

Planning

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Material from
Russell & Norvig,
chapters 10.3. and 11

Slides based on Slides
by Lise Getoor
and Tom Lenaerts

Planning problem

- Planning is the task of coming up with a sequence of actions that will achieve a goal starting from an initial state
 - many search-based problem-solving agents are special cases
- **Given:**
 - a set of **action descriptions** (defining the possible primitive actions by the agent),
 - an initial **state description**, and
 - a **goal state description** or predicate,
- **Find** a plan, which is
 - a **sequence of action** instances, such that executing them in the initial state will change the world to a state satisfying the goal-state description.
- Goals are usually specified as a conjunction of subgoals to be achieved

Application Scenario

- Classical planning environment
 - fully observable, deterministic, finite, static, discrete
- Practical Applications
 - design and manufacturing
 - military operations
 - games
 - space exploration

Planning vs. Problem Solving

- Planning and problem solving methods can often solve the same sorts of problems
- Planning is more powerful because of the representations and methods used
 - States, goals, and actions are decomposed into sets of sentences (usually in first-order logic)
- Planning can analyze the effects of actions
 - The **successor function** is a **black box**: it must be “applied” to a state to know which actions are possible in that state and what are the effects of each one
 - An explicit representation of the possible actions and their effects would help the problem solver
- Subgoals can often be planned independently, reducing the complexity of the planning problem
- Search may be through **plan space** rather than **state space**

Key Problems

- Which actions are relevant?
 - Example: Goal is **have (milk)**
 - the agent may have billions of possible actions
 - e.g., one **buy**-action for each possible product in a store
 - an intelligent planner will know that **buy (X)** will cause **own (X)**, and only consider the action **buy (milk)**
- What is a good heuristic functions?
 - Problem:
 - states are domain-specific data structures, and new heuristics must be supplied for each new problem
 - Example: Goal is buying n different items
 - Number of plans grows exponentially with n
 - Problem-independent heuristics are needed
 - e.g., number of subgoals that have already been reached
- How to decompose a problem?

Decomposable Problems

- Goals are often given as a conjunction of subgoals
 - e.g., **have (milk) & have (bread)**
 - each subgoal can be solved independently

Other problems can be decomposed into subproblems:

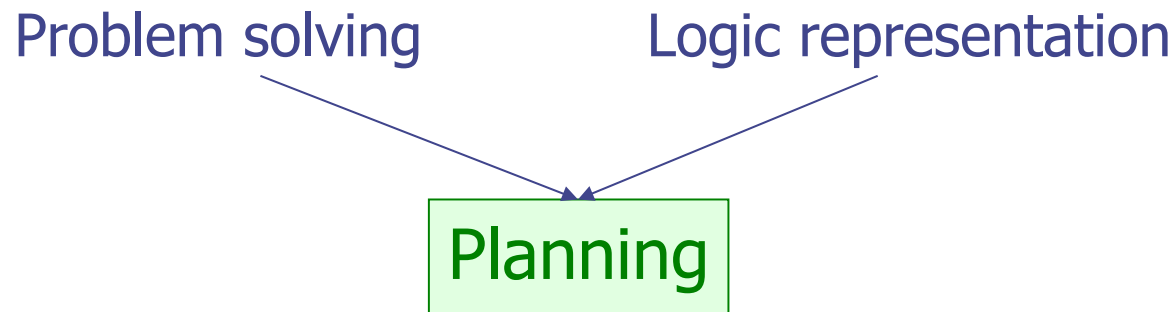
- Example: overnight delivery of a set of packages
 - Planning a complete route for all packages at once is very expensive ($O(n!)$ different routes)
→ Better decompose the problem:
 - First distribute the packages according to nearest airport to destination
 - Then plan to distribute the package from each airport separately
→ $O(k \cdot (n/k)!)$ different routes (much less than $O(n!)$)

Nearly Decomposable Problems

- Completely decomposable Problems are rare
 - typically there are interactions between subgoals
- Nearly decomposable Problems
 - planning for subgoals is possible
 - but additional work may be required to bring the partial results together
- Example:
 - Independent plans for **have (milk)** and **have (bread)** may have the result that two different super-markets are visited

Representation in Planning

- In **Problem Solving**, actions, states, and goals are **black boxes**
 - each problem has its own representation
 - agent does not understand the representations of actions, states, and goals→ cannot exploit relations between them
- **Planning** works with **explicit representations** of actions, states, and goals
 - typically in some form of logical calculus



Major Approaches to Planning

- Situation calculus
- State space planning
- Partial order planning
- Planning graphs
- Planning with Propositional Logic
- Hierarchical decomposition (HTN planning)
- Reactive planning

Planning in First-Order Logic

Principal Idea:

- Formulate planning problem in First-Order Logic (FOL)
 - states (and goals) are conjunctions of literals
 - actions are logical rules
- Use theorem prover to find a proof for the goal
 - the actions used in this proof are the plan
 - e.g., use PROLOG

Key Problem:

- How to represent change?
 - a) add and delete sentences from the KB to reflect changes
 - b) all facts are indexed by a situation variable → situation calculus

PROLOG-like Logical Notation

- **Constant:** represents some objects
 - starts with a number or a lower-case letter
 - e.g., `pam`, `bob`, `liz`, `1`, `pi`, `true`, etc.
 - functions are like constants, but complex expressions
- **Variable:** denotes some unknown object/constant
 - starts with an upper-case letter or an underscore
 - e.g. `X`, `Person`, `Nummer`, `_42`, etc.
 - within a conjunction of literals, same variables refer to same objects
 - but may be different objects in different conjunctions / rules
- **Predicate:** denotes a relation between two objects
 - starts with a lower-case letter
 - e.g., `parent`, `male`, `female`
- **Literal:** a predicate symbol with some arguments
 - e.g., `parent(pam,bob)`, `at(pam,X)`, `airport(X)`
- **Rule:** an implication, typically written `Head :- Cond1, Cond2,`
 - e.g., `grandparent(X,Y) :- parent(X,Z), parent(Z,Y).`

Situation Calculus

- A **situation** is a snapshot of the world at some instant in time
- Every true or false statement is made with respect to a particular situation
 - Add situation variables to every predicate.
 - $\text{at}(\text{agent}, 1, 1)$ becomes $\text{at}(\text{agent}, 1, 1, s_0)$:
 $\text{at}(\text{agent}, 1, 1)$ is true in situation (i.e., state) s_0 .
- Add a new function, $\text{result}(a, s)$, that maps a situation s into a new situation as a result of performing action a .
 - For example, $\text{result}(\text{forward}, s)$ is a function that returns the successor state (situation) to s after performing action a
 - Note that this is just notation!
 - Logical functions are not implemented or evaluated!
 - They are used in pattern matching

Situation Calculus

- **Actions** can be respresented as logical rules that describe which states can be valid
- **Example:**
 - The action agent-walks-to-location-y could be represented by the PROLOG rule

`at(A, Y, result(walk(Y), S)) :- at(A, X, S).`

agent A is at location Y in state `result(walk(Y), S)`
if it was at location X in state S (and performed action `walk(Y)`)

- **Action sequences** are also useful: `results(l, s)` is the result of executing the list of actions `l` starting in `s`:
 - corresponding rules could be included as **short-hand notation** into inference engine

`results([], S) = S`

`results([A|P], S) = results(P, result(A, S))`

Situation Calculus Planning

- **Initial state**

- a logical sentence that describes current situation S_0

```
at(home, s0), not(have(milk, s0)), not(have(bread, s0)),
not(have(drill, s0))
```

- **Goal state**

- a logical sentence that describes the goal state

```
at(home, G), have(milk, G), have(bread, G), have(drill, G)
```

- **Actions (Operators)**

- logical rules that describe the effects of actions

```
have(milk, result(A, S)) :- at(grocery, S),
                             A = buy(milk).
```

```
have(milk, result(A, S)) :- have(milk, S),
                             A != drop(milk).
```

etc.

Situation Calculus Planning

■ Solution

- A sequence of actions P (a plan) that, when applied to the initial state, yields a situation satisfying the goal query

`at(home, G), have(milk, G), have(bread, G), have(drill, G)`

with

`G = results(P, s0)`

- P could, for example, be something like

`P = [go(grocery), buy(milk), buy(bread),
go(hardwareStore), buy(drill), go(home)]`

■ Projection

- determine the effect of a sequence of actions

■ Planning

- find the sequence of action with the desired effect

The Frame Problem

- the action rules only specify what aspects change when an action is performed

$$\text{have}(\text{milk}, \text{result}(A, S)) \text{ :- } \text{at}(\text{grocery}, S), \\ A = \text{buy}(\text{milk}).$$

- we also need rules that describe what does *not* change!

$$\text{at}(\text{grocery}, \text{result}(A, S)) \text{ :- } \text{at}(\text{grocery}, S), \\ A = \text{buy}(\text{milk}).$$

If we are in a grocery store and buy milk, we remain in the grocery store.

- such **frame axioms** are necessary for all possible combination of state predicates and actions
- representational frame problem:**
 - we do not want to represent each such possible combination
- inferential frame problem:**
 - most of the work will be spent in deriving that nothing changes

SC Planning: More Problems

- **Qualification problem:**
 - difficulty in specifying all the conditions that must hold in order for an action to work
 - e.g., `go` action might fail for various reasons (locked doors, hit by a truck while crossing the street, ...)
- **Ramification problem:**
 - difficulty in specifying all of the effects that will hold after an action is taken
 - e.g., if the agent carries something, a `go` action will move that thing too...
- **Complexity:**
 - problem solving (search) is exponential in the worst case
- **Optimality:**
 - resolution theorem proving can only find a proof (plan), not necessarily a *good* plan

Representation Languages for Planning

- Some of the afore-mentioned problems can be solved by better knowledge representation
 - some of them will necessarily remain (e.g., qualification and ramification problems)
- **Alternative approach**
 - we restrict the language
 - use a special-purpose algorithm (a *planner*) rather than general theorem prover
- Criteria for a **good representation language**
 - **Expressive** enough to describe a wide variety of problems
 - Restrictive enough to allow **efficient** algorithm
 - Planning algorithm should be able to take advantage of the logical **structure** of the problem.

The STRIPS Language

- **STRIPS** (**ST**anford **R**esearch **I**nstitute **P**roblem **S**olver)
 - classical planning system (Fikes & Nilsson, 1971)
 - representation of states and actions quite influential

STRIPS: Representation of States

- Decompose the world in logical conditions and represent a state as a conjunction of positive literals.
 - Propositional literals
 - e.g., `poor` \wedge `unknown`
 - First-Order literals
 - e.g., `at(plane1, melbourne)` \wedge `at(plane2, sydney)`
 - grounded (contain no variables)
 - function-free (contain no function symbols)
- Closed world assumption
 - what is not known to be true, is assumed to be false

STRIPS: Representation of Goals

- like any other state, a goal is a conjunction of positive ground literals
 - e.g. `rich` \wedge `famous`
- may be partially instantiated:
 - e.g., `at(P, paris)` \wedge `plane(P)`
(some plane should be in Tahiti)
- A **goal is satisfied** if the state contains all literals in goal
 - e.g. `rich` \wedge `famous` \wedge `miserable` satisfies goal
- In the case of partially instantiated first-order predicates, the state must contain some instantiation of the literals
 - e.g., `at(spirit_of_st_louis, paris)` \wedge
`plane(spirit_of_st_louis)`
satisfies the goal with the substitution
 $\theta = \{X/\text{spirit_of_st_louis}\}$

STRIPS: Representation of Actions

Preconditions: determine the applicability of an action

- conjunction of function-free literals
- all variables that occur here, must also occur in the effects
- the action is applicable if the preconditions match the current state (similar to goals)

Effects: describe the state change after executing an action

- conjunction of function-free literals
- typically divided into:
 - **ADD**-list:
 - facts that become true after executing the action
 - **DELETE**-list
 - facts that become false after executing the action

```
Action( fly(P, From, To) ,  
PRECOND: at(P,From) ,  
         plane(P) ,  
         airport(From) ,  
         airport(To)  
ADD:    at(P,To)  
DELETE: at(P,From)  
)
```

Semantics of the STRIPS Language

- What actions are applicable in a state?
 - An action is applicable in any state that satisfies the precondition.
 - For First-Order action schema applicability involves a substitution θ for the variables in the **PRECOND**.

- **Example:**

```
at(p1,jfk), at(p2,sfo), plane(p1), plane(p2),
airport(jfk), airport(sfo)
```

satisfies

```
at(P,From), plane(P), airport(From), airport(To)
```

with

$$\theta = \{P/p1, From/jfk, To/sfo\}$$

- Thus the action `fly(P, From, To)` is applicable.

Semantics of the STRIPS Language

- What effects do the actions have?
 - The result of executing action a in state s is the state t
 - t is same as s except
 - Any literal P in the **ADD**-list is added
 - Any literal P in the **DELETE**-list is removed

- Example

ADD: $\text{at}(P, \text{To})$
DELETE: $\text{at}(P, \text{From})$

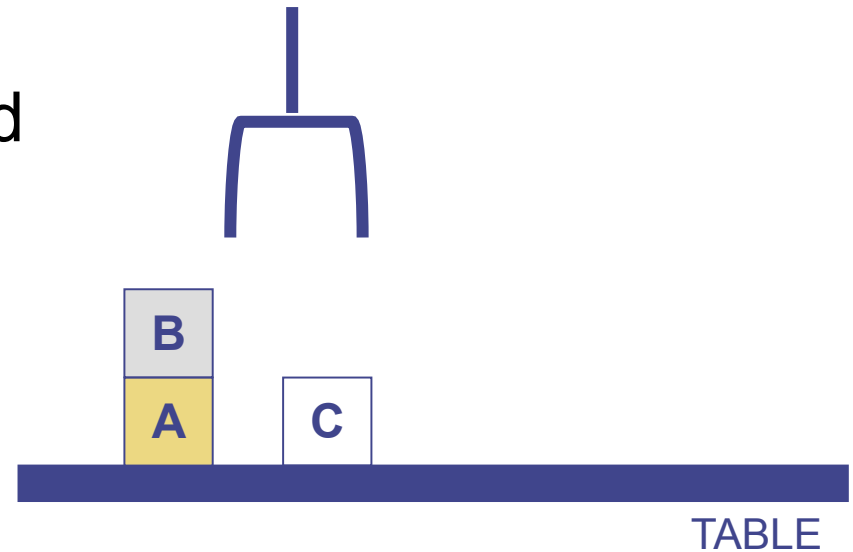
with substitution $\theta = \{P/p1, \text{From}/\text{jfk}, \text{To}/\text{sfo}\}$ results in state

$\text{at}(p1, \text{sfo}), \text{at}(p2, \text{sfo}), \text{plane}(p1), \text{plane}(p2),$
 $\text{airport}(\text{jfk}), \text{airport}(\text{sfo})$

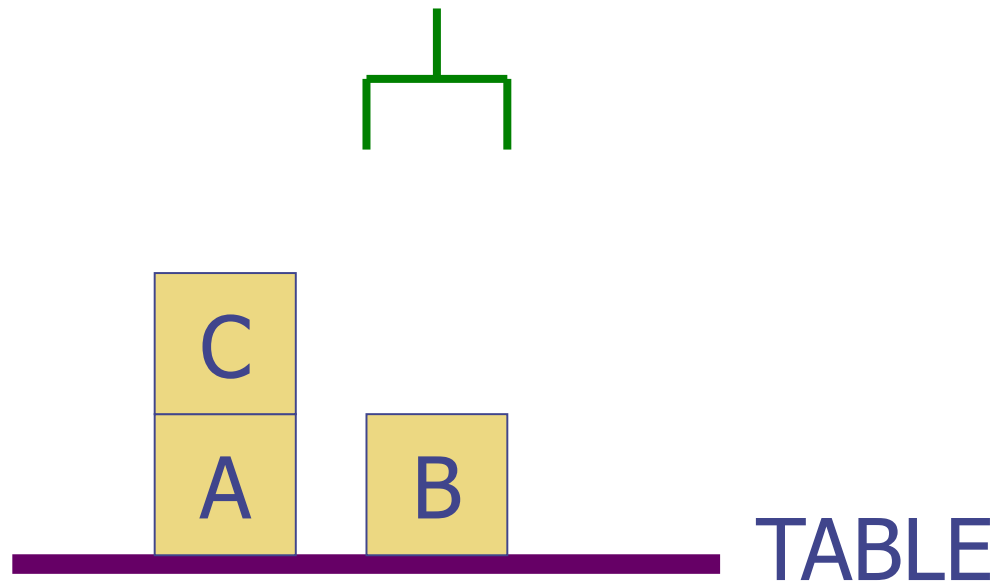
- STRIPS assumption**
 - every literal NOT in the effect remains unchanged
 - avoids representational frame problem

Example: Blocks World

- Very famous AI toy domain
- The blocks world is a micro-world that consists of
 - a table
 - a set of blocks
 - a robot hand
- Operation
 - The robot hand can grasp a single block
 - The robot hand can move over the table (with or without a block)
 - The robot hand can release a block it is holding
 - Blocks can be stacked on top of each other if the top is clear
 - Any number of blocks can be on the table
 - The hand can only hold one block

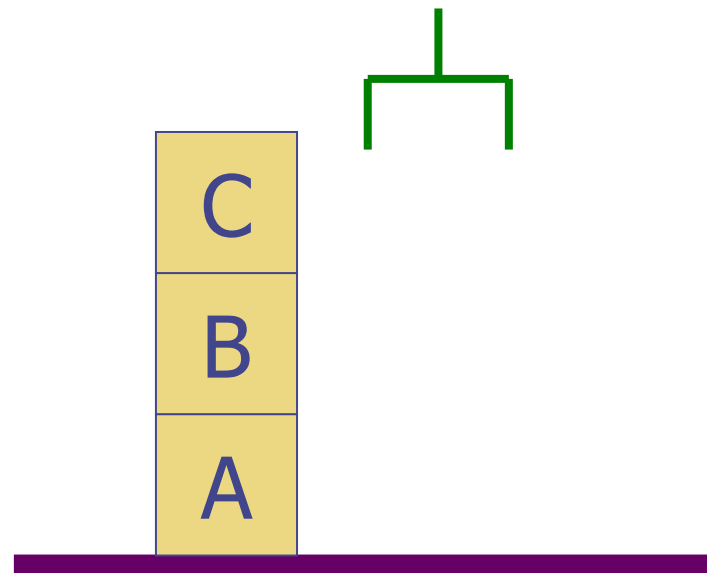


State Representation



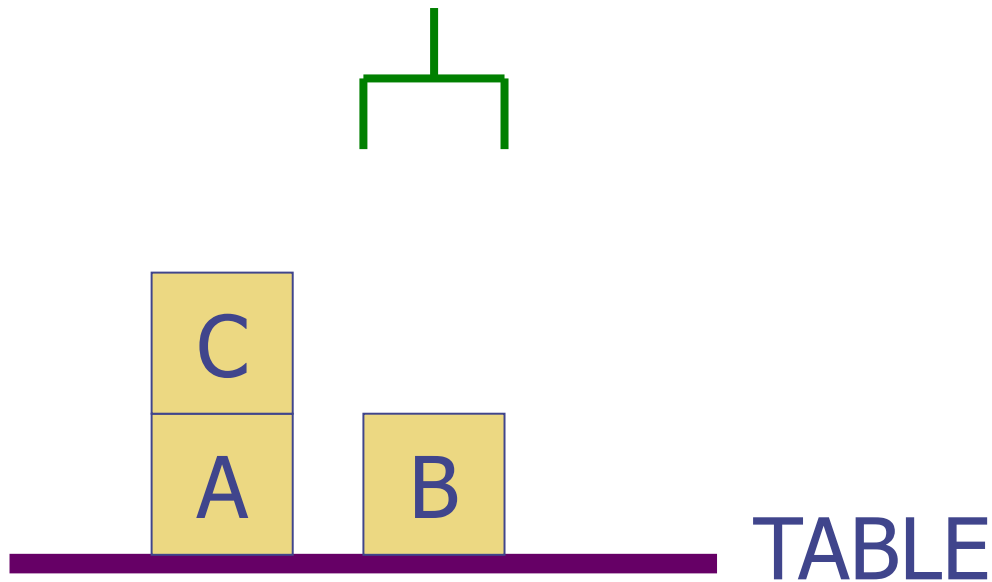
```
block(a), block(b), block(c),  
on(a,table), on(b,table), on(c,a),  
clear(b), clear(c), handempty
```

Goal Representation



`on(a, table), on(b, a), on(c, b)`

Action Application



```

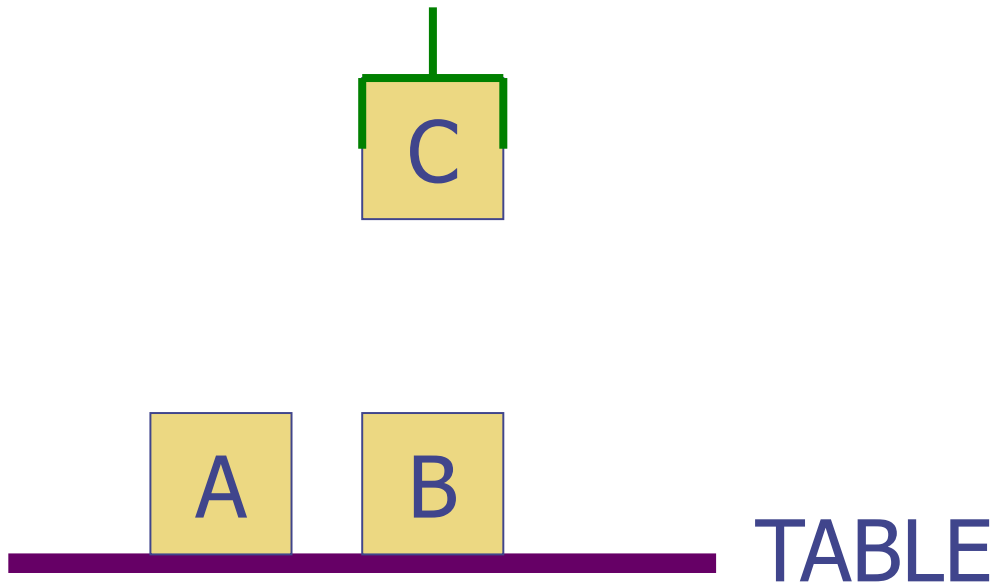
Action( unstack(X, Y) ,
PRECOND: handempty ,
        block(X) ,
        block(Y) ,
        clear(X) ,
        on(X, Y) ,
ADD:   holding(X) ,
        clear(Y) ,
DELETE: handempty ,
        clear(X) ,
        on(X, Y)
)
  
```

```

block(a) , block(b) , block(c) ,
on(a, table) , on(b, table) , on(c, a) ,
clear(b) , clear(c) , handempty ,
holding(c) , clear(a)
  
```

← unstack(c, a)

Action Application

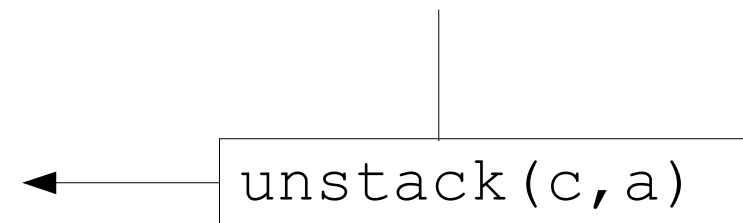


```

Action( unstack(X, Y) ,
PRECOND: handempty,
        block(X) ,
        block(Y) ,
        clear(X) ,
        on(X, Y) ,
ADD:    holding(X) ,
        clear(Y) ,
DELETE: handempty,
        clear(X) ,
        on(X, Y)
)
  
```

```

block(a) , block(b) , block(c) ,
on(a, table) , on(b, table) ,
clear(b) ,
holding(c) , clear(a)
  
```



More Blocks-World Actions

```

Action( stack(X,Y) ,
PRECOND: holding(X) ,
        block(X) ,
        block(Y) ,
        clear(Y)
ADD:    handempty ,
        clear(X) ,
        on(X,Y) ,
DELETE: holding(X) ,
        clear(Y)
)

```

```

Action( pickup(X) ,
PRECOND: handempty ,
        block(X) ,
        clear(X) ,
        on(X,table) ,
ADD:    holding(X) ,
DELETE: handempty ,
        clear(X) ,
        on(X,table)
)

```

```

Action( putdown(X) ,
PRECOND: holding(X)
ADD:    handempty ,
        clear(X) ,
        on(X,table)
DELETE: holding(X)
)

```

Example: Air Cargo Transport

- Initial state:

```
at(c1,sfo), at(c2,jfk), at(p1,sfo),
at(p2,sfo), cargo(c1), cargo(c2),
plane(p1), plane(p2), airport(jfk),
airport(sfo)
```

- Goal state:

```
at(c1,jfk), at(c2,sfo)
```

```
Action(
  unload(C,P,A),
  PRECOND: in(C,P),
           at(P,A),
           cargo(C),
           plane(P),
           airport(A)
  ADD:    at(C,A)
  DELETE: in(C,P)
```

```
Action( fly(P,From,To),
  PRECOND: at(P,From),
           plane(P),
           airport(From),
           airport(To)
  ADD:    at(P,To)
  DELETE: at(P,From)
)
```

```
Action( load(C,P,A),
  PRECOND: at(C,A),
           at(P,A),
           cargo(C),
           plane(P),
           airport(A)
  ADD:    in(C,P)
  DELETE: at(C,A)
)
```

Expressiveness and Extensions

- The STRIPS language is a very simple subset of FOL
 - Important **limitation**: function-free literals
 - All such problems can be represented in propositional logic
 - use one proposition for each possible combination of predicate symbol and arguments
 - Function symbols lead to infinitely many states and actions
 - infinitely many arguments can be constructed with function symbols, hence propositionalization is not possible
- Various **extensions** have been proposed:
 - **Action Description language (ADL)**
 - recent extension to STRIPS language
 - allows for types, explicit negation (no CWA), relations and conditions in goals, equality predicate built in, ...
 - **Planning domain definition language (PDDL)**
 - standardization of various AI planning formalism

Comparison ADL-STRIPS

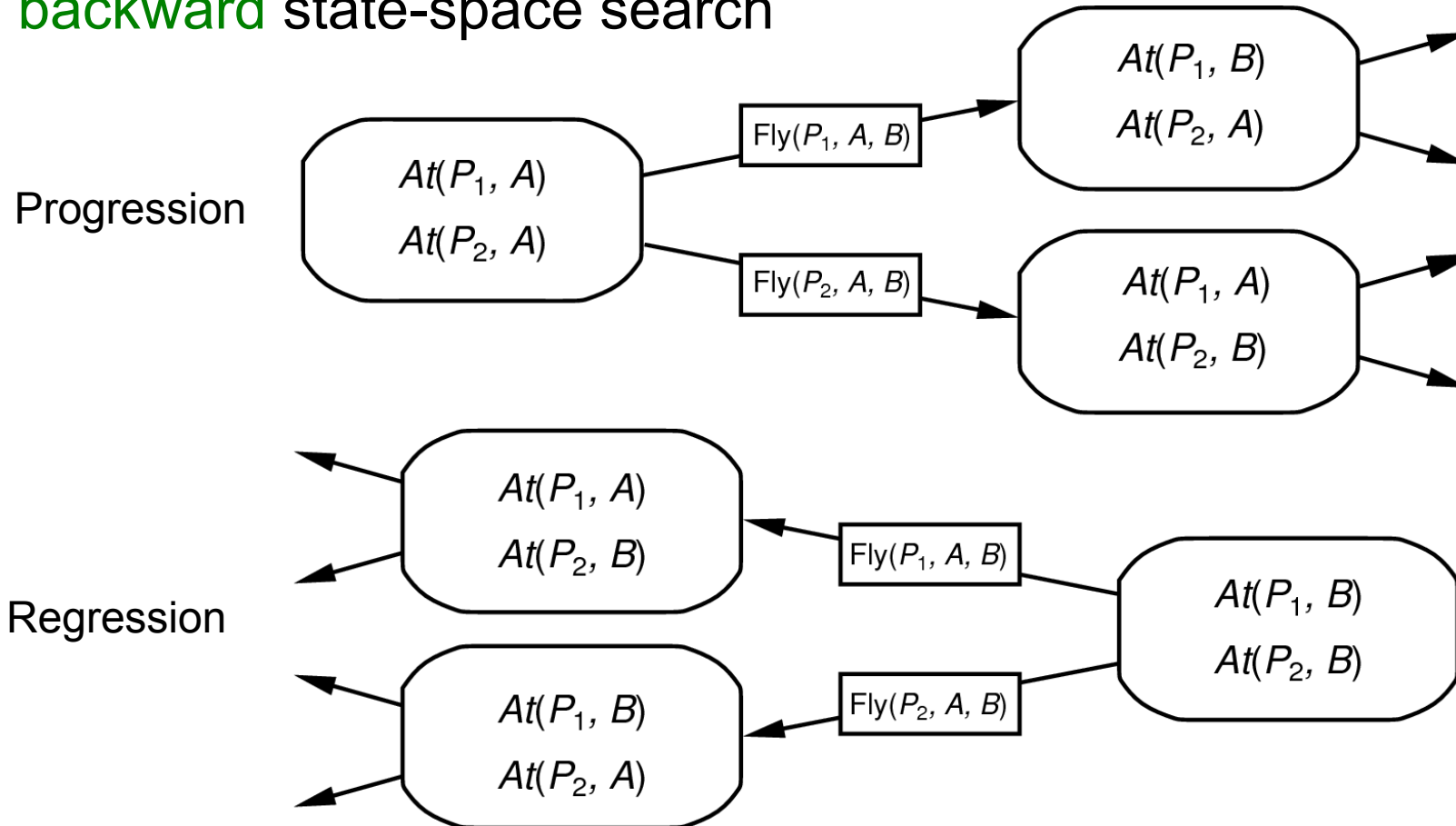
Sprache STRIPS	Sprache ADL
<p>Nur positive Literale in Zuständen: $Arm \wedge Unbekannt$</p> <p>Annahme der geschlossenen Welt: Nicht erwähnte Literale sind falsch.</p> <p>Effekt $P \wedge \neg Q$ bedeutet, P wird hinzugefügt, Q entfernt.</p> <p>Nur Grundliterale in Zielen: $Reich \wedge Berühmt$</p>	<p>Positive und negative Literale in Zuständen: $\neg Reich \wedge \neg Berühmt$</p> <p>Annahme der offenen Welt: Nicht erwähnte Literale sind unbekannt.</p> <p>Effekt $P \wedge \neg Q$ bedeutet, P und $\neg Q$ werden hinzugefügt, $\neg P$ und Q entfernt.</p> <p>Quantifizierte Variablen in Zielen: $\exists x Bei(P_1, x) \wedge Bei(P_2, x)$ ist das Ziel, P_1 und P_2 am selben Ort zu haben.</p>

Comparison ADL-STRIPS

Sprache STRIPS	Sprache ADL
Ziele sind Konjunktionen: $Reich \wedge Berühmt$	Ziele erlauben Konjunktion und Disjunktion: $\neg Arm \wedge (Berühmt \vee Intelligent)$
Effekte sind Konjunktionen	Bedingte Effekte sind erlaubt: when $P: E$ bedeutet, E ist nur dann ein Effekt, wenn P erfüllt ist.
Keine Unterstützung der Gleichheit	Das Gleichheitsprädikat ($x = y$) ist eingebaut.
Keine Unterstützung von Typen	Variablen können Typen haben, wie z.B. in ($p: Flugzeug$).

Planning with State-Space Search

- Progression planners
 - forward state-space search
- Regression planners
 - backward state-space search



Progression Algorithm

- Formulation as state-space search problem:
 - **Initial state** = initial state of the planning problem
 - Literals not appearing are false
 - **Actions** = those whose preconditions are satisfied
 - Add positive effects, delete negative
 - **Goal test** = does the state satisfy the goal
 - **Step cost** = each action costs 1
 - could be changed if necessary
- Search Algorithms
 - function-free \rightarrow finite \rightarrow any complete graph search algorithm will yield a complete planner
- Efficiency is a problem
 - irrelevant action problem
 - good heuristic required for efficient search

Regression Algorithm

- In order to be able to use a backward search, we must be able to apply the STRIPS operators backwards
- What are the states from which applying a given action leads to the goal?
 - Goal state:
 - $at(c1, a), at(c2, a), \dots, at(c20, a)$
 - Relevant action for first conjunct: $unload(c1, P, a)$
 - Works only if pre-conditions are satisfied
 - Previous state:
 - $in(c1, P), at(P, a), at(c2, a), \dots, at(c20, a)$
 - Subgoal $at(c1, a)$ should not be present in this state.
- Actions must not undo subgoals that are already achieved (consistent actions)
 - Example:
 - $load(c2, p)$ will never appear in a plan for the above task

Regression Algorithm

- General process for **predecessor construction**
 - Given a goal description G
 - Let A be an action that is relevant and consistent
 - The predecessor is as follows:
 - Positive effects of A that appear in G are deleted.
 - Each precondition literal of A is added, unless it already appears
- Any standard search algorithm can perform the **search**
 - The initial state is the goal state of the original problem
 - The goal state is the initial state of the original problem
 - Termination when predecessor satisfied by initial state
 - In FO case, satisfaction might require a substitution
- Main **advantage** of Regression Planning
 - only relevant actions are considered.
 - often much lower branching factor than forward search.

Heuristics for State-Space Search

- Neither progression or regression are very efficient without a good heuristic
 - How many actions are needed to achieve the goal?
 - Exact solution is NP hard, find a good estimate
- Two approaches to find admissible heuristic:
 - The optimal solution to a **relaxed problem**
 - remove all preconditions from actions
 - almost identical to the number of open subgoals
 - remove only the delete-list and find a (minimal) set of actions that collectively achieve the goals
 - problem: finding a minimal set cover is NP-hard, and relaxing the constraint loses admissibility of heuristic
 - The **subgoal independence** assumption:
 - The cost of solving a conjunction of subgoals is approximated by the sum of the costs of solving the subproblems independently