ECE/CS 5510 Multiprocessor Programming

Project Proposal - 5. Lock-free red-black tree based CFS scheduler

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**1. Problem Definition**

RB-tree based CFS:

We propose a single thread simulator to show the CFS property in an ideal environment without any interference. We also borrow the idea of fairness in Linux since a “fair“ scheduler can be fair to a task but not every task. So we try to understand the definition of fairness in Linux. And then implement them as much as we can in our Linux-like CFS simulator. Moreover, for data structure, we, based on the simulator, try to understand why Linux utilizes RB-tree rather than AVL-tree, which is very similar to RB-tree, simpler, and faster in most of cases, as its queues.

**2. Introduction**

The main idea of CFS is very simple - give equal CPU resource proportion to every task. However, this is probably not the fairest way to users and to kernel since some tasks are more important, some are not. Thereby, the idea of different time slices appears. Time slice means how long can a task use CPU resource. By assigning proportions of the processor and not fixed time slices, Linux CFS is able to enforce fairness: each process gets its fair share of the processor [3]. If a time slice is too long, response time gets longer. User experience might decrease. If a time slice is too short, context switch between processes and kernel overheads might take effects. So a time slice must be not too long and not too short. Minimum granularity is used by Linux to minimize the system context overhead.

In order to give different time slices, we must give different tasks different weights (priorities). This is so called a priority for a task. In Linux we call it “nice value”. Processes with the default nice value of zero have a weight of one, so their proportion is unchanged. Time slice equals to actual runtime. Processes with a smaller nice value (higher priority) receive a larger weight, increasing their fraction of the processor. Process with a larger nice value (lower priority) receives a smaller weight, decreasing their fraction of the processor [3]. Legal nice values range from −20 to 19 inclusive. The higher nice value it has, the lower priority it owns. Nice value decreased by 1 means 10% more CPU time the task can utilize. Linux has a RLIMIT\_NICE parameter for limiting dynamic nice value range.

All together, Linux records the time each task runs in a “virtual run time” (vruntime), which almost equals to all its time slices accumulation. It means how long does a task occupying CPU resource. The main idea of CFS is to always pick up the minimum virtual run time task to run. The minimum value is always the leftmost node in a RB-tree/AVL-tree. In addition, a new coming task’s vruntime is not always 0. Otherwise, the task will always be selected to enjoy CPU resource. Lunux maintain the least vruntime in each runqueue as a reference to solve this problem.

CFS vruntime formula:

/\* delta: how long process really runs, the time a process has the CPU resource to it release the resource \*/

/\* weight: based on 10% rule, roughly equivalent to 1024 \* (1.25)^(-nice)\*/

**vruntime += delta \* (nice / weight);**

To summarize, when the actual execution time is the same, the higher nice value a task has, the faster its vruntime increases. As a result, this task’s actual runtime (the time occupying a CPU) is less than a task having a lower nice value.

After having a CFS scheduler, we based on this try to check how these two different concurrent data structures (RB-tree, AVL-tree) used by CFS scheduler affect the system execution time. In order to make traffic on accessing the runqueue, in multi-threaded simulator, all processor share a same global queue. Whereas Linux maintain local queue on each process and then it comes up a bigger topic “load balance”, which is not very relevant the relationship between CFS and RB-tree. We more focus on the relationship between RB-tree and CFS and CFS essential properties. Thus, we don’t implement that in our simulator

Other less important Linux mechanisms we haven’t support yet:

* Group scheduling- instead of scheduling by tasks, schedule by processes. e.g. huge process(100 tasks) vs small process (1tasks)
* External interrupt
* per-CPU runqueue
* fork()

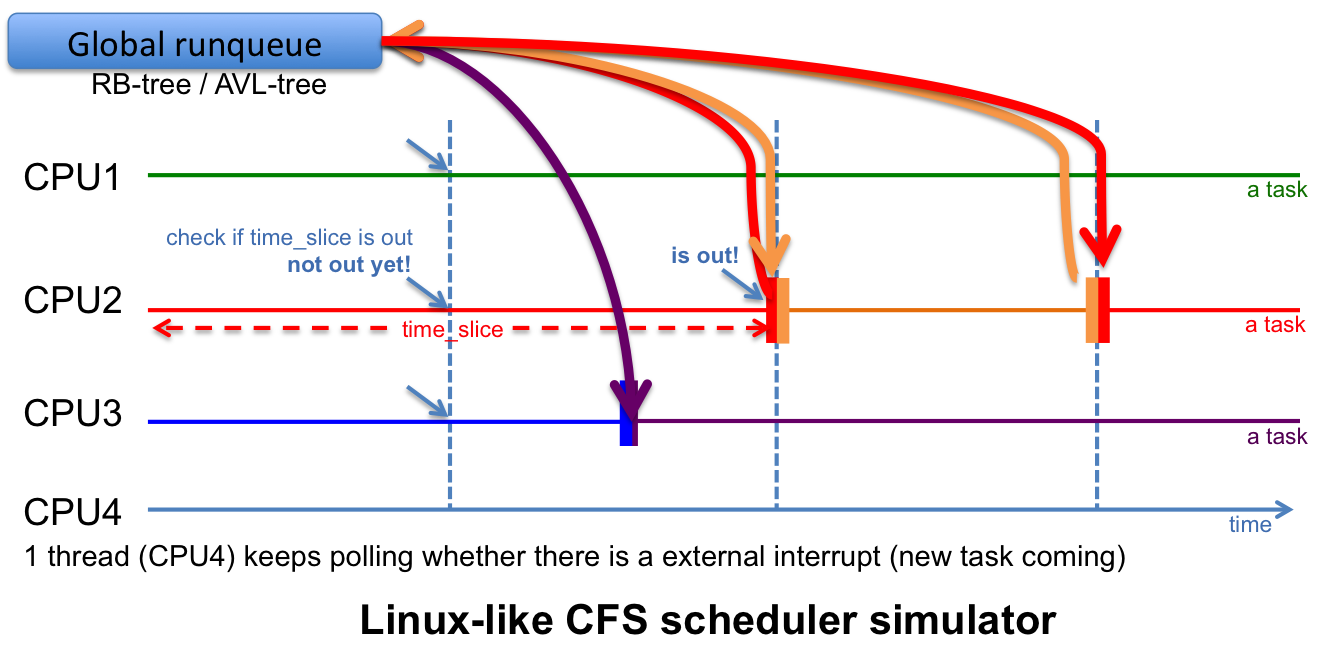
\* As a side, O(1) uses a heuristic algorithm (complex calculation) to solve interactive or non-interactive task problem, which performance is not well. CFS is introduced to solve older O(1) scheduler’s performance problem.

**3. Experiments**

There are two ways to differentiate tasks. We can split tasks into non-interactive and interactive. Linux adopts this way since it’s a general purpose OS, which cares more about user experience. However, here we want to use the second way, which distinguishes tasks into I/O bound and CPU bound. Although our definition of fairness is slightly different from Linux, we are still able to borrow common CFS optimizations from Linux to our CFS.

* CPU bound：processes are hungry for CPU time
* I/O bound：spend more time blocked waiting for some resource than executing，often issuing and waiting for file or network I/O, blocking on keyboard input [3]

To make an ideal environment for checking CFS property, our simulator doesn’t consider the real system overhead. This makes us to get ride of interferences from a system. We concentratedly focus on implement Linux version CFS and use it to compare with different data structures as its run\_queue.



**Simulator Linux-like CFS features:**

While timer interrupt happens:

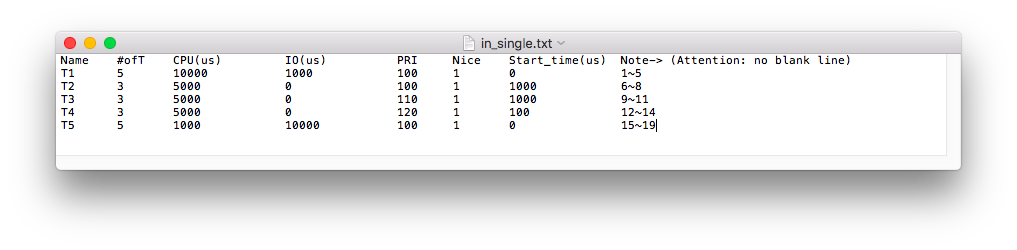
* if delta\_exec > ideal\_runtime, enq() and then deq()
* thread\_exit(): when a thread finishes its jobs
* thread\_create() : start\_time

**4. Experimental results**

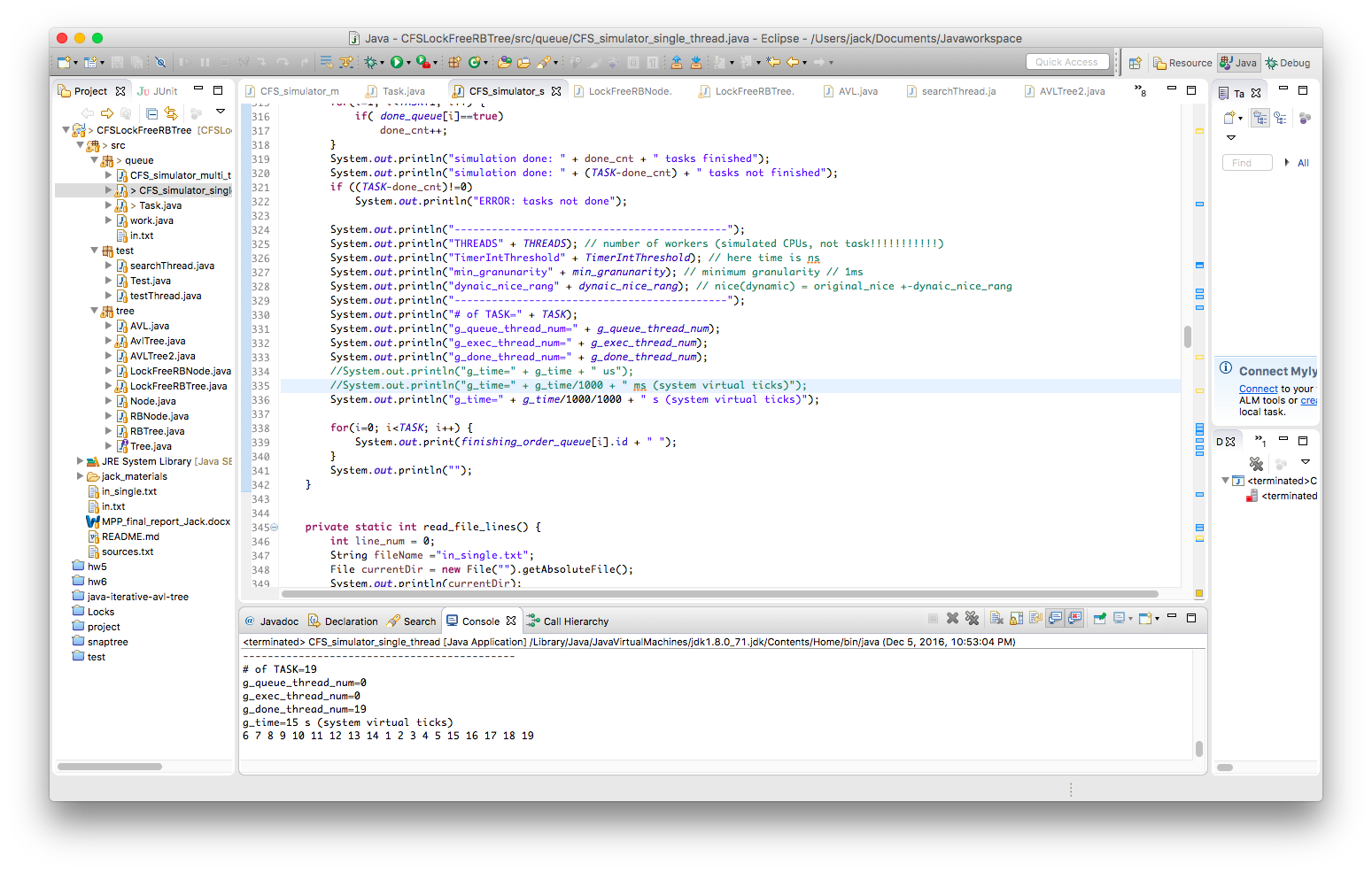
**4.1. CFS part**

**Single-threaded simulator - for checking CFS property**

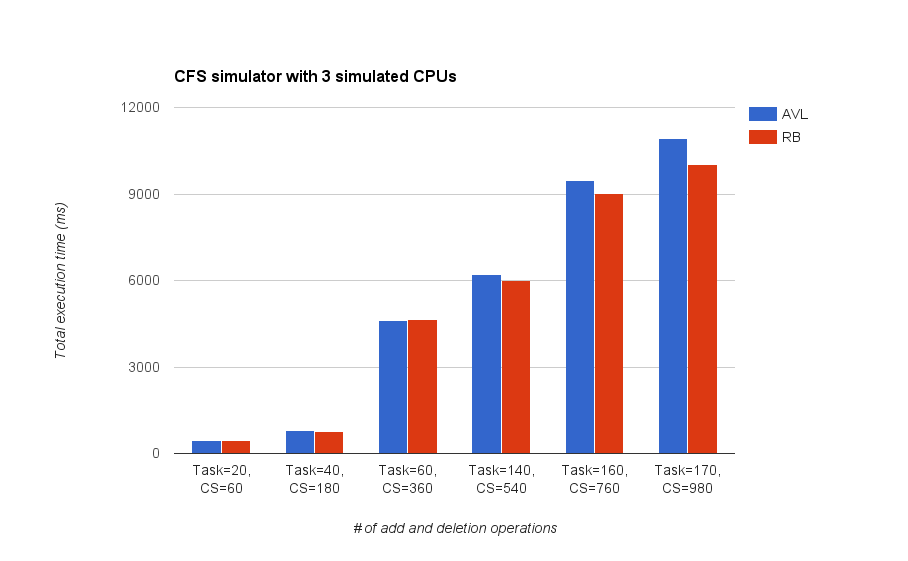
Input task:



Single thread simulator result:

  
Since this is a single task program. As long as the in.txt the same, the output order will be also the same. In this experiment, we want to demonstrate out CFS implementation works correctly. As we can see in the figure, even if T2 started later than T4, since its priority is higher than T4, it finished before T4.

**Multi-threaded simulator - for checking the difference between using RB-tree and AVL-tree**



The result shows that as increase number of Critical Sections (1 CS = 1 add + 1 del operations), RB-tree starts to take advantage of its RB property. I think this is since AVL tree doesn’t use color or marker to make additional information, its rotation operation can be very expensive when the tree is large (complex). Whereas RB-tree can enjoy the benefit of keeping maintaining tree’s color when the tree is large (complex). The RB-tree’s worst case execution time for an insert operation is 2 times rotation and for a deletion operation, 3 times rotation. This merit can help RB-tree outperform AVL-tree while the tree is large (complex).

And during the low workloads, it’s hard to tell which data structure perform better. More importantly, hardly do users feel the differences. We think the reason why Linux chooses RB-tree as queue data structure is that both data structure don’t have much difference during low workload scenario, but RB-tree can significantly outperform AVL-tree while high workload scenario.

**Conclusion**

Through this project we not only try to implement a lock-free data structure by utilizing what we have learn so far but also we have a better understanding about how Linux handle CFS and start to think why Linux choose RB-tree as its implementation.

Our contribution:

* Implementing/modifying AVL-tree & RB-tree
* Implementing parts of lock-free RB-tree methods
* Implementing Linux-like CFS simulators (single-threaded and ideal version, multi-threaded and concurrent version)

**Reference**

[1] Molnar, Ingo. "Modular scheduler core and completely fair scheduler [cfs]."Linux-Kernel mailing list (2007).

[2] Kim, Jong Ho, Helen Cameron, and Peter Graham. "Lock-free red-black trees using cas." Concurrency and Computation: Practice and Experience(2006): 1-40.

[3] Love, Robert. Linux system programming: talking directly to the kernel and C library. " O'Reilly Media, Inc.", 2013.

**Appendix**

1. CFS simulator

**How to run CFS simulator**

CFS simulator single-threaded version:

CFS\_simulator\_single\_thread.java

CFS simulator multi-threaded version:

CFS\_simulator\_multi\_thread.java

**Choose one run\_queue data structure**

**static boolean *IS\_RBTREE* = false; // run with AVLTree**

**static boolean *IS\_RBTREE* = true; // run with RBTree**

**Variables in code**

**static** **int** *THREADS* = 3; // # of workers (simulated CPUs, not task/jobs)

**static** **int** *TimerIntThreshold* = 1000\*1000; // timer interrupt ticks = 1ms

**static** **int** *min\_granunarity* = 1000\*1000; // minimum granularity = 1ms

**static** **int** *dynaic\_nice\_rang* = 5; //nice(dynamic)=original\_nice+-dynaic\_nice\_rang

**Variables in input file**

Assign Tasks (Jobs) for single-thread simulator:

$ vi in\_single.txt

Assign Tasks (Jobs) for multi-threaded simulator:

$ vi in.txt