



Master thesis in Industrial and Management Engineering

# **Change detection and identification in Simple Serial Lines**

**A manufacturing application of Process Mining**

By

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that, the contents and organization of this dissertation constitute my own original work and does not compromise in any way the rights of third parties, including those relating to the security of personal data.

Edoardo Chiò  
2020

*to my loving parents*  
*thanks for your patience*

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## **Abstract**

According to the Industry 4.0 paradigm, Digital Twins of production systems must be always aligned with the real systems to guarantee an effective decision making process in a continuously changing environment. To keep the alignment, digital process models can be updated with Process Mining techniques through data collected by sensors. This thesis proposes a model-update procedure and addresses the issue of detecting and identifying changes occurring in Simple Serial Lines, a particular type of production lines. Using event logs, which are data structures generated by line embedded sensors, KPIs are computed, plotted, and analyzed to get insights of the system behavior. Simulation is used to test the effectiveness of the procedure.

*Keywords:* manufacturing; Industry 4.0; digital twin; production systems; change identification; process mining.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

In the last three centuries humankind experienced three different industrial revolutions that deeply modified every aspect of society, not only changing production and economic models, but also generating new cultural movements and wide political unrests across the world.

The First Industrial Revolution began at the end of the 18th century in Great Britain. The design of efficient steam engines and the use of coke as fuel allowed to highly increase production, especially in iron making and textile industries, and to reduce transportation cost and time.

After a slowdown in important innovations in the middle of 19th century, in the last decades of the century many new inventions (e.g. electrical power, petroleum refining, rubber vulcanization) produced a continuous improvement in manufacturing industry. This period is known as the Second Industrial Revolution and culminated with Henry Ford's product standardization and mass production, inspired by Taylor's "The Principles of Scientific Management". Ford's model (known as Fordism) brought to a massive production and consumption increase, generating both huge wealth and widespread social tensions.

At the end of the 1940s, AT&T Bell Laboratories invented the transistor. This was the first step to the design and production of microprocessors, which are the basis of the Third Industrial Revolution. In particular, in the last decades of 20th century, computers led to process automation and system control and monitoring, generating a growth of productivity, efficiency and quality in manufacturing. Processor capability development and diffusion in every field of the human activities have gone along with data storage capacity increase, which in turn led to the problem of information extraction from huge, complex, and scattered databases.

Manufacturing has been deeply influenced by the recent advancements in digital technologies. Innovative production and process control techniques started to spread in the last decade; the most remarkable ones are cyber-physical systems, Internet of Things, digital twin, big data analytics,

and cloud computing [2]. The challenge of implementing the digitalization in manufacturing led to define a new high-tech strategy by the German government in 2011, soon taken as example by the rest of the world. In the same year, the term “Industrie 4.0” (i.e. Industry 4.0) was introduced [3], implying that these technological developments are considered so significant that it is now widely acknowledged we are entering in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

## 1.1 Industry 4.0 components

*What does the Fourth Industrial Revolution consist of?*

To understand the complex landscape of Industry 4.0, I will summarize the definitions of the main facets of this new manufacturing model, then I will outline how these concepts are linked to each other.

**Cyber-Physical System (CPS)** A CPS is defined in [4] as “*transformative technologies for managing interconnected systems between its physical assets and computational capabilities*”. In other words, CPS refers to a system where physical objects and software elements are linked to interact and exchange information. In [4], two main functional components of a CPS are identified, which are (a) an advanced connectivity able to manage data acquisition and transfer in real-time, and (b) a cyber-space where information is extracted and consequent decisions are taken. Then in the same paper a 5-level (“5C”) architecture is proposed as guideline for implementation of CPS in a manufacturing application.

**Internet of Things (IoT)** The term IoT refers to a production or service model where various sensorized objects (i.e. “Things”) are connected, creating a network through which they collect and share data in real-time. The implementation of an IoT system introduces many challenges. A reliable and affordable automatic identification technology is required to make the objects “smart”; RFID technology is a viable answer, and it’s already actively used for identifying various objects in warehouses, production shop floors, logistics companies, distribution centers, retailers, and disposal/recycle stages. Also, a secure, high speed, and high bandwidth wireless communication standard has to be adopted to manage the huge amount of data generated by the sensors embedded with the objects; 5G technology is a possible, yet controversial, candidate to address this problem.



**Digital Twin (DT)** The DT is “*the virtual and computerized counterpart of a physical system that can be used to simulate it (i.e. the physical system) for various purposes, exploiting a real-time synchronization of the sensed data coming from the field*” [5]. The deep difference with a simple simulation model is that a DT is not a static but a dynamic representation (at a desired level of detail) of the system: it imitates and changes in accordance with the real system. However, this relationship is not one-directional, having the DT that, in turn, while running in parallel, influences the real system, allowing to foresee the process evolution through simulation and to design improvements.

**Big Data Analytics (BDA)** Big Data, as written in the HACE theorem [6], “*starts with large-volume, heterogeneous, autonomous sources with distributed and decentralized control, and seeks to explore complex and evolving relationships among data*”. The data characteristics stated by the definition are typical of any data output in CPS, where different sensors, spread across the production lines, gather and send data to a central system. The amount of collected data requires the use of modern analysis techniques to extract meaningful information, such as Data Mining and Process Mining.

**Cloud Computing (CC)** Cloud computing is a general term that indicates the offer by Internet-related companies (like Google, Microsoft, or Amazon) of computational and storage services through scalable resources over the web. The scalability of resources allows organizations to reduce initial investments and to adjust the business digital capabilities as needs arise. The most significant concerns about cloud computing, apart from technological challenges such as load balancing, scalability and availability, and compatibility among different clouds, are related to privacy issues and security.

Although these concepts do not have well-defined borders, and even partially overlap, figure 1.1 was included to suggest a logical connection among them. The main aspect that jumps out from the previous definitions is that IoT and DT are two sides of the same coin, which is CPS: IoT can be considered the hardware side and DT the software side of a CPS. The CPS monitoring and the coordination of its parts are performed using BDA techniques, which are hosted on digital environments capable of storing and analyzing huge amount of data (i.e. CC). Ultimately, information extraction and exchange are the glue that brings all the Industry 4.0 facets together. Indeed, the main innovative side that characterize the Fourth Industrial Revolution is

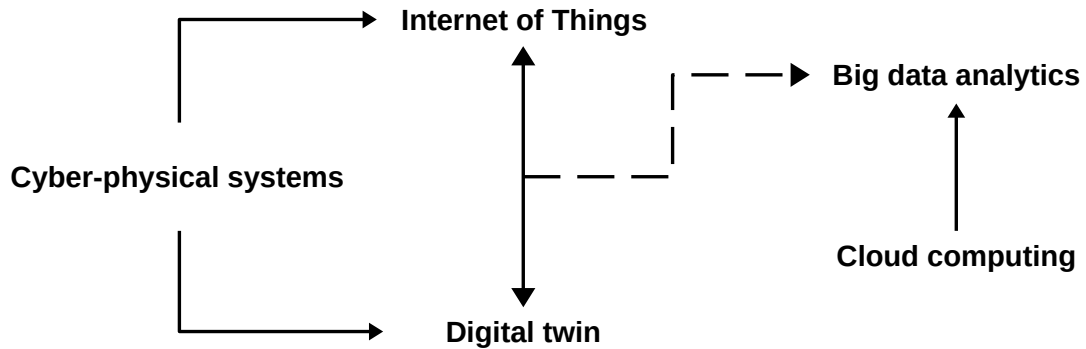


Fig. 1.1 Industry 4.0 scheme

the exploitation of huge amount of data, aiming to automatically improve efficiency and quality in manufacturing contexts.

## 1.2 Tools of Big Data Analytics

BDA works as a bridge between the hardware side and the software side of a CPS, extracting information from the data collected by sensors embedded in the real system (IoT) and from data obtained by simulations run on the digital copy (DT). In general, the activity of obtaining information from big data volumes is called Knowledge Discovery in Databases (KDD), defined in [1] as “*the nontrivial process of identifying valid, novel, potentially useful, and ultimately understandable patterns in data*”. KDD does not belong to a specific field of application, indeed it is a framework that can also adopted in manufacturing contexts. As figure 1.2 shows, KDD includes many steps:

1. Understanding the manufacturing domain: preliminary research of the manufacturing sector which the data come from, and specification of the analysis goals
2. Collection of the data: raw data gathering from different sources
3. Data cleaning, pre-processing and transformation: data pre-processing to remove noise, replace missing values and redundancies, and selection of a dataset structure appropriate for data mining algorithms application
4. Data integration: integration of data from heterogeneous sources

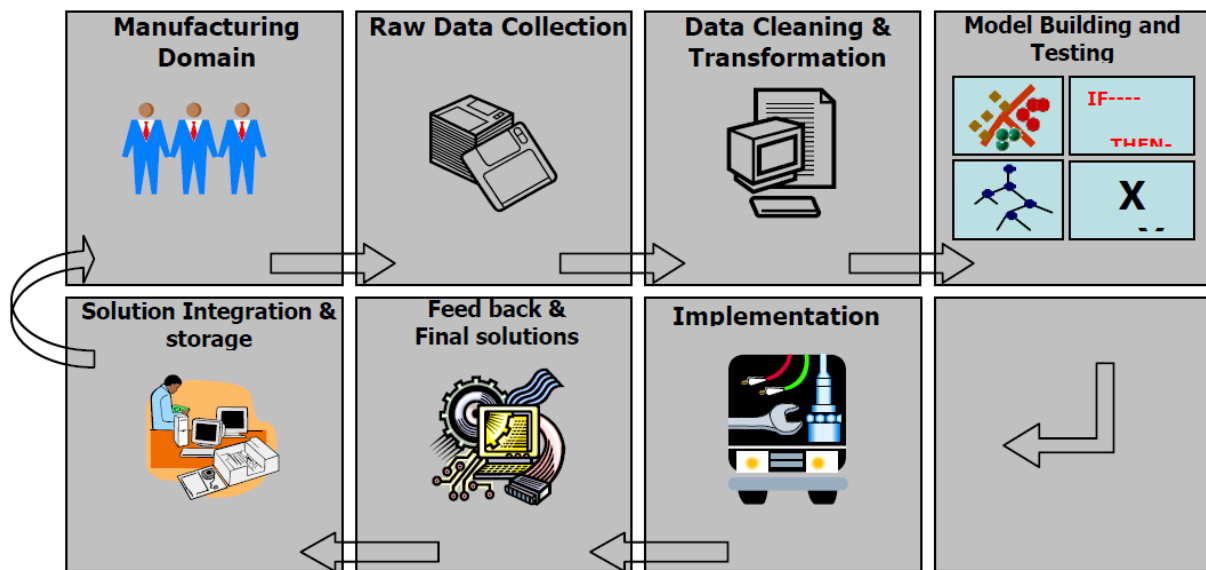


Fig. 1.2 KDD in manufacturing [1]

5. Selection of Data Mining area (see 1.2.1): selection of the Data Mining technique to use for the data analysis
6. Selection of the appropriate data mining algorithm: selection of the Data Mining algorithms to use for the data analysis
7. Interpretation and Visualization: study of the results and preparation of graphs to support the conclusions
8. Implementation of discovered knowledge: execution of the required system modifications and feedback collection
9. Knowledge storage, reuse and integration into manufacturing system: storage of the acquired know-how in sight of future reuse

### 1.2.1 Data Mining

The core of KDD is Data Mining (DM), that is the usage of specific algorithms for identifying patterns in data to uncover hidden relationships (Descriptive DM) and foresee outcomes (Predictive DM). It is possible to distinguish some DM main macro-areas:

- **Characterization & Discrimination:** this DM branch aims to summarize data to provide a concise and information-rich description of the analyzed system.

It is widely used in manufacturing contexts to address quality control problems or to get a overall sight of a process.

- **Classification:** this DM branch aims to map (i.e. classify) the data into one of many different predefined classes.

In manufacturing contexts, it is particularly used to classify defects and to perform online control chart pattern recognition.

- **Clustering:** this DM area branch aims to map the data into one of many different not-predefined classes; these classes are called clusters, characterized by being natural grouping of data items based on similarity metrics.

Some examples of manufacturing usage are its application to study supply chain and order picking routines, and to design part families and machine cells in cellular manufacturing.

- **Prediction:** this DM area branch aims to build and use models to foresee the class of unlabelled samples, or to assess the value or value range of an attribute that a given sample is likely to have.

It is widely used in manufacturing contexts, for example to design efficient resource maintenance policies, predicting the deterioration of components and machines.

- **Association:** this DM branch aims aims to identify relationships patterns among items in a database, not based on inherent properties of the data, but rather on frequency of data-items co-occurrences.

An example of its application in a manufacturing context is the usage of association to identify an efficient disposition of items stocked in a warehouse.

These DM macro-areas are deeply intertwined and different approaches can be concurrently applied to explore data and extract meaningful information.

### 1.2.2 Process Mining

In recent years, data analysis research brought to the design of highly specialized and efficient DM algorithms, devised for specific areas of application. This leaning towards specialization lead to the definition of different DM fields, whose developments are separately pursued, even if mutual influences are still present. Some DM field examples are Text Mining, that aims to extract information from written sources, and Image Mining, that focuses on studying hidden

patterns in pictures and photos. Among the others, in the late 1990s, Process Mining has been introduced.

Process Mining (PM) develops across multiple disciplines beyond DM, involving also Artificial Intelligence research and business process modeling. PM has the purpose of "*discover, monitor and improve real processes by extracting knowledge from event logs readily available in today's (information) systems*" [7], where event logs are data structures that register the events occurred during a process execution (see section 3.1).

As the definition suggests, there are three main types of PM [8]:

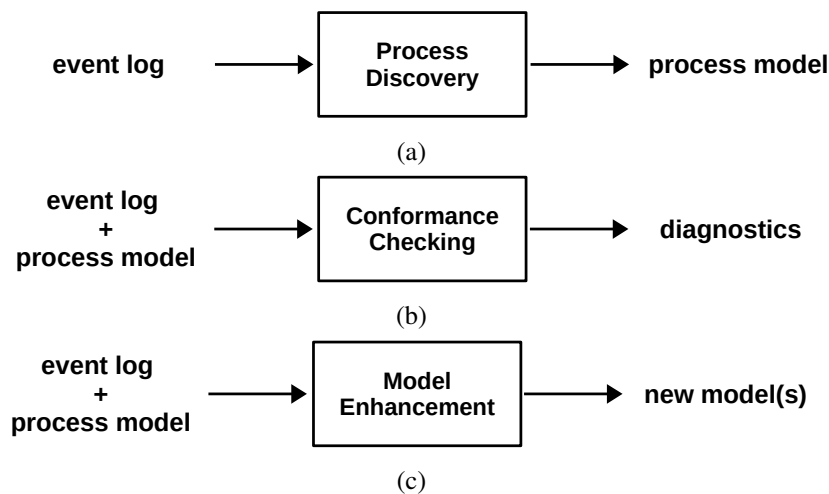


Fig. 1.3 The three main Process Mining branches, highlighting input and output of each one

- **Process Discovery**

As figure 1.3a shows, this PM branch focuses on extracting information from the event log in order to understand the logical dependencies among the activities constituting the process. In other words, it aims to build a process model (i.e. a model describing the system behavior) looking at what activities are performed on cases (i.e. jobs) passing through the system.

- **Conformance Checking**

As figure 1.3b shows, this PM branch focuses on the comparison of the behavior of cases registered in an event log with the process behavior prescribed in an already existing process model, looking for mismatches between the actual system (i.e. the one recorded by the event log) and theoretical system (the one represented in the model).

- **Model Enhancement**

As figure 1.3c shows, this PM branch focuses on the enrichment of an already existing

process model through the analysis of an event log related to the same system. In particular, the process is studied from different points-of-view, such as the resource perspective (e.g. Organizational Mining, which gives insights about the social network structure of a system) and the case perspective (e.g. time an sequence analysis, that allows to easily build Gantt Charts).

PM has been extensively applied in business and healthcare issues [9], and recent researches also tried to apply it to the manufacturing context. Indeed, event logs, which are the initial data source for any PM algorithm, are obtainable as outputs of sensors embedded in production lines, making PM a promising candidate as useful tool for CPS implementation (PM can be adapted to help in the DT construction) and maintenance. In particular, concerning the second part, it is critical to design efficient methods to keep DTs aligned with the real systems, and this thesis aims to suggest a new approach and to take the first steps into a new model updating process, employing the PM framework as a starting point.

### **1.3 Thesis structure**

In the second chapter the thesis scope is defined, exploring the state of the art and stating the dissertation goals. The third chapter describes the study boundaries, specifying what type of manufacturing systems, sensors, and process variations are taken into account. The fourth chapter focuses on the indicators used to monitor the process, explaining how they are extracted from event logs. The fifth and sixth chapters concern the experimental tests, respectively describing the simulated system characteristics and analyzing the indicator behaviors in the simulations. The seventh chapter summarizes the results shown in the previous chapter.

# Chapter 2

## Scope of the work

A recently published article by Lugaresi et al. [10] showed that a process model, starting from an event log, can be built using PM algorithms properly adapted to a manufacturing industry application. Thereafter, a static DT can be created using the resulting process model. However, as explained in section 1.1, a Digital Twin should be a dynamic copy of a real manufacturing system. It means that, ideally, the DT is changed as soon as a variation occurs in the real process, in order to keep the digital copy continuously aligned with the real system.

This thesis has the purpose of laying the foundation for an always up-to-date DT, making it an auto-updating copy of the real system given an initial process model.

### 2.1 A standardized approach for the process model updates

The model updating procedure, in case a variation occurs in the real system, can be divided in the three following steps.

- **Change detection**

The production line is monitored to verify if a variation is occurring during the process. It is performed in real-time, computing and analyzing indicators extracted from sensor output. The continuous inspection of these indicators can be accomplished using statistical process control (SPC) techniques (e.g. Shewart Charts, Cusum Charts, EWMA Charts, Change point Detection), which indicate if the process behavior in a certain instant significantly differs from previous observations. So, if in the real system a variation takes place,

it is possible to detect and report the change occurrence with a predetermined accuracy level, that depends on the sensor reliability and on the chosen significance level used in statistical tests. Figure 2.1 schematically represents a Change Detection example.

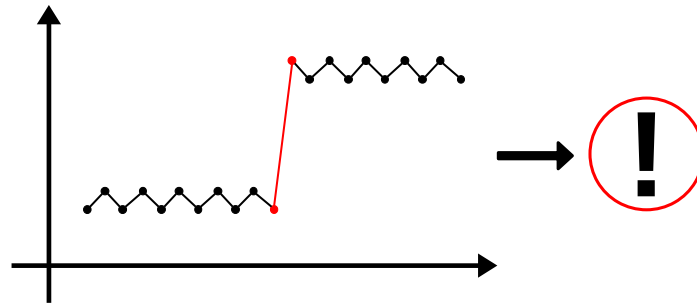


Fig. 2.1 Change Detection: system KPIs are monitored; when a KPI variation occurrence is detected, it is reported for further analysis.

- **Change identification**

A detected change of one or more indicators is classified to determine what kind of variation occurred in the underlying process. To do so, a “change map” is interrogated, in order to match the indicator detected change with a real system change, and then choose the correct update to the process model. Figure 2.2 schematically represents a Change Identification example.

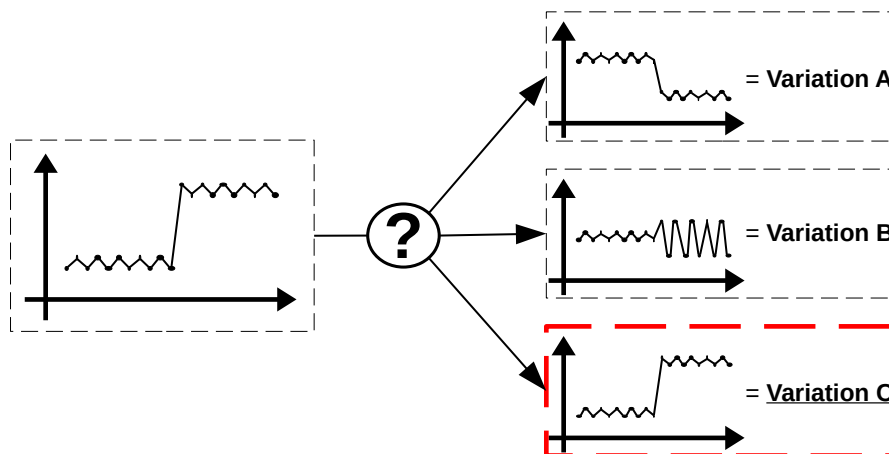


Fig. 2.2 Change Identification: KPI variations are analyzed to identify the type of change occurred in the process.

- **Model modification**

The process model is modified accordingly to the identified variation. A radical way to



update the model is to build it from scratch, using PM algorithms, every time a variation occurs; however, in case of limited or local changes, it is not recommended to use this procedure, since the computational time and effort could be excessive. For this reason, a better approach could be the design of algorithms more specific to the occurring variation type and position, aiming to a more focused rather than a general change in the model. Figure 2.3 schematically represents a Model Modification example.

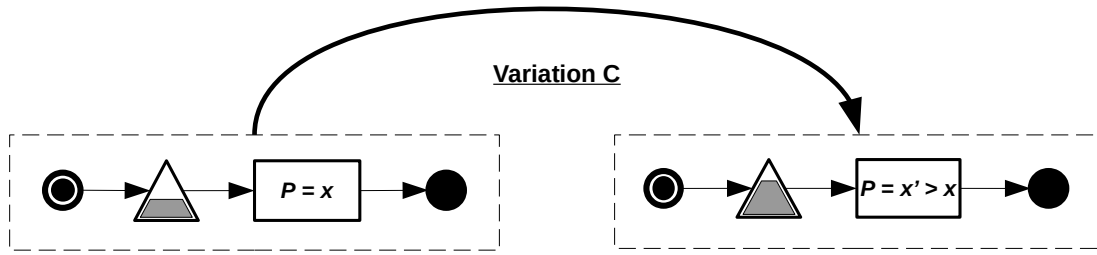


Fig. 2.3 Model Modification: the process model is re-aligned with the real system.

### 2.1.1 Aim of the work

This thesis focuses on the second step of the model update process and, partially, on the first step. Concerning the change detection, this thesis aims to answer whether or not a certain type of variation in the system is noticeable observing the monitored process indicators. Detection methods usage and even which one to apply fall outside the scope of the work. In other words, the focus is on whether a change can be detected, not on how to detect it.

At the same time, the thesis addresses the change identification topic, checking if it is possible to recognize the type of variation through the analysis of indicator behaviors. The main goal is to build a variation map that can be used as a guide to get insights on the process evolution.

This thesis is devised as part of the PM framework. In this regard, the observed indicators are extracted only from event logs generated by line sensors. The reason of this choice is to base the model update on the same data used to build the model in the first place, without requiring the addition of other sensors and the analysis of different data structures.

To show the novelty of this approach, the following sections are dedicated to a state of the art overview concerning the PM manufacturing applications and the PM adaptations to allow dynamic process model updates in general-purpose applications.

## 2.2 Process Mining applications in manufacturing

PM has been applied in manufacturing mostly as a process monitoring tool. For example, in [11] PM is utilized to build the model of a production planning process of a manufacturing company using event logs obtained from an ERP system. A similar application of PM is performed in [12], where PM algorithms are adapted to analyze manufacturing make-to-order production processes, focusing on the resource workloads and on the delays caused by issues during the process. It is to be noted that, even if these studies are conducted in manufacturing contexts, they do not actually examine production lines, rather they use PM to analyze the manufacturing systems on a production planning level, and therefore are quite far from the PM application this thesis aims to achieve.

Lugaresi et al. in [10], as previously outlined, instead direct their attention on designing a PM algorithm which can be applied on production lines, in order to easily and swiftly build a DT imitating a real system. The mining procedure presented in the article consists of four steps:

1. Dataset loading: an event log is pre-filtered and pre-processed to generate the data structures suitable for the information extraction.
2. Optimized mining of event types: this is the core of the procedure, consisting in the application to data of the PM algorithm adapted to production line applications in order to obtain an *activity network*, which shows how activities are connected in the system.
3. Petri Net model generation: the *activity network* is translated in an initial Petri Net model<sup>1</sup>.
4. Petri Net model adjustment: the initial Petri Net Model is polished to obtain a formally correct Petri Net model representing the real system.

Therefore, the article shows that it is possible to mine the necessary information from a system event log to generate a process model, which can serve as a DT logical base. This thesis inserts on the same line of research, aiming to develop around this method and suggesting a procedure to move from a DT one-off generation to an always up-to-date DT.

## 2.3 Auto-update of process models using Process Mining

In real applications, event logs often do not present as complete datasets, instead they are generated continuously appending new events recorded in real-time. In other words, an event

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<sup>1</sup>Petri Nets are process modelling language

stream is collected in an always-extending event log and there is no point in time where the dataset is finished, including the entirety of occurred events. A real-time event gathering causes challenges that basic PM algorithms are not able to deal with, since they require datasets to be finite. The PM branch that aims to address this problem is called Streaming Process Discovery (SPD), and different solutions have been developed, such as the usage of smarter forms of sampling, and summarizing the data into event frequency tables.

The main issue to confront when dealing with event stream is the occurrence of variations in the real system during the process. In [13] three algorithms are proposed, aiming to build a process model from an event stream and keeping it synchronized with the system. These algorithms are based on the *Heuristic Miner*, one of the most used control-flow discovery algorithms. In [14] a similar technique is applied, introducing a growing and pruning mechanism in order to align the *prefix-tree* representing the activity relationships with the real process. A different approach is taken by [15], where a mixed technique is designed using probabilistic neural nets and a genetic algorithm to identify and keep updated a process model with a real manufacturing system.

The model updating processes designed by these articles are much different from the one this thesis suggests. Indeed, in these methods models are influenced by every single event occurring in the system, without an actual monitoring of the process; instead, the approach we propose is based on the detection (and identification) of variations to trigger the model updates. Here the thesis originality lies: before model modifications we think it is critical to understand if and what kind of change is verifying in the real process, in order to minimize the updating computational effort and to be able to build a DT on more stable and reliable process models.

# Chapter 3

## Thesis boundaries

Production systems can take a wide variety of forms, depending on the specific type of application. Generally, the proper way to explore how to address a problem using a new approach is to start from relatively simple contexts, delineating the dissertation boundaries.

This chapter defines the thesis areas of interest, concerning the type of production systems, the sensor positions and the types of variations assumed to occur during the process. Before the boundary definitions, a description of the event logs is provided, in order to illustrate their structure and to show what information they can carry.

### 3.1 Event logs

An event log is a data table where each row records a single event occurred during a specific process. Events are sequentially registered such that, at least, each one is associated to the case (i.e., a process instance, a job) object of the event, and with the activity (i.e., a well-defined step in the process, e.g. entering in a buffer, starting the production) performed on the case [16].

Thus, if the event order is preserved, a minimal event log (called simple event log) is composed of only two fields, containing the following information

- **ID of the case:** the code that uniquely identifies a certain case flowing in the process.
- **ID of the activity:** the code that uniquely identifies a certain activity performed on a case

With these three information (including the event order) a trace can be extracted for each case, which is the ordered sequence of activities executed on a case. So, a simple event log can be

reorganized as a multi-set of traces over a set of activities.

However, in general, event logs are composed by more fields containing different case attributes or event attributes, which allow a deeper and more meaningful analysis of the process.

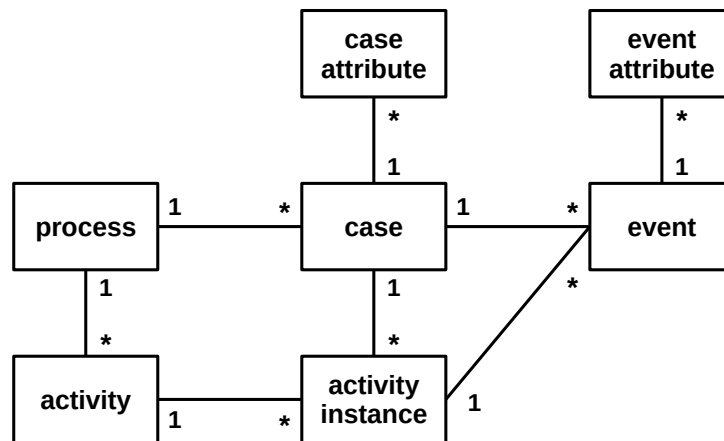


Fig. 3.1 Event log class diagram [8]

Figure 3.1 displays the class diagram of the components of a general event log. The main structure of simple event logs is still present in richer event logs:

- Each event log refers to only one process
- Each case belongs to one process but a process may consist of many cases
- Each event refers to one case but a case may be the subject of many events
- Each activity may be performed on many cases and each case may be processed by different activities

The diagram shows that, in general event logs, in contrast to simple event logs, cases and events may have many attributes. Some examples are

- **Timestamp:** an event attribute containing the instants when events verified
- **ID of the resource:** an event attribute containing the codes that identify which resources (e.g. an operator that performs different activities, a machine in a multi-machine stage) were utilized to process the job
- **Cost:** an event attribute containing the costs related to events

- **Case type:** a case attribute registering the category to which the case belongs, useful in a multi-product system context

The presence of attributes allows to apply Model Enhancement algorithms, which aim to create models that look at a process from different perspectives. For example, if the resource ID<sup>1</sup> is available, it is possible to generate graphs of the social network, that show the employee relationships, the work sequence and the connection frequency.

### 3.1.1 Event logs in real applications: event streams

In manufacturing, event logs are the output produced by sensors positioned along the production line. The sensor locations are determined a priori, and the sensors should guarantee a good level of reliability to minimize errors in the event log.

As explained in section 2.3, in real applications, often, events are collected one at a time, generating event streams, however this thesis only considers event logs consisting of complete datasets, while the event stream situation is not explicitly taken into account. This simplification causes a partial, but not total, generality loss with respect to the event flow case. Indeed, this dissertation has the aim to clarify if it is possible to detect and identify some specific types of variation. Concerning the change detection, since this issue is addressed by assessing the event log with an event-by-event (or window-by-window) approach, that is comparing each new event with the previous ones, the dataset completeness is not necessary and the same approach could be also applied in an event stream context without any adaptation. Instead, regarding the change identification, the event log completeness is much more relevant. To understand what kind of variation is occurring, a simple comparison of consecutive events is insufficient, and the complete event log case and the event stream case lead to different approaches. In the first case (if the event log includes an enough long collection of after-change events), the dataset serves as a snap-shot of the process, making easy to recognize steady state periods before and after the variation and allowing to directly compare them to get insight about the process evolution. Instead, the second case, which necessarily works collecting events (or event windows) one at a time, must also deal with the problem of identifying when the process reaches again the steady state after the variation.

Therefore, while reasonings about the change detection can also be straight applied to event stream situations, even if the study only considers complete event logs, the change identification presents additional challenges that are not addressed in this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup>In this case, intended as the operator IDs

## 3.2 Considered systems

### 3.2.1 Simple serial lines (SSLs)

In this thesis the considered systems are limited to Simple Serial Lines (SSLs), also called basic straight lines, with one resource for each of stage.

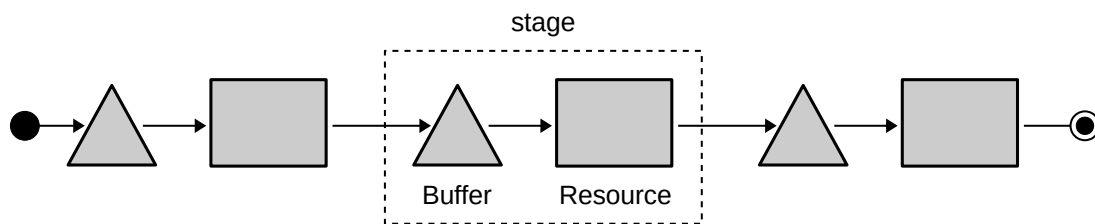


Fig. 3.2 A SSL composed of three stages

Figure 3.2 shows an example of a SSL made of three stages, each one composed of a buffer and a resource. SSLs are described in [17], having the following characteristics.

- **Production in discrete parts**

Discrete manufacturing involves finished products consisting of distinct items (or batches of items) that can be counted, touched, or seen. Production is guided by a bill of materials (BOM) and follows a route, such as an assembly line. Examples of discrete manufacturing products are automobiles, furniture, and smartphones. In theory, a discrete product can be broken down at the end of its lifecycle so its basic components can be recycled. Discrete manufacturing contrasts with process manufacturing, where the product is created by using a formula or recipe to refine raw ingredients and the final product cannot be broken down to its basic components. Examples of goods produced by process manufacturing include pharmaceuticals, food and beverages, refined oil and paints.

- **Single type of product**

Multi-product systems work many types of jobs, and the job type may change during the process. Job types are distinguished, for instance, by production time or cost or because of the stage sequence that they have to pass through. SSLs process a single type of jobs, and the type does not change throughout the process.

- **Production and transfer batches composed of one unit**

Resources does not process groups (i.e. batches) of jobs, but only single jobs. Moreover, jobs move from a stage to the following one alone.

- **FIFO (First In First Out) service policy**

FIFO service policy<sup>2</sup> prescribes that, in each stage, the first job to enter in the buffer is the first to be processed by the resource(s). The exact opposite of FIFO is LIFO (Last In First Out), which prescribes that the last job to enter in the buffer is the first to be processed by the resource.

It is noteworthy that, since FIFO service policy is implemented in all stages and each stage is composed by only one resource, then the job arrival order, the job process order in every stage and the job disposal order is always the same. In other words, jobs cannot swap positions after the arrival in the line. Therefore, each job is uniquely identified by its position.

- **Not synchronized operations**

Each station's operation is independent from the others. The only information that a resource has access to are the fill state of the preceding buffer (i.e. the buffer in the same stage where the resource is located) and the following buffer (i.e. the buffer in the next stage). If the preceding buffer is empty, starvation occurs, that is the production stop caused by the absence of jobs to process. On the other side, if the following buffer is full, blocking occurs, that is the production stop caused by the lack of space to unload the job processed by the resource. Lack of synchronization in operations also prevents setups planning to minimize completion time.

### 3.2.2 Production line characteristics assumptions

To focus on specific types of manufacturing system structures, further assumptions have been done

- **Production line is initially stable**

Stable lines are production lines where the job average arrival rate is lower than the system average service rate. In other words, mean inter-arrival time is higher than mean processing time of the bottleneck. Because of this, true bottleneck of the system is the arrival process. This assumption is made to consider a realistic production situation: an initially unstable

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<sup>2</sup>A service policy is the rule which defines the resource feeding order from the preceding buffer



system is clearly out-of-control since the beginning of monitoring, so it is not worth to be studied using methods that aim to find more subtle processing issues.

The average initial utilization in the bottleneck resource is set around 80-90%, again to consider a realistic production condition.

- **Production line is unsaturated and job arrival in the line is a stochastic process**

Unsaturated lines are production lines where the system is limited by a stochastic arrival pattern, in contrast with saturated production lines, where starvation in the first stage can never occur, meaning that the system is not dependent on material supply or incoming demand.

A stochastic process is a sequence of observations of the same random variable as it is observed through time. The arrival of the jobs in the line is hypothesized to follow a Poisson point process; this is a widely common assumption, since the Poisson distribution is the discrete probability distribution that expresses the probability of a given number of events occurring in a fixed interval of time if these events occur with a known constant mean rate and independently of the time since the last event. Thus, the inter-arrival time of the jobs follows an exponential distribution, which is the probability distribution of the time between events in a Poisson point process.

- **Job processing is a stochastic process**

Job processing time in resources is assumed to follow a lognormal distribution, which is a continuous probability distribution of a random variable whose logarithm is normally distributed.

- **Transfer time is negligible**

After being processed by a resource, jobs are sent to the buffer of the following stage. The job transfer neither uses a vehicle or an operator nor requires time to complete. So, if the buffer in the following stage is not full, the resource is released, and the processed job moves directly and immediately in the next buffer.

- **No failures during resource process and no setups**

Breakdowns while the resources are processing jobs and maintenance do not occur in the considered production lines. This simplification is made to limit the sources of variability in the system to better focus on other variables.

- **Buffers with limited capacity**

Buffer capacity is limited, so when a job tries to leave a resource, if the following stage buffer is saturated, the resource is subject to blocking. An exception is the buffer in the

first stage, which has never limited capacity to avoid job loss at the arrival. In chapter 6 also unlimited buffers have been briefly considered (even if not realistic), to observe the effects of blocking absence on queues. Indeed, if buffers have infinite capacity, no blocking occurs and queues are influenced only by process capacity of the resource in the same stage where the buffer is placed, and by process capacity of the resource in the previous stage. Then, this simplified situation can be compared with the realistic one, where buffers are limited.

- **Blocking after service (BAS)**

BAS is a resource blocking mechanism which prescribes that, after a job has been processed, if the job tries to enter in the following queue which has reached its capacity constraint, then it is forced to wait in the resource, forbidding to process the next jobs. When a space becomes available in the following buffer, the job moves, the resource is released, and service can resume.

- **Unconstrained departures**

After being processed by the last stage resource, jobs leave the system freely, without any blocking mechanism.

### 3.3 Considered sensor positions

To build a full functioning DT many types of sensors can be involved. For example, in [18] an IoT application in a hydraulic system is described: the outputs of different kinds of sensors (e.g. pressure sensors, flow sensors, electrical power sensors, temperature sensors, vibration sensors) are combined into calculated indicators in order to identify hydraulic system faults and defects of the sensors themselves. The same information could be used to keep a hypothetical DT aligned with the real system in every subtle detail.

However, a process model, which is the fundamental structure of a DT, can be built requiring much less information. Indeed, to automatically create a basic process model using PM, even simple event logs are sufficient. This kind of event logs are obtainable as output of sensors, embedded in specific places along the line, that record just the ID of the case flowing through the sensor position and the timestamp corresponding to the passage instant. Therefore, given the simple task of the sensors considered in this application, not the sensor type, but the placement choice is critical.

In this thesis, a placement configuration with three sensors in each stage is assumed to be implemented:

1. One sensor at the buffer entrance. Since, as explained in section 3.2, transfer time is assumed always null, this position also corresponds to the resource exit of the previous stage.
2. One sensor at the resource entrance, corresponding to the buffer exit.
3. One sensor in the resource, which records job processing finish. It is to be noted that it does not coincide with the resource exit: indeed, a job could stop inside the resource if the buffer in following stage is full, because of the BAS policy.

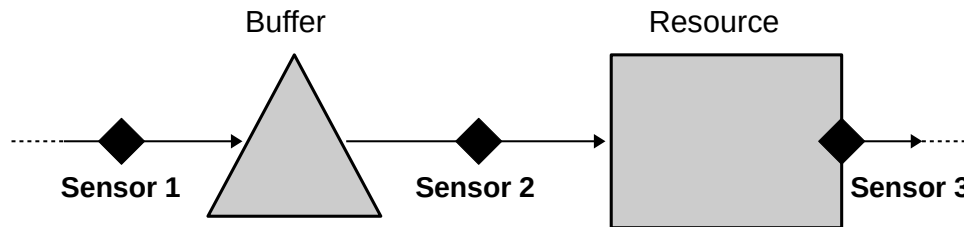


Fig. 3.3 Three sensors configuration scheme

All the sensors are identical, and they all collect the same data, that are the job identification code (Case ID) and its passage instant (Timestamp). These are not the only fields composing the output event log, other attributes are associated, but they are not job-related fields, which have to be actively recorded by the sensors (like Case ID and timestamp), instead they keep track of the event and the sensor position.

## 3.4 Considered process variations

### 3.4.1 Variation classifications

The issue of process variation has been addressed in Process Mining, in particular within the wider topic of Streaming Process Discovery (see section 2.3), that is the construction of models based not on finite event logs but on streams of events. Indeed, in the long term, an event stream

relative to a process monitored in real time could be susceptible to concept drifts, which are “*situations where the process is changing while being analyzed*” [8].

In [19] by Bose et al., concept drifts are classified based on three criteria.

**Classification on perspective** It focuses on where the change occurs, indicating not the physical location but the level of variation. Three categories are identified:

- **Control-flow perspective:** this class includes structural changes, such as insertions, deletions, substitutions, and reordering of process components. For example, inserting new stages in the line, or adding new product types, cause variations of the model structure itself.
- **Data perspective:** this class includes changes related to requirements, usages, a data generation. For example, the enabling the execution of a task without the information request previously needed.
- **Resource perspective:** this class includes changes in roles and behaviors of resources. These variations influence the executions of a process, for example a resource capacity increase in the bottleneck can make the throughput increase if the process is unstable (i.e. production-constrained), or, in a multi-resource stage, a machine disabling makes the stage slower and raises its utilization.

**Classification on duration** As the name suggests, classification on duration aims to classify the variations based on their durations. Two categories are identified:

- **Momentary changes:** variation lifespans are short and may affect few activities, being not enough durable to influence the whole process. (Figure 3.4a)
- **Permanent changes:** variations lifespans are long-lasting, to the point that can be considered permanent. These changes usually affect all the process activities. (Figure 3.4b)

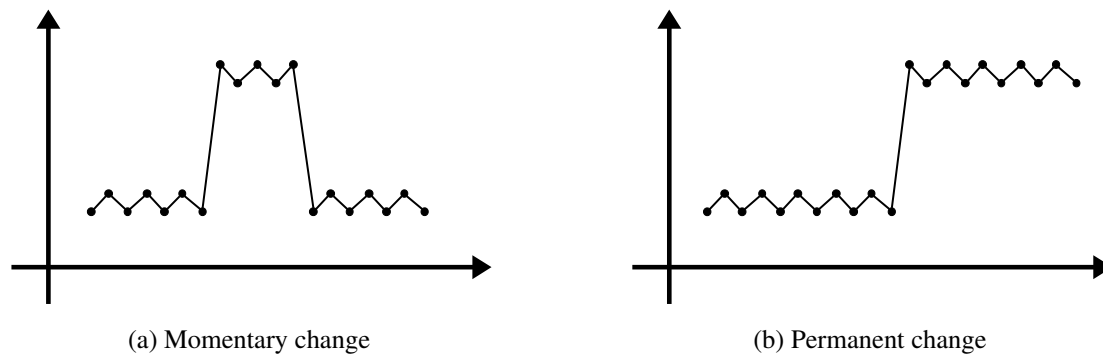


Fig. 3.4 Change classification on duration

**Classification on nature** It focuses on the variation speed and frequency. Four categories are identified:

- **Sudden drift:** it includes variations consisting of instantaneous substitution of an existing process with a new one. This kind of change typically occurs in emergency circumstances, such as machine failures. (Figure 3.5a)
- **Gradual drift:** it includes variations that occur without substituting the previous conditions, in other words it considers situations where different processes coexist for a certain time. This kind of variation is typical of planned organizational changes, such as the implementation of new procedures, without suddenly discontinuing the old ones. (Figure 3.5b)
- **Incremental drift:** it includes variations that occur through small and incremental steps. This is typical of processes with slow machine deterioration over time. (Figure 3.5c)
- **Recurring drift:** it includes variations which occur periodically, often with fixed frequency, followed by reinstatements of previous conditions. It is typical of processes characterized by seasonality. (Figure 3.5d)

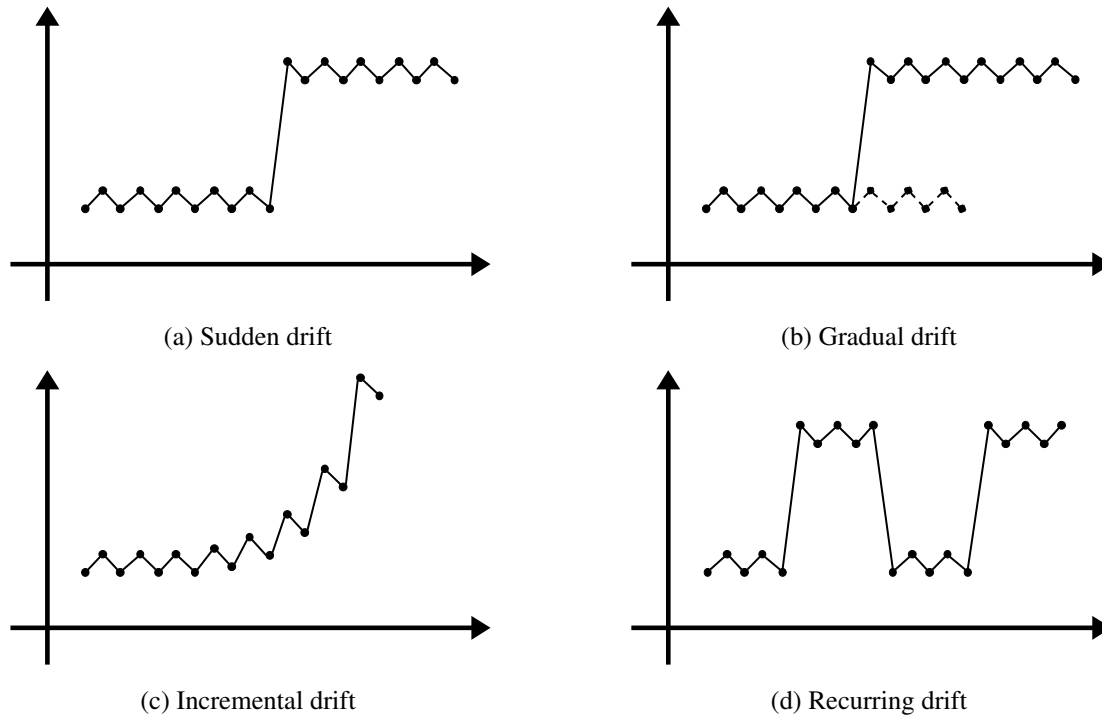


Fig. 3.5 Change classification on nature

### 3.4.2 Considered variations

In this thesis two variation types are considered:

- **Processing time variation in a resource:** a machine in a stage is subject to a sudden production capacity growth or loss, causing, respectively, a decrease or an increase of time needed to process a job in the stage. A capacity growth in a stage may occur in case of a machine substitution with a new and more efficient one. On the other side, a capacity loss may occur when an unnoticed resource deterioration is not adequately addressed by maintenance and abruptly affects the machine, slowing its production.
- **Buffer capacity variation:** a buffer in a stage is subject to a sudden capacity limit growth or loss. This kind of variation may occur in a plug-and-play context, where buffers can expand or shrink based on the stage requirements, aiming to minimize blocking and starvation along the line.

Therefore, according to the previous categorization, the variations considered in this dissertation are limited to stage-related, permanent, sudden changes. It is to be noted that the expression

“stage-related” is used as the adaptation to a manufacturing context of the resource-perspective category, part of the classification on perspective. Indeed, in manufacturing the term resource is often used as synonym of machine, yet a resource-change, as meant above, can occur to any stage component, including buffers: a buffer capacity variation does not affect the model structure or the data requirement and usage, but influences stage behaviors and, so, the process execution, which is the distinctive trait of a resource-perspective variation.

# Chapter 4

## Indicator extractions from event logs

The identification and extraction of meaningful process indicators (i.e. Key Process Indicators, KPIs), capable of conveying useful information in a simple, concise, and not misleading way, is a critical challenge in Operations and Process Management. In this chapter, a series of KPIs are proposed as candidates to monitor a manufacturing system: the first section describes what fields are assumed to compose event logs generated by production lines, while the second section explains how event logs are transformed in *case lists*, which are data structures more suitable for the suggested indicator extractions. The last section shows how these KPIs are computed starting from *case lists* and provides a brief description of what they represent.

### 4.1 Assumptions on event logs generated by production lines

Event logs, as described in section 3.1, have a well-defined general-purpose structure, characterized by the association of one row to each event, accompanied by a case identifier and an activity identifier, and also by a variable number of attributes.

In the particular manufacturing application considered by this thesis, it is assumed that the sensor generated event logs are composed of five fields:

- **Event ID:** univocal code of the event. It is assumed that the event order sequence serves as ID of the event. Therefore, Event ID works on an ordinal scale and events are represented with indexes belonging to a set  $\Theta$  whose elements are  $e \in \{1, 2, \dots, E\}$ , where  $E$  is number of the events occurring during the process. It is to be noted that, for this application, the



information carried by Event ID is redundant, as explained in section 4.2, so this field can be discharged without information loss.

- **Case ID:** univocal code of the job. Since the considered lines are SSLs, with one resource in each stage, and the service policy is BAS, as explained in section 3.2, no case order swap is possible, so the Case ID is equivalent to the job arrival order in the first stage of the line and to the job processing order in each stage. The job arrival order is used as ID for the jobs. Therefore Case ID works on a categorical scale and jobs are represented with indexes belonging to a set  $\Gamma$  whose elements are  $j \in \{1, 2, \dots, J\}$ , where  $J$  is the total number of arrived (and processed) jobs in the line.
- **Activity ID:** univocal code of the stage where the event occurs. The definition of activity for the rest of the dissertation is slightly different from the one presented in section 3.1: the term activity is not used to indicate a step in the work sequence, but a station in the manufacturing line. Since lines are SSLs, and so stages cannot be concurrent, the occupied position in the line stage sequence is used as identification code of the stage. Therefore, Activity ID works on a categorical scale and stages are represented with indexes belonging to a set  $\Sigma$  whose elements are  $s \in \{1, 2, \dots, S\}$ , where  $S$  is the number of stages in the line.
- **Position ID:** univocal code of the position occupied by a sensor in a stage. This ID is univocal only inside a certain stage: multiple sensors in different stages own the same ID if they occupy the same relative position. Position ID works on a categorical scale and positions are represented with indexes belonging to a set  $\Pi$  whose elements are  $p \in \{1, 2, \dots, P\}$ , where  $P$  is the number of sensors in each stage, that is three (see section 3.3).
- **Timestamp:** instant when the event occurred. This field works on an interval scale, where the zero value is assumed in correspondence with the process starting instant.

Table 4.1 Example of event log generated by sensors embedded in a production line

Event ID	Case ID	Activity ID	Position ID	Timestamp
157480	7500	1	1	106387.78
157481	7500	1	2	106389.37
157482	7500	1	3	106392.58
157483	7500	2	1	106392.58
157484	7500	2	2	106399.19
157485	7500	2	3	106413.20
157486	7500	3	1	106413.20
157487	7500	3	2	106413.20
157488	7500	3	3	106416.90
157489	7500	4	1	106416.90
157490	7500	4	2	106416.90
157491	7500	4	3	106423.33
157492	7500	5	1	106423.33
157493	7500	5	2	106486.05
157494	7500	5	3	106498.81
157495	7500	6	1	106498.81
157496	7500	6	2	106498.81
157497	7500	6	3	106506.34
157498	7500	7	1	106506.34
157499	7500	7	2	106506.34
157500	7500	7	3	106513.06

Table 4.1 is provided to show an example of the described field structure, reproducing an event log fragment limited to the trace of a job having CaseID equal to 7500.

## 4.2 From event logs to case lists

Before the indicator extractions, the event log is modified, moving from an event perspective to a case-activity perspective. The datasets obtained modifying event logs are named *case lists*. This conversion is applied to simplify the successive calculations and to organize the data in a structure that better fits the stage-focused study performed through the KPI analysis.

A preliminary transformation is the discharge of the Event ID field. Indeed, both Timestamp and Event ID carry the same information (i.e. the event order), however they work on different

measurement scales. Timestamp works on an interval scale, while Event ID operates on an ordinal scale. Event ID clearly does not convey any information regarding the time gap between events, just their order of occurrence. Thus, Timestamp is kept, since it is the richer field, and Event ID is dismissed.

The rest of the event log undergoes a pivoting operation. The Timestamp field is spread in three fields, separating time instants acquired by sensors located in different positions (recorded in Position ID) in the same stage. The resulting fields are named as follows

- **Timestamp\_Buffer** ( $T_B$ ): it registers the instant when the job entered in the stage buffer, recorded in event log rows having Position ID equal to 1
- **Timestamp\_Resource** ( $T_R$ ): it registers the instant when the job entered in the stage resource, recorded in event log rows having Position ID equal to 2
- **Timestamp\_End** ( $T_E$ ): it registers the instant when the resource finished the job processing, recorded in event log rows having Position ID equal to 3

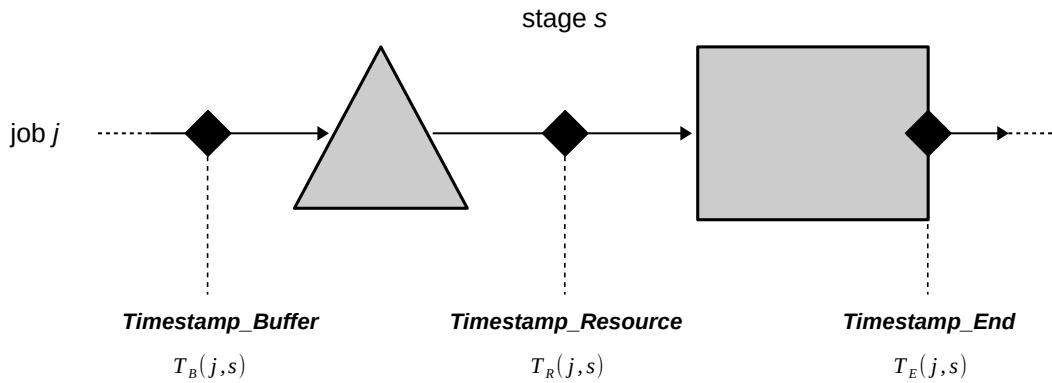


Fig. 4.1 Relations between sensors and timestamps

Each row of the resulting dataset records the instants when the sensors in a specific stage observed the passage of a certain job. Each row is uniquely identified by (i.e. the dataset primary key is) the combination of Case ID and Activity ID.

For the rest of the thesis, Timestamp fields are going to be referenced as follows

- $T_B(j,s)$ : instant of entrance of job  $j$  in the buffer of stage  $s$
- $T_R(j,s)$ : instant of entrance of job  $j$  in the resource of stage  $s$
- $T_E(j,s)$ : instant of processing finish of job  $j$  in stage  $s$

Table 4.2 Example of case list

Case ID	Activity ID	Timestamp_Buffer	Timestamp_Resource	Timestamp_End
7500.00	1	106387.78	106389.37	106392.58
7500.00	2	106392.58	106399.19	106413.20
7500.00	3	106413.20	106413.20	106416.90
7500.00	4	106416.90	106416.90	106423.33
7500.00	5	106423.33	106486.05	106498.81
7500.00	6	106498.81	106498.81	106506.34
7500.00	7	106506.34	106506.34	106513.06

Table 4.2 is provided to show a case list example, computed starting from the event log fragment of table 4.1.

## 4.3 Indicator computations

Both basic and derived KPIs are calculated starting from case lists. In this section firstly the basic ones are presented, from which all the others are obtained. Then KPIs calculated aggregating on moving windows are discussed.

### 4.3.1 Basic KPIs

These indicators are computed as differences between timestamps, so they are all time intervals (see figure 4.2). They are separated in two categories: **Same Case Intervals (SCI)** KPIs and **Consecutive Cases Intervals (CCI)** KPIs. The first category includes indicators calculated as differences of timestamps related to a specific job, not necessarily in the same stage. The second category consists of indicators calculated as differences of timestamps related to pairs of jobs consecutively passing in the same sensor position.

## Same case intervals (SCI) KPIs

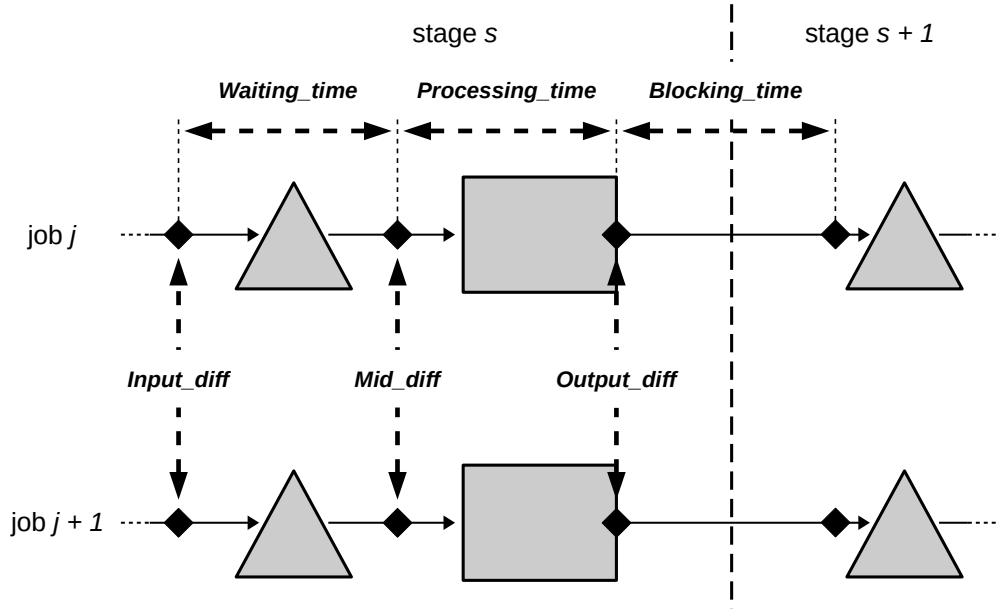


Fig. 4.2 Basic KPI computations scheme

**Waiting\_time** is a SCI indicator, computed as the difference between *Timestamp\_RESOURCE* and *Timestamp\_BUFFER* (see figure 4.3). Since *Timestamp\_BUFFER* is the instant when the job entered in the stage buffer, and *Timestamp\_RESOURCE* is the instant when the job departed from the buffer and entered in the stage resource, this KPI represents the time spent by a job in a stage buffer.

The equation for *Waiting\_time* of job *j* in stage *s* is

$$Waiting\_time(j,s) = T_R(j,s) - T_B(j,s)$$

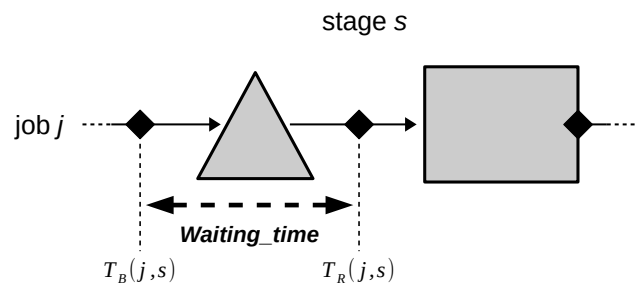


Fig. 4.3 Waiting time computation scheme

**Processing\_time** is a SCI indicator, computed as the difference between Timestamp\_END and Timestamp\_RESOURCE (see figure 4.4). Since Timestamp\_RESOURCE is the instant when the job entered in the stage resource (and started being processed), and Timestamp\_END is the instant when the job processing finished, this KPI represents the time spent by a job in a stage resource while being processed.

The equation for Processing\_time of job  $j$  in stage  $s$  is

$$\text{Processing\_time}(j, s) = T_E(j, s) - T_R(j, s)$$

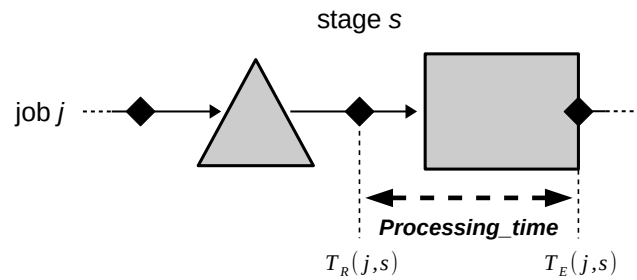


Fig. 4.4 Processing time computation scheme

**Blocking\_time** is a SCI indicator, computed as the difference between Timestamp\_BUFFER, registered at the entrance of the stage following the considered one, and Timestamp\_END, registered in the considered stage (see figure 4.5). Since Timestamp\_END is the instant when the job ended to be processed by the stage resource, and Timestamp\_BUFFER is the instant when the job entered in the buffer of the following stage, this KPI represents the time spent by a job in a stage resource without being processed; in other words, this is the time interval during which the resource was occupied by the job because the buffer in the following stage was full, causing stage  $s$  resource blocking.

The equation for Blocking\_time of job  $j$  in stage  $s$  is

$$\text{Blocking\_time}(j, s) = T_B(j, s + 1) - T_E(j, s)$$

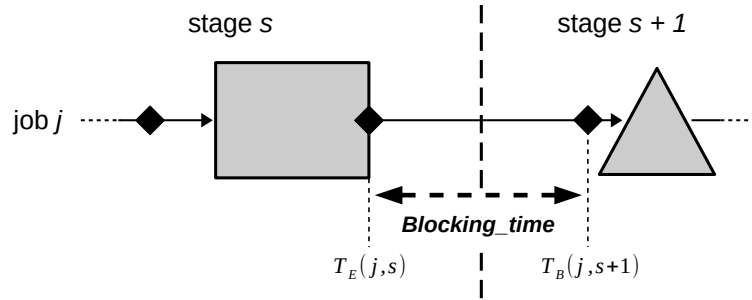


Fig. 4.5 Blocking time computation scheme

### Consecutive cases intervals (CCI) KPIs

**Input\_diff**, **Mid\_diff**, and **Output\_diff** are CCI indicators, computed as the differences between pairs of timestamps<sup>1</sup> relative to consecutive job passages through the same sensor (see figure 4.6). All these KPIs represent time intervals related to the cycle time as perceived by different sensor positions. The values assumed by these indicators during a process in steady state are very similar, as it is going to be shown in subsection 6.1.1.

The equations for CCI KPIs of job  $j$  in stage  $s$  are

$$Input\_diff(j, s) = T_B(j+1, s) - T_B(j, s)$$

$$Mid\_diff(j, s) = T_R(j+1, s) - T_R(j, s)$$

$$Output\_diff(j, s) = T_E(j+1, s) - T_E(j, s)$$

<sup>1</sup>Input\_diff is related to pairs of Timestamp\_BUFFER, Mid\_diff is related to pairs of Timestamp\_RESOURCE, and Output\_diff is related to pairs of Timestamp\_END

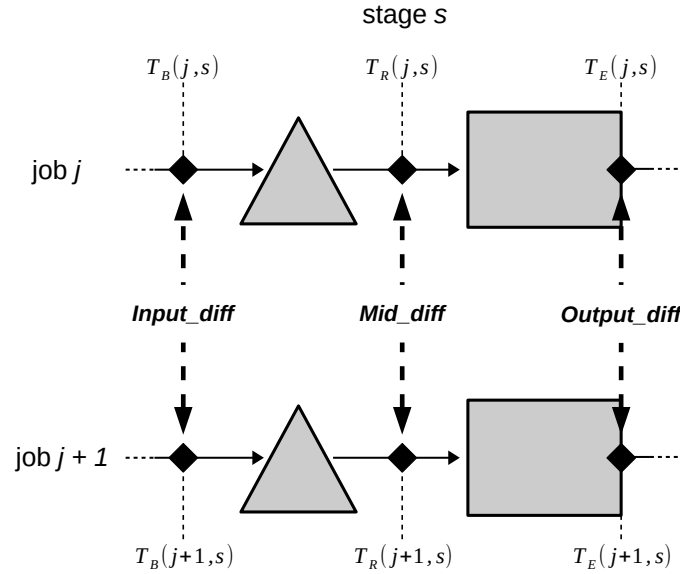


Fig. 4.6 Consecutive cases intervals computations scheme

### 4.3.2 Derived KPIs

These KPIs are obtained combining the basic KPIs introduced in the previous paragraph. The first indicator belonging to this group is called *Starving\_time* and it is closely related the SCI KPIs, to such an extent that is considered part of that category for the rest of the dissertation. The other derived KPIs are called *Rolling Windows KPIs*.

#### *Starving\_time* KPI

*Starving\_time* is calculated as the difference between *Mid\_diff* and the sum of *Processing\_time* and *Blocking\_time* (see figure 4.7). As said, *Mid\_diff* represents the time interval between the passages of two consecutive jobs through the same sensor; this means that *Mid\_diff* cannot be less than *Processing\_time* (i.e. the time spent by a job being processed), since there is only one resource in each stage and, if the resource is seized, jobs have to wait in the buffer queue. Moreover, *Mid\_diff* can be greater than *Processing\_time* for two reasons: first, if the buffer of the following stage is full, a processed job does not release the resource, causing the machine blocking (for a period represented by *Blocking\_time*) and preventing other jobs to enter in the resource. Second, after a job has released the resource, if the previous buffer is empty, clearly no job seizes the resource, causing starvation. Both these resource statuses contribute



to inflate *Mid\_diff*, that is none other than the sum of these time intervals plus the processing time. Therefore, knowing *Mid\_diff*, *Processing\_time*, and *Blocking\_time*, *Starving\_time* can be calculated and represents the time interval during which a resource was not working due to lack of jobs in the stage buffer.

The equation for *Starving\_time* of job *j* in stage *s* is

$$\text{Starving\_time}(j,s) = \text{Mid\_diff}(j,s) - (\text{Processing\_time}(j,s) + \text{Blocking\_time}(j,s))$$

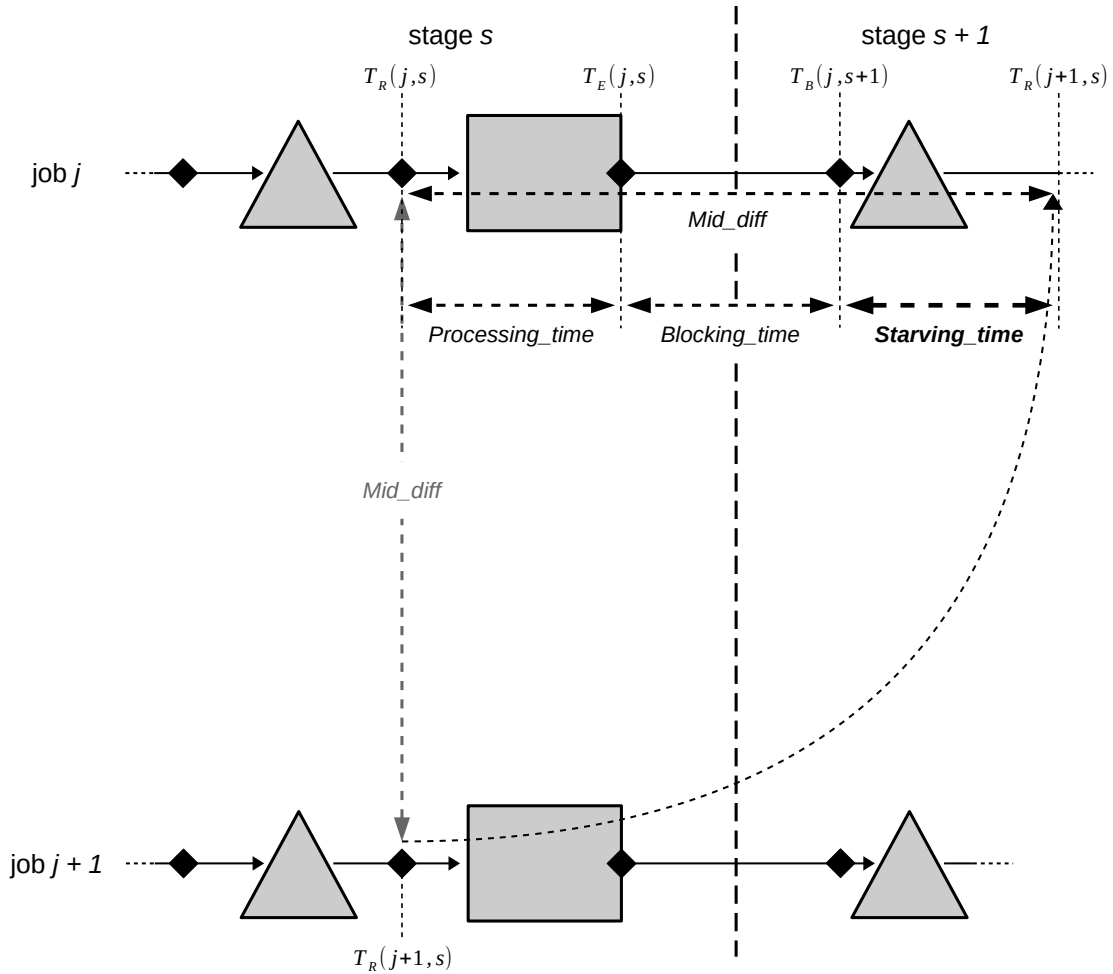


Fig. 4.7 Starving time computation scheme

A more direct, yet less intuitive way to compute this KPI (found simply by replacing the basic indicators with the equations that define them) is differentiating *Timestamp\_RESOURCE* of the job, immediately following the considered one, entering in the stage resource, and

Timestamp\_BUFFER of the considered job entering in the next stage buffer (see figure 4.8).

So, an alternative formula to compute Starving\_time of job  $j$  in stage  $s$  is

$$\text{Starving\_time}(j, s) = T_R(j+1, s) - T_B(j, s+1)$$

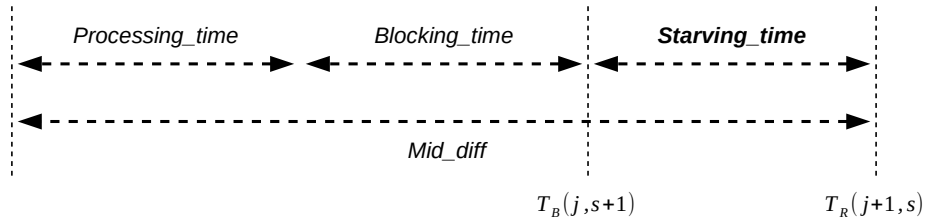


Fig. 4.8 Starving time alternative formula

### Rolling Windows KPIs

Rolling Windows (RW) KPIs are indicators calculated on case list subsection. Since this operation aggregates groups of consecutive rows (i.e. windows) in single records, the resulting dataset has as fewer rows as the subsections are wider. The table containing the aggregation results is named *aggregated case list*.

RW KPIs are separated in two categories: Moment RW KPIs and Stage Metric RW KPIs. The behavior of this kind of indicators depends on the characteristics of the window which they are computed on. Indeed, windows are characterized by two parameters: length and shift. The length  $l$  defines how many rows (i.e. jobs) are included in the dataset subsection. The shift  $f$  defines how many rows are between the start of a subsection and the start of the following one, upper extreme included. Windows overlap if shift is lower than length ( $f < l$ ), windows are delayed if shift is higher than length ( $f > l$ ), windows are adjacent if the parameters are equal ( $f = l$ ). Only complete subsections are considered (i.e. all the windows have length  $l$ , included the first and the last ones), and it is to be noted that the number of windows obtained from a case list varies in function of the windows parameters: the higher the shift and the length, the lower the number of windows obtained from a case list and, therefore, the fewer the rows of the aggregated case list. Since each window includes  $l$  jobs, it is conventionally assumed that the Case ID value of the last job  $j'$  of a window serves as window ID. So, windows are represented with a set  $\Omega$ , a subset of set  $\Gamma$ , whose elements  $j'$  depend on window parameters  $l$  and  $f$ , and that includes only indexes of jobs positioned at window ends. So, given certain window parameters values, the elements of set  $\Omega$  are defined through the function  $j' \in \{l, l+f, l+2f, \dots\} \subseteq \Gamma$ .

**Moment Rolling Windows KPIs** are RW indicators related to moments computed on case list subsections. First order moment (i.e. mean) and second order central moment (i.e. variance) are calculated for each SCI (Starving\_time included), and CCI KPI.

These indicators aim to reduce the noise due to process variability, and to concisely display the characteristics of the distributions followed by the related KPIs.

The equations for Moment Rolling RW KPIs are

$$Waiting\_time\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Waiting\_time(j, s)\}$$

$$Waiting\_time\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Waiting\_time(j, s)\}$$

$$Processing\_time\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Processing\_time(j, s)\}$$

$$Processing\_time\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Processing\_time(j, s)\}$$

$$Blocking\_time\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Blocking\_time(j, s)\}$$

$$Blocking\_time\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Blocking\_time(j, s)\}$$

$$Starving\_time\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Starving\_time(j, s)\}$$

$$Starving\_time\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Starving\_time(j, s)\}$$

$$Input\_diff\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Input\_diff(j, s)\}$$

$$Input\_diff\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Input\_diff(j, s)\}$$

$$Mid\_diff\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Mid\_diff(j, s)\}$$

$$Mid\_diff\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Mid\_diff(j, s)\}$$

$$Output\_diff\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Output\_diff(j, s)\}$$

$$Output\_diff\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Output\_diff(j, s)\}$$

$$Waiting\_trend\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Waiting\_trend(j, s)\}$$

$$Waiting\_trend\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Waiting\_trend(j, s)\}$$

$$Processing\_trend\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Processing\_trend(j, s)\}$$

$$Processing\_trend\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Processing\_trend(j, s)\}$$

$$Blocking\_trend\_MEAN(j', l, f, s) = \text{mean}_j\{Blocking\_trend(j, s)\}$$

$$Blocking\_trend\_VAR(j', l, f, s) = \text{var}_j\{Blocking\_trend(j, s)\}$$

Each function is computed having

$$j \in \{j' - l + 1, j' - l + 2, \dots, j'\} \wedge j' \in \{l, l + f, l + 2f, \dots\}$$

**Stage State Rolling Windows KPIs** are RW indicators that help to monitor buffer and resource, exploiting the flow time to get more insights about their usage. Concerning the buffer, the average number of jobs (in a certain window) in a queue is calculated; then three resource related metrics are computed, that are utilization, probability of blocking, and probability of starvation. All Stage State RW KPIs present the same formula structure, that is the ratio between a SCI derived Moment RW KPI and a CCI derived Moment RW KPI, both calculated on the same dataset subsection. Since both numerator and denominator are time intervals, these KPIs present as absolute values.

**Average\_Queue** is calculated as the ratio between the *Waiting\_time\_MEAN* and *Input\_diff\_MEAN*. Since *Waiting\_time\_MEAN* is the average time interval spent by jobs waiting in a buffer, and *Input\_diff\_MEAN* is the average time interval between consecutive jobs entering in a buffer (i.e. average flow time as seen by the buffer), their ratio tells the average number of jobs simultaneously present in a buffer.

The equation for *Average\_Queue* computed in stage  $s$  on rolling windows with parameters  $l$  and  $f$  and having  $j'$  as last job is

$$Average\_Queue(j', l, f, s) = \frac{Waiting\_time\_MEAN(j', l, f, s)}{Input\_diff\_MEAN(j', l, f, s)}$$

**Utilization** is calculated as the ratio between the *Processing\_time\_MEAN* and *Mid\_diff\_MEAN*. Since *Processing\_time\_MEAN* is the average time interval needed by a resource to process a job, and *Mid\_diff\_MEAN* is the average time interval between consecutive jobs entering in a resource (i.e. average flow time as seen by the resource), their ratio tells how much time the resource worked compared to the available time, or, from another point of view, the probability that, in a certain instant, the resource was not idle.

The equation for Utilization computed in stage  $s$  on rolling windows with parameters  $l$  and  $f$  and having  $j'$  as last job is

$$Utilization(j', l, f, s) = \frac{Processing\_time\_MEAN(j', l, f, s)}{Mid\_diff\_MEAN(j', l, f, s)}$$

**Blocking\_probability** is calculated as the ratio between the *Blocking\_time\_MEAN* and *Mid\_diff\_MEAN*. Since *Blocking\_time\_MEAN* is the average duration of a stop when blocking occurs in a resource, and *Mid\_diff\_MEAN* is the average time interval between consecutive jobs entering in a resource (i.e. average flow time as seen by the resource), their ratio tells how much time the resource was in a blocking state compared to the available time, or, from another point of view, the probability that, in a certain instant, the resource was blocked.

The mathematical equation for *Blocking\_probability* computed in stage  $s$  on rolling windows with parameters  $l$  and  $f$  and having  $j'$  as last job is

$$Blocking\_probability(j', l, f, s) = \frac{Blocking\_time\_MEAN(j', l, f, s)}{Mid\_diff\_MEAN(j', l, f, s)}$$

**Starving\_probability** is calculated as the ratio between the *Starving\_time\_MEAN* and *Mid\_diff\_MEAN*. Since *Starving\_time\_MEAN* is the average time a resource has to wait for the arrival of a new job after being released by the previous one, and *Mid\_diff\_MEAN* is the average time interval between consecutive jobs entering in a resource (i.e. average flow time as seen by the resource), their ratio tells how much time the resource was in a starving state compared to the available time, or, from another point of view, the probability that, in a certain instant, the resource was starving.

The equation for *Starving\_probability* computed in stage  $s$  on rolling windows with parameters  $l$  and  $f$  and having  $j'$  as last job is

$$Starving\_probability(j', l, f, s) = \frac{Starving\_time\_MEAN(j', l, f, s)}{Mid\_diff\_MEAN(j', l, f, s)}$$

# Chapter 5

## Simulated systems

To observe the indicator behaviors, simulations are built to replicate a SSL having the characteristics described in section 3.2. Virtual sensors have been placed accordingly to the three sensor configuration shown in section 3.3. The sensor output is an event log having the field structure defined in chapter 4.

Concerning the software tools:

- Models are written and run with *simmer* [20], a process-oriented discrete-event simulator.
- Event logs transformation in case lists and KPI extractions are executed with queries mostly written with *dplyr*, *tidyr* and other libraries belonging to the *tidyverse* collection [21].
- Plots are printed using *ggplot2*, which is also part of the *tidyverse* collection.

*simmer* and *tidyverse* are open-source packages for R language [22].

### 5.1 Simulated line

The model is designed to simulate a simple serial line having 7 stages. Each stage is composed by a resource fed by a buffer. The first buffer is supplied by a source set up to generate 10000 jobs; job inter-arrival time (i.e. inter-generation time) follows an exponential distribution with

pdf

$$f(x; \lambda) = \begin{cases} \lambda e^{-\lambda x}, & \text{if } x \geq 0 \\ 0, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad (5.1)$$

having fixed parameter  $\lambda = 10^{-1}$ . In this way, the expected value of the inter-arrival time is  $\mu_a = 10$  time units. The simulation stops when the last job has been processed by the resource in the last stage.

Job processing time in the resources follows a log-normal distribution with pdf

$$f(x; \mu, \sigma^2) = e^{\mu + \sigma Z(x; \mu, \sigma^2)} \quad (5.2)$$

where  $Z(x; \mu, \sigma^2)$  is the pdf of a normal distribution with mean  $\mu$  and variance  $\sigma^2$ . The standard deviation of the log-normal distribution is set to  $\sigma_s = 5$  time units in every stage  $s$ ; the initial mean is set to  $\mu'_s = 7$  time units in every stage, except for the resource in the bottleneck stage  $s_{BN}$ , where the initial mean processing time is set to  $\mu'_s = 8.5$ .

During the simulation run, a variation takes place in the line, to observe how indicators behave when it occurs. The variation is realized by forcing a process parameter to suddenly change in the instant when half of the jobs (i.e. the 5000 jobs) have been processed by the first stage resource. The changing stage position  $s_{CH}$  is chosen in order to have a wide view of the variation effects both upstream and downstream in the line; the change trigger was set to be sure that system was in steady state before the variation and to let it to reach the steady state again after.

### 5.1.1 Experimental factors and levels

In this section the experimental factors and the respective levels are presented.

- **Bottleneck and changing stage positions** Bottleneck and changing stage positions in a model depend on each other. Three stage configurations are considered to observe KPIs in different situations, that are

1. Bottleneck stage  $s_{BN}$  is upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$
2. Bottleneck stage  $s_{BN}$  is in correspondence with the changing stage  $s_{CH}$
3. Bottleneck stage  $s_{BN}$  is downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$

So, the stage configuration pairs are

$$(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) \in \{(3, 5), (4, 4), (5, 3)\}$$

- **Initial buffer capacities** In each model, capacity limit  $cl_s$  of stage  $s$  buffer has the same initial value  $cl'_s$  in all stages. Four initial buffer capacity levels are considered
  1. Buffer capacity limit equal to 3 jobs: in this configurations buffers are small and easily saturated
  2. Buffer capacity limit equal to 6 jobs: in this configurations buffers are large and not commonly saturated
  3. Buffer capacity limit equal to 10 jobs: in this configurations buffers are very large and almost never saturated
  4. Unlimited buffers; it is to be noted that models with unlimited buffers have not been taken into account in case of buffer limit variations.

Therefore, the before-change considered levels of  $cl_s$  are (expressed in job units)

$$cl'_s \in \{3, 6, 10, \infty\}$$

The variation types are classified in two categories, in turn divided in two sub-categories. The considered change sizes depend on bottleneck position or initial buffer capacity of the model. Therefore, for each variation subcategory, different  $cl_s$  and  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$  entail different variation levels.

**Processing time variation** This type of variation is realized changing the parameter  $\mu_s$  in the processing time distribution of the resource in the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ . The levels of the after-change value  $\mu''_{s_{CH}}$  taken by parameter  $\mu_{s_{CH}}$  depend on the bottleneck position in the model. A scheme of mean processing time variations is contained in Table 5.1.

#### Processing time increase

- Bottleneck in third stage and variation in fifth stage or vice versa  $((s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (3, 5) \vee (5, 3))$ : considered mean processing time after-change values are (expressed in time units)

$$\mu''_{s_{CH}} \in \{8, 9.5, 11\}$$



- Bottleneck and variation in same stage ( $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$ ): considered mean processing time after-change values are (expressed in time units)

$$\mu''_{s_{CH}} \in \{9.5, 11\}$$

### Processing time decrease

- Bottleneck in third stage and variation in fifth stage or vice versa ( $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (3, 5) \vee (5, 3)$ ): considered mean processing time after-change values are (expressed in time units)

$$\mu''_{s_{CH}} \in \{4.5, 6\}$$

- Bottleneck and variation in same stage ( $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$ ): considered mean processing time after-change values are (expressed in time units)

$$\mu''_{s_{CH}} \in \{4.5, 6, 7.5\}$$

**Buffer capacity variation** This type of variation is realized changing the capacity limit  $cl_s$  of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$  buffer. The levels of the after-change capacity buffer  $cl''_s$  depend on initial buffer capacity  $cl'_s$  present in the model. A scheme of buffer limit variations is contained in Table 5.2.

### Buffer capacity increase

- Initial buffer capacity equal to 3 jobs ( $cl'_s = 3$ ): considered buffer capacity after-change values (expressed in job units) are

$$cl''_{s_{CH}} \in \{6, 10, 20\}$$

- Initial buffer capacity equal to 6 jobs ( $cl'_s = 6$ ): considered buffer capacity after-change values (expressed in job units) are

$$cl''_{s_{CH}} \in \{10, 20\}$$

- Initial buffer capacity equal to 10 jobs ( $cl'_s = 10$ ): considered buffer capacity after-change values (expressed in job units) are

$$cl''_{sCH} \in \{20\}$$

### Buffer capacity decrease

- Initial buffer capacity equal to 3 jobs ( $cl'_s = 3$ ): considered buffer capacity after-change values (expressed in job units) are

$$cl''_{sCH} \in \{1\}$$

- Initial buffer capacity equal to 6 jobs ( $cl'_s = 6$ ): considered buffer capacity after-change values (expressed in job units) are

$$cl''_{sCH} \in \{1, 3\}$$

- Initial buffer capacity equal to 10 jobs ( $cl'_s = 10$ ): considered buffer capacity after-change values (expressed in job units) are

$$cl''_{sCH} \in \{1, 3, 6\}$$

Each factor level combination is used to build a model which is replicated 30 times, in order to assure statistical validity and accuracy in results. Therefore, every model outputs 30 event logs, that are aggregated to calculate the average Timestamp on each combination of Case ID, Activity ID and Position ID.

Table 5.1 Average processing time variation levels

		Stage configuration $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$	
		(4, 4)	$(3, 5) \vee (5, 3)$
Buffer capacity levels $cl'_s$			$\{3, 6, 10, \infty\}$
Average before-change processing time in changing stage $\mu'_{sCH}$		8.5	7
		Increase $\uparrow$	$\{9.5, 11\}$
		Decrease $\downarrow$	$\{4.5, 6, 7.5\}$
Average after-change processing time in changing stage $\mu''_{sCH}$			$\{8, 9.5, 11\}$
			$\{4.5, 6\}$

Table 5.2 Buffer capacity variation levels

		Initial buffer capacity $cl'_s$		
		3	6	10
		$\{(3, 5), (4, 4), (5, 3)\}$		
Stage configuration $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$				
		Increase $\uparrow$	$\{6, 10, 20\}$	$\{20\}$
		Decrease $\downarrow$	$\{1\}$	$\{1, 3\}$
After-change buffer capacity in changing stage $cl''_s$				$\{1, 3, 6\}$

# Chapter 6

## Results

This chapter aims to present a general, yet as much as possible complete collection of KPI behaviors, showing the most meaningful simulation results. Each KPI is plotted to display its behavior when a variation occurs. The graphs present all the same structure, showing the KPI values as a function of the job IDs (i.e. Case IDs).

For the sake of brevity, Basic KPIs plots are not discussed: the analysis would be too lengthy and dispersive, and they would be difficult to visualize since the data noise makes them barely understandable. Therefore, only RW KPIs are considered, with parameters  $f = 100$  and  $l = 100$ . Moreover, in Processing\_time plots and CCI plots, the average inter-arrival time is displayed with a dashed line in correspondence with the value  $\mu_a = 10$ .

### 6.1 Processing time variation

A processing time variation not only causes a change in Processing\_time basic and derived KPIs in correspondence with the changing stage, but also influences different KPIs in all other stages, upstream and downstream the changing stage.

In this section the most information-rich indicators are analyzed, starting from consecutive case intervals KPIs and their relationship with cycle time. Then, it is shown how processing time variations are directly displayed by Processing\_time. After that, the complex behavior of Blocking\_time and Starving\_time is described. Lastly, Waiting\_time and its suitability to show variations in queue lengths are presented.

### 6.1.1 Consecutive cases intervals KPIs

Consecutive cases intervals (CCI) KPIs are indicators strongly related to the cycle time. First of all, the behavior of one of them, Mid\_diff, is shown in a processing time increase situation. Then, the stage synchronization caused by the cycle time propagation through the line is displayed with this KPI. Finally, it is shown how similar are the behaviors of Input\_diff and Output\_diff with respect to Mid\_diff.

#### Processing time increase effects on Mid\_diff

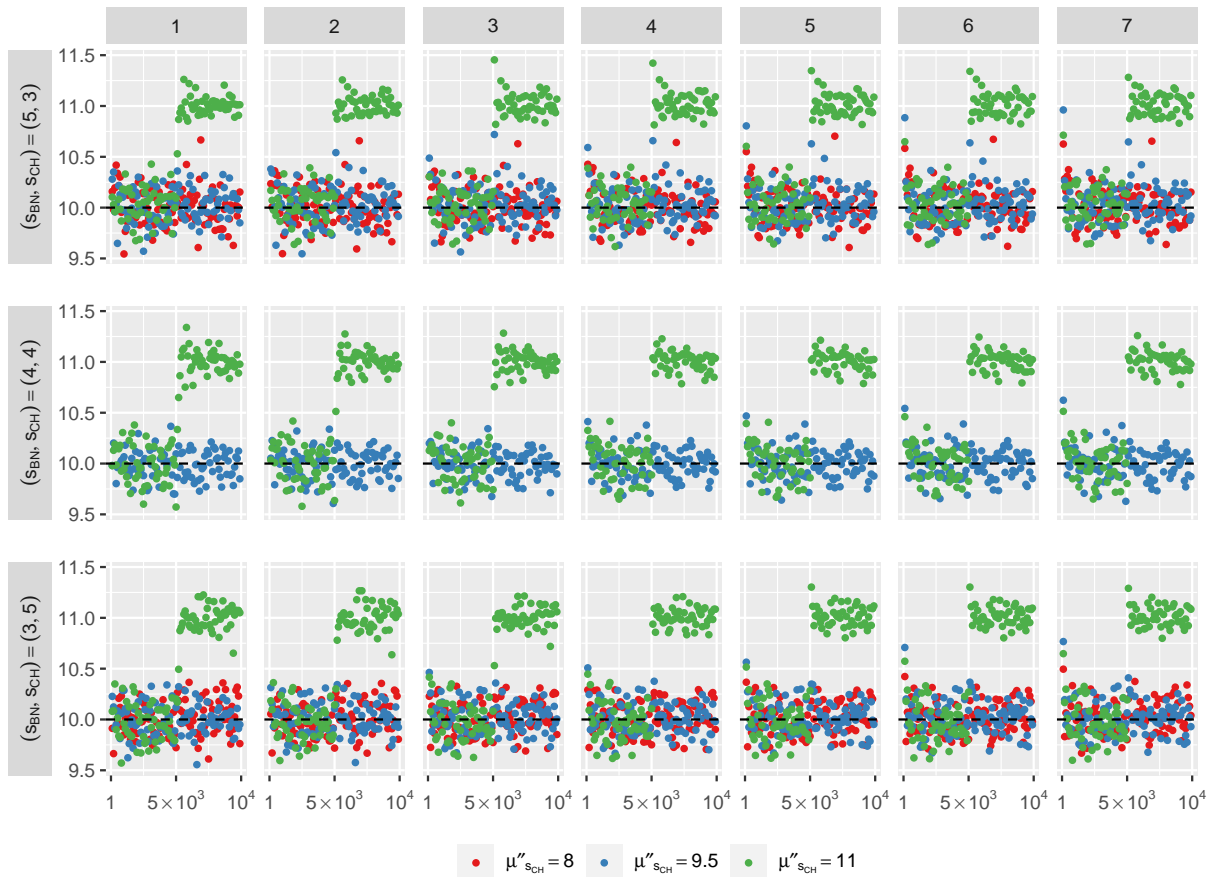


Fig. 6.1 Mid diff RW KPI considering three mean processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{sCH}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl_s = 6$ .

Figure 6.1 shows Mid\_diff\_MEAN RW KPI behavior when a processing time growth occurs. It can be deduced that

- Before the variation, the system is stable and average Mid\_diff stabilizes around the average inter-arrival time  $\mu_a$ .  
This is visible in all the models until Case ID reaches value 5000.
- If a resource loses capacity, but the system remains stable (i.e.  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} < \mu_a$ ) average Mid\_diff does not change and remains around the average inter-arrival time  $\mu_a$ .  
This is visible in models with  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 8$  and  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 9.5$  after Case ID has reached value 5000.
- If a resource loses capacity to the point that the system becomes unstable (i.e.  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} > \mu_a$ ), average Mid\_diff increases and aligns with the bottleneck average processing time  $\mu''_{s_{CH}}$ .  
This is visible in model with  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 11$  after Case ID has reached value 5000.
- The value taken by average Mid\_diff does not depend on the stage position with respect to the changing stage  $s_{CH}$  or the bottleneck  $s_{BN}$ : it behaves similarly in all stages.  
This is visible comparing models having different bottleneck-changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ .

Mid\_diff follows the cycle time behavior as it is described in theory: it stands around a value equal to the maximum between the bottleneck average processing time  $\mu_{s_{BN}}$  and the average inter-arrival time  $\mu_a$ <sup>1</sup>.

### Mid\_diff propagation along the line

Even if it is scarcely visible in figure 6.1, Mid\_diff does not immediately change in all stages, exactly like system cycle time: when the system becomes unstable, the new cycle time needs a certain time span to spread in stages both upstream, through blocking, and downstream, through starvation. Time required to re-establish process synchronization across the line depends mainly on current saturation of buffers: the more the buffers upstream are unsaturated, the longer cycle time takes to propagate upstream (blocking is delayed). The opposite occurs for downstream stages, where cycle time spread is slower the more the buffers are saturated (starvation is delayed). Figure 6.2 better displays what just explained: the graphs portray a particular system where a single buffer having high capacity limit, placed in stage  $s = 3$ , is extremely unsaturated before the variation occurs. After the first stage has processed 5000 jobs, the resource in the bottleneck

<sup>1</sup>Actually, the average cycle time is equal to the maximum between the average inter-arrival time, average bottleneck processing time and average inter-departure time from the last stage, but since job departures from the system are assumed unconstrained in this thesis, the last term can be omitted.

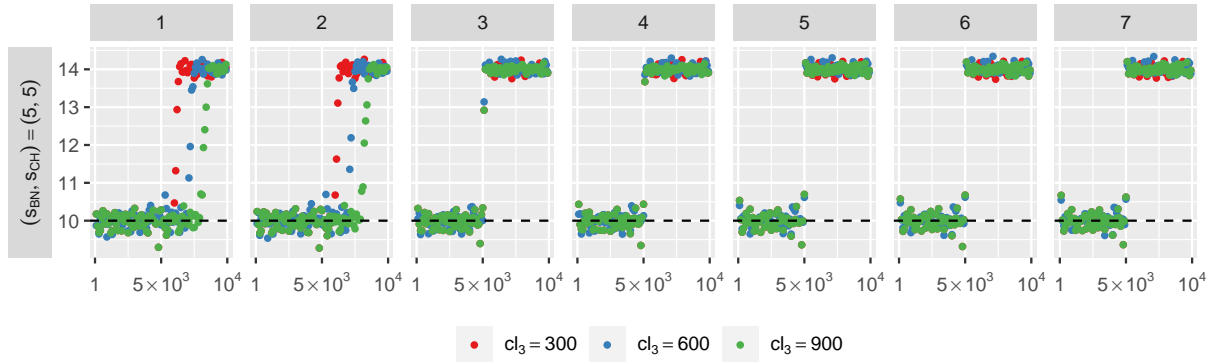


Fig. 6.2 Mid diff RW KPI variation delays in case of a mean processing time increase  $\mu''_{SCH}$  considering different buffer capacity limits  $cl_3$ . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$  and processing time increase  $\mu''_{SCH} = 14$ .

stage  $s = 5$ , positioned downstream stage  $s = 3$ , loses production capacity and its processing time increases to the point that it exceeds inter-arrival time and the system becomes unstable. Therefore cycle time increases, aligning with the new bottleneck average processing time, but the high capacity buffer works as a temporary decoupling point, delaying the blocking and, so, the synchronization of stages upstream its position. Moreover, these plots show that the bigger the buffer capacity ( $cl_3$ ), the wider is the time span before cycle time (i.e. Mid\_diff) manages to spread upstream that stage.

This means that, a variation that has effects on CCI KPIs is immediately detectable only in correspondence of the changing stage, while in the rest of the stages the variation could be delayed due to low (or high, when cycle time spreads downstream) buffer saturation levels.

### Input\_diff and Output\_diff behaviors

Input\_diff and Output\_diff behave similarly to Mid\_diff, as figure 6.3 shows. Sure enough, CCI KPIs are all indicators of cycle time as it is seen in different stage positions. However, these KPIs are not exactly equal, and Input\_diff and Mid\_diff are not interchangeable when it comes to compute Starving time and Stage State RW KPIs: since Input\_diff is relative to buffer entrances, it becomes equal to Mid\_diff, which instead is relative to buffer exits, only when the buffer is saturated and the previous resource starts to suffer of blocking. So, in general, it cannot be used to calculate the exact Starving\_time and cannot serve as denominator in Utilization, Blocking\_prob and Starving\_prob.

Therefore, values taken by CCI KPIs are very similar, but they differ from each other for little delays in their behaviors and generally are not exactly equal.

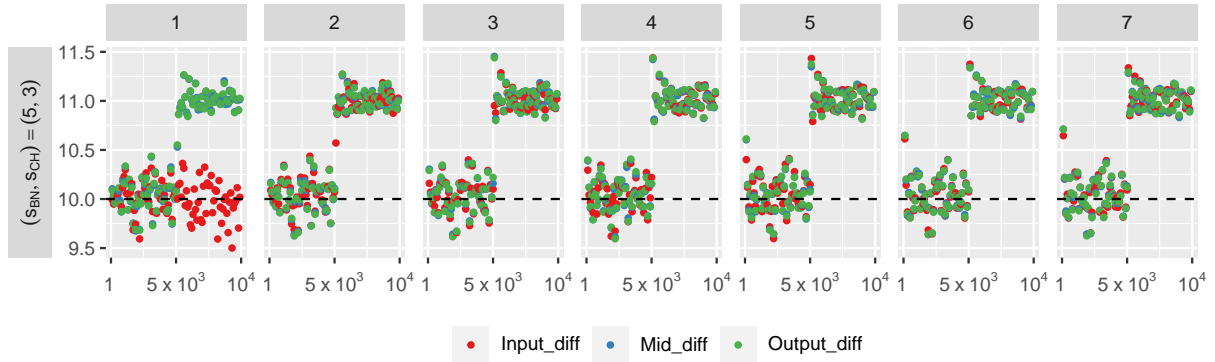


Fig. 6.3 Different CCI RW KPIs behaviors compared . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$ ,  $cl_s = 6$ , and  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 11$ .

### Input\_diff in the first stage

Since the production lines considered in this thesis always have an unlimited buffer in the first stage, Input\_diff allows to know the average inter-arrival time even when the system becomes unstable. As a matter of fact, the first buffer completely isolates the line entrance from potential system instabilities, and so Input\_diff of the first stage is actually a permanent indicator of inter-arrival time, rather than an indicator of cycle time. This detail is visible in the the first stage plot of figure 6.3: after the variation, Mid\_diff and Output\_diff increase, while Input\_diff does not change and remains equal to the average arrival time.



### 6.1.2 Processing\_time and Utilization KPIs

Processing\_time is the most useful indicator to understand if a resource production capacity has changed and to determine its new value. In this subsection, Processing\_time behavior is analyzed in situations of processing time increase and decrease. Then, Utilization KPI is presented and its relation with Processing\_time is displayed.

#### Processing time increase effects on Processing\_time KPI

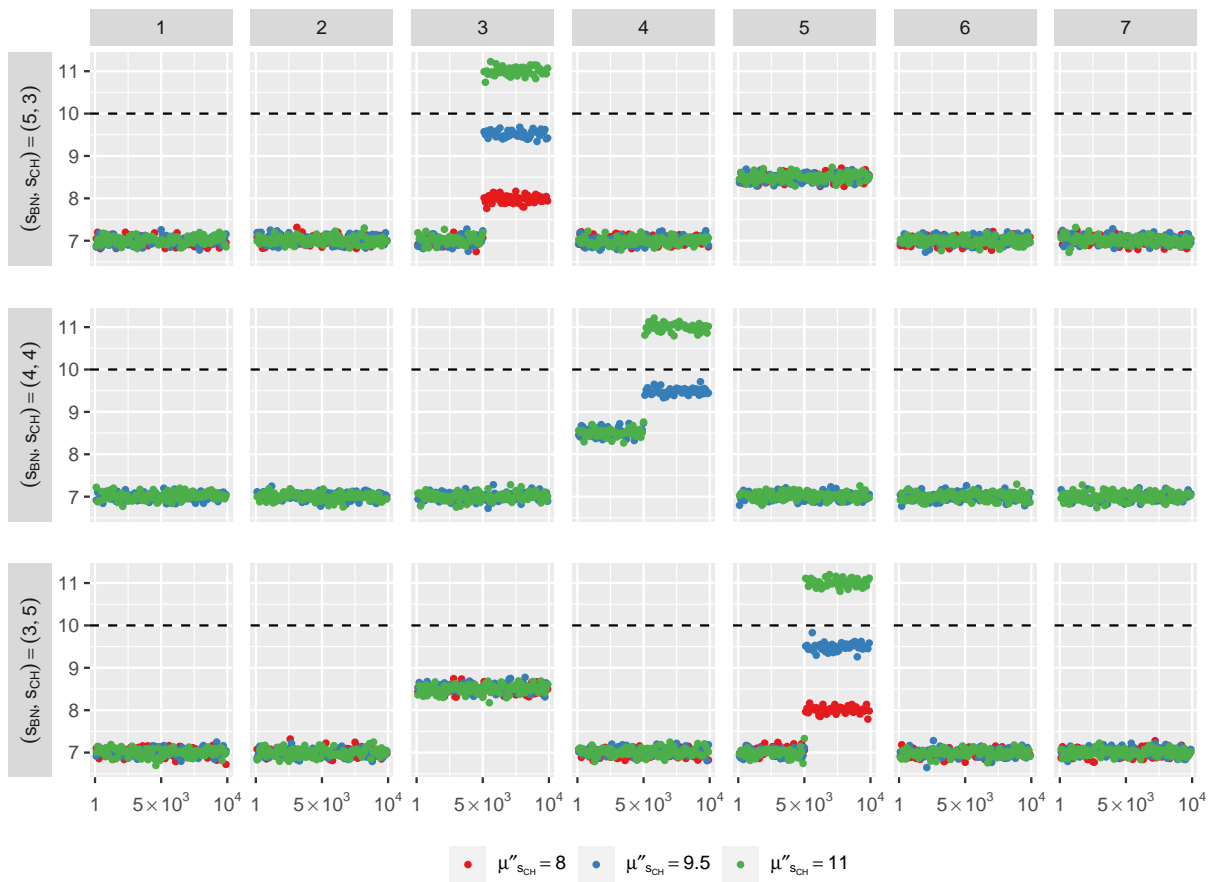


Fig. 6.4 Processing time RW KPI behavior considering three mean processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{s_{CH}}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl_s = 6$ .

Figure 6.4 shows Processing\_time\_MEAN RW KPI behavior when the production capacity of a stage reduces.

- If a resource loses production capacity, average Processing\_time of the changing stage grows, while average Processing\_time of all other stages does not change.  
This is visible comparing the behavior of Processing\_time in correspondence with stage the changing  $s_{CH}$  (where it increases) with its behavior in other stages (where it does not change).
- If a resource loses production capacity, the variation of changing stage average Processing\_time is such that the KPI value settles around the new average processing time of the stage.  
This is visible in each changing stage  $s_{CH}$  plot.
- Average Processing\_time variation does not depend on the stage position with respect to the changing stage  $s_{CH}$  or the bottleneck  $s_{BN}$ .  
This is visible comparing average Processing\_time behavior in the three different bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ .
- Average Processing\_time variation does not depend on the system stability.  
This is visible comparing average Processing\_time behavior in models with  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 8$  and  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 9.5$  (where the system remains stable) with its behavior in model with  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 11$  (where the system becomes unstable).
- Average Processing\_time of stage  $s$  always stabilizes around the average time needed by stage  $s$  resource to process a job.  
This is visible in all models, before and after the variation occurring when Case ID reaches value 5000.

To summarize, the graphs show that the average Processing\_time of a stage is constantly aligned with the average processing time of that stage, even when the stage production capacity decreases.

### Processing time decrease effects on Processing\_time KPI

Figure 6.5 shows Processing\_time\_MEAN RW KPI behavior when the production capacity of a stage increases. Looking at these plots it can be concluded that the observations made on average Processing\_time behavior in case of production capacity decrease can be extended to production capacity variations in general. Indeed, the only difference with the production capacity decrease case is that average Processing\_time of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$  reduces when production capacity increases to keep aligned with the average processing time of that stage.

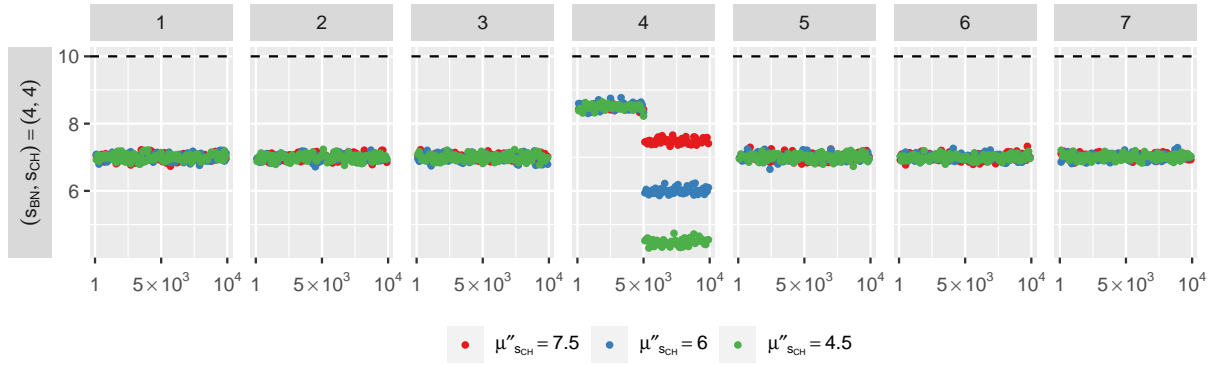


Fig. 6.5 Processing time RW KPI behavior considering three different mean processing time decrease levels  $\mu''_{SCH}$ . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$ , and  $cl_s = 6$ .

### Utilization KPI

Processing\_time alone is useful to monitor stage production capacities, but does not give insights about how much stages work with respect to the line throughput. To obtain this information, Processing\_time\_MEAN with Mid\_diff\_MEAN are combined to calculate Utilization KPI. Figure 6.6 shows Utilization KPI behavior when the production capacity of a stage reduces. This KPI behavior is similar to average Processing\_time behavior, with some important differences

- If a resource loses production capacity, but the system remains stable, Utilization of the changing stage grows, while Utilization of all other stages does not change.  
This is visible in models with  $\mu''_{SCH} = 8$  and  $\mu''_{SCH} = 9.5$ , comparing the behavior of Utilization in correspondence with stage the changing  $s_{CH}$  (where it increases) with its behavior in other stages (where it does not change).
- If a resource loses production capacity to the point that the system becomes unstable, Utilization of the changing stage grows and settles to value 1, while Utilization of all other stages reduces.  
This is visible in models with  $\mu''_{SCH} = 11$ , comparing the behavior of Utilization in correspondence with stage the changing  $s_{CH}$  (where it increases) with its behavior in other stages (where it decreases).
- Utilization variation does not depend on the stage position with respect to the changing stage  $s_{CH}$  or the bottleneck  $s_{BN}$ . This is visible comparing Utilization behavior in the three different bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ .

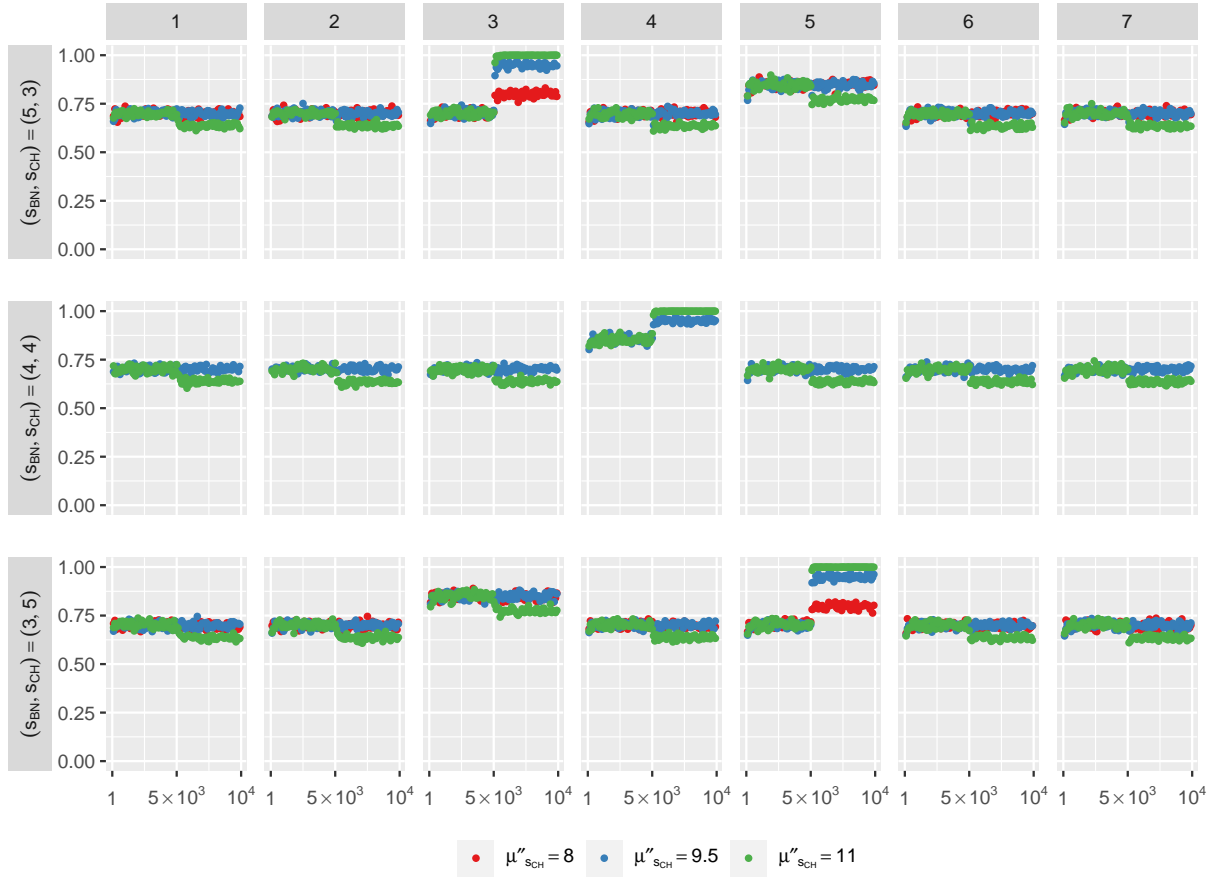


Fig. 6.6 Utilization KPI behavior considering three mean processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{SCH}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl_s = 6$ .

- Values taken by Utilization are limited to the range  $[0, 1]$ .  
This is visible in all models, before and after the variation occurring when Case ID reaches value 5000.
- Utilization of stage  $s$  stabilizes around the average utilization of stage  $s$  resource.  
This is visible in all models, before and after the variation occurring when Case ID reaches value 5000.

Utilization KPI follows the theoretical behavior of resource utilization. Indeed, the utilization of a resource is equal to the ratio between throughput and production capacity of the resource, or in other words, it is equal to the ratio between the resource processing time and the system cycle time. Therefore, if the system becomes unstable, cycle time grows aligning with the bottleneck processing time, and so the resource utilization in the bottleneck reaches 100%. Instead, after all

other stages have synchronized with the bottleneck lowering their throughput, their utilization reduces.

Even if the relative plots are not shown, it is possible to extend the observations made on Utilization behavior in case of production capacity decrease to production capacity variations in general, as with average Processing\_time. The only difference with the production capacity decrease case is that Utilization of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$  reduces when production capacity increases to keep always aligned with utilization of that stage.

### 6.1.3 Blocking\_time, Starving\_time and respective Stage State KPIs

Blocking\_time and Starving\_time KPIs are analyzed together because of their strong relationship. As a matter of fact, their behavior is specular, since they both depend on the resource utilizations and on the buffer capacities. This subsection starts showing and discussing these KPI general behaviors and the effects of a processing time variation on them. Then, Blocking\_prob and Starving\_prob, which are respectively Blocking\_time and Starving\_time derived Stage State KPIs, are commented.

#### Processing time increase and reduction effects on Blocking\_time and Starving\_time KPIs

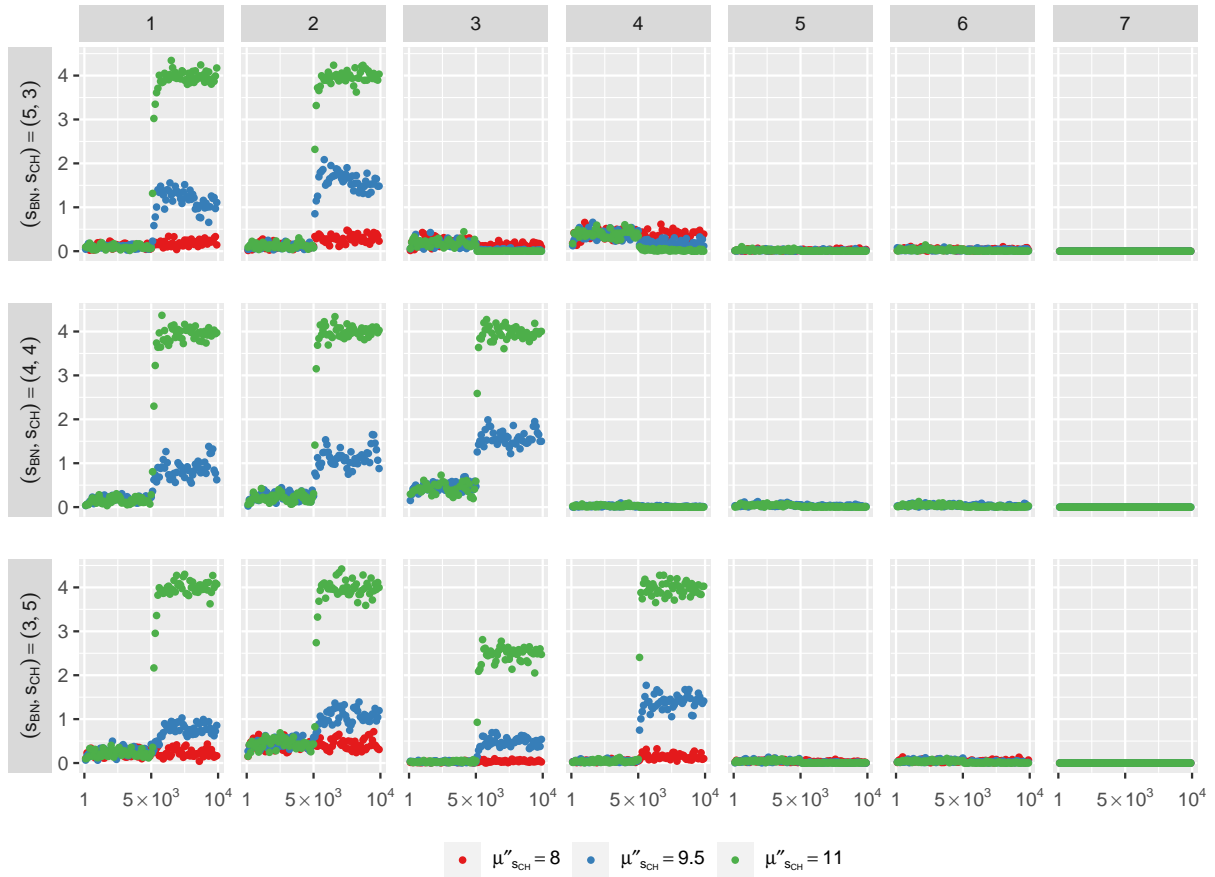


Fig. 6.7 Blocking time RW KPI considering three mean processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{SCH}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl_s = 6$ .

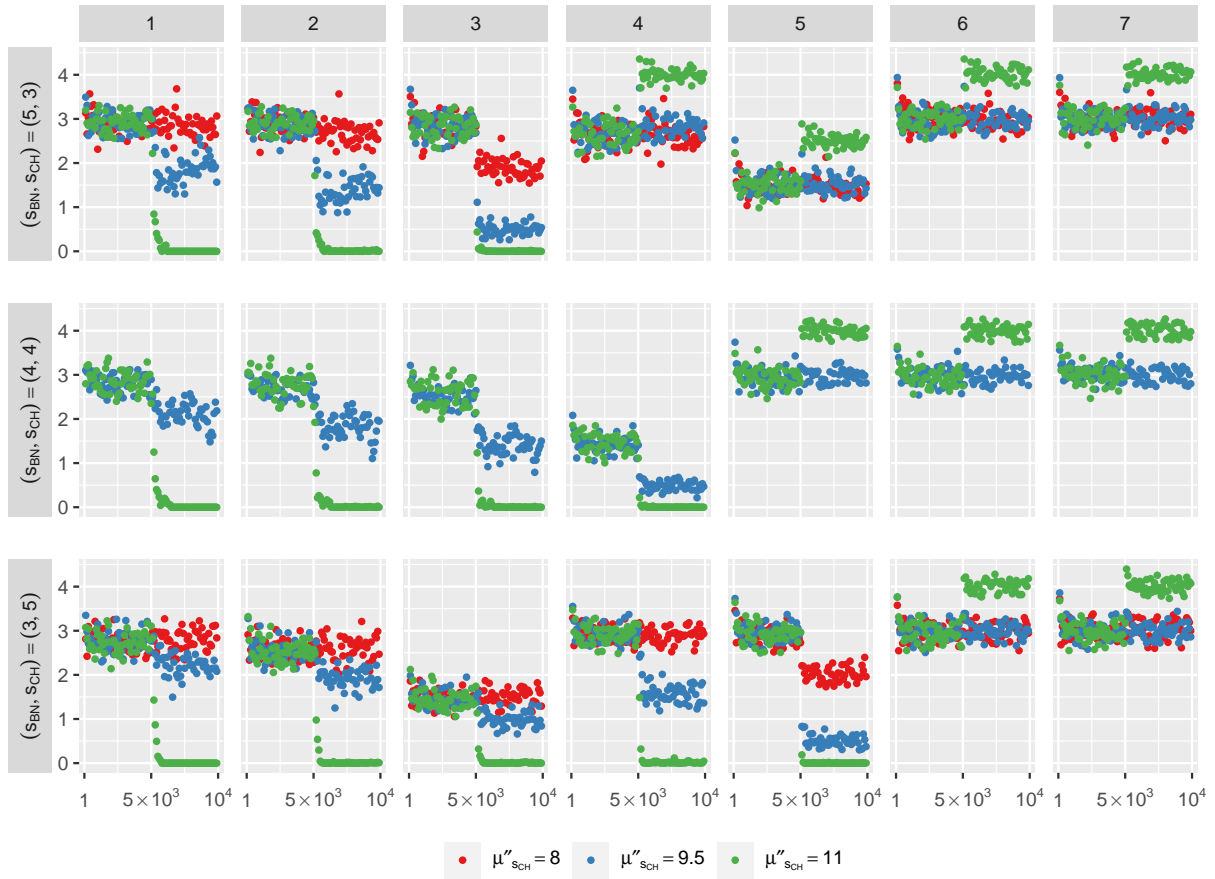


Fig. 6.8 Starving time RW KPI considering three processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{SCH}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl_s = 6$ .

Figures 6.7 and 6.8 show, respectively, Blocking\_time\_MEAN and Starving\_time\_MEAN RW KPI behaviors when the production capacity of a stage reduces. Looking at these plots it can be said that

- If a resource loses production capacity to the point that the system becomes unstable:
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time increases and settles around value  $I_s$ , while average Starving\_time decreases and settles around value 0.
  - In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time decrease and settle around value 0.

- In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time decreases and settles around value 0, while average Starving\_time increases and settles around value  $I_s$ .

This is visible in models with any configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$  having after-change mean processing time value  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 11$ .

$I_s$  is equal to the difference between average Mid\_diff and average Processing\_time of stage  $s$ . In other words, it is a limit that depends on the cycle time as seen in stage  $s$ , and on stage  $s$  production capacity.

- If a resource loses production capacity but the system remains stable:
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time increases towards  $I_s$ , while average Starving\_time decreases towards 0.
  - In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time decrease towards 0.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time decreases towards 0, while average Starving\_time increases towards  $I_s$ .

This is visible in models with any configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$  having after-change mean processing time value  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 8$  or  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 9.5$ .

- Average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time variations in a certain stage  $s$  are less and less relevant the further stage  $s$  is from the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both upstream and downstream  $s_{CH}$ .
- Average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_Queue variations are wider the more significant is the increase of processing time.
- Average Blocking\_time of stage  $s$  stabilizes around the average time a job has to wait in stage  $s$  resource after having been processed.

Average Starving\_time of stage  $s$  stabilizes around the average time passing between the exit of a job from stage  $s$  resource and the entrance of a new one.

This is visible in all models, before and after the variation occurring when Case ID reaches value 5000.

Blocking\_time KPI and Starving\_time KPI follow the theoretical behavior of, respectively, blocking and starvation duration. Indeed, in a stable system, blocking is high in stages upstream



the bottleneck, and much lower in stages downstream and in correspondence. Conversely, starvation is lower in stages upstream and in correspondence with the bottleneck, and higher downstream. When the system becomes unstable, blocking and starvation behaviors are led to the extreme

- Upstream the bottleneck, when buffers become saturated, blocking causes a delay in resource releases, that last until the bottleneck has finished to process a job; so, blocking duration of a certain resource is equal to the time difference between the processing finish of a job in the bottleneck and the processing finish of a job in the considered stage.  
Downstream the bottleneck, since buffers tend to be completely empty, blocking duration drops to 0.
- Downstream and in correspondence of the bottleneck, starvation causes resources idleness until the bottleneck has finished to process a job; starvation lasts, like blocking upstream, the time difference between the processing end in the bottleneck and the processing end in the considered stage.  
Upstream the bottleneck, since buffers tend to be completely full, starvation duration drops to 0.

All the observations that have been done regarding these KPIs considering production capacity reductions are similarly valid also in case of production capacity growths. Figure 6.9 displays average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time in case a resource processing time decreases. The only difference with the processing time increase case is that average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time behaviors are inverted when the variation occurs:

- In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time decreases, while average Starving\_time increases.
- In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time increase.
- In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time increases, while average Starving\_time decreases.

### **Blocking\_time and Starving\_time KPIs considering different buffer levels**

Previously only one buffer capacity limit ( $cl_s = 6$ ) was taken into account in the analysis. However, Blocking\_time and Starving\_time KPIs are also influenced by the buffer capacity,

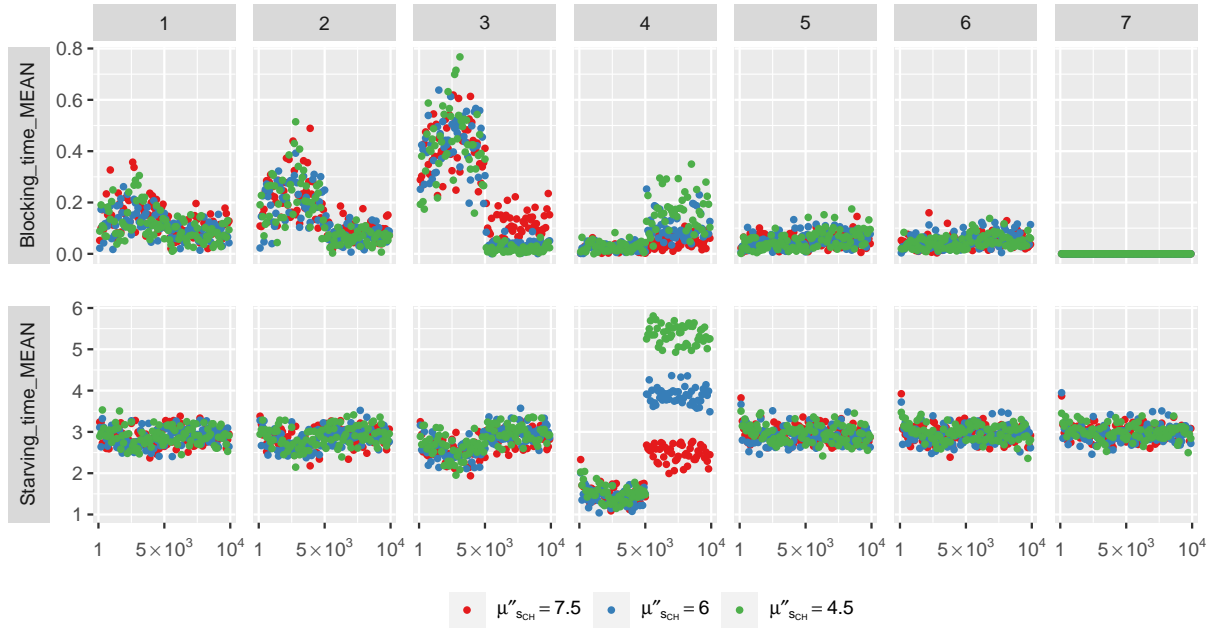


Fig. 6.9 Blocking time and Starving time KPI behaviors considering three different mean processing time decrease levels  $\mu''_{SCH}$ . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$  and  $cl_s = 6$ .

and it is interesting to study their behavior considering different capacity levels. Figure 6.10 shows average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time behaviors in case of a processing time increase, but considering models having three different buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$ .

When a stage loses production capacity:

- The variation extents of average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time are wider the lower the buffer capacity limit is
- The variation extents of average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time are narrower the higher the buffer capacity limit is

It is particularly visible comparing the model with  $cl_s = 3$  and the one with  $cl_s = 6$ .

This happens because smaller buffers are on average easily saturated, causing longer resource blockings in previous stages and reducing starvation. When buffers are bigger the opposite verifies.

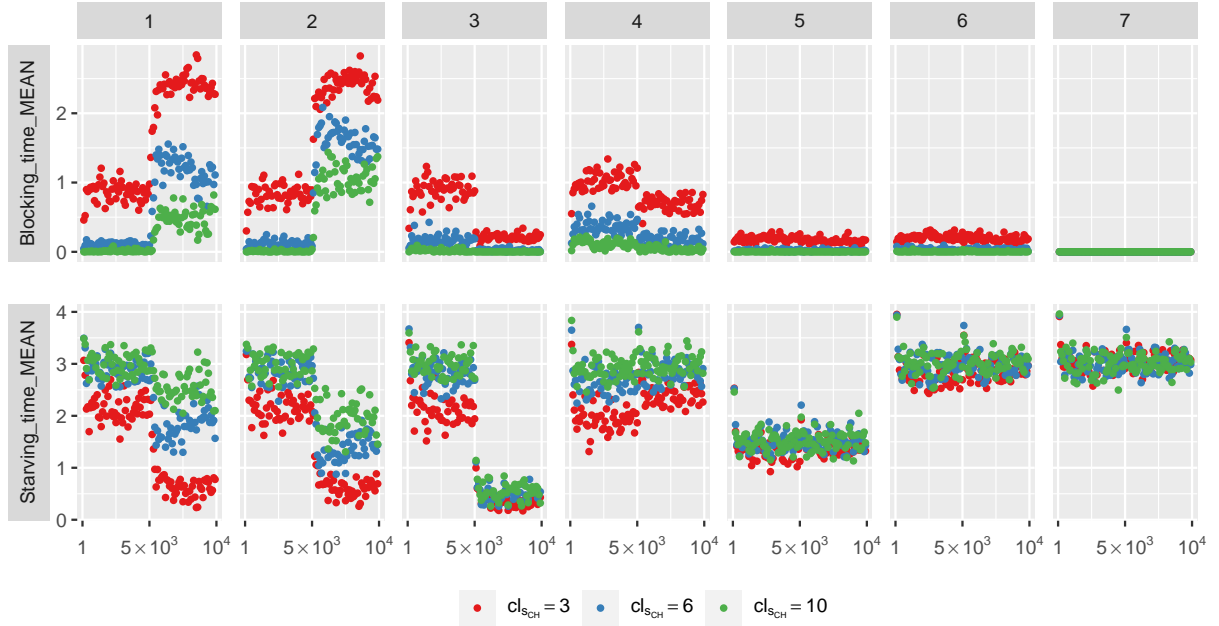


Fig. 6.10 Blocking time and Starving time RW KPI behaviors in case of mean processing time increase  $\mu''_{SCH}$  considering different buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$ . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$  and  $\mu''_{SCH} = 9.5$ .

### Value $I_s$ behavior and Blocking\_time and Starving\_time relative proportions

It is noteworthy to explain that value  $I_s$ <sup>2</sup> is not simply a superior limit for average Blocking\_time or average Starving\_time, but actually it is always equal to their sum. As a matter of fact, the sum of Blocking\_time and Starving\_time of stage  $s$  is always equal to the difference between Mid\_diff and Processing\_time of stage  $s$  because of how these KPIs are defined (see subsection 4.3.2).

$$Blocking\_time(j, s) + Starving\_time(j, s) = Mid\_diff(j, s) - Processing\_time(j, s)$$

Theoretically, this is reasonable given the characteristics of the considered systems: since machine breakdowns are assumed to never occur, resources can find themselves in three possible states, which are seized and working state (processing), seized and not working state (blocking), and not seized state (starvation). Sum of the total time spent by a resource in these states gives the whole available time of the resource, as, analogously, Processing\_time, Blocking\_time, and Starving\_time add up matching Mid\_diff. Figure 6.11 is helpful to understand how  $I_s$  behaves.

<sup>2</sup>Remember that  $I_s$  was defined as the difference between average Mid\_diff and average Processing\_time of stage  $s$

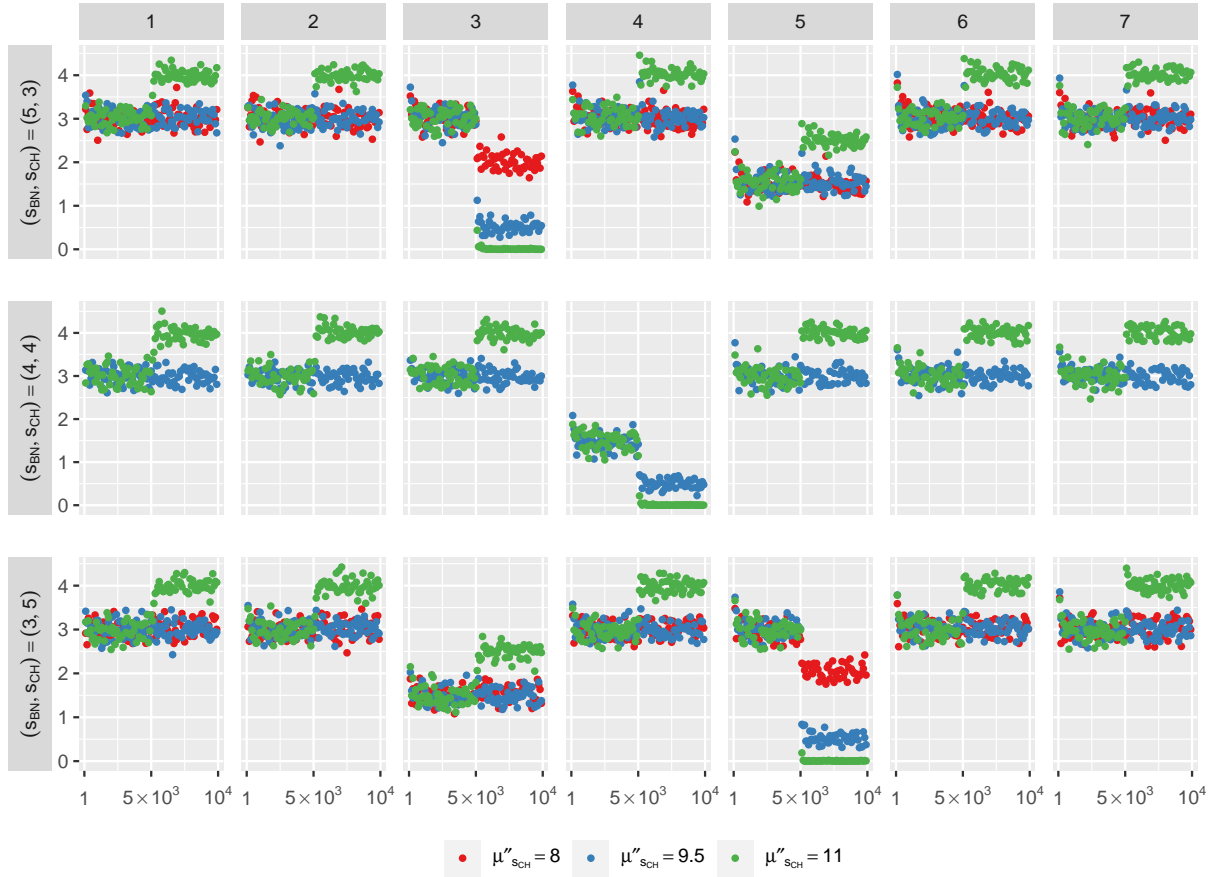


Fig. 6.11 Value  $I_s$  considering three different mean processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{sCH}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl_s = 6$ .

- If a production capacity variation occurs, but the system remains stable, average  $I_s$  changes only in correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$  (it reduces if  $\mu''_{sCH} > \mu'_{sCH}$ , increases if  $\mu''_{sCH} < \mu'_{sCH}$ ).  
It is visible in models with  $\mu''_{sCH} = 8$  or  $\mu''_{sCH} = 9.5$ .
- If a production capacity variation occurs and the system becomes unstable, average  $I_s$  drops to 0 in correspondence with the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , and grows in all other stages.  
It is visible in models with  $\mu''_{sCH} = 11$ .

Since  $I_s$  is also the sum of average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time, this means that the sum of these KPIs, if the system remains stable, is constant in all stages except for the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ . Instead, if the system becomes unstable, the sum reduces to 0 in  $s_{CH}$  and grows in all

other stages. At this point, it is interesting to visualize the relative proportions of Blocking\_time and Starving\_time in this sum. Figure 6.12 shows that

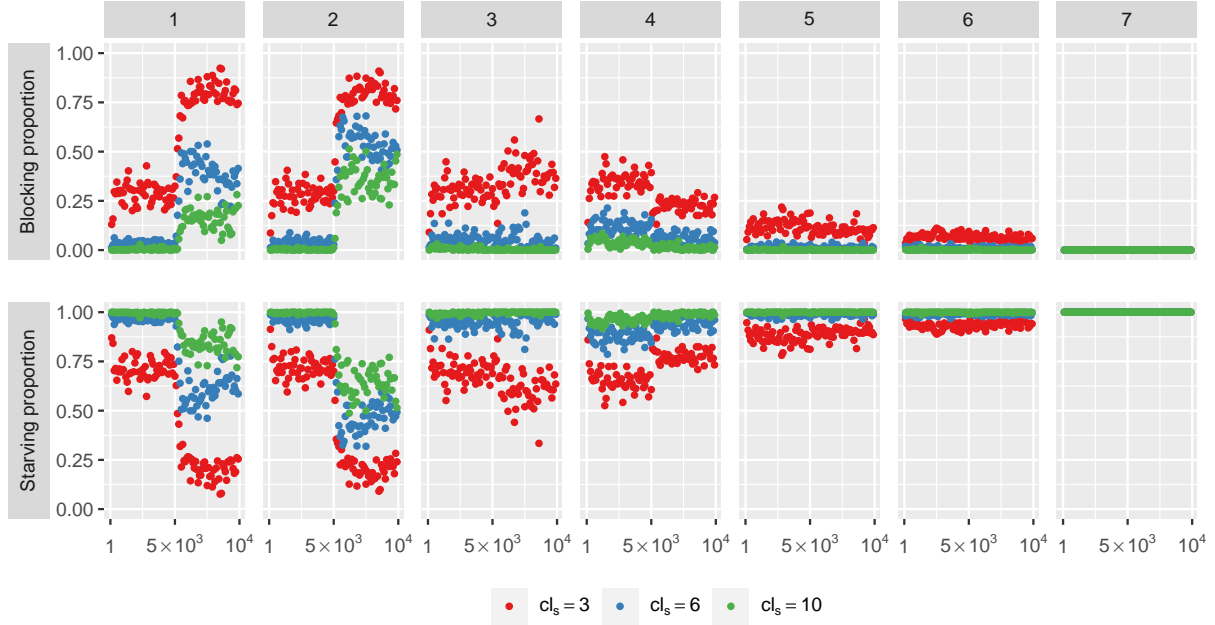


Fig. 6.12 Average Blocking time and Starving time relative proportions considering different buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$ . Models with configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$ , and after-change mean processing time  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 9.5$ .

- The contribution of average Blocking\_time in  $I_s$  increases the smaller is the buffer.
- The contribution of average Starving\_time in  $I_s$  reduces the smaller is the buffer.

### Blocking\_prob and Starving\_prob KPIs

Like Processing\_time, also Blocking\_time and Starving\_time can be represented in combination with Mid\_diff. The obtained KPIs are Blocking\_prob and Starving\_prob. Figure 6.13 portrays an example of these KPIs. These KPIs indicate how much of the available time was spent by the resources without being utilized. The observations that can be made regarding these KPI behaviors are analogous to one done for Blocking\_time and Starving\_time.

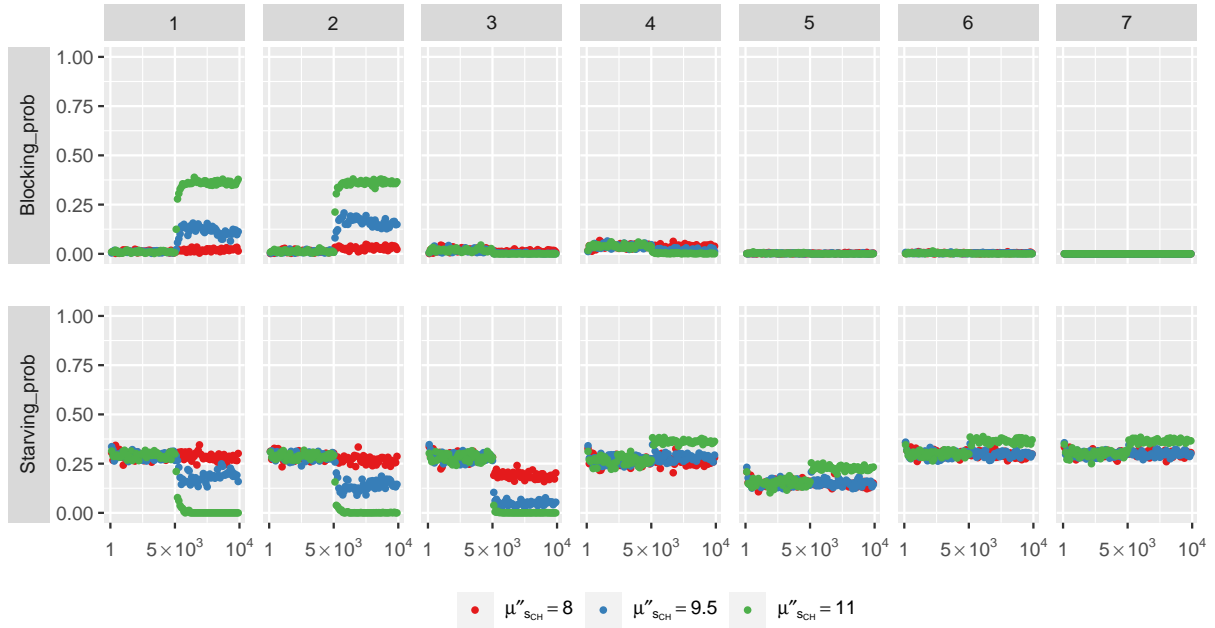


Fig. 6.13 Blocking prob and Starving prob KPI behaviors considering three processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{SCH}$ . Models with configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$  and  $cl_s = 6$ .

### 6.1.4 Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPIs

Blocking\_time and Starving\_time help to monitor the effects of a variation on the exploitation of resources in stages different from the changing stage; indirectly, these KPIs allow to get insights about the buffer saturation levels. However, to get a closer and more precise view of job queues statuses, it is necessary to resort to Waiting\_time KPI. In this subsection, firstly Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue, which is its derived Stage State KPI, behaviors are discussed; then, at the end, the effects of having an unlimited buffer in the first stage are briefly addressed.

#### Processing time increase effects on Waiting\_time KPI

Figure 6.14 the behavior of Waiting\_time\_MEAN RW KPI in case of a production capacity decrease in a stage.

- If a resource loses production capacity to the point that the system becomes unstable:
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time increases and settles around value  $LW_s$ .

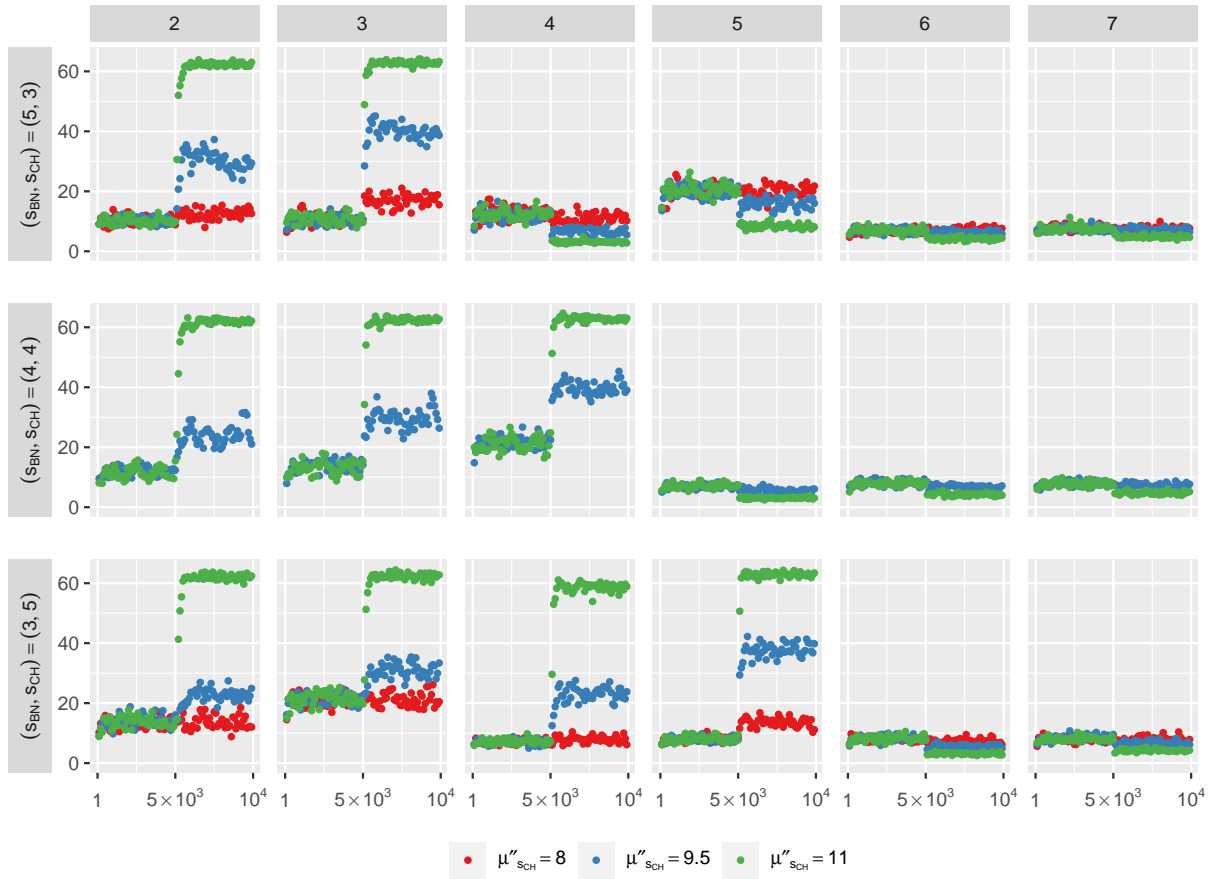


Fig. 6.14 Waiting time RW KPI behavior considering three processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{SCH}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl_s = 6$ .

- In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time increases and settles around value  $LW_s$ .
- In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time decreases towards 0.

This is visible in models with any configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$  having after-change mean processing time value  $\mu''_{SCH} = 11$ .

$LW_s$  is equal to the product of average Input\_diff and the maximum buffer capacity of stage  $s$ ,  $cl_s$ . In other words, it is a limit that depends on the cycle time as seen in stage  $s$ , and on stage  $s$  buffer capacity.

- If a resource loses production capacity but the system remains stable:
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time increases.

- In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time increases.
- In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time decreases.

This is visible in models with any configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$  having after-change mean processing time value  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 8$  or  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 9.5$ .

- Average Waiting\_time variations are wider the more significant is the increase of processing time.
- Average Waiting\_time variations in a certain stage  $s$  are less and less relevant the further stage  $s$  is from the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both upstream and downstream  $s_{CH}$ .
- Average Waiting\_time of stage  $s$  stabilizes around the average time a job has to wait in stage  $s$  buffer before seizing the resource.

This is visible in all models, before and after the variation occurring when Case ID reaches value 5000.

Average Waiting\_time of stage  $s$  follows the theoretical behavior of the average time a job spends in stage  $s$  buffer. Indeed, the time a job has to wait is longer in stages upstream and in correspondence with the bottleneck and lower in stages downstream. Moreover, if the system becomes unstable, buffers in stages upstream and in correspondence with the bottleneck get saturated, and the job queue is longer the higher the buffer capacity limit is. Since jobs in buffers, before seizing the resource, have to wait until all other jobs which have entered before them are processed<sup>3</sup>, the time they have to wait is equal to the number of jobs in the queue before them (which is equal to the buffer limit, since it is full) multiplied by the job inter-arrival time in the queue, that is the cycle time.

### Value $LW_s$ and Average\_Queue KPI

$LW_s$  has been defined as a limit value for stage  $s$  average Waiting\_time if the system becomes unstable, however its equation can be generalized to be also valid when the system works in a stable condition. Indeed, theory says that the job average waiting time in a queue is always equal to the average cycle time multiplied by the average number of jobs in the queue. This means that average Waiting\_time of stage  $s$  is always equal to the product of stage  $s$  average Input\_diff<sup>4</sup> and the average number of jobs in stage  $s$  buffer.  $LW_s$  is just the value taken by

<sup>3</sup>The service policy was assumed to be FIFO, see section 3.2

<sup>4</sup>Input\_diff is the indicator of the cycle time as it is seen at buffer entrances



average Waiting\_time in stages upstream the bottleneck when a particular situation occurs, that is when system becomes unstable.

This observation explains why Average\_queue (i.e. the ratio between average Waiting\_time and Input\_diff, see subsection 4.3.2) indicates the average number of jobs in a buffer. Figure

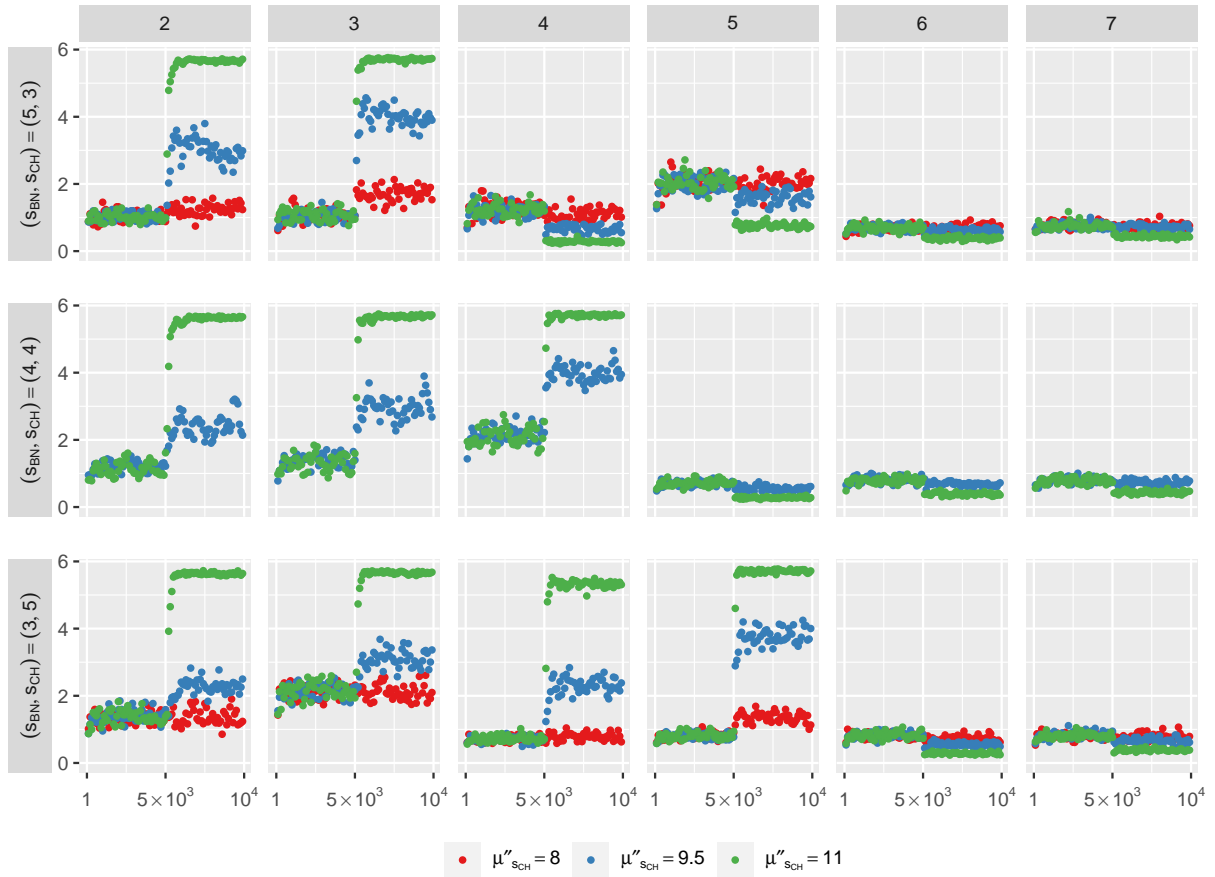


Fig. 6.15 Average Queue KPI behavior considering three processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{SCH}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl_s = 6$ .

6.15 portrays Average\_Queue considering the same models of figure 6.14. This KPI behavior is similar to the Waiting\_time one

- If a resource loses production capacity to the point that the system becomes unstable:
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , Average\_Queue increases and settles around the buffer capacity limit  $cl_s$ .
  - In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , Average\_Queue increases and settles around the buffer capacity limit  $cl_{s_{CH}}$ .

- In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , Average\_Queue decreases towards 0.

This is visible in models with any configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$  having after-change mean processing time value  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 11$ .

- If a resource loses production capacity but the system remains stable:
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , Average\_Queue increases towards the buffer capacity limit  $cl_s$ .
  - In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , Average\_Queue increases towards the buffer capacity limit  $cl_{s_{CH}}$ .
  - In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , Average\_Queue decreases towards 0.

This is visible in models with any configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$  having after-change mean processing time value  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 8$  or  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 9.5$ .

- Average\_Queue variations are wider the more significant is the decrease of processing time.
- Average\_Queue variations in a certain stage  $s$  are less and less relevant the further stage  $s$  is from the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both upstream and downstream.
- Average\_Queue of stage  $s$  stabilizes around the average number of jobs present in stage  $s$  buffer.

This is visible in all models, before and after the variation occurring when Case ID reaches value 5000.

### Waiting\_time behavior considering different buffer sizes

As said before, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue behaviors depend on buffer capacity limits. However, the buffer limitation does not affect these KPIs only when the system is unstable (i.e. when Waiting\_time reaches its limit  $LW_s$  and Average\_Queue settles around the buffer maximum capacity  $cl_s$ ), but it can influence them also when the system is stable. For sake of brevity, since Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue behaviors are very similar, only plots of the first one are displayed. Figure 6.16 shows Waiting\_time in case of production capacity loss, considering three different buffer limits  $cl_s$ . Since the influence of buffer capacity limits on Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue behaviors is quite complex and an in-depth analysis falls outside the goal

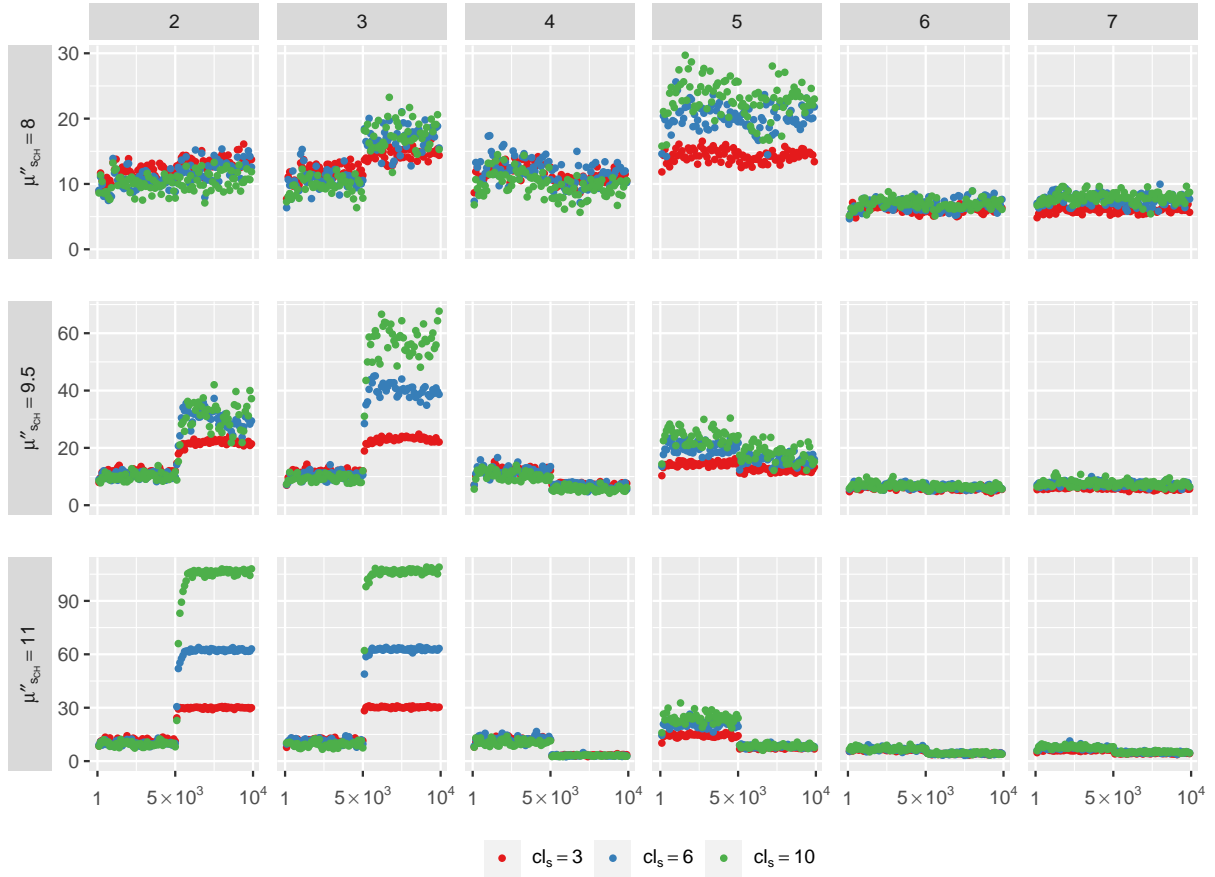


Fig. 6.16 Average Waiting time KPI behavior considering three different mean processing time increase levels  $\mu_{s_{CH}}$  and three buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$ . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$ .

of this thesis, the observations here listed are always valid but insufficient to fully describe this dependence.

- When a resource loses production capacity, the higher the capacity limit  $cl_s$  is, the wider the increase of average Waiting\_time in correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ . This is visible in correspondence with the changing stage  $s_{CH} = 3$ , comparing models with different buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$ .
- When a resource loses production capacity but the system remains stable, the higher the capacity limit  $cl_s$  is, the less relevant the spread of average Waiting\_time variation is in stages upstream and downstream the changing stage  $cl_s$ . This is visible upstream and downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH} = 3$ , comparing models

with different buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$ , having after-change mean processing time value  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 8$  or  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 9.5$ .

To observe another impact of buffer capacity limits on Waiting\_time, systems with unlimited buffer are briefly considered. Indeed, even if it is not a realistic condition, it can be interpreted as a case of systems having buffers with extremely high capacity limits. Figure 6.17 shows average

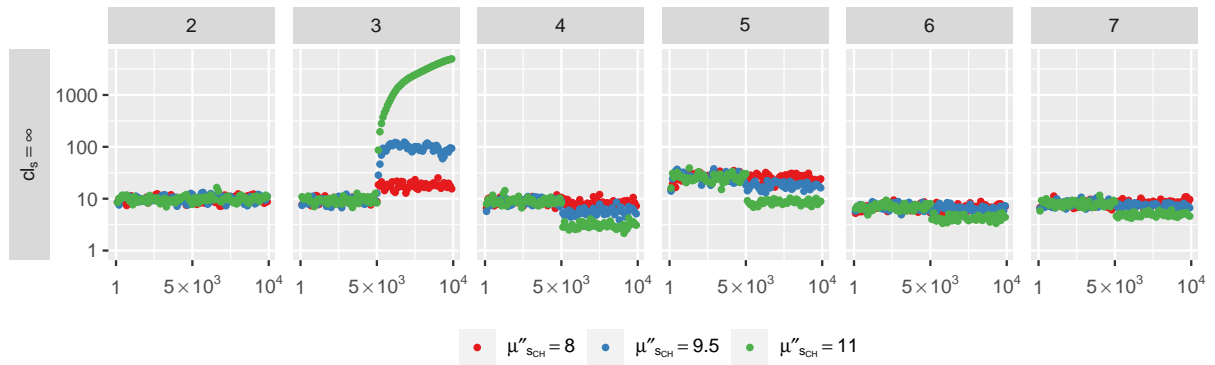


Fig. 6.17 Average Waiting time KPI behavior considering three different mean processing time increase levels  $\mu''_{s_{CH}}$  and buffers with unlimited capacity. Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$  and  $cl_s = \infty$ . Graphs with log-scale on y-axis.

Waiting\_time behavior in case of a production capacity decrease when all buffers have unlimited capacity. The effects of high capacity buffers are taken to the extreme: when the changing stage  $s_{CH}$  processing time increases, average Waiting\_time extensively decreases in stages downstream  $s_{CH}$  and increases in correspondence with the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ . If, after the variation, the system becomes unstable (as in model with  $\mu''_{s_{CH}} = 11$ ), average Waiting\_time of stage  $s_{CH}$  even grows towards infinity, since buffers have no boundaries and job mean inter-arrival in the first stage is lower than the mean processing time of the changing stage ( $\mu_a < \mu''_{s_{CH}}$ ). However, it can be noticed that Waiting\_time does not change in stage  $s = 2$ , upstream  $s_{CH}$ , even when the system becomes unstable.

The discussion about this particular (not realistic) case was included to show that buffers having high capacity limits work as temporary decoupling points, delaying variation effects on KPIs to spread upstream the stage in which they are positioned. The delay caused by infinite buffers (which are permanent decoupling points) is infinite, and so KPIs upstream never change.

### Processing time decrease effects on Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPIs

The effects of a production capacity increase on Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPIs are the opposite than the ones caused by a production capacity decrease. Figure 6.18 shows Waiting\_time

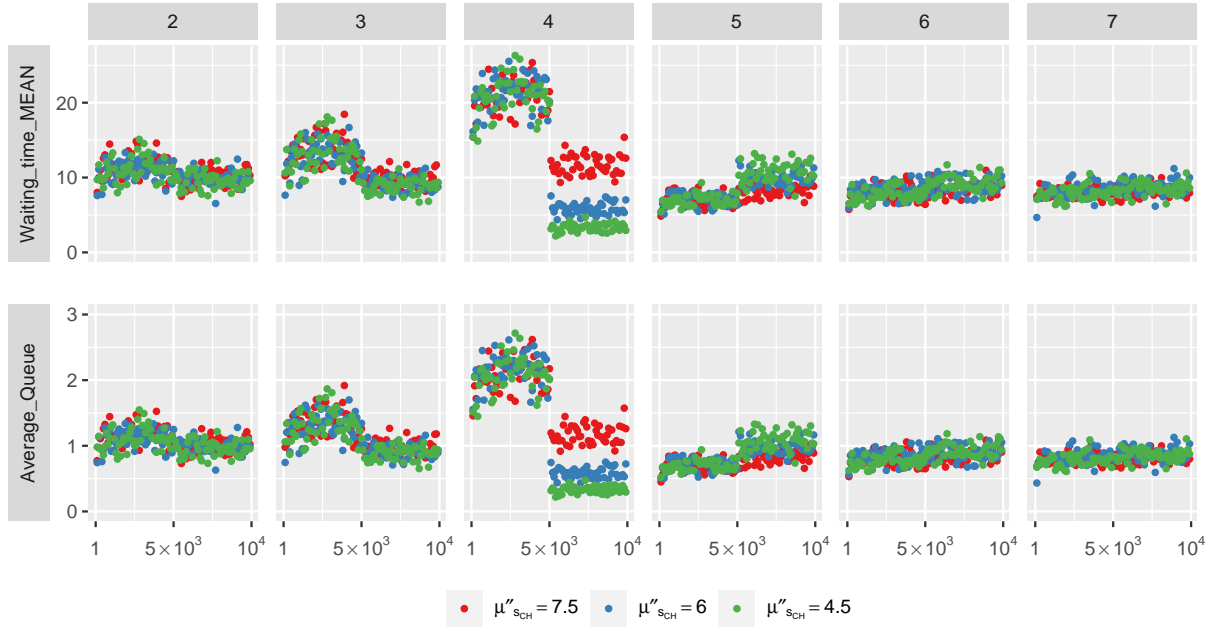


Fig. 6.18 Waiting time RW and Average Queue KPIs behaviors considering different processing time decrease levels  $\mu''_{s_{CH}}$ . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$  and  $cl_s = 6$ .

and Average\_Queue behaviors in case of a mean processing time  $\mu_{s_{CH}}$  decrease.

- If a resource increases its production capacity
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue decrease.
  - In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue decrease.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue increase.
- Average Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue variations are wider the more significant is the increase of processing time.
- Average Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue variations in a certain stage  $s$  are less and less relevant the further stage  $s$  is from the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both upstream and downstream.

### Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPI behaviors in the first stage of the line

It should be noted that the first stage has not been included in any figure of this subsection. As a matter of fact, since the first stage buffer is unlimited, the information of how much time jobs spend in it and how many are present at the same time is not useful. Moreover, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue of the first stage infinitely grow when the system becomes unstable, a circumstance in which Average\_Queue even becomes a wrong indicator of the average number of jobs in the buffer. Figure 6.19 shows the behaviors of Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue when

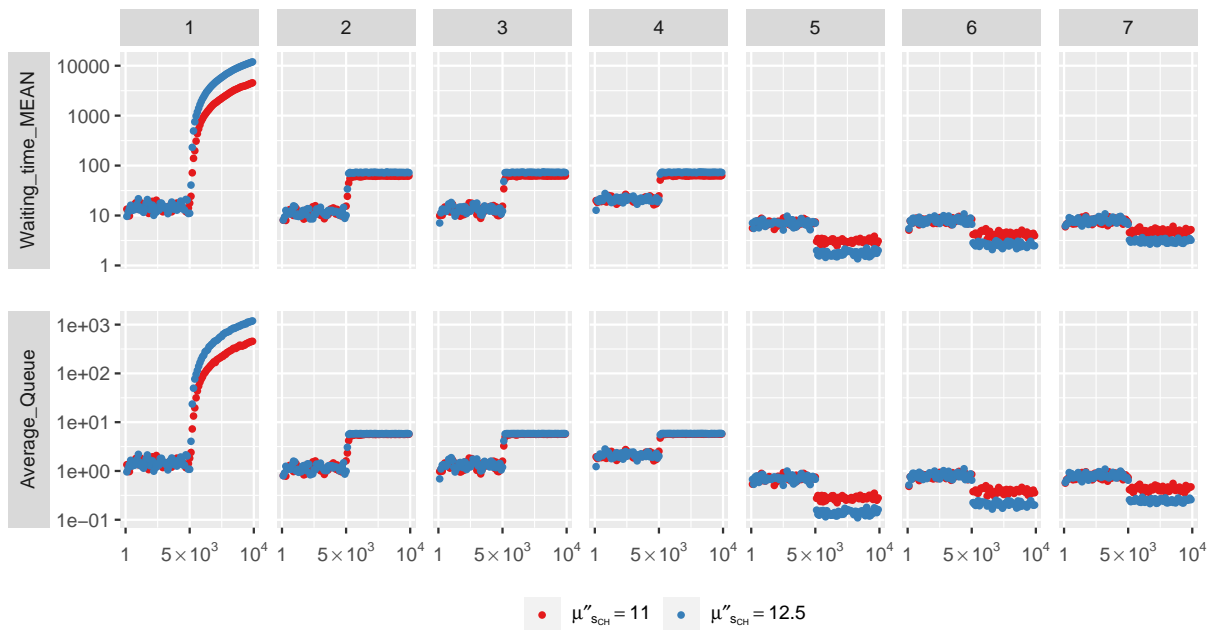


Fig. 6.19 Waiting time RW and Average Queue KPIs behaviors considering different processing time increase levels that make the system unstable. Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$  and  $cl_s = 6$ . Graphs with log-scale on y-axis.

the system becomes unstable: in the first stage both these KPIs increase towards infinity. In particular it should be noticed that, at the end of the process, but Average\_Queue grows as if new jobs kept arriving, even if no more jobs enter the line and the buffer starts emptying. This error verifies because in this situation Waiting\_time (rightly) keeps increasing, yet Input\_diff remains equal to the bottleneck processing time. Reminding how Average\_Queue is computed, this means that the numerator keeps growing while the denominator is fixed, making the KPI erroneously continuously increasing.

Because of these irregular behaviors, first stage plots have been omitted in previous figures.

## 6.2 Buffer capacity variation

A buffer capacity variation does not have effects on resource processing time and, so, never influences the system cycle time. Therefore, this type of variation is visible only in KPIs related to buffers (i.e. `Waiting_time`, `Blocking_time` and `Starving_time`, and the relative Stage State KPIs), while the others (CCI KPIs, `Processing_time` and `Utilization`) are not subject to any change. Plots of KPIs not influenced by buffer capacity variations are not shown and discussed, to restrain the analysis to the most relevant indicators.

### 6.2.1 `Waiting_time` KPI

`Waiting_time` and `Average_Queue` are strongly influenced by buffer capacity limits (as shown in subsection 6.1.4) and are directly related to queue statuses. In this subsection `Waiting_time` behavior is analyzed in situations where a buffer capacity variation verifies, while `Average_Queue` is not discussed, since it shows the same behavior of `Waiting_time`. At the end of the subsection the problem of buffers having high capacity limits before the capacity variation is presented.

#### Buffer capacity increase effects on `Waiting_time` KPI

Figure 6.20 shows average `Waiting_time` behavior when a buffer capacity increases.

- If a buffer capacity increases
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average `Waiting_time` decreases.
  - In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average `Waiting_time` increases.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average `Waiting_time` does not significantly change.
- Average `Waiting_time` variations are wider the larger the increase of buffer capacity is. This is visible comparing models with different after-change buffer capacities  $cl''_{s_{CH}}$ .
- Average `Waiting_time` variations are
  - wider if the changing stage is upstream or in correspondence with the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} \leq s_{BN}$ )
  - narrower if the changing stage is downstream the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} > s_{BN}$ )

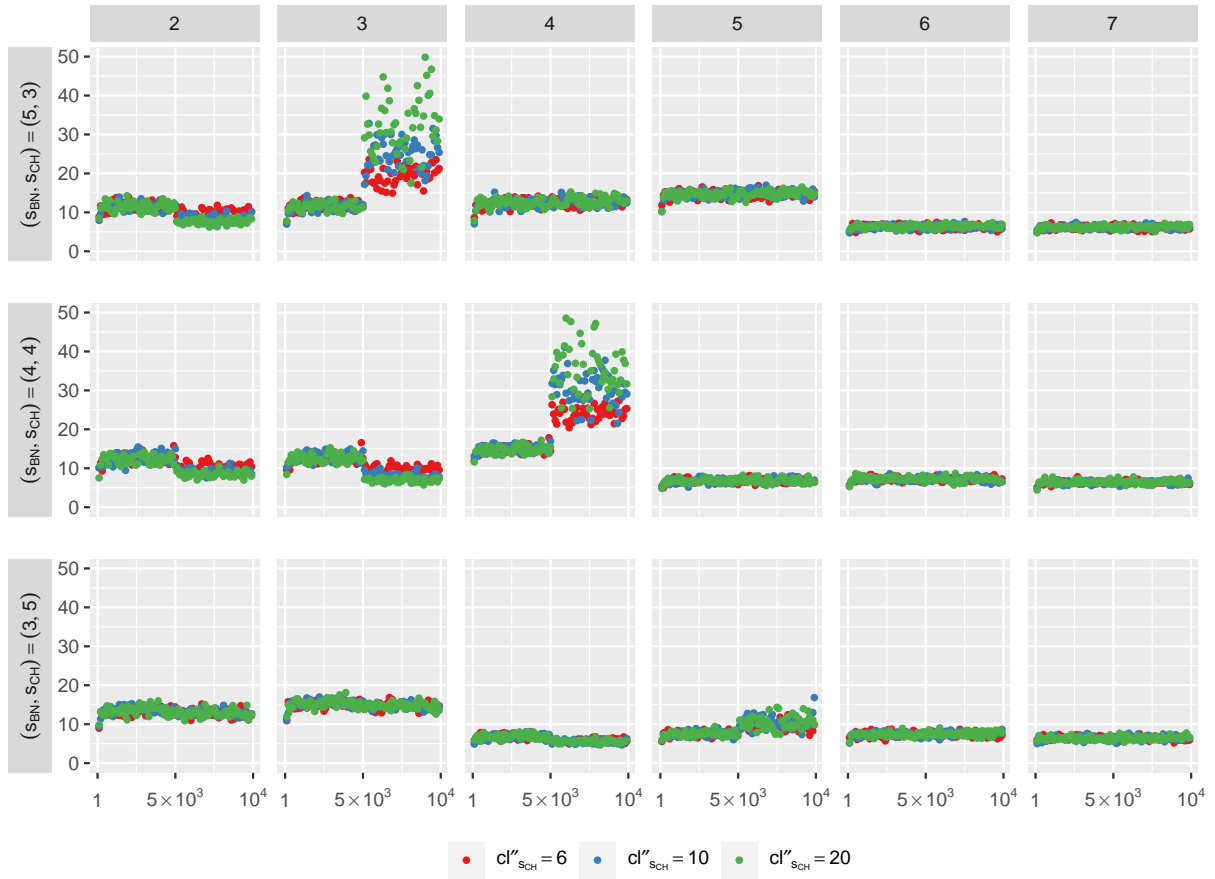


Fig. 6.20 Waiting time RW KPI behavior considering different buffer capacity increase levels  $cl''_{s_{CH}}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl'_s = 3$ .

This is visible comparing models having bottleneck-changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$  (changing stage upstream the bottleneck) or  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$  (changing stage in correspondence with the bottleneck) with models having  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (3, 5)$  (changing stage downstream the bottleneck) .

- Average Waiting\_time variations in a certain stage  $s$  are less and less relevant the further stage  $s$  is from the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both upstream and downstream  $s_{CH}$ .

#### Waiting\_time behavior considering different initial buffer sizes $cl'_s$

In certain conditions, buffer capacity variations may have no effects on Waiting\_time. The occurrence of a change of this KPI mainly relies on the initial buffer saturation levels before the capacity variation verifies. Figure 6.21 shows average Waiting\_time behavior considering



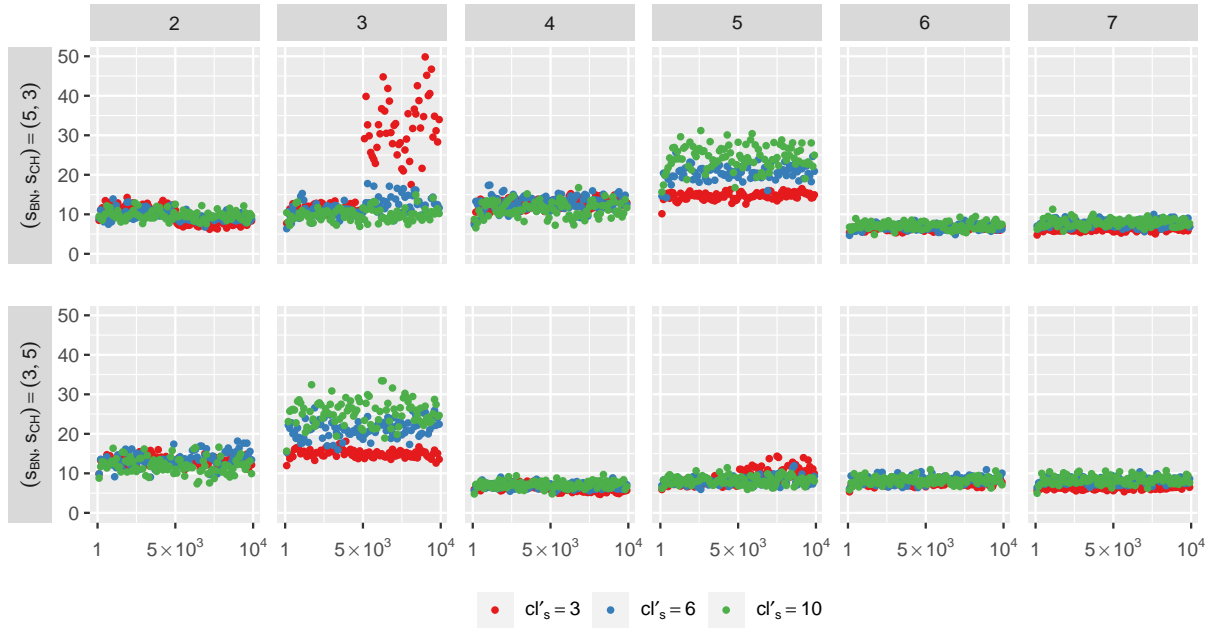


Fig. 6.21 Waiting time RW KPI behavior considering different initial buffer capacity levels  $cl'_s$  and two bottleneck-changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl''_s = 20$ .

different initial buffer capacities  $cl'_s$ .

When a capacity limit increases:

- If buffers tend to be saturated, average Waiting\_time significantly changes.  
This is visible in models with before-change buffer capacity  $cl'_s = 3$ , in particular in correspondence with the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ .
- If buffers tend to be unsaturated, average Waiting\_time does not change.  
This is visible in models with before-change buffer capacity  $cl'_s = 10$ .
- If buffers are on average halfway saturated, average Waiting\_time behavior mostly depends on the position of the changing stage with respect to the bottleneck.  
This is visible in models with before-change buffer capacity  $cl'_s = 6$ : when  $s_{CH}$  is upstream  $s_{BN}$  (i.e. model with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$ ), average Waiting\_time (slightly) changes in correspondence of  $s_{CH}$ .<sup>5</sup> When  $s_{CH}$  is downstream  $s_{BN}$  (i.e. model with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (3, 5)$ ), average Waiting\_time does not significantly change of  $s_{CH}$

<sup>5</sup>This also verifies when the variation occurs in correspondence with the changing stage  $s_{CH}$

### Buffer capacity decrease effects on Waiting\_time KPI

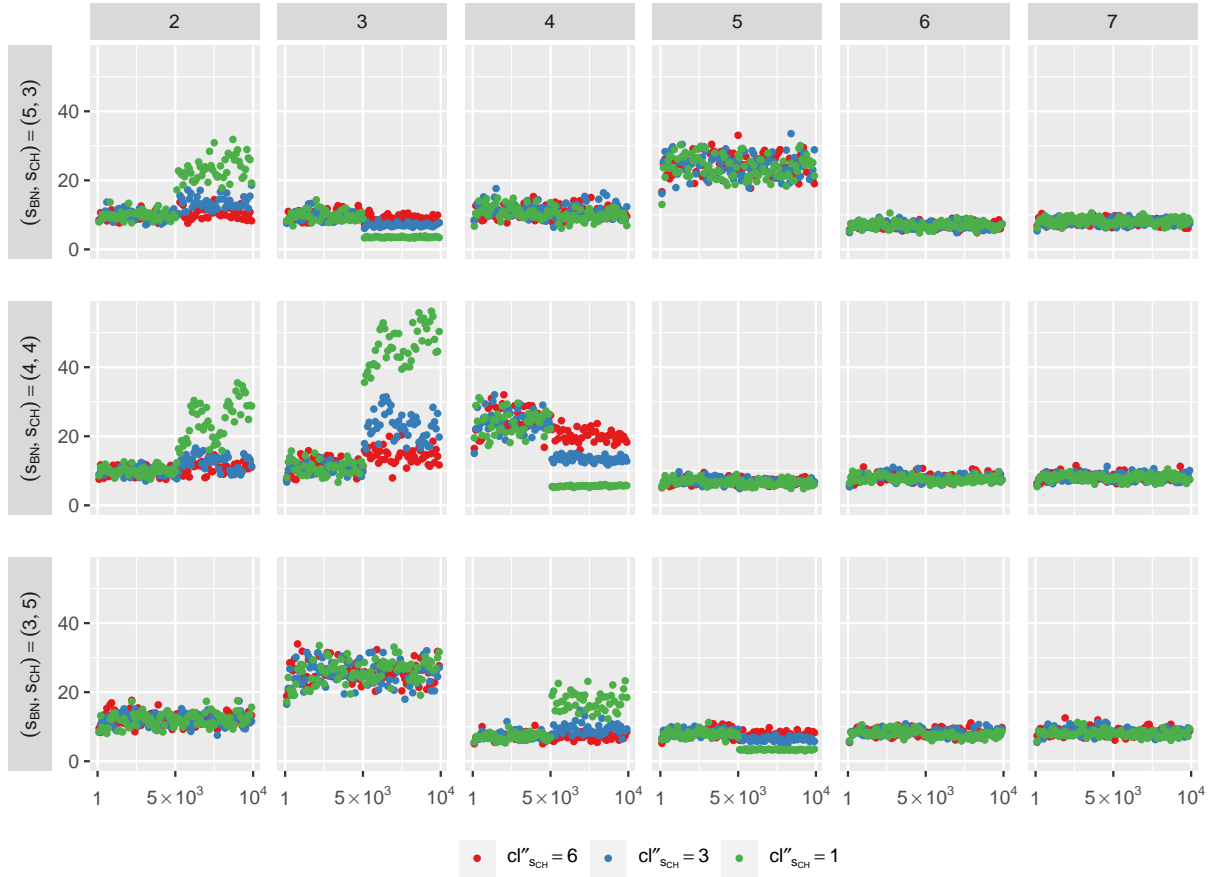


Fig. 6.22 Waiting time RW KPI behavior considering different buffer capacity decrease levels  $cl''_S$ . Models with  $cl'_S = 10$

Figure 6.22 shows average Waiting\_time behavior when a buffer capacity decreases.

- If a buffer capacity reduces
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time increases.
  - In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time decreases.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Waiting\_time does not significantly change.
- Average Waiting\_time variations are wider the larger the decrease of buffer capacity is. This is visible comparing models with different after-change buffer capacities  $cl''_{s_{CH}}$ .

- Average Waiting\_time variations are
  - wider if the changing stage is upstream or in correspondence with the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} \leq s_{BN}$ )
  - narrower if the changing stage is downstream the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} > s_{BN}$ )

This is visible comparing models having bottleneck-changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$  (changing stage upstream the bottleneck) or  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$  (changing stage in correspondence with the bottleneck) with models having  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (3, 5)$  (changing stage downstream the bottleneck).

- Average Waiting\_time variations in a certain stage  $s$  are less and less relevant the further stage  $s$  is from the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both upstream and downstream.

### Variation conceal caused by before-change high capacity buffers

It is important to highlight that not every buffer capacity limit variation is detectable using Waiting\_time or Average\_Queue. Indeed, when before-change buffer sizes are much higher than necessary, and so underused and largely unsaturated during the process, buffer capacity growths or limited capacity reductions are impossible to notice. It verifies because, if queues in buffers are consistently much lower than the capacity limit, a variation of the limit will not have effects on the queue: in case of a capacity increase, the added room is not used, while in case of a capacity decrease (if not too large), the removed space was not used before the change and, so, jobs are not influenced by the change. Figure 6.23 helps to visualize this kind of

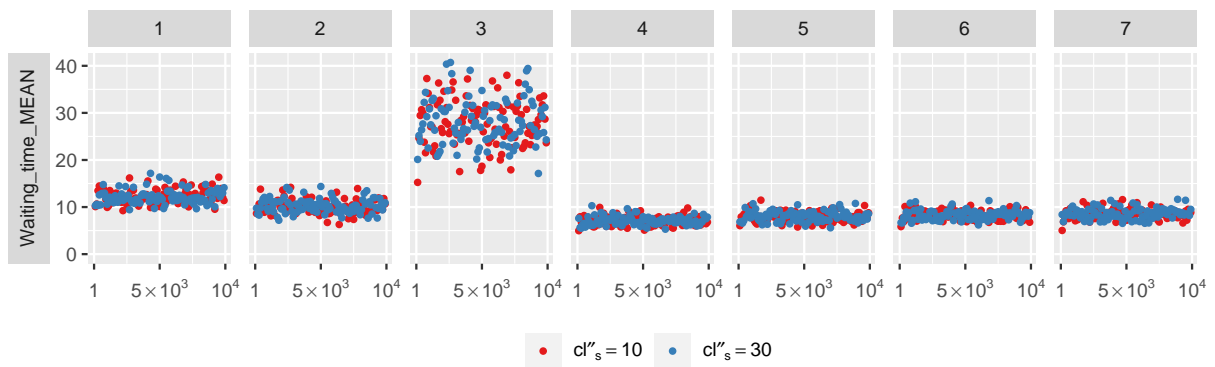


Fig. 6.23 Waiting time RW KPI behavior considering different buffer capacity variation levels  $cl''_s$ . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (3, 5)$  and  $cl'_s = 20$ .

situation: all the buffers have high capacities ( $cl'_s = 20$ ), and so are extremely unsaturated. When

the changing stage capacity limit increases to  $cl_{s_5} = 30$ , average Waiting\_time behavior does not change. Moreover, since the changing stage is downstream the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} = 5 > s_{BN} = 3$ ), even a capacity limit decrease has no visible effects on average Waiting\_time.

Before-change high capacity buffers have also the same effects on Blocking\_time and Starving\_time KPIs, which are discussed in the next chapter. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that, if a buffer capacity change occurs in correspondence with a high capacity and extremely unsaturated buffer, it is not detectable with any KPI defined in this thesis.

### 6.2.2 Blocking\_time and Starving\_time KPIs

Since Blocking\_time and Starving\_time KPI behaviors are specular (as seen in subsection 6.1.3), they are analyzed together in this subsection. These KPI behaviors are influenced by both the production capacities of resources and the capacities of buffers.

#### Buffer capacity increase effects on Blocking\_time and Starving\_time KPIs

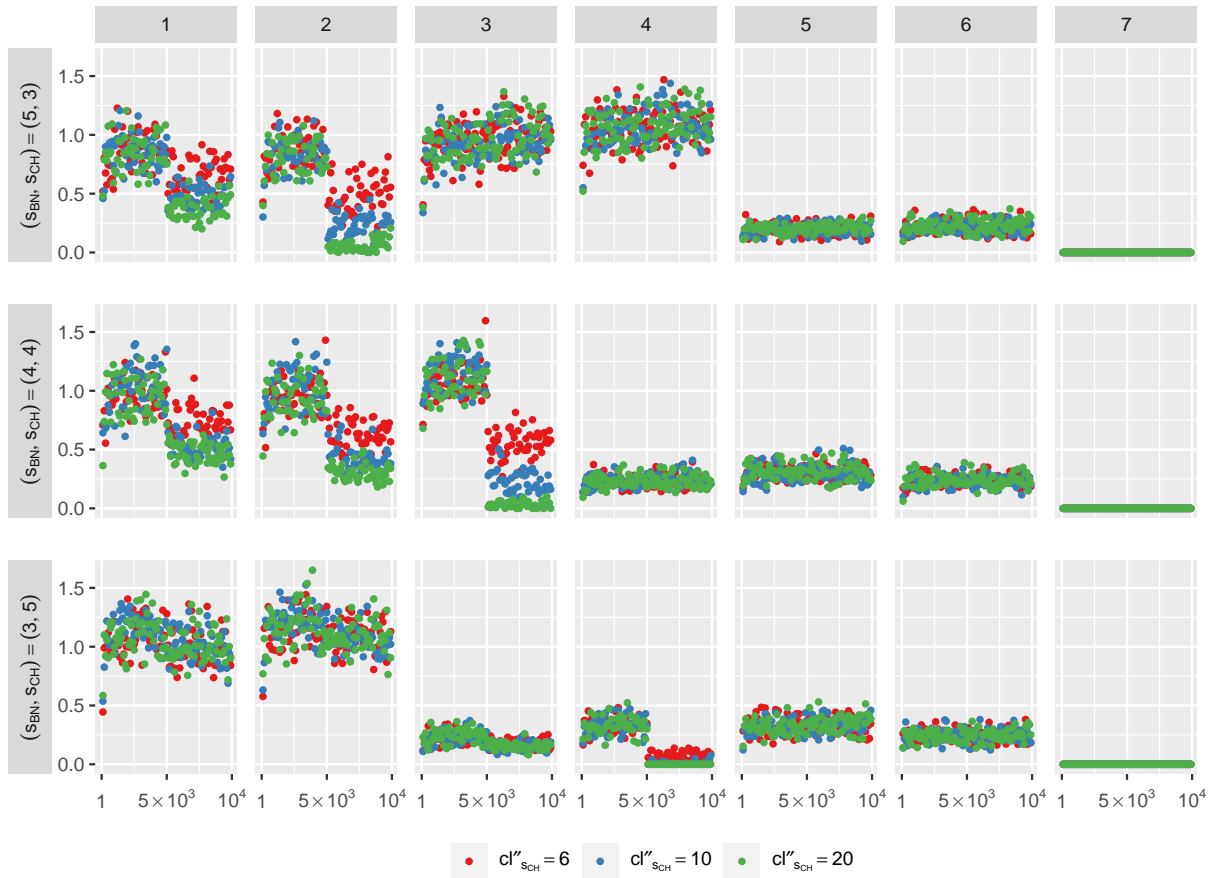


Fig. 6.24 Blocking time RW KPI behavior considering different buffer capacity increase levels  $cl''_{s_{CH}}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl'_s = 3$ .

Figure 6.24 and figure 6.25 show, respectively, average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time behaviors in case of buffer capacity increases.

- If a buffer capacity increases



Fig. 6.25 Starving time RW KPI behavior considering different buffer capacity increase levels  $cl''_{SCH}$  and three bottleneck - changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH})$ . Models with  $cl'_s = 3$ .

- In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time decreases and average Starving\_time increases.
- In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time increases and average Starving\_time decreases.
- In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time do not significantly change.
- Average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time variations are wider the larger the increase of buffer capacity is.  
This is visible comparing models with different after-change buffer capacities  $cl''_{SCH}$ .
- Average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time variations are

- wider if the changing stage is upstream or in correspondence with the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} \leq s_{BN}$ )
- narrower if the changing stage is downstream the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} > s_{BN}$ )

This is visible comparing models having bottleneck-changing stage configurations  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$  (changing stage upstream the bottleneck) or  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (4, 4)$  (changing stage in correspondence with the bottleneck) with models having  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (3, 5)$  (changing stage downstream the bottleneck) .

- Average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time variations in a certain stage  $s$  are less and less relevant the further stage  $s$  is from the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both upstream and downstream  $s_{CH}$ .

### Blocking\_time and Starving\_time behaviors considering different initial buffer sizes $cl'_s$

As for Waiting\_time, buffer capacity variations may have no effects on Blocking\_time and Starving\_time. The occurrence of a change of these KPIs mainly rely on the initial buffer saturation levels before the capacity variation verifies. Figure 6.21 shows average Blocking\_time

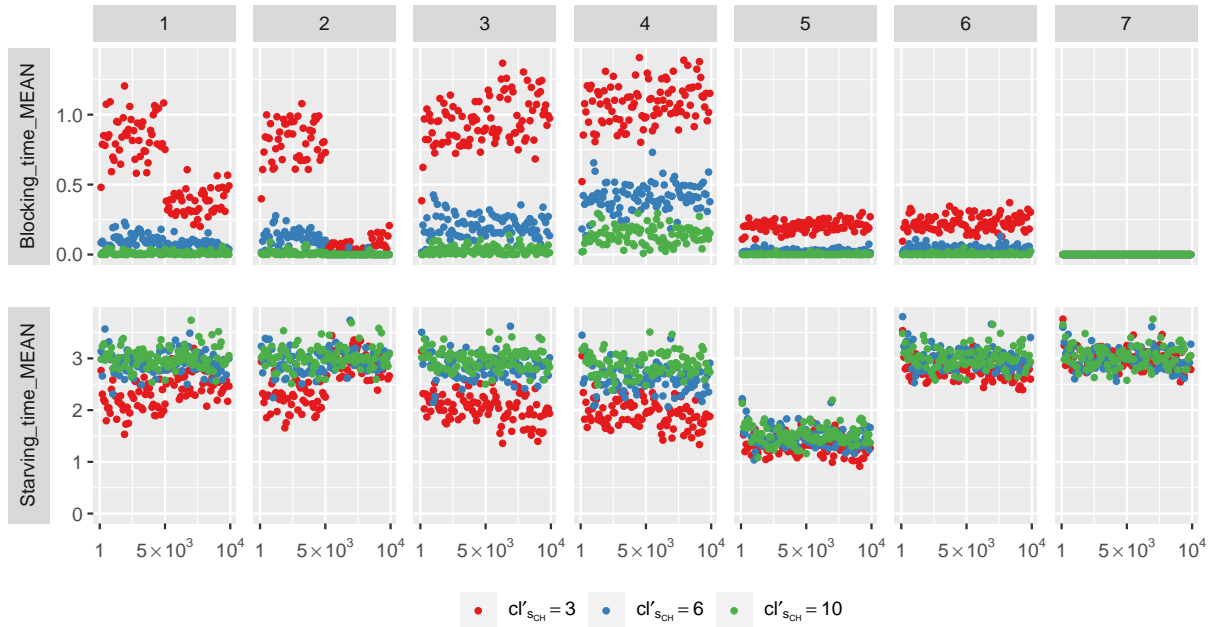


Fig. 6.26 Blocking time and Starving time RW KPIs behaviors considering different initial buffer capacity levels  $cl'_s$ . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$  and after-change value  $cl''_s = 20$ .

and Starving\_time behaviors considering different initial buffer capacities  $cl'_s$ .

When a capacity limit increases:

- If buffers tend to be saturated, average Blocking\_time and Starving\_time significantly change.  
This is visible in models with before-change buffer capacity  $cl'_s = 3$ , in particular in correspondence with the changing stage  $s_{CH} = 3$ .
- If buffers tend to be unsaturated, average Blocking\_time and Starving\_time do not change.  
This is visible in models with before-change buffer capacity  $cl'_s = 10$ .
- If buffers are on average halfway saturated, average Blocking\_time and Starving\_time behaviors mostly depend on the position of the changing stage with respect to the bottleneck.  
This is visible in models with before-change buffer capacity  $cl'_s = 6$ : when  $s_{CH}$  is upstream  $s_{BN}$  (i.e. model with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$ ), average Blocking\_time and Starving\_time (slightly) change in correspondence and upstream  $s_{CH}$ . When  $s_{CH}$  is downstream  $s_{BN}$  (i.e. model with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (3, 5)$ ), average Blocking\_time and Starving\_time do not significantly change.

### Buffer capacity decrease effects on Blocking\_time and Starving\_time

Figure 6.22 shows average Blocking\_time and Starving\_time behaviors when a buffer capacity decreases.

- If a buffer capacity reduces
  - In stages upstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time increases and average Starving\_time decreases.
  - In correspondence of the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , average Blocking\_time decreases and average Starving\_time increases.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both average Blocking\_time and average Starving\_time do not significantly change.
- Average Blocking\_time and Starving\_time variations are wider the larger the decrease of buffer capacity is.  
This is visible comparing models with different after-change buffer capacities  $cl''_{s_{CH}}$ .
- Average Blocking\_time and Starving\_time variations are



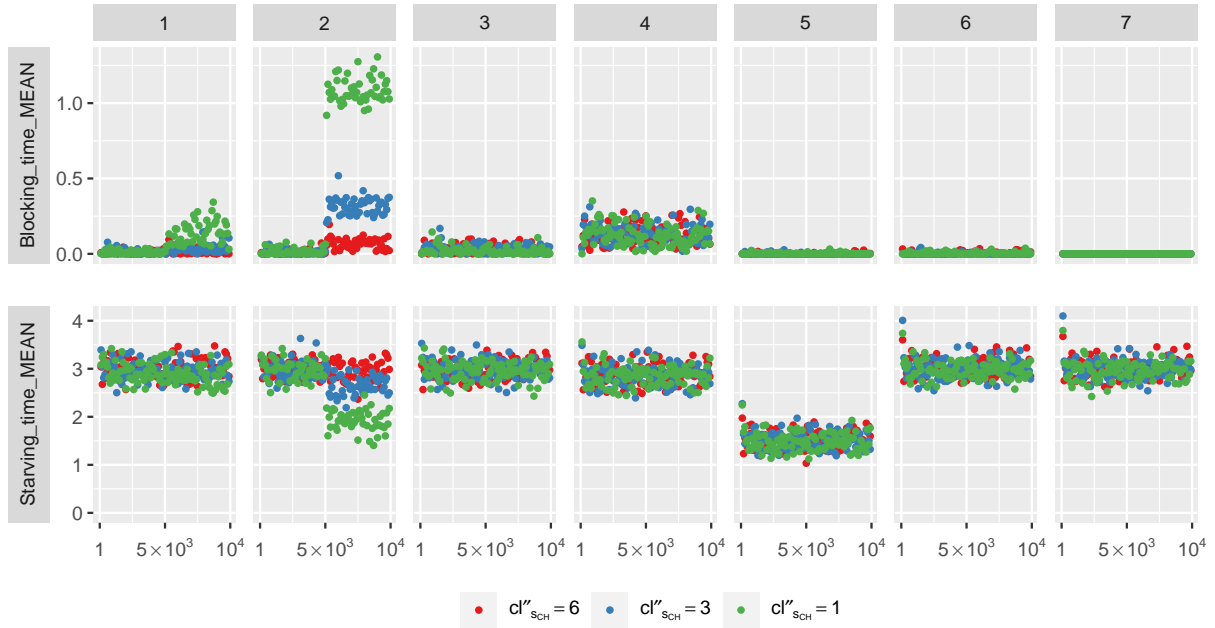


Fig. 6.27 Blocking time and Starving time RW KPIs behaviors considering different buffer capacity decrease levels  $cl''_s$ . Models with configuration  $(s_{BN}, s_{CH}) = (5, 3)$  and  $cl'_s = 10$ .

- wider if the changing stage is upstream or in correspondence with the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} \leq s_{BN}$ )
- narrower if the changing stage is downstream the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} > s_{BN}$ )
- Average Blocking\_time and Starving\_time variations in a certain stage  $s$  are less and less relevant the further stage  $s$  is from the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ , both upstream and downstream.

# Chapter 7

## A map of variations

This chapter provides a summary of variations, based on the results analyzed in chapter 6. The summary aims to fulfill the thesis goal outlined in section 2.1.1, which is to define a map of variations to serve as a handbook that allows to interpret the indicator behaviors and relate a KPI change with a variation occurring in the real system.

The first section is dedicated to change detection, that is the step preliminary to the change identification (see introduction of chapter 2), in order to specify what system variation is possible to notice monitoring a certain KPI.

In the second section, the process variation effects on each indicator is described and visualized through schemes representing abstractions of the KPI average behaviors, in order to outline if and how far they are fitting to give insights about the system variation extents.

### 7.1 Variation detection

The goal of this section is to answer to two questions

*Which KPIs are able to detect a certain process variation?*

*In what situation can a KPI detect a certain process variation?*

Table 7.1 Processing time variation detection

KPI	Processing time		Detection condition
	Increase $\uparrow$	Decrease $\downarrow$	
Input_diff	✓		System becomes unstable
Mid_diff	✓		System becomes unstable
Output_diff	✓		System becomes unstable
Waiting_time	✓	✓	
Average_Queue	✓	✓	
Processing_time	✓	✓	
Utilization	✓	✓	
Blocking_time	✓	✓	
Blocking_prob	✓	✓	
Starving_time	✓	✓	
Starving_prob	✓	✓	

Table 7.2 Buffer capacity variation detection

KPI	Buffer capacity		Detection condition
	Increase $\uparrow$	Decrease $\downarrow$	
Input_diff			
Mid_diff			
Output_diff			
Waiting_time	✓	✓	Buffer not highly unsaturated
Average_Queue	✓	✓	Buffer not highly unsaturated
Processing_time			
Utilization			
Blocking_time	✓	✓	Buffer not highly unsaturated
Blocking_prob	✓	✓	Buffer not highly unsaturated
Starving_time	✓	✓	Buffer not highly unsaturated
Starving_prob	✓	✓	Buffer not highly unsaturated

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 defines which KPIs and under what condition are able to detect the different process variations. They can be further summarized as follows

- Consecutive Cases Intervals KPIs (Input\_diff, Mid\_diff, and Output\_diff) change only if the system becomes unstable.
- Processing\_time and Utilization KPIs change only when the system variation involves resource production capacities (i.e. processing time variations).
- Waiting\_time, Blocking\_time, Starving\_time, and relative Stage State KPIs (Average\_Queue, Blocking\_prob, and Starving\_prob) change when both processing time or buffer capacity variations occur, but the second type of variation affects these KPIs only if the buffers (in particular the one in correspondence of the changing stage) are not too underused.

## 7.2 Variation identification

As in the previous section, also this one aims to answer to two questions

*Is a variation recognizable and distinguishable looking at how it impacts on the considered KPIs?*

*Is the variation extent clearly identifiable looking at how it impacts on the considered KPIs?*

Therefore, this section focuses on summarizing the system variation effects on KPIs.

For each indicator, a description of its behavior and a brief comment on its usefulness are provided; then, six figures are attached, to help to visualize the KPI average behavior when a variation (increase or decrease) occurs, looking at stages upstream, in correspondence, and downstream the changing stage.

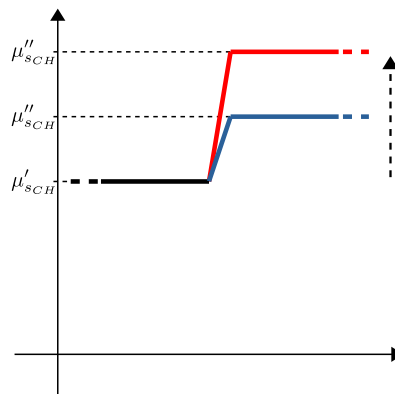


Fig. 7.1 Example of scheme displaying the variation effects on a KPI in a certain stage

Figure 7.1 is an example plot, showing the behavior of Processing\_time KPI in correspondence of the changing stage when a processing time increase occurs.

- The black line represent the average KPI behavior **before** the variation occurs
- The blue line represent the average KPI behavior **after** the variation has occurred, in case the system remained **stable**
- The red line represent the average KPI behavior **after** the variation has occurred, in case the system became **unstable**

In these schemes, when one or more parameters are present on the y-axis (e.g.  $\mu'_{SCH}$  and  $\mu''_{SCH}$  in the example), they represent the value which the KPI settles around before or after the variation. If no parameters are present, the lines just show the approximate KPI behavior.

Moreover, in schemes, dashed arrows are used to visualize variations. Note that the arrow lengths are not exactly proportionate to actual KPI changes, but they only help to show the direction and the approximate extent of the indicator variations.

To simplify the dissertation, since their behaviors are very similar, KPIs and respective Stage State KPIs are discussed together.

## 7.2.1 Processing time variation

### Effects on Consecutive Cases Intervals KPIs

Input\_diff, Mid\_diff, and Output\_diff are discussed together, since their behaviors are mostly similar. CCI KPIs behave as follow:

- If a processing time increase occurs ( $\mu''_{sCH} > \mu'_{sCH}$ )
  - If the system remains stable ( $\mu''_{sCH} < \mu_a$ ), CCI KPIs do not change, keeping settled around the average inter-arrival time  $\mu_a$ .
  - If the system becomes unstable ( $\mu''_{sCH} > \mu_a$ ), CCI KPIs increase equally in all stages, settling around the after-change mean processing time of the changing stage  $\mu''_{sCH}$ .
- If a processing time decrease occurs ( $\mu''_{sCH} < \mu'_{sCH}$ ): CCI KPIs do not change, keeping settled around the average inter-arrival time  $\mu_a$ .

**CCI KPIs usefulness** CCI KPIs are reliable indicators of the system cycle time and, therefore, can be used to understand if the system is still stable after a variation. However, since they change their behavior exclusively when a variation makes the system unstable, it is impossible to detect a decrease in processing time (i.e. a production capacity gain) monitoring them because this variation never causes system instability.

Lastly, it must be added that Input\_diff of the first stage has a behavior that differs from CCI KPIs computed in any other position: since the first stage buffer is unlimited, it is always an inter-arrival time indicator, rather than a cycle time indicator.

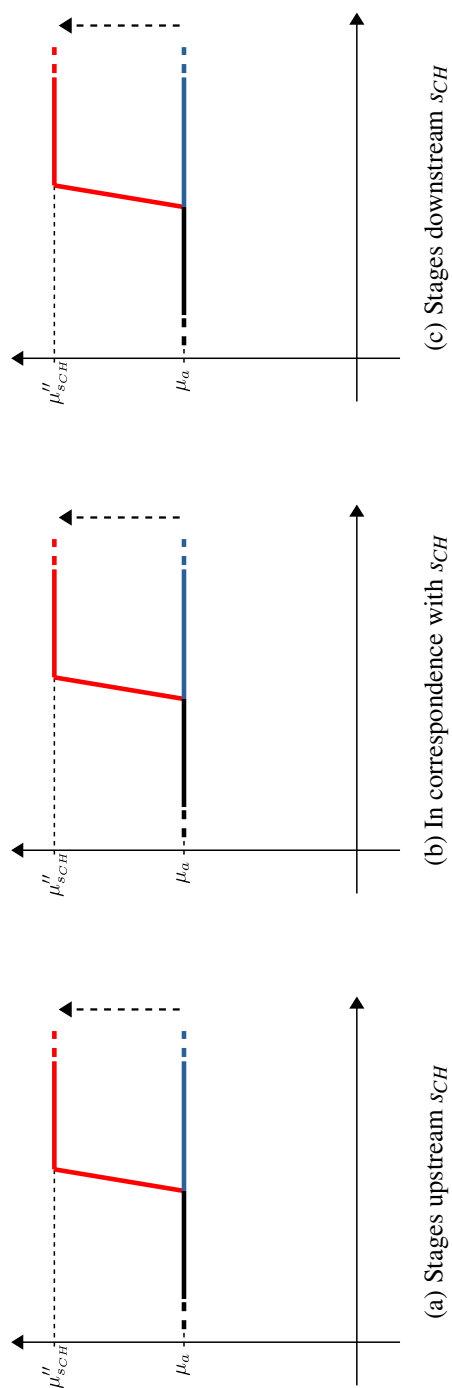


Fig. 7.2 Processing time increase effects on Consecutive Cases Intervals KPIs

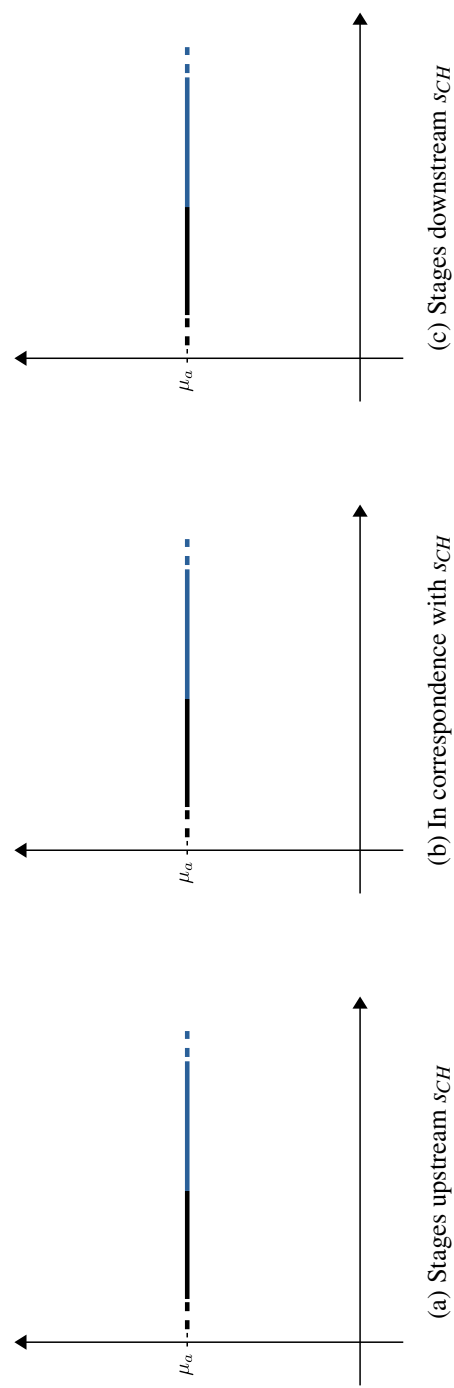


Fig. 7.3 Processing time decrease effects on Consecutive Cases Intervals KPIs

### Effects on Processing\_time and Utilization KPIs

Processing\_time KPI behaves as follows:

- When a processing time increase occurs ( $\mu''_{SCH} > \mu'_{SCH}$ )
  - In the changing stage, Processing\_time increases, keeping aligned with  $\mu''_{SCH}$ .
  - In other stages, Processing\_time does not change.
- When a processing time decrease occurs ( $\mu''_{SCH} < \mu'_{SCH}$ )
  - In the changing stage, Processing\_time decreases, keeping aligned with  $\mu''_{SCH}$ .
  - In other stages, Processing\_time does not change.

Utilization KPI behaves as follows:

- When a processing time increase occurs ( $\mu''_{SCH} > \mu'_{SCH}$ )
  - If the system remains stable ( $\mu''_{SCH} < \mu_a$ )
    - \* In the changing stage, Utilization increases.
    - \* In other stages, Utilization does not change.
  - If the system becomes unstable ( $\mu''_{SCH} > \mu_a$ )
    - \* In the changing stage, Utilization increases.
    - \* In other stages, Utilization decreases.
- When a processing time decrease occurs ( $\mu''_{SCH} < \mu'_{SCH}$ )
  - In the changing stage, Utilization decreases.
  - In other stages, Utilization does not change.

The variation extent of Processing\_time and Utilization are wider the larger the processing time variation is. Values taken by Utilization are limited to the range  $[0, 1]$ .

**Processing\_time and Utilization KPIs usefulness** Both these KPIs give clear information regarding the resources: Processing\_time tells the absolute value of the average time needed by a resource to process a job, while Utilization shows how much a resource is exploited, comparing its processing time to the system cycle time.

Processing time variations directly impact on these KPIs, which turn out to be the most informative and swift-reacting among the considered indicators when this kind of change occurs.



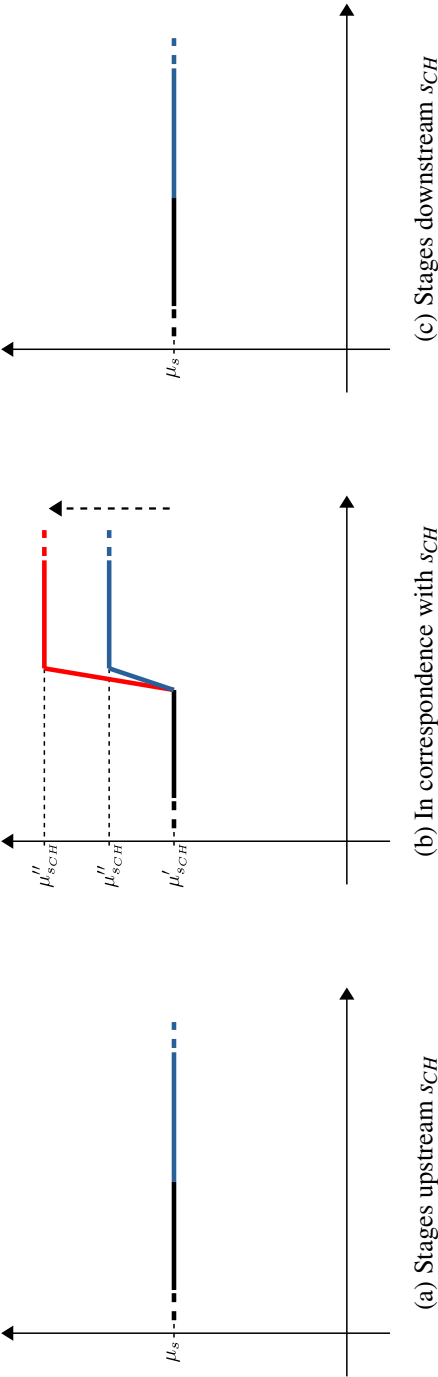


Fig. 7.4 Processing time increase effects on Processing time KPI

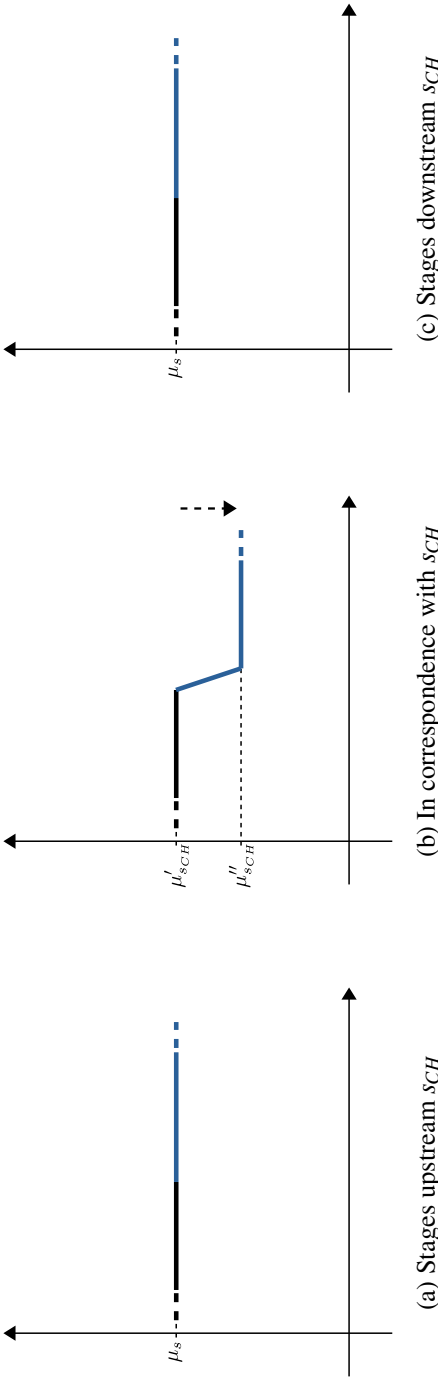


Fig. 7.5 Processing time decrease effects on Processing time KPI

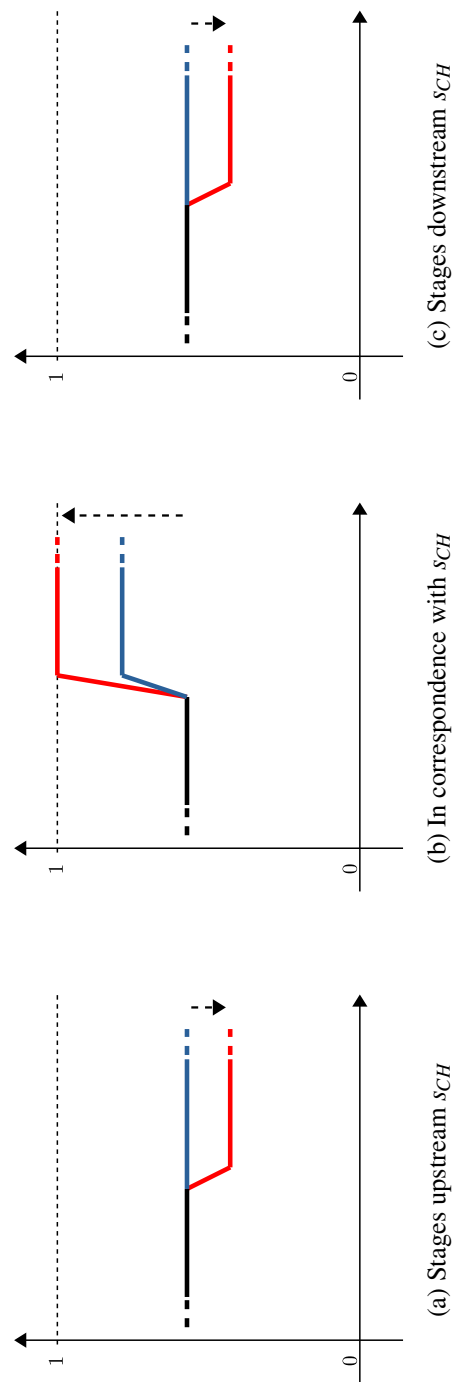


Fig. 7.6 Processing time increase effects on Utilization KPI

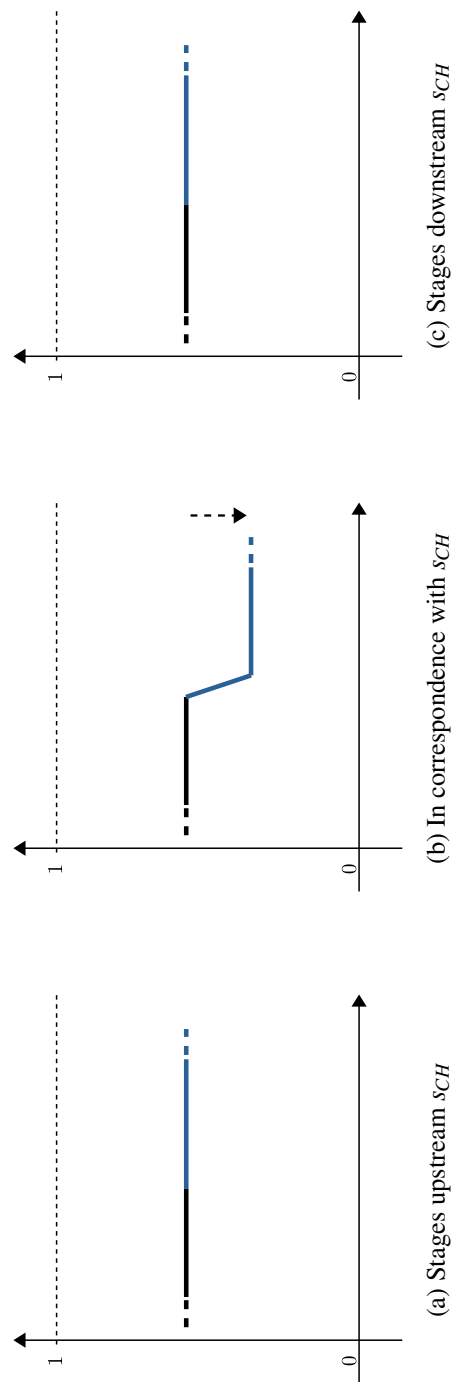


Fig. 7.7 Processing time decrease effects on Utilization KPI

### Effects on Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPIs

Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPIs behave as follows:

- When a processing time increase occurs ( $\mu''_{sCH} > \mu'_{sCH}$ )
  - If the system remains stable ( $\mu''_{sCH} < \mu_a$ )
    - \* In stages upstream and in correspondence with the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue increase.
    - \* In stages downstream the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue decrease.
  - If the system becomes unstable ( $\mu''_{sCH} > \mu_a$ )
    - \* In stages upstream and in correspondence with the changing stage
      - Waiting\_time increases and settles around  $LW_s$ <sup>1</sup>.
      - Average\_Queue increases and settles around the buffer capacity limit of stage  $s$ ,  $cl_s$ .
    - \* In stages downstream the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue decrease towards 0.
- When a processing time decrease occurs ( $\mu''_{sCH} < \mu'_{sCH}$ )
  - In stages upstream and in correspondence with the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue decrease.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue increase.

The variation extent of Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue in a certain stage  $s$  is influenced by stage  $s$  position, the processing time variation width ( $|\mu''_{sCH} - \mu'_{sCH}|$ ), and the buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$ . It is possible to say that the variation extent is

- wider the larger the processing time variation ( $|\mu''_{sCH} - \mu'_{sCH}|$ ) is.
- wider the nearer stage  $s$  is with respect to the changing stage  $sCH$ .
- wider in stages near the changing stage  $sCH$ , the higher the buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$  are.
- narrower in stages far from the changing stage  $sCH$ , the higher the buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$  are.

---

<sup>1</sup> $LW_s$  is equal to the product of average cycle time (indicated by average Input\_diff) and the buffer capacity limit of stage  $s$ ,  $cl_s$

**Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPIs usefulness** Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue offer two different perspectives regarding the buffers: Waiting\_time has a job-oriented point of view, showing how much time jobs spent in buffers, while Average\_Queue is more queue-oriented, allowing to know how many jobs are on average simultaneously present in a buffer. These KPIs allow to understand a processing time variation direction (increase or decrease) and its approximate size: Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue do not show the exact change extent, but high KPI changes are the clue that a big system variation is occurring in a stage.

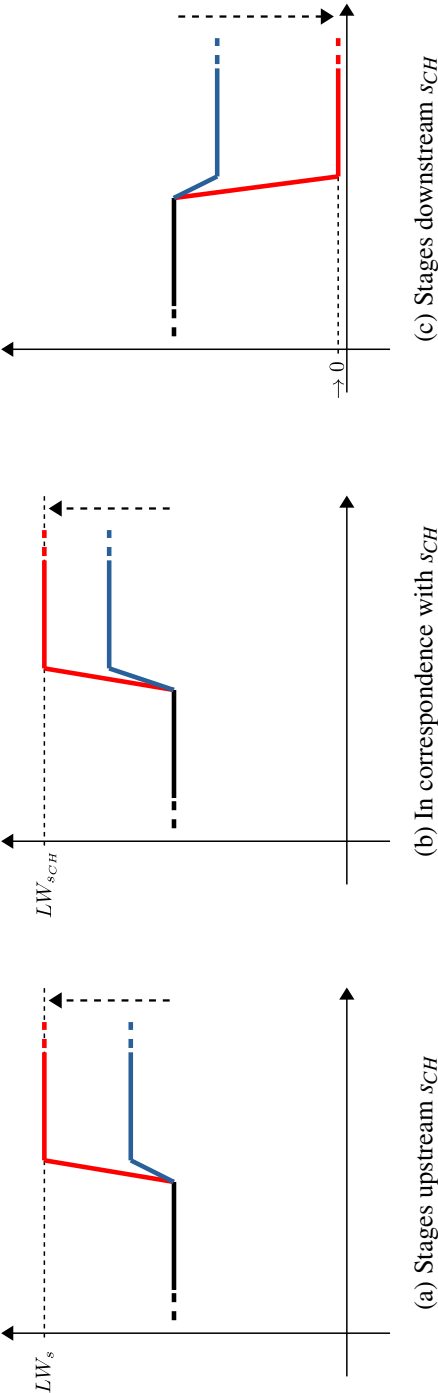


Fig. 7.8 Processing time increase effects on Waiting time KPI

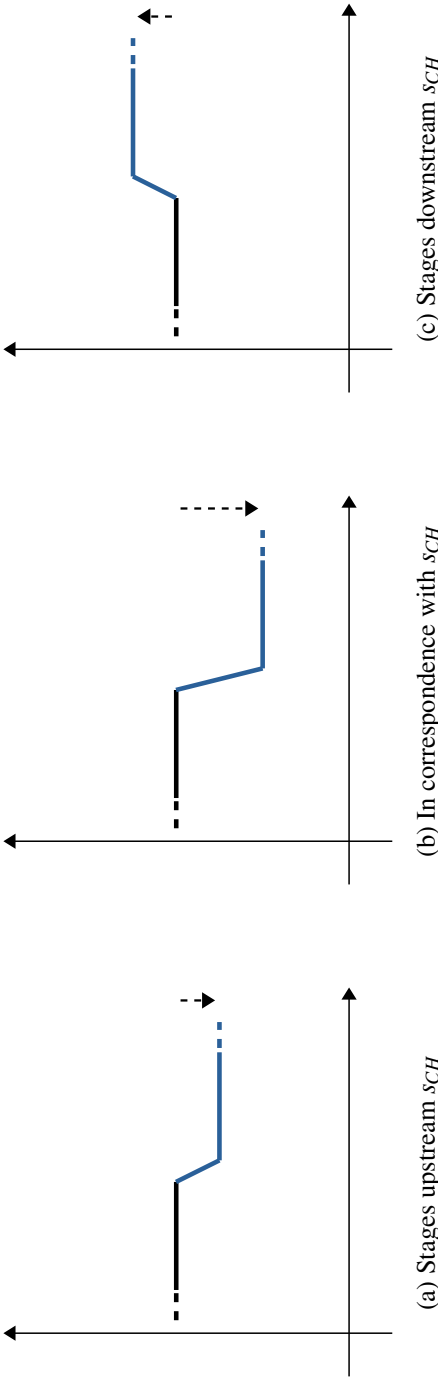


Fig. 7.9 Processing time decrease effects on Waiting time KPI

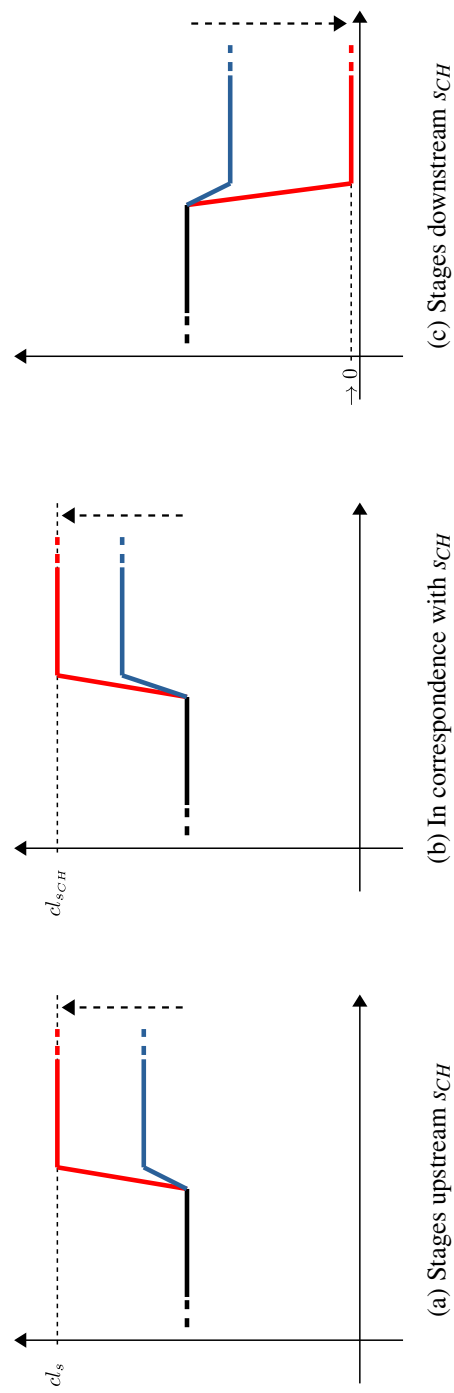


Fig. 7.10 Processing time increase effects on Average Queue KPI

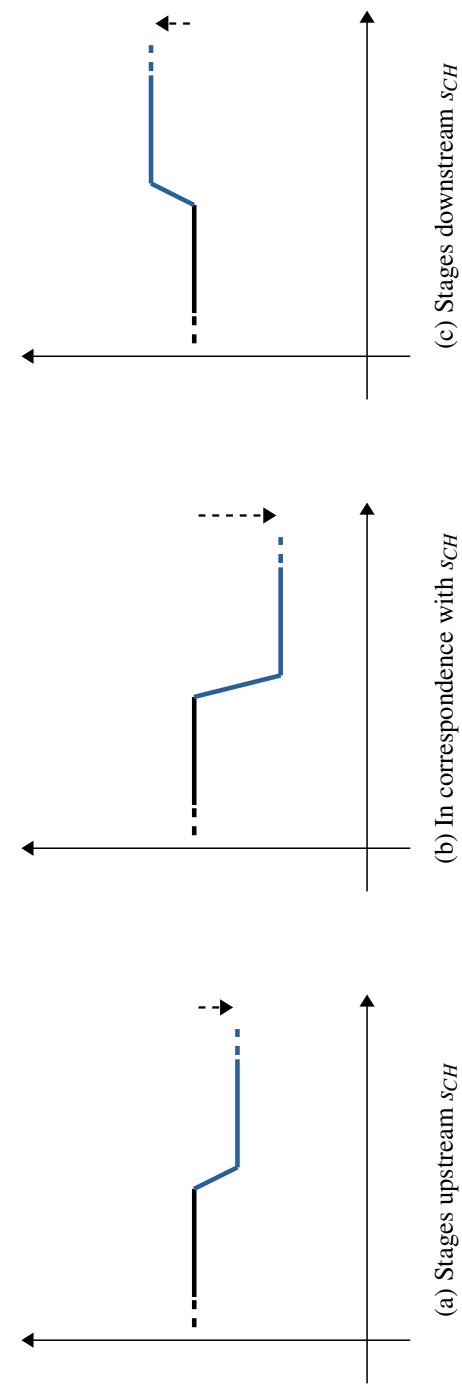


Fig. 7.11 Processing time decrease effects on Average Queue KPI

### Effects on Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob KPIs

Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob KPIs behave as follows:

- When a processing time increase occurs ( $\mu''_{sCH} > \mu'_{sCH}$ )
  - If the system remains stable ( $\mu''_{sCH} < \mu_a$ )
    - \* In stages upstream the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob increase.
    - \* In stages downstream and in correspondence with the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob decrease.
  - If the system becomes unstable ( $\mu''_{sCH} > \mu_a$ )
    - \* In stages upstream the changing stage
      - Blocking\_time increases and settles around  $I_s^2$ .
      - Blocking\_prob increases.
    - \* In stages downstream and in correspondence with the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob decrease and settle around 0.
- When a processing time decrease occurs ( $\mu''_{sCH} < \mu'_{sCH}$ )
  - In stages upstream the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob decrease.
  - In stages downstream and in correspondence with the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob increase.

The variation extent of Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob in a certain stage  $s$  is influenced by stage  $s$  position, the processing time variation width ( $|\mu''_{sCH} - \mu'_{sCH}|$ ), and the buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$ . It is possible to say that the variation extent is

- wider the larger the processing time variation ( $|\mu''_{sCH} - \mu'_{sCH}|$ ) is
- wider the nearer stage  $s$  is with respect to the changing stage  $sCH$
- wider in stages near the changing stage  $sCH$ , the higher the buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$  are
- narrower in stages far from the changing stage  $sCH$ , the higher the buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$  are

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<sup>2</sup> $I_s$  is equal to the difference between average cycle time (indicated by Mid\_diff) and average processing time (indicated by Processing\_time) of stage  $s$

**Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob KPIs usefulness** Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob allow to understand how deeply stages different from the changing stage are affected by a processing time variation: Blocking\_time shows how much time jobs spend seizing a resource after being processed, because the following buffer is full, while Blocking\_prob shows how much of its available time a resource on average spends without working because a job could not leave it. These KPIs allow to understand a processing time variation direction (increase or decrease) and its approximate size: Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob do not directly indicate the exact change extent, but high KPI changes are the clue that a big system variation is occurring in a stage.



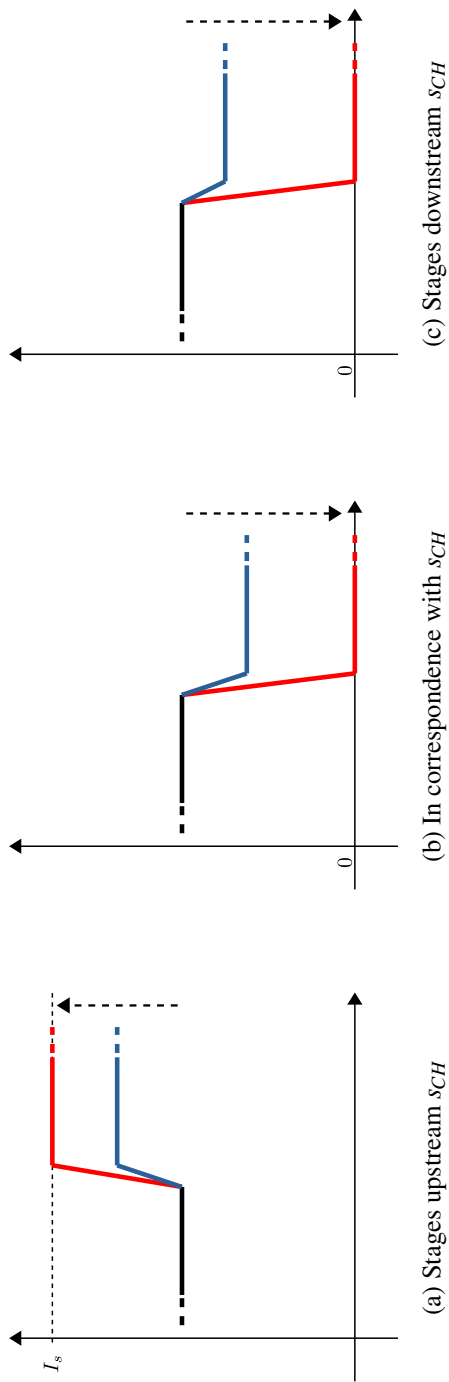


Fig. 7.12 Processing time increase effects on Blocking time KPI

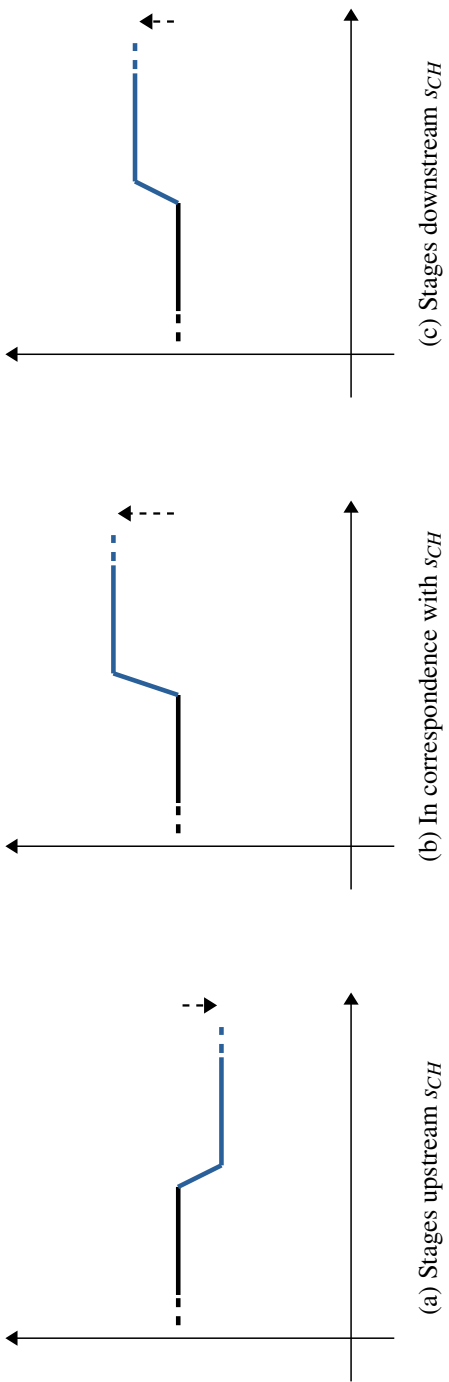


Fig. 7.13 Processing time decrease effects on Blocking time KPI

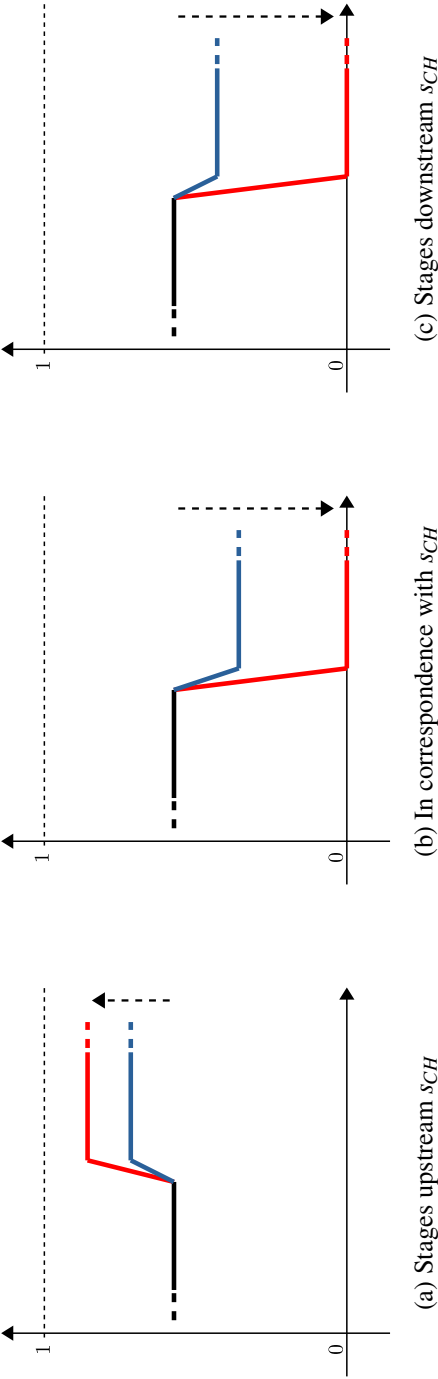


Fig. 7.14 Processing time increase effects on Blocking probability KPI

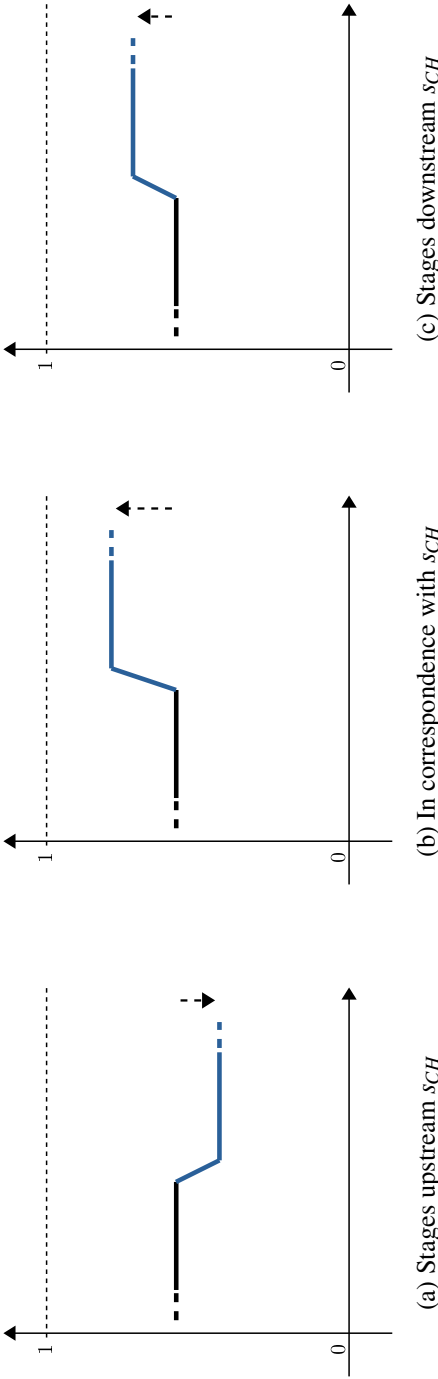


Fig. 7.15 Processing time decrease effects on Blocking probability KPI

### Effects on Starving\_time and Starving\_prob KPIs

Starving\_time and Starving\_prob KPIs behave as follows:

- When a processing time increase occurs ( $\mu''_{sCH} > \mu'_{sCH}$ )
  - If the system remains stable ( $\mu''_{sCH} < \mu_a$ )
    - \* In stages upstream and in correspondence with the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob decrease.
    - \* In stages downstream and in correspondence with the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob increase.
  - If the system becomes unstable ( $\mu''_{sCH} > \mu_a$ )
    - \* In stages upstream and in correspondence with the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob decrease and settle around 0
    - \* In stages downstream the changing stage
      - Starving\_time increases and settles around  $I_s$ <sup>3</sup>.
      - Starving\_prob increases
- When a processing time decrease occurs ( $\mu''_{sCH} < \mu'_{sCH}$ )
  - In stages upstream and in correspondence with the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob increase.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob decrease.

The variation extent of Starving\_time and Starving\_prob in a certain stage  $s$  is influenced by stage  $s$  position, the processing time variation width ( $|\mu''_{sCH} - \mu'_{sCH}|$ ), and the buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$ . It is possible to say that the variation extent is

- wider the larger the processing time variation ( $|\mu''_{sCH} - \mu'_{sCH}|$ ) is
- wider the nearer stage  $s$  is with respect to the changing stage  $sCH$
- wider in stages near the changing stage  $sCH$ , the higher the buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$  are
- narrower in stages far from the changing stage  $sCH$ , the higher the buffer capacity limits  $cl_s$  are

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<sup>3</sup> $I_s$  is equal to the difference between average cycle time (indicated by Mid\_diff) and average processing time (indicated by Processing\_time) of stage  $s$

**Starving\_time and Starving\_prob KPIs usefulness** Starving\_time and Starving\_prob allow to understand how deeply stages different from the changing stage are affected by a processing time variation: Starving\_time shows how much time an idle resource waits before a job seizes it, because the previous buffer is empty, while Starving\_prob shows how much of its available time a resource on average spends without working because there are no jobs to process.

These KPIs allow to understand a processing time variation direction (increase or decrease) and its approximate size: Starving\_time and Starving\_prob do not directly show the exact change extent, but high KPI changes are the clue that a big system variation is occurring in a stage.

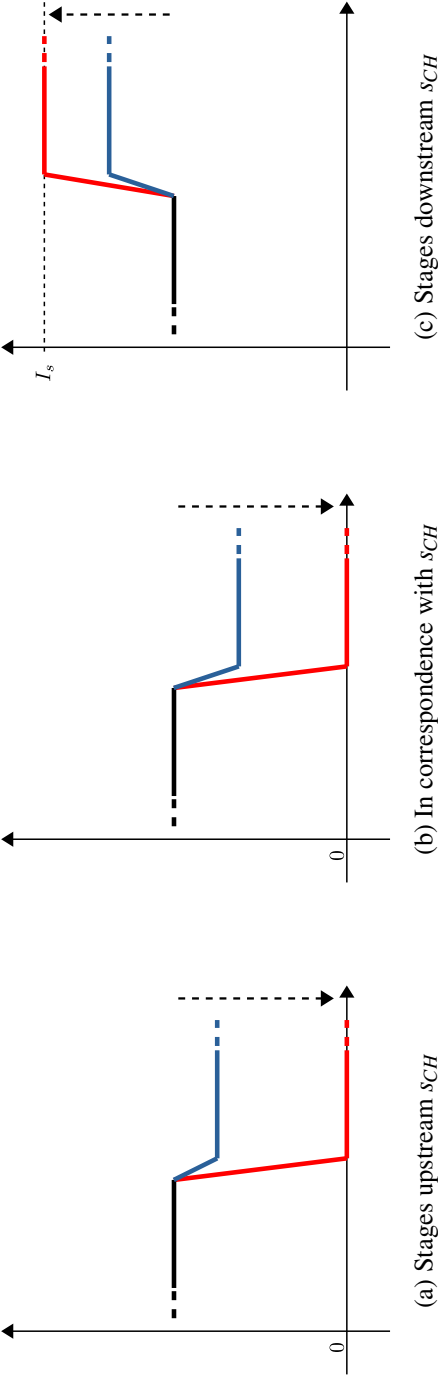


Fig. 7.16 Processing time increase effects on Starving time KPI

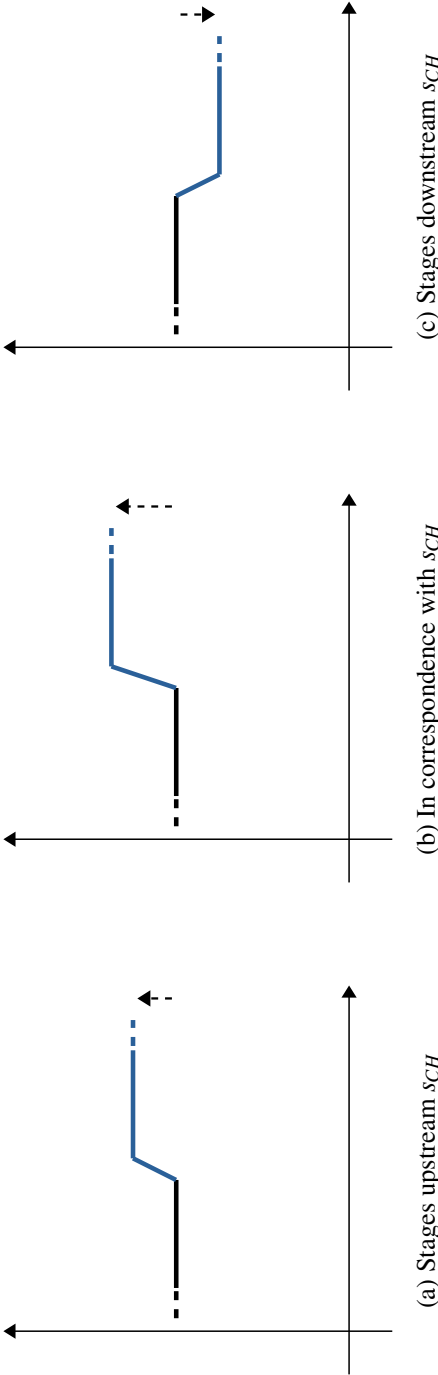


Fig. 7.17 Processing time decrease effects on Starving time KPI

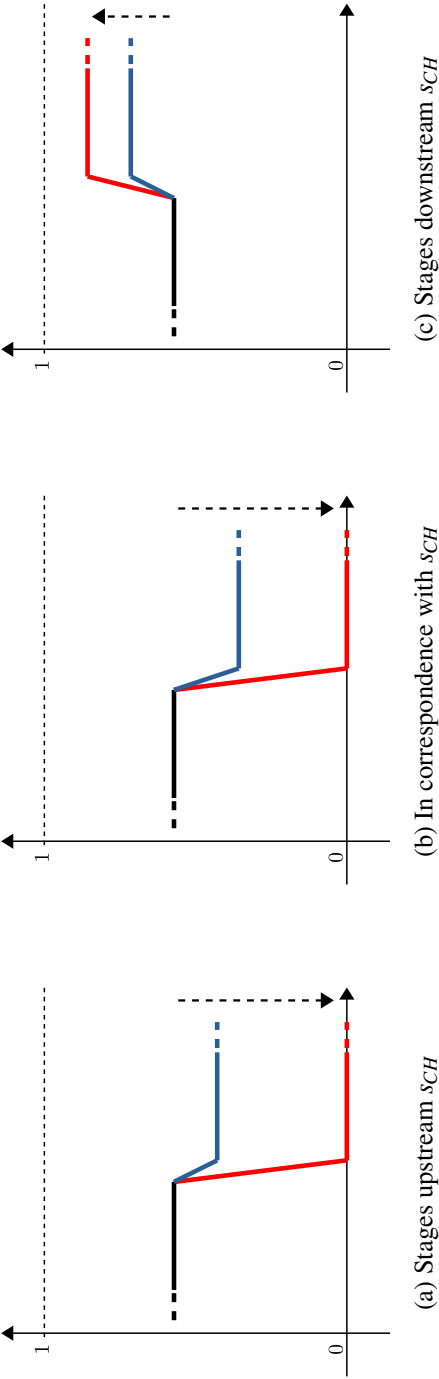


Fig. 7.18 Processing time increase effects on Starving probability KPI

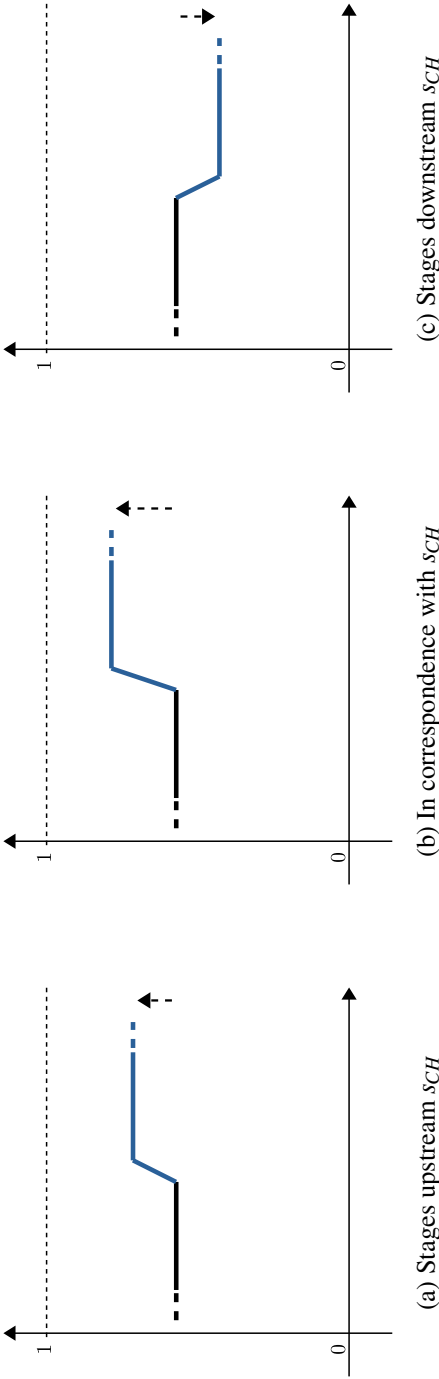


Fig. 7.19 Processing time decrease effects on Starving probability KPI

### 7.2.2 Buffer capacity variation

In this subsection only Waiting\_time, Blocking\_time, Starving\_time and the respective Stage State KPIs are included. Indeed, as table 7.2 shows, these are the only KPIs influenced by this kind of variation.

#### Effects on Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPIs

Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPIs behave as follows:

- When a buffer capacity increase occurs ( $cl_s'' > cl_s'$ )
  - In stages upstream the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue decrease.
  - In the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue increase.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue do not significantly change.
- When a processing time decrease occurs ( $cl_s'' < cl_s'$ )
  - In stages upstream the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue increase.
  - In the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue decrease.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage, Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue do not significantly change.

The variation extent of Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue in a certain stage  $s$  is influenced by stage  $s$  position, and the buffer capacity variation width  $|cl_{sCH}'' - cl_{sCH}'|$ . It is possible to say that the variation extent is

- wider the larger the buffer capacity variation ( $|\mu_{sCH}'' - \mu_{sCH}'|$ ) is.
- wider the nearer stage  $s$  is with respect to the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ .
- wider if the changing stage is upstream or in correspondence with the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} \leq s_{BN}$ ).
- wider the lower the before-change buffer capacity limits ( $cl_s'$ ) are.

The last observation is linked with what is shown in table 7.2: if  $cl_s'$  is too high, and therefore the buffers are underused and mostly unsaturated, a buffer capacity limit variation does not impact Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue, and so it cannot be detected by these KPIs.

**Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue KPIs usefulness** Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue offer two different perspectives regarding the buffers: Waiting\_time has a job-oriented point of view, showing how much time jobs spent in buffers, while Average\_Queue is more queue-oriented, allowing to know how many jobs are on average simultaneously present in a buffer. These KPIs allow to understand a buffer capacity variation direction (increase or decrease) and its approximate size: Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue do not show the exact change extent, but high KPI changes are the clue that a big system variation is occurring in a stage.



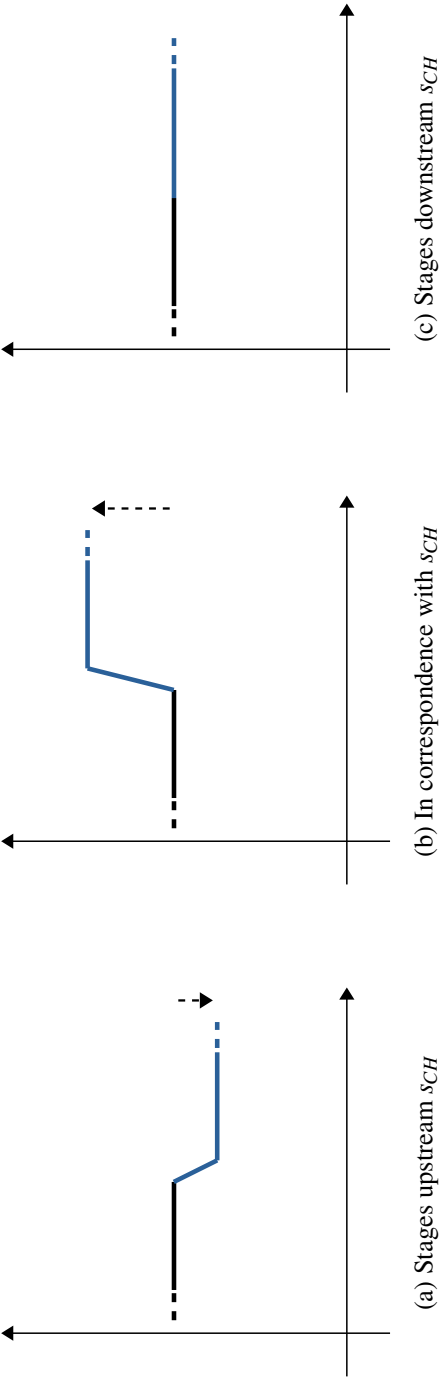


Fig. 7.20 Buffer capacity increase effects on Waiting time KPI

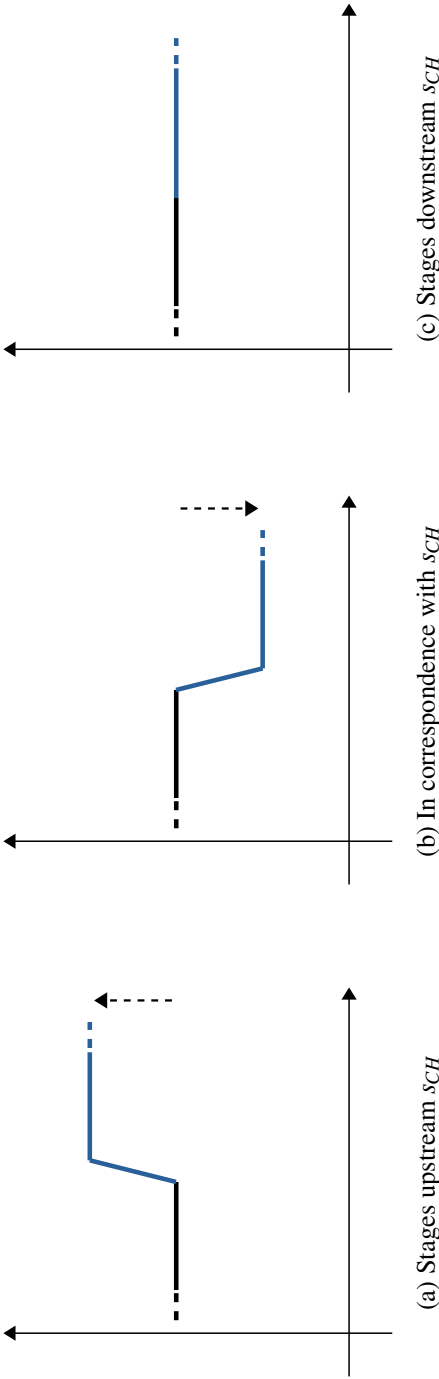


Fig. 7.21 Buffer capacity decrease effects on Waiting time KPI

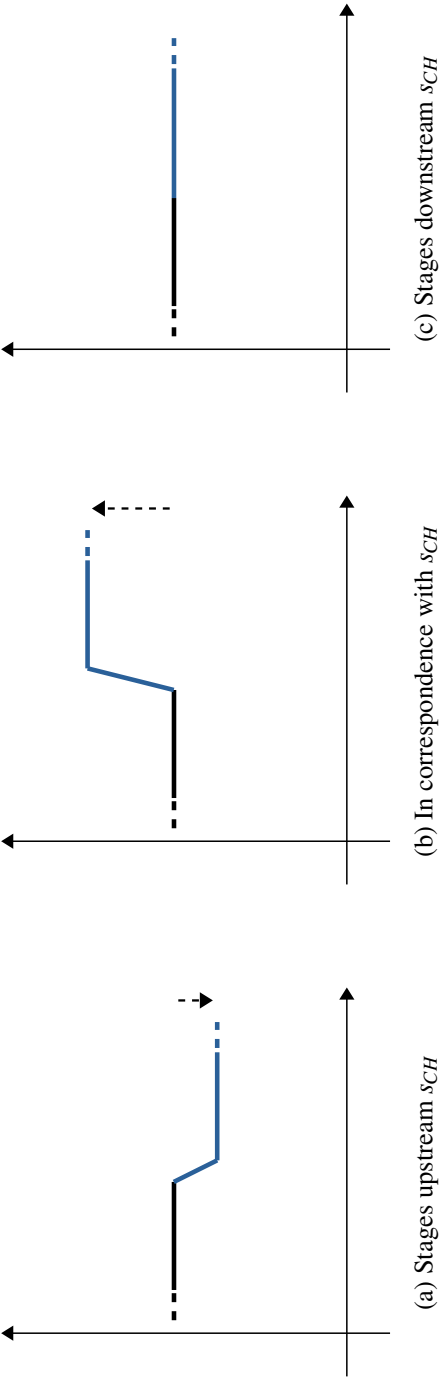


Fig. 7.22 Buffer capacity increase effects on Average Queue KPI

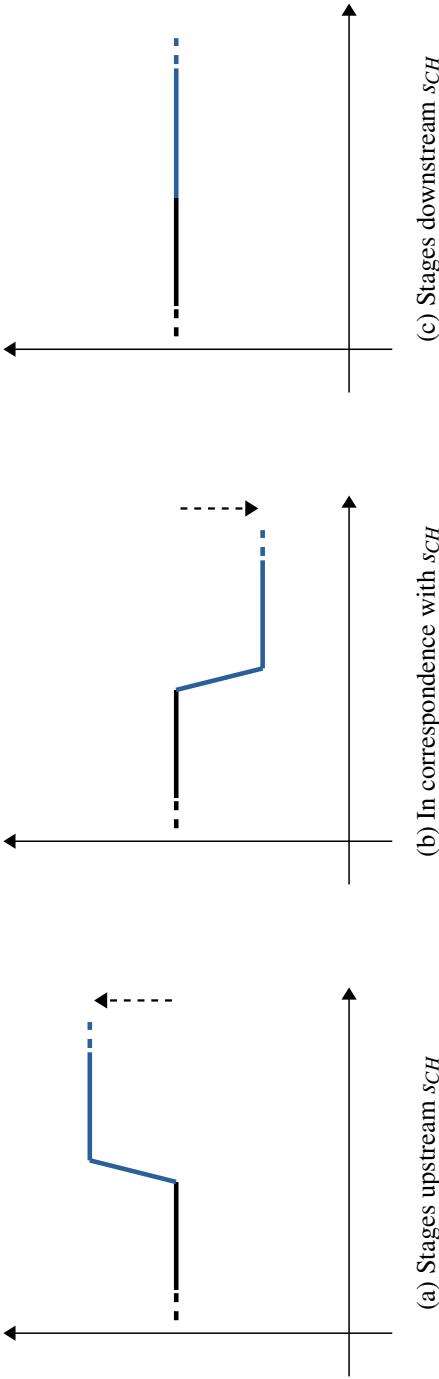


Fig. 7.23 Buffer capacity decrease effects on Average Queue KPI

### Effects on Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob KPIs

Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob KPIs behave as follows:

- When a buffer capacity increase occurs ( $cl_s'' > cl_s'$ )
  - In stages upstream the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob decrease.
  - In the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob increase.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob do not significantly change.
- When a processing time decrease occurs ( $cl_s'' < cl_s'$ )
  - In stages upstream the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob increase.
  - In the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob decrease.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage, Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob do not significantly change.

The variation extent of Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob in a certain stage  $s$  is influenced by stage  $s$  position, and the buffer capacity variation width  $|cl_{sCH}'' - cl_{sCH}'|$ . It is possible to say that the variation extent is

- wider the larger the buffer capacity variation ( $|\mu_{sCH}'' - \mu_{sCH}'|$ ) is.
- wider the nearer stage  $s$  is with respect to the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ .
- wider if the changing stage is upstream or in correspondence with the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} \leq s_{BN}$ ).
- wider the lower the before-change buffer capacity limits ( $cl_s'$ ) are.

The last observation is linked with what is shown in table 7.2: if  $cl_s'$  is too high, and therefore the buffers are underused and mostly unsaturated, a buffer capacity limit variation does not impact Blocking\_time and Blocking\_prob, and so it cannot be detected by these KPIs.

**Usefulness** Starving\_time and Starving\_prob allow to understand how deeply stages different from the changing stage are affected by a buffer capacity variation: Starving\_time shows how much time an idle resource waits before a job seizes it, because the previous buffer is empty, while Starving\_prob shows how much of its available time a resource on average spends without working because there are no jobs to process.

These KPIs allow to understand a buffer capacity variation direction (increase or decrease) and its approximate size: Starving\_time and Starving\_prob do not directly show the exact change extent, but high KPI changes are the clue that a big system variation is occurring in a stage.

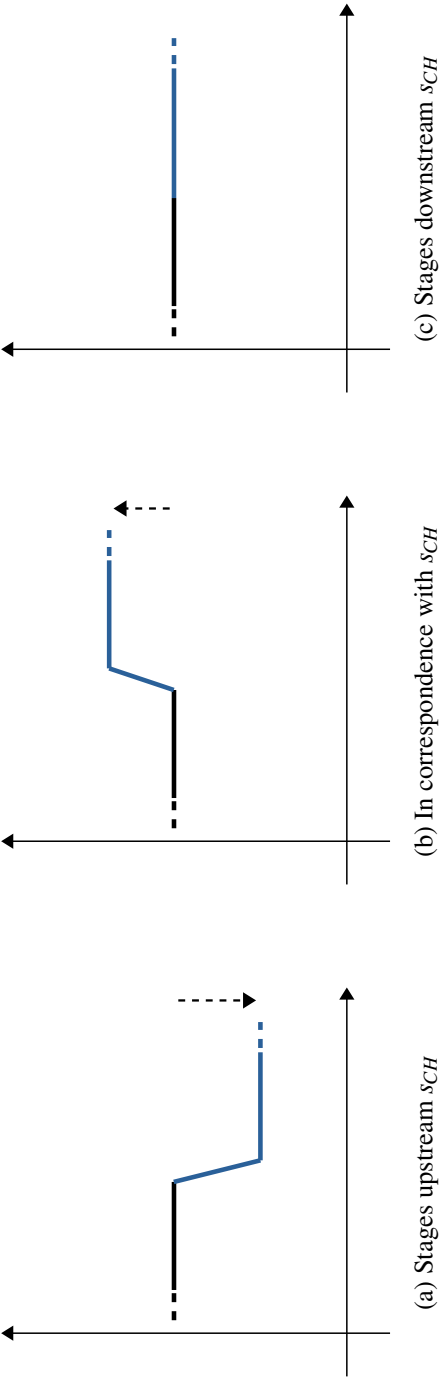


Fig. 7.24 Buffer capacity increase effects on Blocking time KPI

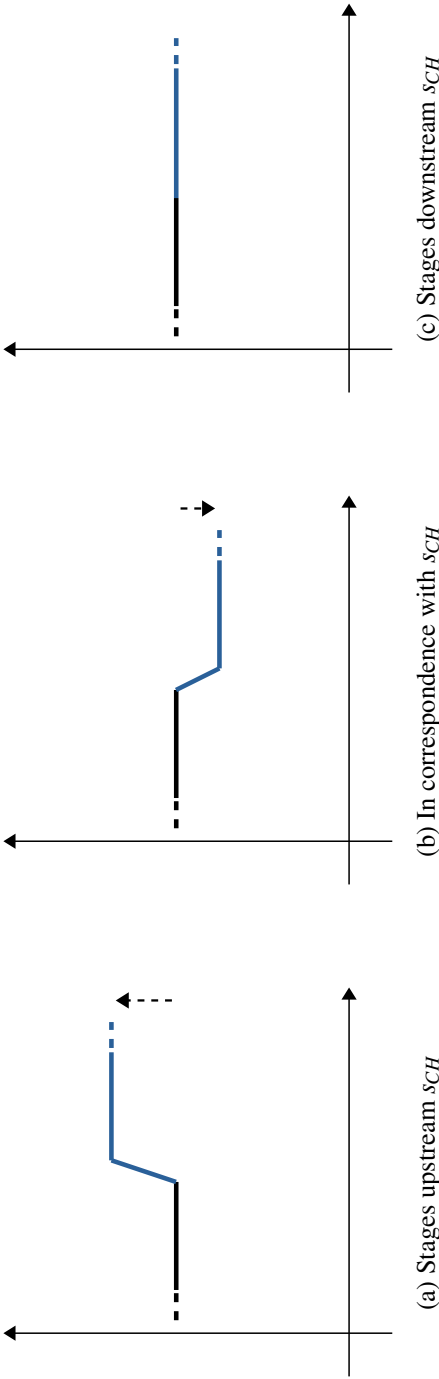


Fig. 7.25 Buffer capacity decrease effects on Blocking time KPI

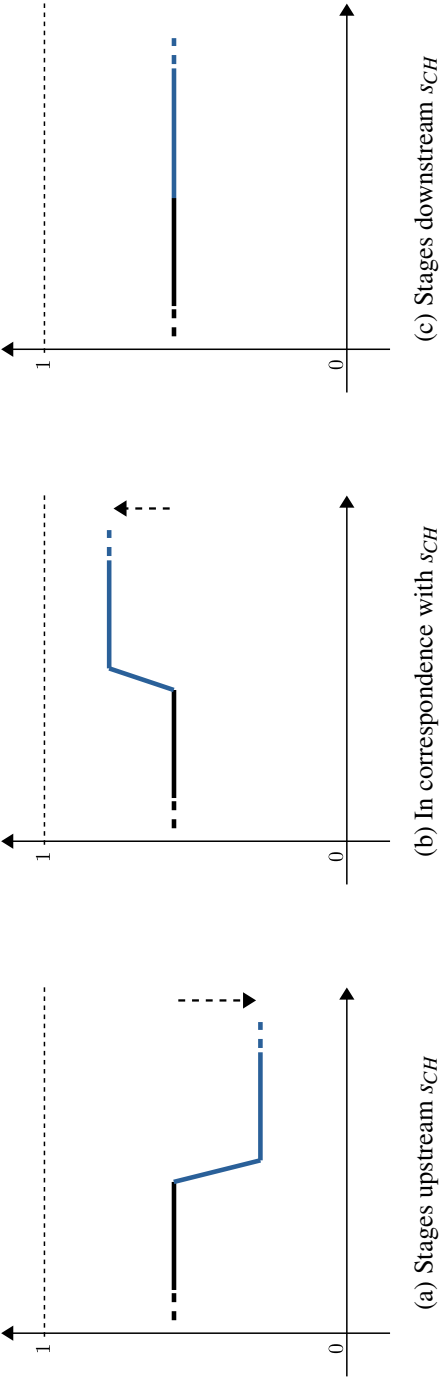


Fig. 7.26 Buffer capacity increase effects on Blocking prob KPI

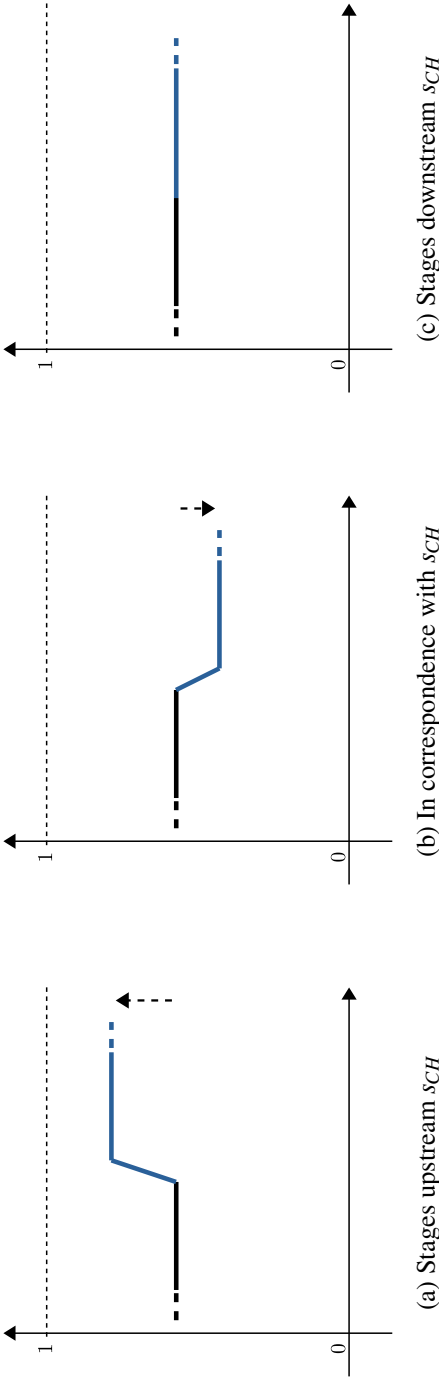


Fig. 7.27 Buffer capacity decrease effects on Blocking prob KPI

### Effects on Starving\_time and Starving\_prob KPIs

Starving\_time and Starving\_prob KPIs behave as follows:

- When a buffer capacity increase occurs ( $cl_s'' > cl_s'$ )
  - In stages upstream the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob increase.
  - In the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob decrease.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob do not significantly change.
- When a processing time decrease occurs ( $cl_s'' < cl_s'$ )
  - In stages upstream the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob decrease.
  - In the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob increase.
  - In stages downstream the changing stage, Starving\_time and Starving\_prob do not significantly change.

The variation extent of Starving\_time and Starving\_prob in a certain stage  $s$  is influenced by stage  $s$  position, and the buffer capacity variation width  $|cl_{sCH}'' - cl_{sCH}'|$ . It is possible to say that the variation extent is

- wider the larger the buffer capacity variation ( $|\mu_{sCH}'' - \mu_{sCH}'|$ ) is.
- wider the nearer stage  $s$  is with respect to the changing stage  $s_{CH}$ .
- wider if the changing stage is upstream or in correspondence with the bottleneck ( $s_{CH} \leq s_{BN}$ ).
- wider the lower the before-change buffer capacity limits ( $cl_s'$ ) are.

The last observation is linked with what is shown in table 7.2: if  $cl_s'$  is too high, and therefore the buffers are underused and mostly unsaturated, a buffer capacity limit variation does not impact Starving\_time and Starving\_prob, and so it cannot be detected by these KPIs.

**Usefulness** Starving\_time and Starving\_prob offer two different perspectives regarding the buffers: Starving\_time has a job-oriented point of view, showing how much time jobs spent in buffers, while Average\_Queue is more queue-oriented, allowing to know how many jobs are on average simultaneously present in a buffer.

These KPIs allow to understand a buffer capacity variation direction (increase or decrease) and its approximate size: Waiting\_time and Average\_Queue do not show the exact change extent, but high KPI changes are the clue that a big system variation is occurring in a stage.



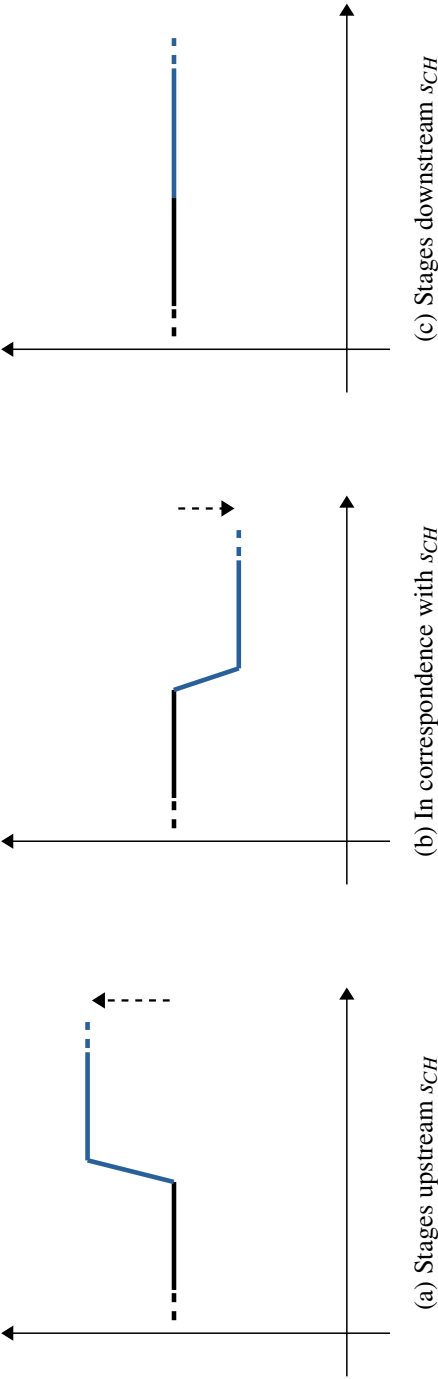


Fig. 7.28 Buffer capacity increase effects on Starving time KPI

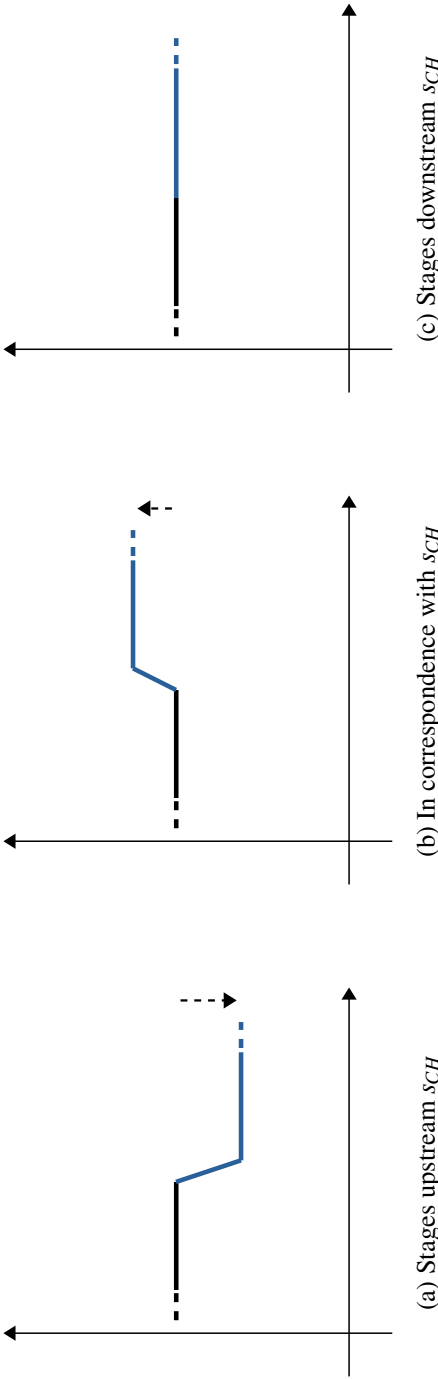


Fig. 7.29 Buffer capacity decrease effects on Starving time KPI

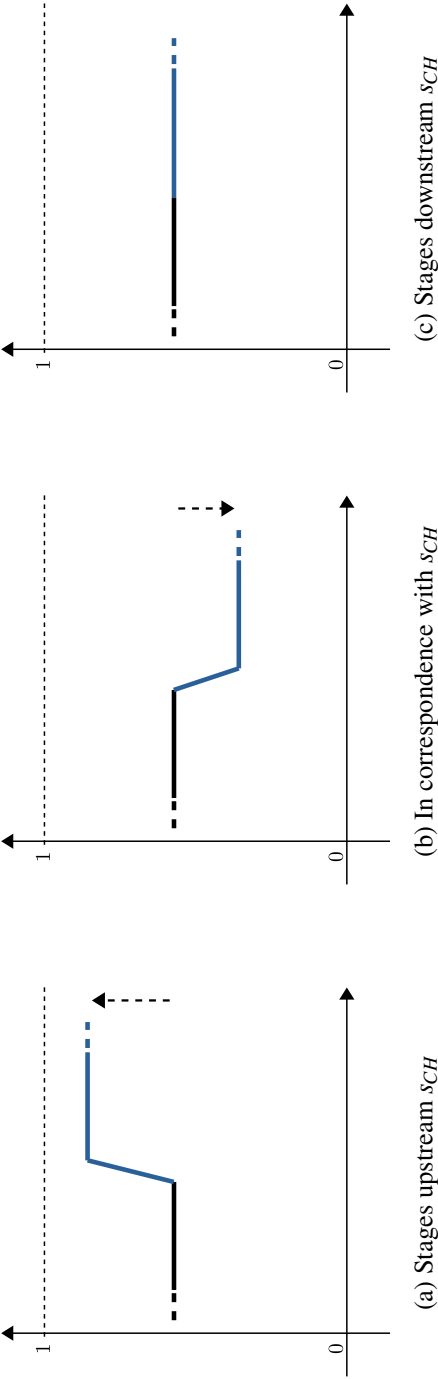


Fig. 7.30 Buffer capacity increase effects on Starving prob KPI

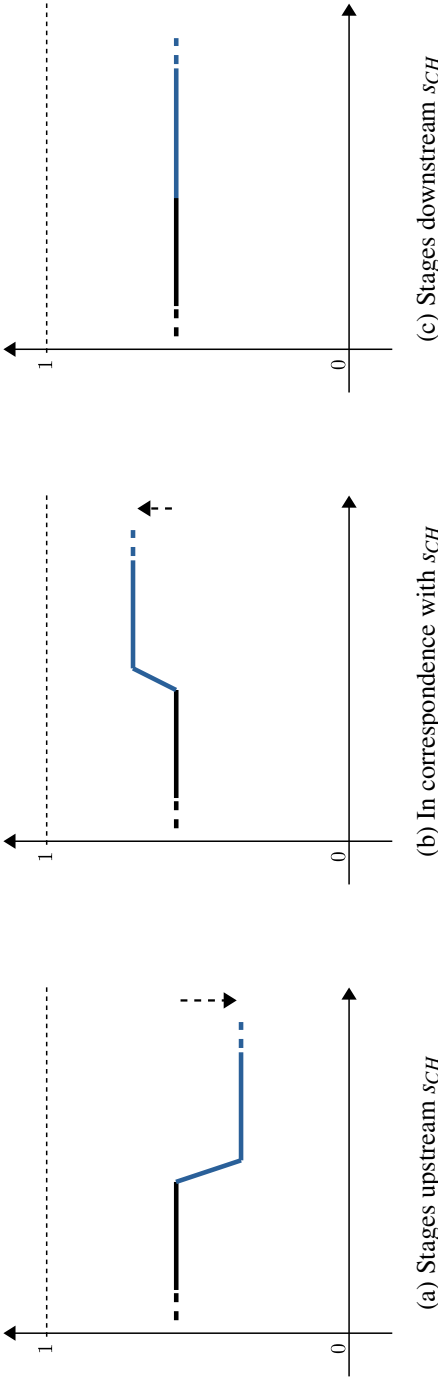


Fig. 7.31 Buffer capacity decrease effects on Starving prob KPI

# Chapter 8

## Conclusions

### 8.1 Summary

Industry 4.0 paradigm is shaping modern manufacturing systems, leading to the implementation of smart production lines and to the design of Digital Twins, that are dynamic software copies of real systems.

In this thesis the issue of a Digital Twin alignment with a real system is addressed, proposing a procedure to update the process model which the Digital Twin of a production line is based on. This method is composed of three steps, that are Change Detection, Change Identification, and Model Modification: the first step consists in figuring out if a process variation verified, by monitoring KPIs extracted from production data in the form of event logs. In the second step, the KPIs are analyzed and classified to define what kind of variation occurred. In the third step, the model representing the system is modified accordingly to the identified variation. The approach novelty lies in the analysis (i.e. detection and identification) of a system variation before the actual model modification: in this way a precise and local update of the model is possible, reducing the effort to keep the Digital Twin aligned and making it a more reliable and less noise-affected copy of the system. The dissertation discusses the first and second step of the method, leaving the third step as subject of future studies.

The thesis is devised as part of the Process Mining field of research, since it aims to exploit event logs, generated by sensors embedded in production lines, as data sources for the computation of KPIs. It has been decided to study the KPI behaviors considering some specific system structures and process variations: the production lines are assumed to be (initially) stable and unsaturated Simple Serial Lines, composed of limited buffer stages having negligible transfer

time among them, with stochastic job arrivals and processing time in machines, no resource breakdowns, blocking after service policy, and unconstrained departures; the considered systems are sensorized, having for each stage three sensors that register in an event log the instant in which a case (i.e. a job) passes through; finally, the variations assumed to occur during the process are permanent and sudden changes of the resource processing capacities and of the buffer capacities.

The KPI extractions from the event log are described, providing the formulas to compute them and explaining what process aspect they represent. Then, the KPI behaviors are displayed and analyzed through a series of simulations imitating production lines having the characteristics described above. Finally, these behaviors are collected to create a map of variation, that is a set of schemes helping to relate the KPI changes with the underlying real system variations.

This thesis showed that it is possible to detect and, even more important, to understand what kind of variation is occurring in a system by monitoring and analyzing KPIs extracted from event logs.

## 8.2 Future developments

As stated in chapter 2, this work aimed to lay the foundations of a new process model update procedure. Many research paths are left unexplored, first and foremost the design of an algorithm to automatically detect and identify process variations, and then addressing the issue of model partial modifications. Moreover, the assumptions made concerning the system should be relaxed, getting to study more complex production line structures (e.g. assembly lines, multi-product systems, occurrence of breakdowns) and different types of variations (e.g. system structure variations, incremental changes). The influence of length and shift parameters on Rolling Windows KPIs should be examined to find a balance between accuracy and detection speed: indeed, wider and overlapping windows better filter data from noise and outliers; on the other side, narrower and non-contiguous windows are more reactive to changes. Finally, other KPI metrics should be considered, computing not only the basic KPIs average on rolling windows, but also moments of higher orders have to be analyzed to deepen the knowledge of the indicator behaviors.

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