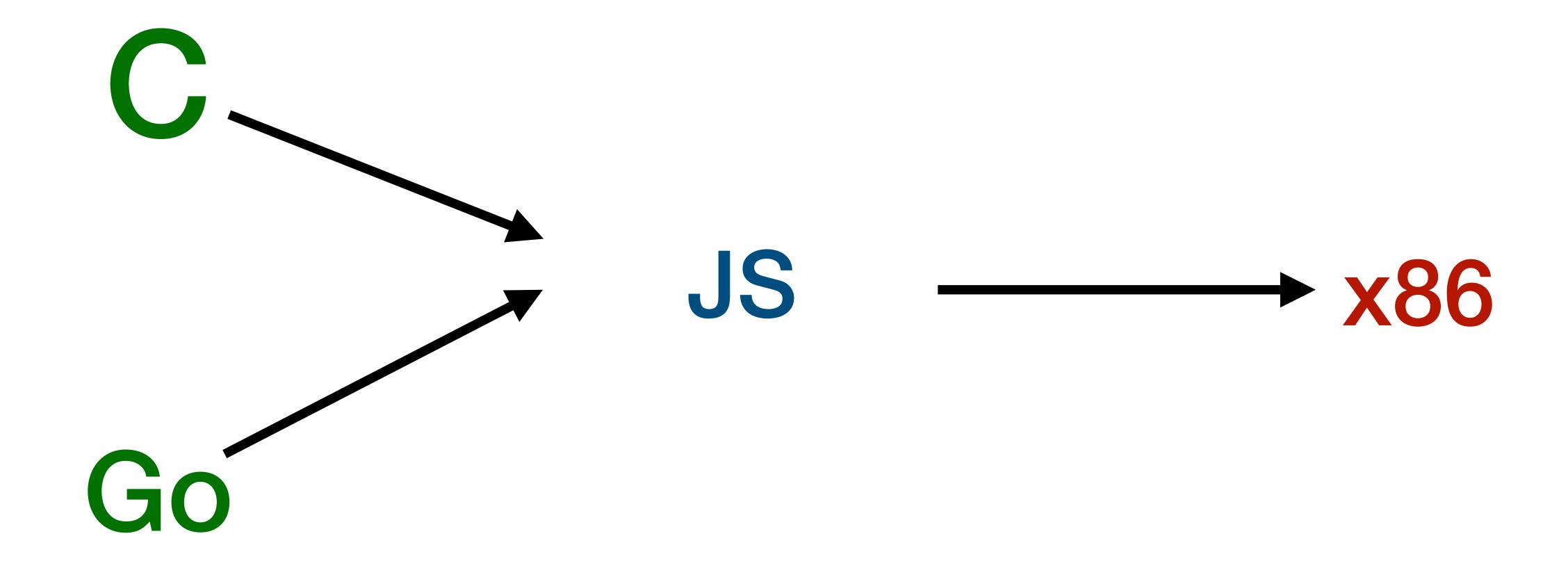
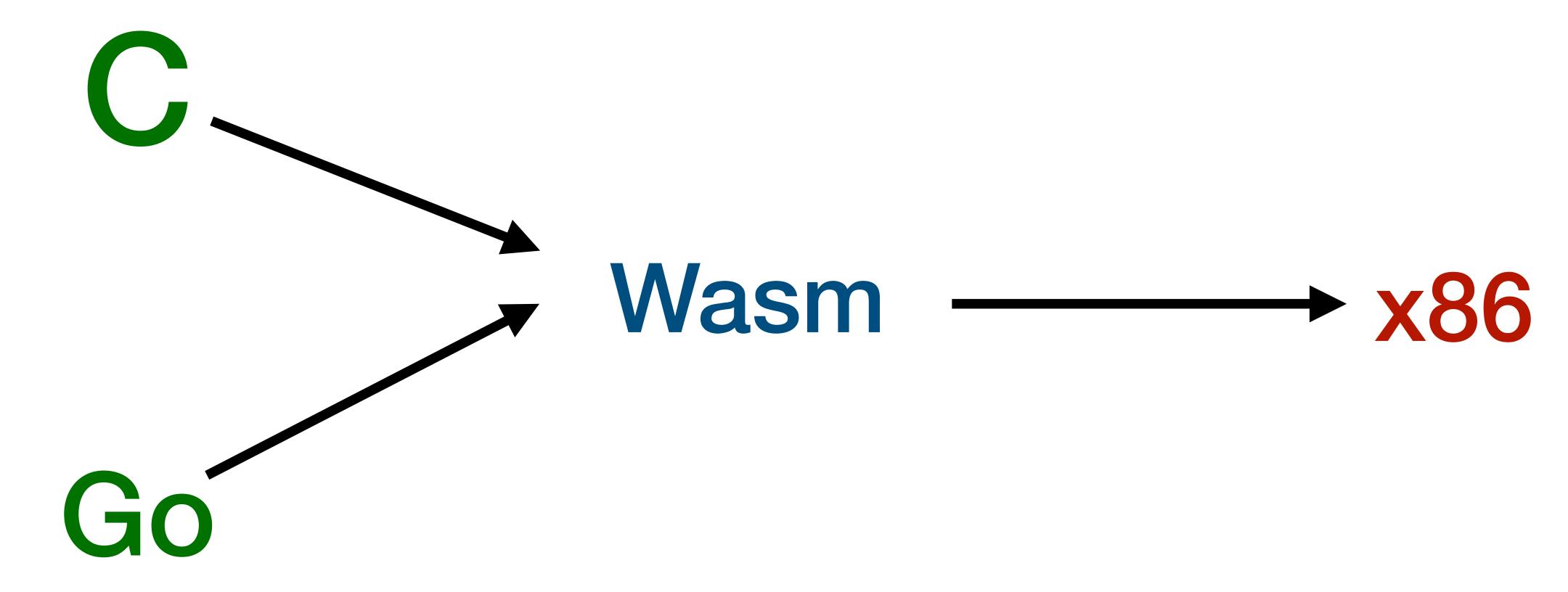
Wasm/k: Delimited Continuations for WebAssembly

DLS 2020

Donald Pinckney (Northeastern), Arjun Guha (Northeastern), Yuriy Brun (UMass Amherst)

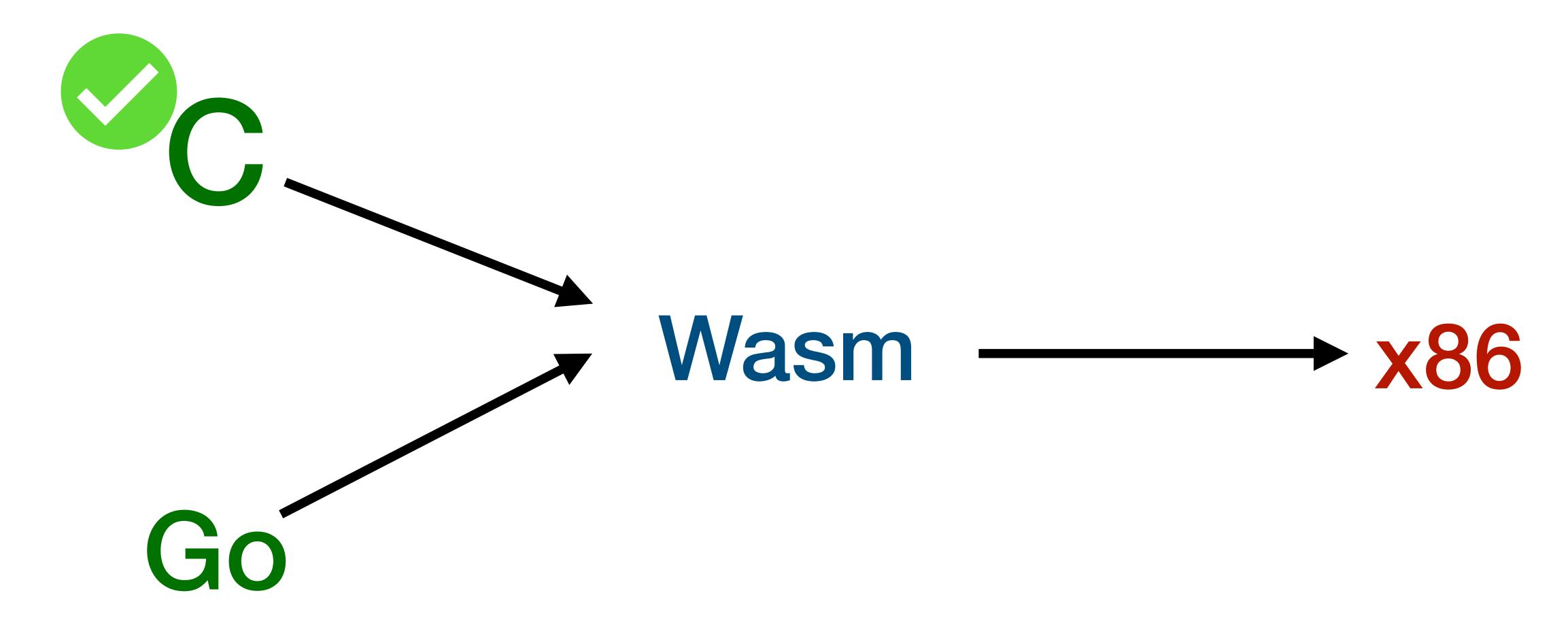


- +Language preference
- +Code reuse



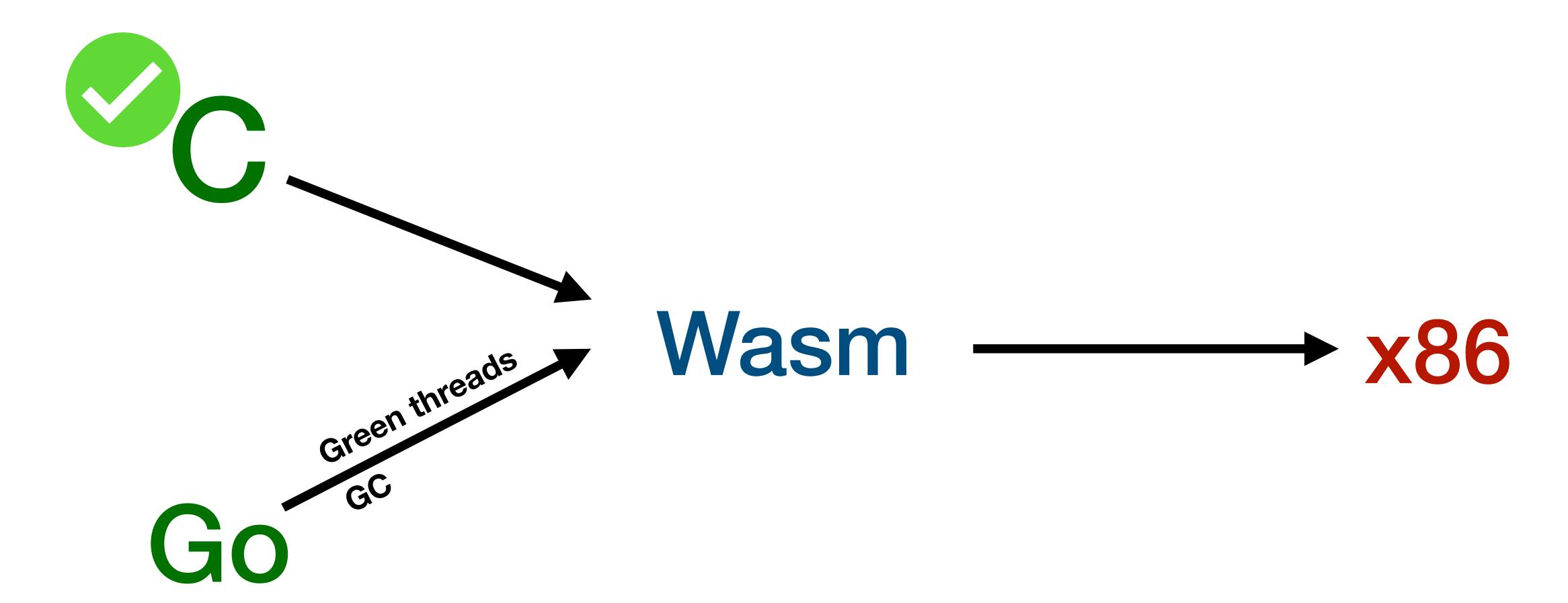
- +Language preference
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- ? Fast & consistent performance
- ? Small code size



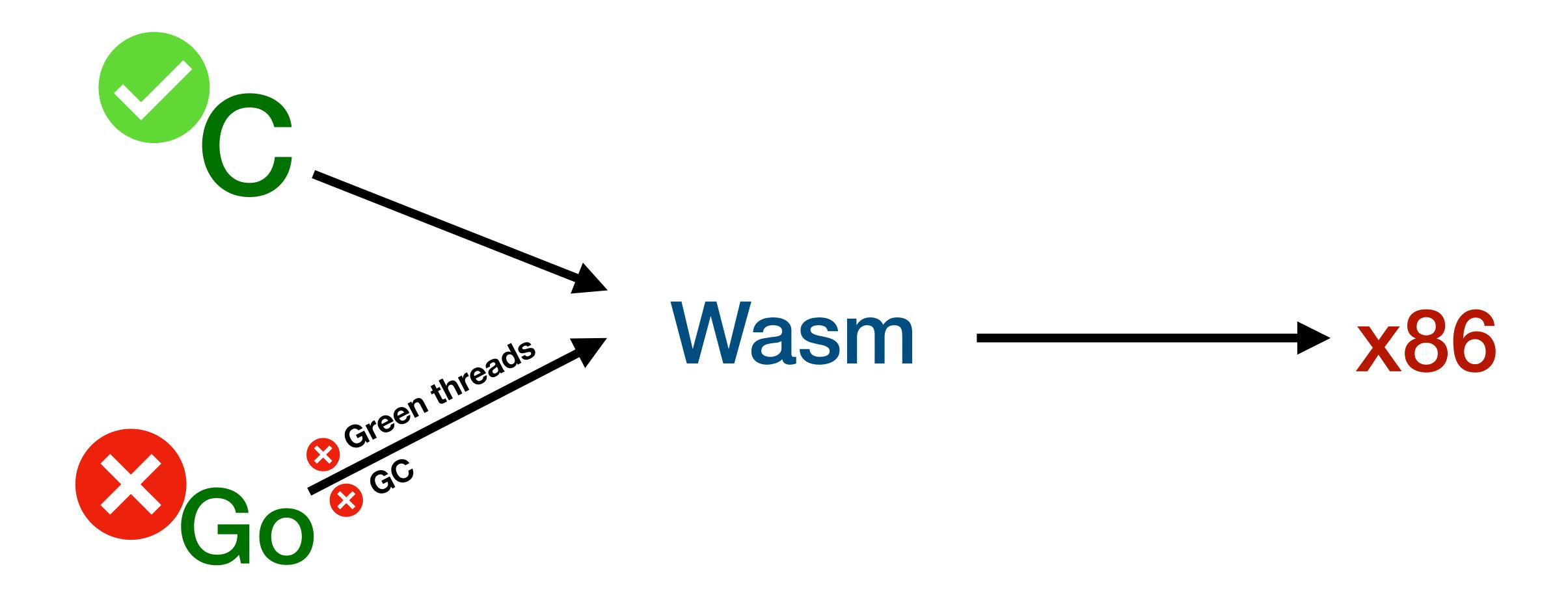
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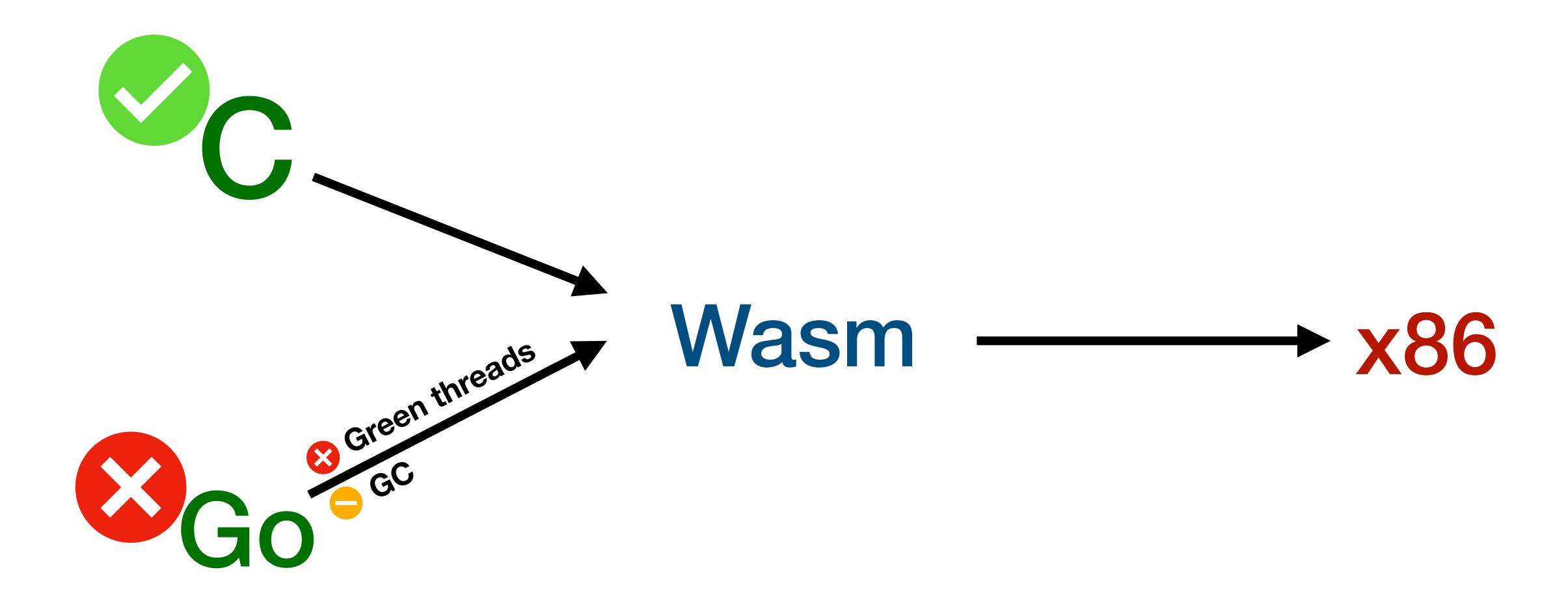
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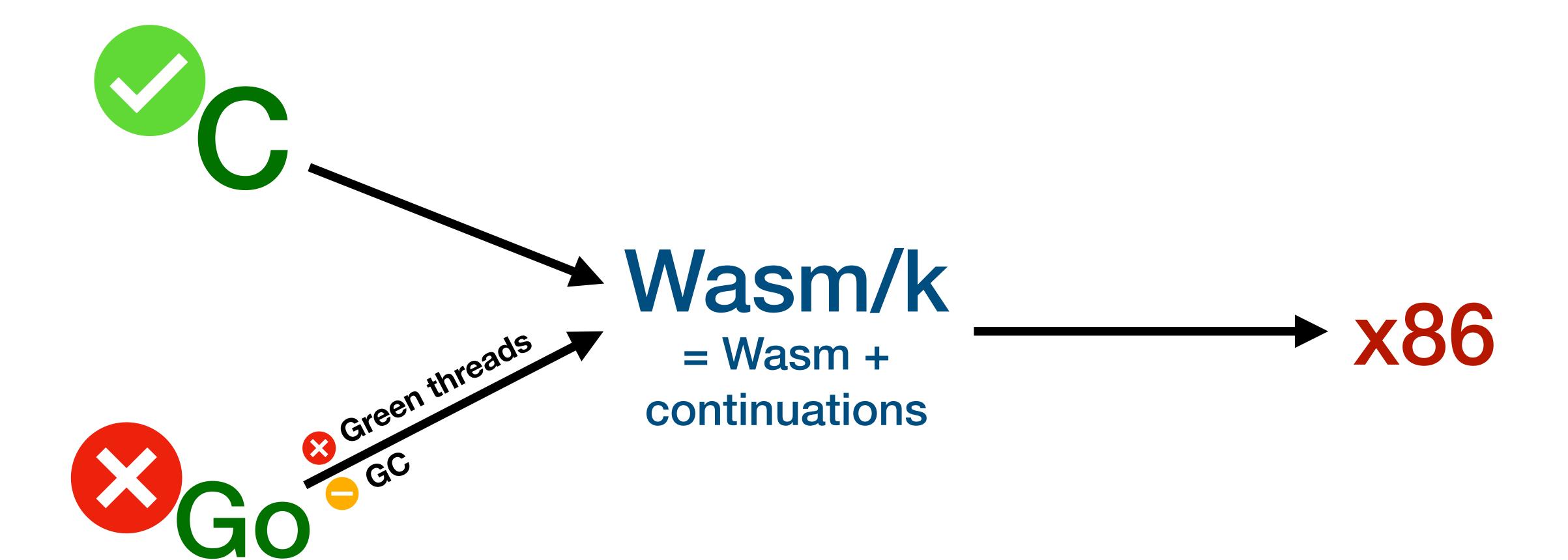
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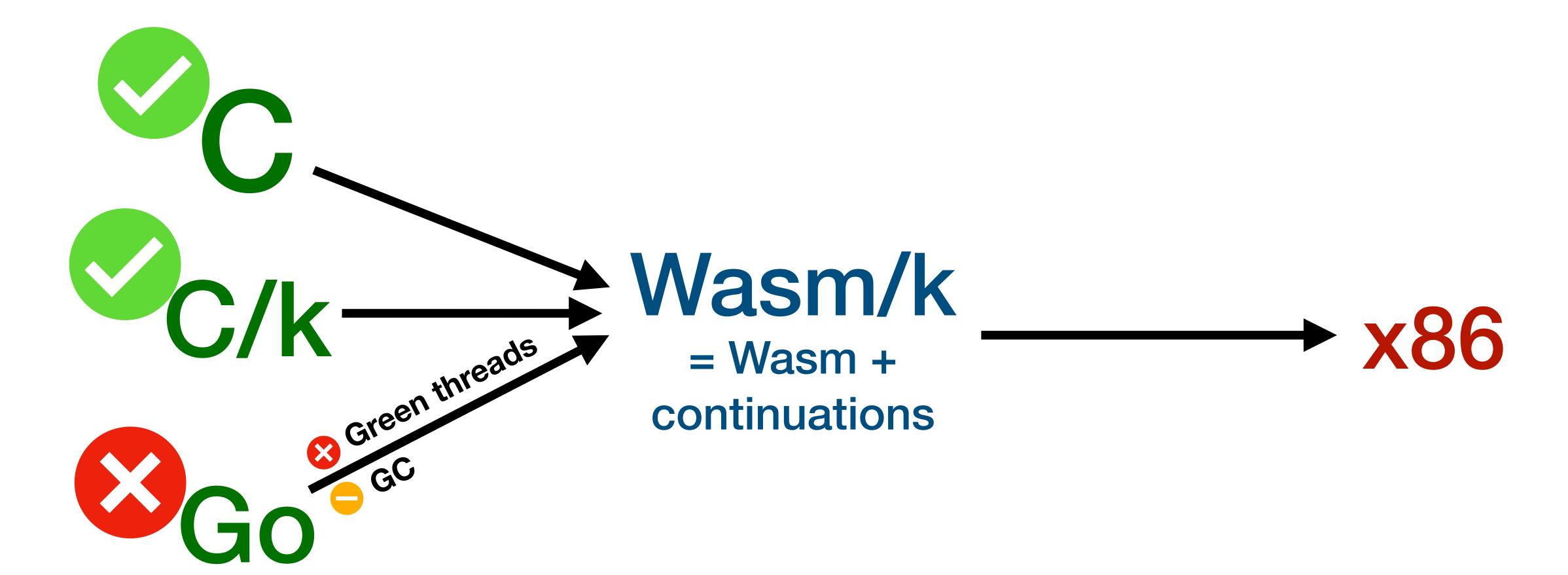
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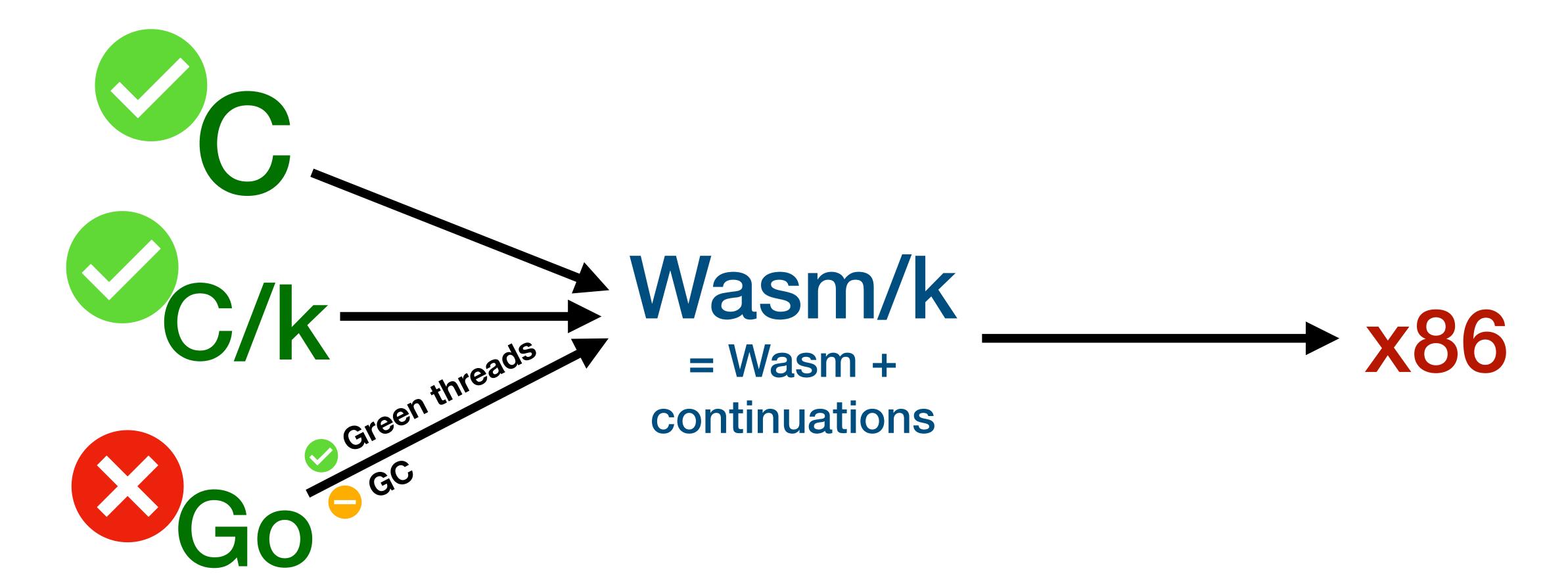
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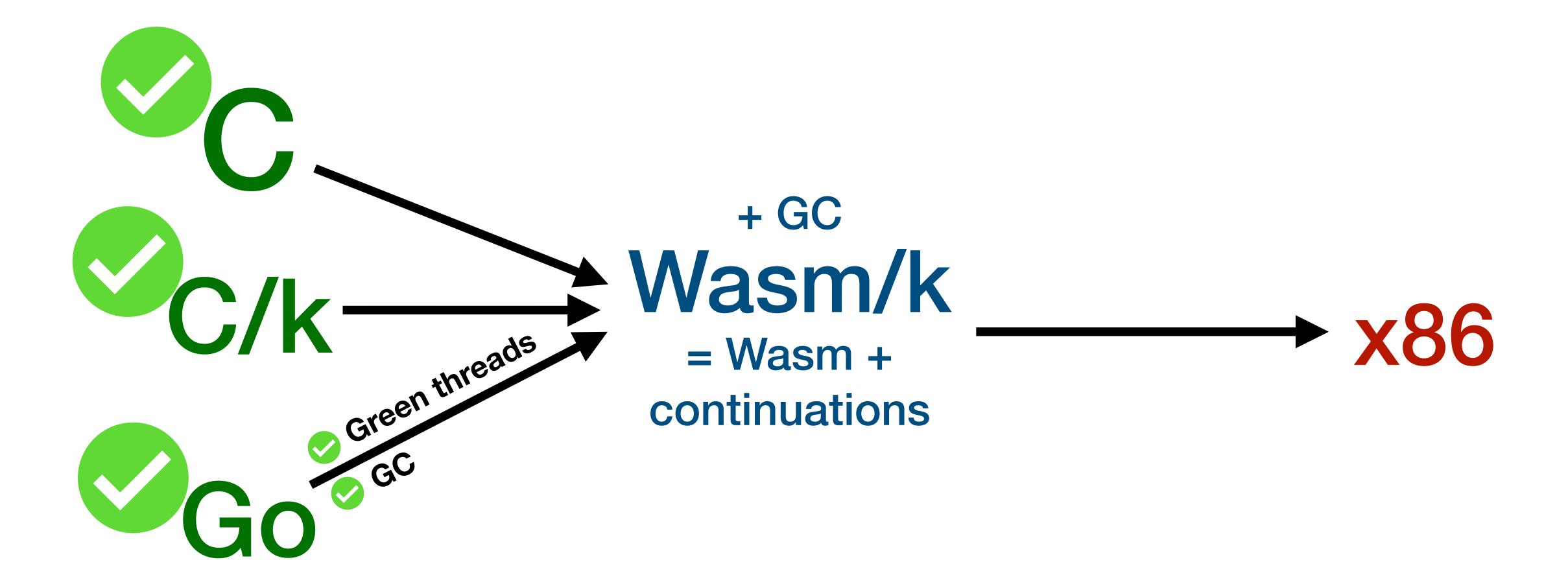
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Wasm

Formal Stack

$$(5+3)*2$$

```
i32.const 5
i32.const 3
i32.add
i32.const 2
i32.mul
```

Functions + Locals

```
int f(int x) {
  int y = x;
  return g(y);
}
```

Wasm

```
Functions +
  Locals
(func $f (param $x i32)
          (local $y i32)
          (result i32)
  local.get $x
  local.set $y
  local.get $y
```



Expressions

Formal Stack

x86 Registers

Locals

Locals

Machine Stack

Function Calls

Function Calls

malloc

$C \rightarrow Wasm \rightarrow x86$

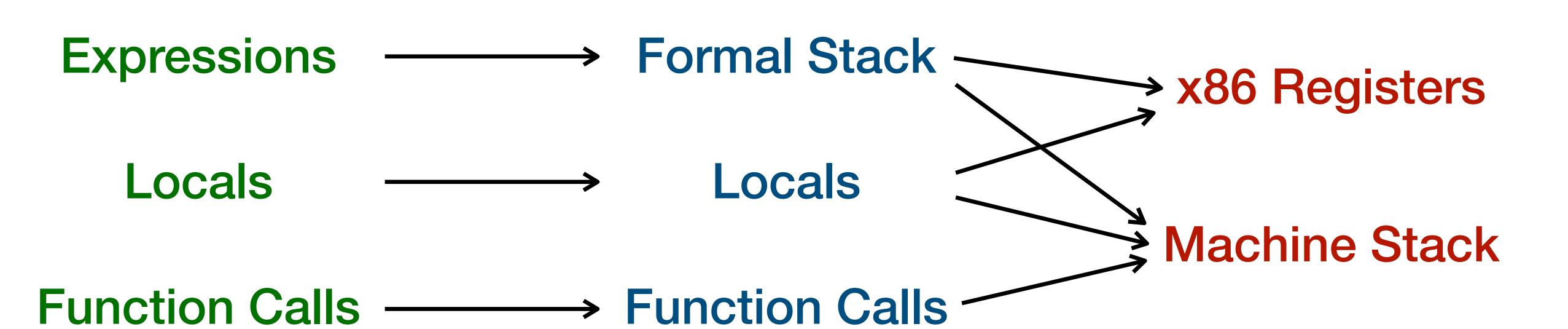
x86 Registers

Locals Locals

Machine Stack

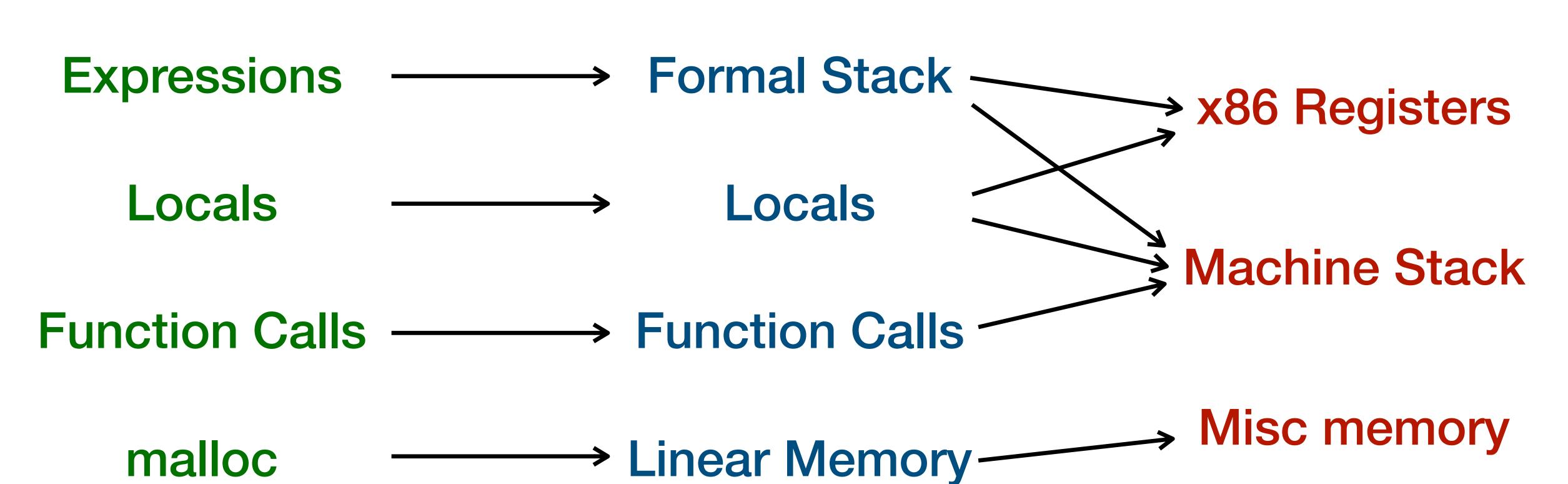
Function Calls — Function Calls

malloc



malloc





C - Wasm

Pointer to local

```
void f() {
   int x;
   g(&x);
}
```

C - Wasm

Pointer to local

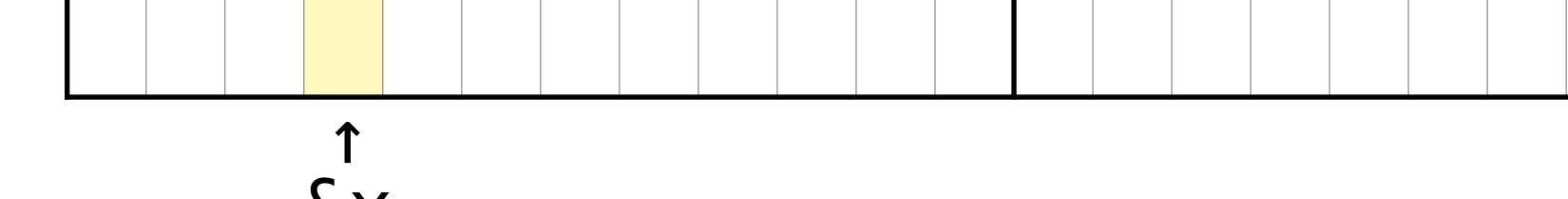
```
void f() {
   int x;
   g(&x);
}
```

Local in Linear Memory

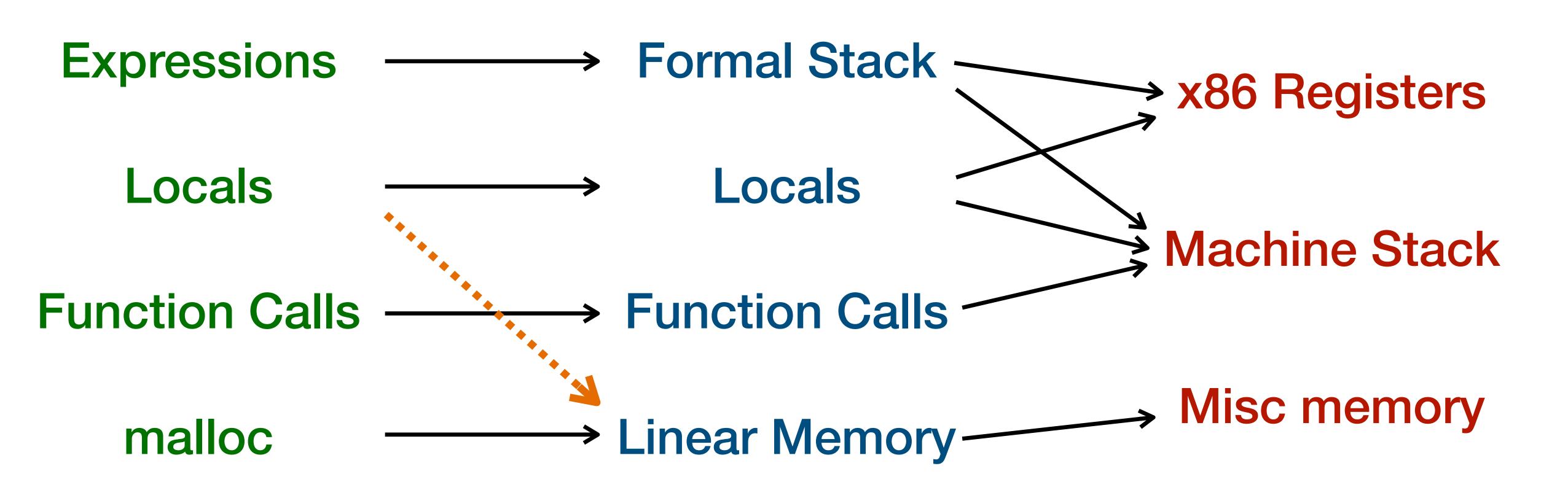
```
i32.const 4
call $shadow_stack_alloc
call $g
...
i32.const 4
call $shadow_stack_pop
```

Shadow Stack Space

Malloc Space



$C \rightarrow Wasm \rightarrow x86$



Intro to WebAssembly

The Toolchain + Compilation



Intro to WebAssembly

The Toolchain + Compilation



Intro to WebAssembly

The Toolchain + Compilation

```
x := 0
for {
```

```
x += 1
```

```
f(x);
```

```
}
```

```
local.get $x
i32.const 1
i32.add
local.set $x
```

```
local.get $x
call $f
```

X := 0for {

```
x += 1
            Might switch
f(x);
```

Goroutines / green threads!

```
local.get $x
i32.const 1
i32.add
local.set $x
```

```
local.get $x
call $f
```

x := 0 for {

```
x += 1
```

```
f(x);
```

← Goroutines / green threads!

```
local.get $x
132.const 1
i32.add
local.eet $x
```

```
local.get $x
call $f
```

```
X := 0
for {
```

```
x += 1

Might switch

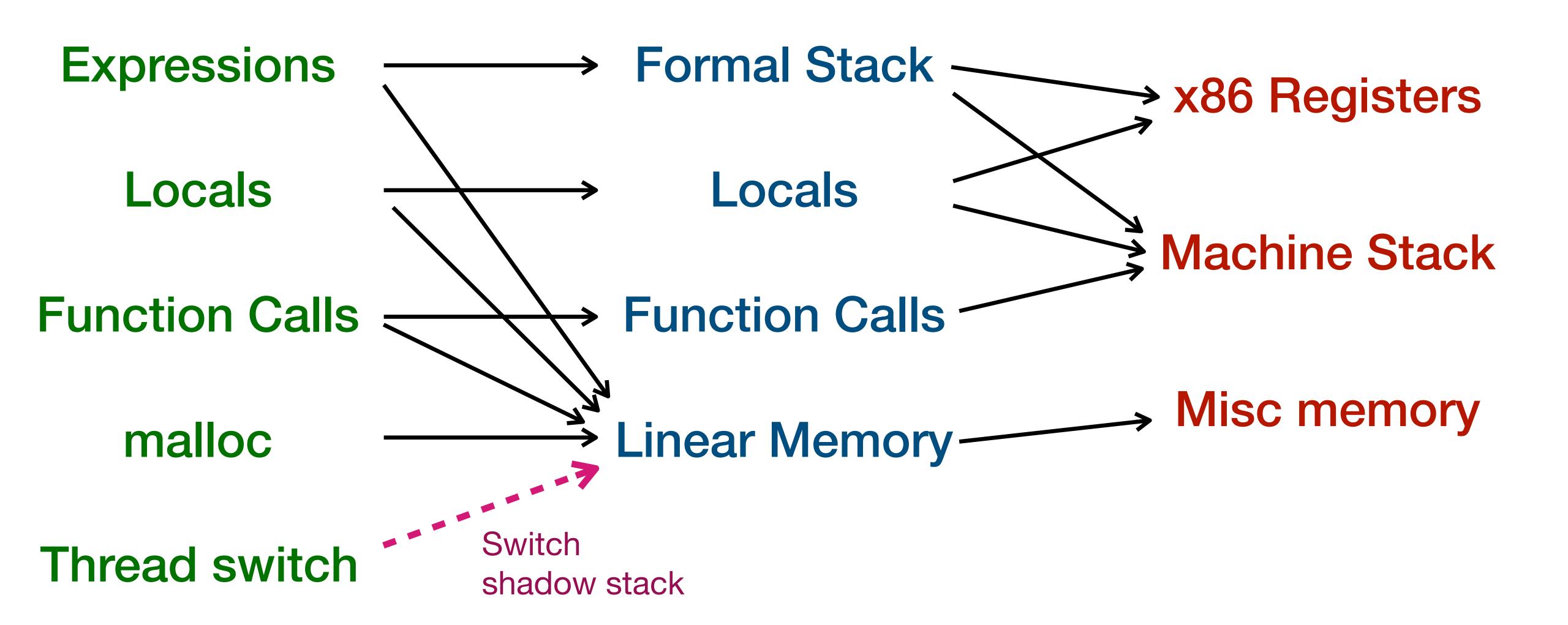
f(x);

Goroutines /
green threads!
```

```
local.get $x
i32.const 1
i32.add
local.set $x
```

```
local.get $x
call $push_shadow_stack
local.get $x
call $f
call $pop_shadow_stack
local.set $x
```

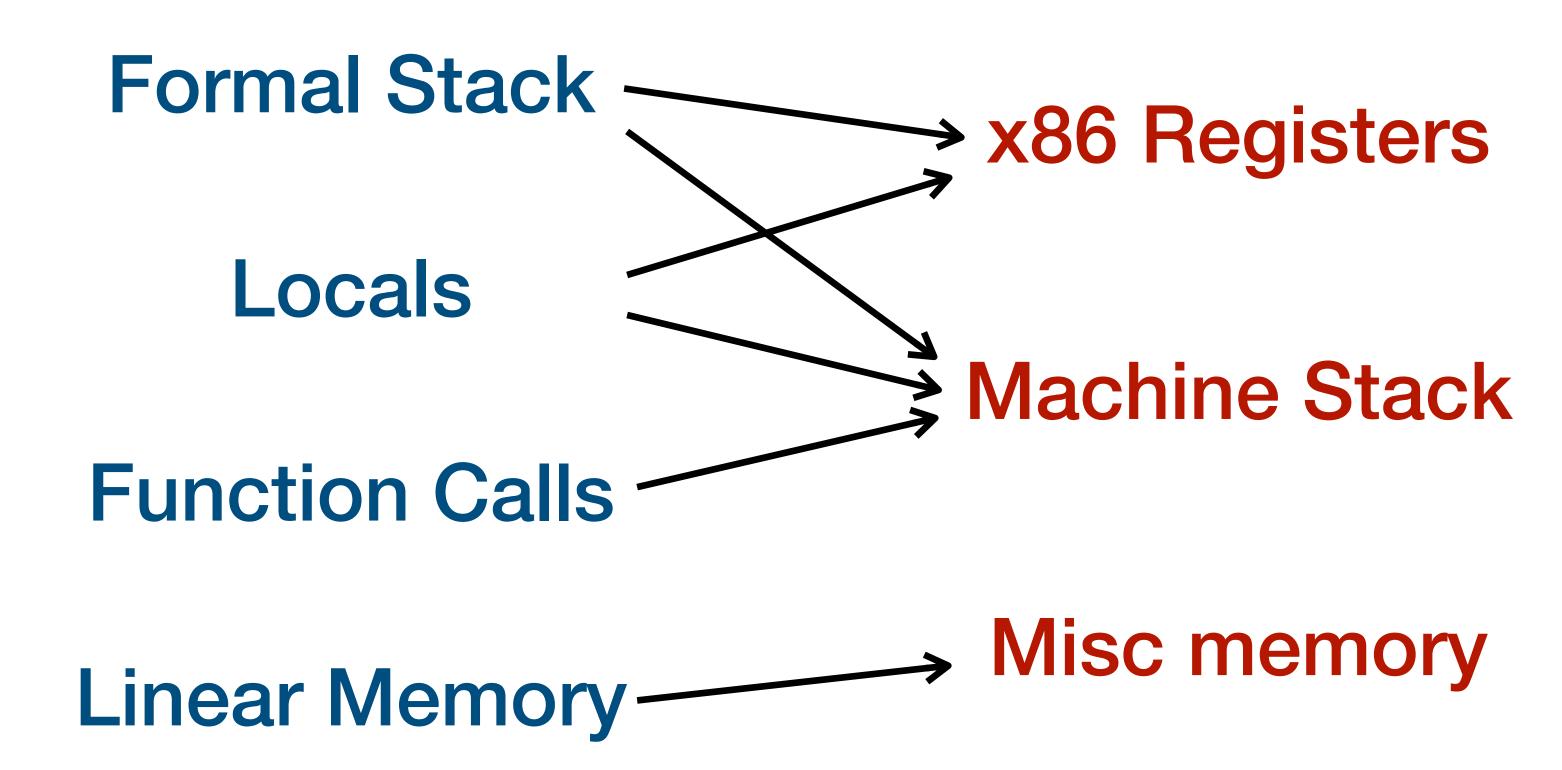
G0 → Wasm → x86



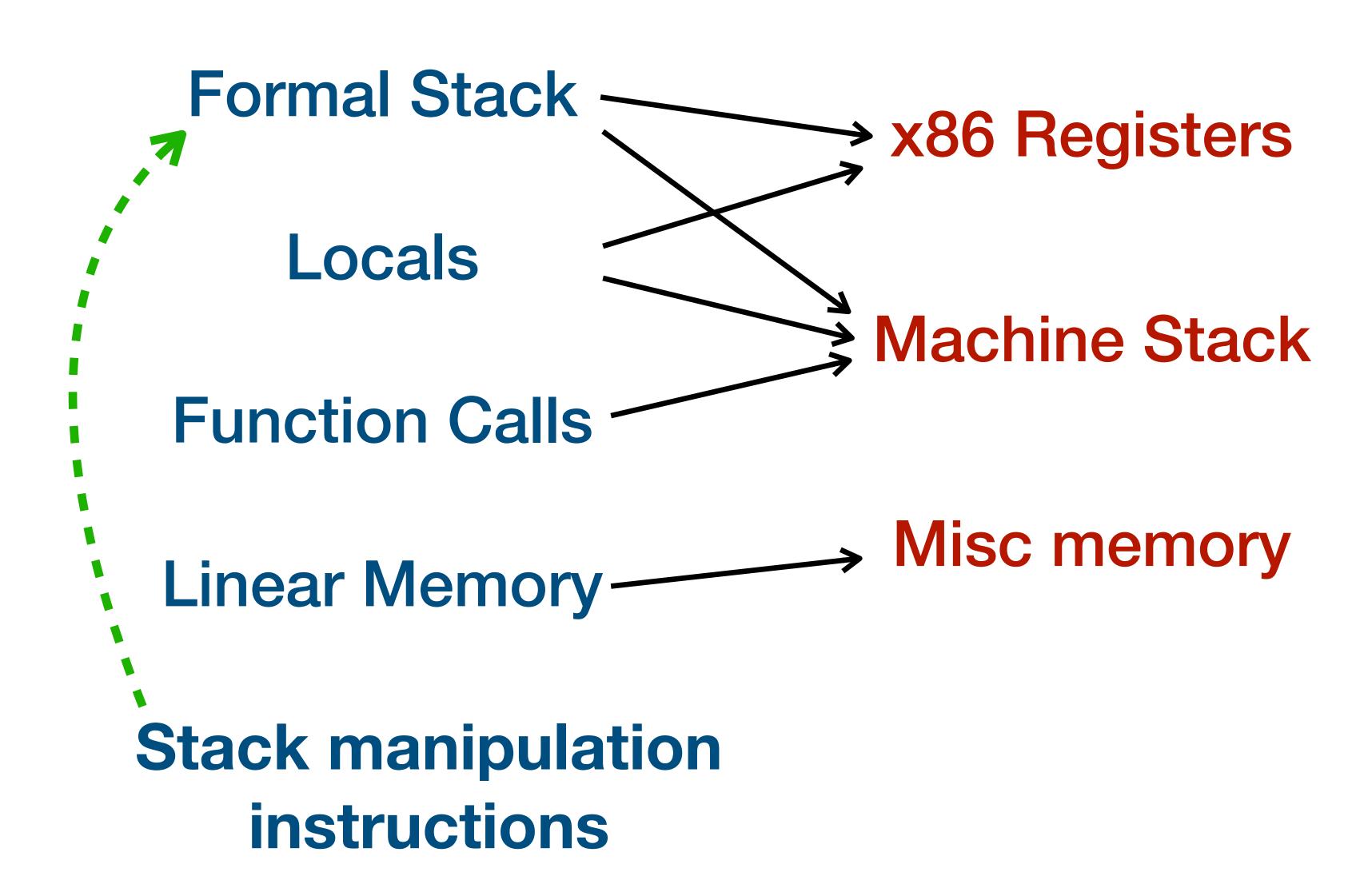
Key Problem:

Go needs to manipulate the stack, but WebAssembly disallows manipulating the formal stack

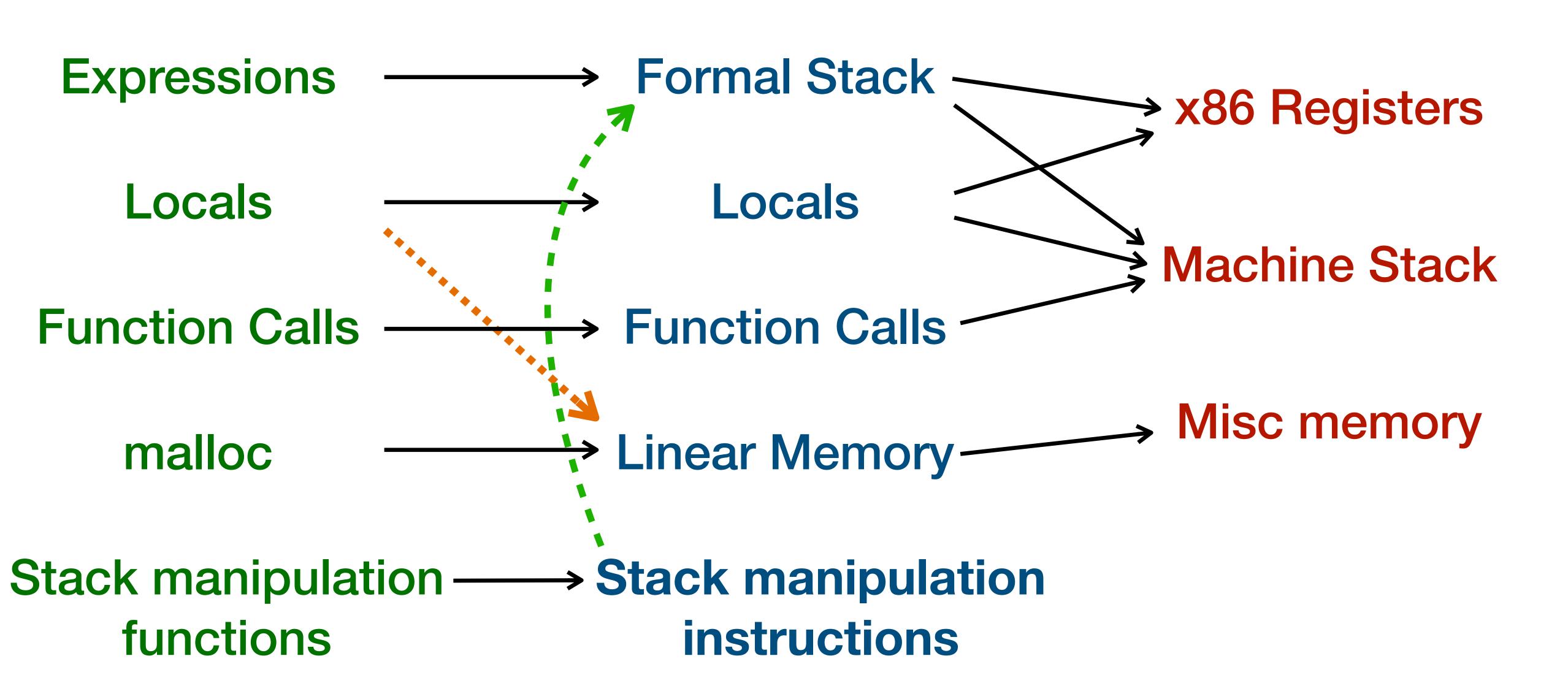
Wasm - x86



Wasm/k - x86



$C/k \longrightarrow Wasm/k \longrightarrow x86$



C/K = C +

Wasm/k

= Wasm +

control()

control

restore()

restore

prompt()

prompt ... end

Programming in C/k

Green threads: control() and restore()

```
std::vector<uint64_t> Q;
uint64_t dequeue() {
    uint64_t next_k = Q.back(); Q.pop_back();
    return next_k;
void yield_handler(uint64_t k, uint64_t arg) {
   Q.insert(Q.begin(), k);
    restore(dequeue(), 0);
void thread_yield() {
    control(yield_handler, 0);
```

```
void thread_main() {
    std::cout << "A" << std::endl;
    thread_yield();
    std::cout << "B" << std::endl;
}
int main() {
    thread_create(thread_main);
    thread_create(thread_main);
    join_all_threads();
}</pre>
```

Programming in C/k

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```

```
void yield_handler(k_id k, Generator *g) {
    g->after_yield = k;
    restore(g->after_next, g->value);
void gen_yield(uint64_t v, Generator *g) {
    g->value = v;
    control(yield_handler, g);
// Next implementation
void next_handler(k_id k, Generator *g) {
    g->after_next = k;
    restore(g->after_yield, 0);
uint64_t gen_next(Generator *g) {
    return control(next_handler, g);
// Freeing a generator
void free_generator(Generator *g) {
    continuation_delete(g->after_yield); free(g);
```

```
void example_generator(Generator *g) {
    uint64_t i = 0;
    while(1) { gen_yield(i++, g); }
}
int main() {
    Generator *g = make_generator(example_generator);
    for(int i = 0; i < 10; i++)
        printf("%llu\n", gen_next(g));
    free_generator(g);
    return 0;
}</pre>
```

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    k_id continuation; // The continuation to resume
    uint64_t value; // The value to pass to the continuation
// vector of thunks which need to be executed
std::vector<ContinuationThunk *> to_execute;
std::map<uint64_t, double> *driver(uint64_t (*body)()) {
    auto *results = new std::vector<uint64_t>();
    results->push_back(body());
    if(rest.size() > 0) {
        ContinuationThunk *t = rest.back(); rest.pop_back();
        restore(t->continuation, t->value);
    return count_probs(results);
void uniform_handler(k_id k, std::vector<uint64_t> *args) {
    for(auto it = std::next(args->begin());
        it != args->end(); ++it) {
        to_execute.push_back(new ContinuationThunk {
            .continuation=continuation_copy(k),
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    restore(k, args[0]);
uint64_t uniform(std::vector<uint64_t> *args) {
    return control(uniform_handler, args);
```

```
uint64_t sum_d6() {
    auto *d6 = new std::vector<uint64_t> {1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6};
    return uniform(d6) + uniform(d6);
}
int main() {
    std::cout << *driver(sum_d6) << std::endl; return 0;
}</pre>
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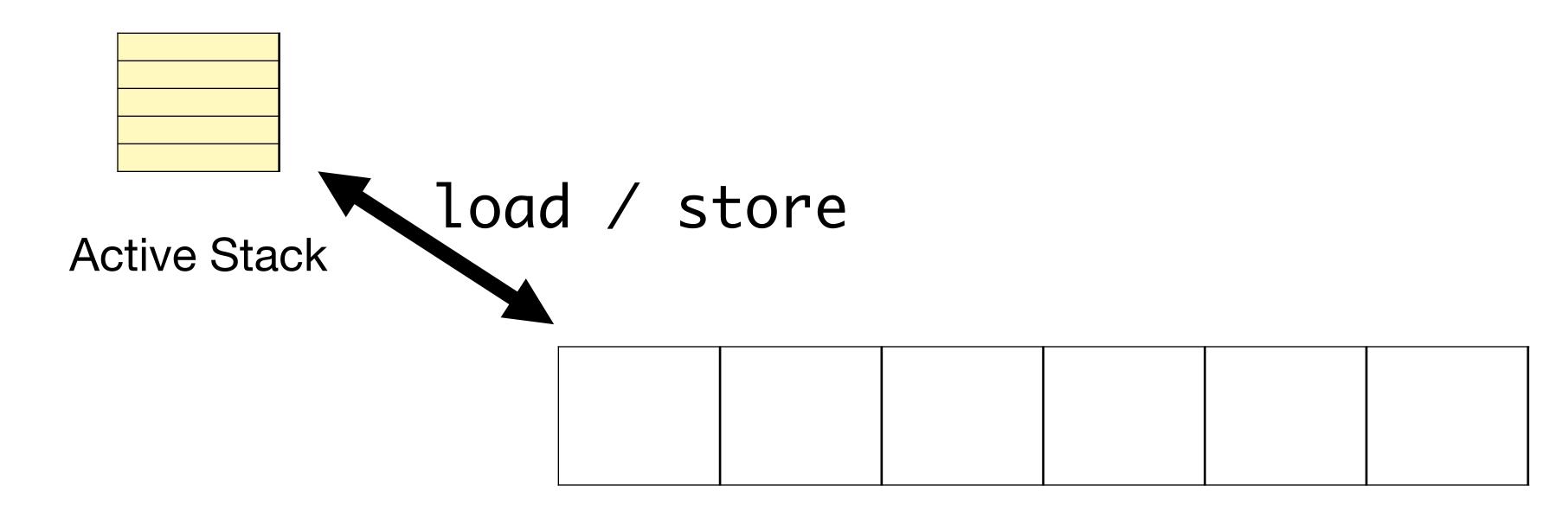
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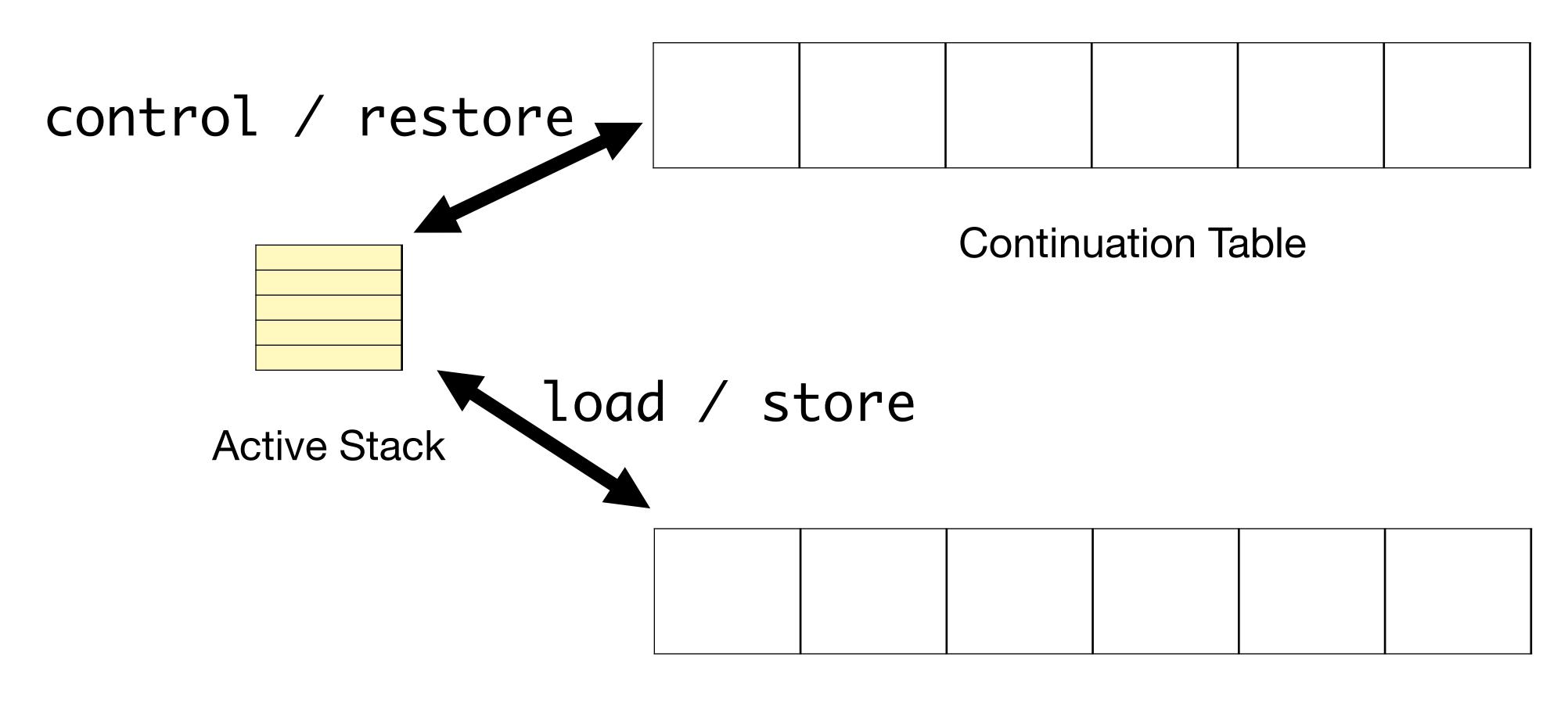
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```

The continuation table



Linear Memory

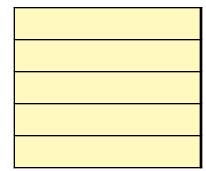
The continuation table



Linear Memory

control and restore

s; v_l^* ; $L^{\max}[(i64.const \kappa) (i64.const v) restore] <math>\rightsquigarrow_i s'$; $v_l^{*'}$; $L^{\max'}[(i64.const v)]$

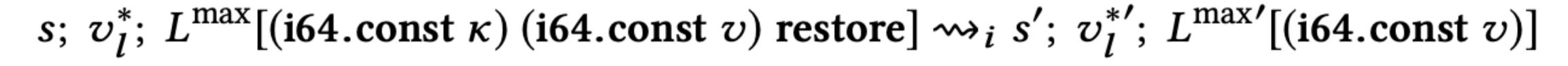


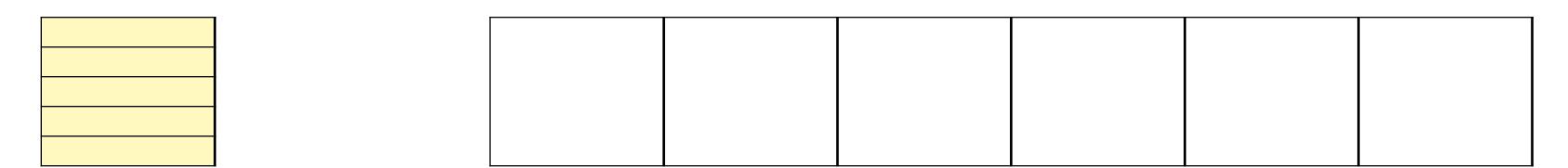


Active Stack

control and restore

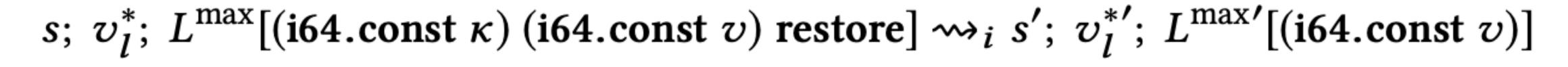
s;
$$v_l^*$$
; $L^{\max}[(i64.const\ v)\ (control\ h)] $\leadsto_i s'$; ϵ ; $(i64.const\ \kappa)\ (i64.const\ v)\ (call\ h)\ trap$$

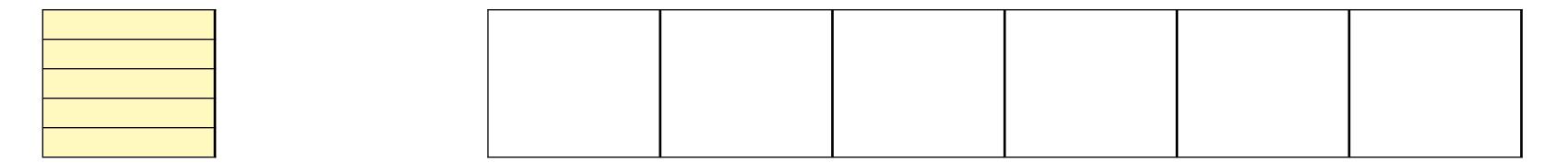




Active Stack

control and restore

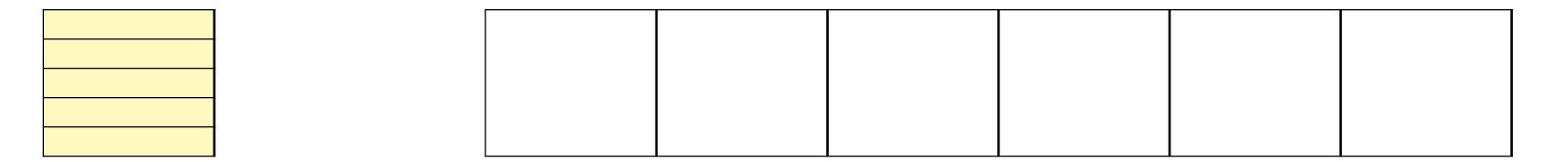




Active Stack

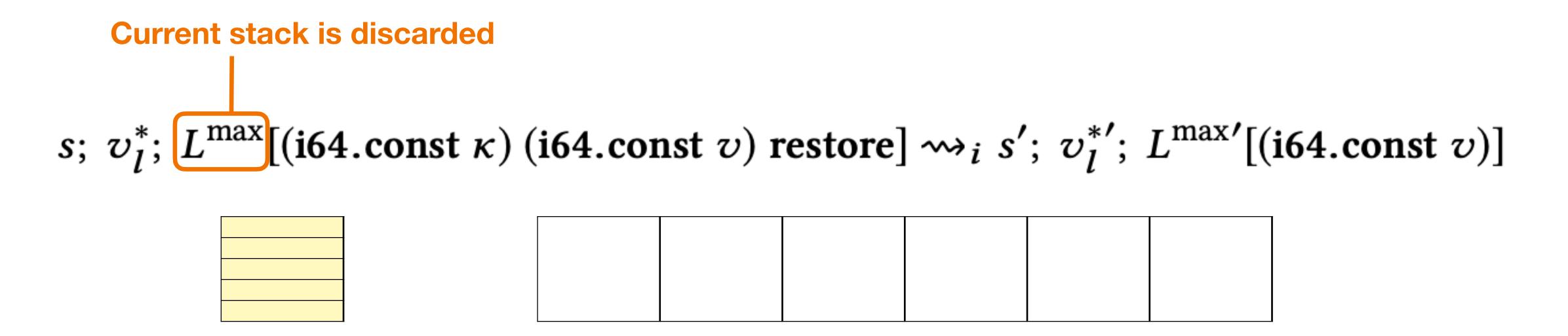
control and restore

s;
$$v_l^*$$
; $L^{\max}[(i64.const \kappa) (i64.const v) restore] $\leadsto_i s'$; $v_l^{*'}$; $L^{\max'}[(i64.const v)]$$



Active Stack

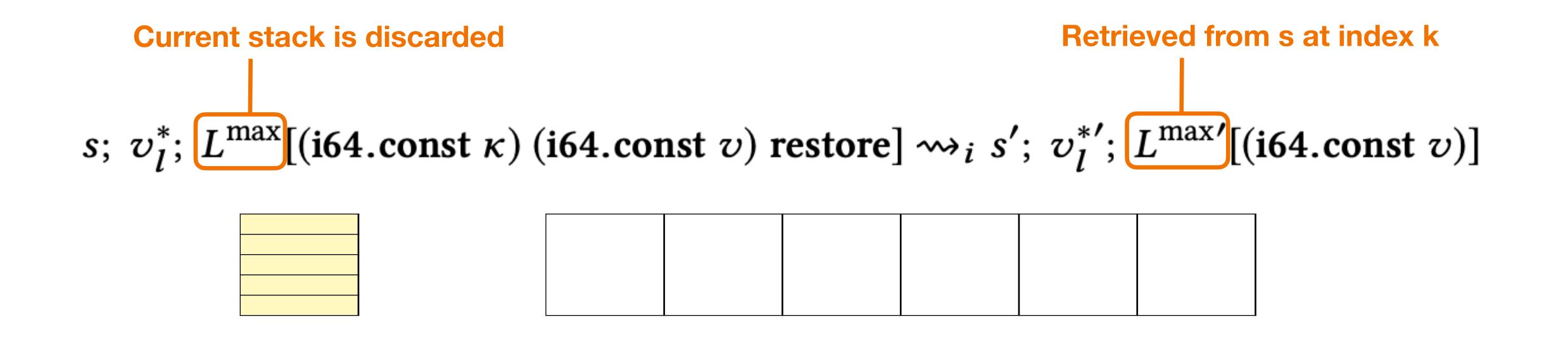
control and restore



Active Stack

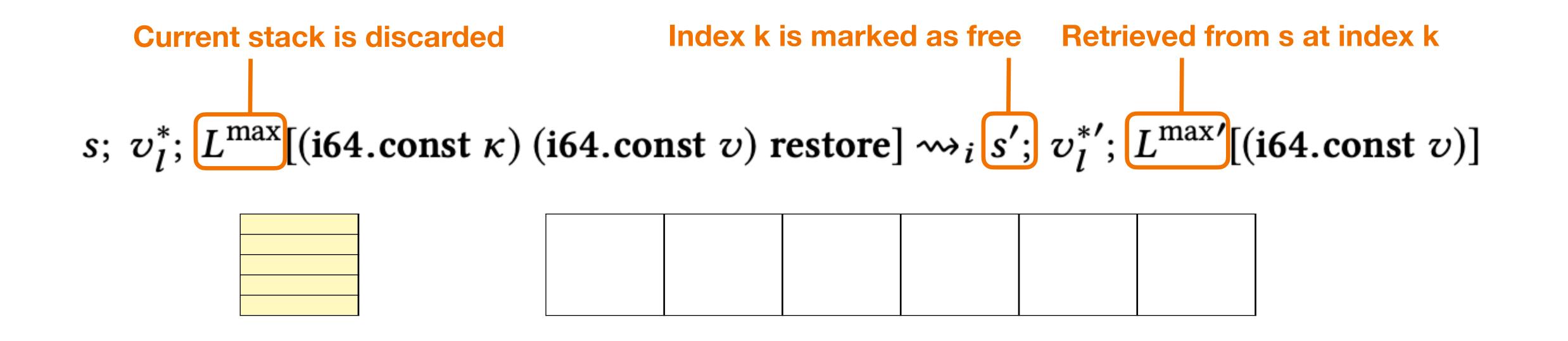
control and restore

Active Stack



control and restore

Active Stack



control and restore

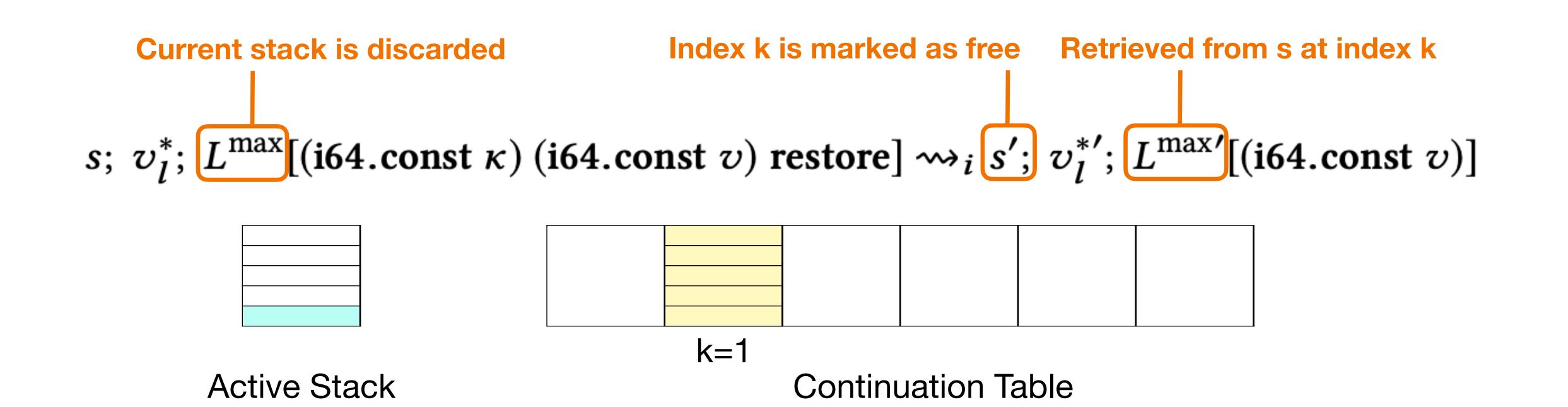
$$s; \ v_l^*; \ L^{\max}[(i64.const\ v)\ (control\ h)] \leadsto_i s'; \ \epsilon; \ (i64.const\ \kappa)\ (i64.const\ v)\ (call\ h) \ trap$$
Capture entire stack

Where $s' = s$ but with context

L^{max} and v_l^* stored at index k

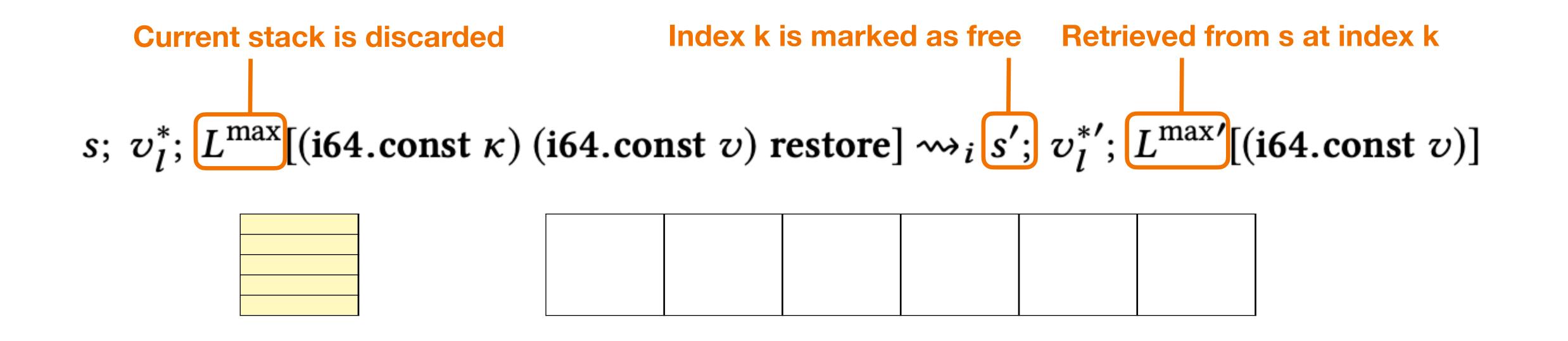
Execute h in fresh stack.

k is a new ID



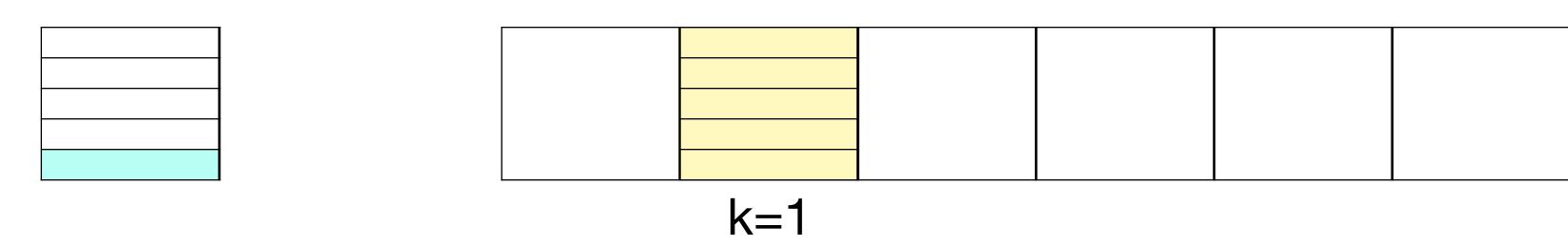
control and restore

Active Stack



continuation_copy



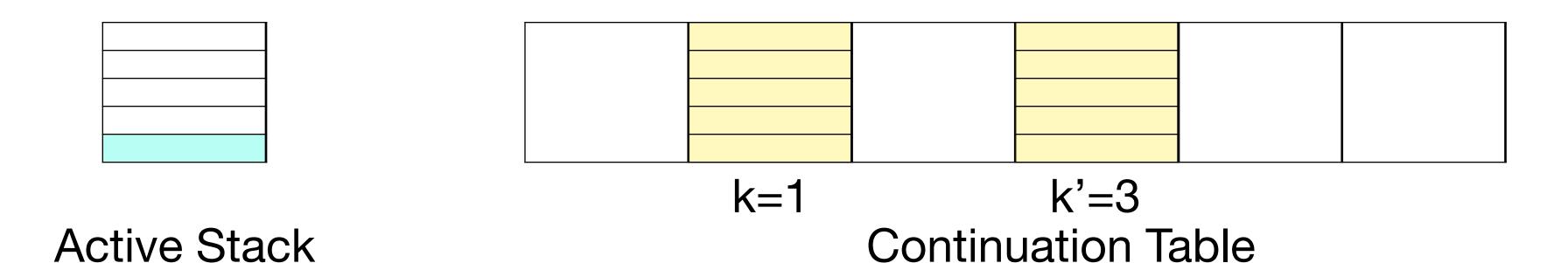


Active Stack

continuation_copy

$$s; (i64.const \ \kappa) continuation_copy \hookrightarrow_i s'; (i64.const \ \kappa')$$
Stack at index k
will be copied

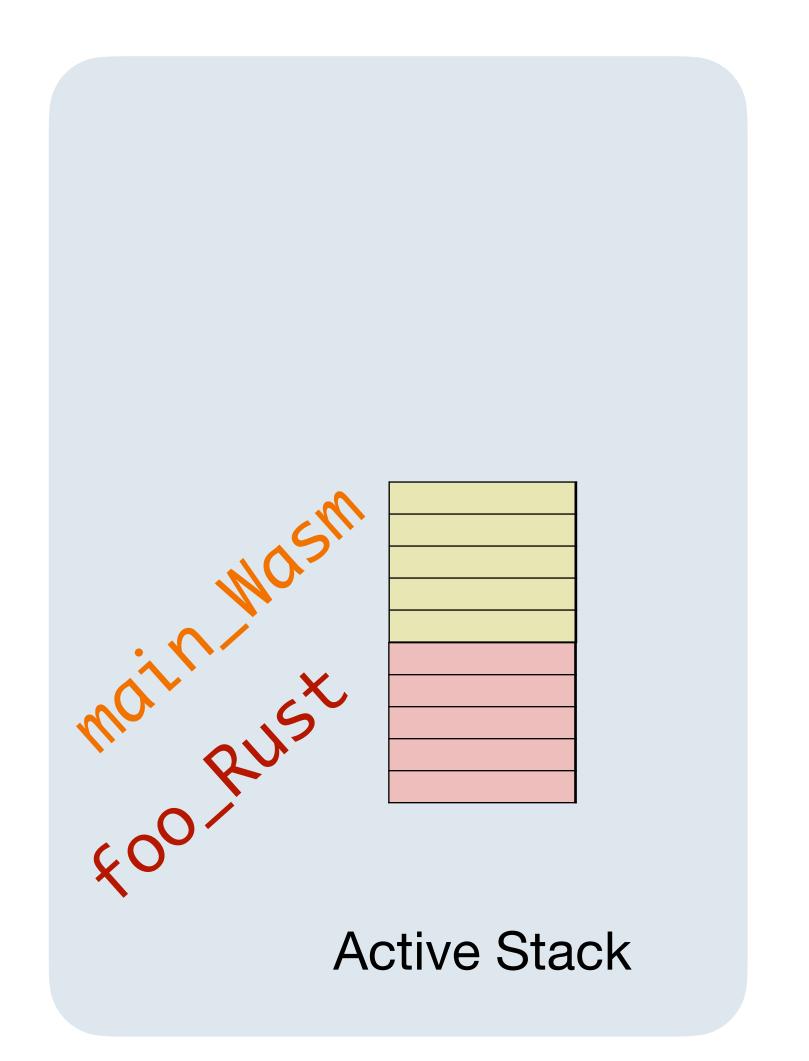
Stack at k is copied to k', and k' is returned

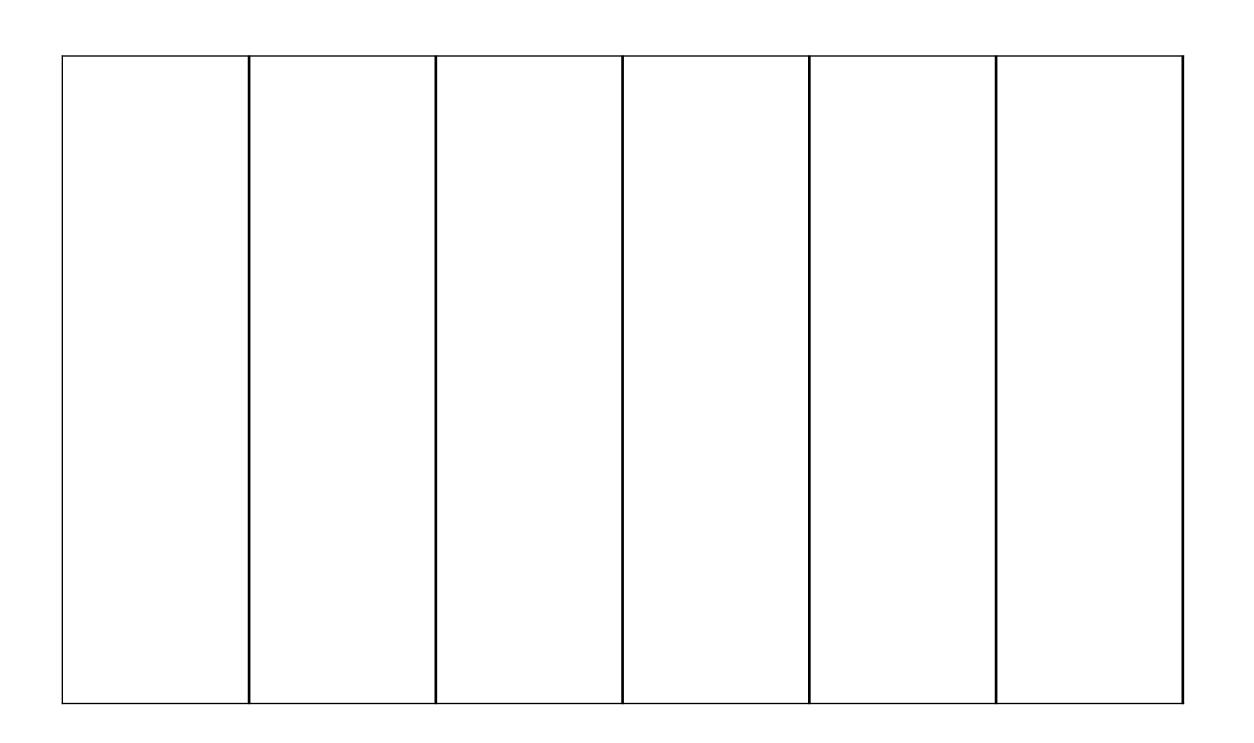


What We Have so Far

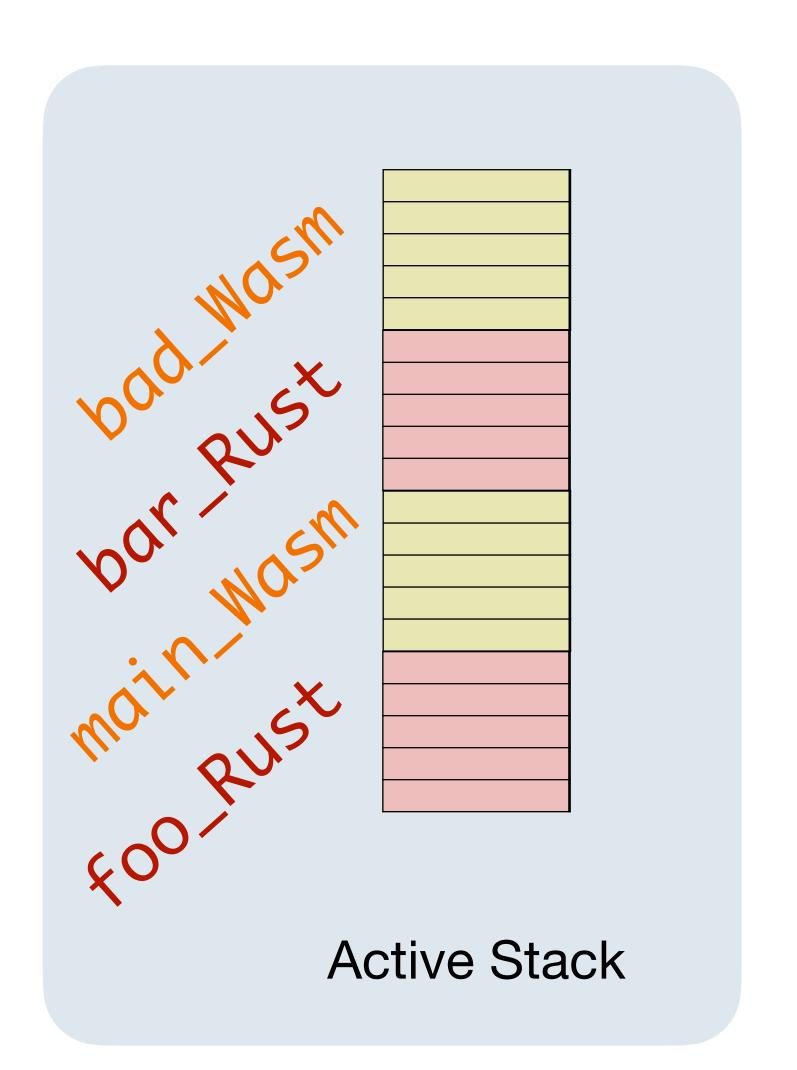
Wasm/k C/K = Wasm + = C +control() control restore() restore > continuation_copy continuation_copy() prompt() prompt ... end

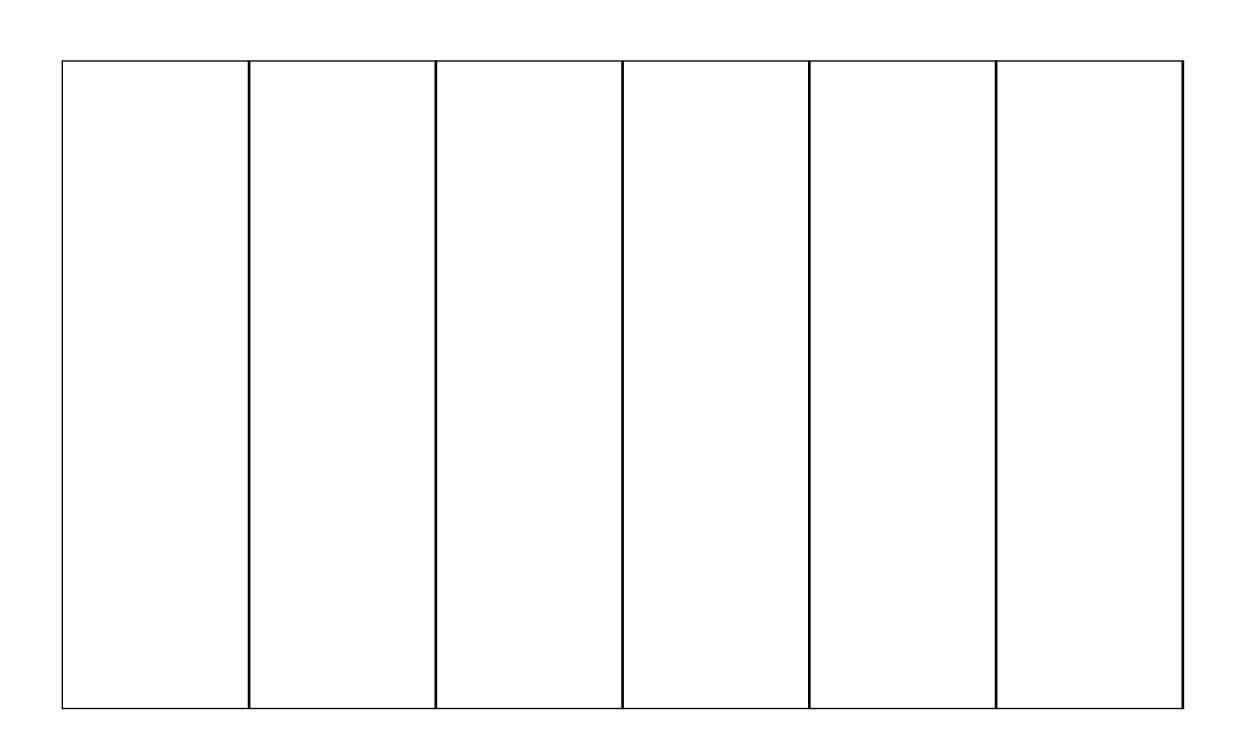
Almost... what about FFI?



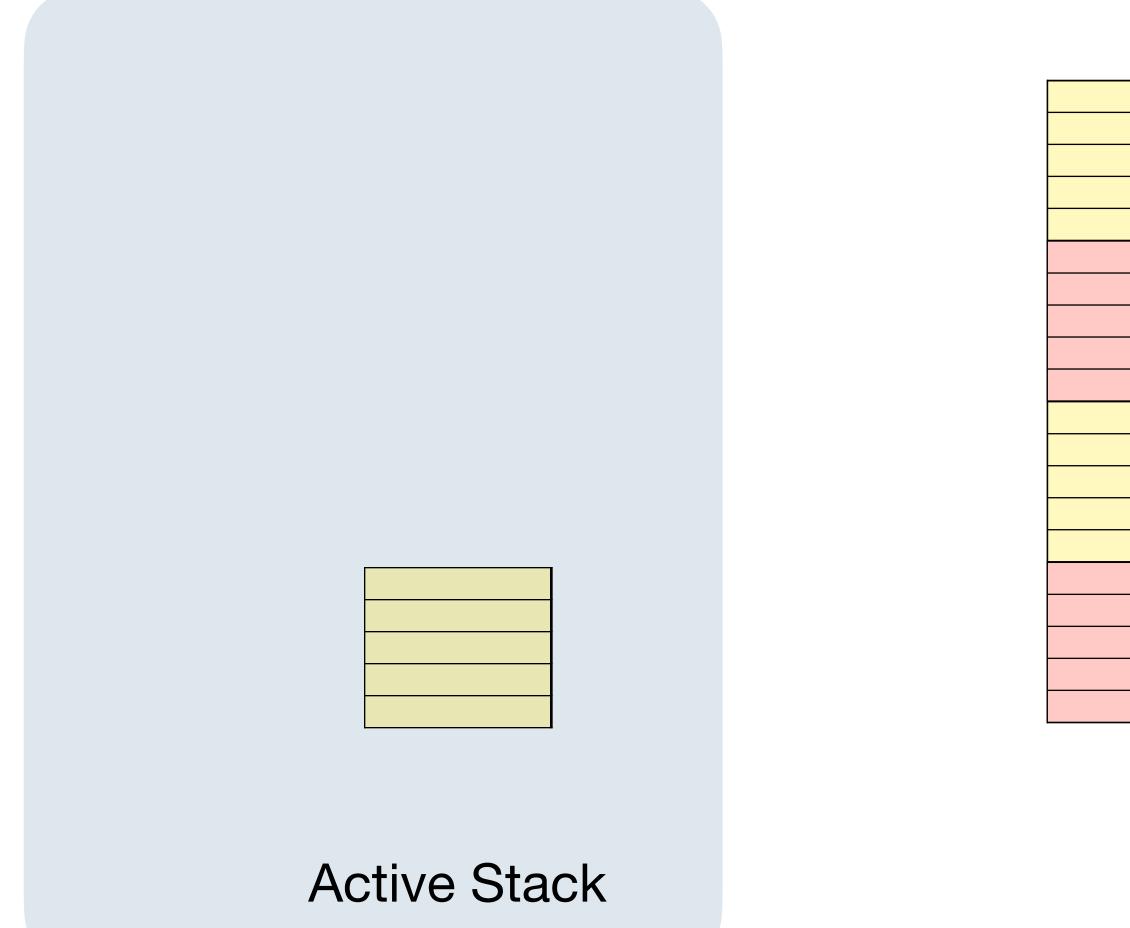


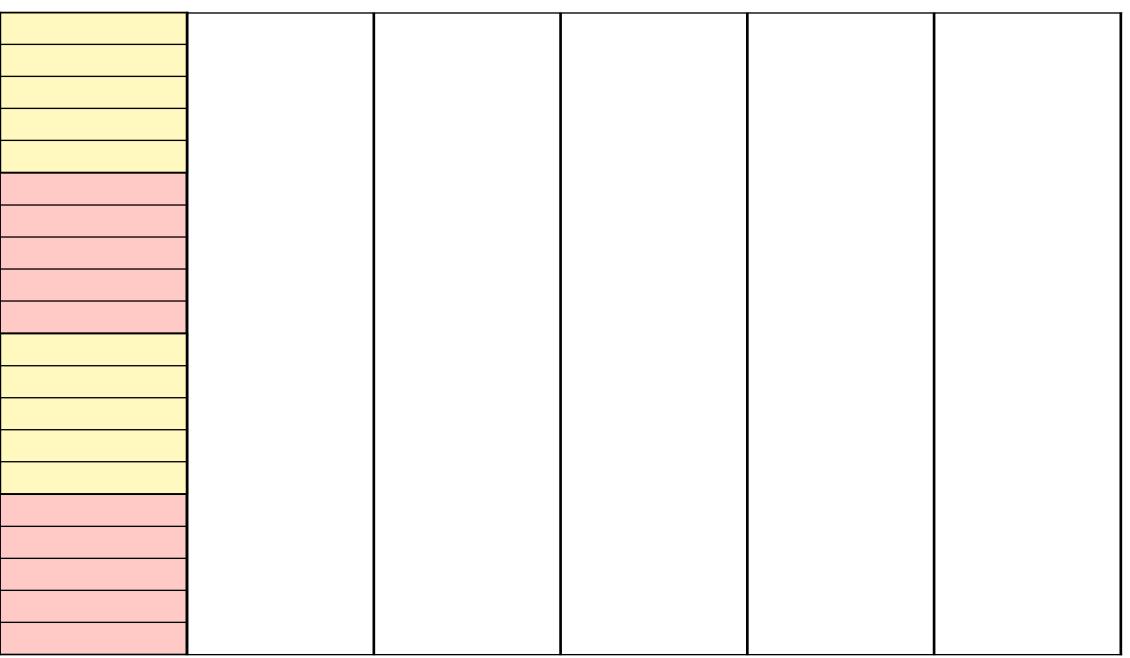
Almost... what about FFI?



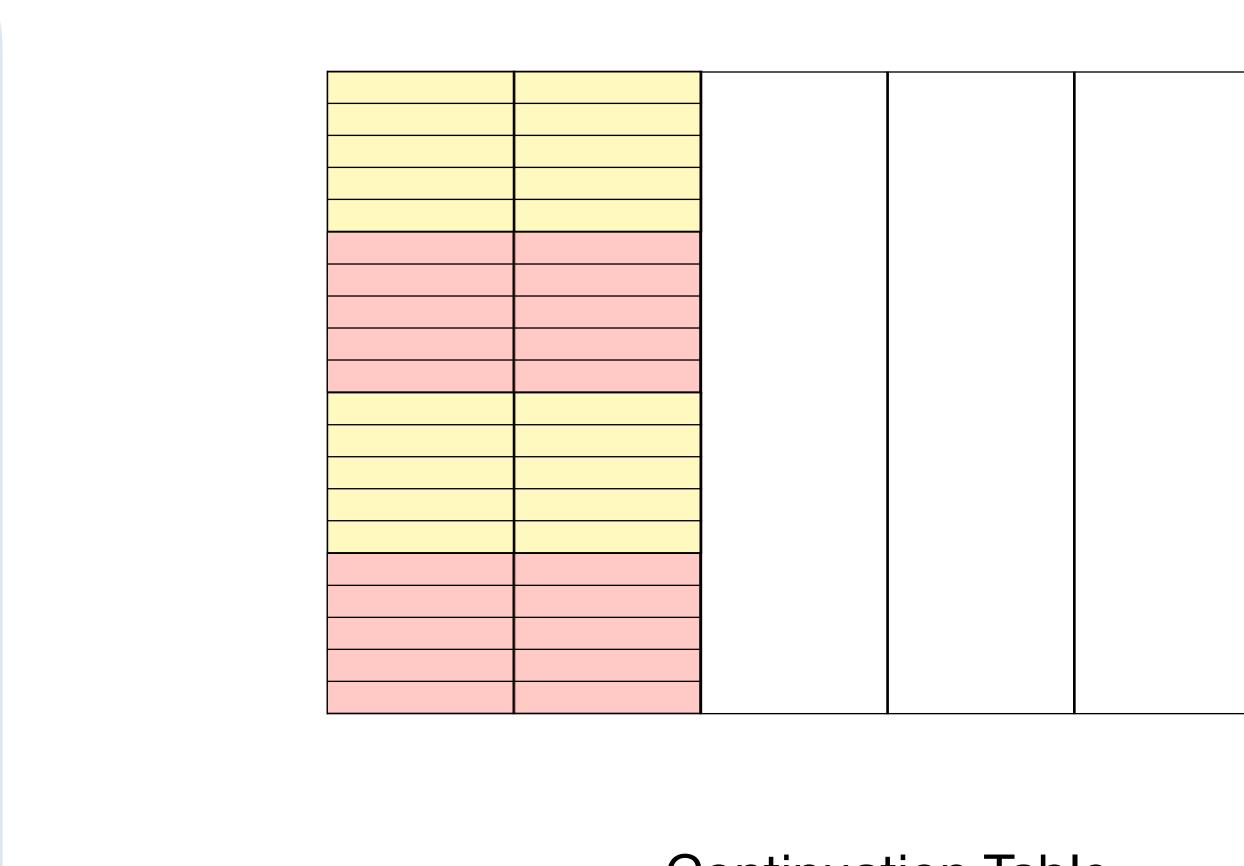


Almost... what about FFI?



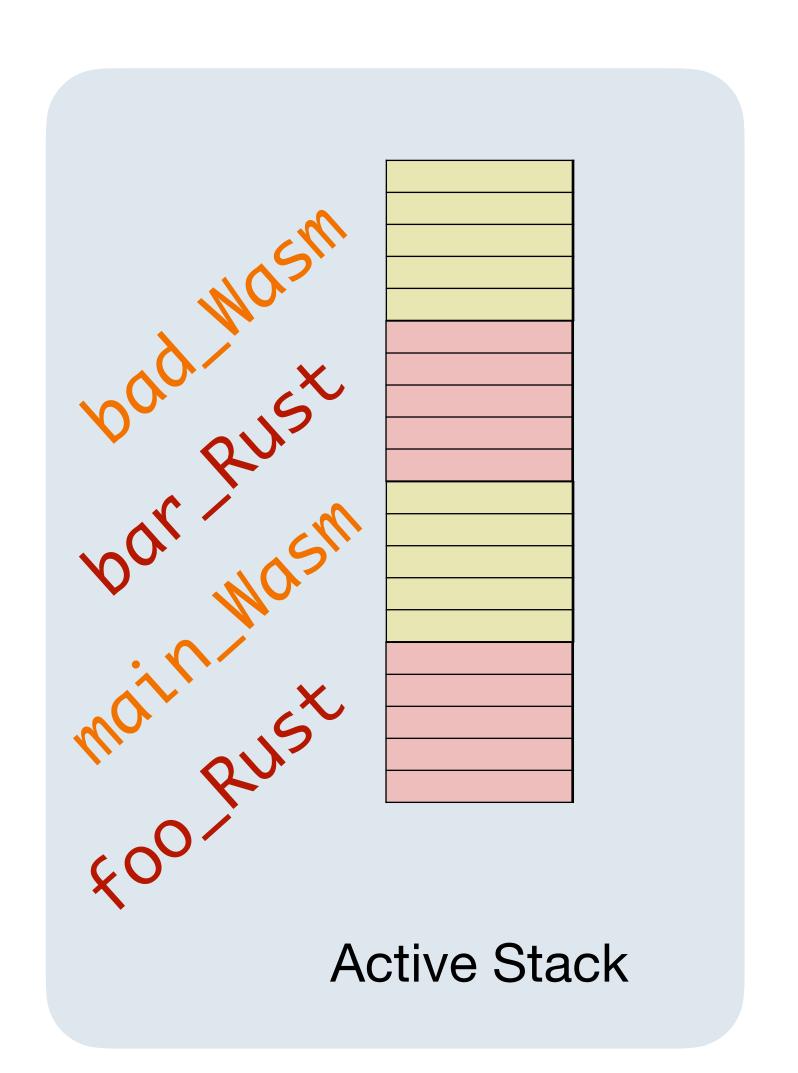


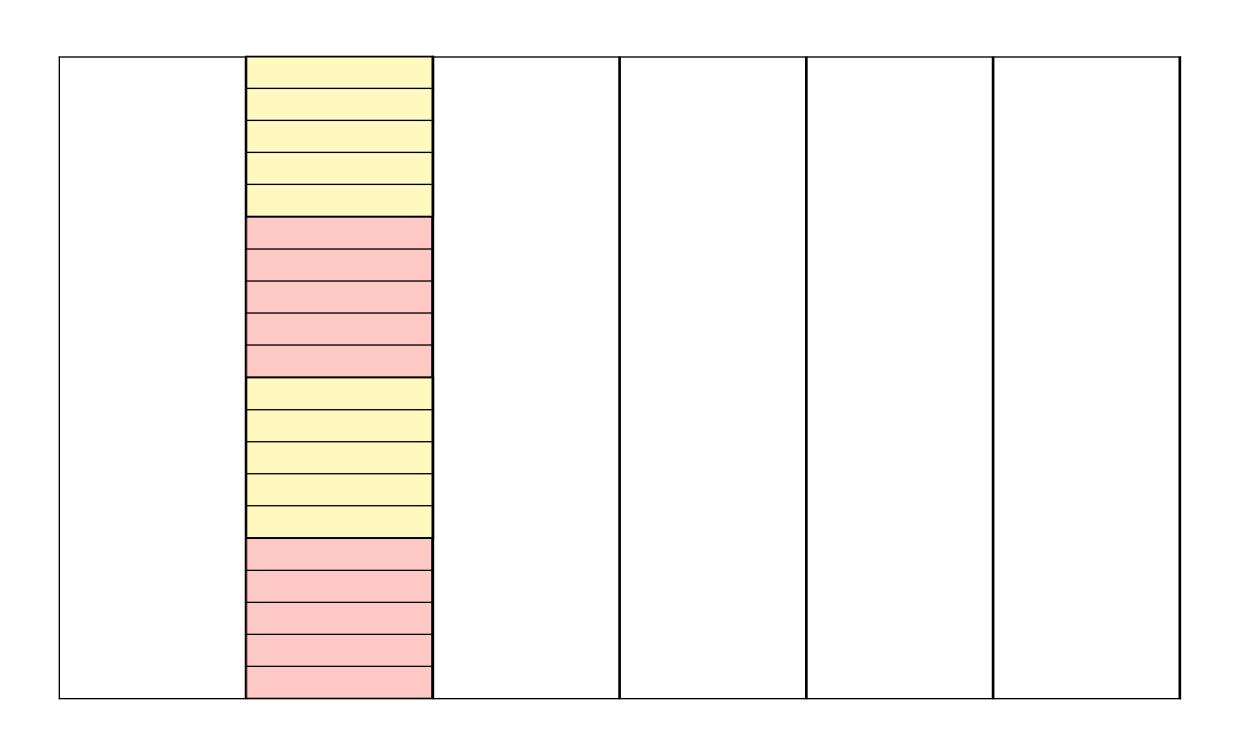
Almost... what about FFI?



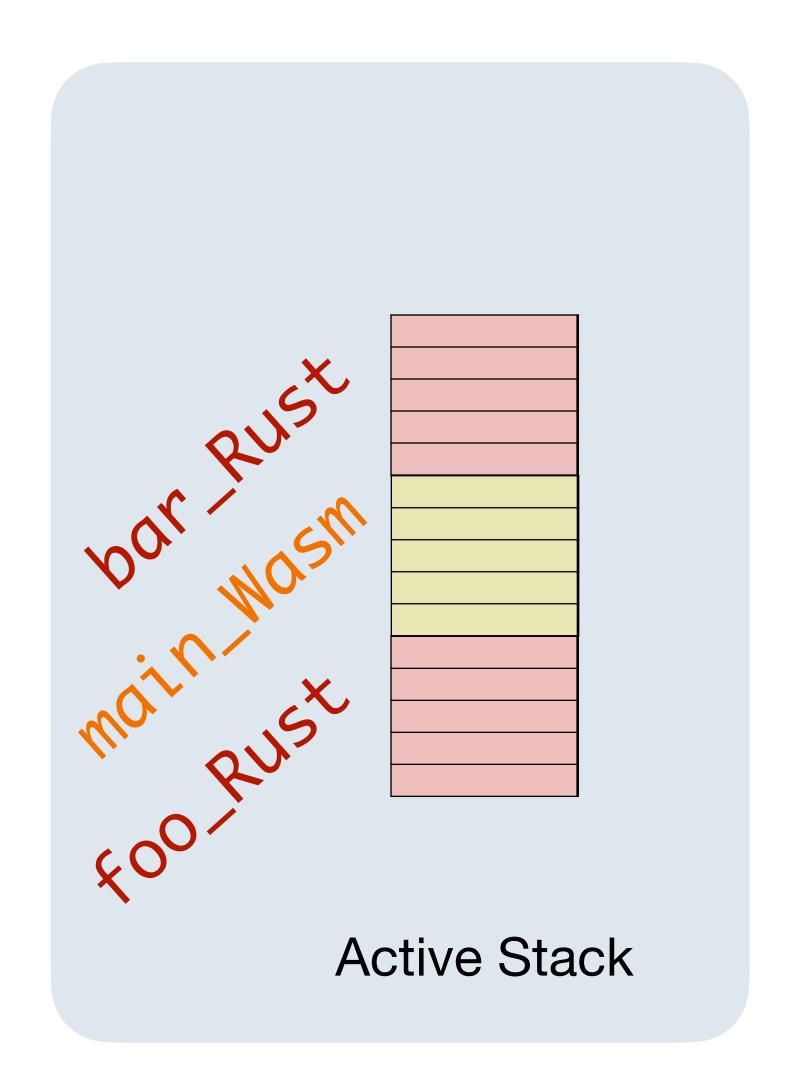
Active Stack

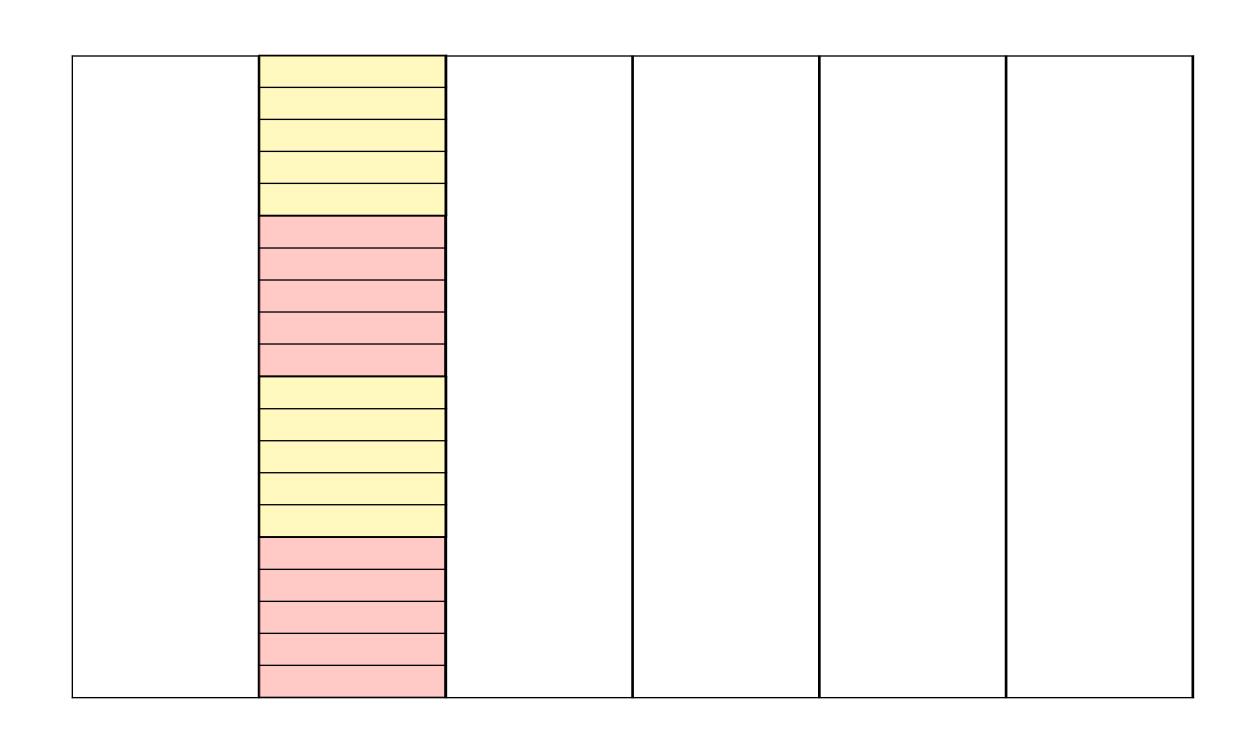
Almost... what about FFI?



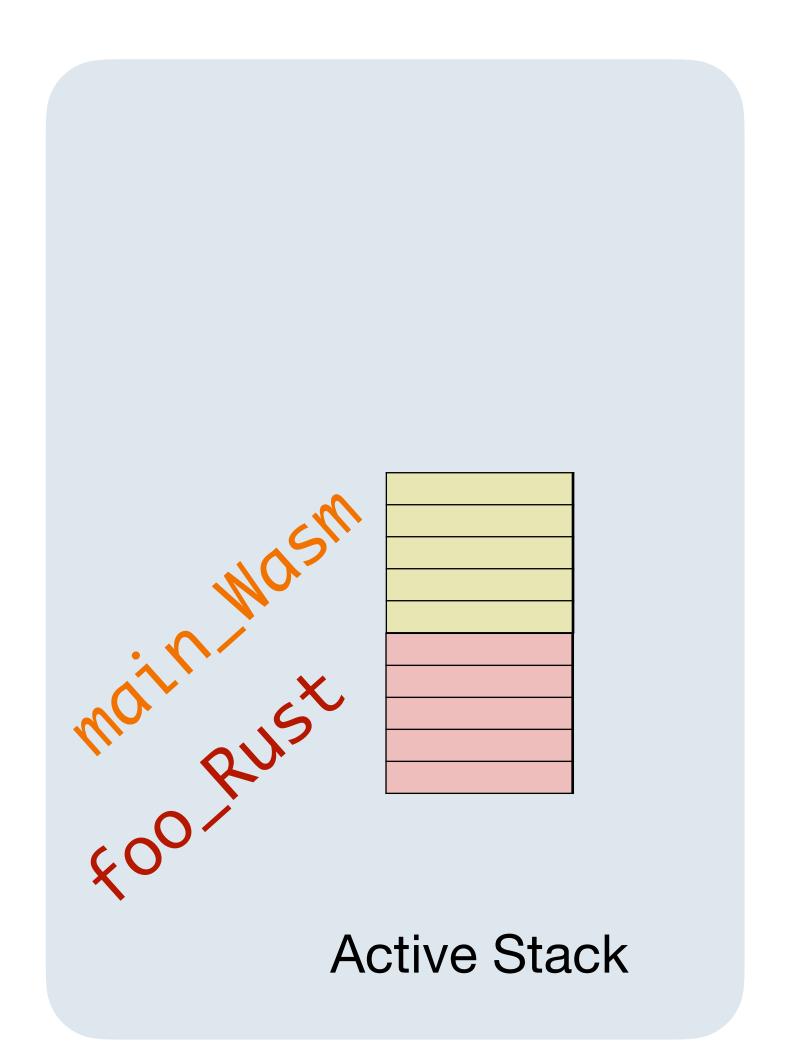


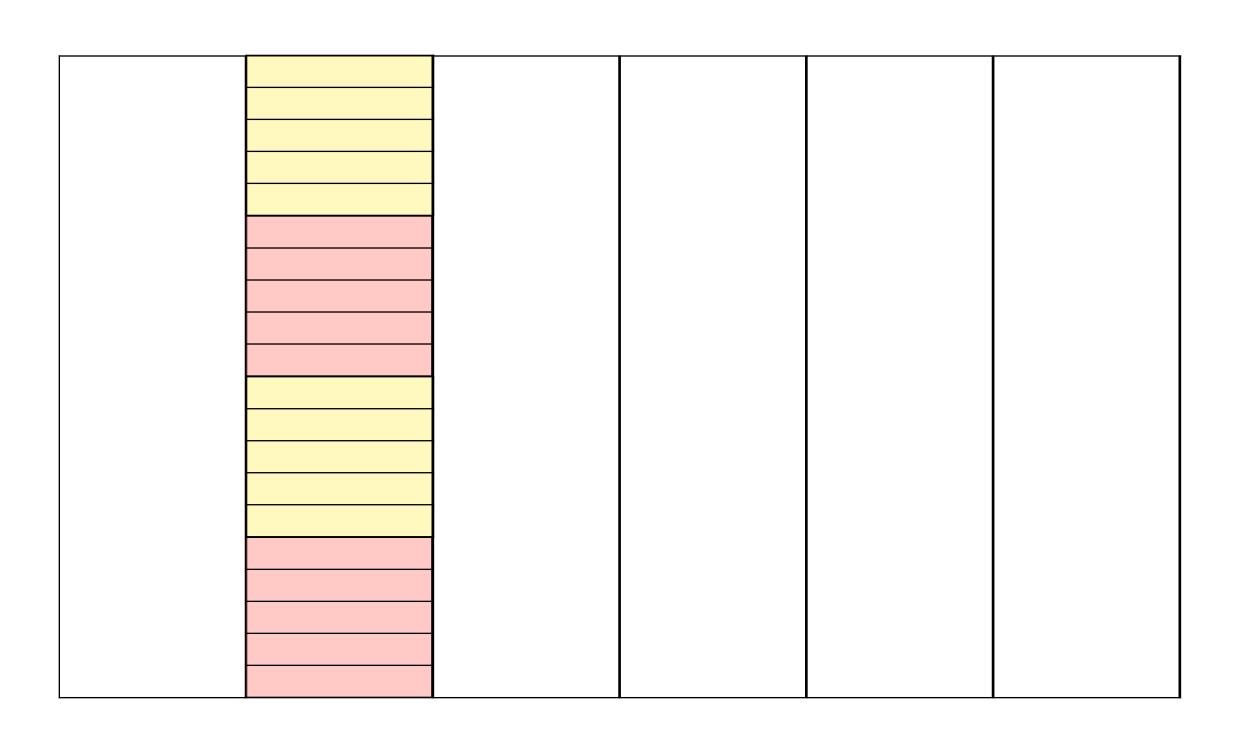
Almost... what about FFI?



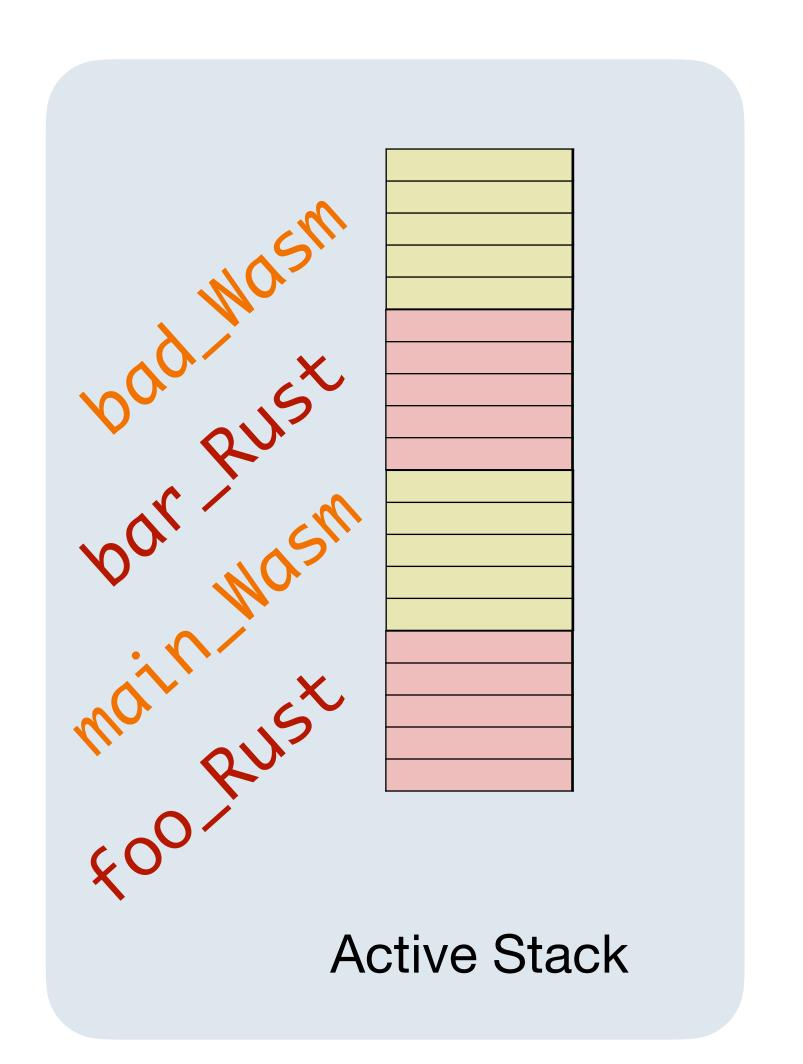


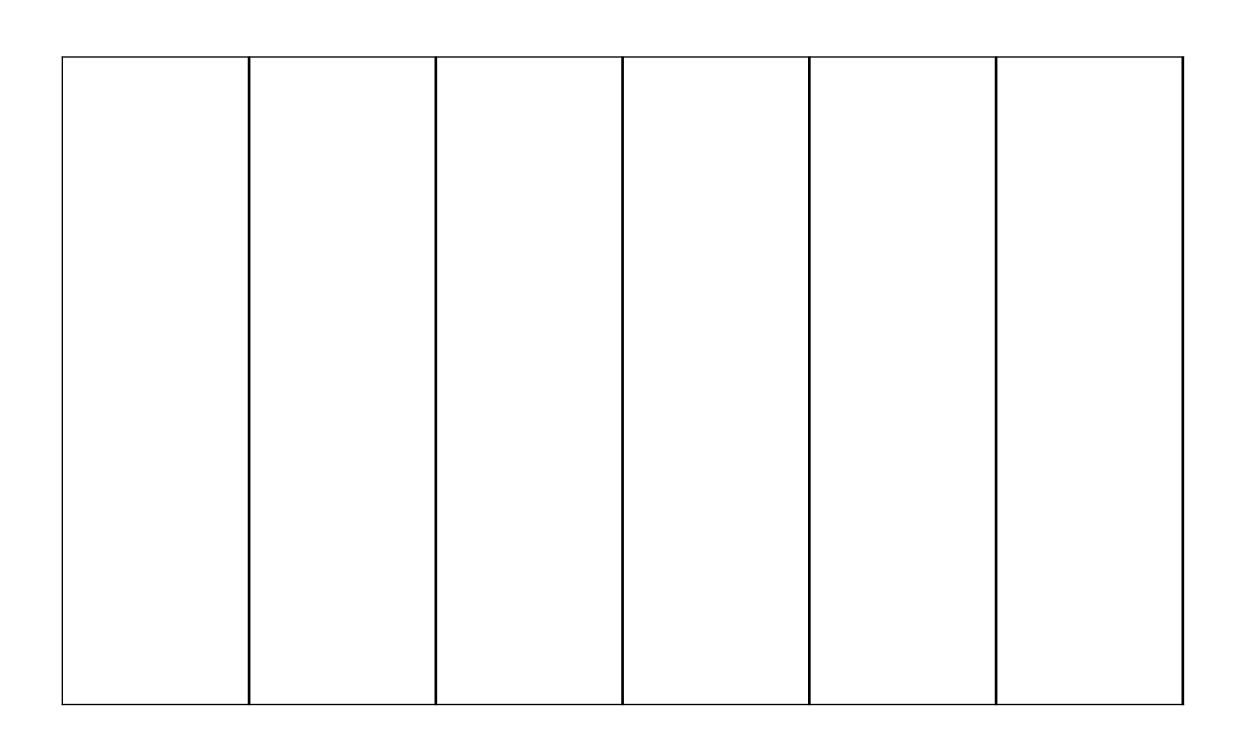
Almost... what about FFI?



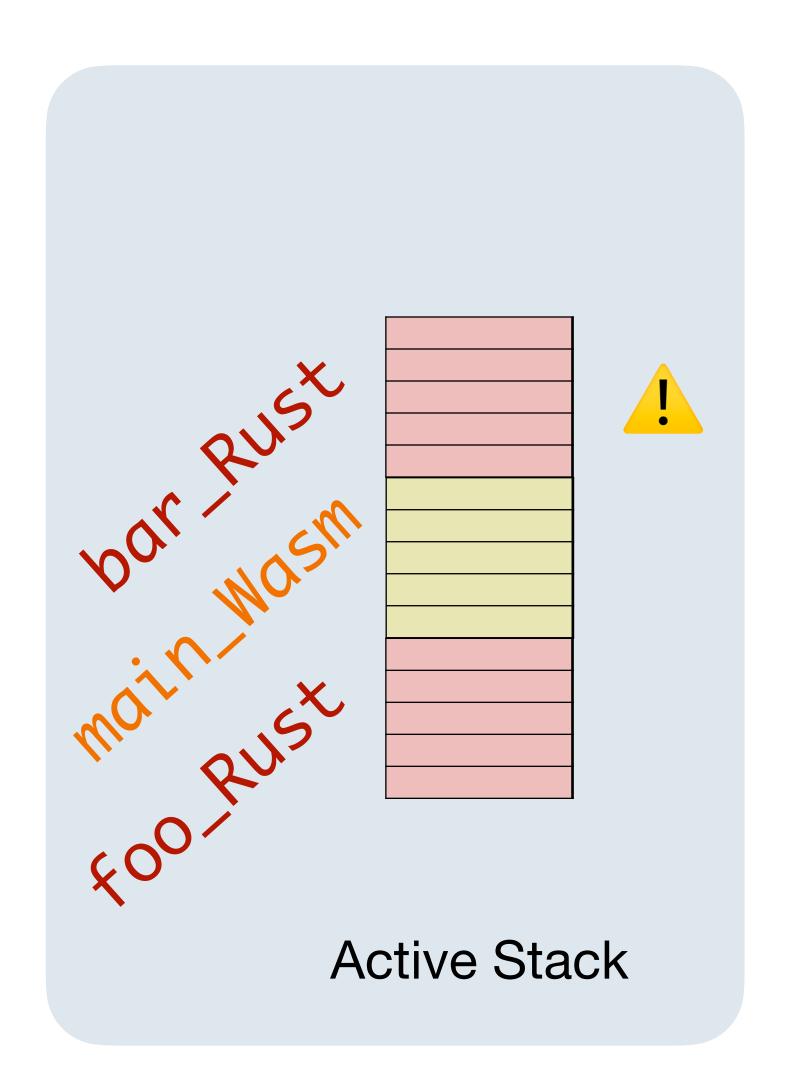


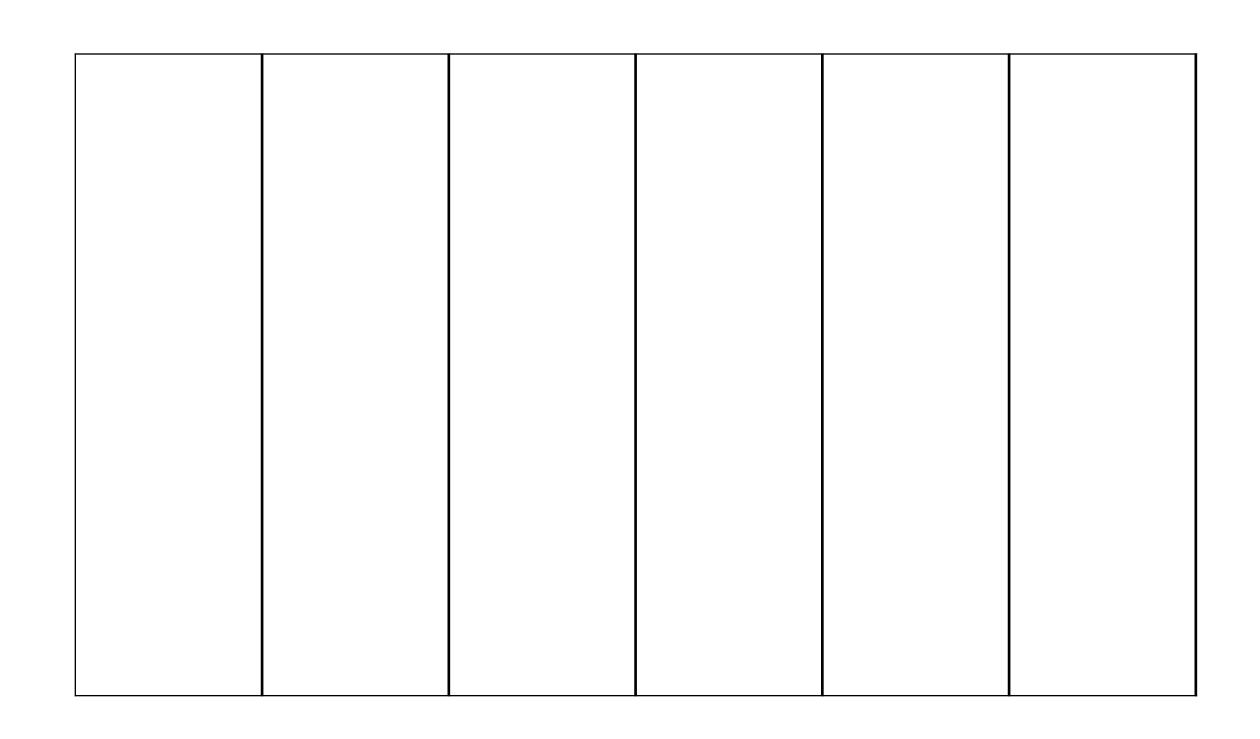
Almost... what about FFI?

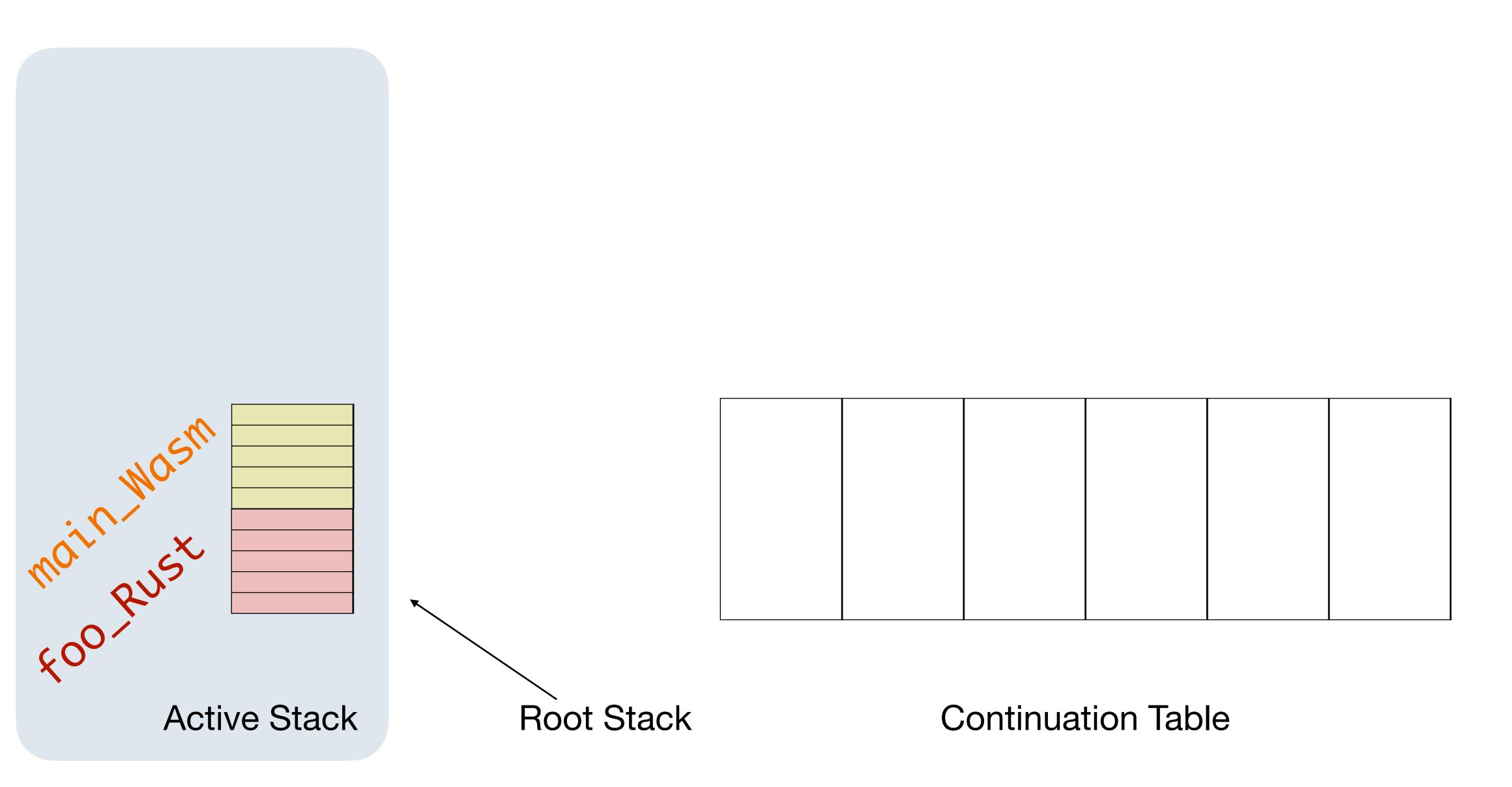


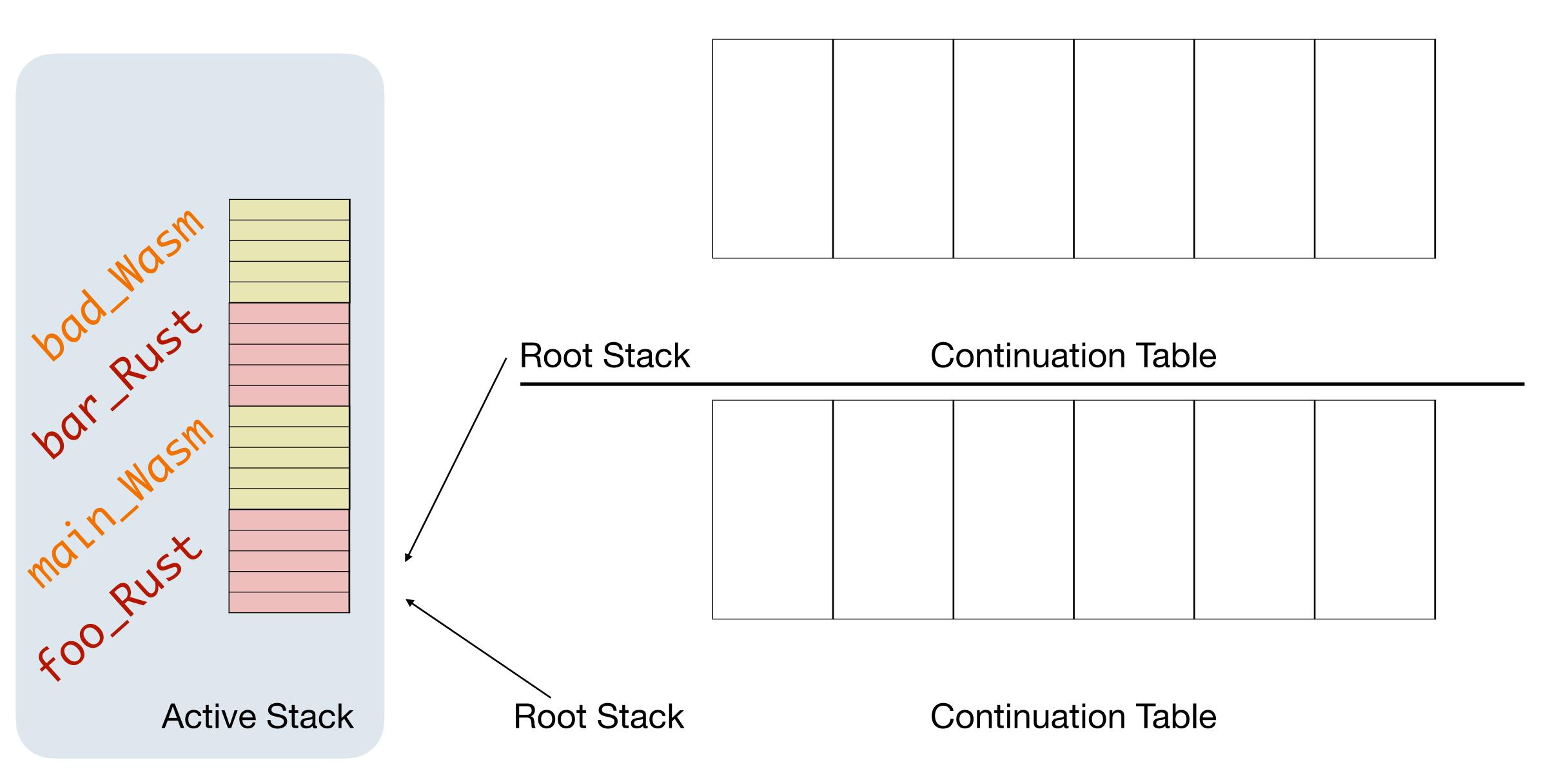


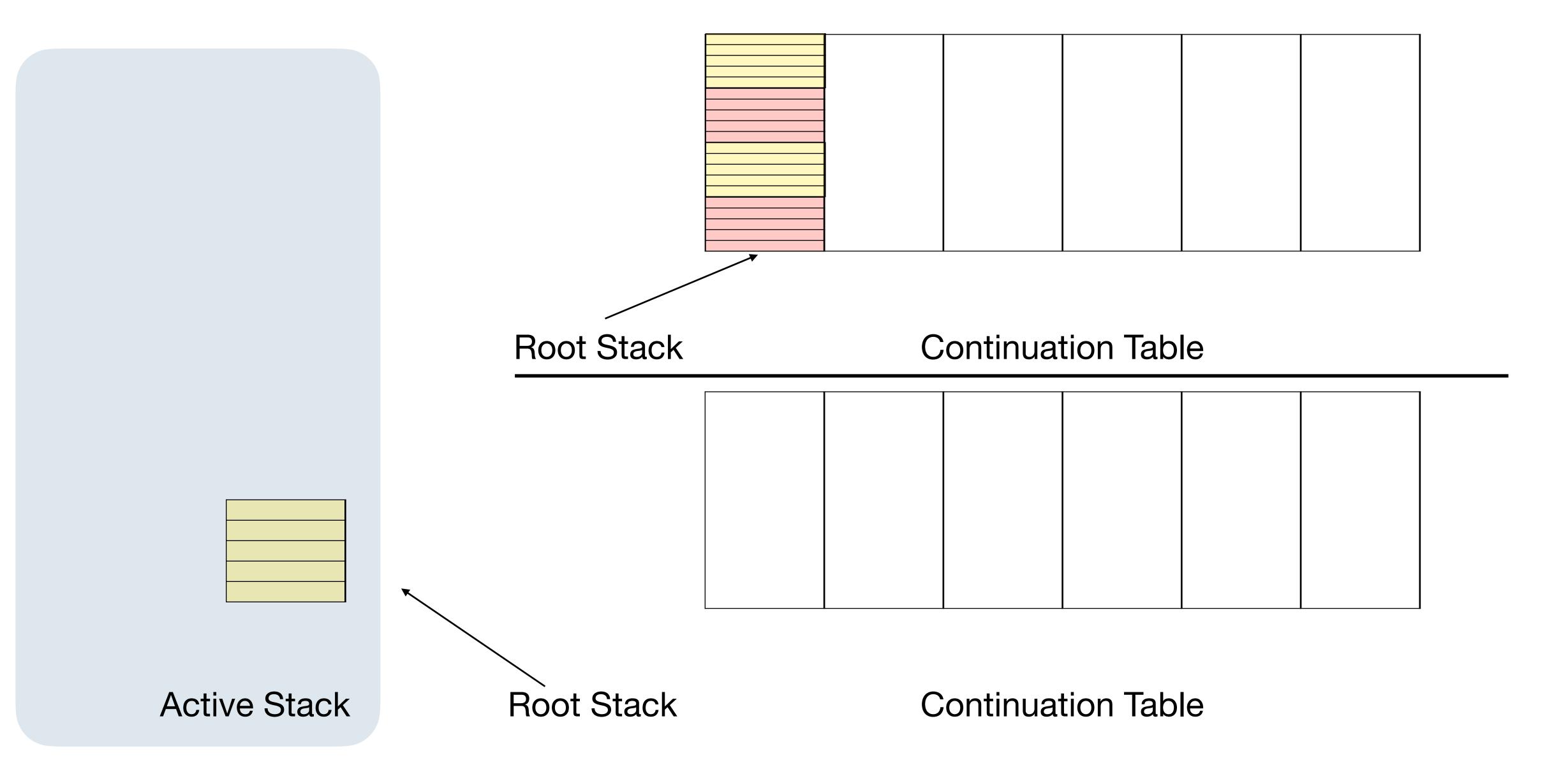
Almost... what about FFI?

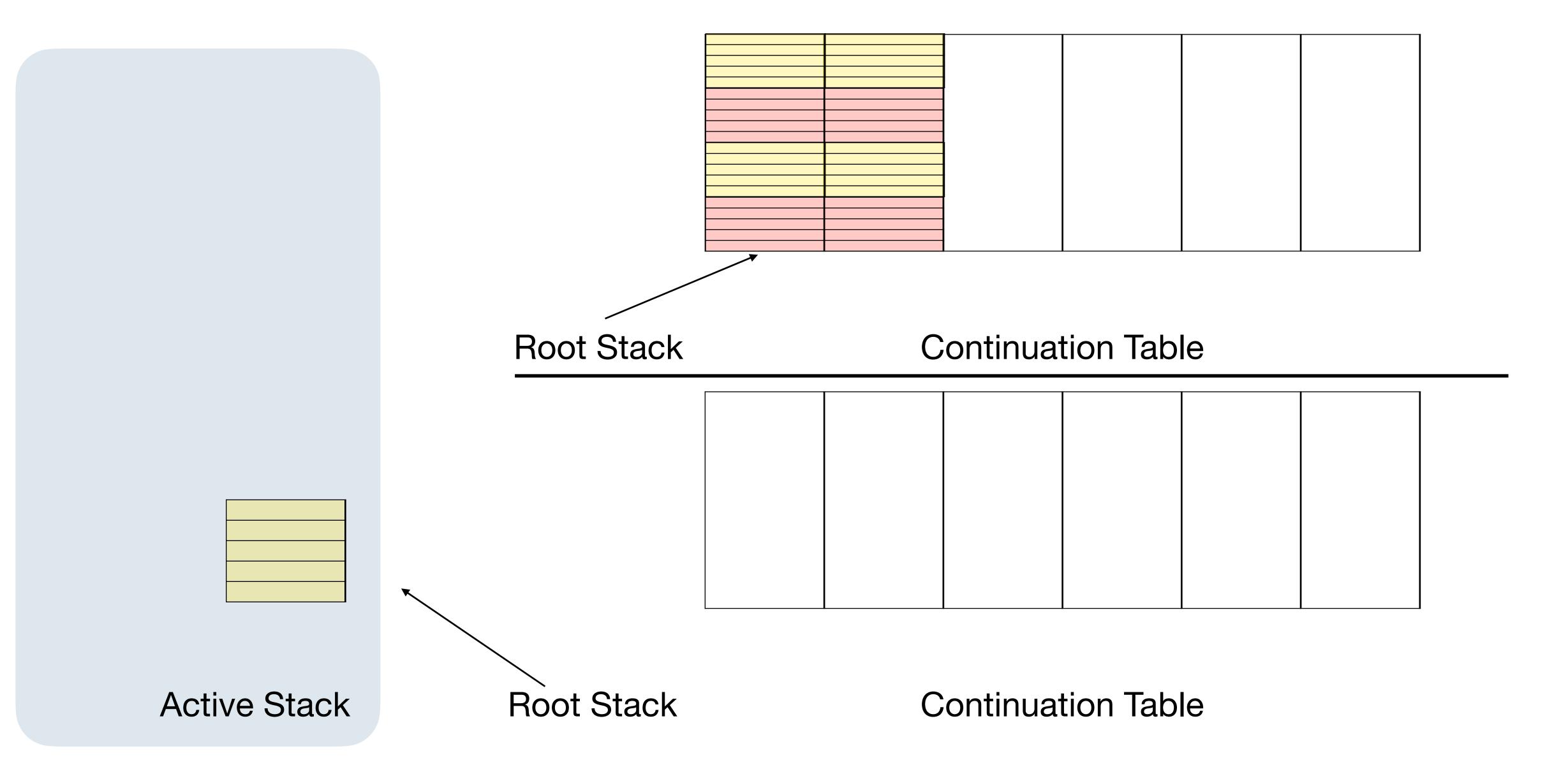


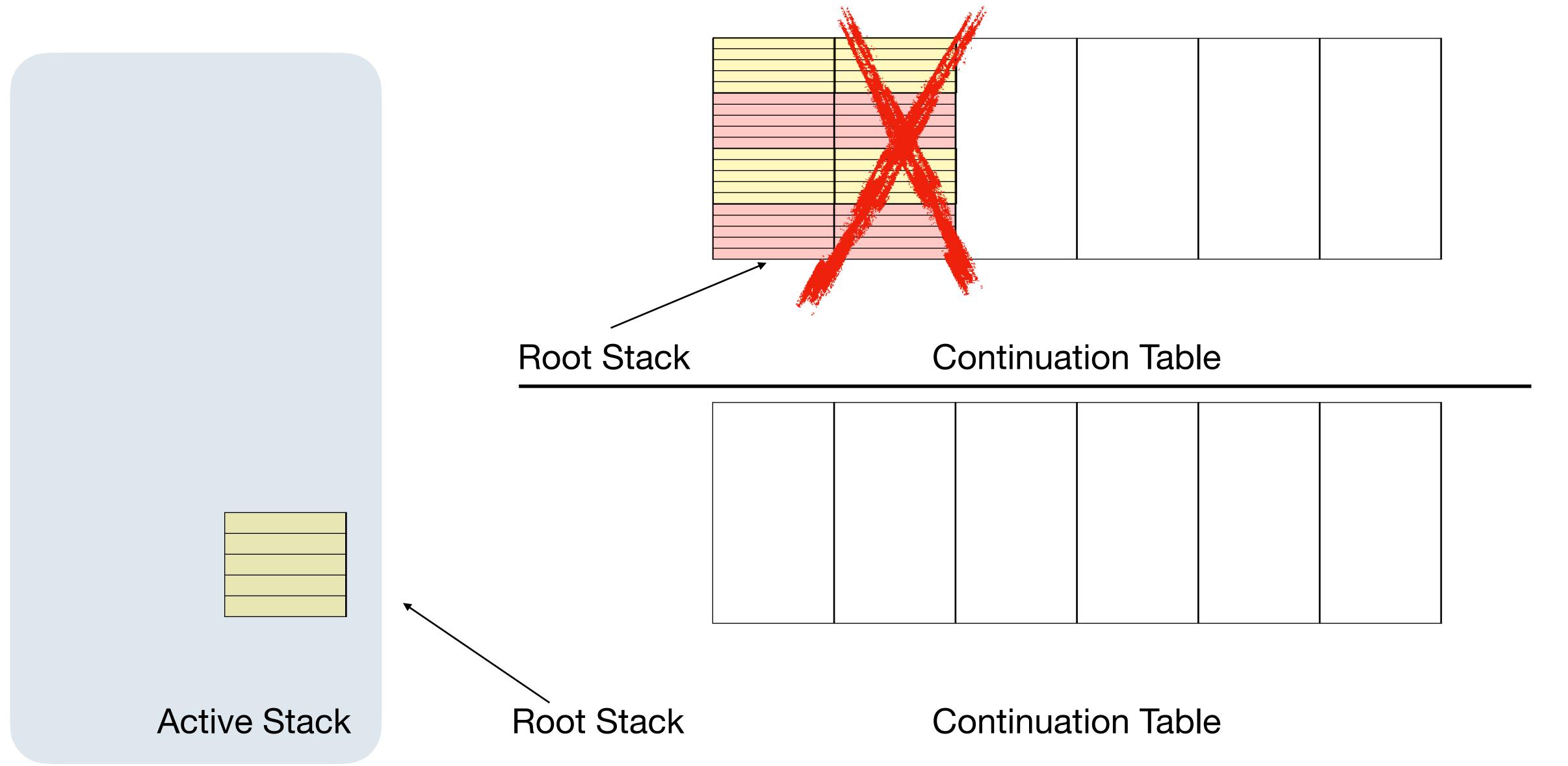


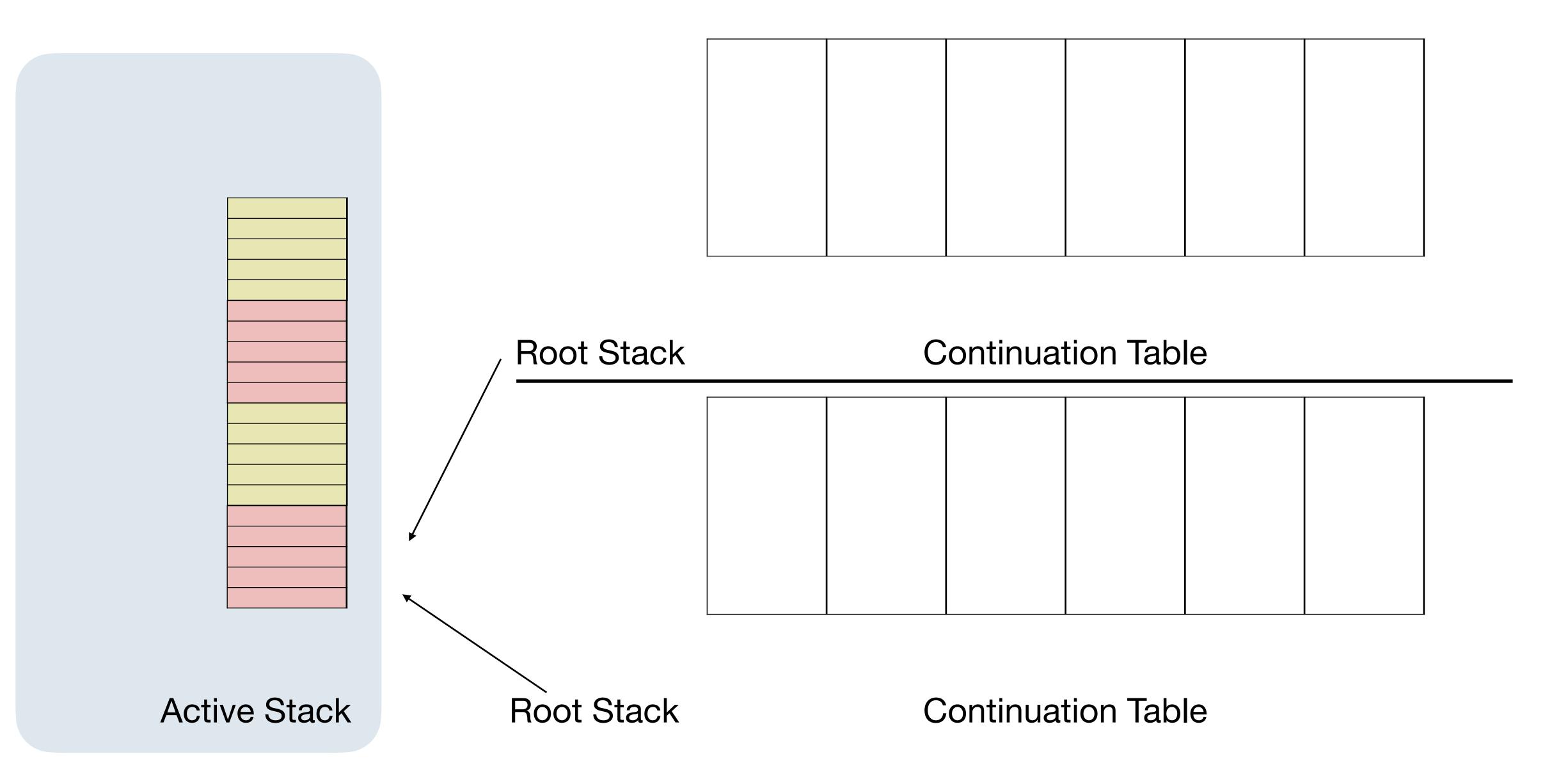


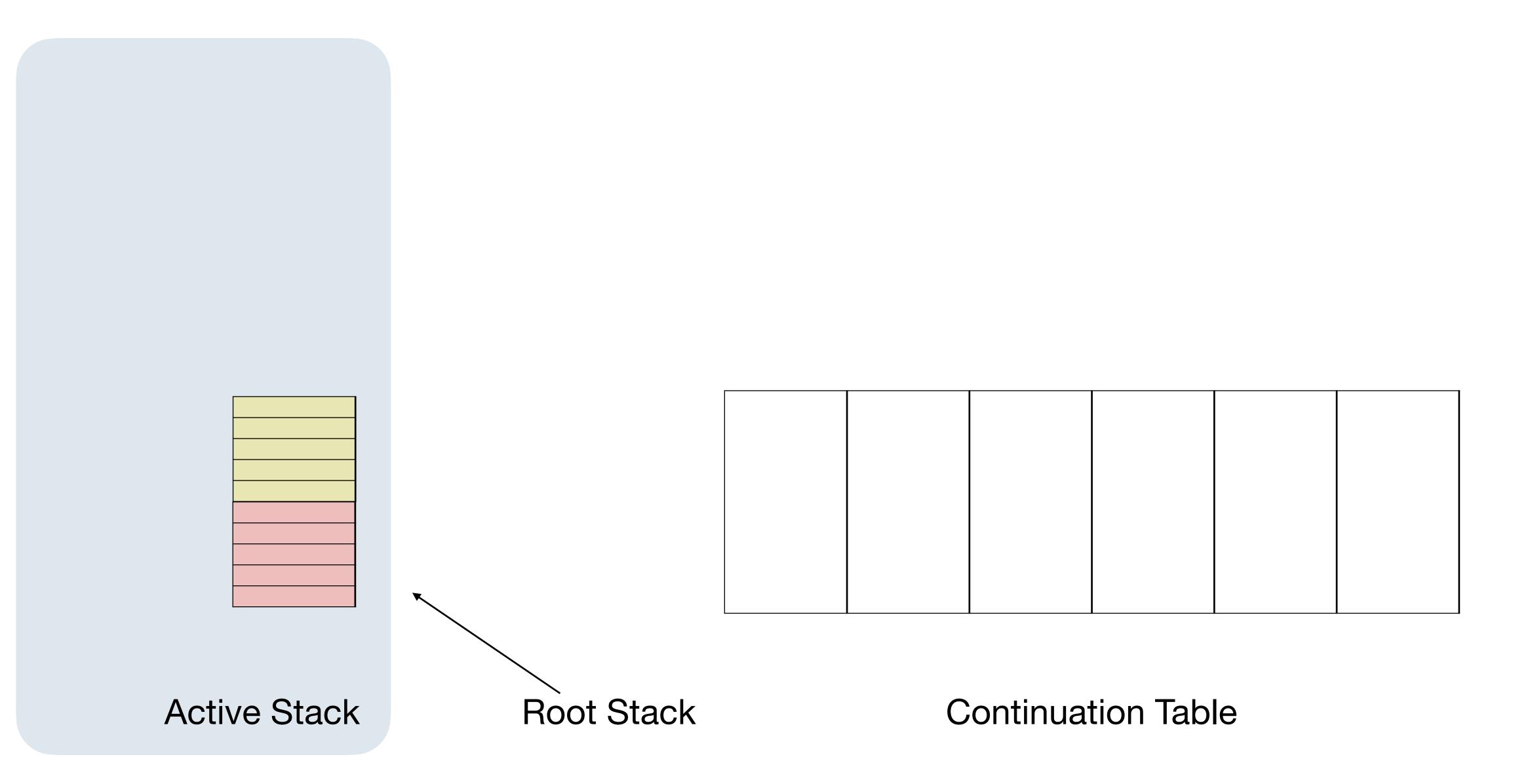












```
s; v^*; e^* \leadsto_i s; v^*; e^*
```

[Cong]
$$\frac{s; \ v^*; \ e^* \hookrightarrow_i \ s'; \ v'^*; \ e'^*}{s; \ v^*; \ L^k[e^*] \hookrightarrow_i \ s'; \ v'^*; \ L^k[e'^*]}$$
 [No-Ctrl] $\frac{s; \ v^*; \ e^* \hookrightarrow_i \ s'; \ v'^*; \ e'^*}{s; \ v^*; \ e^* \leadsto_i \ s'; \ v'^*; \ e'^*}$

[Ctrl] $s; v_l^*; L^{\max}[(i64.const v) (control h)] \leadsto_i s'; \epsilon; (i64.const v) (i64.const v) (call h) trap if <math>(s', \kappa) = \delta_{\text{ctrl}}(s, i, v_l^*, L^{\max})$

[Restore] $s; v_I^*; L^{\max}[(i64.const \kappa) (i64.const v) restore] \rightsquigarrow_i s'; v_I^{*'}; L^{\max'}[(i64.const v)]$

[Restore-Err] s; v_I^* ; $L^{\max}[(i64.const \kappa) (i64.const v) restore] <math>\leadsto_i s$; v_I^* ; trap

if $(s', v_l^*, L^{\max'}) = \delta_{\text{rest}}(s, i, \kappa)$

otherwise

[Copy] s; (i64.const κ) continuation_copy $\hookrightarrow_i s'$; (i64.const κ')

[Copy-Err] s; (i64.const κ) continuation_copy \hookrightarrow_i s; trap

[Delete] s; (i64.const κ) continuation_delete $\hookrightarrow_i s'$; ϵ

[Delete-Err] s; (i64.const κ) continuation_delete \hookrightarrow_i s; trap

[Prompt] s; prompt $tf e^*$ end $\hookrightarrow_i s'$; block $tf e^*$ end prompt_end

[Prompt-End] s; prompt_end \hookrightarrow_i s'; ϵ

if $(s', \kappa') = \delta_{\text{copy}}(s, i, \kappa)$

otherwise

if $s' = \delta_{\text{delete}}(s, i, \kappa)$

otherwise

if $s' = \delta_{p}(s, i)$

if $s' = \delta_{p-end}(s, i)$

$$\delta_{\text{ctrl}}(s, i, \upsilon_l^*, L^{\text{max}}) ::= \begin{cases} (\text{setCont}(\text{setRoot}(s, i, \kappa), i, \kappa, \{\text{locals} = \upsilon_l^*, \text{ctx} = L^{\text{max}}, \text{inst} = i\}), \ \kappa) & \text{if } \text{getRoot}(s, i) = nil \\ (\text{setCont}(s, i, \kappa, \{\text{locals} = \upsilon_l^*, \text{ctx} = L^{\text{max}}, \text{inst} = i\}), \ \kappa) & \text{if } \text{getRoot}(s, i) \neq nil \end{cases}$$

where κ is fresh, i.e., getCont(s, i, κ) = nil

 $\delta_{\text{rest}}(s, i, \kappa) ::= \begin{cases} (\text{setRoot}(\text{setCont}(s, i, \kappa, nil), i, nil), \ \text{getCont}(s, i, \kappa)_{\text{locals}}, \ \text{getCont}(s, i, \kappa)_{\text{ctx}}) & \text{if } \text{getRoot}(s, i) = \kappa \\ (\text{setCont}(s, i, \kappa, nil), \ \text{getCont}(s, i, \kappa)_{\text{locals}}, \ \text{getCont}(s, i, \kappa)_{\text{ctx}}) & \text{if } nil \neq \text{getRoot}(s, i) \neq \kappa \end{cases}$

 $\delta_{\text{copy}}(s, i, \kappa) ::= (\text{setCont}(s, i, \kappa', \text{getCont}(s, i, \kappa)), \kappa')$

if getRoot(s, i) $\neq \kappa \land getCont(s, i, \kappa) \neq nil$

where κ' is fresh, i.e., getCont(s, i, κ') = nil

 $\delta_{\text{delete}}(s,\,i,\,\kappa) ::= \operatorname{setCont}(s,\,i,\,\kappa,\,nil)$ if $\operatorname{getRoot}(s,\,i,\,\kappa,\,nil)$

 $\delta_{p}(s, i) := s' \text{ where } s' = s \text{ except } s'_{inst}(i)_{pstack} \mapsto push(s_{inst}(i)_{pstack}, \{ctable = nil^*, root = nil, inst = i\})$

 $\delta_{\text{p-end}}(s, i) := s' \text{ where } s' = s \text{ except } s'_{\text{inst}}(i)_{\text{pstack}} \mapsto \text{pop}(s_{\text{inst}}(i)_{\text{pstack}})$ if getRoot(s, i) = nil

 $getRoot(s, i) := top(s_{inst}(i)_{pstack})_{root}$

 $getCont(s, i, \kappa) ::= top(s_{inst}(i)_{pstack})_{ctable}(\kappa)$

 $setRoot(s, i, \kappa_R^?) ::= s'$ where s' = s except $top(s'_{inst}(i)_{pstack})_{root} \mapsto \kappa_R^?$

setCont(s, i, κ , γ ?) ::= s' where s' = s except top($s'_{inst}(i)_{pstack})_{ctable}(\kappa) \mapsto \gamma$?

 $C := \{\ldots, \text{label } ((t^*)^*)^*, \text{pstack } \{\text{ctable}(t^* \mid nil)^*, \text{root}(\kappa_R \mid nil)\}^*\}$

 $\frac{C_{\text{func}}(h) = \text{i}64 \text{ i}64 \rightarrow \epsilon}{C \vdash (\text{control } h) : \text{i}64 \rightarrow \text{i}64}$

 $C \vdash \mathbf{restore} : t_1^* \text{ i64 i64} \rightarrow t_2^*$

 $C \vdash \mathbf{continuation_copy} : \mathbf{i64} \rightarrow \mathbf{i64}$

 $C \vdash \mathbf{continuation_delete} : \mathbf{i64} \rightarrow \epsilon$

 $\frac{tf = t_1^n \to t_2^m}{C + \text{prompt } tf e^* \text{ end } : tf}$

Implementation

- How to compile C/k → Wasm/k?
 - Mostly easy: Can be done locally... using C macros + regex find / replace on Emscripten output
 - But, need to also capture / restore the C shadow stack in linear memory
- Implementation of Wasm/k
 - Implemented in a fork of Wasmtime, targeting x86
 - Each instruction (e.g. control) calls handwritten x86 assembly to save registers and the stack. Similar to setjmp / longjmp
 - One-shot continuations means only continuation_copy needs to perform a memcpy

Thank you!

Full proofs and implementation at: https://wasmk.github.io

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