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The number of fixed points of AND-OR networks with chain topology

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AND-OR networks are Boolean networks where each coordinate function is either the AND or OR logical operator. We study the number of fixed points of these Boolean networks in the case that they have a wiring diagram with chain topology. We find closed formulas for subclasses of these networks and recursive formulas in the general case. Our results allow for an effective computation of the number of fixed points in the case that the topology of the Boolean network is an open chain (finite or infinite) or a closed chain. We further explore how our approach could be used in "fractal" chains.

1. Introduction

Boolean networks, $f : \{0, 1\}^n \to \{0, 1\}^n$, have been used to study problems arising from areas such as mathematics, computer science, and biology [Akutsu et al. 1998; Albert and Othmer 2003; Mendoza and Xenarios 2006; Jarrah et al. 2010; Wang et al. 2017]. A particular problem of interest is counting the number of fixed points (x such that $f(x) = x$). To simplify this problem one can restrict the class of Boolean functions or the topology of the network [Agur et al. 1988; Aracena et al. 2004; Jarrah et al. 2007; 2010; Aracena 2008; Murrugarra and Laubenbacher 2011; Bollman et al. 2010; Veliz-Cuba et al. 2014a; 2014b; Dimitrova et al. 2015; Weiss and Margaliot 2017], which in some cases allows one to find effective algorithms or formulas in closed form.

In this manuscript we focus on the number of fixed points of AND-OR networks (each Boolean function is either the AND or the OR operator) that have open or closed chain topology. The networks we study in this manuscript also arise by restricting min-max networks to a Boolean set of values $\{0, 1\}$ [Goles et al. 2000].

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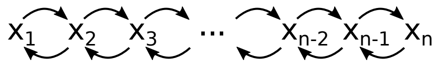

Figure 1. Wiring diagram with open chain topology.

Although one typically specifies the update order to analyze the dynamics, this is not necessary here as the fixed points would not change [Hansson et al. 2005]. We first consider the case of finite open chain topology and find a recursive formula (Theorem 2.4) and sharp lower and upper bounds. We then consider the case of infinite and closed chain topology and show how they can be reduced to the case of finite open chain topology (Theorems 3.1 and 3.2).

2. Open chain

Let $f = (f_1, \dots, f_n) : \{0, 1\}^n \to \{0, 1\}^n$ with $n \geq 2$ be an AND-OR network such that its wiring diagram is a chain; see Figure 1. That is, we consider Boolean networks of the form

$$f_1 = x_2, \quad f_2 = x_1 \diamondsuit_2 x_3, \quad f_3 = x_2 \diamondsuit_3 x_4, \quad \dots, \quad f_{n-1} = x_{n-2} \diamondsuit_{n-1} x_n, \quad f_n = x_{n-1},$$

where $\diamondsuit_i$ is the AND ($\wedge$) or the OR ($\vee$) operator.

Because this family of Boolean networks is completely determined by the sequence of logical operators $\diamondsuit_2, \diamondsuit_3, \dots, \diamondsuit_{n-1}$, we can use this sequence to represent the network. Furthermore, consecutive occurrences of the same logical operator can be denoted as $\wedge^k$ or $\vee^k$.

We are interested in the number of fixed points of such Boolean networks. For simplicity we denote the elements of $\{0, 1\}^n$ as binary strings (omitting parentheses). Also, we will use the notation $\mathbf{0} = 00 \cdots 0$ and $\mathbf{1} = 11 \cdots 1$, where the length of the strings will be clear from the context. Note that $\mathbf{0}$ and $\mathbf{1}$ are fixed points of all AND-OR networks with chain topology.

Example 2.1. Our running example will be the AND-OR network

$$\begin{aligned}
&f_1 = x_2, && f_4 = x_3 \vee x_5, && f_7 = x_6 \vee x_8, && f_{10} = x_9 \wedge x_{11},\\
&f_2 = x_1 \wedge x_3, && f_5 = x_4 \wedge x_6, && f_8 = x_7 \vee x_9, && f_{11} = x_{10} \vee x_{12},\\
&f_3 = x_2 \wedge x_4, && f_6 = x_5 \vee x_7, && f_9 = x_8 \wedge x_{10}, && f_{12} = x_{11}.
\end{aligned}$$

This network can be represented by the sequence of operators $\wedge\wedge\vee\wedge\vee\vee\vee\wedge\wedge\vee$. We can further simplify this representation to $\wedge^2\vee\wedge\vee^3\wedge^2\vee$. This AND-OR network has 13 fixed points listed in Table 1 (first column).

The next lemma states that the number of fixed points depends only on the powers of the operators. Since we do not know which operator is last ($\wedge$ or $\vee$), we will simply use ellipses without explicitly writing the last operator.

Lemma 2.2. *The AND-OR networks* $f = \wedge^{k_1} \vee^{k_2} \wedge^{k_3} \cdots$ *and* $g = \vee^{k_1} \wedge^{k_2} \vee^{k_3} \cdots$ *have the same number of fixed points.*

Proof. Consider $\phi : \{0, 1\}^n \to \{0, 1\}^n$ given by $\phi(x_1, \dots, x_n) = (\neg x_1, \dots, \neg x_n)$, where $\neg$ is the logical operator NOT. Using the fact that $\neg(p \wedge q) = \neg p \vee \neg q$ and $\neg(p \vee q) = \neg p \wedge \neg q$, it follows that $f(\phi(x)) = \phi(g(x))$. Then, x will be a fixed point of g if and only if $\phi(x)$ is a fixed point of f. So, ϕ is a bijection between the fixed points of g and f. □

Because we are interested in the number of fixed points, we will simply use $(k_1, k_2, \dots, k_m)$ to refer to a network. For instance, the AND-OR network seen in Example 2.1 can be represented simply by (2, 1, 1, 3, 2, 1). We denote the number of fixed points by $\mathcal{F}(k_1, k_2, \dots, k_m)$. A similar approach was used by [Alcolei et al. 2016] to study nonmonotonic Boolean networks.

The following lemma states that consecutive variables that have the same logical operator must be equal.

Lemma 2.3. *Consider an AND-OR network* f *represented by* $(k_1, k_2, \dots, k_m)$. *Denote an element of the domain of* f *by* $\boldsymbol{x} = (\boldsymbol{x}^1, \boldsymbol{x}^2, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m)$, *where* $\boldsymbol{x}^1 \in \{0, 1\}^{k_1+1}$, $\boldsymbol{x}^m \in \{0, 1\}^{k_m+1}$, *and* $\boldsymbol{x}^i \in \{0, 1\}^{k_i}$ *for* $i = 2, \dots, m-1$. *If* $\boldsymbol{x}$ *is a fixed point of* f, *then* $\boldsymbol{x}^i = \mathbf{0}$ *or* $\boldsymbol{x}^i = \mathbf{1}$ *for* $i = 1, \dots, m$.

Proof. Let $\boldsymbol{x}$ be a fixed point of f. We use $(\boldsymbol{x}^i)_j$ to denote the j-th coordinate of $\boldsymbol{x}^i$. Note that $(\boldsymbol{x}^1)_1 = (\boldsymbol{x}^1)_2$ and $(\boldsymbol{x}^m)_{k_m} = (\boldsymbol{x}^m)_{k_m+1}$ by the definition of f (the first and last coordinate functions of f depend on single variables).

Now, the rest of the proof follows from the fact that if $q = p \wedge r$ and $r = q \wedge s$ or if $q = p \vee r$ and $r = q \vee s$, then $q = r$. This implies that consecutive variables, $(\boldsymbol{x}^i)_j$ and $(\boldsymbol{x}^i)_{j+1}$, that have the same logical operators must be the same. □

The next proposition states that the numbers k_i in $\mathcal{F}(k_1, \dots, k_m)$ can be assumed to be at most 2 for $2 \le i \le m-1$, and 1 for k_1 and k_m. For example, this will imply that $\mathcal{F}(2, 1, 1, 3, 2, 1) = \mathcal{F}(1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 1)$ and $\mathcal{F}(2, 5, 3, 1, 4, 3) = \mathcal{F}(1, 2, 2, 1, 2, 1)$.

Example 2.1 (continued). The second column of Table 1 highlights the structure of the fixed points of $\wedge^2 \vee \wedge \vee^3 \wedge^2 \vee$.

Proposition 2.3.1. *We have*

$$\mathcal{F}(k_1, k_2, \dots, k_{m-1}, k_m) = \mathcal{F}(1, \min\{k_2, 2\}, \dots, \min\{k_{m-1}, 2\}, 1)$$

for all positive integers k_i.

Proof. We will use the notation of Lemma 2.3.

We first show that $f = \wedge^{k_1} \vee^{k_2} \wedge^{k_3} \cdots$ and $g = \wedge \vee^{k_2} \wedge^{k_3} \cdots$ have the same number of fixed points. Let $\boldsymbol{x} = (\boldsymbol{x}^1, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m)$ be a fixed point of f. Then, by Lemma 2.3 we have $\boldsymbol{x}^1 = \mathbf{0}$ or $\boldsymbol{x}^1 = \mathbf{1}$. Consider $\boldsymbol{y} = (z, \boldsymbol{x}^2, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m)$, where

fixed points	structure from Lemma 2.3	"reduced" system (Proposition 2.3.1)
000000000000	000 0 0 000 00 00	00 0 0 00 00 00
000000000011	000 0 0 000 00 11	00 0 0 00 00 11
000001110000	000 0 0 111 00 00	00 0 0 11 00 00
000001111111	000 0 0 111 11 11	00 0 0 11 11 11
000001110011	000 0 0 111 00 11	00 0 0 11 00 11
000111110000	000 1 1 111 00 00	00 1 1 11 00 00
000111110011	000 1 1 111 00 11	00 1 1 11 00 11
000111111111	000 1 1 111 11 11	00 1 1 11 11 11
111100000000	111 1 0 000 00 00	11 1 0 00 00 00
111100000011	111 1 0 000 00 11	11 1 0 00 00 11
111111110000	111 1 1 111 00 00	11 1 1 11 00 00
111111110011	111 1 1 111 00 11	11 1 1 11 00 11
111111111111	111 1 1 111 11 11	11 1 1 11 11 11

Table 1. Fixed points of the AND-OR network $\wedge^2\vee\wedge\vee^3\wedge^2\vee$. First column: fixed points. Second column: fixed points with the structure given by Lemma 2.3 highlighted. Third column: fixed points of reduced network, $\wedge^2\vee\wedge\vee^2\wedge^2\vee$, with the structure given by Lemma 2.3 highlighted. For this example, the fixed points can be found using software [Elmeligy Abdelhamid et al. 2015]. We performed computations using resources from the Ohio Supercomputer Center [OSCC 1987].

$z = ((\boldsymbol{x}^1)_1, (\boldsymbol{x}^1)_2)$. It can be checked that $\boldsymbol{y}$ is a fixed point of g. Now, if $\boldsymbol{y} = (z, \boldsymbol{x}^2, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m)$ is a fixed point of g, Lemma 2.3 implies that $z = \mathbf{0}$ or $z = \mathbf{1}$. We define $\boldsymbol{x} = (\boldsymbol{x}^1, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m)$ in the domain of f, where $\boldsymbol{x}^1 = \mathbf{0}$ if $z = \mathbf{0}$ and $\boldsymbol{x}^1 = \mathbf{1}$ if $z = \mathbf{1}$. Then, it can be checked that $\boldsymbol{x}$ is a fixed point of f. This shows that $\mathcal{F}(k_1, k_2, \dots, k_{m-1}, k_m) = \mathcal{F}(1, k_2, \dots, k_{m-1}, k_m)$, and similarly it can be shown that $\mathcal{F}(1, k_2, \dots, k_{m-1}, k_m) = \mathcal{F}(1, k_2, \dots, k_{m-1}, 1)$.

We now show that for $k_2 \geq 2$, $f = \wedge^{k_1}\vee^{k_2}\wedge^{k_3}\cdots$ and $g = \wedge^{k_1}\vee^2\wedge^{k_3}\cdots$ have the same number of fixed points. The general case is analogous. Let $\boldsymbol{x} = (\boldsymbol{x}^1, \boldsymbol{x}^2, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m)$ be a fixed point of f. Then, by Lemma 2.3 we have $\boldsymbol{x}^2 = \mathbf{0}$ or $\boldsymbol{x}^2 = \mathbf{1}$. Consider $\boldsymbol{y} = (\boldsymbol{x}^1, z, \boldsymbol{x}^3, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m)$, where $z = ((\boldsymbol{x}^2)_1, (\boldsymbol{x}^2)_2)$. It can be checked that $\boldsymbol{y}$ is a fixed point of g. Now, if $\boldsymbol{y} = (\boldsymbol{x}^1, z, \boldsymbol{x}^3, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m)$ is a fixed point of g, Lemma 2.3 implies that $z = \mathbf{0}$ or $z = \mathbf{1}$. We define $\boldsymbol{x} = (\boldsymbol{x}^1, \boldsymbol{x}^2, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m)$ in the domain of f, where $\boldsymbol{x}^1 = \mathbf{0}$ if $z = \mathbf{0}$ and $\boldsymbol{x}^1 = \mathbf{1}$ if $z = \mathbf{1}$. Then, it can be checked that $\boldsymbol{x}$ is a fixed point of f. This shows that

$$\mathcal{F}(k_1, k_2, \dots, k_{m-1}, k_m) = \mathcal{F}(k_1, 2, k_3, \dots, k_{m-1}, k_m) \quad \text{for } k_2 \geq 2. \qquad \square$$

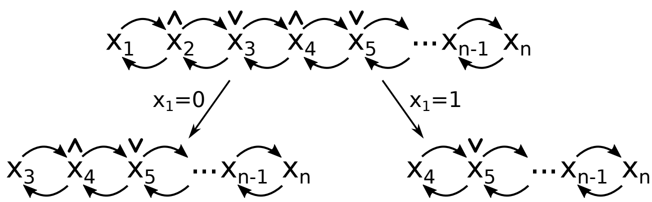

Figure 2. Idea behind the proof of Proposition 2.3.2 (logical operators are included for clarity). Considering the cases $x_1 = 0$ and $x_1 = 1$ yields systems of equations that correspond to smaller AND-OR networks.

Example 2.1 (continued). Proposition 2.3.1 guarantees that $\wedge^2 \vee \wedge \vee^3 \wedge^2 \vee$ and $\wedge \vee \wedge \vee^2 \wedge^2 \vee$ have the same number of fixed points. We can consider the second AND-OR network as a "reduced" version of the original AND-OR network [Veliz-Cuba 2011; Matache and Matache 2016]. This is illustrated in Table 1 (third column).

Proposition 2.3.2. *Let* $r_1, \dots, r_m \in \{1, 2\}$, *and* $m \geq 2$. *Then*, *we have*

$$\mathcal{F}(1, r_1, \dots, r_m, 1) = \begin{cases} \mathcal{F}(1, r_3, \dots, r_m, 1) + \mathcal{F}(r_3, \dots, r_m, 1) & \text{for } r_1 = 1,\ r_2 = 1, \\ \mathcal{F}(2, r_3, \dots, r_m, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1, r_3, \dots, r_m, 1) & \text{for } r_1 = 1,\ r_2 = 2, \\ \mathcal{F}(1, 1, r_3, \dots, r_m, 1) + \mathcal{F}(r_3, \dots, r_m, 1) & \text{for } r_1 = 2,\ r_2 = 1, \\ \mathcal{F}(1, 2, r_3, \dots, r_m, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1, r_3, \dots, r_m, 1) & \text{for } r_1 = 2,\ r_2 = 2. \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

Proof. We will use the notation of Lemma 2.3.

If $r_1 = 1, r_2 = 1$, then we claim that any fixed point of $f = \wedge \vee \wedge \vee^{r_3} \wedge^{r_4} \cdots$ is of the form $\boldsymbol{x} = (\boldsymbol{x}^0, \boldsymbol{x}^1, \boldsymbol{x}^2, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m, \boldsymbol{x}^{m+1})$, where either $\boldsymbol{x}^0 = \boldsymbol{0}$ and $\boldsymbol{z} = (\boldsymbol{x}^1, \boldsymbol{x}^2, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m, \boldsymbol{x}^{m+1})$ is a fixed point of $g = \wedge \vee^{r_3} \wedge^{r_4} \cdots$ or $\boldsymbol{x}^0 = \boldsymbol{x}^1 = \boldsymbol{1}$ and $\boldsymbol{z} = (\boldsymbol{x}^2, \dots, \boldsymbol{x}^m, \boldsymbol{x}^{m+1})$ is a fixed point of $h = \vee^{r_3} \wedge^{r_4} \cdots$. Indeed, the system of Boolean equations for fixed points is

$$x_1 = x_2, \quad x_2 = x_1 \wedge x_3, \quad x_3 = x_2 \vee x_4, \quad x_4 = x_3 \wedge x_5, \quad x_5 = x_4 \vee x_6, \quad \dots, \quad x_n = x_{n-1}.$$

We divide this system of equations into the cases $x_1 = 0$ and $x_1 = 1$. Then, using the fact that $1 = m \wedge n$ implies $m = n = 1$ and that $0 = m \vee n$ implies $m = n = 0$, it follows that we obtain the two systems

$$x_3 = x_4, \quad x_4 = x_3 \wedge x_5, \quad x_5 = x_4 \vee x_6, \quad \dots, \quad x_n = x_{n-1}$$

and

$$x_4 = x_5, \quad x_5 = x_4 \vee x_6, \quad \dots, \quad x_n = x_{n-1},$$

corresponding to the cases $x_1 = 0$ and $x_1 = 1$, respectively (see Figure 2). This means that the number of fixed points of f is equal to the number of solutions of these two systems. Since the solutions of the first system are the fixed points of $g = \wedge\vee^{r_3}\wedge^{r_4}\cdots$ and the solutions of the second system are the fixed points of $h = \vee^{r_3}\wedge^{r_4}\cdots$, we obtain

$$\mathcal{F}(1, 1, 1, r_3, \ldots, r_m, 1) = \mathcal{F}(1, r_3, \ldots, r_m, 1) + \mathcal{F}(r_3, \ldots, r_m, 1).$$

The proof for the other three cases is similar. □

We use the convention

$$\mathcal{F}(0, k_1, \ldots, k_m, 0) = \mathcal{F}(k_1, \ldots, k_m, 0) = \mathcal{F}(0, k_1, \ldots, k_m) = \mathcal{F}(k_1, \ldots, k_m),$$

which will simplify the formulation of upcoming results.

Theorem 2.4. *With the convention above, we have that for $m \geq 3$ and $k_i \geq 1$*

$$\mathcal{F}(k_1, \ldots, k_m) = \mathcal{F}(k_2 - 1, k_3, \ldots, k_m) + \mathcal{F}(k_3 - 1, k_4, \ldots, k_m)$$

and

$$\mathcal{F}(k_1, \ldots, k_m) = \mathcal{F}(k_1, \ldots, k_{m-2}, k_{m-1} - 1) + \mathcal{F}(k_1, \ldots, k_{m-3}, k_{m-2} - 1).$$

Also,

$$\mathcal{F}(k_1, k_2) = 3, \qquad \mathcal{F}(k) = 2 \quad \text{for } k \geq 0.$$

Proof. For $m \geq 4$ the result follows directly from Propositions 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. For $m = 3$ the result follows from

$$\mathcal{F}(1, 2, 1) = 5, \quad \mathcal{F}(1, 1, 1) = 4, \quad \mathcal{F}(1, 1) = 3, \quad \mathcal{F}(1) = 2, \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{F}(0) = 2,$$

which can be easily checked by complete enumeration. □

Example 2.1 (continued). We now use Theorem 2.4 to find the number of fixed points of $\wedge^2\vee\wedge\vee^3\wedge^2\vee$:

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{F}(2, 1, 1, 3, 2, 1) &= \mathcal{F}(1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 1) \\
&= \mathcal{F}(1 - 1, 1, 2, 2, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1 - 1, 2, 2, 1) \\
&= \mathcal{F}(1, 2, 2, 1) + \mathcal{F}(2, 2, 1) \\
&= \mathcal{F}(2 - 1, 2, 1) + \mathcal{F}(2 - 1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(2 - 1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1 - 1) \\
&= \mathcal{F}(1, 2, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(0) \\
&= \mathcal{F}(2 - 1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1 - 1) + \mathcal{F}(1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(0) \\
&= \mathcal{F}(1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(0) + \mathcal{F}(1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(0) \\
&= 3 + 2 + 3 + 3 + 2 \\
&= 13
\end{aligned}$$

or

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{F}(2,1,1,3,2,1) &= \mathcal{F}(1,1,1,2,2,1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,1,1,2,2-1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1,1,2-1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,1,1,2,1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,1,1,2-1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1,1-1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1,1-1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1-1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,1,1-1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1-1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(1)\\
&= 3+2+3+3+2\\
&= 13.
\end{aligned}$$

In this way, Theorem 2.4 provides a recursive formula to compute the number of fixed points of AND-OR networks with chain topology without the need of exhaustive enumeration. We now study the two special cases of $\mathcal{F}(1,1,\dots,1,1)$ and $\mathcal{F}(2,2,\dots,2,2)$.

Define

$$A_n = (1, \underbrace{1, 1, \dots, 1, 1}_{n \text{ times}}, 1) \quad \text{and} \quad B_n = (2, \underbrace{2, 2, \dots, 2, 2}_{n \text{ times}}, 2).$$

Also define the sequences $a_0 = 1,\ a_1 = 1,\ a_2 = 1$, and $a_n = a_{n-2} + a_{n-3}$ for $n \geq 3$ and $b_0 = 1,\ b_1 = 1$, and $b_n = b_{n-1} + b_{n-2}$ for $n \geq 2$. Note that (a_n) is the Padovan sequence and (b_n) is the Fibonacci sequence.

Corollary 2.4.1. *With the definitions above we have $\mathcal{F}(A_n) = a_{n+5}$ and $\mathcal{F}(B_n) = b_{n+3}$ for $n \geq 0$, and the sharp bounds $\mathcal{F}(A_n) \leq \mathcal{F}(1, r_1, r_2, \dots, r_n, 1) \leq \mathcal{F}(B_n)$ for all $r_i \geq 1$.*

Proof. It follows from Theorem 2.4 or Proposition 2.3.2 using induction. □

3. Infinite and closed chain

In this section we study the cases of AND-OR networks with infinitely many variables and when the topology is a closed chain.

When the AND-OR network has infinitely many variables we have a infinite collection of Boolean functions $f = (\dots, f_{-2}, f_{-1}, f_0, f_1, f_2, \dots)$ such that $f_i = x_{i-1} \wedge x_{i+1}$ or $f_i = x_{i-1} \vee x_{i+1}$. We can use the notation of Section 2 and denote consecutive logical operators as $\wedge^k$ or $\vee^k$, where k could also be ∞. Also, we can simply use the exponents to represent the AND-OR network. For example, $(\infty, 1, 2, \infty)$ and $\wedge^\infty \vee \wedge^2 \vee^\infty$ represent the AND-OR network $\cdots \wedge\wedge\wedge\vee\wedge\wedge\vee\vee\vee \cdots$.

Similarly, $(\dots,1,1,2,1,1,2,1,1,2,\dots)$ and $\cdots\wedge\vee\wedge^2\vee\wedge\vee^2\wedge\vee\wedge^2\cdots$ represent the AND-OR network $\cdots\wedge\vee\wedge\wedge\vee\wedge\vee\vee\wedge\vee\wedge\wedge\cdots$.

The following theorem allows us to use the results from Section 2 to study AND-OR networks with infinitely many variables.

Theorem 3.1. *With the notation above and $k_i \geq 1$ we have*

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{F}(\infty) &= 2,\\
\mathcal{F}(\infty,k_1,k_2,\dots,k_{m-1},k_m,\infty) &= \mathcal{F}(1,k_1,k_2,\dots,k_{m-1},k_m,1),\\
\mathcal{F}(\infty,k_1,k_2,k_3,\dots) &= \infty,\\
\mathcal{F}(\dots,k_{-3},k_{-2},k_{-1},\infty) &= \infty,\\
\mathcal{F}(\dots,k_{-3},k_{-2},k_{-1},k_0,k_1,k_2,k_3,\dots) &= \infty.
\end{aligned}$$

Proof. To prove the first equality we consider the AND-OR network where all logical operators are $\wedge$. If one of the variables is 0, it follows that all the other variables are also 0. Similarly, if one of the variables is 1, all the other variables are also 1. Thus, the only fixed points of this AND-OR network are $\mathbf{0}$ and $\mathbf{1}$.

The second equality follows the same approach seen in Proposition 2.3.1.

To prove the third equality we first observe that $\mathcal{F}(\infty,k_1,k_2,k_3,\dots) = \mathcal{F}(1,k_1,k_2,k_3,\dots)$. Now, we will show that any fixed point of the AND-OR network $\mathcal{F}(1,k_1,k_2,k_3,\dots,k_r)$ defines a fixed point of $\mathcal{F}(1,k_1,k_2,k_3,\dots)$. Indeed, using the notation of Lemma 2.3, a fixed point of the AND-OR network $\mathcal{F}(1,k_1,\dots,k_r)$ has the form $\boldsymbol{x}=(\boldsymbol{x}^0,\boldsymbol{x}^1,\dots,\boldsymbol{x}^r)$. Then, denoting $\boldsymbol{z}=(1,1,\dots)$ if $\boldsymbol{x}^r=\mathbf{1}$ and $\boldsymbol{z}=(0,0,\dots)$ if $\boldsymbol{x}^r=\mathbf{0}$, it follows that $(\boldsymbol{x}^0,\boldsymbol{x}^1,\dots,\boldsymbol{x}^r,\boldsymbol{z})$ is a fixed point of $\mathcal{F}(1,k_1,k_2,k_3,\dots)$. Since r is arbitrary, $\mathcal{F}(1,k_1,\dots,k_r)$ is not bounded (see Corollary 2.4.1) and the number of fixed points of $\mathcal{F}(1,k_1,\dots)$ is ∞. The last two equalities are similar. $\square$

When the topology of the network is a closed chain, we have the network

$$\begin{aligned}
f_1 &= x_n \diamondsuit_1 x_2, & f_{n-2} &= x_{n-3}\diamondsuit_{n-2} x_{n-1},\\
f_2 &= x_1 \diamondsuit_2 x_3, & f_{n-1} &= x_{n-2}\diamondsuit_{n-1} x_n,\\
&\ \vdots & f_n &= x_{n-1}\diamondsuit_n x_1.
\end{aligned}$$

We denote this network as $[k_1,k_2,\dots,k_r]$ or any cyclic permutation that groups consecutive logical operators. Thus, the AND-OR network

$$\begin{aligned}
f_1 &= x_n\wedge x_2, & f_3 &= x_2\wedge x_4, & f_5 &= x_4\vee x_6,\\
f_2 &= x_1\vee x_3, & f_4 &= x_3\vee x_5, & f_6 &= x_5\wedge x_1,
\end{aligned}$$

will not be denoted by $[1,1,1,2,1]$ ("splitting" the first and last $\wedge$'s), but by $[1,1,2,2]$, $[1,2,2,1]$, $[2,2,1,1]$, or $[2,1,1,2]$ (combining the first and last $\wedge$'s).

This means that r in $[k_1, k_2, \dots, k_r]$ will always be an even number or equal to 1. The number of fixed points will be denoted by $\mathcal{F}[k_1, k_2, \dots, k_r]$. The following propositions and theorem allow us to use the results from Section 2 to study AND-OR networks with closed chain topology.

Proposition 3.1.1. *With the notation above, we have that for* $k_i \geq 1$

$$\mathcal{F}[k_1, k_2, \dots, k_r] = \mathcal{F}[\min\{2, k_1\}, \min\{2, k_2\}, \dots, \min\{2, k_r\}].$$

Proof. It is analogous to the proof of Proposition 2.3.1. □

Proposition 3.1.2. *Consider* $k_i \geq 1$, $m \geq 6$, *and* $l \geq 8$. *Then*,

$$\mathcal{F}[2, k_2, \dots, k_m] = \mathcal{F}(k_2-1, k_3, \dots, k_{m-1}, k_m-1) + \mathcal{F}(k_3-1, k_4, \dots, k_{m-2}, k_{m-1}-1),$$

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{F}[1, k_2, \dots, k_l] = {}& \mathcal{F}(k_3-1, k_4, \dots, k_{l-1}-1) + \mathcal{F}(k_4-1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-1}, k_l-1) \\ &+ \mathcal{F}(k_2-1, k_3, \dots, k_{l-3}, k_{l-2}-1) - \mathcal{F}(k_4-1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}, k_{l-2}-1).\end{aligned}$$

Proof. The first equality is analogous to Proposition 2.3.2. To prove the second equality we use the notation of Lemma 2.3.

We have several cases to consider for k_{l-2}, k_{l-1}, k_l, k_2, k_3, and k_4. We focus on the case $k_{l-2} = k_{l-1} = k_l = k_2 = k_3 = k_4 = 1$ since the other cases are analogous. Note that we want to prove

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{F}[1, 1, 1, 1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}, 1, 1, 1] = {}& \mathcal{F}(1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}, 1) + \mathcal{F}(k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}, 1, 1) \\ &+ \mathcal{F}(1, 1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}) - \mathcal{F}(k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}).\end{aligned}$$

The fixed points of the AND-OR network are the solutions of

$$\begin{array}{ll} x_1 = x_n \wedge x_2, & x_{n-3} = x_{n-4} \wedge x_{n-2}, \\ x_2 = x_1 \vee x_3, & x_{n-2} = x_{n-3} \vee x_{n-1}, \\ x_3 = x_2 \wedge x_4, & x_{n-1} = x_{n-2} \wedge x_n, \\ \vdots & x_n = x_{n-1} \vee x_1. \end{array}$$

We now consider the cases $x_1 = 1$ and $x_1 = 0$ (see Figure 3). The case $x_1 = 1$ yields the system of equations

$$\begin{array}{ll} x_3 = x_4, & x_{n-4} = x_{n-5} \vee x_{n-3}, \\ x_4 = x_3 \vee x_5, & x_{n-3} = x_{n-4} \wedge x_{n-2}, \\ x_5 = x_4 \wedge x_6, & x_{n-2} = x_{n-3} \vee x_{n-1}, \\ \vdots & x_{n-1} = x_{n-2}, \end{array}$$

which has $\mathcal{F}(1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}, 1)$ solutions. On the other hand, when we consider $x_1 = 0$ the first equation becomes $x_n \wedge x_2 = 0$. We now have two subcases: $x_n = 0$

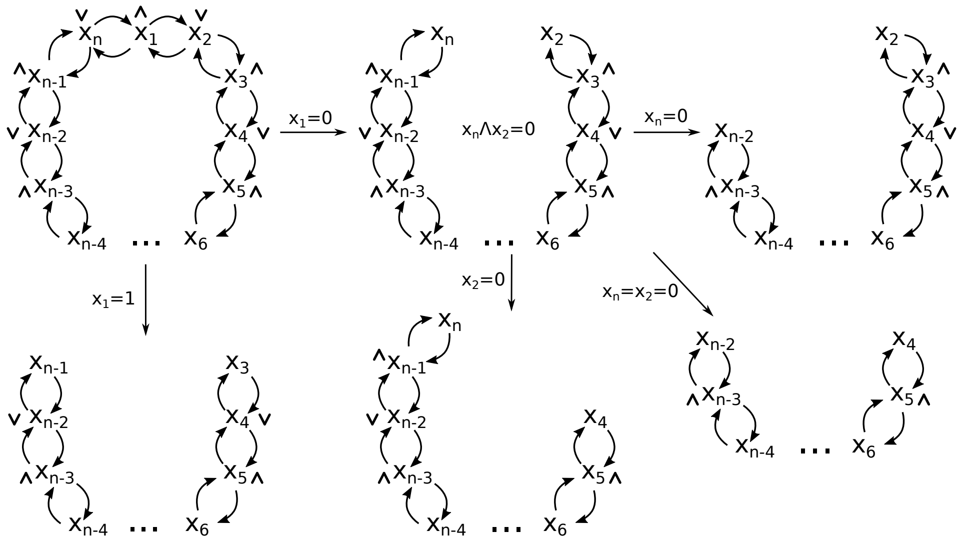

Figure 3. Idea behind the proof of Proposition 3.1.2 (logical operators are included for clarity). Considering the case $x_1 = 1$ yields a system of equations that corresponds to a smaller AND-OR network. Considering the case $x_1 = 0$ yields a system of equations that does not correspond to an AND-OR network (due to the equation $x_n \wedge x_2 = 0$). However, the subcases $x_n = 0$ and $x_2 = 0$ yield systems of equations that do correspond to smaller AND-OR networks. These two systems have overlapping solutions, so we must also take into consideration the common case $x_n = x_2 = 0$ when counting the number of fixed points.

and $x_2 = 0$. The subcase $x_n = 0$ yields

$$\begin{aligned} x_2 &= x_3, & x_{n-4} &= x_{n-5} \vee x_{n-3},\\ x_3 &= x_2 \wedge x_4, & x_{n-3} &= x_{n-4} \wedge x_{n-2},\\ &\vdots & x_{n-2} &= x_{n-3}, \end{aligned}$$

which has $\mathcal{F}(1, 1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-3})$ solutions. The subcase $x_2 = 0$ yields

$$\begin{aligned} x_4 &= x_5, & x_{n-2} &= x_{n-3} \vee x_{n-1},\\ x_5 &= x_4 \wedge x_6, & x_{n-1} &= x_{n-2} \wedge x_n,\\ &\vdots & x_n &= x_{n-1}, \end{aligned}$$

which has $\mathcal{F}(k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}, 1, 1)$ solutions. Thus, adding up these three numbers we obtain $\mathcal{F}(1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}, 1) + \mathcal{F}(k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}, 1, 1) + \mathcal{F}(1, 1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-3})$. However, this is not $\mathcal{F}[1, 1, 1, 1, k_5, \dots, k_{l-3}, 1, 1, 1]$, since the subcases $x_n = 0$ and

$x_2 = 0$ overlap. We need to subtract the number of solutions of the system

$$\begin{aligned} x_4 &= x_5, & x_{n-4} &= x_{n-5} \vee x_{n-3}, \\ x_5 &= x_4 \wedge x_6, & x_{n-3} &= x_{n-4} \wedge x_{n-2}, \\ &\vdots & x_{n-2} &= x_{n-3}, \end{aligned}$$

which has $\mathcal{F}(k_5, \ldots, k_{l-3})$ solutions. Then, the result follows. $\square$

We now declare some conventions to write Proposition 3.1.2 more compactly. We define $\mathcal{F}(-1) = 1$, $(k_s - 1, \ldots, k_s - 1) = (k_s - 2)$, and $(k_s - 1, \ldots, k_t - 1) = (-1)$ for $s > t$.

Theorem 3.2. *With the conventions above, we have that for $m \geq 4$ and $k_i \geq 1$*

$$\mathcal{F}[2, k_2, \ldots, k_r] = \mathcal{F}(k_2-1, k_3, \ldots, k_{r-1}, k_r-1) + \mathcal{F}(k_3-1, k_4, \ldots, k_{r-2}, k_{r-1}-1),$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{F}[1, k_2, \ldots, k_r] = {}& \mathcal{F}(k_3-1, k_4, \ldots, k_{r-1}-1) + \mathcal{F}(k_4-1, k_5, \ldots, k_{r-1}, k_r-1) \\ & + \mathcal{F}(k_2-1, k_3, \ldots, k_{r-3}, k_{r-2}-1) - \mathcal{F}(k_4-1, k_5, \ldots, k_{r-3}, k_{r-2}-1). \end{aligned}$$

Also,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{F}[k] &= 2 \quad \text{for } k \geq 3, \\ \mathcal{F}[k, 1] &= 2 \quad \text{for } k \geq 2, \\ \mathcal{F}[k_1, k_2] &= 3 \quad \text{for } k_1, k_2 \geq 2, \end{aligned}$$

Proof. The first two equalities follow directly from Propositions 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 using the convention declared above. The last three equalities follow from Proposition 3.1.1 and $\mathcal{F}[3] = \mathcal{F}[2, 1] = 2$ and $\mathcal{F}[2, 2] = 3$, which can be verified by complete enumeration. $\square$

As in Section 2, we now consider the cases

$$A_n = (1, \underbrace{1, 1, \ldots, 1, 1}_{n \text{ times}}, 1) \quad \text{and} \quad B_n = (2, \underbrace{2, 2, \ldots, 2, 2}_{n \text{ times}}, 2).$$

We denote the number of fixed points of the corresponding AND-OR networks with closed chain topology by $\mathcal{F}[A_n]$ and $\mathcal{F}[B_n]$, respectively.

Corollary 3.2.1. *With the notation above we have $\mathcal{F}[A_n] = 3a_n - a_{n-2}$ and $\mathcal{F}[B_n] = b_{n+2} + b_n$ for $n \geq 2$, and the sharp bounds*

$$\mathcal{F}[A_n] \leq \mathcal{F}[k_0, k_1, \ldots, k_n, k_{n+1}] \leq \mathcal{F}[B_n]$$

for all $r_i \geq 1$

Proof. The proof follows from first using Theorem 3.2 and then Corollary 2.4.1. $\square$

Example 3.3. We consider

$$\begin{aligned}
&f_1 = x_{12} \wedge x_2, \quad && f_4 = x_3 \vee x_5, \quad && f_7 = x_6 \vee x_8, \quad && f_{10} = x_9 \wedge x_{11},\\
&f_2 = x_1 \wedge x_3, && f_5 = x_4 \wedge x_6, && f_8 = x_7 \vee x_9, && f_{11} = x_{10} \vee x_{12},\\
&f_3 = x_2 \wedge x_4, && f_6 = x_5 \vee x_7, && f_9 = x_8 \wedge x_{10}, && f_{12} = x_{11} \vee x_1.
\end{aligned}$$

We will use Theorems 2.4 and 3.2 for the representations [3, 1, 1, 3, 2, 2] and [1, 3, 2, 2, 3, 1] of f.

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{F}[3,1,1,3,2,2] &= \mathcal{F}[2,1,1,2,2,2]\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1-1,1,2,2,2-1)+\mathcal{F}(1-1,2,2-1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,2,2,1)+\mathcal{F}(2,1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(2-1,2,1)+\mathcal{F}(2-1,1)+\mathcal{F}(2,1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,2,1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(2,1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(2-1,1)+\mathcal{F}(1-1)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(2,1)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(0)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(2,1)\\
&= 3+2+3+3 = 11,
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{F}[1,3,2,2,3,1] &= \mathcal{F}[1,2,2,2,2,1]\\
&= \mathcal{F}(2-1,2,2-1)+\mathcal{F}(2-1,2,1-1)+\mathcal{F}(2-1,2,2-1)-\mathcal{F}(2-2)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,2,1)+\mathcal{F}(1,2)+\mathcal{F}(1,2,1)-\mathcal{F}(0)\\
&= \mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(0)+\mathcal{F}(1,2)+\mathcal{F}(1,1)+\mathcal{F}(0)-\mathcal{F}(0)\\
&= 3+2+3+3+2-2 = 11.
\end{aligned}$$

4. Final remarks: coupled chains

Although the results in this manuscript are for chain topology, we now show how our techniques could also be used for coupled chains. These couplings could be considered as "fractal" versions of the 1-dimensional chains that we covered in previous sections. However, due to the complex couplings that could be attained and the different cases that appear (e.g., the proof of Proposition 3.1.1 has 2^6 subcases per case), a single proposition that covers all cases would be unfeasible. Thus, we will consider two examples featuring different couplings of chains: a coupling of three open chains, and a coupling of an open and a closed chain.

First, we will prove two lemmas that will allow us to handle intersections of chains. To make the notation simpler, a pair of edges between two vertices will be simply denoted by a single undirected edge (Figure 4). When it is not required to label vertices, we will use an even simpler representation of the wiring diagram (top

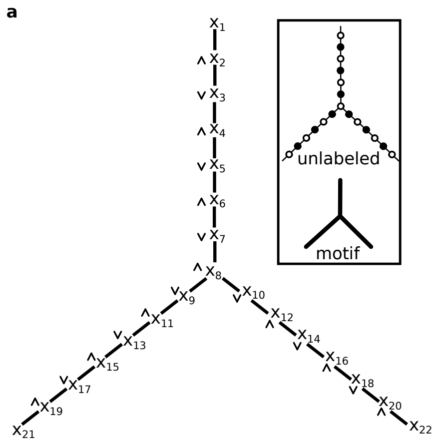

Figure 4. Coupling chains. (a) Wiring diagram of an AND-OR network consisting of the coupling of three open chains. Each undirected edge represents two edges as shown in Figure 1. For example, $f_1 = x_2$, $f_2 = x_1 \wedge x_3$, and $f_8 = x_7 \wedge x_9 \wedge x_{10}$. Vertex x_1 could also be assigned the AND or OR operator. (b) Wiring diagram of an AND-OR network consisting of the coupling of a closed and open chain. In both panels, the insets show the simplified representation of the wiring diagram where the labels of variables are omitted. Open circles indicate the AND operator, whereas filled circles indicate the OR operator. The vertex corresponding to x_1 is left blank, but could also be assigned a filled or open circle. The insets also show an undirected graph highlighting the coupling motif of the AND-OR network. In previous sections the coupling motif would simply be a (finite or infinite) line or a circle.

insets in Figure 4). Also, we will use $\mathcal{F}[f]$ to denote the number of fixed points of an AND-OR network f.

Consider an AND-OR network, $f : \{0, 1\}^n \to \{0, 1\}^n$, and $S \subseteq \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$. We define a new network $g : \{0, 1\}^{n-|S|} \to \{0, 1\}^{n-|S|}$ in the variables $\{x_i : i \notin S\}$, denoted by $g = f \backslash S$, as follows:

(1) Remove the vertices in $\{x_i : i \in S\}$ from the wiring diagram of f. Note that this also means that we remove the edges of the forms $x_i \to x_j$ and $x_k \to x_i$, where $i \in S$.

(2) For each variable x_k in the new wiring diagram, g_k will be the same logical operator as in the wiring diagram of f, but may possibly depend on less variables. Note that the operators $\vee$ and $\wedge$ on a single variable are simply the identity function.

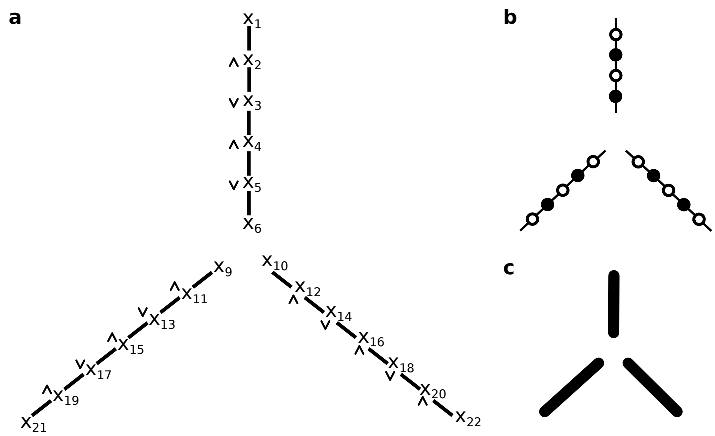

Figure 5. Example of $f\backslash S$. (a) Wiring diagram of the AND-OR network $f\backslash S$, where f is given in Figure 4(a) and $S = \{7, 8\}$. (b) Simplified representation of the wiring diagram with labels omitted. (c) Undirected graph highlighting the coupling motif of $f\backslash S$. Note that this graph now has three connected components, all of them being open chains.

Example 4.1. Consider the AND-OR network with wiring diagram given by Figure 4(a) and let $S = \{7, 8\}$. The new network $g = f\backslash S$ has wiring diagram shown in Figure 5(a). Note that g depends on 20 variables and variables x_6, x_9, and x_{10} each depend on a single variable only (e.g., the Boolean function corresponding to x_6 is $g_6 = x_5$).

We now state and prove the lemmas.

Lemma 4.2. *Consider an AND-OR network f consisting of coupled chains such that x_n depends on two or more variables as shown in Figure 6(a). Denote with $R = \{1, 2, \dots, r\}$. Then, the number of steady states of f is equal to*

$$\mathcal{F}[f] = \mathcal{F}[f\backslash(\{n\} \cup \{i_s : s \in R\})] + \sum_{\varnothing \neq S \subseteq R} (-1)^{|S|+1} \mathcal{F}[f\backslash(\{n\} \cup \{i_s : s \in S\} \cup \{j_s : s \in S\})].$$

Proof. We proceed by cases as in the proof of Proposition 3.1.2.

If $x_n = 1$, then any fixed point of f will satisfy $x_{i_s} = x_{j_s} \vee 1 = 1$ and $x_{j_s} = x_{k_s} \wedge x_{i_s} = x_{k_s} \wedge 1 = x_{k_s}$. Thus, x is a fixed point of f if and only if $y = (x_s)_{s \in \{1,\dots,n\}\backslash\{n, i_1, \dots, i_r\}}$ is a fixed point of the AND-OR network with wiring diagram given in Figure 6(b). This smaller network is precisely $f\backslash(\{n\} \cup \{i_s : s \in R\})$.

If $x_n = 0$, then any fixed point of f will satisfy $x_{i_1} \wedge \dots \wedge x_{i_r} = 0$ (Figure 6(c)). This does not correspond to a system of equations of an AND-OR network, so we consider the subcases $x_{i_s} = 0$ for each $s \in R = \{1, 2, \dots, r\}$.

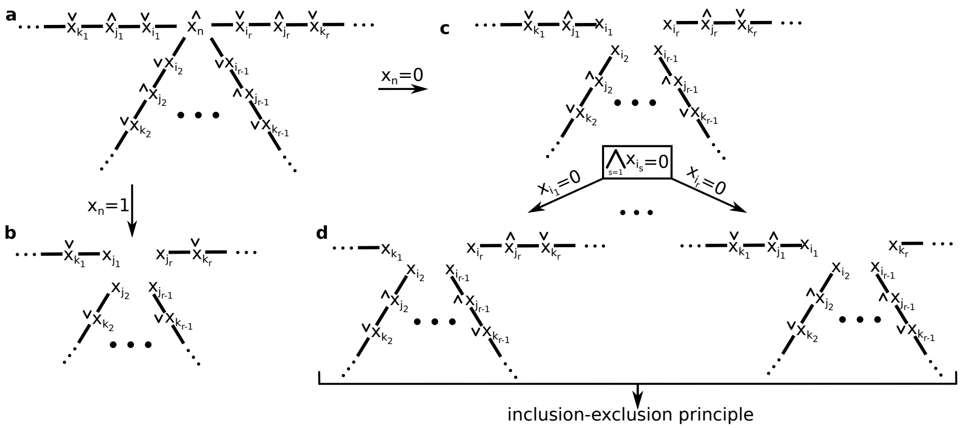

Figure 6. Idea of the proof in Lemma 4.2. (a) Wiring diagram of AND-OR network f that has a vertex that depends on two or more variables. The three dots represent other variables in the r chains that could potentially intersect as in Figure 4(b). We consider two cases, $x_n = 1$ and $x_n = 0$ in the system of equations $f(x) = x$. (b) In the case $x_n = 1$, we obtain a smaller system of equations that corresponds to a smaller wiring diagram of an AND-OR network. (c) In the case $x_n = 0$, the system of equations does not correspond to an AND-OR network due to the condition $\bigwedge_{s=1}^{r} x_{i_s} = 0$. (d) To obtain AND-OR networks we consider the subcases $x_{i_1} = 0,\ x_{i_2} = 0, \ldots,$ and $x_{i_r} = 0$. However, there is overlap of fixed points between the different subcases, so we use the inclusion-exclusion principle.

If $x_{i_s} = 0$, then $x_{i_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge x_{i_r} = 0$ is satisfied. Also, $x_{j_s} = x_{k_s} \wedge 0 = 0$ and then x_{k_s} will depend on a single variable only (see Figure 6(d) for the cases $s = 1$ and $s = r$). The resulting AND-OR network is $f\backslash(\{n, i_s, j_s\})$. Note that these subcases overlap, so we use the inclusion-exclusion principle to properly account for this. For the case $x_n = 0$, the inclusion exclusion principle implies that the number of fixed points is

$$|\{\text{fixed points of the form } x_n = 0\}| \\ = \sum_{\varnothing \neq S \subseteq R} (-1)^{|S|+1} |\{\text{fixed points of the form } x_{i_s} = 0 \text{ for } s \in S\}|.$$

We now claim that

$$|\{\text{fixed points of the form } x_{i_s} = 0 \text{ for } s \in S\}| = \mathcal{F}[f\backslash(\{n\} \cup \{i_s : s \in S\} \cup \{j_s : s \in S\})].$$

Indeed, if $x_{i_s} = 0$ for $s \in S$, it follows that $x_{j_s} = 0$ and that x_{k_s} depends on a single variable only for $s \in S$. The AND-OR network corresponding to this is precisely $f\backslash(\{n\} \cup \{i_s : s \in S\} \cup \{j_s : s \in S\})$.

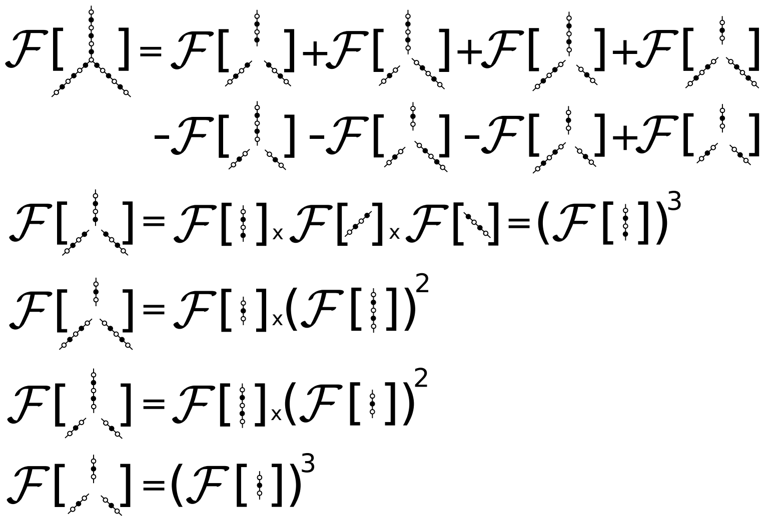

Figure 7. Using our results to find the number of fixed points of a coupling of three open chains.

The proof then follows by adding the total number of fixed points from the cases $x_n = 1$ and $x_n = 0$. □

Lemma 4.3. *Suppose a Boolean network f is the Cartesian product of h and g; that is, up to a relabeling of variables, $f(x, y) = (g(x), h(y))$ (also denoted by $f = g \times h$). Then,*

$$\mathcal{F}[f] = \mathcal{F}[g]\,\mathcal{F}[h].$$

Proof. This follows from the fact that (x, y) is a steady state of f if and only if x is a steady state of g and y is a steady state of h. □

With these lemmas we can now find the number of fixed points of the AND-OR networks given in Figure 4. For notational purposes, we apply the lemmas using the unlabeled representation of the wiring diagrams.

Example 4.4. Consider the AND-OR network with wiring diagram given by Figure 4(a). We use Lemma 4.2 to split the wiring diagram at x_8. The process is shown in Figure 7. Using this lemma, we find that the number of fixed points can be written as a sum/difference of the number of fixed points of disjoint chains. Then, we use Lemma 4.3 to express the number of fixed points as an algebraic combination of the number of fixed points of single chains. Once we have single chains, we can use the results from previous sections. Thus, the number of fixed points is

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{F}[f] &= (\mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1))^3 + 3\mathcal{F}(1,1,1)(\mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1,1))^2 \\ &\qquad - 3\mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1,1)(\mathcal{F}(1,1,1))^2 + (\mathcal{F}(1,1,1))^3 \\ &= (5)^3 + 3(4)(7)^2 - 3(7)(4)^2 + (4)^3 = 441.\end{aligned}$$

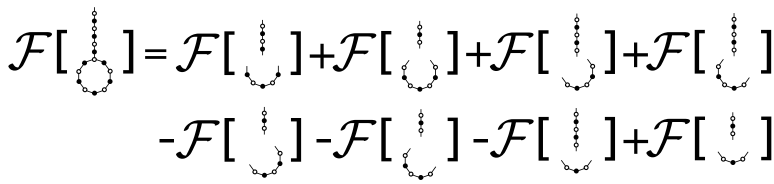

Figure 8. Using our results to find the number of fixed points of a coupling of an open chain and a closed chain.

Example 4.5. Consider the AND-OR network with wiring diagram given by Figure 4(b). We use Lemma 4.2 to split the wiring diagram at x_8 and then we use Lemma 4.3. The process is shown in Figure 8. Analogous to the previous example, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{F}[f] &= \mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1)\mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1,1) + \mathcal{F}(1,1,1)\mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1,1,1,1) \\ &\quad + 2(\mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1,1))^2 - 3\mathcal{F}(1,1,1)\mathcal{F}(1,1,1,1,1) + (\mathcal{F}(1,1,1))^2 \\ &= (5)(7) + (4)(12) + 2(7)^2 - 3(4)(7) + (4)^2 = 113.\end{aligned}$$

5. Conclusion

Our results provide recursive formulas and sharp bounds for the number of fixed points of AND-OR networks with chain topology. Other work regarding the number of fixed points has focused on bounds with respect to the number of nodes [Aracena et al. 2004]. Our results, on the other hand, focus on formulas and bounds with respect to the pattern of logical operators. Thus, our findings complement previous results. Our approach can potentially be extended to cases where an AND-OR network has a topology that can be seen as the "combination" of open chains. Then, the number of fixed points of the original AND-OR network will be given by the inclusion-exclusion principle in terms of the number of fixed points of the AND-OR networks with open chain topology. Indeed, Section 4 shows how our approach can be used in such cases.

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