nor from $v_i \in f(G)$ to $v_i \notin f(G)$. Why?

- Societal goal: maximize the sum of in-degrees of selected agents $\sum_{v \in f(G)} |in(v)|$
  - $in(v)$ = set of nodes that have an edge to v
  - $out(v)$ = set of nodes that v has an edge to
  - Note: OPT will pick the k nodes with the highest indegrees

Optimal ≠ Impartial



- An optimal 1-selecton rule must select v_1 or v_2
- The other node can remove his edge to the winner, and make sure the optimal rule selects him instead
- This violates impartiality

Goal: Approximately Optimal

- α-approximation: We want a k-selection system that always returns a set with total indegree at least $\frac{1}{\alpha}$ times the total indegree of the optimal set

- Q: For $k = 1$, what about the following rule?

  Rule: "Select the lowest index vertex in $out(v_1)$.
  If $out(v_1) = \emptyset$, select v_2."

  - A. Impartial + constant approximation
  - B. Impartial + bad approximation
  - C. Not impartial + constant approximation
  - D. Not impartial + bad approximation

No Finite Approximation ☹

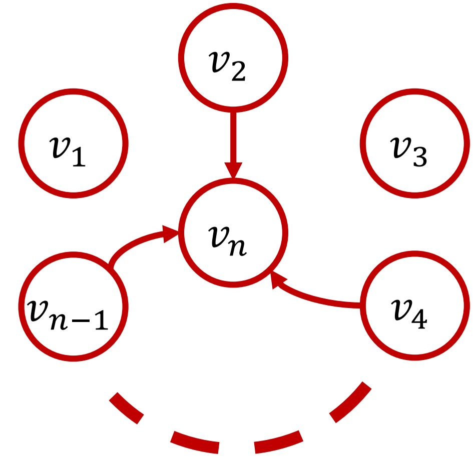
- Theorem [Alon et al. 2011]
  For every $k \in \{1, \dots, n-1\}$, there is no impartial k-selection rule with a finite approximation ratio.
- Proof:
  - For small k, this is trivial. E.g., consider $k = 1$.
    - What if G has two nodes v_1 and v_2 that point to each other, and there are no other edges?
    - For finite approximation, the rule must choose either v_1 or v_2
    - Say it chooses v_1. If v_2 now removes his edge to v_1, the rule must choose v_2 for any finite approximation.
    - Same argument as before. But applies to any "finite approximation rule", and not just the optimal rule.

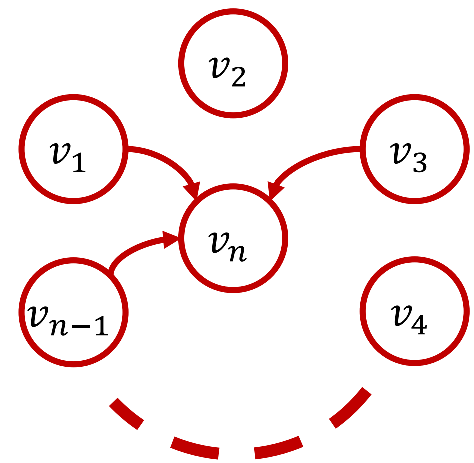
No Finite Approximation ☹

- Theorem [Alon et al. 2011]
  For every $k \in \{1, \dots, n-1\}$, there is no impartial k-selection rule with a finite approximation ratio.
- Proof:
  - Proof is more intricate for larger k. Let's do $k = n - 1$.
    - $k = n - 1$: given a graph, "eliminate" a node.
  - Suppose for contradiction that there is such a rule f.
  - W.l.o.g., say v_n is eliminated in the empty graph.
  - Consider a family of graphs in which a subset of $\{v_1, \dots, v_{n-1}\}$ have edges to v_n.

No Finite Approximation ☹

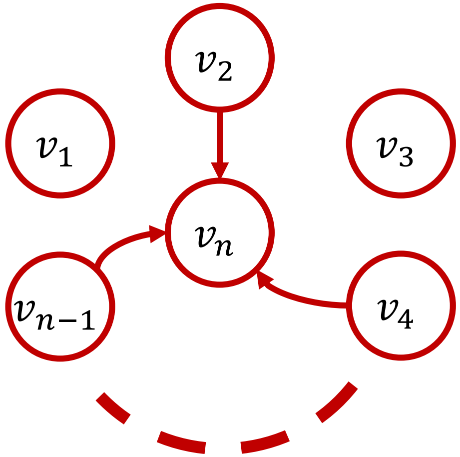
- Proof ($k = n - 1$ continued):
  - Consider *star graphs* in which a non-empty subset of $\{v_1, \dots, v_{n-1}\}$ have edge to v_n, and there are no other edges
    - Represented by bit strings $\{0,1\}^{n-1} \backslash \{\vec{0}\}$
  - v_n cannot be eliminated in any star graph
    - Otherwise we have infinite approximation
  - f maps $\{0,1\}^{n-1} \backslash \{\vec{0}\}$ to $\{1, \dots, n-1\}$
    - "Who will be eliminated?"
  - Impartiality: $f(\vec{x}) = i \Leftrightarrow f(\vec{x} + \vec{e}_i) = i$
    - $\vec{e}_i$ has 1 at i^{th} coordinate, 0 elsewhere
    - In words, i cannot prevent elimination by adding or removing his edge to v_n

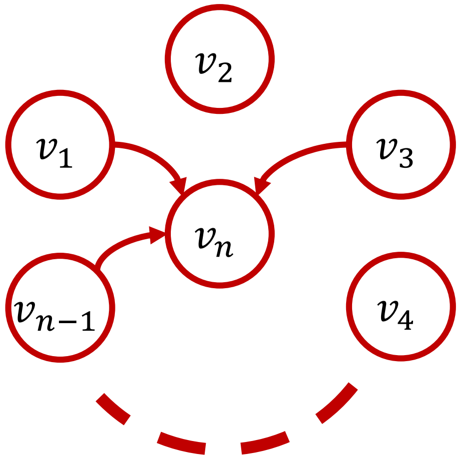




No Finite Approximation ☹

- Proof ($k = n - 1$ continued):
  - $f: \{0,1\}^{n-1} \backslash \{\vec{0}\} \rightarrow \{1, \dots, n-1\}$
  - $f(\vec{x}) = i \Leftrightarrow f(\vec{x} + \vec{e}_i) = i$
    - $\vec{e}_i$ has 1 only in i^{th} coordinate
  - Pairing implies…
    - The number of strings on which f outputs i is even, for every i.
    - Thus, total number of strings in the domain must be even too.
    - But total number of strings is $2^{n-1} - 1$ (odd)
  - So impartiality must be violated for some pair of $\vec{x}$ and $\vec{x} + \vec{e}_i$





Back to Impartial Selection

- Question: So what *can* we do to select impartially?
- Answer: Randomization!
  - Impartiality now requires that the probability of an agent being selected be independent of his outgoing edges.

- Examples: Randomized Impartial Mechanisms
  - Choose k nodes uniformly at random
    - Sadly, this still has arbitrarily bad approximation.
    - Imagine having k special nodes with indegree $n-1$, and all other nodes having indegree 0.
    - Mechanism achieves $(k/n) * OPT \Rightarrow$ approximation = n/k
    - Good when k is comparable to n, but bad when k is small.

Random Partition

- Idea:
  - What if we partition V into V_1 and V_2, and select k nodes from V_1 based only on edges coming to them from V_2?

- Mechanism:
  - Assign each node to V_1 or V_2 i.i.d. with probability ½
  - Choose $V_i \in \{V_1, V_2\}$ at random
  - Choose k nodes from V_i that have most incoming edges from nodes in V_{3-i}

Random Partition

- Analysis:
  - Goal: approximate I = # edges incoming to OPT.
    - I_1 = # edges $V_2 \to OPT \cap V_1$, I_2 = # edges $V_1 \to OPT \cap V_2$
  - Note: $E[I_1 + I_2] = I/2$. (WHY?)
  - W.p. ½, we pick k nodes in V_1 with the most incoming edges from $V_2 \Rightarrow$ # incoming edges $\geq I_1$ (WHY?)
    - $|OPT \cap V_1| \leq k$; $OPT \cap V_1$ has I_1 incoming edges from V_2
  - W.p. ½, we pick k nodes in V_2 with the most incoming edges from $V_1 \Rightarrow$ # incoming edges $\geq I_2$
  - E[#incoming edges] $\geq E\left[\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) \cdot I_1 + \left(\frac{1}{2}\right) \cdot I_2\right] = \frac{I}{4}$

Random Partition

- Improvement
  - More generally, we can divide into ℓ parts, and pick k/ℓ nodes from each part based on incoming edges from all other parts.

- Theorem [Alon et al. 2011]:
  - $\ell = 2$ gives a 4-approximation.
  - For $k \geq 2$, $\ell \sim k^{1/3}$ gives $1 + O\left(\frac{1}{k^{1/3}}\right)$ approximation.

Better Approximations

- Alon et al. [2011] conjectured that for randomized impartial 1-selection…
  - (For which their mechanism is a 4-approximation)
  - It should be possible to achieve a 2-approximation.
  - Proved by Fischer & Klimm [2014]
  - Permutation mechanism:
    - Select a random permutation $(\pi_1, \pi_2, \dots, \pi_n)$ of the vertices.
    - Start by selecting $y = \pi_1$ as the "current answer".
    - At any iteration t, let $y \in \{\pi_1, \dots, \pi_t\}$ be the current answer.
    - From $\{\pi_1, \dots, \pi_t\} \setminus \{y\}$, if there are more edges to π_{t+1} than to y, change the current answer to $y = \pi_{t+1}$.

Better Approximations

- 2-approximation is tight.
  - In an n-node graph, fix u and v, and suppose no other nodes have any incoming/outgoing edges.
  - Three cases: only $u \to v$ edge, only $v \to u$, or both.
    - The best impartial mechanism selects u and v with probability ½ in every case, and achieves 2-approximation.
- But this is because $n - 2$ nodes are not voting!
  - What if every node must have an outgoing edge?
  - [Fischer & Klimm]:
    - Permutation mechanism gives ${}^{12}/_{7} = 1.714$ approximation.
    - No mechanism gives better than $2/3$ approximation.
    - Open question to achieve better than ${}^{12}/_{7}$.

The rest of this lecture is not part of the syllabus.

PageRank

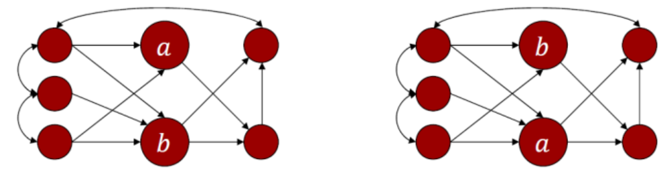
- An extension of the impartial selection problem
  - Instead of selecting k nodes, we want to *rank* all nodes
- The PageRank Problem: Given a directed graph, rank all nodes by their "importance".
  - Think of the web graph, where nodes are webpages, and a directed (u, v) edge means u has a link to v.
- Questions:
  - What properties do we want from such a rule?
  - What rule satisfies these properties?

PageRank

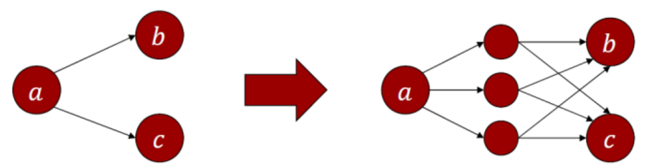
- Here is the PageRank Algorithm:
  - Start from any node in the graph.
  - At each iteration, choose an outgoing edge of the current node, uniformly at random among all its outgoing edges.
  - Move to the neighbor node on that edge.
  - In the limit of $T \to \infty$ iterations, measure the fraction of time the "random walk" visits each node.
  - Rank the nodes by these "stationary probabilities".
- Google uses (a version of) this algorithm
  - It's seems a reasonable algorithm.
  - What nice axioms might it satisfy?

Axioms

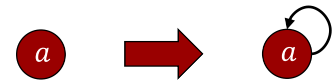
- Axiom 1 (Isomorphism)
  - Permuting node names permutes the final ranking.



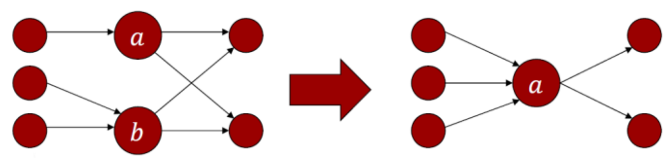
- Axiom 2 (Vote by Committee)
  - Voting through intermediate fake nodes cannot change the ranking.



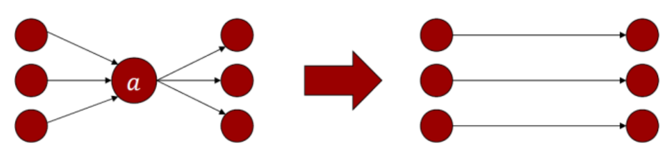
- Axiom 3 (Self Edge)
  - v adding a self edge cannot change the ordering of the *other* nodes.



- Axiom 4 (Collapsing)
  - Merging identically voting nodes cannot change the ordering of the *other* nodes.



- Axiom 5 (Proxy)
  - If a set of nodes with equal score vote for v through a proxy, it should not be different than voting directly.



PageRank

- Theorem [Altman and Tennenholtz, 2005]:
  The PageRank algorithm satisfies these five axioms, and is the unique algorithm to satisfy all five axioms.

- That is, any algorithm that satisfies all five axioms must output the ranking returned by PageRank on every single graph.