

Discrete and Continuous Models for Concurrent Systems

2. Concurrent semantics of Petri nets

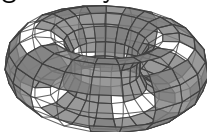
Uli Fahrenberg

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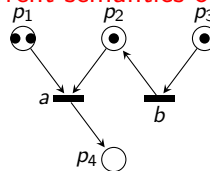
EWSCS 27, Viinistu, March 2025



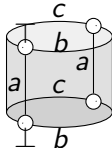
1. The geometry of concurrency



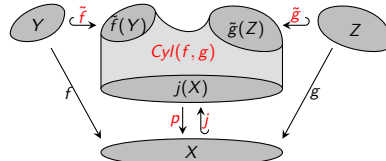
2. Concurrent semantics of Petri nets



3. Languages of higher-dimensional aut.



4. Geometry of higher-dimensional aut.



① Introduction

② Petri Nets

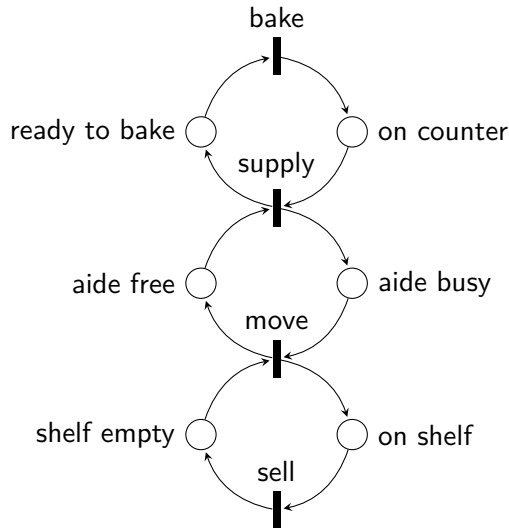
③ Higher-Dimensional Automata

④ Concurrent Semantics of Petri Nets

Petri nets

A **Petri net** (S, T, F) :

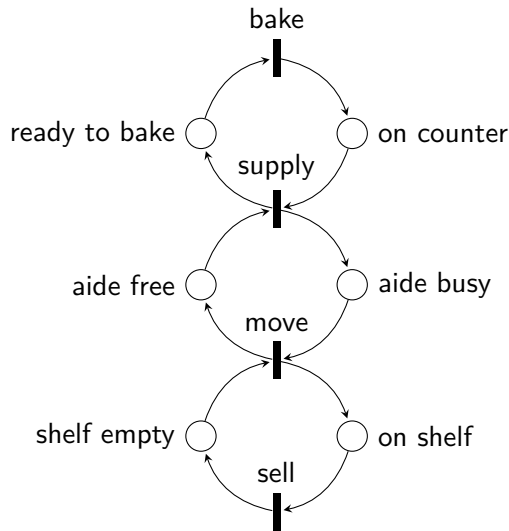
- S set of **places**
- T set of **transitions**, $S \cap T = \emptyset$
- $F \subseteq S \times T \cup T \times S$ **flow** relation
- very useful for modeling distributed or concurrent systems
- invented in 1962; ubiquitous in modeling



Petri nets

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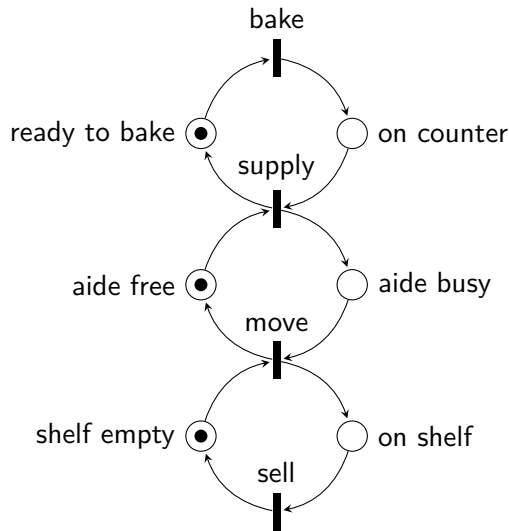
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weighted flow relation



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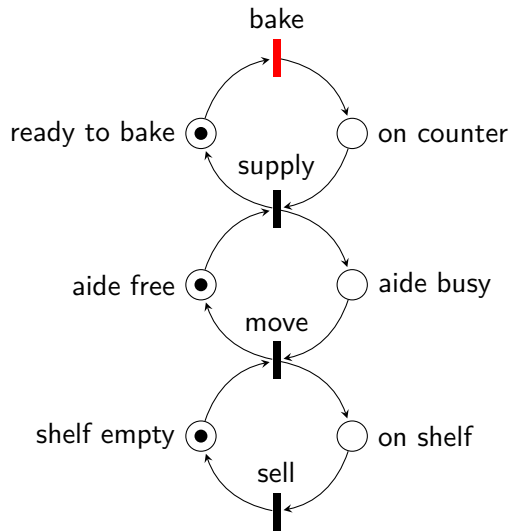
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- **marking**: $S \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$:
number of **tokens** per place
- **preset** of t : $\bullet t = F(s, t)$
- **postset** of t : $t\bullet(s) = F(t, s)$



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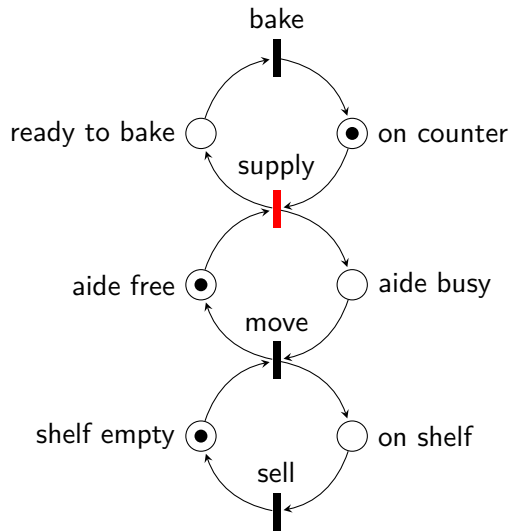
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$$m' = m - \bullet t + t^\bullet$$
- **only** if $\bullet t \leq m$



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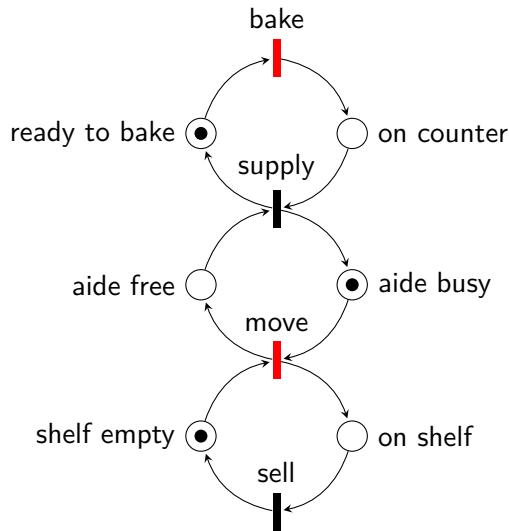
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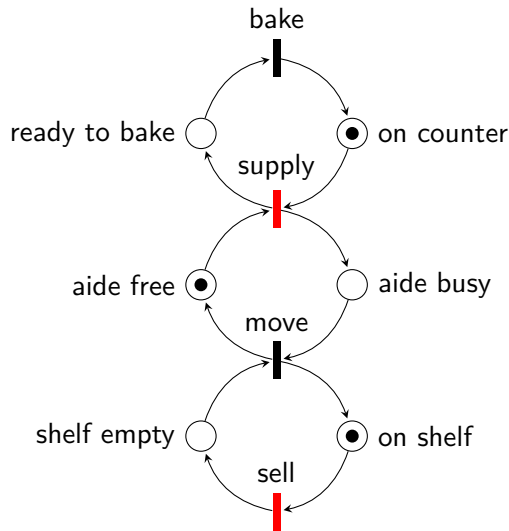
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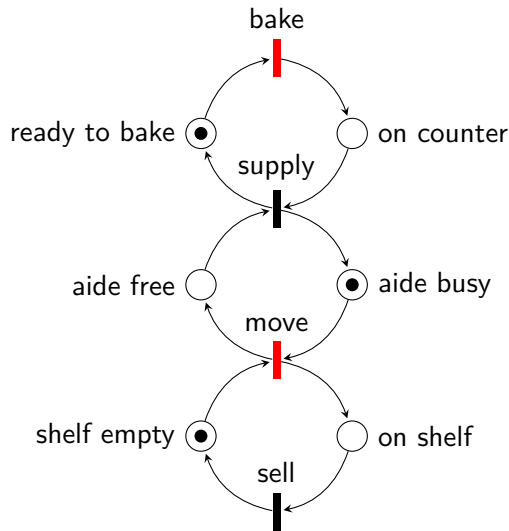
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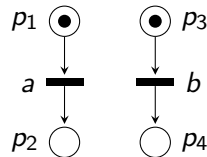
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Semantics of Petri nets

Petri net (S, T, F) : places S ; transitions T ;
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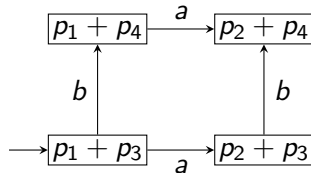
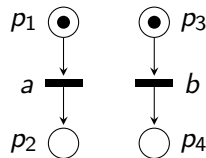


Semantics of Petri nets

Petri net (S, T, F) : places S ; transitions T ;
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Interleaved semantics (reachability graph) (V, E) :

- $V = \mathbb{N}^S$: all markings
- $E \subseteq V \times T \times V$: one transition at a time
- $E = \{(m, t, m') \mid \bullet t \leq m, m' = m - \bullet t + t \bullet\}$
- initial marking \Rightarrow initial state; take reachable part



Semantics of Petri nets

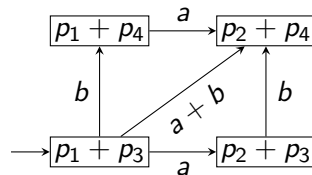
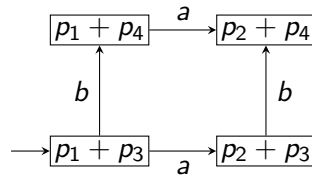
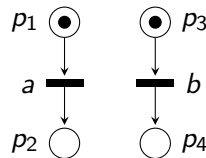
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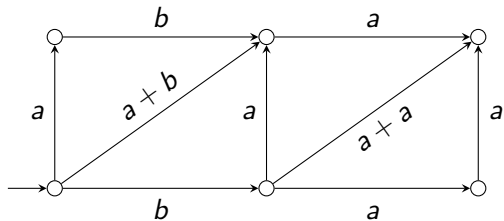
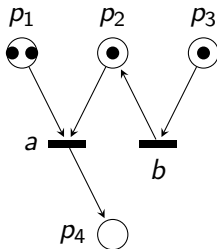
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Concurrent step reachability graph (V, E') :

- $V = \mathbb{N}^S$
- $E' \subseteq V \times \mathbb{N}^T \times V$: multisets of transitions
- $E' = \{(m, U, m') \mid \bullet U \leq m, m' = m - \bullet U + U \bullet\}$

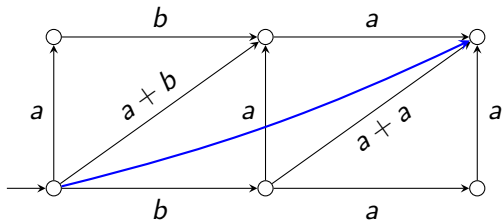
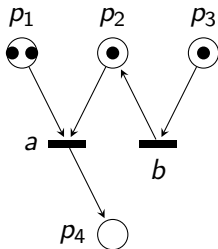


Another example



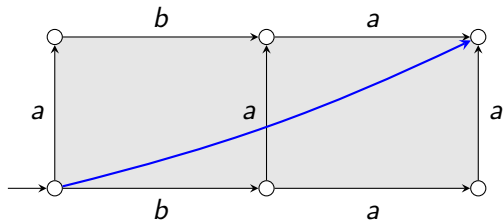
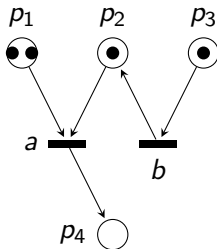
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Another example



- after firing b , a is **auto-concurrent**
- semantics misses some behaviour?
 - start a – start b – finish b – start another a – etc.

Another example



- after firing b , a is **auto-concurrent**
- semantics misses some behaviour?
 - start a – start b – finish b – start another a – etc.
- enter **higher-dimensional automata**
 - replace multi-transitions by **squares**

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Higher-dimensional automata

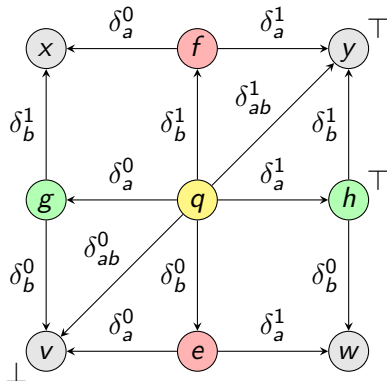
A **conclist** is a finite, totally ordered, Σ -labeled set. (a list of labeled events)

A **precubical set** X consists of:

- A set of cells X (cubes)
- Every cell $x \in X$ has a conclist $\text{ev}(x)$ (list of events active in x)
- We write $X[U] = \{x \in X \mid \text{ev}(x) = U\}$ for a conclist U (cells of type U)
- For every conclist U and $A \subseteq U$ there are:
 - upper face map $\delta_A^1 : X[U] \rightarrow X[U \setminus A]$ (terminating events A)
 - lower face map $\delta_A^0 : X[U] \rightarrow X[U \setminus A]$ (“unstarting” events A)
- **Precube identities:** $\delta_A^\mu \delta_B^\nu = \delta_B^\nu \delta_A^\mu$ for $A \cap B = \emptyset$ and $\mu, \nu \in \{0, 1\}$

A **higher dimensional automaton (HDA)** is a precubical set X with **initial cells** $\perp \subseteq X$ and **accepting cells** $\top \subseteq X$ (not necessarily vertices)

Example



$$X[\emptyset] = \{v, w, x, y\}$$

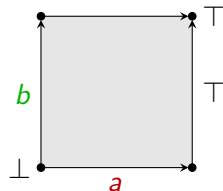
$$X[a] = \{e, f\}$$

$$X[b] = \{g, h\}$$

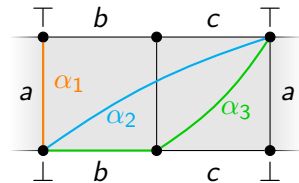
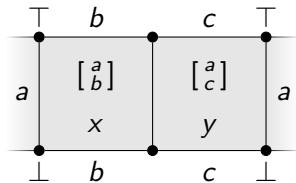
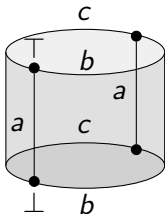
$$X\left[\begin{smallmatrix} a \\ b \end{smallmatrix}\right] = \{q\}$$

$$\perp_X = \{v\}$$

$$\top_X = \{h, y\}$$

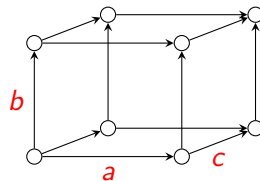


Another one

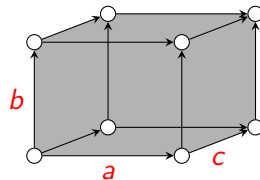


$$a \parallel (bc)^*$$

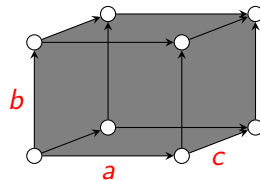
More examples



no concurrency



two out of three



full concurrency

Higher-dimensional automata & concurrency theory

HDA as a model for **concurrency**:

- points: **states**
- edges: **transitions**
- squares, cubes etc.: **independency** relations / **concurrently** executing events
- **two**-dimensional automata \cong asynchronous transition systems
- Introduced in 1990
- Generalize all main models of concurrency proposed in the literature
- (event structures; Petri nets; communicating automata; etc.)

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Concurrent semantics of Petri nets

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Concurrent semantics as HDA:

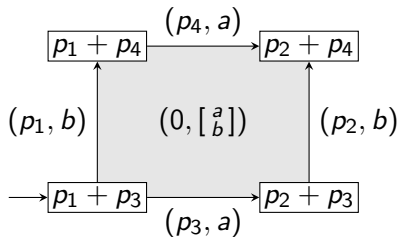
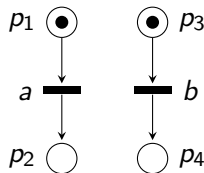
$\square = \square(T)$, $X = \mathbb{N}^S \times \square$, $\text{ev}(m, \tau) = \tau$

- for $x = (m, \tau) \in X[\tau]$ with $\tau = (t_1, \dots, t_n)$:

$$\delta_{t_i}^0(x) = (m + \bullet t_i, (t_1, \dots, t_{i-1}, t_{i+1}, \dots, t_n))$$

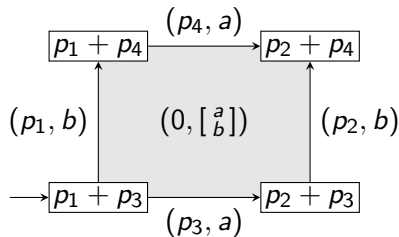
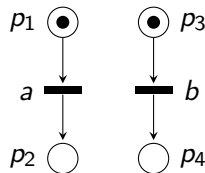
$$\delta_{t_i}^1(x) = (m + t_i \bullet, (t_1, \dots, t_{i-1}, t_{i+1}, \dots, t_n))$$

- initial marking \implies initial cell; take reachable part
- (no accepting cells)

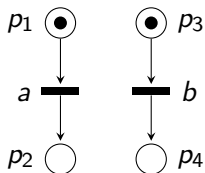


Event order

- trouble with symmetry:
have a cell $(0, [\frac{a}{b}])$, but also $(0, [\frac{b}{a}])$ (not shown)
- solution: fix an arbitrary **order** \preccurlyeq on T
- and use $\square = \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} t_1 \\ \vdots \\ t_n \end{bmatrix} \mid \forall i = 1, \dots, n-1 : t_i \preccurlyeq t_{i+1} \right\}$
instead of $\square(T)$
- order \preccurlyeq may be chosen (and re-chosen) at will
- here: lexicographic $a \prec b \prec \dots$



Example, complete

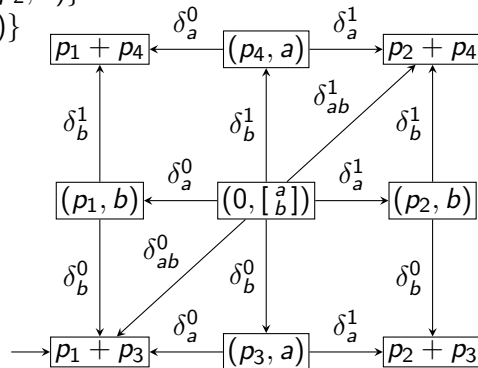
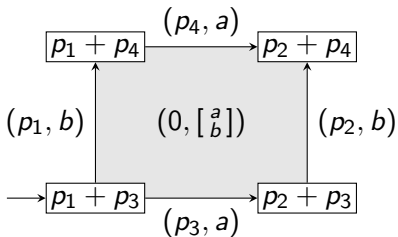


$$X[\emptyset] = \{p_1 + p_3, p_2 + p_3, p_1 + p_4, p_2 + p_4\}$$

$$X[a] = \{(p_3, a), (p_4, a)\}$$

$$X[b] = \{(p_1, b), (p_2, b)\}$$

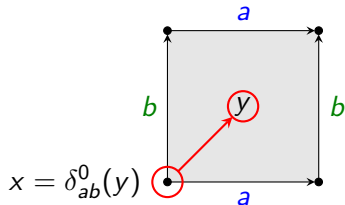
$$X[\begin{smallmatrix} a \\ b \end{smallmatrix}] = \{(0, \begin{smallmatrix} a \\ b \end{smallmatrix})\}$$



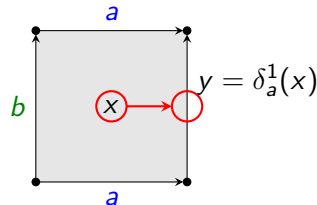
Computations of HDAs

An HDA computes by **starting** and **terminating** events in sequence:

upstep $x \nearrow y$, starting $\begin{bmatrix} a \\ b \end{bmatrix}$:



downstep $x \searrow y$, terminating a :



Idea: Use this to define an automata-like operational semantics **for HDAs**

- an **ST-automaton** (def. next slide) has
 - transitions which start and terminate events
 - states which remember which events are currently running

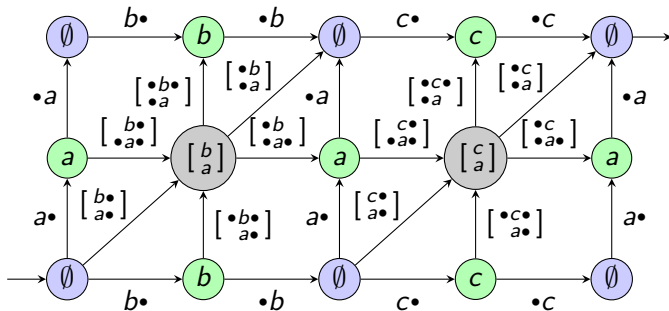
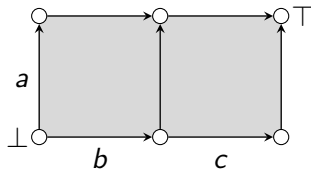
ST-automata

- a **starter** (A, U) : conclist U , subset $A \subseteq U$
- a **terminator** (U, B) : conclist U , subset $B \subseteq U$
- starting A ; terminating B : written $A \uparrow U$ resp. $U \downarrow_B$
- Let ST denote the (infinite) set of starters and terminators

An **ST-automaton** $(Q, \perp, \top, E, \lambda)$:

- Q set of **states**; $\perp, \top \subseteq Q$ initial resp. accepting states
- $E \subseteq Q \times \text{ST} \times Q$ **transitions**
- $\lambda : Q \rightarrow \square$ **state labeling**, such that for all $(p, x, q) \in E$:
 - if $x = A \uparrow U$, then $\lambda(p) = U \setminus A$ and $\lambda(q) = U$;
 - if $x = U \downarrow_B$, then $\lambda(p) = U$ and $\lambda(q) = U \setminus B$.

Translation

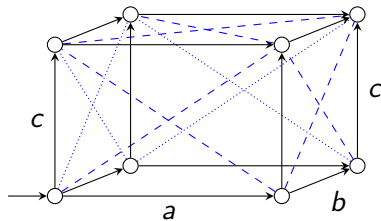
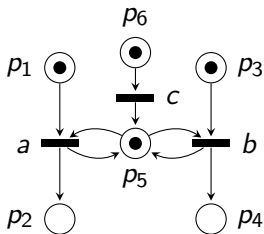


from HDA (X, \perp, \top) to ST-automaton $(Q, \perp, \top, E, \lambda)$:

- $Q = X$, $\lambda = \text{ev}$, $E = \{\delta_A^0(x) \xrightarrow{A \uparrow \text{ev}(x)} x \mid A \subseteq \text{ev}(x)\} \cup \{x \xrightarrow{\text{ev}(x) \downarrow A} \delta_A^1(x) \mid A \subseteq \text{ev}(x)\}$

from ST-automata to HDAs: complicated; we've **lost geometric information**

One last example



- initially, p_5 is a **mutex place**: it disables concurrency of a and b
- after c fires, p_5 holds two tokens, so a and b **become concurrent**
- semantically, a hollow cube without bottom face
- the **five faces**:

front:	$(p_3, \begin{bmatrix} a \\ c \end{bmatrix})$,	back:	$(p_4, \begin{bmatrix} a \\ c \end{bmatrix})$
left:	$(p_1, \begin{bmatrix} b \\ c \end{bmatrix})$,	right:	$(p_2, \begin{bmatrix} b \\ c \end{bmatrix})$
top:	$(0, \begin{bmatrix} a \\ b \end{bmatrix})$		

Selected Bibliography

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- J.Esparza. *Lecture notes on Petri nets*. 2019
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- A.Amrane, H.Bazille, U.F., L.Hélouët, P.Schlehuber-Caissier. *Petri nets and higher-dimensional automata*. arxiv 2025