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# Multicore RISC-V cache controller

Master thesis specification

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# 1. System Overview

This document is a specification of a Master thesis project that includes 2 faculty subjects:

- 1. Advanced microprocessor systems
- 2. Formal methods of verification and design

It is a cooperation between faculty of technical sciences in Novi Sad and VeriestS.

With first subject we will cover the design of individual RISCV core with its own cache controller and L1 cache alongside with a global cache controller that connects L2 caches and main memory with already mentioned cores. We will use Vivado Design Suite and code our design using Verilog HDL.

With second subject we will cover the verification using Jasper Gold formal tool and SystemVerilog language. Our approach will be *bottom-up* as we will try to verify each developed module during design phase. We will verify each phase of pipeline and their functional dependencies. Our idea is to verify each module with 2 different points of view, firstly with a simple testbench during design phase and secondly using formal tool to verify complex scenarios and increase the coverage.

Figure 1 represents the top diagram of our system.

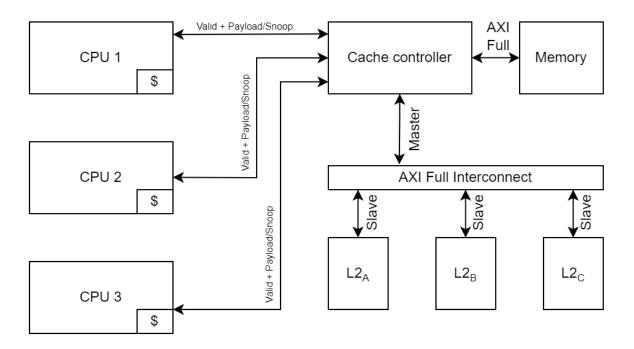


Figure 1: System Overview

# 2. Components

As you can see on the figure 1, our system is composed of following components.

- 1. CPU cores (CPU1, CPU2 and CPU3) with their local cache memories (\$).
- 2. Global cache controller (Cache controller)
- 3. Global memory (*Memory*)
- 4. AXI Interconnect
- 5. Shared L2 cache memories  $(L2_A, L2_B, L2_C)$

This paragraph will give you a more information about each component.

**CPU Cores** – Each core has RISCV ISA, 5 stages of pipeline (*Instruction fetch, Instruction decode, Execute, Memory access* and *Write back*), local cache memory (L1) and cache controller. Our idea is to implement an instruction set (**maybe M or I** (**to be defined...**)). Then we will generate a binary text file from an assembly code using RIPES simulator [1]. We will test our system by loading contents of the binary file into design and viewing the waveforms from Vivado simulator.

Also, each CPU has a feature for accessing data from its local cache memory. If requested data does not exist in local cache memory we flag a *MISS* and send a *SNOOP Request*. When global cache controller receives this request, it has to access other L1 caches and look for a requested data there. It this also fails, global cache controller has to look for request data in L2 or main memory.

**Global cache controller** – This is a key component of our system and it is responsible for:

- Accepting request from CPU Core. Only one core can be served at once, others have to wait.
- In case of local cache SNOOP MISS, scan through L2 caches looking for a requested data. Routing logic will be implemented.
- Sends a SNOOP Request if requested data does not exist in local cache.
- If neither L1 nor L2 have the requested data, look for it in global memory.
- Maintain the coherence of caches.

**Global memory** – Lowest level of memory hierarchy. Biggest capacity but also biggest latency.

**AXI Interconnect** – Component that connects global cache controller and shared L2 caches. Also does the required routing.

**Shared L2 cache memories** – Composed of smaller L2 memories in order to reduce latency of data access.

### 3. Interface

### 3.1. Interface between CPU Core and Global cache controller

This interface has 5 separate segments:

- Valid + Payload interface to global cache controller, requires address, opcode and data (in case of non-write command)
- Valid + Payload for *SNOOP Response*. If it was a *HIT* forward the request data in *payload* and flag a success (1), otherwise flag a fail (0).
- SNOOP Request interface goes from global cache controller to all cores (number of cores = number of instances of this interface)
- Data transfer interface from global cache controller to all cores. Fetched data from either L2 or global memory.
- Valid + Payload completion interface. If transaction is completed flag success, otherwise flag an error.

### 3.2. Interface between global cache controller and L2

For this interface, we decided to use AXI Full, because of its burst mode. We want to fetch a 64 byte cache line from one of slaves. We have one master, global cache controller.

### 3.3. Interface between global cache controller and main memory

For this interface, we decided to use AXI Full, because of its burst mode. We want to fetch a 64 byte data from the main memory.

### 4. Commands

### 4.1. Commands for local cache memories (L1)

- READ This command reads requested data from L1. If it's a HIT proceed with an instruction, otherwise it's a MISS and CPU Core generates a command for a lower level. Global cache controller takes over the control.
- READ + UNIQUE After global cache controller assures that only CPU that generated this
  command has a unique data, read it. Idea for this is to be an exclusive state, however we probably
  won't follow the MOESI protocol exactly. If this instruction is sent, check if cache line is unique
  and then read it.
- WRITE If there is an empty location in L1, write it. If cache is full, apply LRU, write back that data to L2, and replace it with the new one from the write command.
- CMO (Cache maintenance operation)
  - o **MI (Make invalid)** Invalidate data without propagating it to lower level.
  - CI (Cache invalidate) If data was modified (*Dirty*) before invalidating, it must be forwarded to lower level. Otherwise, just invalidate it.

### 4.2. Commands for L2 caches

- WRITE In this scenario, global cache controller should invalidate this data in all other cores without propagation to lower levels (SNOOP MI). For example, if CPU1 generated this command, global cache controller should invalidate this cache line in CPU2 and CPU3 (if they have this data). In this situation we assume that this cache line is the newest.
- **READ** Do a *SNOOP Read*. In this scenario, request data does not exist in neither one L1 cache memory. Read the cache line from L2 and forward it to global cache controller.
- **READ + UNIQUE** Do a *SNOOP CI*. For example if CPU1 sent this instruction, it fetched cache line X from L2 and modified it resulting in it to become *Dirty*. If then CPU2 requests the same instruction for the same cache line, global cache controllers needs to *SNOOP* on other L1 caches to check if they have that cache line, and invalidate them (*SNOOP CI*), resulting in CPU2 having that cache line clean (*updated*).
- CMO (Cache maintenance operation)
  - MI (Make invalid) Do SNOOP MI. Just invalidate cache line in L2, without propagation to the global memory.
  - CI (Cache invalid) Do SNOOP CI. If the cache line is modified (Dirty), invalidate it in L2, and forward it to the global memory.

# 4.3. Commands for CPU Snooping (from CPU Core to global cache controller)

- **SNOOP READ** Try to find requested cache line in other L1 memories. If cache line is found, forward it to a global cache controller.
- **SNOOP CI** Try to find requested cache line in other L1 memories. If the data is *dirty,* invalidate it in L1 you found it in, forward it to the CPU Core that requested it and this CPU Core is obligated to propagate it to lower level.
- **SNOOP MI** Try to find requested cache line in other L1 memories. If cache line is found, forward it to CPU Core that request it (*via global cache controller*) and invalidate this cache line in all other CPU Cores (*if they have that cache line*).

# 5. Development process of system

In this paragraph we will briefly describe development of the whole system divided in three phases:

- 1. Single cycle core without local data cache subsystem
- 2. Single cycle core with local data cache subsystem
- 3. Full system (Edit this later)

### 5.1. Single cycle RISC-V CPU – phase 1

31	27	26	25	24	20	19		15	14	12	11	7	6	0	
funct7			funct7		rs2		rs1	funct3			rd	opco	ode	R-type	
imm[11:0]							rs1		fun	ct3		rd	opco	ode	I-type
im	imm[11:5] rs2			rs1		fun	ct3	imm[4:0]		opco	ode	S-type			
imn	nm[12 10:5] rs2		rs1		fun	ct3	imm[4:1 11]		opco	ode	B-type				
	imm[31:12]										rd	opco	ode	U-type	
imm[20 10:1 11 19:12]											rd	opco	ode	J-type	

Figure 2: Instruction formats

This table represents format of instruction sets and bit position of following fields:

- 1. opcode is a 7 bit field which indicates type of instruction
- 2. funct3, funct7 fields that select the operation of instruction type
- 3. rs1, rs2 fields that represent addresses of registers whose values will be used in operation
- 4. rd filed that represent address of register where result of operation will be stored
- 5. *imm (constant value)* instead of using value from register, value can be hardcoded in instruction

During this phase we have implemented single cycle CPU with following instruction extensions from the table above.

- **1. R extension** Both operands come from register file and the result of operation is written back in register file on address stored in filed *rd*.
  - R Instructions implemented: add, sub, xor, or, and, sll, srl, sra, slt, sltu.
- 2. I extension One operand comes from register file and another is hardcoded into instruction filed *imm*, result is stored back in register file on address stored in filed *rd*.

  I Instructions implemented: addi, xori, ori, andi, slli, srli, srai, slti, sltui.
- **3. S extension** Value in register file from address *rs2* is stored in data memory on address whose value is sum of values from register file on address *rs1* and *imm*.
  - S Instructions implemented: sb (store byte), sh (store half word), sw (store word).
- **4.** L extension Value from data memory on address *rs1 + imm* is stored in *rd* in register file. L Instructions implemented: *lb* (*load byte*), *lh* (*load half word*), *lw* (*load word*).
- **5. B extension** Depending on *funct3*, values from register *rs1* and *rs2* will be compared and aftermath is incrementing value of program counter with immediate value or with 4. B Instructions implemented: *beq*, *bne*, *blt*, *bge*, *bltu*, *bgeu*.

**6. U extension** - The final operation result is related to the 20-bit *imm*, and the result is written back to the *rd* register.

U Instruction implemented: <u>lui</u>.

**7. J extension** - The format of this instruction is very similar to U-type, it only have *rd* and *imm* and opcode.

J Instruction implemented: jal.

All these instructions where firstly verified in Vivado Suit, initially we wrote some simple RISC-V assembly code, translated it in machine code using Ripes Simulator.

Then we loaded this code as stimuli for testbench to check if values in Vivado match with values from Ripes.

Stimuli is stored folder *instruction tests*, and Vivado testbench is stored in folder *tb*.

Once we completed this, we started formally verifying developed CPU with JasperGold tool. As an introduction to tool, we verified module Controller, Branch Condition and Immediate Generator with unit level reference model, all necessary files for those three modules are stored in folder *verif* separated in three subfolders *branch\_checking*, *controller\_checking* and *immediate\_checking*.

When all asserts passed and bugs were fixed, in folder *verif* in subfolder *reference\_model* we started developing reference model of whole CPU as a system level abstraction.

To increase readability, we divided some code in separate files.

File *defines.sv* stores values of opcodes represented in binary, *struct.sv* is used to define structures whose variables were used to make easier debug process and better vision in waveform.

In file *ref\_model.sv* firstly we needed to constraint input of stimuli, for this we used verification directive *assume*.

Because our system uses both clock edges we had to create properties for assumes for both positive and negative edge of clock.

- Assumes present in our code:
  - 1. <u>assume opcodes</u>: This assume restricts seven lowest bits of instruction to adequate opcodes for our system (image *Figure 3*)
  - 2. <u>assume load rs2 not NULL</u>: If instruction opcode is LOAD this assume restrict that *rd* cannot be ZERO because register x0 is hardcoded to zero, and sum of values from *rs1* and *imm* should be smaller than 1024 since that is our data memory size.
  - 3. <u>assume store less than 1024</u>: If instruction opcode is STORE this assume restrict that sum of values from *rs1* and *imm* should be smaller than 1024 since that is our data memory size.
  - 4. <u>assume cant write to x0</u>: This assume does not allow to write result of R, I and U instruction in x0 because register x0 is hardcoded to zero.
  - 5. <u>assume\_fvar\_limit</u>, assume\_fvar\_stable: This assumes restrict value of free variable to be smaller than 1024 and keeps value of it through whole verification process

- In order to verify system we used auxiliary code. Purpose of that was to make whole process of verification easier. Each auxiliary code maps to a certain module in order to develop properties for asserts easier.

At the end whole purpose of reference model is to compare if there is any mismatch between expected values (*calculated aux code of ref\_model*) and real values that appear in CPU.

Almost all auxiliary code used in this reference model is using both combinational and sequential logic and is adapted for both positive and negative edges (data in register file and in data memory is stored on negative edge).

### 5.2. Bugs found during verification of CPU – phase 1

1. Wrong implementation of data memory (sw,sb,sh) – Wrong data was stored on wrong address in data memory.

```
always_comb begin
        write data = 'b0;
       if (wr en) begin
                                       // S-type instruction
           //read_data_from_memory = memory[addr[31:2]];
               case (mask)
                       3'b000: begin // Store byte
                               case (addr[1:0])
                                       //0: write_data = {24'b0, wdata[7:0]};
                                       //1: write_data = {24'b0, wdata[15:8]};
                                       //2: write_data = {24'b0, wdata[23:16]};
                                       //3: write_data = {24'b0, wdata[31:24]};
                                       0: write_data = (memory[addr[31:2]] & 32'hFFFFFF00) | {24'b0, wdata[7:0]};
                                       1: write_data = (memory[addr[31:2]] & 32'hFFFF00FF) | {16'b0, wdata[7:0], 8'b0};
                                       2: write_data = (memory[addr[31:2]] & 32'hFF00FFFF) | {8'b0, wdata[7:0], 16'b0};
                                       3: write_data = (memory[addr[31:2]] & 32'h00FFFFFF) | {wdata[7:0], 24'b0};
                                       default : write data = 0:
                               endcase
                       end
                        3'b001: begin // Store halfword
                               case (addr[1])
                                   //0: write_data = {16'b0, wdata[15:0]};
                                       //1: write_data = {16'b0, wdata[31:16]};
                                       0: write_data = (memory[addr[31:2]] & 32'hFFFF0000) | {16'b0, wdata[15:0]};
                                       1: write_data = (memory[addr[31:2]] & 32'h0000FFFF) | {wdata[15:0],16'b0};
                                       default : write data = 0;
                               endcase
                        3'b010: begin // Store word
                               write_data = wdata;
                       // This is changed - did not exist before
                       default : write_data = 0;
               endcase
       end
end
```

Figure 3: Fixed store block in DataMemory.sv

Commented section in code is wrong implementation. For example if you wanted to store half word on two lowest bytes, half word was stored on its location but data on other two bytes was cleared on zero. Same problem was with store half word on higher two bytes, two lowest bytes was cleared on zero. If you wanted to store byte on lowest byte of the word, this byte would be stored but other three bytes was cleared on zero, same problem occurred with storing byte on other locations in a 4 byte word. In order to fix this problem before storing data in data memory, we had to read whole word, and depending on type of store we had to mask bytes that is not relevant for our store and to keep their values instead of clearing them on zero.

2. <u>Wrong implementation of I - opcode in controller.sv</u> – In if statement there was a wrong value of funct7 (Mismatch from reference card – funct7 was 0x02 instead of 0x20)

Before: 3'b101: begin if (func7 == 7'b0000010) alu\_op <= 6; else alu\_op <= 5; end

After: 3'b101: begin if (func7 == 7'b0100000) alu\_op <= 6; else alu\_op <= 5; end

3. Wrong implementation of U - opcode in controller, wrong value of *alu\_op* – ALU was missing state intended for *LUI* operation so we added state 10 and in Controller we set *alu\_op* to 10.

Changes in controller.sv for U-type instruction:  $alu\_op = 10$ ;

Changes in ALU.sv: 10: C = B;

4. <u>Missing adder in case of jump or branch</u> – Output of immediate generator was directly connected to ALU instead of dedicated adder and address wasn't calculated correctly. We added adder and connected mentioned output to adder input.

Changes in Processor.sv: add\_immediate add\_imm(.in1(index), .in2(B\_i), .out(add\_imm\_s));

5. Wrong implementation of STORE half word and STORE byte in reference model – There was not case statement in store half word for checking addr[1], and for store byte as well.

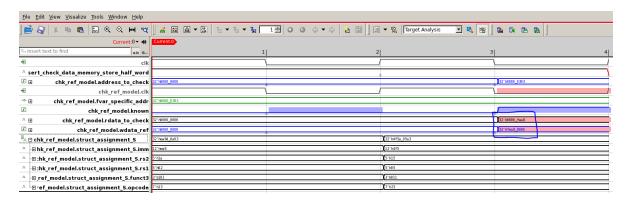


Figure 4 : Load half word error

<u>6. Instruction was not properly read from instruction memory</u> – To convert assembly in machine code we used Ripes simulator. Simulator also shows how machine code is executed on its architecture and we also used this as a reference model to compare register values with our register values. While executing code stored in *store\_load\_instrution\_test.txt* we saw in waveform that first instruction which is *addi x3*, *x0*, *1119* is not executed in our design.

Bug was in file *Add4.sv*, counter would start incrementing its values in restart-routine and it caused that first instruction was not executed because program counter wouldn't point on first location in instruction memory. We added in if-statement check for restart so counter will start incrementing its values after restart is finished.



Figure 5: Program counter bug



Figure 6: Fixed bug with program counter

- 7. One cycle delay between writing data in cache memory and data memory Write through policy requires that upon STORE instruction, we write data in both cache and data memory in the same cycle. Address port for data memory was delayed one cycle compared to the address port for cache memory and this caused mismatch.
  - Opcode 23 is opcode for STORE instruction.
  - dmem address is output from cache memory that sends address to data memory to write on.
  - dm\_address is assigned signal in cache that represents address in cache to write on.

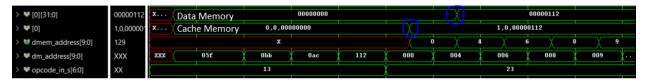


Figure 7: One cycle delay upon storing data in both cache and data memory

# 5.3. Coverage results after testing CPU – phase 1

Once all asserts passed, we used JasperGold Coverage App. On figure 3. and figure 4. for you can see passed asserts and coverage results.

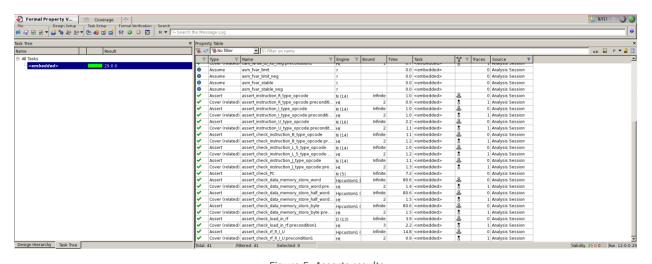


Figure 5: Asserts results

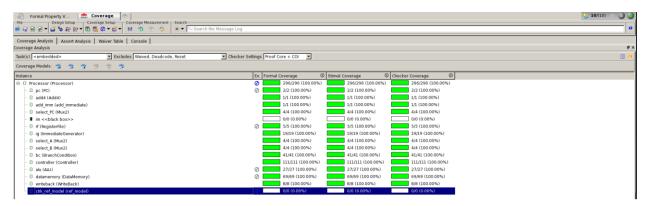


Figure 6: Coverage results

### 5.4. Single cycle with local data cache subsystem development – phase 2

After previously designed and verified core from phase 1, we move on to phase 2 by adding a simple local data cache subsystem. Due to our core being a single cycle variant, we do not expect any significant performance upgrades. This is just an implementation of a concept in order to understand basics of cache and its relation to the RISC-V core.

The structure of cache is direct-mapped cache. For write policy we use write through.

Data memory has 1024 locations. Each location width is 32 bit and byte addressable. To address data memory we use 10 lowest bits.  $(2^10 = 1024)$ 

Cache memory has 256 locations. To address cache lines we use lowest 8 bits of data memory address for index and two highest bits for tag. Each location width is 35 bit and divided in 3 parts:

- MSB represents a valid bit that indicates if line is coherent with data memory and available to use.
- Next two bits represent a tag.
- Rest represent an actual 32 bit data to be store or loaded.

Cache is placed in parallel with data memory module and we distinguish two scenarios accessing memory, LOAD and STORE instructions.

- When STORE instruction occurs, we use write-through policy and write incoming data to both
  data memory and cache memory at the same time on a negative clock edge. When the STORE
  happens on a location that already has some data, we simply overwrite it with new data.
- When LOAD instruction occurs, subsystem has 2 scenarios, load hit and load miss. If data in cache
  is valid and tags match, hit happens and data from cache is instantly (on negative edge of the
  same cycle) loaded in register file. In case of a load miss, new WAIT\_WRITE state is introduced
  that stalls the core for 1 cycle in order to fetch the required data from data memory. If load
  happens to the already filled location, data is overwritten again.

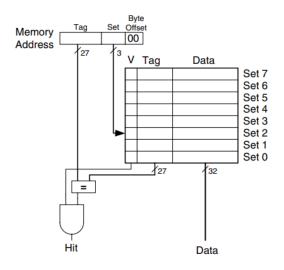


Figure 8: Direct mapped cache [4]

### 5.5. Bugs found during verification of CPU – phase 2

- Wrong implementation of FSM Initially we had states IDLE, MISS and WAIT WRITE. In Vivado, problem did not occur due to specific test sequence we set. However in formal tool, we realized that one state is unnecessary and we reduced FSM to only two states. Now, we have MAIN state where we check if STORE or LOAD happened and we transition to WAIT\_WRITE state only upon load miss.
- 2. <u>Half word and byte storing</u> When we needed to check if the same half word is correctly stored in both data memory and cache memory on same location, property was comparing grey box data memory signal with cache memory. Signal *rdata\_to\_check* in reference model did not do adequate masking (*read only half of the word and filled rest of it with zeros*), so mismatch occurred. Same issue occurred for storing a byte.

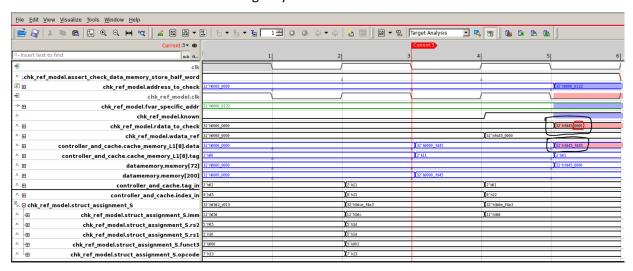


Figure 9: Half word mismatch

3. <u>Delay issues due to a possibly wrong property</u> – New property instance started on cycle 4 due to present skew even though it shouldn't have. Property now uses function *\$past* and this problem is avoided.

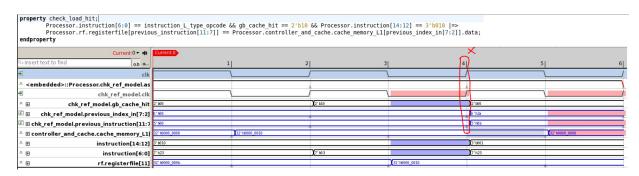


Figure 10: Skew issue

4. LOAD miss scenario issue – Cache subsystem had combinational logic for STORE and for LOAD instructions. STORE instruction has variations of store word, store half word and store byte, so 3 mask values. LOAD instruction has same variations including signed half word and signed byte, so 5 mask values. In case of LOAD miss and signed variants, after stalling, fetched data has to be stored in cache but instruction is still load, and so combinational logic for store was missing those 2 mask values for signed byte and signed half word. In CEX (counter example), we see that upon signed half word we enter default branch which sets data to 0 instead of actual value.

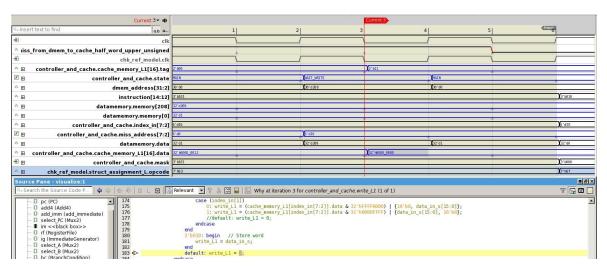


Figure 11: Load miss bug – Signed half word

## 5.6. Coverage results after testing CPU – phase 2

Once all asserts passed, we used JasperGold Coverage App. On figure 12 and figure 13 for you can see passed asserts and coverage results.

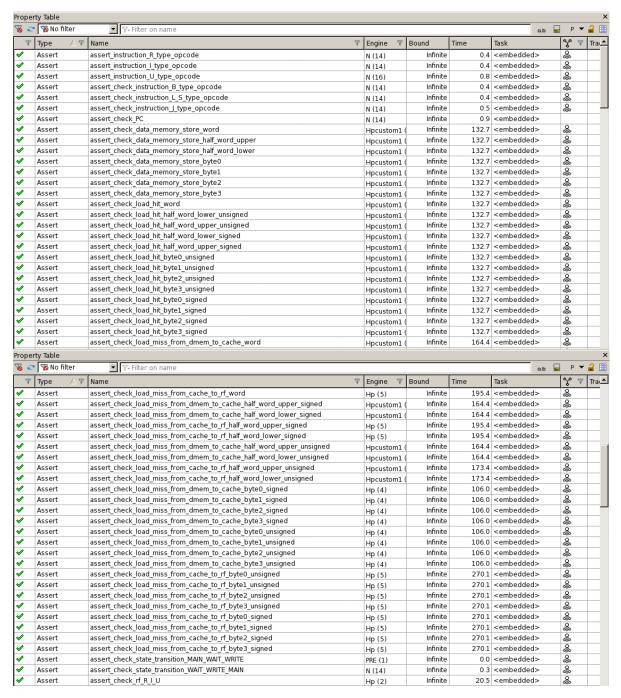


Figure 12: Asserts for phase 2

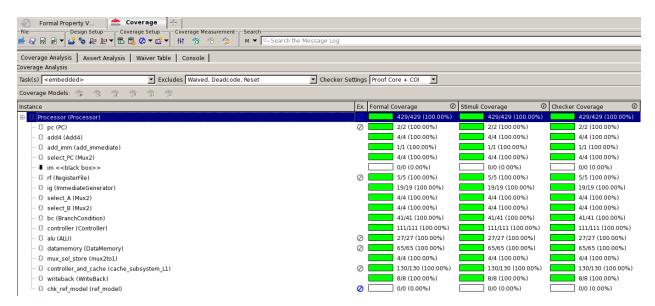


Figure 13: Coverage for phase 2

# References

- [1] <a href="https://github.com/mortbopet/Ripes/releases">https://github.com/mortbopet/Ripes/releases</a>
- [2] https://www.cs.sfu.ca/~ashriram/Courses/CS295/assets/notebooks/RISCV/RISCV\_CARD.pdf
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- [4] "Digital Design and Computer Architecture (Second Edition)", Sarah L. Harris, David Harris