

# Parallel Programming for Embedded Software with mbeddr

Parallele Programmierung für Eingebettete Software mit mbeddr

Master-Thesis von Bastian Gorholt

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Parallel Programming for Embedded Software with mbeddr  
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Ort, Datum

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# Abstract

Multiprocessing is becoming steadily more important for raising the performance of computers. Parallel programming is the key to leveraging such increased processing power. However, parallelization impedes the reasoning about side-effects of application code, which may cause data-races and, thus, non-deterministic behavior. Synchronization via locks is one measure to overcome this menace, by serializing conflicting parallel memory accesses. However, it can also impair an application's run-time significantly. This thesis shows how mbeddr's first-class language extension support and IDE integration can be used to partially overcome these issues for embedded software. The new language abstraction, ParallelMbeddr, offers convenient-to-use concepts for explicit parallelization. It provides a thread-safe communication approach by using the typesystem to prevent low-level data-races. Furthermore, it uses mbeddr's compiler integration to prototypically optimize the generated code in terms of synchronization overhead. The evaluation indicates that these goals are accomplished, although much potential for improvements and enhancements remains.

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# 1 Introduction

Traditionally, the performance of processors is increased by raising their clock rates. Higher frequencies in turn entail even bigger power consumption heightenings. Various techniques are applied by manufacturers to compensate this effect, mainly the reduction of voltages. However, with the advent of the so-called power wall [68], the industry eventually had to and is still facing the problem of not being able to achieve this goal any more. One way to escape this dilemma that is of growing importance is the exchange of higher frequencies for more processor cores on a chip [43]. Instead of executing the instructions of programs continually faster, the multi-core approach is to execute multiple instructions in parallel. While multiple simultaneously running programs can thus be ran in parallel, with rising computational complexity, it is also desirable to distribute the execution of single programs across multiple cores. Yet, programs need to be accordingly designed in order to make use of the new architectures. Parallel programming needs to be applied. The art of this programming technique has proven to be substantially more difficult, since for programs, which run in parallel, program correctness is harder to achieve. This risen difficulty, in turn, influences the productivity and the costs of produced software [41]. As the trend towards multiprocessing has also reached the embedded domain [27][6], this domain is facing the same problems. One tool to “boost the productivity”[2] for this area is *mbeddr*. It offers new language-abstractions and integrated solutions for the development process. This is done by a compiler-based extension of the underlying programming language C: language abstractions are repeatedly reduced into more basic language concepts until plain C code is obtained. In spite of *mbeddr*’s variety of language abstractions, it still misses native language support for parallel programming. While it is possible for the user to use according existing libraries, it is a laborious task to prepare *mbeddr* in this way. Even more important, the programmer is faced with the usual problems of such a library-based approach: the danger of data-races and the drawback of unnecessary computational overhead due to suboptimal countermeasures. Hand-based optimization of this overhead, in turn, introduces the potential for compromising the correctness of programs and is a tedious and costly process. It is therefore desirable to have native support for parallel programming in *mbeddr*. This thesis thus aims at providing the user with language concepts that enable him<sup>1</sup> to write parallel code more easily while simultaneously mitigating the risks of incorrect execution. Additionally, this work will show how to reduce the design-based performance overhead, which the abstractions for data-race safety naturally entail. Due to the complexity of the underlying language C, the presented optimization techniques are implemented prototypically.

The text has the following structure. Chapter 2 will provide the reader with the necessary background to understand the reasoning of the following discussions. It gives short introductions to parallel programming, the character of the embedded domain and the language C that is extended. The 3rd chapter will then introduce the concepts of the new language abstraction *ParallelMbeddr*. To this end, the extension’s

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<sup>1</sup> In this text, for simplicity reasons, ‘he’, ‘him’ and ‘his’ is used in a generic way and will always denote both sexes.

---

design is presented, accompanied by the translation to the basic concepts that are provided by mbeddr. After this, chapter 4 will show first techniques for compiler-based optimizations of the generated code of ParallelMbeddr. This is done in a declarative algorithmic way. Furthermore, the text will depict the difficulties which arose in the prototypical implementation of the algorithms, and propose solution approaches therefor. The evaluation in chapter 5 will show the benefits and shortcomings of the design and implementation. Both the user-written and generated code for general parallelization examples will be investigated. Furthermore, the results of an optimization measurement will be shown and will reveal the performance potential for the compiler-based enhancement of C. The same chapter then gives a short comparison to relevant related work in the parallel-programming field. Finally, chapter 6 will summarize the achievements and results of this work and briefly list promising fields of future research for ParallelMbeddr.

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## 2 Background

This chapter gives a concise introduction into the basic topics of this work. First, the main aspects of parallel programming are explained, in order to give the reader the essential knowledge that is mandatory to understand the problem tackled by this thesis. After that, the embedded domain and the tools that are used to create software for it (*mbeddr* and *C*) are presented.

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### 2.1 Parallel Programming

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Parallel programming is a technique to speed up the classical sequential execution of programs which are suited for parallelization in the limits of *Amdahl's law* [10][49]. The law gives an upper bound on the possible speed up of an algorithm based on the amount of parallelizeable code.<sup>2</sup> The pitfalls of the often mandatory communication in parallel programming arise from race conditions and countermeasures thereof.

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#### Processes and Threads

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Every program in execution which may be delayed or interrupted is represented by a process. A process typically has its own protected data (via virtual memory) and execution state and consists of one or more threads. A thread, also known as lightweight process, shares some of the memory with its process but has its own execution state and thread-local storage as needed [32, p. 20]. In the course of programming language and operating system development, several variants of threads have been devised, among others green threads, fibers and coroutines which mainly differ in how they are managed.

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#### Parallelism and Concurrency

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If multiple threads are “in the middle of executing code at the same time” [46, p. 14] they are processed concurrently. They can be executed at the same time on different processors or interleaved on a single processor, which means that they are executed in an alternating way. The former is also called parallelism. Parallelism, generalized to “the quality of occurring at the same time” [23, p. 91], can manifest in at least four different ways: From an application programmer's view there exist bit-level parallelism and instruction-level parallelism at a very low level. Bit-level parallelism is concerned with increasing the word size of processors in order to reduce the amount of cycles that are needed to perform an instruction [21, p. 15]. Instruction-level parallelism, also called pipelining, is the simultaneous utilization of multiple stages of the processor's execution pipeline. Both bit-level parallelism and instruction-level

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<sup>2</sup> This work, however, is not about finding appropriate patterns for this purpose but about giving a generic approach. Thus, *Amdahl's law* will not be further considered.

---

parallelism primarily reside on the hardware level and the operating system level and thus are irrelevant to this work. Data parallelism is present if the same calculation is performed on multiple sets of data. It can be regarded as a specialization of task parallelism, which denotes the simultaneous execution of different calculations “on either the same or different data” [21, p. 125]. This work focuses on the latter form of parallelism, since it is the more general approach to application-level parallelism.

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### Implicit vs. Explicit Parallelism

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Another way to distinguish parallelism is the way it is expressed in the programmer’s code. Traditionally, the programmer has to define explicitly how and when parallelization shall be performed and where communication between separate units of execution takes place. Instead, with implicit programming, the programmer declares dependencies between data and the compiler uses this information to detect parallelizable code segments which it may then be executed in parallel [26, p. 334].

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### Data Races

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When a process consists of multiple concurrently running threads which have access to the shared data of their process, a class of errors that is unique to parallel (and distributed) programming arises. These so-called synchronization errors occur due to data races and are a result of the general non-atomicity of computations and memory references. Data races – also known as race conditions – are defined as at least “two unsynchronized memory references by two processes on one memory location, of which at least one reference is a write access” [24, p. 327].<sup>3</sup> Such data races can result in inconsistent program states and non-deterministic program behavior since the order in which the concerned memory is accessed might change. In order to deal with this issue, three main paradigms have been conceived in parallel programming: shared memory, message passing and transactional memory.

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### Communication Model: Shared Memory

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The memory model that implicitly underlay the former treatment of processes, which share some data with their threads, is formally known as *shared memory*. In this model, communication between entities is realized by shared-memory regions, which are written to and read from [36, p. 138].<sup>4</sup> Data races can be avoided by employing the low-level synchronization primitive called *mutex*.<sup>5</sup> A mutex can only be locked by exactly one thread at a given time. Any other thread that tries to lock the same mutex is

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<sup>3</sup> As the definition implies, data races are not limited to threads and the shared process data alone, e.g. file-based race conditions can even occur between two different processes [70]. Since this work is about parallelization of single processes, other kinds of race conditions are not considered further. Additionally, as will be shown later on, higher-level data races may occur if the scope of synchronizations does not correctly take the dependencies of data into account.

<sup>4</sup> As for race conditions, the model is not limited to intra-process communication via threads or similar approaches to parallelization. Communication between two processes can also be realized via shared memory, however, this topic will not be addressed further in this thesis.

<sup>5</sup> Semaphores, as a second synchronization primitive, are closely related to mutexes. Since they are irrelevant for this paper, they are not further investigated.

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blocked until the locking thread releases the mutex [48]. Thus, code regions can be protected by having threads synchronize over mutexes that protect these regions.<sup>6</sup> One of the disadvantages of mutexes is that they are not tightly coupled to the data or computation that they protect. It is the programmer's duty to take care of the sound utilization of a certain mutex. Therefore, various higher-level synchronization measures like monitors in Java [31, p. 42] and synchronized classes in the programming language *D* [8] were developed. These measures are usually built on top of mutexes [42, p. 25]. Due to their approach of achieving synchronization via locks, mutexes are vulnerable for deadlocks. This means that multiple threads are in a state where "each is waiting for release of a resource which is currently held by some other" [57, p. 119] thread. As a result, no thread will ever finish executing [25, p. 2-3].

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### Communication Model: Message Passing

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Whereas communication in the shared memory paradigm happens rather implicitly, it is done explicitly in the *message passing* paradigm. Message passing originates from Hoare's paper on Communicating Sequential Processes (CSP) [40]. In CSP, messages are sent from one entity to another. "The sender waits until the receiver has accepted the message (*synchronous* message passing)" [61, p. 138] before it continues its execution. Message passing with asynchronous message sends were deployed by the actor model [39] and pi calculus [53]. Although message passing avoids shared data and realizes communication generally via copies of data,<sup>7</sup> it still suffers from potential race conditions [55] when the atomicity of operations is not properly regarded by the implementation.

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### Communication Model: Transactional Memory

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*Transactional memory* provides a *non-blocking*<sup>8</sup> memory model, which enables communication via "lightweight, *in-memory* transactions" [35, p. 3]. Transactions are code blocks that, from a programmer's perspective, are executed atomically. The illusion of atomicity is realized by the underlying transaction system, which may execute transactions in parallel and has to take care of conflicting reads and writes in transactions [38].<sup>9</sup> Transactional memory can either be realized in hardware or in software. While the former promises a better performance, it demands specific hardware. Software transactional memory on the other hand seems to suffer from comparatively "poor performance" [13, p. 13].

---

<sup>6</sup> For brevity reasons, in this work, the synchronization of computations via a mutex *a* will also be called a 'synchronization of *a*'.

<sup>7</sup> Actually, shared data is often used in implementations of message passing models in order to enhance the performance. Furthermore it exists on the language level, for example as monitors, which were developed by Hoare to reduce deadlocks in CSP. The main notion of the message passing concept nevertheless does not use shared data.

<sup>8</sup> Non-blocking means that at least one parallel unit of execution is guaranteed to make progress in a finite amount of time [34]. This property clearly presumes the absence of deadlocks.

<sup>9</sup> To this end, the corresponding transactions may need to be re-executed as a whole.

---

## Coarse- and Fine-grained Synchronization

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In order to keep data and computations synchronized, the simplest measure to avoid data races is to use the available instruments like locks or transactions as broadly as possible. E.g. transactions could be widened to hold every operation a thread has to execute. As every synchronization is basically a serialization of otherwise parallel executed code, such coarse-grained synchronization would eliminate the benefits of parallel execution. On the other hand, fine-grained synchronization can introduce race conditions if the programmer misses some locking policy. In addition, the acquisition of every lock takes time, which can become an issue with increasing locking counts. Therefore, a trade-off between locking-overhead and scalability problems has to be found [35, pp. 1-2].

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## 2.2 Embedded Programming with Mbeddr

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In the course of this thesis, parallelization is introduced into the programming language *C* which is, due to its performance and computational predictability, a natural choice for the embedded programming domain. *mbeddr* thrives to make the development of software in this domain both easier and safer by giving advanced tool support.

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### Embedded Programming

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“An embedded system is a computerized system that is purpose-built for its application.” [77, p. 1] Due to its narrow scope and monetary constraints induced by the application domain, the hardware of such systems is often constrained to the point that it simply accomplishes the job [77]. As a result, the memory consumption of the resulting program is one main issue to be considered in embedded programming. Additionally, for real-time systems, which constitute a subclass of embedded systems, not only the correctness of computations but also the consumed time determine their quality and usefulness [19, pp. 1-2]. Therefore, the predictability of the program’s execution time becomes an issue for real-time systems. To this end, predetermined dead-lines of computations are used. In accordance to the consequences of timely missed dead-lines, multiple levels of real-time systems have been conceived. These, however, will not be further discussed.<sup>10</sup>

---

### MPS and Mbeddr

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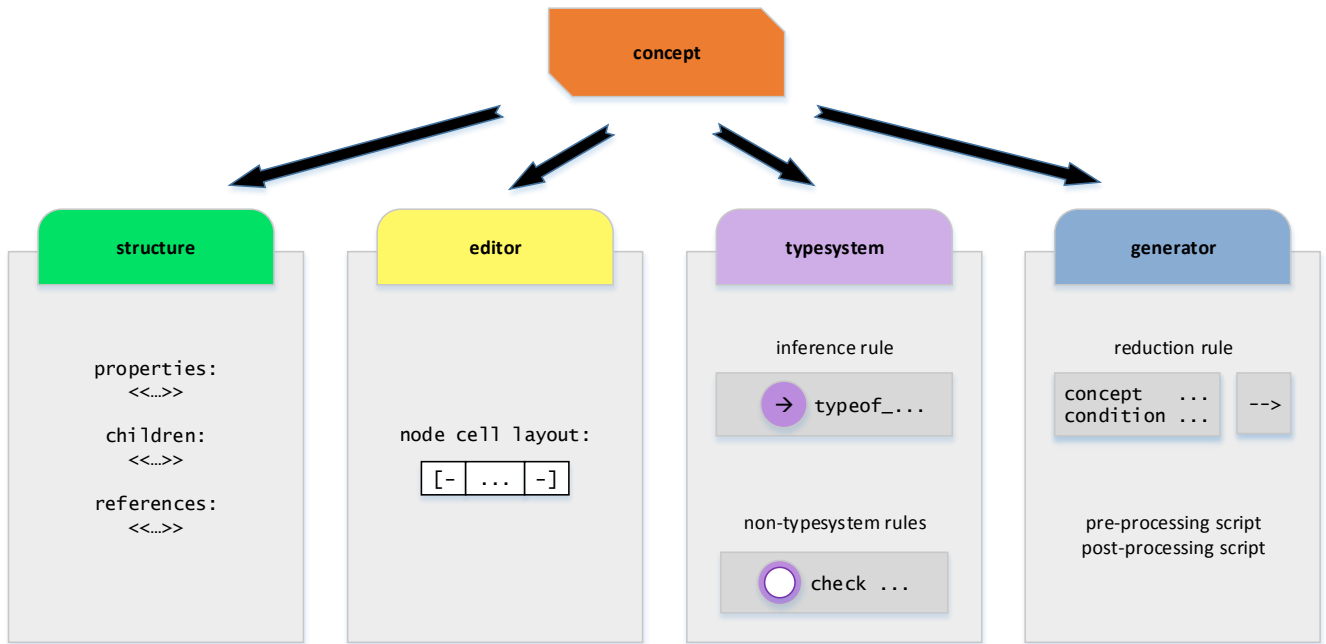
“JetBrains MPS<sup>11</sup> is an open source [...] language workbench developed over the last ten years by JetBrains.” [75] As such, it provides a projectional editor which lets the user work directly on the abstract

---

<sup>10</sup> The reason for this decision is that this work tries to cover a rather broad domain, instead of focusing on any particular embedded sub-domain. Furthermore, *mbeddr* does not provide support for the quantification of related parameters like the worst-case execution time (WCET) [19, p. 8], yet. In consequence, predictability is a lesser concern of this thesis and will be reflected primarily in the careful consideration of the CPU consumption and processing time of the implementation.

<sup>11</sup> <http://jetbrains.com/mps>, accessed: 2014-07-18

syntax tree (AST) of the program [29]. It supports the development and composition of potentially syntactically ambiguous modular language extensions in combination with the development of integrated development environments (IDEs) or extensions thereof. Mbeddr is an extension of MPS tailored for the embedded software development in C. Every program written in the mbeddr IDE is translated to C99 source code which can then be further processed by the gcc tool chain.<sup>12</sup> Every new language construct that is introduced as an extension of the existing language of mbeddr (and any existing language element) is represented by a *concept*.



**Figure 1: Concepts and language aspects in MPS**

The complete definition of a concept comprises the definition of certain *language aspects*: the structure of a concept is defined in a *structure* aspect which contains the definition of the concept’s abstract syntax in the abstract syntax tree (AST) of the program. The visual representation of the concept, its concrete syntax, is defined in the *editor* aspect. The *typesystem* aspect of a concept may contain a type inference rule for it and further *non-typesystem rules*, which restrict the way it may be used. In a formal meta-language, the latter are usually part of the inference rules but are kept separately in MPS to diminish the complexity of inference rules and facilitate an easy extension of them. The *generator* “defines the denotational semantics for the concepts in the language” [69]. Thus, this aspect describes the translation (in the following also called *reduction* and *transformation*) of concepts into concepts of the base language. The implementation of C in mbeddr does not only provide extensions to the core of C but also offers a few differences to the basis of the C99 standard. They will be introduced as needed.

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## C

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The semantics of C differ from modern object-oriented languages like Java in various ways. In order to clarify some of the choices that were made for the design and implementation of ParallelMbeddr,

<sup>12</sup> <http://gcc.gnu.org/>, accessed: 2014-07-18

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in the following, the most relevant differences shall be outlined. Like Java, C leverages pass-by-value semantics for function parameters. In contrast to Java though, which copies the references themselves, C copies the referenced values into the memory that is allocated to the parameters of function calls. Thus, a change to a field of a structure (struct) instance that was copied in such a way does not affect the original struct instance.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, arrays are treated like pointers, i.e. memory addresses as values, which becomes evident when they are passed to functions. Hence, a change of an entry of an array argument actually changes the array that is referred to by a variable on the caller site. For an array to be copied entirely into a function (not just by its address), it can be declared as a struct field, which, due to the copy semantics for structs, ensures that like any other field of the struct instance the array's value is copied into the newly created struct instance. The copy semantics are not restricted to function arguments but also extend to function return values and variable assignments. The 'pass-by-pointer-value' semantics for arrays in C implies that arrays cannot be returned from functions as is done in Java. Instead, corresponding pointers are returned. This means that it is not safe to return an array, respectively a pointer thereof, from a function if the array resides in the area of the stack that was allocated for this function.<sup>14</sup> A peculiarity of C is that global variables may only be initialized with constant expressions, which makes it impossible to initialize a global variable with an arbitrary function call of a proper type [17, p. 48]. In C, the type of a pointer to a value of type `t` is written `t*`.

---

<sup>13</sup> The only way to avoid this behavior is to copy the memory addresses of values as pointers into functions.

<sup>14</sup> Otherwise the pointed-to memory of the returned array pointer would become deallocated after the return of the called function. This again would cause the return of a dangling pointer into the receiver of the returned value, i.e. a pointer that does not point to a valid memory address.



---

## 3 Design and Translation

In this chapter, the extension of mbeddr for parallel programming, called ParallelMbeddr, is introduced. To this end, the new language features for C are explained, each in terms of their design and the translation to plain mbeddr C code.<sup>15</sup> In order to illustrate the presented features, a running example is incrementally built. Further examples are depicted whenever the running example does not provide the right structure to clarify a feature. At the end of this chapter, the measures implemented to make the extension sufficiently thread-safe<sup>16</sup> are explained.

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### Notation

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In the following sections, the concepts of the language of mbeddr are iteratively extended with new elements. For this purpose, based on the notation presented by Pierce [59], the syntax of new concepts is described by notations like the following:

$$e ::= \dots | e' \quad (1)$$

This exemplary line extends the set of expressions of mbeddr by the expression  $e'$  which may contain arbitrary meta-variables like  $e$ . In order to fit into the type system of mbeddr, these concepts are equipped with *type inference* rules, each of which, given a list of premises, derives the type of some concept in the conclusion:

$$\text{NewConcept} \frac{\text{premise}_1, \dots, \text{premise}_n}{e \vdash t} \quad (2)$$

The premises of the concepts are kept minimal but not exhaustive, which means that complex premises are given as informal explanations and are mostly explained in section 3.4. This way, the type inference rules are kept comprehensible and the discussion of the safety measures of ParallelMbeddr are kept closely together. Additionally, this separation reflects MPS' separation of type inference rules and non-typesystem rules.

The translation of a new concept in ParallelMbeddr to a base concept of mbeddr will be shown informally by listing the resulting code that is generated by the IDE after it was given some input code. To this end, if not expressed in the text, the symbol  $\implies$  will denote the translation of code  $c_1$  to some other code  $c_2$  in  $c_1 \implies c_2$ . The translation to basic concepts will often entail the generation of additional code somewhere else in the program as a side effect, e.g. the translation of an expression to a function call may force the generator of mbeddr to generate the declaration of the called function first. These side effects will also be demonstrated by listings of the generated code.

---

<sup>15</sup> For the sake of legibility, the syntax of the generated mbeddr code is depicted in a simplified manner where deemed necessary.

<sup>16</sup> Data-races should be prevented as well as possible. However, the user always has the opportunity to introduce data races if his requested synchronizations for the modifications of data, which are used by multiple units of execution, do not correctly take into account the data dependencies of variables.

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## 3.1 Tasks

---

The basic parallelization element is a *task*. It denotes a parallel unit of execution and, as the name suggests, aims at task parallelism. As the implementation of the underlying parallelization technique might change in the future it is reasonable to abstract the terminology from it. The most basic task which always exists executes the code of the entry (main) function of the program. A task can also be regarded as a closure of the expression that shall be run in parallel. The reader should distinguish this ‘execution template’ from the actual running instance of a task. The latter will further on be addressed as a *running task*.

---

### 3.1.1 Design

---

The syntax  $e$  of expressions in mbeddr is extended by

$$e ::= \dots \mid |e| \quad (3)$$

When executed, a task term yields a handle to a parallel unit of execution. This way, the initialization of the task and the actual execution are decoupled and can happen independently. When a task is run the embraced expression is executed and its value is returned. If the type of the expression is *void* then no value will be returned. The type of a task reflects its return value:

$$t ::= \dots \mid \text{Task}\langle t \rangle \quad (4)$$

Due to implementation reasons (see 3.2.2 for details), the embraced return type of a task must be either *void* or a pointer to the type of the embraced expression:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{VoidTask} \frac{e \vdash \text{void}}{|e| \vdash \text{Task}\langle \text{void} \rangle} \qquad \text{NonVoidTask} \frac{e \vdash t \quad t \neq \text{void}}{|e| \vdash \text{Task}\langle \text{void}^* \rangle} \end{array} \quad (5)$$

When a task is not used anymore to produce running instances of itself, it should be cleared in order to free the memory that it implicitly occupies in the heap:

$$e ::= \dots \mid e.\text{clear} \quad (6)$$

$$\text{Clear} \frac{|e| \vdash \text{Task}\langle t \rangle}{e.\text{clear} \vdash \text{void}} \quad (7)$$

If a task (template) is copied by the pass-by-value semantics of C, the copied task will share the heap-managed data, i.e. the reference environment of its free variables, with the original task. Therefore, a task needs to be cleared only once in order to avoid memory leaks. It has to be kept in mind that a running instance of a task will not be affected by the clearance of its task template. The clearance of a task is only necessary if the task is stored somewhere. Thus, a task that is directly run via  $|e|.run$  does need not to be cleared, which makes such expressions memory-safe.

---

### 3.1.2 Translation

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The *POSIX Threads* standard and library (pthreads) was chosen as a means to realize concurrency in the translated code. It supports all necessary parallelization features and provides a more direct control of the generated code when compared to frameworks like *OpenMP*.<sup>17</sup> Every task in ParallelMbeddr is represented by a thread as provided by the POSIX threads standard, a so-called *pthread*.<sup>18</sup> As the thread initialization function of pthreads takes a function pointer of type **void\* -> void\***, the computation of the translated task is represented by an according function:

```
1 void* parFun_X(void* voidArgs) {...}
```

#### Listing 3.1: Generated function of a task

The **X** in the name indicates that for every task a unique adaptee of this function with the prefix **parFun\_** and some unique suffix chosen by the framework is generated.<sup>19</sup> As the function signature indicates, a pthread and therefore a task which is to be run can be parameterized with values and can return a value which will be explained in the following paragraphs.

If a task contains any references to local variables or function arguments, they need to be bound to capture the variable states at the time of the task initialization. Such states are represented by an ‘argument’ struct:

```
1 struct Args_X {
2     t_1 v_1;
3     ...
4     t_n v_n;
5 }
```

#### Listing 3.2: Struct for a task expression with references **v\_1** to **v\_n**

where in the task expression every **v\_i** represents an equally named reference to a variable or argument of type **t\_i**. The generated function **parFun\_X** is then given an instance of **Args\_X**, which it uses to bind the references of the task expression to. The full function definition of a task **e** of type **Task<t\*>** is, thus:

```
1 void* parFun_X(void* voidArgs) {
2     t* result = malloc(sizeof(t));
3     Args_X* args = (Args_X*) voidArgs;
4     *result = e;
5     free(voidArgs);
6     return result;
7 }
```

#### Listing 3.3: Structure of the generated function of a task

---

<sup>17</sup> <http://openmp.org/>

<sup>18</sup> In the following sections, *pthreads* will denote both the library and multiple thread instances of the library. The context should always implicitly clarify which one is currently meant.

<sup>19</sup> In the following explanations, **X** will always denote some arbitrary suffix. It has to be kept in mind, though, that these suffixes do not necessarily coincide with each other for different kinds of components.

where **e'** is the expression obtained when every local variable reference and function argument reference **r** in **e** is substituted by a reference to an equally named and typed field in **args**:

$$r / \text{args} \rightarrow r \quad (8)$$

If the embraced expression of a task does not contain any reference of this kind (e.g. only references to global variables) the argument related lines 3 and 5 are omitted as is clearly the – otherwise empty – declaration of **struct Args\_X**. In this case **e'** equals **e** except for other reductions of **e** that might occur in the translation process of mbeddr.

The generated function of a task of type **Task<void>** omits the result-related statements:

```

1 void* parFun_X(void* voidArgs) {
2     t* result = malloc(sizeof(t));
3     Args_X* args = (Args_X*) voidArgs;
4     e';
5     free(voidArgs);
6 }
```

**Listing 3.4:** Structure of the generated function of a **void** task

Again, any argument-related code is generated as needed.

The aforementioned handle that a task yields is represented by an instance of a corresponding struct which captures both the initialization state and the computation of the embraced expression.<sup>20</sup> The **void** pointer of the arguments **voidArgs** does not keep the arguments' type information and with it their byte size. Therefore, an additional field **argsSize** is needed in order to be able to create copies of the arguments later on (see 3.2.2 for details).

```

1 exported struct Task {
2     void* args;
3     (void*) => (void*) fun;
4     size_t argsSize;
5 }
```

**Listing 3.5:** Generic struct generated for tasks

As opposed to the unique definitions of other elements that need to be defined for every occurrence of a task (the ones with the **X** suffixes), **struct Task** is generic and is reused for every task. Generic declarations are kept in fixed, separately generated modules (in which code is organized in mbeddr) and are imported into the user-defined modules. With these components in mind, the actual translation of a task expression **| . |** that contains references **v\_1** to **v\_n**, which need to be bound, becomes an mbeddr block expression:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> **(void\*) => (void\*) fun** is mbeddr syntax for the not easily edible function pointer **void \*(\*fun) (void \*)** in standard C99.

<sup>21</sup> A block expression contains a list of statements of which the mandatory yield statement returns the result value.

```

1 {
2   Args_X* args_X =
3     malloc(sizeof(Args_X));
4   args_X->v_1 = v_1;
5   ...
6   args_X->v_n = v_n;
7   yield (Task){ args_X, parFun_X,
8                 sizeof(Args_X) };
9 }

```

⇒

```

1 taskInit(v_1, ..., v_n)

with function declaration

1 inline Args_X taskInit(t_1 v_1, ..., t_n v_n) {
2   Args_X* args_X = malloc(sizeof(Args_X));
3   args_X->v_1 = v_1;
4   ...
5   args_X->v_n = v_n;
6   return (Task){ args_X, parFun_X,
7                  sizeof(Args_X) };
8 }

```

**Listing 3.6:** Reduction of a task expression to a block expression and further on to a function call

The expression of the **yield** statement is a C *compound literal*, which on evaluation creates an instance of the aforementioned **struct Task**. The block expression is then further reduced by mbeddr to a call of a newly generated inline function.<sup>22</sup> Without any references to bind, a task is reduced to the compound literal:

```

1 (Task_X){ null, parFun_X, 0 }

```

**Listing 3.7:** Reduction of a task without references to bind

The reduction of a task is accomplished differently if the task is immediately run via **|e|.run**. Section 3.2.2 will show how this is done. By the definition of **Args\_X** in listing 3.6, it becomes clear that, due to the call of **malloc** in line 3, the arguments of a task – its environment – are stored in the heap before execution.<sup>23</sup> This approach was chosen mainly in order to simplify the generation of the resulting code. In consequence, the arguments of a task (template) have to be deleted by the programmer by hand with **e.clear**. However, one advantage of the chosen implementation is that a task may be passed by value, e.g. when using a builder function to create tasks, without the possible need to copy multiple arguments. Instead just the pointer to the heap-managed data is copied. The results of tasks also reside in the heap, for reasons which are explained later, and must therefore be manually deleted, as well (with the standard C function **free**). For this reason, it becomes apparent that the return type of a task must either be a void type or a pointer type, as was mentioned in the design section.

In the translated code, the clearance **e.clear** of a task becomes a call of the **free** function of C, parameterized with the arguments of the translated task **e'**:

```

1 free(e'.args)

```

**Listing 3.8:** Reduction of a task clearance expression

<sup>22</sup> Whereas in C for a struct type **T**, a typedef has to be manually defined by the programmer, this definition is done implicitly in mbeddr, in order to reference this type directly with **T** instead of **struct T**.

<sup>23</sup> This memory allocation in the heap should not be mixed up with the one in line 2 of listing 3.4 which will be explained later on.

---

### 3.1.3 Example Code

---

The running example concerns itself with the calculation of  $\pi$ , based on the definition given in the concurrent-pi example for the programming language *Go*.<sup>24</sup>  $\pi$  is approximated by the summation of a certain number  $n$  of terms where  $n$  determines the deviation of the result from the actual value of  $\pi$ , i.e. the result's precision:

$$\pi_{\text{approx}} = \sum_{i=0}^n 4 * \frac{-1^i}{2i+1} \quad (9)$$

In the first scenario, the amount of work is distributed among a certain number of tasks, each of which calculates the contribution of summands for a range of indices  $i$ . The calculation of such a partial sum for a range [start,end[ (block) of indices is done by the functions:

```
1 long double calcPiBlock(uint32 start, uint32 end) {
2     long double partialSum = 0;
3     for (uint32 i = start; i < end; ++i) { partialSum += calcPiItem(i); }
4     return partialSum;
5 }
6
7 long double calcPiItem(uint32 index) {
8     return 4.0 * (pow (-1.0, index) / (2.0 * index + 1.0));
9 }
```

**Listing 3.9:** Calculation of  $\pi$  via equation 9

The work can be distributed among e.g. 4 tasks, where each task calculates a partial sum for an equally long block, which is given by:

```
1 #constant BLOCKSIZE = 3000000000;
2 #constant BLOCKCOUNT = 4;
3 #constant THRESHOLD = BLOCKSIZE * BLOCKCOUNT;
```

These values are then used to initialize an array of tasks:

```
1 int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
2     ...
3     Task<long double*>[BLOCKCOUNT] calculators;
4     for (i ++ in [0..BLOCKCOUNT[]) {
5         uint32 start = i * BLOCKSIZE;
6         uint32 end = start + BLOCKSIZE;
7         calculators[i] = |calcPiBlock(start, end)|;
8     } ...
9 }
```

**Listing 3.10:** Main function of parallel  $\pi$  calculation

---

<sup>24</sup> <https://github.com/foamdino/learning-go/blob/master/concurrent-pi/concurrent-pi.go>, accessed: 2014-07-03

The final summation of the calculated blocks will be shown after the presentation of futures in section 3.2.3. The code is translated<sup>25</sup> to the building blocks that were introduced in 3.1.2:

```
1 int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
2     ...
3     Task[BLOCKCOUNT] calculators;
4     for (int8 __i = 0; __i < BLOCKCOUNT; __i++) {
5         uint32 start = __i * BLOCKSIZE;
6         uint32 end = start + BLOCKSIZE;
7         calculators[__i] = taskInit_0(start, end);
8     }
9     ...
10 }
11
12 struct Args_0 {
13     uint32 start;
14     uint32 end;
15 };
16
17 inline Task taskInit_0(uint32 start, uint32 end) {
18     Args_0* args_0 = malloc(sizeof(Args_0));
19     Args_0->start = start;
20     Args_0->end = end;
21     return (Task){ args_0 , :parFun_0 , sizeof (Args_0)};
22 }
23
24 void* parFun_0(void* voidArgs) {
25     long double* result = malloc(sizeof(long double));
26     Args_0* args = ((Args_0*) voidArgs);
27     *result = calcPiBlock((args)->start, (args)->end);
28     free(voidArgs);
29     return result;
30 }
```

**Listing 3.11:** Reduced code of parallel  $\pi$  calculation

The type of **calculators** is translated into an array type of the generic **Task** struct type such that the type specification **long double\***, which is not needed in the translated code, gets lost in this process. The task expression **|calcPiBlock(start, end)|** is translated into a function call of the generated inline function **taskInit\_0**. This function stores the values of the referenced local variables **start** and **end** in a structure which will later be used as the input for the parallel executed function **parFun\_0**. This function, the wrapped arguments and their total size are stored in a generic **Task** structure instance

<sup>25</sup> For legibility reasons, the code shown in the following listing and any other mbeddr code presented is a simplified version of the intermediate code that mbeddr actually generates. The performed changes are restricted to renaming and negligible syntax changes.

which is the handle that will later be used to initiate the task. **parFun\_0** takes its arguments generically (as is required by the POSIX threads standard) and also returns its result generically via the heap. As the arguments reside in the heap and are uniquely allocated (which will be explained in 3.2.2), they must be freed before **parFun\_0** returns. The calculation of the result in line 27 is straightforwardly given by the execution of the expression of the original task sub-expression **calcPiBlock(start, end)** except that the two variable references are substituted by references to the according fields in the argument struct instance **voidArgs** which is cast to the appropriate type **Args\_0**.

---

## 3.2 Futures

---

Whenever a task **t** is run, a *future* is generated. Futures in ParallelMbeddr are based on Halstead's definition of a future [37]. A future is a handle to a running task that can be used to retrieve the result of this task from within some other task **u**. As soon as this happens, the formerly in parallel running task **u** joins **t**, which means that it waits for **t** to finish execution in order to get **t**'s result value. The asynchronous execution is, thus, synchronized.

---

### 3.2.1 Design

---

The syntax *e* of expressions in mbeddr is extended by:<sup>26</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} e &::= \dots | e.run | e.result | e.join \\ t &::= \dots | Future<t> \end{aligned} \tag{10}$$

Like with tasks, the type of a future is parameterized by its return type. **e.run** denotes the launch of task **e** whereas **e.result** joins a running task that is represented by a future handle **e** – i.e. the expression is used to halt the execution of the calling task until **e**'s execution is finished – and returns its result. The last expression **e.join** can be used to join tasks that return nothing. These properties are reflected in the typing rules:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Future} \frac{e \vdash Task<t>}{e.run \vdash Future<t>} & \text{FutureResult} \frac{e \vdash Task<t^*>}{e.result \vdash t^*} & \text{FutureJoin} \frac{e \vdash Task<void>}{e.join \vdash void} \end{array} \tag{11}$$

As was already depicted in the previous section, **result** returns a pointer to a heap-managed value. Hence the programmer has to free the value eventually.

---

### 3.2.2 Translation

---

A future of type **Future<t\*>** is translated to an instance of a generic **struct** that contains a handle of the thread, a storage for the result value – which is dropped for futures of type **Future<void>** – and a flag that indicates whether the thread is already finished:

---

<sup>26</sup> If the expression *e* has a pointer type the dots (.) are replaced by arrows (->).



```

1 exported struct Future {
2     pthread_t pth;
3     boolean finished;
4     void* result;
5 };

```

**Listing 3.12:** Struct generated for all futures of type **Future<t\*>**

For every task and future expression shown above, a generic function reflects the semantics in the translation. The **run** of a task involves taking a task (line 1), creating a pthread with the task's function pointer and arguments (lines 4 and 8), and generating a future<sup>27</sup> with the initialized thread handle (line 10):<sup>28</sup>

```

1 Future runTaskAndGetFuture(Task task) {
2     pthread_t pth;
3     if ( task.argsSize == 0 ) {
4         pthread_create(&pth, 0, task.fun, 0);
5     } else {
6         void* args = malloc(task.argsSize);
7         memcpy(args, task.args, task.argsSize);
8         pthread_create(&pth, 0, task.fun, args);
9     }
10    return ( Future ){ .pth = pth };
11 }

```

**Listing 3.13:** Generic function generated for the reduction of **run**

The code shows that the arguments to be provided for the thread are copied onto a new location in the heap, although they already reside in the heap as was shown in section 3.1.2. It is necessary to do so in order to avoid dangling pointers. These could arise when a task is cleared so that its arguments get deleted while one or more running instances ( pthreads ) of this task are not finished yet. Furthermore, generally every thread needs its own copy of the argument data in case it modifies it. A function corresponding to the previous function, called **runTaskAndGetVoidFuture**, is generated for futures that return nothing.

The signature of **pthread\_create** indicates how the result of a threaded function can be received. As was already , **pthread\_create** expects a function pointer of type **void\* -> void\***, which is the reason why the function generated for a task is equally typed. The result is thus a generic **void** pointer. This implies that the threaded function could generally return the address of a stack-managed value, i.e. a local variable. Since the existence of the value after thread termination cannot be guaranteed in such

<sup>27</sup> In the following a future will always denote either the according concept or an instance thereof. A **Future**, on the other hand, will either denote the struct that is used for futures, an instance thereof or the according struct type – the respective meaning will be explicitly clarified if necessary.

<sup>28</sup> Obviously the thread handle is copied into the **Future**. This is safe as can be seen when looking at the POSIX function **pthread\_t pthread\_self(void)**, which also returns a copy of a thread handle. This useful property is worth mentioning since it does not hold for all POSIX related data structures as is explained in footnote 40.

---

a case, a dangling pointer [63] could emerge, which resembles the aforementioned problem for thread arguments. The only safe alternative that fits the task-future structure well is to allocate memory from the heap and return the address of this memory (see section 3.1.2). The translation of the result retrieval is a call of the following function:

```
1 void* getFutureResult(Future* future) {
2     if (!future->finished) {
3         pthread_join (future->pth, &(future->result));
4         future->finished = true;
5     }
6     return future->result;
7 }
```

**Listing 3.14:** Generic function generated for the reduction of **result**

First, the future is used to join the according thread which blocks the execution until the thread is finished. Additionally, the result is copied into the designated slot of the future struct instance. Finally, the result is returned. In POSIX, a thread can only be joined once; every subsequent call causes a runtime error. In order to allow the user to request the result multiple times nevertheless, the **finished** flag is used to determine whether a join should happen. The same basic structure can be found in the translation of the **join** function for a future of type **Future<void>**. The main difference is the missing result-related code:

```
1 void joinVoidFuture(VoidFuture* future) {
2     if (!future->finished) {
3         pthread_join (future->pth, null);
4         future->finished = true;
5     }
6 }
```

**Listing 3.15:** Generic function generated for the reduction of **join**

Both aforementioned generated functions take their future parameters by address. This is necessary to make the setting of the future data work. If struct instances of futures would be passed to these functions as is, then due to C's pass-by-value semantics only copies of the provided future arguments would be filled with data. Thus, the result of a task would never arrive in the original future struct instance. Furthermore, subsequent calls to these functions would always work with false **finished** flags and ultimately trigger runtime errors (for this reason, futures should generally not be copied). The necessity for future pointers in turn does not assort well with chained future expressions like:

```
1 Task<int32*> task = |(int32)23|;
2 int32* result23 = task.run.result;
```

**Listing 3.16:** Chained future expression **task.run.result**

In this sample code, the future emerging from **task.run** is requested for its result. Since according to listing 3.13 this expression returns a value of type **Future** and **result** expects a pointer thereof the code

conflicts with the definition of the translation of **result** in listing 3.14. A first approach to solve this problem would be to change the line to:

```
1 int32* result23 = (&(task.run))->result;
```

#### Listing 3.17: Naïve solution for chained future expression

This, however, is not allowed because **task.run** is no lvalue [60, pp. 147-148] which prohibits the utilization of the address operator on this expression. Instead, in order to allow for chainings like **task.run.result**, two wrapper functions, one for each **join** and **result**, are provided. These functions each take a future by argument, thus binding it to an addressable location, and call the generated functions that correspond to **join**, respectively **result**, in turn:

```
1 void* saveFutureAndGetResult(Future future) {
2     return getFutureResult(&future);
3 }
4
5 void saveAndJoinVoidFuture(VoidFuture future) {
6     joinVoidFuture(&future);
7 }
```

#### Listing 3.18: Helper functions for chained future expressions

By making use of the presented functions, the reductions of **e.run**, **e.join** (**e->join**) and **e.result** (**e->result**) – where **e'** is the reduced value of **e** – directly become function calls thereof:

```
1 runTaskAndGetFuture(e')           // e.run
2 runTaskAndGetVoidFuture(e')       // e.run, if e is of type void
3 ((t)getFutureResult(&e'))         // e.result => e is of type Future
4 ((t)getFutureResult(e'))          // e->result => e is of type Future*
5 joinFuture(&e')                   // e.join  => e is of type Future
6 joinFuture(e')                    // e->join  => e is of type Future*
```

#### Listing 3.19: Reductions of **run**, **result** and **join**

The type cast of the result returned by **getFutureResult(&e')** is necessary since it returns a generic pointer of type **void\*** which may not be compatible with the receiver of the value. In consequence, the result is cast to the result type of the future for which **e.result** was type checked. For expressions of the kind **|e|.run**, the reduction to a call of **runTaskAndGetFuture()** is not applied. Instead, a call to a specific function **futureInit\_X** that combines both the logic of the task initialization and the future initialization is created. If **e** contains references to local variables or arguments, then similar to the **taskInit\_X()** expression block from section 3.1.2, the future initialization function first allocates memory from the heap for the values of the referred variables. To this end, it uses an instance of the **Args\_X** struct that was created for the task to store the values. Afterwards, instead of wrapping the arguments struct inside a **Task** struct instance, the function directly declares a pthread and initializes it with the arguments and a pointer to the function **parFun\_X** that was created for the task:

```

1 Future futureInit_X(t_1 v_1, ..., t_n v_n) {
2     Args_X* args_X = malloc(sizeof(Args_X));
3     args_X->v_1 = v_1;
4     ...
5     args_X->v_n = v_n;
6     pthread_t pthread;
7     pthread_create (&pthread, null, :parFun_X, args_X);
8     return (Future){ .pthread = pthread };
9 }

```

**Listing 3.20:** Generated function for `|e|.run`

If `e` does not contain any references to local variables or function arguments the arguments-related code is omitted and `null` is given as argument parameter to `pthread_create()`:

```

1 Future futureInit_X() {
2     pthread_t pthread;
3     pthread_create(&pthread, null, :parFun_X, null);
4     return (Future){ .pthread = pthread };
5 }

```

**Listing 3.21:** Generated function for `|e|.run` if `e` contains no references to bind

If the type of `e` is `void`, the struct type `Future` is replaced by `VoidFuture` in either declaration of `futureInit_X`. The code shows why no clearance of the arguments for a task in the case of a direct run of the task is required, as was mentioned in section 3.1.1: Since the struct instance `args_X` is only used for exactly one running task, no further copies of the arguments are needed. Hence, the freeing of the heap-allocated memory can be left to the function `parFun_X`. `futureInit_X` is called in the reduction of `|e|.run`:

```

1 futureInit_X(v_1, ..., v_n)

```

**Listing 3.22:** Reduction of `|e|.run`

Whereas the following section shows example code for the generation of expressions `e.run` to calls of `runTaskAndGetFuture`, the reduction to a call of `futureInit_X` will be depicted in section 3.3.4.

### 3.2.3 Example Code

The running example concerning the  $\pi$  approximation from section 3.1.3 can now be extended with the result-related code. The tasks that were previously declared – and can be regarded as templates for according running instances of task – are used to initiate a running task instance of each:

```

1 int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
2     Task<long double*>[BLOCKCOUNT] calculators;
3     Future<long double*>[BLOCKCOUNT] partialResults;
4     // ... task declarations

```

```

5
6  for (i ++ in [0..BLOCKCOUNT]) {
7      partialResults[i] = calculators[i].run;
8      calculators[i].clear;
9  }
10
11 for (i ++ in [0..BLOCKCOUNT]) {
12     result += *(partialResults[i].result);
13     free(partialResults[i].result);
14 }
15 }

```

**Listing 3.23:** Result-related code of the main function of parallel  $\pi$  calculator

For every task that is run, a future of the same type is created. After the initialization, the tasks (i.e. task templates) are cleared in order to avoid memory leaks. The programmer is free to choose whether he is willing to do so. If only a very limited amount of memory is used by the tasks, the clearance might not be deemed necessary. In the second loop, the futures of all running tasks are used to retrieve and accumulate all partial  $\pi$  results. In the end, their memory is freed since they are located in the heap. Like with tasks, the freeing of future results is up to the programmer and, at the end of the program, might not be even useful. The translation of the new code becomes:

```

1  int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
2      Task[RANGECOUNT] calculators;
3      Future[RANGECOUNT] partialResults;
4      // ... task declarations
5
6      for (int8 __i = 0; __i < RANGECOUNT; __i++) {
7          partialResults[__i] = runTaskAndGetFuture(calculators[__i]);
8          free (calculators[__i].args);
9      }
10
11     for (int8 __i = 0; __i < RANGECOUNT; __i++) {
12         result += (((long double*) getFutureResult(&partialResults[__i])));
13         free((long double*) getFutureResult(&partialResults[__i]));
14     }

```

**Listing 3.24:** Reduction of result-related code of the main function

As the code shows, the future type becomes the type of the according generic **Future** struct. Like the translation of the task type it loses the type parameterization **long double\***, which is not necessary any more. The task running expression **calculators[i].run** and result retrieval expression **partialResults[i].result** are translated to calls of the newly generated generic functions **runTaskAndGetFuture()**, respectively **getFutureResult()**. Their definitions can be found in the previous section 3.1.2. Due to its genericity, **runTaskAndGetFuture()** returns a result of type **void\***. In consequence, its result must be cast by the compiler to an appropriate pointer type which in this case

is **long double\*** like in the original task and future definitions. Finally, the task clearance is simply reduced to a call of C's free function, which is given the pointer to the argument struct instance that the task **calculators[i]** holds.

---

### 3.3 Shared Memory

---

The previous chapters introduced the means to enable parallel execution of code in terms of tasks and futures. Still missing from a discussion of ParallelMbeddr's building blocks is the communication between tasks. The communication model of choice for ParallelMbeddr is shared memory. The reason for this choice follows from the objectives for a communication model: it should offer a reasonable performance, considering that it is supposed to be used in embedded systems; it should be reasonably thread-safe by design in order to avoid the trip hazards that are involved with low-level synchronization approaches like mutexes. For performance reasons, transactional memory seems not to be ready for the embedded domain. By following argumentation, for a first communication design, message passing does not offer profound advantages in comparison to shared memory if the access to the shared memory is controlled in a sound way. Usually message passing forbids shared memory between two parallel units of execution. Instead, communication is realized via message sends. A strict separation of memory does not fit the usual C work-flow concerning pointer arithmetic. Therefore, in order to reduce performance losses due to expensive memory copies, some form of memory sharing would have to be introduced into a message passing model. As this would lead to the same problems that already arise with the general shared memory model, the opposite way is chosen: Instead of introducing shared memory in a message passing model, a shared memory model is designed, on top of which message passing can be attached in order to simplify the communication between tasks.<sup>29</sup>

Memory that is to be shared between two tasks must be explicitly declared by an according type. A variable of this type denotes a *shared resource*. Thus, a shared resource can be regarded as a wrapper of data that is to be shared. In order to make use of a shared resource it has to be synchronized first. Specific language elements are used to access and change the value of a shared resource. The chosen approach enables the programmer to use shared data both globally and locally and, like with any other data, nest them inside structs and arrays. Additionally, the new data type enables the IDE to ensure – despite the (almost) unlimited possibilities to structuring shared resources – that data are shared in a sound<sup>30</sup> way.

---

#### 3.3.1 Design

---

The resources to be shared are typed with the shared resource type:

$$\begin{aligned} t &::= \dots | \text{shared}\langle u \rangle | \text{shared}\langle \text{shared}\langle u \rangle * \rangle \\ u &::= t \quad \text{void} \neq u \neq t * \end{aligned} \tag{12}$$

---

<sup>29</sup> Such an extension would be a future concern and is not implemented in this work.

<sup>30</sup> 'Sound' in this context means 'atomic'. Only one task at a time should be able to access a shared datum.

The type parameterization denotes the base type of a shared type, i.e. the type of the data that is wrapped by a shared resource. The base type of a shared resource can be either of mbeddr's C-types, with two exceptions. It must not be **void** because a shared resource has to wrap an actual value. Furthermore due to reasons that will be explained in 3.4, the base type may not denote a pointer to a value that is not shared.<sup>31</sup> Further restrictions apply to shared types, which are also discussed in 3.4. The same applies to the **.set** expression by which the value of a shared resource can be modified; the value can be retrieved via **.get**:

$$e ::= e.get \mid e.set(e) \quad (13)$$

$$\text{SharedGet} \frac{e \vdash \text{shared}\langle t \rangle}{e.get \vdash t} \quad \text{SharedSet} \frac{e \vdash \text{shared}\langle t \rangle \quad e' \vdash t' \quad t' <: t}{e.set(e') \vdash \text{void}} \quad (14)$$

In order to access (read or write) the value via **.get** or **.set** it must be synchronized first. For this purpose the syntax *stmts* of statements in mbeddr is extended by the synchronization statement **sync**. **sync** contains a *synchronization list* of shared resources to synchronize and a block of statements:

$$\text{stmt} ::= \dots \mid \text{sync}(res, \dots, res) \{ \text{stmt} \dots \text{stmt} \} \quad (15)$$

*res* denotes the syntax of possible *synchronization resources*. Each synchronization resource **res** wraps an expression **e** which evaluates to a shared resource. **e** can be either of type **shared<t>** or of type **shared<t>\***. A shared resource can be synchronized as it is (as a synchronization resource) or be named (the synchronization resource then becomes a *named resource*):

$$res ::= e \mid e \text{ as } [name] \quad (16)$$

The latter allows the programmer inside the **sync** statement to refer to the result of an arbitrary complex expression, which evaluates to a shared resource, inside the synchronization statement. Hence, a *named resource* (i.e. a synchronization resource with a name) can be seen as syntactic sugar for a local variable declaration, initialized with a shared resource, and a synchronization resource with a reference thereof. The type of such a reference is given by the shared resource that the expression wrapped by the named resource evaluates to. Due to C's copy semantics, this type is restricted to **shared<t>\***. This enforcement ensures that the named resource actually synchronizes the original shared resource and not a copy thereof, of which a synchronization would be useless. The scope of a named resource is restricted to the according synchronization statement. More precisely, a named resource *n* of a synchronization statement *s* can be referenced from anywhere inside the abstract syntax tree (AST) of the statement list

<sup>31</sup> In other words: A pointer wrapped in a shared resource must point to a shared resource itself. Due to the comprehensive type system that mbeddr is equipped with and that is only partially existent in C99, the compatibility of base types of shared types was mainly tested with the primitive types of C99 as well as pointer types, array types, struct types and type definitions (typedefs). Future work will have to be done to demonstrate and establish full compatibility with the rest of mbeddr's types.

of  $s$ . Furthermore, it can be referenced from within the expression of any synchronization resource that follows  $n$  in the synchronization list of  $s$ , e.g.:

```
1 shared<shared<int32>> v;  
2 // vContent is declared before it is used in the list => valid  
3 sync(v, &(v.get) as vContent, &vContent->get as vContentContent) {  
4     vContentContent->set(0);  
5 }  
6 // vContentContent is not in scope, here => invalid  
7 vContentContent->set(1);
```

**Listing 3.25:** Synchronization statement with named resources

The introduction of named resources was mainly motivated by the lexical scoping of synchronization resources: In order to determine whether the target of **.get** or **.set** is synchronized, ParallelMbeddr checks whether the target is a reference to a visible and synchronized variable or to a named resource. This implies that shared resource expressions other than variable references (e.g. paths and function calls) must be bound by named resources, in order to be able to access their wrapped values via **.get** or **.set**.

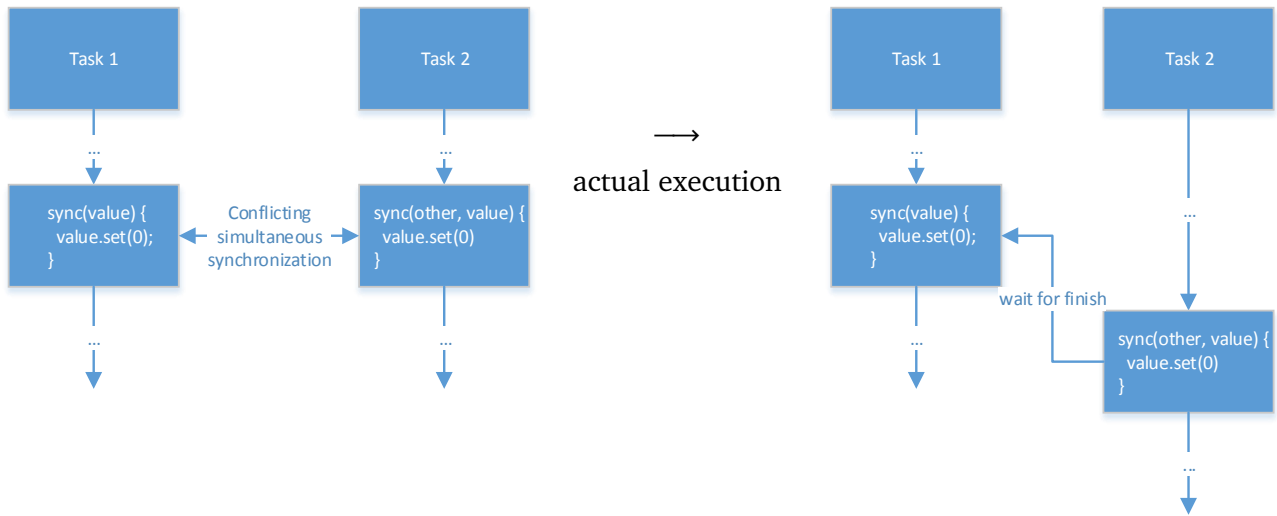
In contrast to Java's synchronization blocks and methods [67, p. 279], the synchronization of tasks is not computation oriented, but data oriented. The crucial difference is that a synchronized block **A** in Java is only protected against simultaneous executions by multiple threads. Thus, it is valid to access the data that are accessed during the execution of **A** via some other computation whose protecting block (if any) is unrelated to **A**. Since low-level data races can obviously not be guaranteed to be excluded with this scheme, ParallelMbeddr ties the protection to the data that is to be shared. Every shared resource, i.e. block of shareable data, is therefore protected separately and application-wide. ParallelMbeddr does not yet face higher-level data races, which involve multiple shared resources. Dependencies between shared resources must be resolved by the programmer who has to wrap the dependent data inside a single shared resource, e.g. as fields of a struct. Concluding, if two synchronization blocks, which are about to be executed in parallel, contain synchronization references that overlap in terms of their referenced shared resources, their executions will be serialized. For instance let  $t1$  and  $t2$  be two tasks that have access to the same shared resource which is referenced by a global variable **value**.  $t1$  wants to synchronize **value**, simultaneously  $t2$  wants to synchronize **valuePointer** which points to **value**'s shared resource and some other shared resource that is available via the variable **other**:

```
1 shared<int32> value;  
2 shared<int32>* valuePointer = &value;  
3 shared<double> other;
```

**Listing 3.26:** Variables that reference equal shared resources

The synchronization semantics will then cause one thread to wait for the other to finish the execution of the conflicting, and thus blocking, synchronization statement before it starts the execution of its own synchronization statement. The execution order might therefore be changed in the following manner:





**Figure 2:** Serialized execution of conflicting synchronization statements

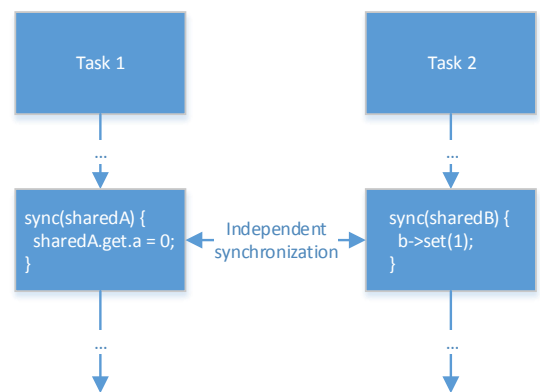
The possibility to refer to multiple shared resources in the synchronization list of a synchronization statement is not mere syntactic sugar for nested synchronization statements. Instead, the semantics of a synchronization list are that all referenced shared resources are synchronized at once, but with a possible time delay. Due to the design of the underlying implementation, deadlocks, as a result of competing synchronization statements, are thus avoided.<sup>32</sup>

As a result of the fact that generally the access to shared resources is resource-centric, a value wrapped in a shared resource which in turn contains nested shared resources is independently protected from the latter. Therefore, a shared resource of a struct with a shared member **b** is independently synchronized from **b**:

```

1 struct A {
2     int32 a;
3     shared<int32> b;
4 }
5 shared<A> sharedA;
6 shared<int32>* sharedB;
7 sync(sharedA) { sharedB = &(sharedA.get.b); }

```



**Figure 3:** Parallel execution of non-conflicting synchronization statements

For this reason, dependent data should not be separately protected by shared resources, since otherwise data-races could emerge.

<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, deadlocks can obviously still occur if nested synchronization statements compete for the same resources in an unsorted order.

---

The translation of shared resources is currently only supported for executable programs. Therefore, it is not safe to use shared types and synchronization statements in libraries that are written with mbeddr. The explanations of the following section are thus limited to according scenarios, although the translation for library code would only change in details.

---

### 3.3.2 Translation of Shared Types

---

In order to fully understand the translation of synchronization statements, the translation of shared types is given first. For the implementation of shared types in C, two main solutions are conceivable, which differ in the coupling that they exhibit between the data that is to be shared and the additional data required for access restriction, i.e. synchronization. In any case, a solution must make use of additional data that can be used to synchronize two threads which try to read or write the shared data. To this end, the most basic synchronization primitive was chosen: each protected data item is assigned exactly one mutex.

In the first solution, the data to be shared is stored as if no protection scheme existed at all. Additionally, all mutexes that are created by the application are stored in one global map, which indexes each mutex by the memory address of its corresponding shared datum. This approach offers the advantage that access to the data itself is not influenced by the mutex protection: Every access `e.get` of the value of a shared resource can directly be translated into a reference to the wrapped value. Additionally, since the mutexes are globally managed, all data that is returned by a library can be easily made (pseudo-) synchronization safe. For instance, if a pointer to an arbitrary memory location `loc` is returned, the pointed-to address can be used to create a new mutex and add a mapping to the global mutex map. However, this on-the-fly protection of memory locations can incur synchronization leaks: The compiler cannot guarantee that address returning functions with unknown implementation will not leak their returned values to some other computation which accesses the according memory unsynchronized. This implies that such protection would only be safe if every reference to `loc` was wrapped in some shared resource which, in this scenario, is not feasible. Hence, a design was chosen that does not allow for such protection (the interaction with library code is a concern for the future). Consequently, a global map would not be beneficial in this regard. A map solution would entail a space-time trade-off. For instance, Google's C++ `dense_hash_map`,<sup>33</sup> provides comparatively fast access to its members but imposes additional memory requirements in comparison to slower hash map implementations<sup>34</sup>. In spite of their constant time-complexity for accesses, a disadvantage of hash maps is the non-deterministic performance<sup>35</sup> and increased access time caused by hash collisions [44].

The second solution for the implementation of shared types keeps each shareable datum and its mutex together. An instance of a struct with member fields for both components is used in place of the bare

---

<sup>33</sup> [http://goog-sparsehash.sourceforge.net/doc/dense\\_hash\\_map.html](http://goog-sparsehash.sourceforge.net/doc/dense_hash_map.html), accessed: 2014-07-25

<sup>34</sup> See <http://incise.org/hash-table-benchmarks.html>, accessed 2014-07-25, for details. This exemplary library should be considered as an illustrative example for the general space-time trade-off that is inherent with maps.

<sup>35</sup> Although real-time applications with their time-wise constraints are not a primary concern of this work, it should nevertheless be kept in mind that they are part of the embedded domain. Therefore, a solution that considers the characteristics of this domain for the crucial implementation decisions of ParallelMbeddr is at least regarded advantageous.

---

datum to be shared. In contrast to the aforementioned solution, a reference to the value **e.get** needs one level of indirection via the struct instance. However, the access to a mutex is simplified. As with the value, it can be retrieved by a member access to the corresponding struct field, whereas the map solution requires a map lookup to get the mutex (plus additional delay to make any modifying access to the map thread-safe). The computational overhead imposed by a struct member lookup is deemed negligible in the overall application performance. On the other hand, the space required for the struct equals that of the individual fields (value and mutex) plus additional padding [50, pp. 303 ff.] that is required to arrange the struct fields along valid memory addresses. The latter depends on the size of the data to be stored. In order to keep the padding as small as possible, smart member ordering should be applied.

For this work, the struct solution was chosen in order to keep the access time of mutex lookups small and deterministic (except for unforeseeable delays produced by the memory layout) while not imposing too much space and computation overhead for datum lookups. For each kind of shared type **shared<t>** with the translated base type **t'** a separate struct is generated:

```
1 struct SharedOf_t {  
2     pthread_mutex_t mutex;  
3     t' value;  
4 }
```

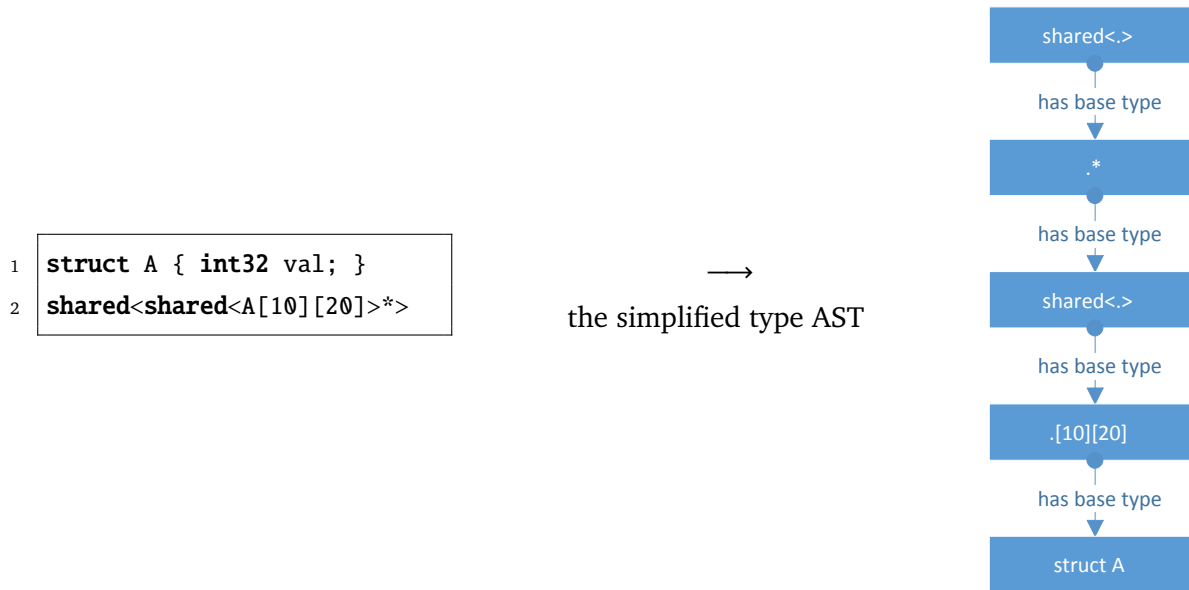
**Listing 3.27:** Struct generated for a shared type

Any nested shared types are, hence, translated first. For implementation reasons, nested *typedefs* and constants used in array types are also resolved in this process.<sup>36</sup> Depending on the base type of the shared type, the generated struct declaration is stored either in a generic module or in a newly generated other module. The following illustration depicts the tree for a type **shared<t>** whose nodes are made of types and whose edges are formed by the base type relationship of shared types, array types and pointer types,<sup>37</sup> e.g:

---

<sup>36</sup> Although the resolution of typedefs and constants impedes corresponding (test-wise) adjustments made by the programmer in the translated C code, this is currently not deemed an issue since, generally, changes should always be made from within mbeddr, i.e. on the original code.

<sup>37</sup> Clearly, this tree will have only one branch.



**Figure 4:** Abstract syntax tree of a nested shared resource type

If the leaf of the tree is a primitive C type the struct declaration is stored in a generic module. In any other case the leaf must be some struct type **s**. In order to preserve the visibility of the corresponding struct in the newly generated struct **SharedOf\_t**, the latter is stored in the same module. Since the generation of code related to shared types can diminish the legibility of the resulting code profoundly for every such module, a specific *SharedTypes\_X* module is created and imported into the module that declares **s**. *SharedTypes\_X* is used to store struct declarations like **SharedOf\_t**. Furthermore **s** is lifted into it in order to make it visible in the member declaration **value** of **SharedOf\_t**. For any field of **s** whose type tree contains another user-defined struct type, the corresponding struct declaration is either lifted as well (and recursively treated in the same way), or imported by its module. Should this separation of generated code used for shared type declarations and other user-defined code not proof well in praxis, it could easily be deactivated. With the former generation of the struct declaration in mind, a type **shared<t>** is reduced to:

```

1 SharedOf_t

```

**Listing 3.28:** Reduction of a shared resource type

The reduction of the expressions **e.get** and **e.set(f)** makes use of the **value** field of the **SharedOf\_t** struct. The expressions are basically reduced to a retrieval of the field, respectively an assignment to the field:

```

1 e'.value

```

respectively

```

1 e'.value = f'

```

**Listing 3.29:** Reductions of **get** and **set**

If **e'** has a pointer type, the expressions **e->get** and **e->set(f)** are reduced to:

1 `e' -> value`      respectively      1 `e' -> value = f'`

### Listing 3.30: Reductions of `get` and `set` for a pointer

The mutex of the struct **SharedOf\_t** in the equally named struct field **mutex**, which is used to synchronize one variable of an according type, must be initialized prior to any usage. This is done implicitly by generated code, in order to free the programmer from this task. Accordingly, mutexes must be released before they get out of scope to prevent memory leaks. In the generated code, both functionalities make use of corresponding functions, i.e. for every type – which is one of the following types – a pair of **mutexInit**–**mutexDestroy** functions is generated:

- shared types whose base types are shared types or for whom mutex functions are recursively generated;
- array types which are not base types of array types themselves and whose base types are either shared types or struct types for whom mutex functions are recursively generated;
- struct types whose structs contain at least one field with a type for which the same relation holds as for the aforementioned types.

For example, a type **shared<int32>[42][24]** would enforce the generation of one mutex initialization and one mutex destruction function. **shared<int32>\*** on the other hand would not. Any variable **v** of the latter type would point to a shared resource which must be referenced directly by another variable **v'** of type **shared<int32>** or be contained in the memory-addressable value of some variable **v''** of a more complex type. The declaration of **v'**, respectively **v''**, would then trigger the initialization of the mutex of the shared resource that **v** points to. The resulting mutex initialization functions for shared types of the aforementioned kind are declared as follows:

```

1 // for a proper shared type shared<t> and the type t' that t is reduced to
2 void mutexInit_X(SharedOf_t'* var) {
3     pthread_mutex_init(&var->mutex, &mutexAttribute);
4
5     // either if t is a shared type or a struct type:
6     mutexInit_X'(&var->value);
7
8     // or if t is an array type t[i_1]...[i_n] of 1 to n dimensions:
9     mutexInit_X'((SharedOf_t'*...*)var->value, i_1, ..., i_n);
10 }

```

### Listing 3.31: Mutex initialization functions

For a shared resource, first the mutex of the corresponding translated struct is initialized by a call to the POSIX function **pthread\_mutex\_init()**, which takes a mutex pointer and a mutex attribute pointer.<sup>38</sup> Then – since by aforementioned conditions the shared resource contains another shared resource – a call

<sup>38</sup> The meaning of the mutex attribute will be explained later on.

to the appropriate mutex function for the contained value is triggered. Depending on whether the base type of the current shared type is an array, additionally the dimension sizes for this base type may need to be provided as well (see below for details).

For shared resources that are nested in arrays, a nested iteration over all elements of the corresponding possibly multidimensional array with calls to either the generated mutex functions or the function defined by the POSIX standard are triggered.

```

1 // for a proper array type t[...] of 1 to n dimensions where '...' denotes the occurrence of
2 // an according number of symbols and t' denotes the reduced-to type
3 void mutexInit_X(t'*...* var, int32 size_0, ..., int32 size_n) {
4     for (int32 __i_0 = 0; __i_0 < size_0; __i_0++) {
5         ...
6         for (int32 __i_n = 0; __i_n < size_n; __i_n++) {
7             // in case t is a struct type
8             mutexInit_X'(&var[__i_0]...[__i_n]);
9
10            // or, in case t is a shared type with generic C base type:
11            pthread_mutex_init(&var[__i_0]...[__i_n].mutex, &mutexAttribute);
12        }
13        ...
14    }
15 }

```

**Listing 3.32:** Mutex initialization function for multi-dimensional arrays

For structs with nested shared resources, for each field that is or contains a shared resource, either the **pthread\_mutex\_init()** function is called directly or the mutex initialization is done by a call to the already generated function that is type compatible with this field (by possibly providing additional array dimensions):

```

1 // for a proper struct type t of a struct t { u_1 f_1; ...; u_n f_n } and according reduced
2 // field types u_1' to u_n'
3 void mutexInit_X(SharedOf_t* var) {
4     ...
5     // if u_i demands further initialization and it is a struct type or a shared type
6     mutexInit_X'(&var->f_i);
7
8     // if u_i demands further initialization and is an array type u_i[j_1]...[j_n] of 1 to n dim.
9     mutexInit_X'((SharedOf_u_i'*...*)var->f_i, j_1, ..., j_n);
10
11    // or, if u_i is a shared type with a generic C base type:
12    pthread_mutex_init(&var->f_i.mutex, &mutexAttribute);
13    ...
14 }

```

**Listing 3.33:** Mutex initialization function for structs

---

The signature of `mutexInit_X()` for arrays in line 3 of listing 3.32 shows that those are not passed as arrays to the mutex functions, but as pointers. This is due to the necessity of declaring multidimensional arrays at least partially with the size for each dimension (e.g. `int[][]` would be missing at least one dimension size). Nevertheless it would not make sense to declare one mutex function for each shape of dimension size. Since arrays are treated like pointers internally when they are passed as function arguments, it is completely safe to cast them to appropriate pointer types and to use equal types for the according function parameters.

The deletion of mutexes is defined quite similar to the initialization, with the main difference that the utilized according pthreads function only takes one mutex. Therefore, only the deletion of mutexes nested in resources of shared types is shown:

```
1 void mutexDestroy_X(SharedOf_t'* var) {  
2     pthread_mutex_destroy (&var->mutex);  
3     // ... further call to a mutexDestroy_X function equivalent to mutexInit_X shown above  
4 }
```

**Listing 3.34: Mutex destruction function**

The presented functions are used to initialize mutexes at the beginning of their life span and delete them right before the corresponding end. For mutexes referred to by global variables this means that they must be initialized at the beginning of the entry function of the program.<sup>39</sup> As already forced for executable programs by mbeddr, the programmer thus has to specify a main function (the construction of libraries is not supported by ParallelMbeddr, yet). Similarly, mutexes of local variables are initialized right after their declaration, whereas mutexes of function arguments are declared at the beginning of the related function.<sup>40</sup> The deletion of mutexes for shared resources must be accomplished before they get out of scope which, again, depends on the kind of variables they are referred to.

Mutexes for global variables need not be destroyed at all in order to avoid memory leaks. Their lifetimes span the whole program execution so that the memory allocated to these mutexes will be cleaned up by the operating system. On the other hand, the mutexes of local variables must be destroyed before they get out of scope. Hence, mutex destruction calls are added at the end of the surrounding scopes of mutexes. If control flow breaking statements (*return*, *break*, *continue*, *goto*) are present, additional calls

---

<sup>39</sup> Due to the way mutexes are used in ParallelMbeddr (recursively and nested in structs – as will be shown in the following paragraphs) and the peculiarities of C and the POSIX standard, there is no way to combine the definition and the initialization of mutexes.

<sup>40</sup> It is not an obvious choice to enable the programmer to use function arguments of shared resources: C's pass-by-value semantics of function parameters causes parameters to be copied into functions. Therefore, a shared resource which is not passed by its address but by its actual value will provoke the generation of another, equal shared resource at the beginning of the function execution. This copy is synchronization-wise completely unrelated to the original shared resource, since mutex copies cannot be used to lock with their origins [5]. Furthermore, they have to be initialized and destroyed separately. The use of shared resources in such a manner can confuse programmers who are not aware of this fact. Nevertheless, ParallelMbeddr allows this kind of utilization of shared resources in order to not burden the programmer with having to copy large structs that contain shared resources component-wise if the shared resource data is not of relevance. Depending on the feedback of future users, it should be considered whether warnings for unintended misuse of shared resources in this way might be helpful.

are inserted according to the following rules. Let  $c$  denote a control-flow-breaking statement that occurs in the AST of the same function as the declaration  $l$  of some local variable, which refers to a (nested) shared resource. If  $c$  is part of the AST of any statement that follows  $l$ <sup>41</sup> and

- $c$  is a *return* statement and refers to a function or a closure whose AST contains  $l$  or
- $c$  is a *break* statement and refers to a loop or a *switch* statement case whose AST contains  $l$  or
- $c$  is a *continue* statement and refers to a loop whose AST contains  $l$  or
- $c$  is a *goto* statement and refers to a label outside the AST of any statement that follows  $l$ ,<sup>42</sup>

$c$  must be preceded with a destruction call of the mutex of the shared resource of  $l$  (compare with the synchronization stopping rules below). Allocated memory that is not freed at the end of the program is automatically released by the operating system. Hence, a *return* statement that refers to the entry function of the program need not be preceded with destruction calls of its local shared resources. The proper destruction of a mutex of an argument of function  $f$  just requires according function calls at the end of  $f$  and before any return statement that refers to  $f$ .

Like inside the declarations of the mutex initialization functions explained above, the actual initialization function to call for a variable or argument is either one of the **mutexInit\_X()** functions or a direct call of **pthread\_mutex\_init()** for ‘simple’ shared resources of generic C types, e.g.:<sup>43</sup>

<pre> 1 // simple shared resource 2 shared&lt;int32&gt; v1; 3 4 // complex shared resource 5 shared&lt;int32&gt;[2][3] v2;</pre>	$\Rightarrow$	<pre> 1 SharedOf_int32_0 v1; 2 pthread_mutex_init(&amp;v1.mutex, &amp;mutexAttribute); 3 4 SharedOf_int32_0[2][3] v2; 5 mutexInit_0((SharedOf_int32_0**)v2, 2, 3);</pre>
--	---------------	--

**Listing 3.35:** Mutex initialization calls for local variables

To recap: The mutex of a shared resource is either directly initialized and destroyed via appropriate pthreads functions or it is indirectly handled via functions that are based on the types of the values that shared resources are nested in. This approach was chosen in order to reduce the amount of code duplication that would occur if mutexes of shared resources would be handled inline for every according variable. As a result, the generated code’s readability is enhanced. The additional computational overhead due to function calls and returns should be regarded as an optimization concern of a further compilation step by a compiler like gcc.

<sup>41</sup> In other words, only those control-flow-breaking statements  $cs$  that are either one of the statements  $stmts$  which have the same AST parent  $p$  and follow  $l$  in the statement list of  $p$  or are contained in the AST of some  $stmt$  are considered.

<sup>42</sup> Since *goto* statements can considerably disorganize the program flow they should be only used with great care in ParallelMbeddr. Specifically the initialization of mutexes is not protected against misuse of these statements.

<sup>43</sup> The same reasoning holds for calls of mutex destruction functions.



ParallelMbeddr does not prevent the programmer from structuring the synchronization statements in such a way that a task will synchronize a variable of a shared resource multiple times (*recursive synchronization*). The following code depicts such behavior:

```

1  shared<int32> sharedValue;
2  sync(sharedValue) {
3      sync(sharedValue) {
4          sharedValue.set(42);
5      }
6  }

```

**Listing 3.36:** Recursive synchronization

Since each synchronization statement locks the mutexes of the referred shared resources (see below for details), a recursive synchronization results in a *recursive lock* of the corresponding mutex. Mutexes as defined by the POSIX standard must be specifically initialized in order to allow for this behavior:<sup>44</sup> A mutex attribute that specifies the recursiveness must be defined and initialized first. It can then be used by any number of mutexes. For this purpose, an application-wide attribute is defined in a generic module that is imported by all user-defined modules. It is initialized at the beginning of the main function:

```

1  // inside the generic module:
2  pthread_mutexattr_t mutexAttribute
3  // at the beginning of main:
4  pthread_mutexattr_init(&mutexAttribute);
5  pthread_mutexattr_settype(&mutexAttribute, PTHREAD_MUTEX_RECURSIVE);

```

**Listing 3.37:** Global mutex attribute for recursive mutexes

### 3.3.3 Translation of Synchronization Statements

Every synchronization statement is reduced to its statement list – as a block –, surrounded with calls to functions that control the synchronization of the mutexes. The reduction of such a statement is given either by

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <pre> 1  sync(e) stmt_list </pre> </div>	$\Rightarrow$	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <pre> 1  startSyncFor1Mutex(&amp;e.mutex); 2  stmt_list' 3  stopSyncFor1Mutex(&amp;e.mutex); </pre> </div>
--	---------------	--

**Listing 3.38:** Reduction of a synchronization statement

in case it contains only one synchronized resource, or else by

<sup>44</sup> By default, a recursive lock results in undefined behaviour because a default mutex does not have a lock count which is required to make recursive locks work: [http://linux.die.net/man/3/pthread\\_mutex\\_trylock](http://linux.die.net/man/3/pthread_mutex_trylock), accessed: 2014-07-28.

<pre>1 sync(e_1, ..., e_n) stmt_list</pre>	$\Rightarrow$	<pre>1 startSyncForNMutexes(&amp;e_1.mutex, ..., &amp;e_n.mutex); 2 stmt_list' 3 stopSyncForNMutexes(&amp;e_1.mutex, ..., &amp;e_n.mutex);</pre>
--	---------------	--

**Listing 3.39:** Reduction of a synchronization statement with multiple synchronization resources

The statements are kept inside their statement list block in order to preserve the scope of local variables inside synchronization statements. A synchronization statement list block is reduced to another block where each statements that breaks the program flow structure may be preceded by an identical call of the **stopSyncForNMutexes()** function as in line 3: Let *s* be a synchronization statement and *c* be a control-flow-breaking statement which is nested in the AST of *s*' statement list. Then *c* is preceded with a call to **stopSyncForNMutexes()** if one of the following cases holds:

- *c* is a *return* statement and refers to a function or a closure whose AST contains *s*;
- *c* is a *break* statement and refers to a loop or a *switch* statement case whose AST contains *s*;
- *c* is a *continue* statement and refers to a loop whose AST contains *s*;
- *c* is a *goto* statement and refers to a label outside the AST of *s*.<sup>45</sup>

In this manner, inconsistent synchronization states of shared resources due to a control flow break by the aforementioned statements are omitted. Since the occurrence of such a statement may also force ParallelMbeddr to insert **mutexDestroy\_X()** calls, a careless mixture of mutex unlocking and destruction calls can cause runtime errors [5]. The generator therefore ensures that any destruction calls are put behind the generated unlocking calls.

For each arity of synchronization resources, separate versions of the **start-** and **stopSyncForNMutexes()** functions are declared inside a generic C module. A **stopSyncForNMutexes()** function straightforwardly redirects its mutex parameters to calls of the **pthread\_mutex\_unlock** function:

```
1 // the corresponding function 'stopSyncFor1Mutex()' for exactly one mutex is skipped here
2 void stopSyncForNMutexes(pthread_mutex_t* mutex_1, ..., pthread_mutex_t* mutex_n) {
3     pthread_mutex_unlock (mutex_1);
4     ...
5     pthread_mutex_unlock (mutex_n);
6 }
```

**Listing 3.40:** Synchronization stopping function

Abstracted from the details of the actual implementation, synchronization statements synchronize their resources atomically, as was mentioned in the preceding design section. Since one or more mutexes can be tentatively locked by multiple threads simultaneously, specific contention management has to be

<sup>45</sup> Similarly to the aforementioned problem with mutex management functions, *goto* statements can impair synchronization states and should therefore be used with great care. This holds particularly for *goto* statements which cause jumps into synchronization statements from outside.

conducted. The illusion of atomic synchronization is realized by an implementation of the obstruction-free<sup>46</sup> busy-wait protocol *Polite*. In order to resolve conflicts, *Polite* uses exponential back-off. The according back-off function is explained further down. The synchronization function tries to lock every mutex as given by its arguments. On failure, it releases every mutex that was locked so far, uses the back-off function to delay its execution for a randomized amount of time, and repeats afterwards. This scheme enables competing threads to (partially) proceed and avoid deadlocks due to unordered overlapping mutex locks.<sup>47</sup>

```

1 // again, the equivalent function declaration for one mutex is skipped
2 void startSyncForNMutexes(pthread_mutex_t* mutex_0, ...,
3     pthread_mutex_t* mutex_m, pthread_mutex_t* mutex_n) {
4     uint8 waitingCounter = 0;
5     uint16 mask = 16;
6     uint32 seed = (uint32)(uintptr_t) &waitingCounter;
7
8     while (true) {
9         if ([| pthread_mutex_trylock (mutex_0) |] != 0) {
10             backoffExponentially(&waitingCounter, &mask, &seed);
11         }
12         else if ([| pthread_mutex_trylock (mutex_1) |] != 0) {
13             [| pthread_mutex_unlock (mutex_0) |];
14             backoffExponentially(&waitingCounter, &mask, &seed);
15         } ...
16         else if ([| pthread_mutex_trylock (mutex_n) |] != 0) {
17             [| pthread_mutex_unlock (mutex_m) |];
18             ...
19             [| pthread_mutex_unlock (mutex_0) |];
20             backoffExponentially(&waitingCounter, &mask, &seed);
21         }
22         else { break; }
23     }
24 }

```

### Listing 3.41: Synchronization starting function

<sup>46</sup> Busy-waiting means that the thread will repeatedly test a condition until it is met, without doing actual useful work [56, p. 166]. Thus, it is an alternative to suspending a thread and revoking it later on when some condition is met (which can, e.g., be realized by *condition variables* as provided by POSIX threads [18, p. 77]). Obstruction-free means that the execution of any thread will progress when at some time the thread is run in isolation, i.e. when the execution of obstructing other threads is interrupted meanwhile. The existence of obstruction-freedom guarantees that no deadlocks will occur [12]. However, livelocks and starvation are not necessarily avoided. Stronger degrees of non-blocking algorithms like lock-freedom and wait-freedom tackle these problems (partially), but are not relevant for this work. Further information on the latter is for instance provided by <http://preshing.com/20120612/an-introduction-to-lock-free-programming/>, accessed: 2014-07-28.

<sup>47</sup> Again, the presented scheme does not prevent the programmer from nesting the synchronization statements in such a manner that deadlocks in nested synchronization statements occur. It is rather a prevention of deadlocks that are caused solely by synchronization statements on the same nesting level.

The back-off realized by Polite delays the execution by less than  $limit = 2^{n+k}$  ns [66] in a randomized fashion.  $n$  denotes the retry counter and  $k$  denotes some constant offset which can be machine-tuned. The randomized wait time of the exponential back-off is used to avoid livelocks which could happen if two threads would repeatedly compete for the same resources and delay their execution for equal amounts of time. In the current implementation **backoffExponentially()** of the contention management, the offset  $k$  is set to 4 and a threshold  $m$  of 17 denotes the number of rounds after which  $k$  is reset.<sup>48</sup> Thus, maximum delays of about 100 ms (specifically 131 ms) are allowed.<sup>49</sup>

```

1 inline void backoffExponentially(uint8* waitingCounter, uint16* mask, uint32* seed) {
2     *mask |= 1 << *waitingCounter;
3     randomWithXorShift(seed);
4     struct timespec sleepingTime = (struct timespec){ .tv_nsec = *seed & *mask };
5     nanosleep(&sleepingTime, null);
6     *waitingCounter = (*waitingCounter + 1) % 13;
7 }

```

**Listing 3.42:** Exponential back-off function

It has to be noted that **backoffExponentially()** keeps its main state inside the **startSyncForNMutexes()** function. The state will therefore be re-initialized before the execution of every synchronization block. The generation of the pseudo-randomized delay is realized via utilization of the Marsaglia's Xorshift random number generator [52]:

```

1 void randomWithXorShift(uint32* seed) {
2     *seed ^= *seed << 13;
3     *seed ^= *seed >> 17;
4     *seed ^= *seed << 5;
5 }

```

**Listing 3.43:** Pseudo randomization via Xorshift

The generator was chosen for its high performance, low memory consumption, and thread-safety due to the utilization of the **seed** parameter which points to a stack-managed local variable as opposed to the global state usage of the standard C random generator **rand()**. The fact that after a certain number – which may be smaller than in other generators – of repeated calls with the same seed value, repetitions of the sequence of calculated numbers will occur is not of relevance for the purpose of this work.

### 3.3.4 Example Code

In the previous sections 3.1.3 and 3.2.3 the running example approximated the number  $\pi$  by using tasks which calculate exactly one fraction of the result each and by retrieving their results via futures. The

<sup>48</sup>  $k$ 's value is reflected in the initial value ( $2^4 = 16$ ) of **mask** whereas  $m$ 's value is composed of mask's base and the divisor (13) in the calculation of the next **waitingCounter**.

<sup>49</sup> The search for machine- or application-specific optimal offsets and thresholds is a task for future enhancements of ParallelMbeddr.

amount of work was therefore partitioned in advance. In this section, a more dynamic approach is chosen instead: The logic of every task comprises major and minor rounds. A minor round is equivalent to the full calculation loop in the previous  $\pi$  solution. In every step of a major round, a minor round is initiated by first coordinating with the other tasks which range of  $\pi$  the current task should calculate. After having calculated the sum in a minor round, the task then uses a queue to store its next partial result. A dedicated task is used to collect these partial results from the queue and accumulate them to a complete sum, which eventually becomes the result of the over-all approximated  $\pi$ . The communication-based solution can be seen as a map-reduce implementation where partial results are mapped onto the queue by a certain number of tasks and from there reduced to a final result by a separate task (compare with [22]). In order to understand the new implementation, the following example is given: A thread-safe queue of type **long double** with a certain number of slots is to be viewed as a black box. Further, it has to be supposed that functions for the initialization, for adding a value and getting the next value (or wait for the next value), exist:

```

1 struct Queue {...}
2 void queueInit(shared<Queue>* queue);
3 void queueSafeAdd(shared<Queue>* queue, long double item);
4 void queueSafeGet(shared<Queue>* queue, long double* result);

```

**Listing 3.44:** Function definitions for the queue

As in the previous approach, the amount of work to be done is defined by a range size (number of minor task rounds) and the number of ranges altogether. Additionally, the number of mapper tasks is set to a certain value that should be in the order of the number of processor cores:

```

1 #constant BLOCKSIZE = 3000000000;
2 #constant BLOCKCOUNT = 4;
3 #constant THRESHOLD = BLOCKSIZE * BLOCKCOUNT;
4 #constant MAPPERCOUNT = 2;

```

These constants are used to initialize the mappers and the reducer in the main function appropriately:

```

1 exported int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
2     shared<Queue> queue;
3     queueInit(&queue);
4     shared<Queue>* queuePointer = &queue;
5
6     shared<uint32> counter;
7     shared<uint32>* counterPointer = &counter;
8     sync(counter) { counter.set(0); }
9
10    Task<void> mapperTask = |map(THRESHOLD, counterPointer, queuePointer)|;
11    Future<void>[MAPPERCOUNT] mappers;
12    for (i ++ in [0..MAPPERCOUNT]) {
13        mappers[i] = mapperTask.run;
14    }

```

```

15 mapperTask.clear;
16
17 shared<long double> result;
18 shared<long double>* resultPointer = &result;
19
20 |reduce(BLOCKCOUNT, resultPointer, queuePointer)|.run.join;
21
22 return 0;
23 }

```

### Listing 3.45: Initialization of the mappers and the reducer

First, the queue is defined as being shared in order to be accessible by all tasks. After the initialization, a pointer to the queue is created, which is necessary since any other reference inside a task expression to the queue variable would otherwise cause a copy of the queue struct instance into the task, regardless of whether later on the address of the referred value is retrieved via the **&** operator. This ‘shortcoming’ of the current semantics could be addressed by the introduction of a new address operator that creates a temporary variable of the addressed value and should be considered for future extensions of ParallelMbeddr. Similar to the queue, a **counter** variable is introduced which will be used by the tasks to check and communicate how many blocks have been processed so far. Then, one mapper task is defined and initialized with a task expression of a call to the **map()** function. For communication purposes, the mapper gets the queue pointer and the counter pointer. Additionally, although due to the use of constants not necessary in the current example, the mapper task is told the maximum number of items that need to be calculated. This single task template<sup>50</sup> is used to create multiple running tasks and store their handles as futures in a **mappers** array. The reducer uses a pointer to the memory location of **result** to store its result. Furthermore, it gets access to the queue via a pointer thereof and is told how many items (**BLOCKCOUNT**) it shall read from the queue before termination. In line 20, the code shows the first example of a task expression chain: First the task is declared, then an instance of it is run in parallel and immediately the main task joins the reducer. Since nothing is done in the main task between the run and the join, the serialized execution could also be realized by a simple function call to **reduce()**. For demonstrative purposes, the code was chosen this way nevertheless. The main task solely joins the reducer task, since after its termination every mapper task will also be finished. The **map()** function iteratively calculates complete ranges (blocks) of fractions of  $\pi$  until the maximum number of items, as given by **threshold**, is reached:

```

1 void map(uint32 threshold, shared<uint32>* counter, shared<Queue>* resultQueue) {
2     while (true) {
3         uint32 start;
4         uint32 end;
5
6         sync(counter) {
7             start = counter->get;
8             if (start == threshold) {

```

<sup>50</sup> **mapperTask** can be seen as a template for actual running mapper task instances.

```

9         break;
10    }
11    uint32 possibleEnd = start + BLOCKSIZE;
12    end = (possibleEnd <= threshold)?(possibleEnd):(threshold);
13    counter->set(end);
14    }
15
16    queueSafeAdd(resultQueue, calcPiBlock(start, end));
17 }
18 }

```

**Listing 3.46:** Mapper function

In every iteration, the function synchronizes the shared resources that **counter** points to in order to retrieve its value and increment it by the number of items that **map()** is going to calculate in the current round. It uses the **calcPiBlock()** function that was presented in section 3.1.3 to calculate a partial sum. Afterwards, the result is added to the queue. The **reduce()** function uses the queue to iteratively read all partial results and update the value of the shared resource of the final result accordingly:

```

1 void reduce(uint32 numberOfItems, shared<long double>* finalResult,
2             shared<Queue>* partialResultQueue) {
3     sync(finalResult) {
4         for (uint32 i = 0; i < numberOfItems; ++i) {
5             long double item;
6             queueSafeGet(partialResultQueue, &item);
7             finalResult->set(item + finalResult->get);
8         }
9     }
10 }

```

**Listing 3.47:** Reducer function

During the whole calculation, **reduce()** synchronizes the result in order to keep the overall synchronization overhead small. It is able to do this because no other task will try to access the result before the termination of the single reducer task.

In the beginning of the translated main function, the global mutex attribute, which will be reused for every mutex, is initialized. Afterwards, the declared queue is initialized:

```

1 pthread_mutexattr_settype(&mutexAttribute_0, PTHREAD_MUTEX_RECURSIVE);
2 pthread_mutexattr_init(&mutexAttribute_0);
3 initAllGlobalMutexes_0();
4 SharedOf_Queue_0 queue;
5 mutexInit_2(&queue);
6 queueInit(&queue);
7 SharedOf_Queue_0* queuePointer = &queue;

```

**Listing 3.48:** Reduction of the queue variable inside the main function

The translated struct type **SharedOf\_Queue\_0** of the original type **shared<Queue>** denotes a struct that contains a field for the protected queue and a mutex field:

```
1 struct SharedOf_Queue_0 {
2     pthread_mutex_t mutex;
3     Queue value;
4 };
```

**Listing 3.49:** Reduction of the queue's type

The mutex initialization function **mutexInit\_2()** initializes the mutex of the shared queue and calls another initialization function which, in turn, initializes any nested mutexes of the **Queue** struct. Similarly, a destruction function is generated:

```
1 void mutexInit_2(SharedOf_Queue_0* var) {
2     pthread_mutex_init(&var->mutex, &mutexAttribute_0);
3     mutexInit_1(&var->value);
4 }
5 void mutexDestroy_2(SharedOf_Queue_0* var) {
6     pthread_mutex_destroy(&var->mutex);
7     mutexDestroy_1(&var->value);
8 }
```

**Listing 3.50:** Mutex management functions for type **shared<Queue>**

Similar to the declarations for the queue, the mbeddr generator creates declarations of a struct for the **result** variable. The initialization and destruction of **result** is accomplished inline by calls to the pthreads functions, since no nested mutexes for the fields of the struct exist:

```
1 struct SharedOf_long_double_0 {
2     pthread_mutex_t mutex;
3     long double value;
4 };
5 ... // in main()
6 SharedOf_long_double_0 result;
7 pthread_mutex_init(&result.mutex, &mutexAttribute_0);
8 SharedOf_long_double_0* resultPointer = &result;
```

**Listing 3.51:** Reduction of the **result** variable

Lastly, the **counter** variable shows how translated shared resources can be synchronized.<sup>51</sup> For the duration of the setting of **counter**'s value, its mutex is locked. The setting of the value is done by an assignment to the **value** field of the generated struct that keeps the value of the shared resource:

```
1 SharedOf_uint32_0 counter;
2 pthread_mutex_init(&counter.mutex, &mutexAttribute_0);
3 SharedOf_uint32_0* counterPointer = &counter;
```

<sup>51</sup> The declarations of the struct and the mutex functions for the **counter** variable are skipped.



```

4
5 startSyncFor1Mutex(&counter.mutex);
6 { counter.value = 0; }
7 stopSyncFor1Mutex(&counter.mutex);

```

**Listing 3.52:** Reduction of the **counter** variable

The mutexes of all shared resources are destroyed at the end of the main function. Although this should not be necessary for local variables of the entry function of the program, the compiler currently does not distinguish between the main function and any other function for which such calls would be necessary:

```

1 mutexDestroy_2(&queue);
2 pthread_mutex_destroy(&counter.mutex);
3 pthread_mutex_destroy(&result.mutex);

```

**Listing 3.53:** Mutex destructions at the end of the main function

The initializations of the tasks and the declarations of the futures are quite similar to those in section 3.1.3:

```

1 Task mapperTask = taskInit_0(queuePointer, counterPointer);
2 // mappers:
3 VoidFuture[MAPPERCOUNT] mappers;
4 for (int8 __i = 0; __i < MAPPERCOUNT; __i++) {
5     mappers[__i] = runTaskAndGetVoidFuture(mapperTask);
6 }
7 free(mapperTask.args);
8
9 // reducer:
10 saveAndJoinVoidFuture(futureInit_0(resultPointer, queuePointer));

```

**Listing 3.54:** Reductions of tasks and futures

Since in the new solution, the tasks do not return any results directly, the **VoidFuture** struct and respective functions are used.<sup>52</sup> The reduction of the original code `|reduce(RANGECOUNT, resultPointer, queuePointer)|.run.join` to the code in line 10 of listing 3.54 is done in the following manner. As was shown in section 3.2.2, the **run** call and the task declaration are reduced to a call of a function which combines the initialization of a task with the one of a future of a parallel running instance of this task. This call is reflected by **futureInit\_0(resultPointer, queuePointer)**. Furthermore, the join of the task must first bind the created future handle to some addressable location before it can use this handle by its address. For this reason **saveAndJoinVoidFuture** is used in place of **joinVoidFuture**. The declaration of **futureInit\_0** follows:

<sup>52</sup> As the declarations of the **taskInit\_0()** function and the **Args\_X** structs resemble equivalent declarations of previously discussed code examples they are skipped here.

```

1 VoidFuture futureInit_0(SharedOf_long_double_0* resultPointer, SharedOf_Queue_0* queuePointer) {
2     Args_1* args_1 = malloc(sizeof(Args_1));
3     args_1->resultPointer = resultPointer;
4     args_1->queuePointer = queuePointer;
5     pthread_t pthread;
6     pthread_create (&pthread, null, :parFun_1, args_1) [];
7     return (VoidFuture){ .pthread = pthread };
8 }

```

**Listing 3.55:** Future initialization function generated for the queue

The original declaration of the reducer task contains references to the local variables **resultPointer** and **queuePointer**, which is why they are bound to equally named fields in the argument struct. An instance of the **VoidFuture** struct is returned because the parallel task does not return a value and, thus, has the type **task<void>**.

Inside the helper function **map()**, the synchronization statement of **counter** is replaced by its statement list, which is surrounded by calls to appropriate functions:

```

1 while (true) {
2     uint32 start;
3     uint32 end;
4
5     startSyncFor1Mutex(&counter->mutex);
6     {
7         start = counter->value;
8         if (start == threshold) {
9             stopSyncFor1Mutex(&counter->mutex);
10            break;
11        }
12        uint32 possibleEnd = start + BLOCKSIZE;
13        end = (possibleEnd <= threshold)?(possibleEnd):(threshold);
14        counter->value = end;
15    }
16    stopSyncFor1Mutex(&counter->mutex);
17
18    queueSafeAdd(resultQueue, calcPiBlock(start, end));
19 }

```

**Listing 3.56:** Reduction of the synchronization statement inside **map()**

The break statement in line 10 is preceded by another call to the synchronization stop function, as the function would otherwise return in a state where **counter** would still be locked, which would ultimately cause the program to fail. The former expressions to get and set the value of **counter** are translated into accesses of the translated **value** field of the **counter** struct instance. The synchronization statement of **reduce()** is likewise translated into its statement list with surrounding synchronization calls. In line 6,

---

the translation of the expression **finalResult->set(item + finalResult->get)** contains two accesses to the aforementioned **value** field, one for **.set** and one for **.get**:

```
1 startSyncFor1Mutex(&result->mutex);
2 {
3     for (uint32 i = 0; i < numberOfItems; ++i) {
4         long double item;
5         queueSafeGet(resultQueue, &item);
6         result->value = item + result->value;
7     }
8 }
9 stopSyncFor1Mutex(&result->mutex);
```

**Listing 3.57:** Reduction of the synchronization statement inside **reduce()**

---

### 3.4 Safety Measures

---

So far the basic blocks that constitute parallel code execution and shared data synchronization, namely tasks, shared resources and synchronization thereof, were introduced. Not discussed so far were most of the rules which ensure that only shared resources may be shared and that these can only be used in a sane way. The current section fills this gap by giving an informal overview of the rules that were implemented in ParallelMbeddr, categorized by their objectives. In the following paragraphs, **t** denotes some arbitrary type.

---

#### 3.4.1 Avoidance of Implicitly Shared Unprotected Data

---

Global variables can be accessed by any function for which they are visible. Therefore, they must have a type **shared<t>** in order to restrict any modifications of their values to synchronized contexts. This restriction can be too strong if a global variable is only accessed by exactly one thread. Nevertheless, in this paper, the conservative approach was chosen in order to establish a safe foundation. Future static code analysis should be leveraged to reliably detect the cases where restrictions can be loosened. Another class of data that is inherently vulnerable for unsafe data sharing arises from static variables. In C, local variables that are declared static have a “global lifetime” [54, p. 439], which means that as with global variables, the addresses of their allocated memory does not change. Thus, they keep their values from one function call to the next. The main difference between static local variables and global variables is the respective visibility. Consequently, static variables must have a type **shared<t>** as well. Finally, a base type **t** of a shared type may never be a pointer type with a base type other than a shared type. Otherwise the value of a shared resource would point to data that is not synchronized and would enable unprotected inter-task communication. For instance, in the following example the functions **foo()** and **bar()** do not block one another since they synchronize different shared resources. Nevertheless they both write to the same location in memory, which causes a data race.

```

1 // global variables:
2 shared<int32*> v1;
3 shared<int32*> v2;
4
5 int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
6     int32 sharedValue;
7     sync(v1, v2) {
8         v1.set(&sharedValue);
9         v2.set(&sharedValue);
10    }
11    |foo()|.run;
12    |bar()|.run;
13 }
14
15 foo() {
16     sync(v1) { *v1.get = 0; }
17 }
18 bar() {
19     sync(v2) { *v2.get = 1; }
20 }

```

**Listing 3.58:** Synchronization violation for shared resources of unsynchronized pointers

---

### 3.4.2 Copying Pointers to Unshared Data into Tasks

---

The pass-by-value semantics of C generally already ensure that any local data which is referred to from within a task expression is safely copied into the task. On execution, the task will not access the original data, but a copy thereof. On the other hand, this approach becomes unsafe as soon as local variables are copied whose values are plain pointers (pointers to something else than shared resources). When such a copied pointer is used inside a task to access a pointed-to memory location in an unsynchronized manner, it accesses data that might simultaneously be accessed by another task, e.g. the task by which this task was created, which knows the address of the data. To avoid this behavior, every pointer that might be copied into a task by accessing a local variable or a function argument from within a task expression must point to a shared resource, i.e. must be of type **shared<t>\***. It has to be noted that this does not only hold for the variables themselves, but also for nested fields of struct instances and array elements. Furthermore, arrays must not be copied into tasks unless they are wrapped in a struct field. Due to the internal treatment of pointers in C (see section 2.2), the access to an array holding local variable would cause a copy of the address of the array into the task as a pointer. In consequence, references of local variables and arguments with type **t[]...[]** inside task expressions are not allowed. On the other hand, it is safe to have a struct with a an array field be copied into a task. In contrast to the former case, the array would then be entirely copied along its surrounding struct instance.

---

### 3.4.3 Unsynchronized Access to Synchronizable Data

---

As was already mentioned in section 3.3, the value of a shared resource can only be accessed (retrieved or rewritten) from within a proper synchronization context. This approach ensures that no write to shared data invalidates any other write or read of the data. The according rule is that an expression **e.get** or **e.set** is only allowed if **e** is either a reference to a named resource in scope, i.e. a shared resource which is synchronized in a surrounding synchronization statement and bound to a new name; or if **e** is a reference to a variable with a shared resource as value that is also referred to by a synchronization resource of a surrounding synchronization statement. By this restriction, the following code would trigger an error message in ParallelMbeddr:

```
1 shared<shared<int32>> v;
2 sync(v) {
3     sync(v.get) {
4         // error: e.get seems to be unsynchronized
5         e.get.set(0);
6     }
7 }
```

**Listing 3.59:** Consequence of the lexical scoping of synchronization resources

Although the previous code would not produce any synchronization gap, ParallelMbeddr does not recognize this since the expression **e.get** does not refer to a named resource or a variable with a synchronized shared resource. Instead, for exactly this purpose, named resources were implemented which allow to rewrite the code in the following valid manner:

```
1 shared<shared<int32>> v;
2 sync(v) {
3     sync(&(v.get) as w) {
4         w->set(0);
5     }
6 }
```

**Listing 3.60:** Access to synchronized shared resource according to lexical scoping

The reasoning behind this was to simplify the implementation of the safety checking analysis. Again, the chosen approach can in certain cases be overly conservative. If write conflicts can never happen for a shared resource and, in consequence, data races thereof are impossible, it would be safe to access the variable outside any synchronization context despite the error message that is generated by the IDE. Moreover, by the applied lexical scoping, ParallelMbeddr is not able to detect whether a shared resource is recursively synchronized across function calls:

```
1 shared<int32> v;
2 sync(v) { foo(&v); }
3 ...
4
```

```

5 void foo(shared<int32>* v) {
6     sync(v) { v->set(0); }
7 }

```

**Listing 3.61:** Synchronization across function multiples

---

### 3.4.4 Address Leakage of Shared Resource Values

---

In order to restrict any writes or reads of the values of shared resources to synchronization contexts, it is crucial to not leak the memory addresses of these values outside the protected synchronization context from where they could be accessed via the address operator (&). The measures to keep the addresses encapsulated constrain the use of the address operator and the use of arrays: The first rule forbids any expressions **&e** where **e** contains a sub path **eSub.get** and **e** does not evaluate to a shared resource. The latter condition allows the programmer to get the address of an encapsulated shared resource, which is unproblematic since shared resources may not be overwritten as is explained in 3.4.5. The second rule states that an expression **e** of some array type is forbidden, if **e** contains a sub path **eSub.get** and the parent of **e** does not access a specific element of **e**. Thus, any access to an (multidimensional) array that is encapsulated in a shared resource must actually be extended to an access of the innermost elements of the array. Otherwise it would be possible to assign the array itself or, in the case of a multidimensional array, take an element of the array which itself is an array and assign it to an unprotected pointer variable. Hence, the address of the array or of an element of this array would be leaked. For instance, in the following example, ParallelMbeddr would complain about an address leakage of the first element of the array wrapped inside **v**:

```

1 shared<int32[5][10]> v;
2 int32* pointer;
3 // address leakage!
4 sync(v) { pointer = v.get[0]; }

```

**Listing 3.62:** Leakage of an array address

---

### 3.4.5 Overwriting Shared Resources

---

Shared resources may never be overwritten. The reason for this regulation results from the following consideration. If a shared resource **r** shall be overwritten, e.g. by a direct assignment or by a **set** if **r** is nested inside another shared resource, it must be synchronized first since the overwriting could overlap with another access to **r** from within another task. Before the resource is rewritten, the mutex of **r** must be destroyed in order to prevent memory leaks. Furthermore, after the rewriting is done, the newly created mutex for **r** must be initialized prior to any usage. Hence, in the span between the destruction and the re-initialization, the mutex of **r** (respectively **r'** after the rewrite is done, because the variable will refer to a new value) cannot be accessed in the synchronization attempt of any other

---

simultaneously executed synchronization statement. Any such task would thus have to be blocked, which would complicate the compiler and decrease the performance of the executed code without offering any worthy advantage. In addition to this problem, the overwriting of a shared resource of a struct instance, which itself contains a shared resource field **f**, would invalidate any pointer **p** to **f**. **p** could therefore not be used anymore afterwards, which may comply with the usual C semantics, but does not fit the safety-first approach of ParallelMbeddr.

Nevertheless, it is safe to copy a shared resource into the memory of a local variable declaration or of a function argument, i.e. a pass of a shared resource to a function or an initialization of a newly created local variable with a shared resource is valid. In these cases, the shared resources copies must be initialized prior to any usage.

The safety enforcing rules are as follows: A variable that refers to a shared resource or to a value that contains a nested shared resource may not be assigned a new value (the initialization of a declaration is not a classical assignment). Additionally, an expression **e.set(e')** is not allowed if **e'** is a shared resource or contains a shared resource, because **e.set(e')** is translated into an assignment (see section 3.3.2).

---

### 3.4.6 Overwriting Pointers to Shared Resources

---

Not only references to variables of shared resources can be used for the definition of synchronization references, but also expressions that evaluate to pointers of shared resources. While providing more flexibility, this approach facilitates the introduction of data races via the following two techniques. For the first problem, the following example is given:

```
1 struct Container {
2     shared<int32> value;
3     shared<int32>* pointer;
4 }
5
6 shared<Container> c;                                // somewhere in the code
7 sync(c, &c.get.value as valueP, c.get.pointer as pointerP) { // somewhere else
8     /* make use of valueP and pointerP */
9 }
```

**Listing 3.63:** Named resource threatened by overwriting

Generally, the semantics of the synchronization statement would be that **c**, **valueP** and **pointerP** would be synchronized altogether by repeatedly trying to lock their mutexes. The translation of the named resources would introduce local variables which bind the values of the expressions **&c.get.value** and **c.get.pointer**:

```
1 shared<int32>* valueP = &c.get.value;
2 shared<int32>* pointerP = c.get.pointer;
3 sync(c, valueP, pointerP) {...}
```

**Listing 3.64:** Invalidation of a synchronization resource

---

The intermediary translated code reveals the problem: The initialization values of the pointers to the shared resources are, due to eager evaluation, evaluated as soon as they are declared. In the case of **valueP** this does not matter, since the **value** field may never be overwritten. **pointerP**, on the other hand, is a copy of the field **pointer** which may be overwritten by any task that has access to **c**. This means that between the declaration of **pointer** and its use in the synchronization statement its value may become out of date. Hence, the atomicity semantics of the synchronization of **sync** would be violated. The translation could be fixed to safely support such cases. Yet, due to the possibility to make use of control-flow-breaking statements inside synchronization statements, the translated code would become considerably more complicated. For this reason, the opposite path was chosen: Cases like the depicted one are forbidden by the following rule. If inside the synchronization list **l** of a synchronization statement the expression of a well-typed named resource **n** – which must have the type **shared<t>\*** – is no address reference expression **&e** but contains either a reference to a previous named resource in **l** or a reference to a variable that is synchronized by a previous synchronization resource in **l**, then **n** is invalid.

The second problem is illustrated by the following example:

```
1  shared<int32> value1;
2  shared<int32> value2;
3  shared<int32>* p = &value1;
4  shared<int32>* q = &value2;
5  // somewhere else
6  sync(p) {
7      p = q;
8      p.set(42);
9  }
```

Since both **p** and **q** are pointers to shared resources they can be used for synchronization resources. Furthermore, according to the previous rules of this chapter, they may be arbitrarily assigned new values. Thus, the line **p = q** should be fine. Nevertheless, this assignment introduces the potential for data races, since **q**'s target **value2** and thus its modification via **p.set(42)** is not synchronized. In addition, at the end of the synchronization statement the program will try to release the lock of **value2**'s mutex although only **value1**'s mutex was previously locked. To solve this problem, pointers to shared resources should never be overwritten if they are simultaneously used for synchronization purposes. For this purpose, a synchronization resource whose type is **shared<t>\*** must be named. Additionally, a named resource may not be treated like an *lvalue* which means that neither it may be assigned any value nor its address may be retrieved (to prevent overwritings via address dereferences).



---

## 4 Optimization

The previous chapter introduced the means to enable parallel execution of code via tasks and establish communication between tasks via shared resources. In order to make the communication thread-safe, synchronization statements were presented which provide synchronization contexts of atomic thread-safe blocks for the shared resources that they synchronize. For the purpose of both simplicity of the design and thread-safety of the user-code, conservative restrictions were made: in the variability of the code and the scopes of synchronization contexts. While this strategy simplifies the construction of correct programs for the user, it may induce unnecessary serialization during program execution if potential data hazards will actually never manifest at runtime [62]. While the synchronization overhead reflects the optimization potential in the time-wise dimension, there is also a space-dimension which originates from the way mutexes are used in the implementation.

---

### 4.1 Space Optimization

As was briefly addressed in 3.3.2, the runtime memory consumption of the translated code is extended by the amount of memory that is occupied by the mutex maintenance. In addition to the obvious memory consumption of the handle and some internal management data, the realization of the choice to make mutexes robust against recursive locks requires a counter field to be maintained throughout the lifetime of each mutex. This property impairs both the space and computation time overhead of the implementation unnecessarily if shared resources are never recursively synchronized. If such cases are detected (which they are, as will be shown in the next section), the generator could decide to declare the according mutexes as non-recursive. This optimization is left for future extensions of ParallelMbeddr. Another starting point for the optimization of space consumption would be the reduction of padding, i.e. unused data, that is automatically introduced by the compiler into the struct instances of shared resources. Padding is added into structs in order to retrieve data from memory more efficiently by aligning it along proper addresses [30, p. 27]. The amount of padding that is inserted depends on the difference among the byte sizes of the individual fields, as well as the order of these fields [30]. Since the “art of C structure packing”<sup>53</sup> is no trivial task and space optimization is no primary concern of this paper, according work is left to future research.

---

### 4.2 Time Optimization

Various optimizations for lock-based synchronizations have been conceived. The general goal of all approaches is to minimize the overhead of synchronization measures. Among others, this can be accomplished in two different ways: First, the amount of synchronization management, i.e. the time spent for

---

<sup>53</sup> See <http://www.catb.org/esr/structure-packing/>, accessed: 2014-08-19, for details.

---

acquiring and releasing locks, can be reduced by diminishing the number of performed locks. This technique is called *lock elision*. Secondly, the waiting time of threads for the release of locks which they try to acquire, also known as *lock contention*, can be diminished. While the classic approaches try to optimize the code at compile-time, increasing effort is performed towards optimizations which occur at run-time. The latter kind primarily resides in the domain of the transactional memory model [62][64]. Due to the complexity and overhead of such techniques this thesis focuses on compile-time optimizations.

The applicable measures for optimizations differ in their coverage of ‘perceived potential’ and their performance. Superior techniques often require more comprehensive information, which, in turn, demands more sophisticated analyses. Such analyses, however, usually come with an increase of complexity. Typical candidates are *pointer analysis* and *data-flow analysis*.

---

#### 4.2.1 Pointer Analysis

---

Pointer analysis, also known as *points-to analysis*, tries to find the set of memory locations to which a pointer may point [65]. Pointers with coinciding pointed-to addresses are called *aliases* of one another (in the following, though, ‘alias’ will rather be used as the pointed-to destination which, for shared resources, remains its value and can, thus, be identified with the stored shared resource). The information delivered by the pointer-analysis will be heavily used in the static analysis of this chapter. The following example illustrates the basic principle of pointer analyses. At the end of the if-else statement, **p** may point to the location of either **v** or of **w**. Due to the copy-semantics of assignments in C, **q** will have the same value as **p** after the assignment in line 5. **p** can therefore be regarded as an *alias* of **q**.

```
1 int32 v, w;  
2 int32* p;  
3 if (condition) p = &v;  
4 else          p = &w;  
5 int32* q = p;
```

**Listing 4.1:** Aliases of a pointer

The quality of a pointer analysis is reflected by its precision. Two properties – that are relevant for this work – influence the precision: whether the analysis is *flow-sensitive* or *-insensitive* and whether it is *inter-procedural* or *intra-procedural* [11].<sup>54</sup> The first property distinguishes whether the particular flow of data and with it the order of statements is taken into account of the analysis. For an illustration, the previous code listing is reconsidered. In a flow-insensitive analysis, the set of locations for **p** would contain the locations of both **v** and **w** in either branch. A flow-sensitive analysis, on the other hand, would precisely assign **v** or **w** to the points-to set (differing from above definition of aliases, in the following also called *alias set*) of **p**. The second property distinguishes how precisely the calculation of points-to sets regards effects across functions, i.e. the context flow across function calls. The following example shall illustrate the difference between the two shapes. According to Andersen, an intra-procedural analysis would merge the calls of **bar()** so that the points-to set of **p** would contain both **v** and **w**. Likewise, the

---

<sup>54</sup> The latter property is also called context-sensitivity [76].

---

sets of **vP** and **wP** would contain the same elements. On the other hand, an inter-procedural analysis would distinguish the calls so that, in the end, the sets of **vP** and **wP** would contain exactly **v**, respectively **w**.

```
1 void foo() {  
2     int32 v, w;  
3     int32* vP = bar(&v);  
4     int32* wP = bar(&w);  
5 }  
6 void bar(int32* p) {  
7     return p;  
8 }
```

**Listing 4.2:** Aliases across function calls

At times, it is necessary to not compute the aliases that a pointer can have in the course of a program run. Instead the set of locations that a pointer will point to on every possible path through the program might be needed.<sup>55</sup> While the former is called a *may point-to* analysis, the latter is called a *must point-to* analysis [11]. Currently, mbeddr does not provide any form of pointer analysis.

---

## 4.2.2 Optimization Opportunities

---

Static analysis offers a variety of optimization opportunities. These differ both in their optimization potential and the information needed for their realizations. Due to the similarity of shared resources to the synchronization concept of Java's monitors and the ongoing research in this area, the optimization ideas were (mainly) influenced by the according literature [7][33][16]. The opportunities are arranged in the order in which they are applied in ParallelMbeddr. The first three of the following paragraphs concern themselves with the *elision* of unnecessary locks and, hence, the computational overhead of synchronization management. The fourth focuses on the reduction of lock contention.

---

### Single-Task Locks

---

The most obvious case in which locks for shared resources can be removed is when synchronized data is only accessed by one task. This may happen for a limited amount of time, for instance in the time span from the declaration of a local variable of a shared resource to its first sharing with other tasks:

```
1 void foo() {  
2     shared<int32> v;  
3     shared<int32>* vP = &v;  
4     init(vP);  
5     |task(vP)|;  
6 }  
7
```

---

<sup>55</sup> An application of this demand will be shown later on.

```

8 void init(shared<int32>* var) {
9     sync(var as varToSet) {
10         varToSet->set(0);
11     }
12 }
13
14 void task(shared<int32>* var) {
15     sync(var as varToGet) {
16         int32 val = varToGet->get;
17     }
18 }

```

**Listing 4.3:** Shared resource with a ‘temporary’ single-task lock

Whereas **varToSet** in **init()** does not need to be synchronized, since it is not yet shared with another task, **varToGet** obviously needs to be synchronized inside **task()**.

Furthermore, during the whole run of a program, a shared resource could be accessed by one task only. This can happen if the programmer does not work attentively. More importantly, the re-use of existing data structures and according functions for single-task data can cause the same effect. For instance, a thread-safe queue and functions to manage this queue could be re-used by the user for data that resides in only one task. It would then be helpful to distinguish the necessity of locks (i.e. sync resources) depending on the use of queue.

---

## Read-only Locks

---

In ParallelMbeddr, shared resources might actually never be set. For primitive data, e.g. of the type **shared<int32>** this should seldom be the case, if the user creates the code carefully. However, he might decide to use structs in order to pack independently synchronizable data:

```

1 struct QueueContainer {
2     shared<Queue> queue;    // Queue is given as a black-box
3     shared<boolean> isFull;
4     shared<int32> itemCount;
5 }
6
7 void foo() {
8     shared<QueueContainer> queueC;
9     shared<QueueContainer>* queueCP = &queueC;
10    // ...
11    sync(queueC) {
12        sync(&queueC.get.isFull as isFull) { isFull->set(true); }
13    }
14 }

```

**Listing 4.4:** Shared resource with read-only lock

---

Because of the semantics for variables of shared resources, **QueueContainer** can never be overwritten by another value. This is accomplished by mbeddr's non-typesystem rules. Therefore, any synchronization of **queueC** and any of its aliases is not necessary. However, the user still needs to pack the data into a shared resource in order to be able to safely share it with other tasks. Although the IDE could infer that **queueC** never needs to be synchronized, the user has to annotate the synchronization in line 11. If, on the other hand, such synchronization would not be required for **queueC**, additional synchronizations would have to be added if **QueueContainer** is eventually equipped with non-shared data. The current approach omits this change.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, the compiler should take care of eliminating locks for such data. If functions are called with both read-only shared resources and written shared resources as argument data, the necessity of synchronizing them might depend on the respective calls (equivalent to single-task locks). This could for instance be the case for logging functions which only read the data of their arguments that shall be logged.

---

## Recursive Locks

---

ParallelMbeddr does not prevent the user from acquiring locks for shared resources recursively. Instead, due to the scoping rules of synchronization resources and their contexts the programmer might be forced to synchronize shared resources recursively. In chapter 5.1.2, such a case arises for the access to a thread-safe queue implementation.

---

## Lock Contention

---

Besides the removal of locks, an important optimization opportunity is the reduction of lock contention. In order to accomplish this goal, the synchronization lists of synchronization statements should be shrunk to the absolute minimum. In the following, this technique is called *lock narrowing*. For instance, the user might decide to apply coarse-grained synchronization by defining one big synchronization context inside a function:

```
1 void calculate(shared<double>* result) {
2     sync(result as myResult) {
3         double pi = calculatePi(); // do something that is expensive and unrelated to the argument
4         myResult->set(pi);           // now use myArg
5         log(pi);                    // again, something unrelated
6     }
7 }
8
9 double calculatePi() {...}
10 void log(double arg) {...}
```

**Listing 4.5:** Lock contention caused by coarse-grained synchronization

---

<sup>56</sup> Of course, it is discussable which approach would be better.

The statements in lines 3 and 5 do not make any use of the synchronized argument **result**. Hence, it would be safe to move these statements out of the synchronization context:

```

1 void calculate(shared<double>* result) {
2     double pi = calculatePi();
3     sync(result as myResult) { myResult->set(pi); }
4     log(pi);
5 }

```

**Listing 4.6:** Optimization of lock contention

One could argue that synchronization lists could even be split into multiple parts in order to separate statements whose evaluations access the current synchronization resources from those that do not:

<pre> 1 void increment(shared&lt;int32&gt;* c) { 2     int32 current, next; 3     sync(c as myC) { 4         current = myC-&gt;get; 5         next = current + 1; 6         myC-&gt;set(next); 7     } 8 } </pre>	<p>→</p> <p>split</p>	<pre> 1 void increment(shared&lt;int32&gt;* c) { 2     int32 current, next; 3     sync(c as myC) { current = myC-&gt;get; } 4 5     next = current + 1; 6 7     sync(c as myC) { myC-&gt;set(next); } 8 } </pre>
---	-----------------------	--

**Listing 4.7:** Aggressive narrowing introduces possible data-race

Yet, with such an aggressive strategy, the optimizer might split the code across data dependencies which were formerly taken account of in the code by the scope of a synchronization statement. For instance, in the previous example, the split does not take into consideration the data dependencies between **current**, **next** and **myC**. Therefore, when another call of **increment()** is executed in an interleaved fashion, the resulting code introduces data races for the shared resource that **c** points to.

---

### 4.2.3 Performed Optimizations

---

The optimizations that were performed in this work are direct realizations of the aforementioned optimization opportunities. For the lack of supporting analyses in mbeddr at the time that this thesis was written, the optimizations assume that all threads are executed simultaneously in order to fit the scope of this work. Thus, since mbeddr was missing a pointer-analysis, at first a simplified pointer analysis for the application in the optimization algorithms was conceived. In this analysis, differing from the usual approach, a separate alias set is computed for each local variable, argument and reference of both kinds.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, divergent from the usual terminology, an alias in this context is a variable or argument of type **shared<t>**. These differences result from the following facts

---

<sup>57</sup> The analysis is therefore *inclusion-based*, i.e. alias sets may overlap [76].

- only shared resources are considered;
- shared resources are bound to memory locations, as they may not be rewritten;
- shared resources inside structured data like arrays and structs are not considered.

Also, it is assumed that everything which has a type **shared<t>** or **shared<t>\*** (i.e. variables, arguments and expressions) has an alias set. For the former type, this is clearly the location of the resource itself.

---

## Pointer analysis

---

As was mentioned before, the analysis that was implemented in the course of this thesis makes several simplifications in order to fit the scope of this work. The analysis is intra-procedural. For the lack of assignment consideration flow-sensitivity is irrelevant for the regarded language concepts. The analysis can either compute *must point-to* or *may point-to* alias sets. As a starting point, a simplified directed data-flow graph is constructed. The nodes of this graph consist of local variable declarations, arguments<sup>58</sup> and references to either kind. For each reference  $r$  to a local variable or an argument  $x$ , an arc  $(x, r)$  is added to the graph. Furthermore, for each local variable  $v$  of type **shared<u>** or **shared<u>\***, whose initialization expression is a reference  $r'$  to a local variable or argument of the same type, an arc  $(r', v)$  is added. The same is done for local variables of type **shared<u>\*** whose initialization expressions reference local variables or arguments of type **shared<u>** by address. Equivalently to local variables and initialization expressions, arcs  $(r, a)$  are added to the graph for according pairs of argument values  $r$  and arguments  $a$ .

Figure 5 illustrates the principle: For each reference to the local variable **container**, an edge going from **container** to this reference is inserted. The same happens for the function arguments **c** and **cV**, as well as for the local variables **myC** and **myCV**. Furthermore, an edge connects the **container** reference with the argument **c**. On the other hand, **cV** has no incoming edge, since due to the simplifications of the algorithm only such expressions may be nodes that are direct or address (&) references to variables or arguments:

---

<sup>58</sup> Although generally, arguments are the values that are passed to function parameters, in the course of this work, no such distinction is made. Instead, the formal function parameters are called arguments and the values, which are passed to functions, are called argument values. This terminology is closer to the one established in mbeddr.

```

1 int32 main(int32 argc string[] argv) {
2     shared<shared<int32>> container;
3     sync(container) {
4         foo(&container, container->get);
5     }
6 }
7
8 void foo(shared<shared<int32>>* c,
9         shared<int32>* cV) {
10    sync(c as myC, cV as myCV) {
11        cV = myC->get;
12        myCV->set(0);
13    }
14 }

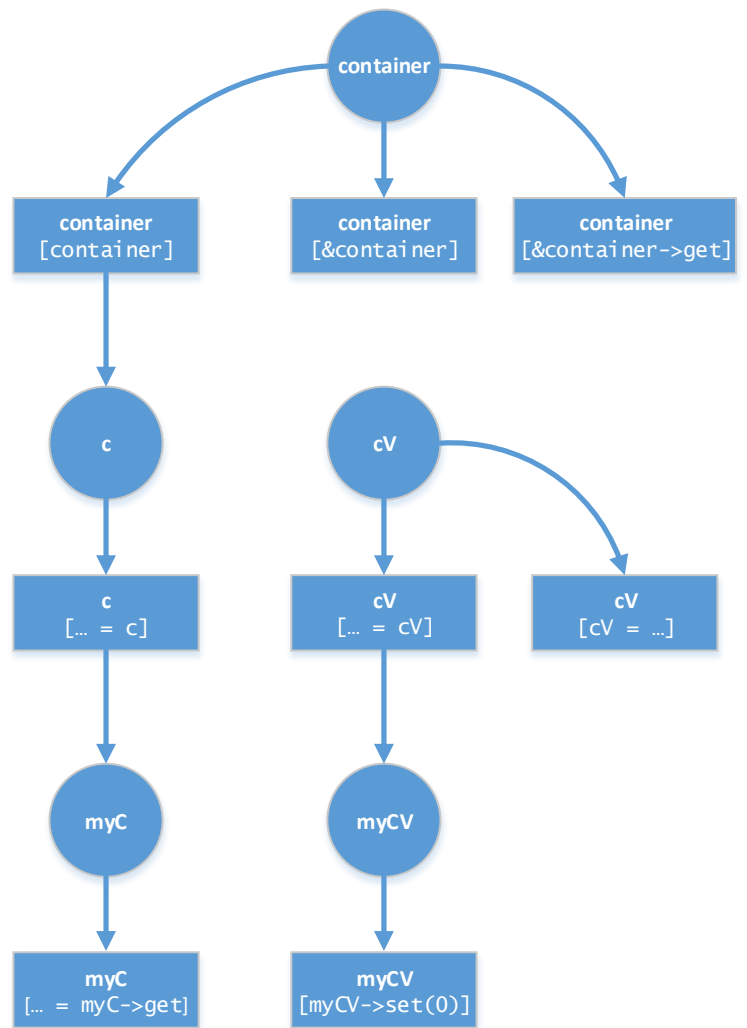
```

↓ resolve named resources ↓

```

1 ...
2 void foo(shared<shared<int32>>* c,
3         shared<int32>* cV) {
4     shared<shared<int32>>* myC = c;
5     shared<int32>* myCV = cV;
6     sync(myC, myCV) {
7         cV = myC->get;
8         myCV->set(0);
9     }
10 }

```



**Figure 5:** Simplified data-flow graph of shared resources

The data-flow graph is used to perform a pointer analysis. The output of the analysis is a directed alias graph whose nodes comprise the nodes of the data-flow graph. Each arc  $(u, v)$  of the alias graph connects a variable, argument or reference  $u$  with a variable or argument  $v$ . In doing so, either  $v$  is an alias for  $u$  or  $u$  refers to another variable which has an arc to  $v$ .<sup>59</sup> Trivially, loops  $(u, u)$  for a variable or argument  $u$  of a shared resource are contained, since every shared resource is an alias for itself. With this initial setting, the algorithm works as follows:

<sup>59</sup> This may for instance be the case for a local variable of a shared resource pointer which is initialized with the value of another such pointer which in turn is initialized with the address of a variable of a shared resource. Thus, the alias graph is not one in the classical sense.



---

```

function ALIASES( $g$ ,  $strict$ )                                ▷  $g$  is an inverse data-flow graph
  for all  $v \leftarrow \text{VARIABLES AND ARGUMENTS}(g)$  of type shared< $t$ > do
    ADD( $a$ , ( $v$ ,  $v$ ))                                           ▷  $a$  is the new alias graph
  end for
  repeat
    find some  $(n, m) \leftarrow \text{ARCS}(g)$  where  $a[n]$  does not contain all  $a[m]$ 
                                                                ▷ in strict mode, only must-aliases are considered
                                                                ▷ all in-nodes must then have the same aliases
    if  $strict$ , and  $n$  is an argument and there are  $i, j \in g[n]$  where  $a[i] \neq a[j]$  then
      skip  $(n, m)$ 
    else
       $a[n].\text{ADD ALL}(a[m])$ 
      if  $n$  is a local variable then
        for all  $r \leftarrow \text{FOLLOWING REFERENCES}(n)$  whose targets are in  $a[n]$  do
           $a[r].\text{ADD ALL}(a[n])$ 
        end for
      end if
    end if
  until no more changes possible
end function

```

**Listing 4.8:** Simplified alias-analysis algorithm

*Aliases* propagates alias information through the alias graph as long as changes are possible. It repeatedly tries to find a node  $n$  which does not contain all aliases of a node  $m$  for which an arc  $(m, n)$  resides in the original data-flow graph. In such a case,  $n$  gets connected to the missing aliases. If *must point-to* aliases need to be calculated (which is currently necessary for the recursive-lock elision algorithm), all nodes  $l$  for which an arc  $(l, n)$  exists must have equal aliases in order to be applicable for an alias augmentation of  $n$ . Due to the simplifications of the analysis, this can only be the case for value-to-argument arcs in the data-flow graph, i.e. for function calls, since no other branches are considered.

---

## Removal of Single-Task Locks

---

In order to remove synchronization resources of variables which are only used in one task, the aforementioned alias analysis is performed. It is fed with the inverse of a data-flow graph, exactly as it is delivered by the aforementioned function.

```

function REMOVE SINGLES( $g, a, d$ )   $\triangleright g$  = inverse data-flow graph,  $a$  = aliases,  $d$  = additional data
  for all  $v \leftarrow d.variables$  do
    if there is no  $(n, m)$  in  $g$  where  $a[n]$  contains  $v$  and  $n$  and  $m$  reside in different tasks then
       $\bar{c}.ADD(v)$    $\triangleright \bar{c}$  = single (clean) task variables
    end if
  end for
  REMOVE CLEAN LOCKS( $c, a, d$ )
end function

```

**Listing 4.9:** Removal algorithm for single-task locks

*Remove Singles* gathers all variables which never leave their defining task contexts. This is accomplished by investigating for each variable  $v$  all references whose alias set contains  $v$ . If any of these references leave the task context of the variable or argument  $x$  that they reference – which may happen if they reside in a task expression but  $x$  does not –, then  $v$  is no single task variable. The sought variables are thus gathered. The actual lock removal is accomplished by **Remove Clean Locks**, which is also used for the removal of read-only locks. The following pseudo-code depicts the general approach of the function:

```

function REMOVE CLEAN LOCKS( $\bar{c}, a, d$ )   $\triangleright \bar{c}$  = clean variables,  $a$  = aliases,  $d$  = additional data
  for all  $s \leftarrow \text{SYNC RESOURCES}(data)$  do
    if  $\bar{c}$  contains all  $a[s.expr]$  then   $\triangleright s.expr$  evaluates to a shared resources or pointer thereof
       $s.REMOVE$ 
    else
       $f\_to\_s[function\ of\ s].ADD(s)$    $\triangleright f\_to\_s$  contains functions with partially clean sync resources
    end if
  end for
  for all  $(f, \bar{s} \leftarrow f\_to\_s)$  do
    TRY TO DUPLICATE( $f, \bar{s}, \bar{c}, a, d$ )
  end for
end function

```

**Listing 4.10:** Removal of locks for single-task and read-only variables

Every synchronization resource  $s$  is either directly removed or deferred. If all aliases of the expression of  $s$  are clean (e.g. they are all single task variables),  $s$  can clearly be removed, since its synchronization is useless. Otherwise at least some of its aliases might be clean. In case of single-task locks, these aliases would ideally originate from an argument like those in the following example:

```

1 void shareXButNotY() {
2   shared<int32> x;
3   shared<int32>* xP = &x;
4   shared<int32> y;
5   |xP|;           // important: for |x| or |&x|, x would not be shared but copied
6   syncXOrY(&x);

```

```

7   syncXOrY(&y);
8   }
9
10  void syncXOrY(shared<int32>* xOrY) {
11      sync(xOrY as val) { val.set(0); }
12  }

```

**Listing 4.11:** Straightforward single-task

In this example, **x** is shared, but **y** is not. Therefore, the set of clean variables *c* in **Remove Clean Locks** would only contain **y**. On the other hand, the set of aliases *a*[**xOrY**] would contain both variables, as they would be forwarded to **xOrY** via the calls **syncXOrY(&x)** and **syncXOrY(&y)** in the aliasing analysis.<sup>60</sup> In this case the function *Try To Duplicate* would distinguish the respective calls and learn that for **syncXOrY(&y)** no synchronization is needed for **xOrY**. In such a case, the function could be inlined for the safe call and the clean synchronization resource could be removed. Alternatively, as is done by *Try To Duplicate*, the function can be duplicated and accordingly optimized:<sup>61</sup>

```

1   //...
2   syncXOrY(&x);
3   syncXOrY_1(&y);
4   }
5   void syncXOrY(shared<int32>* xOrY) {
6       sync(xOrY as val) { val.set(0); }
7   }
8   void syncXOrY_1(shared<int32>* xOrY) {
9       shared<int32>* val = xOrY;
10      sync() { val.set(0); }           // the empty sync will be removed
11  }

```

**Listing 4.12:** Function duplication for partial single-task lock

However, if the aliases of the synchronization resource's expression *e* are not received via paths to the arguments of the surrounding function, function inlining (or duplication) will not help. This may for instance be the case if *e* refers to a local variable of type **shared<t>** that resides in the same function. Another possibility is that it refers to a global variable whose value was set inside another function. In order to match the simplified pointer analysis, currently only synchronization resources, whose expressions directly refer to one of the arguments of the surrounding function (like in the previous example), are considered. The *Try To Duplicate* function works as follows:

<sup>60</sup> This merge is caused by the intra-procedural property of the current alias analysis. In case of an inter-procedural pointer analysis, the following analysis would be facilitated. Of course, this simplification, in turn, requires a more complex algorithm for the conduction of the alias analysis.

<sup>61</sup> Function duplication instead of inlining is done since this approach also works for recursive functions.

▷  $f$  = function,  $\overline{ds}$  = partially clean sync resources,  $\overline{c}$  = clean variables,  $a$  = aliases,  $d$  = add. data

```

function TRY TO DUPLICATE( $f, \overline{ds}, \overline{c}, a, d$ )
  for all  $ds \leftarrow \overline{ds}$  do                                ▷ for each call find the sync resources that are clean
     $\overline{da} = a[ds.expression]$  which is not in  $\overline{c}$                 ▷  $\overline{da}$  = dirty aliases for  $ds$ 
    for all  $l \leftarrow \text{CLEAN CALLS FOR}(ds, \overline{da}, f, a)$  do    ▷  $l$  = clean calls for  $ds$ 
       $l\_to\_cs[l].\text{ADD}(ds)$                                 ▷  $l\_to\_cs$  = clean syncs for call  $l$ 
    end for
  end for
  for all  $l, \overline{cs} \leftarrow l\_to\_cs$  do                        ▷ pack the calls by equal sets of clean sync resources
     $\overline{cs\_to\_l}[\overline{cs}].\text{ADD}(l)$ 
  end for
  for all  $\overline{cs}, \overline{l} \leftarrow \overline{cs\_to\_l}$  do ▷ duplicate the function for calls of equal sets of clean sync resources
    DUPLICATE FUNCTION( $f, \overline{cs}, \overline{l}$ )
  end for
end function

```

**Listing 4.13:** Function duplication algorithm for partially clean locks

*Try To Duplicate* first considers all partially clean synchronization resources  $\overline{ds}$ , i.e. synchronization resources whose expression aliases are clean for at least one function call. For each  $ds$  of these  $\overline{ds}$  it uses the function *Clean Calls For* to determine the function calls  $\overline{l}$ , which do not need  $ds$ . This means that  $ds$  actually needs to get its aliases from one of the arguments of its function (otherwise function inlining would be useless). Furthermore, every call in  $\overline{l}$  must not contain any of the dirty aliases of  $ds$ . Hence, they can only originate from some other call. In case of an inter-procedural pointer analysis, this information would certainly be easier to gather. For each synchronization resource  $ds$  with a non-empty set  $\overline{l}$  for each call, a mapping to  $ds$  is established. These mappings are then used to cluster calls which have equal sets of clean synchronization resources. These clusters, in turn, are used by *Duplicate Function* to generate optimized versions of the current functions. For the lack of valuable insight, the definitions of *Clean Calls For* and *Duplicate Function* are skipped.

---

## Removal of Read-only Locks

---

Read-only locks are removed equivalently to single-task locks. The according algorithm differs in the condition that it uses to determine whether locks for a specific variable may be removed:

```

function REMOVE READONLYS( $g, a, d$ )  $\triangleright g$  = inverse data-flow graph,  $a$  = aliases,  $d$  = additional data
  for all  $v \leftarrow d.variables$  do
    if  $\exists e.set(\_)$  in  $d.sharedSets$  where  $a[e]$  contains  $v$  then
      skip  $v$ 
    else if  $\exists e.get$  in  $d.sharedGets$  where  $a[e]$  contains  $v$  and  $\exists e' = \_$  where  $e'$  contains  $e$  then
      skip  $v$ 
    end if
     $\bar{c}.ADD(v)$   $\triangleright \bar{c}$  = readonly (clean) task variables
  end for
  REMOVE CLEAN LOCKS( $c, a, d$ )
end function

```

**Listing 4.14:** Removal algorithm for read-only locks

A few things should be noted for the last two optimizations. First, in the actual implementation, the gathering of ‘clean variables’ is separated from the actual call of *Remove Clean Locks*. Instead, variants of the two algorithms, called *Get Singles* and *Get Readonlys*, are used to first gather all variables for which locks can be removed. Only then *Remove Clean Locks* is applied to the union of both variable sets. This way, a function may be duplicated only once if it is called multiple times with (a) shared resources that are actually shared and written, (b) read-only shared resources and (c) single-task shared resources. The second thing to consider is that this process is actually repeated as often as some optimization by the application of the algorithms is possible. Otherwise, optimizations might not be possible if an argument value is itself ‘partially clean’, like **var** in line 13 of the following example:

```

1 void send() {
2   shared<int32> a;
3   shared<int32> b;           // b is never shared or written
4   shared<int32>* aP = &a;
5   |aP|;
6   sync(a) { a.set(0); }
7   forward(&a);
8   forward(&b);
9 }
10
11 void forward(shared<int32>* var) {
12   sync(var as myVar) { myVar.get; }
13   receive(var);
14 }
15
16 void receive(shared<int32>* var) {
17   sync(var as myVar) { myVar.get; }
18 }

```

**Listing 4.15:** Partially clean argument value

Since **b** is never shared or written, its synchronizations inside **forward()** and **receive()** are useless. **a**, on the other hand, must always be synchronized. In the first optimization round, the values of the calls of **forward** can strictly be separated into the ‘clean’ value **b** and the ‘dirty’ value **a**. Therefore, an optimized variant for **forward(&b)** can be generated. On the other hand, there is only one call for **receive()** and the aliases of its value are currently merged, because the pointer-analysis is intra-procedural. Thus, another round of optimizations has to be applied where the two calls of the now separated functions **forward()** (for **a**) and **forward\_0()** (for **b**) can be distinguished. An intra-procedural pointer-analysis could directly deliver this information. The third point to consider is that function duplication does not work across functions which do not split the aliases of their arguments themselves, as was done by **forward()**. If the synchronization statement was removed in this function, the algorithm would not detect that a duplication of **forward()** might help. In consequence, **receive()** would not be duplicated as well. For this reason, in the future, cross-function duplications should also be made available. On the other hand, like function inlining, duplication can lead to a ‘code explosion’ if it is used too aggressively. Thus, it should be controllable by the programmer.

---

### Removal of Recursive Locks

---

In contrast to the previous optimization techniques, in this section, the property, which must be proven in order to be able to remove a lock, does not hold for entire variables. Instead, the recursiveness of a lock has to be shown separately for every synchronization resource. For the basic idea of a recursive-lock removal algorithm, an arbitrary synchronization resource  $r$  of an expression  $e$  is considered. If it can be shown that for all aliases of the pointer or shared resource, which  $e$  evaluates to,  $e$  must already be synchronized, then  $r$  can be removed. In order to facilitate the analysis, the data-flow graph, which is necessarily used in such an algorithm, should be preprocessed in the following way: First, edges caused by recursive function calls should be removed. The rationale behind this constraint is that recursive functions should not be able to synchronize their arguments on their own. In the following code listing, an analysis of **recursive()** could otherwise detect that **value1** and **value2** are already synchronized at the beginning of the function.

```

1 void recursive(shared<int32>* value1, shared<int32>* value2) {
2     sync(value2 as myValue2) {
3         myValue2.set(2);
4     }
5     sync(value1 as myValue1) {
6         myValue1.set(5);
7         recursive(myValue1, myValue1);
8     }
9 }
```

**Listing 4.16:** Recursive function with recursive lock

Additionally, if there is another call to **recursive()** from outside the cyclic call structure the algorithm need not first check whether any of the calls to **recursive()** originates from a recursive call path in

order to treat it differently. Furthermore, while in the previous example recursions would be easy to detect, indirect recursions across multiple functions are more complicated to handle. For these reasons, the directed data-flow graph should be created by starting in the main function and avoiding edges that close cycles in the corresponding call graph. Secondly, edges between nodes of different task contexts in the data-flow graph should be ignored. As a result, false recursive locks across tasks are omitted:

```
1 void task1(shared<int32>* value) {
2     sync(value as myValue) { value.set(1);
3         |task2(value)|.run          // here, value is not synced anymore
4     }
5 }
6
7 void task2(shared<int32>* value) {
8     sync(value as myValue) { value.set(2); }
9 }
```

**Listing 4.17:** False recursive lock across tasks

Since every task needs to synchronize its shared resources on its own, the synchronization context of **sync** in **task1** cannot be forwarded to **task2**. Additionally, it should be noted that synchronization contexts may not be forwarded to other tasks via the wrapped values of shared resources. For instance, in the following example, the reference to **myValue** is a reference to a synchronized value. Yet, this synchronization information may not be forwarded into **myContainer**. Otherwise a different task which accesses the value of **myContainer** would not have to synchronize the value any more.

```
1 void task1(shared<int32>* var, shared<shared<int32>*>* container) {
2     sync(var as myVar, container as myContainer) {
3         myContainer->set(myVar);
4     }
5 }
```

**Listing 4.18:** False synchronization forwarding via shared resource container

The construction of the alias graph should, however, only omit cyclic edges, since aliases across tasks are completely valid. In the following, two algorithms for the recursive-lock removal are presented.<sup>62</sup> The first algorithm uses the alias graph to locally mark variable references inside synchronization statements whose aliases are all synchronized. It uses the data-flow graph to push the synchronization states forward across function contexts:

<sup>62</sup> The former algorithm was implemented for its simplicity in light of the simplified scenarios. The second one, on the other hand, avoids the incremental flow of synchronization contexts through the data flow graph and might be better suited for more complicated scenarios with concepts like assignments, shared resources nested in structures and arrays and multidimensional pointers (e.g. **shared<int32>\*\***). It has, however, not been tested by an according implementation.

```

▷  $g$  = data-flow graph (dfg) w/o recursions/task-crossings,  $i$  = inv. dfg,  $a$  = aliases,  $d$  = add. data
function REMOVE RECURSIVE LOCKS 1( $g, i, a, d$ )
  for all  $s \leftarrow d.\text{syncResources}$  do                                     ▷ spread the sync contexts locally
    for all  $r \leftarrow \text{REFERENCES IN}(s)$  do
      if  $r \neq s.\text{expr}$  and  $\text{TASK}(r) = \text{TASK}(s)$  and  $a[s.\text{expr}] \supseteq a[r] \neq \emptyset$  then
         $\bar{s}.\text{Add}(r)$                                                          ▷  $\bar{s}$  = references to synchronized shared resources
      end if
    end for
  end for
  repeat                                                                    ▷ spread the sync contextes globally
    for all  $s \leftarrow \bar{s}$  do
      if there is some  $n$  in  $d[s]$  which is not in  $\bar{s}$  and  $\bar{s}.\text{CONTAINSALL}(i[n])$  then ▷  $n$  = next node
         $\bar{s}.\text{Add}(n)$ 
      end if
    end for
  until no more change is possible
  for all  $s \leftarrow d.\text{syncResources}$  do                                     ▷ remove recursive locks
    if  $\bar{s}.\text{CONTAINS}(s.\text{expr})$  then
      remove  $s$ 
    end if
  end for
end function

```

**Listing 4.19:** Removal algorithm for recursive locks

After the synchronization contexts have been flowed through the data-flow graph, the function can determine whether the expression of any synchronization resource  $s$  evaluates to an already synchronized shared resource. In such a case  $s$  can safely be removed. It should be noted that code resulting from the implementation of the algorithm is currently not able to remove recursive locks across functions reliably. This limitation results from the fact that the applied primitive pointer analysis works intra-procedural. In consequence, the aliases for a function argument would usually be merged for different calls of a function. For an illustration, the following example is given:

```

1 void foo() {
2   shared<int32> p1;
3   shared<int32>* p1P = &p1;
4   shared<int32> p2;
5   shared<int32>* p2P = &p2;
6   |p1P|;
7   |p2P|;
8   bar(p1P, p1P);
9   bar(p2P, p1P);
10 }

```



```

11
12 void bar(shared<int32>* v1, shared<int32>* v2) {
13     sync(v2 as myV2, v1 as myV1) {
14         myV1->set(1);
15         myV2->set(2);
16     }
17 }

```

**Listing 4.20:** Alias-set equality due to intra-procedural alias-analysis

Due to the merge, the alias set of **myV1** becomes **{p1, p2}** and dominates the alias set **{p1}** of **myV2**. Hence, in the recursive lock algorithm, the synchronization resource **myV2** would be removed. The optimized code would therefore become:

```

1 ...
2 void bar(shared<int32>* v1, shared<int32>* v2) {
3     shared<int32>* myV2 = v2;
4     shared<int32>* myV1 = v1;
5     sync(myV1) {
6         myV1->set(1);
7         myV2->set(2);
8     }
9 }

```

**Listing 4.21:** False recursive-lock removal due to intra-procedural alias-analysis

Thus, for both calls **bar(p1P, p1P)** and **bar(p2P, p1P)** only **myV1** would be synchronized. In consequence, in the second call, only the shared resource of **p2** would be synchronized, although both **p2** and **p1** would be modified via **myV1->set(1)**, respectively **myV2->set(2)**. This problem is currently faced by applying a *must point-to* pointer-analysis for this optimization technique. As a result, the alias sets in the example would become empty. Hence, for the algorithm to be able to decide that the alias set of a synchronization resource *s* is superfluous, the condition  $a[s.expr] \supseteq a[r] \neq \emptyset$  in the algorithm requires that the alias set of *s* is not empty. For testing purposes, this restriction can be deactivated (which happens in the evaluation chapter). In the future, an inter-procedural data-flow sensitive pointer analysis should be applied in order to check whether for every function call a specific synchronization resource *s* is covered by another synchronization resource *t* (*t*'s alias set is a superset of *s*' alias set). If that is the case, it may be removed. The non-emptiness condition can then be omitted. As in the previous algorithms, it would further make sense to apply function inlining/duplication to remove synchronization resources for arguments – of a function *f* –, which are used recursively only for a strict subset of calls of *f*.

Another problem results from the restricted range of expressions and types that are currently supported in the optimization algorithm. If for instance a shared resource is nested inside an array **a** of type **shared<int32>[100]** and accessed via an array-access expression **&a[5]**, the optimizer is not able to identify the accessed shared resource. Thus, if this expression is used for the initialization of a local variable **v** of type **shared<int32>\***, the alias-set of **v** will become empty. The same property holds for structs. For this reason, the data-flow construction and alias-analysis can be optionally used with

---

support for *pseudo aliases*. A pseudo alias denotes a shared resource that is not directly supported by the algorithm. Thus, whenever a pointer to a shared resource is accessed via an array-access or struct-access expression and assigned to a local variable or an argument  $x$ , then a pseudo-alias (currently represented by an local variable without a name) is added to the alias-set of  $x$ . This way, the optimizer can generally also detect recursive locks for not supported data structures, which is illustrated by the following example:

```
1 struct Container { shared<int32> value; }
2 void foo() {
3     Container c;
4     // ... share c with some other task
5     sync(&c.value as myValue) {
6         myValue->set(0);
7         bar(myValue);
8     }
9 }
10
11 void bar(shared<int32>* value) {
12     sync(value as myValue) { myValue->set(1); }
13 }
```

**Listing 4.22:** Recursive lock of a nested shared resource

The alias set of the local variable **myValue**, which the named resource in line 5 is reduced to, will be added a pseudo-alias  $l$ .  $l$  will be forwarded to **value** in **bar()** and reach the local variable **myValue** in the same function. Since the synchronization context of **myValue** in **foo()** will take the same path, the compiler will find that the synchronization of **myValue** in **bar()** can be removed. However, this approach does not enable the detection of equal pseudo-aliases if they result from different expressions. Therefore, more extensive data structure support should be aimed for in the future.

The second algorithm uses the alias graph and the call graph, which connects the main function with all other functions that are induced by the data-flow graph. It considers every synchronization resource  $s$  exactly once by determining whether the respective expression  $e$  is synchronized for all aliased shared resources that  $e$  might evaluate to. Every alias  $x$  must be covered by a synchronization statement, either in the same function  $f$  that  $s$  resides in or in one of the functions that lie on the paths from the main function to  $f$  in the call graph. Hence, either  $s$  must have an ancestor synchronization statement in the abstract syntax tree of  $f$  that has another synchronization statement  $s'$ , whose aliases contain  $x$ 's aliases (given an inter-procedural, data-flow sensitive pointer-analysis). Or, on every path from  $f$  to *main* there must be at least one call that itself is nested in a synchronization statement with a synchronization resource whose alias set contains  $x$ 's alias set. If for a synchronization resource this property holds, it can be removed. The algorithm expects an inter-procedural analysis. Hence, in order to handle synchronization resources with references to function arguments correctly, it checks the alias-coverage for every call of  $f$  separately.

▷  $a$  = aliases,  $d$  = add. data,  $f\_to\_c$  = function to main paths' calls

```

function REMOVE RECURSIVE LOCKS 2( $a, d, f\_to\_c$ )
  for all  $l \leftarrow$  CALLS OF FUNCTION OF( $s$ ) do
    for all  $s \leftarrow d.syncResources$  in  $l$  do
       $r := \text{true}$                                      ▷ indicates whether  $s$  can be removed
      for all  $x \leftarrow a[s.expr]$  do
         $r := r \wedge (\text{ALIAS COVERED IN SYNC}(x, s, a) \vee \text{ALIAS COVERED IN PATHS}(x, s, a, f\_to\_c))$ 
      end for
      if  $r$  then
        remove  $s$ 
      end if
    end for
  end for
end function

                                     ▷  $x$  = alias,  $n$  = current node,  $a$  = all aliases
function ALIAS COVERED IN SYNC( $x, n, a$ )
  return  $\exists$  sync resource  $s$  in SURROUNDING SYNCs( $n$ ) .  $\text{TASK}(n) = \text{TASK}(s)$  and  $a[s.expr].\text{CONTAINS}(x)$ 
end function

                                     ▷  $x$  = alias,  $s$  = sync resource,  $a$  = all aliases,  $f\_to\_c$  = function to main paths' calls
function ALIAS COVERED IN PATHS( $x, s, a, f\_to\_c$ )
  for all  $c \leftarrow f\_to\_c$  [FUNCTION( $s$ )] do                                     ▷ consider all paths to the main function
    if there is no  $c$  in  $c$  with ALIAS COVERED IN SYNC( $x, c, a, f\_to\_c$ ) then
      return false
    end if
  end for
  return true
end function

```

**Listing 4.23:** Alternative removal algorithm for recursive locks

---

## Narrowing Synchronization Statements

---

Synchronization statements are narrowed by iteratively moving statements from the beginning of the statement lists to outside the synchronization statements. This process stops as soon as a statement is encountered for which the movement could introduce new data-races. Likewise, statements at the end of each list are moved outside. In order to not interfere with the scopes of local variables, currently all moved statements of a synchronization statement  $s$  and  $s$  itself are nested inside a new statement block:

<pre> 1 void foo(shared&lt;int32&gt;* var) { 2   boolean b = true; 3   sync(var as myVar) { 4     boolean b = false; 5     myVar-&gt;set(0); 6   } 7 } </pre>	$\longrightarrow$ narrow	<pre> 1 void foo(shared&lt;int32&gt;* var) { 2   boolean b = true; 3   { 4     boolean b = false; 5     sync(var as myVar) { myVar-&gt;set(0); } 6   } 7 } </pre>
---	-----------------------------	---

**Listing 4.24:** Result of a narrowing optimization

The crucial aspect of the narrowing algorithm is how to decide whether a statement may be moved. If no other optimization has taken place before, a trivial approach would be to check whether a first or last statement of the statement list of a synchronization statement  $s$  contains any references to a variable that is also referenced by a synchronization resource of  $s$ .<sup>63</sup> Due to the locality of synchronization contexts from a user's perspective, one could argue that this attempt would suffice. However, with the advent of the previous optimization techniques, this simple attempt could fail. If recursive locks are removed, the **.set** and **.get** expressions, which previously referred to according variables, then receive their synchronization contexts from other synchronization resources. This entails for example that synchronization resources need no longer be synchronized locally (in the same function), but can be synchronized across functions. The above mentioned simple approach would not regard such cases. Therefore, not the directly referred variables are compared, but the according aliases. The algorithm is depicted by the following pseudo-code:

▷  $a$  = aliases,  $d$  = add. data,  $\overline{ro}$  = read-only aliases,  $\overline{st}$  = single-task aliases

```

function NARROW SYNCs( $a, d, \overline{ro}, \overline{st}$ )
  for all  $s \leftarrow d.syncStatements$  do
    while there is  $t = \text{FIRST STATEMENT IN}(s)$  where CAN BE SHIFTED( $t$ ) do
       $t.MOVE\ TO\ END\ OF(l_1)$                                 ▷  $l_1$  = list of first shifted statements
    end while
    while there is  $t = \text{LAST STATEMENT IN}(s)$  where CAN BE SHIFTED( $t$ ) do
       $t.MOVE\ TO\ START\ OF(l_2)$                                 ▷  $l_2$  = list of first shifted statements
    end while
    if either  $l_1$  or  $l_2$  is not empty then
      replace old  $s$  with new block {  $l_1.members, s, l_2.members$  }
    end if
  end for
end function

```

**Listing 4.25:** Synchronization statement narrowing algorithm

<sup>63</sup> References to named resources need not be considered because they are resolved before any optimization takes place.

The helper function *Can Be Shifted* gathers all expressions **e.get** and **e.set(\_)** that may be evaluated for the execution of a specific statement  $t$ . For this purpose, it searches for such expressions: first in the AST of  $t$  itself and then in the ASTs of all functions that might be called for the evaluation of  $t$ . To this end, the complete function call branching of  $t^{64}$  is investigated. A shift is declared as safe, if it is safe for every  $e$  in the found expressions **e.get** and **e.set(\_)**. In turn, for  $e$ , the shift is unsafe, if its alias set is contained in one of the alias sets of the synchronization resources of the synchronization statement  $s$ . For this check, only those aliases need to be considered that are not read-only or single-task shared resources. The pseudo-code for *Can Be Shifted* is:

```

    ▷  $t$  = statement,  $s$  = sync statement,  $a$  = aliases,  $\overline{ro}$  = read-only aliases,  $\overline{st}$  = single-task aliases
function CAN BE SHIFTED( $t, s, a, \overline{ro}, \overline{st}$ )
  for all  $e.set()$  and  $e.get$  in AST of  $t$  or in AST of every function of CALL BRANCHING( $t$ ) do
    if there is a sync resource  $r$  in  $s$  with  $a[r.expr].CONTAINS\_ALL(a[e] \setminus (\overline{ro} \cup \overline{st}))$  then
      return false
    end if
  end for
  return true
end function

```

**Listing 4.26:** Helper function which decides if a statement may be shifted outside

Again, an intra-procedural analysis should be preferred in order to be able to optimize more aggressively. In the current implementation, however, the optimization does not use such precise information and instead optimizes quite conservatively. Therefore, the optimizer must instead check whether any alias of the variable reference  $e$  is contained in the alias set of a synchronization resource  $r$ .

<sup>64</sup> This branching comprises all directed subtrees (= aborescences) – of called functions – whose roots lie in the AST of  $t$ .

---

## 5 Evaluation

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### 5.1 Code and Measurements

---

In order to show the advantages and disadvantages of the language design, the generator and the optimizer of ParallelMbeddr, two scenarios are investigated: The calculation of  $\pi$  and the sorting algorithm Quicksort. For both scenarios different solutions are presented. This is done to demonstrate the different aspects of the implemented optimization and depict further optimization potential for future enhancements of ParallelMbeddr. The measurements of the execution times of the implemented algorithms were performed under Windows 8 on a machine with the Intel Core i5 CPU M540, which operates at 2.53 GHz and has 2 cores as well as Hyper-threading, and 4 GB of RAM.

---

#### 5.1.1 Quicksort

---

The Quicksort scenario concerns itself with the sorting of an array of items. In order to get noticeable execution times for the program runs, the length of arrays usually has to be quite large. Since general support for the heap is currently missing in mbeddr and ParallelMbeddr, the array needs to be stored on the stack. Due to the limited usable memory on the stack, the arrays were chosen rather small. To create noticeable execution times nevertheless, the comparison of two items was artificially complicated by a function **doHeavyWork()** that simulates complex comparisons. At the beginning, the arrays are initiated with random values in each example. Afterwards, the usual divide-and-conquer approach of Quicksort is recursively applied. Although generally no synchronization is needed for a Quicksort algorithm, this example is nevertheless chosen to show the effects of lock elision as it clarifies the general effects of performed optimizations.

---

#### Serial variant

---

For comparison reasons, first the serial variant is given. As was mentioned, initially a certain number of randomized items, in this case 200, is added to an array. The items are instances of the **struct Item**, which has an Integer-typed value field. **Item** should be regarded as an element of an arbitrary type.

```
1 #constant numberOfItems = 200;
2 struct Item { int32 value; };
3
4 int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
5     Item[numberOfItems] items;
6     initItems(items);                // initialize the array with randomized items
```

```

7  quickSort(items, 0, numberOfItems - 1);
8  return 0;
9  }

```

#### Listing 5.1: Main function of serial Quicksort

Not surprisingly, the **quickSort()** function divides the provided interval. As usual with Quicksort, the division is accomplished by sorting the provided interval of the array into two sub-intervals that contain items which are smaller, respectively bigger, than a chosen pivot element:

```

1  void quickSort(Item[numberOfItems] items, int32 left, int32 right) {
2      if (left < right) {
3          int32 middle = partition(items, left, right);
4          quickSort(items, left, middle - 1);
5          quickSort(items, middle + 1, right);
6      }
7  }
8  int32 partition(Item[numberOfItems] items, int32 left, int32 right) {
9      Item pivot = items[left];
10     int32 i = left;
11     int32 j = right + 1;
12
13     while (true) {
14         do { ++i; } while ( !(biggerThan(items[i], pivot)) && i < right );
15         do { --j; } while ( biggerThan(items[j], pivot) );
16         if (i >= j) { break; }
17         swap(items, i, j);
18     }
19     if (left != j) { swap(items, left, j); }
20     return j;
21 }

```

#### Listing 5.2: Implementation of serial Quicksort

The comparison function **biggerThan()** compares the two items and simulates computationally complex work by calling **doHeavyWork()**:

```

1  boolean biggerThan(Item item1, Item item2) {
2      doHeavyWork();
3      return item1.value > item2.value;
4  }
5  void doHeavyWork() {
6      for (i ++ in [0..heavyWorkSize]) {
7          for (j ++ in [0..heavyWorkSize]) { j * j * j; }
8      }
9  }

```

#### Listing 5.3: Artificially complex comparison function

---

## Unsafe parallelism

---

A trivial approach to parallelize the Quicksort algorithm would make use of the parallelization concepts, i.e. tasks and futures, while omitting safe communication via shared resources:

```
1 void quickSort(Item[numberOfItems] items, int32 left, int32 right) {
2     if (left < right) {
3         int32 middle = partition(items, left, right);
4
5         if (middle - left > threshold && right - middle > threshold) {
6             // This is unsafe and should generally be avoided. In the current example, however,
7             // the sync leak is harmless.
8             Future<void> sorter1 = |quickSort(items, left, middle - 1)|.run;
9             Future<void> sorter2 = |quickSort(items, middle + 1, right)|.run;
10            sorter1.join;
11            sorter2.join;
12        } else {
13            quickSort(items, left, middle - 1);
14            quickSort(items, middle + 1, right);
15        }
16    }
17 }
```

**Listing 5.4:** Unsafe parallelization approach for Quicksort

The function now decides whether two sub-intervals (slices) of the given interval of the array shall be recursively sorted like in the original example. If the intervals are long enough – have at least 20 items – the calls of **quickSort()** are handed to new tasks, which are immediately run. Future handles are then used to wait for the ending of the sub-tasks. This fork-join pattern is used so that in the end the first call to **quickSort()** does not return before the array is actually sorted. The futures cannot be directly joined, because otherwise line 9 would not be executed before the finish of **sorter1**, which ultimately would serialize the program. In the IDE, the code is marked with error messages at lines 8 and 9. Although every slice of the array is only processed by exactly one task, the type checker of the IDE recognizes a potential shared data leak: the pointer **items** is given to another task, which makes every access to the pointed-to data potentially thread-unsafe. **ParallelMbeddr** is, thus, currently not able to determine if the elements of shared arrays are actually accessed by multiple tasks. For this reason, arrays must be wrapped in shared resources.

---

## Coarse-Grained Protection

---

The first solution to the aforementioned problem is to wrap the whole array of items inside a shared resource **shared<Item[numberOfItems]> items**. By doing so, the distribution of pointers thereof becomes safe. The example code is changed to show the optimization potential for synchronization narrowing:



```

1 boolean biggerThan(shared<Item[numberOfItems]>* items, int32 index1, int32 index2) {
2   // There is no noticeable synchronization management overhead in this example since the sync
3   // overhead is dominated by the not synchronized heavy work. With doHeavyWork() inside
4   // sync(...) the program is basically serialized. Therefore, apply lock narrowing to reduce
5   // the amount of lock contention.
6   sync(items as myItems) {
7     doHeavyWork();
8     return myItems->get[index1].value > myItems->get[index2].value;
9   }
10 }

```

**Listing 5.5:** Comparison function with intentional lock contention

As can be seen, **doHeavyWork()** does not make use of the **items** pointers so that it should actually not reside inside the synchronization context. In the given code, this structure would cause unnecessary lock contention.<sup>65</sup> The items pointer is used for the synchronization of the array. The IDE demands that items must be named, to prevent the user from writing code which causes unsafe changes of the pointer that is used for accessing the array, as was explained in 3.4.6. For many synchronizations via pointers, this naming necessity can become quite tedious, yet it is currently the only way to guarantee thread-safe access via pointers. Synchronization is now also necessary inside the initialization function and the swap function:

```

1 void initItems(shared<Item[numberOfItems]>* items) {
2   for (i ++ in [0..numberOfItems]) {
3     // Such fine-grained synchronization is a bad choice, ParallelMbeddr is, however,
4     // currently not able to optimize this code.
5     sync(items as myItems) { myItems->get[i].value = rand(); }
6   }
7 }
8
9 int32 partition(shared<Item[numberOfItems]>* items, int32 left, int32 right) {
10   Item pivot;
11   // Items may not be taken by address since they are not shared resources themselves.
12   // Since the elements of the considered array interval are not changed by another task,
13   // in terms of data dependencies, however, it is safe to just copy the element to pivot.
14   sync(items as myItems) { pivot = myItems->get[left]; }
15   //...
16 }
17
18 void swap(shared<Item[numberOfItems]>* items, int32 i, int32 j) {
19   sync(items as myItems) {
20     Item temp = myItems->get[i];

```

<sup>65</sup> Again, in spite of this artificial structure, like every following code listing, the example is only meant to demonstrate the optimization potential for ParallelMbeddr.

```

21     myItems->get[i] = myItems->get[j];
22     myItems->get[j] = temp;
23 }
24 }

```

**Listing 5.6:** Synchronizations for coarse-grained parallel Quicksort

As the code for of the **quickSort()** function in the user code, which was shown in listing 5.4, is only changed in terms of the type of the **items** argument it is skipped in this discussion. The generator translates the type **shared<Item[numberOfItems]>** to the type of the generated struct **SharedOf\_ArrayOf\_Item\_0\_t** that stores the array and a mutex which is used for synchronization purposes. The future type **Future<void>** is reduced to the void future type **VoidFuture\_t**. The task and future initialization expressions in lines 8 and 9 of listing 5.4 are reduced to calls of **futureInit\_X()** functions. The following listing shows the generated code for the line 8:

```

1  // line 8...
2  VoidFuture_t sorter1 = futureInit_0(middle, items, left);
3
4  VoidFuture_t futureInit_0(int32 middle, SharedOf_ArrayOf_Item_0_t* items, int32 right) {
5      // the type and variable names are simplified for better legibility
6      Args_0_t* args_0 = malloc(sizeof(Args_0_t));
7      args_0->middle = middle;
8      args_0->items = items;
9      args_0->right = right;
10     pthread_t pth;
11     pthread_create(&pth, null, :parFun_0, args_0);
12     return ( VoidFuture_t ){ .pth = node: pth };
13 }

```

**Listing 5.7:** Reduction of future declaration with parallellized quicksort call

The generated code for line 9 is equivalent to the one for line 8 except for names of the arguments and struct fields of **Args\_1**. This shows that, if many tasks are defined, the generated code may grow substantially by the definition of **futureInit\_X()** functions and argument structure declarations. In the current example, actually a single structure and initialization function would suffice as the types of arguments are equal. However, ParallelMbeddr does not optimize the code in this regard yet. In the future, equivalency checks of task expressions should therefore be implemented to reduce the amount of generated code.

Every synchronization statement is translated to a statement block like the one in the function **biggerThan()**:

```

1 boolean biggerThan(SharedOf_ArrayOf_Item_0_t* items, int32 index1, int32 index2) {
2     {
3         SharedOf_ArrayOf_Item_0_t* myItems = items;
4         {
5             doHeavyWork();
6             startSyncFor1Mutex(&(myItems)->mutex);
7             {
8                 stopSyncFor1Mutex(&(myItems)->mutex);
9                 return myItems->value[index1].value > myItems->value[index2].value;
10            }
11            stopSyncFor1Mutex(&(myItems)->mutex);
12        }
13    }
14 }

```

**Listing 5.8:** Reduction of the coarse-grained comparison function

As expected, the synchronization statement is translated to mutex synchronization functions. An additional call for **stopSyncFor1Mutex()** is added before the return statement in order to prevent inconsistent synchronization states. The next according call in line 11 is therefore useless and could generally be omitted. Yet, ParallelMbeddr does not perform an analysis to prevent the insertion of unreachable ‘stop’ calls. An according analysis should therefore be added in the future, when the built-in data-flow analysis of mbeddr reaches a reliable state. The statement block indicated by the braces in lines 7 and 10 are added to keep a clear distinction between the scopes of local variables inside the synchronization statement and the scopes of named resources. An alternative to this approach would be to prohibit name equalities of inner local variables and named resources. Line 5 shows that the call of **doHeavyWork()** was moved out of the synchronization context, which was accomplished by synchronization narrowing. For this reason, another statement block (lines 4 and 12) was added, again for the separation of local variable scopes. The outer-most block does the same for outer local variables and local variables resulting from the reduction of named resources. Since in this example code, no conflicting variables exist, these scopes are completely unnecessary and should only be generated on demand in the future.

---

## Fine-Grained Protection

---

In the former approach, for every access to the array, the whole array had to be synchronized. Alternatively, every element can be separately protected by a shared resource. The type of the **items** variable is then changed to **shared<shared<Item>[numberOfItems]>**. Although the whole array still needs to be protected and synchronized in the user code, the compiler will find that all synchronizations of the complete array can be removed, since none of its members are ever overwritten:<sup>66</sup> Neither the array

---

<sup>66</sup> Actually, none of the items can ever be overwritten, since the IDE would otherwise detect an unsafe, thus not allowed, overwrite of a shared resource and trigger an error message.

itself nor any of its items. The user's code must be changed to take into account the element-wise synchronizations:

```

1 void initItems(shared<shared<Item>[numberOfItems]>* items) {
2     for (i ++ in [0..numberOfItems]) {
3         sync(items as myItems) {
4             sync(&myItems->get[i] as itemI) { itemI->get.value = rand(); }
5         }
6     }
7 }
8 int32 partition(shared<shared<Item>[numberOfItems]>* items, int32 left, int32 right) {
9     shared<Item>* pivot;
10    sync(items as myItems, &myItems->get[left] as itemLeft) { pivot = itemLeft; }
11    // ...
12 }
13 boolean biggerThan(shared<shared<Item>[numberOfItems]>* items, int32 index1, int32 index2) {
14     sync(items as myItems) {
15         doHeavyWork();
16         sync(&myItems->get[index1] as item1, &myItems->get[index2] as item2) {
17             return item1->get.value > item2->get.value;
18         }
19     }
20     return false;
21 }
22 void swap(shared<shared<Item>[numberOfItems]>* items, int32 i, int32 j) {
23     sync(items as myItems) {
24         sync(&myItems->get[i] as itemI, &myItems->get[j] as itemJ) {
25             Item temp = itemI->get;
26             temp = itemJ->get;
27             itemI->set(itemJ->get);
28             itemJ->set(itemI->get);
29         }
30     }
31 }

```

**Listing 5.9:** Fine-grained synchronization for Quicksort

Again, the reduction of **biggerThan()** shows the performed optimizations:

```

1 boolean biggerThan(SharedOf_ArrayOf_SharedOf_Item_0_0_t* items, int32 index1, int32 index2) {
2     {
3         SharedOf_ArrayOf_SharedOf_Item_0_0_t* myItems = items;
4         {
5             doHeavyWork();
6             {
7                 SharedOf_Item_0_t* item1 = &myItems->value[index1];
8                 SharedOf_Item_0_t* item2 = &myItems->value[index2];

```

```

9      startSyncFor2Mutexes(&(item1)->mutex, &(item2)->mutex);
10     {
11         stopSyncFor2Mutexes(&(item1)->mutex, &(item2)->mutex);
12         return item1->value.value > item2->value.value;
13     }
14     stopSyncFor2Mutexes(&(item1)->mutex, &(item2)->mutex);
15 }
16 }
17 }
18 }

```

**Listing 5.10:** Reduction of the fine-grained comparison function

The call **doHeavyWork()** is again shifted outside the synchronization context. Furthermore, the lock of **myItems** is dropped. In consequence, only the single array elements need to be locked. Thus, the lock contention of the previous approach was replaced by a synchronization management overhead for the individual elements.

---

## Measurements

---

The presented approaches – except for the unsafe variant of the Quicksort algorithm – were measured for their execution times. The synchronization based programs were both tested with and without applied optimizations. The constants **numberOfItems** and **heavyWorkSize** ( $n$  and  $h$  in the following text) were adjusted to provide different constellations:

- for all approaches:  $h = 1000$  with  $n = 50$ ,  $n = 100$  and  $n = 200$
- for the fine-grained approach:  $n = 20000$  with  $h = 100$ ,  $h = 50$  and  $h = 0$

Every timing-test was executed 10 times in order to account for measuring errors. The values for the average means and the standard deviations are given in seconds.

$n$	50	100	200
average mean	0.721	1.693	3.920
standard deviation	0.006	0.005	0.015

**Table 1:** Execution times for serial Quicksort

The timings in tables 1 and 2 show that the non-optimized version of the coarse-grained implementation of Quicksort shows basically the same performance as the serialized one (which is obviously not optimized). This is no surprise as the code serializes most of the work that is performed by the algorithm. The optimized version shows the potential of lock narrowing: The speed-up of the optimized version converges to 2, which is also the maximum speed-up that can be achieved by the two processor cores on the test-system (if caching effects are excluded). This indicates, that the synchronization overhead

$n$	non-optimized			optimized		
	50	100	200	50	100	200
average mean	0.718	1.707	3.944	0.723	1.117	2.135
standard deviation	0.001	0.006	0.009	0.004	0.005	0.011

**Table 2:** Execution times for coarse-grained Quicksort

in the optimized variant is dominated by the work of **doHeavyWork()**. For  $n = 50$  no speed-up can be determined (the additional 5 ms can be attributed to measuring errors) which indicates that the number of items is too small too allow for parallel execution. Thus, no further tasks are initiated.

$n$	non-optimized			optimized		
	50	100	200	50	100	200
average mean	0.756	1.832	4.364	0.743	1.365	2.488
standard deviation	0.007	0.014	0.012	0.005	0.007	0.012

**Table 3:** Execution times for fine-grained Quicksort with  $h = 1000$

For the according configuration of the fine-grained implementation of Quicksort, table 3 indicates only a small performance overhead when compared to the serial variant. The times result from the fact that the main work is again serialized, while additional synchronization for the single items is performed. The overhead increases with the number of items that are sorted. This overhead is also reflected in the optimized version, which is thus slower than the coarse-grained implementation. The numbers of table 2 suggest that due to the dominance of **doHeavyWork()** the synchronization of the whole array seems to be negligible (when optimized). On the other hand, table 3 shows that the synchronization of the single elements noticeably decelerates the algorithm. Thus, the numbers suggest that such fine-grained synchronization can generally cause a significant performance loss, even if no actual lock clashes happen (since every element is only accessed by one task at a time). However, the timings in table 4 reveal that due to reduction contention also coarse-grained synchronization can cause severe performance losses. In this setting, the impact of **doHeavyWork()** is mitigated by adjusting  $h$  to 0, 50 and 100. In exchange, the number of items is set to 20000, in order to register a noticeable synchronization overhead. The numbers of the optimized version suggest that the main part of the execution time results from the amount of additional comparison work of **doHeavyWork()**. For  $h = 0$ , the execution time converges to 0. On the other hand, the execution times of the non-optimized version are significantly worse than those of the former runs. Even with no additional comparison overhead ( $h = 0$ ), the program is slowed down to twice the worst execution time of the optimized variant.

These numbers show that the removal of read-only locks can at times lead to a significant performance boost, which is true also for the narrowing of synchronization statements.

$h$	non-optimized			optimized		
	0	50	100	0	50	100
average mean	6.587	8.609	13.354	0.132	0.809	3.129
standard deviation	0.116	0.085	0.101	0.001	0.006	0.025

**Table 4:** Execution times for fine-grained Quicksort with  $n = 20000$

### 5.1.2 $\pi$

The  $\pi$  scenario is a continuation of the running example from chapter 3. To recap the idea: The number  $\pi$  is calculated by iteratively adding numbers which are given by a function on the natural numbers. The precision of the resulting  $\pi$  approximation correlates to the numbers that are added.

#### Serial Variant

The serial variant of this algorithm just adds the mapped values of 0 up to a certain threshold  $n$  to the result. The following code listing already indicates the block approach which is used by the parallel variants of this algorithm:

```

1  #constant BLOCKSIZE = 300000000;
2  #constant BLOCKCOUNT = 4;
3  #constant THRESHOLD = BLOCKSIZE * BLOCKCOUNT;
4
5  exported int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
6      double result;
7      for (int32 i = 0; i < THRESHOLD; i += BLOCKSIZE) {
8          calcPiBlock(&result, i, i + BLOCKSIZE);
9      }
10     return 0;
11 }
12
13 long double calcPiBlock(uint32 start, uint32 end) {
14     long double result = 0;
15     for (uint32 i = start; i < end; ++i) { result += calcPiItem(i); }
16     return result;
17 }
18
19 long double calcPiItem(uint32 index) {
20     return 4.0 * (pow(-1.0, index) / (2.0 * index + 1.0));
21 }

```

**Listing 5.11:** Serial calculation of  $\pi$

---

## Parallel Variant without Synchronization

---

The first parallel variant that is evaluated is the future-based algorithm whose translation was shown in 3.1.3:

```
1 exported int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
2     long double result = 0;
3     Task<long double*>[BLOCKCOUNT] calculators;
4     Future<long double*>[BLOCKCOUNT] partialResults;
5
6     for (i ++ in [0..BLOCKCOUNT[]] {
7         uint32 start = ((uint32) i) * BLOCKSIZE;
8         uint32 end = start + BLOCKSIZE;
9         calculators[i] = |calcPiBlock(start, end)|;
10    }
11
12    for (i ++ in [0..BLOCKCOUNT[]] {
13        partialResults[i] = calculators[i].run;
14        calculators[i].clear;
15    }
16
17    for (i ++ in [0..BLOCKCOUNT[]] {
18        result += *(partialResults[i].result);
19        free(partialResults[i].result);
20    }
21
22    return 0;
23 }
```

**Listing 5.12:** Parallel calculation of  $\pi$  without synchronization

The algorithm divides the interval of numbers, which will be mapped to the terms that ultimately add up to the result, into blocks. Each block is assigned to a task that calculates partial sums according to the numbers of its block. The partial sums are then accessed in line 18 via the future handles of the running tasks. The memory of the results, which reside in the heap, are then freed, although this is usually not necessary at the end of the program. No synchronization is used in the given code as all communication happens implicitly and moves uni-directional from the calculator tasks to the main task via the result values. The translation of the code is skipped, since it was already shown in 3.1.3 and, for lack of applied optimization, would not enrich the discussion of this chapter.

---

## Simple Map-Reduce Approach

---

The second variant of the  $\pi$  algorithm equals the one presented in 3.3.4: The blocks are now no longer assigned at the definition of the tasks but via communication among the tasks. The *mapper* tasks use



a **counter** to communicate the current progress of processed blocks. Furthermore, their partial sums are no longer received by the result values of their future handles. Instead, a shared queue is used to communicate the partial sum of each block to a reducer task:

```
1 exported int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
2     shared<Queue> queue;
3     queueInit(&queue); // set all slots to 0
4     shared<Queue>* queuePointer = &queue;
5     shared<uint32> counter;
6     shared<uint32>* counterPointer = &counter;
7     sync(counter) { counter.set(0); }
8
9     Task<void> mapperTask = |map(THRESHOLD, counterPointer, queuePointer)|;
10    Future<void>[MAPPERCOUNT] mappers;
11    for (i ++ in [0..MAPPERCOUNT]) { mappers[i] = mapperTask.run; }
12    mapperTask.clear;
13
14    shared<long double> result;
15    shared<long double>* resultPointer = &result;
16    |reduce(BLOCKCOUNT, resultPointer, queuePointer)|.run.join;
17
18    return 0;
19 }
20
21 void map(uint32 threshold, shared<uint32>* counter, shared<Queue>* resultQueue) {
22     while (true) {
23         uint32 start, end;
24
25         sync(counter as myCounter) {
26             start = myCounter->get;
27             if (start == threshold) { break; }
28             uint32 possibleEnd = start + BLOCKSIZE;
29             end = (possibleEnd <= threshold)?(possibleEnd):(threshold);
30             myCounter->set(end);
31         }
32
33         queueSafeAdd(resultQueue, calcPiBlock(start, end));
34     }
35 }
36
37 void reduce(uint32 numberOfItems, shared<long double>* result, shared<Queue>* resultQueue) {
38     sync(result as myResult) {
39         myResult->set(0);
40         for (uint32 i = 0; i < numberOfItems; ++i) {
41             long double item;
```

```

42     queueSafeGet(resultQueue, &item);
43     myResult->set(item + myResult->get);
44 }
45 }
46 }

```

**Listing 5.13:** Parallel calculation of  $\pi$  with simple map-reduce approach

The reducer task knows in advance how many blocks it is going to receive. It can therefore count the received elements in line 40 to determine when it is finished. For simplicity reasons, the reducer synchronizes the shared resource of the result variable during its whole lifetime. While such patterns can generally lead to deadlocks, it is safe in the current example as no other task acquires the result before the finish of the reducer. The mapper tasks do not know in advance the number of blocks that they will process, which is why they use an unconditional loop in line 22. They can, however, identify the last block via **threshold** and stop as soon as the **counter** variable has reached this value. It is crucial for the mappers to synchronize the counter variable from line 25 to line 31 and not apply fine-grained synchronization in order to avoid race conditions. It is the responsibility of the programmer to identify the according data dependencies and synchronize appropriately. For atomicity patterns like the one in the example code (read a shared resource, process its value and overwrite its value), it might be possible to give first-class support in mbeddr in the future. However, the programmer would still have to identify shared resources whose utilizations match such patterns.

The queue whose functions are called in lines 3, 33 and 42 manages two fields, **insertAt** and **deleteAt**, which keep the indices of the next free, respectively occupied slot of the queue. Every item of the queue is separately shared:

```

1  exported struct Queue {
2      int32 insertAt;
3      int32 deleteAt;
4      shared<long double>[QUEUESIZE] data;
5  };

```

**Listing 5.14:** Declaration of the queue of map-reduce

The queue works like a ring buffer: Items are always added at the front and removed at the back, while the according indices **insertAt** and **deleteAt** are managed as if the last and the first slot of the array were connected. The implementation of the queue functions are not optimized for best performance in the user code. Instead, they are written in a way that shows how the optimizations of the compiler may take place. The called functions are defined as follows:

```

1  void queueInit(shared<Queue>* queue) {
2      sync(queue as myQueue) { myQueue->get.insertAt = myQueue->get.deleteAt = 0; }
3  }
4
5  void queueSafeAdd(shared<Queue>* queue, long double item) {
6      while (true) {
7          sync(queue as myQueue) {

```

```

8      int32 newInsertAt = (queueGetInsertAt(queue) + 1) % QUEUESIZE;
9      int32 deleteAt = queueGetDeleteAt(queue);
10     if (deleteAt == newInsertAt) { continue; }
11     queueSetItemAt(queue, queueGetInsertAt(queue), item);
12     queueSetInsertAt(queue, newInsertAt);
13     break;
14 }
15 }
16 }
17
18 void queueSafeGet(shared<Queue>* queue, long double* result) {
19     while (true) {
20         sync(queue as myQueue) {
21             // see above at queueSafeAdd()
22             if (queueGetDeleteAt(queue) == queueGetInsertAt(queue)) { continue; }
23             *result = queueGetItemAt(queue, queueGetDeleteAt(queue));
24             int32 newDeleteAt = (queueGetDeleteAt(queue) + 1) % QUEUESIZE;
25             queueSetDeleteAt(queue, newDeleteAt);
26             return;
27         }
28     }
29 }

```

**Listing 5.15:** Functions for the queue of map-reduce

**queueSafeAdd()** and **queueSafeGet()** repeatedly check the indices of the queue for free, respectively occupied slots. If none are available, the check is repeated in a busy-wait manner. As the repetitions do not perform a wait after an unsuccessful check, the code will ultimately cause unnecessary workload for the CPUs. The user should therefore force the tasks to sleep for a certain amount of time in between two executions of the loop. Yet, it may be difficult to balance the waiting time for acceptable responding times and CPU occupancy. For this reason, it might be helpful in the future to offer condition variables which, in the current example, would allow **queueSafeGet()** to wait for a free or occupied slot without having to worry about the implementation of a performant busy-wait approach. Such condition variables could either suspend a thread until the declared conditions are fulfilled or realize a busy-wait protocol similar to the one for the acquisition of locks. The two functions **queueSafeAdd()** and **queueSafeGet()** synchronize all statements in the busy-wait loops. This is done to prevent interfering changes of the index variables of the queue. The accesses to the queue thus become serialized (for this reason, in this example, the separate protection of each queue slot is actually superfluous). Therefore, the locks's repeated acquisition and release for the queue, which causes unnecessary synchronization management overhead, could be optimized by instead nesting the loops inside the synchronization statements. However, this optimization technique, called lock coarsening, must be used with care in order to not impair the responsiveness due to added lock contention (see also section 5.2.5).

---

Of the queue's remaining functions, the function **queueSetItemAt()** is presented. The other helper functions have the same structure.

```
1 void queueSetItemAt(shared<Queue>* queue, int32 index, long double newItem) {
2     sync(queue as myQueue) {
3         sync(&myQueue->get.data[index] as wrappedItem) { wrappedItem->set(newItem); }
4     }
5 }
```

**Listing 5.16:** Exemplary helper function for the queue of map-reduce

**queueSetItemAt()** first has to synchronize the access to the shared queue. It then does the same for the slot of the queue whose value is to be overwritten. At this point, two optimizations are possible. First, the queue does not need to be locked, since for the only call of this function the queue is already synchronized. Thus, recursive-lock optimization can be performed. Furthermore, since every synchronization of the queue slots happens in a context where the whole queue is also synchronized, the latter synchronization dominates the former. Therefore, the slots actually do not need to be synchronized. This technique is similar to the removal of enclosed monitor locks in Java (see 5.2.5). If the necessary properties for these optimizations only hold for some calls of **queueSetItemAt()** function inlining or duplication could be performed (see 4.2.3). A look at the generated code for the current example reveals that of the presented optimizations the removal of the recursive lock is performed:

```
1 void queueSetItemAt(SharedOf_Queue_0_t* queue, int32 index, long double newItem) {
2     {
3         SharedOf_Queue_0_t* myQueue = queue;
4         {
5             {
6                 SharedOf_long_double_0_t* wrappedItem = &[| node: myQueue -> value |].data[index];
7                 startSyncFor1Mutex(&(wrappedItem)->mutex);
8                 { wrappedItem->value = newItem; }
9                 stopSyncFor1Mutex(&(wrappedItem)->mutex);
10            }
11        }
12    }
13 }
```

**Listing 5.17:** Reduction of the helper function for the queue

The synchronization for **myQueue** is removed, whereas the one for **wrappedItem** remains, which is the expected result of the implemented optimizer. On the other hand, the synchronizations of the queue in the aforementioned functions **queueSafeGet()**, **queueSafeAdd()** and **queueInit()** remain, as expected.

---

## Extended Map-Reduce Approach

---

While in the last version of the  $\pi$  algorithm the mappers shared a single queue, the extended variant assigns one queue to each mapper. The reducer gets access to each of these queues. Furthermore another container is introduced for the queues:

```
1 struct FlaggedQueue {
2     shared<int32> itemCount;
3     shared<Queue> queue;
4     shared<boolean> isFull;
5     shared<boolean> isFinished;
6 };
```

**Listing 5.18:** Container for a queue with additional communication flags

This container is used in the following way. Whereas in the former approach partial sums were communicated, in the extended variant, a mapper adds every single item to the queue (this is of course an approach which, for performance reasons, would not be pursued in real life). The mapper repeatedly fills the queue with as many items as possible, which depends on the number of free slots left in the queue and on the items left to be calculated for the current block of numbers. After each such round, the mapper signals the reducer via **isFull** that it is done for the moment and via **itemCount** how many items were actually added to the queue (since the queue itself does not offer an according functionality). When the mapper is finished, it informs the reducer via **isFinished**; thus, the reducer finally knows when it is finished itself. The result queues are declared in the main function:

```
1 exported int32 main(int32 argc, string[] argv) {
2     // ...
3     shared<shared<FlaggedQueue>[MAPPERCOUNT]> resultQueues;
4     shared<shared<FlaggedQueue>[MAPPERCOUNT]>* resultQueuesPointer = &resultQueues;
5     Future<void>[MAPPERCOUNT] mappers;
6     for (i ++ in [0..MAPPERCOUNT[]] {
7         sync(resultQueues, &resultQueues.get[i] as resultQueue) {
8             sync(&resultQueue->get.itemCount as itemCount) { itemCount->set(0); }
9             sync(&resultQueue->get.isFull as isFull) { isFull->set(false); }
10            sync(&resultQueue->get.isFinished as isFinished) { isFinished->set(false); }
11            queueInit(&resultQueue->get.queue);
12            mappers[i] = |map(THRESHOLD, counterPointer, resultQueue)|.run;
13        }
14    }
15
16    shared<long double> result;
17    shared<long double>* resultPointer = &result;
18    |reduce(resultPointer, resultQueuesPointer)|.run.join;
19 }
```

**Listing 5.19:** Adopted main function of the extended map-reduce approach for  $\pi$

The result queues have to be wrapped inside a shared resource to be safely shareable with the reducer. In lines 4, 17 and 18, the code reveals a circuitousness which results from the copy-semantics of tasks: In order to actually share **resultQueues** and **result** with the reducer, according pointers have to be defined in advance. If the programmer would instead reference these data via address such as

```
1 |reduce(&result, &resultQueues)|.run.join;
```

then not addresses of the original shared resources would actually be copied. Instead, the shared resources would be copied themselves and pointers to these copies would in turn be copied into the reducer task. Ultimately, this would lead to erroneous code. This results from the fact that the value of every referenced variable inside a task expression is copied into the arguments structure, which the thread for this task is fed at runtime. In the future, the semantics should probably be distinguished in this regard, such that every address-referenced variable of a shared resource is actually copied by its address, not by its value. The aforementioned mapper and **calcPiBlock** are changed to the following code:

```
1 void map(uint32 threshold, shared<uint32>* counter, shared<FlaggedQueue>* partialResultQueue) {
2     while (true) {
3         uint32 start, end;
4         // ...
5         calcPiBlock(start, end, partialResultQueue);
6     }
7     sync(partialResultQueue as myQueue, &myQueue->get.isFinished as isFinished)
8         { isFinished->set(true); }
9 }
10
11 void calcPiBlock(uint32 start, uint32 end, shared<FlaggedQueue>* resultQueue) {
12     int32 mapCounter = 0;
13     for (uint32 i = start; i < end; ++i) {
14         sync(resultQueue as queue) { queueSafeAdd(&queue->get.queue, calcPiItem(i)); }
15         ++mapCounter;
16
17         if (mapCounter == QUEUESIZE - 1 || i == end - 1) {
18             sync(resultQueue as queue, &queue->get.itemCount as itemCount)
19                 { itemCount->set(mapCounter); }
20             sync(resultQueue as queue, &queue->get.isFull as isFull) { isFull->set(true); }
21             mapCounter = 0;
22             while (true) {
23                 sync(resultQueue as queue, &queue->get.isFull as isFull) {if (!isFull->get) { break; }}
24                 timespec sleepingTime = (struct timespec){ .tv_nsec = };
25                 nanosleep(&sleepingTime, null);
26             }
27         }
28     }
29 }
```

**Listing 5.20:** Mapper functionality for the extended map-reduce approach for  $\pi$

As already explained, inside **calcPiBlock()**, the mapper adds as many items to the queue as possible. It then changes the flags **itemCount** and **isFull** so that the reducer will empty the queue. The mapper thus subsequently waits in a busy-wait manner for the **isFull** flag to become invalid.

```

1 void reduce(shared<long double>* result,
2             shared<shared<FlaggedQueue>[MAPPERCOUNT]>* resultQueues) {
3     sync(result as myResult) { myResult->set(0); }
4
5     boolean[MAPPERCOUNT] areFinished;
6     for (i ++ in [0..MAPPERCOUNT[]] { areFinished[i] = false; }
7     int32 isFinishedCount = 0;
8
9     while (true) {
10        // try to read from one queue if any one is available
11        for (i ++ in [0..MAPPERCOUNT[]] {
12            if (areFinished[i]) { continue; }
13            sync(resultQueues as myQueues, &myQueues->get[i] as resultQueue) {
14                sync(&resultQueue->get.isFull as isFull, &resultQueue->get.isFinished as isFinished) {
15                    if (isFull->get) {
16                        addPartialResults(result, &resultQueue->get.itemCount, &resultQueue->get.queue,
17                                         &resultQueue->get.isFull);
18                    } else if (isFinished->get && setFinished(i, areFinished, &isFinishedCount)) {
19                        return;
20                    }
21                }
22            }
23        }
24        timespec sleepingTime = (struct timespec){ .tv_nsec = DELAY };
25        nanosleep(&sleepingTime, null);
26    }
27 }

```

**Listing 5.21:** Reducer function of the extended map-reduce approach for  $\pi$

The synchronizer busy-waits for one of the tasks to be either finished (line 18) or for the queue of the respective task to become full (line 15). In the latter case, **addPartialResults** adds the items of the filled slots to the overall result, and invalidates the **isFull** flag:

```

1 void addPartialResults(shared<long double>* result, shared<int32>* itemCount,
2                       shared<Queue>* queue, shared<boolean>* isFullFlag) {
3     sync(queue as myQueue, itemCount as myItemCount) {
4         for (i ++ in [0..myItemCount->get[]] {
5             sync(result as myResult) {
6                 long double tempResult;
7                 queueSafeGet(myQueue, &tempResult);
8                 myResult->set(myResult->get + tempResult);

```

```

9      }
10     }
11    }
12    sync(isFullFlag as flag) { flag->set(false); }
13 }

```

**Listing 5.22:** Actual reduce functionality for the reducer

The previous code listings show some optimization potential. First, **resultQueues** does not need to be synchronized in line 13 of listing 5.21, since array elements are not allowed to be overwritten. The same holds for the container **resultQueue** in the same line. On the other hand, since the container **resultQueue** and its counterparts in lines 7, 14, 18, 20 and 23 of listing 5.20 always dominate the struct fields **itemCount**, **isFull** and **isFinished** synchronization-wise, an optimization algorithm might find that the synchronization of the whole queue and a removal of the synchronizations of its fields may lead to better performing code. Such optimization assessments would require some sort of heuristics and should be considered for future extensions of ParallelMbeddr. Nevertheless, in line 3 of listing 5.22, the synchronization of **myQueue** causes the queue to be always synchronized in **queueSafeGet()**, since line 7 contains the only call for this function. Hence, the synchronization inside this function, which was shown in the previous parallelization approach, can be removed; along with all recursive locks in the helper functions for the queue. Another subtle optimization could be applied for every synchronization of the queue: Since the use of **isFull** forbids the mappers to add new items to the queue as long as this flag evaluates to **false** and vice versa for the reducer, there can actually never be any conflicting accesses to the queues fields. The utilization of the queue, thus, induces two states that are determined by the value of **isFull**. It is left to future research how such state-dependent synchronization can be exploited for the elision of locks. The actual performed optimizations concern the synchronizations of the overall **resultQueues** container and those of the individual actual queues. The optimizer detects the read-only usage of **resultQueues** and infers that locks thereof can be removed. It should be noted that the optimizer is not able to detect this usage pattern for each queue container in the array of **resultQueues** since the according optimization for nested shared resources is not supported, yet. However, due to the use of pseudo-aliases, in an unsafe optimization mode, the optimizer detects the recursive locks of the individual queues in **queueSafeGet()** as well as the helper functions for the queue and deletes them. Since it is not of relevance, the optimized code is omitted in this discussion.

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## Measurements

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All variants of the  $\pi$  approximation algorithm were timed with different configurations. Every configuration was executed 10 times. The configurations adjust different values for the constants **BLOCKSIZE**, **BLOCKCOUNT** and **MAPPERCOUNT** ( $s$ ,  $c$  and  $m$ ). The tests aim at performing an equal number of item calculations for  $\pi$  (**THRESHOLD** = 120,000,000), which was not possible to achieve for the complex queue-based solution of the previous section. By calculating the same items for every configuration of a solution, the impact of the parameters becomes evident. Thus, general scalability was not of concern for the  $\pi$  scenario.



	$s = 15k, c = 8k$	$s = 30k, c = 4k$	$s = 60k, c = 2k$
average mean	4.826	4.801	4.814
standard deviation	0.031	0.038	0.022

**Table 5:** Execution times for serial  $\pi$

As expected, varying block-sizes do not have a significant impact on the performance of the serial variant. For the non-synchronized variant, presented in 5.1.2, a small performance degradation towards increasing block sizes is measurable. This results from the fact that the block size, and with it the block count, determines the number of simultaneously executed tasks: For each block, one task is run.

	$s = 944882, c = 127$	$s = 60000k, c = 2$
average mean	2.816	3.003
standard deviation	0.014	0.047

**Table 6:** Execution times for the non-synchronization approach for  $\pi$

The indicated performance improvement of the parallel approach towards the serial one does not reach factor 2, which would be the ideal case on a dual-core machine. Furthermore, the performance peak is not bound to the configuration with two blocks. Additionally, the solution could not be performed with more than 127 blocks (hence, 127 calculator tasks and threads). While the last, surprising result strongly indicates a limitation of the underlying POSIX library, it remains to be detected if the other issues are caused by the implementation of the library, the outline of the machine or some other reason. The limitation of such a small number of efficiently simultaneously executed tasks, however, shows that the mapping of tasks to pthreads will not fit highly concurrent scenarios.

The next solution, simple map-reduce, was performed with a varying mapper count  $m$  (1, 2, 10, 11, 12) for each of the settings that was also used for the serial variant. In every setting, the queue had a size of 10 slots.

	$m$	1	2	10	11	12
$s = 15k, c = 8k$	average mean	152.758	218.937	115.428	114.453	143.307
	standard deviation	3.173	4.716	3.601	2.273	3.213
$s = 30k, c = 4k$	average mean	76.174	110.354	56.707	54.488	74.698
	standard deviation	3.102	1.795	4.862	1.650	6.079
$s = 60k, c = 2k$	average mean	24.998	48.178	28.050	28.365	38.051
	standard deviation	1.392	1.974	1.628	2.911	3.327

**Table 7:** Execution times for the simple non-optimized map-reduce approach for  $\pi$

When compared to the non-optimized variant of the simple map-reduce approach (table 7), the optimized version (table 8) reveals a performance enhancement which ranges from almost factor 2.5

$m$		1	2	10	11	12
$s = 15k, c = 8k$	average mean	50.527	59.390	17.112	15.501	48.650
	standard deviation	0.726	1.014	0.592	0.953	1.710
$s = 30k, c = 4k$	average mean	25.345	33.020	8.699	8.018	23.821
	standard deviation	0.570	0.784	0.524	0.274	0.700
$s = 60k, c = 2k$	average mean	10.427	16.683	5.085	4.697	11.610
	standard deviation	0.288	0.509	0.181	0.260	0.563

**Table 8:** Execution times for the simple optimized map-reduce approach for  $\pi$

( $s = 60, c = 2k, m = 1$ ) to almost factor 10 ( $s = 15k, c = 8k, m = 10$ ). For this implementation, the optimization of recursive locks, thus, improves the execution times significantly. The second observation is that in most cases the execution time is almost proportional to the number of processed blocks: half as many blocks entail a halved execution time. This outcome is probably a consequence of the proportionality of number of blocks and synchronization overhead for the counter and for the queue that are shared among the mappers. The next, and most obvious observation is that none of the configurations except  $s = 60k, c = 2k$  and  $m = 11$  for the optimized variant entail a better performance than the serial  $\pi$  implementation. In consequence, the synchronization overhead generally seems to over-compensate the lessened work that every mapper task has to do. This assumption is confirmed by the varying execution times of the particular mapper counts. An enhancement of one mapper to two mappers increases the execution times (see tables 7 and 8), which is probably caused by the additional synchronization overhead between the two mappers. Up until 11 mappers, however the execution times considerably improve and are also lower than the single-mapper configurations. This property indicates that either the work division can compensate at least part of the reduced performance due to the synchronization overhead or, more probable, that the better exhaustion of the queue causes the reducer task to spend less time with costly busy-waiting for new reducible values. A utilization of more workers than queue slots (10), however, eventually (for  $m = 12$ ) causes an overall performance degradation, which probably results from a congestion of the queue.

For the more complex map-reduce implementation, the total number of calculated items was decreased to 2,000,000 in order to achieve acceptable execution times. For all settings, the individual queues for all mappers were set to a size of 1000 slots. This size was chosen rather arbitrarily since it did not seem to have a significant impact on the execution times, which indicates that the employment of task-specific queues can diminish the congestions thereof.

The general performance reduction of this approach, when compared to the former ones, does not surprise, since the code contains many bad design choices performance-wise. For this reason it is also not astonishing that the performed optimizations (removal of read-only locks and recursive locks) do not entail significant improvements. However, both tables 9 and 10 show that the utilization of 4 mappers even causes a slight increase of execution times: 13.915 sec vs. 12.889 sec, respectively 2.718 sec vs. 2.567 sec. While the reason for this peculiarity could not be found by the author, the result shows that

$m$	non-optimized			optimized		
	4	10	20	4	10	20
average mean	12.889	3.822	1.775	13.915	3.777	1.718
standard deviation	0.401	0.122	0.101	0.297	0.210	0.046

**Table 9:** Execution times for the extended map-reduce approach for  $\pi$  with  $s = 100$  and  $c = 2000$

$m$	non-optimized			optimized		
	4	10	20	4	10	20
average mean	2.567	1.125	0.688	2.718	1.014	0.498
standard deviation	0.070	0.068	0.088	0.110	0.095	0.048

**Table 10:** Execution times for the extended map-reduce approach for  $\pi$  with  $s = 1000$  and  $c = 200$

lock elision does not necessarily entail better performance; in some cases it may even cause the opposite effect. The different adjustments for the mapper  $m$  count show that an increasement of mappers generally causes an improvement of the execution times. Thus, as in the previous solution, the busy-waiting of the reducer probably has a considerable negative impact on the overall performance. Additionally, larger blocks ( $s = 1000$ ) generate decreased timings, since less synchronization for the **counter** variable has to be performed by the tasks.

The map-reduce approaches show that it is generally difficult to implement a performant message-passing-like communication layer with ParallelMbeddr. For this reason, future research should include a native, performance-tuned implementation thereof in ParallelMbeddr to prevent the programmer from some of the pitfalls that were encountered in this chapter.

## 5.2 Comparison with other Parallelization Approaches

A variety of approaches to thread-safety of code parallelization on the one hand, and performance optimization on the other hand have been conceived. The following paragraphs will present a selection of languages that either already influenced the design and optimization of ParallelMbeddr or might do so in the future. The comparison starts with a discussion of the achievements of parallel programming approaches for C in terms of thread-safety and performance optimization.

### 5.2.1 C

While there are multiple approaches to parallel programming in C, research for optimization techniques seem to focus primarily on the transactional memory[28][51]. This might result from the property that due to its general optimistic approach (execute transactions in parallel and repeat this process if

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conflicts occur), the model itself can be seen as a sort of optimization<sup>67</sup>. Another possible reason is that the overhead of transactional memory [51] facilitates the use of dynamic optimization techniques. Approaches in the domain of classical shared-memory based parallelization in C usually neglect data-races [15] and leave the task of detecting them to the user. [68] suggests an approach with which to “convert global and static variables in parallel programs into thread-safe storage” [68]. This paper does, however, not mention how the thread-safety of pointers can be handled. A prominent representative of the shared-memory model is *OpenMP*.<sup>68</sup> OpenMP is an API to parallel programming for C/C++ and Fortran[3, p. 1]. It supports both task parallelism and data parallelism. OpenMP is used by extending valid C code with the **#pragma** directive,<sup>69</sup> which instructs the compiler how to parallelize a program. It can therefore be seen as a declarative way of enriching single-threaded programs with parallelism. However, OpenMP does not check the code for correctness regarding thread-safety. This means that it is the programmer’s responsibility to ensure that data dependencies do not entail data races. For the lack of an in-built solution, multiple approaches to data-race detection in OpenMP have been proposed [47]. [58] argues that static data-race detection for such programs is difficult to perform and suggests the additional utilization of dynamic test-based data-race detection. Concerning low-level data races, these problems are circumvented in *ParallelMbeddr* by restricting the programmer’s means of sharing data, which is possible due to the compiler integration of *mbeddr*. On the other hand, [15] argues that in some cases, data-races are harmless. For according algorithms, the safety-first concept of *ParallelMbeddr* might be inappropriate due to the enforced synchronization overhead. Nevertheless, OpenMP provides extensive support for parallelization. For instance, it offers multiple strategies to distribute the processing of arrays onto multiple threads. This, of course, is much easier to realize with the absence of strong thread-safety guarantees. The following language, on the other hand, fills this gap by combining explicit parallelization of array-like data structures with thread-safety. In this regard it might serve as one possible Paragon for the future development of *ParallelMbeddr*.

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### 5.2.2 ParaSail

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The programming language *ParaSail* offers implicit parallelism. It does so by guaranteeing at compile time that, theoretically, every valid expression can be evaluated in parallel. In contrast to ‘pure’ languages like Haskell, it does not sacrifice side-effects for this purpose [74]. However, in order to automatically prove the safeness of parallel executions, it avoids concepts that are crucial to languages like C, like pointers and global variables [73]. In these regards, it differs from the focus of this work. Nevertheless, its approach to data collections may also provide ideas for future research: *ParaSail* makes heavy use of indexable containers like lists or trees. When equipped with proper pre- and postconditions, containers can be sliced in a thread-safe manner [72]. This means that they must be designed in a way which lets the compiler prove that slices (i.e. sub-intervals) of their elements do not overlap. In such a case, segmented views of the original container can be manipulated in a thread-safe manner in parallel. While

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<sup>67</sup> It should be kept in mind that this does not mean that transactional memory generally improves execution times and outperforms other approaches [20].

<sup>68</sup> <http://openmp.org/wp/>, accessed: 2014-08-23

<sup>69</sup> See <https://gcc.gnu.org/onlinedocs/cpp/Pragmas.html>, accessed 2014-08-22, for details.

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this feature seems to be promising for future enhancements of ParallelMbeddr, it should be noted that the presence of pointers in C could impede an according realization of containers.

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### 5.2.3 Æminium

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Like ParaSail, the programming language *Æminium* realizes implicit parallelism. As opposed to ParaSail, it uses explicit annotations on methods by the user to guarantee thread-safety. These annotations declare *access permissions* [14] on the parameters of function arguments and return values. The compiler uses these access permissions (*shared*, *immutable*, *unique*) to prove the correctness of programs in terms of thread-safety. If possible, executions are parallelized automatically. This may for instance happen if only immutable data is involved. The presence of mutable shared data, however, requires the programmer to wrap according statements inside atomic blocks. While atomic blocks could be inferred by the compiler, the language pursues this path “for granularity reasons” [71]. This approach equals ParallelMbeddr’s requirement to annotate synchronization blocks explicitly. Both languages thus enable the user to “have fine-grain control over the size of critical sections” [71]. In consequence, the user controls the trade-off between the responsiveness (the synchronization contention, i.e. the time that threads are blocked by others) of the system and the synchronization management overhead. Furthermore, the approach can directly influence the presence of higher-level data dependencies, that “cannot [be] directly inferred via data dependencies” [71]. To this end, *Æminium* offers data groups that allow the user to specify which data must be synchronized together. An according language feature would enrich ParallelMbeddr with better support for higher-level dependencies. Furthermore, data groups would allow the compiler to make use of less mutexes.

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### 5.2.4 D

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A similar feature to data groups in *Æminium* is offered by the multi-paradigm language *D*.<sup>70</sup> *D* provides a thread-safety-first approach to parallelization. The programmer has to manually protect data that is shared between threads. One way of achieving this goal is by synchronizing classes. If a class is synchronized, its data must be private, and every call of one of its methods is locked for unique access. If fields themselves have non-primitive types, i.e. class-types, their classes must also be synchronized. In order to tie the protection of such a field and an object more closely, *D* allows objects to be owned by others in terms of their mutexes. An owned object uses the mutex of its owner. *D* thus enables semantics similar to data groups in *Æminium*. While this feature is still lacking in ParallelMbeddr, the language offers *D*’s support for explicit synchronization for multiple objects in one synchronization statement for coarse-grained, deadlock-free synchronization. While ParallelMbeddr uses a busy-waiting approach to achieve this goal, *D* uses mutex ordering, which acquires mutexes in the same order in all threads, regardless of the syntactic order in the programmer’s code [9].<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> <http://dlang.org/>, accessed: 2014-08-23

<sup>71</sup> For general information on this technique, see <https://www.securecoding.cert.org/confluence/display/seccode/POS51-C.+Avoid+deadlock+with+POSIX+threads+by+locking+in+predefined+order>, accessed: 2014-08-23.

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### 5.2.5 Java

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The programming language Java has a form of synchronization similar to D's. However, its guarantees concerning thread-safety are considerably weaker. In Java, the focus of synchronizations is rather computation-oriented than data-oriented. The programmer is himself responsible for identifying the blocks of statements and methods that need to be synchronized, and needs to annotate them. Unlike in D, a class can thus have synchronized and not synchronized methods. Furthermore, although the access through a method  $m$  of such a *monitor* (i.e. an object which applies the explained form of synchronization) is synchronized, simultaneous access via unsynchronized other methods to the same data, which  $m$  accesses, is still possible. In spite of these limitations, the research on lock-related optimizations in Java was used as a starting point for similar optimizations in ParallelMbeddr. The optimizations accomplished in Java include lock-elision for re-entrant monitors, i.e. monitors whose synchronized methods are called recursively. Furthermore, enclosed and thread-local monitors are optimized. The latter relates to single-task lock elision in ParallelMbeddr. The former can be seen as an optimization technique that was not applied in ParallelMbeddr. If the field  $f$  of a monitor  $m$  is always accessed by a synchronized method of  $m$ , and  $f$  is itself a monitor, then the synchronizations for  $f$ 's methods can be omitted. Similar, in ParallelMbeddr the synchronizations for a shared resource  $n$ , which is nested inside another one  $s$ , could be omitted, if  $n$  is always synchronized inside a synchronization context of  $s$  [7]. Another optimization applied in Java is lock-coarsening, which tries to reduce the synchronization management overhead by broadening synchronization contexts [33]. Such optimization can increase the amount of lock contention. For this reason, good heuristics are mandatory. Another optimization is adaptive locking, which switches between spinning (for short time intervals) and suspension (for longer ones) when a thread waits for the release of a lock. Yet another technique, which was proposed for Java, is lock reservation [45]. Lock reservation assumes that locks are repeatedly requested by one thread at a time. It exploits this property by storing at runtime for each lock an owner-thread which might change anytime. While accesses via a lock  $l$  of the owner thread  $o$  need not be locked, other threads have to lock  $l$ . Hence, if for a certain amount of time  $o$  is the only thread to enter the synchronized methods of a monitor protected by  $l$ , then meanwhile no locking for  $l$  has to be applied. It remains to be investigated whether such optimization is suitable for the resource-constraint embedded domain.

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### 5.2.6 Rust

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While Java tries to reduce the amount of necessary locks at compilation time, the programming language *Rust*<sup>72</sup> cedes this effort to the programmer by providing appropriate data types. As a systems programming language, Rust targets performance, but also memory-safety (i.e. null pointers and dangling pointers are prevented) and thread-safety. Among other things, the latter is accomplished by the use of owned and borrowed pointers. If data is owned by a thread, the thread can safely access it without the need of synchronization. The data can be used inside functions by borrowing a pointer to the function. This pointer has a limited lifetime and can never leave its creator thread. However, ownership

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<sup>72</sup> <http://www.rust-lang.org/>, accessed: 2014-23-08

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can be transferred to other threads. For data that need to be accessed from multiple threads, Rust offers the wrapper type **Mutex<T>** which “provides synchronized access to the underlying data” [4]. A mutex in Rust is the equivalent to a shared resource in ParallelMbeddr. Any access to the underlying data must be accompanied by a lock of the mutex container. Rust further offers a signal-wait approach via condition variables for the type **Mutex<T>**. Concluding, with the depicted language features and various others, Rust offers manifold opportunities to avoid locks in the first place. For this reason, Rust can serve as a prototype for future language-based enhancements of ParallelMbeddr.

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## 6 Conclusion

This thesis showed an approach to leverage mbeddr's language extensibility support for providing advanced support for parallel programming in the embedded domain with C. By developing the new language abstraction ParallelMbeddr on top of mbeddr, the work provided an explicit parallelization approach for task based parallelism. For this purpose the concepts 'task' and 'future' were developed. It was found that these concepts enable a convenient approach to parallel execution of code: The definition of code that shall be executed in parallel is significantly facilitated when compared to working with low level libraries like POSIX threads (as can be seen at the generated code which makes use of pthreads). The thread-safe communication between tasks was realized by shared resources which wrap data to be shared between tasks. The communication via shared resources was restricted to explicit synchronization contexts that the user had to define by making use of the synchronization statement concept. By enhancing the type system with a shared data type for shared resources and restricting the ways shared resources may be used, ParallelMbeddr thus simplifies reasoning of side-effects of communication between tasks. As a result, the creation of thread-safe code should be facilitated. By applying explicit synchronization, the system forces the programmer to think about the right scoping of synchronization contexts. The guaranteed thread-safety, however, is currently limited to low-level data-dependencies. Languages like Æminium show how to approach this problem and should be used as paragons for future extensions of ParallelMbeddr: Dependencies between data should be expressed at the definition of the data, not only when it is used. Otherwise, the language suffers from the danger of data-races resulting from higher-level data-dependencies just as Java does with low-level data-dependencies, if methods or statement blocks are not properly synchronized.

As in mbeddr the safety checks happen in the background in real-time, the user directly receives feedback concerning safety issue of the written code. However, this approach demands the checks to be not too complex computation-wise. Hence, the code currently burdens the user with lexical scopes of synchronization statements. One approach to mitigate this problem in the future is the introduction of further data types or type annotations (for instance **synced<t>**) by the user, which diminish the use of synchronization – hence, locks in the generated code – in the first place. Another type-based approach would be the introduction of owned pointers and borrowed pointers, as they are implemented in Rust, which eliminate the necessity for synchronization altogether. Such type advances could both make the code more explicit (and certainly more complicated) and accelerate the generated code. While these approaches cede the reduction of locks to the user, inspired by research on Java, this work showed how to perform performance optimizations in the compilation process. It presented algorithms for the reduction of single-task and read-only locks, which share the property of removing locks for whole shared resources, whenever this is possible. Approaches for the removal of recursive locks were given next. The test results in the evaluation showed evidence, that specifically for the current lexical scopes of synchronizations (and the necessarily resulting recursively locks), such optimization should certainly be



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applied, in order to mitigate the resulting synchronization management overhead. On the other hand, single-task locks seem to be either a code smell for an unnecessary utilization of shared data by the user. Or they result from re-use of library code. The programming and re-use of library code which makes use of ParallelMbeddr's concepts is currently not supported and should be a concern of future research. As the optimization algorithms generally benefit from an inter-procedural alias-analysis, which can not be performed when libraries are written, optimizations of such code, too, is left to future research. While for these reasons and the similarity to read-only locks, single-tasks were not evaluated (although extensively tested), the removal of read-only locks was. It was shown that the optimization of shared containers of shared data can in some cases improve the performance of the generated code. The last optimization, the data-dependence safe narrowing of synchronization statements can also improve the performance of the executed code significantly. The presented optimizations should, however, be seen as prototypes, since in the implementation they support only simple data structures. Additionally, the lack of a precise alias analysis in mbeddr limits the scope of optimizations that can safely be executed with the prototypical analysis that was implemented as a surrogate. For the evaluation, the recursive-lock reduction therefore was configured to perform optimizations which were safe for the considered scenarios, but can be dangerous – in terms of thread-safety – for others. Two important fields of future research should therefore be the extension of mbeddr with a precise alias-analysis and general optimization support for more complex data structures. The presented algorithms should greatly profit from this.

Another task for the future is the development of algorithms which do not, unlike the presented ones, assume a simultaneous execution of threads but, instead, take the succeeding and interleaved execution of tasks into account. This way, those locks could for instance be removed which synchronize data that up until a certain point are only used by a single task. Additionally, apart from static analysis for the detection of shared data of interleaved tasks which are guaranteed to be used by only one task at a time, model checkers like CBMC could be employed for the same purpose. CBMC can be used to perform test-runs of code which makes use of assertions. Additionally, for programs that are simple enough, CBMC can verify the absence of false assertions by unwinding all possible paths through the program [1].<sup>73</sup> An optimization analysis could exploit this feature by assigning access counters to shared resources, removing synchronization statements and asserting that despite this removal, in every possible run of the program, a certain shared resource is always executed by at most one task at a time. For such resources the according locks could be removed. The utilization of CBMC could specifically help to remove locks, for which static analysis cannot easily detect thread-safety like for shared resources whose only synchronizations occur in conditional statements whose complex conditions will never hold. At the time this thesis was written, however, CBMC was not ready to be used yet for multi-threading. In this regard the concrete applicability of CBMC for optimizations has to be left to future research.

Apart from optimization concerns, the scenarios presented in this work showed that for instance the implementation of shared resources as C structures may entail the generation of many according declarations. Without concrete scenarios from the industry it remains uncertain whether the amount of generated code has a negative impact on the applicability of ParallelMbeddr. Nevertheless, future re-

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<sup>73</sup> If loops and recursive functions need to be evaluated more often than the user allows, they will limit the assertions that CBMC can verify.

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search should investigate the impact of padding that may be inserted into the generated structs and whether according optimization should be pursued. The scenarios further showed that general parallelization problems, like the dining philosophers problem and map-reduce via communication queues, can be implemented with ParallelMbeddr. The performance and scalability of the resulting code does not only depend on the quality of performed optimizations, but also on the general utilization of synchronization. For instance, the pi-example of section 5.1.2 showed that the implementation of a queue and communication via the queue require a busy-wait approach in the user code. Although concepts like message passing can therefore in a sense also be implemented by the user, it is questionable if the performance and usability of an implementation like the presented one have already reached their limits. Hence, native support for concepts like message-passing or condition variables could both improve the usability and may, in certain cases, enhance the performance of the written code.

Overall, the thesis showed, how first-class language support on top of an existing language can both ease the writing of parallel data-race free code and use the compiler for optimizing the resulting code in terms of synchronization overhead. To the knowledge of the writer, it also gave the first implementation of such an approach for C in a real-world setting, the development environment mbeddr. While this work laid the foundation for parallelization support for mbeddr, it showed how much potential reside in the chosen approach and how further enhancements can raise the accomplishments. From an industrial point of view, one main task for the future will be the complete integration of ParallelMbeddr with all of mbeddr's various language concepts and the stabilization for real-world applications.

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