Chapter 10
Parallel Algorithms

Algorithm Theory
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Sequential Algorithms

Classical Algorithm Design:

- One machine/CPU/process/… doing a computation

RAM (Random Access Machine):

- Basic standard model
- Unit cost basic operations
- Unit cost access to all memory cells

Sequential Algorithm / Program:

- Sequence of operations
  (executed one after the other)

Parallel and Distributed Algorithms

Today's computers/systems are not sequential:

- Even cell phones have several cores
- Future systems will be highly parallel on many levels
- This also requires appropriate algorithmic techniques

Goals, Scenarios, Challenges:

- Exploit parallelism to speed up computations
- Shared resources such as memory, bandwidth, …
- Increase reliability by adding redundancy
- Solve tasks in inherently decentralized environments
- …

Parallel and Distributed Systems

- Many different forms

- Processors/computers/machines/… communicate and share data through
  - Shared memory or message passing
- Computation and communication can be
  - Synchronous or asynchronous
- Many possible topologies for message passing
- Depending on system, various types of faults

Challenges

Algorithmic and theoretical challenges:

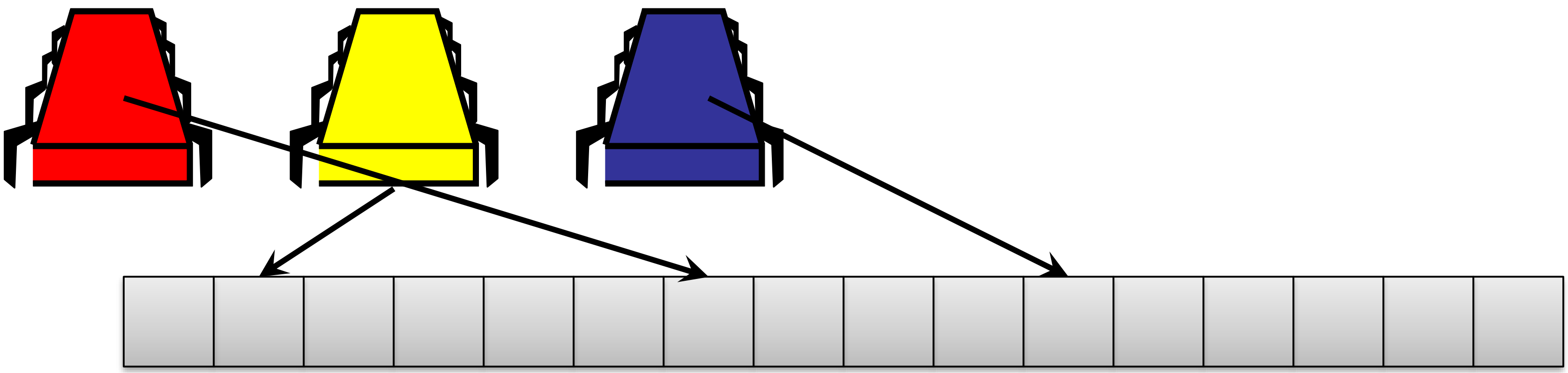
- How to parallelize computations
- Scheduling (which machine does what)
- Load balancing
- Fault tolerance
- Coordination / consistency
- Decentralized state
- Asynchrony
- Bounded bandwidth / properties of comm. channels
- …

Models

- A large variety of models, e.g.:
- **PRAM** (Parallel Random Access Machine)
  - Classical model for parallel computations
- **Shared Memory**
  - Classical model to study coordination / agreement problems, distributed data structures, …
- **Message Passing** (fully connected topology)
  - Closely related to shared memory models
- Message Passing in **Networks**
  - Decentralized computations, large parallel machines, comes in various flavors…
- Computations in large clusters of powerful individual machines: Massively Parallel Computations (MPC)

PRAM

- Parallel version of RAM model
- p processors, shared random access memory



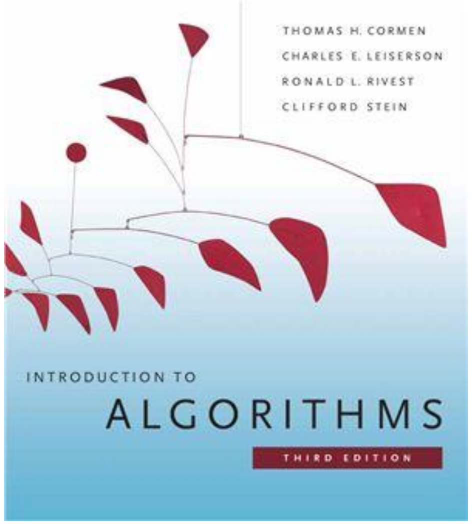
- Basic operations / access to shared memory cost 1
- Processor operations are synchronized
- Focus on parallelizing computation rather than cost of communication, locality, faults, asynchrony, …

Other Parallel Models

- **Message passing:** Fully connected network, local memory and information exchange using messages

- **Dynamic Multithreaded Algorithms:** Simple parallel programming paradigm
  - E.g., used in Cormen, Leiserson, Rivest, Stein (CLRS)

```
FIB(n)
if n < 2
    then return n
x ← spawn FIB(n − 1)
y ← spawn FIB(n − 2)
sync
return (x + y)
```



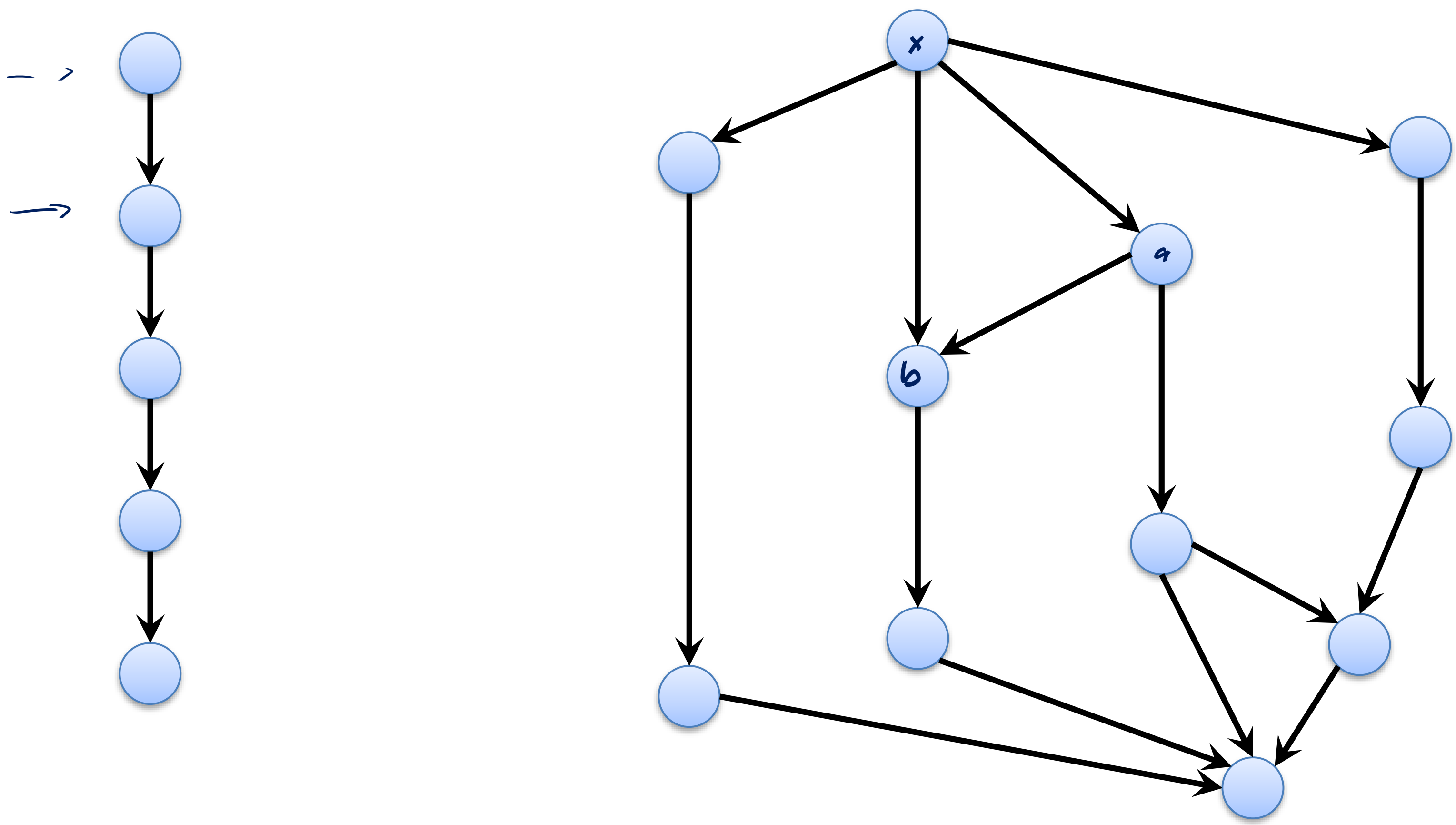
Parallel Computations

Sequential Computation:

- Sequence of operations

Parallel Computation:

- Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG)



Parallel Computations

$\boldsymbol{T_p}$: time to perform comp. with p procs

- T_1: **work** (total # operations)
  - Time when doing the computation sequentially
- T_∞: **critical path / span**
  - Time when parallelizing as much as possible
- **Lower Bounds**:

$$T_p \geq \frac{T_1}{p}, \qquad T_p \geq T_\infty$$