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Evaluation of a Genetic Algorithm on generating critical Scenarios in a Traffic Simulation

Master's Thesis

to achieve the university degree of

Master of Science

Master's degree programme: Telematik

submitted to

Graz University of Technology

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Graz, November 2013

Affidavit

I declare that I have authored this thesis independently, that I have not used other than the declared sources/resources, and that I have explicitly indicated all material which has been quoted either literally or by content from the sources used. The text document uploaded to TUGRAZonline is identical to the present master's thesis.

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Abstract

This is a placeholder for the abstract. It summarizes the whole thesis to give a very short overview. Usually, this the abstract is written when the whole thesis text is finished.

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1 Introduction

This Thesis will use a Genetic Algorithm in order to generate critical Driving Scenarios for testing ADAS/AD Functionality in vehicles. While generating these scenarios is the objective, the main task of the thesis will evolve around the implementation of the Genetic Algorithm as well as the Optimization of its Hyperparameter.

1.1 Research Questions

1.1.1 Research Question 1

Is a Genetic Algorithm suitable for generating critical driving scenarios compared to a random generation?

In this thesis,

1.1.2 Research Question 2

Can hypertuning improve the performance of a Genetic Algorithm?

1.1.3 Research Question 3

Can a hypertuned Genetic Algorithm generalize on different start scenarios?

1.1.4 Research Question 4

Is the usage of a Behavior Tree on the Ego vehicle improving the criticaality of resulting scenarios?

1.1.5 Research Question 5

Can rules help to improve the performance of a genetic algorithm?

1.2 Shortcomings

This Master Thesis started with the developement of the Traffic Manger and thus progress was closely linked. Without a working simulations, no genetic alogirthmis could be tested. Due to time and performance constraints, it is not possible to test a full driving stack like autoware, as well as other professional ADAS/AD functions. In this Thesis, internal functions like Time-To-Collision and Emergency Braking will be optimized. The learned information on e.g. optimal hyperparameter settings can then be applied in further steps to test these functions. This will however not be tackled by this thesis.

Performance is also a problem and will lead to many shortcuts that need to be taken. There is a hughe number of possible compations of hyperparamter, so only a handful can be tested. In further chapers, these shortcuts will be explained and their relevancy will be dicussed.

2 Foundations

2.1 Genetic Algorithm

Genetic Algorithms are a popular search algorithm that utilizes the principle of Darwin. They have been used successfully in various areas. Some of their strengths are .... However we will also look at shortcomings, which mainly evolve around performance. We will have a look at its History and then discussing the most important paramters.

> Define a vocabulary

The task of the Genetic Algorithm is to search for sequences of actions that will result in the most interesting Scenarios according to its cost function.

> Usage of GA

2.1.1 History

The GA was invented by....

2.1.2 Different Hyperparameter

Hyperparamter have a huge influence on the performance of a Genetic Algorihm. They have an impact on the "convergin" ... It has been shown, that there is no universal hyperparamter set and that it needs to be optimized on a per "problem" basis.

Num of generations

The Number of Generation defines the duration of a GA. As long as the algorihtm has not converged, ...? For my testing, using a generation size of 40 was almost always sufficient, and will thus mostly be used.

Pop Size

Pop size will set the number of Individuals of a GA per Generation. The higher the pop size, the bigger the less change of premature converging. It will however also lead to a longer convergin time.

Selection

Selection defines how which individuals are allowed to mate and move into the next generation.

pros and cons of roulette vs Tournament

tournament was chosen to be used for this works because of this paper (and also because of pros and cons list)

Other ideas are evolve around having a flexible selection system debending on fitness

cite paper

Crossover

Discuss all used crossover methods

Crossover is the mating process.

Mutation

Discuss individual mutation

Mutation is responsible for introducing new information into the gene pool.

Discuss all used mutation methods

4

Other

More to come....

2.2 Behavior Tree

A behavior tree is a decision tree.

insert a good introduction to BT

2.2.1 Usage for GA

Due to the fact, , that there is no full stack available for the EGO vehicle, a solution had to be found. In order to have the Genetic Algorithm controll only NPCs and not the EGO vehicle itselve, a behaviour tree is used. The behaviour tree is used to controll the EGO vehicle over the action interface provided by the Traffic Manager. This is the same as the Genetic Algorithm is doing.

insert ref to discussion

The behaviour tree will define which direction the EGO should take at junctions and it will realistically dodge obstacles intoduced by the Genetic Algorithm. The main goal of the BT is to make the EGO vehicle behave in a realistic way.

In a further chapter it will be dicussed if a GA with controll of the EGO (i.e. no BT will be used) lead to better cost.

While the aim of the GA is to find the most optimal solution, considering the vastness of the hyperspace, this is unlikely. Rather, we want to find the "best" local minimas. Considering the contex of Automotive testing, it is not so much of importance to find "the best fail of the ADAS/AD System", rather its important to find "all" fails.

2.3 Traffic Manager

The Genetic Algorithm will control the simulation of a custom developed Traffic Manager. This Traffic Manager was developed closely to fit the needs of the Genetic Algorithm. It, however is not part of this Thesis and will thus will only get a brief introduction. In general, it will simulate traffic starting from a predefined scenarios where the positions and types of Vehicles and Pedestrians are given (i.e. actors). It also allows for an Interface for aplying actions on all actors in the simulation, which will be discussed in section 2.3.1.

A simulation consists of multiple NPCs and exactly one EGO vehicle. While the NPCs are only controlled by the Traffic Manager (and dadurch also by its action interface), the ego vehicle can be either partly or even completly controlled by an ADAS/AD Function. This function can then be tested inside the simulation on errors.

2.3.1 Action Interface

To interface with the Traffic Manager, actions have to be used. An action will request a certain behaviour from an actor. If no action is set, the actor will behave in a normal manner inside the simulation. An action can be set to at any timestep (for this thesis, the simulation is running with 100 Hz) for any actor. Pedestrians and vehicles however have different actions.

The following list are now all actions provided by the traffic manager that were available for the genetic algorithm at the time of this master thesis.

- JunctionSelection
  - Parameters: Vehicle ID: int, Junction_selection_angle: float
  - Angle is set in radiant. Default value is 0. Vehicles will chose which direction to take at a junction based on this angle.

- LaneChange
  - Parameters: Vehicle ID: int, ...
  - Initiates a LaneChange based on its given parameters.

- AbortLaneChange

  - Parameters: Vehicle ID: int, ...
  - If a LaneChange is currently happening, it will get aborted.

- ModifyTargetVelocity

  - Parameters: Vehicle ID: int, ...
  - Modifies the interal Target Velocity of the Traffic Manager by a percentage. If it is for example 0, the vehicle will stop.

- TurnHeading

  - Parameters: Pedestrian ID: int, ...
  - The pedestrian will turn 180 degrees and walk in the oposite direction

- CrossRoad

  - Parameters: Pedestrian ID: int, ...
  - The pedestrian will cross the road immediately.

- CrossAtCrosswalk

  - Parameters: Pedestrian ID: int, ...
  - The pedestrian will cross the road at the next crosswalk.

2.3.2 Graphics

During the simulation, usually no graphics engine is used in order to save performance. In order to visualize the results, two options can be chosen. The more lightweight Esmini, as well as Carla, which is using Unreal Engine to render realistic graphics.

3 Implementation

This chapter will explain

All these actions are accessed by the Genetic Algorithm to maximize a given Cost Function.

3.1 Map and Starting Scenario

The map is Town10 from Carla. It was chosen, because 1. its roads are self contained, 2. its not too big, yet still complex and 3. its supported by Carla and thus visualization looks better.

The Starting Scenario defines the number and type of all actors as well as their position. It needs to be created manually. Changing the scenario will have a great impact on the Genetic Algorithms performance. For time and complexity reasons, it was thus decided to first stick with one scenario and do all hyperparameter testing there. And finally test the performance for a handfull different scenarios.

3.2 Genetic Algorithm

For implementing the Genetic Algorithm, DEAP was chosen. It is a popular tool for accademia .

explain why pygad was NOT chosen

cite

cite 3 examples

dejong talks about dynamic param and why its not good

3.2.1 Encoding

When implementing a Genetic Algorithm, it is necessary to implement a Encoding that fits to the problem.

cite what makes an encoding good: eg. simplicity,...

Gene

Genes are the building blocks of a GA.

Chromosome

Each Individual has 1 chomosome which consits of a list of genes. Starting out, 2 different encodings came to mind, in both cases, the genes position in the chromosome defined the time an action is set.

generate images

Encoding 1 has the idea that each gene stands for 1 time step. Because multiple actors exist in the simulation, a gene thus needs to be a list of actions. This list always has the length of the number of all actors. This means that crossover can only move all actions of a timestep at once, modifing between actions of the same timestep can only be done using mutation.

Encoding 2 has not only the time step encoded in the position, also the actor ID is encoded. This makes a chromosome now much longer than in the previous encoding, whith the eqatuion beeing: number of timesteps * number of actors. Now crossover has more possibilities.

In the chapter 5 these two chromosome types will be compared.

3.2.2 Rules

Often, actions are not possible if specific requirements are not met. The obvious example is that it is not possible to perform the action Abort-LaneChange if there is no current LaneChange happening. LaneChange during a LaneChange is not possible as well. Also Pedestrians can not CrossRoad shortly in a Row. The hypothesis is that implementing Rules that

dont allow for these behaviours will reduce the searchspace and will thus make GA converge quicker.

be carefull, lanechange after lanechange or crossroad after crossroad might be possible if prev did not happen. Good to explain

3.2.3 Cost Function

Cost function is a bit difficult, as we are only using interal values. No ADAS/AD system is tested and we thus have to work with what we got. Currently 3 different cost functions are tested

Oracles

While not implemented here, Oracles are needed in order to get a list of good scenarios.

3.3 Behavior Tree

The Behavior Tree will controll the ego vehicle

4 Hyperparameter Tuning

In this chapter, we will incrementally move to an optimized Genetic Algorithm

4.1 No Free Lunch Theorem

No Free Lunch Theorem: The best hyperparameter settings of a Genetic Alogrithm are very problem specific. K. De Jong, 2007, Dao, Abhary, and Marian, 2016 ⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺ More ref

4.2 Start Scenario

4.3 Population

The number of Individuals is of high importance to a genetic algorithm, as has been explained in section 2.1. Especially considering the limed processing resources available, a suitable population size has to be found. On one hand, a population that is too low might result in less diverse runs of the genetic algorithm, on the other hand, if population is too high, the simulations will become too costly. Considering these points, the first step of the hyper parameter tuning was to find a suitable population size. In the next chapter 4.4, we will aim to improve the hyperparamter using a more robust approach.

In order to test for the best population size, the other hyperparameters have to be assumed using an educated guess. While reviewing the literature,

trends of general settings for genetic algorithms can be found. However Mills, Filliben, and Haines, 2015 highlight the inconsistencies between findings, stating to have "uncovered conflicting opinions and evidence regarding key GA control parameters".

However Grefenstette, 1986 suggests, that "while it is possible to optimize GA control parameters, very good performance can be obtained with a range of GA control parameter settings." This is also complimented by findings from K. De Jong, 2007: "The key insight from such studies is the robustness of EAs with respect to their parameter settings. Getting "in the ball park" is generally sufficient for good EA performance. Stated another way, the EA parameter "sweet spot" is reasonably large and easy to find [18]. As a consequence most EAs today come with a default set of static parameter values that have been found to be quite robust in practice."

Chosing the right selection method is complicated as well, as discuees by K. De Jong, 2007: "One source of difficulty here is that selection pressure is not as easy to "parameterize" as population size. We have a number of families of selection procedures (e.g, tournament selection, truncation selection, fitness-proportional selection, etc.) to choose from and a considerable body of literature analyzing their differences (see, for example, [19] or [15]), but deciding which family to choose or even which member of a parameterized family is still quite difficult, particularly because of the interacting effects with population size [13]."

Looking at the literature might lead to hyperparameters are used that at least sufficient enough, to get an idea which range for population size is suitable. We will now look at different concrete hyperparameter suggestions from the literature.

4.3.1 Suggested hyperparameter from the literature

Use best values also from : Using genetic algorithms for automating automated lane-keeping system testing

Talk about rules (e.g. 1/n for mut rate...) - look at: Parameter selection in genetic algorithms

In an often cited thesis by K. A. De Jong, 1975, the following parameters have been suggested: GA(50, 0.6, 0.001, 1.0, 7, E) These suggested parameters have been used successfully by various different genetic algorithms Grefenstette, 1986.

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An extensive study by Mills, Filliben, and Haines, 2015 which that took over "over 60 numerical optimization problems." into consideration found that "the most effective level settings found for each factor: population size = 200, selection method = SUS, elite selection percentage = 8%, reboot proportion = 0.4, number of crossover points = 3, mutation rate = adaptive and precision scaling = 1/2 as fine as specified by the user."

Grefenstette, 1986 claim that GA(30, 0.95, 0.01, 1.0, 1, E) and GA(80, 0.45, 0.01, 0.9, 1, P) produced the best results. They also advised against, a mutation rate of over 0.05, suggesting poor performance. Using a low mutation rate is also suggested by Whitley, 1994 and Jinghui Zhong et al., 2005. On the other hand, Boyabatli and Sabuncuoglu, 2004 state, that "Controversial to existing literature on GA, our computational results reveal that in the case of a dominant set of decision variable the crossover operator does not have a significant impact on the performance measures, whereas high mutation rates are more suitable for GA applications." Other paper also find a relatively high mutation rate useful. Almanee et al., 2021 uses genetic algorithms in a similar domain as this thesis. There, a Population of 50, crossover of 0.8 and mut of 0.2 was used. These used params are the same as the default params from deap (pop = 50 CXPB, MUTPB, NGEN = 0.5, 0.2, 4).

cite
https://deap.readthed

Srinivas and Patnaik, 1994 state, that for a higher population, cross : 0.6, mut: 0.001 and pop: 100 is a good starting point, while a lower population needs higher crossover and mutation rates like this cross: 0.9, mut: 0.01, pop: 30

These next three paper use ANOVA analysis to come a conclusion. Fazal et al., 2005 recommend: Migration direction: Forward Population size: 50 Fitness scaling function: Rank Selection function: Tournament Elite count: 5 Crossover fraction: 0.5 Crossover function: Scattered

Dao, Abhary, and Marian, 2016 suggests these values after anova: Migdirection: forwards pop size: 200 fitness scaling: rank selection: roulette elite count: 1 Crossover prop: 0.7 MutationFunc: Gaussian Crossover FUnc: two point hybrid function: none

Assistant Professor, Amity University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India et al., 2019 use these values after anova: Direction: Forward Pop: 200 Fitness Scaling

Function: linar Shift selection: Roulette elite count: 10 Crossover: 0.4 Mutation: Constraint Dependent Crossover function: Heuristi Hybrid Function: None

4.3.2 results

This now leads to a difficult decision in choosing the right parameters. Based on the extensive research, we will compare population size of 32, 48, 64 and 96. We will compare the different crossover rates: 0.8 and 0.6. For mutation, 0.01 and 0.2 will be discussed. Further we will use tournament selection with 2 and 4. Each run will be executed 5 times to get rid of randomness and to make the results more robuts. We will run each simulation for 40 Generations.

Comparison of Population Size				
Settings	32	48	64	96
C: 0.8, M: 0.01, TS: 2	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)
C: 0.8, M: 0.01, TS: 4	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)
C: 0.8, M: 0.2, TS: 2	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)
C: 0.8, M: 0.2, TS: 4	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)
C: 0.6, M: 0.01, TS: 2	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)
C: 0.6, M: 0.01, TS: 4	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)
C: 0.6, M: 0.2, TS: 2	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)
C: 0.6, M: 0.2, TS: 4	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)	1000(1000)

Insert BoxPlot

Here is a boxplot of the best settings per Population Size:

4.4 other parameter

This chapter will now discuss the tuning of all the other hyperparameter. Testing over all combinations is not feasable. The following table will provide you information on what we want to test:

Hyperparameter				
ChromosomeType	Time	Time+NPC	-	-
GeneType	int	dict	-	-
CrossoverType	one point	two point	uniform	-
RulesEnabled	true	false	-	-
CrossoverProp	0.2	0.5	0.8	0.9
MutationProp	0.01	0.1	0.3	0.5
IndMutationProp	0.1	0.5	1.0	-
TournamentSize	2	4	6	-

4.4.1 Combinatorial Testing vs. Orthogonal Arrays

5 Evaluation

in this chapter, we evaluate and compare various different settings

5.1 Behaviour Tree enabled

Will the scenarios be more interesting if the ga is not allowed to have controll over the Ego Vehicle?

5.2 Rules enabled

5.3 Comparison with random and default ga Values

5.3.1 Current Scenario

5.3.2 Generalization on different start scenario

6 Conclusion

6.1 Test

Altough lots of shortcommings Results look very vielversprechend. This thesis hopes to have emphasised that this approach has lots of advanatages

Appendix

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