My Party !

Alexander K. Hartmann

1 Background story

You are running a pub. To make your pub more fashionable, you are throwing the ultimate party. Clearly, you want that it will be a big success by attracting many people to the party. Unfortunately, your college from the opposite side of the street had the same idea and is inviting to another party on the same day. You have to outperform him, more people should come to your party! For this purpose you should take advantage of the fact that some potential guests like each other while some others do not. Thus, if you compose your group of guests in a suitable way, such that their relations are very friendly, your party will be a big success. Within this game you can even influence the relations among the guests, whether they like each other or whether they hate each other. Hence, it is up to you to achieve a triumphe over your neighbor.

Throw THE party of the year!

2   Game Material

The game contains the following items:

- These intructions

- Two different boards (which can be combined to make one big board)

- Two types of *pieces*:

    - 40 *guests* (two-coloured wooded discs with one white and one black side)

    - 60 *bonds* (coloured wooden sticks) for *friendly* (blue, 40 pieces) and *hostile* (red, 20 pieces) interactions

- one little sack

- two sets of each 6 *action cards*

- short instruction (in German) consisting of 4 cards

- eight additional cards with further information.

3   Aim of the game

The game is for two players. One player ("player black") aims at having as many as possible of the guests being oriented in such a way that the black side is up. Correspondingly, the other player ("player white") tries to maximize the number of guests with an orientation such that the white side is up.

4   Game preparation

One of the boards is selected. The guests are placed next to the board, they form the *pool*. The bonds are put into the sack. Each player receives a complete set of 6 action cards, selects secretly 3 of them, and places them in front of him/her upside down, i.e., with the information side looking down such that it is not visible. The three other cards, respectively, are put concealed into the box.

5 The board

Both boards contain *sites* (circles) where during the games the guests are placed. The sites are connected by *links* where during the game the *bonds* are placed. The number of adjacent links per site is varying on the boards.

At the boundary of the boards there are some "half" links, which are only used if both boards are joined to form a large board.
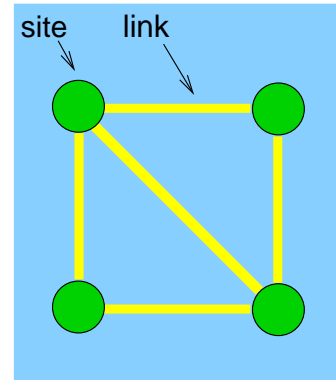
6 Basic principles/Denominations

A guest can be placded in two *orientations*, with the color white up or with the color black up. In this way it is indicated which party the guest wants to attend.

Two guests which are connected by a friendly bond prefer to exhibit the same orientation (white/white or black/black). In the same way two guests joined by a hostile bond prefer to take different orientations. In these two cases, one says the bond is *satisfied*. Then a *satisfaction* of $+1$ is assigned to the bond.

In the opposite case a bond is called *unsatisfied*, i.e., if a friendly bond connects two guests of different orientations or if a hostile bond connects two guests of equal orientation. To this bond a satisfaction of -1 is assigned.
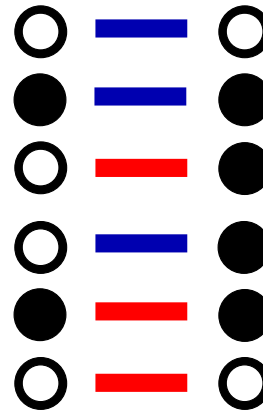
Remark: There are situations where it is impossible to satisfy all bonds, e.g., if three guests interact mutually (forming a triangle) via hostile bonds.

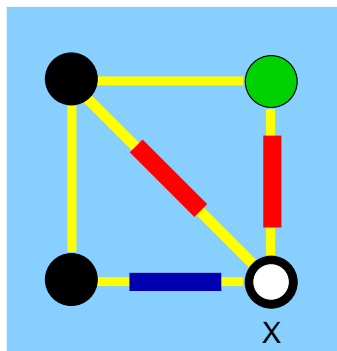Bonds which are not adjacent to *two* guests are *neutral* (satisfaction0).

The most important quantity for each guest is the total satisfaction of all bonds adjacent to the guest, i.e., the sum of the satisfaction values. Links where (yet) no bonds are placed and also neutral bonds (where at least at one side no guest is placed) are not taken into account when calculating the total satisfaction.

A guest is called *stable*, if for its adjacent bonds there are *more* satisfied than unsatisfied (total satisfaction positive). A guest is called *unstable*, if for its adjacent bonds there are *less* satisfied than unsatisfied (total satisfaction negative). A guest is called *free*, if for its adjacent bonds the number of satisfied and unsatisfied is *the same* (total satisfaction zero). In particular a guest is free, if no bonds are adjacent.
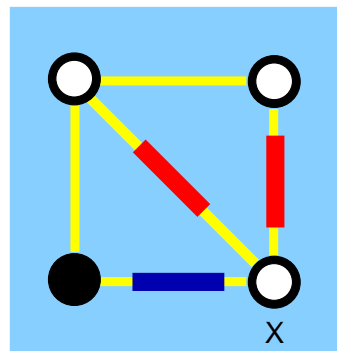
Example: for the guest marked with 'X' we obtain:
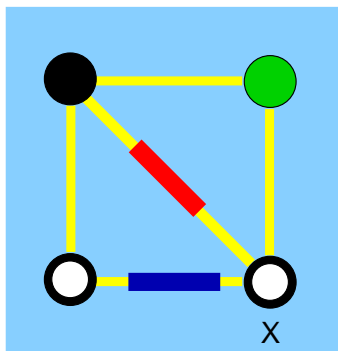
| total satisfaction 2 | total satisfaction 0 | total satisfaction -3 |

7 The game

The players perform moves alternatingly. The junger one starts and gets assigned the color white. A move consits of *some* of the **steps** listed below. Each step can occur once, several times or zero times within one single move, while observing the basic rules mentioned here and on the next page:

- Blindly drawing a bond from the sack.

- Placing a bond on an unoccupied link, i.e., where so far no bond was placed, no matter what the orientation of the adjacent guests are, if there are any.

- Taking one guest from the pool.

- Placing a guest on an unoccupied site, i.e., where no guest was placed so far. The orientation (black/white) *must* be chosen such that the total satisfaction of the guest is *NOT negative*, i.e., it may be positive or zero.

- Flipping of guests located on the board: a guest showing black on top before will show white on top afterwards, and vice versa. It is only allowed to flip guests, where the total satisfaction (sum of satisfactions) is negative or zero, i.e., where the guest is unstable or free.

  Remark: guests exhibiting a negative total satisfaction may be flipped but are not required to be flipped, in contrast to the strict rule when placing a guest. This freedom holds in particular if first a guest is placed on a site without adjacent bonds (all adjacent links are not occupied, leading to total satisfaction zero) and next a bond is placed adjacent to the guest. (Also it may just happen and it is allowed that a player does not spot a guest which can be flipped, or forgets to flip a guest.)

Basic rules: For s standard move, *a total* of three pieces (bonds/guests) is taken from the sack and/or pool and placed on the board. This may be three bonds in one move, or one bond and two guests, etc. (Exceptions may occur when using action cards, see section 9.) All pieces taken within a move have to be placed on the board during the move.

The order of the steps within a move is arbitrary. *Example*: a player may first draw a bond and then take a guest from the pool. Next the player places the bond and then the guest, or the other way round. The player is also allowed to take a third piece first. During a move one or several guests may be flipped, if allowed, at any time. Also up to one action card may be used within one move any time. A move is **finished** if a player has placed three pieces (guests/bonds) and announces that he or she is finished.

Tactical advice: Via placing bonds and via flipping guests it is possible to achieve that adjacent guests, which were stable before, become free or even unstable and thus can be flipped. This is the main mechanism to flip guests from the opponent's orientation to the own orientation.

With this set of rules, together with the explenations of the action cards in section 9 and with the rules for the finishing the game (section 11), the game is completely described. For a better comprehendsion, next some examples are given, in particular for illustrating the tactical advice.

8   Example moves

Player white starts and draws one bond from the sack and happens to obtain a friendly (blue) bond.

The player places the bond on a link. Next, the player takes a guest from the pool and places it adjacent to the bond. Since the bond is still neutral, the guest is free and the player can chose the orientation of the guest. He/she choses the orientation white. The player takes another guest and places it on the other end of the bond. Due to the friendly bond and due to the white orientation of the first guest, now only the orientation white is possible. The situation shown to the right is obtained.
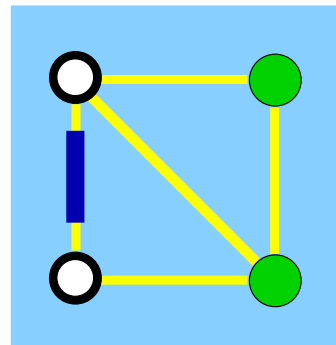
Now it is the turn of player black. He/she draws a bond from the sack and happens to obtain also a friendly (blue) bond. The player decides to draw another bond and obtaines by chance another friendly bond. Now the player *first* places a guest on the site marked by X. He/she is allowed to chose the orientation black since currently no bonds are adjancent to the site. *Next*, the player places the two friendly bonds between site X and the sites A and B which are already occupied by guests. Now the two white guests A and B have become free, since each of them is adjacent to one satisfied bond (connecting the guests
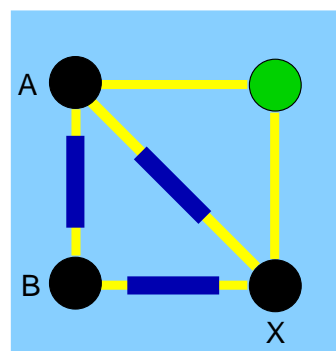
A and B) and one unsatisfied bond (adjacent to guest X). Player black now is allowed to flip any of the two free guests, e.g., A. Now guest B has become unstable and can be flipped as well. This results in the situation shown, where now all guests are oriented in favor of player black.

Remark: If player black had placed first a bond (or two) adjacent to the two white guests, he/she would have been forced to place the guest at site X with orientation white, because it is not allowed to place a guest with negative satisfaction. Hence, the order of the steps must be chosen carefully.

Note that within the resulting situation the guests are more stable, since it needs at least two unsatisfied bonds to free and thus flip a guest. As we have seen in the previous example move, pairs (or chains) of guests can be flipped easily.

Remark: if player black had obtained not blue but insetad one red and one blue bond, he/she could have turned the two white guests A and B as well. In this case the situation shown to the right could have been obtained. Currently, guest A is stable. Nevertheless, guests X and B are free since both are adjacent to one satisfied and one unsatisfied bond. Thus, player white could in his/her move flip guest B. Now guest A has been freed, which can be flipped as well to white. Finally, guest X is free and can be flipped as well. All guests have been flipped from black to white. Nevertheless, the situation is still not stable, player black could

in the same way flip all three guests again. Therefore, all three guests are directly and indirectly (through neighboring free guests) free. Note that such guests will be ignored in the final evaluation of the game (see section 11).
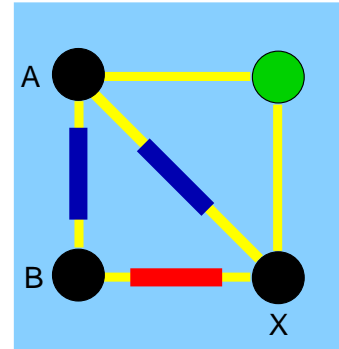
9   Action cards

At the beginning of the game, each player receives a complete set of 6 action cards. From this set each player selects three cards, hidden from the view of the other player. There are the following action cards which can be used at *any time* during a move, but *at most one* during one move. After an action card has been used, it is put aside and cannot be used again during the same game.

For the "special move" card, the player has to take and place four pieces instead of three. Apart from this, the rules for a move do not change.

Spezialzug

4 x

Du legst
4 Spielsteine
in einem Zug
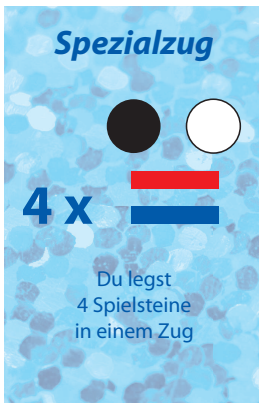
When using the "master move" card, the player must take and place five peices instead of three. Apart from this, the rules for a move do not change.

Meisterzug

5 x

Du legst
5 Spielsteine
in einem Zug

Using the "new link" action card, the player places a bond between two sites which are not connected by a link. It does not matter whether there are already guests placed on theses sites. It is like a new link is created between the two sites, where the bond is placed. Requirement: the imaginary straight line between the two sites must not touch existing links or sites. Remark: still the total number of pieces placed is exactly three wthin the move.

Neuer Kontakt

Du kannst eine Bindung
zwischen bisher nicht
verbundenen Plätze
legen

Using the "revision" card, the player removes an arbitrary bond and puts it back into the sack.
Remark 1: if the removed bond was previously placed via a "new link" card, this link is destroyed as well.
Remark 2: Via well planned usage of this card, some guests might become free and thus can be flipped.

Revision

Du kannst eine
Bindung entfernen

Doppel-Bindung!

Du kannst auf einen Kontakt zwei Bindungen legen

When using the "double bond" card, the player puts one of the bonds played during the move next to an exisiting bond.
Remark: Both bonds contribute to the calculation of the satisfaction. Thus, the corresponding link attains twice the normal importance, if both bonds placed on it are the same. If the two bonds are different, they cancel each other, i.e., they neutralized each other.

Fixierung

● ! oder ◯ !

Du kannst einen beliebigen Gast/Spin für eine Richtung fixieren

The "fixing" card allows a player to orient and fix an arbitrary guest on the borad in an arbitrary orientation, independent from the adjacent bonds and the neighboring guests. This guest is marked by putting another guest on the top of the guest. Still, the fixed guest is considered and counted as one guest. During the remaining game, the fixed guest is not allowed to flip, even not when using the other "fixing" card.
Remark: This is probably the strongest action card. Via a carfully chosen application, one might create a large cascade of flipped guests.

10 Finish

The game is finished when all sites are occupied by guests and all links are occupied by bonds. Thus, it might happen that during the last move only less than three pieces can be placed, if no unoccupied site or bond is available. In particular, during the last move a player might not have the choice of the pieces. It might happen, e.g., that there are only two sites left and no links, thus only two guests can be placed.
After the final move, no action card can be used, by any player.

11 Final evaluation

There might be guests which are free after the game has finsied, i.e., they may be flipped. In particular, there might be guests, which are *indiretly* free, i.e., they may be flipped after a free neighboring guest has been fliped. This may lead to cascades of free guests.
Remark 1: guests which are fixed are by definition not free.
Remark 2: guests which are adjacent to an odd number of bonds can never be free.

Remark 3: if during the evaluation unstable guests are detected (which have been overseen before), any player is allowed to flip them.

Thus, first the total set of directly and indirectly free guests is identified. They are removed in one strike. This means, one does not remove a free guest once it is identified, but only after all free guests have been detected.

After removal of the free guests, the guests of each orientation are counted. The player wins who has the majority of guests showing his/her orientation. If the number of guests showing the two different orientations is the same, the game ends in a draw.

12 Ideas for variants

- Both boards may be joined to form a large board. In this case each player gets assigned all six action cards (they need not to be kept concealed).

- The players are not forced to place the pieces immediately. Instead, they can be (partially) collected such that during a later move more than three pieces can be placed.

- One can remove chance completely from the game, if the bonds are not taken randomly from the sack. Instead, each player receives the same set of bonds from which he/she may select some during a move.

- Pro version: You can divide the game into two phases: First, only bonds are placed. After all bonds are placed, the guests are placed using the usual rules. Hence, when putting the bonds a player has to have already a good plan (which, on the other hand, may be exploited by the opponent).

Enjoy the game!

Alexander K. Hartmann

Appendix

For trying the game, you might want to print it and cut the pieces out. Note that you can buy the professionally produced game for 14.50 Euros (which is slightly below the production costs!) plus pp at the University of Oldenburg via emailing to `bisverlag@uni-oldenburg.de`.

We suggest to print the guests below and glue them on coins, one side black, one side white.
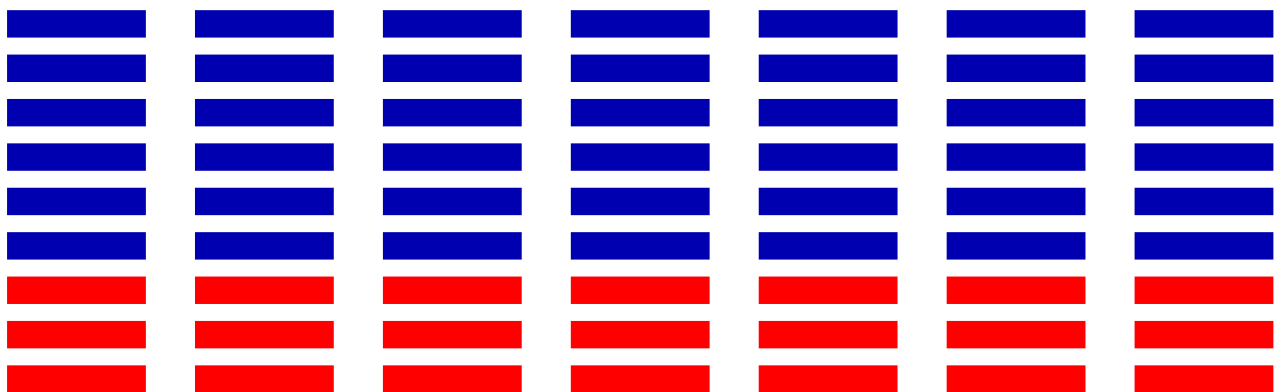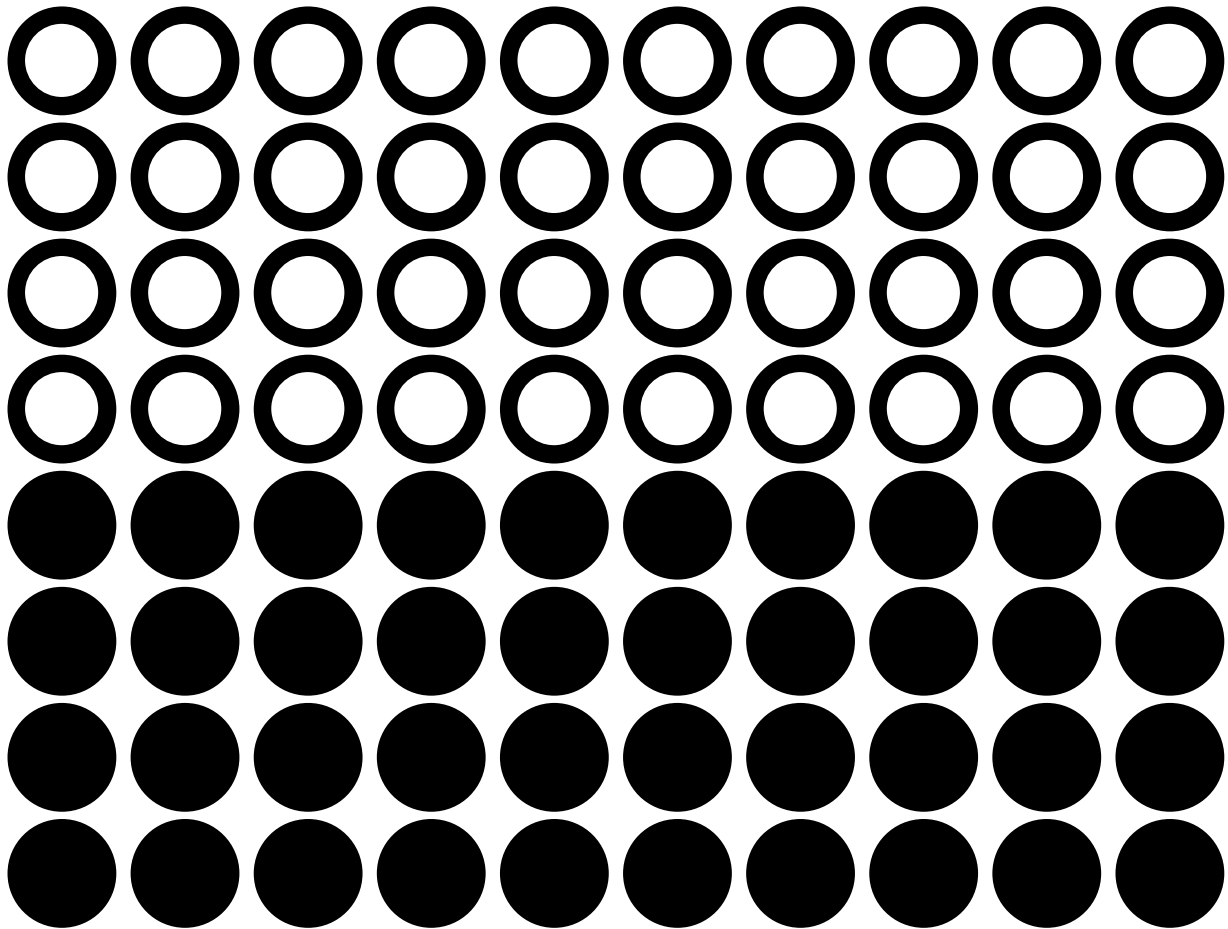
Meine Party – Schmeiss die beste Party!

(print this page twice)

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4 x

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4 Spielsteine
in einem Zug

Meisterzug

5 x

Du legst
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Neuer Kontakt

Du kannst eine Bindung
zwischen bisher nicht
verbundenen Plätze
legen

Revision

Du kannst eine
Bindung entfernen

Doppel-Bindung!

Du kannst auf einen
Kontakt zwei
Bindungen legen

Fixierung

! oder **!**

Du kannst einen
beliebigen Gast/Spin
für eine Richtung
fixieren