

# Dynamic Epistemic Logic

## 7. Multi-Agent PathFinding with Destination Uncertainty

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



**UNI  
FREIBURG**

Bernhard Nebel and Robert Mattmüller

July 10th, 2019



## Credits:

- This presentation is based on our JAIR paper: “Implicitly Coordinated Multi-Agent Path Finding under Destination Uncertainty: Success Guarantees and Computational Complexity”

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



# Motivation

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- All the examples of epistemic planning we have seen are rather **simple**.
- Are there **more complex settings**, which could be dealt with in the framework?
- There are **no success guarantees** for the execution of joint plans in the general case.
- Are there possibly **specialized epistemic planning situations**, for which positive results are possible?
- Propositional epistemic planning in general is **undecidable** (something, we have not seen yet).
- Are there **decidable special cases**?
- ⇒ MAPF/DU – originally only used as a motivating example.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



# (Classical) Multi-Agent Path Finding

Motivation

**Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding**

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



## Definition (Multi-agent path finding (MAPF) problem)

Given a set of *agents*  $A$ , an undirected, simple *graph*  $G = (V, E)$ , an *initial state* modelled by an injective function  $\alpha_0 : A \rightarrow V$ , and a *goal state* modelled by another injective function  $\alpha_*$ , can  $\alpha_0$  be *transformed* into  $\alpha_*$  by *movements of single agents* without collisions?

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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- *Existence problem*: Does there exist a successful sequence of movements (= *plan*)?

Motivation

Multi-Agent Pathfinding

Definition and example

MAPF Variations

Computational Complexity of MAPF

Going Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary & Outlook

Literature



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- *Bounded existence problem*: Does there exist a plan of a given *length*  $k$  or less?

Motivation

Multi-Agent Pathfinding

Definition and example

MAPF Variations

Computational Complexity of MAPF

Going Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary & Outlook

Literature





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Motivation

Multi-Agent Pathfinding

Definition and example

MAPF Variations

Computational Complexity of MAPF

Going Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary & Outlook

Literature



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- *Existence problem*: Does there exist a successful sequence of movements (= *plan*)?
- *Bounded existence problem*: Does there exist a plan of a given *length*  $k$  or less?
- *Plan generation problem*: Generate a plan.
- *Optimal plan generation problem*: Generate a shortest plan.

Motivation

Multi-Agent Pathfinding

Definition and example

MAPF Variations

Computational Complexity of MAPF

Going Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

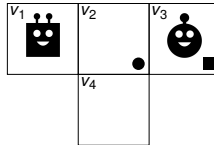
Summary & Outlook

Literature

# Example



Can we find a (central) plan to move the square robot  $S$  to  $v_3$  and the circle robot  $C$  to  $v_2$ ?



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

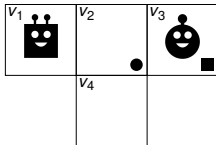
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

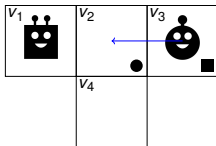
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Plan:

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

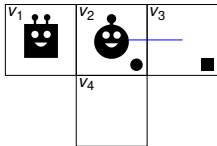
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Example



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

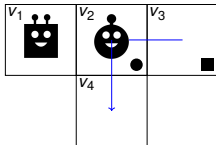
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Example



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

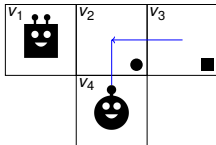
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Example



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

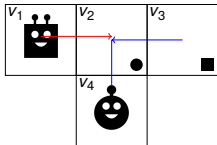
Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

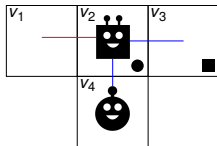
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

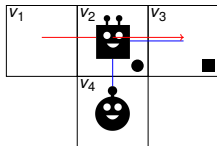
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Example



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

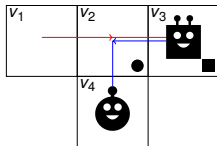
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Example



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

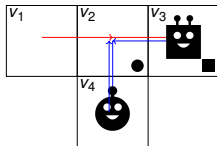
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Example



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

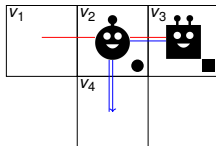
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Example



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# A special case: 15-puzzle



Pictures from Wikipedia article on 15-Puzzle

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

**Definition and  
example**

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

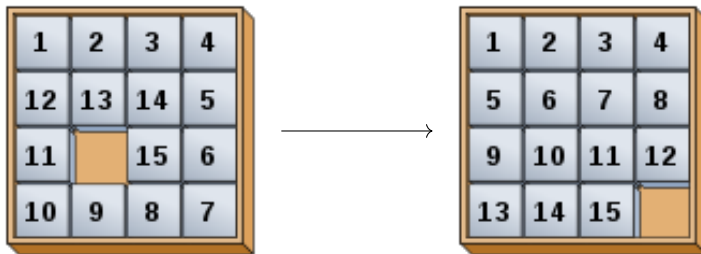
MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature





- MAPF: variations & complexity
- Distributed MAPF (each agent plans on it own): DMAPF
- Distributed MAPF with destination uncertainty: MAPF/DU

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- **Sequential MAPF** (or pebble motion on a graph) allows only one agent to move per time step.
- An agent  $a \in A$  can move in one step from  $s \in V$  to  $t \in V$  transforming  $\alpha$  to  $\alpha'$ , if
  - $\alpha(a) = s$ ,
  - $\langle s, t \rangle \in E$ ,
  - there is no agent  $b$  such that  $\alpha(b) = t$ .
- In this case,  $\alpha'$  is determined as follows:
  - $\alpha'(a) = t$ ,
  - for all agents  $b \neq a : \alpha(b) = \alpha'(b)$ ,
- One usually wants to minimize the number of single movements (= *sum-of-cost* over all agents)

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- *Parallel MAPF* allows many agents to move in parallel, provided they do not collide.
- Two models:
  - *Parallel*: A chain of agents can move provided the first agent can move on an unoccupied vertex.
  - *Parallel with rotations*: A closed cycle can move synchronously.
- In both cases, one is usually interested in the number of parallel steps (= *make-span*).
- However, also the **sum-of-cost** is sometimes considered.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- There is a set of **agents** and a set of **targets** (of the same cardinality as the agent set).
- Each target must be reached by one agent.
- This means one first has to assign a target and then to solve the original MAPF problem.
- Interestingly, the problem as a whole is easier to solve (using flow-based techniques).

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

**MAPF Variations**

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- **Existence:** For arbitrary graphs with at least one empty place, the problem is polynomial ( $O(|V|^3)$ ) using Kornhauser's algorithm). For BIBOX on bi-connected with at least two empty places also cubic, but smaller constant.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature





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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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  - A solution candidate can be checked in polynomial time for satisfying the conditions of being a movement plan with  $k$  of steps or less.
- **Question:** Is the problem also NP-hard?

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# The Exact Cover By 3-Sets (X3C) Problem



## Definition (Exact Cover By 3-Sets (X3C) Problem)

Given a set of elements  $U$  and a collection of subsets  $C = \{s_j\}$  with  $s_j \subseteq U$  and  $|s_j| = 3$ . Is there a sub-collection of subsets  $C' \subseteq C$  such that  $\bigcup_{s \in C'} s = U$  and all subsets in  $C'$  are pairwise disjoint, i.e.,  $s_a \cap s_b = \emptyset$  for each  $s_a, s_b \in C'$  with  $s_a \neq s_b$ ?

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# The Exact Cover By 3-Sets (X3C) Problem



## Definition (Exact Cover By 3-Sets (X3C) Problem)

Given a set of elements  $U$  and a collection of subsets  $C = \{s_j\}$  with  $s_j \subseteq U$  and  $|s_j| = 3$ . Is there a sub-collection of subsets  $C' \subseteq C$  such that  $\bigcup_{s \in C'} s = U$  and all subsets in  $C'$  are pairwise disjoint, i.e.,  $s_a \cap s_b = \emptyset$  for each  $s_a, s_b \in C'$  with  $s_a \neq s_b$ ?

X3C is **NP-complete**.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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$U = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6\}$

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations  
Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations  
Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# NP-hardness of MAPF: Reduction from X3C



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example

MAPF Variations

**Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF**

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

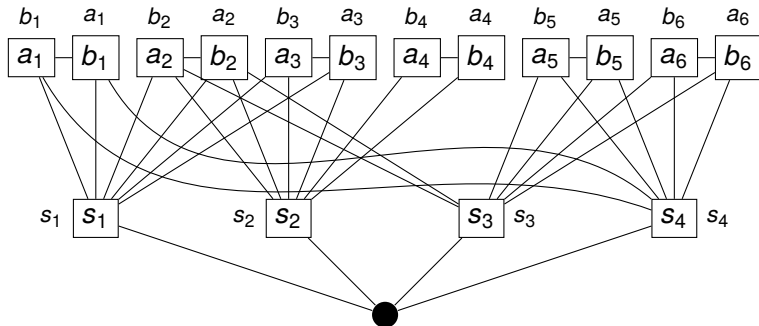
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Squares represent agents, circles are empty vertices, node labels denote destinations

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations  
Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

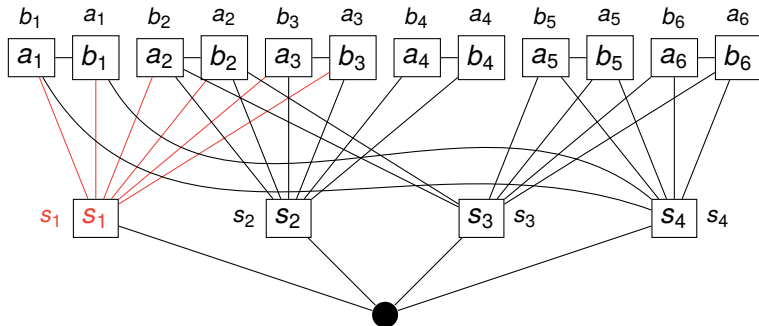
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations  
Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

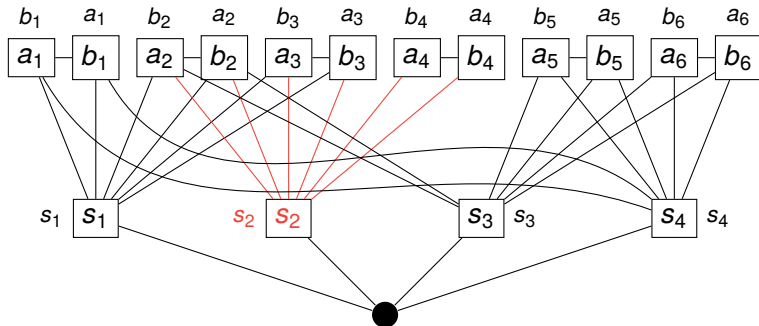
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations  
Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

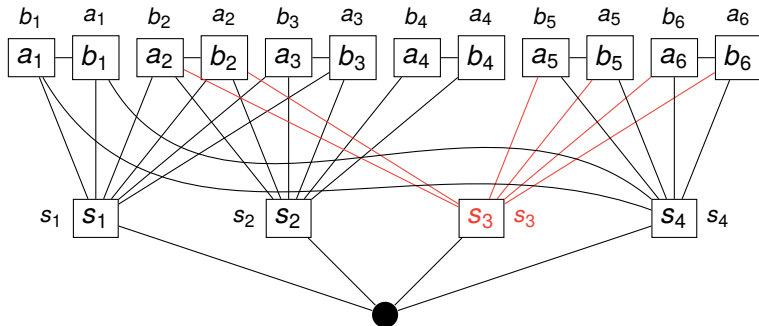
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations  
Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

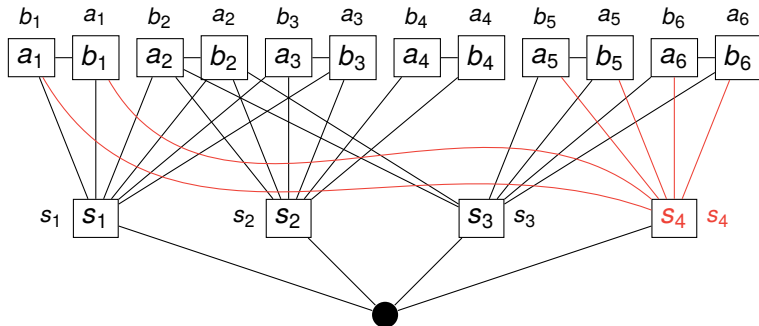
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations  
Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

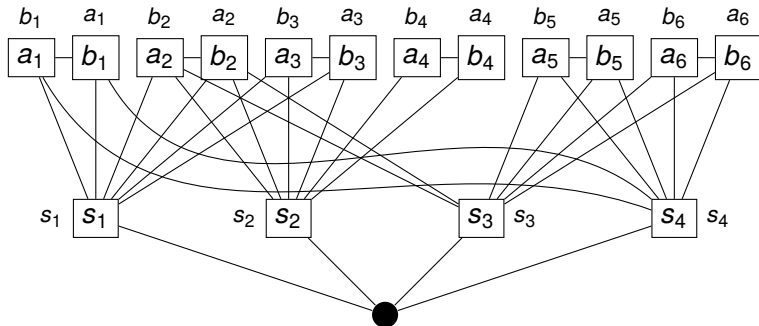
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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**Claim:** There is an exact cover by 3-sets iff the constructed MAPF instance can be solved in at most  $k = 11/3|U|$  moves.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Definition and  
example  
MAPF Variations  
Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature





# Going Beyond: DMAPF and MAPF/DU

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- The **common goal** of all agents is still that everybody reaches its destination.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature





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  - Models multi-robot interactions without communication and with **goal uncertainty**

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- Note: Full observability = uniform knowledge
- General results apply: Joint execution successful if agents are optimally eager

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

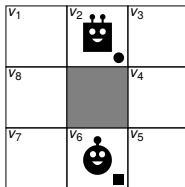
MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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- $S$  initially:  $\langle (S, v_2, v_3), \dots \rangle$
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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

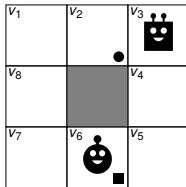
MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

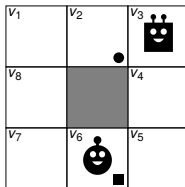
MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

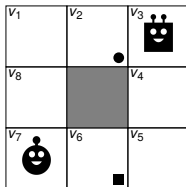
MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- Note that solving MAPF optimally implies NP-hardness, while in general (sub-optimal) MAPF is polynomial.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature





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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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- Because plans should be cycle-free, no agent will ever consider to revisit a previously visited configuration!
- We do not have to solve NP-hard problems every time we (re-)plan!

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Problems with conservative eager agents ...



- In the worst-case (if scheduled unfavorably), the agents might consider all of the exponentially many configurations

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

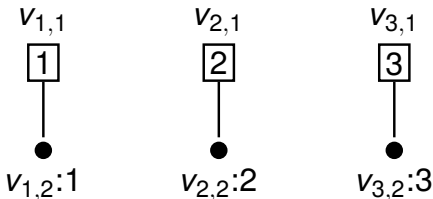
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

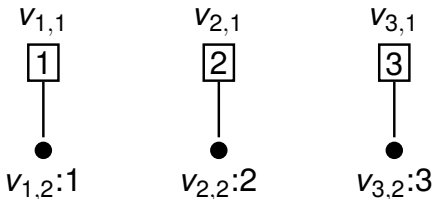
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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- Assuming here a schedule similar to a **Gray counter** (a counter that changes only one bit at a time), we visit all possible configurations.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

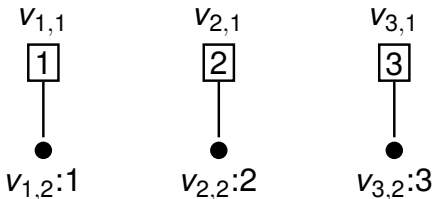
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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- In the worst-case (if scheduled unfavorably), the agents might consider all of the exponentially many configurations



- Assuming here a schedule similar to a **Gray counter** (a counter that changes only one bit at a time), we visit all possible configurations.
- In addition, the **rule-based** polynomial planing methods may not create the right plan prefixes, except when all agents use the identical algorithm.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



# MAPF/DU

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

**MAPF/DU**

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- In addition to the sets of agents  $A$ , the graph  $G = (V, E)$ , and the assignment of agents to nodes  $\alpha$ , we need a function to represent the *possible destinations*  $\beta : A \rightarrow 2^V$ .

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature





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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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- A *MAPF/DU instance* is given by  $\langle A, G, s_0, \alpha_* \rangle$ , where  $s_0 = \langle \alpha_0, \beta_0 \rangle$ .

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- Goal specification is complicated since all agents should reach their **true destination**.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# MAPF/DU viewed as epistemic planning



- Goal specification is complicated since all agents should reach their **true destination**.
- Can be specified using a conjunction of implications: If  $x$  is  $i$ 's destination, then try to achieve a configuration where  $i$  is on  $x$ .

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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- Use a **public announcement** when destination has been reached so that **true destination** becomes **common knowledge**. We require that the agent does not move afterwards, but this can be varied.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature





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- Use a **public announcement** when destination has been reached so that **true destination** becomes **common knowledge**. We require that the agent does not move afterwards, but this can be varied.
- Common goal can be stated as **common knowledge goal**.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- Since there are **no private announcements** and **no non-deterministic effects**, the update operation is simple.
- Simple ontic or public announcement update, never adding any worlds.
- **Perspective-shifts** are also simple.
- If shifting perspective to agent  $i$ , simply assume all combinations of destinations from the agents as possible. Perhaps branch over  $i$ 's possible destinations.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

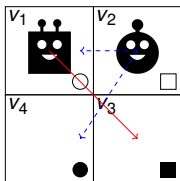
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# MAPF/DU: Implicitly coordinated branching plans



- Square agent  $S$  wants to go to  $v_3$  and knows that circle agent  $C$  wants to go to  $v_1$  or  $v_4$ .



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

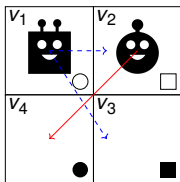
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# MAPF/DU: Implicitly coordinated branching plans



- Square agent **S** wants to go to  $v_3$  and knows that circle agent **C** wants to go to  $v_1$  or  $v_4$ .
- **C** wants to go to  $v_4$  and knows that **S** wants to go to  $v_2$  or  $v_3$ .



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

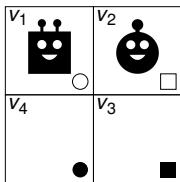
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# MAPF/DU: Implicitly coordinated branching plans



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- Let us assume  $S$  forms a plan in which it moves in order to empower  $C$  to reach their common goal.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

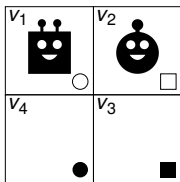
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# MAPF/DU: Implicitly coordinated branching plans



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- $S$  needs *shifting its perspective* in order to plan for all possible destinations of  $C$  (*branching on destinations*).

Motivation

Multi-Agent Pathfinding

Going Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly Coordinated Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

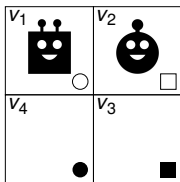
Execution cost  
Execution guarantees

Complexity

Summary & Outlook

Literature

# MAPF/DU: Implicitly coordinated branching plans



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- $S$  needs *shifting its perspective* in order to plan for all possible destinations of  $C$  (*branching on destinations*).
- Planning for  $C$ ,  $S$  must *forget* about its own destination.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



Branching plans consist of:

- **Movement actions:** ( $\langle agent \rangle$ ,  $\langle sourcenode \rangle$ ,  $\langle targetnode \rangle$ ), i.e., a movement of an agent
- **Success announcement:** ( $\langle agent \rangle$ ,  $\mathcal{S}$ ), after that all agents know that the agent has reached its destination and it cannot move anymore
- **Perspective shift:** [ $\langle agent \rangle : \dots$ ], i.e., from here on we assume to plan with the knowledge of agent  $\langle agent \rangle$ . This can be unconditional or conditional on  $\langle agent \rangle$ 's destinations.
- **Branch on all destinations:** ( $? \langle dest_1 \rangle \{ \dots \}, \dots, ? \langle dest_n \rangle \{ \dots \}$ ), where all destinations of the current agent have to be listed. For each case we try to find a successful plan to reach the goal state.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature





- **Movement actions** modify  $\alpha$  in the obvious way.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- **Movement actions** modify  $\alpha$  in the obvious way.
- A **success announcement** of agent  $i$  transforms  $\beta$  to  $\beta'$  such that  $\beta'(i) = \emptyset$  in order to signal that  $i$  cannot move anymore.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans

Stepping Stones

Execution cost

Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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- A **perspective shift from  $i$  to  $j$  with subsequent branching on destinations** transforms the subjective state  $s^i = \langle \alpha, \beta, i, v_i \rangle$  to a set of subjective states  $s^{j_k} = \langle \alpha, \beta, j, v_{j_k} \rangle$  with all  $v_{j_k} \in \beta(j)$ .

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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- A **perspective shift from  $i$  to  $j$  without subsequent branching on destinations** induces the same transformation, but enforces that the subsequent plans are the same for all states subjective states  $s^{j_k}$ .

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

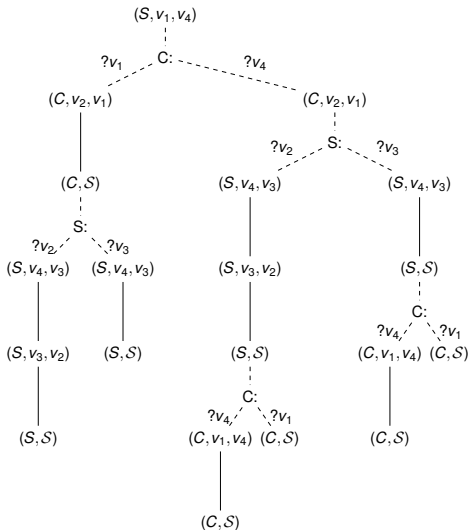
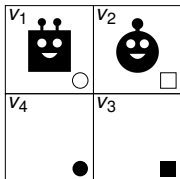
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

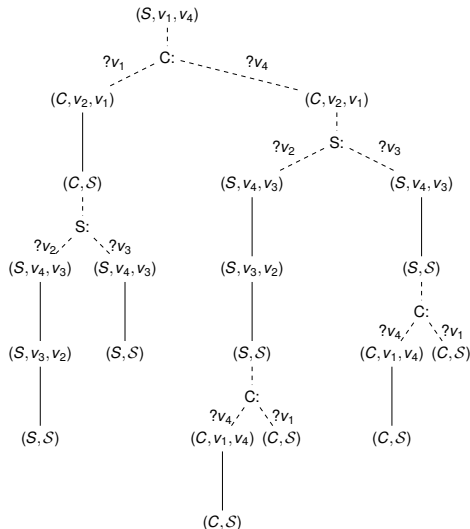
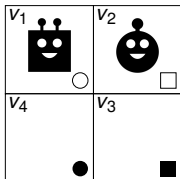
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

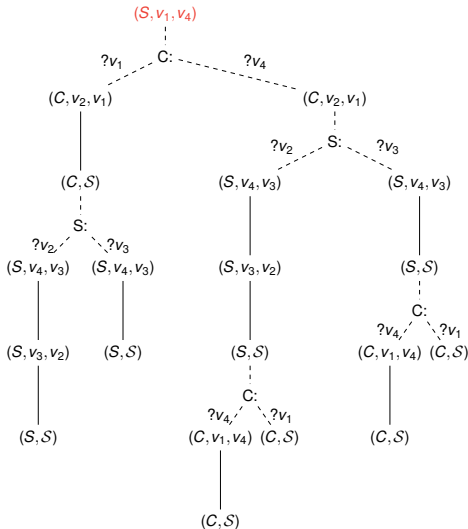
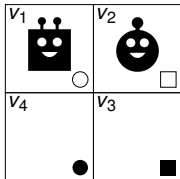
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

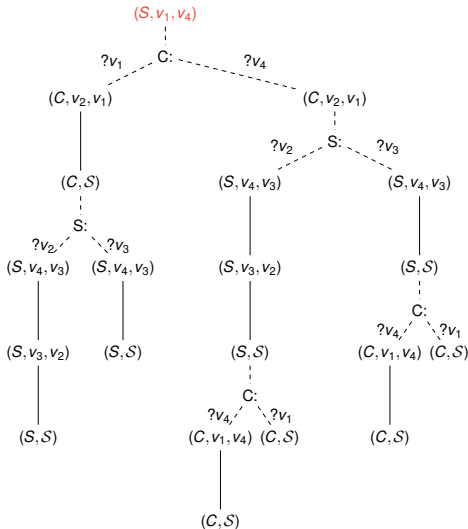
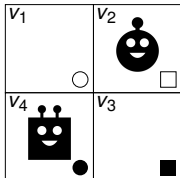
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

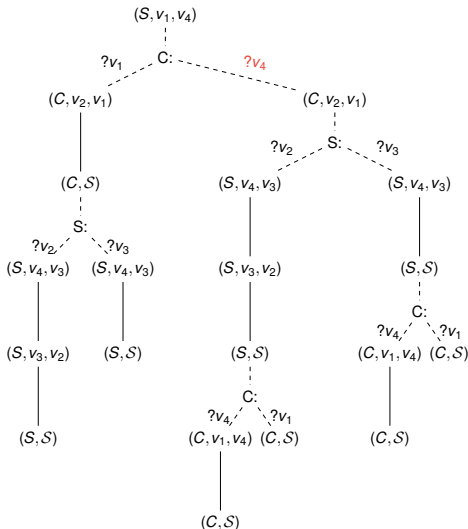
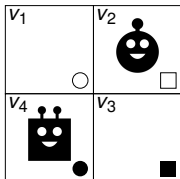
Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

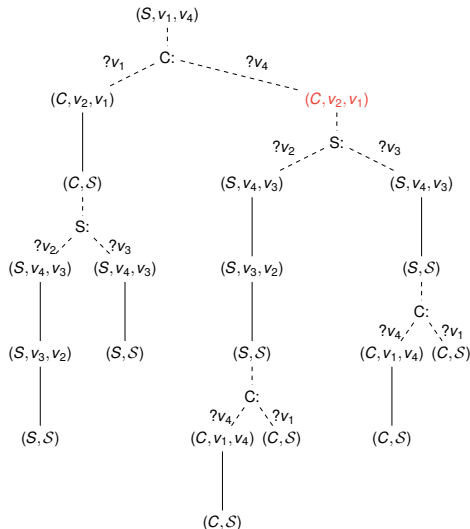
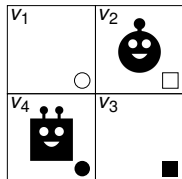
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

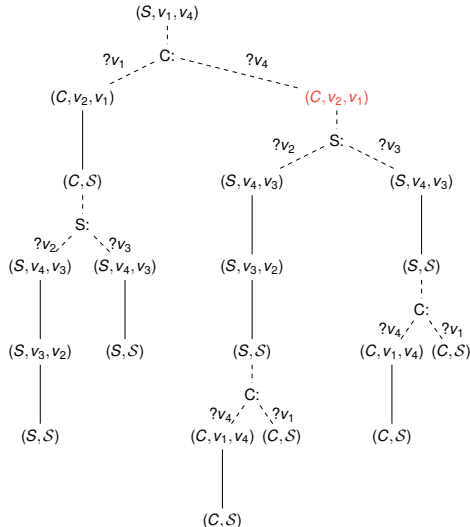
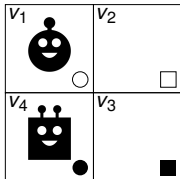
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

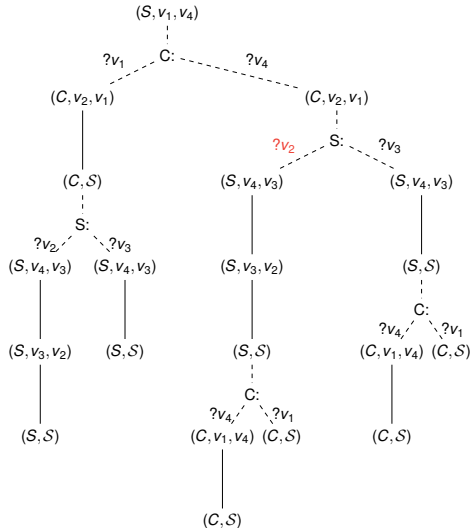
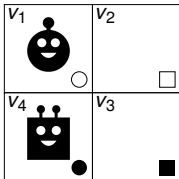
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

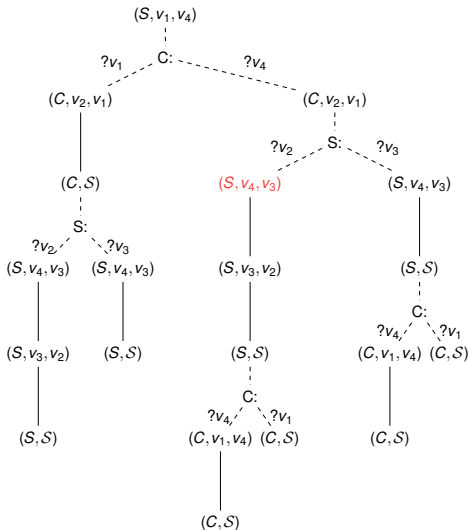
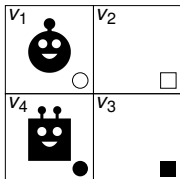
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

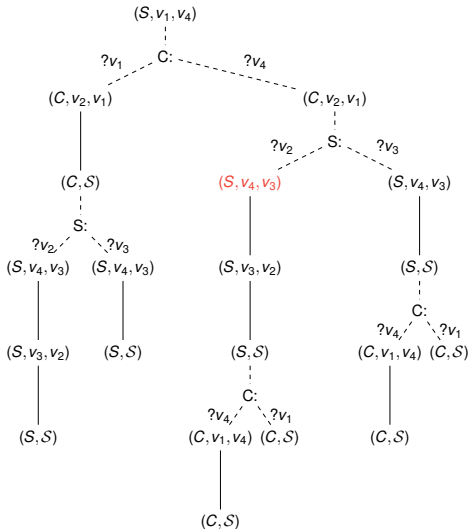
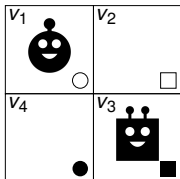
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

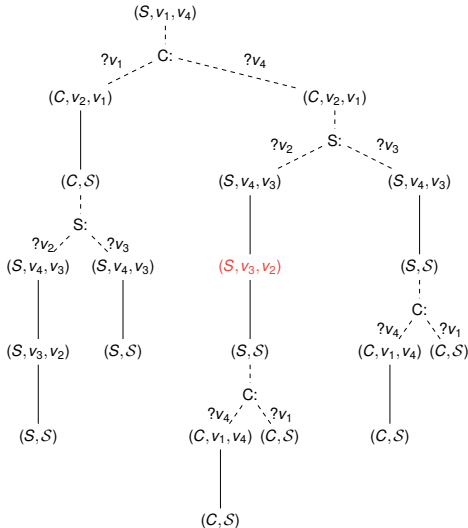
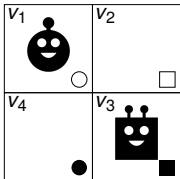
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example

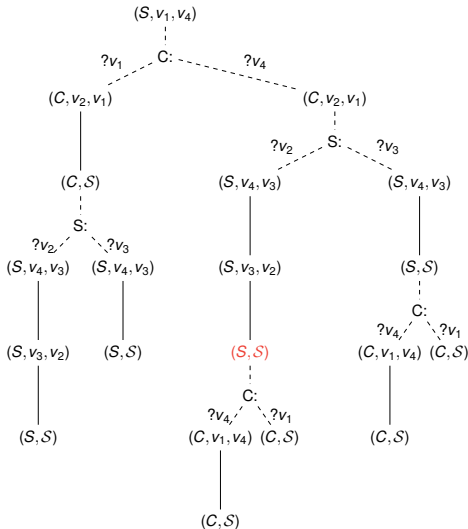
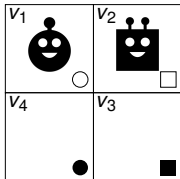


- Motivation
- Multi-Agent Pathfinding
- Going Beyond
- MAPF/DU
  - Implicitly Coordinated Branching Plans
  - Strong plans
  - Stepping Stones
  - Execution cost
  - Execution guarantees
- Complexity
- Summary & Outlook
- Literature





# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

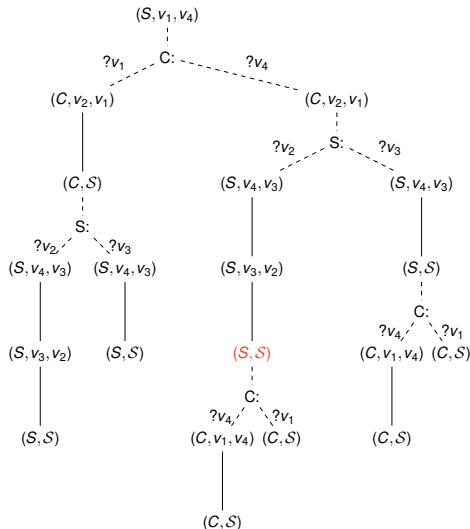
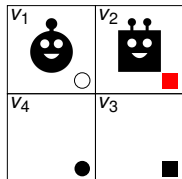
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

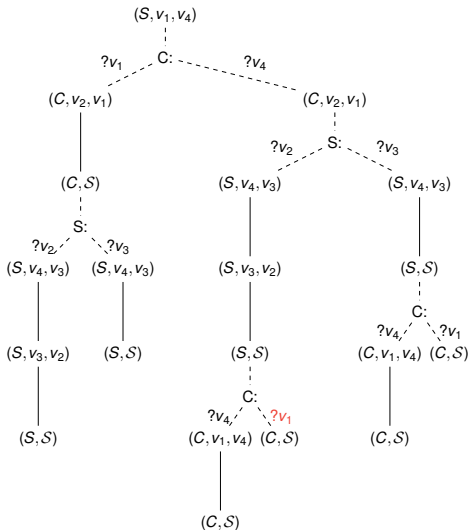
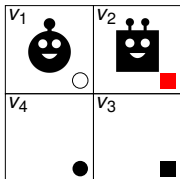
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

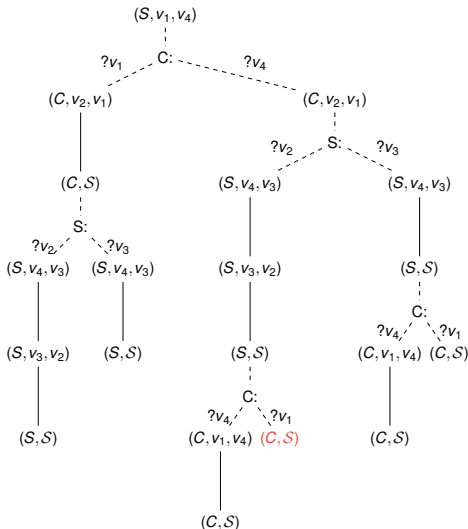
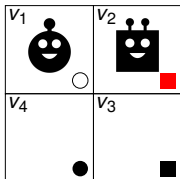
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

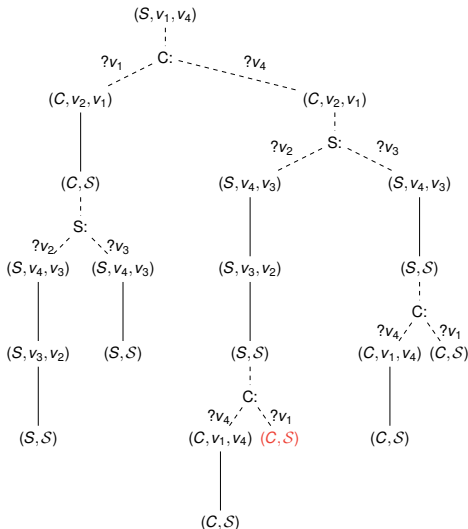
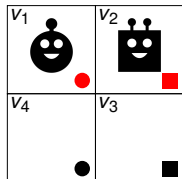
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Branching plan: Subjective execution example



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



Similar to the notion of **strong plans** in non-deterministic single-agent planning, we define ***i-strong plans*** for an agent  $i$  to be:

- ***cycle-free***, i.e., not visiting the same objective state twice;
- ***always successful***, i.e. always ending up in a state such that all agents have announced success;
- ***covering***, i.e., for all combinations of possible destinations of agents different from  $i$ , success can be reached.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

**Strong plans**  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Subjectively and objectively strong plans



- A plan is called *subjectively strong* if it is  $i$ -strong for some agent  $i$ .
- A plan is called *objectively strong* if it is  $i$ -strong for each agent  $i$ .
- An instance is *objectively* or *subjectively solvable* if there exists an objectively or subjectively strong plan, respectively.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

**Strong plans**  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

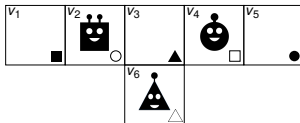
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Subjectively and objectively strong plans



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

**Strong plans**  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

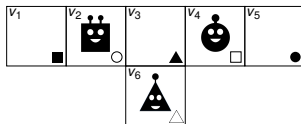
Literature



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→ There does not exist a  $T$ -strong plan, but an  $S$ - and a  $C$ -strong plan.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

**Strong plans**  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

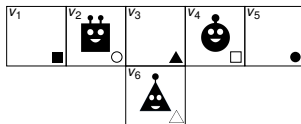
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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- There does not exist a  $T$ -strong plan, but an  $S$ - and a  $C$ -strong plan.
- Difference between **subjective** and **objective** solvability concerns only the first acting agent!

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

**Strong plans**  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

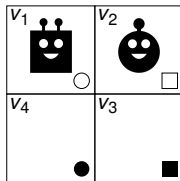
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Structure of strong plans: Stepping stones



- A *stepping stone* for agent  $i$  is a state in which  $i$  can move to each of its possible destinations, announcing success, and afterwards, for each possible destination, there exists an  $i$ -strong plan to solve the resulting states.



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
**Stepping Stones**

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

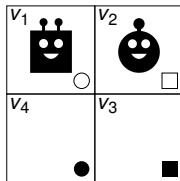
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
**Stepping Stones**

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

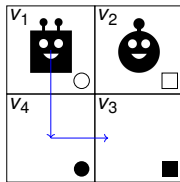
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
**Stepping Stones**

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

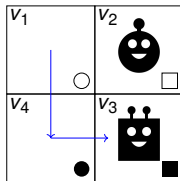
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

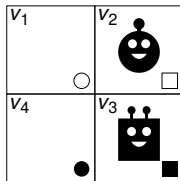
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
**Stepping Stones**

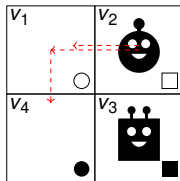
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
**Stepping Stones**

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

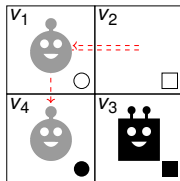
Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
**Stepping Stones**

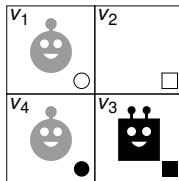
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

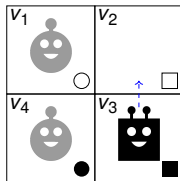
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
**Stepping Stones**

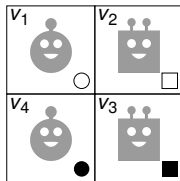
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
**Stepping Stones**

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



## Theorem

*Given an  $i$ -solvable MAPF/DU instance, there exists an  $i$ -strong branching plan such that the only branching points are those utilizing stepping stones.*

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans

**Stepping Stones**

Execution cost

Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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## Proof sketch.

Remove non-stepping stone branching points by picking one branch without success announcement.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans

**Stepping Stones**

Execution cost

Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

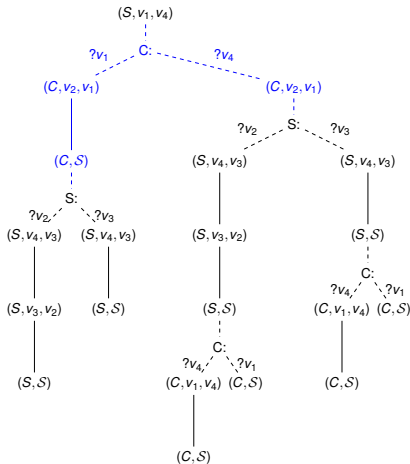
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## Proof by example



Motivation

Multi-Agent Pathfinding

Going Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly Coordinated Branching Plans

Strong plans

Stepping Stones

Execution cost

Execution guarantees

Complexity

Summary & Outlook

Literature

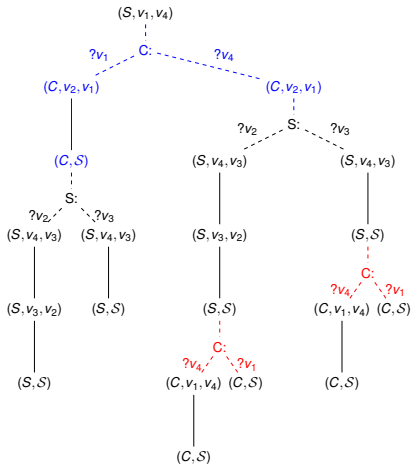
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Motivation

Multi-Agent Pathfinding

Going Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly Coordinated Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution guarantees

Complexity

Summary & Outlook

Literature



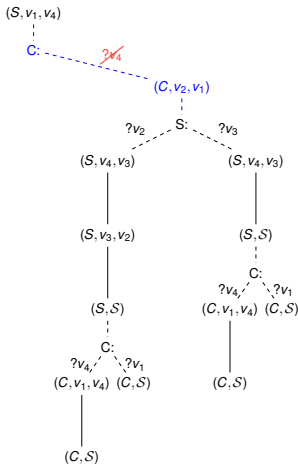
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Motivation

Multi-Agent Pathfinding

Going Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly Coordinated Branching Plans

Strong plans

**Stepping Stones**

Execution cost

Execution guarantees

Complexity

Summary & Outlook

Literature



The *execution cost* of a branching plan is the number of atomic actions of the longest execution trace.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

**Execution cost**  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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*Given an  $i$ -solvable MAPF/DU instance over a graph  $G = (V, E)$ , then there exists an  $i$ -strong branching plan with execution cost bounded by  $O(|V|^4)$ .*

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

**Execution cost**  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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## Proof sketch.

Direct consequence of the stepping stone theorem and the maximal number of movements in the MAPF problem. □

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

**Execution cost**  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- **Joint execution** is defined similarly to the fully observable case: One agent is chosen; afterwards the plan is tracked or the agent has to replan.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature





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- One might hope that **optimally eager agents** are **always successful**.
- In **epistemic planning** this was proven to be true only in the **uniform knowledge** case.
- We do not have uniform knowledge . . . and indeed, **execution cycles** cannot be excluded.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

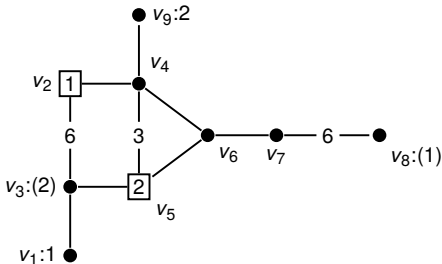
Execution cost  
**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# A counter example



A number on an edge means that there are as many nodes on a line.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

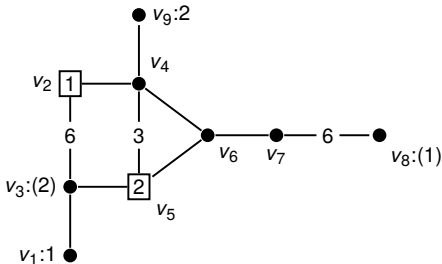
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# A counter example



A number on an edge means that there are as many nodes on a line.

- Agent 2 has a shortest eager plan moving first to  $v_6$ .

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

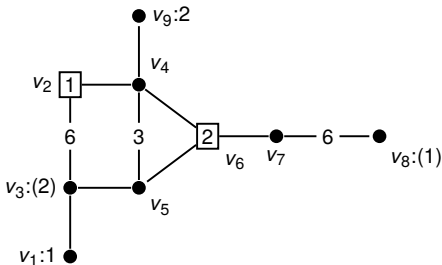
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

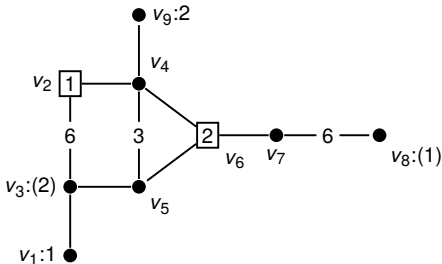
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

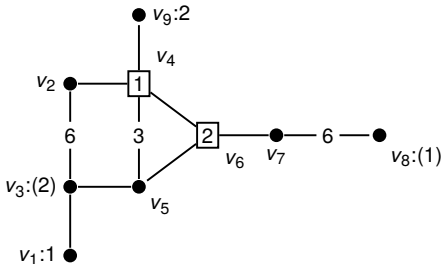
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

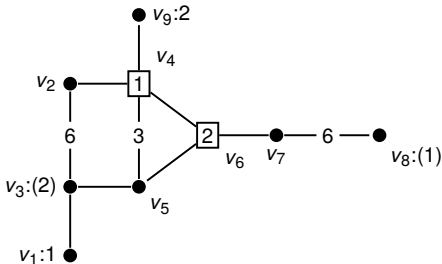
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

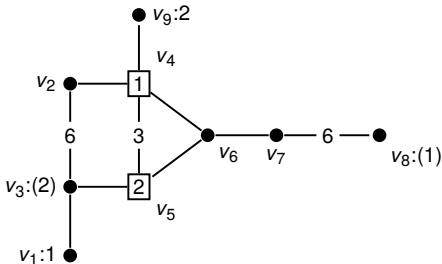
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

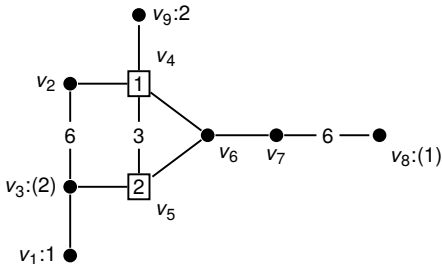
Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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- Agent 2 has then a shortest eager plan moving first to  $v_5$ .
- Agent 1 has then a shortest eager plan moving first to  $v_2$ .

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

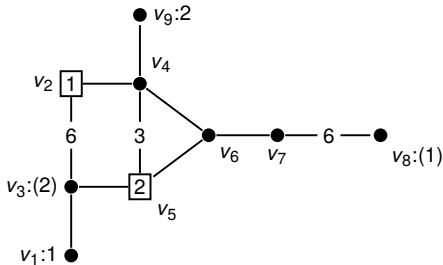
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# A counter example



A number on an edge means that there are as many nodes on a line.

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- Perhaps **conservatism** can help!
- Similarly to DMAPF, conservative replanning means that the already executed actions are used as a **prefix** in the plan to be generated.
- Differently from DMAPF, we assume that after a **success announcement**, the initial state is modified so that the **real destination** of the agent is known in the initial state.
- Otherwise we could not solve instances that are only **subjectively solvable**.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Conservative, optimally eager agents



- Conservative, eager agents are always successful, but might visit the entire state space before terminating.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Conservative, optimally eager agents



- Conservative, eager agents are always successful, but might visit the entire state space before terminating.
- Adding optimal eagerness can help to reduce the execution length.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- Conservative, eager agents are always successful, but might visit the entire state space before terminating.
- Adding optimal eagerness can help to reduce the execution length.

## Theorem

*For solvable MAPF/DU instances, joint execution and replanning by conservative, optimally eager agents is always successful and the execution length is polynomial.*

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans

Stepping Stones

Execution cost

Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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- Adding optimal eagerness can help to reduce the execution length.

## Theorem

*For solvable MAPF/DU instances, joint execution and replanning by conservative, optimally eager agents is always successful and the execution length is polynomial.*

## Proof idea.

After the second agent starts to act, all agents have an identical perspective and for this reason produce objectively strong plans with the same execution costs, which can be shown to be bounded polynomially using the stepping stone theorem. □

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

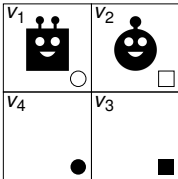
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Conservative replanning example



- Assume  $S$  moves first to  $v_4$ .



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

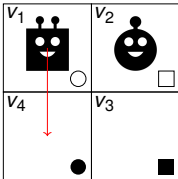
Literature



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

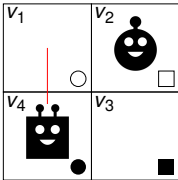
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

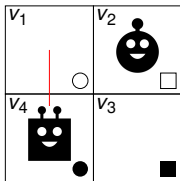
Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Conservative replanning example



- Assume  $S$  moves first to  $v_4$ .
- Assume  $C$  re-plans. From now on, in replanning from the beginning, it has to do a perspective shift to  $S$ , because it now has to extend the partial plan starting with  $(S, v_4, v_1)$ , i.e., it has to create an **objectively strong** plan.



Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

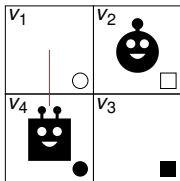
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

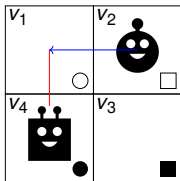
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

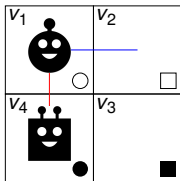
Execution cost  
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans

Strong plans  
Stepping Stones

Execution cost

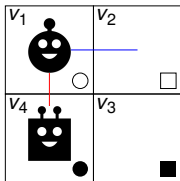
Execution  
guarantees

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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- Assume that  $C$  moves now to  $v_1$ .
- From now on, also  $S$  has to make a perspective shift to  $C$ , effectively “forgetting” its own destination, i.e., it also has to create a **objectively strong** plan.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Implicitly  
Coordinated  
Branching Plans  
Strong plans  
Stepping Stones  
Execution cost  
**Execution  
guarantees**

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



# Computational Complexity of MAPF/DU planning

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

**Complexity**

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



# Computational Complexity of MAPF/DU planning



- MAPF planning is a polynomial problem.
  - DMAPF is NP-hard, because we need optimal MAPF solutions.
  - What about MAPF/DU?
- We look at the problem of deciding whether exists a plan with execution costs  $k$  (decision problem corresponding to the optimization problem)

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Computational Complexity: Complexity classes P and NP



Problems are categorized into *complexity classes* according to the requirements of computational resources:

- The class of problems decidable on *deterministic Turing machines* in *polynomial time*: **P**
  - Problems in P are assumed to be *efficiently solvable* (although this might not be true if the exponent is very large)
  - In practice, a reasonable definition
- The class of problems decidable on *non-deterministic Turing machines* in *polynomial time*, i.e., having a poly. length accepting computation for all positive instances: **NP**
- More classes are definable using other resource bounds on time and memory

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

**P and NP**

PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Computational Complexity: PSPACE



There are problems even more difficult than NP ...

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP

**PSPACE**

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Computational Complexity: PSPACE



There are problems even more difficult than NP ...

## Definition ((N)PSPACE)

**PSPACE** (**NPSPACE**) is the class of decision problems that can be decided on deterministic (non-deterministic) Turing machines using only *polynomially many tape cells*.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP

**PSPACE**

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Some facts about PSPACE:

- PSPACE is *closed under complements* (... as all other deterministic classes)
- PSPACE is *identical* to NPSPACE (because non-deterministic Turing machines can be simulated on deterministic TMs using only quadratic space: Savitch's Theorem)
- $NP \subseteq PSPACE$  (because in polynomial time one can "visit" only polynomial space, i.e.,  $NP \subseteq NPSPACE$ )

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE  
Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# Computational Complexity: PSPACE-completeness



## Definition (PSPACE-completeness)

A decision problem (or language) is **PSPACE-complete** if it is in PSPACE and all other problems in PSPACE can be polynomially reduced to it.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP

**PSPACE**

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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PSPACE-complete problems appear to be “harder” than *NP-complete* problems from a *practical point of view*.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP

**PSPACE**

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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PSPACE-complete problems appear to be “harder” than *NP-complete* problems from a *practical point of view*.

An example for a PSPACE-complete problem is **QBF**:

*Instance:* A Boolean formula  $\varphi$  with quantification over the variables in  $\varphi$ :

$$\forall x_1 \exists x_2 \dots \forall x_n : \varphi$$

*Question:* Is the QBF formula true under all assignments described by the quantification?

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP

PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



# Computational complexity of MAPF/DU bounded plan existence



## Theorem

*Deciding whether there exists an eager MAPF/DU  $i$ -strong or objectively strong plan with execution cost  $k$  or less is PSPACE-complete.*

## Proof sketch.

Since plans have polynomial depth, all execution traces can be generated non-deterministically and tested using only polynomial space, i.e., PSPACE-membership.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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Example construction for

$$\forall x_1 \exists x_2 \forall x_3 :$$

$$(x_1 \vee x_2 \vee \neg x_3) \wedge (\neg x_1 \vee x_2 \vee x_3)$$

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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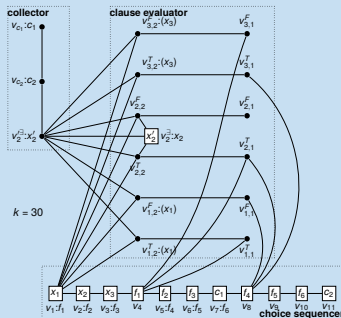
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Motivation

Multi-Agent Pathfinding

Going Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP

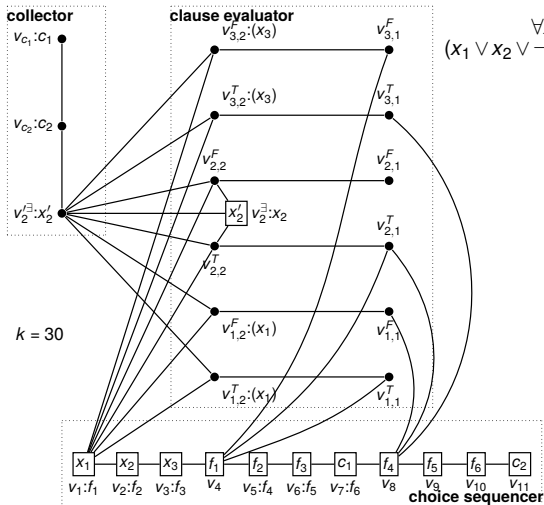
PSPACE

Computational Complexity of MAPF/DU

Summary & Outlook

Literature

# The reduction enlarged



$$\forall x_1 \exists x_2 \forall x_3 : (x_1 \vee x_2 \vee \neg x_3) \wedge (\neg x_1 \vee x_2 \vee x_3)$$

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



These results probably imply that the technique could not be used online.

For a fixed number of agents, however, the bounded planning problem is polynomial.

## Theorem

*For a fixed number  $c$  of agents, deciding whether there exists a MAPF/DU  $i$ -strong or objectively strong plan with execution cost of  $k$  or less can be done in time  $O(n^{c^2+c})$ .*

That means, for two agents, it takes “only”  $O(n^6)$  time – but in [practice](#) it should be faster.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

# An algorithm for generating an objective MAPF/DU plan for two agents



- 1 Determine in the *state space of all node assignments* the distance to the initial state using **Dijkstra**:  $O(|V|^4)$  time.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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- 1 Determine in the *state space of all node assignments* the distance to the initial state using **Dijkstra**:  $O(|V|^4)$  time.
- 2 For each of the  $O(|V|^2)$  configurations check, whether it is a *potential stepping stone* for one agent, i.e., whether all potential destinations of this agent are reachable using **Dijkstra** on the modified graph, where the other agent blocks the way:  $O(|V|^4)$  time.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



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- 3 For all  $O(|V|^2)$  potential stepping stones, check whether for each of the  $O(|V|)$  possible destination of the first agent, the second agent can reach its possible destinations and use **Dijkstra** to compute the shortest path: altogether  $O(|V|^5)$  time.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP  
PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature

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- 3 For all  $O(|V|^2)$  potential stepping stones, check whether for each of the  $O(|V|)$  possible destination of the first agent, the second agent can reach its possible destinations and use **Dijkstra** to compute the shortest path: altogether  $O(|V|^5)$  time.
- 4 Consider all stepping stones and minimize over the maximum plan depth. Among the minimal plans select those that are *eager* for the planning agent.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

P and NP

PSPACE

Computational  
Complexity of  
MAPF/DU

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



# Summary & Outlook

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

**Summary &  
Outlook**

Literature



- DMAPF generalizes the MAPF problem by dropping the assumption that plans are **generated centrally** and then communicated.
- MAPF/DU generalizes the MAPF problem further by dropping the assumptions that destinations are **common knowledge**.
- A solution concept for this setting are ***i*-strong branching plans** corresponding to implicitly coordinated policies in the area of epistemic planning.
- The backbone of such plans are **stepping stones**.
- Joint execution can be guaranteed to be **successful and polynomially bounded** if all agents are **conservative** and **optimally eager**.
- While **plan existence** in general is PSPACE-complete, it is polynomial for a fixed number of agents.

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



- Do the results still hold for **planar graphs**?
  - Is MAPF/DU plan existence also PSPACE-complete?
  - How would more general forms of describing the common knowledge about destinations affect the results?
- **Overlap** of destinations or **general Boolean combinations**
  - Can we get similar results for other execution semantics?
- **Concurrent** executions of actions
  - Can we be more aggressive in expectations about possible destinations?
- Use **forward induction**, i.e., assume that actions in the past were rational.
  - Are other forms of implicit coordination possible?
- More **communication**? Coordination in **competitive scenarios**?

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature



# Literature

Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

**Literature**



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Motivation

Multi-Agent  
Pathfinding

Going  
Beyond

MAPF/DU

Complexity

Summary &  
Outlook

Literature