

# STKTOKENS: Enforcing Well-Bracketed Control Flow and Stack Encapsulation Using Linear Capabilities

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# Overview

STKTOKENS-paper in the big picture

Capability machines and STKTOKENS

Defining well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation by fully-abstract overlay semantics

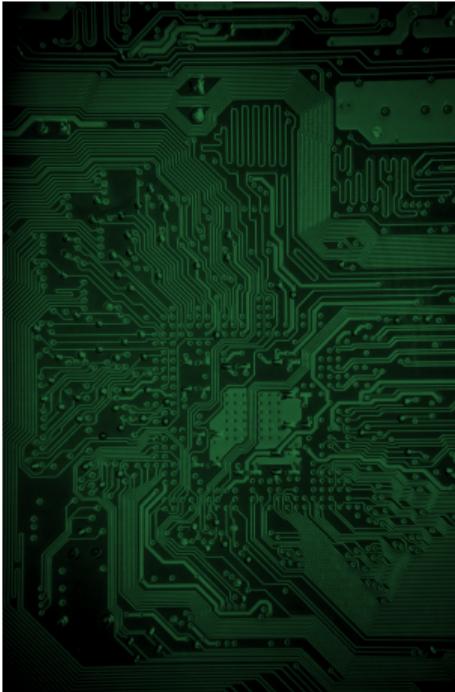
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# Abstractions all the way down



# Abstractions all the way down

```
main:  
    .cfi_startproc  
# BB#0:  
    pushq %rbp  
.Ltmp0:  
    .cfi_offset %rbp, -16  
.Ltmp1:  
    .cfi_offset %rbp, -16  
    movq %rsp, %rbp  
.Ltmp2:  
    .cfi_offset %rbp, -16  
    subq $16, %rsp  
    movabsq $.L.str, %rdi  
    movl $0, -4(%rbp)  
    movb $0, %al  
    callq printf  
    xorl %ecx, %ecx  
    movl %eax, -8(%rbp)  
    movl %ecx, %eax  
    addq $16, %rsp  
    popq %rbp  
    retq  
.Lfunc_end0:  
    .size main, .Lfunc_end0-main  
    .cfi_endproc
```



# Abstractions all the way down

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main()
{
    printf("Hello, World!");
    return 0;
}

main:
.cfi_startproc
# BB#0:
    pushq %rbp
.Ltmp0:
    .cfi_offset %rbp, -16
    movq %rsp, %rbp
.Ltmp1:
    .cfi_offset %rbp, -16
    movq %rbp, %rsp
.Ltmp2:
    .cfi_offset %rbp, -16
    subq $16, %rsp
    movabsq $.L.str, %rdi
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# Abstractions all the way down

compilation

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# Abstractions all the way down

secure  
compilation

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# Abstractions all the way down

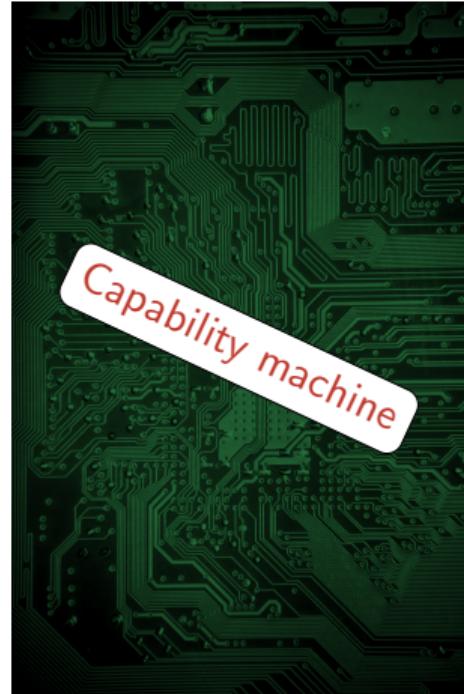
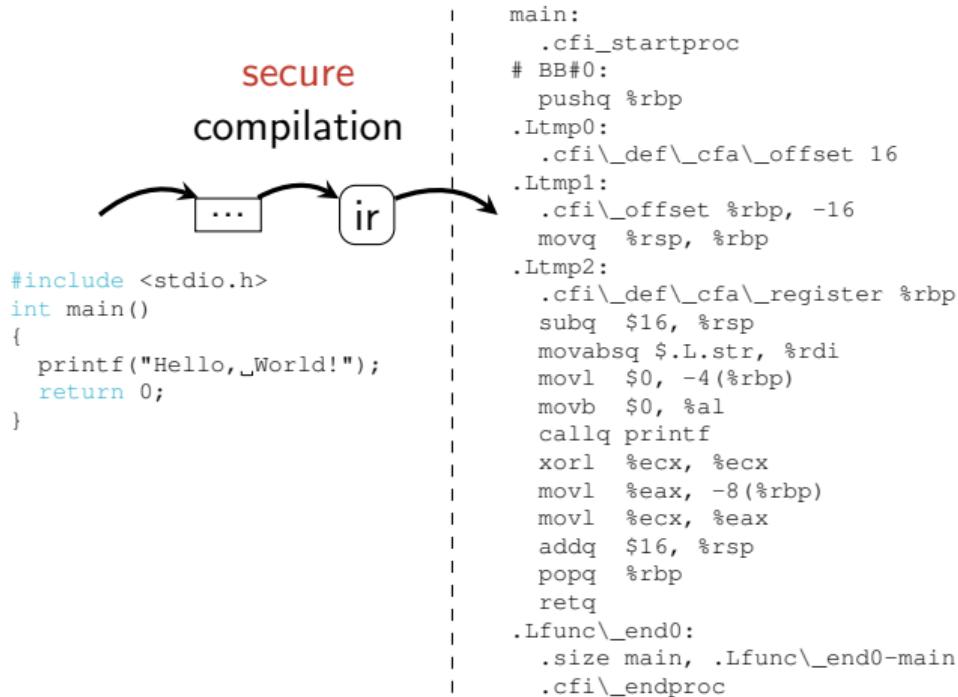
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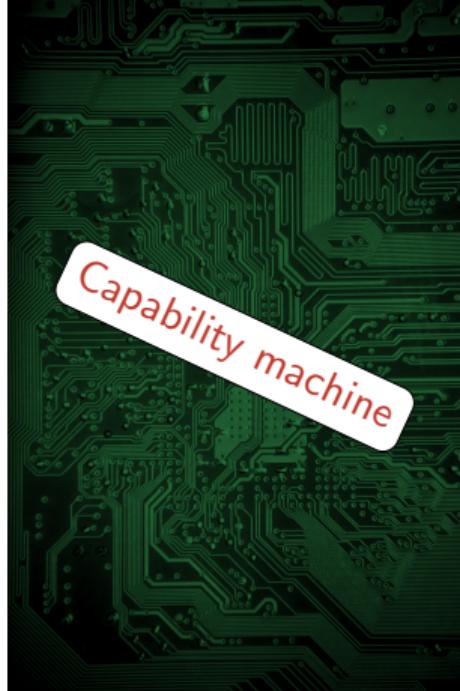
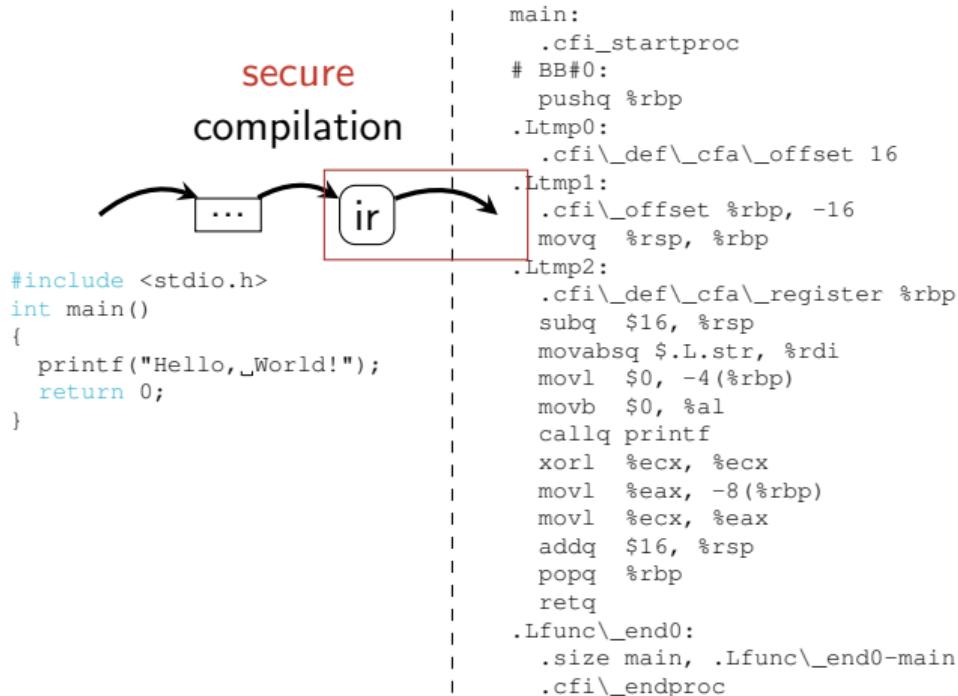
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# Abstractions all the way down



# Abstractions all the way down



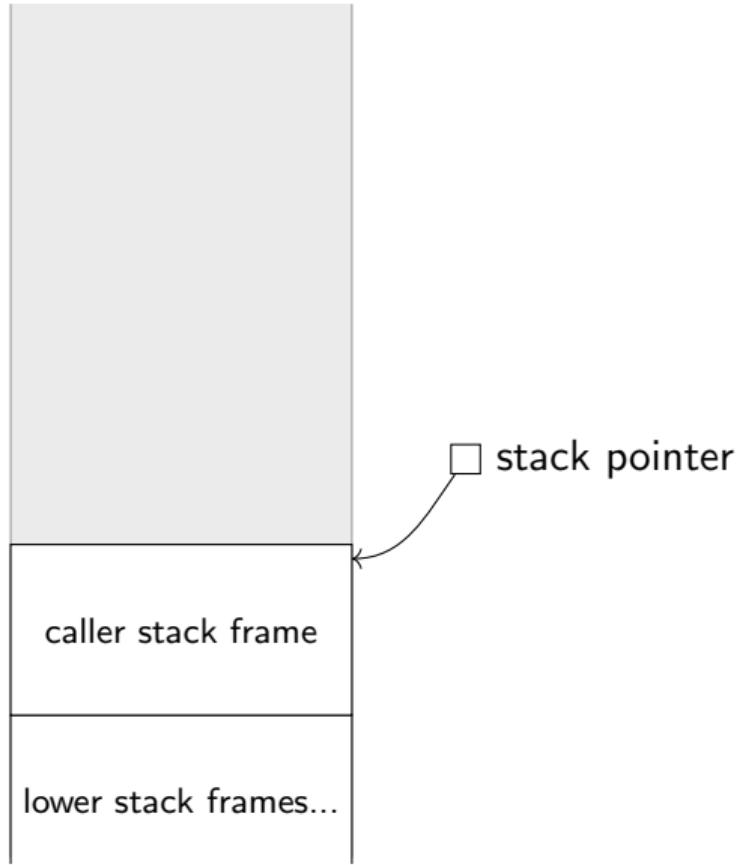
# Overview

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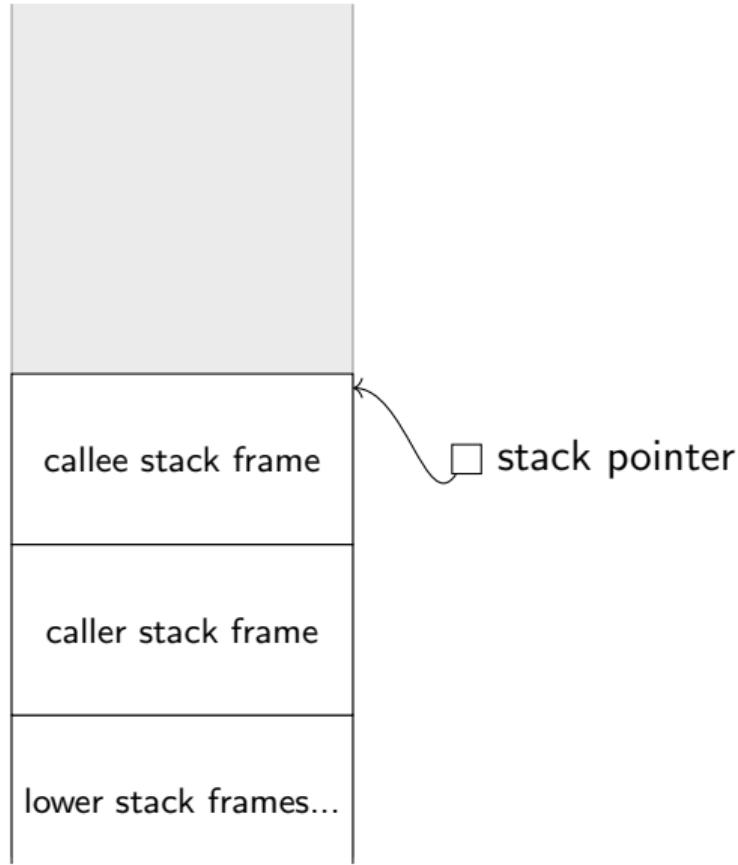
## Capability machines and STKTOKENS

Defining well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation by fully-abstract overlay semantics

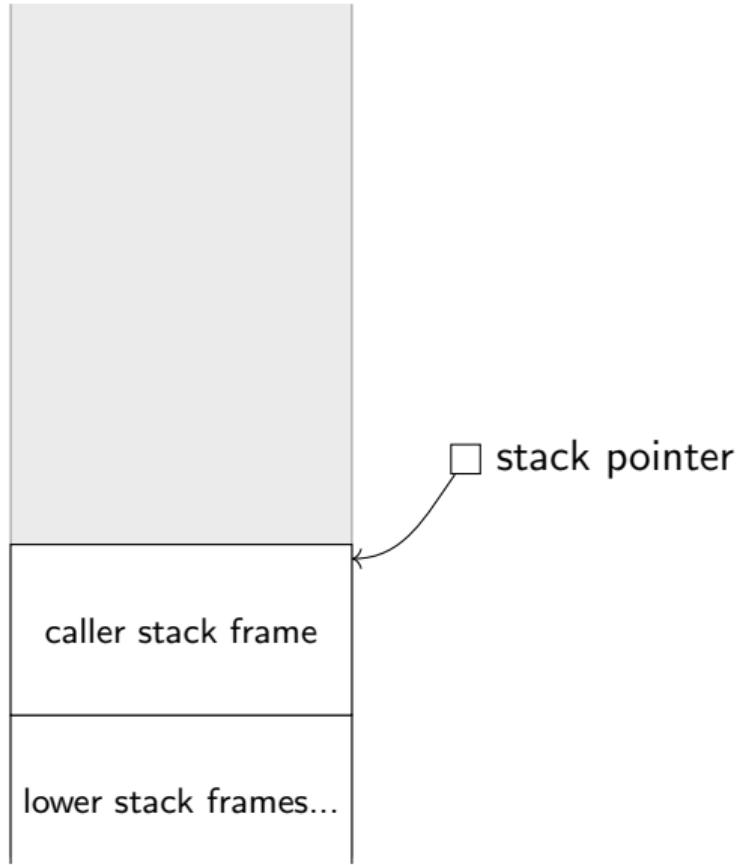
## Traditional stack pointers



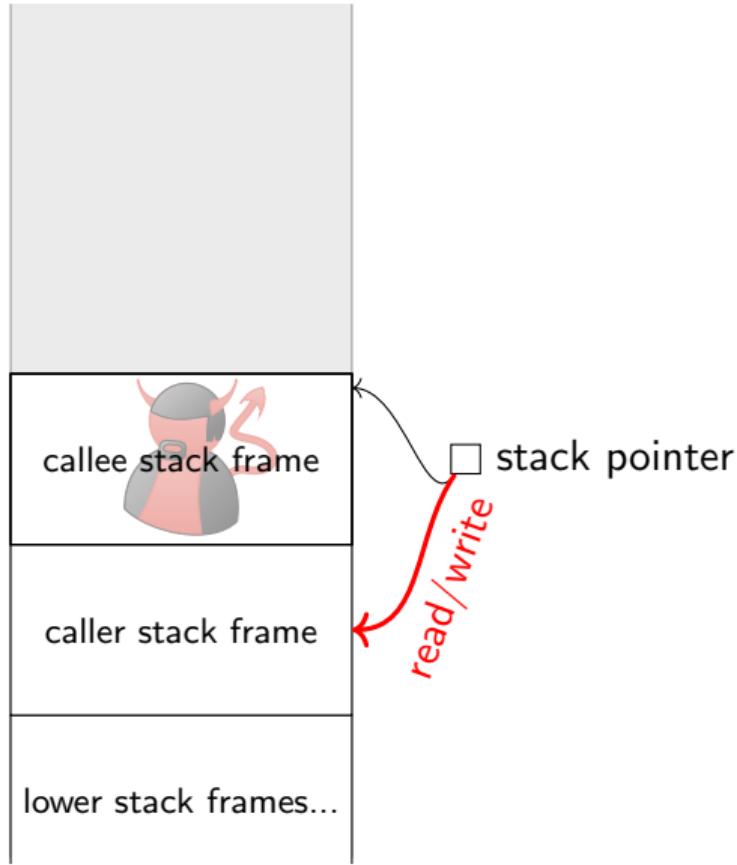
## Traditional stack pointers



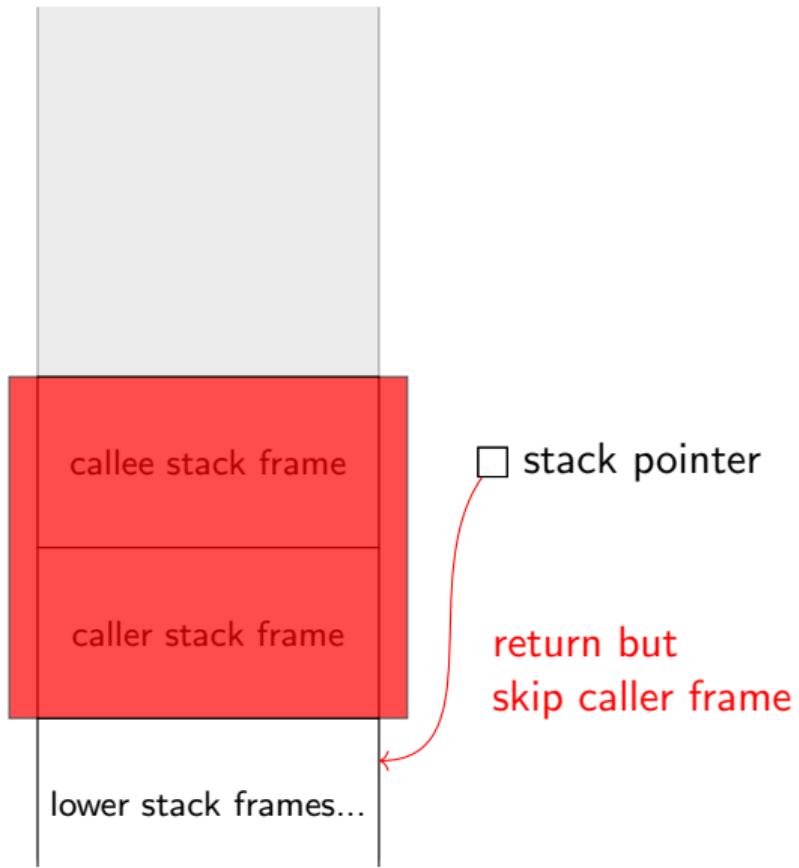
## Traditional stack pointers



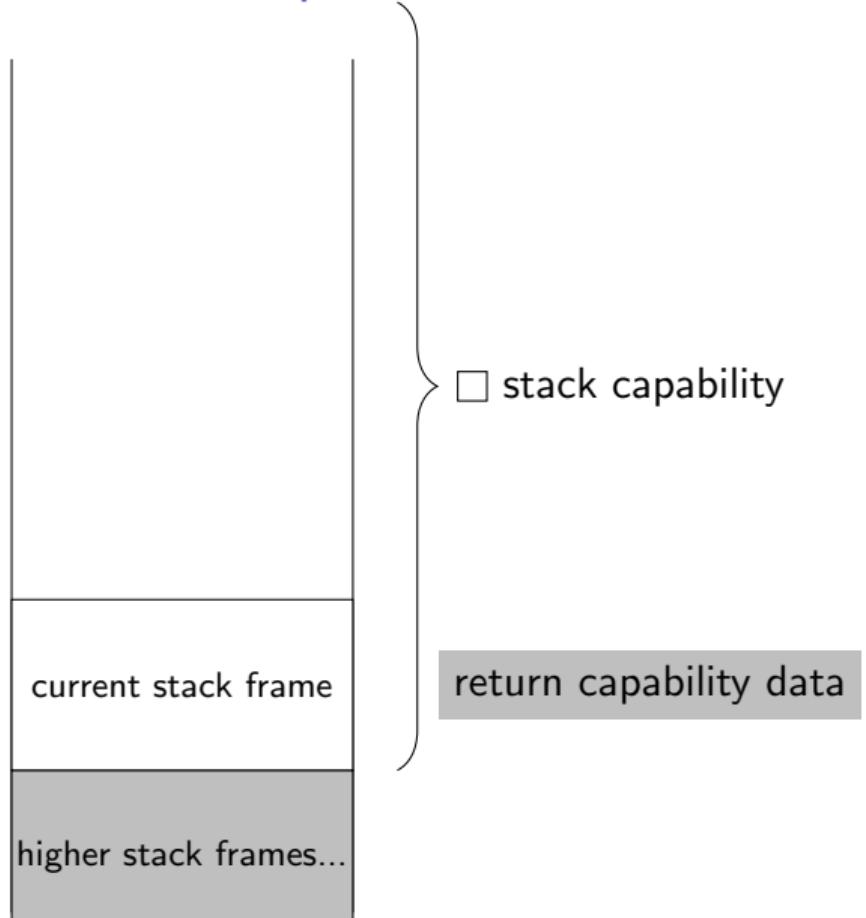
# Traditional stack pointers



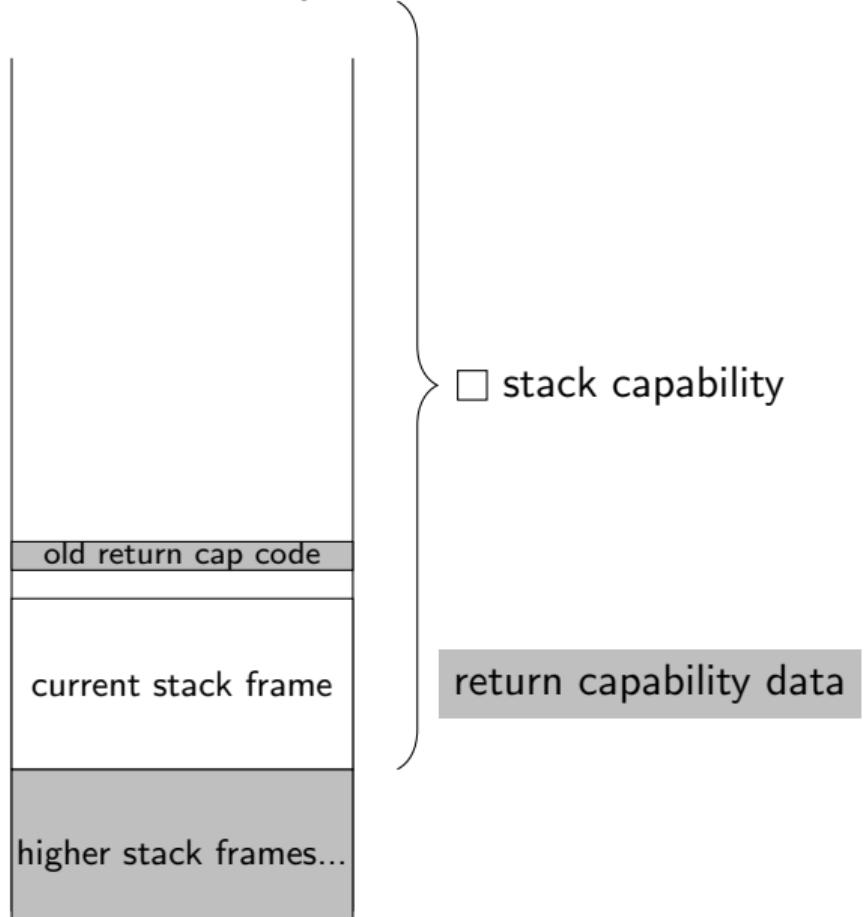
# Traditional stack pointers



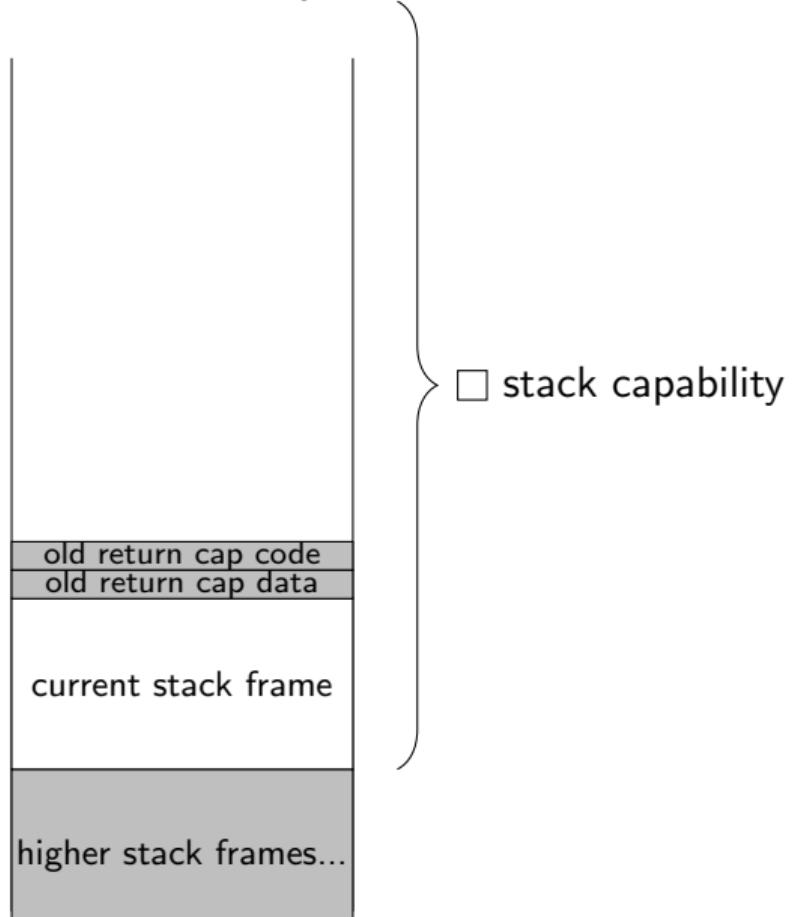
## Stack and return capabilities



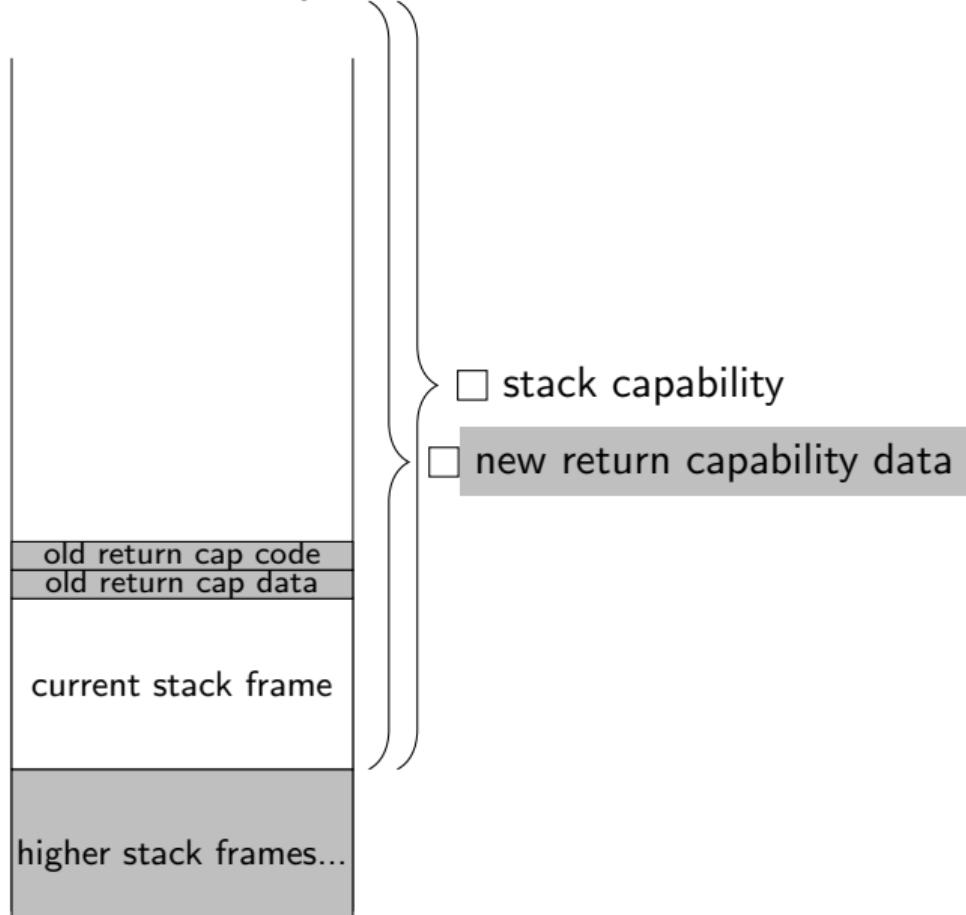
## Stack and return capabilities



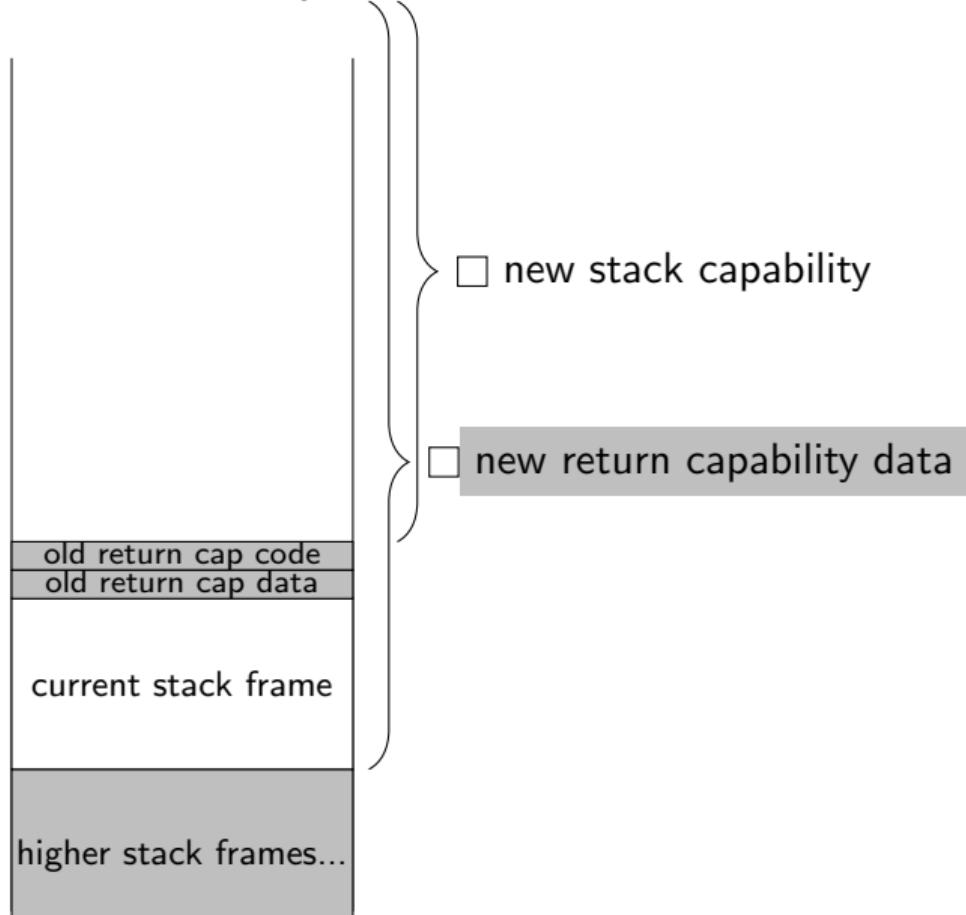
## Stack and return capabilities



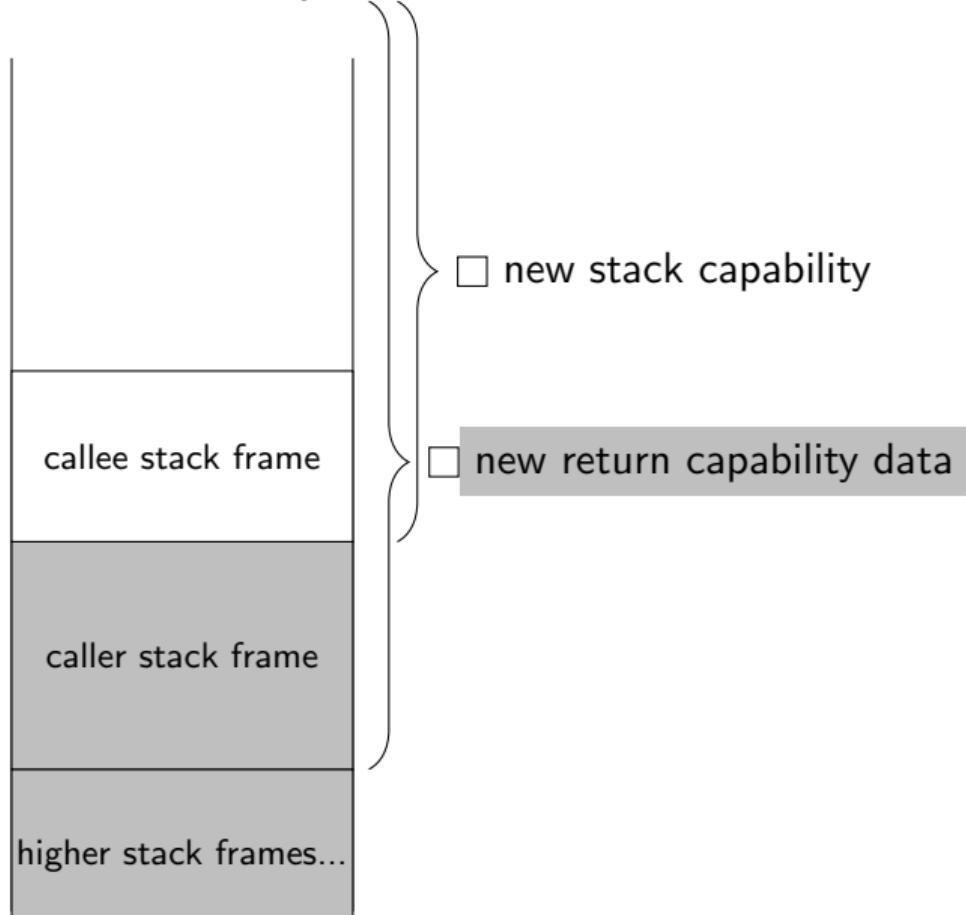
## Stack and return capabilities



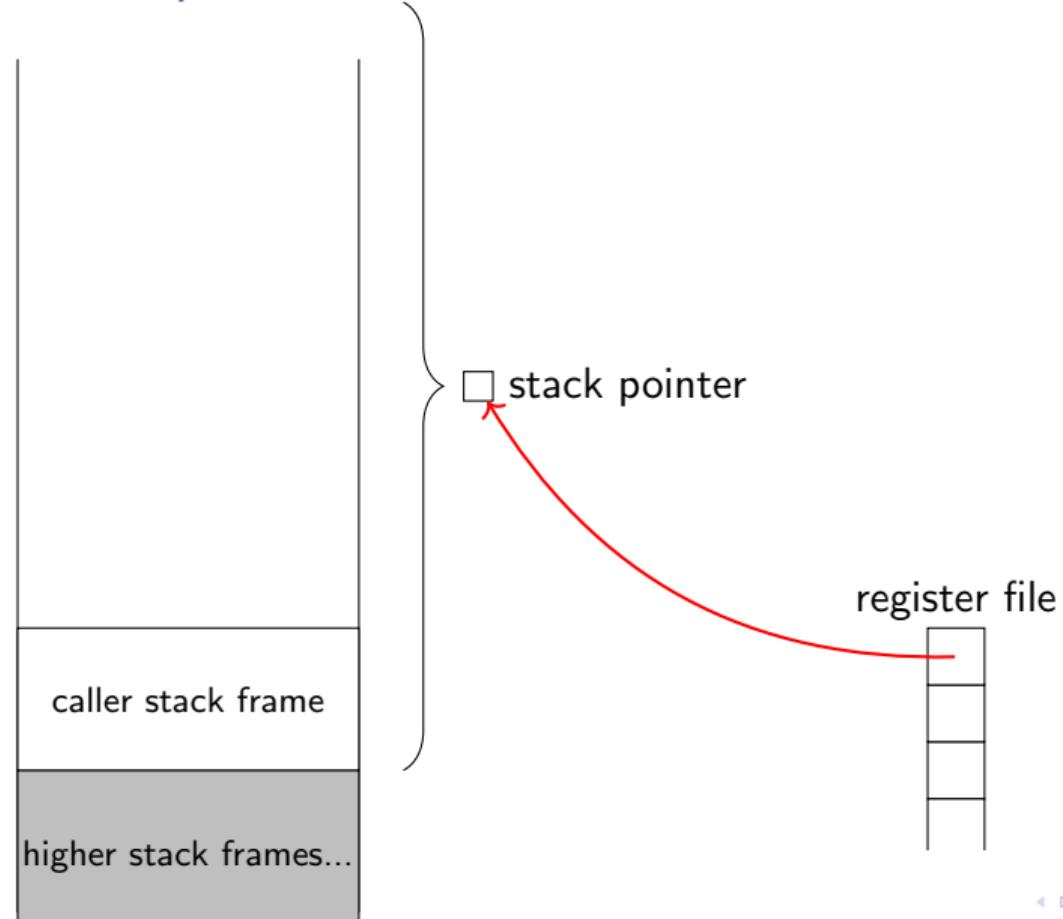
## Stack and return capabilities



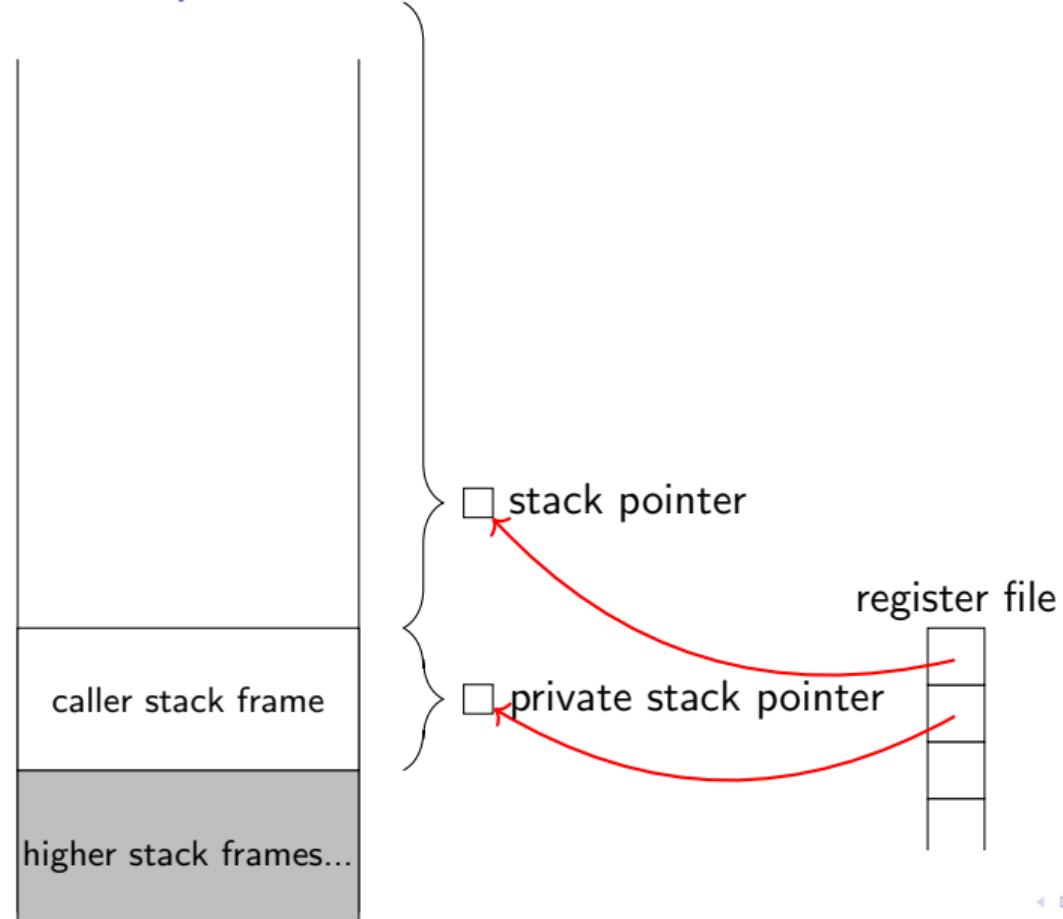
## Stack and return capabilities



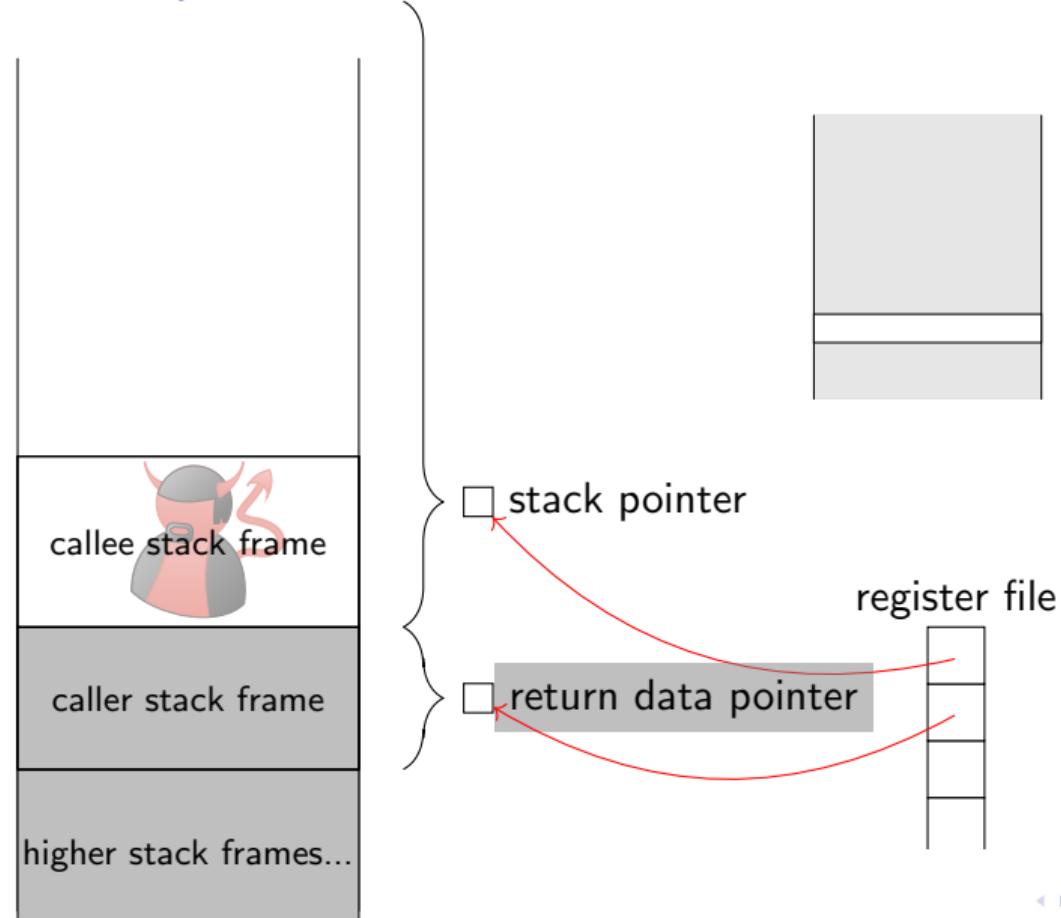
## STKTOKENS prevent the attack



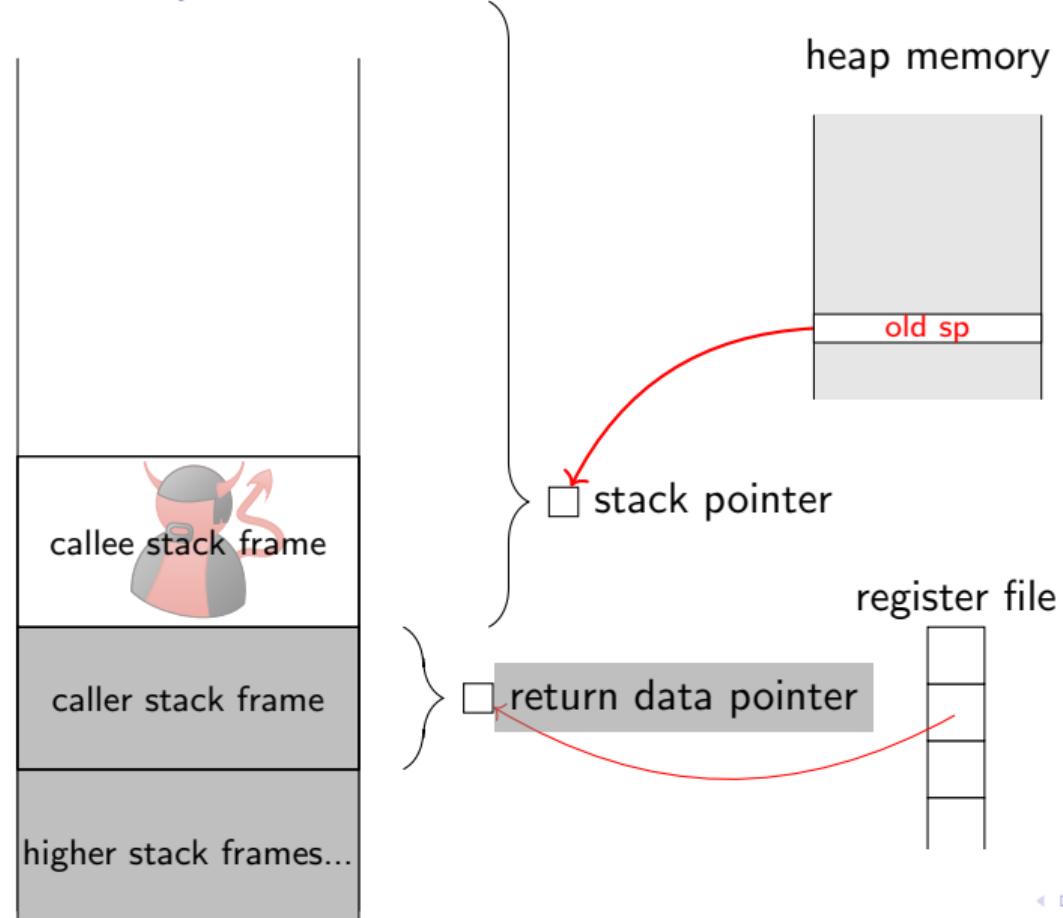
STKTOKENS prevent the attack



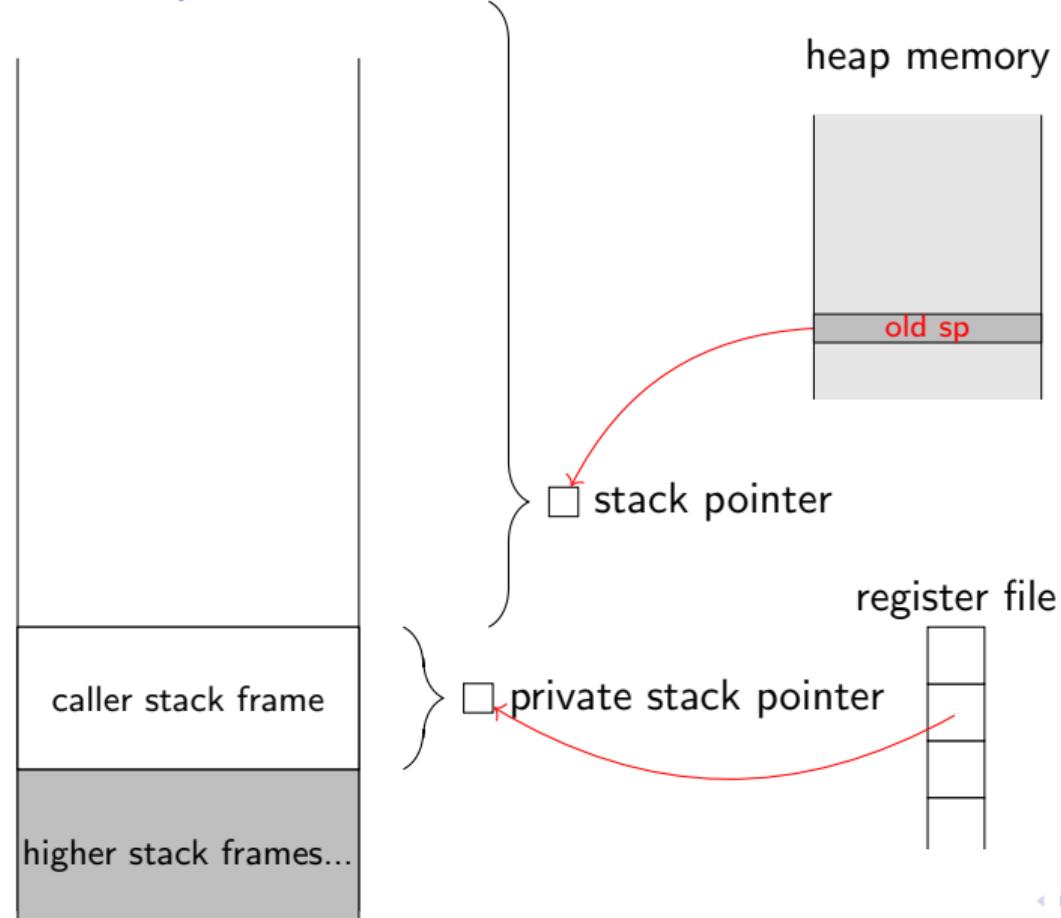
## STKTOKENS prevent the attack



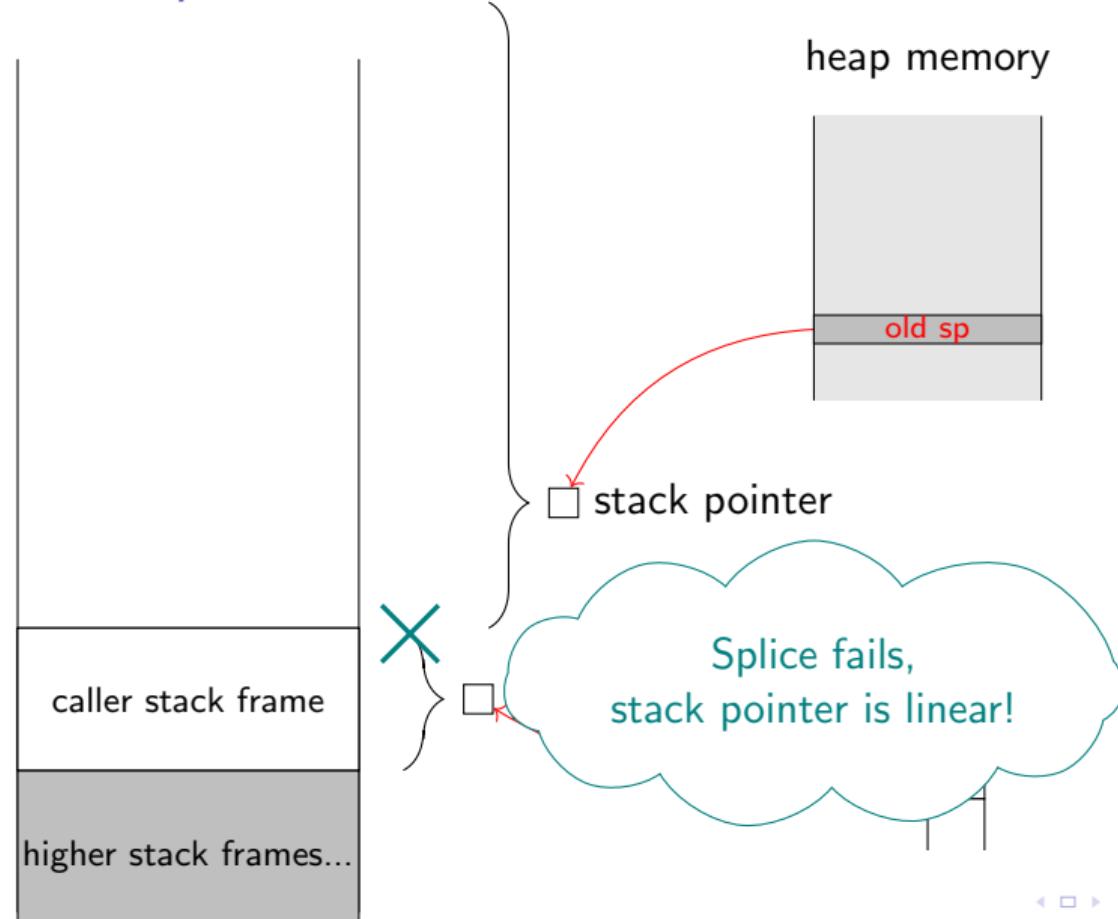
# STKTOKENS prevent the attack



## STKTOKENS prevent the attack



STKTOKENS prevent the attack



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Defining well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation by fully-abstract overlay semantics

## Well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation

```
void a()
{
    ...
    return;
}

void b()
{
    int x = 5;
    a();
    ...
    a();
    return;
}
```

## Well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation

```
void a()  
{  
    ...  
    return;  
}
```

} Function a cannot  
access variable x

```
void b()  
{  
    int x = 5;  
    a();  
    ...  
    a();  
    return;  
}
```

Local-state encapsulation (LSE)

## Well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation

```
void a()  
{  
    ...  
    return;  
}
```

```
void b()  
{  
    int x = 5;  
    a();  
    ...  
    → a();  
    return;  
}
```

Well-bracketed control flow (WBCF)

## Well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation

```
→ void a()
{
    ...
    return;
}
```

```
void b()
{
    int x = 5;
    a();
    ...
    a();
    return;
}
```

Well-bracketed control flow (WBCF)

## Well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation

```
void a()
{
    → ...
    return;
}
```

```
void b()
{
    int x = 5;
    a();
    ...
    a();
    return;
}
```

Well-bracketed control flow (WBCF)

## Well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation

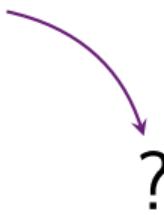
```
void a()
{
    ...
→ return;
}
```

```
void b()
{
    int x = 5;
    a();
    ...
    a();
    return;
}
```

Well-bracketed control flow (WBCF)

## Well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation

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```



Well-bracketed control flow (WBCF)

## Well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation

```
void a()  
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    ...  
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}  
  
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    int x = 5;  
    a();  
    ...  
    a();  
    → return;  
}
```



Well-bracketed control flow (WBCF)

## Well-bracketed control flow and local state encapsulation

```
void a()  
{  
    ...  
    return;  
}  
  
void b()  
{  
    int x = 5;  
    a();  
    → ...  
    a();  
    return;  
}
```



Well-bracketed control flow (WBCF)

# Fully-abstract overlay Semantics

```
move  rtmp1 42          load  rtmp1 rtmp1
store rstk rtmp1        cca   rtmp1 -21
ccs   rstk -1          cseal rretd rtmp1
geta  rtmp1 rstk        move   rretc pc
ccs   rretc 5           xjmp  r1 r2
move  rtmp1 pc          cseal rretc rtmp1
ccs   rtmp1 -20         move   rtmp1 0
```

Linear Capability  
Machine

# Fully-abstract overlay Semantics

```
move  rtmp1 42          load  rtmp1 rtmp1
store rstk rtmp1        cca   rtmp1 -21
cca   rstk -1          cseal rretd rtmp1
geta  rtmp1 rstk        move   rretc pc
cca   rretc 5           xjmp   r1 r2
move  rtmp1 pc          cseal rretc rtmp1
cca   rtmp1 -20         move   rtmp1 0
```

Overlay Semantics

---

```
move  rtmp1 42          load  rtmp1 rtmp1
store rstk rtmp1        cca   rtmp1 -21
cca   rstk -1          cseal rretd rtmp1
geta  rtmp1 rstk        move   rretc pc
cca   rretc 5           xjmp   r1 r2
move  rtmp1 pc          cseal rretc rtmp1
cca   rtmp1 -20         move   rtmp1 0
```

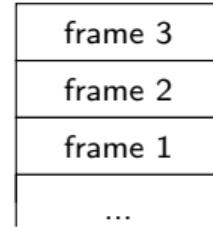
Linear Capability  
Machine

# Fully-abstract overlay Semantics

```
move rtmp1 42
store rstk rtmp1
cca rstk -1
geta rtmp1 rstk
cca rretc 5
move rtmp1 pc
cca rtmp1 -20
```

```
load rtmp1 rtmp1
cca rtmp1 -21
cseal rretd rtmp1
move rretc pc
xjmp r1 r2
cseal rretc rtmp1
move rtmp1 0
```

Builtin call stack



Overlay Semantics

```
move rtmp1 42
store rstk rtmp1
cca rstk -1
geta rtmp1 rstk
cca rretc 5
move rtmp1 pc
cca rtmp1 -20
```

```
load rtmp1 rtmp1
cca rtmp1 -21
cseal rretd rtmp1
move rretc pc
xjmp r1 r2
cseal rretc rtmp1
move rtmp1 0
```

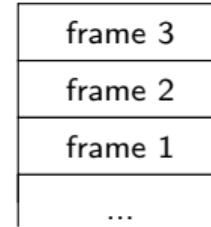
Linear Capability  
Machine

# Fully-abstract overlay Semantics

```
move rtmp1 42
store rstk rtmp1
cca rstk 1
call
geta rtmp1 rstk
cca rretc 5
move rtmp1 pc
cca rtmp1 -20
```

```
load rtmp1 rtmp1
cca rtmp1 -21
cseal rretd rtmp1
move rretc pc
return
cseal rretc rtmp1
move rtmp1 0
```

Builtin call stack



Overlay Semantics

```
move rtmp1 42
store rstk rtmp1
cca rstk -1
geta rtmp1 rstk
cca rretc 5
move rtmp1 pc
cca rtmp1 -20
```

```
load rtmp1 rtmp1
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cseal rretd rtmp1
move rretc pc
xjmp r1 r2
cseal rretc rtmp1
move rtmp1 0
```

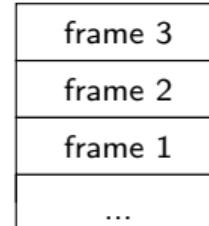
Linear Capability  
Machine

# Fully-abstract overlay Semantics

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move rtmp1 42
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move rtmp1 pc
cca rtmp1 -20
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```
load rtmp1 rtmp1
cca rtmp1 -21
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move rretc pc
return
cseal rretc rtmp1
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```

Builtin call stack



Overlay Semantics

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store rstk rtmp1
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```
load rtmp1 rtmp1
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move rretc pc
xjmp r1 r2
cseal rretc rtmp1
move rtmp1 0
```

Linear Capability  
Machine

# Fully-abstract overlay Semantics

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move rtmp1 pc  
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```

**call**

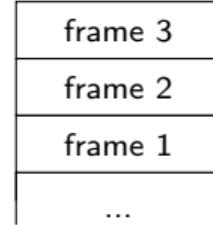
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move rtmp1 42  
store rstk rtmp1  
cca rstk -1  
geta rtmp1 rstk  
cca rretc 5  
move rtmp1 pc  
cca rtmp1 -20
```

**return**

*id*

---

Builtin call stack



Overlay Semantics

Linear Capability  
Machine

# Fully-abstract overlay Semantics

```
move rtmp1 42  
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cca rretc 5  
move rtmp1 pc  
cca rtmp1 -20
```

**call**

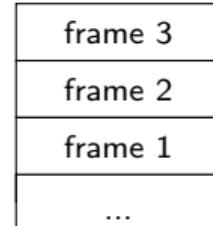
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cca rstk -1  
geta rtmp1 rstk  
cca rretc 5  
move rtmp1 pc  
cca rtmp1 -20
```

**return**

*id*

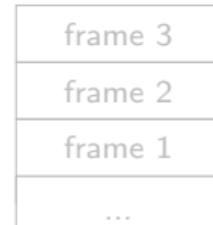


Builtin call stack



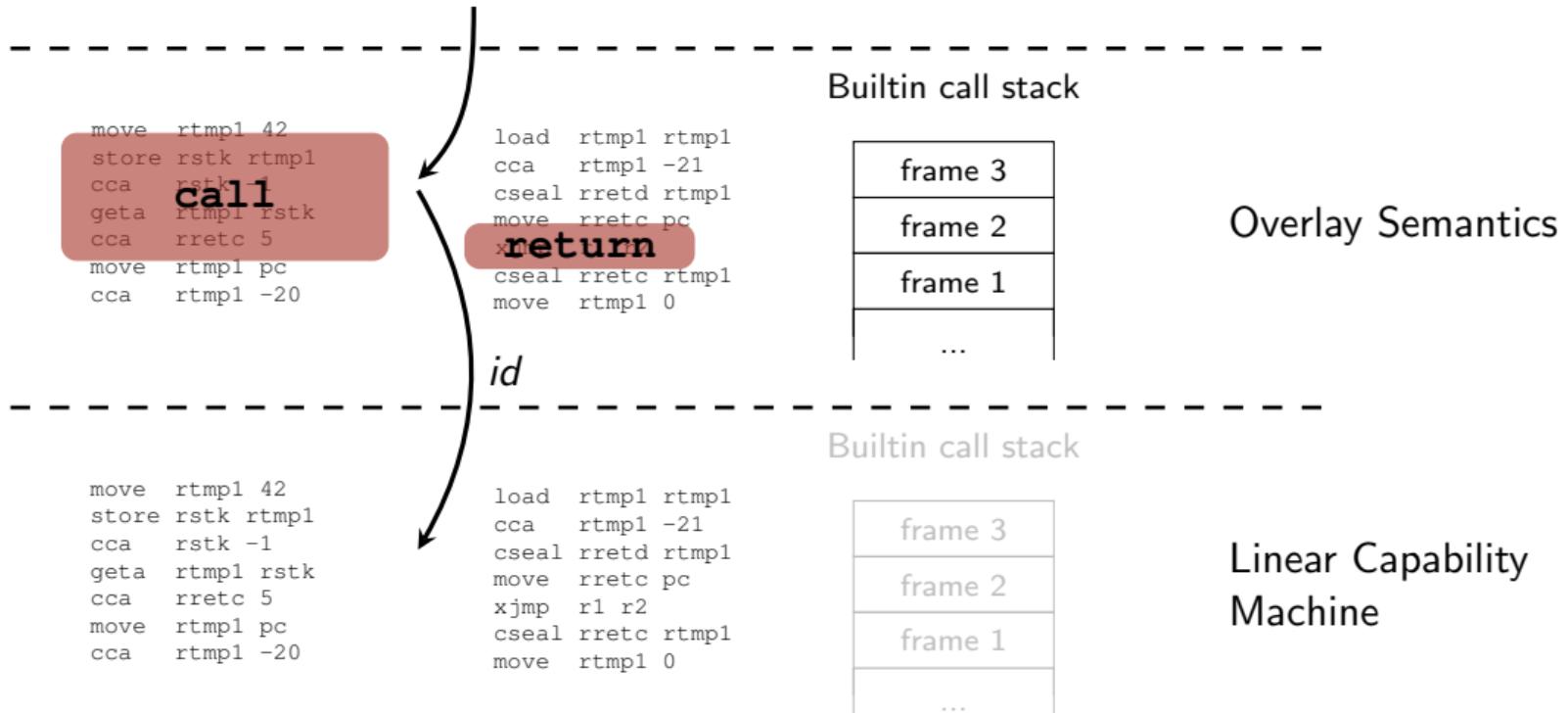
Overlay Semantics

Builtin call stack



Linear Capability Machine

# Fully-abstract overlay Semantics



## Paper overview

- ▶ LCM: A formalization of a simple CHERI-like capability machine with linear capabilities
- ▶ STKTOKENS, a new calling convention that provably guarantees LSE and WBCF on LCM
- ▶ A new way to formalize these guarantees based on a novel technique called *fully-abstract overlay semantics*
- ▶ Proof of LSE and WBCF which includes
  - ▶ oLCM: an overlay semantics for LCM with built-in LSE and WBCF
  - ▶ proving full-abstraction for the embedding of oLCM into LCM by
  - ▶ defining and using a cross-language, step-indexed, Kripke logical relation with recursive worlds

Thank you!

# Full-abstraction proof sketch

Contextual equivalence preservation



$$\begin{array}{c} comp_1 \approx_{\text{ctx}} comp_2 \\ \mathcal{C}[comp_1] \Downarrow^{gc} \Rightarrow \mathcal{C}[comp_2] \Downarrow^{gc} \\ \mathcal{C} \sqsupseteq \mathcal{C} \quad \uparrow \qquad \downarrow \quad \mathcal{C} \sqsupseteq \mathcal{C} \\ comp_1 \sqsupseteq comp_1 \qquad \qquad \qquad comp_2 \sqsupseteq comp_2 \\ \mathcal{C}[comp_1] \Downarrow \stackrel{?}{\Rightarrow} \mathcal{C}[comp_2] \Downarrow \\ comp_1 \approx_{\text{ctx}} comp_2 \end{array}$$

## Desired properties of LSE and WBCF definition

1. *intuitive*
2. *useful for reasoning*: we should be able to use WBCF and LSE when reasoning about correctness and security of programs using STKTOKENS.
3. *reusable in secure compiler chains*: for compilers using STKTOKENS, one should be able to rely on WBCF and LSE when proving correctness and security of other compiler passes and then compose such results with ours to obtain results about the full compiler.
4. *arguably "complete"*: the formalization should arguably capture the entire meaning of WBCF and LSE and should arguably be applicable to any reasonable program.
5. *potentially scalable*: although dynamic code generation and multi-threading are currently out of scope, the formalization should, at least potentially, extend to such settings.