

# Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) & their relevance in particle physics

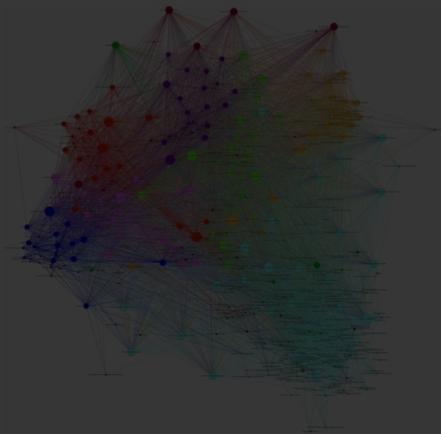
Tobias Golling



UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE

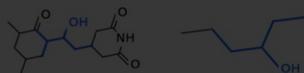
FACULTY OF SCIENCE

# Graph-structure



# Social networks

Fragments most activated by pro-solubility feature



Fragments most activated by anti-solubility feature



# Drug molecules

ERUM-DATA-HUB & DIG-UM PRESENT

# ACTIVE TRAINING COURSE ADVANCED DEEP LEARNING

INTENSIVE COURSE ON GRAPH NEURAL NETWORKS, TRANSFORMERS, NORMALIZING FLOWS & AUTOENCODERS

## 28 NOV - 1 DEZ 22

LANDHAUS NORDHELLE MEINERZHAGEN

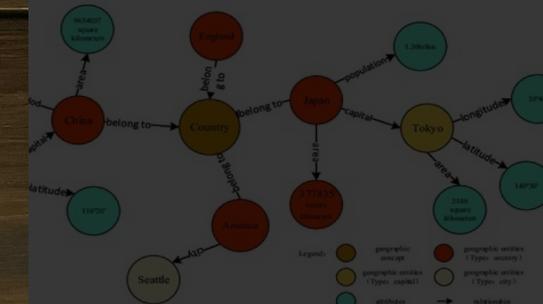
**Contact & Information:**  
[www.erumdatahub.de](http://www.erumdatahub.de)  
[info@erumdatahub.de](mailto:info@erumdatahub.de)  
<https://indico.scc.kit.edu/event/2852/>

GEFÖRDERT VOM  
 Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung

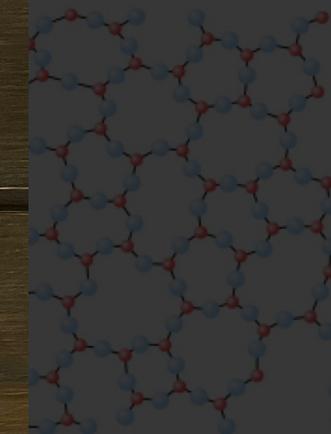
 ERUM DATA HUB

Organized by ErUM-Data-Hub:  
Prof. Dr. Martin Erdmann  
Angela Warkentin  
Peter Fackeldey

# Anywhere...

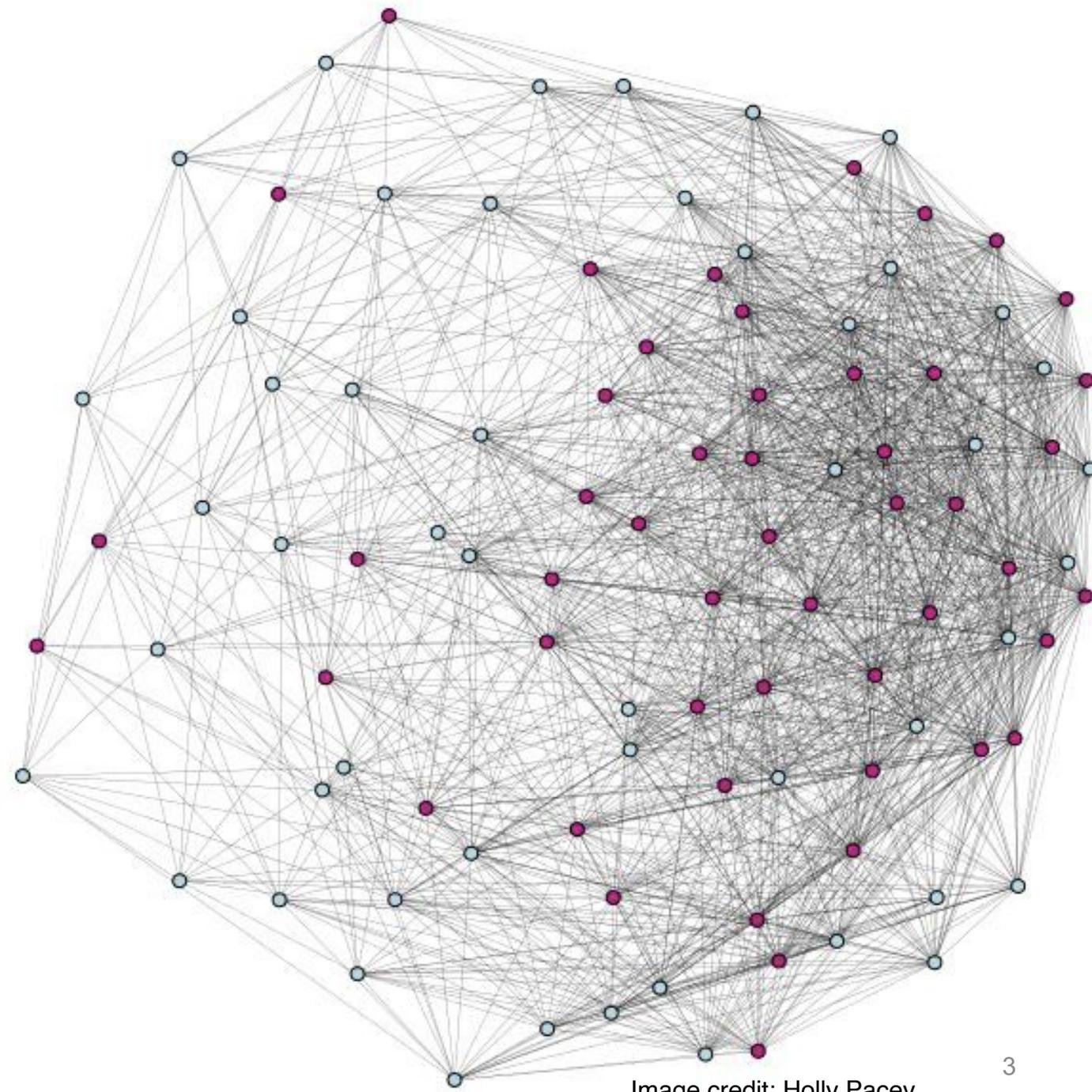


# Knowledge graphs

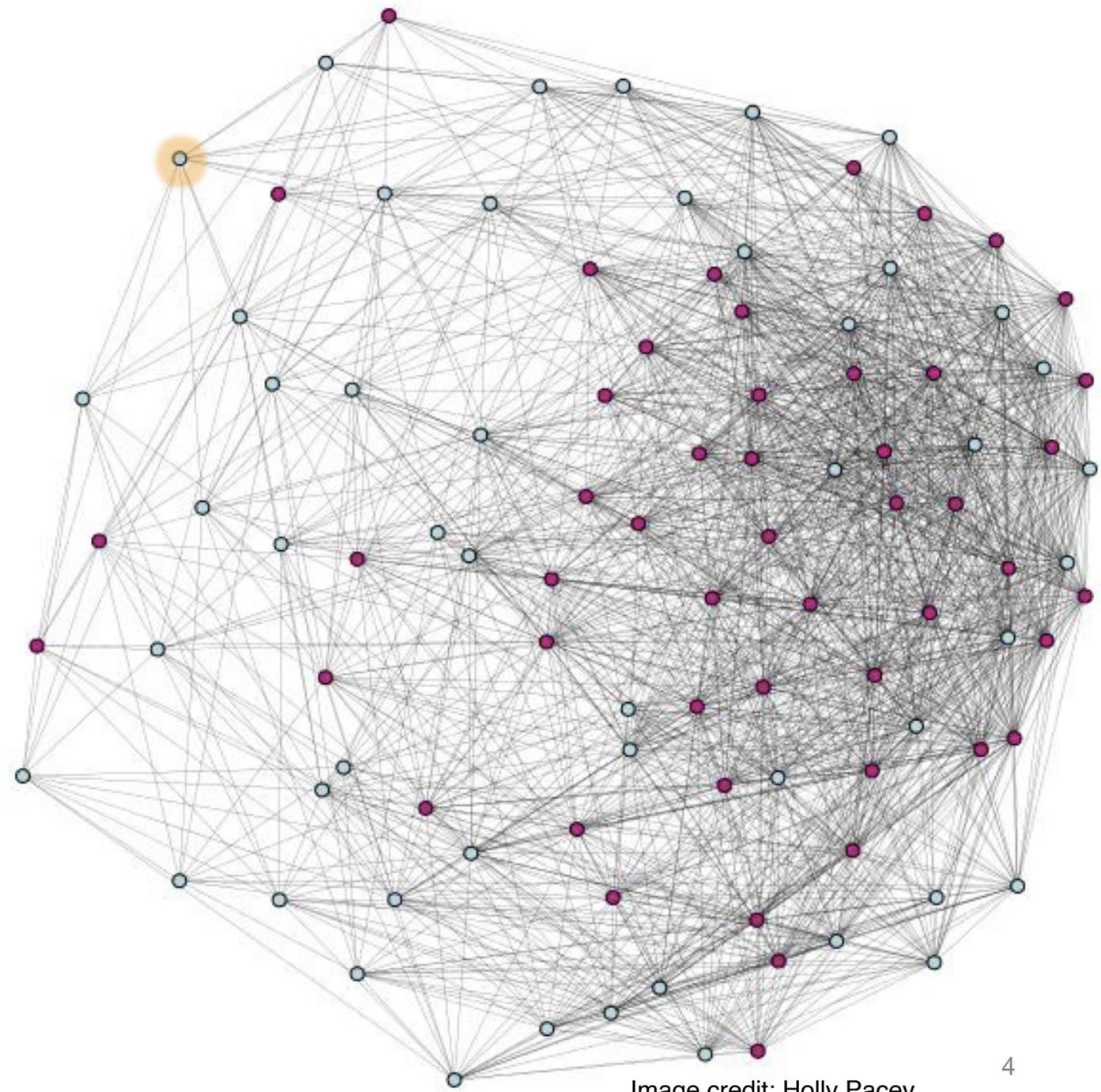


# Glass structure

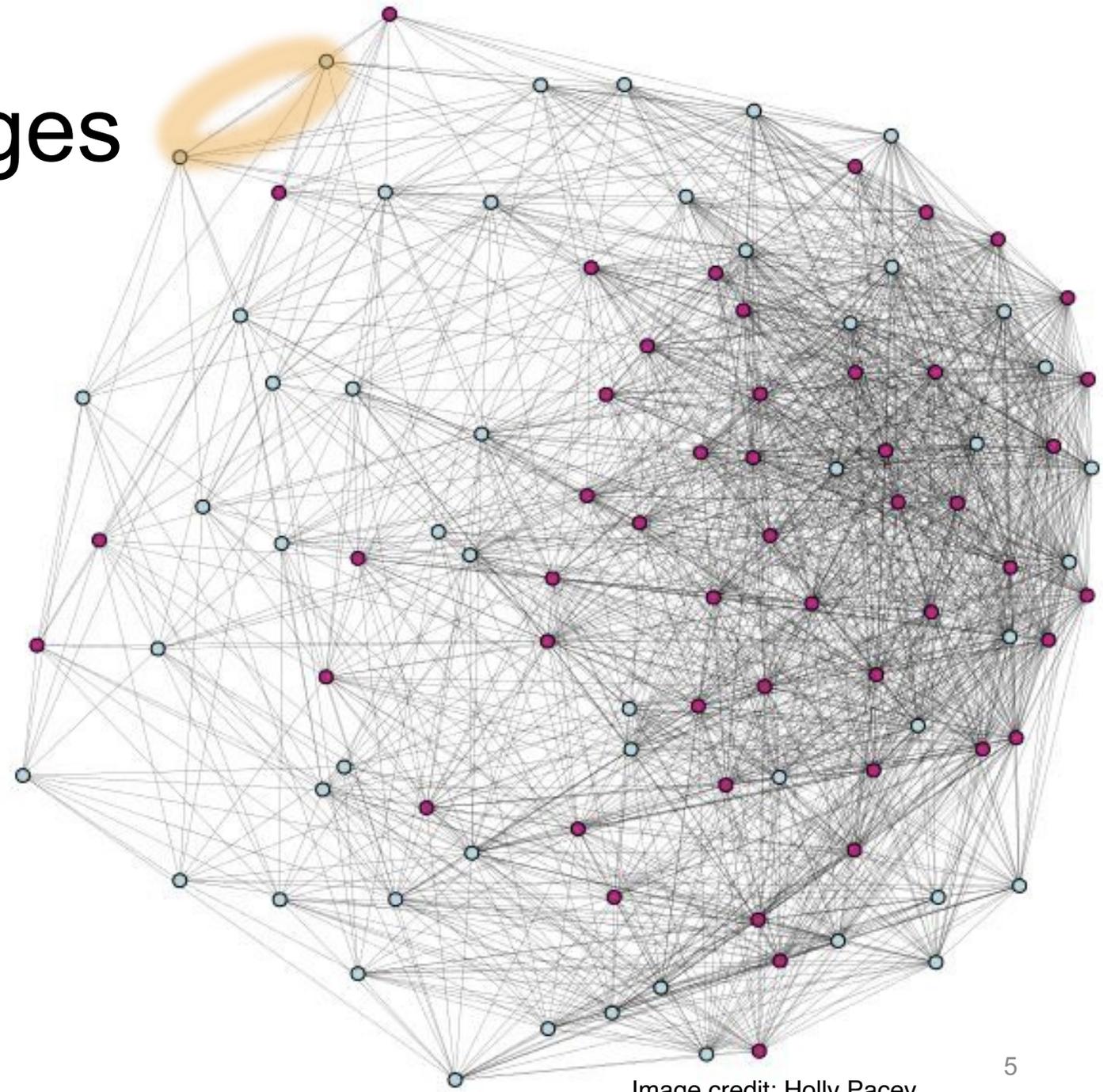
This is a graph



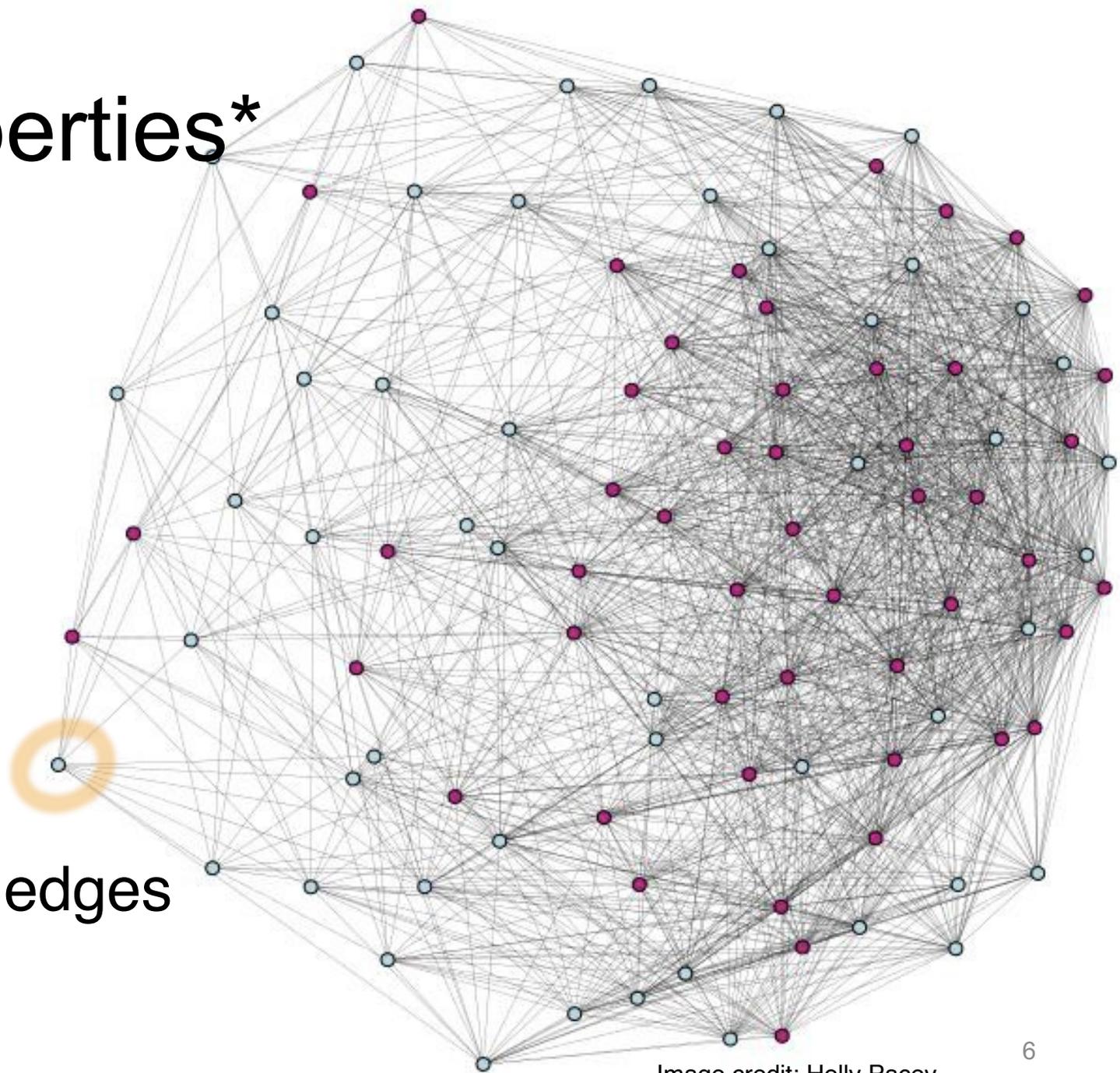
It has nodes



# Connected by edges



# Nodes have properties\*



e.g. how many connected edges

\*Properties = features = attributes

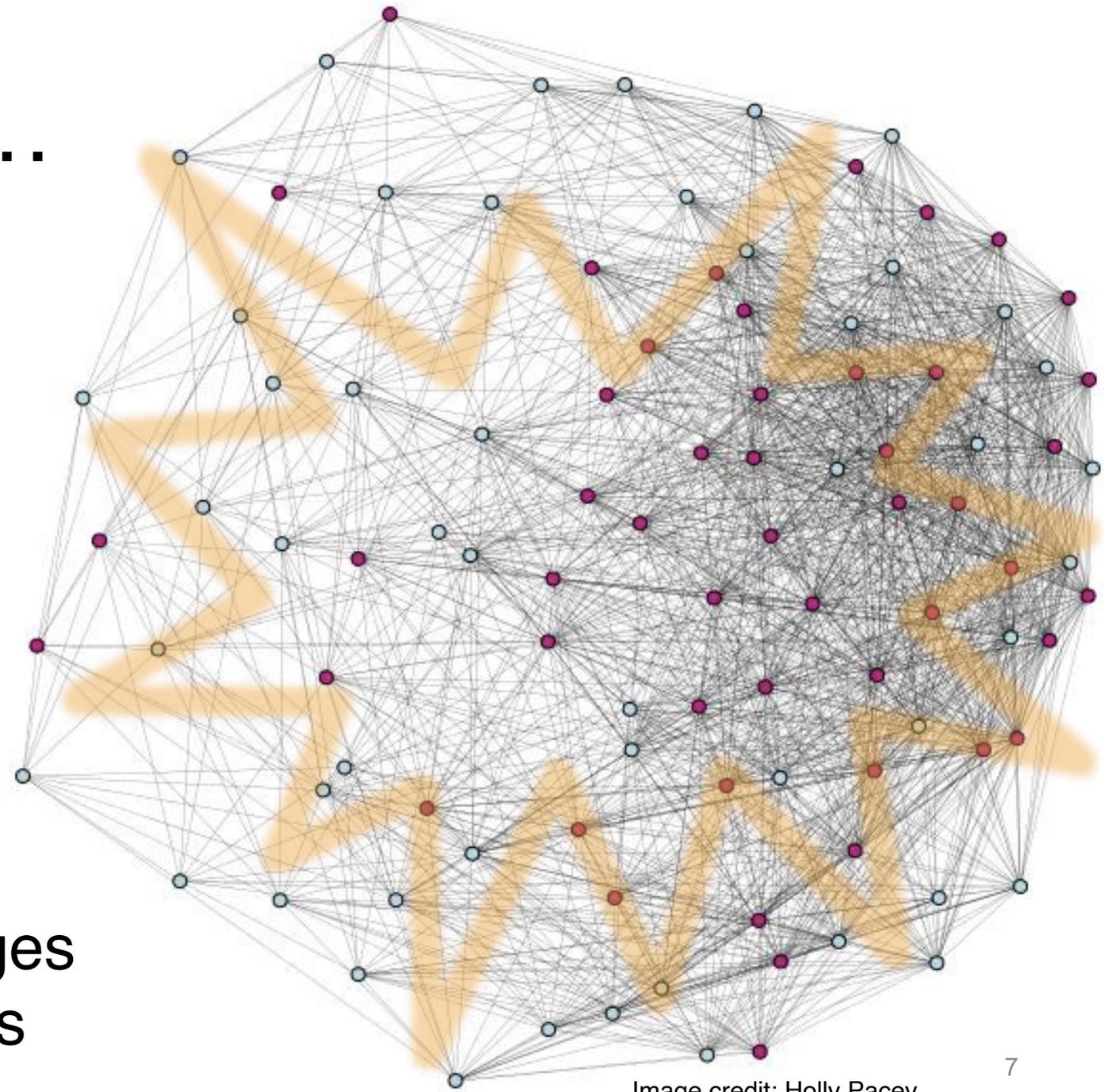
# Properties at...

Node level

Edge level

Graph level

e.g. number of edges  
in connected nodes





# Many GNN success stories in past few years

In Science and beyond...

# AlphaFold (DeepMind)

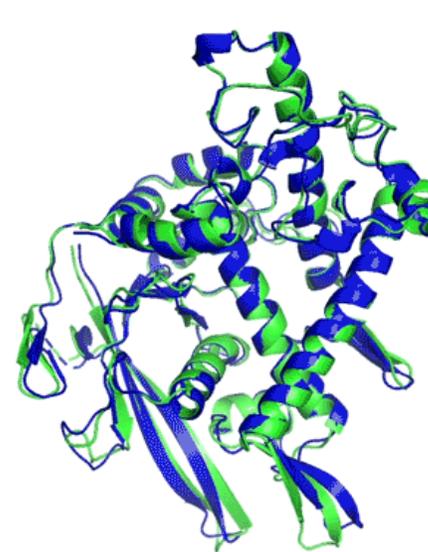
Predict 3D protein shape from sequence of amino acids with GNNs

Applications:

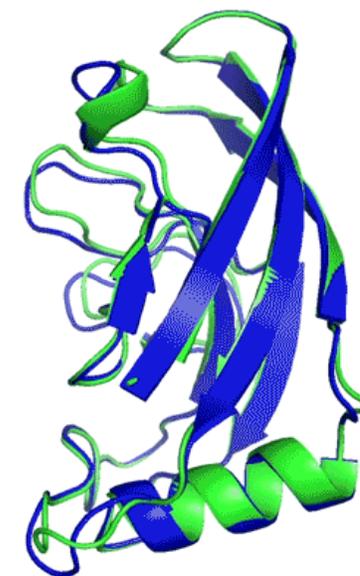
Drug discovery

Engineer enzymes

...



T1037 / 6vr4  
90.7 GDT  
(RNA polymerase domain)

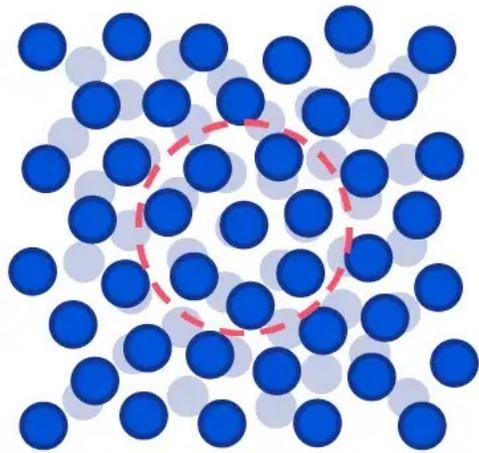


T1049 / 6y4f  
93.3 GDT  
(adhesin tip)

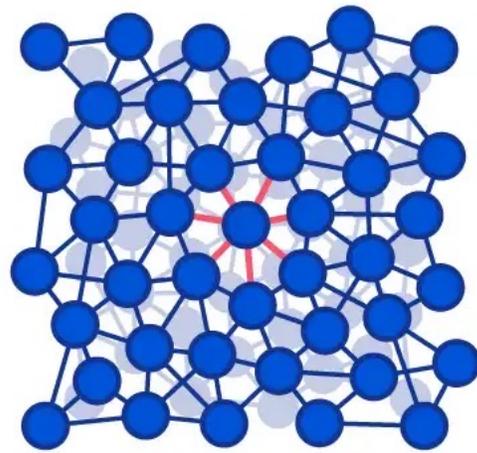
● Experimental result  
● Computational prediction

# Glass dynamics simulation (DeepMind)

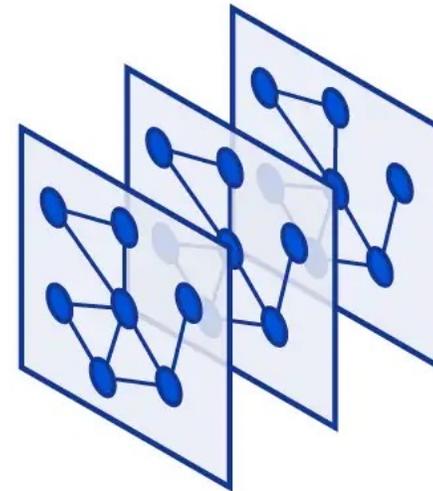
A



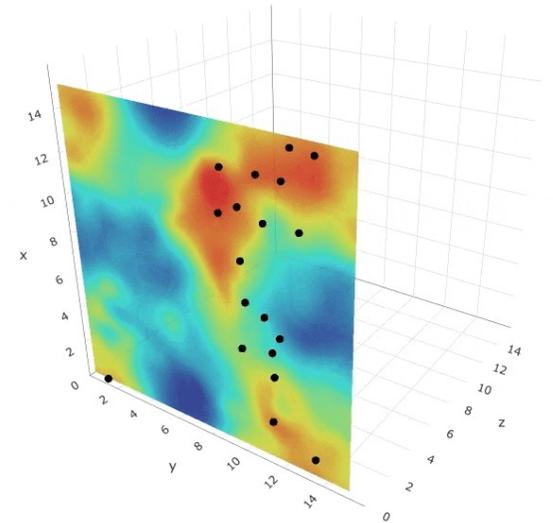
3D input



Graph input



Graph network

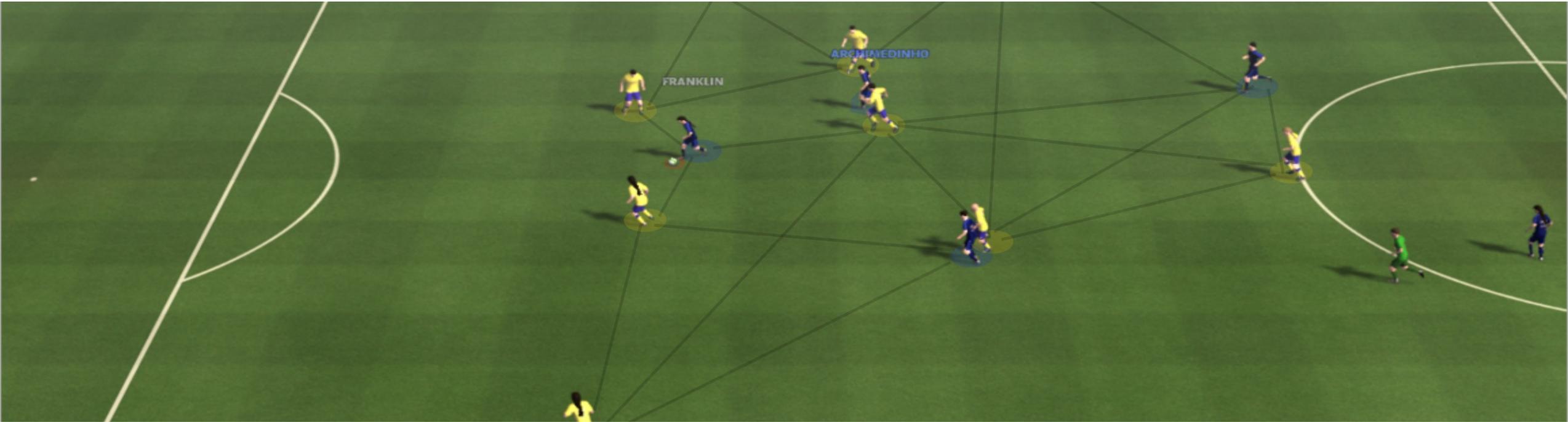




FIFA WORLD CUP  
Qatar 2022

# On current occasion...

<https://www.kaggle.com/c/google-football>

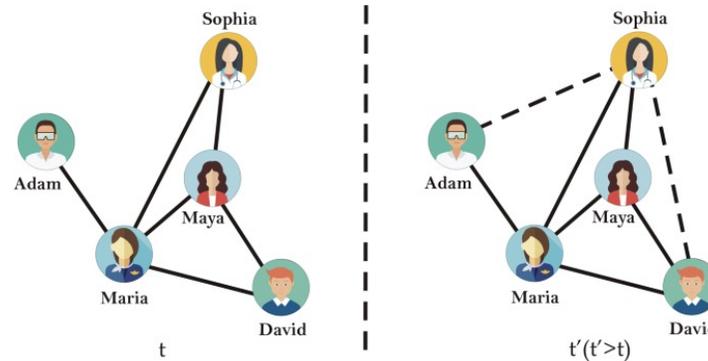


- Objective: build an autonomous football-team agent
  - Players = nodes
  - Player interactions = edges

# Discover relational structure

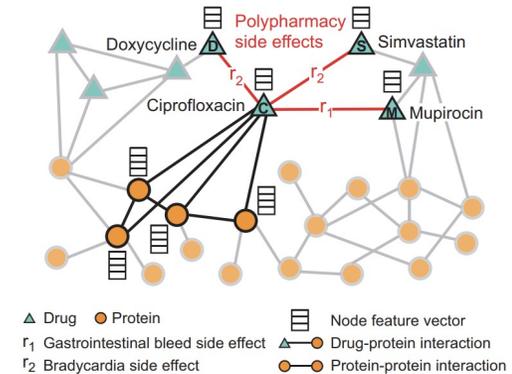
- Node/edge attribute prediction (e.g. drug side effects)

- Link prediction



- Node prediction (Object discovery)

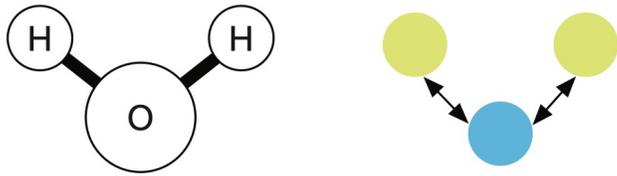
- Learn optimal graph structure for downstream task



# Introduction to graph networks

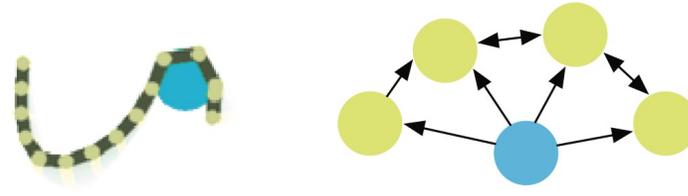
(a)

Molecule



(b)

Mass-Spring System



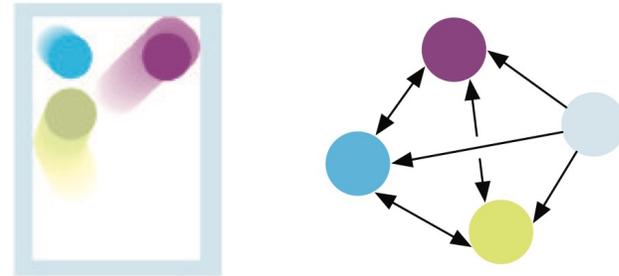
(c)

$n$ -body System



(d)

Rigid Body System

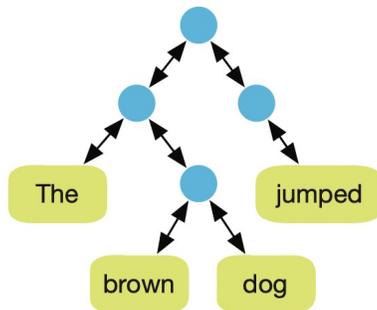


“Relational inductive biases, deep learning, and graph networks”

(e)

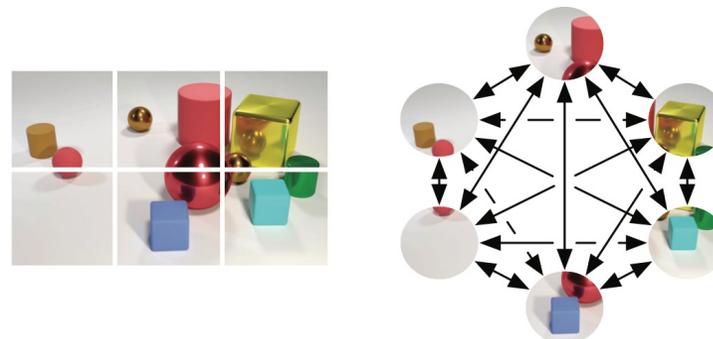
Sentence and Parse Tree

The brown dog jumped.



(f)

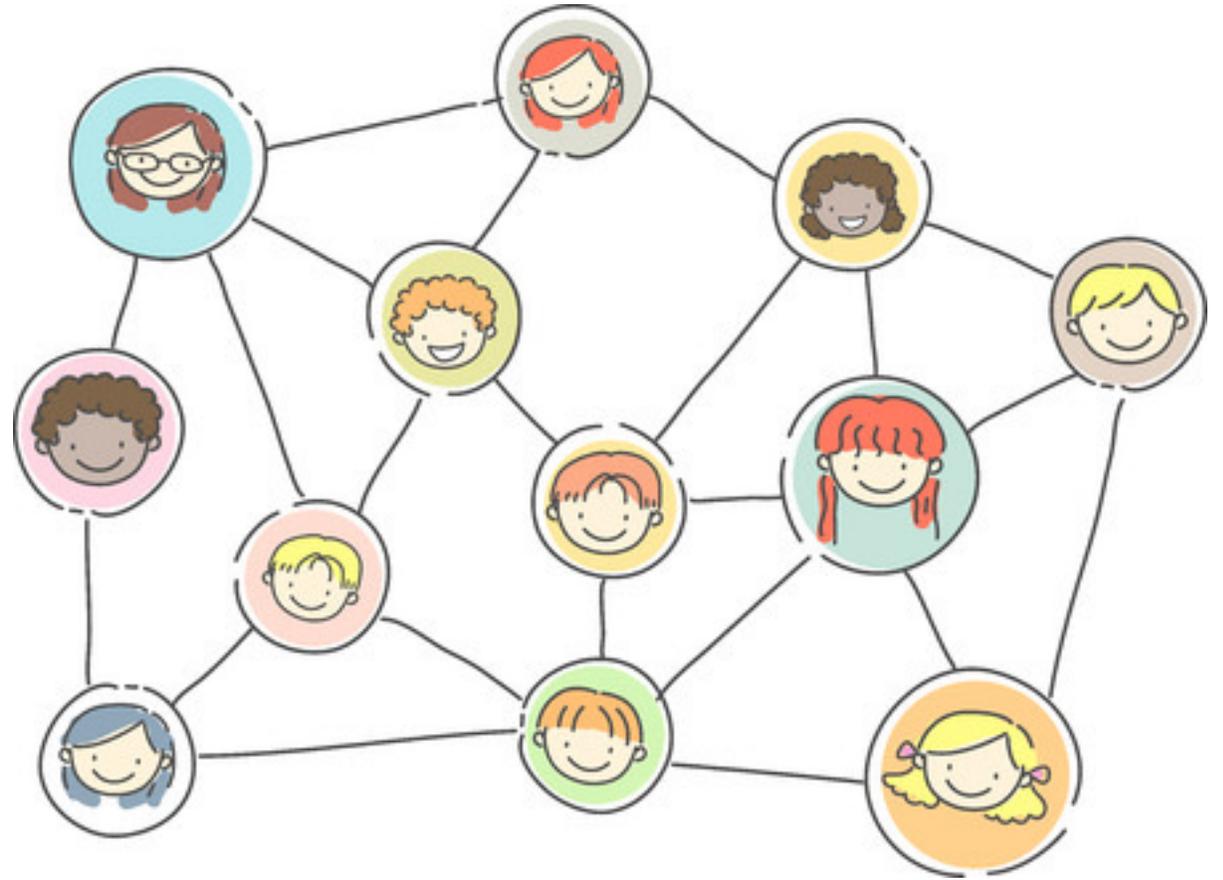
Image and Fully-Connected Scene Graph



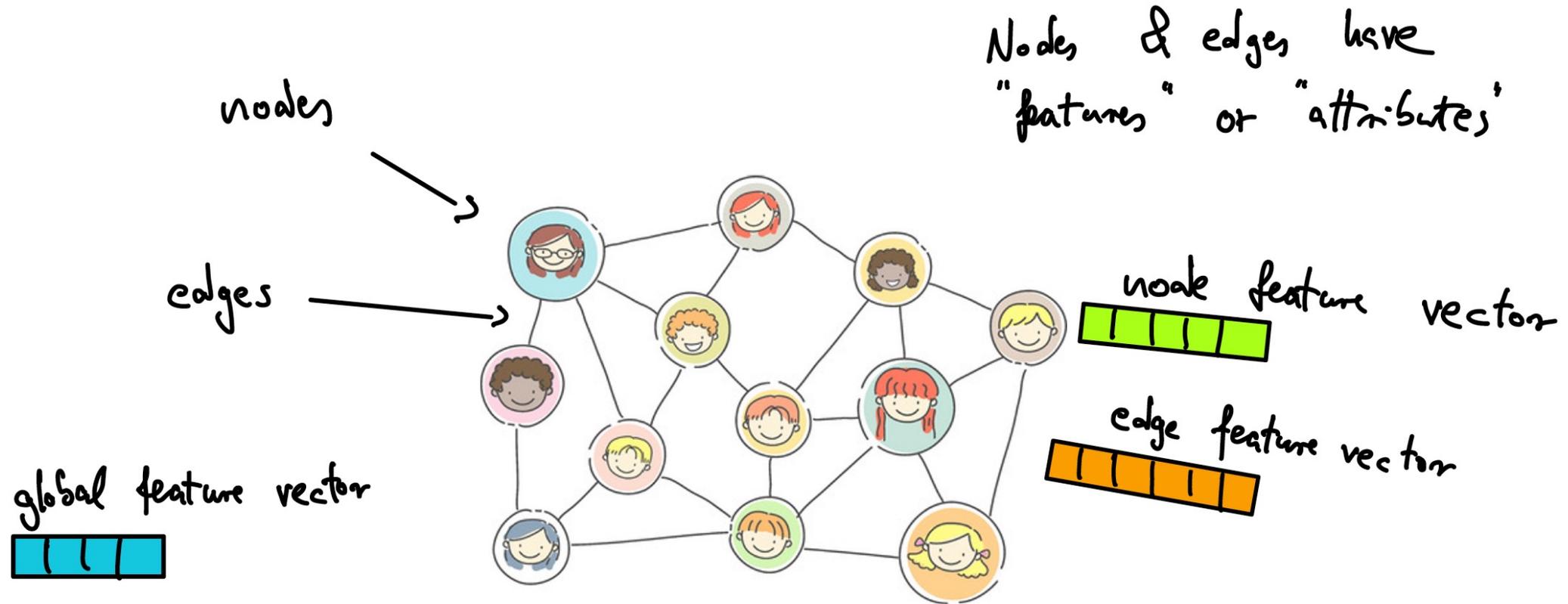
[\[1806.01261\]](#)

# Graphs as real-world data representation

- Most real-world data is
  - Unordered
  - Variable-size
- Examples
  - Social networks
  - Molecules
  - Particles in a LHC collision
  - Planets in a solar system
  - Transportation networks
  - Covid-19 patients
  - ...



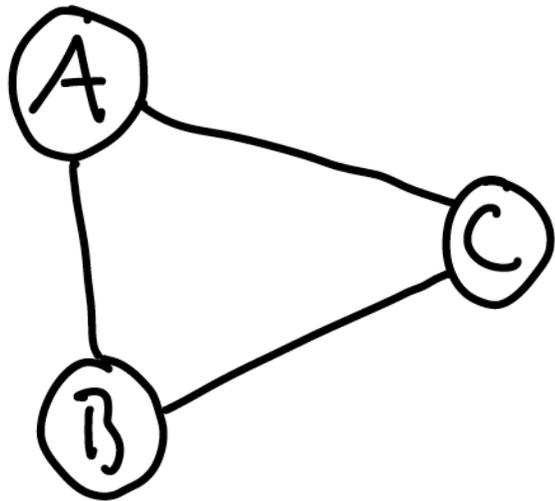
# Graphs: very flexible data format



Order of nodes / edges is arbitrary

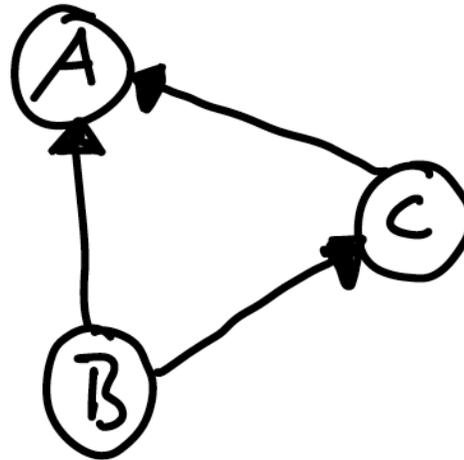
# Directed and undirected graphs

undirected edges

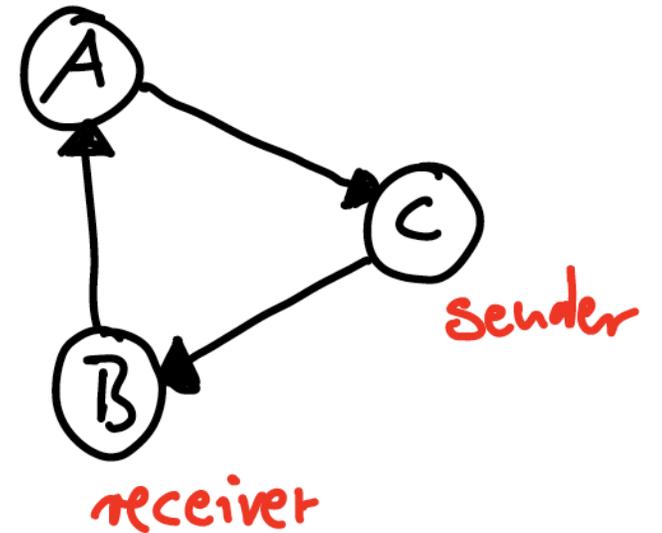


Example: social network

directed edges

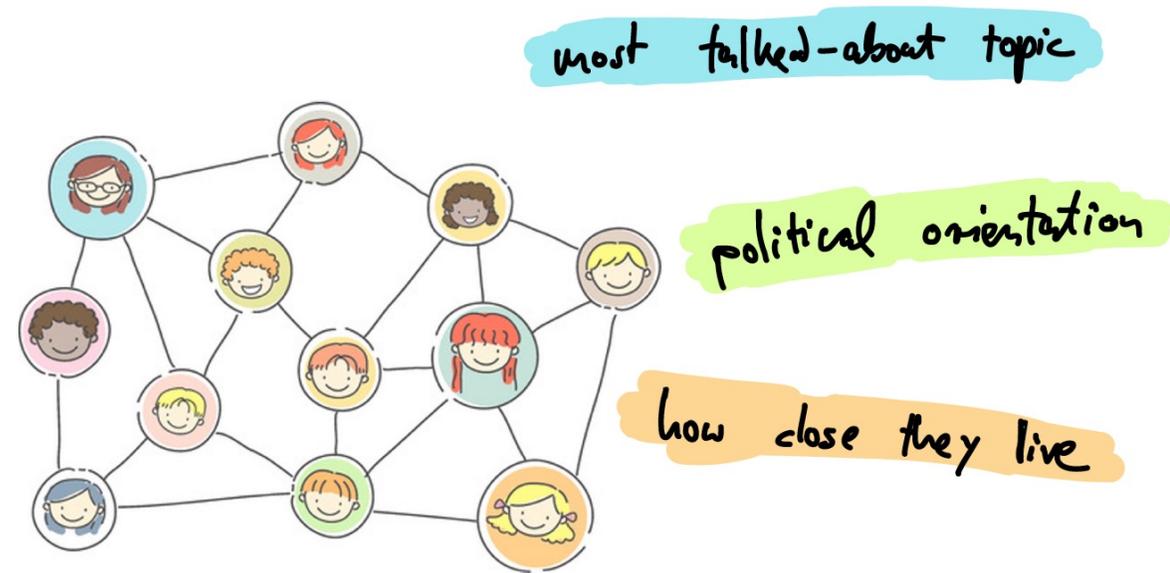


Example: flow of information

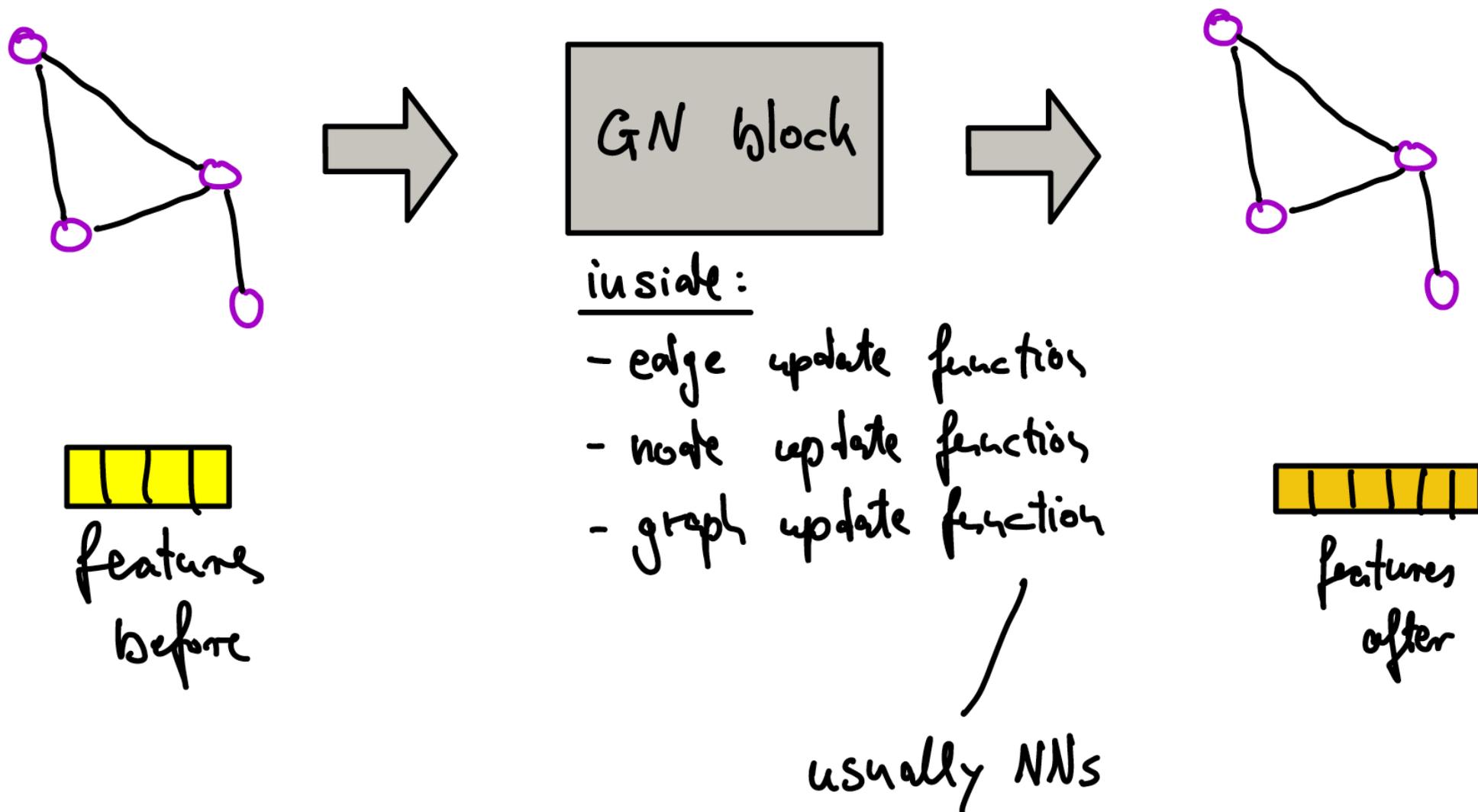


# Graphs as inputs to a NN

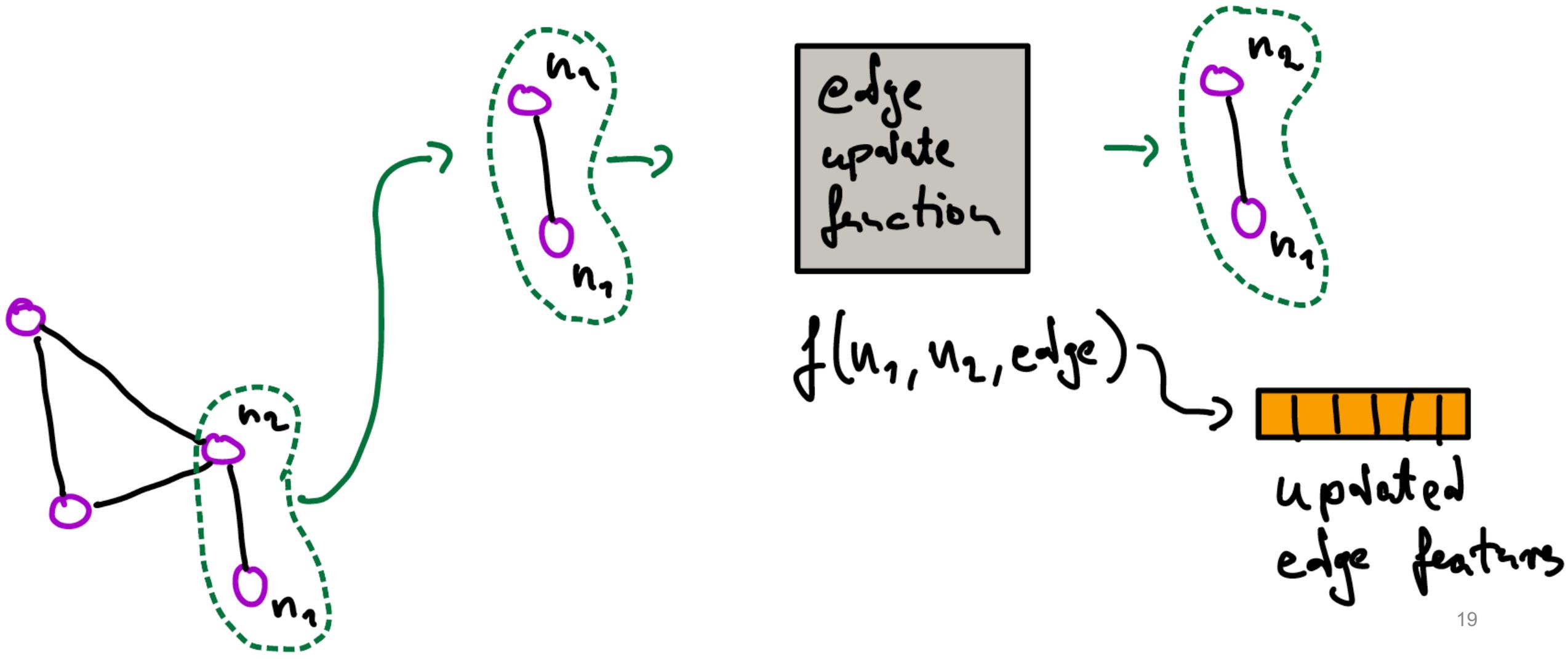
- Neural net:  $f(x) \rightarrow y'$ 
  - Minimize cost  $J(y, y')$  with gradient descent and back-prop,...
- Tasks at level of:
  - Whole graph
  - Each node
  - Each edge
  - Or any combination of those
- Classification, regression, segmentation,...



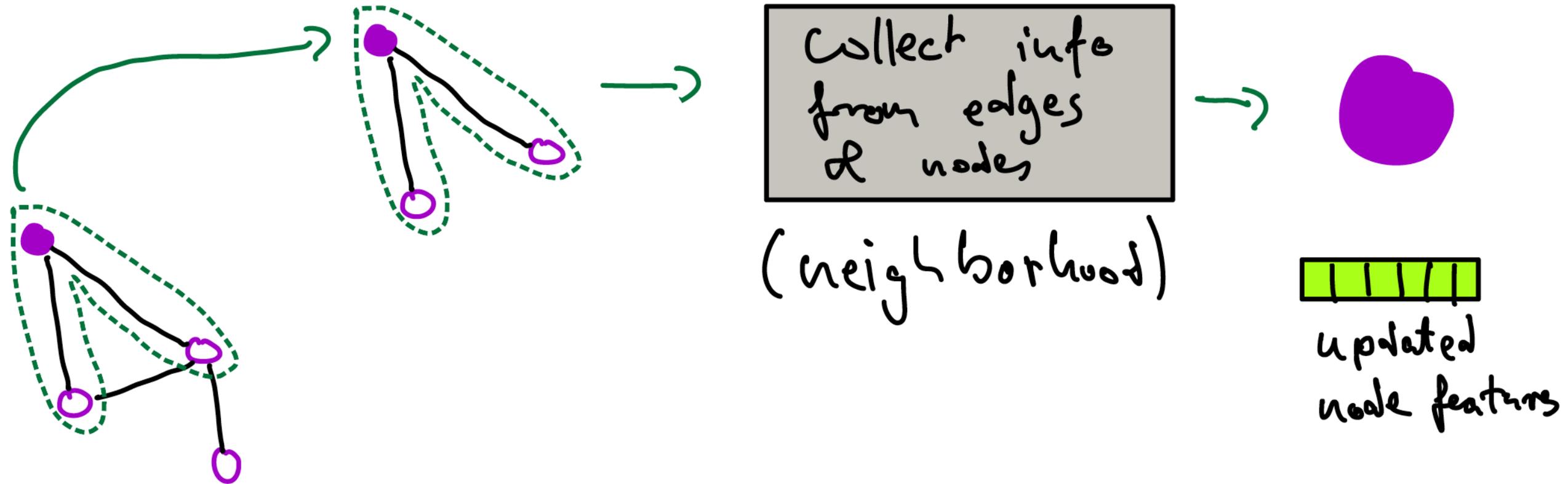
# The GN block



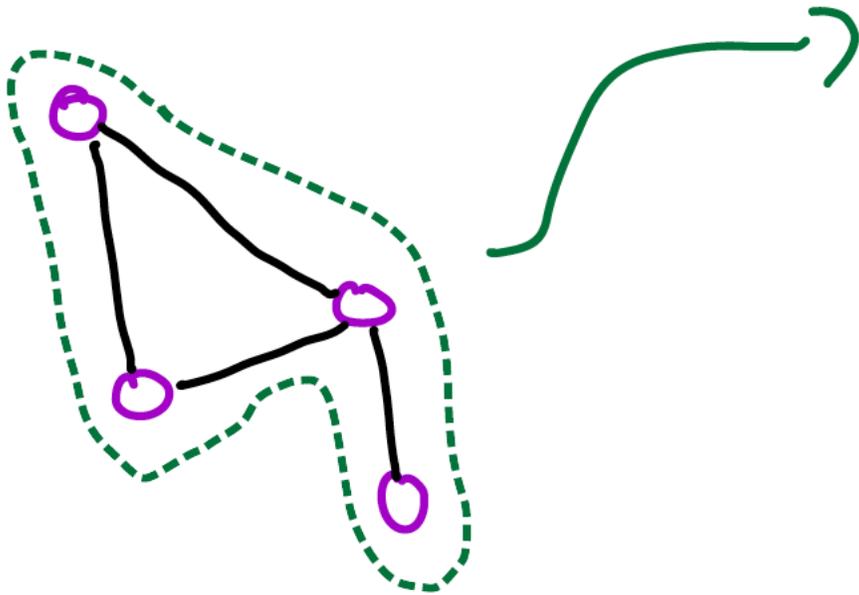
# Edge update function in GN block



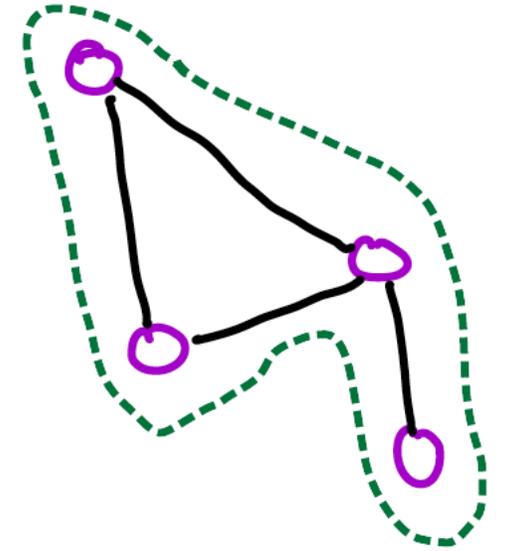
# Node update function in GN block



# Graph update function in GN block



collect all  
edges + nodes

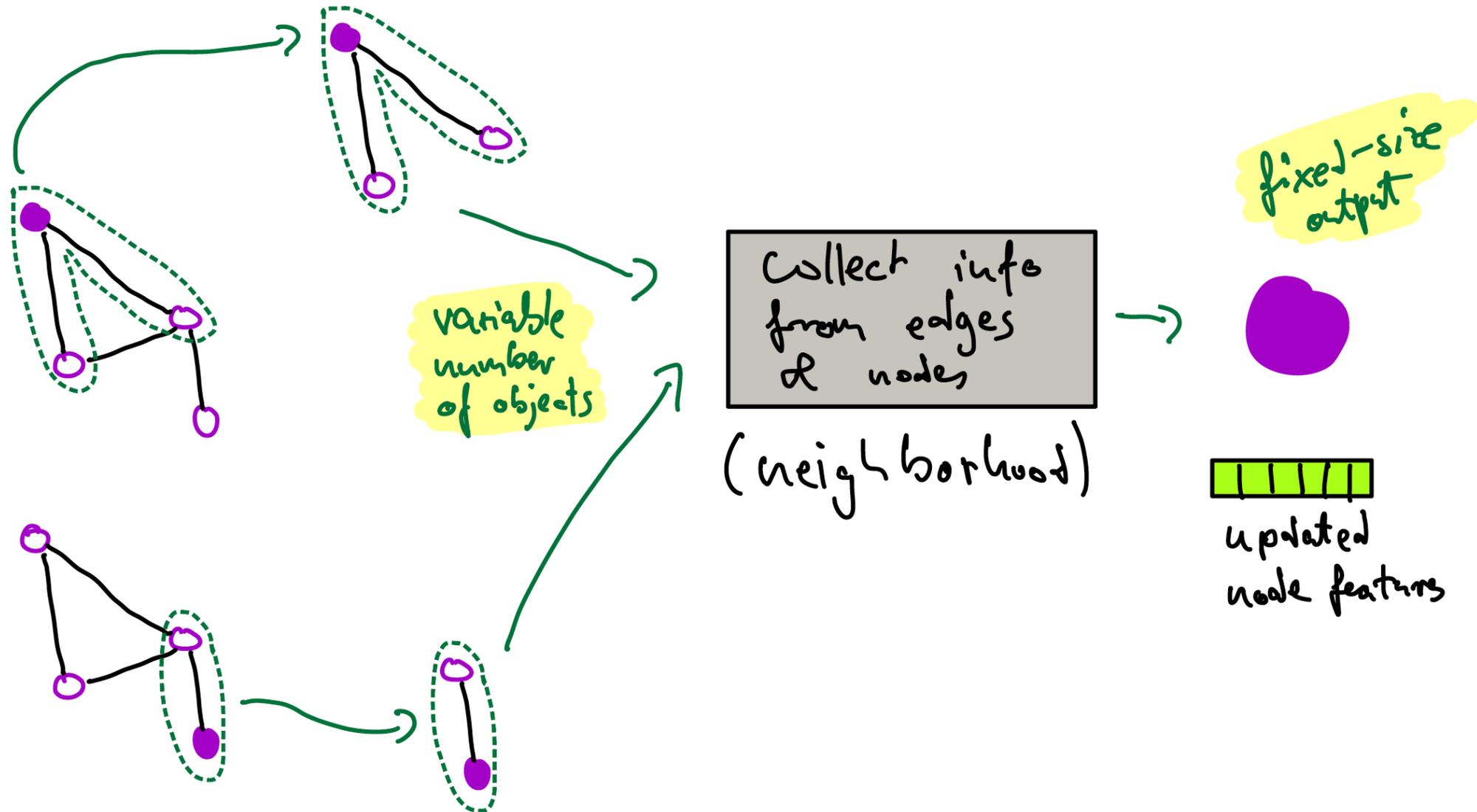


updated  
graph features

# Building block: aggregate information



# Aggregate information: node update



# What function does the trick?

## Desired properties

Variable-size input & fixed-size output

Independent of order of inputs

Sum

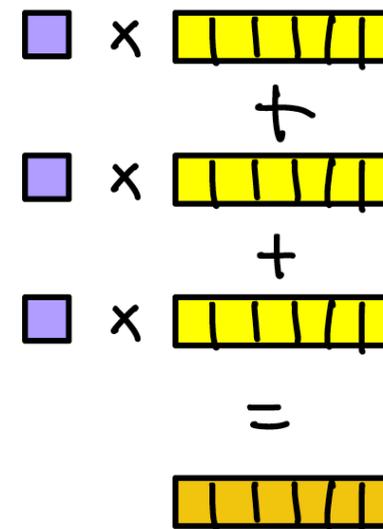
Mean

Max/Min

Most advanced: weighted sum

**Attention weights, i.e.**  
importance to task at hand

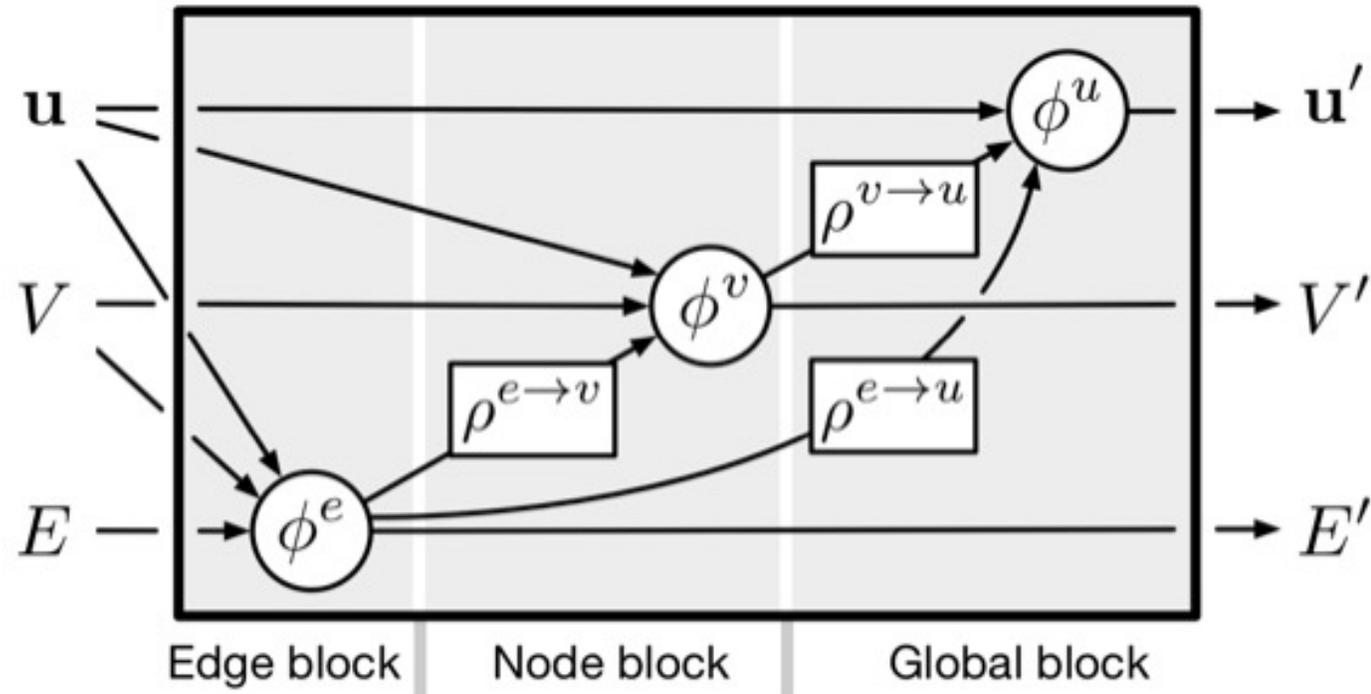
→ Transformers



# The complete GN block

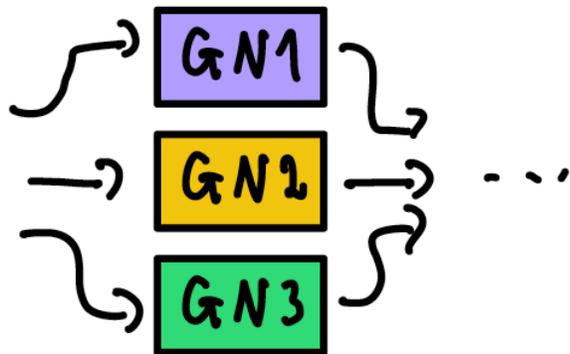
Variable-size inputs

Fixed-size output,  
invariant to order of inputs



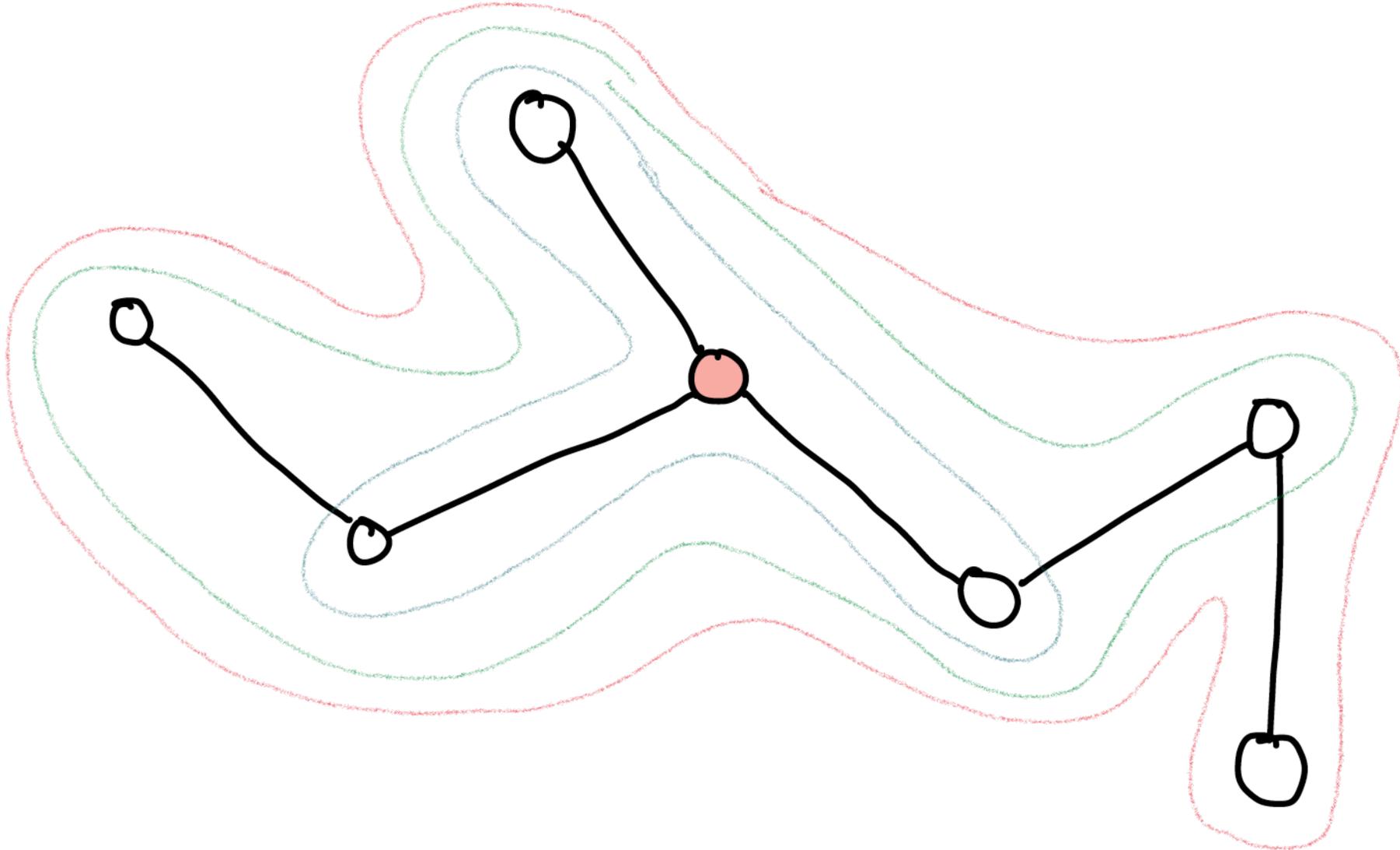
[\[https://arxiv.org/abs/1806.01261\]](https://arxiv.org/abs/1806.01261)

# Stacking GN blocks

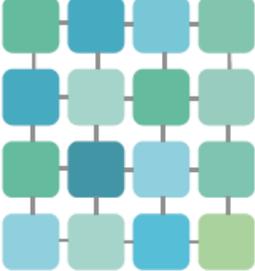
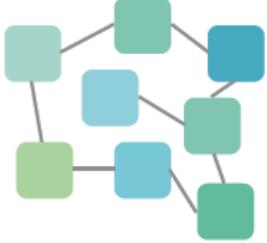


Depending on task at hand

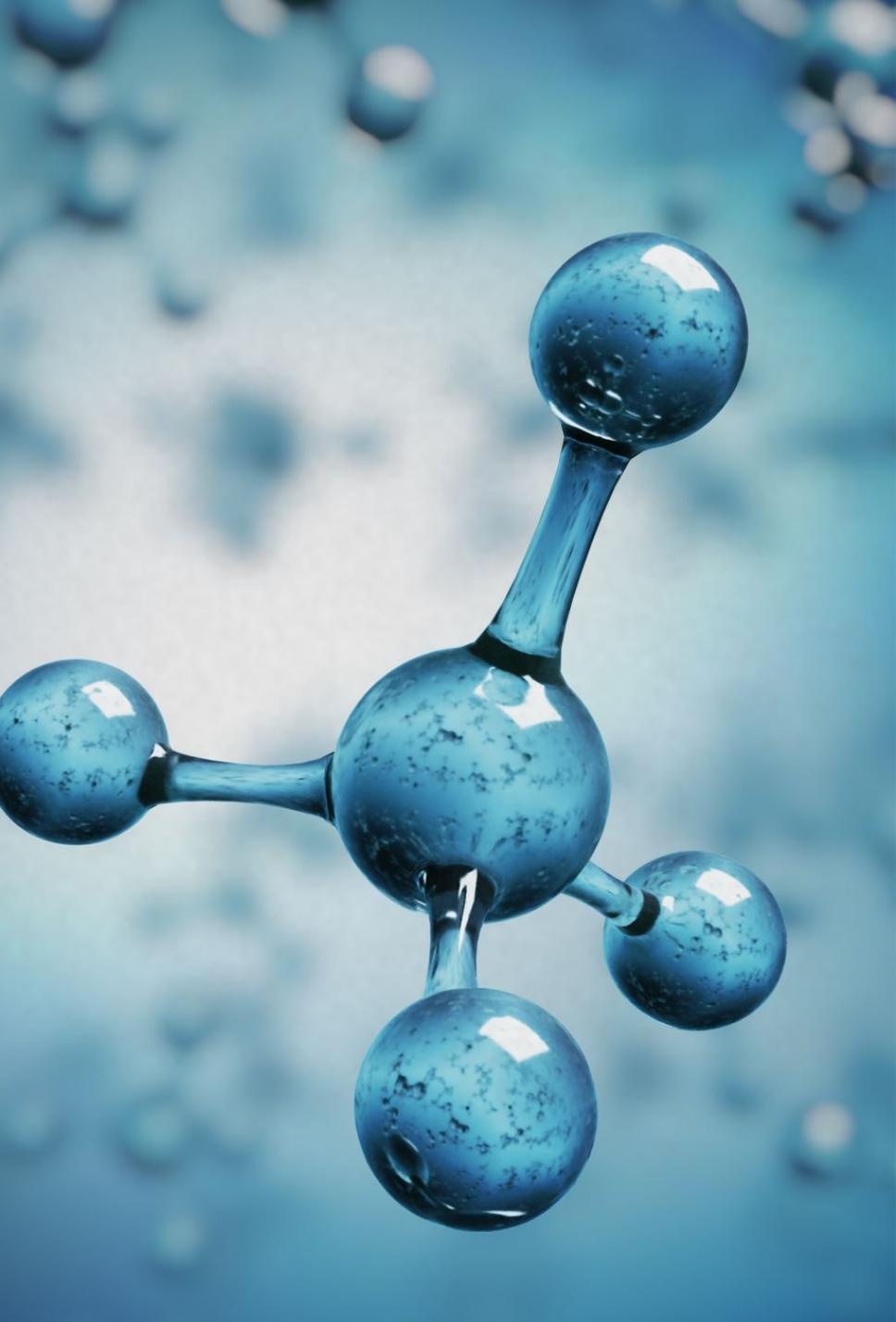
# Stacking GN blocks to increase receptive field



# Compare with other data representations

	UNSTRUCTURED	SEQUENTIAL	GRID	COMPLEX RELATIONAL STRUCTURE
Structure				
Model	MLP	RNN	CNN	GNN
Inductive Bias *	Weak	Sequentiality	Locality	Arbitrary order Variable-size inputs  Strong relational bias

\* Beliefs about the model and data properties. Right initial beliefs  $\Rightarrow$  better generalization with less data



# Example applications

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Properties of molecules – **graph-level regression**

Movement of N-body system – **node-level regression**

Query a knowledge graph – **more complex architecture**

**Applications in particle physics**

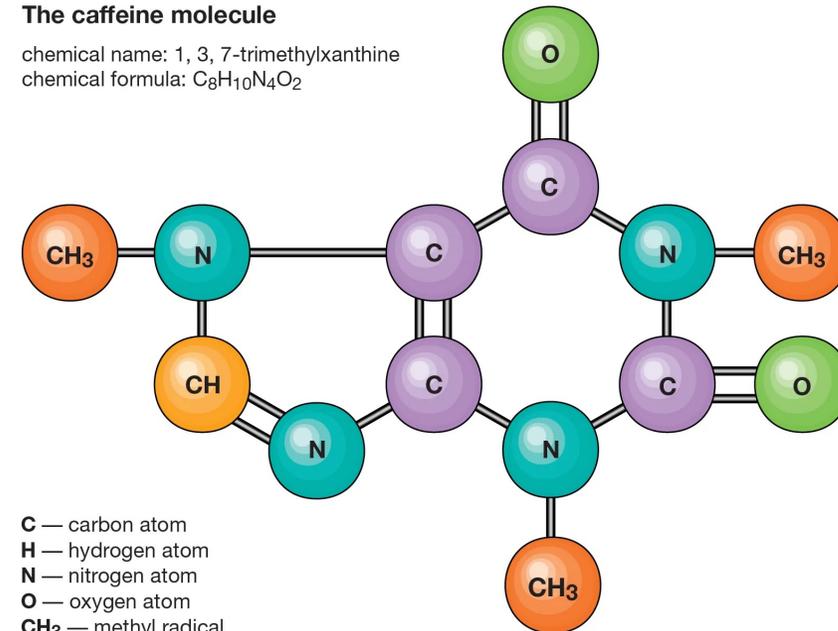
# Example 1: molecules

Nodes = atoms

Edges = chemical bonds

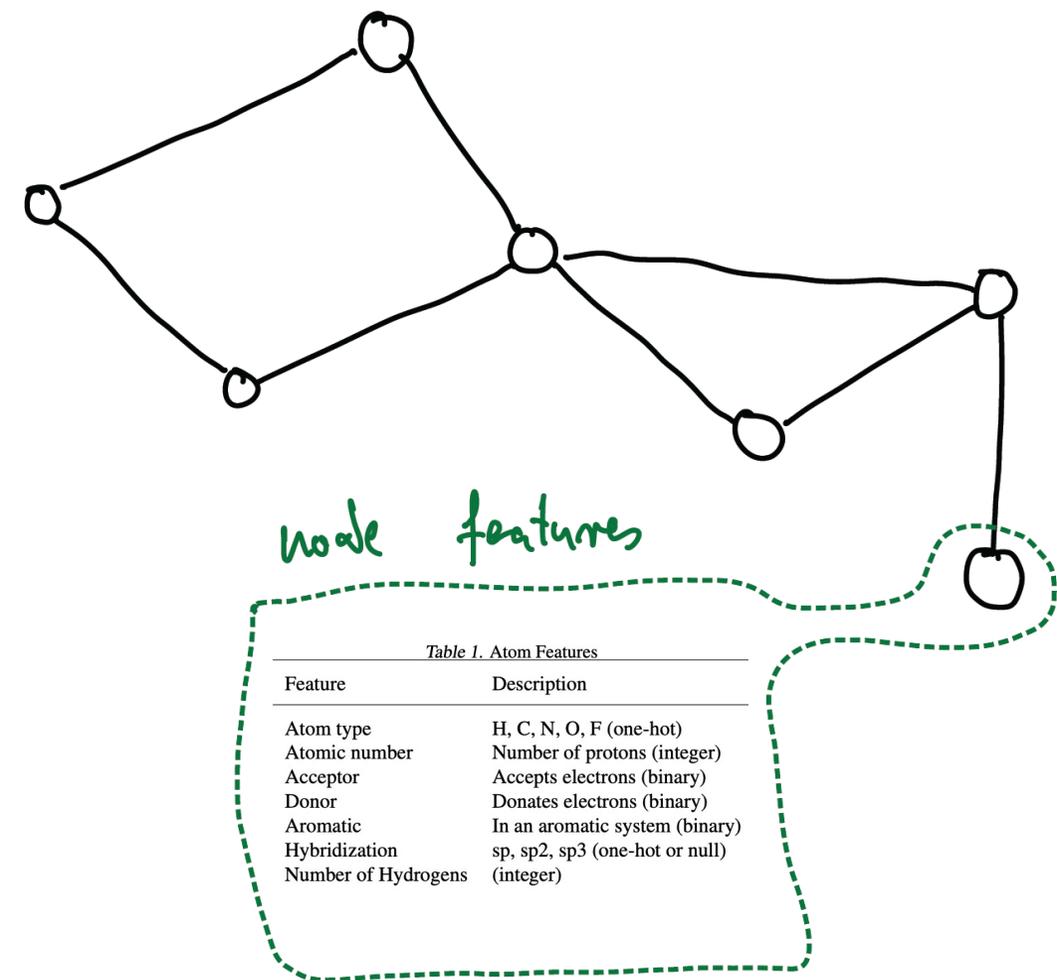
**The caffeine molecule**

chemical name: 1, 3, 7-trimethylxanthine  
chemical formula:  $C_8H_{10}N_4O_2$



© 2010 Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

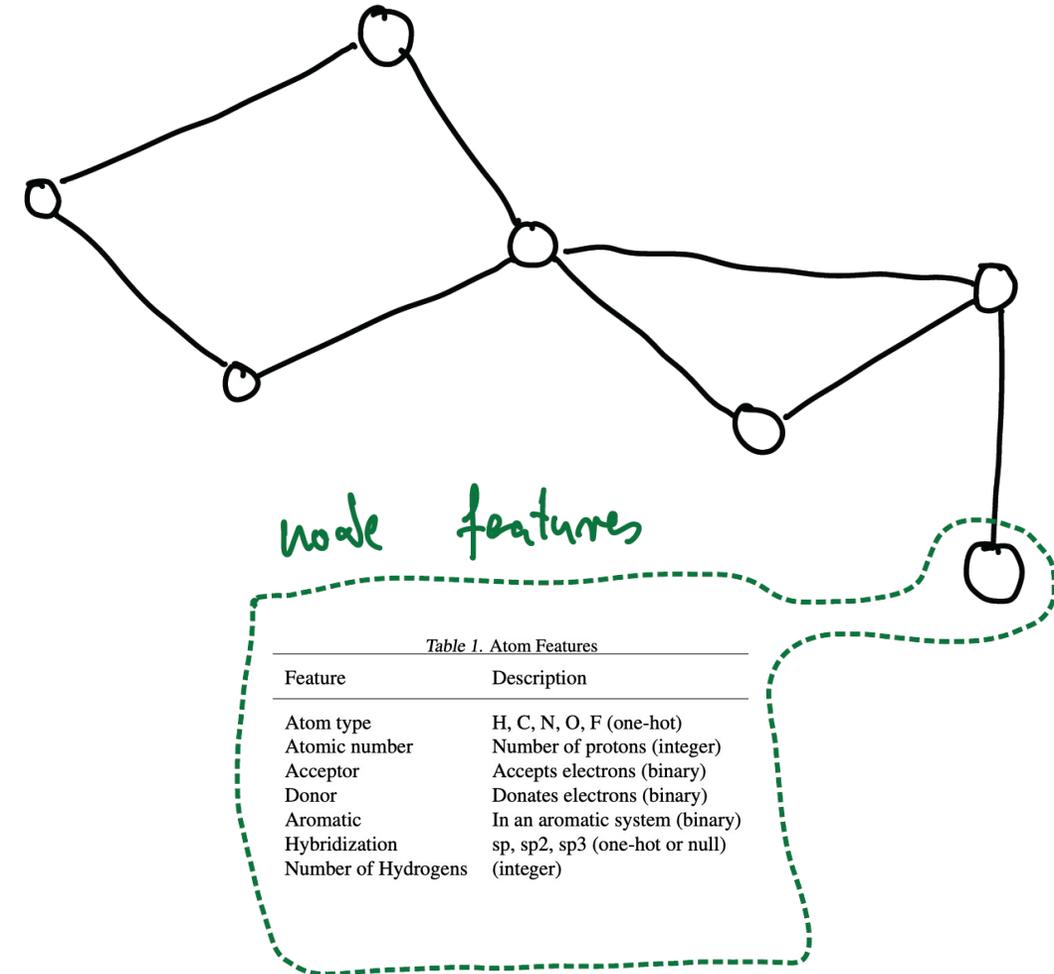
# Neural Message Passing for Quantum Chemistry



Training data:

134k drug-like organic molecules  
that span a wide range of chemistry

# Graph-level regression task



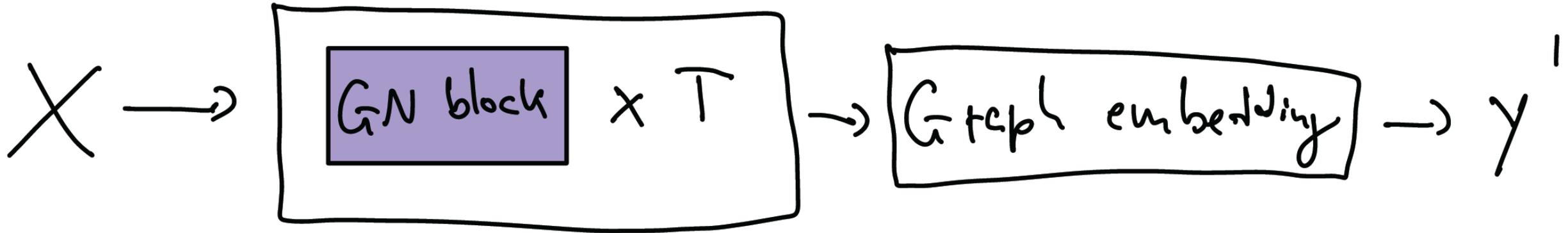
Target:

Atomisation energy

Vibrational frequencies

Etc.

# Architecture used

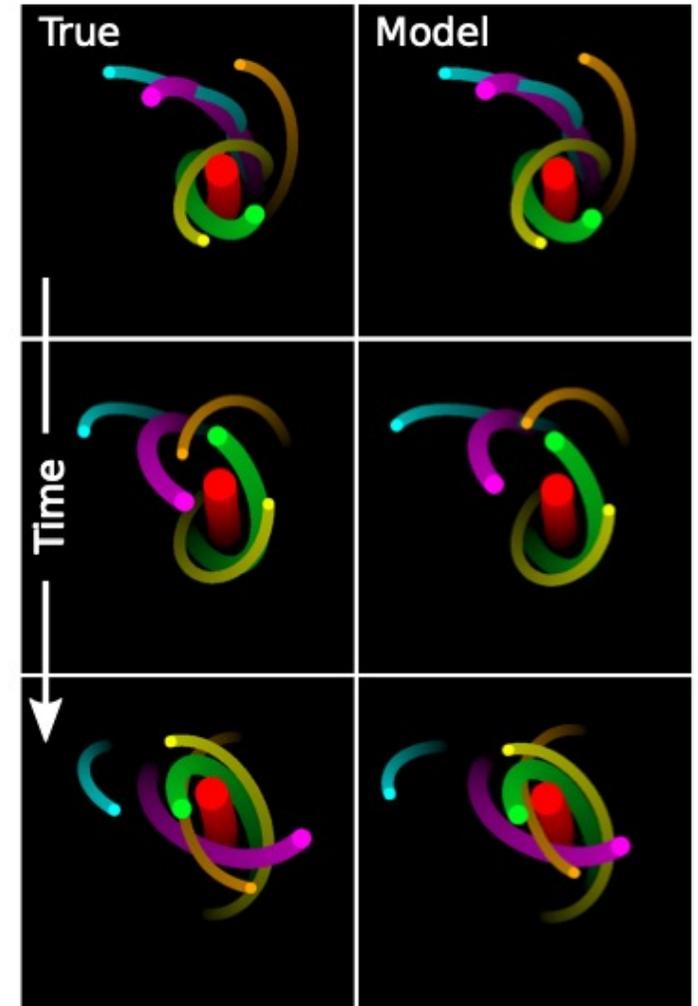


$$3 \leq T \leq 8$$

number of iterations  $T$   
is a hyperparameter

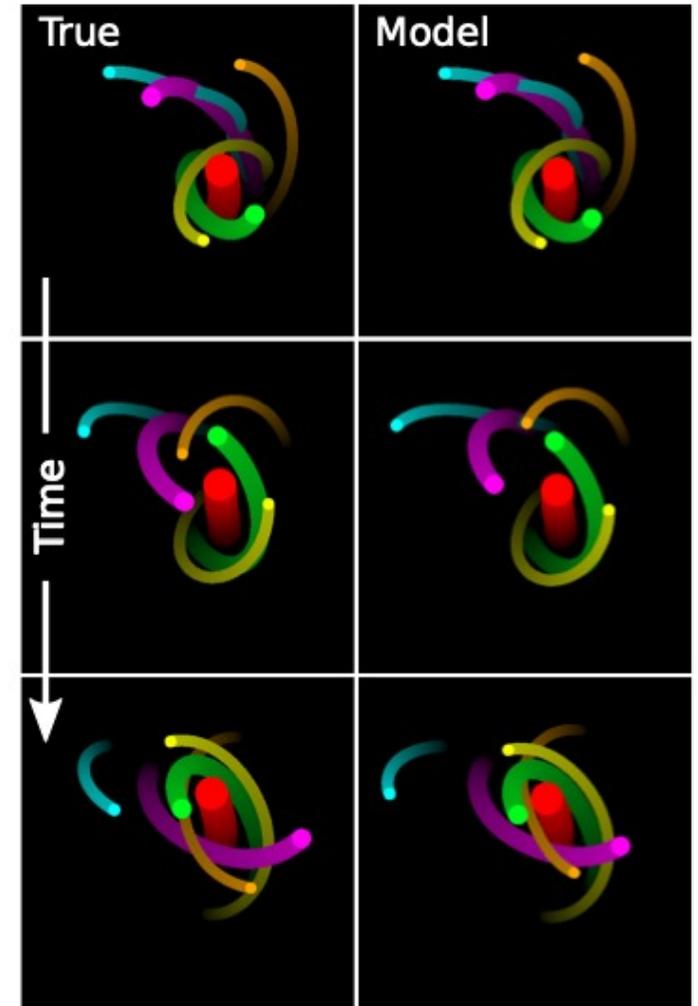
# Example 2: learn dynamics of physical systems

- Nodes = planets
  - Position
  - Velocity vector
  - Mass
- Edges = “fully connected”
  - Gravitational force between any 2 planets



# Node-level regression task

- Predict nodes features after time  $t$ 
  - Dynamics of system
- Train on  $N=6$  planets
  - Generalize to e.g.  $N=12$  planets
- Edge function:
  - Compute distance of planets
- Node function:
  - Masses + distances  $\Rightarrow$  force
  - Force + current velocity + mass  $\Rightarrow$  future position



# Example 3: knowledge graph

Transport network

Node = metro station

Edge = connecting line

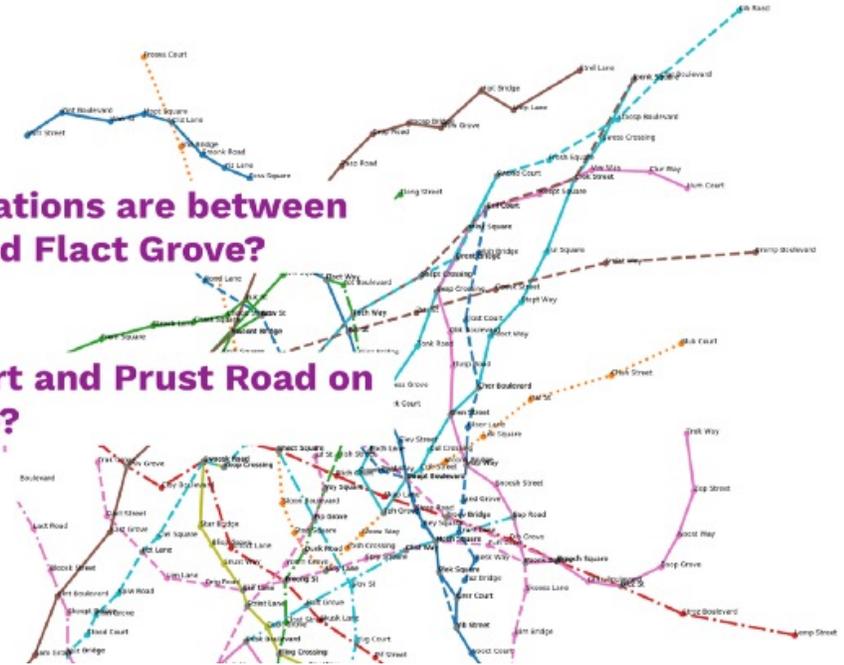
Embed graph in natural language processing

How many stations are between Crar Court and Flact Grove?

Answer: 12

Are Grey Court and Prust Road on the same line?

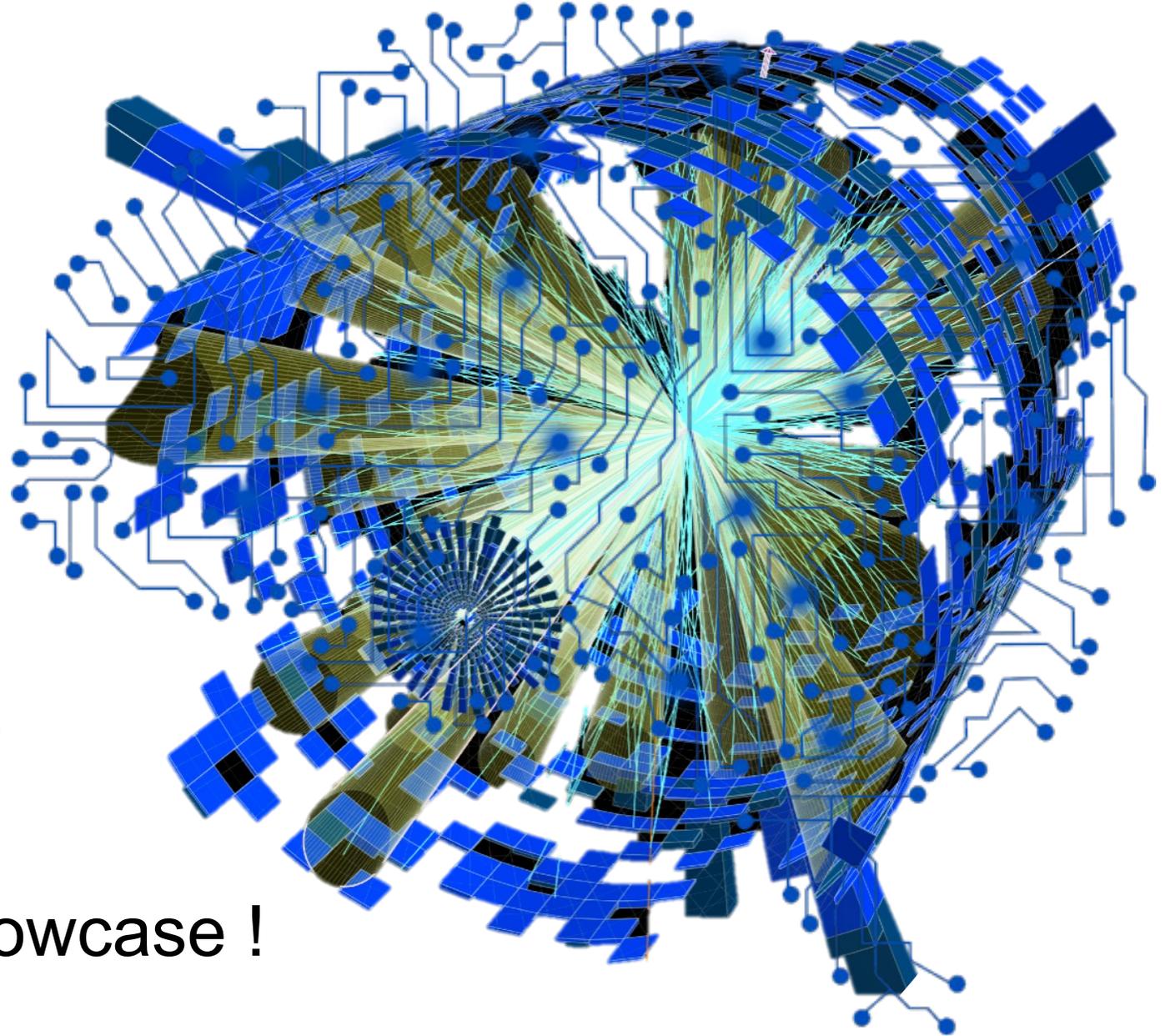
Answer: No



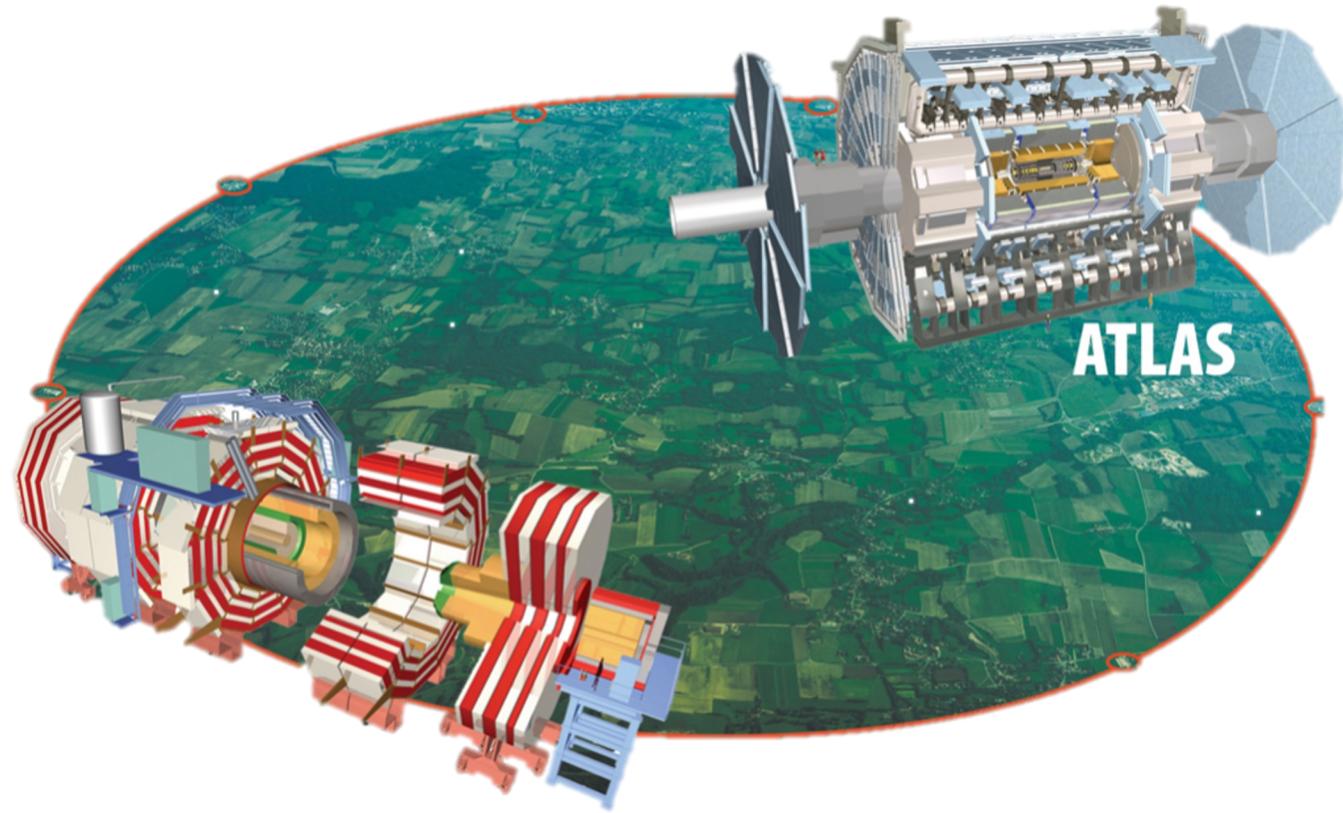
# GNNs in particle physics: the LHC

Your lecturer's expertise

And it's a great GNN showcase !



# LHC in a nutshell



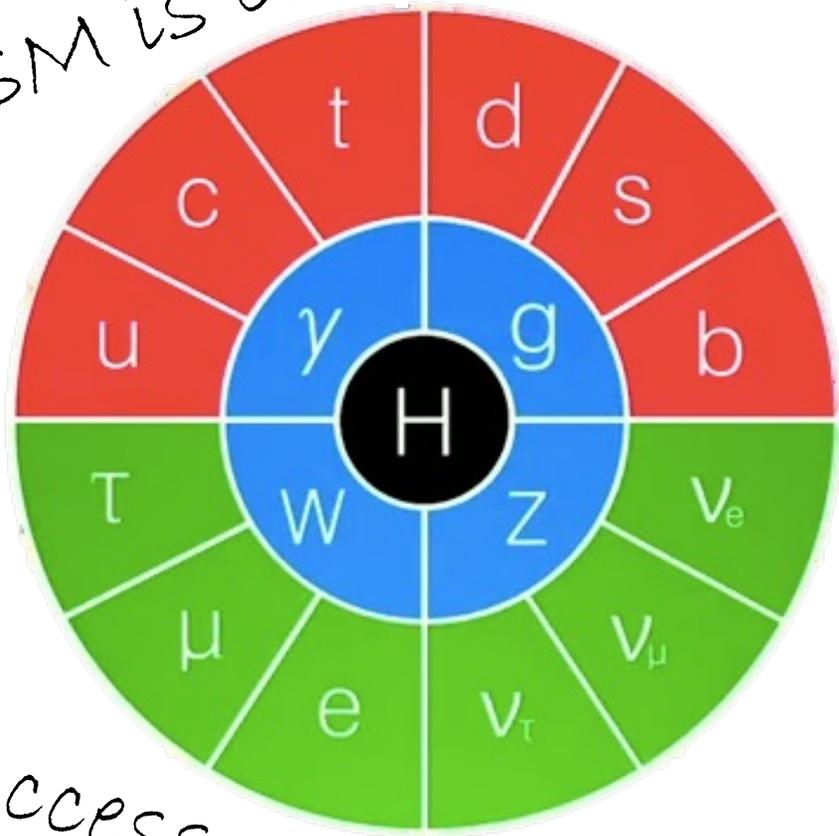
Collide high-energy (HE) particles in controlled environment

Hermetic detectors around collision points to measure all produced particles

Answer fundamental questions

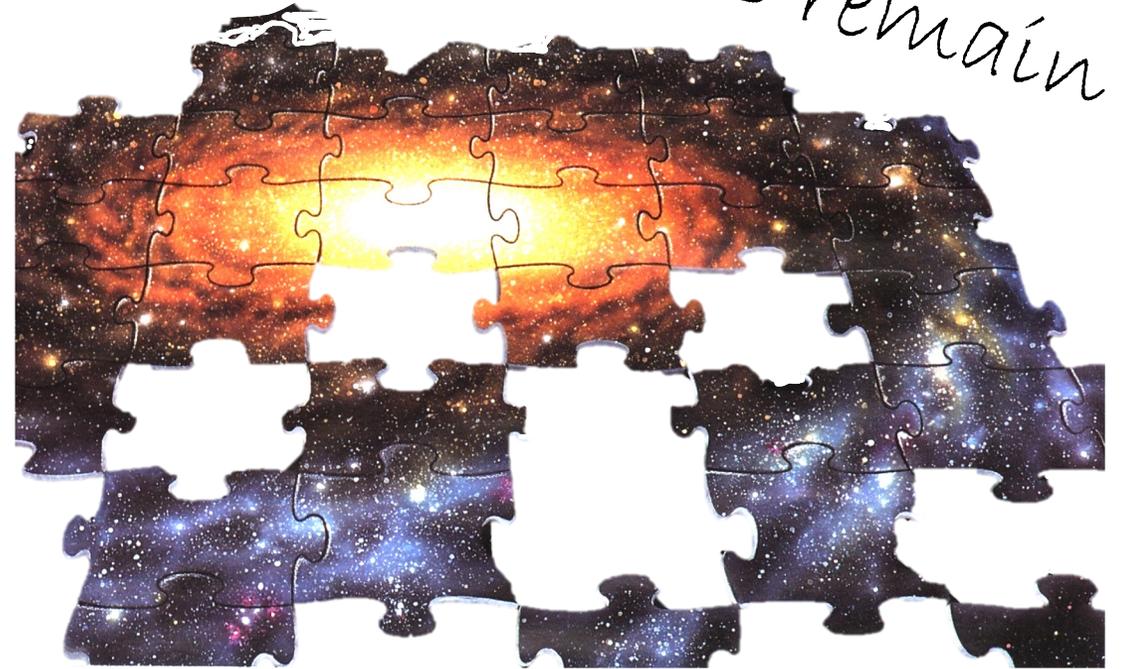
# The motivation

The SM is complete



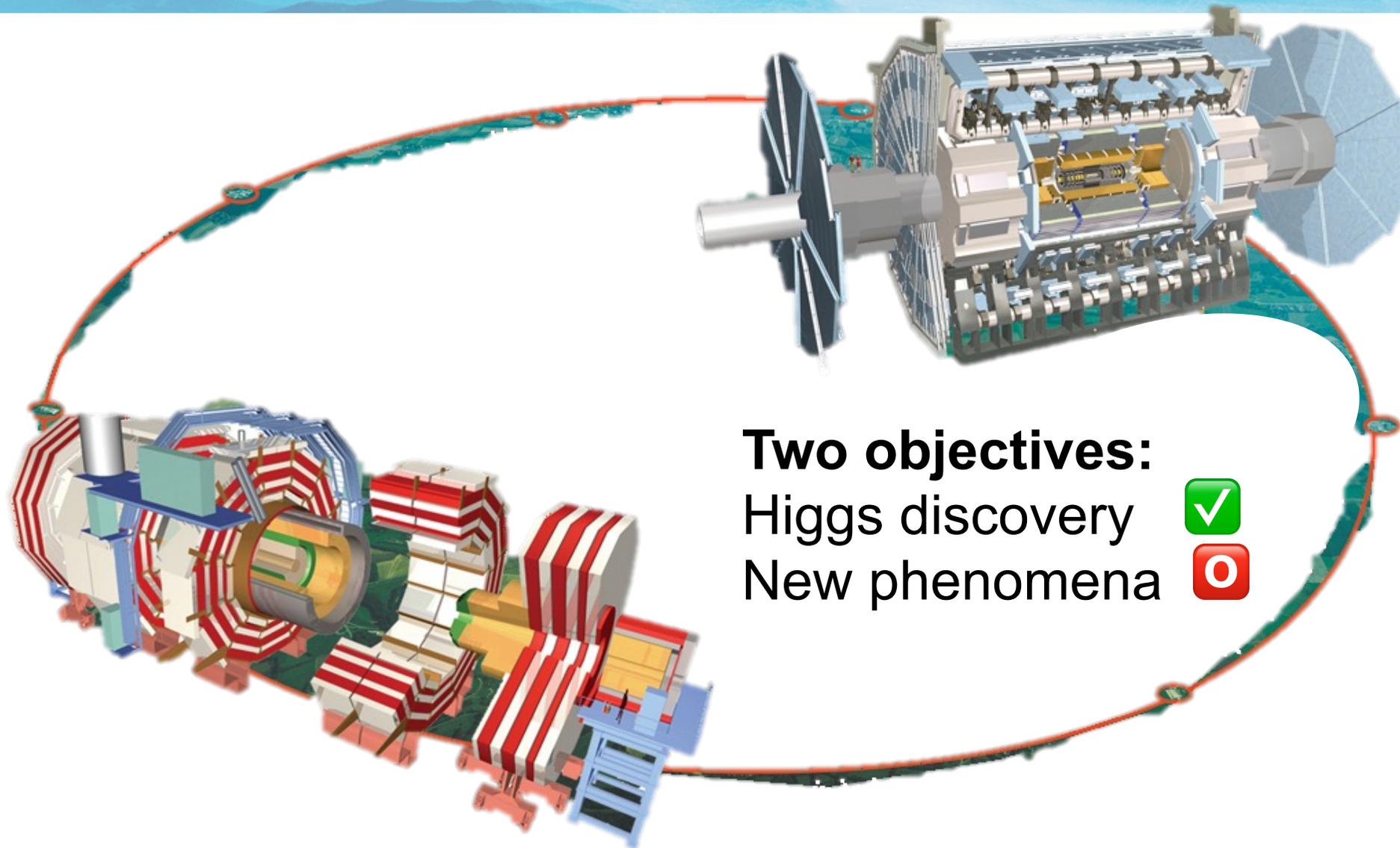
Success story!

Open mysteries remain



Dark matter, dark energy,  
quantum gravity,...

# The Large Hadron Collider (LHC)



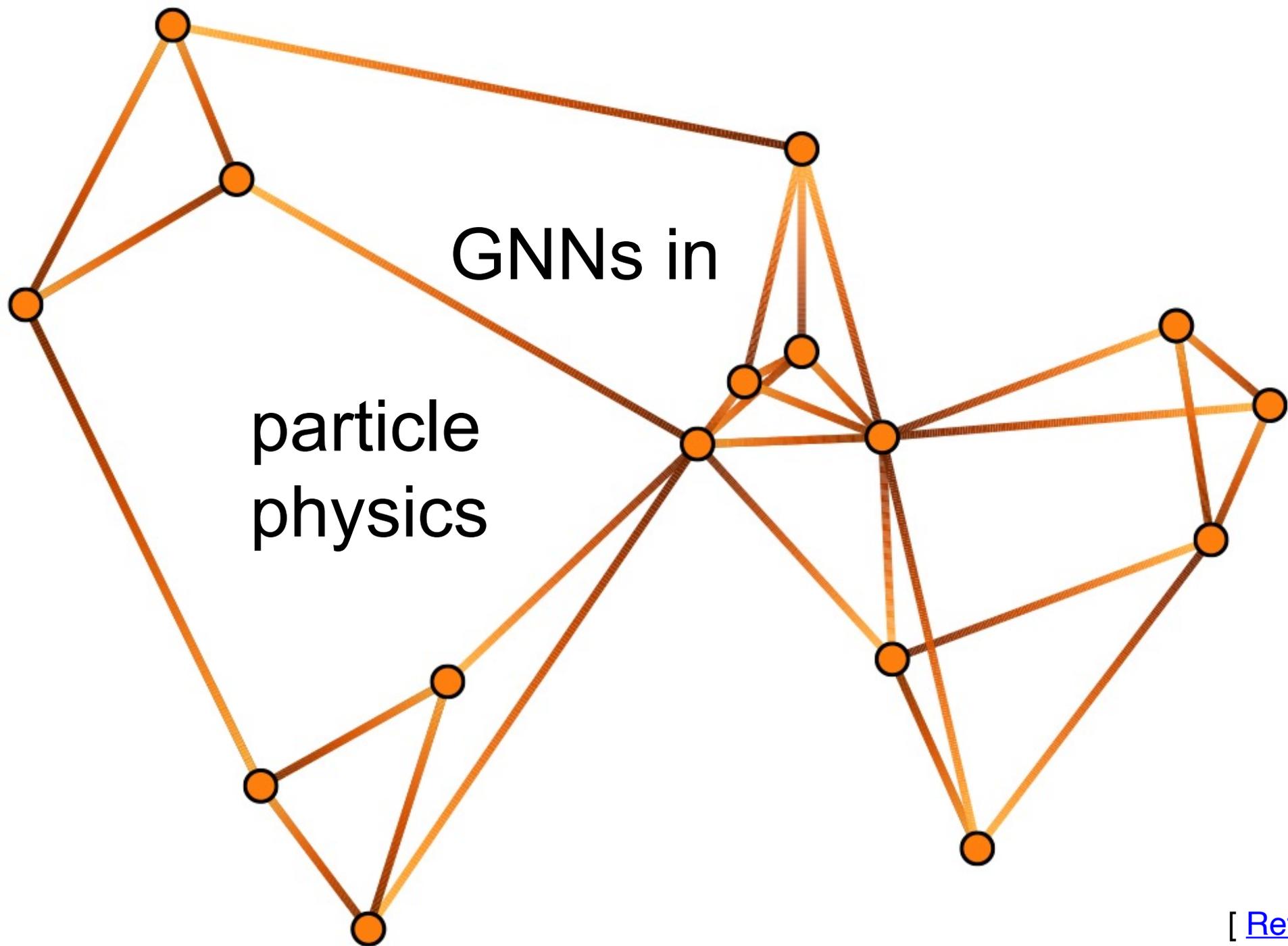
**Two objectives:**

Higgs discovery



New phenomena



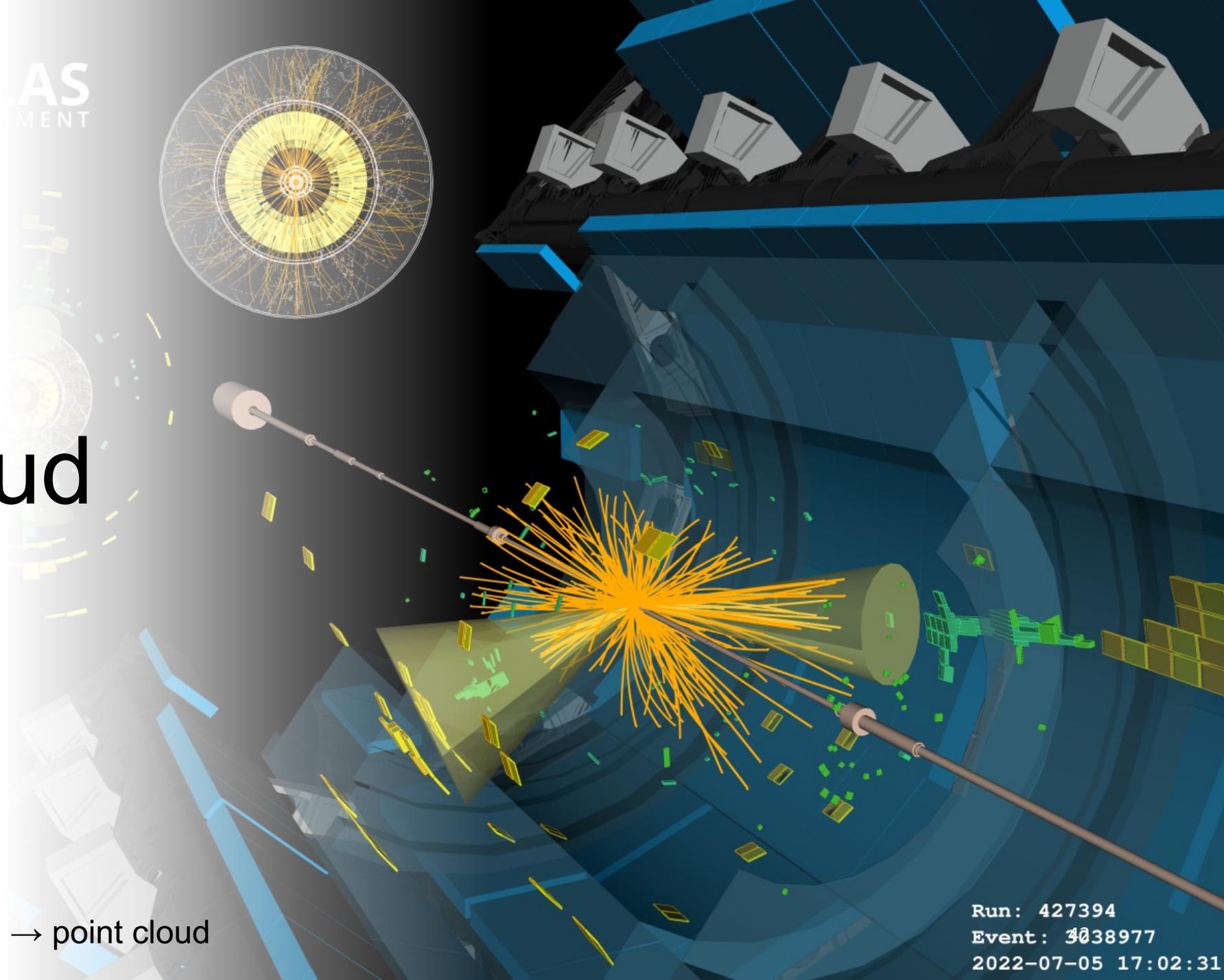


AS  
MENT

# Point cloud data

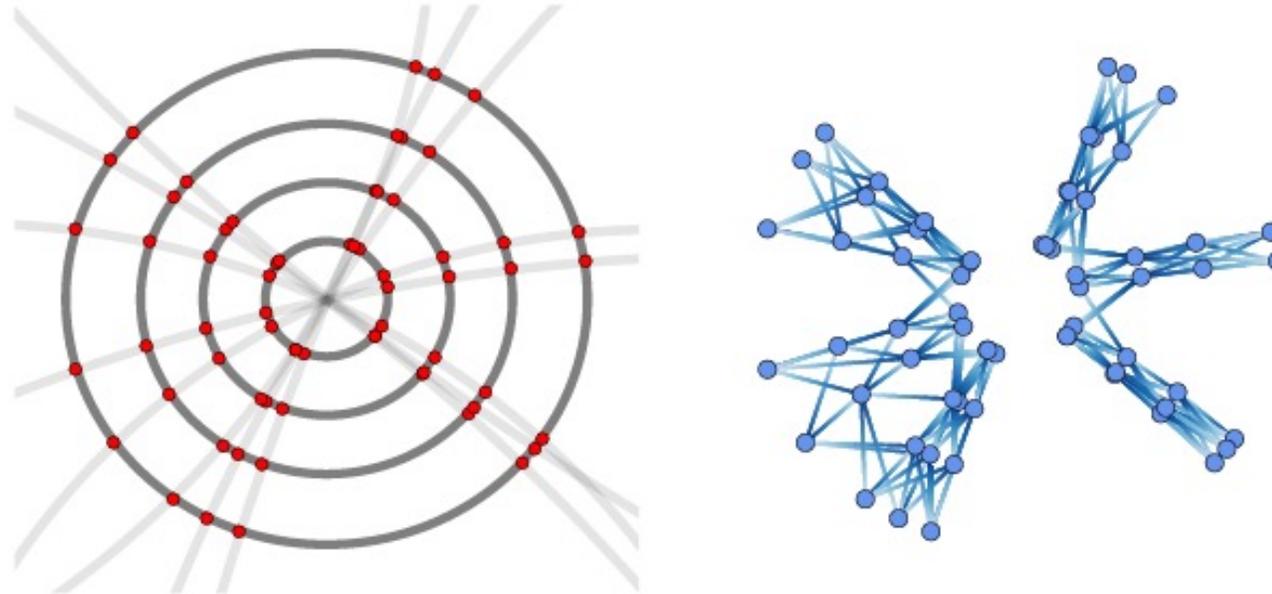
Sparse inhomogeneous 3D image → point cloud

Run: 427394  
Event: 3038977  
2022-07-05 17:02:31



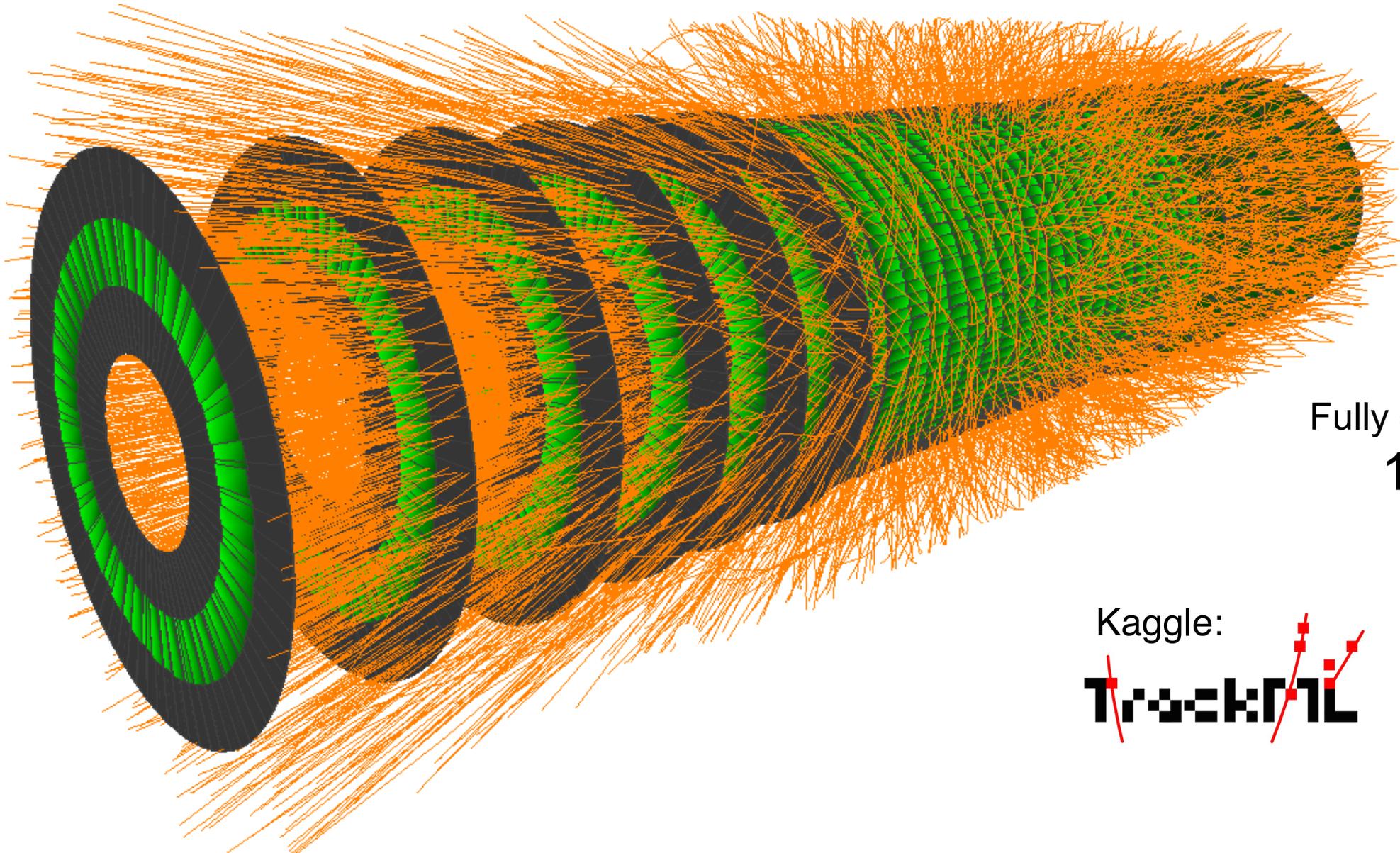
# Track reconstruction = edge prediction

*Connecting  
the dots*



Traditional solution: Kalman filter  
but too slow for HL-LHC !

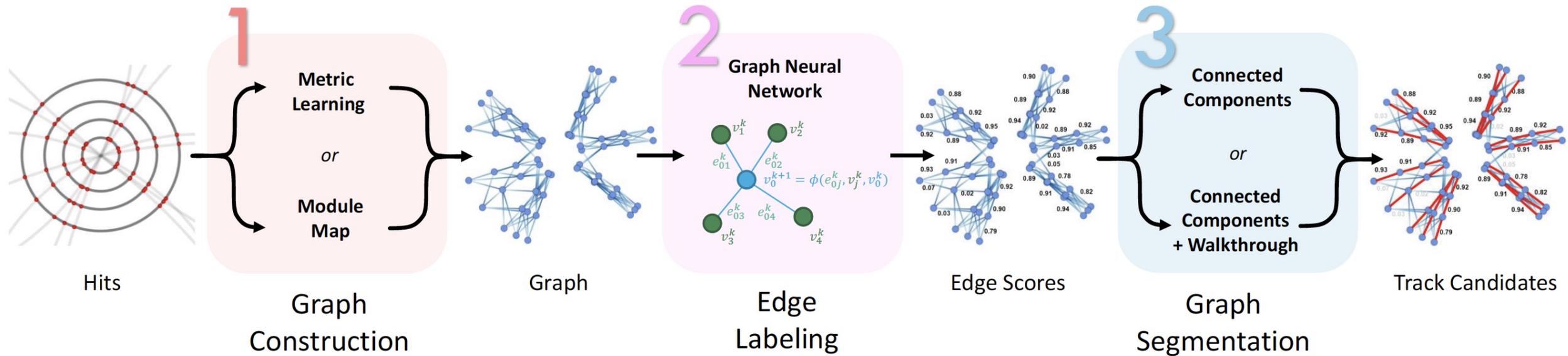
# Connect 300k dots to 10k tracks using ML



Fully connected graph:  
 $10^{10}$  edges

Kaggle:  
**TrackML**

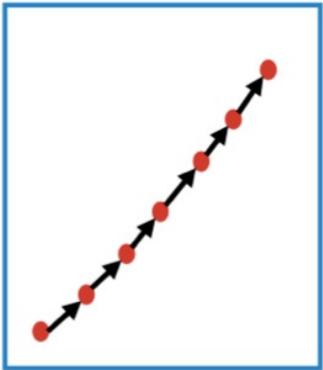
# Track reco with GNN in 3 steps



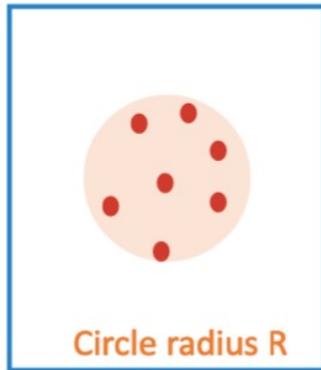
# 1. Graph construction

## Metric learning

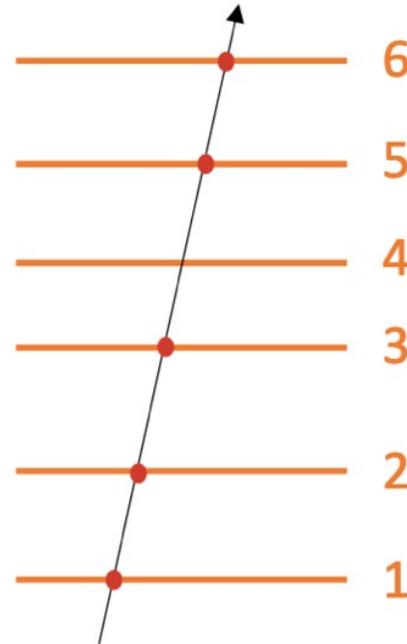
Euclidian space



N-dimensional space  
learned by the MLP



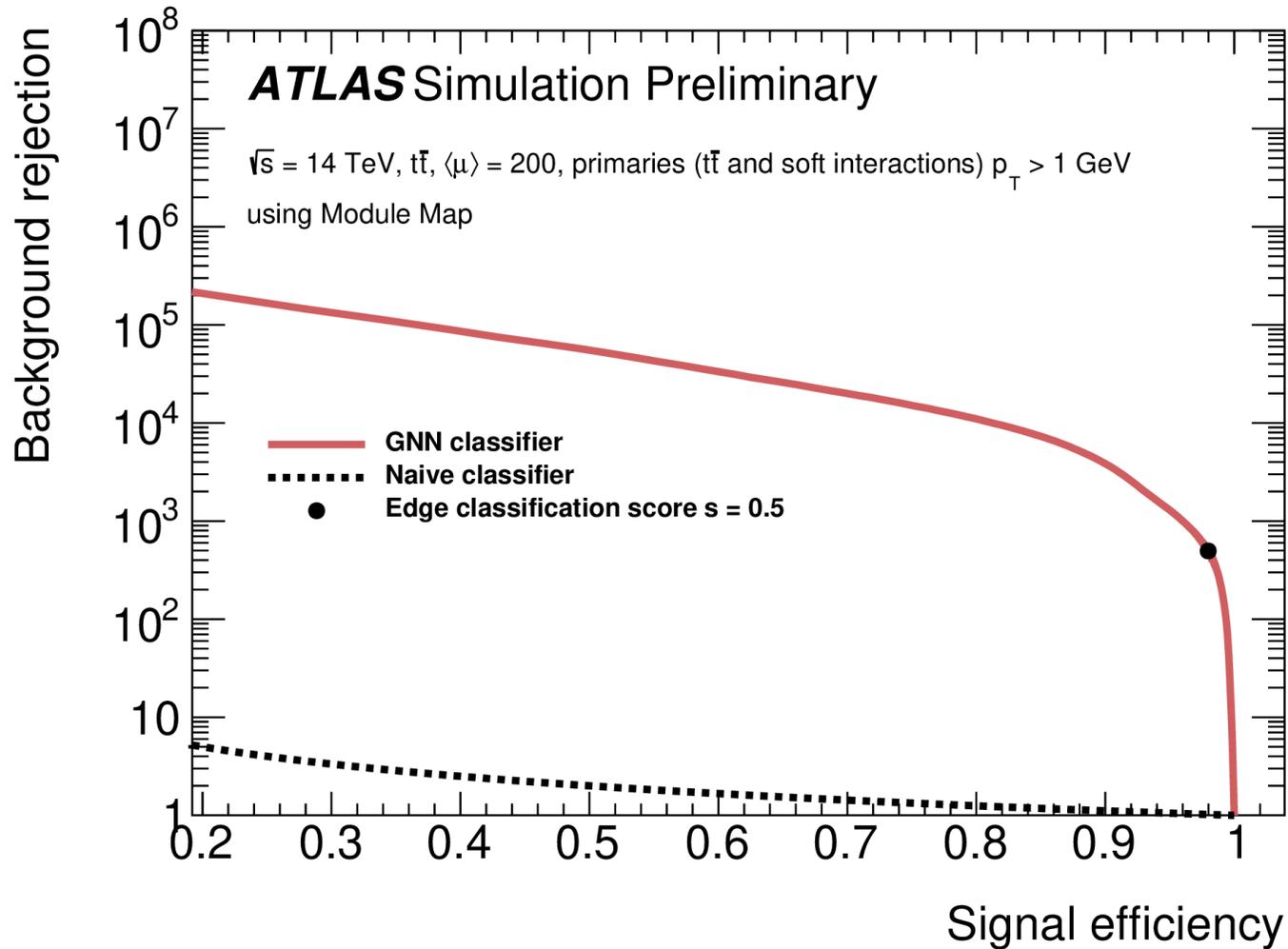
## Module map



Lookup table:  
possible module groups  
traversed by a particle

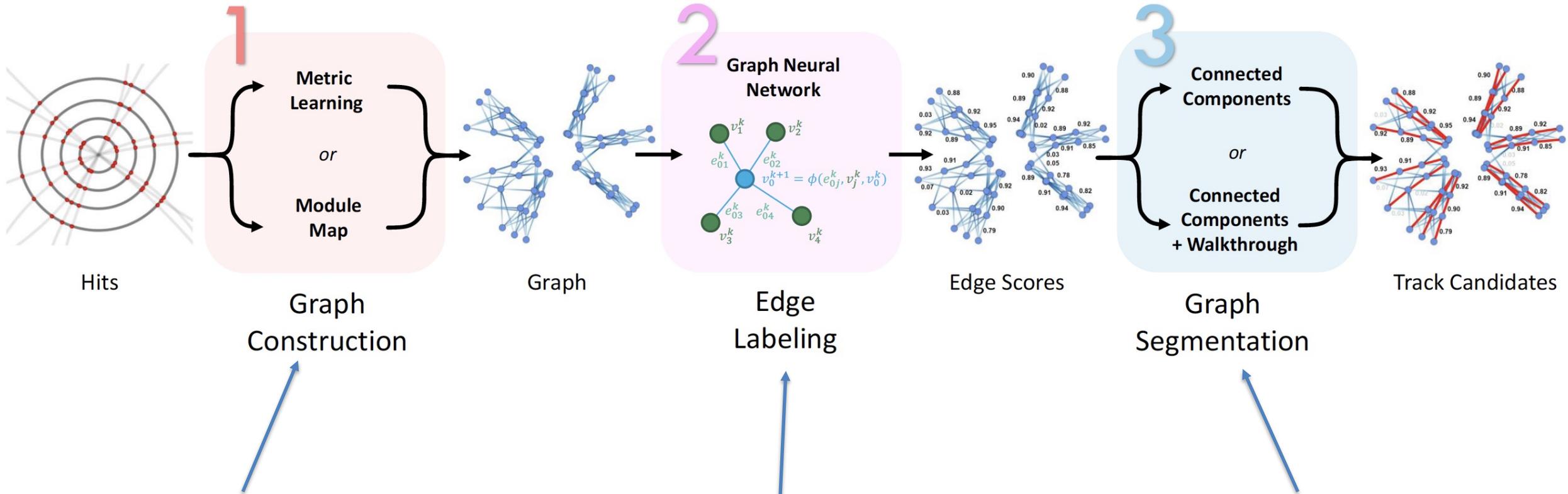
$10^{10}$  edges  $\rightarrow$   $10^6$  edges ( $10^4$  true edges)

# 2. Edge classification



ROC curve

↗ efficiency, ↗ purity, ↘ compute time



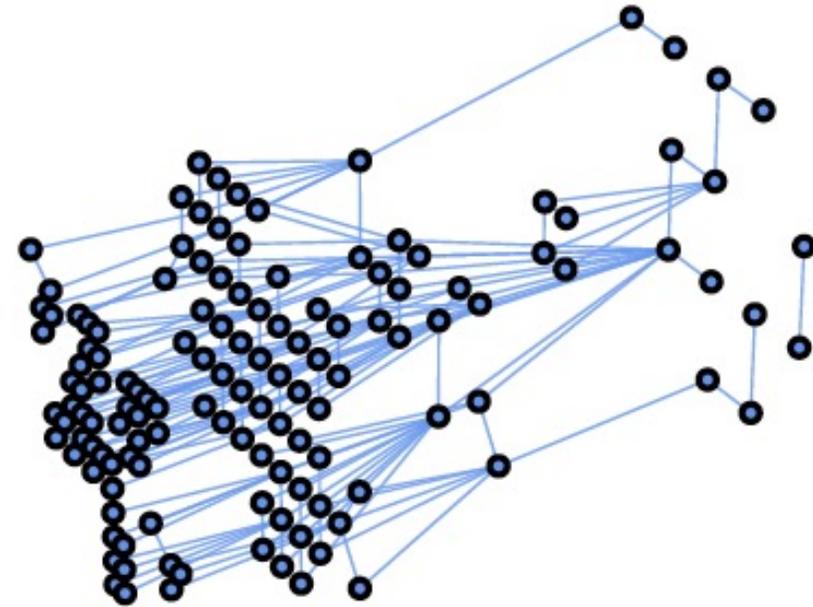
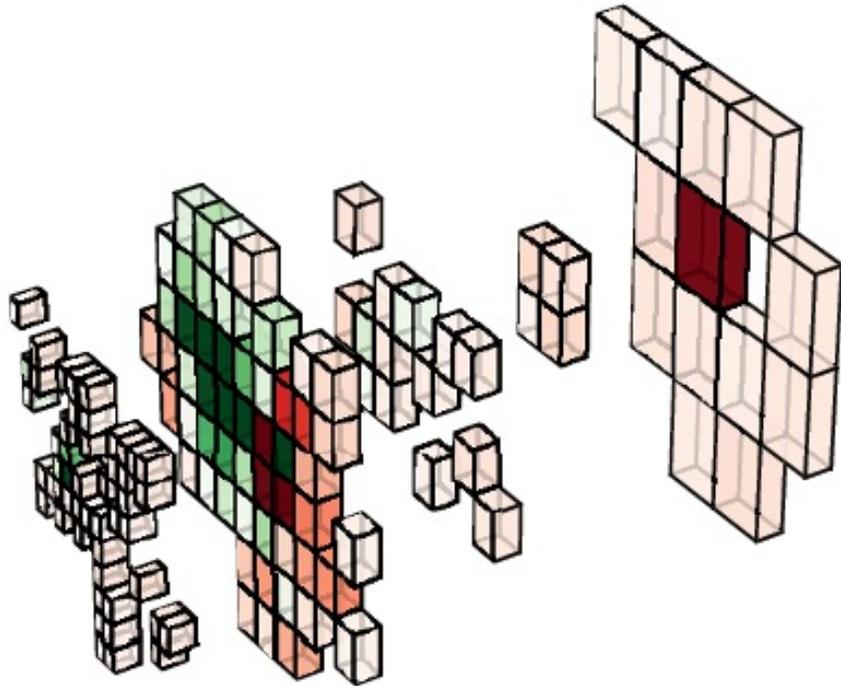
- Edge lost can't be retrieved later
- Dominated by fake edges
- Dominates compute time (0.5 s)

Efficiency vs. purity

Work in progress

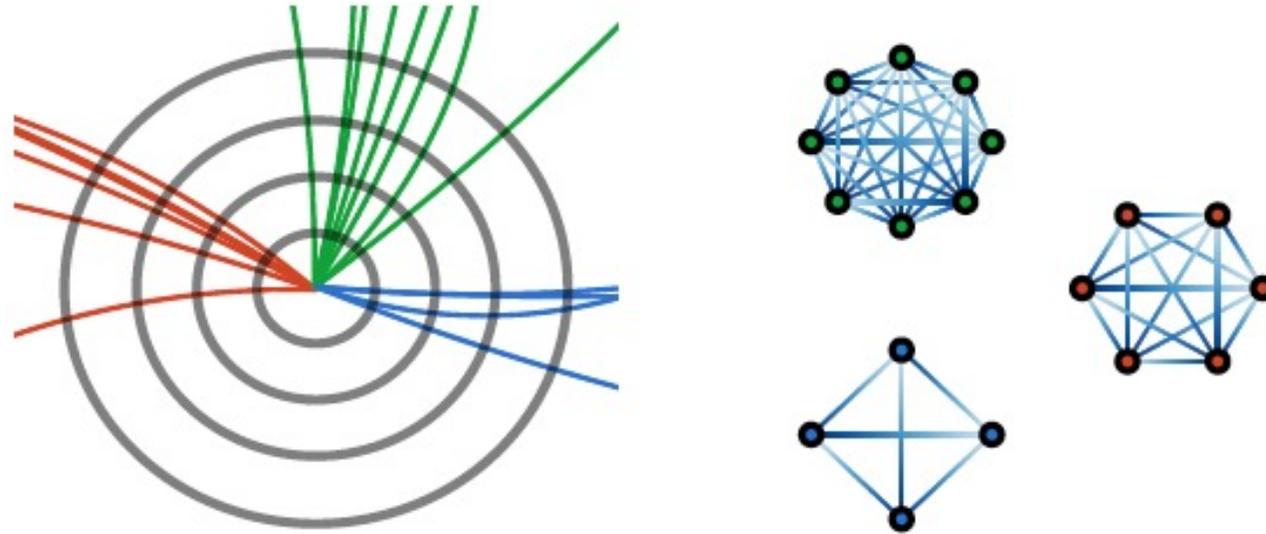
# Jet reconstruction based on energy depositions

*A cloud of particles*



- Graph-level classification

# Interpreting jets based on associated particles



→ Flavor tagging – **graph-level classification**

**Flavor tagging domain:  
longstanding & very active history of ML usage**

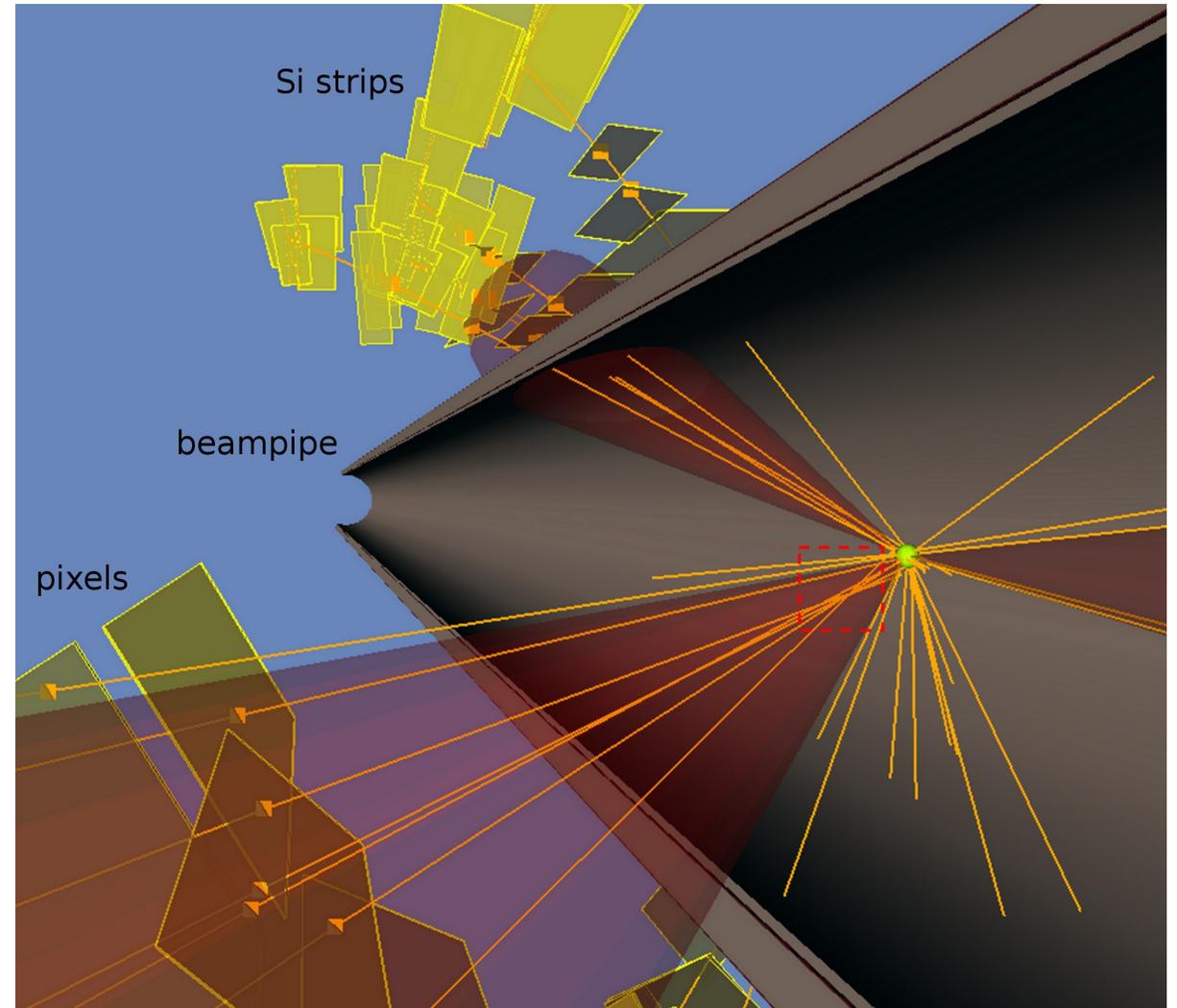
We will discuss:  
Data representations  
Learning algorithms

# Mini-intro to flavor tagging

- Quark hadronizes to collimated bunch of hadrons = *jet*
- They come in flavors
  - *c*-jet
  - *b*-jet
  - light-jet
- Interesting physics: *b*, *c*
- Task: identify jet flavor
- Train on truth-labelled simulation data

2,3 MeV $\frac{2}{3}$ <b>u</b> up	1,275 GeV $\frac{2}{3}$ <b>c</b> charm	
4,8 MeV $-\frac{1}{3}$ <b>d</b> down	95 MeV $-\frac{1}{3}$ <b>s</b> strange	4,18 GeV $-\frac{1}{3}$ <b>b</b> bottom

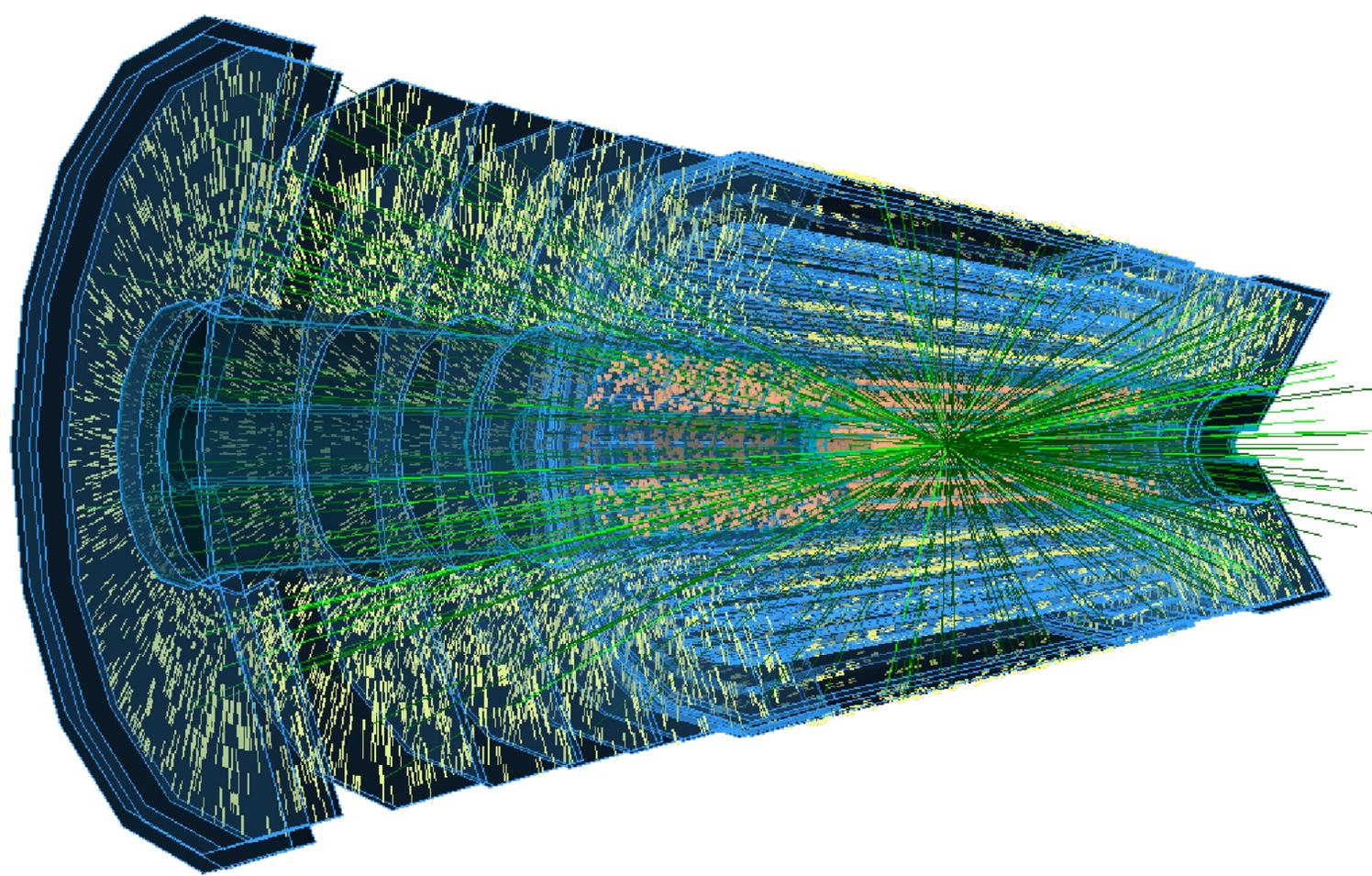
Visualizing a *jet* in a collision



[ATLAS experiment]

# MC simulation

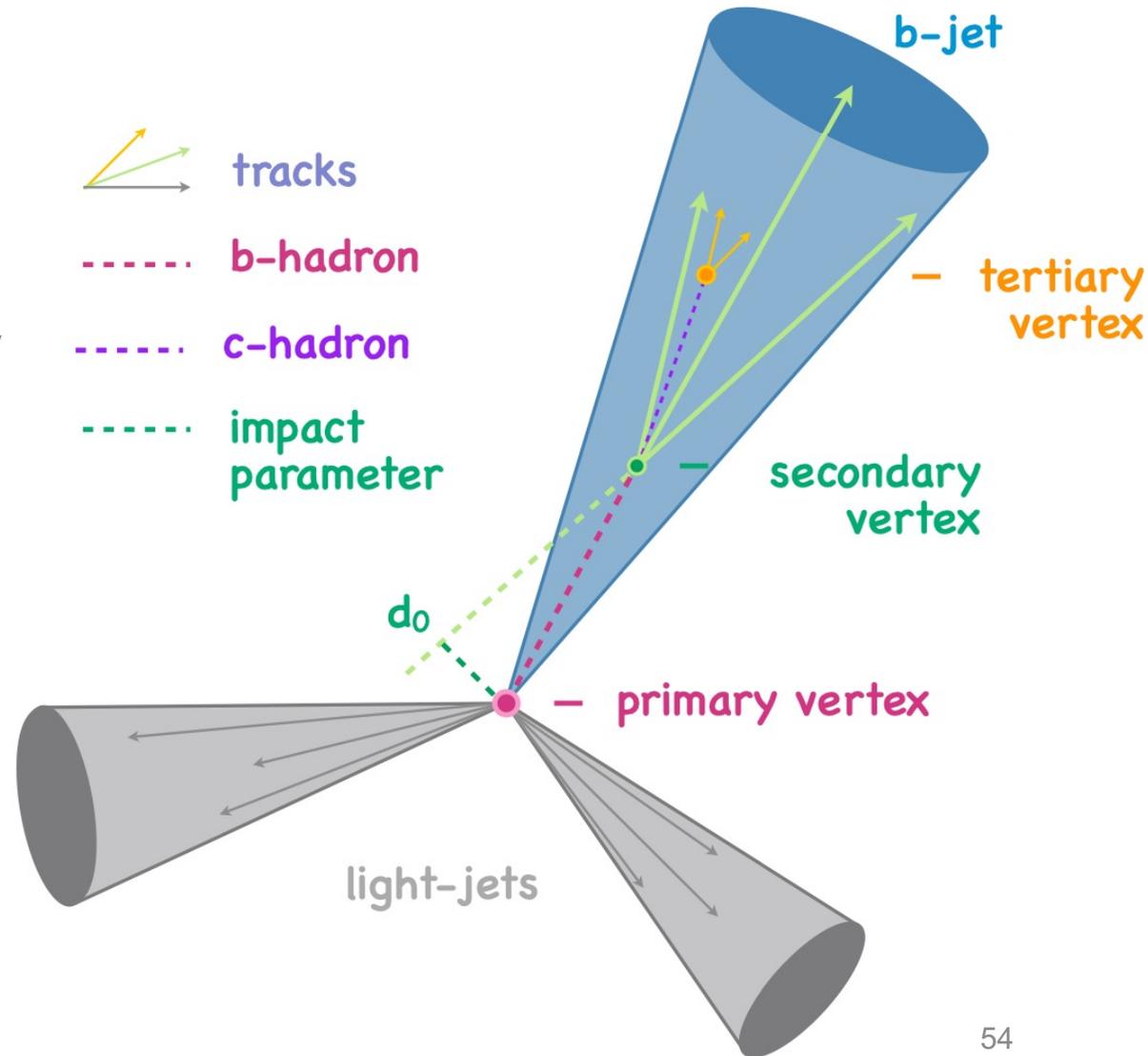
Too complex to predict  
experiment outcomes  
from first principles



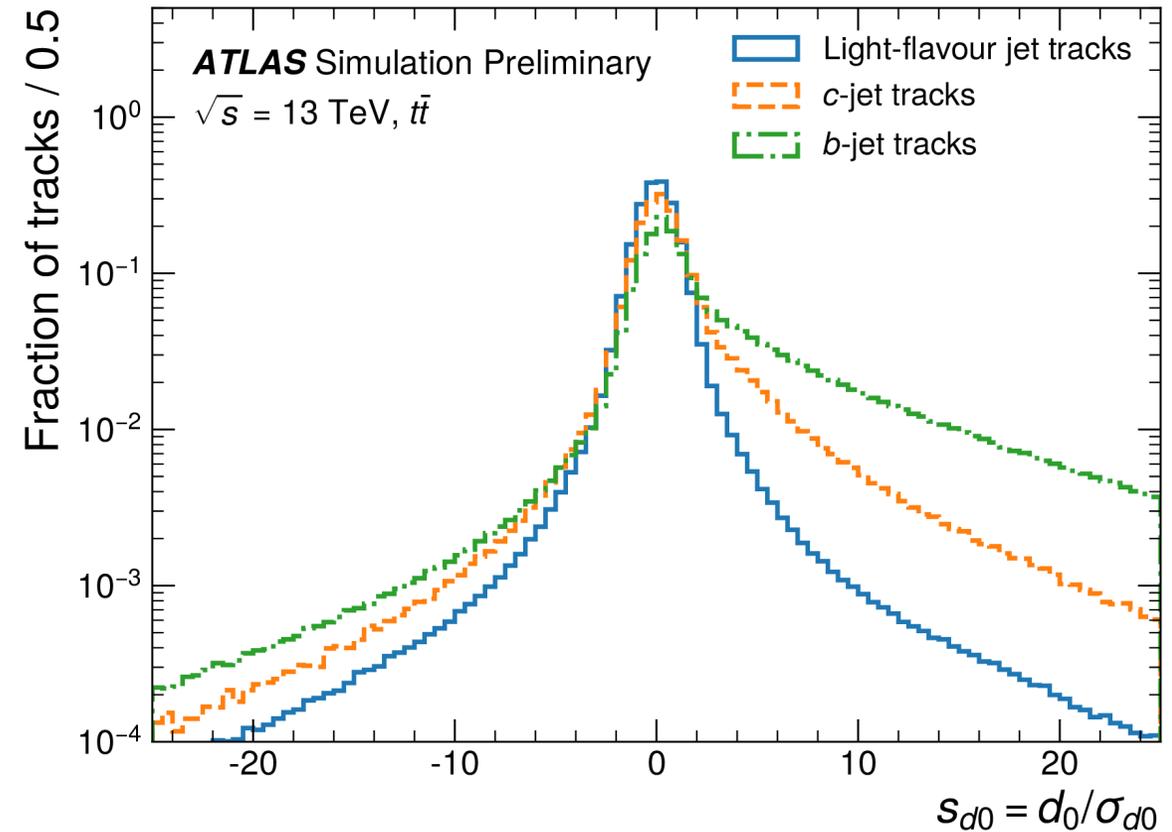
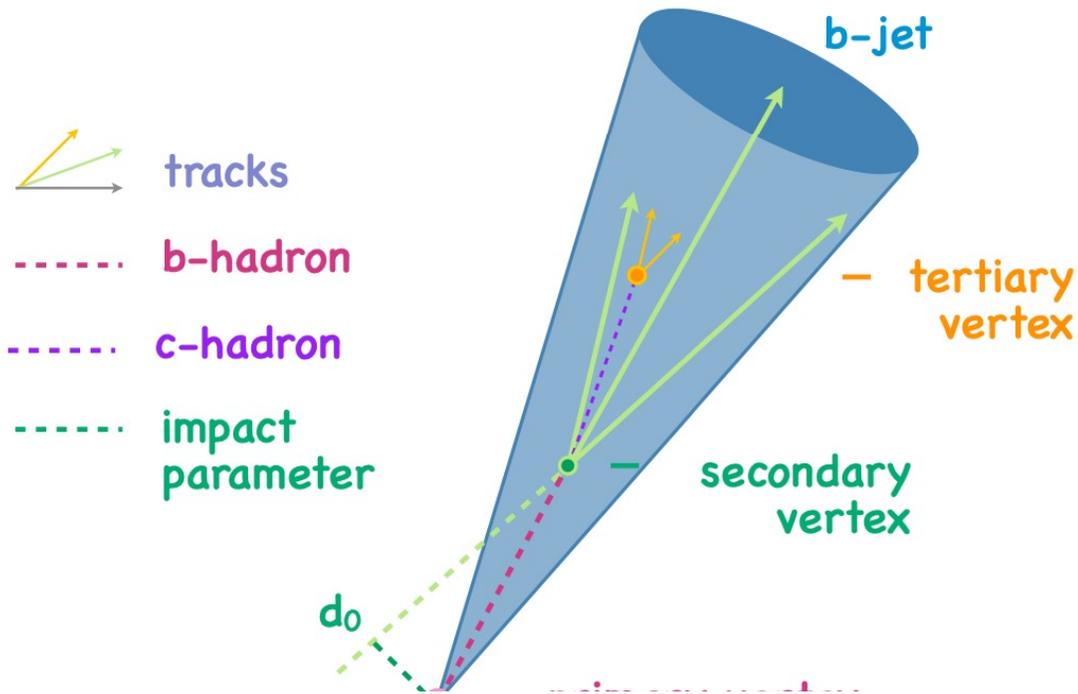
- High-fidelity simulation engines (synthetic data) to describe
  - Physics processes in a LHC collision
  - Passage of particles through the (ATLAS) detector

# B and C hadron features

- Long lifetime
  - High mass
  - High decay product multiplicity
  - B hadron often decays to C hadron
- 
- What we measure
    - Reconstruct **tracks** (from hits)
    - Extrapolate tracks to **vertices**



# Track features: *signed IP significance*

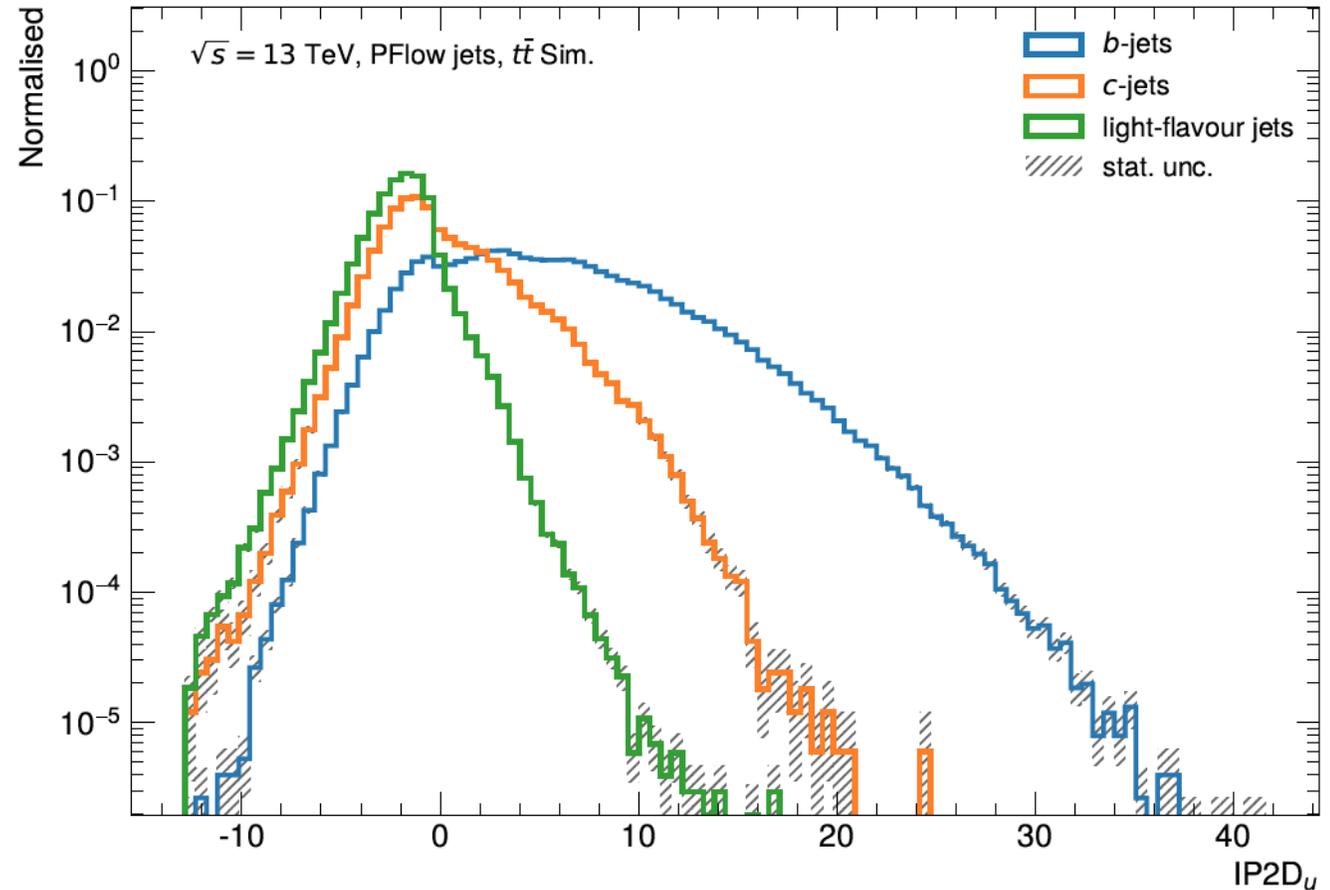
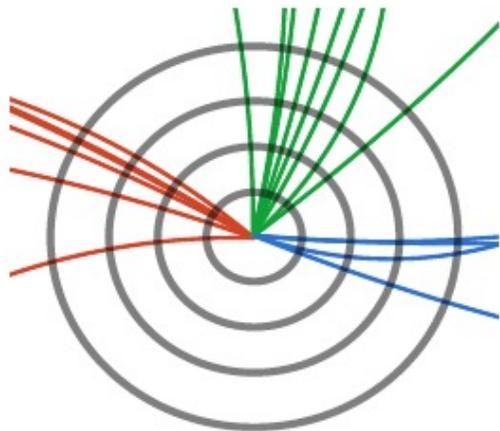


Can interpret as probability density functions  $p_b, p_c, p_l$

# Hand-designed jet feature: $IP2D$

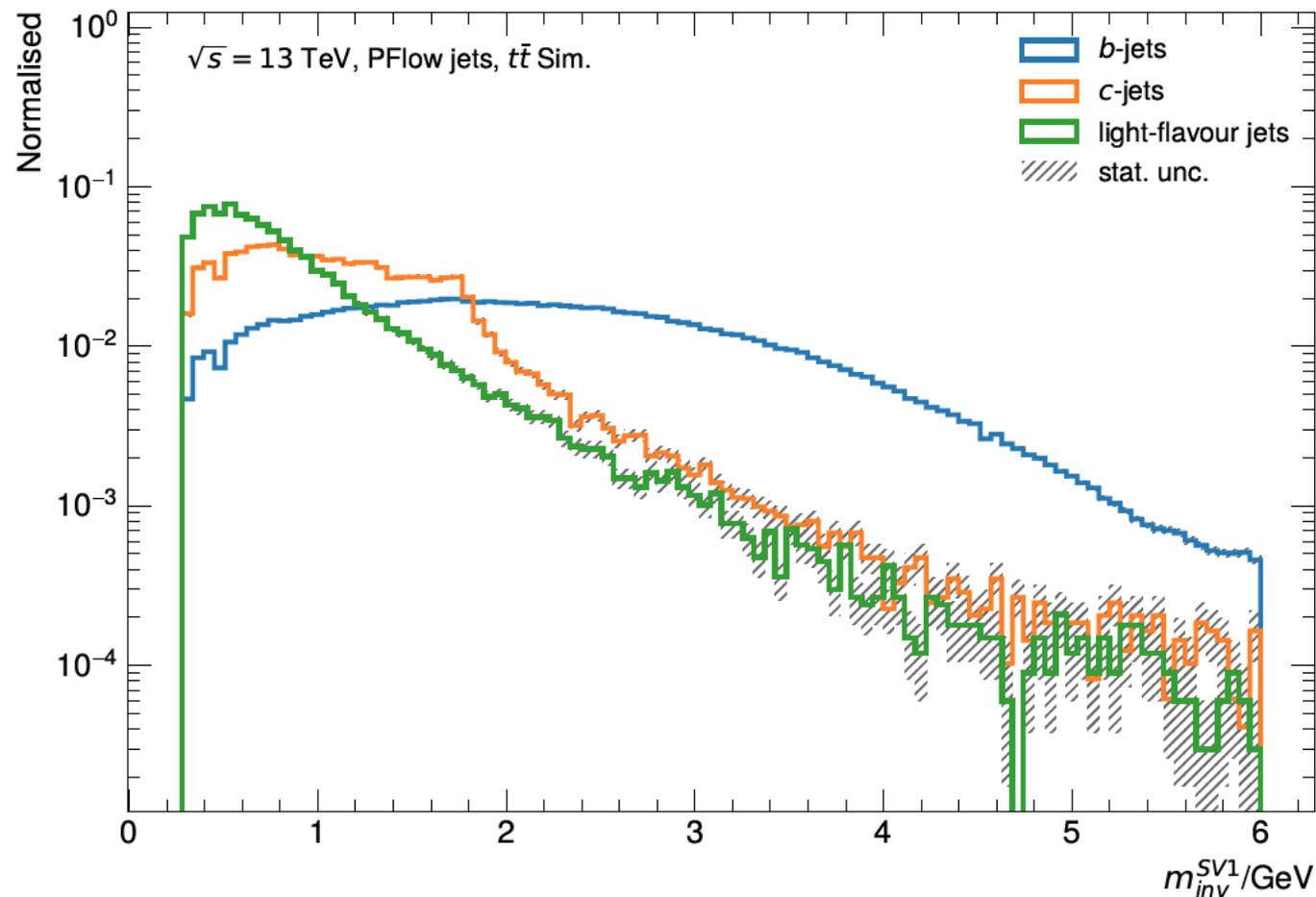
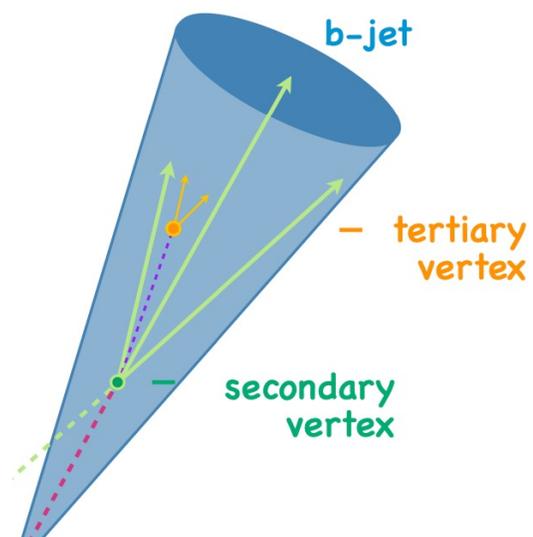
Sum log-likelihood-ratio  
(Neyman–Pearson lemma)

$$IP\chi D_{l,c,cl} = \sum_{i \in \text{tracks}} \log \left( \frac{p_{b,b,c}^i}{p_{l,c,l}^i} \right)$$

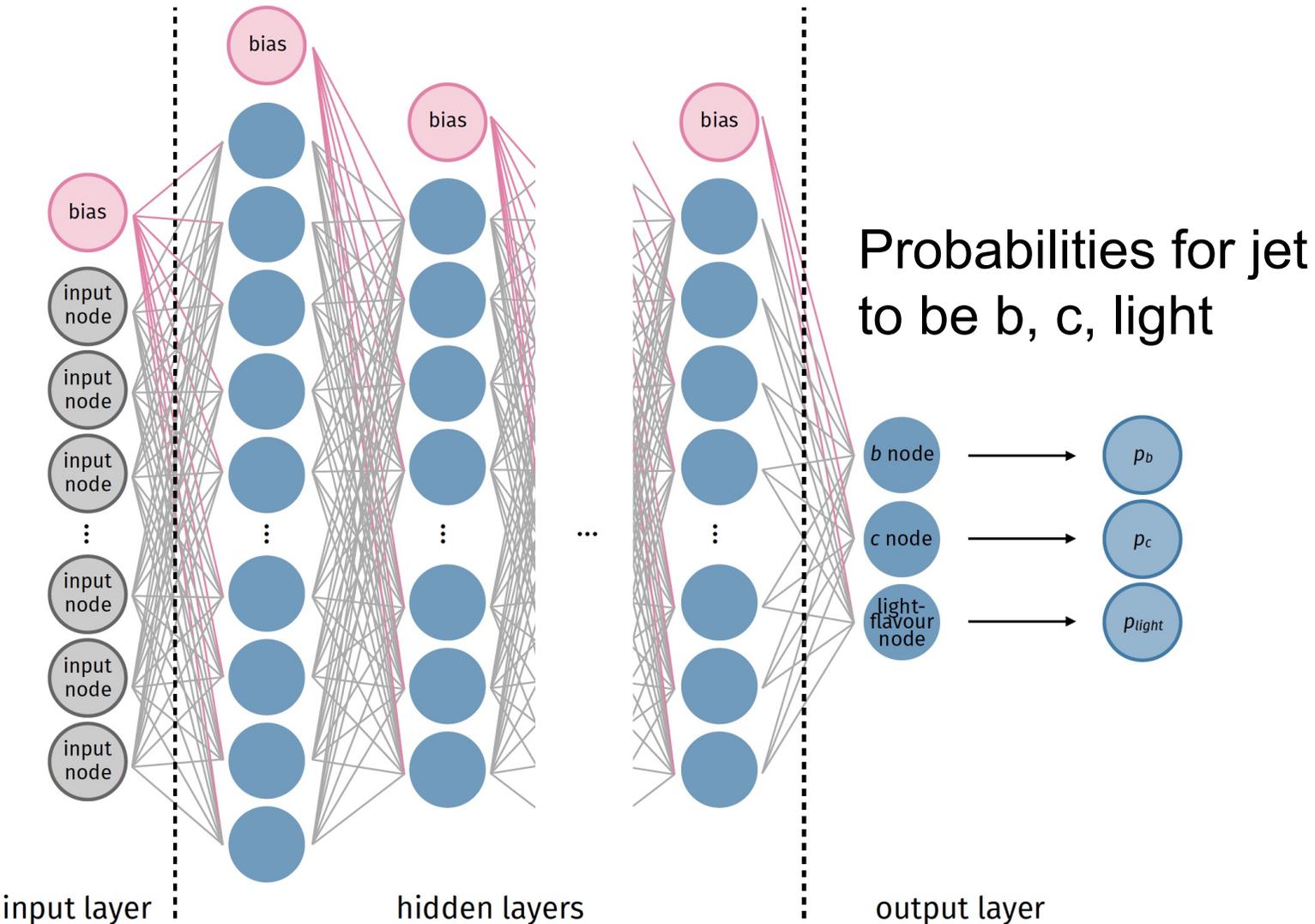


# Vertex feature: $SV1$

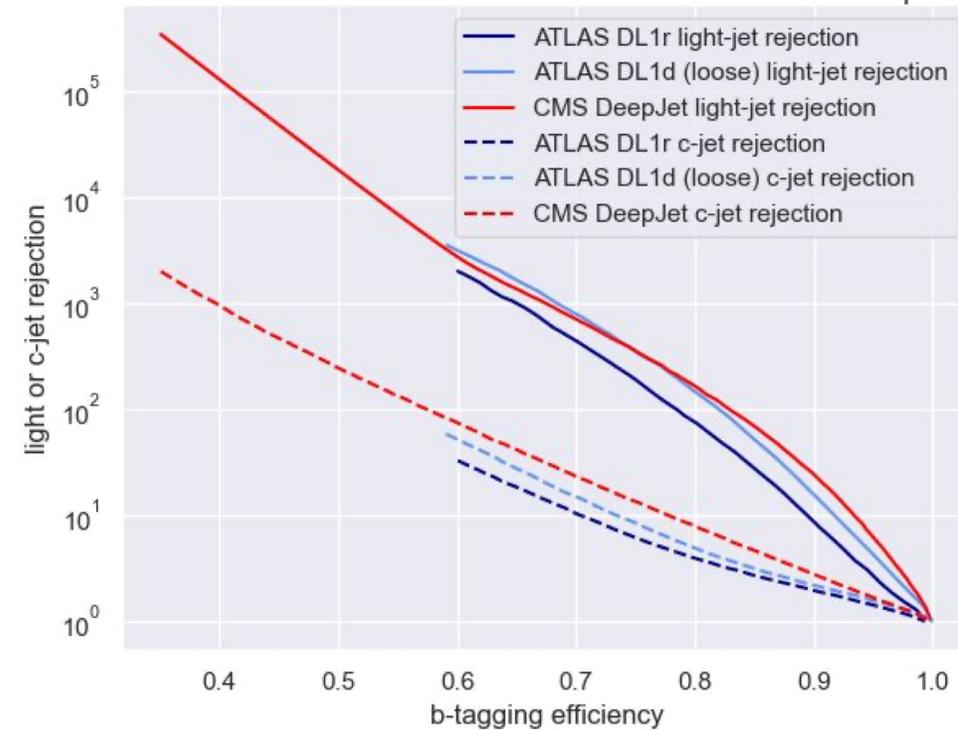
## Secondary vertex features



# Weak inductive bias: MLP (DL1)



ROC curve:



# Recap

Inputs = **variable** number of **unordered** tracks (& vertices)

MLP = **fixed-size** number of **ordered** inputs

- Ad-hoc workaround:
  - **Fixed-size**: zero-pad/truncate variable-size or sum
  - **Ordered**: leading N tracks
- NOT ideal – why?

# Universal approximation theorem

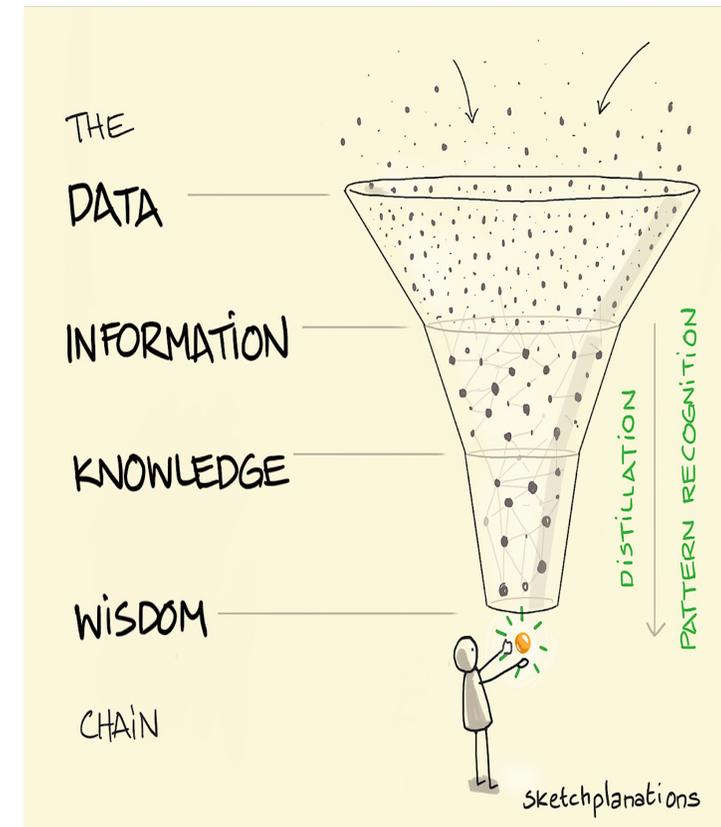
*MLP (FF NN) can represent a good function for a task,  
but the problem is how to construct it*

Might require:

*Infinite data*

*Infinite network size*

*Infinite compute*



# Add inductive bias: Recurrent NNs (RNNs)

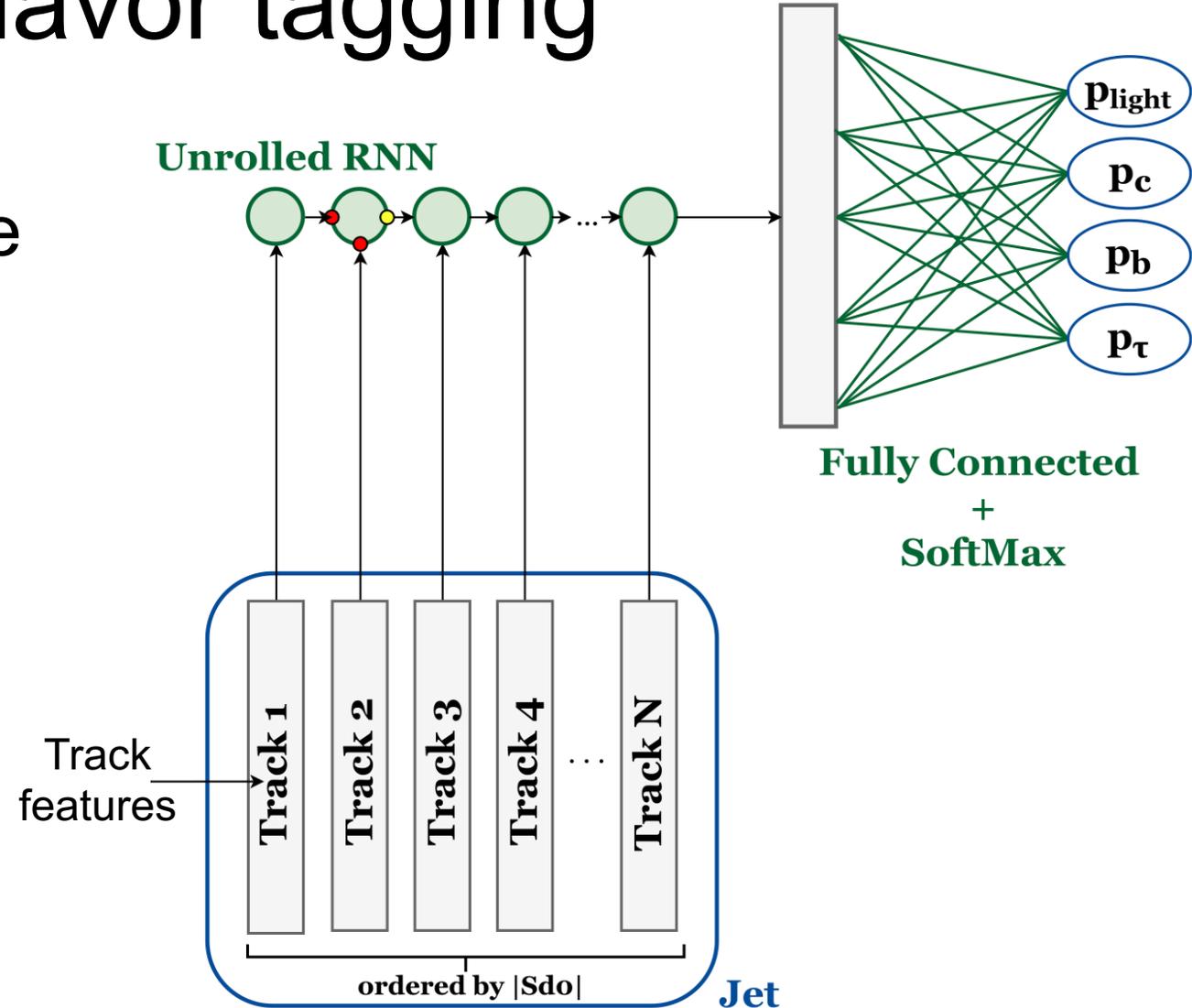
- Handle **variable-length ordered** sequences (e.g. NLP)
  - The food was **good**, not *bad* at all
  - The food was *bad*, not **good** at all
- Share parameters across the sequence

# RNNs for flavor tagging

Tracks = variable-sized sequence

*Better* than summing tracks

But order is *arbitrarily* imposed



# Data representation *matters*

## Ideal representation: GNNs

Variable-sized inputs

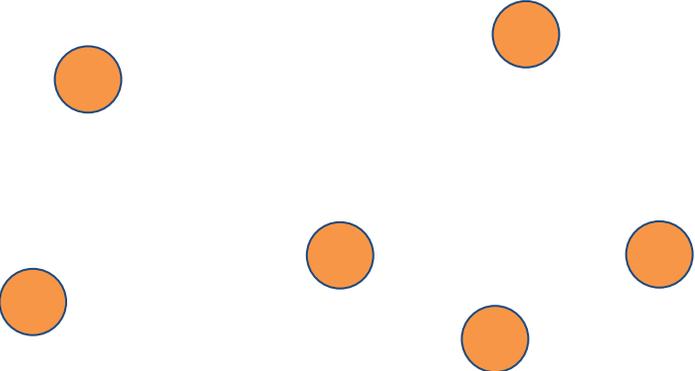
Unordered

# Flavor tagging with Deep Sets

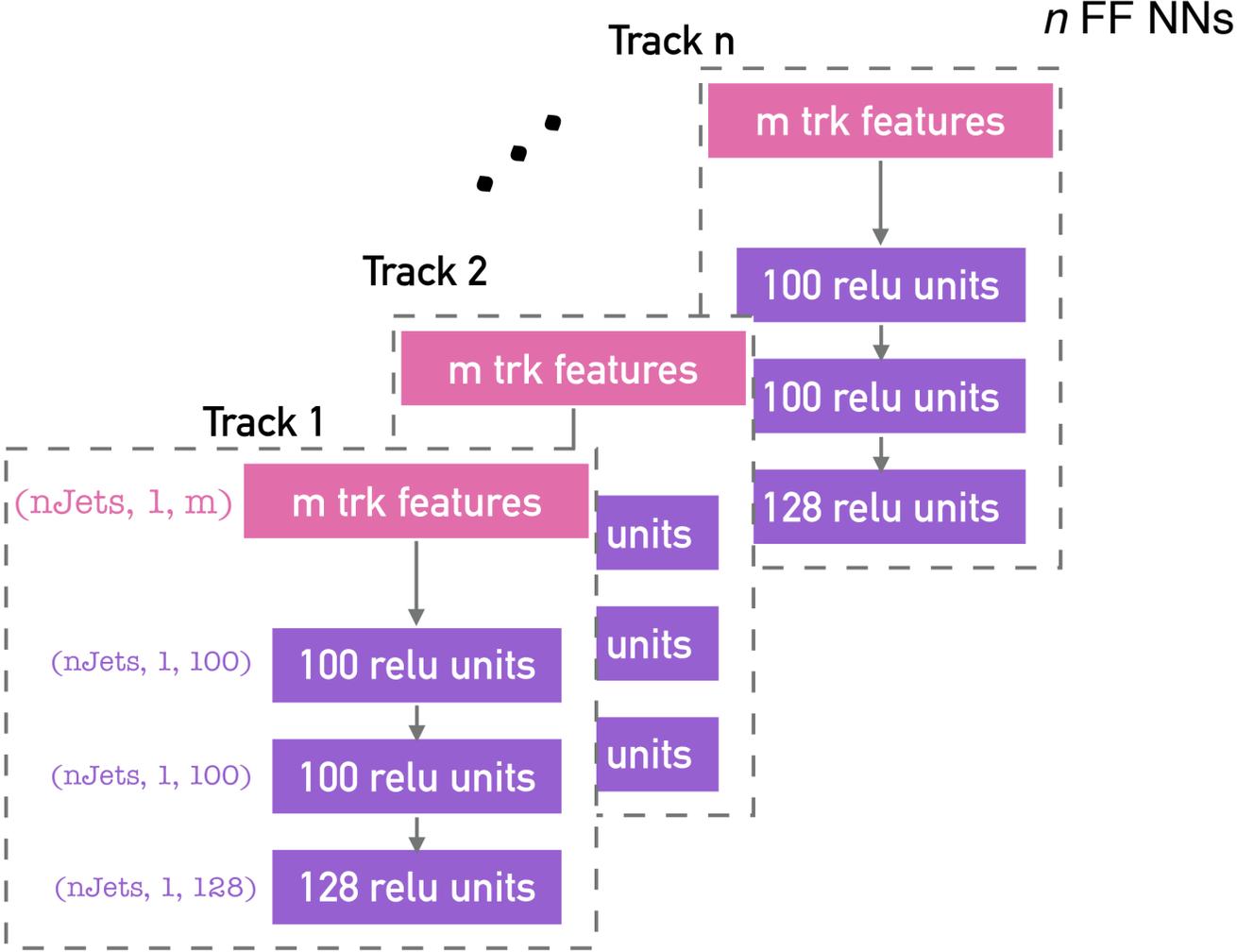
Deep Set

=

Graph without edges

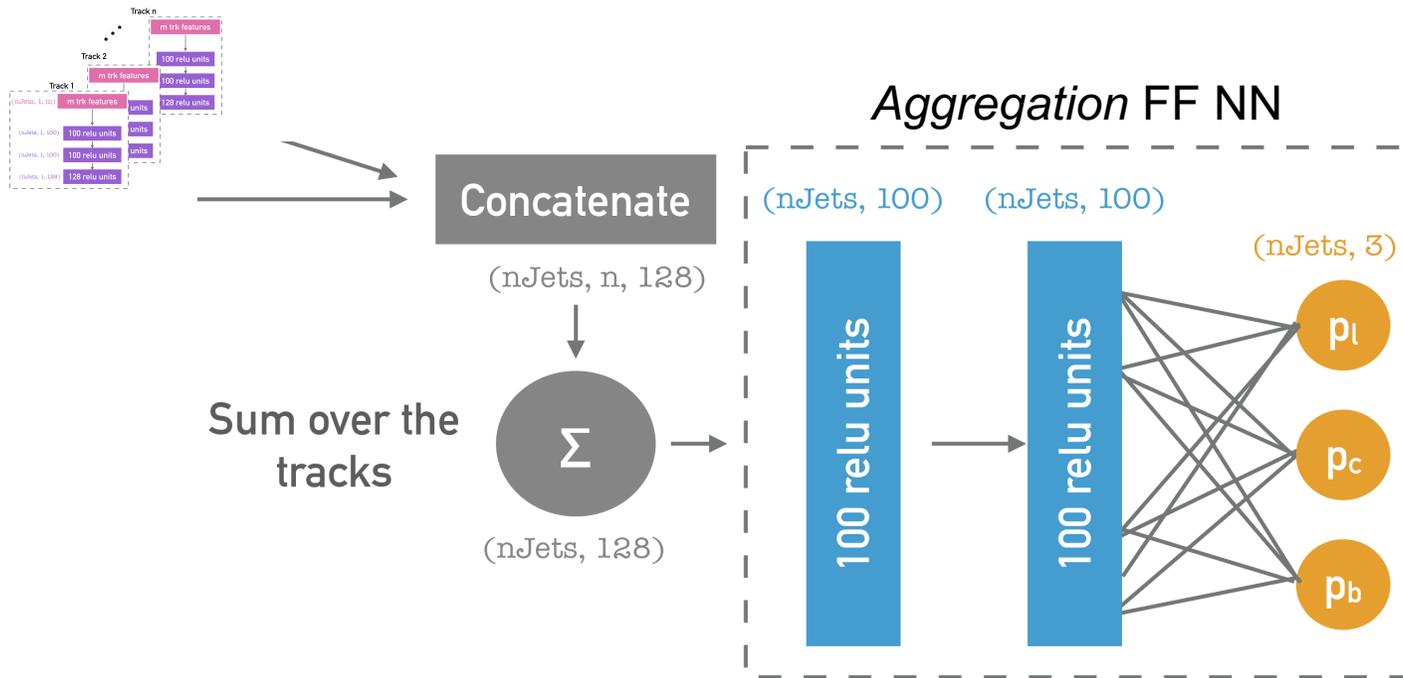


[DIPS]



Embed in higher-dimensional latent space

# Flavor tagging with Deep Sets (step 2)



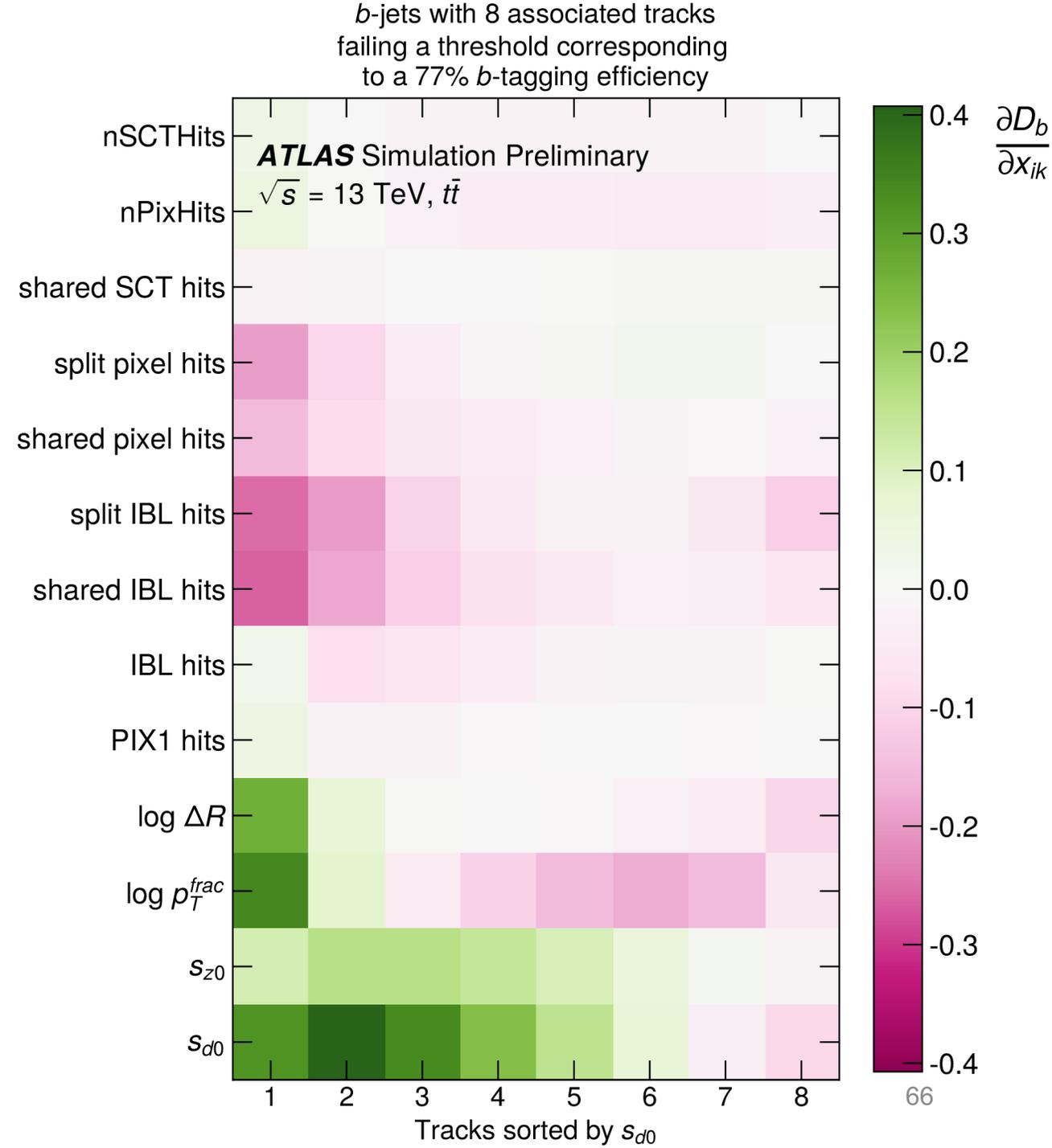
Permutation invariant  
Arbitrary input size  
Account for track correlations

# Interpretability

## Saliency map:

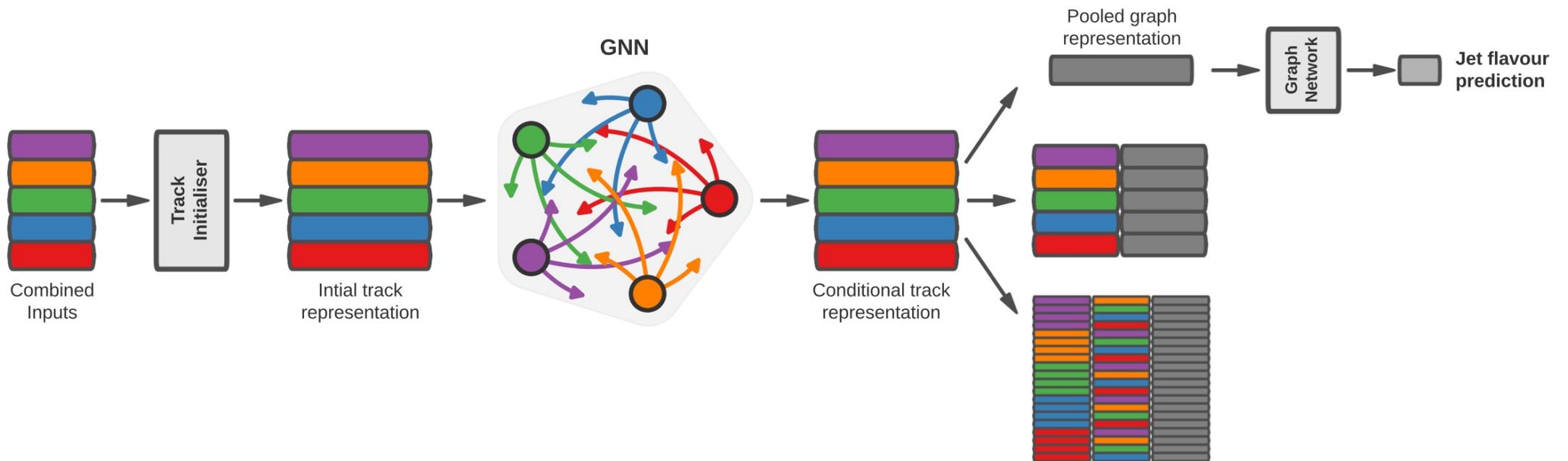
how sensitive is discriminant to input changes

$$\frac{\partial D_b}{\partial x_{ik}} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N \frac{\partial D_b^{(j)}}{\partial x_{ik}^{(j)}}$$



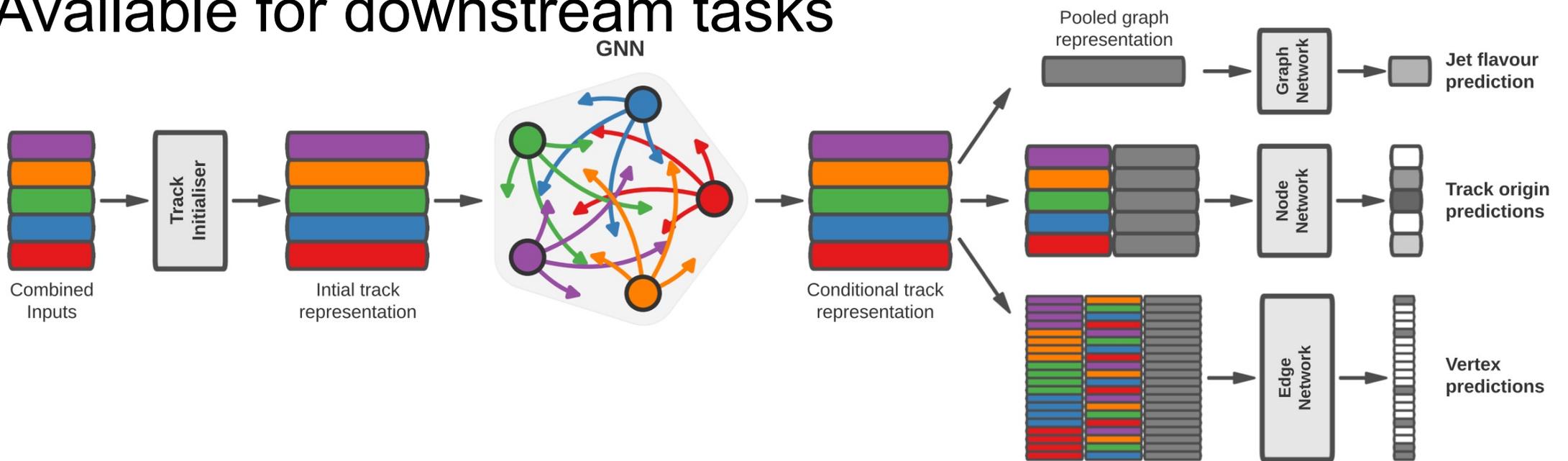
# Deep Set $\rightarrow$ GNN

- Fully connected graph
- Edges  $\rightarrow$  information exchange



# The importance of *auxiliary tasks*

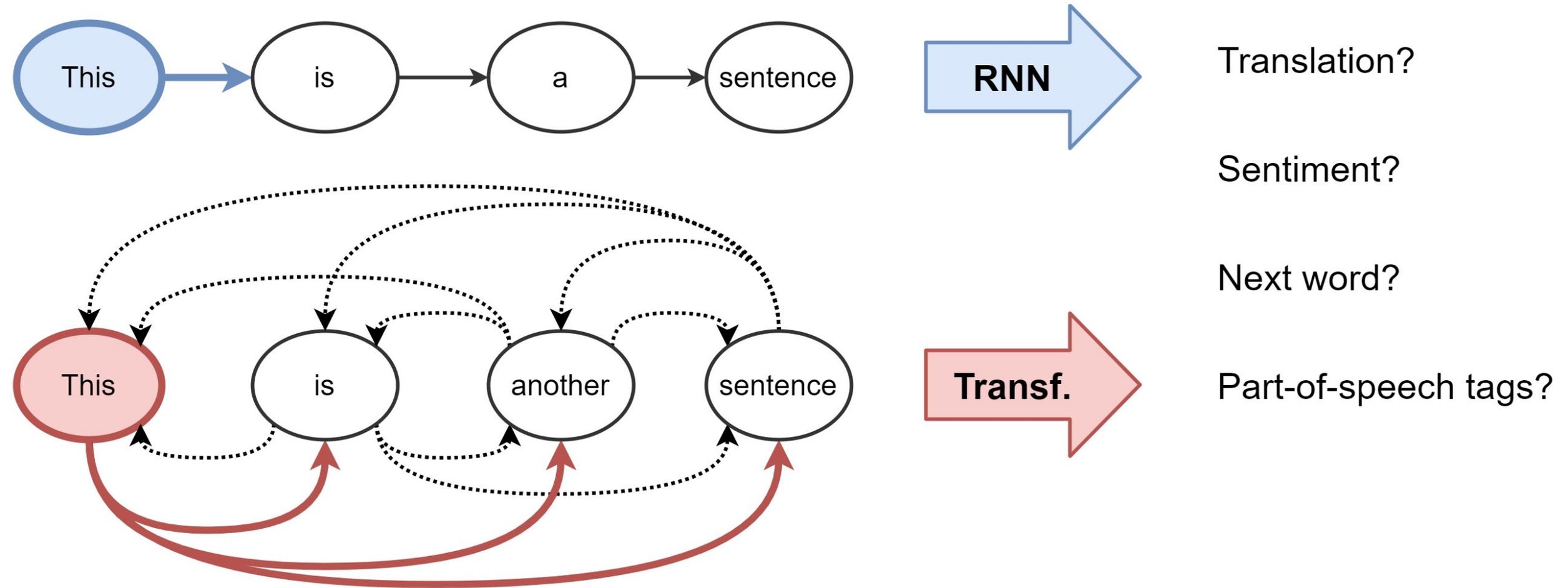
- Improves performance
- *Stepping stone*
- Available for downstream tasks



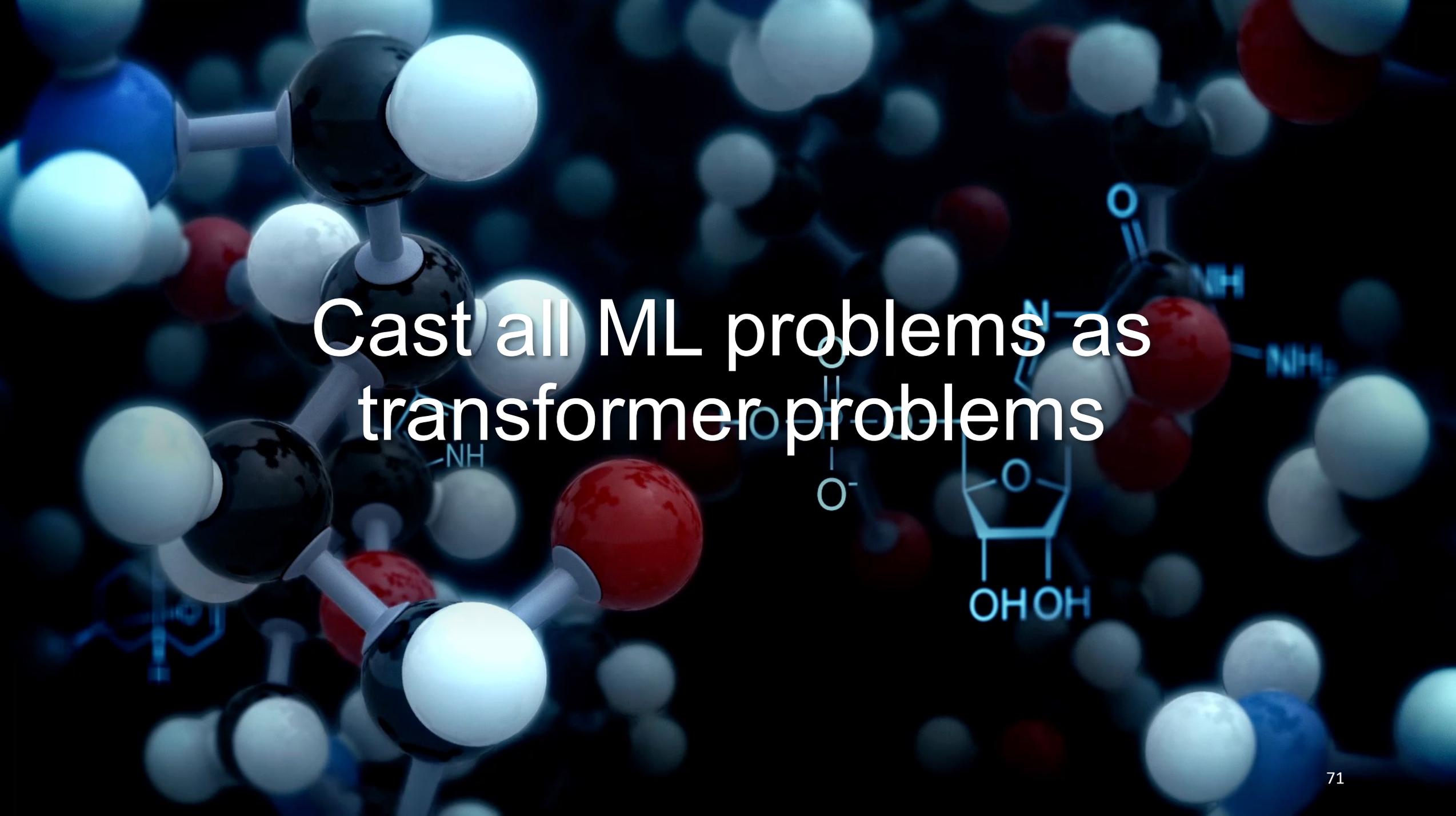
# Transformers Are Taking the AI World by Storm



# Representation Learning for NLP

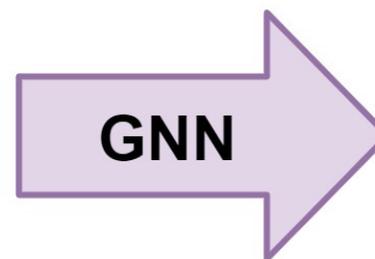
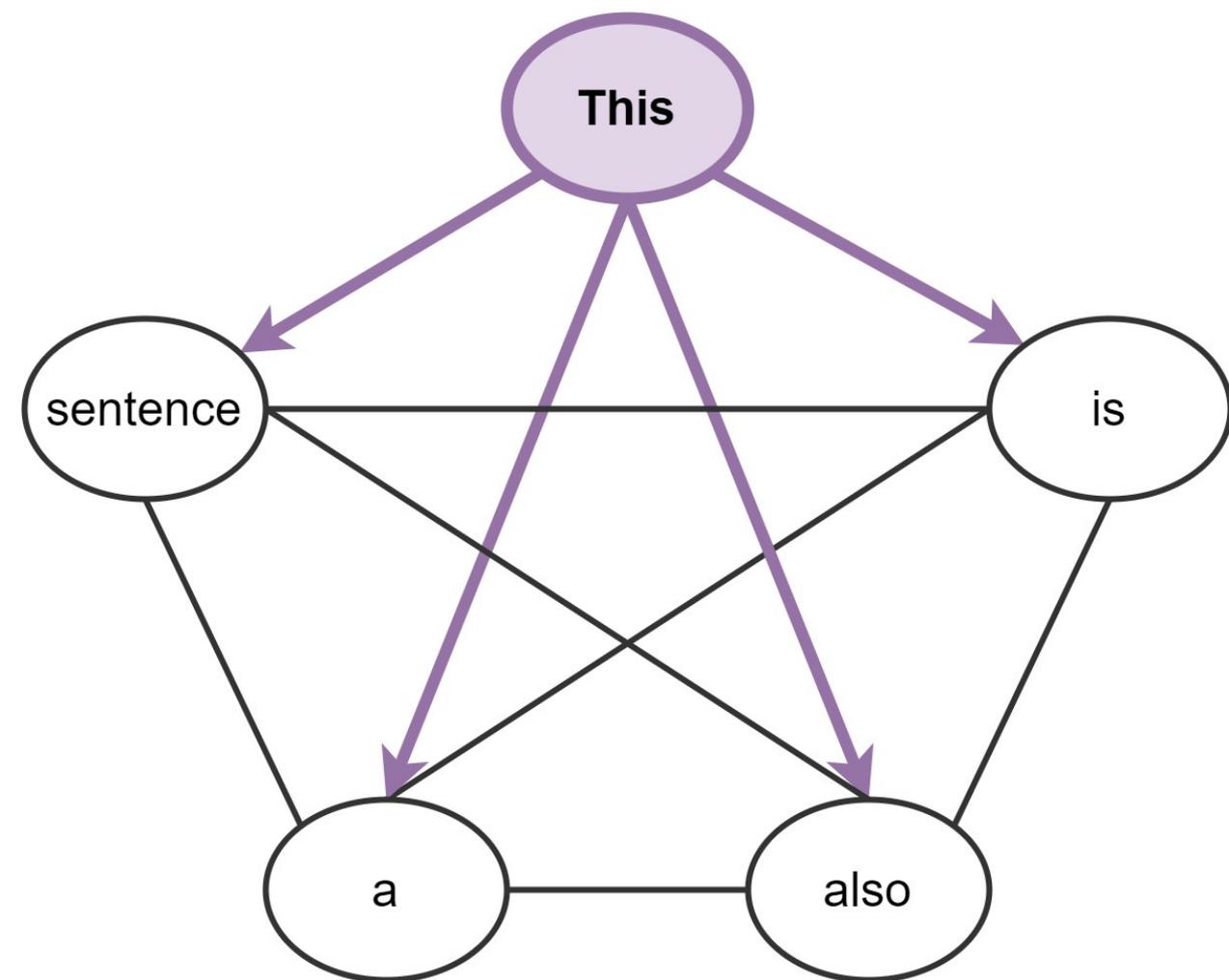


Transformers completely superseded RNNs

The background features a dark blue field filled with various molecular models and chemical structures. On the left, there are several ball-and-stick models with black, white, and red spheres. On the right, there are 2D chemical structures, including a sugar ring with 'OH' and 'OH' labels, and a carboxylate group with 'O-' and 'NH' labels. The overall aesthetic is scientific and digital.

Cast all ML problems as  
transformer problems

# Sentences are fully-connected word graphs

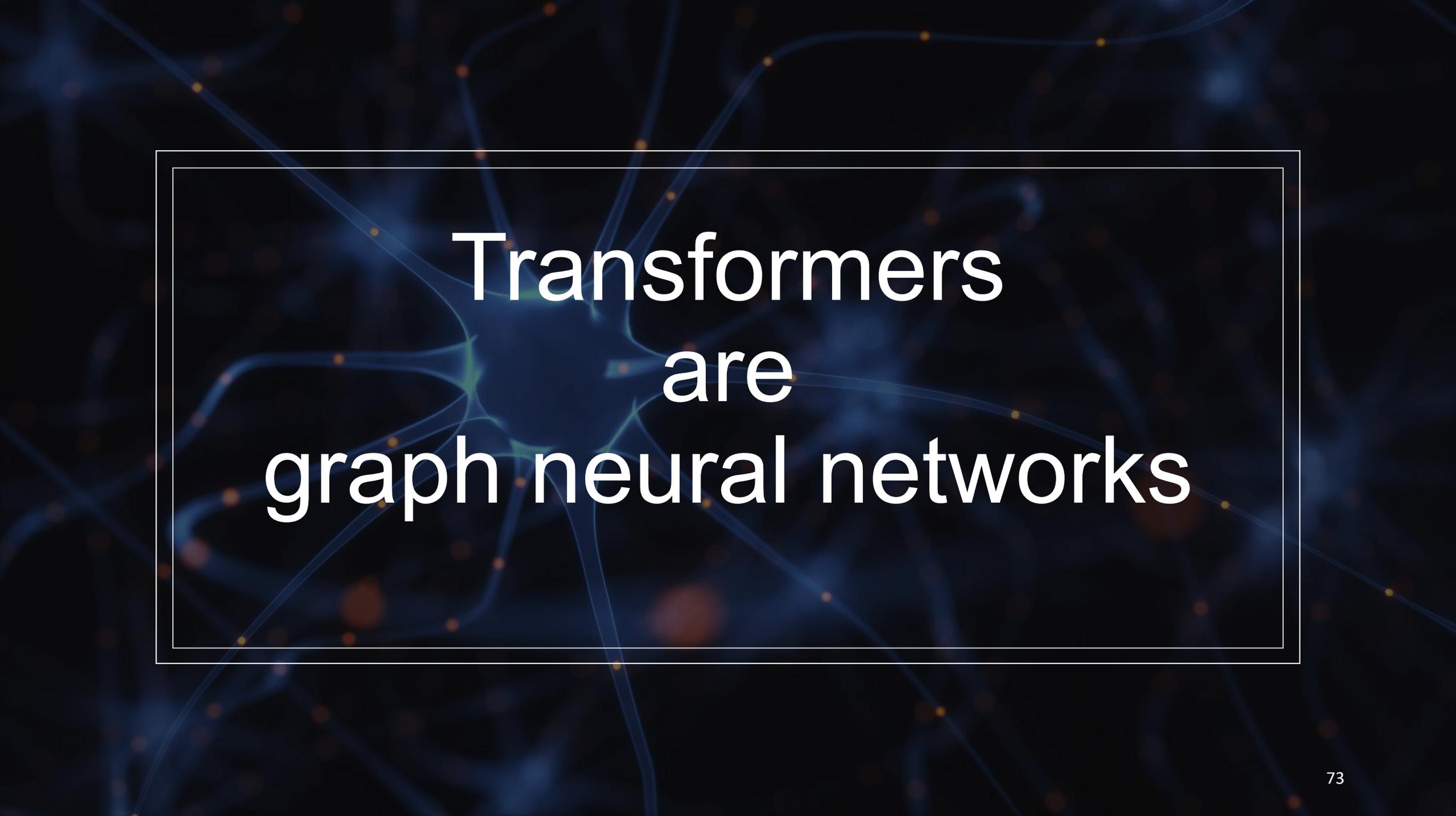


Translation?

Sentiment?

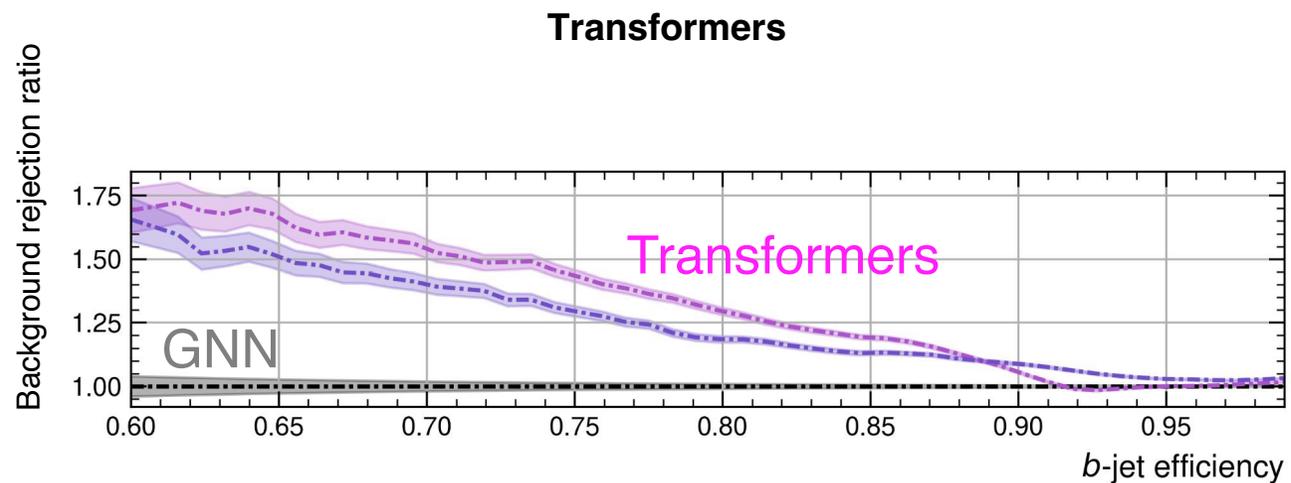
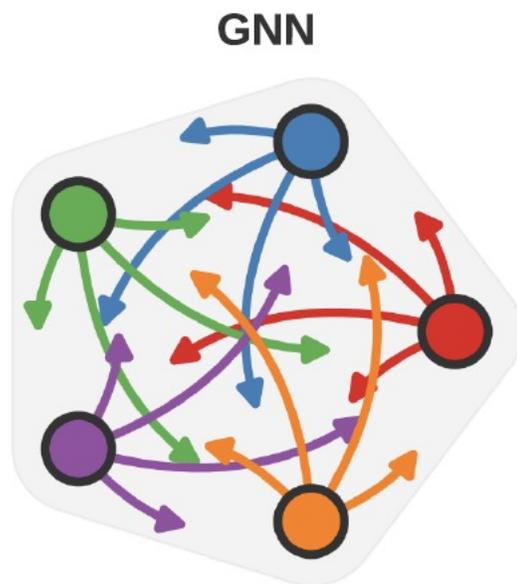
Next word?

Part-of-speech tags?

The background features a complex network of glowing blue lines and small orange dots, resembling a neural network or a data visualization. The lines are thin and curved, connecting various points. The dots are small and scattered throughout the scene. The overall color palette is dark blue with accents of orange and white.

Transformers  
are  
graph neural networks

# GNN $\rightarrow$ Transformer



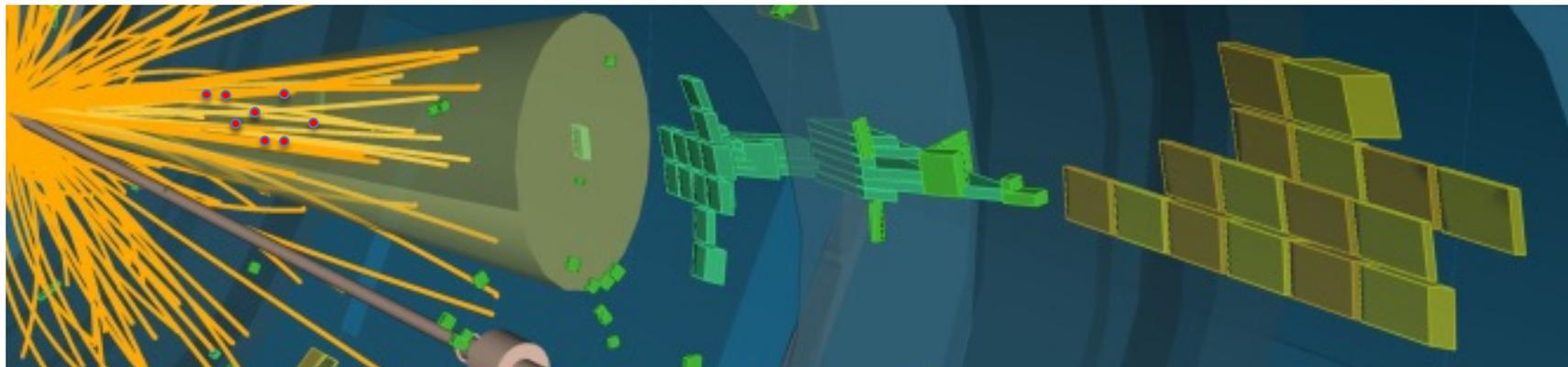
Faster to train

Scale better with more data & more parameters

Potential for *pre-trained backbone + fine-tuning*

# Is there more unused information?

- Tracks
- Hits (leftover)
- Neutrals



- Heterogenous graph
  - Different node & edge types (track, hit, neutral)
  - Cannot apply same GN block
- Way out: embed in a common latent space

Have we really used all information now?

The difference between face recognition & PP?

**We have a model**

# The holy grail

Encode model in  
graph structure

# Back to the *inductive bias* story

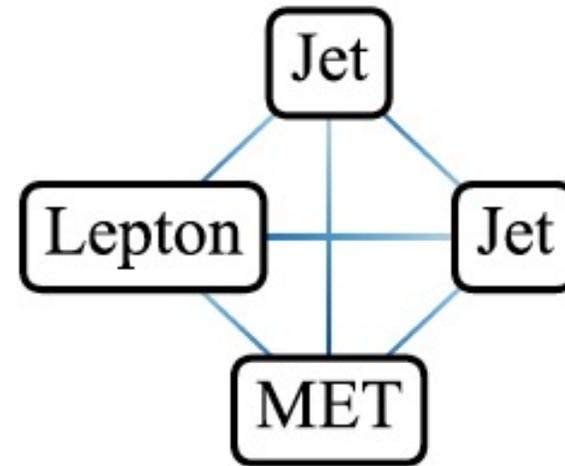
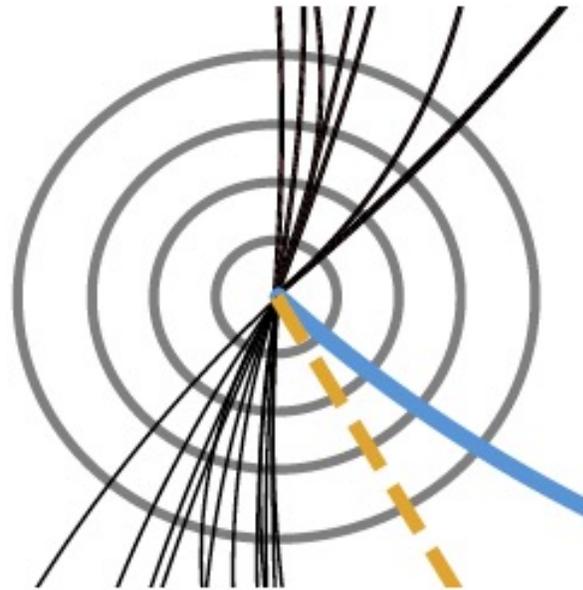
Learning generic functions = curse of dimensionality

Encode physics priors to reduce dimensionality

Graphs separate **data representation** from **learning**

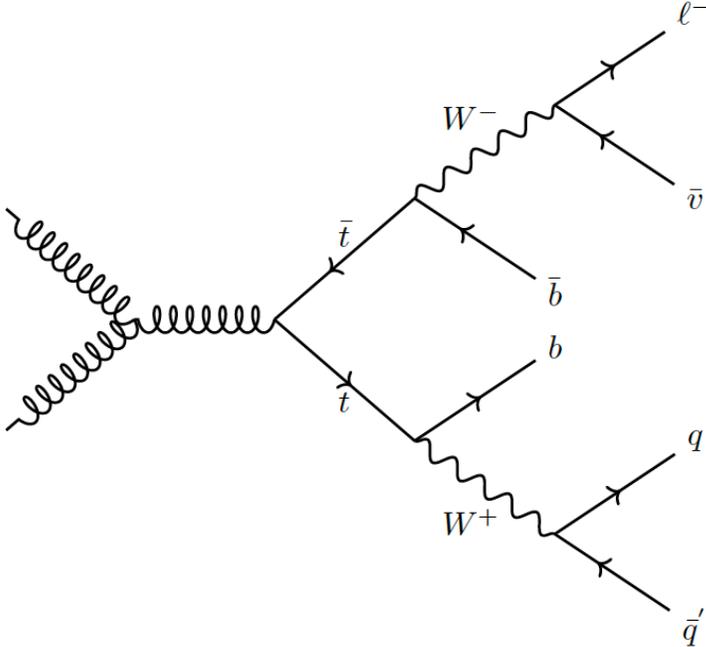
Encode structure: *leaving edges out or adding nodes*

# Interpreting particles in a collision

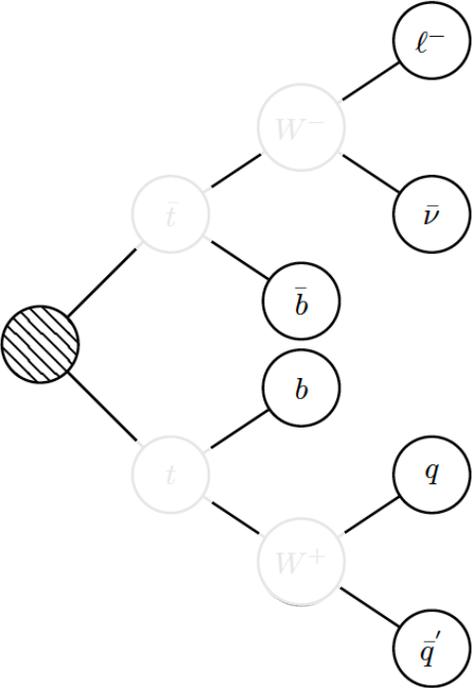


# Encoding model in GNN

Unseen nodes



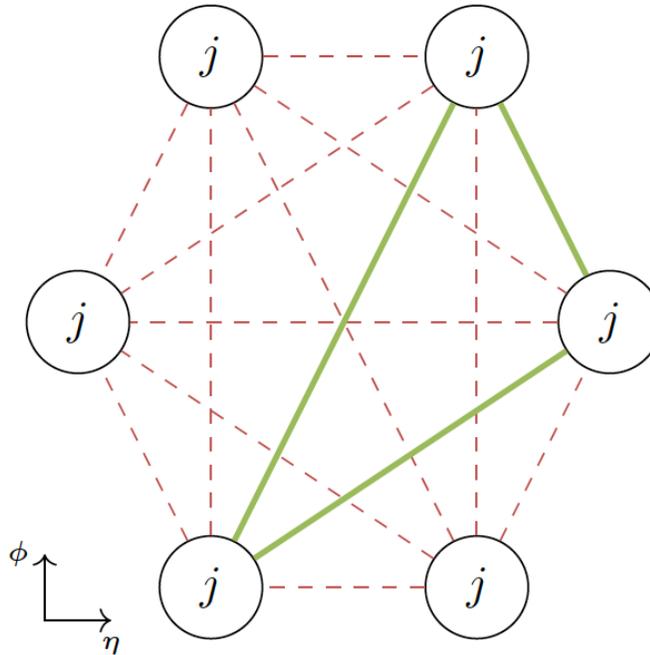
(a) Feynman diagram



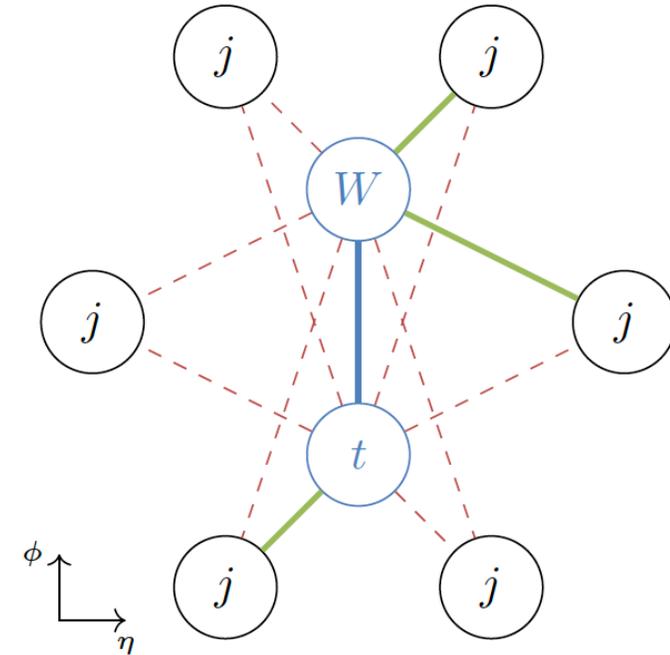
(b) Node and edge graph

# Topograph idea

- Encode Feynman diagram in GNN
- Add virtual  $W$  &  $t$  nodes
- Combinatorics
  - Fully connected  $O(n^2)$
  - Topograph  $O(n)$
- Predict kinematics

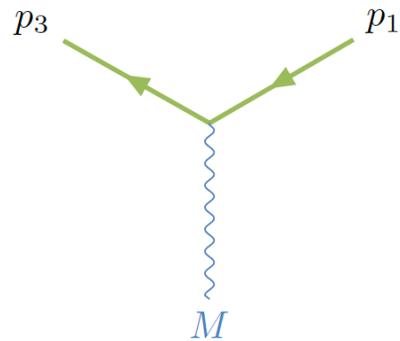
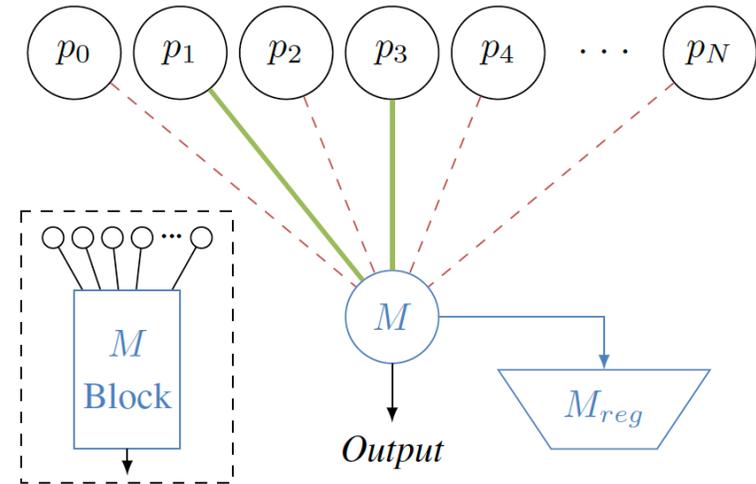


(a) Fully connected graph

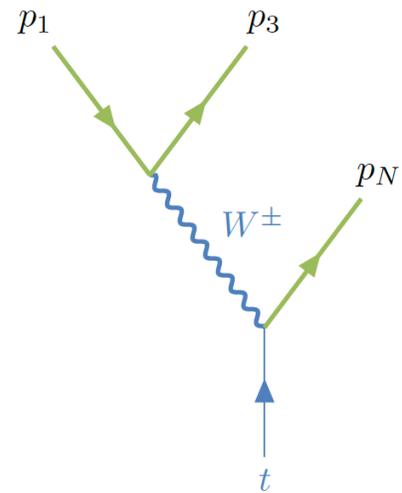
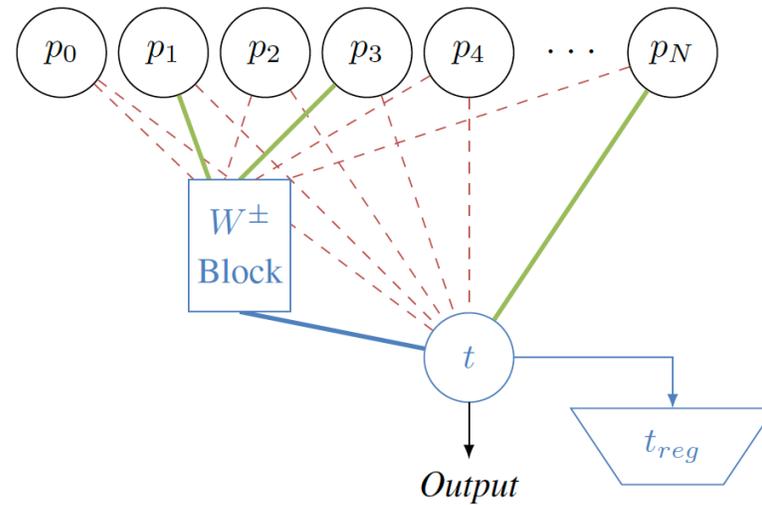


(b) Topograph

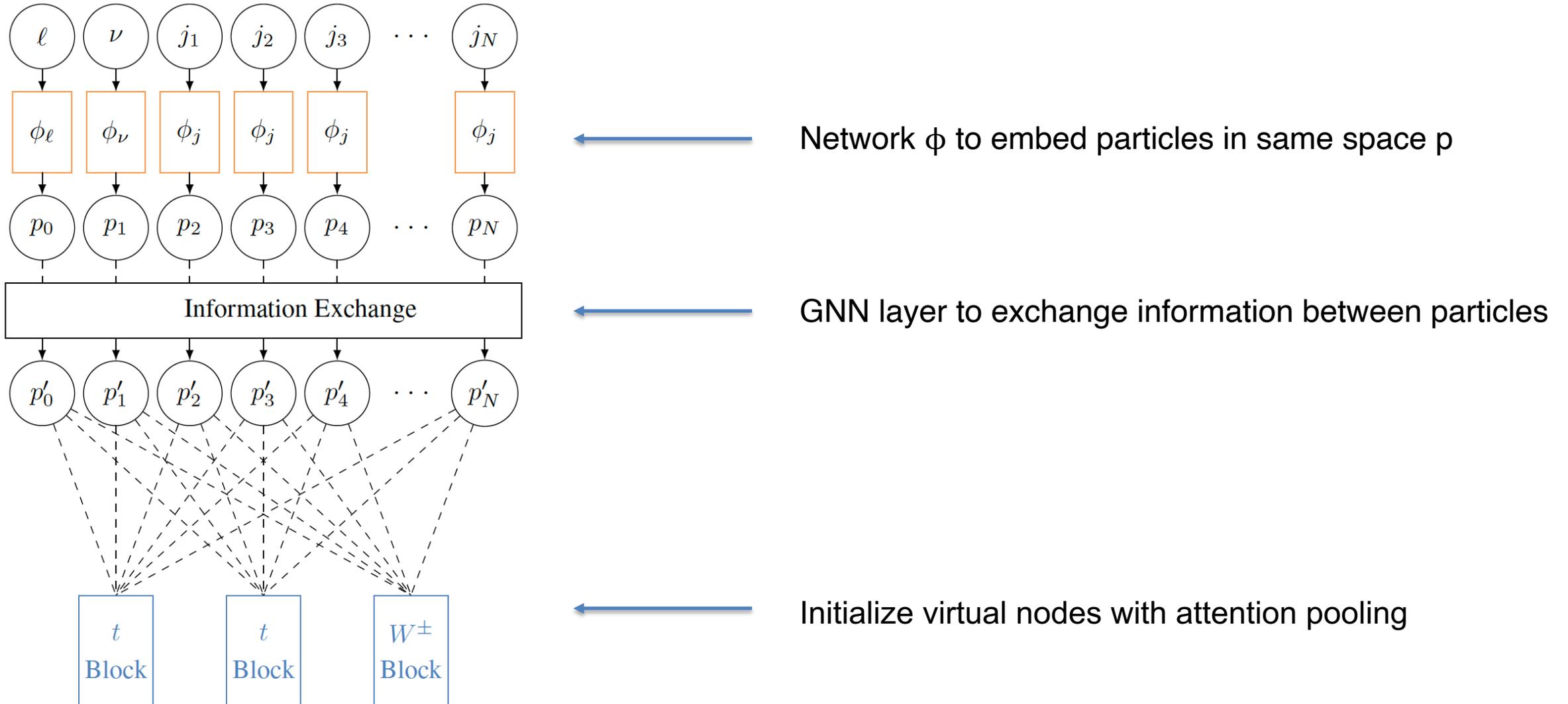
# Particle Blocks



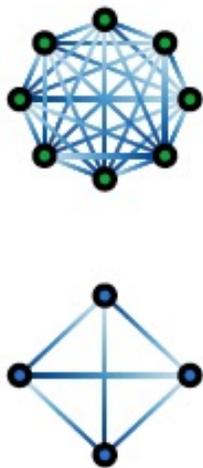
- Auxiliary tasks
  - Virtual node regression
  - Link prediction



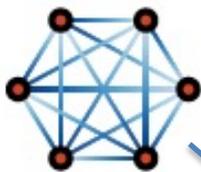
# Modular network structure



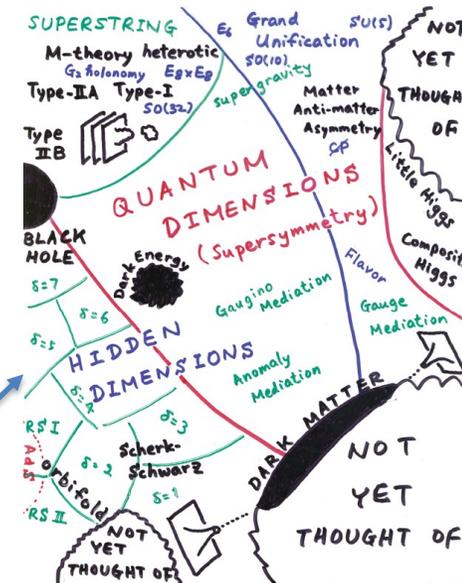
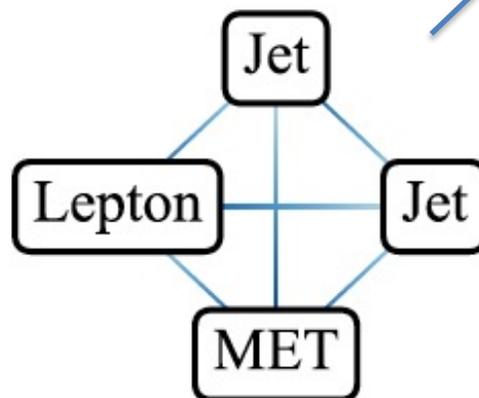
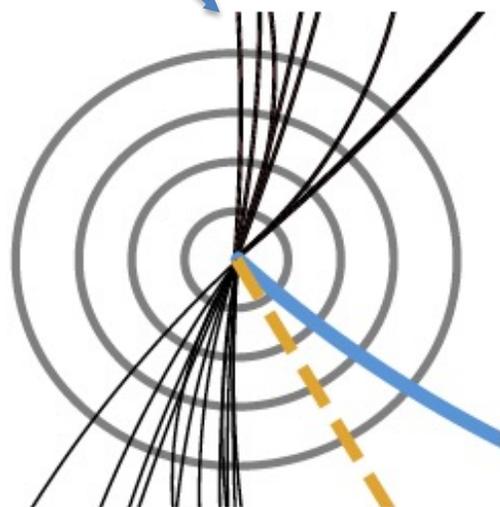
# Graph of graphs of graphs...



Space of constituents of a jet



Space of objects in a collision event



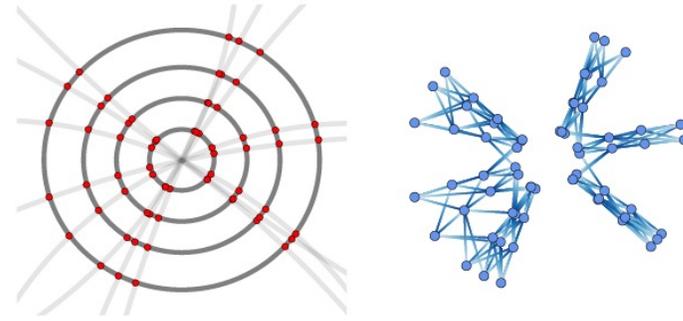
Collision events = nodes in theory space

Raw data =

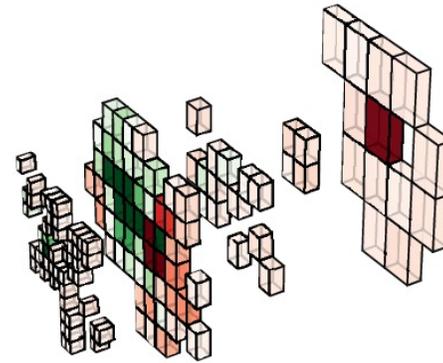
point cloud

~

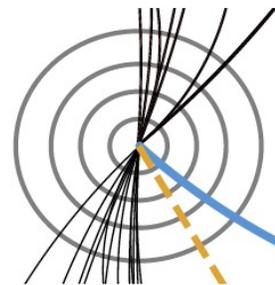
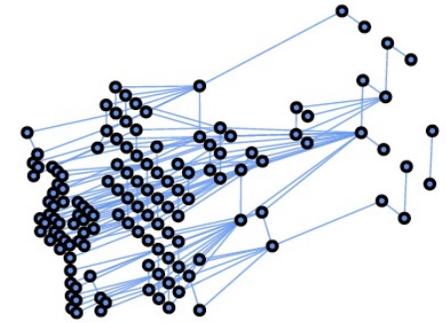
particle cloud



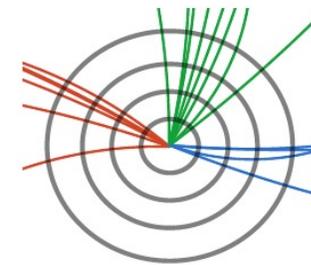
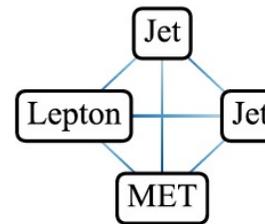
(a)



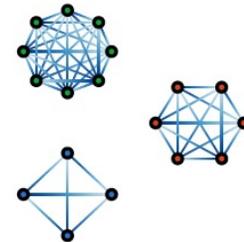
(b)



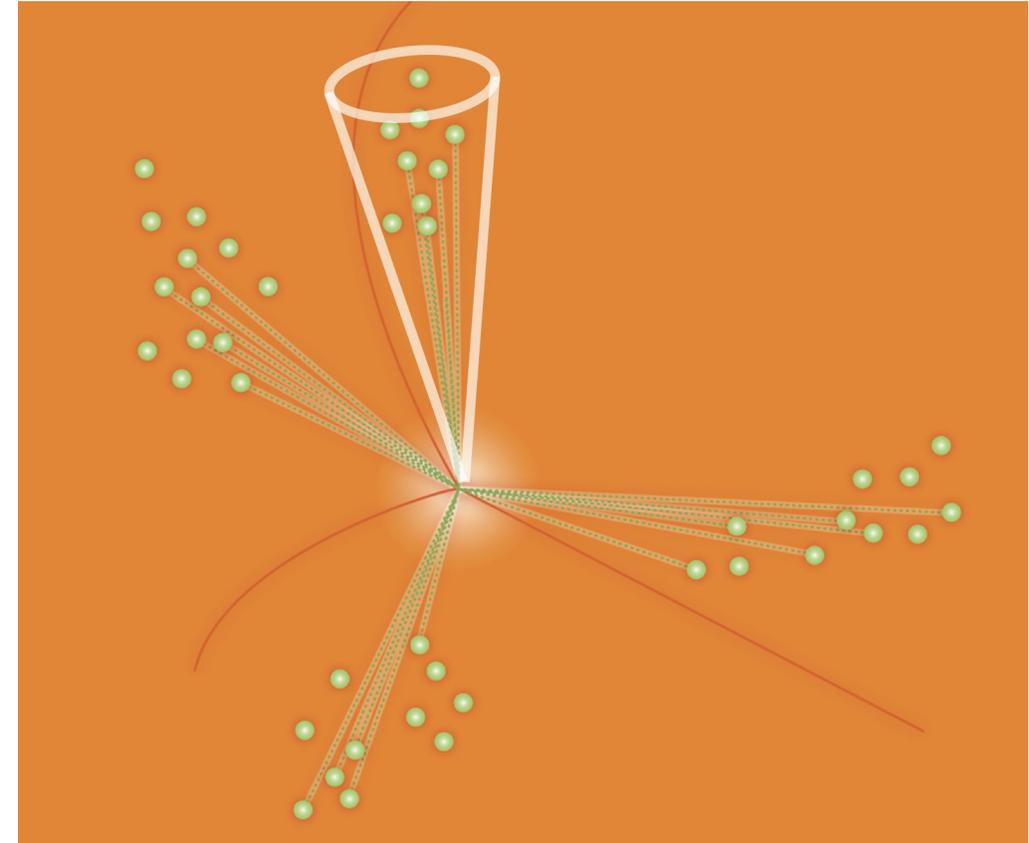
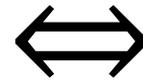
(c)



(d)



# Generating images $\Leftrightarrow$ generating point clouds



Based on fully-connected GNN [[2106.11535](#)]

# No AI lecture w/o these 2 topics

Quick intermezzo: going beyond GNNs...

# 1. Ethical AI

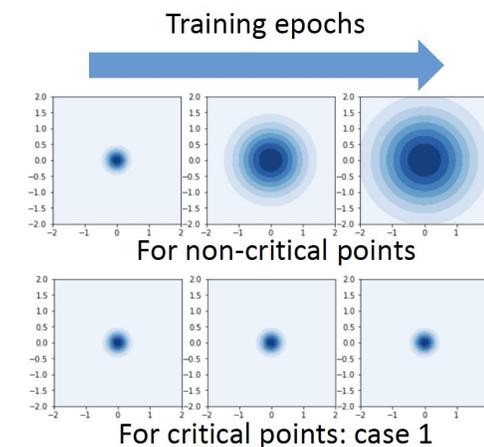
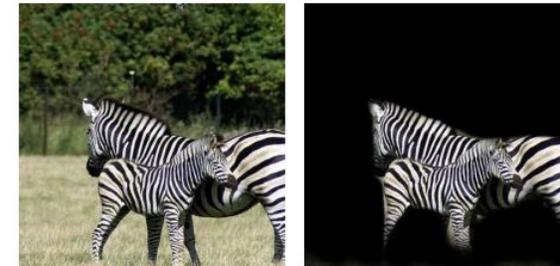
- *What you see is what you get*
- Trained models reflect the training data
  - Existing biases are kept!
  - Famous *cow-on-the-beach* issue
    - Universal cow features
    - Spurious patterns
- Effort needed to unbiased
  - Augment
  - Decorrelate
    - Support issue



# 2. Trustworthy AI

Explain to human how the verdict was reached

1. *Post-hoc explainer* NN applied to trained model
  - Perturbation-based [SHAP, LIME]
  - Gradient-based [Saliency map, see b-tag example]
2. *Self-explainer*: learn like a human during training
  - Inject stochasticity & learn the noise
  - For GNNs: node Gaussian noise, edge Bernoulli noise
    - Resonates with a physicist's notion of *uncertainty*



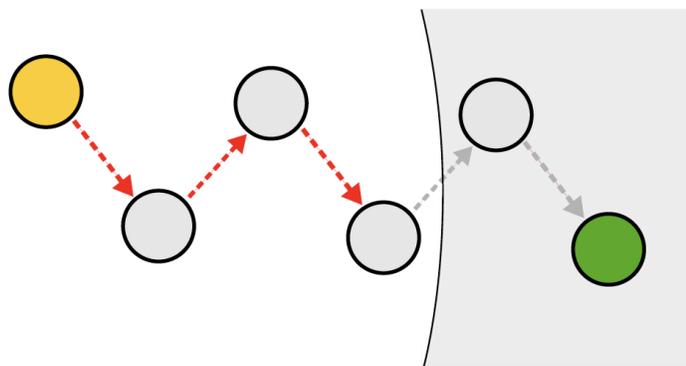
# Graphs for experts

(that you are now!)

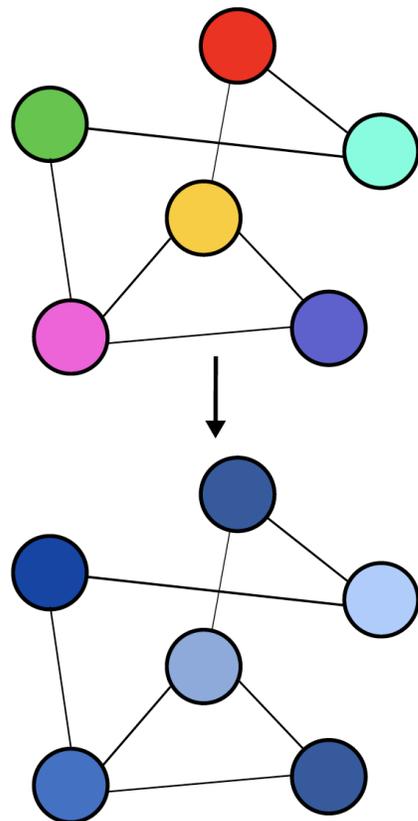
What could go wrong?



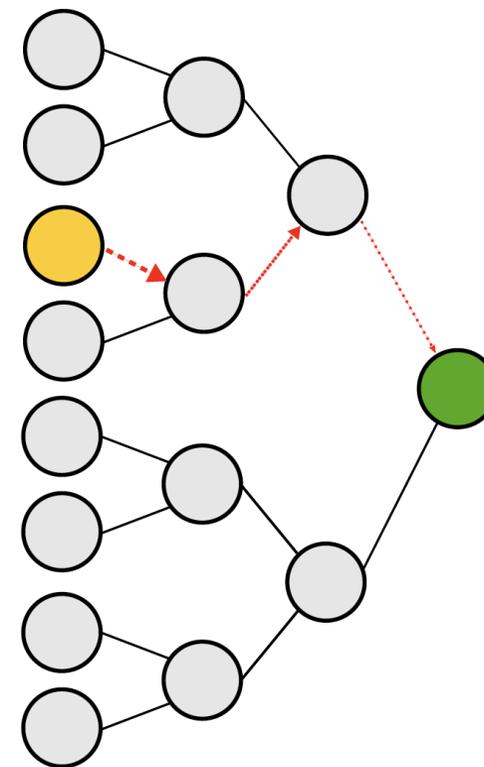
# Common problems with GNNs



Under-reaching



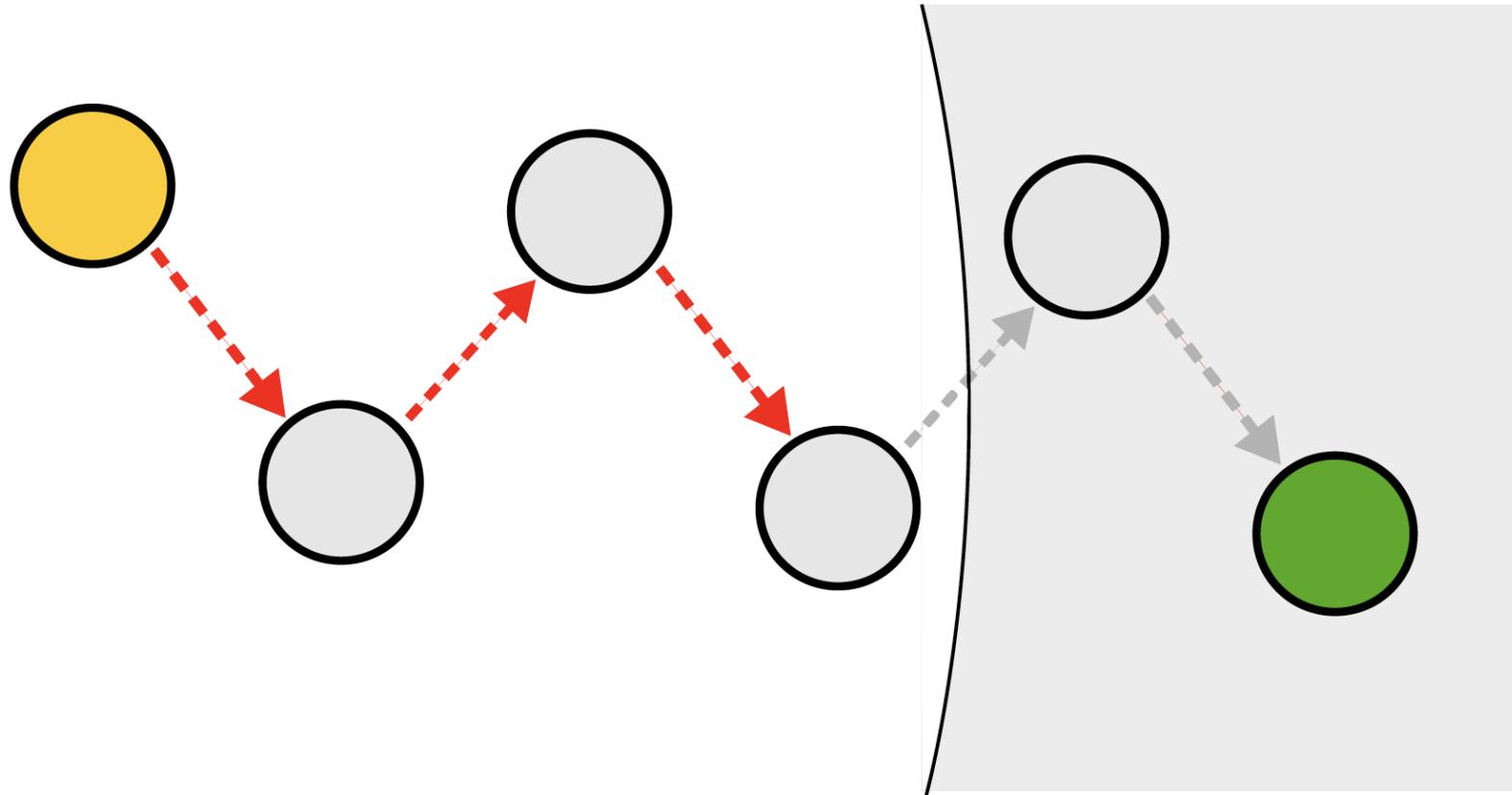
Over-smoothing



Over-squashing

# Under-reaching

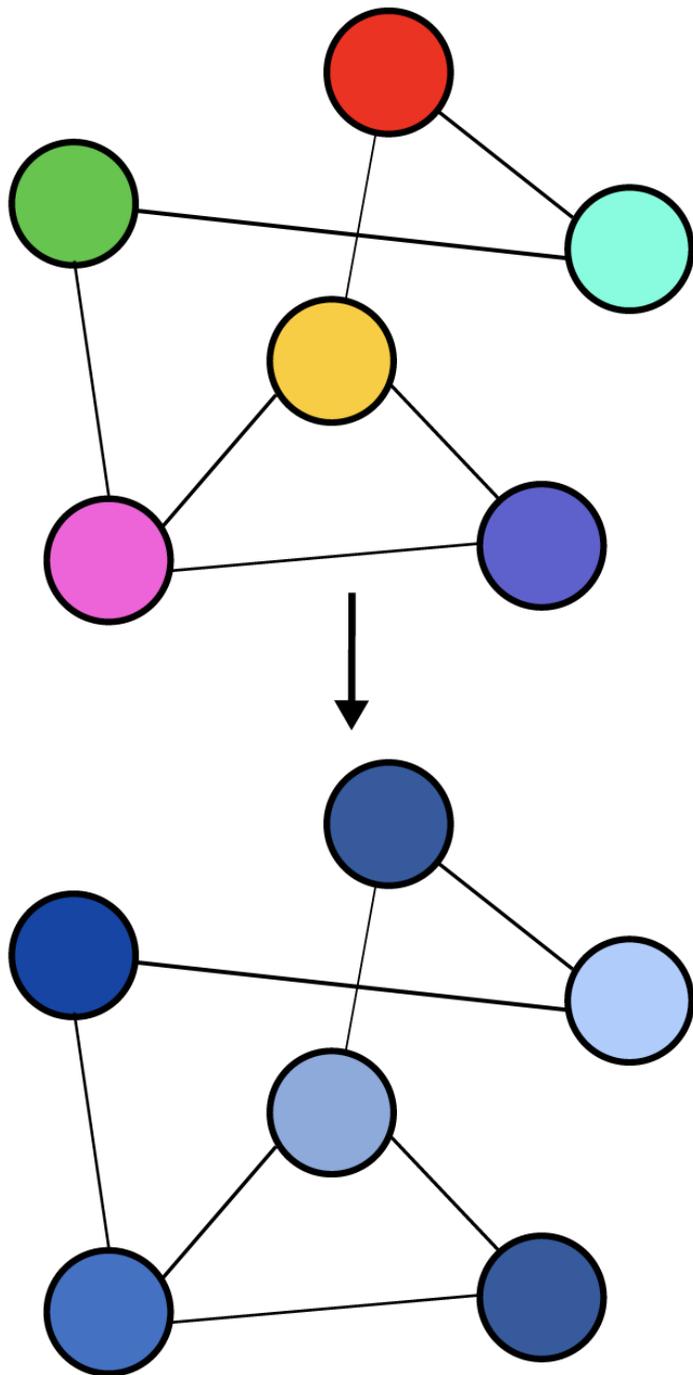
Yellow cannot reach  
green in 3 updates



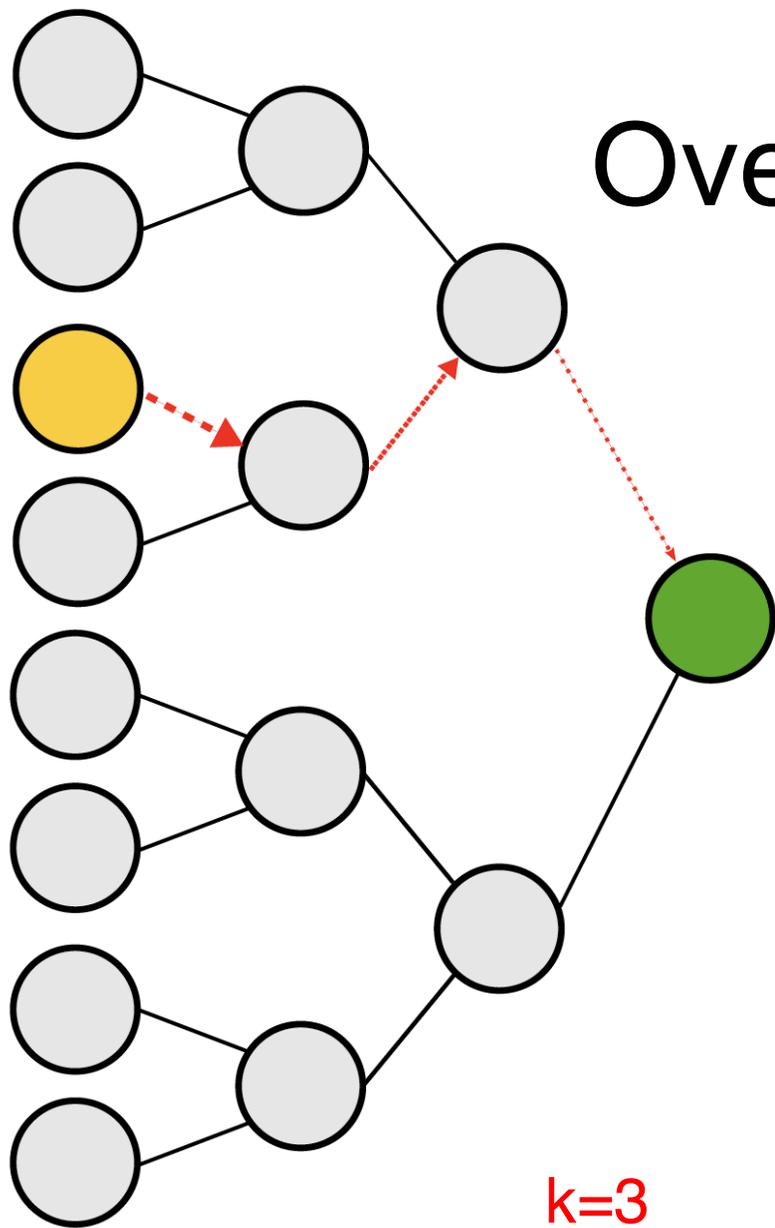
**Fix: increase depth**

# Over-smoothing

Too deep: node representations can become similar (*smoothed out*) and weaken influence of graph structure



**Fix: decrease depth / sharper update functions**



# Over-squashing

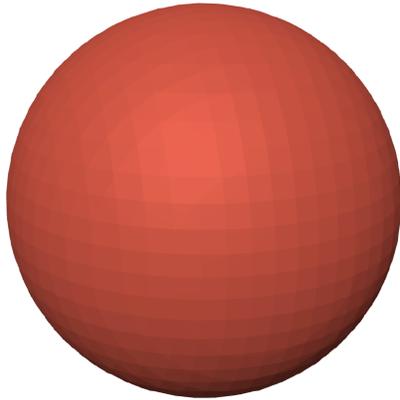
Size of  $k$ -hop neighborhoods grows substantially with  $k$

*Squashing* more and more information into a node

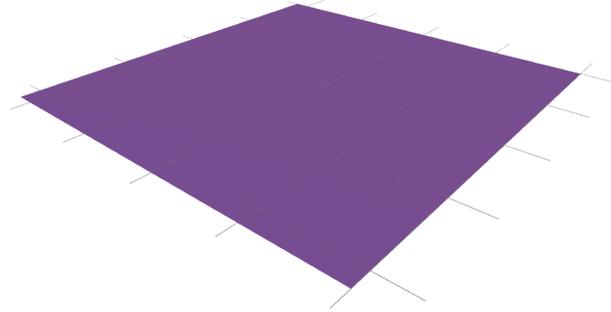
Congestion / bottleneck issue

**Fix: add *short-cuts* based on *curvature***

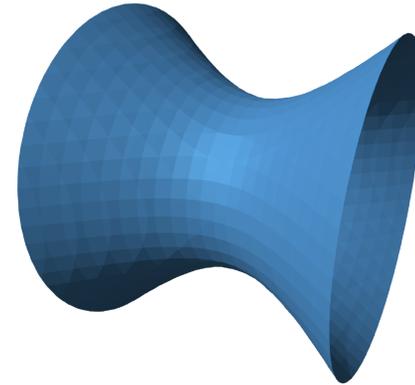
# Ricci curvature – intuition



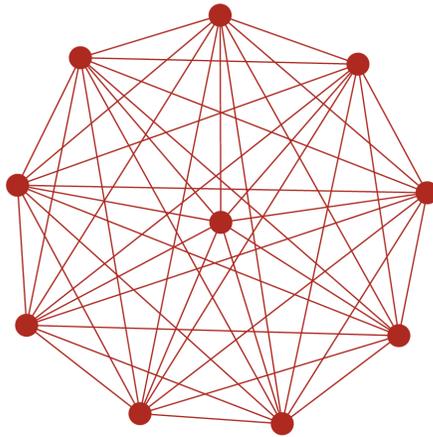
Spherical ( $> 0$ )



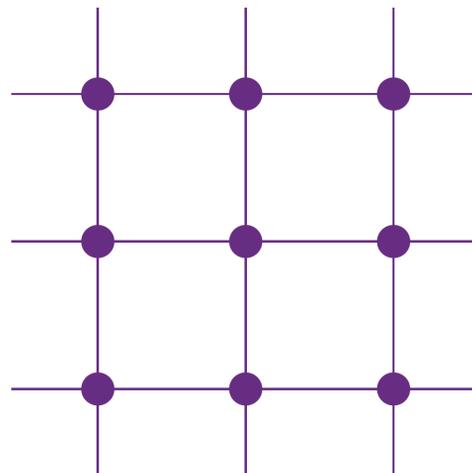
Euclidean ( $= 0$ )



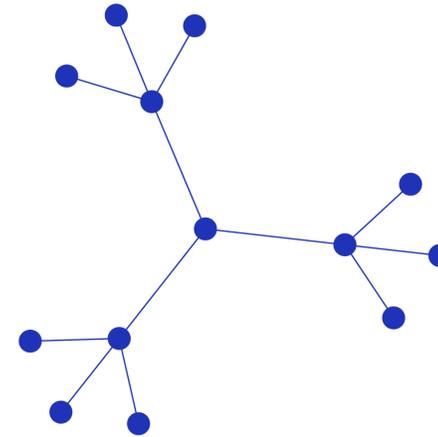
Hyperbolic ( $< 0$ )



Clique ( $> 0$ )

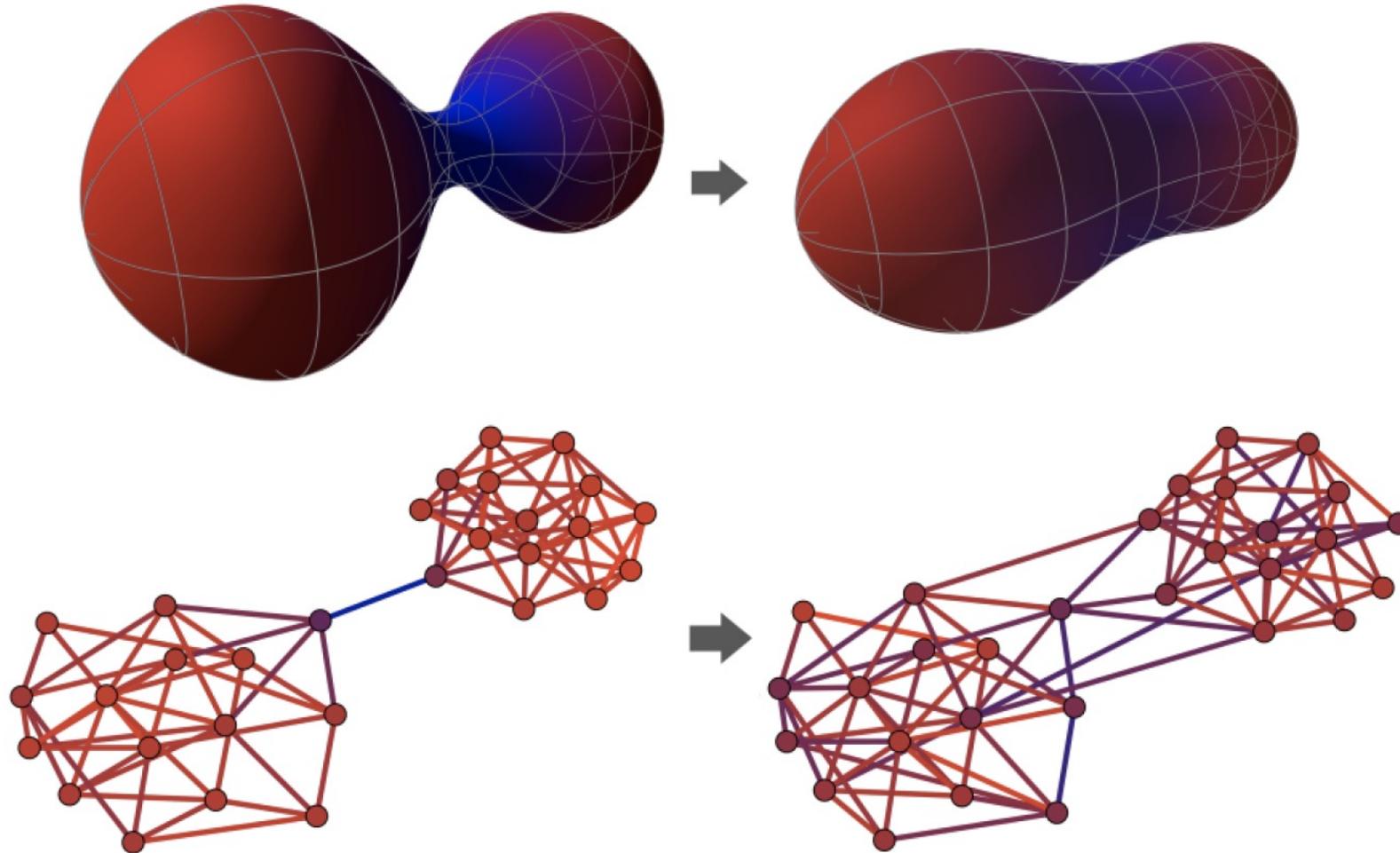


Grid ( $= 0$ )

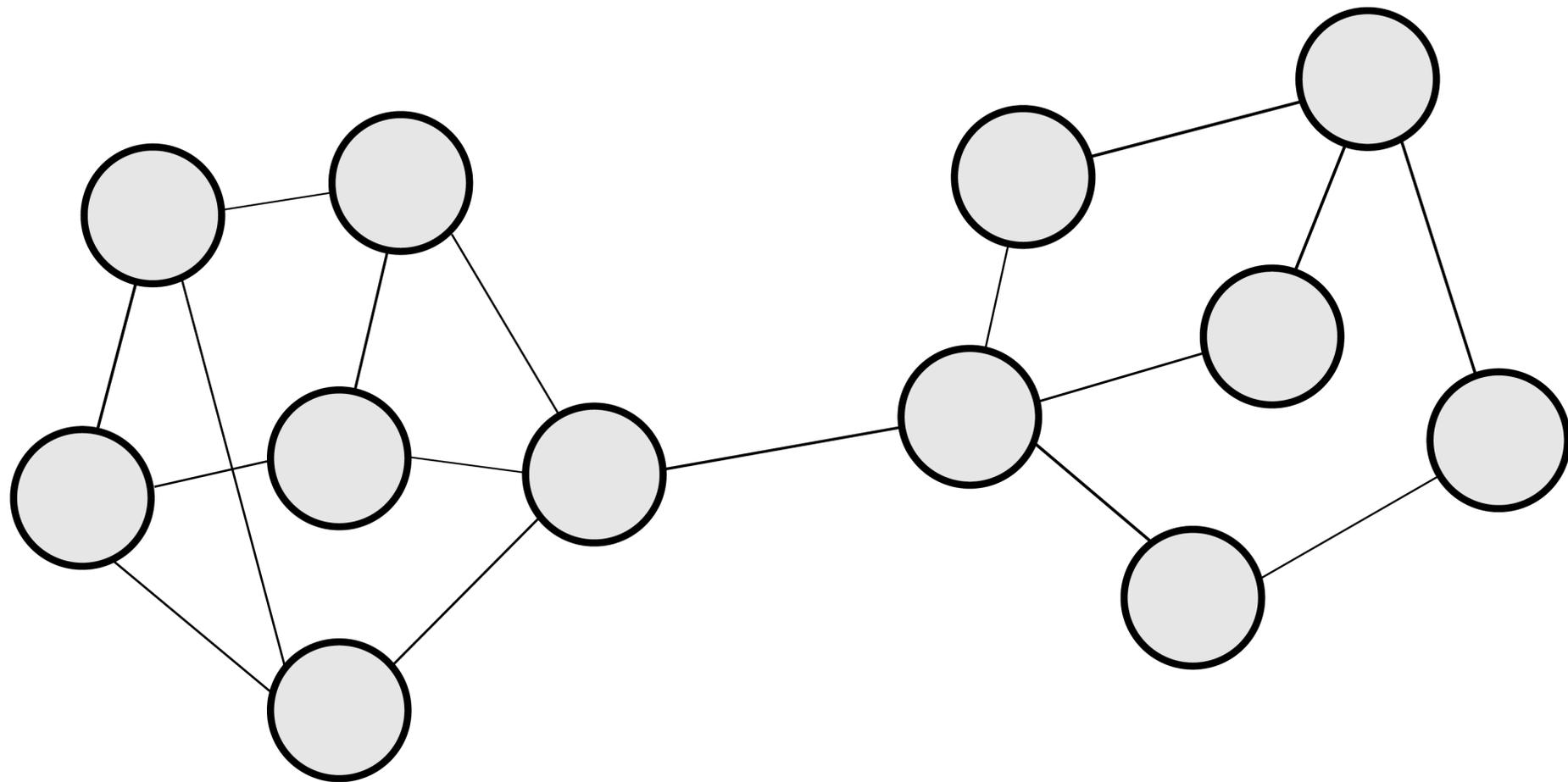


Tree ( $< 0$ )

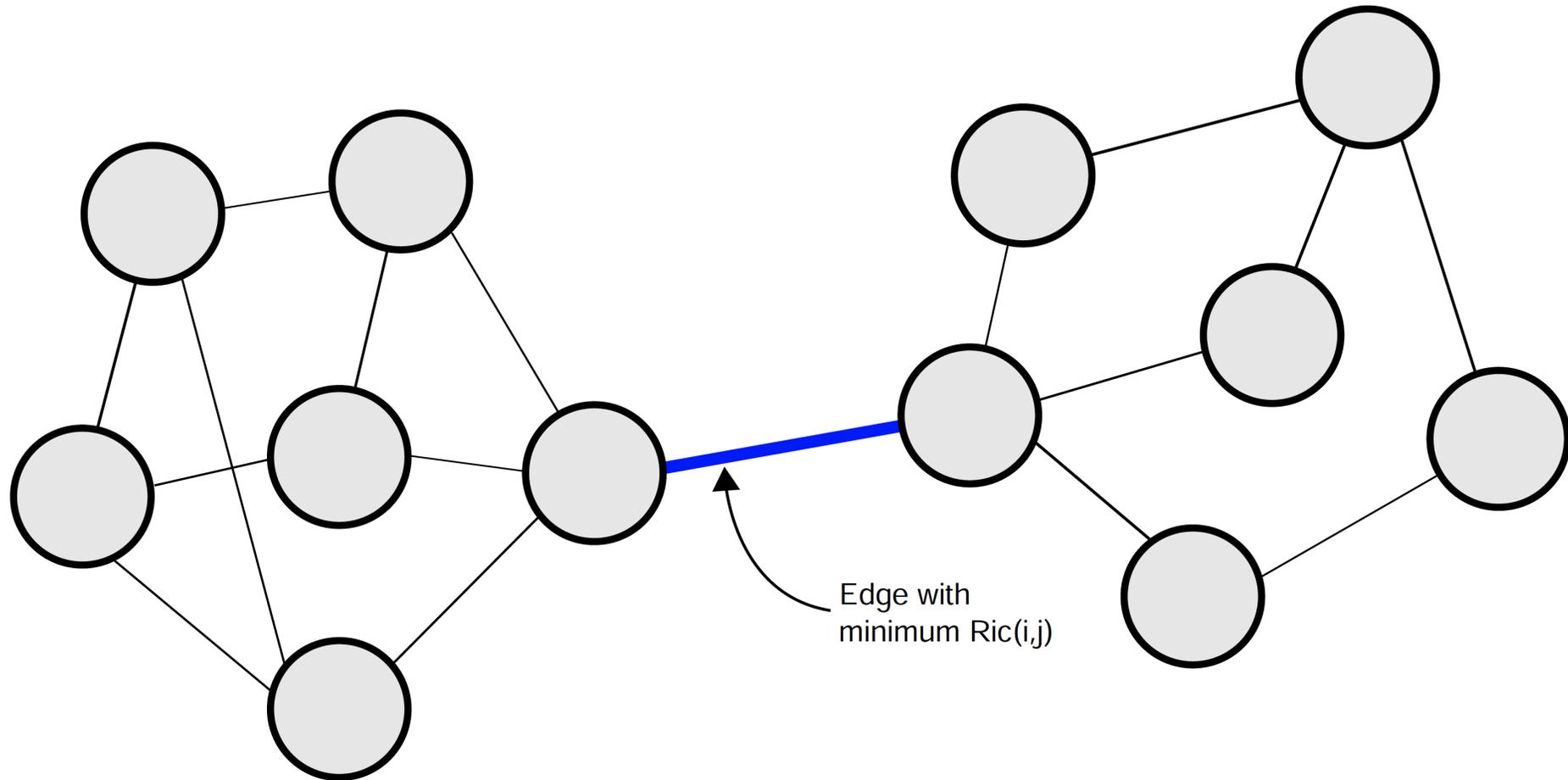
# Curvature-inspired alleviation of over-squashing



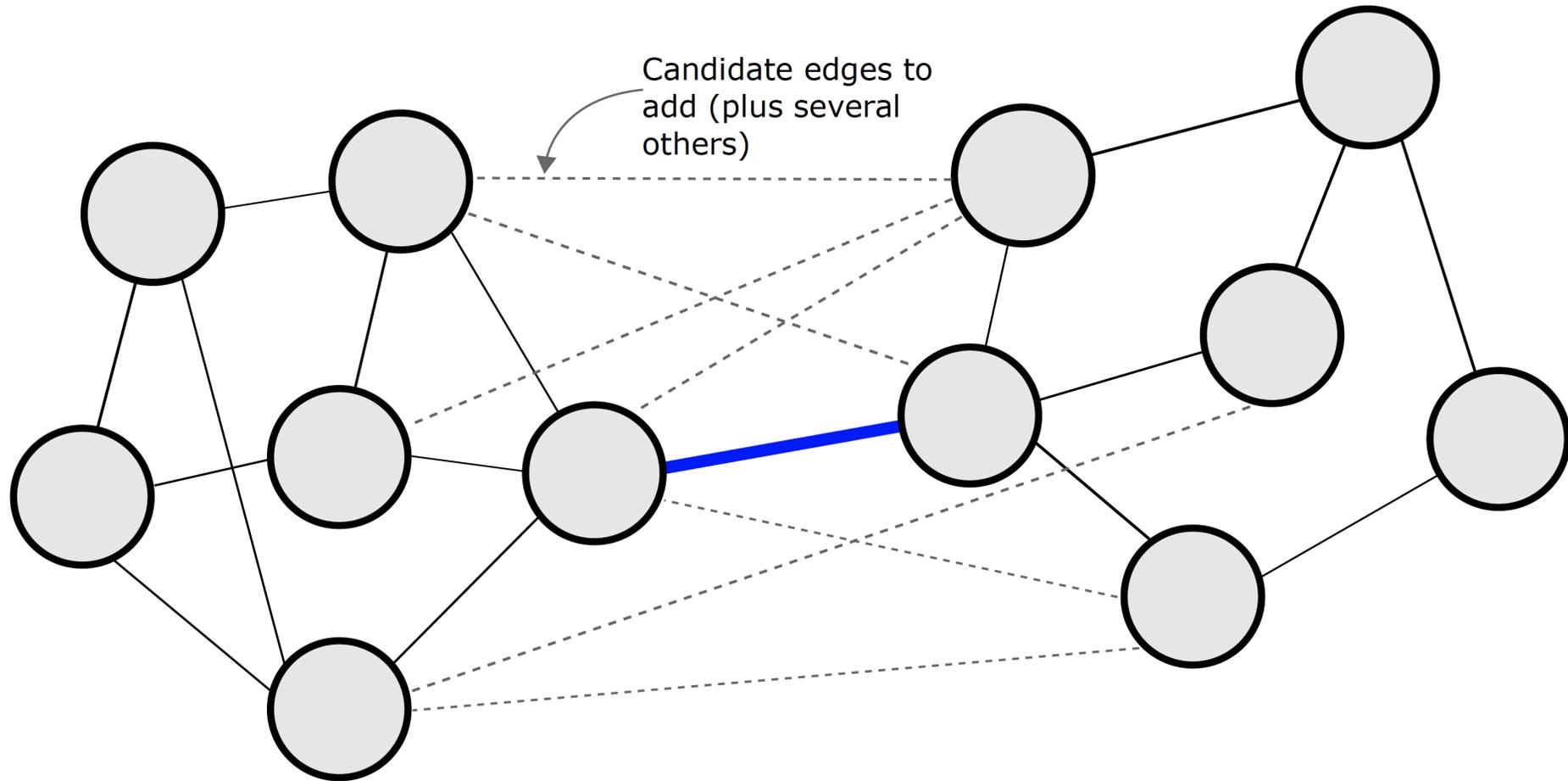
# Example



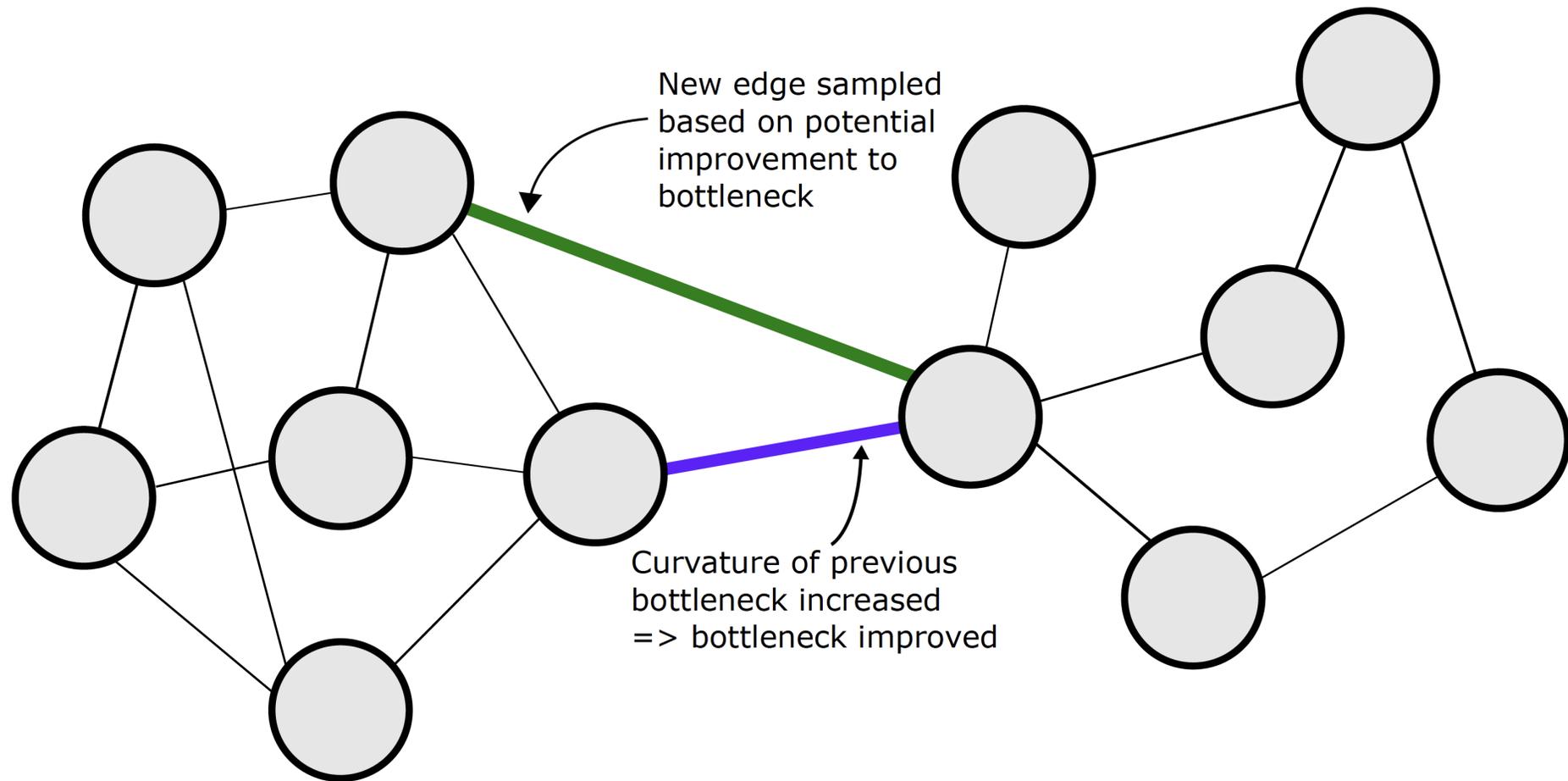
# Example



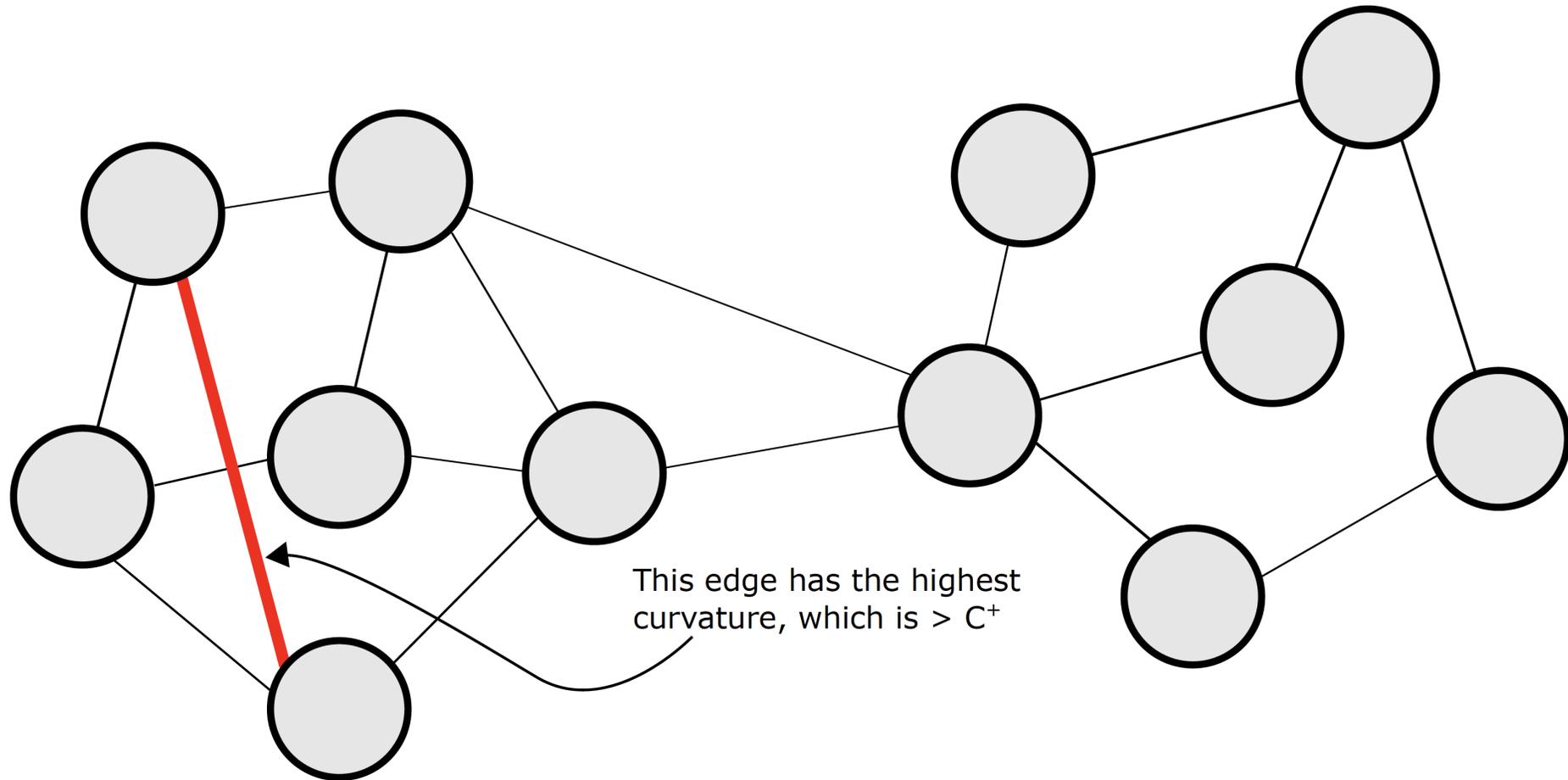
# Example



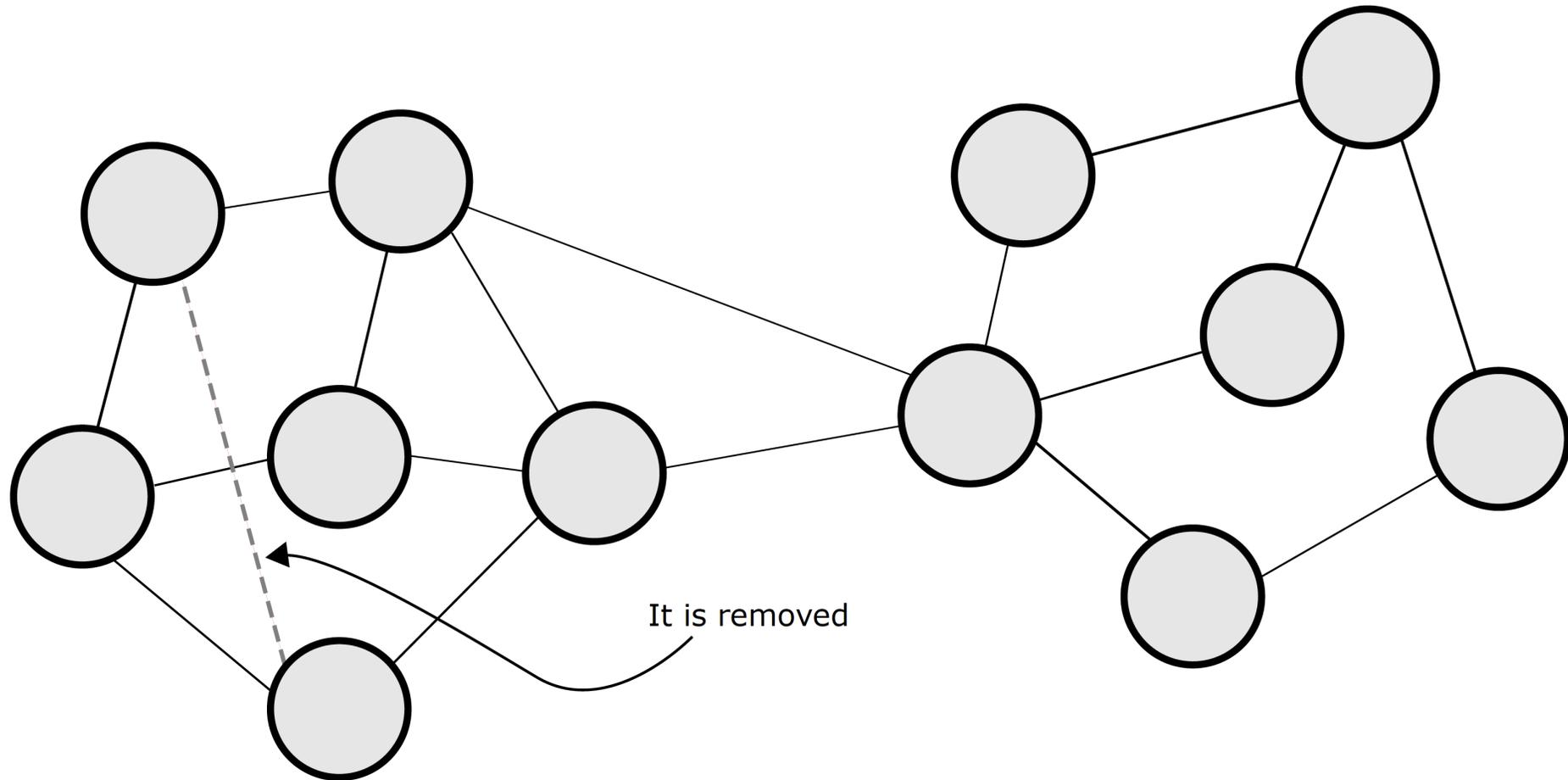
# Example



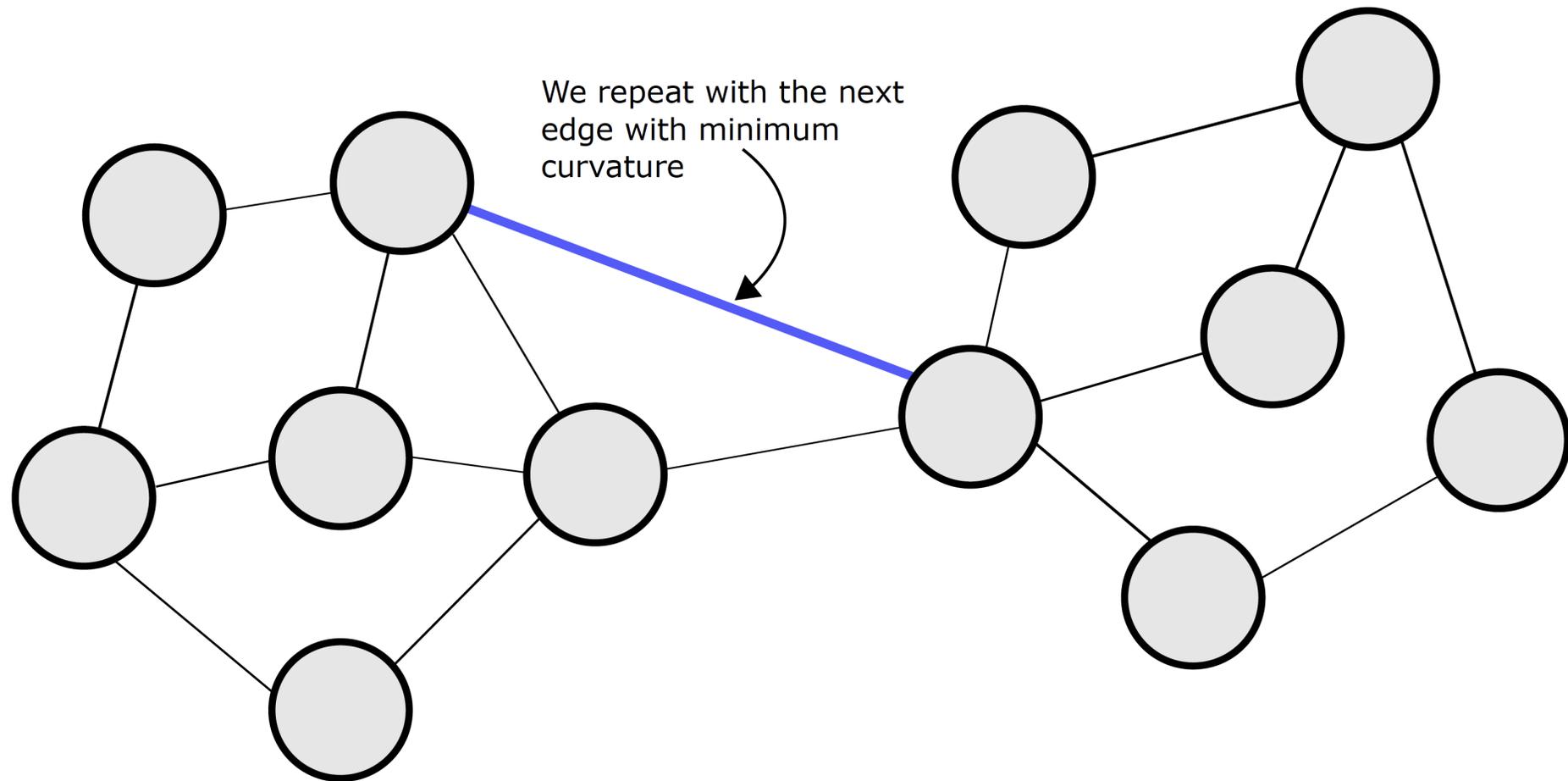
# Example



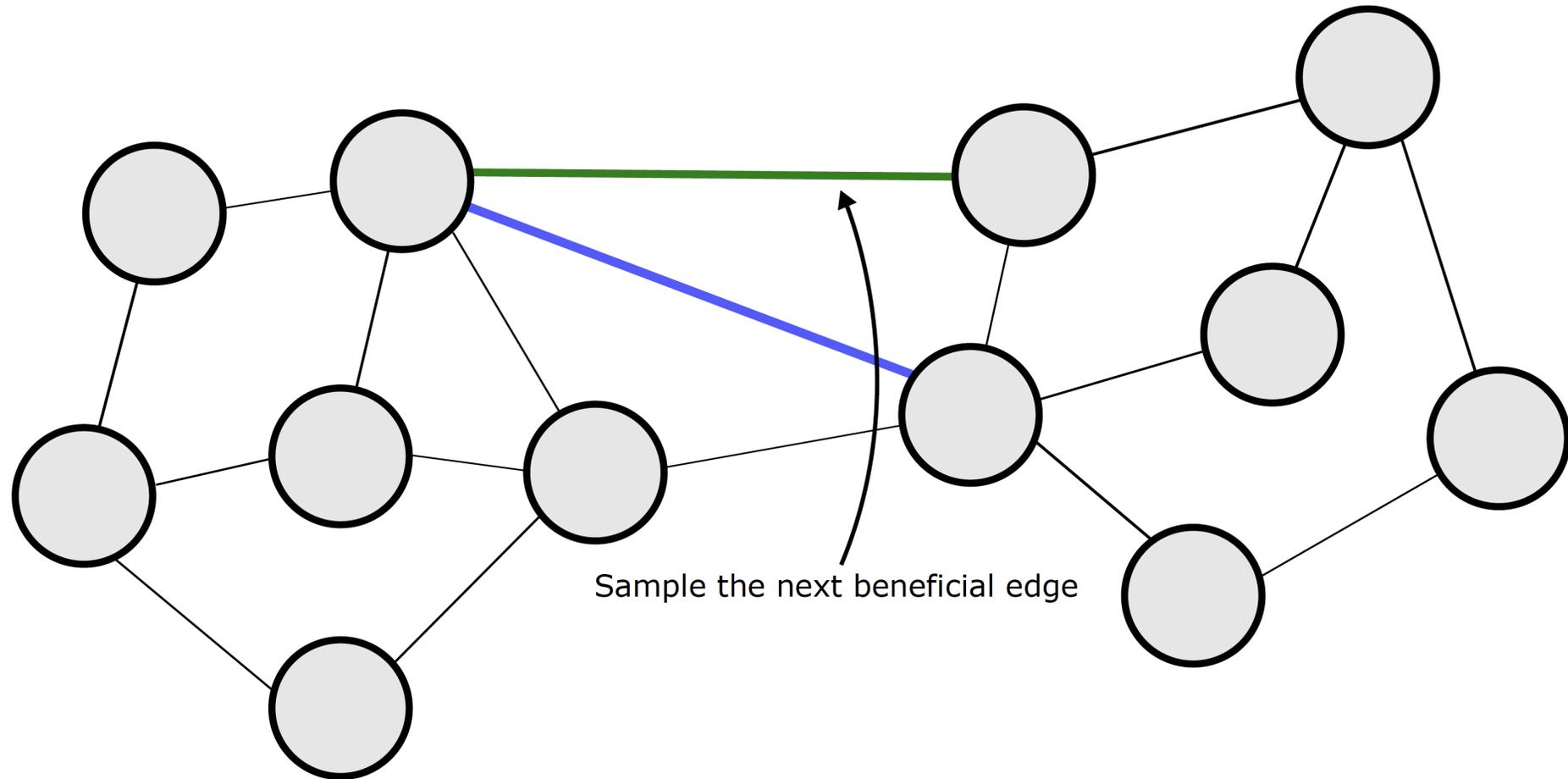
# Example



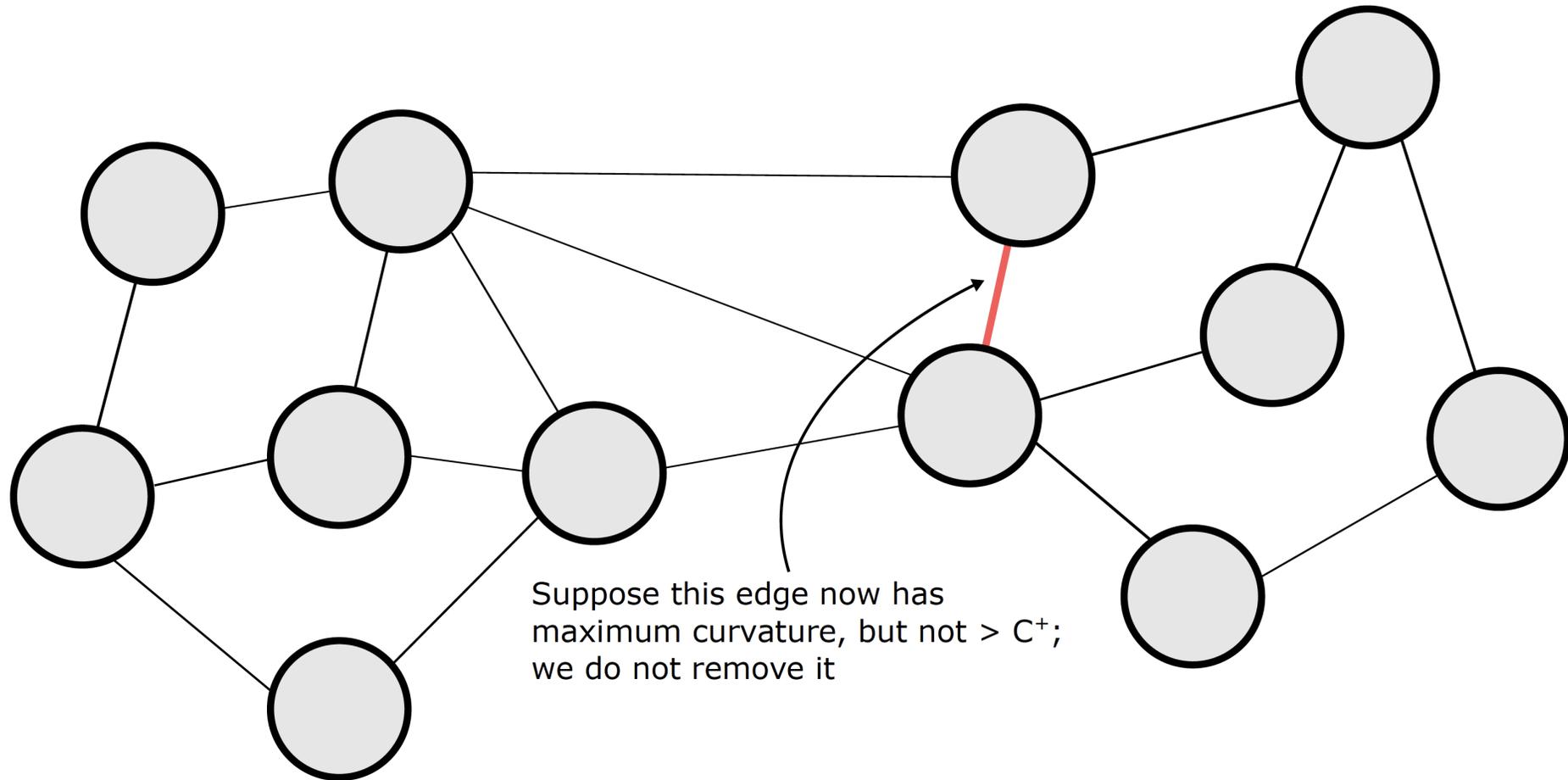
# Example



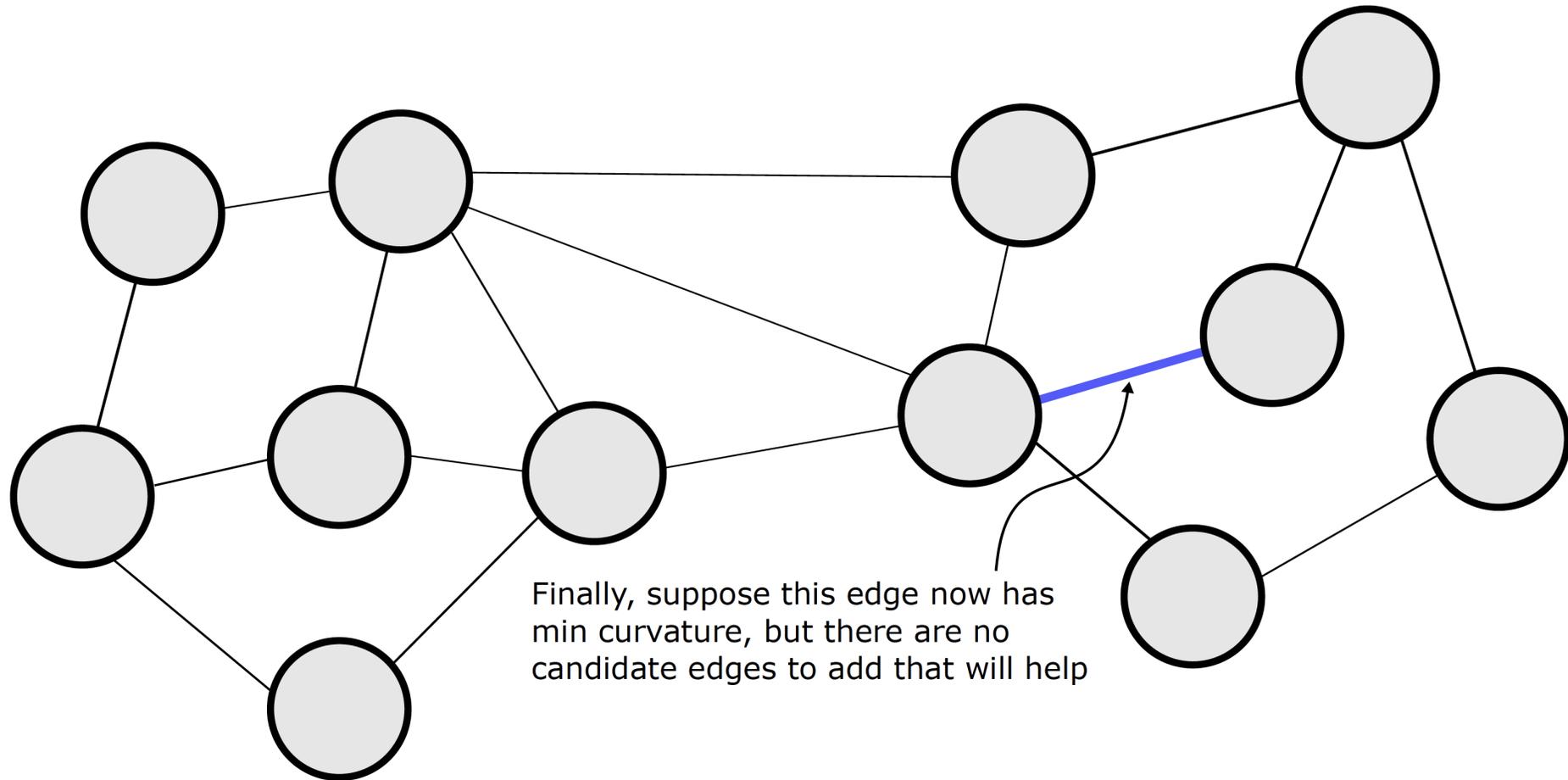
# Example



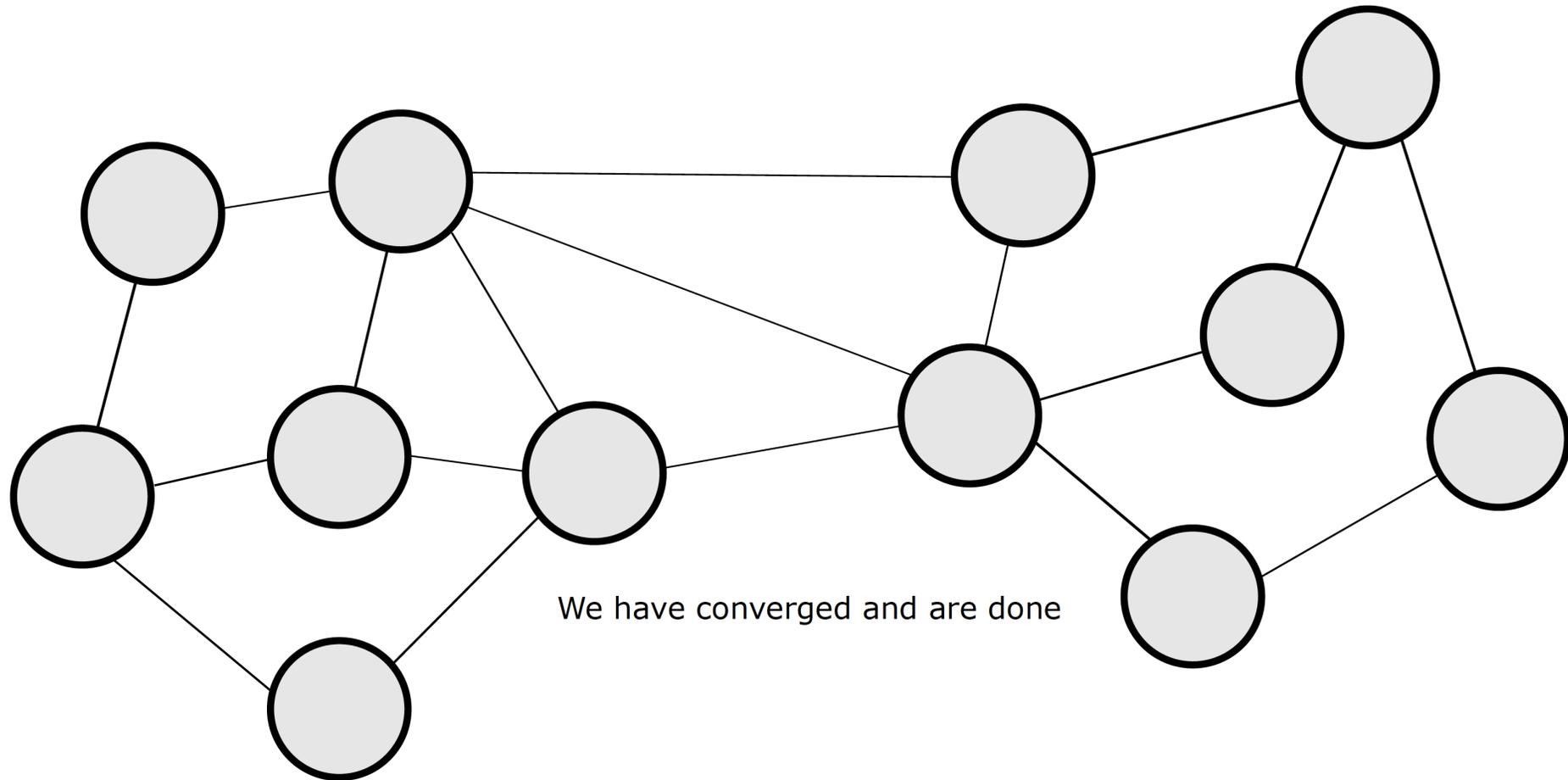
# Example



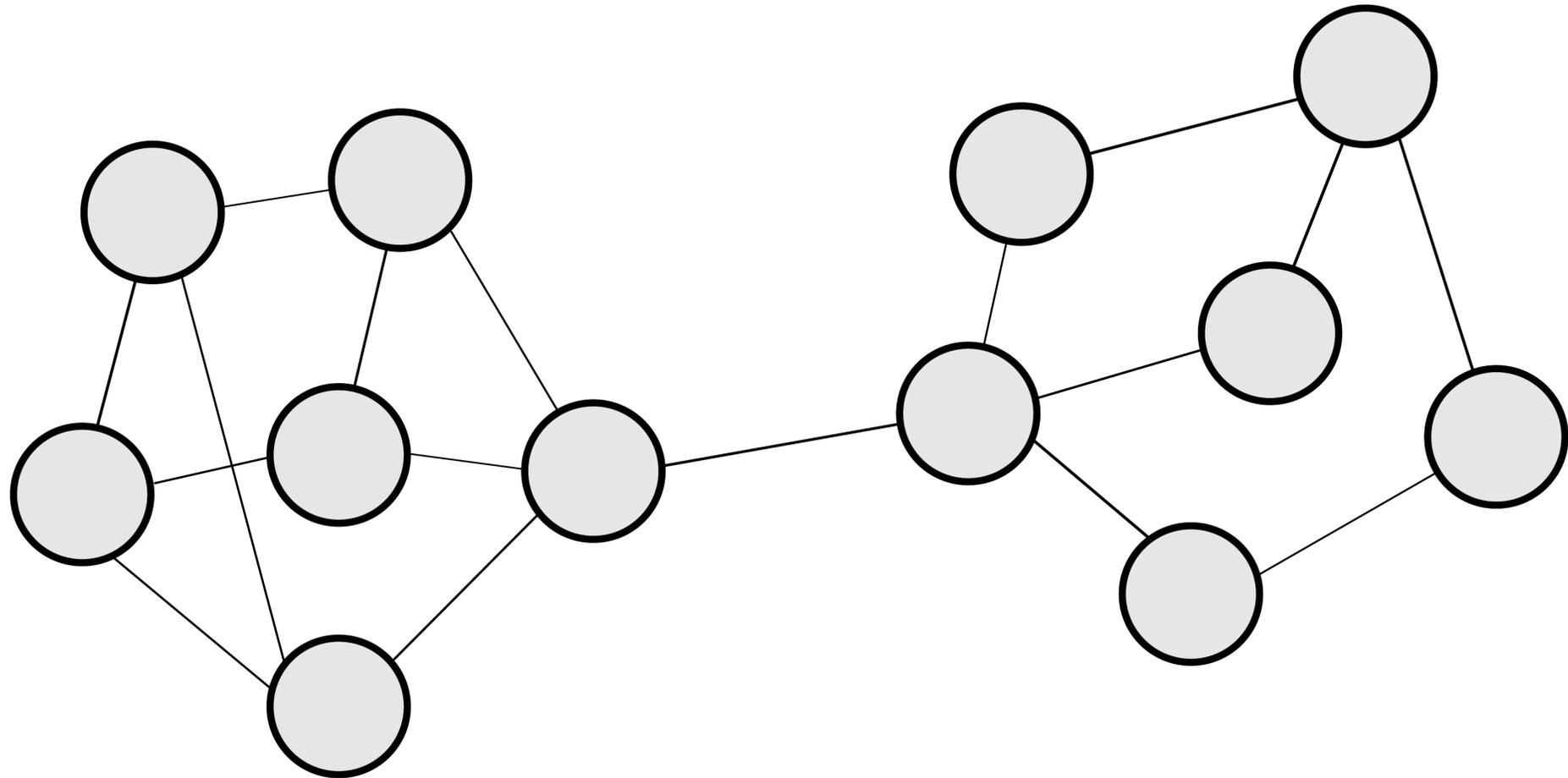
# Example



# Example



# This is what we started from



# Discussion

- Improved flow of messages in graph
- But what if structure matters? (which was changed)

*“New directions in science are launched by new tools much more often than by new concepts.”*

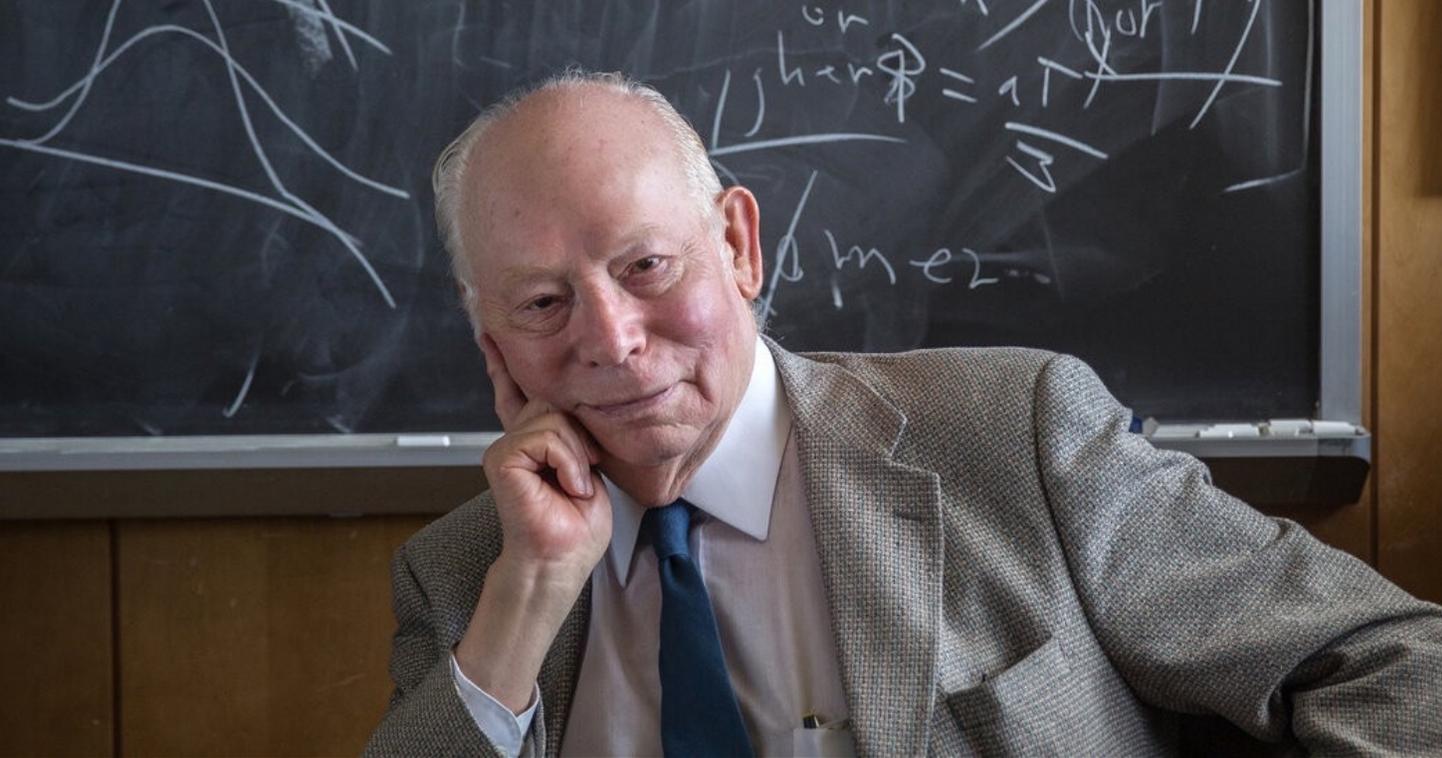
- Freeman Dyson





*“Solving intelligence, and then  
using that to solve everything else.”*

- Demis Hassabis, Google DeepMind



*“Go for the messes –  
that’s where the action is.”*

- Steven Weinberg

*“Deep Learning today reminiscent of the field  
of particle physics before the Standard  
Model: veritable zoo of ~~particles~~ but few  
unifying principles.”*

*NN architectures*

- Michael Bronstein on geometric deep learning (freely quoted)



# Summary

- Graph-structured data is everywhere
- Encode & discover relational inductive bias
- Any domain & downstream task
  - Huge impact in particle physics
- Transformers are GNNs
  
- Very active field of research
- More innovation to come

