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**Container-based Server  
Consolidation in Cloud with  
Evolutionary Computation  
Approaches**

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
PhD.

**Abstract**

A short description of the project goes here.



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

In this chapter, we present an introduction to the problem that will be addressed in this thesis.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Cloud computing is a major shift on modern software industry by offering on-demand computing capacity (e.g storage and computing) over the Internet [14]. With no upfront investment, low price, and high availability (e.g services are accessible 99.99% of the time), most web service providers such as Google and Netflix tend to deploy their services (e.g. Google drive) on Cloud.

A major issue in Cloud computing is the huge energy consumption generated by data centers - a typical data center consumes as much energy as 25,000 households [22]. Since energy has become the major expense of cloud providers, cutting the energy bill becomes a critical mission which will lead to a cost reduction of software and consequently be beneficial to most people who access the Internet on a daily basis.

To reduce the energy consumption of a data center, the main target is to reduce the usage of physical machines (PMs) (e.g. servers). In a data center such as cooling system, PMs, and network devices, PMs accounts for the majority - more than 40% - of energy consumption. Therefore, it is possible to reduce energy by improving the utilization of PMs. Currently, because the defects in resource management, PMs always run in a low utilization [4, 76] - from 10% to 50% of required resources on average.

The major way to reduce the energy consumption of PMs is through resource management [59] (see Figure 1.1). Generally, cloud resource management is a centralized system [44] that allocates resources to cloud users' applications, handles the workload fluctuations. Better management of application placement and workloads leads to the reduction of PMs and energy.

One of the crucial steps in resource management that related to energy consumption is *placement decision*. Placement decision determines the location of applications based on the resource requirement provided by data analysis. The decision involves with an optimization process called server consolidation which decides the placement of applications for the best energy efficiency.

Server consolidation [89] is an approach to efficiently use the resources of PMs in order to reduce the total number of PMs which leads to lower energy consumption. For three resource management scenarios, server consolidation is applied in different ways: static and dynamic. Static approach is conducted in an off-line fashion: application initial placement and periodic optimization belong to this category, while dynamic approach is conducted in

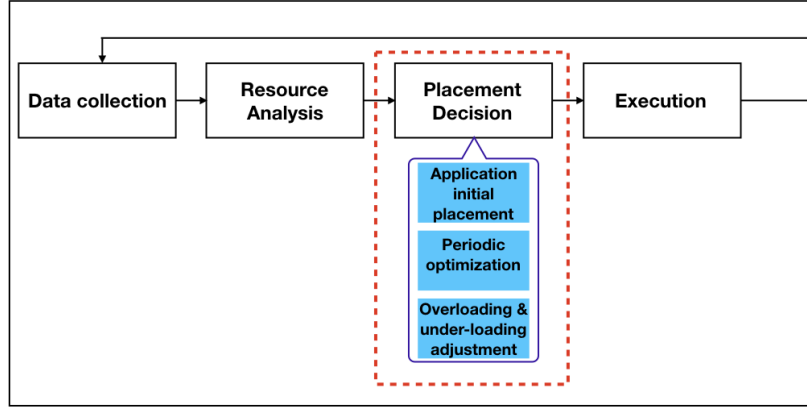


Figure 1.1: A workflow of resource management [63]

an on-line fashion: over-loading and under-loading scenarios are in this category.

Currently, resource management in data centers is based on *virtualization technology* [87]. Such virtualization separates the resources (e.g. CPUs and RAMs) of a PM into several parts called *virtual machines (VMs)*, each of which runs an isolated operating system. Before virtualization technology was widely used, traditional data center assigns a PM for each application; it leads to the low utilization of PMs. Later on, by using VMs to deploy applications, the utilization of PMs has been largely improved and energy consumption are reduced.

However, in recent years, resource management with VMs cannot catch up with a new trend in software industry - *Service Oriented Architecture (SOA)* [81]; SOA has become widely used in modern software industry because of its agility and re-usability [81]. SOA separates a centralized application into multiple distributed components called web services. As most of web services only require a small amount of resources, using a VM for a web service causes resource wastage inside a VM. Consequently the low utilization of PMs decreases the energy efficiency.

To resolve the wastage of resource and energy in SOA by using VMs, a new virtualization technology: *containers* [34, 79] and a new service model: *Container as a Service (CaaS)* [69] have been proposed to provide a finer granularity level of resource management. Container is an operating system (OS) level of virtualization which run on top of VMs. A container provides performance and resource isolation for a single application so that multiple applications can run in the same VM without interfering each other. In addition, containers naturally support vertical scaling (change its size during runtime) [88] which is resilient to the fluctuate workloads. CaaS uses containers as the fundamental resource management units. Thus, CaaS has the potential to improve the utilization of resources as well as energy consumption [28].

Container is still a young technology which brings new challenges in server consolidation. We will discuss these challenges in terms of three placement decision scenarios: application initial placement, periodic optimization, and dynamic placement.

## 1.2 Motivation

This section identifies the research gaps in container-based cloud data center in three resource management processes.



Application initial placement is conducted when data centers receive a number of requests for new application deployment. The placement can be seen as a static optimization task to allocate applications and reduce energy in PMs.

In a container-based Cloud, the optimization processes involve two levels - the lower level optimizes the placement of containers to VMs and the upper level optimizes the placement of VMs to PMs. The optimization interact with VMs and containers, therefore, it cannot be optimized separately. An additional constraint is that each container has its OS requirement which makes them cannot be simply packed into homogeneous VMs.

Container-based placement can be seen as a bilevel optimization problem [20] where each level is bin packing problem. Because of the problem structure has changed, previous VM-based approaches cannot be directly applied on the problem. In addition, currently, there is no study considers the container-based placement as a bilevel problem. The advantage of considering it as a bilevel problem is that containers and VMs can cooperate to achieve lower energy consumption. However, the *optimization of joint placement of container and VMs* is very difficult because of the nature of bilevel problem.

After initial placement, periodic optimization is a routine process that takes existing applications' placement, re-placing them to PMs according to the nature of their workloads (e.g static, periodic or continuously changing etc). A live migration technique is used to move one application from one PM to another. The live migration is a very expensive operation since it consumes network bandwidth and uses the resource on both host PM and target PM. Therefore, periodic optimization is a multi-objective task which considers minimizing migration of applications and minimizing the overall energy consumption as well.

Two major challenges exist in periodic optimization. Firstly, it is a multi-objective task, two potentially conflicting objectives: reducing the number of migration and minimizing the energy consumption. Therefore, the trade-off between two objectives must be balanced. Secondly, because of the expensiveness of live migration, cloud providers want to achieve a robust state of data center which means the placement remains stable in a long run. To achieve robustness, periodic optimization must consider the variation of workload and plan their positions in advance. This is because workloads' variation may cause overloading or underloading of PMs which requires live migration.

However, the major gap in literature is most research simplified workloads as static (remains a constant value throughout its life cycle) [16, 33, 91] for the sake of simplicity. For example, for periodic work, the average value within a period of time will be considered.

In our research, we will consider periodic optimization as a multi-objective problem with various types of workload [31]. Specifically, complementary workloads can be combined so that it can potentially reduce the migration in the future. Thus, the applications are consolidated in a more robust way.

Overloading and underloading are scenarios which need an immediate reaction [6], thus, a dynamic placement is applied. In these scenarios, PMs are either running out of resources or running in a low utilization. At these states, applications inside the PM will be placed to other PMs to quickly resolve the problems.

There are two challenges in dynamic placement. First, on one hand, dynamic placement allocates an application at a time to meet the requirement of fast reaction. On the other hand, it only considers the best placement of the current application using either simple bin-packing algorithms such as First Fit or manually design heuristics. Simple bin-packing algorithms may perform poorly because application placement is more complicated than bin-packing [57], while manual designed heuristics may not be general because they are designed for specific conditions and constraints [45]. The second challenge is that, simi-

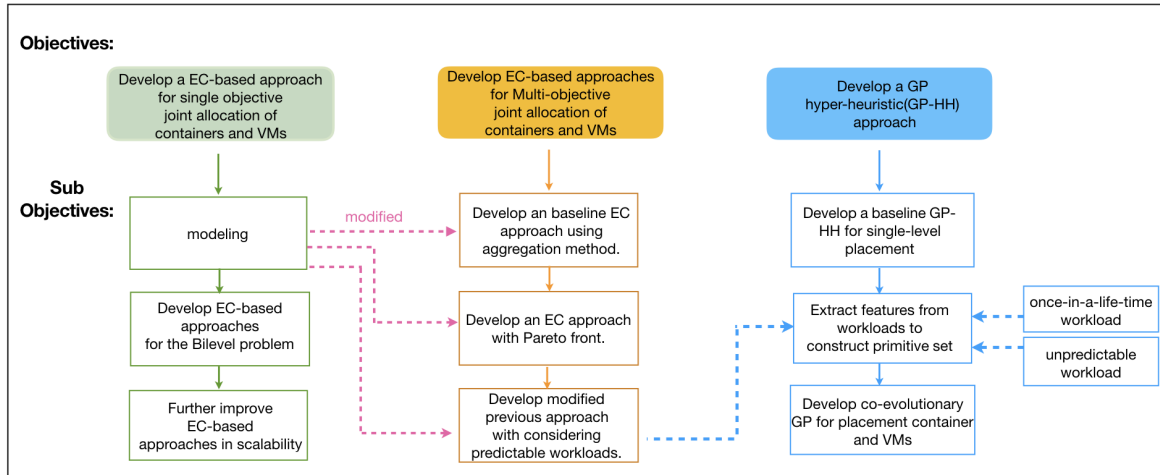


Figure 1.2: Relationship between objectives

lar to periodic consolidation, different types of workload also need to be considered when dynamically matching the complementary workloads in order to reach a robust state.

These challenges motivate us to develop a hyper-heuristic approach which can automatically generate heuristics for quickly placing. The hyper-heuristic can learn from previous good solutions as well as the features of various workloads so that the dispatching rules can be applied with any conditions and constraints.

In summary, this thesis aims at improving the energy efficiency in a container-based cloud data center. The gaps in three resource management processes motivate us to address three issues:

- Develop an algorithm for the joint placement of containers and VMs.
- Develop an algorithm for multi-objective joint placement of containers and VMs with consider various workloads.
- Develop a hyper-heuristic for dynamic placement.

### 1.3 Research Goals

The overall goal for this thesis is to improve energy efficiency of a container-based Cloud data center with new models and algorithms in three resource management processes: application initial placement, periodic optimization, and dynamic placement. The specific research objectives of this work can be itemized as follows.

#### 1.3.1 Objective One: Develop EC-based approaches for the single objective joint placement of containers and VMs

The goal is to reduce the energy consumption in application initial placement considering container-based cloud data center. To achieve this goal, inevitably, the first step is to propose a new model for container-based placement problem which considers the problem as a bilevel optimization problem. Then, we will explore evolutionary computation based approaches to solve the problem. The research goal leads to three objectives as follows.

1. Develop a new model to capture the relationship between containers allocation and energy consumption in container-based cloud data center.

The goal of the first sub objective is to propose a descriptive single objective model for the bilevel optimization problem of joint allocation of container and VM. In order to establish a bilevel model, variables, constraints and objective functions need to be clarified before applying any optimization algorithm. Each level of the problem will be formulated to a multi-dimensional vector bin packing problem. It is still unclear that which objective function is the best to capture the relationship between container and VM so that the overall energy is low. In addition, we will address the overhead of VMs which is generally missing from previous research.

We will start from the simplest case - single dimension of resource - to more general multi-dimensional resources model by reviewing a number of VM-based approaches. Specifically, we focus on their variables, constraints and objective function. Objective function is mainly related to energy consumption. Hence, energy model is another major issue to study. In addition, in the multi-dimensional resource model, we will address the balance of CPU and memory problem by investigating several resource wastage models [35, 39, 102]. In this objective, we consider the static workload of applications, this is because the initial resource demand is often provided by the Cloud users.

2. Propose a new EC based approach to optimize energy consumption in initial application placement.

The goal of this sub-objective is to develop a baseline approach that solve the problem using nested Evolutionary algorithms [78]. We will start from the simplest form: one dimensional bin-packing in each level to more complex multi-dimensional bin-packing.

Current nested methods have been used in solving bilevel problem, however, there is no research focus on bilevel bin-packing problem. We will investigate several approaches such as Nested Particle Swarm Optimization [54], Differential evolution (DE) based approach [1, 107] and Co-evolutionary approach [53]. In order to adapt our problem to these existing approaches, we will develop suitable representations such as direct binary representation [102], or indirect continuous probability representation [101]. Genetic operators will also be investigated.

3. Investigate methods to improve the scalability of previously propose approach.

The goal of this sub-objective is to improve scalability of the nested approach. Although nested approaches have been reported effective, they are very time consuming [78]. Therefore, this sub objective intends to explore other directions to improve either better energy consumption or faster execution time. One possible direction is single-level reduction [78], which reduces the bilevel problem into a single dimensional problem. Clustering approaches such as K-means [100] can be useful in categorizing containers in predefined groups. Then, complementary containers can be grouped to reduce the variables of placement. Another possible solution is using a representation which embedded with simple heuristic (e.g First Fit); it allows to consider less number of PMs.

### 1.3.2 Objective Two: Develop EC-based approaches for the multi-objective joint allocation problem

The goal is to develop multi-objective EC-base approaches for container-based cloud in periodic optimization with considering various types of workload to reduce the overall energy consumption.

1. Propose an EC-based multi-objective algorithm for periodic optimization baseline approach. **The goal of this sub-objective is to modified the model and develop a baseline aggregation approach for the problem.** In previous objective, we develop a single-objective joint allocation of containers and VMs. For periodic optimization, both level of placement is multi-objective since both VMs and containers can be placed to other machines. We will modified the model to adaptive to the multi-objective problem. We will further develop an EC-based multi-objective algorithm with aggregation approach as our baseline approach. The aggregation approach combines several optimization objectives into a single value. We may use previous developed algorithm to solve the problem. In addition, we will consider the workloads as static.

2. Propose an EC-based multi-objective algorithm for periodic optimization considering with Pareto front approach.

**The goal of this sub-objective is to develop an EC-based approach to solve the multi-objective joint allocation problem with Pareto front approach.** In previous sub-objective we develop a baseline approach using aggregation approach. However, aggregation approach has some defects such as it cannot find the non-convex solution. In the sub-objective, we will use a Pareto front approach to solve the bilevel optimization problem. Currently only a few research [23,25,104] focus on bilevel optimization problem. We will investigate which approach is the most suitable for this problem. The basic assumption for the workload is still static.

3. Propose an EC-based multi-objective algorithm for periodic optimization considering various types of predictable workload. **The goal of this sub objective is to propose an approach for more general case: predictable workloads.** In previous objectives, we consider the problem using static workloads for simplicity. However, practically, rare workload remains static throughout its life cycle. Therefore, we will consider several types of predictable workloads [31] such as static, linear continuously changing, and periodic. Based on our previous designed algorithm, we will investigate a general representation for different workloads. Furthermore, the representation may incur the changing of models, genetic operators and search mechanism.

### 1.3.3 Objective Three: Develop a hyper-heuristic Genetic Programming (GP) approach for automatically generating dispatching rules for dynamic placement.

**The goal for this objective is to develop a GP-based hyper-heuristic approach so that the generated dispatching rules can place different workloads to reduce the overall energy consumption.**

1. Develop a baseline GP-based hyper-heuristic (GP-HH) approach for dynamic placement. **The goal of this sub-objective is to develop a baseline GP-HH approach for single-level of placement: placing containers to VMs.** We will start from the basic assumption: static workload. In order to accomplish this task, we will construct primitive set by considering various features extracted from workload datasets such as the status of VMs (e.g resource utilization), features of workloads (e.g resource requirement). We will construct the functional set by using the general operators. The original genetic programming will be used as the search mechanism.
2. Conduct feature extraction on the predictable workloads and unpredictable workloads. **The goal of this sub-objective is to construct a GP primitive set by applying**

**feature extraction on various types of application workload.** In previous sub-objective, we develop a baseline GP-HH on static workload. In order to develop a general GP-HH that can handle all kinds of workloads, we will extract features from predictable workloads such as linear continuous changing workloads, periodic workloads, and from unpredictable workloads: once-in-a-lifetime workloads. We will consider the using properties of workloads as features such as non-stationarity, burstiness, and self-similarity [32]. We will test the extracted features by applying classification on the training and test set. The final features will be used in the primitive set.

3. Develop a Cooperative GP-HH approach to evolve dispatching rules for placing container and VMs. **The goal of this sub-objective is to develop a cooperative GP approach to evolve dispatching rules.** In the baseline approach, we develop a GP-HH approach for single-level of placement with static workload. However, there is a case that no current VM is suitable for a container to place in; a new VM is needed to place at this moment. This case incurs a second level of placement. Therefore, to construct a complete placement dispatching rule, we will develop a cooperative GP-HH approach to solve the two-level of placement problem. We may reuse the single-level GP-HH in both level or develop a new GP-HH in the VMs to PMs level.

## 1.4 Published Papers

During the initial stage of this research, some investigation was carried out on the model of container-based server consolidation [85].

1. Tan, B., Ma, H., Mei, Y. and Zhang, M., "A NSGA-II-based Approach for Web Service Resource Allocation On Cloud". *Proceedings of 2017 IEEE Congress on Evolutionary Computation (CEC2017)*. Donostia, Spain. 5-8 June, 2017.pp.2574-2581

## 1.5 Organisation of Proposal

The remainder of the proposal is organised as follows: Chapter 2 provides a fundamental background of the resource management in cloud data center and its the energy consumption problem. It also performs a literature review covering a range of works in this field; Chapter 3 discusses the preliminary work carried out to explore the techniques and EC-based techniques for the joint allocation of container and VMs; Chapter 4 presents a plan detailing this projects intended contributions, a project timeline, and a thesis outline.



## Chapter 2

# Literature Review

### 2.1 Background

This chapter begins by providing a brief introduction of Cloud computing and energy consumption problem. Then, it will introduce the virtualization technology in Section 2.1.2.

#### 2.1.1 Cloud computing

Cloud computing is a computing model offers a network of servers to their clients in a on-demand fashion. From NIST's definition [61], "cloud computing is a model for enabling ubiquitous, convenient, on-demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (e.g., networks, servers, storage, applications and services) that can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort or service provider interaction."

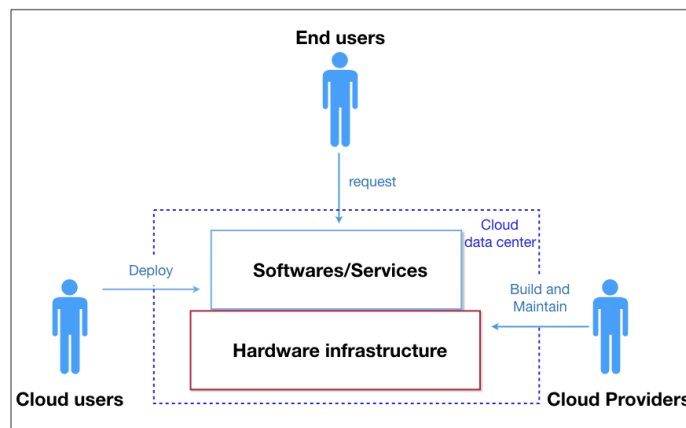


Figure 2.1: Stakeholders of Cloud computing [44]

To give an example of how Cloud computing works (see Figure 2.1, considering the case: a Cloud provider builds a data center which contains thousands of servers connected with network. A web-based application provider is also a Cloud user, can deploy and access their applications (e.g Endnote, Google Drive and etc.) in these servers from anywhere in the world. Once the applications start serving, End users can use them without installing on their local computers. Cloud providers charge fees from Cloud users for infrastructure and Cloud users charge fees from End users for using their services. Therefore, from cloud providers' perspective, they can increase their profit by accommodating more applications and reducing the expense of data centers.



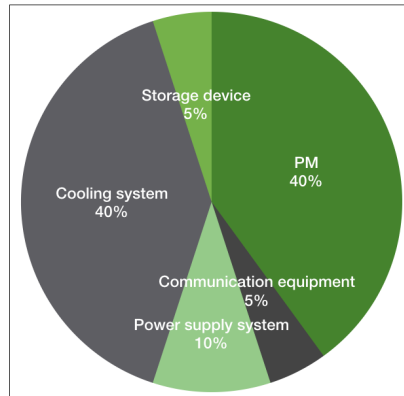


Figure 2.2: Energy consumption distribution of data centers [73]

The major expense of data centers is energy consumption [46]. Energy consumption is derived from several parts as illustrated in Figure 2.2. Cooling system and physical machines (PMs) account for a majority of the consumption. A recent survey [17] shows that the recent development of cooling techniques have reduced its energy consumption and now PM consumption has become the dominate energy consumption component.

According to Hameed et al [40], PMs are far from energy-efficient. The main reason for the wastage of energy is that the energy consumption of servers remains high even when the utilization of PMs are low. For example, the average CPU utilization of a data center is only 15% for most of the time, however, the energy consumption of PM remains 70% of their peak time. The major reason is that each application is allocated to PMs for the sake of application environment isolation while the resources in the PM are far more than the application needs. In order to solve the problem, a concept of *energy proportional computing* [4] raised to address the disproportionate between utilization and energy consumption by using virtualization technology.

### 2.1.2 Virtualization

Virtualization [87] partitions a PM's resources (e.g. CPU, memory and disk) into several independent units called virtual machines (VMs) or containers. This technology rooted back in the 1960s' was originally invented to enable isolated software testing, because VMs can provide good isolation so that multiple applications can run in separated VMs within the same PM without interfering each other [80]. Soon, people realized that it can be a way to improve the utilization of hardware resources: With each application deployed in a VM, a PM can run multiple applications.

There are two classes of virtualization (see Figure 2.3): Hypervisor-based or VM-based and container-based virtualization.

#### VM-based Virtualization

A VM-based virtualization uses VM as its fundamental resource management unit. A VM allows independent Operating system runs on it. The system includes a new layer of software - the hypervisor or the virtual machine monitor (VMM). The VMM arbitrates accesses to the PM's resources so that OS from VMs can share them [?]. In the previous decades VM-based hypervisors such as Xen [3], KVM [49], and VMware ESX [92] dominate this field.

VMs can be used to reduce the energy consumption in data centers by utilizing the technology of live migration. live migration [42] can move a VM from one PM to another with-



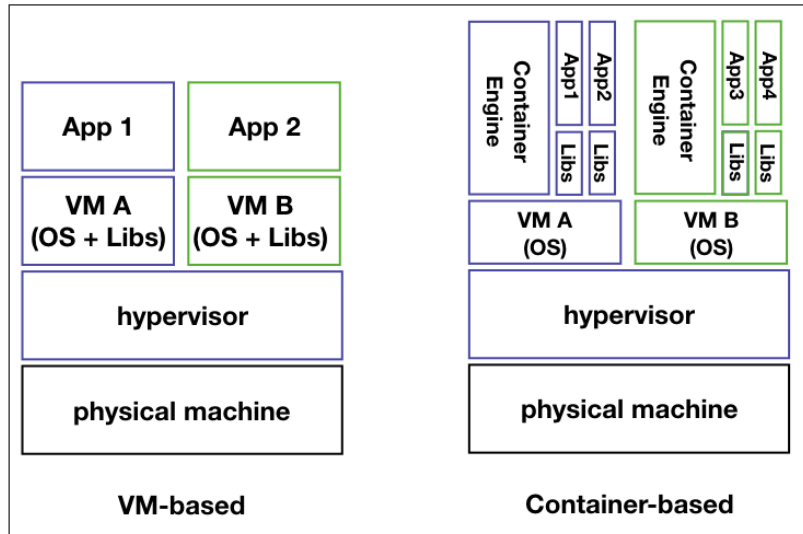


Figure 2.3: A comparison between VM-based and Container-based virtualization [68]

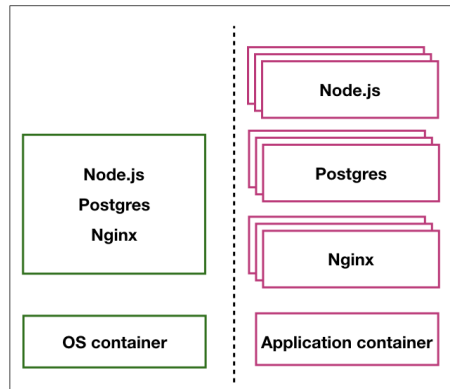


Figure 2.4: A comparison between OS container and Application container [?]

out interrupting the application running inside the VM. A common practice gathers several low utilized VMs into a PM so that the utilization of the PM is improved and idle PMs are turned off to save energy. This practice is called server consolidation which will be discussed in Section 2.1.3.

## Container-based Virtualization

Container-based virtualization uses both VM and container as its fundamental resource management unit. Container-based virtualization is also often addressed as operating-system-level virtualization. It includes two types of container: OS container and application container [?]. OS container (as shown in Figure 2.4) can run in both PM and VM which allows multiple applications running inside. There are mainly three implementations of OS-level of containers: OpenVZ, Google’s control groups, and namespace [74]. Google and Facebook have been using OS container for years and being beneficial for its lightweight and fast communication among applications.

An application container, such as Docker, Rocket and Kubernetes [7], accommodates a single application in it. Application container is much more flexible than OS container because each container to have its separated environment (e.g. libraries) so that the container

can be deployed in different OSs. Application container also provides a finer granularity of resource management by enabling an application level of operations including deployment, scaling, and migration.

### Comparison between Container-based and VM-based virtualization

This section mainly discussed the differences between application container and VM since OS container is very similar to VM. Several research [27, 34, 97] have compared VM-based and container-based virtualization. The advantages of container-based virtualization are mainly from three aspects:

- Container-based virtualization has a lightweight management which generates much less overhead than a VM hypervisor.
- Container-based virtualization shares OSs which reduces the overhead of multiple OSs while VMs have to run separated OSs.
- Containers naturally support vertical scaling while VMs do not. Vertical scaling means a container can dynamically adjust its resources under the host's resource constraint. This feature offers a fine granularity management of resources.

These advantages together with fine granularity resource management of container, can be used to improve the energy efficiency by overcoming three main defects in traditional VM-based cloud data centers.

The defects are listed as follows:

- Resource over-provisioning  
Cloud users tend to reserve over more resources for ensuring the Quality of Service at peak hours [15] which leads to low resource utilization. Cloud users do not completely rely on auto-scaling because auto-scaling is more expensive than reservation. However, the peak hours only account for a short period, therefore, in most of time, resources are wasted.

Application container overcomes this defects by dynamically adjusting its size. With vertical scaling, resource reservation can be performed in a minimum level, which leads to a high utilization of resources.

- Unbalanced usage of resources  
Specific applications consume unbalanced resources which leads to vast amount of resource wastage [86]. For example, computation intensive tasks consume much more CPU than RAM; a fixed type of VM provides much more RAM than it needs. Because the tasks use too much CPU, they prevent other tasks from co-allocating. This also causes wastage.

Application container overcomes this defects by combining complementary containers into a VM. The size of container reflects the requirement of the application. By using appropriate placement algorithm, the balanced usage of resources is achievable.

- Heavy overhead of VM hypervisors and redundant operating systems (OSs)  
Heavy overhead of hypervisor and redundant OSs running in the PM causes huge resource wastage. Traditional VM provides a complete independent environment for deploying software which includes its own OS and libraries. However, as most applications only require a general OS such as Windows or Linux, multiple duplicate OSs running in the system is a waste of resource.

Application container overcomes this defects by running on top of a VM.

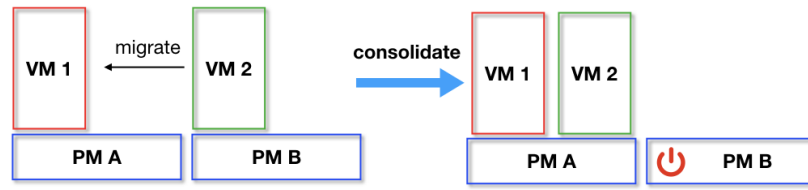


Figure 2.5: A Server Consolidation example: Initially, each PM runs an application wrapped with a VM in a low resource utilization state. After the consolidation, both VMs are running on PM A, so that PM B is turned off to save energy [4].

In summary, container-based cloud data center has the potential to improve further improve the energy efficiency than VM-based cloud. Next section will introduce the major strategy that is used to reduce the energy consumption in cloud data centers.

### 2.1.3 Server consolidation

Server consolidation is a resource management strategy aims at improving the resource utilization and decreasing the energy consumed by PMs. A general step of server consolidation is shown in Figure 2.5.

Server consolidation packs a number of VMs on fewer number of PMs to Server consolidation is often applied to solve the problem of PM sprawl [47]: a situation that more PMs are used in a low-utilized way.

Two technologies can be used to achieve server consolidation: clustering and virtualization. Clustering is used in a situation that the applications running in bare-metal PMs are I/O intensive. This is because current virtualization technologies such as KVM [49] or Xen [3] have a 20% to 55% of reduction of I/O bandwidth (e.g disk reads and writes, network bandwidth) in comparison with bare-metal PM [75].

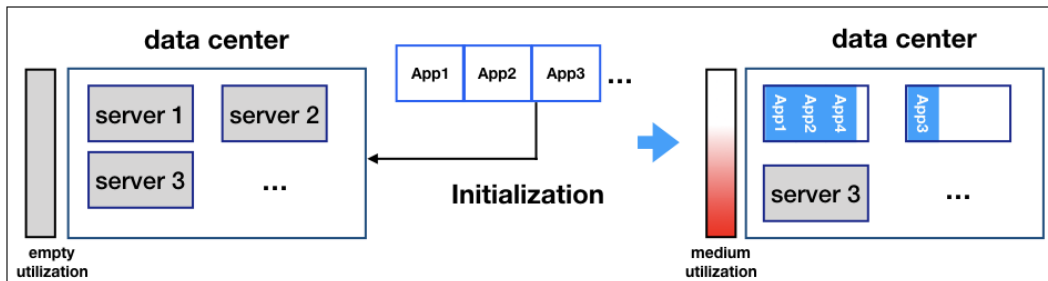
Virtualization is more suitable for applications which require small CPU utilization (e.g 15%) and low I/O needs. Web services are mostly categorized into this group.

Virtualization-based Server consolidation [105] utilized a dynamic migration technique (e.g pre-copy [18] and post-copy [42]) to resolve the low utilization problem by gathering applications into a fewer number of PMs (see Figure 2.5), so that the resource utilization of PMs are maintained at a high level. In the meanwhile, idle PMs can be turned off to save energy. Consolidation dramatically improves hardware utilization and lowers PM and cooling energy consumption.

Server consolidation can be done in two ways: Static and dynamic [90,99] which are applied in different resource management scenarios (discuss in next section). In some scenarios, for example: new application initialization and global consolidation, involve large number of variables, therefore, it is very time-consuming job and often conducted in an off-line fashion. In other scenarios, when PMs are overloading or underloading, it requires fast a decision-making to migrate one or more VMs to reduce the burden on overloaded PM or improve the utilization. It migrates one VM at a time with a dynamic method.

### General Server Consolidation Scenarios

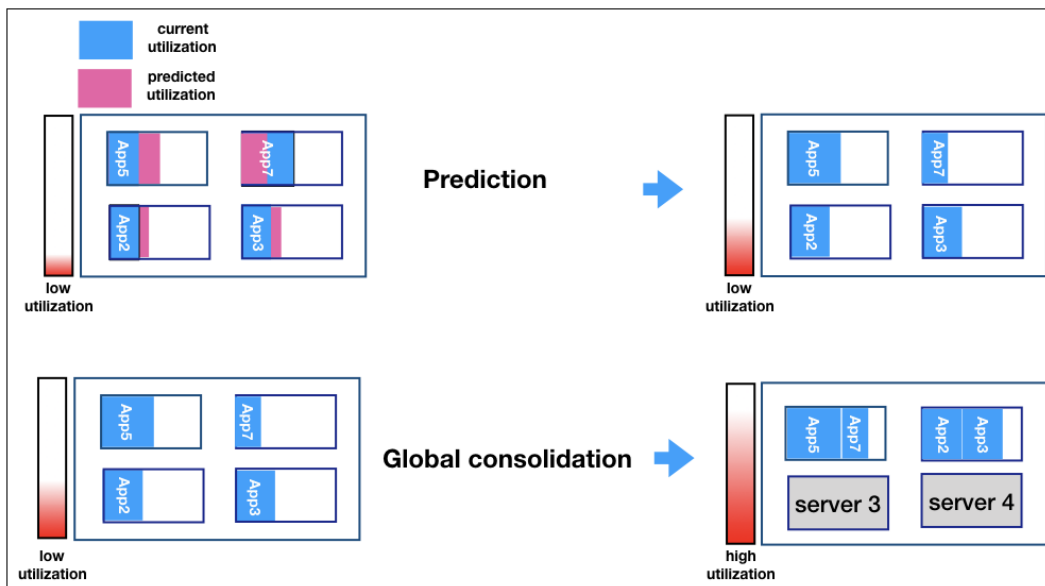
The server consolidation in data center can be applied to three [63,84] scenarios: Application initialization, Prediction and Global consolidation, and Dynamic resource management (see Figure 2.6).



(a) Initialization



(b) Dynamic resource management



(c) Prediction and Consolidation

Figure 2.6: Three scenarios of resource management

1. *Application initial placement* is applied when new applications or new VMs arrive and the problem is to allocate them into a minimum number of PMs [63].

In this problem, a set of applications or VMs are waiting in a queue. The resource capacity of the PM and usage by applications are characterized by a vector of resource utilizations including CPU, memory and etc. Then, the allocation system must select a minimum number of PMs to accommodate them so that after the allocation, the resource utilizations remain high. The problem is to consider the different combinations of applications so that the overall resource utilization is high. This problem is naturally modeled as a static bin-packing problem [19] which is a NP-hard problem meaning it is unlikely to find an optimal solution of a large problem.

2. *Prediction and Global consolidation* is conducted periodically to adjust the current allocation of applications so that the overall utilization is improved.

In this problem, time is discrete and it can be split into basic time frames, for example: ten seconds. A periodical operation is conducted in every  $N$  time frames. A cloud data center has a highly dynamic environment with continuous arriving and releasing of applications. Releasing applications cause hollow in PMs; new arrivals cannot change the structure of current allocation. Therefore, after the initial allocation, the overall energy efficiency is likely to drop along with time elapsing.

In prediction, an optimization system takes the current applications' utilization records as the input. Make a prediction of their utilization in the next period of time. In Global consolidation, based on the predict utilization and the current allocation - including a list of applications/VMs and a list of PMs, the system adjusts the allocation so that the global resource utilization is improved.

In comparison with initialization, instead of new arrivals, the global consolidation considers the previous allocation. Another major difference is that global consolidation needs to minimize the differences of allocation before and after the optimization. This is because the adjustment of allocation relies on a technique called live migration [18], and it is a very expensive operation because it occupies the resources in both the host and the target. Therefore, global optimization must be considered as a time-dependent activity which makes the optimization even difficult.

In comparison with dynamic consolidation, global consolidation takes a set of VMs as input instead of one. Therefore, it is time consuming and often treated as a static problem.

3. *Dynamic resource management* is applied in three scenarios. **First**, it is applied when a PM is overloading. In order to prevent the QoS from dropping, an application is migrated to another PM. This is called hot-spot mitigation [63]. **Second**, it is applied when a PM is under-loading. Under-loading is when a PM is in a low utilization state normally defined by a threshold. At this moment, all the applications in the under-loading PM are migrated to other active PMs, so the PM becomes empty and can be turned off. This is called dynamic consolidation. **Third**, it is applied when a PM having very high level of utilization while others having low. An adjustment is to migrate one or more application from high utilized PMs to low ones. This is called load balancing.

No matter which scenario it is, a dynamic resource management always involves three steps .

- *When to migrate?* refers to determine the time point that a PM is overloaded or underloaded. It is often decide by a threshold of utilization.

- *Which application to migrate?* refers to determine which application need to be migrated so that it optimize the global energy consumption.
- *Where to migrate?* refers to determine which host that an application is migrated to. This step is called dynamic placement which is directly related to the consolidation, therefore, it is decisive in improving energy-efficiency.

Among three operations, dynamic placement is a dynamic and on-line problem. The term “dynamic” means the request comes at an arbitrary time point. An on-line problem is a problem which has on-line input and requires on-line output [12]. It is applied when a control system does not have the complete knowledge of future events.

There are two difficulties in this operation, firstly, dynamic placement requires a fast decision while the search space is very large (e.g hundreds of thousands of PMs). Secondly, migrate one application at a time is hard to reach a global optimized state.

Finally, a consolidation plan includes four major items:

1. A list of existing PMs after consolidation
2. A list of new virtual machines created after consolidation
3. A list of old PMs to be turned off after consolidation
4. The exact placement of applications and services

## 2.2 Related Work

In this section, we summarize the related works in the terms of three resource management processes: application initial placement, periodic consolidation and dynamic consolidation, corresponding to our proposed objectives. In each sub section, we analyze the container-based and VM-based approaches, discuss their models and methodologies.

### 2.2.1 Application Initial Placement

Application initial placement is one of the major process in resource management as discussed in Section 2.1.3. The task of application initial placement for cloud provider is to deploy a number of VMs or containers to a minimum number of empty physical machines (PMs), because energy consumption is proportional to the PM number.

This section first discusses container-based approaches including modeling and methodology. The modeling includes power model and wastage model. Then, we will discuss and reason their disadvantages in design. In order to remedy their problems, we will review a number of VM-based placement including traditional bin packing and more advanced approaches.

#### Container-based Application Initial Placement

This section will briefly discuss the models of container-based approaches. Furthermore, our focus is to discuss the design of separate concern of container placement and VM placement as well as the collaborative placement. This will lead to our first objective: Develop an algorithm to solve the joint allocation of containers and VMs.

There are only few container-based research in the literature which mainly follow the VM-based modeling. Piraghaj et al [68] and Mann [58] both consider a linear energy model

which is widely adopted in the literature [98]. They consider two resources: CPU and memory. In addition, the constraints are allocated resources cannot exceed the PMs' capacity. In terms of wastage model, so far, they did not use any measure on the residual resources. In contrast, in most VM-based approaches, wastage has been widely considered. It will be discussed in the next section.

The design of three-tier structure: container-VM-PM raises a placement concern, optimize each tier separately and collaboratively. Piraghaj et al [68] consider it separately. Their placement strategy relies on fast and simple heuristic: in each tier of placement, they apply First Fit algorithm. While their main contribution is not the placement strategy but an architecture for container-based resource management. In this architecture, it allows the cloud providers to customize the size or type of VM when allocating applications instead of traditional fixed size VM. They determine the size of VM by two steps, in a pre-execution phase, they perform clustering technique on historical workload data from Google Cluster Data. In this way, they assert that the applications with similar workload pattern can be categorized into the same group. In the execution phase, when a number of deployment requests of container arrives, if there are enough available resources in the existing VMs, they perform First Fit on containers. If new VMs need to be initiated, they first determines the size of VMs by designed policies. Then, the containers are allocated to certain size of VMs.

Mann's research [58] is the earliest study which realizes this two level of placement are interact with each other, therefore, they must be considered collaboratively. Different from Piraghaj's assumption, they consider the container is based on an existing IaaS where fixed types of VM are provided. Therefore, the problem becomes three folds: 1. VM size selection for containers, 2. Place containers, 3. VM placement, and they should be considered together. However, another concern is "why not placement as many containers as possible in a single VM which minimizes the overhead of hypervisor". The paper gives an answer of "Too big VMs limit the consolidation possibilities". In order to prove their interaction, they apply a fixed VM placement algorithm and considering a series of VM selection algorithms such as simple selection [38], Multiple selection, Maxsize, Consolidation-friendly. They discover that the final energy consumption varies with the selection algorithms. They claim that the performance is better when VM selection has more knowledge of the PMs' capacity. However, their study only focuses on the partial placement with fixed VM placement algorithm. The answer of "How these two level of placement interact?" is still undiscovered.

There are mainly three reasons for us to propose a distinct approach from Piraghaj [68] to solve the container-based placement problem. First, their proposed architecture assumes arbitrary size of VM can be created when requests arrive. While our assumption is that the container-based architecture is based on traditional IaaS, where fix-size VMs provide the fundamental resources. Second, from the perspective of energy efficiency, the allocation of container and VM interact with each other. That is, the minimum number of VMs does not necessary lead to the minimum number of PMs, because the type of VMs also affect the results. Therefore, their approach cannot guarantee the energy consumption is near optimal. This inspires us to simultaneously allocate containers and VMs. Third, both approaches did not consider the OS requirement of containers or applications. We argue that this is another critical reason for deploying containers into different VMs besides the "limit the consolidation possibilities" argument states by Mann [58].

In order to solve the two-level of optimization problem, we believe one of the promising way is to model the problem as a bilevel optimization [20] as described in detailed in Section 2.2.2. Bilevel optimization naturally models the interaction so that this problem can be tackled by an optimization algorithm. The main challenge is that Bilevel optimization is a strongly NP-hard problem [?], therefore, traditional approaches such as Branch-and-bound [?] can only be applied in very small problems, or convert the problem into a single-

Table 2.1: A Comparison of different models and approaches

Research	Resources	Algorithm	Power model	Wastage model	Objective
Xu et al [102]	CPU and RAM	GGA and Fuzzy multi-objective	Linear	balance resources	three
Gao et al [39]	CPU and RAM	Ant Colony Optimization	Linear	balance resources	Two
Ferdaus et al [35]	CPU, RAM, and IO	Ant Colony Optimization	Linear	Sum of resources	Single
Wang and Xia [93]	CPU and RAM	MIP	Cubical	No	Single
Wilcox et al [96]	CPU and RAM	GGA	Linear	Sum of resources	Single
Xiong and Xu [101]	CPU,RAM,Bandwidth,Disk	PSO	Non-linear	Sum of resources	Single

level optimization problem. Evolutionary algorithms, on the other hand, becoming popular approaches in this field [77, 94].

### VM-based Application Initial Placement

This section first reviews a number of traditional approaches for the VM placement problem. Their drawbacks will be presented. Then, a number of advanced approaches will be examined. We mainly study the following five aspects: resources, power model, wastage model, objective, and algorithm.

Most of the works model VM placement problem as variants of bin packing problem and propose extensions of greedy-based heuristics such as First Fit Decreasing (FFD) [?], Best Fit, Best Fit Decreasing [?] etc. However, as VM placement is an NP-hard problem, greedy-based approaches can not guaranteed to generate near optimal solutions. Mishra and Sahoo’s paper [64] further analyze and discuss the drawbacks of these approaches. They found that, instead of standard bin packing, only vector bin packing is suitable for modeling resource allocation (see Section ??). Another drawback of traditional bin packing heuristic is that they do not consider the balance among resources which is a critical issue for vector bin packing problem. Their main contribution is that they list five principles for a good design of objective function, specially, the core idea is to capture the balance among resources.

Based on this insight, Gao et al [39] and Ferdaus et al [35] both propose an Ant Colony Optimization based metaheuristic using a vector algebra complementary resource utilization model proposed by Mishra [64]. They considered three resources CPU, memory, and network I/O with two objectives: minimizing power consumption and resource wastage. They apply the *Resource Imbalance Vector* to capture the imbalance among three resources. Meanwhile, they use a linear energy consumption function to capture the relationship between CPU utilization and energy [30]. Their solution was compared with four algorithms: Max-Min Ant System, a greedy-based approach, and two First Fit Decreasing-based methods. The results show that their proposed algorithm has much less wastage than other algorithms.

Xu and Fortes [102] propose a multi-objective VM placement approach with three objectives: minimizing total resource wastage, power consumption and thermal dissipation costs. They applied an improved grouping genetic algorithm (GGA) with fuzzy multi-objective evaluation. Their wastage by calculating as differences between the smallest normalized residual resource and the others. They also applied a linear power model to estimate the power consumption [55]. They conduct experiments on synthetic data and compare with six traditional approaches including First Fit Decreasing (FFD), Best Fit Decreasing (BFD) and single-objective grouping GA. The results showed the superior performance than other approaches.

Wilcox et al [96] also propose a reordering GGA approach because GGA can effectively avoid redundancy [29]. They use a indirect representation [71] which represents the packing as a sequence. In order to transform the sequence into a packing, they applied an ordering



operator which, in essence, is a first fit algorithm. This design naturally avoids infeasible solution, therefore, there is no need for constraint handling.

Wang and Xia [93] develop a MIP algorithm for solving large-scale VM placement problem under a *non-linear* power consumption model. Instead of considering the power consumption as a linear model like most researchers, they consider the CPU frequency can be adjust by dynamic voltage and frequency scaling (DVFS), therefore, the power consumption is a cubical power function of frequency. In order to solve the non-linear problem, they first use a linear function to approximate the cubical function. Then, they first use the Gurobi MIP solver to solve the relaxed linearized problem. Then, they apply an iterative rounding algorithm to obtain the near optimal solution.

$$\delta = \sum_{i=1}^n \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^d (u_j^i - ubest_i)^2} \quad (2.1)$$

Xiong and Xu [101] propose a PSO based approach to solve the problem. Their major contribution is using a total Euclidean distance  $\delta$  to represent the distance between current resource utilization and the optimal resource utilization (see equation 2.1) where  $d$  is the dimension of resources,  $u_j^i$  is the current resource utilization of  $j$  in a PM  $i$ ,  $ubest_i$  is the predefined optimal resource utilization (e.g 70% CPU utilization). Another contribution is their representation used in PSO. They represent the allocation of each VM to a PM as a probability and let particles search through the indirect solution space.

In summary, most of VM-based placement approaches consider two or three resources (I/O has not been considered in many approaches because they assume that network attached storage (NAS) is used as a main storage along the cluster [65]). After Mishra unreal the principles of vector bin packing, most research apply a balance-measure among resources as their objectives. EC approaches are widely used because they are better performed than traditional heuristics and faster than ILP methods.

### 2.2.2 Bilevel Optimization

A bilevel optimization [20] is a kind of optimization where one problem is embedded within another. The outer optimization is referred to as the *upper-level* problem, while the inner optimization is referred to as the *lower-level* problem.

The general formulation of a bilevel optimization problem can be defined as:

$$\min_{x \in X, y} F(x, y) \quad (2.2a)$$

$$s.t \quad G(x, y) \leq 0, \quad (2.2b)$$

$$\min_y f(x, y) \quad (2.2c)$$

$$s.t \quad g(x, y) \quad (2.2d)$$

The variables of problem,  $x \in \mathbb{R}^{n_1}$  is the *upper-level variables* and  $y \in \mathbb{R}^{n_2}$  is the *lower-level variables*. The function  $F : \mathbb{R}^{n_1} \times \mathbb{R}^{n_2} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  and  $f : \mathbb{R}^{n_1} \times \mathbb{R}^{n_2} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  are the *upper-level* and *lower-level objective functions* respectively. The function  $G : \mathbb{R}^{n_1} \times \mathbb{R}^{n_2} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{m_1}$  and  $g : \mathbb{R}^{n_1} \times \mathbb{R}^{n_2} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{m_2}$  are called the *upper-level* and *lower-level constraints* respectively.

Bilevel optimization problem has a hierarchical structure which may introduce difficulties such as non-convexity and disconnectedness even for simple cases such as bilevel linear programming problems is strongly NP-hard [?].

In practice, there are a number of problems that are bilevel in nature. For example, transportation related: work design, optimal pricing [13,21], management: network facility location [83], and engineering related: optimal design [48].

### 2.2.3 Techniques for Bilevel optimization

A number of studies have been conducted on bilevel optimization [20, 26]. Because of its NP-hard nature, approximation algorithms such as Karush-kuhn-Tucker approach [8, 41], branch-and-bound [2] are often applied to solve the problem. Most of these approaches are not applicable when the problem size increases.

As the complexity of the problem, practical problems with bilevel nature are often simplified into a single-level optimization problem which can achieve a satisfactory level instead of optimal. Classic algorithms often fail because of the nature of bilevel problem such as non-linearity, discreteness, no-differentiability, non-convexity etc.

Evolutionary methods have been applied to bilevel optimization problem since 90s. Mathieu et al [60] proposed an genetic algorithm (GA) based approach. It uses a nested strategy - the lower level is optimized with a linear programming method and the upper level apply a GA.

Oduguwa and Roy [66] proposed a co-evolutionary approach for bilevel problems. Two population are co-operated to find the optimal solution, where each population handles a sub-problem.

Wang et al [94] proposed an evolutionary algorithm based approach with a constraint handling technique. Their approach is able to handle non-differentiability at the upper level objective function, but not in constraints and lower level objective function. Later on, Wang proposed an improved version [95] that shows better performance than the previous version.

Particle Swarm Optimization [54] was also used in solving bilevel problems. A recent work is from Sinha et al [77], they propose a bilevel evolutionary algorithm (BLEAQ) works by approximating the optimal solution mapping between the lower level optimal solutions and the upper level variables. BLEAQ was tested on two sets of test problems and the results were compared with WJL [94] and WLD [95]. The results show BLEAQ is much faster than previous approaches. One major drawback of evolutionary algorithms is its high computation cost which limits the problem size from growing bigger.

### 2.2.4 Periodic consolidation

Periodic consolidation (see Section 2.1.3) is an process that optimizes the current allocation of resources in a periodic fashion [63]. This is because the cloud datacenter is a dynamic environment with continuous deployment and releases that causes degradation of the resource utilization, thus, the allocation needs to be adjusted when the performance degrades to a certain level. In comparison with application initial placement (see Section 2.2.1), the similarity is that they are both static approaches which consider a batch of applications and PMs. The difference is that periodic consolidation needs to take the cost of application migration into account, therefore, it is often considered as a multi-objective optimization problem.

Although periodic consolidation has been applied in VM-based Cloud for years [36, 65], it has not been studied in the new context of container-based Cloud. Therefore, this section will first discuss VM-based models, especially the migration models. Secondly, we will discuss the approaches in periodic consolidation in the VM-context, specifically, in terms of the prediction of workload, these gaps existed in both VM and container context.

Murtazaev and Oh [65], Beloglazov et al [5] and Ferreto et al [36] realize that the migration process generates a large overhead so that it should be used as few as possible. In their migration model, they use the number of migration as the optimization objective. Murtazaev's approach minimize this number by developing an algorithm which always chooses a VM in the least loaded PM and attempts to allocate them on the most loaded PMs. Based on this idea, they develop a heuristic based on First and Best Fit. They select a candidate

VM based on a surrogate weight of the resources it used. Beloglazov, on the other hand, considers different criteria for selecting candidate VMs. They not only considers the utilization of VMs but also the utilization of the original PM and target PMs. They also propose a simple heuristic: a modified Best Fit Decreasing to solve the problem. However, these two approaches develop their selection criteria in a greedy fashion which may lead to a local optimal. Ferreto proposes a preprocessing step before the placement algorithm. It first orders the VMs according to their workload variation. Then, it only performs placement on those VMs with the highest variability. These three papers provide some insight that a good placement algorithm should consider more than the utilization of host and target PMs, but also the variation of workload.

Most previous consolidation approaches [16,33,91] only consider static workload. That is, they use a peak or average workload as a represented value as the consolidation input. In most of cases, this will lead to either low utilization: peak time only account for small proportion of the total time, or more migrations: extra migration are performed on workload changes. Therefore, the consolidation is more than aggressively concentrate workload on as few PM as possible, but also considers the robustness. The robustness is referred to the capability of enduring the variation of workload without make too many changes.

In order to achieve robustness, the workload variation must be taken into account. Bobroff [9] analyzed a large number of traces from real world datacenter. They categorize workloads into three main groups:

- Weak variability.
- Strong variability with weak periodic behavior.
- Strong variability with strong periodic behavior.

Workload with weak variability can be directly packed. The only problem is that their long-term workload can also be changed. For the second type of workload, it is hard or even impossible to predict its behavior. The third type of workload can be predicted. However, it is hard to find the applications with compensated workload patterns.

Meng et al [62] proposed a standard time series technique to extract the deterministic patterns (e.g trends, cycles and seasonality) and irregular fluctuating patterns from workloads' CPU utilization; they assume the periodic behavior of workload will preserve in the future and predict the irregular parts with two approaches: with and without explicit forecast error models. Then, applications are paired according to their negative correlation. They evaluate the workload prediction and application selection with a server consolidation task. They use First Fit to allocate paired applications. During the consolidation, The consolidation results show that they use 45% less PMs for hosting the same number of VMs. Furthermore, their approach is more robust since the variation of workload is considered. However, they only consider two complementary applications at a time.

### 2.2.5 VM-based Dynamic Consolidation Techniques

Forsman et al [37] propose two distributed migration strategies to balance the load in a system. *The push* strategy is applied on overloaded PM; it attempts to migrate *One* VM at a time to less loaded PMs. *The pull* strategy is applied on underutilized PMs request workload from heavier loaded PMs. Each of the strategy is executed on each PM as an intelligent agent. They share their status with each other through a communication protocol. There are several interesting features of their approach. First, they apply an adaptive high-load threshold (e.g 0.7 of overall CPU utilization) so that it considers the environment changes. Second,

they use an EWMA algorithm to reduce the unnecessary migration because EWMA [43] is useful in smoothing out variations in the average load. Third, they applied an entropy to model the load distribution which is also applied in some previous approaches [50, 70]. Their system is agent-based which means large amount of communication may occur between nodes, this would certainly cost extra network resources which are not discussed. Therefore, we expect to design a centralized system, where all nodes are controlled by a controller.

Xiao et al [99] make two contributions, first, they build a quadratic energy model for the energy consumption of PM and a linear model for the energy consumption of migration [56]. Second, they propose an algorithm based on Multiplayer random evolutionary game theory to solve the problem. In their approach, VMs are mapped into players that take part in the evolutionary game. In each iteration, all the players choose their best feasible action, i.e., Migrate to a PM which can minimize the energy consumption. Some players will randomly choose PM to avoid being stuck at a local optimal. Their approach is compared with First Fit, Best Fit Increasing, Best Fit Decreasing, Greedy and Load Balance rule. The solutions show their approach can improve energy consumption greatly, especially in the scenario that the distributions of VMs are very centralized.

## Chapter 3

# Preliminary Work

### 3.1 Related models

#### 3.1.1 Workload model

Xavier et al [103] develops a *Resource-Allocation-Throughput (RAT)* model for web service allocation. The *RAT model* mainly defines several important variables for an atomic service which represents a software component. Based on this model, firstly, an atomic service's throughput equals its coming rate if the resources of the allocated VM are not exhausted. Secondly, increasing the coming rate will also increase an atomic service's throughput until the allocated resource is exhausted. Thirdly, when the resource is exhausted, the throughput will not increase as request increasing. At this time, the virtual machine reaches its capacity.

#### 3.1.2 Power Model

Shekhar's research [82] is one of the earliest in energy aware consolidation for cloud computing. They conduct experiments of independent applications running in physical machines. They explain that CPU utilization and disk utilization are the key factors affecting the energy consumption. They also find that only consolidating services into the minimum number of physical machines does not necessarily achieve energy saving, because the service performance degradation leads to a longer execution time, which increases the energy consumption.

Bohra [10] develops an energy model to profile the power of a VM. They monitor the sub-components of a VM which includes: CPU, cache, disk, and DRAM and propose a linear model (Eq 3.1). Total power consumption is a linear combination of the power consumption of CPU, cache, DRAM and disk. The parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are determined based on the observations of machine running CPU and IO intensive jobs.

$$P_{(total)} = \alpha P_{\{CPU, cache\}} + \beta P_{\{DRAM, disk\}} \quad (3.1)$$

Although this model can achieve an average of 93% of accuracy, it is hard to be employed in solving SRAC problem, for the lack of data.

Beloglazov et al. [?] propose a comprehensive energy model for energy-aware resource allocation problem (Eq 3.2).  $P_{max}$  is the maximum power consumption when a virtual machine is fully utilized;  $k$  is the fraction of power consumed by the idle server (i.e. 70%); and  $u$  is the CPU utilization. This linear relationship between power consumption and CPU utilization is also observed by [51,72].

$$P(u) = k \cdot P_{max} + (1 - k) \cdot P_{max} \cdot u \quad (3.2)$$

### 3.2 Problem Description

We consider the problem as a multi-objective problem with two potentially conflicting objectives, minimizing the overall cost of web services and minimizing the overall energy consumption of the used physical machines.

To solve the SRAC problem, we model an atomic service as its request and requests' coming rate, also known as frequency.

The request of an atomic service is modeled as two critical resources: CPU time  $A = \{A_1, A_i, \dots, A_t\}$  and memory consumption  $M = \{M_1, M_i, \dots, M_t\}$ , for each request consumes a  $A_i$  amount of CPU time and  $M_i$  amount of memory. The coming rate is denoted as  $R = \{R_1, R_i, \dots, R_t\}$ . In real world scenario, the size and the number of a request are both variant which are unpredictable, therefore, this is one of the major challenges in Cloud resource allocation. In this paper, we use fixed coming rate extracted from a real world dataset to represent real world service requests.

The cloud data center has a number of available physical machines which are modeled as CPU time  $PA = \{PA_1, PA_j, \dots, PA_p\}$  and memory  $PM = \{PM_1, PM_j, \dots, PM_p\}$ .  $PA_j$  denotes the CPU capacity of a physical machine and  $PM_j$  denotes the size of memory. A physical machine can be partitioned or virtualized into a set of virtual machines; each virtual machine has its CPU time  $VA = \{VA_1, VA_n, \dots, VA_v\}$  and memory  $VM = \{VM_1, VM_n, \dots, VM_v\}$ .

The decision variable of service allocation is defined as  $X_n^i$ .  $X_n^i$  is a binary value (e.g. 0 and 1) denoting whether a service  $i$  is allocated on a virtual machine  $n$ . The decision variable of virtual machine allocation is defined as  $Y_j^n$ .  $Y_j^n$  is also binary denoting whether a VM  $n$  is allocated on a physical machine  $j$ .

In this work, we consider homogeneous physical machine which means physical machines have the same size of CPU time and memory. The utilization of a CPU of a virtual machine is denoted as  $U = \{U_1, U_n, \dots, U_v\}$ . The utilization can be calculated by Eq.3.3.

$$U_n = \begin{cases} \frac{\sum_{i=1}^t R_i \cdot A_i \cdot X_n^i}{VA_n}, & \text{If } \frac{\sum_{i=1}^t R_i \cdot A_i \cdot X_n^i}{VA_n} < 1 \\ 1, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (3.3)$$

The cost of a type of virtual machine is denoted as  $C = \{C_1, C_n, \dots, C_v\}$ .

In order to satisfy the performance requirement, Service providers often define Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to ensure the service quality. In this work, we define throughput as a SLA measurement [67]. Throughput denotes the number of requests that a service could successfully process in a period of time. According to *RAT* model, the throughput is equal to the number of requests when the allocated resource is sufficient. Therefore, if a VM reaches its utilization limitation, it means that the services have been allocated exceedingly. Therefore, all services in that VM suffer from performance degradation.

Then we define two objective functions as the total energy consumption and the total cost of virtual machines:

minimize

$$Energy = \sum_{j=1}^p (k \cdot V_{max} + (1 - k) \cdot V_{max} \cdot \sum_{n=1}^v U_n \cdot Y_j^n) \quad (3.4)$$

$$Cost = \sum_{j=1}^p \sum_{n=1}^v C_n \cdot Y_j^n \quad (3.5)$$

### Hard constraint

A virtual machine can be allocated on a physical machine if and only if the physical machine has enough available capacity on every resource.

$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{n=1}^v VM_n \cdot Y_j^n &\leq PM_j \\ \sum_{n=1}^v VA_n \cdot Y_j^n &\leq PA_j\end{aligned}\tag{3.6}$$

### Soft constraint

A service can be allocated on a virtual machine even if the virtual machine does not have enough available capacity on every resource, but the allocated services will suffer from a quality degradation.

$$\sum_{i=1}^t M_i \cdot R_i \cdot X_i^n \leq VM_n\tag{3.7}$$

## 3.3 Methods

As we have discussed, Multi-objective Evolutionary Algorithms are good at solving multi-objective problems and NSGA-II [24] has shown his effective and efficiency. NSGA-II is a well-known MOEA that has been widely used in many real-world optimization problems. In this paper we also adopt NSGA-II to solve the SRAC problem. We first propose a representation and then present a NSGA-II based algorithm with novel genetic operators.

### 3.3.1 Chromosome Representation

SRAC is a two-level bin-packing problem, in the first level, bins represent physical machines and items represent virtual machines. Whereas, in the second level, a virtual machine acts like a bin and web services are items. Therefore, we design the representation in two hierarchies, virtual machine level and physical machine level.

Figure 3.1 shows an example individual which contains seven service allocations. Each allocation of a service is represented as a pair where the index of each pair represents the number of web service. The first number indicates the type of virtual machine that the service is allocated in. The second number denotes the number of virtual machine. For example, in Figure 3.1, service #1 and service #2 are both allocated in the virtual machine #1 while service #1 and service #5 are allocated to different virtual machines sharing the same type. The first hierarchy shows the virtual machine in which a service is allocated by defining VM type and number. Note that, the VM type and number are correlated once they are initialized. With this feature, the search procedure is narrowed down in the range of existing VMs which largely shrinks the search space. The second hierarchy shows the relationship between a physical machine and its virtual machines, which are implicit. The physical machine is dynamically determined according to the virtual machines allocated on it. For example, in Figure 3.1, the virtual machines are sequentially packed into physical machines. The boundaries of PMs are calculated by adding up the resources of VMs until one of the resources researches the capacity of a PM. At the moment, no more VMs can be packed into the PM, then the boundary is determined. The reason we designed this heuristic is because a physical machine is always fully used before launching another. Therefore, VM consolidation is inherently achieved.

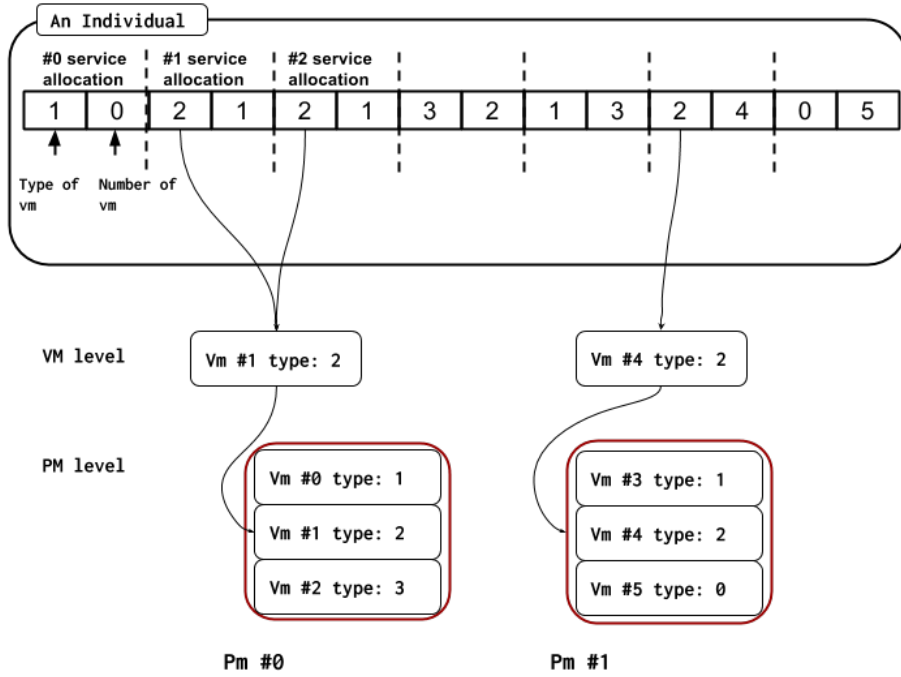


Figure 3.1: An example chromosome representation

Clearly, specifically designed operators are needed to manipulate chromosomes. Therefore, based on this representation, we further developed initialization, mutation, constraint handling and selection method.

### 3.3.2 Initialization

---

#### Algorithm 1 Initialization

---

**Inputs:**

VM CPU Time  $VA$  and memory  $VM$ ,  
Service CPU Time  $A$  and memory  $M$   
consolidation factor  $c$

**Outputs:** A population of allocation of services

```

1: for Each service  $t$  do
2:   Find its most suitable VM Type
3:   Randomly generate a VM type  $vmType$  which is equal or better than its most suitable type
4:   if There are existing VMs with  $vmType$  then
5:     randomly generate a number  $u$ 
6:     if  $u < \text{consolidation factor}$  then
7:       randomly choose one existing VM with  $vmType$  to allocate
8:     else
9:       launch a new VM with  $vmType$ 
10:    end if
11:  else
12:    Create a new VM with its most suitable VM type
13:  end if
14: end for

```

---

The initialization (see Alg 1) is designed to generate a diverse population. In the first step, for each service, it is able to find the most suitable VM type which is just capable of running the service based on its resource requirements. In the second step, based on the



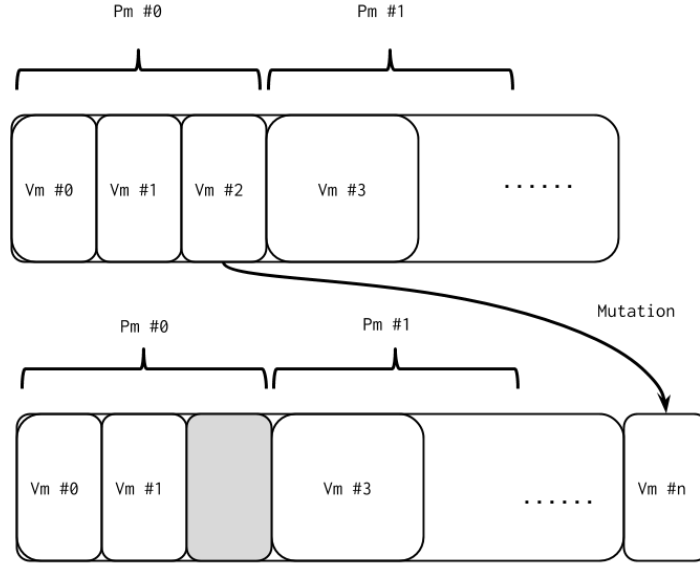


Figure 3.2: An example mutation without insertion that causes a lower resource utilization

suitable VM type, a stronger type is randomly generated. If there exists a VM with that type, the service is either deployed in the existing VM or launch a new VM. We design a consolidation factor  $c$  which is a real number manually selected from 0 to 1 to control this selection. If a random number  $u$  is smaller than  $c$ , the service is consolidated in an existing VM.

This design could adjust the consolidation, therefore, controls the utilization of VM.

### 3.3.3 Mutation

The design principle for mutation operator is to enable individuals exploring the entire feasible search space. Therefore, a good mutation operator has two significant features, the exploration ability and the its ability to keep an individual within the feasible regions. In order to achieve these two goals, firstly, we generate a random virtual machine type which has a greater capacity than the service needs. It ensures the feasible of solutions as well as exploration capability. Then, we consider whether a service is consolidated with the consolidation factor  $c$ .

The consolidation is conducted with a roulette wheel method which assigns fitness value to each VM according to the reciprocal of its current utilization. The higher the utilization, the lower the fitness value it is assigned. Therefore, a lower utilization VM has a greater probability to be chosen. At last, if a new VM is launched, it will not be placed at the end of VM lists. Instead, it will be placed at a random position among the VMs. The reason is illustrated in Figure 3.2. In the example, VM #2 is mutated into a new type and be placed at the end of the VM list. However, because of the size of VM #3 is too large for PM #0, the hollow in PM #0 will never be filled. This problem can be solved with the random insertion method.

### 3.3.4 Violation control method

A modified violation ranking is proposed to deal with the soft constraint, for the hard constraint is automatically eliminated by the chromosome representation. We define a violation

---

**Algorithm 2 Mutation**

---

**Inputs:**

An individual VM CPU Time  $VA$  and memory  $VM$ ,  
Service CPU Time  $A$  and memory  $M$   
consolidation factor  $c$

**Outputs:** A mutated individual

```
1: for Each service do
2:   Randomly generate a number  $u$ 
3:   if  $u < \text{mutation rate}$  then
4:     find the most suitable VM Type for this service
5:     Randomly generate a number  $k$ 
6:     if  $k < \text{consolidation factor}$  then
7:       calculate the utilization of used VMs
8:       assign each VM with a fitness value of  $1 / \text{utilization}$  and generate a roulette wheel according to
         their fitness values
9:       Randomly generate a number  $p$ , select the VM according to  $p$ 
10:      Allocate the service
11:   else
12:     launch a new VM with the most suitable VM Type
13:     insert the new VM in a randomly choose position
14:   end if
15: end if
16: end for
```

---

number as the number of services which are allocated in the degraded VMs. That is, if there are excessive services allocated in a VM, then all the services are suffered from a degraded in performance. The violation number is used in the selection procedure, where the individuals with less violations are always preferred.

### 3.3.5 Selection

Our design uses the binary tournament selection with a constrained-domination principle. A constrained-domination principle is defined as following. A solution  $I$  is considered constraint-dominate a solution  $J$ , if any of the following condition is true:

1. Solution  $I$  is feasible, solution is not,
2. Both solutions are infeasible,  $I$  has smaller overall violations,
3. Both solutions are feasible, solution  $I$  dominates solution  $J$ .

An individual with no or less violation is always selected. This method has been proved effective in the original NSGA-II paper [24].

### 3.3.6 Fitness Function

The cost fitness (Eq.3.5) is determined by the type of VMs at which web service are allocated. The energy fitness is shown in Eq.3.4, the utilizations (Eq.3.3) of VM are firstly converted into the utilizations of PM according to the proportion of VMs and PMs CPU capacity.

### 3.3.7 Algorithm

The main difference between our approach and the original NSGA-II is that our approach has no crossover operator.

That is, a random switch of chromosome would completely destroy the order of VMs, hence, no useful information will be preserved. Therefore, we only apply mutation as the

Table 3.1: Problem Settings

Problem	1	2	3	4	5	6
Number of services	20	40	60	80	100	200

exploration method. Then, the algorithm becomes a parallel optimization without much interaction between its offspring, which is often addressed as Evolutionary Strategy [52].

---

**Algorithm 3** NSGA-II for SRAC

---

**Inputs:**

VM CPU Time  $VA$  and memory  $VM$ ,  
PM CPU Time  $PA$  and memory  $PM$ ,  
Service CPU Time  $A$  and memory  $M$   
consolidation factor  $c$

**Outputs:** A Non-dominated Set of solutions

```

1: Initialize a population  $P$ 
2: while Termination Condition is not meet do
3:   for Each individual do
4:     Evaluate the fitness values
5:     Calculate the violation
6:   end for
7:   non-Dominated Sorting of  $P$ 
8:   calculate crowding distance
9:   while child number is less than population size do
10:    Selection
11:    Mutation
12:    add the child in a new population  $U$ 
13:   end while
14:   Combine  $P$  and  $U$  { for elitism}
15:   Evaluate the combined  $P$  and  $U$ 
16:   Non-dominated sorting and crowding distance for combined population
17:   Include the top popSize ranking individuals to the next generation
18: end while

```

---

## 3.4 Experiment

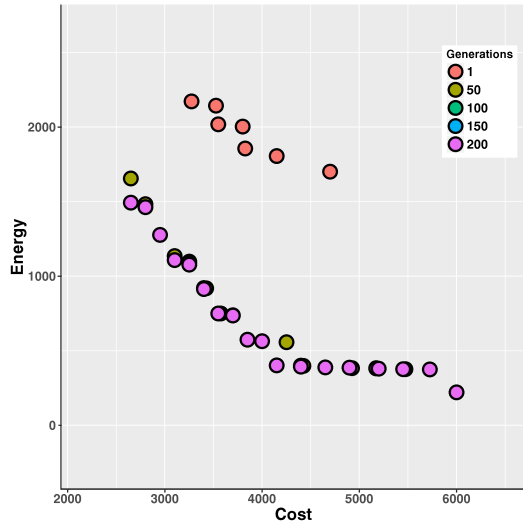
### 3.4.1 Dataset and Problem Design

This project is based on both real-world datasets *WS-Dream* [106] and simulated datasets [11]. The *WS-Dream* contains web service related datasets including network latency and service frequency (request coming rate). In this project, we mainly use the service frequency matrix. For the cost model, we only consider the rental of virtual machines with fixed fees (monthly rent). The configurations of VMs are shown in Table 3.2, the CPU time and memory were selected manually and cost were selected proportional to their CPU capacity. The maximum PM's CPU and memory are set to 3000 and 8000 respectively. The energy consumption is set to 220W according to [11].

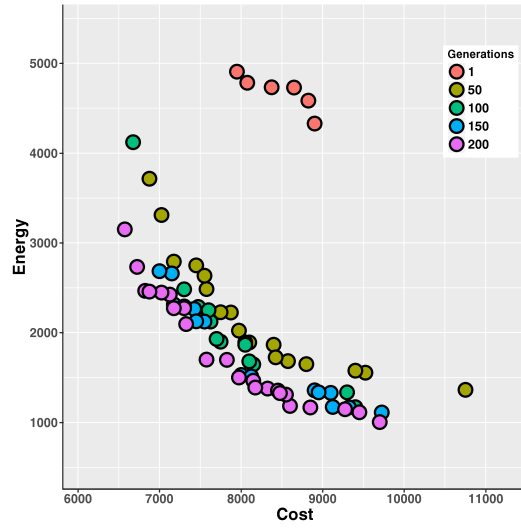
We designed six problems shown in Table 3.1, listed with increasing size and difficulty, which are used as representative samples of SRAC problem.

Selection Method with violation Control vs. without violation control

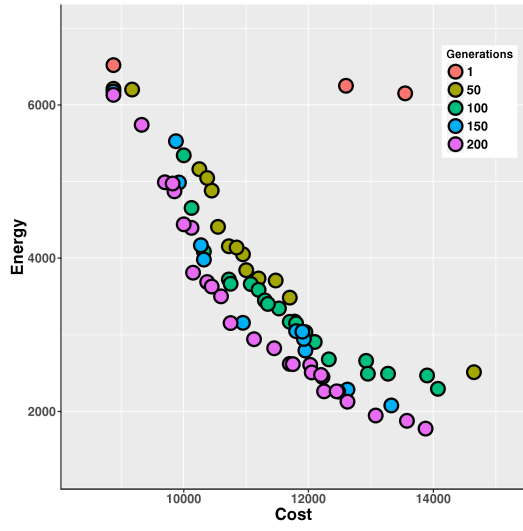
We conducted two comparison experiments. For the first experiment, we make a comparison between NSGA-II with violation control and NSGA-II without violation control. In second experiment, two mutation operators are compared. The first is the roulette wheel



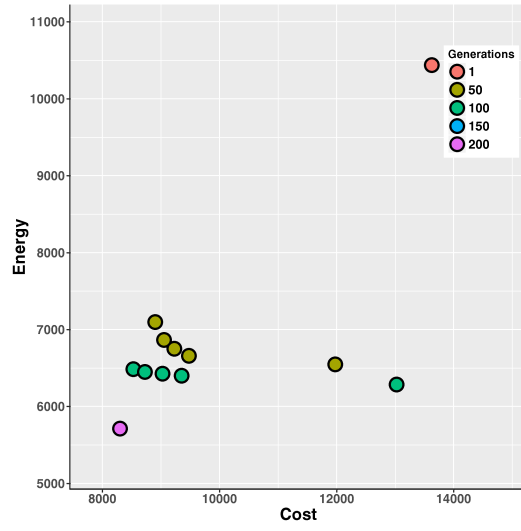
(a) Problem 1



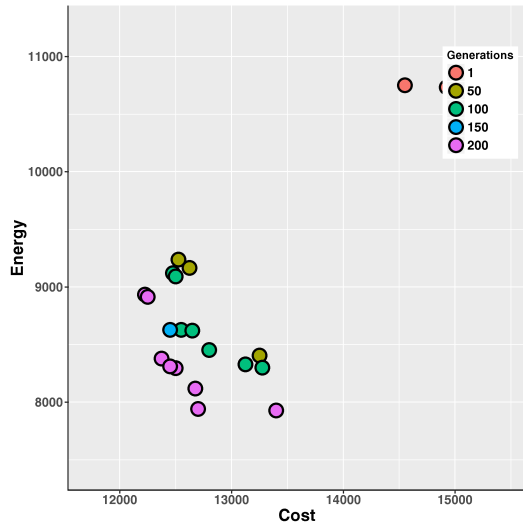
(b) Problem 2



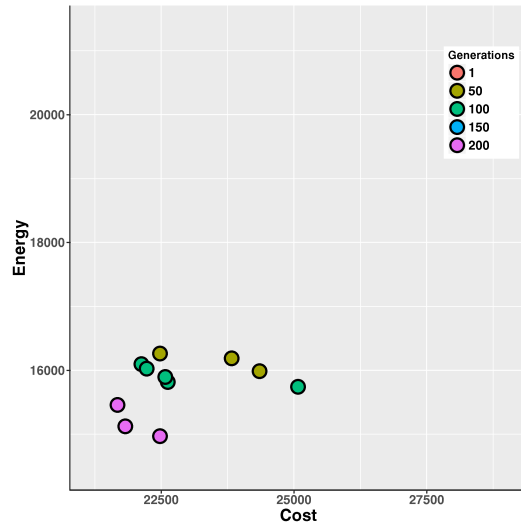
(c) Problem 3



(d) Problem 4



(e) Problem 5



(f) Problem 6

Figure 3.3: Non-dominated solutions evolve along with the generation

Table 3.2: VM configurations

VM Type	CPU Time	Memory	Cost
1	250	500	25
2	500	1000	50
3	1500	2500	150
4	3000	4000	300

mutation, the second is the mutation with greedy algorithm. The mutation with greedy algorithm is a variant of roulette wheel mutation. The only difference is that instead of selecting a VM to consolidate with fitness values, it always selects the VM with the lowest CPU utilization. Therefore, it is a greedy method embedded in the mutation.

The experiments were conducted on a personal laptop with 2.3GHz CPU and 8.0 GB RAM. For each approach, 30 independent runs are performed for each problem with constant population size 100. The maximum number of iteration is 200.  $k$  equals 0.7. We set mutation rate and consolidation factor to 0.9 and 0.01.

### 3.4.2 Results

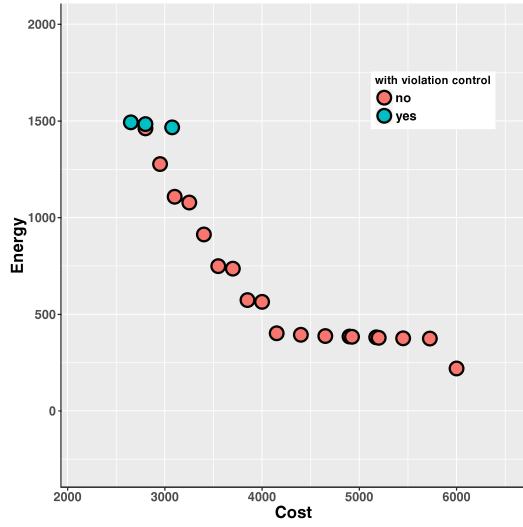
Table 3.3: Comparison between two Mutation methods

Problem	roulette wheel mutation		Greedy mutation	
	cost fitness	energy fitness	cost fitness	energy fitness
1	$2664.6 \pm 66.4$	$1652.42 \pm 18.2$	$2661.7 \pm 56.9$	$1653.2 \pm 18.2$
2	$6501.1 \pm 130.2$	$4614.0 \pm 110.7$	$6495.37 \pm 110.7$	$4132.5 \pm 80.4$
3	$8939.2 \pm 118.5$	$6140.7 \pm 204.0$	$9020.5 \pm 204.0$	$5739.6 \pm 148.6$
4	$11633.7 \pm 301.1$	$9301.9 \pm 254.0$	$12900.6 \pm 243.0$	$9376.3 \pm 120.9$
5	$14102.0 \pm 231.7$	$10164.8 \pm 238.9$	$14789.2 \pm 238.8$	$9876.3 \pm 120.9$
6	$27194.3 \pm 243.0$	$19914.4 \pm 307.5$	$27654.2 \pm 307.5$	$19187.1 \pm 176.6$

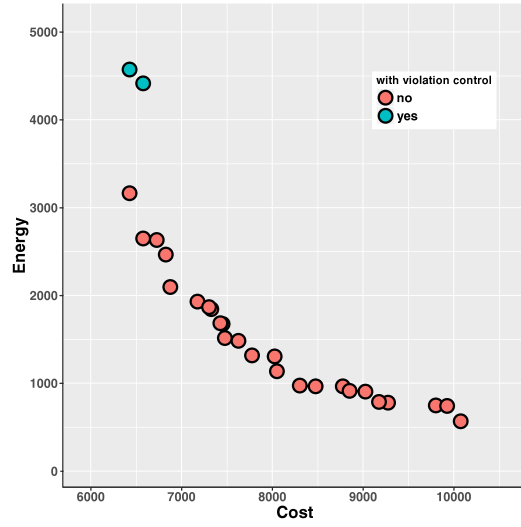
As we conducted the experiment for 30 runs, we first obtain an average non-dominated set over 30 runs by collecting the results from a specific generation from all 30 runs, and then apply a non-dominated sorting over them.

Firstly, we show the non-dominated solutions evolve along with the evolution process in Figure 3.3. These results come from selection method without violation control. As it illustrated, different colors represent different generations from 0th to 200th. For problem 1, because the problem size is small, the algorithm converged before 100 generations. Therefore, the non-dominated set from the 100th and 150th generations are overlapping with results from the 200th generation. For problem 2 and problem 3, it clearly shows the improvement of fitness values. For problem 4 onwards, the algorithm can only obtain a few solutions as the problem size is large, it is difficult to find solutions.

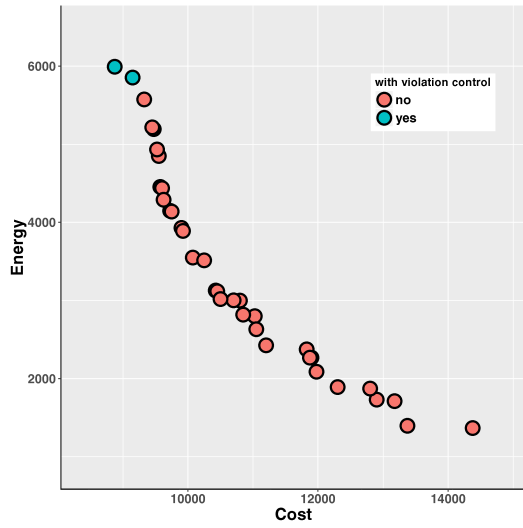
Then, the non-dominated sets of the last generation from two selection methods are compared in Figure 3.4. There are much fewer results are obtained from the violation control method throughout all cases. For the first three problems, the non-dominated set from the violation control method has similar quality as the no violation control method. From problem 4 onwards, the results from selection with violation control are much worse in terms of fitness values. However, most of the results from non-violation control selection have a high



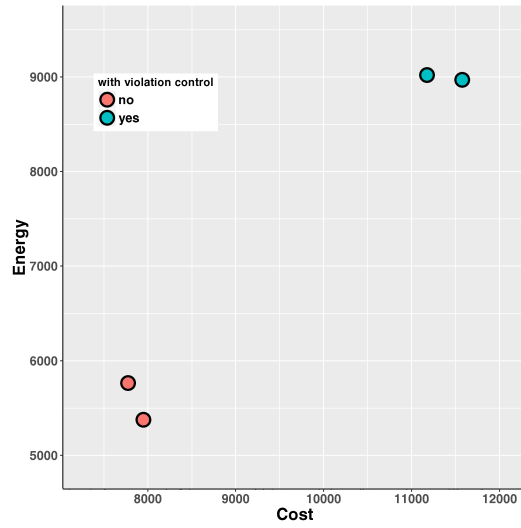
(a) Problem 1



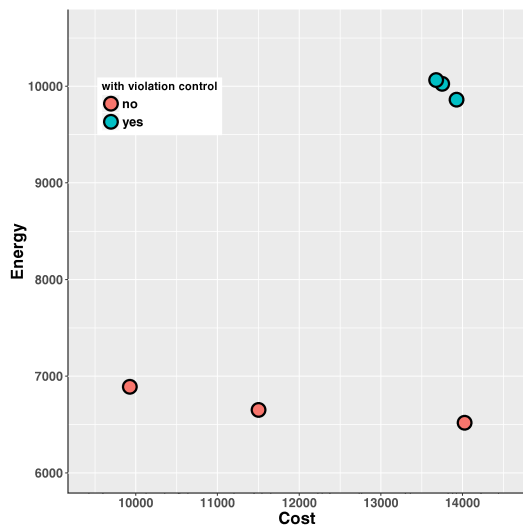
(b) Problem 2



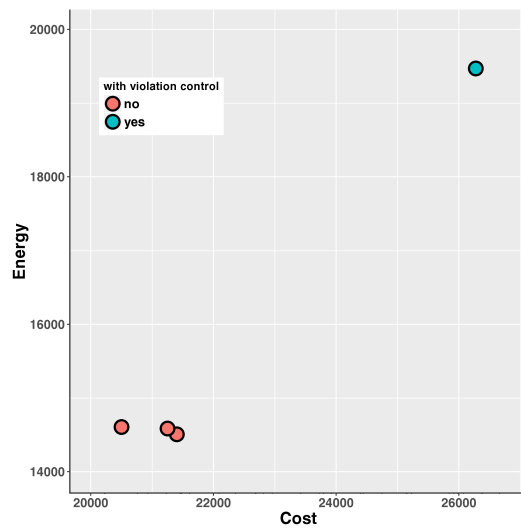
(c) Problem 3



(d) Problem 4



(e) Problem 5



(f) Problem 6

Figure 3.4: non-dominated solutions comparison between selection with violation control and without violation control

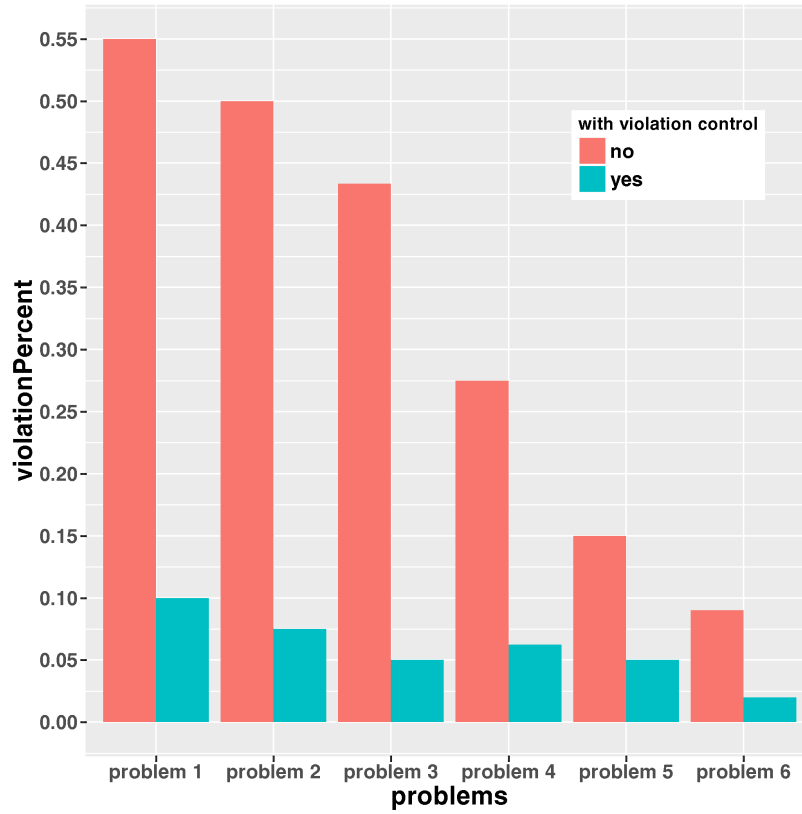


Figure 3.5: Violation Percentage comparison between selection with violation control and without violation control

violation rate. That is, the method without violation control is stuck in the infeasible regions and provide high-violation rate solutions.

From figure 3.5, we can observe the violation rate between two methods. It proves violation control has a great ability to prevent the individual from searching the infeasible region. On the other hand, without violation control, although, the algorithm can provide more solutions with better fitness values, most of them have a high violation rate over 10% which are not very useful in reality.

As we mentioned in previous section, the mutation rate and consolidation factor are set differently for the two methods. For the method with violation control, the mutation rate is set to 0.9 and the consolidation factor  $c$  is set to 0.01, this is because the feasible region is narrow and scattered. In order to avoid sticking in the local optima, a large mutation rate can help escape local optima. For the factor  $c$ , a larger percentage would easily lead the algorithm to infeasible regions. Therefore, it is set to a small number.

### Mutation with roulette wheel vs. Mutation with greedy algorithm

Table 3.3 shows the fitness value comparison between mutation methods. According to statistics significant test, there is little difference between methods. The possible reason is the consolidation factor is set to 0.01. In each mutation iteration, there is only 1% probability that a service will be consolidated in an existed VM, therefore, the influence between different consolidation strategies is trivial.

### 3.5 Conclusion

In this paper, we first propose a multi-objective formulation of a two levels of bin packing problem, web service resource allocation in Cloud. It solves the resource allocation in IaaS and SaaS at the same time. Two objectives, minimizing the cost from service providers' perspective and minimizing the energy consumption from cloud provider's objective are achieved. Secondly, we propose a NSGA-II based algorithm with specific designed genetic operators to solve the problem. The results are compared with different variances of the algorithm. The results show our approach can solve the very complicate optimization problem.

With current work as a baseline, in future work, we could improve the quality of solutions as well as provide better violation control mechanisms.



## Chapter 4

# Proposed Contributions and Project Plan

This thesis will contribute to the field of Cloud Computing by proposing novel solutions for the joint allocation of container and VM, and to the field of Evolutionary Computation by proposing new representations and genetic operators in evolutionary algorithms. The proposed contributions of this project are listed below:

1. A new model for the joint placement of container and VM problem. This new model will address the relationship between containers, VMs, PMs, and energy consumption. This model can be used in optimizing the energy consumption in a container-based cloud data center.
2. An EC-based approach for optimizing the single objective joint allocation of container and VM problem. This algorithm is expected to achieve better performance than existing VM-based approaches in terms of energy consumption.
3. A clustering-based pre-processing approach with the EC-based optimization algorithm to efficiently solve the joint allocation of container and VM problem. This work can be used to reduce the complexity of the joint allocation of container and VM problem by combining containers into larger groups.
4. EC-based multi-objective approaches for the joint placement container and VM with considering various types of workload. This work will propose several multi-objective approaches with aggregation and Pareto front methods. In addition, a uniform representation for various workloads will be proposed to make the algorithm more resilient.
5. A new genetic programming hyper-heuristic (GP-HH) approach for single objective dynamically placement of container with various types of workload. The proposed GP-HH is expected to automatically generate heuristics for various types of workload, dispatching them to suitable PMs in order to reach near-optimal solution in energy consumption.

### 4.1 Overview of Project Plan

Six overall phases have been defined in the initial research plan for this PhD project, as shown in Table 4.1. The first phase, which comprises reviewing the relevant literature, investigating both VM-based and container-based server consolidation algorithms, and producing the proposal, has been completed. The second phase, which corresponds to the first

Table 4.1: Phases of project plan

Phase	Task	Duration (Months)
1	Reviewing literature, overall design, selection of datasets and writing the proposal	12 (Complete)
2	Develop a single-objective EC-based approach for the joint allocation of containers and VMs	7
3	Develop multi-objective EC-based approaches for container-based cloud in periodic optimization with considering various types of workload	7
4	Develop a cooperative Genetic programming based hyper-heuristic approach for dynamical placement.	7
5	Writing the thesis	6

Table 4.2: Time Line

Task	Months											
	2	4	6	8	10	12	13	16	18	20	22	24
Literature Review and Updating	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Develop a new model for the joint placement of VMs and containers	x											
Develop an EC-based bilevel optimization approach for the joint placement of VMs and containers			x									
Improve the scalability of the EC-based approach with a pre-processing method				x								
Modify the model and develop a baseline aggregation approach for the multi-objective problem					x							
Develop an EC-based approach to solve the multi-objective joint allocation problem with Pareto front approach						x	x					
Propose an EC-based multi-objective algorithm for periodic optimization considering various types of predictable workload								x				
Develop a baseline GP-based hyper-heuristic approach									x	x		
Construct a GP primitive set by applying feature extraction on various types of application workload									x	x		
Develop a Cooperative GP-HH approach to evolve dispatching rules for placing container and VMs									x	x		
Writing the first draft of the thesis										x	x	
Editing the final draft										x	x	x

objective of the thesis, is currently in progress and is expected to be finished on time, thus allowing the remaining phases to also be carried out as planned.

## 4.2 Project Timeline

The phases included in the plan above are estimated to be completed following the timeline shown in Table 4.2, which will serve as a guide throughout this project. Note that part of the first phase has already been done, therefore the timeline only shows the estimated remaining time for its full completion.

## 4.3 Thesis Outline

The completed thesis will be organised into the following chapters:

- *Chapter 1: Introduction*

This chapter will introduce the thesis, providing a problem statement and motivations,

defining research goals and contributions, and outlining the structure of this dissertation.

- *Chapter 2: Literature Review*

The literature review will examine in the existing work on VM-based and container-based server consolidation, discussing the fundamental concepts in this field in order to provide the reader with the necessary background. Multiple sections will then follow, considering issues such as static placement, dynamic placement. The focus of this review is on investigating server consolidation techniques that are based on Evolutionary Computation.

- *Chapter 3: Develop EC-based approaches for the single objective joint placement of containers and VMs.*

This chapter will establish a new model for the joint placement of container and virtual machine problem. Furthermore, this chapter will introduce a new EC-based bi-level approach to solve this problem.

- *Chapter 4: EC-based approaches for the multi-objective joint placement problem*

In this chapter, EC-based approaches for the multi-objective joint placement of containers and VMs with considering various types of workload. It is then followed by algorithm performance evaluation that contains an experiment design, setting, results and analysis.

- *Chapter 5: A Genetic Programming-based Hybrid-heuristic Approach to Dynamic Placement*

This chapter focuses on providing a Genetic Programming-based hybrid heuristic approach to automatic generate dispatching rules to dynamic consolidation problem. A cooperative GP-HH will be proposed in this chapter for generating dispatching rules for two-level of placement.

- *Chapter 7: Conclusions and Future Work* In this chapter, conclusions will be drawn from the analysis and experiments conducted in the different phases of this research, and the main findings for each one of them will be summarised. Additionally, future research directions will be discussed.

## **4.4 Resources Required**

### **4.4.1 Computing Resources**

An experimental approach will be adopted in this research, entailing the execution of experiments that are likely to be computationally expensive. The ECS Grid computing facilities can be used to complete these experiments within reasonable time frames, thus meeting this requirement.

### **4.4.2 Library Resources**

The majority of the material relevant to this research can be found online, using the universitys electronic resources. Other works may either be acquired at the universitys library, or by soliciting assistance from the Subject Librarian for the fields of engineering and computer science.

#### **4.4.3 Conference Travel Grants**

Publications to relevant venues in this field are expected throughout this project, therefore travel grants from the university are required for key conferences.

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