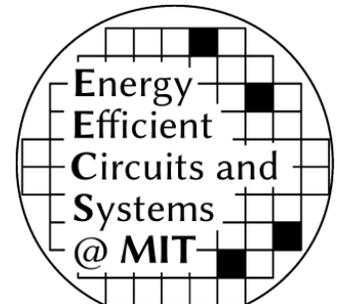


Analog Compute-near-RRAM CNN Accelerator for Fast-Inference Applications

Aya G. Amer, Minghan Chao, Gage Hills,
Anantha P. Chandrakasan, Max Shulaker

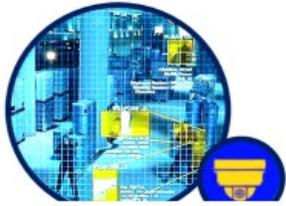
May 1st, 2024



Outline

- **Background and Motivation**
- **Proposed NMC CNN Accelerator**
 - Proposed Fully-Parallel Architecture
 - Proposed RRAM Cell and Pulsed RRAM Read
 - Proposed multi-bit MAC Cell
- **Proposed Analog Computations**
 - CONV, FC, POOL layers Implementation
 - Low-Power Analog Circuits
- **Experimental Results**
- **Conclusions**

Motivation: AI Applications & Edge Computing



Security & Surveillance



Smart TV



Autonomous Cars



Home Robotics



VR & Gaming



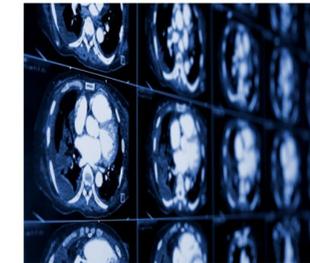
Face recognition



Speech Recognition



Wearable Medical Devices



Medical Imaging



- **Low Latency** ✓
- **Low Cost** ✓
- **Security** ✓

Motivation: Computing Limitations

Huge amounts of data processing in real-time.



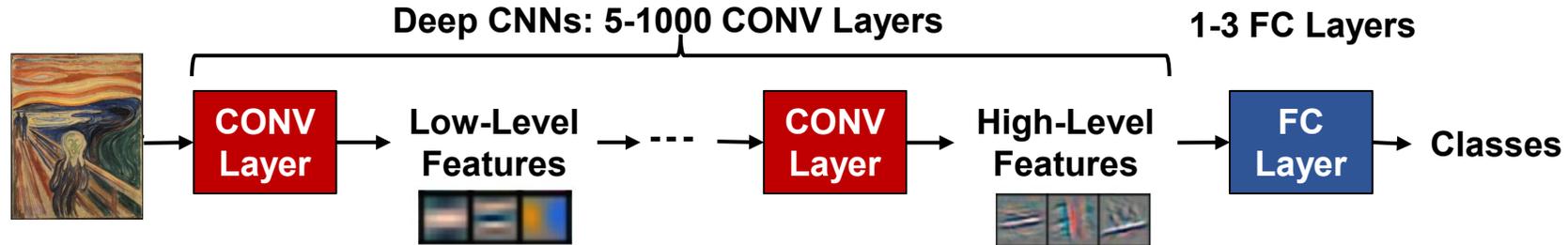
~ **6 GB** of data every 30 seconds
Prototypes use ~ **2500 Watts** !!

The Google Images search interface. It features the "Google" logo in its multi-colored font, with "images" written in blue below it. There is a search input field, a "Search Images" button, and a "Search by image" button with a camera icon.

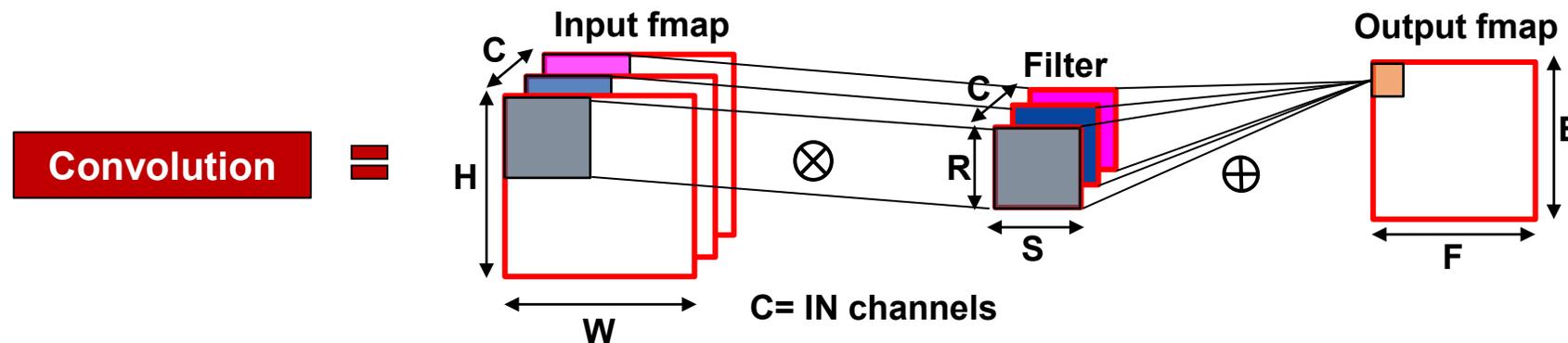
~ **60 k** searches every second
1 search = Energy of 60W light
bulb for 17 seconds !!

Convolutional Neural Networks: CNNs

- CNNs provide state-of-the-art accuracy for wide range of tasks.



- CNNs basic operation is dot product or multiply and accumulate (MAC).



CNNs: Major Challenges

- **Computation Intensive**

- Millions of MAC operations
- Energy Intensive

- **Data movement to/from memory**

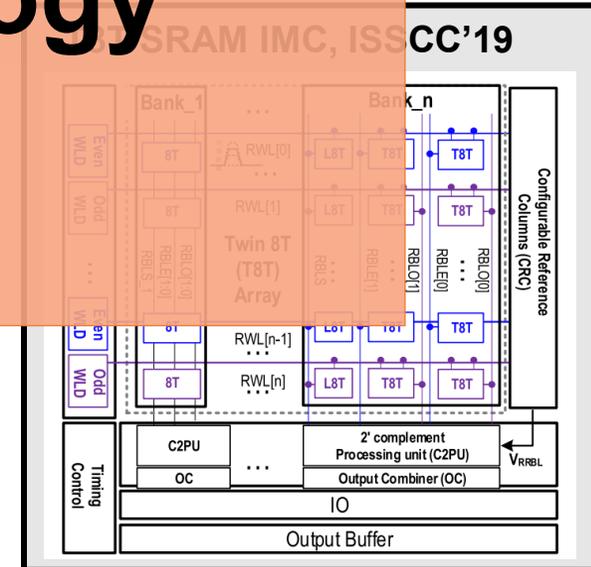
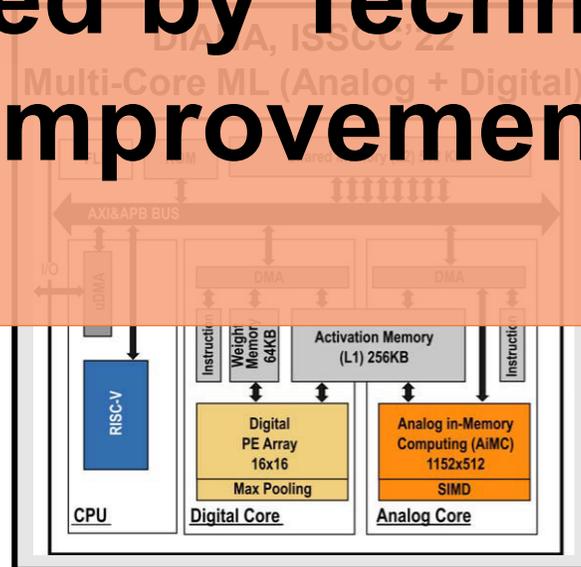
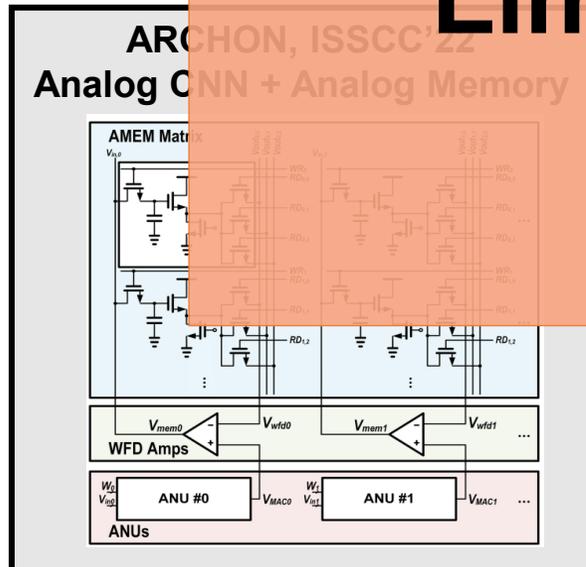
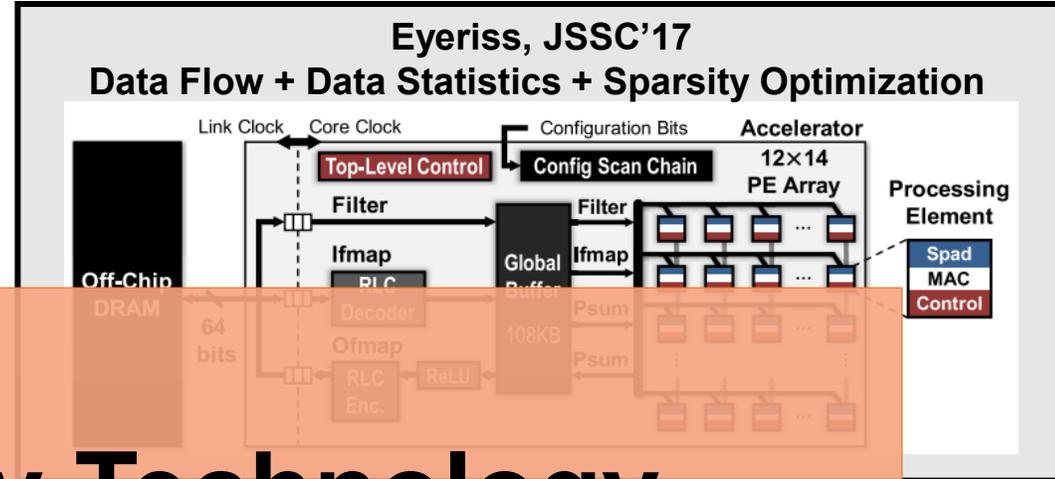
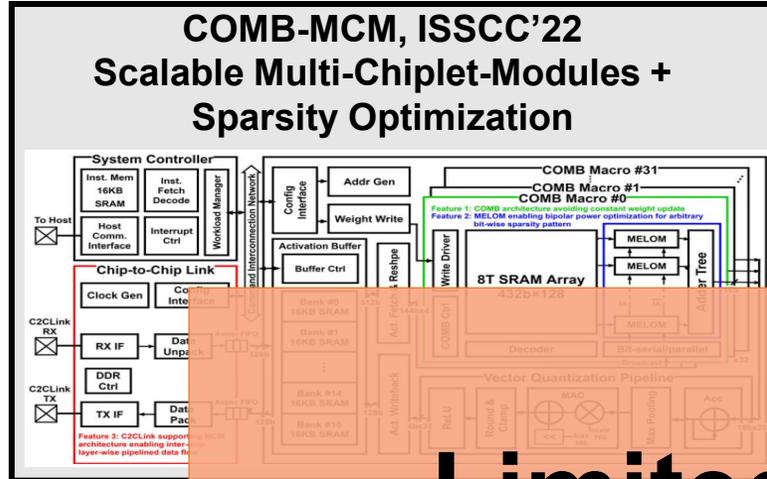
- Massive continuous data movement between computation and memory
- Substantial energy and speed penalty

- **Hardware Reuse**

- Long latency
- High energy

How to Improve Computations?

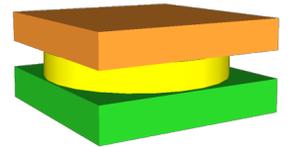
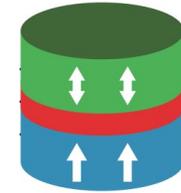
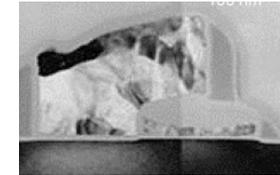
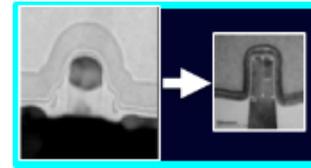
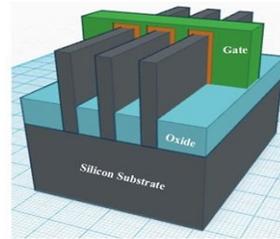
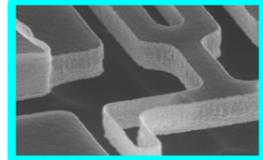
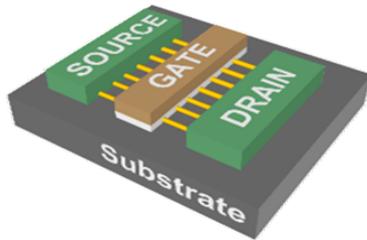
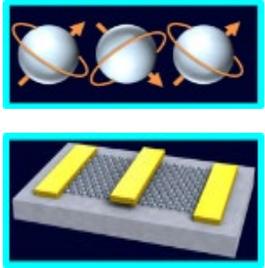
Improved Circuits, System Architectures



Limited by Technology Improvement

How to Improve Computations?

Enhanced / New Devices

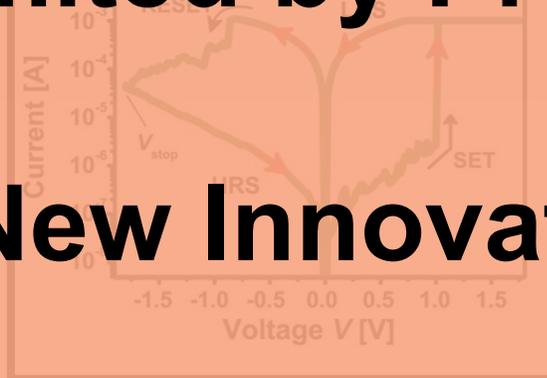
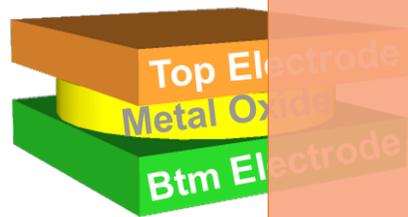


NV-RRAM Technology

Limited by Process Variations



New Innovations Required



- Dense
- Reduced Leakage
- Improved Read/Write Speed.
- Compatible with CMOS process.
- Energy-Efficient storage and computing inside memory.

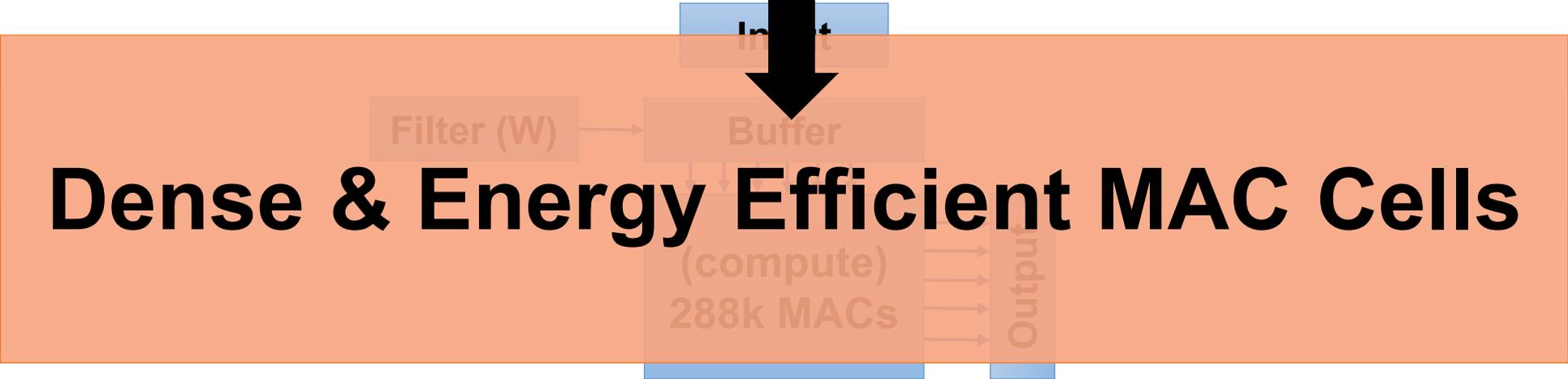
Proposed Fully Parallel CNN Hardware

- Architecture Parallelism

- Map all storage and computation hardware on chip to generate the outputs in 1 clock cycle
- Remove bottleneck of data transfer to/from memory

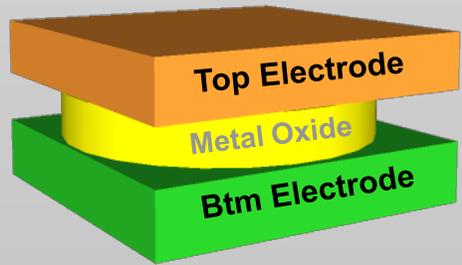
Area – Speed tradeoff

Layer	Input size	Filters	Filter Size	Output size	Multiplications = Filter Size * Output size
CONV	16x16x128	1	3x3x128	16x16x1	288 k



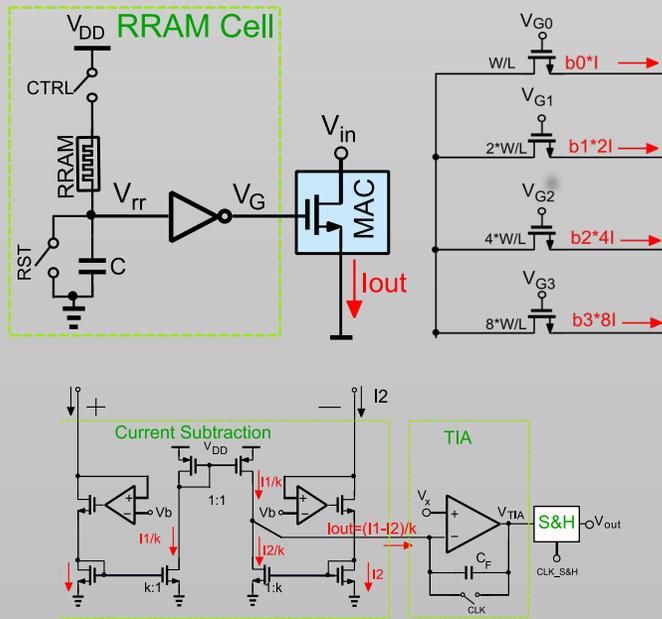
Proposed Solution

RRAM Technology

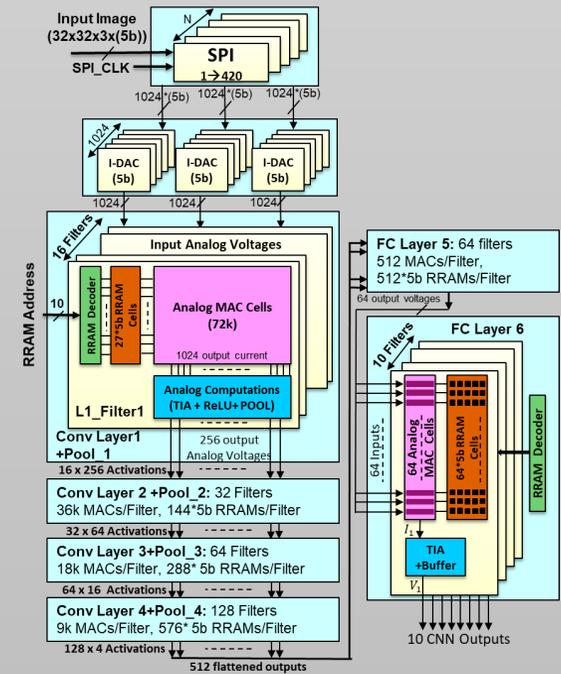


- Non-Volatile
- Dense
- Energy-Efficient
- Compatible with Si CMOS process

Novel Analog Circuits



Parallel Architecture

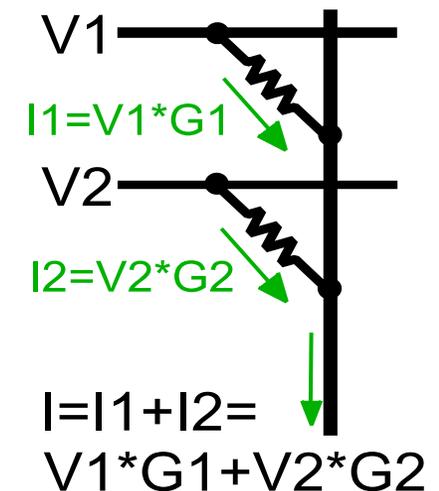
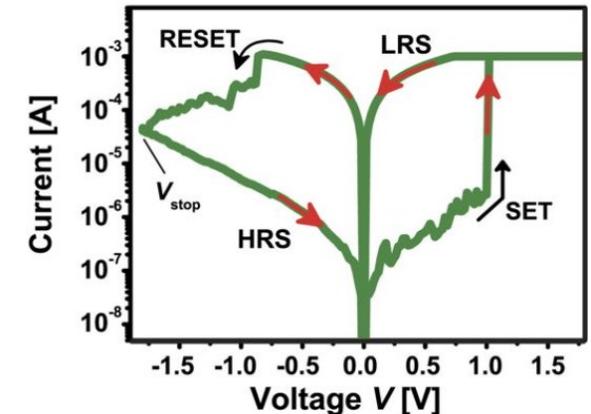
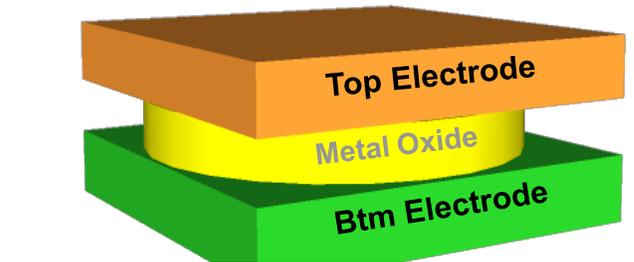


> 300x EDP Benefit

New Device: Resistive RAM (RRAM)

- Dense (< 60nm x 60nm)
- Non-volatile
- Programmability into one of 2 states
 - High Resistance State (HRS > 100k)
 - Low Resistance State (LRS < 1k)
- Digital memory device (store CNN weights)
 - HRS → Low Conductance → Weight = 0
 - LRS → High Conductance → Weight = 1
- Perform MAC operations in parallel

$$I = V_1 * G_1 + V_2 * G_2$$



Computation in RRAMs (1T1R Configuration)

■ RRAM in crossbar array

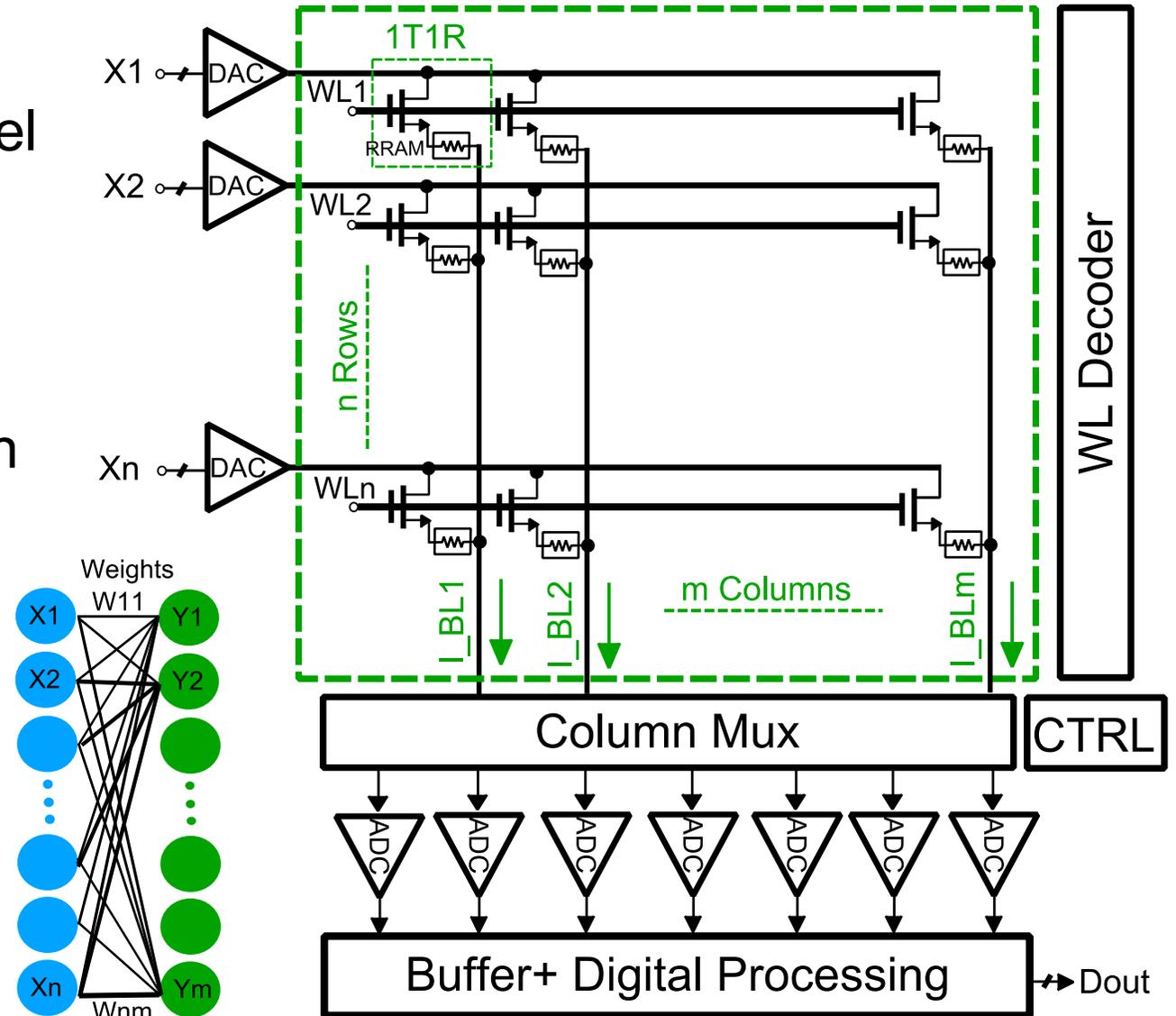
- Perform MAC operations in parallel
- Energy efficient

■ Access Transistors

- Address RRAM cells by activation of word- and bit-lines.

■ ADCs/DACs

- Interface array with buffers and digital processing.
- >80% of system power and area.



Major RRAM Challenges

■ I-V Non-linearity

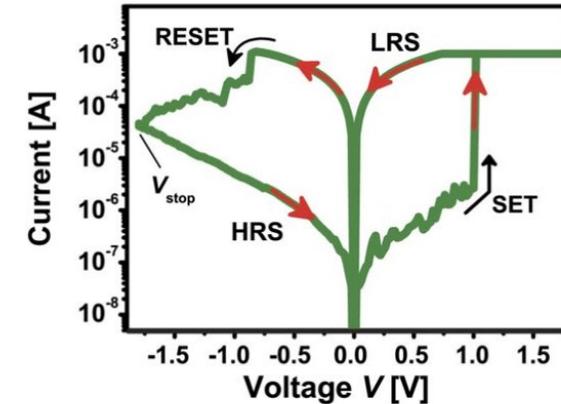
- Limits overall accuracy
- Difficult for multibit weight implementation

■ Resistance Variations

- LRS = 800Ω - $2k\Omega$, HRS = $10k\Omega$ - $100k\Omega$
- Finite R_{off}/R_{on} ratio (~ 10)

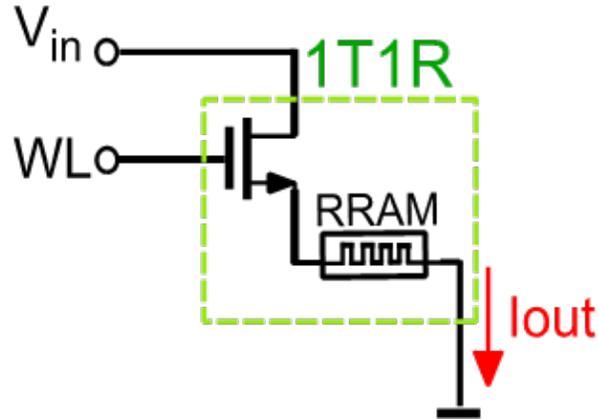
■ Limited Endurance

- $< 10^6$ set-reset cycles before permanent write failure

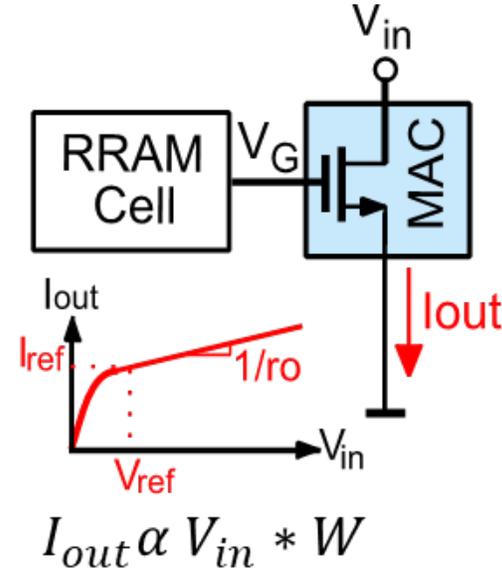


Proposed RRAM + MAC Cell

Conventional IMC 1T1R



Proposed NMC



- Multiplication with a transistor
- RRAM cell turns on/off MAC transistor.

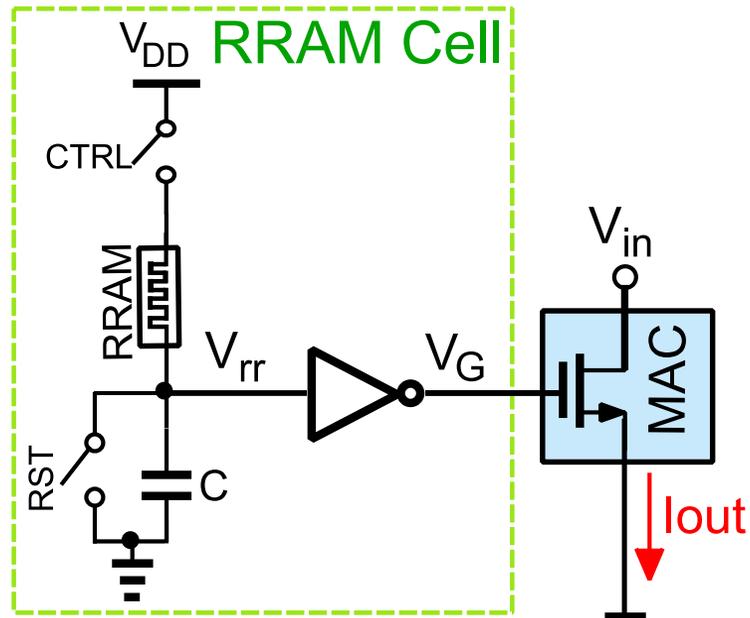
$$\text{RRAM HRS } (W=1) \rightarrow V_G = 1 \rightarrow I_{out} \propto V_{in} * W$$

$$\text{RRAM LRS } (W=0) \rightarrow V_G = 0 \rightarrow I_{out} = 0$$

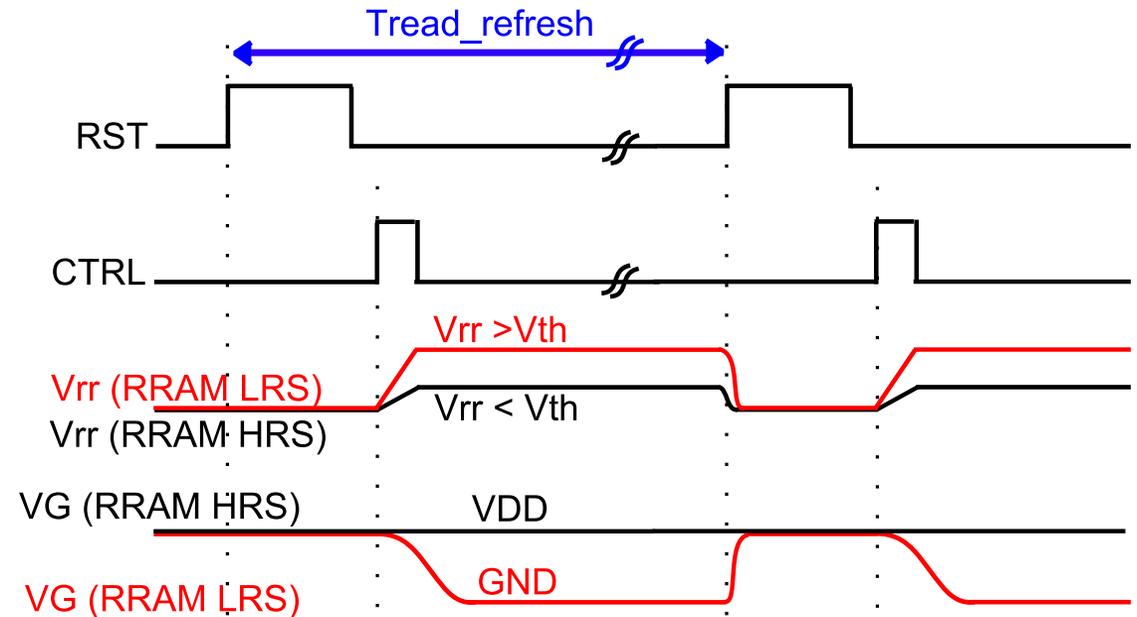
Proposed RRAM Cell

- **RRAM cell turns on/off MAC transistor.**

- RRAM Cell Output = VDD/0 depending on the RRAM State (HRS/ LRS)

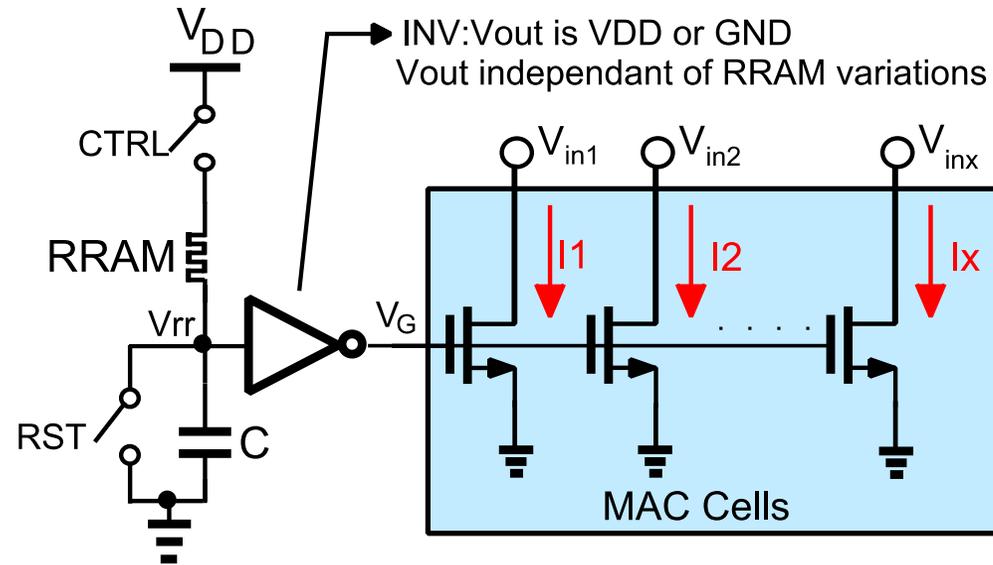


Switches + Capacitor + Inverter



**Duty-Cycled Read
→ Low Power Consumption**

Proposed Pulsed RRAM Read



- **Read once at start of the operation**
No static power and leakage power.
- **RRAM Cell output can be shared with many MAC cells.**
 - Reduce number of RRAM cells on chips.
- **RRAM Cell output independent of RRAM variations**
 - Works with 50% RRAM variations and R_{off}/R_{on} down to 5

Analog Multiplication by n-bit Signed Weight

▪ Differential MAC cells + Current Subtraction

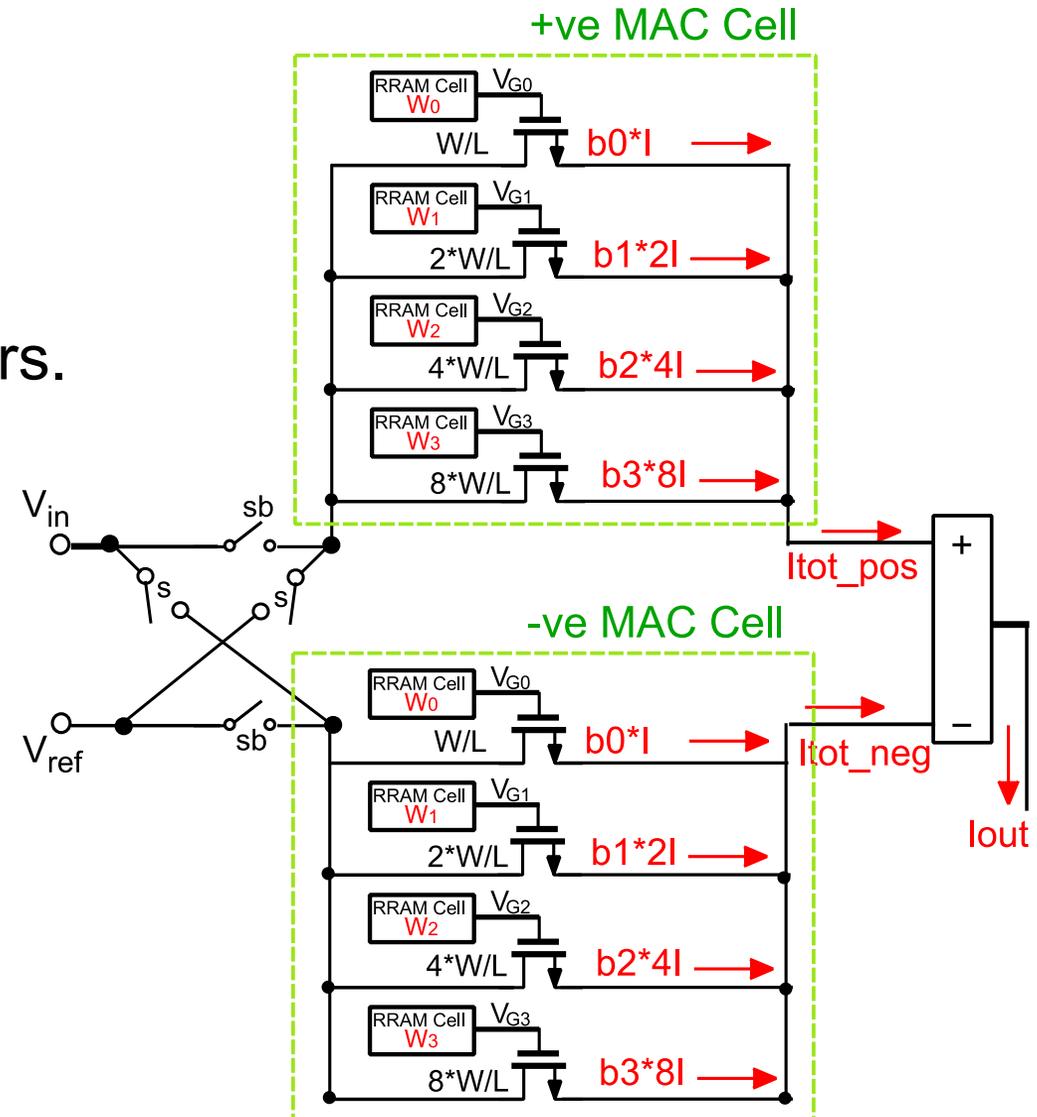
- The sign bit connects V_{in} to either the positive or negative MAC cell.
- Weights control both MAC cells transistors.
- Removes offset currents.

▪ Binary-Weighted Current DAC

- Scale MAC transistors W/L

▪ Low-Power MAC

- Power scales with input/weight values.
- $W=0 \rightarrow I_{out} = 0$



Proposed RRAM + MAC Cells

▪ Linear Operation

- Improves overall MAC accuracy.

▪ Robust against Variations

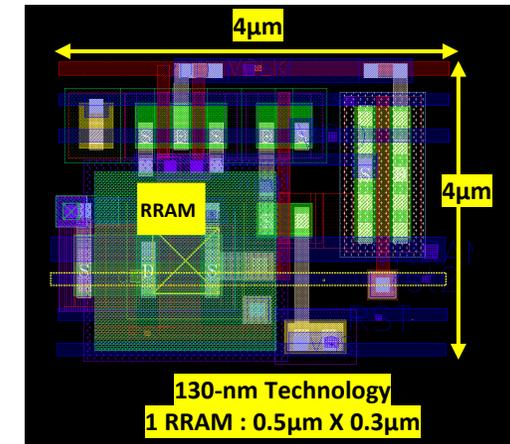
- Works with 50% RRAM variations.
- Works with finite R_{off}/R_{on} ratio (>5).

▪ Low Power

- Duty-cycled RRAM read operation
- MAC power scales down with IN/W sparsity.

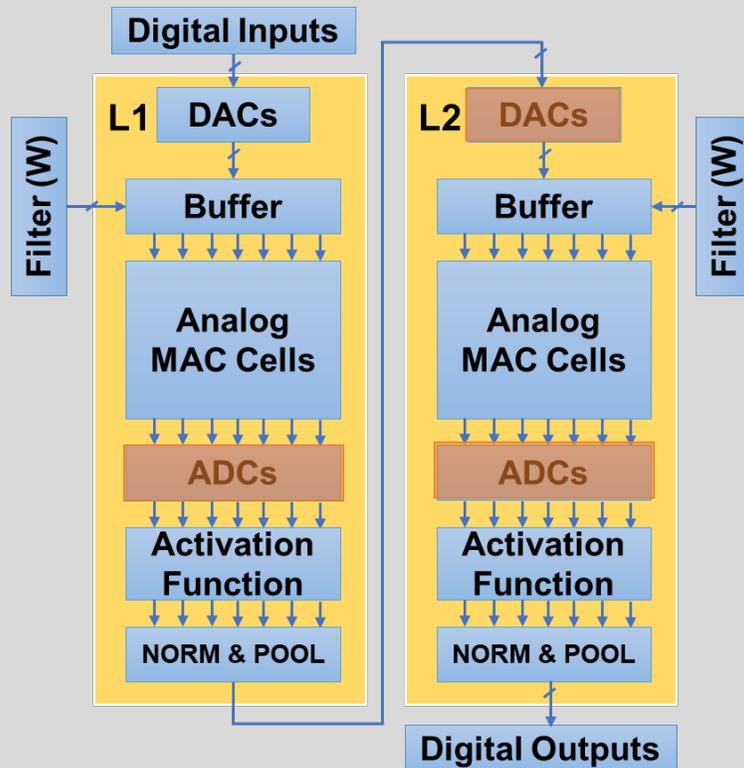
▪ Small Area

- Dense \rightarrow implement large number on-chip.
- RRAM cell output is shared with many MAC cells.



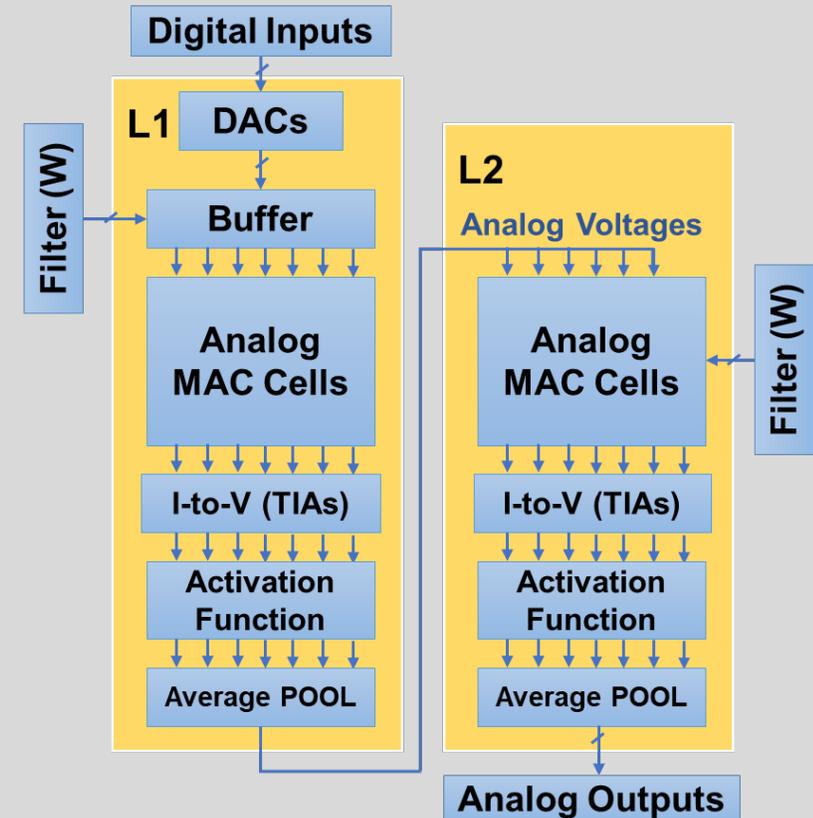
Analog Computations

Conventional Analog-Mixed CNN Computations



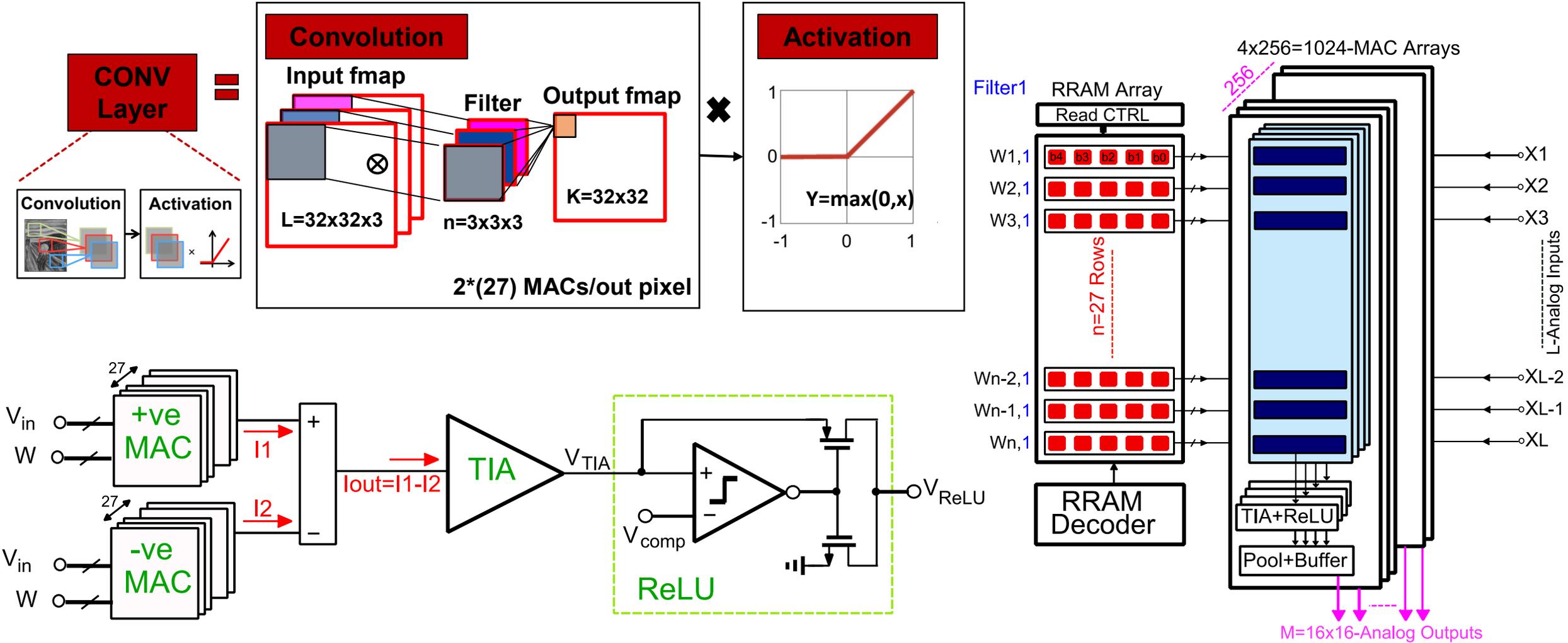
ADCs/DACs
→ Energy, Delay, Area Overhead

Proposed Analog CNN Computations



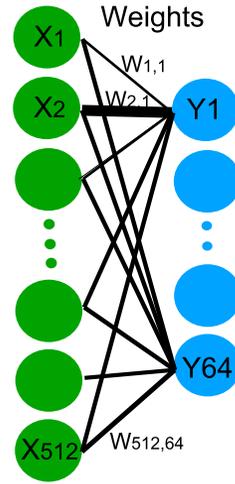
No ADCs/DACs between layers
→ Lower Power, Higher speed

Convolution Layer Implementation

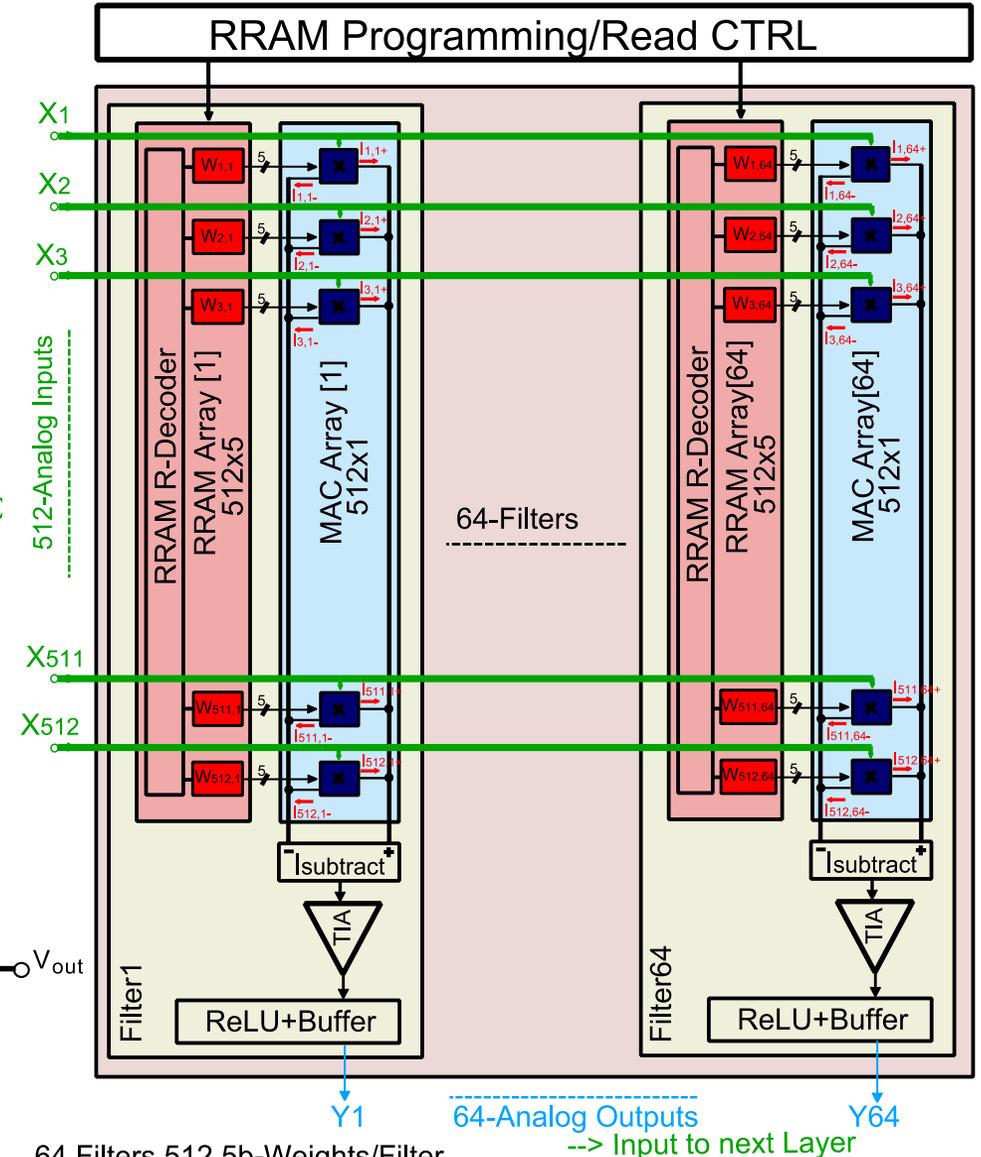
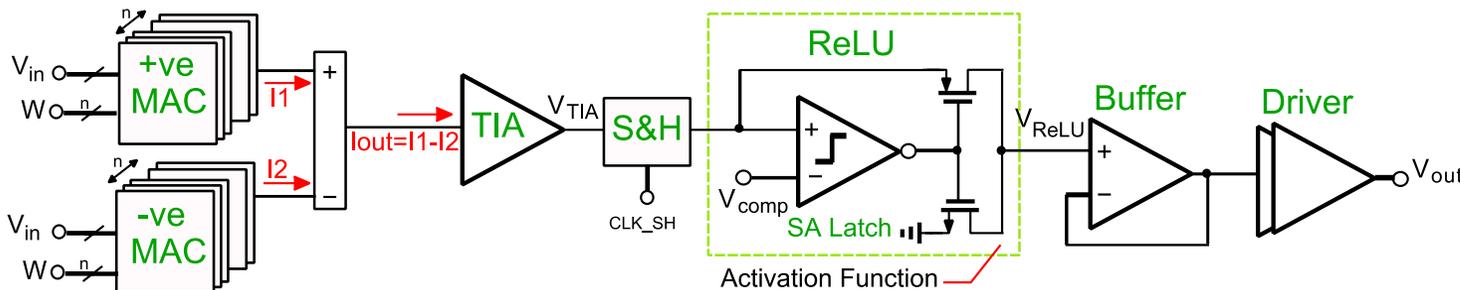


Fully-Connected Layer Implementation

- All outputs are connected to all inputs
 - N Filters to generate N outputs.
 - Each filter has an RRAM array to store filter weights.

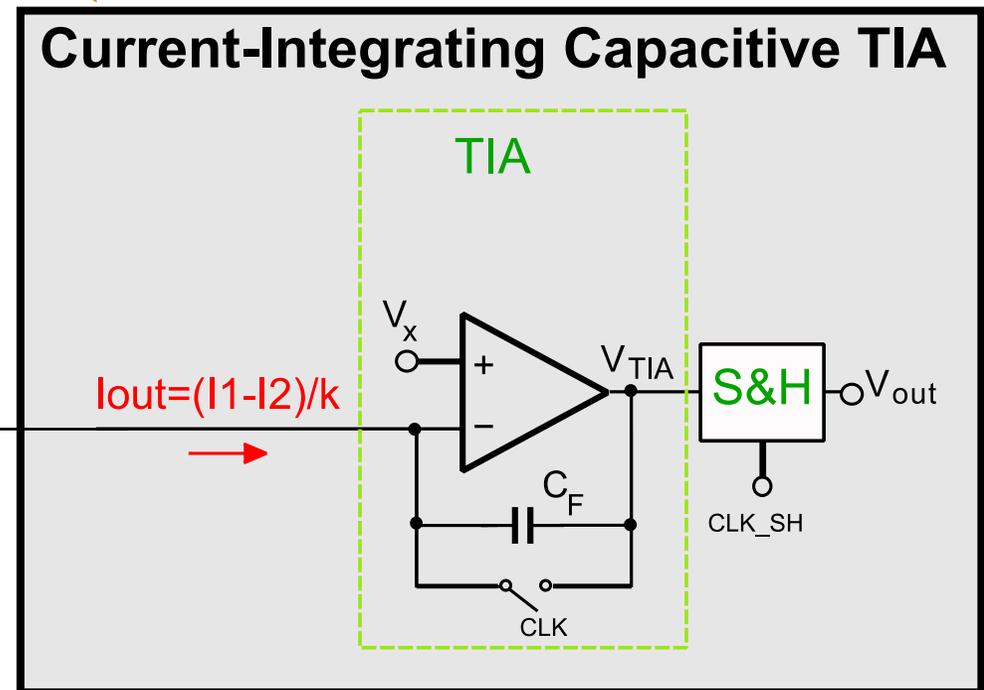
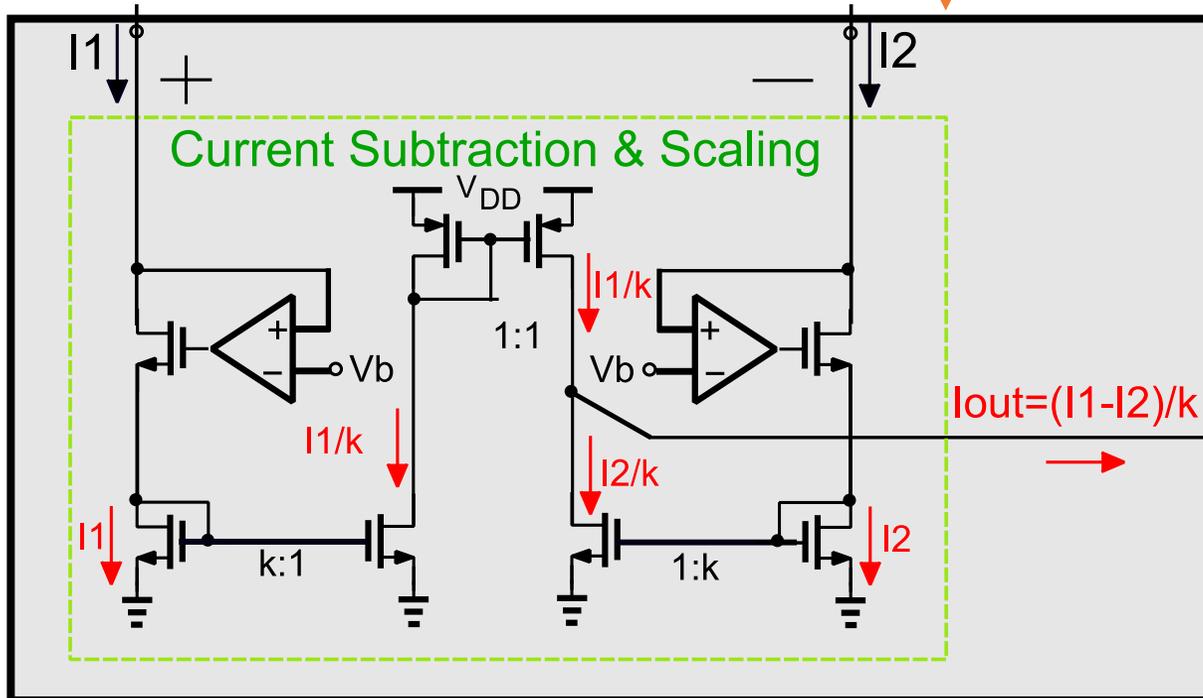
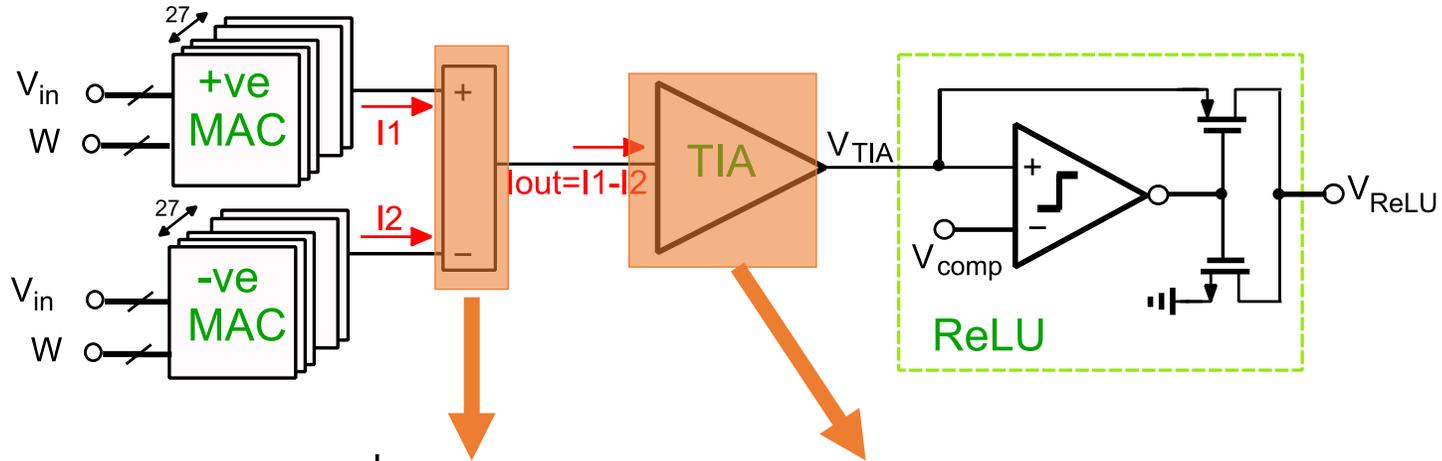


- Circuit implementation is similar to CONV. layer.

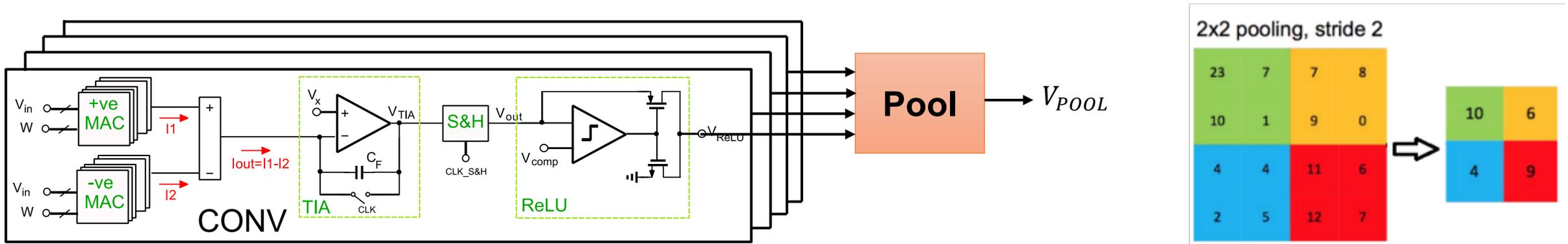


64 Filters, 512 5b-Weights/Filter
160 kbit RRAM cells, 512x64 MAC cells

Low-Power Analog Circuits (I-Sense + TIA)



Low-Power Analog Circuits (Pool)

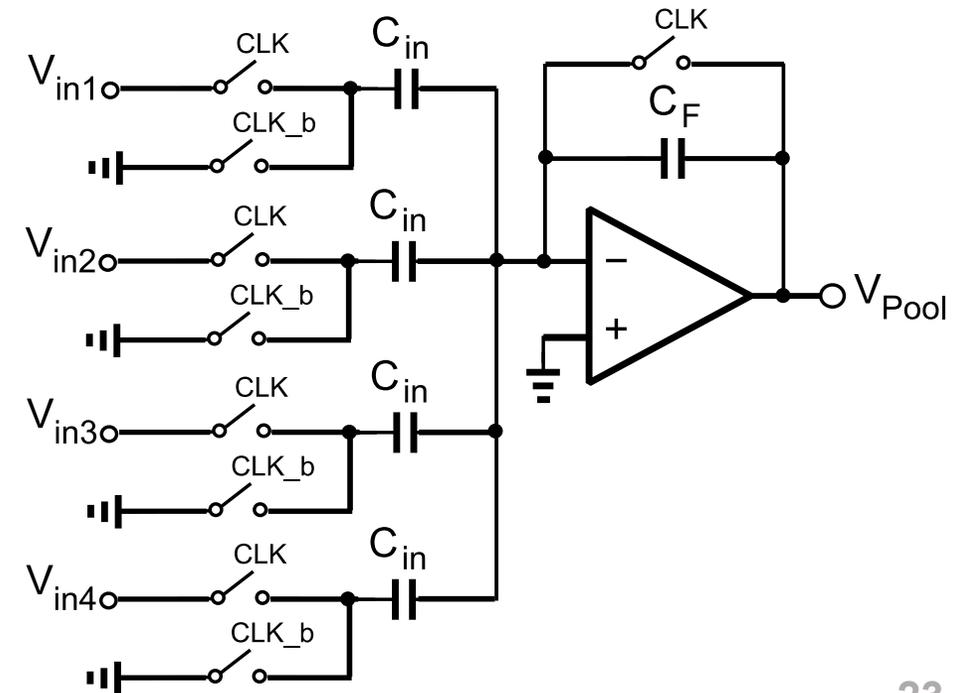


2x2 Average POOL

- Summing amplifier configuration.

$$V_{POOL} = -\frac{C_{in}}{C_f} * \sum_{n=1}^4 V_{in_n}$$

- Works as a buffer to drive the following layer.



Fabricated Die Photo

■ SkyWater 130-nm Technology

- Monolithic 3D (Si + RRAM)
- First design + tape-out of US Foundry RRAM

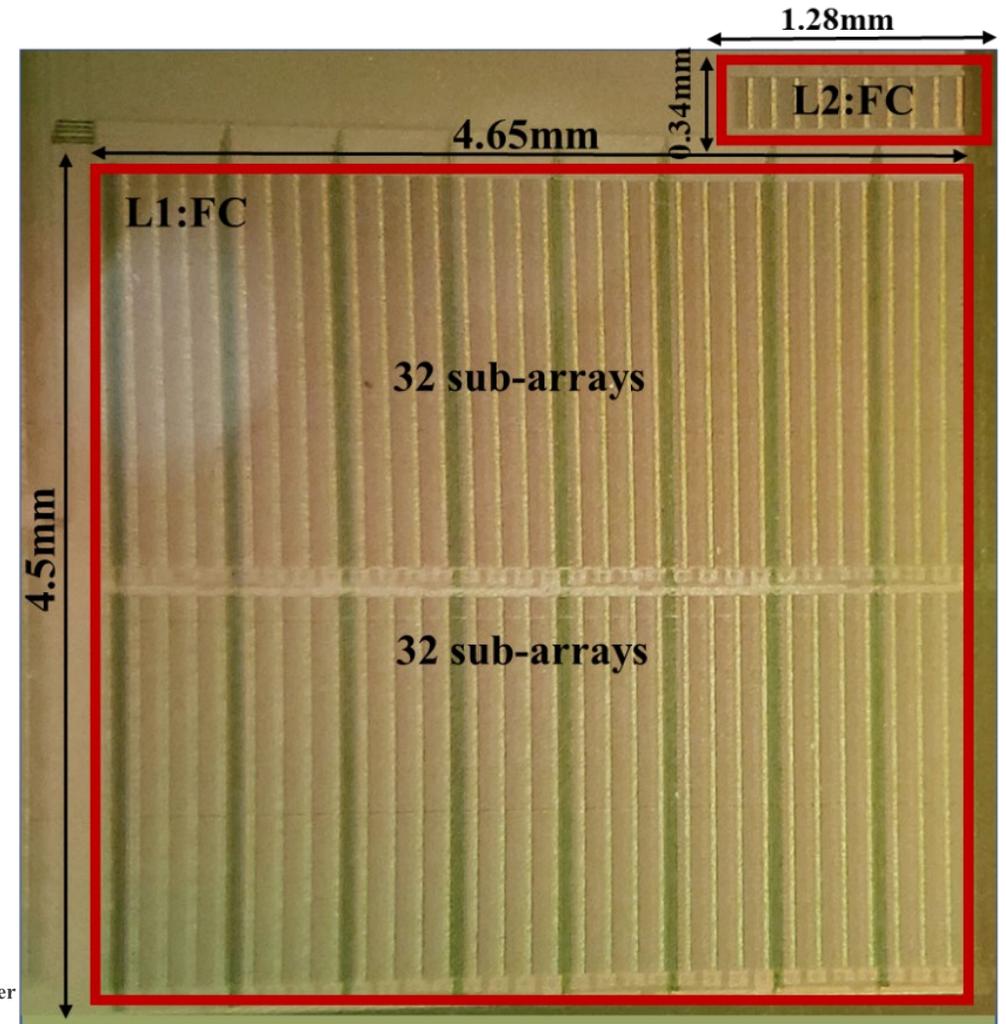
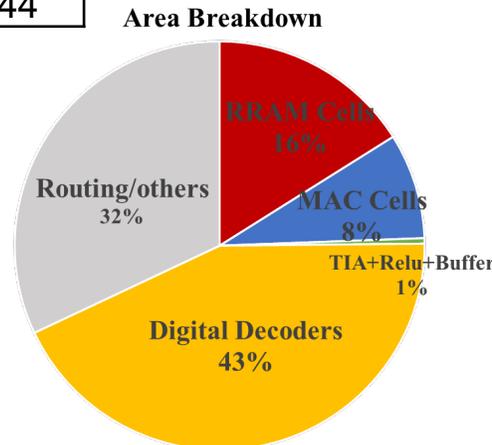
■ Two Successive FC layers

- 164 kbit RRAM Cells + 33 k MAC Cells

L1: FC	
No of sub-arrays	64
Subarray RRAM	513 x5
Subarray MACs	513
GOPS	1223
Area (mm ²)	20.9

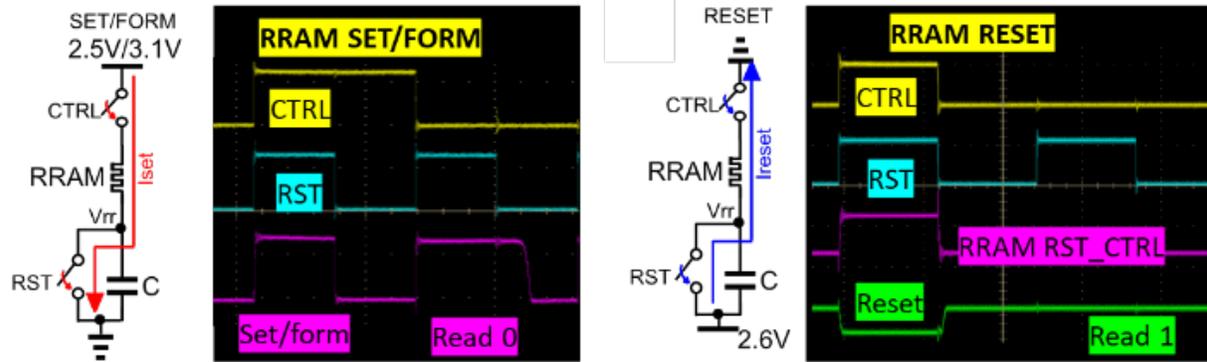
L2:FC	
No of sub-arrays	10
Subarray RRAM	65 x5
Subarray MACs	65
GOPS	24.21
Area (mm ²)	0.44

- RRAMs + MACs area ~ 24% of whole system area.
- RRAM + MAC density efficiency = 240 GOPS/ mm²

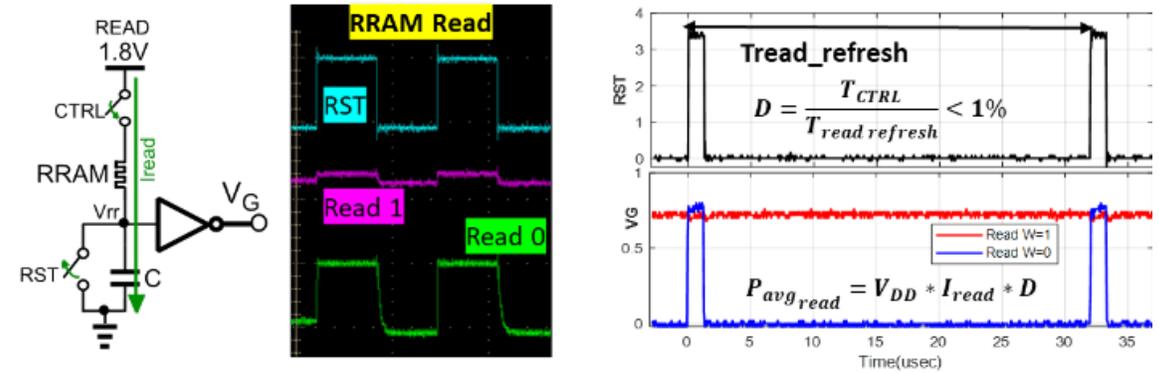


Experimental Measurements Results

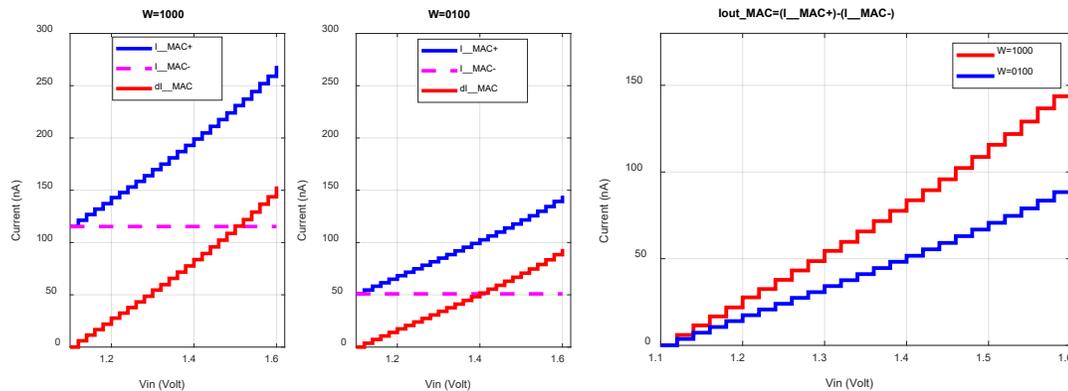
1- RRAM Programming



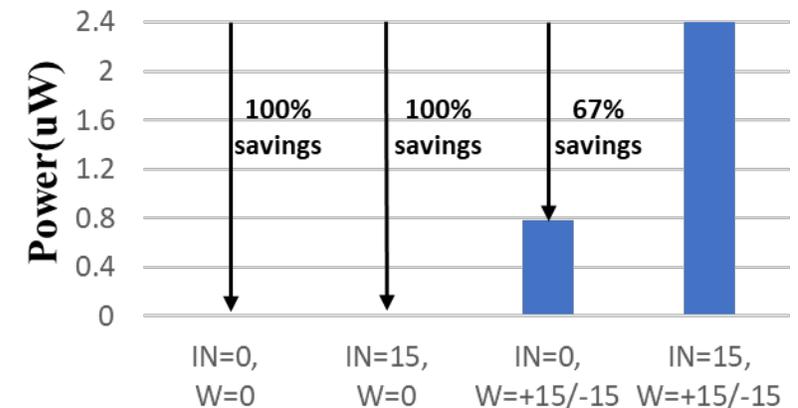
2- RRAM Duty-Cycled Read



3- MAC Cell I-V Characterization

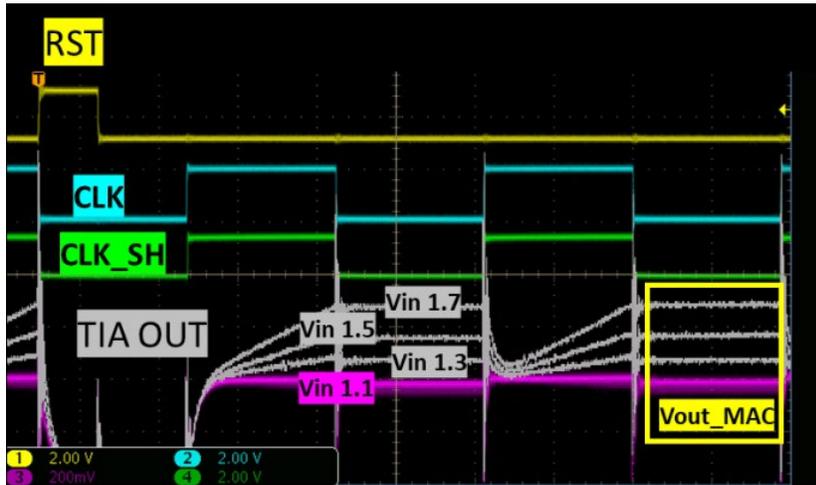


4- MAC Cell Power

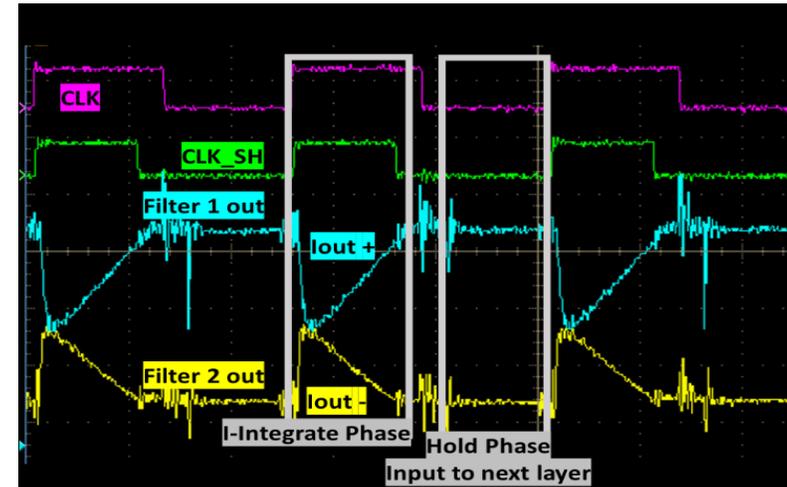


Experimental Measurements Results

5- MAC Cell + Analog Computing (1MAC + TIA+ Isub+ ReLU+ Buffer)

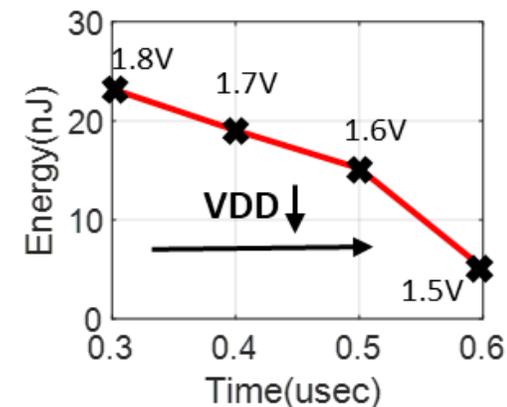


6- Fully-Connected Filters (1 filter = 64MACs+ 320 RRAMs)



7- Power, Energy, and Speed

- Verify the power/speed measured numbers with circuit simulations and models.
- Voltage scaling for higher energy-efficiency.



Measured Performance Summary

	This Work	ISSCC' 19 [1]	VLSIC'22 [2]	ISSCC'22 [3]	ISSCC'22 [4]
Technology	130-nm	55-nm	40-nm	40-nm	40-nm
Voltage	1.53V		0.9V	0.9V	0.8V-1.1V
nbits/RRAM Cell	1	3	1	1	1
On-chip RRAM Capacity	164kb L1(FC): 513x64x5b L2(FC): 65x10x5b	1Mb 8 Subarrays =8x256x512	64kb L1: 256x256x1b L2: 256x256x1b	2.25MB 288 modules =288x8KB	64kb
Input/output Precision	Analog (4b accuracy)	Digital 2b/3b	Analog	Digital 1-8b/ 32b	Digital 1b/4b
Weight Precision	5b (4b+1b sign)	3b	2b	1-8b	1b
Column Sensing Scheme	Integrating TIA	1b SA	PWM Conversion	ADC	Flash 4b-ADC
Frequency	1.7 MHz	-	100MHz	192MHz	64MHz
Throughput (GOPS) ¹	207.9 (Analog 4b/5b)	8361(2b/3b)	13.93 (Analog 8b /2b)	3880.96 (4b/4b)	
Bitwise Throughput ²	2.07 TOPS	24.5TOPS	222.88 GOPS	7.96 TOPS	5.44 GOPS
Bitwise Throughput/RRAM Capacity	25.7 TOPS/Mb	24.5 TOPS/Mb	3.48 TOPS/Mb	0.44 TOPS/Mb	0.585 TOPS/Mb
Bitwise Density Efficiency (GOPS/mm ²)	101.4	-	360	650	201.48
Power (mW)	9		0.504	131.26	0.2
Bitwise Energy Efficiency (TOPS/W)	230	131.4	431.52	60.64	26.56

Energy Efficient Analog Design at 130-nm Node

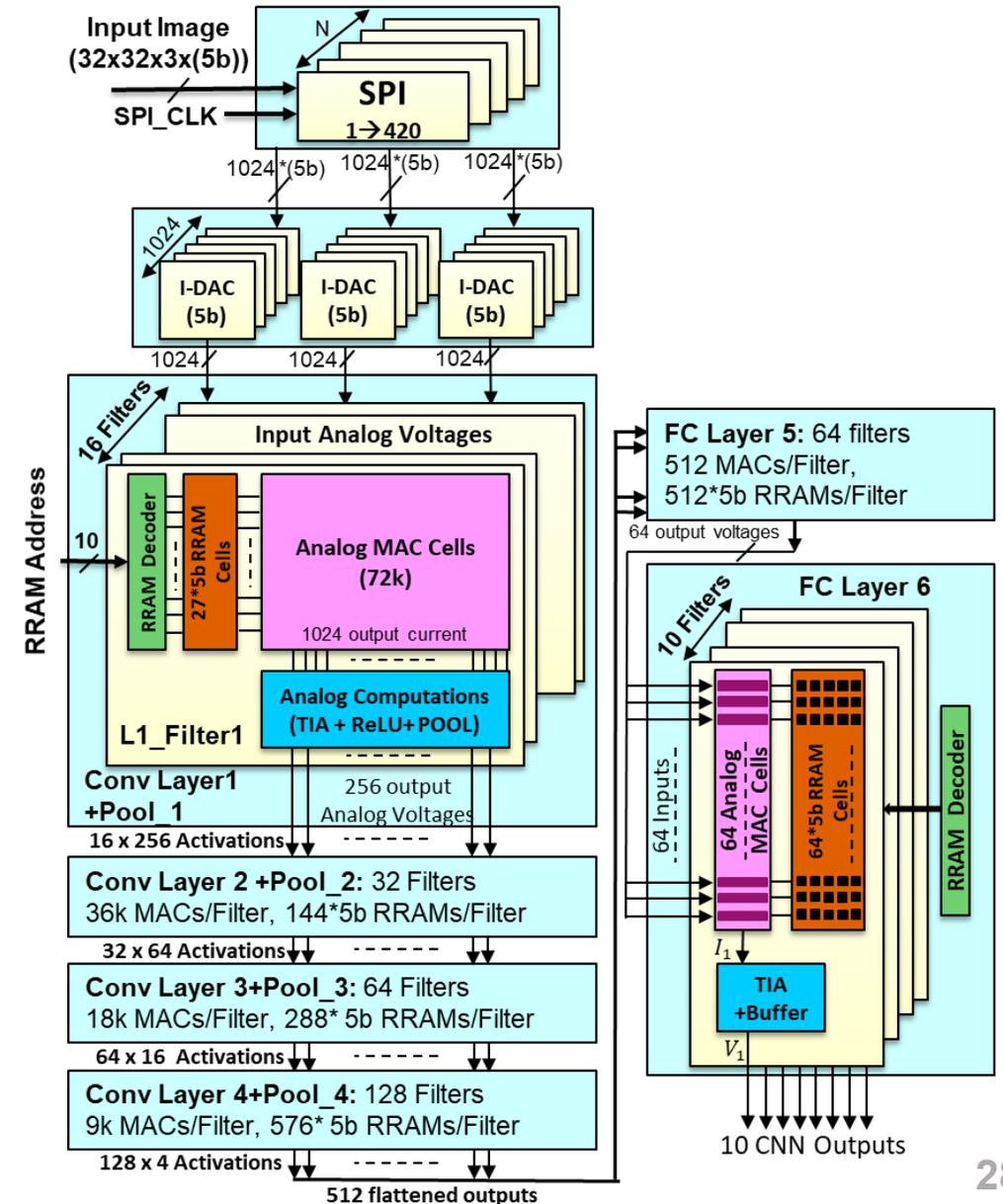
Scaling to a Fully-Parallel Architecture

■ CNN for CIFAR10 image classification

- 4 CONV. Layers + 2 FC. Layers
- 638 kbit RRAM cells for CNN weights.
- 7.6M MACs, 31k ReLU, and 7.5k Pool.

■ Parallel Computing

- Just **1 clock cycle** to generate outputs from each layer.
- No SRAM to store activation and intermediate data.
- Much faster classification.
- Get the classification in 6 clock cycles.



CNN Estimated Performance Summary

Metric	This work	JSSC'18 [6]	IBM TrueNorth [7]	BinarEye [8]	FINN [9]	JSSC'21 [10]
Tech. (nm)	130	28	28	28	28	
Voltage (V)	1.8	0.6V/0.8V	1V	0.7V	-	0.8V
ML. Algorithm	CNN (6-layer)	CNN (9-layer)	CNN	CNN (9-layer)	CNN (9-layer)	CNN
ML. dataset	CIFAR10	CIFAR10	CIFAR10	CIFAR10	CIFAR10	AlexNet
Computation mode	Analog, near memory	Mixed-signal	Neuromorphic	Digital	Digital	Digital
On-chip memory	80kB RRAM	328kB SRAM	-	-	-	3MB RRAM 32Kb SRAM3
# bits/weight	5b (4b+1b sign)	1b	1.6b	1b	1b	1.5b
# bits/activation	analog	1b	1b	1b	1b	
Clock Frequency	1 MHz	10 MHz		10.6 MHz	-	120MHz
Throughput (TOPS) ¹	2.5	0.48	-	0.48	2.5	0.123
Speed (Frames/sec)	143k	237	1.25k	945	21.9k	-
Classification Power	400mW	0.9mW	204.4mW	3.7mW	3.6W	127.9mW
Classification accuracy	84%	86%	83.41%	82%	80%	-
Classification Energy	2.4μJ	3.8 μJ	164 μJ	3.8 μJ	164 μJ	-
Energy Efficiency (TOPS/W)	6.3	533	-	132	0.7	0.96
Active area	621mm ²	6mm ²	-	2.3mm ²	FPGA ZC706	10.8mm ²
Energy-delay product ²	1.4e-11	1.6e-8	1.3e-7	4e-9	1.16e-8	-

>1.6X better Energy, and >350X better EDP

Key Message

▪ Analog Near-RRAM Compute

- Linear MAC operations
- Low-power RRAM read
- Robust against RRAM variations

▪ Analog Computations

- No ADCs/DACs between CNN layers
- Energy efficient computing

▪ Architectural Parallelism

- Tackle bottleneck of data transfer to/from memory.
- Faster operations
- 350x better energy-delay product

Acknowledgements



DARPA 3DSoC

Thank You!

Questions?

References

- [1] S. D. Spetalnick et al., "A 40nm 64kb 26.56TOPS/W 2.37Mb/mm²RRAM Binary/Compute-in-Memory Macro with 4.23x Improvement in Density and >75% Use of Sensing Dynamic Range," 2022 IEEE International Solid-State Circuits Conference (ISSCC), 2022, pp. 1-3, doi: 10.1109/ISSCC42614.2022.9731725.
- [2] Cheng-Xin Xue, et al. "16.1 a 22nm 4mb 8b-precision reram computing-in-memory macro with 11.91 to 195.7 tops/w for tiny ai edge devices." 2021 IEEE International Solid-State Circuits Conference (ISSCC). Vol. 64. IEEE, 2021.
- [3] Hongwu Jiang, et al. "A 40nm Analog-Input ADC-Free Compute-in-Memory RRAM Macro with Pulse-Width Modulation between Sub-arrays." 2022 IEEE Symposium on VLSI Technology and Circuits (VLSI Technology and Circuits). IEEE, 2022.
- [4] Muya Chang, et al. "A 40nm 60.64 TOPS/W ECC-Capable Compute-in-Memory/Digital 2.25 MB/768KB RRAM/SRAM System with Embedded Cortex M3 Microprocessor for Edge Recommendation Systems." 2022 IEEE International Solid-State Circuits Conference (ISSCC). Vol. 65. IEEE, 2022.
- [5] C. -X. Xue et al., "24.1 A 1Mb Multibit ReRAM Computing-In-Memory Macro with 14.6ns Parallel MAC Computing Time for CNN Based AI Edge Processors," 2019 IEEE International Solid- State Circuits Conference - (ISSCC), 2019, pp. 388-390, doi: 10.1109/ISSCC.2019.8662395.
- [6] D. Bankman, L. Yang, B. Moons, M. Verhelst and B. Murmann, "An Always-On 3.8 μ W/86% CIFAR-10 Mixed-Signal Binary CNN Processor With All Memory on Chip in 28-nm CMOS," in IEEE Journal of Solid-State Circuits, vol. 54, no. 1, pp. 158-172, Jan. 2019, doi: 10.1109/JSSC.2018.2869150.

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- [7] J. Sawada et al., "TrueNorth Ecosystem for Brain-Inspired Computing: Scalable Systems, Software, and Applications," SC '16: Proceedings of the International Conference for High Performance Computing, Networking, Storage and Analysis, 2016, pp. 130-141, doi: 10.1109/SC.2016.11.
- [8] B. Moons, D. Bankman, L. Yang, B. Murmann, and M. Verhelst, "BinarEye: An always-on energy-accuracy-scalable binary CNN processor with all memory on chip in 28nm CMOS," in Proc. Custom Integr. Circuits Conf. (CICC), Apr. 2018, pp. 1–4.
- [9] Umuroglu, Yaman, et al. "Finn: A framework for fast, scalable binarized neural network inference." Proceedings of the 2017 ACM/SIGDA international symposium on field-programmable gate arrays. 2017.
- [10] Z. Li et al., "RRAM-DNN: An RRAM and Model-Compression Empowered All-Weights-On-Chip DNN Accelerator," in IEEE Journal of Solid-State Circuits, vol. 56, no. 4, pp. 1105-1115, April 2021, doi: 10.1109/JSSC.2020.3045369.

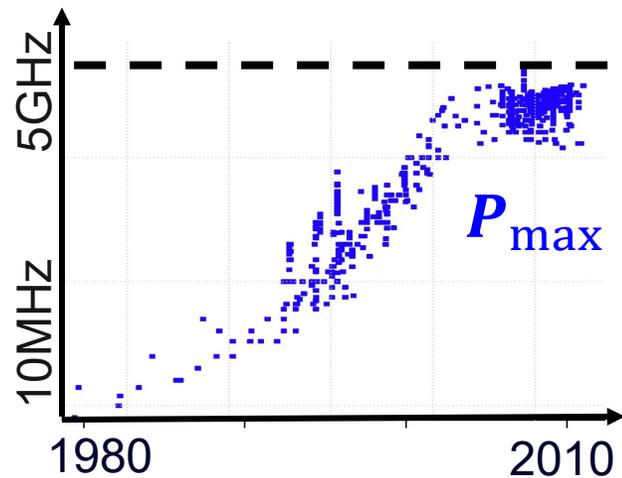
Thank You!

Questions?

Back-up Slides

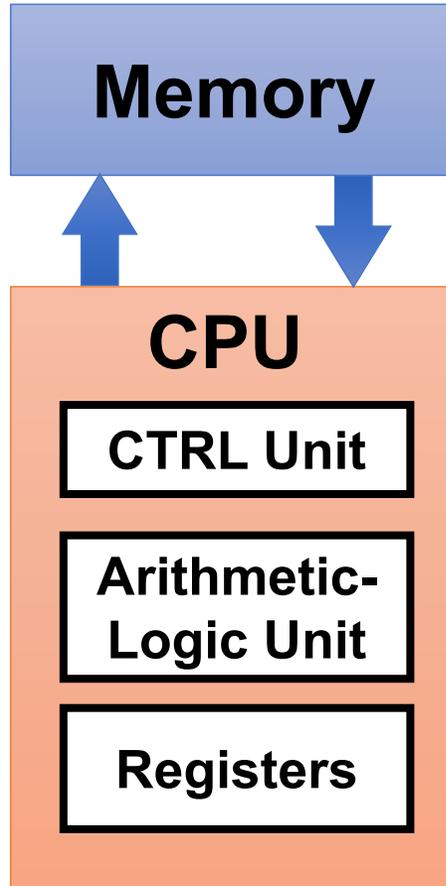
Motivation: Computing Limitations

Power-Wall



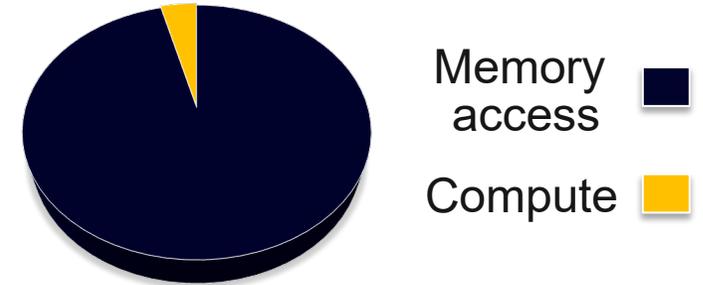
Limited Power Budget

Memory



Memory-Wall

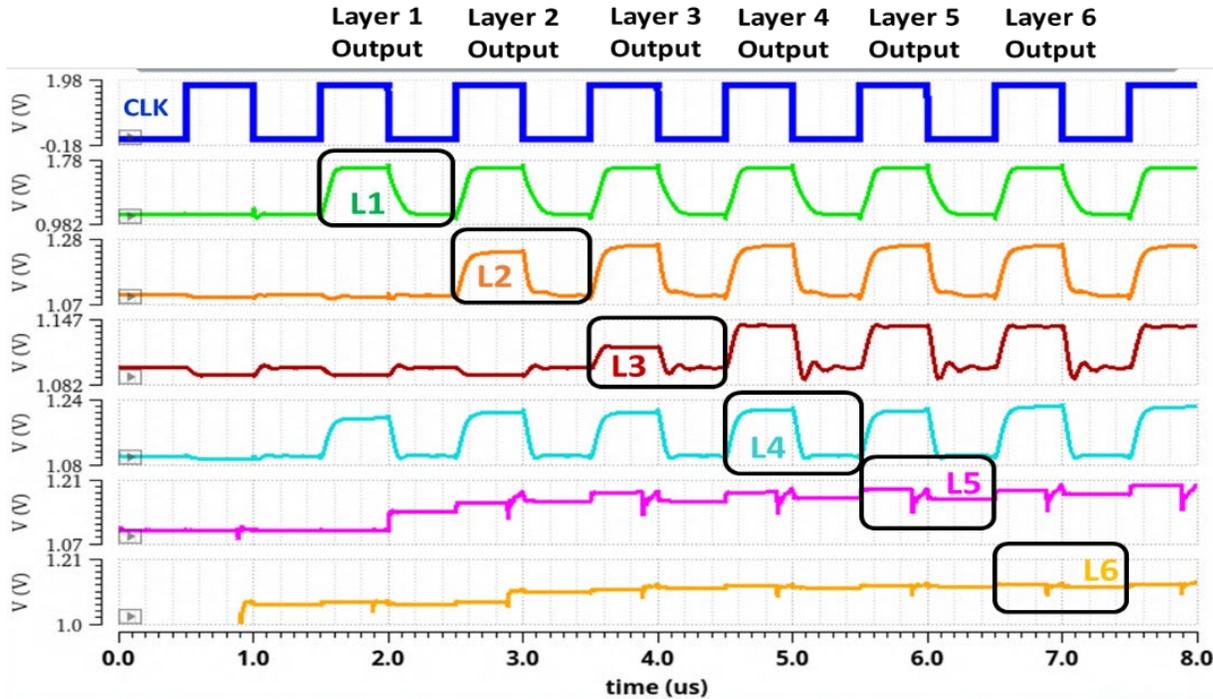
Execution time



Limited Bandwidth

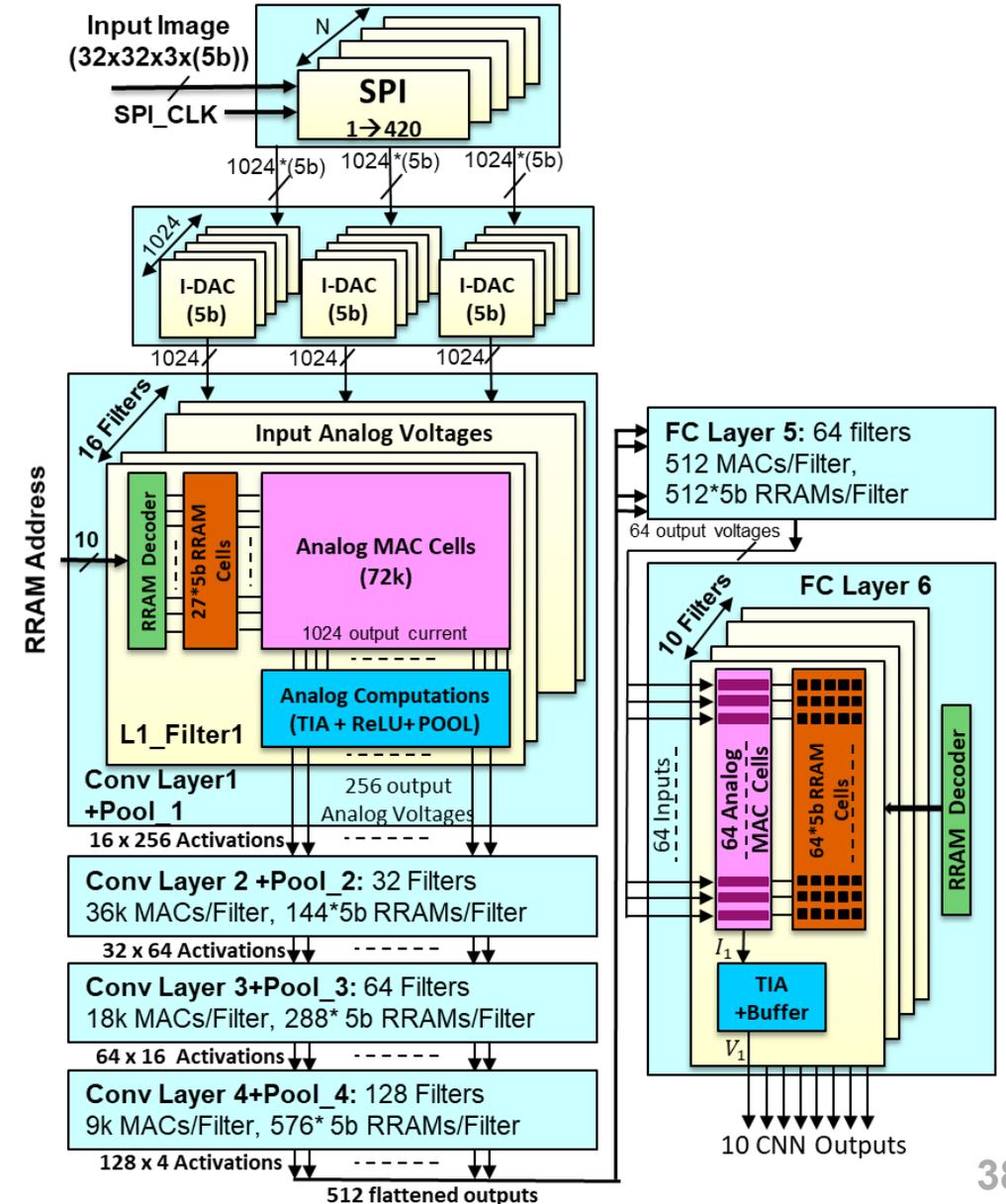
Scaling to a Fully-Parallel Architecture

Transient Simulation



Whole CNN latency \approx No of CNN layers $\times T_{CLK}$

Only 6 clock cycles to generate output after loading input image



CIFAR 10: Proposed Model (Accuracy = 83%)

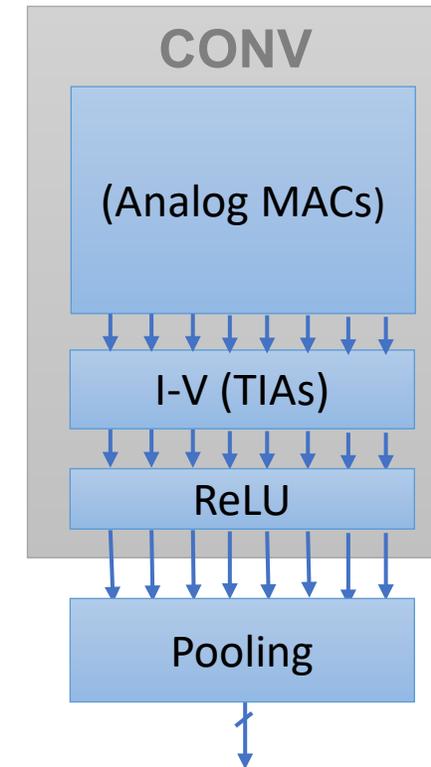
Layer	Input Activations	Output Activations	# Weights	# MACs
Conv1 : 16 (3x3)	32x32x3	32x32x16=16k	16x3x3x3=432	432k
Average Pooling		16x16x16		
Conv2 : 32 (3x3)	16x16x16	16x16x32=8k	32x3x3x16=4.5k	1.125M
Average Pooling		8x8x32		
Conv3: 64 (3x3)	8x8x32	8x8x64=4k	64x3x3x32=18k	1.125M
Average Pooling		4x4x64		
Conv4: 128 (3x3)	4x4x64	4x4x128=2k	128x3x3x64=72k	1.125M
Average Pooling		2x2x128=512		
FC1: 512--64	512	64	512x64=33k	33k
FC2: 64--10	64	10	640	640
Total		30k	128.5k * 5b= 642.5kb	3.8M

Analog Circuits Noise

- Represent mean & sigma of analog computation noise as a percentage of the whole output voltage dynamic range.
- Inject noise as a percentage random variation of output activations in the inference model.

Noise Extraction from simulations

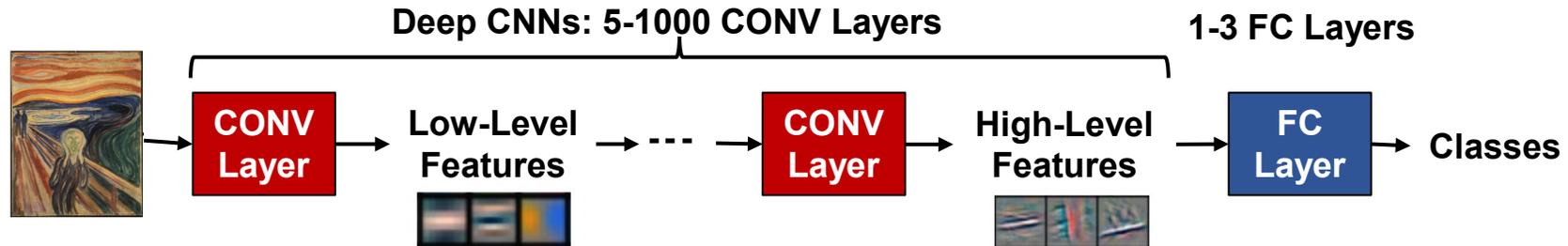
Layer	Mean	RMS Noise
CONV1	0.17%	2.3%
POOL1	0.017%	0.16%
CONV2	0.02%	2.3%
POOL2	0.16%	0.11%
CONV3	0.17%	2.9%
POOL3	0.15%	0.1%
CONV4	-0.12%	4.1%
POOL4	0.15%	0.1%
FC1	0.33%	6.2%
FC2	0.08%	4.7%



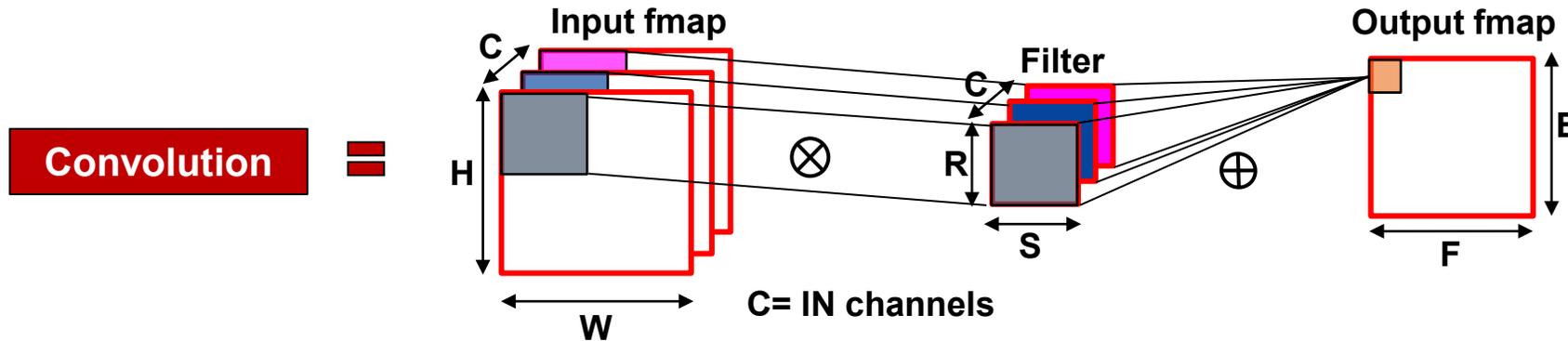
Accuracy loss < 1.5%

Convolutional Neural Networks: CNNs

- CNNs provide state-of-the-art accuracy for wide range of tasks.



- CNNs basic operation is dot product or multiply and accumulate (MAC).



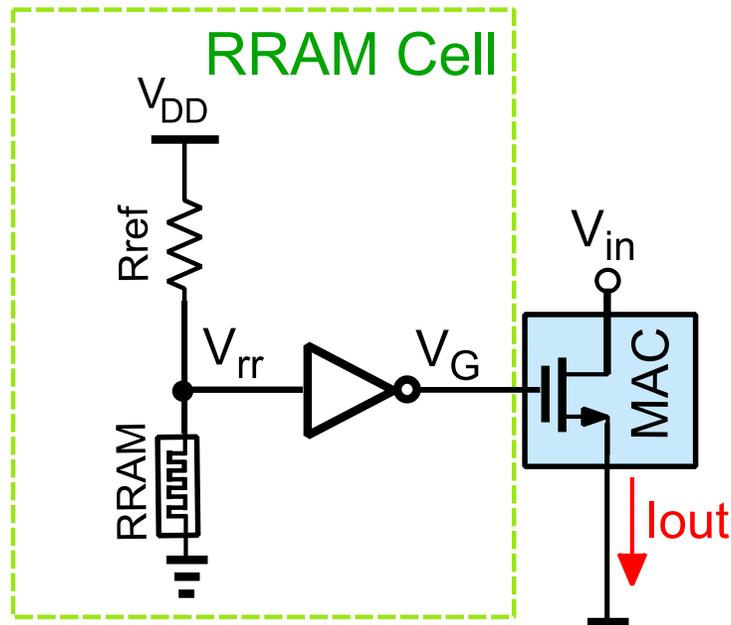
$$Y_{(E,F)} = \sum_{c=1}^C \sum_{s=1}^S \sum_{r=1}^R \text{IN}(r + E, s + F, c) * W(r, s, c)$$

The equation is annotated with boxes: $Y_{(E,F)}$ points to **Output Layer**, $\text{IN}(r + E, s + F, c)$ points to **Input Layer**, and $W(r, s, c)$ points to **Filter weights**.

Proposed RRAM Cell

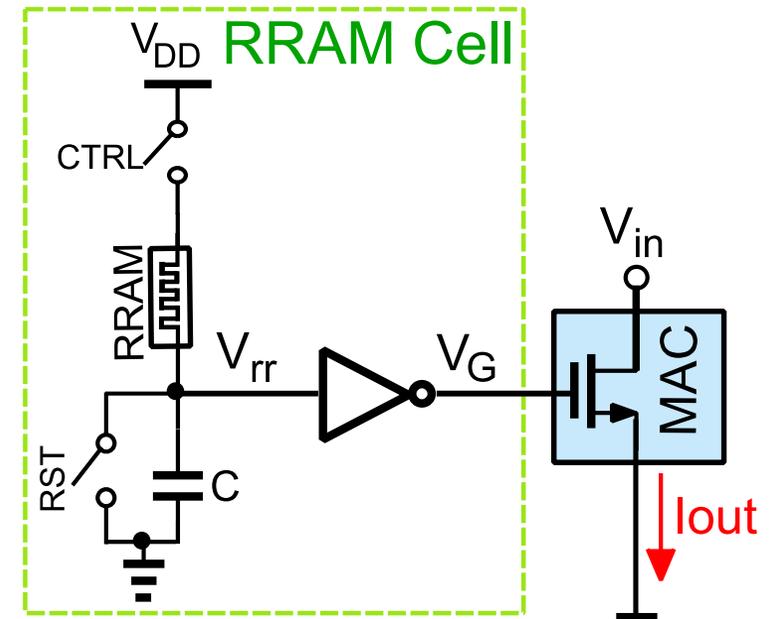
- **RRAM cell turns on/off MAC transistor.**

➤ RRAM Cell Output = $V_{DD}/0$ depending on the RRAM State (HRS/ LRS)



Resistive Divider + Inverter

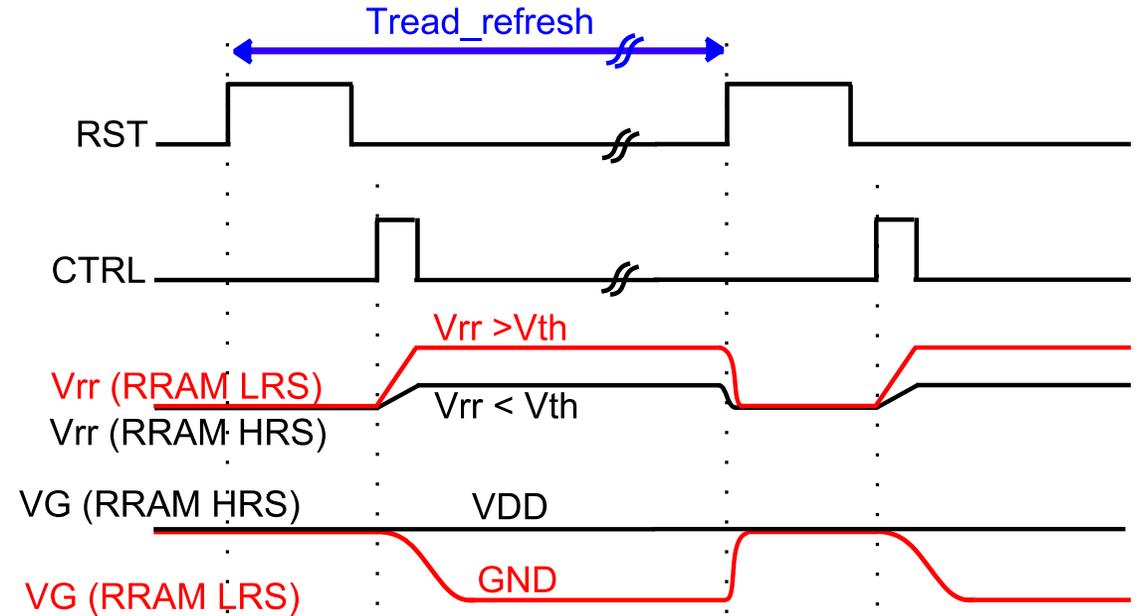
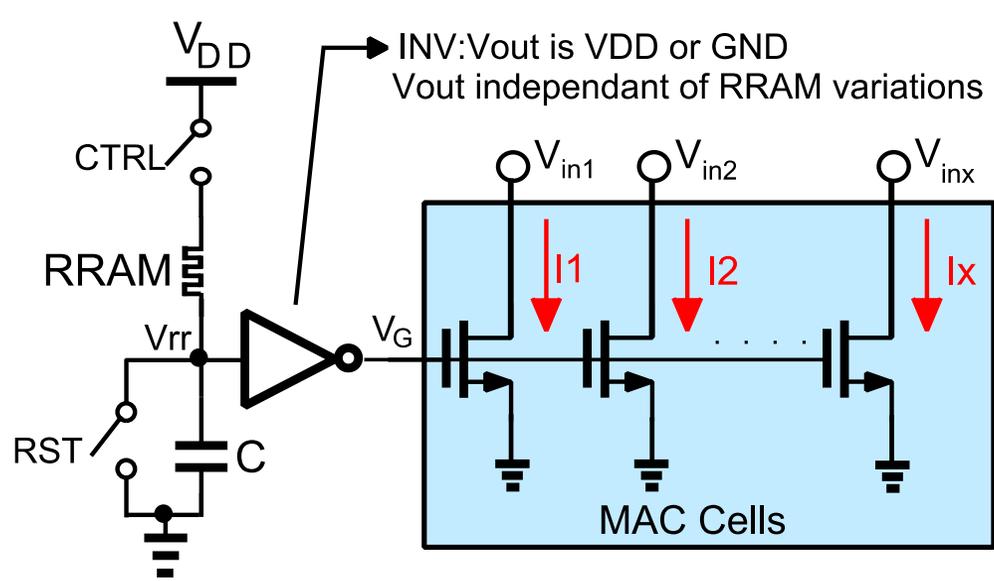
Static Power Consumption



Switches + Capacitor + Inverter

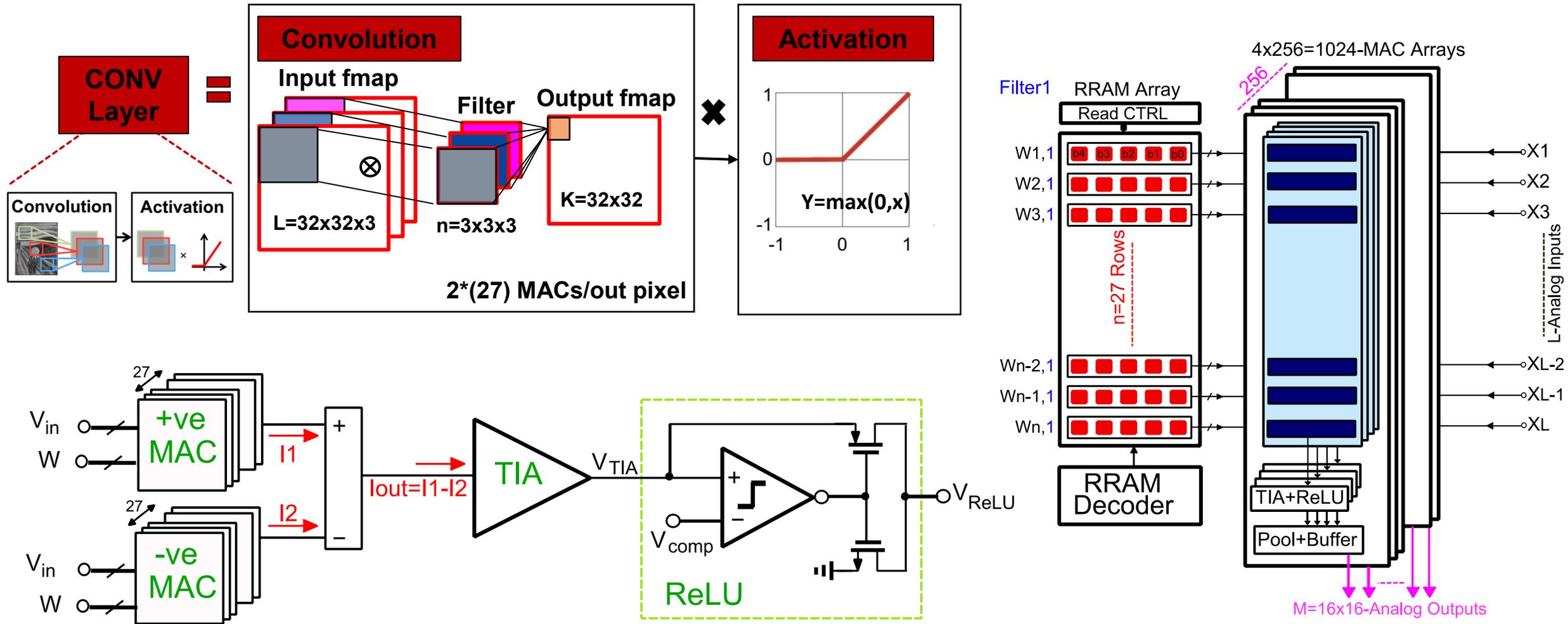
Low Power Consumption

Proposed Pulsed RRAM Read

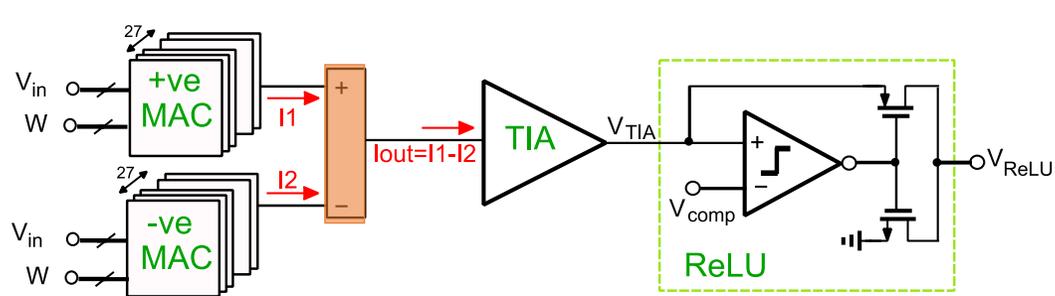


- **Read once at start of the operation**
No static power and leakage power.
- **RRAM Cell output can be shared with many MAC cells.**
 - Reduce number of RRAM cells on chips.
- **RRAM Cell output independent of RRAM variations**
 - Works with 50% RRAM variations and Ron/Roff down to 5

Convolution Layer Implementation

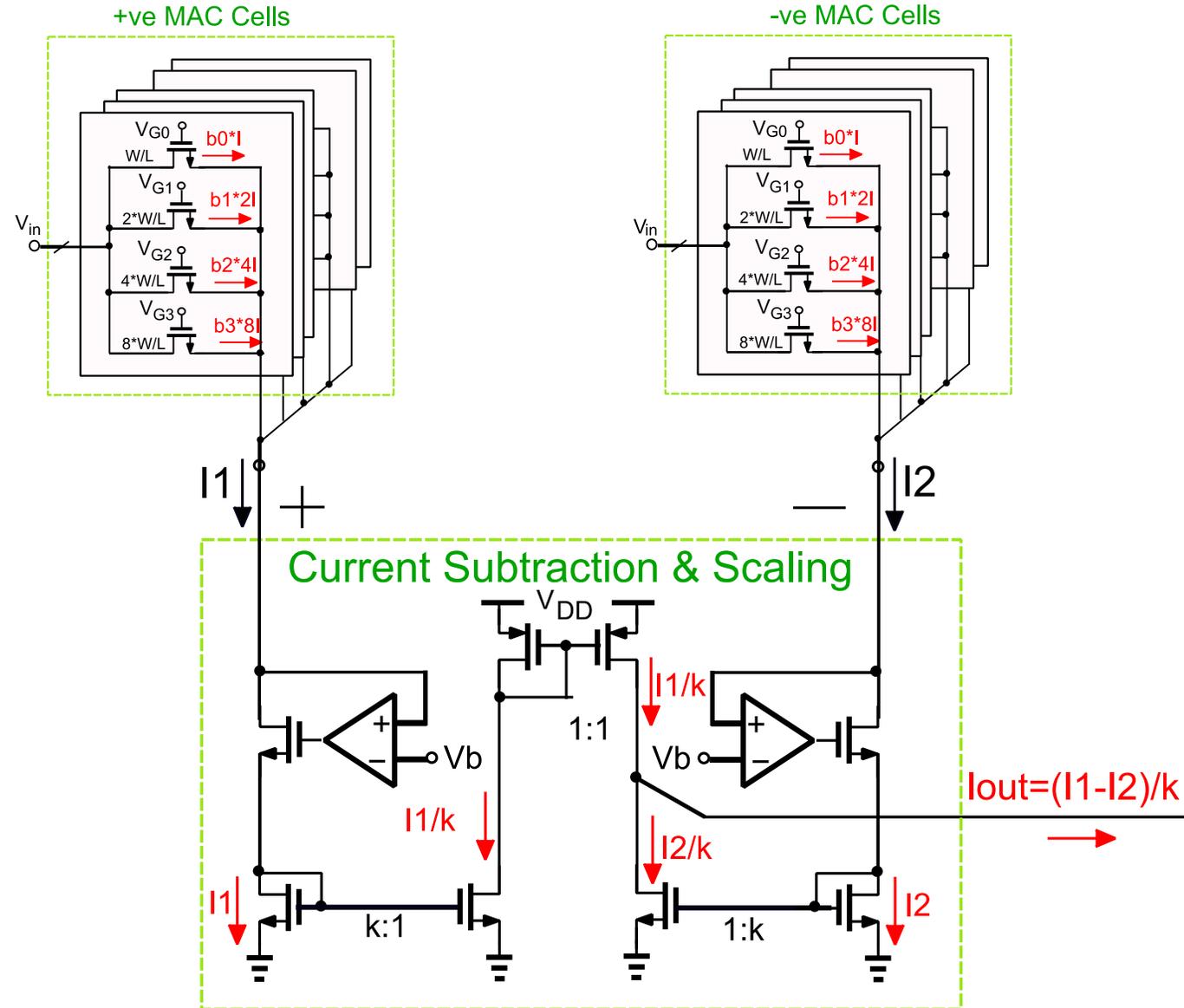


Low-Power Analog Circuits (I-Sense)

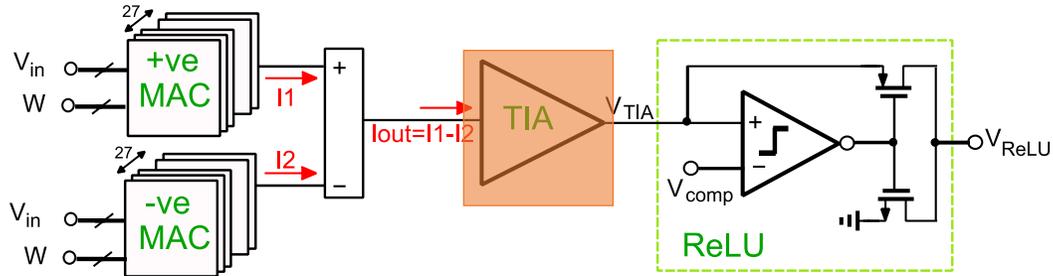


■ Differential Current Sensing

- $I_{out} \propto \sum W * V_{in}$
- Opamps to regulate the MAC transistors' source terminals.
- Mirror and scale currents down.
 - Low Power
 - Relax TIA requirements.



Low-Power Analog Circuits (TIA)



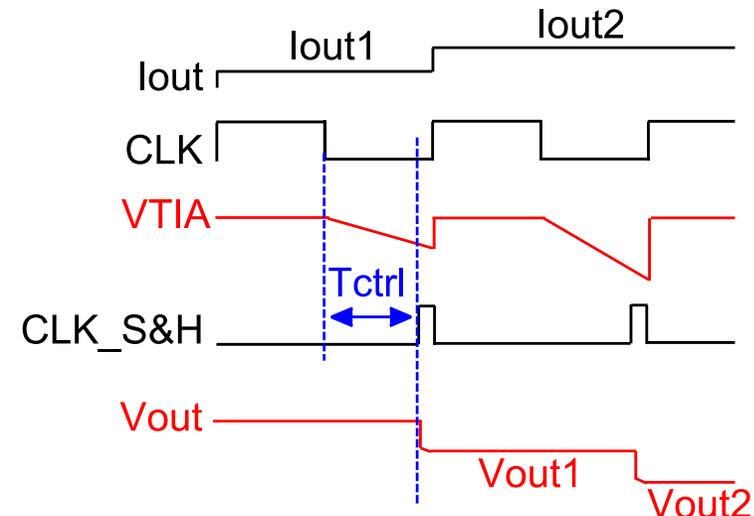
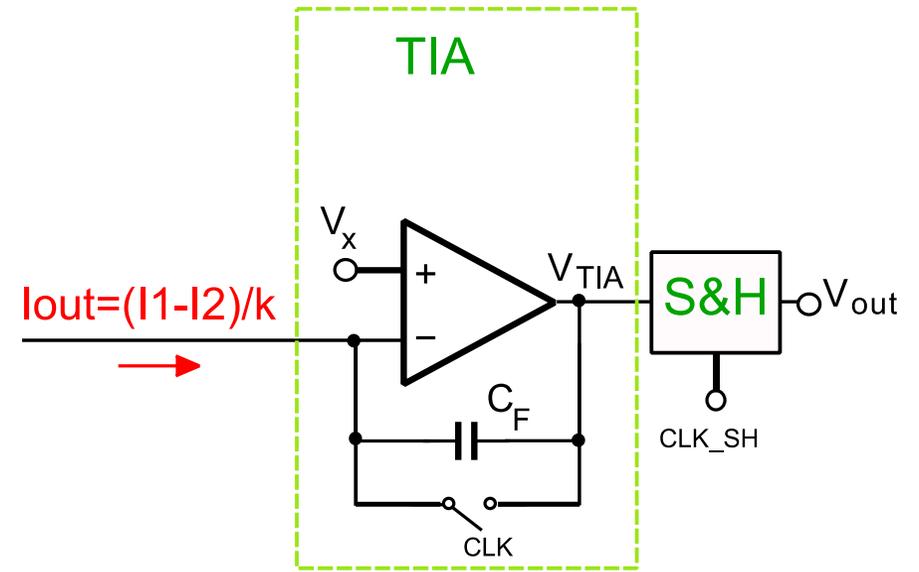
Current-Integrating Capacitive TIA

- Lower noise and power vs resistive TIAs
- Small area

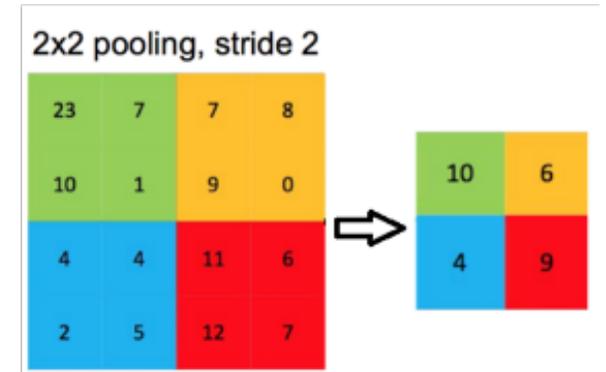
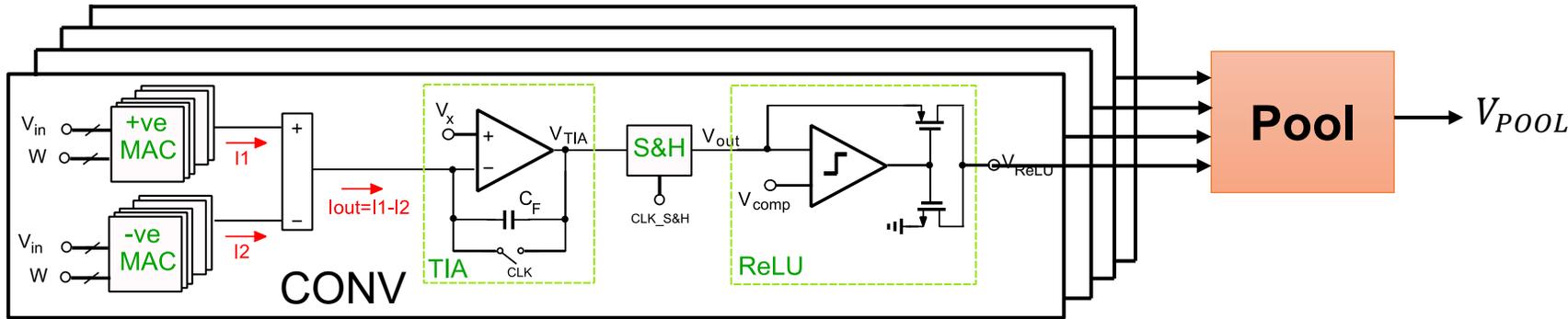
- Controllable and high gain

$$V_{out} = \frac{I_{out}}{C_f} * T_{ctrl} = I_{out} * G_{TIA}$$

- Design to support maximum input MAC currents.
- $GBW \ll 1/T_{ctrl}$



Low-Power Analog Circuits (Pool)

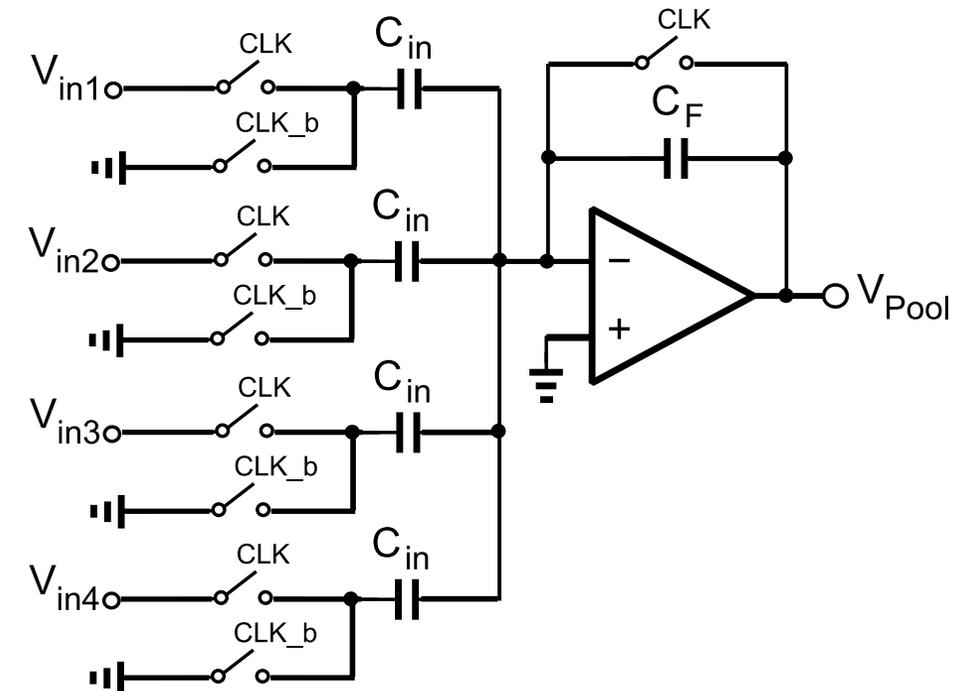


2x2 Average POOL

- Summing amplifier configuration.

$$V_{POOL} = -\frac{C_{in}}{C_f} * \sum_{n=1}^4 V_{in_n}$$

- Works as a buffer to drive the following layer.
- Design for fast and stable settling.
- C_f stores the analog output.



Future Directions: Analog NMC Processing Arrays

- **Analog processing near Memory Array**
 - Integrate memory arrays with analog MAC arrays.
- **Investigate different NV memory devices: MRAM, PCM, FRAM**
 - 3D integrate memory cells with processor.
- **Improve MAC design**
 - Non-linear quantization.
 - Support higher IN/W precision.
- **Investigate energy-efficient techniques**
 - Pipelining the analog processing arrays.
 - Power-gating analog MAC arrays.

