TSP via Dynamic Programming

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ToC

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Introduction

Define $G = (V, E)$ to be an undirected graph.

1. Dynamic programming is the idea of combining optimal solutions for smaller problems to make the full solution.
2. For the traveling salesman, we consider using spanning paths for covering different sizes of subsets.

Definition

Let $S \subseteq V$ and use $C(S, i, j)$ to denote the optimal $i \to j$ spaning path and its cost covering all vertices in S.

The algorithm

TSP using Dynamic Programming

Algorithm 1 Held Karp algorithm for Travelling Salesman

for $i, j \in V, i < j$ **do**
  C({i, j}, i, j) := c(i, j)
end for
for $k = 3, 4, \cdots n$ **do**
  for $|S| = k, S \subseteq V$ **do**
    for $i, j \in S, i < j$ **do**
      $C(S, i, j) := \min_{l \in S \setminus \{i,j\}} \{C(S \setminus \{j\}, i, l) + c(l, j)\}$
    end for
  end for
end for
return $\min_{i,j \in V} \{C(V, i, j) + c(i, j)\}$

Facts about the algorithm

1. Its complexity is $\mathcal{O}(n^3 2^n)$.
2. We need to keep track of the optimal solutions and the cost of the optimal solutions during the iterations of the algorithm.
3. Because this dynamic programming is a bottom-up approach, storing the results from previous iterations suffices. We used this strategy for our implementations.

Challenges and their solutions