

Parameterized verification of distributed shared-memory systems



Under the supervision of

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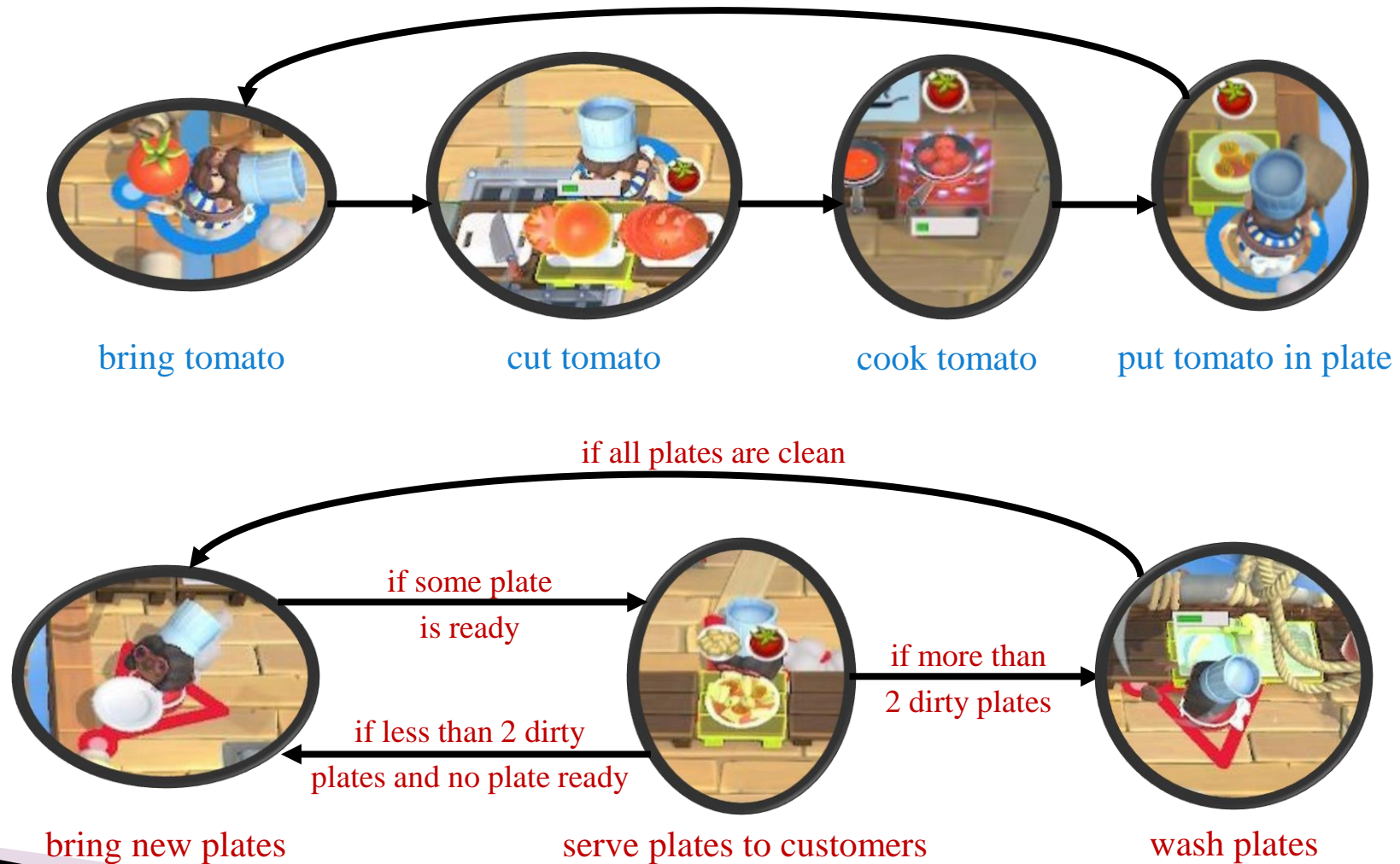
Introduction



Cooking with friends

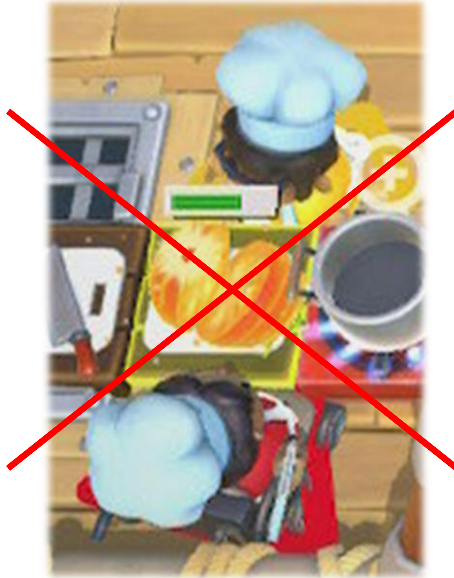


Distributed algorithms



Distributed problems

Mutual exclusion



Consensus



Verification of distributed algorithms

Does my algorithm avoid



?

Verification of distributed algorithms

Does my algorithm avoid



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Verification of distributed algorithms

Does my algorithm avoid



Objective: **mathematically** verify distributed algorithm to give guarantees about their safety.

From algorithms to automata-based models

Peterson's mutual exclusion algorithm [Pet81]

For process $i \in \{0,1\}$:

```
while true:
    do non-critical things ;
    flagi = true ; turn := 1 - i ;
    wait until (flag1-i == false or turn == i)
    do critical things;
    flagi = false ;
```

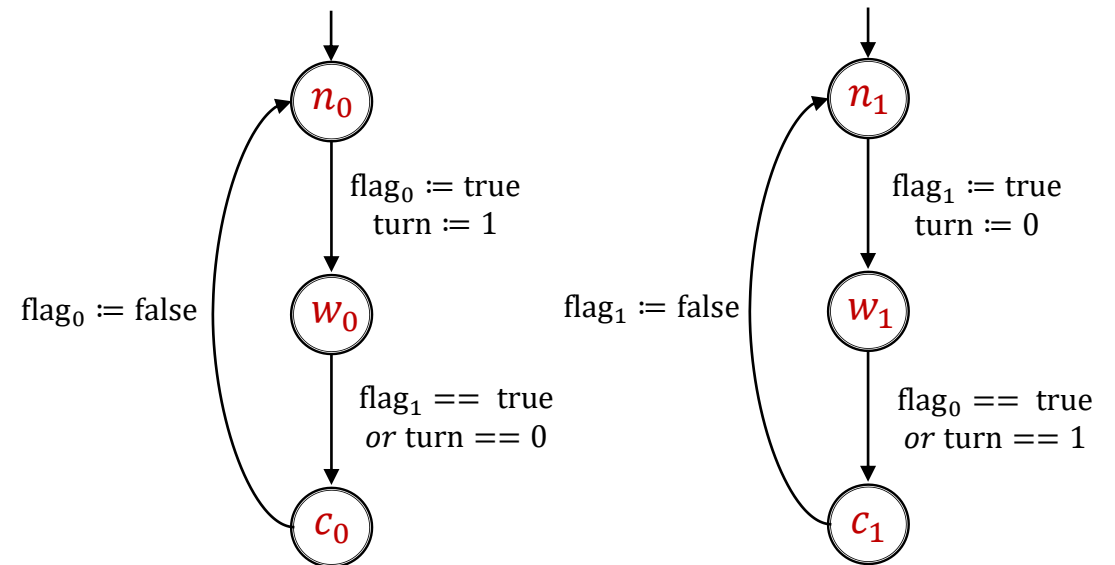
From algorithms to automata-based models

Peterson's mutual exclusion algorithm [Pet81]

For process $i \in \{0,1\}$:

```
while true:
   $n_i$  do non-critical things ;
  flag $_i$  = true ; turn := 1 -  $i$  ;
   $w_i$  wait until (flag $_{1-i}$  == false or turn ==  $i$ )
   $c_i$  do critical things;
  flag $_i$  = false ;
```

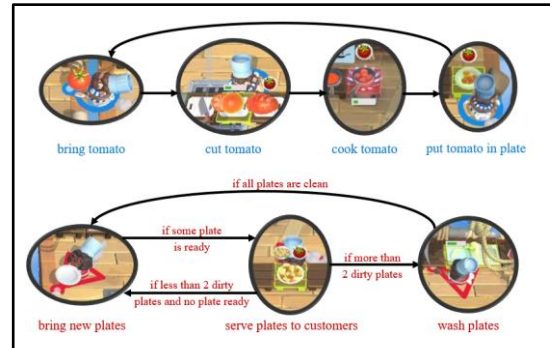
Automata-based model



Mutual exclusion = not c_0 and c_1 simultaneously

Model Checking

Does



distributed algorithm

satisfy

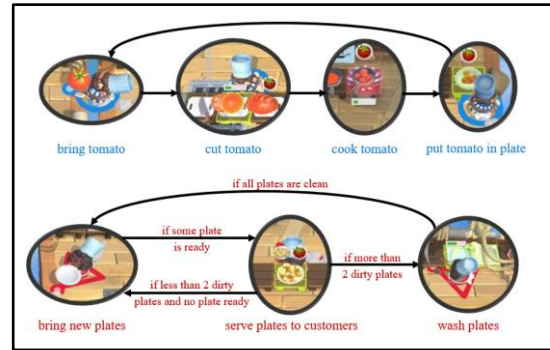


requirement

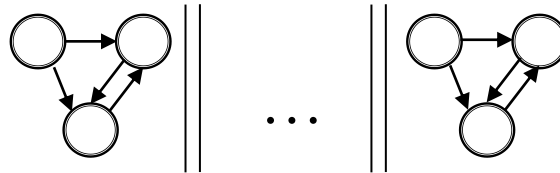
?

Model Checking

Does

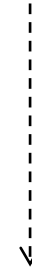


distributed algorithm



model

satisfy



\models

model-checking algorithm



?

requirement



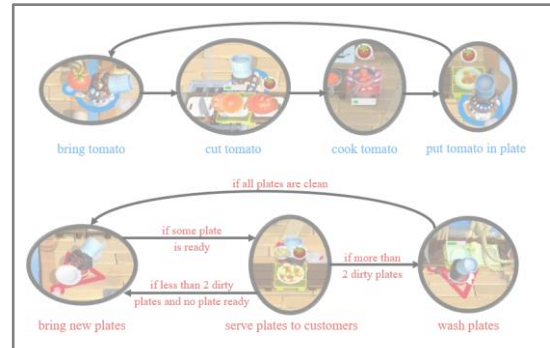
$G(\neg \text{fire})$

property

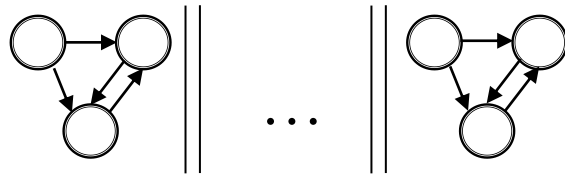
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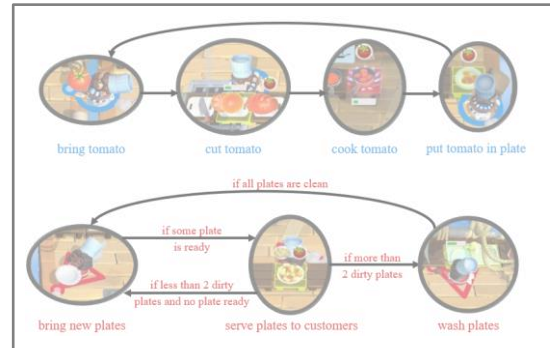
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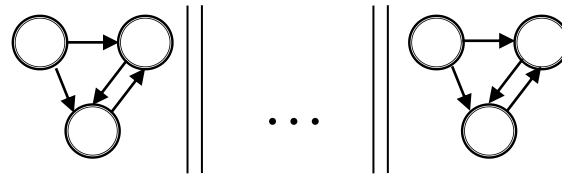
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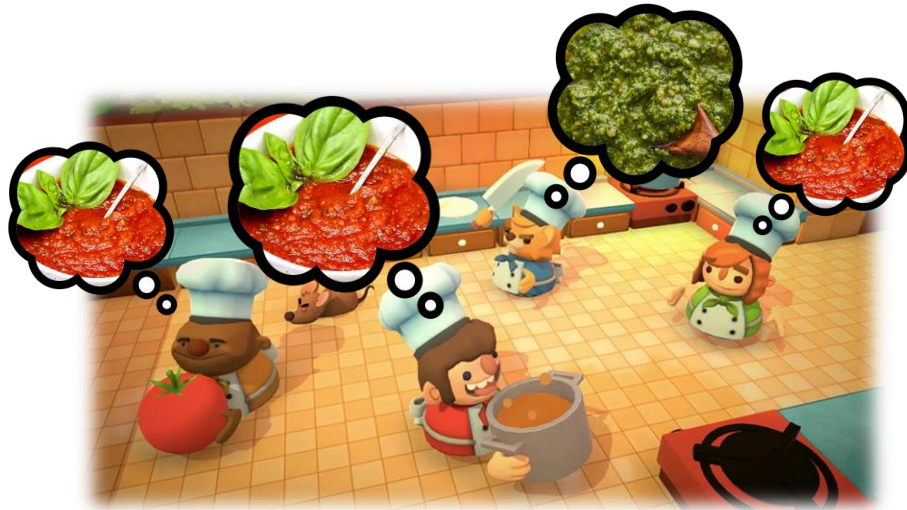
?

Theoretical approach:

- identify relevant **models** and relevant **properties** for these models,
- study **decidability** and **complexity** questions.

The number of processes as a parameter

Consensus algorithms: designed for any number n of participants.



The number of processes as a parameter

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Parameterized verification: is the algorithm correct for every n ?

First part

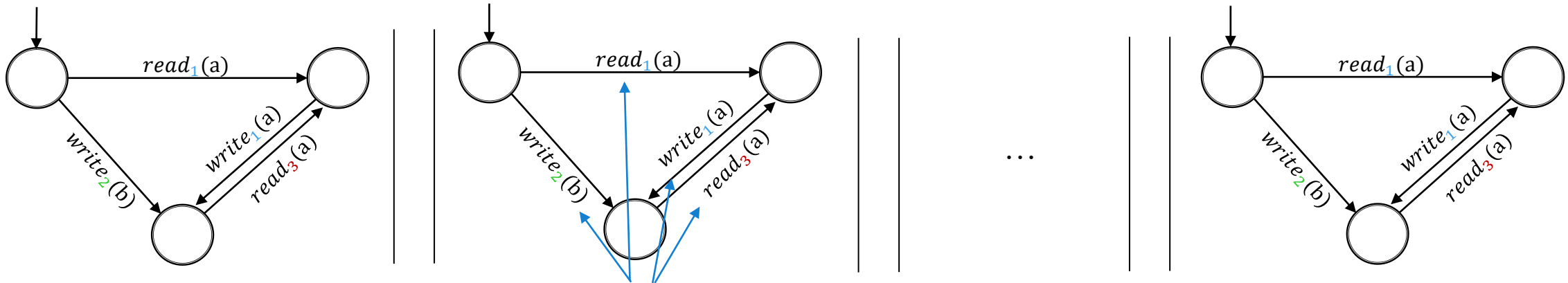
Shared-memory systems



A shared-memory model: ASMS

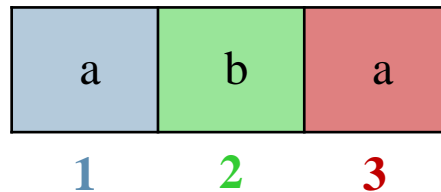
Asynchronous Shared-Memory Systems (ASMS) [EGM13]

Processes = identical finite-state machines, behaving asynchronously



Each transition has either a read or a write action

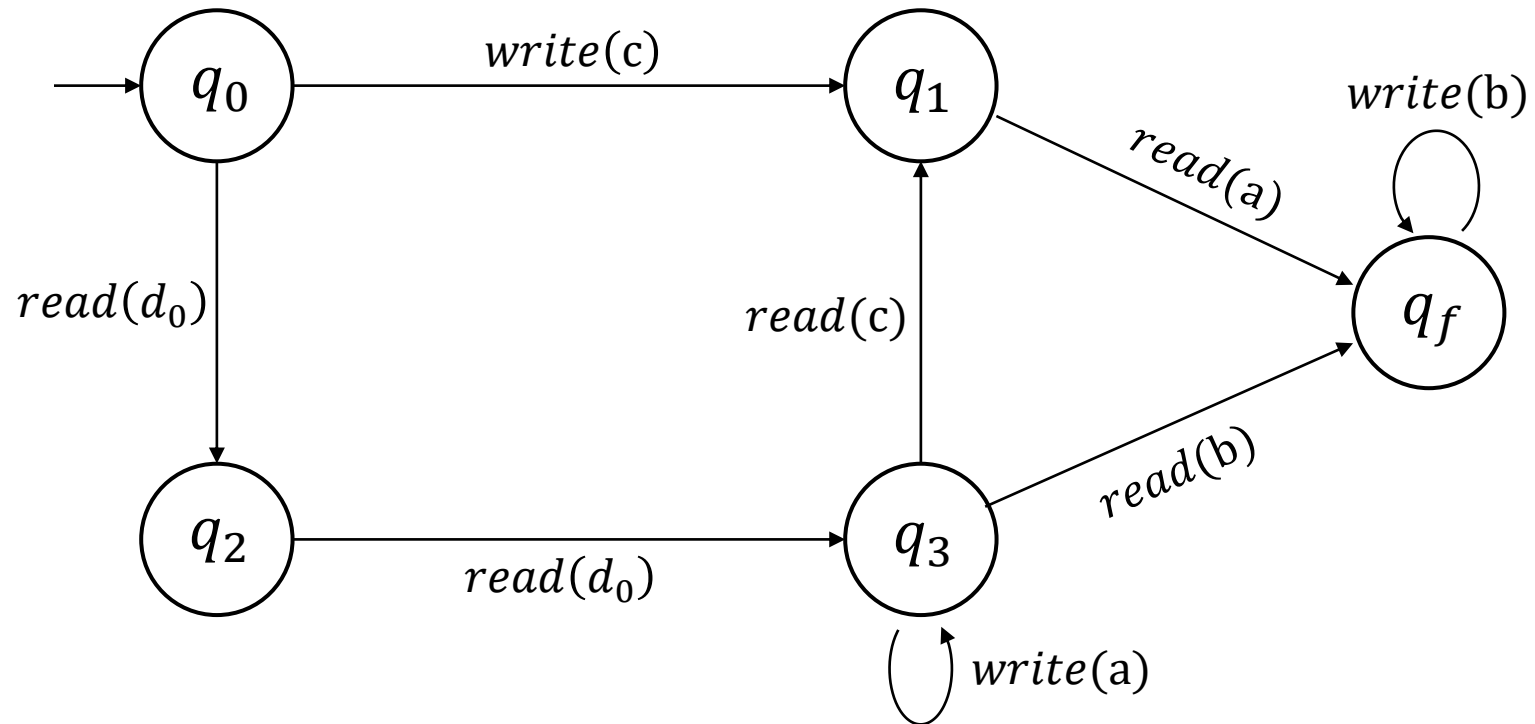
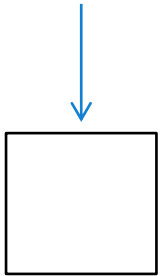
Shared memory



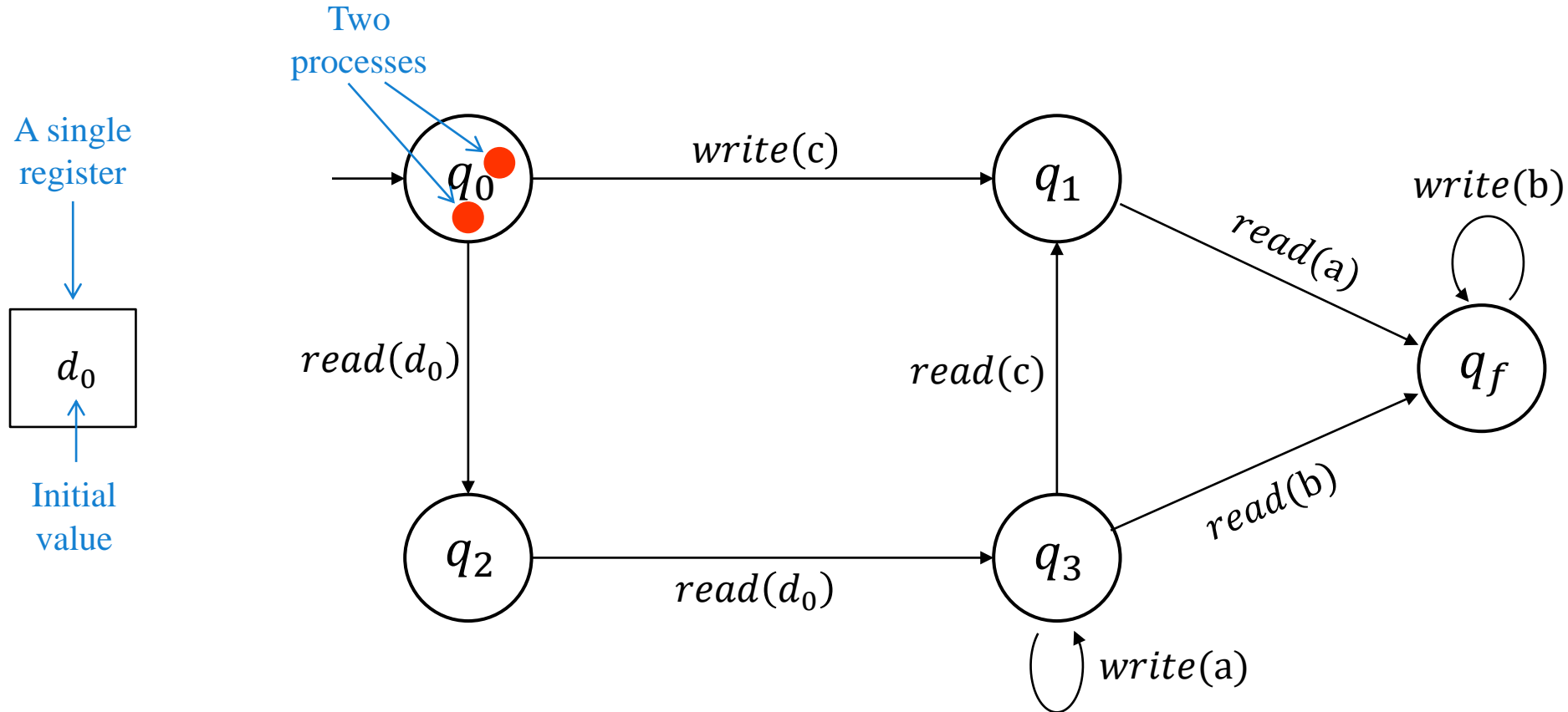
- Finite number of registers
- Finite set of values
- A special initial value

A small example

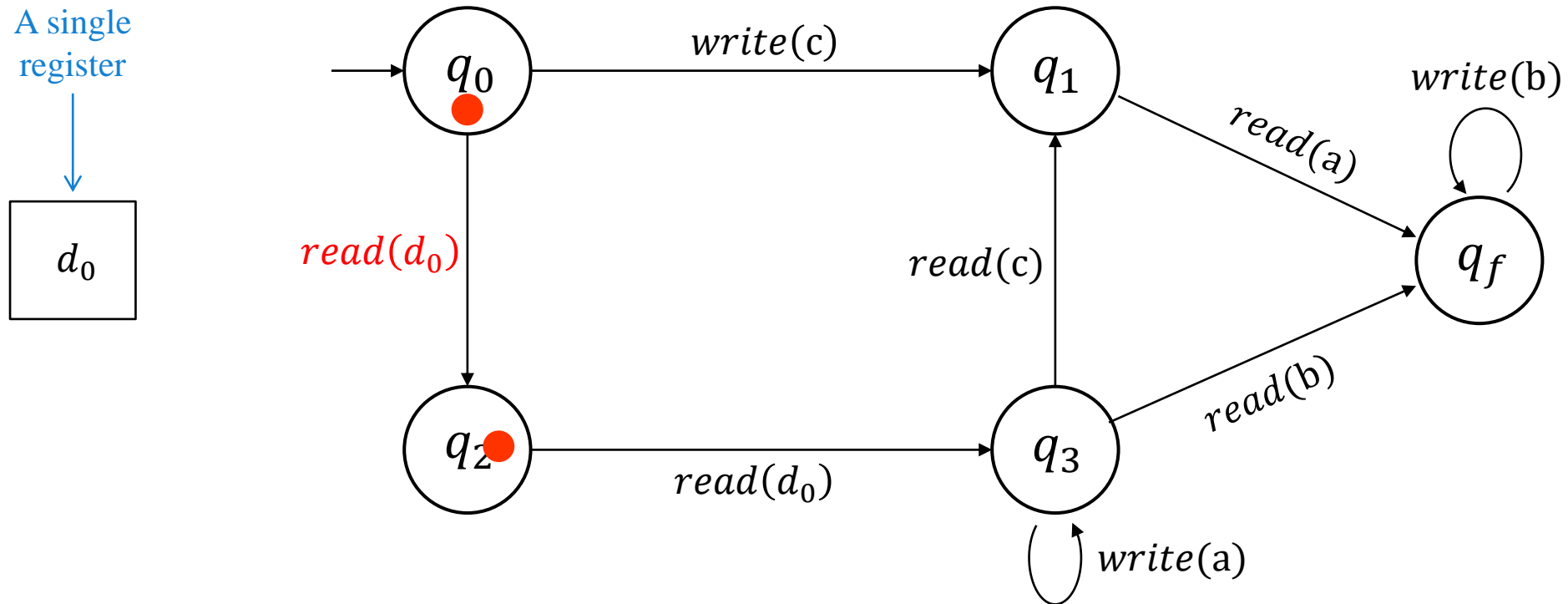
A single register



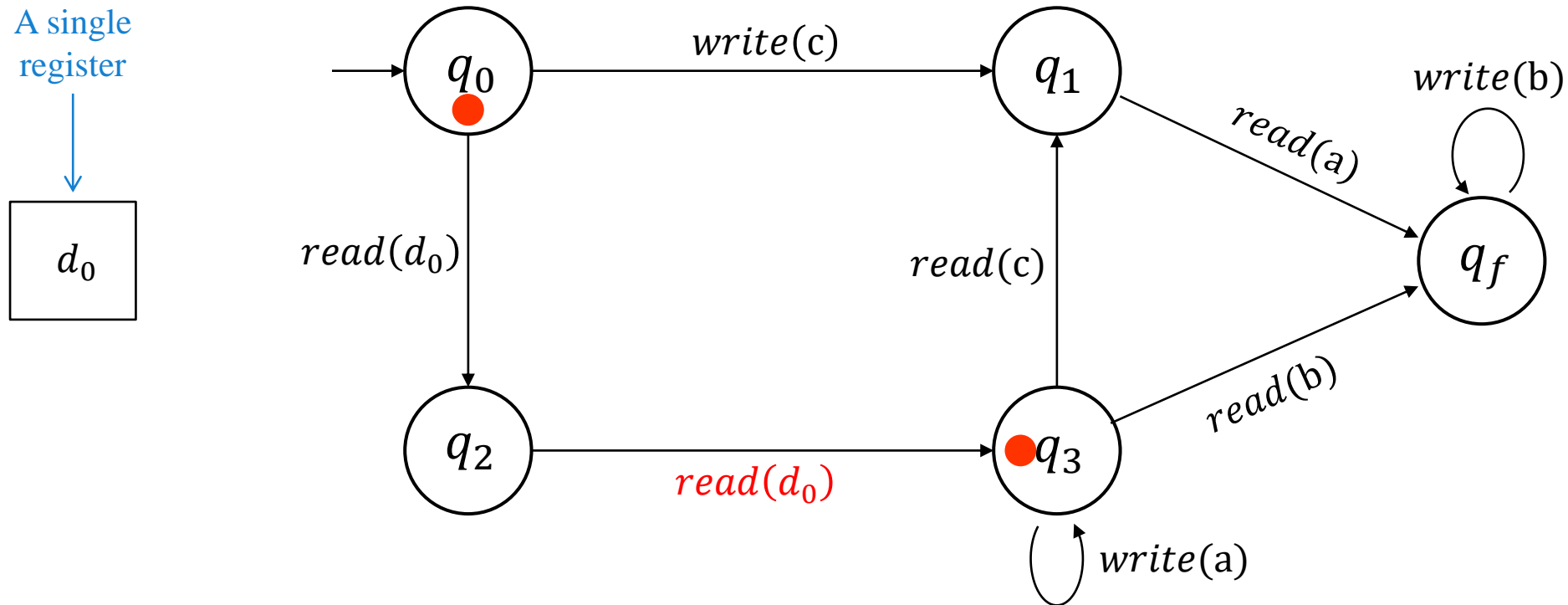
A small example



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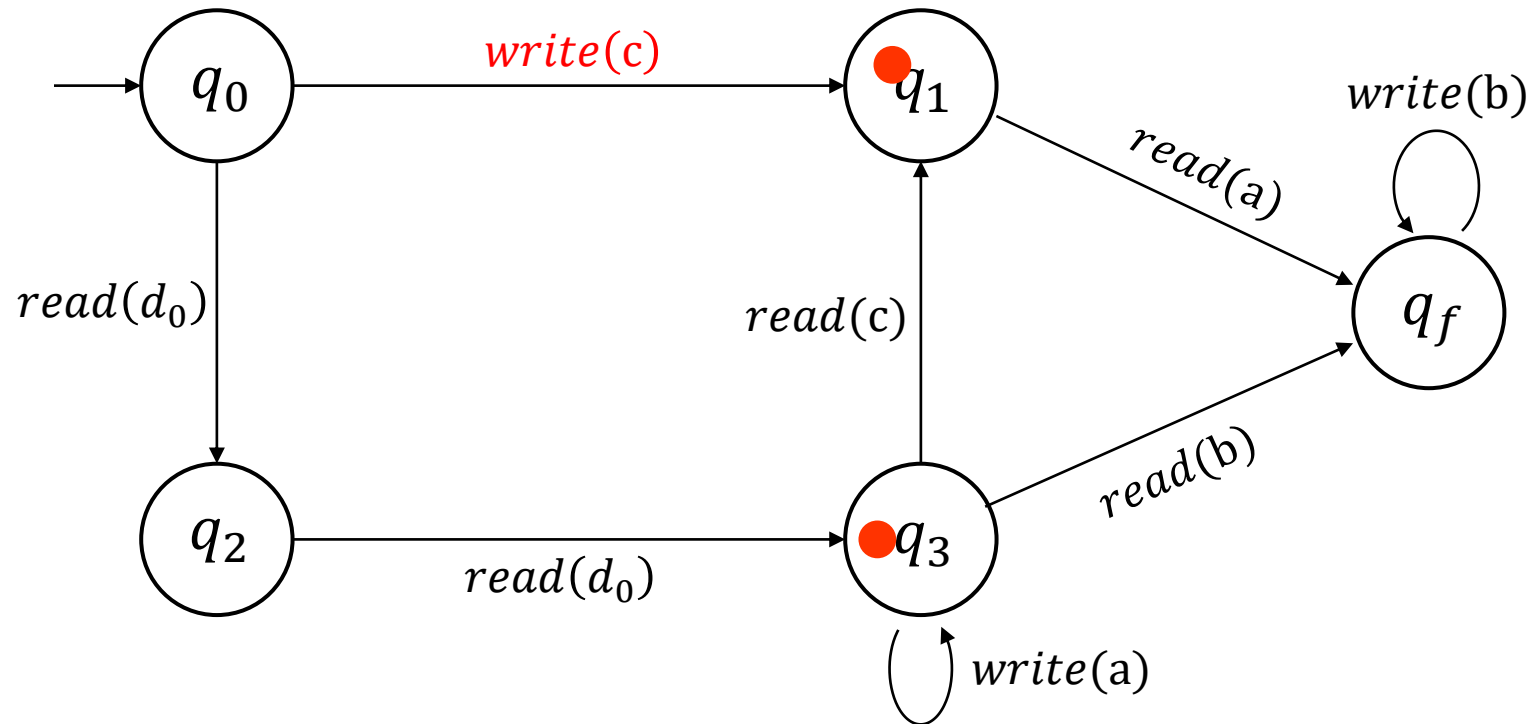
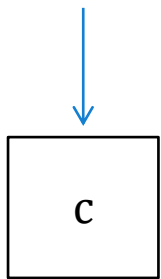


A small example

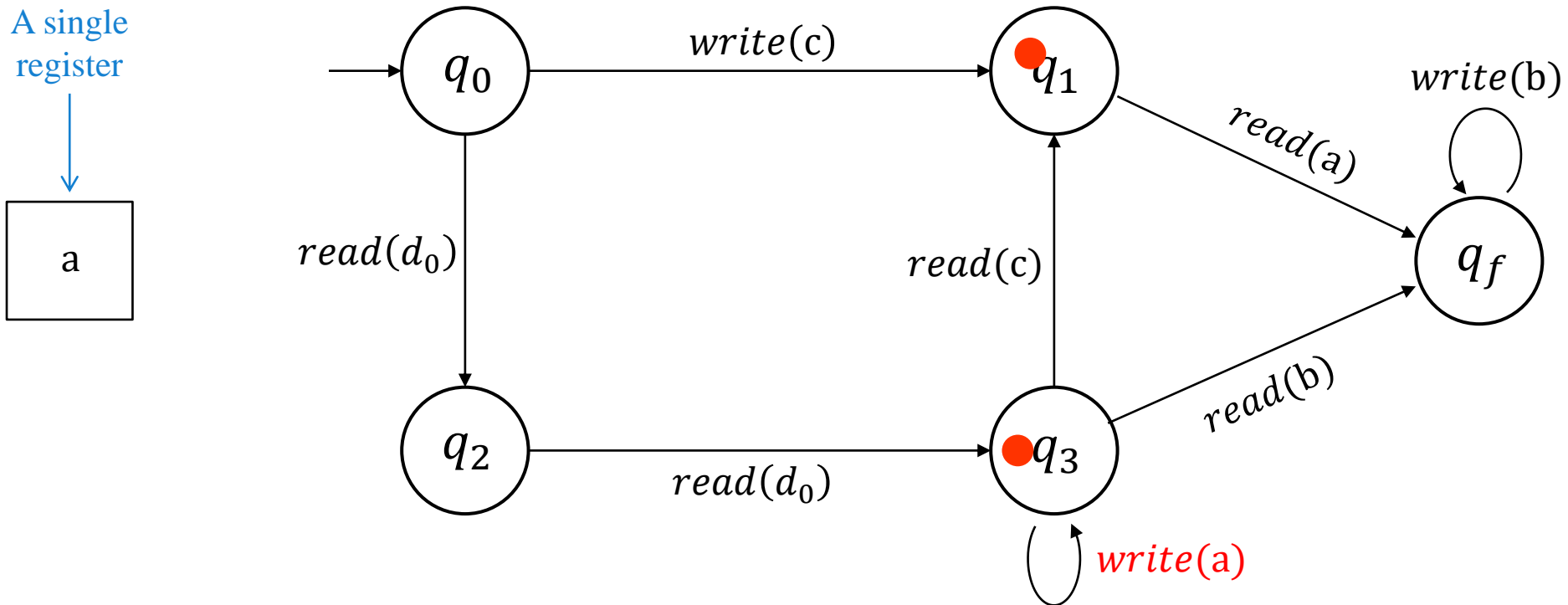


A small example

A single register

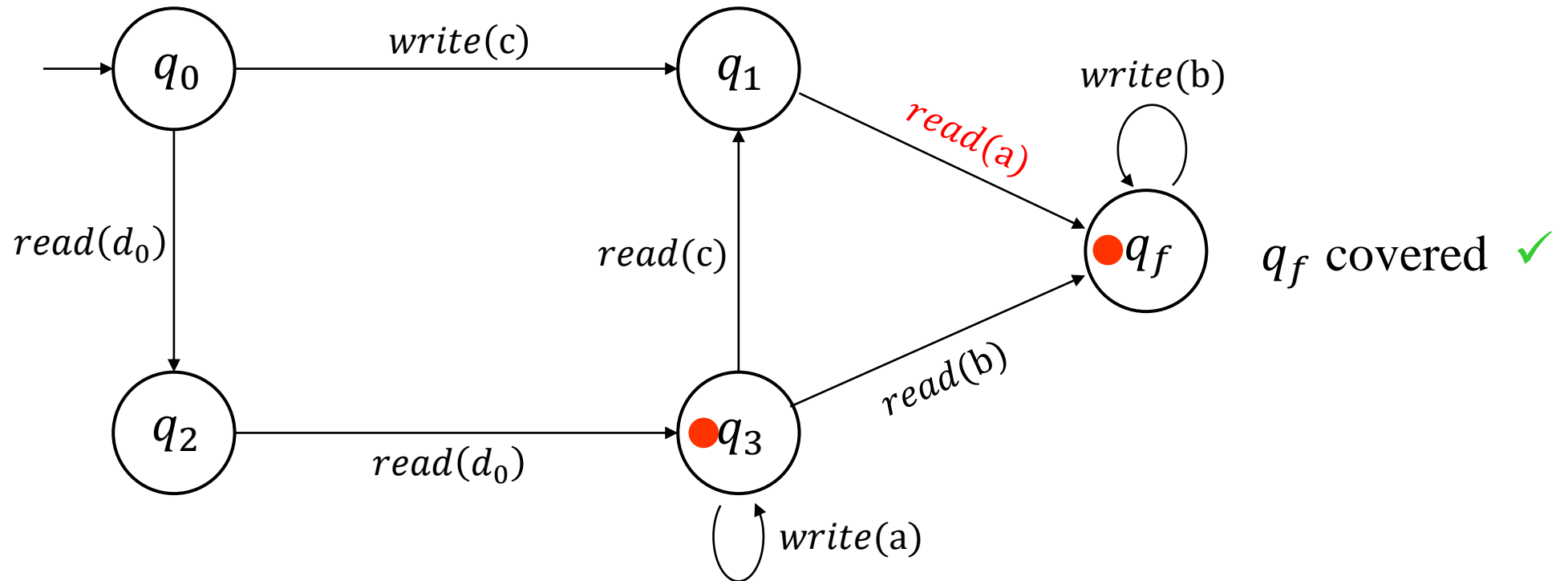
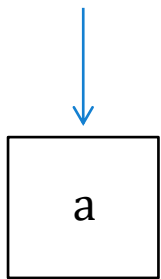


A small example

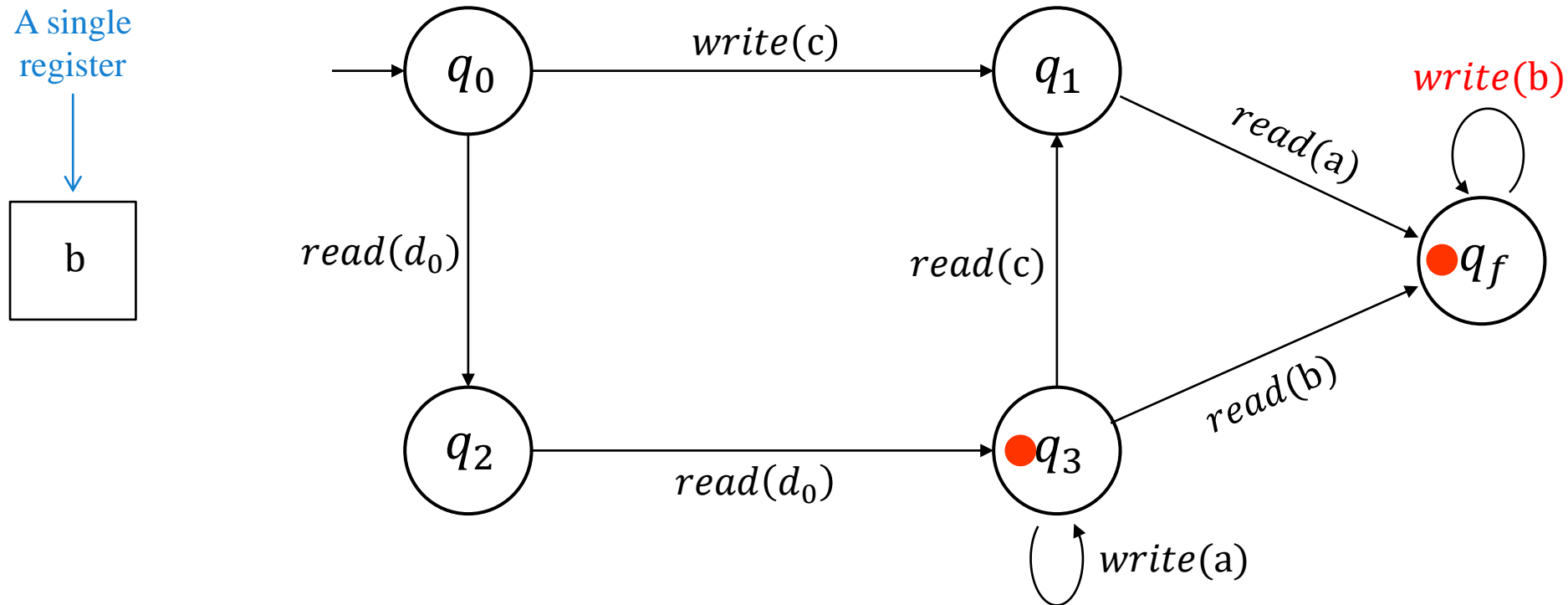


A small example

A single register

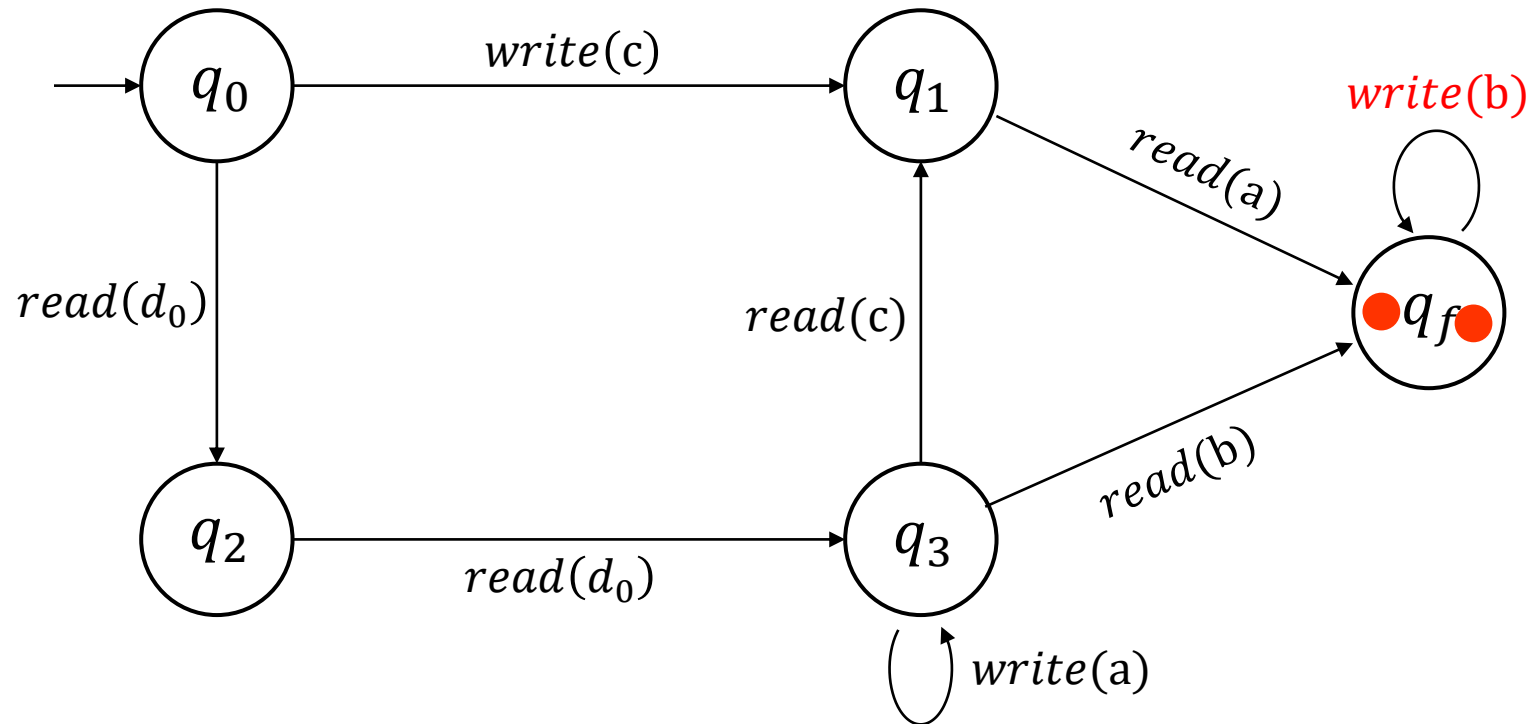
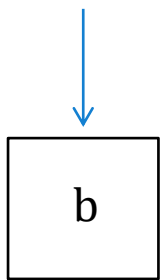


A small example



A small example

A single register



All processes can be in q_f at the same time

Reachability problems

Does there exist a number of participants for which a bad event can happen?

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Does there exist n such that, from init_n , there is an execution ρ that reaches a bad configuration?

\uparrow
 n processes, all in q_0
registers initialized to d_0

\uparrow
Asynchronicity:
many executions for a given n

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COVER

$\exists n, \exists \rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma, \gamma(q_f) \geq 1 ?$

At least one process in *error state* q_f

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TARGET

$\exists n, \exists \rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma, \forall q \neq q_f, \gamma(q) = 0 ?$

All processes in q_f

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All processes in q_f

**Presence Reachability
Problem (PRP)**

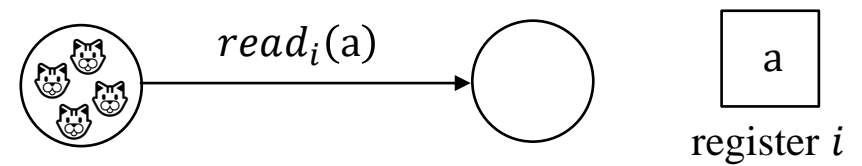
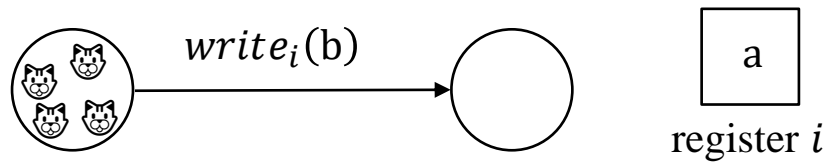
$$\exists n, \exists \rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma, \quad \gamma \models \phi ?$$

\uparrow
inspired by [DSTZ12]

\uparrow
Presence constraint = Boolean combination of ‘state q empty’

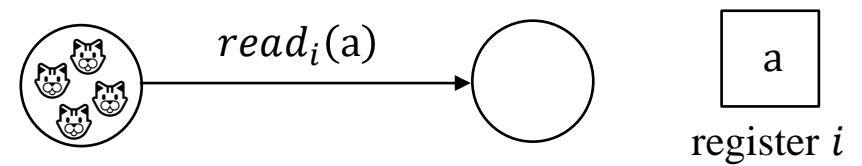
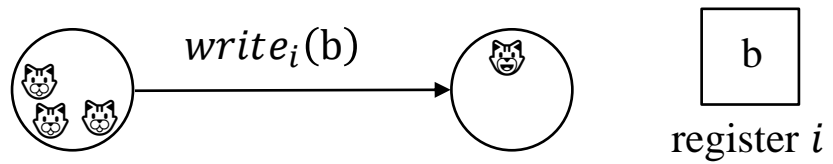
An abstraction for PRP

Copycat: a process can copy another one in same state.



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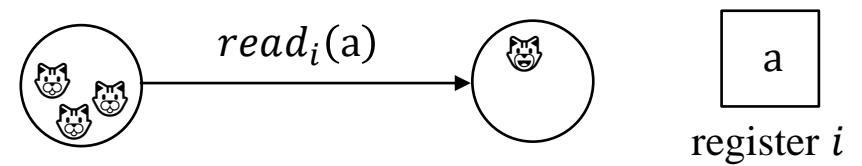
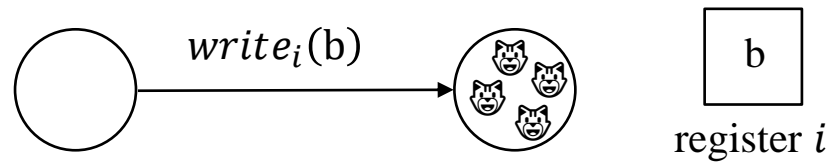
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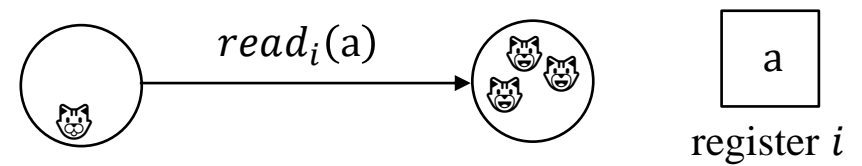
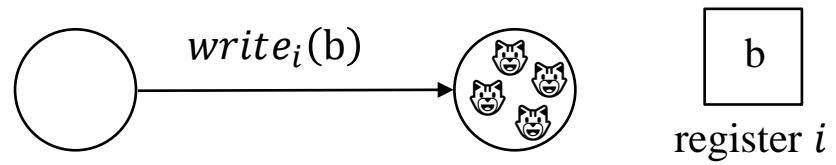
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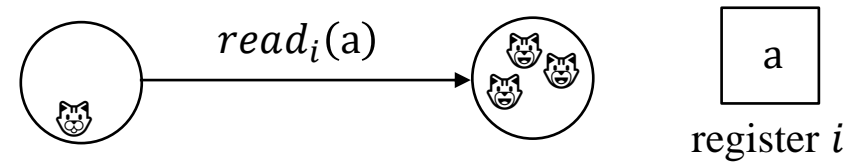
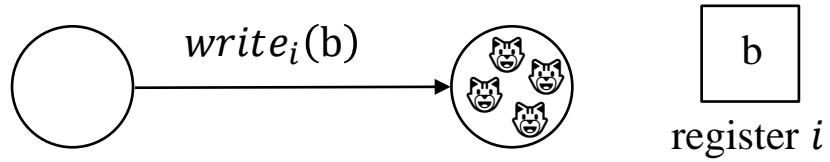
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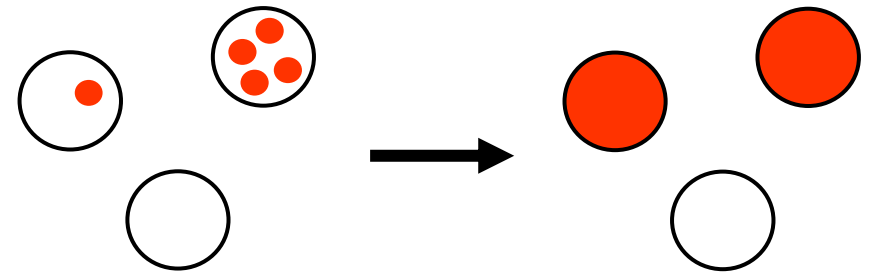


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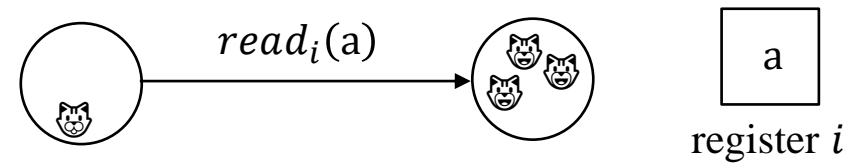
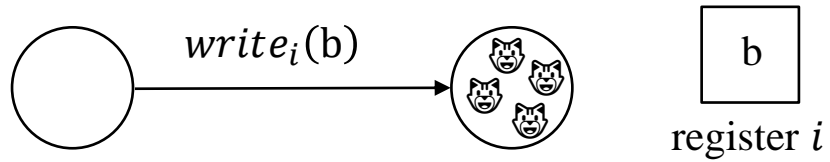


0 – 1 abstraction: store whether 0 process or at least 1



An abstraction for PRP

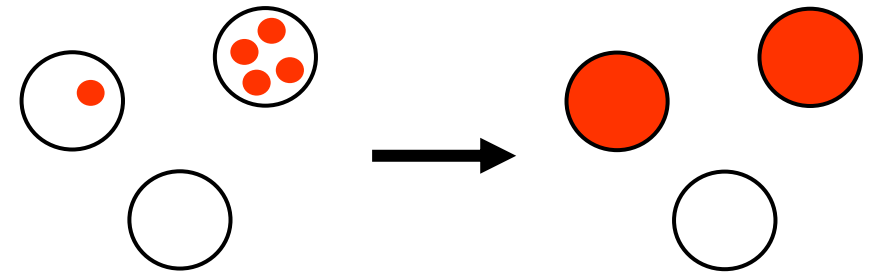
Copycat: a process can copy another one in same state.



0 – 1 abstraction: store whether 0 process or at least 1

Sound and complete for PRP:

- copycat property
- number n of processes is arbitrary
- presence constraints do not count processes

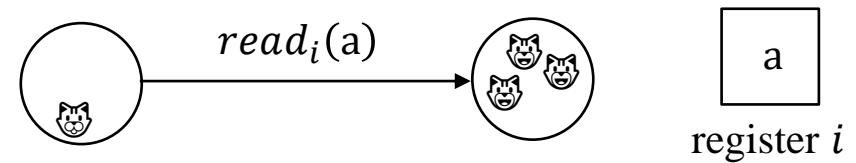
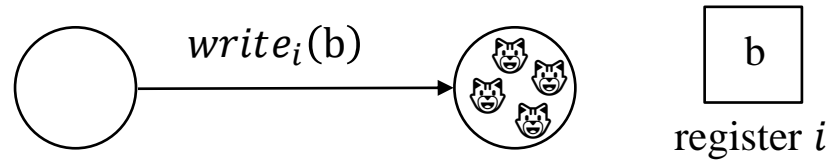


$$\text{PRP} \quad \exists n, \exists \rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma, \quad \gamma \models \phi?$$

Boolean combination of 'state q empty'

An abstraction for PRP

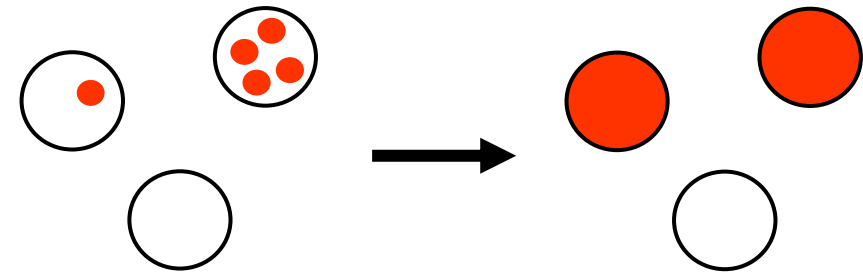
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Boolean combination of ‘state q empty’

Theorem [Wal23]: PRP is in NP.

Contributions on reachability problems [Wal23]

	COVER	TARGET	DNF-PRP	PRP
General case	NP-complete	NP-complete	NP-complete	NP-complete
Not initialized	PTIME	NP-complete	NP-complete	NP-complete
One register	PTIME	PTIME	PTIME	NP-complete

[Wal23] Nicolas Waldburger. *Checking Presence Reachability Properties on Parameterized Shared-Memory Systems*. MFCS 2023.

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previously known result

A more general result

Structural Theorem [Wal24]: In ASMS, the *diameter* is doubly-exponentially bounded.

If $\gamma \rightarrow^* \gamma'$ then there is

$$\rho: \gamma = \gamma_0 \xrightarrow{t_1} \xrightarrow{t_1} \xrightarrow{t_1} \dots \xrightarrow{t_1} \gamma_1 \xrightarrow{t_2} \xrightarrow{t_2} \xrightarrow{t_2} \dots \xrightarrow{t_2} \gamma_2 \xrightarrow{t_3} \dots \xrightarrow{t_\ell} \xrightarrow{t_\ell} \xrightarrow{t_\ell} \dots \xrightarrow{t_\ell} \gamma_\ell = \gamma' \quad \ell \leq B \text{ phases, } B \text{ 2-exp}$$

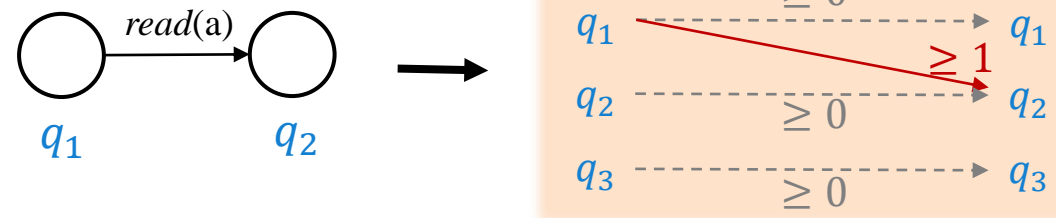
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Proof using an abstraction called **transfer flows**.
Relies on a bound from well-quasi-order theory [SS24].



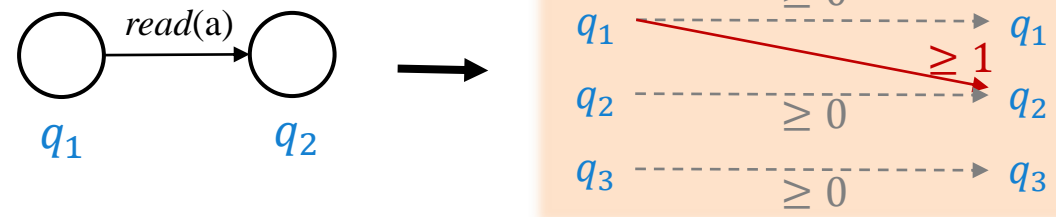
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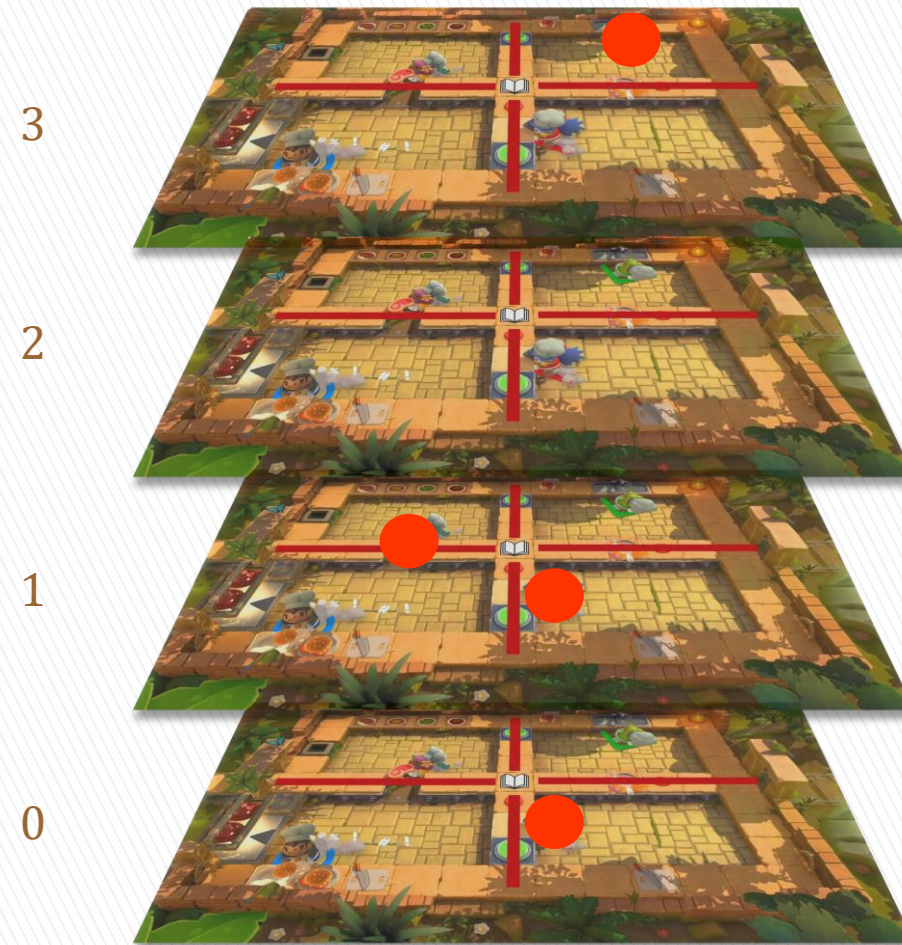


Corollary [Wal24]: The following problems for ASMS are decidable:

- emptiness of expressions obtained using presence constraints, Boolean operators and Post^* and Pre^* operators;
 $\text{Post}^*(\text{Init}) \subseteq \text{Pre}^*(\#q_f \geq 1)$
- verification of LTL formulas over transitions, without the next operator.
 $\exists n \exists \rho$ infinite from $\text{init}_n, \rho \models t_1 \text{ U } (G t_2)$

Second part

Round-based shared-memory systems



A round-based consensus algorithm

Aspnes' consensus algorithm [Asp02]



Shared registers: $(rg_b[r])_{b \in \{0,1\}, r \in \mathbb{N}}$ all initialized to \perp ;

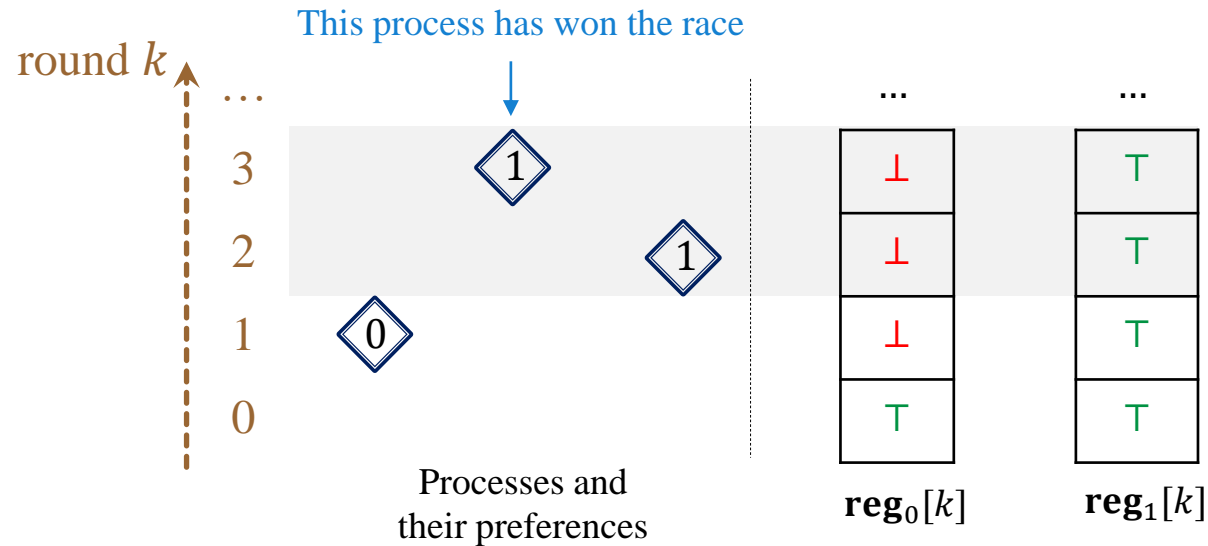
Variable k is private
= asynchronous rounds

```
bool  $p \in \{0,1\}$  %preference of the process
for  $k = 0$  to  $\infty$ :
  read from  $rg_0[k]$  and  $rg_1[k]$ ;
  if  $rg_0[k] = \top$  and  $rg_1[k] = \perp$  then  $p := 0$ ;
  else if  $rg_0[k] = \perp$  and  $rg_1[k] = \top$  then  $p := 1$ ;
  write  $\top$  to  $rg_p[k]$ ;
  if  $k > 0$ :
    read from  $rg_{1-p}[k-1]$ ;
    if  $rg_{1-p}[k-1] = \perp$ :
      return  $p$ ;
```

Unboundedly many shared registers: 2 per round

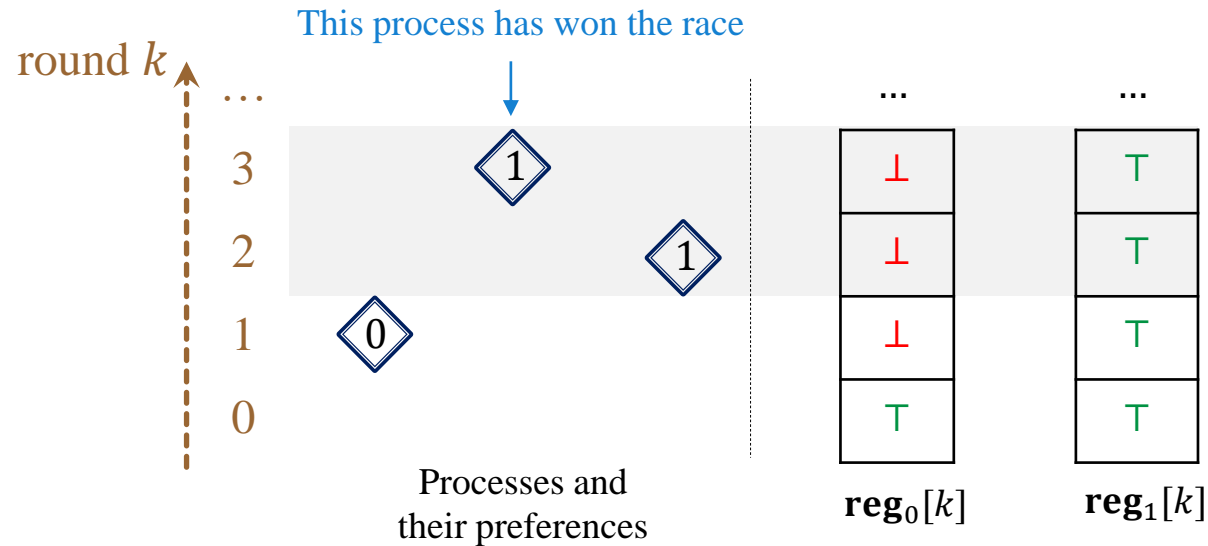
Read and write to registers of nearby rounds

More about Aspnes' algorithm



- **Race** between the processes.
- **Stochastic scheduler** that models a **noisy environment**.
- **Almost-surely terminates** but does not always terminate (workaround for an impossibility result [FLP85]).
- Unboundedly many rounds are needed.

More about Aspnes' algorithm

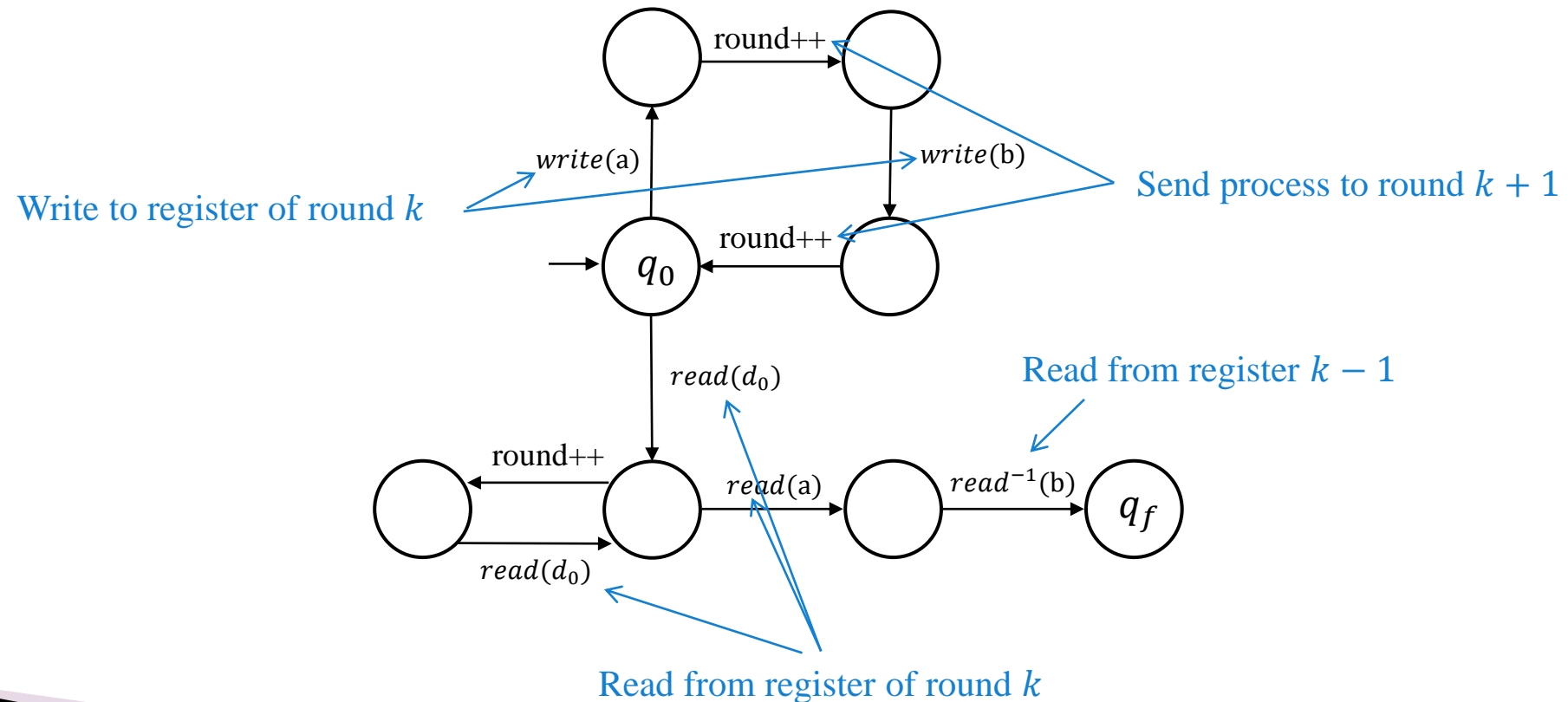


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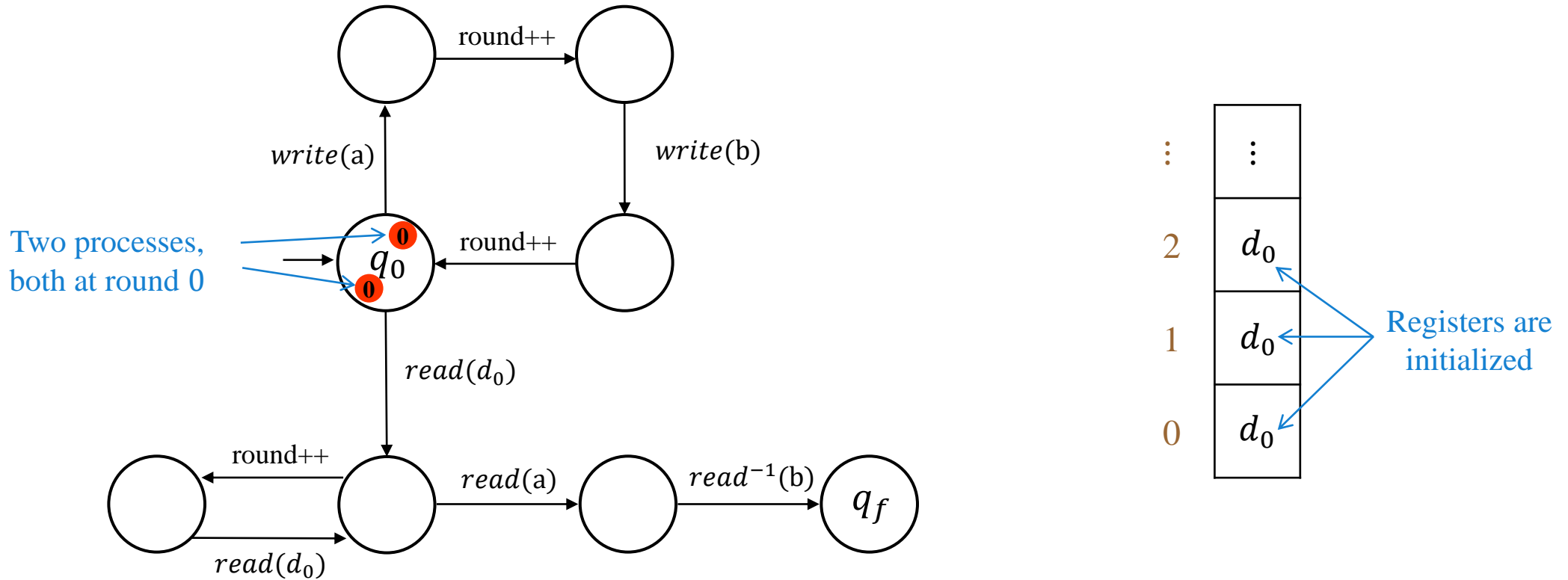
(not modelled for now, topic of third part)

Round-based ASMS

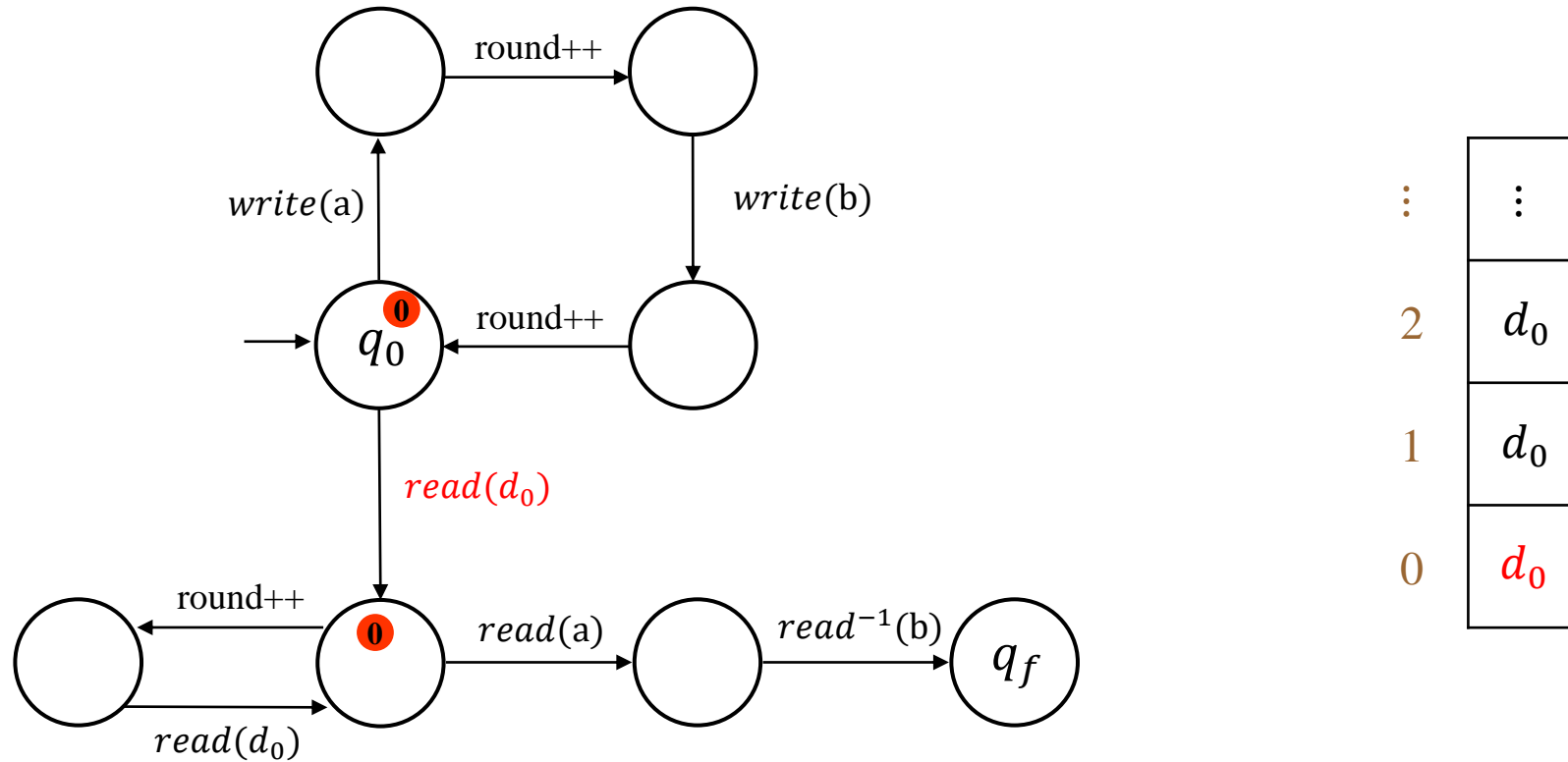
New model for round-based algorithms [BMSW22]



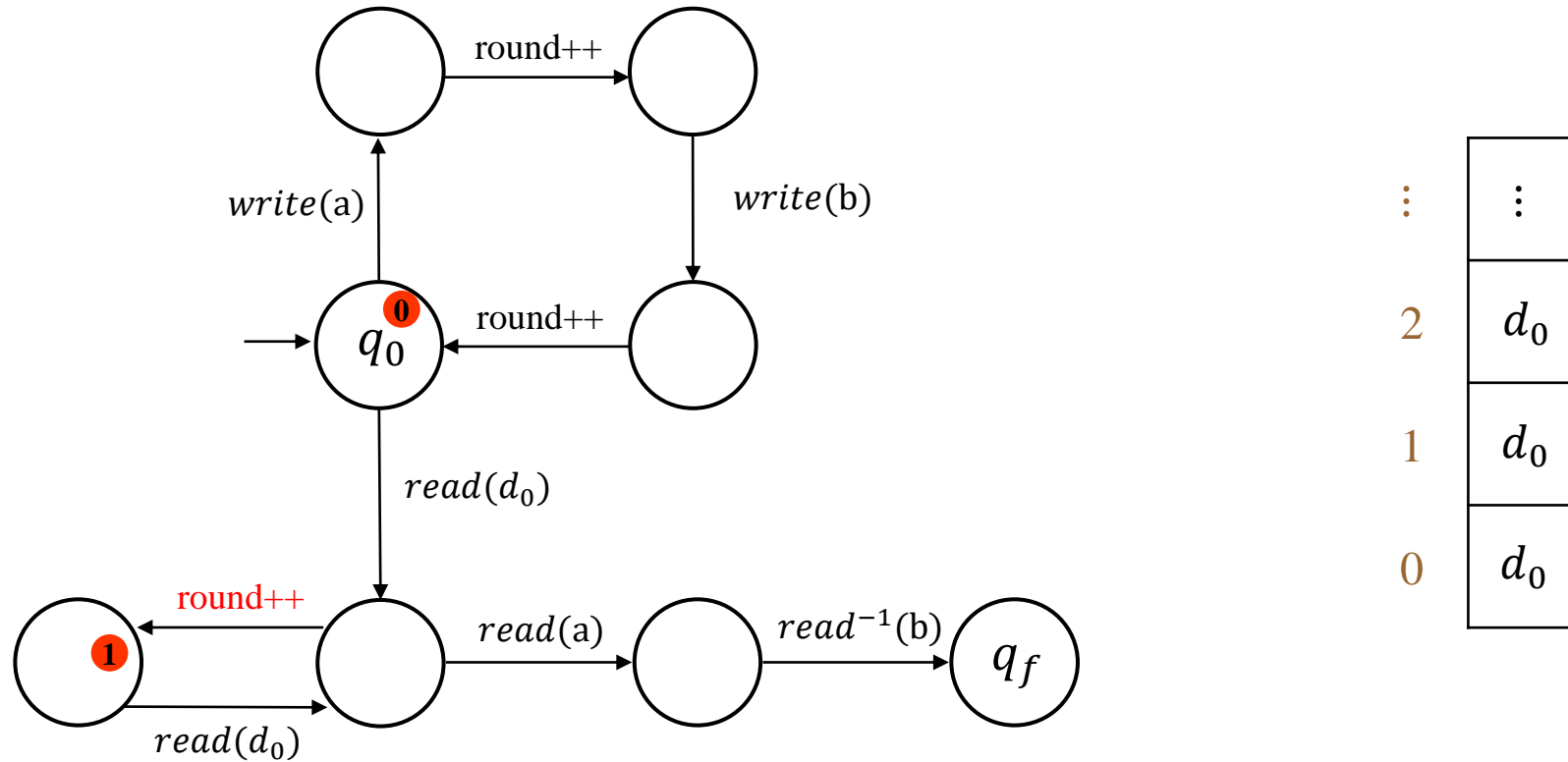
An example of execution



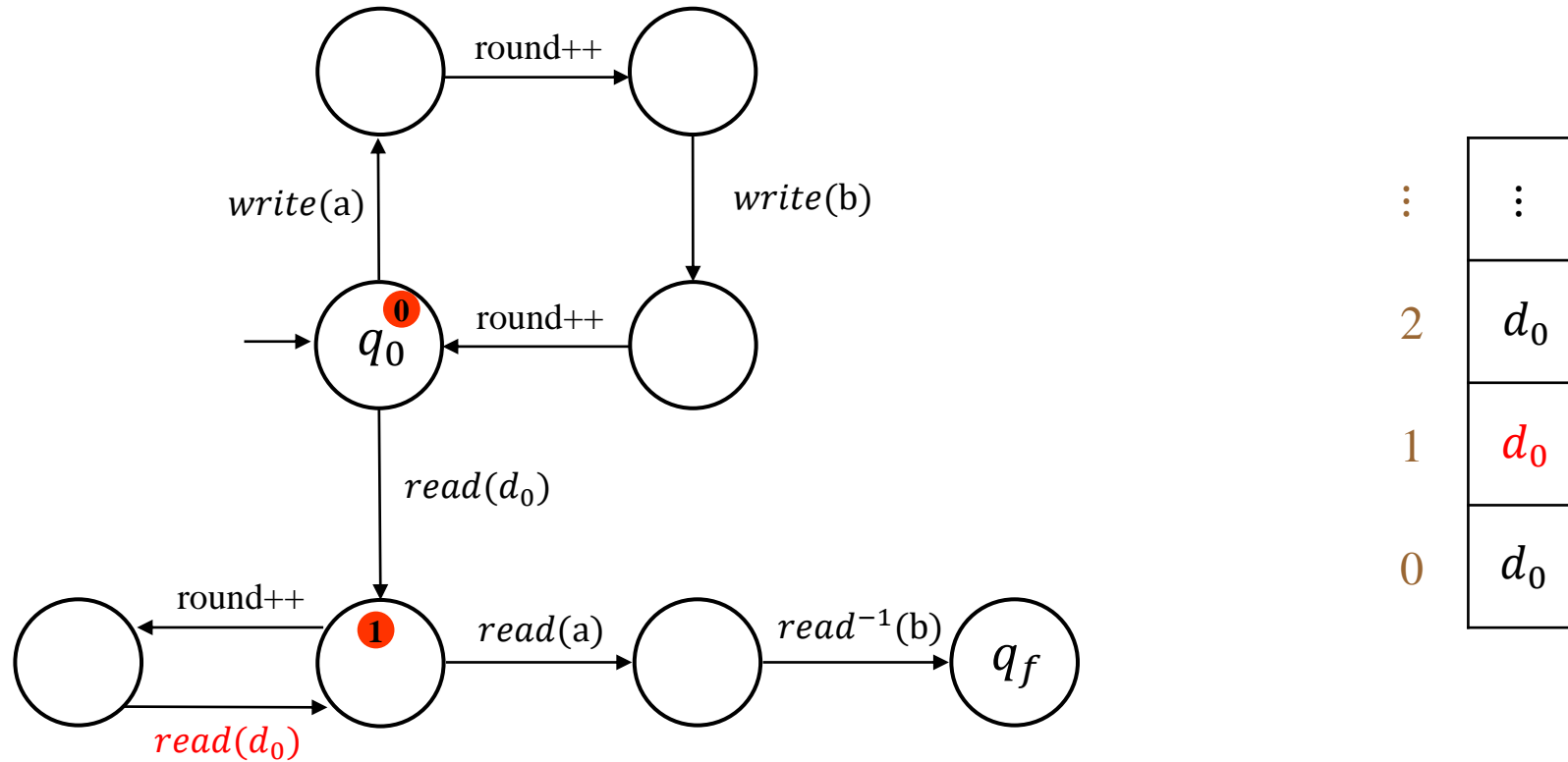
An example of execution



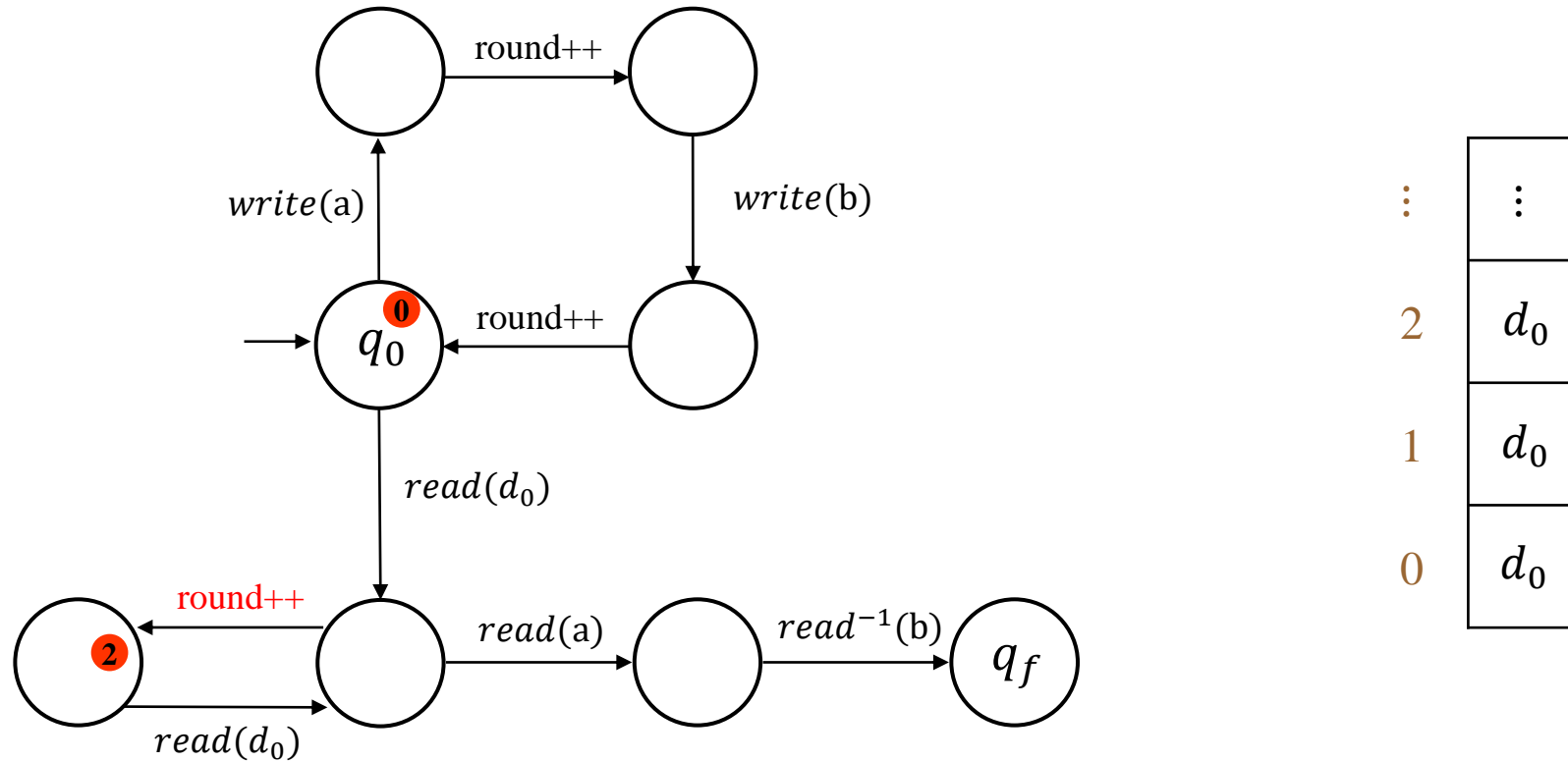
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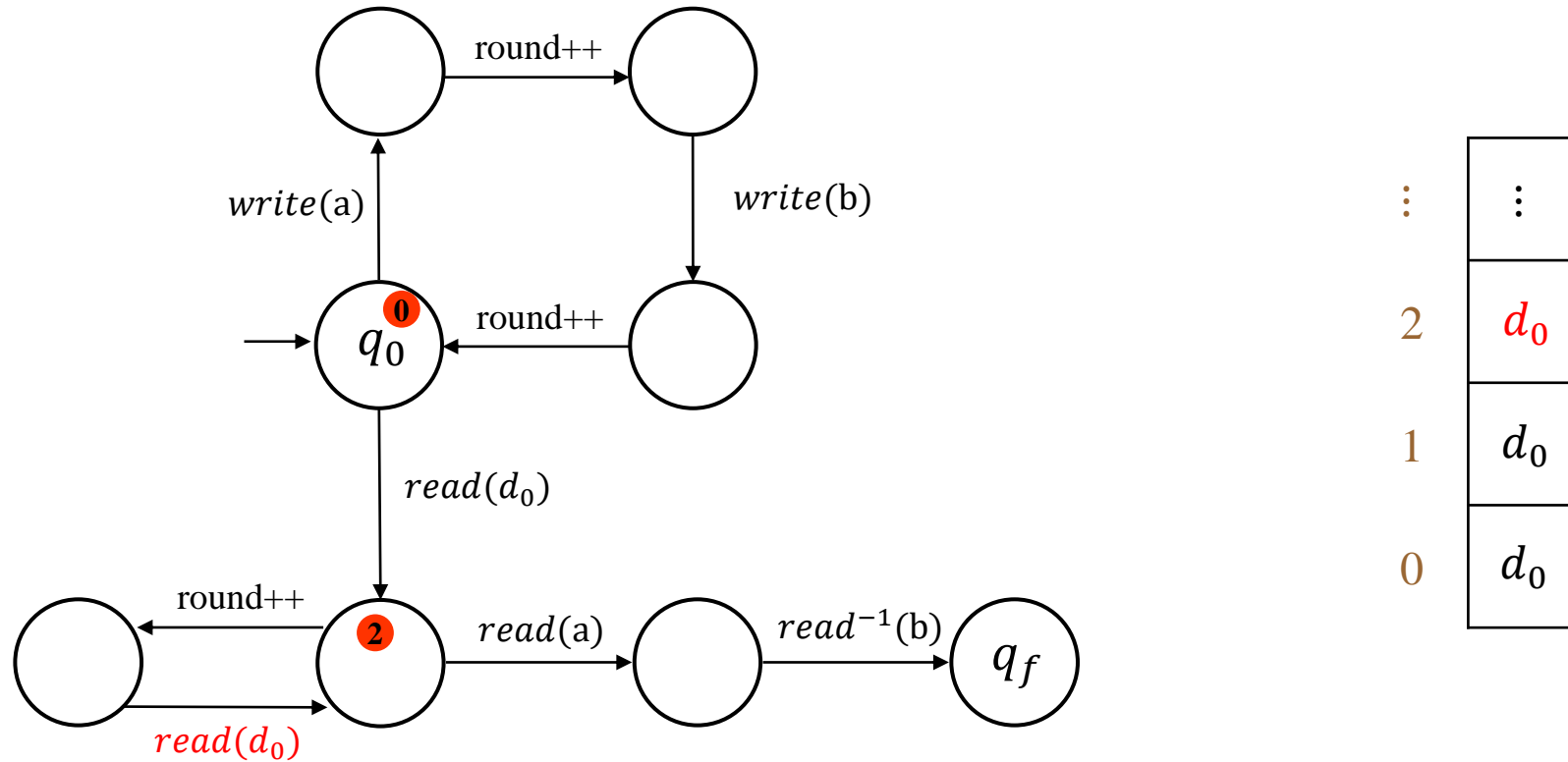
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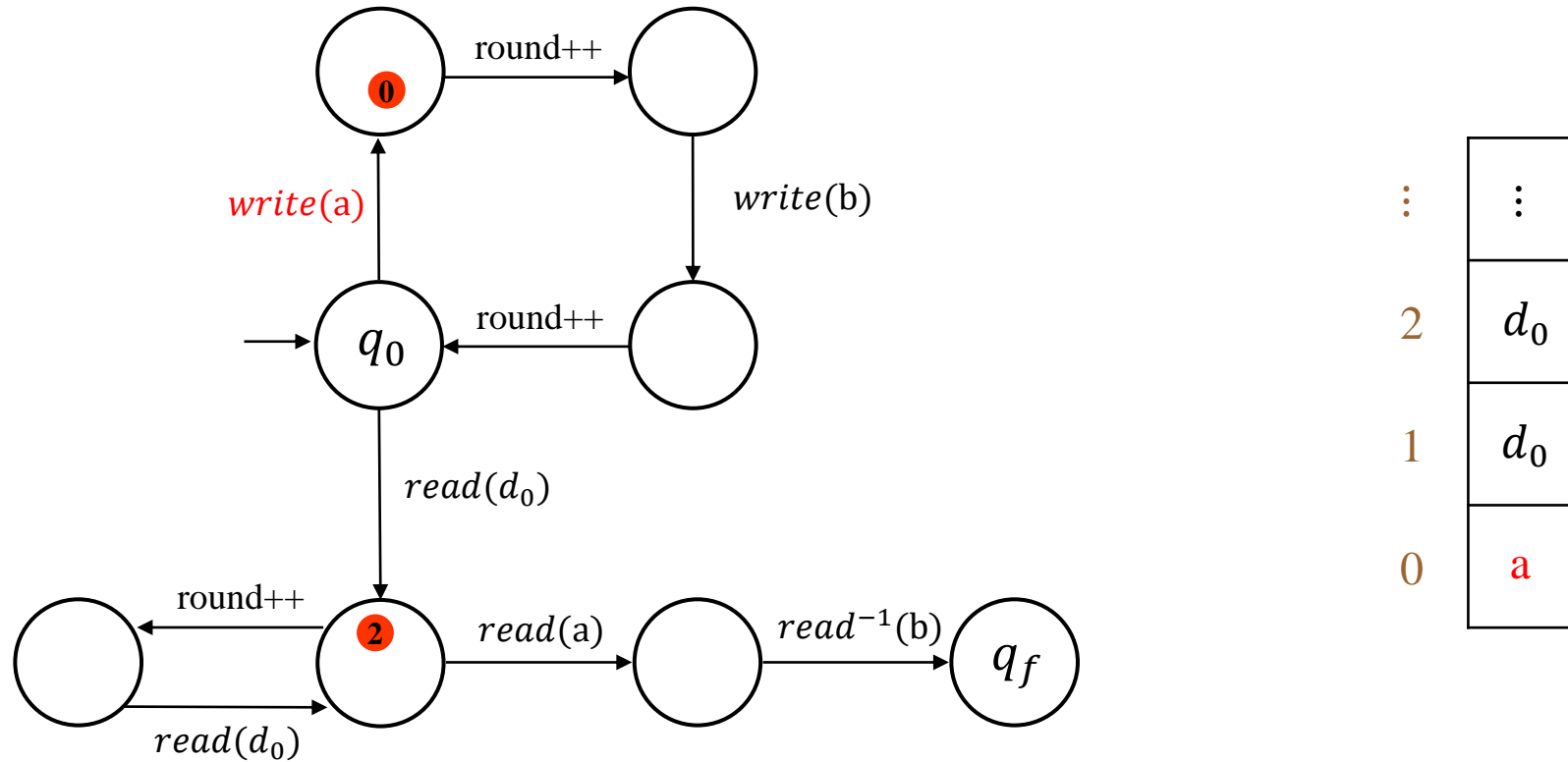
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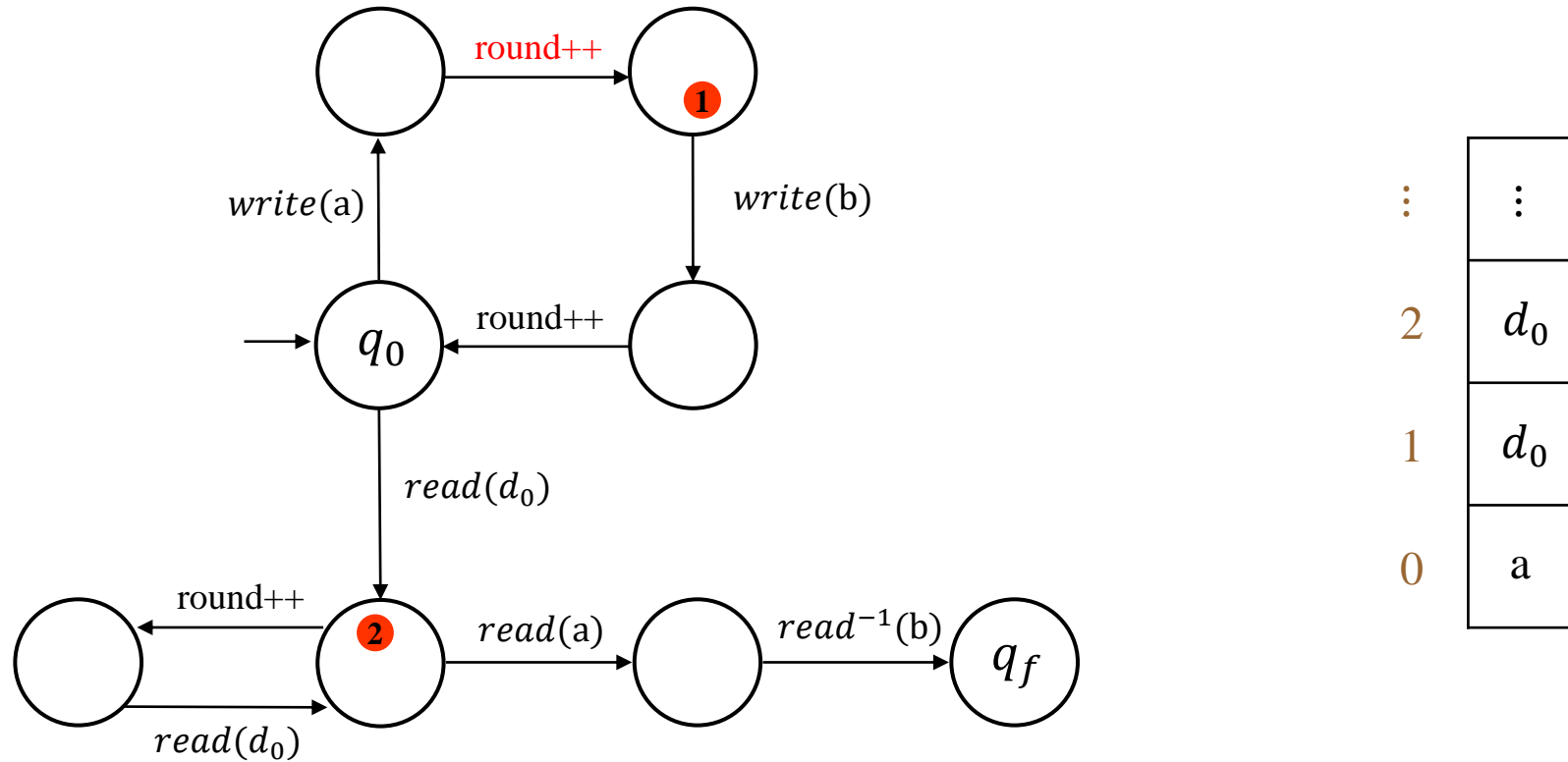
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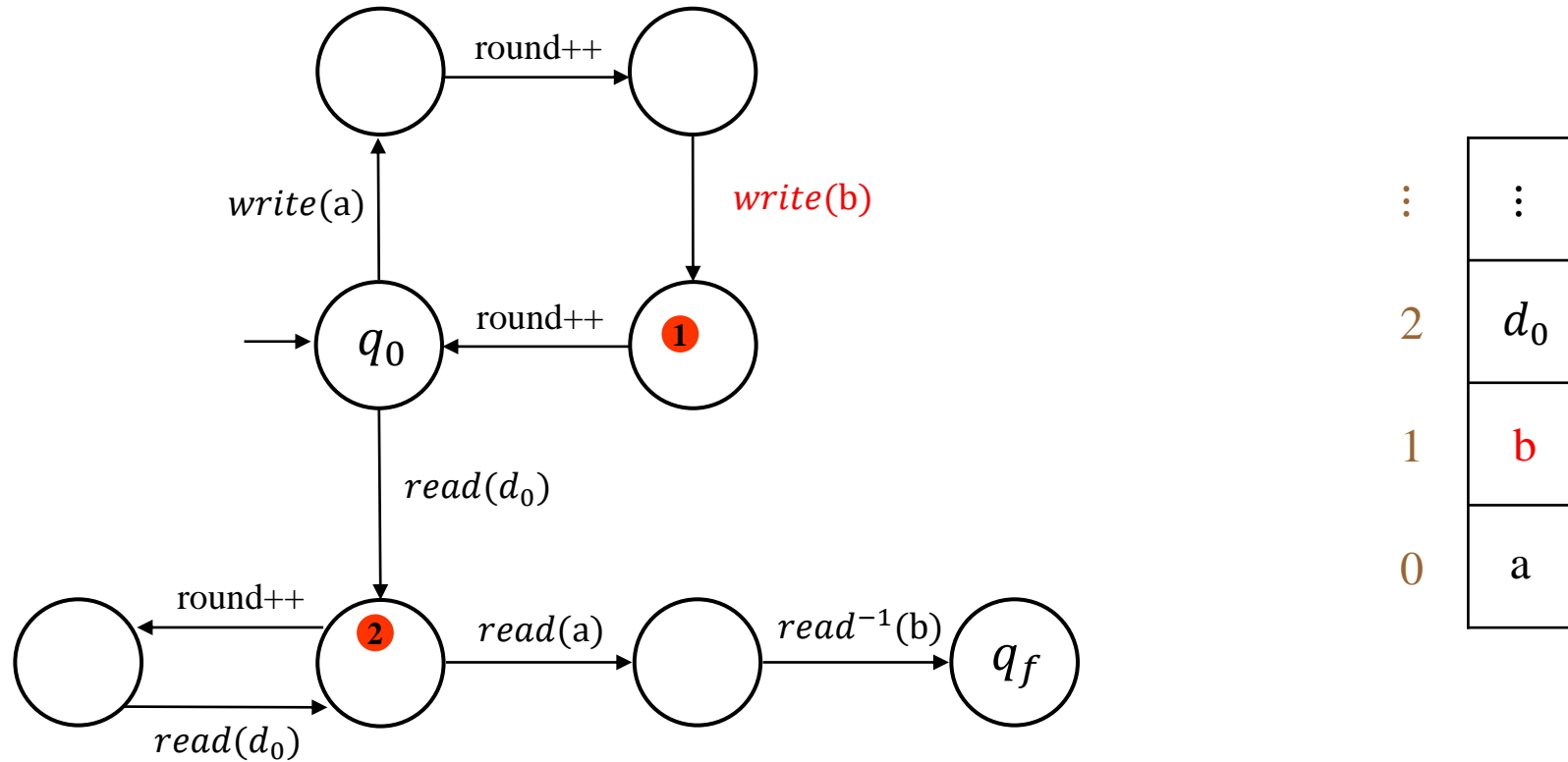
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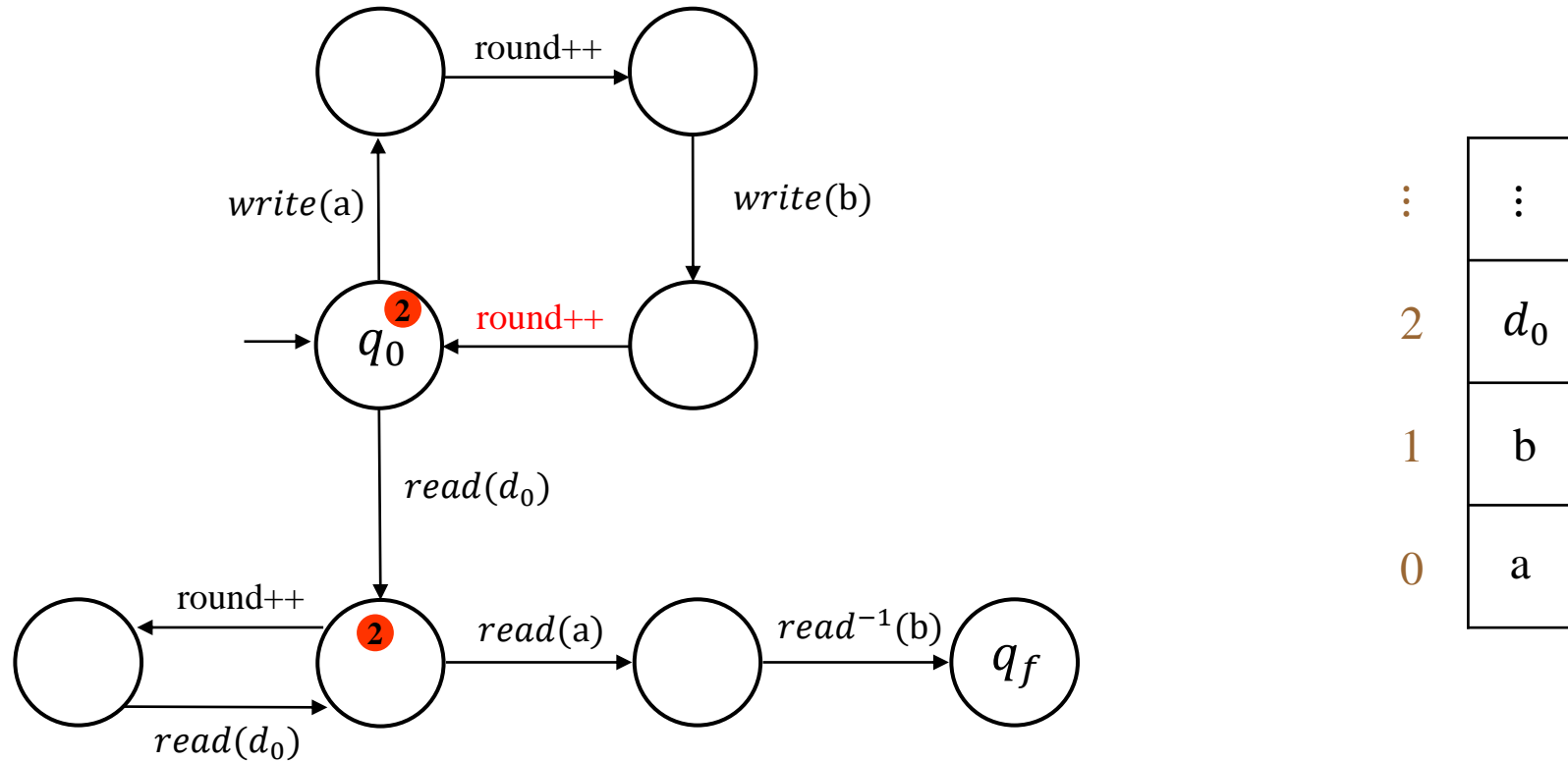
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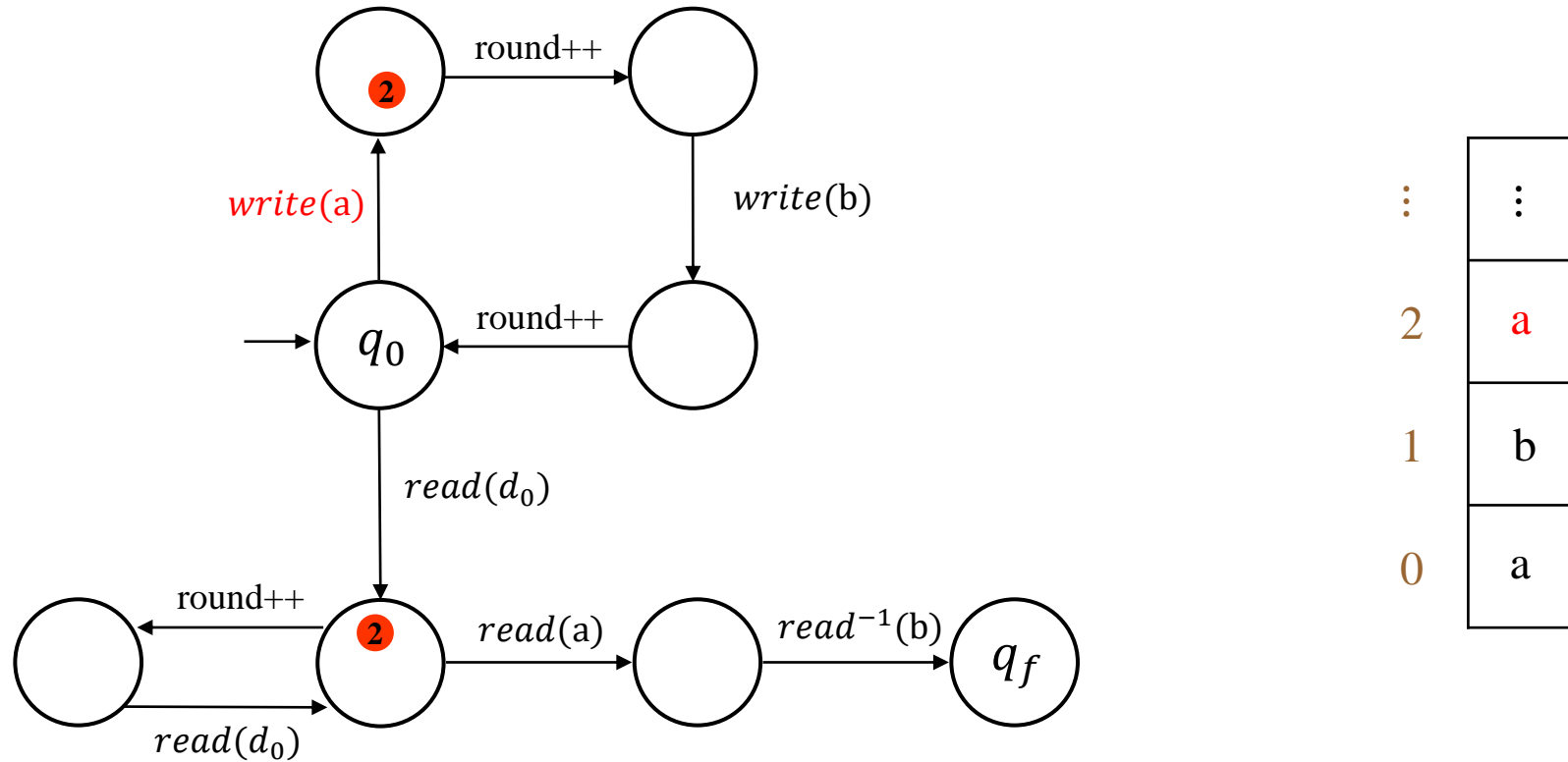
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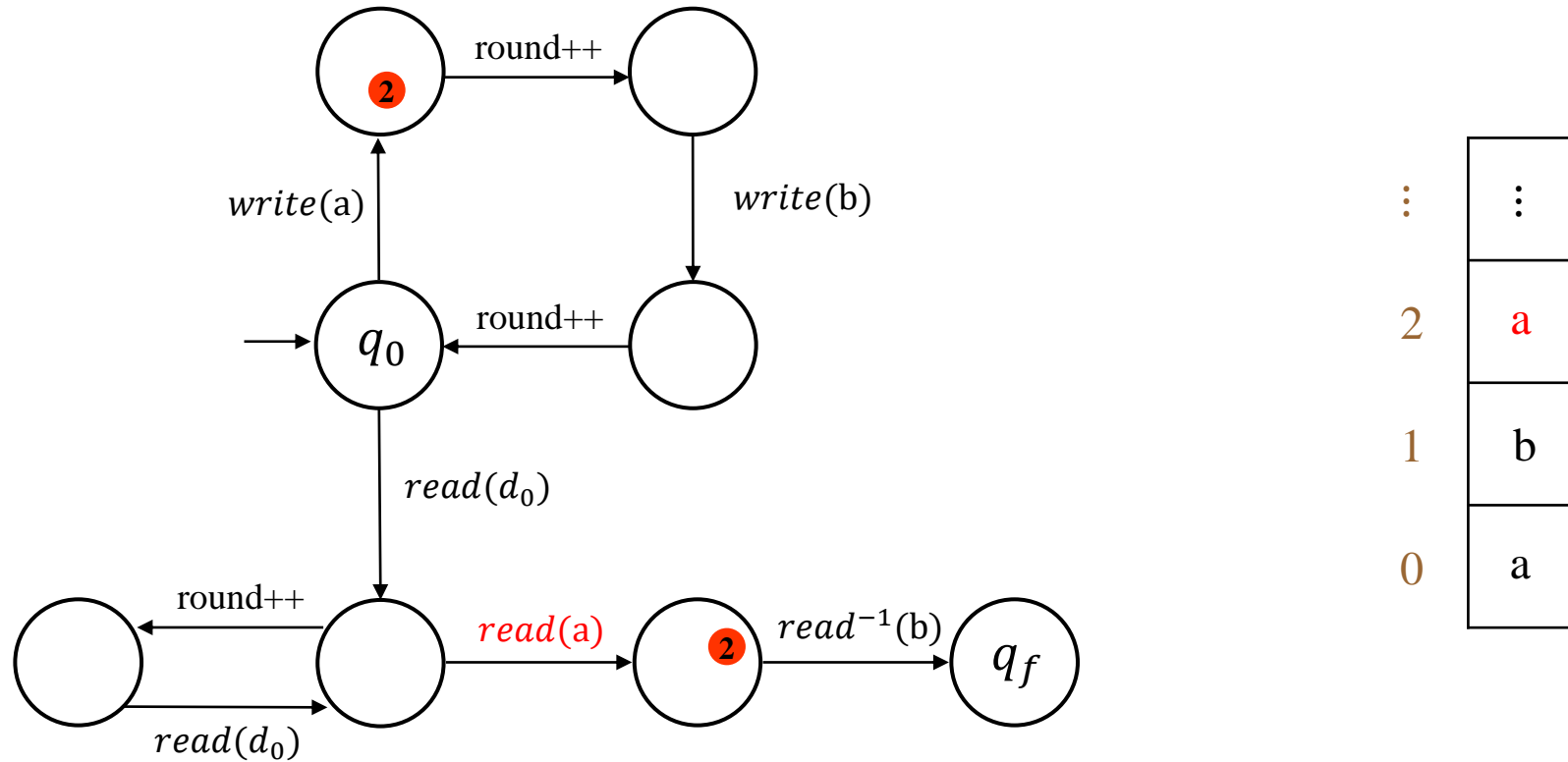
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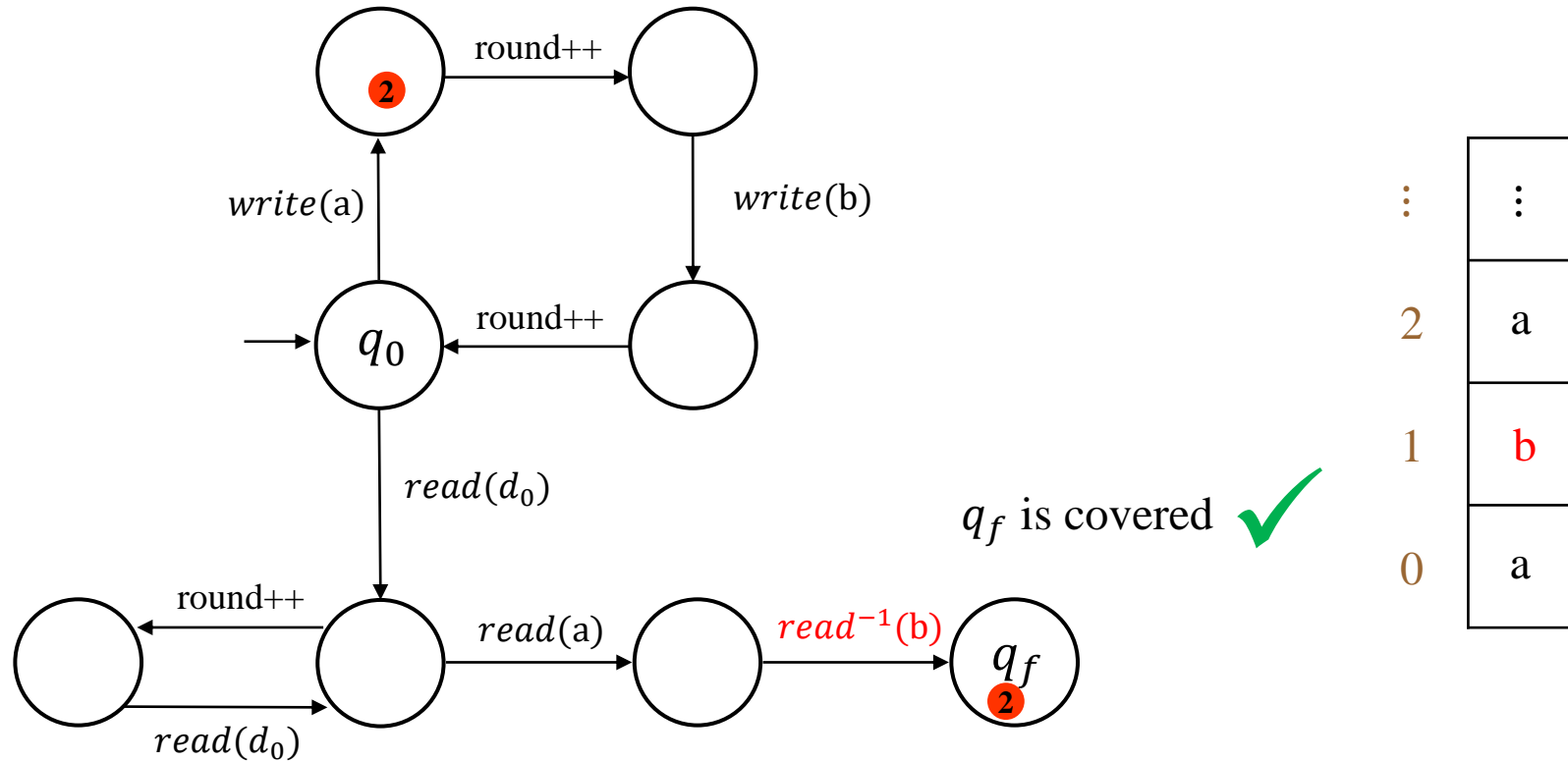
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Reachability problems in round-based ASMS

COVER

$$\exists n, \exists \rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma, \exists k, \gamma(q_f, k) \geq 1 ?$$

for some round k , some process in state q_f and at round k

Reachability problems in round-based ASMS

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Presence Reachability Problem (PRP)

$\exists n, \exists \rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma, \gamma \models \psi ?$



presence constraint = first-order formula on rounds with no nested quantifiers

Example: $\underbrace{\exists k (\gamma(q_1, k + 1) \geq 1 \wedge \gamma(q_1, k) = 0)} \vee \underbrace{\forall k \gamma(q_0, k) = 0}$

For some k , $(q_1, k + 1)$ not empty
but (q_1, k) empty

no process is in q_0

Complexity results

Theorem [BMSW22]: In round-based ASMS, COVER is PSPACE-complete.

[BMSW22] Nathalie Bertrand, Nicolas Markey, Ocan Sankur, **Nicolas Waldburger**:
Parameterized safety verification of round-based shared-memory systems. ICALP 2022.

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[Wal23] **Nicolas Waldburger**. *Checking Presence Reachability Properties on Parameterized Shared-Memory Systems*. MFCS 2023.

A representation for executions

Witness execution: $\rho: \gamma_0 \xrightarrow{\theta_1} \gamma_1 \xrightarrow{\theta_2} \gamma_2 \xrightarrow{\theta_3} \gamma_3 \xrightarrow{\theta_4} \gamma_4 \xrightarrow{\theta_5} \gamma_5 \xrightarrow{\theta_6} \gamma_6 \xrightarrow{\theta_7} \gamma_7 \xrightarrow{\theta_8} \gamma_8 \xrightarrow{\theta_9} \gamma_9 \xrightarrow{\theta_{10}} \gamma_{10} \models \psi$

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Actions:	θ_1	θ_2	θ_3	θ_4	θ_5	θ_6	θ_7	θ_8	θ_9	θ_{10}
Rounds:	0	1	1	0	0	2	3	4	1	2

$\theta_i \in \Delta \times \mathbb{N}$:
transition and round

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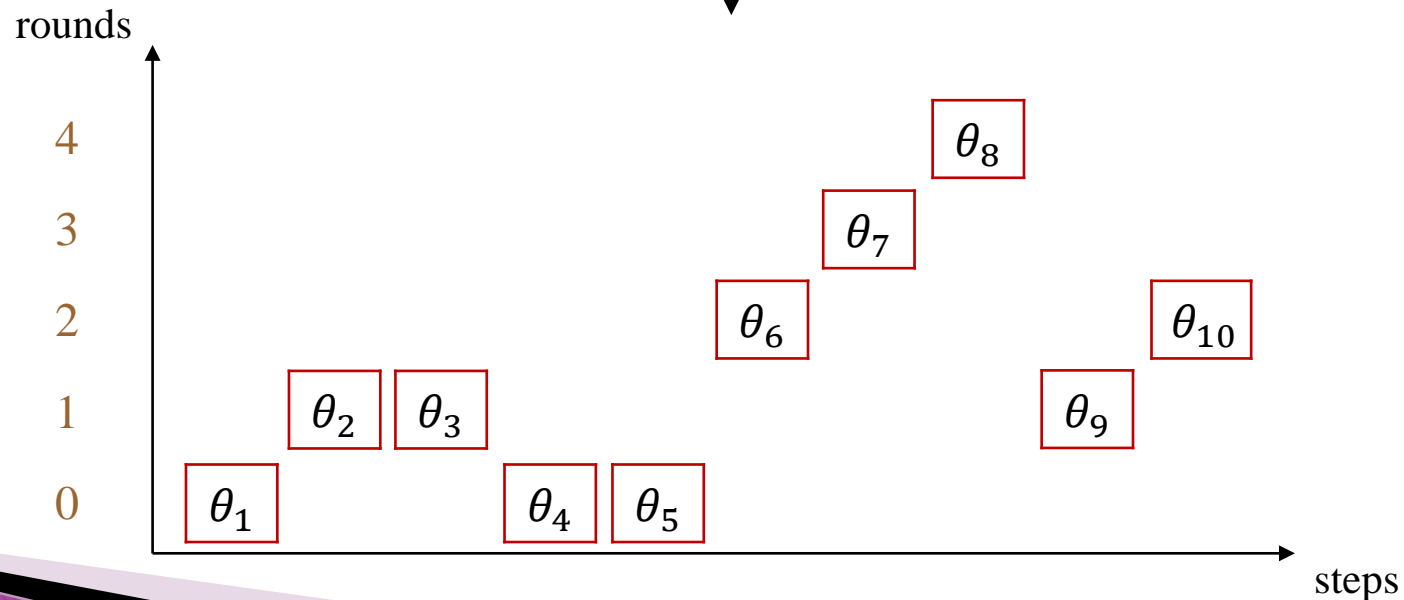
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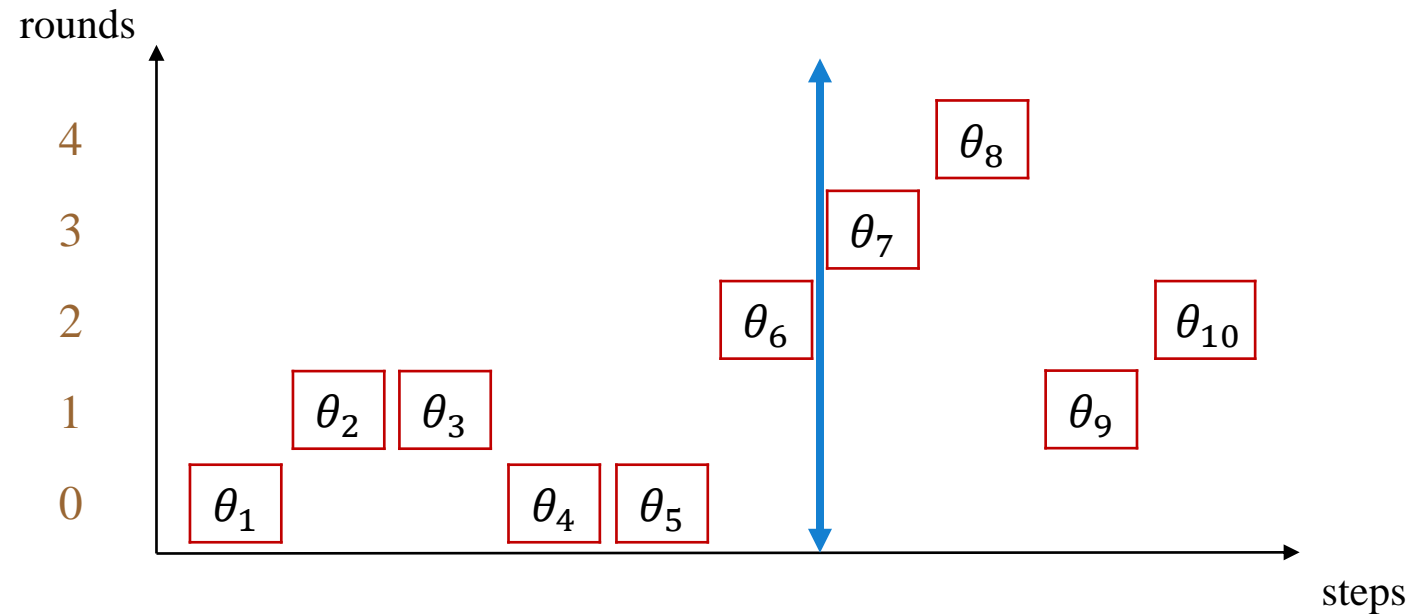
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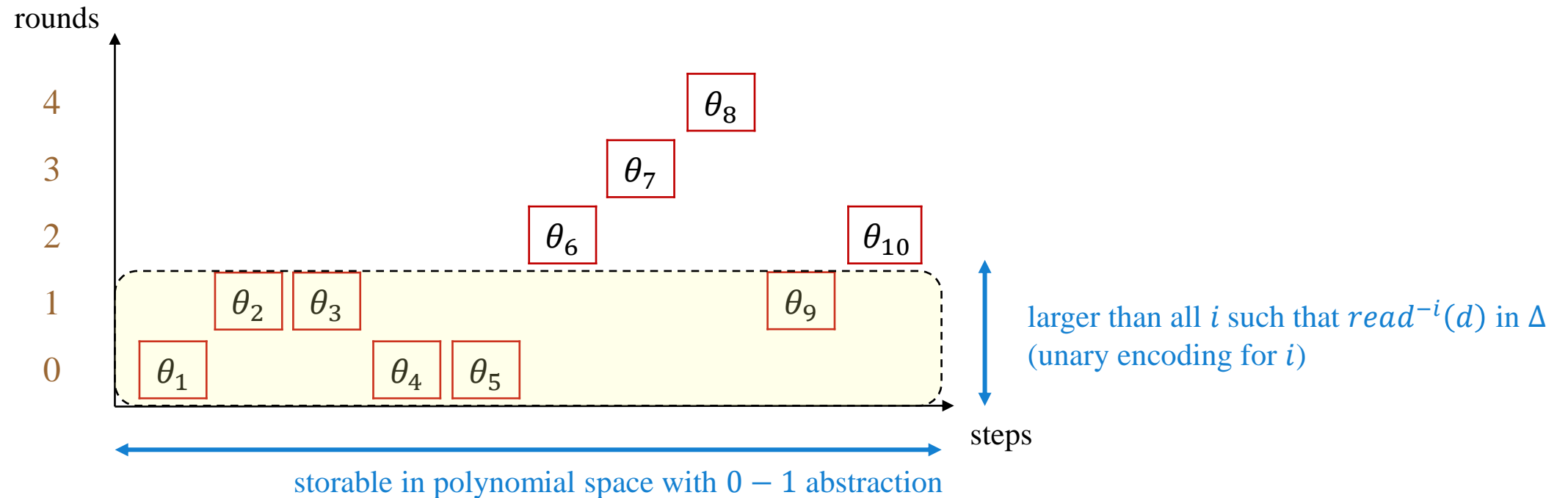


A non-deterministic polynomial-space algorithm

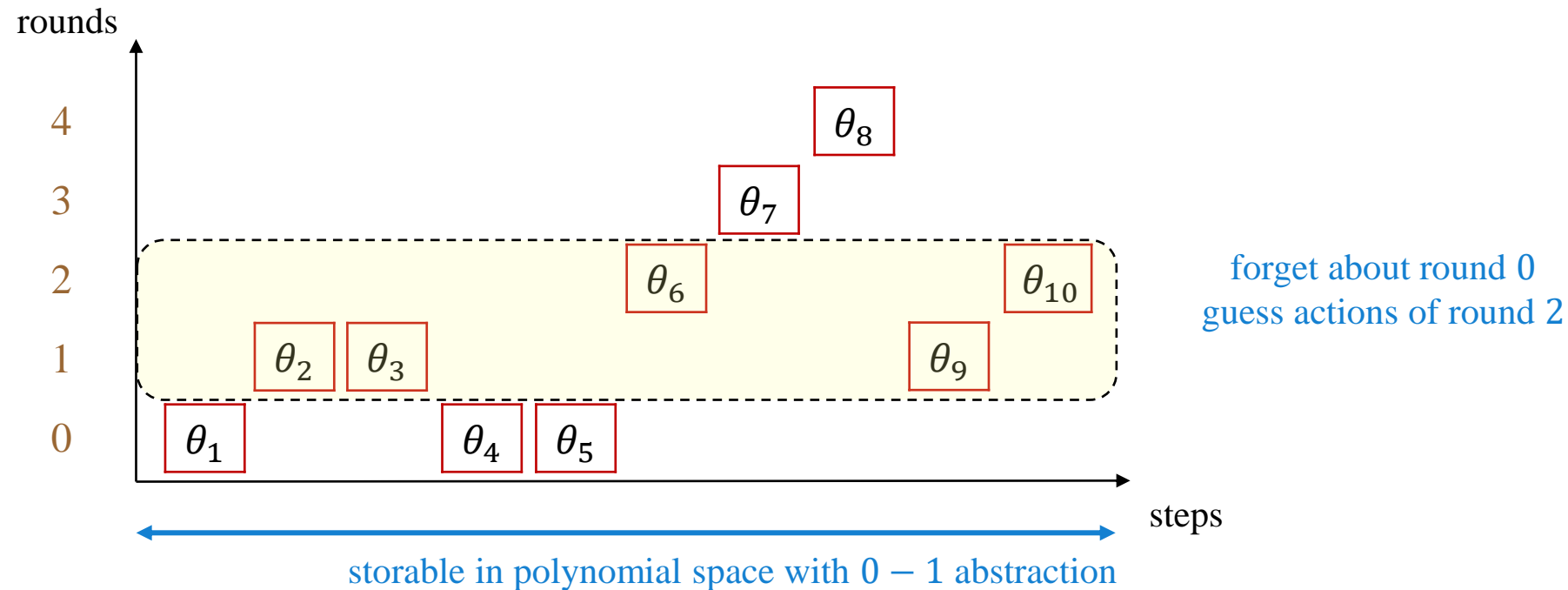


configurations may stretch across
exponentially many rounds

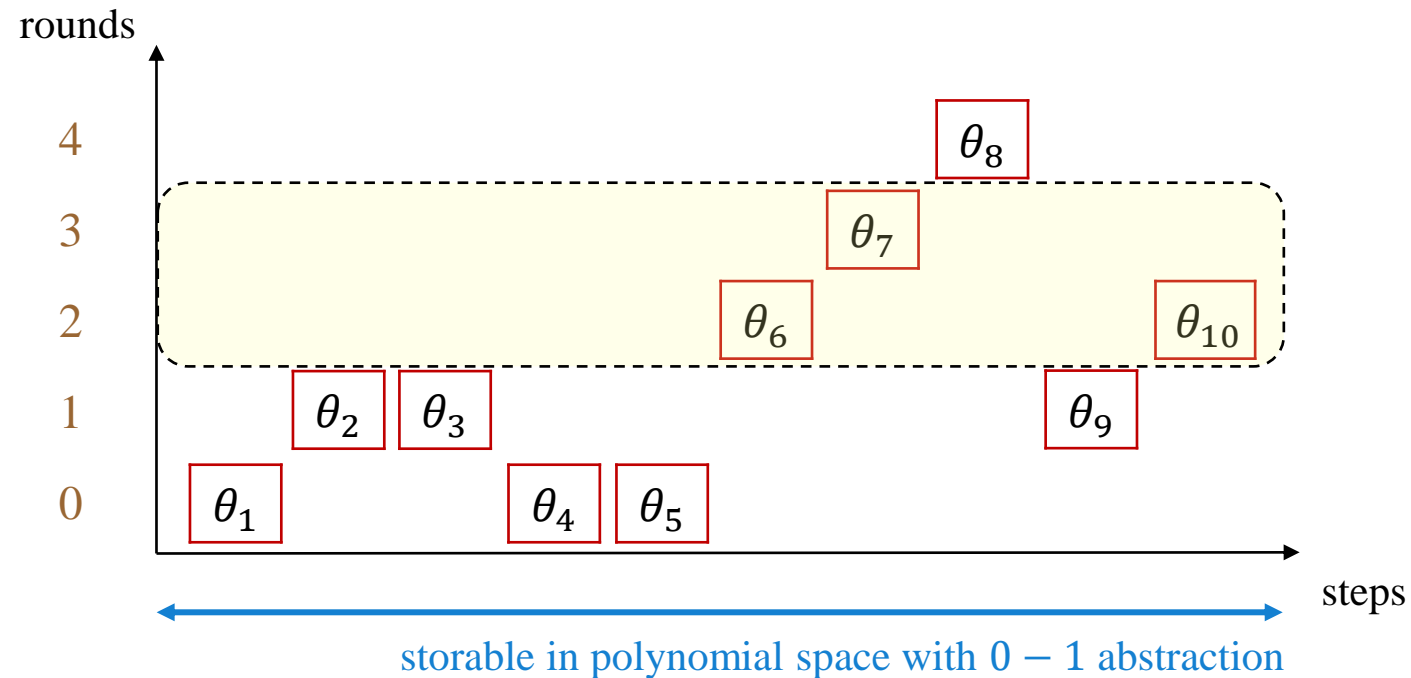
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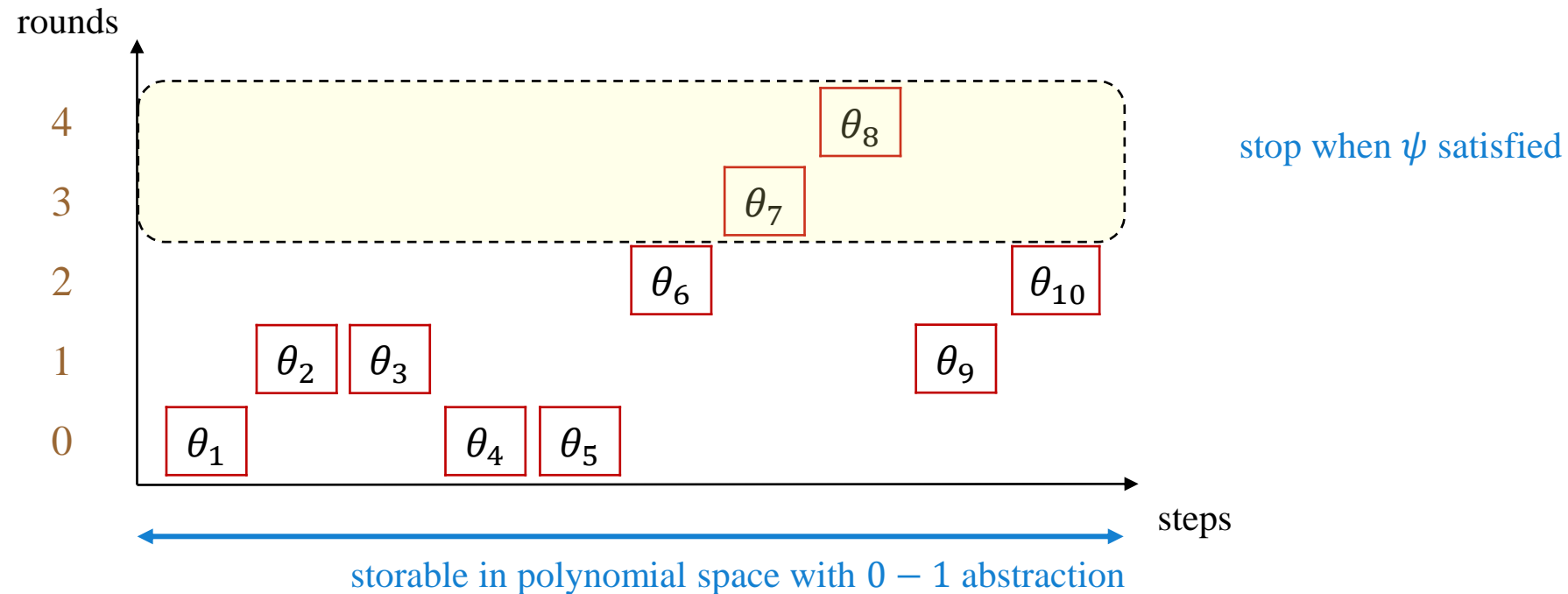
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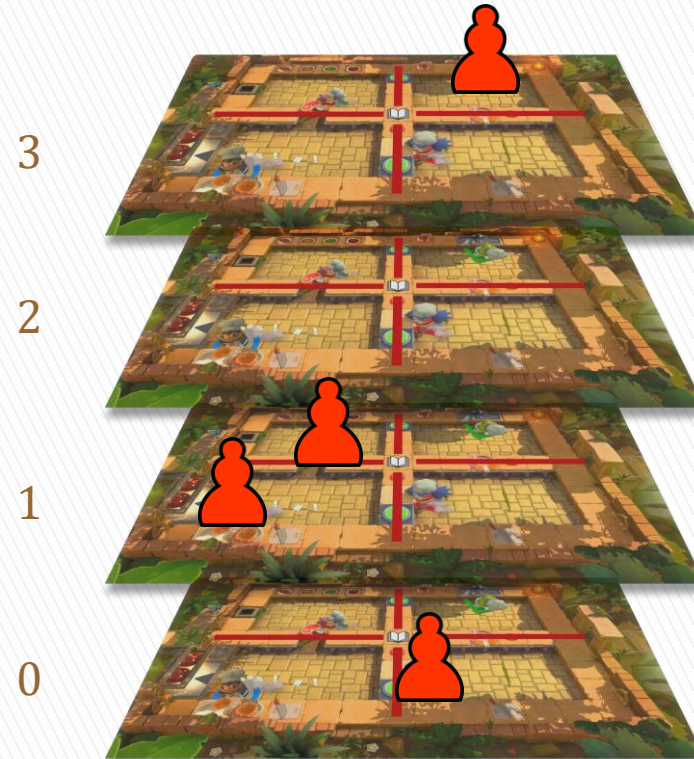


A non-deterministic polynomial-space algorithm



Third part

Round-based ASMS under stochastic schedulers



Stochastic scheduler

Needed for almost-sure termination in Aspnes' consensus algorithm.

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Qualitative probabilistic model-checking: does ρ satisfy the property **with probability 1**?

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almost-sure coverability: one process in q_f

almost-sure termination: all processes in q_f

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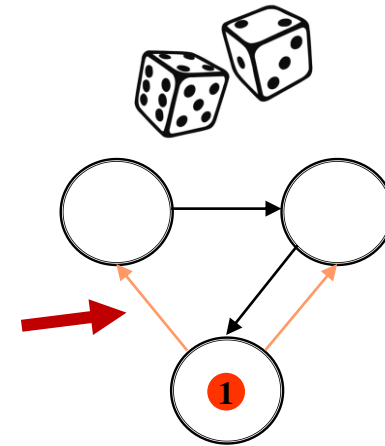
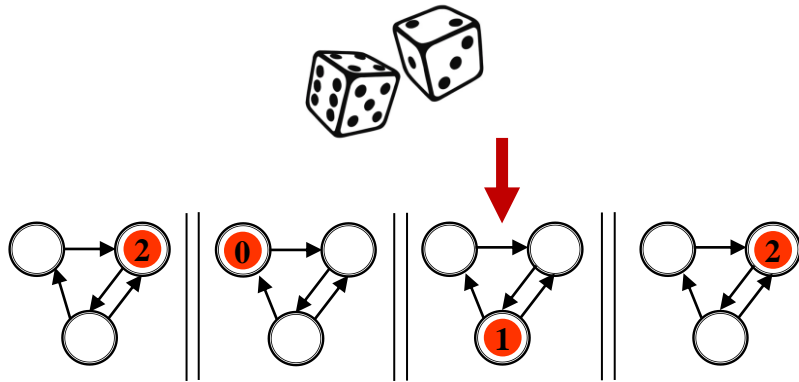
almost-sure termination: all processes in q_f

Memoryless and **uniform** stochastic scheduler:

select which process plays uniformly at random

then

select the transition uniformly at random among possible transitions



Is almost-sure COVER really probabilistic?

Proposition [BMRSS16]: In ASMS **without rounds**, for all $n \geq 1$:

$$\mathbb{P}_n(\mathbf{F}(\#q_f \geq 1)) = 1 \Leftrightarrow \text{Post}^*(\text{init}_n) \subseteq \text{Pre}^*(\#q_f \geq 1).$$

q_f covered with probability 1

\Leftrightarrow

from every reachable configuration, q_f can be covered

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Proposition [Wal24]: There are round-based ASMS where, for all n large enough:

- $\text{Post}^*(\text{init}_n) \subseteq \text{Pre}^*(\#q_f \geq 1)$ but
- $\mathbb{P}_n(\mathbf{F}(\#q_f \geq 1)) < 1$.

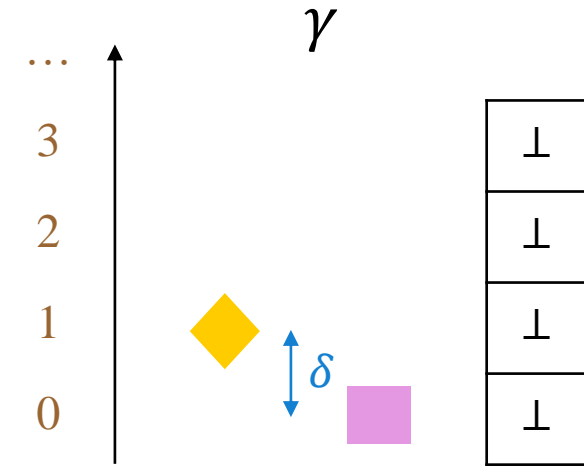
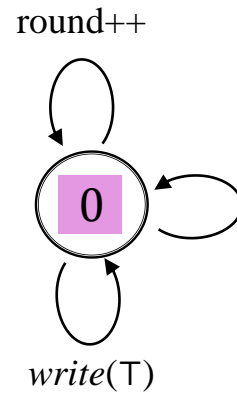
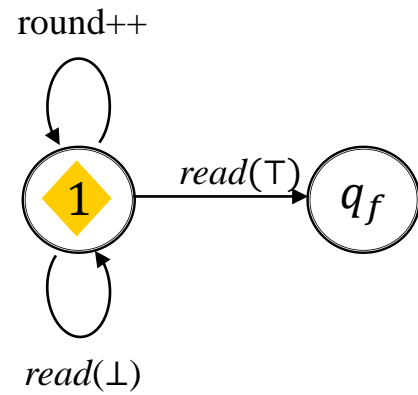
Because of random-walk behaviors (next slide).

[BMRSS16] Patricia Bouyer, Nicolas Markey, Mickael Randour, Arnaud Sangnier, and Daniel Stan. *Reachability in Networks of Shared-memory Protocols under Stochastic Schedulers*. ICALP 2016.

[Wal24] Nicolas Waldburger. *Parameterized verification of distributed shared-memory systems*.

PhD thesis (submitted), 2024.

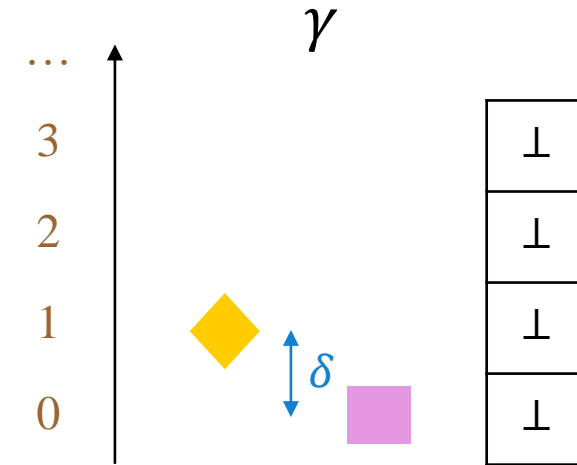
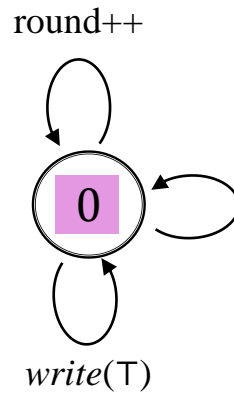
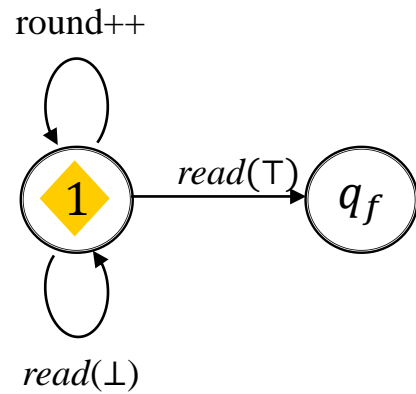
Random walk behaviors



◆ must read \top to get to q_f

■ only can write \top

Random walk behaviors



◆ must read T to get to q_f

■ only can write T

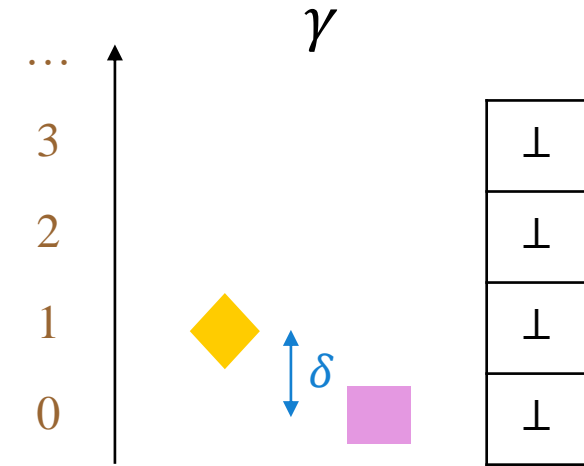
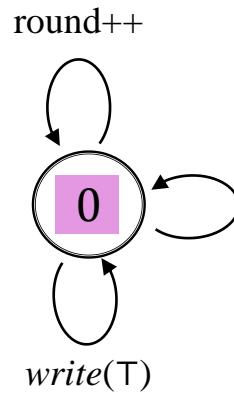
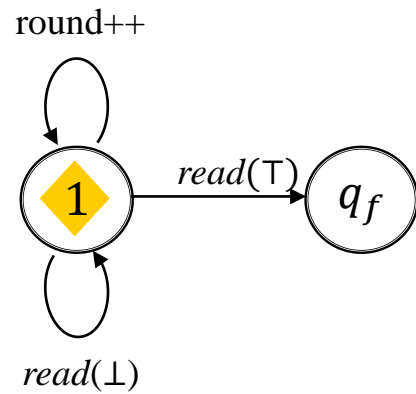
◆ has probability $\frac{1}{2}$ to increment round

■ has probability $\frac{1}{3}$ to increment round

always 2 possible transitions,
selected uniformly at random

always 3 possible transitions

Random walk behaviors

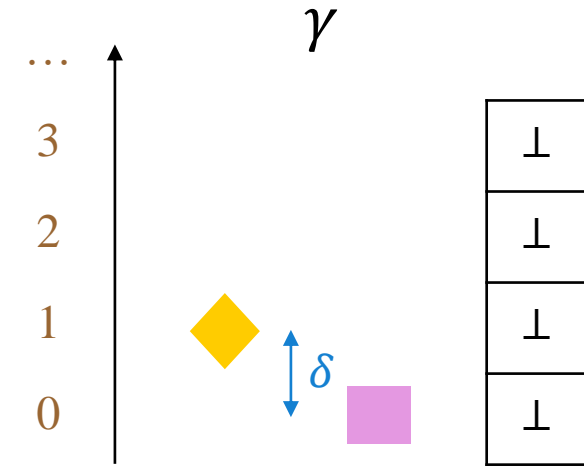
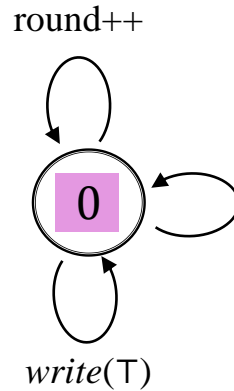
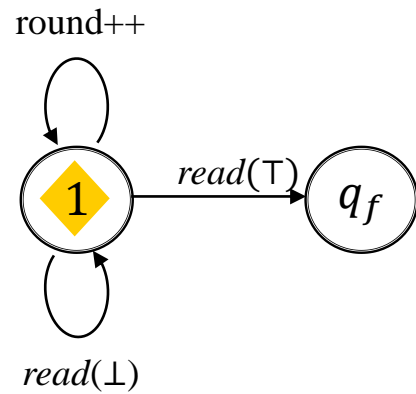


◆ must read \top to get to q_f
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↗ always 2 possible transitions, selected uniformly at random

■ only can write \top
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one-dimensional **biased** random walk
 \Rightarrow probability > 0 that ◆ always above ■

Random walk behaviors

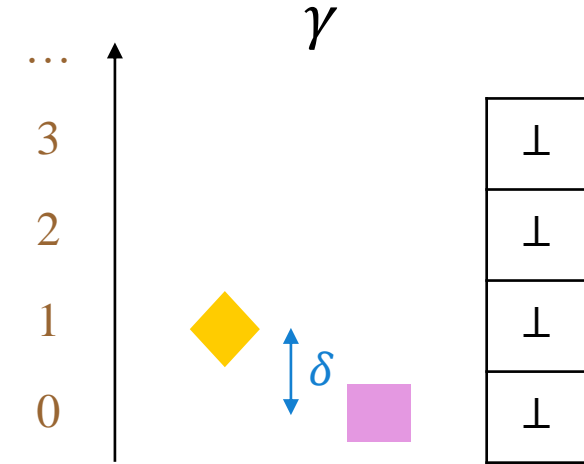
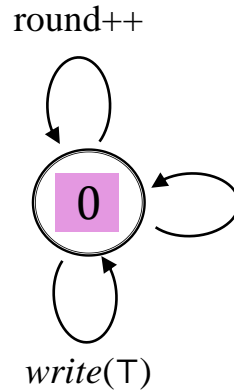
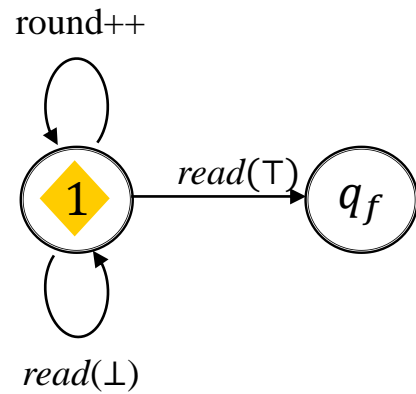




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Some examples involve **multi-dimensional** random walk behaviors



Almost-sure Obstruction Freedom

In **fault-tolerant consensus algorithms**, one process left in isolation must terminate.

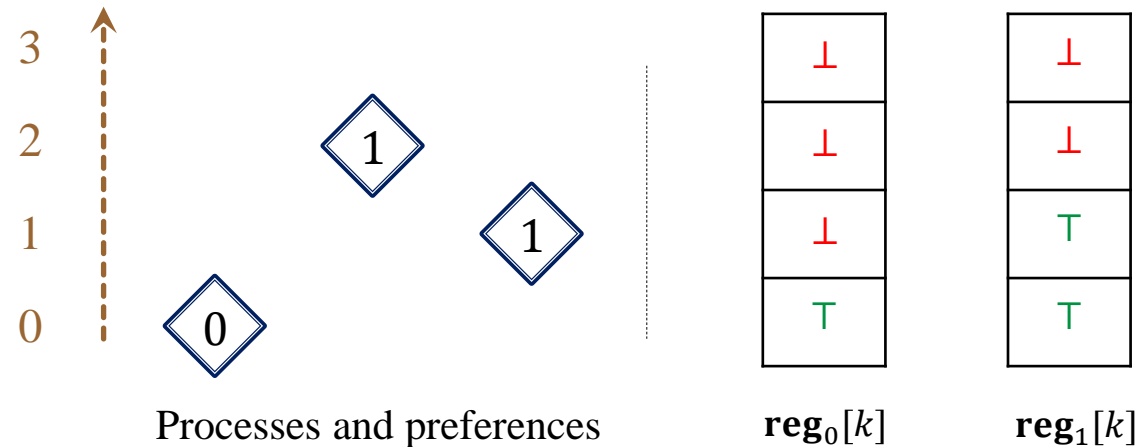
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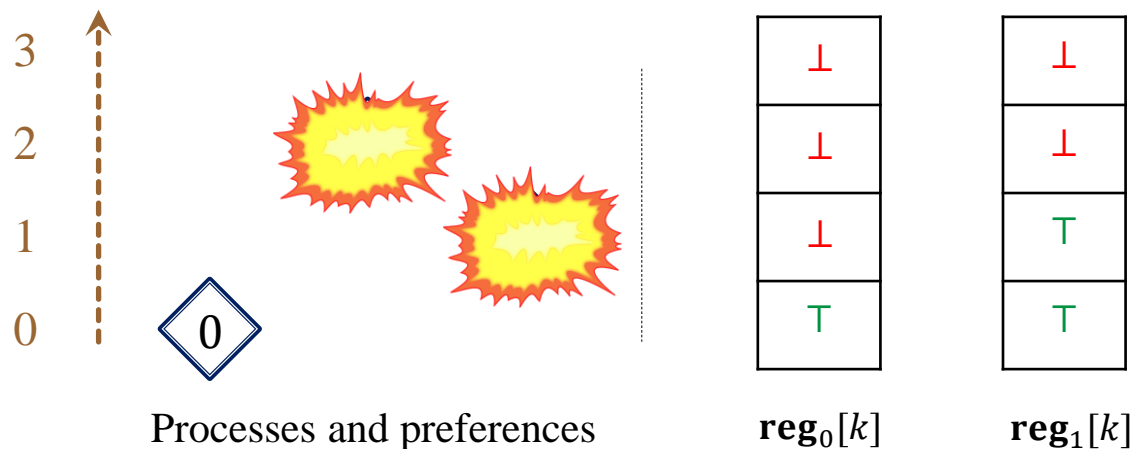


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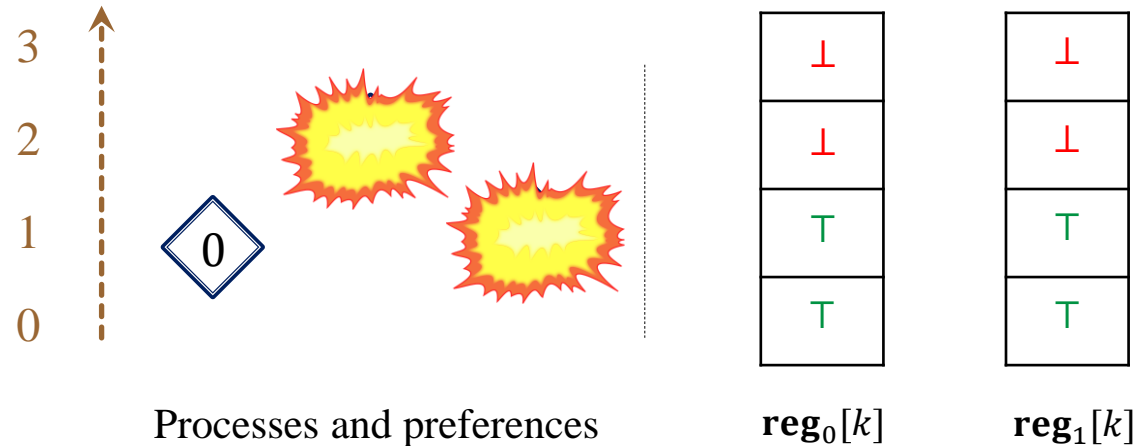


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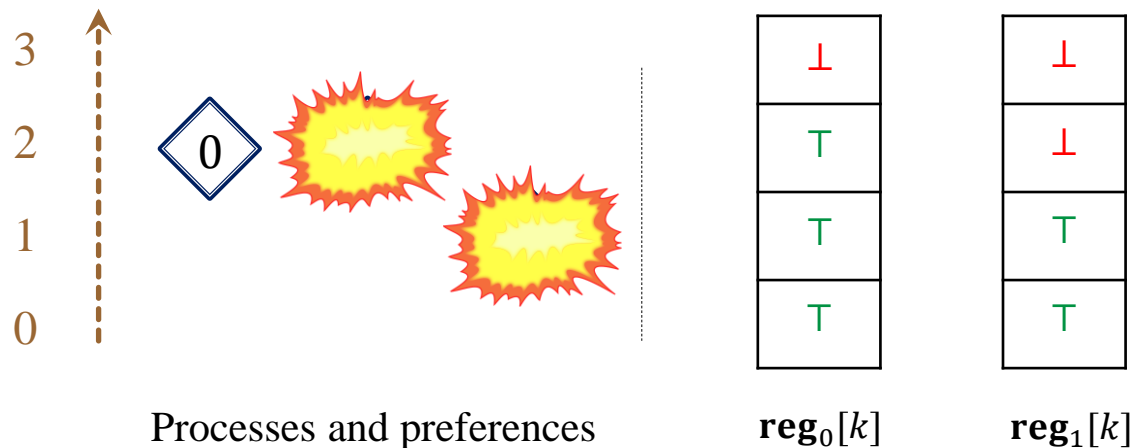


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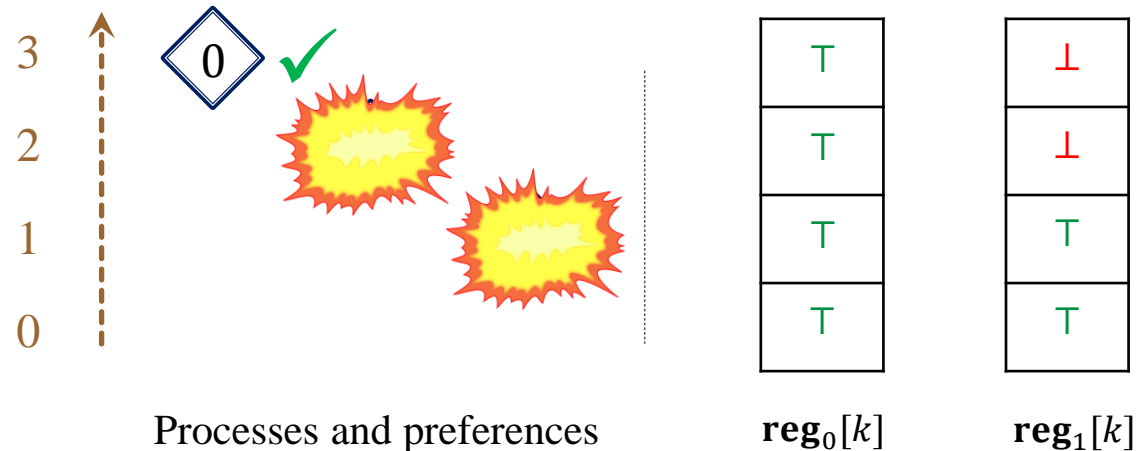


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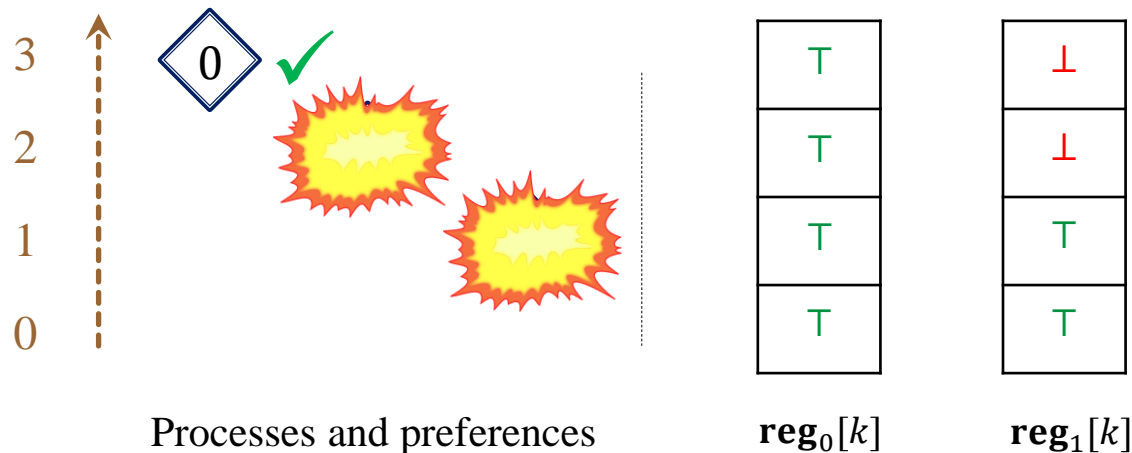


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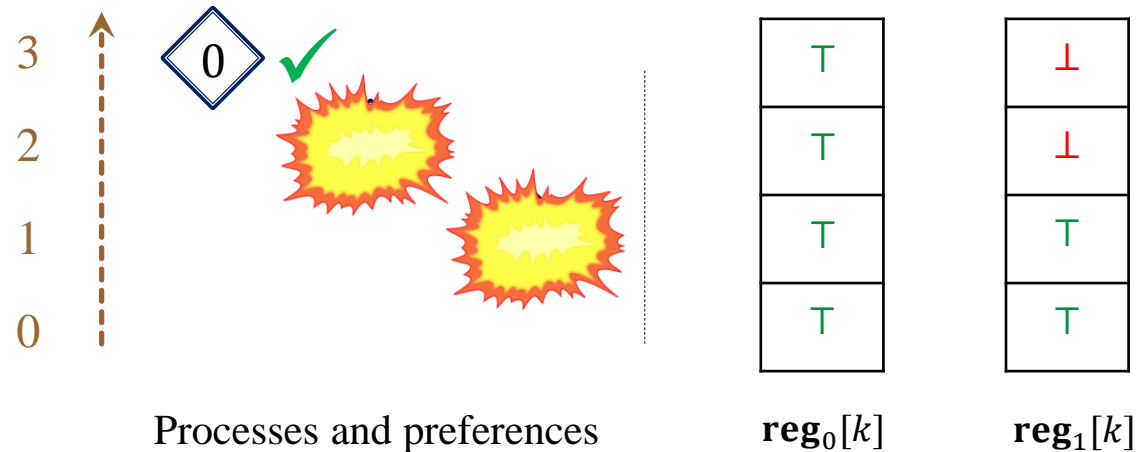
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Proposition [Wal24]: ASOF implies that, for all n , all processes almost-surely terminate.

Theorem [Wal24]: Deciding whether a round-based ASMS is ASOF is PSPACE-complete.

Conclusion

Summary

First part: Shared-memory systems

- A parameterized model: asynchronous shared-memory systems (ASMS)
- Problems: reachability problems, presence reachability problem (PRP)
- Between PTIME and NP-complete
- A doubly-exponential bound on the diameter.



Summary

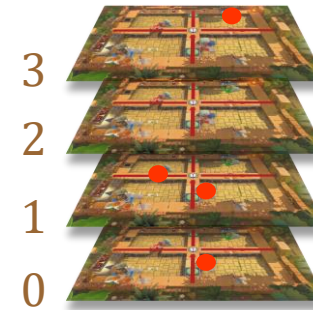
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- PRP with quantification over round values
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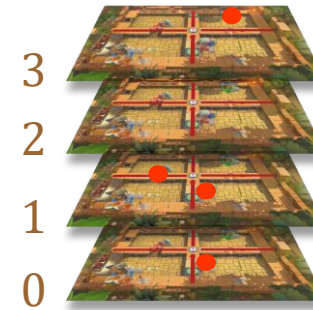
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Third part: Round-based ASMS under a stochastic scheduler

- Random walk behaviors
- ASOF property, related to fault-tolerant algorithms
- ASOF implies almost-sure termination and can be decided in PSPACE



Other contributions

- On broadcast networks where processes have identifiers and private registers:

Lucie Guillou, Corto Mascle and **Nicolas Waldburger**. *Parameterized Broadcast Networks with Registers: from NP to the Frontiers of Decidability*. FoSSaCS 2024.

- On population protocols where processes have unchangeable data that can be tested for equality:

Steffen van Bergerem, Roland Guttenberg, Sandra Kiefer, Corto Mascle, **Nicolas Waldburger** and Chana Weil-Kennedy. *Verification of Population Protocols with Unordered Data*. ICALP 2024.

- On one-counter automata with disequality test on the counter:

Dmitry Chistikov, Jérôme Leroux, Henry Sinclair-Banks and **Nicolas Waldburger**. *Invariants for One-Counter Automata with Disequality Tests*. CONCUR 2024.

- On hyperLTL for population protocols (uses transfer flow techniques):

Nicolas Waldburger, Chana Weil-Kennedy, Pierre Ganty and César Sánchez. *Temporal Hyperproperties for Population Protocols*. In preparation (unpublished).

Work performed during a stay at IMDEA Madrid (funded by Rennes Métropole)

Perspectives

Open problem: Can the bound of the diameter from the structural theorem be improved to simply-exponential?

The structural theorem can be phrased in a more general fashion and for more general systems. This makes it a generalized phrasing of preexisting open problems [BMRSS16][BGW22].

Open problem: Complexity and decidability of almost-sure reachability problems for round-based ASMS?

Mathematically very challenging.

Future work: Find models that retain decidability of (at least) COVER while capturing more round-based algorithms.

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Thank you for your attention!

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[BGW22] A. R. Balasubramanian, Lucie Guillou, and Chana Weil-Kennedy. *Parameterized Analysis of Reconfigurable Broadcast Networks*, FoSSaCS 2022.

Complexity of COVER in ASMS

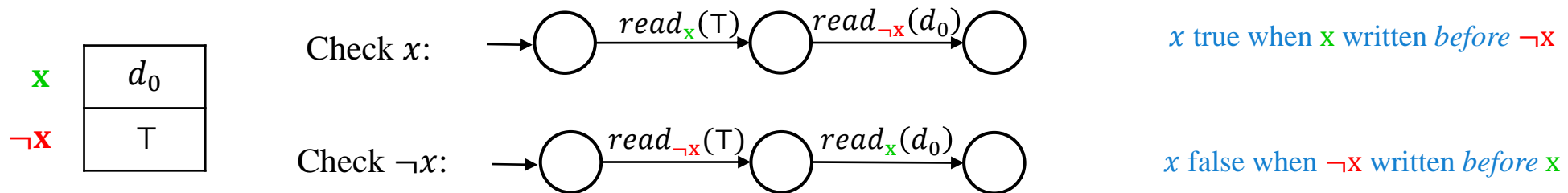
COVER

$\exists n, \exists \rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma, \gamma(q_f) \geq 1 ?$

Theorem [Wal23]: COVER is NP-complete.

Reduction from 3-SAT

For each variable x in the SAT formula:



Directly relies on initialization of the registers !

Proposition [Wal23]: COVER is PTIME when registers are not initialized, or when the number of registers is fixed.

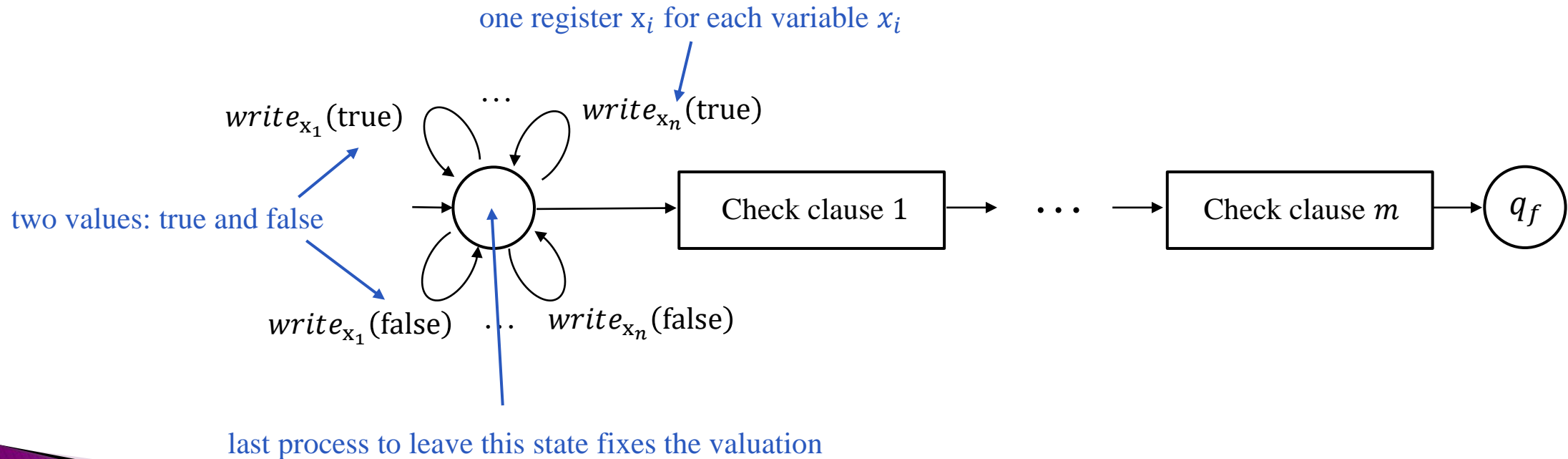
Complexity of TARGET in ASMS

TARGET

$$\exists n, \exists \rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma, \forall q \neq q_f, \gamma(q) = 0?$$

Theorem [Wal23]: TARGET is NP-complete, and NP-hard already with uninitialized registers.

Again, reduction from 3-SAT.



TARGET in ASMS with a single register

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$\exists n, \exists \rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma, \forall q \neq q_f, \gamma(q) = 0?$

Theorem [Wal23]: TARGET is in PTIME when one register only.

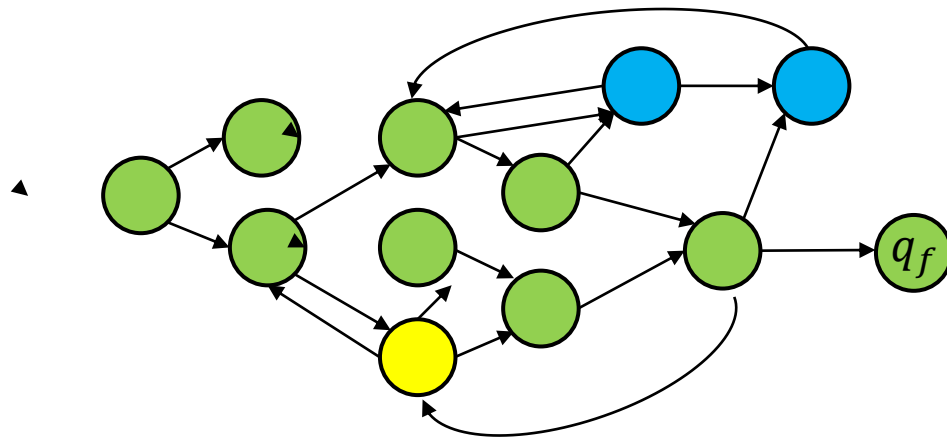
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Algorithm inspired by broadcast protocols [Fou15].



-  = state q is *coverable*
= there are n, γ and $\rho: \text{init}_n \rightarrow^* \gamma$ such that $\gamma(q) > 0$
-  = state q is *backwards coverable*
= there are n, γ, γ' and $\rho: \gamma \rightarrow^* \gamma'$ (starting with a write action) such that $\gamma(q) > 0$ and $\gamma'(q') = 0$ for all $q' \neq q_f$
-  = both *coverable* and *backwards coverable*

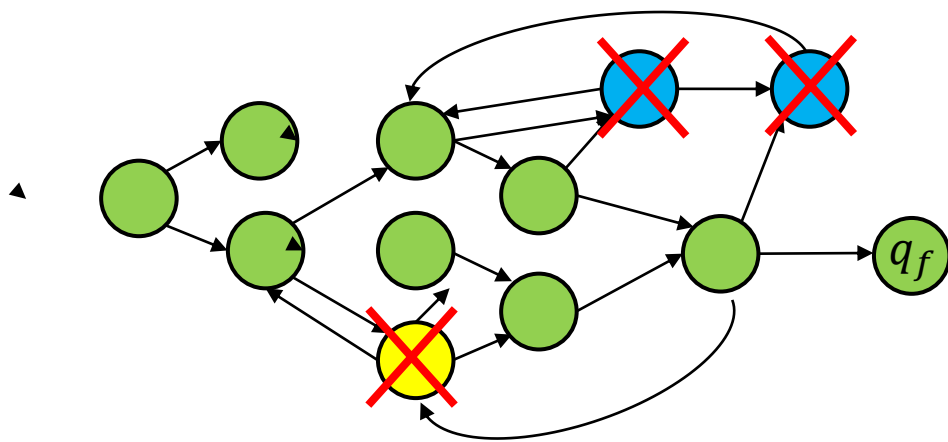
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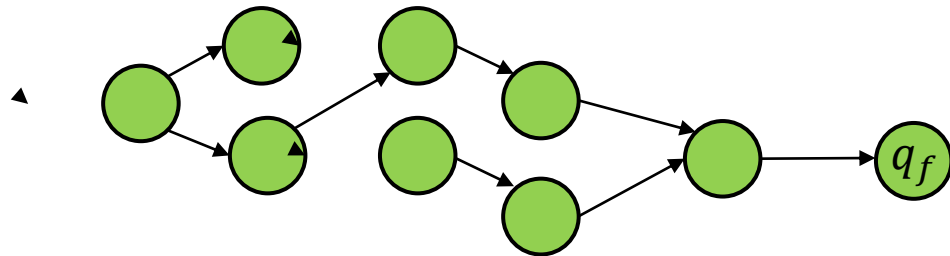
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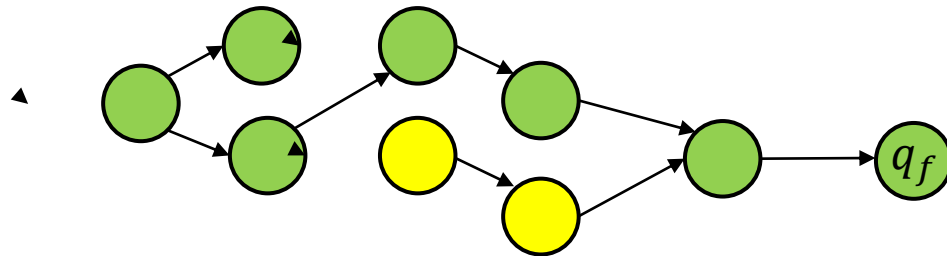
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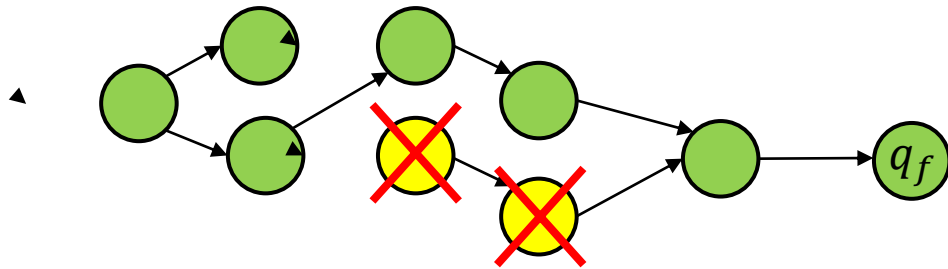
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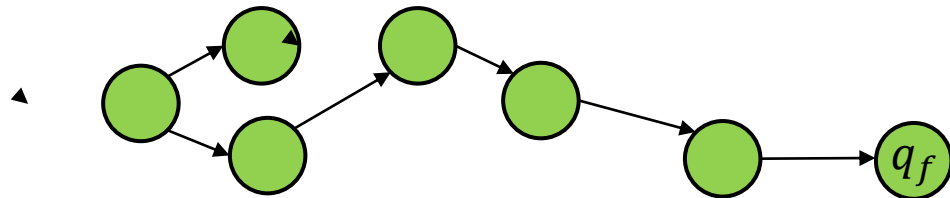
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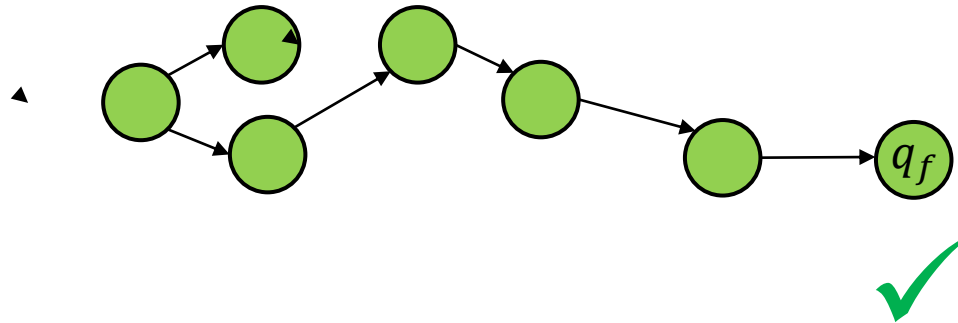
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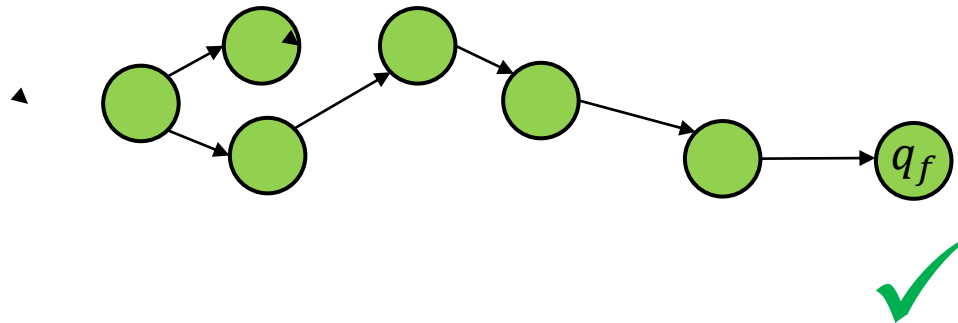
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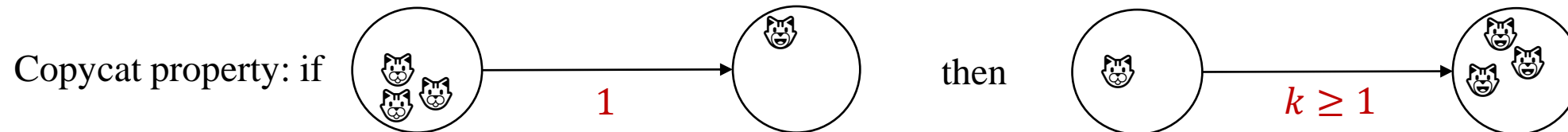
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Corollary [Wal23]: PRP is in PTIME when one register only and the formula is in DNF.

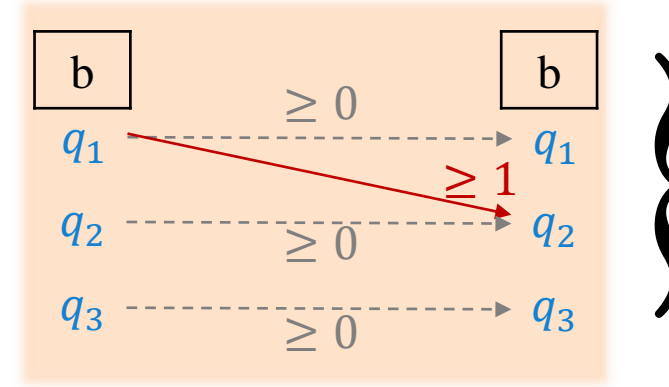
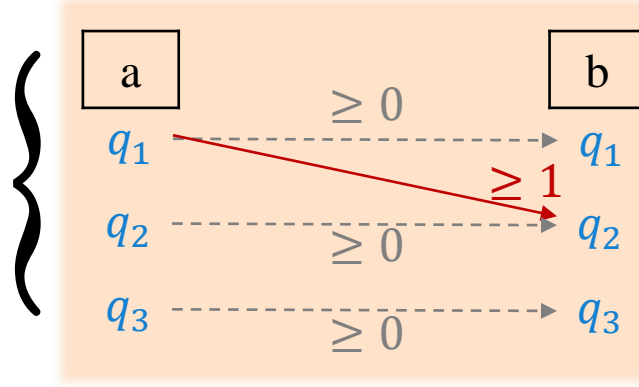
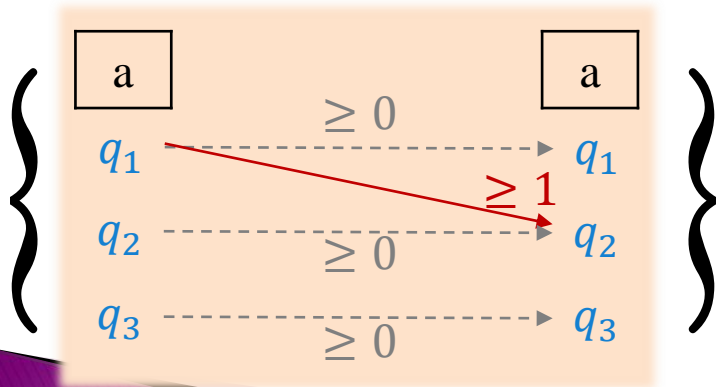
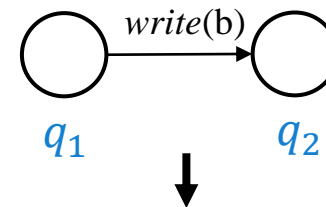
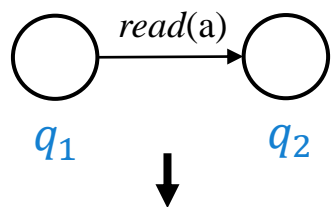
Complexity results for ASMS

	COVER	TARGET	DNF-PRP	PRP
General case	NP-complete	NP-complete	NP-complete	NP-complete
Not initialized	PTIME-complete	NP-complete	NP-complete	NP-complete
One register	PTIME-complete	PTIME-complete	PTIME-complete	NP-complete
Number of registers as parameter	FPT	W[2]-hard	W[2]-hard	W[2]-hard

Transfer flows

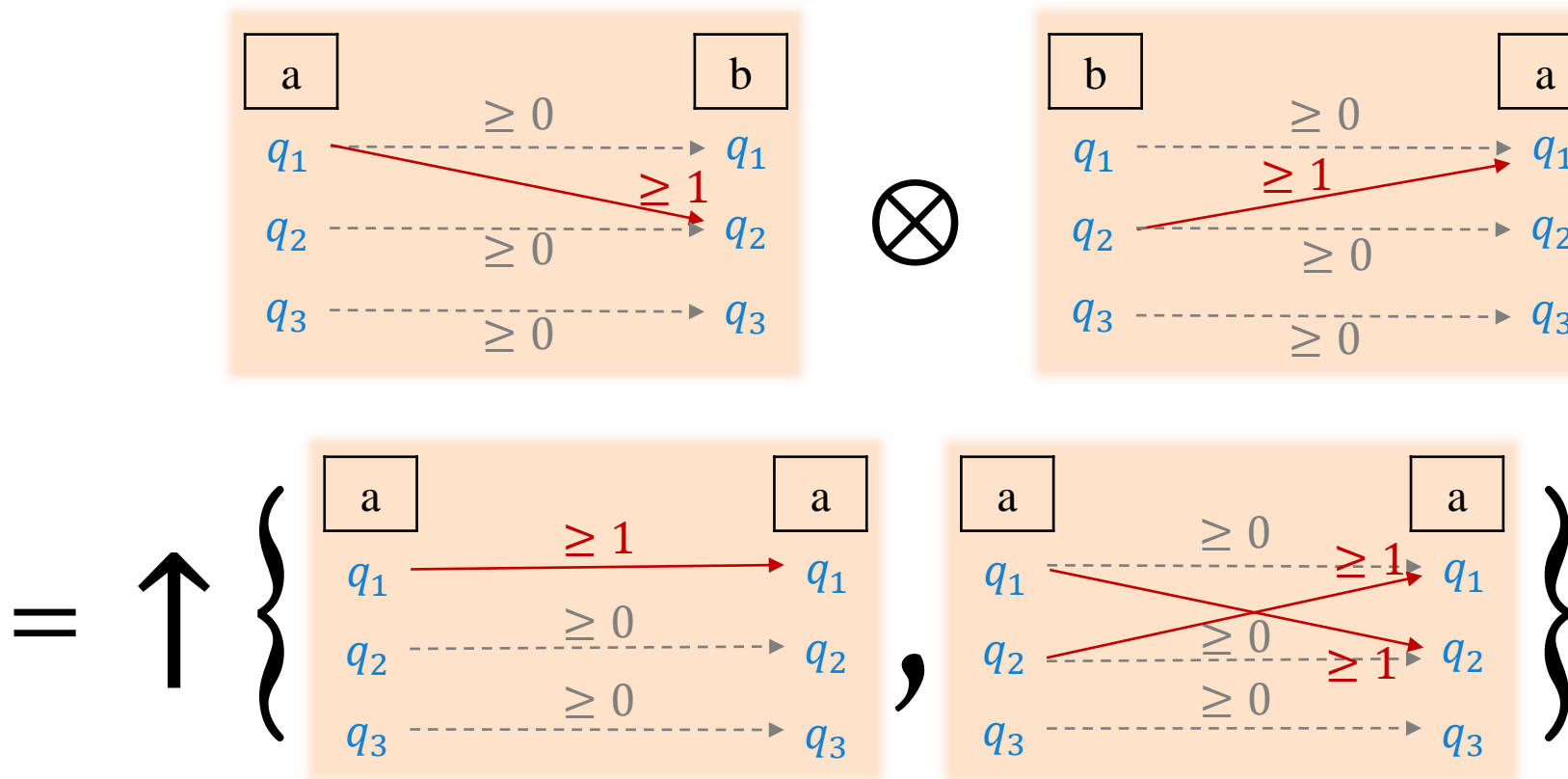


Each transition is represented by a set of *transfer flows*.

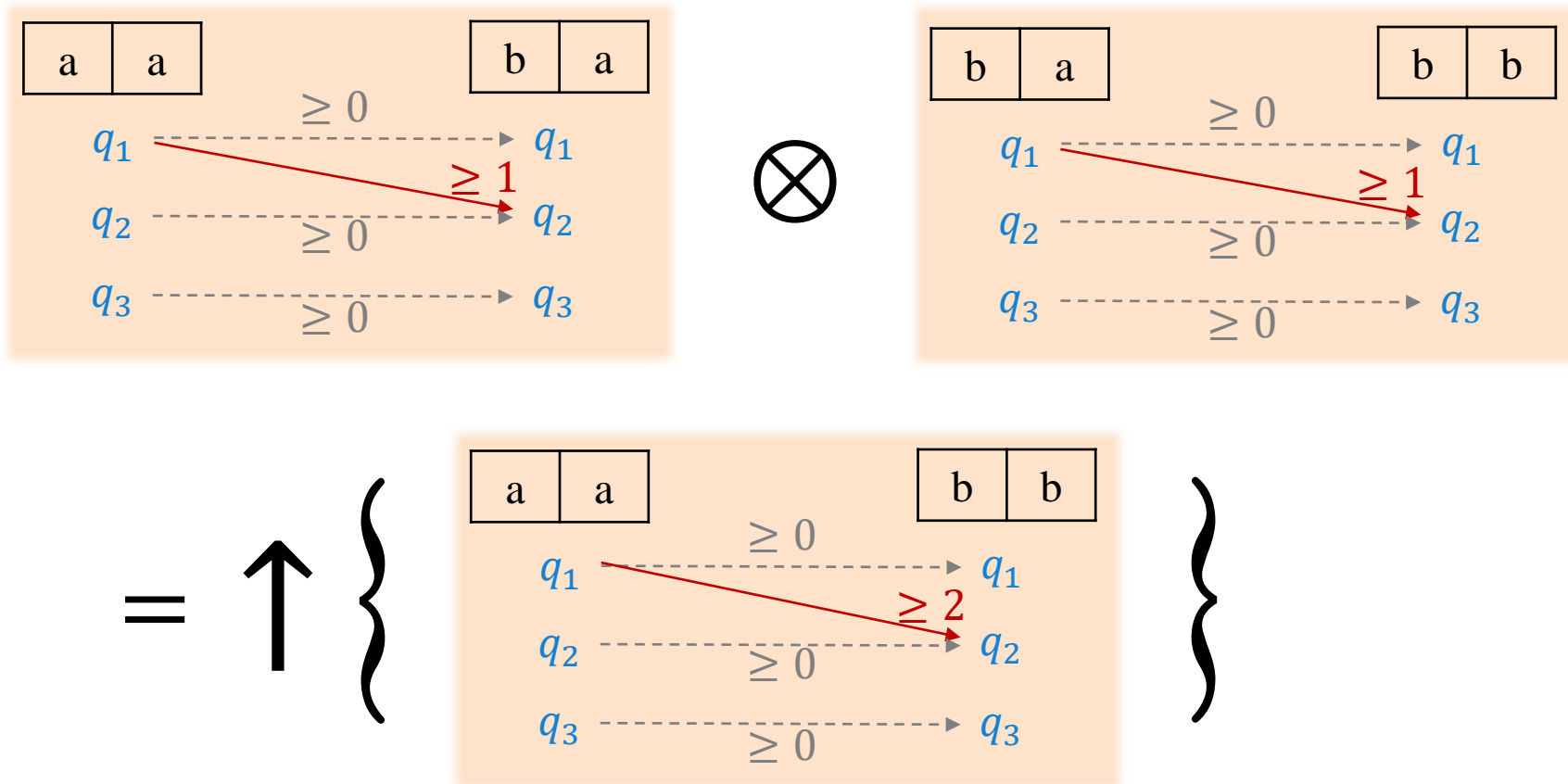


Composition of transfer flows

Given transfer flows tf_1, tf_2 , set $tf_1 \otimes tf_2 =$ transfer flows possible with tf_1 then tf_2 .



Composition of transfer flows 2



The structural theorem on transfer flows

- \mathcal{T}_1 := transfer flows of single transitions
 \mathcal{T}_k := $\mathcal{T}_{k-1} \otimes \mathcal{T}_1$ ~ executions of less than k transitions
 \mathcal{T}^* := $\bigcup_{k \in \mathbb{N}} \mathcal{T}_k$ ~ all possible executions

Structural Theorem [Wal24]: $\mathcal{T}^* = \mathcal{T}_B$ for B doubly-exponential in the size of the system.

Proof with:

- well-quasi-order theory,
- a transformation of transfer flows into vectors,
- a bound on the length of descending chains of \mathbb{N}^d that generalizes Rackoff's bound [SS24].

The consensus problem

Binary consensus problem:

Each process starts with an initial preference $p \in \{0,1\}$.

Validity: If a process decided value p , some process started with preference p .

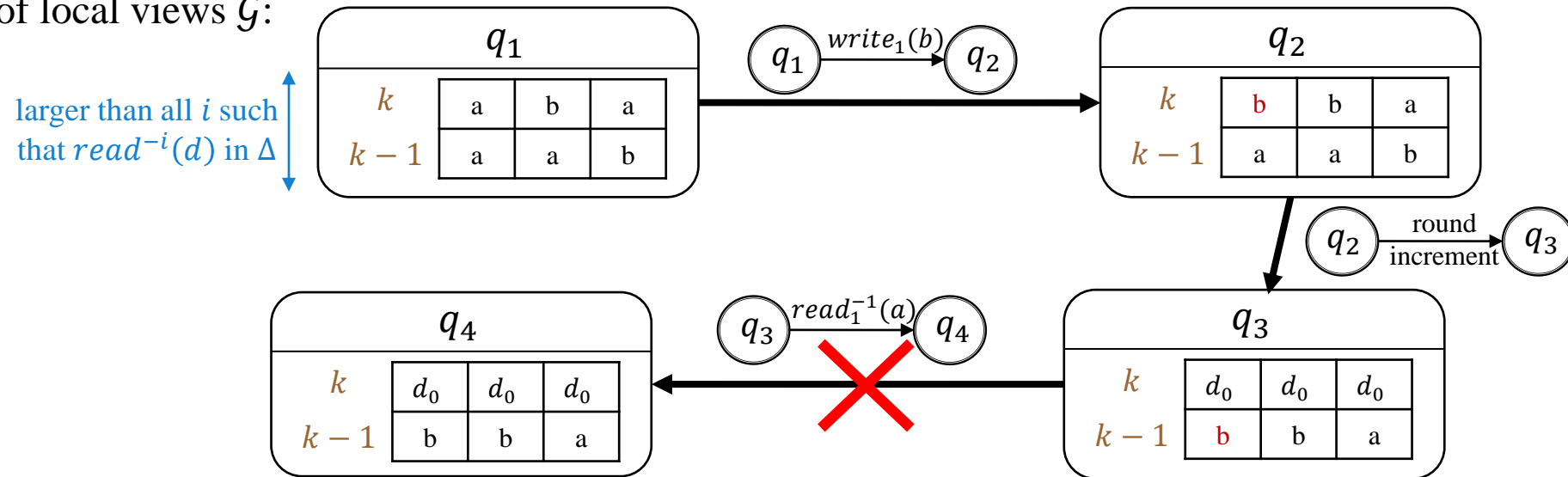
Agreement: Two processes that decide decide of the same value.

Termination: All processes eventually decide of a value.

Deciding ASOF

Theorem [Wal24]: Deciding whether a round-based ASMS is ASOF is a PSPACE-complete problem.

Graph of local views \mathcal{G} :



Lemma [Wal24]: not ASOF \Leftrightarrow there is $\ell \in \mathcal{G}$ reachable whose SCC is bottom and does not have vertices with q_f .

reachable = there is $\gamma \in \text{Post}^*(\Gamma_0)$ such that some process in γ has local view ℓ
can be reduced to PRP

Deciding ASOF with the local view graph

Lemma [Wal24]: The round-based ASMS is **not ASOF** if and only if there is a local view ℓ such that:

- there are n, γ reachable from $\gamma_0(n)$ such that some process in γ has local view ℓ ,
- the strongly connected component S of ℓ in \mathcal{G} is bottom,
- S does not have any vertex with state q_f .

Non-deterministic polynomial-space algorithm to decide whether a protocol is **not ASOF**:

- Guess ℓ ,
- Check the existence of γ (reduces to round-based PRP),
- explore \mathcal{G} to check the conditions on S .