Constrained Narrowing for Conditional Equational Theories Modulo Axioms[2]

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Abstract

For an unconditional equational theory (Σ, E) whose oriented equations $\vec{E}$ are confluent and terminating, narrowing provides an E-unification algorithm. This has been generalized by various authors in two directions: (i) by considering unconditional equational theories $(\Sigma, E \cup B)$ where the $\vec{E}$ are confluent, terminating and coherent modulo axioms B, and (ii) by considering conditional equational theories. Narrowing for a conditional theory $(\Sigma, E \cup B)$ has also been studied, but much less and with various restrictions. In this paper we extend these prior results by allowing conditional equations with extra variables in their conditions, provided the corresponding rewrite rules $\vec{E}$ are confluent, strictly coherent, operationally terminating modulo B and satisfy a natural *determinism* condition allowing incremental computation of matching substitutions for their extra variables. We also generalize the type structure of the types and operations in Σ to be order-sorted. The narrowing method we propose, called *constrained narrowing*, treats conditions as constraints whose solution is postponed. This can greatly reduce the search space of narrowing and allows notions such as *constrained variant* and *constrained unifier* that can cover symbolically possibly infinite sets of actual variants and unifiers. It also supports a *hierarchical* method of solving constraints. We give an inference system for hierarchical constrained narrowing modulo B and prove its soundness and completeness.

1. Introduction

Symbolic methods that describe infinite-state systems by means of constraints can be very useful in analyzing and verifying systems. Various kinds symbolic techniques such as: (i) automata and grammars, e.g., [1, 13, 11, 12, 28, 46, 5, 4, 3]; (ii) SMT solving, e.g., [6, 16, 26, 27, 44, 49, 50]; and (iii) narrowing [48, 23, 24, 8, 9], have been employed for this purpose. All are useful in their own way and can complement each other; and there is great interest in

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combining the power of these different symbolic approaches to handle a wider range of applications [40, 41].

Narrowing, while generally less efficient that domain-specific approaches, is particulary attractive for system analysis because of its very wide applicability. Following the rewriting logic approach [37], a concurrent system can be naturally specified by a rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, E, R)$, where (Σ, E) is an equational theory specifying the distributed states as an algebraic data type, and R are rewrite rules specifying the system's concurrent transitions. Assuming that we have an E-unification algorithm, we can symbolically analyze by narrowing the behavior of our system, under reasonable assumptions on $\mathcal{R}$ [48], as follows. Instead of concrete system states, we can represent a possibly infinite set of such states by a *term* t with logical variables. We can then use narrowing modulo E to "symbolically execute" state transitions as narrowing steps $t \rightsquigarrow_{R,E} t'$, thus obtaining a useful form of symbolic reachability analysis and model checking with many applications [48, 23, 24, 8, 9].

But where does the needed E-unification algorithm come from? Special-purpose narrowing algorithms only exist for specific, commonly occurring theories E; but the equations E of a system specification $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, E, R)$ can easily fall outside such specific theories. What we need is a *general-purpose* unification algorithm that will apply to a wide range of theories. And such a need is *answered by narrowing itself!* That is, if the equations E in the theory (Σ, E) can be decomposed as $E = E_0 \uplus B$, where B is a set of equational axioms for which we do have a unification algorithm, and the equations E_0 can be oriented as rewrite rules $\vec{E}_0$ so that the rewrite theory $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E}_0)$ is convergent, then narrowing with $\vec{E}_0$ modulo B provides the desired E-unification algorithm [32]. Since the requirement that $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E}_0)$ is convergent is *de rigueur* for executable specifications $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, E, R)$, this provides indeed a very general method of symbolic system analysis for $\mathcal{R}$. Note the interesting fact that narrowing then happens *at two levels*: at the *concurrent system* level as narrowing modulo E with a relation $t \rightsquigarrow_{R,E} t'$, and at the *equational level* to perform E-unification by narrowing with the relation $t \rightsquigarrow_{\vec{E}_0,B} t'$. Specifically, for narrowing at the equational level, *folding variant narrowing* [25] is the most effective method currently available, is supported by the Maude tool, and has been proved effective in the above-mentioned applications [23, 24, 8, 9].

There is, however, a further challenge, which we address in this paper. Even though in virtually all applications of interest the rewrite theory $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E}_0)$ associated to the equations E of a rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, E, R)$ is convergent, the equations $\vec{E}_0$ can often be *conditional* and, furthermore, the rules in $\vec{E}_0$ may have *extra variables* in their condition: the so-called strongly deterministic rules. Although there has been extensive work on conditional narrowing without axioms (i.e., $B = \emptyset$) (see, e.g., the survey of the literature in [43] and the discussion of related work in Section 9), much less is known about conditional narrowing modulo axioms B. This is further discussed in Section 9, but, for example, one of the few papers on the subject, by Bockmayr [10], assumes that there are no extra variables in the conditions of $\vec{E}_0$ and therefore leaves out many applications. Furthermore, since, as already mentioned, folding variant narrowing [25] seems at present the most effective approach for narrowing with unconditional equations $\vec{E}_0$ modulo axioms B, there are additional questions to be asked and answered, such as what a conditional notion of variant should look like, and how should such conditional variants be computed by narrowing. There is also a clear and present danger of *combinatorial explosion*, which can be extreme in the conditional case. For example, the approach presented in [10] and followed also by many other authors envisions narrowing not only on the terms being narrowed, but also on the *accumulated conditions* added after each narrowing step. After just a few steps this can lead to enormously big search spaces. Therefore, another key question to answer is: are there ways of postponing the evaluation of conditions so that we can obtain a much more manageable search space?

This paper studies conditional narrowing modulo axioms B for a very general class of convergent conditional rewrite theories $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E}_0)$ as a first, necessary step for applying the resulting variant and unification methods to the narrowing-based analysis of concurrent systems specified by rewrite theories of the form $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, E_0 \cup B, R)$. And it addresses all the questions and challenges described above. Specifically, its main contributions can be summarized as follows:

1. The danger of combinatorial explosion is addressed by the notion of *constrained narrowing*, which is proved sound and complete, does not evaluate the accumulated conditions and imposes stringent *irreducibility restrictions* on the accumulated substitutions to further reduce the search space.

2. A new notion of *constrained variant*, generalizing to the conditional case the notion of variant in [15, 25] and computed by a special type of constrained narrowing, is proposed. It shares constrained narrowing's economy of description and state-reduction advantages, so that a single constrained variant may symbolically encompass a huge number of actual variants.

3. Likewise, a new notion of *constrained unifier*, also computed by a special type of constrained narrowing, is proposed. Again, a single constrained unifier may symbolically encompass a huge number of actual unifiers.

4. A new hierarchical method, called *layered constrained narrowing*, to solve the accumulated conditions generated by constrained narrowing is also proposed and proved sound and complete. In particular this provides a method of extracting a complete set of actual variants (resp. actual unifiers) from a given constrained variant (resp. constrained unifier).

5. A new notion of *convergent conditional FPP rewrite theory* with particularly good executability properties, yet involving no real loss of generality, is also proposed. This notion is of interest not just for narrowing, but also for executable specification and equational programming.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Preliminaries on order-sorted rewrite theories are presented in Section 2. Conditional rewriting modulo axioms and several proof systems for it are presented in Section 3. The key theories of current interest, namely, *convergent* rewrite theories are studied in Section 4. Section 5 contains core ideas such as: reachability problems and their solutions, constrained narrowing, and proofs of its soundness and completeness. Constrained variants and constrained unifiers are studied in Section 6. A useful theory transformation essential for layered constrained narrowing, and layered constrained narrowing itself are studied, respectively, in Sections 7 and 8. A discussion of related work and concluding remarks are gathered in Section 9.

2. Preliminaries on Order-Sorted Rewrite Theories

We follow the standard terminology and notation of term rewriting (see, e.g., [45, 7, 18, 47, 17]) order-sorted algebra [29, 38], and rewrite theories [37, 14]. Readers familiar with such terminology and notation can skip this section and proceed to Section 3. Recall the notions of order-sorted signature, term, substitution and equation. An order-sorted signature $(\Sigma, S, \leq)$ consists of a poset of sorts $(S, \leq)$ and an $S^* \times S$-indexed family of sets $\Sigma = \{\Sigma_{s_1 \ldots s_n, s}\}_{(s_1 \ldots s_n, s) \in S^* \times S}$ of function symbols. Throughout, Σ is assumed to be *preregular*, so that each term t has a least sort, denoted $ls(t)$ (see [29]). Σ is also assumed to be *kind-complete*, that is, for each sort $s \in S$ its connected component in the poset $(S, \leq)$ has a top sort, denoted $[s]$ and called the connected component's *kind*, and for each $f \in \Sigma_{s_1 \ldots s_n, s}$ there is also an $f \in \Sigma_{[s_1] \ldots [s_n], [s]}$. An order-sorted signature can always be extended to a kind-complete one. Maude automatically checks preregularity and adds a new "kind" sort $[s]$ at the top of the connected component of each sort $s \in S$ specified by the user, and automatically lifts each operator to the kind level. Finally, Σ is also assumed to be *sensible*, in the sense that for any two typings $f : s_1 \ldots s_s \longrightarrow s$ and $f : s'_1 \ldots s'_s \longrightarrow s'$ of an n-argument function symbol f, if s_i and s'_i are in the same connected component of $(S, \leq)$ for $1 \leq i \leq n$, then s and s' are also in the same connected component; this provides the right notion of *unambiguous* signature at the order-sorted level.

Given an S-sorted set $\mathcal{X} = \{\mathcal{X}_s\}_{s \in S}$ of *mutually disjoint* countably infinite sets of variables, $\mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})_s$ denotes the set of Σ-terms of sort s with variables in $\mathcal{X}$, and $\mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})$ denotes, ambiguously, both the S-sorted set of all Σ-terms with variables in $\mathcal{X}$, and the free Σ-algebra on those variables. Similarly, $\mathcal{T}_\Sigma$ denotes both the S-sorted set of all *ground* Σ-terms that have no variables, and the initial Σ-algebra. Σ is said to have *non-empty sorts* iff $\mathcal{T}_{\Sigma,s} \neq \emptyset$ for each sort s. $\mathcal{V}ar(t)$ denotes the set of variables appearing in term t.

A *substitution* is an S-sorted mapping $\sigma : \mathcal{X} \longrightarrow \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})$. We define its *domain*, denoted $Dom(\sigma)$, as the set $Dom(\sigma) = \{x \in \mathcal{X} \mid \sigma(x) \neq x\}$, and its *range*, denoted $Ran(\sigma)$, as the set $Ran(\sigma) = \{y \in \mathcal{X} \mid \exists x\ (x \in Dom(\sigma) \ \wedge\ y \in \mathcal{V}ar(\sigma(x)))\}$. σ can also be described more economically as the mapping $\sigma : Dom(\sigma) \longrightarrow \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(Ran(\sigma))$. Given a subset $\vec{x}$ of sorted variables in $\mathcal{X}$ and a substitution σ, $\sigma|_{\vec{x}}$, called the *restriction* of σ to $\vec{x}$, denotes the substitution mapping each $y \in \mathcal{X}$ to $\sigma(x)$ if $y \in \vec{x}$ and to y otherwise. Therefore, $Dom(\sigma|_{\vec{x}}) =$

$Dom(\sigma) \cap \vec{x}$. The homomorphic extension $\sigma : \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X}) \longrightarrow \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})$ is also denoted σ, and its application to a term t is denoted $t\sigma$. Composition of substitutions σ_1, σ_2 is denoted by juxtaposition, i.e., for any term t, $t(\sigma_1\sigma_2) = (t\sigma_1)\sigma_2$.

$Pos(t)$ denotes the set of positions (strings of naturals) of a Σ-term t, and t_p denotes the *subterm of t at position $p \in Pos(t)$*. Similarly, $Pos_\Sigma(t)$ denotes the *non-variable positions* of t, that is, those $p \in Pos(t)$ such that $t_p \notin \mathcal{V}ar(t)$. A term t with its subterm t_p replaced by the term t' is denoted $t[t']_p$.

For a Σ-equation $u = v$ to be well-formed, the sorts of u and v should be in the same connected component of $(S, \leq)$. A *conditional* Σ-equation is an implication $\bigwedge_{i=1,\ldots,n} u_i = v_i \Rightarrow l = r$ between Σ-equations, denoted from now on as: $l = r$ *if* $\bigwedge_{i=1,\ldots,n} u_i = v_i$. A *conditional equational theory* is a pair (Σ, E) with Σ an order-sorted signature and E a set of conditional Σ-equations. An unconditional equation $u = v$ is the special case of a conditional equation with an empty condition $\top$. For E a set of conditional Σ-equations, $=_E$ denotes the provable E-equality relation [29, 38], and $[t]_E$ denotes the equivalence class of t modulo $=_E$.

Given a set E of Σ-equations, a substitution σ is an *E-unifier* of an equation $t = t'$ iff $t\sigma =_E t'\sigma$. Let $CSU_E(t, t')$ denote a complete set of most general E-unifiers of the equation $t = t'$, i.e., for any E-unifier ρ of $t = t'$, there is a substitution $\sigma \in CSU_E(t, t')$ and another substitution τ s.t. $\rho|_X =_E (\sigma\rho)|_X$ with $X = \mathcal{V}ar(t) \cup \mathcal{V}ar(t')$. Likewise, a substitution σ is an *E-match* from t to t' iff $t' =_E t\sigma$. Given two substitutions σ, τ, we call them *B-equal*, denoted $\sigma =_B \tau$, iff $\forall x \in \mathcal{X}\ \sigma(x) =_B \tau(x)$.

An unconditional equation $u = v$ is called *sort-preserving* iff for each well-sorted substitution θ we have $ls(u\theta) = ls(v\theta)$. Using substitutions that specialize variables to smaller sorts it can be easily checked whether an equation is sort-preserving.

A *conditional order-sorted rewrite theory* is a triple $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$, with Σ an order-sorted signature, B a set of unconditional Σ-equations, and R a set of conditional rewrite rules of the form $l \to r$ *if* $\bigwedge_{i=1,\ldots,n} u_i \to v_i$, with *no restrictions* on the variables of l, r, or those of the u_i and v_i.

In general, the rewrite rules of a conditional rewrite theory $\mathcal{R}$ have a non-equational meaning as transition rules in a concurrent system [37, 39]. However, in this work we will focus for the most part on rewrite theories *with an equational interpretation*. That is, in the narrowing uses $\mathcal{R}$ will be of the form, $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$, where $(\Sigma, E \cup B)$ is a conditional order-sorted equational theory, where the equations B are unconditional and the equations E are possibly conditional; and where $\vec{E}$ are conditional rewrite rules that interpret each conditional equation $l = r$ *if* $\bigwedge_{i=1,\ldots,n} u_i = v_i$ as the conditional rewrite rule $l \to r$ *if* $\bigwedge_{i=1,\ldots,n} u_i \to v_i$. We call $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$ the rewrite theory *associated* to the order-sorted conditional equational theory $(\Sigma, E \cup B)$ by choosing the equations B as axioms and *orienting* the conditional equations E as conditional rewrite rules.

Thererefore, rewriting with $\vec{E}$ is achieved *modulo* the unconditional equations B. Since the practical interest is in implementable uses of rewriting modulo B, we will assume that the provable B-equality relation $=_B$ is decidable and that B has a finitary B-matching algorithm; that is, an algorithm generating a complete finite set of B-matches from t to t', denoted $Match_B(t, t')$; that is, for any B-match σ there is a $\tau \in Match_B(t, t')$ such that for all $x \in \mathcal{V}ar(t)$ $\sigma(x) =_B \tau(x)$. For narrowing purposes we will also assume that B has a B-unification algorithm that can generate a set of most general B-unifiers $CSU_B(t, t')$ for each equation $t = t'$.

3. Proof Systems for Conditional Rewrite Theories

We present several proof systems for conditional rewriting modulo axioms. We also present basic notions and results from [42] on the strict coherence property for conditional rewrite rules that allows the rewrite relation $\to_{R/B}$ to be (bi-)simulated by the much simpler relation $\to_{R,B}$.

3.1. Standard Proof Systems

Given a rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$, we follow closely the treatment in [42] to define the rewriting modulo B relation $\to_{R/B}$, and the easier to implement relation $\to_{R,B}$, by appropriate *inference systems*. Here is the inference system[4] defining both $\to_{R/B}$ and $\to^{\star}_{R/B}$ when Σ has non-empty sorts.

- **Reflexivity**. For each $t, t' \in \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})$ such that $t =_B t'$, $\dfrac{}{t \to^{\star}_{R/B} t'}$
- **Replacement**. For $l \to r$ *if* $u_1 \to v_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge u_n \to v_n$ a rule in R, $t, u, v \in \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})$, $p \in Pos(t)$, and θ a substitution, such that $u =_B t[l\theta]_p$ and $v =_B t[r\theta]_p$,

$$\frac{u_1\theta \to^{\star}_{R/B} v_1\theta \quad \ldots \quad u_n\theta \to^{\star}_{R/B} v_n\theta}{u \to_{R/B} v}$$

- **Transitivity** For $t_1, t_2, t_3 \in \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})$,

$$\frac{t_1 \to_{R/B} t_2 \qquad t_2 \to^{\star}_{R/B} t_3}{t_1 \to^{\star}_{R/B} t_3}$$

In general, the relation $u \to_{R/B} v$ may be undecidable, since checking whether $u \to_{R/B} v$ holds involves searching through the possibly infinite equivalence class $[u]_B$ to find a representative that can be rewritten with R and

[4] Modulo the fact that the relations $\to_{R/B}$ and $\to^{\star}_{R/B}$ are combined into a single relation, denoted $\to$, the inference system given here can easily be proved equivalent to the rewriting logic inference system in [37] (which works directly with B-equivalence classes) for the unsorted case, and to the generalized rewriting logic inference system in [14] when order-sorted equational logic is viewed as a sublogic of membership equational logic.

checking, furthermore, that the result u' of such rewriting belongs to the equivalence class $[v]_B$. For this reason, and for greater efficiency, a much simpler relation $\to_{R,B}$ is defined. The key idea about $\to_{R,B}$ is to replace general B-equalities of the form $u =_B t[l\theta]_p$ by a matching B-equality $t_p =_B l\theta$ with the subterm actually being rewritten. This completely eliminates any need for searching for a redex in the possibly infinite equivalence class $[u]_B$. Here is the inference system defining both $\to_{R,B}$ and $\to^\star_{R,B}$ when Σ has non-empty sorts.

- **Reflexivity**. For each $t, t' \in \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})$ such that $t =_B t'$, $\dfrac{}{t \to^\star_{R,B} t'}$
- **Replacement**. For $l \to r \;\; \mathit{if} \;\; u_1 \to v_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge u_n \to v_n$ a rule in R, $t \in \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})$, $p \in Pos(t)$, and θ a substitution, such that $t_p =_B l\theta$,

$$\frac{u_1\theta \to^\star_{R,B} v_1\theta \quad \ldots \quad u_n\theta \to^\star_{R,B} v_n\theta}{t \to_{R,B} t[r\theta]_p}$$

- **Transitivity** For $t_1, t_2, t_3 \in \mathcal{T}_\Sigma(\mathcal{X})$,

$$\frac{t_1 \to_{R,B} t_2 \qquad t_2 \to^\star_{R,B} t_3}{t_1 \to^\star_{R,B} t_3}$$

For some applications, the above rewrite relation $\to_{R,B}$ can be restricted by a *frozenness map*[5] [14] $\phi : \Sigma \to \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N})$, mapping each function symbol $f \in \Sigma$ with n arguments to a subset $\phi(f) \subseteq \{1, \ldots, n\}$ of the argument positions below which rewriting is forbidden. For example, for *if* an if-then-else operator we may choose $\phi(\mathit{if}) = \{2, 3\}$ to forbid rewriting below the "then" and "else" branches and force instead evaluation by rewriting of the first argument (the Boolean condition). A frozenness map ϕ then defines the frozen positions of a Σ-term, where rewriting is forbidden, as follows:

Definition 1. *Let $\phi : \Sigma \to \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N})$ be a frozenness map. Given a Σ-term t, a position $p \in Pos(t)$ is* frozen *by ϕ iff p can be decomposed as a string concatenation of the form $p = q \cdot i \cdot r$, with $t_q = f(u_1, \ldots, u_n)$ and $i \in \phi(f)$.*

The above inference system for $\to_{R,B}$ and $\to^\star_{R,B}$ can be easily restricted to obtain an inference system for rewrite relations $\to_{R,B,\phi}$ and $\to^\star_{R,B,\phi}$ under frozenness restrictions ϕ, just by imposing to the **Replacement** rule the additional requirement that the position $p \in Pos(t)$ at which rewriting takes place is not frozen by ϕ.

Remark 1. *The easy proof of the following facts is left to the reader:*

[5]The notion of a frozenness map is *dual* to that of a the restriction map $\mu : \Sigma \to \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N})$ in *context-sensitive rewriting* (see, e.g., [34]): if f has n-arguments, $\{1, \ldots, n\} - \phi(f)$ defines an associated context-sensitive restriction map.

1. $\to_{R/B} \subseteq \to^\star_{R/B}$, *and* $\to_{R,B} \subseteq \to^\star_{R,B}$.

2. $u \to^\star_{R/B} v$ *holds iff there is a chain of* $n \geq 0$ *rewrite steps followed by a* B*-equality step of the form* $u \to_{R/B} u_1 \to_{R/B} u_2 \ldots u_{n-1} \to_{R/B} u_n =_B v$. *And* $u \to^\star_{R,B} v$ *holds iff there is a chain of* $n \geq 0$ *rewrite steps followed by a* B*-equality step of the form* $u \to_{R,B} u'_1 \to_{R,B} u'_2 \ldots u'_{n-1} \to_{R,B} u'_n =_B v$.

3. $(\to^\star_{R/B}; \to^\star_{R/B}) \subseteq \to^\star_{R/B}$.

Note from (2) above that the relation $\to^\star_{R/B}$ (resp. $\to^\star_{R,B}$) contains the reflexive-transitive closure of the relation $\to_{R/B}$ (resp. $\to_{R,B}$), but adds a last step of B-equality. Both $\to^\star_{R/B}$ and $\to^\star_{R,B}$ can be thought of as *reachability modulo* B relations.

Under suitable conditions of *strict coherence* on B and R explained below, the relations $\to^\star_{R/B}$ and $\to^\star_{R,B}$ coincide. This is very useful, since we can focus mostly on the much easier to implement rewrite relation $\to_{R,B}$. This will be exploited later to define constrained narrowing with R modulo B as a suitable generalization of the rewrite relation $\to_{R,B}$.

3.2. Strict Coherence of Conditional Rewrite Theories

Although the semantics of conditional ordered-sorted rewriting modulo B has been defined in Section 3.1 with no restrictions on B, when the equations B are non-linear and/or non-regular, the relations $\to_{R/B}$ and $\to_{R,B}$, although still relatable to each other under some conditions [31], lack a sufficiently good correspondence. As shown in [42], a considerably better correspondence between $\to_{R/B}$ and $\to_{R,B}$, called *strict coherence*, can be achieved for a conditional rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ if the axioms B are regular and linear and the conditional rules R are closed under so-called B-extensions. In this section we summarize some of the key notions and results from [42].

An equation $u = v$ is *regular* iff $\mathcal{V}ar(u) = \mathcal{V}ar(v)$, that is, both sides have the exact same variables. A term t is *linear* iff each of its variables occurs only once (at a single position) in t. An equation $u = v$ is *linear* iff both u and v are linear. The nilpotency equation $x * x = 0$ is neither regular nor linear.

To achieve the desired strict coherence property, from now on the equational axioms B in a rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ will always be regular, linear, sort-preserving, with $=_B$ decidable, have a finitary B-matching algorithm, and be *most general possible*, in the sense that for any $u = v \in B$, each $x \in \mathcal{V}ar(u = v)$ has a "kind" sort $[s]$ at the top of one the connected components in $(S, \leq)$. B being sort-preserving is extremely useful for performing *order-sorted* rewriting modulo B: when B-matching a subterm t_p against a rule's lefthand side to obtain a matching substitution σ, we need to check that σ is well-sorted, that is, that if a variable x has sort s, then some element in the B-equivalence class $[x\sigma]_B$ has also sort s. But since B is sort-preserving, this is equivalent to checking $ls(x\sigma) \leq s$. Of course, in the many-sorted and unsorted cases sort-preservation and greatest possible generality of the equations B are always satisfied, and all the assumptions on Σ boil down to Σ being unambiguous.

Strict coherence is the following property of the relation $\to_{R,B}$:

Definition 2. *[42] A rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ is called* strictly coherent *iff for any Σ-terms u, u', v if $u =_B u'$ and $u \to_{R,B} v$, then there exists a term v' such that $u' \to_{R,B} v'$ and $v =_B v'$. Adopting the convention of expressing existential quantifications by dotted lines, this property can be expressed by the diagram:*

$$\begin{tikzcd} u \arrow[r, "R,B"'] \arrow[d, equal, "B"'] & v \arrow[d, dotted, no head, "B"] \\ u' \arrow[r, dotted, "R,B"'] & v' \end{tikzcd}$$

Under the above assumptions on B, $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ is strictly coherent if it is *closed under B-extensions*, in the following sense:

Definition 3. *[42] Let $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ be a conditional order-sorted rewrite theory, and let $l \to r$ if C be a rule in R, where C abbreviates the rule's condition. Without loss of generality we assume that $\mathcal{V}ar(B) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(l \to r \text{ if } C) = \emptyset$. If this is not the case,* only the variables of B *will be renamed; the variables of $l \to r$ if C will* never *be renamed. We then define the set of B*-extensions *of $l \to r$ if C as the set*[6]*:*

$$Ext_B(l \to r \text{ if } C) = \{u[l]_p \to u[r]_p \text{ if } C \mid u = v \in B \cup B^{-1} \wedge p \in Pos_\Sigma(u) - \{\epsilon\} \wedge CSU_B(l, u_p) \neq \emptyset\}$$

where, by definition, $B^{-1} = \{v = u \mid u = v \in B\}$.

Given two rules $l \to r$ if C and $l' \to r'$ if C with the same *condition C we say that $l \to r$ if C B*-subsumes[7] *$l' \to r'$ if C iff there is a substitution σ such that: (i) $Dom(\sigma) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(C) = \emptyset$, (ii) $l' =_B l\sigma$, and (iii) $r' =_B r\sigma$.*

We call $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ closed under B-extensions *iff for any rule $l \to r$ if C in R, each rule $l' \to r'$ if C in $Ext_B(l \to r$ if $C)$ is subsumed by some rule in R.*

An algorithm to close a rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ under B-extensions under the above assumptions on B by computing for each rewrite rule $l \to r$ *if* C in R its extension closure $\overline{Ext}_B(l \to r \text{ if } C)$ is described in [42]. The main results about the strict coherence of rewrite theories closed under B-extensions can be summarized as follows:

Theorem 1. [42] *Let $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ satisfy all the above assumptions on B and Σ and be closed under B-extensions. Then $\mathcal{R}$ is* strictly coherent*. Furthermore:*

1. $\to^{\star}_{R/B} = \to^{\star}_{R,B}$

[6] Note that, because of the assumptions that Σ is kind-complete and that all $u = v \in B$ are most general possible and have variables whose sorts are tops of connected components in the sort poset $(S, \leq)$, the terms $u[l]_p$ and $u[r]_p$ are always well-formed Σ-terms.

[7] Note that for unconditional rules, since C is empty, we have $var(C) = \emptyset$, so that requirement (i) trivially holds for σ. Therefore, the conditional notion of subsumption yields the usual unconditional notion as a special case.

2. *if* $u =_B u'$ *and* $u \to_{R,B} v$ *at position* p *with a rule* $l' \to r'$ *if* $C \in R$ *and with substitution* θ*, then there exists a term* v' *such that* $u' \to_{R,B} v'$ *at some position* q *with a rule* $l'' \to r''$ *if* $C \in R$ *and with a substitution* θ' *such that: (i)* $v =_B v'$*, and (ii) for all* $x \in \mathcal{V}ar(C)$ $x\theta = x\theta'$

3. *Given any chain of* $n \geq 0$ R*,*B*-rewrite steps followed by a* B*-equality step of the form,* $u \to_{R,B} u_1 \to_{R,B} u_2 \ldots u_{n-1} \to_{R,B} u_n =_B v$*, where at each step a rule* $l_i \to r_i$ *if* $C_i \in R$ *has been applied with substitution* θ_i*, and given any term* u' *such that* $u =_B u'$*, there is another chain of* $n \geq 0$ *rewrite steps followed by a* B*-equality step of the form,* $u' \to_{R,B} u'_1 \to_{R,B} u'_2 \ldots u'_{n-1} \to_{R,B} u'_n =_B v'$*, such that: (i)* $u_i =_B u'_i$*,* $1 \leq i \leq n$ *and* $v =_B v'$*, where at each step a rule* $l'_i \to r'_i$ *if* $C_i \in R$ *has been applied with substitution* θ'_i *such that for all* $x \in \mathcal{V}ar(C_i)$ $x\theta_i = x\theta'_i$*,* $1 \leq i \leq n$*.* □

Not all frozenness maps ϕ are meaningful modulo a set of axioms B. The following definition imposes a simple requirement on ϕ to make it well-behaved when rewriting modulo axioms B:

Definition 4. *Given a strictly coherent theory* $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ *and a frozeness map* $\phi : \Sigma \to \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N})$*, we say that* ϕ *is* B-stable *iff for any* Σ*-terms* u, u', v *if* $u =_B u'$ *and* $u \to_{R,B,\phi} v$*, then there exists a term* v' *such that* $u' \to_{R,B,\phi} v'$ *and* $v =_B v'$*. This property can be expressed by the diagram:*

$$\begin{tikzcd}
u \arrow[r, "{R,B,\phi}"'] \arrow[d, equal, "B"'] & v \arrow[d, dotted, dash, "B"] \\
u' \arrow[r, dotted, "{R,B,\phi}"'] & v'
\end{tikzcd}$$

For a simple example of a ϕ that is *not* B-stable, consider an unsorted theory with constants a, b and binary function symbol $+$, B the commutativity axiom $x + y = y + x$, and R the rule $a \to b$. This theory is closed under B-extensions (there are none) and therefore strictly coherent. The map ϕ with $\phi(+) = \{2\}$ is not B-stable, because $a + b \to_{R,B,\phi} b + b$, but $b + a$ *cannot* be rewriten with frozenness restrictions ϕ because position 2 is frozen.

3.3. Layered Proof System

For later uses in connection with narrowing, it will be useful to consider *layered proofs* of (conjunctions of) rewrites $u \to^{\star}_{R,B} v$ as an alternative inference system, yet equivalent to the proof system for $\to_{R,B}$ and $\to^{\star}_{R,B}$ in Section 3.1.

Given a conditional rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ we can be more general and consider as proof goals finite conjunctions of reachability goals

$$C = t_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} {t'}_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} {t'}_n \qquad (1)$$

We will use letters $C, D, C', D', \ldots$, for such conjunctions.

Proofs of the $\mathcal{R}$-reachability of such goals will be developed from left to right, trying to build an actual full trace for each $t_i \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_i$ of the form:

$$t_i \rightarrow_{R,B} v_1 \rightarrow_{R,B} v_2 \rightarrow_{R,B} \cdots v_{n-1} \rightarrow_{R,B} v_n =_B t'_i \tag{2}$$

by applying rules in R modulo B. However, substitution instances of each rule's condition in each rewrite attempt will generate new reachability goals *one layer up*, which may, in turn, generate new such goals in a third layer, and so on. A proof is then *closed* when all such goals have been developed into full traces.

Example 1. *Let us consider a simple example with Σ having sorts* Nat*,* NeList*, and* List*, and subsort* NeList < List*, a constructor list operator* $\_;\_ : \mathsf{Nat}\ \mathsf{List} \rightarrow \mathsf{NeList}$*, a list element* $\mathtt{nil}$.List*, and two defined operations* $\mathtt{head} : \mathsf{NeList} \rightarrow \mathsf{Nat}$ *and* $\mathtt{rest} : \mathsf{NeList} \rightarrow \mathsf{List}$*. For the naturals, consider two constructor symbols* $\mathtt{0} : \mathsf{Nat}$ *and* $\mathtt{s} : \mathsf{Nat} \rightarrow \mathsf{Nat}$*. Note that we implicitly assume all operators overloaded at the kind sorts, i.e.,* [List] *and* [Nat] *above* List *and* Nat*, respectively. There are no axioms in this example, i.e., $B = \emptyset$. The set of rules R is:*

$$\mathtt{first(L)} \rightarrow \mathtt{N} \text{ if } \mathtt{L} \rightarrow \mathtt{N\ ;\ L'}$$
$$\mathtt{rest(L)} \rightarrow \mathtt{L'} \text{ if } \mathtt{L} \rightarrow \mathtt{N\ ;\ L'}$$

We then obtain the layered proof below for the reachability goal $\mathtt{first(rest(0;s(0);nil))} \rightarrow^{\star} \mathtt{s(0)}$ *where the reachability goals*

$$\mathtt{0\ ;\ s(0)\ ;\ nil} \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} \mathtt{0\ ;\ s(0)\ ;\ nil}$$
$$\mathtt{s(0)\ ;\ nil} \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} \mathtt{s(0)\ ;\ nil}$$

generated by the first and second rewrite rules as conditions of the bottom trace can be proved just by reflexivity steps.

$$\cfrac{\cfrac{\top}{\mathtt{(0\ ;\ s(0)\ ;\ nil)} =_B \mathtt{(0\ ;\ s(0)\ ;\ nil)} \wedge \mathtt{(s(0)\ ;\ nil)} =_B \mathtt{(s(0)\ ;\ nil)}}}{\mathtt{first(rest(0\ ;\ s(0)\ ;\ nil))} \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} \mathtt{first(s(0)\ ;\ nil)} \rightarrow_{R,B} \mathtt{s(0)} = \mathtt{s(0)}} \tag{3}$$

Formally we represent layered proofs of this form as *lists of lists*, where each *list* has as elements reachability goals, perhaps partially (or fully) developed into traces. Each list is built with an associative binary conjunction operator $\_\wedge\_$ with identity $\top$ (we represent an unconditional rule $l \rightarrow r$ as the conditional rule $l \rightarrow r$ if $\top$). The associative operator building layers is denoted by $\_\uparrow\_$ with `nil` as its identity element. For example, the layered trace proof of Display (3) can be represented as the list of lists below, where we have added markers # at the beginning and end to emphasize the top and bottom:

$$\begin{aligned} \#\mathtt{first(rest(0\ ;\ s(0)\ ;\ nil))} &\rightarrow_{R,B} \mathtt{first(rest(s(0)\ ;\ nil))} \\ &\rightarrow_{R,B} \mathtt{s(0)} =_B \mathtt{s(0)} \uparrow \\ (\mathtt{0\ ;\ s(0)\ ;\ nil}) =_B (\mathtt{0\ ;\ s(0)\ ;\ nil}) &\wedge \\ (\mathtt{s(0)\ ;\ nil}) =_B (\mathtt{s(0)\ ;\ nil}) &\uparrow \top \qquad\qquad \# \end{aligned}$$

Replacement

$\#\ TS \uparrow T \wedge w \to_{R,B} w_1 \to_{R,B} \cdots \to_{R,B} w_{n-1} \to_{R,B} w_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} v \wedge C \uparrow D\ \#$

$\to$

$\#\ TS \uparrow T \wedge w \to_{R,B} w_1 \to_{R,B} \cdots \to_{R,B} w_n \to_{R,B} w_n[r\theta]_p \to^{\star}_{R,B} v \wedge C \uparrow$
$D \wedge u_1\theta \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_1\theta \wedge \cdots \wedge u_k\theta \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_k\theta\ \#$

where $n \geq 0, (l \to r \text{ if } u_1 \to v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_k \to v_k) \in R,$ and θ s.t. $l\theta =_B (w_n)_p$.

Reflexivity

$\#\ TS \uparrow T \wedge w \to_{R,B} w_1 \to_{R,B} \cdots \to_{R,B} w_{n-1} \to_{R,B} w_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} v \wedge C \uparrow D\ \#$

$\to$

$\#\ TS \uparrow T \wedge w \to_{R,B} w_1 \to_{R,B} \cdots \to_{R,B} w_{n-1} \to_{R,B} w_n =_B v \wedge C \uparrow D\ \#$

if $w_n =_B v$ (with $n \geq 0$)

Shift

$\#TS \uparrow D\# \to \#TS \uparrow D \uparrow \top\#$ if $D \neq \top$

Figure 1: Inference rules for layered trace proofs

Initially, any goal of the form in Display (1) is represented as:

$$\#\ t_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n \uparrow \top\ \#$$

and a layered trace proof is built by application of the three inference rules in Figure 1, applied as meta-level rewrite rules to try to build a full proof. Such inference rules perform, respectively: (i) one step of R, B-rewriting in $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$; (ii) one B-equality step; and (iii) shift one level up in the proof. These inference rules are order-sorted, in the sense that any sequence of the form in Display (1) has sort GoalSequence, represented with variables $C, D, C', D', \ldots$, whereas any sequence which is a conjunction of full traces of the form in Display (2) has sort FullTraceSequence, represented with variables $T, T', \ldots$.

We call a sequence of full trace sequences of the form $T_1 \uparrow T_2 \uparrow \cdots \uparrow T_n$ a *trace stack*, and represent such stacks with variables $TS, TS', \ldots$. Note that in Figure 1, no R, B-rewrite step can be performed in a trace stack TS.

For example, the proof of our running example is obtained by the inference steps of Figure 2.

A *layered trace proof* of a goal is an (obviously *irreducible* by the inference rules) trace stack of the form: $\#TS \uparrow \top\#$, obtained by repeated application of the **Replacement**, **Reflexivity**, and **Shift** inference rules from the initial goal. That is, we obtain $\#TS \uparrow \top\#$ by a sequence of inference steps from an initial goal as the rewrite inference sequence:

$$\#t_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n \uparrow \top\# \longrightarrow^{*} \#TS \uparrow \top\#$$

$$
\begin{aligned}
&\#\ \mathtt{first(rest(0;s(0);nil))} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0)} \uparrow \top\# \\
&\qquad \longrightarrow_{\text{Replacement}} \\
&\#\ \mathtt{first(rest(0;s(0);nil))} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{first(s(0);nil)} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0)} \\
&\qquad\qquad \uparrow \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{0;s(0);nil}\# \\
&\qquad \longrightarrow_{\text{Replacement}} \\
&\#\ \mathtt{first(rest(0;s(0);nil))} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{first(s(0);nil)} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0)} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0)} \\
&\qquad\qquad \uparrow \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} \\
&\qquad\qquad\quad \wedge \mathtt{s(0);nil} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0);nil}\# \\
&\qquad \longrightarrow_{\text{Reflexivity}} \\
&\#\ \mathtt{first(rest(0;s(0);nil))} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{first(s(0);nil)} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0)} = \mathtt{s(0)} \\
&\qquad\qquad \uparrow \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} \\
&\qquad\qquad\quad \wedge \mathtt{s(0);nil} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0);nil}\# \\
&\qquad \longrightarrow_{\text{Shift}} \\
&\#\ \mathtt{first(rest(0;s(0);nil))} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{first(s(0);nil)} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0)} = \mathtt{s(0)} \\
&\qquad\qquad \uparrow \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} \\
&\qquad\qquad\quad \wedge \mathtt{s(0);nil} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0);nil} \uparrow \top\# \\
&\qquad \longrightarrow_{\text{Reflexivity}} \\
&\#\ \mathtt{first(rest(0;s(0);nil))} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{first(s(0);nil)} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0)} = \mathtt{s(0)} \\
&\qquad\qquad \uparrow \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} = \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} \\
&\qquad\qquad\quad \wedge \mathtt{s(0);nil} \to^{\star}_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0);nil} \uparrow \top\# \\
&\qquad \longrightarrow_{\text{Reflexivity}} \\
&\#\ \mathtt{first(rest(0;s(0);nil))} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{first(s(0);nil)} \to_{R,\emptyset} \mathtt{s(0)} = \mathtt{s(0)} \\
&\qquad\qquad \uparrow \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} = \mathtt{0;s(0);nil} \\
&\qquad\qquad\quad \wedge \mathtt{s(0);nil} = \mathtt{s(0);nil} \uparrow \top\#
\end{aligned}
$$

Figure 2: Inference steps for Example 3

We then write $\mathcal{R} \vdash_{LT} t_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n$, and call such a goal *provable* with layered proof $\#TS \uparrow \top\#$. For example, the last step in the sequence of rewrites of Figure 2 give us a layered trace proof for the goal

$$\texttt{first(rest(0;s(0);s(s(0));nil))} \rightarrow^{\star}_{R} \texttt{s(0)}$$

Of course, some initial goals may not be provable at all, so that such a fully developed trace stack can never be reached.

The usefulness of layered trace proofs is that they are the natural proof object to consider when analyzing layered constrained conditional narrowing proofs and greatly help in reasoning about them. They are of course equivalent to the standard proof system in the following sense:

Proposition 1. *Denoting by* $\mathcal{R} \vdash t_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n$ *the conjunction* $\mathcal{R} \vdash t_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge \mathcal{R} \vdash t_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n$*, with* $\vdash$ *the proof system for* $\rightarrow_{R,B}$ *and* $\rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B}$ *in Section 3.1, we have the equivalence:*

$$\mathcal{R} \vdash t_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n \iff \mathcal{R} \vdash_{LT} t_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n$$

A useful fact about layered trace proofs that follows immediately from Theorem 1 is the following.

Lemma 1. *Let* $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ *be closed under* B*-extensions and let* $\#T \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#$ *be a layered trace proof of the goal* $t_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n$*, and* $u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_n$ *be such that* $t_i =_B u_i$ *and* $t'_i =_B u'_i$*,* $1 \leq i \leq n$*. Then there exists a full trace sequence* T' *such that* $\#T' \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#$ *is a layered trace proof of the goal* $u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_n$*.*

Another useful property of layered trace proofs is that they can be *composed in parallel* in a very easy and natural way. We give below the definition and state the obvious lemma, whose easy proof is left to the reader.

Definition 5. *Let* $LTP = \#T_1 \uparrow T_2 \uparrow \cdots \uparrow T_n \uparrow \top\#$ *and* $LTP' = \#T'_1 \uparrow T'_2 \uparrow \cdots \uparrow T'_m \uparrow \top\#$ *be two layered trace proofs. Then their* parallel composition*, denoted* $LTP \parallel LTP'$ *is constructed as follows:*

- *If* $n > m$*,* $LTP \parallel LTP' = \#T_1 \wedge T'_1 \uparrow \cdots T_m \wedge T'_m \uparrow T_{m+1} \uparrow \cdots \uparrow T_n \uparrow \top\#$
- *If* $n \leq m$*,* $LTP \parallel LTP' = \#T_1 \wedge T'_1 \uparrow \cdots T_n \wedge T'_n \uparrow T'_{n+1} \uparrow \cdots \uparrow T'_m \uparrow \top\#$*.*

Lemma 2. *Let* LTP *be a layered trace proof of the goal* $t_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n$*, and* LTP' *a layered trace proof of the goal* $u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_m \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_m$*. Then* $LTP \parallel LTP'$ *is a layered trace proof of the goal* $t_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge t_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} t'_n \wedge u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_m \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_m$*.*

4. Convergent Conditional Rewrite Theories

As mentioned in Section 2, in this work we focus for the most part on rewrite theories with an equational meaning, that is, theories whose rewrite rules have been obtained by *orienting* the equations of a conditional equational theory. Under suitable conditions on the rewrite rules, which we call *convergence* modulo B (because they generalize to the conditional and modulo case a similar notion of convergent rewrite rules), a very good correspondence exists between equational deduction and rewriting modulo B, namely, the *Church-Rosser* property.

We discuss below a series of conditions that, together, will give us the convergence property. Of course, to ensure that $\rightarrow^{\star}_{R/B} = \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B}$, so that we can use the much easier to implement relation $\rightarrow_{R,B}$, the rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ should always be *closed under B-extensions*. However, this is not enough for implementation purposes.

We have so far not imposed any restrictions on the variables of a conditional rule. In particular, such rules may have *extra variables* in both their righthand side and their condition not appearing in its lefthand side. This can make the choice of substitution θ used in an application of the **Replacement** inference rule in Section 3.1 quite hard to implement, since there can be an infinite number of possible choices for such a θ. This problem can avoided, while still allowing extra variables in a rule's righthand side and condition, by requiring rewrite theories to be deterministic. When Σ is unsorted and $B = \emptyset$, this notion specializes to that of a *deterministic 3-CTRS* [45].

Definition 6 (Deterministic Rewrite Theory). *An order-sorted rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ is called* deterministic *iff for each rule $l \rightarrow r$ if $u_1 \rightarrow v_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge u_n \rightarrow v_n$ in R and for each i, $1 \leq i \leq n$, we have $\mathcal{V}ar(u_i) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(l) \cup \bigcup_{j=1}^{i-1} \mathcal{V}ar(v_j)$.*

In other words, variables are only introduced in the righthand terms of the condition, and the lefthand terms in the condition may only contain variables that appear either in the lefthand side of the rule, or in the previous righthand terms of the condition.

A deterministic rule $l \rightarrow r$ if $u_1 \rightarrow v_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge u_n \rightarrow v_n$ allows a simple algorithm for computing incrementally an expanded B-matching substitution for the extra variables in its condition from a B-matching substitution for l by solving the conditions one by one from left to right. Let t be the term to be rewritten at position p by $l \rightarrow r$ if $u_1 \rightarrow v_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge u_n \rightarrow v_n$. We first compute a B-match $\gamma_0 \in Match_B(l, t_p)$. Then, we instantiate u_1 with γ_0 and attempt to rewrite $u_1\gamma_0 \rightarrow^{*}_{R,B} w_1$ so that we can find a B-match (instantiating only the fresh variables in v_1) $\gamma_1 \in Match_B(v_1\gamma, w_1)$. Then, we instantiate u_2 with $\gamma_0 \cup \gamma_1$ and repeat this process, until every v_i in the condition has an associated substitution γ_i. We then take $\gamma = \bigcup_{0 \leq i \leq n} \gamma_i$ as the *extended matching substitution* used to rewrite t.

Note that it is not necessary to rewrite $u_i\gamma$ to canonical form before attempting to match it against v_i. One may stop rewriting as soon as one achieves a match with v_i. As we shall see later, this can lead to problems when attempting to lift such rewrite sequences to narrowing. Furthermore, faithfully implementing this algorithm can be very inefficient. Therefore, we will further restrict our scope to *strongly deterministic rewrite theories*, and will present a much more efficient rewrite strategy. However, before we can define strongly deterministic rewrite theories, we need the notion of a *strongly irreducible term*.

Definition 7 (Irreducible and Strongly Irreducible). *Let* (Σ, B, R) *be a rewrite theory. A term* t *is* R, B-irreducible *iff there is no term* u *such that* $t \to_{R,B} u$*. A substitution* θ *is* R, B-irreducible *iff for each* $x \in Dom(\theta)$ *the term* $x\theta$ *is* R, B*-irreducible. A term* t *is* strongly R, B-irreducible *iff for every* R, B*-irreducible substitution* σ*, the term* $t\sigma$ *is* R, B*-irreducible.*

Definition 8 (Strongly Deterministic Rewrite Theory). *A deterministic rewrite theory* (Σ, B, R) *is called* strongly deterministic *iff for each rule* $l \to r \,\mathrm{if}\, u_1 \to v_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge u_n \to v_n$ *in* R*, and for each* i*,* $1 \leq i \leq n$*,* v_i *is strongly* R, B*-irreducible.*

The next requirement on (Σ, B, R) is a termination requirement. Note, however, that for conditional theories the termination of the relation $\to_{R,B}$ is not enough, since looping can still happen when evaluating a rule's condition. The right notion for conditional theories is that of *operational termination* [19, 35]. The precise definition can be found in the just-cited papers, but the idea is intuitively quite simple, namely, *absence of infinite inference.* We can think of an interpreter, for example implementing R, B-rewriting for a strongly deterministic rewrite theory (Σ, B, R), as a *proof-building engine* that tries to build a proof tree using the inference system in Section 3.1 by trying to build proof trees from left to right for each of the subgoals generated by an application of an inference rule. At any intermediate point in the computation the interpreter will have only a partial proof, called a *well-formed* proof tree. Operational termination of (Σ, B, R) means that such an interpreter will never loop by trying to build an *infinite* well-formed proof tree, because there are none. That is, any proof attempt either succeeds in finite time, finding a proof, or fails in finite time for all attempts. For methods and tools to prove the operational termination of an order-sorted rewrite theory see, e.g., [19, 21, 20, 36].

The next requirement on (Σ, B, R) is *sort-decreasingness*. This requirement is always satisfied if Σ is a many-sorted or unsorted signature. Intuitively, it means that, as a term gets rewritten, more sort information becomes available. $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ is called *sort-decreasing* modulo B iff whenever $t \to_{R,B} t'$ we have $ls(t) \geq ls(t')$. A checkable sufficient condition for sort-decreasingness is that: (i) B is sort-preserving, and (ii) for all rules $l \to r$ *if* $\bigwedge_{i=1,\ldots,n} u_i \to v_i$ in R and all "sort specializations" ρ (i.e., sort-lowering substitutions ρ such that for all $x{:}s$ in $Dom(\rho)$ we have $\rho : x{:}s \mapsto x'{:}s'$ with $s \geq s'$) the property $ls(l\rho) \geq ls(r\rho)$ holds.

The last, yet most important, requirement is *confluence* modulo B, for which we need the auxiliary notion of *joinability* modulo B. For simplicity let us assume that $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ is closed under B-extensions, so that we can focus on the simpler and easier to implement R, B-rewrite relation. Two terms $u, v \in \mathcal{T}_{\Sigma}(\mathcal{X})$ are called R, B-*joinable*, denoted $u \downarrow_{R,B} v$ iff there exists $w \in \mathcal{T}_{\Sigma}(\mathcal{X})$ such that $u \rightarrow^{\star}_{R/B} w \ {}_{R/B}\!\overset{\star}{\leftarrow} v$. The relation $\rightarrow_{R,B}$ is called *confluent* modulo B iff for each $u, v, t \in \mathcal{T}_{\Sigma}(\mathcal{X})$, $u \ {}_{R,B}\!\overset{\star}{\leftarrow} t \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} v$ implies $u \downarrow_{R,B} v$. Checking of confluence modulo regular and linear axioms B with a finitary unification algorithm under the sort-decreasingness, operational termination and closure under B-extensions assumptions, and a tool supporting such checking for various combinations of associativity, commutativity and identity axioms have been documented in [22]. Indeed, such checking amounts to checking the confluence of *conditional critical pairs* modulo the axioms B.

We are now ready to define convergent theories.

Definition 9 (Convergent Rewrite Theory). *An order-sorted rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ is called* convergent *iff: (i) B satisfies all the requirements at the beginning of Section 3.2; (ii) R is closed under B-extensions; (iii) R is strongly deterministic; (iv) $\mathcal{R}$ is operationally terminating; (v) R is sort-decreasing, and (vi) R is confluent modulo B.*

An extremely useful property of convergent theories is that they satisfy the Church-Rosser property modulo B, that is, the equivalence between provable equality and joinability displayed in the following theorem:

Theorem 2 (Church Rosser Theorem modulo B with Decidable Equality). [42] *Let $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$, associated to a conditional equational theory $(\Sigma, E \cup B)$, satisfy conditions (i)–(v) in Definition 9. Then $\mathcal{R}$ is confluent modulo B iff for any Σ-terms t, t' we have the equivalence:*

$$t =_{E \cup B} t' \;\Leftrightarrow\; t \downarrow_{\vec{E},B} t'.$$

Furthermore, for any convergent and therefore Church-Rosser modulo B $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$, if E is finite the equality relation $t =_{E \cup B} t'$ is decidable by checking whether the B-equality: $t!_{\vec{E},B} =_B t'!_{\vec{E},B}$ holds, where $t!_{\vec{E},B}$ (resp. $t'!_{\vec{E},B}$) denotes the[8] *R, B-irreducible term $\rightarrow^{\star}_{\vec{E},B}$-reachable from t (resp. from t') and called its $\vec{E}, B$*-canonical form*.*

Note that we can easily move back and forth between convergent rewrite theories and their corresponding equational theories. That is, given an equational theory $(\Sigma, E \cup B)$, if $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$ is convergent we have the above Church-Rosser theorem. But any convergent (Σ, B, R) is of the form $(\Sigma, B \cup \vec{E_R})$ for E_R the set of conditional equations

$$E_R = \{l = r \ \mathit{if} \bigwedge_{i=1,\ldots,n} u_i = v_i \mid (l \rightarrow r \ \mathit{if} \bigwedge_{i=1,\ldots,n} u_i \rightarrow v_i) \in R\}$$

[8]By confluence, $t'!_{\vec{E},B}$ is unique up to B-equality.

so that (Σ, B, R) is the rewrite theory associated to the equational theory $(\Sigma, E_R \cup B)$.

To express that we can reach from a term t an R,B-irreducible term u we write $t \to^!_{R,B} u$. That is, $t \to^!_{R,B} u$ means that: (i) $t \to^\star_{R,B} u$, and (ii) u is R,B-irreducible. As mentioned above, if $\mathcal{R}$ is convergent, then the R,B-canonical form u is unique up to B-equality, is denoted $u = t!_{R,B}$, and is called the *normal form* of t. A term t is called *R,B-normalized* (or just normalized) iff $t =_B t!_{R,B}$. Likewise, if θ is a substitution and $\mathcal{R}$ is convergent, there is up to B-equality a unique R,B-irreducible substitution, denoted $\theta!_{R,B}$, where for each $x \in Dom(\theta)$, $\theta!_{R,B}(x) = \theta(x)!_{R,B}$. A substitution θ is called *R,B-normalized* (or just normalized) iff $\theta =_B \theta!_{R,B}$.

In a convergent rewrite theory (Σ, B, R) we can simplify and optimize the algorithm for computing the expanded matching substitution by rewriting each $u_i\gamma$ to its R,B-canonical form before attempting to match it against v_i.

Such a simplified algorithm induces the following normalized-conditional rewriting (NC-rewriting) relation:

Definition 10 (NC-Rewriting). *Let (Σ, B, R) be a convergent order-sorted rewrite theory and t be a Σ-term. We say that t* rewrites with normalized condition *(NC) to $t[r\gamma]_p$ at position $p \in Pos(t)$ with rule $l \to r$* if *$u_1 \to v_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge u_n \to v_n$ and substitution γ, denoted $t \xrightarrow{NC}_{\gamma,R,B} t[r\gamma]_p$, iff $t_p =_B l\gamma$, and for all i, $1 \leq i \leq n$, $u_i\gamma \to^!_{R,B} v_i\gamma$.*

Unfortunately, the NC-rewrite strategy is in general not complete, even when $\mathcal{R}$ is convergent.

Example 2. *Consider the following unsorted signature Σ and strongly deterministic rules R:*

$$
\begin{array}{llll}
\Sigma : & & & \\
\quad S = \{s\} & & & \\
\quad a :\ \to s & b :\ \to s & c :\ \to s & d :\ \to s \\
\quad f :\ s\ s \to s & & & \\
\quad [\_,\_] :\ s\ s \to s & & & \\
R : & & & \\
\quad a \to b & & & \\
\quad c \to d & & & \\
\quad f(x,y) \to z \text{ if } [x,y] \to [x,z] & & &
\end{array}
$$

which do not have any critical pairs and are therefore locally confluent, and are also operationally terminating and therefore convergent. We can perform the rewrite $f(a,c) \to c$. However, $f(a,c)$ is irreducible by NC*-rewriting, because $[a,c]!_{R/B} = [b,d]$, which does not match the term $[a,z]$.*

We can make NC-rewriting complete by adopting a slightly more restrictive notion of strongly deterministic rewrite theory that we claim is the *right* notion for efficient executability purposes. Furthermore, as we explain below, this slight restriction involves no real loss of generality.

Definition 11 (Fresh Pattern Property). *Let $(\mathcal{F}, B, R)$ be a strongly deterministic order-sorted rewrite theory. We say that $(\mathcal{F}, B, R)$ has the* fresh pattern property *(FPP) iff for each rule in R of the form $l \to r$* if *$u_1 \to v_1 \wedge \ldots \wedge u_n \to v_n$, and for each i, $1 \leq i \leq n$, $\mathcal{V}ar(v_i) \cap (\mathcal{V}ar(l) \cup \bigcup_{1 \leq j < i} \mathcal{V}ar(v_j)) = \emptyset$ (observe that for each u_i, $\mathcal{V}ar(u_i) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(l) \cup \bigcup_{1 \leq j < i} \mathcal{V}ar(v_j)$).*

In other words, if v_i has any variables, they are all *fresh* with respect to the variables in the lefthand side of the rule, and the variables appearing in the previous terms of the condition.

The fresh pattern property *involves no real loss of generality*, because we can easily transform any strongly determinisitc theory that does not have the fresh pattern property into one that does. To do so, first, we add a new connected component, with a single fresh sort *Truth* to Σ. Then, for each top sort $[s]$ in every other connected component, we add the predicate $\_ \equiv \_ : [s]\ [s] \to \mathit{Truth}$. We also add a constant $tt :\to \mathit{Truth}$, and the rule $x \equiv x \to tt$. Then, for each conditional rule $l \to r$ if $\bigwedge_{1 \leq i \leq n} u_i \to v_i$, and each $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$ s.t. it has a variable $x \in vars(v_i) - (vars(l) \cup \bigcup_{1 \leq j < i} vars(v_j))$, we rename every occurrence of x in v_i by a fresh variable x' in a new term v'_i, obtaining in this way a renamed condition $u_i \to v'_i$, and add the condition $x \equiv x' \to tt$ at the end of the conditional part of the rule. *NC*-rewriting then ensures that the substitution instance $u_i \gamma_{i-1}$ of u_i is normalized before being matched against v_i to obtain γ_i, and $x \equiv x' \to tt$ ensures that x' is properly bound to x. This is a standard procedure in functional logic programming where there are no reachability conditions but only equality conditions using a strict semantics, i.e., both terms of a strict equality are normalized into constructor terms and then checked for syntactic equality; see [30] and references therein.

Example 3. *We can easily transform the theory in Example 2 to make it FPP by just modifying the rule $f(x, y) \to z$* if *$[x, y] \to [x, z]$ into the rule: $f(x, y) \to z$* if *$[x, y] \to [x', z] \wedge x \equiv x' \to tt$.*

If $\mathcal{R}$ is convergent and FPP, then NC-rewriting is complete for reaching canonical forms, in the following sense:

Proposition 2 (Completeness of NC-Rewriting). *Let $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ be convergent and FPP. Then for each Σ-term t, if $t \to^!_{R,B} v$, then $t \xrightarrow{NC}{}^!_{R,B}\ v$, where $t \xrightarrow{NC}{}^!_{R,B}\ v$ denotes a sequence of $n \geq 0$ NC-rewriting steps followed by a step of B-equality.*

Proof. The case when $t =_B v$ is trivial. Suppose, therefore, that $t \to_{R,B} u \to^!_{R,B} v$. Since $\mathcal{R}$ is convergent, it is in particular operationally terminating, so that the relation $\to_{R,B}$ is well-founded. We can reason by well-founded induction on $\to_{R,B}$. But $t \to_{R,B} u$ means that there is a position $p \in Pos(t)$, a rule $l \to r$ if $u_1 \to v_1, \ldots, u_n \to v_n$ in R and a substitution σ such that $t_p =_B l\sigma$, $u_j\sigma \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_j\sigma$ for each $1 \leq j \leq n$, and $u = t[r\sigma]_p$. Since $\mathcal{R}$ is strongly deterministic, we have $u_j\sigma \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_j\sigma \to^{!}_{R,B} v_j(\sigma!_{R,B})$, and since it is FPP and confluent, $\sigma' = \sigma|_{\mathcal{V}ar(l)} \uplus (\sigma!_{R,B})|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v_1)\cup\cdots\mathcal{V}ar(v_n)}$ gives us an NC-rewrite step $t \xrightarrow{\text{NC}}_{R,B} t[r\sigma']_p$. By confluence and well-founded induction we then have $t[r\sigma']_p \xrightarrow{\text{NC}}{}^{!}_{R,B} v$, and therefore, $t \xrightarrow{\text{NC}}{}^{!}_{R,B} v$, as desired. □

Note that, if $\mathcal{R}$ is convergent and FPP, the above completeness result ensures that one can reach a canonical form using exclusively NC rewriting, both in each rewrite step, and in recursively evaluating the conditions of each such step to canonical form. This is of course much more time- and space-efficient than performing search when evaluating conditions.

5. Reachability Problems and Constrained Narrowing

Constrained terms are pairs $u \mid C$, with u a term and C a conjunction of reachability goals. Semantically, $u \mid C$ denotes the set of instances $u\theta$ (with θ a normalized substitution), such the $\mathcal{R} \vdash C\theta$. We call $v \mid D$ $\mathcal{R}$-reachable from $u \mid C$ if an instance of $u \mid C$ can be rewritten to an instance of $v \mid D$. We define *constrained narrowing* for convergent FPP theories, and prove it sound and complete to find NC-solutions to reachability problems between constrained terms.

5.1. Reachability Problems

Definition 12 (FPP Condition and Constrained Term). *Given a rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$, a condition $u_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_n$ is called an* FPP condition over $\vec{x}$ *iff:*

1. *all v_i are strongly R, B-irreducible.*
2. *$\mathcal{V}ar(u_1) \subseteq \vec{x}$*
3. *$\forall 1 < j \leq n$, $\mathcal{V}ar(u_j) \subseteq \vec{x} \cup (\bigcup_{1\leq i<j} \mathcal{V}ar(v_i))$*
4. *$\forall 1 \leq j \leq n$, $\mathcal{V}ar(v_j) \cap (\vec{x} \cup (\bigcup_{1\leq i<j} \mathcal{V}ar(v_i))) = \emptyset$.*

We call $\bigcup_{1\leq i\leq n} \mathcal{V}ar(v_i)$ the fresh variables *of the FPP condition.*

A constrained Σ-term *is a pair $u \mid C$ where u is a Σ-term, and C is a conjunction of the form $u_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_n$. A constrained term $u \mid C$ is called* FPP *iff $C = (u_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} u'_n)$ is FPP over $\mathcal{V}ar(u)$.*

Definition 13 (Reachability Problem and their Solutions). *Given a convergent FPP rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ and constrained terms $(u \mid C)$ and $(v \mid D)$, we call $(v \mid D)$ $\mathcal{R}$-*reachable *from $(u \mid C)$ with solution σ iff there is a normalized substitution σ with $Dom(\sigma) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cup \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D)$ such that:*

- $\mathcal{R} \vdash C\sigma$ *and* $\mathcal{R} \vdash D\sigma$
- $u\sigma \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} v\sigma$.

A solution σ *is called an* NC solution *iff there is an NC-rewrite sequence* $u\sigma \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} v\sigma$.

We denote the problem of whether $v \mid D$ is reachable from $u \mid C$ an $\mathcal{R}$-*reachability problem*, denoted $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$, and call it *solvable* (resp. *NC-solvable*) iff there is a solution (resp. NC-solution) σ reaching $v \mid D$ from $u \mid C$. If a solution σ exists, we then write $\mathcal{R} \vdash u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star}_{\sigma} v \mid D$, or just $\mathcal{R} \vdash u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$.

The following lemma, showing that solutions exist up to B-equivalence is an easy consequence of Theorem 1; its proof is left to the reader.

Lemma 3. *Given a convergent FPP theory* $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$*, constrained terms* $u \mid C$ *and* $v \mid D$*, and substitutions* σ, τ *with* $\sigma =_B \tau$*, then* σ *is a solution (resp. NC-solution) of the reachability problem* $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$ *iff* τ *is so.*

Example 4. *Note that some reachability problems may be solvable, but not NC-solvable. Consider, for example, the convergent FPP theory of Example 3, and the reachability problem* $f(x, c) \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^{\star} c \mid \top$*. This reachability problem is trivially solvable with solution the identity substitution id, since we have* $f(x, c) \rightarrow c$*. However, no NC-solution exists.*

The easy proof of the following lemma is left to the reader.

Lemma 4. *Let* $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ *be a convergent FPP theory, and* $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$ *a reachability problem such that* v *is strongly* R, B*-irreducible. Then any solution* σ *of such a problem is an NC-solution.* □

In Definition 13 the set of shared variables $\vec{y} = \mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D)$ may be non-empty. However, by adding to $\mathcal{R}$ a tupling constructor we can easily reduce any $\mathcal{R}$-reachability problem to one where $\vec{y} = \emptyset$.

Lemma 5. *Let* $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ *be a convergent FPP rewrite theory, and* $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$ *an* $\mathcal{R}$*-reachability problem with* u *and* v *of sort* $[\mathsf{s}]$ *and* $\vec{y} = \mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = y_1{:}\mathsf{s_1}, \ldots, y_n{:}\mathsf{s_n}$ *with* $n \geq 0$.

Extend $\mathcal{R}$ *to* $\mathcal{R}^{<>}$ *by adding a new tupling constructor*

$$\mathsf{<\_, \ldots, \_>} : [\mathsf{s}]\ [\mathsf{s_1}]\ \cdots\ [\mathsf{s_k}] \rightarrow \mathsf{Tuple}.[\mathsf{s}].[\mathsf{s_1}].\ldots.[\mathsf{s_k}]$$

which does not appear in Σ *and where the new sort* $\mathsf{Tuple}.[\mathsf{s}].[\mathsf{s_1}].\ldots.[\mathsf{s_k}]$ *is in a new connected component of the, thus extended, poset of sorts. Then:*

1. $\mathcal{R} \vdash (u \mid C) \rightsquigarrow^{\star} (v \mid D)$ *iff*
2. $\mathcal{R}^{<>} \vdash (< u, y_1, \ldots, y_n > \mid C) \rightsquigarrow^{\star} (< v\rho, y'_1, \ldots, y'_n > \mid D\rho)$*, where* $\vec{y'} = y'_1{:}\mathsf{s_1}, \ldots, y'_n{:}\mathsf{s_n}$*,* $Dom(\rho) = \vec{y}$*,* $Ran(\rho) = \vec{y'}$*,* $\rho(y_i) = y'_i$ *for* $1 \leq i \leq n$*, and* $\vec{y'} \cap (\mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cup \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D)) = \emptyset$.

Furthermore, any solution θ of (1) extends to a solution $\overline{\theta}$ of (2) with $y'_i\overline{\theta} = y_i\theta$. Conversely, for any solution γ of (2), $\rho\gamma$ is a solution of (1).

PROOF. Obviously, if $\mathcal{R} \vdash u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star}_{\theta} v \mid D$, since $u\theta \rightarrow^{*}_{R,B} v\theta$, we also have $< u\theta, y_1\theta, \ldots, y_n\theta > \rightarrow^{*}_{R,B} < v\theta, y_1\theta, \ldots, y_n\theta >$, but extending θ to $\overline{\theta}$ by defining $y'_i\overline{\theta} = y_i\theta$, we have $< v\theta, y_1\theta, \ldots, y_n\theta > = < v\rho\overline{\theta}, y'_1\overline{\theta}, \ldots, y'_n\overline{\theta} >$, giving us a solution $\overline{\theta}$ of (2) as described.

Conversely, let γ be a solution of (2), so that we have $< u\gamma, y_1\gamma, \ldots, y_n\gamma > \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} < v\rho\gamma, y_1\rho\gamma, \ldots, y_n\rho\gamma >$. Since γ is R, B-irreducible and $< \_, \ldots, \_ >$ is a new constructor symbol, this forces: (i) $u\gamma \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} v\rho\gamma$, and (ii) $y_i\gamma =_B y_i\rho\gamma$, $1 \leq i \leq n$. But since ρ is a sort-preserving bijective renaming of variables, (ii) then gives us $u\rho\gamma =_B u\gamma$ and $C\rho\gamma =_B C\gamma$, which by Theorem 1 gives us $u\rho\gamma \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} v\rho\gamma$ and $\mathcal{R} \vdash C\rho\gamma$, proving $\mathcal{R} \vdash u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star}_{\rho\gamma} v \mid D$. □

Because of the above lemma, from now on without loss of generality we will assume that in all $\mathcal{R}$-reachability problems $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{*} v \mid D$ we have $\mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = \emptyset$.

5.2. Constrained Narrowing

Given an $\mathcal{R}$-reachability problems, is there a *symbolic* method to find an NC-solution for it? As we shall see, *constrained narrowing* provides such a method for $\mathcal{R}$ a convergent FPP theory when the reachability goals do not share variables. Furthermore, we shall show that this symbolic method is sound (produces correct NC-solutions), and complete, in the sense that (up to B-equality) any NC-solution of a reachability problem is an *instance* of a symbolic solution found by constrained narrowing.

Given a convergent FPP theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$, by a rule of R being *standardized apart*, denoted $(l' \rightarrow r' \,\text{if}\, C') \ll R$, we mean that there is a variable renaming ρ and a rule $(l \rightarrow r \,\text{if}\, C) \in R$ such that $(l' \rightarrow r' \,\text{if}\, C') = (l \rightarrow r \,\text{if}\, C)\rho$, and, furthermore, the variables $\mathcal{V}ar(l' \rightarrow r' \,\text{if}\, C')$ are *disjoint* from all the variables previously met during any computation. In our case, the "computations" will be constrained narrowing sequences $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} u_n \mid C_n =^{\gamma}_{B} v \mid D$, which are symbolic solutions of reachability goals $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$, where the last step is a B-unification of u_n and v with B-unifier γ. Likewise, we say that a substitution θ is *standardized apart* if the variables in $Ran(\theta)$ are *disjoint* from all the variables previously met during any computation. Standardizing rules (resp. substitutions) apart allows all variables in such rules (resp. introduced by such substitutions) to always be fresh. Of course, over a computation, rules in R may have to be standardized apart many times.

Definition 14. *Let $u \mid C$ be a constrained term, and $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ a convergent FPP theory. A* constrained narrowing step *denoted*

$$u \mid C \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha,q,R,B} (u[r]_q \mid C \wedge D)\alpha$$

with rule $(l \rightarrow r \,\text{if}\, D) \ll R$ at non-variable position $q \in Pos_{\Sigma}(u)$ and with substitution α is defined iff $\alpha \in CSU_B(u|_q, l)$ with $Dom(\alpha) = \mathcal{V}ar(u|_q) \uplus \mathcal{V}ar(l)$

and α standardized apart; in particular this implies that $Ran(\alpha) \cap (\mathcal{V}ar(u|C) \uplus \mathcal{V}ar(l \to r \,\mathrm{if}\, D)) = \emptyset$. When q, R and B are understood, we abbreviate a constrained narrowing step as: $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha} (u[r]_q \mid C \wedge D)\alpha$.

By a constrained narrowing sequence *of length $n \geq 0$ from $u \mid C$, we mean either the 0-step sequence $u \mid C$ or the $n > 0$ sequence of constrained narrowing steps*

$$u \mid C \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} u_2 \mid C_2 \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow u_{n-1} \mid C_{n-1} \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} u_n \mid C_n$$

with each α_i standardized apart, $1 \leq i \leq n$.

Like rewriting, narrowing can also be restricted by means of a frozenness map $\phi : \Sigma \to \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N})$. We then obtain a relation $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha,q,R,B,\phi} (u[r]_q \mid C \wedge D)\alpha$ by imposing the extra condition that the position q is not frozen by ϕ.

The key result is the following *lifting lemma*, which shows that any NC-rewriting step can be lifted to a narrowing step of which it is an instance.

Lemma 6 (Lifting Lemma). *Let $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ be a convergent FPP rewrite theory. Let $u \mid C$ be a Σ-constrained term, and β a R,B-normalized substitution with $Dom(\beta) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C)$ such that $\mathcal{R} \vdash C\beta$. Let $u\beta \to_{R,B} u\beta[r\sigma]_q$ be an NC-rewrite step with rule*

$$l \to r \,\mathrm{if}\, u_1 \to v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \to v_n \tag{4}$$

at position q with substitution σ. Then, there is a constrained narrowing step $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha,q,R,B} (u[r]_q \mid C \wedge u_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots u_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_n)\alpha$ using (4) and a R,B-normalized substitution γ such that, assuming without loss of generality that (4) is standardized apart, and defining the mutually disjoint sets of variables: $\vec{x} = \mathcal{V}ar(u|_q)$, $\vec{y} = \mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \setminus \mathcal{V}ar(u|_q)$, $\vec{z} = \mathcal{V}ar(l)$, $\vec{z'} = \mathcal{V}ar(v_1) \cup \cdots \cup \mathcal{V}ar(v_n)$, and $\vec{z''} = Ran(\alpha)$, we have $Dom(\gamma) \subseteq \vec{y} \uplus \vec{z'} \uplus \vec{z''}$, and:

1. *$(\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{x} \uplus \vec{y}} =_B \beta$,*
2. *$(\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{z} \uplus \vec{z'}} =_B \sigma$,*
3. *There is an NC-rewrite $u\alpha\gamma \to_{R,B} u[r]_q\alpha\gamma$ with rule (4), substitution $(\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{z} \uplus \vec{z'}}$, and provable condition $(u_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots u_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_n)\alpha\gamma$ that coincides up to B-equality with the NC-rewrite step $u\beta \to_{R,B} u\beta[r\sigma]_q$ with same rule and provable condition $(u_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots u_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_n)\sigma$, in the sense that:*
    - *$u\alpha\gamma =_B u\beta$ and $u\beta[r\sigma]_q =_B (u[r]_q)\alpha\gamma$, and*
    - *for $1 \leq i \leq n$, $u_i\alpha\gamma =_B u_i\sigma$, and $v_i\alpha\gamma =_B v_i\sigma$.*
4. *$\mathcal{R} \vdash (C \wedge u_1 \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \to^{\star}_{R,B} v_n)\alpha\gamma$.*

Proof. Since β is normalized we must have $q \in Pos_{\Sigma}(u)$; and since $u_q\beta =_B l\sigma$, there is a B-unifier $\alpha \in CSU_B(u_q, l)$ with domain $\vec{x} \uplus \vec{z}$ and a substitution γ_0

with domain $\vec{z''}$ such that $\beta|_{\vec{x}} =_B (\alpha\gamma_0)|_{\vec{x}}$ and $\sigma|_{\vec{z}} =_B (\alpha\gamma_0)|_{\vec{z}}$. Define γ as the following extension of γ_0:

$$\gamma = \beta|_{\vec{y}} \uplus \gamma_0 \uplus \sigma|_{\vec{z'}}$$

Note that γ is normalized since: (i) β is so, (ii) σ is the substitution associated to an NC-rewrite, which forces $\sigma|_{\vec{z'}}$ to be normalized, and, (iii) since B is regular and $u_q\alpha =_B l\alpha$, we have $\mathcal{V}ar(u_q\alpha) = \mathcal{V}ar(l\alpha) = Ran(\alpha) = \vec{z''}$, so that $\beta|_{\vec{x}} =_B (\alpha\gamma_0)|_{\vec{x}}$ and β normalized forces γ_0 to be normalized. Note that $(\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{x}\uplus\vec{y}} = (\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{x}} \uplus (\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{y}} =_B \beta|_{\vec{x}} \uplus \gamma|_{\vec{y}} = \beta|_{\vec{x}} \uplus \beta|_{\vec{y}} = \beta$, which is point (1). We also have $(\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{z}\uplus\vec{z'}} = (\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{z}} \uplus (\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{z'}} =_B \sigma|_{\vec{z}} \uplus \gamma|_{\vec{z'}} = \sigma|_{\vec{z}} \uplus \sigma|_{\vec{z'}} = \sigma$, which is point (2).

Since $u_q\beta =_B l\sigma$, $\beta|_{\vec{x}} =_B (\alpha\gamma_0)|_{\vec{x}} = (\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{x}}$, and $\sigma|_{\vec{z}} =_B (\alpha\gamma_0)|_{\vec{z}} = (\alpha\gamma)|_{\vec{z}}$, we have $u_q\alpha\gamma =_B u_q\beta =_B l\sigma =_B l\alpha\gamma$. Furthermore, point (2) of Theorem 1, and the fact that for each $1 \leq i \leq n$ we have $u_i\sigma \to_{R,B}! v_i\sigma$ gives us $u_i\alpha\gamma \to_{R,B}! v_i\alpha\gamma$, which gives us the claimed NC-rewrite $u\alpha\gamma \to_{R,B} u[r]_q\alpha\gamma$, and the fact that $\alpha\gamma|_{\vec{z'}} = \gamma|_{\vec{z'}} = \sigma|_{\vec{z'}}$ gives us the actual identities $v_i\alpha\gamma = v_i\sigma$, which is (3).

Finally we have, $(C \wedge u_1 \to^\star_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \to^\star_{R,B} v_n)\alpha\gamma = C\alpha\gamma \wedge (u_1 \to^\star_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \to^\star_{R,B} v_n)\alpha\gamma =_B C\beta \wedge (u_1 \to^\star_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \to^\star_{R,B} v_n)\alpha\gamma$. Since by hypothesis we have $\mathcal{R} \vdash C\beta$, and we have just shown that $\mathcal{R} \vdash (u_1 \to^\star_{R,B} v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \to^\star_{R,B} v_n)\alpha\gamma$, again Theorem 1 gives (4), as desired. □

Remark 2. *For technical reasons that will become clear in Sections 7 and 8, we will be interested in using also the above Lifting Lemma when the convergent FPP rewrite theory comes with a B-stable frozenness map* ϕ. *If* $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ *is such a theory and* ϕ *is a frozenness map, we write* $\mathcal{R}_\phi = (\Sigma, B, R, \phi)$ *to denote* $\mathcal{R}$ *enriched with the extra frozenness information* ϕ. *As already mentioned in Section 3.1, the inference system defining the relation* $\to_{R,B}$ *can be naturally restricted to one defining the relation* $\to_{R,B,\phi}$, *where rules are only applied at non-frozen term positions. Of course, in* $\mathcal{R}_\phi$ *this frozenness restriction also applies to the evaluation of conditions by rewriting. However, in all the applications we will consider,* $\mathcal{R}_\phi$ *will have particularly good properties, namely, it will have: (i) a family of kinds* $\{[s_i]\}_{i\in I}$ *such that for each* $i \in I$, *any term* t *of kind* $[s_i]$ *has all its positions unfrozen; and (ii) for any rule* $l \to r$ *if* D *in* R, *all terms appearing in the lefthand or righthand side of a condition in* D *have their kind among the* $\{[s_i]\}_{i\in I}$. *We call* $\mathcal{R}_\phi$ *satisfying (i) and (ii) a theory with* unfrozen kinds $\{[s_i]\}_{i\in I}$ and unfrozen conditions.

The point, of couse, is that for terms t *of kind* $[s_i]$, *the relations* $\to_{R,B}$ *and* $\to_{R,B,\phi}$ coincide. *Therefore, notions such as normal form, normalized substitution, and so on, do not change at all for such terms by the introduction of the frozenness restrictions* ϕ. *Furthermore, for any term* u *whatsoever, which may have frozen positions, the notion of an* NC-rewrite $u \to_{R,B,\phi} v$ at a non-frozen position *makes perfect sense, since no frozenness restrictions can apply to the evaluation of conditions, so that the entire evaluation of the NC-step* $u \to_{R,B,\phi} v$, *including the evaluation of its condition, can be performed with* $\mathcal{R}_\phi$.

We leave for the reader to check that the above Lifting Lemma also applies to a theory $\mathcal{R}_\phi$ *with* ϕ *B-stable and with unfrozen kinds* $\{[s_i]\}_{i\in I}$ *and unfrozen* *conditions provided: (i) the sorts of the variables $\mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C)$ are all below some unfrozen kind $[s_i]$, and (ii) the position q at which the rewrite takes place is non-frozen.*

5.3. Solving Reachability Goals through Constrained Narrowing

Let $u \mid C$ and $v \mid D$ be constrained terms with $\mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = \emptyset$. We can use constrained narrowing as a symbolic method to find an NC-solution for it as follows.

Definition 15. *Given a convergent FPP rewrite theory $\mathcal{R}$ and constrained terms $u_0 \mid C_0$ and $v \mid D$ with $\mathcal{V}ar(u_0 \mid C_0) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = \emptyset$, we call $v \mid D$* symbolically reachable by constrained narrowing *from $u_0 \mid C_0$* with symbolic NC-solution $(\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_n \delta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} \uplus \delta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ *iff there is a chain of constrained narrowing steps with $n \geq 0$ of the form:*

$$u_0 \mid C_0 \leadsto_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1 \leadsto_{\alpha_2} u_2 \mid C_2 \cdots u_{n-1} \mid C_{n-1} \leadsto_{\alpha_n} u_n \mid C_n$$

and a standardized apart unifier $\delta \in CSU_B(u_n, v)$ with $Dom(\delta) = \mathcal{V}ar(u_n) \uplus \mathcal{V}ar(v)$ such that:

1. *$(\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_n \delta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)}$ and δ are normalized*
2. *for each i, $1 \leq i < n$, $(\alpha_{i+1} \dots \alpha_n \delta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_i)}$ is normalized*
3. *for each i, $1 \leq i \leq n$, let $\vec{y}_i$ be the* fresh *variables of condition D_i of the rule $l_i \to r_i$ if D_i used in the narrowing step $u_{i-1} \mid C_{i-1} \leadsto_{\alpha_i} u_i \mid C_i$, then $(\alpha_i \dots \alpha_n \delta)|_{\vec{y}_i}$ is normalized.*

We say that such a symbolic NC-solution $(\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_n \delta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} \uplus \delta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ has an actual NC-solution instance $(\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_n \delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} \uplus \delta\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ *iff there is a normalized substitution ρ with $Dom(\rho) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_0\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_n\delta) \cup \mathcal{V}ar((v \mid C_n \wedge D)\delta)$ such that:*

1. *$(\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_n \delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)}$ and $\delta\rho$ are normalized*
2. *for each i, $1 \leq i < n$, $(\alpha_{i+1} \dots \alpha_n \delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_i)}$ is normalized*
3. *for each i, $1 \leq i \leq n$, $(\alpha_i \dots \alpha_n \delta\rho)|_{\vec{y}_i}$ is normalized*
4. *$\mathcal{R} \vdash (C_n \wedge D)\delta\rho$.*

Remark 3. *For the reasons given in Remark 2, Definition 15 can be easily adapted to a convergent FPP theory $\mathcal{R}_\phi$ with B-stable frozenness map ϕ that has a family of unfrozen kinds and with unfrozen conditions provided: (i) the kinds of the terms in each condition of $C_0 \wedge D$ have unfrozen kinds; (ii) the kinds of all variables in $\mathcal{V}ar(u_0 \mid C_0) \cup \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid B)$ have unfrozen kinds; and (iii) the positions at which narrowing takes place in the narrowing sequence are all unfrozen positions.*

The correctness of constrained narrowing as a symbolic method to solve reachability goals is expressed in the following theorem.

Theorem 3 (Soundness Theorem). *Given a convergent FPP rewrite theory $\mathcal{R} = (\Sigma, B, R)$ and constrained terms $u_0 \mid C_0$ and $v \mid D$ with $\mathcal{V}ar(u_0 \mid C_0) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = \emptyset$, if $v \mid D$ is symbolically reachable by constrained narrowing from $u_0 \mid C_0$ with symbolic NC-solution $(\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n \delta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u|C)} \uplus \delta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$, any actual NC-solution instance $(\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n \delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u|C)} \uplus \delta\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ is an NC-solution of the reachability goal $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$.*

Proof. Suppose that $(\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n \delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u|C)} \uplus \delta\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ is an actual NC-solution instance. This means that there are standardized apart rules $l_i \to r_i$ *if* D_i in R, and positions $p_i \in Pos(u_{i-1})$, $1 \leq i \leq n$ such that:

1. $\alpha_i \in CSU_B(l_i, (u_{i-1})_{p_i})$, $1 \leq i \leq n$
2. $u_i = u_{i-1}[r_i]_{p_i}\alpha_i$, $1 \leq i \leq n$
3. $C_i = (C_{i-1} \wedge D_i)\alpha_i$. $1 \leq i \leq n$.

But (3) implies that $\mathcal{R} \vdash (C_n \wedge D)\delta\rho$ exactly means that:

- $\mathcal{R} \vdash C_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho$
- $\mathcal{R} \vdash D_i\alpha_i \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho$, $1 \leq i \leq n$, and
- $\mathcal{R} \vdash D\delta\rho$.

And since $(\alpha_i \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\vec{y}_i}$ is normalized and $\mathcal{R}$ is FPP, (1) and (2) then mean that there is an NC-rewrite step $u_{i-1}\alpha_i \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho \to_{R,B} u_i\alpha_{i+1} \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho$, $1 \leq i \leq n$. This, together with the fact that $u_n\delta\phi =_B v\delta\phi$, shows that there is an NC rewrite $u_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho \to^\star_{R,B} v\delta\phi$, and therefore that $(\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u|C)} \uplus \delta\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ is an NC-solution of the reachability goal $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$, as desired. □

Remark 4. *For the reasons given in Remarks 2–3, the above Soundness Theorem can be easily adapted to a convergent FPP theory $\mathcal{R}_\phi$ with B-stable frozenness map ϕ that has a family of unfrozen kinds and with unfrozen conditions provided: (i) the kinds of the terms in each condition of $C_0 \wedge D$ have unfrozen kinds; (ii) the kinds of all variables in $\mathcal{V}ar(u_0 \mid C_0) \cup \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D)$ have unfrozen kinds; and (ii) the positions at which narrowing takes place in the narrowing sequence are all unfrozen positions.*

Note that Conditions (1)–(3) in Definition 15 can be very useful in weeding out useless narrowing paths early on, thus making the symbolic search for NC solutions more efficient. We already used this approach in [25] to drastically reduce the number of narrowing steps in the *variant narrowing* strategy.

Example 5. *Let Σ be an unsorted signature with constants a, b, binary associative-commutative operator $+$, and unary symbols f, h and $[\_]$, and with rules:*

1. $f(x) \to x + y$ *if* $h(x) \to [y]$
2. $z + a + a \to z + b$
3. $h(x) \to [x]$.

It is not hard to show that this theory is convergent, and it is clearly FPP. Consider the reachability problem

$$f(f(x_0)) \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^\star x'_0 + b \mid \top$$

We can find a symbolic NC-solution by constrained narrowing as follows: a first constrained narrowing step

$$f(f(x_0)) \mid \top \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} f(x_1 + y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y]$$

using rule (1) with substitution $\alpha_1 = \{x_0 \mapsto x_1, x \mapsto x_1\}$*; a second constrained narrowing step*

$$f(x_1 + y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y] \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} x'_1 + y'_1 + y' \mid h(x'_1) \to^\star [y'_1] \wedge h(x'_1 + y'_1) \to^\star [y']$$

using rule (1) standardized apart as $f(x') \to x' + y'$ *if* $h(x') \to [y']$ *with substitution* $\alpha_2 = \{x_1 \mapsto x'_1, y \mapsto y'_1, x' \mapsto x'_1 + y'_1\}$*; a third constrained narrowing step*

$$x'_1{+}y'_1{+}y' \mid h(x'_1) \to^\star [y'_1] \wedge h(x'_1{+}y'_1) \to^\star [y'] \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_3} z'{+}b \mid h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a{+}a) \to^\star [z']$$

using rule (2) with substitution $\alpha_3 = \{z \mapsto x', y' \mapsto z', x'_1 \mapsto a, y'_1 \mapsto a\}$*; and a final substitution* $\delta = \{z' \mapsto x_2, x'_0 \mapsto x_2\}$ *unifying* $z' + b$ *and the term to be reached* $x'_0 + b$.

This symbolic solution has an actual NC-solution instance thanks to the substitution $\rho = \{x_2 \mapsto a + a\}$*, which instantiates the condition* $h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2]$ *to a provable one and yields the actual solution* $\{x_0 \mapsto a, x'_0 \mapsto a{+}a\}$*, for which we have the NC-rewrite sequence:*

$$f(f(a)) \to_{R,AC} f(a + a) \to_{R,AC} a + a + a + a \to_{R,AC} b + a + a.$$

Other narrowing sequences can be rejected early on because they fail to satisfy conditions (1)–(3) in Definition 15. For example, after the above first narrowing step, there is a second, alternative narrowing step

$$f(x_1 + y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y] \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha'_2} f(z_1 + z_2 + b) \mid h(z_2) \to^\star [a + a + z_1]$$

using rule (2) with substitution $\alpha'_2 = \{x_1 \mapsto z_2, y \mapsto a + a + z_1, z \mapsto z_1 + z_2\}$*. This alternative path can be immediately rejected, because* α'_2 *maps the fresh variable* y *in the condition of rule (1) to a term reducible by rule (2), violating condition (3) in Definition 15.*

Is constrained narrowing a *complete* method to symbolically describe NC-solutions of reachability problems for $\mathcal{R}$ convergent and FPP? The positive answer is made precise in the following theorem.

Theorem 4 (Completeness of Constrained Narrowing). *Let $\mathcal{R}$ be convergent and FPP, $u_0 \mid C_0$ and $v \mid D$ two constrained terms with $\mathcal{V}ar(u_0 \mid C_0) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = \emptyset$, and β, η normalized substitutions, with $Dom(\beta) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_0 \mid C_0)$ and $Dom(\eta) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D)$, such that $\beta \uplus \eta$ is an NC-solution of the reachability problem $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$ with an NC-rewrite sequence $u_0\beta \rightarrow_{R,B} w_1 \rightarrow_{R,B} w_2 \cdots w_{n-1} \rightarrow_{R,B} w_n =_B v\eta$. Then there is a symbolic NC-solution with constrained narrowing sequence $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} u_2 \mid C_2 \cdots u_{n-1} \mid C_{n-1} \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} u_n \mid C_n$ and B-unifier $\delta \in CSU_B(u_n, v)$, and a substitution ρ with $Dom(\rho) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta) \cup \mathcal{V}ar((v \mid C_n \wedge D)\delta)$ such that $(\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} \uplus \delta\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ is an* actual NC-solution instance *and, furthermore:*

1. *$\beta =_B (\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)}$ and $\eta =_B \delta\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$*
2. *the NC-rewrite sequence*

$$u_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho \rightarrow_{R,B} u_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho \ldots u_{n-1}\alpha_n\delta\rho \rightarrow_{R,B} u_n\delta\rho =_B v\delta\rho$$

ensured by the Soundness Theorem is such that: (i) $u_0\beta =_B u_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho$, (ii) for each i, $1 \leq i \leq n$, $w_i =_B u_i\alpha_{i+1} \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho$, and (iii) $v\eta =_B v\delta\rho$.

Proof. The proof is by induction on the number n of NC-rewrite steps in the NC-rewrite sequence $u_0\beta \rightarrow_{R,B} w_1 \rightarrow_{R,B} w_2 \cdots w_{n-1} \rightarrow_{R,B} w_n =_B v\eta$. For $n = 0$ we have $u_0\beta =_B v\eta$ and, since $\mathcal{V}ar(u_0) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v) = \emptyset$, there is a B-unifier $\delta \in CSU_B(u_n, v)$ and a substitution ρ_0 with $Dom(\rho_0) \subseteq Ran(\delta)$ such that $\beta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0)} =_B \delta\rho_0|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0)}$, and $\eta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v)} =_B \delta\rho_0|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v)}$. Extending ρ_0 to ρ by defining:

$$\rho = \beta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(C_0)-\mathcal{V}ar(u_0)} \uplus \rho_0 \uplus \eta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(D)-\mathcal{V}ar(v)}$$

gives us the desired NC-solution instance satisfying the requirements in the theorem.

Suppose that the theorem holds for any NC-solutions of reachability problems with associated NC-rewrite sequences of length less than n and let $\beta \uplus \eta$ be an NC-solution of the problem $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$ with associated NC-rewrite sequence $u_0\beta \rightarrow_{R,B} w_1 \rightarrow_{R,B} w_2 \ldots w_{n-1} \rightarrow_{R,B} w_n =_B v\eta$. In particular, the NC-rewrite $u_0\beta \rightarrow_{R,B} w_1$ corresponds to a non-variable position p_1, a rule $l_1 \rightarrow r_1$ *if* D_1 and substitution σ such that $w_1 = u_0\beta[r_1\sigma]_{p_1}$ and, by the Lifting Lemma, there is a unifier α_1, a constrained narrowing step $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1$ with $u_1 \mid C_1 = (u_0[r_1]_{p_1} \mid C_0 \wedge D_1)\alpha_1$, and a normalized substitution γ such that:

1. $(\alpha_1\gamma)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} =_B \beta$
2. $(\alpha_1\gamma)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(l_1 \rightarrow r_1 \text{ if } D_1)} =_B \sigma$
3. there is an NC-rewrite $u_0\alpha_1\gamma \rightarrow_{R,B} u_0[r_1]_{p_1}\alpha_1\gamma$ with $u_0\beta =_B u_0\alpha_1\gamma$, and $u_0[r_1]_{p_1}\alpha_1\gamma =_B w_1$

4. $\mathcal{R} \vdash (C_0 \wedge D_1)\alpha_1\gamma$.

Therefore, by Theorem 1 there is an NC-rewrite sequence

$$u_0\alpha_1\gamma \rightarrow_{R,B} u_0[r_1]_{p_1}\alpha_1\gamma \rightarrow_{R,B} w'_2 \ldots w'_{n-1} \rightarrow_{R,B} w'_n =_B v\eta$$

with $w_i =_B w'_i$, $2 \leq i \leq n$. This means that $\gamma|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_1|C_1)} \uplus \eta$ is an NC-solution of the reachability problem $u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$ with $n-1$ NC-rewrite steps. Therefore, by the induction hypothesis there is a symbolic solution with narrowing sequence[9] $u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} u_2 \mid C_2 \cdots u_{n-1} \mid C_{n-1} \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} n_n \mid C_n$ and B-unifier $\delta \in CSU_B(u_n, v)$, and a normalized substitution ρ_0 with $Dom(\rho_0) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta) \cup \mathcal{V}ar((v \mid C_n \wedge D)\delta)$ such that $(\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_1|C_1)} \uplus \delta\rho_0|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ is an actual NC-solution instance and, furthermore:

1. $\gamma|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_1|C_1)} =_B (\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_1|C_1)}$ and $\eta =_B \delta\rho_0|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$
2. the NC-rewrite sequence

$$u_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0 \rightarrow_{R,B} u_2\alpha_3 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0 \ldots u_{n-1}\alpha_n\delta\rho \rightarrow_{R,B} u_n\delta\rho_0 =_B v\delta\rho_0$$

is such that: (i) $u_1\gamma =_B u_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0$, (ii) for each i, $2 \leq i \leq n$, $w'_i =_B u_i\alpha_{i+1} \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0$, and (iii) $v\eta =_B v\delta\rho_0$.

Since by the assumptions in Footnote 9 we have a narrowing sequence $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} u_2 \mid C_2 \cdots u_{n-1} \mid C_{n-1} \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} n_n \mid C_n$ and a B-unifier $\delta \in CSU_B(u_n, v)$, the natural candidate for the desired NC-solution instance would be $(\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} \uplus \delta\rho_0|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$. The problem, however, is that we need a normalized substitution ρ with $Dom(\rho) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_0\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta) \cup \mathcal{V}ar((v \mid C_n \wedge D)\delta)$, which may properly contain $Dom(\rho_0) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta) \cup \mathcal{V}ar((v \mid C_n \wedge D)\delta)$. This is because $u_1 = u_0[r_1]_{p_1}\alpha_1$, and the righthand side r_1 of the rule $l_1 \rightarrow r_1$ *if* D_1 may drop some of the variables of l_1. That is, the set $\vec{z_1} = Ran(\alpha_1) - \mathcal{V}ar(u_1)$ may be non-empty. But by the standardization apart assumptions in Footnote 9, $\vec{z_1} \cap Dom(\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta) = \emptyset$, so that $\vec{z_1}\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta = \vec{z_1}$, and our desired ρ has $Dom(\rho) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_0\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta) \cup \mathcal{V}ar((v \mid C_n \wedge D)\delta) = \vec{z_1} \uplus \mathcal{V}ar(u_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta) \cup \mathcal{V}ar((v \mid C_n \wedge D)\delta) = \vec{z_1} \uplus Dom(\rho_0)$. We can choose ρ as the normalized substitution extending ρ_0 as $\rho = \rho_0 \cup \gamma|_{\vec{z_1}}$. All we have left is to prove that ρ yields an actual NC-solution instance satisfying conditions (1)–(2) in the Theorem.

First of all note that, again, by the standardization apart, we have for each i, $1 \leq i < n$, $(\alpha_{i+1} \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_i)} = (\alpha_{i+1} \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_i)}$, which is normalized by the induction hypothesis, and for each i, $2 \leq i \leq n$, $\alpha_i \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho|_{\vec{y_i}} = \alpha_i \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0|_{\vec{y_i}}$, which again is normalized by the induction hypothesis. Likewise, $(C_n \wedge D)\delta\rho = (C_n \wedge D)\delta\rho_0$, so that $\mathcal{R} \vdash (C_n \wedge D)\delta\rho$. With respect to the fresh

[9] Since we will later use the longer narrowing sequence $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} u_2 \mid C_2 \cdots u_{n-1} \mid C_{n-1} \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} n_n \mid C_n$, we furthermore assume that the rules and unifiers in the subsequent steps are standardized apart with respect to the variables used in the initial step $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1$.

variables $\vec{y}_1$ of D_1, since $\vec{y}_1\alpha_1 = \vec{y}_1$ and $\vec{y}_1 \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_1 \mid C_1)$, the above equality $\gamma|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_1|C_1)} =_B (\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n \delta\rho_0)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_1|C_1)}$ and γ normalized means, using again standardization apart, that $(\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\vec{y}_1}$ is normalized. Also, $\delta\rho = \gamma|_{\vec{z_1}} \uplus \delta\rho_0$ and therefore is normalized. Furthermore, $(\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)} = \delta(\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar((v|D)\delta)}) = \delta(\rho_0|_{\mathcal{V}ar((v|D)\delta)}) = (\delta\rho_0)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)} =_B \eta$, proving the second part of (1). So we just need to prove that $(\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)}$ is normalized, so that we have an NC-solution, and that the first part of (1) and (2) hold. Since $\beta =_B (\alpha_1\gamma)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)}$, if we can prove $(\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} =_B (\alpha_1\gamma)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)}$, we will prove both the first part of (1) and $(\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)}$ normalized. It is helpful to consider the following sets of variables: $\vec{x}_{p_1} = \mathcal{V}ar((u_0)_{p_1})$, $\vec{z}_0 = \mathcal{V}ar(u_0 \mid C_0) - \vec{x}_{p_1}$, $\vec{z}_2 = Ran(\alpha_1) - \vec{z}_1$, and to recall that $\vec{y}_1$ are the fresh variables of the FPP condition D_1. We then get the following partitions of variables: $\mathcal{V}ar(u_0 \mid C_0) = \vec{x}_{p_1} \uplus \vec{z}_0$, and $\mathcal{V}ar(u_1 \mid C_1) = \vec{z}_2 \uplus \vec{y}_1 \uplus \vec{z}_0$. Therefore, $(\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} = (\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\vec{x}_{p_1}} \uplus (\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\vec{z}_0}$. But, using standardization apart, the definition of ρ, and the equality $\gamma|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_1|C_1)} =_B (\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho_0)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_1|C_1)}$, we get:

$$(\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\vec{x}_{p_1}} = \alpha_1((\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\vec{z}_1 \uplus \vec{z}_2}) =_B \alpha_1(\gamma|_{\vec{z}_1} \uplus \gamma|_{\vec{z}_2}) = (\alpha_1\gamma)|_{\vec{x}_{p_1}}.$$

Likewise, $(\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\vec{z}_0} = (\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\vec{z}_0} =_B \gamma|_{\vec{z}_0} = \alpha_1\gamma|_{\vec{z}_0}$, giving us $(\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} =_B (\alpha_1\gamma)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)}$ and therefore both the first part of (1) and its being normalized. For (2), note that: (i) $u_0\beta =_B u_0\alpha_1\gamma =_B u_0\alpha_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho$; (ii) for each i, $1 \leq i \leq n$, $w_i =_B w'_i = u_i\alpha_{i+1} \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho$; and (iii) $u_n\delta\rho =_B v\delta\rho =_B v\eta$. $\square$

Remark 5. *Using Remarks 2, 3 and 4, the above Completeness Theorem can be easily adapted to a convergent FPP theory $\mathcal{R}_\phi$ with B-stable frozenness map ϕ that has a family of unfrozen kinds and with unfrozen conditions provided: (i) the kinds of the terms in each condition of $C_0 \wedge D$ have unfrozen kinds; (ii) the kinds of all variables in $\mathcal{V}ar(u_0 \mid C_0) \cup \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid B)$ have unfrozen kinds; and (ii) the positions at which rewriting takes place in the NC-rewrite sequence $u_0\beta \rightarrow_{R,B} w_1 \rightarrow_{R,B} w_2 \cdots w_{n-1} \rightarrow_{R,B} w_n =_B v\eta$ are all unfrozen positions.*

The completeness of NC-rewriting immediately shows that, if v is strongly irreducible, constrained narrowing is a complete method to find as instances *all* solutions of a reachability problem $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$, and not just NC-solutions.

Corollary 1. *If in Theorem 4 the term v is strongly irreducible, we can weaken the assumption on $\beta \uplus \eta$ to just be a solution of the reachability problem $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$. Since $v\eta$ is normalized, the rewrite $u_0\beta \rightarrow^!_{R,B} v\eta$ has a description as an NC-rewrite sequence, so that $\beta \uplus \eta$ is an NC-solution.*

6. Constrained Variants and Constrained Unification

The completeness of constrained narrowing and Corollary 1 yield two useful symbolic methods, one for describing symbolically all $\mathcal{E}$-variants of a term in an equational theory $\mathcal{E} = (\Sigma, E \uplus B)$ by constrained narrowing with a convergent FPP rewrite theory $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$, and another for describing symbolically all $E \uplus B$-unifiers of two terms by constrained narrowing with such a theory $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$.

The $\mathcal{E}$-variants of a term have only been defined for *unconditional* equational theories $\mathcal{E}$ [15, 25]. The following definition generalizes the variant notion to the conditional case.

Definition 16 (Variants). *Let $\mathcal{E} = (\Sigma, E \uplus B)$ be an order-sorted conditional equational theory such that $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}} = (\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$ is a convergent FPP rewrite theory. Given a term t, an* $\mathcal{E}$-variant *of t is a pair (u, θ) with u a Σ-term and θ a substitution such that: (i) $Dom(\theta) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(t)$, (ii) $\theta = \theta!_{\vec{E},B}$, and (iii) $u =_B (t\theta)!_{\vec{E},B}$.*

We can think of the variants of a term t as the different *patterns* in $\vec{E}, B$-canonical form associated to instances of t.

As shown in [25], in the unconditional case the $\mathcal{E}$-variants of a term can be computed symbolically by *folding variant narrowing*. Can we have in the conditional case a constrained notion of variant as a symbolic way and method of describing all variants?

Definition 17 (Constrained Variant). *Let $\mathcal{E} = (\Sigma, E \uplus B)$ be an order-sorted conditional equational theory such that $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}} = (\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$ is a convergent FPP rewrite theory. A* constrained $\mathcal{E}$-variant *of a term t is a pair $(u_n\delta \mid C_n\delta, (\alpha_1 \cdots \alpha_n\delta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(t)})$ such that the constrained narrowing sequence $t \mid \top \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow u_{n-1} \mid C_{n-1} \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} u_n \mid C_n$, $n \geq 0$, together with the B-unifier $\delta \in CSU_B(u_n, x{:}\mathsf{s})$ is a symbolic NC-solution of the reachability problem $t \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^{\star} x{:}\mathsf{s} \mid \top$, where $s = ls(t)$, and x is a fresh variable not appearing in t.*

Note that conditions (1)–(2) in Definition 15, plus the fact that $u_n\delta =_B x{:}\mathsf{s}\delta$ ensure that: (i) $u_n\delta$ is normalized, and (ii) $\alpha_1 \cdots \alpha_n\delta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(t)}$ is a normalized substitution.

Note that $x{:}\mathsf{s}$ is a strongly irreducible term. Therefore, Corollary 1 applies, and we get as an immediate consequence of the Completeness Theorem for constrained narrowing the following completeness result, showing that constrained variants contain as instances *all* variantes up to B-equality.

Theorem 5 (Completeness of Constrained $\mathcal{E}$-Variants). *For $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}}$ as above, let t be a term and let (w, θ) be an $\mathcal{E}$-variant of t. Then there is a constrained $\mathcal{E}$-variant $(v \mid C, \gamma)$ and a normalized substitution ρ such that:*

1. $v\rho =_B w$
2. $\theta =_B \gamma\rho$
3. $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}} \vdash C\rho$.

Let $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}}$ be as above, and consider an $\mathcal{E}$-unification problem $u \stackrel{?}{=}_{E \cup B} v$. Note that, since $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}}$ is Church-Roser, θ is an $\mathcal{E}$-unifier iff $(u\theta)!_{\vec{E},B} =_B (v\theta)!_{\vec{E},B}$. Furthermore, without loss of generality we may assume $\theta = \theta!_{\vec{E},B}$. Note that, by assuming that for each top sort [s] in each connected component we add a fresh new sort Pair.[s] in its own connected component and a pairing operator $< \_, \_ >$: [s] [s] $\rightarrow$ Pair.[s], we can recast an $\mathcal{E}$-unification problem $u \stackrel{?}{=}_{E \cup B} v$ as a reachability problem $< u, v > \rightsquigarrow^{\star} < x, x >$ where x is a fresh variable not appearing in u and v and having the top sort [s] of the connected component of the sorts of u and v.

Definition 18 (Constrained $\mathcal{E}$-Unifier). *Let $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}}$ be as above. A* constrained $\mathcal{E}$-unifier *of a $\mathcal{E}$-unification problem $u \stackrel{?}{=}_{E \cup B} v$ is a pair of the form*

$$\alpha_1 \cdots \alpha_n \delta \mid C_n \gamma \delta$$

such that $< u, v > \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} < u_1, v_1 > \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} < u_n, v_n >$ together with the B-unifier $\delta \in CSU_B(< u_n, v_n >, < x, x >)$ is a symbolic NC-solution of the reachability problem $< u, v >\mid \top \rightsquigarrow^{\star} < x, x >\mid \top$.

Note that conditions (1)–(2) in Definition 15, plus the fact that $< u_n, v_n > \delta =_B < x, x > \delta$ ensure that: (i) $\alpha_1 \cdots \alpha_n \delta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(<u,v>)}$ is a normalized substitution, and (ii) $u_n\delta$ and $v_n\delta$ are normalized.

Again, since $< x, x >$ is strongly irreducible, Corollary 1 applies, and we get as an immediate consequence of the Completeness Theorem for constrained narrowing the completeness of constrained unifiers to describe symbolically all (normalized) $\mathcal{E}$-unifiers up to B-equality.

Theorem 6 (Completeness of Constrained $\mathcal{E}$-unifiers). *Let $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}}$ be as above, and let $\theta = \theta!_{\vec{E},B}$ be a unifier of $u \stackrel{?}{=}_{E \cup B} v$. Then there is a constrained unifier $\gamma \mid D$ and a normalized substitution ρ such that:*

1. $\gamma\rho =_B \theta$
2. $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}} \vdash D\rho$.

Using a second tupling constructor, a simultaneous unification problem

$$u_1 \stackrel{?}{=}_{E \cup B} v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \stackrel{?}{=}_{E \cup B} v_n$$

can be reduced to the single unification problem

$$< u_1, \ldots, u_n > \stackrel{?}{=}_{E \cup B} < v_1, \ldots, v_n >$$

and be symbolically described by its constrained unifiers.

There is of course the alternative, already described after Definition 11, of extending $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}}$ with a new sort *Truth*, with a constant $tt :\rightarrow$ *Truth*, in a new connected component, and adding for each top sort $[s]$ in each connected component of the sorts of $\mathcal{R}_{\mathcal{E}}$ the predicate $\_ \equiv \_ : [s]\ [s] \rightarrow$ *Truth* and the rule

$x \equiv x \to tt$. In this way we can, alternatively, *reduce* any $\mathcal{E}$-unification problem $u \stackrel{?}{=}_{E \cup B} v$ to the problem of computing the *variants* of the term $u \equiv v$ that have the form (tt, θ), which, by Theorem 5, can all be obtained as instances of constrained variants of the form $(tt \mid C, \gamma)$. However, since all constrained unifiers computed according to the treatment we have presented above are such that $u_n \delta$ and $v_n \delta$ are normalized, such a treatment may compute fewer constrained unifiers and may be more efficient. We leave a detailed comparison between both methods, including their experimental evaluation, as a subject for future research.

The advantage of constrained variants and constrained unifiers is that they can provide a more compact, yet complete, representation of, respectively, all $\mathcal{E}$-variants of a term and all $\mathcal{E}$-unifiers of a unification problem $u \stackrel{?}{=}_{E \cup B} v$. This can have many advantages, including the following two. First, in some cases there may be a finite set of constrained variants (resp. unifiers) when only an infinite set of variants (resp. unifiers) exists. This would allow achieving a finitely-braching search space instead of an infinitely-branching one, and postponing the possibly costly solution of the constrains until after some potential symbolic solution is found. Second, in conditional theories appearing in actual practice —particularly when sorts and subsorts are used— the set $\vec{E}_1$ of rules needed to solve the constraints generated by narrowing may be a proper subset of $\vec{E}$, and may even be unconditional and have the finite variant property. More generally, denoting $\vec{E} = \vec{E}_0$, we may have a sequence of increasingly simpler equations $\vec{E}_0 \supset \vec{E}_1 \supset \ldots \vec{E}_k$, so that constraints generated using $\vec{E}_i$ can be handled with fewer and simpler rules in $\vec{E}_{i+1}$. This can make hierarchical, symbolic methods such as the computation of constrained variants and constrained unifiers quite effective. We illustrate these possibilities with an example.

Example 6. *As pointed out in the Introduction, a rewrite theory has often a non-equational meaning in which rules are viewed as transition rules in a concurrent system [37, 39]. We have developed, with K. Bae, a narrowing-based model checking method and implementation for such concurrent systems in [24, 8], called* logical model checking*, which allows rules to describe a concurrent system while the equational theory describes both system properties and state predicates. However such logical model checking does not allow conditional transition rules or conditional equations. The work developed in this paper can clearly contribute to expand the application of logical model checking by allowing conditional equations both for the system properties and the state predicates. Specifically, we are interested in performing model checking in a symbolic way with rewrite theories $(\Sigma, E \cup B, R)$ such that $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$ is a convergent FPP theory of the kind considered in this paper, and where the rules R may be conditional, but have only equational conditions that can be solved using the convergent FPP theory $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E})$.*

Let us consider a simple protocol example involving a data structure for messages exchanged between participants that is represented as a set. That is, we consider a sort Dataset *with a subsort* Data *and two operators, $\emptyset$ and an associative-commutative union operator $\&$ with equations $\emptyset \mathbin{\&} y = y$, $x \mathbin{\&} x = x$*

and $y \;\&\; x \;\&\; x = y \;\&\; x$ *using variables* x, y:Dataset. *Assuming that communication channels may lose messages, the protocol repeats sending messages indefinitely, and thus channels may have repeated messages. Let us assume a very simple notion of state using symbol* $\_;\_;\_ :$ DataSet DataSet DataSet, *where the left component originally contains the initial data, the second component represents a unidirectional communication channel, and the third component will store the final data. For* S_0 *some specific data set to be sent, an initial configuration would be* $S_0; \emptyset; \emptyset$, *and the final configuration should be* $\emptyset; \emptyset; S_0$.

This protocol should satisfy an invariant asserting that all the information spread out among the communication channels is always the same, i.e., if there is an initial set messages to be sent from sender participants to received participants, the set of messages scattered through all the channels is the same modulo repeated occurrences of messages. This is expressed with the following predicate ***inv*** : DataSet State $\rightarrow$ Bool *which can be defined by the following conditional equation, oriented as the FPP rule:*

$$\boldsymbol{inv}(S_0, S_1; S_2; S_3) \rightarrow \boldsymbol{true} \;\; \boldsymbol{if} \;\; S_1 \& S_2 \& S_3 \;\rightarrow S_4 \wedge \; S_0 \equiv S_4 \rightarrow tt. \qquad (5)$$

The equational theory $(\Sigma, B \uplus E_0 \uplus E_1)$ *associated to this example is a convergent FPP rewrite theory by orienting equations* E_1 *for symbol* $\&$ *and* E_0 *containing only Equation 5 into rules. Indeed, we have a hierarchical view of the equational theory, as explained above, where* $B \subset (E_1 \cup B) \subset (E_1 \cup E_0 \cup B)$. *The equational theory* $(\Sigma, B \cup E_1)$ *has the finite variant property and the latest version of the Maude tool can effectively generate variants and unifiers for it. Of course, the communication protocol is specified by a rewrite theory* $(\Sigma, B \uplus E_0 \uplus E_1, R)$ *where the rules* R *(not detailed here) specify the protocol transitions. We are in the desired, more general situation, since the underlying conditional equational theory* $(\Sigma, B \uplus E_0 \uplus E_1)$ *can be oriented as a convergent FPP rewrite theory* $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E}_0 \uplus \vec{E}_1)$.

In logical model checking, equational unification is performed every time a transition rule is applied by narrowing but this equational unification is restricted to the system properties, in this case properties of symbol $\&$. *However, the generation of the logical state transition system requires instantiating every computed symbolic state in the transition system to a version where predicates can be evaluated to either* ***true*** *or* ***false***. *Therefore, variants of symbolic states are generated using the equations for the state predicates. For example, given an initial data set* $m_0 \& m_1 \& m_2$ *and a state* $St = (m_1 \& X); m_1; (m_0 \& Y)$, *the variants of the term* $t = \boldsymbol{inv}(m_0 \& m_1 \& m_2, (m_1 \& X); m_1; (m_0 \& Y))$ *would be generated using constrained narrowing for the reachability goal* $t \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^{\star} x{:}\mathsf{s} \mid \top$. *In particular* *we get:*

$$\begin{array}{rr} \textit{\textbf{inv}}(m_0\&m_1\&m_2, (m_1\&X); m_1; (m_0\&Y)) \mid & \top \\ \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} & \\ \textit{\textbf{true}} \mid & m_1\&X\&m_1\&m_0\&Y \to^\star S_4 \\ & \wedge \\ & S_4 \equiv m_0\&m_1\&m_2 \to^\star tt \end{array}$$

Finally, as explained before, the equational theory $(\Sigma, B, \vec{E_1})$ has the finite variant property and there are tools for effectively solving the unification problem

$$m_1\&X\&m_1\&m_0\&Y = m_0\&m_1\&m_2$$

whose more general solutions are $\sigma_1 = \{X \mapsto Z, Y \mapsto m_2\&Z\}$ and $\sigma_2 = \{X \mapsto m_2\&Z, Y \mapsto Z\}$.

An important issue left for future research is how to detect that a constrained variant (resp. constrained unifier) is *more general than* another (i.e., one subsumes another). Semantically, $(u \mid C, \alpha)$ is more general than $(v \mid D, \beta)$ iff there is a γ such that:

1. $u\gamma =_B v$, and
2. $\mathcal{R} \vdash (D \Rightarrow C\gamma)$ (i.e., for each substitution θ such that $\mathcal{R} \vdash D\theta$, we have that $\mathcal{R} \vdash C\gamma\theta$).

Likewise, $\alpha \mid C$ is semantically *more general* than $\beta \mid D$ (i.e., subsumes $\beta \mid D$) iff there is a substitution γ such that

1. $\alpha\gamma =_B \beta$, and
2. $\mathcal{R} \vdash (D \Rightarrow C\gamma)$

Of course, in both cases determining whether $\mathcal{R} \vdash (D \Rightarrow C\gamma)$ may in general be undecidable. However, either because we can use simpler equations $\vec{E_i}$ as described above, or by using a simple decidable condition, it may be possible to achieve checkable versions of subsumption for constrained variants and constrained unifiers.

Constrained variants and constrained unifiers seem appealing for symbolically and compactly representing all variants and unifiers of a conditional theory. But we can ask the question:

> *Given a constrained variant (resp. unifier) is there a systematic way to* extract *from it a complete family of the variants (resp. unifiers) that it represents?*

The answer, in the affirmative, is part of the more general method of *layered constrained narrowing* explained in Section 8.

7. A Useful Theory Transformation

Let $\mathcal{R}$ be a convergent, strongly deterministic FPP conditional order-sorted rewrite theory. In what follows it will be useful to bring to the object level certain meta-level constraints involving the operators $\_ \rightarrow^{\star} \_$ and $\_ \wedge \_$. This can be achieved by extending $\mathcal{R}$ (where S is its set of sorts) to a rewrite theory $\hat{\mathcal{R}}$ with the following new sorts:

- a sort Atom with a constant $\top$, and for each top sort $[\mathsf{s}]$ in S a new operator $\_ \rightarrow^{\star} \_ : [\mathsf{s}]\ [\mathsf{s}] \rightarrow \mathsf{Atom}$,
- a sort Cond with subsort $\mathsf{Atom} < \mathsf{Cond}$ and a binary operator $\_ \wedge \_ :$ $\mathsf{Atom}\ \mathsf{Cond} \rightarrow \mathsf{Cond}$.

$\hat{\mathcal{R}}$ contains the axioms B and rules R of $\mathcal{R}$ and the following additional rules:

1. $(x \rightarrow^{\star} x) \rightarrow \top$, where x is a variable of the top sort $[\mathsf{s}]$ for each strongly connected component of S.
2. $(\top \wedge C) \rightarrow C$, where C is a variable of sort Cond

Since these rules are terminating and operate on a completely new connected component, it is not hard to show that, since $\mathcal{R}$ is operationally terminating, $\hat{\mathcal{R}}$ is also operationally terminating. By construction, the above rules cannot have any critical pairs with those in R, and do not themselves have any non-trivial critical pairs. Therefore $\hat{\mathcal{R}}$ is itself also a convergent FPP rewrite theory. In what follows, it will be useful to give to the new operators added to $\mathcal{R}$ in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}$ the following frozenness information using a mapping ϕ:

$$\phi(\_ \rightarrow^{\star} \_) = \{2\} \qquad \phi(\_ \wedge \_) = \{2\}$$

Instead, all operators f in $\mathcal{R}$ are unfrozen, i.e., $\phi(f) = \emptyset$. Since the only operators with frozenness restrictions obey no axioms, ϕ is clearly a B-stable map. It is easy to check that, if S is the set of sorts in $\mathcal{R}$, then $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_{\phi}$ is such that the kinds of S are unfrozen, with the conditions of the rules in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}$ also unfrozen.

Note that the notion of a layered proof for a rewrite theory $\mathcal{R}$ extends naturally to that of a layered proof for a theory $\mathcal{R}_{\phi}$, with frozenness information given by mapping ϕ, just by requiring that all rewrites take place at non-ϕ-frozen positions. In our case, since the conditions in the theory $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_{\phi}$ are unfrozen, the restrictions imposed by ϕ can apply at most to the first layer of such proofs: for all other layers the restrictions ϕ do not apply. A key point about the above extension is that we have the following equivalence:

Theorem 7. *Let $u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_n$ be a conjunction of reachability goals in $\mathcal{R}$. Then for each layered trace proof (resp. NC-proof[10]) $\#T \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#$ in $\mathcal{R}$ of these reachability goals, there are:*

[10] That is, a layered trace rewrite proof where *all* the rewrite steps (including those in evaluations of conditions) are NC-rewrites.

1. *a layered trace proof (resp. NC-proof)* $\#T' \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#$ *of the following* transformed *sequence of reachability goals* $(u_1 \rightarrow^\star v_1) \rightarrow^\star \top \wedge \cdots \wedge (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n) \rightarrow^\star \top$ *in* $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$

2. *a layered trace proof (resp. NC-proof)* $\#T'' \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#$ *of the following* single *reachability goal* $((u_1 \rightarrow^\star v_1) \wedge \cdots \wedge (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top$ *in* $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$

Conversely, for any layered trace proofs (resp. NC-proofs) $\#T' \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#$ *and* $\#T'' \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#$ *in* $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ *of, respectively, the transformed reachability goals and the compact reachability goal above, there is a layered trace proof (resp. NC-proof)* $\#T \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#$ *in* $\mathcal{R}$.

Proof. We use throughout, without further mention, the fact that $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ has unfrozen the kinds of $\mathcal{R}$ and unfrozen conditions. The layered trace proof $\#T \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#$ of the given reachability goals in $\mathcal{R}$ is of the form:

$$\begin{aligned}&\#u_1 \rightarrow u_1^1 \rightarrow u_1^2 \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow u_1^{k_1} =_B v_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge\\ &\ u_n \rightarrow u_n^1 \rightarrow u_n^2 \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow u_n^{k_n} =_B v_n \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#\end{aligned}$$

We can build a layered trace proof of the transformed reachability goals in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ of the form

$$\begin{aligned}&\#(u_1 \rightarrow^\star v_1) \rightarrow (u_1^1 \rightarrow^\star v_1) \rightarrow (u_1^2 \rightarrow^\star v_1) \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow (u_1^{k_1} \rightarrow^\star v_1) \rightarrow \top =_B \top \wedge \cdots \wedge\\ &\ (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n) \rightarrow (u_n^1 \rightarrow^\star v_n) \rightarrow (u_n^2 \rightarrow^\star v_n) \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow (u_n^{k_1} \rightarrow^\star v_n) \rightarrow \top =_B \top \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#\end{aligned}$$

and likewise a layered trace proof of the compact reachability goal in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ of the form

$$\begin{aligned}&\#((u_1 \rightarrow^\star v_1) \wedge \cdots (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \rightarrow ((u_1^1 \rightarrow^\star v_1) \wedge \cdots (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \rightarrow ((u_1^2 \rightarrow^\star v_1) \wedge \cdots (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \vdots\\ &\ \rightarrow ((u_1^{k_1} \rightarrow^\star v_1) \wedge \cdots (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \rightarrow (\top \wedge \cdots (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \rightarrow ((u_2 \rightarrow^\star v_2) \wedge \cdots (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \vdots\\ &\ \rightarrow ((u_2^{k_2} \rightarrow^\star v_2) \wedge \cdots (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \rightarrow (\top \wedge \cdots (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \rightarrow ((u_3 \rightarrow^\star v_3) \wedge \cdots (u_n \rightarrow^\star v_n)) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \vdots\\ &\ \rightarrow (u_n^{k_n} \rightarrow^\star v_n) \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \rightarrow \top \rightarrow^\star \top\\ &\ \rightarrow \top =_B \top \uparrow TS \uparrow \top\#\end{aligned}$$

The converse proof follows easily from the frozenness restrictions ϕ, which force the rewriting to be restricted to subterms of the form $u_1, u_1^1, \ldots, u_1^{k_1}, \ldots, u_n, u_n^1, \ldots, u_n^{k_n}$. Finally, since the levels TS of all proofs are the *same*, it is obvious by construction that NC rewriting proofs of the original reachability goals correspond to the NC rewriting proofs of both the transformed reachability goals and the compact reachability goal. □

Lemma 7. *Let $u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_n$ be such that for each i, $1 \leq i \leq n$, there is a strongly irreducible term v_i and a normalized substitution γ_i such that $u'_i =_B v_i\gamma_i$. Let θ be a substitution with $Dom(\theta) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_n)$ and such that for each i, $1 \leq i \leq n$, $(\gamma_i\theta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v_i)}$ is normalized. Then if $(u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_n)\theta \rightarrow^{*} \top$ in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}$, there is an NC rewriting sequence for it satisfying the frozenness restrictions ϕ.*

Proof. First of all note that $u'_1\theta =_B v_1\gamma_1\theta, \ldots, u'_n\theta =_B v_n\gamma_n\theta$ are normalized, so no rewriting is possible for them. Second, it is easy to prove by induction on n that the above rewrite sequence is possible iff $u_1\theta!_{R,B} =_B v_1\gamma_1\theta, \ldots, u_n\theta!_{R,B} =_B v_n\gamma_n\theta$. Let $u_i\theta \rightarrow^{*} u_i\theta!_{R,B}$ be NC rewrite sequences, $1 \leq i \leq n$. We then obtain the following NC rewrite sequence satisfying the frozenness condition ϕ:

$$
\begin{array}{l}
(u_1\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_1\theta \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_n\theta) \\
\rightarrow^{*} (u_1\theta!_{R,B} \rightarrow^{\star} u'_1\theta \wedge u_2\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_2\theta \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_n\theta) \\
\rightarrow (\top \wedge u_2\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_2\theta \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_n\theta) \\
\rightarrow (u_2\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_2\theta \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_n\theta) \\
\rightarrow^{*} (\top \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_n\theta) \\
\qquad \vdots \\
\rightarrow (u_n\theta \rightarrow^{\star} u'_n\theta) \\
\rightarrow^{*} \top
\end{array}
$$

□

8. Solving Constraints by Layered Constrained Narrowing

Constrained narrowing allows us to find *symbolic NC-solutions* to reachability problems $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$ with $u \mid C$ and $v \mid D$ constrained terms, and $\mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = \emptyset$. That is, symbolic NC-solutions that will "cover" or "lift" as an instance any actual NC-solution $\beta \uplus \eta$. But can we use it to *compute* a set of *most general actual NC-solutions* $\{\beta_i \uplus \eta_i\}_{i \in \mathcal{I}}$ to a reachability problem $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{*} v \mid D$ when $u \mid C$ and $v \mid D$ are FPP, so that any other NC-solution will be (up to B-equivalence) a substitution *instance* of one of the $\beta_i \uplus \eta_i$?

The key idea of the affirmative answer to the above question is to exploit the theory transformation in Section 7 that allows us to recast the solution of a conjunction of reachability goals in $\mathcal{R}$

$$u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_n$$

as a single reachability goal

$$(u_1 \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge u_n \rightarrow^{\star}_{R,B} u'_n) \rightarrow^{\star} \top$$

in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_{\phi}$. We can apply this idea to *solve by constrained narrowing* the accumulated condition $(C_n \wedge D)\delta$ computed by constrained narrowing when symbolically solving a goal $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$. Indeed, we can do so by symbolically solving the reachability goal $(C_n \wedge D)\delta \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^{\star} \top \mid \top$ by constrained narrowing in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_{\phi}$. Solving this goal will generate another accumulated condition goal, and so on. Repeated application of this method then gives us a *sound and complete* method to compute a set of most general NC-solutions $\{\beta_i \uplus \eta_i\}_{i \in \mathcal{I}}$ of a reachability goal $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D$, provided $u \mid C$ and $v \mid D$ are FPP.

The method can be expressed by an inference system for *layered constrained narrowing* which is analogous to the one in Section 3 based on layered traces: here we have layered constrained narrowing traces. But, since we can gather all conjunction into a single term in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}$, the inference system is simpler, since it solves a single reachability goal in each layer.

Layered traces will be of the form:

$$\#T_1 \uparrow T_2 \uparrow \cdots \uparrow T_n \mid G \mid \top\#$$

with $n \geq 0$, the T_i fully expanded narrowing traces, and G a possibly partially expanded reachability goal. A *closed proof* will have the form

$$\#T_1 \uparrow T_2 \uparrow \cdots \uparrow T_n \uparrow \top\#$$

so that fully expanded constrained narrowing proofs of all layers have been developed and no more inference steps are possible.

Initially, we start with a reachability goal in $\mathcal{R}$,

$$\#u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v \mid D \uparrow \top\#$$

with $\mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = \emptyset$ (but see below for a more general possibility). By a *fully expanded* narrowing trace T of a goal $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow^{\star} v_0 \mid D_0$, where all the variables of the goal, and each of the terms in the conditions C_0 or D_0, belong to sorts in $\mathcal{R}$, we mean a symbolic NC-solution of it in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_{\phi}$, represented as a sequence of normalized substitutions followed by the actual symbolic trace as follows:

$$[\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}] : u \mid C \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1,\phi} u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow u_{n-1} \mid C_{n-1} \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n,\phi} u_n \mid C_n =^{\delta}_{B} v \mid D$$

where $\gamma = \alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n \delta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u|C)} \uplus \delta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ is the symbolic NC-solution, which, as δ, is normalized by definition; $\vec{\mu} = \{\alpha_{i+1} \ldots \alpha_n \delta|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_i)}\}_{1 \leq i < n}$ is the family of substitutions also normalized by definition; and $\vec{\nu} = \{\alpha_i \ldots \alpha_n \delta|_{\vec{y_i}}\}_{1 \leq i \leq n}$ is the family of substitutions, normalized by definition, where $\vec{y_i}$ are the fresh variables of the condition D_i in the rule $l_i \rightarrow r_i$ *if* D_i used in narrowing step $u_{i-1} \mid C_{i-1} \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_i,\phi} u_i \mid C_i$. Note that, since all the sorts of $\mathcal{R}$ and all conditions in its rules are unfrozen in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_{\phi}$, we can trivially view each trace of a goal $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^{\star}$

$v \mid D$ in $\mathcal{R}$ as a trace of a goal in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$. This suggest widening our inference system to deal not just with initial reachability goals in $\mathcal{R}$, but with initial reachability goals $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ such that: (i) $\mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = \emptyset$, and (ii) all the variables of the goal and each of the terms in the conditions C or D have sorts in $\mathcal{R}$.

$TS, TS', \ldots$, etc., will range over sequences $T_1 \uparrow T_2 \uparrow \cdots \uparrow T_n$ of such fully-expanded narrowing traces (called *trace stacks*), where $n \geq 0$, i.e., TS can also be the empty trace stack, denoted *nil*. The inference system for layered constrained narrowing is quite simple. It is very similar to the layered proof system in Section 3.3 and has just three inference rules; expressed as meta-level rewrite rules that expand reachability goals:

Narrowing

$\# \; TS \uparrow (u_0 \mid C_0) \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1,\phi} (u_1 \mid C_1) \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow (u_n \mid C_n) \rightsquigarrow^\star_{R,B} (v \mid D) \uparrow \top \; \#$

$\rightarrow$

$\# \; TS \uparrow (u_0 \mid C_0) \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1,\phi} (u_1 \mid C_1)$
$\rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow (u_n \mid C_n) \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_{n+1},\phi} (u_{n+1} \mid C_{n+1}) \rightsquigarrow^\star_{R,B} (v \mid D) \uparrow \top \; \#$

where $n \geq 0$ and $u_n|C_n \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_{n+1},\phi} u_{n+1}|C_{n+1}$ is a constrained narrowing step in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$

Unification

$\# \; TS \uparrow (u_0 \mid C_0) \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} (u_1 \mid C_1) \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow (u_n \mid C_n) \rightsquigarrow^\star_{R,B} (v \mid D) \uparrow \top \; \#$

$\rightarrow$

$\# \; TS \uparrow [\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}] : (u_0 \mid C_0) \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} (u_1 \mid C_1) \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow (u_n \mid C_n) =^\delta_B (v \mid D) \uparrow \top \; \#$

if:

1. $n \geq 0$, and $\delta \in CSU_B(u_n = v)$
2. the above trace is a symbolic solution of the reachability goal $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star_{R,B} v \mid D$ with $[\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}]$ its associated sequence or normalized substitutions, and
3. if $TS = [\gamma_1, \delta_1, \vec{\mu_1}, \vec{\nu_1}] : S_1 \uparrow \ldots \uparrow [\gamma_k, \delta_k, \vec{\mu_k}, \vec{\nu_k}] : S_k,\ k \geq 0$, with the S_j the actual narrowing sequences followed by their last unification step, then, for each j, $1 \leq j \leq k$, the substitutions

$$[\gamma_j\gamma_{j+1}\ldots\gamma_k\gamma, \delta_j\gamma_{j+1}\ldots\gamma_k\gamma, \vec{\mu}_j\gamma_{j+1}\ldots\gamma_k\gamma, \vec{\nu}_j\gamma_{j+1}\ldots\gamma_k\gamma]$$

are all normalized.

Shift

$$\# \; TS \uparrow [\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}] : (u \mid C) \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1, \phi} (u_1 \mid C_1) \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow (u_n \mid C_n) =^{\delta}_{B} (v \mid D) \uparrow \top \; \#$$
$$\to$$
$$\# \; TS \uparrow [\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}] : (u \mid C) \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1, \phi} (u_1 \mid C_1) \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow (u_n \mid C_n) =^{\delta}_{B} (v \mid D) \uparrow$$
$$((C_n \wedge D)\delta \mid \top) \rightsquigarrow^{\star}_{R,B} (\top \mid \top) \uparrow \top \; \#$$

if $C_n \neq \top$ or $D \neq \top$.

Note that, because of condition (3) in the **Unification** rule, the normalization conditions on the substitutions $[\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}]$ associated to a symbolic NC-solution at one layer according to Definition 15 are now *inherited by previous layers by composition.* This can make the above inference system quite effective, since many layered proofs will not even be developed when failure of normalization is detected in the composed substitutions. In an actual implementation it is of course not necessary to wait until a **Unification** step is taken to check normalization of composed substitutions. As already pointed put in Example 5, this can (and should) also be done after each step of **Narrowing**, to weed out useless narrowing sequences at each layer.

The use of this inference system can be best illustrated with an example.

Example 7. *Recall the reachability problem*

$$f(f(x_0)) \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^{\star} x'_0 + b \mid \top$$

in Example 5. In the present inference system this becomes the initial goal

$$\# f(f(x_0)) \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^{\star} x'_0 + b \mid \top \uparrow \top \#$$

Three applications of the above **Narrowing** *inference rule, with the rewrite rules, positions, and substitutions in Example 5, give us:*

$$\begin{aligned} \# f(f(x_0)) \mid \top &\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} f(x_1 + y) \mid h(x_1) \to^{\star} [y] \\ &\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} x'_1 + y'_1 + y' \mid h(x'_1) \to^{\star} [y'_1] \wedge h(x'_1 + y'_1) \to^{\star} [y'] \\ &\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_3} z' + b \mid h(a) \to^{\star} [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^{\star} [z'] \\ &\rightsquigarrow^{\star} x'_0 + b \mid \top \uparrow \top \# \end{aligned}$$

And then the unifier $\delta = \{z' \mapsto x_2, x'_0 \mapsto x_2\}$ allows us to apply the **Unify** *rule, yielding:*

$$\begin{aligned} \#[\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}] : f(f(x_0)) \mid \top &\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} f(x_1 + y) \mid h(x_1) \to^{\star} [y] \\ &\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} x'_1 + y'_1 + y' \mid h(x'_1) \to^{\star} [y'_1] \wedge h(x'_1 + y'_1) \to^{\star} [y'] \\ &\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_3} z' + b \mid h(a) \to^{\star} [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^{\star} [z'] \\ &=^{\delta}_{AC} x'_0 + b \mid \top \uparrow \top \# \end{aligned}$$

We can now apply the **Shift** *rule, getting:*

$$\begin{aligned}\#[\gamma,\delta,\vec{\mu},\vec{\nu}] : f(f(x_0)) \mid \top &\leadsto_{\alpha_1} f(x_1+y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y]\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_2} x_1'+y_1'+y' \mid h(x_1') \to^\star [y_1'] \wedge h(x_1'+y_1') \to^\star [y']\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_3} z'+b \mid h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [z']\\ &=^{\delta}_{AC} x_0'+b \mid \top\\ &\uparrow h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \leadsto^\star \top \mid \top \uparrow \top\#\end{aligned}$$

Using rule (3) standardized apart as $h(x_3) \to [x_3]$ we can apply the **Narrowing** *inference rule with substitution $\alpha_4 = \{x_3 \mapsto a\}$ at non-frozen position 1.1 to get:*

$$\begin{aligned}\#[\gamma,\delta,\vec{\mu},\vec{\nu}] : f(f(x_0)) \mid \top &\leadsto_{\alpha_1} f(x_1+y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y]\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_2} x_1'+y_1'+y' \mid h(x_1') \to^\star [y_1'] \wedge h(x_1'+y_1') \to^\star [y']\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_3} z'+b \mid h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [z']\\ &=^{\delta}_{AC} x_0'+b \mid \top\\ &\uparrow h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_4} [a] \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \leadsto^\star \top \mid \top \uparrow \top\#\end{aligned}$$

We can now apply **Narrowing** *with standarized apart rule $x_4 \to^\star x_4 \to \top$ at non-frozen position 1 with subsitution $\alpha_5 = \{x_4 \mapsto a\}$ to get:*

$$\begin{aligned}\#[\gamma,\delta,\vec{\mu},\vec{\nu}] : f(f(x_0)) \mid \top &\leadsto_{\alpha_1} f(x_1+y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y]\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_2} x_1'+y_1'+y' \mid h(x_1') \to^\star [y_1'] \wedge h(x_1'+y_1') \to^\star [y']\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_3} z'+b \mid h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [z']\\ &=^{\delta}_{AC} x_0'+b \mid \top\\ &\uparrow h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_4} [a] \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_5} \top \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \leadsto^\star \top \mid \top \uparrow \top\#\end{aligned}$$

Applying **Narrowing** *again with rule $\top \wedge C \to C$ at non-frozen position ϵ with subsitution $\alpha_6 = \{C \mapsto h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2]\}$ we get:*

$$\begin{aligned}\#[\gamma,\delta,\vec{\mu},\vec{\nu}] : f(f(x_0)) \mid \top &\leadsto_{\alpha_1} f(x_1+y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y]\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_2} x_1'+y_1'+y' \mid h(x_1') \to^\star [y_1'] \wedge h(x_1'+y_1') \to^\star [y']\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_3} z'+b \mid h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [z']\\ &=^{\delta}_{AC} x_0'+b \mid \top\\ &\uparrow h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_4} [a] \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_5} \top \wedge h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top\\ &\leadsto_{\alpha_6} h(a+a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \leadsto^\star \top \mid \top \uparrow \top\#\end{aligned}$$

Applying **Narrowing** *with standarized apart rule* $h(x_5) \to [x_5]$ *and substitution* $\alpha_7 = \{x_5 \mapsto a + a\}$ *at non-frozen position 1 we then get:*

$$\begin{aligned}
\#[\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}] : f(f(x_0)) \mid \top &\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} f(x_1 + y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y] \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} x_1' + y_1' + y' \mid h(x_1') \to^\star [y_1'] \wedge h(x_1' + y_1') \to^\star [y'] \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_3} z' + b \mid h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [z'] \\
&=_{AC}^{\delta} x_0' + b \mid \top \\
&\uparrow h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_4} [a] \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_5} \top \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_6} h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_7} [a + a] \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^\star \top \mid \top \uparrow \top\#
\end{aligned}$$

Applying **Narrowing** *with standarized apart rule* $x_6 \to^\star x_6 \to \top$ *at non-frozen position* ϵ *with subsitution* $\alpha_8 = \{x_6 \mapsto a + a, x_2 \mapsto a + a\}$ *we then get:*

$$\begin{aligned}
\#[\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}] : f(f(x_0)) \mid \top &\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} f(x_1 + y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y] \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} x_1' + y_1' + y' \mid h(x_1') \to^\star [y_1'] \wedge h(x_1' + y_1') \to^\star [y'] \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_3} z' + b \mid h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [z'] \\
&=_{AC}^{\delta} x_0' + b \mid \top \\
&\uparrow h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_4} [a] \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_5} \top \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_6} h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_7} [a + a] \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_8} \top \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^\star \top \mid \top \uparrow \top\#
\end{aligned}$$

A final application of the **Unification** *inference rule with identity substitution id gives us the closed proof:*

$$\begin{aligned}
\#[\gamma, \delta, \vec{\mu}, \vec{\nu}] : f(f(x_0)) \mid \top &\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} f(x_1 + y) \mid h(x_1) \to^\star [y] \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} x_1' + y_1' + y' \mid h(x_1') \to^\star [y_1'] \wedge h(x_1' + y_1') \to^\star [y'] \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_3} z' + b \mid h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [z'] \\
&=_{AC}^{\delta} x_0' + b \mid \top \\
&\uparrow [\gamma', \delta', \vec{\mu'}, \vec{\nu'}] : h(a) \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_4} [a] \to^\star [a] \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_5} \top \wedge h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_6} h(a + a) \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_7} [a + a] \to^\star [x_2] \mid \top \\
&\rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_8} \top \mid \top \\
&=_{AC}^{id} \top \mid \top \uparrow \top\#
\end{aligned}$$

The crucial point is that we can obtain from this closed proof an NC-solution $\gamma\gamma'|_{\{x_0,x_0'\}}$ of our original goal $f(f(x_0)) \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^\star x_0' + b \mid \top$. Indeed, $\gamma\gamma'(x_0) = a$, and $\gamma\gamma'(x_0') = a + a$, which gives us the NC-solution with NC-rewrite sequence:

$$f(f(a)) \to_{R,AC} f(a+a) \to_{R,AC} a+a+a+a \to_{R,AC} a+a+b.$$

The two main theorems about this inference system for layered constrained narrowing state its soundness and completeness for computing NC-solutions of reachability goals.

Theorem 8 (Soundness of Layered Constrained Narrowing). *Consider a reachability goal $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ such that $\mathcal{V}ar(u \mid C) \cap \mathcal{V}ar(v \mid D) = \emptyset$ and all the variables of the goal, and each of the terms in the conditions C or D belong to sorts in $\mathcal{R}$. If we can use the inference system for layered constrained narrowing to rewrite the initial goal $\#u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D \uparrow \top\#$ to a closed proof of the form $\#[\gamma_0, \delta_0, \vec{\mu_0}, \vec{\nu_0}] : S_0 \uparrow \ldots \uparrow [\gamma_n, \delta_n, \vec{\mu_n}, \vec{\nu_n}] : S_n \uparrow \top\#$, then $(\gamma_0 \ldots \gamma_n)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u|C) \uplus \mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ is an NC-solution of such a goal in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$.*

Proof. First of all, note that the inference rules for layered constrained narrowing will never produce from such a goal any constrained term $w \mid Q$ where the sorts of either the variables or of the terms in its condition Q will not be in $\mathcal{R}$. Clearly, neither **Unification** nor **Shift** can violate this invariant. And **Narrowing** cannot either, for the following reasons: (i) the added condition in a narrowing step has all terms having sorts in $\mathcal{R}$, because all conditional rules of $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ are rules in $\mathcal{R}$; (ii) the only rule in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ which has a variable whose sort is not in $\mathcal{R}$ is rule $(\top \wedge C) \to C$. But if we apply it to narrow a constrained term $w \mid Q$ where the sorts of the variables are in $\mathcal{R}$, the unifier α must map C to a term whose variables are all in $\mathcal{R}$. Therefore, the narrowing step $w \mid Q \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha,\phi} (w[C]_p \mid Q)\alpha$ yields a new constrained term where the sorts of the variables and of the terms in its condition $Q\alpha$ are all in $\mathcal{R}$.

We prove the theorem by induction on n. If $n = 0$, the closed proof must necessarily be of the form $\#[\gamma_0, \delta_0, \vec{\mu_0}, \vec{\nu_0}] : u|\top \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1,\phi} \ldots \rightsquigarrow u_k \mid \top =_B^{\delta_0} v \mid \top \uparrow \top\#$. But this means that $\rho = id$ provides an actual NC-solution instance $\gamma_0 = \gamma_0 id$, which by the Soundness Theorem is an NC-solution of the goal, as desired.

Suppose $n > 0$ and assume the theorem is true for $n - 1$. Then we must have a closed proof of the form

$$\#[\gamma_0, \delta_0, \vec{\mu_0}, \vec{\nu_0}] : u|C \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1,\phi} \ldots \rightsquigarrow u_k|C_k =_B^{\delta_0} v \mid D \uparrow$$
$$[\gamma_1, id, \vec{\mu_1}, \vec{\nu_1}] : ((C_k \wedge D) \mid \top)\delta_0 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_{k+1},\phi} \ldots \rightsquigarrow \top|C_{k+h} =_B^{id} \top \mid \top \uparrow$$
$$\ldots \uparrow [\gamma_n, id, \vec{\mu_n}, \vec{\nu_n}] : S_n \uparrow \top\#$$

But this means that

$$\#[\gamma_1, id, \vec{\mu_1}, \vec{\nu_1}] : ((C_k \wedge D) \mid \top)\delta_0 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_{k+1},\phi} \ldots \rightsquigarrow \top|C_{k+h} =_B^{id} \top \mid \top \uparrow$$
$$\ldots \uparrow [\gamma_n, id, \vec{\mu_n}, \vec{\nu_n}] : S_n \uparrow \top\#$$

is a closed proof for the goal $\#((C_k \wedge D) \mid \top)\delta_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star \top \mid \top \uparrow \top\#$. By the induction hypothesis, $(\gamma_1 \dots \gamma_n)|_{\mathcal{V}ar((C_k \wedge D)\delta_0)}$ is then an NC-solution of $((C_k \wedge D) \mid \top)\delta_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star \top \mid \top$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$. But by Theorem 7, plus the layered irreducibility conditions forced by the repeaded applications of the **Unification** inference rule, this means that $\mathcal{R} \vdash (C_k \wedge D)\delta_0\gamma_1 \dots \gamma_n$ (and of course $\widehat{\mathcal{R}} \vdash (C_k \wedge D)\delta_0\gamma_1 \dots \gamma_n$), and that $(\gamma_0 \dots \gamma_n)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u|C) \uplus \mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ is an NC-solution of the goal $u \mid C \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$, as desired. $\square$

The completeness of layered constrained narrowing depends crucially on our ability to turn the accumulated condition $(C_n \wedge D)\delta$ at the end of one layer of narrowing into a reachability goal $((C_n \wedge D)\delta \mid \top) \rightsquigarrow^\star_{R,B} (\top \mid \top)$ one layer up and solving it by constrained narrowing. But this, in turn, requires that if the reachability goal $((C_n \wedge D)\delta \mid \top) \rightsquigarrow^\star_{R,B} (\top \mid \top)$ is solvable, then it has an *NC-solution*. In general, however, this may not be the case.

Example 8. *Consider the convergent FPP theory of Example 3, and recall from Example 4 that the reachability problem $f(x, c) \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^\star c \mid \top$ is solvable but has no NC-solution in this theory. Consider now the following reachability problem:*

$$f(x_0, c) \mid f(x_0, c) \rightarrow^\star_{R,B} c \rightsquigarrow^\star d \mid \top$$

We can easily find a symbolic NC-solution for it as follows:

$$f(x_0, c) \mid f(x_0, c) \rightarrow^\star c \rightsquigarrow_\alpha z \mid f(x'', c) \rightarrow^\star c \wedge [x'', c] \rightarrow^\star [x', z] \wedge x'' \equiv x' \rightarrow^\star tt =^\delta_B d \mid \top$$

where we have narrowed with the conditional rule in Example 3 with unifier $\alpha = \{x_0 \mapsto x'', x \mapsto x', y \mapsto c\}$, and δ is the unifier $\delta = \{z \mapsto d\}$. This symbolic NC-solution has *an actual NC-solution instance, namely by taking $\rho = \{x'' \mapsto x''', x' \mapsto x'''\}$, so that we get the NC-rewrite $f(x''', c) \rightarrow d$. And of course ρ solves the accumulated condition $f(x'', c) \rightarrow^\star c \wedge [x'', c] \rightarrow^\star [x', d] \wedge x'' \equiv x' \rightarrow^\star tt$, which becomes the true condition $f(x''', c) \rightarrow^\star c \wedge [x''', c] \rightarrow^\star [x''', d] \wedge x''' \equiv x''' \rightarrow^\star tt$. However, the accumulated condition is* not *NC-solvable, because there is no NC-rewrite $f(x'', c) \rightarrow^\star_R c$ for x'' or any of its instances, although we have $f(x'', c) \rightarrow_R c$.*

The moral of this story, is that, although constrained narrowing is a complete *method for symbolically describing* all *NC-solutions, layered constrained narrowing is* not complete *in general, since we cannot find an NC-solution for the reachability goal*

$$f(x'', c) \rightarrow^\star_{R,B} c \wedge [x'', c] \rightarrow^\star_{R,B} [x', d] \wedge x'' \equiv x' \rightarrow^\star_{R,B} tt \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^\star \top \mid \top$$

that layered narrowing would generate one level up.

What restrictions should we place on a reachability goal $(u \mid C) \rightsquigarrow^\star (v \mid D)$ to make layered narrowing complete? A very simple and natural one, already mentioned earlier, suffices, namely, requiring that $(u \mid C)$ and $(v \mid D)$ are FPP. The restriction is not a strong one, since FPP conditions are the most attractive and easy-to-compute way to place additional restrictions on a term. That is, if

$(u \mid C)$ is FPP and θ is a normalized substitution for the variables of u, we can use the exact same incremental method to test the FPP condition C of a rewrite rule before a rewrite step to similarly test whether $\mathcal{R} \vdash C\theta'$ holds, where θ' is a normalized substitution extending θ and obtained incrementally in the usual way. For example, the reachability goal in Example 8 can be easily transformed into the following one satisfying the FPP requirement:

$$f(x_0, c) \mid f(x_0, c) \equiv c \to^\star tt \rightsquigarrow^\star d \mid \top$$

and this transformed goal *is* solvable by layered constrained narrowing.

The key reason why the FPP requirement allows layered constrained narrowing, and in particular the **Shift** rule, to be effective in solving accumulated conditions can be summarized as follows:

Lemma 8. *Let $(u \mid C) \rightsquigarrow^\star (v \mid D)$ be a goal in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ satisfying the requirements in Theorem 8 and such that $(u \mid C)$ and $(v \mid D)$ are FPP. Then, if $(C_n \wedge D)\delta$ is the accumulated condition of a symbolic NC-solution γ found by constrained narrowing with $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$, and $\gamma\rho$ is an actual NC-solution instance, then there is an NC-rewrite sequence $(C_n \wedge D)\delta\rho \to^\star \top$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$.*

Proof. This follows by direct application of Lemma 7. All we need to do is to make this obvious by "unpacking" $(C_n \wedge D)\delta$. But this we have already done in the proof of Theorem 3, namely,

$$(C_n \wedge D)\delta = C_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta \wedge D_1\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta \wedge \ldots \wedge D_n\alpha_n\delta \wedge D\delta.$$

Then, conditions (1)–(3) on an actual NC-solution in Definition 15, plus the assumption that $(u \mid C)$ and $(v \mid D)$ are FPP, ensure that ρ, which plays the role of θ in Lemma 7, satisfies the requirements for θ in that lemma, thus yielding the claimed result. $\square$

Another key observation is that if the original reachability goal $(u \mid C) \rightsquigarrow^\star (v \mid D)$ satisfies the requirements in Lemma 8 above, and has a closed proof by layered trace narrowing with NC-solution $\gamma_0\gamma_1\underset{\frown}{\gamma_n}$, then the existence of an NC-rewrite sequence $(C_n \wedge D)\delta_0\gamma_1 \ldots \gamma_n \to^\star \top$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ ensured Lemma 8 holds also for the accumulated conditions $(C'_{n'} \wedge \top)\delta_i$ at upper layers ($i \geq 1$). That is, there is an NC-rewrite sequence $(C'_{n'} \wedge \top)\delta_i\gamma_{i+1} \ldots \gamma_n \to^\star \top$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$. This is because the accumulated condition $C'_{n'}\delta_i$ is precisely a conjunction of conditions of the form $D_j\alpha_j \ldots \alpha_{n'}\delta_i$, with D_j the FPP condition of a rewrite rule in $\mathcal{R}$, and then the irreducibility conditions imposed on substitutions by the inference system of layered constrained narrowing ensure that $(C'_{n'} \wedge \top)\delta_i\gamma_{i+1} \ldots \gamma_n$ satisfies the requirements in Lemma 7.

We are now ready to state and prove the key theorem about layered constrained narrowing, namely, its completeness.

Theorem 9 (Completeness of Layered Constrained Narrowing). *Let $(u_0 \mid C_0) \rightsquigarrow^\star (v \mid D)$ be a reachability goal in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ satisfying the requirements in Theorem 8 and such that $(u_0 \mid C_0)$ and $(v \mid D)$ are FPP, and let*

σ be an NC solution of this goal in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$. Then there exists a closed proof of the goal by layered constrained narrowing of the form $\#[\gamma_0, \delta_0, \vec{\mu_0}, \vec{\nu_0}] : S_0 \uparrow \ldots \uparrow [\gamma_n, \delta_n, \vec{\mu_n}, \vec{\nu_n}] : S_n \uparrow \top\#$, and a normalized substitution θ such that $\sigma =_B (\gamma_0 \ldots \gamma_n \theta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u|C) \uplus \mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$.

PROOF. The proof of the theorem will be by strong induction on $h(\sigma, P) - 1$, where $h(\sigma, P)$ is the *height* of a pair (σ, P), with σ an NC-solution of a goal $(u_0 \mid C_0) \rightsquigarrow^\star (v \mid D)$, and P a partially developed layered proof of an NC-rewrite trace

$$T = u_0\sigma \rightarrow_{R,B} w_1 \rightarrow_{R,B} \cdots w_{n-1} \rightarrow_{R,B} w_n =_B v\sigma \tag{6}$$

having the form $\#T \uparrow D_1\sigma_1 \wedge \ldots D_n\sigma_n\#$, where each D_i is the condition of the rule used in the i-th rewrite step of T. $h(\sigma, P)$ is defined in detail below. Define first the *height* of a layered trace (rewrite) proof $\#T_1 \uparrow T_2 \uparrow \cdots \uparrow T_n \uparrow \top\#$ to be n. The height of the empty conjunction $\top$ of rewrite goals is 0 by convention. Define then the *height* $h(\sigma, P)$ for a solution σ of goal $(u_0 \mid C_0) \rightsquigarrow^\star (v \mid D)$ as $h(\sigma) = h_{C_0} + h_P + h_D$, where h_{C_0} (resp. h_D) is the smallest height of a layered NC-proof of $C_0\sigma$ (resp. $D\sigma$) in $\mathcal{R}$, and h_P is the smallest height of a layered NC-proof obtained by repeated application of inference rules to the partial proof P of the trace T in 6.

Since by Lemma 3 solutions are closed under B-equivalence, we can use the Completeness Theorem for constrained narrowing (Theorem 4) to assume, without real loss of generality, that σ is an actual NC-solution instance of a symbolic NC-solution of our goal by constrained narrowing. That is, there is a symbolic NC-solution $\gamma_0 = (\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n \delta_0)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} \uplus \delta_0|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ with constrained narrowing proof

$$u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid C_1 \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} u_2 \mid C_2 \cdots u_{n-1} \mid C_{n-1} \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} u_n \mid C_n =_B^{\delta_0} v \mid D$$

and a normalized substitition ρ with $Dom(\rho) \subseteq \mathcal{V}ar(u_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta_0) \cup \mathcal{V}ar((v \mid C_n \wedge D)\delta_0)$ such that $\sigma = (\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n \delta_0 \rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} \uplus \delta_0\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$.

In our definition of $h(\sigma, P)$ for the above σ, the chosen trace T will be the NC-rewrite sequence

$$T = u_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho \rightarrow_{R,B} u_1\alpha_2 \ldots \alpha_n\delta\rho \ldots u_{n-1}\alpha_n\delta\rho \rightarrow_{R,B} u_n\delta\rho =_B v\delta\rho$$

in $\hat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$, and P will then be the partial layered trace proof $\#T \uparrow D_1\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta_0\rho \wedge \ldots \wedge D_n\alpha_n\delta_0\rho\#$, where D_i is the condition of the rule used in the i-th step of the narrowing sequence of which T is an instance.

Suppose that $h(\sigma, P) - 1 = 0$. This can only happen if $C_0 = D = \top$ and all the rules applied in the above narrowing sequence are unconditional, so that $C_1 = \ldots = C_n = \top$. But then $\#[\gamma_0, \delta_0, \vec{\mu_0}, \vec{\nu_0}] : u_0 \mid \top \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_1} u_1 \mid \top \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_2} u_2 \mid \top \cdots u_{n-1} \mid \top \rightsquigarrow_{\alpha_n} u_n \mid \top =_B^{\delta_0} v \mid \top \uparrow \top\#$ is a layered constrained narrowing proof of the goal, and choosing $\theta = \rho$ we are done.

Suppose instead that $h(\sigma, P) > 1$. Since $\mathcal{R} \vdash (C_n \wedge D)\delta_0\rho$, the fact the $u_0 \mid C_0$ and $v \mid D$ are FPP and Lemma 8 ensure that there is an NC-rewrite sequence

$(C_n \wedge D)\delta_0\rho \to^\star \top$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$. But this exactly means that $\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar((C_n \wedge D)\delta_0)}$ is an NC-solution of the reachability goal $(C_n \wedge D)\delta_0 \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^\star \top \mid \top$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$. Let now h be the smallest possible height of a layered trace NC-proof of $(C_n \wedge D)\delta_0\rho \to^\star \top$. Using Theorem 7, h is also the smallest possible height of a layered trace NC-proof of $C_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta_0\rho \wedge D_1\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta_0\rho \wedge \ldots \wedge D_n\alpha_n\delta_0\rho \wedge D\delta_0\rho$. That is, of $C_0\sigma \wedge D_1\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta_0\rho \wedge \ldots \wedge D_n\alpha_n\delta_0\rho \wedge D\sigma$. But if $h(\sigma, P) = h_{C_0} + h_P + h_D$, with corresponding layered trace NC-proofs $\#TS_{C_0}\#$, $\#T \uparrow TS\#$, $\#TS_D\#$, then, by Lemma 2, $\#TS_{C_0}\# \parallel \#TS\# \parallel \#TS_D\#$ is a layered NC-proof of $C_0\sigma \wedge D_1\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta_0\rho \wedge \ldots \wedge D_n\alpha_n\delta_0\rho \wedge D\sigma$, which has height $max(h_{C_0}, (h_R - 1), h_D)$, so that $h \leq max(h_{C_0}, (h_R - 1), h_D) < h(\sigma, P)$; and by Theorem 7 this is also the height of a layered NC-proof of $(C_n \wedge D)\delta_0\rho \to^\star \top$. Since the conditions of the goal $(C_n \wedge D)\delta_0 \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^\star \top \mid \top$ in $\widehat{\mathcal{R}}_\phi$ are both $\top$, this means that we can choose P' so that $h = h(\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar((C_n \wedge D)\delta_0)}, P') < h(\sigma, P)$, so that the strong induction hypothesis applies.

Therefore, there exists a closed proof of the goal $(C_n \wedge D)\delta_0 \mid \top \rightsquigarrow^\star \top \mid \top$ by layered constrained narrowing of the form $\#[\gamma_1, \delta_1, \vec{\mu_1}, \vec{\nu_1}] : S_1 \uparrow \ldots \uparrow [\gamma_n, \delta_n, \vec{\mu_n}, \vec{\nu_n}] : S_n \uparrow \top\#$, and a normalized substitution θ_0 such that $\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar((C_n \wedge D)\delta_0)} =_B (\gamma_1 \ldots \gamma_n\theta_0)|_{\mathcal{V}ar((C_n \wedge D)\delta_0)}$. Define $\vec{z} = \mathcal{V}ar(u_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta_0) - \mathcal{V}ar((C_n \wedge D)\delta_0)$, and extend θ_0 to $\theta = \theta_0 \uplus \rho|_{\vec{z}}$. This means that $\rho =_B \rho|_{\vec{z}} \uplus (\gamma_1 \ldots \gamma_n\theta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar((C_n \wedge D)\delta_0)}$. But by the standardized apart assumption, we have $\rho|_{\vec{z}} = (\gamma_1 \ldots \gamma_n\theta)|_{\vec{z}}$, which shows that $\rho =_B (\gamma_1 \ldots \gamma_n\theta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta_0) \cup \mathcal{V}ar((C_n \wedge D)\delta_0)}$. Therefore, $\sigma = (\alpha_1 \ldots \alpha_n\delta_0\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0)} \uplus \delta_0\rho|_{\mathcal{V}ar(v|D)} = (\gamma_0\rho)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0) \cup \mathcal{V}ar(v|D)} =_B (\gamma_0\gamma_1 \ldots \gamma_n\theta)|_{\mathcal{V}ar(u_0|C_0) \cup \mathcal{V}ar(v|D)}$ is also an actual NC-solution instance of the symbolic solution γ_0 solving our original goal $(u_0 \mid C_0) \rightsquigarrow^\star (v \mid D)$ and is B-equal to σ. Furthermore, it is easy to check that conditions (1)–(3) for an actual NC-solution instance in Definition 15 ensure that $\#[\gamma_0, \delta_0, \vec{\mu_0}, \vec{\nu_0}] : S_0 \uparrow \ldots \uparrow [\gamma_n, \delta_n, \vec{\mu_n}, \vec{\nu_n}] : S_n \uparrow \top\#$ is a closed proof of the goal by layered constrained narrowing. This finishes the proof of the theorem. $\square$

In complete analogy to Corollary 1 we then obtain:

Corollary 2. *If in Theorem 9 the term v is strongly irreducible, we can weaken the assumption on σ to just be a solution of the reachability problem $u_0 \mid C_0 \rightsquigarrow^\star v \mid D$. Since $v\sigma$ is normalized, the rewrite $u_0\sigma \to^!_{R,B} v\sigma$ has a description as an NC-rewrite sequence, so that σ is an NC-solution.*

This corollary has two important consequences:

1. Layered constrained narrowing gives us a method to extract from a constrained variant of a term a complete set of actual variant instances. More generally, it gives us a method to generate a complete set of variants for any term.

2. Layered constrained narrowing gives us a method to extract from a constrained unifier of an equation a complete set of actual unifier instances. More generally, it gives us a method to generate a complete set of unifiers for an equation, or set of equations.

9. Related Work and Conclusions

A good overview of (conditional) narrowing and its different completeness results can be found in [43]. This work does not study narrowing modulo axioms, which is the main focus of this paper. It is remarkable that it has identified several problems and wrong proofs in previous works on (conditional) narrowing. The main results are restricted to 1-CTRS and 2-CTRS but the results in this paper apply to convergent FPP theories, which fall into the 3-CTRS characterization. [43] provides a completeness result for conditional narrowing in *level-complete* 3-CTRS, where the notion of *level-confluence* (used by the notion of level-completeness) defines confluence separately for each theory in the hierarchy of theories into which a theory is split. Level-complete theories and convergent FPP theories are different. Furthermore, our work is within the more general context of order-sorted rewriting modulo axioms. Indeed, the definition of convergent FPP theories is an important contribution of our paper compared to previous work. Also, most approaches for conditional narrowing rely on a set of equality constraints whose evaluation order is not stated. However, as pointed out in Section 4 and elsewhere in the paper, by adding an explicit equality predicate $\_ \equiv \_$ and rules $x \equiv x \to tt$ for each kind, such unoriented conditions can be viewed as a special case of our oriented conditional approach, which is the appropriate one for strongly deterministic theories.

Unconditional narrowing modulo axioms B goes back to [32], which this work generalizes from an untyped and unconditional to an order-sorted and conditional setting. However, nothing was known about terminating narrowing strategies modulo axioms B until folding variant narrowing was introduced in [25]. By proposing the notion of constrained variant, this work is a first step in generalizing the ideas in [25] to the conditional case.

In [10], Bockmayr considered conditional rewriting modulo B with the R,B-relation, but without requiring B-extensions, and only under the assumptions of no extra variables in a rule's condition (called 1-CTRS) and of the simplifying termination [45] of R modulo B. Our work extends Bockmayr's in several ways: first by considering convergent FPP theories, which are 3-CTRS, second by considering operational termination modulo axioms, and third by incorporating B-extensions. Bockmayr's work also relies on a set of equality constraints, instead of our approach of a list of reachability constraints. Another important difference between Bockmayr's work and ours is that ours is hierarchical (i.e., layered), and based on the systematic use of irreducibility conditions to drastically reduce the search space. Furthermore, notions like constrained variant and constrained unifier, which are important contributions of our work, cannot be expressed in Bockmayr's framework.

In [30], conditional narrowing is considered for a set of rules without axioms. The rules do not have any restriction on the conditional part (are 4-CTRS) and they do not restrict to convergent theories (and clearly, since no axioms B are involved there are no B-extensions). However, this approach studies lazy narrowing with non-determinism in the computations and with a call-time choice semantics (in order to ensure all occurrences of a variable in the right-hand side of a rule have the same actual term). In our work, we restrict ourselves to convergent FPP theories and argue that this is actually the most useful definition for conditional rewriting in a convergent theory, since there is an intuitive notion of deterministic functional computation that, when lifted to narrowing, is easily expressible and useful in practice. Another interesting aspect of [30] is the definition of conditions using strict equality, which normalizes terms to a constructor term and performs checks for syntactic equality. We have reachability conditions instead of equality conditions and have somehow incorporated this aspect of strict equality by requiring strongly irreducible terms in the destination term of each reachability condition. This enjoys better properties for lifting conditional rewriting to narrowing.

The work in [2], provides a calculus for conditional narrowing modulo axioms in rewriting logic. They consider convergent 4-CTRS equational order-sorted theories, with similar assumptions on operational termination and B-coherence to ours. They provide weak-completeness and soundness results of conditional narrowing for unification in these theories. An important difference is that this work provides results for the relation $\rightarrow_{E/B}$ instead of $\rightarrow_{E,B}$. Their work considers membership equational logic, whereas ours does not consider membership conditions. Their approach is based on a set of reachability constraints with no order of evaluation of the constraints, while ours relies on the deterministic evaluation features of a list of reachability constraints.

In [33], conditional narrowing modulo axioms is defined as a set of inference rules for a set of conditional equality constraints, i.e., each equality constraint may have its own set of conditions to be solved. This provides a very general form of conditional narrowing for convergent theories, where a simplification ordering is required for termination, confluence modulo axioms is also required, and a notion of B-extension is also considered. They also consider an approach similar in spirit to our constrained narrowing, where conditions are not solved but checked for solvability. However the focus of that work is in generating a saturated set of conditional equality constraints in order to be able to prove properties in such a finitely saturated set.

In conclusion, the work presented here provides new concepts such as those of: (i) convergent FPP conditional theory, which, while being very general allows very efficient implementation; (ii) constrained narrowing, which allows symbolic solutions while postponing solving the constraints and can drastically reduce the search space; (iii) constrained variant and constrained unifier, which allow a simpler and more economic symbolic, yet complete description of all variants and unifiers; and (iv) layered constrained narrowing, a new, hierarchical way of performing conditional narrowing. It also provides soundness and completeness results for constrained narrowing and layered constrained narrowing.

Much work remains ahead, particularly: (i) on implementing our approach, for which we plan to rely on, and extend, the existing Maude infrastucture for narrowing, variants, and unification; (ii) on extending it from the equational case to, as mentioned in the Introduction and in Section 6, the model checking analysis of concurrent systems specified as conditional rewrite theories; and (iii) on experimentally evaluating the effectiveness and performance of our approach, and comparing it with other approaches using such an implementation. All this will be the focus of our work in the near future.

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