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Instantaneous Reaction-Time in Dynamic-Consistency Checking of Conditional Simple Temporal Networks

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Abstract—Conditional Simple Temporal Network (CSTN) is a constraint-based graph-formalism for conditional temporal planning. Three notions of consistency arise for CSTNs and CSTPs: weak, strong, and dynamic. Dynamic-Consistency (DC) is the most interesting notion, but it is also the most challenging. In order to address the DC-Checking problem, in [5] we introduced ε-DC (a refined, more realistic, notion of DC), and provided an algorithmic solution to it. Next, given that DC implies ε-DC for some sufficiently small ε > 0, and that for every ε > 0 it holds that ε-DC implies DC, we offered a sharp lower bounding analysis on the critical value of the reaction-time ε under which the two notions coincide. This delivered the first (pseudo) singly-exponential time algorithm for the DC-Checking of CSTNs. However, the ε-DC notion is interesting per se, and the ε-DC-Checking algorithm in [5] rests on the assumption that the reaction-time satisfies ε > 0; leaving unsolved the question of what happens when ε = 0. In this work, we introduce and study π-DC, a sound notion of DC with an instantaneous reaction-time (i.e., one in which the planner can react to any observation at the same instant of time in which the observation is made). Firstly, we demonstrate by a counter-example that π-DC is not equivalent to 0-DC, and that 0-DC is actually inadequate for modeling DC with an instantaneous reaction-time. This shows that the main results obtained in our previous work do not apply directly, as they were formulated, to the case of ε = 0. Motivated by this observation, as a second contribution, our previous tools are extended in order to handle π-DC, and the notion of ps-tree is introduced, also pointing out a relationship between π-DC and HyTN-Consistency. Thirdly, a simple reduction from π-DC to DC is identified. This allows us to design and to analyze the first sound-and-complete π-DC-Checking procedure. Remarkably, the time complexity of the proposed algorithm remains (pseudo) singly-exponential in the number of propositional letters.

Index Terms—Conditional Simple Temporal Networks, Dynamic-Consistency, Instantaneous Reaction-Time, Hyper Temporal Networks, Singly-Exponential Time.

I. INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION

In temporal planning and temporal scheduling, Simple Temporal Networks (STNs) [6] are directed weighted graphs, where nodes are events to be scheduled in time and arcs represent temporal distance constraints between pairs of events.

This work is focused on the Conditional Simple Temporal Problem (CSTP) [12] and its graph-based counterpart Conditional Simple Temporal Network (CSTN) [10], a constraint-based model for conditional temporal planning. The CSTN formalism extends STNs in that: (1) some of the nodes are called observation events and to each of them is associated a propositional letter, to be disclosed only at execution time; (2) labels (i.e., conjunctions over the literals) are attached to all nodes and constraints, to indicate the scenarios in which each of them is required. The planning agent (planner) must schedule all the required nodes, while respecting all the required temporal constraints among them. This extended framework allows for the off-line construction of conditional plans that are guaranteed to satisfy complex temporal constraints. Importantly, this can be achieved even while allowing the decisions about the precise timing of actions to be postponed until execution time, in a least-commitment manner, thereby adding flexibility and making it possible to adapt the plan dynamically, during execution, in response to the observations that are made [12].

Then, three notions of consistency arise for CSTNs: weak, strong, and dynamic. Dynamic-Consistency (DC) is the most interesting one, as it requires the existence of conditional plans where decisions about the precise timing of actions are postponed until execution time, but anyhow guaranteeing that all of the relevant constraints will be ultimately satisfied. Still, it is the most challenging one and it was conjectured to be hard to assess by Tsamardinos, Vidal and Pollack [12].

In our previous work [5], it was unveiled that HyTNs and MPG are a natural underlying combinatorial model for the DC-Checking of CSTNs. Indeed, STNs have been recently generalized into Hyper Temporal Networks (HyTNs) [3], [4], by considering weighted directed hypergraphs, where each hyperarc models a disjunctive temporal constraint called hyper-constraint. In [3], [4], the computational equivalence between checking the consistency of HyTNs and determining the win-
ning regions in Mean Payoff Games (MPGs) was also pointed out. The approach was shown to be viable and robust thanks to some extensive experimental evaluations [4]. MPGs [1], [7], [13] are a family of two-player infinite games played on finite graphs, with direct and important applications in model-checking and formal verification [8], and they are known for having theoretical interest in computational complexity for their special place among the few (natural) problems lying in NP ∩ coNP.

All this combined, in [5] it was provided the first (pseudo) singly-exponential time algorithm for the DC-Checking problem, also producing a dynamic execution strategy whenever the input CSTN is DC. For this, it was introduced ε-DC (a refined, more realistic, notion of DC), and provided the first algorithmic solution to it. Next, given that DC implies refined, more realistic, notion of DC), and provided the first algorithmic results obtained in [5] do not apply directly to the singly-exponential time algorithm for the DC-Checking problem, and that for every ε > 0 it holds that ε-DC implies DC, it was offered a sharp lower bounding analysis on the critical value of the reaction-time ε under which the two notions coincide. This delivered the first (pseudo) singly-exponential time algorithm for the DC-Checking of CSTN. However, the ε-DC notion is interesting per se, and the ε-DC-Checking algorithm in [5] rests on the assumption that the reaction-time satisfies ε > 0; leaving unsolved the question of what happens when ε = 0.

Definition 1: In this work we introduce and study π-DC, a sound notion of DC with an instantaneous reaction-time (i.e., one in which the planner can react to any observation at the same instant of time in which the observation is made). Firstly, we provide a counter-example showing that π-DC is not just the ε = 0 special case of ε-DC. This implies that the algorithmic results obtained in [5] do not apply directly to the study of those situations where the planner is allowed to react instantaneously. Motivated by this observation, as a second contribution, we extend the previous formulation to capture a sound notion of DC with an instantaneous reaction-time, i.e., π-DC. Basically, it turns out that π-DC needs to consider an additional internal ordering among all the observation nodes that occur at the same time instant. Next, the notion of ps-tree is introduced to reflect the ordered structure of π-DC, also pointing out a relationship between π-DC and HyTN-Consistency. Thirdly, a simple reduction from π-DC to DC is identified. This allows us to design and to analyze the first sound-and-complete π-DC-Checking procedure. The time complexity of the proposed algorithm remains (pseudo) singly-exponential in the number |P| of propositional letters.

II. BACKGROUND

This section provides some background and preliminary notations. To begin, if G = (V, A) is a directed weighted graph, every arc α ∈ A is a triplet (u, v, wα) where u = t(α) ∈ V is the tail of α, v = h(α) ∈ V is the head of α, and wα = w(u, v) ∈ Z is the (integer) weight of α.

Let us now recall Simple Temporal Networks (STNs) [6].

Definition 1 (STNs). An STN [6] is a weighted directed graph whose nodes are events that must be placed on the real time line and whose arcs, called standard arcs, express binary constraints on the allocations of their end-points in time.

An STN G = (V, A) is called consistent if it admits a feasible schedule, i.e., a schedule ϕ : V → R such that ϕ(v) ≤ ϕ(u) + w(u, v) for all arcs (u, v, w(u, v)) ∈ A.

A. Conditional Simple Temporal Networks

Let us recall the CSTN model from [5], [10], [12]. Let P be a set of propositional letters (boolean variables), a label is any (possibly empty) conjunction of letters, or negations of letters, drawn from P. The empty label is denoted by λ. The set of all these labels is denoted by P∗. Two labels, ε1 and ε2, are called consistent, denoted by Con(ε1, ε2), when ε1 ∧ ε2 is satisfiable. A label ε1 subsumes a label ε2, denoted by Sub(ε1, ε2), whenever ε1 ⇒ ε2 holds. We are now in the position to recall the formal definition of CSTNs.

Definition 2 (CSTNs [10], [12]). A Conditional Simple Temporal Network (CSTN) is a tuple ⟨V, A, L, O, OV, P⟩ where:

- V is a finite set of events; P = {p1, . . . , p|P|} is a finite set of propositional letters;
- A is a set of labelled temporal constraints (LTCs) each having the form (v − u ≤ w(u, v), ℓ), where u, v ∈ V, w(u, v) ∈ Z, and ℓ ∈ P∗ is satisfiable;
- L : V → P∗ assigns a label to each event in V;
- OV ⊆ V is a finite set of observation events; O : P → OV is a bijection that associates a unique observation event O(p) = O p to each proposition p ∈ P;
- The following reasoning assumptions must hold:

- (WD1) for any LTC ⟨v − u ≤ w, ℓ⟩ ∈ A the label ℓ is satisfiable and subsumes both L(u) and L(v); intuitively, whenever a constraint (v − u ≤ w) is required, then its endpoints u and v must be scheduled (sooner or later);
- (WD2) for each p ∈ P and each u ∈ V such that either p or ¬p appears in L(u), we require: Sub(L(u), L(O p)); intuitively, whenever a label L(u), for some u ∈ V, contains some p, and u is eventually scheduled, then O p = O(p) must be scheduled before or at the same time of u;
- (WD3) for each labelled constraint ⟨v − u ≤ w, ℓ⟩ and p ∈ P, for which either p or ¬p appears in ℓ, it holds that Sub(ℓ, L(O p)); intuitively, assuming that a required constraint contains some p ∈ P, then O p = O(p) must be scheduled (sooner or later).

In all of the following definitions we shall implicitly refer to some CSTN Γ = ⟨V, A, L, O, OV, P⟩.

Definition 3 (Scenario). A scenario over a subset U ⊆ P of boolean variables is a truth assignment s : U → {0, 1}, i.e., s is a function that assigns a truth value to each proposition p ∈ U. When U ⊆ P and s : U → {0, 1}, then s is said to be a partial scenario; otherwise, when U = P, then s is said to be a (complete) scenario. The set comprising all of the complete scenarios over P is denoted by ΣP. If s ∈ ΣP is a scenario and ℓ ∈ P∗ is a label, then s(ℓ) ∈ {0, 1} denotes the truth value of ℓ induced by s in the natural way.
Notice that any scenario $s \in \Sigma_P$ can be described by means of the label $\ell_s \triangleq \ell_1 \cdots \ell_1 {\ell_1}_{P_1} \cdots {\ell_1}_{P_{|P|}}$, such that, for every $1 \leq i \leq |P|$, the literal $l_i \in \{p_i, \neg p_i\}$ satisfies $s(l_i) = 1$.

Example 1. Consider the set of boolean variables $P = \{p, q\}$. The scenario $s : P \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$ defined as $s(p) = 1$ and $s(q) = 0$ can be compactly described by the label $\ell_s = p \land \neg q$.

Definition 4 (Schedule). A schedule for a subset of events $U \subseteq V$ is a function $\phi : U \rightarrow R$ that assigns a real number to each event in $U$. The set of all schedules over $U$ is denoted $\Phi_U$.

Definition 5 (Scenario-Restriction). Let $s \in \Sigma_P$ be a scenario. The restriction of $V$, $O$, and $A$ w.r.t. $s$ are defined as follows:

- $V^+_{s} \triangleq \{v \in V | s(L(v)) = 1\}; \forall V^+_{s} \triangleq \forall V \cap V^+_{s}$
- $A^+_{s} \triangleq \{(u, v, w) \in A, s(\ell) = 1\}$
- The restriction of $\Gamma$ w.r.t. $s \in \Sigma_P$ is the STN $\Gamma^+_{s} \triangleq \langle V^+_{s}, A^+_{s} \rangle$.

Definition 6 (Execution-Strategy). An Execution-Strategy (ES) for $\Gamma$ is a mapping $\sigma : \Sigma_P \rightarrow \Phi_{V^+_{s}}$ such that, for any scenario $s \in \Sigma_P$, the domain of the schedule $\sigma(s)$ is $V^+_s$. The set of all ESs of $\Gamma$ is denoted by $\Sigma_\Gamma$. The execution of an event $v \in V^+_s$ in the schedule $\sigma(s) \in \Phi_{V^+_{s}}$ is denoted by $[\sigma(s)]_v$.

Definition 7 (History). Let $\sigma \in \Sigma_\Gamma$ be any ES, let $s \in \Sigma_P$ be any scenario and let $\tau \in R$. The history $\text{Hst}(\tau, s, \sigma)$ of $\tau$ in the scenario $s$ under strategy $\sigma$ is defined as: $\text{Hst}(\tau, s, \sigma) \triangleq \{(p, s(p)) \in P \times \{0, 1\}, \forall O_p \in V^+_s, [\sigma(s)]_p < \tau\}$.

The history can be compactly encoded as the conjunction of the literals corresponding to the observations comprising it, that is, by means of a label.

Definition 8 (Viable Execution-Strategy). We say that $\sigma \in \Sigma_\Gamma$ is a viable ES if, for each scenario $s \in \Sigma_P$, the schedule $\sigma(s) \in \Phi_{V^+_{s}}$ is feasible for the STN $\Gamma^+_{s}$.

Definition 9 (Dynamic-Consistency). An ES $\sigma \in \Sigma_\Gamma$ is called dynamic if, for any $s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_P$ and any $v \in V^+_s$, the following implication holds on $\tau \triangleq [\sigma(s_1)]_v$:

\[ \text{Con}(\text{Hst}(\tau, s_1, \sigma), s_2) \Rightarrow [\sigma(s_2)]_v = \tau. \]

We say that $\Gamma$ is dynamically-consistent (DC) if it admits $\sigma \in \Sigma_\Gamma$, which is both viable and dynamic. The problem of checking whether a given CSTN is DC is named Dynamic-Checking.

We provide next the definition of difference set $\Delta(s_1; s_2)$.

Definition 10 (Difference-Set). Let $s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_P$ be any two scenarios. The set of observation events in $V^+_s$ at which $s_1$ and $s_2$ differ is denoted by $\Delta(s_1; s_2)$. Formally:

\[ \Delta(s_1; s_2) \triangleq \{O_p \in V^+_s | s_1(p) \neq s_2(p)\}. \]

The various definitions of history and dynamic consistency that are used by different authors [5], [11], [12] are equivalent.

B. Hyper Temporal Networks

This subsection surveys the Hyper Temporal Network (HyTN) model, which is a strict generalization of STNs. The reader is referred to [3], [4] for an in-depth treatise on HyTNs.

Definition 11 (Hypergraph). A hypergraph $\mathcal{H}$ is a pair $(V, A)$, where $V$ is the set of nodes, and $A$ is the set of hyperarcs. Each hyperarc $A = (t_A, H_A, w_A) \in A$ has a distinguished node $t_A$ called the tail of $A$, and a nonempty set $H_A \subseteq V \setminus \{t_A\}$ containing the heads of $A$; to each head $v \in H_A$ is associated a weight $w_A(v) \in \mathbb{Z}$.

Provided that $|A| \geq |H_A \cup \{t_A\}|$, the size of a hypergraph $\mathcal{H} = (V, A)$ is defined as $m_A \triangleq |\sum_{A \in A}|A|$: it is used as a measure for the encoding length of $\mathcal{H}$. If $|A| = 2$, then $A = (u, v, w)$ can be regarded as a standard arc. In this way, hypergraphs generalize graphs.

A HyTN is a weighted hypergraph $\mathcal{H} = (V, A)$ where a node represents an event to be scheduled, and a hyperarc represents a set of temporal distance constraints between the tail and the heads.

In the HyTN framework the consistency problem is the following decision problem.

Definition 12 (HyTN-Consistency). Given some HyTN $\mathcal{H} = (V, A)$, decide whether there is a schedule $\phi : V \rightarrow R$ such that:

\[ \phi(t_A) \geq \min_{v \in H_A} \{\phi(v) - w_A(v)\}, \forall A \in A \]

any such a schedule $\phi : V \rightarrow R$ is called feasible.

A HyTN is called consistent whenever it admits at least one feasible schedule. The problem of checking whether a given HyTN is consistent is named HyTN-Consistency.

Theorem 1. [3] There exists an $O((|V| + |A|)m_AW)$ pseudo-polynomial time algorithm for checking HyTN-Consistency; moreover, when the input HyTN $\mathcal{H} = (V, A)$ is consistent, the algorithm returns as output a feasible schedule $\phi : V \rightarrow R$ of $\mathcal{H}$: Here, $W \triangleq \max_{A \in A, v \in H_A} |w_A(v)|$.

C. $\varepsilon$-Dynamic-Consistency

In CSTNs, decisions about the precise timing of actions are postponed until execution time, when informations meanwhile gathered at the observation nodes can be taken into account. However, the planner is allowed to factor in an outcome, and differentiate its strategy according to it, only strictly after the outcome has been observed (whence the strict inequality in Definition 7). Notice that this definition does not take into account the reaction-time, which, in most applications, is non-negligible. In order to deliver algorithms that can also deal with the reaction-time $\varepsilon > 0$ of the planner, we introduced in [5] a refined notion of DC.

Definition 13 ($\varepsilon$-Dynamic-Consistency). Given any CSTN $(V, A, L, O, \mathcal{O}, \mathcal{P})$ and any real number $\varepsilon \in (0, +\infty)$, an ES $\sigma \in \Sigma_\Gamma$ is $\varepsilon$-dynamic if it satisfies all of the $H_\varepsilon$-constraints, namely, for any two scenarios $s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_P$ and any event $v \in V^+_s$, the ES $\sigma$ satisfies the following constraint, which is denoted by $H_{\varepsilon}(s_1; s_2, v)$:

\[ [\sigma(s_1)]_v \geq \min \left\{ [\sigma(s_2)]_v + \varepsilon \mid v \in \Delta(s_1; s_2) \right\} \]

We say that a CSTN $\Gamma$ is $\varepsilon$-dynamically-consistent (EDC) if it admits $\sigma \in \Sigma_\Gamma$ which is both viable and $\varepsilon$-dynamic.
As shown in [5], ε-DC can be modeled in terms of HyTN-Consistency. Fig. 1 depicts an illustration of an $H_e(s_1; s_2; u)$ constraint, modeled as a hyperarc.

Also, in [5] we proved that DC coincides with $\varepsilon$-DC, provided that $\varepsilon \triangleq |\Sigma_P|^{-1}|V|^{-1}$. Therefore, if $\Gamma$ is DC and if only if $\Gamma$ is $\varepsilon$-DC. Moreover, if $\Gamma$ is $\varepsilon$-DC for some $\varepsilon > 0$, then $\Gamma$ is $\varepsilon'$-DC for every $\varepsilon' \in (0, \varepsilon]$.

Then, the main result offered in [5] is a (pseudo) singly-exponential time DC-checking procedure (based on HyTNS).

**Theorem 2.** Let $\varepsilon \triangleq |\Sigma_P|^{-1}|V|^{-1}$. Then, $\Gamma$ is DC if and only if $\Gamma$ is $\varepsilon$-DC. Moreover, if $\Gamma$ is $\varepsilon$-DC for some $\varepsilon > 0$, then $\Gamma$ is $\varepsilon'$-DC for every $\varepsilon' \in (0, \varepsilon]$.

In particular, given any dynamically-consistent CSTN $\Gamma$, the algorithm returns a viable and dynamic ES for $\Gamma$.

**Theorem 3.** There exists an $O(|\Sigma_P|^3|A|^2|V| + |\Sigma_P|^3|A|^2|V^2|P| + |\Sigma_P|^3|V^3|P|)W$ time algorithm for checking DC on any input CSTN $\Gamma = \langle V, A, L, O, \Sigma, P \rangle$.

**Proposition 1.** The CSTN $\Gamma_0$ (Example 2, Fig. 2) is 0-DC.

**Proposition 2.** The CSTN $\Gamma_0$ is not DC.

**Proposition 3.** Let $\sigma = \psi_1 \cup \cdots \cup \psi_k$ be an execution strategy for CSTN $\Gamma_0$. Then, for every $i$, $\sigma_i$ is a DC.

**Example 2 (CSTN $\Gamma_0$).** Consider the following CSTN $\Gamma_0 = \langle V_0, A_0, L_0, O_0, \Sigma_0, P_0 \rangle$; see Fig. 2 for an illustration.

In light of this we will introduce a stronger notion, which is named ordered-Dynamic-Consistency (π-DC); this will turn out to be a suitable notion of DC with an instantaneous reaction-time.

**Example 2 (CSTN $\Gamma_0$).** Consider the following CSTN $\Gamma_0 = \langle V_0, A_0, L_0, O_0, \Sigma_0, P_0 \rangle$; see Fig. 2 for an illustration.

- $V_0 = \{A, T, \lambda, B, C\}$;
- $A_0 = \{\top, \bot, A, B, C\}$;
- $O_0 = \{\top, \bot, \lambda, (\top, A, B, C)\}$;
- $L_0 = \{\top, \bot, A, B, C\}$;
- $\Sigma_0 = \{\top, \bot, \lambda, (\top, A, B, C)\}$;
- $P_0 = \{A, B, C\}$.

**Proposition 1.** The CSTN $\Gamma_0$ (Example 2, Fig. 2) is 0-DC.

**Proposition 2.** The CSTN $\Gamma_0$ is not DC.
Definition 15 (π-notation). Let $\Sigma_p$ be a set of scenarios. For any two scenarios $s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_p$, the event $e \in V_{s_1}^+$ is said to be $\pi$-event if $e \in V_{s_2}^+$, and $\Gamma(\pi)$ is defined as:

$$\Gamma(\pi) = \{ (\pi, s_1, s_2) \mid s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_p \land s_1 \not\leq s_2 \}.$$ 

Then, it is easy to check from Fig. 4 that: (i) $[\sigma_\Box(s)]_L = 0, [\sigma_\Box(s)]_T = 1$, and it holds $[\sigma_\Box(s)]_X \in \{0, 1\}$ for every $X \in \{A, B, C\}$; (ii) there exists at least two observation events $X \in \{A, B, C\}$ such that $[\sigma_\Box(s)]_X = 0$; still, (iii) there is no $X \in \{A, B, C\}$ such that $[\sigma_\Box(s)]_X = 0$ for every $s \in \Sigma_p$, i.e., no observation event is executed first at all possible scenarios. Therefore, the ES $\sigma_\Box$ is not dynamic.

We now introduce a stronger notion of dynamic consistency; it is named ordered-Dynamic-Consistency (π-DC), and it takes explicitly into account an additional ordering between the observation events scheduled at the same execution time.

Definition 14 (π-Execution-Strategy). An ordered-Execution-Strategy (π-ES) for $\Gamma$ is a mapping:

$$\sigma : s \mapsto ([\sigma(s)]^L, [\sigma(s)]^T),$$

where $s \in \Sigma_p, [\sigma(s)]^L \in \Phi_V$, and finally, $[\sigma(s)]^T : OV^+ \mapsto \{1, \ldots, |OV^+|\}$ is bijective. The set of π-ES of $\Gamma$ is denoted by $\mathcal{S}_\Gamma$. For any $s \in \Sigma_p$, the execution time of an event $e \in V_{s_1}^+$ is denoted by $[\sigma(s)]^e \in \Phi_V$.

We require positions to be coherent w.r.t. execution times, i.e., $\forall (O_p, O_q \in OV^+) \land [\sigma(s)]^L, [\sigma(s)]^T \in \mathcal{S}_\Gamma$, then $\sigma(s)^T \prec \sigma(s)^T$. In addition, it is worth to adopt the notation $[\sigma(s)]^T \triangleq |OV^+| + 1$ whenever $e \in V_{s_1} \setminus \{\}$.

Definition 15 (π-History). Let $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_\Gamma, s \in \Sigma_p$, and let $\tau \in \mathcal{P}$ and $\psi \in \{0, 1, \ldots, |V|\}$. The ordered-history $\pi$-Hst$(\tau, \psi, s, \sigma)$ of $\pi$ and $\psi$ in the scenario $s$, under the π-ES $\sigma$, is defined as:

$$\pi$-Hst$(\tau, \psi, s, \sigma) \triangleq \{(p, s(p)) \in P \times \{0, 1\} \mid O_p \in OV^+, [\sigma(s)]^T \leq \tau, [\sigma(s)]^T \prec \psi\}.$$

Then, we can define the possibility of $\sigma_\Box$ being π-DC:

**Remark 1.** It is easy to see that, due to the strict inequality “$[\sigma(s)]^T \prec \psi$” in the definition of π-Hst$(\cdot)$ (Definition 15), in a π-dynamic π-ES, there must be exactly one $O_p \in OV^+$, for some $p \in P$, which is executed at first (w.r.t. both execution time and position) under all possible scenarios $s \in \Sigma_p$.

**Proposition 3.** The CSTN $\Gamma_\Box$ is not π-DC.

**Proof.** The proof goes almost in the same way as that of Proposition 2. In particular, no observation event is executed first (i.e., at time $t = 0$ and position $\psi = 1$) in all possible scenarios. Since there is no first-in-time observation event, then, the ES $\sigma$ is not π-dynamic.

We provide next a CSTN which is π-DC but not DC.

**Example 3.** Define $\Gamma_\pi = (V_\pi, A_\pi, O_\pi, OV_\pi, P_\pi)$ as follows. $V_\pi = \{O_p, X, \top\}, A_\pi = \{(|\top - O_p| \leq 1, \lambda), (|O_p - \top| \leq 1, \lambda), (X - O_p \leq 0, p), (\top - X \leq 0, \neg p)\}, O_\pi(p) = O_p, OV_\pi = \{O_p\}, P_\pi = \{p\}$. Fig. 5 depicts the CSTN $\Gamma_\pi$.

![Fig. 5: The CSTN $\Gamma_\pi$.](image-url)

**Proposition 4.** The CSTN $\Gamma_\pi$ is π-DC, but it is not DC.

**Proof.** Let $s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_p$, be two scenarios such that $s_1(p) = 1$ and $s_2(p) = 0$. Consider the π-ES $\sigma$ defined as follows: $[\sigma(s_1)]^T \mapsto [\sigma(s_2)]^T \mapsto [\sigma(s_2)]^T \mapsto [\sigma(s_2)]^T = 0$, $[\sigma(s_2)]^T = 0$, $[\sigma(s_2)]^T = 1$, $[\sigma(s_2)]^T = 2$, for all $s \in \{s_1, s_2\}$. Then, $\sigma$ is viable and π-dynamic for $\Gamma_\pi$. To see that $\Gamma_\pi$ is not DC, pick any $\varepsilon > 0$. Notice that any viable ES must schedule $X$ either at $t = 0$ or $t = 1$, depending on the outcome of $O_p$, which in turn happens at $t = 0$; however, in any $\varepsilon$-dynamic strategy, the planner can’t react to the outcome of $O_p$ before time $t > 0$. This implies that $\Gamma_\pi$ is not π-DC. Since $\varepsilon$ was chosen arbitrarily ($\varepsilon > 0$), then $\Gamma_\pi$ can’t be DC by Theorem 2.

So $\Gamma_\pi$ is $\varepsilon$-DC for $\varepsilon = 0$ but for no $\varepsilon > 0$. In summary, the following chain of implications holds on the various DCs:

$$[\varepsilon$-DC, $\forall \varepsilon \in (0, \varepsilon)] \Rightarrow DC \Rightarrow \pi$-DC \Rightarrow [\varepsilon$-DC, for $\varepsilon = 0]$$
The ps-tree: a “skeleton” structure for $\pi$-dynamic $\pi$-ESs

In this subsection we introduce a labelled tree data structure, named the ps-tree, which turns out to capture the “skeleton” ordered structure of $\pi$-dynamic $\pi$-ESs.

Definition 17 (PS-Tree). Let $P$ be any set of boolean variables. A permutation-scenario tree (ps-tree) $\pi_T$ over $P$ is an outward (non-empty) rooted binary tree such that:

- Each node $u$ of $\pi_T$ is labelled with a letter $p_u \in P$;
- All the nodes that lie along a path leading from the root to a leaf are labelled with distinct letters from $P$.
- Each arc $(u, v)$ of $\pi_T$ is labelled by some $b_{(u,v)} \in \{0, 1\}$;
- The two arcs $(u, v_1)$ and $(u, v_2)$ exiting a same node $u$ have opposite labels, i.e., $b_{(u,v_1)} \neq b_{(u,v_2)}$.

Fig. 6 depicts an example of a ps-tree.

Fig. 6: An example of a ps-tree over $P = \{a, b, c, d\}$.

Definition 18 ($\pi_s, s_t$, Coherent-PS-Tree). Let $\pi_T$ be a ps-tree over $P$, let $r$ be the root and $s$ be any leaf. Let $(r, v_2, \ldots, s)$ be the sequence of nodes encountered along the path going from $r$ down to $s$ in $\pi_T$.

- The sequence of labels $\pi_s = (p_r, p_{v_2}, \ldots, p_s)$ is a permutation of the subset of letters $\{p_r, p_{v_2}, \ldots, p_s\} \subseteq P$.
- Each sequence of bits $(b_{(r,v_2)}, \ldots, b_{(v_{i+1},v_i)})$, for each $i \in \{1, 2, \ldots, k_s - 1\}$ (where $v_1 = r$ and $v_{k_s} = s$), can be seen as a partial scenario $s_i$ over $P$; i.e., define $s_i(v_j) = b_{(v_j,v_{j+1})}$ for every $j \in \{1, \ldots, i\}$.
- $\pi_T$ is coherent (c-ps-tree) with $T$ if for every leaf $s$ of $\pi_T$, $O_{p_s, O_{p_{v_2}}, \ldots, O_{p_r}} = \OV_p^+ \text{ holds for every complete scenario } s' \in \Sigma_P \text{ such that } \text{Sub}(s', s_{k_s-1})$.

It is not difficult to see that a $\pi$-dynamic $\pi$-ES induces one and only one c-ps-tree $\pi_T$. So, the existence of a suitable c-ps-tree is a necessary condition for a $\pi$-ES to be $\pi$-dynamic. One may ask whether a $\pi$-dynamic $\pi$-ES can be reconstructed from its c-ps-tree; the following subsection answers affirmatively.

B. Verifying a c-ps-tree: on $\pi$-DC and HyTN-Consistency.

This subsection builds on the notion of c-ps-tree to work out the details of the relationship between $\pi$-DC and HyTN-Consistency. Once this picture is in place, it will be easy to reduce to HyTN-Consistency the problem of deciding whether a given CSTN admits a valid $\pi$-dynamic $\pi$-ES with a given c-ps-tree. This easy result already provides a first combinatorial algorithm for $\pi$-DC, though of doubly exponential complexity in $|P|$; a bound to be improved in later subsections, but that can help sizing the sheer dimensionality and depth of the problem.

Firstly, the notion of Expansion of CSTNs is recalled [5].

Definition 19 (Expansion $(V^E, \Lambda^E)$). Consider a CSTN $\Gamma = (V, A, L, O, OV, P)$. Consider the family of all (distinct) STNs $(V_s, A_s)$, one for each scenario $s \in \Sigma_P$, defined as follows:

- $V_s = \{v \mid v \in V^+_P\}$ and $A_s = \{(u_s, v_s, w) \mid (u, v, w) \in A^+_P\}$.
- The expansion $(V^E, \Lambda^E)$ of the CSTN $\Gamma$ is defined as follows:

\[
\{(V_s^E, \Lambda_s^E) \mid s \in \Sigma_P\} = \bigcup_{s \in \Sigma_P} V_s \cup \bigcup_{s \in \Sigma_P} A_s.
\]

Notice, $(V^E, \Lambda^E)$ is an STN with at most $|V^E| \leq |\Sigma_P| \cdot |V|$ nodes and at most $|\Lambda^E| \leq |\Sigma_P| \cdot |A|$ standard arcs.

We now show that the expansion of a CSTN can be enriched with some standard arcs and some hyperarcs in order to model the $\pi$-DC property, by means of an HyTN denoted $H^E_0(\Gamma)$.

Definition 20 (HyTN $H^E_0(\Gamma)$). Let $\Gamma = (V, A, L, O, OV, P)$ be a given CSTN. Let $\pi_T$ be a given c-ps-tree over $P$.

Then, the HyTN $H^E_0(\Gamma)$ is defined as follows:

- For every scenarios $s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_P$ and $u \in V^+_P \setminus OV$, define a hyperarc $\alpha = \alpha_0(s_1, s_2; u) \text{ as follows (with the intention to model } H_0(z_1, z_2; u)\text{, see Definition 13):}$

\[
\alpha = \alpha_0(s_1; s_2; u) \triangleq (t_\alpha, H_\alpha, w_\alpha),
\]

where:

- $t_\alpha \triangleq u_{s_1}$ is the tail of the hyperarc $\alpha$;
- $H_\alpha \triangleq \{u_{s_2}\} \cup \Delta(s_1; s_2)$ is the set of the heads;
- $w_\alpha(u_{s_2}) \triangleq 0$; $\forall (v \in \Delta(s_1; s_2)) w_\alpha(v) \triangleq 0$.

Now, consider the expansion of the CSTN $\Gamma = (V^E, \Lambda^E) = \bigcup_{s \in \Sigma_P} (V_s, A_s)$ (as in Definition 19).

- For each internal node $x$ of $\pi_T$, $A'_s \in \Sigma_P$ is a set of (additional) standard arcs defined as follows. Let $\pi_x = (r, \ldots, x')$ be the sequence of all and only the nodes along the path going from the root $r$ to the parent $x'$ of $x$ in $\pi_T$ (where we assume $r' = r$). Let $P_x \subseteq P$ be the corresponding literals, $p_x$ excluded, i.e., $P_x \triangleq \{p_x \in P \mid x \text{ appears in } \pi_x \text{ and } p_x \text{ is the label of } x \text{ in } \pi_T\} \setminus \{p_x\}$. Let $s_x : P_x \to \{0, 1\}$ be a partial scenario defined as follows:

\[
s_x : P_x \to \{0, 1\} : \left\{ \begin{array}{ll}
\lambda, & \text{if } x = r; \\
p_x & \Rightarrow b(\zeta', x') \end{array} \right.
\]

where $\zeta'$ is the unique child of $z$ in $\pi_T$ lying on $\pi_x$. Let $x_0$ be the unique child of $x$ in $\pi_T$ such that $b_{x, x_0} = 0$ ($b_{x, x_0} = 1$). For every complete $s'_x \in \Sigma_P$ such that $\text{Sub}(s'_x, s_{x'})$, we define:

\[
B'_s \triangleq \{((\langle O_{p_{s'_x}} \rangle_{s'_x}, (\langle O_{p_x} \rangle_{s_{x'}}), 0)) \}, \text{ if } s'_x(x) = 0; \}
\]

\[
\langle (\langle O_{p_{s'_x}} \rangle_{s'_x}, (\langle O_{p_x} \rangle_{s_{x'}}), 0) \rangle \}, \text{ if } s'_x(x) = 1.
\]

Also, for every complete $s'_x, s'_x \in \Sigma_P$ such that $\text{Sub}(s'_x, s_{x'}) \text{ and Sub}(s'_x, s_{x'})$, where $s'_x \neq s'_x$, we define:

\[
C'_s \triangleq \{((\langle O_{p_x} \rangle_{s'_x}, (\langle O_{p_x} \rangle_{s'_x}, 0)) \},
\]

where $\zeta$ is the unique child of $z$ in $\pi_T$ lying on $\pi_x$. Let $x_0$ be the unique child of $x$ in $\pi_T$ such that $b_{x, x_0} = 0$ ($b_{x, x_0} = 1$). For every complete $s'_x \in \Sigma_P$ such that $\text{Sub}(s'_x, s_{x'})$, we define:

\[
B'_s \triangleq \{((\langle O_{p_{s'_x}} \rangle_{s'_x}, (\langle O_{p_x} \rangle_{s_{x'}}), 0)) \}, \text{ if } s'_x(x) = 0; \}
\]

\[
\langle (\langle O_{p_{s'_x}} \rangle_{s'_x}, (\langle O_{p_x} \rangle_{s_{x'}}), 0) \rangle \}, \text{ if } s'_x(x) = 1.
\]
Finally, 

$$A'_{x, s} \triangleq \bigcup_{s', s'' \in \Sigma_P : s' \neq s''} B_{s', s''} \cup C_{s', s''},$$

Then, $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ is defined as $H_0^\tau(\Gamma) \triangleq \langle V_1^E, A_0^{H_0^\tau(\Gamma)} \rangle$, where,

$$A_0^{H_0^\tau(\Gamma)} \triangleq A_1^E \cup \bigcup_{s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_P} \alpha_1(s_1; s_2; u) \cup \bigcup_{x : \text{internal node of } \pi_T} A'_x.$$

Notice that the following holds: each $\alpha_1(s_1; s_2; u)$ has size $|\alpha_1(s_1; s_2; u)| = |s_1| + |s_2| + 1 \leq |P| + 1$.

The following theorem establishes the connection between the $\pi$-DC of CSTNs and the consistency of HYTNs.

**Theorem 4.** Given any CSTN $\Gamma = \{V, A, L, O, OV, P\}$, it holds that the CSTN $\Gamma$ is $\pi$-DC if and only if there exists a $c$-ps-tree $\pi_T$ such that the HYTN $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ is consistent. Moreover, $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ has at most $|\pi_T| |V|$ nodes, $|A_0^{H_0^\tau(\Gamma)}| = O(|\Sigma_P| |A| + |\Sigma_P|^2 |V|)$ hyperarc, and it has size at most $m_{A_0^{H_0^\tau(\Gamma)}} = O(|\Sigma_P| |A| + |\Sigma_P|^2 |V| |P|)$.

**Proof.** (1) Firstly, we prove that the CSTN $\Gamma$ is $\pi$-DC if and only if there exists a $c$-ps-tree $\pi_T$ such that the HYTN $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ is consistent.

$(\Rightarrow)$ Let $\sigma \in S_\Sigma$ be a given viable and $\pi$-dynamic execution strategy for the CSTN $\Gamma$. Since $\sigma$ is $\pi$-dynamic, then for any two $s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_P$ and any $v \in V_{s_1}$, the following holds on the execution time $\tau \triangleq [\sigma(s_1)]^v_\tau$ and position $\psi \triangleq [\sigma(s_1)]^\psi_\psi$.

$$\text{Con}(\pi, \text{Hst}((\tau, \psi, s_1, \sigma), s_2) \Rightarrow [\sigma(s_2)]^v_\psi = \tau, [\sigma(s_2)]^\psi_\psi = \psi.$$ 

It is easy to see that this induces one and only one $c$-ps-tree $\pi_T$; indeed, due to Remark 1, there must be exactly one $\mathcal{O}_{p'} \in \mathcal{O}V$ for some $p' \in P$, which is executed at first (w.r.t. to both execution time and position) under all possible scenarios; then, depending on the boolean result of $p'$, a second observation $p''$ can be differentiated, and it can occur at the same or at a subsequent time instant, but still at a subsequent position; again, by Remark 1, there is exactly one $\mathcal{O}_{p''} \in \mathcal{O}V$ which comes first under all possible scenarios that agree on $p''$; and so on and so forth, thus forming a tree structure over $P$, rooted at $p'$, which is captured exactly by our notion of $c$-ps-tree. Then, let $\phi_{\pi_T} : V_1^E \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be the schedule of $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ defined as: $\phi_{\pi_T}(v_s) \triangleq [\sigma(s)]^v_\tau$ for every $v_s \in V_1^E$, where $s \in \Sigma_P$ and $v \in V_s$. It is not difficult to check from the definitions, at this point, that all of the standard ac and hyperarc constraints of $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ are satisfied by $\phi_{\pi_T}$, that is to say that $\phi_{\pi_T}$ must be feasible for $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$. Hence, $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ is consistent.

$(\Leftarrow)$ Assume that there exists a $c$-ps-tree $\pi_T$ such that the HYTN $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ is consistent, and let $\phi : V_1^E \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a feasible schedule for $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$. Then, let $\sigma_{\phi, \pi_T}(s) \in S_\Sigma$ be the execution strategy defined as follows:

- For each $s' \in \Sigma_P$, $\sigma_{\phi, \pi_T}(s) \in S_\Sigma$ is defined such that $\sigma_{\phi, \pi_T}(s') \triangleq \phi(v_{s'}), \forall v_{s'} \in V_1^E, s \in \Sigma_P, v \in V_s$.
- Let $\phi$ be any complete scenario. Then, $s'$ induces exactly one path in $\pi_T$, in a natural way, i.e., by going from the root $r$ down to some leaf $s$. Notice that the sequence of labels $(p_{r}, p_{r_2}, \ldots, p_s)$ can be seen as a bijection, i.e., $\pi_\phi : V_1^E \rightarrow \{1, \ldots, |V_1^E|\}$. Then, for any $s' \in \Sigma_P$ and $v \in O\{V_{s'}^E\}$, define $[\sigma_{\phi, \pi_T}(s')]^v_\tau \triangleq \pi_\phi(v)$.

It is not difficult to check from the definitions, at this point, that since $\phi$ is feasible for $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$, then $\sigma_{\phi, \pi_T}$ must be viable and $\pi$-dynamic for the CSTN $\Gamma$. Hence, the CSTN $\Gamma$ is $\pi$-DC.

(2) The size bounds for $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ follow from Definition 20. 

In Fig. 7, Algorithm 1 presents the pseudocode for constructing the HYTN $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$, as prescribed by Definition 20.

**Algorithm 1: construct_H(\Gamma, \pi_T)**

**Input:** A CSTN $\Gamma \triangleq \{V, A, L, O, OV, P\}$, a $c$-ps-tree $\pi_T$ coherent with $\Gamma$.

1. foreach $(s \in \Sigma_P)$ do
2. $V_s \leftarrow \{v_s \mid v \in V_s^E\}$; 
3. $A_s \leftarrow \{a_s \mid a \in A_s\}$; 
4. $V_1^E \leftarrow \bigcup_u \{V_u\};$ 
5. $A_1^E \leftarrow \bigcup_u A_u; $
6. foreach $(s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_P, s_1 \neq s_2)$ do 
7. foreach $(u \in V_{s_1} \setminus OV)$ do
8. $t_\phi \leftarrow u_{s_1}; $
9. $H_{\sigma} \leftarrow \{u_{s_2}\} \cup \{\Delta(s_1; s_2)\};$
10. $w_{\sigma}(u_{s_2}) \leftarrow 0; $
11. foreach $v \in \Delta(s_1; s_2) $ do
12. $w_{\sigma}(v) \leftarrow 0; $
13. $\alpha_{0}(s_1; s_2; u) \leftarrow \{t_\phi, H_{\sigma}, w_{\sigma}\};$
14. foreach $(x : \text{internal node of } \pi_T)$ do 
15. $A'_x \leftarrow \text{as defined in Definition 20};$ 
16. $A_0^{H_0^\tau(\Gamma)} \leftarrow A_1^E \cup \bigcup_{s_1, s_2 \in \Sigma_P} \alpha_1(s_1; s_2; u) \cup \bigcup_{x : \text{internal node of } \pi_T} A'_x; $
17. $H_0^\tau(\Gamma) \leftarrow \{V_1^E, A_0^{H_0^\tau(\Gamma)}\};$ 
18. return $H_0^\tau(\Gamma);$ 

If $\Gamma$ is $\pi$-DC, there is an integral $\pi$-dynamic $\pi$-ES, as below.

**Proposition 5.** Assume $\Gamma = \{V, A, L, O, OV, P\}$ to be $\pi$-DC. Then, there is some $\pi$-ES $\sigma \in S_\Sigma$ which is viable, $\pi$-dynamic, and integral, namely, for every $s \in \Sigma_P$ and every $v \in V_s^E$, the following integrality property holds:

$$[\sigma(s)]^v_\tau \in \{0, 1, 2, \ldots, M_{\tau}\} \subseteq \mathbb{N},$$

where $M_{\tau} \triangleq \left((|\Sigma_P| |V| + |\Sigma_P| |A| + |\Sigma_P|^2 |V|) W\right).$

**Proof.** By Theorem 4, since $\Gamma$ is $\pi$-DC, there exists some c-ps-tree $\pi_T$ such that the HYTN $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ is consistent; moreover, by Theorem 4 again, $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ has $|\Sigma_P| |V|$ nodes and $|A_0^{H_0^\tau(\Gamma)}| \leq |\Sigma_P| |A| + |\Sigma_P|^2 |V|$ hyperarc. Since $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ is consistent, it follows from Theorem 4 [also see Lemma 1 and Theorem 8 in [4]] that $H_0^\tau(\Gamma)$ admits an integral and feasible schedule $\phi$ such that:

$$\phi : V_0^H(\Gamma) \rightarrow \{0, 1, 2, \ldots, M_{\tau}\},$$
where $M_T \leq (|V_{H_{\pi}^{\Phi^T}(\Gamma)}| + |A_{H_{\pi}^{\Phi^T}(\Gamma)}|)W$. Therefore, it holds that $M_T \leq (|\Sigma_p||V| + |\Sigma_p||A| + |\Sigma_p|^2|V|)W$.

Given a CSTN $\Gamma$ and some c-ps-tree $\pi_T$, it is thus easy to check whether there exists some $\pi$-ES for $\Gamma$ whose ordering relations are exactly the same as those prescribed by $\pi_T$. Indeed, it is sufficient to construct $H_{\pi}^{\Phi^T}(\Gamma)$ with Algorithm 1, then checking the consistency of $H_{\pi}^{\Phi^T}(\Gamma)$ with the algorithm mentioned in Theorem 1. This results into Algorithm 2. The corresponding time complexity is also that of Theorem 2.

\begin{algorithm}
\caption{check-$\pi$-DC-on-c-ps-tree($\Gamma, \pi_T$)}
\begin{algorithmic}[1]
\STATE Input: a CSTN $\Gamma = \langle V, A, L, O, OV, P \rangle$, a c-ps-tree $\pi_T$ coherent with $\Gamma$.
\STATE 1 $H_{\pi}^{\Phi^T}(\Gamma) \leftarrow$ construct$_H(H(\pi_T))$; // ref. Algorithm 1
\STATE 2 $\phi \leftarrow$ check$_{HyTN}$-Consistency($H_{\pi}^{\Phi^T}(\Gamma)$); // ref. Thm 1
\STATE 3 if ($\phi$ is a feasible schedule of $H_{\pi}^{\Phi^T}(\Gamma)$) then
\STATE 4 \quad return (YES, $\phi, \pi_T$);
\STATE 5 return NO;
\end{algorithmic}
\end{algorithm}

Fig. 7: Checking $\pi$-DC given a c-ps-tree $\pi_T$, by reduction to $HyTN$-Consistency.

Notice that, in principle, one could generate all of the possible c-ps-trees $\pi_T$ over $P$, one by one, meanwhile checking for the consistency state of $H_{\pi}^{\Phi^T}(\Gamma)$ with Algorithm 2. However, it is not difficult to see that, in general, the total number $f_n$ of possible c-ps-trees over $P$ is not singly-exponential in $|P|$. Indeed, a moment’s reflection reveals that for every $n > 1$ it holds that $f_n = n \cdot f_{n-1}^2$, and $f_1 = 1$. So, any algorithm based on the exhaustive exploration of the whole space comprising all of the possible c-ps-trees over $P$ would not have a (pseudo) singly-exponential time complexity in $|P|$. Nevertheless, we have identified another solution, that allows us to provide a sound-and-complete (pseudo) singly-exponential time $\pi$-DC-Checking procedure: it is a simple and self-contained reduction from $\pi$-DC-Checking to DC-Checking. This allows us to provide the first sound-and-complete (pseudo) singly-exponential time $\pi$-DC-Checking algorithm which employs our previous DC-Checking algorithm (i.e., that underlying Theorem 3) in a direct manner, as a black box, thus avoiding a more fundamental restructuring of it.

C. A Singly-Exponential Time $\pi$-DC-Checking Algorithm

This section presents a sound-and-complete (pseudo) singly-exponential time algorithm for solving $\pi$-DC, also producing a viable and $\pi$-dynamic $\pi$-ES whenever the input CSTN is really $\pi$-DC. The main result of this section goes as follows.

\begin{theorem}
There exists an algorithm for checking $\pi$-DC on any input given CSTN $\Gamma = \langle V, A, L, O, OV, P \rangle$ with the following (pseudo) singly-exponential time complexity:
\[ O\left(|\Sigma_p|^4|A|^2|V|^3 + |\Sigma_p|^5|A||V|^4|P| + |\Sigma_p|^5|V|^5|P|\right)W. \]
Moreover, when $\Gamma$ is $\pi$-DC, the algorithm also returns a viable and $\pi$-dynamic $\pi$-ES for $\Gamma$. Here, $W \triangleq \max_{a \in A} w_a$.
\end{theorem}

The algorithm mentioned in Theorem 5 consists of a simple reduction from $\pi$-DC to (classical) DC in CSTNs.

Basically, the idea is to give a small margin $\gamma$ so that the planner can actually do before, in the sense of the time value $[\sigma(s)]_v$, what he did “before” in the ordering $\pi$. Given any ES in the relaxed network, the planner would then turn it into a $\pi$-ES for the original network (which has some more stringent constraints), by rounding-down each time value $[\sigma(s)]_v$ to the largest integer less than or equal to it, i.e., $\lfloor [\sigma(s)]_v \rfloor$. The problem is that one may (possibly) violate some constraints when there is a “leap” in the rounding (i.e., a difference of one unit, in the rounded value, w.r.t. what one would have wanted). Anyway, we have identified a technique that allows us to get around this subtle case, provided that $\gamma$ is exponentially small.

\begin{definition}
Relaxed CSTN $\Gamma'$. Let $\Gamma = \langle V, A, L, O, OV, P \rangle$ be any CSTN with integer constraints. Let $\gamma \in (0,1)$ be a real. Define $\Gamma' \triangleq \langle V, A', L, O, OV, P \rangle$ to be a CSTN that differs from $\Gamma$ only in the numbers appearing in the constraints. Specifically, each constraint $\langle u - v \leq \delta, \ell \rangle \in A$ is replaced in $\Gamma'$ by a slightly relaxed constraint, $\langle u - v \leq \delta', \ell \rangle \in A'$, where:
\[ \delta' \triangleq \delta + |V| \cdot \gamma. \]
\end{definition}

The following two lemmata hold for any CSTN $\Gamma$.

\begin{lemma}
Let $\gamma$ be any real in $(0, |V|^{-1})$.
If $\Gamma$ is $\pi$-DC, then $\Gamma'$ is DC.
\end{lemma}

\begin{proof}
Since $\Gamma$ is $\pi$-DC, by Proposition 5, there exists an integral, viable and $\pi$-dynamic, $\pi$-ES $\sigma$ for $\Gamma$. Let us fix some real $\gamma \in (0, |V|^{-1})$. Define the ES $\sigma' \in S_{\Gamma'}$ as follows, for every $s \in \Sigma_p$ and $v \in V^+_s$:
\[ [\sigma'(s)]_v \triangleq [\sigma(s)]_v + [\sigma(s)]_v \cdot \gamma. \]
Since $[\sigma(s)]_v \leq |V|$, then:
\[ [\sigma(s)]_v \cdot \gamma \leq |V| \cdot |V|^{-1} = 1, \]
and so the total ordering of the values $[\sigma'(s)]_v$, for a given $s \in \Sigma_p$, coincides with $[\sigma(s)]_v$. Hence, the fact that $\sigma'$ is dynamic follows directly from the $\pi$-dynamicity of $\sigma$. Moreover, no LTC $(u - v \leq \delta', \ell)$ of $\Gamma'$ is violated in any scenario $s \in \Sigma_p$ since, if $\Delta'_{u,v,s} \triangleq [\sigma'(s)]_u - [\sigma'(s)]_v$ then:
\[ \Delta'_{u,v,s} = ([\sigma(s)]_u + [\sigma(s)]_v \cdot \gamma) - ([\sigma(s)]_v + [\sigma(s)]_v \cdot \gamma) \leq [\sigma(s)]_u - [\sigma(s)]_v + |V| \cdot \gamma \leq \delta + |V| \cdot \gamma = \delta'. \]
So, $\sigma'$ is viable. Since $\sigma'$ is also dynamic, then $\Gamma'$ is DC.
\end{proof}

The next lemma shows that the converse direction holds as well, but for (exponentially) smaller values of $\gamma$.

\begin{lemma}
Let $\gamma$ be any real in $(0, |\Sigma_p|^{-1} \cdot |V|^{-2})$.
If $\Gamma'$ is DC, then $\Gamma$ is $\pi$-DC.
\end{lemma}

\begin{proof}
Let $\sigma' \in S_{\Gamma'}$ be some viable and dynamic ES for $\Gamma'$.

Firstly, we aim at showing that, w.l.o.g., the following lower bound holds:

\[ |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)| - |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)| = |V| \cdot |\gamma|, \text{ for all } s \in \Sigma_P \text{ and } v \in V^+ \cdot (LB) \]

This will allow us to simplify the rest of the proof. In order to prove it, let us pick any \( \eta \in [0,1) \) such that:

\[ |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)| - \eta - k \in [0,|V| \cdot |\gamma|), \text{ for no } v \in V, s \in \Sigma_P, k \in \mathbb{Z} \]

Observe that such a value \( \eta \) exists. Indeed, there are only \( |\Sigma_P| \cdot |V| \) choices of pairs \((s,v)\) in \( \Sigma_P \times V \) and each pair rules out a (circular) semi-open interval of length \( |V| \cdot |\gamma| \) in \([0,1)\), so the total measure of invalid values for \( \eta \) in the semi-open real interval \([0,1)\) is at most \( |\Sigma_P| \cdot |V| \cdot |V| \cdot |\gamma| < 1 \). So \( \eta \) exists.

See Fig. 8 for an intuitive illustration of this fact.

![Fig. 8: An illustration of the proof of Lemma 2.](image)

By subtracting \( \eta \) to all time values \( \{ |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)| \}_{v \in V, s \in \Sigma_P} \) we can assume w.l.o.g. that \( \eta = 0 \) holds for the rest of this proof; and thus, that (LB) holds. Now, define \( (\sigma(s))_{||} \triangleq |\sigma'(s)| \) and let \( (\sigma(s))_{||} \) be the ordering induced by \( \sigma'_{\gamma}(s) \). Observe that \( \sigma \) is a well-defined \( \pi \)-ES (i.e., that \( (\sigma(s))_{||} \) is coherent w.r.t. \( (\sigma(s))_{||} \)), thanks to the fact that \( \lfloor \cdot \rfloor \) is a monotone operator. Since the ordering \( (\sigma(s))_{||} \) is the same as that of \( \sigma'_{\gamma}(s) \), then \( \sigma \) is \( \pi \)-dynamic.

It remains to prove that \( \sigma \) is viable. For this, take any constraint \((u - v \leq \delta, \ell)\) in \( A \in \Gamma \), and suppose that:

\[ |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_u - |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_v \leq \delta' \gamma = \delta + |V| \cdot |\gamma|, \quad (A) \]

If \( |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_u - |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_v \leq \delta \), then clearly \( |\sigma(s)|_u - |\sigma(s)|_v \leq \delta \). So, the interesting case that we really need to check is when:

\[ 0 < |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_u - |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_v - \delta \leq |V| \cdot |\gamma|, \]

For this, we observe that the following \((*)\) holds by (LB):

\[ |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_u \leq |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_u - |V| \cdot |\gamma| \quad (*). \]

Also, it is clear that:

\[ |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_v > |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_v - 1. \quad (**). \]

Then,

\[ |\sigma(s)|_u - |\sigma(s)|_v = |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_u - |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_v - |\sigma'_{\gamma}(s)|_v - 1 < \delta' - |V| \cdot |\gamma| + 1 \leq \delta + 1, \]

where: the first equality holds by definition of \( |\sigma(s)|_u \), for \( x \in \{u,v\} \); the strict inequality holds by \((*)\) and \((***)\); the subsequent inequality is just a rewriting; finally, the last two inequalities hold by \((A)\) and by \( \delta' = \delta + |V| \cdot |\gamma| \) (respectively).

Now, since we have the strict inequality \( |\sigma(s)|_u - [\sigma(s)]_v < \delta + 1 \), and since \( |\sigma(s)|_u - [\sigma(s)]_v \in \mathbb{Z} \), then \( |\sigma(s)|_u - [\sigma(s)]_v \leq \delta \), as desired. So, \( \sigma \) is viable. Since \( \sigma \) is both viable and \( \pi \)-dynamic, then \( \Gamma \) is \( \pi \)-DC.

Fig. 8 illustrates the proof of Lemma 2, in which a family of (circular) semi-open intervals of length \( |V| \cdot |\gamma| \) are depicted as shaded rectangles. Lemma 2 ensures that at least one chunk on length \( l_\gamma \geq 1 - |\Sigma_P| \cdot |V|^2 \cdot |\gamma| \) is not covered by the union of those (circular) semi-open intervals, and it is therefore free to host \( \eta \); in Fig. 8, this is represented by the blue interval, and \( \eta = j \cdot |\gamma| \) for some \( j \in \mathbb{Z}, j \cdot |\gamma| = \gamma^{-1} \). Also notice that \( \gamma \) can be fixed as follows:

\[ \gamma \triangleq \frac{1}{|\Sigma_P| \cdot |V|^2 + 1}; \]

then, \( l_\gamma \geq |\Sigma_P|^{-1} \cdot |V|^{-2} \).

In summary, Lemma 1 and Lemma 2 imply Theorem 6.

**Theorem 6.** Let \( \Gamma \) be a CSTN and let \( \gamma \in (0,|\Sigma_P|^{-1} \cdot |V|^{-2}). \)
Then, \( \Gamma \) is \( \pi \)-DC if and only if \( \Gamma'_{\gamma} \) is DC.

This allows us to design a simple algorithm for solving \( \pi \)-DC-Checking, by reduction to DC-Checking, which is named \( \text{Check-\pi-DC}(\Gamma) \) (Algorithm 3). Its pseudocode follows below.

**Algorithm 3:** Check-\( \pi \)-DC(\( \Gamma \))

**Input:** a CSTN \( \Gamma \triangleq \langle V, A, L, O, \Omega, V, P \rangle \)

**Output:** \( \langle \text{YES}, \sigma \rangle \) or \( \langle \text{NO} \rangle \)

1. \( \gamma \leftarrow \frac{1}{|\Sigma_P| \cdot |V|^2 + 1}; \)
2. \( A' \leftarrow \langle \{u - v \leq \delta + |V| \cdot |\gamma|, \ell \} \mid (u - v \leq \delta, \ell) \in A \}; \)
3. \( \Gamma' \leftarrow \langle V, A', L, O, \Omega, V, P \rangle ; \)
4. \( \sigma' \leftarrow \text{check-DC}(\Gamma'); \) // see Theorem 3
5. if \( \sigma' \) is a viable and dynamic ES for \( \Gamma' \), then
6. \( \eta \leftarrow \text{pick } \eta \in [0,1) \) as in the proof of Lemma 2;
7. foreach \((s,v) \in \Sigma_P \times V^+ \) do
8. \[ [\sigma(s)]_v \leftarrow [\sigma(s)]_v - \eta; // \text{ shift by } \eta \]
9. let \( \sigma \in \Sigma_{\Gamma} \) be constructed as follows;
10. foreach \( s \in \Sigma_P \) do
11. \[ \text{foreach } v \in V^+_s \text{ do} \]
12. \[ [\sigma(s)]_v \leftarrow [\sigma(s)]_v; \]
13. \[ [\sigma(s)]_v \leftarrow \text{the ordering on } P \text{ induced by } \sigma'; \]
14. return \( \langle \text{YES}, \sigma \rangle ; \)
15. return \( \langle \text{NO} \rangle ; \)

![Fig. 9: Checking \( \pi \)-DC by reduction to DC-Checking.](image)
\((u - v \leq \delta, t) \in A\). At this point, at line 5, the DC-Checking algorithm of Theorem 3 is invoked on input \(\Gamma'\). Let \(\sigma'_v\) be its output. If \(\Gamma'\) is not DC, then Check-\(\pi\)-DC() (Algorithm 3) returns NO at line 15. When \(\sigma'_v\) is a viable and dynamic ES for \(\Gamma'\), at line 5, then Check-\(\pi\)-DC() (Algorithm 3) proceeds as follows. At line 6, some \(\eta \in [0, 1)\) is computed as in the proof of Lemma 2, i.e., such that \([\sigma'_v(s)]_v - \eta - k \in [0, |V| \cdot \gamma]\) holds for no \(v \in V, s \in \Sigma P, k \in \mathbb{Z}\). Notice that it is easy to find such \(\eta\) in practice. Indeed, one may view the real semi-open interval \([0, 1)\) as if it was partitioned into chunks (i.e., smaller semi-open intervals) of length \(\gamma\); as observed in the proof of Lemma 2, there are only \(|\Sigma P| \cdot |V|\) choices of pairs \((s, v) \in \Sigma P \times V\), and each pair rules out a (circular) semi-open interval of length \(|V| \cdot \gamma\); therefore, there is at least one chunk of length \(L_\gamma \geq |\Sigma P|^{-1} \cdot |V|^{-2}\), within \([0, 1)\), where \(\eta\) can be placed, and we can easily find it just by inspecting (exhaustively) the pairs \((s, v) \in \Sigma P \times V\). In fact, the algorithm underlying Theorem 3 always delivers an earliest-ES (i.e., one in which the time values are the smallest possible, in the space of all consistent ESs), so that for each interval of length \(|V| \cdot \gamma\), the only time values that we really need to check and rule out are \(|V|\) multiples of \(\gamma\). Therefore, at line 6, \(\eta\) exists and it can be easily found in time \(O(|\Sigma P| \cdot |V|^2)\). So, at line 7, for each \(s \in \Sigma P\) and \(v \in V^+_s\), the value \([\sigma'_v(s)]_v\) is shifted to the left by setting \([\sigma'_v(s)]_v \leftarrow [\sigma'_v(s)]_v - \eta\). Then, the following \(\pi\)-ES \(\sigma \in T_1\) is constructed at lines 9-13: for each \(s \in \Sigma P\) and \(v \in V^+_s\), the execution-time is set \([\sigma(s)]_v \leftarrow [\sigma'_v(s)]_v\), and the ordering \(\sigma^{\pi}\) follows the ordering on \(P\) that is induced by \(\sigma'_v(s)\). Finally, \(\langle \text{YES}, \sigma\rangle\) is returned to output at line 14.

To conclude, we can prove the main result of this section.

**Proof of Theorem 5.** The correctness of Algorithm 3 follows directly from Theorems 6 and 3, plus the fact that \(\eta \in [0, 1)\) can be computed directly, at line 6, as we have already mentioned above. The (pseudo) singly-exponential time complexity of Algorithm 3 follows from that of Theorem 3 plus the fact that all the integer weights in \(\Gamma\) are scaled-up by a factor \(1/\gamma = |\Sigma P| \cdot |V|^2 + 1\) in \(\Gamma'\); also notice that \(\eta \in [0, 1)\) can be computed in time \(O(|\Sigma P| \cdot |V|^2)\), as we have already mentioned. Therefore, all in, the time complexity stated in Theorem 3 increases by a factor \(1/\gamma = |\Sigma P| \cdot |V|^2 + 1\).

**IV. RELATED WORKS**

This section discusses of some related approaches offered in the current literature. The article of Tismarinoios, et al. [12] introduced DC for CSTNs. Subsequently, this notion has been analyzed and further formalized in [10], finally leading to a sound notion of DC for CSTNs. However, neither of these two works takes into account an instantaneous reaction-time. Cimatti, et al. [2] provided the first sound-and-complete procedure for checking the Dynamic-Controllability of CSTNs with Uncertainty (CSTNUs) and this algorithm can be employed for checking DC on CSTNs as a special case. Their approach is based on reducing the problem to solving Timed Game Automata (TGA). However, solving TGAs is a problem of much higher complexity than solving MPGs. Indeed, no upper bound is given in [2] on the time complexity of their solution. Moreover, neither \(\varepsilon\)-DC nor any other notion of DC with an instantaneous reaction-time is dealt with in that work. The first work to approach a notion of DC with an instantaneous reaction-time is [11]; its aim was to offer a sound-and-complete propagation-based DC-checking algorithm for CSTNs. The subsequent work [9] extended and amended [11] so that to check \(\varepsilon\)-DC, both for \(\varepsilon > 0\) and for \(\varepsilon = 0\). However, to the best of our knowledge, the worst-case complexity of those algorithms is currently unsettled. Moreover, it is not clear to us how one variant of the algorithm offered in [9], [11] (i.e., the one that aims at checking DC with an instantaneous reaction-time) can adequately handle cases like the CSTN counter-example \(\Gamma_D\) that we have provided in Example 2.

In summary, we believe that the present work can possibly help in clarifying DC with an instantaneous reaction-time also when the perspective had to be that of providing sound-and-complete algorithms based on the propagation of labelled temporal constraints.

**V. CONCLUSION**

The notion of \(\varepsilon\)-DC has been introduced and analysed in [5] where an algorithm was also given to check whether a CSTN is \(\varepsilon\)-DC. By the interplay between \(\varepsilon\)-DC and the standard notion of DC, also disclosed in [5], this delivered the first (pseudo) singly-exponential time algorithm checking whether a CSTN is DC (essentially, DC-Checking reduces to \(\varepsilon\)-DC-Checking for a suitable value of \(\varepsilon\)). In this paper, we proposed and formally defined \(\pi\)-DC, a natural and sound notion of DC for CSTNs in which the planner is allowed to react instantaneously to the observations that are made during the execution. A neat counter-example shows that \(\pi\)-DC with instantaneous reaction-time is not just the special case of \(\varepsilon\)-DC with \(\varepsilon = 0\). Therefore, to conclude, we offer the first sound-and-complete \(\pi\)-DC-Checking algorithm for CSTNs.

The time complexity of the procedure is still (pseudo) singly-exponential in \(|P|\). The solution is based on a simple reduction from \(\pi\)-DC-Checking to DC-Checking of CSTNs.

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