

# C2TLA+: A translator from C to TLA+

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- Introduction
- General approach
- Translation from C to TLA+
  - Memory model
  - Expressions
  - Intra-procedural control flow
  - Inter-procedural control flow
  - Generating specification
  - Examples of properties
- Conclusion

## ■ Context

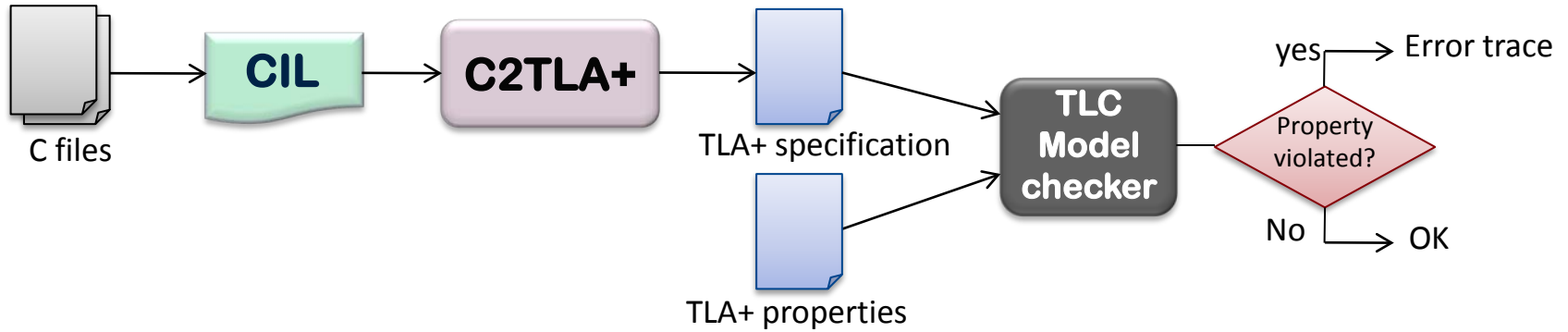
- C is a low level language
- Programs are concurrent
  - Verifying C code is challenging (presence of pointer, pointer arithmetic's...)

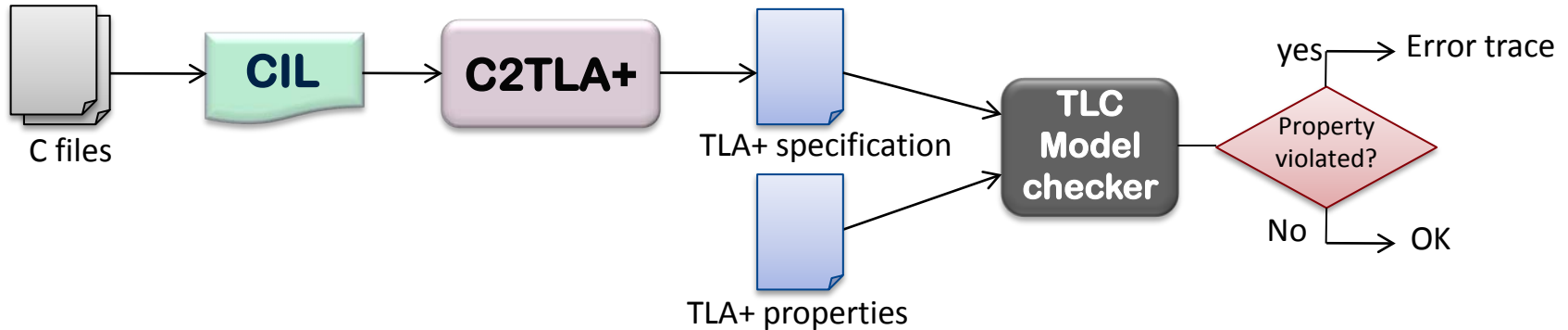
## ■ Motivation

- Verifying an implementation model.
- Guaranteeing the absence of certain classes of errors.

## ■ Method

- Automatically translate a TLA+ specification from input C codes.
- Using automated tools to verify concurrent C programs against a set of safety and liveness properties.





- **CIL (C Intermediate Language)** is a high-level representation along with a set of tools that permit easy analysis and source-to-source transformation of C programs.

- Some of CIL's simplifications:

- All forms of loops (while, for and do) are compiled internally as a single while(1) looping construct with explicit goto statements (for termination.)

**C**

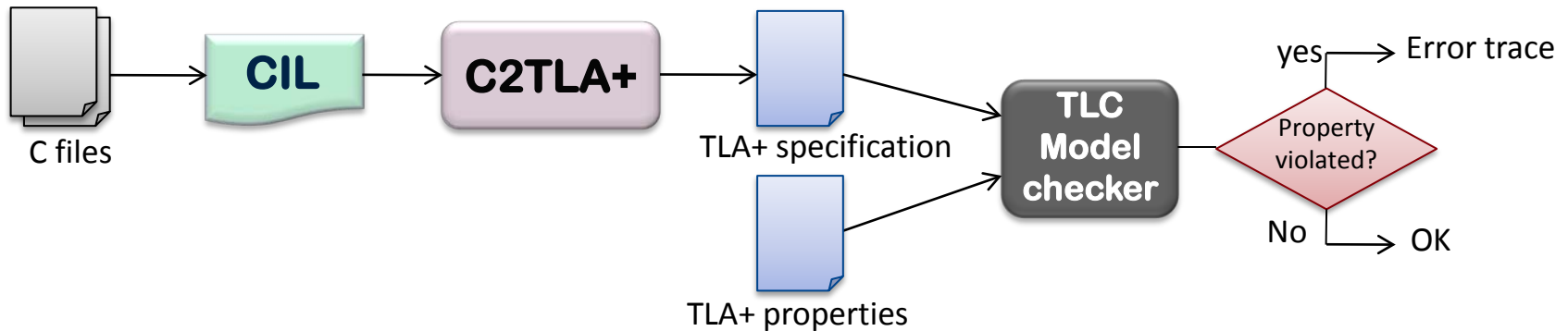
```

while (x<10){
    if (x == 8)
        continue;
    x++;
}
  
```

**CIL**

```

while (1) {
    while_continue: /* internal */ ;
    if (! (x < 10))
        { goto while_break; }
    if (x == 8)
        { goto while_continue; }
    x ++;
}
while_break: /* internal */ ;
  
```



- **CIL (C Intermediate Language)** is a high-level representation along with a set of tools that permit easy analysis and source-to-source transformation of C programs.

- Some of CIL's simplifications:
  - Expressions that contain side-effects are separated into statements.

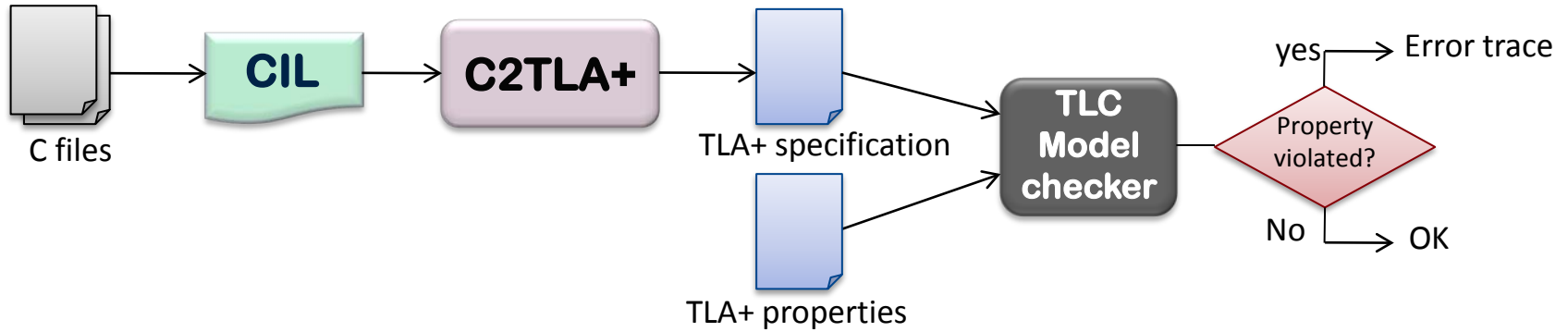
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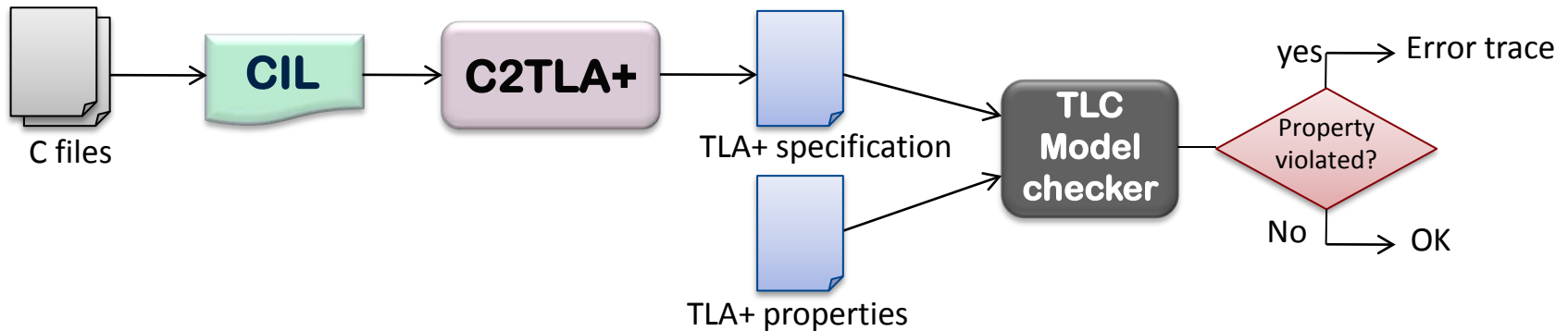
```
return(y ++ + f(x++));
```

**CIL**

```
int tmp = y;
y ++;
int tmp_0 = x;
x ++;
int tmp_1 = f(tmp_0);
int __retres = tmp + tmp_1;
return (__retres);
```

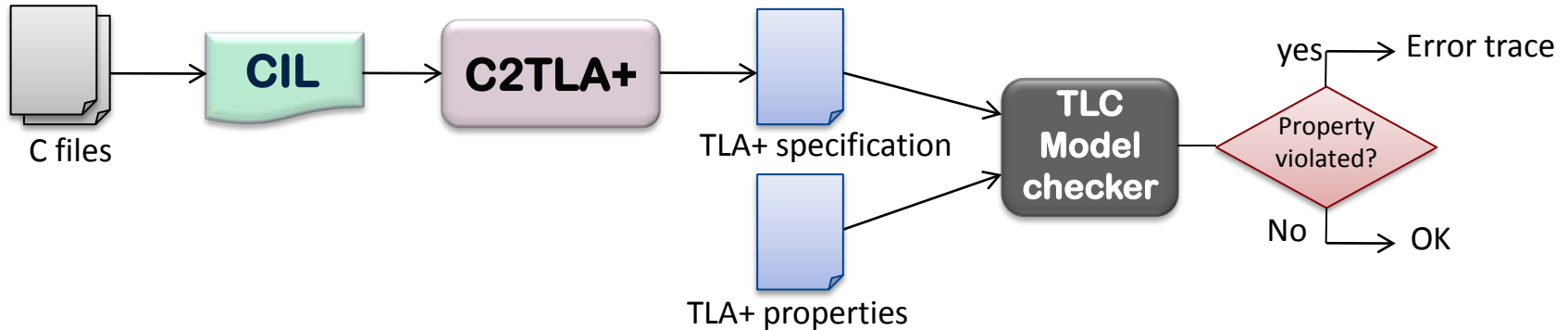
# General approach





- Expressions: pointers, pointer arithmetic, referencing, dereferencing (&), array indexing, structure members (.), arithmetic (\*, +, -, %, /), relational (>, >=, <, <=, ==, !=) and logical (&&, ||, !) operators;
- Statements: assignment, conditions (if, if/else), loops (for/do-while/while), goto, break, continue, return;
- Data types: integers (int), structures (struct), enumerations (enum);
- Value-returning function of int or pointer type;
- Recursion.
- ❌ C2TLA does not support: functions pointer, dynamic memory allocation and assignments of structures types.





## ■ Using TLC to verify properties

### ■ Safety

- Problems because of pointers and arrays (dereferencing null pointer).
- Invariants over variables values.
- Mutual exclusion.

### ■ Liveness

- Termination.
- Starvation-freedom (each waiting process will eventually enter its critical section).

- Concurrent program consists in several interleaved sequences of operations called processes (corresponding to threads in C).
- C2TLA+ attributes a unique identifier to each process, and defines the constant **Procs** to be the set of all process identifiers.

## ■ Four memory regions:

1) A region that contains global (and static) variables, called *mem*.

- Shared by processes.
- Modeled by an array (function).

<i>mem</i>	
x	[val ->0]
y	[val->2]
z	[val->Undef]

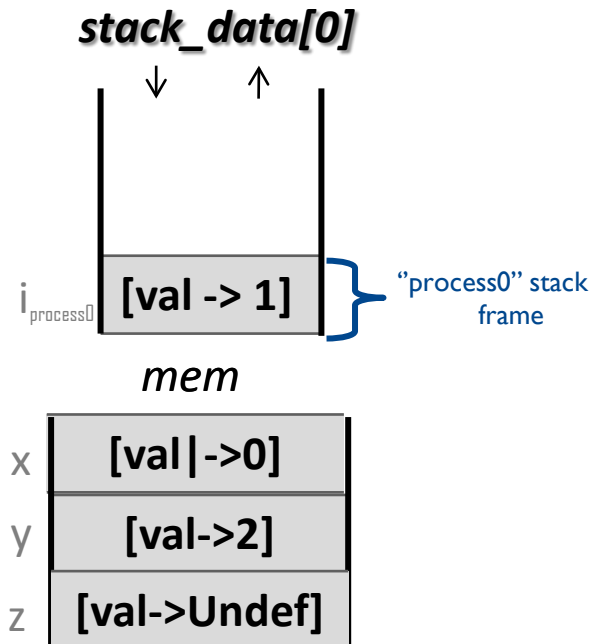
```

1-  int x = 0;
2-  int y = 2;
3-  int z;
4-
5-  int max(int a,int b)
6-  {if (a>=b)
7-      return a;
8-      else return b;}
9-
10- int process0(){
11-     int i = 1;
12-     x = x + i;
13-     y = max(x,y);
14-     x = y + 1;
15-     return x;  }
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17- void process1(){
18-     int j = 0;
19-     x = max(x,y);  }
```

## ■ Four memory regions:

2) A region contains local variables and function parameters, called *stack\_data*.

- This region is modeled by an array of sequences and is composed of stack frames.
- Each stack frame corresponds to a call to a function which has not yet terminated with a return.



```

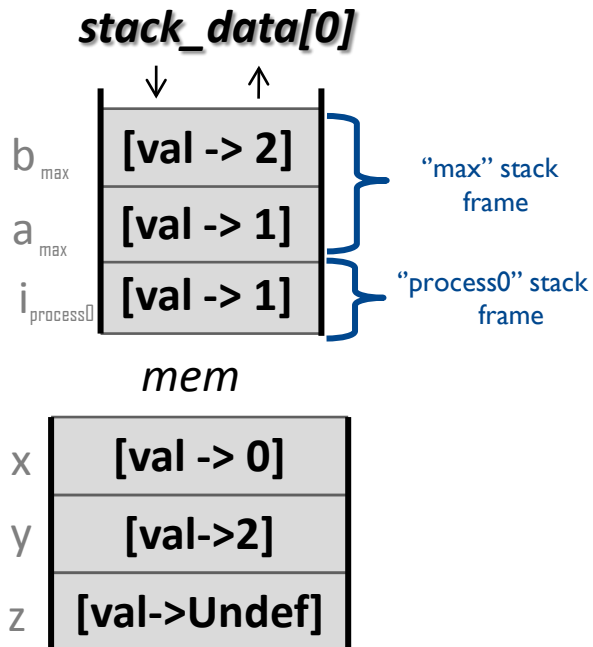
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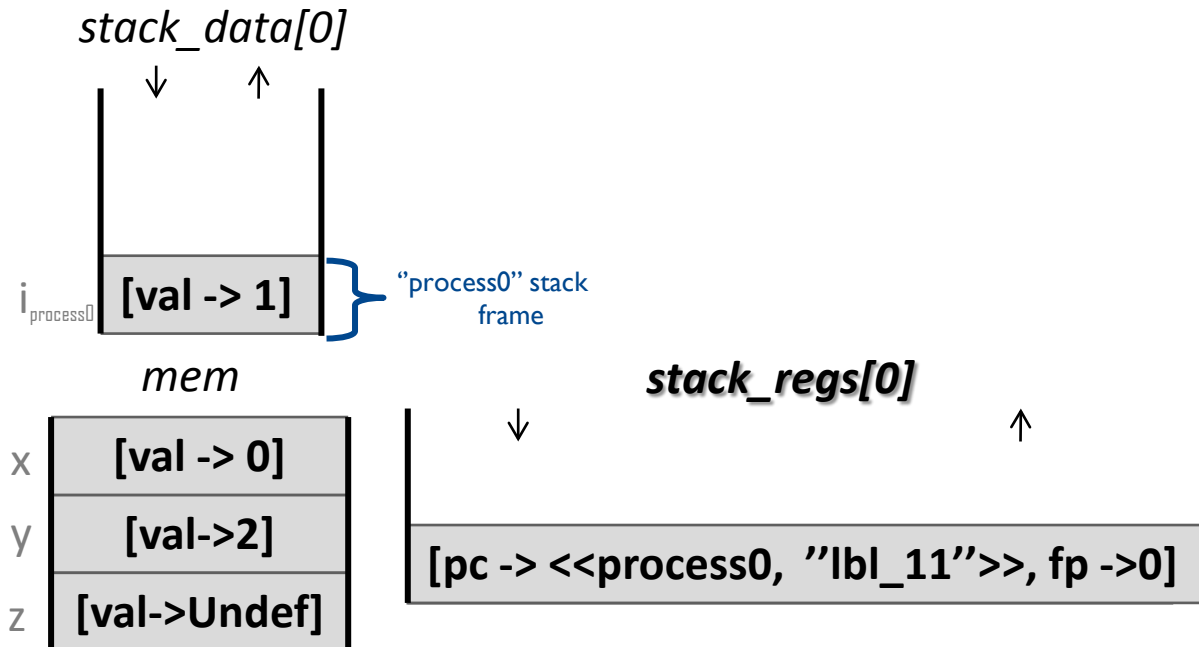
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## ■ Four memory regions:

### 3) A region that stores the program counter of each process (*stack\_regs*).

- It associates to each process a stack of records.
- Each record contains two fields:
  - *pc*, the program counter, represented by a tuple function <<name, label>> (Labels values are given by CIL).
  - *fp*, the frame pointer, contains the base offset of the current stack frame.



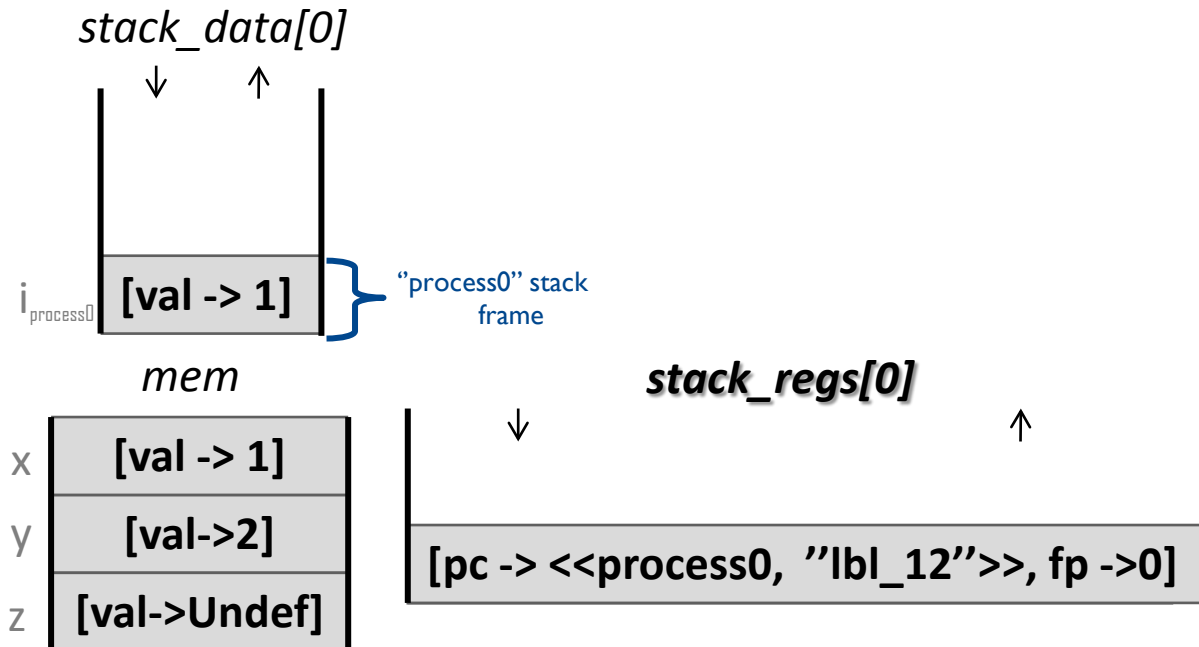
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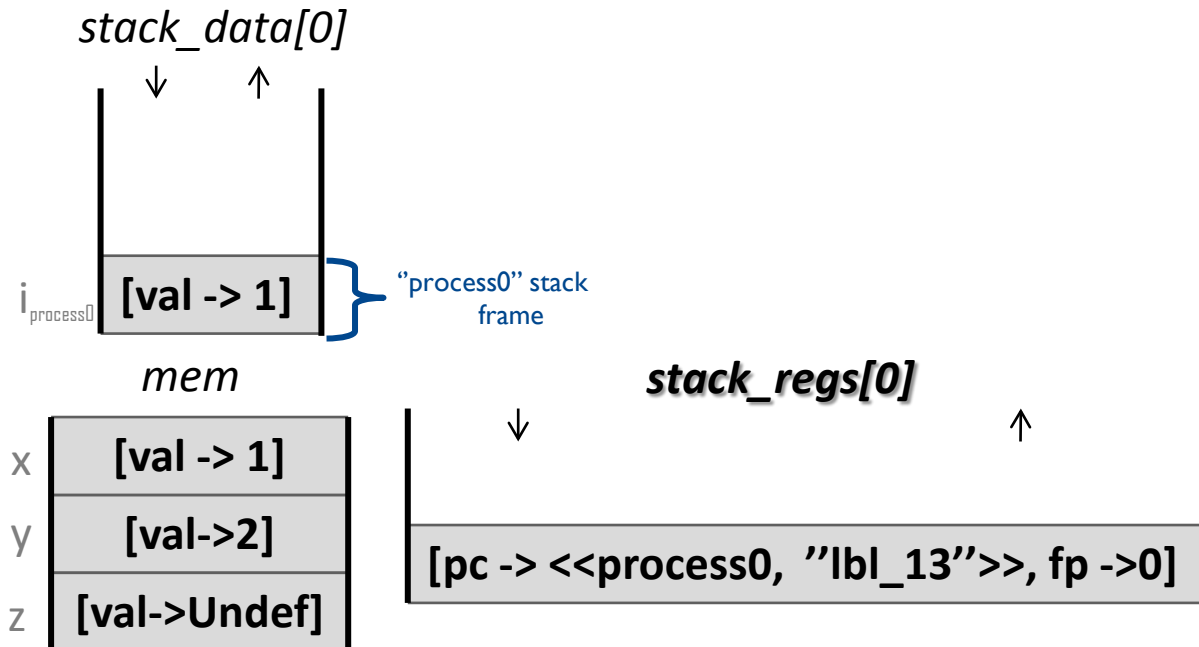
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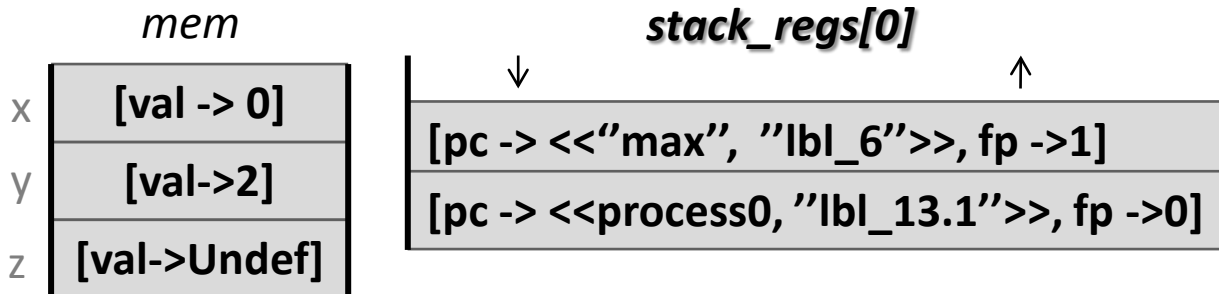
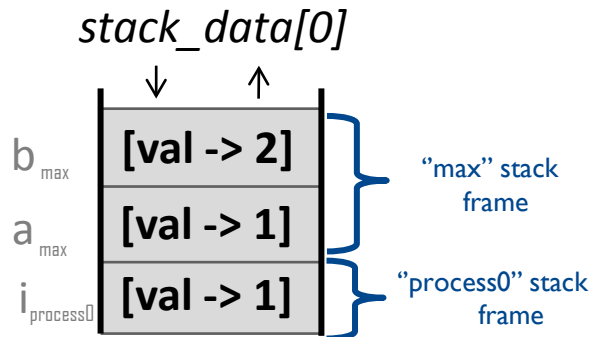
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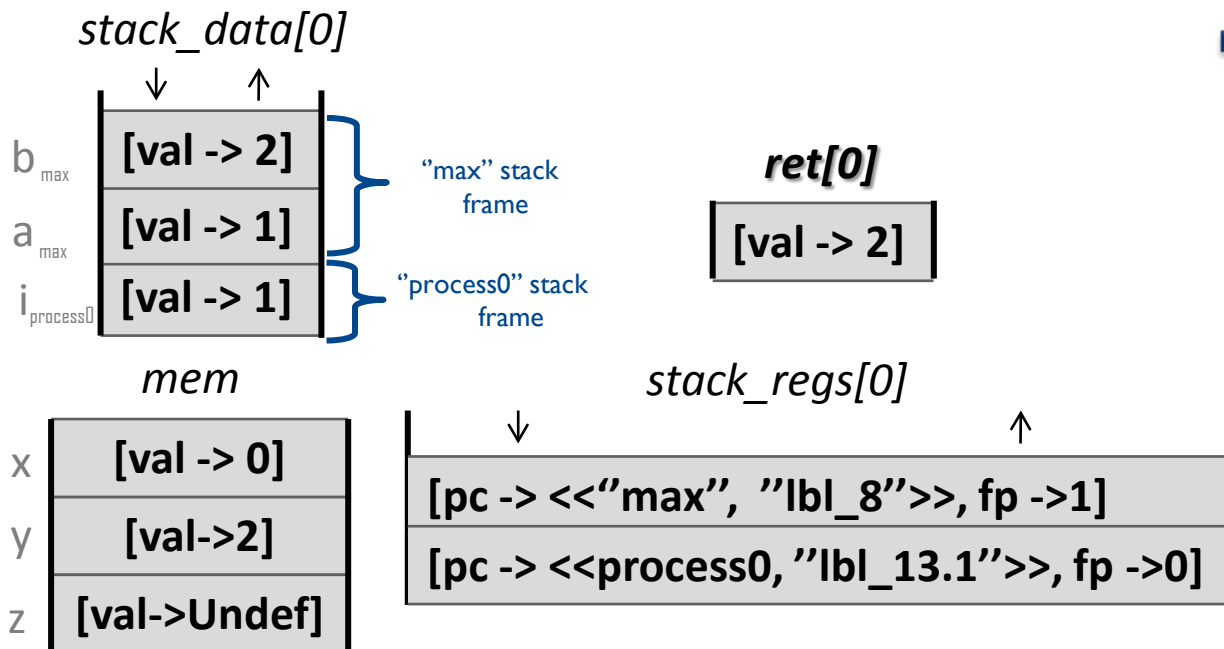
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17- void process1(){
18-     int j = 0;
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```

## ■ Four memory regions:

4) A region contains the values returned by processes, called *ret*.

- This region is modeled by an array and indexed by process identifier.



```

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2-  int y = 2;
3-  int z;
4-
5-  int max(int a,int b)
6-  {if (a>=b)
7-    return a;
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```

- C2TLA+ maps each C variable to unique TLA+ constant (address) modeled by a record with two fields :

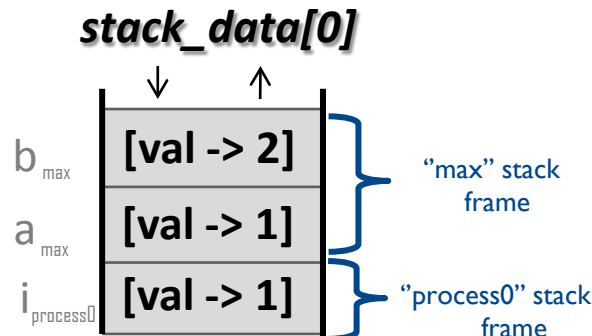
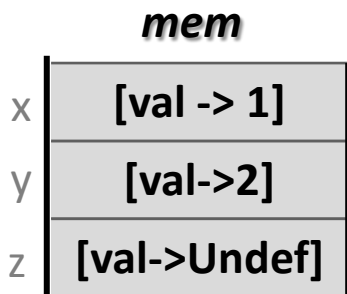
- *loc* : memory region (*mem* or *stack\_data*).
- *off* : offset in the considered memory region.

## ■ Example

$Addr\_x \triangleq [loc \mapsto "mem", offs \mapsto 0]$

$Addr\_process0\_i \triangleq [loc \mapsto "stack\_data", offs \mapsto 0]$

```
int x = 0;
int y = 2;
int z;
int process0() {
    int i = 1;
    x = x + i;
    y = max(x, y);
    x = y + 1;
    return x;
}
void process1() {
    int j = 0;
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```



- C2TLA+ maps each C variable to unique TLA+ constant modeled by a record with two fields :
  - *loc* : memory region (*mem* ou *stack\_data*).
  - *off* : offset in the considered memory region.

## ■ Loading operation

- A *lvalue* is evaluates to an address and which refers to a region of storage.
- Accessing the value stored in this region is performed using the TLA+ operator *load()*.

$$load(id, ptr) \triangleq \begin{array}{l} \text{IF } ptr.loc = \text{"mem"} \text{ THEN } mem[ptr.off] \\ \text{ELSE } stack\_data[id][Head(stack\_regs[id]).fp + ptr.off] \end{array}$$

- C2TLA+ maps each C variable to unique TLA+ constant modeled by a record with two fields :
  - *loc* : memory region (*mem* ou *stack\_data*).
  - *off* : offset in the considered memory region.
- Loading operation
- Assignment operation

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{store}(id, ptr, value) &\triangleq \\
 \vee \quad &\wedge ptr.loc = \text{"mem"} \\
 &\wedge mem' = [mem \text{ EXCEPT } ![ptr.off] = value] \\
 &\wedge \text{UNCHANGED } stack\_data \\
 \vee \quad &\wedge ptr.loc = \text{"stack\_data"} \\
 &\wedge stack\_data' = [stack\_data \text{ EXCEPT } ![id][Head(stack\_regs[id]).fp + ptr.off] = value] \\
 &\wedge \text{UNCHANGED } mem
 \end{aligned}$$

## ■ Example

The statement `i = 1;` is translated into TLA+ as  $\text{store}(id, Addr\_process0\_i, [val \mapsto 1])$

## ■ Arrays

- Accessing an array element in C2TLA+ requires computing the offset using the size of the elements, the index and the base address of the array.

- Example: accessing to `z[a]` is translated as

$load(id, [loc \mapsto Addr\_z.loc, offs \mapsto (Addr\_z.offs + (load(id, Addr\_a) * Size\_of\_int))])$

## ■ Pointer arithmetic's and structure member

- The same kind computation is used to perform pointer arithmetics.
- Similarly, accessing a structure member is achieved by shifting the base address of the structure with the constant accumulated size of all previous members.

- Example: accessing to `student.name` is translated as

$load(id, [loc \mapsto Addr\_student.loc, offs \mapsto (Addr\_student.offs + Offset\_student\_name)])$

- Each C function definition is translated into an operator with the process identifier *id* as argument.
- A C statement is translated into the conjunction of actions that are done simultaneously.
- The function body is translated into the disjunction of the translation of each statement it contains.

### ■ Example

```
...  
int process0(){  
  1 int i = 1;  
  2 x = x + i;  
  3 return x;  
}
```



## ■ Example

$$\begin{aligned}
 process0(id) \triangleq & \quad \vee \wedge Head(stack\_regs[id]).pc = \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_1"} \rangle \\
 & \quad \wedge store(id, Addr\_process0\_i, [val \mapsto 1]) \\
 & \quad \wedge stack\_regs' = [stack\_regs \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_2"} \rangle, \\
 & \quad \quad fp \mapsto Head(stack\_regs[id]).fp \rangle] \circ Tail(stack\_regs[id])] \\
 & \quad \wedge \text{UNCHANGED } \langle ret \rangle
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 & \quad \vee \wedge Head(stack\_regs[id]).pc = \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_2"} \rangle \\
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 & \quad \quad \wedge stack\_regs' = [stack\_regs \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_3"} \rangle, \\
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 & \quad \quad \wedge stack\_regs' = [stack\_regs \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = Tail(stack\_regs[id])] \\
 & \quad \quad \wedge stack\_data' = [stack\_data \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \\
 & \quad \quad \quad SubSeq(stack\_data[id], 1, Head(stack\_regs[id]).fp - 1)] \\
 & \quad \quad \wedge ret' = [ret \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = load(id, Addr\_x)] \\
 & \quad \quad \wedge \text{UNCHANGED } \langle mem \rangle
 \end{aligned}$$

```

...
int process0(){
  1 int i = 1;
  2 x = x + i;
  3 return x;
}

```

- The translation of `goto`/`break`/`continue` statements consists in updating *stack\_regs[id]* to the successor statement.

```

1 lbl0 : if (x < 10)
2     goto lbl1;
3 else goto lbl2;
4 lbl1: x ++;
5 goto lbl0;
6 lbl2: y = x;
7 ...

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- The translation of `goto`/`break`/`continue` statements consists in updating *stack\_regs[id]* to the successor statement.
- Example:

$$\begin{aligned} & \vee \wedge \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).pc = \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_1"} \rangle \\ & \wedge \text{IF } (lt((load(id, Addr\_x, ([val \mapsto 10]))) \neq [val \mapsto 0])) \\ & \quad \text{THEN } \text{stack\_regs}' = [\text{stack\_regs} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_2"} \rangle, \\ & \quad \quad fp \mapsto \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).fp \rangle \circ \text{Tail}(\text{stack\_regs}[id])] \\ & \quad \text{ELSE } \text{stack\_regs}' = [\text{stack\_regs} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_3"} \rangle, \\ & \quad \quad fp \mapsto \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).fp \rangle \circ \text{Tail}(\text{stack\_regs}[id])] \\ & \wedge \text{UNCHANGED } \langle mem, \text{stack\_data}, ret \rangle \end{aligned}$$

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- Example:

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 & \wedge \text{store}(id, Addr\_y, load(id, Addr\_x)) \\
 & \wedge \text{stack\_regs}' = [\text{stack\_regs} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_7"} \rangle, \\
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- All loops in C are normalized by CIL as a single while(1) looping construct that we translate like other jump statements.
- C Example:

```
1 while (x!=10) {
2   x ++;
3 }
```

C code

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 & \wedge \text{store}(id, \text{Addr\_x}, plus(load(id, \text{Addr\_x}), [val \mapsto 1])) \\
 & \wedge \text{stack\_regs}' = [\text{stack\_regs} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"f1"}, \text{"lbl\_1"} \rangle, \\
 & \quad \quad fp \mapsto \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).fp \rangle \circ \text{Tail}(\text{stack\_regs}[id])] \\
 & \wedge \text{UNCHANGED} \langle \text{ret} \rangle \\
 & \vee \wedge \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).pc = \langle \text{"f1"}, \text{"lbl\_6"} \rangle \\
 & \wedge \text{stack\_regs}' = [\text{stack\_regs} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"f1"}, \text{"lbl\_7"} \rangle, \\
 & \quad \quad fp \mapsto \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).fp \rangle \circ \text{Tail}(\text{stack\_regs}[id])] \\
 & \wedge \text{UNCHANGED} \langle \text{mem}, \text{stack\_data}, \text{ret} \rangle
 \end{aligned}$$

- A function call is translated in two actions :
  - The stack frame is pushed onto the *stack\_data[id]* which obeys the LIFO order.
  - The *stack\_regs[id]* is updated by changing its head to a record whose *pc* field points to the action done once the call has finished.
  - On top of *stack\_regs[id]* is pushed a record with *pc* pointing to the first statement of the called function, and *fp* to the new stack frame.

```

int max(int i,int j)
1 { if (i => j)
2   return i;
3   else return j;
4 }
5
6 void f1(){
7   x = ...
8   y = ...
9   int m = max(x,y);
10  ...}
    
```

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```

1  int max(int i,int j)
2  { if (i => j)
3      return i;
4  }
5
6  void f1(){
7      x = ...
8      y = ...
9      int m = max(x,y);
10     ...}
    
```

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\vee \wedge \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).pc = \langle \text{"f1"}, \text{"lbl\_9"} \rangle \\
 &\wedge \text{stack\_data}' = [\text{stack\_data} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \text{stack\_data}[id] \circ \\
 &\quad \langle \text{load}(id, \text{Addr\_x}), \text{load}(id, \text{Addr\_y}), [\text{val} \mapsto \text{Undef}] \rangle] \\
 &\wedge \text{stack\_regs}' = [\text{stack\_regs} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \\
 &\quad \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"max"}, \text{"lbl\_1"} \rangle, fp \mapsto \text{Len}(\text{stack\_data}[id]) + 1 \rangle \\
 &\quad \circ \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"f1"}, \text{"lbl\_9.1"} \rangle, fp \mapsto \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).fp \rangle \\
 &\quad \circ \text{Tail}(\text{stack\_regs}[id])] \\
 &\wedge \text{UNCHANGED } \langle mem, ret \rangle
 \end{aligned}$$

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  - The stack frame is pushed onto the *stack\_data[id]* which obeys the LIFO order.
  - The *stack\_regs[id]* is updated by changing its head to a record whose *pc* field points to the action done once the call has finished.
  - On top of *stack\_regs[id]* is pushed a record with *pc* pointing to the first statement of the called function, and *fp* to the new stack frame.
  - The second action copies the return value *ret[id]* in the considered variable .

```

int max(int i,int j)
1 { if (i => j)
2   return i;
3   else return j;
4 }
5
6 void f1(){
7   x = ...
8   y = ...
9   int m = max(x,y);
10  ...}
    
```

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\vee \wedge \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).pc = \langle \text{"f1"}, \text{"lbl\_9"} \rangle \\
 &\wedge \text{stack\_data}' = [\text{stack\_data} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \text{stack\_data}[id] \circ \\
 &\quad \langle \text{load}(id, \text{Addr\_x}), \text{load}(id, \text{Addr\_y}), [\text{val} \mapsto \text{Undef}] \rangle] \\
 &\wedge \text{stack\_regs}' = [\text{stack\_regs} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \\
 &\quad \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"max"}, \text{"lbl\_1"} \rangle, fp \mapsto \text{Len}(\text{stack\_data}[id]) + 1 \rangle \\
 &\quad \circ \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"f1"}, \text{"lbl\_9.1"} \rangle, fp \mapsto \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).fp \rangle \\
 &\quad \circ \text{Tail}(\text{stack\_regs}[id])] \rangle \\
 &\wedge \text{UNCHANGED} \langle mem, ret \rangle \\
 &\vee \wedge \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).pc = \langle \text{"f1"}, \text{"lbl\_9.1"} \rangle \\
 &\wedge \text{store}(id, [loc \mapsto \text{Addr\_f1\_m.loc}, offs \mapsto \text{Addr\_f1\_m.offs}], ret[id]) \\
 &\wedge \text{stack\_regs}' = [\text{stack\_regs} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \langle [pc \mapsto \langle \text{"f1"}, \text{"lbl\_10"} \rangle, \\
 &\quad fp \mapsto \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).fp \rangle \circ \text{Tail}(\text{stack\_regs}[id])] \rangle \\
 &\wedge \text{UNCHANGED} \langle ret \rangle
 \end{aligned}$$

...

- Once the function returns:
  - The top of the *stack\_regs[id]* is popped,
  - Its stack frame is removed from stack data[id] (using the *SubSeq* operator).
  - The returned value is stored on *ret[id]*.
  
- Example:

```
...
int process0() {
    int i = 1;
    x = x + i;
    return x;
}
```

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\vee \wedge \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).pc = \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_3"} \rangle \\
 &\wedge \text{stack\_regs}' = [\text{stack\_regs} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \text{Tail}(\text{stack\_regs}[id])] \\
 &\wedge \text{stack\_data}' = [\text{stack\_data} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \\
 &\quad \text{SubSeq}(\text{stack\_data}[id], 1, \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).fp - 1)] \\
 &\wedge \text{ret}' = [\text{ret} \text{ EXCEPT } ![id] = \text{load}(id, \text{Addr\_x})] \\
 &\wedge \text{UNCHANGED } \langle \text{mem} \rangle
 \end{aligned}$$

- *Init* predicate that initializes all variables of the system.
  - The number of process and the entry point (initial function) of each one are specified by user. This will initialize the *stack\_regs* variable.
  - The *mem* variable is initialized according to the initializers of global variables.
  - The *stack\_data* is initially empty and the *ret* variable contains *Undef* value, for all processes.
- The predicate *process(id)*, that defines the next-state action of the process *id*
  - It asserts that one of the function is being executed while *stack\_reg[id]* is not empty.

$$process(id) \triangleq \wedge stack\_regs[id] \neq \langle \rangle \\ \wedge (\vee max(id) \vee process0(id) \vee process1(id))$$

- The tuple of all variables

$$vars \triangleq \langle mem, stack\_regs, stack\_data, ret \rangle$$

```
int max(int x, int y)
{...}
void process0()
{...}
void process1()
{...}
```

- The next-state action *Next* of all processes
  - One of the process that has not finished is nondeterministically chosen to execute one step until *stack\_regs* becomes empty.

$$Next \triangleq \bigvee \exists id \in Procs : process(id) \wedge \bigvee (\forall id \in Procs : (stack\_regs[id] = \langle \rangle) \wedge (UNCHANGED\ vars))$$

- The complete specification

$$Spec \triangleq Init \wedge \Box [Next]_{vars}$$

```

1-int x = 0;
2-int lock_var = 0; // lock global
3-  variable
4-void process0(int i){
5-  acquire_mutex();
6-  x++;
7-  x = x + i;
8-  release_mutex();
9-  ...}
10-
11-void process1(int j){
12-  acquire_mutex();
13-  j = x;
14-  x = x + i;
15-  release_mutex();
16-  ...}

```

Critical  
section  
sc1

Critical  
section  
sc2



```

1-int x = 0;
2-int lock_var = 0; // lock global
3-   variable
4-void process0(int i){
5-   acquire_mutex();
6-   x++;
7-   x = x + i;
8-   release_mutex();
9-   ...}
10-
11-void process1(int j){
12-   acquire_mutex();
13-   j = x;
14-   x = x + i;
15-   release_mutex();
16-   ...}

```

Critical  
section  
sc1

Critical  
section  
sc2

## ■ Mutual exclusion

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\forall sc1 \in \{\langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_6"} \rangle, \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_7"} \rangle\} : \\
 &\quad \forall sc2 \in \{\langle \text{"process1"}, \text{"lbl\_13"} \rangle, \langle \text{"process1"}, \text{"lbl\_14"} \rangle\} : \\
 &\quad ((\text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[\text{"process0"}]).pc = sc1) \Rightarrow \\
 &\quad (\text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[\text{"process1"}]).pc \neq sc2))
 \end{aligned}$$

```

1-int x = 0;
2-int lock_var = 0; // lock global
3-  variable
4-void process0(int i){
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11-void process1(int j){
12-  acquire_mutex();
13-  j = x;
14-  x = x + i;
15-  release_mutex();
16-  ...}

```

Critical  
section  
sc1

Critical  
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## ■ Mutual exclusion

$$\forall sc1 \in \{\langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_6"} \rangle, \langle \text{"process0"}, \text{"lbl\_7"} \rangle\} : \\ \forall sc2 \in \{\langle \text{"process1"}, \text{"lbl\_13"} \rangle, \langle \text{"process1"}, \text{"lbl\_14"} \rangle\} : \\ ((\text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[\text{"process0"}]).pc = sc1) \Rightarrow \\ (\text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[\text{"process1"}]).pc \neq sc2))$$

## ■ Termination

$$\Diamond (\forall id \in \{\text{"process0"}, \text{"process1"}\} : \text{Head}(\text{stack\_regs}[id]).pc = \langle \rangle)$$

**i** Considering fairness assumptions  
in the specification

## ■ Conclusion

- C2TLA+: A translator from C to TLA+ specification that can be checked by TLC.
- The translation is based on a set of translation rules.

## ■ Future works

- Handle missing features.
- Catch all C runtime-errors.
- Using TLAPS to prove that a (translated) specification implements an abstract one.

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# Thank you

## Questions ??



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