Artificial Intelligence

Information Systems and Machine Learning Lab (ISMLL)
Tomáš Horváth

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Solving Problems by Searching

Problem-solving agent

- decides what to do by finding sequences of actions leading to desirable states - goals
  - I. Goal formulation
    - What do we want to “reach”?
  - II. Problem formulation
    - What actions and states to “consider”, given a goal?
    - abstraction
      - the level of states and actions

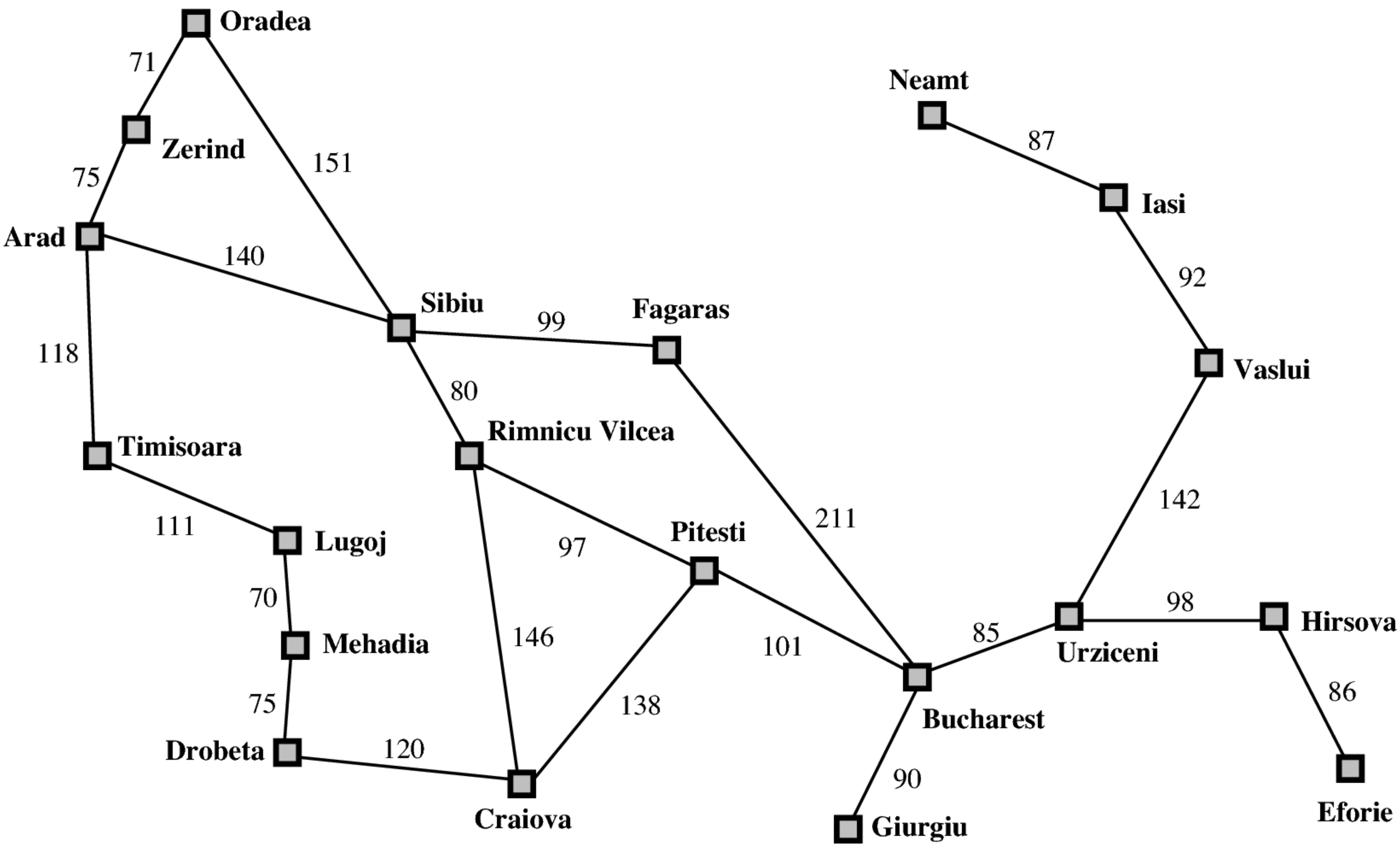
- Looking for such sequences is called SEARCH

Problem-solving agent

```
function SIMPLE-PROBLEM-SOLVING-AGENT(percept) returns an action
   persistent: seq, an action sequence, initially empty
               state, some description of the current world state
               goal, a goal, initially null
               problem, a problem formulation

   state ← UPDATE-STATE(state, percept)
   if seq is empty then
      goal ← FORMULATE-GOAL(state)
      problem ← FORMULATE-PROBLEM(state, goal)
      seq ← SEARCH(problem)
      if seq = failure then return a null action
   action ← FIRST(seq)
   seq ← REST(seq)
   return action
```

Example


Oradea
71
Neamt
Zerind
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Iasi
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Sibiu
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Fagaras
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Vaslui
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Rimnicu Vilcea
Timisoara
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Lugoj
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Pitesti
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Mehadia
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Hirsova
101
Urziceni
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Bucharest
Drobeta
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Craiova
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Giurgiu

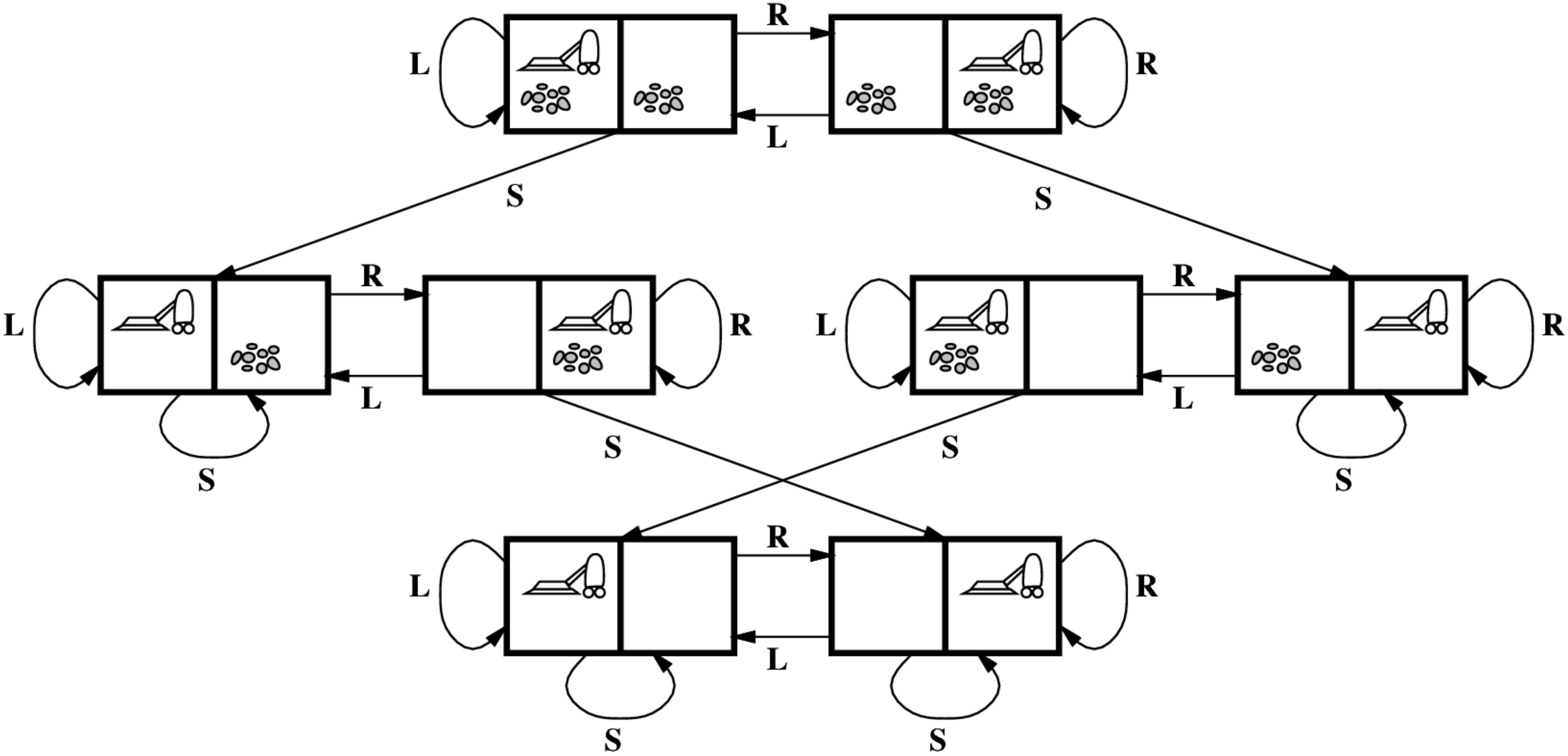
Problem definition

- initial state
- successor function
  - possible actions available from the current state
- goal test
  - determines whether a given state is a goal state
- path cost
  - assigns a number to each path
  - step costs
- solution
  - a path from the initial state to a goal state

Toy examples

- vacuum cleaner
  - states
    - 8 possible world states
      - two locations which could be clean or dirty
  - any state can be initial
  - successor function generates the legal states resulting from trying the three possible actions
    - Left, Right, Suck
  - goal test checks whether all the squares are clean
  - path cost is the number of step
    - the number of steps, each step costs 1

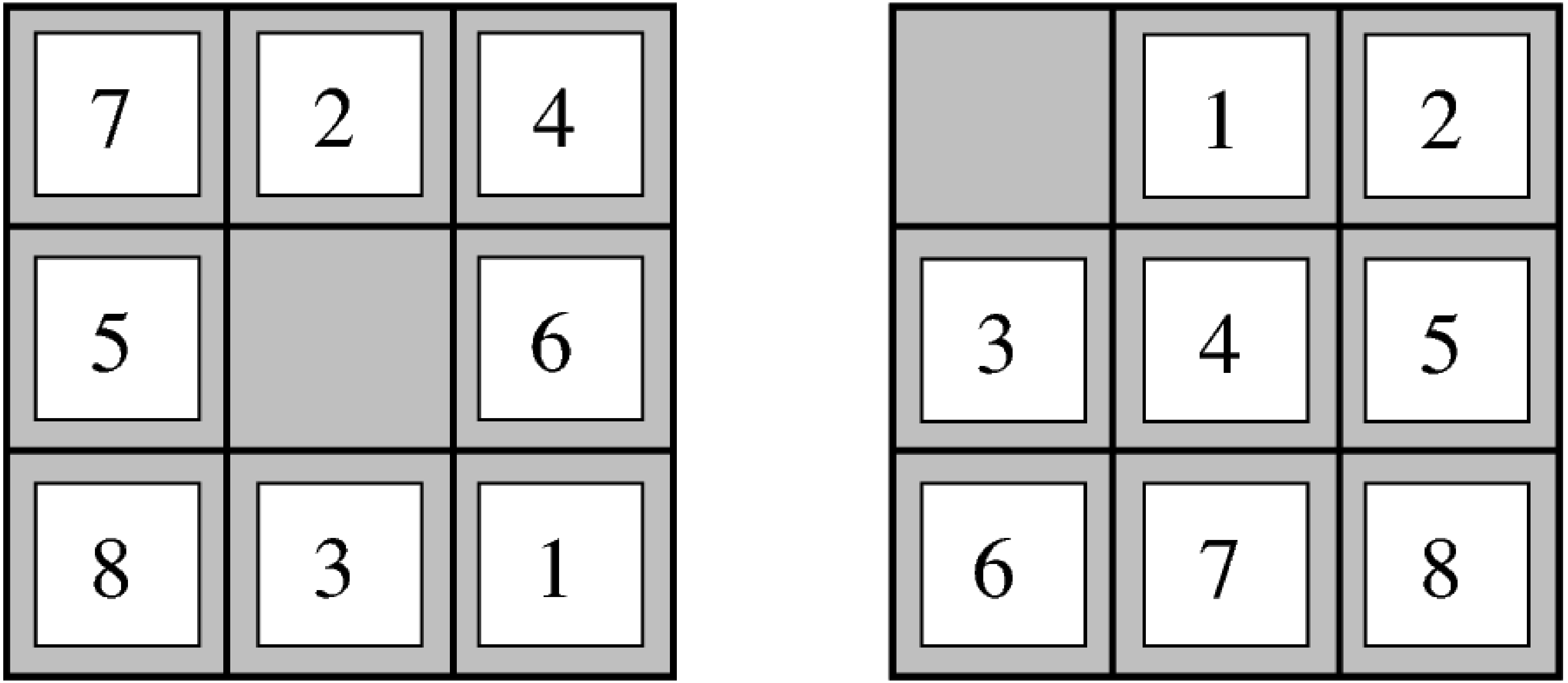
Toy examples



Toy example

- 8 puzzle
  - states
    - the location of each of the 8 tiles and the blank
  - initial state
    - any state
  - successor function
    - Left, Right, Up or Down
  - goal test
    - tests whether the state matches the goal configuration
  - path cost
    - the number of steps, each step costs 1

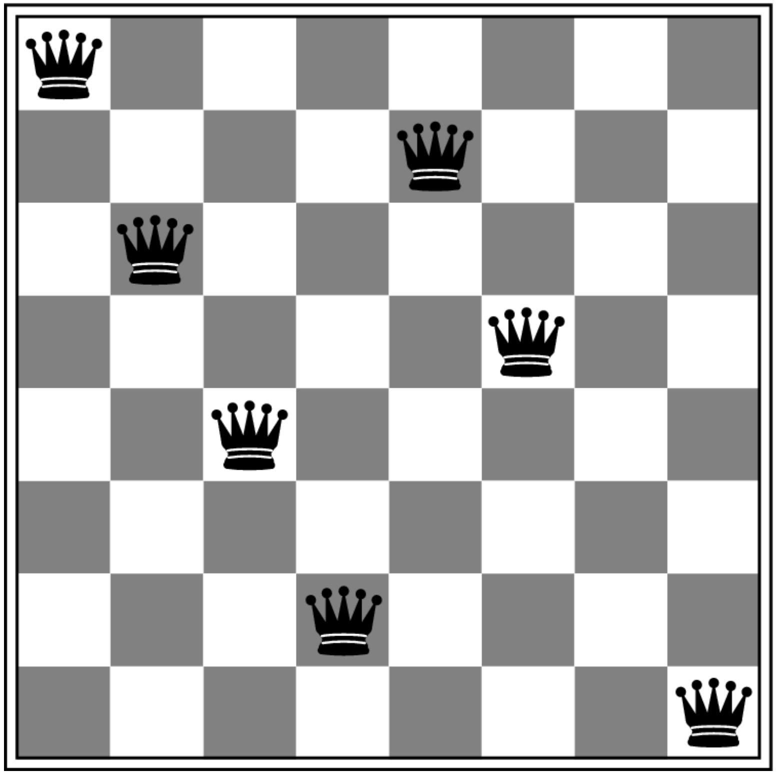
Toy example



Start State Goal State

Toy example

- 8-queens problem
  - **How the specification looks like?**



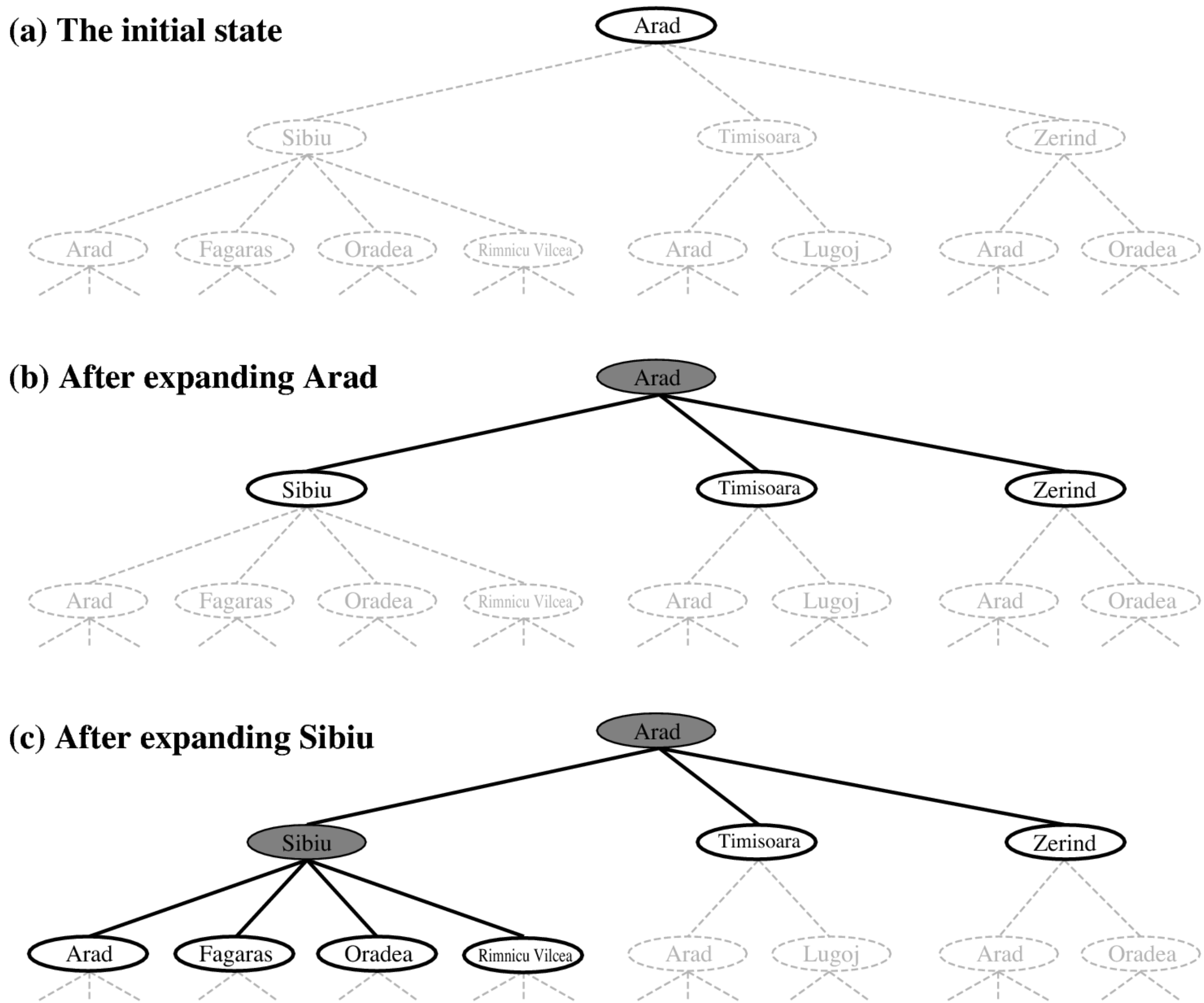
Real-world problems

- route finding, touring, traveling problems
  - get from the location A to the location B
  - visit every city at least once
  - visit every city at least once
- VLSI layout problem
  - positioning millions of components and connections on a chip to minimize area
- Internet searching problem
  - looking for related information

Searching

- search tree, search graph
  - generated by the initial state and the successor function
  - search node
    - an instantiation of a world state
    - main components are
      - state (in the state space to which the node corresponds)
      - parent node
      - action (which was applied to the parent to generate the node)
      - path-cost
      - depth (the number of steps along the path from the initial state)
- search strategy
  - the choice of which state to expand
  - <u>fringe</u>
    - the collection of nodes that have been generated but not yet expanded

Search tree/graph



Search

function TREE-SEARCH(*problem*) **returns** a solution, or failure
  initialize the frontier using the initial state of *problem*
  loop do
    if the frontier is empty **then return** failure
    choose a leaf node and remove it from the frontier
    if the node contains a goal state **then return** the corresponding solution
    expand the chosen node, adding the resulting nodes to the frontier

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function GRAPH-SEARCH(*problem*) **returns** a solution, or failure
  initialize the frontier using the initial state of *problem*
  initialize the explored set to be empty
  loop do
    if the frontier is empty **then return** failure
    choose a leaf node and remove it from the frontier
    if the node contains a goal state **then return** the corresponding solution
    add the node to the explored set
    expand the chosen node, adding the resulting nodes to the frontier
      only if not in the frontier or explored set

Measuring the performance

- completeness
  - Is the algorithm guaranteed to find a solution when there is one?
- optimality
  - Does the strategy find the optimal solution?
- time complexity
  - how long does it take to find a solution?
- space complexity
  - how much memory is needed to perform the search?

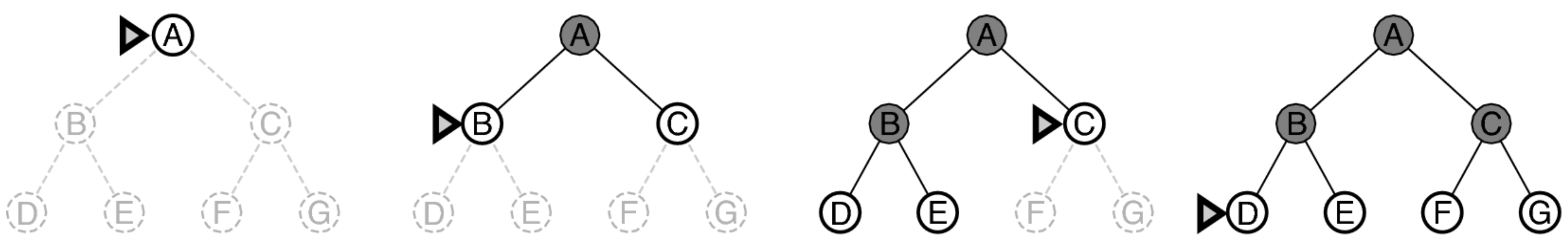
- important factors
  - branching factor (b)
  - depth of the shallowest node (d)
  - the maximum length of any path in the state space (m)

Breadth-first search

```
function BREADTH-FIRST-SEARCH(problem) returns a solution, or failure
  node ← a node with STATE = problem.INITIAL-STATE, PATH-COST = 0
  if problem.GOAL-TEST(node.STATE) then return SOLUTION(node)
  frontier ← a FIFO queue with node as the only element
  explored ← an empty set
  loop do
     if EMPTY?(frontier) then return failure
     node ← POP(frontier)  /* chooses the shallowest node in frontier */
     add node.STATE to explored
     for each action in problem.ACTIONS(node.STATE) do
        child ← CHILD-NODE(problem, node, action)
        if child.STATE is not in explored or frontier then
           if problem.GOAL-TEST(child.STATE) then return SOLUTION(child)
           frontier ← INSERT(child, frontier)
```

Breadth-first search

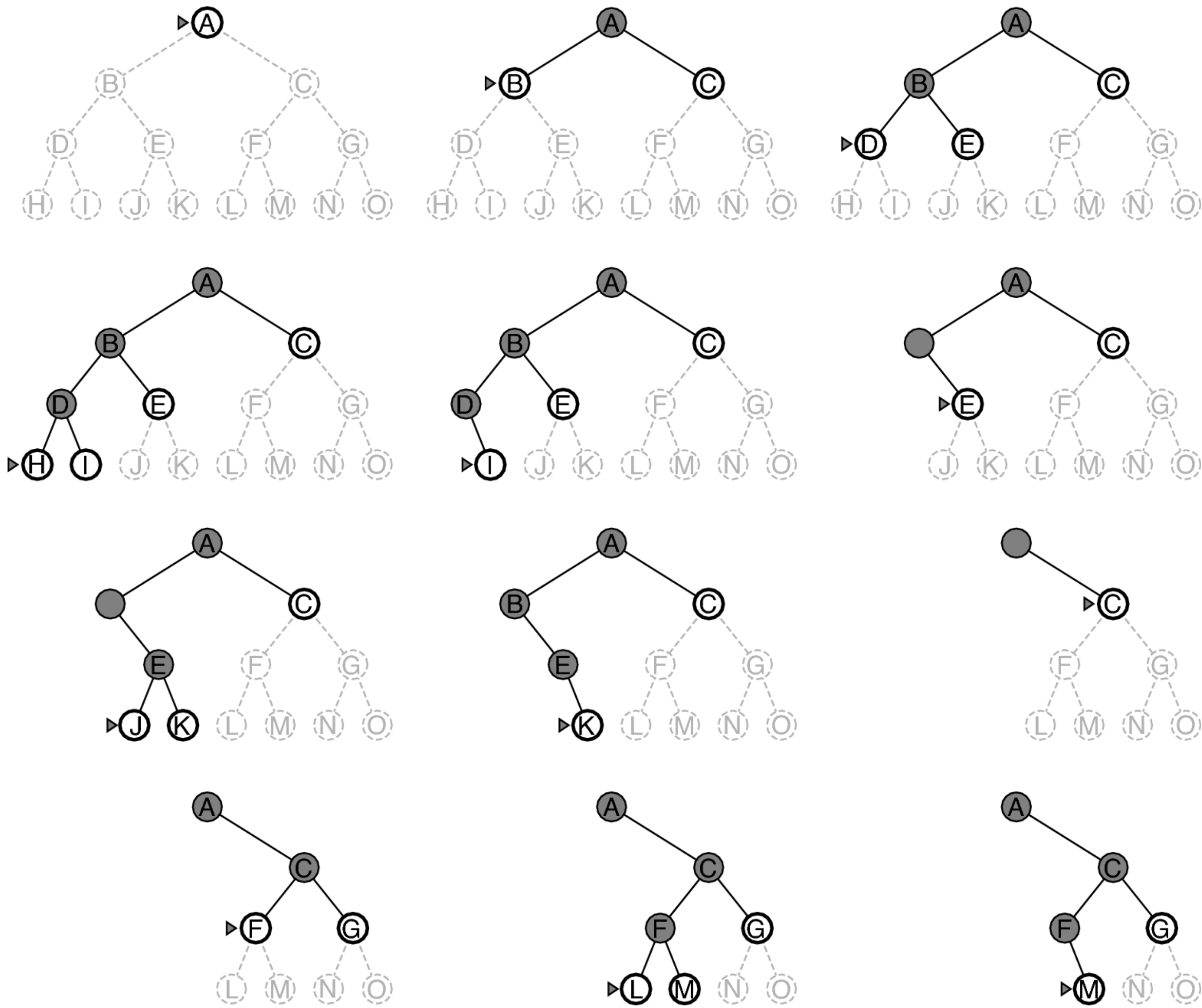
- **what is the total number of nodes generated?**
  - suppose that the solution is at depth d and
  - each node generates b more nodes...



Uniform-cost search

```
function UNIFORM-COST-SEARCH(problem) returns a solution, or failure
  node ← a node with STATE = problem.INITIAL-STATE, PATH-COST = 0
  frontier ← a priority queue ordered by PATH-COST, with node as the only element
  explored ← an empty set
  loop do
     if EMPTY?(frontier) then return failure
     node ← POP(frontier)   /* chooses the lowest-cost node in frontier */
     if problem.GOAL-TEST(node.STATE) then return SOLUTION(node)
     add node.STATE to explored
     for each action in problem.ACTIONS(node.STATE) do
        child ← CHILD-NODE(problem, node, action)
        if child.STATE is not in explored or frontier then
           frontier ← INSERT(child, frontier)
        else if child.STATE is in frontier with higher PATH-COST then
           replace that frontier node with child
```

Depth-first search



Depth-first search

- similar to breadth-first search
  - using LIFO
- Backtracking search
  - a variant of depth-first search
  - only one successor is generated at a time
    - nodes should remember which successor to generate next
- **what is the drawback of depth-first search?**

Depth-limited search

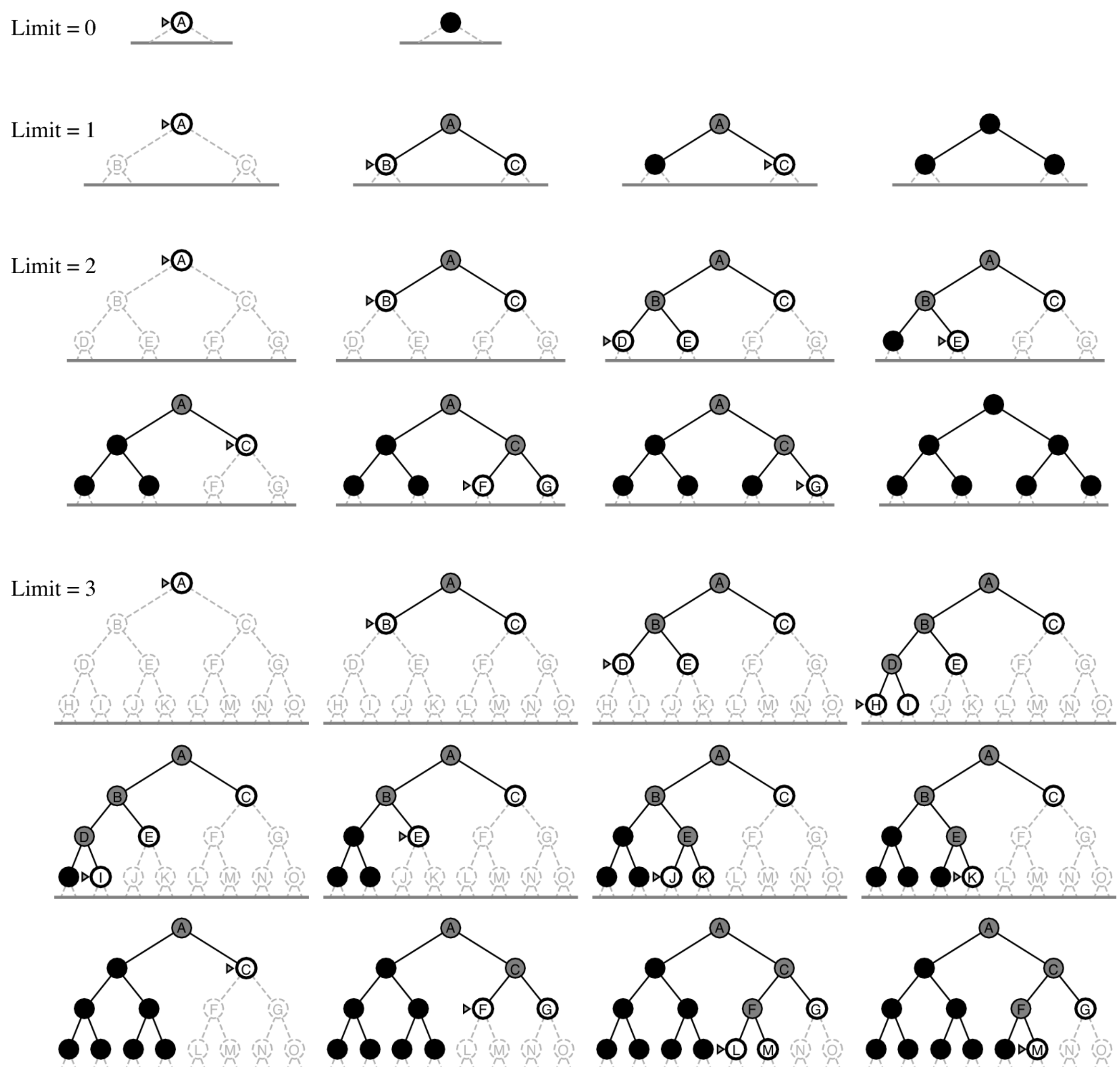
```
function DEPTH-LIMITED-SEARCH(problem, limit) returns a solution, or failure/cutoff
  return RECURSIVE-DLS(MAKE-NODE(problem.INITIAL-STATE), problem, limit)

function RECURSIVE-DLS(node, problem, limit) returns a solution, or failure/cutoff
  if problem.GOAL-TEST(node.STATE) then return SOLUTION(node)
  else if limit = 0 then return cutoff
  else
      cutoff_occurred? ← false
      for each action in problem.ACTIONS(node.STATE) do
          child ← CHILD-NODE(problem, node, action)
          result ← RECURSIVE-DLS(child, problem, limit − 1)
          if result = cutoff then cutoff_occurred? ← true
          else if result ≠ failure then return result
      if cutoff_occurred? then return cutoff else return failure
```

Iterative deepening depth-first search

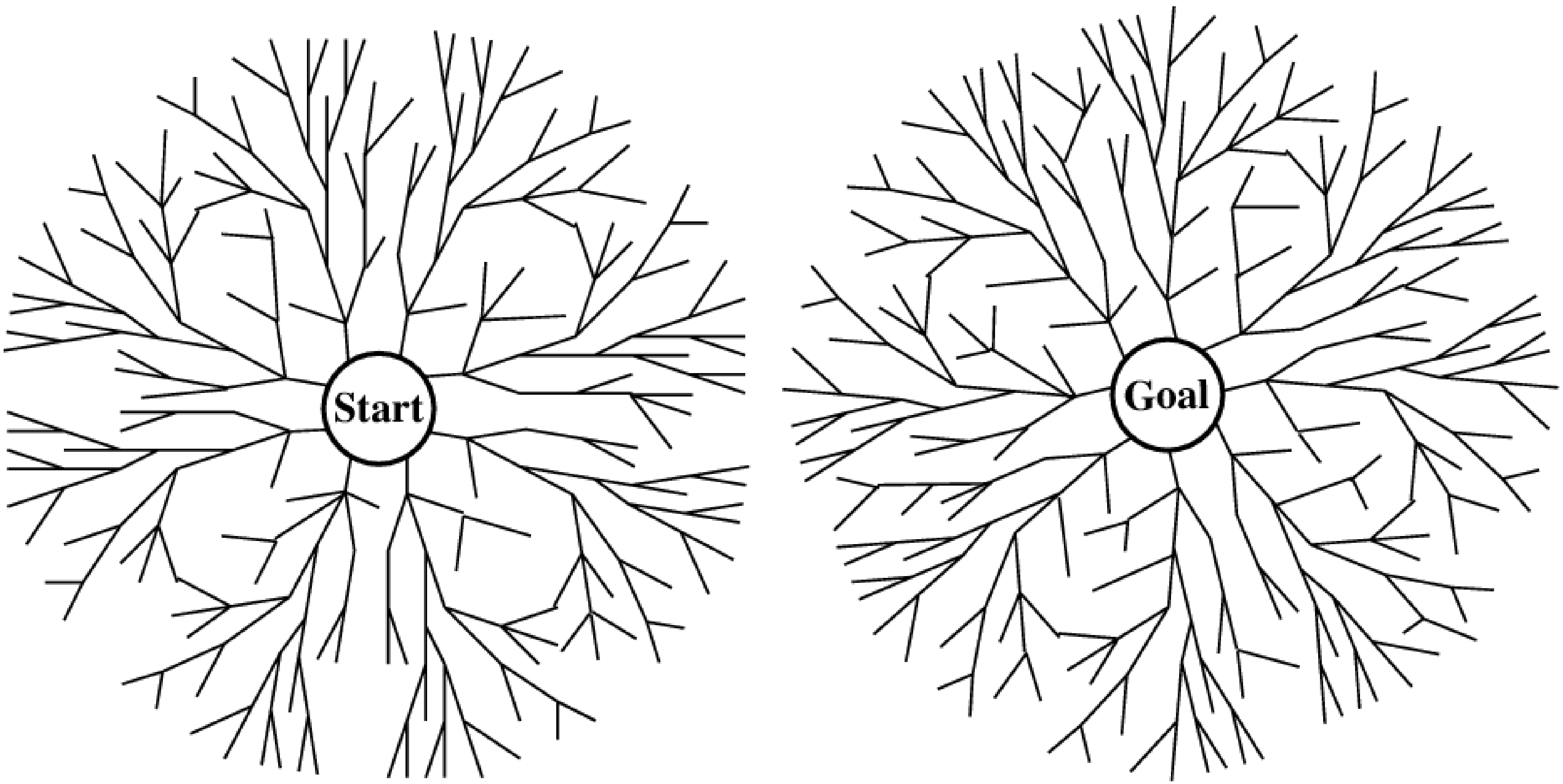
```
function ITERATIVE-DEEPENING-SEARCH(problem) returns a solution, or failure
   for depth = 0 to ∞ do
      result ← DEPTH-LIMITED-SEARCH(problem, depth)
      if result ≠ cutoff then return result
```

- in general, iterative deepening is the preferred uninformed search method when there is a large space and the depth of the solution is not known
  - **why?**
  - **what is the total number of nodes generated?**

Iterative deepening depth-first search



Bidirectional search

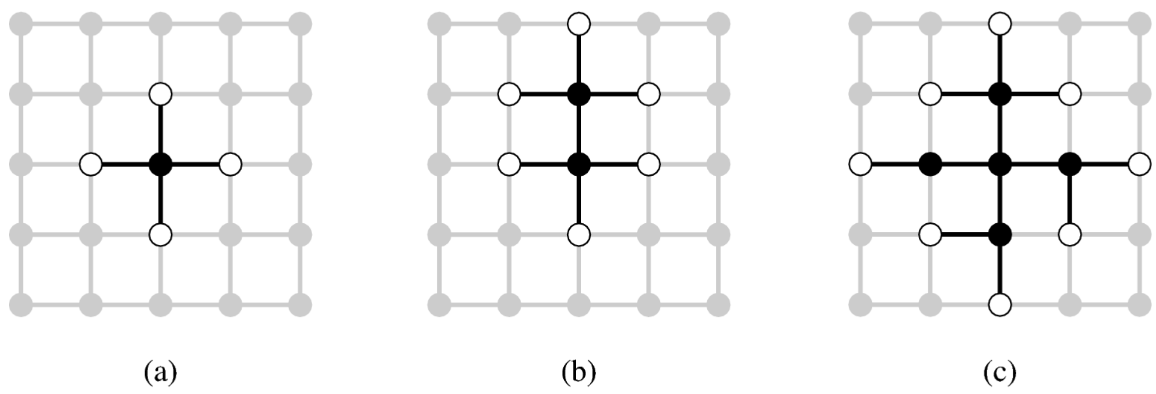


Comparison

Method	Completeness	Time complexity	Space complexity	Optimality
Breadth-first	yes^a	$O(b^{d+1})$	$O(b^{d+1})$	yes^c
Uniform-Cost	yes^{a,b}	$O(b^{1+\lfloor C^*/\epsilon \rfloor})$	$O(b^{1+\lfloor C^*/\epsilon \rfloor})$	yes
Depth-first	no	$O(b^m)$	$O(bm)$	no
Depth-limited	no	$O(b^l)$	$O(bl)$	no
Iterative-deepening	yes^a	$O(b^d)$	$O(bd)$	yes^c
Bi-directional (if applicable)	yes^{a,d}	$O(b^{d/2})$	$O(b^{d/2})$	yes^{c,d}

^{a} complete if b is finite
^{b} complete if step costs $\geq \epsilon$ for positive ϵ
^{c} optimal if step costs are all identical
^{d} both directions use breadth-first search

Avoiding repeated states

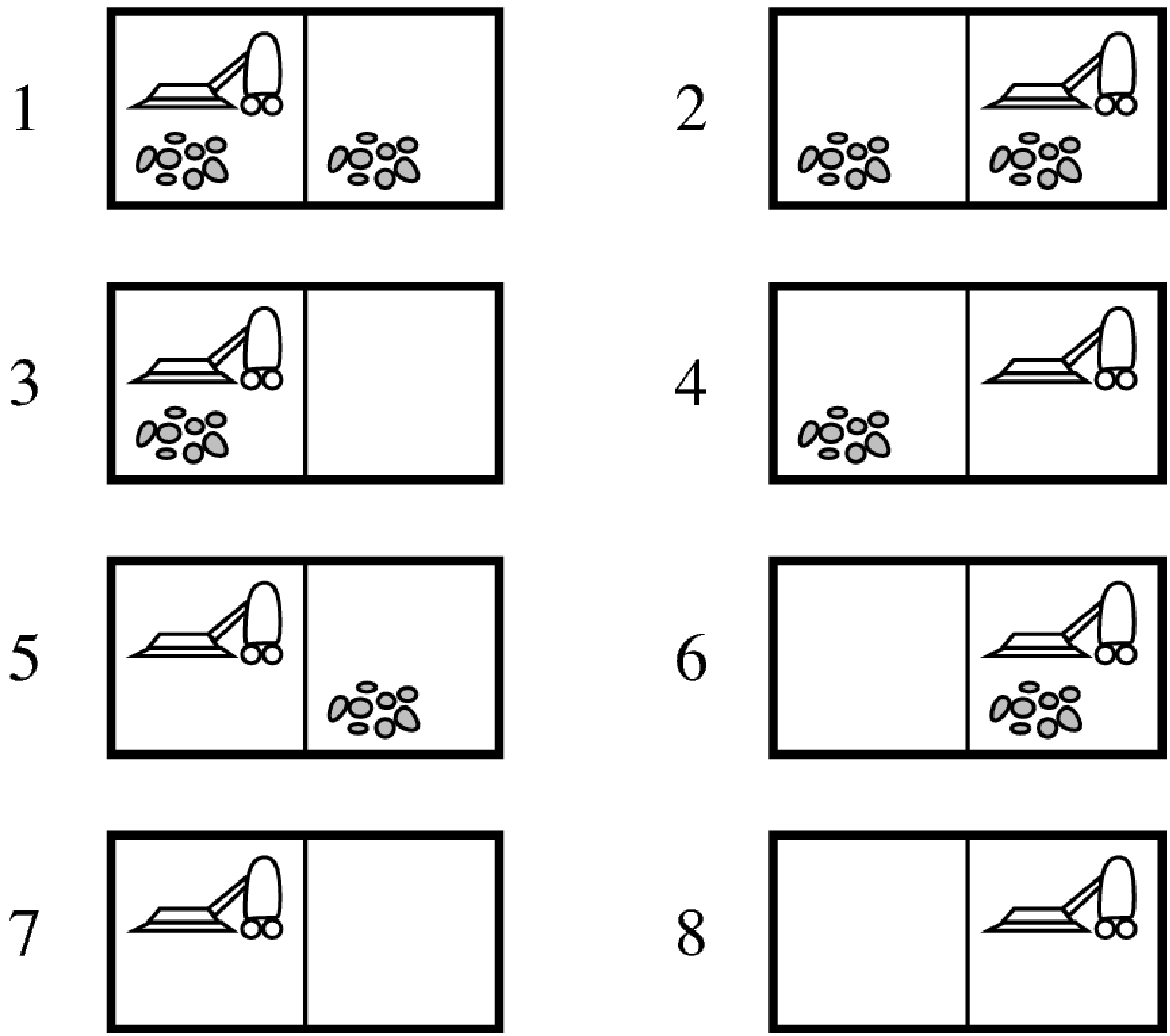


- we can smartly formulate a problem to avoid repeated states
  - **how we can do it in 8-queen problem?**
- cut the search tree - remembering visited states
  - find a trade-off between space and time
  - closed list - expanded nodes
  - open list - not yet expanded nodes

Searching with partial information

- sensorless problem
  - if an agent has no sensors at all, it could be in one of several possible initial states, and each action might therefore lead to one of several possible successor states
- contingency problem
  - if the environment is partially observable or if actions are uncertain, then the agent's percepts provide new information after each iteration. Each possible percept defines a contingency that must be planned for

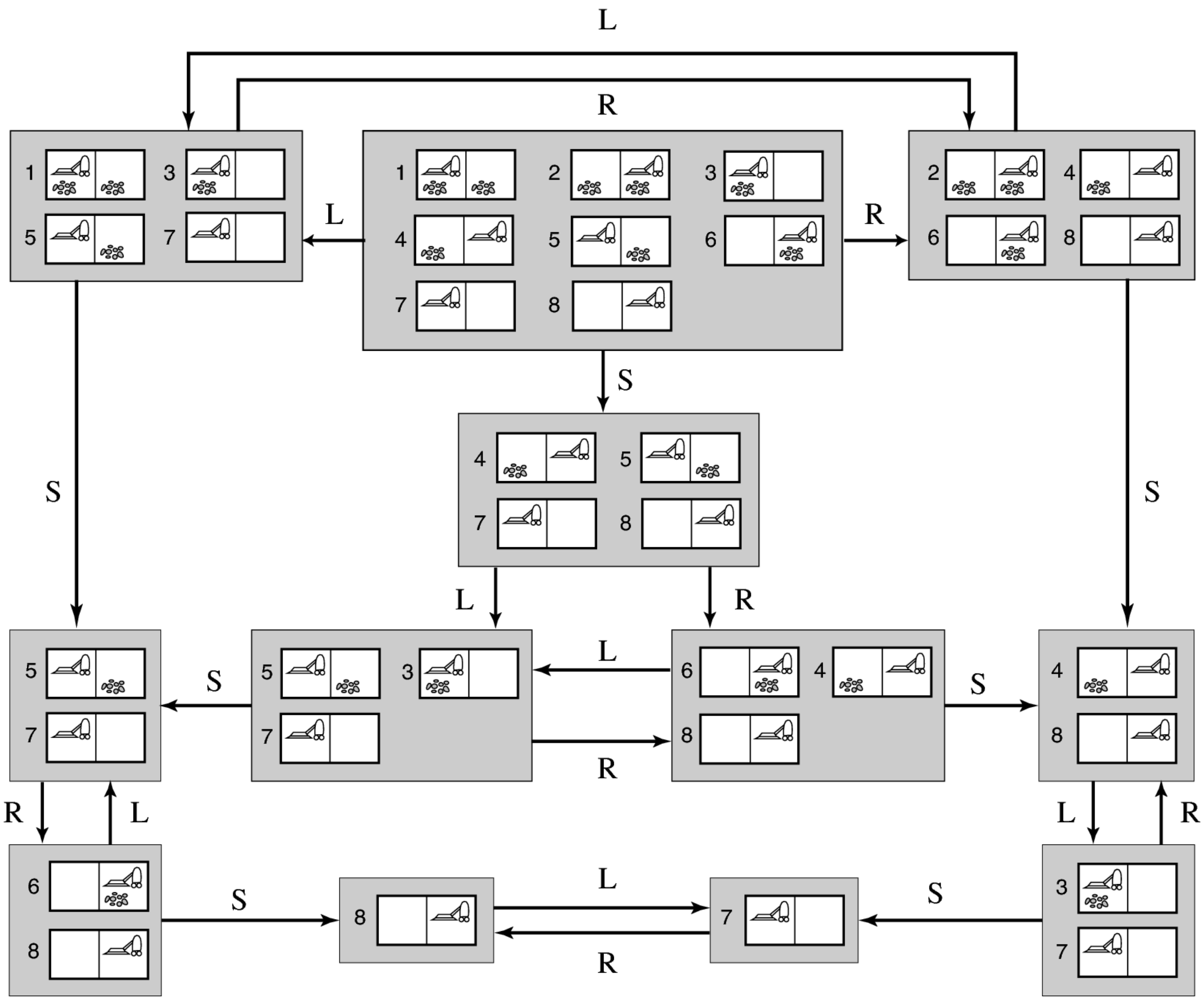
Searching with partial information



Sensorless problems

- an agent knows all the effects of its actions but has no sensors
  - initial state is one of the set {1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8}
  - Right will cause to be in one of the states {2,4,6,8}
  - [Right, Suck] will cause to be in one of {4,8}
  - [Right, suck, Left, Suck] guarantees to reach the goal state 7
- belief states

Sensorless problems



Contingency problems

- assume Murphy's law
  - Suck sometimes deposits dirt only if there is no dirt
    - percept [L,Dirty] means that an agent is in one of the states {1,3}
    - executing [Suck, Right] will lead to one of the states {6,8}
    - executing the final Suck action in state 6 leads to a goal state but executing Suck in state 8 might take us back to the state 6 (Murphy's law}, in which case the plan fails

  - [Suck, Right, **if** [R,Dirty] **then** Suck] is a solution

Thanks for your attention!
Questions?