

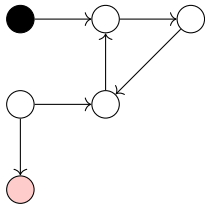
# Giving Some Pointers for Abstraction-Based Model Checking

**Levente Bajczi,**  
Dániel Szekeres, Csanád Telbisz, Vince Molnár

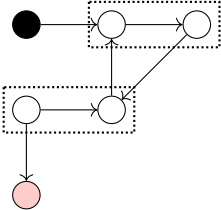
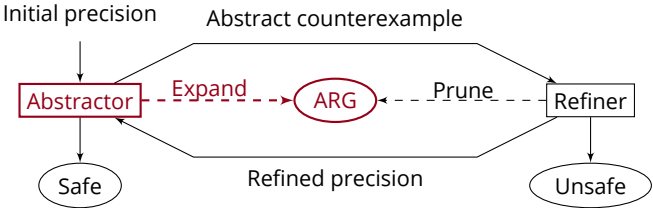
February 3, 2025



# Abstraction in Verification

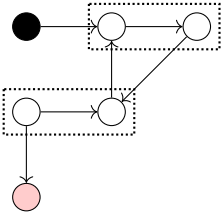
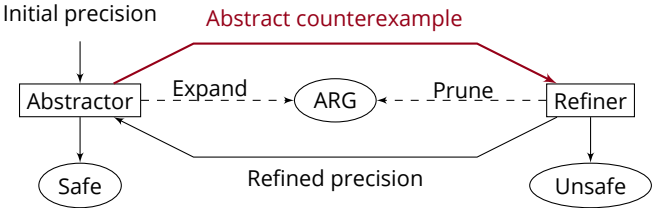


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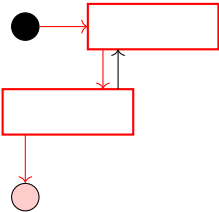


Abstract state  
space

# Abstraction in Verification

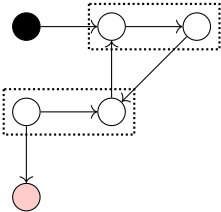
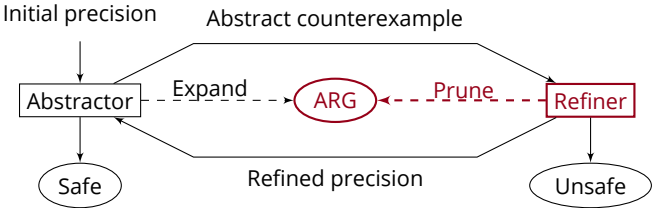


Abstract state space

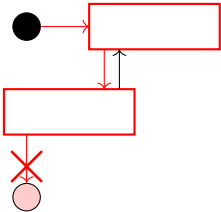


Abstract counterexample

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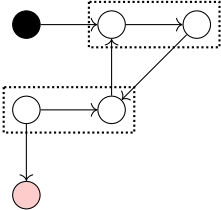
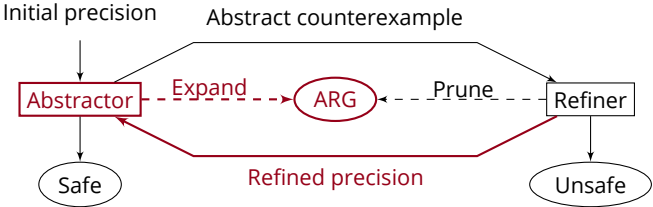


Abstract state space

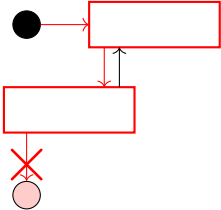


Abstract counterexample

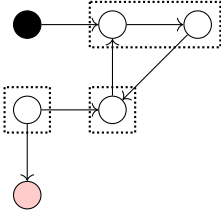
# Abstraction in Verification



Abstract state space

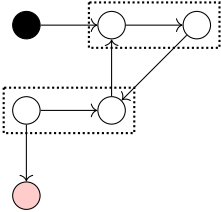
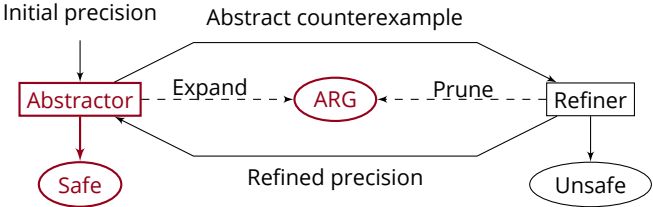


Abstract counterexample

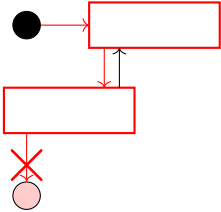


Refined abstract state space

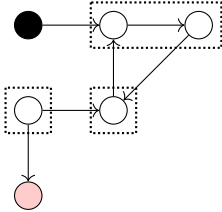
# Abstraction in Verification



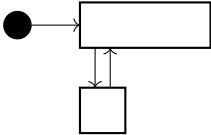
Abstract state space



Abstract counterexample



Refined abstract state space

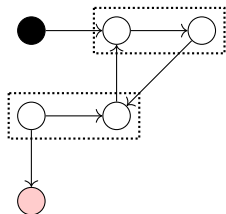
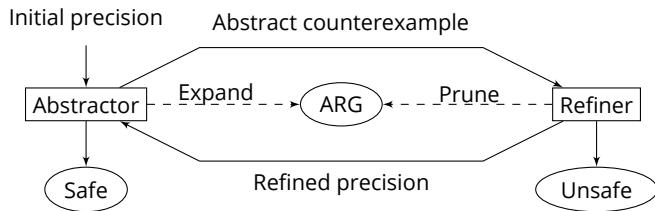


Safe ARG

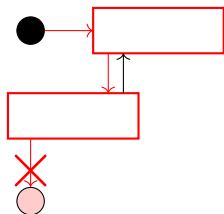
# Abstraction in Verification

Predicate

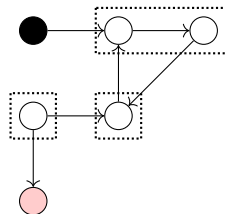
Explicit Value



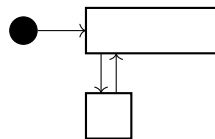
Abstract state space



Abstract counterexample



Refined abstract state space



Safe ARG



# Pointers in Verification

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## Ignoring Pointers

- ▶ Easy to implement
- ▶ Great for safety proofs (if lucky)
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Widespread tool support

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# Summary of Contributions

## Theoretical

- ▶ Precise, symbolic pointer analysis leveraging SMT solvers
- ▶ Extensible pointer analysis *plug-in* for CEGAR
- ▶ Examination of the effect of abstract domain choice



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- ▶ Precise, symbolic pointer analysis leveraging SMT solvers
- ▶ Extensible pointer analysis *plug-in* for CEGAR
- ▶ Examination of the effect of abstract domain choice

## Practical

- ▶ Plug-In implementation in **Theta**
- ▶ Evaluation on software benchmarks

# Pointers in Verification

```
1 int a;  
2 int b;  
3 a = 0; b = 0;  
4 int cond = nondet();  
5 int *c = cond?&a:&b;  
6 int *d = !cond?&a:&b;  
7 *c = 1;  
8 *d = 2;  
9 assert(a==1 || b==1);
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Some nondeterministic input

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Some nondeterministic input

Aliasing either *a* or *b*

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Some nondeterministic input

Aliasing either  $a$  or  $b$

Never the same as  $c$

At least  $a$  or  $b$   
was aliased by  $c$

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Reference

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Dereference

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# Pointers in Verification

Simplicity!

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Contribution 1: Reference Elimination

# Pointers in Verification

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1 (declare-fun deref (Int Int Int) Int)
  (declare-fun a () Int) (declare-fun b () Int) (declare-fun c () Int)
  (declare-fun d () Int) (declare-fun cond () Bool)

2 (assert (= a 0))
  (assert (= b 1))

3 (assert (= (deref a 0 1) 0)) (assert (= (deref b 0 1) 0))

4 (assert (= c (ite cond a b))) (assert (= d (ite (not cond) a b)))

5 (assert
  (let ((idx1 (+ 1 (ite (= c 1) 1 (ite (= c 0) 1 0)))))
    (let ((idx2 (+ 1 (ite (= d c) idx1 (ite (= d 1) 1 (ite (= d 0) 1 0)))))
      (and (= (deref c 0 idx1) 1)
            (= (deref d 0 idx2) 2)
            (let ((idx3 (ite (= 0 d) idx2 (ite (= 0 c) idx1 1))))
              (let ((idx4 (ite (= 1 d) idx2 (ite (= 1 c) idx1 1))))
                (or (= (deref a 0 idx3) 1)
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*deref*  
UF

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      (and (= (deref c 0 idx1) 1)
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Dereference:  
(ptr, offset, idx) -> value

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UF

Unique  
address

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*deref*  
UF

Unique  
address

Index  
calculation

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Dereference:  
(ptr, offset, idx) -> value



# Pointers in Verification

---

*ptr      off    idx    (deref ptr off idx)*

---

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*(ptr, offset, idx) -> value*

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<i>ptr</i>	<i>off</i>	<i>idx</i>	<i>(deref ptr off idx)</i>
0( <i>a</i> )	0	1	0
1( <i>b</i> )	0	1	0

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------------	------------	------------	------------------------------

0( <i>a</i> )	0	1	0
---------------	---	---	---

1( <i>b</i> )	0	1	0
---------------	---	---	---

$c == a$

$d == b$

<i>ptr</i>	<i>off</i>	<i>idx</i>	( <i>deref ptr off idx</i> )
------------	------------	------------	------------------------------

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1( <i>b</i> )	0	1	0	<i>c</i> == <i>a</i>
0( <i>a</i> , <i>c</i> )	0	2	1	<i>d</i> == <i>b</i>

<i>ptr</i>	<i>off</i>	<i>idx</i>	( <i>deref ptr off idx</i> )	
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1( <i>b</i> )	0	1	0	<i>c</i> == <i>b</i>
1( <i>b</i> , <i>c</i> )	0	2	1	<i>d</i> == <i>a</i>

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(*ptr*, *offset*, *idx*) -> *value*

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1( <i>b</i> )	0	1	0	<i>c</i> == <i>a</i>
0( <i>a</i> , <i>c</i> )	0	2	<b>1</b>	
1( <i>b</i> , <i>d</i> )	0	2	<b>2</b>	<i>d</i> == <i>b</i>

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1( <i>b</i> )	0	1	0	<i>c</i> == <i>b</i>
1( <i>b</i> , <i>c</i> )	0	2	<b>1</b>	
0( <i>a</i> , <i>d</i> )	0	2	<b>2</b>	<i>d</i> == <i>a</i>

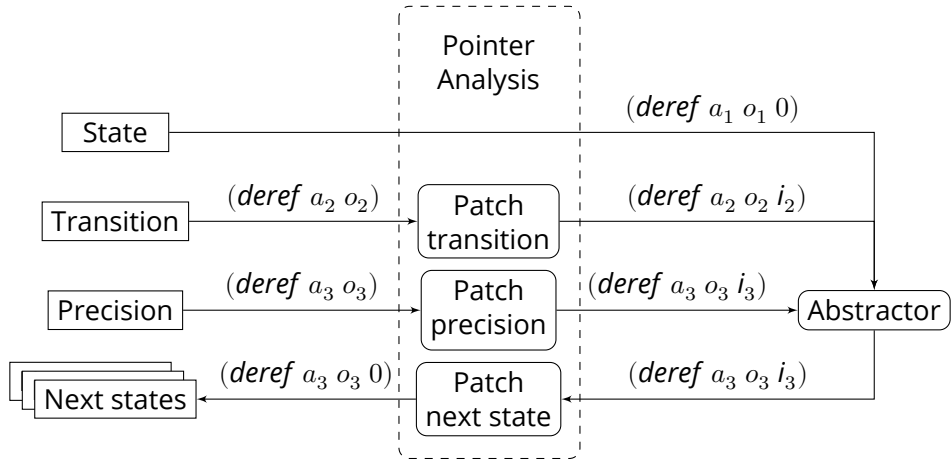
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2 int *b = malloc();
3 *a = 0; *b = 0;
4 int cond = nondet();
5 int *c = cond?a:b;
6 int *d = !cond?a:b;
7 *c = 1;
8 *d = 2;
9 assert(*a==1 || *b==1);

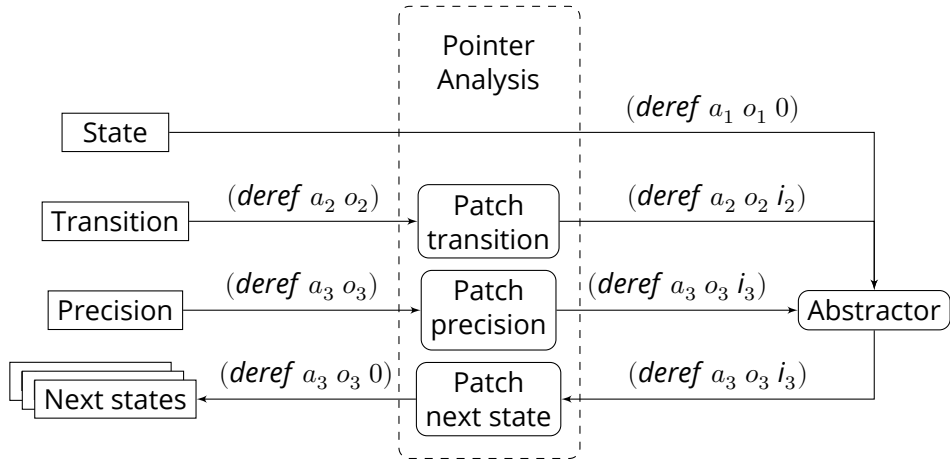
```

Dereference:  
(*ptr*, *offset*, *idx*) -> *value*

# CEGAR Plug-In



# CEGAR Plug-In



## Contribution 2: CEGAR Plug-In

# Experiments

## Implementation in $\Theta$ *theta*

- ▶ As an independent plug-in
- ▶ Supports any abstract domain and all refinement strategies
- ? Better than *havoc*?
- ? Which domain is best?





# Experiments

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## Experiments on Benchmarks



- ▶ 633 *reachability* tasks from  [SV-Benchmarks](#)
- ▶  [BenchExec](#) for accuracy

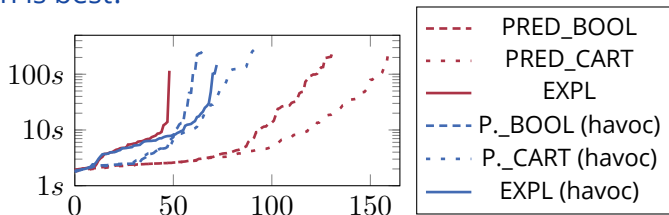
# Experiments

## Implementation in $\Theta$ *theta*

- ▶ As an independent plug-in
- ▶ Supports any abstract domain and all refinement strategies
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## Experiments on Benchmarks

- ▶ 633 *reachability* tasks from  **SV-Benchmarks**
- ▶  **BenchExec** for accuracy





# Experiments

## Implementation in $\Theta$ *theta*

- ▶ As an independent plug-in
- ▶ Supports any abstract domain and all refinement strategies
- ? Better than *havoc*? **Yes!**
- ? Which domain is best? **Predicate**

## Experiments on Benchmarks

- ▶ 633 *reachability* tasks from  **SV-Benchmarks**
- ▶  **BenchExec** for accuracy

