

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI  
MILANO-BICOCCA

DECISION MODELS

FINAL PROJECT

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# Q-ant & Q-gen

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## Abstract

The ABSTRACT is not a part of the body of the report itself. Rather, the abstract is a brief summary of the report contents that is often separately circulated so potential readers can decide whether to read the report. The abstract should very concisely summarize the whole report: why it was written, what was discovered or developed, and what is claimed to be the significance of the effort. The abstract does not include figures or tables, and only the most significant numerical values or results should be given.

## 1 Introduction

**The problem:** the travelling salesman problem (TSP) is an algorithmic problem tasked with finding the shortest route between a set of points and locations that must be visited. In the problem statement, the points are the cities a salesperson might visit. The salesman's goal is to keep the distance travelled as low as possible. TSP has been studied for decades and several solutions have been theorized. The simplest solution is to try all possibilities, but this is also the most time consuming and expensive method. Many solutions use heuristics, which provides probability outcomes. It must be considered that the results are approximate and not always optimal.

**Our approach:** in this project we tried to apply two meta-heuristics named *Ant Colony Optimization* and *Genetic Algorithm*, implementing their "classical" version and a custom one integrating *Reinforcement Learning Algorithms*, namely *Q-learning*.

**Theoretical hints:**

## 2 Datasets

The datasets are taken from [www.math.uwaterloo.ca/tsp/world/countries.html#DJ](http://www.math.uwaterloo.ca/tsp/world/countries.html#DJ).

### 3 The Methodological Approach

This is the central and most important section of the report. Its objective must be to show, with linearity and clarity, the steps that have led to the definition of a decision model. The description of the working hypotheses, confirmed or denied, can be found in this section together with the description of the subsequent refining processes of the models. Comparisons between different models (e.g. heuristics vs. optimal models) in terms of quality of solutions, their explainability and execution times are welcome.

Do not attempt to describe all the code in the system, and do not include large pieces of code in this section, use pseudo-code where necessary. Complete source code should be provided separately (in Appendixes, as separated material or as a link to an on-line repo). Instead pick out and describe just the pieces of code which, for example:

- are especially critical to the operation of the system;
- you feel might be of particular interest to the reader for some reason;
- illustrate a non-standard or innovative way of implementing an algorithm, data structure, etc..

You should also mention any unforeseen problems you encountered when implementing the system and how and to what extent you overcame them. Common problems are: difficulties involving existing software.

### 4 Results and Evaluation

The Results section is dedicated to presenting the actual results (i.e. measured and calculated quantities), not to discussing their meaning or interpretation. The results should be summarized using appropriate Tables and Figures (graphs or schematics). Every Figure and Table should have a legend that describes concisely what is contained or shown. Figure legends go below the figure, table legends above the table. Throughout the report, but especially in this section, pay attention to reporting numbers with an appropriate number of significant figures.

## 5 Discussion

The discussion section aims at interpreting the results in light of the project's objectives. The most important goal of this section is to interpret the results so that the reader is informed of the insight or answers that the results provide. This section should also present an evaluation of the particular approach taken by the group. For example: Based on the results, how could the experimental procedure be improved? What additional, future work may be warranted? What recommendations can be drawn?

## 6 Conclusions

Conclusions should summarize the central points made in the Discussion section, reinforcing for the reader the value and implications of the work. If the results were not definitive, specific future work that may be needed can be (briefly) described. The conclusions should never contain “surprises”. Therefore, any conclusions should be based on observations and data already discussed. It is considered extremely bad form to introduce new data in the conclusions.

## References

The references section should contain complete citations following standard form. The references should be numbered and listed in the order they were cited in the body of the report. In the text of the report, a particular reference can be cited by using a numerical number in brackets as [?] that corresponds to its number in the reference list. L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X provides several styles to format the references