

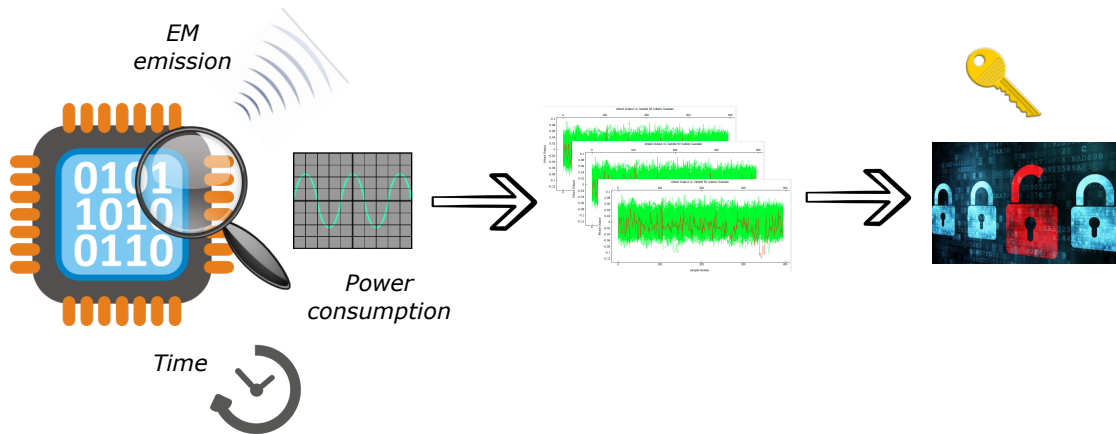
On the modelling of the processor microarchitecture for masked software verification

Karine HEYDEMANN,
Thales/Sorbonne University
Journées du GDR Sécurité Informatique, 24th June 2025

Plan

- 1. Background on Side-Channel Attacks**
- 2. Masked Implementation Verification**
- 3. Microarchitecture modelling for masked software verification**

Introduction: Side-Channel Attacks

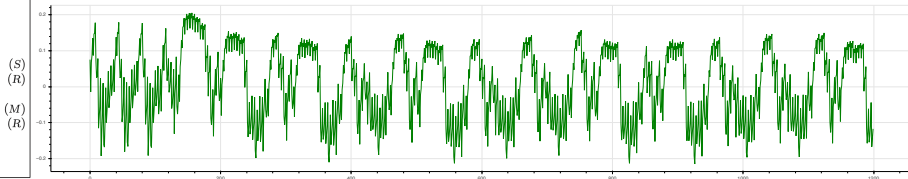


Power Consumption of Instructions

The power consumption of a CPU-based device differs with the executed instructions

➤ Example of a naive fast exponentiation

```
SquareMult(x, e, N):  
  let  $e_n, \dots, e_1$  be the bits of  $e$   
   $y \leftarrow 1$   
  for  $i = n$  down to 1 {  
     $y \leftarrow \text{Square}(y)$  (S)  
     $y \leftarrow \text{ModReduce}(y, N)$  (R)  
    if  $e_i = 1$  then {  
       $y \leftarrow \text{Mult}(y, x)$  (M)  
       $y \leftarrow \text{ModReduce}(y, N)$  (R)  
    }  
  }  
  return  $y$ 
```



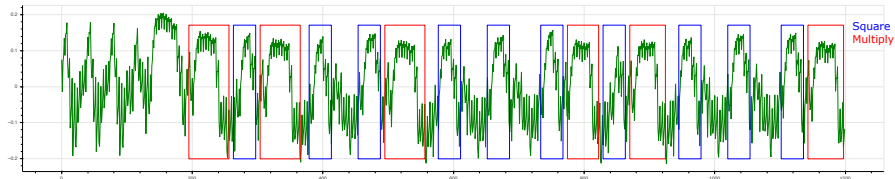
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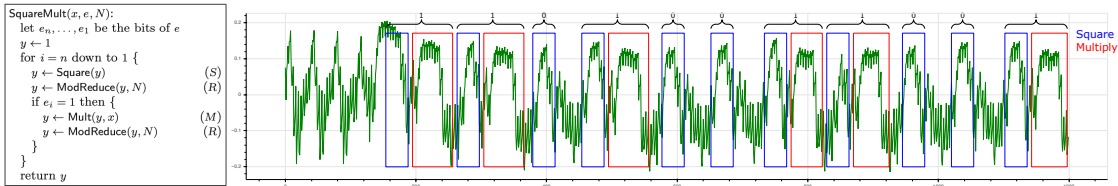


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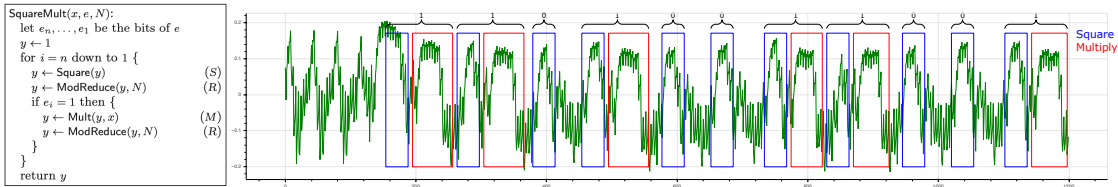


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➤ Example of a naive fast exponentiation



➤ Typical exploitation example: Simple Power Analysis (SPA) [Mangard et al., 2010]¹

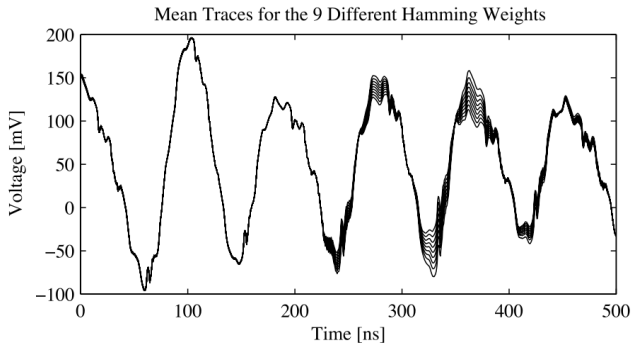
1. also used for synchronizing a fault injection

Power Consumption of Data

The power consumption of an instruction depends on its data

- Simple leakage model: Hamming Weight of data

DPA Book [Mangard et al., 2010] extract

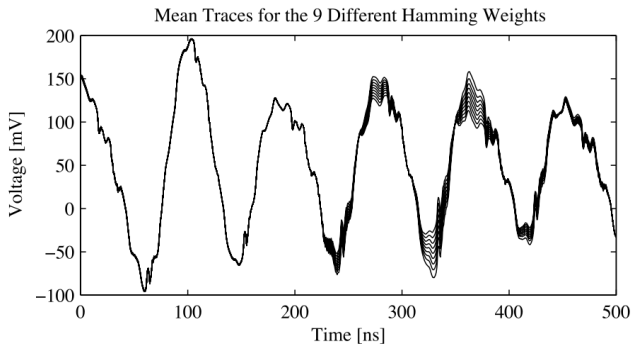


Power Consumption of Data

The power consumption of an instruction depends on its data

- Simple leakage model: Hamming Weight of data

DPA Book [Mangard et al., 2010] extract



- Simple but works in practice !
- Typical exploitation examples: Differential Power Analysis [Kocher et al., 1999] and Correlation Power Analysis [Brier et al., 2004]

Counter-measure Against SCA

Hiding

- Add noise to reduce the signal to noise ratio
- Examples: dummy instruction, instruction or loop shuffling, semantic variants (function or instruction)
- Does not remove leakage but makes it harder to exploit (more traces are needed)

Masking

- Make the manipulated data statistically independent from the secret values
- Can be formally proven
- Power measurements are theoretically independent of the secret

Masking

At order d

- Split a secret s into $d + 1$ parts (a.k.a shares) s_0, s_1, \dots, s_d such that $s = s_0 \star s_1 \star \dots \star s_d$
 - s_0, \dots, s_{d-1} are d uniform randoms (a.k.a “masks”)
 - $s_d = s \star s_0 \star s_1 \star \dots \star s_{d-1}$
- Any combination of less than d shares is statistically independent from the secret
- First-order boolean masking:
 - s_0 is a uniform random
 - $s_1 = s_0 \oplus s$

Masking of a "AND" Operation

- Consider 2 boolean shared values $a = (a_0, a_1)$ and $b = (b_0, b_1)$ at order 1
- How to **securely** compute c , also shared, such that $c = a \cdot b$?

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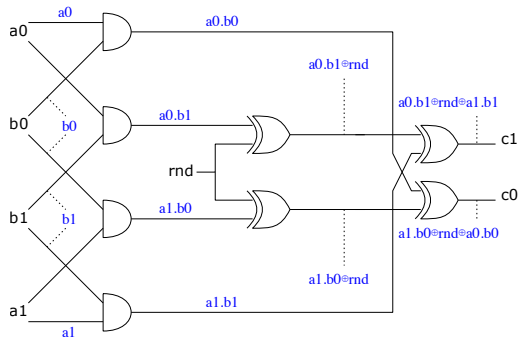
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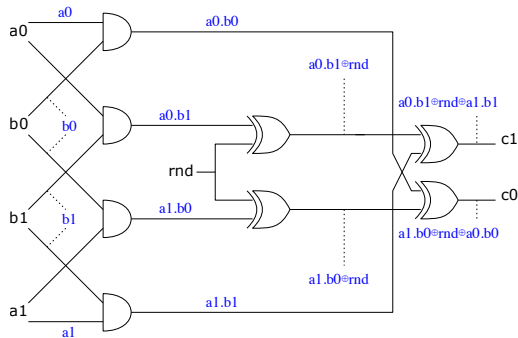
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 - \Rightarrow additional randoms are necessary to make the computation secure
- Different masking schemes have been proposed ISW-AND [Ishai et al., 2003], DOM-AND [Gross et al., 2016], TI-AND [Nikova et al., 2006]

Example: Masked AND at Order 1



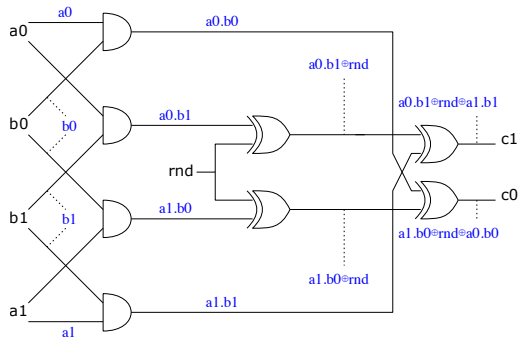
```
1 void masked_and(uint8_t a0, uint8_t a1,  
2                 uint8_t b0, uint8_t b1,  
3                 uint8_t rnd,  
4                 uint8_t *c0, uint8_t *c1)  
5  
6 *c0 = ((a0 & b0) ^ rnd) ^ (a1 & b1);  
7 *c1 = ((a0 & b1) ^ rnd) ^ (a1 & b0);  
8 return;
```

Example: Masked AND at Order 1



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1 void masked_and(uint8_t a0, uint8_t a1,  
2                 uint8_t b0, uint8_t b1,  
3                 uint8_t r,  
4                 uint8_t *c0, uint8_t *c1)  
5 {  
6     uint8_t tmp = (a0 & b1) ^ r;  
7     __asm__ __volatile__ ("    ::: \"memory\"");  
8     *c0 = tmp ^ (a1 & b0);  
9     tmp = (a0 & b0) ^ r;  
10    __asm__ __volatile__ ("    ::: \"memory\"");  
11    *c1 = tmp ^ (a1 & b1);  
12    return;  
13 }
```

Example: Masked AND at Order 1



```
1 ;r0:a0, r1:b0, r2:a1, r3:b1, r6:c[] r7:r
2
3 and.w r4, r0, r3 ; a0 & b1
4 eors r4, r7      ; t0 = (a0 & b1) ^ r
5 and.w r5, r2, r1 ; a1 & b0
6 ands r0, r1      ; a0 & b0
7 ands r3, r2      ; b1 & a1
8 eors r4, r5      ; t1 = t0 ^ (a1 & b0)
9 eors r0, r7      ; c0 = (a0 & b0) ^ r
10 eors r4, r3      ; c1 = t1 ^ (a1 & b1)
11 str r0, [r6, #0]
12 str r4, [r6, #4]
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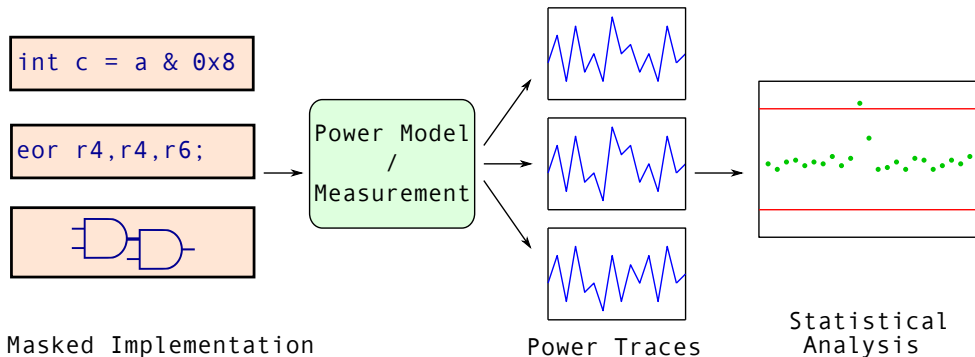
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How To Verify a Masked Implementation?

Empirically

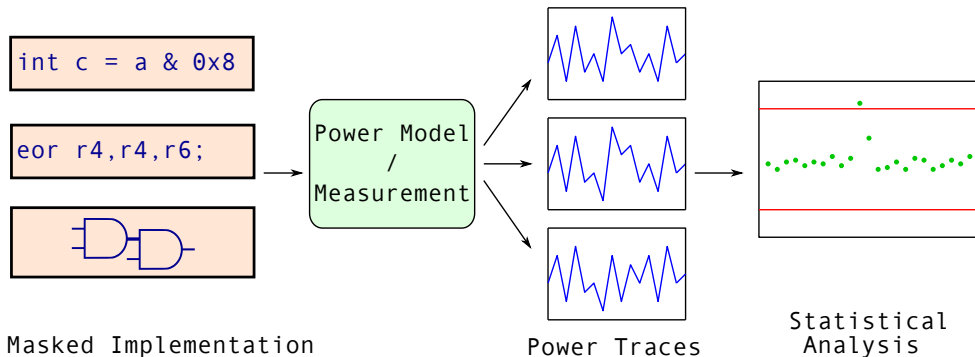
- Perform power simulations or acquisitions then use statistical metrics, such as the t-test



How To Verify a Masked Implementation?

Empirically

- Perform power simulations or acquisitions then use statistical metrics, such as the t-test



Pros : Complex circuits/software analysis

Cons : No guarantee, leakages are difficult to locate

- MAPS [Corre et al., 2018],
PROLEAD [Müller and Moradi, 2022],
ELMO [McCann et al., 2017] or
ROSITA [Shelton et al., 2021]

How To Verify a Masked Implementation?

Formally

- Label input values as secret, mask or public, and prove the absence of leakage for a chosen attacker model and a leakage model

d -probing model [Ishai et al., 2003]

- The attacker has d probes that can capture d intermediate values during the execution
- Assume a value leakage model

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Example with a method based on symbolic expression

Masked Implementation

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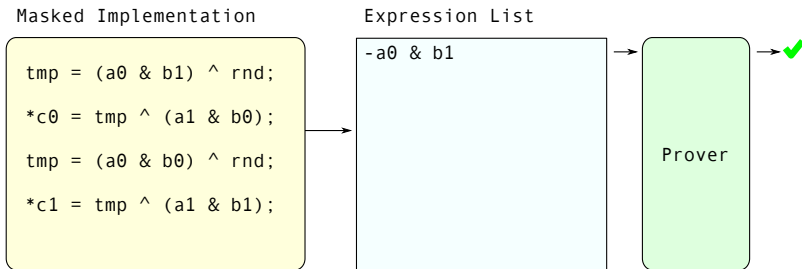
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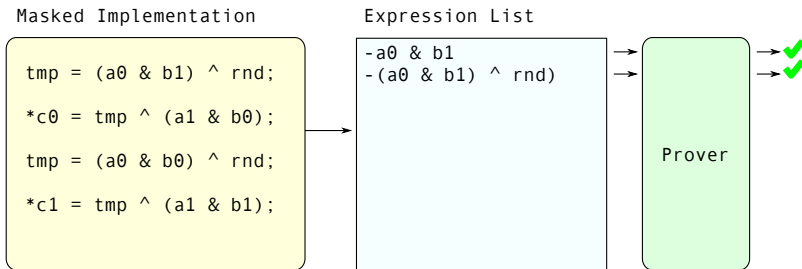
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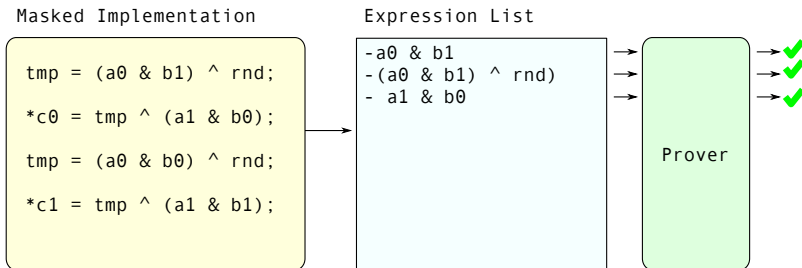
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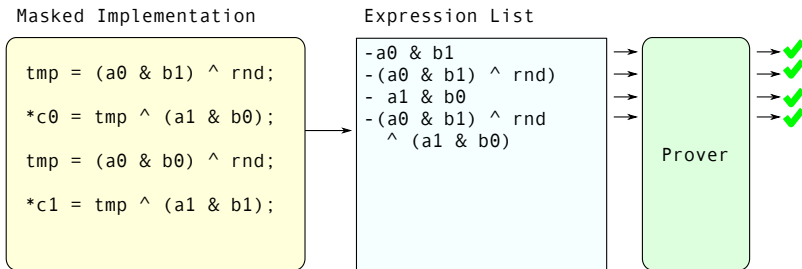
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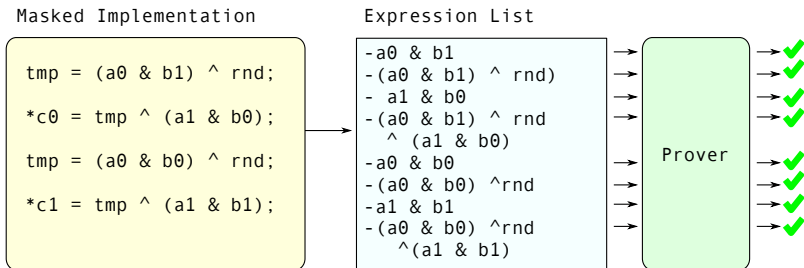
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Pros: Absence of secret leakage is guaranteed for the chosen model, easier to locate and understand leakages

Cons: Scalability issues, potential false positive, proven-secure implementations in the d -probing model can leak

- MaskVerif [Barthe et al., 2019], ARISTI [Ben El Ouahma et al., 2019], LeakageVerif [Meunier et al., 2023], VerifMSI [Meunier and Taleb, 2023]

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- Label input values as secret, mask or public, and prove the absence of leakage for a chosen attacker model and a leakage model

d -probing model with transition

- The attacker has d probes that can capture **transitions** during the execution
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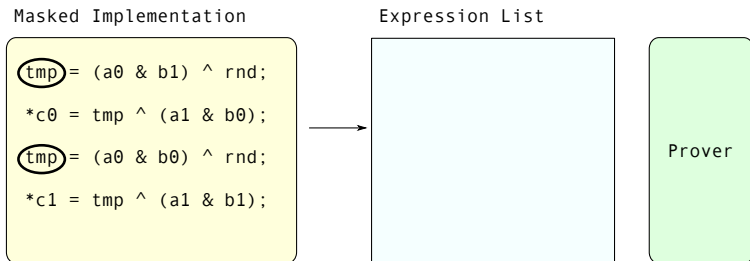
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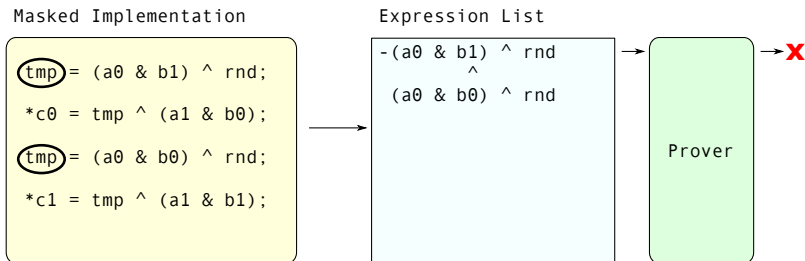
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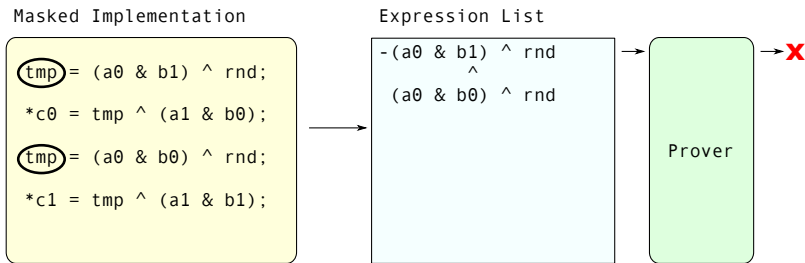
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Example with a method based on symbolic expression



- Perform verification at the assembly level to detect vulnerabilities post-compilation

Proven Leakage-Free Implementation in Practice

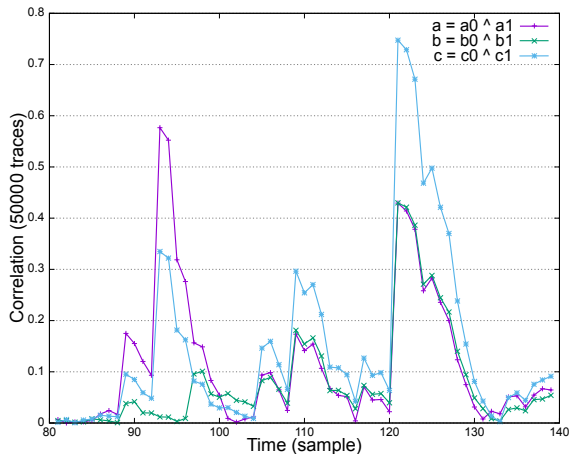
- Software “ISW And” proven leakage-free at the ISA level in the value leakage model and transition leakage model (GPRs).

```
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2 and.w r4, r0, r3 ; a0 & b1
3 eors r4, r7 ; t0 = (a0 & b1) ^ m
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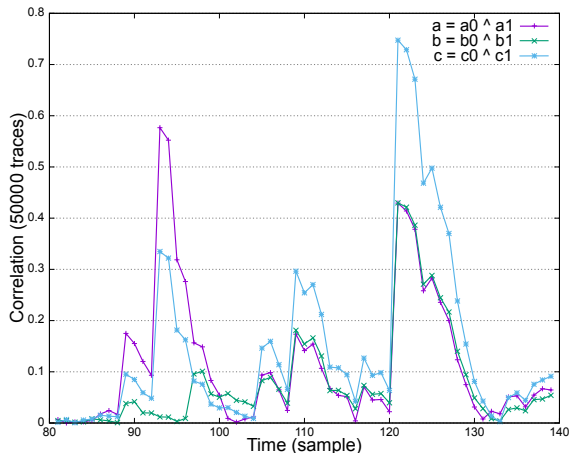
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11 str r4, [r6, #4]
```



- Need for modelling leakage happening in the circuit at the micro-architectural level while software is executed to capture leakage that can not be modeled at ISA level

Plan

- 1. Background on Side-Channel Attacks**
- 2. Masked Implementation Verification**
- 3. Microarchitecture modelling for masked software verification**

ARMISTICE: Micro-Architectural Leakage Modelling for Masked Software Formal Verification

Arnaud de Grandmaison², Karine Heydemann, Quentin L. Meunier³

published in IEEE Transaction Computer-Aided Design 2022 and presented at the conference
CASES 2022

2. Arm

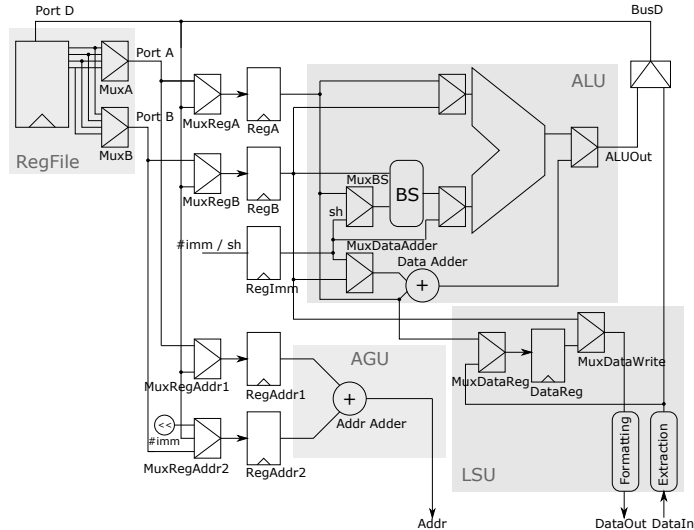
3. Sorbonne Université/LIP6

Case Study: Board STM32F1 [De Grandmaison et al., 2022]

- Arm Cortex-M3: modeled from the Verilog source code

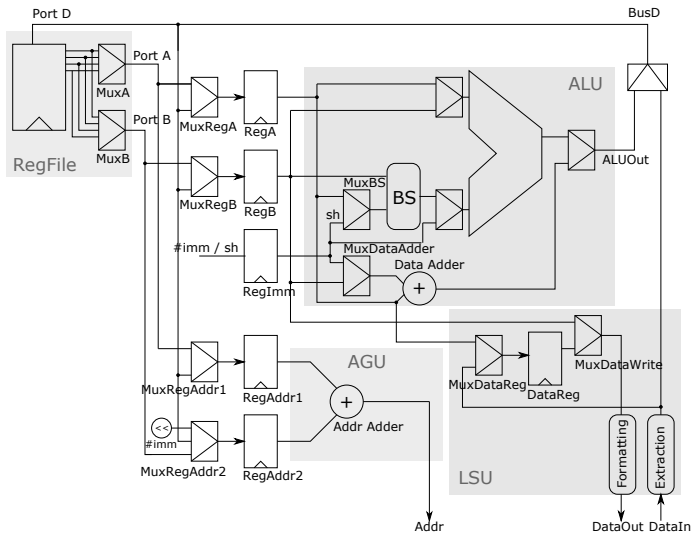
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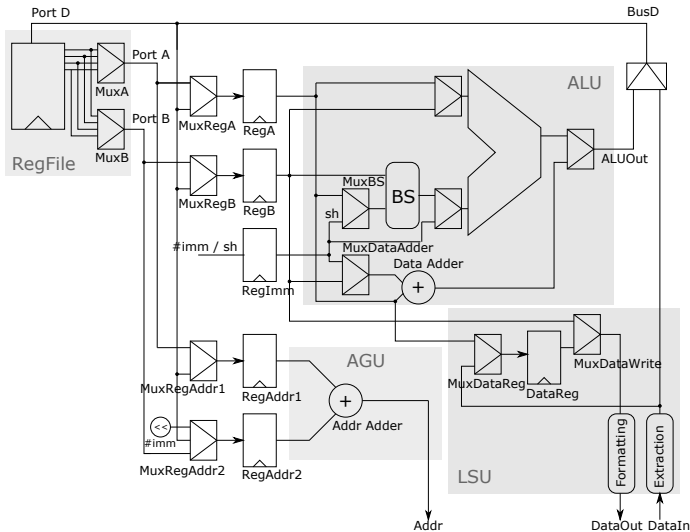
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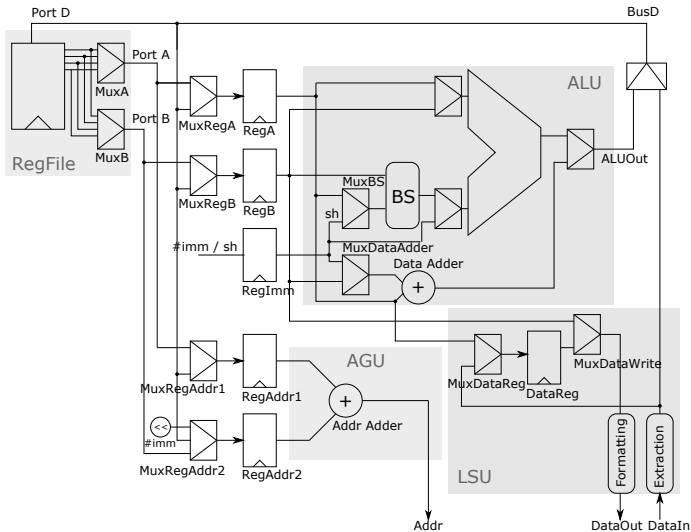
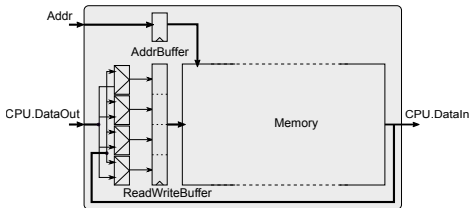
Case Study: Board STM32F1 [De Grandmaison et al., 2022]

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- Design of several micro-benchmarks a.k.a. "leakage test vectors":
 - Detection of leakage sources (black-box)



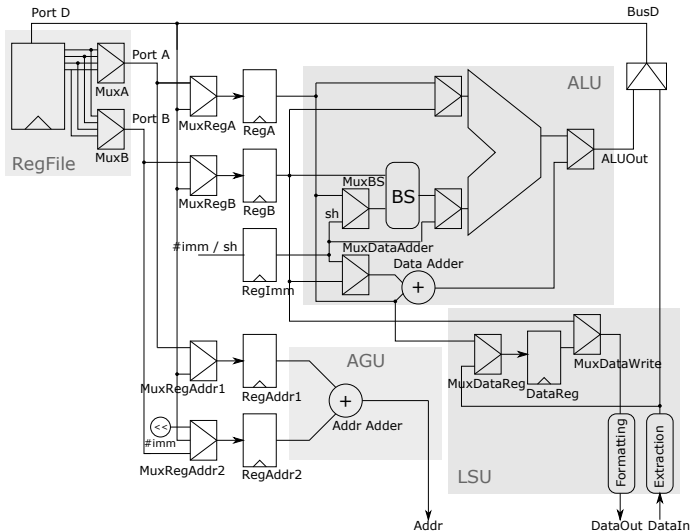
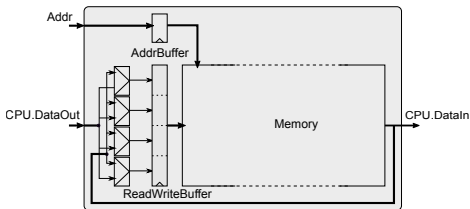
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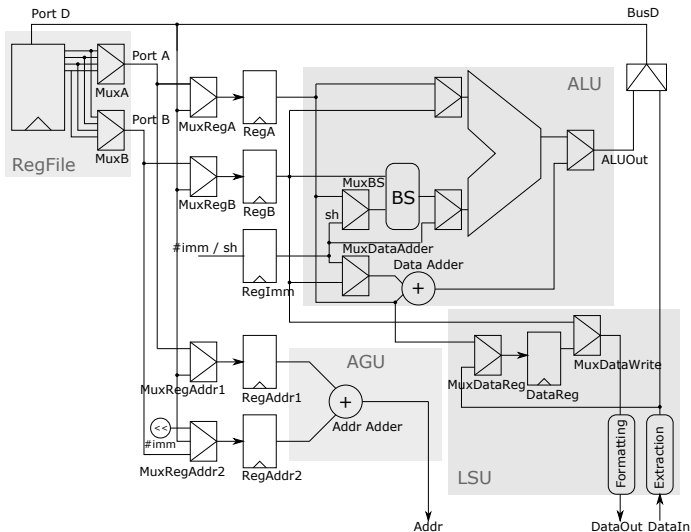
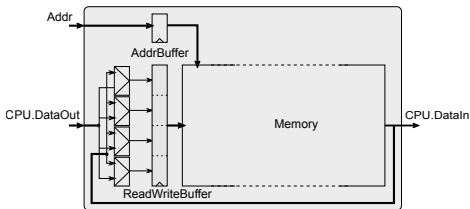
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 - Ranking



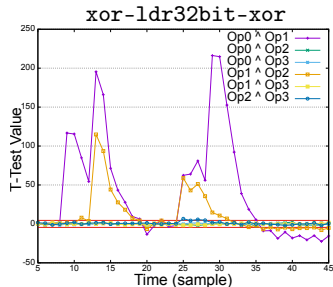
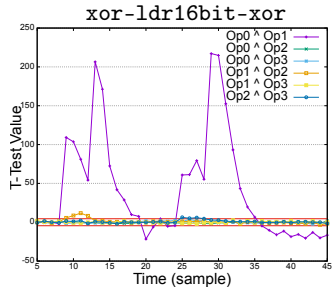
Leakage test vectors overview

- > Description and results online: <https://www-soc.lip6.fr/armistice>

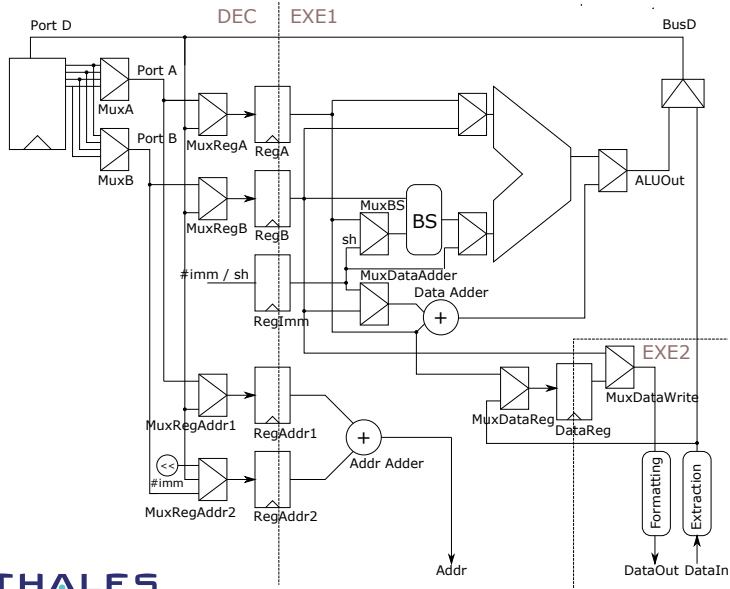
20 / 29

Findings Using Leakage Vectors

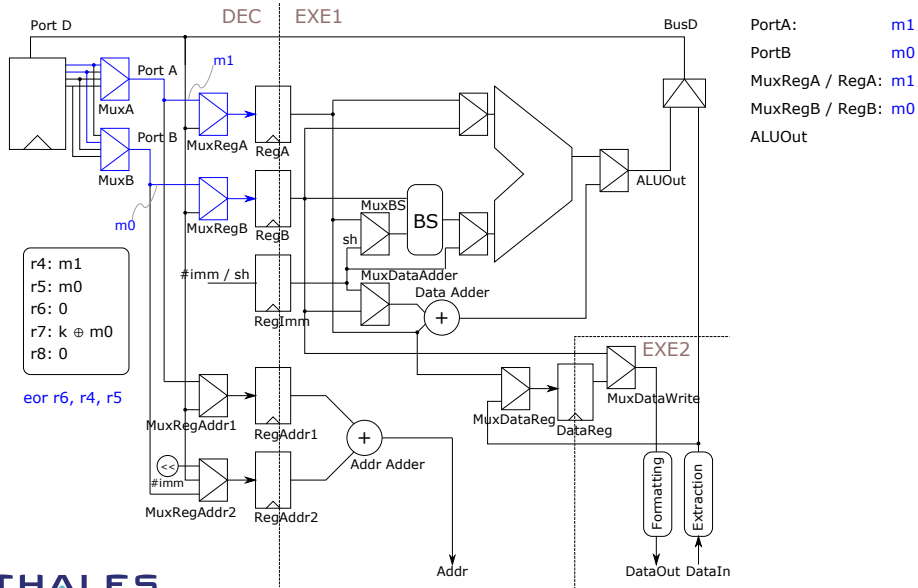
- Leakage without any link to the data manipulated by instructions !
 - Instruction encodings (16-bit versus 32-bit) can impact leakage
 - Part of immediate in the encoding can be used to read the register bank
 - Forwarding mechanism
- Intra-word leakage in the LSU
- The required number of traces varies with the source of leakage
- ...
- We did not have the RTL version corresponding to the CPU of our target !



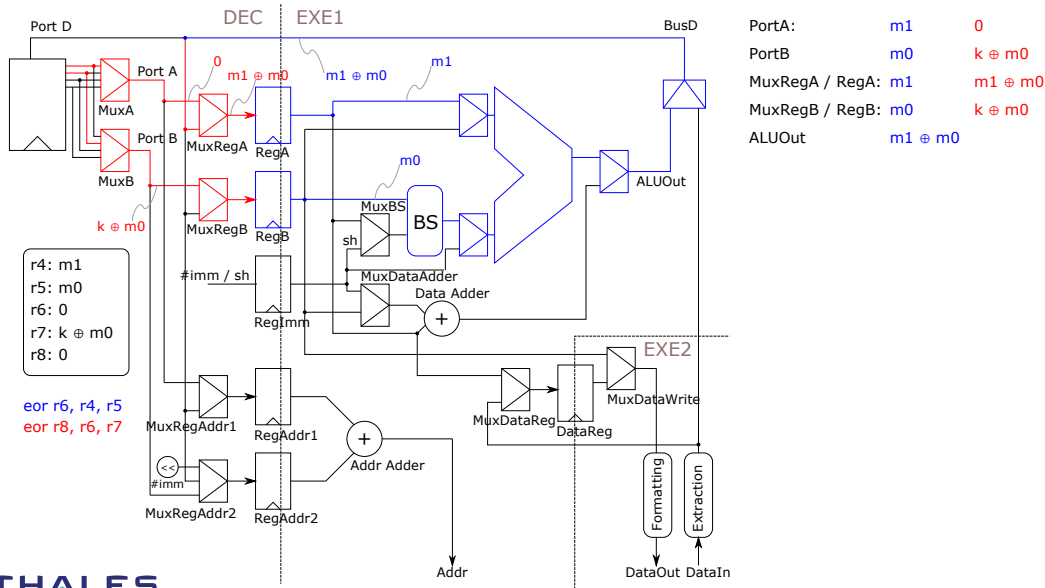
Arm Cortex-M3: Exemple



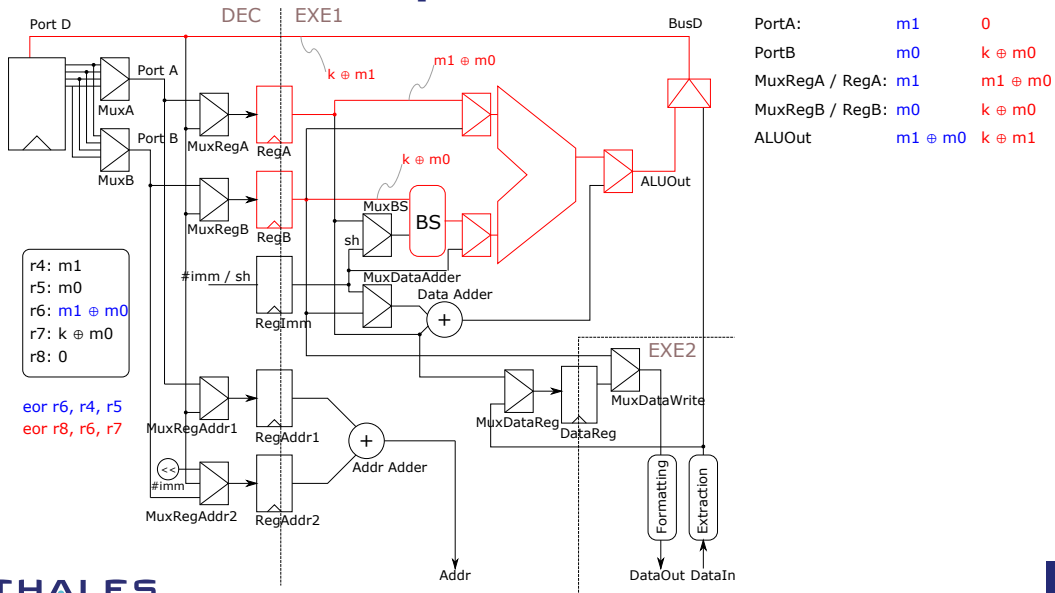
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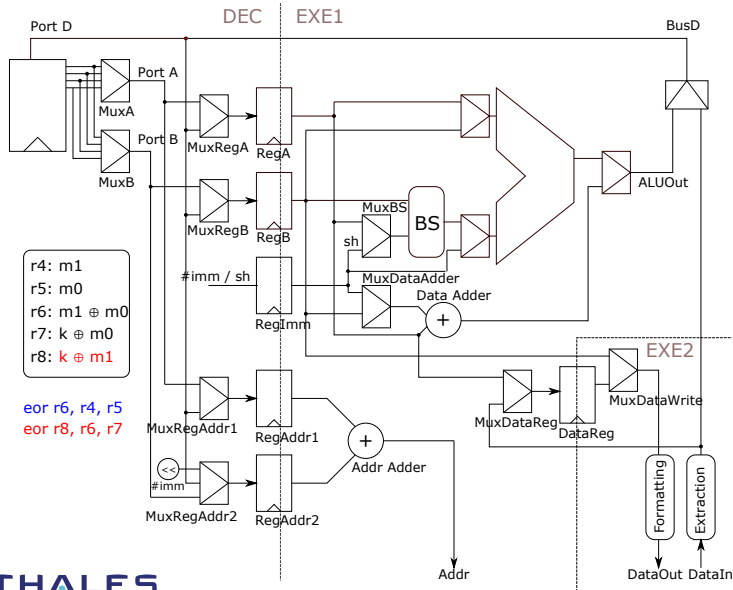
Arm Cortex-M3: Exemple



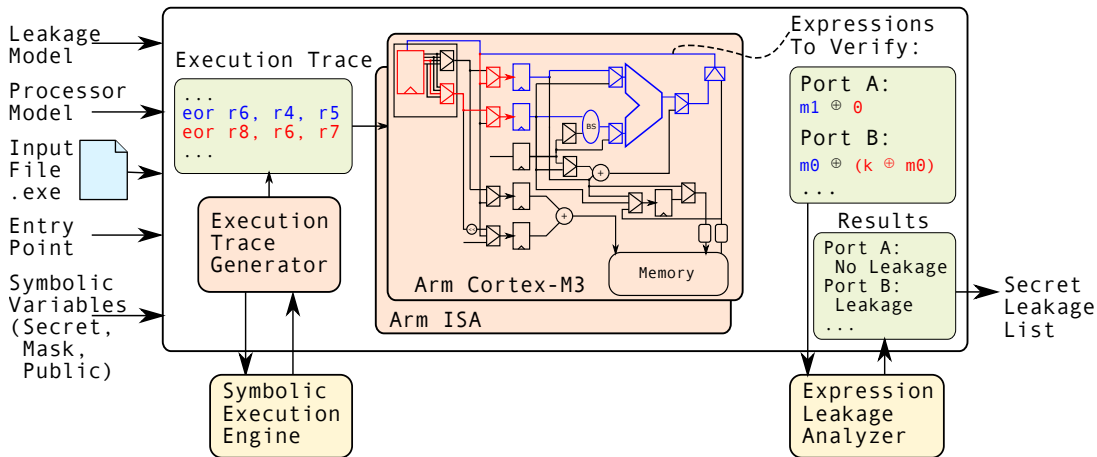
Arm Cortex-M3: Example



Arm Cortex-M3: Exemple



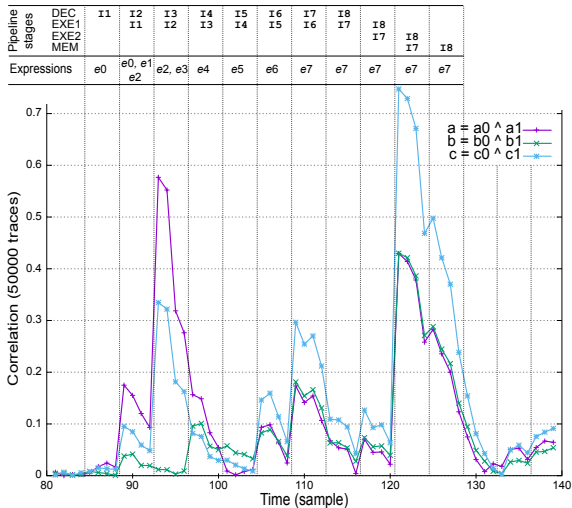
ARMISTICE Framework



Back on the Leaking “ISW And”

	Instructions	Leaks: <i>expr. name</i>
I1	and.w r5, r2, r1	MuxRegA, RegA: e0 RegB: e1
I2	ands r0, r1	PortA, RegA: e2 AluOut: e3
I3	ands r3, r2	AluOut: e4
I4	eors r4, r5	RegB: e5
I5	eors r0, r7	AluOut: e6
I6	eors r4, r3	AluOut: e7
I7	str r0, [r6, #0]	-
I8	str r4, [r6, #4]	PortB, RegB, DataReg, DataOut, BufferMem: e7

Nom	Expression	Fuites
e0	$a0 \cdot b1 \oplus a1$	a, c
e1	$a0 \cdot b1 \oplus b0$	b, c
e2	$a0 \oplus a1$	a, c
e3	$a0 \cdot b0 \oplus a1 \cdot b0$	a, c
e4	$a0 \cdot b0 \oplus a1 \cdot b1$	a, b, c
e5	$a1 \cdot b0 \oplus b1$	b, c
e6	$a0 \cdot b0 \oplus a0 \cdot b1 \oplus a1 \cdot b0$	a, b, c
e7	$a0 \cdot b0 \oplus a0 \cdot b1 \oplus a1 \cdot b0 \oplus a1 \cdot b1$	a, b, c



ARMISTICE Results Validation

8 masked applications from the literature

Results summary

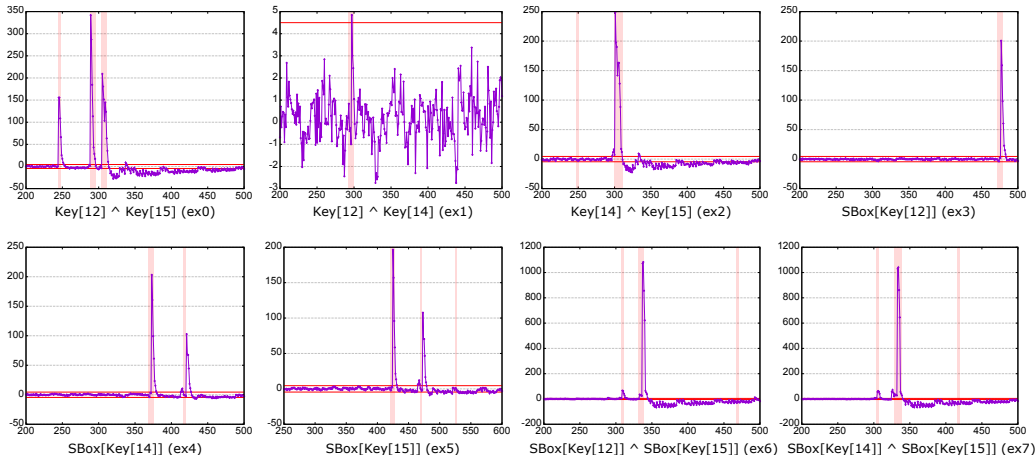
- Absence of leakage in the value based model for correct masking schemes
- At least one secret leakage due to micro-architecture in all programs, even those designed to be secured w.r.t. the Arm Cortex-M3 micro-architecture (Dilithium AND and A2B)
- At least one leakage for 22 out of 27 modeled components

Accuracy and Exploitability (1/2)

- Manual analysis of the leakage resulting from the first round of the Key Schedule
- 8 considered expressions (simplest ones)
- Experimental leakage assessment using specific t-test with 500,000 traces

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Accuracy and Exploitability (2/2)

Leakages found but not observed

- 8-bit transition in a GPR, not observable
- 8-bit transition on Bus B, not observable
- Stall cycle from the memory, could be removed with a better memory model

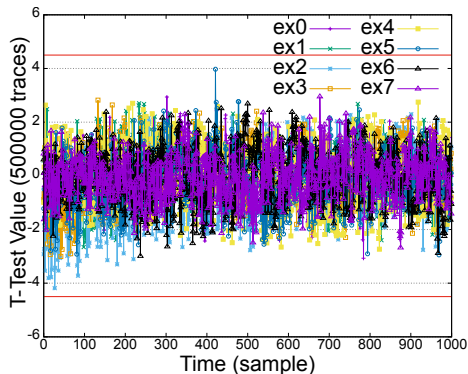
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Leveraging ARMISTICE output

- Addition of carefully designed instructions to clean the part of the data path involved in the leaking transition



Conclusion and Future Work

ARMISTICE

- A framework for formally proving the absence of secret leakage in a masked code
- Based on the micro-architectural details of a Arm Cortex-M3 core and a memory model
- Model close to reality, good match between found leakages and observed leakages
- Locates secret leakages in time and space along with the corresponding expressions, which in turn can help remove them

Future work

- Avoid the manual generation of the micro-architecture model
 - ⇒ Automate the verification from a RTL description, a binary code and information on shares (secrets and masks) and sources of randomness
 - Consider glitches
- ⇒ Noé Amiot, current PhD on this topic at LIP6, stay tuned !

Thank you

and many thanks to Quentin Meunier⁴, Noé Amiot⁴ and Simon Tollec⁵ for their slides !

4. LIP6/Sorbonne University

5. Thales

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