

# Energy-aware memory allocation in real-time systems

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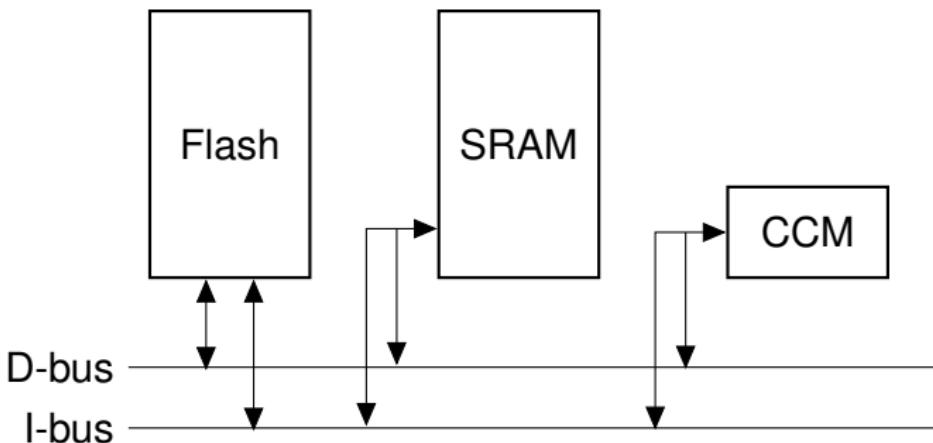
November 5, 2023

# Goal of the study

Find a new solution for energy-aware memory allocation in real-time systems on low-power microcontrollers.

- ① Get energy consumption data with different memory configurations on Cortex M4 microcontrollers.
- ② Measure the impact of each memory allocation.
- ③ Create a model to optimize the energy consumption.
- ④ Find scheduling algorithms that can work for this case.

# Core Coupled Memory - CCM SRAM



- Special area of memory.
- Connected to both instruction and data buses.
- Direct access to memory ⇒ zero wait states.

# Wait states

- FLASH memory can be clocked up to 24MHz.
- When the CPU is faster than the memory, it has to wait for the memory to be ready.  
⇒ FLASH execution is blocked by wait states.
- The CCM-SRAM can transfer instructions at CPU clock rate.  
⇒ CCM-SRAM execution time is proportional to frequency.

# Context

## Previous work

Tasks' memory allocation can reduce runtime in real-time context.



Zhishen Zhang, Yuwen Shen, Binqi Sun, Tomasz Kloda, and Marco Caccamo

Memory allocation for low-power real-time embedded microcontroller. *IEEE ETFA 2022*

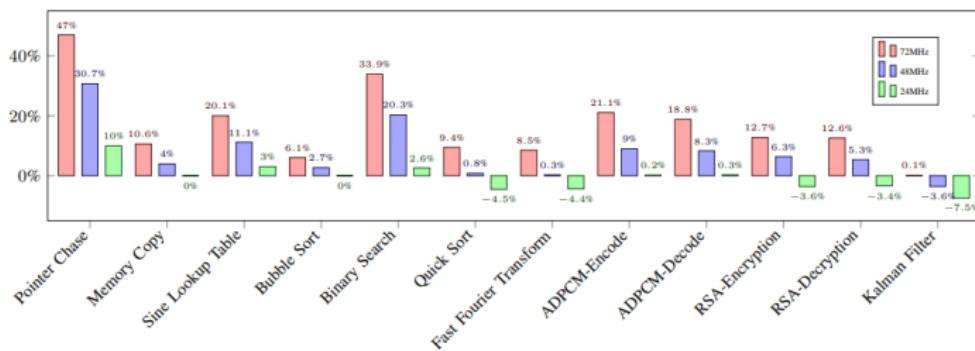


Figure: Results of the previous work (Runtime decreases when code run from CCM-SRAM)

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② Current measurement

③ STM32F performances

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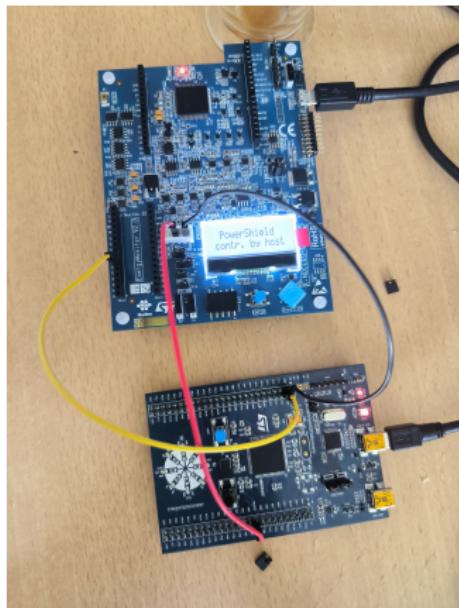
⑥ Future work

# NUCLEO LPM01A



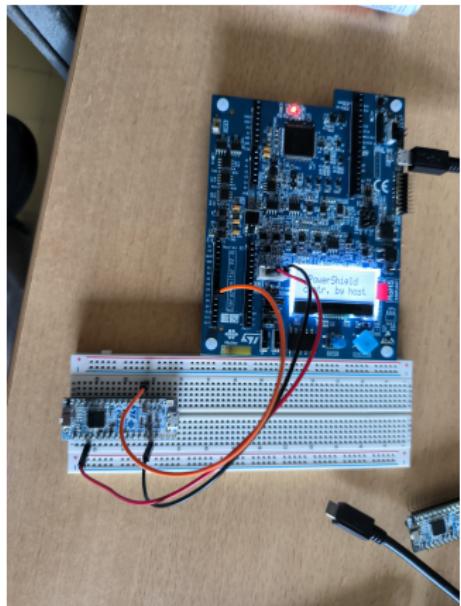
- Consumption averaging (from 1 nA up to 200 mA).
- Supply energy to the measured microcontroller.
- Measure acquisition at 3.2 Msamples/s max.
- Intensity measurements are transferred via USB to the computer.

# STM32F303



- Frequency up to 72 MHz
- 8 kB CCM-SRAM
- 16 kB SRAM
- 512 kB FLASH
- FLASH speed up to 24 MHz
- No dynamic voltage frequency scaling

# STM32G43KB



- Frequency up to 170 MHz
- 10 kB CCM-SRAM
- 22 kB SRAM
- 128 kB FLASH
- Instruction and data caches for flash  
(32 and 8 lines of 4 x 64 bits)
- Pre-Fetch feature
- Dynamic voltage scaling (3 modes)
- Two different SRAMs

# STM32F possibilities

The STM32F does not have Dynamic Voltage Frequency Scaling (DVFS).

The options are more limited, so only memory allocation and frequency will have an impact.

## Memory configurations

- Instructions in FLASH, SRAM and CCM
- Input data in SRAM
- Read only data in FLASH, SRAM and CCM

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# First measures for current consumption

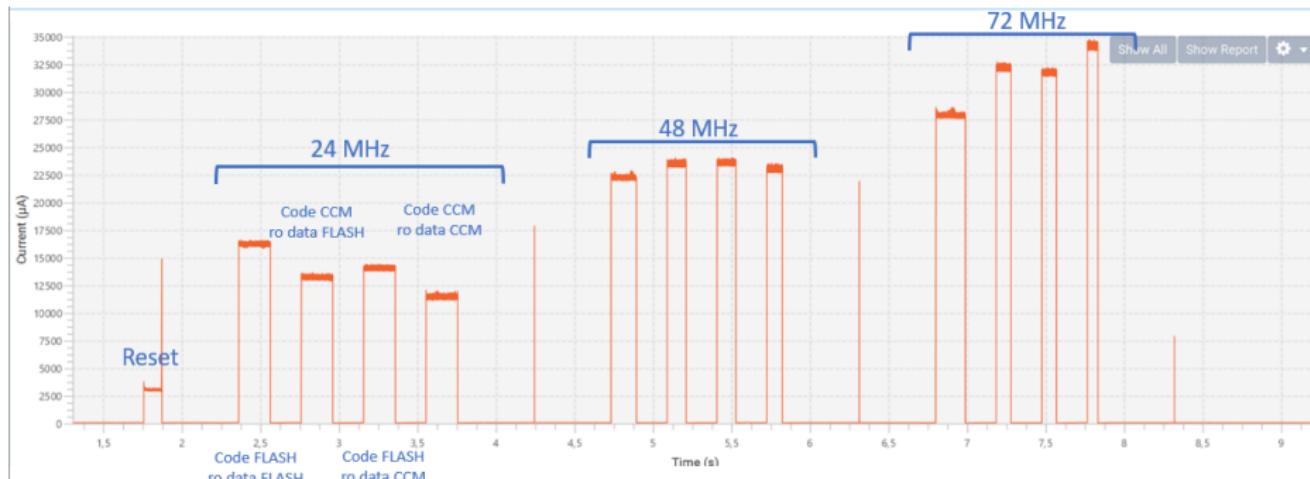


Figure: Intensity consumption graphic for different pointer chase executions

# Final measures for current consumption

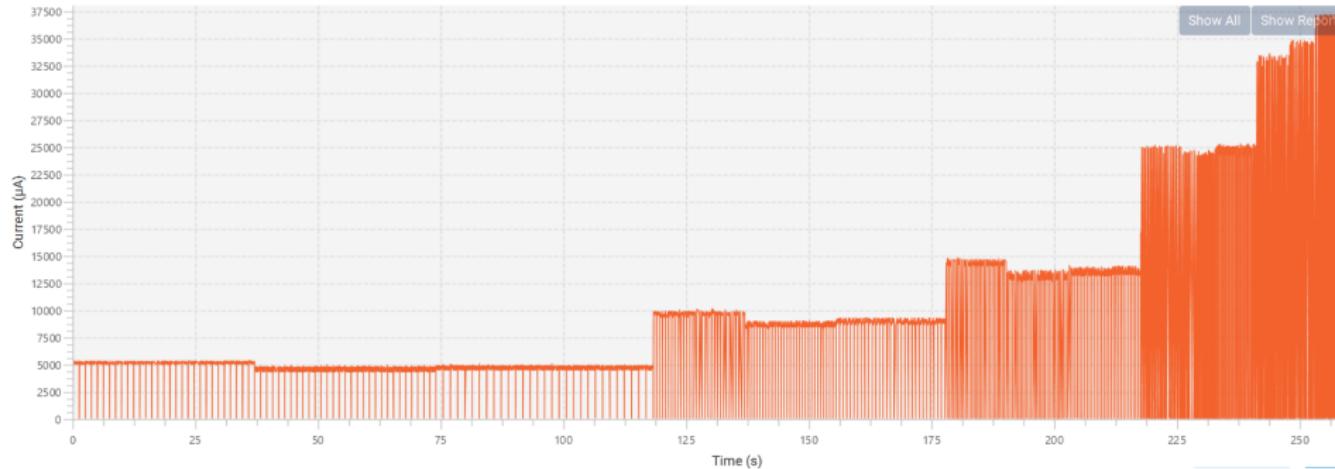


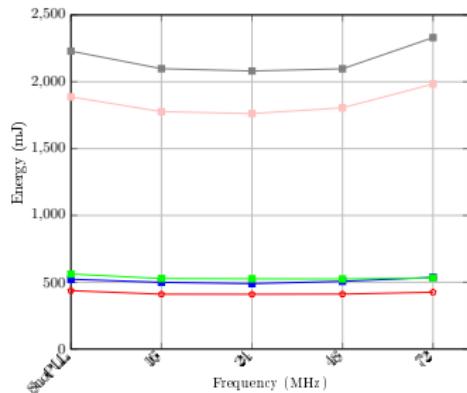
Figure: Intensity consumption graphic with 30 execution per memory configuration

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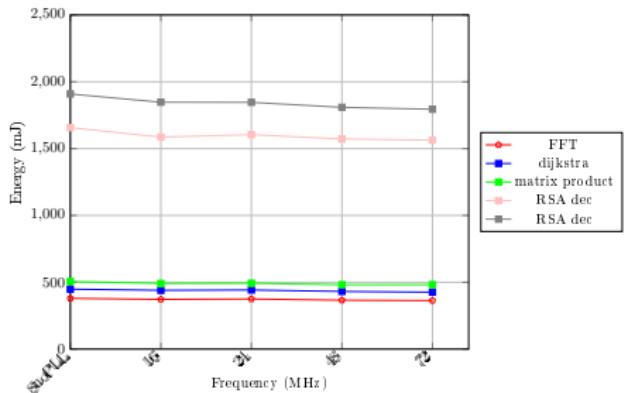
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# Absolute energy comparison

Code in FLASH vs code in CCM



(a) Energy (mJ) when code in FLASH



(b) Energy when code in CCM

- Instructions in FLASH : frequency  $\nearrow \Rightarrow$  energy  $\nearrow$
- Instructions in CCM : frequency  $\nearrow \Rightarrow$  energy  $\rightarrow$

To save energy, we should allocate tasks instructions to the CCM (if enough space).

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# STM32G features

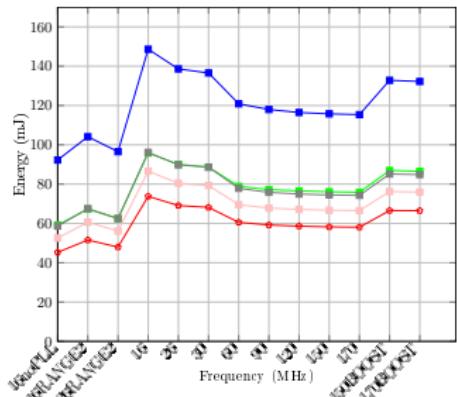
## Different execution modes

- Range 1 mode (normal) : normal execution.
- Range 1 boost mode : frequency between 150 and 170 MHz, fewer wait states but higher voltage.
- Range 2 low power mode : frequency between 8 and 32 MHz, better consumption between these frequencies.

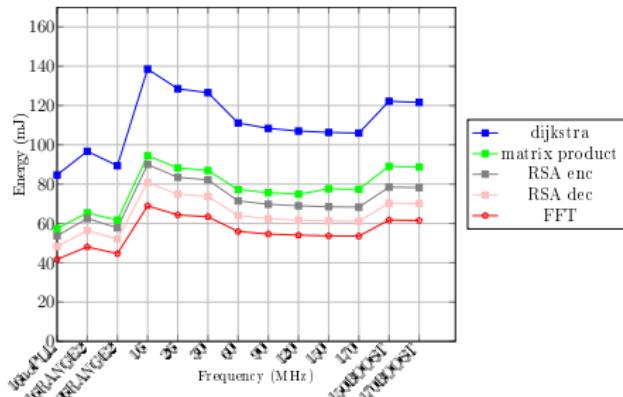
## FLASH instruction cache

Allows zero wait states when instructions are in FLASH → same results as the CCM (runtime).

# DVFS and CCM impact on STM32G



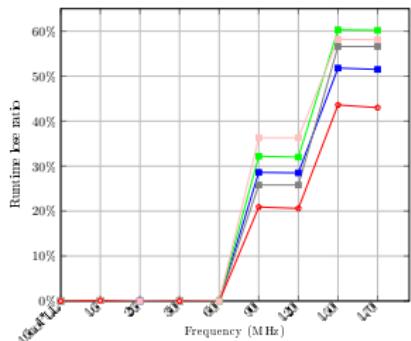
(a) Energy when code in FLASH with Cache



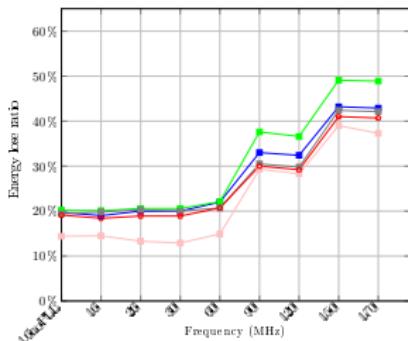
(b) Energy when code in CCM

- Low power mode lowers the energy consumption, but used only in low frequencies.
- BOOST mode consumes more energy to go faster at high frequencies.
- We can save energy with instructions in CCM.

# Cache impact



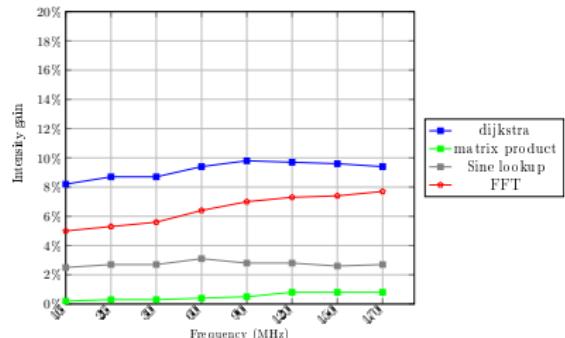
(a) Runtime loss when cache disabled



(b) Energy loss when cache disabled

- Different wait state levels.
- In high frequencies the wait states reduce the global intensity.
- With no wait state, there are the same runtime performances.

# SRAM 1 and 2



- SRAM2 lowers power consumption.

- Intensity gain does not compensate the runtime loss.

It is better to put data in SRAM1.

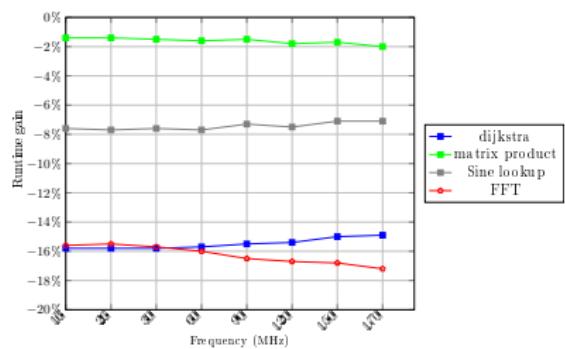


Figure: Intensity and Runtime gain when we move data from RAM1 to RAM2 (code FLASH)

# Pre-Fetch in STM32G

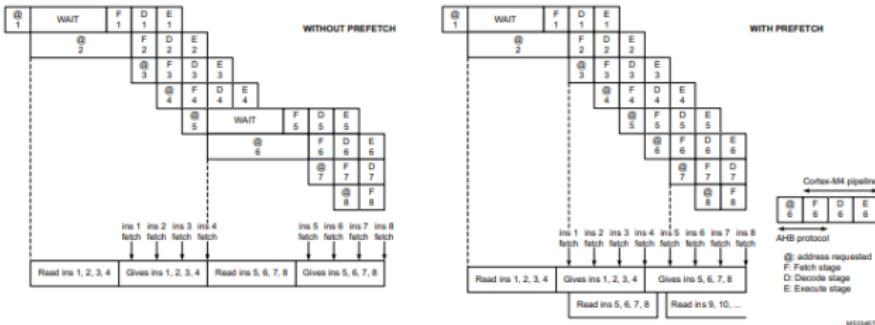
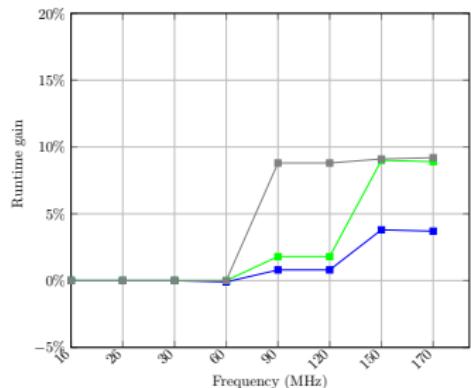


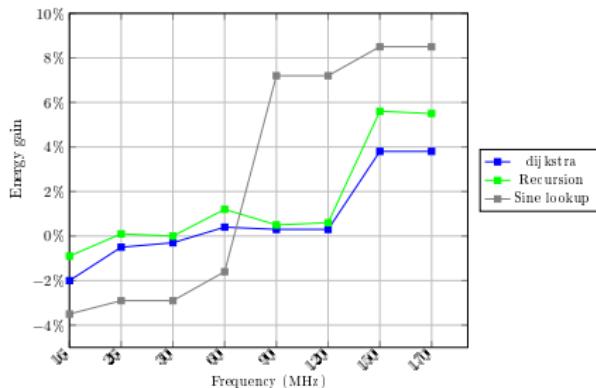
Figure: Sequential 16-bit instructions execution (64-bit read data width)

Pre-fetch on the instruction bus can be used to read the next sequential instruction line from the Flash memory while the current instruction line is being requested by the CPU.

# Pre-Fetch impact when cache is disabled

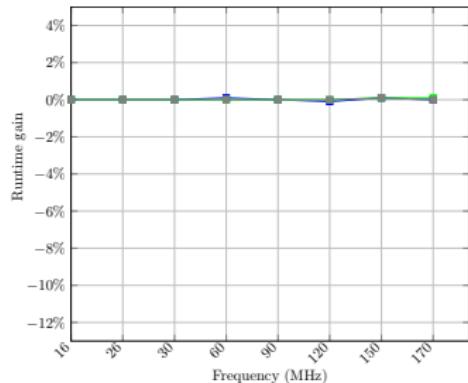


(a) Runtime gain if pre-fetch enabled (Cache OFF)

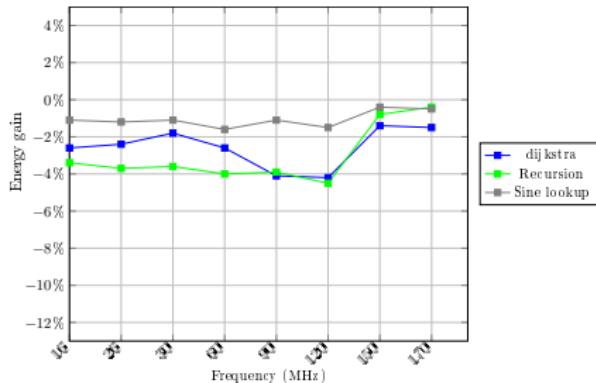


(b) Energy gain if pre-fetch enabled (Cache OFF)

# Pre-Fetch impact when cache is enabled



(a) Runtime gain if pre-fetch enabled (Cache ON)



(b) Energy gain if pre-fetch enabled (Cache ON)

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# Observations conclusion

## Comparaison with FLASH

Moving instructions in CCM SRAM reduces runtime and energy consumption. It is almost always better to run code from CCM.

## Energy over frequency

- Energy is constant when code runs from CCM at every frequency. There are only advantages to run from CCM at maximum frequency.
- When instructions are in FLASH we can gain energy if the frequency is lower

# Offline algorithm

Choose the best tasks to move in CCM and which one we lower the frequency

$$\min \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \sum_{c \in \mathcal{C}} \frac{E_i^c}{T_i} \cdot x_i^c \right)$$

## Constraint 1

$$\sum_{c \in \mathcal{C}} x_i^c = 1 \quad \forall \tau_i \in \Gamma$$

- $\mathcal{C}$  represents the set of all possible configuration (memory and frequency)
- Only one configuration can be selected per task.

## Constraint 2

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{c \in \mathcal{C}} U_i^c \cdot x_i^c \leq 1$$

The taskset has to remain schedulable under EDF.

# Model memory constraints

## Constraints 3, 4 and 5

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \left( \sum_{c \in \mathcal{C}}^{p=C} (x_i^c \cdot m_i^P) + \sum_{c \in \mathcal{C}}^{ro=C} (x_i^c \cdot m_i^{Ro}) \right) \leq M^C$$

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \left( \sum_{c \in \mathcal{C}}^{p=F} (x_i^c \cdot m_i^P) + \sum_{c \in \mathcal{C}}^{ro=F} (x_i^c \cdot m_i^{Ro}) \right) \leq M^F$$

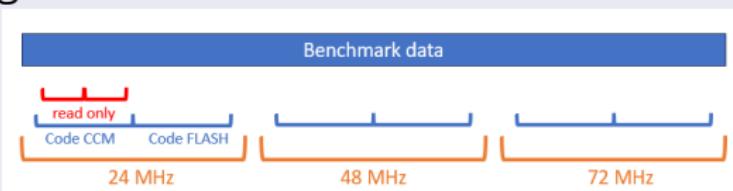
$$\sum_{i=1}^n \left( \sum_{c \in \mathcal{C}}^{d=R} (x_i^c \cdot m_i^D) + \sum_{c \in \mathcal{C}}^{ro=R} (x_i^c \cdot m_i^{Ro}) \right) \leq M^R$$

- Constraint on CCM, FLASH and SRAM space
- The sums on  $\mathcal{C}$  cover only the case which concerns the good memory (ex :  $d = R$  means that input data is in SRAM)

# Model implementation

## Step 1

Use the collected measurements and create arrays with all the memory configurations.



## Step 2

- Create a random taskset based on the benchmarks.
- The taskset is schedulable with the default configuration.

## Step 3



We use the solver Gurobi on our model to find the best configuration.

# Energy results on STM32F

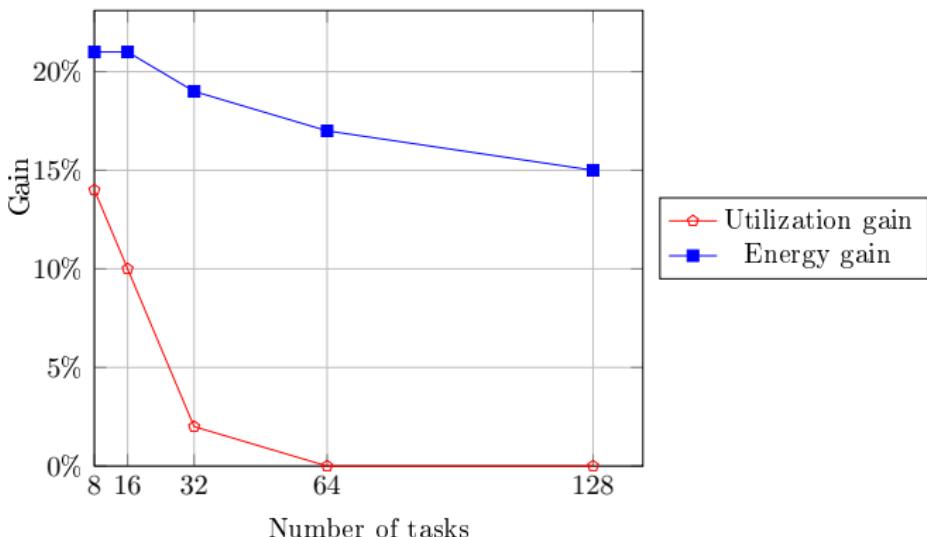


Figure: Utilization and energy gains with the model on STM32F

Compared to the default configuration we can consume 20% less energy. With a low number of tasks, we can even gain utilization.

# Frequency results on STM32F

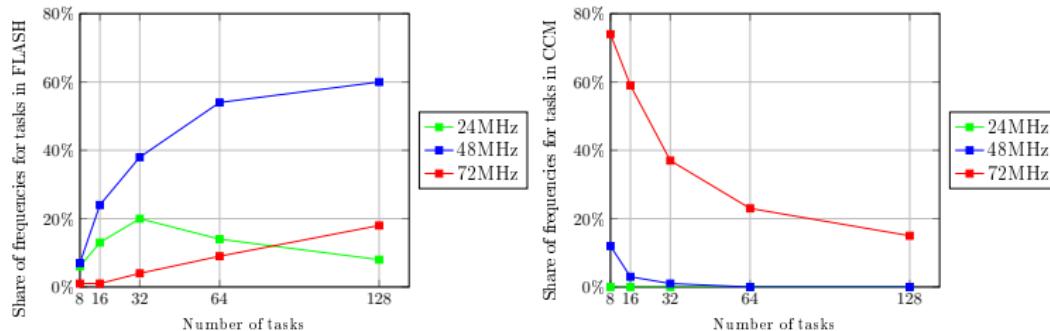


Figure: Frequency choices made by the model for tasks in FLASH and CCM

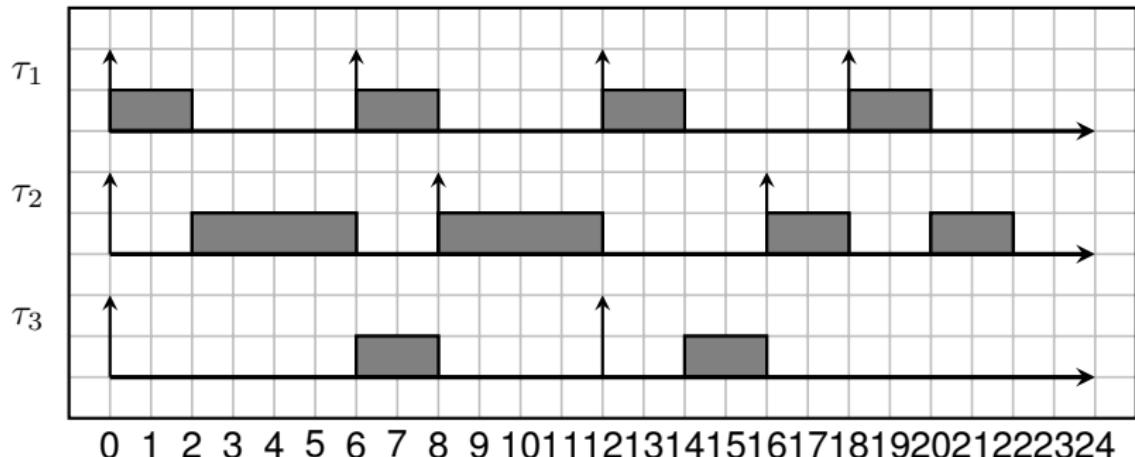
nb tasks ↗ ⇒ proportion in CCM ↘

Low number of tasks ⇒ tasks in FLASH at low or mid frequency.

High number of tasks ⇒ ↗ tasks in FLASH at 72 MHz

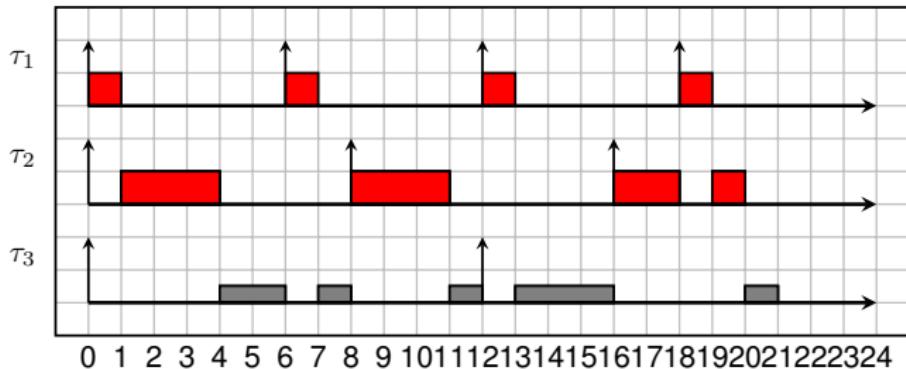
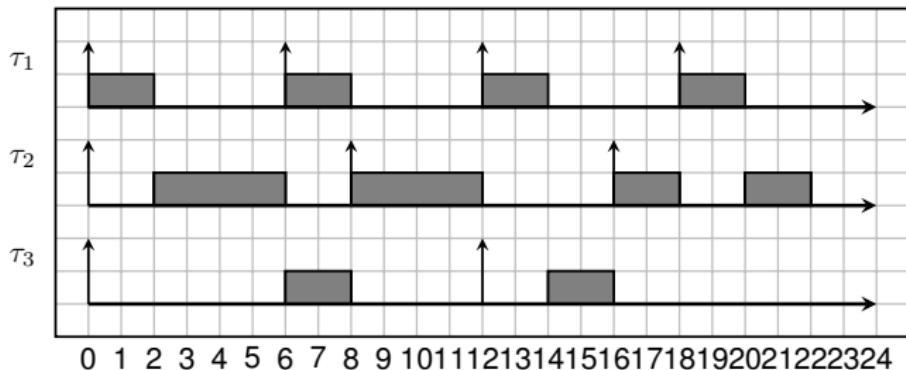
⇒ if system fully-loaded → default config (72MHz and FLASH).

# Normal EDF example



We have 3 tasks  $\tau_1$ ,  $\tau_2$  and  $\tau_3$ , in the standard configuration.  
Instructions are in FLASH and the CPU runs them at 72 MHz.

# Comparison if we use the model



# Model results on STM32G

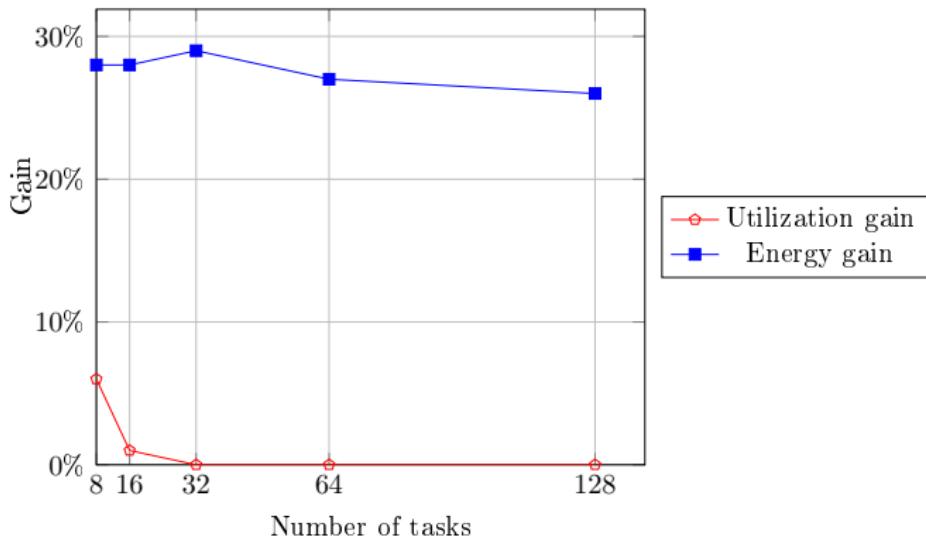


Figure: Utilization and energy gains with the model on STM32G

We have a better energy gain with the STM32G, with the DVFS it is easier to consume less.

# Frequency results on STM32G

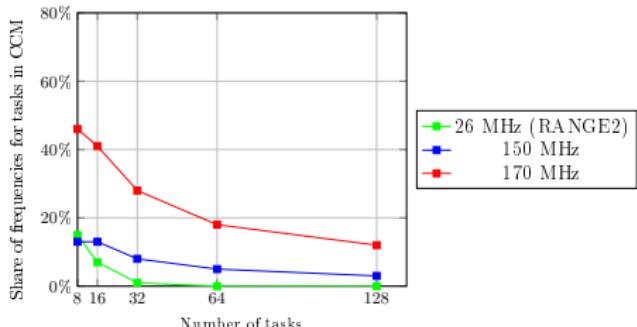
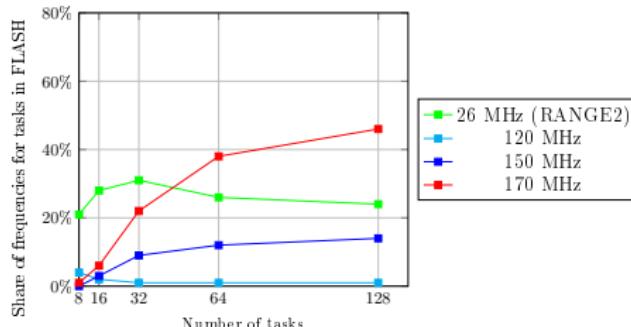


Figure: Frequency choices made by the model for tasks in FLASH and CCM for STM32G

The low power mode is even used with the CCM. However; the boost mode is not used at all (the runtime gain is too low compared to the waste of energy).

Mid frequencies are not enough efficient to be chosen.



Thomas Rauber, Gudula Rungger, Michael Schwind, Simon Melzner, Haibin Xu

Energy Measurement, Modeling, and Prediction for Processors with Frequency Scaling. Springer

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# Online algorithms

## Dynamic frequency and SLACK algorithm

If we can still complete the task with the worst-case execution time before the deadline, then we lower the frequency.



Bambagini, Mario and Marinoni, Mauro and Aydin, Hakan and Buttazzo, Giorgio

Energy-aware scheduling for real-time systems: A survey. *ACM TECS 2016*

## Dynamic CCM SRAM allocation

- Divide the CCM into slots
- Before the execution we copy tasks' instructions in one CCM slot
- the worst-case execution time is equal to the CCM execution time plus memory copy

⇒ Changes in the scheduling algorithm: mutex, blocking, non-preemptive tasks ...

Thank you for your attention

Questions? Comments?