SUPSI

Lab: Introduction

Operating Systems

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Objectives

- Understand the concept of thread
- Understand how to create and manage threads with Pthread in C
- Understand how to work with synchronization mechanisms in C

Browsing

Get a rapid overview.

Reading

Read it and try to understand the concepts.

Studying

• Read in depth, understand the concepts as well as the principles behind the concepts.

You are also encouraged to try out (compile and run) code examples!



The active part of a process: threads

- A process can have one or more threads (or paths) of execution *
 - Threads in a process share some resources (→ concurrency problems)

Per process items Address space Global variables Open files Child processes Pending alarms	Per thread items Program counter Registers Stack State	Thread 1's — stack	Thread 2 Thread 3 Process Thread 3's stack
Signals and signal handlers Accounting information		Stack	Kernel

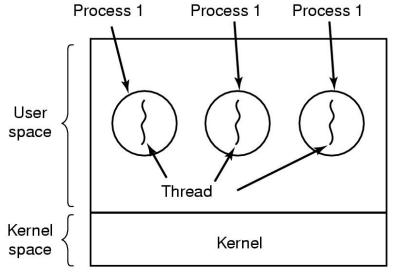
A. Tanenbaum, Modern Operating Systems, 2nd ed

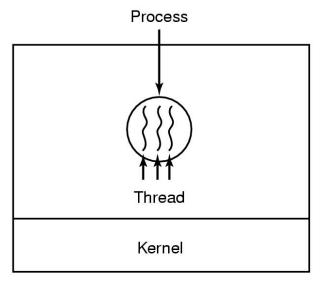
 When a process has multiple threads of execution we call it a multithreaded process, otherwise it is called a single-threaded process

^{*} typically simply referred to as threads



The active part of a process: threads





(a) (b)
A. Tanenbaum, Modern Operating Systems, 2nd ed

Multiple single-threaded processes

One multi-threaded process

Why multi-threading?



brought forth upon this conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the

proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged testing whether that

so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of dothis.

We have come to

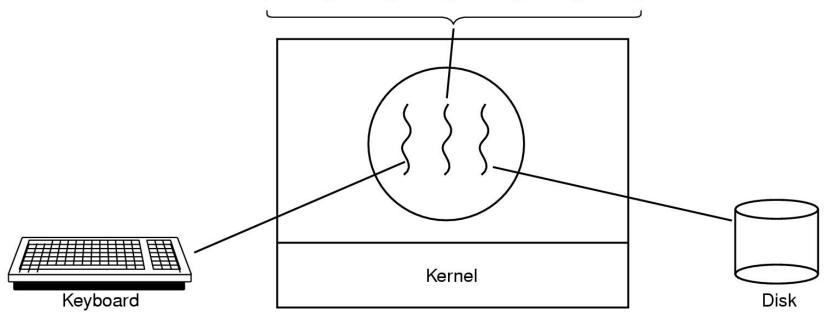
lives that this nation who struggled here here to the unfinished might live. It is altogether fitting and above our poor power fought here have thus proper that we should

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we what we say here, but great task remaining dedicate a portion of cannot consecrate we that field as a final cannot hallow this resting place for those who here gave their men, living and dead, rather, to be dedicated

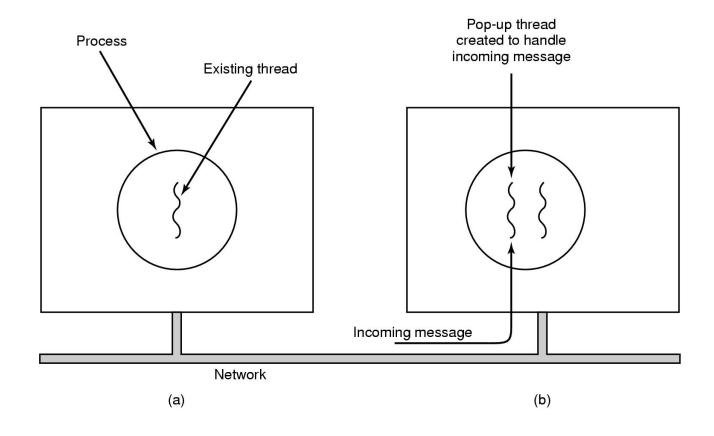
have consecrated it, far to add or detract. The world will little note, It is rather for us to be nor long remember, it can never forget

far so nobly advanced here dedicated to the before us, that from these honored dead we and that government of take increased devotion to that cause for which

vain that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom



Why multi-threading?

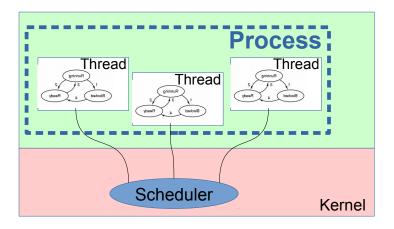


A. Tanenbaum, Modern Operating Systems, 2nd ed





Threads implementation



Thread Process Thread Thread Thread Scheduler Kernel

Kernel level threads

- "the kernel knows what threads are"
- Thread scheduling is done by the kernel
- If a thread blocks, other threads within the same process can continue executing
- Note: kernel level threads still run in unprivileged (user) mode!

User level threads

- "the kernel doesn't know anything about threads"
- Thread scheduling is done by the process
 - When the kernel schedules the process its threads are given a chance to run
- If a thread blocks, the whole process (including other user threads) is blocked



Creating a thread (with pthread)

- Each thread is associated with a pthread_t structure
- The "body" of the thread is defined by the start_routine
 procedure, which can receive parameters using the arg pointer
- The new thread is started immediately



Terminating a thread

- A thread terminates when start_routine returns
- A thread can explicitly terminate its execution and return a value:

```
#include <pthread.h>
void pthread_exit(void *retval);
```

A thread can also ask another thread to terminate:

```
#include <pthread.h>
int pthread_cancel(pthread_t thread);
```

 Exit happens as soon as possible (when a cancellation point is reached)



Cancellation point

```
#include <pthread.h>

void pthread_testcancel(void);
```

- With this procedure we can define a cancellation point where the thread will respond to pending cancellation requests:
 - It is possible to ignore the request with pthread_setcancelstate
 - Many functions provide pre-defined cancellation points (see man pthreads)



Who gets the exit value?

 A thread can wait for another thread to terminate and obtain its exit value:

```
#include <pthread.h>
int pthread_join(pthread_t thread, void **retval);
```

- The return value can be obtained from retval
- Only threads which are JOINABLE *(default) can be waited for,
 DETACHED ones can't be waited for:
 - A joinable thread waits until the join before being freed
 - pthread_join returns 0 if the thread terminates correctly, a negative value in case of errors

^{*}see man pthread_attr_init

Example

```
#include <pthread.h>
#include <stdio.h>
void *mythread (void *name)
    printf("Hello, I'm a new thread %s\n", (char*) name);
    sleep(3);
    return (void*) 42;
}
int main()
    pthread_t thread;
    int i;
    pthread_create(&thread, NULL, &mythread, "Alfred");
    sleep(2);
    pthread_join(thread, (void**) &i);
    printf("Return value is %d\n", i);
    return 0;
```



Example (detached thread)

```
#include <pthread.h>
#include <stdio.h>
void *mythread (void *name)
    printf("Hello, I'm a new thread %s\n", (char*) name);
    sleep(3);
    return (void*) 42;
int main()
    pthread_t thread;
    pthread_attr_t attr;
    int i;
    pthread_attr_init(&attr);
    pthread_attr_setdetachstate(&attr, PTHREAD_CREATE_DETACHED);
    pthread_create(&thread, &attr, &mythread, "Alfred");
    sleep(2);
    pthread join(thread, (void**) &i); // Error, cannot join detached thread
    printf("Return value is %d\n", i); // Return value is bogus
    return 0;
```

>>

Example (alternate stack)

```
#include <pthread.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#define STACK_SIZE 2<<15</pre>
void *mythread (void *name)
    printf("Hello, I'm a new thread %s\n", (char*) name);
    sleep(3);
    return (void*) 42;
int main()
    pthread_t thread;
    pthread_attr_t attr;
    int i;
    void *sp;
    pthread_attr_init(&attr);
    sp = malloc(STACK SIZE);
    pthread_attr_setstack(&attr, sp, STACK_SIZE);
    pthread create(&thread, &attr, &mythread, "Alfred");
    sleep(2);
    pthread join(thread, (void**) &i); // Error, cannot join detached thread
    free(sp);
    printf("Return value is %d\n", i); // Return value is bogus
    return 0;
```

Example (pthread_exit)

```
#include <pthread.h>
#include <stdio.h>
void *mythread (void *name)
{
    printf("Hello, I'm a new thread %s\n", (char*) name);
    sleep(3);
    pthread exit((void*) 13);
    return (void*) 42;
}
int main()
    pthread t thread;
    int i;
    pthread create(&thread, NULL, &mythread, "Alfred");
    sleep(2);
    pthread join(thread, (void**) &i);
    printf("Return value is %d\n", i);
    return 0;
```

Example (pthread_testcancel)

```
#include <pthread.h>
#include <stdio.h>
void *mythread (void *arg)
    printf("Thread start\n");
    while (1) {
        pthread testcancel(); /* Cancellation point */
    printf("Exiting!\n"); /* This code is never executed */
    return (void*) 42; /* This code is never executed */
int main()
    pthread t thread;
    int i;
    pthread create(&thread, NULL, &mythread, NULL);
    sleep(3);
    pthread cancel(thread);
    sleep(4);
    pthread_join(thread, (void**) &i); /* The return value 'i' is PTHREAD_CANCELED (-1) */
    printf("Return value %d\n", i);
    return 0;
```

Use case for kernel threads: I/O in a separate thread

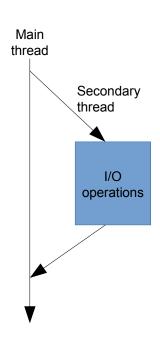
I/O operations normally block the execution (until data is read/written)

```
Main
#include <stdio.h>
                                                                 thread
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <unistd.h>
#define NBYTES 10000
                                                                  I/O
                                                                operations
void main(void)
{
       char* buffer[NBYTES];
       unsigned int bytes;
       FILE* file = fopen("/var/log/syslog", "r");
       bytes = read(fileno(file), buffer, NBYTES);
       printf("Synchronous read, got %d bytes.\n", bytes);
       close(fileno(file));
```

Use case for kernel threads: I/O in a separate thread

I/O operations can be moved to a separate thread

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <unistd.h>
#include <pthread.h>
#define NBYTES 10000
FILE* file:
char* buffer[NBYTES];
unsigned int bytes;
void* reader() {
       bytes = read(fileno(file), buffer, NBYTES);
void main(void) {
       pthread t thread reader;
       file = fopen("/var/log/syslog", "r");
       pthread create(&thread reader, NULL, &reader, NULL);
       printf("... reader thread is doing its work...\n");
       sleep(5);
       pthread join(thread reader, NULL);
       printf("Read finished, got %d bytes.\n", bytes);
       close(fileno(file));
```





Race condition

- When working with shared resources (for example, in a multi-thread program with global shared variables) if the correctness of the output depends on the sequence or timing of execution of each task there is a race condition
 - the problem originates from concurrent access to a shared resource by multiple processes or threads
 - to solve this situation we first have to identify critical sections of the program...



Critical regions

Critical regions are part of the source code which access shared resources

```
int account_balance = 100;
```

```
void* thread1(void* arg)
{
    int wallet = 0;
    if (account_balance >= 100) {
        account balance -= 100;
        wallet = 100;
    } else {
        printf("Cannot draw money\n");
        pthread_exit((void*)-1);
    assert(account_balance >= 0);
    account_balance += 50;
    printf("Balance: %d\n",
                account_balance);
```

```
void* thread2(void* arg)
{
    account_balance += 50;

if (account_balance >= 100) {
    account_balance -= 100;
    printf("Pay bills\n");
} else {
    printf("Not enough money\n");
}
assert(account_balance >= 0);
}
```

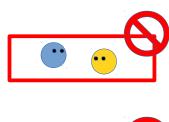


How to avoid race conditions

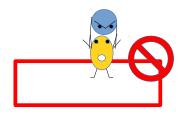
 Two processes/threads must not be simultaneously inside critical regions of the same resource

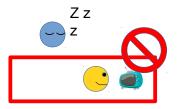


- The program must operate correctly no matter what is the speed of execution, number of processes/threads, scheduling policy or timing
- When outside critical regions a thread/process cannot block another thread (for example, by preventing it from entering a critical region)
- No thread should have to wait indefinitely before entering a critical region (should not starve)

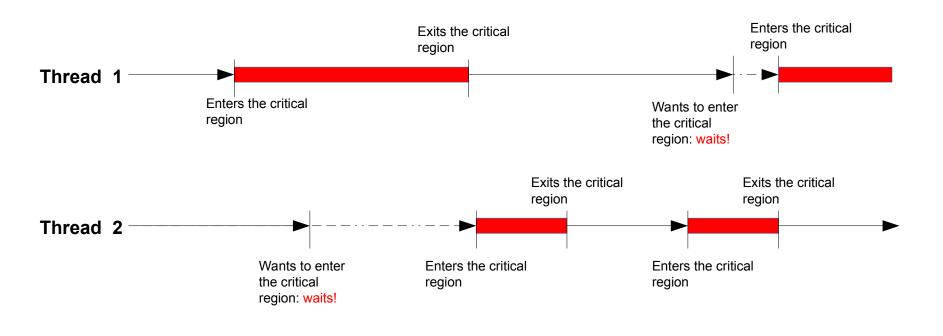








Example





Atomicity

- The mechanisms that we will study to ensure mutual exclusion work on the principle of atomicity and on atomic operations/instructions
 - an operation is atomic if it completes in a single step relative to other threads (i.e. cannot be interrupted)
 - no other thread can observe an inconsistent state (for example, half-complete modification)

Achieving mutual exclusion: a non-solution

A variable named lock

```
int lock = 0;
void* thread1(void* arg)
{
    for(;;) {
        while (lock != 0);
        lock = 1;
        do_things();
        lock = 0;
}
void* thread2(void* arg)
{
    for(;;) {
        while (lock != 0);
        lock = 1;
        do_things();
        lock = 0;
}
```

Sequential execution

 If threads are executed sequentially (one at at time, from beginning to the end) there cannot be two of them at the same time in a critical section

Disabling interrupts

- On single processor/core systems disabling interrupts prevents preemption and thus forces sequential execution
 - does not work on multiprocessor/multicore systems!

Strict alternation (working but not optimal *)

```
while (TRUE) {
                                                                while (TRUE) {
               while (turn != 0)
                                       /* loop */ ;
                                                                    while (turn != 1)
                                                                                                 /* loop */;
               critical_region();
                                                                     critical_region();
               turn = 1;
                                                                    turn = 0;
               noncritical_region();
                                                                     noncritical_region();
                              (a)
                                                                                   (b)
                                    A. Tanenbaum, Modern Operating Systems, 2nd ed
* example:
     while(turn!=0)
                                            while(turn!=0)
                             turn=1
a)
               critical region()
                                 noncritical region()
                                                    critical region is free, but a) cannot enter
                                                                              while(turn!=1)
                                                                                                      turn=0
a)
                                                                                       critical region()
                                      noncritical region()
```

Peterson solution (similar to strict alternation, but avoids flaw)

```
int turn;
int interested[2];
#define TRUE 1
#define FALSE 0
int count = 0;
void enter region(int thread)
{
    int other;
    other = 1 - thread;
    interested[thread] = TRUE;
                                                                   Might not work on multi-
                                                                   core/multiprocessor
unless memory fences
    turn = other;
    \ensuremath{//} Other process might be in the region now, wait...
    while (interested[other] && turn == other);
                                                                   are used
}
void leave_region(int thread)
{
    // Leave the region
    interested[thread] = FALSE;
}
```

Peterson solution

```
other = 1;
interested[0] = TRUE;
turn = 1;
while(interested[1] == TRUE && turn==1)

other = 0;
interested[1] = TRUE;
turn = 0;
while(interested[0] == TRUE && turn== 0)

Thread 1
```

```
other = 1;
interested[0] = TRUE;
turn = 1;
while (interested[1] == TRUE && turn==1)

other = 0;
interested[1] = TRUE;
turn = 0;
while(interested[0] == TRUE && turn==0)

Thread 1

critical_region()
```

- Solution based on the hardware TSL Instruction (spinlock)
 - Many CPUs implement a TSL (Test and Set Lock) instruction which test and sets the value of a memory address in one atomic step
 - TSL Source, Destination

```
enter_region:

TSL Lock, Reg ; copy lock in reg, set lock to 1

CMP Reg,#0 ; test if Reg (= previous lock value) is 0

JNE enter_region ; if it wasn't 0, repeat (loop)

RET ; otherwise enter the critical region

exit_region:

MOV #0, Lock ; set lock to 0

RET ; return
```

ed

- Solution based on the hardware XCHG Instruction (spinlock)
 - Many CPUs implement a XCHG instruction which performs an atomic swap of the two operands
 - XCHG Source, Destination

MOVE LOCK,#0

RET

```
enter_region:

MOVE REGISTER,#1

XCHG REGISTER,LOCK

CMP REGISTER,#0

JNE enter_region

RET

| put a 1 in the register
| swap the contents of the register and lock variable
| was lock zero?
| if it was non zero, lock was set, so loop
| return to caller; critical region entered

| leave_region:
```

From A. Tanenbaum, Modern Operating Systems, 2nd

store a 0 in lock

return to caller



Busy waiting... handle with care

- Strict alternation, Peterson solution and spinlock solutions based on TSL or XCHG employ busy waiting to enter the critical section
 - they perform a loop continuously retrying to enter the region
- If the loop is short or there are multiple CPUs or cores drawbacks are neglibible
- ...but in some situations it can cause priority inversion:
 - high-priority is busy waiting to enter critical region R. Thread remains runnable, and preempts lower priority threads that are executing in R → might never exit critical region → deadlock



HANDLE WITH CARE



Synchronization primitives

- To avoid race conditions operating systems, with the help of atomic CPU instructions, implement synchronization primitives which are easier to work with and don't require busy waiting:
 - Mutex
 - Semaphores
 - Barriers
 - Condition variables



Mutex

- To enter a critical section a thread tries to acquire the corresponding mutex (lock the mutex)
 - Only one thread at a time can own the mutex
 - If the mutex is in the unlocked state, the thread can acquire it
 - From that moment, only the thread owning the mutex can unlock it
 - If the mutex is already locked, all threads which try to acquire it will wait (will not be scheduled for execution)

pthread mutex

To create and initialize a mutex:

- pthread_mutex_t identifies the mutex
- pthread_mutexattr_t defines the type of mutex
 - can be **NULL** if we do not want to set attributes

Mutex types

pthread_mutexattr_settype(&attr, PTHREAD_MUTEX_DEFAULT);

FAST (default)

- Defined also with PTHREAD_MUTEX_NORMAL
- Can be acquired only once: if a thread owns the mutex and tries to re-acquire it it blocks (deadlock)
- Fastest mutex

pthread_mutexattr_settype(&attr, PTHREAD_MUTEX_ERRORCHECK);

NON RECURSIVE

 Returns a negative value (error) when the thread that owns the mutex tries to re-acquire it (useful for debugging)

pthread_mutexattr_settype(&attr, PTHREAD_MUTEX_RECURSIVE);

RECURSIVE

- Can be re-acquired multiple times
- To unlock, the thread must call pthread_mutex_unlock() the same number of times it has called pthread_mutex_lock()

Destroy a mutex

To destroy a mutex and release associated resources

```
#include <pthread.h>
int pthread_mutex_destroy(pthread_mutex_t *mutex)
```

A locked mutex cannot be destroyed (EBUSY is returned)

Lock and unlock a mutex

To lock a mutex:

```
#include <pthread.h>
int pthread_mutex_lock(pthread_mutex_t *mutex)
```

• To unlock a mutex (only from the thread that owns it):

```
#include <pthread.h>
int pthread_mutex_unlock(pthread_mutex_t *mutex)
```

Example

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <pthread.h>
#include <assert.h>
int account_balance = 100;
pthread_mutex_t mutex;
void* thread1(void* arg) {
    int wallet = 0;
    pthread_mutex_lock(&mutex);
    if (account_balance >= 100) {
        account_balance -= 100;
        pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
        wallet = 100;
    } else {
        pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
        printf("Cannot draw money\n");
        pthread_exit((void*)-1);
    }
    assert(account_balance >= 0);
    pthread_mutex_lock(&mutex);
    account_balance += 50;
    pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
    printf("Balance: %d\n", account_balance);
}
```

```
void* thread2(void* arg) {
    pthread_mutex_lock(&mutex);
    account_balance += 50;
    if (account_balance >= 100) {
        account_balance -= 100;
        pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
        printf("Pay bills\n");
    } else {
        pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
        printf("Not enough money\n");
    assert(account_balance >= 0);
}
void main(void) {
    pthread_t t1, t2;
    pthread_mutex_init(&mutex, NULL);
    pthread_create(&t1, NULL, thread1, NULL);
    pthread_create(&t2, NULL, thread2, NULL);
    pthread_join(t1, NULL);
    pthread_join(t2, NULL);
}
```

mutextrace

To analyze lock/unlock sequences we can use a Linux tool called mutextrace

```
$ mutextrace ~/bankaccount mutex
[1] mutex_init(1, FAST)
[2] started
[2] mutex_lock(1)
[2] mutex_unlock(1)
[2] mutex_lock(1)
[2] mutex_unlock(1)
Balance: 50
[3] started
[3] mutex_lock(1)
[3] mutex_unlock(1)
[2] finished (normal exit)
Pay bills
[3] finished (normal exit)
```

Source and packages at http://packages.debian.org/squeeze/mutextrace







- A semaphore represents an integer value
 - At initialization the programmer can specify the initial value of the semaphore: subsequently the semaphore can be incremented (+1) or decremented (-1) atomically
 - When a thread decrements the semaphore, if the result is negative, the threads blocks and has to wait until another thread increases the semaphore
 - When a thread increments a semaphore and some threads are waiting, one of them is woken up

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Semaphore initialization

Initialize and assign a value to a semaphore

Specifies how a semaphore is to be shared:

- zero if the semaphore is shared only between threads in the same process
- nonzero if the semaphore is to be shared between processes (when using shared memory)

Initial value of the semaphore

Incrementing a semaphore

To increment a semaphore (+ 1, atomically)

```
#include <semaphore.h>
int sem_post(sem_t *sem);
```

If there are any waiting threads, one of them is unblocked

Decrementing a semaphore

To decrement a semaphore (-1, atomically)

```
#include <semaphore.h>
int sem_wait(sem_t *sem);
```

 if the resulting semaphore value is less than zero the thread is put in a waiting list: when the thread wakes up, decrements the value and resumes execution

```
#include <semaphore.h>
int sem_trywait(sem_t *sem);
```

like sem_wait() but returns an error (EAGAIN) without blocking if the resulting value is less than zero

address pointed by sval

Getting the semaphore current value

To get the semaphore's current value

```
#include <semaphore.h>
int sem_getvalue(sem_t *sem, unsigned int *sval);

The value is stored at the
```

Destroying a semaphore

To destroy a semaphore

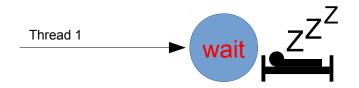
```
#include <semaphore.h>
int sem_destroy(sem_t *sem);
```

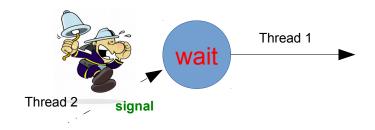
Destroying a semaphore which has some waiting threads results in an undefined (i.e bad) behavior!



Condition variables

- Alternative to semaphores
- A condition variable can be manipulated using two primitives
 - wait (for an event to happen)
 - signal (that some event has happened)







Initialize a condition variable

Initialize a condition variable



Wait for an event

Wait on a condition variable

what's mutex???



Condition variable and mutex

- A condition variable is a synchronization mechanism which does not manage mutual exclusion...
 - … for this purpose we have mutexes!
- Frequently the event of a condition variable is related to a shared resource (which should be protected)
 - We can pass a mutex to p_thread _cond_wait() that will be released while the thread is waiting for the event... as soon as execution resumes the thread will try to re-acquire the thread



Signaling an event

Signal on a condition variable

```
#include <semaphore.h>
int pthread_cond_signal(pthread_cond_t *cond);
```

- This call wakes up at least one waiting thread
 - if there is not waiting thread this call does nothing
- If more than one thread is waiting on the condition variable and there is a mutex, those threads will all try to re-acquire it but just one will succeed (the others will wait)



Signaling an event

Signal on a condition variable

```
#include <semaphore.h>
int pthread_cond_broadcast(pthread_cond_t *cond);
```

- This call wakes up all waiting thread
 - if there is not waiting thread this call does nothing
- All the threads waiting on the condition variable resume execution: if there is a mutex, those threads will all try to reacquire it but just one will succeed (the others will wait)

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Destroying a condition variable

Destroy a condition variable

```
#include <semaphore.h>
int pthread_cond_destroy(pthread_cond_t *cond);
```

Destroying a condition variable which has some waiting threads results in an undefined (i.e bad) behavior!

Spurious wakeup

- pthread_cond_wait might return unexpectedly* or in more than one waiting thread** even when pthread_cond_signal (and not pthread_cond_broadcast) is called (mostly in multiprocessor systems):
 - These issues are called spurious wakeups:
 - Putting the wait inside a while loop is good practice to ensure that the condition is always checked before continuing execution

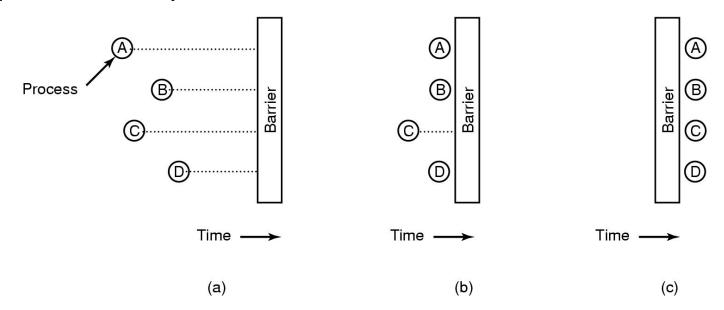
^{*} In multiprocessor systems

^{**} On Linux **pthread_cond_wait** is based on a futex call which returns if interrupted by a system call



Barrier

 The barrier is a synchronization mechanism which is useful to control the execution of a multi-step parallel algorithm, where each step depends on results computed at the previous step



From A. Tanenbaum, Modern Operating Systems, 2nd Edition



Creating a barrier

Initializing a barrier

```
#include <pthread.h>
int pthread barrier init
                (pthread barrier t *restrict barrier,
        const pthread barrierattr t *restrict attr,
                unsigned count);
                                                   Barrier properties (typically
                     Number of threads that need
                                                   NULL, for default parameters;
                                                   used for setting sharing
                     to synchronize on the barrier
                                                   options)
```

SUPSI Threads

Destroying a barrier

Destroy a barrier



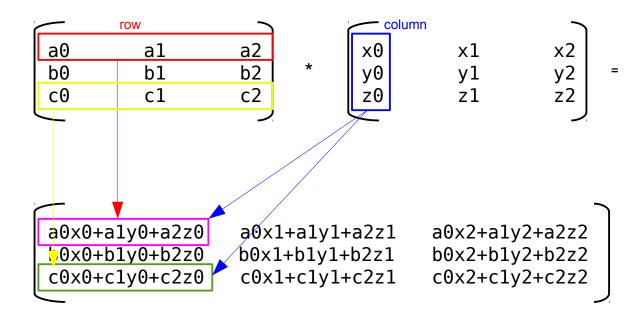
Waiting on a barrier

A thread can wait on a barrier with

 When all threads arrive at the barrier, the latter unlocks and this function returns PTHREAD_BARRIER_SERIAL_THREAD

Barrier example

We consider matrix multiplication:



Matrix multiplication

- The problem can be easily divided in multiple independent subproblems which can execute in parallel
 - we can assign each of these problems to one thread
- ... but consider if, given a matrix A, we want to compute A³
 - we need to perform two steps
 - 1) multiply A * A = B
 - 2) multiply B * A = C

... the second step depends on the result of the first one!

Barrier example: matrix cube (1)

```
#include <pthread.h>
#include <stdio.h>
double A[3][3] = \{ \{ 1, 2, 3 \}, \{ 4, 5, 6 \}, \{ 7, 8, 9 \} \};
double B[3][3];
double C[3][3];
pthread_barrier_t barrier;
void multiply(double X[3][3], double Y[3][3], double Z[3][3],
                int row, int column) {
  int i;
  Z[row][column] = 0;
  for(i=0; i<3; i++) {
    Z[row][column] += X[row][i] * Y[i][column];
```

Barrier example: matrix cube (2)

```
void* thread_multiply (void* args)
  int result;
  int row = (int) args / 3;
  int column = (int) args % 3;
  multiply(A, A, B, row, column);
  result = pthread_barrier_wait(&barrier);
  if (result != 0 && result != PTHREAD_BARRIER_SERIAL_THREAD) {
    perror("Error!\n");
    exit(-1);
  }
  multiply(A, B, C, row, column);
```

Barrier example: matrix cube (3)

```
void main()
{
  pthread_t threads[9]; /* One thread for each matrix element */
  int t, r, c;
  if(!pthread_barrier_init(&barrier, NULL, 9)) {
    for (t=0; t<9; t++) {
      pthread_create(&threads[t], NULL, &thread_multiply, (void*) t);
    for (t=0; t<9; t++) {
      pthread_join(threads[t], NULL);
    printf("The cube is:\n");
    for (r=0; r<3; r++) {
      for (c=0; c<3; c++) {
        printf(" %3.2f ", C[r][c]);
      printf("\n");
    pthread_barrier_destroy(&barrier);
```