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*Ah, la thèse.*

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SAT Theory NP complete Cite [COOK 71]

Used In

- Formal methods Hardware model checking; Software model checking; Termination analysis of term-rewrite systems ; Test pattern generation (testing of software hardware) ; etc
- AI planning, game n queen sudoku
- Bio info Haplotype inference ; Pedigree checking ; Analysis of Genetic; Regulatory Networks; etc.
- Design Automation: Equivalence checking; Delay computation; Fault diagnosis ; etc
- Security: Cryptanalysis ; Inversion attacks on hash functions; etc

Where can found

- Computationally hard problems: Graph coloring, Traveling salesperson
  - Mathematical: van der Waerden numbers ; Quasigroup open problems
  - Core engine for other solvers :0-1 ILP/Pseudo Boolean ;QBF ; #SAT ; SMT ; MAXSAT;
  - Integrated into theorem provers :HOL ; Isabelle ;
- Integrated into widely used software: Eclipse provisioning system based on a Pseudo Boolean solver Suse 10.1 dependency manager based on a custom SAT solver

Interest in BMC [ ]Biere 99]

SAT solver Def

Input: Can encode any Boolean formula into Normal Form

Classical simplification: - Resolution - Subsumption

More complicated Hidden tautology BVA ... Loo Heule simplification slides

Algo CDCL





# **Part I**

## **State-of-the-art**



## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, computers are powerful and used in many applications in different domains. On of this domain is critical application, these applications are running in planes, cars and some software must be secure. Proving the correctness of these software leads to combinatorial explosion. Over the years, computers scientist have developed many techniques to solve this kind of problems like *constraint programming* (CP) [29], *Propositional Satisfiability* (SAT) [6], *Satisfiability Modulo Theory* (SMT) [4].

In this thesis, we focus on solving propositional or Boolean formula, it is simply deciding whether all constraints of a formula can be satisfiable and answer SAT, or it is not possible to satisfy all constraints and answer UNSAT. This problem may appear to be simple but cannot be handled efficiently. This problem is the first one proved NP-complete and so means that every NP problem can be expressed as a propositional formula. Hence, it is an important challenge to optimize solving time. Moreover, SAT is used as a basic component of more complex tools such SMT solvers.

Over the last decades, SAT solver can handle more and more complicated problems in different domains: like *formal methods*: hardware model checking, software model checking, etc; *artificial intelligence*: planning; *games resolution*: sudoku, n-queens, *Bio informatics* : Haplotype inference, *design automation* : equivalence checking. A recent works solves the Pythagorean triple, an old mathematical problems that be solved with a huge proof of 200TB.

This success comes from the introduction of sophisticated heuristics and optimization of the solving algorithm called Conflict Driven Clause Learning (CDCL) algorithm. It is based on the first non memory intensive algorithm named by its authors Davis, Putnam, Logemann, and Loveland (DPLL).

Unfortunately, some problems still intractable for state of the art SAT solver. But, some

of them exhibits symmetries that can be exploited by the solver to accelerate the overall solving time. At its most basic, symmetry is some transformations of an object that leaves it unchanged. In the case of satisfiability problems it maps a solution of a problem to another. Ignoring these properties forces the solver to explore equivalent search space and it is a loss of time and energy (let's save the world).

Effectively it leads to a combinatorial explosion

In the literature, some works exists and tackle the symmetry problems in two different ways. The first one is made without any change of existing solvers. It takes the symmetric problem as input and produce an satisfiability equivalent formula without symmetries.

The seconds one integrate a component to existing solver to handle symmetries and avoid it to manage

## **1.1 Contributions**

## **1.2 Structure of the manuscript**

# THE BOOLEAN SATISFIABILITY PROBLEM

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In this thesis, our goal is to exploit symmetrical properties of a SAT problems. Before, get to the heart of the matter, we first introduce the Boolean satisfiability (SAT) problems. These problems are propositional formula representing constraints of a system. A SAT solver aims to satisfy all constraints present in the formula. It is a decision problem that answer SAT if it is possible and UNSAT otherwise.

## 2.1 SAT basics

A most basic block of satisfiability problem is *Boolean variable*, or *propositional variable*. It has two possible values : true or false (noted respectively  $\top$  or  $\perp$ ) that are *constants*. We denote *literal*  $l$ , a propositional variable or its negation. For a given variable  $x$ , the positive literal is represented by  $x$  and the negative one by  $\neg x$ . To build more complex formula, it

exists different operators,  $\neg$ ,  $\vee$  and  $\wedge$  that are respectively negation, disjunction and conjunction. Others operators like  $\Rightarrow$ ,  $\Leftrightarrow$  and  $\oplus$ , respectively called implication, equivalence and exclusive disjunction (xor) can be written with the basic one. For example  $a \Rightarrow b$  can be expressed as  $\neg a \vee b$ , where  $a$  and  $b$  are propositional variables. These operators have a different priority and given in decreasing order: negation ( $\neg$ ), conjunction ( $\wedge$ ), disjunction ( $\vee$ ). To ensure the priority, constraints are between parenthesis.

$x$	$y$	$\neg x$	$x \vee y$	$x \wedge y$
0	0	1	0	0
0	1	1	1	0
1	0	0	1	0
1	1	0	1	1

Table 2.1: Truth table of basic operators

The value given to each variable of a formula is called an *assignment* noted  $\alpha$  and defined as follow:

$$\alpha : \mathcal{V} \mapsto \{\top, \perp\}$$

As usual,  $\alpha$  is said *total*, or *complete*, when all elements of  $\mathcal{V}$  have an image by  $\alpha$ , otherwise it is *partial*. By abuse of notation, an assignment is often represented by the set of its true literals. The set of all (possibly partial) assignments of  $\mathcal{V}$  is noted  $Ass(\mathcal{V})$ . A *truth table* gives an evaluation of all possible assignment for a given formula. Table 2.1 shows the evaluation of negation, conjunction and disjunction operators. For convenience, true value ( $\top$ ) is also represented as 1 and false value ( $\perp$ ) is represented as 0.

When a formula is always true independently from the assignment it is called a *tautology*,  $x \vee \neg x$  is an example of tautologous formula.

## Normal forms

In Boolean logic, it exists some structural properties, called *normal form*. To present them, we first need to introduce *clause* and *cube* concepts.

A *clause*  $\omega$  is a finite disjunction of literals represented by:

$$\omega = \bigvee_{i=1}^k l_i$$

A *cube*  $\gamma$  is a finite conjunction of literals represented by:

$$\gamma = \bigwedge_{i=1}^k l_i$$

On respect to its size, a clause is said *unary*, *binary* or *ternary* if it contains respectively one, two, three literals. The clause form have a property called *subsumption*. When a clause  $\omega_1$  is subset of an other clause  $\omega_2$  noted  $\omega_1 \subset \omega_2$ . And any assignment that satisfies  $\omega_1$  also satisfies  $\omega_2$ , so  $\omega_2$  is *redundant* towards  $\omega_1$  and so can be removed of the formula.

*Conjunctive Normal Form* (CNF) of a formula is a finite conjunction of clauses A CNF can be either noted:

$$\varphi = \bigwedge_{i=1}^k \omega_i$$

*Disjunctive normal form* (DNF) of a formula is finite disjunction of cubes and noted:

$$\varphi = \bigvee_{i=1}^k \gamma_i$$

The following table is a summary of existing laws about Boolean formulas that allow to transform any formula to a normal form.

<i>associativity</i>	<i>associativity of <math>\vee</math></i>	$(x \vee y) \vee z \equiv x \vee (y \vee z)$
<i>commutativity of <math>\vee</math></i>	$x \vee y \equiv y \vee x$	
<i>identity</i>	$x \vee \perp \equiv x$	
<i>domination</i>	$x \vee \top \equiv \top$	
<i>idempotent</i>	$x \vee x \equiv x$	
<i>distribution over land</i>	$x \vee (y \wedge z) \equiv (x \vee y) \wedge (x \vee z)$	
<i>associativity of <math>\wedge</math></i>	$(x \wedge y) \wedge z \equiv x \wedge (y \wedge z)$	
<i>commutativity of <math>\wedge</math></i>	$x \wedge y \equiv y \wedge x$	
<i>identity</i>	$x \wedge \top \equiv x$	
<i>domination</i>	$x \wedge \perp \equiv \perp$	
<i>idempotent</i>	$x \wedge x \equiv x$	
<i>distribution over <math>\vee</math></i>	$x \wedge (y \vee z) \equiv (x \wedge y) \vee (x \wedge z)$	
<i>negation 1</i>	$x \vee \neg x \equiv \top$	
<i>negation 2</i>	$x \wedge \neg x \equiv \perp$	
<i>double negation</i>	$\neg(\neg x) \equiv x$	
<i>De Morgan 1</i>	$\neg x \vee \neg y \equiv \neg(x \wedge y)$	
<i>De Morgan 2</i>	$\neg x \wedge \neg y \equiv \neg(x \vee y)$	

Table 2.2: Set of laws of operators

Every formula can be transformed into a normal form with different complexity and the resulting formula is *equivalent*. In other words, every assignment  $\alpha$  that satisfies formula  $\varphi$  also models the resulting formula  $\psi$  and vice-versa, denoted as  $\varphi \equiv \psi$ . Also, we say a formula  $\psi$  is *logical consequence* of a formula  $\varphi$  is every model of  $\varphi$  is also a model of  $\psi$  and is denoted as  $\varphi \models \psi$ .

Conjunctive normal form is the input form of state-of-the-art solvers.

Note that each cube in DNF is a solution to whole formula in CNF form.

## Satisfiability problem

A *Boolean variable*, or *propositional variable*, is a variable that has two possible values : true or false (noted respectively  $\top$  or  $\perp$ ). A *literal*  $l$  is a propositional variable or its negation. For a given variable  $x$ , the positive literal is represented by  $x$  and the negative one by  $\neg x$ .

A *clause*  $\omega$  is a finite disjunction of literals represented equivalently by  $\omega = \bigvee_{i=1}^k l_i$  or the set of its literals  $\omega = \{l_i\}_{i \in [1,k]}$ . A clause with a single literal is called *unit clause*. A clause is a *tautology* if it is always true, a clause that contains a positive and negative value of a clause for example. A *conjunctive normal form (CNF) formula*  $\varphi$  is a finite conjunction of clauses. A CNF can be either noted  $\varphi = \bigwedge_{i=1}^k \omega_i$  or  $\varphi = \{\omega_i\}_{i \in [1,k]}$ . We denote  $\mathcal{V}_\varphi$  ( $\mathcal{L}_\varphi$ ) the set of variables (literals) used in  $\varphi$  (the index in  $\mathcal{V}_\varphi$  and  $\mathcal{L}_\varphi$  is usually omitted when clear from context).

For a given formula  $\varphi$ , an *assignment* of the variables of  $\varphi$  is a function  $\alpha : \mathcal{V} \mapsto \{\top, \perp\}$ . As usual,  $\alpha$  is *total*, or *complete*, when all elements of  $\mathcal{V}$  have an image by  $\alpha$ , otherwise it is *partial*. By abuse of notation, an assignment is often represented by the set of its true literals. The set of all (possibly partial) assignments of  $\mathcal{V}$  is noted  $\text{Ass}(\mathcal{V})$ .

The assignment  $\alpha$  *satisfies* the clause  $\omega$ , denoted  $\alpha \models \omega$ , if  $\alpha \cap \omega \neq \emptyset$ . Similarly, the assignment  $\alpha$  satisfies the propositional formula  $\varphi$ , denoted  $\alpha \models \varphi$ , if  $\alpha$  satisfies all the clauses of  $\varphi$ . Note that a formula may be satisfied by a partial assignment. In this case, unassigned variable are called *dont care*. A formula is said to be *satisfiable* (SAT) if there is at least one assignment that satisfies it; otherwise the formula is *unsatisfiable* (UNSAT).

## An NP-complete problem

The SAT problems is the first NP-complete algorithm as proven by Stephen Cook in 1971 [7]. NP-completeness means that a SAT problem can be solved with a non deterministic machine in polynomial time (NP) and is also NP-hard. A problem is said NP-hard if everything in NP can be transformed into it in polynomial time. One of the most important unsolved problem in theoretical computer science is the P versus NP problem. This question is one of the seven millennium prize problems.

Some particular form of the SAT problems can be computed in linear time for 2-SAT [3] where each clause is in binary form i.e. size of two. Others particular form can be solved in polynomial time like Horn SAT [3] in which it suffice to apply *unit propagation* explained in section 2.1 until fix point. Xor-SAT is satisfiability where each clause contains exclusive or belong also to the polynomial class.



## Solving a SAT problem

Two kinds of algorithm exists to solve satisfiability problems. First, the *incomplete* algorithm which does not provide any guarantee that will eventually report either any satisfiable assignment or declare that formula is unsatisfiable. This kind of algorithm is out of scope of this thesis. Second, the *complete* algorithm, which provides a guarantee that if an assignment exists it will be reached or it will declare that formula is unsatisfiable. This section describes different *complete* algorithm to solve a propositional formula.

### A naive algorithm

A naive approach to solve a SAT problem is to try all possible assignments. In total, for a propositional formula with  $n$  variables, it leads to  $2^n$  assignments in the worst case. Figure 2.1 illustrate the search tree for a given problem with six variables. In this case  $\alpha_{11}$  ( $\neg x_1, \neg x_2, x_3, \neg x_4, x_5, \neg x_6$ ) is found as a solution of the problem. In the general case, this algorithm is obviously intractable on real problems even for a formula with few variables.

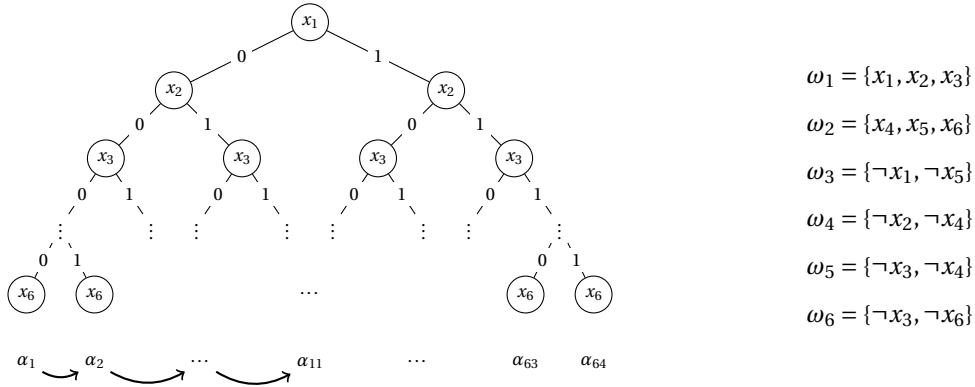


Figure 2.1: All possible assignments for a problem with 6 variables

### Davis Putnam Logemann Loveland (DPLL) algorithm

One of the first non memory intensive algorithm to solve the SAT problems is the Davis Putnam Logemann Loveland (DPLL) algorithm [9]. It explores a binary tree using depth first search as given in Algorithm 1. The construction of the tree is related to a *decision* literal (line 8) then, recursive call with each value are checked. When a leaf report UNSAT (line 5), other branches are explored. By recursive construction of the algorithm, when positive and negative value of a literal reach UNSAT, solver *backtracks* at most one level, this fact is called *chronological backtracking*. If all leaves report UNSAT the formula  $\varphi$  is unsatisfiable line 14. Finally, if any branch found a solution i.e. the problem is empty, formula is satisfiable corresponding assignment is returned (lines 10 and 12)

An important function in the DPLL algorithm is `unitPropagation` line 3 and it is detailed in Algorithm 2. It searches all unit clauses, then, to ensure satisfiability these literals must be true and added to the current assignment. Formula is then simplified as follow,

```

1 function DPLL ( $\varphi$ : CNF formula,  $\alpha$  assignment)
2   returns an assignment if  $\varphi$  is SAT and UNSAT otherwise
3    $\varphi, \alpha \leftarrow \text{unitPropagation}(\varphi, \alpha);$ 
4   if  $\{\} \in \varphi$  then
5     return UNSAT;                                // This branch is UNSAT
6   if  $\varphi = \{\}$  then
7     return  $\alpha$ ;                                //  $\varphi$  is SAT
8    $x \leftarrow \text{assignDecisionLiteral}();$ 
9   if  $\alpha \leftarrow \text{DPLL}(\varphi \cup \{x\}, \alpha) \neq \text{UNSAT}$  then
10    return  $\alpha$ 
11  else if  $\alpha \leftarrow \text{DPLL}(\varphi \cup \{\neg x\}, \alpha) \neq \text{UNSAT}$  then
12    return  $\alpha$ 
13  else
14    return UNSAT;                                //  $\varphi$  is UNSAT

```

**Algorithm 1:** The DPLL algorithm.

clauses that contains this literal are already satisfied and can be deleted; negative literals are removed from the clause that belongs to him. This procedure ends when either no unit clause remains or an inconsistency was found (empty clause).

```

1 function unitPropagation ( $\varphi$ : CNF formula,  $\alpha$  assignment)
2   returns CNF formula and assignment  $\alpha$ 
3   while  $\{l\} \in \varphi$  and  $\{l\} \notin \varphi$  do
4     // Remove all clauses containing  $l$ , all literals  $\neg l$ 
5      $\varphi \leftarrow \varphi \setminus l$ 
6      $\alpha \leftarrow \alpha \cup \{l\}$ 
7   return  $\varphi, \alpha$ 

```

**Algorithm 2:** Unit propagation

When DPLL algorithm is executed on the formula in Figure 2.1, after the decision of literal  $\neg x_1$  and  $\neg x_2$  unit propagation detects that  $x_3$  must be true. This propagation prevents to explore assignments from  $\alpha_1$  to  $\alpha_8$ . Moreover, application to unit propagation provokes more unit clauses and leads directly to a solution. An important part of efficiency of DPLL is due to choose the variable that divide the search tree made by the procedure `assignDecisionLiteral`. The objective of this function is to find a literal that will generate a maximum of unit propagation. Intuitively, decision literals can be viewed as "guesses" and propagated literals can be viewed as "deductions". Finding a optimal variable is NP-Hard. Different heuristics exists to choose the decision variable, some of them will be presented in section 16.

### Conflict Driven Clause Learning (CDCL) algorithm

The principal weakness of DPLL algorithm is to make same inconsistencies several times (principally due to chronological backtracking), incurring unnecessary CPU usage.

Conflict Driven Clause Learning (CDCL) algorithm 3 is another sound and complete algorithm to resolve a SAT problem and overcome principal weakness of DPLL.

Algorithm 3 gives an overview of CDCL, Like DPLL, it walks on a binary search tree. Initially, the current assignment is empty and decision level that indicated the depth of the search tree noted as  $dl$  is set to zero. Algorithm first applies unit propagation to the formula  $\varphi$  for the current assignment  $\alpha$  (line 6). Note that it is exactly the same procedure as the one used for DPLL. An inconsistency or a *conflict* at level zero indicates that the formula is unsatisfiable, and the algorithm reports it (lines 8 and 9). When the conflict is occurring at a higher level, it reason was analyzed and a clause called *conflict clause* is deduced (line 10). This clause is *learned* (line 12) (added to the formula). This clause is redundant from the current formula and so as it does not change the satisfiability of  $\varphi$ . It also avoids encountering a conflict with the same causes in the future. Working of this function will be presented thereafter. The analysis is completed by the computation of a *backjump*, solver unassign some literals and decrease the decision level (line 11). As the level can be much lower than the current assignment this is called *non chronological backtracking*. Finally, if no conflict appears, the algorithm chooses a new decision literal (lines 14 and 15). The above steps are repeated until the satisfiability status of the formula is determined.

```

1 function CDCL ( $\varphi$ : CNF formula)
2   returns  $\top$  if  $\varphi$  is SAT and  $\perp$  otherwise
3    $dl \leftarrow 0$ ;                                // Current decision level
4    $\alpha \leftarrow \emptyset$ ;
5   while not all variables are assigned do
6      $\varphi, \alpha \leftarrow \text{unitPropagation}(\varphi|_{\alpha}, \alpha)$ ;
7     if  $\{\} \in \varphi$  then                                // A conflict occurs
8       if  $dl = 0$  then
9         return  $\perp$ ;                                //  $\varphi$  is UNSAT
10       $\omega \leftarrow \text{analyzeConflict}()$ ;
11       $dl \leftarrow \text{backjumpAndRestartPolicies}()$ ;
12       $\varphi \leftarrow \varphi \cup \{\omega\}$ ;
13    else
14       $\alpha \leftarrow \alpha \cup \text{assignDecisionLiteral}()$ ;
15       $dl \leftarrow dl + 1$ ;
16  return  $\top$ ;                                //  $\varphi$  is SAT

```

**Algorithm 3:** The CDCL algorithm.

## Conflict Analysis

A conflict is an inconsistency discovered by the solver, a situation that requires for a variable to be set simultaneously to the  $\top$  and  $\perp$  value. Figure 2.2 shows an assignments that leads to a conflict. First the solver chose  $\neg x_1$  as decision then  $\neg x_6$  and then  $\neg x_5$ . This last one propagates  $x_4$  which in turn propagates  $x_2$  and  $x_3$ . On clause  $\omega_1$ ,  $x_3$  needs to be  $\top$  and  $\perp$  in  $\omega_5$  so a conflict appears.

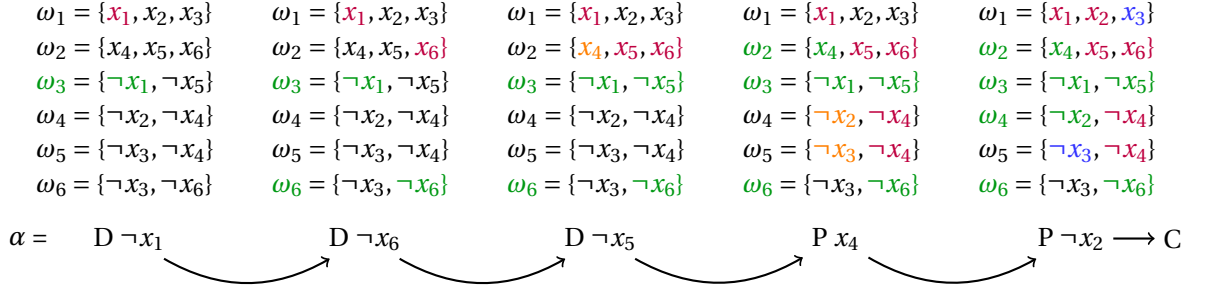


Figure 2.2: Decisions/Propagations that leads to a conflict

This series of decisions would provoke same propagation and leads to the same conflict. To avoid this situation, the solver needs to analyze the reason of the conflict with so called *implication graph*. Implication graph represents the current state of the solver proof system. It records every dependencies among variables and so it is updated either when a variable is assigned on decision/propagation or when a variable is unassigned. The implication graph is a directed acyclic graph (DAG) in which a vertex represents an assigned variable labeled as  $l@dl(l)$  where  $l$  represents assigned literal and  $dl(l)$  represents the decision level of the literal  $l$ . Root vertexes, that have no incoming edges, are literals chosen by decision heuristics and others are propagated literals. Incoming arcs labeled with a clause represents the *reason* of this propagation. This clause must be assertive i.e. all of its literals are false except one that are not yet assigned. Figure 2.3 shows implication graph of the previous example (fig. 2.2) until the conflict.

`analyzeConflict` procedure analyzes this graph to found the reason of the conflict. To do that, a search of *unique implication point* (UIP) is performed. UIP of a decision level in the implication graph is a variables which lies on every path from the decision to the conflict. Note that, there are many UIP for a given decision level. In such case, UIPs are ordered according to the distance with the contradiction. The first UIP is the closest to the conflict. It is well known that the first UIP provides the smallest set of assignment that is responsible for the contradiction [33]

An UIP divides the implication in two sides with a *cut*, the reason side contains decision variables that is responsible for the contradiction and the conflict side that contains the conflict. Note that, UIP is always is the reason side. Figure 2.3 depicts two cuts in the implication graph.

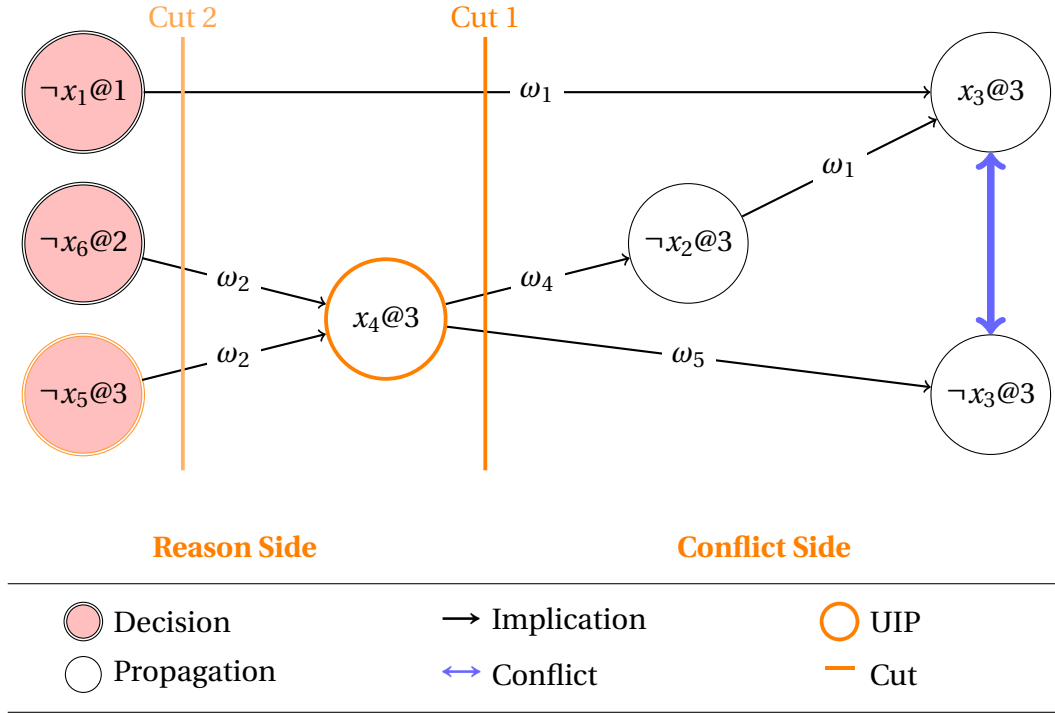


Figure 2.3: Implication graph

Once the reason side of a conflict is established, a conflict driven clause or conflict clause is produced. It purposes to avoid same contradiction. To build this clause, it suffices to negate literals that have an ongoing arc to the first cut that contains first UIP. In fig. 2.3, produced clause will be  $\omega_l = \{x_1, \neg x_4\}$ . Since the information of this clause is redundant with respect to the original formula. It can be added without any satisfiability restrictions. The conflict clause can be simplified using the implication graph [32].

`backjumpAndRestartPolicies` procedure is executed after producing the conflict clause. It will unassigned all decision until the first one that is responsible for the inconsistency. Add the conflict clause prune search space that contains no solution. This is the key point of the CDCL algorithm. The restart policy will be discussed in the next section. In our example Figure 2.3, the target decision level is one. The first UIP variable must be as-assertive, and will be propagated in the next loop of the solving algorithm. If a conflict implied only one level, the decision variable must be assigned to the opposite value at level zero. Roughly speaking, to ensure satisfiability of the formula, this literal must be true without any decision.

## Heuristics

This sections gives an overview of different heuristics present in modern SAT solvers.

**Decision heuristics.** Variable used to divide problems have a huge impact on the overall solving time by the solver. Decision variable may impact the number of propagation and

so the depth of the search tree.

Variable State Independent Decaying Sum (VSIDS) [28] is one of the decision heuristic and used nowadays in almost all solvers. Each variable has an activity and was increased by a multiplicative factor when it participate to the resolution of the conflict. A solver has thousands conflicts during the solving and so activity of variables are very volatile. Decision heuristics choose unassigned variable with the highest activity. The idea behind this heuristics is to solve "hard" part of problem at the top of the search tree. Hence, it is much more efficient when coupled with the restart heuristics.

Learning rate based branching (LRB [23]) is a most recent decision heuristics. It is a generalization of VSIDS and its goal is to optimize the *learning rate* (LR), defined as the ability to generate learnt clauses. The LRB of a variable is the weighted average (computed with *exponential recency weighted average* (ERWA)) value taken by its LR over the time. Unassigned variable with a highest LRB are chose as decision. The idea behind this heuristics is to keep variables that used to generate learnt clause in the search tree.

**Restarts.** Another important heuristic is *restart*. Basically the solver abandons it current assignment and so start from the top of the tree, while maintaining other information notably learnt clauses but also scores of variables in the decision heuristic. It prevents the solver to get stuck in "hard" (heavy tailing [16] part of the search space and can not escape due to backjump few levels after conflict resolution. Restart is best effort heuristics, hoping that, with more information, a better assignments was made. Hence, in practice, SAT solvers usually restarts after a certain number of conflict. Empirically a solver with restart has a better results [17] and is today used in almost all state of the art solvers.

## Preprocessing / Inprocessing

In order to optimize resolution time by the solver, some transformation to simplify the original formula can be applied. This is done by *preprocessing* engine before the start of solving. When it is used at some point during the solving, usually after a restart, it is called *inprocessing*.

Simplification of the formula is made by removing clauses and/or variables.

*Variable elimination* simplification is based on *Resolution inference rule*. Suppose two clauses  $\omega_1 = \{x_1, x_i, \dots, x_j\}$  and  $\omega_2 = \{\neg x_1, y_i, \dots, y_j\}$ . The resolution inference rule allows to derive clause  $\omega_3 = \{x_i, \dots, x_j, y_i, \dots, y_j\}$  which is called the *resolvent* as it results from resolving two clauses on the literal  $x_1$  and  $\neg x_1$ . Moreover, applying variable elimination until either an empty clause is derived (unsatisfiable formula) or no more application of the resolution are possible (satisfiable formula). This is a complete algorithm to solve a SAT problem. Its major issue is to explicitly generate all resolvent and can be exponential in CNF size. Hence, the memory of computer will be limiting factor.

*Subsumption* is a simple principle to remove clauses. Suppose two clauses  $\omega_1$  and  $\omega_2$  such that  $\omega_1 \subset \omega_2$ , then  $\omega_2$  can be safely removed from the original formula. *Self Subsuming resolution* is a principle that use resolution rule and subsumption. Resolvent clause subsumes the original one. Example  $\omega_1 = \{x_1, \neg x_2, x_3\}$  and  $\omega_2 = \{x_1, \neg x_2, x_3, x_4\}$ , then resolvent

clause will be  $\omega_3 = \{x_1, x_3\}$  which subsumes  $\omega_2$ . This principle is presents in `SatElite` [13] preprocessor engine and used in almost all modern SAT solvers.

Other simplification techniques exists such that *Gaussian elimination* which detect sub formula in a xor-SAT form and solve it in a polynomial complexity. Moreover, this technique can also be used as inprocessing [31].

Some techniques exploits the structure of the original formula and add relevant clauses to speed up the resolution time of the SAT solver. One of them use community structure of the formula to find good clauses to add into. A preprocessor engine doing that is `modprep` [2]. Usage of symmetries also add relevant clause in the formula and will be detailed in the next chapter.

## Parallel SAT solving

With the emergence of multi core architectures and increasing power of computer, one way to optimize the solving of a SAT problem is the exploitation of these cores. Effectively, SAT problems are a good candidate for parallelism. *Portfolio* is a technique that launches several SAT solver in parallel with different heuristics (decisions, restarts, ...) that communicates or not between us. When one of them found a solution or found that none exists, the overall computation is finished. Another technique to make parallel SAT solver exists and called *divide and conquer* in which the search space was divided dynamically according to positive and negative value of the decision literal. Several solvers cooperate to found solution, each of them are assigned to sub formula induced by the division. Some specific techniques like load balancing and work stealing is applied to avoid a solver to be idle. A recent framework *PaInleSS* (a Framework for Parallel SAT Solving) can be used to easily create a new parallel SAT solver with different heuristics [21] [22]. Authors of this framework win the parallel tracks of SAT competition <sup>1</sup> in 2018.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.satcompetition.org/>





## SYMMETRY AND SAT

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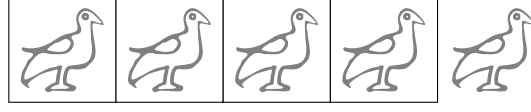
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Despite SAT solving is an NP-complete algorithm, it works well on many real industrial problems. This is principally due to capacity to cut off search space with learning clause. Another way to cut off search space is the exploitation of symmetry. At its most basics, symmetry is a transformation of an object that leaves it unchanged. Symmetries is common in real life, if we show the figure

Some instances exhibit symmetries and not taking them into account forces solvers to needlessly explore isomorphic search space.

In this chapter, we show how to detect if a given formula present symmetries and if it is the case, how to exploit them for accelerating solving time.

**Hakan:** mettre cette figure pour les pigeonhole problem



### 3.1 Group basics

As symmetries is a belongs to a branch of mathematics called theory group. This section gives us an overview of group theory.

#### Groups

A *group* is a structure  $\langle G, * \rangle$ , where  $G$  is a non-empty set and  $*$  a binary operation such as the following axioms are satisfied:

- *associativity*:  $\forall a, b, c \in G, (a * b) * c = a * (b * c)$
- *closure*:  $\forall a, b \in G, a * b \in G$ .
- *identity*:  $\forall a \in G, \exists e$  such that  $a * e = e * a = a$
- *inverse*:  $\forall a \in G, \exists b \in G$ , commonly denoted  $a^{-1}$  such that  $a * a^{-1} = a^{-1} * a = e$

Note that *commutativity* is not required i.e  $a * b = b * a$ , for  $a, b \in G$ . A group is *abelian* if it satisfies the commutativity rule. Moreover, the last definition leads to important properties which are: i) uniqueness of the identity element. To prove this property, assume  $\langle G, * \rangle$  a group with two identity elements  $e$  and  $f$  then  $e = e * f = f$ . ii) uniqueness of the inverse element. To prove this property, suppose that an element  $x_1$  has two inverses, denoted  $b$  and  $c$  in groups  $\langle G, * \rangle$ , then

$$\begin{aligned}
 b &= b * e \\
 &= b * (a * c) && c \text{ is an inverse of } a, \text{ so } e = a * c \\
 &= (b * a) * c && \text{associativity rule} \\
 &= e * c && b \text{ is an inverse of } a, \text{ so } e = a * b \\
 &= c && \text{identity rule}
 \end{aligned}$$

The structure  $\langle G, * \rangle$  is denoted as  $G$  when clear from context that  $G$  is a group with a binary operation. In this thesis, we are interested only with the *finite* groups i.e with a finite number of elements. Given a group  $G$ , a *subgroup* is a non-empty subset of  $G$  which is also a group with the same binary operation. If  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$ , we denote as  $H \leq G$ . A group has at least two subgroups: i) the subgroup composed by the identity element  $\{e\}$ , denoted *trivial* subgroup. All other subgroups are *nontrivial*; ii) the subgroup composed by itself, denoted *improper* subgroup. All other subgroups are *proper*.

#### Generators of a group

If every element in a group  $G$  can be expressed as a linear combination of a set of a group of elements  $S = \{g_1, g_2, \dots, g_n\}$  then we say  $G$  is generated by the  $S$ . we denote this as  $G = \langle S \rangle = \langle \{g_1, g_2, \dots, g_n\} \rangle$

### Permutation groups

A *permutation* is a bijection from a set  $X$  to itself.

Example: given a set  $X = \{x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6\}$ ,

$$g = \begin{pmatrix} x_1 & x_2 & x_3 & x_4 & x_5 & x_6 \\ x_2 & x_3 & x_1 & x_4 & x_6 & x_5 \end{pmatrix}$$

$g$  is a permutation that maps  $x_1$  to  $x_2$ ,  $x_2$  to  $x_3$ ,  $x_3$  to  $x_1$ ,  $x_4$  to  $x_4$ ,  $x_5$  to  $x_6$  and  $x_6$  to  $x_5$ . Permutations are generally written in *cycle notation*, the self-mapped elements are omitted. So the permutation in cycle notation will be

$$g = (x_1 \ x_2 \ x_3) (x_5 \ x_6)$$

We say *support* of the permutation  $g$  noted  $\text{supp}_g$  the elements that not mapped to themselves:

$$\text{supp}_g = \{x \in X \mid g.x \neq x\}$$

A variable  $x$  is *stable* by a permutation  $g$  if  $x \notin \text{supp}_g$ . A clause  $\omega$  is *stabilized* by a permutation  $g$  if  $\omega \cap \text{supp}_g = \emptyset$ .

A set of permutations of a given set  $X$  form a group  $G$ , with the composition operation ( $\circ$ ) and is called *permutation group*. The *symmetric group* is the set of all possible permutations of a set  $X$  and noted  $\mathfrak{S}(X)$ . So, a *permutation group* is a subgroup of  $\mathfrak{S}(X)$ .

A permutation group  $G$  induces an *equivalence relation* on the set of elements  $X$  being permuted. Two elements  $x_1, x_2 \in X$  are equivalent if there exists a permutation  $g \in G$  such that  $g.x_1 = x_2$ . The equivalence relation partition  $X$  into *equivalence classes* referred to as the *orbits* of  $X$  under  $G$ . The orbit of an element  $x$  under group  $G$  (or simply orbit of  $x$  when clear from the context) is the set.  $[x]_G = \{g.x \mid g \in G\}$

## 3.2 Symmetries in SAT

The previous mathematical definition of group theory is applied to the CNF formula. The symmetric group of permutations of  $\mathcal{V}$  (i.e. bijections from  $\mathcal{V}$  to  $\mathcal{V}$ ) is noted  $\mathfrak{S}(\mathcal{V})$ . The group  $\mathfrak{S}(\mathcal{V})$  naturally acts on the set of literals: for  $g \in \mathfrak{S}(\mathcal{V})$  and a literal  $\ell \in \mathcal{L}$ ,  $g.\ell = g(\ell)$  if  $\ell$  is a positive literal,  $g.\ell = \neg g(\neg \ell)$  if  $\ell$  is a negative literal. The group  $\mathfrak{S}(\mathcal{V})$  also acts on assignments possibly partial of  $\mathcal{V}$  as follows:

$$\forall g \in \mathfrak{S}(\mathcal{V}), \alpha \in \text{Ass}(\mathcal{V}), g.\alpha = \{g.\ell \mid \ell \in \alpha\}.$$

We say that  $g \in \mathfrak{S}(\mathcal{V})$  is a symmetry of  $\varphi$  if following conditions holds:

- permutation fixes the formula,  $g.\varphi = \varphi$
- $g$  commutes with the negation:  $g.\neg l = \neg g.l$

The set of symmetries of  $\varphi$  is noted  $G(\varphi)$  and is a subgroup of  $\mathfrak{S}(\mathcal{V})$ . Symmetries of a formula  $\varphi$  preserves the satisfaction, for every *complete* assignment  $\alpha$ :

$$\alpha \models \varphi \Leftrightarrow g.\alpha \models \varphi$$

### 3.3 Symmetry detection in SAT

For the detection of symmetries in SAT, we first introduce the graph automorphism notion. Given a colored graph  $G = (V, E, \gamma)$ , with vertex set  $V \in [1, n]$ , edge set  $E$  and  $\gamma$  a function that apply a mapping  $\gamma : V \rightarrow C$  where  $C$  is a set of *colors*. An automorphism of  $G$  is a permutation from its vertices  $g : V \rightarrow V$  such that:

- $\forall (u, v) \in E \implies (g.u, g.v) \in E$
- $\forall v \in V, \gamma(v) = \gamma(g.v)$

The graph automorphism problem is to find if a given graph has a non-trivial permutation group. The computational complexity of this algorithm is conjectured to be strictly between P and NP. Several tools exist to tackle this problem like `saucy3` [20], `bliss` [19], `nauty` [26], etc.

There exists different ways to encode a SAT problem, which leads to different symmetries in these problems. When a symmetry depends on the structure of the problem, we say *syntactic* symmetries. In contrast, symmetries were *semantic*, when it is not inherent to the encoding. To find symmetries in SAT problem, the formula is transformed into colored graphs and an automorphism tool is applied onto. Specifically, given a formula  $\varphi$  with  $m$  clauses over  $n$  variables, the graph is constructed as follows [6]:

- *clause nodes*: represent each of the  $m$  clauses by a node with color 0;
- *literal nodes*: represent each of the  $l$  literals by a node with color 1;
- *clauses edges*: connect a clause to its literal by linking the corresponding clause node and literal nodes;
- *boolean consistency edges*: connect each pair of literals that correspond to the same variables.

Figure 3.1 shows the graph representation of a CNF. This problem has 6 variables and 11 clauses. So, the graph will have  $12 + 11 = 33$  vertexes where 12 represents literal vertexes (circle in the figure) and 11 represents the number of clause vertexes (square in the figure).

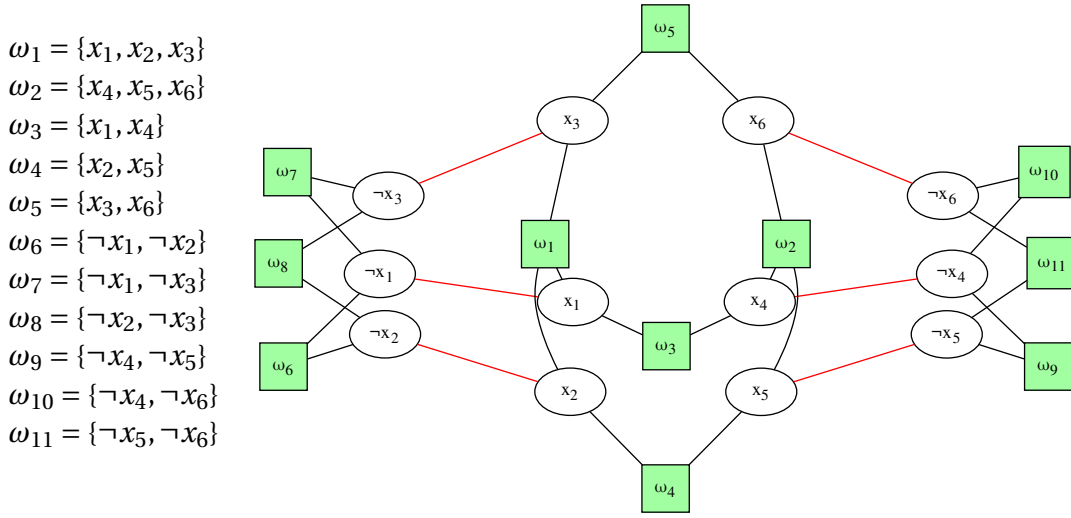


Figure 3.1: Example of constructed symmetry graph for a given CNF

The graph will also have  $6 + 24 = 30$  edges, 6 for Boolean consistency (red color in the figure) and 24 edges that rely clause vertexes to the literals.

An optimization of this graph is possible with the usage of binary clauses i.e. a clause with only two literals. The clause node can be omitted and we connect the two literals. As we cannot distinguish between the optimized edge and Boolean consistency edges, we must check if the produced permutations are spurious. To do so, as we ensure the permutation commutes with the negation it suffices to check:

$$\forall x \in \text{supp}(g), g.\neg x = \neg g.x$$

Roughly speaking, we check if the image of the negation of  $x$  is equals to the negation of the image of  $x$ , for each element  $x$  in the support of the permutation. This optimization allows to compute symmetries of the problem more efficiently. In the previous example, the graph has deleted 12 nodes and 12 edges. More generally, the graph removes as many nodes and edges as binary clauses on the formula. Figure 3.2 represents the optimized version the graph.

After the construction of a such graph, a graph automorphism tools take it as input and give the set of generators as output. With the previous graph, the following generators are obtained:

$$\begin{aligned}
 g_1 &= (x_2 \ x_3)(x_5 \ x_6)(\neg x_2 \ \neg x_3)(\neg x_5 \ \neg x_6) \\
 g_2 &= (x_1 \ x_2)(x_4 \ x_5)(\neg x_1 \ \neg x_2)(\neg x_4 \ \neg x_5) \\
 g_3 &= (x_1 \ x_4)(x_2 \ x_5)(x_3 \ x_6)(\neg x_1 \ \neg x_4)(\neg x_2 \ \neg x_5)(\neg x_3 \ \neg x_6)
 \end{aligned}$$

These permutations form a permutation group and so induce an equivalence relation. Figure 3.3 shows graphical representation of an orbit, where each node represents a literal.

$\omega_1 = \{x_1, x_2, x_3\}$   
 $\omega_2 = \{x_4, x_5, x_6\}$   
 $\omega_3 = \{\neg x_1, \neg x_2\}$   
 $\omega_4 = \{\neg x_3, \neg x_4\}$   
 $\omega_5 = \{\neg x_5, \neg x_6\}$   
 $\omega_6 = \{x_1, \neg x_3\}$   
 $\omega_7 = \{x_2, \neg x_4\}$   
 $\omega_8 = \{x_3, \neg x_5\}$   
 $\omega_9 = \{x_4, \neg x_6\}$   
 $\omega_{10} = \{x_5, \neg x_1\}$   
 $\omega_{11} = \{x_6, \neg x_2\}$

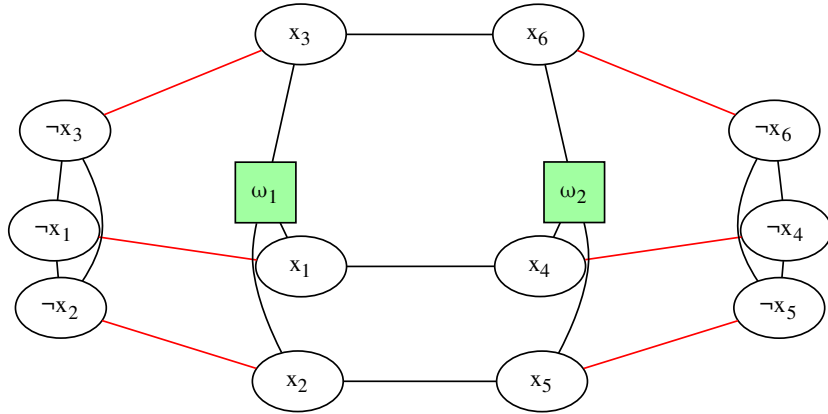


Figure 3.2: Example of constructed symmetry graph for a given CNF

Two literals are linked with an arc if it exists a permutation that maps one to the other. An orbit must be a *strongly connected component* (SCC). Some permutations have a special form like two-dimensional array as in this example. A further section (3.4) shows how to exploit this special form.

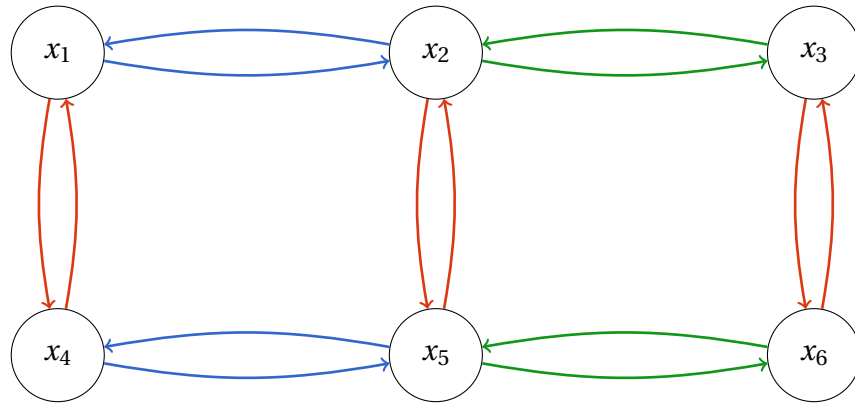


Figure 3.3: Graphical representation of an orbit

### 3.4 Usage of symmetries

*Symmetry breaking* aims at eliminating symmetry, either by *statically* posting symmetry breaking constraints that invalidate symmetric assignments, or by altering the search space *dynamically* to avoid symmetric search paths.

## Static symmetry breaking

Generally symmetry breaking allows SAT solver to avoid visit isomorphic search space. Visiting one branch is equivalent to visit each symmetric branch and so visiting this one is sufficient to determine satisfiability of the whole formula. Symmetrical branch are discarded by the solver with the addition of constraints. These constraint are not satisfied if the solver visit equivalent assignment. In other words, when symmetries of a problems are ignored, solver visit a branch multiple times. Suppose the *pigeonhole problems*, where  $n$  pigeons are put into  $n - 1$  holes, with the constraint that each pigeon must be in a different hole is a highly symmetric problem. Indeed, all the pigeons (resp. holes) are swappable without changing the initial problem. Trying to solve it with a standard SAT solver, like MiniSAT [14], turns out to be very time consuming (and even impossible, in reasonable time, for high values of  $n$ ). Here, such a standard solver ignores the symmetry property of the problem, and then potentially tries all variables combinations ; this eventually leads to a combinatorial explosion.

This section explains how to exploit statically symmetrical properties of a SAT problem. This can be summarize with the following two questions: 1) How to choose branch that are equivalent to all symmetric ones? 2) how to generate constraints that forbid symmetrical assignments.

To answer the first part of the problematic: how to choose branch that are equivalent to all symmetric ones ? We need to introduce an ordering relation between assignments

**Definition 1** (Assignments ordering). *We assume a total order,  $<$ , on  $\mathcal{V}$ . Given two assignments  $(\alpha, \beta) \in \text{Ass}(\mathcal{V})^2$ , we say that  $\alpha$  is strictly smaller than  $\beta$ , noted  $\alpha < \beta$ , if there exists a variable  $v \in \mathcal{V}$  such that:*

- *for all  $v' < v$ , either  $v' \in \alpha \cap \beta$  or  $\neg v' \in \alpha \cap \beta$ .*
- *$\neg v \in \alpha$  and  $v \in \beta$ <sup>1</sup>.*

In other words, the prefix of both assignment is equal according to the ordering relation  $<$  and the next variable  $v$  has a different value,  $\alpha(v) = \perp, \beta(v) = \top$ , then  $\alpha < \beta$ . Note that  $<$  coincides with the lexicographical order on *complete* assignments. Furthermore, the  $<$  relation is monotonic as expressed in the following proposition:

**Proposition 1** (Monotonicity of assignments ordering). *Let  $(\alpha, \alpha', \beta, \beta') \in \text{Ass}(\mathcal{V})^4$  be four assignments.*

$$\text{If } \alpha \subseteq \alpha' \text{ and } \beta \subseteq \beta', \text{ then } \alpha < \beta \implies \alpha' < \beta'$$

*Proof.* The proposition follows on directly from definition 1. □

---

<sup>1</sup>We could have chosen as well  $v \in \alpha$  and  $\neg v \in \beta$  without loss of generality.

Given a formula  $\varphi$  and its group of symmetry  $G$ , the *orbit* of  $\alpha$  under  $G$  (or simply the *orbit* of  $\alpha$  when  $G$  is clear from the context) is the set  $[\alpha]_G = \{g.\alpha \mid g \in G\}$ . The lexicographic leader (*lex-leader* for short) of an orbit  $[\alpha]_G$  is defined by  $\min_{<}([\alpha]_G)$ . This *lex-leader* is unique because the lexicographic order is a total order. The optimal approach to solve a symmetric SAT problem would be to explore only one assignment per orbit (for instance each *lex-leader*). Figure 3.4 shows different orbits, each dot in an orbit (ellipse in the figure) is an assignment, and the *lex-leader* is the empty red one. To avoid exploring symmetry search space, *symmetry breaking predicates* (SBP) also called *lex-leader constraints* are added to the formula. These constraints are only true for the *lex-leader* [8] and prevent other assignments from being explored.

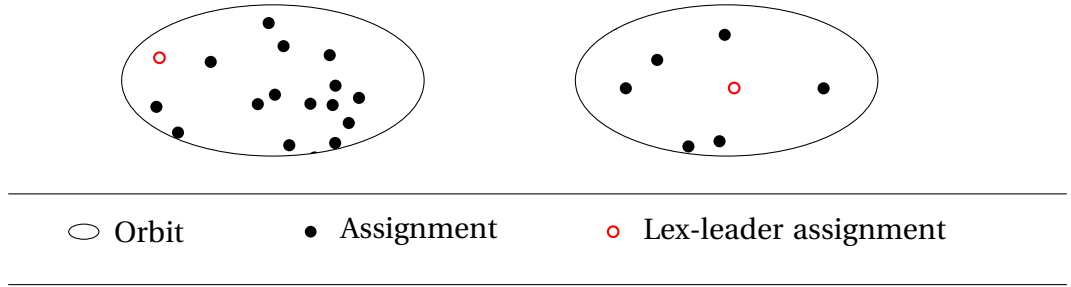


Figure 3.4: Show lex-leader per orbit

Lex-leader predicates for a permutation  $g \in G_\varphi$  is defined as :

$$LL_g = \forall i : (\forall j < i : x_j = g.x_j) \Rightarrow x_i \leq g.x_i$$

In other words, each assignment whose have a variable such that its image under  $g$  is smaller according to the ordering relation  $<$ , is pruned by  $LL_g$ . Conjunction of  $LL_g$ , for all permutations  $g \in G_\varphi$  results a sound and complete symmetry breaking predicates also called *full symmetry breaking*. Only *lex-leader* assignment will be visited per orbit. Hence, finding the *lex-leader* of an orbit is computationally hard [25]. Conjunction of  $LL_g$  for some  $G \subset G_\varphi$  results a symmetry breaking predicates that aims to visit at least one assignment per orbit and called is *partial symmetry breaking*. In both cases, the set of symmetry breaking predicates generated is denoted as  $\psi$ . Since a group may have a exponential number of permutations, all symmetry breaking predicates belongs to the group must be generated to ensure full symmetry breaking. These constraints will overload the solver and slow down its core principle (unit propagation). Hence, slow down overall time computation. Conversely, partial symmetry breaking adds few constraints and bring often considerable reduction of the search space. Generally, the set of generators produced by automorphism tool is chosen as a subgroup. Partial symmetry breaking gives a good trade off between the number of generated constraints and reduction of the search space.

**Theorem 1** (Satisfiability preservation SBPs). *Let  $\varphi$  be a formula and  $\psi$  the computed SBPs for the set of symmetries in  $G_\varphi$ :*

*$\varphi$  and  $\varphi \wedge \psi$  are equi-satisfiable.*



*Proof.* If  $\varphi \wedge \psi$  is SAT then  $\varphi$  is trivially SAT. If  $\varphi$  is SAT, then there is some assignment  $\beta$  that satisfies  $\varphi$ . Without loss of generality,  $\beta$  can be chosen to be the lex-leader of its orbit under  $G_\varphi$ . Thus,  $g$  does not contradict  $\beta$ , which implies that  $\beta \models \psi$ .  $\square$

Generation of lex-leader constraints proposed by Crawford et al. [8] is defined as follows:

$$LL_g = \forall i : (\forall j < i : x_j = g.x_j) \Rightarrow \neg x_i \vee g.x_i$$

Figure 3.5 shows an example of generated clauses for the permutation  $g_3$  of the previous example and a lexicographic order. Last constraint present in the figure produce tautological clause, effectively variable  $x_1$  or  $x_4$  are present in both polarity. The constraints of other variables produce also tautological clauses.

Order :  $x_1 < x_2 < x_3 < x_4 < x_5 < x_6 \mid (\perp < \top)$   
 Permutation :  $g_3 = (x_1 \ x_4)(x_2 \ x_5)(x_3 \ x_6)(\neg x_1 \ \neg x_4)(\neg x_2 \ \neg x_5)(\neg x_3 \ \neg x_6)$

Constraints	Generated SBP
$x_1 \leq x_4$	$\neg x_1 \vee x_4$
$x_1 = x_4 \Rightarrow x_2 \leq x_5$	$x_1 \vee x_4 \vee \neg x_2 \vee x_5$ $\neg x_1 \vee \neg x_4 \vee \neg x_2 \vee x_5$
$x_1 = x_4 \wedge x_2 = x_5 \Rightarrow x_3 \leq x_6$	$x_1 \vee x_4 \vee x_2 \vee x_5 \vee \neg x_3 \vee x_6$ $\neg x_1 \vee \neg x_4 \vee x_2 \vee x_5 \vee \neg x_3 \vee x_6$ $x_1 \vee x_4 \vee \neg x_2 \vee \neg x_5 \vee \neg x_3 \vee x_6$ $\neg x_1 \vee \neg x_4 \vee \neg x_2 \vee \neg x_5 \vee \neg x_3 \vee x_6$
$x_1 = x_4 \wedge x_2 = x_5 \wedge x_3 = x_6 \Rightarrow x_4 \leq x_1$	$x_1 \vee x_4 \vee x_2 \vee x_5 \vee x_3 \vee x_6 \vee \neg x_4 \vee x_1$ $\dots$ $\neg x_1 \vee \neg x_4 \vee x_2 \vee x_5 \vee x_3 \vee x_6 \vee \neg x_4 \vee x_1$ $\dots$

Figure 3.5: Example of generated SBPs for one permutation

Moreover, the number of clauses generated per constraint increase exponentially with the number of variable present in the permutation. Hence, Aloul et al [1] propose a more compact representation of symmetry breaking predicates.

Let  $g$  a permutation, let  $supp_g = \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$  the support of the permutation  $g$  be ordered such that  $x_i \leq x_j$  iff  $i \leq j$  and let  $\{y_0, \dots, y_n\}$  be a set of auxiliary variables disjoint from  $supp_g$ . These auxiliary variables encode equality of literals in such  $y_0$  is set as an unit clause and encodes the first equality. Following clauses encode a compact lex-leader for a permutation:

$$\begin{array}{l|l} \neg y_i \vee \neg x_{i-1} \vee \neg x_i \vee g.x_i & 1 \leq i \leq n \\ \neg y_i \vee g.x_{i-1} \vee \neg x_i \vee g.x_i & 1 \leq i \leq n \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{l|l} \neg y_i \vee \neg x_{i-1} \vee \neg y_{i+1} & 1 \leq i \leq n \\ \neg y_i \vee g.x_{i-1} \vee \neg y_{i+1} & 1 \leq i \leq n \end{array}$$

Figure 3.6 shows the compact encoding of generated clauses. This form grows linearly with the number of variables. Auxiliary variable encodes the equality of two literals allows to achieve this reduction. Three auxiliary variables are introduced in this example  $x_7, x_8, x_9$  such that  $x_7$  encode the equality of  $x_1$  and  $x_4$ ,  $x_8$  equality of  $x_2$  and  $x_5$ , and  $x_9$  equality of  $x_3$  and  $x_6$ .

Order :  $x_1 < x_2 < x_3 < x_4 < x_5 < x_6 \mid (\perp < \top)$   
 Permutation :  $g_3 = (x_1 \ x_4)(x_2 \ x_5)(x_3 \ x_6)(\neg x_1 \ \neg x_4)(\neg x_2 \ \neg x_5)(\neg x_3 \ \neg x_6)$

Constraints	Generated SBP
$x_1 \leq x_4$	$\neg x_1 \vee x_4$ $x_7$
$x_1 = x_4 \Rightarrow x_2 \leq x_5$	$\neg x_7 \vee \neg x_1 \vee \neg x_2 \vee x_5$ $\neg x_7 \vee \neg x_1 \vee x_8$ $\neg x_7 \vee x_4 \vee \neg x_2 \vee x_5$ $\neg x_7 \vee x_4 \vee x_8$
$x_1 = x_4 \wedge x_2 = x_5 \Rightarrow x_3 \leq x_6$	$\neg x_8 \vee \neg x_2 \vee \neg x_3 \vee x_6$ $\neg x_8 \vee \neg x_2 \vee x_9$ $\neg x_8 \vee x_5 \vee \neg x_3 \vee x_6$ $\neg x_8 \vee x_5 \vee \neg x_9$

Figure 3.6: Example of compact generated SBPs for one permutation

Shatter [1] is a tool for partial symmetry breaking that computes symmetry with saucy3 automorphism tool and generate a new formula with compact lex-leader encoding. It uses only generators given by the automorphism tool. Following table shows the number of symmetry breaking predicates clauses and the number of auxiliary variables added to the original formula.

Hakan: Mettre des espaces pour les nombres et texte pour expliquer si tableau ok  
 Hakan: Mettre total de clause et vars et pourcentage d'augmentation

Instances	#vars	#clause	#sbp	#auxiliary variables
battleship-12-12-unsat	936	144	1498	378
battleship-12-23-sat	1662	276	5464	1375
battleship-14-26-sat	2562	364	3688	929
battleship-14-27-sat	2653	378	7222	1814
battleship-16-16-unsat	2176	256	4388	1102
battleship-16-31-sat	3976	496	12094	3035
battleship-24-57-sat	16308	1368	40372	10113
chnl10_11	1122	220	2416	615
chnl10_12	1344	240	2736	696
chnl10_13	1586	260	3252	826
chnl11_12	1476	264	3204	813
chnl11_13	1742	286	3636	922
chnl11_20	4220	440	6760	1710
fpga10_15_uns_rcr	2130	300	4580	1160
fpga10_20_uns_rcr	3840	400	6768	1712
fpga11_12_uns_rcr	1476	264	3704	938
fpga11_13_uns_rcr	1742	286	4076	1032
fpga11_14_uns_rcr	2030	308	4740	1199
fpga11_15_uns_rcr	2340	330	5196	1314
fpga11_20_uns_rcr	4220	440	7864	1986
hole010	561	110	1054	269
hole015	1816	240	3280	828
hole020	4221	420	6478	1630
hole030	13981	930	21322	5346
hole040	32841	1640	44934	11254
hole050	63801	2550	81682	20446
Urq6_5	1756	180	109	0
Urq7_5	2194	240	143	0
Urq8_5	3252	327	200	0
x1_40	314	118	42	1
x1_80	634	238	80	0

An improvement of static symmetry breaking was made by Devriendt et al [11] with a tool called *BreakID*. It exploits some properties from the structure of generators. On some circumstance a linear number of constraints can break all group. The other tries to add a maximum of binary clauses that is useful because it can participate often to unit propagation and so to the conflict analysis.

### Special form of the group

Some formula presents a specific type of symmetry called *row (column) interchangeability*, when a subset of variables is structured as a two-dimensional matrix. Each row (column) is interchangeable with the symmetries. This form of symmetry is common in different kind of problem like pigeon hole problems in which pigeons and holes are interchangeable or in the delivery system in which trucks of a fleet are interchangeable. Usage of row (column) interchangeability can significantly improve SAT performance. Effectively symmetries can be eliminated by the addition of only a linear number of symmetry-breaking constraints [15]. One condition must be satisfied to ensure this linear number of constraints: lexicographic order needs to respect the structure of the matrix. In practice, automorphism tools give only the set generators which contains no information on the structure of the group. Authors of BreakID [11] develop an algorithm to detect this specific structure and exploit it.

### Binary lex-leader constraints

BreakID has another approach that aims to post many lex-leader constraints. The first constraint of symmetry breaking predicates must produce a binary clause. Building many binary clauses is possible without enumerating the whole symmetry group. It suffices to compute the orbit of the smallest variable according to the ordering relation. As the orbit can be seen as a strong connected component, it must exist a permutation that permutes the smallest variable with all other variables in the same orbit. Then, as many binary clauses as variables (without the smallest variable) in the orbit can be added to the formula. Constructing a sequence of subgroups that stabilize the smallest variable (i.e. not have the smallest variable in its support) results to new binary clauses. This sequence ends when trivial subgroup is reached and is called a *stabilizer chain*.

Figure 3.7 shows application of the generation of binary clauses. In the example, considered group has three permutations and its graphical representation is showing. Given the lexicographic order, the smallest variable is  $x_1$  and all other variables are in its orbits. According to the ordering relation, five symmetry breaking predicates are generated with the formula  $\neg x_1 \vee g.x_1$ . Then, subgroup that stabilizes  $x_1$  is computed and it remains only one permutation  $g_2$ . As its smallest variable is  $x_2$ , the constraint  $\neg x_2 \vee x_3$  is generated. Stabilizer chain leads to trivial group and no more binary clauses are generated. In total, six binary clauses are generated without adding any auxiliary variables. Moreover, a property can be observed, when the smallest variable has the greatest value ( $\top$  in this case), all variables in the orbits must have the same value.

The size of the stabilizer chain is heavily dependent of the chosen lexicographic order. More stabilizer discards permutations and more trivial subgroup is reached quickly and fewer binary clauses are generated. An incremental order is proposed to optimize the number of generated binary clauses. First, orbit of all variables is computed and the variable with fewest number of occurrence is chosen among the biggest orbit. The idea is that biggest orbit produces more clauses and the variable appearing in few permutations reduces the

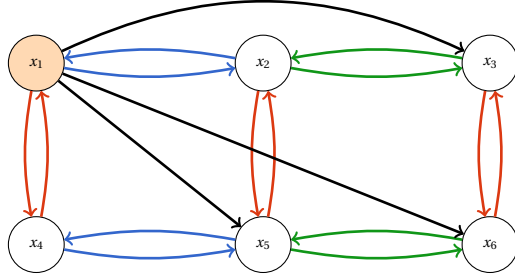
Order :  $x_1 < x_2 < x_3 < x_4 < x_5 < x_6 \mid (\perp < \top)$

$$g_1 = (x_2 \ x_3)(x_5 \ x_6)(\neg x_2 \ \neg x_3)(\neg x_5 \ \neg x_6)$$

$$g_2 = (x_1 \ x_2)(x_4 \ x_5)(\neg x_1 \ \neg x_2)(\neg x_4 \ \neg x_5)$$

$$g_3 = (x_1 \ x_4)(x_2 \ x_5)(x_3 \ x_6)(\neg x_1 \ \neg x_4)(\neg x_2 \ \neg x_5)(\neg x_3 \ \neg x_6)$$

$$g_1 = (x_2 \ x_3)(x_5 \ x_6)(\neg x_2 \ \neg x_3)(\neg x_5 \ \neg x_6)$$



$$\omega_1 = \{\neg x_1, x_2\}$$

$$\omega_4 = \{\neg x_1, x_5\}$$

$$\omega_2 = \{\neg x_1, x_3\}$$

$$\omega_5 = \{\neg x_1, x_6\}$$

$$\omega_3 = \{\neg x_1, x_4\}$$



$$\omega_6 = \{\neg x_2, x_3\}$$

Figure 3.7: Generation of binary symmetry breaking predicates

number of stabilized permutations. This procedure is applied until trivial group is reached. At the end, remaining variables are added to the order.

### BreakID

As summary, **BreakID** combines three idea. First it searches if produced generators by the automorphism tool has the special form row interchangeability and if that is the case exploit it. This first point establish a prefix of an order for the lex-leader. Secondly this order will be completed to generate a maximum number of binary lex-leader constraints. Thirdly, the order is supplemented with leftover variables until it is total and classical lex-leader constraints are added to the original formula.

### Conclusion

Static symmetry breaking acts as a preprocessor that augment the initial formula with symmetry breaking predicates. These constraints avoid exploration of symmetric search space. In the general case, the number of these clauses is often too large to be effectively handled by a SAT solver [25]. On the other hand, if only a subset of the symmetries is considered then the resulting search pruning will not be perfect and its effectiveness depends heavily on the heuristically chosen symmetries [6]. An extremely important point for static symmetry breaking is the chosen lexicographic order. Variable ordering may impact the

number of generated constraints and so the performance of the underlying SAT solver. Different orders are studied in the literature. One of the simplest orders was the sorted variables according to their numbers. Some other order exists and exploit structural properties of the problem. Some recent works brings some optimizations and solves more instances. Despite these optimizations and the good reduction of the search space with symmetries, some formula that exhibit symmetries still intractable for a state-of-the-art SAT solver. Moreover, a disadvantage of static symmetry breaking is that the solver is influenced by SBPs and explore the search space with a different manner and can affect performance negatively.

## Dynamic symmetry breaking

Dynamic symmetry breaking approaches aims to exploits symmetries during the solving by altering search space dynamically. This is possible with the integration of symmetry breaking approach inside existing SAT solver. It uses symmetries presents in the formula to propagate symmetrical literals. As consequence, the solver reduces the number of decisions, that are chosen heuristically and increase the number of propagation that are consequence of the formula. In other words, symmetries allows to transform some "guesses" as "deductions". And so, improves performance of the underlying SAT solver. In the literature, different approaches of dynamic symmetry breaking, this section presents some of them.

### SymChaff

One of the first dynamic symmetry breaking approaches is *SymChaff* [30] and is applicable only on special groups where all couple of variables are symmetric section 3.4. The idea of this approach is to treat each orbit like a *symbolic variable*, i.e. instead of considering a single variable (branching), all symmetric variables are considered at the same time and so backtracked at the same time (k-branching). In this special case of groups, the number of orbits is easy to compute but the order in which they would be applied has a tremendous impact of the solver performance. In the general case, when we take any groups computing the number of orbits will be very difficult and this approach will be intractable.

### Symmetry Propagation

A different approach can be used to reduce search space using symmetries is *symmetry propagation* [12]. The general idea of this approach is to propagate symmetrical literals of those already propagated. In other words, it accelerates the tree traversal by “transforming some guessing (decisions) to deductions (propagation)”. Indeed, problem that presents symmetries makes possible to deduce some value for the variables that would be guessed if symmetry properties were ignored. These deductions will reduce the overall tree traversal depth and hence eventually accelerate the solving process. To explain this approach, some definitions are required.

**Definition 2** (Logical consequence). *A formula  $\phi$  is a logical consequence of a formula  $\varphi$  denoted by  $\varphi \models \phi$  if for all assignment  $\alpha$  satisfying  $\varphi$ , it also satisfies  $\phi$ . Two formulas are logically equivalent if each is a logical consequence of the other.*

**Proposition 2** (Symmetry propagation). *Let  $\varphi$  be a formula,  $\alpha$  an assignment and  $l$  a literal. If  $g$  is a symmetry (permutation) of  $\varphi \cup \alpha$  and  $\varphi \models \{l\}$ , then  $\varphi \cup \alpha \models g.\{l\}$  is also true.*

In other words, if a literal  $l$  was propagated by the solver and  $g$  is a *valid* symmetry for the sub problem  $\varphi \cup \alpha$  (in which all satisfied clauses and false literals are removed), so, the solver can also propagate the symmetrical of  $l$ . The problem here is to determinate which symmetries are valid for the formula  $\varphi \cup \alpha$ .

**Definition 3** (Active symmetry). *A symmetry  $g$  is called active under a partial assignment  $\alpha$  if  $g.\alpha = \alpha$*

The definition 3 leads to the following proposition:

**Proposition 3.** *Let  $\varphi$  a formula and  $\alpha$  a partial assignment. Let  $g$  a symmetry of  $\varphi$ , if  $g$  is active under the assignment  $\alpha$ , then  $g$  is also a symmetry of  $\varphi \cup \alpha$*

The previous proposition states that an active symmetry  $g$  for a partial assignment  $\alpha$  still valid for the formula  $\varphi \cup \alpha$ . So when a literal  $l$  is propagated, and a symmetry  $g$  is active for a partial assignment  $\alpha$ , the solver can also propagate  $g.l$ . Moreover, the group theory allows to compose permutations with the composition operator  $\circ$  and the composition of two active symmetries is also an active symmetry so the solver can also propagate.  $g^2.l, g^3.l, \dots$

Devriendt et al improves the active symmetries in the SAT context, introducing *weakly active* symmetries.

**Definition 4** (Weakly active symmetry). *Let  $\varphi$  a formula and  $(\delta, \alpha, \gamma)$  a state of a CDCL solver in which  $\delta$  is the set of decisions  $\alpha$  is the current assignment and  $\gamma$  the reasons of the learned clauses. Then a symmetry  $g$  is weakly active if  $g.\delta \subseteq \alpha$*

This definition leads to the following proposition:

**Proposition 4.** *Let  $\varphi$  be a formula,  $\alpha$  an assignment. If there exists a subset  $\delta \subseteq \alpha$  and a symmetry  $g$  of  $\varphi$  such that  $g.\delta \subseteq \alpha$  and  $\varphi \cup \delta \models \varphi \cup \alpha$ , then  $g$  also is a symmetry of  $\varphi \cup \alpha$ .*

In other words, we can detect with a minimal effort, the symmetries of  $\varphi \cup \alpha$  by keeping track of the set of variables  $\delta$ , which are in a state-of-the-art complete SAT solving algorithms, the set of decision variables. Obviously, a weakly active symmetry can also propagate the symmetrical literals of a propagated one. Moreover, weakly active symmetries allow more propagation and so is more efficient. Note that if a weakly active symmetry wants to propagate a symmetrical literal which are already affected to the opposite value, this leads to a symmetry conflict and the solver backtrack to propagate the symmetrical value correctly.

Symmetry propagation gives good performances on many symmetric instances. The overall performance of the symmetry propagation is intrinsically related to the decision heuristics of the underlying SAT solver.

Note that, this approach don't discard any assignments like in the static approach where not lex-leader assignment were eliminated by symmetry breaking predicates.

### **Symmetry Explanation Learning**

Another approach to exploit symmetry without removing any satisfiable assignment of the problem is *Symmetry Explanation Learning* [10] (SEL). Symmetries of a formula leaves this one invariant. Moreover all learned clauses are logical consequence of the problem, symmetric of these clauses are also valid. Unlike Symmetry explanation scheme [5] (SLS) where all symmetrical learned clauses are added to the clause database. The idea of this approach is to learn useful symmetrical variant of learned clauses. A clause is said useful if it participates to the unit propagation or conflict analysis. Computing all symmetrical learn clauses will create a huge overhead and will be intractable on real problems.

Symmetry Explanation Learning uses the following fact: on the unit propagation, propagated literals has a reason clause which is assertive. Generally, symmetries permute only few literals in a clause and so symmetrical clauses may also be assertive and participate to unit propagation. These clauses are stored in different learning scheme and treated separately. Solver promotes these clause uniquely where they are effectively useful at the end of unit propagation. As unit propagation is done until fix point, it ensures that no duplicate clause is added in the problem. To limit memory impact, symmetrical clauses are removed when the propagated literal responsible of the computation is unaffected.

SEL provides some interesting properties. First, the authors proves that its propagation are a super-set of the one provided by symmetry propagation. It also no need to track any status of symmetries as opposed to symmetry propagation. Like symmetry propagation no satisfying assignment are discarded. As disadvantage, SEL may flood the solver if the used set of symmetries is big and take time to compute symmetrical clauses.

### **Conclusion**



# **Part II**

## **Contributions**



# BETWEEN STATIC AND DYNAMIC SYMMETRY BREAKING

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This chapter presents our first contribution published in TACAS 2018 conference 4.

## 4.1 General idea

In the general case, the size of the *sbp* can be exponential in the number of variables of the problem so that they cannot be totally computed. Even in more favorable situations, the size of the generated *sbp* is often too large to be effectively handled by a SAT solver [25]. On the other hand, if only a subset of the symmetries is considered then the resulting search

pruning will not be that interesting and its effectiveness depends heavily on the heuristically chosen symmetries [6]. Besides, these approaches are preprocessors, so their combination with other techniques, such as *symmetry propagation* [12], can be very hard. Also, tuning their parameters during the solving turns out to be very difficult. For all these reasons, some classes of SAT problems cannot be solved yet despite the presence of symmetries. To handle these issues, we propose a new approach that reuses the principles of the static approaches, but operates dynamically: the symmetries are broken during the search process without any pre-generation of the *sbp*. It is a best effort approach that tries to eliminate, *dynamically*, the *non lex-leading* assignments with a minimal computation effort. To do so, we first introduce the notions of *reducer*, *inactive* and *active* permutation with respect to an assignment  $\alpha$  and *effective symmetry breaking predicates* (*esbp*).

**Definition 5** (Reducer, inactive and active permutation). *A permutation  $g$  is a reducer of an assignment  $\alpha$  if  $g.\alpha < \alpha$  (hence  $\alpha$  cannot be the lex-leader of its orbit.  $g$  reduces it and all its extensions).  $g$  is inactive on  $\alpha$  when  $\alpha < g.\alpha$  (so,  $g$  cannot reduce  $\alpha$  and all the extensions). A symmetry is said to be active with respect to  $\alpha$  when it is neither inactive nor a reducer of  $\alpha$ .*

Proposition 5 restates this definition in terms of variables and is the basis of an efficient algorithm to keep track of the status of a permutation during the solving. Let us, first, recall that the *support* of a permutation  $g$ ,  $\text{supp}_g$ , the set  $\{v \in \mathcal{V} \mid g.v \neq v\}$ .

**Proposition 5.** *Let  $\alpha \in \text{Ass}(\mathcal{V})$  be an assignment,  $g \in \mathfrak{S}$  a permutation and  $\text{supp}_g \subseteq \mathcal{V}$  the support of  $g$ . We say that  $g$  is:*

1. a reducer of  $\alpha$  if there exists a variable  $v \in \mathcal{V}_g$  such that:
  - $\forall v' \in \mathcal{V}_g, s. t. v' < v$ , either  $\{v', g^{-1}(v')\} \subseteq \alpha$  or  $\{\neg v', \neg g^{-1}(v')\} \subseteq \alpha$ ,
  - $\{v, \neg g^{-1}(v)\} \subseteq \alpha$ ;
2. inactive on  $\alpha$  if there exists a variable  $v \in \mathcal{V}_g$  such that:
  - $\forall v' \in \mathcal{V}_g, s. t. v' < v$ , either  $\{v', g^{-1}(v')\} \subseteq \alpha$  or  $\{\neg v', \neg g^{-1}(v')\} \subseteq \alpha$ ,
  - $\{\neg v, g^{-1}(v)\} \subseteq \alpha$ ;
3. active on  $\alpha$ , otherwise.

When  $g$  is a *reducer* of  $\alpha$  we can define a predicate that contradicts  $\alpha$  yet preserves the satisfiability of the formula. Such a predicate will be used to discard  $\alpha$ , and all its extensions, from a further visit and hence pruning the search tree.

**Definition 6** (Effective Symmetry Breaking Predicate). *Let  $\alpha \in \text{Ass}(\mathcal{V})$ , and  $g \in \mathfrak{S}\mathcal{V}$ . We say that the formula  $\psi$  is an effective symmetry breaking predicate (*esbp* for short) for  $\alpha$  under  $g$  if:*

$$\alpha \not\models \psi \text{ and for all } \beta \in \text{Ass}(\mathcal{V}), \beta \models \psi \Rightarrow g.\beta < \beta$$

The next definition gives a way to obtain such an effective symmetry-breaking predicate from an assignment and a reducer.

**Definition 7** (A construction of an *esbp*). *Let  $\varphi$  be a formula. Let  $g$  be a symmetry of  $\varphi$  that reduces an assignment  $\alpha$ . Let  $v$  be the variable whose existence is given by item 1. in Proposition 5. Let  $U = \{v', \neg v' \mid v' \in \mathcal{V}_g \text{ and } v' \leq v\}$ . We define  $\eta(\alpha, g)$  as  $(U \cup g^{-1}.U) \setminus \alpha$ .*

**Example.** Let us consider  $\mathcal{V} = \{x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5\}$ ,  $g = (x_1 \ x_3)(x_2 \ x_4)$ , and a partial assignment  $\alpha = \{x_1, x_2, x_3, \neg x_4\}$ . Then,  $g.\alpha = \{x_1, \neg x_2, x_3, x_4\}$  and  $v = x_2$ . So,  $U = \{x_1, \neg x_1, x_2, \neg x_2\}$  and  $g^{-1}.U = \{x_3, \neg x_3, x_4, \neg x_4\}$  and we can deduce that  $\eta(\alpha, g) = (U \cup g^{-1}.U) \setminus \alpha = \{\neg x_1, \neg x_2, \neg x_3, x_4\}$ .

**Proposition 6.**  $\eta(\alpha, g)$  is an effective symmetry-breaking predicate.

*Proof.* It is immediate that  $\alpha \not\models \eta(\alpha, g)$ .

Let  $\beta \in \text{Ass}(\mathcal{V})$  such that  $\beta \wedge \eta(\alpha, g)$  is UNSAT. We denote  $\alpha'$  and  $\beta'$  as the restrictions of  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  to the variables in  $\{v' \in \mathcal{V}_g \mid v' \leq v\}$ . Since  $\beta \wedge \eta(\alpha, g)$  is UNSAT,  $\alpha' = \beta'$ . But  $g.\alpha' < \alpha'$ , and  $g.\beta' < \beta'$ . By monotonicity of  $<$ , we thus also have  $g.\beta < \beta$ .  $\square$

It is important to observe that the notion of *esbp* is a refinement of the classical concept of *sbp* defined in [1]. In particular, like *sbp*, *esbp* preserve satisfiability.

**Theorem 2** (Satisfiability preservation). *Let  $\varphi$  be a formula and  $\psi$  an esp for some assignment  $\alpha$  under  $g \in S(\varphi)$ . Then,*

$$\varphi \text{ and } \varphi \wedge \psi \text{ are equi-satisfiable.}$$

*Proof.* If  $\varphi \wedge \psi$  is SAT then  $\varphi$  is trivially SAT. If  $\varphi$  is SAT, then there is some assignment  $\beta$  that satisfies  $\varphi$ . Without loss of generality,  $\beta$  can be chosen to be the lex-leader of its orbit under  $S(\varphi)$ . Thus,  $g$  does not reduce  $\beta$ , which implies that  $\beta \models \psi$ .  $\square$

## Algorithm

This section describes how to augment the state-of-the-art CDCL algorithm with the aforementioned concepts to develop an efficient symmetry-guided SAT solving algorithm. The approach is implemented using a couple of components: (1) a *Conflict Driven Clauses Learning (CDCL) search engine*; (2) a *symmetry controller*. Roughly speaking, the first component performs the classical search activity on the SAT problem, while the second observes the engine and maintains the status of the symmetries. When the controller detects a situation where the engine is starting to explore a redundant part<sup>1</sup>, it orders the engine to operate a backjump. The detection is performed thanks to *symmetry status tracking* and the backjump order is given by a simple injection of an *esbp* computed on the fly. Principle

<sup>1</sup>Isomorphic to a part that has been/will be explored.

of CDCL is described in section 6, algorithm 4 explains how to extend it with a *symmetry controller* component which guides the behavior of CDCL algorithm depending on the status of symmetries.

```

1 function CDCLSym ( $\varphi$ : CNF formula, SymController: symmetry controller)
  returns  $\top$  if  $\varphi$  is SAT and  $\perp$  otherwise
2    $dl \leftarrow 0$  // Current decision level
3    $\alpha \leftarrow \emptyset$ 
4   while not all variables are assigned do
5      $isConflict \leftarrow \text{unitPropagation}()$ 
6     SymController.updateAssign( $\alpha$ )
7      $isReduced \leftarrow \text{SymController.isNotLexLeader}(\alpha)$ 
8     if  $isConflict \parallel isReduced$  then
9       if  $dl == 0$  then
10        return  $\perp$  //  $\varphi$  is UNSAT
11       if  $isConflict$  then
12         $\omega \leftarrow \text{analyzeConflict}()$ 
13       else
14         $\omega \leftarrow \text{SymController.generateEsbp}(\alpha)$ 
15         $\varphi \leftarrow \varphi \cup \{\omega\}$ 
16         $dl \leftarrow \text{backjumpAndRestartPolicies}()$ 
17        SymController.updateCancel( $\alpha$ )
18       else
19         $\alpha \leftarrow \alpha \cup \text{assignDecisionLiteral}()$ 
20         $dl \leftarrow dl + 1$ 
21  return  $\top$  //  $\varphi$  is SAT

```

**Algorithm 4:** the CDCLSym SAT Solving Algorithm.

The symmetry controller is initially given a set of symmetries  $G^2$ . It observes the behavior of the SAT engine and updates its internal data according to the current assignment, to keep track of the status of the symmetries. This observation is *incremental*: whenever a literal is assigned or cancelled, the symmetry controller updates the status of all the symmetries. This corresponds to lines 6 and 17 of Algorithm 3. When the controller detects that the current assignment can not be a *lex-leader* (line 7), it generates the corresponding *esbp* (line 14).

In the remainder of this section, functions composing the symmetry controller are detailed.

<sup>2</sup>The generators of the group of symmetries.

### Symmetries Status Tracking.

The `updateAssign`, `updateCancel` and `isNotLexLeader` functions (Algorithm 5) track the status of symmetries based on Proposition 5 ; there, resides the core of our algorithm.

All these functions rely on the  $pt$  structure: a map of variables indexed by permutations. Initially,  $pt[g] = \min_{<}(supp_g)$  for all  $g \in G$  according to the ordering relation and all permutations are marked *active*.

For each permutation,  $g$ , the symmetry controller keeps track of the smallest variable  $pt[g]$  in the support of  $g$  such that  $pt[g]$  and  $g^{-1}(pt[g])$  do not have the same value in the current assignment. If one of the two variables is not assigned, they are considered not to have the same value.

When new literals are assigned, only active symmetries need to have their  $pt[g]$  updated (line 2). This update is done thanks to a while loop (lines 4 – 5).

When literals are cancelled, we need to update the status of symmetries for which some variable  $v$  before  $pt[g]$ , or  $g^{-1}(v)$ , becomes unassigned (lines 9 – 10). Symmetries that were inactive may be reactivated (line 11).

The current assignment is not a *lex-leader* if some symmetry  $g$  is a reducer. This is detected by comparing the value of  $pt[g]$  with the value of  $g^{-1}(pt[g])$  (line 16). The function `isNotLexLeader` also marks symmetries as *inactive* when appropriate (lines 18 – 19).

### Generation of the *esbp*.

When the current assignment cannot be a *lex-leader*, some symmetry  $g$  is a reducer. The function `generateEsbp` computes the  $\eta(\alpha, g)$  defined in Definition 7, which is an effective symmetry-breaking predicate by Proposition 6. This will prevent the SAT engine to explore further the current partial assignment.

### Illustrative example

Let us illustrate the previous concepts and algorithms on a simple example. Let the ordering relation  $x_1 < x_2 < x_3 < x_4 < x_5 < x_6 \mid \perp < \top$ , and the two last previous generators  $G = \{g_2 = (x_1 \ x_2)(x_4 \ x_5), g_3 = (x_1 \ x_4)(x_2 \ x_5)(x_3 \ x_6)\}$  (written in cycle notation with opposite cycles omitted). Their respective supports sorted according to ordering relation are,  $supp_{g_2} = \{x_1, x_2, x_4, x_5\}$  and  $supp_{g_3} = \{x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6\}$ .

On the assignment  $\alpha = \emptyset$ , both permutations are active and  $pt[g_1] = pt[g_2] = x_1$ . When the solver updates the assignment to  $\alpha = \{x_4\}$ , both permutations remain active and  $pt[g_2] = pt[g_3] = x_1$ . On the assignment  $\alpha = \{x_4, x_1\}$ , the symmetry controller updates  $pt[g_3]$  to  $x_2$ , while  $pt[g_2]$  remains unchanged. On the assignment  $\alpha = \{x_4, x_1, \neg x_2\}$ ,  $g_2.\alpha = \{x_5, x_2, \neg x_1\}$ , which is smaller than  $\alpha$  (because  $x_1 \in \alpha$  and  $\neg x_1 \in g_2.\alpha$ ):  $g_2$  is a reducer of  $\alpha$ . The symmetry controller then generates the corresponding *esbp*  $\omega = \{\neg x_1, x_2\}$ .

```

1 function updateAssign ( $\alpha$ : assignment)
2   foreach active  $g \in G$  do
3      $v \leftarrow pt[g]$ ;
4     while  $\{v, g^{-1}(v)\} \subseteq \alpha$  or  $\{\neg v, \neg g^{-1}(v)\} \subseteq \alpha$  do
5        $v \leftarrow$  next variable in  $\mathcal{V}_g$ ;
6      $pt[g] \leftarrow v$ 
7 function updateCancel ( $\alpha$ : assignment)
8   foreach  $g \in G$  do
9      $u \leftarrow \min\{v \in \mathcal{V}_g \mid \{v, \neg v\} \cap \alpha = \emptyset \text{ or } \{g^{-1}(v), \neg g^{-1}(v)\} \cap \alpha = \emptyset\}$ ;
10    if  $u \leq pt[g]$  then
11      mark  $g$  as active;
12       $pt[g] \leftarrow u$ ;
13 function isNotLexLeader ( $\alpha$ : assignment)
14   foreach active  $g \in G$  do
15      $v \leftarrow pt[g]$ ;
16     if  $\{v, \neg g^{-1}(v)\} \subseteq \alpha$  then
17       return  $\top$ ;                                     //  $g$  is a reducer
18     if  $\{\neg v, g^{-1}(v)\} \subseteq \alpha$  then
19       mark  $g$  as inactive;                               //  $g$  can't reduce  $\alpha$  or its
20       extensions
21   return  $\perp$ 
22 function generateEsbp ( $\alpha$ : assignment) returns  $\omega$ : generated esbp
23    $\omega \leftarrow \{\}$ ;
24    $g \leftarrow$  the reducer of  $\alpha$  detected in isNotLexLeader;
25    $v \leftarrow \min(\mathcal{V}_g)$ ;
26    $u \leftarrow pt[g]$ ;
27   while  $u \neq v$  do
28     if  $v \in \alpha$  then  $\omega \leftarrow \omega \cup \{\neg v\}$  else  $\omega \leftarrow \omega \cup \{v\}$ ;
29     if  $g^{-1}(v) \in \alpha$  then  $\omega \leftarrow \omega \cup \{\neg g^{-1}(v)\}$  else  $\omega \leftarrow \omega \cup \{g^{-1}(v)\}$ ;
30      $v \leftarrow$  next variable in  $\mathcal{V}_g$ 
31    $\omega \leftarrow \omega \cup \{\neg v, g^{-1}(v)\}$ ;
32   return  $\omega$ 

```

**Algorithm 5:** the functions keeping track of the status of the symmetries and generating the *esbp*.



## 4.2 Implementation and Evaluation

In this section, we first highlight some details on our implementation of the symmetry controller. Then, we experimentally assess the performance of our algorithm against three other state-of-the-art tools.

### **cosy: an efficient implementation of the symmetry controller**

We have implemented our method in a C++ library called **cosy** (1630 LoC). It implements a symmetry controller as described in the previous section, and can be interfaced with virtually any CDCL SAT solver. **cosy** is released under GPL v3 licence and is available at <https://github.com/lip6/cosy>.

#### **Heuristics and Options.**

Let us recall that finding the optimal ordering of variables (with respect to the exploitation of symmetries) is NP-hard [24], so the choice for this ordering is heuristic. **cosy** offers several possibilities to define this ordering:

- a naive ordering, where variables are ordered by the lexicographic order of their names;
- an ordering based on occurrences, where variables are sorted according to the number of times they occur in the input formula. The lexicographic order of variables names is used for those having the same number of occurrences;
- an ordering based on symmetries, where variables belonging to the same orbit (under the given set of symmetries) are grouped together. Orbit are ordered by their numbers of occurrences.

The ordering of assignments we use in this paper orders positive literals before negative ones (thus,  $\top < \perp$ ), but using the converse ordering does not change the overall method. However, it can impact the performance of the solver on some instances, so that it is an option of the library.

All the symmetries we used for the presentation of our approach are permutations of variables. Our method straightforwardly extends to permutations of literals, also known as *value permutations* [6].

#### **Integration in MiniSAT.**

We show how to integrate **cosy** to an existing solver, through example of **MiniSAT** [14].

First, we need an adapter that allows the communication between the solver and **cosy** (30 LoC). Then, we adapt Algorithm 3 to the different methods and functions of **MiniSAT**. In particular, the function `updateAssign` is moved into the `uncheckEnqueue` function of **MiniSAT** (2 LoC). The `updateCancel` function is moved to the `cancelUntil`

function of `MiniSAT` that performs the backjumps (2 LoC). The `isNotLexLeader` and `generateEsbp` functions are integrated in the `propagate` function of `MiniSAT` (30 LoC). This is to keep track of the assignments as soon as they occur, then the *esbp* is produced as soon as an assignment is identified as not being *lex-leader*. Initialization issues are located in the main function of `MiniSAT` (15 LoC).

The integration of `cosy` increases `MiniSAT` code by 3%.

## Evaluation

This section presents the evaluation of our approach. All experiments have been performed with our modified `MiniSAT` called `MiniSym`. The symmetries of the SAT problem instances have been computed by two different state-of-the-art tools `saucy3` [20] and `bliss` [19]. For a given group of symmetries, the first tool generates less permutations to represent the group than the second one, but it is slower than the other one.

We selected from the last six editions of the SAT contests [18], the CNF instances for which `bliss` finds at least 2% of the variables are involved in some symmetries that could be computed in at most 1000s of CPU time. We obtained a total of 1350 symmetric instances (discarding repetitions) out of 3700 instances in total.

All experiments have been conducted using the following conditions: each solver has been run once on each instance, with a time-out of 5000 seconds (including the execution time of the symmetries generation except for `MiniSAT`) and limited to 8GB of memory. Experiments were executed on a computer with an Intel Xeon X7460 2.66 GHz featuring 24 cores and 128GB of memory, running a Linux 4.4.13, along with `g++` compiler version 6.3.

We compare `MiniSym` using the occurrence order, value symmetries, and without *lex-leader* forcing, against:

- `MiniSAT`, as the reference solver without symmetry handling [14];
- `Shatter`, a symmetry breaking preprocessor described in [1], coupled with the `MiniSAT` SAT engine;
- `BreakID`, another symmetry breaking preprocessor, described in [11], also coupled with the `MiniSAT` SAT engine.

Each SAT solution was successfully checked against the initial CNF. For UNSAT situations, there is no way to provide an UNSAT certificate in presence of symmetries. Nevertheless, we checked our results were also computed by the other measured tools. Unfortunately, out of the 1350 benchmarked formulas, we have no proof or evidence for the 15 UNSAT formulas computed by `MiniSym` only.

Results are presented Tables in 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. We report the number of instances solved within the time and memory limits for each solver and category. We separate the UNSAT

Benchmark	MiniSAT	Shatter	BreakID	MiniSym	Benchmark	MiniSAT	Shatter	BreakID	MiniSym
app2016 (134)	18	19	<b>20</b>	17	app2016 (134)	18	<b>21</b>	18	19
app2014 (161)	23	23	22	<b>24</b>	app2014 (161)	23	21	20	<b>24</b>
app2013 (145)	6	8	8	<b>10</b>	app2013 (145)	6	7	10	<b>11</b>
app2012 (367)	115	115	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	app2012 (367)	115	106	114	<b>123</b>
hard2016 (128)	8	17	<b>50</b>	42	hard2016 (128)	8	11	<b>79</b>	77
hard2014 (107)	9	24	<b>30</b>	29	hard2014 (107)	9	45	40	<b>53</b>
hard2013 (121)	12	24	<b>48</b>	29	hard2013 (121)	12	51	<b>56</b>	54
hard2012 (289)	86	84	88	<b>93</b>	hard2012 (289)	86	69	90	<b>93</b>
all2017 (124)	8	14	<b>15</b>	14	all2017 (124)	8	14	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
all2015 (65)	9	8	8	<b>10</b>	all2015 (65)	<b>9</b>	7	8	8
TOTAL (no dup)	261	302	<b>371</b>	345	TOTAL (no dup)	261	324	415	<b>439</b>

(a) With saucy3

(b) With bliss

Table 4.1: comparison of different approaches on the UNSATinstances of the benchmarks of the six last editions of the SAT competition.

Benchmark	MiniSAT	Shatter	BreakID	MiniSym	Benchmark	MiniSAT	Shatter	BreakID	MiniSym
app2016 (134)	20	<b>22</b>	21	20	app2016 (134)	20	20	<b>22</b>	20
app2014 (161)	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	22	app2014 (161)	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	23	22
app2013 (145)	34	35	35	<b>43</b>	app2013 (145)	<b>34</b>	32	30	33
app2012 (367)	121	112	119	<b>126</b>	app2012 (367)	<b>121</b>	112	120	118
hard2016 (128)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	hard2016 (128)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
hard2014 (107)	14	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	14	hard2014 (107)	14	14	17	<b>18</b>
hard2013 (121)	23	23	<b>24</b>	22	hard2013 (121)	23	24	<b>26</b>	25
hard2012 (289)	135	141	<b>143</b>	138	hard2012 (289)	135	134	141	<b>142</b>
all2017 (124)	23	20	26	<b>27</b>	all2017 (124)	23	25	26	<b>29</b>
all2015 (65)	<b>7</b>	5	<b>7</b>	6	all2015 (65)	<b>7</b>	5	6	6
TOTAL (no dup)	325	323	<b>337</b>	335	TOTAL (no dup)	325	316	334	<b>336</b>

(a) With saucy3

(b) With bliss

Table 4.2: comparison of different approaches on the SATinstances of the benchmarks of the six last editions of the SAT competition.

instances (Table 4.1) from the SAT ones (Table 4.2). Besides the reference with no symmetry (column MiniSAT), we have compared the performance of the three tools when using symmetries computed by *saucy3* (see Table 4.1a and Table 4.2a), and *bliss* (see Table 4.1b and Table 4.2b). Rows correspond to groups of instances: from each edition of the SAT contest, and when possible, we separated applicative instances (app $\langle x \rangle$  where  $\langle x \rangle$  indicates the year) from hard combinatorial ones (hard $\langle x \rangle$ ). This separation was not possible for the editions 2015 and 2017 (all2015 and all2017). The total number of instances for each bench is indicated between parentheses. For each row, the cells corresponding to the tools solving the most instances (within time and memory limits) are typeset in bold and grayed out. Table 4.3 shows the cumulative and average PAR-2 times of the evaluated tools.

We observe that MiniSym with *saucy3* solves the most instances in only half of the UNSATcategories. However, with *bliss*, MiniSym solves the most instances in all but four of the UNSATcategories ; it then also solves the highest number of instances among its competitors. This shows the interest of our approach for UNSATinstances. Since symmetries are used to reduce the search space, we were expecting that it will bring the most performance

Solver	PAR-2 sum	PAR-2 avg	Solver	PAR-2 sum	PAR-2 avg
MiniSAT	8 074 348	5 981	MiniSAT	8 074 348	5 981
Shatter	7 770 434	5 756	Shatter	7 517 556	5 569
BreakID	6 909 999	5 119	BreakID	6 444 954	4 774
MiniSym	7 229 700	5 355	MiniSym	6 245 448	4 626

(a) With `saucy3` (b) With `bliss`

Table 4.3: comparison of PAR-2 times (in seconds) of the benchmarks on the six last editions of the SAT competition.

gain for UNSAT instances.

The situation for SAT instances is more mitigated (Table 4.2), especially when using `saucy3`. Again, this is not very surprising: our method may cut the exploration of a satisfying assignment because it is not a *lex-leader*. This delays the discovery of a satisfying assignment. The other tools suffer less from such a delay, because they rely on symmetry breaking predicates generated in a pre-processing step. Also, when seeing the global results of MiniSAT, we can globally state that the use of symmetries in the case of satisfiable instances only offers a marginal improvement.

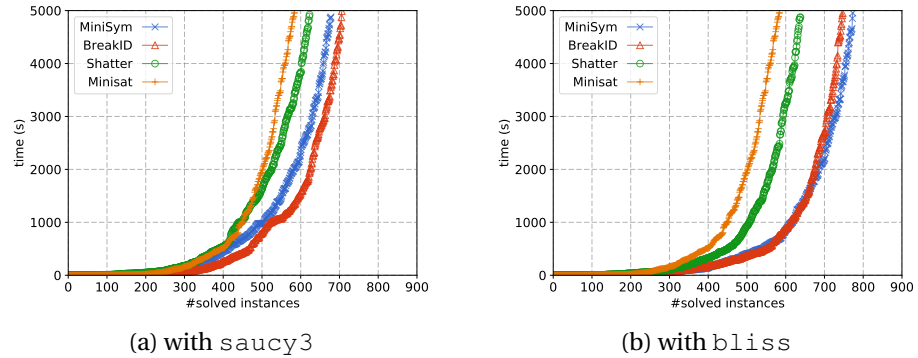


Figure 4.1: cactus plot total number of instances

We observe that performances our tool are better with `bliss` than with `saucy3` (see fig 4.1). We explain it as follows: `saucy3` is known to compute fewer generators for the group of symmetries than `bliss`. Since, the larger the symmetries set is, the earlier the detection of an *evidence* that an assignment is not a *lex-leader* will be, we generate less symmetry-breaking predicates (only the effective ones). This is shown in Table 4.4; MiniSym generates an order of magnitude fewer predicates than BreakID.

We also conducted experiments on highly symmetrical instances (all variables are involved in symmetries), whose results are presented in Table 4.5. The performance of BreakID on this benchmark is explained by a specific optimization for the *total symmetry groups* that are found in these examples, that is neither implemented in Shatter nor in MiniSym.

Number of SBPs	BreakID	MiniSym	Number of SBPs	BreakID	MiniSym
UNSAT(316)	12 088 433	1 579 623	UNSAT(399)	2 576 349	913 339
SAT(312)	13 839 689	359 352	SAT(320)	12 179 513	457 452

(a) With saucy3

(b) With bliss

Table 4.4: Comparison of the number of generated SBPs each time BreakID and MiniSym both compute a verdict (number of verdicts between parentheses).

However, the difference between BreakID and MiniSym is rather thin when using bliss. Our tool still outperforms Shatter on this benchmark.

Benchmark	MiniSAT	Shatter	BreakID	MiniSym	Benchmark	MiniSAT	Shatter	BreakID	MiniSym
battleship(6)	5	5	5	5	battleship(6)	5	5	5	6
chnl(6)	4	6	6	6	chnl(6)	4	6	6	6
clqcolor(10)	3	4	5	6	clqcolor(10)	3	5	8	10
fpga(10)	6	10	10	10	fpga(10)	6	10	10	10
hole(24)	10	12	23	11	hole(24)	10	24	24	23
hole shuffle(12)	1	2	12	3	hole shuffle(12)	1	3	7	4
urq(6)	1	2	6	2	urq(6)	1	2	6	5
xorchain(2)	1	1	2	2	xorchain(2)	1	1	2	2
TOTAL	31	42	69	45	TOTAL	31	56	68	66

(a) With saucy3

(b) With bliss

Table 4.5: comparison of the tools on 76 highly symmetric UNSAT problems.

## 4.3 Related Works

Usage of symmetry property dynamically allows the solver to adapt classical heuristics and symmetry based one on the fly. For example, some restart heuristics are based on the number of conflict, taking into account injection of ESBP may impact the performance of the overall SAT solver.

### Adapt heuristics dynamically

Other heuristics on the symmetry handling may increase the performance. We present here some of them. In some cases multiple permutations are reducer at the same time, and each one generate different symmetry breaking constraint. The backtrack level of the solver and the pruning capacity depends heavily on the chosen one. In the provided library, first reducer permutation generates the constraints. Inject symmetry breaking predicates when it was detected at the beginning of the unit propagation or at the end will change the solver behavior. In the first case, ESBP is more important of a classical conflict if bot occurs and the inverse on the second case. We can even ignore the conflict and just add the constraints to clause database. This prevents the solver to get multiple time on non minimal part of search. We can allow to go one time for satisfiable instances for example. Effectively, if

the solution is easy to found in this symmetrical branch and much more harder on the lex leader, it may have a positive impact.

### Change the order dynamically

As seen before, ordering relation between variable influence lex-leader and the generated constraints. This order is chosen heuristically, changing this order dynamically is possible but with some requirement. All generated constraints and all deduced clause from a symmetry breaking predicates needs to be completely removed. If these constraints are not removed, inconsistencies may appear and a satisfiable problem become unsatisfiable.

## 4.4 Conclusion

SymmSAT uses same principles as static symmetry breaking but operates dynamically by injecting effective symmetry breaking during the search. This overcomes, the main problem of the static approaches, that they generate many *sbp* that are not effective in the solving (size of the generated formulas, overburden of the unit propagation procedure, etc.). The idea we bring is to break symmetries *on the fly*: when the current partial assignment can not be a prefix of a *lex-leader* (of an orbit), an *esbp* that prunes this forbidden assignment and all its extensions is generated.

This approach is implemented in the C++ library called **cosy**. It is an off-the-shelf component that can be interfaced with virtually any CDCL SAT solver. **cosy** is released under GPL licence and is available at <https://github.com/lip6/cosy>.

The extensive evaluation of our approach on the symmetric formulas of the last six SAT contests shows that it outperforms the state-of-the-art techniques, in particular on unsatisfiable instances, which are the hardest class of the problem.

# COMPOSE DYNAMIC SYMMETRY HANDLING

## Contents

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## 5.1 Composition of SP and SymmSAT

Recently, we developed an approach that reuses the principles of the static approaches, but operates dynamically (namely, the effective symmetry breaking approach [27]): the symmetries are broken during the search process without any pre-generation of the *shp*. The main advantage of this technique is to cope with the heavy (and potentially blocking) pre-generation phase of the static-based approaches. It also gives more flexibility for adjusting some parameters on the fly. Nevertheless, we also observed that many formulas easily solved by the pure dynamic approaches remained unsolvable by our approach and vice-versa. This is particularly true with the *symmetry propagation* technique developed by Devriendt et al. [12]. Hence, our goal is to explore the composition of our algorithm with the *symmetry propagation* technique in a new approach that would mix the advantages of

the two classes of techniques while alleviating their drawbacks. At first sight, the two approaches appear to be orthogonal, and hence could be mixed easily. However, as we show in the rest of this section, this is not completely true: both theoretical and practical issues have to be analysed and solved to get a running complementary.

Since the approach based on symmetry propagation (later called SPA) focuses on accelerating the tree traversal and the approach based on effective symmetry breaking (later called ESBA) targets to prune the tree traversal, the question of combining these approaches, to solve a formula  $\varphi$ , can be reformulated as:

*is it possible to accelerate the traversal while pruning the tree?*

## Theoretical foundations

To answer the previous questions, we analyze the evolution of  $\varphi$  during its solving. In ESBA,  $\varphi$  evolves, incrementally, to an equi-satisfiable formula of the form  $\varphi \equiv \varphi \cup \varphi_e \cup \varphi_d$ , where  $\varphi_e$  is a set of injected esbps and  $\varphi_d$  is a set of deduced clauses (logical consequences). Both sets are modified continuously during the solving. Hence, to be able to compose ESBA with SPA, we have to consider the symmetries of  $\varphi' = \varphi \cup \varphi_e \cup \varphi_d$  as allowed permutations in place of those of  $\varphi$ .

A first naive solution could be to recompute, dynamically, the set of symmetries of  $\varphi \cup \varphi_e \cup \varphi_d$  for each new  $\varphi_e \cup \varphi_d$ , but this would be an intractable solution generating a huge complexity.

A computationally less expensive solution would be to keep track of all globally unbroken symmetries as the clauses of  $\varphi_e$  are injected during the solving process: considering formula  $\varphi$  and a set of esbps  $\varphi_e$  then the set of global unbroken symmetries is:

$$GUS = \bigcap_{\omega_e \in \varphi_e} \text{Stab}(\omega_e) \cap S(\varphi)$$

where  $\text{Stab}(\omega_e) = \{g \in \mathfrak{SV} \mid \omega_e = g.\omega_e\}$  is the stabilizer set of  $\omega_e$  and  $S(\varphi)$  is the set of symmetries of  $\varphi$ . Since  $\varphi \cup \varphi_e \models \varphi_d$ , then  $GUS$  is a valid set of symmetries for  $\varphi \cup \varphi_e \cup \varphi_d$ . Then, (1) each time a new set of esbp clauses is added, its stabilizer will be used to reduce  $GUS$ ; (2) conversely, when a set of esbp clauses is reduced<sup>1</sup>,  $GUS$  cannot be enlarged by the recovered broken symmetries because of the retrieved set: *at that point, we do not know which symmetries become valid!*

As a consequence, the set of globally unbroken symmetries will converge very quickly to the empty set. At this point, SPA will be blocked for the rest of the solving process without any chance to recover. Therefore, this solution is of limited interest in practice.

We propose here to improve aforementioned solution by alleviating the issue cited in point (2). We first present the intuition, then we will detail and formalize it.

<sup>1</sup>In classical CDCL algorithm, this can be due to a back-jump or a restart.



Consider formula  $\varphi'$  as before. It can be rewritten as:

$$\varphi' = \varphi \bigcup_i (\varphi_e^i \cup \varphi_d^i), \text{ such that } \varphi_e \cup \varphi_d = \bigcup_i (\varphi_e^i \cup \varphi_d^i) \text{ and } \varphi \cup \varphi_e^i \models \varphi_d^i \text{ for all } i$$

So,  $GUS_i = \bigcap_{\omega_e \in \varphi_e^i} \text{Stab}(\omega_e) \cap S(\varphi)$  is a valid set of symmetries for the sub-formula  $\varphi \cup \varphi_e^i \cup \varphi_d^i$ , and  $GUS$  can be obtained by  $GUS = \bigcap_i GUS_i$ . If some esbp clauses are added to  $\varphi'$ , then the new  $GUS$  is computed as described in (1). The novelty here comes with the retrieval of some set of clauses: by keeping track of the symmetries associated to each sub-formula ( $GUS_i$ ), it is now easy to recompute a valid set of symmetries for  $\varphi'$  when some set  $\varphi_e^k \cup \varphi_d^k$  is retrieved. It suffices to operate the intersection on the valid symmetries of the rest of the sub-formulas:  $GUS = \bigcap_{i \neq k} GUS_i$ .

Just say your approach keeps track of a set of particular symmetries for each clause. For a deduced clause, this set of symmetries captures which esbp's were involved in a deduced clause's derivation. The intersection of these sets is a superset of the globally unbroken symmetries, and a strict superset after clause deletion.

### Local symmetries

The general and formal framework that embodies the above idea is given by the following. It first relies on the notion of *local symmetries* that we introduce in definition 8.

**Definition 8.** Let  $\varphi$  be a formula. We define  $L_{\omega, \varphi}$ , the set of local symmetries for a clause  $\omega$ , and with respect to a formula  $\varphi$ , as follows:

$$L_{\omega, \varphi} = \{g \in \mathfrak{SV} \mid \varphi \models g.\omega\}$$

$L_{\omega, \varphi}$  is local since the set of permutations applies locally to  $\omega$ . It is then straightforward to deduce the next proposition that gives us a practical framework to compute, incrementally, a set of symmetries for a formula (by using the intersection of all local symmetries).

**Proposition 7.** Let  $\varphi$  be a formula. Then,  $\bigcap_{\omega \in \varphi} L_{\omega, \varphi} \subseteq S(\varphi)$ .

*Proof.* Let  $\varphi$  be a formula. Then,  $\forall \omega \in \varphi, \forall g \in L_{\omega, \varphi}, \varphi \models g.\omega$ . So,  $\forall g \in \bigcap_{\omega \in \varphi} L_{\omega, \varphi}, \varphi \models g.\varphi$ .

This is combined with the fact that the number of satisfying assignments for a formula is not changed by permuting the variables of the formula, we have  $g.\varphi \models \varphi$ . Hence  $\varphi \equiv g.\varphi$ , and  $g \in S(\varphi)$  (by definition).  $\square$

Using this proposition, it becomes easy to reconsider the symmetries on-the-fly: each time a new clause  $\omega$  is added to the formula  $\varphi$ , we can just operate an intersection between  $L_{\omega, \varphi}$  and  $\bigcap_{\omega' \in \varphi} L_{\omega', \varphi}$  to get a new set of valid symmetries for  $\varphi \cup \{\omega\}$ .

Proposition 8 establishes the relationship between the local symmetries of a deduced clause and those of the set of clauses that allow its derivation.

**Proposition 8.** *Let  $\varphi_1$  and  $\varphi_2$  be two formulas, with  $\varphi_2 \subseteq \varphi_1$ . Let  $\omega$  be a clause such that  $\varphi_2 \models \omega$ . Then,  $(\bigcap_{\omega' \in \varphi_2} L_{\omega', \varphi_1}) \cup \text{Stab}(\omega) \subseteq L_{\omega, \varphi_1}$ ;*

*Proof.* Let us consider a clause  $\omega$  and a permutation  $g \in (\bigcap_{\omega' \in \varphi_2} L_{\omega', \varphi_1}) \cup \text{Stab}(\omega)$ . Since,  $\varphi_2 \models \omega$ , then  $g.\varphi_2 \models g.\omega$ . Since  $\varphi_1 \models \varphi_2$  ( $\varphi_2 \subseteq \varphi_1$ ), and  $g \in (\bigcap_{\omega' \in \varphi_2} L_{\omega', \varphi_1}) \cup \text{Stab}(\omega)$ , then we have  $\varphi_1 \models g.\varphi_2$  (from Def. 8). Hence,  $\varphi_1 \models g.\varphi_2 \models g.\omega$ , and then,  $g \in L_{\omega, \varphi_1}$  (by definition).  $\square$

## Algorithm

This section shows how to integrate the propositions developed in the previous section as the basis of our combo approach in a concrete Conflict-Driven Clause Learning (CDCL)-like solver.

First recall the algorithm of symmetry propagation used for the combination of two approaches.

```

1 function CDCLSymSp ( $\varphi$ : CNF formula, spController: symmetry propagation controller)
2   returns  $\top$  if  $\varphi$  is SAT and  $\perp$  otherwise
3    $dl \leftarrow 0$ ;                                     // Current decision level
4    $\alpha \leftarrow \emptyset$ ;
5   while not all variables are assigned do
6      $isConflict \leftarrow \text{unitPropagation}() \wedge \text{spController.symPropagation}()$ ;
7     if  $isConflict$  then
8       if  $dl = 0$  then
9         return  $\perp$ ;                                     //  $\varphi$  is UNSAT
10       $\omega \leftarrow \text{analyzeConflict}()$ ;
11       $dl \leftarrow \text{backjumpAndRestartPolicies}()$ ;
12       $\varphi \leftarrow \varphi \cup \{\omega\}$ ;
13      spController.cancelActiveSymmetries();
14    else
15       $\alpha \leftarrow \alpha \cup \text{assignDecisionLiteral}()$ ;
16       $dl \leftarrow dl + 1$ ;
17      spController.updateActiveSymmetries();
18  return  $\top$ ;                                     //  $\varphi$  is SAT

```

**Algorithm 6:** The CDCLSp algorithm. Blue (or grey) parts denote additions to CDCL.

CDCLSp (see Algorithm 6) implements SPA, and also has a structure similar to the one of CDCL. In this algorithm, the symmetry propagation actions are executed by the controller component (**spController**) through a call to the function **symPropagation**

(line 6). This propagation is allowed only if the conditions are met. Such conditions are evaluated by tracking on-the-fly the status of the symmetries. This is implemented by functions `updateSymmetries` (line 17) and `cancelSymmetries` (line 13).

```

1 function CDCLSymSp ( $\varphi$ : CNF formula, symController: symmetry controller,
2                      spController: symmetry propagation controller)
3   returns  $\top$  if  $\varphi$  is SAT and  $\perp$  otherwise
4    $dl \leftarrow 0$ ; // Current decision level
5    $\alpha \leftarrow \emptyset$ ;
6   while not all variables are assigned do
7      $isConflict \leftarrow \text{unitPropagation}() \wedge \text{spController.symPropagation}()$ ;
8     symController.updateAssign ( $\alpha$ );
9      $isReduced \leftarrow \text{symController.isNotLexLeader}(\alpha)$ ;
10    if  $isConflict \vee isReduced$  then
11      if  $dl = 0$  then
12        return  $\perp$ ; //  $\varphi$  is UNSAT
13      if  $isConflict$  then
14         $\langle \omega, L = \bigcap_{\omega' \in \varphi_1} L_{\omega', \varphi_1} \cup \text{Stab}(\omega) \rangle \leftarrow \text{analyzeConflictSymSp}()$ ;
15      else
16         $\langle \omega, L = \text{Stab}(\omega) \rangle \leftarrow \text{symController.generateEsbpSp}(\alpha)$ ;
17       $dl \leftarrow \text{backjumpAndRestartPolicies}()$ ;
18       $\varphi \leftarrow \varphi \cup \{\omega\}$ ;
19      symController.updateCancel ( $\alpha$ );
20      spController.cancelActiveSymmetriesSym ();
21      spController.updateLocalSymmetries ( $L$ );
22    else
23       $\alpha \leftarrow \alpha \cup \text{assignDecisionLiteral}()$ ;
24       $dl \leftarrow dl + 1$ ;
25      spController.updateActiveSymmetriesSym ();
26  return  $\top$ ; //  $\varphi$  is SAT

```

**Algorithm 7:** The CDCLSymSp algorithm. Additions derived from MiniSym and CDCLSp are reported in red and blue (or grey). Additions due to the composition of the two algorithms are reported with a gray background.

The algorithm we propose for the composed approach is presented in Algorithm 7. Let us detail the critical points.

- Lines 13 and 16: when a conflict is detected, then the analysing procedure is triggered. According to Proposition 8, the generated conflicting clause  $\omega$ , should be associated with the computation of its set of local symmetries. Thus, we update the

classical `analyzeConflict` procedure to `analyzeConflictSymSp` that produces such a set:  $\varphi_1$  contains all the clauses that are used to derive  $\omega^2$ . So, at the end of the conflict analysis we operate the intersection of a local symmetries of these clauses to get the set of local symmetries of  $\omega$ . We can thus complete this set with the stabilizer set (see as Proposition 8).

In the classical algorithm of `symmSAT`, when a non lex-leader assignment is detected, then the `esbp` generation function, `generateEsbp`, is called. In the new algorithm this function is replaced by a new one called `generateEsbpSp`. In addition to compute the `esbp` clause  $\omega$ , it produces the stabilizer set of  $\omega^3$ .

- Line 20: `cancelActiveSymmetriesSym` extends function `cancelActiveSymmetries` of Algorithm 6 with the additional reactivation of the symmetries that have been broken (deactivated) by `ESBPA`. Technically speaking, each time a deduced literal is unassigned, all symmetries that became inactive because of its assignment (see `updateLocalSymmetries` and `updateActiveSymmetriesSym` functions below) are *reactivated*.
- Line 21: `updateLocalSymmetries` is a new function of `spController`. It is responsible of updating the status of the manipulated symmetries so that only those respecting Proposition 7 are active each time the `symPropagation` function is called. Technically speaking, each symmetry of the complement set (to  $S(\varphi)$ ) of the set  $L$  is marked *inactive* (it is a broken symmetry), if it is not already marked so. Here, the asserting literal of clause  $\omega$  becomes responsible of this deactivation.
- Line 25: `updateActiveSymmetriesSym` extends function `updateActiveSymmetries` of Algorithm 6. The reason clause,  $\omega_l$ , of each propagated literal,  $l$ , by the `unitPropagation` function is analysed. Each symmetry of the complement set (to  $S(\varphi)$ ) of the set local symmetries of  $\omega_r$  is marked *inactive*, if it is not already marked so.  $l$  becomes responsible of this deactivation.

## Implementation

We have implemented our combo on top of the `minisat-SPFS`<sup>4</sup> solver, developed by the authors of SPA.

This choice has been influenced by two points: (1) take advantage of the expertise used to implement the original SPA method; (2) the easiness of integrating our implementation of `ESBA` to any CDCL-like solver because it is an off-the-shelf library<sup>5</sup>.

However, this choice has the drawback of doubling the representation of symmetries. This can be a hard limit to treat certain big problems from the memory point of view.

<sup>2</sup>These are clauses of the *conflict side* of the implication graph when applying the classical conflict analysis algorithm.

<sup>3</sup>The only allowed local symmetries in case of an `esbp`, according to point 2 of section ??.

<sup>4</sup><https://github.com/JoD/minisat-SPFS>

<sup>5</sup>This library is released under GPL v3 licence, see <https://github.com/lip6/cosy>.

Benchmark	minisat-Sp	minisat-Sym	minisat-SymSP
generators 0-20 (704)	194	197	<b>198</b>
generators 20-40 (136)	33	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>
generators 40-60 (141)	28	28	<b>29</b>
generators 60-80 (168)	<b>65</b>	64	<b>65</b>
generators 80-100 (51)	28	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>
generators >100 (200)	58	59	<b>60</b>
TOTAL no dup (1400)	406	416	<b>420</b>

Table 5.1: Comparison of the number of SAT problems solved by each approach.

Benchmark	minisat-Sp	minisat-Sym	minisat-SymSP
generators 0-20 (704)	<b>233</b>	220	226
generators 20-40 (136)	50	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>
generators 40-60 (141)	75	<b>83</b>	<b>83</b>
generators 60-80 (168)	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	10
generators 80-100 (51)	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
generators >100 (200)	90	<b>109</b>	107
TOTAL no dup (1400)	470	488	<b>491</b>

Table 5.2: Comparison of the number of UNSAT problems solved by each approach.

The implemented combo solver can be found at:

<https://github.com/lip6/minisat-SymSp>

## Evaluation

This section compares our combo approach against ESBA and SPA. All experiments have been performed with a modified version of the well-known MiniSAT solver [14]: `minisat-Sp`, for SPA; `minisat-Sym`, for ESBA; and `minisat-SymSP`, for the combo. Symmetries of the SAT problems have been computed by `bliss` [19].

We selected from the last seven editions of the SAT contest [18], the CNF problems for which `bliss` finds some symmetries that could be computed in at most 1000s of CPU time. We obtained a total of 1400 SAT problems (discarding repetitions) out of the 4000 proposed by the seven editions of the contest.

All experiments have been conducted using the following settings: each solver has been run once on each problem, with a time-out of 7200 seconds (including the execution time of symmetries generation) and limited to 64GB of memory. Experiments were executed on a computer with an Intel(R) Xeon(R) Gold 6148 CPU @ 2.40GHz featuring 80 cores and 1500GB of memory, running a Linux 4.17.18, along with g++ compiler version 8.2.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 present the obtained results for SAT and UNSAT problems respectively. The first column of each table lists the classes of problems on which we operated our experiments: we classify the problems according to the number of symmetries they admit. A

line noted “generators X-Y (Z)” groups the Z problems having between X and Y generators (i.e., symmetries). Other columns show the number of solved problems for each approach.

Globally, we observe that the combo approach can be effective in many classes of symmetric problems. For SAT problems, the combo has better results than the two other approaches (4 more SAT problems when compared to the best of the two others) and this is despite the significant cost paid for the tracking of the symmetries’ status. When looking at the UNSAT problems, things are more mitigated. Although, the total number of solver problems is greater than the best of the two others, we believe that the cost for tracking the symmetries’ status has an impact on the performances. This can be observed on the first and last lines of Tables 5.2: when the number of generators is small (first line), the ESBA benefits greatly from the SPA. When the number of generators is high (last line), we see a small loose of the combo with respect to ESBA. It is also worth noting that the combo approach solved 8 problems that could not be handled by ESBA nor SPA.

Solvers	PAR2 (1400)	CTI (825)
minisat-SymSp	5653089	614856
minisat-Sym	5682892	584868
minisat-Sp	6026840	612638

Table 5.3: Comparison of PAR-2 and CTI times (in seconds) of the global solving.

Table 5.3 compares the different techniques with respect to the PAR-2 and the CTI time measures. PAR-2 is the official ranking measure used in the yearly SAT contests [18]. CTI measures the Cumulative solving Time of the problem Intersection (i.e., 825 problems solved by all solvers). While PAR-2 value gives a global indication on the effectiveness of an approach, CTI is a good mean to evaluate its speed compared to other approaches.

Hence, we observe that the combo has a better PAR-2 score, and this shows its effectiveness. However, it is the least fast when coming to solved intersection. This is clearly due the double cost paid for tracking the symmetries’ status (one for ESBA and the other for SPA). Having a unified management of symmetries tracking would probably reduce this cost.

To go further in our analyze, we also compare the ratio between the number of decisions and the number of propagation. This is a fair measure to assess the quality of a SAT solving approach: if the ratio is small, then this means that the developed algorithm is producing more deduced facts than making guesses, which is the best way to conclude quickly on a problem!

The scatter plots of Fig.5.1 show a comparison between the aforementioned ratios. When comparing minisat-Sp to minisat-SymSp (right hand side scatter plot), we observe that the ratio goes in favour of minisat-Sp for the problems solved by both approaches.

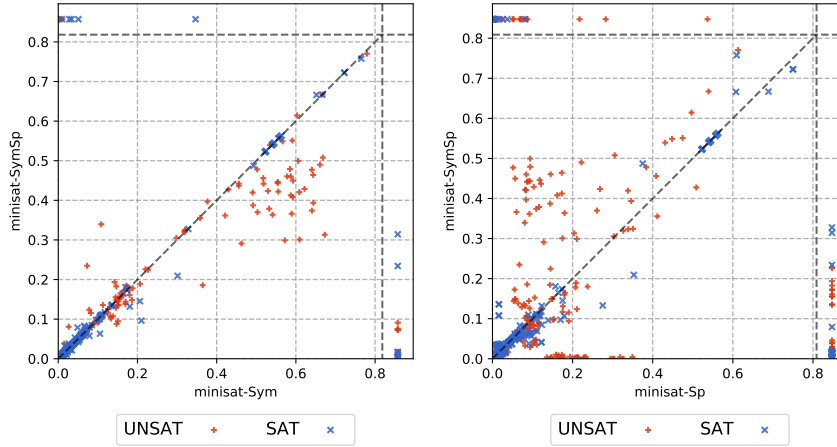


Figure 5.1: Comparison of the ratio between the number of decisions and the number of propagation for the combo w.r.t. ESBA and SPA.

This is an expected result since the main objective of SPA is to minimize the number of decisions while augmenting the number of propagation. What is important to underline here is highlighted on the left hand side scatter plot: on a large majority of UNSAT problems, the ratio goes in favor of `minisat-SymSp` w.r.t. `minisat-Sym`. This confirms the positive impact of SPA when applied in conjunction with ESBA.

## 5.2 Another combo approach

Introducing local symmetries allow us to use it with another dynamic approach : *Symmetry Explanation Learning* (SEL). It computes the symmetrical learning clause and include it in the solver clauses when it can be used in the unit propagation or leads to a conflict. With local symmetries, each clause have a set of allowed symmetries, when a symmetry wants to add a symmetrical clause, it suffice to check if this permutation belongs to local symmetries.

Hakan: Naive approach no stab .

## 5.3 Exploitation of local symmetries

Local symmetries seen previously allows to exploit symmetries in different way. Effectively, we can consider symmetries on a part of the problem. Only clauses that are really use by the solver i.e in the implication graph can be processed. To obtain the symmetries of the current sub problem is the intersection of local symmetries.





## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORKS

In this thesis, we have presented a way to increase performance of solving Boolean satisfiability problem (SAT) on presence of symmetries.

Nowadays, SAT solvers can handle huge problems with thousands of variables and clauses. It is primary due to efficiently cut off search space.

studies of detection and exploitation of symmetry breaking techniques.

Symmetries are

### 6.1 Perspectives



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