



# A Semantic Bridge Between Executable Specifications and Formal Verification Tools

**Ciprian TEODOROV**

<https://teodorov.github.io/>

[ciprian.teodorov@ensta.fr](mailto:ciprian.teodorov@ensta.fr)

P4S, Lab-STICC, UMR CNRS 6285

ensta-bretagne.fr/teodorov

### Academia @ Lab-STICC, ENSTA Bretagne, Brest

[23-...] Full Professor

[15-23] Associate professor

Lead the OBP2 Semantic Diagnosis & Formal Verification Lab. (<http://www.obpcdl.org/>)

[13-15] Postdoc

Verification MBSE, Concurrent system modeling, and verification (<https://gemoc.org/>)

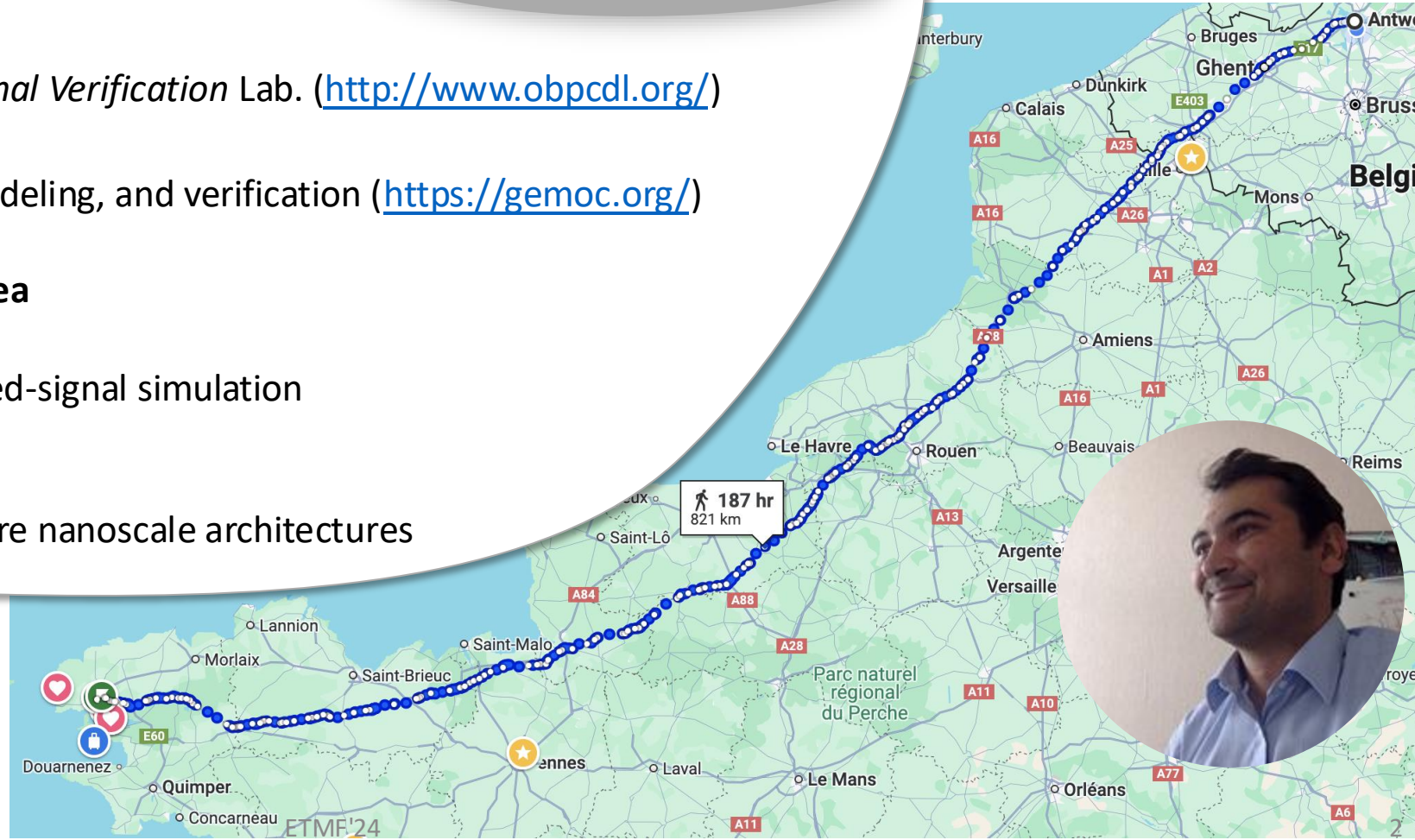
### Industry @ Dolphin Integration - Grenoble Area

[11-13] Electronics CAD engineer

Compilation of VHDL, VHDL-AMS for mixed-signal simulation

### PhD in Computer Science @ UBO – Brest

[08-11] Model-driven physical design for future nanoscale architectures



# The Road Today

1. Executable specifications & behavior analysis monitors
2. The shy semantics and the inaccessible monitors.
3.  $G\forall\text{min}\exists$ : If the semantics opens up the monitors are interested.
4. When  $G\forall\text{min}\exists$  experiences the real world.
5. Sum up and ways forward.

# Context: Domain-specific languages

General-purpose languages introduce **accidental complexities**.

Domain experts rely on *a shared domain-specific language* to alleviate these problems.

**Domain-specific languages enable**

**abstractions** (models) focused on the domain of discourse.

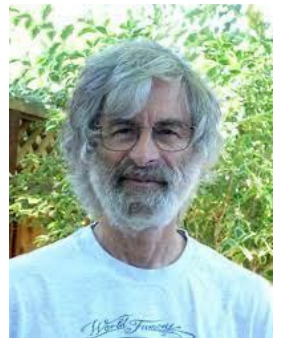
**tools** (conceptual or computer-assisted) adapted to the domain

# Context: Executable specifications

- eXecutable Domain-Specific Languages (xDSL) for handling behaviors.
  - Programming languages = prescriptive xDSLs
    - force the computer to perform some behavior.
  - Thinking above the code [1], specifying, requires a problem-oriented mindset
- Executable-Specifications capture the behavior to study it in captivity
  - Descriptive xDSL that reflects how the object behaves

*Descriptive* [2]:

- presenting observations about the characteristics of something
- factually grounded or informative rather than normative, prescriptive or emotive



[1] Leslie Lamport: [Thinking Above the Code](#)


[2] (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/descriptive>)

# a Zoo of Executable Specification Languages

$\frac{dy}{dx}$

**Physical processes**

- Calculus [Newton and Leibniz]



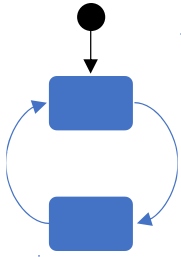
**Temporal logic**

- LTL
- CTL\*
- Temporal Logic of Actions (TLA+)

$\lambda f. \lambda x. x$


**Computable functions**

- Lambda calculus
- Turing machines



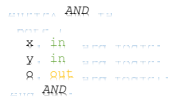
**Automata**

- NFA
- PDA
- Statecharts



**Concurrency**

- Petri nets
- CSP – Hoare
- Actor models – Hewitt



**HDLs**

- VHDL[-AMS]
- [System-]Verilog[-A]

# Terminology

**Language monitoring** [KHC91] is the process of observing the **execution of a computer program** expressed in a given **programming language**.

[KHC91] Amir Kishon, Paul Hudak, and Charles Consel. 1991. Monitoring semantics: a formal framework for specifying, implementing, and reasoning about execution monitors. In *Proceedings of the ACM SIGPLAN 1991 conference on Programming language design and implementation (PLDI '91)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 338–352. <https://doi.org/10.1145/113445.113474>

Terminology: In our context

**Language monitoring** is the process of observing the **behavior of an executable specification** expressed in a given **specification language**.

*In the following:*

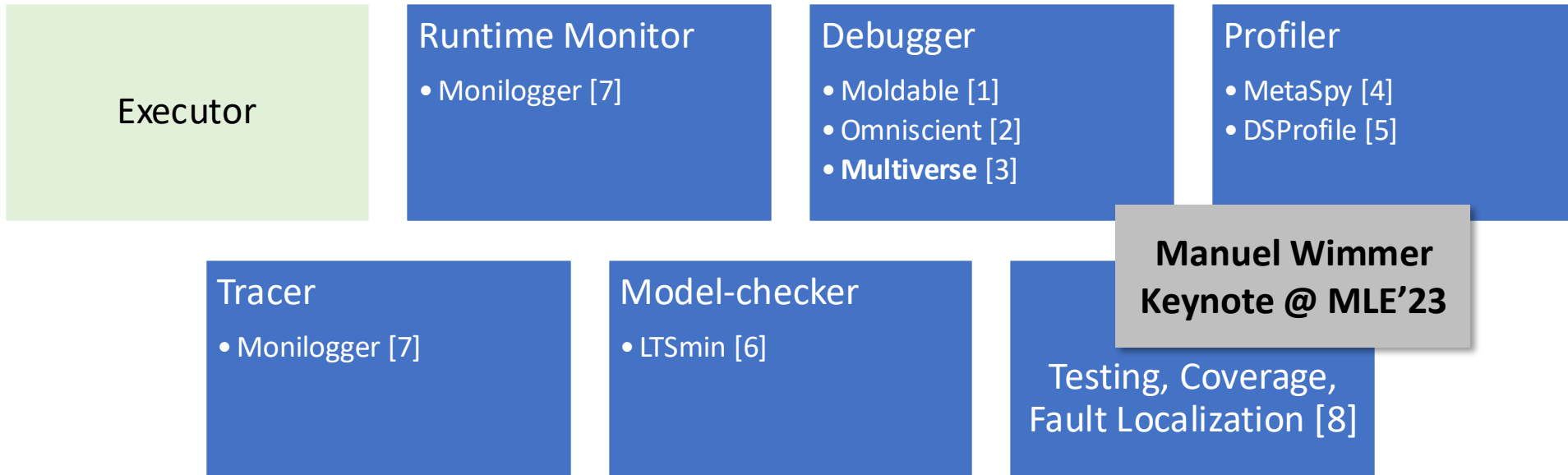
the tools that enable this process will be referred to as:

***language monitors***, or simply **monitors**

***runtime monitors*** are a subclass of ***language monitors***



# a Zoo of Language Monitors



[1] Chiş et al. "The Moldable Debugger: A Framework for Developing Domain-Specific Debuggers." SLE 2014.

[2] Bousse et al. "Omniscient Debugging for Executable DSLs." JSS 2018.

[3] Torres Lopez et al. "Multiverse debugging: Non-deterministic debugging for non-deterministic programs." ECOOP 2019.

[4] Bergel et al. "Domain-specific profiling." TOOLS 2011.

[5] Sloane et al. "Domain-specific program profiling and its application to attribute grammars and term rewriting." SCP 2014.

[6] Kant et al. "LTSmin: High-Performance Language-Independent Model Checking." TACAS 2015.

[7] Leroy et al. "Monilogging for executable domain-specific languages." SLE 2021

[8] Khorram et al. "From Coverage Computation to Fault Localization: A Generic Framework for Domain-Specific Languages." SLE 22

# Program Verification Tools [1]

<https://slebok.github.io/proverb/>

tool papers from TACAS 2016–2021  
all papers from CAV 2017–2021

	Tools	Prototypes	No tool
CAV	228 (49%)	36 (8%)	89 (19%)
TACAS	94 (20%)	0 (0%)	19 (4%)
Overall	322 (69%)	36 (8%)	108 (23%)

**Table 1: An overview of how many tools were identified in the CAV and TACAS proceedings.**

[1] Sophie Lathouwers and Vadim Zaytsev. 2022. Modelling program verification tools for software engineers. In *Proceedings of the 25th International Conference on Model Driven Engineering Languages and Systems (MODELS '22)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 98–108.

<https://doi.org/10.1145/3550355.3552426>

# Questions to ponder

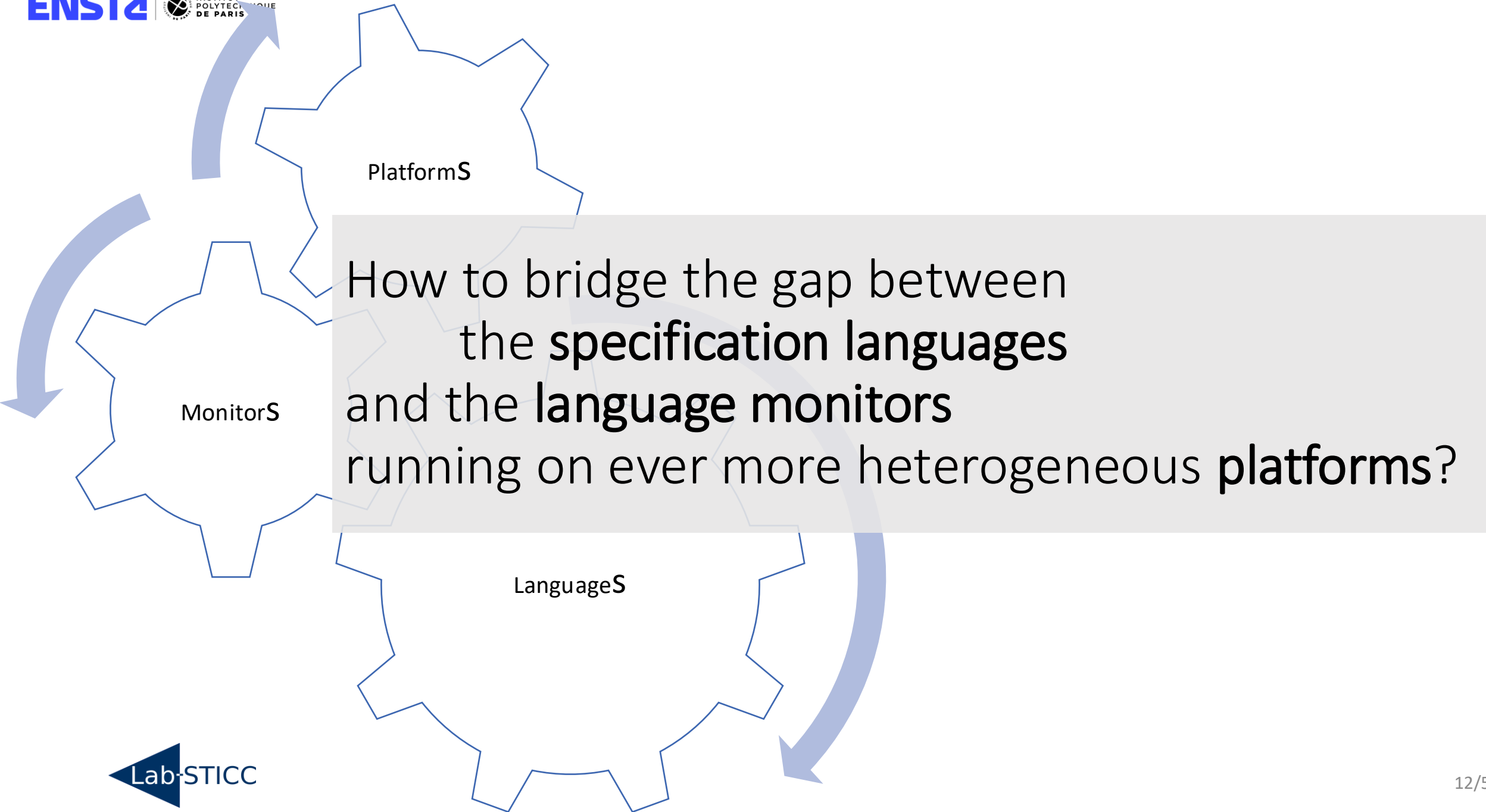
## Sustainability?

How to write code that survives?

Does your favorite **specification** language:

- has a **debugger**? Can it go back in time?
- comes with a **model-checker**?
- offers support for **random testing**?

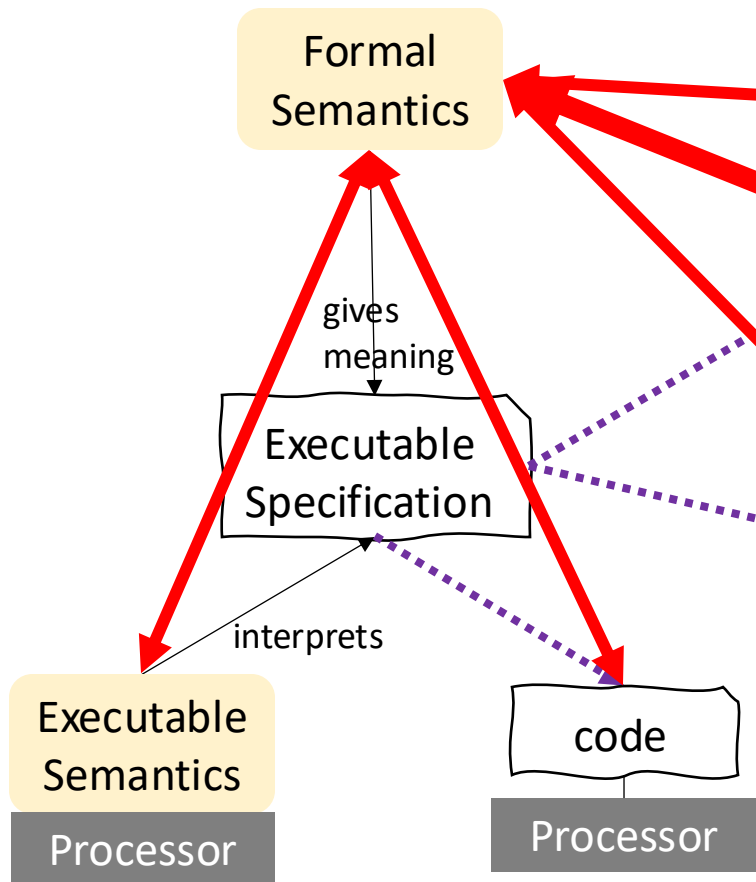
Why do we still **lack these basic tools** for so many **practically important** specification languages?



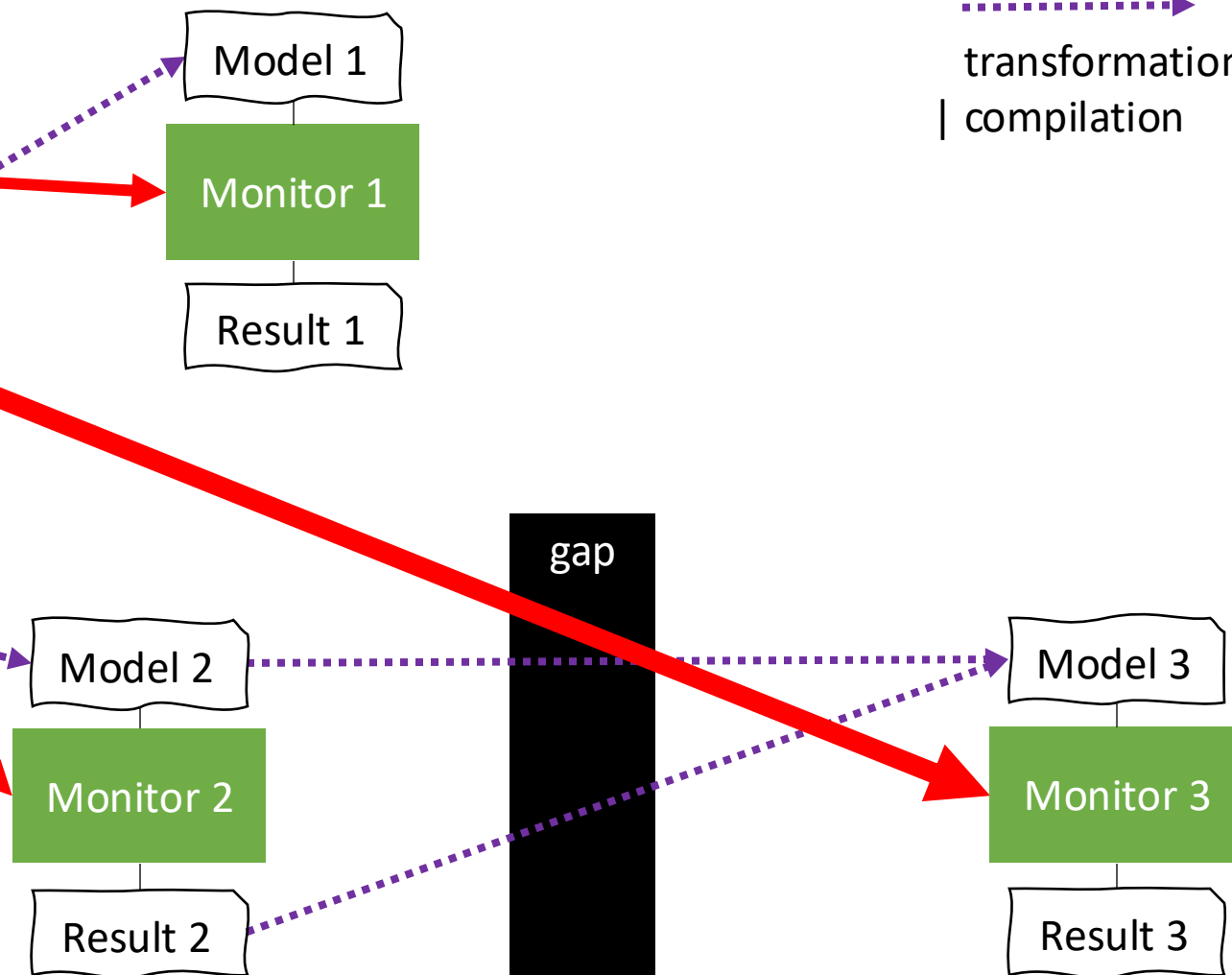
## 2. The Shy Semantics and the Inaccessible Monitors.

- Understanding the problem
- Looking for high-level solutions

# Many semantics

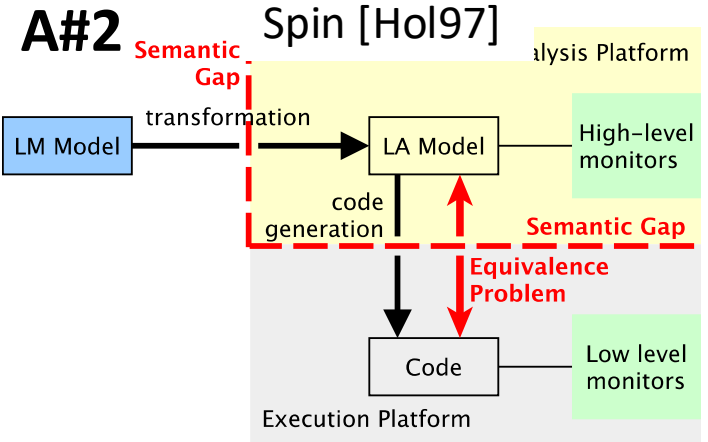
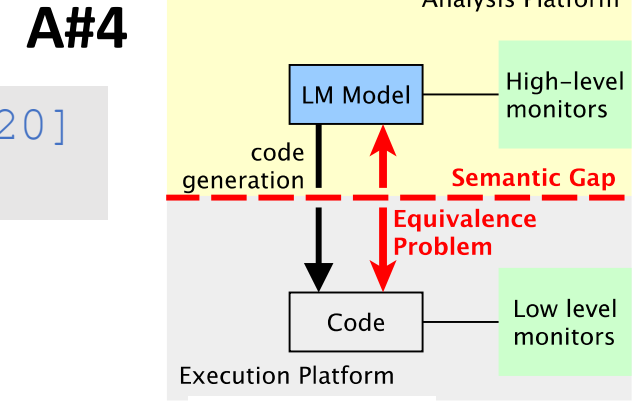
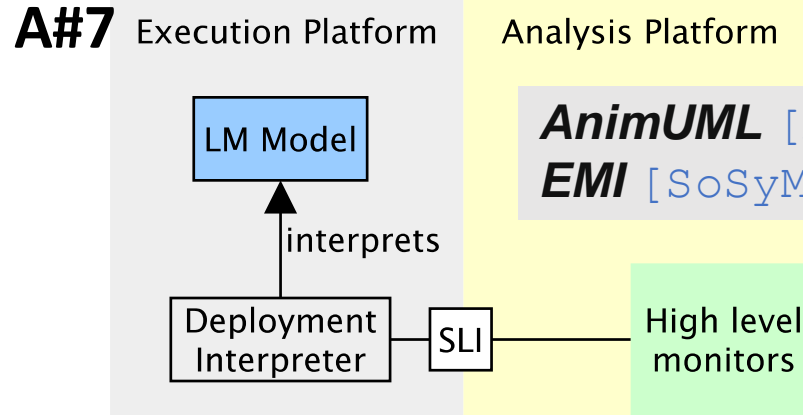
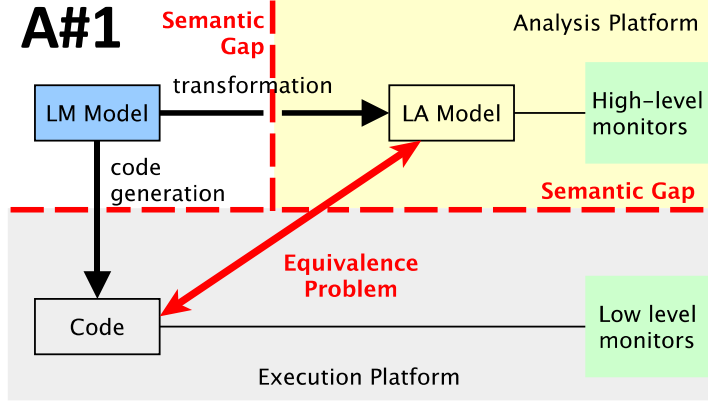


# Many Monitors

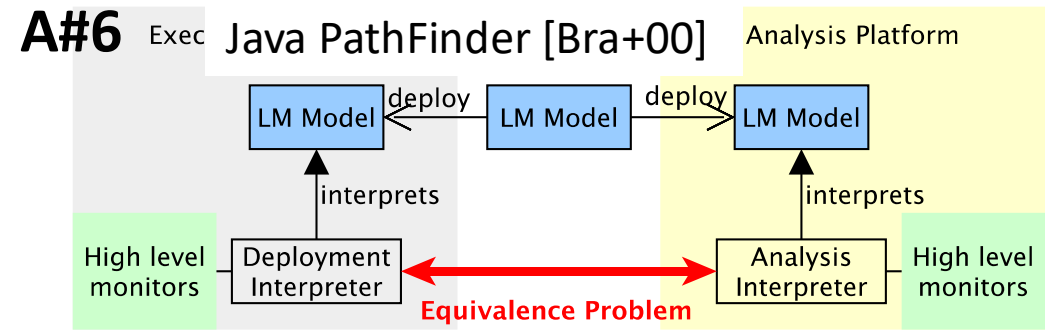
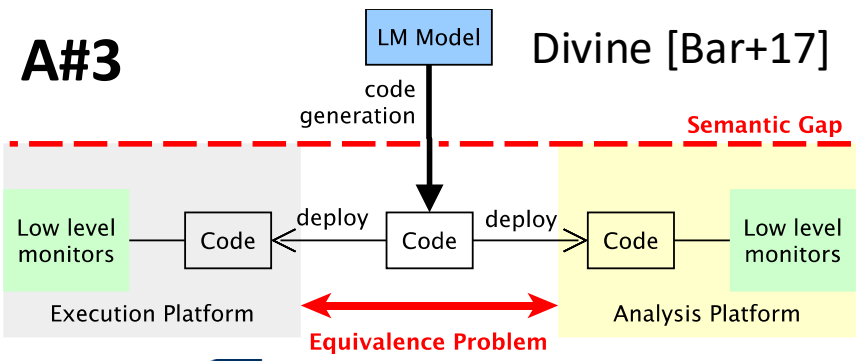
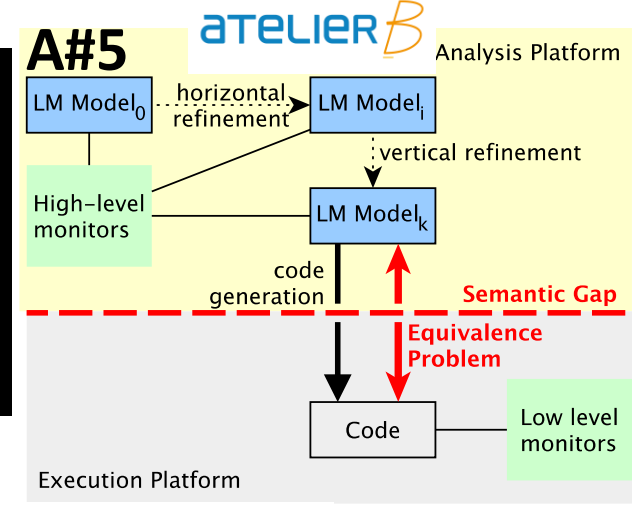


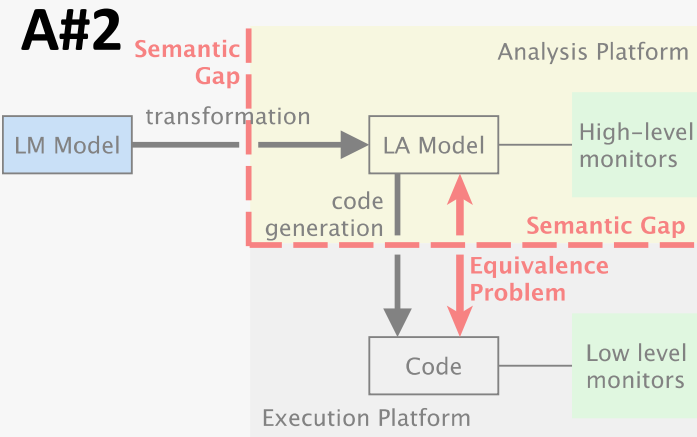
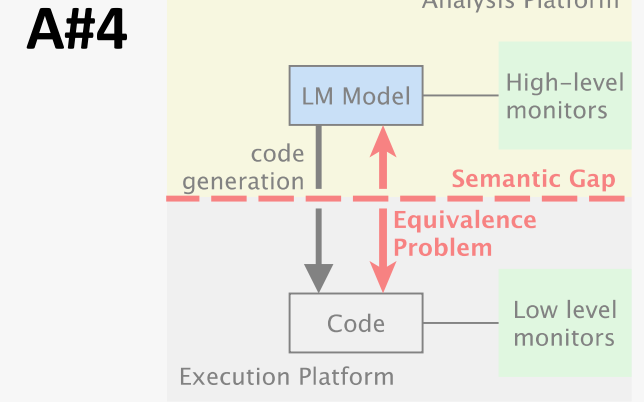
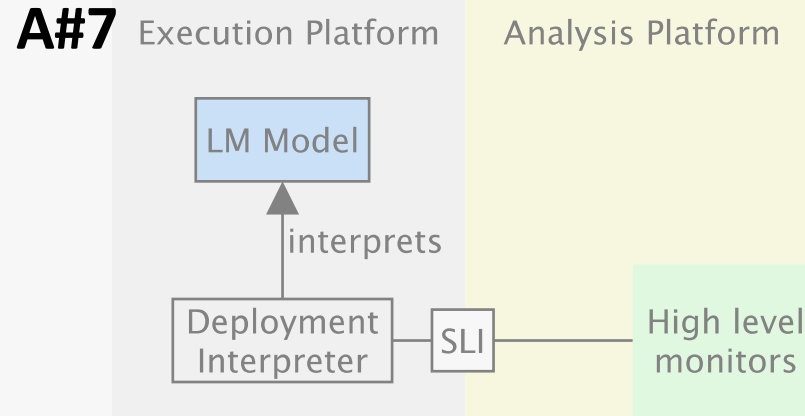
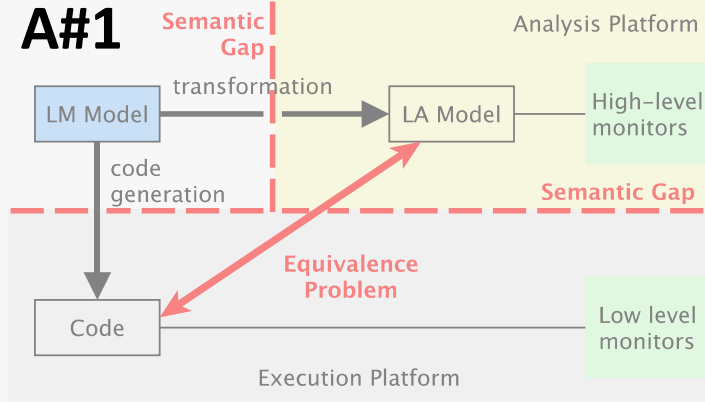
↔  
equivalence  
needed

⋯→  
transformation  
|  
compilation

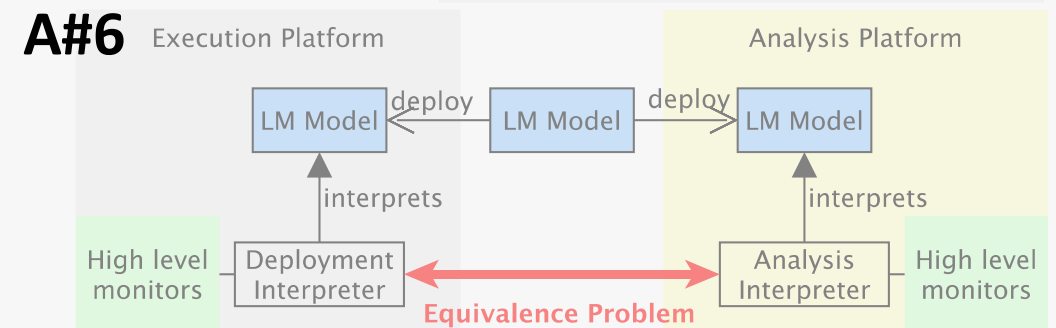
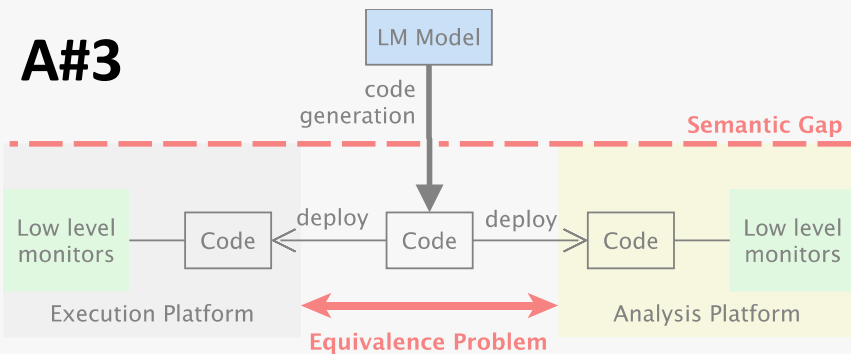
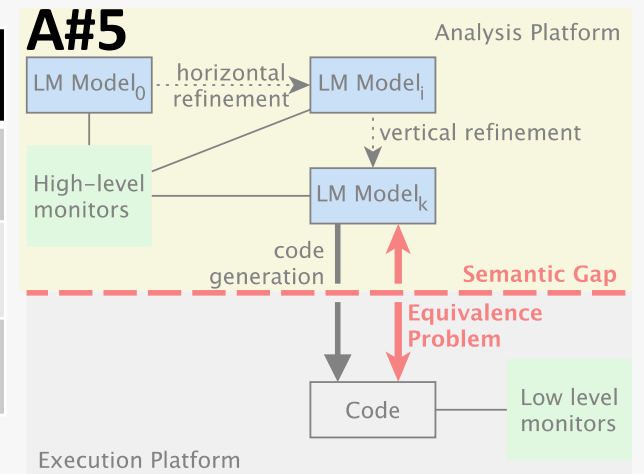


**P#1** Semantic gap between design model and analysis model  
**P#2** Semantic gap between design model and executable code  
**P#3** Equivalence problems between the analysis model and executable code





	A#1	A#2	A#3	A#4	A#5	A#6	A#7
<b>P#1</b>	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>P#2</b>	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
<b>P#3</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓



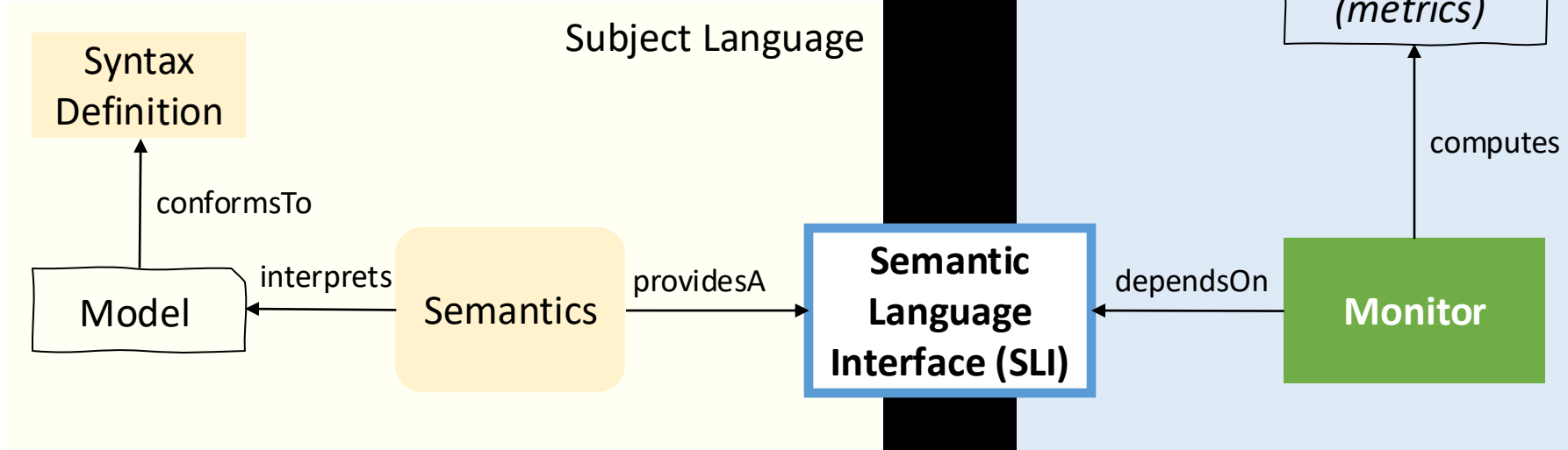


### 3. $G\forall\text{min}\exists$ : If the Semantics Opens Up the Monitors are Interested.

- Requirements
- $G\forall\text{min}\exists$  Semantic Language Interface
- An illustration

# Make it simple

Execution & Monitoring



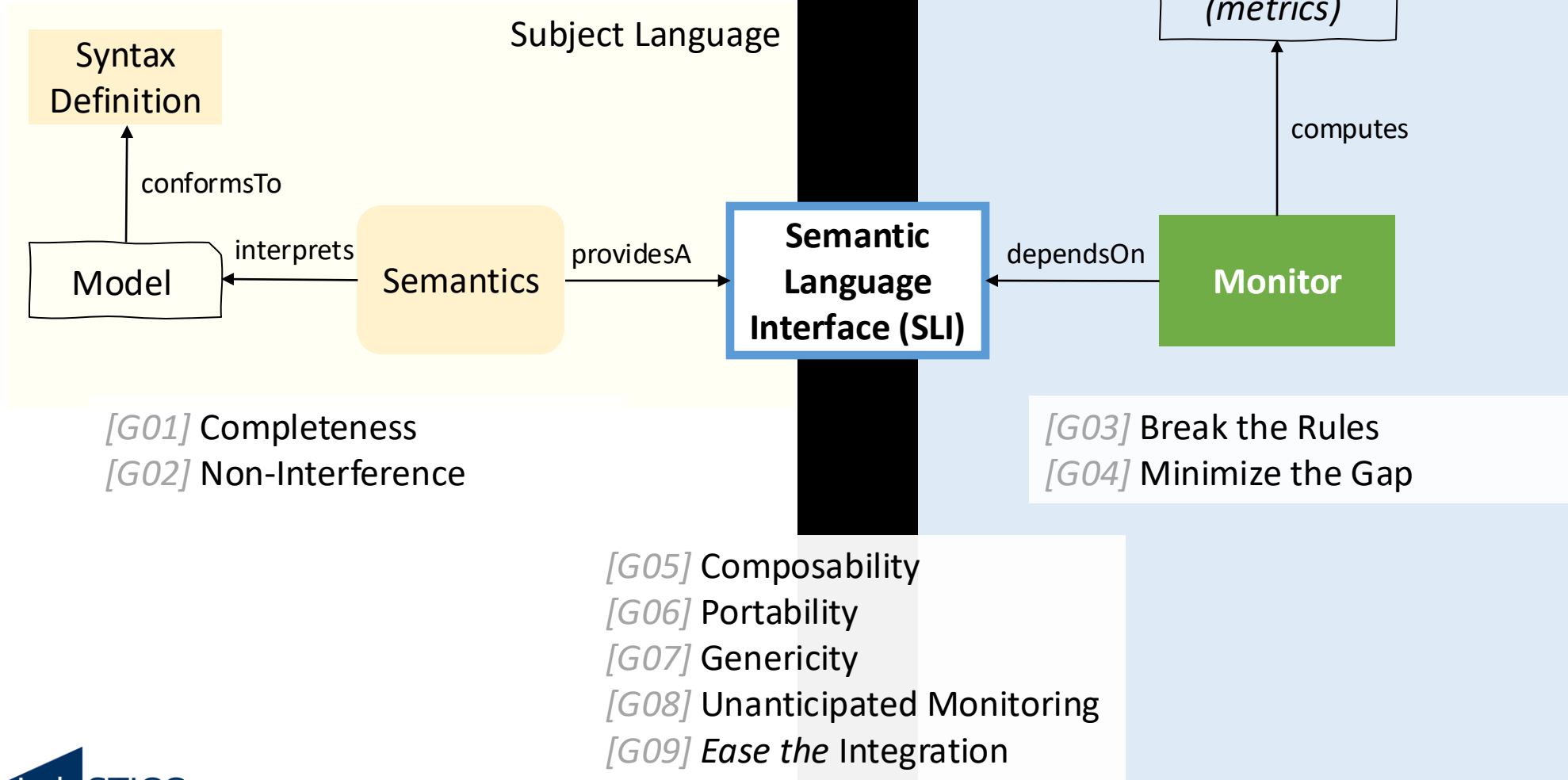
Q1: What is the SLI interface?

Q2: How to build the monitors?

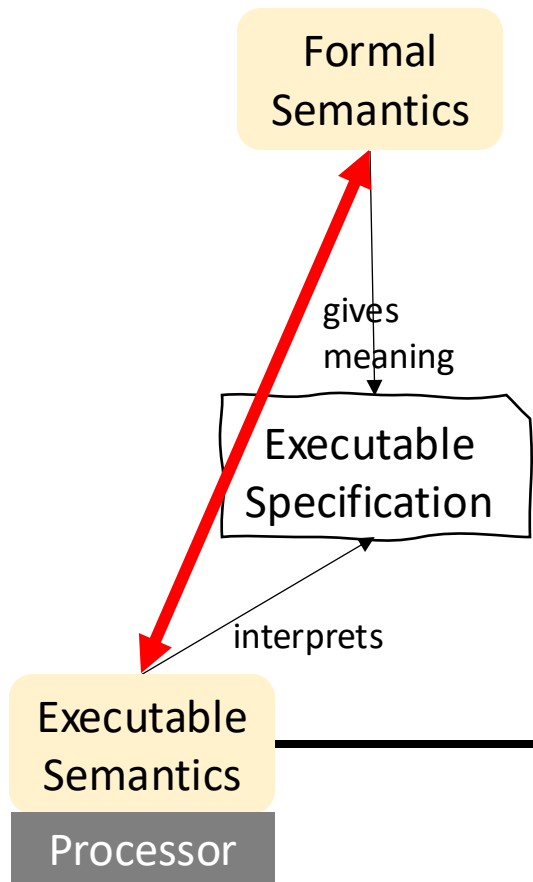
[SLE'16]

# SLI Goals

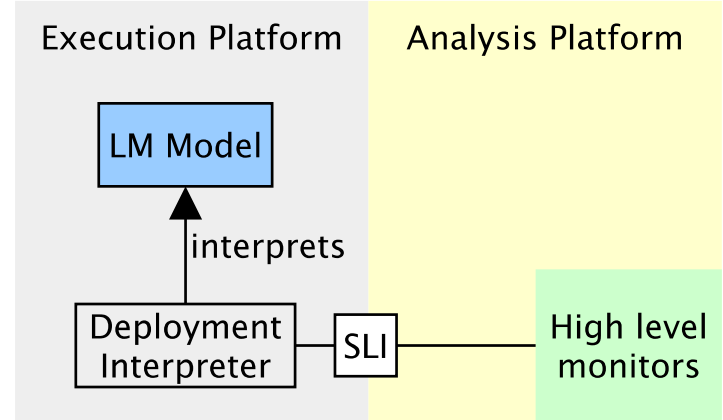
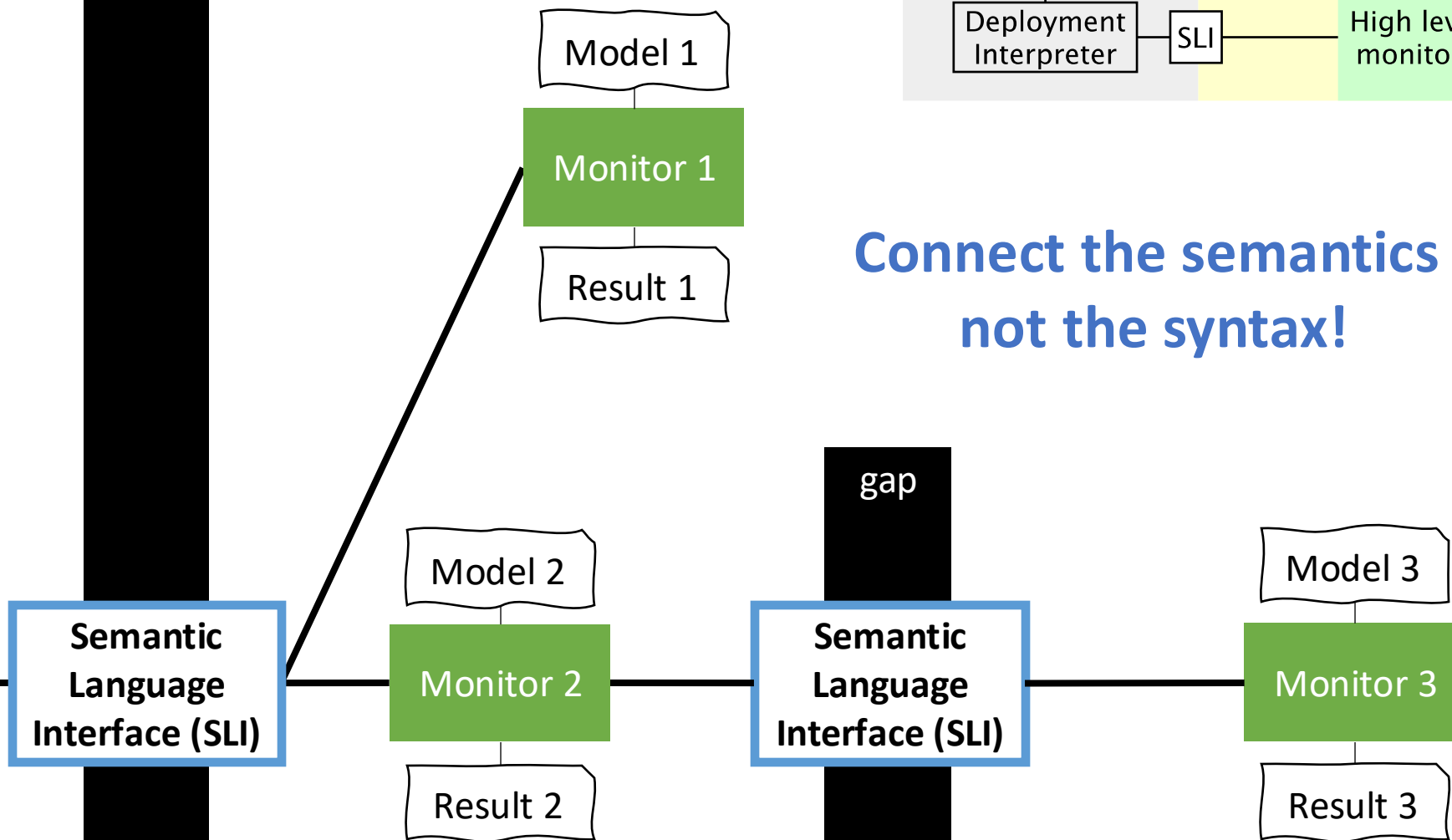
Execution & Monitoring



# One semantics



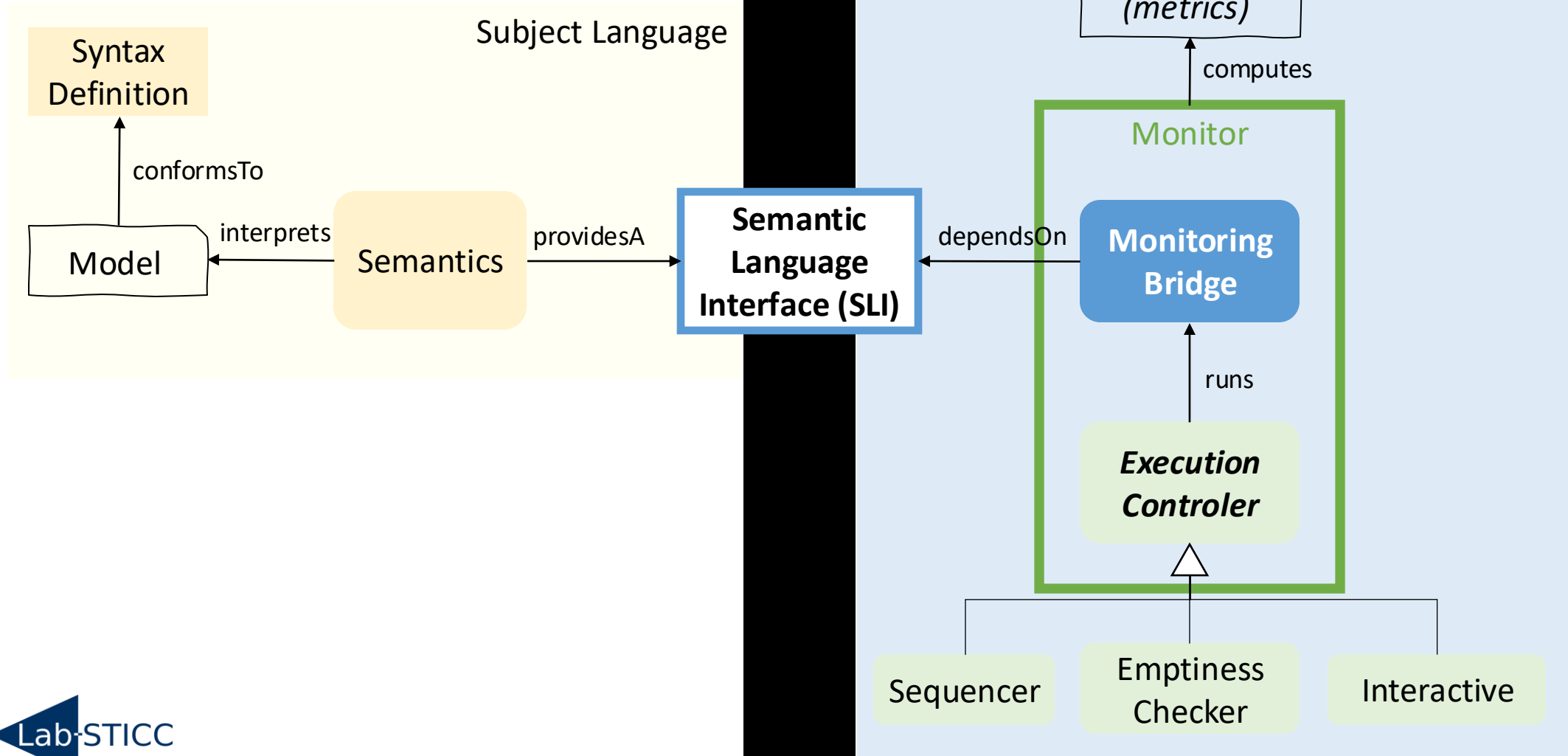
# Many Monitors



Connect the semantics not the syntax!

# Monitor Structure

Execution & Monitoring



# $\forall \text{min} \exists$ Semantic Language Interface (SLI)

SLI {

```

semantics: (C A) {
  initial:    set C
  actions:   C → set A
  execute: A → C → set C
}

```

Expression    execution step    Value

**evaluate:**  $E \rightarrow (C \times A \times C) \rightarrow V$  -- *questions*

**reduce:**  $R \rightarrow C \rightarrow \alpha$                       -- *reductions*

$\pi:$   $(C A V \alpha T) \{ \dots \}$                       -- *projections*

}

Similar semantic approaches:

Lamport L. *“The temporal logic of actions.”* TOPLAS. **1994** <https://doi.org/10.1145/177492.177726>

Charguéraud, et al. *“Omnisemantics: Smooth Handling of Nondeterminism.”* TOPLAS. **2023**, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3579834>

## Generic Types:

*Configuration:*

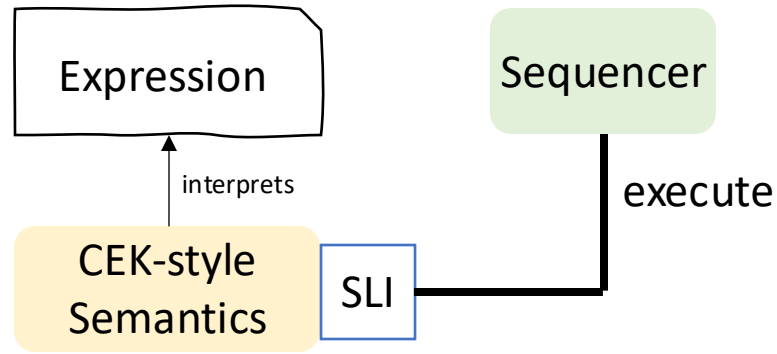
*Example CEK-style*

$C \triangleq \langle \text{control, env, [Frame]} \rangle$

*Action:*

*Example CEK-style*

$A \triangleq \text{from-predicate} \rightarrow \text{to-C}$



**Example CEK-style**  
 $C \triangleq \langle \text{control, env, [Frame]} \rangle$

$A \triangleq \text{from-predicate} \rightarrow \text{to-C}$

### SLI Semantics for a CEK-style abstract machine

rules: { lookup, app, arg, body, ... }

*SLI.semantics*: (C A) {  
**initial**: set C := { <exp,  $\emptyset$ , [] > }

**actions**: C  $\rightarrow$  set A  
 | c => rules.where(r => r.enabledIn c)

**execute**: A  $\rightarrow$  C  $\rightarrow$  set C  
 | r c => { r.applyIn c }

```

Sequencer(sli) {
  current = sli.initial.any
  while (current != NULL) {
    action = sli.actions(current).any
    if (actions == NULL) break;
    current = sli.execute(action, current).any
  }
}
  
```

- If **sli** exposes a deterministic semantics  $\rightarrow$  *exactly one sequence*  
 $\Leftrightarrow$   
 $\forall a c, |initial| = |actions\ c| = |execute\ a\ c| = 1$



## 4. When G $\forall$ min $\exists$ experiences the real world.

- **Some experiences unravel reusable monitoring bridges**
- Exploring hardware execution
- Multiverse debugging made simple and more powerful
- Transfer to commercial products -- *OBP2 inside*
- Transfer to future practitioners -- *From zero to model-checker*



# OBP2 Research Vehicle

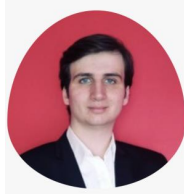
2015-2025



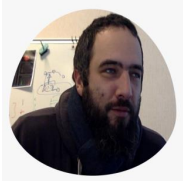
Emilien  
FOURNIER  
2022



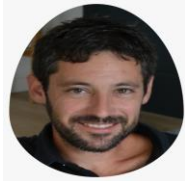
Nicolas  
SUN  
2022



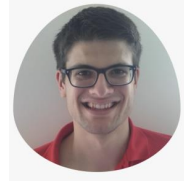
Matthias  
PASQUIER  
2024



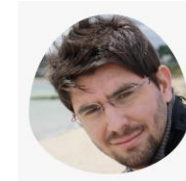
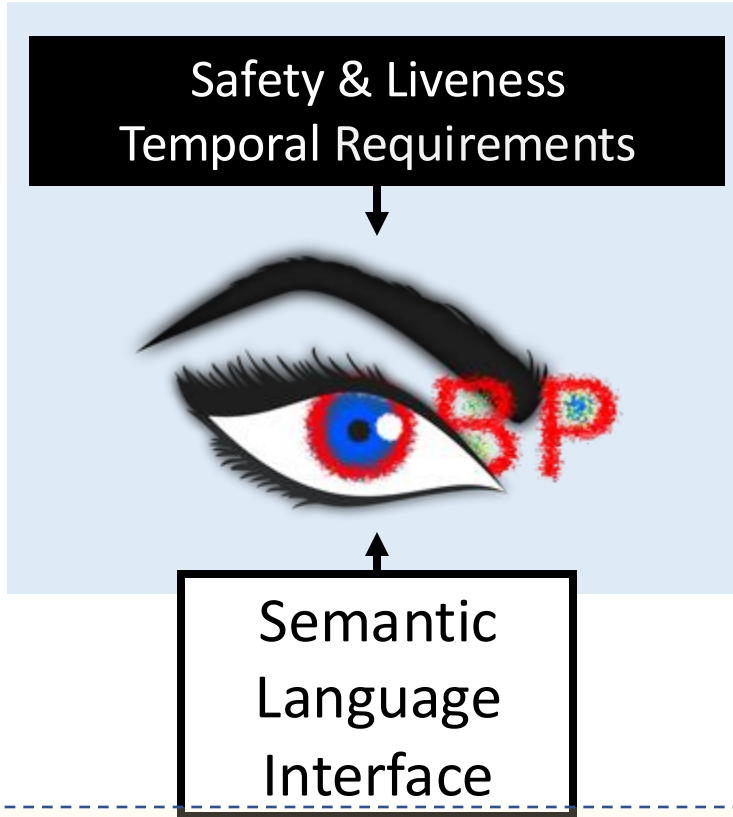
Luka  
LE ROUX  
2018



Vincent  
LEILDE  
2019



Valentin  
BESNARD  
2020



J.C. ROGER



B. DROUOT



T. BOLLENGIER



L.LE ROUX



F. GOLRA

Projects:

- ONEWAY (DGAC)
- Ker-SEVECO (R.Bretagne,EU)
- JoinSafeCyber (AID)
- VeriMoB (RAPID)
- EASE4SE (RAPID)
- DEPARTS (PIA)
- GeMoC (ANR)



Commercial Products [ *PragmaDEV* ]

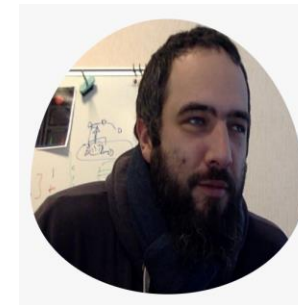


Academic Prototypes [ *in-house* ]

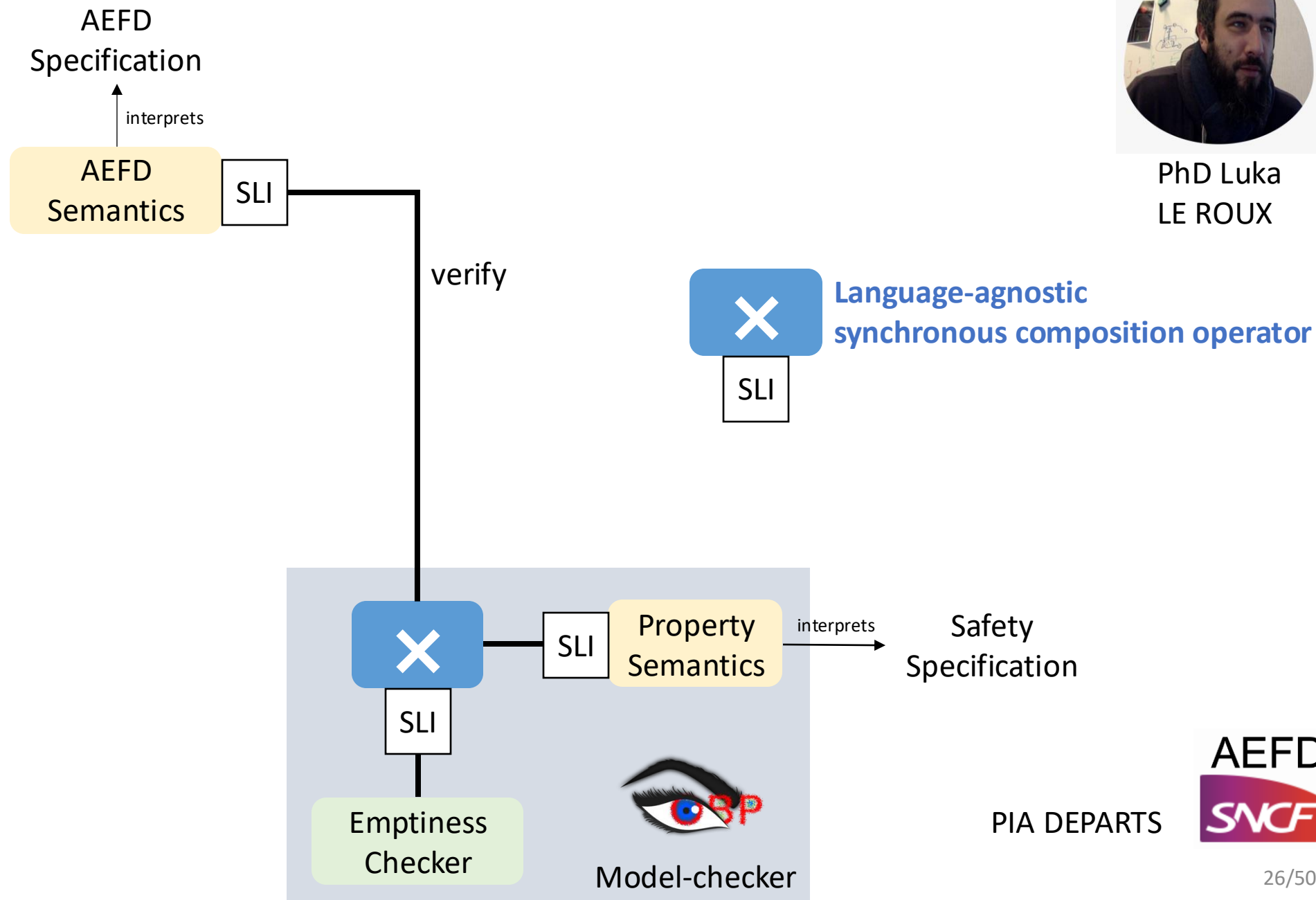


Reuse [ OTS ]





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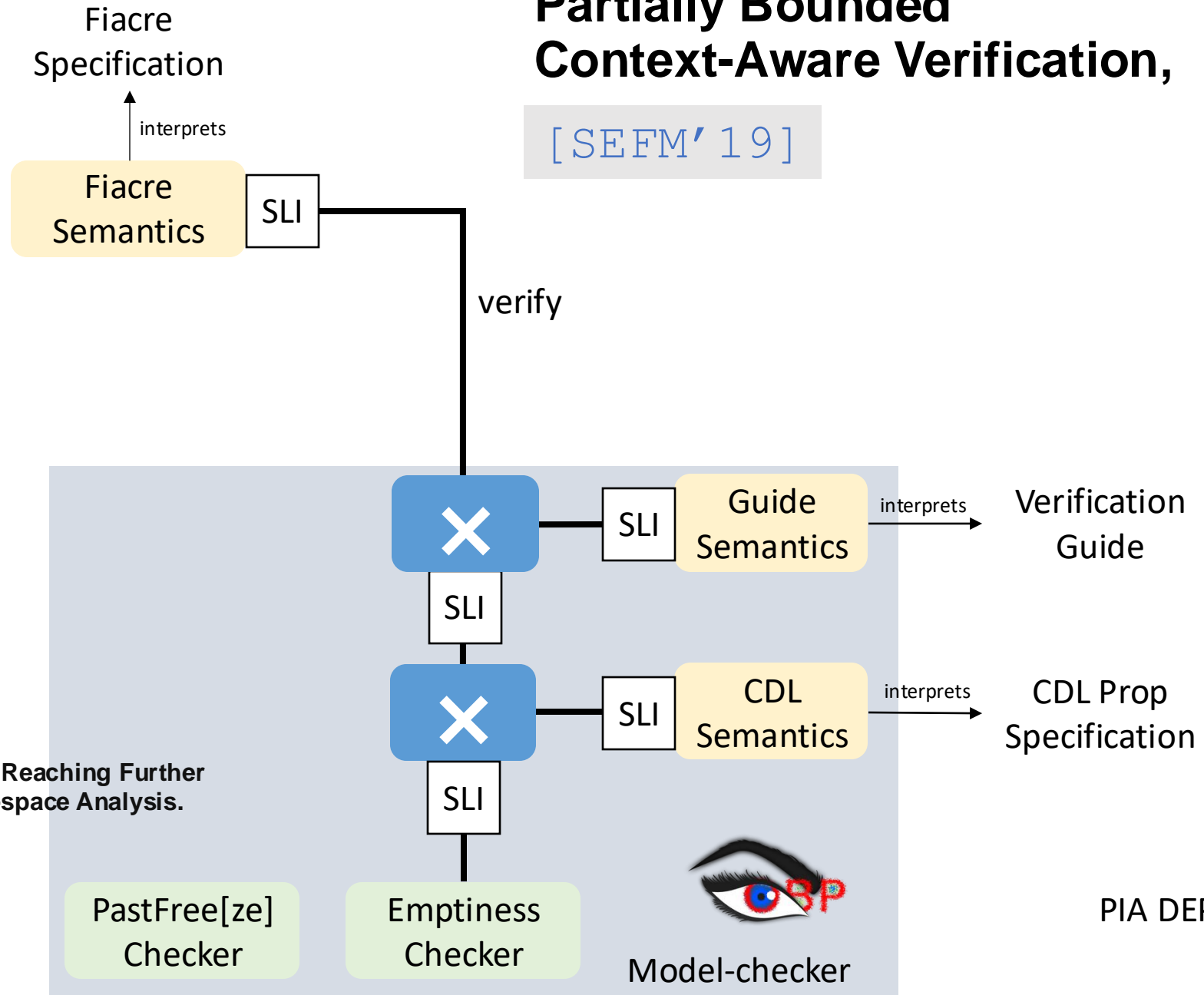


# Partially Bounded Context-Aware Verification,

[SEFM'19]



PhD Luka LE ROUX

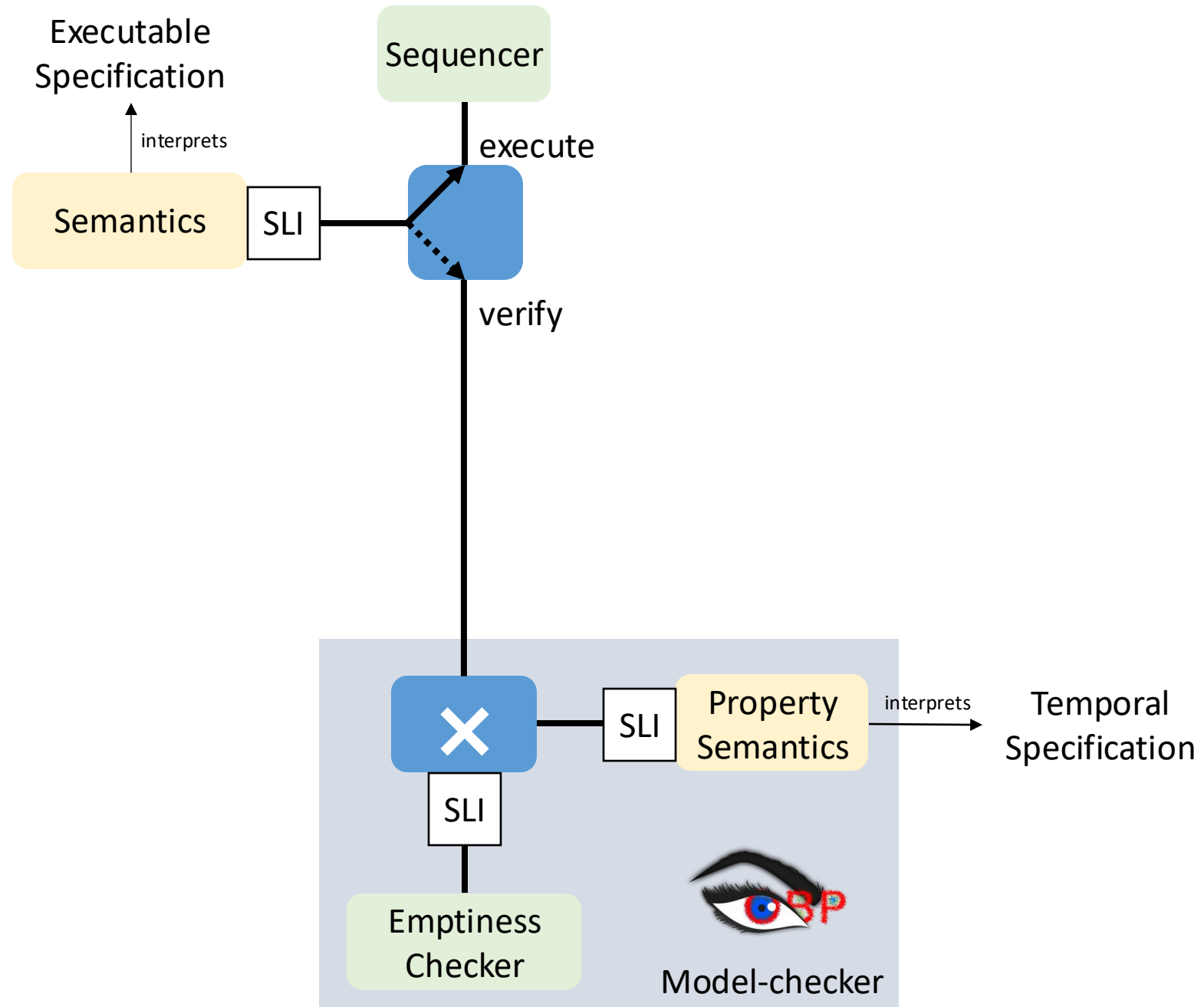


Past-Free[ze] Reachability Analysis: Reaching Further with DAG-directed Exhaustive State-space Analysis.

[STVR'16]



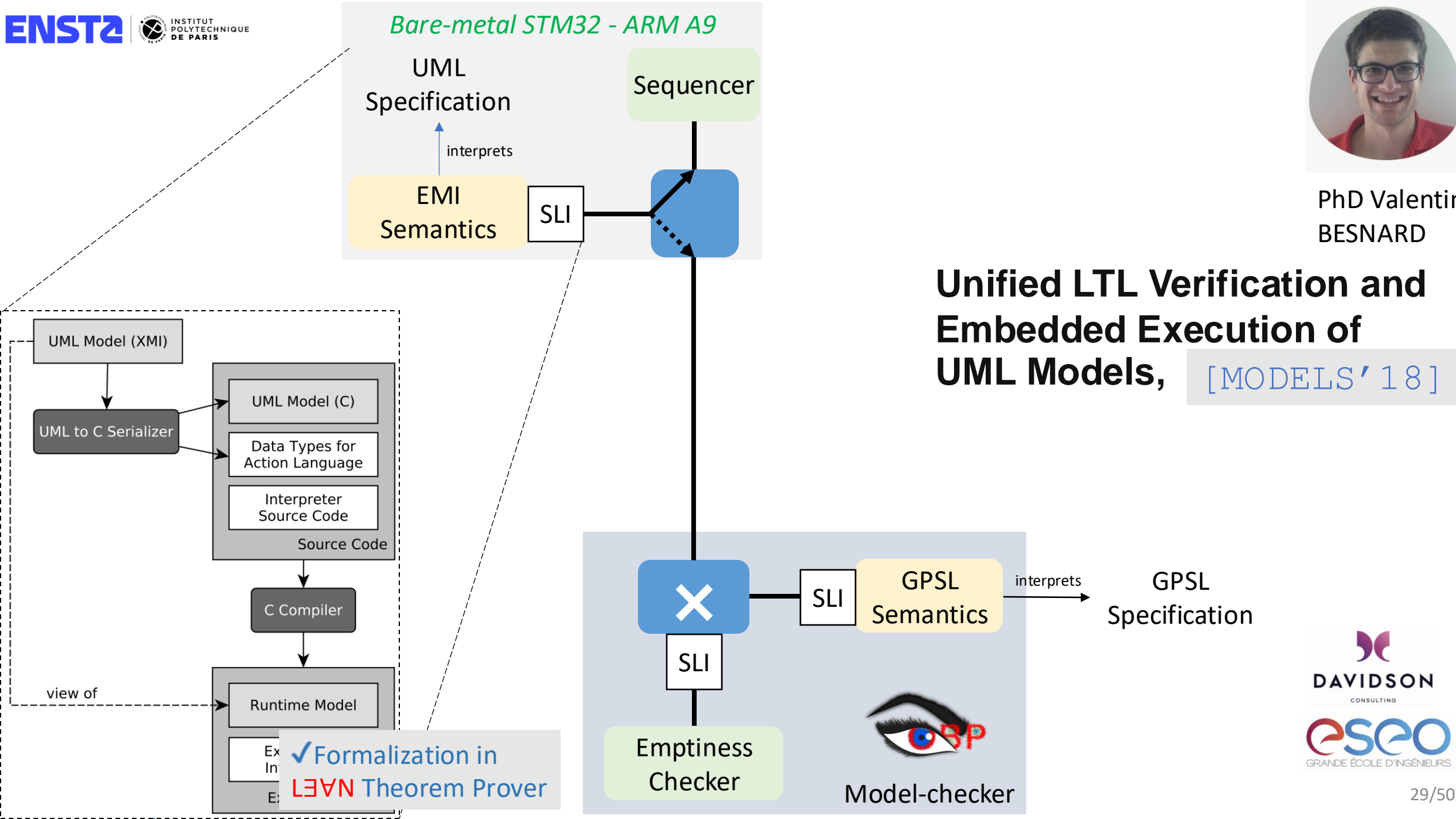
PIA DEPARTS



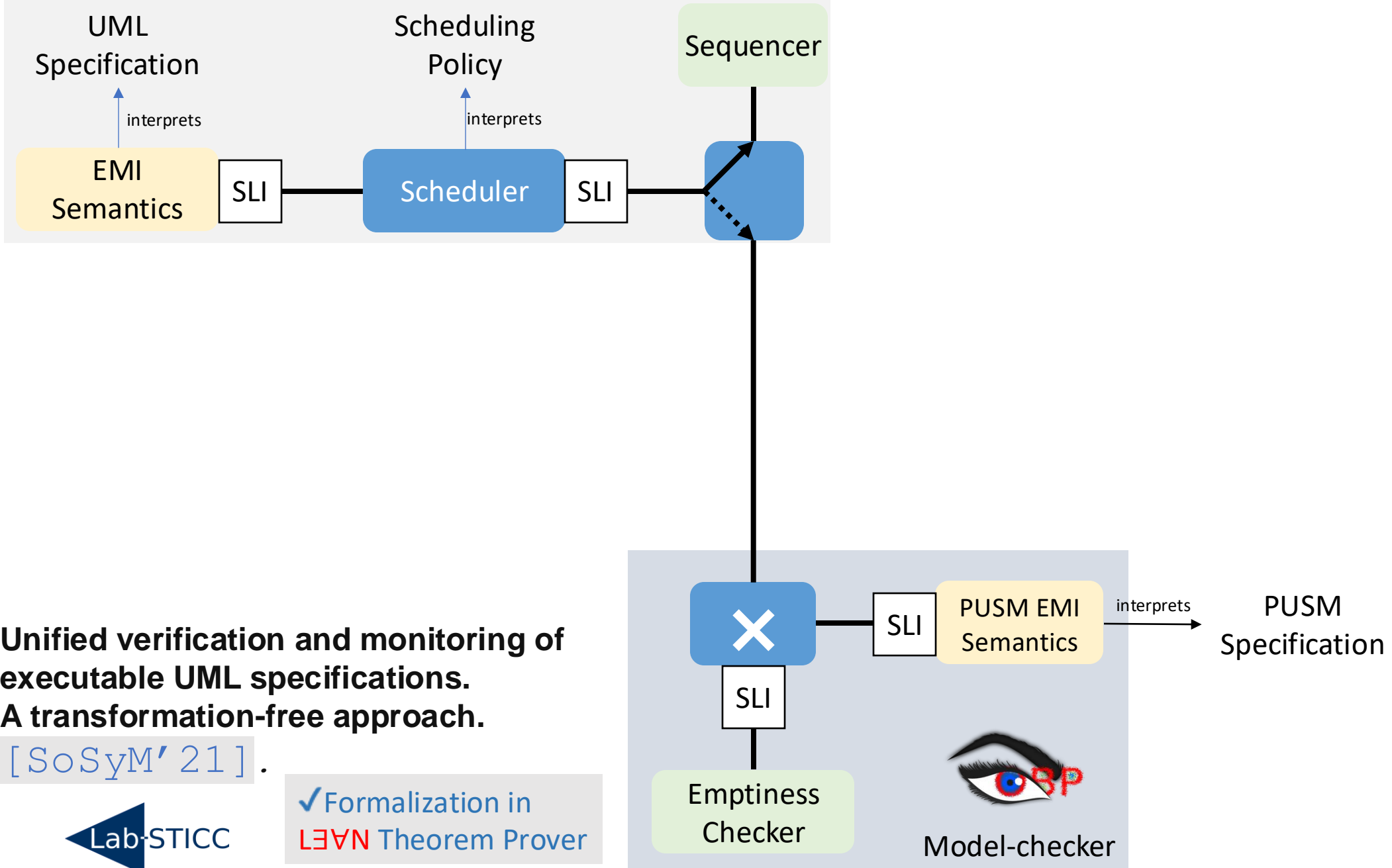


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# Unified LTL Verification and Embedded Execution of UML Models, [MODELS'18]



*Bare-metal STM32 - ARM A9*



**Unified verification and monitoring of executable UML specifications. A transformation-free approach.**

[SoSyM'21].



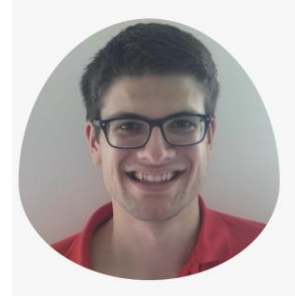
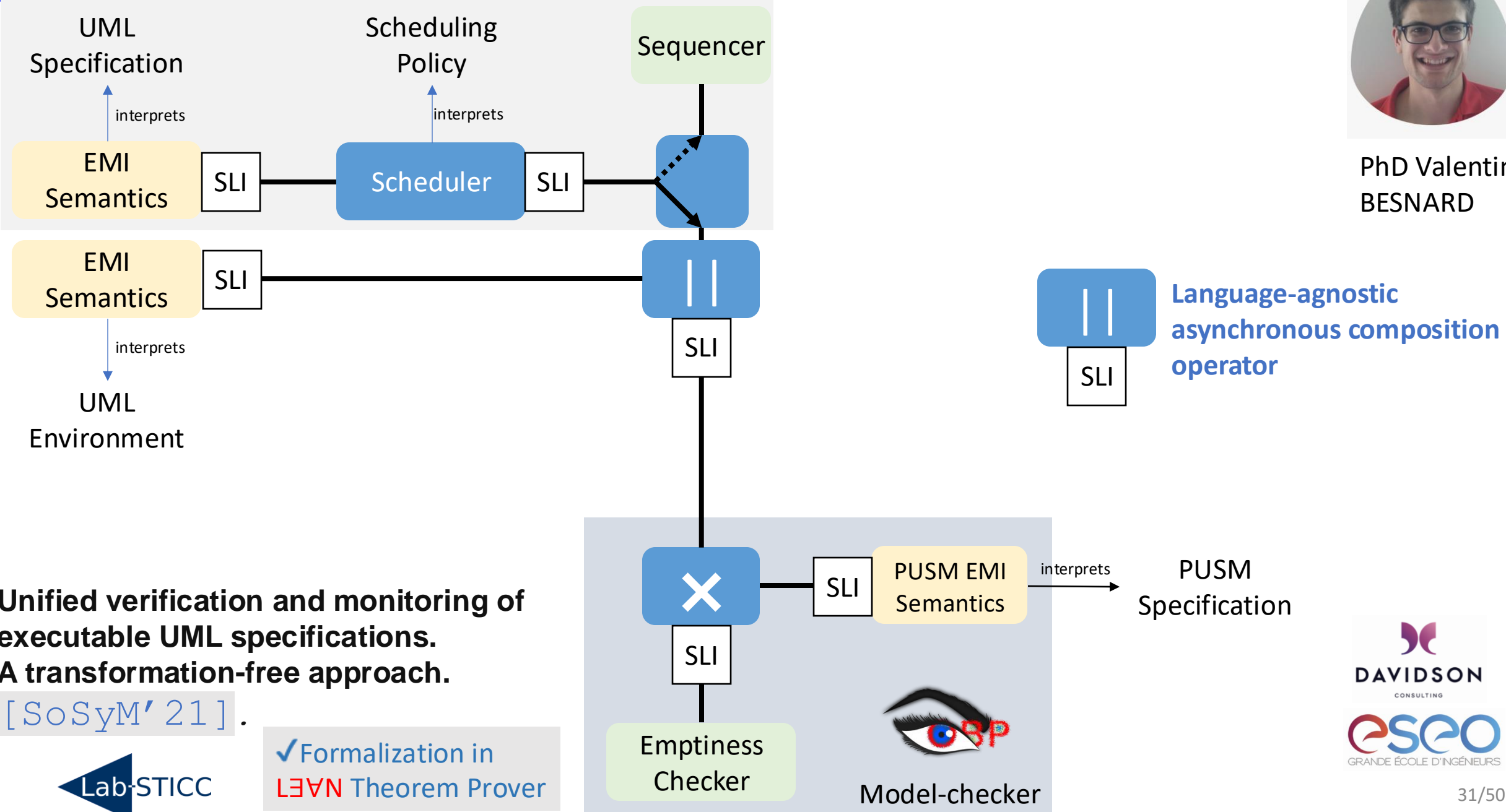
✓ Formalization in **NAEL** Theorem Prover



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Bare-metal STM32 - ARM A9



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**Unified verification and monitoring of executable UML specifications. A transformation-free approach.**

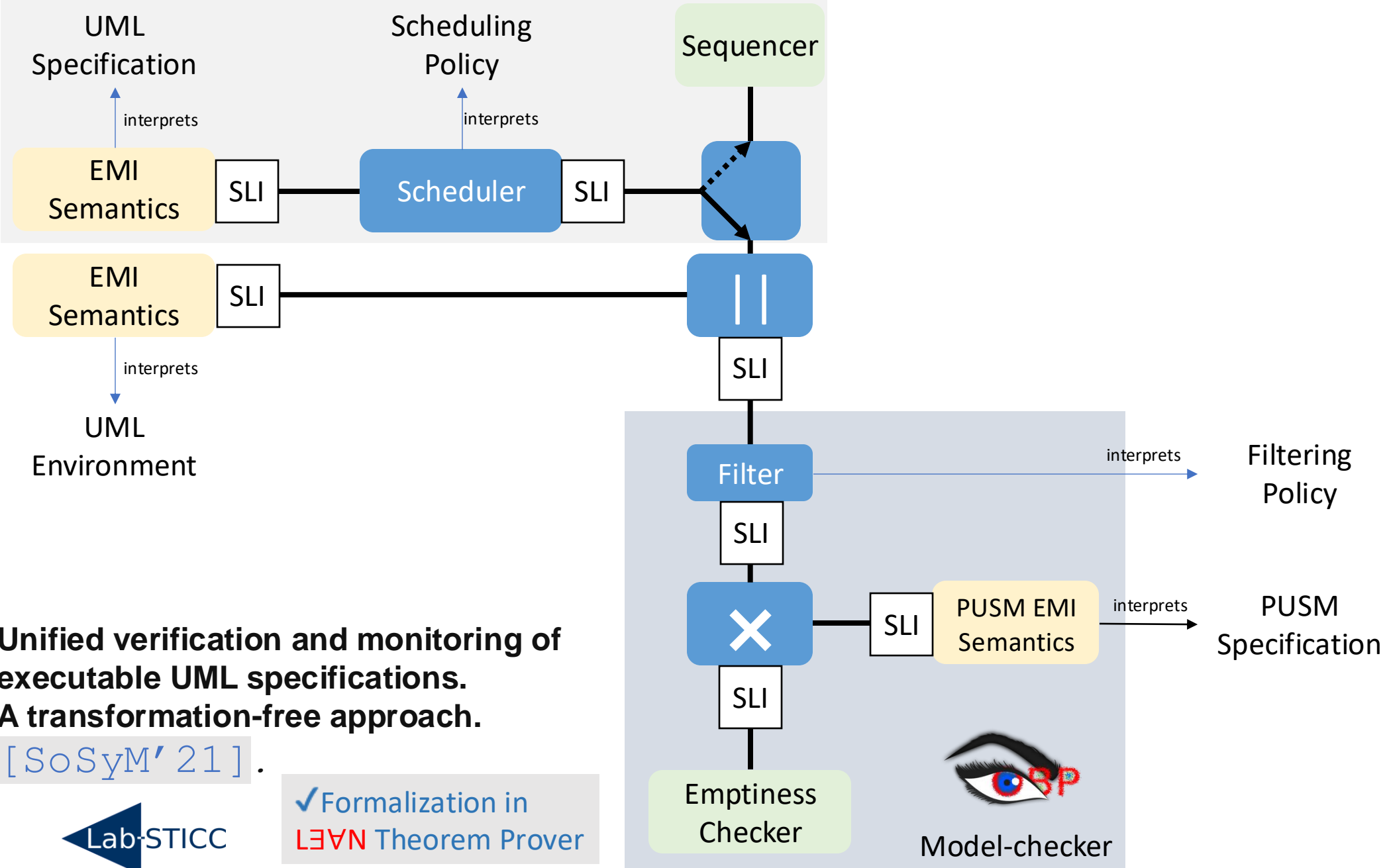
[SoSyM'21].



✓ Formalization in **NAEL** Theorem Prover



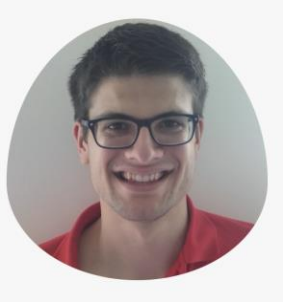
# Bare-metal STM32 - ARM A9



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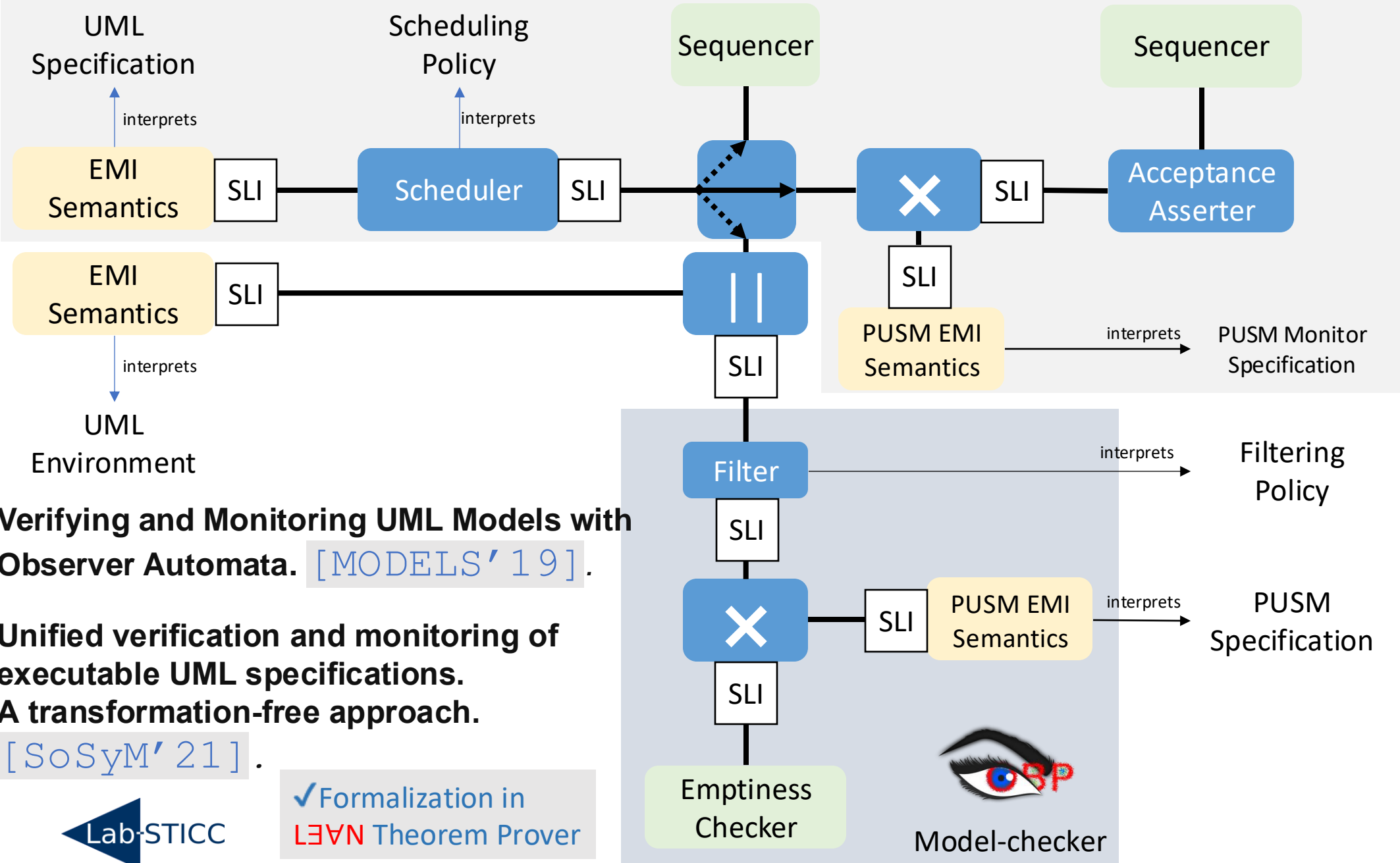
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Verifying and Monitoring UML Models with Observer Automata. [MODELS'19].

Unified verification and monitoring of executable UML specifications. A transformation-free approach.

[SoSyM'21].

✓ Formalization in NAEL Theorem Prover





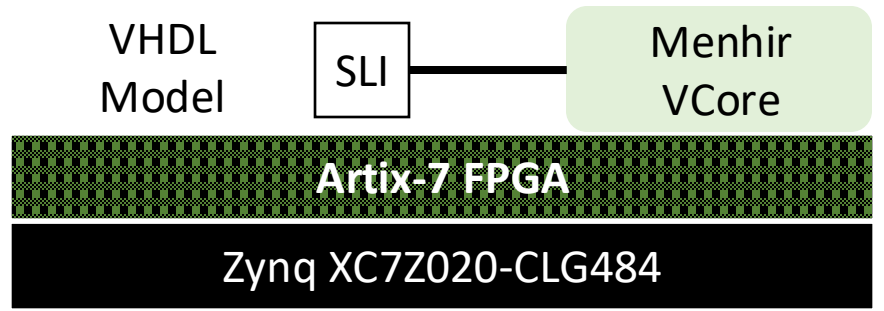
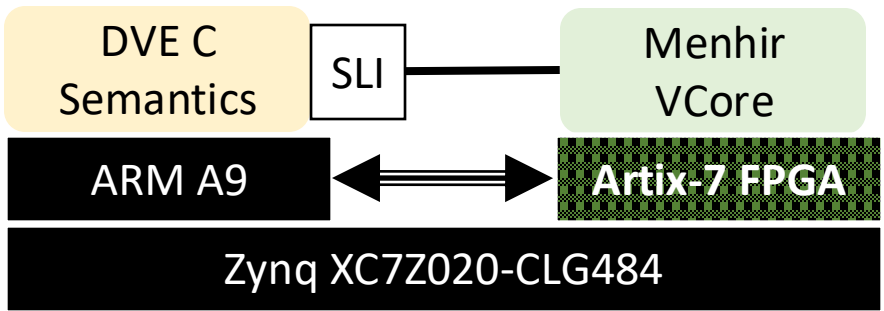
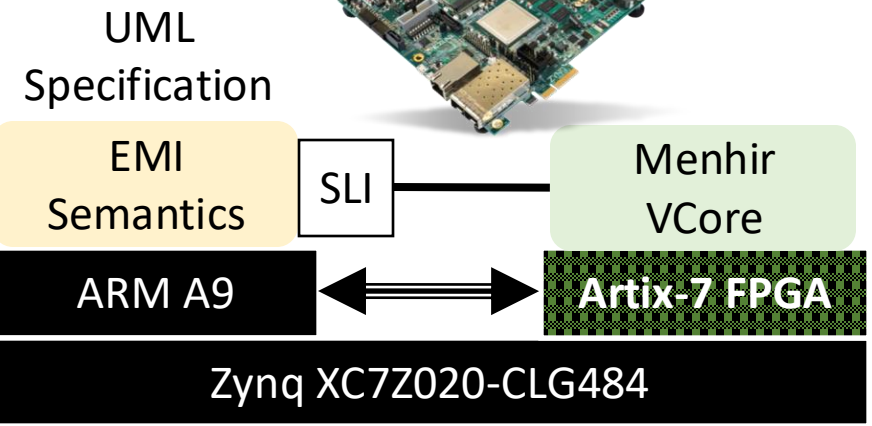
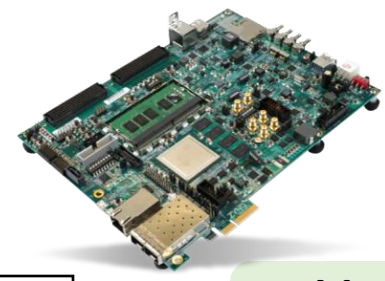
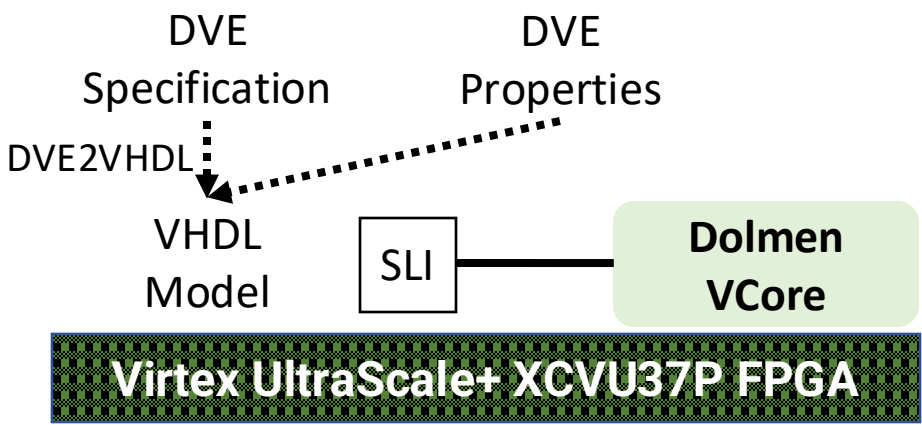
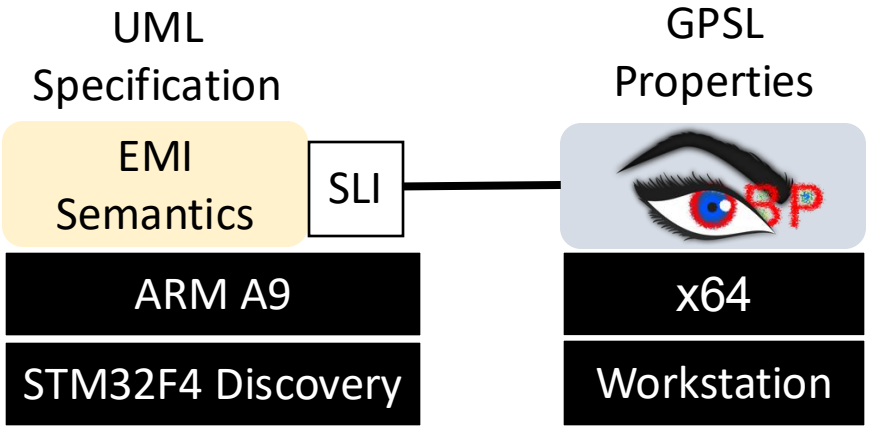
## 4. When G∀min∃ experiences the real world.

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- **Exploring hardware execution**
- Multiverse debugging made simple and more powerful
- Transfer to commercial products -- *OBP2 inside*
- Transfer to future practitioners -- *From zero to model-checker*

# From Embedded to Hardware Execution



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PhD Emilien FOURNIER

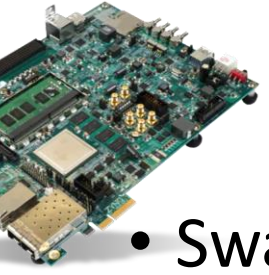
[DSD'20]  
[FPL'21]  
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Région Bretagne  
CPER CyberSSI

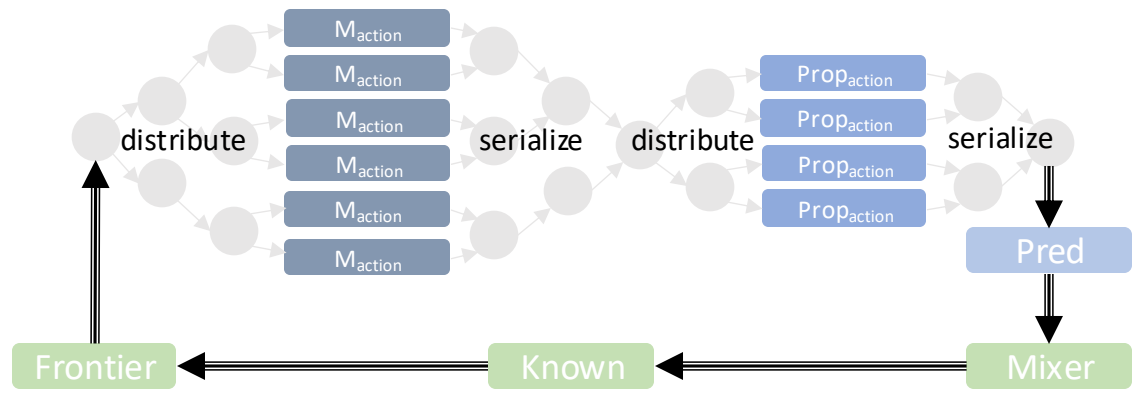
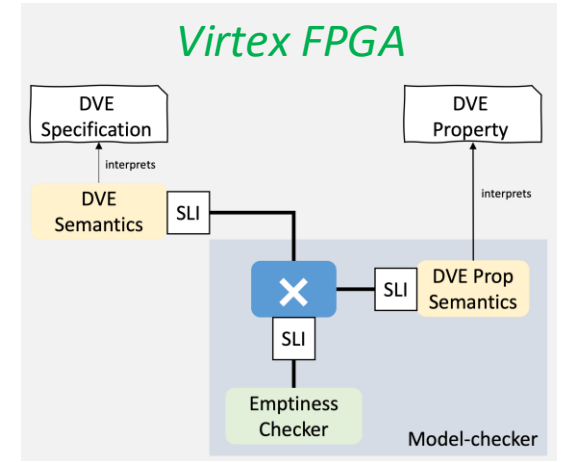
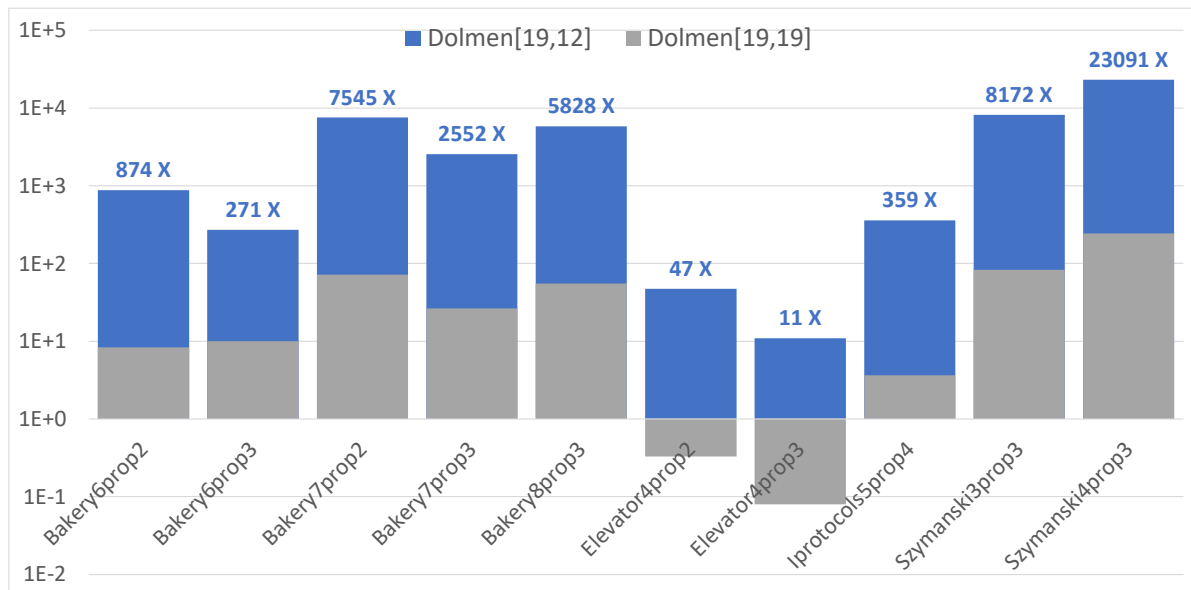


PhD Emilien FOURNIER

# Dolmen: 1<sup>st</sup> Hardware Swarm Engine for Both Safety & Liveness Verification



- Swarm of 32 deeply pipelined verification cores
- Distributed control architecture, for large SSI-FPGAs
- **4874x** average speedup over software (Divine 3)



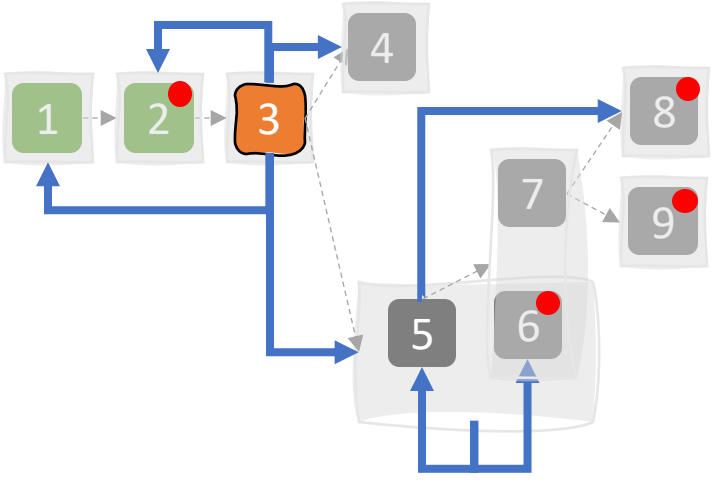
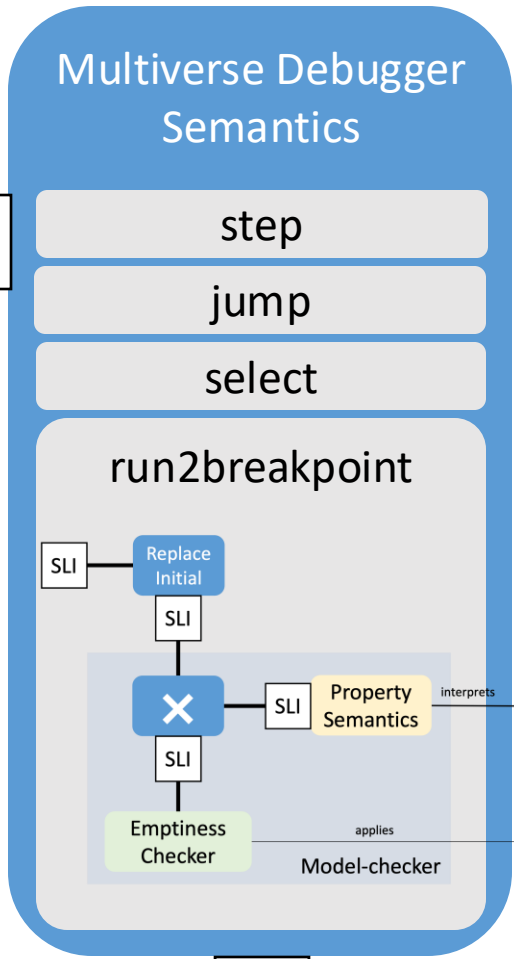
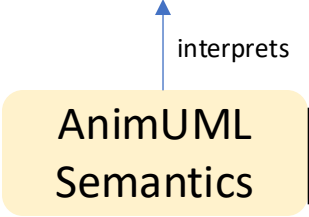


## 4. When G∀min∃ experiences the real world.

- Some experiences unravel reusable monitoring bridges
- Exploring hardware execution
- **Multiverse debugging made simple and more powerful**
- Transfer to commercial products -- *OBP2 inside*
- Transfer to future practitioners -- *From zero to model-checker*

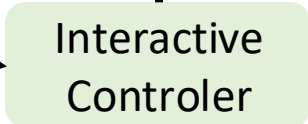


AnimUML Specification



User

uses



✓ Formalization in **LEAN** Theorem Prover

Language-agnostic

Non-trivial Monitor Composition

Scalability

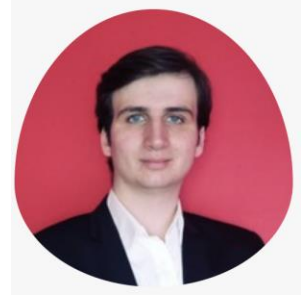
+Expressivity, no instrumentation

Temporal Breakpoints

[SLE'23]

Reduction

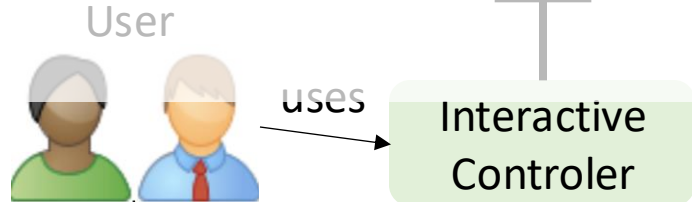
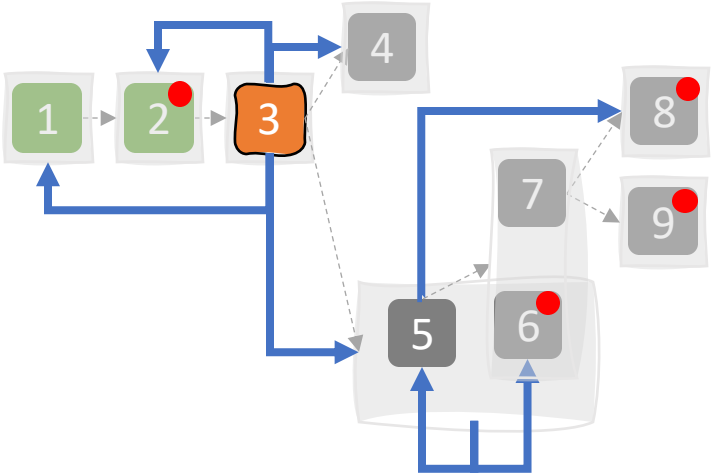
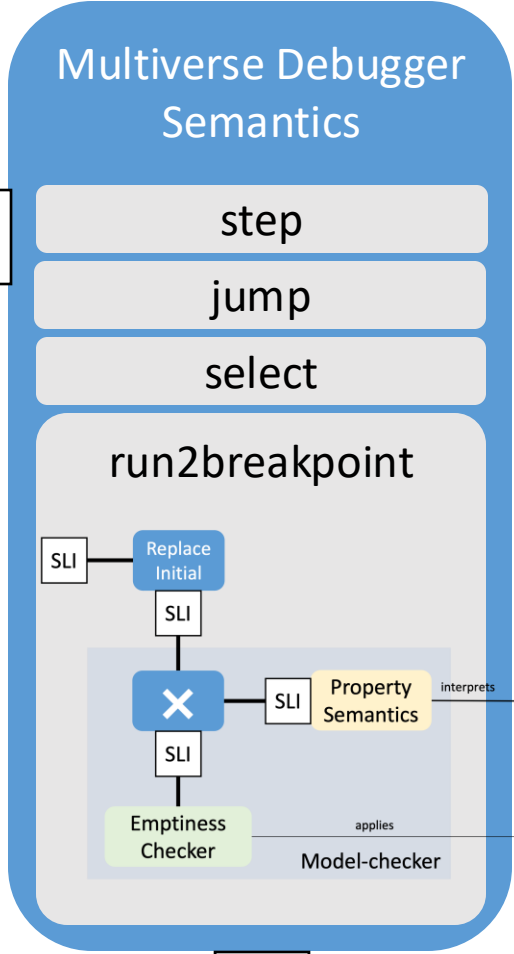
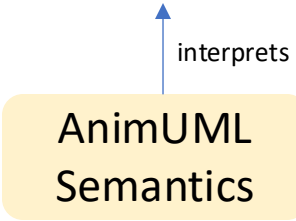
[MODELS'22]



PhD Matthias PASQUIER



AnimUML Specification



✓ Formalization in **LEAN** Theorem Prover

Language-agnostic

Non-trivial Monitor Composition

Scalability

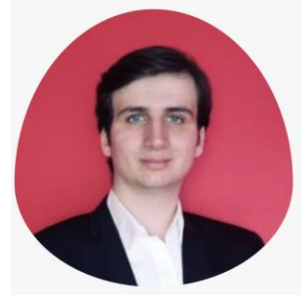
+Expressivity, no instrumentation

Temporal Breakpoints

[SLE'23]

Reduction

[MODELS'22]

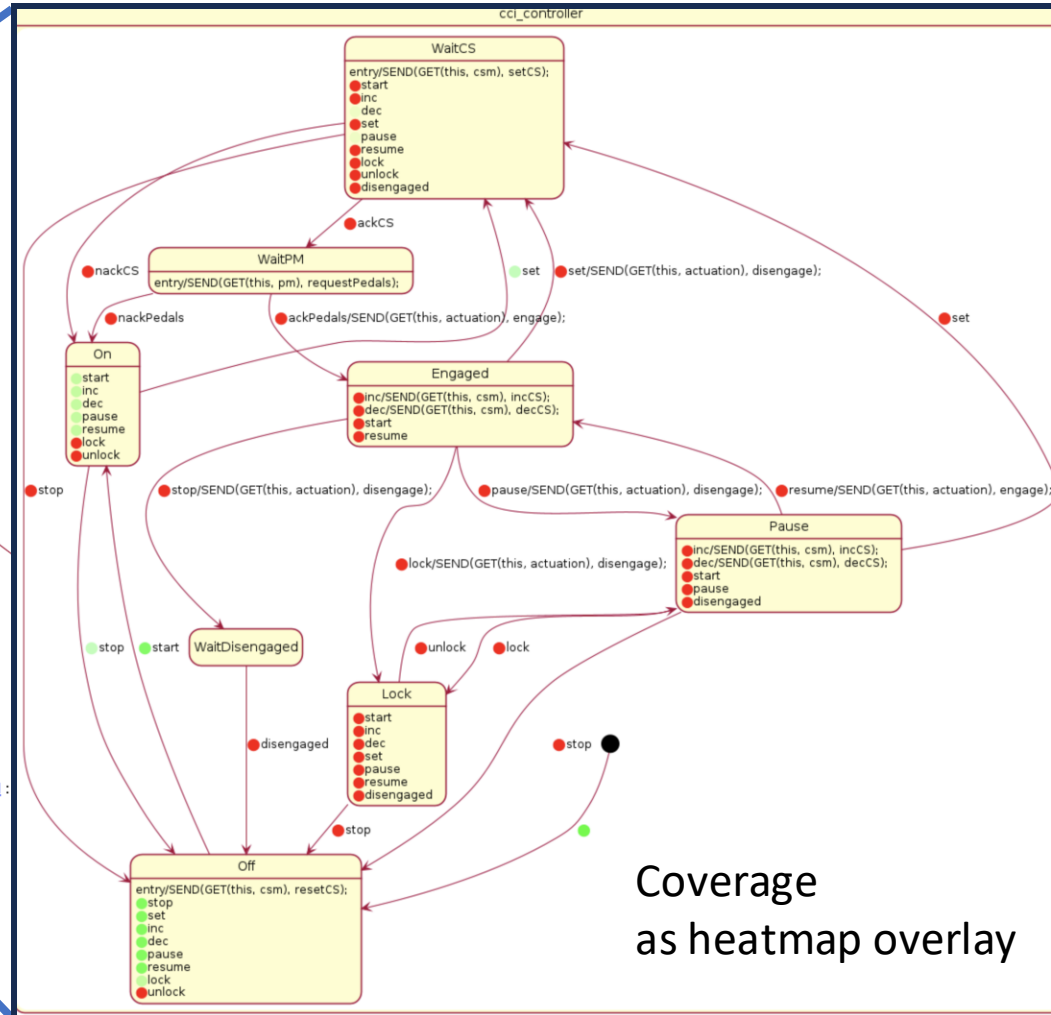
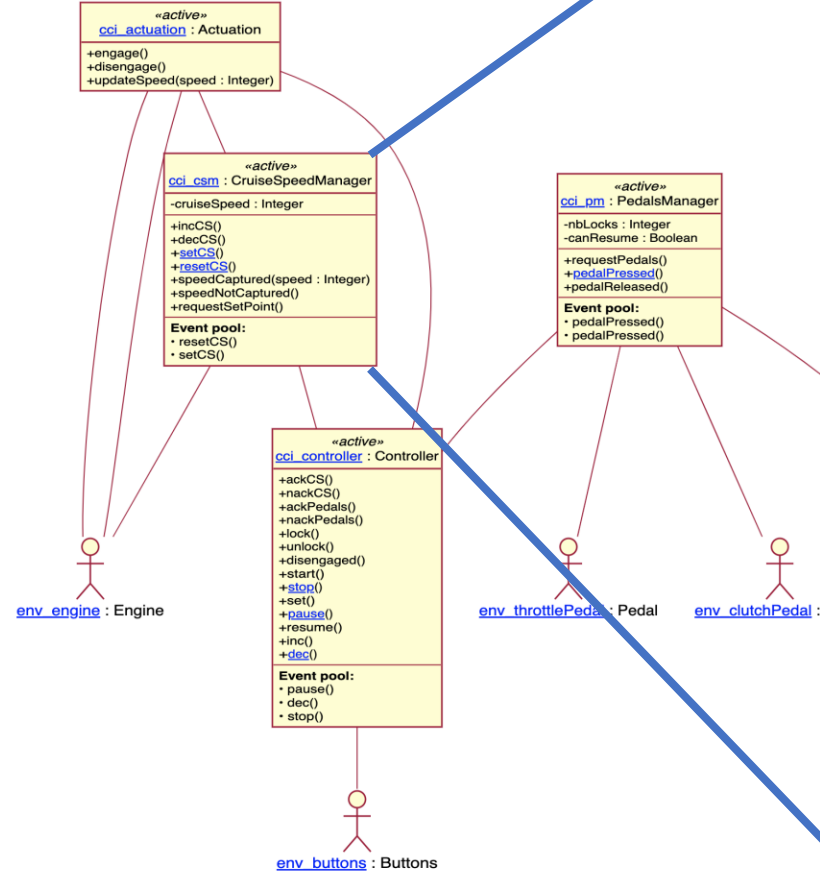


PhD Matthias PASQUIER



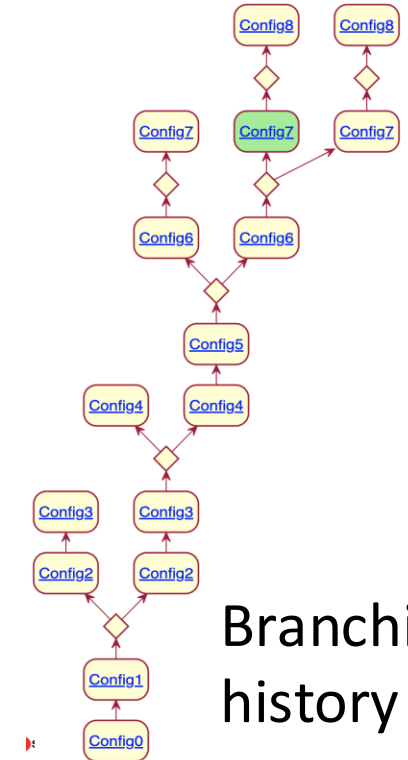
Select model: UML2AnimUML\_CruiseControlv4

Doc. Open settings: [display](#), [semantics](#), [remote engine](#), [analysis tools](#), [export](#), [generate](#), [help](#).



Coverage as heatmap overlay

Select interaction: Branching execution history/trace



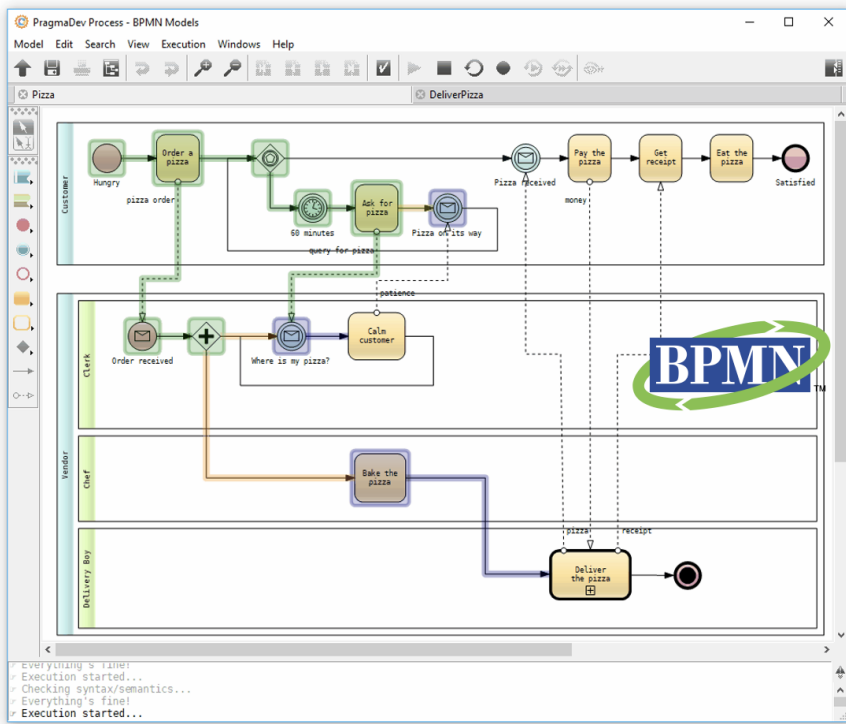
Branching history





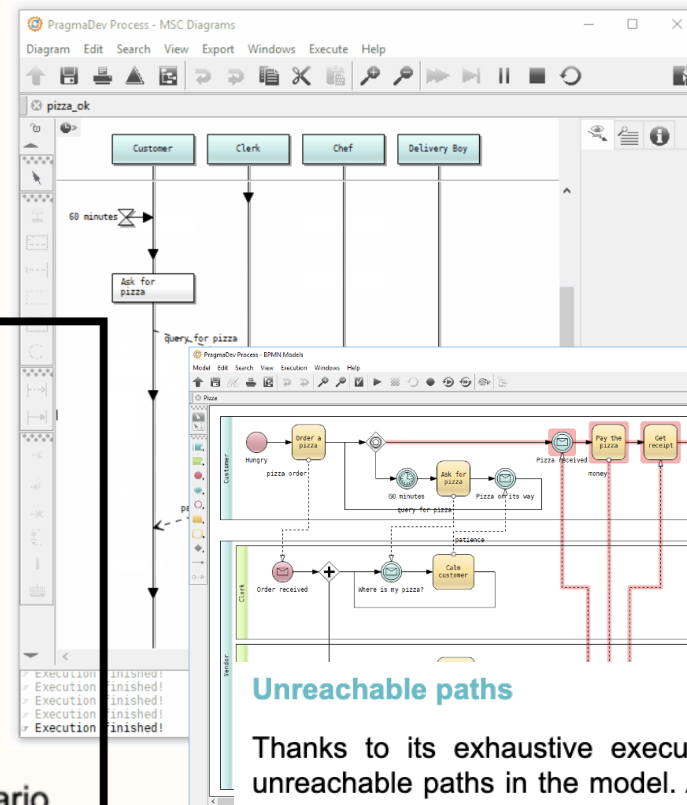
## 4. When G∀min∃ experiences the real world.

- Some experiences unravel reusable monitoring bridges
- Exploring hardware execution
- Multiverse debugging made simple and more powerful
- **Transfer to commercial products -- OBP2 inside**
- Transfer to future practitioners -- *From zero to model-checker*



## Coverage

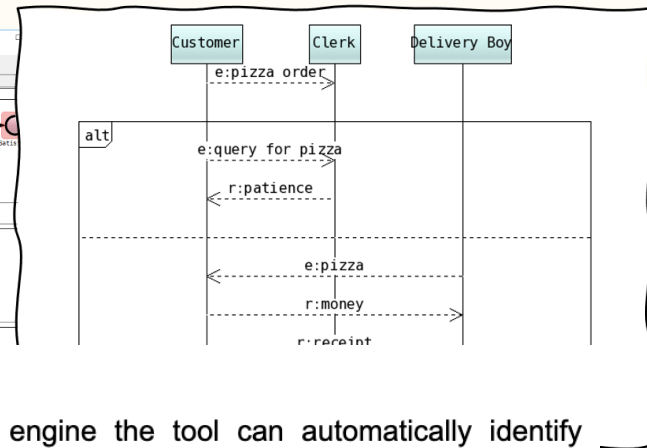
Coverage information can be extracted and merged after each scenario.



## Unreachable paths

Thanks to its exhaustive execution engine the tool can automatically identify unreachable paths in the model. After analyze the impossible paths are displayed in red in the editor.

## Property Sequence Chart



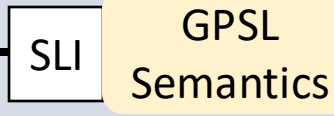
Press release



**PragmaDev Process, a new tool to verify business processes.**



Emptiness  
Checker



Model-checker

interprets

GPSL  
Specification

[ERTS' 20]  
[CSD&M' 20]

RAPID VeriMoB  
DGAC OneWay



Successful transfer to industry lead to

- **Adoption** in new products – PROCESS for BPMN
- **Empowering** the practitioners – coverage, unreachable paths, ...
- **Retrofitting** existing products – STUDIO for SDL

Press release



## A new generation of model checker with PragmaDev Studio V6.0.

Language agnostic model checking for SDL

# SAM Conference

Who *Emmanuel Gaudin, Mihal Brumbulli, Eric Brunel*

Track [MODELS 2023 SAM Conference](#)

When **Mon 2 Oct 2023 11:00 - 11:30 at 203 - Session 1 - Methods for Rigorous System Quality Assurance**



**Emmanuel Gaudin**  
PragmaDev  
France



**Mihal Brumbulli**



**Eric Brunel**





## 4. When G $\forall$ min $\exists$ experiences the real world.

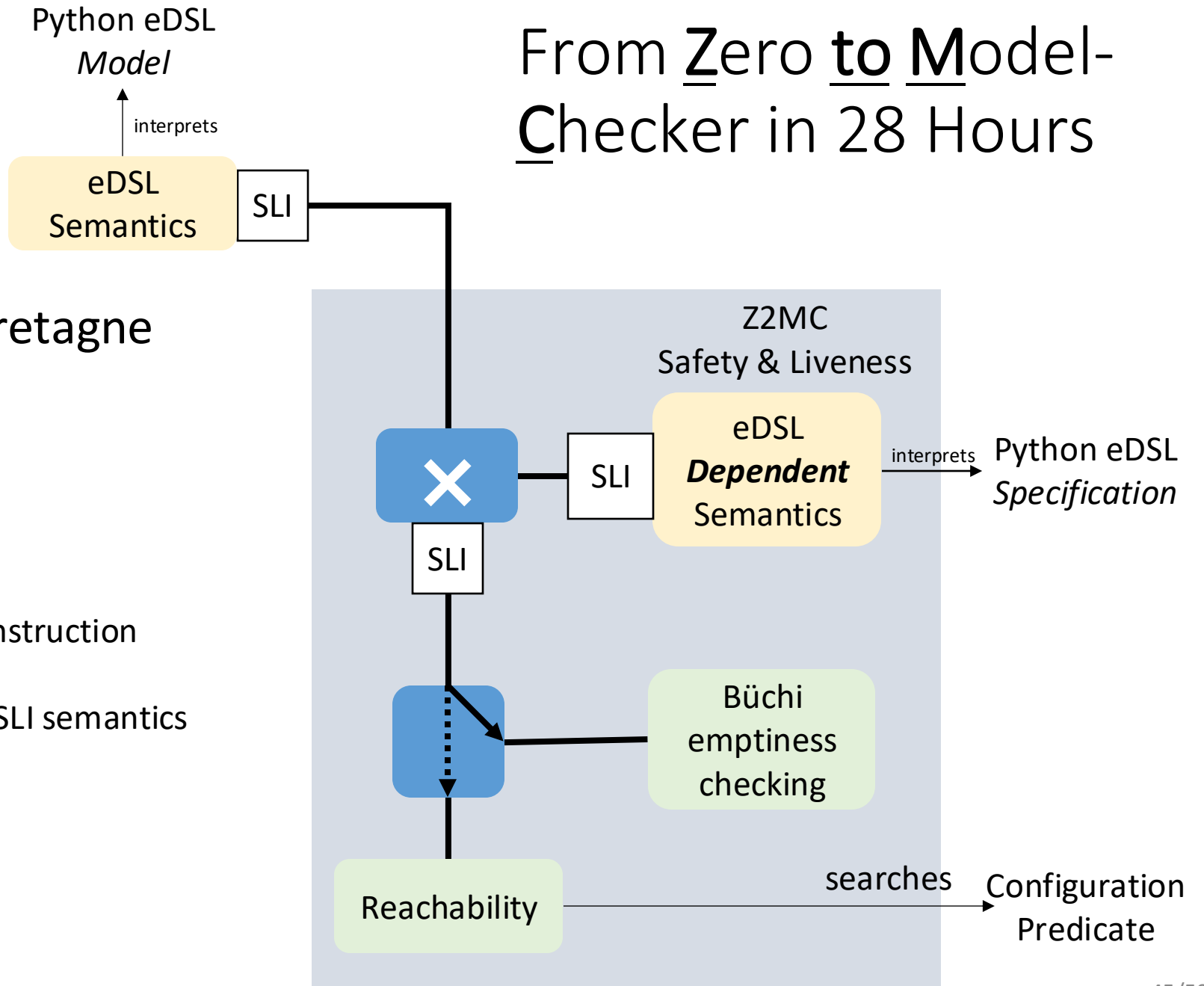
- Some experiences unravel reusable monitoring bridges
- Transfer to commercial products -- *OBP2 inside*
- Exploring hardware execution
- Multiverse debugging made simple and more powerful
- **Transfer to future practitioners -- *From zero to model-checker***

# Transfer to Future Practitioners

Master-level class at ENSTA Bretagne the last 2 years  
seven 4-hour sessions

1. Model-independent graph traversal
2. Predicate-based search and witness construction
3. SLI by refactoring the graph API
4. Lambda-based guard-action eDSL with SLI semantics
5. Dependent SLI semantics
6. Step-based synchronous composition
7. Büchi emptiness checking

# From Zero to Model-Checker in 28 Hours



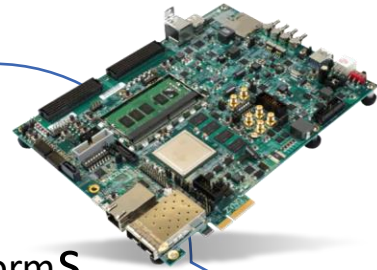
# 5. Sum Up & Ways Forward

Conclusion

Major Breakthroughs

Perspectives

Track Record



PlatformS

*embedded:* Bare-metal  
*hardware:* FPGA

**GVminE** = a way to bridge the gap between the specification languages and the language monitors running on ever more heterogeneous platforms?

MonitorS

Model-checker  
Multiverse Debugger  
Runtime Monitors

LanguageS

*industrial:* BPMN, SDL  
*reuse:* TLA+, Fiacre  
*academic:* UML, AEFD

# Major Contributions

A **sustainable** & **composable** approach for **language monitoring**

*simple and versatile, the SLI offers a radically better cost structure  
step-based evaluation plays a major role*

**1st Hardware** Swarm Engine for **Both Safety and Liveness Verification**

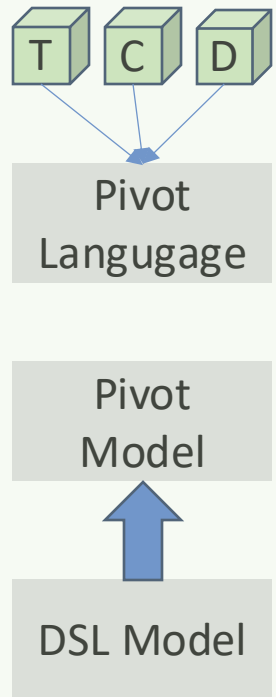
*pipelined reformulation of the verification architecture*

Established a **continuum** between **debugging** and **model-checking**

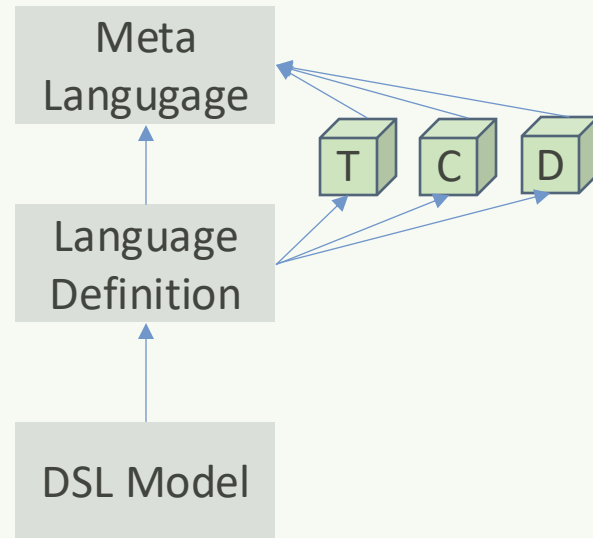
*language-agnostic under-approximations for scalability  
temporal breakpoints for expressivity without instrumentation*



### Reuse based on Pivot Language

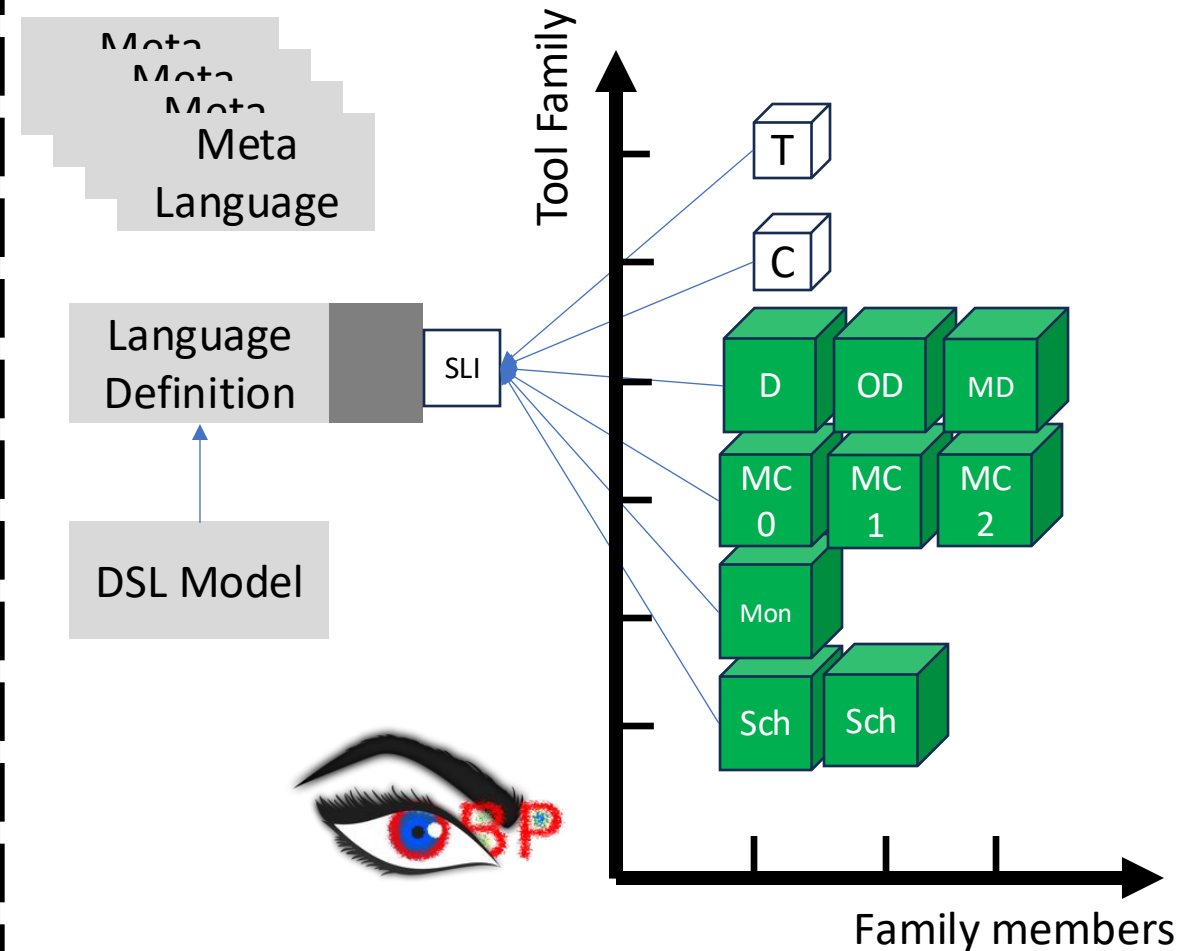


### Reuse based on Meta-Language



Hypothesis:  
**black box semantics**  
-> any meta-language

### Reuse based on Confluent Tool Requirements



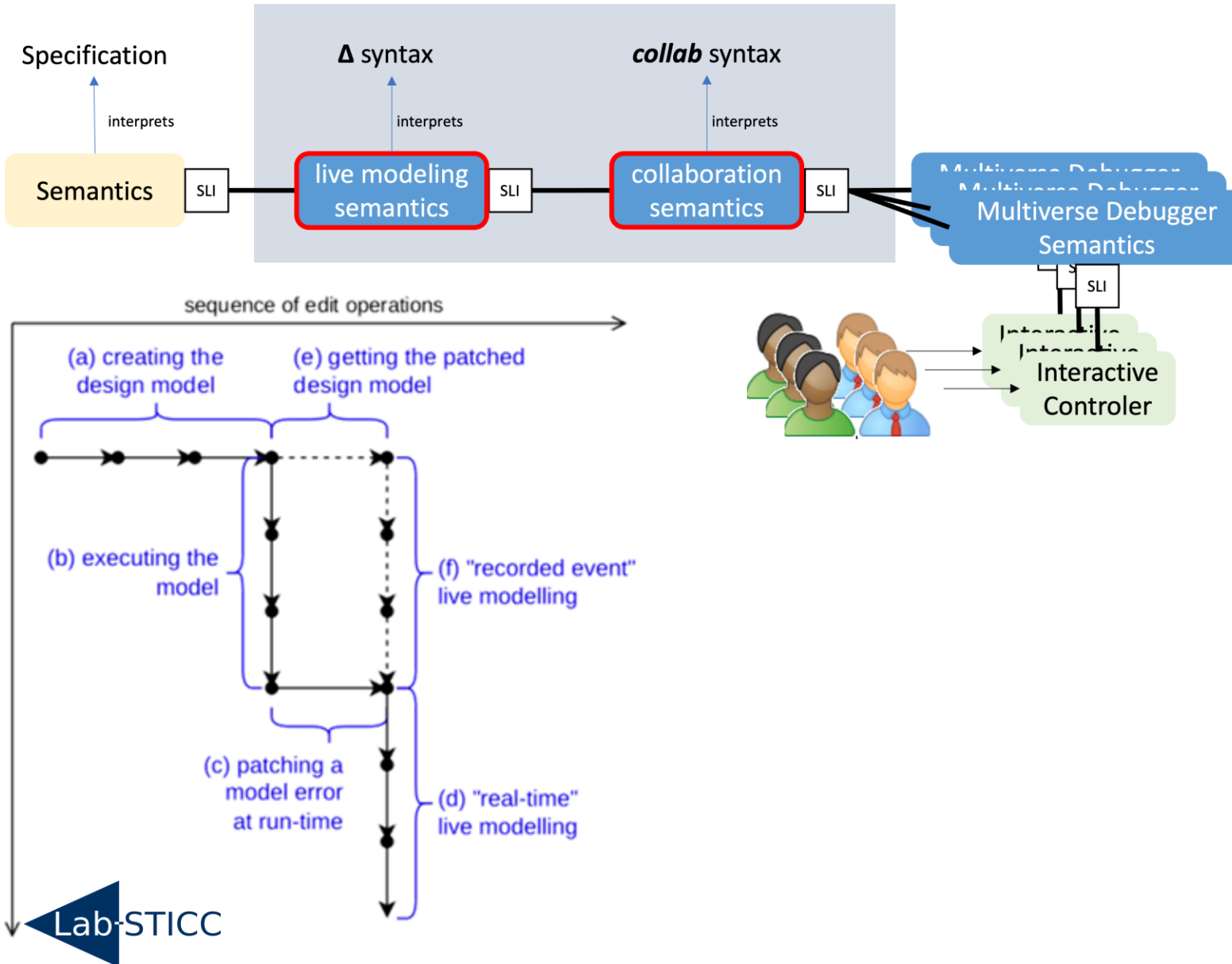
# Ways Forward

Generalizing the  $G\forall\text{min}\exists$  language monitoring  
for the future of specification-driven engineering.

# Collaborative Live Modelling



Joeri EXELMANS

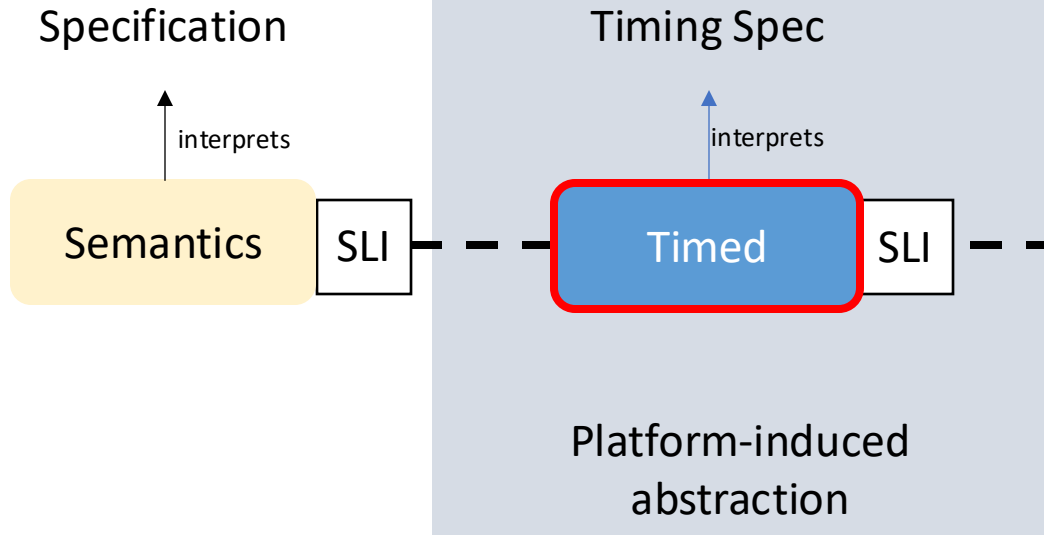


Composition?

Language-agnostic?  
Without redoing the language

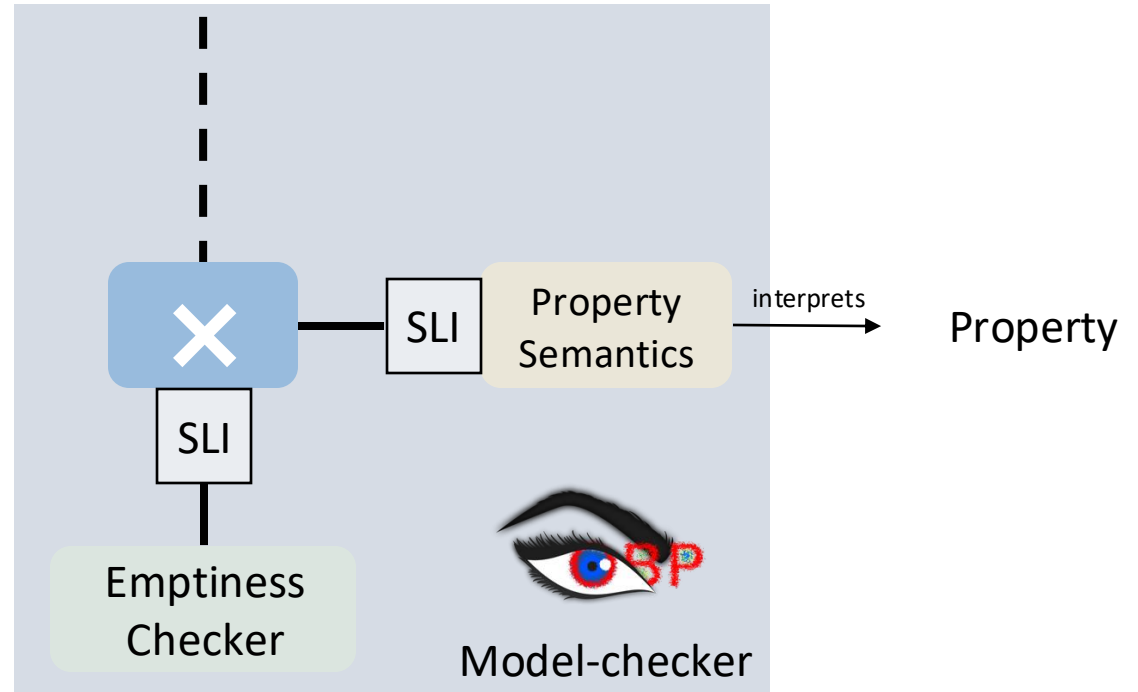
[...]  
[SoSyM' 24]  
[MLE' 23]

# Ways Forward

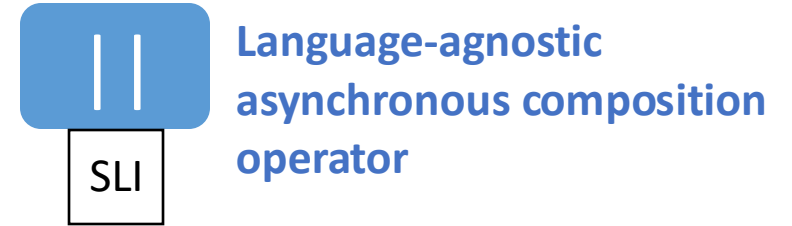
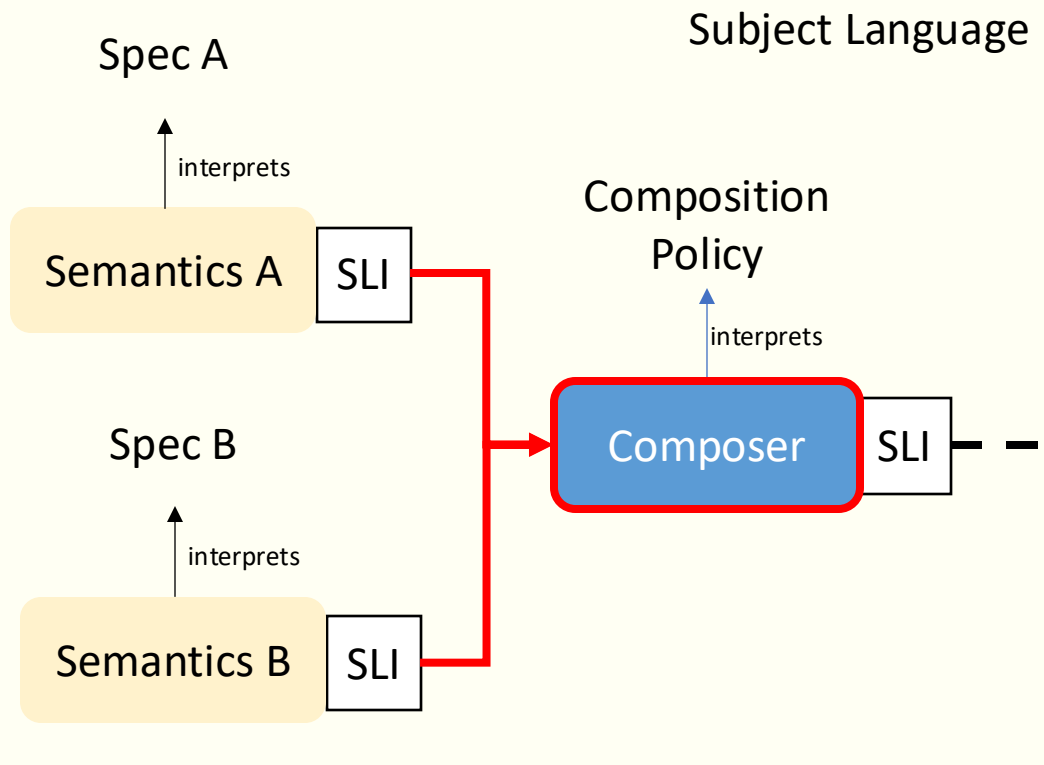


How to obtain a timed automata abstraction on-the-fly?

1st successful step: DGAC ONEWAY  
*Timed BPMN* without transformations

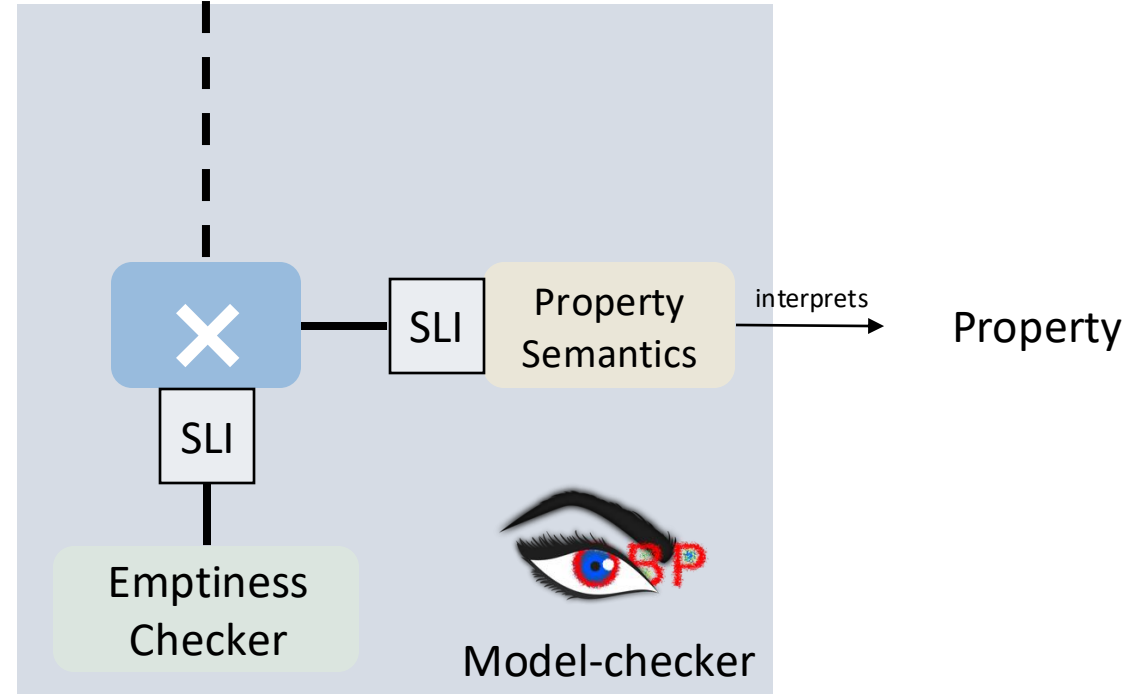


# Ways Forward

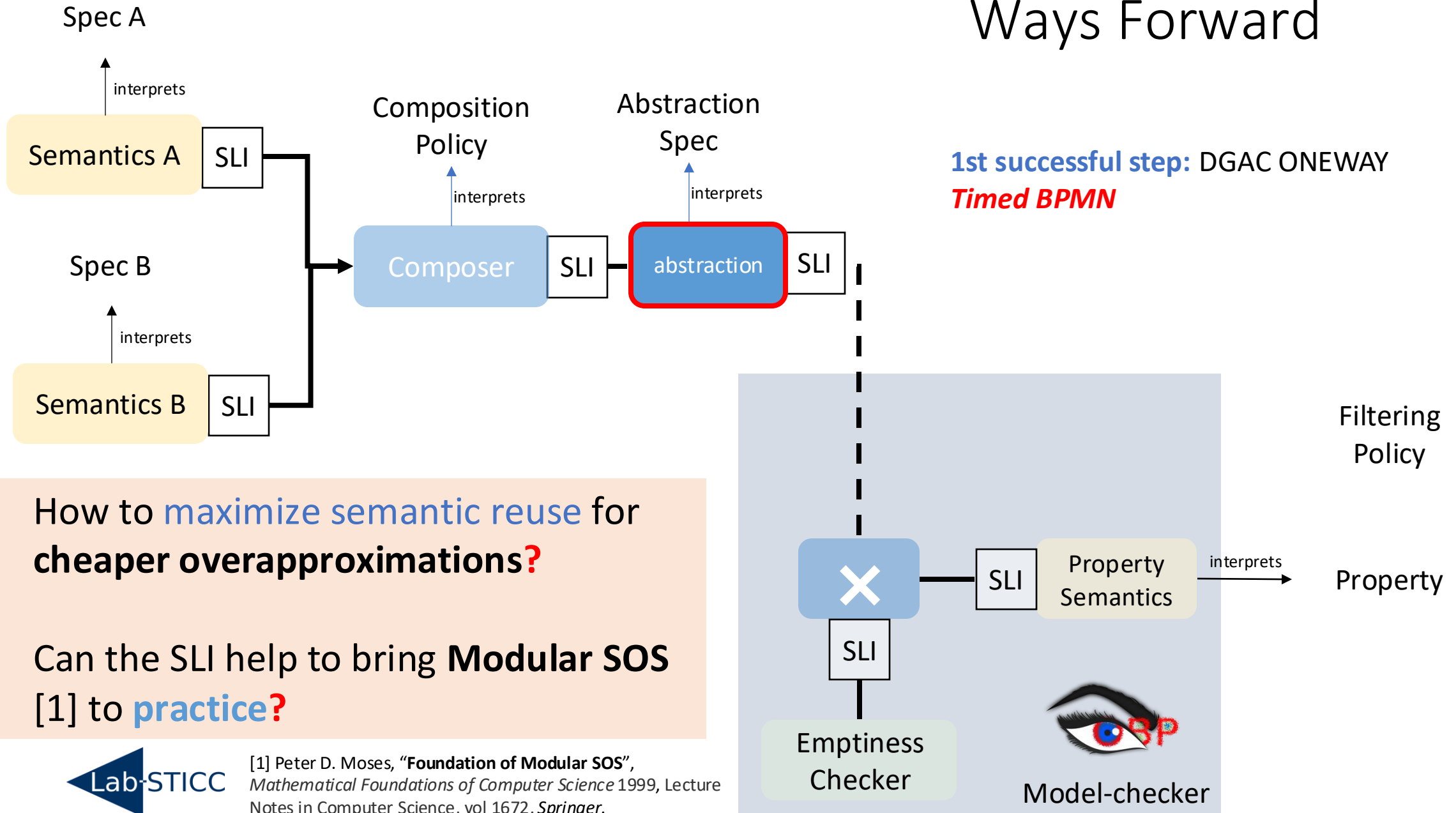


Composition algebras: channel, clocks, events

Can the SLI be used for defining semantic-level operators?



# Ways Forward



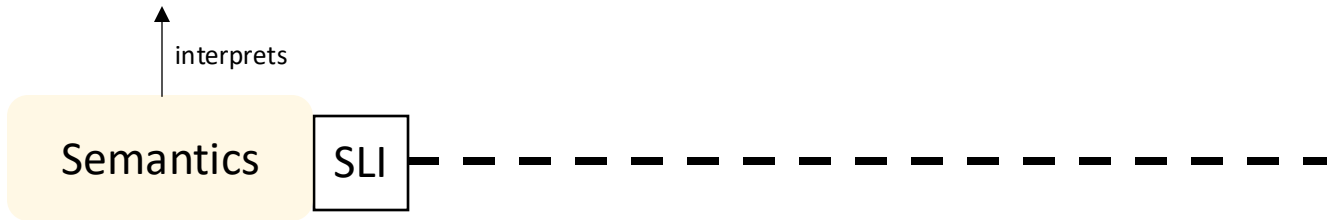
How to maximize semantic reuse for cheaper overapproximations?

Can the SLI help to bring Modular SOS [1] to practice?

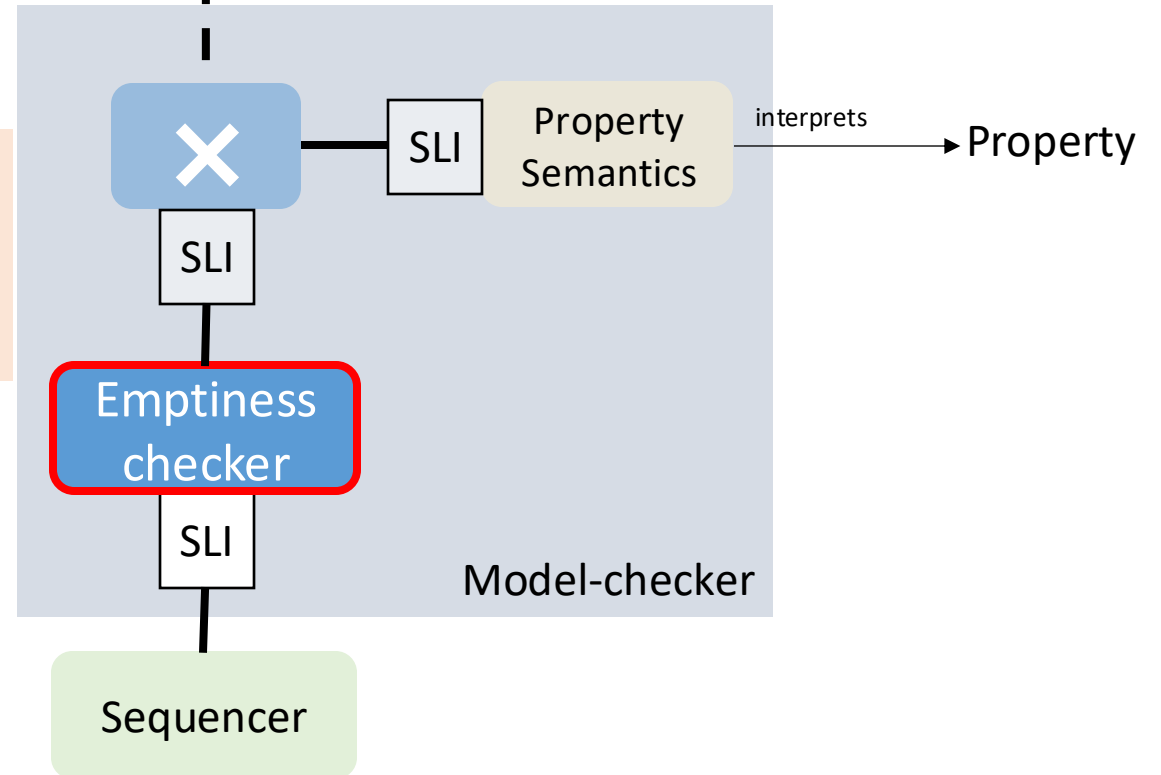
# Ways Forward

**1st successful step:** PhD E. FOURNIER  
*TLA+ formalization of reachability*  
*subsuming explicit and symbolic traversals*

Specification



Does the **separation**  
**execution controller** -- **algorithm logic**  
simplifies algorithm design and analysis?



# Ways Forward

How to **standardize** the SLI?

- Harmonization with the LSP and Debug Adapter Protocol

How to get a **provably sound language-agnostic portfolio-based diagnosis** toolkit?

Will it be fast enough?

## How to Survive the Multicore Software Revolution

How to write code that will survive the ~~many-core~~ **many-core** revolution **S**

Generalizing the **GVmin7** language **oring**

for t **Are live specification environments**

the **next revolution?**

Understanding DevOps: A Revolution in Software

Software

***Let's get cracking,  
and Talk About It.***