Reversible Computation vs. Runtime Adaptation

(in Industrial IoT Systems)

CORSE 2025 · D. P. Attard · K. Bugeja · A. Francalanza · M. Galea · G. Tabone · G. Zahra

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Introduction

Smart factories consist of **roboticised** shop floors

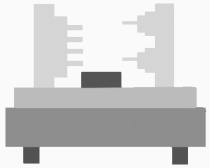
IIoT enables **real-time** monitoring and control

IIoT computation resources per device are **limited**

Automation requirements

- **Robust**: anticipate errors $\Rightarrow$ **safe** production process
- **Flexible**: adapt to errors $\Rightarrow$ **uninterrupted** production process

Example: IC manufacturing shop floor



Deflasher

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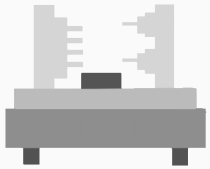
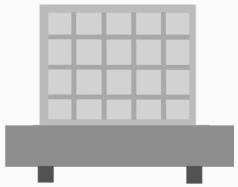


Bonder



Stocker

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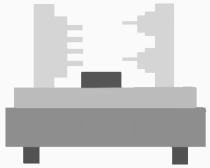

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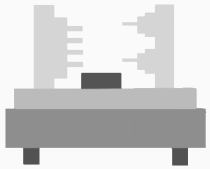

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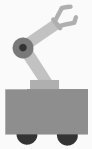
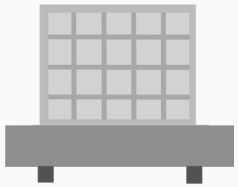


Mobile manipulator$_2$

Mobile manipulator$_1$



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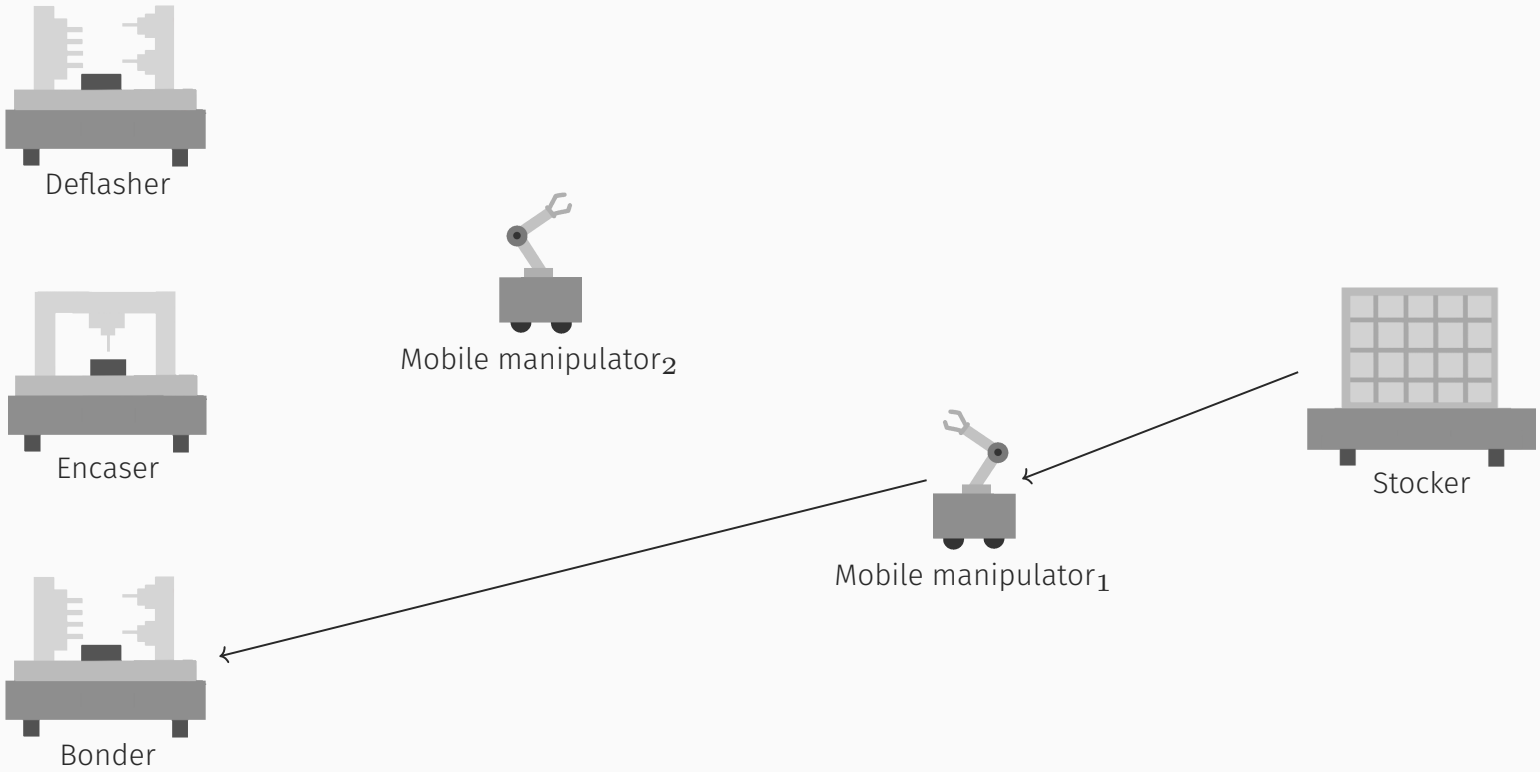

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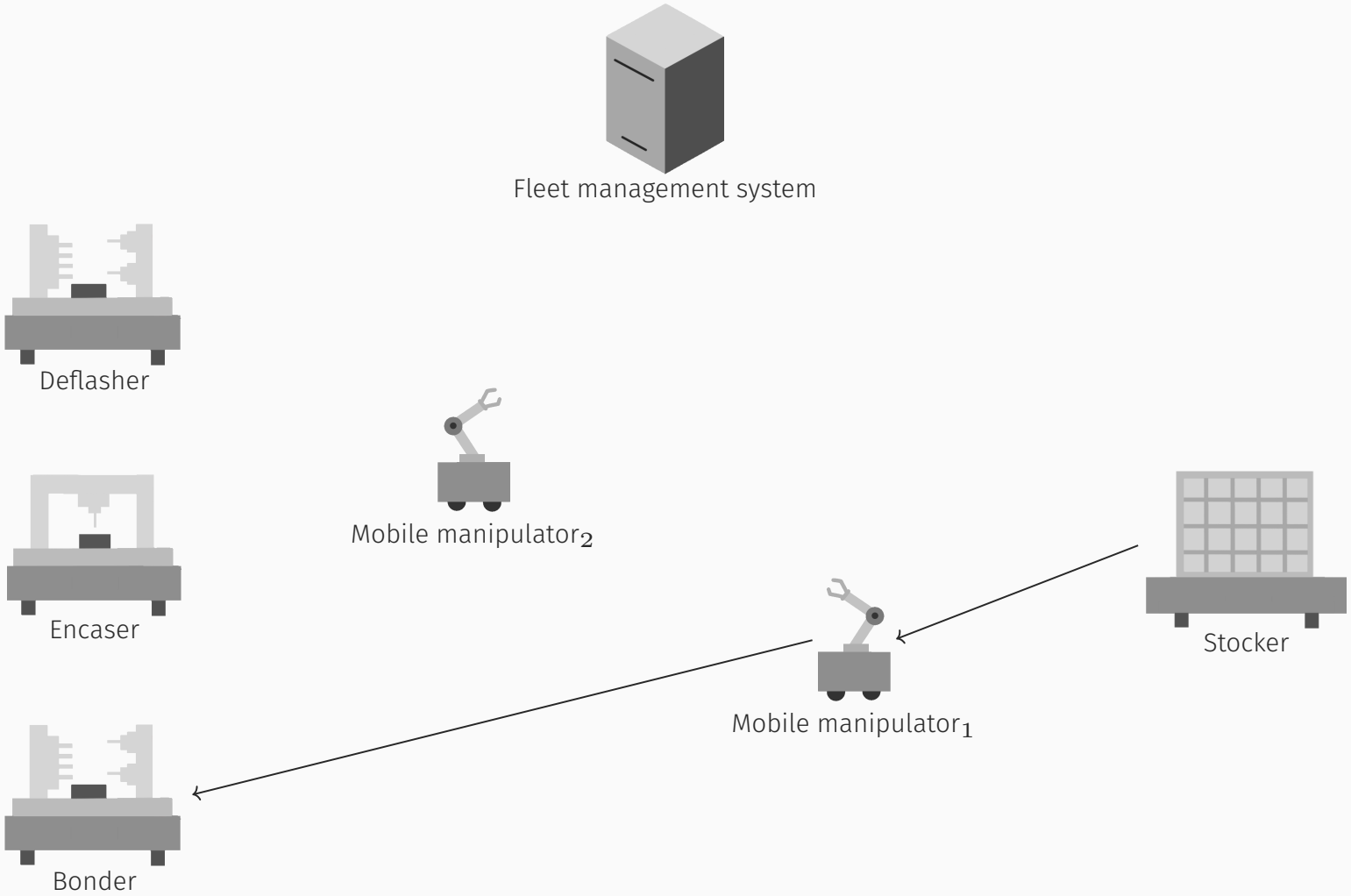

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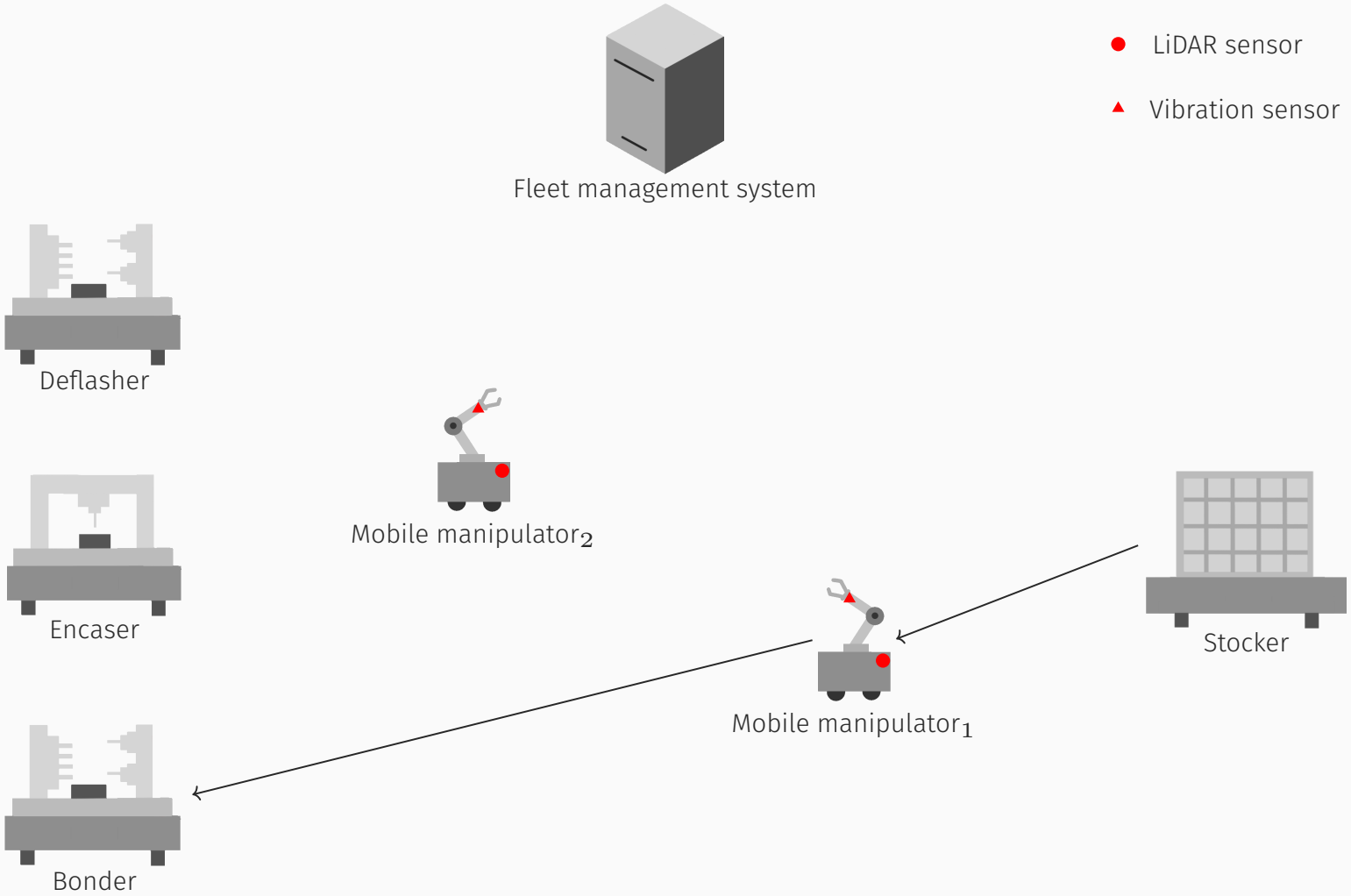
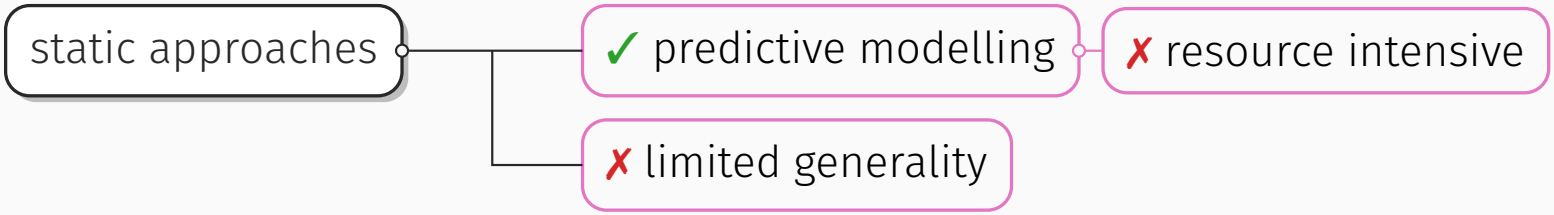


Automation robustness and flexibility



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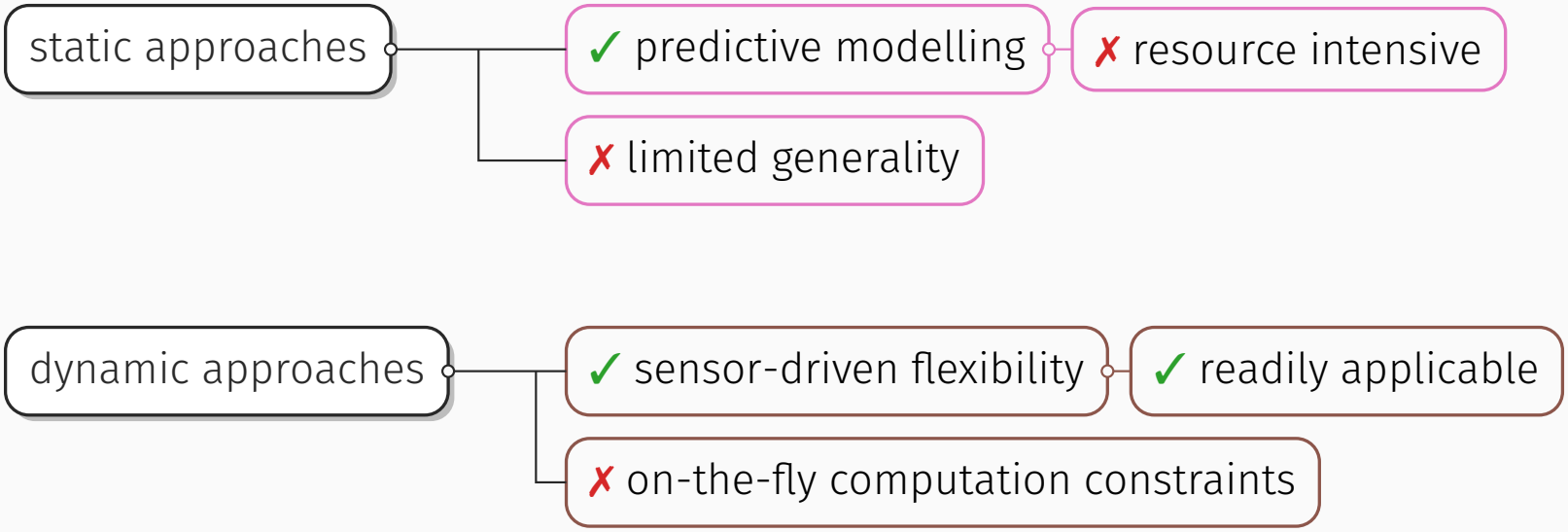

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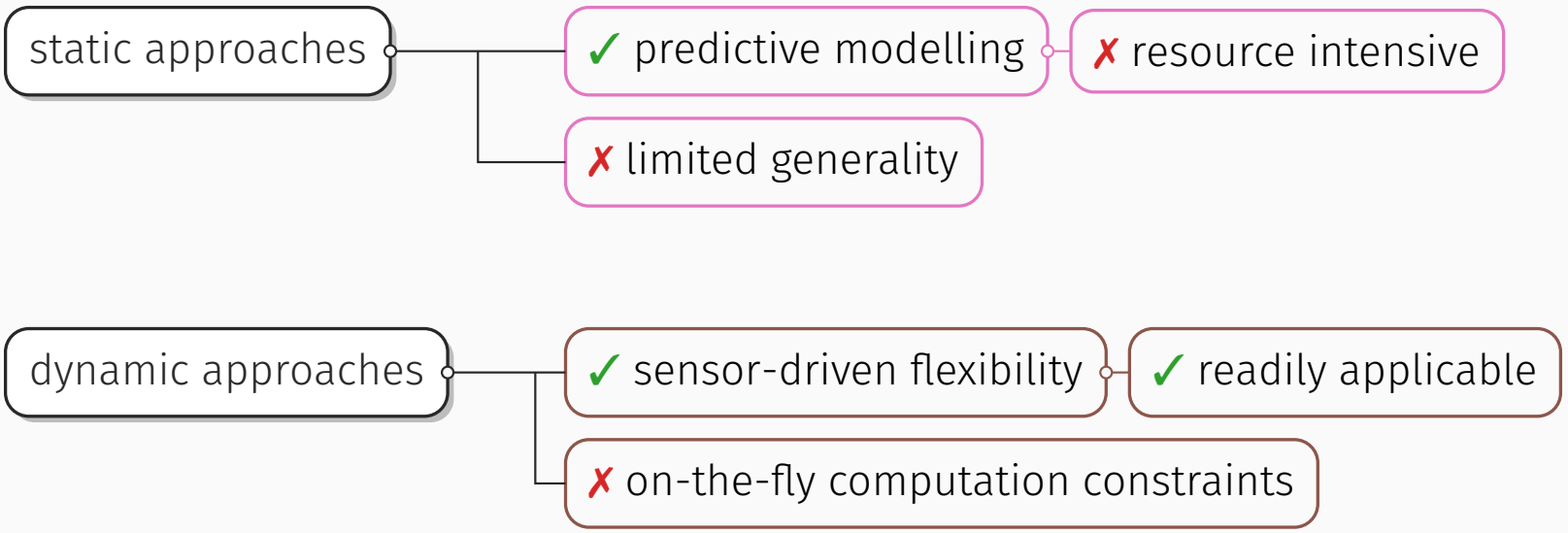


Balancing static and dynamic approaches

- Use part of the **model** information to reduce hardware costs
- Use **sensor** information to adapt to changes as they occur

Runtime adaptation (RA)

Detects **violations** of correctness properties

Monitors respond with remedial actions (called **adaptations**)

Applicable to **black-box** systems with limited internal access

A RA correctness property

- Is formalised **declaratively**, *e.g.*, via a temporal logic
- Encodes **static knowledge** about the system
- Defines the set of **error states** the system can be in

Reversible computation (RC)

Partitions computations as **forwards** and **backwards**

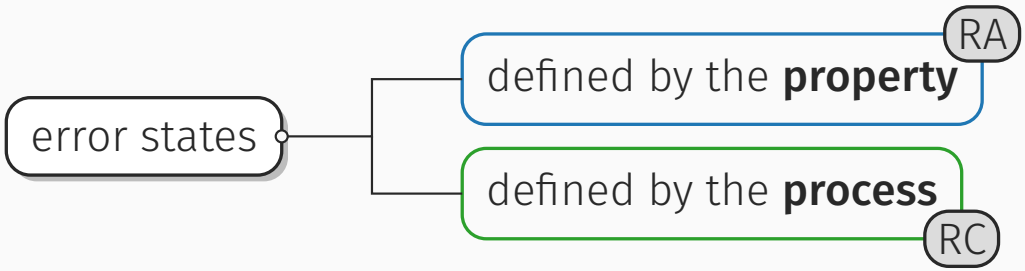
Programs can **undo** computation via backward steps

Requires **intimate knowledge** of and **access** to system code

Reversibility can be

- **Direct:** an inverse action of the forward action exists
- **Indirect:** backward actions needed to reverse a forward action
- **Irreversible:** no direct or indirect backward action exists

RA and RC side-by-side



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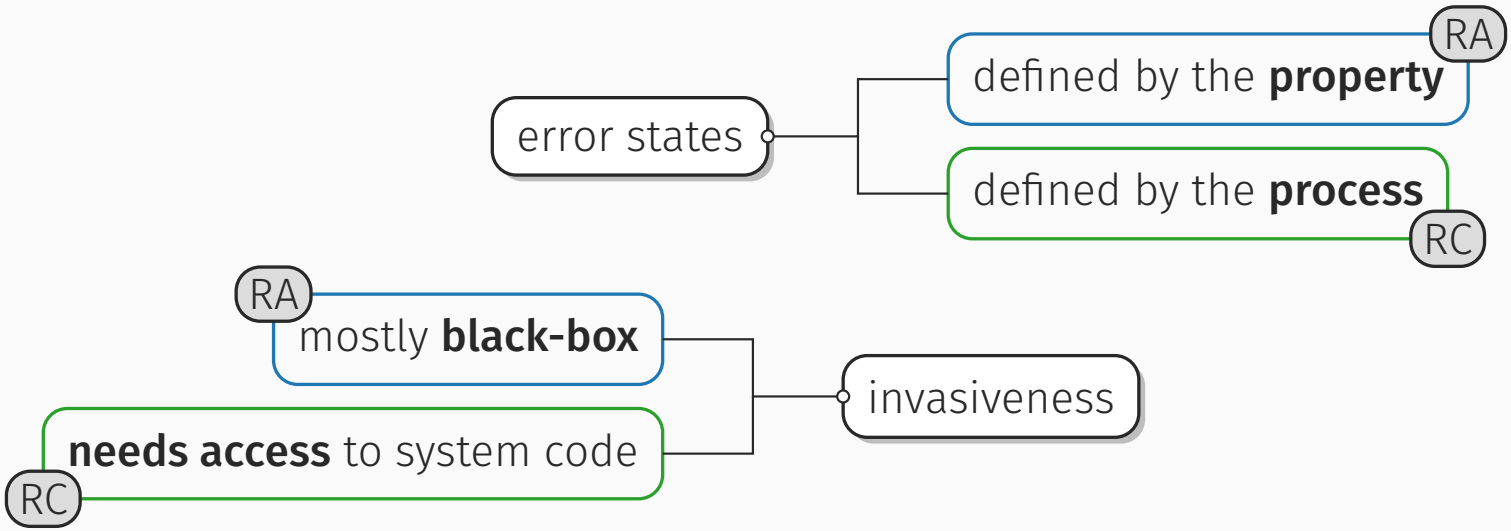

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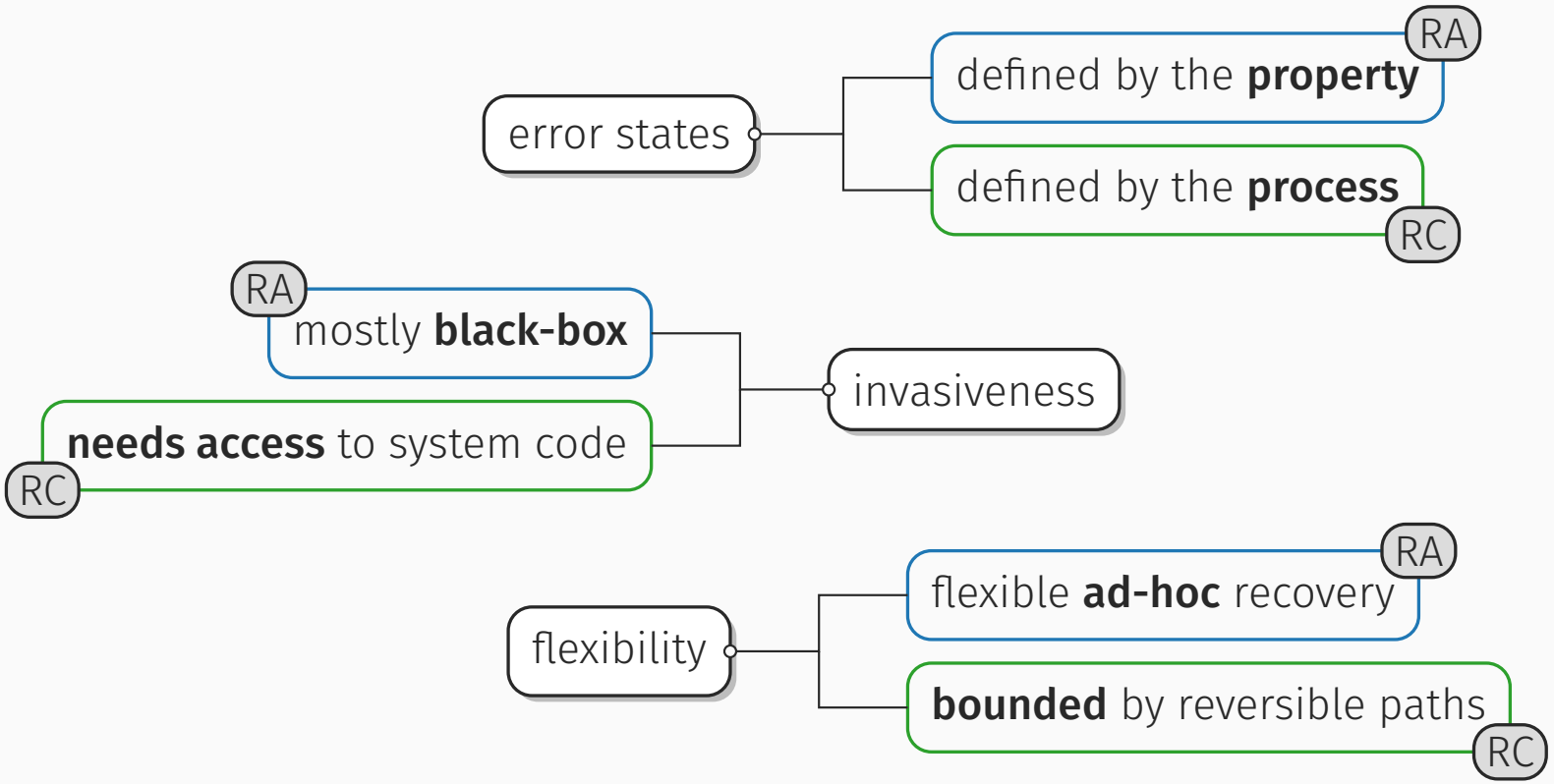

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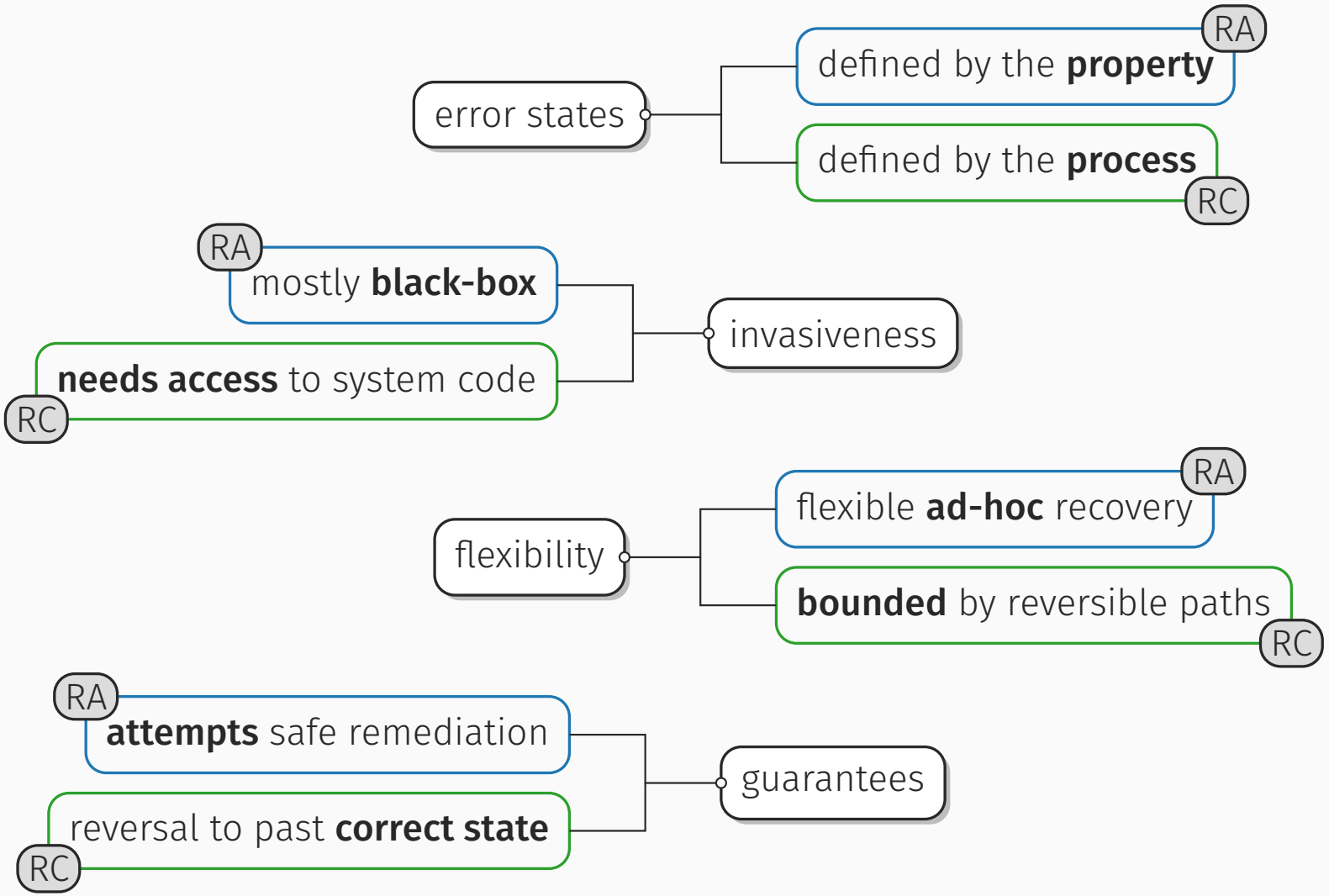

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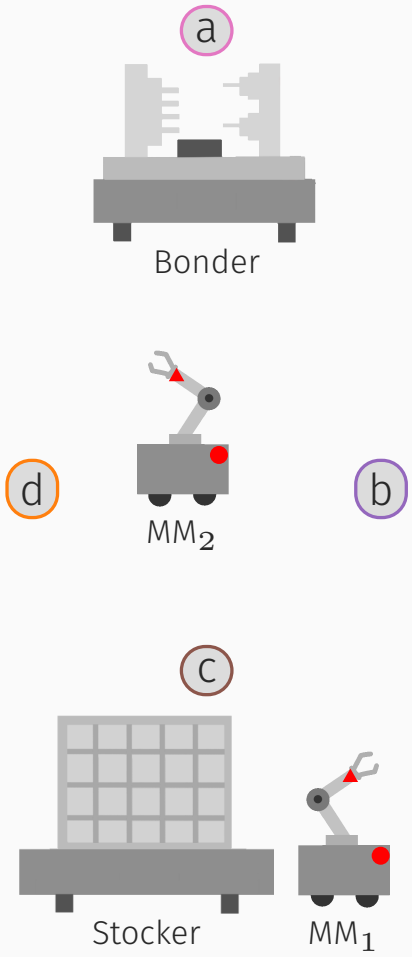
RA and RC in action

> *MMs never block when entering a docking station*



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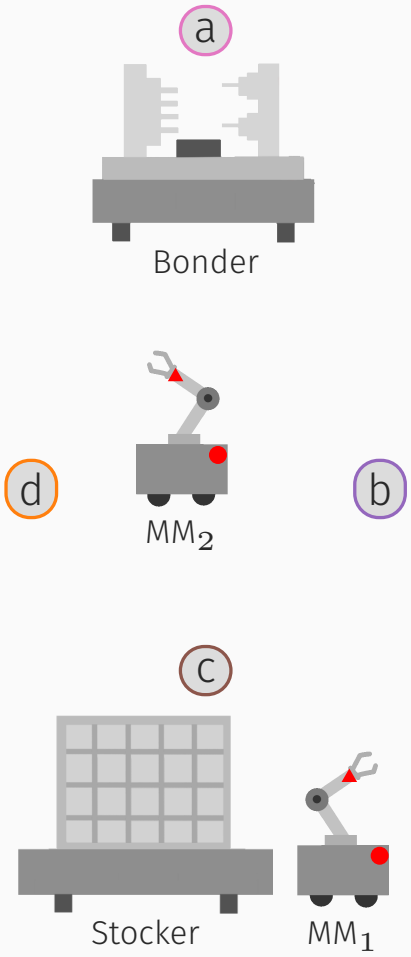

Reversible computation

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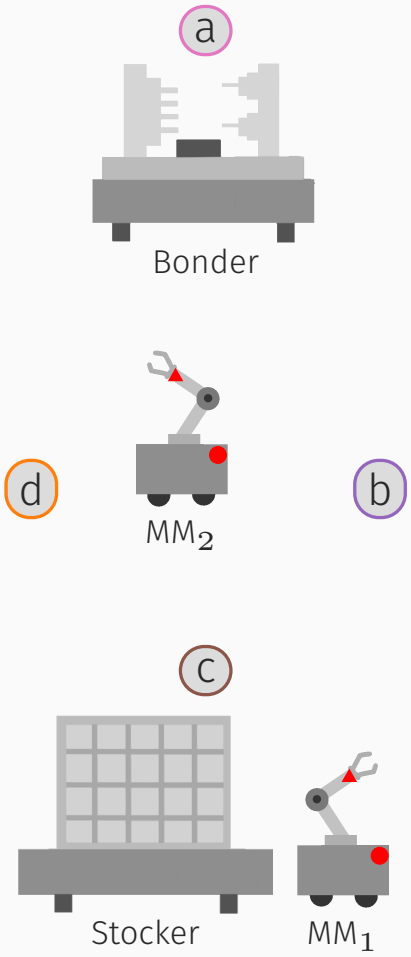

Reversible computation

1. **pick**(dev = MM_2, from = Bonder, obj = Dies) $\rightarrow$

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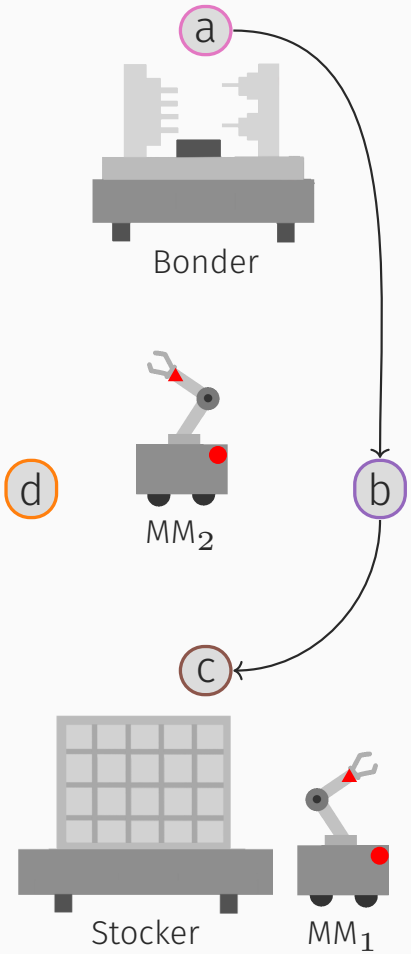

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1. **pick**(dev = MM_2, from = Bonder, obj = Dies) →
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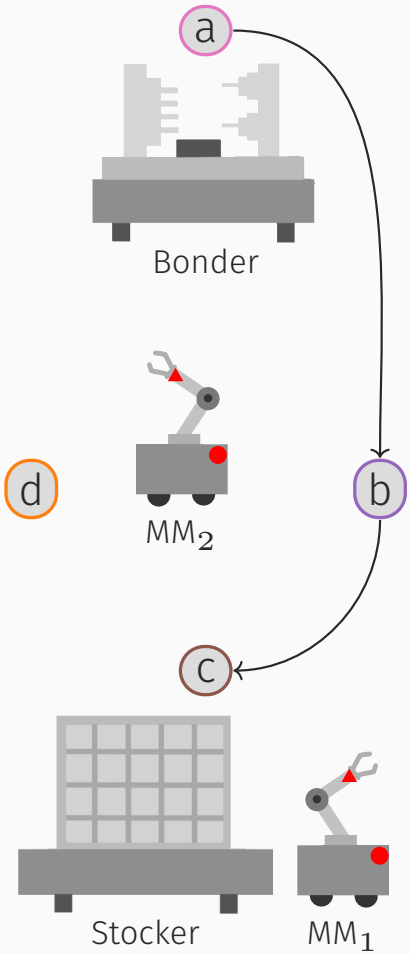

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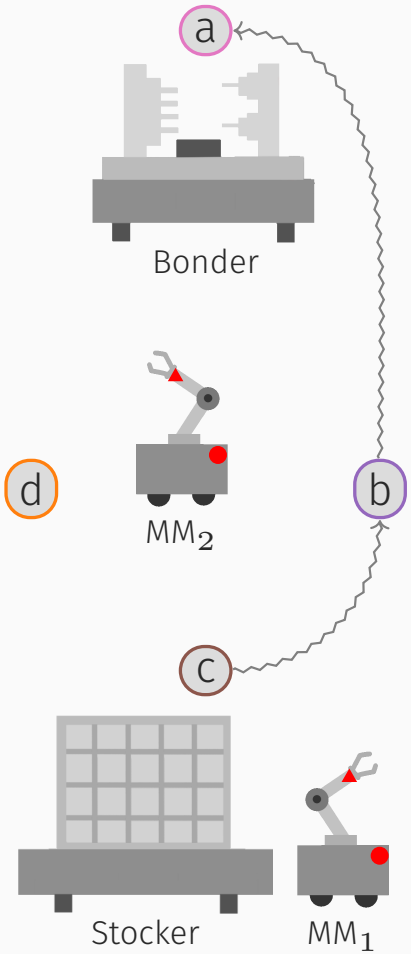

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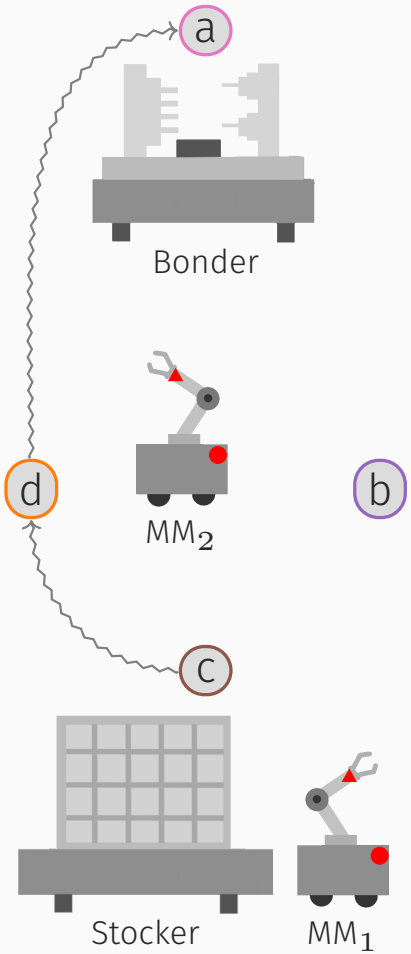

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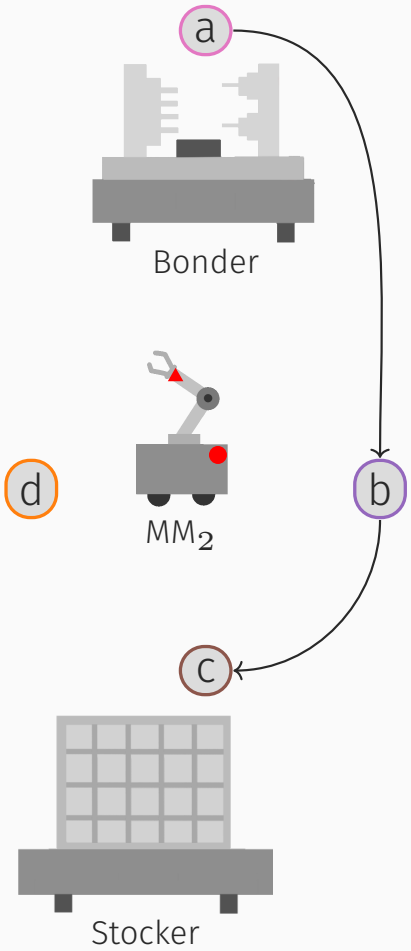

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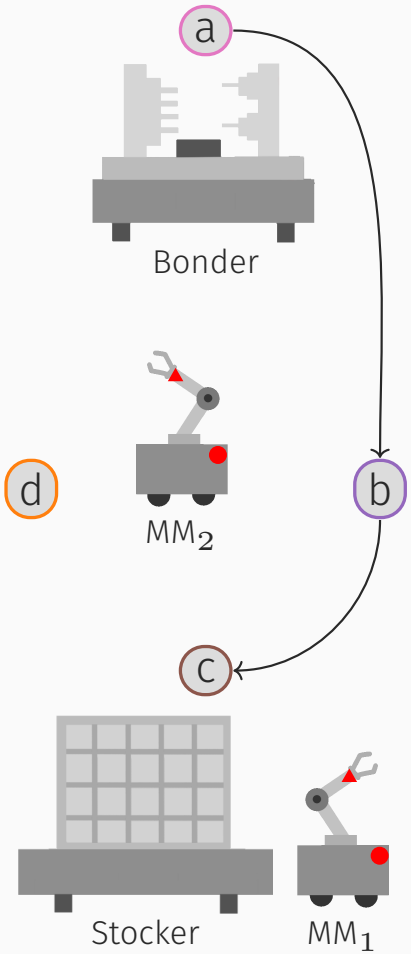

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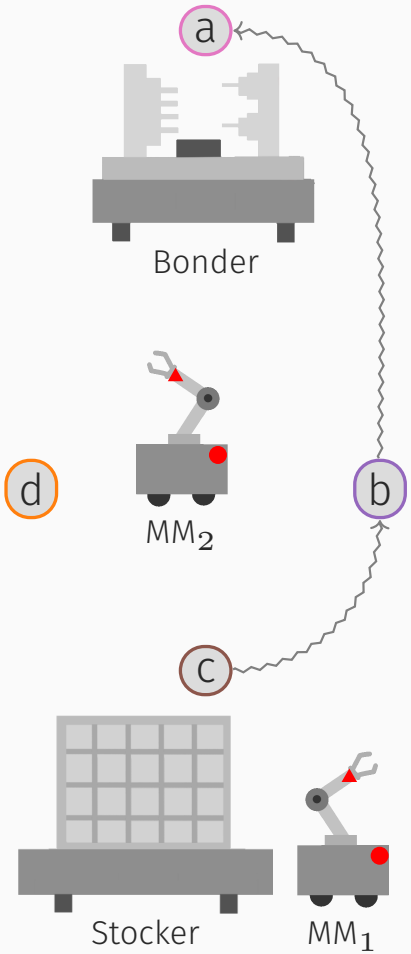

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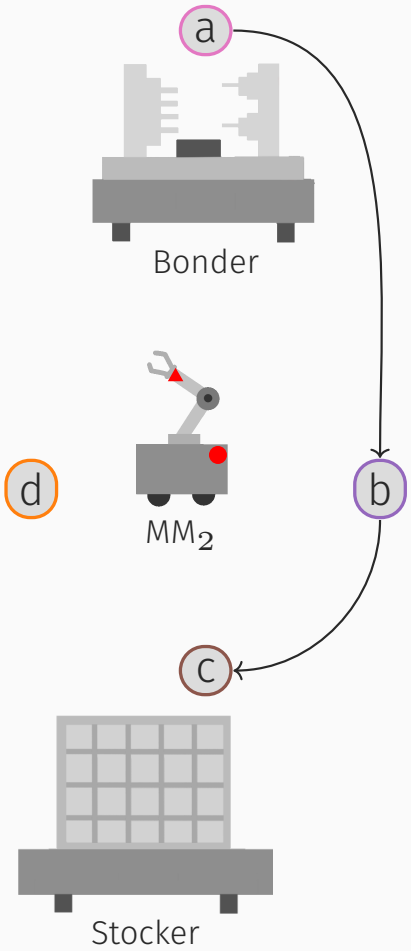

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RA and RC in action

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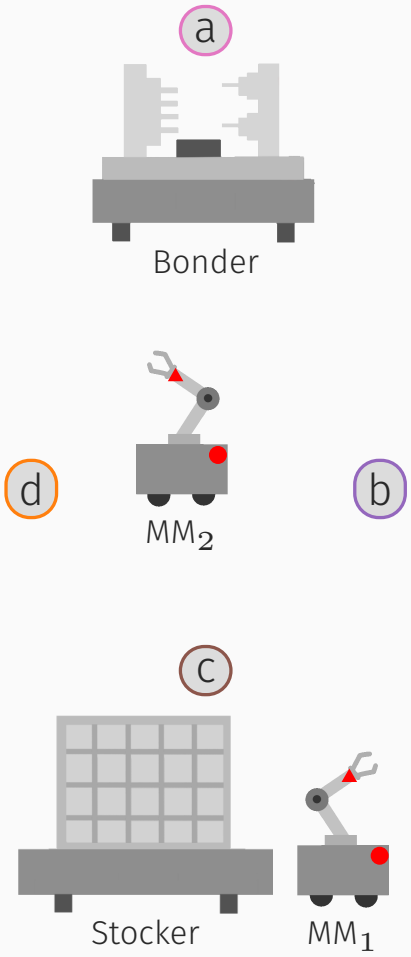

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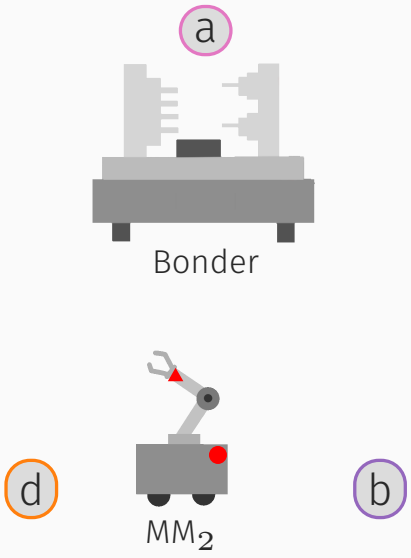

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What if the robot arm of MM_2 gets damaged?

Our experience in applying reversibility to IIoT

Machines are black boxes with **limited API**

Machine behaviour must be observed **indirectly** via sensors

Changes in machine behaviour published as **events**

Notion of a bad system state corresponds to an **error event**

Less obvious to identify **forward** and **backward** computations

RA seems to be more applicable to our IIoT setting

How can we benefit from RC?

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Reversible programs via RC

RC gives **static guarantees** about reversible operations

but...

Requires **explicit reasoning** on forward and backward logic

Tightly couples forward and backward logic in code

May be harder to reverse **side-effecting** operations

The RA view of reversibility

Treat reversibility as **cross-cutting**

Separation of concerns between forward and backward logic

Automate the generation of a complete reversible program

Benefits

- **Simplicity:** reason on forward and backward logic separately
- **Modularity:** backward logic can be layered as RA actions
- **Static guarantees:** when RA is limited to reversible operations

Reversible programs via RA

RA property φ

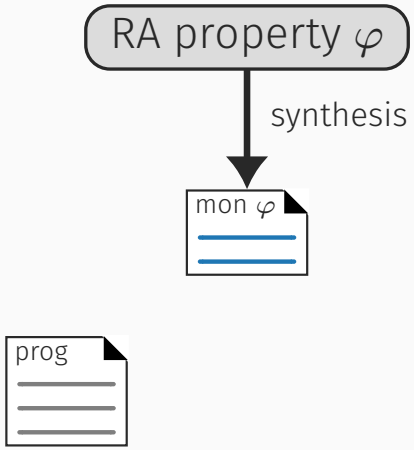
1. RA adaptation defines backward logic

Reversible programs via RA

RA property φ

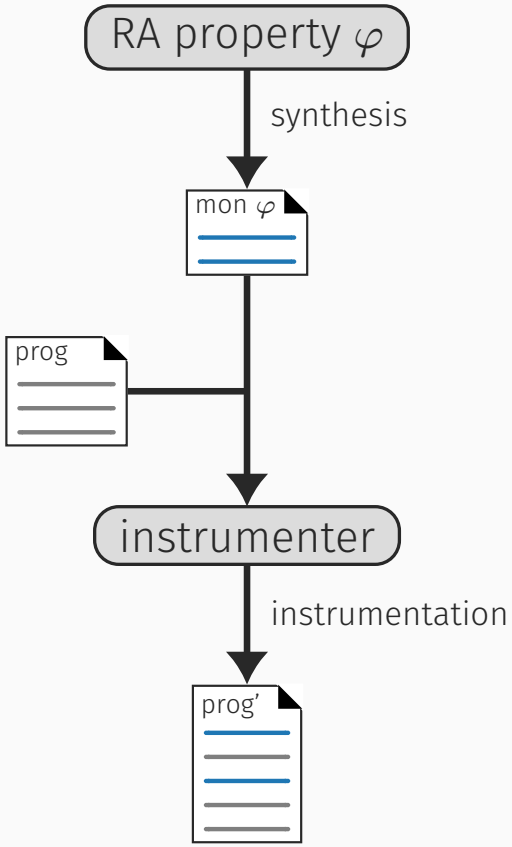
1. RA adaptation defines backward logic
2. Program defines forward logic

Reversible programs via RA



1. RA adaptation defines backward logic
2. Program defines forward logic
3. RA property synthesised as monitor

Reversible programs via RA



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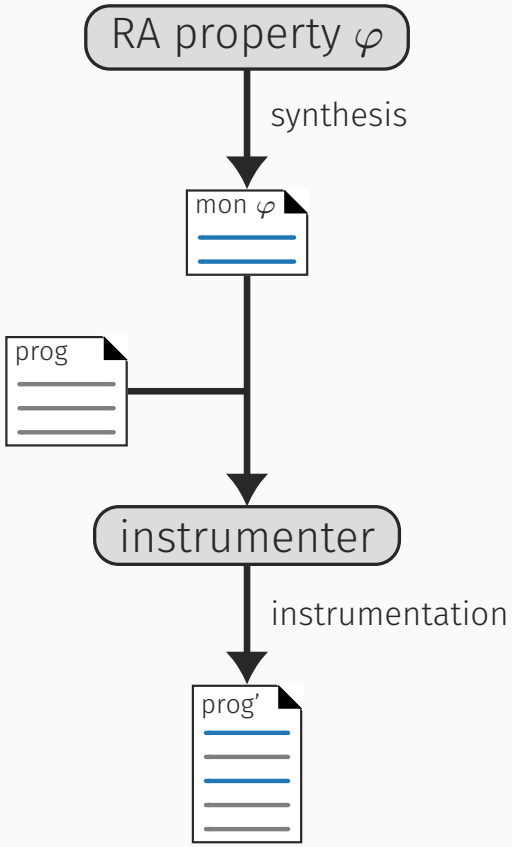
Reversible programs via RA



1. RA adaptation defines backward logic
2. Program defines forward logic
3. RA property synthesised as monitor
4. Program instrumented with monitor
5. Outputs reversible program

RA + RC for IIoT: best of both worlds

1. Construct RA properties with **only** reversible operations
2. **Mix** ad-hoc logic with RC operations in RA properties

Integration style 1

- Clean delineation of forward and backward logic
- RA can benefit from RC static guarantees

Integration style 2

- RA can handle cases RC deems irreversible
- RA enables graceful degradation $\Rightarrow$ automation flexibility

Link to paper

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