Some Foundational Problems in Interdomain Routing

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The state of interdomain routing research

- Many years of work, some successes
- Drilling down into esoteric, BGP-specific arcana
- Unfortunately, not a lot of yield in improvements

Maybe problems are intrinsic to interdomain routing?

Questions:

- What makes interdomain routing so difficult?
- Which problems are intrinsic vs. bad design?

Interdomain Routing Has a Lot to Do

- Stability, fast convergence, loop freedom, security...
- Reachability to global destinations
  - Millions of destinations
  - Thousands of independent networks
- Contractual agreements
  - Transit
  - Peering
  - Partial/paid peering or transit
- Traffic engineering
  - Load balance (inbound and outbound)
  - Backup

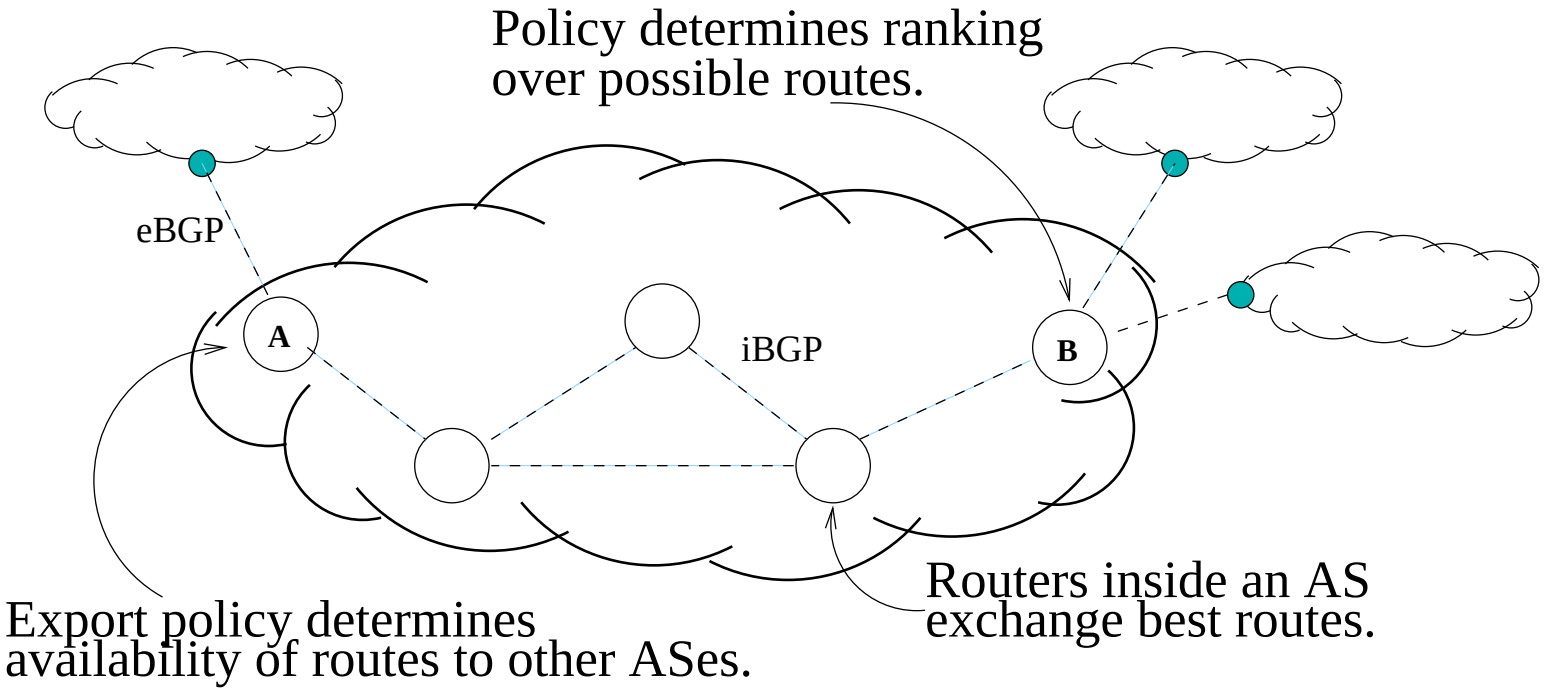
Interdomain Routing Model

Local Policy:

- Ranking function to select the best route
- Export rules determine route visibility

Intra-AS Route Dissemination:

- Routers within an AS exchange best routes

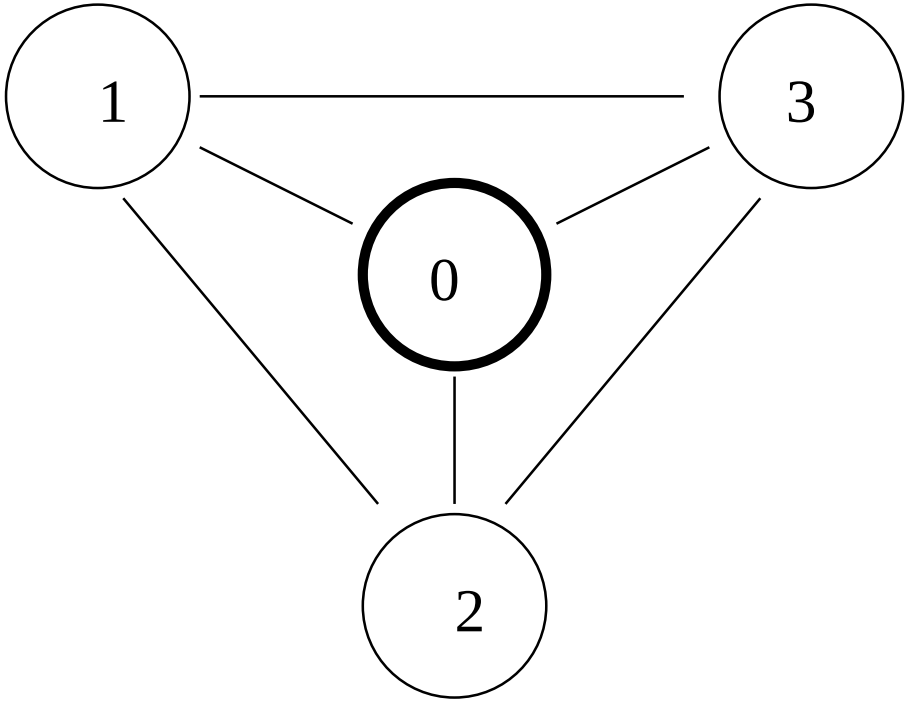


Open Issues Discussed in the Paper

- Policy-Induced Problems
  - **Policy disputes between ASes (i.e., oscillation)**
    Intrinsic tension between expressiveness and stability
  - Policy enforcement
  - Secure route advertisement
- Scalability-Induced Problems
  - **Network partitions, forwarding loops, and oscillations**
    Bad design choices for route dissemination and computation
  - Inability to determine cause of update (slow convergence, difficulty of root-cause analysis)
  - Prefix aggregation hides reachability information

Tension between expressiveness and stability

Requirement: Stable path assignment
Problem: Local rankings of each AS may conflict. [GW01]



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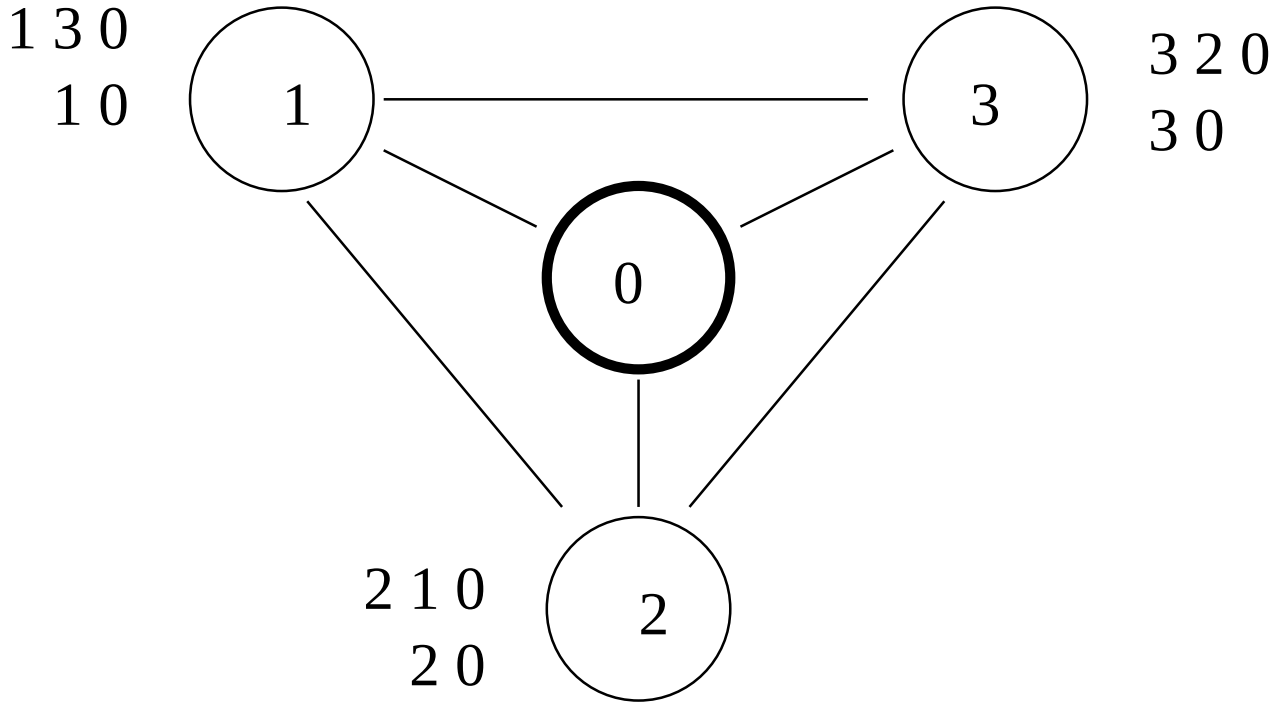

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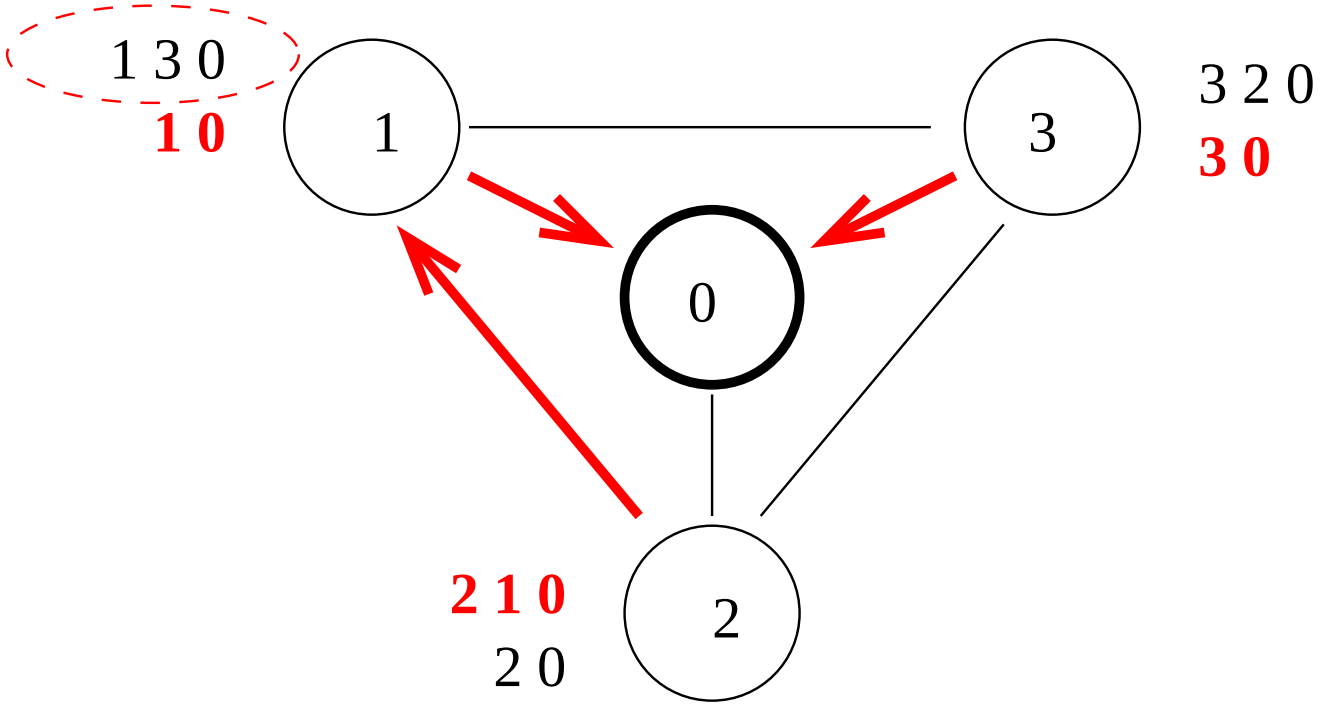

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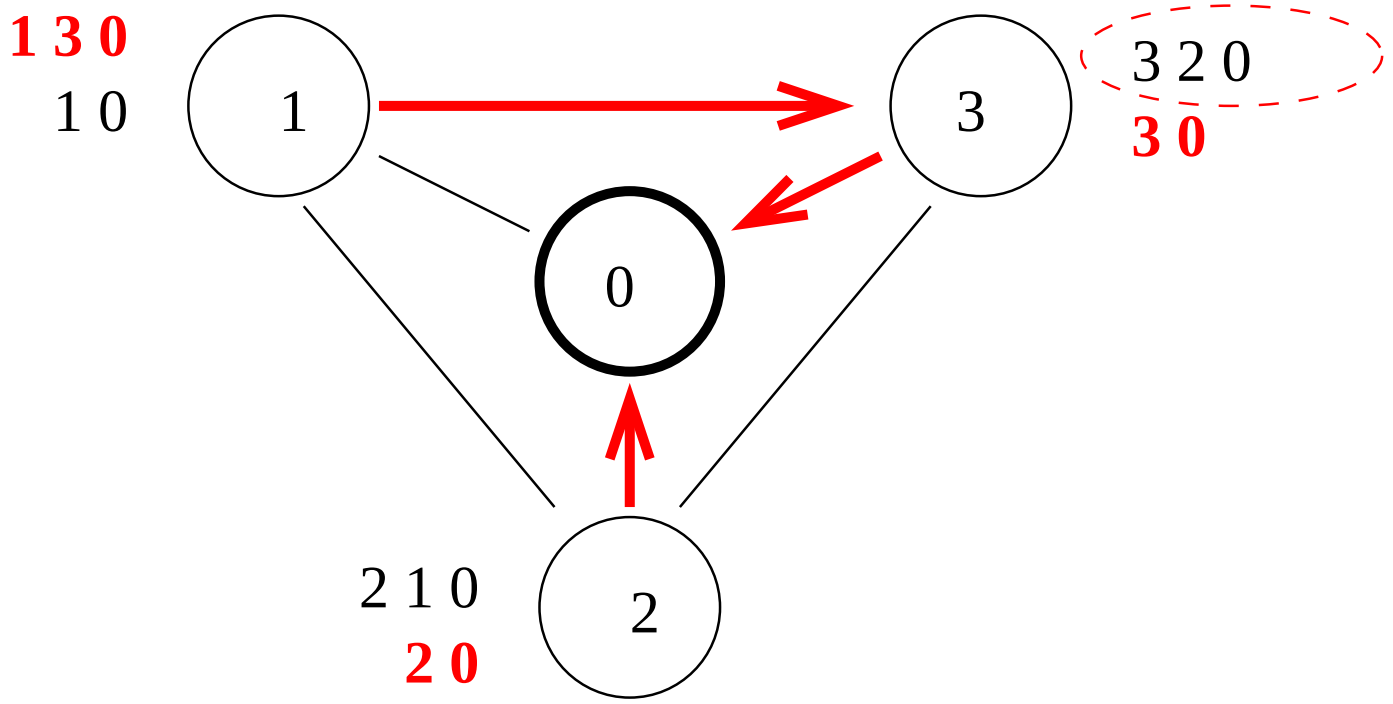

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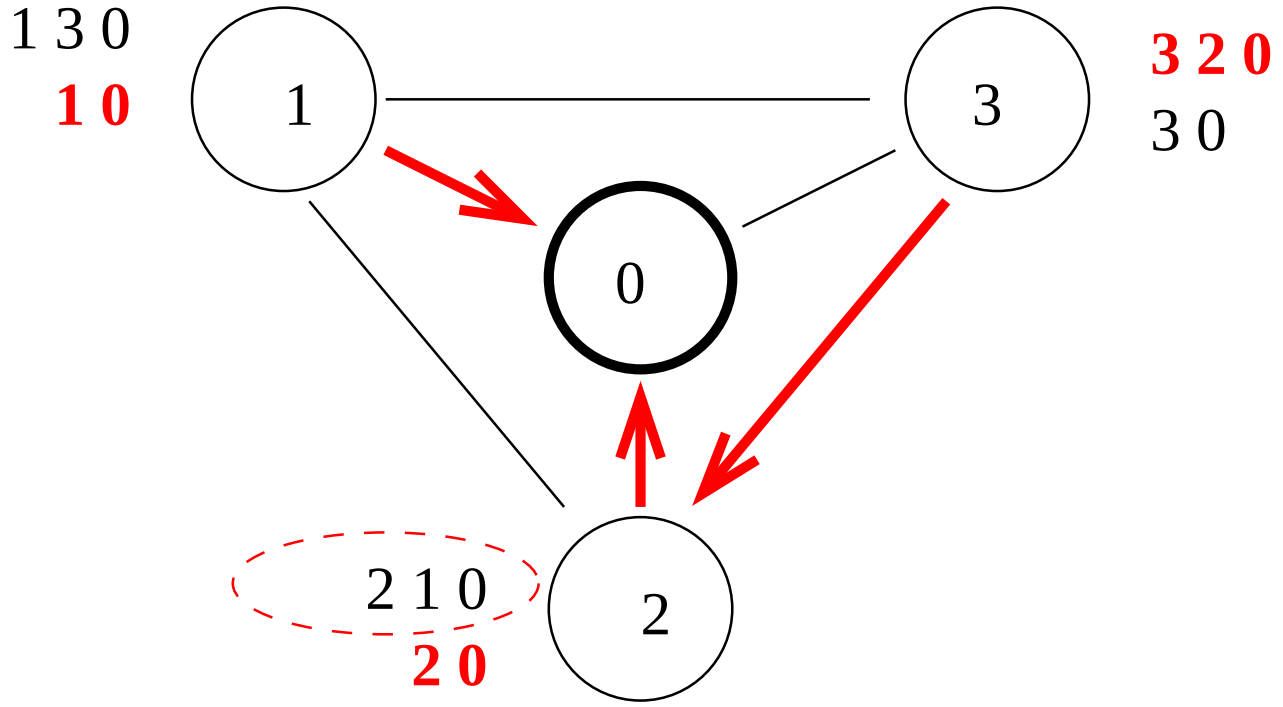

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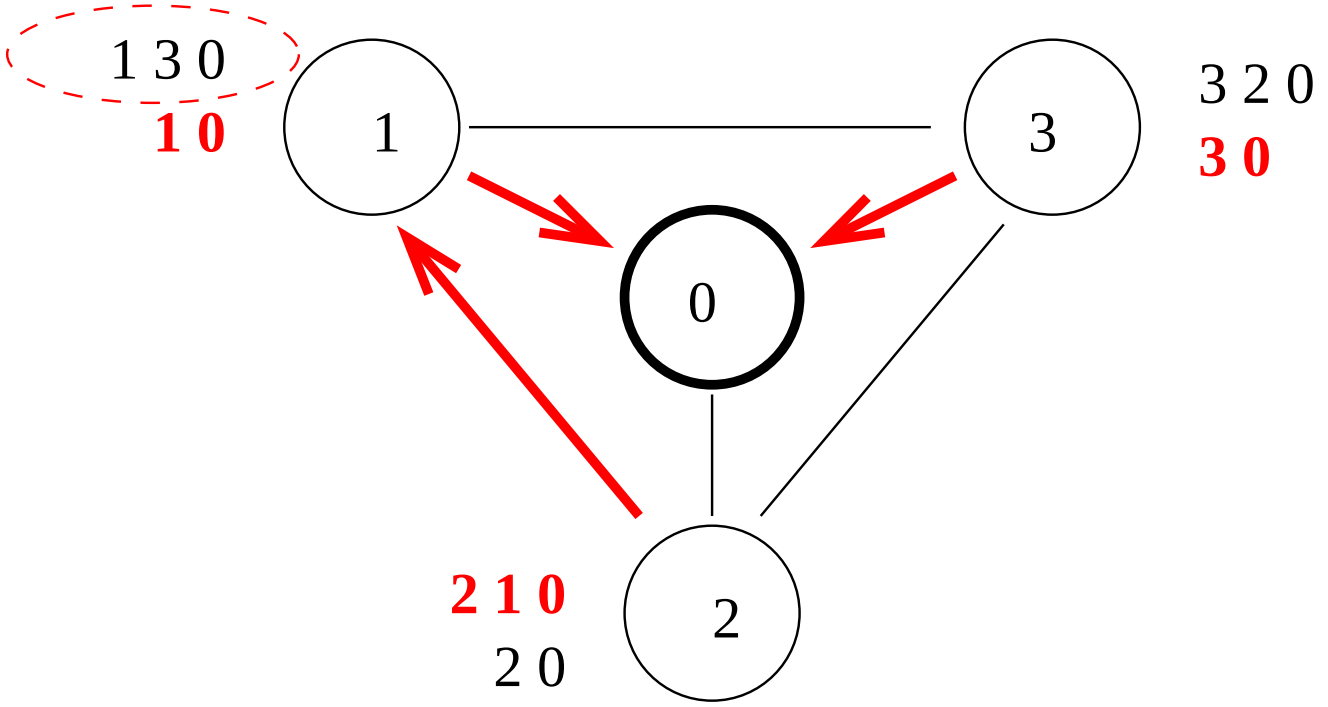

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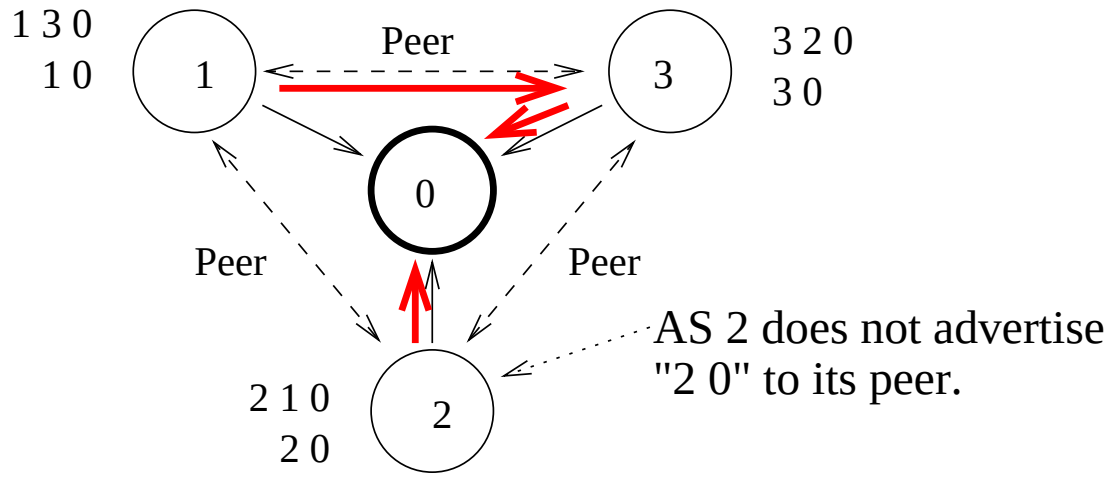
Tension between expressiveness and stability

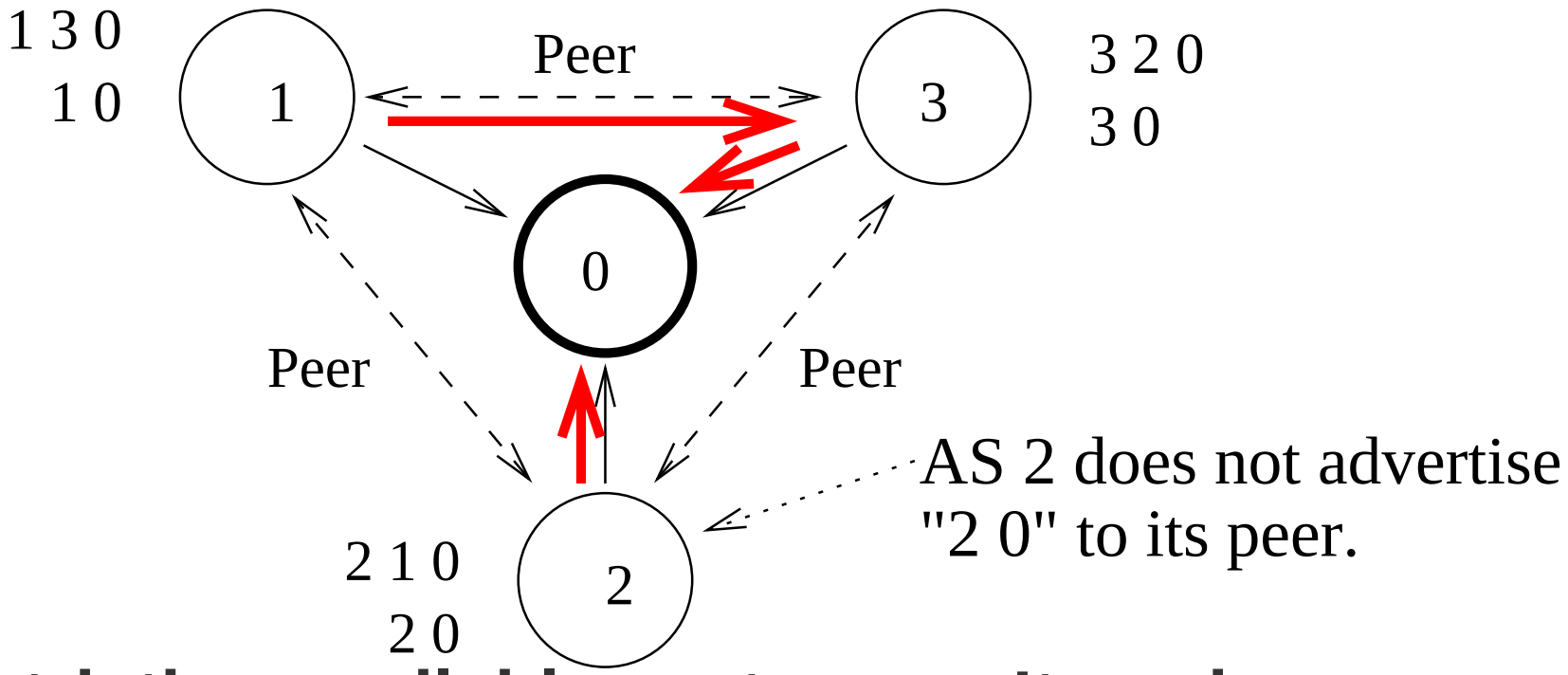
What's known:

- BGP may be unstable.
- Restricting policies can guarantee stability.
  - No "dispute wheel" implies stability. [GW01]
  - Restricting rankings and export policies according to "peering" and "customer-provider" relationships implies stability. [GR01]



What's the problem?

- Conditions on export restrict relationships.
- It makes no sense to restrict these relationships.



Restricting available routes won't work:

- Stable if 2 does not advertise "2 0" to 3
- But what if 3 pays 2 to see "2 0"?

Note: These contracts exist today!

Assuming no restrictions on available routes:

- What types of rankings will guarantee stability?

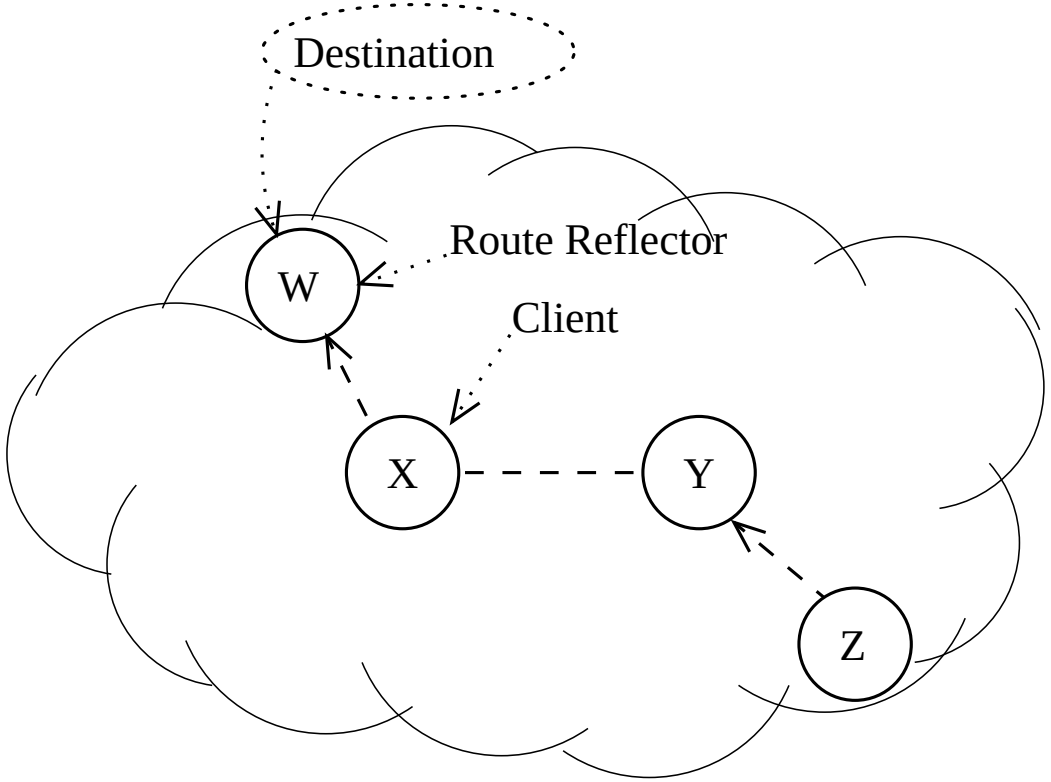
Don’t embed common practices into tomorrow’s protocols!

Research directions:

- Determining restrictions on rankings, given no restrictions on topology or contracts
  - Are these rankings too restrictive for traffic engineering, etc.?
- A separate protocol on a slower timescale for contracts and negotiation?

Scalability-Induced Problem: Partitions

Requirement: Many routers and sessions
Today: Route reflectors reduce the number of sessions.
Problem: Route reflection does not distribute all routes.



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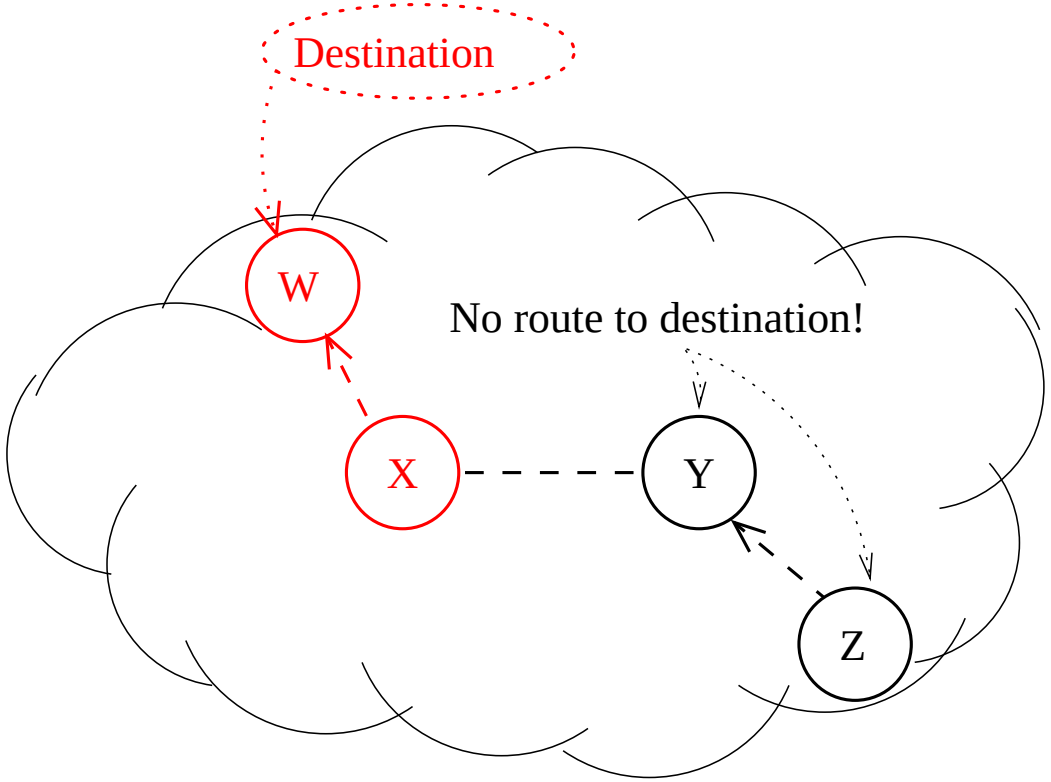

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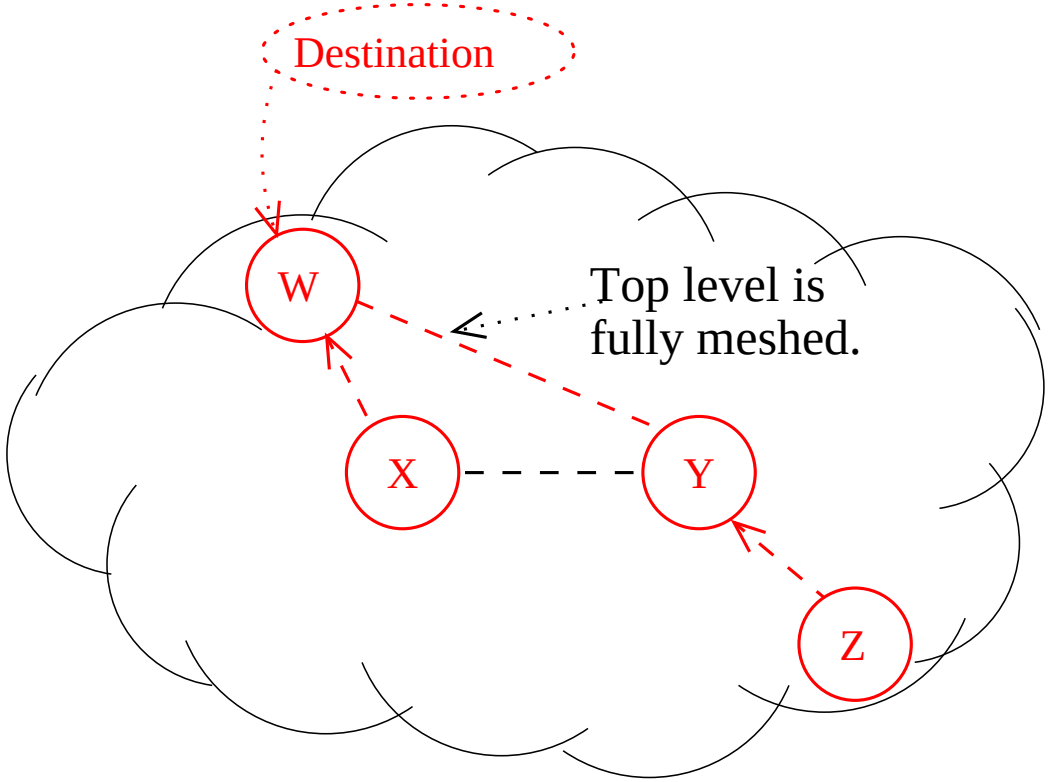
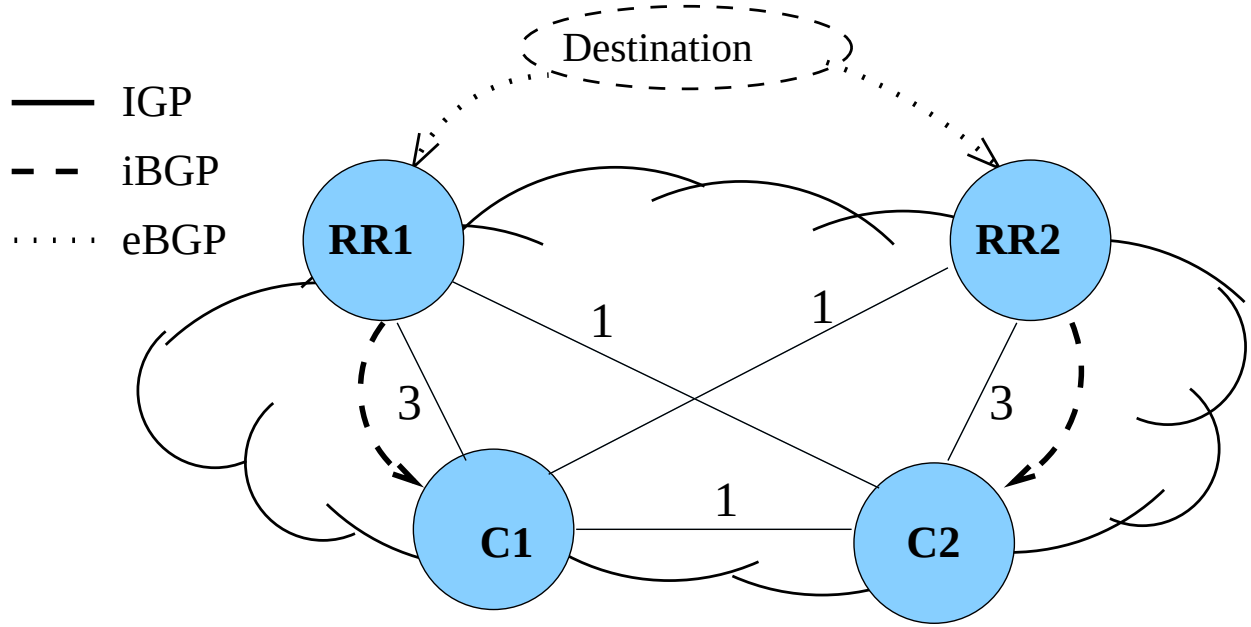


How to guarantee path visibility?
All top-level routers must be fully meshed.

Loops and Oscillations



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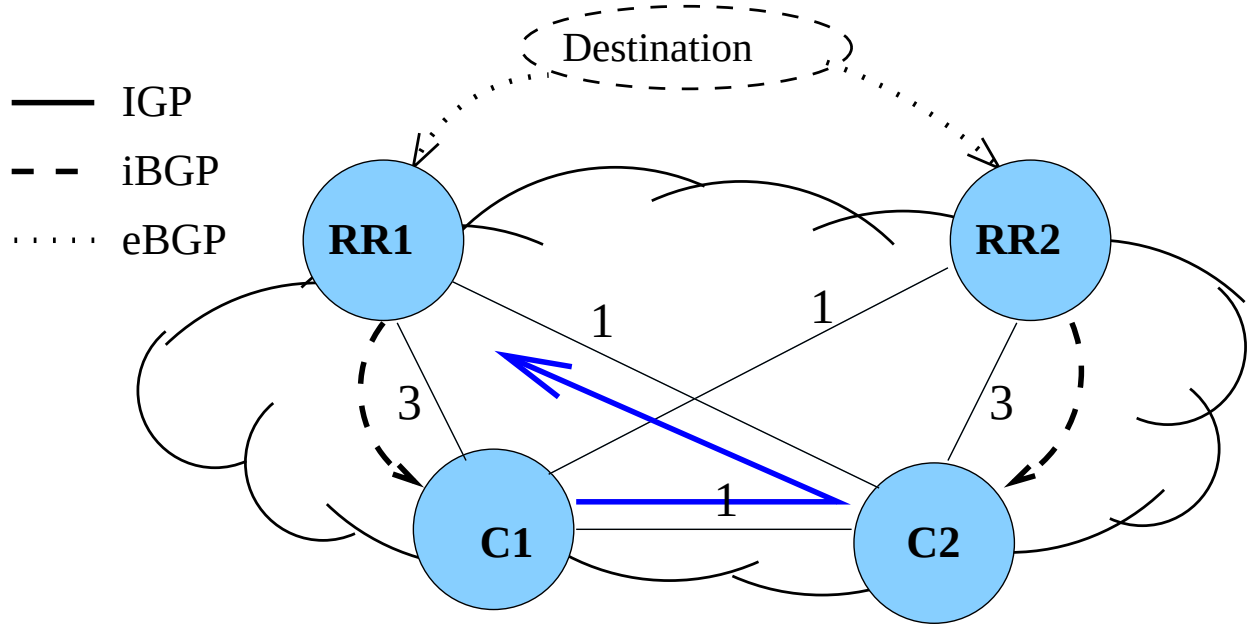

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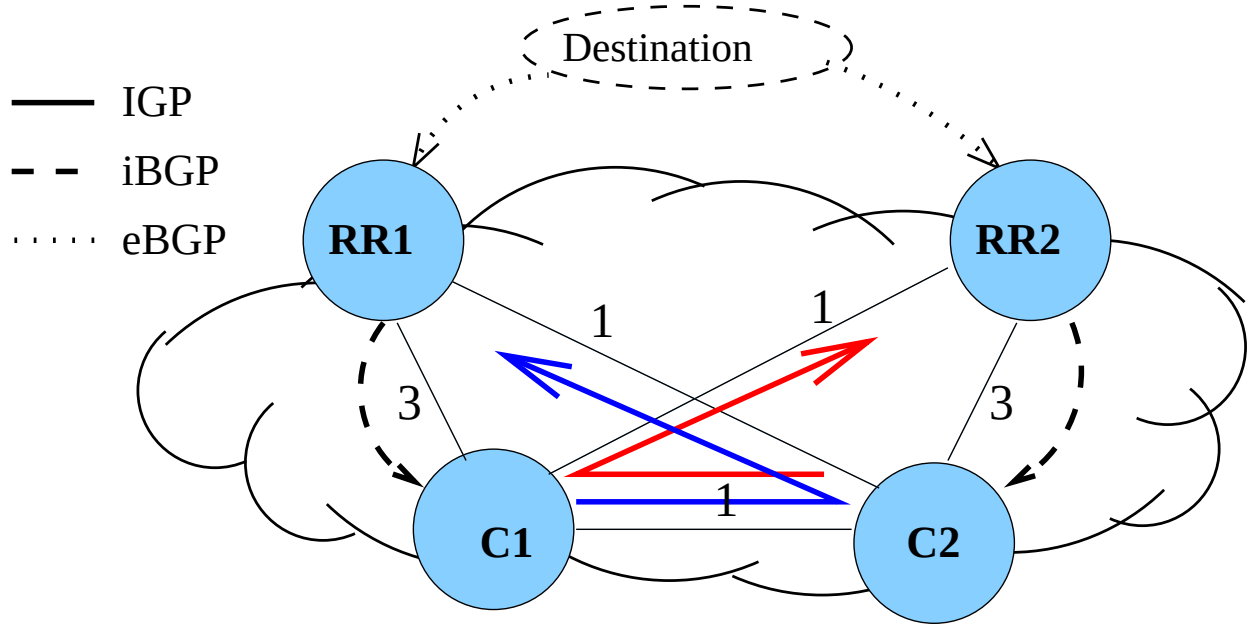


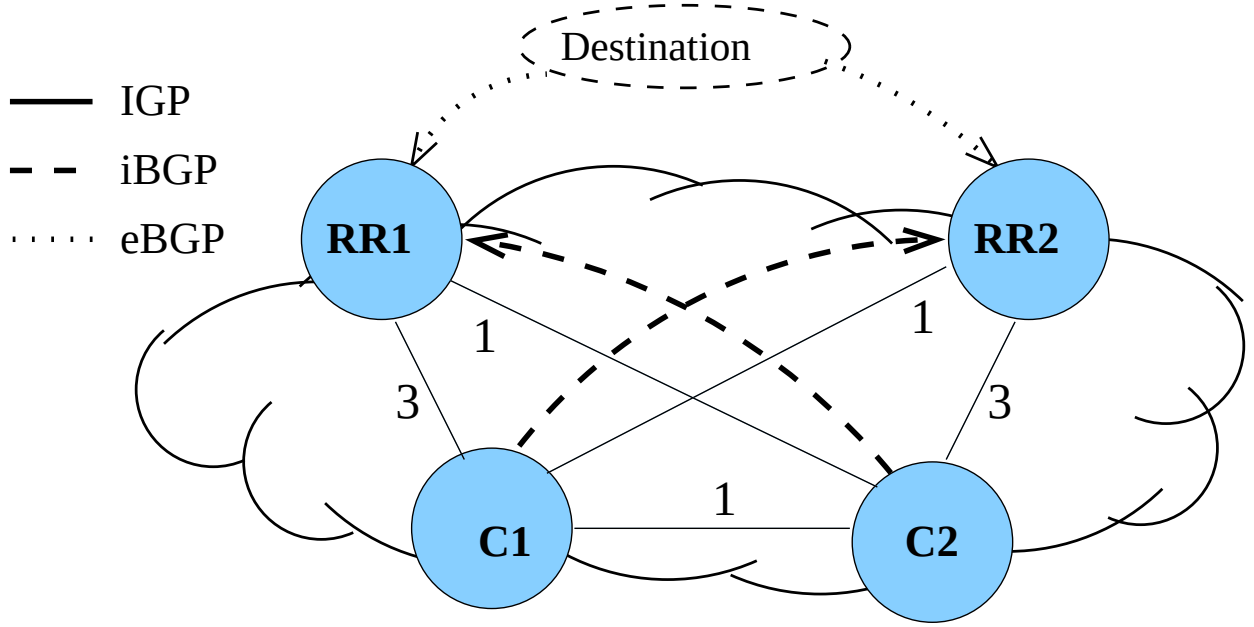
What's known:

- iBGP/IGP interaction causes loops and oscillations.
- Restrictions guarantee stable, loop-free paths.
  - Every shortest path in an AS must be a valid "signaling path". [GW02]
  - Route reflectors should be close to clients. [GW02]

What's the problem?

- Can't have redundant, topologically diverse RRs
  - Route reflectors must be placed based on IGP topology.

This artifact results from bad design.

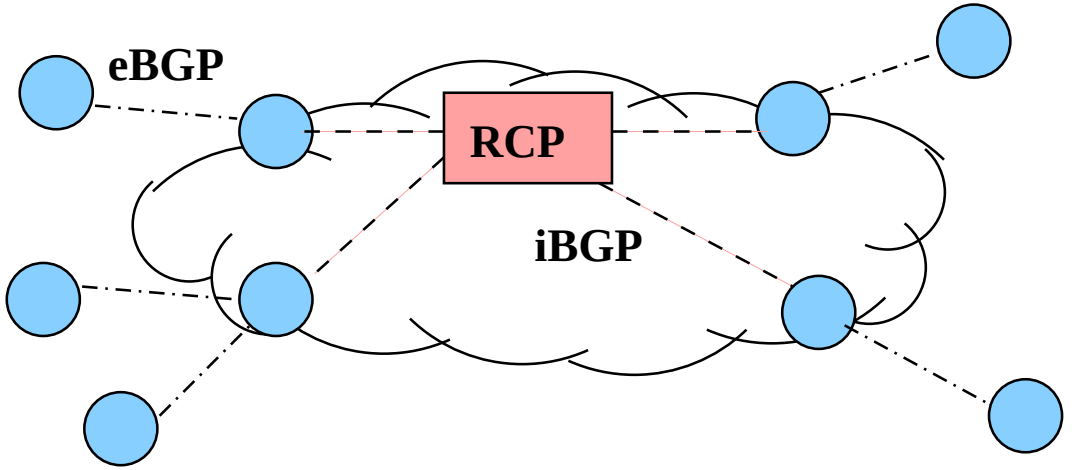


Research directions:

- Weaker conditions for forwarding correctness?
- Why not tunnel from ingress to egress?

Possible Solution: Routing Control Platform

- Compute consistent routes using complete state.
- Control routing protocol interactions.



Correct dissemination and computation of routes.

Conclusion

Moving forward, we can:

- Continue fixing BGP
- Propose an entirely new protocol

In either case, we should try to distinguish intrinsic tradeoffs from design choices.

Intrinsic problems:

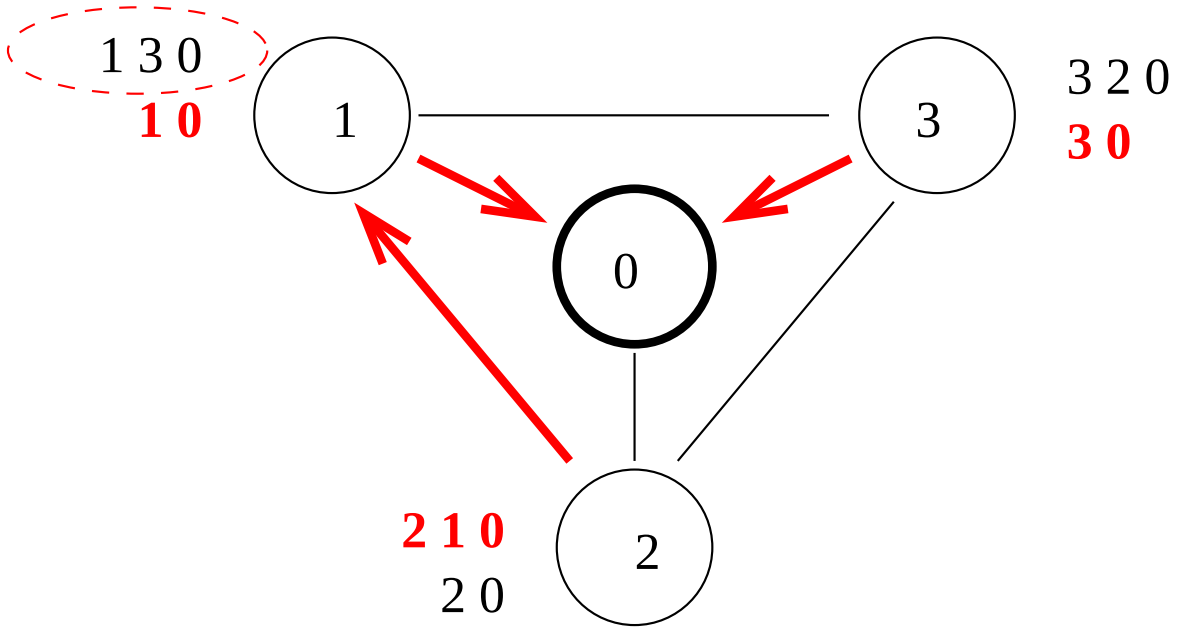
- Tension between expressiveness and stability
- Inability to determine the cause of an update
- Aggregation of prefixes vs. control of traffic

Design choices:

- iBGP loops, partitions, and oscillations
- multiple-exit discriminator (MED) attribute

Policy Disputes

Even given stable inputs, BGP may not converge.



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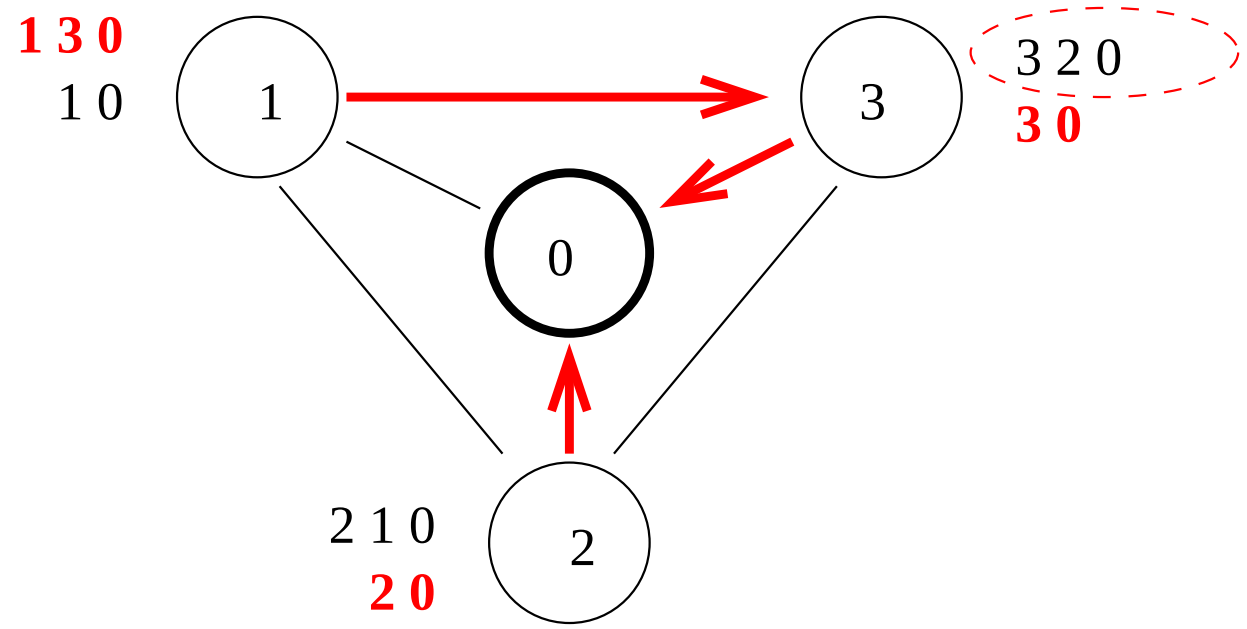

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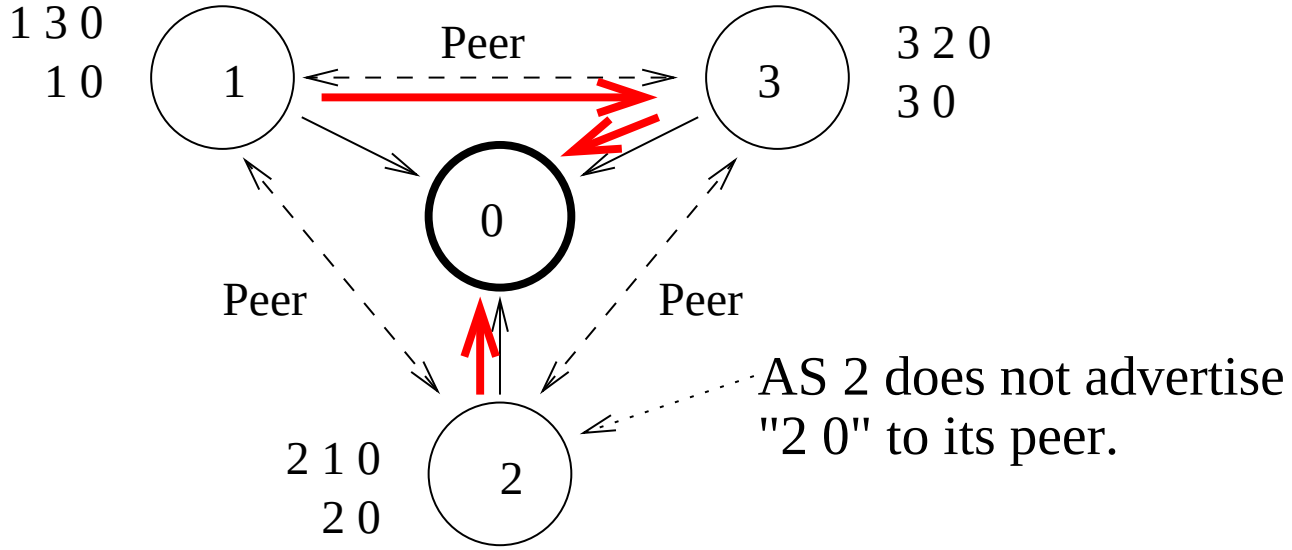
Solution to Policy Disputes [GR01]

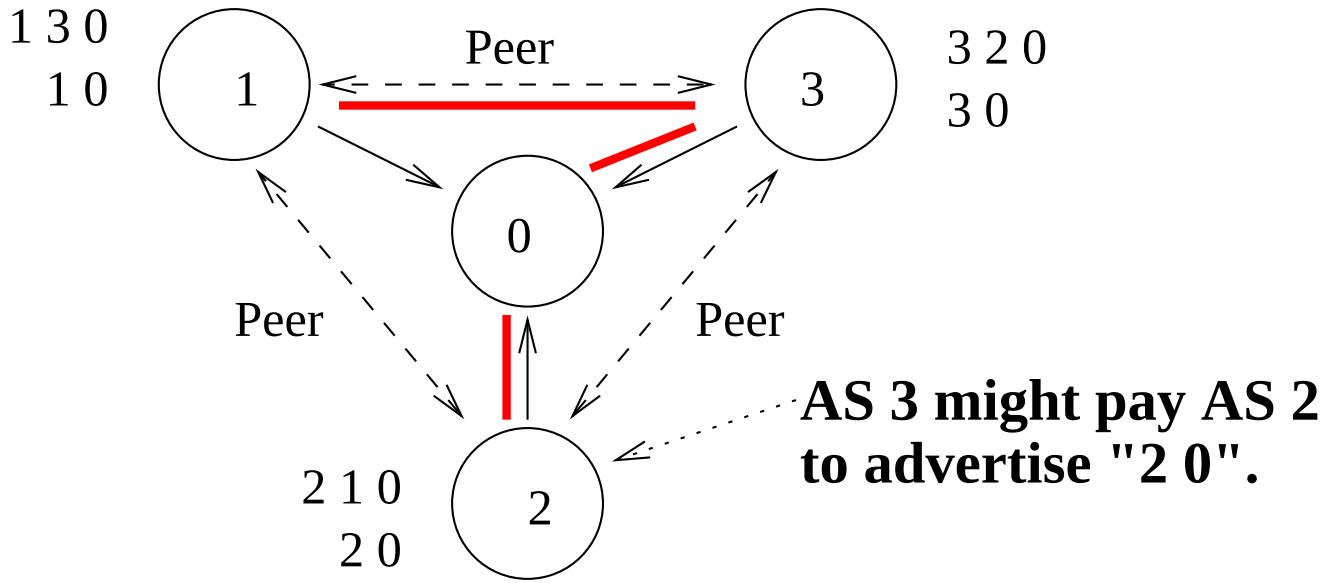
- Every relationship is "provider-customer" or "peering" (no cycles)
- **Ranking** rules:
  - Prefer route through a customer over one through a peer.
- **Export** rules:
  - Export all routes to customers.
  - Export only customer routes to peers and providers.



Do these constraints close the book on BGP convergence?

We think not.

- Customer-provider/peer relationships are global.
- Export policies are contractual (they involve money).



Scalability Makes Interdomain Routing Difficult

Requirement: Many routers and sessions
Problem: Route reflection does not distribute all routes.
Result: Partitions, oscillations, and forwarding loops.

Requirement: Many destinations.
Problem: Aggregation hides information about reachability to destinations.
Result: Coarse information about end-host reachability.

Requirement: Many ASes.
Problem: AS path hides router-level path information.
Result: Slow convergence, inability to pinpoint failures.