

# A Solution for the Exercise 7 (Faulty Base Objects)

EPFL, LPD

STiDC'07

# Problem 1: Compare and Swap

**Question:** Is it possible to implement C&S using a finite number of base C&S objects one of which can be faulty in a **non-responsive** way?

**Short answer:** No, it is not.

# Main Idea

- Problem  $P$ : implement C&S using base C&S objects, one of which can be non-responsive, and registers (non-faulty).
- **Reduce to** problem  $Q$ : implement consensus using registers in a system of  $n > 1$  processes, one of which can crash  $\Rightarrow$  **impossible**
- By contradiction: assume there exists an algorithm  $A$  that solves  $P$  using  $k$  C&S objects, in a system of  $n$  processes (one of which can crash)
- If we find an algorithm  $B$  that solves problem  $Q$ , using  $A \Rightarrow$  contradiction

# The Reduction

- We implement consensus in a system of  $N = \max(k, n)$  processes, one of which can crash
- A process  $p_i$  that proposes a value, writes the value in a register  $R[i]$  and waits until a decided value is written in register  $D$ :

**initially:**  $D = \perp, R[1, \dots, N] = \perp$

**upon**  $propose_i(v)$  **do**

$R[i] \leftarrow v$

  wait until  $D \neq \perp$

**return**  $D$

## The Reduction (2)

$k$  processes emulate base C&S objects (in a parallel task; operation requests and responses passed via registers  $CS$  between each pair of processes):

**parallel task**  $C_i$

**initially:**  $q = \perp$  (local variable)

**while true do**

**for**  $j \leftarrow 1$  **to**  $n$  **do**

$(type, oldval, newval) \leftarrow CS[i][j]$

**if**  $type = \text{invocation}$  **then**

**if**  $q = oldval$  **then**  $q \leftarrow newval$

$CS[i][j] \leftarrow (\text{response}, q)$

## The Reduction (3)

$n$  processes run the following algorithm in a parallel task:

- 1 Wait until some value  $v \neq \perp$  is written in some register  $R[j]$ ,
- 2 Run algorithm  $A$  with operation  $C\&S(\perp, v)$ , using the emulated base C&S objects,
- 3 Write the value returned by  $A$  into register  $D$ .

## Problem 2: SWMR Register

**Problem:** Implement SWMR register out of base SWMR registers,  $t$  of which can fail in a non-responsive way.

**Solution:** Use  $2t + 1$  base registers, so that always **majority** is correct. Read/write from/to majority of registers.

# The Idea

**uses:**  $R[1, \dots, 2t + 1]$  – SWMR registers  $t$  of which can be non-responsive

**upon**  $write_1(v)$  **do**

┌  $ts \leftarrow ts + 1$   
├ invoke  $write_1(ts, v)$  on all  $R[1, \dots, 2t + 1]$   
└ wait for  $t + 1$  responses

**upon**  $read_j$  **do**

┌ invoke  $read_j(v)$  on all  $R[1, \dots, 2t + 1]$   
├ wait for  $t + 1$  responses  
└ **return** the value  $v$  with the highest timestamp  $ts$

This algorithm implements a **regular** SWMR register!



## The Idea (contd.)

The presented algorithm implements a **regular** SWMR register. However, a regular register can be transformed into an atomic one (see the lecture slides about register transformations).