Methodologies for Software Processes

Lecture 11

PERMISSION MODELS

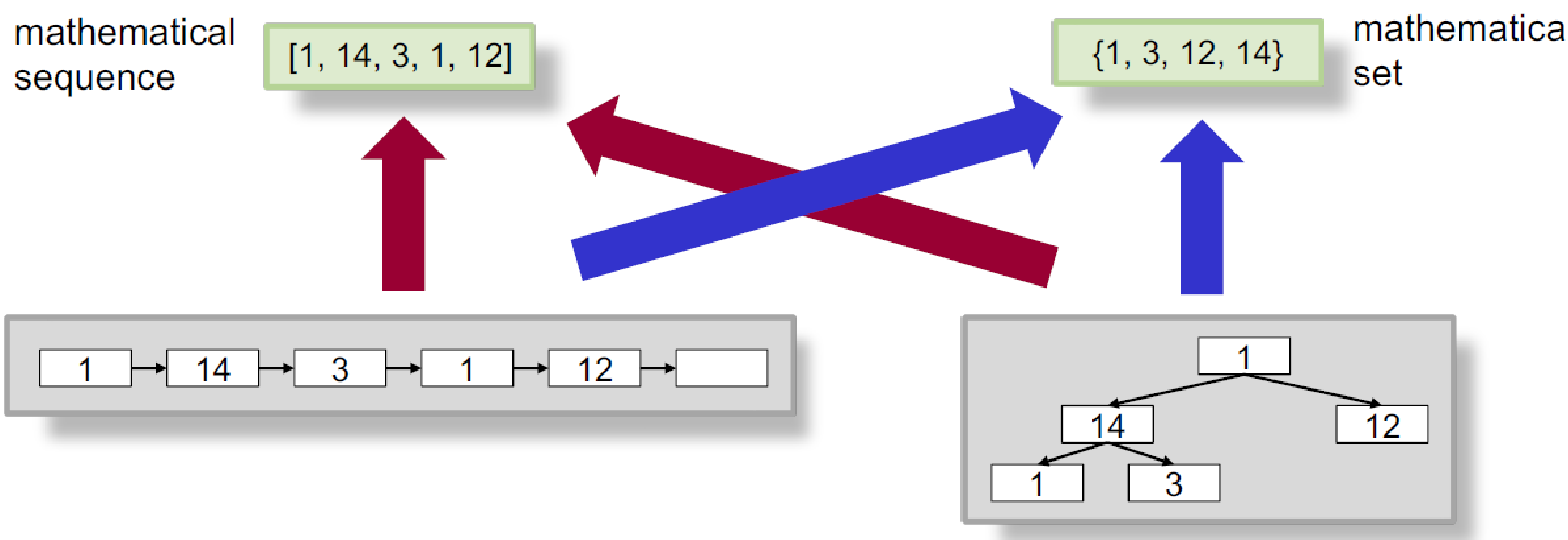
Previously…

Heap data structures pose three major challenges for sequential verification

- Reasoning about aliasing
  - Permissions and separating conjunction
- Framing, especially for dynamic data structures
  - Sound frame rule, predicates
- Writing specifications that preserve information hiding
  - Data abstraction, heap-dependent functions

Data abstraction

- To write implementation-independent specifications, we map the concrete data structure to mathematical concepts and specify the behavior in terms of those



- Mapping can be a function or a relation

Data abstraction via predicate arguments

```
method append(this: Ref, e: Int, c: Seq[Int])
  requires list(this, c)
  ensures  list(this, c ++ Seq(e))
{
  unfold list(this, c)
  if(this.next == null) {
    var n: Ref
    n := new(*)
    n.next := null
    this.elem := e
    this.next := n
    fold list(n, Seq[Int]())
  } else {
    append(this.next, e, c[1..])
  }
  fold list(this, c ++ Seq(e))
}
```

- Solution supports information hiding
- No unfolding-expressions required in specifications
- Preconditions would ideally quantify existentially over abstract value

```
method append(this: Ref, e: Int)
  requires exists c: Seq[Int] ::
             list(this, c)
  ensures  list(this, c ++ Seq(e))
```

- Since existentials are problematic for automation, ghost arguments are required instead (overhead!)

Data abstraction via abstraction functions

- For "getter" methods to be meaningful in assertions, they must
  - be side-effect free,
  - terminate, and
  - be deterministic

- Viper provides heap-dependent functions for this purpose

```
function content(this: Ref): Seq[Int]
{
  this.next == null
   ? Seq[Int]()
   : Seq(this.elem) ++ content(this.next)
}
```

(incomplete declaration)

Reminder: partial functions

- Preconditions of heap-dependent functions specify the read effect

- Like method preconditions, they may also constrain the function arguments (including the heap)

```
function length(this: Ref): Int
  requires list(this)
{ … }
```

```
function first(this: Ref): Int
  requires list(this) && 0 < length(this)
{
  content(this)[0]
}
```

Wrap-up: data abstraction

- Ghost fields + invariants
  - Manual updates of ghost state
  - Predicates cannot be abstract
- Predicate arguments
  - Support information hiding
  - Require ghost parameters
- Heap-dependent functions
  - Support information hiding
  - Typically exist in programs anyway (getters)
  - Separation of concerns:
    predicates for permissions and invariants,
    functions for abstraction

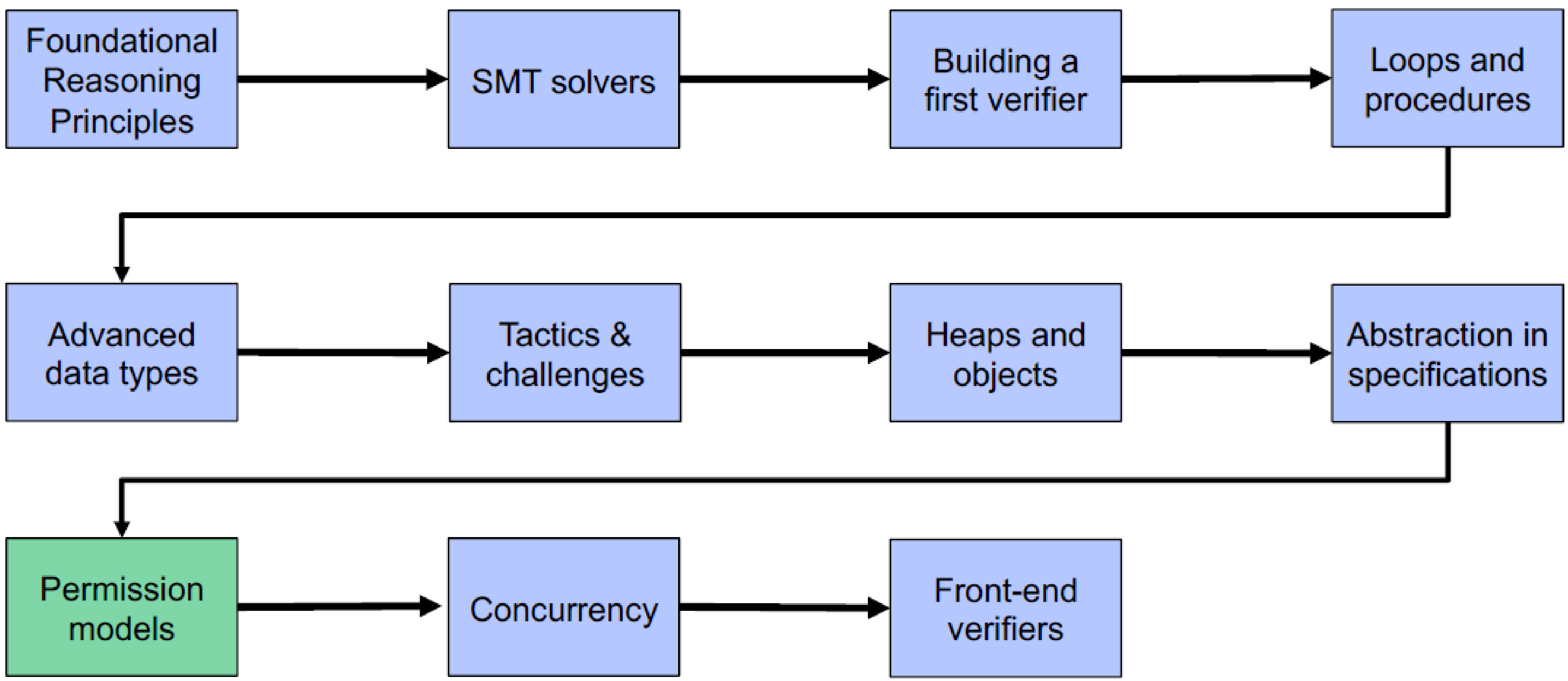
```
predicate list(this: Ref) {
  acc(this.elem) && acc(this.next) &&
  (this.next != null ==> list(this.next))
}
```

```
function length(this: Ref): Int
  requires list(this)
{ … }
```

```
function first(this: Ref): Int
  requires list(this) && 0 < length(this)
{ … }
```

```
function content(this: Ref): Seq[Int]
  requires list(this)
{ … }
```

Tentative course outline



Advanced permission models

1. Fractional permissions

2. Quantified permissions

Framing revisited

→ 00-clone.vpr

```
method cloneList(this: Ref) returns (res: Ref)
  requires list(this)  // read only
  ensures  list(this) && list(res)
  ensures  content(this) == old(content(this))
{
  res := new(*)
  unfold list(this)
  if(this.next == null) {
    res.next := null
  } else {
    var tmp: Ref
    tmp := cloneList(this.next)
    res.elem := this.elem
    res.next := tmp
  }
  fold list(this)
  fold list(res)
}
```

- Methods that only read a data structure must specify that each abstraction remains unchanged
- Adding an abstraction requires changes to existing specifications (non-modular)
- Possible solution: specify that predicate version remains unchanged (not possible in Viper)
- We introduce a more expressive solution in the following

Fractional permissions

- To distinguish read and write access, permissions can be split and re-combined

- A permission amount π is a rational number in [0,1]

- Viper syntax
  - Permissions are fractions `n/d`
  - **`write`** for `1/1` and **`none`** for `0/1`
  - `acc(E.f)` is a shortcut for `acc(E.f, write)`
  - `P(E)` is a shortcut for `acc(P(E), write)`

- Field read requires a non-zero permission

- Field write requires full (**`write`**) permission

Predicates (or assertions)

```
P ::= ...
    | acc(E.f, π)
    | acc(P(Ē), π)
```

```
inhale acc(x.f, 1/2)
v := x.f
```

```
inhale acc(x.f, 1/2)
x.f := v
```

Manipulating fractional permissions

→ 01-clone.vpr

- Separating conjunction sums up permissions of the conjuncts

`acc(x.f, 1/2) && acc(x.f, 1/2)` is equivalent to `acc(x.f, 1/1)`

- `inhale` *adds* permissions
- `exhale` *subtracts* permissions and havocs only when *all* permission to a location or predicate instance is removed
- Values are framed as long as *some* permission is held

```
method cloneList(this: Ref) returns (res: Ref)
  requires acc(list(this), 1/2)  // read only
  ensures  acc(list(this), 1/2) && list(res)
{ … }
```

```
method frameList(this: Ref) returns (l: Ref)
  requires list(this)
{
  var tmp1: Seq[Int]
  tmp1 := content(this)
  l := cloneList(this)  // no havoc of version
  assert tmp1 == content(this)
}
```

Predicates and fractional permissions

→ 02-clone.vpr
→ 02-fractions.vpr

- Predicates may contain fractional permissions, e.g. to permit sharing

```
predicate readCell(this: Ref) {
  acc(this.cell) && acc(this.cell.val, 1/2)
}
```

- Field locations with more than full permission are infeasible (magic)

```
predicate P(this: Ref) {
  acc(this.val, 1/2)
}
```

- Predicate instances with more than full permission are feasible (no magic)

```
inhale acc(x.val)
fold P(x)
fold P(x)
exhale P(x) && P(x)  // not false
```

- Unfold and fold multiply the fraction of the predicate with the fractions in the predicate body

```
inhale acc(readCell(x), 1/4)
unfold acc(readCell(x), 1/4)
exhale acc(x.cell.val, 1/8)
```

Heap-dependent functions

- Heap-dependent functions may only read the heap
- Hence, an arbitrarily small fraction would be sufficient
- Problem: we don't know how often permissions are split
- Possible solution: use wildcard to avoid concrete fraction

```
function length(this: Ref): Int
  requires list(this)
{
  unfolding list(this) in
  (this.next == null ? 0 : length(this.next) + 1)
}
```

```
inhale acc(list(this), 1/2)
x := length(this)
```

```
function length(this: Ref): Int
  requires acc(list(this), wildcard)
{
  unfolding acc(list(this), wildcard) in
  (this.next == null ? 0 : length(this.next) + 1)
}
```

Adjusted encoding: permissions and field access

- Permissions are tracked in a global permission mask

```
type MaskType = Map<T>[(Ref, Field T), Real]
var Mask: MaskType
```

- Convention: `Mask[null, f] == 0.0` for all fields `f`

- Field access

```
v := x.f
```

```
assert Mask[x,f] > 0.0
v := Heap[x,f]
```

```
x.f := E
```

```
assert Mask[x,f] == 1.0
Heap[x,f] := E
```

  - Field access requires permission!

Adjusted encoding: inhale

- **`inhale`** A means:
  - obtain all permissions required by assertion A
  - assume all logical constraints

- Encoding is defined recursively over the structure of A

```
inhale acc(E.f, π)
```

```
Mask[[[E]],f] := Mask[[[E]],f] + π
assume Mask[[[E]],f] <= 1.0
```

Reaching more than full permission for a field location goes to magic

```
inhale acc(P(E), π)
```

```
Mask[null,PField([[E]])] := Mask[null,PField([[E]])] + π
```

```
inhale A && B
```

```
[[inhale A]]; [[inhale B]]
```

Separating conjunction: add sum of permissions

- The encoding also asserts that E and π are well-defined (omitted here)

Adjusted encoding: exhale

- `exhale A` means:
  - assert all logical constraints
  - check and remove all permissions required by assertion A
  - havoc any locations to which all permission is lost

- Encoding is defined recursively over the structure of A

```
exhale acc(E.f, π)
```

```
assert Mask[[[E]],f] >= π
Mask[[[E]],f] := Mask[[[E]],f] - π
```

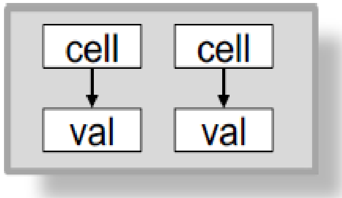
```
exhale A
```

```
var oldMask: MaskType
var newHeap: HeapType
oldMask := Mask
[[exhale A]]
assume forall y,g :: Mask[y,g] > 0.0 ==> newHeap[y,g] == Heap[y,g]
Heap := newHeap  // effectively havocs all locations to which all
                    permission was lost
```

Sharing in data structures

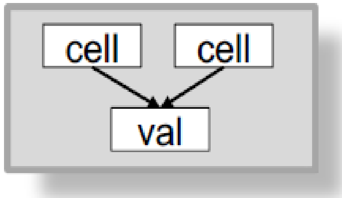
- Full permissions can describe tree-shaped data structures only

```
predicate exclusiveCell(this: Ref) {
  acc(this.cell) && acc(this.cell.val)
}
```



- Fractional permissions allow sharing

```
predicate sharedCell(this: Ref) {
  acc(this.cell) && acc(this.cell.val, 1/2)
}
```



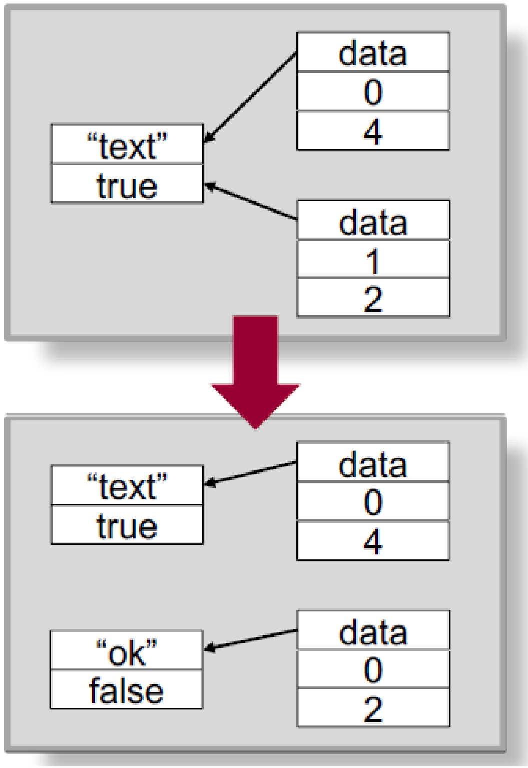
- Sharing is used in many data structures
  - Examples: doubly-linked lists, global data, caches, graphs, ...

Case study: binary reference counting

→ 04-rcbox.vpr

- Binary reference counting optimizes code that uses immutable data
- Keep track whether the data is shared
- Updates on shared data perform a copy ("copy on write")
- Updates on unshared data perform a destructive update
- Once shared, the data does not go back to unshared (unlike with full reference counting)

- Example: text segments



The Perm type

- The demo uses a ghost field of type `Perm`

```
field frac: Perm
```

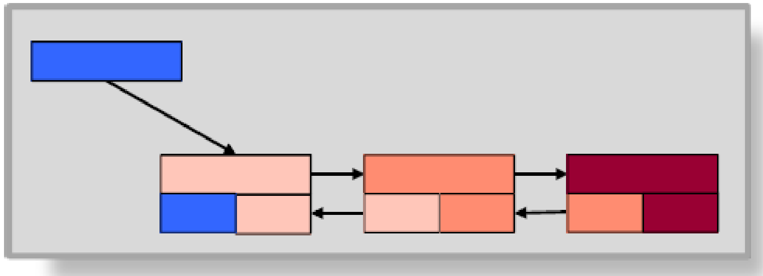
- Values of type `Perm` include:
  - constants `none`, `write`, `wildcard`, and fractions
  - expressions, e.g., `write - x.frac` or `2*write`
- `Perm` is typically used for ghost variables
  - Parameterize methods that require read permission
  - Perform permission accounting when permissions are distributed and later re-collected

```
method cloneList(this: Ref, p: Perm)
                             returns (res: Ref)
  requires acc(list(this), p)
  ensures  acc(list(this), p) &&
           list(res)
```

- Type `Perm` is encoded as a real

Sharing in mutable data structures

- Previously: immutable shared objects
- To specify mutable data structures with sharing, we arrange fractional permissions such that they can be combined to obtain a full permission



- Example: doubly-linked list

```
predicate nodes(this: Ref) {
  acc(this.next) && acc(this.prev, 1/2) &&
  (this.next != null ==>
    acc(this.next.prev, 1/2) &&
    this.next.prev == this &&
    nodes(this.next)
  )
}
```

```
predicate dlist(this: Ref) {
  acc(this.head) &&
  (this.head != null ==>
    acc(this.head.prev, 1/2) &&
    this.head.prev == null &&
    nodes(this.head)
  )
}
```

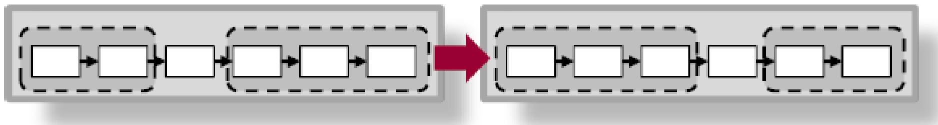
Advanced permission models

1. Fractional permissions
2. Quantified permissions

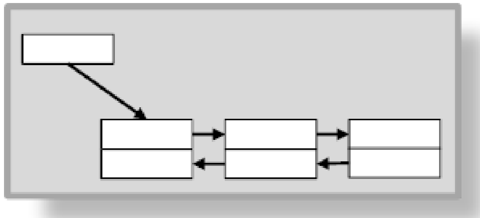
Limitations of recursive predicates

- Recursive predicates allow one to specify unbounded data structures
  - Traversals happen in the order in which the predicate needs to be unfolded

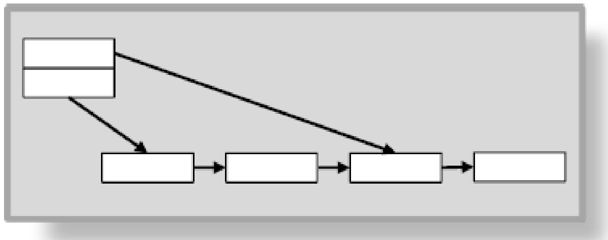
- Predicates are not ideal for many other use cases



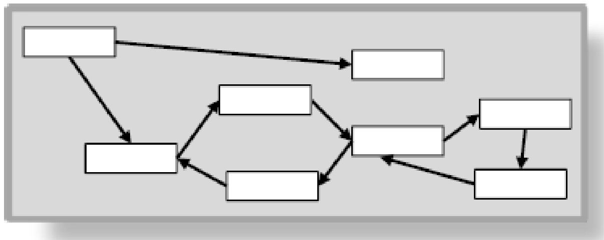
Iterative traversals



Other traversal orders



Random-access data structures



Arbitrary cyclic data structures

Quantified permissions

- To denote permission to an unbounded set of locations without prescribing a traversal order, we allow permissions and predicates in universal quantifiers

Permissions

```
P ::= ... | forall x:T :: P
```

- Universal quantifiers can be thought of as a possibly-infinite iterated conjunction

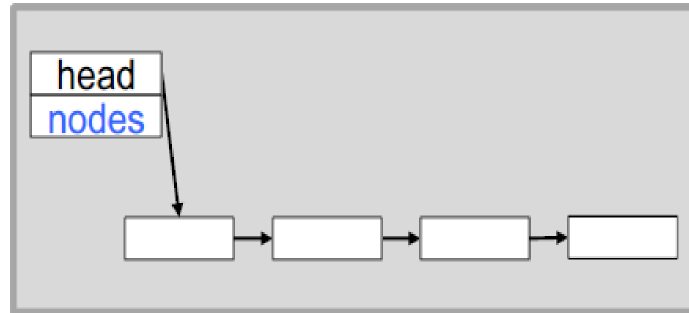
```
forall x:T :: P  <==>  P[x/v1] ∧ P[x/v2] ∧ ...
```

- Viper's `forall` represents a possibly-infinite iterated separating conjunction

```
forall x:T :: P  <==>  P[x/v1] * P[x/v2] * ...
```

Explicit footprints

→ 06-qp-list-iter.vpr



- As alternative to predicates, we can specify permission to an unbounded set of locations by
  - maintaining an explicit set of references as ghost state (the explicit footprint)
  - quantifying over the set elements in specifications

```
field head: Ref
field nodes: Set[Ref]  // explicit footprint
```

```
predicate list(this: Ref) {
  acc(this.head) && acc(this.nodes) &&
  (forall n: Ref :: n in this.nodes ==> acc(n.elem) && acc(n.next) &&
                                         (n.next != null ==> n.next in this.nodes)) &&
  (this.head != null ==> this.head in this.nodes)
}
```

Well-formed quantified permissions

- Viper requires for each assertion **acc**(E.f) under a **forall** x:T that E is injective for all instantiations x1, x2:

```
x1 != x2 ==> E[x/x1] != E[x/x2]
```

- Analogous rule applies to predicates (for parameter tuples)

- Examples

```
forall x: Ref :: x in s ==> acc(x.f)  // s has type Set[Ref]
```

```
forall x: Ref :: acc(y.f) && (y.f != x ==> P(x))
```

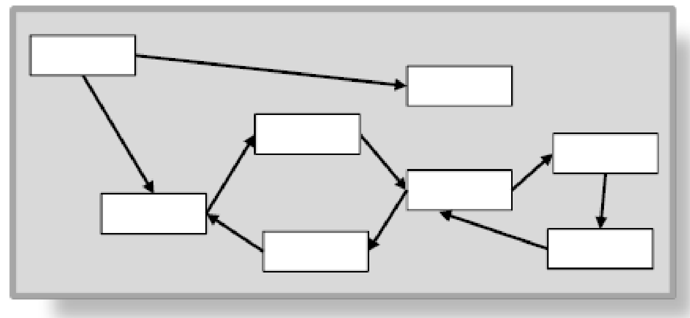
```
forall i: Int :: 0 <= i && i < |t| ==> acc(t[i].f)  // t has type Seq[Ref]
```

well-formed if t contains no duplicates

Complex sharing: graph marking

➔ 07-graph.vpr

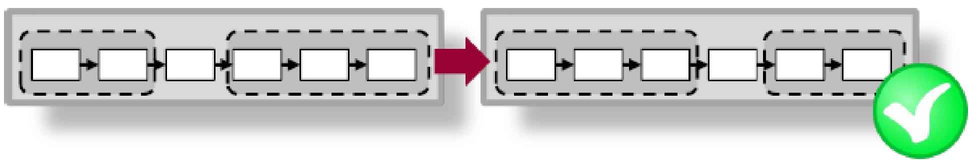
- We represent a graph as a set of nodes
- Each node stores a (possibly empty) set of successors
- Each node contains a flag that is set during marking



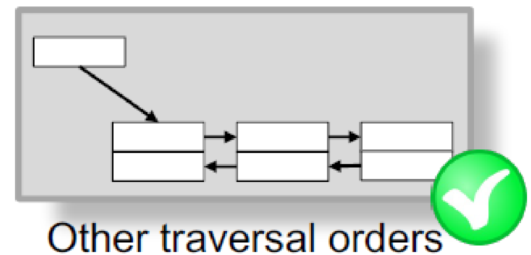
```
field next: Set[Ref]
field flag: Bool

define graph(nodes) (
  forall n: Ref :: n in nodes ==> acc(n.next) && acc(n.flag) && (n.next subset nodes)
)
```

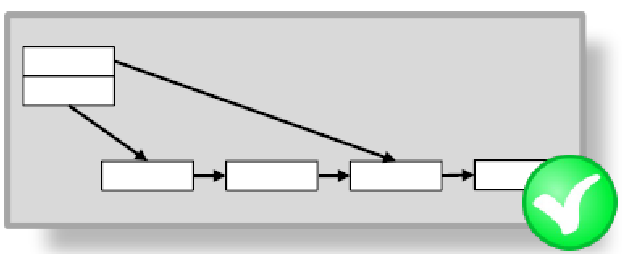
Quantified permissions address the limitations of predicates



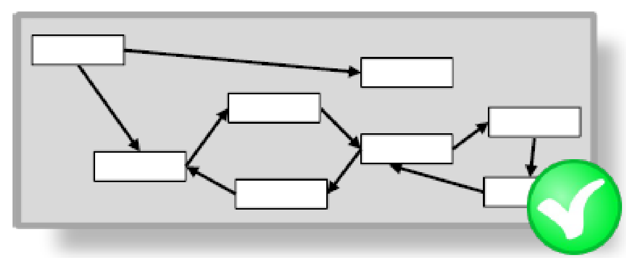
Iterative traversals



Other traversal orders



Random-access data structures



Arbitrary cyclic data structures

Arrays

- Viper does not have built-in arrays
- In contrast to sequences, arrays are mutable heap data structures
- We model arrays by a set of disjoint references that can be accessed via an index
- `loc(a, i).val` models `a[i]`
- More-dimensional arrays can be encoded analogously

```
field val: Int // for integer arrays

domain Array {
  function loc(a: Array, i: Int): Ref
  function len(a: Array): Int
  function first(r: Ref): Array
  function second(r: Ref): Int

  axiom injectivity {
    forall a: Array, i: Int :: {loc(a, i)}
      first(loc(a, i)) == a &&
      second(loc(a, i)) == i
  }

  axiom length_nonneg {
    forall a: Array :: len(a) >= 0
  }
}
```

Accessing array locations

→ 09-array-inc-all.vpr

- Arrays are random-access data structures

- We can express permissions using quantified permissions

```
forall i: Int :: 0 <= i && i < len(a) ==> acc(loc(a, i).val)
```

  - Similarly for sub-ranges of the array

- We define macros for convenient access

```
define lookup(a, i)
  loc(a, i).val
```

```
define update(a, i, e) {
  loc(a, i).val := e
}
```

  - Bounds are checked implicitly via permissions

Wrap-up: advanced permission models

- Fractional permissions
  - Distinguish between read and write permission
  - Are useful to express sharing, to strengthen framing, and for concurrency (see later)

- Quantified permissions
  - Complement predicates for the specification of unbounded data structures
  - Are especially useful for random-access structures, complex sharing, and flexible traversals
  - Inherit challenges of quantification (controlling instantiations, performance)

- Other permission models exist
  - Magic wands (permission-aware implication): useful to specify partial data structures
  - Counting permissions are related to fractional permissions, but use units