Computer-Aided Reasoning for Software

CSE507

Symbolic Execution

Today

Last lecture

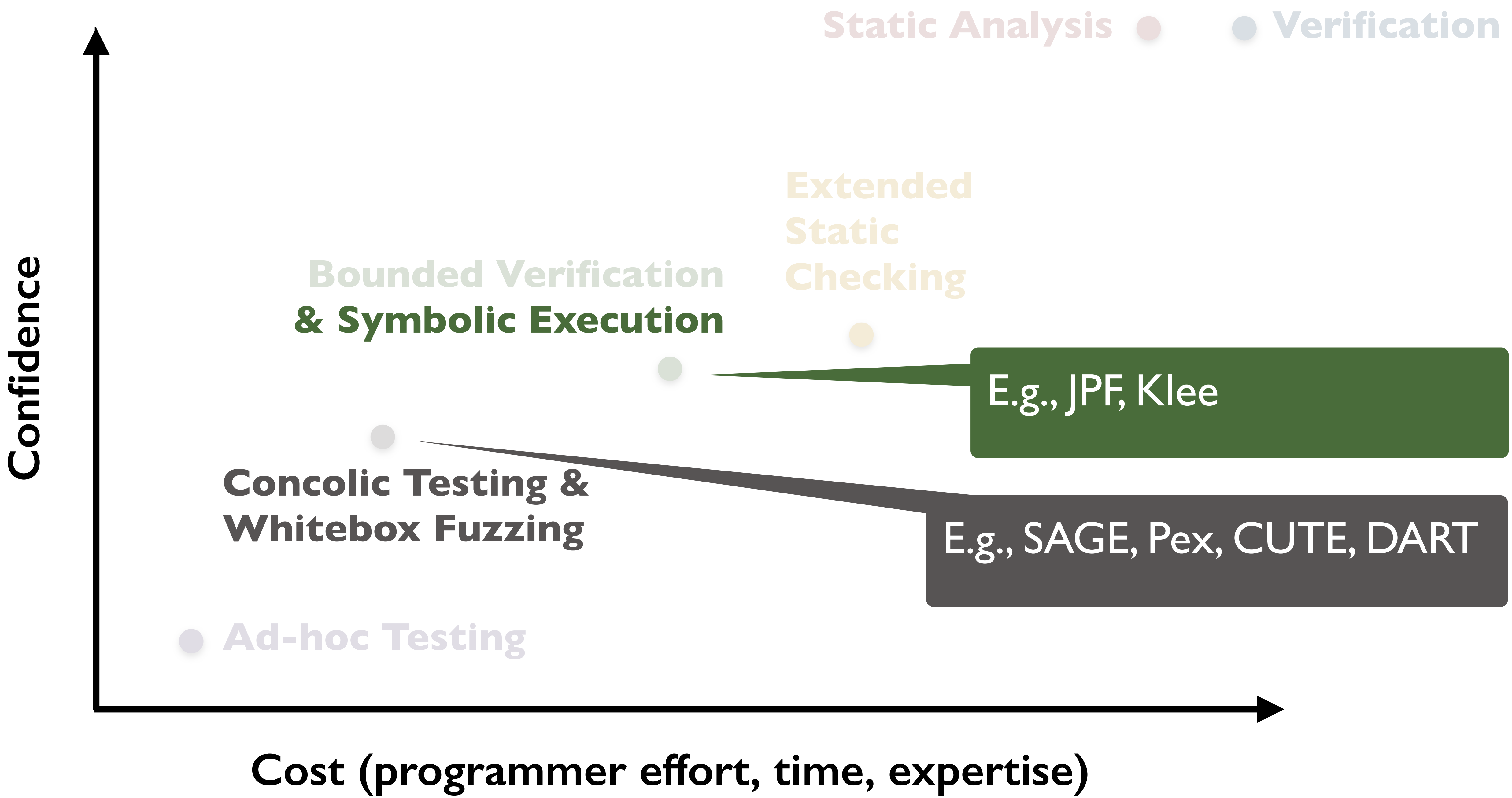
- Verification with Dafny

Today

- Symbolic execution: strongest postconditions for finite programs
- Concolic testing

topics

The spectrum of program validation tools



A brief history of symbolic execution

1976: *A system to generate test data and symbolically execute programs* (Lori Clarke)

1976: *Symbolic execution and program testing* (James King)

2005-present: practical symbolic execution

- Using SMT solvers
- Heuristics to control exponential explosion
- Heap modeling and reasoning about pointers
- Environment modeling
- Dealing with solver limitations

Symbolic execution: basic idea

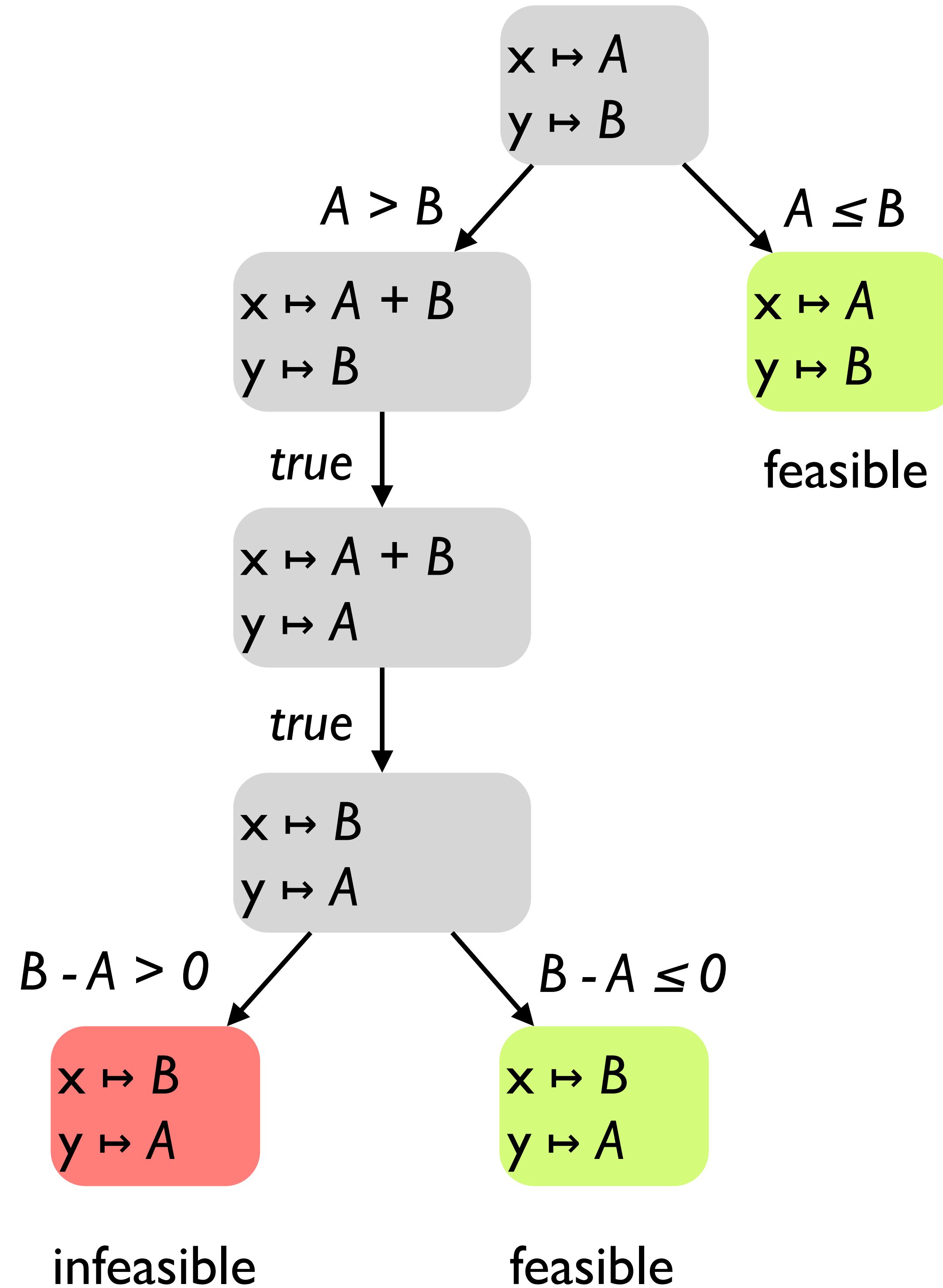
```
def f (x, y):
  if (x > y):
    x = x + y
    y = x - y
    x = x - y
    if (x - y > 0):
      assert false
  return (x, y)
```

Execute the program on *symbolic values*.

Symbolic state maps variables to symbolic values.

Path condition is a quantifier-free formula over the symbolic inputs that encodes all branch decisions taken so far.

All paths in the program form its *execution tree*, in which some paths are *feasible* and some are *infeasible*.



Symbolic execution: practical issues

Loops and recursion: infinite execution trees

Path explosion: exponentially many paths

Heap modeling: symbolic data structures and pointers

Solver limitations: dealing with complex PCs

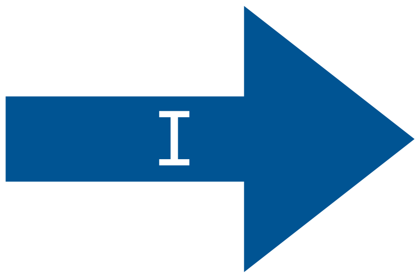
Environment modeling: dealing with native / system / library calls

Loops and recursion

Dealing with infinite execution trees:

- Finitize paths by unrolling loops and recursion (bounded verification)
- Finitize paths by limiting the size of PCs (bounded verification)
- Use loop invariants (verification)

```
init;
while (C) {
  B;
}
assert P;
```




```
init;
assert I;
havoc targets(B);
assume I;
if (C) {
  B;
  assert I;
  assume false;
}
assert P;
```

Path explosion

Achieving good coverage in the presence of exponentially many paths:

- Select next branch at random
- Select next branch based on coverage
- Interleave symbolic execution with random testing

symbolic execution | random testing | interleaved execution

Heap modeling

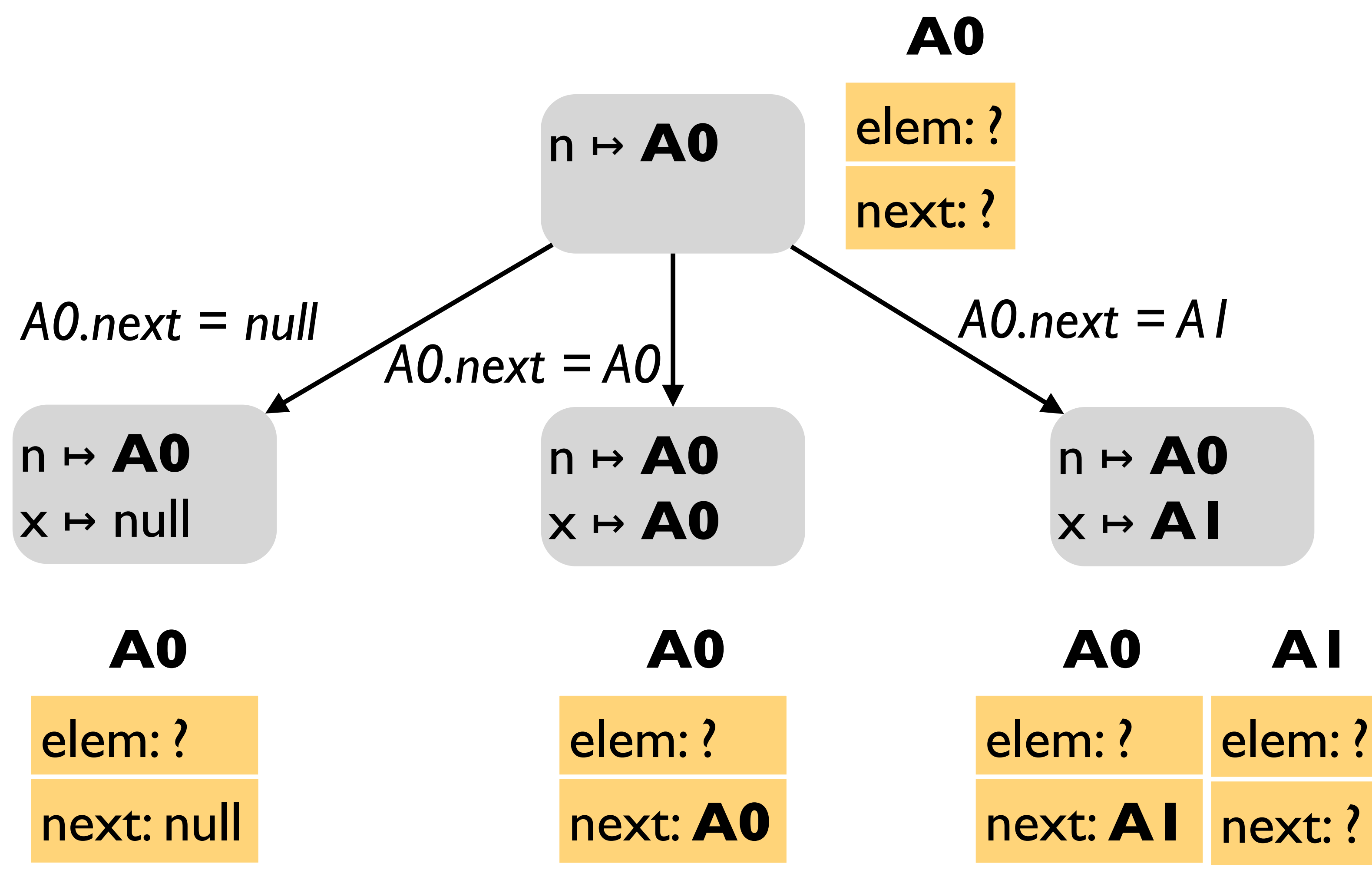
Modeling symbolic heap values and pointers

- Bit-precise memory modeling with the theory of arrays (EXE, Klee, SAGE)
- Lazy concretization (JPF)
- Concolic lazy concretization (CUTE)

Heap modeling: lazy concretization

```
class Node {
  int elem;
  Node next;
}

n = symbolic(Node);
x = n.next;
```



Heap modeling: concolic testing

```
typedef struct cell {
  int v;
  struct cell *next;
} cell;

int f(int v) {
  return 2*v + 1;
}

int testme(cell *p, int x) {
  if (x > 0)
    if (p != NULL)
      if (f(x) == p->v)
        if (p->next == p)
          assert false;
  return 0;
}
```

Heap	Concrete	PC
	p ↦ null x ↦ 236	$x > 0 \wedge p = null$
A0 next: null v: 634	p ↦ **A0** x ↦ 236	$x > 0 \wedge p \neq null \wedge$ $p.v \neq 2x + 1$
A0 next: null v: 3	p ↦ **A0** x ↦ 1	$x > 0 \wedge p \neq null \wedge$ $p.v = 2x + 1 \wedge$ $p.next \neq p$
A0 next: **A0** v: 3	p ↦ **A0** x ↦ 1	$x > 0 \wedge p \neq null \wedge$ $p.v = 2x + 1 \wedge$ $p.next = p$

Execute concretely and symbolically. Negate last decision and solve for new inputs.

Solver limitations

Reducing the demands on the solver:

- On-the-fly expression simplification
- Incremental solving
- Solution caching
- Substituting concrete values for symbolic in complex PCs (CUTE)

Environment modeling

Dealing with system / native / library calls:

- Partial state concretization
- Manual *models* of the environment (Klee)

Summary

Today

- Practical symbolic execution and concolic testing

Next lecture

- Angelic execution