Mixing Signals and Modes in Synchronous Data-flow Systems

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Designing Mixed Systems

Data dominated Systems: continuous and sampled systems, block-diagram formalisms, data-flow equations

$\hookrightarrow$ Simulation tools: Simulink, etc.

$\hookrightarrow$ Programming languages: SCADE/Lustre, Signal, etc.

Control dominated systems: transition systems, event-driven systems, Finite State Machine formalisms, signal emission and testing

$\hookrightarrow$ StateFlow, StateCharts

$\hookrightarrow$ SyncCharts, Argos, Esterel, etc.

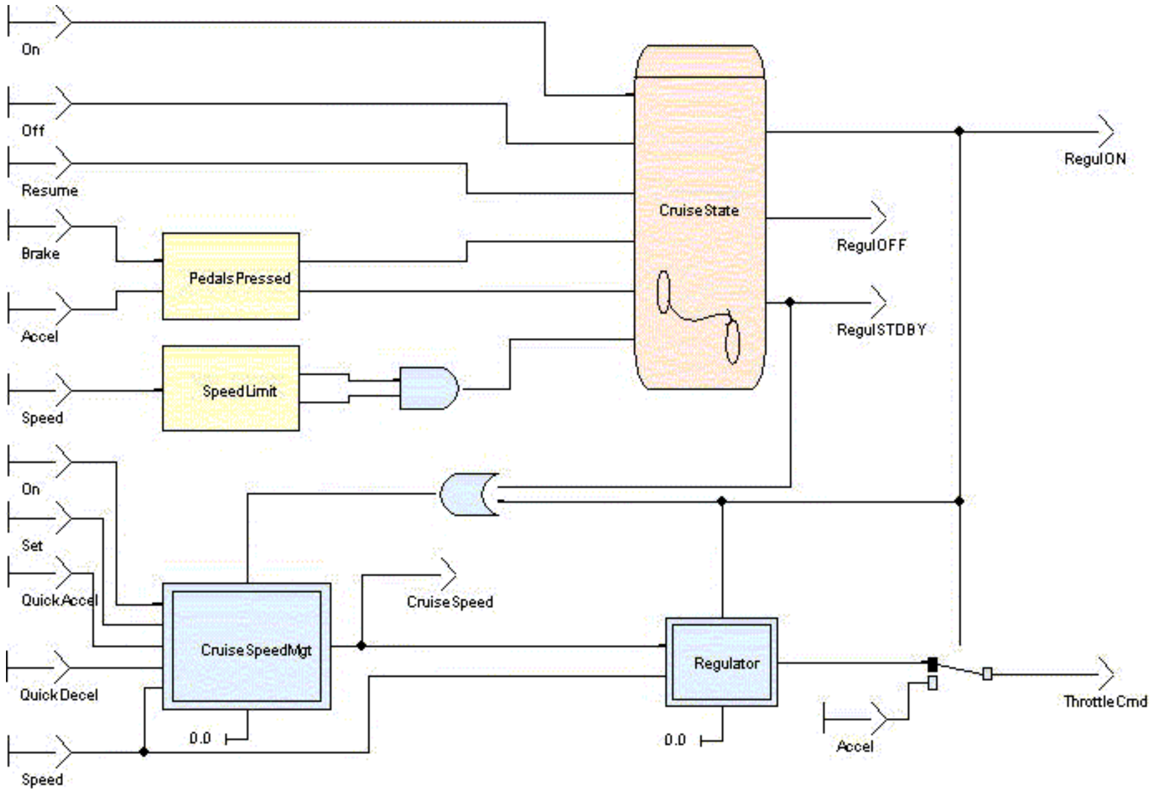
What about mixed systems?

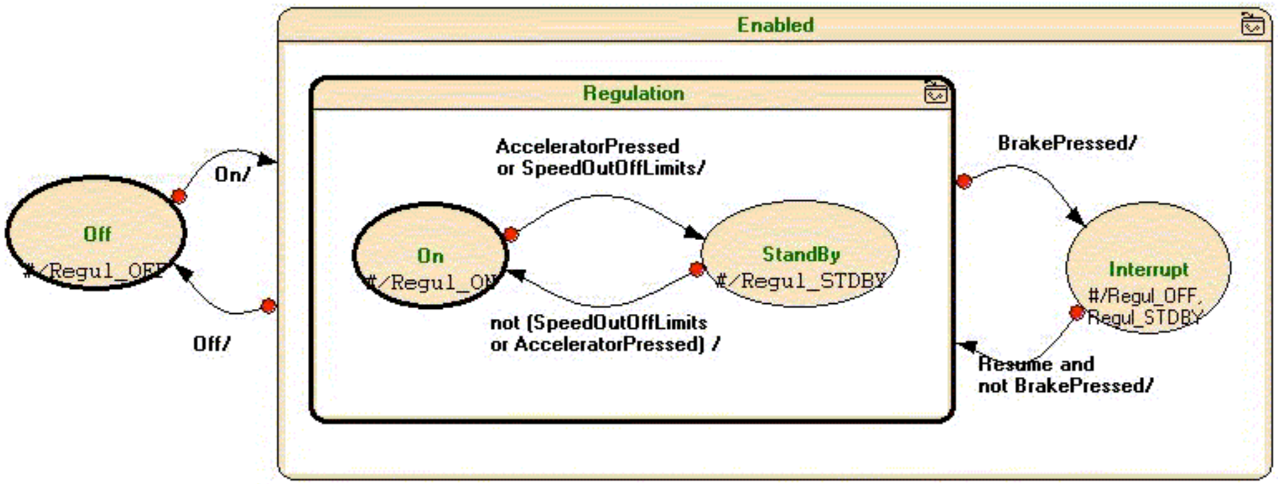
- most systems are a mix of the two kinds: systems have **"modes"**
- each mode is a big control law, naturally described as data-flow equations
- a control part switching these modes and naturally described by a FSM

Traditional Approaches: linking mechanisms

- two (or more) specific languages: one for data-flow and one for control-flow
- "linking" mechanism. A sequential system is more or less represented as a pair:
  - a transition function $f : S \times I \rightarrow O \times S$
  - an initial memory $M_0 : S$
- agree on a common representation and add some glue code
- this is provided in most academic and industrial tools
- PtolemyII, Simulink + StateFlow, SCADE + Esterel Studio SSM, etc.

An example: the Cruise Control (SCADE V4.2)





Observations

- automata can only appear at the leaves of the data-flow model
- forces the programmer to make decisions at the very beginning of the design (what is the good methodology?)
- the control structure is not explicit and hidden in boolean values: nothing indicate that modes are exclusive
- what is the semantics of the whole?
- code certification (to meet avionic constraints)?
- efficiency/simplicity of the code?
- how to exploit this information for program analysis and verification tools?

Can we provide a finer integration of both styles inside a unique language?

Extending Synchronous Data-flow with Automata [EMSOFT05]

Basis

- *Mode-Automata* by Maraninchi & Rémond [ESOP98, SCP03]
- *SignalGTI* (Rutten [EuroMicro95] and *Lucid Synchrone V2* (Hamon & Pouzet [PPDP00, SLAP04])

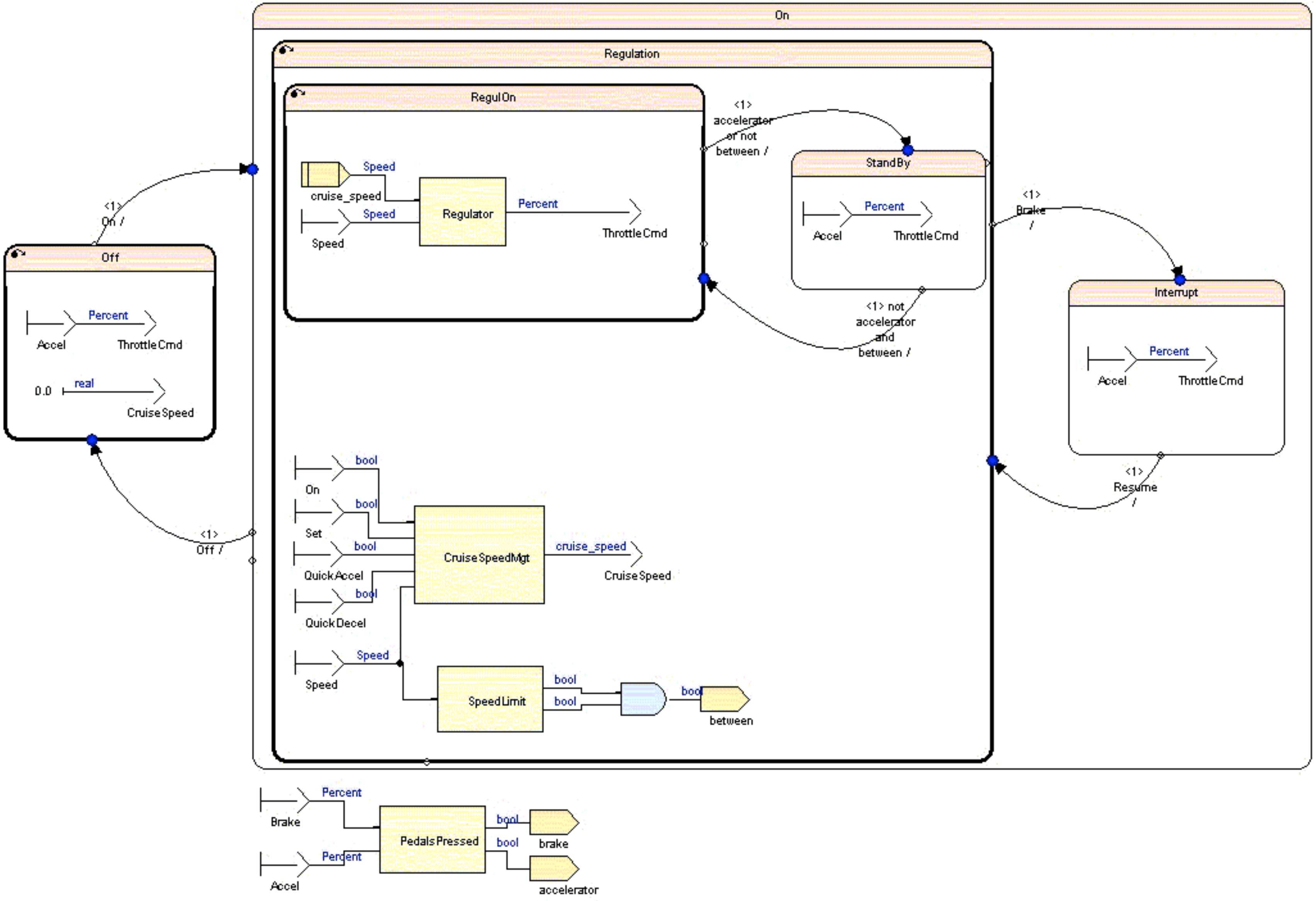
Proposal

- extend a basic clocked calculus (SCADE/Lustre) with automata constructions
- base it on a *translation semantics* into well clocked programs; gives both the semantics and the compilation method

Two implementations

- *Lucid Synchrone* language and compiler
- *ReLuC* compiler of SCADE at Esterel-Technologies; the basis of SCADE V6 (released in summer 2007)

The Cruise Control with SCADE 6



Semantic principles

- only one set of equations is executed during a reaction
- two kinds of transitions: Weak delayed ("until") or Strong ("unless")

- both can be "by history" (H* in UML) or not (if not, both the SSM and the data-flow in the target state are reseted
- at most one strong transition followed by a weak transition can be fired during a reaction
- at every instant:
  - what is the current active state?
  - execute the corresponding set of equations
  - what is the next state?
- forbids arbitrary long state traversal, simplifies program analysis, better generated code

New questions and extensions

A more direct semantics

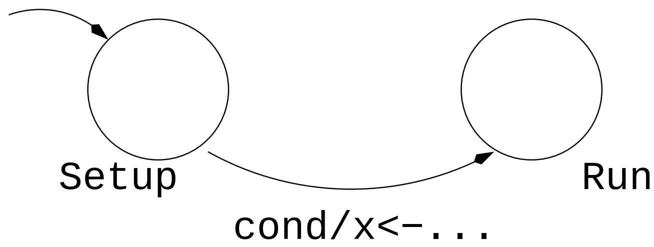
- the translation semantics is good for compilation but...
- can we define a more "direct" semantics which expresses how the program reacts?
- we introduce a ***logical reaction semantics***

Further extensions

- can we go further in closing the gap between synchronous data-flow and imperative formalisms?
- **Parameterized State Machines:** this provides a way to pass local information between two states without interfering with the rest of the code
- **Valued Signals:** these are events tagged with values as found in Esterel and provide an alternative to regular flows when programming control-dominated systems

Parameterized State Machines

- it is often necessary to communicate values between two states upon taking a transition
- e.g., a *setup* state communicate initialization values to a *run* state



- can we provide a safe mechanism to communicate values between two states?
- without interfering with the rest of the automaton, i.e.,
- without relying on global shared variables (and imperative modifications) in states nor transitions?

Parameterized states:

- states can be Parameterized by initial values which can be used in turn in the target automaton
- preserves all the properties of the basic automata

A typical example

several modes of normal execution and a failure mode which needs some contextual information

```
let node controller in1 in2 = out where
  automaton
  | State1 ->
     do out = f (in1, in2)
     until (out > 10) then State2
     until (in2 = 0) then Fail_safe(1, 0)
  | State2 ->
     let rec x = 0 -> (pre x) + 1 in
     do out = g (in1,x)
     until (out > 1000) then Fail_safe(2, x)
  | Fail_safe(error_code, resume_after) ->
     let rec
       resume = resume_after -> (pre resume) - 1 in
     do out = if (error_code = 1) then 0
              else 1000
     until (resume <= 0) then State2
  end
```

Parameterized states vs global modifications on transitions

Is all that useful?

- expressiveness? every parameterized state machine can be programmed with regular state machines using global shared flows
- efficiency? depends on the program and code-generator (though parameters only need local memory and are not all alive at the same time)

But this is bad!

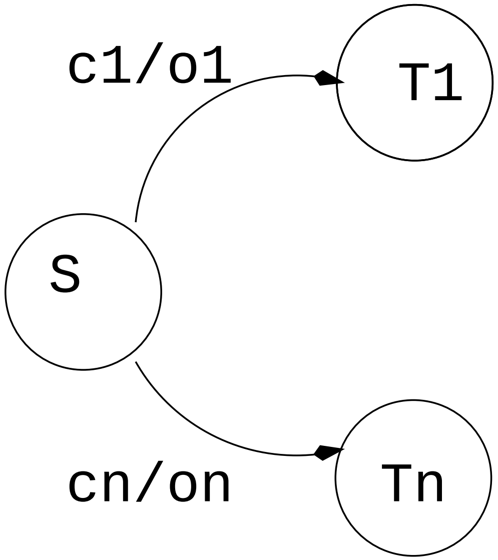
- who is still using global shared variables to pass parameters to a function in a general-purpose language?
- passing this information through shared memory would mean having global shared variables to hold it
- they would receive meaningless values during normal execution and be set on the transition itself
- this breaks locality, modularity principles and is error-prone
- making sure that all such variables are set correctly before being use is not trivial

Parameterized states

- we want the language to provides a safer way to pass local information
- complementary to global shared variables and do not replace them
- keep the communication between two states local without interfering with the rest of the automaton
- do not raise initialization problems
- reminiscent to continuation passing style (in functional programming)
- yet, we provide the same compilation techniques (and properties) as in the case of unparameterized state machines (initialization analysis, causality, type and clocks)

Example (encoding Mealy machines)

- reduces the need to have equations on transitions
- adding equations on transitions is feasible but make the model awfully complicated




```
automaton
   ...
| S(v) -> do o = v unless c1 then T1(o1)
             ...
             unless cn then Tn(on)
   ...
end
```

Valued Signals and Signal Pattern Matching

- in a control structure (e.g., automaton), every shared flow must have a value at every instant
- if an equation for `x` is missing, it keeps implicitly its last value (i.e., `x = last x` is added)
- how to talk about absent value? If `x` is not produced, we want it to be absent
- in imperative formalisms (e.g., Esterel), an event is present if it is explicitly emitted and considered absent otherwise
- can we provide a simple way to achieve the same in the context of data-flow programming?

An example

A part of the Milner coffee machine...

```
let node vend drink cost v = (o1, o2) where
  match v >= cost with
      true ->
        do emit o1 = drink
        and o2 = v - cost
        done
    | false ->
        do o2 = v done
  end
```

- `o2` is a regular flow which has a value in every branch
- `o1` is only emitted when (`v >= cost`) and is supposed to be absent otherwise; we call it a signal

Accessing the value of a valued signal

- the value of a signal is the one which is emitted during the reaction
- what is the value in case where no value is emitted?
- **Esterel:** keeps the last computed value (i.e., implicitly complement the value with a register)

  ```
  emit S( ?A + 1)
  ```

  this may be **unsafe** and raise **initialization problems**: what is the value if it has never been emitted?

- need extra methodology development rules (e.g., guarding every access by a test for presence)

  ```
  present A then ... emit S(?A + 1) ...
  ```

Propose a programming construct reminiscent to pattern matching and which forbid the access to a signal which is not emitted

Signal pattern matching

- a pattern-matching construct testing the presence of valued signals and accessing their content
- a block structure and only present value can be accessed

```
let node sum x y = o where
  present
  | x(v) & y(w) -> do emit o = v + w done
  | x(v1) -> do emit o = v1 done
  | y(v2) -> do emit o = v2 done
  | _ -> do done
  end
```

The Recursive Buffer

```
type 'a option = None | Some of 'a

let node count n = ok where
  rec o = 0 -> (pre o + 1) mod n
  and ok = false -> o = 0

(* the 1-buffer with bypass *)
let node buffer1 push pop = o where
  rec last memo = None
  and match last memo with
      None ->
        do present
             push(v) & pop() -> do emit o = v done
           | push(v) -> do memo = Some(v) done
          end done
    | Some(v) ->
        do present
             push(w) -> do emit o = v and memo = Some(w) done
           | pop() -> do emit o = v and memo = None done
           end done
  end
```

A n-buffer can be build by putting n buffers of size one in parallel

```
(* the recursive buffer *)
let rec node buffer n push pop = o where
  match n with
      0 ->
        do o = push done
    | n ->
        let pusho = buffer1 push pop in
        do
          o = buffer (n-1) pusho pop
        done
  end
```

Signals vs clocked streams

- in control structures, an absent definition for `x` is implicitly completed with an equation `x = last x`
- this means that we need a memory to keep the value of `last x`
- signals are thus intrinsically more efficient: no memory is needed. `x` is absent if nothing defines `x`

Is all that useful?

- signals already exist in synchronous data-flow: we have clocks!
- a signal is a flow which is present from time to time with a particular clock
- ask a lot for a compiler (and even the user).
- we need full dependent types here (the clock of `x` must keep the control information defining the instant where `x` is emitted)
- can we rely on more modest (but safe) mechanism while keeping the philosophy of the basic language?

Signals as existential types

```
let node sum x y = o where
  present
  | x(v) & y(w) -> do emit o = v + w done
  | x(v1) -> do emit o = v1 done
  | y(v2) -> do emit o = v2 done
  | _ -> do done
  end
```

- `o` is partially defined and should have clock ck `on` $(?x \wedge ?y) \vee ?x \vee ?y$ if x and y are themselves on clock ck
- giving it the existential type $\Sigma(c : ck).ck$ `on` c, that is, "exists c on clock ck such that the result is on clock ck `on` c is a correct abstraction

Signals as Existential Types

Clock type of a signal: a pair $ck\ \texttt{sig} = \Sigma(c : ck).ck\ \texttt{on}\ c$ made of:

- a (hidden) boolean sequence c which is itself on clock type ck
- a sequence sampled on c, that is, with clock type $ck\ \texttt{on}\ c$

The flow is boxed with its presence information

- this is a restriction compared to what can provide a synchronous data-flow language equipped with a powerful clock calculus
- but this is the way **Esterel** valued signal are implemented
- mimics the constraints in **Lustre** to return the clock of a sampled stream

Clock verification (and inference) only need modest techniques

- box/unbox mechanisms of a Milner type system + extension by Laufer & Odersky for abstract data-types

$$\frac{H \vdash e : ck\ \texttt{on}\ c}{H \vdash \texttt{emit}\ x = e : [x : ck\ \texttt{sig}]}$$

Translation Semantics

- parameterized state machines and signals can be combined in an arbitrary way
- a translation semantics of the extension into a basic language

Example

let node sum (a, b, r) = o where
    automaton
    | Await -> do unless $a(x)\&b(y)$ then Emit $(x + y)$
    | Emit (v) -> do emit $o = v$ unless r then Await

- a signal of type t is represented by a pair of type `bool` $\times\, t$
- *nil* stands for any value with the right type (think of a local stack allocated variable

```
let node sum (a, b, r) = o where
    match pnextstate with
    | Await -> match (a, b) with
                | ((True, x), (True, x)) -> state = Emit(x + y)
                | _ -> state = Await
    | Emit(v) -> match r with
                 | true -> state = Await
                 | false -> state = Emit(v)
    and
    match state with
    | Await -> o = (False, nil) and nextstate = Await
    | Emit(v) -> o = (True, nil) and nextstate = Emit(v)
    and
    pnextstate = Await -> pre nextstate
```

Conclusion

Automata and control structures

- an extension of a data-flow language with control structures
- various kinds of transitions, yet quite simple
- two semantics: a translation semantics and a logical semantics

Extensions: parameterised states and signals

- transmit local information between states
- signals as a light way to abstract the clock of a flow
- both features combine well
- light to implement in a translation-based compiler
- try it! (`www.lri.fr/~pouzet/lucid-synchrone`)