

# Improved Protocols for Luminous Asynchronous Robots<sup>\*</sup>

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**Abstract.** The distributed setting of computational mobile entities, called robots, that have to perform tasks without global coordination has been extensively studied in the literature. A well-known scenario is that in which robots operate in *Look-Compute-Move* (LCM) cycles. LCM cycles might be subject to different temporal constraints dictated by the considered schedule. The classic models for the activation and synchronization of mobile robots are the well-known *fully-synchronous*, *semi-synchronous*, and *asynchronous* models.

In this paper, we concentrate on the weakest asynchronous model, and propose improved and general protocols to solve tasks when the robots are endowed with lights, i.e. they are *luminous*.

## 1 Introduction

The distributed setting of computational mobile robots that have to perform tasks without global coordination has been extensively studied in the literature. A well-known scenario is that in which robots operate in *Look-Compute-Move* (LCM) cycles (see [1,2,11,12] and references therein). During each cycle, a robot acquires

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a snapshot of the surrounding environment (*Look* phase), then executes an appropriate algorithm by using the obtained snapshot as input (*Compute* phase), and finally moves toward a desired destination, if any (*Move* phase). Look-Compute-Move cycles might be subject to different temporal constraints dictated by the considered schedule. The classic models for the activation and synchronization of mobile robots are the well-known *fully-synchronous* (FSYNC), *semi-synchronous* (SSYNC), and *asynchronous* (ASYNC) models (see, e.g., [3,5,8]).

- **Fully-synchronous** (FSYNC): The *activation* phase (i.e. the execution of an LCM cycle) of all robots can be logically divided into global rounds. In each round all the robots are activated, obtain the same snapshot of the environment, compute and perform their move. Notice that, this assumption is computationally equivalent to a fully synchronized system in which robots are activated simultaneously and all operations happen instantaneously.
- **Semi-synchronous** (SSYNC): It coincides with the FSYNC model, with the only difference that not all robots are necessarily activated in each round.
- **Asynchronous** (ASYNC): The robots are activated independently, and the duration of each *Compute*, *Move* and inactivity phase is finite but unpredictable. As a result, robots do not have a common notion of time. Moreover, they can be seen while moving, and computations can be made based on obsolete information about positions.

Recently, a new model has been introduced by Das et al. in [4], extending the classic ones. In detail, given a model  $\mathcal{M} \in \{\text{FSYNC}, \text{SSYNC}, \text{ASYNC}\}$ , the authors define model  $\mathcal{M}^c$ , where each robot operating in  $\mathcal{M}$  is equipped with a *light* that is visible to itself and to the other robots during the *Look* phase. The light associated with a robot can generate  $c$  different colors (for some constant integer  $c > 0$ ), and can be updated by a robot during its *Compute* phase. The light is assumed to be *persistent*, i.e. despite robots can be oblivious, their lights are not automatically reset at the end of a LCM-cycle. Light-enhanced robots, introduced for the first time in [9,13], are usually referred as *luminous* robots (see, e.g., [10]). Note that, depending on the considered scenario, a robot might have visibility of the lights of either all other robots or just of a subset of them.

A first comprehensive evaluation of the computational power of robots operating in the LCM model and moving within the *Euclidean plane*, under different levels of synchronization, has been proposed in [4]. In detail, the authors provide a series of results that prove relations between classic models and variations of them, including the possibility that robots are *luminous*.

In [6] a characterization of the computational power of robots moving on *graphs* has been proposed. In particular, the authors first show relations among the three classic activation and synchronization models; second, they compare the models where robots are endowed with lights against the models without lights; third, they highlight the relations among the different models concerning luminous robots; finally, they provide a detailed comparison of the proposed results with the case of robots moving in the Euclidean plane.

### 1.1 Our Contribution

In this paper, we extend the work done in [6] and [7] as follows. First, we propose a reviewed and improved version of the proof given in [7] to show that `FSYNC` is not more powerful than `ASYNCO(I)`. To this aim, we introduce a new algorithm which uses less colors to solve the same problem considered in the proof, thus showing it is solvable in `ASYNC3` rather than in `ASYNC4`. Second, we generalize the newly introduced algorithm into a general algorithmic framework that for any  $k > 2$  allows (any number of) robots operating in `ASYNCk` to address all tasks within class of *basic formation problems* having  $k$  states (`BFPk` from now on). In such problems, described for the first time in [6], the focus is on allowing robots to achieve specific sequences of  $k$  placements regardless of the movements they perform to reach each disposal. Robots might move on graphs or on the Euclidean plane. Finally, we show, by means of a specific distributed task, that there is a non-trivial subset of problems in `BFPk` for which using robots in `ASYNC3` instead of `ASYNCk` suffice to reach the corresponding goal.

### 1.2 Structure of the Paper

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we provide the necessary notation for the considered problems. In Section 3, we give the improved version of the algorithm given in [7], while in Section 4 we introduce its generalization. In Section 5, we discuss on how `ASYNC3` robots can be used to solve all tasks within a non-trivial subset of `BFPk`. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper.

## 2 Preliminaries

We consider a system composed of mobile entities, called *robots*, that operate in LCM-cycles. In particular, each robot is modeled as an independent computational unit, capable of performing local computations. The robots are placed in a spatial environment which is assumed to be either the Euclidean plane or an undirected graph  $G = (V, E)$ , i.e. robots are placed on the nodes of the graph. Each robot has its own local perception of the surrounding environment, which means it can detect all other robots either as points in the plane with respect to its own coordinate system or perceiving a graph isomorphic to  $G$  and understand whether a node is occupied by a robot or not. Each robot is equipped with sensing capabilities that return a *snapshot* of the relative positions of all other robots with respect to its location.

In the remaining of the paper, we assume that robots are *anonymous* and *identical*, i.e. they are indistinguishable by their appearance, and execute the same algorithm. Unless differently specified, robots are assumed to be *oblivious*, i.e. they have no memory. Moreover, we consider robots acting without a central control, i.e. they are assumed to be *autonomous* and not able to directly communicate information (e.g. by a wireless interface) with other robots, i.e. they are *silent*. Each robot is endowed with motor capabilities and can freely move. However,

when moving on graphs, the movement along one edge is considered instantaneous, so that each time a robot perceives the snapshot of the current configuration, it sees all other robots always on the nodes of the graph. We will specify different assumptions if required by the context.

At any point in time, a robot is either *active* or *inactive*. All robots are initially inactive, i.e. they are idle. When active, a robot executes an LCM-cycle by performing the following three operations in sequence, each of them associated with a different state:

- **Look:** The robot observes the environment. The result of this phase is a snapshot of the positions of all robots with respect to its own perception.
- **Compute:** The robot executes its own algorithm, using the data sensed in the *Look* phase as input. The result of this phase is a target node among the neighbors of the node in which the robot currently resides (at most one edge per cycle can be traversed by a robot).
- **Move:** The robot moves toward the computed target. If the target is the current position, then the robot stays still, i.e. it performs what is called a *null* movement.

The amount of time to complete a full LCM-cycle is assumed to be finite but unpredictable.

### 3 Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK

In this section, we propose a reviewed and improved version of the proof given in [7] to show that `FSYNC` is not more powerful than `ASYNCO(t)`. To this aim, we make use of the following task for the proof.

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#### Forth and Back (FB)

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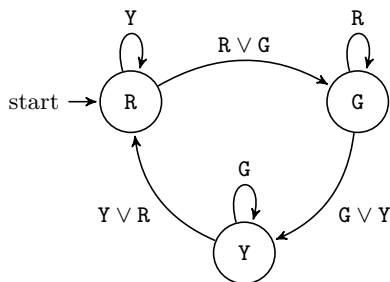
**Input:** Two anonymous robots placed at two distinct internal nodes of a path  $P$  at some distance  $d$  (in terms of number of edges).

**Solution:** A distributed algorithm that ensures the two robots to alternate their distance between  $d$  and  $d + 2$ .

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In [6] it has been already shown that the FB problem cannot be solved in `FSYNC`. They also show that FB can be solved in `ASYNCO(t)`, by an algorithm (namely `FORTHBACK`) which requires each robot to be equipped with a light that can assume *four* colors. Here, we propose an enhanced algorithm, named Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK (see Algorithm 1), which is able to solve the problem even if the robots are endowed with a light that can generate only *three* colors.

The new strategy has its own practical interest since it improves over the algorithm given in [6]. In particular, it reduces the number of colors needed for solving the problem, which can be easily imagined as a proxy for the use of power/communication resources. In addition, the intuition behind its design opens new perspectives for devising general strategies dedicated to robots operating in `ASYNCk`. We will discuss in the next sections on such aspect. In details,



**Fig. 1.** Finite state machine associated to algorithm 3-FORTHBACK.

we will show that the technique underlying Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK can be generalized into an algorithmic framework that allows  $\text{ASYNC}^k$  robots to address a class of problems of significant interest.

We now proceed with the description of the new algorithm. The three colors used by Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK are RED (R), GREEN (G), and YELLOW (Y), with the following meanings:

- RED indicates that the robot is ready to move for the next step and the previous distance must be increased;
- GREEN indicates that the robot is ready to move for the next step and the previous distance must be decreased;
- YELLOW indicates that the robot has moved to decrease the previous distance and it is ready for the next step.

In what follows, we denote by  $L[r]$  the light associated with a given robot  $r$ . At the beginning, both robots start with the lights set to RED. As we will see, Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK ensures that, whenever one of the robots has the light set to RED (to GREEN, respectively), the other robot will eventually turn its light to RED (to GREEN, respectively), i.e. they are always able to be synchronized at some point. In other words, Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK solves FB in  $\text{ASYNC}^3$  by exploiting the parity encoding of the current step by means of the light. We describe the algorithm as it is executed by a generic given robot  $r$ . For the sake of clarity, we also summarize the behavior of each robot via a finite state machine (see Figure 1), where the label within a node represents the color of the light  $L[r]$  of the executing robot, while the label above an edge represents the condition on the light  $L[r']$  of the other robot  $r'$  that triggers the transition to occur.

**Theorem 1.** *Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK correctly solves the FB problem in  $\text{ASYNC}^3$ .*

*Proof.* First of all, notice that, if  $d$  is the initial distance between the two robots (when both lights are RED), then  $d + 2$  defines the final placement of the two robots after the first step. Therefore, in order to reach the requested configuration,

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**Algorithm 1:** Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK performed by a generic robot  $r$  to solve FB in ASYNC<sup>3</sup>.

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1 Let  $r'$  be the other robot;
2 Let  $\delta$  be my distance from  $r'$ ;
3 if  $L[r] = \text{RED}$  then
4   | if  $L[r'] = \text{RED} \vee L[r'] = \text{GREEN}$  then
5   |   |  $L[r] := \text{GREEN}$ ;
6   |   | Let  $v$  be the neighbor at distance  $\delta + 1$  from  $r'$ ;
7   |   | The new position is  $v$ ;
8   |   | Exit;
9 if  $L[r] = \text{GREEN}$  then
10  | if  $L[r'] = \text{GREEN} \vee L[r'] = \text{YELLOW}$  then
11  |   |  $L[r] := \text{YELLOW}$ ;
12  |   | Let  $v$  be the neighbor at distance  $\delta - 1$  from  $r'$ ;
13  |   | The new position is  $v$ ;
14  |   | Exit;
15 if  $L[r] = \text{YELLOW}$  then
16  | if  $L[r'] = \text{YELLOW} \vee L[r'] = \text{RED}$  then
17  |   |  $L[r] := \text{RED}$ ;
18  |   | Exit;
```

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when a robot has to move to increase its distance (i.e. its light is RED), if the current distance is  $d'$ , then the target distance has to be set to  $d' + 1$  (see Line 7), since both robots contribute of one edge.

Similarly, if  $d + 2$  is the distance between the two robots after an increasing step, then  $d$  defines the placement of the two robots after the current step. Hence, in order to reach the requested configuration, when a robot has to move to decrease its distance (i.e. its light is GREEN), if the current distance is  $d'$ , then the target distance has to be set to  $d' - 1$  (see Line 13), since both robots contribute of one edge.

Now, if  $L[r]$  is either RED or GREEN, then  $r$  is ready to accomplish a movement, which must either increase the distance of the previous placement ( $L[r] = \text{RED}$  case) or decrease it ( $L[r] = \text{GREEN}$  case). The robot  $r$  can decide which is the case by looking at the light of the other robot.

On the one hand, if  $L[r] = \text{RED}$  and  $L[r']$  is either RED or GREEN (see Line 4), then  $r$  must move away from  $r'$  of one edge, as robot  $r'$  is either ready to move to increase the distance ( $L[r'] = \text{RED}$ ) or is ready to move to decrease the distance ( $L[r'] = \text{GREEN}$ ). On the other hand, if  $L[r] = \text{GREEN}$  and  $L[r']$  is either GREEN or YELLOW (see Line 10), then  $r$  must move closer to  $r'$  of one edge since robot  $r'$  is either ready to move to decrease the distance ( $L[r'] = \text{GREEN}$ ) or has already accomplished a movement that has decreased it ( $L[r'] = \text{YELLOW}$ ).

If  $L[r]$  is YELLOW and  $L[r']$  is either RED or YELLOW, then  $r$  can conclude that  $r'$  is either ready to move to increase the distance ( $L[r'] = \text{RED}$ ) or has already terminated a movement whose purpose was that of decreasing the distance

( $L[r'] = \text{YELLOW}$ ). Robot  $r$ , in this case, just switch its light to RED (see Line 17). If  $r'$  has performed the above step before  $r$ , i.e.  $L[r] = \text{YELLOW}$  and  $L[r']$  is GREEN, then,  $r$  simply keeps  $L[r]$  to YELLOW.  $\square$

## 4 Generalizing Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK

In this section, we propose a general algorithmic paradigm that allows robots operating in  $\text{ASync}^k$ ,  $k > 2$  to address a whole class of problems, namely the basic formation problems  $\text{BFP}_k$ .

$\text{BFP}_k$  problems can be informally defined as the class of problems where a set of  $k$  static configurations have to be (possibly cyclically) reached, in order to achieve the goal, regardless of the movements they perform to reach each disposal (see [6] for a more thorough discussion). We remind that the class of  $\text{BFP}_k$  problems can be defined for robots moving on both graphs and the Euclidean plane.

More formally, problems are in  $\text{BFP}_k$  if and only if their dynamics can be completely described by a finite state machine (o by any subset of it) with the following characteristics:

- there are  $k$  distinct states;
- there exists a total (strict) ordering among the  $k$  states, i.e. for every  $i$ -th state there exists a transition that brings the system from state  $i$  to a state  $(i + 1) \bmod k$ .

In other words, the problem asks the robots to change from a state to another one in a sequential manner, according to some criteria. An example of finite state machine of the above kind is reported in Figure 2, where label  $x_i$  within a node represents the  $i$ -th state in the ordering. Clearly the above class of problems satisfies  $\text{BFP}_1 \subseteq \text{BFP}_2 \subseteq \dots \subseteq \text{BFP}_k$  for any  $k$ .

Trivially, the FB problem, discussed in Section 3, belongs to  $\text{BFP}_2$ , since the robots have to cyclically oscillate between  $k = 2$  distinct configurations, i.e. those in which the robots are at distance  $d' + 1$  and  $d' - 1$ . However, to solve FB we required 3 colors in order to synchronize the robots. Whereas, when  $k > 2$  there is no need for an extra color.

Note that, problems in  $\text{BFP}_k$  might be solvable in  $\text{FSync}$  or not. This possibility depends on the capability of the robots of distinguishing, by only observing the surrounding environment, two states that are adjacent in the sequence (and therefore are connected by a transition in the finite state machine). If robots are capable of doing so, it is easy to see that (any number of)  $\text{FSync}$  robots can solve problems of  $\text{BFP}_k$  in  $\Theta(k)$  time steps by the following very simple strategy. Starting from an initial state  $x_0$ , at each synchronous time step, all robots wake up and perceive the very same snapshot of the surrounding environment. Then, given the state they perceived, say  $x_i$ , they all check the criterion associated to the arcs outgoing  $x_i$  in the finite state machine (i.e. they perform the compute phase) and, according to the result they perform the move phase that either brings them into  $x_{(i+1) \bmod k}$  or keeps them into  $x_i$ . An example

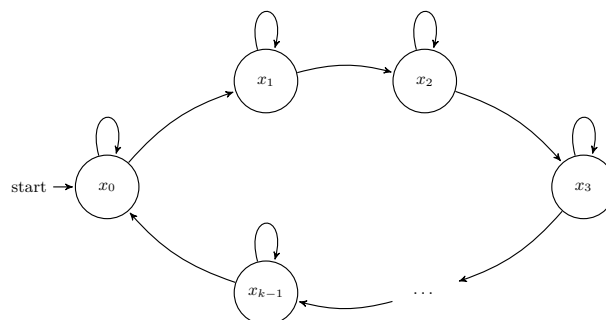


Fig. 2. Finite state machine associated to problems in  $\text{BFP}_k$ .

of problem in  $\text{BFP}_k$  that is not solvable in  $\text{FSYNC}$  is indeed problem  $\text{FB}$ , since the knowledge obtained by the acquired snapshot is not enough to determine whether the target distance has to be set to  $d' + 1$  or to  $d' - 1$  and hence to decide the next state. On the contrary, an example of problem in  $\text{BFP}_k$  that is solvable in  $\text{FSYNC}$ , by the above strategy, is the so-called *Pattern Series Chasing* ( $\text{PSC}$ ) problem whose first description can be found in [7], and is reported below.

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**Pattern Series Chasing (PSC)**

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**Input:** An undirected and complete graph  $G$  with nodes labeled from 1 to  $n$ . An array  $A$  of  $c$  patterns, for some integer constant  $c > 0$ , each involving  $k < n$  nodes of  $G$ , such that  $A[i] \neq A[j]$ , for every  $0 \leq i \neq j < c$ . A set of  $k$  robots forming  $A[0]$  in  $G$ .

**Solution:** A distributed algorithm that ensures robots to form pattern  $A[(i + 1) \bmod c]$  after  $A[i \bmod c]$ ,  $i \in \mathbb{N}$ .

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Regarding  $\text{FB}$ , in the previous section we have shown that it can be solved by two  $\text{ASYNC}^3$  robots by Algorithm 1. By following the intuition underlying such algorithm, we now give a generalization of it that allows (any number of)  $\text{ASYNC}^k$  robots to solve problems in  $\text{BFP}_k$  for  $k > 2$ . The main idea behind the algorithmic paradigm we are proposing is based on the fact that, when considering  $\text{BFP}_k$  problems, an implicit ordering can be provided by the lights of  $\text{ASYNC}^k$  robots.

The strategy for solving any  $\text{BFP}_k$  by  $\text{ASYNC}^k$  robots can be summarized as follows (see Algorithm 2 for more details). Suppose we are given a generic problem in  $\text{BFP}_k$  and a set  $\mathcal{R} = r_1, r_2, \dots, r_n$  of  $n$  robots. We denote by  $L[r_x]$  the color assumed by the light of robot  $r_x$ . We equip the robots with lights assuming  $k$  colors with the following meaning: color  $\text{COL}_i$  indicates that the robot is in state  $x_i$  and it is ready to move to state  $x_{(i+1) \bmod k}$ , and to accomplish the associated (possibly null) move phase. Moreover, we assume that colors exhibit a total (strict) ordering, i.e. for each color  $x_i$  there exist two colors  $x_{(i\pm 1) \bmod k}$  such that  $x_{(i-1) \bmod k} < x_i < x_{(i+1) \bmod k}$ . To solve the problem is then enough



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**Algorithm 2:** Algorithmic paradigm that allows (any number of)  $\text{ASYNC}^k$  robots to solve problems in  $\text{BFP}_k$ ,  $k > 2$ .

---

```

1 Let  $r_i$  be the robot executing the algorithm;
2 if  $L[r_i] = \text{COL}_{x_i}$  then
3   foreach  $r_j \in \mathcal{R} : i \neq j$  do
4     if  $L[r_j] < L[r_i]$  then
5       Exit;
6    $L[r_i] := \text{COL}_{x_{(i+1) \bmod k}}$ ;
7   Perform move phase of state  $x_{(i+1) \bmod k}$ ;
8   Exit;
```

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to exploit the ordering of the colors to take coherent decisions about the state to be reached. In particular, each robot  $r_i$  performs its (possibly null) move phase if and only if its current color  $L[r_i] = \text{COL}_{x_i}$  is less or equal than the colors of the lights of all other robots. If so, it also switches its light to  $\text{COL}_{x_{(i+1) \bmod k}}$ . By the above discussion, the following result can be stated.

**Theorem 2.**  $\text{ASYNC}^k$  robots can solve any problem in  $\text{BFP}_k$ ,  $k > 2$ .

It is worth noticing that Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK, given in the Section 3, can be easily derived by Algorithm 2 by considering the different move phases associated to each of the two states of problem FB.

As a final remark, note that an algorithm for solving problem PSC by  $\text{ASYNC}^c$  robots, where  $c$  is the cardinality of the array  $A$ , can be derived as well by Algorithm 2 by customizing each move phase according to the pattern to be reached.

## 5 Further Applications of Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK

In this section, we show that there is a non-trivial category of problems in  $\text{BFP}_k$  for which something better than using  $\text{ASYNC}^k$  robots can be done. To this aim, we first define the main characteristics of such category and show they can be solved by weaker  $\text{ASYNC}^3$  robots. Consider again Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK defined in Section 3, the three colors have been thought to encode the static configurations, but they can be used to simply encode an *advancing* in the current computational process. This is not the case for the PSC problem as shown in [7]. In order to better understand the intuition, we now consider a variant of the classical *patrolling problem*, where three robots must infinitely traverse a circle but ensuring some specific configurations where they are all idle. It means that during the patrolling, robots must ensure some predefined *static* configurations.

Given a circle  $C$ , let  $\text{arc}(x, y)$  be the smallest arc of  $C$  from  $x$  to  $y$ .

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 Patrolling With Stops (PWS)
 

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**Input:** Three anonymous robots  $r_1$ ,  $r_2$  and  $r_3$  placed on a circle  $C$  with center  $c$ , such that  $\text{arc}(r_1, r_2) = d$ ,  $\text{arc}(r_2, r_3) = 2d$ ,  $d < \frac{\pi}{6}$ .

**Solution:** A distributed algorithm that ensures the three robots to patrol  $C$  by forming a static configuration similar to  $C$  each time the angle  $\alpha$  in  $c$  defined by the initial position of  $r_1$ ,  $c$  and the current position of  $r_1$  is  $p \cdot \frac{\pi}{3}$ , for any integer  $p$ .

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In PWS, we have considered six static configurations that must be reached cyclically, by setting the angle  $\alpha$  as a multiple of  $\frac{\pi}{3}$ . Clearly an arbitrary number of configurations can be considered by reducing  $\alpha$ . According to Theorem 2, we know how to solve PWS in ASYNC<sup>6</sup>. We now show that an algorithm similar to Algorithm 3-FORTHBACK can be defined to solve the PWS problem in ASYNC<sup>3</sup>.

**Theorem 3.** *There exists an algorithm in ASYNC<sup>3</sup> that solves the PWS problem.*

*Proof.* The proof proceeds by providing three subroutines of the same algorithm, each one executed by a different robot, according to its role among  $r_1$ ,  $r_2$  and  $r_3$ . Although the three robots are anonymous, by looking to their relative positioning and lights, they can always deduce who they are. As we are going to show, our algorithm never changes the role of a robot. The meaning of the lights is the same for all robots, that is:

- RED: ready to reach the new static configuration
- GREEN: moving to the computed target
- YELLOW: target reached

The minimum arc of  $C$  containing all three robots is always divided into two sub-arcs. The middle robot is always  $r_2$ . Initially (when all robots assume light RED), the closest robot to  $r_2$  is  $r_1$ , while the other is  $r_3$ . The proposed algorithm makes  $r_3$  move always as first, increasing its distance from  $r_2$ . This is done by switching  $L[r_3]$  to GREEN and evaluating the next position where a static configuration must be guaranteed. Movements are always performed along the circumference of  $C$  as the patrolling requires.

While  $L[r_3] = \text{GREEN}$ ,  $r_1$  and  $r_2$  do not move. Once  $L[r_3] = \text{YELLOW}$ ,  $r_2$  can start its movement toward the next position. Due to the adversary, each time a robot moves toward a target position, it can reach it or it can be stopped before. Nevertheless, our algorithm is designed so as the same robot will be the unique one allowed to move until it reaches the desired destination, eventually.

Once both  $r_2$  and  $r_3$  have reached their current destinations and  $L[r_2] = L[r_3] = \text{YELLOW}$ , the last robot that has to move deduces it is  $r_1$ .

Once all robots have reached their destinations,  $L[r_1] = L[r_2] = L[r_3] = \text{YELLOW}$  and the configuration is static, that is a stop has been performed and the next positioning can start. This is done first by switching all the lights to RED, but in a sequential order, starting from  $r_3$ , then  $r_2$  and finally  $r_1$ . Then, the whole process is repeated.  $\square$

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**Algorithm 3:** Algorithm PWS  $\{r_1\}$  performed by  $r_1$ 

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```

1 Let  $x$  be the point on  $C$  between  $r_1$  and  $r_2$  such that  $|\text{arc}(x, r_3)| = \frac{3}{2}|\text{arc}(r_2, r_3)|$ ;
2 if  $(L[r] = \text{RED} \wedge L[r_2] = L[r_3] = \text{YELLOW}) \vee (L[r] = \text{GREEN} \wedge |\text{arc}(r, r_3)| > x)$ 
   then
3    $L[r] := \text{GREEN}$ ;
4   The new position is  $x$ ;
5   Exit;
6 if  $L[r] = \text{GREEN}$  then
7    $L[r] := \text{YELLOW}$ ;
8   Exit;
9 if  $L[r] = \text{YELLOW} \wedge L[r_2] = L[r_3] = \text{RED}$  then
10   $L[r] := \text{RED}$ ;
11  Exit;
```

---



---

**Algorithm 4:** Algorithm PWS  $\{r_2\}$  performed by  $r_3$ 

---

```

1 Let  $x$  be the point on  $C$  between  $r_2$  and  $r_3$  such that
    $|\text{arc}(x, r_3)| = \frac{2}{3} (|\text{arc}(r_1, r_3)| - \arcsin \frac{\pi}{3})$ ;
2 if  $(L[r] = \text{RED} \wedge L[r_3] = \text{YELLOW}) \vee (L[r] = \text{GREEN} \wedge |\text{arc}(r, r_3)| > x)$  then
3    $L[r] := \text{GREEN}$ ;
4   The new position is  $x$ ;
5   Exit;
6 if  $L[r] = \text{GREEN}$  then
7    $L[r] := \text{YELLOW}$ ;
8   Exit;
9 if  $L[r] = L[r_1] = \text{YELLOW} \wedge L[r_3] = \text{RED}$  then
10   $L[r] := \text{RED}$ ;
11  Exit;
```

---

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper, we have considered the problem of devising protocols for luminous asynchronous robots. In details, we have extended the work done in [6] and [7] in three directions. We first have proposed a reviewed, improved version of the proof given in [7] to show that  $\text{FSYNC}$  is not more powerful than  $\text{ASync}^{O(1)}$ . To do so, we have introduced a new more efficient algorithm for solving the FB problem that requires less colors to work with respect to its previous counterpart of [7]. Apart from the desirable property of being optimized in terms of colors, the new algorithm has driven us also to the design of its generalization that allows (any number of)  $\text{ASync}^k$  robots to address any problem in  $\text{BFP}_k$ , for any  $k > 2$ . As a final contribution, we have shown that there exists a non-trivial subset of problems in  $\text{BFP}_k$  for which weaker  $\text{ASync}^3$  robots are powerful enough to achieve the considered goal.

---

**Algorithm 5:** Algorithm PWS  $\{r_3\}$  performed by  $r_3$

---

```

1 Let  $x$  be the point on  $C$  such that  $|\text{arc}(r_1, x)| = 3|\text{arc}(r_1, r_2)| + \arcsin \frac{\pi}{3}$ ;
2 if  $(L[r] = \text{GREEN} \wedge |\text{arc}(r_1, r)| < |\text{arc}(r_1, x)|) \vee L[r] = L[r_1] = L[r_2] = \text{RED}$ 
   then
3   |  $L[r] := \text{GREEN}$ ;
4   | The new position is  $x$ ;
5   | Exit;
6 if  $L[r] = \text{GREEN}$  then
7   |  $L[r] := \text{YELLOW}$ ;
8   | Exit;
9 if  $L[r] = L[r_1] = L[r_2] = \text{YELLOW}$  then
10  |  $L[r] := \text{RED}$ ;
11  | Exit;
```

---

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