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Shahar Maoz and Jan Oliver Ringert and Bernhard Rumpe

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An Operational Semantics for Activity Diagrams using SMV

Shahar Maoz[1]
Jan Oliver Ringert[2]
Bernhard Rumpe

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Abstract

This document defines an operational semantics for activity diagrams (ADs) using a translation to SMV. The translation is inspired by the work of Eshuis [Esh06] and extends it with support for data. Each execution step of the SMV module obtained from an AD represents an executed action of this AD with interleaved execution of concurrent branches.

An implementation of the given translation was used in the context of semantic differencing for ADs [MRR11]. We define the translation and give two examples, showing ADs and their complete representation in SMV.

Chapter 1

Activity Diagrams

Activity diagrams (ADs) have recently become widely used in the modeling of work flows, business processes, and web-services, where they serve various purposes, from documentation, requirement definitions, and test case specifications, to simulation and code generation.

1.1 AD Language Syntax

An Activity Diagram is a structure
$AD = \langle A, V^{inp}, V^{loc}, AN, PN, T \rangle$ where:

- A is a set of action names.
- V^{inp} is a (possibly empty) set of immutable input variables over finite domains.
- V^{loc} is a (possibly empty) set of local variables over finite domains.
- AN is a set of action nodes $an_1, \ldots, an_k$. Each action node an is labeled with an action name $acname(an) = ac \in A$, and a (possibly empty) set of assignment expressions to the variables in V^{loc}.
- PN is a set of pseudo nodes, consisting of initial nodes PN^{init}, final nodes PN^{fin}, decision nodes PM^{dec}, merge nodes PN^{mer}, fork nodes PN^{fork}, and join nodes PN^{join}.
- T is a set of transitions of the form $t = \langle n_{src}, n_{tgt}, guard \rangle$ where $n_{src}, n_{tgt} \in (AN \cup PN)$ and $guard$ is a Boolean expression over the variables in $V^{inp} \cup V^{loc}$. Unless n_{src} is a decision node, $guard = \texttt{true}$.

We do not formally capture here obvious well-formedness rules and context conditions such as: initial nodes have no incoming transitions, final nodes have no outgoing transitions, etc.

A minor technical limitation of our current translation rules is that two pseudo nodes should not be connected directly. Some rules for translating pseudo nodes rely on their successors or predecessors to determine the previous or next action. This limitation can be easily removed by 'skipping' pseudo nodes when looking for the next action in the abstract syntax.

1.2 Operational Semantics

We give operational semantics to activity diagrams using a translation to SMV, the language of the SMV model checker [SMV]. The translation is inspired by the translation presented in [Esh06]. It extends this previous translation with support for data.

The SMV language allows the description of finite state machines (FSMs). FSMs consist of a set of variables and predicates on these variables. Predicates use the logical operators `&` (and), `|` (or), and `!` (not). Constant `1` denotes true whereas `0` denotes false. Variables are declared using the `VAR` keyword, followed by a list of typed variable declarations. Variables can be of type Boolean or can be enumerative. A state is an assignment of values to a set of variables. Predicates are of two types: predicates defining the initial state are preceded by the `INIT` keyword, and predicates defining the transition relation, relating the current values of some variables with their possible next values, are preceded by the `TRANS` keyword.

The SMV language was presented in [McM93]. Complete syntax and semantics definitions for SMV can be found in [CCJ+05].

We present our complete translation of ADs given in abstract syntax to the SMV language in Figures 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. An AD is translated into one SMV module, i.e., FSM. Each step of this FSM represents the execution of a single action of the AD. Termination of the AD is represented by an infinite execution sequence of the pseudo action `nop`.

Rule 1 from Fig. 1.1 gives the state space of the FSM. It consists of control flow variables for each node that show if this node is active or not. Fork nodes are translated as separate variables for each outgoing transition and join nodes as separate variables for incoming transitions. In all cases these variables are used to decide which transition steps can be executed (see rule 3). Variable `acnode` denotes the action node in each step and variable `ac` holds the name of the executed action. Local and initial variables are translated directly to variables in SMV.

1 `VAR`

$\forall an \in AN \cup PN^{init,fin}$:
    `in_`$an.nId$`: boolean;`
$\forall fn \in PN^{fork} \forall t \in fn.out$:
    `in_F`$t.tgt.nId$`: boolean;`
$\forall jn \in PN^{join} \forall t \in jn.in$:
    `in_J`$t.src.nId$`: boolean;`
`acnode :` $\{\bigcup_{an \in AN} an.nId\}$`;`
`ac :` $\{\bigcup_{acname \in A} acname\}$`;`
$\forall var \in (V^{inp} \cup V^{loc})$:
    $var.name$ `:` $var.typeDecl$`;`

2 `INIT`

`in_`$ad.initialNode.nId$ `= 1 &`
$\forall an \in AN$:
    `in_`$an.nId$ `= 0 &`
$\forall fn \in PN^{fork} \forall t \in fn.out$:
    $\bigwedge$ `in_F`$t.tgt.nId$ `= 0 &`
$\forall jn \in PN^{join} \forall t \in jn.in$:
    $\bigwedge$ `in_J`$t.src.nId$ `= 0 &`
$\forall var \in V^{loc}$:
    $var.name$ `=` $var.init$ `&`
`acnode =` $ad.initialNode.nId$ `&`
`ac =` $ad.initialNode.acName$`;`

Figure 1.1: AD FSM variables and initial states

Rule 2 specifies all initial states. The control flow variable of the initial node is marked true, and all others false. Local variables are initialized to their pre-defined values. The value of `acnode` and `ac` is determined by the initial node. Input variables are not assigned a value (they get their value from the environment).

Rule 3 from Fig. 1.2 defines taking of transitions: a transition's source node has to be active and its (optional) guard needs to evaluate to true. When a transition is taken, t_`taken` disables predecessor nodes, enables successor control flow variables in the next state, and the variable `acnode` is updated to the next action node. Special definitions, 3^f, 3^j,3^m and 3^d, handle pseudo nodes where diagram edges do not relate one-to-one to state transitions.

Rule 3^f states that every transition t leaving a fork node can be taken if it's control flow variable `in_F`$t.tgt.nId$ is true. These variables are set in rule 4. To take a transition preceding a join node, all control flow variables `in_J`$t'.src.nId$ have to be true, indicating that all previous concurrent branches have reached the join node (see rule 3^j).

Transitions to merge nodes are routed to the target node of the one outgoing edge of the merge (rule 3^m). A transition leaving a decision node can be taken if its guard evaluates to true and the control flow has reached the node preceding it (rule 3^d).

3 DEFINE

$\forall t \in T \wedge t.src, t.tgt \in AN \cup PN^{initial,final}$:
t_taken := in_$t.src.nId$ &
!next(in_$t.src.nId$) &
next(in_$t.tgt.nId$) &
next(acnode = $t.tgt.nId$);

3^f $\forall t \in T \wedge t.src \in PN^{fork}$:
t_taken := in_F$t.tgt.nId$ &
!next(in_$t.src.in.src.nId$) &
!next(in_F$t.tgt.nId$) &
next(in_$t.tgt.nId$) &
next(acnode = $t.tgt.nId$);

3^j $\forall t \in T \wedge t.src \in PN^{join}$:
t_taken := $\bigwedge_{t' \in t.src.in}$ in_J$t'.src.nId$ &
$\bigwedge_{t' \in t.src.in}$!next(in_J$t'.src.nId$) &
next(in_$t.tgt.nId$) &
next(acnode = $t.tgt.nId$);

3^m $\forall t \in T \wedge t.tgt \in PN^{mer}$:
t_taken := in_$t.src.nId$ &
!next(in_$t.src.nId$) &
next(in_$t.tgt.out.tgt.nId$) &
next(acnode = $t.tgt.out.tgt.nId$);

3^d $\forall t \in T \wedge t.src \in PN^{dec}$:
t_taken := in_$t.src.in.src.nId$ &
$t.guard$ &
!next(in_$t.src.in.src.nId$) &
next(in_$t.tgt.nId$) &
next(acnode = $t.tgt.nId$);

Figure 1.2: AD FSM transition definitions

Rule 4 activates the control flow variables for forking if the next step arrives in an action node previous to the fork and a corresponding join variable when executing an action before the join node.

Rule 5 defines that by every state transition the control flow variables `in_`$an.nId$ are not changed, unless incoming or outgoing edges are taken. Fork nodes can change these variables with every outgoing transition and join nodes with their one outgoing transition. The special variables `in_F`$t.tgt.nId$ for fork and `in_J`$t.src.nId$ join nodes are changed if incoming or outgoing edges from or to these pseudo nodes are taken.

Rule 6 ensures that – unless the diagram traversal has reached a final node – in every step of the SMV FSM one edge of the diagram has to be taken. With t`_taken`'s unique assignments to `acnode`, this results in exactly one following action node.

Rule 7 states that during every transition the value of input variables stays constant.

Rule 8 is used to specify that local variables can only change to the next step if the next node contains an assignment to a variable with this name. If so the variable will have the assigned value in the next step.

Rule 9 assigns the executed action's name for the given action node `acnode` to variable `ac`.

4 TRANS

$\forall fn \in PN^{fork}, n = fn.in.src$:
(next(acnode) = $n.nodeId$ ->
$\bigwedge_{t \in fn.out}$ next(in_F$t.tgt.nId$)) &
$\forall jn \in PN^{join} \forall t \in jn.in$:
$\bigwedge$(next(acnode) = $t.src.nodeId$ ->
next(in_J$t.src.nId$));

5 $\forall n \in AN$:
(in_$n.nId$ = next(in_$n.nId$)|
$\bigvee_{t \in n.in \cup n.out, t_\texttt{taken defined}} t_\texttt{taken}$ |
$\bigvee_{t \in n.out.tgt.out, t.src \in PN^{fork}} t_\texttt{taken}$ |
$\bigvee_{t=n.out.tgt.out, t.src \in PN^{join}} t_\texttt{taken}$) &
$\forall fn \in PN^{fork} \forall t \in fn.out$:
(in_F$t.tgt.nId$ = next(in_F$t.tgt.nId$)|
$\bigvee_{t' \in fn.in.src.in \cup t} t'_\texttt{taken}$) &
$\forall jn \in PN^{join} \forall t \in jn.in$:
(in_J$t.src.nId$ = next(in_J$t.src.nId$)|
$\bigvee_{t' \in t.src.in \cup jn.out} t'_\texttt{taken}$);

6 $\forall n \in PN^{final}$:
$\bigwedge$ in_$n.nId$ -> next(acnode = nop) &
($\bigvee$ in_$n.nId$ |
$\bigvee_{t \in T, t_\texttt{taken defined}} t_\texttt{taken}$);

7 $\forall var \in V^{inp}$: $\bigwedge var.vName$ = next($var.vName$);

8 $\forall v \in V^{loc}$:
$\bigwedge$($v.vName$ = next($v.vName$) |
$\bigvee_{n \in asgnVar(v)}$ (next(acnode) = $n.nId$ &
next($v.vName$) = $n.asgmt_v.val$));

9 $\bigwedge_{an \in AN}$(next(acnode) = $an.nId$ ->
next(ac) = $an.acName$);

Figure 1.3: AD FSM transition rules

Chapter 2

Examples of AD to SMV Transformation

We present two complete examples of the translation of an activity diagram to SMV code. The first activity from Fig. 2.1 contains internal control and external input variables. Its action nodes contain assignments to local variables. A decision node evaluates expressions over internal and external variabels. The second example in Fig. 2.2 shows an activity where actions are executed in parallel (interleaved) with nondeterministic choice of their execution order.

2.1 Example I

The AD `controlledLoop` from Fig. 2.1 contains four action nodes, an input variable `project` with values `short` and `long`, and an internal local variable `iterations` with domain {`0, 1, 2, 3, 4`}. Variable `iterations` is initialized to `0` in the first action node. Its value is incremented each time action `work` is executed. The loop containing the two actions `define work` and `work` can only be left if the input variable `project` was initially set to `short` by the environemt or the local variable `iterations` has been increased to 3 after executing the loop `define work` and `work` three times.

The fully automated translation to SMV code following the scheme presented above in Fig. 1.1 and Fig. 1.3 consists of about 160 lines of SMV code presented in listings 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5. Nodes cannot be identified by their action names only since these might be used more than once in an activity. The nodes in this example are `n1` to `n4` representing the action nodes from Fig. 2.1 and the special nodes `n0_initial` and `n5_final` for the initial and final node (see l.11 of listing 2.1). The correspondance of nodes

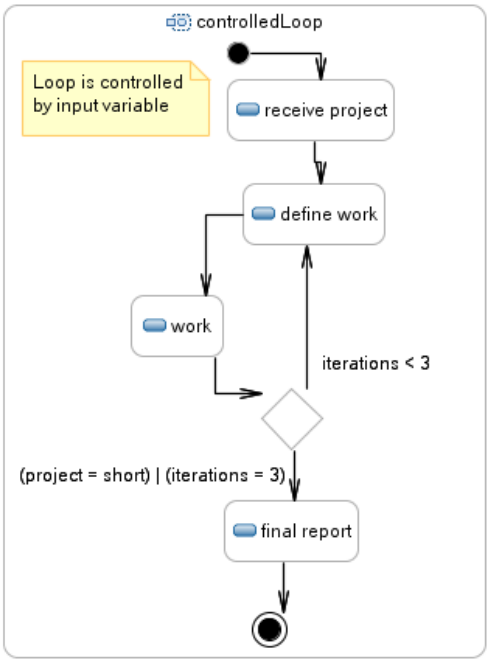

Figure 2.1: Activity diagram `controlledLoop`

and actions is established in listing 2.5 as defined in rule 9 of Fig. 1.3.

It is also easy to spot the application of rule 3^d from Fig. 1.1 which is applied to all edges that are outgoing from the decision node in the AD. The edge with guard `( iterations < 3 )` leading to action `define work` produces lines 28-38 in listing 2.2. Please note that in the generated code the first condition of whether edges can be taken or not is always factored out into an additional definition ending with `_enabled`. The second edge leaving the decision node with guard `( ( project = short ) | ( iterations = 3) )` produces accordingly lines 1-12 in listing 2.3.

```
VAR
  -- nodes and pseudo-nodes of ad
  in_n0_initial : boolean;
  in_n1 : boolean;
  in_n2 : boolean;
  in_n3 : boolean;
  in_n4 : boolean;
  in_n5_final : boolean;

  -- visitable nodes
  acnode : {n0_initial, n1, n2, n3, n4, n5_final, nop};

  -- the visible action of a step
  ac : {define_work, final_report, receive_project,
                                              work, nop};

  -- input variables
  project : {long, short};

  -- control variables
  iterations : {0,1,2,3,4};

INIT
  -- init all nodes
  in_n0_initial = 1 &
  in_n1 = 0 &
  in_n2 = 0 &
  in_n3 = 0 &
  in_n4 = 0 &
  in_n5_final = 0 &
  -- init control variables as assigned in first node
  iterations = ( 0) &
  -- set initial action node and visible action
  acnode = n0_initial &
  ac = nop;
```

Listing 2.1: Variables and their initial values of automaton of AD `controlledLoop`

```
-- shortcut to what happens when an edge is taken
DEFINE
  en0_initialn1_enabled := in_n0_initial ;
  en0_initialn1_taken := en0_initialn1_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_n0_initial) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n1) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    -- doing assignments
    next (iterations) =  0 &
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n1);

DEFINE
  en2n3_enabled := in_n2 ;
  en2n3_taken := en2n3_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_n2) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n3) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    -- doing assignments
    next (iterations) =  iterations +1 &
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n3);

DEFINE
  en3n2_enabled := in_n3  & (iterations < 3);
  en3n2_taken := en3n2_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_n3) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n2) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    -- doing assignments
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n2);
```

Listing 2.2: Shortcuts to define what happens when edges are taken (part 1)

```
DEFINE
  en3n4_enabled := in_n3  &
    ((project = short) | (iterations = 3));
  en3n4_taken := en3n4_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_n3) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n4) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    -- doing assignments
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n4);

DEFINE
  en4n5_final_enabled := in_n4 ;
  en4n5_final_taken := en4n5_final_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_n4) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n5_final) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    -- doing assignments
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n5_final);

DEFINE
  en1n2_enabled := in_n1 ;
  en1n2_taken := en1n2_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_n1) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n2) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    -- doing assignments
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n2);
```

Listing 2.3: Shortcuts to define what happens when edges are taken (part 2)

```
TRANS
  (  (in_n0_initial = next(in_n0_initial)  ) |
      en0_initialn1_taken ) &
  (  (in_n1 = next(in_n1)  ) |
      en0_initialn1_taken |
      en1n2_taken ) &
  (  (in_n2 = next(in_n2)  ) |
      en3n2_taken |
      en1n2_taken |
      en2n3_taken ) &
  (  (in_n3 = next(in_n3)  ) |
      en2n3_taken |
      en3n2_taken |
      en3n4_taken ) &
  (  (in_n4 = next(in_n4)  ) |
      en3n4_taken |
      en4n5_final_taken ) &
  (  (in_n5_final = next(in_n5_final)  ) |
      en4n5_final_taken );

TRANS
  (   (next(acnode=nop) <-> in_n5_final  ) ) &
      ( in_n5_final  |   (
        (en0_initialn1_taken) |
        (en2n3_taken) |
        (en3n2_taken) |
        (en3n4_taken) |
        (en4n5_final_taken) |
        (en1n2_taken) ))  ;

TRANS
-- input variables do not change
  project = next(project) ;

TRANS
  -- local variables change only on assignments
  (  iterations = next(iterations)
   | next(acnode) = n1  | next(acnode) = n3 );
```

Listing 2.4: Transitions of automaton generated for AD `controlledLoop` (part 1)

```
TRANS
  (next(acnode) = n0_initial -> next(ac) = nop )&
  (next(acnode) = n1 -> next(ac) = receive_project )&
  (next(acnode) = n2 -> next(ac) = define_work )&
  (next(acnode) = n3 -> next(ac) = work )&
  (next(acnode) = n4 -> next(ac) = final_report )&
  (next(acnode) = n5_final -> next(ac) = nop )&
  (next(acnode) = nop -> next(ac) = nop );
```

Listing 2.5: Transitions of automaton generated for AD `controlledLoop` (part 2)

2.2 Example II

The AD `hireEmployeeSimplified` from Fig. 2.2 contains four action nodes. The modeled activity shows the simplified process of hiring an employee. It starts with the action `register` of registering the new employee in the office. The control flow then forks and the actions `assign to project` and `add to website` are executed in parallel. After execution both the control flow merges and the action `authorize payment` is executed before the final node of the AD is reached.

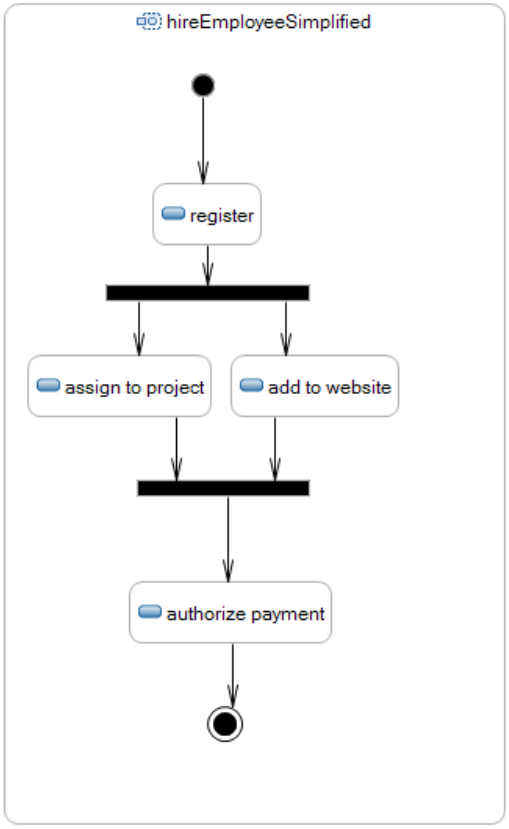

Figure 2.2: Activity diagram `hireEmployeeSimplified`

The fully automated translation to SMV code following the scheme presented above in Fig. 1.1 and Fig. 1.3 consists of about 160 lines of SMV code presented in listings 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10.

Listing 2.6 shows that the variables `acnode` and `ac` are generated similar as in the previous example. Additionally variables for each transition leaving a fork node are generated (see lines 9-10). These variables are set to `true`

when the last action before the fork node is executed (see lines 10-11, listing 2.7).

Similar variables in listing 2.6 are generated for all predecessors of join nodes (see lines 11-12). These are each enabled after their corresponding action before the join node is executed (see lines 10 and 24, listing 2.8). The action after the join can only be executed if all of these join variables are set to `true`, i.e., all concurrent control flow paths have reached the join node (see line 17, listing 2.7).

```
VAR
  -- nodes and pseudo-nodes of ad
  in_n0_initial : boolean;
  in_n1_final : boolean;
  in_n2 : boolean;
  in_n3 : boolean;
  in_n4 : boolean;
  in_n5 : boolean;
  in_Fn4 : boolean;
  in_Fn3 : boolean;
  in_Jn3 : boolean;
  in_Jn4 : boolean;

  -- visitable nodes
  acnode : {n0_initial, n1_final, n2, n3, n4, n5, nop};

  -- the visible action of a step
  ac : {add_to_website , assign_to_project ,
                  authorize_payment , nop , register };

  -- input variables

  -- control variables

INIT
  -- init all nodes
  in_n0_initial = 1 &
  in_n1_final = 0 &
  in_n2 = 0 &
  in_n3 = 0 &
  in_n4 = 0 &
  in_n5 = 0 &
  in_Fn4 = 0 &
  in_Fn3 = 0 &
  in_Jn3 = 0 &
  in_Jn4 = 0 &
  -- init control variables as assigned in first node
  -- set initial visible action node and visible action
  acnode = n0_initial &
  ac = nop;
```

Listing 2.6: Variables and their initial values of automaton of AD `hireEmployeeSimplified`

```
-- shortcut to what happens when an edge is taken
DEFINE
  en0_initialn2_enabled := in_n0_initial ;
  en0_initialn2_taken := en0_initialn2_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_n0_initial) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n2) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    next(in_Fn3) &
    next(in_Fn4) &
    -- doing assignments
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n2);

DEFINE
  eJn3Jn4n5_enabled := in_Jn3 & in_Jn4 ;
  eJn3Jn4n5_taken := eJn3Jn4n5_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_Jn3) &
    !next(in_n3) &
    !next(in_Jn4) &
    !next(in_n4) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n5) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    -- doing assignments
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n5);

DEFINE
  en5n1_final_enabled := in_n5 ;
  en5n1_final_taken := en5n1_final_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_n5) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n1_final) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    -- doing assignments
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n1_final);
```

Listing 2.7: Shortcuts to define what happens when edges are taken (part 1)

```
DEFINE
  eFn3n3_enabled := in_Fn3 ;
  eFn3n3_taken := eFn3n3_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_Fn3) &
    !next(in_n2) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n3) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    next(in_Jn3) &
    -- doing assignments
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n3);

DEFINE
  eFn4n4_enabled := in_Fn4 ;
  eFn4n4_taken := eFn4n4_enabled &
    -- not in previous nodes anymore
    !next(in_Fn4) &
    !next(in_n2) &
    -- arrive in target node
    next(in_n4) &
    -- possibly taking hidden edges
    next(in_Jn4) &
    -- doing assignments
    -- set next node
    next(acnode = n4);
```

Listing 2.8: Shortcuts to define what happens when edges are taken (part 2)

```
TRANS
  (   (in_n0_initial = next(in_n0_initial)   ) |
      en0_initialn2_taken ) &
  (   (in_n1_final = next(in_n1_final)   ) |
      en5n1_final_taken ) &
  (   (in_n2 = next(in_n2)   ) |
      en0_initialn2_taken |
      eFn3n3_taken |
      eFn4n4_taken ) &
  (   (in_n3 = next(in_n3)   ) |
      eFn3n3_taken |
      eJn3Jn4n5_taken ) &
  (   (in_n4 = next(in_n4)   ) |
      eFn4n4_taken |
      eJn3Jn4n5_taken ) &
  (   (in_n5 = next(in_n5)   ) |
      eJn3Jn4n5_taken |
      en5n1_final_taken ) &
  (   (in_Fn4 = next(in_Fn4)   ) |
      en0_initialn2_taken |
      eFn4n4_taken ) &
  (   (in_Fn3 = next(in_Fn3)   ) |
      en0_initialn2_taken |
      eFn3n3_taken 0 ) &
  (   (in_Jn3 = next(in_Jn3)   ) |
      eFn3n3_taken |
      eJn3Jn4n5_taken ) &
  (   (in_Jn4 = next(in_Jn4)   ) |
      eFn4n4_taken |
      eJn3Jn4n5_taken );

TRANS
  (    (next(acnode=nop) <-> in_n1_final   ) ) &
      ( in_n1_final   |    (
        (en0_initialn2_taken) |
        (eJn3Jn4n5_taken) |
        (en5n1_final_taken) |
        (eFn3n3_taken) |
        (eFn4n4_taken) ))   ;
```

Listing 2.9: Transitions of automaton generated for AD `hireEmployeeSimplified` (part 1)

```
TRANS
  (next(acnode) = n0_initial -> next(ac) = nop)&
  (next(acnode) = n1_final -> next(ac) = nop)&
  (next(acnode) = n2 -> next(ac) = register)&
  (next(acnode) = n3 -> next(ac) = assign_to_project)&
  (next(acnode) = n4 -> next(ac) = add_to_website)&
  (next(acnode) = n5 -> next(ac) = authorize_payment)&
  (next(acnode) = nop -> next(ac) = nop);
```

Listing 2.10: Transitions of automaton generated for AD `hireEmployeeSimplified` (part 2)

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