Timing Characterization of OpenMP4 Tasking Model

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Abstract
OpenMP is increasingly being supported by the newest high-end embedded many-core processors. Despite the lack of any notion of real-time execution, the latest specification of OpenMP (v4.0) introduces a tasking model that resembles the way real-time embedded applications are modeled and designed, i.e., as a set of periodic task graphs. This makes OpenMP4 a convenient candidate to be adopted in future real-time systems. However, OpenMP4 incorporates as well features to guarantee backward compatibility with previous versions that limit its practical usability in real-time systems. The most notable example is the distinction between tied and untied tasks. Tied tasks force all parts of a task to be executed on the same thread that started the execution, whereas a suspended untied task is allowed to resume execution on a different thread. Moreover, tied tasks are forbidden to be scheduled in threads in which other non-descendant tied tasks are suspended. As a result, the execution model of tied tasks, which is the default model in OpenMP, to simplify the coexistence with legacy constructs, clearly restricts the performance and has serious implications on the response time analysis of OpenMP4 applications, making difficult to adopt it in real-time environments.

In this paper, we revisit OpenMP design choices, introducing timing predictability as a new key metric of interest. Our first results confirm that even if tied tasks can be timing analyzed, the quality of the analysis is much worse than with untied tasks. We thus reason about the benefits of using untied tasks, deriving a response time analysis for this model, and so allowing OpenMP4 untied model to be applied to real-time systems.

1. Introduction
Modern high-end embedded systems are increasingly concerned with providing higher performance in real-time, challenging the performance capabilities of current architectures. The advent of next-generation many-core embedded platforms has the chance of intercepting this converging need for predictable high-performance, but an evolution of programming paradigms is required to combine traditional requirements, i.e., ease of programmability and efficient exploitation of parallel resources, with timing analysis techniques.

OpenMP [2], the de-facto standard for shared memory parallel programming in high-performance computing (HPC), is increasingly being adopted also in embedded parallel and heterogeneous systems [11] [4] [6] [9] [17] [19]. Originally focused on a thread-centric model to exploit massively data-parallel and loop-intensive types of applications, the latest specification of OpenMP v4.0 (a.k.a. OpenMP4) has evolved to a task-centric model which enables very sophisticated types of fine-grained and irregular parallelism.

The current OpenMP4 tasking model allows the programmer to define explicit tasks and the data dependencies existing among them. At run-time, tasks are executed by a team of threads, which allows effectively utilizing many-core architectures while hiding its complexity to the programmer. Although the OpenMP specification leaves open the implementation of the task-to-thread scheduler, available implementations typically rely on breadth-first (BFS) [16] and work-first (WFS) [15] schedulers. The former creates all children tasks before executing them; the latter executes new tasks immediately after they are created (suspending the execution of the parent task, which potentially can be resumed on a different thread).

Several practical issues have been addressed by the OpenMP language committee when designing the tasking model specification [10], considering simplicity of use, compatibility with the existing specification and performance as the main metrics of interest. However, the requirements for the co-existence of a “legacy” thread-based execution model and a new task-based execution model led to conflicting needs for choosing in the default settings. Unfortunately, none of the considered design choices took time predictability into account, as this is traditionally not a relevant metric in the HPC domain. In this paper we revisit such design choices introducing timing predictability as a new key metric of interest.

Probably the most notable example of a “trade-off” design choice between the old (thread-centric) and the new (task-centric) specification is the distinction between tied and untied tasks. In state-of-the-art tasking programming models [15], there are points in the execution of a program where a thread can suspend the execution of the current task and switch to a new task. The suspended task can resume execution on a different thread, if available. This execution model implements a work-conserving policy, which ensures that no thread remains idle if there is work to be done. Ultimately, this behavior guarantees efficient exploitation of a multi-core processor and facilitates the timing characterization of parallel execution (see Section 3.2 for further details). Unfortunately, the thread-centric nature of many of the original OpenMP constructs exposes a number of issues if migration of a task from one thread to another is allowed. To give a few examples:
• thread id-based work partitioning among threads, at the core of older OpenMP programming practices (up to v2.5), would break the semantics of the program;
• mutually-exclusive code regions (e.g. critical construct) would result in deadlock scenarios, as critical section locks are owned by threads;
• private data to a thread (e.g., threadprivate variables) should also migrate with the task, which is not easy nor efficient to implement.

As a solution to the problem, the OpenMP4 specification states that tasks must be tied by default and that all parts of a tied task must execute on the same thread in which it started executing. Moreover, the OpenMP4 specification defines a set of task scheduling constraints in which tied tasks are not allowed to be scheduled in threads in which other non-descendant tied tasks are suspended. Overall, the tied tasking model results in a non-work-conserving task scheduling approach. The knowledgeable programmer can specify a work-conserving approach by using untied tasks, which are allowed to resume execution on a different thread when suspended. As it often happens in OpenMP, the programmer takes responsibility for guaranteeing correct execution of the program.

The use of tied tasks clearly restricts the performance and has serious implications on the schedulability analysis of OpenMP4 applications. In this paper, we explore the tied and untied clauses from a timing analyzability point of view, considering both scheduling strategies BFS and WFS and estimating the impact that such programming model features have on the capability of our analysis to provide precise and tight timing guarantees.

Our first experiences suggest that, despite OpenMP4 tasking model can be timing analyzed, the quality of the analysis is significantly worse when tied tasks are assumed, leading to a very pessimistic and conceptually complicated worst-case scheduling scenario. The use of untied tasks, instead, allows deriving an efficient schedulability test considering the scheduling constraints imposed by OpenMP tasking directives and clauses, due to the work-conserving nature of the untied tasking model. Overall, this paper demonstrates that OpenMP4 can be effectively applied in real-time systems if the untied tasking model is adopted.

2. OpenMP4 Tasking Model

This section summarizes the main characteristics of the OpenMP specification focusing on the tasking support provided by the latest versions [1][2].

2.1 From thread-centric to task-centric Model

Up to specification version 2.5, OpenMP assumed a thread-centric execution model, in which the programmer could determine the thread in which a code segment was executing (with the OpenMP call omp_get_thread_num). Following the single program, multiple data (SPMD) programming paradigm, the programmer was allowed to explicitly perform different work on various threads, based on their id. Moreover, the programmer could assign private storage to the thread (marking target variables with the threadprivate directive) that remained valid across executions of different parallel regions.

With the introduction of OpenMP 3.0 specification, the task construct was introduced, exposing a higher level of abstraction to programmers. A task is an independent parallel unit of work, specified by an instance of executable code and its data environment, and executed by a given available thread from a team. This new model, known as “tasking model”, provides a very convenient abstraction of parallelism, being the run-time in charge of scheduling tasks to threads. With the latest 4.0 specification, OpenMP introduced advanced features to express dependencies among tasks, resembling sporadic DAG real-time scheduling models [19], as will be shown in Section 3.1. This makes OpenMP4 a firm candidate to be adopted in future real-time systems.

For backward compatibility reasons, both models need to coexist in the last OpenMP specification. As a result, the tasking model introduces certain characteristics that complicate the derivation of a tight timing analysis. The next section introduces the design choices in the default settings to allow both execution models to coexist.

2.2 OpenMP4 Tasking Model

An OpenMP program starts with an implicit task1 surrounding the whole program. This implicit task is executed by a single thread, called the master or initial OpenMP thread that runs sequentially.

When the thread encounters a parallel construct, it creates a new team of threads, composed of itself and n-1 additional threads (n being specified with the num_threads clause).

When a thread encounters a task construct, a new explicit task is created and assigned to one of the threads in the current team for immediate or deferred execution, based on additional clauses: depend, if, final and untied.

The depend clause forces sibling tasks to be executed in a given order based on dependences defined among data items. The if clause makes the new task to be undeferred and executed by a thread of the team, suspending the current task region until the new task completes. Similarly, the final clause makes all descendants of the new task to be included, meaning that they must execute immediately by the encountering thread.

The untied clause (which is the focus of this paper) makes the new generated task not being tied to any thread and so, in case it is suspended, it can later be resumed by any thread in the team. By default, OpenMP tasks are tied to the thread that first starts their execution. Hence, if such tasks are suspended, they can later only be resumed by the same thread.

The completion of a subset or all explicit tasks bound to a given parallel region may be specified through the use of task synchronization constructs, i.e., taskwait, taskgroup and barrier constructs. The taskwait construct specifies a wait on completion of child tasks of the current task. The taskgroup construct specifies a wait on completion of tasks of the current task and their descendant tasks. The barrier construct specifies an explicit barrier where all threads of the team must complete execution before any of them is allowed to continue execution beyond the barrier.

Figure 1 shows an OpenMP program example. The code enclosed in the parallel construct defines a team of N threads. The single construct at line 2 is used to specify that only one of the threads in the team has to execute the implicit task region T0. When the thread executing T0 encounters the task constructs at lines 4, 12 and 19, new tasks T1, T2 and T3 are generated. T3 will not start its execution until T1 finishes because there exits a data dependency (T3 produces item x and T0 consumes it). The thread executing T1 creates task T2 and the thread executing T3 creates task T4. Similarly, the thread executing T4 creates task T5, T6 creates tasks T7 and T8, and T7 creates T9.

All tasks are guaranteed to have completed at the implicit barrier at the end of the parallel region at line 39. Moreover, task T2 will wait on the taskwait at line 8 until task T3 has completed and similarly T3 will wait T4, T5 will wait T6, task T2 will wait T8 and T0 will wait on the taskwait at line 37 until tasks T1, T3 and T5 have completed before proceeding past the taskwait.

1 An implicit task is not created by the programmer but by the run-time; tasks created by the programmer using the task construct are commonly referred to as explicit tasks.
2.3 OpenMP Task-to-thread Scheduling

2.3.1 Task Scheduling Points (TSP) and Task Scheduling Constraints (TSC)

OpenMP [2] defines task scheduling points (TSP) as points in the program where the encountering task can be suspended and the hosting thread can be rescheduled to a different task. As a result, TSPs divide task regions into task parts (or simply parts) executed uninterrupted from start to end. The example shown in Figure 1 identifies the parts in which each task region is divided, e.g., T0 is composed of parts0, parts0a, parts0b, and parts0c.

TSPs occur upon (1) task creation and completion, (2) at task synchronization points such as taskwait directives and taskgroup directives, (3) at explicit and implicit barriers and (4) upon taskyield directives, in which the current task can be suspended in favor of the execution of a different task. When a thread encounters a TSP, it can begin or resume the execution of a task, provided that a set of task scheduling constraints (TSC) are fulfilled:

1. An included task must be executed immediately after the task is created.

Figure 1: Example of an OpenMP program using tasking constructs.

A predecessor/descendant relationship exists among tasks. Predecessor tasks of T1 are T1’s parent task and parent’s predecessor tasks. On the contrary, the descendant tasks of T1 are T1’s child tasks and child’s descendant tasks. For example, predecessor tasks of T3 are T3 and T0, and the descendant tasks of T3 are T6, T7, T8, and T9.

2.3.2 Understanding TSC 2

TSC 2 prevents tied task from being scheduled in threads in which other non-descendant tied tasks are suspended. This inhibits the run-time from incurring in a deadlock situation when the critical synchronization construct is used within a task [10]. The critical construct is a synchronization mechanism inherited from the thread-centric model that defines a region that can be exclusively executed by a single thread at a time [2]. The reason of the deadlock situation is because the owner of the lock is a thread and not a task.

Figure 2 shows an example in which the critical construct is used within a task. The example will create as many T1 and T2 task instances as for-loops iterations. When the thread executing the first instance of T1 enters the critical section, the thread obtains the lock so that no other thread can access it. However, the execution of this task instance T1 can be suspended when reaching the TSP at line 8 (T2 task construct) and so the same thread may execute a different task. If the thread started executing another instance of T1, it would eventually reach the critical section again, but this time would not be able to enter it as this thread already has the lock. This leads to a deadlock situation in which the thread has the lock due to the first T1 instance and, at the same time, is blocked in the critical section due to the second T1 instance. Notice that the critical construct does not imply a TSP, so that the thread is stalled in the second T1 task instance.

The TSC 2 prevents the same thread from executing any tied task that is not descendant of T1. Note that T2 is a descendant task of T1 and so it is allowed to execute it.

When untied tasks are used, the responsibility of the utilization of critical sections or thread-specific information lies on the programmer.

2.3.3 Scheduling Algorithms

When a task encounters a TSP, the program execution branches into the OpenMP runtime system, where task-to-thread schedulers

Figure 2: Example of an OpenMP program using synchronization constructs.

2. Scheduling of new tied tasks is constrained by the set of task regions that are currently tied to the thread, and that are not suspended in a barrier region. If this set is empty, any new tied task may be scheduled. Otherwise, a new tied task may be scheduled only if it is a descendant task of every task in the set.

3. A dependent task shall not be scheduled until its task data dependencies are fulfilled.

4. When a task contains an if clause and its associated condition evaluates to false, the task is executed immediately if the rest of the TSCs are met.

A program relying on any other TSC or performing a different action when a TSP is encountered is non-OpenMP-conforming. TSC 2 may considerably reduce the number of threads available to tied tasks, impacting on both performance and timing predictability. Next section explains the reason of such a design choice.
can: 1) begin the execution of a task region bound to the current
team or 2) resume any previously suspended task region bound 
to the current team. The order in which these two actions are 
applied is not specified by the standard. An ideal task scheduler 
will schedule tasks for execution in a way that maximizes concurrency 
while accounting for load imbalance and locality to facilitate better 
performance. Current implementations of OpenMP run-times are 
based on two main task scheduling policies:

**Breadth-First scheduling (BFS).** When a task is created, it is 
placed into a pool of tasks and the encountering thread continues 
the execution of the parent task. Tasks placed in that pool can then be 
executed by any available thread from the team. Due to TSC 2, 
when a tied task is suspended in a TSP, it is placed into the private 
pool of tasks associated to its execution thread. Untied tasks instead are 
queued into a pool of tasks accessible by all threads in the team. 
Access to these pools can be LIFO (i.e., last queued tasks will be 
executed first) or FIFO (i.e., oldest queued tasks will be executed 
first). Threads will always try to schedule first a task from their 
local pool. If it is empty then they will try to get tasks from the 
team pool. An example of BFS is shown in [16].

**Work-first scheduling (WFS).** New tasks are executed imme-
diately after they are created by the parent’s thread, suspending the 
execution of the parent task. When a task is suspended in a TSP, it is 
placed in a per thread local pool which can be accessed in a LIFO or 
FIFO manner. When looking for tasks to execute, threads will look into 
their own local pool. If it is empty, they will try to steal work from 
other threads. When stealing from another thread pool, to comply 
with OpenMP restrictions, tied task cannot be stolen from its as-
associated thread. The Cilk scheduler [15] pertains to this family. In 
particular, it is a WFS where access to the local pool is LIFO, tries 
to steal the parent task first and otherwise steals from another thread 
pool in a FIFO manner.

WFS tends to obtain better performance results than BFS due to 
the reasons [3]: (1) the WFS strategy tries to follow the serial 
exection path hoping that if the sequential algorithm was well 
developed, it will lead to better data locality; and (2) it also has the 
property of minimizing space: in a BFS strategy all tasks coexist 
simultaneously, because all child tasks are created before executing 
them. On the contrary, WFS creates the same number of tasks, 
but fewer tasks have to exist at the same time because they are 
executed immediately after they are created. However, OpenMP 
implementations typically use BFS due to the ties tasks default 
restriction: if WFS is implemented, when a tied task \( T_i \) creates a 
child tied task \( T_{i+1} \), this one starts its execution in \( T_i \)'s thread. 
Then, \( T_i \) is suspended and it cannot resume its execution until 
\( T_{i+1} \) finishes or suspends in a TSP because it is tied to a thread. 
Therefore, WFS turns a parallel program with tied tasks into a 
sequential execution, as will be shown in Section 5.1.

Overall, TSC 2 and the semantics of tied tasks prevent the 
implementation of work-conserving schedulers. We will discuss in 
the next section how this limits the analyzability of the tied task 
execution model.

3. Timing characterization of OpenMP4

The sporadic DAG model [21] [20] [5] [7] [13] generalizes the 
fork-join execution model to allow exploitation of 
parallelism within tasks. This section explains how to derive an 
OpenMP-DAG and the implications that the OpenMP4 tasking 
model has on the scheduling.

3.1 OpenMP4 Tasking Model and Sporadic DAG Scheduling Model

Despite the current OpenMP specification lacks any notion of real-
time scheduling semantics, the structure and syntax of an OpenMP 
program have certain similarities with DAG-based models pre-
sented in the real-time community, as shown in [19].

In the sporadic DAG model, each task (called *DAG-task*) is 
represented by a directed acyclic graph (DAG) \( G = (V,E) \), a 
period (\( T \)) and a deadline (\( D \)). Each node \( v_i \in V \) denotes a 
sequential operation or job, characterized by a worst-case execution 
time (WCET) estimate \( c_i \). The edges represent the dependencies 
between jobs: if \((v_1,v_2) \in E\), then job \( v_2 \) must complete its 
execution before job \( v_1 \) can start executing. In other words, the 
DAG captures scheduling constraints imposed by dependencies 
among jobs and it is annotated with a WCET estimate \( c_i \) of each 
individual job. When a DAG-task is released at time \( t \), all jobs in \( V \) 
are ready to execute if precedence constraints are fulfilled, and all 
jobs must finish before time \( t + D \).

Moreover, the sporadic DAG model defines a *chain* as a se-
quence of jobs \( \lambda = v_1,v_2,\ldots,v_k \) such that \((v_i,v_{i+1}) \in E\) is an edge 
in \( G, \ 1 \leq i < k \). The length of this chain is the sum of the WCETs 
of all its nodes, i.e., \( \lambda(\lambda) = \sum_{i=1}^{k} c_i \). The *critical path* of \( G \) is 
the longest chain in \( G \) and its length is denoted by \( \lambda(G) \). Finally, the 
*volume* of a DAG-task is defined as the sum of all WCETs of its 
jobs, i.e., \( \varepsilon(G) = \sum_{i=1}^{k} c_i \).

The execution of an OpenMP program has certain similarities 
with the execution of a DAG-task: (1) the execution of a task *part* 
in the OpenMP program resembles the execution of a job in \( V \) for 
which WCET estimation can be derived [19]; (2) the edges \( E \) in 
the DAG model can be used to model the *depend* clause, which 
forces tasks not to be scheduled until all precedence constraints 
are fulfilled; the *if* and *final* clauses, which make the task to be 
suspended until the next task completes execution; and the 
synchronization directives.

Figure 3 shows the OpenMP-DAG obtained by the example 
program presented in Figure 1. Tasks *parts* are the nodes in \( V \) and 
the *TSPs* encountered at the end of a task *part* (task creation or com-
pletion, task synchronization) are the edges in \( E \). The figure distin-
guishes three different types of edges: control flow dependencies 
dotted arrows) that force *parts* to be scheduled in the same order as 
they are executed within the task, TSP task creation dependencies 
dashed arrows) that force tasks to start/resume execution after 
the corresponding TSP, and TSP synchronization dependencies (solid 
edges) that force the sequential execution of tasks as defined by the 
*if* clause, the *depend* clause and the *taskwait* synchronization 
construct. All edges express a precedence constraint.

3.2 Schedulability Problem for OpenMP4

Once the OpenMP-DAG of an OpenMP application is derived, the 
problem of schedulability reduces to the problem of determining 
whether the DAG can be scheduled on the available threads to 
complete within a specified relative deadline \( D \), i.e., within \( D \) time 
units from the release of the DAG.

The OpenMP4 specification is agnostic of the task-to-thread 
scheduling implemented by the run-time. It is therefore the 
responsibility of the run-time developer to implement the most suitable 
scheduler for the OpenMP system, guaranteeing that the TSCs de-
defined in Section 2.3.1 are fulfilled.

In high-performance systems, the main goal of task-to-thread 
schedulers is to maximize the occupancy of threads. In real-time 
systems, the main goal is not only maximizing the use of resources 
but also to provide timing guarantees. The use of work-conserving 
schedulers facilitates the timing characterization of parallel execu-

**Definition 1.** A scheduling algorithm is said to be work-conserv-
ing if and only if it never idles threads whenever there exists at least one 
ready job awaiting execution in the system.
For work-conserving schedulers, the problem of determining the schedulability of an OpenMP-DAG has a strong correspondence with the makespan minimization problem of a set of precedence constrained jobs (task parts in our case) on identical processors (threads in a team in our case), which is known to be strongly NP-hard by a result of Lenstra and Rinnooy Kan [12]. However, the Graham’s List Scheduling algorithm [18], which can be implemented in polynomial run-time complexity, provides an approximation of $2 - \frac{1}{m}$ for this problem, being $m$ the total number of threads in a team. This means that this algorithm is able to produce for any input task graph a value of the makespan that is at most $2 - \frac{1}{m}$ times the optimal one. The List Scheduling algorithm simply maps tasks to available threads in a team without introducing idle times if not needed, i.e., it implements a work-conserving scheduling algorithm.

Therefore, implementing OpenMP4 run-time incorporating work-conserving schedulers seems to be the best option. Current OpenMP4 run-time implementations already incorporate work-conserving schedulers, i.e. BFS and WFS (see Section 2.3.3).

Unfortunately, TSC 2 and the execution semantics of tied tasks force these schedulers not to be work-conserving. On the one hand, TSC 2 forbids a new tied task to be scheduled to a thread where it is not a descendant of all the other suspended tied tasks already assigned to this thread. This may potentially reduce the number of threads in the team that can be assigned to new tied tasks. On the other hand, tied task parts cannot migrate when the task is resumed and its corresponding thread is being used by another descendant tied task or an untied task. These constraints impose extra conditions on the schedulability analysis of OpenMP4 programs.

This is not the case for untied tasks, which are not subject to TSC 2, allowing parts of the same task to execute on different threads; so, when a task is suspended, the next part to be executed can be resumed on a different thread. Hence, the execution model of untied tasks allows BFS and WFS to be work-conserving.

Overall, the additional requirements imposed by the use of tied tasks suggest devising distinct timing characterizations for the two types of OpenMP4 tasks, i.e., tied and untied. Hence, in the rest of this paper we analyze both types of tasks to characterize their timing behavior, outlining the major challenges posed by the use of tied tasks in a real-time domain.

4. Schedulability Analysis of Untied Tasks

The untied clause allows a task to be executed in any thread and, in case it is suspended, to be resumed by any thread in the team. In other words, the task can be freely migrated across threads during its execution. This flexibility in the task allocation is exploited at the analytical level in order to derive a direct solution to the schedulability problem.

Given the OpenMP-DAG derived in Section 3.1, we build upon the result in [18] to derive response-time bounds for untied tasks, by considering that each task part represents a sequence of operations that can be executed in one of the available threads as soon as all its three types of dependencies have been fulfilled (control flow, TSP creation/resume and TSP synchronization). Whenever more parts than available threads are ready to be executed, we assume any possible allocation order is possible, provided that the scheduling strategy remains work-conserving. This is the case of BFS and WFS strategies.

We now derive an upper-bound on the response-time of an OpenMP program composed of untied tasks and represented as an OpenMP-DAG $G$. Such a bound can be computed starting from the proof of the $2 - \frac{1}{m}$ approximation bound in [18], in conjunction with some additional considerations. Here, we first establish two lower-bounds on the minimum makespan $R^{opt}$ of an OpenMP program, which will be useful to derive an upper-bound on its response-time.

**Proposition 1.**

$$R^{opt} \geq \frac{1}{m} \sum_{\lambda \in G} c_\lambda = \frac{1}{m} \text{vol}(G).$$ (1)

**Proposition 2.**

$$R^{opt} \geq \max_{\lambda \in G} \sum_{\lambda \in \Lambda} c_\lambda = \text{len}(G).$$ (2)

Equation (1) trivially follows from the fact that the total amount of work should be executed on $m$ threads, while Equation (2) is obtained by noticing that parts belonging to a chain must be executed sequentially. This is true for any chain of the OpenMP-DAG, and in particular for its longest one, i.e., its critical path.

We now review the proof in [18] to derive the approximation bound of List Scheduling on the minimum makespan of a generic set of precedence-constrained jobs (parts), which applies to OpenMP-DAGs with untied tasks as well.

**Theorem 1.** Graham’s List Scheduling algorithm gives a $2 - \frac{1}{m}$ approximation for the makespan minimization problem of a set of precedence-constrained jobs (or parts) expressed by means of a task graph $G$, scheduled on $m$ identical processors (or threads).

**Proof.** Let $v_z$ be the job in $G$ that completes last, and $t_z$ its starting time. Let $v_{z-1}$ be the predecessor of $v_z$ that completes last. By the precedence relation between the two jobs, we have that $t_z \geq t_{z-1} + c_{z-1}$. Proceeding in this way until a job without predecessors is reached, we construct a particular chain of jobs $\lambda^* = (v_1, \ldots, v_z)$. The fundamental observation that must be made is that, between the completion time $t_1 + c_1$ of each job of $\lambda^*$ and the starting time of the next job, all threads must be busy, otherwise job $v_{z+1}$ would have started earlier. The same applies to the time interval between 0 and $t_1$. Note also that some job belonging to $\lambda^*$ is executing at every time instant when not all the threads are busy.

The response-time $R$ of the OpenMP-DAG is given by the sum of the time instants when some of the threads are idle and the

\[Figure 3: DAG corresponding to the program in Figure 1.\]

\[The makespan of a set of precedence constrained jobs is defined as the total length of the schedule (i.e., response-time) of the collection of jobs.\]
time instants when all the threads are busy. The former contribution cannot exceed \( \text{len}(\lambda^*) \), while the latter cannot exceed \( \frac{1}{m} (\text{vol}(G) - \text{len}(\lambda^*)) \), since the total amount of workload executed in such time slots is no more than \( \text{vol}(G) - \text{len}(\lambda^*) \). Hence,
\[
R \leq \text{len}(\lambda^*) + \frac{1}{m} (\text{vol}(G) - \text{len}(\lambda^*)). \tag{3}
\]

Now, by combining Equations (1), (2) and (3) and rephrasing the terms, we obtain:
\[
\begin{align*}
R &\leq \text{len}(\lambda^*) + \frac{1}{m} \text{vol}(G) - \frac{1}{m} \text{len}(\lambda^*) \\
&= R^{\text{opt}} + R^{\text{err}} - \frac{1}{m} R^{\text{opt}} \\
&= \left( 1 - \frac{1}{m} \right) R^{\text{opt}} \\
&= \left( 2 - \frac{1}{m} \right) R^{\text{opt}}.
\end{align*}
\]

Equation (3) cannot be directly used as an upper-bound to the response-time of the OpenMP-DAG, because the chain \( \lambda^* \) is not known a priori. However, a simple upper-bound can be found from Equation (3) by upper-bounding the length of the chain \( \lambda^* \) with the critical path length of the task graph, as it is longer than any possible chain in the OpenMP-DAG. The following lemma formalizes this result.

**Lemma 1.** An upper-bound on the response-time of an OpenMP-DAG composed of untied tasks is given by \( R^{ub} \):
\[
R^{ub} = \text{len}(G) + \frac{1}{m} (\text{vol}(G) - \text{len}(G)). \tag{4}
\]

**Proof.** The upper-bound \( R^{ub} \) simply follows from Equation (3) by definition of critical path and by considering that \( 1 \geq \frac{1}{m} \). More explicitly:
\[
R \leq \text{len}(\lambda^*) + \frac{1}{m} \text{vol}(G) - \frac{1}{m} \text{len}(\lambda^*) = \left( 1 - \frac{1}{m} \right) \text{len}(\lambda^*) + \frac{1}{m} \text{vol}(G) \leq \text{len}(G) + \frac{1}{m} (\text{vol}(G) - \text{len}(G)).
\]

The result of Lemma 1 suggests that, whenever an OpenMP4 program is composed of untied tasks, a timing analysis can be easily performed by checking Equation (4) against the relative deadline \( D \) of the OpenMP-DAG.

5. Impact of Tied Tasks on Scheduling

When the OpenMP-DAG comprises tied tasks, the timing analysis presents some conceptual difficulties that significantly affect the complexity of the schedulability problem.

Tied tasks are constrained by TSC 2, which reduces the number of available threads for the execution of new tied tasks, and by the fact that tied tasks must always resume on the same thread where they started executing. Overall, these two constraints impact both performance and timing predictability.

5.1 Reduction of available threads

This section analyzes the implications of using tied tasks from a schedulability point of view. In particular, we compute the number of threads available to a new task due to TSC 2 (Section 5.1.1) and the number of tasks that can prevent another task from resuming its execution in its thread (Section 5.1.2). In this way, we demonstrate that tied task execution model results in a non-conserving policy and explain why analyzing tied tasks without introducing unacceptable pessimism is prohibitive, or at least conceptually very difficult to achieve.

The following sections analyze these two scenarios assuming a generic scheduler (GenS) in which no concrete scheduling policy has been considered, and the BFS and WFS strategies with FIFO policies (see Section 2.3.3). Notice that the possible scheduling solutions derived by BFS and WFS strategies are included in GenS.

5.1.1 New tied tasks

The number of available threads for a new tied task may be reduced because other tied tasks suspended in a TSP may prevent the new tied task from being scheduled in the same thread. According to TSC 2, the new tied task can be scheduled to a thread in which other tied tasks are suspended only if it is a descendant of all the tasks tied to this thread. In the extreme case, a new tied task could even not start its execution despite existing available threads in the team.

We consider basic notions of set theory to derive the number of tasks affecting the effective number of threads available to new tied tasks. Concretely, we define \( \text{BlockCT}_i(T_i) \) as the set of potential tasks that may prevent task \( T_i \) from executing on the same thread in which they are suspended considering a GenS strategy:
\[
\text{BlockCT}_i(T_i) \cap \text{GenS} = \left( T \setminus \text{DesT}_i \setminus \text{PreT}_i \setminus \text{DDepT}_i \setminus \{ T_i \} \right) \cap \text{TSPT},
\]
where \( T \) is the set of all tasks, \( \text{DesT}_i \) is the set of descendant tasks of \( T_i \), \( \text{PreT}_i \) is the set of predecessor tasks of \( T_i \), \( \text{DDepT}_i \) is the set of tasks having a data dependency relationship with \( T_i \) and \( \text{TSPT} \) is the set of tasks with at least one TSP that can suspend their execution (e.g. contain a task or a taskwait construct). The data dependency relationship in \( \text{DDepT}_i \) considers tasks with data dependencies through depend clauses and also their child tasks if a synchronization dependency exits (e.g. a taskwait).

In other words, \( \text{BlockCT}_i(T_i) \) contains the sibling tasks of \( T_i \) and their descendant tasks that do not depend on \( T_i \) and that can be suspended in a TSP. It is important to remark that the descendant tasks of \( T_i \) have not been created yet at the point \( T_i \) is created, hence we can neglect them. Similarly, the dependent tasks of \( T_i \) and their descendant tasks are not considered because they have to wait until \( T_i \) has finished in order to start executing. Also, the predecessor tasks of \( T_i \) can be neglected because, according to TSC 2, \( T_i \) can be scheduled in the threads of all its predecessor tasks.

In the case of BFS strategy, \( \text{BlockCT}_i(T_i) \cap \text{GenS} \) if defined as \( \text{BlockCT}_i(T_i) \cap \text{GenS} \) removing the tasks that start executing after \( T_i \) (due to the FIFO policy):
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{BlockCT}_i(T_i) \cap \text{GenS} &= \text{BlockCT}_i(T_i) \cap \text{GenS} \setminus \text{SAftT}_i \\
&= \left( \left( T \setminus \text{DesT}_i \setminus \text{PreT}_i \setminus \text{DDepT}_i \setminus \{ T_i \} \right) \cap \text{TSPT} \right) \setminus \text{SAftT}_i,
\end{align*}
\]
where \( \text{BlockCT}_i(T_i) \) is the set defined in Equation (5) and \( \text{SAftT}_i \) is the set of sibling (and their descendant) tasks starting their execution after \( T_i \) according to the FIFO policy. This set includes the tasks for which the execution order can be defined. For example, in Figure 3 we can ensure that \( T_5 \) starts executing
The cardinality of a set $A$, expressed as $|A|$, is a measure of the number of elements of the set.

Table 1: $DesT_i$, $PreT_i$, $DDepT_i$, and $SAftCT_i$ sets for each task $T_i$ in Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$T_i$</th>
<th>$DesT_i$</th>
<th>$PreT_i$</th>
<th>$DDepT_i$</th>
<th>$SAftCT_i$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$T_0$</td>
<td>${T_1, T_2}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_1$</td>
<td>${T_2}$</td>
<td>${T_0, T_3}$</td>
<td>${T_3, T_4}$</td>
<td>${T_3, T_5}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_2$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>${T_0, T_1}$</td>
<td>${T_0, T_4}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_3$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>${T_5, T_6}$</td>
<td>${T_7, T_8}$</td>
<td>${T_9}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_4$</td>
<td>${T_6, T_7, T_8, T_9}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>${T_9}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_5$</td>
<td>${T_7, T_8, T_9}$</td>
<td>${T_0, T_5, T_6}$</td>
<td>${T_0, T_6}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_6$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>${T_0, T_5, T_6, T_7}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_7$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>${T_0, T_5, T_6, T_7}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_8$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>${T_0, T_5, T_6, T_7}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_9$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>${T_0, T_5, T_6, T_7}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Given the example in Figure 1, tasks that may block threads for a new task at creation time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$T_i$</th>
<th>$BlockCT_i(GenS)$</th>
<th>$BlockCT_i(BFS)$</th>
<th>$BlockCT_i(WFS)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$T_0$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_1$</td>
<td>${T_5, T_6, T_7}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_2$</td>
<td>${T_5, T_6, T_7}$</td>
<td>${T_5, T_7}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_3$</td>
<td>${T_5, T_6, T_7}$</td>
<td>${T_5, T_7}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_4$</td>
<td>${T_5, T_6, T_7}$</td>
<td>${T_5, T_7}$</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_5$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_6$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_7$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_8$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T_9$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
<td>${T_5}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.2 At resumption time

When a suspended tied task wants to resume, it may not restart its execution even if there are idle available threads, because the thread the task is tied to is executing another task (it is important to remark that a task can only be suspended if it contains a TSP).

This situation occurs when a task has been suspended in a TSP and, at resumption time, another (predecessor or descendant) task or an antecedent task is executing in the thread. Therefore, there may be other idle threads, but the task cannot resume its execution because it is tied to its thread.

We define $BlockRT_i(GenS)$ as the set of potential tasks that may prevent (block) task $T_i \in TSP$ from resuming its execution in the thread to which $T_i$ is tied, assuming GenS strategy.

$$BlockRT_i(GenS) = DesT_i \cup PreT_i \cup uT,$$ (8)

where $DesT_i$ is the set of descendant tasks of $T_i$, $PreT_i$ is the set of predecessor tasks of $T_i$ and $uT$ is the set of united tasks.

This set contains predecessor and descendant tasks of $T_i$ and all the united tasks because, due to TSC 2, they are the only ones that can be scheduled in $T_i$’s thread, and therefore can prevent $T_i$ to be resumed.

In the case of BFS strategy, $BlockRT_i(BFS)$ is defined as:

$$BlockRT_i(BFS) = (DesT_i \setminus TSPDepT_i) \cup PreT_i \cup uT,$$ (9)

where $TSPDepT_i$ is the set of tasks having a synchronization dependency with $T_i$ through any of its TSP. With respect to $PreT_i$, which is the set of predecessor tasks, $T_i$’s parent task is included in it only if it contains a taskyield TSP, as in this case $T_i$’s parent task could block $T_i$’s thread. Otherwise, if $T_i$’s parent task is suspended in any other TSP, e.g. a taskwait, it cannot resume its execution as it is blocked until $T_i$ finishes and so, it cannot block $T_i$’s thread.

In the case of WFS strategy, $BlockRT_i(WFS)$ is equal to $BlockRT_i(GenS)$:

$$BlockRT_i(WFS) = BlockRT_i(GenS) = DesT_i \cup PreT_i \cup uT.$$ (10)

As previously noted, WFS is particularly affected when tied tasks are implemented, because the parallel execution turns into a sequential one. When any $T_i$ is created, it starts its execution in the parent’s thread. The parent task is suspended and it cannot resume its execution in another thread because it is tied to $T_i$’s thread. On the contrary, if $T_i$ is suspended in a TSP (not a task creation) and $T_i$’s parent task resumes its execution, the thread $T_i$ is blocked because of its parent.

Table 3 shows the sets $TSPDepT_i$ for each $T_i \in TSP$ in Figure 1. Based on this and on $PreT_i$ and $DesT_i$, shown in Table 1, the sets $BlockRT_i$ considering GenS, BFS and WFS strategies have been calculated and are shown in Table 4. Similar to the $BlockCT_i$, the set $TSP$ is different for BFS because the task...
Table 3: TSPDepT_{i1} set for each task T_{i1} ∈ TSP{T} in Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T_{i1}</th>
<th>TSPDepT_{i1}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T_{0}</td>
<td>{T_{1}, T_{2}, T_{3}, T_{4}, T_{5}, T_{6}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{1}</td>
<td>{T_{2}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{3}</td>
<td>{T_{3}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{5}</td>
<td>{T_{5}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{6}</td>
<td>{T_{6}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{7}</td>
<td>{T_{7}}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Given the example in Figure 1, tasks that may block threads for each task T_{i1} ∈ TSP{T} at resumption time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T_{i1}</th>
<th>BlockRT_{i1}(GenS)</th>
<th>BlockRT_{i1}(BFS)</th>
<th>BlockRT_{i1}(WFS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T_{0}</td>
<td>{T_{1}, \ldots, T_{6}}</td>
<td>{T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
<td>{T_{1}, \ldots, T_{9}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{1}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{2}}</td>
<td>{T_{3}, T_{6}}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{2}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{2}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{2}}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{5}}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{5}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{3}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{5}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
<td>{T_{10}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
<td>{T_{10}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{5}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{5}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{5}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{5}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T_{6}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{5}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{5}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
<td>{T_{0}, T_{5}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, given T_{0}, BlockRT_{0}(GenS) contains all its descendant tasks because all of them can be scheduled in the same thread and prevent T_{0} from resuming its execution. In case of BlockRT_{0}(BFS), we analyze independently each TSP in which T_{0} can be suspended, that is, at the taskwait at line 26 in Figure 1. Then, from DesT_{0}, we remove all the descendant tasks that have a synchronization dependency with this taskwait, i.e., tasks in TSPDepT_{0}: task T_{1} (and recursively its child T_{2} because it has another synchronization dependency with T_{1}), task T_{3} (and similarly T_{5}) and task T_{5} (and similarly T_{6}) but not its descendants T_{7}, T_{8} and T_{9} because there is no synchronization dependency with T_{0}. As a result, tasks T_{7}, T_{8} and T_{9} compose the set BlockRT_{0}(BFS). Finally, for BlockRT_{0}(WFS), T_{0}'s thread will be blocked by its descendants BlockRT_{0}(WFS) = \{T_{1}, T_{2}, T_{3}, T_{4}, T_{5}, T_{6}, T_{7}, T_{8}, T_{9}\}.

5.2 Issues on the timing characterization of tied tasks

The reasoning about the computation of BlockCT_{i} and BlockRT_{i} suggests that deriving schedulability results when tied tasks are involved is extremely challenging, unless very pessimistic assumptions are made. More specifically, in Section 4 we have leveraged the work-conserving policy implied by the use of untied tasks to derive a timing analysis simply based on two quantities: (i) the critical path length of the entire task graph and (ii) the remaining interfering workload over m threads.

However, when considering the non-work-conserving scenario induced by tied tasks, deriving such an accurate analysis is not as easy, due to multiple reasons:

1. It is not correct to compute the critical path of the task graph as a whole, but rather a critical path reaching the end of each task in the OpenMP-DAG, since it is important to compute the different time offsets after which each task can start executing. In fact, since each task has its own descendant and precedence relationships, the corresponding BlockCT_{i} and BlockRT_{i} sets will be different, suggesting to carry out a per-task timing analysis.

2. The interference contribution for a tied task cannot be considered as evenly distributed. Specifically, it is necessary to differentiate the interference contribution before the task starts, which can be accounted for as evenly distributed on the threads being blocked due to BlockCT_{i}, and the interference suffered by the task at each of its TSPs, which includes the full contribution of the set of tasks BlockRT_{i}.

3. The critical path reaching the end of a task may comprehend parts of other tasks that can have different descendant relationships with respect to T_{i}, which makes really hard to identify which tasks may actually interfere T_{i} without introducing unacceptable pessimism in the analysis. In order to have an intuitive feeling of the problem, please consider again the example given in Figure 3, where all task parts have unitary WCETs. Here, task T_{5} has a data dependency with T_{1}, hence it cannot start executing until T_{1} has finished. When computing the critical path reaching the end of T_{1}, we immediately observe that it is not simply composed of tasks that are predecessors of T_{3}, but also by parts of T_{1} and T_{2} p_{10}, p_{11} and p_{20} (that are not predecessors of T_{3}). Hence, the interference imposed on critical task parts of T_{3} cannot simply be estimated based on the descendant relationships of T_{3} (i.e., by the knowledge of BlockRT_{i}), but should take into account those of all the tasks involved, which hugely complicates the analysis.

4. From the analytical point of view, computing an upper-bound on the response-time of a tied task T_{i} would require to assume the worst-case scenario in which all the tasks that can be suspended simultaneously at the creation point of T_{i} are indeed suspended, inhibiting T_{i} to execute on the corresponding threads tied to these tasks. Therefore, beside knowing the maximum number of tasks that could be suspended at the time of T_{i}'s creation due to TSC 2 (i.e., the set BlockCT_{i}), we should provide an upper-bound on the maximum time the suspended tasks would take before being resumed.

Overall, the above considerations confirm that a timing analysis for tied tasks, besides being conceptually very difficult to achieve, would require to address sources of inherent complexity that would lead to unacceptably pessimistic response-time bounds. As a result, the makespan of the task graph may undergo large variations depending on the allocation of newly generated tasks, leading in few cases to resource under-utilization and undesirable idleness of some threads as shown in next section.

5.3 Platform Under-utilization

As previously observed, the use of tied tasks encompasses their suspension and resumption only by the same thread that first started their execution. This may lead to platform under-utilization reducing the number of threads working even if there are tasks ready to execute. We refer as m_{i}^{*} to the minimum number of threads available to task T_{i} at the time of its creation. Since not all threads may be available to a task when it is created, it follows that the interference suffered from other tasks cannot be considered to be evenly distributed across all threads, but only on m_{i}^{*} ≤ m threads.

Theorem 2. The minimum value of m_{i}^{*} is 2, for any task graph comprising tied tasks.

Proof. The statement can be demonstrated by the two following points: (i) providing a configuration where m_{i}^{*} = 2, and (ii) showing that no configuration can be produced with 0 ≤ m_{i}^{*} < 2.

(i) There exists a scenario where m_{i}^{*} = 2. Consider the OpenMP program illustrated in Figure 4. Suppose the program must be executed on m = 4 threads and that the allocation on the available threads is as shown in Figure 5(a). Tasks T_{0}, T_{3} and T_{5} must wait for their first-level descendants before terminating, due to the taskwait directives. Then, if task parts p_{04} and p_{40} have a very long WCET, there is a long time interval where T_{3}, T_{6} and T_{7} cannot execute on threads 2 and 3, although they are idle, due
Figure 4: Example of an OpenMP program, pessimistic scheduling of tied tasks.

Figure 5: (a) Pessimistic breadth-first scheduling example with tied tasks, (b) work-first scheduling (LIFO) with tied tasks and (c) breadth-first scheduling with untied tasks. Program in Figure 4.

where $|\text{BlockCT}_i|$ is the maximum number of tasks that may block threads which $T_i$ could not use at its creation time due to $TSC_2$. As we consider all potential cases, this number of tasks can be greater than the total number of threads, $m$. Therefore, $m - |\text{BlockCT}_i|$ may be negative, but it is proven by Theorem 2 that the minimum value of $m^*_i$ is 2. Hence, in this case, an accurate timing analysis should identify which tasks compose this subset in the worst-case, since only a subset of the tasks composing $\text{BlockCT}_i$ will subtract threads to the considered task. However, when tied tasks are involved, it is absolutely non-trivial to identify the scenario that maximizes the interference imposed on $T_i$. This is another subtle reason (in addition to those listed in Section 5.2) that explains why devising a timing analysis for tied tasks is so difficult.

Figure 5 illustrates a case of resource under-utilization implied by the use of tied tasks, as opposed to the untied case. In particular, Figure 5a shows a possible scheduling of the OpenMP program in Figure 4, considering BFS: if all the nested tasks are scheduled in different threads before $T_3$, $T_5$, and $T_7$, and being $\text{part}_{40}$ and $\text{part}_{41}$ very time-consuming, then the execution of tasks $T_5$, $T_6$, and $T_7$ are postponed even if threads 2 and 3 are idle (striped areas) but tied to tasks $T_1$ and $T_2$. Figure 5b shows the scheduling considering WFS (LIFO): as already noted, WFS turns into a sequential execution when implementing tied tasks. Notice that in this figure task parts $p_{00}$, $p_{04}$, $p_{60}$, $p_{70}$ and $p_{04}$ are less time-consuming only for the sake of space-saving. If the clause untied is added to all the tasks in the program of Figure 4, we observe that the breadth-first scheduling of these untied tasks, illustrated in Figure 5c, determines no platform under-utilization beyond program limitations. WFS will result in a similar scheduling for untied tasks.

6. Related work

The OpenMP language committee presented in [10] a comparison between the thread-centric and the task-centric models, exposing the design choices done in the new tasking model due to conflicts with the thread-centric model. These decisions include the defini-
tion of tied and untied tasks and some others related to the data-sharing and the scheduling. However, the paper does not take time predictability into account.

In [3], authors performed an evaluation of different scheduling policies using their run-time system Nanos++ [22] and analyzed the differences existing between tied and untied tasks for an average performance point of view.

The first attempt to apply OpenMP4 has been recently introduced in [19], where the authors studied how to construct an OpenMP task graph which contains enough information to allow the application of real-time DAG scheduling models, from which timing guarantees can be derived, considering the tasking semantics of OpenMP4.

OpenMP has been already considered as a convenient interface to describe real-time applications to deal with parallel task models in multiprocessor systems. The earliest parallel task model to be proposed is the fork-join model [14], where each task is represented as an alternating sequence of sequential and parallel segments and no nested parallelism is allowed. Later, this model has been generalized by the synchronous parallel model [5] [8], which allows consecutive parallel segments with arbitrary degree of parallelism. Still, synchronization is enforced at every segment’s boundary. As a further generalization of the previously mentioned task models, the sporadic DAG model represents a task as a directed acyclic graph, where each node is a sequential job, and edges represent precedence constraints between jobs [21] [20] [5] [7] [13].

Unfortunately, besides the increasing expressiveness provided by existing real-time parallel task models, all of them neglect the real semantics of the OpenMP execution model and bypass the functionality of the runtime system. Moreover, the focus has typically been on the thread-centric model from OpenMP specification v2.5, which is limited to a standard fork-join type of parallelism and does not take advantage of the way more expressive tasking interface. The purpose of this work, instead, is to demonstrate that OpenMP tasking model can be applied to real-time systems if work-conserving schedulers, such as BFS and WFS, are used.

Hence, to our knowledge, this work represents the first attempt to provide an accurate timing characterization of a real and prominent parallel programming model such as OpenMP.

7. Conclusions
This paper analyses from a timing perspective the two tasking execution models existing in OpenMP4, tied and untied. The existence of these two models results from the coexistence of the thread-centric and task-centric models for backward compatibility reasons.

The considerations drawn in this paper suggest that using tied tasks inside time-critical applications is not recommendable, because of the inherent pessimism that underlies the timing analysis of such tasks and the conceptual difficulties behind the construction of an accurate schedulability test.

On the other hand, we have shown that a simple schedulability analysis of OpenMP programs is possible whenever untied tasks are involved. This definitely suggests that the use of untied tasks would be preferable for parallel applications in the real-time context, since it would permit to exploit a parallel execution model in a predictable way. Overall, this paper demonstrates that OpenMP4 can be applied to real-time systems if untied tasking model is adopted.

8. Acknowledgments
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References