

**LOGICHE NON-CLASSICHE PER LA RAPPRESENTAZIONE
DELLA CONOSCENZA E IL RAGIONAMENTO**
*NON-CLASSICAL LOGICS FOR KNOWLEDGE
REPRESENTATION AND REASONING*

Laura Giordano, Valentina Gliozzi, Nicola Olivetti, Gian Luca Pozzato, and Camilla B. Schwind

SOMMARIO/ABSTRACT

Riassumiamo brevemente la nostra attività di ricerca nel campo delle logiche non-classiche iniziata negli anni '90. In particolare, descriviamo la nostra ricerca riguardante l'applicazione delle logiche non-classiche alla rappresentazione della conoscenza e lo sviluppo di metodi di prova per logiche non-monotone e condizionali.

We briefly outline our research activity in the field of non-classical logics started in the 90s. In particular, we describe our research in the application of non-classical logics to knowledge representation and in the development of proof methods for non-monotonic and conditional logics.

Keywords: Non-classical logics, knowledge representation, proof methods

1 Introduction

Our interest in the field of non-classical logic started with our work in Logic Programming at the beginning of the 90s. At that time we were working with Alberto on extensions of LP for dealing with hypothetical, conditional, defeasible and abductive reasoning. Those activities include the development of goal directed proof methods for Horn like fragments of modal logics K, S4, S5 and their use in the definition of structuring constructs for logic programs; the study of negation as failure in a hypothetical logic programming (NProlog); the semantic characterization of truth maintenance systems (TMS), and its relation with stable model semantics; proof procedures for abductive logic programming; and the definition of a conditional logic programming language (CondLP). Since that time, we have started working on non-classical logics both focusing on the use of such logics in knowledge representation and on developing proof methods for the automatization of conditional and non-monotonic logics.

Non-classical logics are widely used within the AI com-

munity, in the context of knowledge representation. In the following section, we describe the activity of our group in this area, concerning the use of modal, temporal, conditional and non-monotonic logics for Reasoning about Actions and Change and for Belief Revision as well as in the specification and verification of multi-agent systems.

In section 3 we describe our activity regarding proof methods for non-classical logics and, in particular, for KLM non-monotonic logics and for Conditional Logics.

2 Knowledge Representation

As mentioned above, our activity in Knowledge Representation has been mainly concerned with the formalization of *change*, which is crucial both in the context of Reasoning about Actions as well as in the context of Belief Revision. Concerning Reasoning about Actions, we have proposed a few modal and temporal formalisms for modelling actions execution. In modal and temporal action theories, action execution is modelled by introducing action modalities, and the Ramification problem is addressed by making use of modal or temporal operators (see section 2.1). Such action theories have been used in the specification and verification of agent interaction protocols as well as in the specification, verification and composition of web services (section 2.2). Concerning Belief Revision, our research has mainly focused on the relationships between Belief Revision and Conditional Logics (section 2.3). In the following we describe the above activities, as well as our recent activity concerning reasoning about typicality and inheritance with exceptions in Description Logics (section 2.4).

2.1 Reasoning About Actions

The idea of representing actions as modalities comes from Dynamic Logics [15]. As observed in [17], classical dynamic logic adopts essentially the same ontology as McCarthy's situation calculus, by taking "the state of the world as primary, and encoding actions as transformations

on states”. Indeed, actions can be represented in a natural way by modalities, and states as sequences of modalities. In this setting, the action law, saying that action a has effect f when executed in a state in which P holds, can be expressed by the formula: $P \rightarrow [a]f$. Moreover, the precondition law, saying that action a is executable in a state in which condition C holds, can be expressed by the formula: $C \rightarrow \langle a \rangle f$. Based on this idea, in [10] we have defined a modal action theory in which the frame problem is tackled by using a non-monotonic formalism which maximizes persistency assumptions and the ramification problem is tackled by introducing a modal causality operator which is used to represent causal dependencies among fluents. This action theory can also deal with incomplete initial state and with nondeterministic actions.

In [10], we have developed a temporal action theory based on a dynamic extension of Linear Temporal Logic (LTL). This logic, called DLTL (Dynamic Linear Time Temporal Logic) [16], extends LTL by strengthening the “until” operator by indexing it with regular programs. The advantage of using a linear time temporal logic is that it is a well established formalism for specifying the behavior of distributed systems, for which a rich theory has been developed and the verification task can be automated by making use of automata based techniques. In particular, for DLTL, in [11] a tableau-based algorithm for obtaining a Büchi automaton from a formula in DLTL has been presented, whose construction can be done on-the-fly, while checking for the emptiness of the automaton.

An alternative approach to reasoning about actions, based on Conditional Logics, has been proposed in [14].

2.2 Specification and Verification of Agent Interaction Protocols

The temporal action theory described above has been used in the specification and verification of communication protocols [12]. We have followed a social approach [22] to agent communication, where communication is described in terms of changes to the social relations between participants, and protocols in terms of creation, manipulation and satisfaction of commitments among agents. The description of the interaction protocol and of communicative actions is given in a temporal action theory, and agent programs, when known, can be specified as complex actions (regular programs in DLTL).

We have addresses several kinds of verification problems, including run-time verification of protocols as well as static verification of agent compliance with the protocols. Some of these problems can be formalized either as validity or as satisfiability problems in the temporal logic and can be solved by model checking techniques. Other problems, as compliance, are more challenging and require a special treatment [13]. The proposed approach has also been used in the specification of Web Services and, in particular, for reasoning about service composition.

2.3 Belief Revision

A lot of work has been devoted to the problem of finding a formal relation between Conditional Logics and Belief Revision [4, 18]. Conditional Logics provide a semantics to conditional sentences of the form “if A , then B ”, denoted by $A \Rightarrow B$. Belief Revision is the area of Knowledge Representation that deals with the problem of how to integrate a new information in a given belief set. The most known theory of Belief Revision is the so-called AGM theory (from Alchourrón, Gardenfors, and Makinson who first proposed it) that specifies a set of rationality postulates for integrating a new information about a static domain into a belief set of the same domain.

The idea that there might be a relation between evaluation of conditional sentences and Belief Revision dates back to Ramsey, who proposed an acceptability criterion for conditionals in terms of belief change. According to this criterion, in order to decide whether to accept a conditional $A \Rightarrow B$ in a belief set K , one should add A to K by changing it as little as possible, and see if B follows. If it does, one should accept the conditional, otherwise one should reject it. In spite of the intuitiveness of Ramsey’s criterion, its formalisation in the framework of Belief Revision is not straightforward. Many proposals, such as [4] run into the well-known Triviality Result, according to which there is no interesting Belief Revision system compatible with the proposed formalization. In [7, 8] we have proposed a Conditional Logic that corresponds to Belief Revision, thus establishing a relation between the two domains, without running into the Triviality Result.

2.4 Reasoning About Typicality in Description Logics

The family of description logics (DLs) is one of the most important formalisms of knowledge representation. DLs correspond to tractable fragments of first order logic, and are reminiscent of the early semantic networks and of frame-based systems. They offer two key advantages: a well-defined semantics based on first-order logic and a good trade-off between expressivity and complexity. DLs have been successfully implemented by a range of systems and they are at the base of languages for the semantic web such as OWL.

A DL knowledge base comprises two components: (i) the TBox, containing the definition of concepts (and possibly roles), and a specification of inclusions relations among them, and (ii) the ABox containing instances of concepts and roles, in other words, properties and relations of individuals. Since the very objective of the TBox is to build a taxonomy of concepts, the need of representing prototypical properties and of reasoning about defeasible inheritance of such properties naturally arises. The traditional approach is to handle defeasible inheritance by integrating some kind of non-monotonic reasoning mechanism. This has led to study non-monotonic extensions of

DLs. However, finding a suitable non-monotonic extension for inheritance reasoning with exceptions is far from obvious.

In [5], we have considered a novel approach to defeasible reasoning based on the use of a typicality operator \mathbf{T} . The intended meaning is that, for any concept C , $\mathbf{T}(C)$ singles out the instances of C that are considered as “typical” or “normal”. Thus, an assertion as “normally students do not pay taxes” is represented by $\mathbf{T}(Student) \sqsubseteq \neg TaxPayer$. The DL obtained is called $\mathcal{ALC} + \mathbf{T}$.

In the logic $\mathcal{ALC} + \mathbf{T}$, one can have consistent knowledge bases containing the inclusions $\mathbf{T}(Student) \sqsubseteq \neg TaxPayer$; $\mathbf{T}(Student \sqcap Worker) \sqsubseteq TaxPayer$; $\mathbf{T}(Student \sqcap Worker \sqcap \exists HasChild.\top) \sqsubseteq \neg TaxPayer$, corresponding to the assertions: normally a student does not pay taxes, normally a working student pays taxes, but normally a working student having children does not pay taxes (because he is discharged by the government), etc.. Furthermore, if the ABox contains the information that for instance $\mathbf{T}(Student \sqcap Worker)(john)$, one can infer that $TaxPayer(john)$.

3 Proof Methods for Non-classical Logics

Our interest in the area of proof methods started with our work in Logic Programming

At the beginning of the Nineties, our interest for proof methods for non-classical logics were mainly devoted to extend goal directed proof methods to non-classical logics, and, in particular to modal logics. In the same period, Dale Miller [19] was putting the basis of intuitionistic logic programming, based on the idea of having uniform proofs. Our work in this field was mainly concerned with modal extensions of logic programming [1, 3] as well as with abductive, hypothetical and conditional extension of logic programming [2]. In the following, we describe our more recent activity concerning proof methods for non-monotonic and conditional logics.

3.1 Proof Methods for KLM Logics

In [9] we have introduced analytic tableau calculi for all non-monotonic logics introduced by Kraus, Lehmann, and Magidor (KLM). Such logics, namely \mathbf{R} , \mathbf{P} , \mathbf{CL} , and \mathbf{C} , have a preferential semantics in which a preference relation is defined among worlds or states. It has been observed that KLM logics correspond to the flat (i.e. unnested) fragment of well-known Conditional Logics.

Our tableau method provides a sort of run-time translation of \mathbf{P} into modal logic G. The idea is simply to interpret the preference relation as an accessibility relation: a conditional $A \sim B$ holds in a model if B is true in all minimal A -worlds, where a world w is an A -world if it satisfies A , and it is a minimal A -world if there is no A -world w' preferred to w . The relation with modal logic G is motivated by the fact that we assume, following KLM, the so-called *smoothness condition*, which ensures that minimal

A -worlds exist whenever there are A -worlds, by preventing infinitely descending chains of worlds. This condition therefore corresponds to the finite-chain condition on the accessibility relation (as in modal logic G).

We have extended our approach to the cases of \mathbf{CL} and \mathbf{C} by using a second modality which takes care of states (intuitively, sets of worlds). Regarding \mathbf{CL} , we have shown that we can map \mathbf{CL} -models into \mathbf{P} -models with an additional modality. In both cases, we can define a decision procedure to solve the validity problem in CoNP. Also, we have given a labelled calculus for the strongest logic \mathbf{R} , where the preference relation is assumed to be modular. The calculus defines a systematic procedure which allows the satisfiability problem for \mathbf{R} to be decided in nondeterministic polynomial time.

From the completeness of our calculi we get for free the finite model property for all the logics considered. With the exception of the calculus for \mathbf{C} , in order to ensure termination, our tableau procedures for KLM logics do not need any loop-checking, nor blocking, nor caching machinery. Termination is ensured only by adopting a restriction on the order of application of the rules.

3.2 Proof Methods for Conditional Logics

In [20] we have introduced proof methods for some standard Conditional Logics. We have considered the *selection function* semantics. Intuitively, the selection function f selects, for a world w and a formula A , the set of worlds $f(w, A)$ which are “most similar to w ” given the information A . In this respect, the selection function can be seen as a sort of modality indexed by formulas of the language. A conditional formula $A \Rightarrow B$ holds in a world w if B holds in all the worlds selected by f for w and A .

We have introduced cut-free sequent calculi for the basic Conditional Logic CK and for some of its extensions, namely $CK + \{ID, MP, CS, CEM\}$ including all the combinations of these extensions except those including *both* CEM and MP. Our calculi make use of labels representing possible worlds. Two types of formulas are involved in the rules of the calculi: world formulas of the form $x : A$, representing that A holds at world x , and transition formulas of the form $x \xrightarrow{A} y$, representing that $y \in f(x, A)$. The completeness of the calculi is an immediate consequence of the admissibility of cut.

We have also shown that one can derive a decision procedure from the cut-free calculi. Whereas the decidability of these systems was already proved by Nute (by a finite-model property argument), our calculi give the first *constructive* proof of decidability. As usual, the terminating proof search mechanism is obtained by controlling the backward application of some critical rules. By estimating the size of the finite derivations of a given sequent, we have also obtained a polynomial space complexity bound for the logics considered.

Our calculi can be the starting point to define goal-

oriented proof procedures, according to the paradigm of Miller's Uniform Proofs recalled above. As a preliminary result, in [21] we have presented a goal-directed calculus for a fragment of CK and its extensions with MP and ID.

Proof methods for other Conditional Logics have been introduced in [6]. In detail, some labelled tableaux calculi have been defined for the Conditional Logic **CE** and its main extensions, including **CV**, whose flat fragment correspond, respectively, to KLM systems **P** and **R**.

4 Conclusions and Future Works

We believe that the temporal action theory we have developed for the specification and verification of agent interaction protocols can be profitably used in the specification and verification of web services. In this context, new issues arise, as for instance the problem of modelling service composition and that of service compliance (which still requires a general solution).

Concerning reasoning about typicality in description logics, we are currently studying a minimal model semantics for $\mathcal{ALC} + T$ to maximize typical instances of a concept. By means of this semantics we are able to infer defeasible properties of (explicit or implicit) individuals.

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5 Contacts

Laura Giordano

Dipartimento di Informatica - Università del Piemonte Orientale “A. Avogadro”
via Bellini 25/G - 15100 Alessandria - Italy

Email: laura@mfn.unipmn.it

Valentina Gliozzi

Dipartimento di Informatica - Università degli Studi di Torino - Italy
corso Svizzera 185 - 10149 Turin

Email: gliozzi@di.unito.it

Nicola Olivetti

LSIS - UMR CNRS 6168 Université Paul Cézanne (Aix-Marseille 3) - France
Avenue Escadrille Normandie-Niemen 13397 Marseille Cedex 20

Email: nicola.olivetti@univ.u-3mrs.fr - nicola.olivetti@lsis.org

Gian Luca Pozzato

Dipartimento di Informatica - Università degli Studi di Torino - Italy
corso Svizzera 185 - 10149 Turin

Email: pozzato@di.unito.it

Camilla B. Schwind

École d’Architecture de Marseille - Luminy - France
184 avenue de Luminy - 13288 Marseille Cedex 9

Email: Camilla.Schwind@map.archi.fr

L. Giordano got the Ph.D. in Computer Science from the Università degli Studi di Torino in 1993. Since 1998 she is Professore Associato at the Facoltà di Scienze Matematiche, Fisiche e Naturali, Università del Piemonte Orientale - Amedeo Avogadro. Her research interests include: Non-monotonic Reasoning, Belief Revision, Reasoning about Action and Change, Multiagent Systems, Proof Methods for non-classical logics.

V. Gliozzi graduated in Philosophy at the Università degli Studi di Torino in 1997, and she got the Ph.D. in Computer Science from the same university in 2002 (with a thesis on Belief Revision and Conditional Logics). Since 2005 she is a researcher at the Department of Computer Science at Università di Torino. Her main research interests include logic, knowledge representation, non-classical logics.

N. Olivetti got the Ph.D. in Computer Science from the Università degli Studi di Torino in 1995. He is a Professor of Computer Science at the Paul Cézanne University (Aix-Marseille, France), and he is a member of the CNRS laboratory LSIS. His main research interests are automated deduction for non-classical logics (conditional, substructural, and many-valued logics), foundation and proof-theory of non-monotonic reasoning, extensions of logic programming, and Belief Revision.

G.L. Pozzato was born in Moncalieri (Turin) in 1978. He took his “Laurea” degree “summa cum laude” in Computer Science in 2003, and his Ph.D. in Computer Science in 2007, both at the Università degli Studi di Torino. Since 2007 he is a researcher at the Department of Computer Science of the Università degli Studi di Torino. His research interests include non-monotonic reasoning, non-classical logics, proof-theory, and Description Logics.

C. B. Schwind is a researcher of Computer Science at the CNRS laboratory LIF (Marseille, France). Her main research interests are: Conditional Logic, Multi-agent systems, and analytic tableaux for non-monotonic and conditional logics. She has also been actively involved in basic research in the following topics: Natural Language Understanding, Temporal and Modal Logics, Deductive Data Bases, Computer Assisted Language Learning, Action Logics and the Frame Problem, Modal Non Monotonic Logics.