

# Solving trajectory optimization problems by influence diagrams

Jirka Vomlel and Václav Kratochvíl,  
Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

Lugano, July 11th, 2017

# Contents

- Brachistochrone problem

# Contents

- Brachistochrone problem
- Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem

# Contents

- Brachistochrone problem
- Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem
- Goddard problem

# Contents

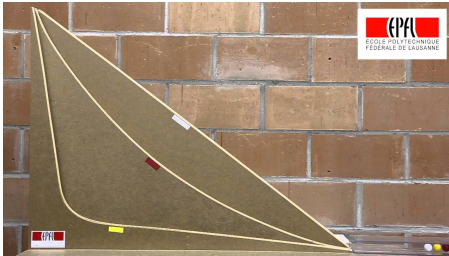
- Brachistochrone problem
- Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem
- Goddard problem
- Influence diagram for the Goddard problem

# Contents

- Brachistochrone problem
- Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem
- Goddard problem
- Influence diagram for the Goddard problem
- Guidelines for influence diagrams of trajectory optimization problems

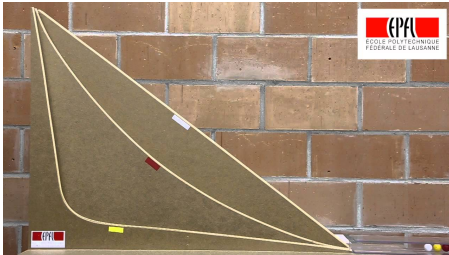
# Brachistochrone problem

(formulated by Johan Bernoulli in 1696)



# Brachistochrone problem

(formulated by Johan Bernoulli in 1696)

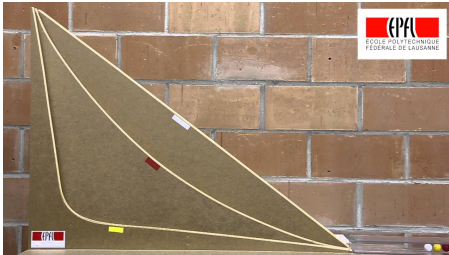


- Given two points in space



# Brachistochrone problem

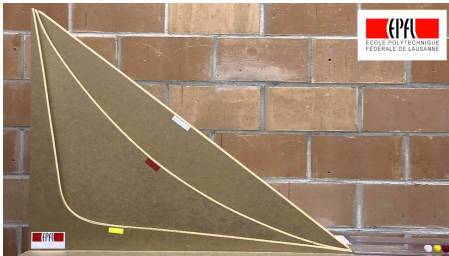
(formulated by Johan Bernoulli in 1696)



- Given two points in space
- find a curve connecting them such that:

# Brachistochrone problem

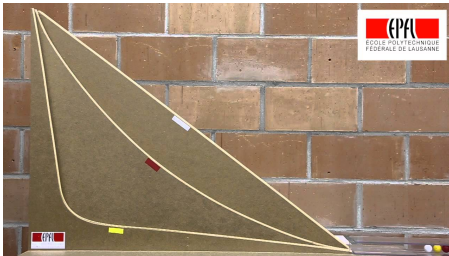
(formulated by Johan Bernoulli in 1696)



- Given two points in space
- find a curve connecting them such that:
- a mass point moving along the curve under the gravity

# Brachistochrone problem

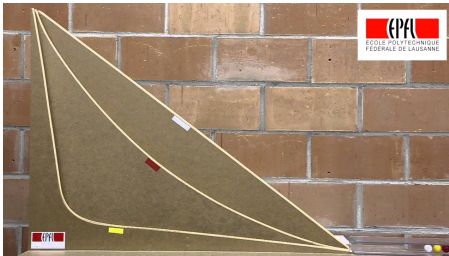
(formulated by Johan Bernoulli in 1696)



- Given two points in space
- find a curve connecting them such that:
- a mass point moving along the curve under the gravity
- reaches the second point in the **shortest time**.

# Brachistochrone problem

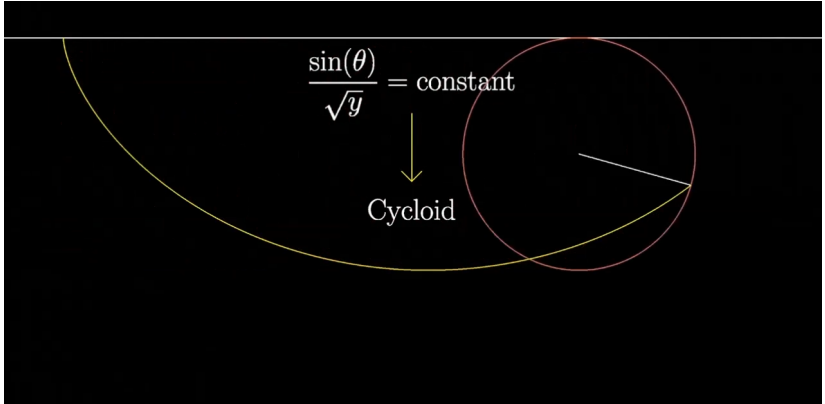
(formulated by Johan Bernoulli in 1696)



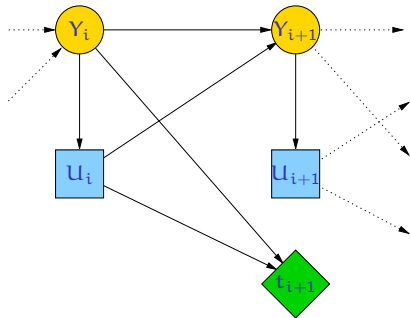
See the video of the experiment.

- Given two points in space
- find a curve connecting them such that:
- a mass point moving along the curve under the gravity
- reaches the second point in the **shortest time**.

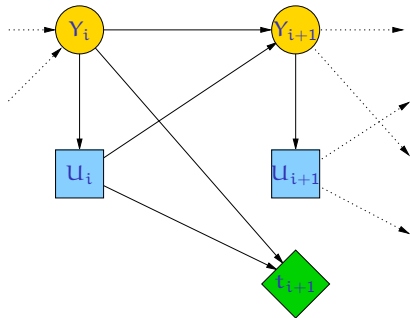
# Cycloid - the optimal solution



## Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem

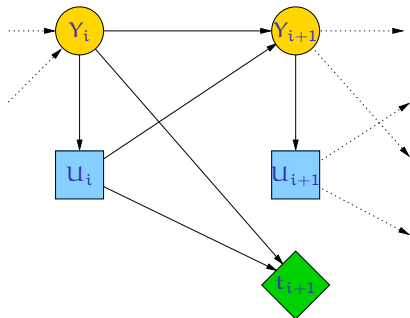


## Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem



- Discretize the x-coordinate to segments of length  $\Delta x$ .

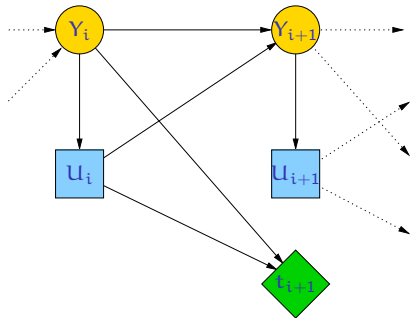
## Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem



- Discretize the x-coordinate to segments of length  $\Delta x$ .
- State variable  $Y_i$  – the vertical position of the mass point.

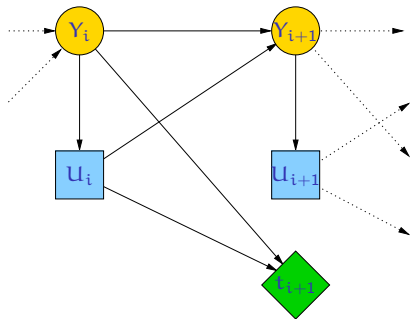


## Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem



- Discretize the x-coordinate to segments of length  $\Delta x$ .
- State variable  $Y_i$  – the vertical position of the mass point.
- Decision variable  $U_i$  – the vertical shift.

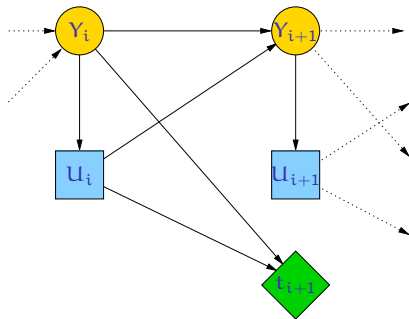
## Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem



- Discretize the x-coordinate to segments of length  $\Delta x$ .
- State variable  $Y_i$  – the vertical position of the mass point.
- Decision variable  $U_i$  – the vertical shift.
- Utility node  $t_{i+1}(y_i, u_i)$  – the utility function is the time :

$$t_{i+1} = \begin{cases} \frac{\Delta x}{\sqrt{-2 \cdot g \cdot y_i}} & \text{if } u_i = 0 \\ -\sqrt{\frac{2}{g}} \cdot \frac{\sqrt{(\Delta x)^2 + u_i^2}}{u_i} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} \sqrt{-y_i} \\ -\sqrt{-u_i - y_i} \end{pmatrix} & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

## Influence diagram for the Brachistochrone problem

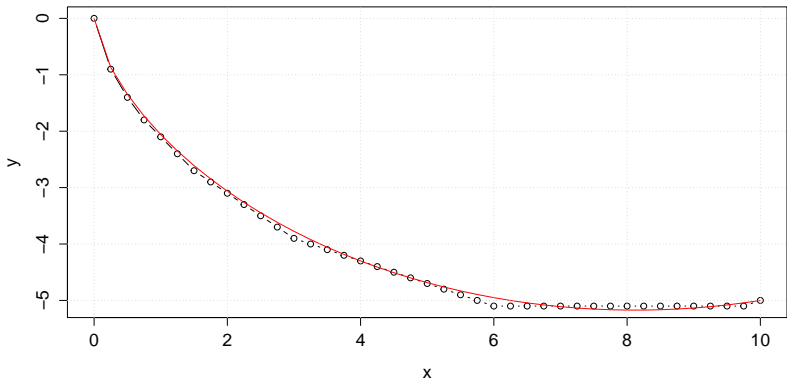


- Discretize the x-coordinate to segments of length  $\Delta x$ .
- State variable  $Y_i$  – the vertical position of the mass point.
- Decision variable  $U_i$  – the vertical shift.
- Utility node  $t_{i+1}(y_i, u_i)$  – the utility function is the time :

$$t_{i+1} = \begin{cases} \frac{\Delta x}{\sqrt{-2 \cdot g \cdot y_i}} & \text{if } u_i = 0 \\ -\sqrt{\frac{2}{g}} \cdot \frac{\sqrt{(\Delta x)^2 + u_i^2}}{u_i} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} \sqrt{-y_i} \\ -\sqrt{-u_i - y_i} \end{pmatrix} & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

The goal is to minimize total time  $\sum_{i=0}^n t_{i+1}$ .

## Comparison of the optimal solution with the influence diagram solution



# The Goddard problem

Robert H. Goddard, 1919



# The Goddard problem

Robert H. Goddard, 1919



Establish the **optimal engine thrust profile** for a rocket ascending vertically from the Earth's surface such that:

# The Goddard problem

Robert H. Goddard, 1919



Establish the **optimal engine thrust profile** for a rocket ascending vertically from the Earth's surface such that:

- a given altitude is achieved with a given speed and a given payload,

# The Goddard problem

Robert H. Goddard, 1919



Establish the **optimal engine thrust profile** for a rocket ascending vertically from the Earth's surface such that:

- a given altitude is achieved with a given speed and a given payload,
- the fuel expenditure is minimized,



# The Goddard problem

Robert H. Goddard, 1919



Establish the **optimal engine thrust profile** for a rocket ascending vertically from the Earth's surface such that:

- a given altitude is achieved with a given speed and a given payload,
- the fuel expenditure is minimized,
- aerodynamic drag and the varying gravitation is considered, and

# The Goddard problem

Robert H. Goddard, 1919



Establish the **optimal engine thrust profile** for a rocket ascending vertically from the Earth's surface such that:

- a given altitude is achieved with a given speed and a given payload,
- the fuel expenditure is minimized,
- aerodynamic drag and the varying gravitation is considered, and
- the engine thrust is bounded.

## The rocket dynamics

- $m$  ... rocket mass

## The rocket dynamics

- $m$  ... rocket mass
- $v$  ... rocket speed

## The rocket dynamics

- $m$  ... rocket mass
- $v$  ... rocket speed
- $u$  ... the engine thrust

## The rocket dynamics

- $m$  ... rocket mass
- $v$  ... rocket speed
- $u$  ... the engine thrust
- $h$  ... the distance to Earth's center

## The rocket dynamics

- $m$  ... rocket mass
- $v$  ... rocket speed
- $u$  ... the engine thrust
- $h$  ... the distance to Earth's center
- the system of two ordinary differential equations (ODEs) with respect to height  $h$  in the normalized form:

## The rocket dynamics

- $m$  ... rocket mass
- $v$  ... rocket speed
- $u$  ... the engine thrust
- $h$  ... the distance to Earth's center
- the system of two ordinary differential equations (ODEs) with respect to height  $h$  in the normalized form:

$$\frac{dm}{dh} = g(h, v) = \frac{u}{v(h)}$$

“burning the fuel”



## The rocket dynamics

- $m$  ... rocket mass
- $v$  ... rocket speed
- $u$  ... the engine thrust
- $h$  ... the distance to Earth's center
- the system of two ordinary differential equations (ODEs) with respect to height  $h$  in the normalized form:

$$\frac{dm}{dh} = g(h, v) = \frac{u}{v(h)}$$

“burning the fuel”

$$\frac{dv}{dh} = f(h, m, v)$$

“equilibrium of forces”

$$= -\frac{1}{m} \cdot \left( \frac{c \cdot u}{v} + \frac{1}{2} \cdot s \cdot c_D \cdot \rho_0 \cdot \exp(\beta \cdot (1 - h)) \cdot v \right) - \frac{1}{v} \cdot \frac{1}{h^2}$$

## Optimal solution

It is known (Miele, 1963) that the optimal solution consists of three subarcs:

- (a) maximum-thrust subarcs,

## Optimal solution

It is known (Miele, 1963) that the optimal solution consists of three subarcs:

- (a) maximum-thrust subarcs,
- (b) variable-thrust subarc, and

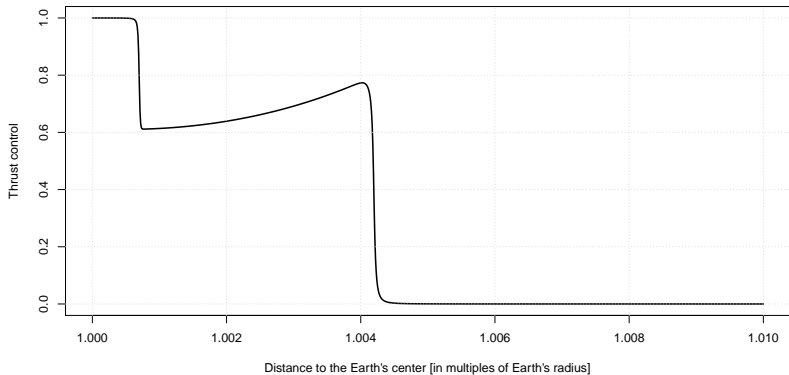
## Optimal solution

It is known (Miele, 1963) that the optimal solution consists of three subarcs:

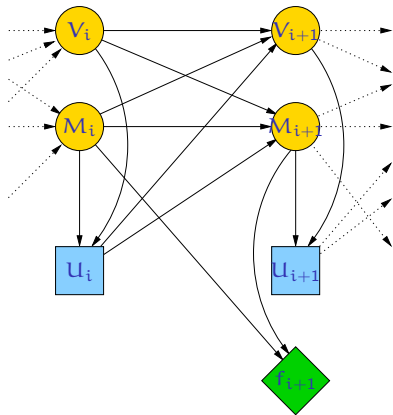
- (a) maximum-thrust subarcs,
- (b) variable-thrust subarc, and
- (c) coasting subarcs (i.e. subarcs with the zero thrust).

# Optimal solution

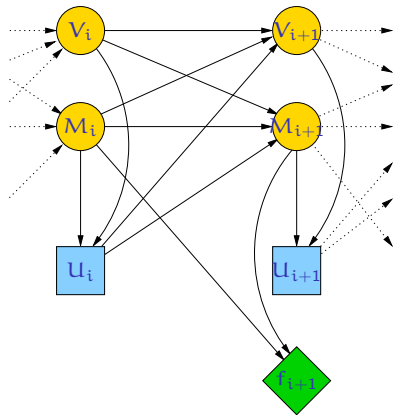
(found by Bocop, using a NLP solver IPOPT)



## Influence diagram for the Goddard Problem

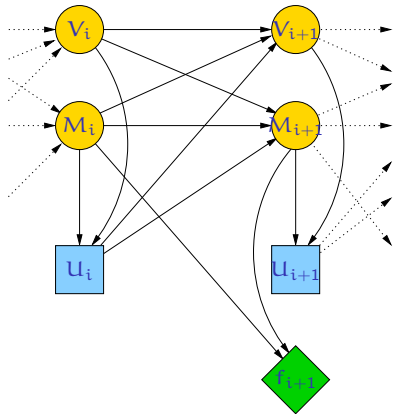


## Influence diagram for the Goddard Problem



- State variables:
  - $M_i$  – the rocket mass (payload + fuel),
  - $V_i$  – the rocket speed.

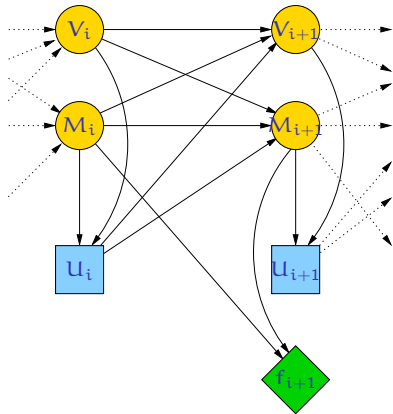
## Influence diagram for the Goddard Problem



- State variables:
  - $M_i$  – the rocket mass (payload + fuel),
  - $V_i$  – the rocket speed.
- Decision variable:
  - $U_i$  – the engine thrust.

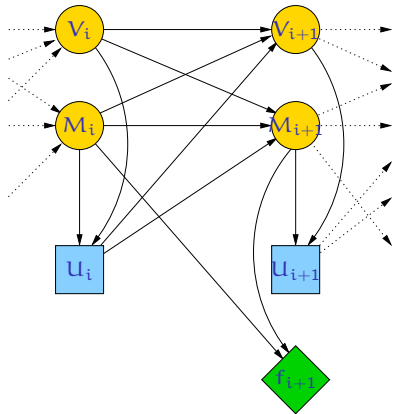


## Influence diagram for the Goddard Problem



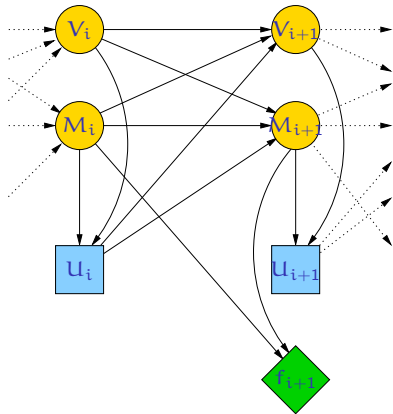
- State variables:  
 $M_i$  – the rocket mass (payload + fuel),  
 $V_i$  – the rocket speed.
- Decision variable:  
 $U_i$  – the engine thrust.
- Utility node:  
 $f_{i+1}$  – the mass of the burnt fuel, i.e.,  $M_i - M_{i+1}$ .

## Influence diagram for the Goddard Problem



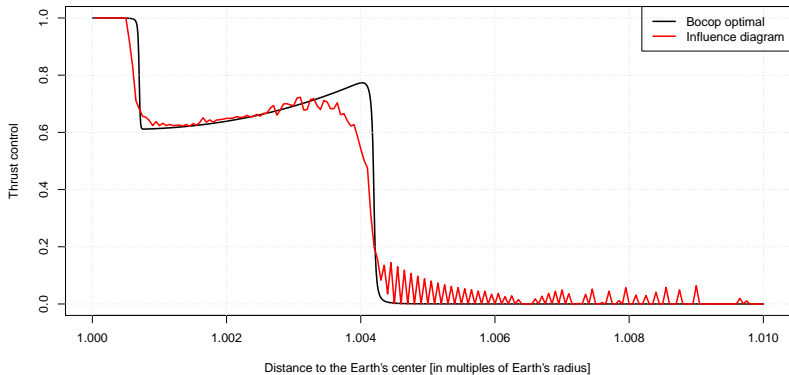
- State variables:
    - $M_i$  – the rocket mass (payload + fuel),
    - $V_i$  – the rocket speed.
  - Decision variable:
    - $U_i$  – the engine thrust.
  - Utility node:
    - $f_{i+1}$  – the mass of the burnt fuel, i.e.,  $M_i - M_{i+1}$ .
- 
- State transitions are defined by the Euler approximation of the system of two ordinary differential equations (ODEs).

## Influence diagram for the Goddard Problem



- State variables:
    - $M_i$  – the rocket mass (payload + fuel),
    - $V_i$  – the rocket speed.
  - Decision variable:
    - $U_i$  – the engine thrust.
  - Utility node:
    - $f_{i+1}$  – the mass of the burnt fuel, i.e.,  $M_i - M_{i+1}$ .
- 
- State transitions are defined by the Euler approximation of the system of two ordinary differential equations (ODEs).
  - In CPTs a stochastic approximation of the state transitions by a probability mixture of two nearest states is used.

## Comparison of the optimal solution with the influence diagram solution



## General guidelines

1. Specify the state and the control variables, the utility function.

## General guidelines

1. Specify the state and the control variables, the utility function.
2. Describe the system using differential equations.

## General guidelines

1. Specify the state and the control variables, the utility function.
2. Describe the system using differential equations.
3. Discretize the trajectory to short segments.

## General guidelines

1. Specify the state and the control variables, the utility function.
2. Describe the system using differential equations.
3. Discretize the trajectory to short segments.
4. Find an analytical formula for the state.



## General guidelines

1. Specify the state and the control variables, the utility function.
2. Describe the system using differential equations.
3. Discretize the trajectory to short segments.
4. Find an analytical formula for the state.
5. If no analytical solution is available use an approximation method (Euler, Runge-Kutta, Gauss-Legendre, etc.)

## General guidelines

1. Specify the state and the control variables, the utility function.
2. Describe the system using differential equations.
3. Discretize the trajectory to short segments.
4. Find an analytical formula for the state.
5. If no analytical solution is available use an approximation method (Euler, Runge-Kutta, Gauss-Legendre, etc.)
6. Construct the ID having in each segment:
  - a **chance node** for each state variable,
  - a **decision node** for each control variable, and
  - a **utility node**.

## General guidelines - II

7. If necessary, discretize the state and control variables.

## General guidelines - II

7. If necessary, discretize the state and control variables.
8. Use conditional probability tables to specify the state transitions.

## General guidelines - II

7. If necessary, discretize the state and control variables.
8. Use conditional probability tables to specify the state transitions.
9. If states are discretized and the state transitions lead to states that are not in the set of state values then use the stochastic approximation by a mixture of two nearest states.

## General guidelines - II

7. If necessary, discretize the state and control variables.
8. Use conditional probability tables to specify the state transitions.
9. If states are discretized and the state transitions lead to states that are not in the set of state values then use the stochastic approximation by a mixture of two nearest states.
10. Find and store the optimal policy for each segment of the trajectory by solving the ID.

## General guidelines - II

7. If necessary, discretize the state and control variables.
8. Use conditional probability tables to specify the state transitions.
9. If states are discretized and the state transitions lead to states that are not in the set of state values then use the stochastic approximation by a mixture of two nearest states.
10. Find and store the optimal policy for each segment of the trajectory by solving the ID.
11. During the application the optimal policy for the actual observed values of state variables at each point of the trajectory is used.

## General guidelines - II

7. If necessary, discretize the state and control variables.
8. Use conditional probability tables to specify the state transitions.
9. If states are discretized and the state transitions lead to states that are not in the set of state values then use the stochastic approximation by a mixture of two nearest states.
10. Find and store the optimal policy for each segment of the trajectory by solving the ID.
11. During the application the optimal policy for the actual observed values of state variables at each point of the trajectory is used.
12. If the controlled object deviates from the optimal solution use the stored optimal policy for the observed state.



## Conclusions and future work

- In the two benchmark problems the influence diagrams solutions were **comparable with the analytic solutions**.

## Conclusions and future work

- In the two benchmark problems the influence diagrams solutions were **comparable with the analytic solutions**.
- Thanks to the decomposability of the optimization criteria **computations are performed locally** in the cliques.

## Conclusions and future work

- In the two benchmark problems the influence diagrams solutions were **comparable with the analytic solutions**.
- Thanks to the decomposability of the optimization criteria **computations are performed locally** in the cliques.
- In influence diagrams it is **easy to modify the optimality criteria** – as long as it decomposes additively along the path.

## Conclusions and future work

- In the two benchmark problems the influence diagrams solutions were **comparable with the analytic solutions**.
- Thanks to the decomposability of the optimization criteria **computations are performed locally** in the cliques.
- In influence diagrams it is **easy to modify the optimality criteria** – as long as it decomposes additively along the path.
- Future work: influence diagrams with **continuous variables**.