Design of Parallel Algorithms

Bulk Synchronous Parallel
A Bridging Model of Parallel Computation
Need for a Bridging Model

- The RAM model has been reasonable successful for serial programming
  - The model provides a framework for describing the implementation of serial algorithms
  - The model provides reasonably accurate predictions for algorithm running times

- A bridging model is a model that can be used to design algorithms and also make reliable performance predictions

- Historically, there has not been a satisfactory bridging model for parallel computations. Either the model is good at describing algorithms (PRAM) or is good at describing performance (network model) but not both.

- Leslie Valiant proposed the BSP model as a potential bridging model
  - Basically an improvement on the PRAM model to incorporate more practical aspects of parallel hardware costs
What is the Bulk Synchronous Parallel (BSP) model?

- Processors are coupled to local memories

- Communications happen in synchronized bulk operations
  - Data updates for the communications are inconsistent until the completion of a synchronization step
  - All of the communications that occur at the synchronization step are modeled in aggregate rather than tracking individual message transit times

- For data exchange, a one-sided communication model is advocated
  - E.g. data transfer through put or get operations that are executed by only one side of the exchange (as opposed to 2 sided where send-receive pairs must be matched up.)

- Similar to a coarse grained PRAM model, but exposes more realistic communication costs

- BSP provides realistic performance predictions
Bulk Synchronous Parallel Programming

- Parallel Programs are developed through a series of super-steps

- Each super-step contains:
  - Computations that utilize local processor memory only
  - A communication pattern between processors called an h-relation
  - A barrier step whereby all (or subsets) of processors are synchronized
    - The communication pattern is not fully realized until the barrier step is complete

- The h-relation:
  - This describes communication pattern according to a single characteristic of the communication identified by the parameter called $h$
  - $h$ is defined as the larger of the number of incoming or outgoing interactions that occur during the communication step
  - Time for communication is assumed to be $mgh + l$ where $m$ is the message size, $g$ is an empirically determined bulk bandwidth factor, and $l$ is an empirically determined time for barrier synchronization
Architecture of a BSP Super-Step

- The super-step begins with local computations
- In some models, virtual processors are used to give the run-time system flexibility to balance load and communication
- Local computations are followed by a global communication step
- The global communications are completed with a barrier synchronization
- Since every super-step starts after the barrier, computations are time synchronized at the beginning of each super-step
The network is defined by two bulk parameters:
- The parameter $g$ represents the average per-processor rate of word transmission through the network. It is an analog to $t_w$ in network models.
- The parameter $l$ is the time required to complete the barrier synchronization and represents the bulk latency of the network. It is an analog to $t_s$ in network models.

The cost of a super-step can be computed using the following formula:
$$t_{step} = \max(w_i) + mg \max(h_i) + l$$
- $w_i$ is the time for local work on processor $i$.
- $h_i$ is the number of incoming or outgoing messages for processor $i$.
- $m$ is the message size.
- $g$ is the machine specific BSP bandwidth parameter.
- $l$ is the machine specific BSP latency parameter.
Example of BSP implementations of broadcast (central scheme)

- Since there is no global shared memory in the BSP model, we need to broadcast a value before it can be used by all processors.

- There are several ways to implement broadcast algorithms, a central scheme would perform the broadcast by using one super-step with one processor communicating with all other processors. This we call the central scheme.

- In this approach the $h$ relation will be $p-1$ since one processor will need to send a message to all other processors.

- The cost for this scheme is $t_{central} = gh + l = g(p-1) + l$.
Example: BSP broadcast using binary tree scheme

- Broadcast using a tree approach where the algorithm proceeds in $\log p$ steps.
- Each step, every processor that presently has broadcast data sends to a processor that has no data.
  - Processors that have broadcast data doubles in each step.
- Since each processor either sends or receives one or no data each step, the $h$ relation is always $h=1$.
- The time for each step of this algorithm is $t_{\text{step}} = g+l$.
- The time for the overall broadcast algorithm that includes all $\log p$ steps is $t_{\text{tree}} = (g+l) \log p$. 
Optimizing broadcasts under BSP

- The central algorithm time:
  \[ t_{central} = g(p-1) + l \]

- The tree algorithm time:
  \[ t_{tree} = (g+l) \log p \]

- If \( l \gg g \) then for sufficiently small \( p \), then \( t_{central} < t_{tree} \)

- Can we optimize broadcast for specific system where we know \( g \) and \( l \)?
  - There is no reason that we are constrained only double in each step, We could triple, quadruple, or more each step.
  - Combining the central and tree algorithm can yield an algorithm that can be optimized for architecture parameters
Cost of the hybrid broadcast algorithm

- Each step of the algorithm, processors that have data will communicate with \( k-1 \) other processors, therefore \( h = k-1 \) in each step.

- After \( \log_k p \) steps, all processors will have shared the broadcast data.

- Therefore the cost of each step of the hybrid algorithm is \((k-1)g\) and so the cost of the hybrid algorithm is \( t_{hybrid} = ((k-1)g + l)\log_k p \).

- To optimize set \( k \) such that \( t_{hybrid}'(k) = 0 \), from this we find optimal \( k \) set by
  - \( l/g = 1 + k*(\ln(k) - 1) \)

- For a general message of \( m \) words, the broadcast algorithm can be shown to be \( t_{hybrid} = (m(k-1)g + l)\log_k p \), and the optimal setting for \( k \) becomes
  - \( l/(mg) = 1 + k*(\ln(k) - 1) \).
Practical application of BSP

- Several parallel programming environments have been developed based on the BSP model.
- The second generation of the MPI standard, MPI-2, has extended its API to include a one-sided communication structure that can emulate the BSP model (e.g., it is one-sided + barrier synchronization).
- Even when using two-sided communications, parallel programs are often developed as a sequence of super-steps. Using the BSP model, these can be analyzed using a bulk view of communications.
- The BSP model assumes that the network is homogenous, but architectural changes, such as multi-core architectures, present challenges.
  - Currently, the model is being extended to support hierarchical computing structures.
Discussion Topic

- Implementation of summing $n$ numbers using BSP model

- Serial Implementation:

```c
int sum = 0;
for(int i=0; i<n; ++i)
    sum = sum + a[i];
```
Dependency graph for serial summation

\[\text{Final sum} = (((((\text{sum} + a[0]) + a[1]) + a[2]) + a[3]) + a[4])\]
Problems with parallelizing the serial code

- The dependency graph does not allow one to perform subsequent operations.
  - It is not possible, as the algorithm is formulated, to execute additions in parallel

- We note that the addition operation is associative
  - NOTE! This is not true for floating point addition!
  - Although floating point addition is not associative, it is approximately associative
    - Accurately summing large numbers of floating point values, particularly in parallel, is a deep problem
    - For the moment we will assume floating point is associative as well, but note that in general an optimizing compiler cannot assume associativity of floating point operations!

- We can exploit associativity to increase parallelism
How does associativity help with parallelization?

- We can recast the problem from a linear structure to a tree:
  - $(((a0+a1)+a2)+a3) = ((a0+a1)+(a2+a3))$
  - Now $a0+a1$ and $a2+a3$ can be performed concurrently!
What are the costs of this transformation

- Using operator associativity we are able to reveal additional parallelism, however there are costs
  - For the serial summing algorithm only one register is needed to store intermediate results (we used the sum variable)
  - For the tree based summing algorithm we will need to store \( n/2 \) intermediate results for the first concurrent step
- For summing where \( 2n >> p \), maximizing concurrency may introduce new problems:
  - Storing extra intermediate results increase memory requirements of algorithm and may overwhelm available registers
  - Assigning operations to processors (graph partitioning) is needed to parallelize the summation. Some mappings will introduce significantly more inter-processor communication than others
Mapping Operators to Processors
Round Robin Allocation

\[ p_0 \rightarrow p_1 \rightarrow p_2 \rightarrow p_3 \]
BSP model for round robin allocation of the tree

- Since there is communication for each level of the tree, there will be $\log n$ super-steps in the algorithm.
- For level $i$ in the tree, the algorithm will perform $\max(n/(2ip), 1)$ operations on at least one processor.
- For level $i$ in the tree, the algorithm will utilize an $h$ relation where $h = \max(n/(2ip), 2)$.

Therefore the running time to sum $n$ numbers on $p$ processors using the BSP model is

$$t_{\text{sum}} = \sum_{i=1}^{\log n} \left\{ \left\lfloor \frac{n}{2ip} \right\rfloor t_c + \left\lfloor \frac{n}{4ip} \right\rfloor 2g + l \right\} \approx \frac{n}{p} (t_c + g) + l \log n$$
Mapping Operators to Processors
Communication Minimizing Allocation
BSP model for optimized allocation sum

- Notice that only the last $\log p$ levels of the tree will require communication between processors, therefore there will be only $\log p$ super-steps.

- The first step will require $n/p - 1$ operations per processor, and the remaining steps will only require 1 operation.

- During these final $\log p$ steps, at most a processor either receives or sends one piece of information, and so $h = 1$ for the $h$-relation.

- From this the BSP model running time can be derived:

$$t_{\text{sum}} = \left(\frac{n}{p} - 1\right)t_c + \sum_{i=1}^{\log p} \left(t_c + g + l\right) = \left(\frac{n}{p} - 1\right)t_c + \left(t_c + g + l\right)\log p$$
Comments on BSP analysis

- Obviously, in the BSP model, different allocations of work to processors can have radically different running times even though the work is equally balanced.

- For a PRAM model, both allocations would have had the same cost which is unrealistic.

- The cost structure of the BSP algorithms favors algorithms that have greater locality

- Even if we do not explicitly use a BSP model, we typically think of our algorithm going through a sequence of steps even if the implementation never explicitly enforces a barrier to get all processors to a unified state. Therefore the BSP model closely matches how we typically think about practical parallel programs.
Q&A