Introduction Basic Multi-Objective Robust Preference-Based Conclusions Formulation Formulation Formulation & Future Work

# **Search-Based Software Project Scheduling**



### Francisco Chicano

joint work with E. Alba, A. Cervantes, D. González-Álvarez, F. Luna, A. J. Nebro, G. Recio, R. Saborido, M. A. Vega-Rodríguez

BasicMulti-ObjectiveRobustPreference-BasedConclusionsFormulationFormulationFormulationFormulation& Future Work

# Introduction

Introduction

- Current software projects are very complex
- They can involve hundreds of people and tasks
- An efficient way of assigning employees to tasks is required
- An automatic software tool can assist to the software project manager
- Problem: assign employees to tasks with a given dedication degree

# Employee Task Salary Maximum dedication Skills TPG

Introduction

Several authors proposed different formulations in the literature



Multi-Objective Formulation

Robust Formulation

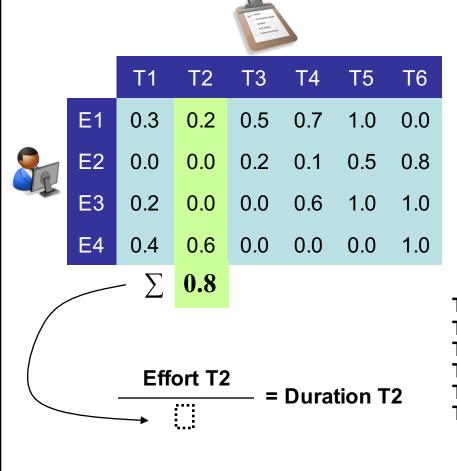
Preference-Based Formulation

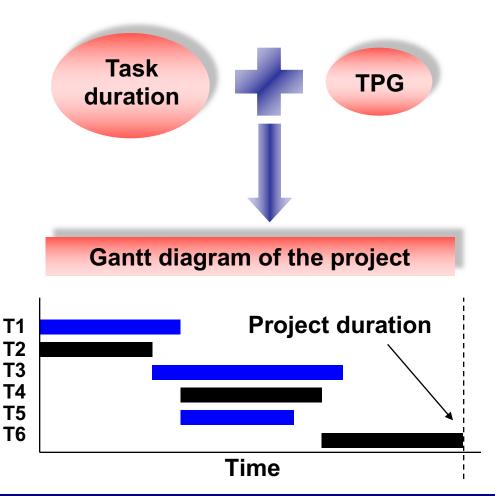
Conclusions & Future Work

# Basic Problem Formulation

# **Basic Problem Formulation: duration**

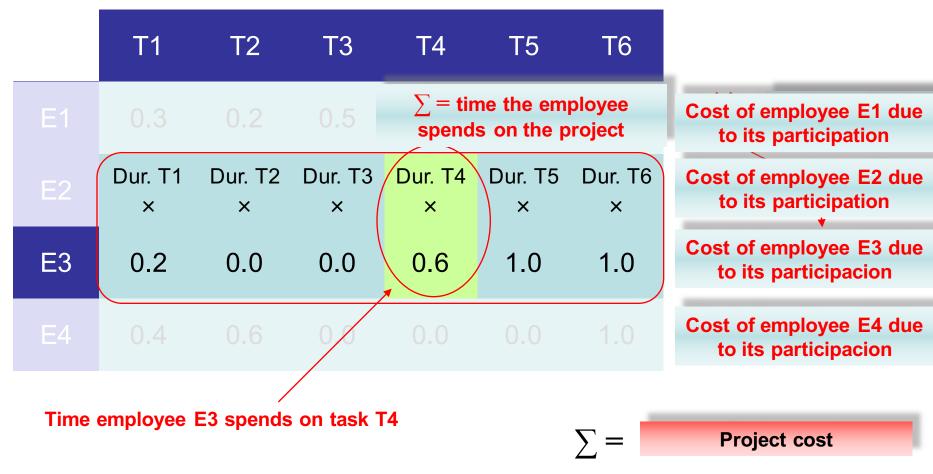
Project duration (computation)



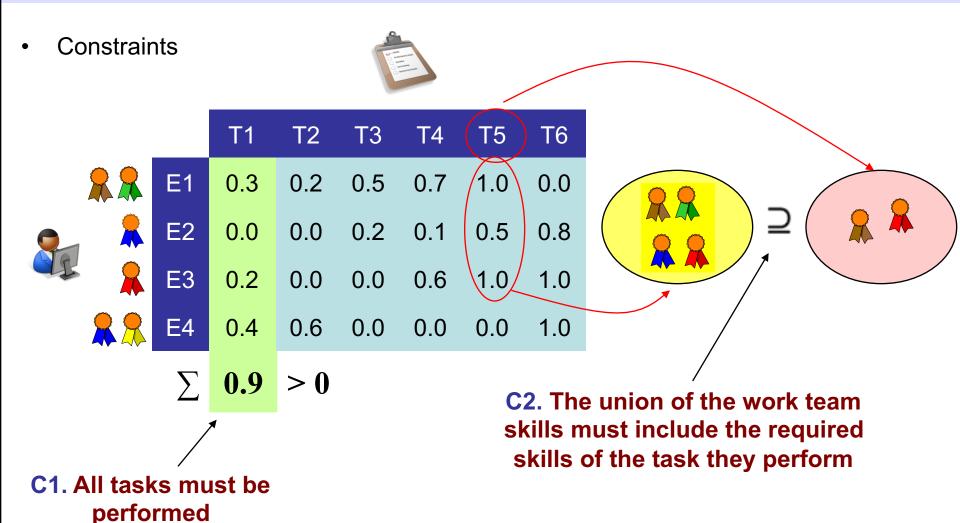


# Basic Problem Formulation: cost

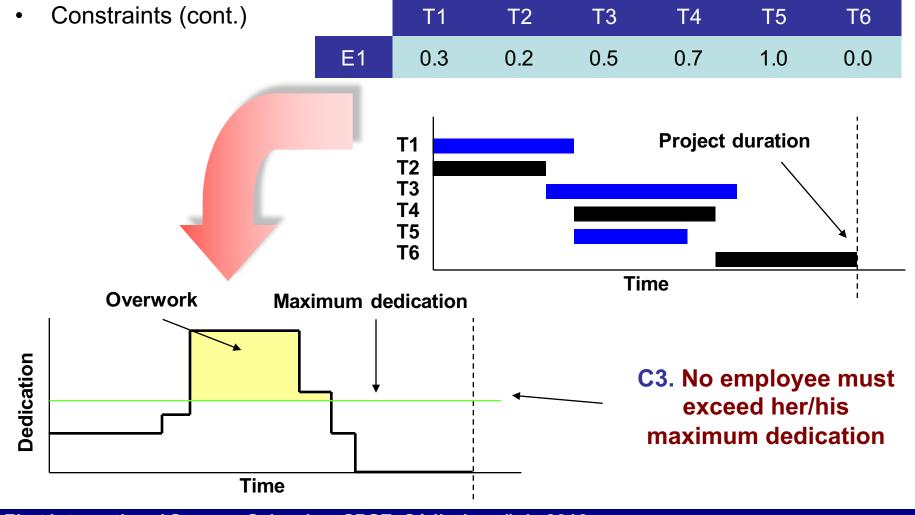
Project cost (computation)



# Basic Problem Formulation: constraints



# Basic Problem Formulation: constraints



# **Basic Problem Formulation: fitness**

$$f(\mathbf{x}) = \begin{cases} 1/q & \text{if the solution is feasible} \\ 1/(q+p) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

### **Project duration**

$$q = w_{cost} \cdot p_{cost} + w_{dur} \cdot p_{dur}$$

### **Project cost**

Peso	Valor
W <sub>cost</sub>	10-6
<b>W</b> <sub>dur</sub>	0.1
<b>W</b> <sub>penal</sub>	100
<b>W</b> <sub>undt</sub>	10
W <sub>reqsk</sub>	10
W <sub>over</sub>	0.1

### **Overwork**

$$p = w_{penal} + w_{undt} \cdot undt + w_{reqsk} \cdot reqsk + w_{over} \cdot p_{over}$$

**Undone tasks** 

Required skills

# Basic Problem Formulation: algorithm & representation

- Steady State GA with binary representation
- Maximum dedication set to 1.0 for all employees  $\rightarrow x_{ij} \in [0,1]$
- Matrix elements are discretized to eight values (3 bits per element)

	T1	T2	ТЗ	T4	T5	T6
E1	0,3	0,2	0,5	0,7	1,0	0,0
E2	0,0	0,0	0,2	0,1	0,5	0,8
E3	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,6	1,0	1,0
E4	0,4	0,6	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,0

Introduction



	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
E1	010	001	100	101	110	000
E2	000	000	001	001	100	110
E3	001	000	000	100	111	111
E4	010	100	000	000	000	111

### 2D recombination





### Chromosome

010001100101110000<sup>0</sup>000000...

# Basic Problem Formulation: experiments

- 48 generated instances in 5 groups
- In the first three groups (12 instancias) only one parameter change
  - **Employees (5, 10, 15, 20)**
  - **❖** Tasks (10, 20, 30)

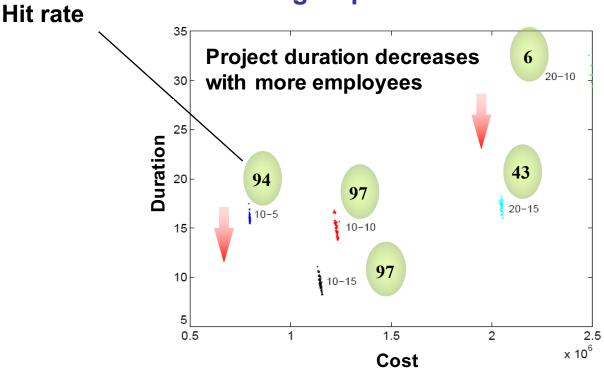
- **Skills of employees (2, 4, 6, 8, 10)**
- Fourth and fifth groups: all parameters simultaneously change
- 100 independent runs

GA param.	Value
Population	64
Selection	Binary tournament
Recombination	2D crossover
Mutation	Bit flip (p <sub>m</sub> =1/length)
Replacement	Elitist
Stop condition	5000 generations

# Basic Problem Formulation: experiments

Introduction

# Fourth group of instances

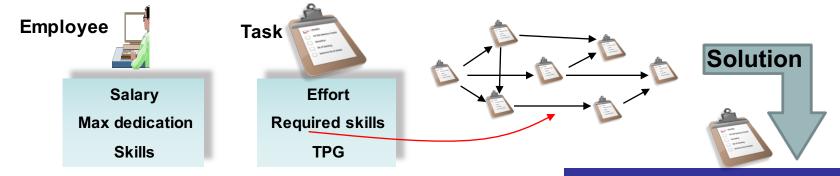


4-5 skills per employee

# Multi-Objective Formulation

# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation

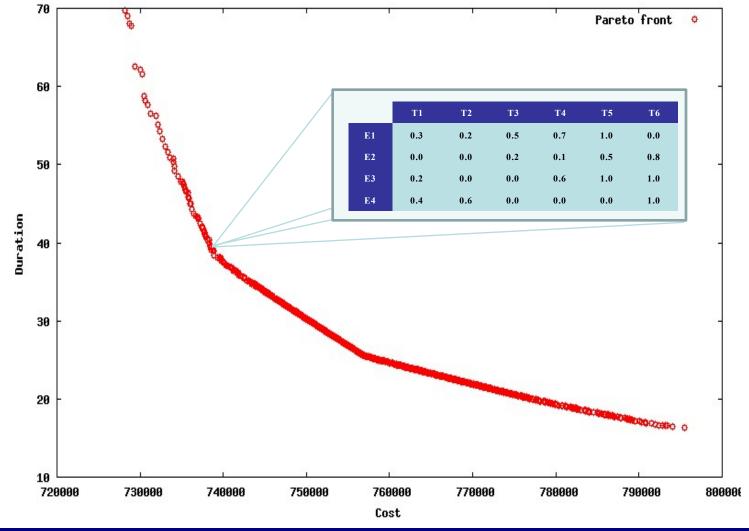
Multi-Objective Software Project Scheduling



Objectives

- Minimize the project cost
- Minimize the project duration
- Constraints
  - C1: All tasks must be performed by some employee
  - C2: The union of the employees skills must include the required skills of the task they perform
  - C3: No employee exceeds his/her maximum dedication

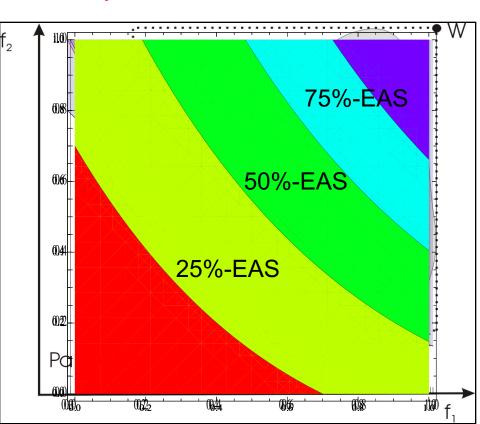
# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation



# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation: quality indicators

Hypervolume (HV)

- Volume covered by members of the non-dominated set of solutions
- Measures both convergence and diversity in the Pareto front
- Larger values are better
- Attainment surfaces
  - Localization statistics for fronts
  - The same as the median and the interquartile range in the mono-objective case



# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation: algorithms

# NSGA-II

- Generational GA
- Ranking & Crowding

# SPEA2

- Generational GA + External Archive
- Strengh raw fitness & K-nearest neighbor

# PAES

- (1+1) Evolution Strategy + External Archive
- · Adaptive Grid

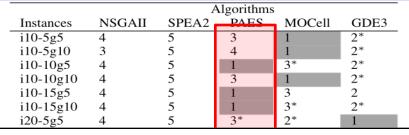
# **MOCell**

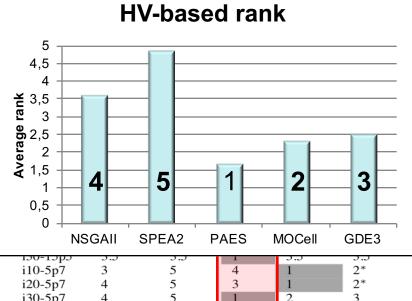
- Cellular GA + External archive
- Ranking & Crowding from NSGA-II

GDE3

- Differential Evolution
- Ranking & NSGA-II's improved crowding

# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation: results



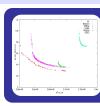


2 i30-5p7 i10-10p7 3 3 i20-10p7 2 i30-10p7 3\* i10-15p7 3 i20-15p7 3.5 3.5 i30-15p7 3.5 3.5

- Ranking of the algorithms based on the median of their HV values
- PAES has reached the approximated fronts with the better (higher) HV
  - Best in 25 out of 36 instances
  - It assigns a low dedication to employees → avoid constraint violation for larger instances
  - MOCell and GDE3 performs specially well for small instances
- Neither NSGA-II nor SPEA2 have ranked the first nor second for any instance
  - Crossover operators (in NSGA-II, SPEA2, and MOCell) and Differential Evolution recombination (in GDE3) generate many unfeasible solutions in large instances

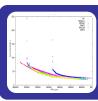
# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation: results

- They graphically represent the median
- PF is the reference Pareto
   Front build for each instance
- They clearly explain the high HV values of PAES
- Five different behaviors remain hidden to a scalar indicator such as HV



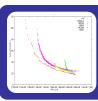
### Scenario 1

- PAES outperforms all the others
- Project plans with low cost and long durations



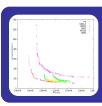
### Scenario 2

- · All the algorihtms perform the same
- But SPEA2



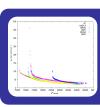
### Scenario 3

- The attainment surfaces of NSGA-II, MOCell, and GDE3 cross that of PAES
- PAES is slightly worse in concrete regions



### Scenario 4

- · PAES fails at reaching short but costly projet plans
- Its HV remains the higher because of its extension

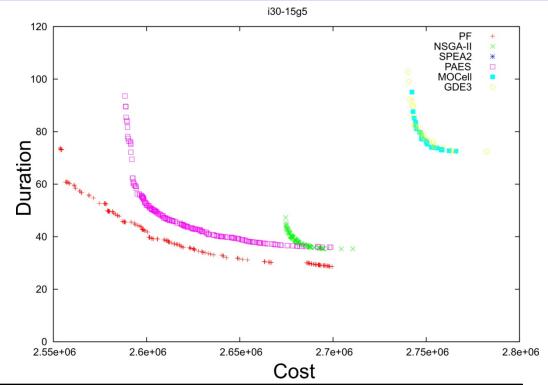


### Scenario 5

- PAES is clearly outperformed
- It happens in the smaller (easier) instances

# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation: results

- They graphically represent the median
- PF is the reference Pareto Front build for each instance
- They clearly explain the high **HV** values of PAES
- Five different behaviors remain hidden to a scalar indicator such as HV

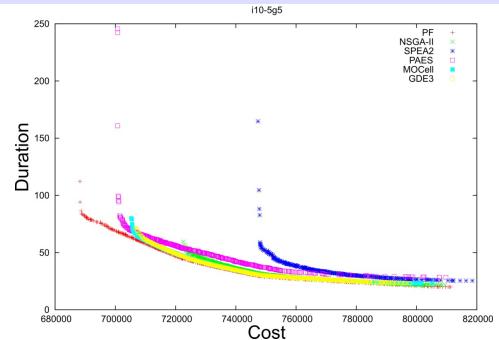


### Scenario 1

- PAES clearly dominates the solutions reached by all the other algorithms
- This algorithm has also reached project plans with low cost and long durations

# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation: results

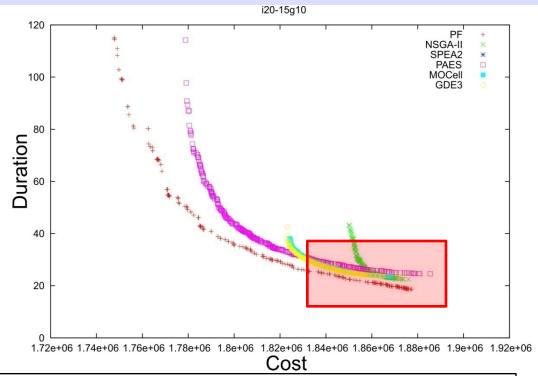
- They graphically represent the median
- PF is the reference Pareto
   Front build for each instance
- They clearly explain the high HV values of PAES
- Five different behaviors remain hidden to a scalar indicator such as HV



### Scenario 2

- All the algorithms but SPEA2 perform the same
- On average, their approximated fronts are overlapped in almost the entire objective space
- They are also very close to the reference Pareto Front (PF)

- They graphically represent the median
- PF is the reference Pareto Front build for each instance
- They clearly explain the high **HV** values of PAES
- Five different behaviors remain hidden to a scalar indicator such as HV

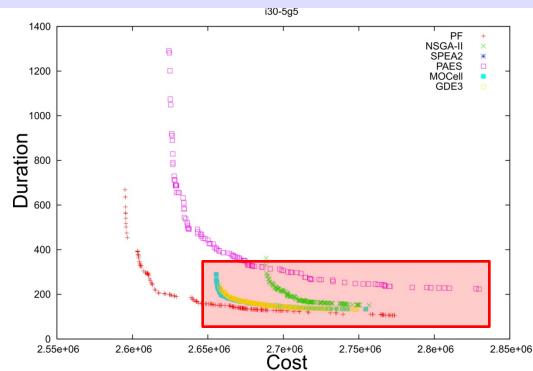


### Scenario 3

- The attainment surfaces of NSGA-II, MOCell, and GDE3 cross that of PAES → the region of project plans with short durations and high cost
- PAES still obtains the best HV values because it covers a larger portion of the objective space

# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation: results

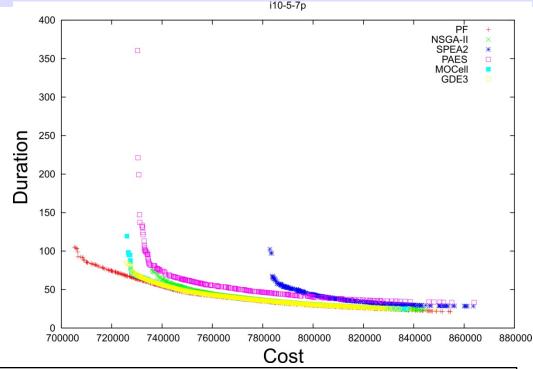
- They graphically represent the median
- PF is the reference Pareto
   Front build for each instance
- They clearly explain the high HV values of PAES
- Five different behaviors remain hidden to a scalar indicator such as HV



### Scenario 4

- PAES is clearly the worse algorithm at reaching project plans with short durations and high cost
- This happens in 18 out of the 36 instances
- PAES still gets the best HV value → Is HV suitable to make decisions?

- They graphically represent the median
- PF is the reference Pareto Front build for each instance
- They clearly explain the high **HV** values of PAES
- Five different behaviors remain hidden to a scalar indicator such as HV



### Scenario 5

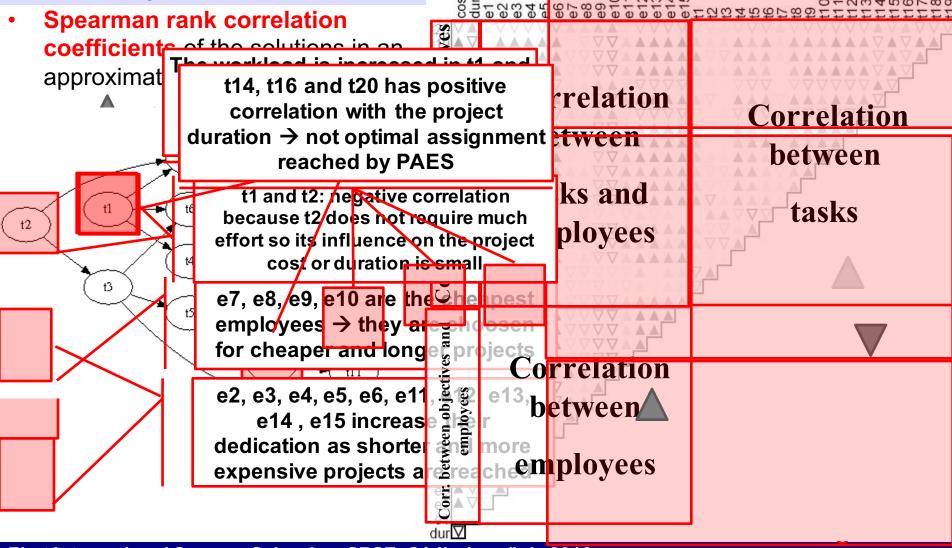
- NSGA-II, MOCell and GDE3 clearly dominates the attainment surface of PAES
- The HV values now reflect this fact
- It always happens in the smaller (easier) instances

Multi-Objective Formulation

Robust Formulation Preference-Based Formulation

Conclusions & Future Work

# Multi-Objective Problem Formulation: results



Multi-Objective Formulation

Robust Formulation

Preference-Based Formulation

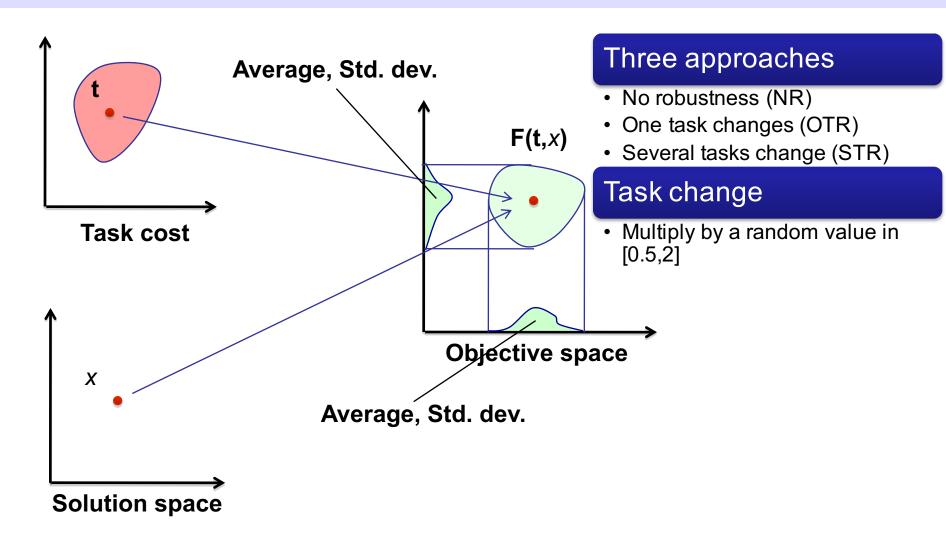
Conclusions & Future Work

# Second (and Robust) Formulation

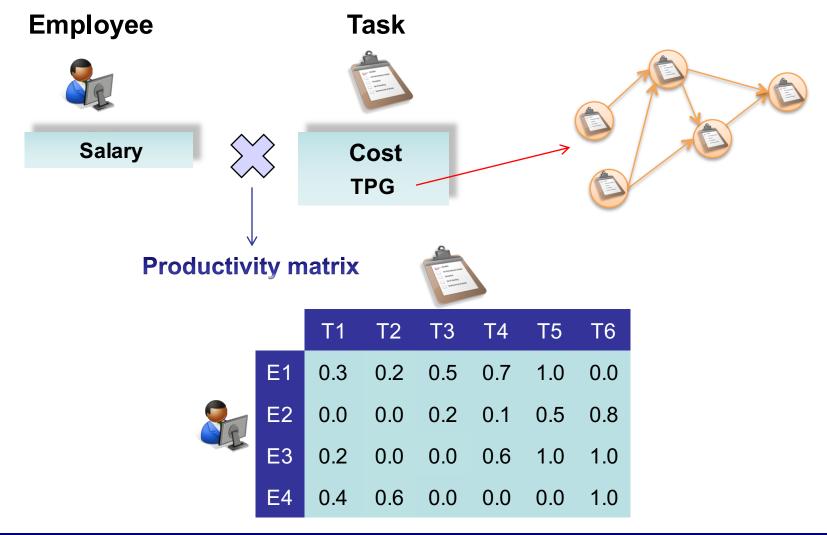
# Motivation for the Second Formulation

- The problem formulation is far from realistic:
  - Task effort is not an exact value (as assumed), we can only estimate it
  - Skills are not 0 or 1, there are degrees
  - Durations are not real values, they are discrete
- How to model:
  - Task effort inaccuracy ► robust optimization
  - Non-binary skills ▶ productivity matrix
  - Discrete durations ► discrete event simulator

# Robustness



# **Instance Information**



# Solution

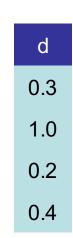
Introduction

### **Priorities matrix**





q	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
E1	3	1	5	0	0	0
E2	0	0	2	1	5	0
E3	2	0	0	0	1	1
E4	0	0	0	1	0	1
	2	2	5	7	1	0



**Dedication vector** 

Conclusions

& Future Work

- **Delays vector**
- U
- The evaluation of a solution is based on a simulation of the project
- **Objectives:** 
  - Makespan: the minimum time slot in which all tasks are done
  - **Cost:** salary multiplied by the dedication and worked hours

# Algorithms in the Comparison

# **NSGA-II**

- Generational GA
- Ranking & Crowding

# SPEA2

- Generational GA + External Archive
- Strengh raw fitness & K-nearest neighbor

# PAES

- (1+1) Evolution Strategy + External Archive
- Adaptive Grid

# MOCell

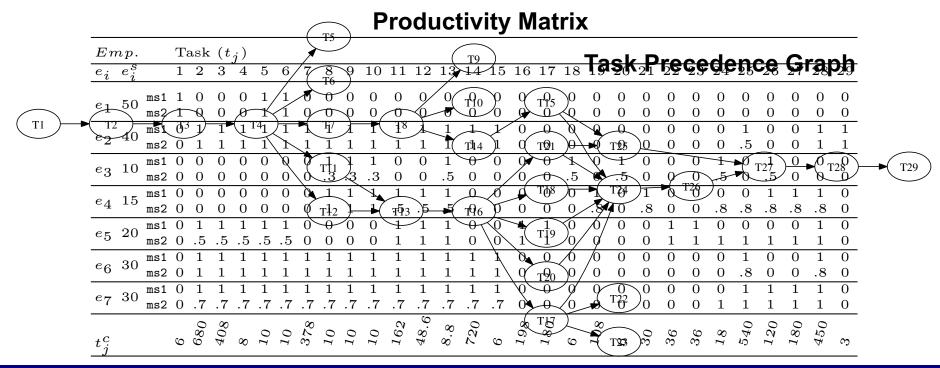
- Cellular GA + External archive
- Ranking & Crowding from NSGA-II

# Experiments: Instances

Introduction

### Problem instances

 2 instances based on a MS Project repository real example: ms1 and ms2



# Experiments: Algorithm-Specific Parameters

# **NSGAII**

Introduction

Population: 100

Binary tournament

 $DPX (p_c = 0.9)$ 

Uniform mutation  $(p_m=1/L)$ 

# SPEA2

Population: 100

Binary tournament

 $DPX (p_c = 0.9)$ 

Uniform mutation (p<sub>m</sub>=1/L)

# PAES

Population: 1

Uniform mutation (p<sub>m</sub>=1/L)

# **MOCell**

Population: 100

Binary tournament

 $DPX (p_c=0.9)$ 

Uniform mutation (p<sub>m</sub>=1/L)

# **Experiments: Global Parameters**

### Global Parameters

- Stopping condition: 1 000 000 function evaluations
- Approximated Pareto front size: 100 solutions
- Sampling H=100
- 100 independent runs for each algorithm-instance
- Statistical tests for significance differences (95%)
- Representation: integer matrix + real vector + integer vector

# Results: Hypervolume Comparison

# Hypervolume (HV)

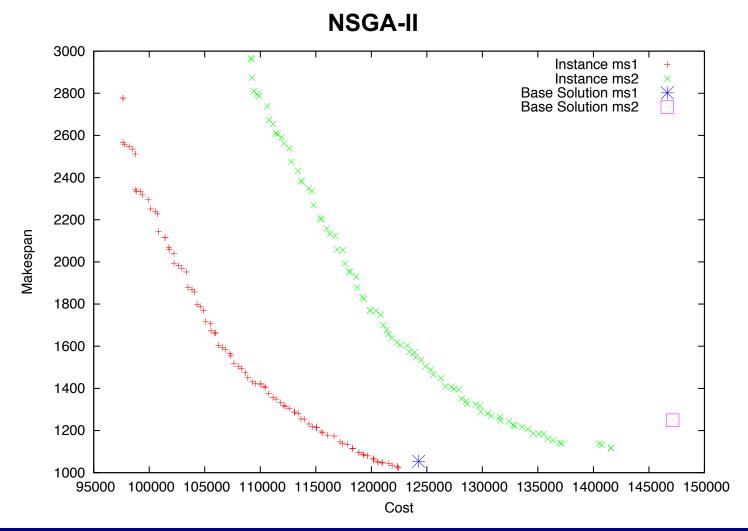
Introduction

- NSGA-II and MOCell are the best algorithms
- NSGA-II is specially good in robust versions of the problem
- MOCell is good in the non-robust version
- PAES is the worst algorithm in the comparison
- Running time between 2.5 and 5 minutes in NR and around 5 hours in OTR and STR

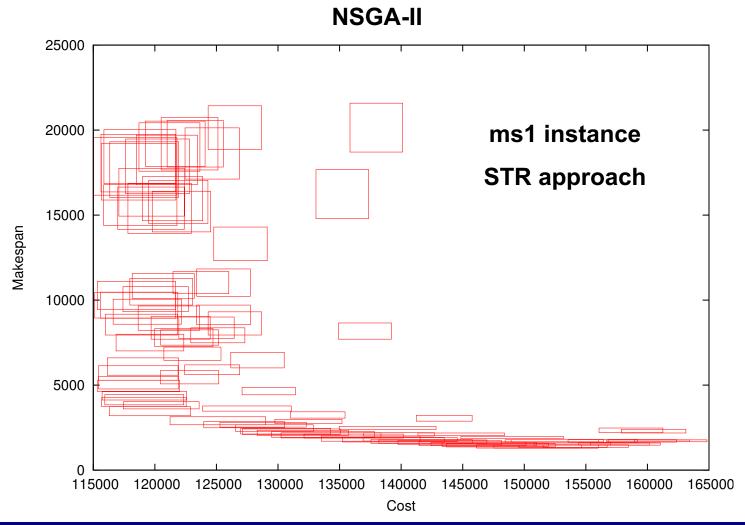
### Median and interquartile range

	NSGAII	SPEA2	PAES	MOCell	NSGAII	SPEA2	PAES	MOCell
Rob.		ms	s1			ms	52	
NR	$0.943^*_{0.000}$	$0.943^*_{0.000}$	$0.518^*_{0.065}$	$0.944_{0.000}$	$0.904^*_{\pm 0.000}$	$0.905^*_{\pm 0.001}$	$0.543^*_{\pm 0.031}$	$0.905_{\pm 0.000}$
OTR	$0.829^*_{0.027}$	$0.807^*_{0.030}$	$0.328^*_{0.039}$	$0.816_{0.032}$	$0.738_{\pm 0.025}$	$0.730_{\pm 0.018}$	$0.287^*_{\pm 0.020}$	$0.695^*_{\pm 0.043}$
STR	$0.746_{0.028}$	$0.688^*_{0.063}$	$0.345^*_{0.036}$	$0.742_{0.025}$	$0.764_{\pm 0.025}$	$0.717^*_{\pm 0.030}$	$0.387^*_{\pm 0.032}$	$0.769_{\pm 0.022}$

# Results: Comparison with a (Human) Base Solution



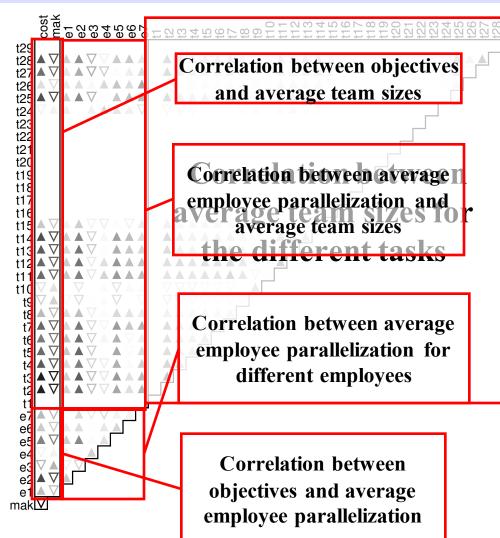
#### Results: 50%-Attainment Surface



Introduction

### Results: Analysis of the Solution Features

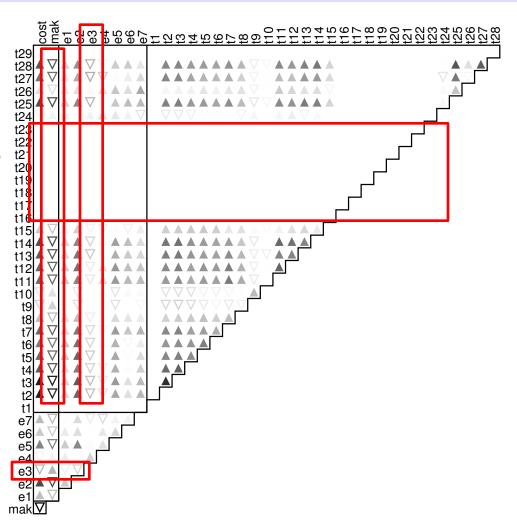
- Spearman rank
   correlation coefficients of
   the solutions in an
   approximated Front
  - **A** : positive correlation
  - − ¬ : negative correlation
  - Gray scale: absolute value of correlation
- An example for an approximated Pareto front of MOCell using the NR approach in the ms2 instance



Introduction

### Results: Analysis of the Solution Features

- Increasing the size of the working teams the makespan is reduced
- Employee e<sub>3</sub> is the only one able to perform a task in the critical path
- No correlation is observed in tasks for which only one employee can do the work



Introduction

Multi-Objective Formulation

Robust Formulation

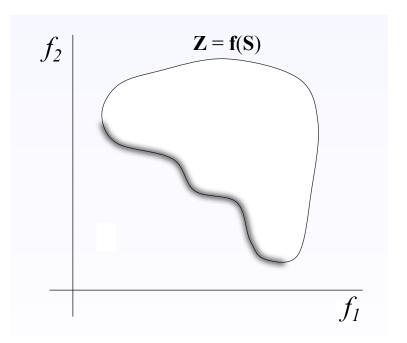
Preference-Based Formulation

Conclusions & Future Work

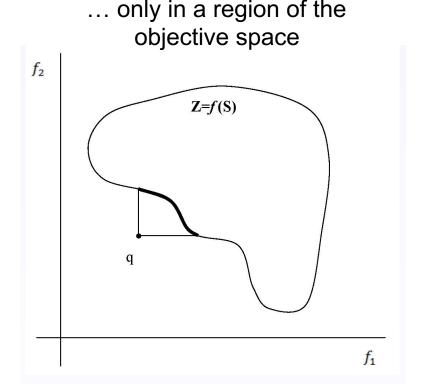
# Interactive Preference-Based Resolution

### Expressing Preferences in Objective Space

 Sometimes the decision maker is not interested in the whole Pareto front...



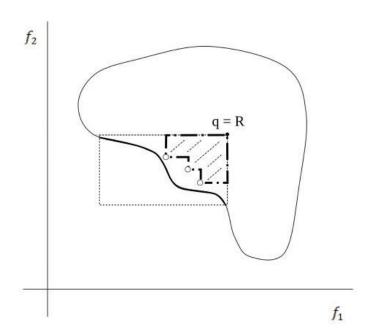
Introduction



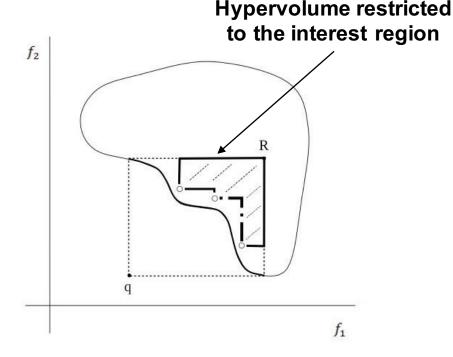
The algorithm can save computational effort if it focuses on the region of interest

### Expressing Preferences in Objective Space

 The region of interest can be determined by a single point in the objective space: the reference point



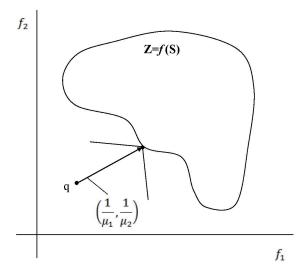
Reachable reference point



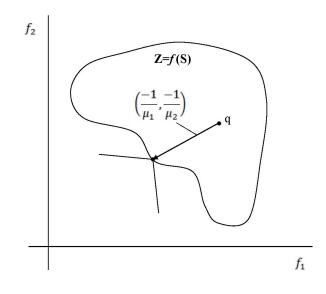
Unreachable reference point

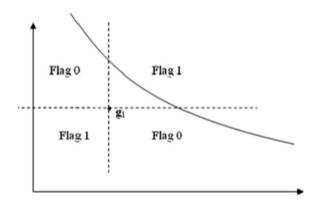
## Algorithms

- Some algorithms to solve the problem
  - WASF-GA



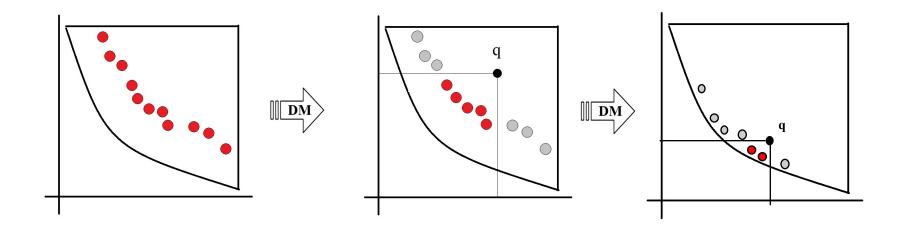
- g-NSGA-II (based on g-dominance)
- P-MOGA (similar to WASF-GA)





#### Interaction with Decision Maker

 If the decision maker is available, he can interactively guide the search by defining different reference points



#### **Software Tool**

Introduction

We developed a tool for interactive preference-based resolution





## **Concluding Remarks**

- Search algorithms are useful to take decisions at the management level
- Some published ideas have been shown in this presentation...
- ...but much more opportunities are waiting for us
  - New algorithmic proposals
  - More realistic models
  - ...

Introduction

... and real data



### Search-based Software Project Scheduling

# Thanks for your attention !!!



#### First instances group

Employees	Hit rate	Duration	E*p <sub>dur</sub>
5	87	21,88 <sub>0,91</sub>	109,40 <sub>4,54</sub>
10	65	11,27 <sub>0,32</sub>	112,74 <sub>3,17</sub>
15	49	7,73 <sub>0,20</sub>	115,90 <sub>2,95</sub>
20	51	5,88 <sub>0,14</sub>	117,56 <sub>2,74</sub>

• Duration decreases as number of employee increases

Introduction

#### **Second group of instances**

Tareas	Tasa éxito	Coste	Duración	p <sub>cost</sub> / p <sub>dur</sub>
10	73	$980000_{0,00}$	21,84 <sub>0,87</sub>	44944,34 <sub>1720,76</sub>
20	33	$2600000_{0,00}$	58,29 <sub>3,76</sub>	44748,12 <sub>2265,24</sub>
30	0	-	-	-

- La duración disminuye al aumentar el número de empleados
- La duración aumenta con el número de tareas

#### Segundo grupo de instancias

Tareas	Tasa éxito	Coste	Duración	p <sub>cost</sub> / p <sub>dur</sub>
10	73	$980000_{0,00}$	21,84 <sub>0,87</sub>	44944,34 <sub>1720,76</sub>
20	33	$2600000_{0,00}$	58,29 <sub>3,76</sub>	44748,12 <sub>2265,24</sub>
30	0	-	-	-

- La duración disminuye al aumentar el número de empleados
  - La duración aumenta con el número de tareas

E. Alba & F. Chicano, Software Project Management with GAs, Information Sciences 177, pp. 2380-2401, 2007

#### Tercer grupo de instancias

Habilidades	Tasa éxito	Duración	p <sub>cost</sub> / p <sub>dur</sub>
2	39	21,71 <sub>0,97</sub>	45230,22 <sub>1957,89</sub>
4	53	21,77 <sub>0,75</sub>	45068,66 <sub>1535,53</sub>
6	77	21,98 <sub>0,84</sub>	44651,29 <sub>1593,47</sub>
8	66	$22,00_{0,87}$	44617,01 <sub>1717,67</sub>
10	75	22,11 <sub>1,15</sub>	44426,93 <sub>2051,03</sub>

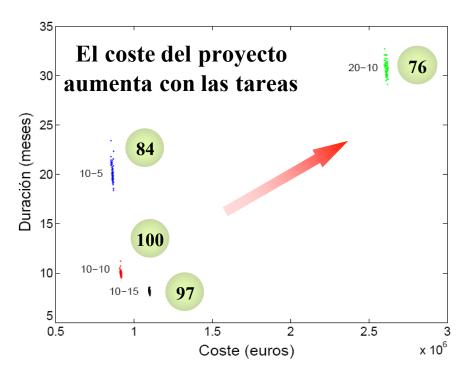
- La duración disminuye al aumentar el número de empleados
  - La duración aumenta con el número de tareas
  - Asignación más eficiente con plantilla especializada

E. Alba & F. Chicano, Software Project Management with GAs, Information Sciences 177, pp. 2380-2401, 2007

lanif. de proyectos sw Generación de casos de prueba Búsqueda de errores de seguridad

### Resultados

#### Cuarto grupo de instancias



6-7 habilidades por empleado

E. Alba & F. Chicano, Management of Software Projects with GAs, MIC 2005, pp. 13-18

# Algorithms: NSGA-II

```
1: proc Input:(nsga-II) //Algorithm parameters in 'nsga-II'
 2: P \leftarrow Initialize\_Population() // P = population
                                 // Q = auxiliary population
 3: Q \leftarrow \emptyset
 4: while not Termination_Condition() do
 5:
       for i \leftarrow 1 to (nsga-II.popSize / 2) do
          parents←Selection(P)
 6:
          offspring \( \begin{aligned} \text{Recombination} \left( \text{nsga-II.Pc,parents} \right) \end{aligned}
          Evaluate_Fitness(offspring)
 9:
10:
          Insert(offspring,Q)
11:
       end for
12:
    R \leftarrow P \cup Q
13:
       Ranking_And_Crowding(nsga-II, R)
       P \leftarrow Select\_Best\_Individuals(nsga-II, R)
14:
15: end while
16: end_proc
```

# Algorithms: PAES

```
//Algorithm parameters in 'paes'
 1: proc Input:(paes)
2: archive \leftarrow \emptyset
3: currentSolution ← Create_Solution(paes) // Creates an initial solution
   while not Termination_Condition() do
       mutatedSolution←Mutation(currentSolution)
5:
6:
       Evaluate_Fitness(mutatedSolution)
 7:
       if IsDominated(currentSolution, mutatedSolution) then
8:
          currentSolution \leftarrow mutatedSolution
9:
       else
10:
          if Solutions_Are_Nondominated(currentSolution, mutatedSolution) then
             Insert(archive, mutatedSolution)
11:
12:
             currentSolution \leftarrow Select(paes, archive)
13:
          end if
14:
       end if
15: end while
16: end_proc
```