

# DIAMONDS AND DOMINOES.

## IMPOSSIBILITY RESULTS FOR ASSOCIATIVE MODAL LOGICS

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*We'll begin with something well known  
(and then something that, I think, deserves to  
be better known)*

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**Question:** Is the resulting system decidable?

Answer: It is not!

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And in fact, it is the modal logic

$$\mathbf{K}_2 \oplus (p \circ q) \circ r \leftrightarrow p \circ (q \circ r)$$



# Plan for the rest of the talk

- Setting
- Results and technique
- Related results

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Preprint available on arXiv.

# Setting

Logically, we are interested in normal extensions of

$$\mathbf{AK}_2 := \mathbf{K}_2 \oplus (p \circ q) \circ r \leftrightarrow p \circ (q \circ r).$$

Algebraic semantics for  $\mathbf{AK}_2$  is given by associative BAOs  $(A, \vee, \wedge, \neg, \perp, \top, \circ)$ :

- $(A, \vee, \wedge, \neg, \perp, \top)$  is a BA
- $x \circ (y \vee z) = (x \circ y) \vee (x \circ z)$  and  $(x \vee y) \circ z = (x \circ z) \vee (y \circ z)$
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Relational semantics for  $\mathbf{AK}_2$  is given by associative frames  $\mathbb{F} = (X, \cdot)$ :

$\cdot : X^2 \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(X)$  is a function s.t.

$$(x \cdot y) \cdot z = x \cdot (y \cdot z),$$

and

$\mathbb{M}, x \Vdash \varphi \circ \psi$       iff      there exist  $y, z \in X$  such that  $\mathbb{M}, y \Vdash \varphi$ ;  
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$\cdot$  is lifted to sets  $Y, Z \subseteq X$  by  $Y \cdot Z := \{x \in X \mid \exists y \in Y, z \in Z : x \in y \cdot z\}$ .

# Two central systems

1. Take frames  $(X, \cdot)$  to be **semilattices**:  $\cdot$  is functional, associative, commutative, and idempotent.
  - We obtain the modal logic of semilattices (decidability problem raised by SBK (2023a)).
  - Algebraically, this is  $\text{Var}(\text{SL}^+)$  (raised by Bergman (2018) and Jipsen et al. (2021)).
2. Take frames  $(X, \cdot)$  to be **Boolean algebras** (raised by Goranko and Vakarelov (1999)).<sup>1</sup>

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# The Domino Problem

- A **Wang domino (tile)** is a square with colors on each side.
- **The domino (tiling) problem:** Given a finite set of Wang tiles  $\mathcal{W}$ , is it possible to tile the first quadrant  $\mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{N}$  so that adjacent tiles match along their shared edges?
- Introduced by Wang (1963) and proven **undecidable** by Berger (1966).

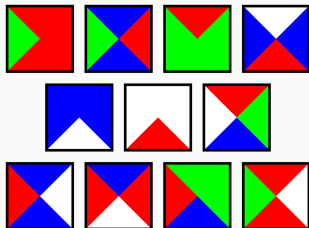


Figure 1: Wang tiles

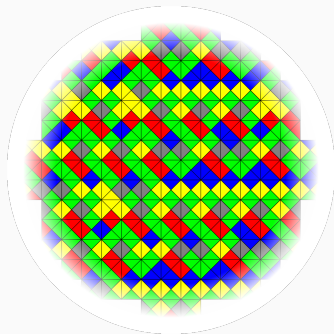


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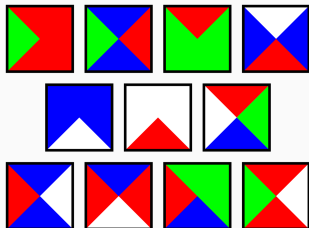


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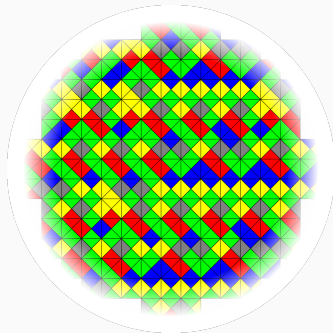


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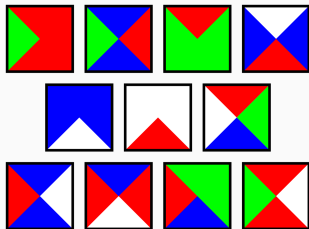


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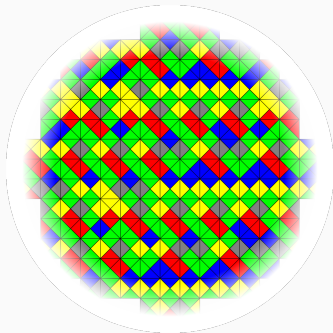


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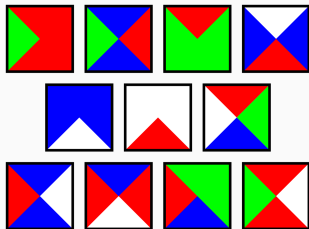


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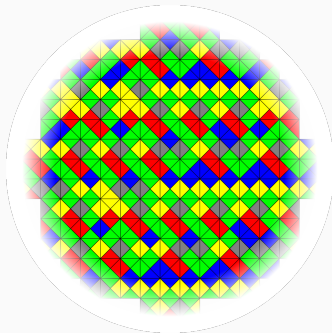


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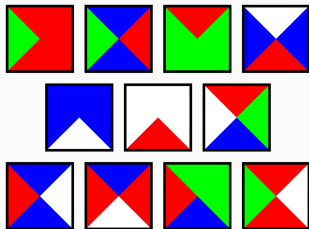


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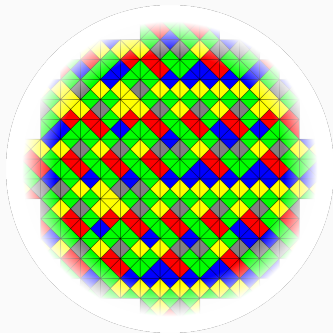
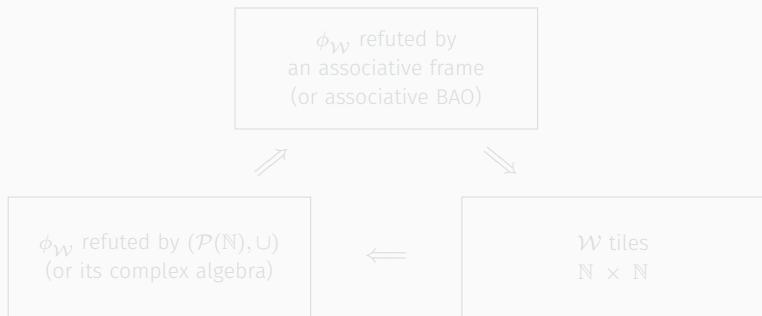


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Given  $\mathcal{W}$ , construct a formula  $\phi_{\mathcal{W}}$  such that:



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Let  $\mathbf{V}$  be a variety of associative BAOs.

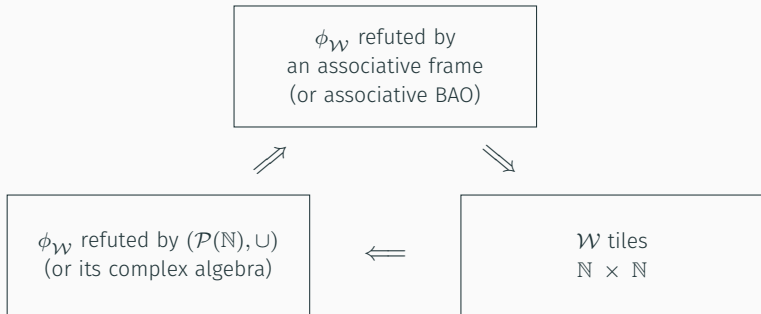
If  $\mathbf{V}$  contains  $(\mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N}), \cup)^+$ , then  $\mathbf{V}$  is undecidable.

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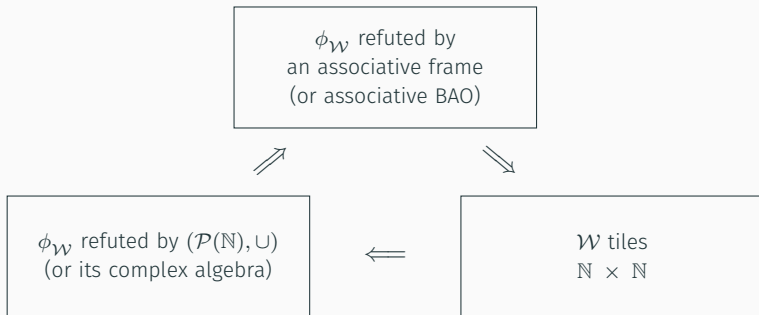
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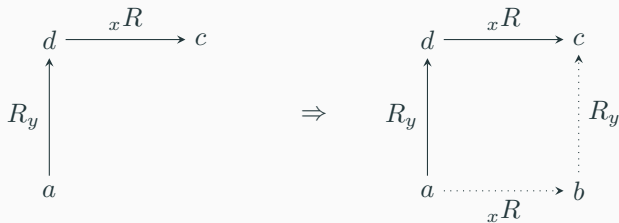


# Associativity and Tiling 1

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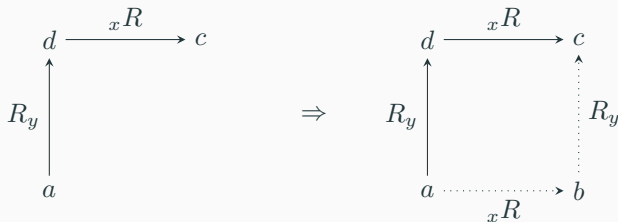
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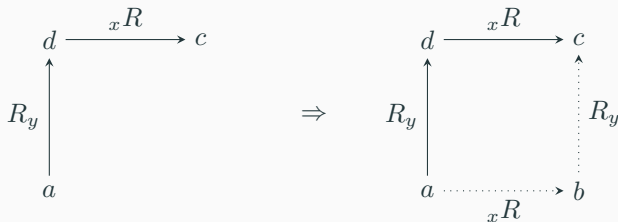
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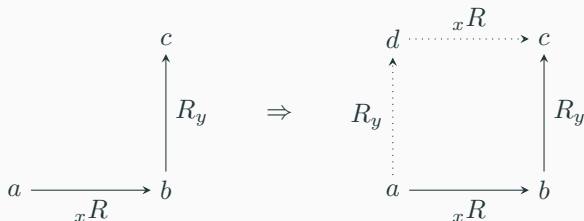


From  $(Rady$  and  $Rdxc)$  infer  $\exists b \in X$  ( $Raxb$  and  $Rbcy$ ).

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# Associativity and Tiling 2

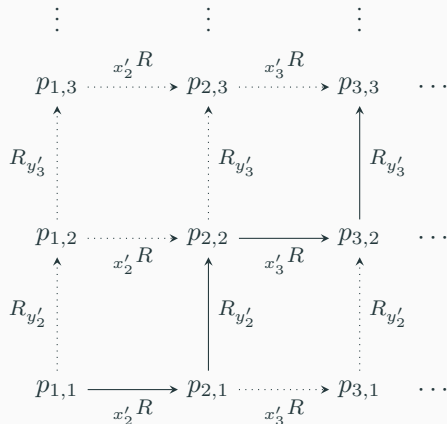


Figure 3: Generating  $\mathbb{N}^2$  from the staircase:  $p_{1,1}, p_{2,1}, p_{2,2}, p_{3,2}, p_{3,3}, \dots$

# Consequences

## Theorem

Let  $V$  be a variety of associative BAOs.

If  $V$  contains  $(\mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N}), \cup)^+$ , then  $V$  is undecidable.

Let  $L$  be an associative normal modal logic.

If  $L \subseteq \text{Log}(\mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N}), \cup)$ , then  $L$  is undecidable.

Recall the above. From this, we get:

## Theorem

$\text{Var}(\text{BA}^+)$  is undecidable.

Hyperboolean modal logic is undecidable.

## Theorem

$\text{Var}(\text{SL}^+)$  is undecidable.

The modal (information) logic of semilattices is undecidable.

*Proof.* Semilattices are associative and  $(\mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N}), \cup)$  is, in particular, a semilattice.

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# Other Consequences

## Undecidability for:

- The variety of **Boolean semilattices** (Bergman 2018 and Jipsen et al. 2021).
- Modal logics over **(modular/distributive) lattices** (Wang and Wang (2025)).
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**Lastly:** There is no translation from modal information logic into truthmaker semantics (question raised by Benthem 2017, 2024)

## Related results

Thank you!





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$$(\mathcal{P}(X), \cup, V), s \Vdash p \quad \text{iff} \quad s \in V(p),$$

and only allow principal valuations  $V : \mathbf{Prop} \rightarrow \{\downarrow s \mid s \in \mathcal{P}(X)\}$ , we get **sound and complete relational semantics for team logics**.

*Proof.* A simple p-morphism argument.

# Team semantics as relational semantics

For  $X := \{v \mid v : \mathbf{Prop} \rightarrow \{0, 1\}\}$  and  $s \in \mathcal{P}(X)$ , we had

$s \models p$	iff	$\forall v \in s : v(p) = 1,$
$s \models \varphi \wedge \psi$	iff	$s \models \varphi$ and $s \models \psi,$
$s \models \varphi \vee \psi$	iff	$s \models \varphi$ or $s \models \psi,$
$s \models \neg \varphi$	iff	$s \not\models \varphi,$
$s \models \varphi \circ \psi$	iff	there exist $s', s'' \in \mathcal{P}(X)$ such that $s' \models \varphi;$ $s'' \models \psi;$ and $s = s' \cup s''.$

This induces a **powerset frame**  $\mathbb{F} = (\mathcal{P}(X), \cup)$ , where ‘ $\circ$ ’ is a binary modality referring to the ternary  $\cup$ -relation:  $s = s' \cup s''$ ; and a **model**  $\mathbb{M} = (\mathcal{P}(X), \cup, V)$  with a ‘principal valuation’, i.e.,

$$V(p) := \{s \in \mathcal{P}(X) \mid \forall v \in s : v(p) = 1\} = \downarrow\{v \in X \mid v(p) = 1\}.$$

**In fact**, if we take all powerset frames  $(\mathcal{P}(X), \cup)$ , redefine the base clause

$$(\mathcal{P}(X), \cup, V), s \Vdash p \quad \text{iff} \quad s \in V(p),$$

and only allow principal valuations  $V : \mathbf{Prop} \rightarrow \{\downarrow s \mid s \in \mathcal{P}(X)\}$ , we get **sound and complete relational semantics for team logics**.

*Proof.* A simple p-morphism argument.