

Motion planning

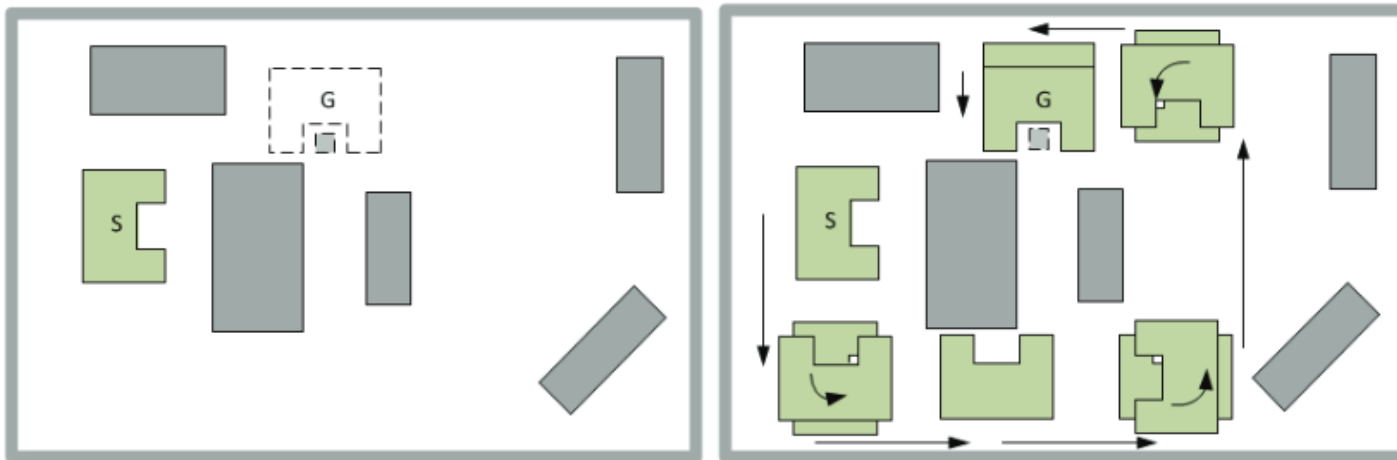
FIELD AND SERVICE ROBOTICS

 **DIE** **UNIVERSITA'** **DEGLI STUDI DI**
TI. **NA** **POLI FEDERICO II**
DIPARTIMENTO DI INGEGNERIA ELETTRICA
E TECNOLOGIE DELL'INFORMAZIONE

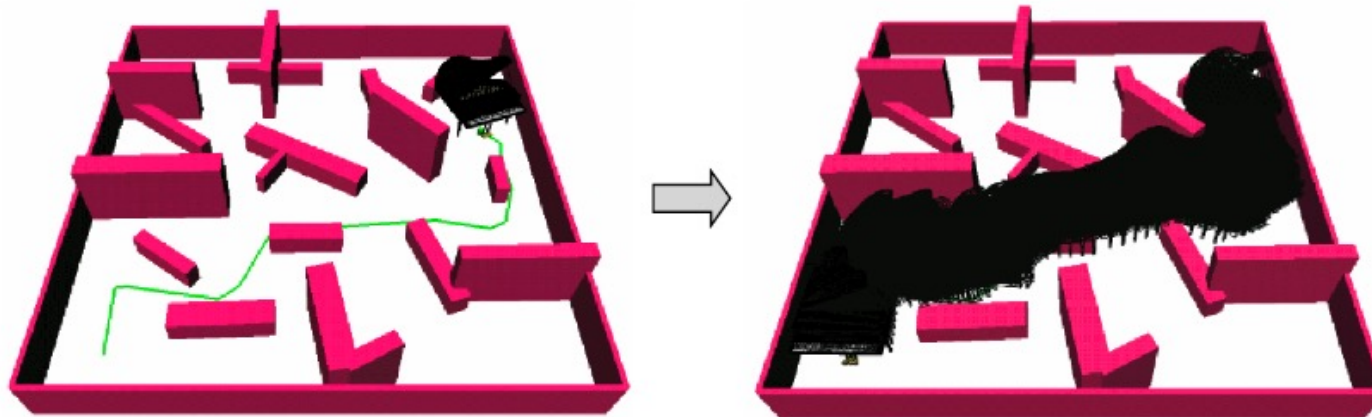
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- In presence of obstacles, it is necessary to plan motions that enable the robot to execute the assigned task without colliding with them
- One would like that the robot can move from an initial to the desired pose without colliding with obstacles, starting from a high-level description of the task and a geometric characterization of the workspace
 - **Offline planning**: made in advance, the environment is known
 - **Online planning**: made at runtime, the environment is discovered through sensors
- Static obstacles
 - Fixed with respect to the environment
 - Walls
 - Desks
 - Doors
- Dynamic obstacles
 - Objects that can appear at any time in the environment
 - Persons
 - Other robots
 - Sliding doors

- A fundamental need in robotics is to have algorithms that convert **high-level** specifications of tasks from humans into **low-level** descriptions of how to move
 - Motion planning
- A classical version of motion planning is sometimes referred to as the **Piano Mover's Problem (2-D version)**
 - Generalized Mover's Problem (3-D version)



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 - Generalized Mover's Problem (3-D version)



- Consider a generic robot \mathcal{B} (wheeled robot, aerial robot, legged robot, industrial manipulator, ...)
 - The robot moves in its workspace $W \equiv \mathbb{R}^n$, with $n = \{2,3\}$
- Denote with $\mathcal{O}_1, \mathcal{O}_2, \dots, \mathcal{O}_p$ the obstacles
 - We will suppose that, at least for the offline planning, they are fixed in W
- Suppose that, at least for the offline planning, the geometry of $\mathcal{B}, \mathcal{O}_1, \mathcal{O}_2, \dots, \mathcal{O}_p$ are known
- Suppose also that \mathcal{B} can instantaneously move everywhere
 - We will relax this assumption

- **Motion planning problem**
 - Given the initial and the desired poses of \mathcal{B} in W , we want find, if it exists, a path (i.e., a continuous sequence of poses) that drives the robot between the two poses while avoiding any contact and collision with $\mathcal{O}_1, \mathcal{O}_2, \dots, \mathcal{O}_p$. A failure is reported if such path does not exist
- **Hypotheses not present in the practice**
 - There are moving robots in W
 - The obstacles are moving in W
 - The environment is unstructured/unknown
 - The robot has nonholonomic constraints
 - The manipulation problem is excluded from the above definition since it intrinsically requires contacts with objects



- Given two points in the configuration space, $q_1 \in \mathcal{C}$ and $q_2 \in \mathcal{C}$, the following Euclidian metrics can be inaccurate as in the example above for the 2-DoF Cartesian manipulator

$$d(q_1, q_2) = \|q_1 - q_2\|$$
 - This is appropriate when \mathcal{C} is the Euclidian space only
- When \mathcal{C} is not an Euclidian space, intuition suggests that the distance between q_1 and q_2 should go to zero when the portion of the space occupied by the robot in q_1 is coincident with the portion of the space occupied by the robot in q_2
- Let $\mathcal{B}(q)$ the subset of \mathcal{W} occupied by the robot \mathcal{B} when it is in $q \in \mathcal{C}$
- Let $p(q)$ the position in \mathcal{W} of a robot's point, $p \in \mathcal{B}$
- The distance in \mathcal{C} can be defined as

$$d_1(q_1, q_2) = \max_{p \in \mathcal{B}} \|p(q_1) - p(q_2)\|$$

- In rough words, $d_1(q_1, q_2)$ is the maximum displacement in \mathcal{W} that two model-configurations, q_1 and q_2 , induce on a point $p \in \mathcal{B}$, as the point moves all around the robot



- We have to represent $\mathcal{O}_1, \mathcal{O}_2, \dots, \mathcal{O}_p$ in \mathcal{C}
 - It is assumed that the obstacles are closed (they contain their boundaries)
 - In general they are not necessarily limited subsets of W
- Given an obstacle $\mathcal{O}_i \in W$, ($i = 1, \dots, p$), the **image** in the configuration space \mathcal{C} is called **C-obstacle** and it is defined as

$$CO_i = \{q \in \mathcal{C} : \mathcal{B}(q) \cap \mathcal{O}_i \neq \emptyset\}$$

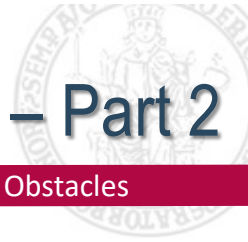
- That is, the space occupied by the robot in the workspace has some points in common with the space occupied by the i-th obstacle in the workspace
 - In rough words, the C-obstacle, CO_i , is the subset of the model-configurations that cause a collision, or a contact, between the robot \mathcal{B} and the obstacle \mathcal{O}_i
- The union of all the C-obstacle spaces defines the **C-obstacle region**

$$CO = \bigcup_{i=1}^p CO_i$$

- The **free configuration space** is

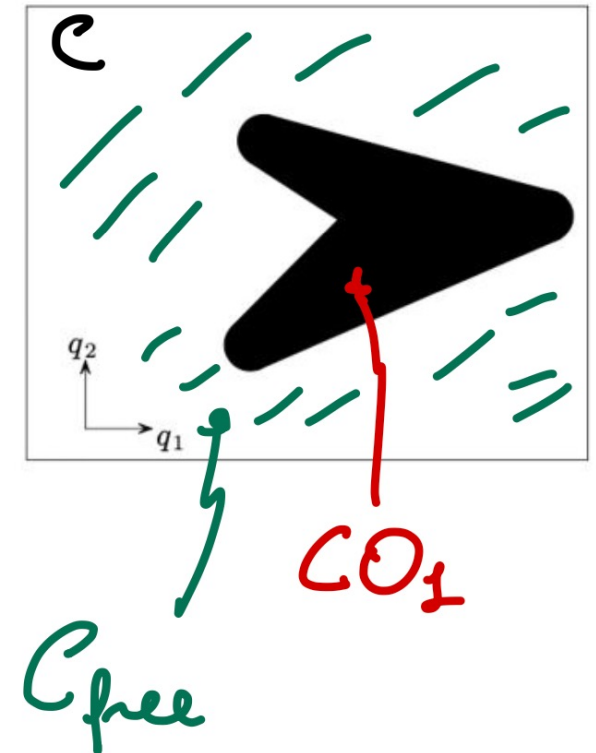
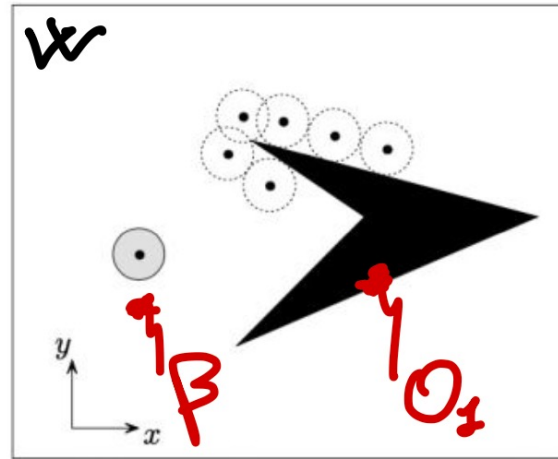
$$C_{free} = C - CO = \{q \in C : \mathcal{B}(q) \cap (\bigcup_{i=1}^p CO_i) = \emptyset\}$$

- A **free path** for the robot is a sequence of model-configurations all belonging to C_{free}
- Notice that, even if C is a connected space (given two arbitrary model-configurations there exists a path joining them), the subset C_{free} may not be connected due to the presence of the C -obstacle region

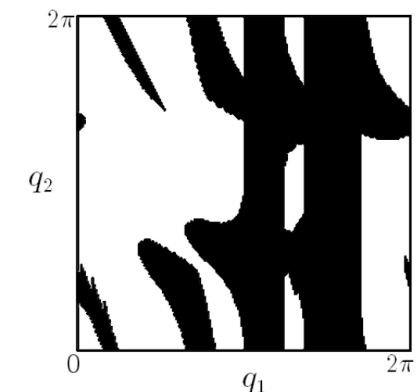
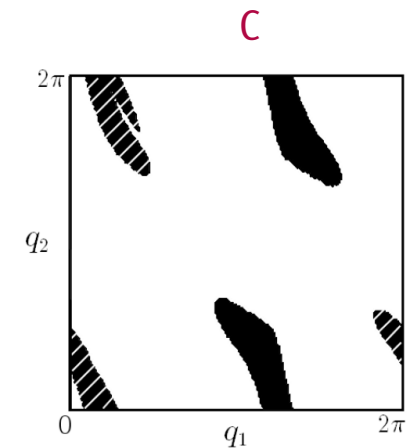
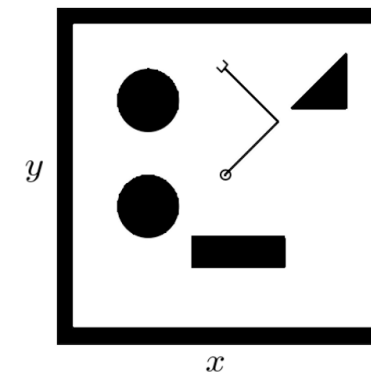
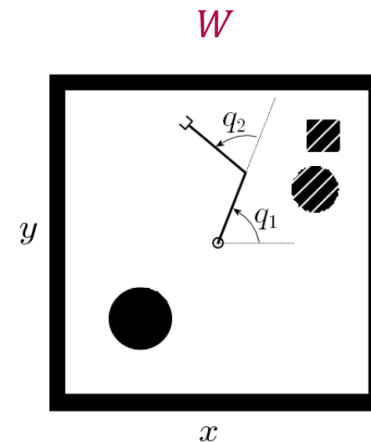


- We can now state a more formal definition for the motion planning problem
 - Let $q_s \in C_{free}$ be the starting model-configuration of the robot \mathcal{B} in its workspace W . Let $q_g \in C_{free}$ be the goal model-configuration. Planning a collision-free motion for \mathcal{B} means generating a path between q_s and q_g as connected components of C_{free} . A failure is reported otherwise.

- Consider a disk-shaped robot
 - $W \equiv \mathbb{R}^2$
 - $q = \begin{bmatrix} q_1 \\ q_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \end{bmatrix}$
 - $C \equiv \mathbb{R}^2$
- The boundaries of CO_1 are the locus of the model-configurations in which the robot touches the obstacle in W
- CO_1 can be built through a growing procedure
 - In this case, since the robot is disk-shaped, the procedure is isotropic



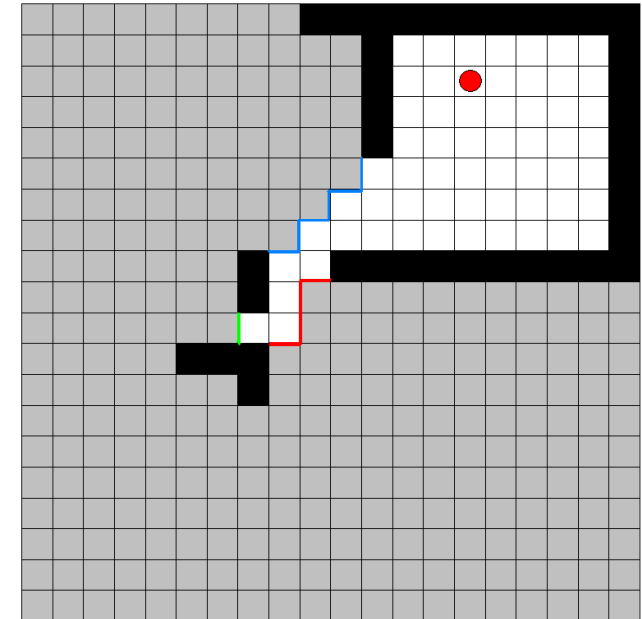
- Consider a robot manipulator \mathcal{B} made by n rigid links $\mathcal{B}_1, \dots, \mathcal{B}_n$ connected by joints
- Two kinds of C-obstacle regions exist
 - Collision between a link \mathcal{B}_i and an obstacle \mathcal{O}_i
 - Collision between a link \mathcal{B}_i and another link $\mathcal{B}_j, i \neq j$ (self-collision)
- To obtain the boundaries of \mathcal{CO}_i it is necessary to identify,, through appropriate inverse kinematic computations, all the model-configurations that bring one or more links of \mathcal{B} in contact with \mathcal{O}_i
- Notice that, in the second part of this example, there exist three distinct connected regions



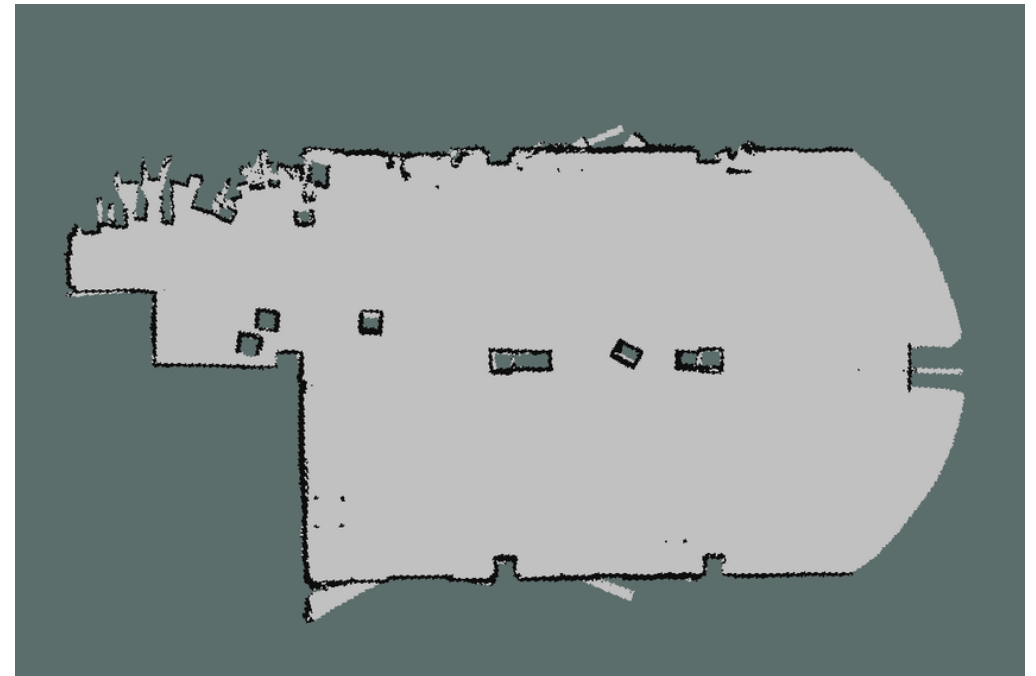
- Therefore, first, we need an algebraic or CAD model of the obstacle \mathcal{O}_i in W
- Then, we need to compute the CO_i image exactly
 - The procedure may be complex
- A simple, but computationally intensive, way to build the CO_i image is to sample C by a regular grid
 - We then compute the volume occupied by \mathcal{B} via direct kinematics and identify those samples bringing the robot in contact with \mathcal{O}_i through a **collision checking** algorithm
 - The accuracy improves by increasing the grid resolution

- The idea is to build an approximation of C_{free}
 - Then, we seek the path connecting q_s from q_g , if it exists
- At each iteration of the planner, a sample model-configuration is chosen and it is checked whether there is a collision/contact or not with some obstacles
 - If there is a collision/contact, the sample is discarded from C_{free}
 - If there is not a collision/contact, the sample is saved in the current **roadmap**
 - The roadmap is a structure representing the approximation of C_{free}

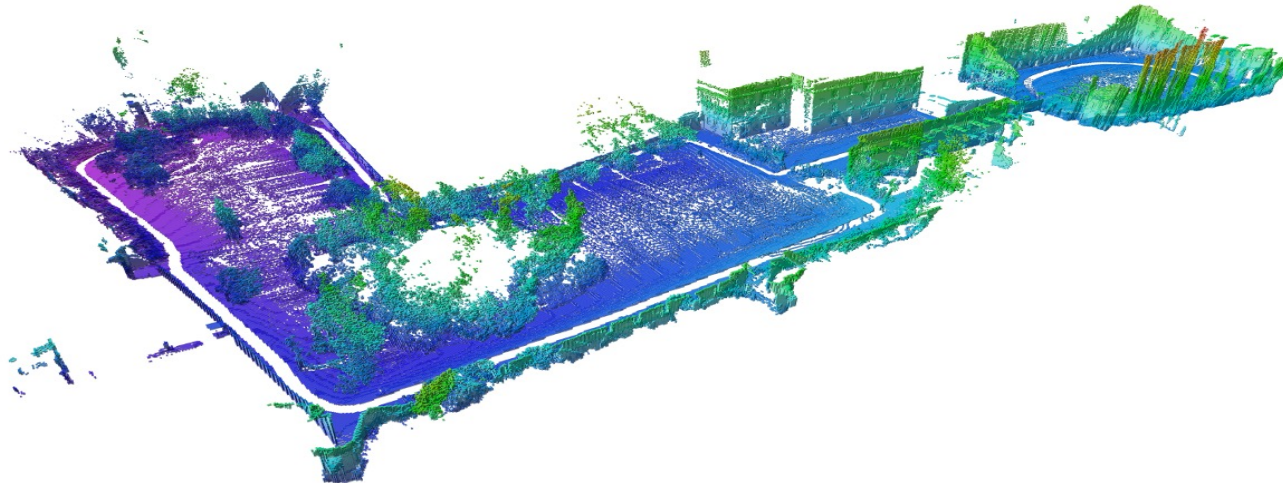
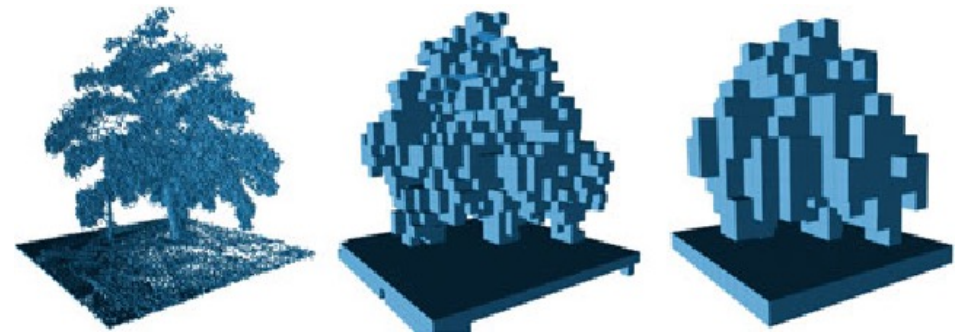
- Discretize the configuration space as a set of occupied/free cells of a matrix
- A common approach:
 - 1 Free cells
 - -1 Unknown cells
 - 0 Occupied cells
- Increasing the resolution of the cells help to speed up the planning process
- Increasing the resolution of the cells generate worst paths



- Map representation is still a problem
 - Which kind of data structure must be used?
 - The data structure must be
 - Easy to read (time complexity)
 - Easy to visualize
 - Easy to maintain (space complexity)



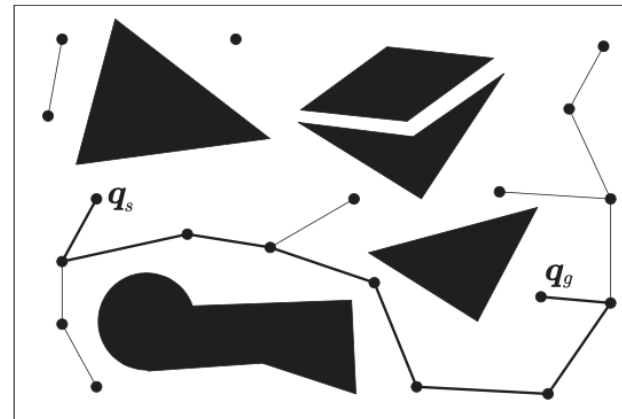
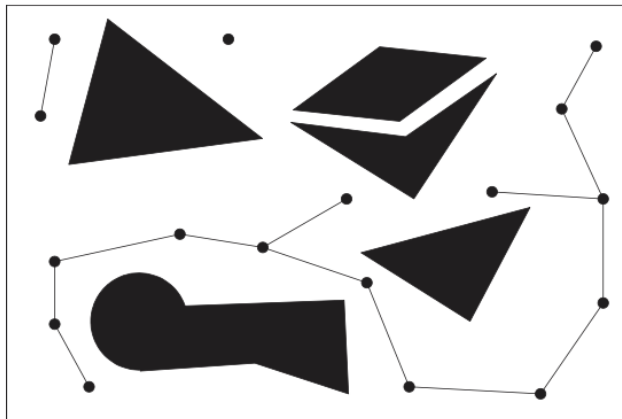
- Wheeled ground-based robots
 - Occupancy grid map
- Aerial robots, legged robots, etc.
 - Discretize the configuration space as a set of occupied/free cells of a matrix





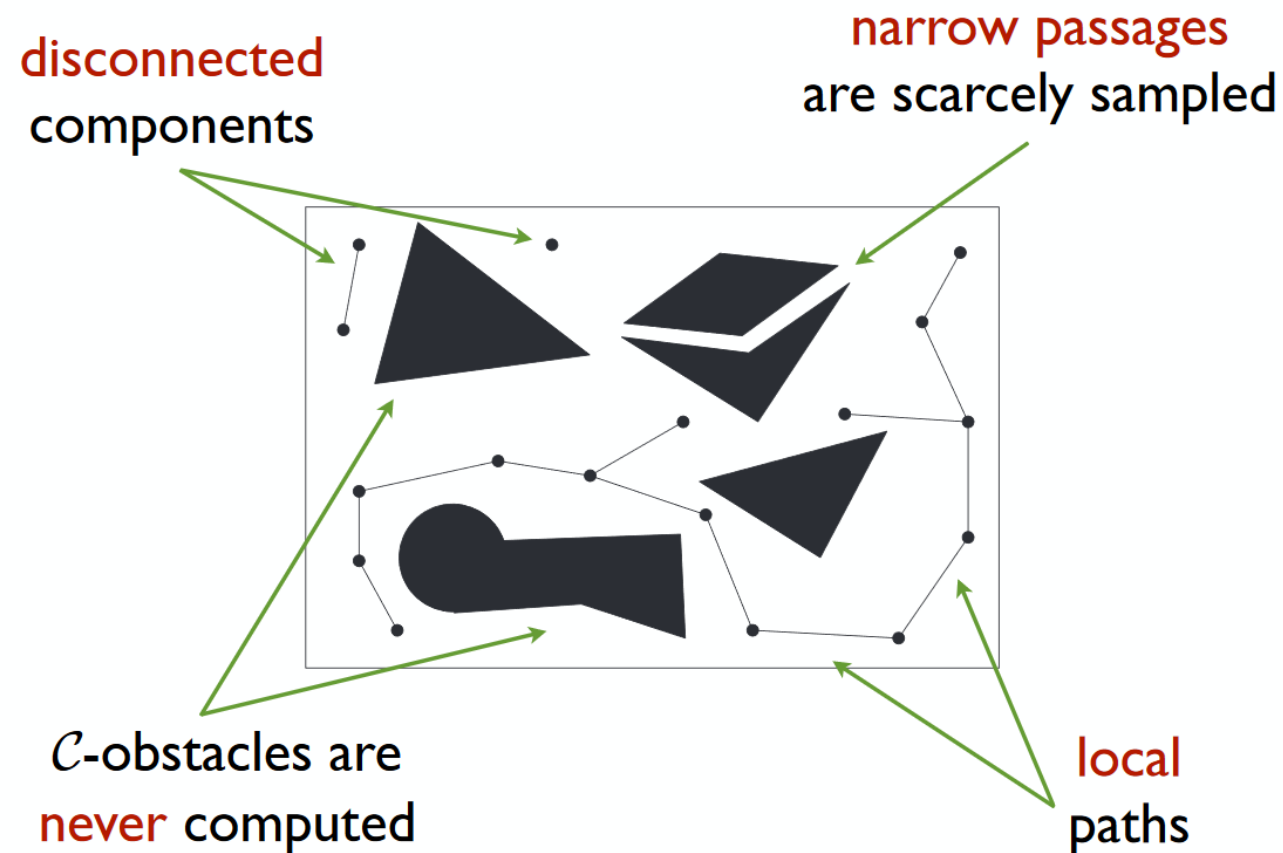
- The basic idea is to generate randomly a sample $q_{rand} \in C$, with **uniform probability distribution**
 - This sample q_{rand} is tested for collisions
 - If the description of CO is available, it is easy since one must check if q_{rand} belongs to CO or not
 - If the description of CO is not available, kinematics and geometric relationships must be used to check if the robot is in contact or collides in W
 - If q_{rand} does not cause collisions, it is added to the roadmap, otherwise it is discarded
- At the end, many points will belong to C_{free}
- It is now important to create connections between these points approximating C_{free}
 - These connections should be collision-free as well
- The procedure to generate a free local path between q_{rand} and its closest model-configuration q_{near} is a job of the **local planner**
 - A common choice is a rectilinear path between q_{rand} and q_{near} in C
 - This rectilinear path is sampled, and each sample is checked for collisions
 - A “near” model-configuration, q_{near} , must be determined on the chosen metrics on C

- The PRM incremental generation procedure stops when either a maximum pre-determined number of iterations is reached, or the number of connected components (connected regions of C_{free}) are small than a given threshold (the roadmap well describes C_{free})
- At this point, it is necessary to solve the motion planning problem by connecting q_s to q_g
 - First, q_s and q_g are connected to the roadmap through the local planner, if they do not belong yet to it
 - It means that we find a rectilinear path, that is collision-free, connecting q_s and q_g to the respective closest model-configurations of the roadmap
 - Then, the path connecting q_s and q_g is found on the roadmap (**graph search algorithms**)





- If a solution cannot be found, the PRM can be improved by performing more iterations so that the roadmap is more dense
 - Being the PRM a probabilistic methodology, the probability to find a suitable path connecting q_s and q_g tends to 1 as the execution time increases
 - This means that, if a solution does not exist, the algorithm continues indefinitely
- The PRM is critical for the **narrow passages** in C_{free}
 - This can be avoided by avoiding a uniform probability distribution
- The PRM describes the whole C_{free} , maybe including portions not of interest for the connection between q_s and q_g
- The PRM does not require the explicit computation of CO since we check only for collisions given a random sample or a local path



- The graph search algorithms are needed to find the best path connecting two points on the roadmap
- Let $G = (N, A)$ be a graph consisting of N nodes and A arcs
 - $n = \text{card}(N)$
 - $a = \text{card}(A)$
- G is usually represented by an adjacent list
 - To each node, N_i , is associated a list of nodes connected to N_i itself by arcs
- Consider the problem of searching G to find a path from the starting node, N_s , to the final one, N_g
 - We will see three techniques



- The BFS uses a **queue**, that is a FIFO (First-Input First-Output) data structure of nodes
 - We refer to this queue as **OPEN**
- At the beginning, OPEN contains the node N_s only and it is marked as **visited**
- Then, the other nodes are marked as **unvisited**
- At each iteration, the first node in OPEN is extracted and all the connect nodes marked as unvisited are inserted into OPEN as visited
- The search terminates once N_g is in OPEN as visited, or OPEN is empty (failure)
- During this search, the algorithm must keep track of the **BFS tree**, containing all the nodes that have led to unvisited nodes
 - If it exists, the BFS tree contains the path connecting N_s to N_g

Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

Graph search algorithms

OPEN

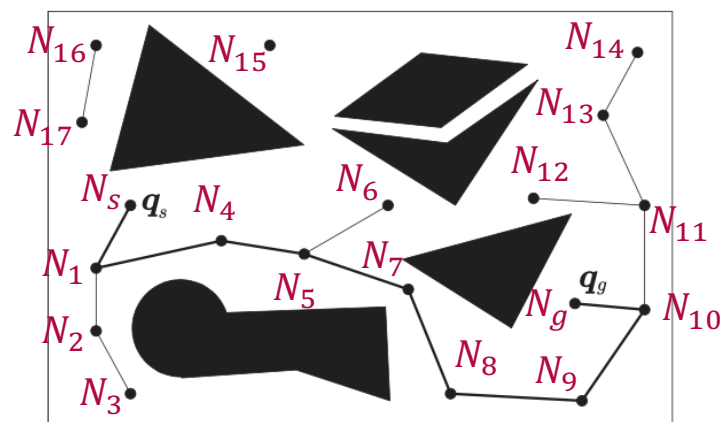
Node (visited from)

N_s

The *visited from* part is taken from the adjacency list

Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Unvisited
N_2	Unvisited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Unvisited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited



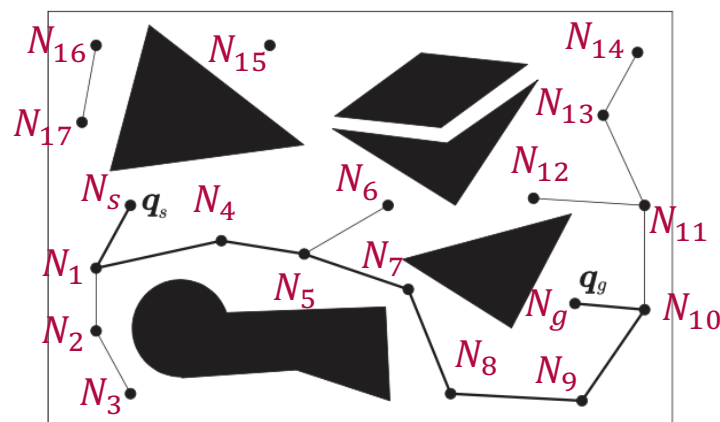
BFS TREE

Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

Graph search algorithms

Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Unvisited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Unvisited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited



BFS TREE

N_s

OPEN

Nodes (visited from)
$N_1(N_s)$

Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

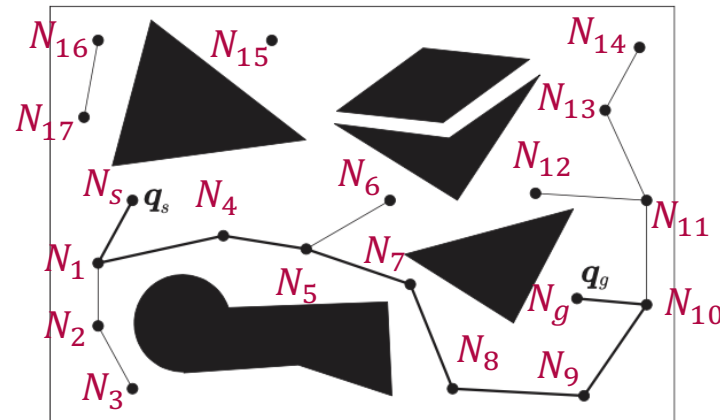
Graph search algorithms

OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

$N_2 (N_1)$

$N_4 (N_1)$



BFS TREE

N_s
|
 N_1

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

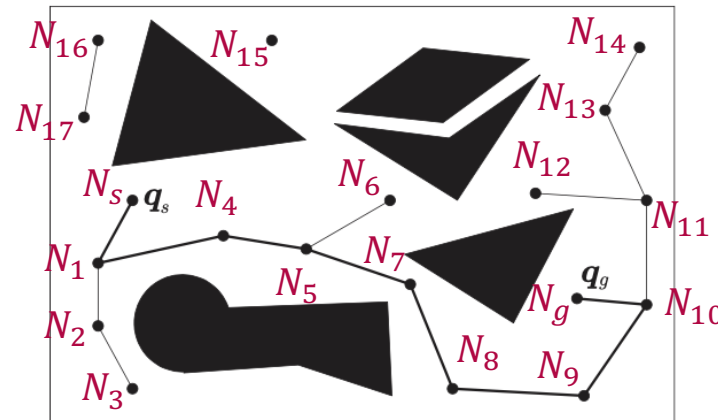
Graph search algorithms

OPEN

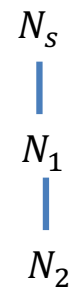
Nodes (visited from)

$N_4 (N_1)$

$N_3 (N_2)$



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

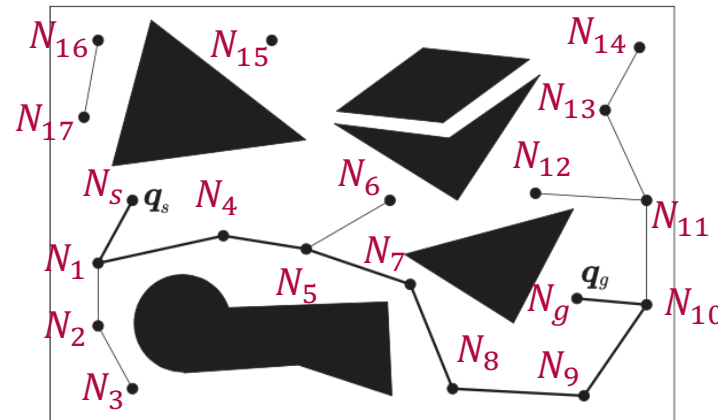
Graph search algorithms

OPEN

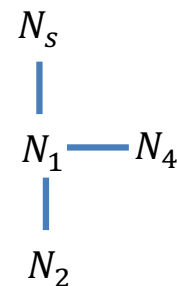
Nodes (visited from)

$N_3 (N_2)$

$N_5 (N_4)$



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

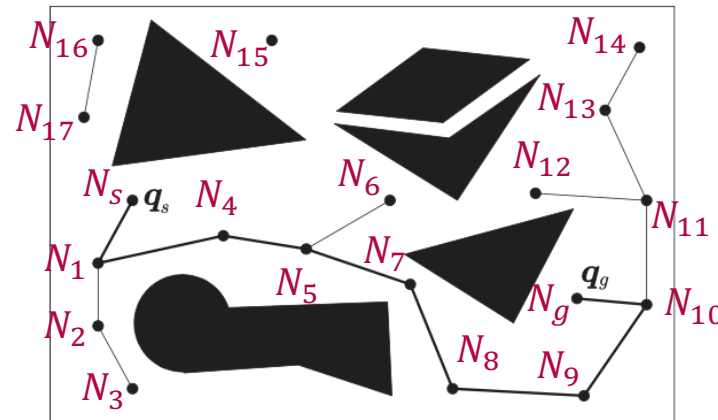
Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

Graph search algorithms

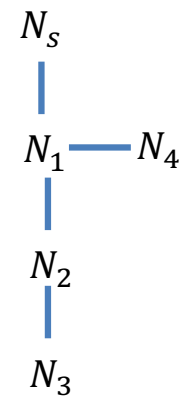
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

N_5 (N_4)



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

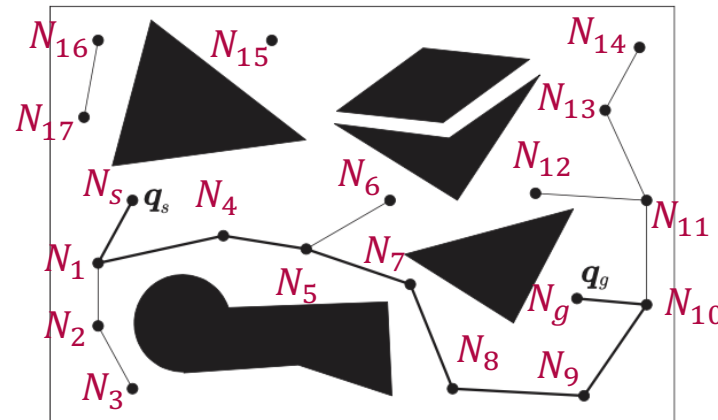
Graph search algorithms

OPEN

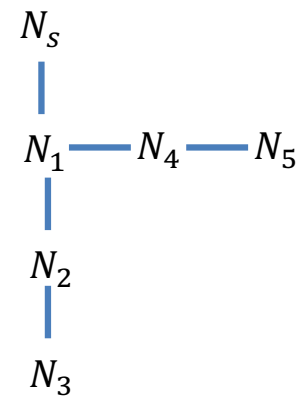
Nodes (visited from)

$N_6 (N_5)$

$N_7 (N_5)$



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

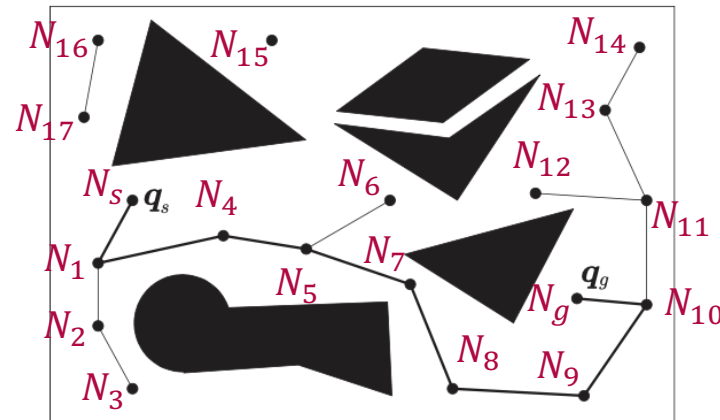
Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

Graph search algorithms

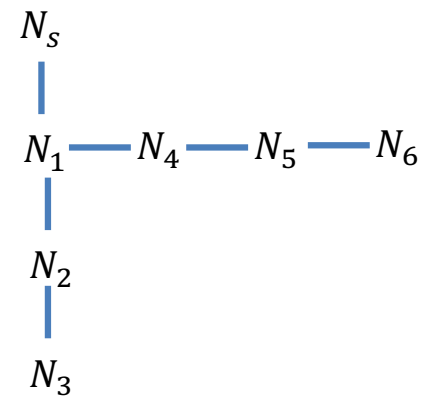
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

N_7 (N_5)



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

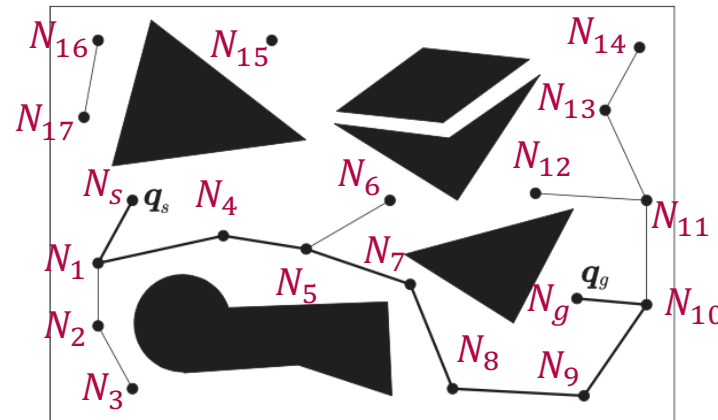
Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

Graph search algorithms

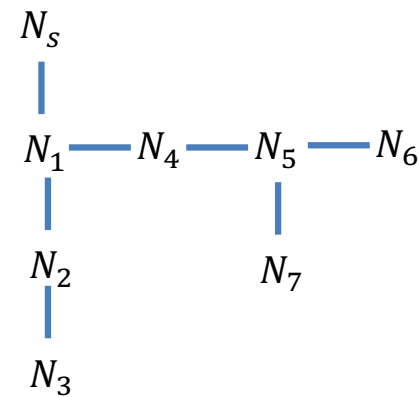
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

N_8 (N_7)



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

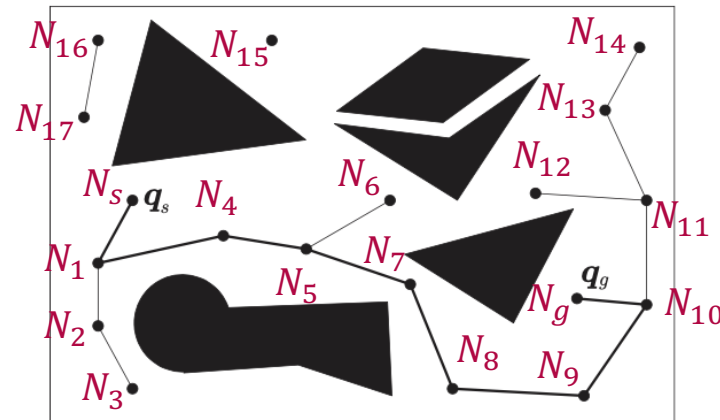
Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

Graph search algorithms

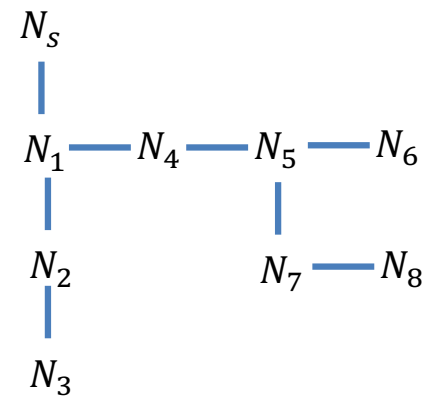
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

N_9 (N_8)



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Visited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

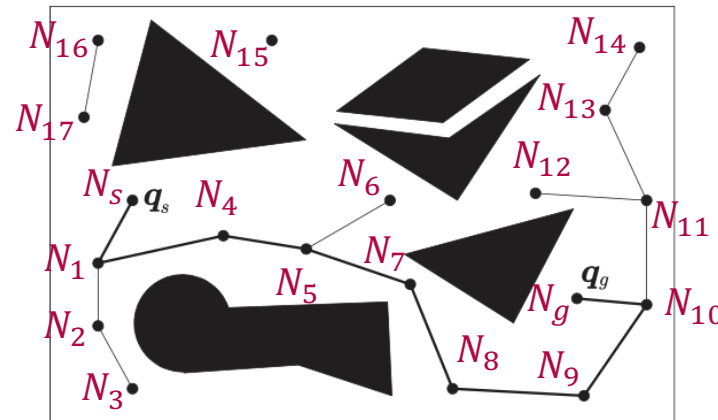
Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

Graph search algorithms

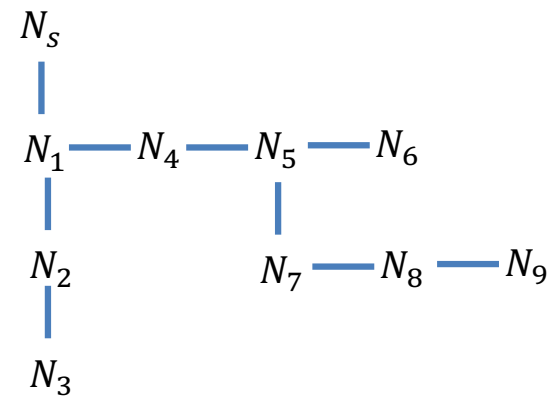
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

N_{10} (N_9)



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Visited
N_{10}	Visited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

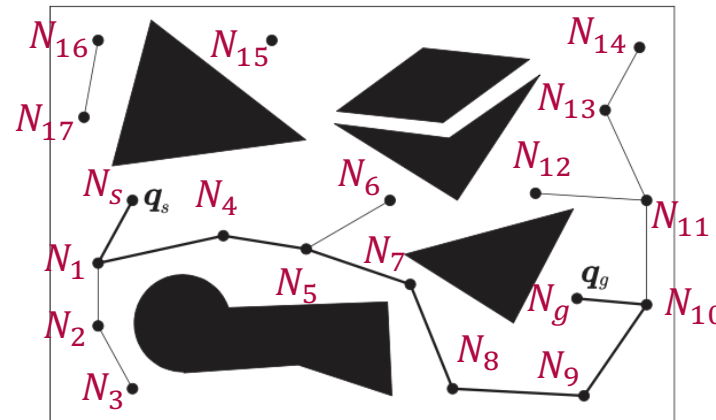
Graph search algorithms

OPEN

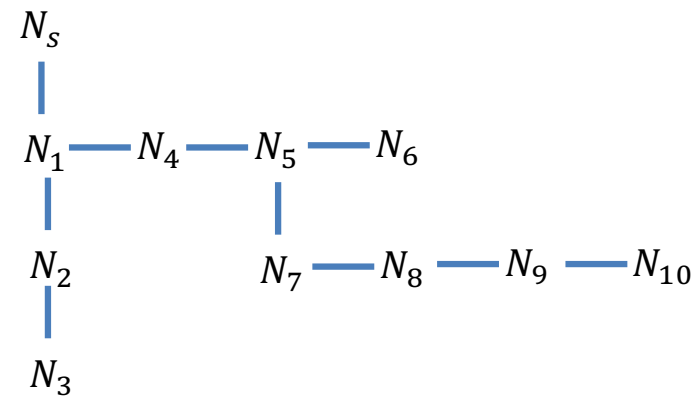
Nodes (visited from)

$N_g (N_{10})$

$N_{11} (N_{10})$



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Visited
N_{10}	Visited
N_{11}	Visited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Visited

Breadth-first search (BFS): Example

Graph search algorithms

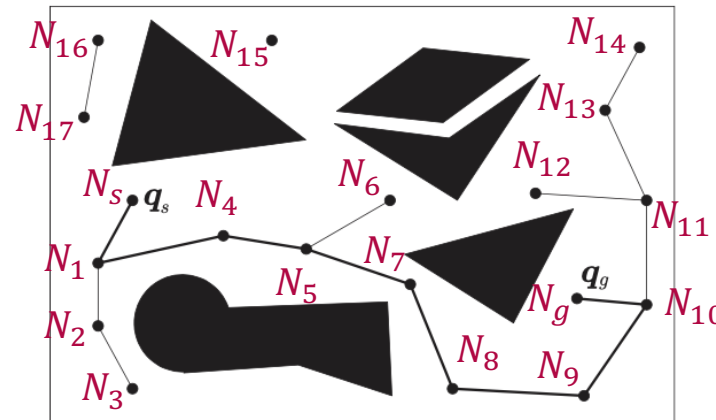
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

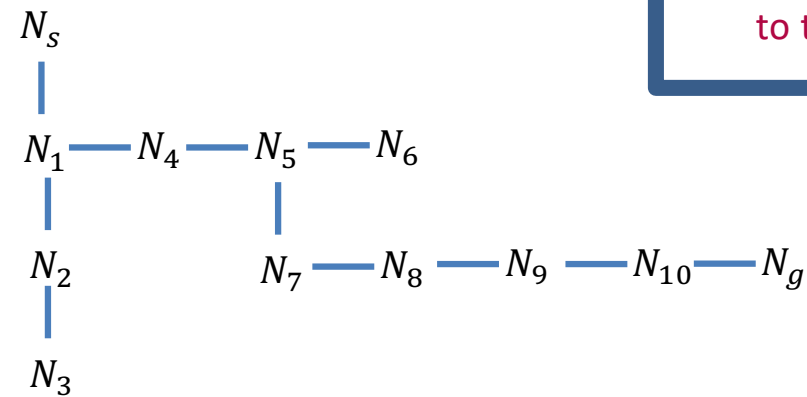
N_g (N_{10})

N_{11} (N_{10})

BFS ends since N_g is in OPEN and it is added to the tree



BFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Visited
N_{10}	Visited
N_{11}	Visited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Visited



- The DFS uses a **stack**, that is a LIFO (Last-Input First-Output) data structure of nodes
 - We refer to this stack as **OPEN**
- At the beginning, OPEN contains the node N_s only and it is marked as **visited**
- Then, the other nodes are marked as **unvisited**
- At each iteration, the last node in OPEN is extracted and all the connect nodes marked as unvisited are inserted into OPEN as visited
- The search terminates once N_g is in OPEN as visited, or OPEN is empty (failure)
- During this search, the algorithm must keep track of the **DFS tree**, containing all the nodes that have led to unvisited nodes
 - If it exists, the DFS tree contains the path connecting N_s to N_g

OPEN

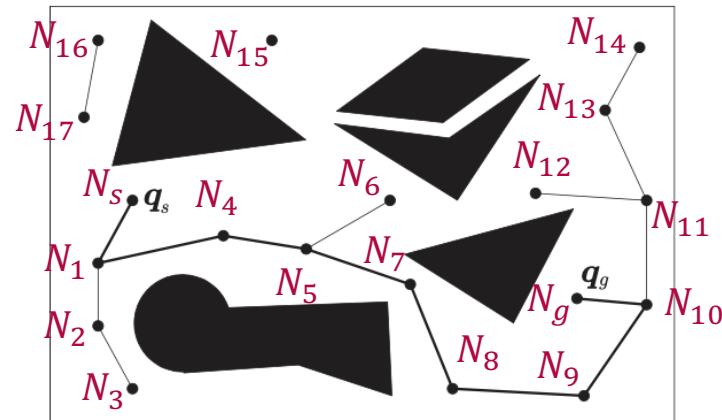
Node (visited from)

N_s

The *visited from* part is taken from the adjacency list

Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Unvisited
N_2	Unvisited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Unvisited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

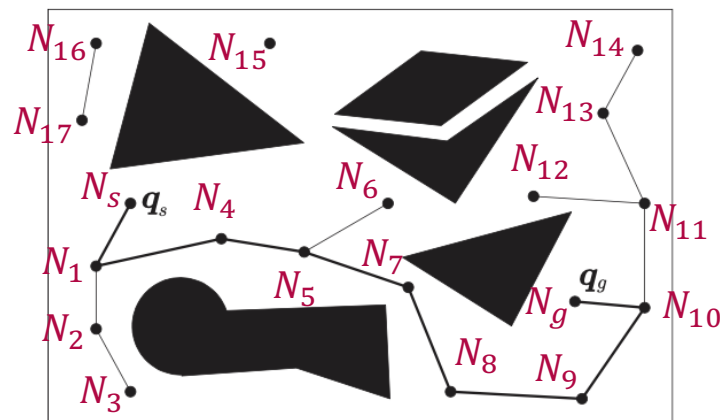


DFS TREE

OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

$N_1(N_s)$



DFS TREE

N_s

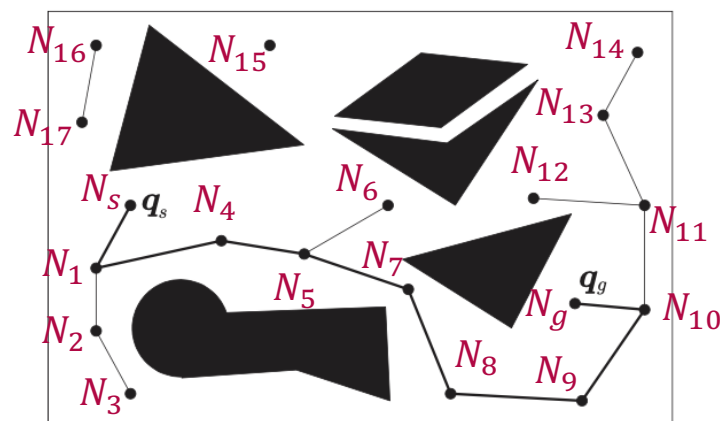
Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Unvisited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Unvisited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

$N_2 (N_1)$

$N_4 (N_1)$



DFS TREE

N_s
|
 N_1

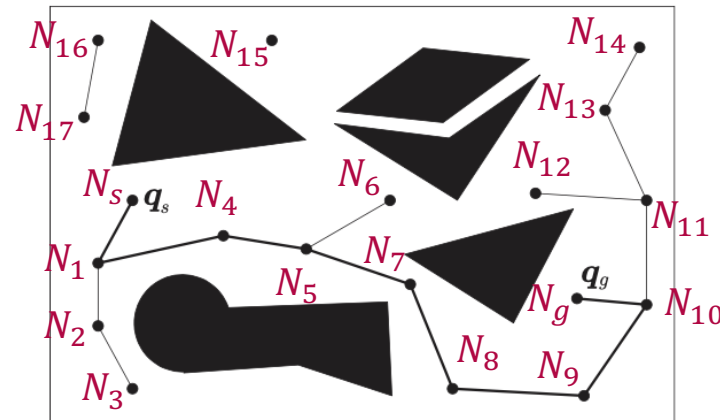
Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

OPEN

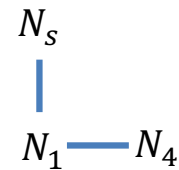
Nodes (visited from)

$N_2 (N_1)$

$N_5 (N_4)$



DFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

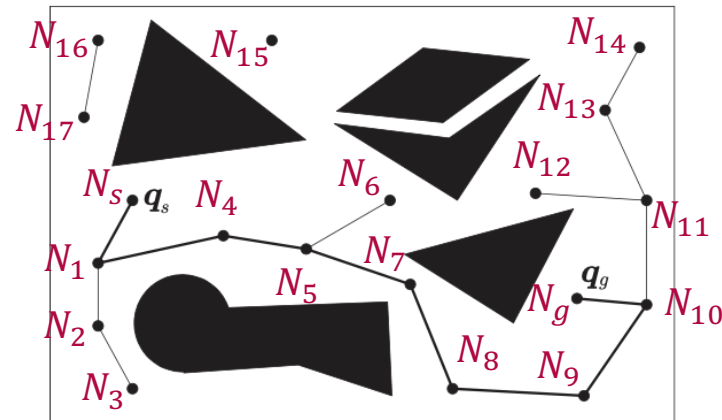
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

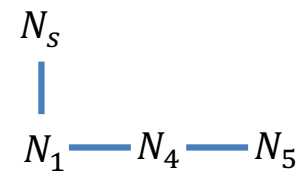
$N_2 (N_1)$

$N_6 (N_5)$

$N_7 (N_5)$



DFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Unvisited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

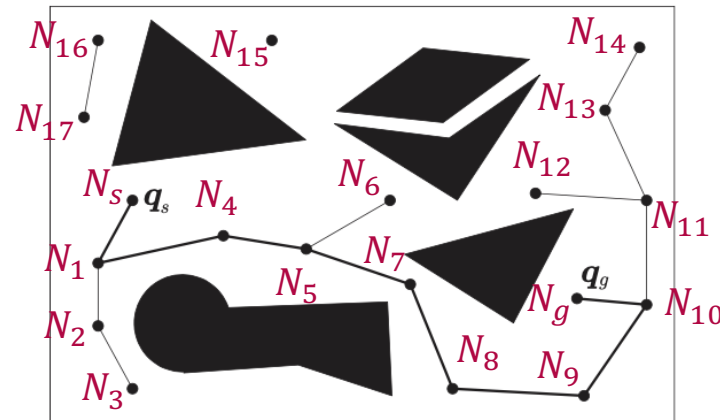
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

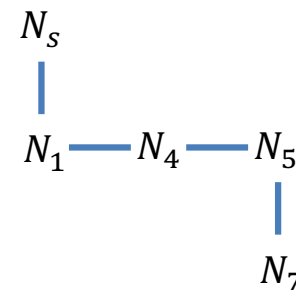
$N_2 (N_1)$

$N_6 (N_5)$

$N_8 (N_7)$



DFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Unvisited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

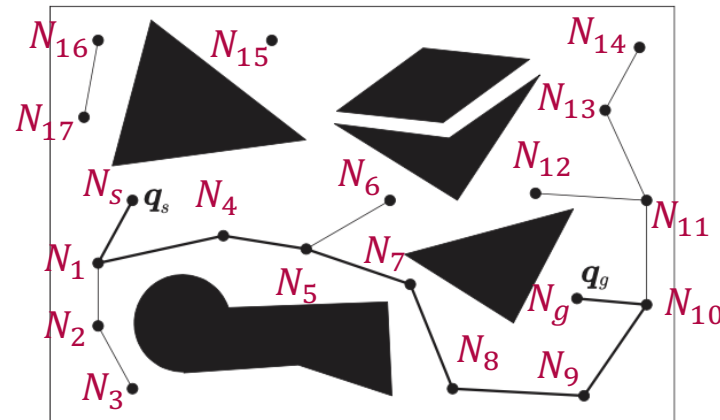
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

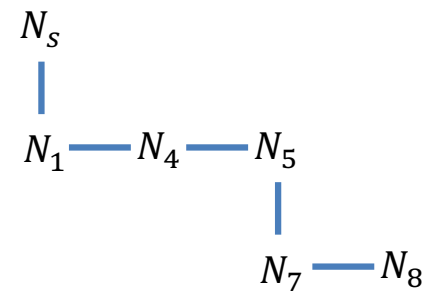
$N_2 (N_1)$

$N_6 (N_5)$

$N_9 (N_8)$



DFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Visited
N_{10}	Unvisited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

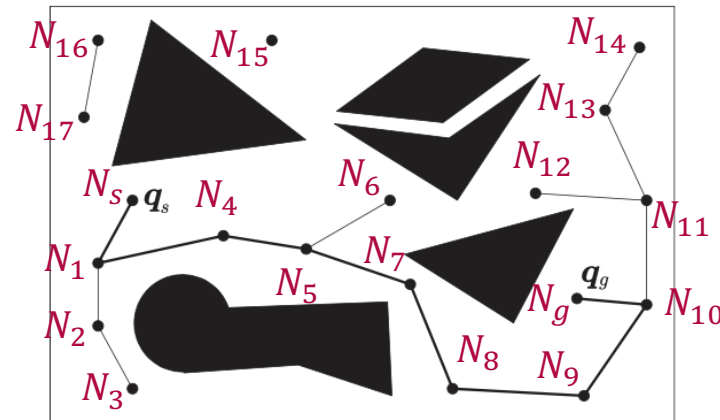
OPEN

Nodes (visited from)

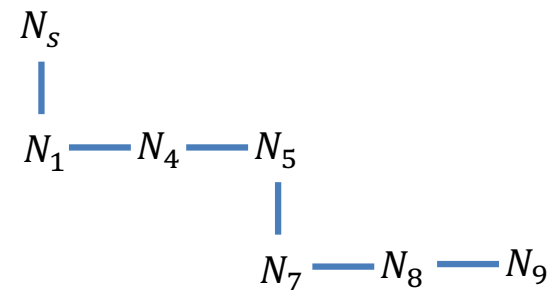
$N_2 (N_1)$

$N_6 (N_5)$

$N_{10} (N_9)$



DFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Visited
N_{10}	Visited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited

OPEN

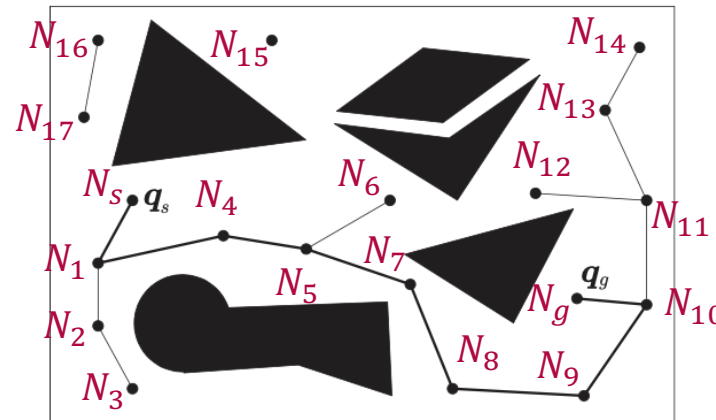
Nodes (visited from)

$N_2 (N_1)$

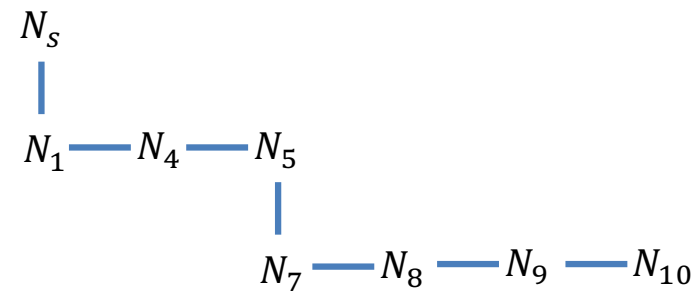
$N_6 (N_5)$

$N_g (N_{10})$

$N_{11} (N_{10})$



DFS TREE



Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Visited
N_{10}	Visited
N_{11}	Visited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Visited

OPEN

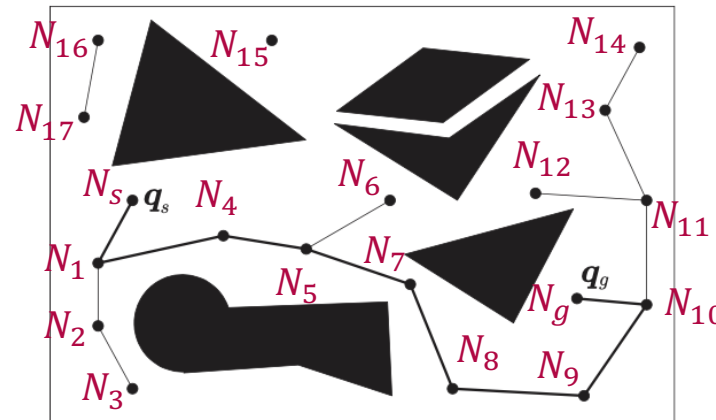
Nodes (visited from)

$N_2 (N_1)$

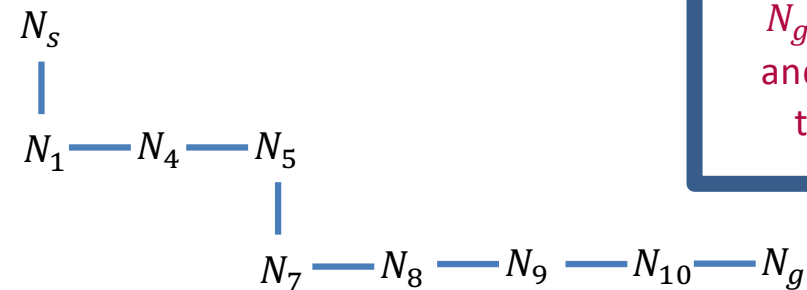
$N_6 (N_5)$

$N_g (N_{10})$

$N_{11} (N_{10})$



DFS TREE



DFS ends since N_g is in OPEN and it is added to the tree

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_s	Visited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited
N_8	Visited
N_9	Visited
N_{10}	Visited
N_{11}	Unvisited
N_{12}	Unvisited
N_{13}	Unvisited
N_{14}	Unvisited
N_{15}	Unvisited
N_{16}	Unvisited
N_{17}	Unvisited
N_g	Unvisited



- In many applications, the arcs of the graph G are weighted with positive numbers
 - In this way, it is possible to define a **cost** of a path on G as the sum of the weights on its arcs
 - The problem is now connecting N_s to N_g through a path associated to the minimum cost, called **minimum path**
- It is possible to associate a **cost function** associated to a node $N_i, i = 1, \dots, N$
$$f(N_i) = g(N_i) + h(N_i)$$
 - $g(N_i)$ is the cost of the path from N_s to N_i as stored in the current tree
 - $h(N_i)$ is a **heuristic** estimate of the cost $h^*(N_i)$ of the minimum path from N_i to N_g
 - Any choice of the heuristic such that $0 \leq h(N_i) \leq h^*(N_i), \forall N_i$ is admissible, meaning that the heuristic should not overestimate the real cost
 - The choice $h(N_i) = 0$ corresponds to the **Dijkstra algorithm**



- The A* algorithm uses an **ordinated list**
 - We refer to this list as **OPEN**
- At the beginning, OPEN contains the node N_s only and it is marked as **visited**
 - The other nodes are marked as **unvisited**
- At each iteration, the node in OPEN associated to the minimum cost function is extracted
 - We refer to this node as N_{best}
- The search terminates once N_g is extracted from OPEN, or OPEN is empty (failure)
- During this search, the algorithm must keep track of the **A* tree**, containing all the nodes that have led to unvisited nodes
 - If it exists, the DFS tree contains the path connecting N_s to N_g
 - The tree adjusts the pointer from N_i to N_{best} if $g(N_{best}) + c(N_{best}, N_i) < g(N_i)$, with $c(N_{best}, N_i)$ the cost from N_i to N_{best}



■ Pseudo-code

```
A* algorithm
1  repeat
2    find and extract  $N_{\text{best}}$  from OPEN
3    if  $N_{\text{best}} = N_g$  then exit
4    for each node  $N_i$  in  $\text{ADJ}(N_{\text{best}})$  do
5      if  $N_i$  is unvisited then
6        add  $N_i$  to  $T$  with a pointer toward  $N_{\text{best}}$ 
7        insert  $N_i$  in OPEN; mark  $N_i$  visited
8      else if  $g(N_{\text{best}}) + c(N_{\text{best}}, N_i) < g(N_i)$  then
9        redirect the pointer of  $N_i$  in  $T$  toward  $N_{\text{best}}$ 
10     if  $N_i$  is not in OPEN then
10       insert  $N_i$  in OPEN
10     else update  $f(N_i)$ 
10     end if
11   end if
12 until OPEN is empty
```

OPEN

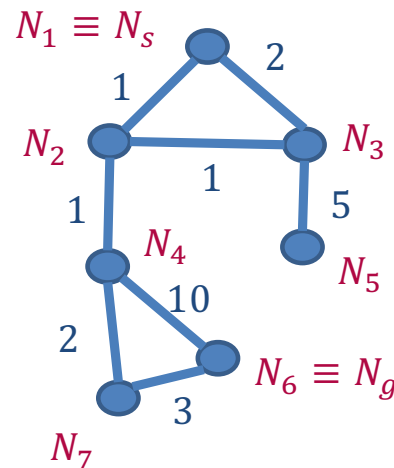
Node (visited from / cost)

N_1

The *visited from* part is taken from the adjacency list

```

A* algorithm
1  repeat
2    find and extract  $N_{best}$  from OPEN
3    if  $N_{best} = N_g$  then exit
4    for each node  $N_i$  in  $ADJ(N_{best})$  do
5      if  $N_i$  is unvisited then
6        add  $N_i$  to  $T$  with a pointer toward  $N_{best}$ 
7        insert  $N_i$  in OPEN; mark  $N_i$  visited
8      else if  $g(N_{best}) + c(N_{best}, N_i) < g(N_i)$  then
9        redirect the pointer of  $N_i$  in  $T$  toward  $N_{best}$ 
10     if  $N_i$  is not in OPEN then
11       insert  $N_i$  in OPEN
12     else update  $f(N_i)$ 
13   end if
14 end if
15 until OPEN is empty
  
```



DFS TREE

Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Unvisited
N_3	Unvisited
N_4	Unvisited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited

Adjacency list

Nodes	Adjacent nodes
N_1	N_2, N_3
N_2	N_1, N_3, N_4
N_3	N_1, N_2, N_5
N_4	N_2, N_6, N_7
N_5	N_3
N_6	N_4, N_7
N_7	N_4, N_6

OPEN

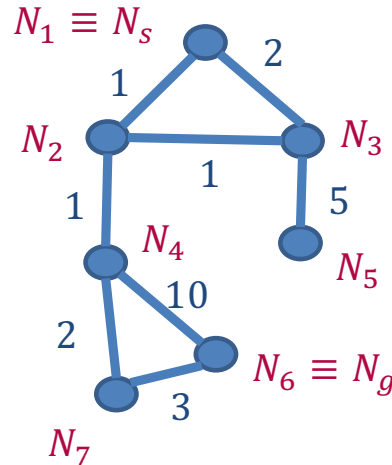
Node (visited from / cost)

$N_2(N_1/1)$

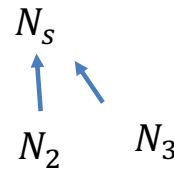
$N_3(N_1/2)$

Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Unvisited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited



DFS TREE



```

A* algorithm
1  repeat
2    find and extract  $N_{best}$  from OPEN
3    if  $N_{best} = N_g$  then exit
4    for each node  $N_i$  in  $ADJ(N_{best})$  do
5      if  $N_i$  is unvisited then
6        add  $N_i$  to  $T$  with a pointer toward  $N_{best}$ 
7        insert  $N_i$  in OPEN; mark  $N_i$  visited
8      else if  $g(N_{best}) + c(N_{best}, N_i) < g(N_i)$  then
9        redirect the pointer of  $N_i$  in  $T$  toward  $N_{best}$ 
10     if  $N_i$  is not in OPEN then
11       insert  $N_i$  in OPEN
12     else update  $f(N_i)$ 
13   end if
14 end if
15 until OPEN is empty
  
```

Adjacency list

Nodes	Adjacent nodes
N_1	N_2, N_3
N_2	N_1, N_3, N_4
N_3	N_1, N_2, N_5
N_4	N_2, N_6, N_7
N_5	N_3
N_6	N_4, N_7
N_7	N_4, N_6

OPEN

Node (visited from / cost)

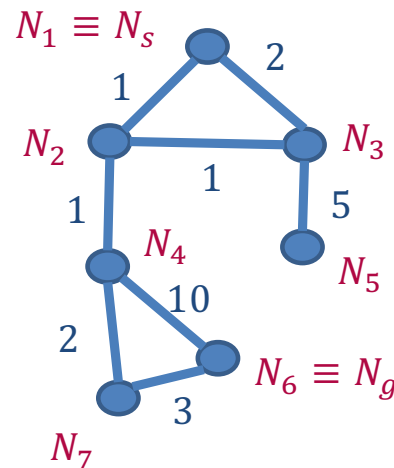
$N_3(N_1/2)$

$N_4(N_2/2)$

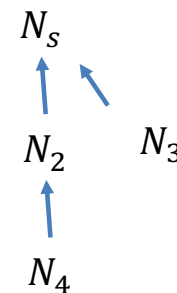
$g(N_2) + c(N_2, N_1) < g(N_1)$ is not verified since $1+1 < 0$
 $g(N_2) + c(N_2, N_3) < g(N_3)$ is not verified since $1+1 < 2$

```

A* algorithm
1  repeat
2    find and extract  $N_{best}$  from OPEN
3    if  $N_{best} = N_g$  then exit
4    for each node  $N_i$  in  $ADJ(N_{best})$  do
5      if  $N_i$  is unvisited then
6        add  $N_i$  to  $T$  with a pointer toward  $N_{best}$ 
7        insert  $N_i$  in OPEN; mark  $N_i$  visited
8      else if  $g(N_{best}) + c(N_{best}, N_i) < g(N_i)$  then
9        redirect the pointer of  $N_i$  in  $T$  toward  $N_{best}$ 
10     if  $N_i$  is not in OPEN then
11       insert  $N_i$  in OPEN
12     else update  $f(N_i)$ 
13   end if
14 end if
15 until OPEN is empty
  
```



DFS TREE



Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Unvisited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited

Adjacency list

Nodes	Adjacent nodes
N_1	N_2, N_3
N_2	N_1, N_3, N_4
N_3	N_1, N_2, N_5
N_4	N_2, N_6, N_7
N_5	N_3
N_6	N_4, N_7
N_7	N_4, N_6

OPEN

Node (visited from / cost)

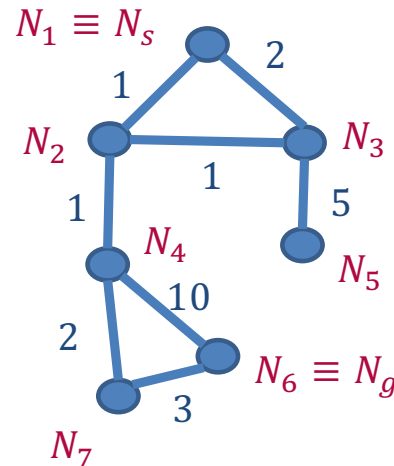
$N_4(N_2/2)$

$N_5(N_3/7)$

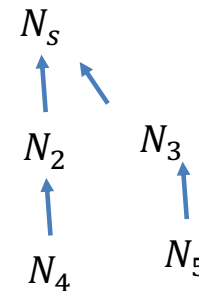
$g(N_3) + c(N_3, N_1) < g(N_1)$ is not verified since $2+2 < 0$
 $g(N_3) + c(N_2, N_3) < g(N_2)$ is not verified since $2+1 < 1$

```

A* algorithm
1  repeat
2    find and extract  $N_{best}$  from OPEN
3    if  $N_{best} = N_g$  then exit
4    for each node  $N_i$  in  $ADJ(N_{best})$  do
5      if  $N_i$  is unvisited then
6        add  $N_i$  to  $T$  with a pointer toward  $N_{best}$ 
7        insert  $N_i$  in OPEN; mark  $N_i$  visited
8      else if  $g(N_{best}) + c(N_{best}, N_i) < g(N_i)$  then
9        redirect the pointer of  $N_i$  in  $T$  toward  $N_{best}$ 
10     if  $N_i$  is not in OPEN then
11       insert  $N_i$  in OPEN
12     else update  $f(N_i)$ 
13   end if
14 end if
15 until OPEN is empty
  
```



DFS TREE



Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Unvisited
N_7	Unvisited

Adjacency list

Nodes	Adjacent nodes
N_1	N_2, N_3
N_2	N_1, N_3, N_4
N_3	N_1, N_2, N_5
N_4	N_2, N_6, N_7
N_5	N_3
N_6	N_4, N_7
N_7	N_4, N_6

OPEN

Node (visited from / cost)

$N_7(N_4/4)$

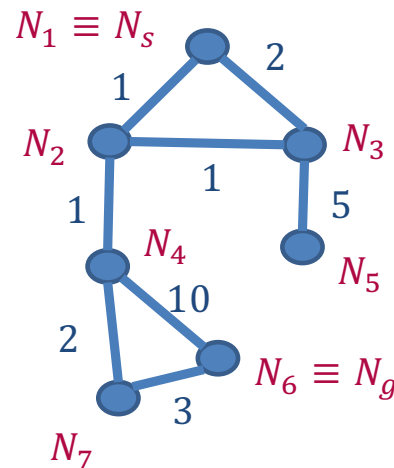
$N_5(N_3/7)$

$N_6(N_4/12)$

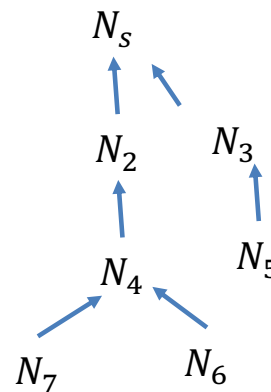
$g(N_4) + c(N_4, N_2) < g(N_2)$ is not verified since $2+1 < 1$

```

A* algorithm
1  repeat
2    find and extract  $N_{best}$  from OPEN
3    if  $N_{best} = N_g$  then exit
4    for each node  $N_i$  in  $ADJ(N_{best})$  do
5      if  $N_i$  is unvisited then
6        add  $N_i$  to  $T$  with a pointer toward  $N_{best}$ 
7        insert  $N_i$  in OPEN; mark  $N_i$  visited
8      else if  $g(N_{best}) + c(N_{best}, N_i) < g(N_i)$  then
9        redirect the pointer of  $N_i$  in  $T$  toward  $N_{best}$ 
10     if  $N_i$  is not in OPEN then
11       insert  $N_i$  in OPEN
12     else update  $f(N_i)$ 
13   end if
14 end if
15 until OPEN is empty
  
```



DFS TREE



Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited

Adjacency list

Nodes	Adjacent nodes
N_1	N_2, N_3
N_2	N_1, N_3, N_4
N_3	N_1, N_2, N_5
N_4	N_2, N_6, N_7
N_5	N_3
N_6	N_4, N_7
N_7	N_4, N_6

OPEN

Node (visited from / cost)

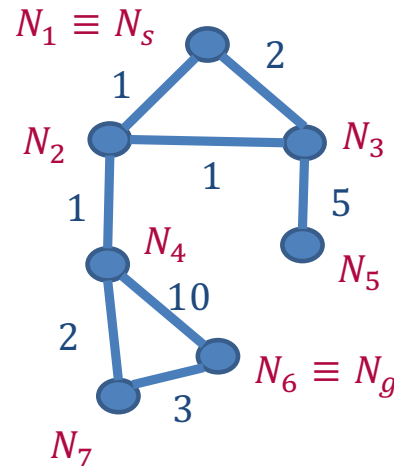
$N_5(N_3/7)$

$N_6(N_4/12)$

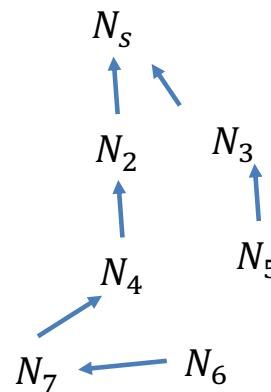
$g(N_7) + c(N_7, N_4) < g(N_4)$ is not verified since $4+2 < 2$
 $g(N_7) + c(N_7, N_6) < g(N_6)$ IS VERIFIED since $4+3 < 12$

```

A* algorithm
1  repeat
2    find and extract  $N_{best}$  from OPEN
3    if  $N_{best} = N_g$  then exit
4    for each node  $N_i$  in  $ADJ(N_{best})$  do
5      if  $N_i$  is unvisited then
6        add  $N_i$  to  $T$  with a pointer toward  $N_{best}$ 
7        insert  $N_i$  in OPEN; mark  $N_i$  visited
8      else if  $g(N_{best}) + c(N_{best}, N_i) < g(N_i)$  then
9        redirect the pointer of  $N_i$  in  $T$  toward  $N_{best}$ 
10     if  $N_i$  is not in OPEN then
11       insert  $N_i$  in OPEN
12     else update  $f(N_i)$ 
13   end if
14 end if
15 until OPEN is empty
  
```



DFS TREE



Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited

Adjacency list

Nodes	Adjacent nodes
N_1	N_2, N_3
N_2	N_1, N_3, N_4
N_3	N_1, N_2, N_5
N_4	N_2, N_6, N_7
N_5	N_3
N_6	N_4, N_7
N_7	N_4, N_6

OPEN

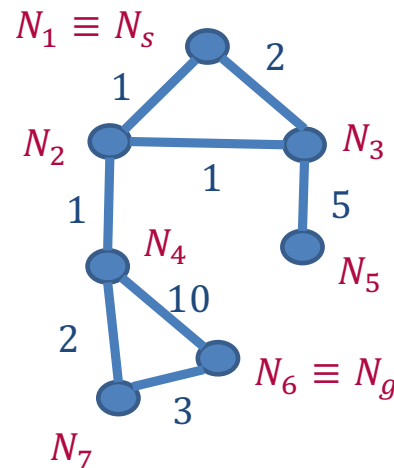
Node (visited from / cost)

$N_6(N_4/12)$

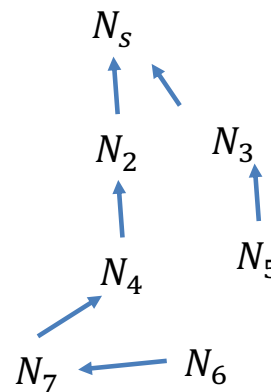
$g(N_5) + c(N_5, N_3) < g(N_3)$ is not verified since $7+5 < 2$
 N_6 is then extracted and the algorithm ends

```

A* algorithm
1  repeat
2    find and extract  $N_{best}$  from OPEN
3    if  $N_{best} = N_g$  then exit
4    for each node  $N_i$  in  $ADJ(N_{best})$  do
5      if  $N_i$  is unvisited then
6        add  $N_i$  to  $T$  with a pointer toward  $N_{best}$ 
7        insert  $N_i$  in OPEN; mark  $N_i$  visited
8      else if  $g(N_{best}) + c(N_{best}, N_i) < g(N_i)$  then
9        redirect the pointer of  $N_i$  in  $T$  toward  $N_{best}$ 
10     if  $N_i$  is not in OPEN then
11       insert  $N_i$  in OPEN
12     else update  $f(N_i)$ 
13   end if
14 end if
15 until OPEN is empty
  
```



DFS TREE



Node list

Nodes	Visited/Unvisited
N_1	Visited
N_2	Visited
N_3	Visited
N_4	Visited
N_5	Visited
N_6	Visited
N_7	Visited

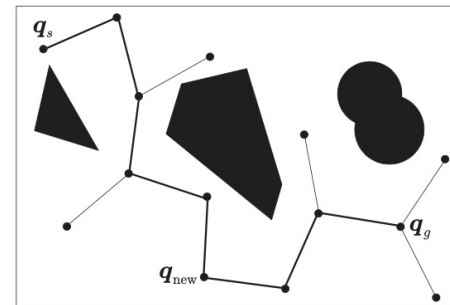
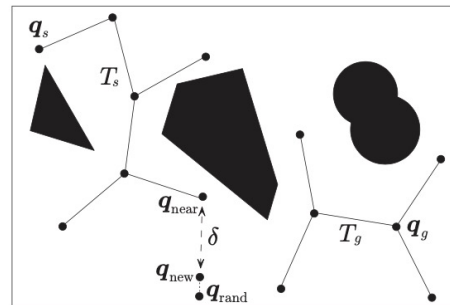
Adjacency list

Nodes	Adjacent nodes
N_1	N_2, N_3
N_2	N_1, N_3, N_4
N_3	N_1, N_2, N_5
N_4	N_2, N_6, N_7
N_5	N_3
N_6	N_4, N_7
N_7	N_4, N_6



- It might be a good idea not to build a roadmap describing the entire C_{free}
 - It may be useful to explore only the part of C_{free} connecting q_s to q_g
- Denote with G the current graph
 - The first step is the generation of a random model-configuration q_{rand} as for the PRM with a uniform probability distribution
 - Given G , the model-configuration $q_{near} \in G$ closer to q_{rand} is found
 - A new model-configuration, q_{new} , is chosen as the segment joining q_{near} and q_{rand} at a pre-determined distance δ from q_{near}
 - A collision-check is carried out for q_{new} and the segment connecting q_{near} and q_{new}
 - If there are no collisions, q_{new} and its segment connecting q_{near} are added to G
 - Notice that q_{rand} can also be a point belonging to the CO -obstacle region

- To speed-up the search, two graphs are considered
 - One graph, G_s , starts from q_s
 - The other graph, G_g , starts from q_g
 - They evolve in parallel
- At a certain point (i.e., after a certain number of iterations), G_s must be connected to G_g
 - In this phase, q_{new} acts as q_{rand} for G_g
 - One finds the closest q_{near} in G_g and moves it trying to have $q_{rand} = q_{new}$ with a variable step-size instead of a fixed δ
 - If this segment is free from collisions, the graphs are connected





- This method is suitable for on-line applications
 - The obstacles are not known in advance
 - Sensors are indeed needed
 - It is employed also off-line
- The aim is not to build C_{free} , but only to reach q_g
- The artificial potentials method exploits the superimposition of two terms
 - An **attractive potential** to the goal
 - A **repulsive potential** away from the CO -obstacle region



- The robot must be guided to q_g through the potential

$$U_a(q) = \frac{1}{2} k_a e^T(q) e(q) = \frac{1}{2} k_a \|e(q)\|^2$$

- $k_a > 0$
 - $e(q) = q_g - q$
 - $U_a(q)$ has the global minimum in $e(q) = 0$
- The resulting force from this potential is

$$f_a(q) = -\nabla U_a(q) = k_a e(q)$$

- Applying this force to the robot, q tends to q_g linearly



- Another choice for the potential might be

$$U_b(q) = k_a \|e(q)\|$$

- $k_a > 0$
 - $e(q) = q_g - q$
 - $U_b(q)$ has the global minimum in $e(q) = 0$
- The resulting force from this potential is

$$f_b(q) = -\nabla U_b(q) = k_a \frac{e(q)}{\|e(q)\|}$$

- Notice that this force is not defined when $e(q) = 0$, therefore it is not denoted when $q = q_g$, the desired model-configuration
 - The advantage in applying this force is that $f_b(q)$ does not go to infinite when $e(q)$ increases in norm, therefore it is suitable for large initial errors
 - It is slower than $f_a(q)$ close to the desired model-configuration q_g



- A way to combine the two forces is to use

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} f_a(q), & \|e(q)\| < 1 \\ f_b(q), & \|e(q)\| \geq 1 \end{cases}$$

- The transition is smooth when $e(q) = 1$, avoiding jumps in the control actions



- The repulsive potential is needed to avoid collisions
 - The idea is to build a sort of a virtual barrier potential around the obstacles
- It is assumed that CO is convex, or partitioned in convex components $CO_i, i = 1, \dots, p$
- For each CO_i , the associated potential is

$$U_{r,i}(q) = \begin{cases} \frac{k_{r,i}}{\gamma} \left(\frac{1}{\eta_i(q)} - \frac{1}{\eta_{o,i}} \right)^\gamma, & \eta_i(q) \leq \eta_{o,i} \\ 0, & \eta_i(q) > \eta_{o,i} \end{cases}$$

- $k_{r,i} > 0$ is a gain
- $\eta_i(q) = \min_{q' \in CO_i} \|q - q'\|$ is the distance from the obstacle
- $\eta_{o,i}$ is the **range of influence** of the obstacle
- $\gamma = \{2,3\}$ is a factor
- Notice that $U_{r,i}(q)$ is zero outside the range of influence and positive inside



- The repulsive force is

$$f_{r,i}(q) = -\nabla U_{r,i}(q) = \begin{cases} \frac{k_{r,i}}{\eta_i(q)^2} \left(\frac{1}{\eta_i(q)} - \frac{1}{\eta_{o,i}} \right)^{\gamma-1} \nabla \eta_i(q), & \eta_i(q) \leq \eta_{o,i} \\ 0, & \eta_i(q) > \eta_{o,i} \end{cases}$$

- The convexity hypothesis regarding the obstacles is necessary to compute $\nabla \eta_i(q)$ analytically
- During on-line planning, $\nabla \eta_i(q)$ must be computed numerically
- Notice that $\eta_i(q_g) \geq \eta_{o,i}, i = 1, \dots, p$, meaning that the final model-configuration is sufficiently outside any influence region



- The sum of all the repulsive potentials and forces is

$$U_r(q) = \sum_{i=1}^p U_{r,i}(q)$$

$$f_r(q) = -\nabla U_r(q) = \sum_{i=1}^p f_{r,i}(q)$$

- The total potential is the sum of the attractive and the repulsive one

$$U_t(q) = U_a(q) + U_r(q) > 0$$

- This total potential has a global minimum in q_g by construction

- The resulting force field is

$$f_t(q) = -\nabla U_t(q) = f_a(q) + f_r(q)$$

- This is called **deepest descent method**

- The artificial potentials method suffers of local minima in which

$$\begin{cases} f_t(\bar{q}) = 0 \\ U_t(\bar{q}) > 0 \end{cases} \text{ with } \bar{q} \neq q_g$$



$$f_a(\bar{q}) = f_r(\bar{q})$$

$$U_t(\bar{q}) > 0$$



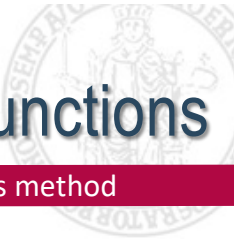
- There are different interpretations for the total force
 - $f_t(q) = \tau$
 - The total force is seen as the vector of generalized forces (force plus torques) that induce a motion of the robot in accordance with its dynamic model
 - In case of on-line planning, the total force is directly the control input
 - In case of off-line planning, it generates smooth trajectories since the reactions of the robot are filtered by the robot dynamics
 - $f_t(q) = \ddot{q}$
 - The total force is seen as the acceleration moving the robot that is considered as a point mass
 - In case of on-line planning, it requires the solution of the inverse dynamic problem or an on-line 2nd order kinematic control scheme
 - In case of off-line planning, it is an intermediate case as the above one and the below one
 - $f_t(q) = \dot{q}$
 - The total force is seen as the velocity vector moving the robot, that is considered from a kinematic viewpoint only
 - In case of on-line planning, it requires the solution of an on-line 1st order kinematic control scheme
 - In case of off-line planning, it is faster to generate trajectories as $q(t)$
 - This is the only method ensuring that q_g is reached with zero velocity, $\dot{q} = 0$, while the other methods require the addition of a damping term in $f_a(q)$
 - This is the most common choice, where $q_{k+1} = q_k + T_s f_t(q)$, that is the next model-configuration is the actual one plus the sampling time multiplied by the total force given by the artificial potentials methodology



- If a local minima is recognised, one solution is to stop the execution of the artificial potentials method and perform some random motions
 - Be careful of the environment!
- The artificial potentials method can be re-activated afterwards
- In case of on-line planning without any prior information or reconstruction of the environment, this is the only method that we consider here
 - Other methods can be used in case of off-line planning and they are explained in the following



- Suppose to discretize C_{free} using a regular grid
- Each free cell of this grid is assigned to a value of $U_t(q_c)$, where q_c is the model-configuration of the cell's centre
- The algorithm builds a graph rooted at q_s aiming at q_g
- At each iteration, the adjacent cells (4,8,...) of the node with a minimum $U_t(q_c)$ are considered
 - Those nodes that are not in the graph are added as children of the considered node
- The algorithm stops when the cell containing q_g is in the graph
 - Otherwise, a failure is reported
- This best-first algorithm is the discretized version of the steepest descent method
- This best-first algorithm is used to exit a local minimum, the artificial potentials method is re-activated afterwards, or it is employed from the beginning



- The best-first algorithm, in general, may lead to inefficient paths
 - The robot can enter into other local minima
- The **numerical navigation function** is a potential built on the grid-map of C_{free} associated to its distance from q_g
 - 0 → is assigned to the cell containing q_g
 - 1 → is assigned to the adjacent cells of q_g
 - 2 → is assigned to the unmarked cells among those adjacent to the ones marked with 1
 - ...
- The steepest descent method can be applied on this grid-map
 - Again, the navigation function can be applied to exit from the local minima only
 - It can be also applied from the beginning as an off-line planning

2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		19
1	0	1			6	7	8	9	10		18
2	1	2	3		7	8		10	11		17
3		3	4	5	6	7	8		12		16
4			5	6	7			12	13		15
5	6	7	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15