

Scheduling Single AGV in Blocking Flow-Shop with Identical Jobs : *a dynamic programming approach*

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Problem description

Data :

- J identical jobs (products)
- a loading station s_0 (pick-up)
- M workstations $\in \{s_1, s_2, \dots, s_M\}$
- an unloading station s_{M+1} (delivery)
- $\forall i \in \{1, 2, \dots, M\}, p_i \in \mathbb{N}^+ : \text{processing time on workstation } s_i$
- $\forall i, j \in \{0, 1, \dots, M+1\}, t_{ij} \in \mathbb{N} : \text{AGV moving time from } s_i \text{ to } s_j$
 - moving times are symmetrical
 - moving times respect the triangle inequality
 - moving times are the same regardless of whether the AGV is carrying a product or not

Constraints :

- initially, all the products are in the loading station s_0
- the manufacturing process of each product requires it to pass through all the workstations sequentially from s_1 to s_M
- the products will eventually end up in the unloading station s_{M+1}
 - s_0 and s_{M+1} have unlimited capacity
 - all workstations can hold a maximum of one product at a time and have no buffer
- when a product arrives at workstation s_i it must be processed for p_i time units; it cannot be moved to the next station until its processing is completed
- an AVG can take a product from s_i and move it to s_{i+1} ($i \leq M$) only if s_{i+1} is an empty workstation or the unloading station
 - the AVG can hold a maximum of one product at a time
 - we assume that loading products onto the AVG and unloading products from it takes no time

Objective :

- find the scheduling of AGV operations that minimizes the time to complete the manufacturing process of all products i.e. the time to get all products to the unloading station

Remarks :

- since all the jobs are identical, the order in which they are picked up from s_0 has no influence on the completion time
- since we are dealing with a flow-shop (all products have the same sequence of workstations) and there are no buffers, no product can overtake another product on its way through the workstations
- only the order in which the products are moved between the stations influences the completion time

Sample instance

- $J = 4$, $M = 3$

- | p_1 | p_2 | p_3 |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 11 | 54 | 4 |

- | t_{ij} | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| 0 | 0 | 25 | 16 | 15 | 19 |
| 1 | 25 | 0 | 18 | 18 | 17 |
| 2 | 16 | 18 | 0 | 16 | 25 |
| 3 | 15 | 18 | 16 | 0 | 23 |
| 4 | 19 | 17 | 25 | 23 | 0 |

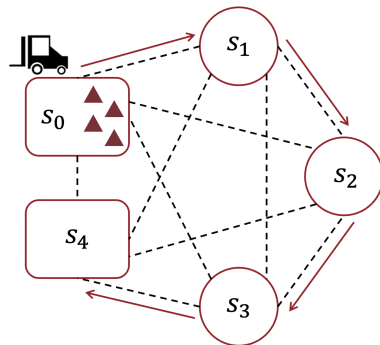


Figure:

Graphical representation of the instance. Arrows indicate the path that each product must take through the workstations

- The reference article for this problem is :
Scheduling Single AGV in Blocking Flow-Shop with Identical Jobs.
E. Boom, M. Mihalák, F. Thuijsman, M.H.M. Winands
(February 2024)
- The authors proposed for this problem :
 - an exact ILP-based algorithm
 - an ILP-based heuristic
 - two greedy heuristics
- The use of a dynamic programming technique seems promising for tackling the problem and it is exactly what I am experimenting with in this project

Trivial feasible solution

- Every instance of the problem has a trivial feasible solution, the cost of which is an upper bound on its optimal completion time
- This solution consists of moving one product at a time to the unloading station, thus waiting for its processing time on each workstation
- It has the following cost :

$$UB = J \cdot \left(\sum_{i=0}^M t_{i,i+1} + \sum_{i=1}^M p_i \right) + (J - 1) \cdot t_{M+1,0}$$

- The formula applied to the sample instance gives :

$$UB = 4 \cdot (69 + 82) + 3 \cdot 19 = 661$$

DP Algorithm 1 (definitions)

States :

- $\langle t, x, l, w_1, \dots, w_M, u \rangle$ where :

$t \in \{0 \dots UB\}$ elapsed time

$x \in \{0 \dots M + 1\}$ AGV position (station)

$l \in \{0 \dots J\}$ # products in loading station

$w_i \in \{\perp\} \cup \{0 \dots p_i\} \quad \forall i \in \{1 \dots M\}$

if s_i is empty : equal to \perp

if s_i is non-empty : equal to the residual processing time of the product in workstation s_i

$u \in \{0 \dots J\}$ # products in unloading station

- Given $P = \max_{i \in \{1 \dots M\}} p_i$, number of states is $O(UB \cdot M \cdot J^2 \cdot P^M)$

Initialization : $\langle 0, 0, J, \perp, \dots, \perp, 0 \rangle$

Label extension (idea) :

- From each state we can make moves composed of these actions :
 - from the current station s_x we move the AGV to a station s_y , which can be :
 - a) the loading station s_0 if it is non-empty and s_1 is empty
 - b) a workstation $s_{i \in \{1 \dots M-1\}}$ if it is non-empty and s_{i+1} is empty
 - c) the workstation s_M if it is non-empty(null-movement is possible)
 - if $s_y \neq s_0$, we wait the residual processing time of the product on s_y
 - we transport the product from s_y to s_{y+1} by AGV
(or, if $s_y = s_0$, any of the products in s_0)
- For each state : $0 < \# \text{ possible extensions} \leq \lfloor M/2 \rfloor + 1$
- The cost of the optimal solution is :

$$z^* = \min \{ t \mid \langle t, M+1, 0, \perp, \dots, \perp, J \rangle \text{ is reached} \}$$

Label extension (formalized) :

- notation :

$$w'_i(e) = \begin{cases} \perp & \text{if } w_i = \perp \\ \max \{ 0, w_i - e \} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

- case a) movement towards the loading station s_0

$$S = \langle t, x, l > 0, w_1 = \perp, w_2, \dots, w_M, u \rangle$$

- $t_{x,0}$ passes
- at s_0 no processing time passes
- $t_{0,1}$ passes
- $e := t_{x,0} + t_{0,1}$

$$S_{\text{next}} = \langle t + e, 1, l - 1, w_1 = p_1, w'_2(e), \dots, w'_M(e), u \rangle$$

- case b) movement towards a workstation $s_{i \in \{1 \dots M-1\}}$

$$S = \langle t, x, l, w_1, \dots, w_i \neq \perp, w_{i+1} = \perp, \dots, w_M, u \rangle$$

- $t_{x,i}$ passes
- at s_i passes $t_p = \max \{ 0, w_i - t_{x,i} \}$
- $t_{i,i+1}$ passes
- $e := t_{x,i} + t_p + t_{i,i+1}$

$$S_{next} = \langle t + e, i + 1, l, w'_1(e), \dots, w_i = \perp, w_{i+1} = p_{i+1}, \dots, w'_M(e), u \rangle$$

- case c) movement towards the workstation s_M

$$S = \langle t, x, l, w_1, \dots, w_{M-1}, w_M \neq \perp, u \rangle$$

- $t_{x,M}$ passes
- at s_M passes $t_p = \max \{ 0, w_M - t_{x,M} \}$
- $t_{M,M+1}$ passes
- $e := t_{x,M} + t_p + t_{M,M+1}$

$$S_{next} = \langle t + e, M + 1, l, w'_1(e), \dots, w'_{M-1}(e), w_M = \perp, u + 1 \rangle$$

Dominance :

- Given two states

$$S' = \langle t', x', l', w'_1, \dots, w'_M, u' \rangle$$

$$S'' = \langle t'', x'', l'', w''_1, \dots, w''_M, u'' \rangle$$

$$S' \prec S'' \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad t' < t''$$

$$x' = x''$$

$$l' = l''$$

$$w'_i = w''_i \quad \forall i \in \{1 \dots M\}$$

$$u' = u''$$

DP Algorithm 1 (implementation details)

- label correcting
- for each state we keep track of the predecessor, so we can reconstruct the optimal AGV route at the end of the algorithm
- states with lower t are extended first
 - popping a state with minimum t from the pool is $O(1)$
 - adding a state to the pool is $O(1)$

Dominance checks :

- dominance checks done with a map H (hash-table implementation)
 - when a state $S = \langle t, x, l, w_1, \dots, w_M, u \rangle$ is visited, we consider all its components except t as key k and t as value
 - if k is not in H
 - then we set $H[k] = t$
 - if k is in H and $H[k] = t'$,
 - if $t < t'$, then we set $H[k] = t$
 - otherwise, S is dominated by a previously visited state and must not be extended

DP Algorithm 1 (sample instance solution)

- DP algorithm 1 applied to the sample instance finds an optimal AGV route represented by this sequence of states :

t	x	l	w_1	w_2	w_3	u
0	0	4	\perp	\perp	\perp	0
25	1	3	11	\perp	\perp	0
54	2	3	\perp	54	\perp	0
95	1	2	11	13	\perp	0
129	3	2	0	\perp	4	0
156	4	2	0	\perp	\perp	1
191	2	2	\perp	54	\perp	1
232	1	1	11	13	\perp	1
266	3	1	0	\perp	4	1
293	4	1	0	\perp	\perp	2
328	2	1	\perp	54	\perp	2
369	1	0	11	13	\perp	2
403	3	0	0	\perp	4	2
439	2	0	\perp	54	0	2
478	4	0	\perp	15	\perp	3
519	3	0	\perp	\perp	4	3
546	4	0	\perp	\perp	\perp	4

- $z^* = 546$ (17.4 % improvement wrt $UB = 661$)

DP Algorithm 2 (definitions)

States :

- Given $C_k :=$ completion time of product k on its current station ,
we define the earliest service time of k as $E_k := \max \{ C_k, t + t_{x, x_k} \}$
i.e. the first instant at which k can be moved to $x_k + 1$
- $\langle t, x, x_1, \dots, x_J, e_1, \dots, e_J \rangle$ where :
 - $t \in \{0 \dots UB\}$ elapsed time
 - $x \in \{0 \dots M + 1\}$ AGV position
 - $x_k \in \{0 \dots M + 1\}$ $\forall k \in \{1 \dots J\}$, product position
 $\forall k \in \{1 \dots J - 1\}$, $x_k \leq x_{k+1}$
 - $e_k \in \{\perp\} \cup \{0 \dots UB\}$ $\forall k \in \{1 \dots J\}$
 - if $x_k < M + 1$: equal to E_k
 - if $x_k = M + 1$: equal to \perp
- The number of states is $O \left((UB \cdot M)^{J+1} \right)$

Initialization : $\langle 0, 0, 0, \dots, 0, 0, \dots, 0 \rangle$

Label extension (idea) :

- From each state the possible moves and the # possible extensions are the same as in the previous algorithm
- The cost of the optimal solution is :

$$z^* = \min \{ t \mid \langle t, M+1, M+1, \dots, M+1, \perp, \dots, \perp \rangle \text{ is reached} \}$$

Label extension (formalized) :

- $S = \langle t, x, x_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\}, e_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\} \rangle$
- we move towards x_α i.e. the current station of product $\alpha \in \{1 \dots J\}$
 - if $x_\alpha = 0$ we can move α forward
only if no other product $\alpha' > \alpha$ has $x_{\alpha'} = 0$
 - if $x_\alpha = M + 1$ we cannot move α forward
 - if $x_{\alpha+1} > x_\alpha + 1 \vee x_\alpha + 1 = M + 1$ we can move α forward
- $S_{next} = S' = \langle t', x', x'_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\}, e'_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\} \rangle$
 - $t' = \max \{ t + t_{x, x_\alpha}, e_\alpha \} + t_{x_\alpha, x_\alpha+1}$
 - $x' = x_\alpha + 1$
 - $x'_k = \begin{cases} x_k + 1 & \text{if } k = \alpha \\ x_k & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$
 - $e'_k = \begin{cases} \perp & \text{if } e_k = \perp \vee (k = \alpha \wedge x'_\alpha = M + 1) \\ t' + p_{x'_\alpha} & \text{if } k = \alpha \wedge x'_\alpha \neq M + 1 \\ \max \{ e_k, t' + t_{x', x'_k} \} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$

Dominance :

- Given two states

$$S' = \langle t', x', x'_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\} , e'_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\} \rangle$$

$$S'' = \langle t'', x'', x''_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\} , e''_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\} \rangle$$

$$S' \prec S'' \Leftrightarrow \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\} \mid x'_k < M + 1 \\ (x'_k > x''_k \wedge t' \leq t'') \vee (x'_k = x''_k \wedge e'_k \leq e''_k)$$

- As a consequence :

$$\exists k \in \{1 \dots J\} \mid x''_k > x'_k \Rightarrow S' \not\prec S''$$

DP Algorithm 2 (implementation details)

- Like in the previous algorithm :
 - label correcting
 - we keep track of each state's predecessors
 - states with lower t are extended first

Dominance checks :

- States that are ready to be extended are kept in a pool Q
- A state S can be added to Q only if $\nexists S' \in Q \mid S' \prec S$
- When S is added to Q then we set $Q = Q - \{ X \in Q \mid S \prec X \}$
- Computing all the required dominance checks every time we have to add a new state to the pool is too computationally expensive
- \forall product $k \in \{1 \dots J\}$, \forall station $i \in \{0 \dots M + 1\}$ we keep :
 - a set $ON[k][i]$ of states currently $\in Q$ in which k is in i
 - a set $GEQ[k][i]$ of states currently $\in Q$ in which k is in a station $\geq i$
 - a set $LEQ[k][i]$ of states currently $\in Q$ in which k is in a station $\leq i$

- We are trying to add to Q a state

$$S = \langle t, x, x_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\}, e_k \ \forall k \in \{1 \dots J\} \rangle$$

- if $\exists S' \in \bigcap_{k=1}^J ON[k][x_k] \mid S' \prec S$, then S cannot be added to Q
- if $\exists S' \in \bigcap_{k=1}^J GEQ[k][x_k] \mid S' \prec S$, then S cannot be added to Q
- otherwise S is added to Q
- $\forall S' \in \bigcap_{k=1}^J ON[k][x_k] \mid S \prec S'$ must be removed from Q
- $\forall S' \in \bigcap_{k=1}^J LEQ[k][x_k] \mid S \prec S'$ must be removed from Q
- the vast majority of state non-pushes and removals are consequent to checks involving ON
- IDs associated to states $\in Q$ and use of bitsets : advantages and drawbacks

DP Algorithm 2 (sample instance solution)

- DP algorithm 2 applied to the sample instance finds an optimal AGV route represented by this sequence of states :

t	x	x_1	x_2	x_3	x_4	e_1	e_2	e_3	e_4
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	1	0	0	0	1	50	50	50	36
54	2	0	0	0	2	70	70	70	108
95	1	0	0	1	2	120	120	106	113
129	3	0	0	1	3	144	144	147	133
156	4	0	0	1	4	175	175	173	⊥
191	2	0	0	2	4	207	207	245	⊥
232	1	0	1	2	4	257	243	250	⊥
266	3	0	1	3	4	281	284	270	⊥
293	4	0	1	4	4	312	310	⊥	⊥
328	2	0	2	4	4	344	382	⊥	⊥
369	1	1	2	4	4	380	387	⊥	⊥
403	3	1	3	4	4	421	407	⊥	⊥
439	2	2	3	4	4	493	455	⊥	⊥
478	4	2	4	4	4	503	⊥	⊥	⊥
519	3	3	4	4	4	523	⊥	⊥	⊥
546	4	4	4	4	4	⊥	⊥	⊥	⊥

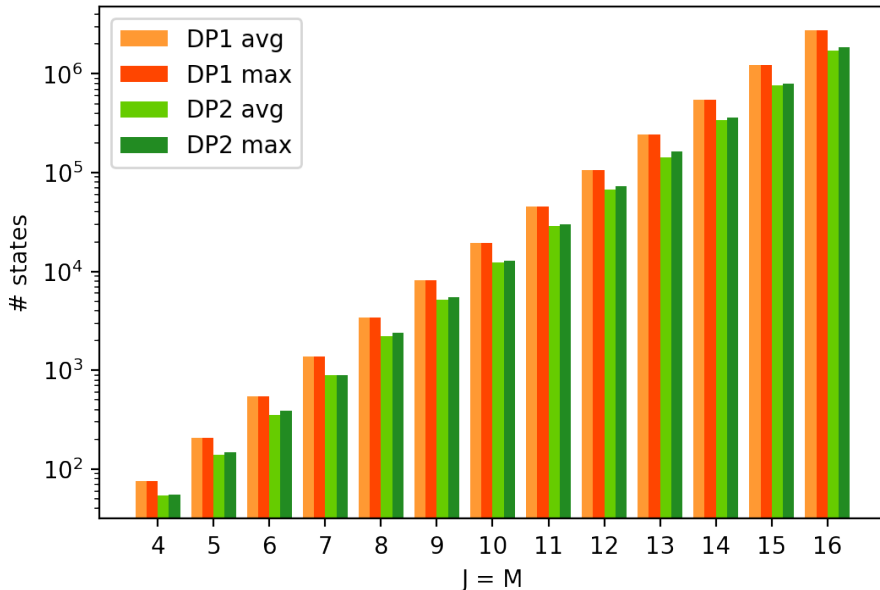
Instances generation

- very similar to what is explained in the reference article
- we vary J and M
- moving times t_{ij} are uniformly generated in an interval $[t_{MIN}, t_{MAX}]$
- we set $t_{MIN} = 15$ and $t_{MAX} = 25$
 - the triangular inequality automatically holds because $2 \cdot t_{MIN} \geq t_{MAX}$
 - average moving time is therefore 20
- we vary a parameter
 $r \in \{0.1, 0.4, 0.8, 1.1, 1.4, 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0\}$
- processing times p_i are uniformly generated in an interval $[1, r \cdot 40]$
 - average processing time is therefore $r \cdot 20$
- 5 instances for each combination of J, M, r

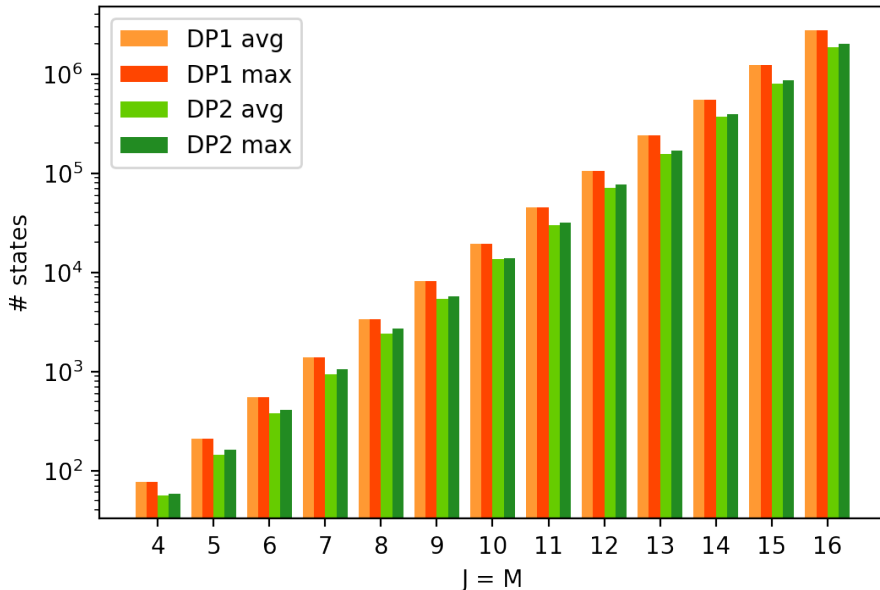
Computational results

- AVG and MAX number of extended states
 - DP1 vs. DP2 for each r
 - DP2 percentual improvement wrt DP1
 - DP2 MAX number of states simultaneously in the pool
- AVG and MAX execution time
 - DP1 vs. DP2 for each r
 - DP2 percentual improvement wrt DP1
- AVG and MAX execution time
 - fixing $M = 10$ and varying $J \in \{4 \dots 16\}$
 - fixing $J = 10$ and varying $M \in \{4 \dots 16\}$
- the statistics for a given combination of J , M , r are only visible in the barplot if all 5 instances had an execution time < 15 minutes

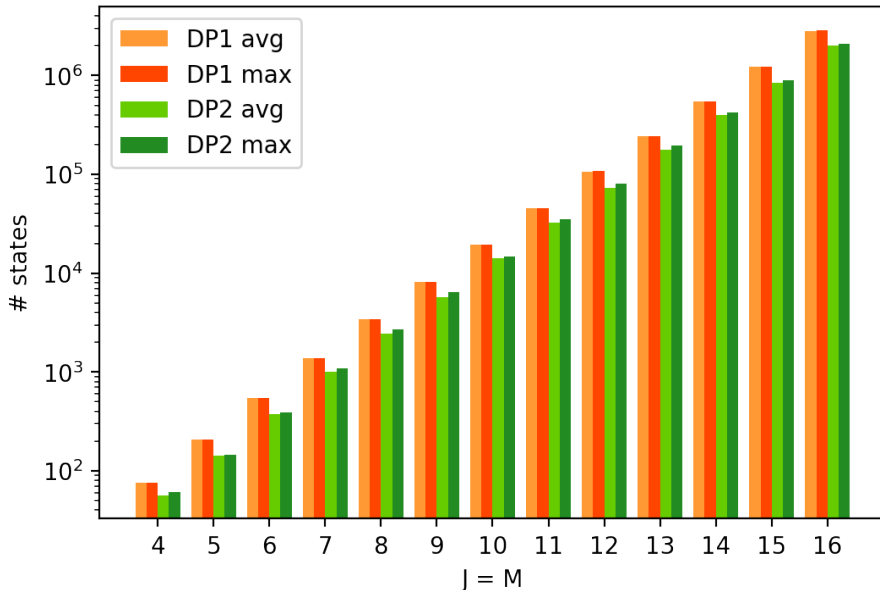
$r = 0.1$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



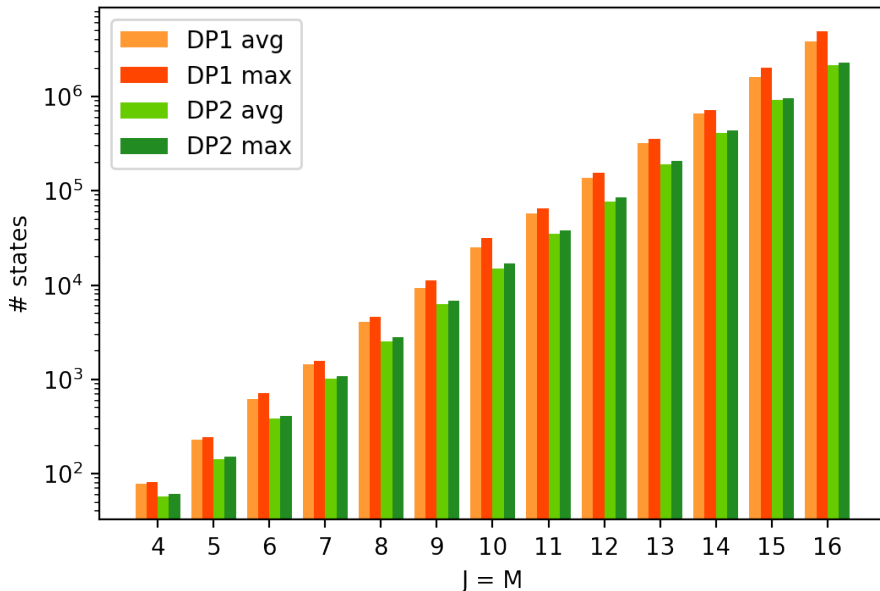
$r = 0.4$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



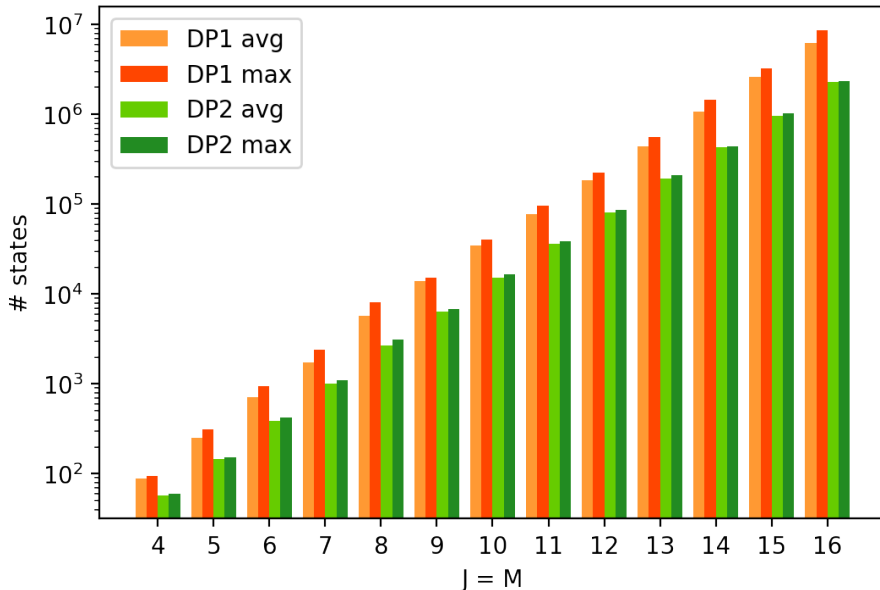
$r = 0.8$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



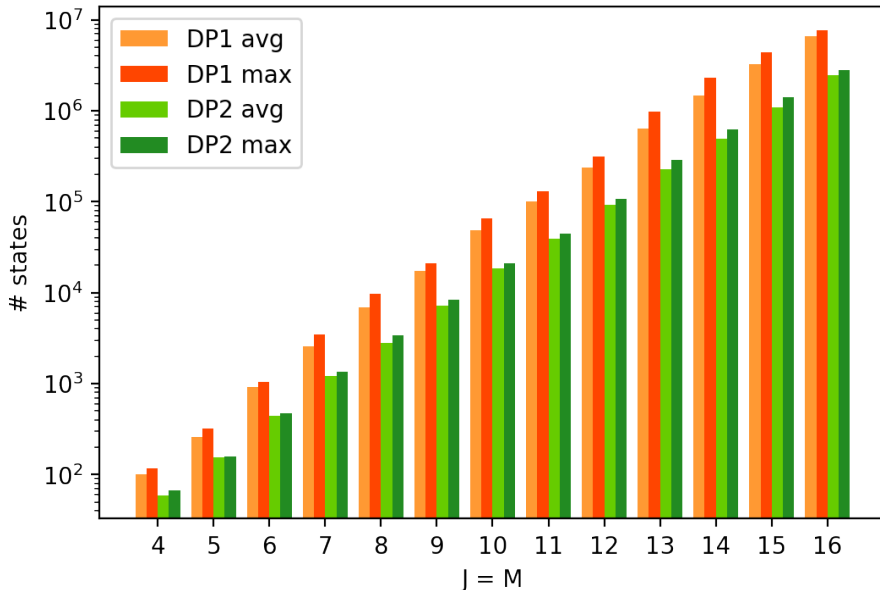
$r = 1.1$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



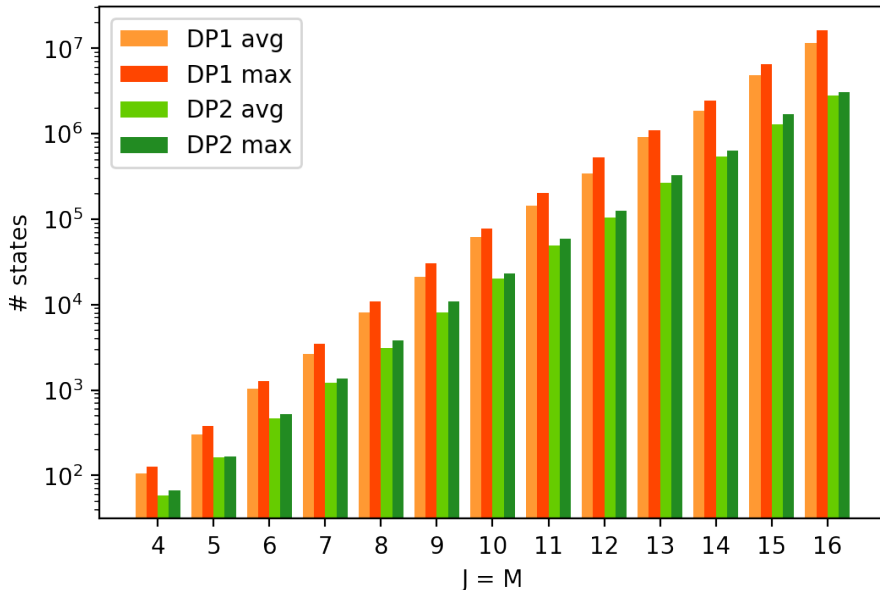
$r = 1.4$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



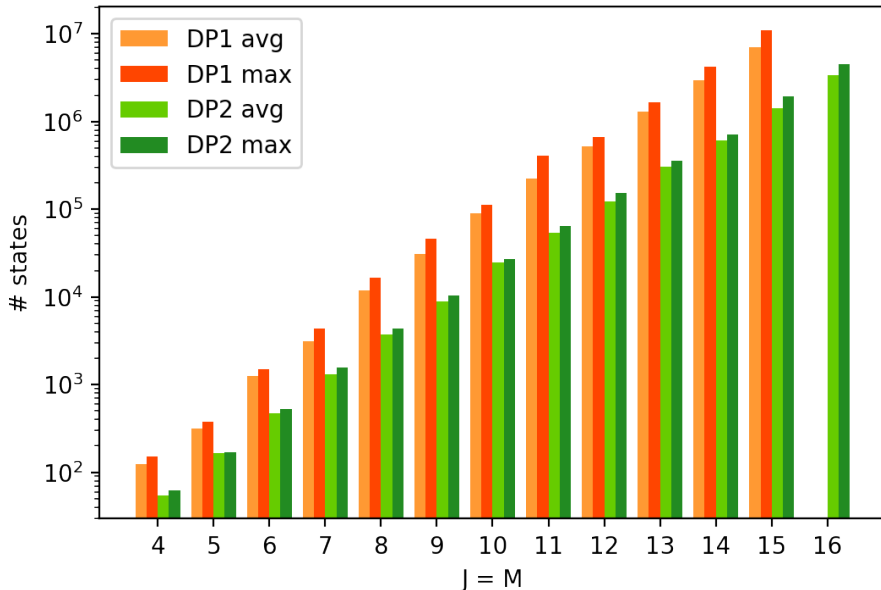
$r = 1.8$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



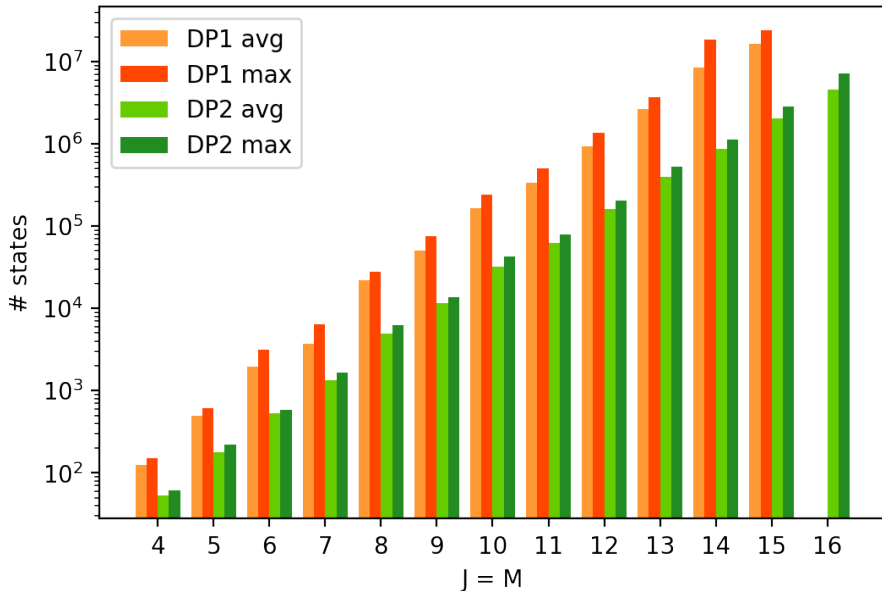
$r = 2.1$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



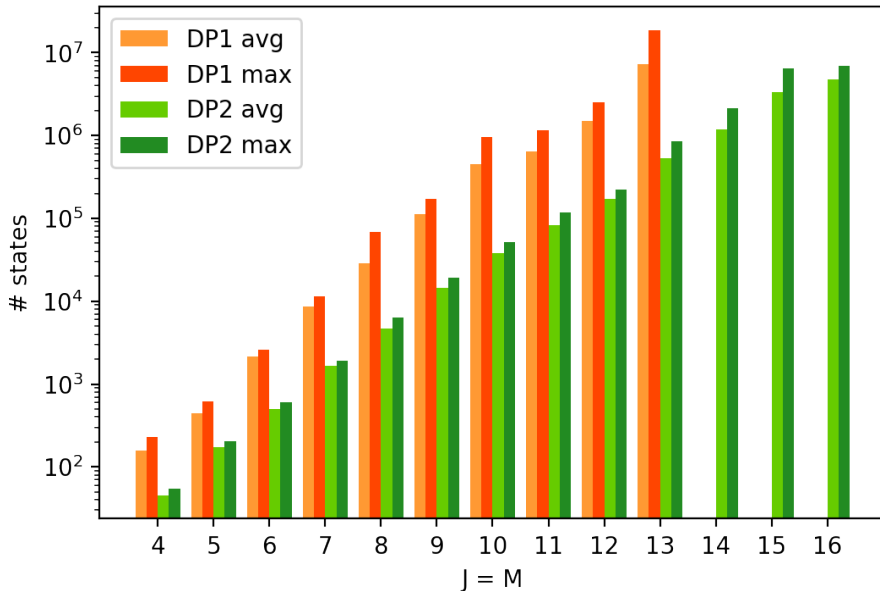
$r = 2.5$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



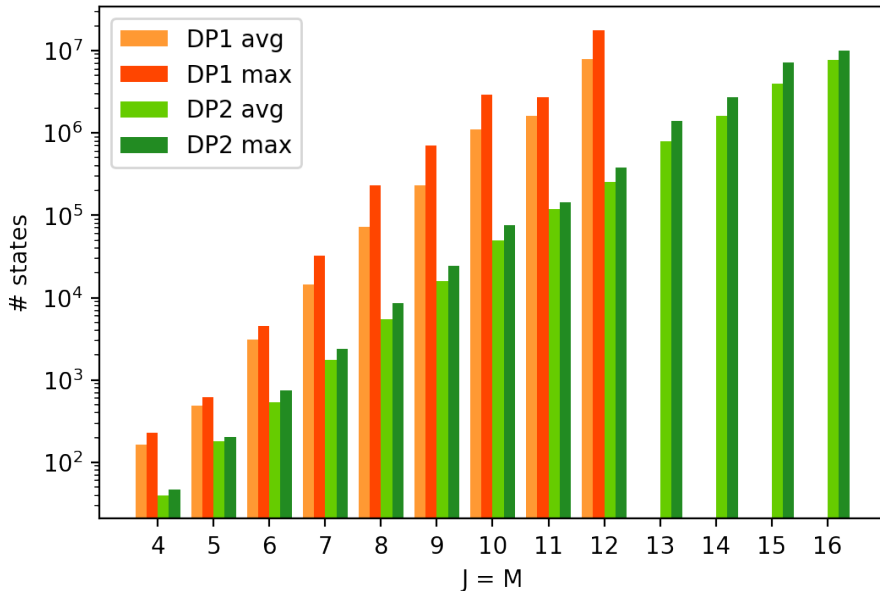
$r = 3.0$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



$r = 3.5$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



$r = 4.0$, AVG and MAX number of extended states



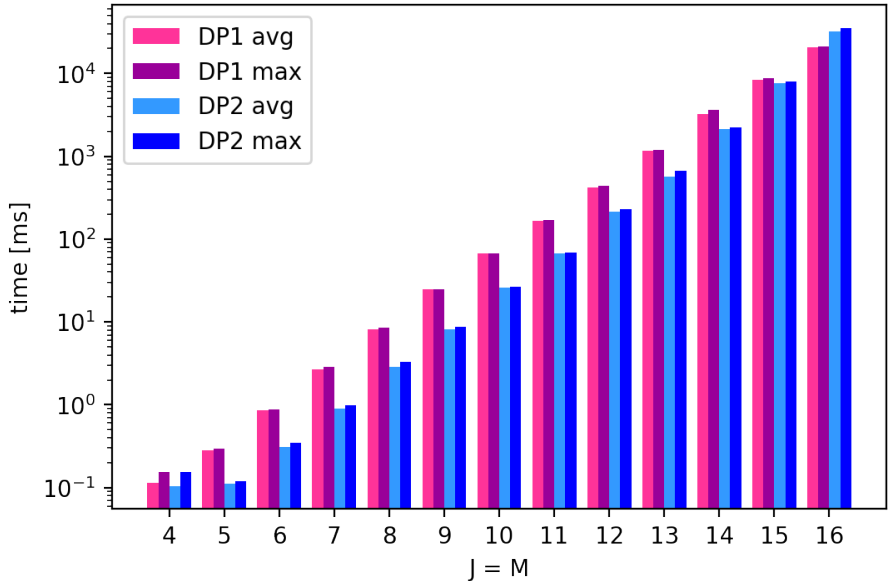
- DP2 percentual improvement wrt DP1
in terms of MAX number of extended states

J = M	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
r = 0.1	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.35	0.29	0.33	0.35	0.34	0.31	0.32	0.34	0.36	0.33
r = 0.4	0.24	0.22	0.25	0.24	0.20	0.30	0.28	0.30	0.27	0.30	0.29	0.30	0.27
r = 0.8	0.20	0.30	0.29	0.21	0.20	0.21	0.24	0.22	0.25	0.18	0.23	0.28	0.27
r = 1.1	0.25	0.38	0.43	0.31	0.39	0.39	0.47	0.42	0.45	0.42	0.40	0.52	0.54
r = 1.4	0.37	0.50	0.55	0.54	0.62	0.55	0.59	0.60	0.61	0.62	0.70	0.68	0.73
r = 1.8	0.42	0.50	0.54	0.61	0.65	0.60	0.68	0.66	0.65	0.71	0.73	0.68	0.63
r = 2.1	0.47	0.55	0.59	0.61	0.65	0.64	0.71	0.71	0.76	0.70	0.74	0.74	0.81
r = 2.5	0.59	0.55	0.65	0.65	0.74	0.78	0.76	0.84	0.77	0.79	0.83	0.82	
r = 3.0	0.59	0.64	0.81	0.74	0.78	0.82	0.82	0.84	0.85	0.86	0.94	0.88	
r = 3.5	0.76	0.67	0.77	0.83	0.91	0.89	0.95	0.90	0.91	0.95			
r = 4.0	0.79	0.67	0.84	0.93	0.96	0.97	0.97	0.95	0.98	0.00			

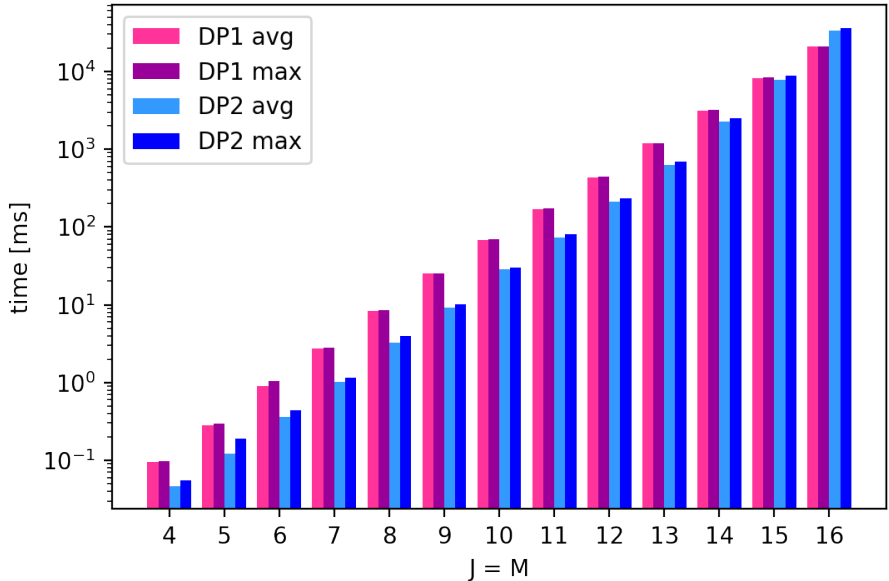
- DP2 MAX number of states simultaneously in the pool

J = M	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
r = 0.1	6	12	21	38	78	146	279	553	1249	2228	4427	8829	17397
r = 0.4	7	13	22	42	77	134	264	507	1087	1996	4121	7996	15743
r = 0.8	7	12	22	44	80	151	284	528	1151	2168	4197	7755	15890
r = 1.1	8	12	25	43	84	161	314	598	1102	2290	4227	8545	17186
r = 1.4	8	13	24	44	97	165	308	628	1151	2316	4594	9116	17911
r = 1.8	8	13	28	59	109	203	415	678	1465	3230	6126	12455	21202
r = 2.1	8	18	32	59	119	277	442	893	1737	3695	6289	14974	24215
r = 2.5	9	18	33	67	145	261	524	1068	2037	3947	7449	18223	34396
r = 3.0	9	20	46	78	227	370	841	1325	2861	6250	11859	25580	57704
r = 3.5	7	20	57	95	228	570	1123	2030	3225	10140	21756	61341	52958
r = 4.0	8	25	57	124	335	777	1642	2756	5439	18024	28425	67892	76244

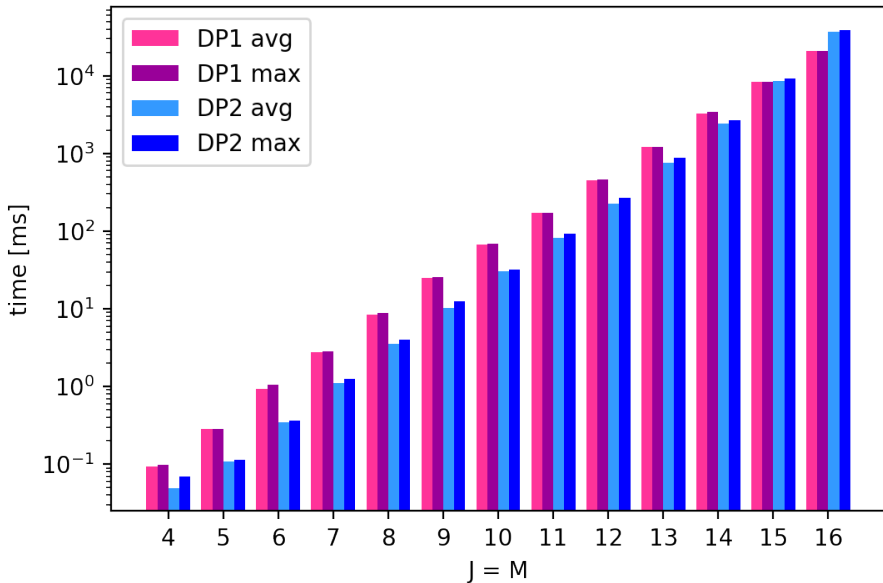
$r = 0.1$, AVG and MAX execution time



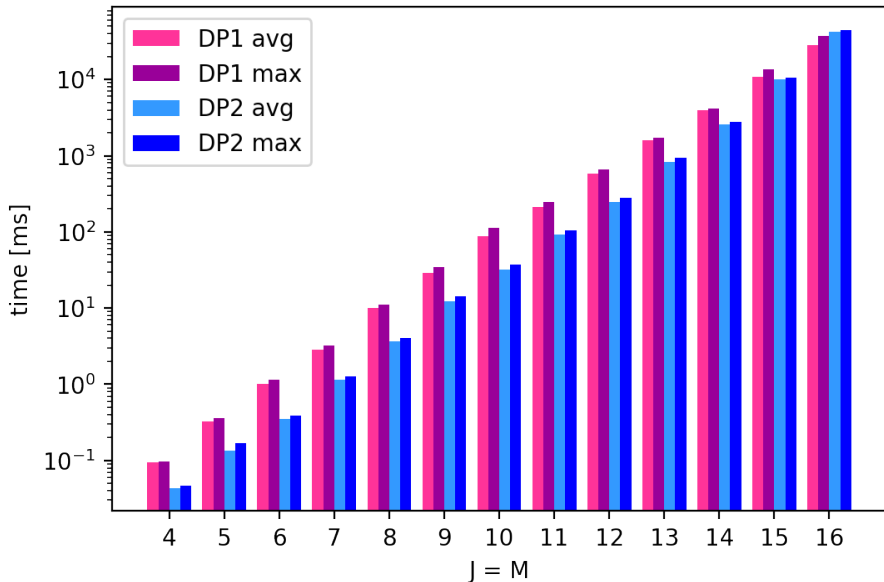
$r = 0.4$, AVG and MAX execution time



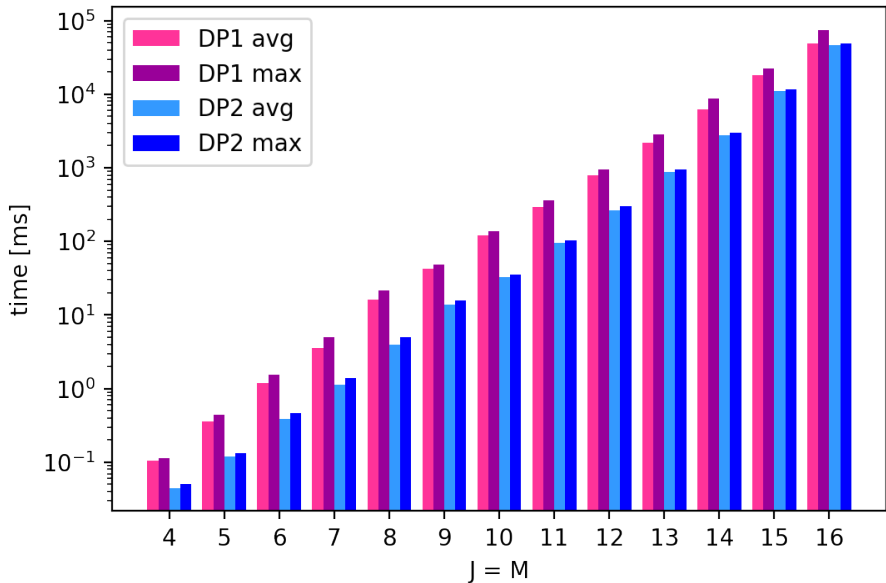
$r = 0.8$, AVG and MAX execution time



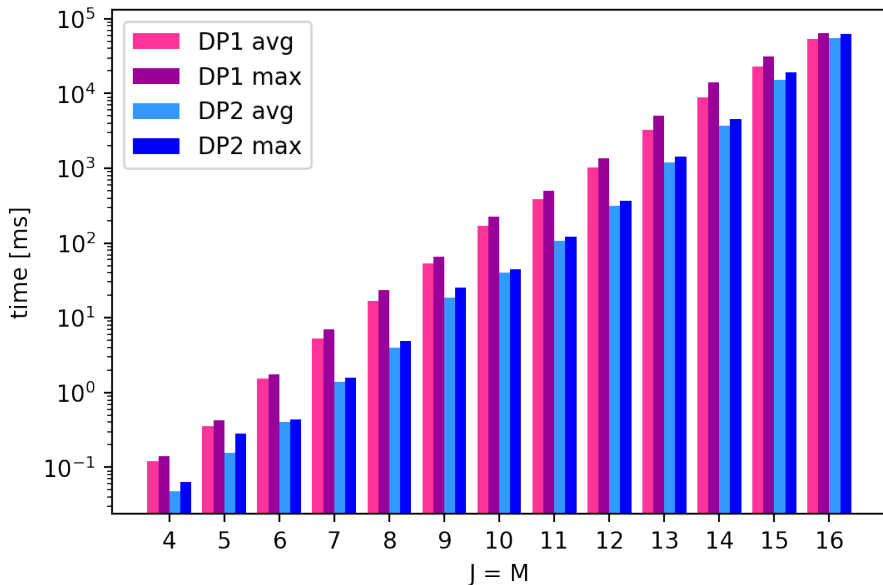
$r = 1.1$, AVG and MAX execution time



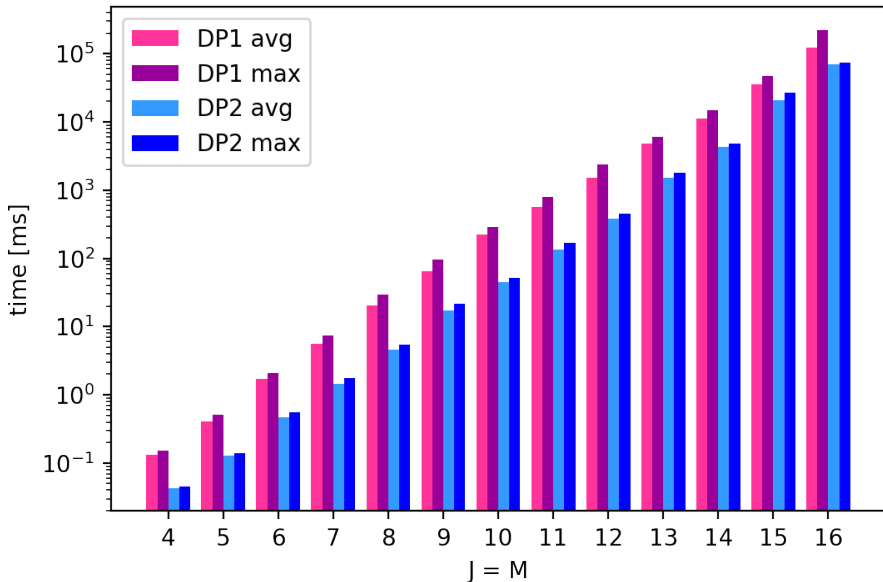
$r = 1.4$, AVG and MAX execution time



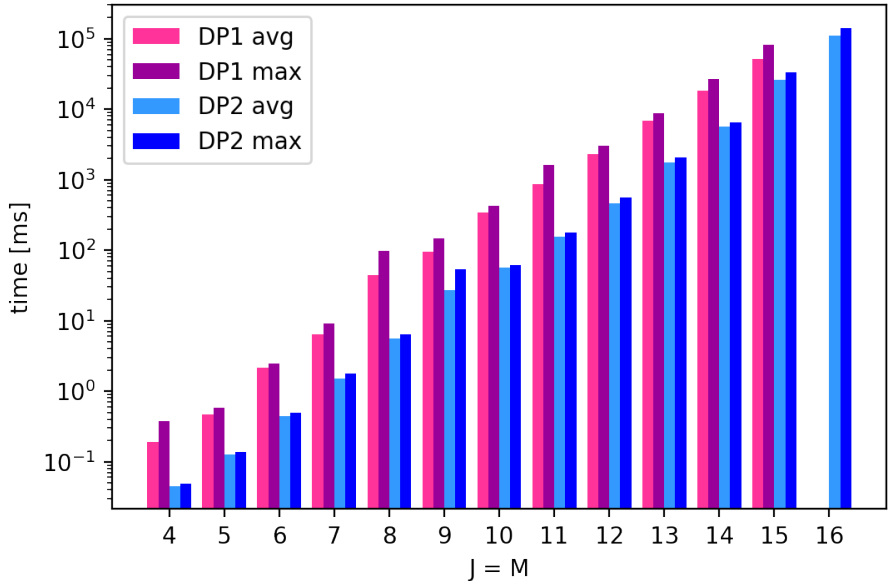
$r = 1.8$, AVG and MAX execution time



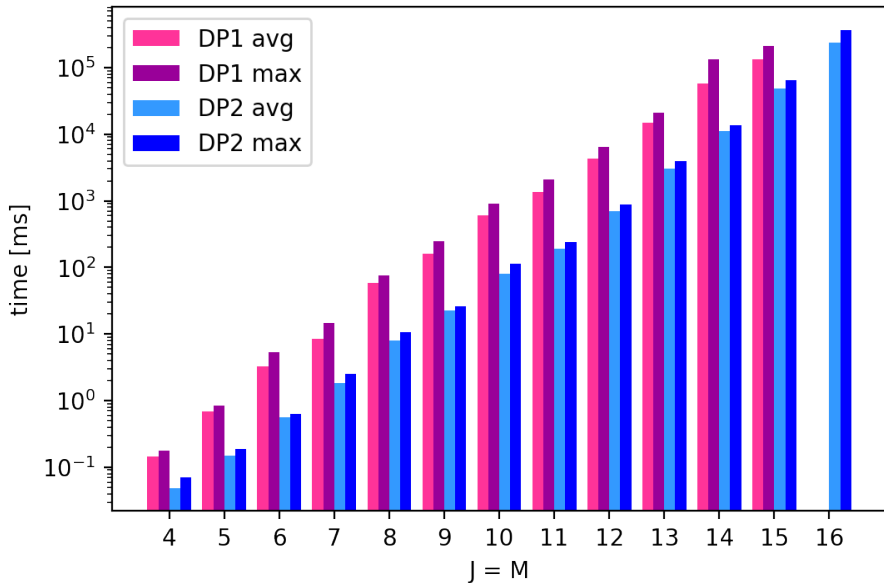
$r = 2.1$, AVG and MAX execution time



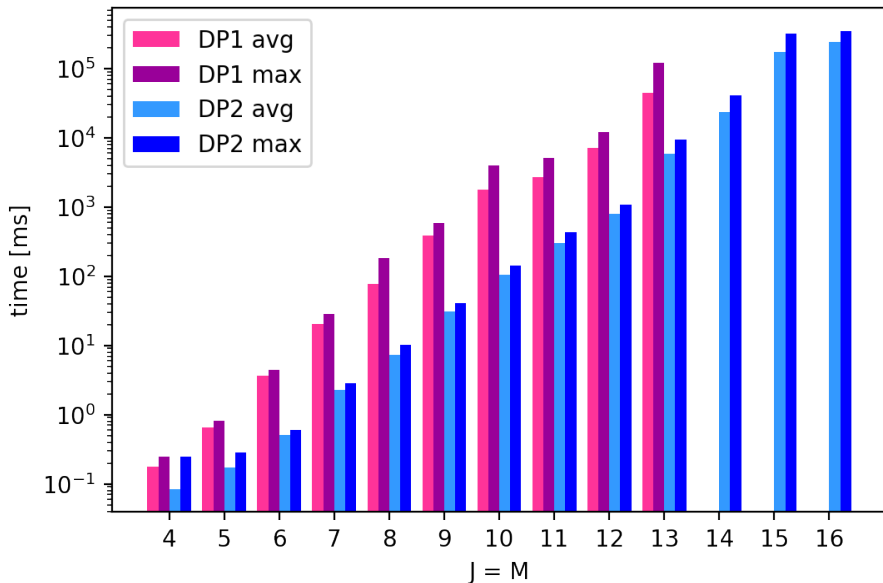
$r = 2.5$, AVG and MAX execution time



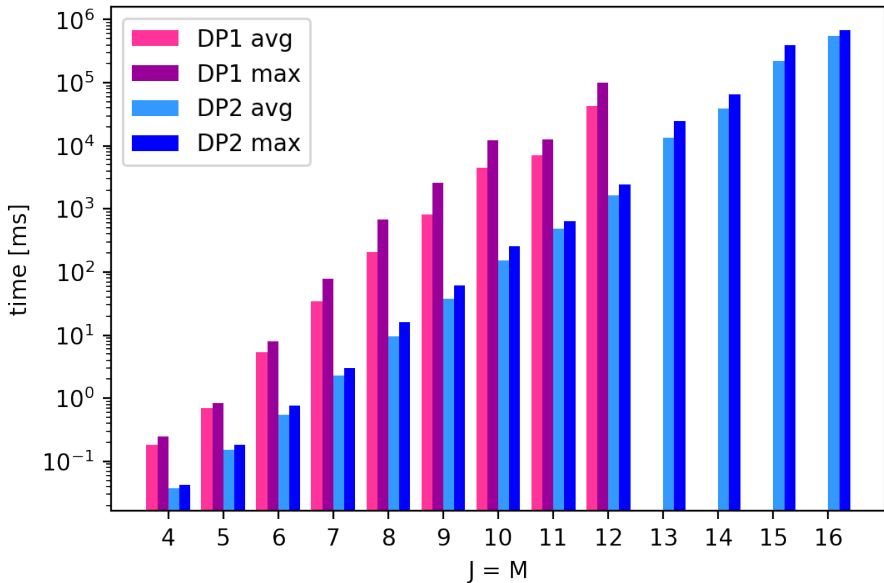
$r = 3.0$, AVG and MAX execution time



$r = 3.5$, AVG and MAX execution time



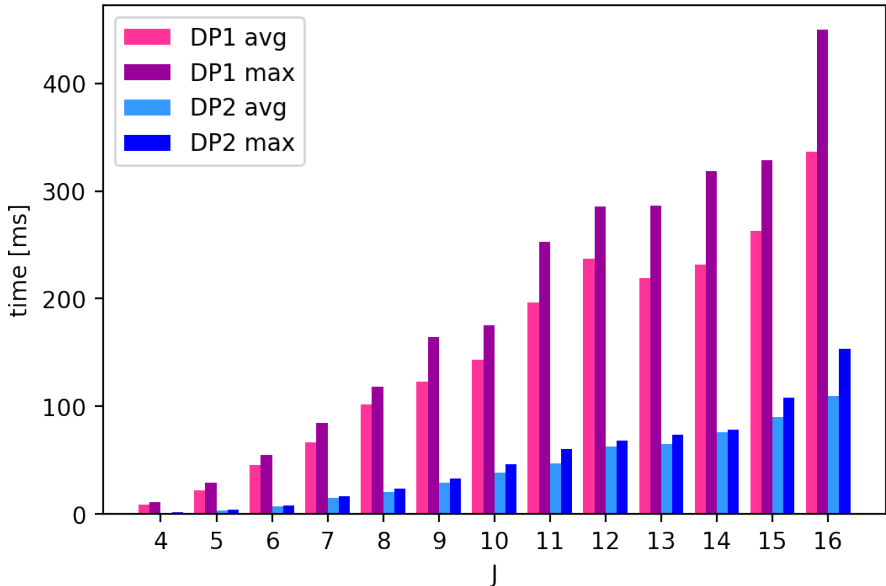
$r = 4.0$, AVG and MAX execution time



- DP2 percentual improvement wrt DP1
in terms of MAX execution time

J = M	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
r = 0.1	0.01	0.59	0.61	0.65	0.62	0.65	0.61	0.59	0.48	0.44	0.37	0.07	-0.69
r = 0.4	0.44	0.35	0.58	0.59	0.53	0.60	0.57	0.54	0.48	0.42	0.21	-0.04	-0.71
r = 0.8	0.29	0.60	0.65	0.56	0.55	0.51	0.53	0.47	0.42	0.28	0.21	-0.10	-0.85
r = 1.1	0.53	0.54	0.67	0.61	0.63	0.59	0.67	0.58	0.58	0.46	0.34	0.23	-0.21
r = 1.4	0.55	0.70	0.70	0.72	0.77	0.68	0.74	0.72	0.69	0.66	0.66	0.49	0.34
r = 1.8	0.55	0.33	0.75	0.77	0.79	0.61	0.80	0.76	0.73	0.72	0.68	0.38	0.03
r = 2.1	0.70	0.73	0.73	0.76	0.81	0.77	0.82	0.78	0.81	0.70	0.68	0.43	0.66
r = 2.5	0.87	0.76	0.80	0.81	0.93	0.64	0.85	0.89	0.81	0.76	0.75	0.59	
r = 3.0	0.60	0.78	0.88	0.82	0.86	0.89	0.88	0.88	0.86	0.81	0.90	0.69	
r = 3.5	0.02	0.66	0.87	0.90	0.95	0.93	0.96	0.91	0.91	0.92			
r = 4.0	0.83	0.78	0.90	0.96	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.98				

$r = 1.8$, $M = 10$, AVG and MAX execution time



$r = 1.8$, $J = 10$, AVG and MAX execution time

