

SYMBOLIC GENERATION OF OPTIMAL DISCRETE CONTROL

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WG 2.1 Meeting, Namur

11-15 December 2006

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I. PRELIMINARIES

I.1. Problem

Data

- (*Symbolic*) *action system* :

$$\begin{aligned} S &= \text{do } A \text{ od} \\ &= \text{do } A_0 \parallel \cdots \parallel A_{N-1} \text{ od.} \end{aligned}$$

- *Target predicate* Q .

- *Domain* X of states.

- *Index set* $I = \{0, \dots, N - 1\}$.

- For $i \in I$, the *action* A_i is a guarded command with an integer cost $w_i \geq 1$:

$$B_i(x) \rightarrow x := f_i(x) \langle w_i \rangle .$$

A *policy* C for S is a tuple (C_0, \dots, C_{N-1}) of predicates such that $C_i \Rightarrow B_i$ for each i .

A *policy* C' *refines* a *policy* C

$$\text{iff} \quad \forall i \in I : C'_i \Rightarrow C_i.$$

$S \downarrow_C$ is S where each B_i is replaced by C_i .

A *policy* C is *optimal* for (S, Q) if Q is reached using paths by $S \downarrow_C$ with a minimum total cost.

Aim : Find the *optimal policy* for (S, Q) .

II.2. Background

Basic Predicate Transformer :

It is a syntactical map $pre.S$ such that

$$\begin{aligned}pre.(do A od).P &\equiv \bigvee_{n \in \mathcal{N}} (pre.A)^n.P \\(pre.A)^0.P &\equiv P \\(pre.A)^{n+1}.P &\equiv pre.A.((pre.A)^n.P) \\pre.(\prod_{i \in I} A_i).P &\equiv \bigvee_{i \in I} pre.A_i.P \\pre.(B_i \rightarrow x := e).P &\equiv B_i \wedge P_e^x\end{aligned}$$

Graph : $G_S = (X, E_S, w)$ where

$$E_S = \{(x, i, f_i(x)) \mid B_i(x)\}, \quad w(i) = w_i$$

Paths by S : x_0 or $x_0 \cdots i_k x_k \cdots$

where $x_0 \in X, (x_{k-1}, i_k, x_k) \in E_S$ for $k = 1 \cdots$.

$Paths(S)$ is the set of paths by S .

$Paths(x, S)$: the paths by S beginning with x .
 $Paths(S, x)$: the finite paths by S ending on x .
 $Paths(S, Y) \doteq \bigcup_{x \in Y} Paths(S, x)$.
 $Paths(x, S, Y) \doteq Paths(x, S) \cap Paths(S, Y)$.

The *concatenation* $p.p'$ of $p \in Paths(S, y)$ and $p' \in Paths(y, S)$ is p followed by the result of removing the initial y from p' .

Path Costs : for any finite path $p \in Paths(S, X)$,

$$\begin{aligned}
 cost(x) &= 0, & cost(xiy) &= w(i) \\
 cost(p.(xiy)) &= cost(p) + w(i)
 \end{aligned}$$

Optimality Domain D : for all $x \in X$,

$$D(x) \equiv (Paths(x, S, Q) \neq \emptyset) \equiv (pre.S.Q)(x)$$

Value Function $V : X \rightarrow \mathcal{N}$. If $D(x)$ then

$$V(x) = \min\{cost(p) \mid p \in Paths(x, S, Q)\}$$

OptPaths(x, S, Q)

$$\doteq \{p \mid p \in Paths(x, S, Q) \wedge cost(p) = V(x)\}$$

The (*weakest*) *optimal policy* for (S, Q) is the policy C for S such that, for all $x \in X$,

$$Paths(x, S \downarrow_C) = OptPaths(x, S, Q).$$

A Little Hierarchy of Predicate Transformers

$$\begin{aligned} (pre.S.Q)(x) &\equiv D(x) \equiv \\ (Paths(x, S, Q) \neq \emptyset) &\equiv (OptPaths(x, S, Q) \neq \emptyset). \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} (wp.S.Q)(x) \\ \equiv D(x) \wedge (Paths(x, S) = Paths(x, S, Q)). \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} (owp.S.Q)(x) \\ \equiv D(x) \wedge (Paths(x, S) = OptPaths(x, S, Q)). \end{aligned}$$

Read *owp* as "weakest optimality precondition".

So the weakest optimal policy C is the weakest policy for S such that

$$owp.S \downarrow_C . Q \equiv pre.S.Q.$$

Clearly $wp.S.P \Rightarrow pre.S.P$, $owp.S.P \Rightarrow wp.S.P$
and $D \equiv Q \vee \bigvee_i C_i$.

Classical, State-Based Method (e.g. Bellman):

(0) The domain X is assumed to be finite.

(1) Compute the value function V .

(2) The weakest optimal policy for (S, Q) is $C = (C_0, \dots, C_{N-1})$ where, for all i and x ,

$$C_i(x) \equiv B_i(x) \wedge (V(x) - V(f_i(x)) = w_i).$$

A *termination policy* is given by

$$C_i(x) \equiv B_i(x) \wedge (V(x) - V(f_i(x)) > 0)$$

where V is a variant function.

Complexity of the State-Based Generation

If X is finite, the complexity of this method is polynomial in $\#X$, thanks to efficient shortest-paths algorithms on finite graphs.

Challenges

- (i) The number of states is exponential in the number of variables.
- (ii) Infinite domains can't be handled.

II. SYMBOLIC GENERATION OF OPTIMAL POLICIES

II.1. Stratification into Level-Sets

(Optimality) Levels belong to the set

$$X_L \doteq \{n \mid n \in \mathcal{N} \wedge n < \#Rng(V)\}.$$

Optimality Radius : $\rho \doteq \sup X_L$.

Level-to-Value Bijection $V_L : X_L \rightarrow Rng(V)$:

$$\begin{aligned} V_L(0) &= 0 \\ V_L(n+1) &= \min_{x \in X} \{V(x) \mid V(x) > V_L(n)\}. \end{aligned}$$

State-to-Level Function $L : X \rightarrow X_L$:

$$\begin{aligned} V(x) &= V_L(L(x)) \\ \text{i.e. } L(x) &= V_L^{-1}(V(x)). \end{aligned}$$

Sub-Domains : for $n \in X_L$,

$$D^{(n)}(x) \equiv D(x) \wedge L(x) \leq n,$$

Sub-Guards :

$$C_i^{(n)}(x) \equiv C_i(x) \wedge L(x) \leq n.$$

Domain Strata :

$$F^{(n)}(x) \equiv D(x) \wedge L(x) = n.$$

Guard Strata :

$$F_i^{(n)}(x) \equiv C_i(x) \wedge L(x) = n.$$

Strata are *fringes* or *fronts* of growing subsets.

Aim : to compute the optimal control guards

$$C_i \equiv \sup_{n \in X_L} \{C_i^{(n)}\}$$

iteratively.

II.2. Symbolic Iterative Terms These terms must not use computations on states.

Obvious Iterative Terms

$$D^{(0)} \equiv F^{(0)} \equiv Q, \quad C_i^{(0)} \equiv F_i^{(0)} \equiv \mathbf{false},$$

$$\begin{aligned} D^{(n+1)} & \equiv D^{(n)} \vee F^{(n+1)}, & C_i^{(n+1)} & \equiv C_i^{(n)} \vee F_i^{(n+1)}, \end{aligned}$$

$$F^{(n+1)} \equiv \bigvee_i F_i^{(n+1)}, \quad C_i \equiv C_i^{(\rho)}$$

where $n, n + 1 \in X_L$ and $i \in I$.

Iterative Terms for Guard Strata

Informally,

$$F_i^{(n+1)} \equiv \neg D^{(n)} \wedge \text{pre}.A_i.F^{(m)}$$

such that $V_L(n+1) - V_L(m) = w_i$, if feasible.

Let $\text{opt}_i : X_L \rightarrow \text{Bool}$, $g_i : X_L \rightarrow X_L$ such that

$$\begin{aligned} \text{opt}_i(n) &\equiv V_L(n) - w_i \in \text{Rng}(V_L), \\ \text{opt}_i(n) &\Rightarrow V_L(n) - V_L(g_i(n)) = w_i. \end{aligned}$$

So $\text{opt}_i(n)$ implies $g_i(n) = V_L^{-1}(V_L(n) - w_i) = m$.

Hence

$$\begin{aligned} F_i^{(n+1)} &\equiv \neg D^{(n)} \\ &\quad \wedge \text{opt}_i(n+1) \wedge \text{pre}.A_i.F^{(g_i(n+1))}. \end{aligned}$$

Additional Iterative Terms :

$$= \min_{i, m: m \leq n} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} V_L(n+1) \\ w_i + V_L(m) \\ | \neg D^{(n)} \wedge pre.A_i.F^{(m)} \neq \text{false} \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\equiv \bigvee_{m: m \leq n} V_L(n+1) - V_L(m) = w_i$$

If $opt_i(n+1)$ holds then

$$= \min_{m: m \leq n} \{m \mid V_L(n+1) - V_L(m) = w_i\}$$

Reduction of Symbolic Iterative Terms

A term is *subsidiary* if it is

- a predicate transformation,
- a satisfiability expression,
- a disjunction of equalities between costs,
- a minimization, or
- a supremum,

and does not occur in S or Q .

To *reduce* E is to replace each subsidiary sub-term E' in E by a symbolic expression of the result of evaluating E' .

Additional simplifications are welcome. In particular, if $id \equiv e$ has been derived where e is reduced then e may replace id in a reduced term.

In the semi-algorithm hereafter, all subsidiary sub-terms must be reduced. Thus $id \equiv E$ means id identifies $reduce(E)$.

II.3. Symbolic Semi-Algorithm *GenOpt*

begin

$V_L(0) = 0;$ $F^{(0)} \equiv Q;$ $D^{(0)} \equiv F^{(0)};$

for each i : $F_i^{(0)} \equiv \text{false};$ $C_i^{(0)} \equiv F_i^{(0)};$

for n from 0 while $\neg D^{(n)} \wedge \text{pre}.A.D^{(n)} \neq \text{false}$:

 for each i :

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} F_i^{(n+1)} \equiv \neg D^{(n)} \\ \quad \wedge \text{opt}_i(n+1) \wedge \text{pre}.A_i.F(g_i(n+1)); \\ C_i^{(n+1)} \equiv C_i^{(n)} \vee F_i^{(n+1)}; \end{array} \right.$$

$$F^{(n+1)} \equiv \bigvee_i F_i^{(n+1)};$$

$$D^{(n+1)} \equiv D^{(n)} \vee F^{(n+1)};$$

for each i : $C_i \equiv C_i^{(\text{sup } \text{Dom}(V_L))}$

end

The iterative terms for $V_L(n+1)$, $\text{opt}_i(n+1)$ and $g_i(n+1)$ have been given.

Correctness

By construction, if *GenOpt* terminates then the resulting policy (C_0, \dots, C_{N-1}) is the weakest optimal policy for (S, Q) .

The semi-algorithm *GenOpt* terminates iff

- the optimality radius ρ is finite, and
- the reductions terminate.

III. EVALUATION OF THE APPROACH

III.1. Illustration

$$S = \text{do } A_0 : x \geq 0 \rightarrow x := 4x \quad \langle 26 \rangle \\ \quad \parallel A_1 : x \geq 0 \rightarrow x := x + 1 \quad \langle 13 \rangle \\ \text{od}$$
$$X = \mathcal{R}, \quad Q \equiv 8 \leq x \leq 10.$$

The iterates for $n = 0, 1$ are

$$V_L(0) = 0 \\ F_0^{(0)} \equiv F_1^{(0)} \equiv \text{false}, \quad C_0^{(0)} \equiv C_1^{(0)} \equiv \text{false} \\ F^{(0)} \equiv 8 \leq x \leq 10, \quad D^{(0)} \equiv 8 \leq x \leq 10$$

$$V_L(1) = 13 \\ F_0^{(1)} \equiv \text{false}, \quad C_0^{(1)} \equiv \text{false}, \\ F_1^{(1)} \equiv 7 \leq x < 8, \quad C_1^{(1)} \equiv 7 \leq x < 8 \\ F^{(1)} \equiv 7 \leq x < 8, \quad D^{(1)} \equiv 7 \leq x \leq 10$$

For $n = 2$:

$$V_L(2) = 26$$

$$F_0^{(2)} \equiv 2 \leq x \leq 2.5, \quad C_0^{(2)} \equiv 2 \leq x \leq 2.5,$$

$$F_1^{(2)} \equiv 6 \leq x < 7, \quad C_1^{(2)} \equiv 6 \leq x < 8,$$

$$F^{(2)} \equiv 2 \leq x \leq 2.5$$

$$\vee 6 \leq x < 7$$

$$D^{(2)} \equiv 2 \leq x \leq 2.5$$

$$\vee 6 \leq x \leq 10$$

... and so on until $n = \rho = 6$.

Then $V_L(6) = 78$.

The optimal guards $C_0 \equiv C_0^{(6)}, C_1 \equiv C_1^{(6)}$ are

$$C_0 \equiv 0.5 \leq x \leq 0.625 \vee 1.5 < x \leq 2.5$$

$$C_1 \equiv 0 \leq x \leq 0.5$$

$$\vee 0.625 < x \leq 1.5 \vee 2.5 < x < 8.$$

Notes

- $D \equiv 0 \leq x \leq 10 \equiv C_0 \vee C_1 \vee Q.$
- The intervals in C_0 and C_1 are interleaved.
- Non-determinism is possible; e.g. $x = 0.5.$
- To guess optimal policies is not easy.
- The domain is not denumerable.

III.2. Complexity of *GenOpt*

Notations

- $T(G)$ is the complexity of G .
- $T_{sat}(G)$ is the complexity of satisfiability expressions and predicate transformations in G .
- $f \in Poly(h)$ stands for $f \in \mathcal{O}(h^k)$.

Complexity of GenOpt

If ρ is finite then

$$T(\text{GenOpt}) \in Poly(\rho + N + T_{sat}(\text{GenOpt})).$$

Efficiency of GenOpt when ρ is finite

Since

$$T(\text{GenOpt}) \in \text{Poly}(\rho + N + T_{\text{sat}}(\text{GenOpt})),$$

two good cases are defined as follows.

(i) X is finite

and $\rho + N + T_{\text{sat}}(\text{GenOpt}) \in \text{Poly}(\log \#X)$:

Then $T(\text{GenOpt}) \in \text{Poly}(\log \#X)$.

(ii) X is infinite

and $N + T_{\text{sat}}(\text{GenOpt}) \in \text{Poly}(\rho)$:

Then $T(\text{GenOpt}) \in \text{Poly}(\rho)$.

III.3. Complexity for Reachability Domains

Reachability Domains, Levels, Radius and Strata

Reachability domain :

$$D(x) \equiv (Paths(x, S, Q)) \equiv (pre.S.Q)(x).$$

Reachability level of x , for x such that $D(x)$:

$$L_R(x) \doteq \min\{nb_{edges}(p) \mid p \in Paths(x, S, Q)\}$$

where $nb_{edges}(p)$ is the number of occurrences of edge labels in a path p .

Reachability radius : $\rho_R \doteq \sup Rng(L_R)$.

Reachability sub-domains and strata :

for $n \in Rng(L_R)$,

$$D^{(n)}(x) \equiv D(x) \wedge L_R(x) \leq n,$$

$$F^{(n)}(x) \equiv D(x) \wedge L_R(x) = n.$$

Symbolic Semi-Algorithm GenReach :

begin

$F^{(0)} \equiv Q; D^{(0)} \equiv F^{(0)};$

for n **from** 0 **while** $\neg D^{(n)} \wedge pre.A.F^{(n)} \neq \text{false} :$

$F^{(n+1)} \equiv \neg D^{(n)} \wedge pre.A.F^{(n)};$

$D^{(n+1)} \equiv D^{(n)} \vee F^{(n+1)};$

$D \equiv D^{(\rho_R)}$

end

Complexity of GenReach : If ρ_R is finite then

$T(\text{GenReach}) \in Poly(\rho_R + N + T_{sat}(\text{GenReach})).$

Two efficiency conditions for *GenReach* are determined, as in the case of *GenOpt*.

III.4. Complexity of Optimality vs. Reachability

Let $M_w = \max_{i \in I} \{w_i\}$. For any $p \in Paths(S, Q)$,

$$nb_{edges}(p) \leq cost(p) \leq nb_{edges}(p) \times M_w.$$

Thus

$$L_R(x) \leq L(x) \leq L_R(x) \times M_w,$$

and, given $\rho_R = \sup Rng(L_R)$, $\rho = \sup Rng(L)$,

$$\rho_R \leq \rho \leq \rho_R \times M_w.$$

Hence ρ_R is finite implies $\rho \in Poly(\rho_R + M_w)$.

Hence

$$\begin{aligned} & T(GenOpt) \\ & \in Poly(\rho_R + M_w + N + T_{sat}(GenOpt)). \end{aligned}$$

Case ρ_R and X are finite :

(A) If $\rho_R + M_w + N + T_{sat}(GenOpt) \in Poly(\log \#X)$
then $T(GenOpt) \in Poly(\log \#X)$
and $GenOpt$ is efficient.

(B) If $\rho_R + N + T_{sat}(GenReach) \in Poly(\log \#X)$
then $T(GenReach) \in Poly(\log \#X)$
and $GenReach$ is efficient.

Condition (A) for $GenOpt$ holds if

- Condition (B) for $GenReach$ holds,
- $M_w \in Poly(\rho_R)$,
- $T_{sat}(GenOpt) \in Poly(T_{sat}(GenReach))$.

Case ρ_R is finite and X is infinite : same conclusion.

III.5. Discussion

State-Based and Symbolic Greedy Algorithms

In Dijkstra's algorithm for shortest-path lengths, each iteration step

- computes the next optimal value, if needed,
- generates one new state with the considered optimal value.

In *GenOpt*, the iteration step for level $n + 1$

- computes the optimal value $V_L(n + 1)$,
- generates the set $F^{(n+1)}$ of all states having this optimal value.

Termination

In restricted families of symbolic transition systems, the termination of *GenReach* is guaranteed (Henzinger, Majumdar, Raskin 05). Similar families could thus ensure the termination of *GenOpt*.

Efficiency

In case ρ_R is finite, *GenOpt* is efficient provided

- *GenReach* is efficient,
- $M_w \in Poly(\rho_R)$,
- $T_{sat}(GenOpt) \in Poly(T_{sat}(GenReach))$.

The efficiency of *GenReach* is improved by

- simplification, e.g. abstraction,
- optimization, e.g. incrementalization,
- economical data structures.

Likewise for the efficiency of *GenOpt*.

From Value Functions to Optimal Policies

Usual approach: optimal policies are extracted from value functions, to be computed first.

Case of discrete-time finite-state systems : The value functions are produced using shortest-paths algorithms for finite graphs.

Case of timed automata :

The value functions are generated by algorithms which are symbolic wrt. clocks, thanks to the linearity of the considered continuous dynamics (Asarin, Maler 99; LaTorre et al. 02). But the extraction of optimal policies may be hard (Bouyer et al. 05).

From Optimal Policies to Value Functions

Optimal policies are generated by *GenOpt* directly, without computing the value function.

Optimal costs may be obtained using the predicate $(opre.S.Q)(x, y) \equiv (D(x) \wedge y = V(x))$. This predicate is computed by adding the following iterative terms in *GenOpt*:

$$\begin{aligned} W^{(0)} &\equiv F^{(0)} \wedge y = 0 \\ W^{(n+1)} &\equiv W^{(n)} \vee F^{(n+1)} \wedge y = V_L(n+1) \\ opre.S.Q &\equiv W^{(\rho)}. \end{aligned}$$

If $V_L(n)$ reduces to v_n then $(opre.S.Q)(x, y)$ reduces to

$$\bigvee_{n \in X_L} F^{(n)}(x) \wedge y = v_n.$$

Thus, for a finite X_L , the guarded conditional

$$\bigsqcup_{n \in X_L} F^{(n)}(x) \rightarrow y := v_n$$

implements $y = V(x)$ if $D(x)$.

This allows to compute shortest path-lengths for the following graphs, finite or not:

- the graphs are defined by action systems,
- the reachability radiuses are finite,
- the symbolic reductions terminate.

Value Functions vs Optimality Policies

As observed by Bellman, optimal policies and value functions f are dual to each other. He adds:

The purpose of our investigation is not so much to determine $f(x)$, which is really a by-product, but more importantly, to determine the structure of the optimal policy.

Verification of Optimality

To prove S is optimal from P to Q , one may prove $P \Rightarrow owp.S.Q$. Recall

$$\begin{aligned} & (owp.S.Q)(x) \\ \equiv & (pre.S.Q)(x) \\ & \wedge (Paths(x, S) = OptPaths(x, S, Q)). \end{aligned}$$

The predicate $owp.S.Q$ can be generated iteratively. For $n, n + 1 \in X_L$,

$$\begin{aligned} K^{(0)} & \equiv Q, \quad H^{(0)} \equiv K^{(0)} \\ K^{(n+1)} & \equiv \left(\bigvee_{i \in I} B_i \right) \wedge \bigwedge_{i \in I} (B_i \Rightarrow opt_i(n + 1) \wedge \\ & \quad pre.A_i.K^{(g_i(n+1))}) \\ H^{(n+1)} & \equiv H^{(n)} \vee K^{(n+1)} \\ owp.S.Q & \equiv H^{(\rho)}. \end{aligned}$$

III.6. Further Work

Issues related to the proposed technique :

- improvement, implementation and application of *GenOpt*;
- problem classes for which the efficiency of *GenOpt* is guaranteed;
- symbolic generation of reachability policies.

Other possible areas where optimal policies could be generated symbolically :

- games,
- probabilistic systems,
- continuous dynamics.

III.7. Conclusion

The procedures *GenReach* and *GenOpt* respectively generate reachability domains and optimal policies. *GenOpt* refines *GenReach* by taking action costs into account.

The synchronous iteration steps in *GenReach* become asynchronous in *GenOpt*: optimal guard-strata for an action with a higher cost use domain strata with lower levels.

The efficiency of *GenOpt* is guaranteed if

- *GenReach* is efficient,
- the maximum action cost is polynomial in the reachability radius, and
- the complexity of reductions in *GenOpt* is polynomial in that of reductions in *GenReach*.

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A1. Synchronous vs. Asynchronous Iterations

The iterative term for $F_i^{(n+1)}$ defines an asynchronous iteration. Indeed

$$F_i^{(n+1)} \equiv \neg D^{(n)} \wedge pre.A_i.F^{(m)}$$

where m , if defined, may verify $m < n$.

If $\forall i : w_i = 1$ then $g_i(n+1) = m = n$ and the iteration is synchronous:

$$F_i^{(n+1)} \equiv \neg D^{(n)} \wedge pre.A_i.F^{(n)}$$

(vanLamsweerde, Sintzoff 1979).

A2. A Proof

$$\begin{aligned}
& F_i^{(n+1)}(x) \\
\equiv & \quad \{ \text{defn of } F_i^{(n)} \} \\
& L(x) = n + 1 \wedge C_i(x) \\
\equiv & \quad \{ \text{props of } C_i \} \\
& L(x) = n + 1 \wedge C_i(x) \wedge \text{opt}_i(n + 1) \\
& \wedge D(f_i(x)) \wedge L(f_i(x)) = g_i(n + 1) \\
\equiv & \quad \{ \text{gen. of } C_i \text{ using } V; \text{ defn of } g_i \} \\
& L(x) = n + 1 \wedge B_i(x) \wedge \text{opt}_i(n + 1) \\
& \wedge D(f_i(x)) \wedge L(f_i(x)) = g_i(n + 1) \\
\equiv & \quad \{ \text{defn of } F^{(n)} \} \\
& L(x) = n + 1 \wedge B_i(x) \wedge \text{opt}_i(n + 1) \\
& \wedge F^{(g_i(n+1))}(f_i(x)) \\
\equiv & \quad \{ \text{defn of } pre \} \\
& L(x) = n + 1 \\
& \wedge \text{opt}_i(n + 1) \wedge pre.A_i.F^{(g_i(n+1))}(x) \\
\equiv & \quad \{ \text{defn of } D^{(n)} \} \\
& \neg D^{(n)}(x) \\
& \wedge \text{opt}_i(n + 1) \wedge pre.A_i.F^{(g_i(n+1))}(x)
\end{aligned}$$

A3. Control Policies as Relations

$$C_i(x) \equiv \pi(x, i) \equiv i \in \kappa(x)$$

where $\pi \subseteq X \times I$ and $\kappa : X \rightarrow 2^I$.

Non-deterministic (resp. deterministic) actions represent recurrence inclusions (resp. recurrence equations).