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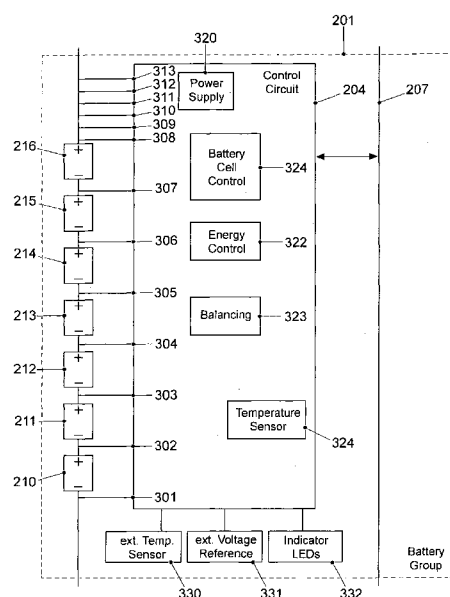


FIG. 3

(57) Abstract: A method for Controlling a plurality of battery cells with a control circuit coupled to the plurality of battery cells, includes: supplying the control circuit with electrical energy from the coupled battery cells; determining a number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit; and automatically adapting a power consumption drawn from the battery cells in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

CONTROL CIRCUIT AND METHOD FOR
CONTROLLING A PLURALITY OF BATTERY CELLS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application claims the benefit of U.S.
Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 61/413,723, filed on
November 15, 2010, which is expressly incorporated herein in
5 its entirety by reference thereto.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method for controlling
a plurality of battery cells, a control circuit configured to
10 control a plurality of battery cells, a battery module
including a plurality of battery groups, and a vehicle with an
electrical engine and a battery module for powering the
electrical engine.

15 SUMMARY

According to example embodiments of the present
invention, a method for controlling a plurality of battery
cells is provided. The battery cells are controlled with a
control circuit coupled to the battery cells. According to the
20 method, the control circuit is supplied with electrical energy
from the coupled battery cells. Furthermore, a number of
battery cells coupled to the control circuit is determined.
Based on the number of battery cells coupled to the control
circuit a power consumption drawn from the battery cells is
25 automatically adapted.

According to example embodiments of the present
invention, a control circuit configured to control a plurality
of battery cells is provided. The control circuit includes a
plurality of terminals, a power supply unit, a battery cell
30 control unit, and an energy control unit. The plurality of
terminals are configured to be coupled to the plurality of

battery cells. The power supply unit is configured to generate electrical energy for the control circuit. The electrical energy for the control circuit is derived from or drawn from electrical energy of the battery cells. The battery cell control unit is configured to determine the number of battery cells which are coupled to the control circuit. The energy control unit is configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells based on the number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit.

According to example embodiments of the present invention, a battery module is provided. The battery module includes a plurality of battery groups. Each battery group includes a plurality of battery cells and a control circuit configured to control the plurality battery cells of the battery group. The control circuit includes a plurality of terminals coupled to the plurality of battery cells, a power supply unit, a battery cell control unit, and an energy control unit. The power supply unit is configured to generate electrical energy for the control circuit from the energy of the battery cells. The battery cell control unit is configured to determine a number of battery cells which is couple to the control circuit. The energy control unit is configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

According to example embodiments of the present invention, a vehicle is provided. The vehicle includes an electrical engine for providing a driving force for driving the vehicle and a battery module for powering the electrical engine. The battery module includes a plurality of battery groups, and each battery group includes a plurality of battery cells. Furthermore, each battery group includes a control circuit configured to control the plurality of battery cells of the battery group. The control circuit includes a plurality of terminals coupled to the plurality of battery cells, a power supply unit, a battery cell control unit, and an energy

control unit. The power supply unit is configured to generate electrical energy for the control circuit from electrical energy of the battery cells. The battery cell control unit is configured to determine a number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit. The energy control unit is configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

Although specific features described in the above summary and the following detailed description are described in connection with particular example embodiments, it is to be understood that the features described herein can be combined with each other unless it is noted otherwise.

Hereinafter, exemplary embodiments of the invention will be described with reference to the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 schematically illustrates a vehicle with a battery module according to an example embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 schematically illustrates a battery module according to an example embodiment of the present invention including a plurality of battery groups.

Fig. 3 schematically illustrates a battery group according to an example embodiment of the present invention including a control circuit, a plurality of battery cells, and external components.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following, exemplary embodiments of the present invention will be described in more detail. It is to be understood that the following description is given only for the purpose of illustrating the principles hereof and is not to be taken in a limiting sense.

It is to be understood that the features of the various exemplary embodiments described herein may be combined with each other unless specifically noted otherwise.

It is further to be understood that in the following
5 detailed description any direct connection or coupling between functional blocks, devices, components or other physical or functional units shown in the drawings or described herein may also be implemented in an indirect connection or coupling. The same reference signs in the various instances of the drawings
10 refer to similar or identical components.

According to example embodiments, a method for controlling a plurality of battery cells is provided. The battery cells are controlled with a control circuit coupled to the battery cells. According to the method, the control
15 circuit is supplied with electrical energy from the coupled battery cells. Furthermore, a number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit is determined. Based on the number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit a power consumption drawn from the battery cells is automatically
20 adapted.

The power consumption or energy drawn from the battery cells in response to the number of coupled battery cells may be drawn to the control circuit and consumed inside of the control circuit or guided to an appropriate load, or may be
25 drawn or bled at an appropriate load under the control of the control circuit.

According to example embodiments, the power consumption is automatically adapted by automatically directing at least a portion of the electrical energy from the battery cells to a
30 balancing circuit in response to the number of coupled battery cells. The balancing circuit may be provided in the control circuit or may be coupled to the control circuit and may be adapted to consume or bleed the electrical energy directed to the balancing circuit. The balancing circuit may include, for
35 example, a transistor and a resistor coupled in parallel to

each battery cell of the plurality of battery cells and the transistor may be controlled by the control circuit.

According to example embodiments, the step of automatically adapting the power consumption includes an automatic adjustment of a period of time in which a component connected to the control circuit is powered with electrical energy from the battery cells via the control circuit. The electrical component may include, for example, a light emitting diode, a voltage reference or a temperature sensor coupled to the control circuit. The light emitting diode may be part of an operation display of a battery module including the battery cells and the control circuit. The voltage reference may be a common external voltage reference of the battery module providing several control circuits with a reference voltage. The temperature sensor may be a sensor for monitoring a temperature of the battery module.

Furthermore, the step of automatically adapting the power consumption includes an automatic adjustment of a period of low power time of the control circuit. The control circuit may have different operating modes, for example, an active mode and a standby mode. In the standby mode, the power consumption of the control circuit may be lower than in the active mode. By adjusting a relation between the high power active time and the low power standby time of the control circuit, the average power consumption of the control circuit can be adapted.

According to example embodiments, the battery cells are coupled in a series connection and the control circuit is connected to each terminal of each cell of the plurality of battery cells. As in a series connection for example a plus terminal of a first battery cell is connected to a minus terminal of a second battery cell, and the plus terminal of the second battery cell is connected to a minus terminal of a third battery cell, and so on, each terminal of each cell can be connected to the control circuit by connecting the control circuit to the end terminals of the series connection and to

each intermediate connection between connected terminals of two neighboring battery cells.

In the series connection the control circuit can be supplied with electrical energy provided at the end terminals
5 of the series connection.

According to example embodiments, a control circuit configured to control a plurality of battery cells is provided. The control circuit includes a plurality of terminals, a power supply unit, a battery cell control unit,
10 and an energy control unit. The plurality of terminals are configured to be coupled to the plurality of battery cells. The power supply unit is configured to generate electrical energy for the control circuit. The electrical energy for the control circuit is derived from or drawn from electrical
15 energy of the battery cells. The battery cell control unit is configured to determine the number of battery cells which are coupled to the control circuit. The energy control unit is configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells based on the number of battery cells coupled to the
20 control circuit.

According to example embodiments, the energy control unit is coupled to a balancing circuit and configured to adapt the power consumption by directing electrical energy from the battery cells to the balancing circuit in response to the
25 number of coupled battery cells.

The control circuit may further include a terminal to couple the control circuit to an external electrical component. The electrical component may include for example a light emitting diode, a voltage reference, or a temperature
30 sensor. The energy control unit may be configured to adapt the power consumption drawn from the battery cells by adjusting a period of time in which the external component is powered with electrical energy. By varying a duty cycle of a period of time in which the external component is powered with electrical
35 energy and a period of time in which the external component is

not powered with electrical energy, an average power consumption can be adjusted. The electrical energy directed to the external component may be directed via the power supply unit of the control circuit to the external component.

5 According to example embodiments, the energy control unit is configured to adapt the power consumption drawn from the battery cells by adjusting an amount of low power time of the control circuit. The control circuit may provide at least two operating modes, an active mode and a low power standby mode.
10 By adjusting a duty cycle of a period of time in which the control circuit is in the active mode and a period of time in which the control circuit is in the low power standby mode, an average power consumption of the control circuit can be adjusted.

15 According to example embodiments, the battery cells are connected in a series connection and the power supply unit is coupled to end terminals of the series connection of the battery cells. Furthermore, the control circuit may be connected to each terminal of each of the plurality of battery
20 cells for monitoring each of the battery cells separately.

 According to example embodiments, a battery module is provided. The battery module includes a plurality of battery groups. Each battery group includes a plurality of battery cells and a control circuit configured to control the
25 plurality battery cells of the battery group. The control circuit includes a plurality of terminals coupled to the plurality of battery cells, a power supply unit, a battery cell control unit, and an energy control unit. The power supply unit is configured to generate electrical energy for
30 the control circuit from the energy of the battery cells. The battery cell control unit is configured to determine a number of battery cells which is couple to the control circuit. The energy control unit is configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells in response to the number of
35 coupled battery cells.

According to example embodiments, the battery cells are connected in a series connection. Each terminal of each of the plurality of battery cells is connected to the control circuit via the plurality of terminals.

5 According to example embodiments, a vehicle is provided. The vehicle includes an electrical engine for providing a driving force for driving the vehicle and a battery module for powering the electrical engine. The battery module comprises a plurality of battery groups, and each battery group includes a
10 plurality of battery cells. Furthermore, each battery group includes a control circuit configured to control the plurality of battery cells of the battery group. The control circuit includes a plurality of terminals coupled to the plurality of battery cells, a power supply unit, a battery cell control
15 unit, and an energy control unit. The power supply unit is configured to generate electrical energy for the control circuit from electrical energy of the battery cells. The battery cell control unit is configured to determine a number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit. The energy
20 control unit is configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

The above described exemplary embodiments will now be described in more details with reference to the accompanying
25 drawings.

Fig. 1 shows a vehicle 100 including a battery module 101. The vehicle 100 may include an electrical engine providing a driving force for driving the vehicle 100. The electrical engine is powered with electrical energy of the
30 battery module 101. The vehicle 100 may be an electric vehicle including only an electrical drive for driving the vehicle, or may be a so-called hybrid vehicle including an electrical drive and a further drive, for example a combustion engine, for driving the vehicle or for generating electrical energy
35 for powering the electrical engine or for charging the battery

module 101. The vehicle may additionally include a connector for connecting a charging unit of the vehicle to an electrical power system for charging the battery module 101.

5 The battery module 101 includes a large number of battery cells. Typically, the battery module 101 of the electric vehicle 100 may include several hundred up to several thousands of battery cells. In the present context, a single cell and a group of cells in parallel are not distinguished and therefore the term battery cell is used likewise for a
10 single battery cell and a group of battery cells in parallel. Furthermore, in the present context, the terms battery module and battery pack are used synonymously. Monitoring the voltage levels of these cells and correcting for any imbalances is an important issue for the battery module, for example, for
15 accomplishing a long lifetime of the battery module, a high capacity of the battery module, and a safe operation of the battery module. However, as larger battery modules are developed, where a number of cells, or groups of cells in parallel, are placed in series, it becomes more complex to
20 monitor and manage the individual cells or parallel groups of cells.

A number of integrated circuits have been developed that assist in the management of battery cells connected in a series connection, so-called series stacks of battery cells,
25 including for example Linear Technology's LTC6802, Analog Device's AD8280, and Maxim's MAX11080.

In some battery modules it may be the case that battery groups including a serial connection of battery cells are physically separated from one another. In this case, it may be
30 desirable to have one battery management circuit with each of the physical battery groups. The number of battery cells in the series connection in each battery group may be different. Due to the different number of battery cells in the series connection a different board or integrated circuit may be
35 provided for each group requiring its own hardware and its own

software. When monitoring different numbers of battery cells in a series connection and imbalance in the power drawn from the battery cells to power the battery management circuit may occur. For example, supposing a battery management circuit
5 requires 1 W to operate, the power drawn from each cell will be 0.2 W, if the battery management circuit is connected to five battery cells in a series connection. If the same battery management circuit is connected to for example ten battery cells in a series connection, the power drawn from each
10 battery cell will be 0.1 W. The overall performance of the battery module will improve the closer the battery cells are kept in balance to each other. Therefore, according to example embodiments of the present invention, the power drawn from each cell to power the battery management circuits is
15 automatically equalized as will be shown in the following in connection with Figs. 2 and 3.

Fig. 2 shows a battery module 101 including a plurality of battery groups 201 to 203. In Fig. 2, three battery groups 201 to 203 are shown, but any other number of battery groups
20 may be implemented. Each battery group 201 to 203 includes a control circuit 204 to 206 for managing battery cells provided in each battery group 201 to 203. Therefore, battery group 201 includes control circuit 204 for controlling battery cells 210 to 216, battery group 202 includes control circuit 205 for
25 controlling battery cells 220 to 229, and battery group 203 includes control circuit 206 for controlling battery cells 230 to 237. The control circuits 204 to 206 are arranged identically and are adapted to manage different numbers of battery cells in series. In the example shown in Fig. 2,
30 control circuit 204 manages seven battery cells, control circuit 205 manages ten battery cells, and control circuit 206 manages eight battery cells. Managing the battery cells 210 to 237 may include, for example, monitoring a voltage and a status of each of the battery cells. Monitoring results may be
35 communicated via a common data bus 207 connecting the control

circuits 204 to 206 to a battery module control unit of the battery module 101. Operation power for each of the control circuits 204 to 206 may be drawn from the corresponding plurality of battery cells the respective control circuit is connected to. In exemplary embodiments, the operation power of the control circuits 204 to 206 is drawn only from the corresponding plurality of battery cells.

Fig. 3 shows the battery group 201 and the control circuit 204 of Fig. 2 in more detail. As described above, control circuit 204 is connected to a series connection of seven battery cells 210 to 216. For individually controlling each of the battery cells 210 to 216, the control circuit 204 includes a plurality of terminals 301 to 313. The battery cells 210 to 216 are connected in a series connection such that the plus terminal of battery 210 is connected to the minus terminal of battery cell 211, the plus terminal of battery cell 211 is connected to the minus terminal of battery cell 212 and so on. For individually monitoring each of the battery cells 210 to 216, the minus terminal of battery cell 210 is connected with terminal 301 of the control circuit 204, the connection between battery cells 210 and 211 is connected to terminal 302, the connection between battery cell 211 and 212 is connected to terminal 303 and so on. Finally, the plus terminal of battery cell 216 is connected to terminal 308 of the control circuit 204.

The control circuit 204 shown in Fig. 3 is configured to monitor up to twelve battery cells and provides therefore further terminals 309 to 313 for connecting five more battery cells. However, in the example shown in Fig. 3, the battery group 201 includes only seven battery cells 210 to 216 and therefore the terminals 309 to 313 are connected commonly to the plus terminal of battery cell 216. In other example embodiments, the unused terminals 209 to 213 may be left open.

As shown in Fig. 3, the control circuit 204 may include furthermore a power supply unit 320, a battery cell control

unit 321, an energy control unit 322, a balancing unit 323, and a temperature sensor 324. Furthermore, as shown in Fig. 3, the battery group 201 may include an external temperature sensor 330, an external voltage reference 331, and indicator LEDs 332 which are connected to the control circuit 204.

As described above, the control circuit 204 is configured to monitor a different number of battery cells depending on the application in which the control circuit 204 is used. In the example shown in Fig. 3, the control circuit 204 is used for monitoring seven battery cells. However, the control circuit 204 is adapted to monitor for example up to twelve battery cells and provides therefore the further terminals 309 to 313. Therefore, the battery cell control unit 321 is adapted to determine the number of battery cells connected to the control circuit 204. For example, the battery cell control unit may include a jumper field in which the number of connected battery cells can be configured when the battery group 201 is assembled. Furthermore, the battery cell control unit 221 may automatically determine the number of connected battery cells, for example, by monitoring each of the voltages between neighboring pairs of the terminals 301 to 313. If a voltage above a predetermined threshold is monitored between a pair of neighboring terminals of the terminals 301 to 313, the battery cell control unit 321 may determine that between this pair of terminals a battery cell is present. If the determined voltage is below the threshold, the battery cell control unit 321 may determine that no battery cell is connected between the corresponding pair of terminals. In the example shown in Fig. 3, the battery cell control unit 321 may determine that seven battery cells are present.

The energy for operating the control circuit 204 may be provided by the power supply unit 320. The power supply unit 320 may derive the energy for powering the control circuit 204 from the connected battery cells 210 to 216. As the number of battery cells may vary also a voltage between end terminals of

the series connection of the battery cells 210 to 216 may vary. Therefore, the power supply unit 320 may be adapted to provide a constant supply voltage to the control circuit 204 independently from the number of connected battery cells. This
5 may be accomplished for example by a voltage controller or a DC/DC converter as is conventional. As the control circuit 204 consumes in general a specific amount of electrical power which may vary with an operational state or operation mode of the control circuit 204 but which is in general independent of
10 the number of connected battery cells, the power drawn from each individual battery cell for powering the control circuit 204 depends on the number of battery cells connected to the control circuit 204. In exemplary embodiments, the control circuit 204 may need 1 W in an active operation mode. Thus,
15 when the control circuit is connected to seven battery cells as shown in Fig. 3, $1/7$ W is drawn from each of the battery cells 210 to 216. However, if the control circuit is connected to a different number of battery cells, for example, like control circuit 205 of Fig. 2 which is connected to ten
20 battery cells, a different power is drawn from those battery cells. In the example in Fig. 2 from each battery cell 220 to 229 only 0.1 W is drawn for powering the control circuit 205. Thus, there may be an imbalance between loads on the battery cells of each of the battery groups 201 to 203.

25 For avoiding this imbalance, the control circuit 204 includes the energy control unit 322 which is configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells connected to the control circuit 204 in response to the number of coupled battery cells. The information about the number of
30 coupled battery cells is provided to the energy control unit 322 by the battery cell control unit 321 as described above. Based on this information the energy control unit 322 automatically increases or decreases the power consumption drawn from the battery cells 210 to 216 as will be described
35 below.

For example, the energy control unit 322 may vary the periods of time in which the control circuit 204 is in an active mode and the periods of time in which the control circuit 204 is in an inactive mode. As the control circuit 204 consumes less energy in an inactive mode, an average power consumption of the control circuit 204 can be varied by changing the duty cycle of the control circuit 204.

Furthermore, power consuming measurements, for example a temperature measurement of the control circuit 204 with an internal temperature sensor 324 of the control circuit 204 may be performed more frequently to increase the power consumption of the control circuit 204 or may be performed less frequently to reduce an average power consumption of the control circuit 204.

Furthermore, the control circuit 204 may include the balancing unit 323 which may be adapted to draw electrical energy selectively from each of the battery cells 210 to 216 individually and consume the drawn energy in for example resistors. Such balancing units 323 are commonly used in a control circuit for balancing the individual battery cells 210 to 216 connected to the control circuit 204 for example during a charging of the battery cells. The balancing unit 323 may include, for example, for each of the battery cells 210 to 216 a resistor which can be controlled selectively via a transistor to shortcut the respective battery cell providing thus a controlled bleeding of energy of the respective battery cell.

Furthermore, the energy control unit 322 may vary a duty cycle of components 330 to 332 of the battery group 201. For example, indicator LEDs 332 indicating a status of the battery group 201 may be activated more frequently or for longer periods to increase the power drawn from the battery cells 210 to 216. Furthermore, the external temperature sensor 330 which may be used for monitoring a temperature of the battery group 201 may be activated and read out more frequently to increase

the power drawn from the battery cells 210 to 216. Finally, the amount of time the external voltage reference 331 is activated may be varied to adjust the amount of power drawn from the battery cells 210 to 216.

5 The control circuit 204 shown in Fig. 3 may be implemented as a circuit board including a plurality of discrete components, for example as shown in Fig. 3. However, these components may be combined with each other, for example, the battery cell control unit 321 and the energy control unit
10 322 may be combined in a single component. Furthermore, all or a part of the components of the control circuit 204 may be integrated in an integrated semiconductor circuit. Furthermore, the components of the control circuit 204 may be arranged as discrete logic components or may be arranged at
15 least in part in a processor or a controller executing a corresponding software program.

The control circuit described above allows a single configuration to work with different numbers of battery cells in a series connection in a battery module. The control
20 circuit may work with for example three to twelve cells. Therefore, a single configuration for the control circuit can be used in a wide range of applications thus lowering the cost of the control circuit. Furthermore, development of new battery modules may be easier and faster by eliminating the
25 need to redesign the control circuit.

While exemplary embodiments have been described above, various modifications may be implemented in other example embodiments. For example, additional assembly loads may be provided on the control circuit or may be connected to the
30 control circuit, and may be powered depending on the number of connected battery cells. These additional assembly loads may be powered for example by the power supply unit for increasing the power drawn from the battery cells.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for controlling a plurality of battery cells with a control circuit coupled to the plurality of battery cells, comprising:

- 5 supplying the control circuit with electrical energy from the coupled battery cells;
- determining a number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit; and
- automatically adapting a power consumption drawn from the
- 10 battery cells in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

2. The method according to claim 1, automatically adapting the power consumption includes automatically
- 15 directing at least a portion of the electrical energy to a balancing circuit in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the
- 20 automatically adapting the power consumption includes automatically adjusting an amount of time in which a component connected to the control circuit is powered with electrical energy from the battery cells by the control circuit.

- 25 4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the electrical component includes at least one of (a) a light emitting diode, (b) a voltage reference, and (c) a temperature sensor coupled to the control circuit.

- 30 5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the automatically adapting the power consumption includes automatically adjusting an amount of low-power time of the control circuit.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the battery cells are coupled in a series connection, and wherein the supplying of the control circuit with electrical energy from the coupled battery cells includes supplying the control
5 circuit with the electrical energy from end terminals of the series connection.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the battery cells are coupled in a series connection, and wherein the
10 control circuit is connected to each terminal of each cell of the plurality of battery cells.

8. A control circuit configured to control a plurality of battery cells, comprising:

15 a plurality of terminals configured to be coupled to the plurality of battery cells;

a power supply unit configured to generate electrical energy for the control circuit from electrical energy of the battery cells;

20 a battery cell control unit configured to determine a number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit; and

an energy control unit configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

25

9. The control circuit according to claim 8, wherein the energy control unit is coupled to a balancing circuit, wherein the energy control unit is configured to adapt the power consumption by directing electrical energy to the balancing
30 circuit in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

10. The control circuit according to claim 8, wherein the control circuit includes a further terminal adapted to couple the control circuit to an external component, wherein the
35 energy control unit is configured to adapt the power

consumption by adjusting an amount of time in which the external component is powered with electrical energy.

11. The control circuit according to claim 8, wherein the electrical component includes at least one (a) a light emitting diode, (b) a voltage reference, and (c) a temperature sensor.

12. The control circuit according to claim 8, wherein the energy control unit is configured to adapt the power consumption by adjusting an amount of low-power time of the control circuit.

13. The control circuit according to claim 8, wherein the battery cells are connected in a series connection and the power supply unit is coupled to end terminals of the series connection.

14. A battery module, comprising:
a plurality of battery groups, each battery group including:

a plurality of battery cells; and

a control circuit configured to control the plurality of battery cells of the battery group;

wherein the control circuit includes:

a plurality of terminals coupled to the plurality of battery cells;

a power supply unit configured to generate electrical energy for the control circuit from electrical energy of the battery cells;

a battery cell control unit configured to determine a number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit; and

an energy control unit configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

5 15. The battery module according to claim 14, wherein the battery cells are connected in a series connection and each terminal of each of the plurality of battery cells is connected to the control circuit via the plurality of terminals.

10 16. A vehicle, comprising
an electrical engine adapted to provide a driving force for driving the vehicle; and

15 a battery module adapted to power the electrical engine,
the battery module including a plurality of battery groups, each battery group including:

a plurality of battery cells; and

a control circuit configured to control the plurality of battery cells of the battery group;

20 wherein the control circuit includes:

a plurality of terminals coupled to the plurality of battery cells;

25 a power supply unit configured to generate electrical energy for the control circuit from electrical energy of the battery cells;

a battery cell control unit configured to determine a number of battery cells coupled to the control circuit; and

30 an energy control unit configured to adapt a power consumption drawn from the battery cells in response to the number of coupled battery cells.

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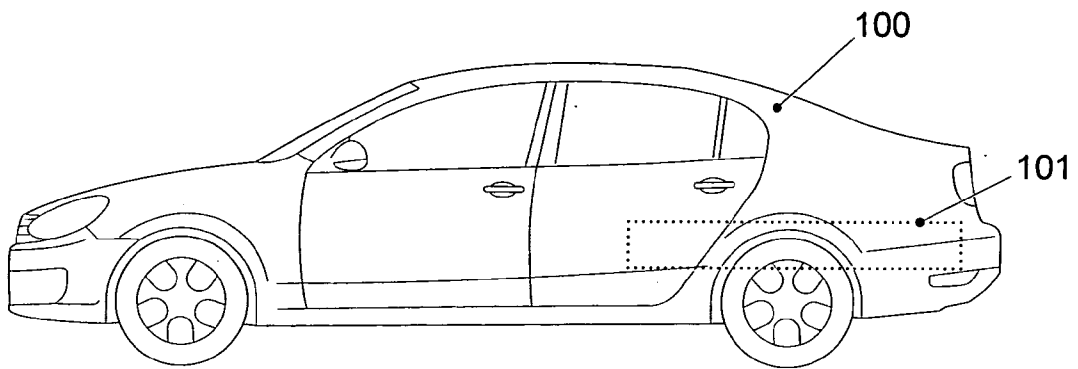


FIG. 1

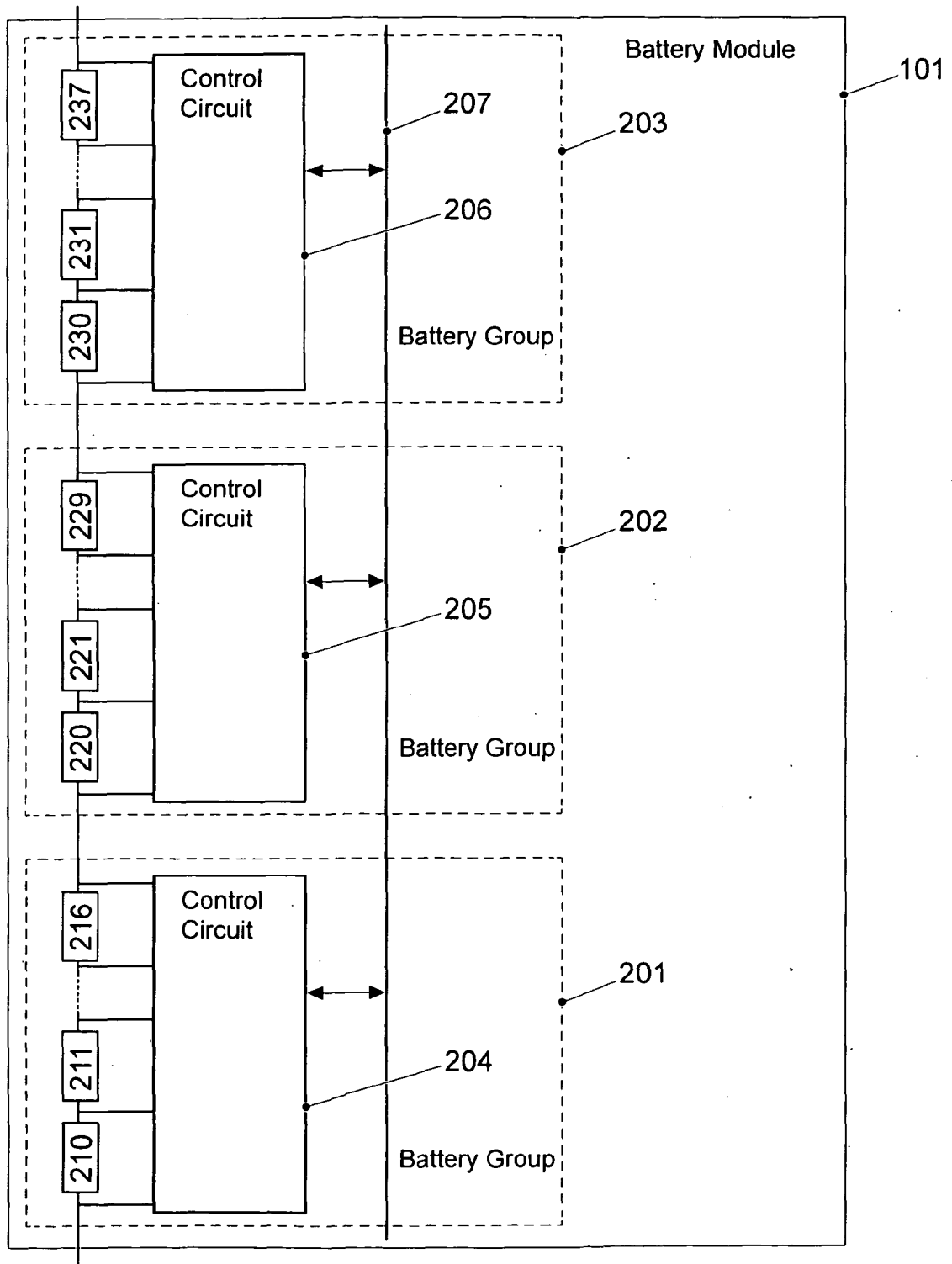


FIG. 2

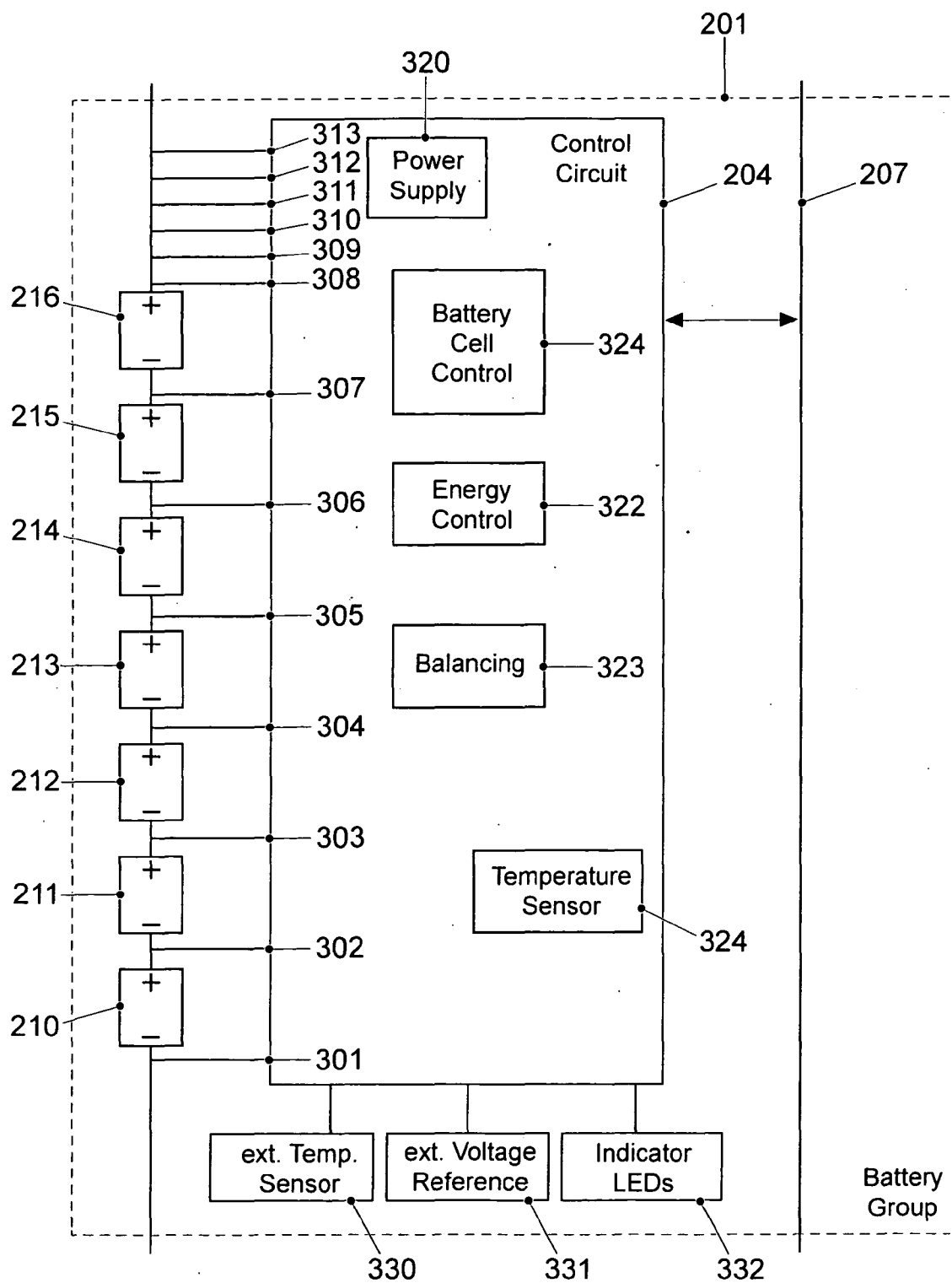


FIG. 3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/EP2011/005638

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. H01M10/44 H02J7/00
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
H01M H02J

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	FR 2 915 328 A1 (VALEO EQUIP ELECTR MOTEUR [FR]) 24 October 2008 (2008-10-24) page 2, line 6 - page 3, line 31; claims 1-21; figures 1, 5 -----	1-3, 6-10, 13-16
X	US 6 208 117 B1 (HIBI MICHIO [JP]) 27 March 2001 (2001-03-27) column 9, line 59 - column 10, line 55 column 12, line 23 - column 12, line 58; claims 1-23; figures 2-5 ----- -/-	1-3, 5-10, 12-16



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

13 February 2012

Date of mailing of the international search report

24/02/2012

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/EP2011/005638

C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 2008/139103 A2 (VALEO EQUIP ELECTR MOTEUR [FR]; SARDAT PIERRE [FR]; MATT JEAN-CLAUDE [] 20 November 2008 (2008-11-20) page 3, line 1 - page 5, line 18 page 8, line 8 - page 9, line 14; claims 1-28; figures 1, 5 -----	1-3, 6-10, 13-16
X	US 5 656 915 A (EAVES STEPHEN S [US]) 12 August 1997 (1997-08-12) column 2, line 56 - column 5, line 39; claims 1-16; figure 1, -----	1,2,8,14

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/EP2011/005638

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			FR	2915328 A1		24-10-2008

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			WO	2008139103 A2		20-11-2008

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