

Towards **Asynchronous** Communication in Team Automata

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CISTER & U. Porto, Portugal



APM 2025, Porto, Portugal, October 3rd, 2024

- History of Team Automata
 - Motivation and development
 - Constrained multi-party synchronisations
 - Related coordination models
- Recent Results
 - ICTAC'20** Extended Team Automata
 - FM'21** Featured Team Automata
 - FM'23** Model Check Team Automata
 - ICTAC'23** Realisable Team Automata
- Ongoing Work: Asynchronous Team Automata
 - Asynchronous multi-party communication?
 - Safe communication in asynchronous setting?
 - Realisability of asynchronous team automata?
 - Tooling for asynchronous team automata?

History of Team Automata

A formalism for interacting component-based systems, whereby multiple **sending** and **receiving** actions from concurrent automata can **synchronise** on certain executions

First proposed at the 1997 ACM SIGGROUP Conference on Supporting Group Work for modelling components of groupware systems and their interconnections

[GROUP'97]



Inspired by Input/Output (I/O) automata, inheriting the distinction between **internal** and external (**input** and **output**) actions used for communication with the environment

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[GROUP'97]



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Formally defined in Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) — The Journal of Collaborative Computing, as composed by **component automata** that synchronise

[CSCW'03]

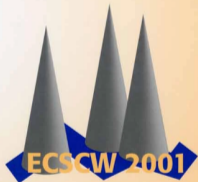
Technically an extension of I/O automata, imposing **hardly any restrictions on the role of actions** in components, while **composition is not limited to the synchronous product**

[IPL'05] 1/28

1997-2003: Team Automata and CSCW

ECSCW 2001

Proceedings of the Seventh European Conference
on Computer Supported Cooperative Work



KLUWER ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS

Edited by:
Wolfgang Prinz
Matthias Jarke
Yvonne Rogers
Kjeld Schmidt
Volker Wulf

Computer Supported Cooperative Work

The Journal of Collaborative Computing

Volume 12 No. 1 2003

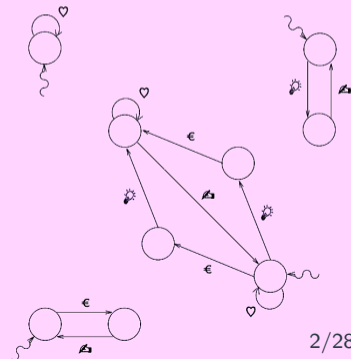


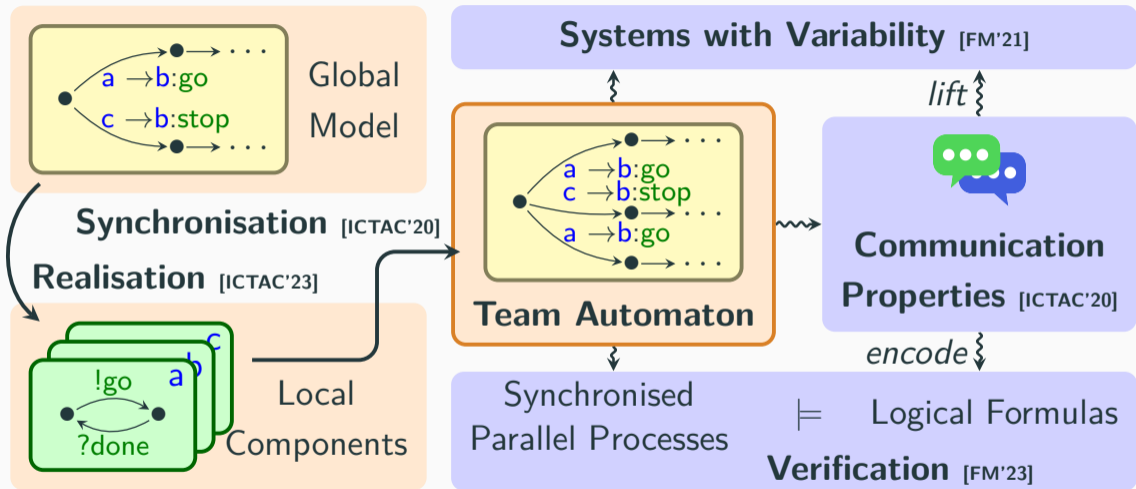
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Team Automata

A Formal Approach to the Modeling of
Collaboration Between System Components

Maurice H. ter Beek





[COORDINATION'24]

25+ Years: Selected Publications

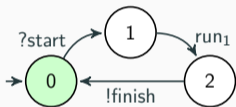
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2016	Conditions for Compatibility of Components: The Case of Masters and Slaves	ISoLA'16
2014	On Distributed Cooperation and Synchronised Collaboration	JALC
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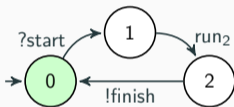
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Constrained Multi-party Synchronisations

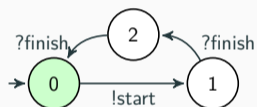
Team Automata: **not all system transitions are meaningful!**



$Runner_1$



$Runner_2$



$Controller$

Team Automata

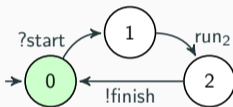
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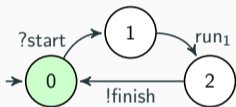
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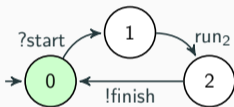
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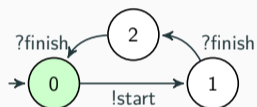
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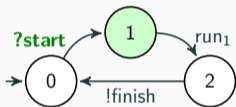
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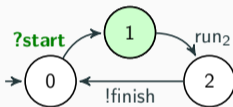
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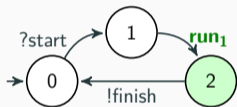
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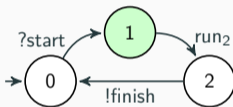
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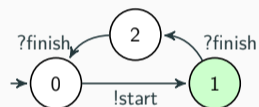
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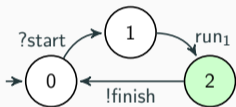
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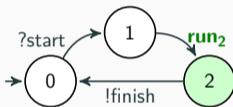
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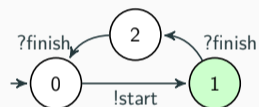
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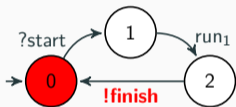
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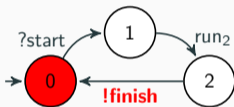
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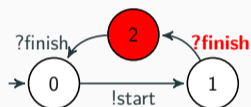
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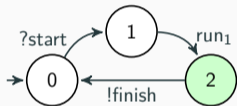
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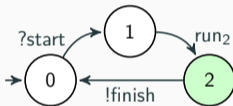
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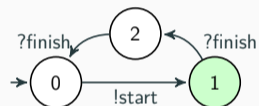
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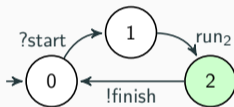
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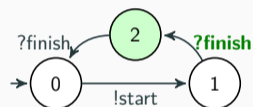
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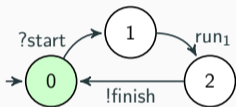
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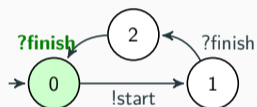
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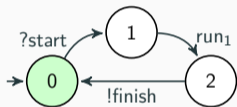
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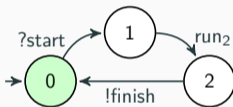
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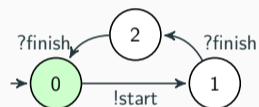
Extended Team Automata: Constrained Multi-party Synchronisations



Runner₁



Runner₂



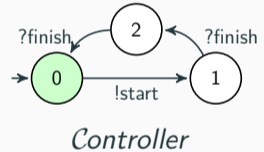
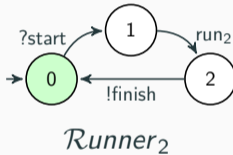
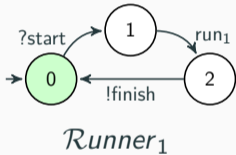
Controller

Extended TA synchronisations

[CSCW'01'03] [FM'03,'21,'23] [TCS'12'13]

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Extended Team Automata: Constrained Multi-party Synchronisations



Extended TA synchronisations

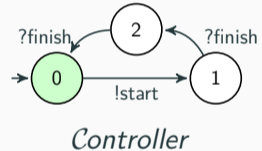
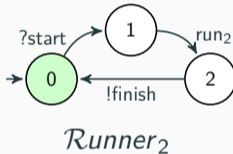
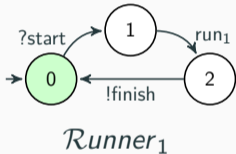
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multi-party

$Ctr \rightarrow \{R1, R2\}: start$

Extended Team Automata: Constrained Multi-party Synchronisations



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multi-party

$Ctr \rightarrow \{R1, R2\}: start$

constrained

$start: 1 \rightarrow 2$

$finish: 1 \rightarrow 1$

Team Automata and other Coordination Models

Overview on Constrained Multi-party Synchronisation in Team Automata

and other coordination models:

[FACS'23] [COORDINATION'24]

Overview on Constrained Multi-party Synchronisation in Team Automata

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Runners with orchestrators

- Reo
- BIP

↳ S.-S.T.Q. Jongmans and F. Arbab, Overview of thirty semantic formalisms for Reo. *Scientific Annals of Computer Science* 22 (2012)

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Overview on Constrained Multi-party Synchronisation in Team Automata

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Runners with choreographies

- Choreography Automata
- Multi-party Session Types



F. Barbanera, I. Lanese, and E. Tuosto, Choreography Automata @ COORDINATION'20



↳ S. Ghilezan, S. Jakšić, J. Pantović, A. Scalas, and N. Yoshida, Precise subtyping for synchronous multiparty sessions. *JLAMP* 104 (2019)

Overview on Constrained Multi-party Synchronisation in Team Automata

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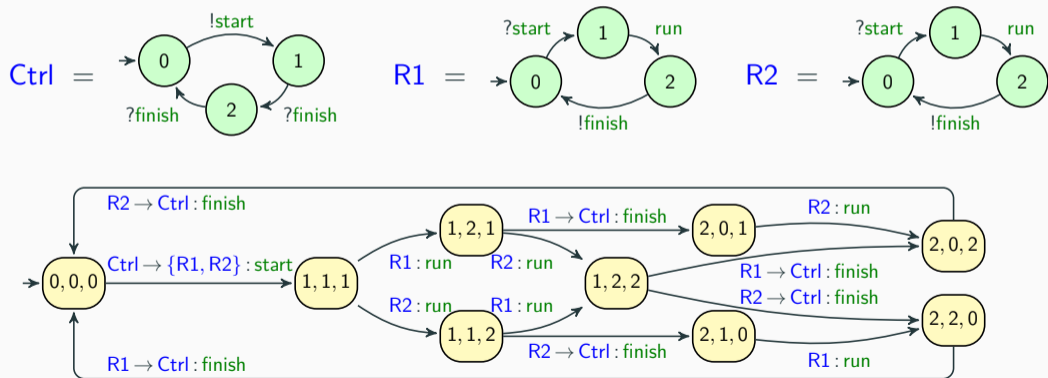
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... with both

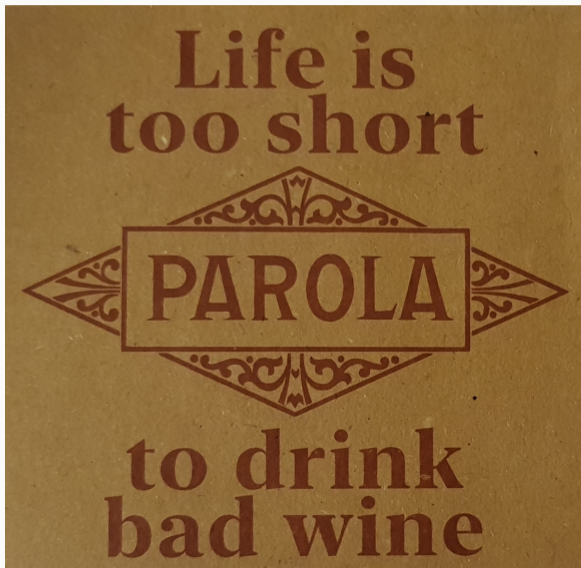
- Contract Automata

In [COORDINATION'24] we discuss for each formalism (1) the definition, (2) means of composition (via synchronisation), (3) a model of the Race example, (4) a brief relation with team automata, and (5) tool support

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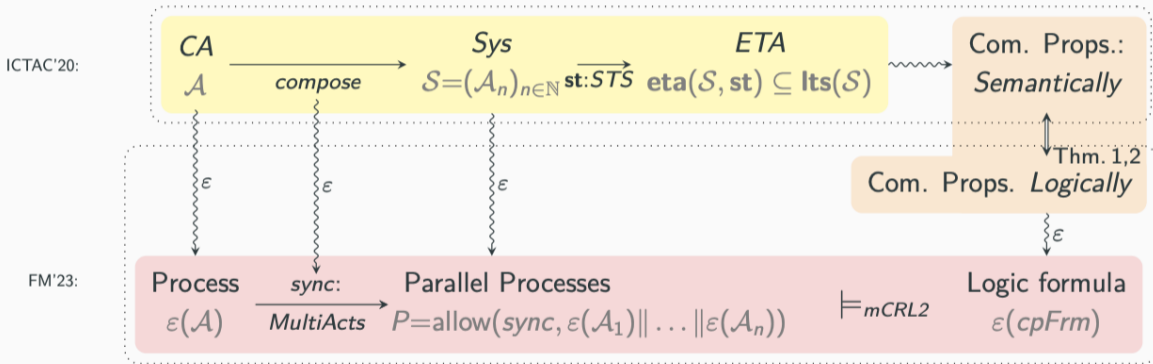
Recent Results



Model Checking Communication Properties of Team Automata

Com. Props.: **receptiveness** (*no message loss*) & **responsiveness** (*no indefinite waiting*)

Com. Props.: **receptiveness** (no message loss) & **responsiveness** (no indefinite waiting)



STS *per action* in ETA: $st(a) = [\min_{\text{out}}, \max_{\text{out}}] \rightarrow [\min_{\text{in}}, \max_{\text{in}}]$

(e.g., peer-to-peer, multicast, broadcast, master-slave, ...)

ETA Specification

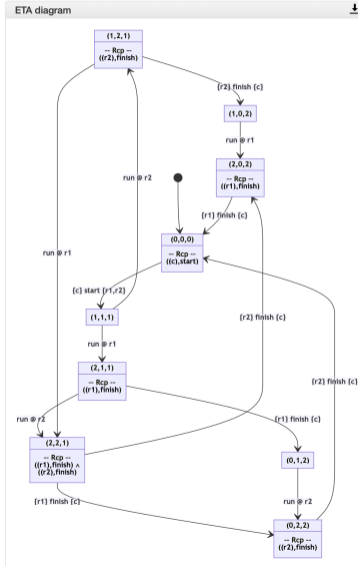
```

1 //Race example
2 CA runner (start)
3   (finish) = {
4   start 0
5   0 --> 1 by start
6   1 --> 2 by run
7   2 --> 0 by finish
8 }
9 CA controller (finish)
10  (start) = {
11  start 0
12  0 --> 1 by start
13  1 --> 2 by finish
14  2 --> 0 by finish
15 }
16 S = (r1:runner, r2:runner,
17      c:controller)
18 STS = {
19  default = 1 to 1
20  start = 1 to 2
21 }
    
```

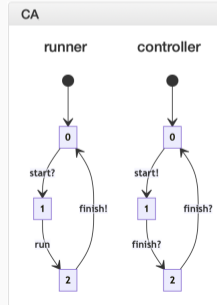
Race example

ETA Examples

Simple Race Chat



Demo



Communication Properties' Characterisation in mCRL2

Receptiveness:

```
[ (r1_finish|c_finish + r2_run + c_start|r1_start|r2_start + r2_finish|c_finish + r1_run)* (
  ((<c_start> true) => (<c_start|r1_start|r2_start> true)) &&
  ((<r1_finish> true) => (<r1_finish|c_finish> true)) &&
  ((<r2_finish> true) => (<r2_finish|c_finish> true))
)
```

Responsiveness:

```
[ (r1_finish|c_finish + r2_run + c_start|r1_start|r2_start + r2_finish|c_finish + r1_run)* (
  (<c_finish +
   r1_start|r2_start> true)
=>
  (<r1_finish|c_finish +
   c_start|r1_start|r2_start +
   r2_finish|c_finish> true)
)
```

Weak Receptiveness:

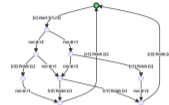
```
[ (r1_finish|c_finish + r2_run + c_start|r1_start|r2_start + r2_finish|c_finish + r1_run)* (
  ((<r1_finish> true) => (<(r2_run+r2_finish|c_finish)* . r1_finish|c_finish> true)) &&
  ((<r2_finish> true) => (<(r1_finish|c_finish+r1_run)* . r2_finish|c_finish> true)) &&
  ((<c_start> true) => (<(r2_run+r1_run)* . c_start|r1_start|r2_start> true))
)
```

Weak Responsiveness:

```
[ (r1_finish|c_finish + r2_run + c_start|r1_start|r2_start + r2_finish|c_finish + r1_run)* (
  (<c_finish +
   r1_start|r2_start> true)
=>
  (<(r2_run+r1_run)* . r1_finish|c_finish +
   c_start|r1_start|r2_start +
   (r2_run+r1_run)* . r2_finish|c_finish> true)
)
```

View mCRL2 evidence

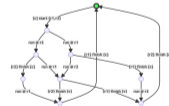
Receptiveness: true



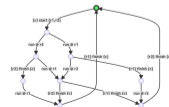
Responsiveness: false



Weak Receptiveness: true



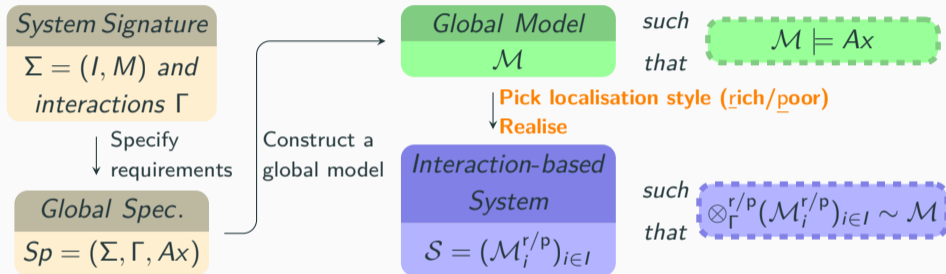
Weak Responsiveness: true



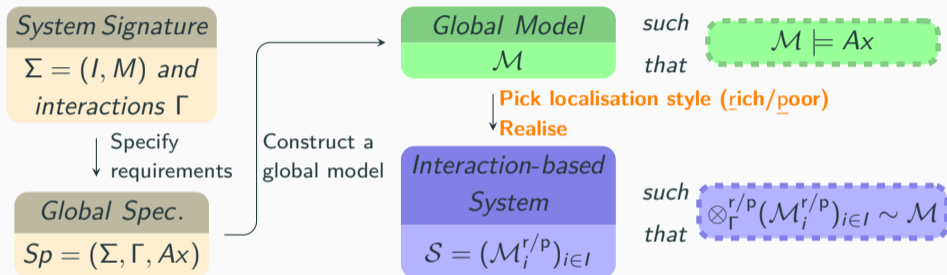
Team Automata as Realisations of Global Interaction Models

How to check if a global model is **realisable** and, if it is, how to **synthesise** a realisation?

How to check if a global model is **realisable** and, if it is, how to **synthesise** a realisation?



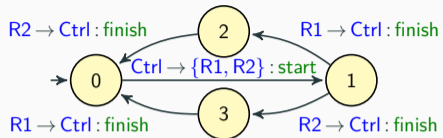
How to check if a global model is **realisable** and, if it is, how to **synthesise** a realisation?



Multi-interactions

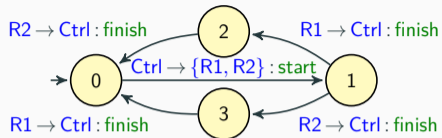
- rich** (à la multi-party session types, choreography languages) $i \rightarrow j : m \Rightarrow$
local output action $ij!m$ for i and local input action $ij?m$ for j
- poor** (à la component-based I/O development, loose coupling) $i \rightarrow j : m \Rightarrow$
local output action $!m$ for i and local input action $?m$ for j

$$\Gamma_{\text{Race}} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Ctrl} \rightarrow \{R1, R2\} : \text{start}, \\ R1 \rightarrow \text{Ctrl} : \text{finish}, \\ R2 \rightarrow \text{Ctrl} : \text{finish} \end{array} \right\}$$

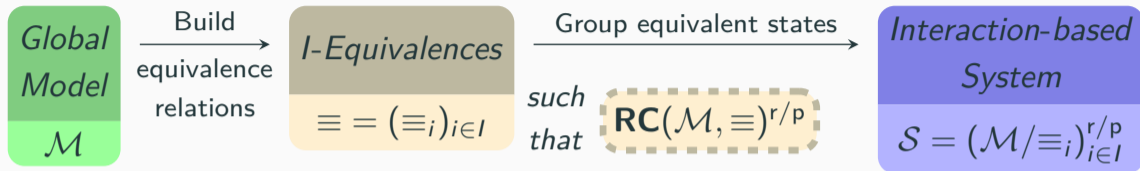


Example

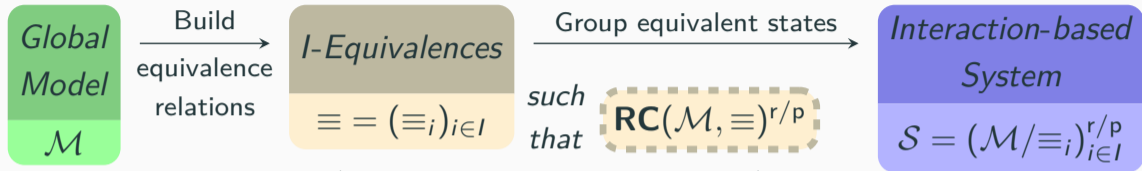
$$\Gamma_{\text{Race}} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Ctrl} \rightarrow \{R1, R2\} : \text{start}, \\ R1 \rightarrow \text{Ctrl} : \text{finish}, \\ R2 \rightarrow \text{Ctrl} : \text{finish} \end{array} \right\}$$



Localisation	Local Ctrl	Local R1	Local R2
Rich			
Poor			



Demo: <https://lmf.di.uminho.pt/ceta/>

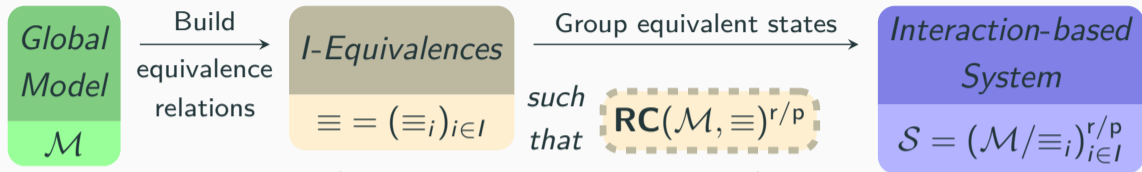


$$q \equiv_i q' \Rightarrow \exists q \xrightarrow{\text{out} \rightarrow \text{in} : m}_{\mathcal{M}} q' \text{ with } i \notin \text{out} \cup \text{in}$$

enabledness in “glue” states

I. Castellani, M. Mukund, and P.S. Thiagarajan,
Synthesizing Distributed Transition Systems
from Global Specifications @ FSTTCS'99

cf. our paper for details:
M.H. ter Beek, R. Hennicker, and J. Proença,
Realisability of Global Models of Interaction @ ICTAC'23



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Theorems 2/3 (sufficient realisability condition)

If $RC(\mathcal{M}, \equiv)^{r/p}$ holds, then $\mathcal{M} \sim \otimes_{\Gamma}^{r/p} ((\mathcal{M}/\equiv_i)^{r/p})_{i \in I}$

1. Realisations of global models with **arbitrary multi-interactions** supporting any kind of synchronous communication between multiple senders and multiple receivers
2. Correctness notion for realisation based on **bisimulation** rather than isomorphism, so allowing to deal with non-determinism
3. To construct realisations we consider, and analyse, **two different localisation styles**: rich and poor local actions
4. A prototypical **tool Ceta** checks the realisability conditions and, if they are satisfied, generates local quotients and hence realisations

<https://github.com/arcalab/choreo/tree/ceta>

<https://lmf.di.uminho.pt/ceta>

Choreographic Extended Team Automata

Choreography

```
1 // Race example
2 (
3   (Ctrl->R1,R2: start);
4   (R1->Ctrl:finish ||
5     R2->Ctrl:finish)
6 )*
```

A controller starts 2 runners at the same time, and receives a finish message from each runner at a time.

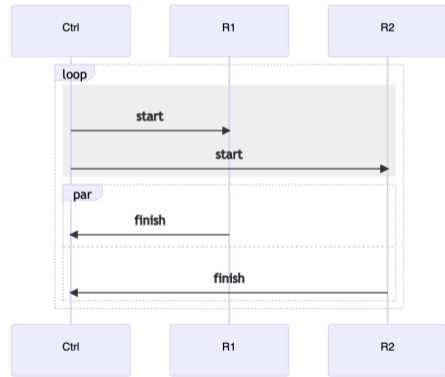
Examples

Race (simple) Race (R1-first) Race (once, simple)

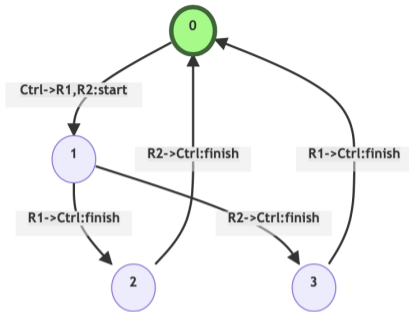
Toss Gossip (bad) Gossip (good) Cast-v1

Cast-v2 ab+cb+ca ab;ac ab|ac ab;cd ab|cd

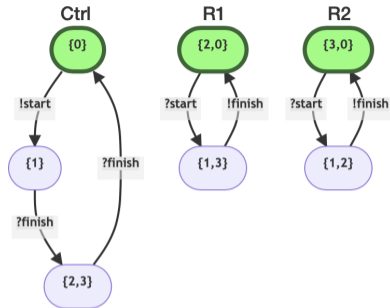
Sequence Diagram



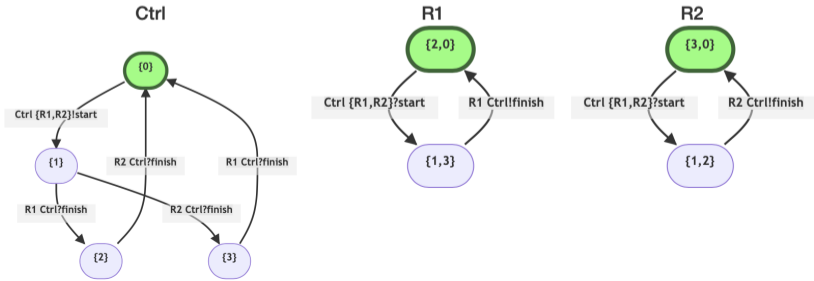
LTS: Global S-Choreo



LTS (poor actions): Local Quotients (Component Automata)



LTS (rich actions): Local Quotients (NOT Component Automata)

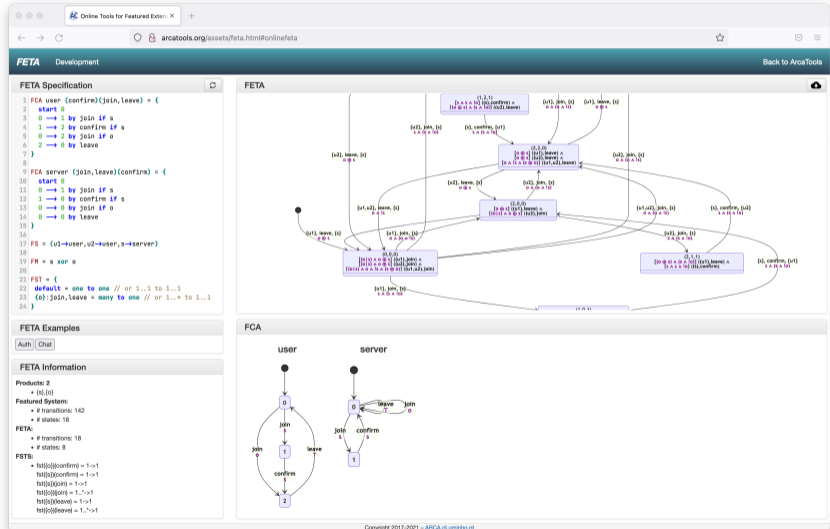


Featured Team Automata

- Specify
- Generate*
- Visualise
- Statistics

*SAT solver to solve *fm*

Demo



The screenshot displays the FETA web application interface. The browser address bar shows `arcatools.org/assets/feta.html#onlinefeta`. The page title is "FETA Development".

FETA Specification

```
1 FCA user (confirm)(join,leave) = {
2   start 0
3   0 → 1 by join if s
4   1 → 2 by confirm if s
5   0 → 2 by join if o
6   2 → 0 by leave
7 }
8
9 FCA server (join,leave)(confirm) = {
10  start 0
11  0 → 1 by join if s
12  1 → 0 by confirm if s
13  0 → 0 by join if o
14  0 → 0 by leave
15 }
16
17 FS = {u1→user,u2→user,s→server}
18
19 FH = s xor o
20
21 FST = {
22  default = one to one // or 1..1 to 1..1
23  (o):join,leave = many to one // or 1..* to 1..1
24 }
```

FETA

A complex state transition diagram for the FETA specification. States are represented by boxes containing state identifiers and their associated variables. Transitions are labeled with actions and conditions. The diagram shows a network of states and transitions, with some states highlighted in purple.

FCA

Two state transition diagrams for the Feature Control Algebra (FCA). The left diagram, labeled "user", shows states 0, 1, and 2. Transitions are labeled "join" (0 to 1), "leave" (1 to 0), and "confirm" (1 to 2). The right diagram, labeled "server", shows states 0 and 1. Transitions are labeled "join" (0 to 1) and "confirm" (1 to 0).

FETA Examples

Auth Chat

FETA Information

Products: 2
• {s},{o}

Featured System:
• # transitions: 142
• # states: 18

FETA:
• # transitions: 18
• # states: 8

FSTs:
• fst1[confirm] = 1->1
fst1[join] = 1->1
fst1[leave] = 1..*->1
fst1[o] = 1->1
fst1[s] = 1..*->1

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Ongoing Work



Inspiration from **multi-composition** of asynchronous systems of CFSMs

D. Brand and P. Zafiropulo, On Communicating Finite-State Machines. *Journal of the ACM* 30 (1983)

F. Barbanera and R. Hennicker, Safe Composition of Systems of Communicating Finite State Machines @ ICE'24



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Basically finite-state I/O-automata that communicate by asynchronous exchanges of messages via buffered FIFO channels, but

- CFSM use potentially infinite FIFO buffers as message channels (like MPST)
- CFSM systems use **binary peer-to-peer communication** with rich local actions

Behaviour of CFSM systems formalised as a transition relation on **configurations** (which are pairs of a tuple of component states and a tuple of channel buffers)



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Behaviour of CFSM systems formalised as a transition relation on **configurations** (which are pairs of a tuple of component states and a tuple of channel buffers)

⇒ Need to generalise to asynchronous **multi-party communication** for team automata

? Alternative with multisets as channels

L. Clemente, F. Herbreteau, and G. Sutre,

Decidable topologies for communicating automata with FIFO and bag channels @ CONCUR'14



Consider safe communication as well as **safe composition**, “guaranteeing the composition not to ‘break’ any relevant property of the single systems”

F. Barbanera, M. Dezani-Ciancaglini, I. Lanese, and E. Tuosto,
Composition and decomposition of multiparty sessions. *JLAMP* 119 (2021)



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⇒ Need to generalise receptiveness and responsiveness to asynchronous setting



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- Avoid **orphan message** configurations (in which each component is in a final state, but there is still at least one non-empty buffer)

P.-M. Deniélou and N. Yoshida,
Multiparty Session Types Meet Communicating Automata @ ESOP'12



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P.-M. Deniélou and N. Yoshida,
Multiparty Session Types Meet Communicating Automata @ ESOP'12
- Guarantee **asynchronous compatibility** (in any reachable configuration, if there is a channel with a message on its top position then some component can consume it)
R. Hennicker and M. Bidoit, Compatibility Properties of Synchronously and Asynchronously Communicating Components. *Logical Methods in Computer Science* 14 (2018)



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R. Hennicker and M. Bidoit, Compatibility Properties of Synchronously and Asynchronously Communicating Components. *Logical Methods in Computer Science* 14 (2018)

However, unlike team automata, they consider only binary peer-to-peer communication ^{24/28}



Consider safe communication as well as **safe composition**, “guaranteeing the composition not to ‘break’ any relevant property of the single systems”

F. Barbanera, M. Dezani-Ciancaglini, I. Lanese, and E. Tuosto,

Composition and decomposition of multiparty sessions. *JLAMP* 119 (2021)

⇒ Need to generalise **receptiveness** and **responsiveness** to asynchronous setting

- Avoid **unspecified reception** configurations (in which there is a receiving state unable to receive a message from any of its buffers, i.e., in each channel from which it could consume there is a message which it cannot receive in that state) [JACM'83]



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F. Barbanera and R. Hennicker, Safe Composition of Systems of Communicating Finite State Machines @ ICE'24



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F. Barbanera and R. Hennicker, Safe Composition of Systems of Communicating Finite State Machines @ ICE'24

However, unlike team automata, asynchronous communication between CFSMs uses rich local actions

? Enrich synchronisation types with channel behaviour

$[1, 1] \rightarrow [1, 2] : m_1 \Rightarrow \text{sync}$

$[2, 2] \rightarrow [1, 1] : m_2 \Rightarrow \text{fifo @ receiver}$

$[1, 1] \rightarrow [3, 3] : m_3 \Rightarrow \text{unsorted @ sender-receiver}$

⇒ Asynchronous communication with **non-blocking** senders

m_1 : synchronous communication between 1 sender and 1 or 2 receivers

m_2 : **asynchronous** communication between 2 senders and 1 receiver, and the messages are stored in a single **fifo** queue of the receiver

m_3 : **asynchronous** communication between 1 sender and 3 receivers, and the messages are stored in a **multiset** of both the sender(s) and the receiver

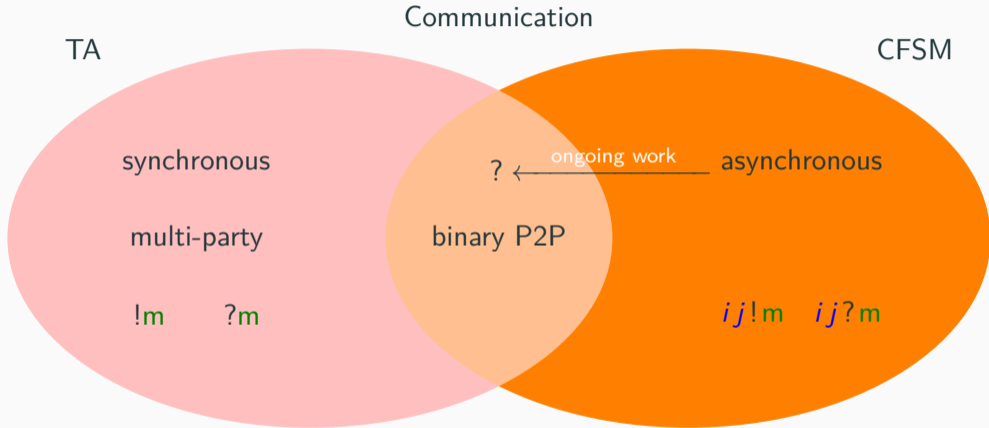
? Realisability of Asynchronous Team Automata

⇒ Tradeoff: more knowledge and control (sync + rich types) *versus*
more freedom and simpler systems (async + poor types)

Demo:

- **Local to Global (sync+poor):**
<http://arcatools.org/feta>
- **Global to Local (sync+rich/poor):**
<https://lmf.di.uminho.pt/ceta/>
- **Global to Pomsets (async+rich, not TA):**
<https://lmf.di.uminho.pt/b-pomset/>
- **Global to Scala (async+rich, not TA):**
<https://lmf.di.uminho.pt/pompset/>
+
<https://lmf.di.uminho.pt/st4mp/>

Conclusion and Publicity



“Every good talk should include a Venn diagram” – Einar (Lima, Peru, 2023)

It would be great to meet some of you at **FM 2026**:

- Submission: December 2nd, 2025
- Conference: May 18th–22nd, 2026
- New at FM: track on Tests and Proofs (**TAP**)
- Co-located: 18th International Conference on Rigorous State Based Methods (**ABZ**)



Backup: Realisability Condition $\mathbf{RC}(\mathcal{M}, \equiv)$ sufficient but not necessary

Global model \mathcal{M} does not satisfy $\mathbf{RC}(\mathcal{M}, \equiv)$, but $\mathcal{S} = \{\mathcal{M}_p, \mathcal{M}_q, \mathcal{M}_r\}$ does realise \mathcal{M} :

