

# Secure Compilation: Formal Foundations and (Some) Applications

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Marco Patrignani



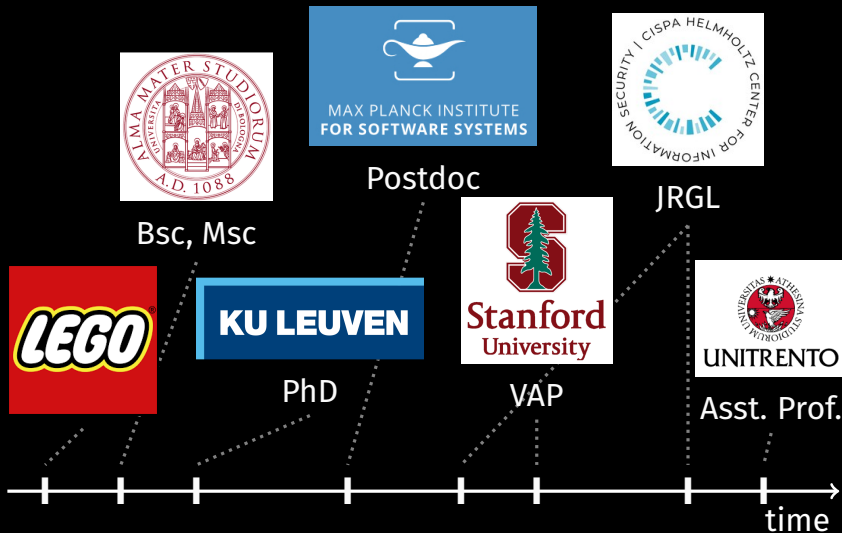
UNIVERSITÀ  
DI TRENTO

03 April 2024

**Who Am I ?**

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# Marco Patrignani



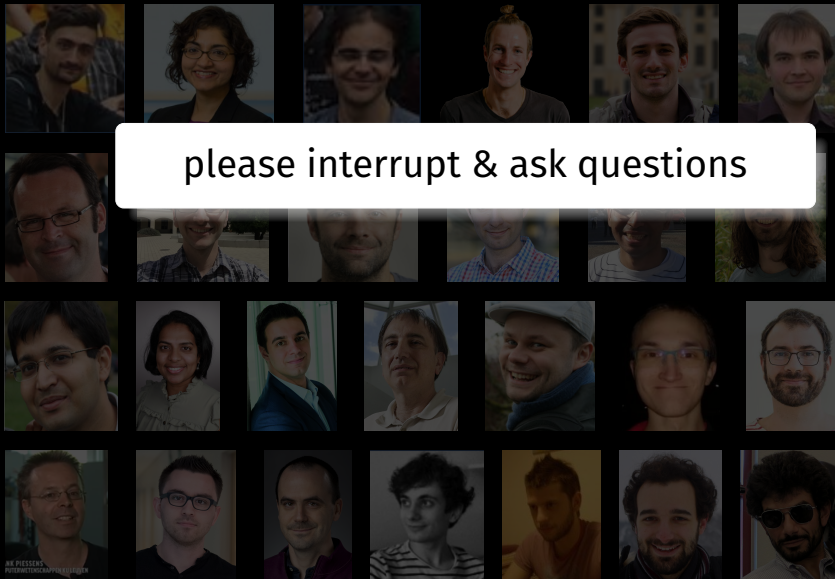
# Special Thanks to:

(wrt the contents of this talk)



# Special Thanks to:

(wrt the contents of this talk)



AK PLESSERS  
PETERWITTEKRAFFELLAGER

# Special Thanks to:

(wrt the contents of this talk)



for offline questions: I leave tomorrow



# Foundations of Secure Compilation

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# Programming Languages: Pros and Cons

Good PLs (, , , , ...) provide:

- helpful **abstractions** to write **secure** code



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Good PLs (, , , , ...) provide:

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but

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# Programming Languages: Pros and Cons

Good PLs (, , , , ...) provide:

- helpful **abstractions** to write **secure** code

but

- when compiled (`[[·]]`) and **linked** with adversarial target code
- these abstractions are **NOT** enforced

# Secure Compilation: Example

ChaCha20

Poly1305

...

$F^*$

HACL\*. Zinzindohouè *et al.*, CCS'17

Asm

[[ChaCha20]]

[[Poly1305]]

[[...]]

# Secure Compilation: Example

ChaCha20

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[[ChaCha20]]

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[[...]]



160x C/C++ code (unsafe)

# Secure Compilation: Example



$F^*$  HACL\*. Zinzindohouè *et al.*, CCS'17

Asm



# Secure Compilation: Example

Preserve the security of

ChaCha20

Poly1305

...

$F^*$  HACL\*. Zinzindohouè et al., CCS'17

Asm

[[ChaCha20]]

[[Poly1305]]

[[...]]



when interoperating with

# Secure Compilation: Example

Correct compilation

ChaCha20

Poly1305

...

F\*

HACL\*. Zinzindohouè *et al.*, CCS'17

Asm

[[ChaCha20]]

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[[...]]

# Secure Compilation: Example

Secure compilation

ChaCha20

Poly1305

...

F\*

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Asm

[[ChaCha20]]

[[Poly1305]]

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# Secure Compilation: Example

Enable source-level security reasoning

ChaCha20

Poly1305

...

F\*

HACL\*. Zinzindohouè *et al.*, CCS'17

Asm

[[ChaCha20]]

[[Poly1305]]

[[...]]



What does it **mean**  
for a compiler to  
be **secure**?

What does it **mean**  
for a compiler to  
**be secure?**

Analogous questions are answered for type systems, correct compilation, ...

# Once Upon a Time in Process Algebra

## Secure Implementation of Channel Abstractions

Martin Abadi

ma@pa.dec.com

Digital Equipment Corporation  
Systems Research Center

Cédric Fournet

Cedric.Fournet@inria.fr

INRIA Rocquencourt

Georges Gonthier

Georges.Gonthier@inria.fr

INRIA Rocquencourt

### Abstract

*Communication in distributed systems often relies on useful abstractions such as channels, remote procedure calls, and remote method invocations. The implementations of these abstractions sometimes provide security properties, in particular through encryption. In this*

spaces are on the same machine, and that a centralized operating system provides security for them. In reality, these address spaces could be spread across a network, and security could depend on several local operating systems and on cryptographic protocols across machines.

For example, when an application requires secure

Challenge: define that their implementation of  
secure channels via cryptography was secure

# Once Upon a Time in Process Algebra

## Fully Abstract Compilation (FAC)

**Theorem 1** *The compositional translation is fully-abstract, up to observational equivalence: for all join-calculus processes  $P$  and  $Q$ ,*

$$P \approx Q \quad \text{if and only if} \quad \text{Env}[[P]] \approx \text{Env}[[Q]]$$

Concrete implementations of these abstractions sometimes provide security properties, in particular through encryption. In this

network, and security could depend on several local operating systems and on cryptographic protocols across machines.

For example, when an application requires secure

Challenge: define that their implementation of secure channels via cryptography was secure

# Fully Abstract Compilation Influence

ACM CSUR'19

## Fully Abstract Compilation to JavaScript

## Secure Implementations for Typed Session Abstraction

**Typed Closure Conversion Preserves Observational Equivalence**

Chen Pierre-Evariste Dagand Pierre-Yves Strub<sup>1</sup> Benj  
MSR-INRIA<sup>1</sup>  
math.ac.uk pierre-yves@stru

Ricardo Corin<sup>1,2,3</sup> Pierre-Malo Deniérou<sup>1,2</sup> Cédric Fournet<sup>1,2</sup>  
Karthikeyan Bhargavan<sup>1,2</sup> James Leifer<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup> MSR-INRIA Joint Centre <sup>2</sup> Microsoft Research <sup>3</sup> University of T

Amal Ahmed Matthias Blume  
Toyota Technological Institute at Chicago  
(amal,blume)@ti-c.org

## Fully-Abstract Compilation by Approximate Back-Translation

Dominique Devriese Marco Patrignani Frank Piessens  
iMinds-DistriNet, Computer Science dept., KU Leuven  
frank.last@cs.kuleuven.ac.be

## Authentication primitives and their compilation

Martín Abadi\*  
Bell Labs Research  
Lucent Technologies

Cédric Fournet  
Microsoft Research

Georges G  
INRIA Rocq

## On Protection by Layout Randomization

MARTÍN ABADI, Microsoft Research, Silicon Valley  
Santa Cruz, Collège de France  
GORDON D. PLOTKIN, University of Edinburgh

## Beyond Good and Evil

**Formalizing the Security Guarantees of Compartmentalizing Compilation**

Yannis Juglaret<sup>1,2</sup> Cătălin Hrișcu<sup>1</sup> Arthur Azevedo de Amorim<sup>1</sup> Boris Eng<sup>1,3</sup> Benjamin C. Pierce<sup>4</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Inria Paris <sup>2</sup>Université Paris Diderot (Paris 7) <sup>3</sup>Université Paris 8 <sup>4</sup>University of Pennsylvania

## Secure Compilation

## of Object-Oriented Components

## to Protected Module Architectures

Marco Patrignani, Dave Clarke, and Frank Piessens

iMinds-DistriNet, Dept. Computer Science  
{first.last}@cs.kuleuven.ac.be

## A Secure Compiler for ML Modules

and Dave Clarke

## Local Memory via Layout Randomization

Corin Pitecher

Julian Rathke  
University of Southampton

James Riely  
University

## An Equivalence-Preserving CPS Translation via Multi-Language Semantics\*

Amal Ahmed

Matthias Blume  
Google  
blume@google.com

## Secure Compilation to Protected Module Architectures

Marco Patrignani  
Dept. Computer Science  
and Dave Clarke

## Fully Abstract Compilation via Universal Embedding\*

Marco Patrignani  
MPI-SWS

## On Modular and Fully-Abstract Compilation

Dominique Devriese

Fully A

Typed Closure C

Authentication

Martín Abadi\*  
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Secur  
of Object-C  
o Protected

Marco Patrignani,  
iMinds-DistriNet, L  
(first.last)@

Local Memory via Layout

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Secure Compilation to Protected Module Architectures

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Preserving CPS Translation  
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Google  
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Dominique D

- FAC: useful for language expressiveness but complex and with an unclear security implication

CSUR'19

ion Abstraction

Cédric Fournet<sup>1,2</sup>  
nes Leifer<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> University of T

-Translation

Pierce<sup>a</sup>  
sylvania

L Module

and Dave Clar

- FAC: useful for **language expressiveness** but complex and with an unclear security implication
- **Challenge:** easier/more efficient/more precise alternatives

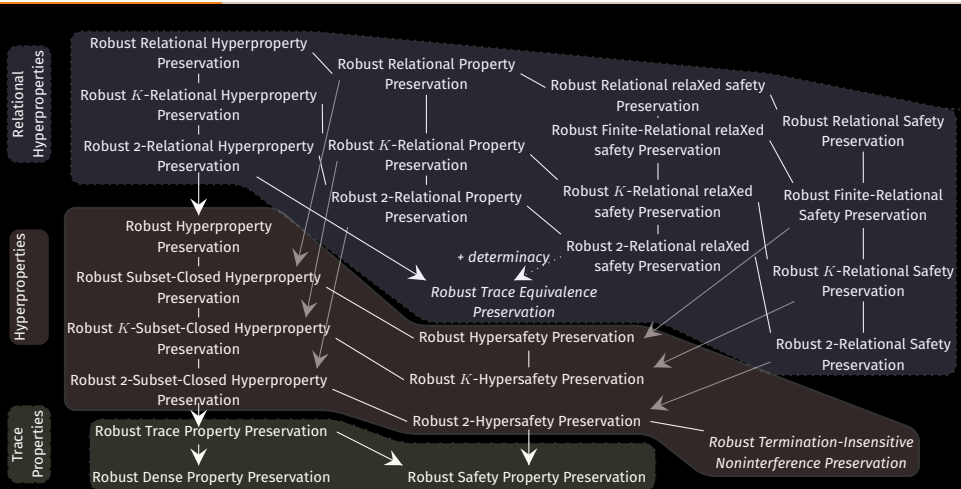


- FAC: useful for **language expressiveness** but complex and with an unclear security implication
  - **Challenge:** easier/more efficient/more precise alternatives
- preserve classes of **(hyper)properties**

Clarkson & Schneider JCS '10

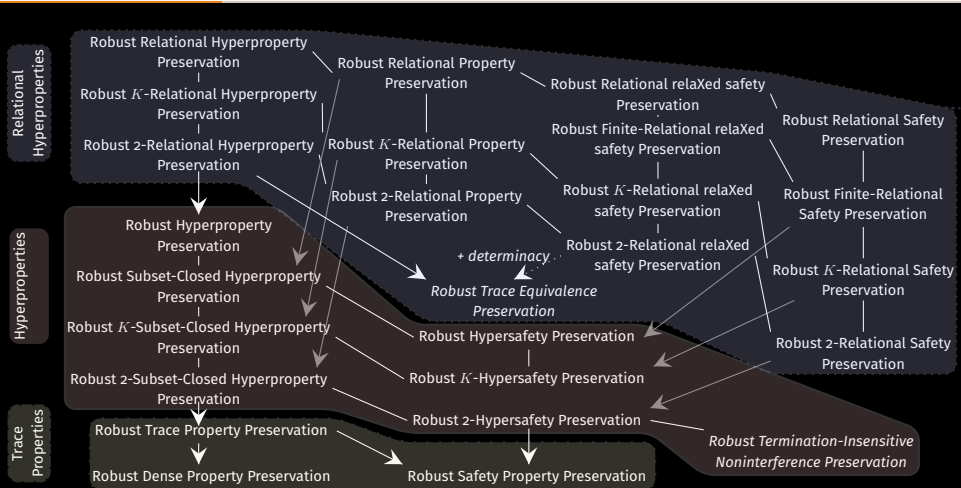
# Robust Compilation (RC) Criteria

CSF'19, ESOP'20, Toplas'21



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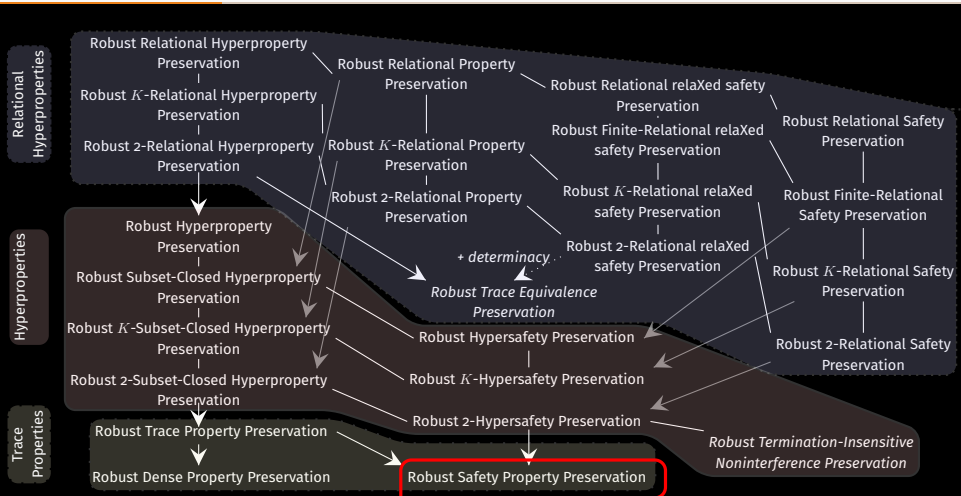
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Tradeoffs for code efficiency, security guarantees, proof complexity

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Each point has two **equivalent** criteria:

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  - harder to prove
- **Property – free** :
  - + **easier** to prove
  - unclear what security classes are preserved



# In Depth Example: RSC

ESOP'19, TOPLAS'21

$[[\cdot]] = \text{compiler}$      $[[\cdot]] : \text{RSP} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{RSC}$

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 $\pi / \pi$  = set of traces

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# Secure Compilation Threat Model

- robust, **active** attacker ( $\forall \mathbf{A}$ )

robust safety works, e.g., Swasey *et al.* OOPSLA'17, Sammler *et al.* POPL'20



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- **in-language** expressible attacker
- trace-based security behaviour (**m/m**)

# Secure Compilation Threat Model

- robust, **active** attacker ( $\forall \mathbf{A}$ )

What can we do with these foundations?

- trace-based security behaviour ( $\mathbf{m}/\mathbf{m}$ )

# Talk Outline

Robust Memory Safety

POPL'23

Robust Cryptographic Constant Time

(wip)

Micro-architectural Attacks (Spectre)

CCS'21

Security Architectures

(e.g., Cheri/ARM Morello, Sancus/Intel SGX, ...) Toplas'15, CSF'21, ...

Mechanise Cryptographic Proofs

CSF'24 + wip

Conclusion

# Robust Memory Safety

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POPL'23

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*Memarian et al. POPL'19, Azevedo de Amorim et al. POST'18*



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`alloc(4)`

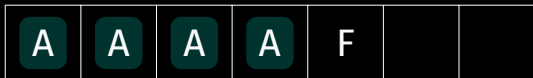


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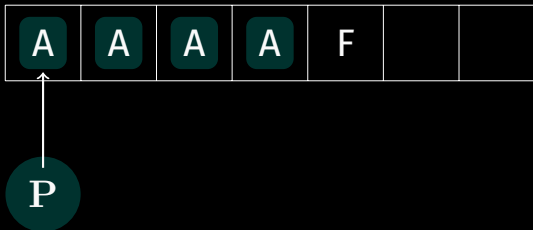


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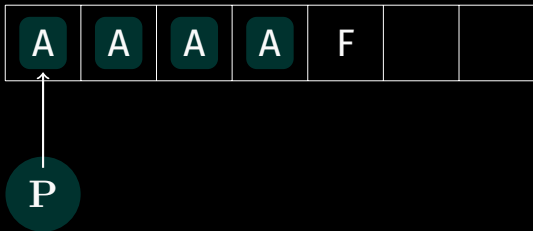


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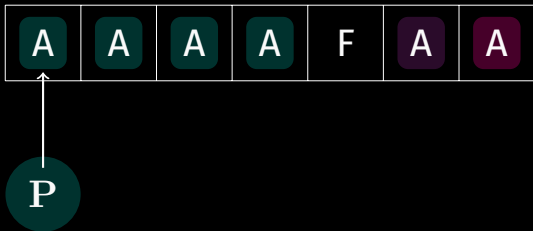


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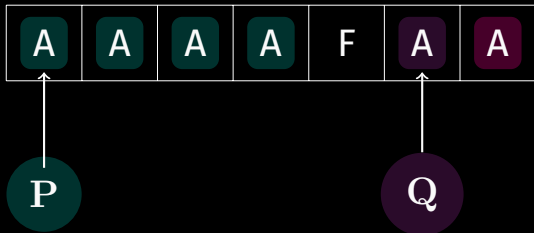


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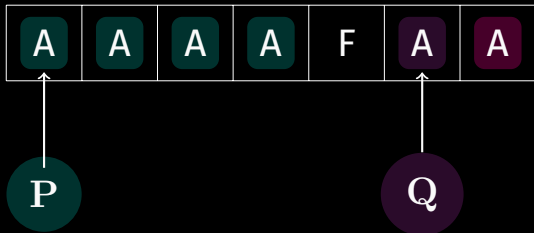


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alloc(4)  
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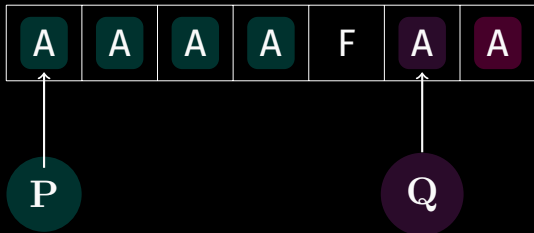
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ok

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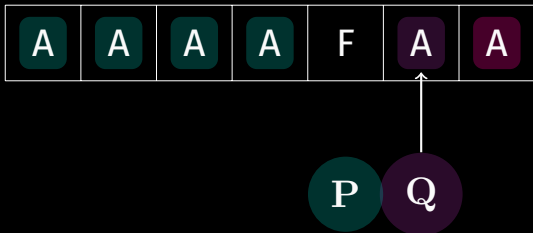


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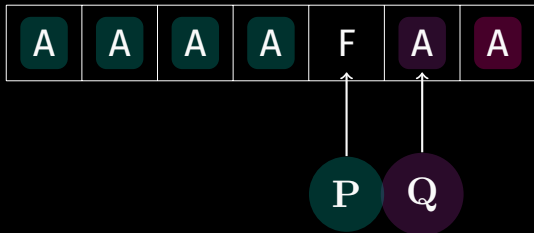
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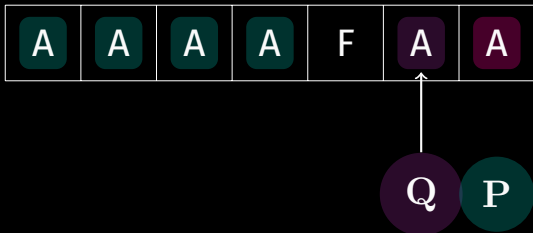


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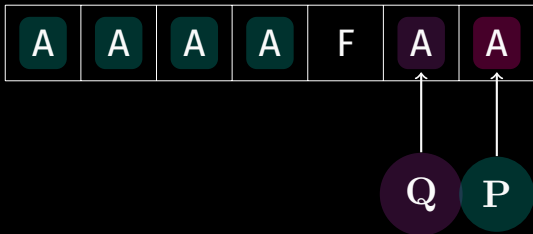
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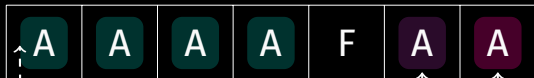
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Monitor encoding of MS  
with state  $M$

and actions for transitions



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*Watson et al. S&P'15*

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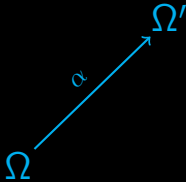
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$\Omega$  = source state

$\alpha/\alpha$  = trace action

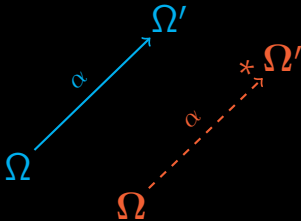


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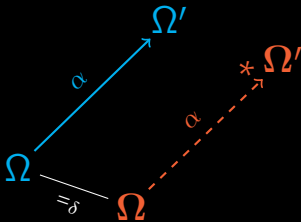
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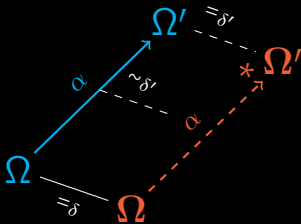
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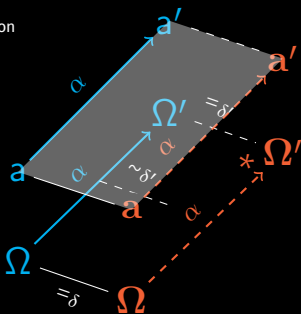
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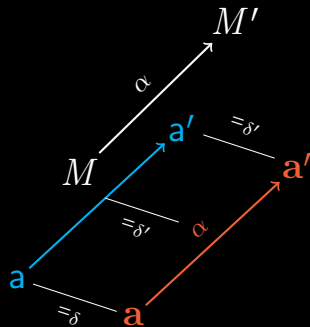
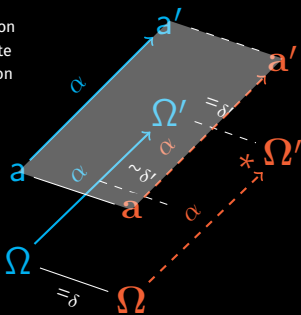






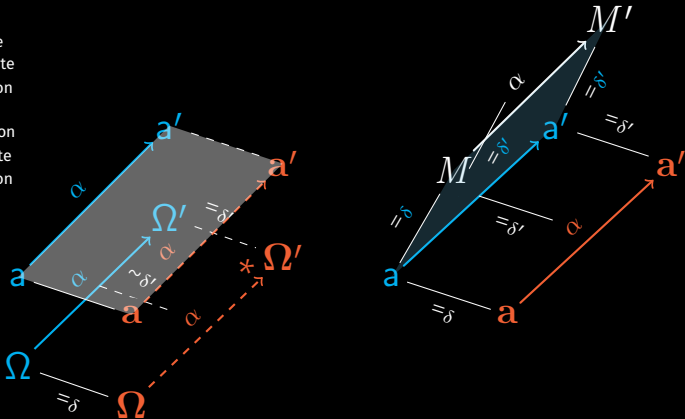
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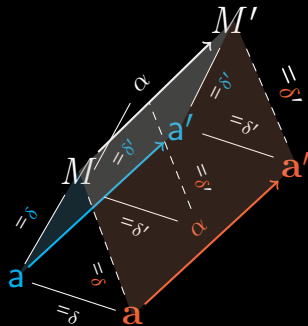
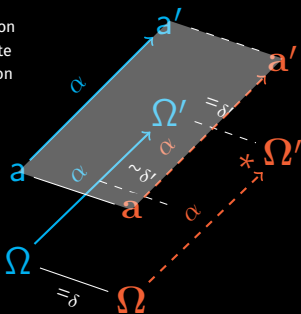
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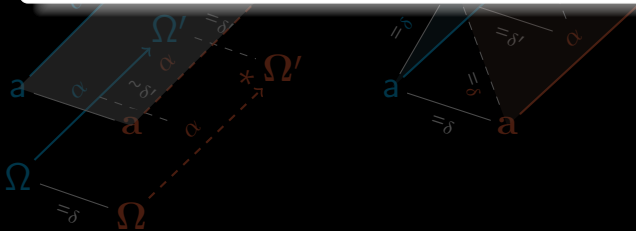
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PRO: proved MS preservation, MS  
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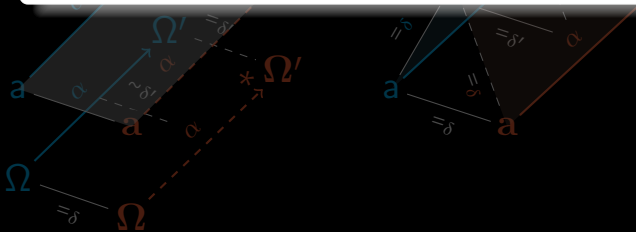
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Challenge: how to ensure  $\mathbf{A}$  actions  
do not affect MS?

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# Robust Cryptographic Constant Time

(wip)

---

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- (in)formally RCT: ...  
no secret-dependent operations

Bernstein '15, Barbosa *et al.* S&P'21

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- **Solution**: use a compiler that preserves RCT

# Micro-architectural Attacks (Spectre)

---

# Speculative Semantics & SNI

Guarnieri et al. S&P'21

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void f (int x)  $\mapsto$  if(x < A.size) {y = B[A[x]]}  
run 1: A.size = 16, A[128] = 3
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call f 128

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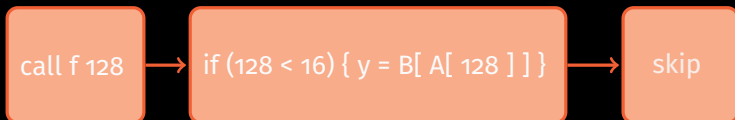


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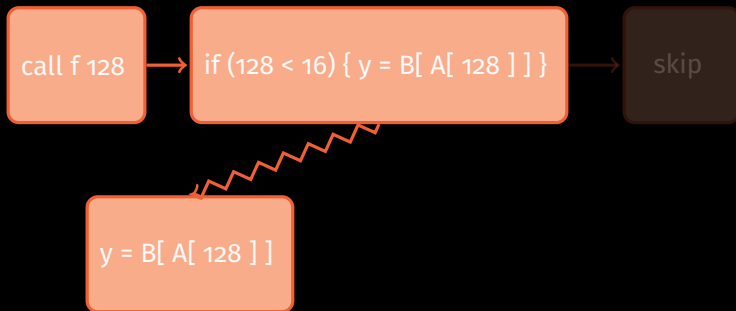
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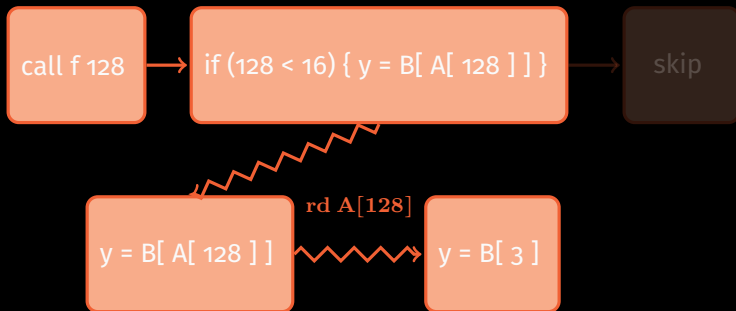
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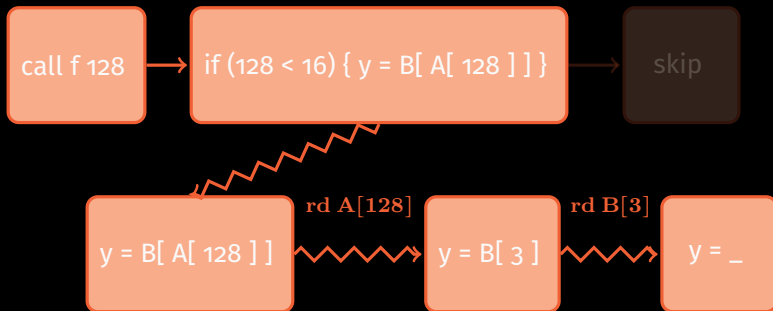
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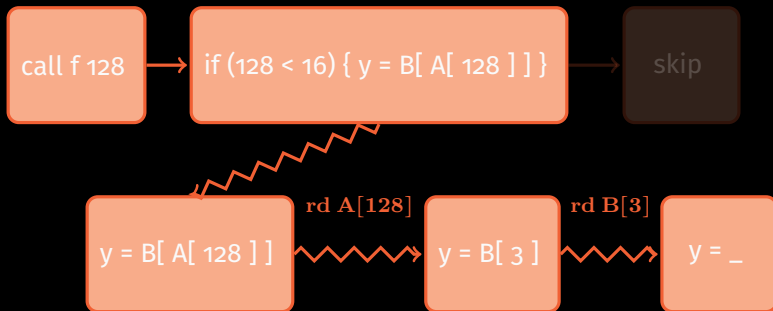




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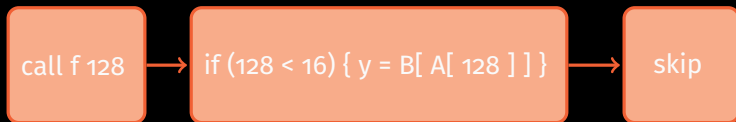
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trace 1: rd A[128]

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# Speculative Semantics & SNI

A program is **SNI** ( $\vdash P : \text{SNI}$ ) if, given two runs from low-equivalent states:

- assuming the non-speculative traces are low-equivalent
- then the **speculative traces are also low-equivalent**

trace 1: rd A[128]

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rd B[7]  $\Rightarrow$  SNI violation

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**Problem:** Proving compiler preserves SNI is hard

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**Solution:** overapproximate SNI with a novel property: speculative safety (SS)

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`void f (int x) ↦ if(x < A.size) {y = B[A[x]]}`

only 1 run needed: `A.size=16, A[128]=3`

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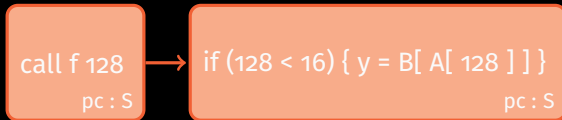
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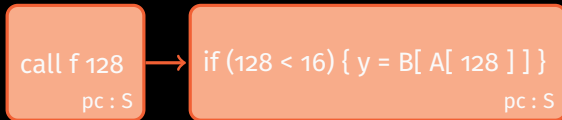


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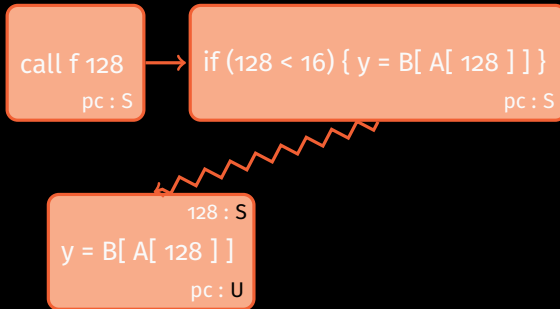


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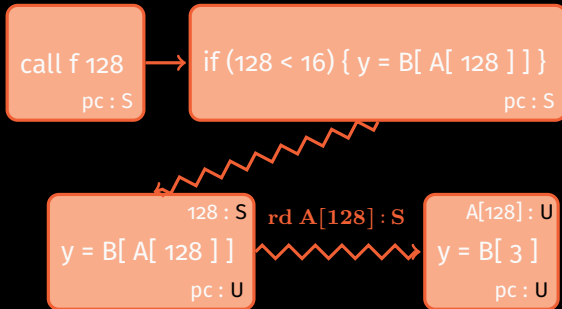


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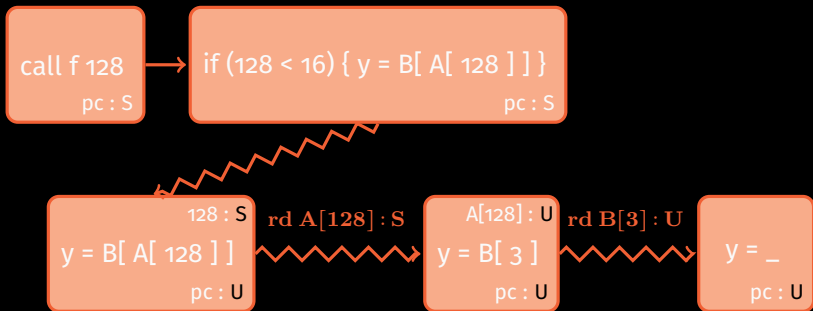


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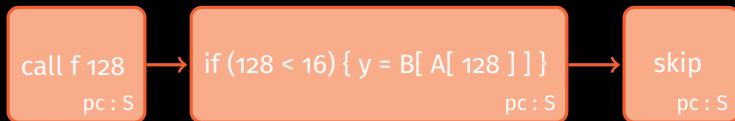


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A program is **SS** ( $\vdash \mathbf{P} : \mathbf{SS}$ ) if its traces do not contain **U** actions

call f 128  
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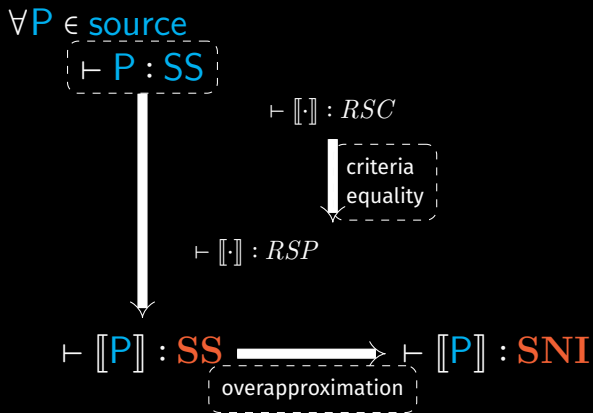
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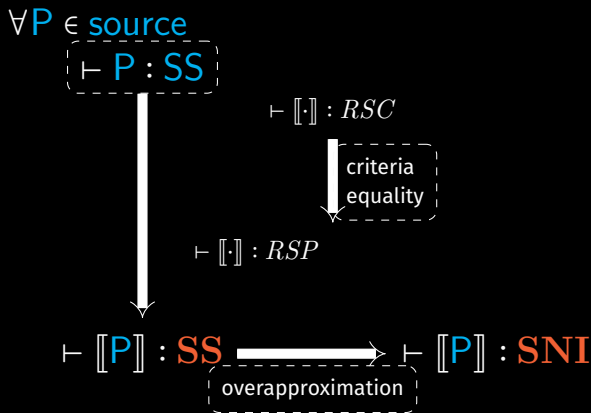
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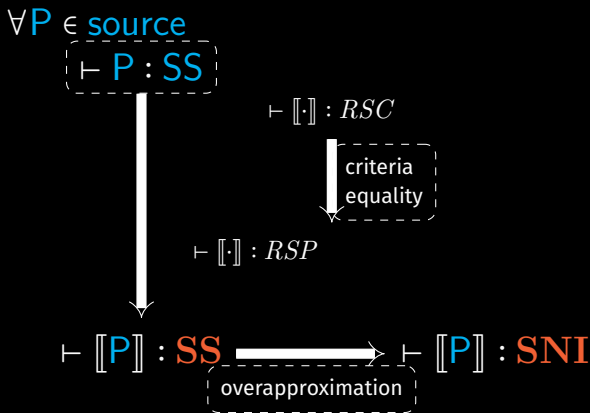


# Secure Compilation Framework for Spectre



- dashed premises are already discharged

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- dashed premises are already discharged
- to show security: **simply prove**  $RSC$

# RSC **for** lfence

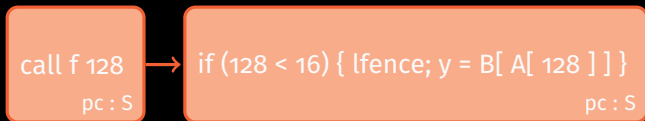
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void f(int x) ↦ if(x < A.size){y = B[A[x]]} // A.size=16, A[128]=3  
[[·]] = void f(int x) ↦ if(x < A.size){lfence; y = B[A[x]]}
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call f 128

pc: S

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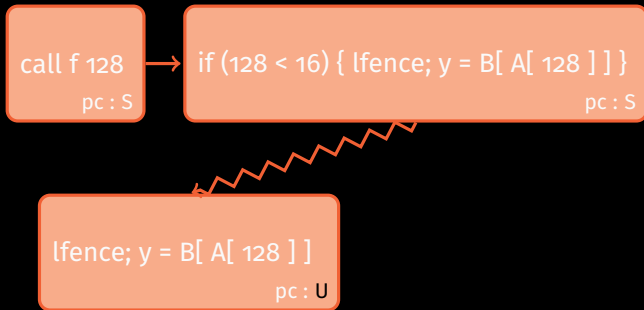
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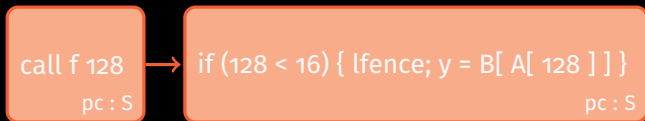
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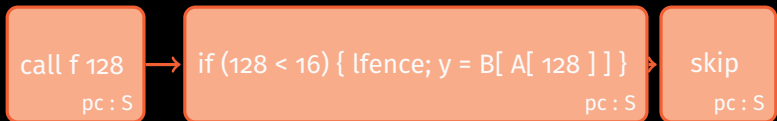
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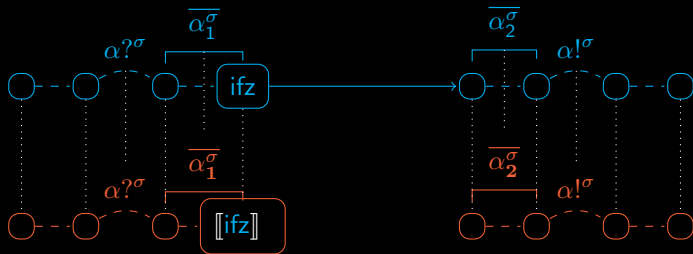


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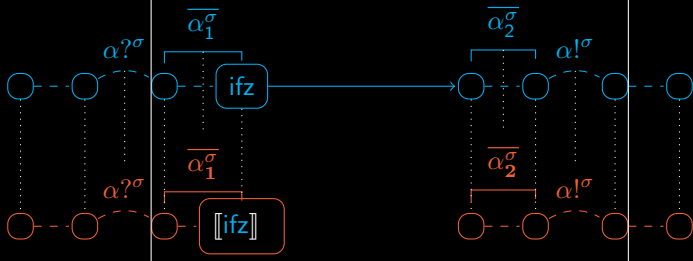


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$\langle\langle A \rangle\rangle / A$   
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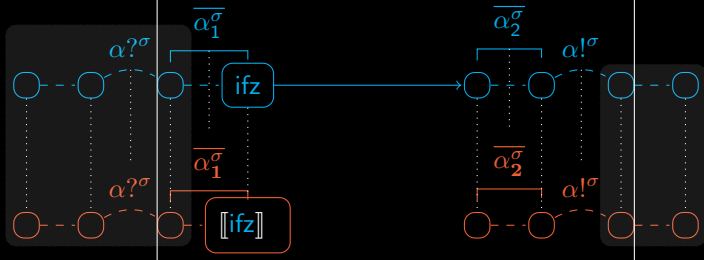


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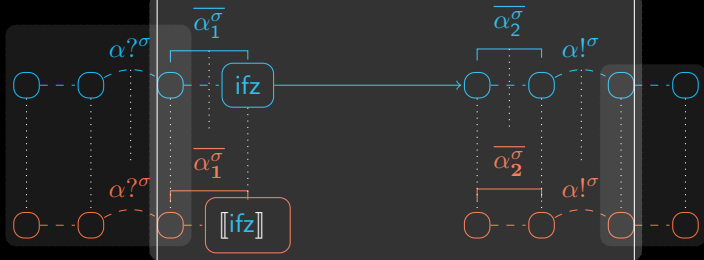


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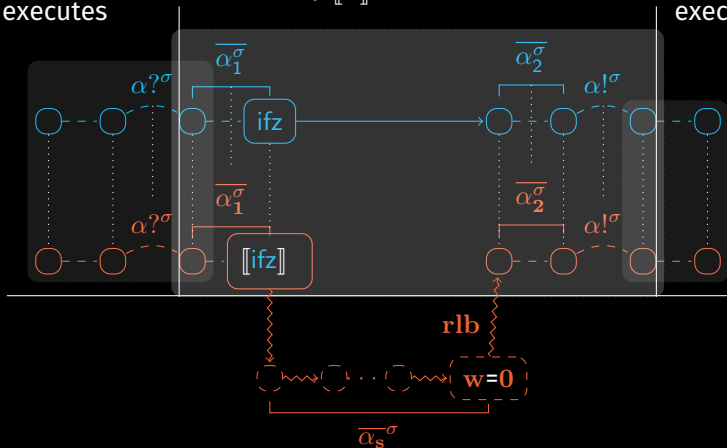


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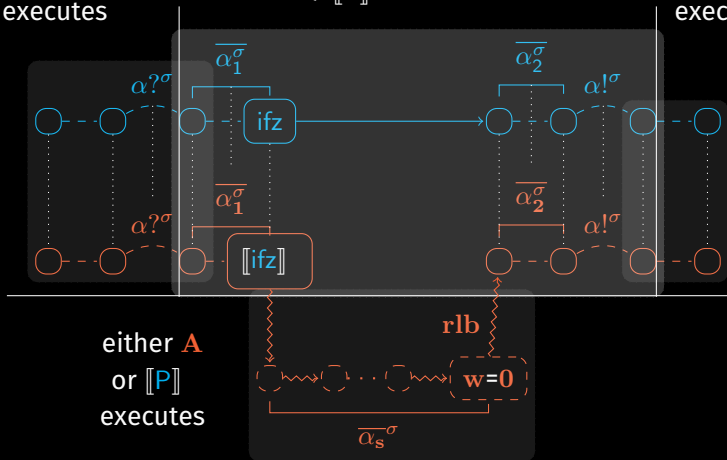


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# What Then?

CCS'22, wip

- SNiv1, SNiv2, SNiv4, SNiv5

Kocher *et al.* S&P'19

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- Challenge: can the **lfence** compiler “**mess**” with SNiv2?
- Challenge: can we **compose lfence**(SNiv1) and **retpoline**(SNiv5)?

# Security Architectures

(e.g., Cheri/ARM Morello, Sancus/Intel SGX, ...) Toplas'15, CSF'21, ...

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# Mechanise Cryptographic Proofs

CSF'24 + wip

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# Robust Hyperproperty Preservation

$$[[\cdot]] \vdash \text{RHP} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \forall P, A. \exists A. \forall t.$$

$$A [[P]] \rightsquigarrow t \iff A [P] \rightsquigarrow t$$

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$$\begin{array}{ccc} t & & t \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ \llbracket P \rrbracket \bowtie A & \iff & P \bowtie A \end{array}$$

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**This talk:** generic flavour, geared towards the newer theories

- protocols  $\Pi$  (using concrete crypto)

*commitment for  $b \in \{0, 1\}$  with SID  $sid$ :*

compute  $G_{pk_b}(r)$  for random  $r \in \{0, 1\}^n$

set  $y = G_{pk_b}(r)$  for  $b = 0$ , or  $y = G_{pk_b}(r) \oplus \sigma$  for  $b = 1$

send  $(Com, sid, y)$  to the receiver

Upon receiving  $(Com, sid, y)$  from  $P_i, P_j$  outputs  $(Receipt, sid, cid, P_i, P_j)$

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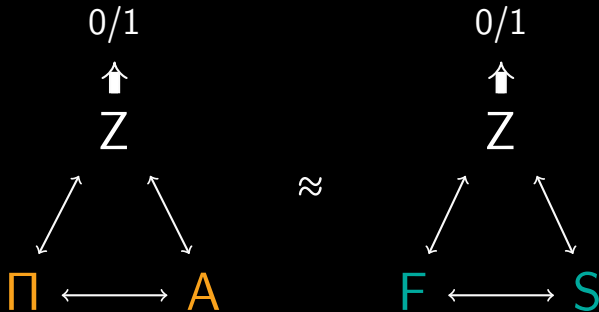
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- environments  $Z$  (objective witness)

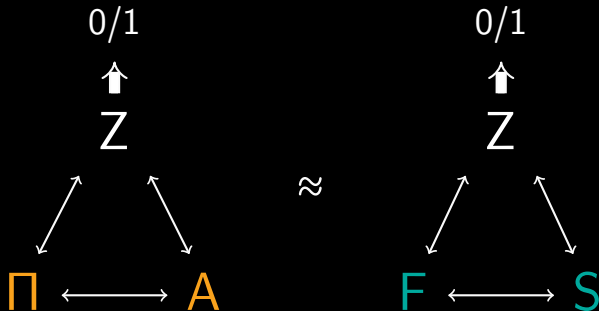


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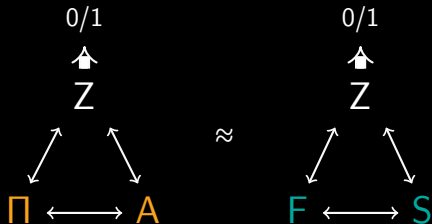
$\leftrightarrow$  represent communication channels

$$\Pi \vdash_{UC} F \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \forall \text{poly } A, \exists S, \forall Z.$$

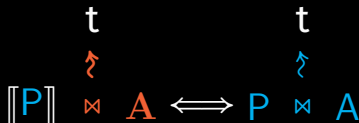
$$\text{Exec}[Z, A, \Pi] \approx \text{Exec}[Z, S, F]$$

# A Closer Look

$\forall \text{poly } A, \exists S, \forall Z.$

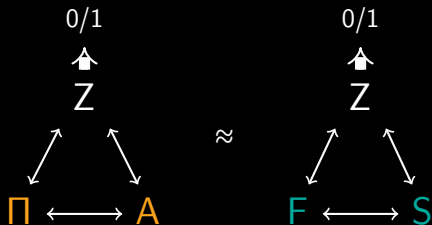


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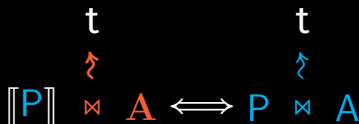


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Isabelle'd both perfect and computational *UC*

# Analogy

<i>UC</i>			<i>SC</i>
protocol	$\Pi$	$\llbracket P \rrbracket$	compiled program
concrete attacker	$A$	$A$	target context
ideal functionality	$F$	$P$	source program
simulator	$S$	$A$	source context
environment, output communication	$Z, 0/1$	$t, \rightsquigarrow$	trace, semantics
probabilistic equiv.	$\leftrightarrow$	$\llbracket \rrbracket$	linking
	$\approx$	$\Leftrightarrow$	trace equality

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human translation	$\Pi \rightarrow F$	$\llbracket \cdot \rrbracket: P \rightarrow P$	compiler
general composition result		...	

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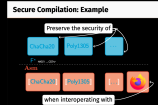
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- Mechanised *UC* for 1-Bit Commitment in Deepsec submission
- Mechanised *UC* for 1/2 Wireguard in Cryptoverif CSF'24

# Conclusion

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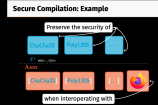
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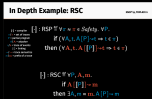
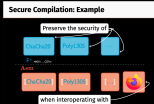


In Depth Example: RSC

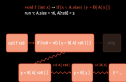
```
[[  $\text{RSC} \Psi \Psi', A, m.$   
  If  $(\Psi, A, P) \Rightarrow \text{ok} (\text{ok})$   
  then  $(\Psi', A, A[P]) \Rightarrow \text{ok} (\text{ok})$   
  
  ]]  
  
[[  $\text{RSC} \Psi \Psi', A, m.$   
  If  $A[P] \Rightarrow m$   
  then  $\exists A', m'. A[P] \Rightarrow m'$   
  
  ]]
```

# Conclusion

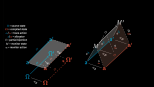
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## Speculative Semantics & SNI

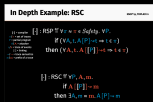
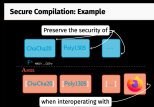


## Compiler Properties

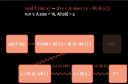


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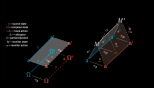
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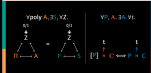
**Speculative Semantics & SNI**



**Compiler Properties**



**A Closer Look**



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Come to PRISC'25, co-located with  
POPL'25.

- SC for different languages?
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# Questions?

