The LTS WorkBench

Alceste Scalas
Dipartimento di Matematica e Informatica
Università di Cagliari, Italy
alceste.scalas@unica.it

Massimo Bartoletti
Dipartimento di Matematica e Informatica
Università di Cagliari, Italy
bart@unica.it

Labelled Transition Systems (LTSs) are a fundamental semantic model in many areas of informatics, especially concurrency theory. Yet, reasoning on LTSs and relations between their states can be difficult and elusive: very simple process algebra terms can give rise to a large (possibly infinite) number of intricate transitions and interactions. To ease this kind of study, we present `LTSwb`, a flexible and extensible LTS toolbox: this tutorial paper discusses its design and functionalities.

1 Introduction

`LTSwb` (from *"LTS WorkBench"*) [14] is a Labelled Transition System (LTS) toolbox, allowing to define LTSs and processes, manipulate them, and compute relations between their states. Its main features are:

genericity. `LTSwb` does not require LTSs and processes to have specific state/label types. This allows to semantically reason on different process specifications: for example, it allows to study whether a CCS process [12] is a semantic refinement of a session type [10] (as in [1]), or whether it can correctly interact with a service whose specification is a Communicating Finite-State Machine (CFSM) [2];

laziness. Very large, and even infinite-state LTSs and processes are managed transparently: states and transitions are only generated upon request. This allows to mitigate state space explosion problems, and to explore and filter out (finite) parts of infinite LTSs arising e.g. with recursion, parallelism, unbounded communication buffers, *etc.*

`LTSwb` is a Scala [13] library. The choice of Scala is motivated by the desire of a functional programming language with an advanced type system, and the possibility of accessing the vast landscape of libraries available on the Java VM; moreover, Scala's `lazy` values allow for some controlled lazy evaluation in an otherwise eager language — a mix which we found helpful for our implementation. `LTSwb` can be used directly on the interactive Scala console: unless otherwise noted, all the examples on this paper can be replicated therein via simple cut&pasting.

2 LTSs, processes and asynchrony

An *LTS* is a triple $(\Sigma, \Lambda, \mathcal{R})$ where Σ is the set of *states*, Λ is the set of *labels*, and $\mathcal{R} \subseteq (\Sigma \times (\Lambda \times \Sigma))$ is the *transition relation*. A *process* is a pair (L, σ) where L is an LTS and σ is one of its states. The *process transition* $(L,\sigma) \xrightarrow{\ell} (L,\sigma')$ holds iff $(\sigma,(\ell,\sigma'))$ is in the transition relation of L.

In the following sections, we show several ways in which `LTSwb` processes can be created (by extracting them from some LTS) and manipulated.

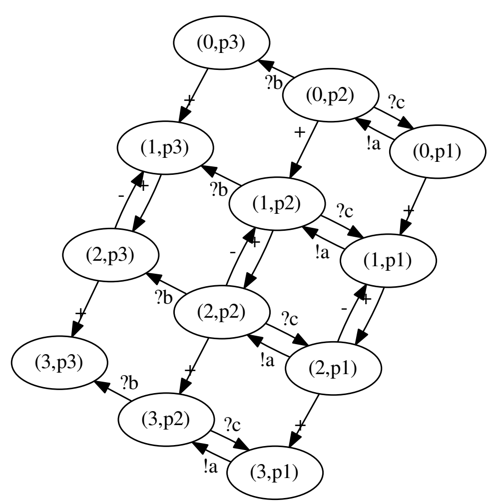


Figure 2.1: Output of `(l1 ||| l2).toDot`.

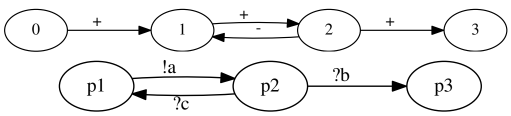
To appear in EPTCS.

2.1 From LTSs to processes

In LTSwb, a finite LTS can be defined with the LTS constructor, by enumerating the state-(label-state) triples which compose its transition relation. For example:

```
val l1 = LTS(List((0, ("+", 1)), (1, ("+", 2)), (2, ("+", 3)), (2, ("-", 1))))
val l2 = LTS(List(("p1", ("!a", "p2")), ("p2", ("?b", "p3")), ("p2", ("?c", "p1"))))
```

The types of `l1` and `l2` are (respectively) `FiniteLTS[Int,String]` and `FiniteLTS[String,String]`: i.e., they are finite-state, finite-branching LTSs where states are `Int`egers (resp. `String`s), and labels are `String`s. The methods `l1.toDot` and `l2.toDot` return their graphs (shown on the left). The `|||` operator on LTSs returns the LTS whose states correspond to the parallel composition of its arguments' states, provided that the labels have the same type: Figure 2.1 shows the diagram of `(l1 ||| l2).toDot`. Such a composition is performed *lazily*, thus avoiding (or delaying) state space explosion problems: the actual combinations of LTS states are generated only upon request.



A process can be simply retrieved from an LTS through one of its states. For example:

```
val p1 = l2.process("p1")
```

In this case, we have that `p1` has type `FiniteProcess[String,String]` (i.e., a finite-state, finite-branching process where states are `String`s, and labels are `String`s as well). As one might expect, `p1.state` has indeed value `"p1"`. Moreover, `p1.lts` is `l2` — i.e., the LTS inhabited by `p1`.

A process can be queried for its enabled transitions. In our example, `p1.transitions` has type `FiniteSet[String]`, and value `Set("!a")`. We can now let:

```
val p1a = p1("!a");   val p2 = p1a.iterator.next
```

where `p1a` is the `FiniteSet` of processes reachable from `p1` via transition `"!a"`. In our example, `p1a` contains a single element, i.e. the process corresponding to state `"p2"` of `l2`: such a process is retrieved via `p1a`'s iterator[1], and assigned to `p2`. As expected, `p2.transitions` has value `Set("?b","?c")`.

Processes can be composed in parallel, similarly to LTSs (as shown above). Let:

```
val p01 = l1.process(0) ||| p1
```

`p10` has type `FiniteProcess[(Int,String),String]` (i.e., each state is a *pair* of `(Int,String)`, while labels remain `String`s). The transitions of `p01` are those of the LTS state `(0,p1)` in Figure 2.1: indeed, the same process could have been extracted with `(l1|||l2).process((0,"p1"))`, and `p01.lts` is `l1|||l2`.

2.2 CCS processes

LTSwb implements `CCS`, which is the *infinite* LTS whose states are `CCSTerm`s, labels are `CCSPrefix`es, and the (infinite) transition relation corresponds to the CCS semantics. Processes can be extracted from `CCS` as above, i.e. with `CCS.process(s)` (where `s` is a `CCSTerm`), or letting LTSwb parse terms from strings:

```
val ccs1 = CCS.process("rec(X)(!a.(?b + ?c.X))") // Parses the CCSTerm from String
val ccs2 = CCS("?a.(t.!c.?a.!b + t.!b)") // Shorthand. "t" is the internal action
```

The type of `ccs1` and `ccs2` is `FiniteBranchingProcess[CCSTerm,CCSPrefix]` — i.e., they are finite-branching (but *not* necessarily finite-state) processes whose states are `CCSTerm`s, and whose transition labels are `CCSPrefix`es. Note that `ccs1` has, intuitively, the same transitions of process `p1` defined

[1] Note that the same process can also be retrieved via `l2.process("p2")`, as we did for `p1` above.

earlier: for example, `ccs1.transitions` is `Set(!a)`. There is, however, a difference: the CCS LTS distinguishes `CCSPrefix`es among *input*, *output* and *internal* actions (respectively: ?a, !a, τ), and this additional information (which is *not* present for the simple string labels of process `p1` above) is exploited by the `|||` operator to let two parallel CCS processes synchronise. For example, let:

```
val ccs12 = ccs1 ||| ccs2
```

Here, `ccs12` has type `FiniteBranchingProcess[(CCSTerm,CCSTerm),CCSPrefix]`, and the value of `ccs12.transitions` is `Set(?a, !a, τ)`. As expected, the τ-transition is generated by the synchronisation on a — and indeed, as shown in Figure A.1, `ccs12(τ)` returns[2]:

```
Set( ( (?b + (?c.rec(X)(!a.(?b + ?c.X)))) , (t.!c.?a.!b + t.!b) ) )
```

The synchronisation mechanics are parametric at the LTS level — and in particular, they are regulated by two methods:

- `LTS.syncp(l1, l2)` is a predicate telling whether labels `l1` and `l2` can synchronise (its default implementation is `false`, thus only catering for interleaved executions, as shown in Section 2.1);
- `LTS.syncLabel(l)` returns the new label emitted when synchronising on label `l` (the default implementation is vacuous, since `LTS.syncp()` is `false` by default).

Further details about the implementation of these methods in the case of CCS are given in Section 2.4.

2.3 From synchronous to asynchronous semantics

If `p` is an instance of `Process` (which is the main abstract class common to *all* LTSwb processes), then `p.async` is a new process obtained by pairing `p` with an empty *FIFO buffer*, represented as a `List`. LTSwb performs this transformation in a general, purely semantic fashion[3]: each *output* label of `p` is appended to the buffer (with an internal transition), and the *head* of the buffer enables a corresponding output transition. This change is transparently reflected in the values returned by `p.async.transitions`. For example:

```
val ccs1a = ccs1.async;   val ccs2a = ccs2.async
```

Values `ccs1a` and `ccs2a` have type `FiniteBranchingProcess[(CCSTerm,Seq[CCSPrefix]),CCSPrefix]` (i.e., each state pairs a `CCSTerm` with a sequence of prefixes). The difference between `ccs2` and `ccs2a` is shown in Figure 2.2: it can be seen that, for example, the first !c transition of `ccs2` becomes a τ transition (with buffering) in `ccs2a`, and the head of the buffer is later consumed with a !c transition. Note, however, that there is an important difference between `ccs1` and `ccs1a`: while the former has a *finite* number of states, the latter has *infinite* states, due to the presence of recursion and unbounded buffers (the difference can be seen in Figure A.2). This is not a problem *per se*, because, as remarked above, LTSwb ensures that process transitions are expanded "lazily". Pairing a finite processes with an unbounded buffer reminds of Communicating Finite State Machines (CFSMs) [2] — and indeed, a CFSM-like interaction (modulo the different naming of labels) can be modeled with the composition `ccs1a ||| ccs2a`, by filtering the states reachable via internal moves and synchronisations: the resulting *finite* transition diagram is shown in Figure A.3 (note that the "unfiltered" transition diagram of `ccs1a ||| ccs2a` is *in*finite).

[2] Note that `ccs12(τ)` and its return value have been slightly edited for clarity, and thus are *not* valid Scala code.

[3] Indeed, such an operation is performed at the LTS level: if `l` is an `LTS`, then `l.async` is the `LTS` with `l`'s states paired with a buffer; if `s` is a state of `l`, then `l.async.process((s, List()))` is equal to `l.process(s).async`.

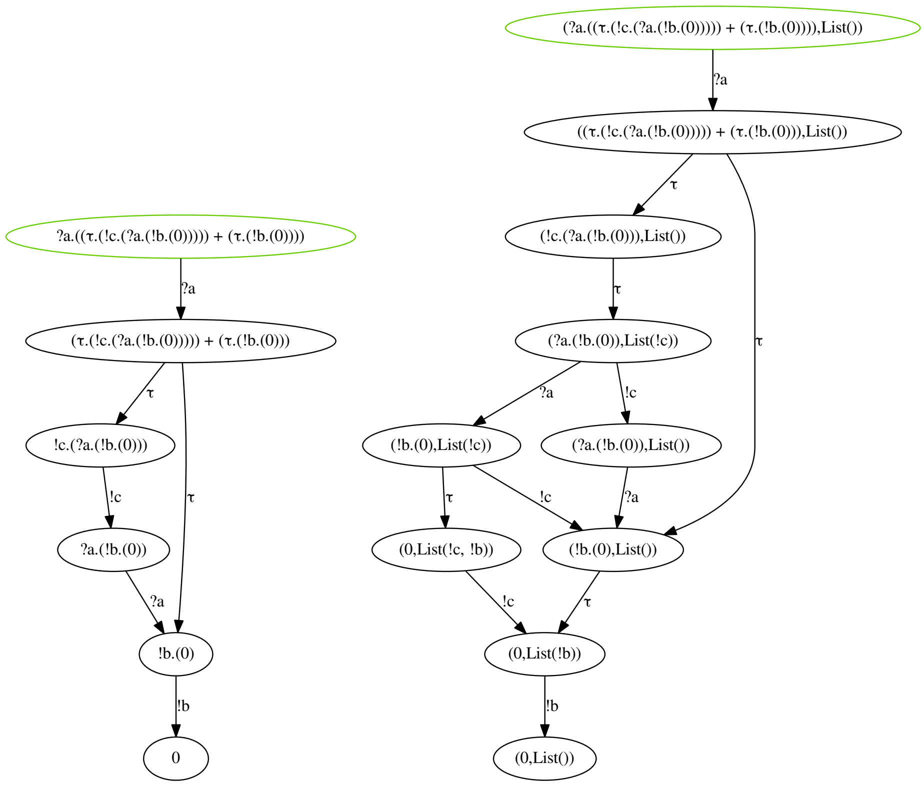


Figure 2.2: Outputs of `ccs2.toDot()` (left) and `ccs2.toDot()` (right).

2.4 Adding new process calculi

`LTSwb` has no "hardwired" notion of process calculus. A new process calculus with labelled semantics can be added to the framework in four steps: *(a)* define (or possibly reuse) a class `L` for its labels, *(b)* define a class `T` for its terms, *(c)* define a transition relation `R` by deriving the class `Relation3[T,L,T]`, and *(d)* suitably derive the abstract class `LTS`, using `T` and `L` respectively as state and label types (specifying which labels are input/output/internal, and how they synchronise), and `R` as transition relation. This very approach has been followed for implementing `CCS` under `LTSwb`, as sketched below:

- *(a)* the base (abstract) class for CCS labels is `CCSPrefix`, with one derived class for each concrete label type: `CCSInPrefix`, `CCSOutPrefix`, and `CCSTau`;
- *(b)* the base (abstract) class for CCS terms is `CCSTerm`, with one derivative for each syntactic production: `CCSNil` (terminated process), `CCSSeq` (prefix-guarded sequence), `CCSPlus` (choice), `CCSPar` (parallel), `CCSRec` (recursion), `CCSVar` (recursion variable), `CCSDel` (delimitation). Such classes represent the CCS abstract syntax tree, and they are instantiated by the CCS parser;
- *(c)* the CCS semantics is implemented in the `CCSSemantics` singleton class. Its core method is `apply(s:CCSTerm)`, which returns a binary `Relation[CCSPrefix,CCSTerm]` containing the label-state transitions arising from `s`. For example, is `s` is a `CCSNil` instance, the returned relation is empty; if `s` is `CCSSeq(pfx:CCSPrefix, cont:CCSTerm)`, the returned relation only contains the pair `(pfx, cont)`, and so on. The other (more complex) cases exploit LTS-level or relation-level operators already provided by `LTSwb`: for example, if `s` is `CCSPlus(term1, term2)`, the return value is `CCS.apply(term1) | CCS.apply(term2)`, where `|` is the *union* of the relations returned by

invoking `apply()` on the two subterms: as a consequence, in the resulting relation, a transition from `term1` leads to a continuation which neglects `term2`, and *vice versa* — as expected by the standard behaviour of the CCS choice operator. Instead, if `s` is `CCSPar(term1, term2)`, the returned relation is created by directly reusing the syntax-independent, LTS-level implementation of `|||` described in Sections 2.1 and 2.2;

(d) finally, the CCS LTS is implemented in `CCS`, which is a derivative of `FiniteBranchingLTS[CCSTerm, CCSPrefix]`. The `LTS.syncp(l1, l2)` method is overridden so that it returns `true` whenever, for some string `a`, `l1 == CCSInPrefix(a)` and `l2 == CCSOutPrefix(a)` (or *vice versa*); moreover, the `LTS.syncLabel(l:CCSPrefix)` method is overridden so that it returns `CCSTauPrefix()` (i.e., each synchronisation causes the emission of a τ-prefix).

With this approach, the CCS-specific code is mostly necessary for parsing terms, while the semantics of the operators is factored into several syntax-independent classes; moreover, the implementation of `CCS.process()` and all the operations on CCS processes (e.g., `|||`, `.toDot()`, `.async`,. . .) are provided by the base abstract classes of `LTSwb`.

We conclude this section noticing that, additionally to standard CCS syntactic constructs, `LTSwb` offers semantic operators allowing e.g. process filtering (as we did for τ-reachable states in Section 2.3), and general sequencing: for all processes `p1`, `p2` with the same label type, `p1.seq(p2)` returns a process which behaves as `p1` until it terminates, and then behaves as `p2`. These *semantic* methods can be leveraged through the `LTSwb` API, on *all* LTSs and processes; if one wants to implement an additional process calculus with such filtering/sequencing capabilities at the *syntactic* level, then it is possible to simply reuse the underlying semantic facilities, without reimplementing them.

Finally, we stress that, if two processes (notwithstanding their LTS) share the same label type, then they can synchronise, and their relations can be studied as shown in Section 3.

3 Behavioural relations

One of the goals of `LTSwb` is implementing and studying *semantic* relations, without syntactic limitations. `LTSwb` currently implements (bi)simulation, and some variants of *progress* [4] and *I/O compliance* [1], i.e. notions of "correct" interaction between processes. We exemplify the latter (the others are used similarly).

3.1 Experiments with I/O compliance

Intuitively, two processes p,q are I/O compliant iff the outputs of p are always matched by the inputs of q (and *vice versa*), even after synchronisations and internal moves. The `IOCompliance.build()` method takes two `FiniteBranchingProcess` instances, and returns an `Either` object whose `Right` value is a *finite* I/O compliance relation. If p,q are *not* I/O compliant, the returned `Left` value is a *counterexample*, i.e. a pair of non-I/O compliant states. Consider the first call to `IOCompliance.build()` in Listing 3.1: since

```
val alice = CCS("!aCoffee.?coffee.!pay + !aBeer.(?beer.!pay + ?no.!pay)")
val bartender = CCS("rec(Y)(?aCoffee.!coffee.Y + ?aBeer.(!beer.Y + !no.Y) + ?pay)")
val ab = IOCompliance.build(alice, bartender)
val aba = IOCompliance.build(alice.async, bartender.async)
```

Listing 3.1: Alice and bartender example, from [1].

```
val aliceH = CCS("!aCoffee.(?coffee | !pay)")
val bartenderL = CCS("rec(Y)(?aCoffee.!coffee.Y + ?aBeer.(!beer.Y + !no.Y) + ?pay
                      + t . rec(Z)(?aCoffee.!coffee.Z + ?aBeer.!no.Z + ?pay))")
val aHbL = IOCompliance.build(aliceH, bartenderL)
val aHbLa = IOCompliance.build(aliceH.async, bartenderL.async)
```

Listing 3.2: Another example from [1]: Alice tries to grab the coffee and pay at the same time.

`alice` and `bartender` are I/O compliant, `ab`'s `Right` value is an I/O compliance relation containing the pair (`alice`,`bartender`); the same holds for `aba`, built on the *asynchronous* versions of the two processes.

Listing 3.2 shows more examples. The *second* call to `IOCompliance.build()` is successful and returns `Right`, with an I/O compliance relation containing the *asynchronous* processes. The *first* call to `IOCompliance.build()`, instead, is *not* successful, and `aHbL` is the `Left` value below (edited for clarity):

```
Left( (?coffee | !pay ),
      (!coffee.rec(Y)(?aCoffee.!coffee.Y + ?aBeer.(!beer.Y + !no.Y) + ?pay
                      + t.rec(Z)(?aCoffee.!coffee.Z + ?aBeer.!no.Z + ?pay))) )
```

The problem is that, after synchronising on aCoffee, `aliceH` and `bartenderL` reach the states inside `Left(···)`, where the !pay transition of the former is *not* matched by a (weak) ?pay of the latter.

3.2 Adding new compliance relations

Both `IOCompliance` and `Progress` are derivatives of an abstract, reusable class called `Compliance`. Intuitively, $\mathcal{R}$ is a coinductive *compliance relation* iff, whenever $(p,q) \in \mathcal{R}$, then:

(i) `pred(`p`,`q`)` holds; (where `pred` is given as a parameter)

(ii) $p \xrightarrow{\ell} p'$ and $q \xrightarrow{\ell'} q'$ and ℓ, ℓ' can synchronise implies $(p',q') \in \mathcal{R}$;

(iii) $p \Rightarrow p'$ and $q \Rightarrow q'$ implies $(p',q') \in \mathcal{R}$. (where $\Rightarrow$ represents 0 or more internal moves)

`Compliance` implements the `.build()` method according to the definition above: given (p,q), it ensures that a class-specific predicate `pred` holds for p,q (as per clause *(i)*), and then checks their reducts after synchronisation or internal moves (as per clauses *(ii)* and *(iii)*). `Compliance.build()` terminates when either no more states need to be checked, or `pred` is false: in the latter case, it returns a counterexample, as seen in Section 3.1. `Progress`, `IOCompliance` and their variants are implemented by just changing `pred`, and new coinductive compliance relations can be added in the same way: e.g., the *"Correct contract composition"* from [3] (Def. 3) can be added by defining `pred(`p`,`q`)` as `(`p` ||| `q`).wbarbs.contains(`$\checkmark$`)` (where `.wbarbs` is the `Set` of weak barbs of a process, and $\checkmark$ is a label denoting success).

Note that `Compliance.build()` only implements a *semi*-algorithm: hence, the method *may* not terminate if one of the processes under analysis is infinite-state — and in particular, if it can reduce, through internal moves, to an infinite number of distinct states. In such a situation, `LTSwb` may need to construct an *infinite* compliance relation, with an infinite search for states violating `pred`. Our Alice/bartender examples are infinite-state, but do *not* generate infinite internal moves, and the semi-algorithm terminates. The risk of non-termination could be simply avoided by leveraging the types provided by `LTSwb`: for example, by only calling `Compliance.build()` on `FiniteProcess` instances (e.g., through a simple wrapper). This would be a sufficient (but *not* necessary) condition ensuring the termination of the method, albeit sacrificing cases such as the ones illustrated above. By letting `Compliance.build()` also accept `FiniteBranchingProcess` arguments, `LTSwb` allows to experiment with behaviours for which the termination of the method is not (yet) clear, or follows by some properties which are not easily captured by the type system (e.g., the way inputs/outputs are interleaved in the Alice/bartender example).

Verifying relations. `LTSwb` also implements the method `Compliance.check()`. Given an instance `r` of some `Compliance`-derived relation, `r.check()` is `true` when each pair of states in `r` actually respects `pred` according to clause *(i)* above, and `r` contains all the pairs of states required by clauses *(ii)* and *(iii)*. Consider e.g. Listing 3.1: `ab` is a `Right` value, and `ab.right.get.check()` is `true`. This also holds for `aba`, and `aHbLa` from Listing 3.2. It is important to note that `Compliance.build()` and `Compliance.check()` are implemented *separately*: the latter is intended as an independent verification method, also for relations which are defined "by hand" (i.e., directly as finite sets of pairs of states) *without* resorting to their own `.build()` method[4]. For example, we can instantiate a `Progress` relation from an existing relation:

```
val aHbLaProg = Progress(aHbLa.right.get) // Recall: aHbLa is an IOCompliance rel.
```

and in this case `aHbLaProg.check()` holds — i.e., notwithstanding its type, `aHbLa` is *also* a progress relation. Under this framework, if a new compliance relation is implemented as explained above (i.e., by deriving the `Compliance` class and providing a suitable class-specific `pred`), then synthesis (`.build()`) and verification (`.check()`) are obtained "for free". A similar framework is also in place for (bi)simulation.

4 Conclusions and future work

In the current (early) stage of development, `LTSwb` offers a flexible and extensible platform allowing to define generic LTSs and processes, explore their (finite or infinite) state space and study their (bi)simulation and compliance relations. It offers general, syntax-independent operators for manipulating LTSs and processes, on which specific process calculi can be implemented.

The most similar tool, albeit more CCS-centric, is [6], whose development stopped around 1999: hence, its obsolete dependencies and restrictive licensing terms make it very difficult to use and improve. Another related tool is *LTS Analyser* [11] — which is limited to finite-state processes; moreover, its development stopped around 2006, and its source code is not available.

It is possible to find some similarities between `LTSwb` and the Process Algebra Compilers proposed in the '90s [5]: `LTSwb` can be seen as a semantic backend on which a process calculus can be "compiled" by suitably deriving some classes, and letting the parser instantiate them — as sketched in Section 2.4. On the one hand, this approach makes the parser quite integrated into `LTSwb`, and not very suited for different backends; on the other hand, the tight integration allows to use parser combinators, thus obtaining easily maintainable, well-typed parsers.

Beyond representing and manipulating LTSs and processes, `LTSwb` also allows to explore them — not unlike well-established model checking tools like mCRL2 [7] and CADP [8]. Beside being much smaller and less mature than such tools, `LTSwb` also has a different goal (being a *framework* rather than an application) and tries keep a more *semantic* foundation, in that it does not depend on (nor privileges) specific process languages. One intended usage scenario of `LTSwb` is the following: suppose you want to introduce a new behavioural relation (say, I/O compliance), and you want to study it on some process algebra (say, asynchronous CCS), or on some processes whose specification is provided directly as a set of state-label-state triples (e.g., from some industrial case study). One can achieve these goals by extending the `Compliance` class, and applying it on LTSs and processes, as summarised in the paper. An alternative way would be that of *(a)* encoding asynchronous CCS or the given state-label-state triples into the process calculus and LTSs accepted by mCLR2 or CADP and their tools (proving that such an encoding is correct), and *(b)* encode I/O compliance into e.g. a μ-calculus formula (and, again, prove that such an encoding is correct). Both alternatives are possible; however, we think that for the scenario

[4]When debugging is enabled, `LTSwb` runs `.check()` on *each* relation created by `Compliance.build()`, to test its code.

sketched above, the LTSwb framework allows users to obtain quicker results.

Future work on LTSwb includes the addition of more relations, with a "reusable" approach to synthesis and verification similar to the one adopted for Compliance and (bi)simulation. Moreover, we plan better support for multiparty interactions (currently provided via the PCCS calculus, not discussed here) and richer process calculi with time and value passing. We also plan to integrate LTSwb with Gephi [9], thus providing a better user interface with interactive exploration of large transition diagrams.

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A Figures

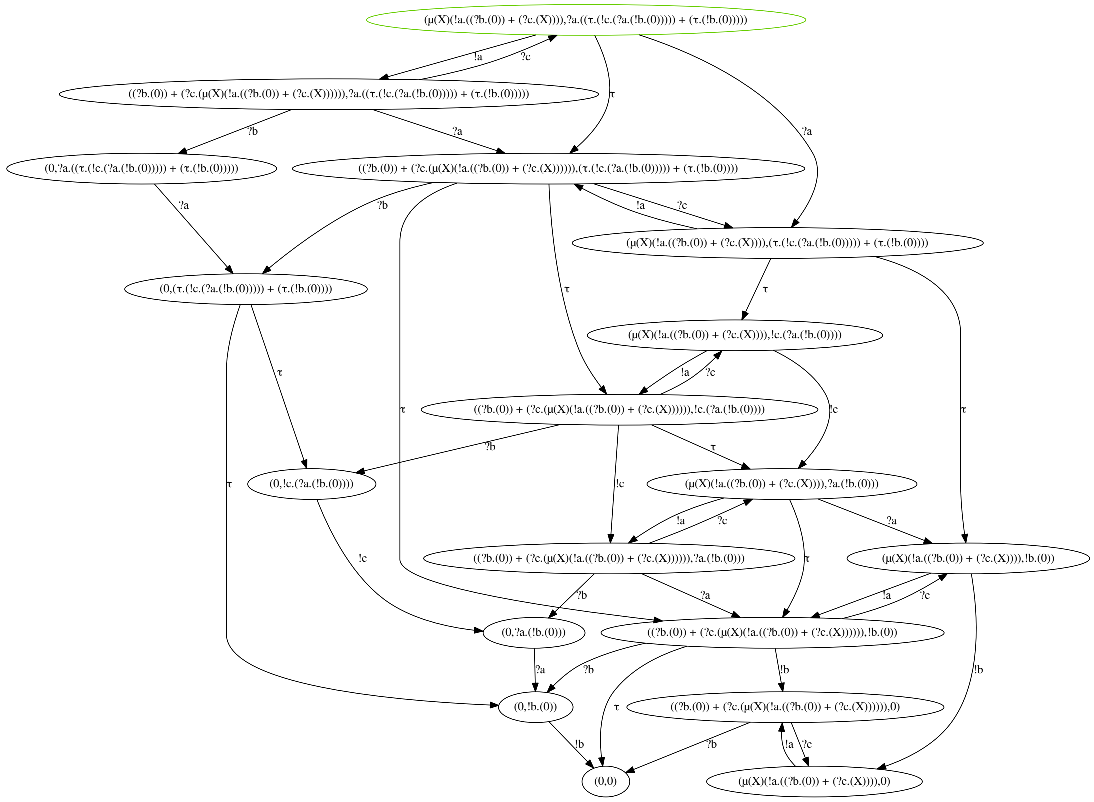

Figure A.1: Output of `ccs12.toDot()`.

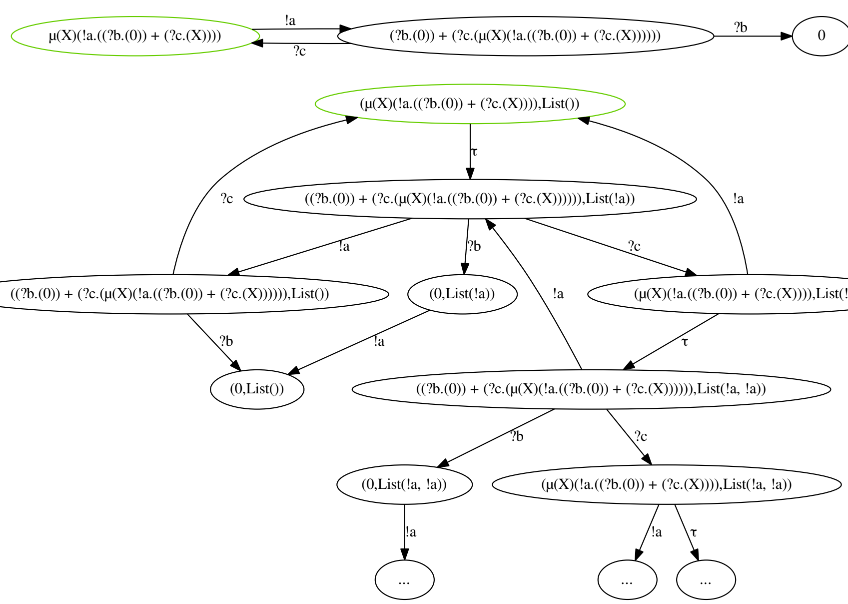

Figure A.2: Output of `ccs1.toDot()` (top) and `ccs1a.toDot(maxDepth=Finite(4))` (bottom).

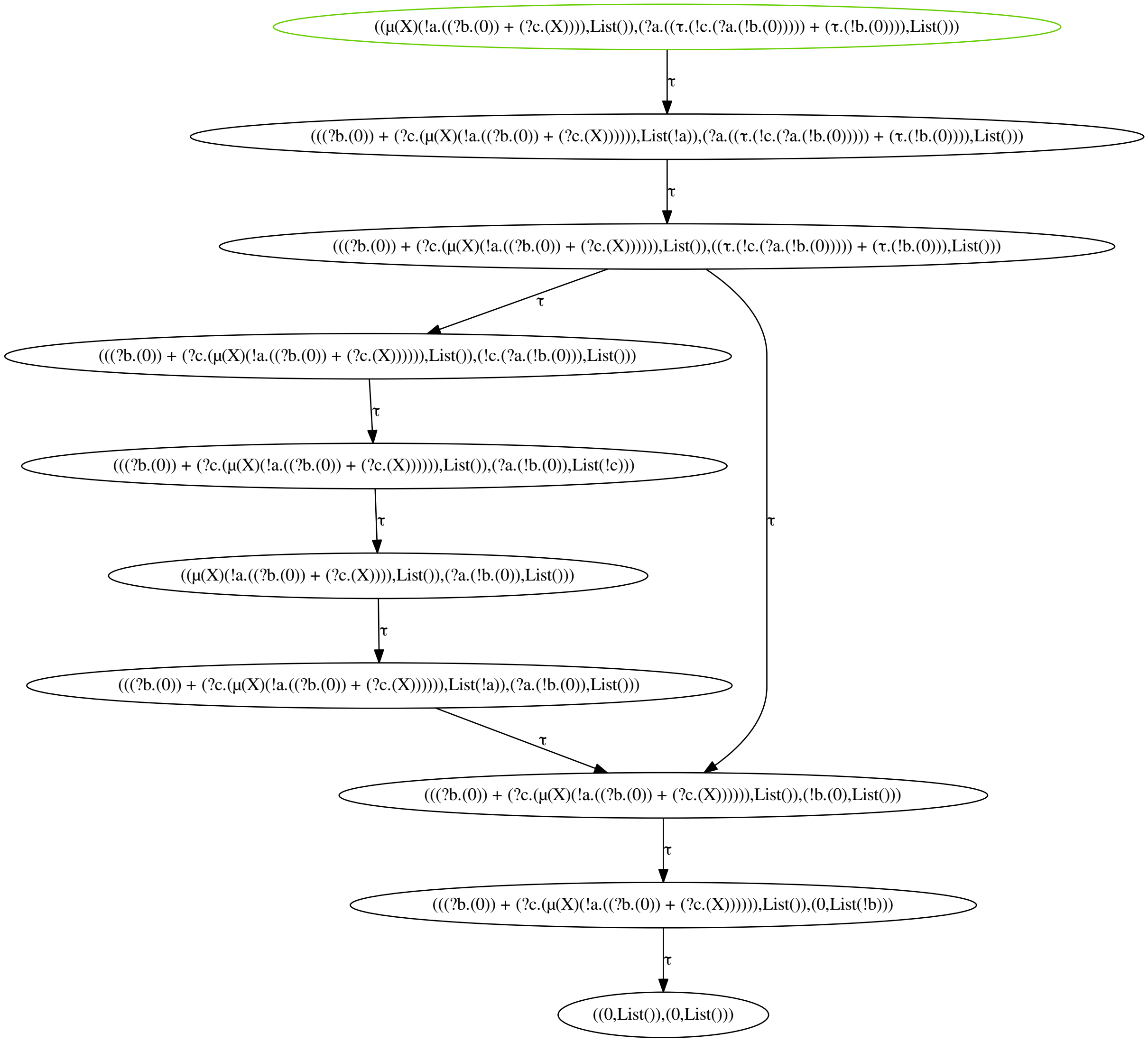

Figure A.3: Output of `(ccs1a ||| ccs2a).filter(l => l.isTau).toDot()`. Note that τ-transitions generated by synchronisations cause the reduction of buffers — i.e., the output at the head of a buffer is consumed by an input of the other process.